

WORKING IN FITNESS SURVEY 2009 SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Working in Fitness survey is a unique opportunity to gauge the views and opinions of the fitness workforce across a range of occupations in the sector. It is conducted annually, between May and August, by SkillsActive - the sector skills council for active leisure and learning - and the Register of Exercise Professionals. The survey was open to all those working in the industry on a full, part-time or self employed basis; along with anyone who works within a leisure centre, private health club or directly with clients.

Objectives

- To explore the composition of employment in the sector examining full time / part time employment and self employed roles
- To gather information on salaries, terms and conditions across occupations in the fitness industry
- To monitor levels of qualifications, training and professional development amongst employees
- To explore motivations and barriers to seeking / continuing with a career in the sector
- To examine satisfaction with current position, remuneration and development

This report is based on 1,489 UK responses.

Respondent Profile

The respondents to Working in Fitness typically came from the south of England with the South East, London and South West accounting for over half of participants.

They mainly worked as self employed / freelance workers (47 per cent) or in permanent full time employment (33 per cent). Permanent part time staff accounted for 16 per cent and seasonal / casual workers and unpaid volunteers formed the remainder.

The core respondents were those working 'on the gym floor' and 44 per cent reported

working in public leisure centres or private fitness club chains.

Females accounted for the majority, 64 per cent, of responses which reflects their position in the UK health and fitness workforce. Forty-six per cent of respondents were aged below 35.

Females heavily dominate the yoga, pilates or KFA teachers and group exercise & aqua instructors / teachers (level 2) roles (94 per cent and 89 per cent respectively). Whilst the male workforce appears to have a stronger representation in management roles (range from 54 per cent in club / duty management to 63 per cent for directors).

SALARIES AND HOURS

The average basic salary is £20,300 across all occupations working in permanent or self employment. This varies by mode of work:

- Self employed / freelancer: £22,900 p.a.
- Permanent full time: £20,400 p.a. (range from £13,800 for gym instructor (level 2) to £28,800 for senior management.)
- Permanent part time: £12,900 p.a.

The highest salaries are earned in the senior management roles (earning an average £26,700) whilst the lowest earners are the level 2 occupations of gym instructor and group exercise & aqua instructors at less than £15,000. The level 3 roles range between basic salaries of £17,500 (advanced instructors) to £25,600 (personal trainers).

Variations in salary are evident between the sexes with males earning, on average, 16 per cent more than females. Females are typically working 20 hours or less or 31 to 40 hours (51 and 25 per cent, respectively) whilst men are mainly working 31 to 50 hours (36 per cent working 31 to 40 hours and 20 per cent 41 to 50 hours).

Overall, 34 per cent of UK fitness workers received a pay rise in the last year, lower than 2008 when 49 per cent had an increase. The same proportion of public sector workers received a pay rise as in 2008 whilst only 22 per cent of private sector workers reported an increase compared to 38 per cent last year.

QUALIFICATIONS, TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

More than one quarter of the fitness workers hold honours degrees as their highest level of education and 45 per cent of those stated it was relevant to the industry.

The most commonly held fitness qualification was other level 3 (32 per cent of respondents) followed by other level 2 (18 per cent). Only 34 per cent of the fitness workforce reported having a NVQ / SVQ or VRQ at level 2 or 3 as their main fitness qualification.

Continuing Professional Development

The sector spends an average £484 and six days on training and development.

Only nine per cent of respondents said they had not attended any days in training and development, however almost one fifth reported a lack of training. This may indicate they needed more training hours or more relevant training to do their jobs. Gym instructors (level 2) and club / duty managers most commonly reported a lack of training, 34 per cent and 31 per cent respectively.

The fitness workforce mainly pay for their own training and to a greater extent than last year (58 per cent compared to 45 per cent in 2008) and it is typically the gym floor workers doing so. Working in the public sector or charity, voluntary, community sector results in greater employer support whilst the private sector workers are mainly paying for their own training (72 per cent).

MOTIVATIONS AND BARRIERS TO SEEKING / CONTINUING EMPLOYMENT

On average, fitness respondents have been in their current fitness role for one to four years (43 per cent). More than four fifths of respondents (excluding don't know) said they would stay more than five years. Exercise

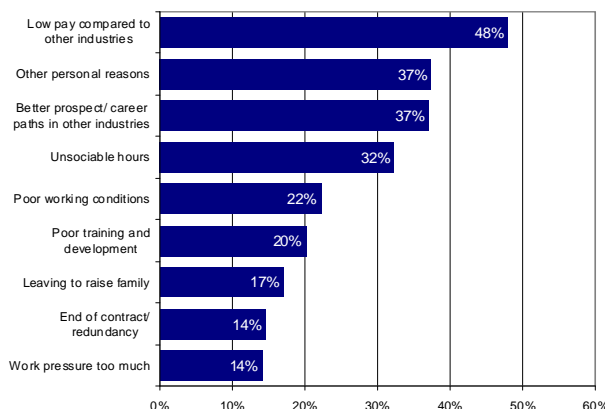
referral / clinical exercise roles were most likely to do so (88 per cent).

