

SSA EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: NORTH WEST

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 North West
Sector Profile		
Total size of paid workforce		60,200
% of sector employment in England		13%
% of total employment in the NW		1.8%
Total number of establishments		4,000
% of micro businesses (1-10 people)		69%
Largest sub-sector is Sport and Rec		60%
Playwork is 2nd largest		25%
Workforce Profile		
Self employed		10%
Part-time workers		47%
Male Employees		39%
Female Employees		61%
Workforce aged 16-24		18%
Workforce aged 45+		37%
Workforce of minority ethnic origin		3%
Qualifications, Recruitment & Skill Needs ²		
Workforce not qualified to L2		29%
Workforce qualified to L4+		29%
% of employers with a vacancy		54%
% employers reporting the vacancy was hard-to-fill		45%
% of hard to fill vacancies attributed to skills shortages (lack of skills, qualifications or experience)		65%
Skills shortage vacancies as % of all		16%
% of employers reporting a skills gap		31%
Forecast Growth (2004-2009) ³		
Average annual growth in Output *		2.6%
Paid employment growth by 2014		10%
Forecast employment in 2014		66,300
Average annual growth in employment (last 5 years)		3%
Average annual growth in employment (next 5 years)		2%
Additional jobs created by 2014		94,900

*Note: 2004 to 2009

Regional Economic Strategy & Sport

The RES identifies that the North West has a strong sporting presence, but more needs to be done to ensure that the region maximises opportunities

presented by future cultural and sporting events. Furthermore, it identifies that there is a need to promote access to sport and physical activity in order to improve general health, employee fitness and overall levels of productivity.

'North West on the Move' is the regional plan for sport and physical activity. It identifies five strategic themes to increase participation in sport and physical activity and to widen access and reduce inequalities in participation.

The North West has a strong sporting heritage, hosting many high-profile sporting clubs, venues, facilities and events including 7 premier league football clubs, a county cricket club, a number of Super League rugby clubs and first class golf courses. The region is also home to the Grand National at Aintree and has hosted a number of major events in the past such as the Commonwealth Games, UEFA Women's Football Championships, the Paralympic World Cup, the ITU Triathlon World Cup, the European Champions League Final and the Super League Grand Final. The region also has a vast array of natural outdoor assets such as the Lake District and the Forest of Bowland. The English Institute of Sport is also based in the region.

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 North West 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 £834m in output to the North West economy in 2004 – more than twice the average annual growth rate of the North West economy as a whole over the last 5 years
- GVA for the sector is forecast to grow by 32% to £1.1bn over the next decade, at an average annual rate of 2.6%.
- The average rate of employment growth has been around double that of the whole North West economy in the past 5 years (1999-2004)
- Growth in employment is expected to continue above the regional average over the next 10 years

Profile of our workforce

See Key statistics

- Volunteers are important to the sector and are concentrated in key occupations such as coaches, instructors or activity leaders, operational staff and non-managerial staff.
- Around 10% of the workforce is self employed. The Outdoors and Caravan industry show the highest levels of self employment – both 16%.
- 61% of the workforce is female. Proportions of female employment are particularly high within the Playwork sub-sector (82%) and lower than average in the caravan sub-sector (41%).
- Just under half of the paid workforce work part-time (47%) compared with 22% in the North West economy as a whole.
- Around 18% of the regional workforce are under 25.
- Around three in ten (29%) of the workforce is not qualified to level 2, lower than the whole regional economy.

Sports, Fitness and the Outdoors

- Sport generates £3bn in annual turnover and £1.1bn in annual value-added
- Approximately 706,000 people participate in organised sports clubs
- Residents spend £1.6bn annually on sports-related goods and services
- **257 private health clubs in the region** (15% of England) with a further 77 planned ⁴
- **406 public sports centres** (15% of England) with a further 74 sports centres planned.

Recruitment Difficulties & Skills Gaps

- The North West has a higher percentage of vacancies, hard-to-fill and skill shortage vacancies than England.
- 54% of 'establishments' report a vacancy compared with 51% in England.

- 45% of sector organisations with a vacancy found them hard-to-fill (compared with 36% nationally).
- The most common skills lacking or need improving were sport specific technical skills, team working, basic computer/IT and communications skills.

