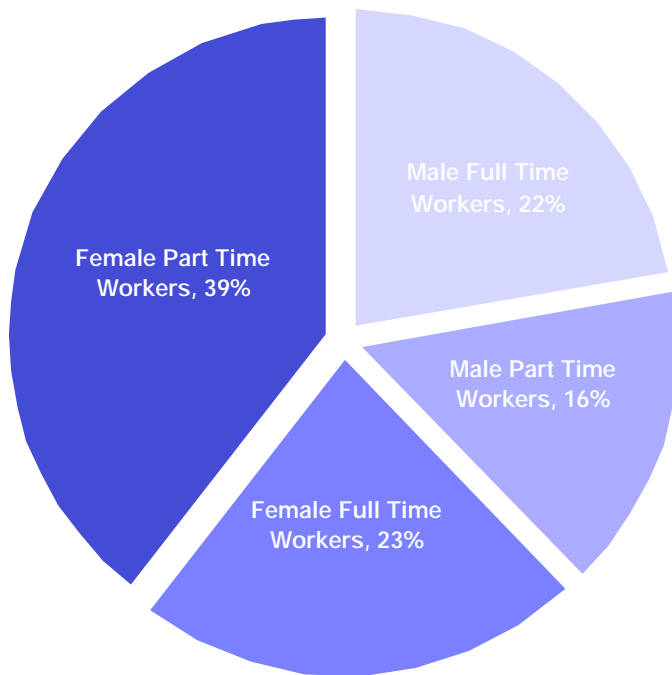


Active Leisure and Learning in the West Midlands

How many jobs in the Sector?

West Midlands distribution of employment in the sector



- Around 35,200 people are employed in the sports and active leisure sector in the West Midlands in 2002, with a further 2,800 people self-employed
- 1.5% of the regional workforce is employed in the sector, a proportion slightly lower than the national figure for the sector
- 8.3% of all sports and active leisure jobs in the UK are in the West Midlands
- 62.1% of the workforce are women
- 55.2% of the workforce are part-time
- Besides the paid workforce, there is an estimated 624,000 who work on an informal voluntary basis including 215,700 people performing core formal voluntary roles.

Source: ABI 2002 (excludes self-employed)

Job opportunities in the sector

- The Annual Business Inquiry shows that between 1998-2002 employment in the sector increased by over 8,900 jobs
- In 1998 Skills Foresight data for England suggested a 2.5% annual growth in employment in the sector over the next ten years, however the West Midlands has exceeded this forecast in the four year period up to 2002 with an average growth rate of 7.5% per year
- Besides this considerable expansion, there is also expected to be a relatively high staff turnover rate. Up to 2008, 30% of current jobs will need to be filled because of replacement demand, a figure equivalent to 11,400 jobs



National Foresight data for the sector suggests that:

- Female employment will experience a slightly greater increase than male employment
- There is expected to be a higher growth in part-time employment
- The rate of growth in the level of self-employment will be modest compared to the growth in the number of employees

Businesses in the Sector

- There are over 2,200 sports and active leisure business units in the West Midlands

- A lower proportion of businesses in the sector (69%) are micro-businesses (employing up to 10 people), compared to 82% across all sectors in the region
- There are a higher proportion of small businesses employing 11-24 people (14%) than in the West Midlands economy as a whole (10%)
- There are relatively few large businesses with over 200 employees
- A high proportion of people in the sector work in businesses employing 50-199 people (32% compared to an average of 24% in the region) and businesses employing between 25 and 49 employees (24% compared to a regional 13%). As a consequence of this employment in small and medium sized enterprises there is relatively less employment in micro and especially large sized businesses

Source: Annual Business Inquiry

Key companies in the sector

There are many well-known large companies operating in the sector. In professional sport, Aston Villa, Birmingham City and West Bromwich Albion are in the Premiership and Worcestershire and Warwickshire host County Cricket Clubs. Sports such as golf (the Belfry has hosted the Ryder Cup on a number of occasions) horse racing and motor sports are responsible for attracting visitors and spending in the region.

