



SOCIAL RESEARCH NUMBER:

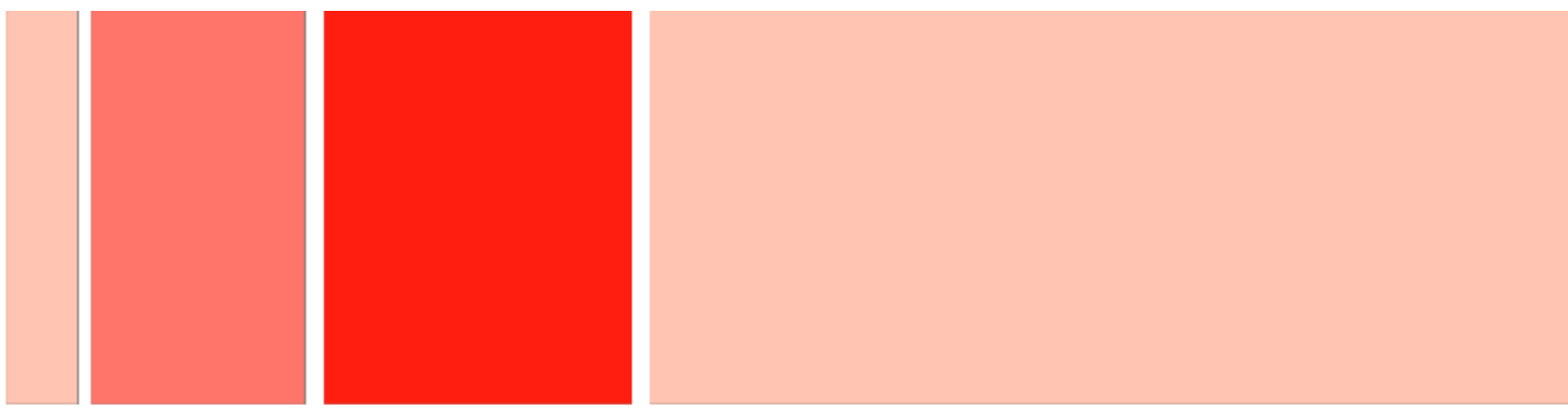
34/2016

PUBLICATION DATE:

16/03/2016

Evaluation of the Sector Priorities Fund Pilot

Final Report



Evaluation of the Sector Priorities Fund Pilot Programme

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Views expressed in this report are those of the researchers and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government.

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Welsh Government Social Research, 2016

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Glossary of Acronyms

CCTs	Cross-Cutting Themes
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CQFW	Curriculum and Qualifications Framework for Wales
DfES	Department for Education and Skills, Welsh Government
EC	European Commission
ERR	Employers Rights & Responsibilities
ESDGC	Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship
ESF	European Social Fund
ESW	Essential Skills Wales (Qualifications)
ESiW	Essential Skills in the Workplace
FE	Further Education
FEI	Further Education Institutions
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
HMCTS	Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service
HNC	Higher National Certificate
HND	Higher National Diploma
IAG	Information Advice and Guidance
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IMI	Institute of the Motor Industry
IT	Information Technology
LMI	Labour Market Intelligence
LLWR	Lifelong Learning Wales Record
NTFW	National Training Federation of Wales
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
NQF	National Qualification Framework
RCT	Rhondda Cynon Taff
RLPs	Regional Learning Partnerships
SASW	The Specification of Apprenticeship Standards in Wales
SME	Small & Medium Sized Enterprises
SPF	Sector Priorities Fund
SPFP	Sector Priorities Fund Pilot
SSA	Sector Skills Agreement

SSCs	Sector Skills Councils
SQS	Sector Qualifications Strategy
UKCES	United Kingdom Commission on Employment and Skills
WBL	Work-based Learning
WESB	Wales Employment and Skills Board
WEFO	Welsh European Funding Office
WG	Welsh Government
YCL	York Consulting Ltd

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Acknowledgements

The evaluation team would like to express thanks for all those who participated in the research. In particular, we would like to thank: the Sector Skills Councils who spoke candidly of their successes and challenges faced during project delivery; to the provider network of tutors and managers who developed and delivered the training; and to the many employers and learners who participated in interviews and completed surveys. Without everyone's engagement in the evaluation, we would not have been able to produce the extent of evidence included in this report. We would also like to thank the Advocates Service for their support in the evaluation.

Executive Summary

1. The Welsh Government's Sector Priorities Fund Pilot Programme (SPFP) was designed to ensure that training providers developed innovative training strategies that were more closely aligned to sector and business needs. In order to achieve this, the Welsh Government contracted with Sector Skills Councils (SSCs)¹ to develop training and development projects to meet business needs.
2. York Consulting LLP (YCL) was commissioned to carry out an independent evaluation of the SPFP. The evaluation considered the effectiveness of the implementation and the roll out of the pilot programme and the degree to which performance targets were met. The methodology included: a review of SSC project evaluation reports, an online learner survey (generating 70 responses), an employee survey (generating 51 responses), and interviews with stakeholders. Recommendations were made to help inform any future development of similar activities.

Key Findings:

3. SSCs developed a clear rationale for project delivery based on consultations with employers and from Labour Market Research. A number of qualifications and apprenticeships developed through SPFP evidenced on-going demand and if mainstreamed, were likely to continue to be delivered by providers. There were a number of apprenticeship frameworks for which demand was less likely to continue without further substantial investment of time and promotional activities from providers and without a financial contribution from employers.
4. Overall, the majority of SSC projects performed well. There were some examples of innovation evidenced through the development of new apprenticeship qualifications, new pathways of progression and through the use of Apps².

¹ SSCs are employer led organisations working to represent the needs of businesses within their footprint, including identifying skills gaps

² a computer program designed to run on mobile devices such as smartphones and tablet computers

5. Some SSCs experienced challenges in engaging employers, and this resulted in lower than targeted achievements. A small number of SSCs experienced quite substantial problems in the early phases. As a result, targets were re-negotiated and overall budgets re-defined to reflect more closely the predicted spend.
6. Some learners and employers did not value the essential skills element of the apprenticeship framework as it was not sufficiently contextualised.
7. A survey of learners achieved 70 responses. This low response rate limited the extent to which findings were considered to be representative of the population of learners on SPFP. However, considering both the quantitative and qualitative evidence together, there was evidence that learners felt more confident about their abilities, were more enthusiastic about learning in general, and felt more optimistic about their career prospects. Three quarters of the learners in the survey stated they had developed job specific skills and over two thirds of learners stated they were able to apply their learning to their work.
8. Many project evaluation reports evidenced good levels of learner engagement and high levels of satisfaction in both the content and quality of learning provision. A few learners were critical of the essential skills delivery and reported that they did not feel it was relevant to their learning.
9. Quantitative and qualitative evidence showed that employers recognised the benefits of the training. Most employers valued the training and cited increased capacity by recruiting apprentices as a benefit, particularly for Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SME). There was evidence that apprentices had either continued their employment after the training was complete or found employment elsewhere as a result of the training. In addition, bespoke and short course training, received by many employers, was particularly valued as this met specific employer needs.
10. The Advocate Service was put in place to provide support and guidance to SSCs during the project design phase and to help identify labour market intelligence to support the evidence of need. The service was re-organised following the recommendations from the Phase 1 report and the simplified structure appears to have been effective. Advocates reported successfully developing relationships with SSCs, providing guidance and information on procurement, labour market

information and intelligence and liaising with providers to promote the awareness of SPFP projects. Not all SSCs felt the need for the service and towards the end, some expressed concerns that the service focussed too much on monitoring project outputs and provided little added value.

11. Projects funded under European Social Fund (ESF) streams were required to demonstrate engagement and impact on Cross-Cutting Themes (CCTs) regarding the equalities agenda and environmental sustainability. A very small number of SSCs appeared to have considered the impact of their project on the CCTs and this was recorded in the evaluation reports. However, the level of focus on CCTs by SSCs was very low and the reporting of this by individual project evaluations was minimal.
12. Training was delivered through the medium of Welsh, where this was feasible for providers. Although precise numbers were not collected. There was some evidence that learners wanting to receive learning through the medium of Welsh, did not. Although training providers stated they could deliver in Welsh, they did not have the capacity to respond to individual requests for delivering through the medium of Welsh where other learners do not speak Welsh.
13. Overall performance of the SPFP programme was close to, but just below, revised targets³, including: 99 per cent of participants; and 95 per cent of employers assisted. Performance measured against the original targets was more modest, with 84 per cent of participants engaged. Around 94 per cent of planned revised expenditure was achieved and 76 per cent of original expenditure was achieved.
14. Performance against the ESF Convergence⁴ target for delivery was below the original target (88 per cent of the target for participants and 73 per cent of the target for employers assisted/supported). Delivery in ESF Convergence areas exceeded

³ Following a programme level review, targets were revised in September 2014 to more accurately reflect predicted outturns over the following six months and de-commit areas of underperformance.

⁴ The Convergence area contains the 15 Local Authorities of Isle of Anglesey, Conwy, Denbighshire, Gwynedd, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, Swansea, Neath Port Talbot, Bridgend, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Merthyr Tydfil, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Torfaen.

the output indicator for BME participants (141 per cent) but was below the output indicators for older participants (77 per cent) and female participants (67 per cent). ESF Convergence expenditure was higher (95 per cent) than for non-ESF (92 per cent).⁵

15. Engagement with business across Wales was balanced; delivery in terms of geography was broadly in line with the population of employers and employees.

Conclusions

16. There is evidence that this programme had a positive impact in all three areas as defined in the original aims of the programme: 1) to 'design, develop and test innovative training'; 2) to 'improve the level of business engagement in training' and 3) to 'extend provider capacity'.
17. We concluded that the majority of SSCs performed well, stimulated demand and developed training solutions to meet business needs. Although they struggled to meet original ambitious target volumes for delivery.
18. What was apparent from talking with SSCs and providers, was the vulnerability of the employer led infrastructure that was trialled through SPFP: many SSCs had a reduced capacity, particularly in Wales, and expertise had already been lost due to reduced UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) funding.

Recommendations

19. SSCs played a key role in delivering labour market intelligence (LMI) and training provision to meet the needs of sectors. The Welsh Government should review the

⁵ The Welsh Government applied for and received ESF funding to deliver activity in the Convergence areas of West Wales and the Valleys, although the programme was designed to operate across the whole of Wales using Welsh Government funding (as ESF funding was not available in East Wales for this type of activity).

role of SSCs in any future sector priorities programme considering their capacity in Wales to operate to a similar specification.

20. SSCs needed to consider the EC/Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) guidance when designing evaluations of their projects to ensure it covered all areas stipulated in the guidance. Welsh Government should review the quality of evaluation reports before signing off final payments.
21. All ESF funded projects are required to demonstrate engagement with the CCTs. Therefore, there is need for the Welsh Government to give clear direction for SSCs (and all other project management operators) to clearly report on engagement in the CCTs in future reporting.
22. Some providers need to improve strategies for contextualising essential skills delivery, especially in apprenticeships with adult participants, to avoid learners perceiving essential skills as separate or less valuable to other learning.
23. The Welsh Government should consider how responsibility for employer engagement should be framed in any future similar projects. Employer engagement had an impact in the speed of project delivery and on the final volumes achieved. It is, therefore, a critical element in helping such projects achieve their targets.
24. To help understand the extent of delivery through the medium of Welsh, ensure that data on the number of learners who received learning through the medium of Welsh is captured in programme monitoring data.