The Caravan Industry Stats	North West
Number of caravan parks	350
% of total number of parks in England	11%
Holiday pitches (67% owner occupied)	15,091
Number of Households in Park homes	3,025
% of residential caravans in England	9%

- **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 £1,000-£4,999. Trained staff attended an average of 18 days training compared with a national average of 11 days.
- Operational roles (e.g. lifeguards and green keepers) are most likely to receive training.
- 39,654 people participated in LSC funded learning on sport-related learning programmes.
- Total funding for sport related study in the North West was £30,001,488 – 18% of all England sector spend on sport-related learning (estimated to be £121.7million)⁵.
- One college in the region provides work-based learning for the Caravan sector.
- The Playwork sector remains largely dependant on FE provision. The main qualifications undertaken are certificates, NVQs and diplomas in Playwork.

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. Seasonal workers and those working on holiday play schemes are also common.
- Large proportions of employees are voluntary workers.
- Holiday play schemes attract younger and more male playworkers within the seasonal workforce.

Skills needs

Specific needs for the Playwork sector in the North West include:

- More playwork specific skills and qualification
- A better understanding of the values and principles of playwork.
- More business and management skills
- More staff trained to level 2 and 3
- More higher level qualifications (e.g. foundation degrees for senior practitioners)
- More playwork training and quality work experience for trainers and assessors.

Key Issues and Drivers of Change - Employer Views

Complexity of the sector

- Many organisations belong to more than 1 sub-sector
- Potential need for more sector-wide and sub-sector workforce development initiatives,
- Possible investment in regional campaigns for the whole sector which are supported by focused cluster and employer networks.

Differing needs/behaviour of different sized organisations

- Workforce development and training solutions should target the needs of small, medium and large organisations

The professional workforce

- Growth in the demand for professional occupations is expected.
- Organisations may require support in attracting candidates with the right mix of skills and competence.

Promote the benefit of investment in workforce development

- Many organisations measure success in 'customer volume' and financial performance.
- There is a need to relate workforce development directly to improved productivity and increased customer volumes and satisfaction.

Quality Standards

- Recognition through quality standards are not highly prevalent.
- More needs to be done to widen the take up of relevant standards across the sector.
- In promoting quality standards it is important to emphasise the benefits in improving consumer confidence, levels of customer service and overall professionalism.

Addressing skills needs

- Core skills such as first aid, coaching and instruction, health and safety, advanced IT and marketing skills are in need of improvement.
- Management skills, communication, customer handling and staff management skills are also in demand.
- There is a need to create an effective dialogue with training providers and funders to ensure the right mix mandatory and development training options are available.

Ensuring training matches employer needs

- A number of businesses do not feel that current training meets their needs.
- Need to raise the awareness of the benefits of NVQs, Foundation Degrees, Modern Apprenticeships and National Traineeships

Increase awareness of the skills, training and productivity agenda

- Great potential to work through existing employer networks and associations to increase awareness.

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

Source

- ¹ SkillsActive – SSA Stage I - Skills Needs Assessment
- ² NESS 2005
- ³ The Future of Active leisure and Learning, Experian Business Strategies, 2005
- ⁴ FIA Leisure Database Company
- ⁵ LSC

1. To improve the quality and range of services

- 1.1 Meet the skills challenge of the 2012 Olympics – e.g. aligning the work of the SALSPA and the NW Olympic steering group and identifying skills issues presented by the Games.
- 1.2 Increase the uptake of business support schemes in the region – e.g. raising the profile of brokerage and improving awareness of business support services, influence funding allocations and promoting social enterprise.
- 1.3 Establish a shared commitment to improve skills within the workforce – e.g. promoting business support and HR services and ensuring dialogue with Health, Tourism and Culture policy makers.
- 1.4 More sustainable public funding –e.g. developing a funding strategy and exploring the resources available to and from higher education institutions
- 1.5 Provide data to influence regional policy and improve sector recognition – e.g. supporting the development of sub-regional workforce development plans.

