

SSA EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: EAST OF ENGLAND

SkillsActive is the Sector Skills Council for Active Leisure and Learning, which encompasses the following sub-sectors:

- Sport and Recreation
- Playwork
- Health and Fitness
- The Outdoors
- The Caravan industry

Key Statistics ¹	SkillsActive East of England
Sector Profile	
Total size of paid workforce	57,800
% of sector employment in England	12%
% of total employment in the East of England	2%
Total number of establishments	3,800
% of micro businesses (1-10 people)	74%
Largest sub-sector is Sport and Rec	66%
Playwork is 2nd largest	18%
Workforce Profile	
Self employed	10%
Part-time workers	47%
Male Employees	39%
Female Employees	61%
Workforce aged 16-24	19%
Workforce aged 45+	37%
Workforce of minority ethnic origin	2%
Qualifications, Recruitment & Skill Needs ²	
Workforce not qualified to L2	32%
Workforce qualified to L4+	28%
% of employers with a vacancy	36%
% employers reporting the vacancy was hard-to-fill	40%
% of hard to fill vacancies attributed to skills shortages (lack of skills, qualifications or experience)	83%
Skills shortage vacancies as % of all	12%
% of employers reporting a skills gap	35%
Forecast Growth (2004-2009) ³	
Average annual growth in Output*	3.1%
Paid employment growth by 2014	10%
Forecast employment in 2014	63,400
Average annual growth in employment (last 5 yrs)	3%
Average annual growth in employment (next 5 yrs)	1%
Additional jobs created by 2014	92,100

* Note: 2004 to 2009

Regional Economic Development Strategy
'A Shared Vision', the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) outlines 8 key goals in ensuring improved

economic performance and quality of life. The Active Leisure and Learning sector has many opportunities to contribute to the development of the region, particularly in improving skills, developing the role of volunteers, ensuring social inclusion and community development, improving employment and ensuring quality business support.

The value of sport is also outlined in the regional plan for sport, 'Adding Value'. This strategy outlines 6 priority areas of development to ensure that sport and physical activity contributes to wider social issues and is recognised in the work plans of key regional agencies.

The East of England is home to a number of sporting clubs, venues, facilities and events. The region is home to 1 premiership football club (Watford) and 6 football league clubs, a first class county cricket club (Essex) and a premiership rugby union club (Saracens). The headquarters for British horseracing (Newmarket) and 3 other race courses are also found in the region. Furthermore, the region regularly hosts international events such as the Guineas Festival and the World Bowls Championships and is home to the nationally recognised University of East Anglia Sports Park and Grafham Water Centre of Excellence in Sailing.

Sector Skills Agreements

Sector Skills Agreements (SSA) bring together employers, providers and funders of education and training with the key purpose of developing a more demand-led system of public investment in skills for the sector, combined with an increase in employer commitment to workforce development:

1. Provide a means for employers and government to collaborate in meeting the priority skills needs of sectors
2. Present a unique opportunity for employers to shape training provision and coherent progression routes
3. Challenge employers to work collaboratively
4. Give individuals access to training with is relevant to industry needs and to help secure well paid employment and progression

We have undertaken extensive research including desk-top reviews of existing information, conducting research and consultation with key sector employers through focus groups, questionnaires and face to face meetings.

Our Skills Needs Assessment, Assessment of Current Provision and Analysis of Gaps and Weaknesses reports provide the fullest picture and are available on www.skillsactive.com.

The Sector Skills Agreement: Regional Action Plan for the East of England incorporates the findings from Stages One to Three of the SSA process and sets out a plan for development for the Active Leisure and Learning sector in the region.

Value of our sector

- The SkillsActive sector contributed £804m in output to the East of England economy in 2004 – nearly twice the average annual growth rate of the East of England economy as a whole over the last 5 years
- GVA for the sector is forecast to grow by 34% to £1.076m over the next decade, at an average annual rate of 3.1%.
- The average rate of employment growth has been more than two times greater than the East of England economy as a whole over the past 5 years (1999-2004)
- Growth in employment is expected to continue over the next 10 years, albeit at a slower rate beyond 2006.