1 Introduction and Context

- 1.1 York Consulting LLP (YCL) was commissioned to carry out an independent evaluation of the Welsh Government's Sector Priorities Fund Pilot Programme (SPFP).

Background

- 1.2 In 2009, the Welsh Government launched a programme to test the delivery of innovative post-16 skills training solutions that could not be sourced through existing training provision. The programme was designed as an employer led pilot programme in which Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) were tasked with liaising between providers and industry to develop new and innovative training to better meet industry needs.
- 1.3 The programme, which was delivered across Wales until December 2014, was part funded by European Social Fund (ESF) in West Wales and the Valleys Convergence areas, the remaining areas were funded by the Welsh Government core funding.
- 1.4 The programme was delivered across two phases; Phase 1 ran from 2009-2012 and Phase 2 ran from 2012-2015. An interim report was published in 2013 drawing on evidence generated from SSCs contracted to deliver in Phase 1¹. York Consulting was commissioned to carry out an evaluation of the whole programme.

Context

- 1.5 The Welsh Government is committed to raising the skills levels of young people and adults in Wales. The Webb Review², commissioned in 2007 concluded that employer engagement must drive the strategy and performance of training providers. The Wales Employment and Skills Board (WESB) was established in 2008 to be a forum through which the voice of employers helps to shape the training, skills and employment agenda.

- 1.6 Skills that Work for Wales, written in 2008³, committed to funding sector specific programmes of support to meet priority sector skills needs. SSCs were deemed central to ensuring that training developed and delivered through the network of training providers, met employers' needs.
- 'We will look to Sector Skills Councils to represent employers, identify priority skills needs, and advising which qualifications should be prioritised for public funding...'*⁴
- 1.7 Sector Skills Councils' original remit was to work as UK wide bodies with/on behalf of, the sector(s) they represent. Their key aims were to identify skills gaps/shortages and to improve learning opportunities for individuals by improving training supply.
- 1.8 The landscape in which SSCs now operate has changed quite considerably. The move from funding grants received from the UK Government to funding allocated through a competitive process (for example, the Employer Investment Fund in England and SPFP in Wales) has encouraged SSCs to focus more acutely on specific sector/business needs and to work more closely with sector experts and training providers to develop resources, tools, qualifications and training to address business needs.
- 1.9 At the heart of the Skills that Work for Wales⁵ strategy was a transformation of the quality and flexibility of post-19 provision to ensure equality of opportunity for learners. A commitment from the Welsh Government for learners to learn bilingually and through the medium of Welsh was published in 2010⁶.
- 1.10 An important driver of improved skills was the co-investment from employers; the SPFP programme was tasked with developing sustainable partnerships between employers and providers that would facilitate greater investment from employers in the skills of employees.
- 1.11 The Welsh Government applied for and received ESF funding to deliver activity in the Convergence areas of West Wales and the Valleys, although the programme was designed to operate across the whole of Wales using Welsh Government funding (as ESF funding was not available in East Wales for this type of activity).

1.12 The SPFP programme was launched in April 2009 with the original intention to pilot a fund that would evaluate the effectiveness of a demand led model in shaping further education funding. Using evidence from this pilot, a larger fund, drawn from Further Education Institutions (FEI) budgets, was going to be created to continue to support the development and delivery of training that was stimulated through sector specialists (SSCs and other representative bodies).

1.13 Since the start of the programme in 2009, there was a change of Government in 2011 and a shift in priorities away from the creation of a large sector fund utilising FEI budgets to develop skills to support Economic Renewal⁷. However, the SPFP programme remained essential in testing the delivery of innovative post-16 skills training solutions required by employers that could not be sourced through other existing provision.

Aims of the SPFP Programme

1.14 Through SPFP funding, SSCs were tasked with designing, developing and testing innovative training to improve the level and type of business engagement in training. Emphasis was on innovation, employer engagement and investment in training, and on extending the capacity of training providers to deliver new and innovative training and qualifications. All SPFP projects are listed in Annex A. Other key objectives included:

- Informing planning and post-16 funding decisions (excluding Higher Education) of both Government and training providers.
- Promoting and measuring the extent of partnerships between SSCs and training providers, particularly with FEIs to ensure that training becomes more demand responsive in the long term.
- To test the demand for innovative training and evaluate the conditions and drivers for raising employer investment in training.
- To provide opportunities to encourage SSC collaboration to develop joint sector training strategies as well as training opportunities.
- Producing research studies, learning and development strategies and evaluation reports to inform what works and key lessons learned.

- To produce evidence in the form of research studies and evaluation reports to better understand the issues of supply and demand.

1.15 The programme featured an Advocate Service whose task it was to assist SSCs and training providers to develop sector specific training strategies.

Aims and Objectives of the Evaluation

1.16 The Welsh Government research specification set out that the overarching aim of this final evaluation was to develop an evaluation framework building on the mid-term evaluation as well as final project/activity level evaluations to achieve the following objectives:

- To measure the effectiveness of the performance of the SPFP programme overall and its activities against target indicators and target spending.
- To assess the added value and impact of SPFP on employers including:
 - the extent to which employers were engaged, in particular those who would not have traditionally engaged with such training programmes
 - the extent to which employers supported by the programme have changed their attitude to training
 - to what extent the training delivered under SPFP has met employers' expectations and requirements (i.e. was the training truly demand-led)
 - to explore what effect, if any, SPFP support has had on the matching of training provision with employer need and sector demand
 - to explore what effect, if any, has SPFP support had on the ability of enterprises and workers to adapt to new forms of work organisation and new technologies.
- To assess the added value and impact of SPFP on learners including:
 - to explore what effect, if any, SPFP support has had on the learner's career progression, pay levels and skills levels
 - the impact on their attitudes towards training
 - the extent to which their expectations were met and the extent to which they found the training provision useful.

- To assess whether SSC projects have had a broader effect in changing attitudes/practices of training providers and the extent to which delivering training funded under SPFP has affected the focus of their mainstream programmes (i.e. how planning arrangements of providers changed as a result of the project).
- To assess the effectiveness of measures implemented to achieve targets with regard to the Welsh European Funding Office's (WEFO) CCTs.
- To assess the Value for Money aspect with regard to funding spent on the delivery of SPFP versus the return in terms of achieved outputs and outcomes.
- To review the overall development, management and implementation of the programme and its activities and changes made to the programme since the mid-term evaluation.
- To highlight areas of good practice.
- To highlight areas that require improvement and further development.
- To assess strengths and weaknesses of the restructured Advocate Service in comparison to the previous structure and offer.
- To develop recommendations to inform the design of a new Sector Priority Programme.
- To explore the extent to which additional evidence base (i.e. research outcomes from programme activities) made available via the SPFP programme has been used by stakeholders to inform future planning and funding arrangements or to support the development of related spinoff projects and programmes.
- To explore whether and to what extent activities delivered under SPFP have contributed to (and are compatible with) the wider WG policy objectives to increase Welsh language skills amongst the workforce. This should include:
 - Measuring how effectively SSC and training providers were able to identify the demand from employers and learners for Welsh-language skills development and explore how effective the programme was in responding to this demand.

- Measuring how effectively SSC and training providers were able to identify the demand from employers and learners for delivering training through the medium of Welsh and explore how effective the programme was in responding to this demand.

Methodology

1.17 The key areas of investigation were mapped to the objectives of the evaluation as detailed in the specification for the evaluation and were agreed by the Welsh Government.

1.18 Evidence to support the analysis of impact was generated from qualitative and quantitative methods:

- **Synthesising data from project evaluation reports:** we undertook a thematic synthesis of 23 of the delivery projects in Phase 2. From this analysis, we sought to collate information showing: performance outcomes, impacts, challenges, innovation in delivery, lesson learned and evidence of engagement in CCTs.
- **Review of Interim Evaluation report:** we considered the findings, conclusions and recommendations from the interim evaluation report in detail.
- **Analysis of Management Information.** To establish programme performance, we used a range of sources: SPFP Programme Business Plan; WEFO Funding Claim Form Reports (April 2015; September 2014; September 2013); Progress Output (Impact Indicator) Reports; Data from the EDMS database; Contract Management Closure Report (Word document: 'SPFP position of closure of all projects', updated March 15.doc); Additional information regarding Project Manager discussions during the final six months.
- **Consultations with all SSCs:** to explore the rationale for the project, what was achieved and key challenges and lessons learned.
- **Quantitative online survey of employers:** an online survey of employers engaged through the SPFP programme provided 51 responses (2,315 employers were engaged and this represents 2.2 per cent of the overall population of employers).

- **Learner Survey:** an online survey of learners engaged in training provided through SPFP funding to evidence the outcomes and benefits of the training on their knowledge and skills. The survey generated 70 responses (5,503 learners were engaged and this represents 1.3 per cent of the overall population of learners).
- **Provider telephone consultations:** semi-structured interviews conducted with 20 providers to probe on partnerships with the SSC and employers, challenges and sustainability in delivery.
- **SPFP project case studies:** validating the evidence provided through six case studies, reviewing the reports and interviewing providers, employers and evaluators.
- **A focus group and review of evidence from Advocates:** a focus group was held with the Advocate Service (involving all advocate services) and a review of progress reports and key outputs to establish the benefits of the service.

1.19 The research tools were designed against the evaluation framework (all data collection instruments are included in Annex B and C) and agreed with the Welsh Government.

Timing of the Evaluation

1.20 The final evaluation was commissioned in October 2014 and ran to July 2015. The research was designed to be conducted after project delivery had completed, although in practice, some learning was ongoing.

Methodological Challenges

1.21 The evaluation encountered a number of methodological challenges that impacted on the robustness of evidence generated.

- 1.22 Definitive understanding of individual project targets was a challenge, as many changes to targets took place and in the final six months projects were managed on an individual basis by project managers. Although, overall delivery was monitored at the programme level no tables of projects and their respective performance were generated. This made it difficult to see the whole picture of how individual project performance was influencing programme performance. It must also be noted that there was a difference between ESF (only unique beneficiaries) and Welsh Government monitoring data (all instances of engagement of beneficiaries) i.e. a person can only be counted once for ESF even if they participate in different ESF activity.
- 1.23 The original proposal was to undertake a telephone survey of SPFP learners to generate a sample of between 10-15% of the learner population. However, on review of data protocol agreements between the Welsh Government and SPFP learners, it was not possible for the evaluators to have access to learner contact details.
- 1.24 The remedial action taken to continue the survey was to develop an online survey that the Welsh Government forwarded to learners. An incentive of £10 was included to encourage completion. The survey was forwarded by the Welsh Government to 800 participants (between 16th and 27th February 2015), with an aim of achieving 100 responses. 70 learners completed the survey, although there were a number of undelivered email messages received.
- 1.25 The sample for the employer survey was constrained by the fact that not all records had email addresses and full information. York Consulting was passed a database of 2,561 employer records. Of these, 1,403 had email addresses (although 102 of these were generic email addresses rather than a named contact). Of the 1,403 records 616 were full records and 787 were partial, (e.g. missing the name of the course undertaken). We also removed a small number of duplicates giving a final sample of 1,329 records (555 full and 774 partial).
- 1.26 The e-survey was emailed to the 1,329 employers on 13th February 2015 and closed on 27th February 2015. In total, 431 undelivered emails messages were received, giving an effective sample of 898. The survey resulted in 52 valid responses. Therefore, the effective response rate was 6 per cent.