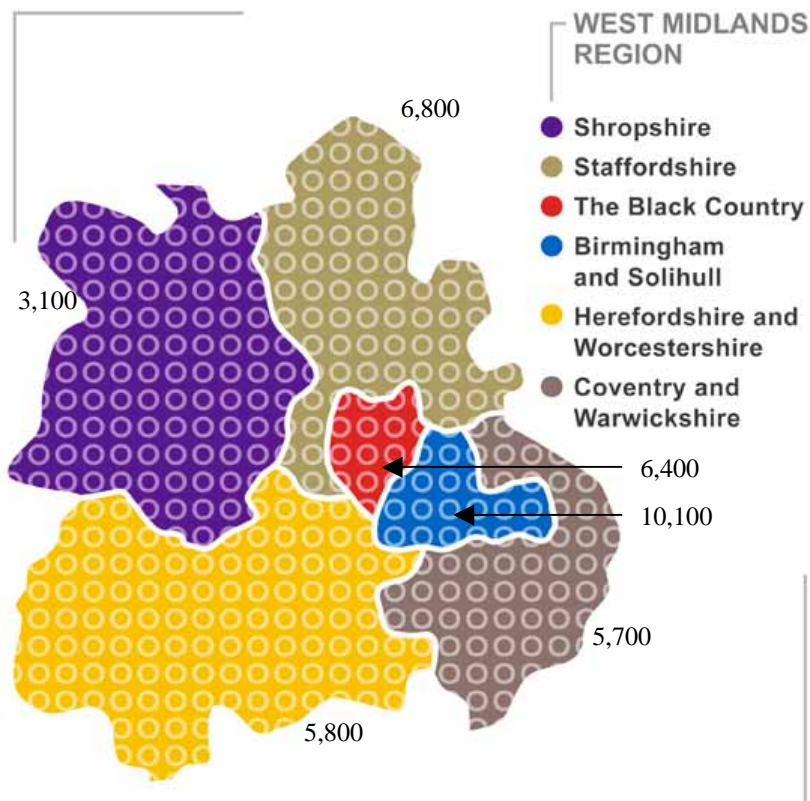
The region also has a number of stadia and facilities; the Alexandra Stadium is a major athletics venue whilst the NEC recently hosted the World Indoor Athletics Championships. Much employment in sport and fitness is local authority based, but private clubs are an increasing source of employment opportunities. There are a number of major theme and leisure parks in the region including Alton Towers, Drayton Manor, Waterworld (a water adventure park) based in Staffordshire and Tamworth Snowdome.

Major developments in the sector

The following major developments will affect employment in the Active Leisure and Learning Sector:

- The new Coventry Arena, redevelopment of the Abbey Stadium at Redditch, the Junction at Oldbury, English Institute of Sport projects at Lilleshall, Birmingham Indoor Athletics Centre, Birmingham University, Wolverhampton University and Cannock.
- The Sports Pathways to Employment Project (based in the South Black Country and West Birmingham Regeneration Zone) is a group of inter-linked projects aimed at tackling barriers to growth in the sport and active leisure industry and tackling disaffection, inequality and exclusion. Outcomes will include sectoral growth nurtured, enhanced sporting infrastructure, barriers to entry removed, progression routes to employment established, and skills levels raised through continuous professional development programmes.

Employment in the Active Leisure and Learning Sector in the sub-regions



- As the map shows, regionally Birmingham and Solihull and Staffordshire employ the most people in sports and active leisure. Employment in this sector as a percentage of total employment is highest in Herefordshire and Worcestershire (1.9%)

- Staffordshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire have the highest number of sports and active leisure businesses

- Businesses in this sector make up 1.2% of businesses in the region with the highest proportion in Herefordshire and Worcestershire (1.6%)

Skills and recruitment issues in the sector

The 2003 National Employer Skills Survey was commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council, in partnership with the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) and the Department for Education and Skills, in order to provide detailed information about the extent, causes and implications of England's recruitment problems and skill gaps. It also measures employers' training activities.

In Skills Active's sector, 28% of businesses expect employment to increase in the next 12 months compared to 30% nationally. Almost no businesses are expecting employment to decrease in the period in the region.

Employers were asked their views on the levels of skills required to do each job. Across all occupations nationally in the sector, the skills most required at advanced and high levels are customer handling skills (27% of employers say this is required at an advanced level, 46% at a high level), communication skills (24% advanced, 48% high) and team working (20% advanced, 49% high). Notable is the low level of IT skills required.