Profile of our workforce

See Key statistics

- Around 47% of the paid workforce work part-time, compared with 23% across all industries in the region.
- 10% of the workforce is self employed. The Caravan and Outdoor sub-sectors show the highest levels of self employment (both 17%).
- Approximately 61% of the sector is female. The proportion of female employment is particularly high within the Playwork sub-sector (83%) and lower than average in the Caravan industry (46%).
- 19% of the workforce is under the age of 25.
- Almost a third (32%) of the workforce is not qualified to Level 2 (on par with the regional economy as a whole).

Sports, Fitness and the Outdoors

- Sport generates £3bn in annual turnover and £1bn in annual value-added
- Approximately 580,000 people participate in organised sports clubs
- Residents spend £1.2bn annually on sports-related goods and services
- **193 private health clubs in the region** (11% of England) with a further 64 planned ⁴
- **330 public sports centres** (11% of England) with a further 55 sports centres planned.

Recruitment Difficulties & Skills Gaps

- Around 36% of Active Leisure and Learning organisations have had vacancies in the last 12 months, compared with 51% across the sector nationally.
- Approximately 40% of organisations in the region with vacancies had found them hard to fill
- 83% of organisations with hard to fill vacancies attributed them to skill shortages (compared with 69% across the sector nationally).

- 12% of employers report skills gaps in the current workforce.
- Employers highlight that personality attributes are important when selecting employees (e.g. reliability, flexibility, initiative, common sense, keenness, enthusiasm, positive attitude and passion for the area of work)
- Transferable skills (e.g. customer service, communication), management, core technical skills and literacy and numeracy skills were deemed important by employers.
- National research reveals that there are negative images about pay and conditions within the sector.

The Caravan Industry Stats	East of England
Number of caravan parks	416
% of total number of parks in England	14%
Holiday pitches (51% CHH Owned)	20,649
Number of Households in Park homes	6,312
% of residential caravans in England	19%

- **The Caravan industry** has enjoyed great success in recent years, with manufacturing sales up 50%
- 40% of Caravan Parks reported a vacancy in the last 12 months, of which 57% found them hard to fill.
- A major challenge is recruiting enough cleaners and housekeepers, followed by bar managers/staff, receptionists, wardens, cooks and chefs.
- The three most important skills were Customer service, maintaining safety and communication.

Training Provision

- The median spend on training is £500 to £999. Trained staff in the East of England attended an average of 7 days training, compared with 11 days in England.
- Coaching, teaching and instruction staff are the most likely to receive training.
- Around 15,500 people participated in sports related learning programmes in 2003-04.
- Data supplied by the LSC, suggests that approximately £11.8m was invested in Active Leisure and Learning courses – 10% of the total funding for the sector (£121m).
- The region is home to 4 of the 7 Centres of Vocational Excellence in Sport, Leisure, Recreation and Fitness in England and has 37 FE Colleges offering sports related courses.
- There is currently no work based learning for the Caravan sector in the East of England.
- The Playwork sector is largely dependent on FE provision. There are currently 3 awarding bodies offering Playwork qualifications in the region, CACHE, City & Guilds and EYDCPS.

Playwork

The widely accepted definition is: *Play is freely chosen, personally directed, intrinsically motivated behaviour that actively engages the child or young person.*

- Playwork has a higher proportion of female and part-time workers. Furthermore, the sector has a high proportion of voluntary, seasonal and holiday play scheme workers.

- Holiday play schemes attract younger and more male playworkers within the seasonal workforce.

Skills needs

Specific issues for the Playwork sector in the UK include:

- Need for more Playwork specific skills and qualifications.
- A greater understanding of the values and principles of playwork.
- Improved business and management skills: specifically leadership, partnership working, marketing and fundraising.
- A need for more staff trained to level 2 and 3.
- Need for higher level qualifications e.g. foundation degrees for senior practitioners
- More Playwork training and quality work experience for trainers and assessors.