- 1.27 Confidence intervals for both surveys meant that firm conclusions could not be drawn from the data and the responses should be viewed as indicative only.
- 1.28 Understanding the overall performance of the programme using Welsh Government data was also a challenge. Having confidence in representing the overall spend on the programme, alongside the key outputs achieved through SPFP Phase 1 and Phase 2 and through each project, has not been possible due to inconsistencies in data provided to the evaluators. It is understood that part of the difficulty is an artificially created set of phases against which data does not easily separate out neatly.

2 Performance against Programme Outputs

Introduction

- 2.1 This section provides an overview of the performance of the SPFP programme during Phase 2 and over the entire programme.

Project Management

- 2.2 The SPFP Programme was monitored and managed by a dedicated SPFP Team within the Department for Education and Skills, Welsh Government. SPFP projects were directly managed by two Contract Managers, with data entry support from two officers. The project team used the European Data Management System to store and collate participant and employer data. They maintained a number of spreadsheet based management and monitoring systems which mapped profiled activity against actual claimed activity. Whilst the Senior Management structure of the Programme changed between Phase 1 and the final months of Phase 2, the contract management staff remained consistent, and continued to conduct rigorous ESF checks on project claims and arrange routine contract management meetings to monitor the approved delivery.
- 2.3 Responsibility for the Contract Management and delivery of SPFP was transferred from the Employment and ESF Branch within the Department to the Skills Delivery Branch within the same Department, in June 2014.
- 2.4 Senior Management within the Skills Delivery Branch undertook a full review of each project; the review highlighted that a number of projects were experiencing difficulties in delivery and were being closely monitored by their Contract Manager.
- 2.5 Skills Delivery Branch Senior Management raised concerns regarding the limited time remaining on the projects, the scope and ability for Welsh Government to implement new management systems and the high expectations that remained with the project to deliver their original targets. A decision was taken to ask each project to provide revised achievable forecasts with a view to identifying an accurate budget position for the year and to provide projects with the support required to achieve maximum impact in the remaining months.

- 2.6 A large number of projects agreed a reduction in both targets and associated expenditure. It was felt prudent to allow projects to concentrate on quality of delivery and engagement of the activity they were currently delivering, rather than push them to develop and deliver additional new activity to meet targets which may have compromised their ability to deliver any meaningful outputs. Activity that had been started, but would not be completed in time for project closure, was also stopped.
- 2.7 Skills Delivery Branch Senior Management also worked closely with colleagues in the Apprenticeship Unit to ensure a seamless transition from SPFP into mainstream support for individuals that would otherwise fail to complete their Apprenticeship by the 31st December 2014.
- 2.8 To assist the Programme review, each live project was asked to provide a quarterly delivery profile up to and including Sept 2014, additional support was offered to those projects that had claims outstanding as at June 2014. In addition, each project was required to provide a monthly profile for the final three months, October, November and the final month December 2014. This enabled Contract Managers to monitor the project closure activity and spend in line with the agreed revised delivery profile and to ensure that projects did not once more slip behind as the programme drew to a close.
- 2.9 Contract Managers met quarterly with the projects where no concerns were identified. Where there were important performance issues identified or where projects were starting to slip from their revised agreed profile, Contract Managers asked for evidence to support the forecast delivery and associated spend. Contract Managers were in monthly contact with projects in the final three months ensuring activity was being delivered. Where underspends or underperformances could not be rectified by the project before closure, further de commitments were made by the Senior Manager. This worked well and only one project was identified as requiring a further de commitment
- 2.10 The Contract Managers and the Senior Manager maintained a monitoring spreadsheet which compared the claims received with the revised profiles. Contract Managers used a variety of templates to document their meetings with the projects over this time, raising concerns with Senior Management as necessary.

2.11 Whilst the actual monitoring system changed from Phase 1 to Phase 2 and for completion, there is evidence to suggest that both expenditure and activity was being closely monitored by both Contract Managers and the relevant Senior Management Team throughout the Programme.

Overall delivery

2.12 Some of the targets (gaining qualifications, entering further learning) were ESF specific targets and a similar target did not exist for the non-ESF element of SPFP.

2.13 As targets did not exist for all aspects of the SPFP Phase 2 element of the programme, it is best to talk about overall performance first and then to reflect on the performance of the ESF Convergence element as a subset of the overall programme.

2.14 Overall project spend was £18.4 million (Table 2.1), which represented 94 per cent of the revised budget. This broke down as £6.7 million for Phase 1 and £11.6 million Phase 2. The percentage of spend of the revised budget was 91 per cent for Phase 2; although only 76 per cent of the original budget for Phase 2 was spent.

Table 2.1: Expenditure to March 2015, by Phase

	Original budget	Revised budget	Actual spend	Percentage of revised budget
Phase 1	-	-	£6,719,527	-
Phase 2	£15,370,062	£12,856,996	£11,637,619	91
Total	-	£19,576,523	£18,357,146	94

Source: WEFO European Funding Claim Reports

2.15 ESF Convergence spending of £11 million (Table 2.2) represented 59 per cent of the total programme spend with the non-ESF spend of £7.4 million representing 41 per cent of the total programme spend. The percentage of the revised budget spent was slightly lower for the non-ESF element (at 92 per cent) compared with the ESF Convergence figure of 95 per cent.

Table 2.2: Expenditure to March 2015, Whole Programme

	Original budget	Revised budget	Actual spend	Percentage of revised budget
ESF Convergence	-	£11,527,000	£10,943,214	95
Non-ESF	-	£8,049,523	£7,413,932	92
Total	-	£19,576,523	£18,357,146	94

Source: WEFO European Funding Claim Reports

2.16 The proportion of Phase 2 private funding was reduced considerably from the original budget to the revised budget (Table 2.3). Just over three-fifths (62 per cent) of the revised private funding budget was actually achieved. This indicates that projects struggled to convince employers to invest in the projects.

Table 2.3: Expenditure to March 2015, Phase 2

	Original budget	Revised budget Aug 2014	Actual spend	Percentage of revised budget
Public	£14,780,845	£12,552,895	£11,449,632	91
Private	£589,217	£304,101	£187,987	62
Total	£15,370,062	£12,856,996	£11,637,619	91

Source: Welsh Government Contract Management Spread Sheets

2.17 Overall delivery on the key indicators is outlined in Table 2.4. Key points to note are:

- There were double the number of projects in Phase 2 compared with Phase 1.
- Just over two-fifths of participants (42 per cent) were involved in Phase 2 compared with 58 per cent in Phase 1.
- There was always a lag in terms of participants gaining qualifications and entering further learning, plus a number of projects were still delivering qualifications at the end of the delivery period, so it was not so surprising that the number of Phase 2 qualifications and participants entering further learning was lower than might be expected.
- Most projects undertook an element of research as part of their project throughout the programme.
- Most of the employers assisted (92 per cent) were involved in Phase 1, compared with 8 per cent in Phase 2. However, this masks the fact that employers were only recognised once so Phase 2 only includes additional employers.

Table 2.4: SPFP Programme actual delivery

Indicators	Total (actual)	Phase 1 (actual)	Phase 2 (actual)
Total Projects	43	14	29
Total Participants	5,503	3,216	2,287
Total Participants Gaining Qualifications	2,847	1,827	1,020
Total Participants Entering Further Learning	682	629	53
Number of Research Studies	41	22	19
Total Employers Assisted/Supported*	2,315	2,136	179

Source: Welsh Government data provided through WEFO Funding claim reports

Note: * = Actuals for Phase 2 are low as only unique businesses were counted. Some business from phase 1 participated in phase 2 but would not be counted again.

2.18 In terms of qualifications gained, around two-thirds (65 per cent) were at NQF Level 2, a third were at NQF Level 3 (33 per cent) and 2 per cent at NQF Levels 4 to 6.

Programme Targets

2.19 Targets were mainly set for ESF Convergence elements of the programme. The key ESF Convergence targets were revised as part of the business planning process for Phase 2, although some had further revisions made, according to data provided to the consultants from the Welsh Government. Our best understanding (Table 2.5) was based on the following definitions:

- Approval = defined as “at approval stage” in the SPFP Business Plan, V6.6, September 2014.
- Revised = management information provided by the Welsh Government.

Table 2.5: SPFP Programme ESF targets

Indicators	Approval	Revised
Total Participants	4,272	4,464
Total Participants Gaining Qualifications	2,827	2,654
Total Participants Entering Further Learning	673	590
Number of Research Studies	41	41
Total Employers Assisted/Supported	2,029	2,059
Sustainable Development Projects	1	1

Sources: SPFP Business Plan, V6.6, September 2014 and data from WG

2.20 Other ESF output indicators set out in the SPFP Business Plan, V6.6, September 2014 (Section 6: Outputs, Results and Impacts) were the subject of a major caveat⁶ (but to our knowledge, were not revised as suggested in the footnote) and included:

- Participants Accessing Level 2 training: 1,917 (72 per cent of all participants gaining qualifications).
- Participants Accessing Level 3 training: 688 (26 per cent of all participants gaining qualifications).
- Participants Accessing Level 4 training: 49 (2 per cent of all participants gaining qualifications).
- Older Participants: 536 (12 per cent of all participants).
- BME Participants: 44 (1 per cent of all participants).
- Female Participants: 1785 (40 per cent of all participants).

ESF Performance against Targets

2.21 Performance against the key ESF targets and output indicators, for the whole programme, is set out in Table 2.6. In terms of participant indicators, 88 per cent of targeted participants were recruited, 79 per cent of the target participants gained qualifications and 90 per cent of the target entered further learning. All of the targeted research studies were achieved. Just under three-quarters (74 per cent) of the targeted employers were assisted or supported.

⁶The Indicators are based on indicative project ideas provided by SSCs as part of the consultation process for the SPFP Programme. SSCs have provided outline information on which to frame forecasts, using their existing intelligence base. However, all are subject to further clarification based on actual bids submitted by SSCs (and the subsequent assessment of these bids by the SPFP Approvals Panel) and cannot therefore be confirmed prior to finalising this amended Business Plan.

Table 2.6: Performance against the ESF targets and outputs indicators

Indicators	Target	Actual	Percentage of target achieved
Total Participants	4,464	3,931	88
Total Participants Gaining Qualifications	2,654	2,090	79
Total Participants Entering Further Learning	590	532	90
Number of Research Studies	41	41	100
Total Employers Assisted/Supported	2,059	1,514	74
Output indicators			
Participants Gaining Level 2 qualifications	1,917	1,338	70
Participants Gaining Level 3 qualifications	688	701	102
Participants Gaining Level 4 and above qualifications	49	51	105
Older Participants	536	410	77
BME Participants:	44	62	141
Female Participants	1,785	1,200	67

Sources:

WEFO European Funding Claim Reports

Welsh Government, WEFO Business Plan September 2014

Detailed analysis of delivery data

2.22 Although targets were not available for all measures, some targets exist for the whole programme based on the latest information provided by the Welsh Government to the evaluators.

