

SSA EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: WEST MIDLANDS

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 West Midlands
Sector Profile	
Total size of paid workforce	47,000
% of sector employment in England	10%
% of total employment in WM	1.8%
Total number of establishments	2,800
% of micro businesses (1-10 people)	71%
Largest sub-sector is Sport and Rec	62%
Playwork is 2nd largest	24%
Workforce Profile	
Self employed	9%
Part-time workers	47%
Male Employees	38%
Female Employees	62%
Workforce aged 16-24	17%
Workforce aged 45+	39%
Workforce of minority ethnic origin	6%
Qualifications, Recruitment & Skill Needs ²	
Workforce not qualified to L2	30%
Workforce qualified to L4+	29%
% of employers with a vacancy	60%
% employers reporting the vacancy was hard-to-fill	21%
% of hard to fill vacancies attributed to skills shortages (lack of skills, qualifications or experience)	74%
Skills shortage vacancies as % of all	15%
% of employers reporting a skills gap	38%
Forecast Growth (2004-2009) ³	
Average annual growth in Output*	3.4%
Paid employment growth by 2014	21%
Forecast employment in 2014	57,300
Average annual growth in employment (last 5 yrs)	5%
Average annual growth in employment (next 5 yrs)	2%
Additional jobs created by 2014	80,400

* Note: 2004 to 2009

Regional Economic Development Strategy

'Delivering Advantage', the Regional Economic Strategy for the West Midlands identifies 4 strategic priorities to improve the economic performance of the region.

The Active Leisure and Learning sector has a role to play in delivering these objectives, including helping to develop the visitor economy and regenerating communities (i.e. using sport as a hook to learning and bringing people together).

'Sign up for Sport', the regional plan for sport sets out a framework for delivering sport and physical activity targets. It presents 7 key outcomes, including increasing participation and performance levels, widening access, improving the health and education of residents as well as creating stronger and safer communities.

The West Midlands hosts a number of sporting venues, including the Birmingham National Indoor Arena, the National Sports Centre and the National Exhibition Centre. There are several premier/ championship football clubs (e.g. Aston Villa, Birmingham, Coventry City), a professional rugby club (Worcester), 2 cricket clubs and a basketball club.

The region is also home to a number of English Institute of Sports Centres (e.g. the University of Wolverhampton (Judo) and the University of Birmingham (hockey and squash centres)) as well as a regional indoor training centre at Worcester Rugby Club and a world class golf course and academy at the Belfry.

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 West Midlands 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 £672m in output to the West Midlands economy in 2004 – more than two and a half the average annual growth rate of the whole West Midlands economy over the last 5 years.
- GVA for the sector is forecast to grow by 37% to £924m over the next decade, at an average annual rate of 2.3%.
- The average rate of employment growth has soared above that of the West Midlands economy as a whole over the past 5 years (1999-2004), at a rate of 5.1% compared with <1%.
- Growth in employment is expected to continue at a steady rate, above the regional average over the next 10 years.

Profile of our workforce

See Key statistics

- Around 47% of the paid workforce work part-time, compared with just 23% across all industries in the region.
- 9% of the workforce is self employed. The Outdoors and Health and Fitness sub-sectors show the highest levels of self employment (14% and 13% respectively).
- Approximately 62% of the sector is female. The proportion of female employment is particularly high within the Playwork sub-sector (82%) and lower than average in the Caravan industry (36%).
- 17% of the workforce is under the age of 25.
- Three in ten of the workforce is not qualified to Level 2 (30% compared with 35% across the regional economy as a whole).

Sports, Fitness and the Outdoors

- Sport generates £3bn in annual turnover and £1bn in annual value-added
- Approximately 650,000 people participate in organised sports clubs
- Residents spend £1.2bn annually on sports-related goods and services
- **135 private health clubs in the region** (8% of England) with a further 48 planned ⁴
- **281 public sports centres** (10% of England) with a further 44 sports centres planned.

Recruitment Difficulties & Skills Gaps

- Around 60% of Active Leisure and Learning organisations have had vacancies in the last 12 months, compared with 57% across the sector nationally.
- Approximately 35% of organisations in the region with vacancies had found them hard to fill.

- Just under three quarters of organisations with hard to fill vacancies attributed them to skill shortages (74% compared with 69% across the sector nationally).
- 38% of employers report skills gaps in the current workforce.
- The most common skills that are lacking or in need of improvement are customer service, management, communications and initiative.

The Caravan Industry Stats	West Midlands
Number of caravan parks	201
% of total number of parks in England	7%
Holiday pitches (53% CHH Owned)	6,127
Number of Households in Park homes	2,450
% of residential caravans in England	7%

- **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 to £4,999. Trained staff in the West Midlands attended an average of 5 days training, compared with 11 days in England.
- Managers and coaching, teaching and instruction staff are the most likely to receive training.
- 17,887 people participated in sports related learning programmes in 2003-04.
- Data supplied by the LSC, suggests that approximately £13.4m was invested in Active Leisure and Learning courses – 11% of the total funding for the sector (£121m).
- There is currently no specific WBL for the Caravan sector in the region.
- The Playwork sub-sector is largely dependant on FE, the main qualifications undertaken are NVQs and Diplomas in Playwork.
- The West Midlands currently has no provision for HE courses 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. 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 West Midlands include:

- Need for more playwork assessors and trainers.
- Need for Ofsted inspectors to specifically request playwork qualifications for workers in play settings.
- Greater support for voluntary sector groups (i.e. accessing funds).
- Need to establish the delivery of the Playwork Sector Endorsed Foundation Degree (PSEFD) the region.
- Inconsistency in funding for training and qualifications.