'Key Challenges in the Employers' View

Business support services

- Inconsistency in the involvement of the sector in business support
- The picture of available support is confusing
- Often bureaucratic process involved in accessing support.

Recruitment and retention

- Difficulties recruiting people with the right skills
- Geographical location of region means employers can not draw from the national pool of workers.
- Low level of academic qualifications/attainment amongst new applicants
- Standards of school leavers has fallen (e.g. time keeping, literacy, numeracy)
- Lack of suitable candidates for positions
- Staff turnover is a problem
- Low pay and poor sector image impacts on the recruitment and retention of staff

The skills challenge

- There is a need for clearer progression pathways.
- New entrants lack core skills required to work in the industry.
- The sector needs to 'sell' itself to overcome negative perceptions.
- There is a need to enhance employers understanding of National Occupational Standards.
- There is a need for a generic 3-4 day course which covers skills gaps (e.g. customer care, communications, first aid).

Training supply

- Need to improve partnerships between employers and FE/HE.

- There is mixed understanding of course availability.
- Vocational programmes need a greater balance of theoretical and practical work.
- Work placements need to be truly reflective of the real tasks that individuals will need to undertake.
- There is a need for greater focus on service delivery and management in courses
- More effective college-employer links need to be developed
- There is a lack of regional/county level database of training opportunities.
- Some employers identify a need for more standardisation of qualifications.

Funding

- Public sector funding is inadequate to meet needs.
- Sustainability of funding is an issue, particularly for the voluntary sector
- There are difficulties associated with the funding of key vocational level 2 qualifications and upskilling to level 3.
- Current educational priorities and targets for HE and FE are not correctly attuned to providing qualified workers to the sector
- There needs to be a more flexible approach to funding.
- There is a need for a simple user-friendly system to access funding.

Key Priorities

As part of the SSA process SkillsActive have developed a number of key solutions to tackle the issues and challenges facing the Active Leisure and Learning industry, grouped into 6 key themes (below).

As this agreement is on behalf of the employers in our sector, their actions, which complement those of our stakeholders, have been included in this Sector Skills Agreement.

Six Priorities for Action

1. Improve the quality and range of services
2. Improve recruitment and retention
3. Professionalise and up-skill the existing workforce
4. Match training supply to employer demand
5. Source funding for training
6. Increase sector investment in our people

Sources:

- ¹ SkillsActive – SSA Stage 1 - Skills Needs Assessment
- ² Employer Training Needs Survey, SkillsActive
- ³ The Future of Active leisure and Learning, Experian Business Strategies, 2005
- ⁴ FIA Leisure Database Company

REGION SSA ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

1. To improve the quality and range of services

- 1.1 To raise awareness of the sector amongst key stakeholders in the region in order to influence regional and sub regional policy, e.g. establishing an annual regional workforce development stakeholder conference.
- 1.2 To integrate Active Leisure and Learning into the regional and sub regional planning commitments
- 1.3 To develop a shared commitment to improve skills and business support in the sector, e.g. establish WFD Hubs in each county, co-ordinate WFD plans and promote engagement in Train 2 Gain, Skills for Life and management and leadership training.

2. To improve recruitment and retention

- 2.1 To promote the use of SkillsActive careers information across the whole region, including update sessions for Connexions advisors and working with B Live and Youth Sport Trust to expand the number of young people accessing SkillsActive Careers.
- 2.2 To support the developments of the 14-19 reform in our sector
- 2.3 To highlight best practice in the sector in relation to pay, conditions and workforce development
- 2.4 To develop employer and training provider partnerships that help people to gain employment in the Active Leisure and Learning Sector.

3. To professionalise and up-skill the existing workforce

- 3.1 To develop employer understanding and use of the National Occupational Standards, encouraging them to access training that delivers NOSs and contribute to their future development.
- 3.2 To ensure the workforce in the Sector has the opportunity to obtain the required qualifications to support the increase in physical activity, e.g. monitoring, reviewing and developing provision across sub sectors and encouraging the use of REPs

3.3 To promote the increased use of work-based learning in the Sector, including the use of apprenticeships via case studies.