All Learners Participating

2.23 Total participants engaged were above target for Phase 2 but below target for Phase 1 (Table 2.7). The target for non-ESF participants was exceeded with 142 per cent achievement.

Table 2.7: SPFP Participants to March 2015

	Original target	Revised target	Total actual	Percentage of target
Overall Programme	6,528	5,573	5,503	99
Phase 1	4,017	3,421	3,216	94
Phase 2	2,511	2,152	2,287	106
ESF Convergence	n/a	4,464	3,931	88
Non-ESF	n/a	1,109	1,572	142

Source: WEFO European Funding Claim Reports

Participants Gaining Qualifications

2.24 Just over half (52 per cent) of all participants gained a qualification.

2.25 The target for participants gaining qualifications was exceeded for Phase 1, but no target was set for Phase 2 (Table 2.8) as the SPFP programme was set up to trial/test and establish new delivery methods and courses rather than target participants gaining qualifications.

Table 2.8: SPFP Participants Gaining Qualifications to March 2015

	Original target	Revised target	Total actual	Percentage of target
Overall Programme	3,243	n/a*	2,841	n/a
Phase 1	3,243	1,694	1,827	107
Phase 2	n/a	n/a	1,014	n/a
ESF Convergence	n/a	2,654	2,070	78
Non-ESF	n/a	n/a	771	n/a

Source: WEFO European Funding Claim Reports

Note: * There was an ESF specific target=2,654 which is covered in earlier tables

Employers Involved

2.26 Overall, performance in terms of employers assisted or supported was just short of the target (95 per cent) (Table 2.9). The target for employers assisted or supported was achieved for Phase 1, but underperformed for Phase 2 (although this was much smaller). Just under three-quarters (73 per cent) of the ESF Convergence target for employers assisted or supported was achieved. This compared with 210 per cent achievement for non-ESF activity.

Table 2.9: SPFP Employers assisted or supported to March 2015

	Original target	Revised target	Total actual	Percentage of target
Overall Programme	1,915	2,441	2,315	95
Phase 1	1,192	2,136	2,136	100
Phase 2	723	305	179	59
ESF Convergence	n/a	2,059	1,509	73
Non-ESF	n/a	382	806	210

Source: WEFO European Funding Claim Reports

Note: Actuals for Phase 2 are low as only unique businesses were counted. Some business from phase 1 participated in phase 2 but would not be counted again.

Participants Entering Further Learning

2.27 The target for participants entering further learning was nearly achieved for Phase 1, but no target was set for Phase 2 (Table 2.10). Similarly, no target was set for Non-ESF delivery.

Table 2.10: Participants entering further learning to March 2015

	Original target	Revised target	Total actual	Percentage of target
Overall Programme	991	662*	682	<i>n/a</i>
Phase 1	991	662	629	95
Phase 2	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	53	<i>n/a</i>
ESF Convergence	<i>n/a</i>	590	532	90
Non-ESF	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	150	<i>n/a</i>

Source: WEFO European Funding Claim Reports

Note: * ESF specific target

Research Studies

2.28 All the research studies related to the ESF Convergence projects were completed (Table 2.11).

Table 2.11: Number of research studies to March 2015

	Original target	Revised target	Total actual	Percentage of target
Overall Programme	44	41	41	100
Phase 1	17	22	22	100
Phase 2	27	19	19	100
ESF Convergence	44	41	41	100
Non-ESF	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>

Source: WEFO European Funding Claim Reports

Migrant Learners

2.29 A total of 157 learners were migrants from European Union and non-European Union countries (3 per cent of all participants). A higher proportion of learners were migrants in non-ESF areas (5 per cent) compared with ESF Convergence areas (2 per cent).

Female Learners

2.30 A total of 1,850 participants were female (34 per cent of all participants). A higher proportion of learners were female in non-ESF areas (41 per cent) compared with ESF Convergence areas (31 per cent).

Older Learners

2.31 A total of 563 participants were aged 55 or over (10 per cent of all participants). The proportions were almost the same for non-ESF areas (9 per cent) compared with ESF Convergence areas (10 per cent).

Disabled Learners

2.32 A total of 89 participants were disabled (2 per cent of all participants). The proportions were almost the same for non-ESF areas (1 per cent) compared with ESF Convergence areas (2 per cent).

Black and Minority Ethnic Learners

2.33 A total of 141 participants were from black and minority ethnic groups (3 per cent of all participants). A higher proportion of learners were from black and minority ethnic groups in non-ESF areas (5 per cent) compared with ESF Convergence areas (2 per cent).

Prior Qualifications

2.34 The spread of prior qualifications was broadly similar between ESF Convergence areas and non-ESF areas (Table 2.12) with no more than two percentage point differences, except that there were more with NQF Level 7-9 learners in the non-ESF areas (11 per cent) than ESF Convergence areas (7 per cent).

Table 2.12: Learners' previous qualifications

Prior Qualifications	Percentage of all learners	Percentage of all learners Convergence	Percentage of all learners Non-ESF	Percentage point difference Convergence to Non-ESF
None	17	18	16	2
Below NQF level 2	13	13	13	0
At NQF level 2	21	22	20	1
At NQF level 3	19	19	17	2
At NQF level 4-6	22	21	23	-2
At NQF level 7-8	8	7	11	-4
Total	100	100	100	

Source: WEFO 2007-13 European Funding Claim Reports

Bases: Total=5,503; ESF Convergence=3,931; Non-ESF=1,572.

Notes: Percentage point differences do not sum to zero due to rounding.

Qualifications Gained

2.35 In terms of qualifications gained, 1,863 participants (65 per cent of all those gaining a qualification) achieved at NQF Level 2. A higher proportion of learners from non-ESF areas (68 per cent) compared with ESF Convergence areas (64 per cent) achieved NQF Level 2 qualifications. A total of 935 participants gained an NQF Level 3 (33 per cent). A lower proportion of learners from non-ESF areas (30 per cent) compared with ESF Convergence areas (34 per cent) achieved qualifications at NQF Level 3. Only 69 individuals (2 per cent) gained a qualification at Level 4 and above.

Area Level Performance Data

2.36 The spread of employers by local authority was broadly consistent with employers across Wales (Table 2.13).

Location of Employers

Table 2.13: SPFP employers by local authority (Phase 1 and Phase 2)

Local Authority	ESF Convergence	Non-ESF	Percentage of total	Percentage of all businesses ¹	Percentage point difference
Blaenau Gwent	38	0	2	1	1
Bridgend	78	0	3	4	-1
Caerphilly	76	0	3	4	-1
Carmarthen	243	0	10	6	4
Ceredigion	104	0	4	3	1
Conwy	109	0	5	4	1
Denbighshire	140	0	6	4	2
Gwynedd	135	0	6	5	1
Isle of Anglesey	40	0	2	2	0
Merthyr Tydfil	24	0	1	1	0
Neath Port Talbot	70	0	3	3	0
Pembrokeshire	107	0	5	5	0
RCT	107	0	5	6	0
Swansea	186	0	8	7	1
Torfaen	52	0	2	2	0
Cardiff	0	270	12	12	0
Flintshire	0	53	2	5	-3
Monmouthshire	0	43	2	4	-2
Newport	0	92	4	4	0
Powys	0	178	8	6	2
Vale of Glamorgan	0	47	2	4	-2
Wrexham	0	94	4	4	0
Outside Wales	0	29	1	-	-
Total	1,509	806	100	100	-

Source: WEFO European Funding Claim Reports. Note: Active Business Enterprises by area in 2013, StatsWales, ONS use data from the IDBR to produce business demography statistics.

2.37 There was a higher proportion, compared with all businesses, participating in Carmarthen, Denbighshire and Powys; with a slightly smaller proportion compared with all businesses from Flintshire, Monmouthshire and the Vale of Glamorgan.

Participant Location

2.38 The location of participants was broadly in line with the spread of the working population across local authorities (Table 2.14).

Table 2.14: SPFP participants by local authority compared with those in employment

Local Authority	Number of learners ESF Convergence	Number of learners Non-ESF	Percentage of SPFP learners	Percentage of working population	Percentage point difference
Blaenau Gwent	109	0	2	2	0
Bridgend	199	0	4	5	-1
Caerphilly	419	0	8	6	2
Carmarthen	524	0	10	6	4
Ceredigion	154	0	3	2	0
Conwy	229	0	4	4	1
Denbighshire	130	0	2	3	-1
Gwynedd	312	0	6	4	2
Isle of Anglesey	132	0	2	2	0
Merthyr Tydfil	103	0	2	2	0
Neath Port Talbot	323	0	6	4	1
Pembrokeshire	272	0	5	4	1
Rhondda Cynon Taff	371	0	7	8	-1
Swansea	458	0	8	8	1
Torfaen	196	0	4	3	1
Cardiff	0	536	10	13	-3
Flintshire	0	143	3	5	-3
Monmouthshire	0	122	2	3	-1
Newport	0	220	4	5	-1
Powys	0	324	6	5	1
Vale of Glamorgan	0	141	3	4	-2
Wrexham	0	86	2	5	-3
Total	3,931	1,572	100	100	0

Source: WEFO European Funding Claim Reports

Note: Those in employment from Annual Population Survey / Local Labour Force Survey summary of economic activity, Aged 16 to 64, year ending 30 Jun 2014. This included people who are either in employment or ILO unemployed. This included employees, self-employed, people on government supported training and employment programmes, and unpaid family workers.

Project Level Performance in Phase 2

2.39 The following data was from Welsh Government sources but have different definitions to WEFO claim data (they were broadly in line with the earlier data but did not match up, which limits the extent of confidence about this project level data). Ideally for evaluation purposes, the claim data would be available by project.

2.40 The aggregate data is summarised in Table 2.15.

Table 2.15: Aggregated project level data for Phase 2

Output	Original Targets	Revised Targets as at Aug 2014	Project completion achievements Dec 2014
Expenditure	£14,026,845	£11,802,780	£10,931,790
Employer contributions	£553,403	£304,002	£196,753
Participants	3,066	2,746	2,846
Apprentices	538	478	477
Businesses supported	923	256	305
Research study	15	19	24

Source: WG project level data, April 2015

Note: A decision was taken to exclude one employer-led project, which was not ESF funded, from the totals as it is not yet finished.

Expenditure

2.41 Table 2.16 lists the targets and final project achievements in terms of project expenditure. The projects ranged in size of final expenditure from £28,356 up to £1,295,048. The mean average project size was £390,421.