As expectations on remaining in the industry rise so do the average training days received. While those with the shortest expectations of remaining particularly note low pay as a factor for leaving the industry.

Overall, low pay is cited as the key factor that would persuade people to leave the industry (48 per cent of respondents).

Other factors include better career prospects / paths elsewhere, other personal reasons (33 per cent each) and unsociable hours (32 per cent) and. These issues have been consistently cited over the years.

Factors to make you leave the industry



INDUSTRY SATISFACTION

Overall, employees appear quite satisfied at work particularly with their degree of responsibility followed by their current employer and the hours of work. However, improvement areas identified were career development prospects and remuneration packages which received the lowest satisfaction scores by the sector.

The highest degree of satisfaction is seen in exercise referral/ clinical exercise roles (42 per cent were satisfied with their package). Those occupations expressing the highest amount of dissatisfaction with their remuneration package are personal trainers (level 3) (46 per cent), yoga, pilates and KFA teachers (44 per cent), advanced instructors (level 3) and gym instructors (level 2) (43 per cent each).

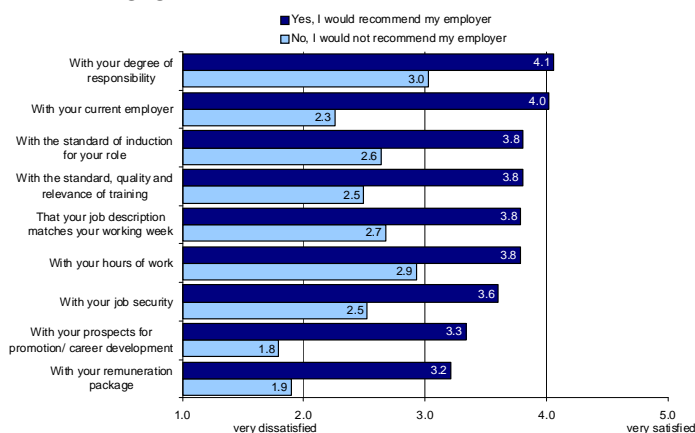
Employer recommendation

Three quarters of UK respondents said they would recommend the main organisation they worked at (75 per cent). Across all sizes of organisation recommendation of employers was high.

The public sector was the most positive, 79 per cent compared to 71 per cent in the charity, voluntary and community sector.

The key areas of dissatisfaction for those who would not recommend their employer repeat those seen earlier for remuneration package and career development prospects.

Employer recommendation and satisfaction level



There appears to be a link between training levels and those not willing to recommend their employer. Nearly two-fifths of respondents who had undertaken no training would not recommend their employer whilst 81 per cent of respondents who had spent 11 or more days training would refer them.

Employer recommendation is high across all occupations, most notably in management roles and group exercise and aqua teachers - where self employment / freelance working is particularly high.

CONCLUSIONS

- The fitness industry shows some evidence of slowing down with fewer reports of pay rises this year, smaller bonuses reported, a higher proportion contributing to their own training and a slight fall in the proportion recommending their employer.
- Positively, three quarters of respondents are still happy to recommend the organisation they work for, the number of training days hasn't fallen, training spend remained unchanged and the average salary has increased – although this is partly attributable to the change of question in the survey.
- Four fifths of respondents still expect to remain in the sector for at least five years. As in previous years, the public sector received the most positive response.
- Remunerations and career prospects / progression continue to be issues for the sector. Those with the shortest expectations for remaining in the industry are driven by low pay primarily, but also other personal reasons, better career prospects elsewhere and unsociable hours.
- Training and development is continuing positively. However, more respondents report paying for their own training. There are signs respondents are starting to receive the right training with a smaller proportion reporting insufficient levels.
- A focus on salaries reveals disparity amongst men and women
- Overall, women form more than half of the overall workforce and have a healthy presence across all roles but this decreases as the role becomes more senior.

Overall, the fitness industry shows signs of resilience to the current economic climate but there remains more to be done in terms of improving standards in the industry for low pay, inequalities in pay between the sexes and poor career progression..

For further information visit:
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