3.4 To support a coordinated brokerage system, e.g. collating TNA information and developing WFD Plans.

4. To match supply to demand

- 4.1 To establish a region-wide portfolio of fit-for-purpose training supply for employers and the future workforce to access, e.g. developing a regional prospectus of training provision and promoting NOS in HE provision
- 4.2 To facilitate the input of employers' needs into training provision, e.g. collating TNA information and communicating it to providers.
- 4.3 To encourage employers and training providers to develop suitable work placements that meet job requirements

5. To re-direct funding

- 5.1 To ensure that funding agencies are aware of the emerging skills needs of the sector
- 5.2 To source new funding that will allow employers to meet identified skills gaps in the short term
- 5.3 To work with funding agencies during the planning cycle to ensure that funding for workforce development meets the needs of employers, e.g. updating employers and partners on new opportunities and co-ordinating collation of TNA information

6. To increase sector investment in our people

- 6.1 To increase the engagement of employers in the skills agenda and promote to employers the role of workforce development in future business growth, e.g. more employer visits and the development of an East of England Active Leisure WFD Newsletter.
- 6.2 To develop structured workforce development planning amongst in the Sector across the Region, e.g. promote the SkillsActive WFD Planning CD Rom and supporting CSPs in developing WFD Plans
- 6.3 Monitor and review the impact of investment in skills by employers, establishing a research forum, evaluating activities and disseminating information.

1. To improve the quality and range of services

- 1.1 Better recognition of the value of playwork through promoting playwork values, skills, knowledge and principles to other allied professional sectors, promoting public play and playwork events such as Playday and Play Awards, ensuring Children and Young People's Workforce Strategies include playwork, making playwork practice and principles accessible for people who want to incorporate their own practice; exporting playwork principles wherever possible and working to gain recognition of the benefits of playwork as an integral need of children and the additional benefits of delivery (e.g. impact on crime).
- 1.2 Constant drive to meet Government agendas and customer expectations through promoting the importance of including playwork in inter-agency groupings and increasing the recognition of playwork within Government policies and agendas.

2. To improve recruitment and retention

- 2.1 A programme of improved careers advice / guidance through increasing the pool of playwork applicants, promoting playwork as a positive, viable and professional career and promoting the value of play, playwork, qualifications and training through networks and information dissemination.
- 2.2 Explore improvements to pay and conditions for playworkers.
- 2.3 Improve employer recognition of and investment in Skills for Life to aid progression.

3. To professionalise and up-skill the existing workforce

- 3.1 Establish a register of playwork professionals.
- 3.2 Up-skill the existing workforce through gaining recognition that an increasing number of playworkers will need to achieve relevant higher level qualifications that equip them for a variety of new roles, improving the take up of training by BME, disabled and other disadvantaged groups and exploring the development of qualifications for new roles working with children (e.g. play rangers and participation workers).

4. To match supply to demand

- 4.1 A programme to raise the quality of FE training in our sector through supporting delivery of training for Playwork NVQ assessors and development of Playwork NVQ

assessment centres in the region, supporting delivery of training for trainers courses, improving the development of playwork within the FE/HE environment and raising the quality of playwork education, training and qualifications.

- 4.2 Improve standardisation and transferability of qualifications through establishment of a Register of Playwork Professionals.

5. To re-direct funding (for training)

- 5.1 Reduce barriers to accessing training – more local, flexible, work-based training.

6. To increase sector investment in our people

- 6.1 Work at a regional level to promote the take-up and provision of quality work experience opportunities for students, tutors and assessors.
- 6.2 Encourage employers use of workforce development planning tools.
- 6.3 Increase training levels in the sector through promoting workforce development, improving recognition of the value of training and qualifications in the play sector and improving the recognition of quality assured training and qualifications with employers and improve the 'learning culture' with playwork employers.
- 6.4 Promote understanding and utilisation of National Occupational Standards (NOS) by employers.
- 6.5 Embed training in project funding contracts.

7. Operational or implementation

- 7.1 Strong regional infrastructure for playwork education and training centres.