Table 2.16: Expenditure to March 2015 (£). Phase 2

SSC	Project	Original Targets	Revised Targets as at Aug 2014	Project completion achievements Dec 2014
Asset Skills	SPFP 040	£1,512,590	£1,390,725	£1,295,048
Creative and Cultural Skills	SPFP 053	£491,424	£325,847	£304,709
Creative Skillset	SPFP 062	£381,728	£361,579	£357,277
Creative Skillset	SPFP 076	£387,728	£387,579	£380,656
Creative Skillset	SPFP 077	£395,217	£395,194	£341,380
E Skills *	SPFP 046	£949,399	£806,842	£778,122
E Skills	SPFP 082	£659,374	£592,676	£561,728
E & U Skills	SPFP 080	£854,417	£720,774	£617,282
IMI	SPFP 068	£141,400	£177,900	£150,392
Improve	SPFP 059	£963,771	£376,620	£348,893
Lantra	SPFP 047	£1,609,501	£1,289,500	£1,145,924
People 1st	SPFP 044	£27,131	£24,839	£24,839
People 1st	SPFP 057	£427,828	£401,815	£401,815
People 1st	SPFP 066	£339,413	£302,742	£274,504
People 1st	SPFP 075	£329,460	£329,725	£322,023
People 1st	SPFP 079	£123,557	£122,582	£122,582
SEMTA	SPFP 054	£971,500	£471,500	£384,477
SEMTA	SPFP 090	£72,000	£76,051	£76,051
Skills for Health	SPFP 069	£169,850	£167,160	£167,160
Skills for Justice *	SPFP 049	£110,282	£110,282	£105,488
Skills for Justice	SPFP 050	£1,019,251	£1,005,957	£956,127
Skills for Justice	SPFP 058	£572,922	£572,922	£533,542
Skills for Justice	SPFP 074	£242,618	£211,618	£193,764
SkillsActive	SPFP 052	£342,000	£336,385	£334,519
SkillsActive	SPFP 083	£625,125	£558,285	£532,658
SkillsActive and Habia	SPFP 092	£88,659	£88,527	£85,774
CITB*	SPFP 091	£179,700	£168,800	£106,700
Menter Mon *	SPFP 096	£39,000	£28,356	£28,356
Total		£14,026,845	£11,802,780	£10,931,790

Source: WG project level data, April 2015

Note: *=non-ESF project; These totals differ from data derived from the Welsh Government Contract Management Spread Sheets used in Table 2.3

2.42 The data showed that there was an underspend of 22 per cent from the original forecasted spend of £14,026,845. The original target was an intentional over commitment in order to achieve programme level spend expected. Targets were revised in September 2014 based on predictions of project outturns. There was an underspend on the revised target of 7.7 per cent.

2.43 Twelve projects had between one per cent and 10 per cent underspend, seven projects had between 11 per cent and 20 per cent underspend, and seven had an underspend of between 21 per cent and 64 per cent. Projects with high percentage underspends (SPFP 059, SPFP 054, SPFP 091 and SPFP 053) had project design problems, struggled to engage employers and/or struggled to match the provision with business need.

Employer Contribution

2.44 The amount of employer contributions across the projects at £196,753 was below the target of £304,002. The employer contribution varied from zero to £56,850 (Table 2.17). In all but one project, the revised targets for employer contributions were not achieved.

Table 2.17: Employer contribution to March 2015, Phase 2

SSC	Project	Original Targets	Revised Targets as at Aug 2014	Project completion achievements Dec 2014
Asset Skills	SPFP 040	£80,325	£6,992	£2,868
Creative and Cultural Skills	SPFP 053	£7,400	£4,359	£3,908
E Skills	SPFP 082	£35,850	£34,525	£34,525
E & U Skills	SPFP 080	£22,200	£29,924	£11,840
IMI	SPFP 068	£45,000	£63,000	£56,850
Improve	SPFP 059	£193,000	£70,213	£54,281
Lantra	SPFP 047	£167,142	£89,093	£23,989
People 1st	SPFP 057	£8,500	N/A	£6,992
People 1st	SPFP 079	£700	£700	0
CITB	SPFP 091	£29,100	£5,196	£1,500
Total		£553,403	£304,002	£196,753

Source: WG project level data, April 2015

2.45 This suggests that SSCs struggled to convince employers to invest in the training.

Participants

2.46 The number of project participants in Phase 2 ranged from 25 to 671 (Table 2.18). The mean average number of participants was 185.

Table 2.18: Project Participants to March 2015, Phase 2

SSC	Project	Original Targets	Revised Targets as at Aug 2014	Project completion achievements Dec 2014*
Asset Skills	SPFP 040	897	600	469
Lantra	SPFP 047	500	803	671
Skills for Justice	SPFP 050	183	222	222
People 1st	SPFP 057	100+	100+	97
Improve	SPFP 059	350	181	173
People 1st	SPFP 066	100	100	45
IMI	SPFP 068	100+	143	130
People 1st	SPFP 075	80	80	87
Creative Skillset	SPFP 077	40	56	44
People 1st	SPFP 079	50	86	97
E & U Skills	SPFP 080	100	124	159
E Skills	SPFP 082	250	251	239
CITB	SPFP 091	164	50	37
CITB	SPFP 091	152	50	25
Total		3,066	2,846	2,495

Source: WG project level data, April 2015

Note: * = numbers higher than in Table 2.4 which counted unique individuals, as some individuals participated more than once.

Apprentices

2.47 The Welsh Government project data indicated that 477 apprentices had completed by December 2014 (Table 2.19). However, we were aware that in the case of project SPFP058 (Higher Apprentice for Legal Services) participants had only achieved half of their two-year Apprenticeship. Therefore, we believe this data might be a mixture of completed and in-progress Apprenticeships.

Table 2.19: Apprentices involved to March 2015, Phase 2

SSC	Project	Original Targets	Revised Targets as at Aug 2014	Project completion achievements Dec 14
Creative and Cultural Skills	SPFP 053	54	Removed	-
Creative Skillset	SPFP 062	20	16	16
Creative Skillset	SPFP 076	20	14	20
E Skills	SPFP 046	108	62	62
People 1 st	SPFP 066	11	11	18
Skills for Justice	SPFP 050	120	218	216
Skills for Justice	SPFP 058	30	27	22
Skills for Justice	SPFP 074	30	21	21
SEMTA	SPFP 054	70	44	44
SkillsActive	SPFP 083	50	45	41
SkillsActive	SPFP 083	25	20	17
Total		538	478	477

Source: WG project level data, April 2015

Employers

2.48 The total number of employers supported during Phase 2 exceeded the revised target (as shown in table 2.20) but is different to the ESF engagement data (Table 2.9).

Table 2.20: Employers supported to March 2015, Phase 2

SSC	Project	Original Targets	Revised Targets as at Aug 2014	Project completion achievements Dec 14
Creative and Cultural Skills	SPFP 053	530	50	31
E Skills	SPFP 082	100	106	99
People 1st	SPFP 057	49	49	147
CITB	SPFP 091	44	20	7
Improve	SPFP 059	200	80	76
Total		923	305	360

Source: WG project level data, April 2015

Value for Money

2.49 At a very simple level, the cost per participant works out at £3,336 (Table 2.21) over the life of the SPFP programme (accepting that it is not entirely clear how the participants are spread across different types of involvement, such as short courses, Apprenticeships and masters qualifications; plus, the projects were investing in the development of infrastructure rather than pure training delivery).

Table 2.21: Value for Money, by Phase

	Actual spend	Participants	Cost per participant
Phase 1	6,719,527	3,216	2,089
Phase 2	11,637,619	2,287	5,088
Total	18,357,146	5,503	3,336

Source: WEFO European Funding Claim Reports

2.50 This compared well with wider estimates⁸ of cost per apprentice, for example, the Skills Funding Agency estimated that the cost of delivering a Level 2 adult Apprenticeship in Business and Administration in 2010 was around £2,700 and was £16,300 for an advanced Apprenticeship (Level 3) in Engineering for a 16 to 18-year-old.

2.51 Further modelling work to undertake counterfactual impact evaluation was not possible, due to the very small numbers of respondents and the difficulty of establishing the exact course that learners participated in.

Summary

2.52 Overall targets were revised in September 2014, making most targets much closer to performance compared with original targets.

2.53 Overall performance of the SPFP programme was close to, but just below, revised targets, including , 99 per cent of participants, and, 95 per cent of employers assisted. This indicates a good performance against revised targets.

2.54 Performance measured against the original targets was more modest with around 76% of expenditure achieved and 84% of participants engaged.

2.55 Performance against the ESF Convergence target for delivery was, below target (88 per cent of the target for participants and 74 per cent of the target for employers assisted/supported). Delivery in ESF Convergence areas exceeded the output indicator for BME participants (141 per cent) but was below the output indicators for older participants (77 per cent) and female participants (67 per cent). Performance against the ESF Convergence target for expenditure was higher (95 per cent) than for non-ESF (92 per cent).

2.56 The balance of delivery in terms of geography is broadly in line with the population of employers and employees.

2.57 Phase 2 only had targets for expenditure, private income, participants and employers. The Phase 2 revised targets for expenditure and employer contributions were both below budget at 91 per cent and 62 per cent respectively. The Phase 2 revised target for participants was exceeded (106 per cent) and the employers assisted/supported revised target was not achieved (59 per cent). This suggests a mixed performance for Phase 2 at a programme level.

3 Performance and Experiences of Sector Skills Councils

Introduction

3.1 This section reviews evidence of SSC's project delivery, their effectiveness in engaging providers on to the project, the sustainability of provision, innovation in training development/delivery and challenges in project delivery. Evidence was generated from interviews with SSCs, providers, employers and project-level evaluators as well as the documentary review of final reports.

Evidence of Strong Project Rationale

3.2 A review of project proposals and interviews with SSCs evidenced that all SSCs developed a strong evidence base that demonstrated the need for each project. SSCs engaged with a range of methods to evidence the needs of the employers in the sector and to ensure that projects raised and widened overall skills levels of participants. These included:

- use of existing LMI as evidence of skills gaps
- undertaking skills needs research and analysis to identify recruitment issues skills needs and skills gaps in the current workforce
- developing and piloting qualifications in Phase 1 to establish demand.

3.3 Consultations with SSCs evidenced considerable activity was undertaken with employers prior to the proposal or just after receiving information that the proposals were accepted by Welsh Government. Many evaluation reports evidenced the skills needs being addressed by SSC projects. Below are three such examples.

- **Creative and Cultural Skills SPFP053, Apprenticeship Development and Digital Opportunities for Creative Industries in Wales:** A Sector Skills Assessment (2011) identified a large number of generalist courses and qualifications rather than courses directed at the specific needs of sector employers. They established problems with recruitment and deficits in IT skills or software skills. In our view, this audit provided a solid and compelling evidence base to inform the broader development and testing of digital skills courses in Wales, particularly in geographical locations beyond south Wales⁹.

- **e-skills SPFP046 – IT professional Apprenticeships in Wales:** 3,100 new IT and Telecoms professionals are needed in Wales each year, with technical and business skills increasingly in demand. Though employers see the attractiveness of employing talented young people as an alternative to graduate recruitment, IT Apprenticeships are currently underutilised in Wales. More Apprentices at Level 3 and above are needed therefore to address current and future skills issues and enable growth¹⁰.
- **E & U Skills SPFP080 – Low Carbon Energy and Marine Power Institute:** In 2013, Energy and Utility Skills undertook detailed labour market intelligence research into the low carbon and renewable sector in Wales...The research identified developmental needs across the sector...training delivered in the low carbon and renewable sector was fragmented with no formalised framework or balance in regional delivery. Much of the training delivered within the sector was either generic, such as those typically offered at Further or Higher Education Institutes, or more sector / job specific training that was either delivered in-house or through private training providers on an ad-hoc basis. As a result of this, there was no recognised industry specific standard qualification – the lack of which contributed to there being different competence levels and skill needs among the workforce¹¹.