18% of establishments had vacancies at the time of the survey. In employment terms vacancies form 2.0% of employment in the region. 52% of establishments in the region with vacancies are finding at least one position hard to fill, equivalent to 9% of all establishments.

Nationally, the skills that establishments found difficult to obtain from applicants are communication skills (40% of establishments with a hard to fill vacancy), team working skills (38%), customer handling skills (33%), technical and practical skills (28%) and problem solving skills (27%).

Comparing employers within the SkillsActive SSC area with employers across England, the main difference is that they are more likely to state that the hard-to-fill vacancy is caused by aspects of the job; poor terms and conditions (39 per cent compared to 21 per cent) and shift work (30 per cent compared to 15 per cent). They are less likely to give reasons associated with the number of applicants or their skills or experience. Because of this the proportion of hard-to-fill vacancies in the SkillsActive SSC area that are skill shortage vacancies is lower (at 35 per cent) than for England as a whole (50 per cent).

The implications of hard-to-fill vacancies are an increased workload for other staff (93% of establishments report this), difficulties meeting customer service objectives (48%), difficulties meeting required quality standards (47%) and difficulties introducing new working practices (39%).

It is estimated that 24 per cent of establishments in the SkillsActive SSC area suffered from internal skills gaps, higher than the 22 per cent reported for England as a whole. This data suggests that some 13 per cent of employees in the sector are not fully proficient at their current jobs. In the West Midlands a higher proportion of establishments are reporting skills gaps (28%) and this equates to 13% of their staff in the region.

It is evident from this that the volume of skill gaps far exceeds that of recruitment problems, as in other sectors and across England. This would suggest that there is a need for sufficient emphasis on workforce development to address these gaps as well as looking at skill supply and the quality of entrants into the sector. In the West Midlands the skills that need to be improved were reported as communication skills (30% of establishments with a skill gap), customer handling skills (30%) and general IT user skills (28%).

Pay and conditions in the sector

- The average annual salary for full-time leisure and sports managers was £26,300 in 2003
- Sports coaches, instructors and officials earn an average of £24,800 per annum
- Fitness instructors and sports and leisure assistants both earn around £15,000 nationally

Source: New Earnings Survey 2003

Education and training provision in the West Midlands

- SkillsActive, in partnership with employers and key organisations across the Sector, has developed a framework for Apprenticeships. The mandatory outcomes for completion lead to a Level 2 or Level 3 S/NVQ, some Key Skills awards, a Technical Certificate and other industry-relevant skills. The occupational strands cover Coaching, Teaching and Instructing (a sport or activity), Instructing Health and Fitness, Activity Leadership and the Outdoors, Spectator Control, Operational Services and Operations and Development, and Playwork.
- There are a wide range of Further Education college-based courses in areas such as sport science and fitness instruction as well as general courses in active leisure and learning.
- There are currently five Centres of Vocational Excellence in sport-related subjects established or in development in England. A number of Further Education Colleges and training providers based in the West Midlands are enthusiastic and keen to obtain CoVE status.
- Higher-level qualifications are available at graduate and postgraduate level. They include degrees in areas such as physical education, sports development, sport science and physiology and sport and recreation management. Providers include:
 - Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies where HNDs, DipHEs and BAs are available in subjects such as sports management and leisure and recreation management.
 - Birmingham University offers a DipHE or HND in Community, Play and Youth Studies.
 - Coventry University offers HNDs, BAs, BScs and MBAs in subjects such as sport management, community health, sport and exercise science and exercise physiology.
 - Harper Adams University College offers courses in rural leisure and golf course management.
 - Newman College offers BA, BSc, Bed, Foundation and PGCE courses in subjects such as Sports Studies and Physical Education.
 - Staffordshire University offers a wide range of BAs, BScs and MScs in subjects such as sport and exercise science, sport and exercise nutrition, sports development and coaching and sports technology.
 - Wolverhampton University offers a wide range of BAs, BScs, Foundation and MScs in subjects such as sport studies, coaching science and physical exercise, activity and health.
 - University College Worcester offers a wide range of HND and BSc courses in subjects such as sport coaching science, sport studies and sport and exercise science.

Other factsheets in the series

SPR01 – West Midlands

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SPR07 – North East

SPR11 – Northern Ireland

SPR04 – South West

SPR08 – Eastern England

SPR12 – Scotland

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