'Key Challenges in the Employers' View

Recruitment and Retention

- Applicants direct from FE/HE do not always have the skill set needed to meet employer needs.
- Mismatch in the work readiness of students compared with what is required.
- Some employers feel that there is a surplus of graduates but a deficiency in people able to fill level 2 operational jobs.

Funding Support

- The burden of paying for industry recognised training lies with the individual.
- Statutory training takes priority, often leaving little budget for training to tackle skill gaps.
- The Voluntary workforce is largely unsupported
- Future funding for coaching qualifications is a key concern.

People Development

- Turnover of staff is an issue.
- Employers need help in undertaking formal training assessments and identifying development solutions.

Promoting Career Pathways

- There is a need for greater clarity about how to achieve rewarding employment and career progression within the sector.
- Greater support is needed to encourage young people, older people and people looking to improve their circumstances.
- There is a need to promote the merits of vocational and WBL options.
- Employers need to offer more placements and work trials and widen recruitment practices.

Training Provider Flexibility

- Mismatch between FE/HE provision and the quality of people applying for jobs.

- Inflexibility of providers to incorporate 'job specific' skills or knowledge into the curriculum.
- Training support for age groups outside 16-25 is not readily available – many of the workforce remain unsupported.

Data, Information and Communication

- There is a need for regular and relevant communications about training, funding, CPD, the Olympics and latest industry news.
- Employers would welcome an honest broker/one to one support to suit their needs.
- There is a need to know more about how to work with and get support from the LSCs in the region.

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 The Sports, Fitness and Outdoors Survey, SkillsActive, 2005

³ The Future of Active leisure and Learning, Experian Business Strategies, 2005

⁴ FIA Leisure Database Company

SkillsActive
 Shaping Skills for the Future



1. To improve the quality and range of services

- 1.1 Increase the uptake of business support schemes in the region, e.g. promote Train2Gain, increase employer engagement in Skills for Life and Management and Leadership training and develop employer networks/business support service.
- 1.2 Provide data to influence regional policy and improve sector recognition, e.g. providing skills data, disseminating the RAP and ensuring collection of employer TNAs.
- 1.3 Conduct relevant research to inform workforce development across the region, e.g. establish 6 county level WFD Plans, provide awareness sessions.

2. To improve recruitment and retention

- 2.1 Raise individual aspirations and demand for learning, e.g. promote through reports/ezine/newsletters, create new 14-19 pathways, help engage excluded individuals, support new learning to involve young and older people in the 2012 Games and identify Regional Employer Champions.
- 2.2 Establish employment routeways into the sector, e.g. support the development of social enterprises, develop working relationships with professional clubs and identify opportunities for further community engagement and volunteer development.
- 2.3 Promote the wide range of career opportunities within the active leisure and learning sector, collaborating with IAG networks, developing guidance with CSPs and holding careers training advice sessions.

3. To professionalise and up-skill the existing workforce

- 3.1 Plan training and support to the coaching workforce to meet community and performance requirements, e.g. effective use of talent development and capacity building resources, supporting CSPs with WFD and agreeing funding mechanisms to support training requirements.
- 3.2 Support the training of health and fitness professionals to provide a wide range of services to the community, e.g. sourcing potential LSC funding for REPs conversion programme, lobbying for sustainable funding streams and building a regional Physical Activity Network.
- 3.3 Promote the take-up of leadership and management training e.g. through timely communication.
- 3.4 Increase the uptake of apprenticeship schemes across the region, e.g. utilising case

studies to promote effectiveness to employers.

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. conduct audit of training providers, develop a database of regional provision and encourage NGBs to expand provision for assessors and verifiers.
- 4.2 Encourage training providers to offer suitable work placements that meet job requirements, e.g. encourage collaborative working (providers/employers) to develop a work experience programme in line with industry needs and NOS' are integrated into undergraduate courses.
- 4.3 Facilitate the input of employers' needs into training provision, e.g. provide feedback mechanism from the SSA, engage employers further in the Training Provider Forum and explore the potential for a regional Coaching Academy/Regional Skills Hub.

5. To re-direct funding

- 5.1 Identify appropriate funding sources to support training needs and qualification attainment across the sector, e.g. ensure effective use of building capacity money, disseminate funding information to employers and encourage collaboration of providers in accessing funds.
- 5.2 Increase public sector funding into vocational training within the sector, informing the LSC of the sectors needs (including skills for life).
- 5.3 Agree investment into coaching and exercise and fitness training initiatives.

6. To increase sector investment in our people

- 6.1 Establish a shared commitment to improve skills within the workforce, e.g. promote/develop the SLEG group, fully endorse the RAP and agree measures of monitoring and evaluation.
- 6.2 Increase employer demand for, and investment in, skills within the workforce, e.g. create an employer forum and develop a regional e-newsletter.
- 6.3 Encourage employers to conduct and use personal development plans to meet business objectives, e.g. promote the use of the WFD planning guide, encourage the uptake of Investors in People for volunteers and investment in up-skilling and professionalising the workforce.
- 6.4 Embed training into project funding contracts
- 6.5 Monitor and review the impact of investment in skills by employers, i.e. develop the WFD guide tool to take account of continuing employer needs.

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 by 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.
- 1.3 Work towards sustainable funding for play provision and holiday play schemes.

2 To improve recruitment and retention

- 2.1 A programme of improved careers advice / guidance to increase the pool of playwork job applicants through 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 the delivery of training for Playwork NVQ assessors and the development of Playwork NVQ assessment centres in the region, supporting the 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 the establishment of a Register of Playwork Professionals.

5 To re-direct funding (for training)

- 5.1 Reduce barriers to accessing training with 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 and 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 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 improving the 'learning culture' with playwork employers.
- 6.4 Raise employers awareness, understanding and utilisation of National Occupational Standards (NOS).
- 6.5 Embed commitment to fund training into project funding contracts.

7 Operational or implementation

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