3.4 The range of evidence generated gave SSCs a reliable platform from which to develop new qualifications to meet the changing demand of sectors.

Engagement of Employers

3.5 As the performance data shows, the engagement of employers in Phase 2 was a challenge and many SSCs underperformed against original targets and needed to re-profile.

3.6 Employer engagement methods varied, some SSCs engaged employers in the development phases or as a result of continuous project delivery from Phase 1.

3.7 Some providers reported successful engagement strategies, which were built on extending existing relationships with businesses and having a greater understanding of how to promote the opportunity. This was particularly notable among providers that were involved in Phase 1 of the SPFP programme activity and had developed strong relations with the SSC.

'We were involved in the first phase of SPFP, and this programme has followed on from that. We knew that employers needed this training, and we have close links with employers in the area.' (FE College)

3.8 However, some SSCs reported quite substantial problems with providers having appropriate networks and not putting in sufficient resources to ensure they met contractual requirements. Problems with the engagement of employers either delayed the start of delivery or led to fewer employers being engaged than originally targeted and projects being re-profiled. A number of SSCs re-profiled their employer engagement targets as a result of difficulties or delays in engagement.

'In the early stages, one of the major challenges was a lack of learners coming onto the courses. This was a primarily because providers were not effective at engaging employers. We were particularly disappointed with some of the larger colleges who did so badly at delivering against the contract that we had to terminate their contract.' (SSC)

3.9 There were three projects that experienced great difficulties recruiting employers and where, in consultations and reporting, SSCs reported difficulties in administrative issues and in stimulating demand: Lantra's SPFP047 Food and Drink Skills Project, Improve's SPFP059 Tasty Bites and Tasty Networks and Construction Skills' SPFP091 Sustainable Construction Learning Sites. The first two of these projects were considerable in scope and funding allocated, and more resources and planning needed to have been committed by the SSC to ensure early engagement of employers.

3.10 There were a small number of projects that delivered apprenticeship frameworks where the value of the additional elements of the apprenticeship (Essential Skills Wales Qualifications and Employer Rights and Responsibilities (ERR)) were questioned by learners and employers.

- 3.11 It seemed likely that in some circumstances, SSCs were promoting the apprenticeship model because the model of delivery was free and a priority for Welsh Government, rather than focussing on developing or agreeing learning options that were more appropriate, but would result in a cost to the employer. However, apprenticeships were not the only method through which qualifications could be gained. Bespoke training, for example, delivered through Lantra SPFP047, People 1st SPFP079, Creative and Cultural Skills SPFP053 and e-Skills SPFP082, appeared to have been highly valued by employers and learners, particularly the short duration and that the courses were designed to develop particular knowledge around an area of work such as lean manufacturing, e-marketing and project management.
- 3.12 Employer contributions were lower than anticipated at £187,987, down £115,742 from the revised targets. Reasons for the lower levels of financial contribution were not known, but could be an indication that employers did not value the training sufficiently to pay for it, (or that the training was cheaper than originally forecast and required a lower level of contribution from employers).
- 3.13 In addition, a number of project evaluations reported that on-going demand for apprenticeships, in particular, was in doubt due to the costs associated with either recruiting an apprentice and/or with paying for the training.

*'Encouraging employers to participate and take on an apprentice is likely to be an on-going challenge, particularly as some funding support opportunities, for example, the Young Recruits Programme may not be available after 2014 to support employers' costs of taking on an apprentice.'*¹²

'Higher Apprenticeship for Legal Services might well increase the legal sector's engagement in apprenticeships, if only because it offers a totally new route into the legal profession. However, in reality, employer demand for Higher Apprenticeships for Legal Services is likely to be fairly limited, quite simply because of the sheer numbers of appropriately qualified graduates looking to enter the sector.' (Skills for Justice SPFP058 Employer)

Sustainability of Delivery

3.14 All SSCs, involved in delivery (18), focussed on developing the potential for the provision to continue beyond the funded programme. At the time of writing time, it was difficult to report with certainty, the extent to which providers would continue to deliver the range of qualifications generated under this programme. Not many project evaluations reported on this issue. However, consultations with providers and SSCs indicated that some delivery will continue. The circumstances supporting sustainability of delivering included:

- apprenticeships being mainstreamed
- SSCs confident of sourcing additional funding to deliver free/subsidised training
- a high demand from employers and evidence that employers were willing to pay for training.

3.15 Projects that evidenced potential sustainability included:

- People 1st SPFP066: the Shared Apprenticeship programme, which was very successful, had support from learners and employers. People 1st intended on producing a guide to support the model of delivery and would work with providers to promote on-going delivery.
- Skills Active SPFP083: there was demand for both the elite sports and outdoor Level 3 Apprenticeships, and good relationships had been developed with providers, although the elite sports Apprenticeship had a complex chain of delivery which might need to be reviewed going forward.
- Skills for Justice SPFP058: the higher level Apprenticeship for legal services was recruiting another round of learners as the programme came to an end and the Apprenticeship had been mainstreamed, although demand going forward was somewhat uncertain due to high numbers of graduates entering the market. The providers were engaged in dialogue with other legal services firms and were actively promoting the mainstreamed framework.

- Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI) SPFP068: Workforce Development in Vehicle Diagnostics had a high level of interest in this training due to garages needing to understand the application of the diagnostics to remain competitive, although there was some concern over the future cost of the training to the employer. The training providers were pursuing funding to continue delivery.
- Creative Skillset SPFP076: Level 2 in Fashion and Textiles was supported by providers who saw a market for the Apprenticeship but needed to stimulate demand by going in to schools to raise awareness of the learning pathways.
- Atradius SPFP084: two year Graduate Programme in Financial Services. It is hoped this project will continue and Atradius and partner businesses are seeking additional funding.
- Creative and Cultural Skills SPFP053: Higher Level Apprenticeship Development and Digital Opportunities for the Creative Industries in Wales: the platform developed as part of this project would facilitate access to training and development materials. However, the SSCs needed to prioritise the continued development of materials and the online platform. The higher level Apprenticeship had interest from providers but this required input from the SSC to ensure engagement of employers and recruitment of learners.
- People 1st SPFP079: Raising Skills of Taxi Drivers: according to the SSC and the evaluators, this programme should continue to be successful due to the training module being delivered online, and good levels of engagement in the product among taxi drivers and their employers. People 1st were liaising with local authorities to continue to promote the App.
- One project, Skills Active SPFP052, developed play work principles at Level 3. This included the development of learning and teaching resources to underpin the qualifications. According to Skills Active, the resources developed were extensive and Play Wales designed and developed valuable resources that would lead to a Level 3 qualification (Award, Certificate or Diploma). Play Wales, who were contracted to write the principles, completed all activities that led to the learning and teaching resources for the Award, Certificate and Diploma. These were all available electronically. The resources were being translated into Welsh at the time of reporting.

3.16 Two projects offered a wide range of training through a number of private training providers and it was difficult to comment on the sustainability of delivery from these projects. These were Lantra SPFP047: Food and Drinks Skills Project and Improve SPFP059 Tasty Bites and Tasty Networks. Both projects offered a range of new and accredited or endorsed training modules of short duration, delivered in the workplace. However, according to one training provider and an employer engaged in the training, demand for the training going forward was uncertain, mainly due to the cost of training, but also due to challenges of raising awareness of the training among employers.

3.17 There were some projects that faced quite considerable challenges in ensuring continued delivery beyond the life of the SPFP funding. These were:

- CITB SPFP091: Sustainable Construction Learning Sites. This project struggled to raise demand for the training and was considered by the evaluators to be the result of a poor evidence base regarding employers' need for the training.
- Creative Skillset SPFP052: Level 4 Apprenticeship in Creative and Digital Media. There was doubt over the legacy of the Apprenticeship due to cost issues for the employers. Most employers stated that they would not be prepared to increase their financial contribution.
- People 1st SPFP075: Developing a Level 4 Higher Apprenticeship for Chefs. At the end of the funded programme, the SSC failed to get the Apprenticeship accredited by an awarding body. Although the SSC was committed to ensuring it was accredited, there was some uncertainty as to how this would be achieved.
- SEMTA SPFP054: Higher Apprenticeship for Advanced Manufacturing in Wales. This project had some complexity within the delivery of the Apprenticeship framework and the knowledge elements being delivered by HEI conflicted with the Post 16 Work-based Learning funding stream.

- Skills for Justice SPFP050: Apprenticeship in Home Office Policing. In Wales, there was uncertainty as to whether the Apprenticeship would be adopted as the preferred method of training. The police delivered the diploma Level 3 in-house but could not deliver the essential skills element and felt that without further funding, they would not have the budget to purchase Essential Skills delivery in order to complete the Apprenticeship in Home Office Policing.
- Skills for Justice SPFP074: Level 2 and 3 Apprenticeship in Courts, Tribunals and Prosecution. The Apprenticeships had mixed reviews from employers and learners, but this was mainly due to challenges in the delivery. The SSC would need a positive marketing campaign to reignite interest.
- E & U Skills SPFP080: Low Carbon Energy and Marine Power. Although there was considerable support for the institute and a network of providers was been established, the training is new and demand from employers fluctuates.
- Asset Skills SPFP040: Building a Sustainable Training Infrastructure for the Built Environment. This project had considerable problems with FE providers struggling to stimulate demand from employers. Once the support of the SSC is withdrawn, it is very unlikely that providers would continue to engage in the training.
- People 1st SPFP057. Although the take-up of mentoring support for high street retailers was high, the take-up of more traditional training was much harder to generate. Without sustained effort, demand for further training would not continue.

Labour Market Research

3.18 Six SSCs delivered labour market research through SPFP:

- Skills Active SPFP092: LMI into Hair and Beauty
- SEMTA SPFP90: LMI into Advanced Materials and Technology
- Skills for Health SPFP069: LMI into SMEs in the Welsh Health Sector Welsh, demand for Apprenticeships and the role of the Assistant Practitioner in the Welsh Health Sector

- Skills for Justice SPFP048: Research in to the Viability of a Mediation Centre in Wales
- People 1st SPFP044: Research in to Progression Pathways looking at the causes of drop out from Level 1 Professional Cookery Diploma
- e-skills SPFP082: carried out primary research among employers to help articulate employer demand for Level 3 and Level 4 IT Apprenticeships.

3.19 Clearly, having up-to-date information regarding the skills needs and skills gaps within the labour market is important to SSCs. Without grant funding, SSCs were in a position of vulnerability in terms of being able to lead their sector with regard to identifying training and development needs and helping shape provision. SPFP was a vital source of funding to help them ensure that they generated sufficient labour market intelligence.