2. To improve recruitment and retention

- 2.1 Raise individual aspirations and demand for learning –e.g. monitoring pay/conditions, developing Skills Passports and promoting quality work placements, career pathways, volunteering and personal development.
- 2.2 Promote the wide range of career opportunities within the active leisure and learning sector –e.g. developing SALSPA as a regional knowledgebase, exploring the opportunities for ‘Sports Skills Summits and ‘Employer Champions’ and promoting www.skillsactive.com/careers.
- 2.3 Establish employment routeways into the sector – e.g. developing toolkits to illustrate career pathways and providing support and information to IAG partners.

3. To professionalise and up-skill the existing workforce

- 3.1 Develop registers of professional competence –e.g. developing a register for coaching professionals and promoting participation.
- 3.2 Improve the percentage of coaches with a qualification – e.g. supporting new community sport coach schemes/new coaches and exploring opportunities for discretionary funding.
- 3.3 Up-skill the existing workforce –e.g. supporting the development of new coaches

and establishing a well-trained volunteer workforce.

4. To match supply to demand

- 4.1 Establish a region-wide portfolio of fit-for-purpose training supply for employers and the future workforce to access – e.g. continued development/take up of foundation degrees and apprenticeship framework and enhancing co-ordination /understanding of skills and training provision.
- 4.2 Encourage training providers to offer suitable work placements that meet job requirements –e.g. developing work experience that links to the 2012 Games
- 4.3 Facilitate the input of employers’ needs into training provision –e.g. raising employer awareness of National Occupation Standards and increasing the take up of relevant quality standards.

5. To re-direct funding

- 5.1 Identify appropriate funding sources to support training needs and qualification attainment across the sector – e.g. influencing LSC development planning and developing funding directory/database.
- 5.2 Increase investment into vocational training – e.g. monitor and develop AASE, ensure training is made an essential part of employee development and explore funding for volunteer training.
- 5.3 Agree investment into coaching and exercise and fitness training initiatives.

6. To increase sector investment in our people

- 6.1 Increase employer demand for and investment in, skills within the workforce.
- 6.2 Promote sector and celebrate success – e.g. promoting volunteering opportunities and recognition of employer contribution in the BBC Sports Awards.
- 6.3 Monitor and review the impact of investment in skills by employers – e.g. formal audit of baseline data, comparison of the region’s USPs in Sport and Active Leisure

NORTH WEST SSA ACTION PLAN SUMMARY – PLAYWORK

1. To improve the quality and range of services

- 1.1 Better recognition of the value of playwork - promote playwork values, skills, knowledge and principles to other allied professional sectors, promote public play and playwork events such as Playday and Play Awards, ensure Children and Young People's Workforce Strategies include playwork, make playwork practice and principles accessible for people who want to incorporate their own practice; exporting playwork principles wherever possible and work 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 - promote the importance of including playwork in inter-agency groupings and government commitment to play and playwork
- 1.3 More sustainable public funding for play provision and holiday play schemes

2. To improve recruitment and retention

- 2.1 A programme of improved careers advice / guidance - increase the pool of playwork applicants, promote playwork as a positive, viable and professional career and promote 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 Investment in Skills for Life to aid progression - 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 - gain recognition that an increasing number of playworkers will need to achieve relevant higher level qualifications that equip them for a variety of new roles, improve the take up of training by BME, disabled and other disadvantaged groups and explore 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 - support delivery of training for Playwork NVQ assessors and development of Playwork NVQ assessment centres in the region, support delivery of training for trainers courses, improve the development of playwork within the FE/HE environment and raise the quality of playwork education, training and qualifications
- 4.2 Improve standardisation and transferability of qualifications through establishing 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 Explore quality work experience for students, tutors and assessors - work at a regional level to promote the take-up and provision of work experience opportunities
- 6.2 Encourage employers use of workforce development planning tools
- 6.3 Increase training levels in the sector - promote workforce development, improve recognition of the value of training and qualifications in the play sector and improve the recognition of quality assured training and qualifications with employers and improve the 'learning culture' with playwork employers
- 6.4 Understanding and utilisation of National Occupational Standards (NOS) - raise employers awareness of NOS
- 6.5 Embed training in project funding contracts

7. Operational or implementation

- 7.1 Strong regional infrastructure for playwork education and training centres