‘The health sector has changed considerably over the last decade, there is considerable market segmentation and a high number of SMEs. This research has developed our understanding of the landscape.’ (Skills for Health)

‘Colleges tell us that they struggle to recruit and retain learners on to the Level 1 [Professional Cookery Diploma Level 1] and we wanted to do some research to find out why. This research told us that when they get referred from Careers Wales there was a lack of understanding of the skills needs required.’ (People 1st)

3.20 In terms of assessing the extent to which LMI or other forms of research, funded through SPFP, were used by stakeholders to inform future planning and funding arrangements, or to support the development of related spinoff projects and programmes, there was evidence that intelligence generated through Phase 1 achieved this.

3.21 All but four SSCs (e-skills, Skills for Health, Skills for Justice and Improve) were funded to deliver projects as part of the Phase 1 SPFP programme. SSCs were able to develop subsequent bids based on the knowledge generated in the first round. For example, People 1st established the need for chef qualifications during their Phase 1 project delivery, the Institute of the Motor Industry established that the industry needed training in the use of Diagnostics during their delivery of the Phase 1 project, as did Creative Skillset with the piloting of the Level 4 Interactive Digital Media Apprenticeship.

Innovation

3.22 In the majority of cases, evaluation reports did not evidence innovation as a key feature of delivery. However, there were a number of SSCs that developed non-traditional methods of training and development. A few projects demonstrated elements of new ways of delivering training or developing industry expertise.

3.23 People 1st SPFP079, delivered a project through the use of an App that can be downloaded on to any iPhone or iPad. The App was well received by taxi firms, stating the interface was engaging and the quizzes were fun to do when they were waiting for a fare and, learners enjoyed using it. The App was a sustainable resource that could be easily updated. The SSC was promoting it to local authorities who were responsible for the licensing of taxi firms and there was considerable support.

3.24 People 1st SPFP066 also developed an App as part of the Shared Apprenticeship programme. This was a game that helped develop learners' independent thinking, encouraging them to consider issues such as the impact of their workplace on the environment and how they could reduce it. Learners reported that the App was fun and easy to use and they discussed some of the issues with other learners at their workplace.

3.25 People 1st SPFP057 developed a working model of mentors who delivered on-site business development training for high street retailers. The evaluation stated that the programme had potential to deliver business support and stimulate more demand for training through the mentor, mentee relationship.

3.26 e-skills SPFP046 developed a new Level 3 IT Professional Apprenticeship designed to be delivered by WBL providers and FEIs, harnessing the expertise of both providers, with FEIs responsible for the knowledge aspects of the course, and WBL providers managing the WBL assessment and learner management aspects. The Apprenticeship also included e-learning units and a professional profile tool that supported learners to develop appropriate pathways. e-skills created a new flexible funding model which enabled providers from the FE and WBL sector to come together to deliver one training offer.

3.27 Creative and Cultural Skills designed a portal to assist learners to navigate their way through continuing professional development opportunities. This was supported by the development of one day digital courses delivered by Cyfle and promoted through social media. The uptake of learners was much higher than expected and there was potential for the site and provision to continue.

Challenges in Project Delivery

3.28 In many cases, SSCs appeared to have been over optimistic in their target setting for engaging employers and learners. Many evaluation reports evidenced under performance of learner recruitment and SSCs agreed to re-profile targets with the Welsh Government. This was confirmed by contract managers in the Welsh Government. Through consultations with each SSC and a review of the evaluation reports, there was evidence of a number of common challenges faced by SSCs that affected performance. This is detailed in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 Challenges in Delivery Projects

- Difficulties in the commissioning process (both the process and in procuring providers with experience to delivering similar training).
- Difficulty in engaging employers, due to provider capacity and lack of awareness of the training offer among employers.
- Time frames – developing and delivering using FE colleges within 2 years – particularly a higher level apprenticeship.
- Drop-Out and not all apprentices completing all elements of the framework.
- Joint SSC project delivery was not truly collaborative.
- Level of resources required to deliver the programme.

- 3.29 A small number of SSCs reported problems in the commissioning of providers. Some of these problems seemed to be due to a lack of experience and SSCs making errors in the commissioning process and some due to the types of provision that SSCs wanted to procure. A small number stated that clearer guidance at the outset would have helped prevent some problems. Problems in the commissioning process affected two projects specifically, Lantra SPFP047 and Improve SPFP059.
- 3.30 Training was delayed quite considerably due to the problems with procurement which affected project performance. One SSC reported considerable frustration with the Welsh Government stating that decisions on the training they wished to procure were too 'risk averse', resulting in very little scope to deliver innovative training. However, the Welsh Government stated that the training was not broad enough in scope and would have a limited applicability to employers. One of the main frustrations was an apparent lack of detailed feedback to the SSC about why their training proposals had been rejected.
- 3.31 Creative Skillset had difficulties commissioning a provider for Level 2 and Level 3 Apprenticeships in Fashion and Textiles indicating a gap in provision.
- 3.32 Following commissioning, a number of SSCs reported that providers had difficulty recruiting employers. Some SSCs reported problems with providers lacking strong relationships with businesses to promote the training offer, for example, as part of the pathway to digital growth (SPFP082).
- 'There has been a huge amount of work put into recruiting apprentices both by providers and e-skills, over and above what was expected to be needed for the project. It has taken some time for the marketing messages to reach employers.'*¹³
- 3.33 People 1st had to spend considerable time and effort developing interest in training among high street retail businesses.
- 3.34 Asset Skills (SPFP040) reported considerable challenges with providers not prioritising engagement of employers, resulting in Asset Skills withdrawing their contract because of poor performance.
- 3.35 Many SSCs reported that the delivery timescales were considerably shorter than the two years originally envisaged.

'By the time we got the contract signed and the funding secured, we were well in to April [2013], and this gave us little time to start talking to colleges for the next academic year. It all ended up a bit rushed.' (SSC)

- 3.36 A number of providers also commented on the problems in delivering training within the project timeframe. Indeed, there were many projects where the apprenticeships were on-going at the time the programme completed.
- 3.37 Two of the three Skills for Justice delivery projects had apprentices that were part way through the programme at the end of the funded SPFP programme and were having to negotiate on funds for continuation of learning to ensure apprentices could complete their framework. We were also aware that many evaluation reports reported a lower figure than the target due to learners not completing within the timeframe.
- 3.38 This was particularly challenging where SSCs were working within sectors that traditionally had a lower level of engagement with staff training, such as retail.

*'The tight timescales of the project presented significant challenges in delivering this campaign. The evaluation demonstrates how retailers can initially be reluctant to engage...the process of changing attitudes can take considerable time and effort...'*¹⁴

- 3.39 Retention of learners, in terms of completing whole apprenticeship frameworks, was lower than expected in two projects: Asset Skills SPFP040 and SEMTA SPFP054. Asset Skills lost 24% of learners due to issues relating to the partnership having insufficient time to develop smooth delivery of the qualification.

"The project experienced a high Early Leaver rate of 24 per cent with the vast majority of leavers occurring in the last three months of the project. Much of this was due to provider optimism and failure to address candidate issues as they fell behind schedule. However, both the Energy Level 3 and Facilities Management Level 4 proved to be more complex in delivery than first thought." (SSC)

3.40 SEMTA SPFP054 also suffered a 30 per cent drop-out due in part to: problems with completing the NVQ element of the programme, learners leaving due to frustration with the amount of paper work involved in order for the SSCs to claim the learner engagement and learners reporting a lack of time to attend training.

3.41 A number of SSCs reported underestimating the resource requirements to administer and deliver the project.

'I had no administrative support, so I was effectively doing it all, managing the project, doing all the paper work and responding to problems as they arose. Next time we do this, I'm definitely putting in some admin support.' (SSC)

3.42 In a number of SSCs, resource dedicated to the management of SPFP projects was limited to one or two people. It was evident at the time of reporting that project staff found other employment outside of the SSC, as there was no further funding available for their posts after the end of SPFP. There was a level of uncertainty among most SSCs regarding any continuation of activity.

'It's a shame that it's come to an end. We've developed some really good relationships with providers and employers. We're hopeful that we can continue with some alternative funding, but at the moment it's uncertain.' (SSC)

3.43 SSCs have reduced considerably in terms of resources since the grant funding was withdrawn by the UK Government in 2012 and since the completion of SPFP. Evidence of this was clear when trying to set up interviews with SSCs and many staff had already moved on. Some SSCs have restructured considerably in order to continue to operate at all in Wales.

'The withdrawal of the regional board structure of Asset Skills across Wales has reduced the extent of direct links with employers. At one time, we had regional directors within Wales.' (Asset Skills).

3.44 The reduction in SSCs' presence in Wales seemed certain to affect the extent to which SSCs could drive forward the performance of providers to continually develop demand for qualifications that were developed through SPFP.

- 3.45 Section Six looks in more detail at delivery and the extent to which the provider network has extended capacity and is in a position to continue to offer the training developed.
- 3.46 The collaborative project delivered by Lantra SPSP047 did not succeed in evidencing the benefits of collaborative work. Although there was a presence of the three SSCs (Improve, Lantra and People 1st on the Steering Group), their involvement in shaping delivery was limited according to the evaluation (Wavehill 2015)¹⁵. Both Improve and People 1st had their own SPFP projects that overlapped with a key element of the delivery which was to ‘develop and deliver innovative training tailored to a small number of targeted employers’. The conclusion of the evaluation was that this limited the effectiveness of the ‘joint approach’.
- 3.47 There was no evidence of other forms of collaboration among SSCs, either at a project level or at the programme level. Future programme delivery could include greater levels of collaboration designed in to the management of programme delivery.

Feedback from Stakeholders Regarding SSC Performance

- 3.48 Despite the many challenges in delivering the projects, providers and employers interviewed as part of the evaluation provided positive feedback on the performance of the SSC and on their experience in delivering training.

Feedback from Providers

- 3.49 Many providers had worked for the SSC previously and reported strengthening existing relationships as a result of SPFP.

‘We’ve been delivering for IMI for many years and have developed a strong relationship with them...The management has been very good, the procurement process straight forward and the project has been a real success.’ (FE College).

‘We’ve worked for Improve before and have always had a really good experience.’ (WBL Provider Manager)

‘The SSC [People 1st] was very positive, particularly at the beginning. The meetings at the start were very helpful.’ (FE College)

'They [Skills for Justice] have been very responsive and demanding at the same time, but we have developed a good relationship and hope to continue delivering for the police.' (WBL Provider Manager)

'The project has strengthened our relationship with e-skills. We have got to know their staff much better and built stronger relationships.' (FE College)

'The SSC [SEMTA] have performed consistently well over the years, and now they are disappearing. They have been the voice of the industry, and we are concerned regarding the impact of their loss on the sector.' (WBL Provider)

3.50 There was evidence that, in general, SSCs performed well, and project delivery across the SPFP programme was well managed by SSCs. SSCs convened steering groups which worked well and facilitated candid discussions among providers and employers engaged in the training. Many project evaluation studies reported similarly to this:

*'Management and delivery arrangements have worked well overall throughout the Level 2 Fashion and Textiles Apprenticeship. Good levels of communication between Coleg Sir Gar and employers have been developed from the outset enabling on-going improvements to be made to the delivery.'*¹⁶

3.51 However, there were examples of where the difficulties, experienced in project delivery, were perceived to be the result of poor levels of communication and organisation by the SSC.

3.52 Some providers reported insufficient marketing of the training opportunities and poor engagement strategies by SSCs which led to problems in the early phases of delivery. Some providers had to spend time engaging employers, which they had not factored for in terms of their resources. One or two referenced referrals for training received from the SSC which were not appropriate. This indicated inadequate discussions between SSCs and businesses regarding the purpose and content of the training.

3.53 Some providers reported a lack of specifics regarding the level of engagement required in the programme at the start of project delivery. These comments suggested a greater level of communication was required, but might also be symptomatic of SSCs being under-resourced. It is recommended that in the future, there is at least one full time role dedicated to the management of the project who also has administrative support.

Feedback from Employers

3.54 In many cases, prior to engagement on SPFP, many employers seemed unaware of SSCs. This could be a function of SSCs' reach, or an indication that SSCs were engaging employers who, previously had not been involved with sectoral training initiatives. Many employers increased their awareness of and engagement with SSCs as a result of SPFP.

3.55 The employer survey data generated as part of this programme indicated that three quarters of employers had no relationship with the SSC previous to SPFP. Although the sample size was very small (52 employers) and findings are not a reliable indicator, it does suggest new levels of engagement with employers were achieved. In particular, where SSCs led projects through steering groups, employers had the chance to meet with the SSC and to learn about their role. In addition, employers attended research and dissemination events where the SSCs promoted their projects.

3.56 Of those responding to the employer survey, over half (n=29), stated that they would continue to work with the SSC. Certainly if further funding was to be made available, there were relationships that were developed through SPFP Phase 2 that could be continued.

Summary

3.57 SSCs developed a clear rationale for project delivery based on research with employers and from Labour Market research generated as part of Phase 1 and Phase 2.

- 3.58 SSCs experienced challenges in engaging employers and this resulted in lower than targeted achievements. A small number of SSCs experienced quite considerable problems in the early phases.
- 3.59 A number of qualifications and apprenticeships developed, evidenced on-going demand and, if mainstreamed, were likely to continue. There were a number of apprenticeship frameworks and provision that were less likely to be continued without further substantial investment but would need providers to be proactively engaging employers.
- 3.60 Overall, the majority of SSCs appeared to have managed their projects well, mediated between providers and employer and delivered a range of training. However, they experienced challenges in engaging employers and some delivery was not been taken forward due to low or no demand. There were some examples of innovation that were valued by employers in terms of the flexibility this provided to the training offer.

4 Impact on Employers

Introduction

- 4.1 This section details evidence of the impact of SPFP on employers. It combines the quantitative evidence generated from the employer survey with evidence derived from employer case studies and the findings from each project evaluation report. Due to the low numbers responding to the employer survey (N=51), generalisations of impact among the SPFP employer population cannot be made.

Engagement of Employers on to SPFP

- 4.2 In many projects, SSCs engaged with employers during the proposal writing stage of SPFP 2. This was either informally, to establish their likelihood of participating in apprenticeship programmes, or as part of research to establish sector skills gaps and skills needs within business. For projects that had a specific focus on key sectors/organisations this was a necessity, for example, the Skills for Justice's Apprenticeship programmes for the police, the legal services and the courts. The demand for apprenticeships needed testing before submitting firm proposals. In these cases, employer engagement was secured at the start of delivery.
- 4.3 Most SSCs began promotional activities after the contract had been awarded. Some held engagement events to launch projects, inviting employers and training providers to help promote the training opportunities. Other SSCs advertised opportunities through social media such as Facebook adverts and tweets. An example of how effective this approach could be, was detailed in the evaluation of the Creative and Cultural Skills report¹⁷.

'The Strand 1 report highlights the effectiveness of targeted marketing and communications through social media channels, particularly geographical and sector targeting campaigns through Facebook; for instance targeting business people in Caernarfon who had an interest in Craft. Facebook adverts were run for each of the courses and resulted in 2,624 website clicks and a reach of 191,917 individuals. Twitter was also tested to promote the CPD courses, resulting in a total of 5,023 impressions and 90 tweet engagements.'

- 4.4 Where SSCs engaged with providers who had strong links with relevant businesses, project delivery went smoothly. For example, at Coleg Llandrillo Rhyl, trainers developed strong relationships with the motor industry and were able to effectively promote the training offer directly with employers. Similarly, Myrick Training worked closely with the Mid Wales Manufacturing Group with a membership of over 130 businesses. There were other examples, such as Creative and Skillset contracting with Cyfle, who also had strong links with industry. Some SSCs were not so fortunate and contracted with providers who had no, or very limited, links and this presented problems in recruiting learners.
- 4.5 In many cases, providers were contracted to engage employers and were given targets as part of their contractual agreement. In most cases, this appeared to have been reasonably successful, although profiles were reduced, in part due to problems with providers engaging sufficient numbers of employers.
- 4.6 The employer survey revealed that over one third of employers (18) highlighted that their organisation had been involved with the training provider before the programme. Over a quarter of the sample of employers (n=14) proactively sought training by contacting providers.

Table 4.1: How employers became involved in the programme (numbers)

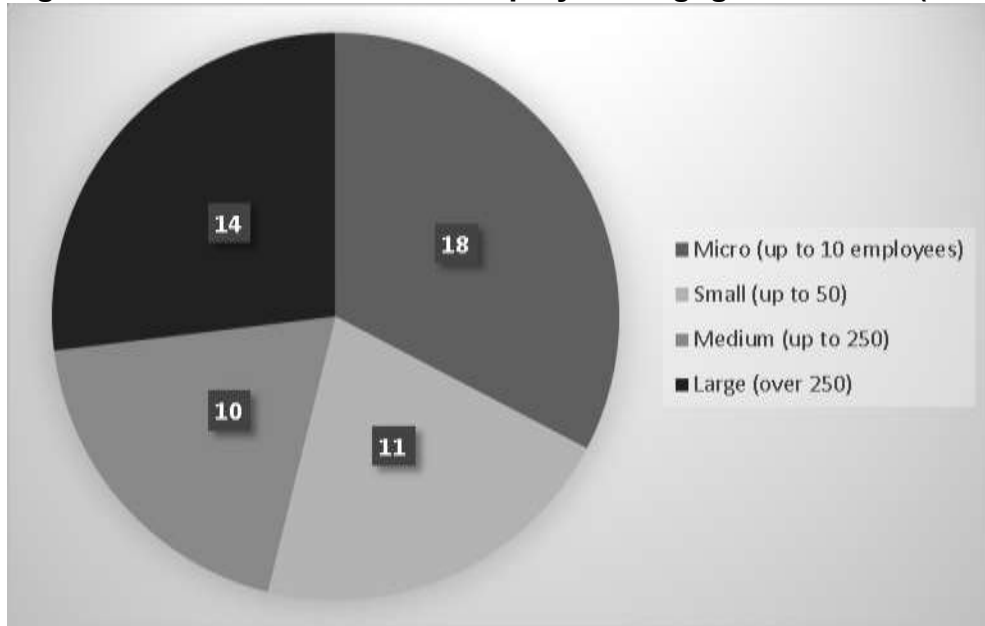
	Count
Approached by Sector Skills Council (SSC)	18
Approached by training provider	10
Heard about it and proactively made contact	14
Approached by another organisation	4
Don't Know	5
Total	51

Source: YCL Employer E-Survey

Base: All (51). Respondents were asked 'How did you become involved in the programme?' Closed question, single response.

4.7 Data from the survey suggested that SPFP engaged a range of business sizes.

Figure 4.1: Business Sizes of Employers Engaged on SPFP (numbers)



Source: Source: YCL Employer E-Survey
Base: All (51). Respondents were asked, 'What is the size of your business?' Closed question, single response.

4.8 Eighteen employers, in the sample surveyed, were micro businesses and ten were businesses employing up to 50 employees.

4.9 This would concur with a programme that was aimed at delivering training in a wide range of sectors and for businesses of all sizes. Consultations with SSCs such as Creative and Cultural Skills and IMI showed that many of the businesses benefiting from the training were self-employed or micro-sized companies.

'We wanted to work with small businesses as many can't afford to spend money on training and developing the business and don't know how to market their business. This has been a great opportunity for them to learn these skills.'
(Creative and Cultural Skills).

4.10 At the other end of the scale was engagement of larger businesses employing 250 or more employees, such as large hotel chains through People 1st and food manufacturing companies as part of the Lantra pilot.

4.11 Employers surveyed were from a range of sectors with the most frequently (7) cited being manufacturing. This was possibly the result of the significant number of employers engaged through the Lantra project (n=599). Nineteen SSCs and one Employer successfully bid for SPFP funding, which helped ensure a range of businesses from different sectors. Other areas of operation specified by employers included a wide range of sectors including Police, Education and Training, Engineering, and Renewable Energy.

Business Rationale for Accessing SPFP Support.

4.12 Consultations with employers and providers evidenced that businesses engaged in SPFP because they recognised a need to train staff but also because the training was free or highly subsidised. In many evaluation reports, there was evidence that employers valued the opportunity to train staff through SPFP.

'I was looking for someone to help me with the business. I set up a couple of years ago and I couldn't keep pace with the growth of the business and my increasing workload so I was looking for someone to take on some of this workload.' (SPFP Employer).

4.13 The programme provided considerable flexibility with regard to employers qualifying for support. Learning was delivered to many people who were self-employed or worked in micro businesses (fewer than ten employers). In these cases, learning was often of a short duration, or/and was delivered online such as learning to taxi drivers included as part of the People 1st SPFP 079 project focussing on raising skills of taxi drivers. In other projects, learning was more traditionally delivered, over a period of 12-18 months and involved periods of class related learning and face to face tutorials such as through Creative Skillset's SPFP076. This tailored approach was a key feature and strength of SPFP.

4.14 Only 30 of the 51 employers surveyed were involved in any training. Others were engaged through labour market research and qualification development.

Table 4.21: Business Rationale for Involvement in SPFP (numbers)

	Count
To increase the qualifications of the existing workforce	27
To provide new opportunities for the workforce	27
To support the development of qualifications in the sector	24
To improve training within the business	22
To gain free training	16
To train new entrants to the workforce	15
To increase the workforce capacity of the business	11
To achieve Corporate Social Responsibility goals	6
Other	7

Source: YCL Employer E-Survey

Base: All (51). Respondents were asked 'What was the business rationale for becoming involved?' Closed Question, Multiple Response.

4.15 The majority of employers were engaged in the training in order to increase the qualifications of their existing workforce and to improve training opportunities for the workforce. One organisation interviewed was very keen to improve the local image of his business and, therefore, engaging in staff training and development was very important.

'We struggle to recruit locally and we wanted people to see our business as a local business they could invest in and be proud of. Delivering this training was a great way of demonstrating we are a business that invests in people.' (Employer)

4.16 Some employers engaged in the programme by agreeing to support an apprenticeship during the life of the SPFP programme. Examples of this were provided in Creative Skillset SPFP062 and SPFP076 and People 1st SPFP066. A key motivation of employers was to improve their capacity as a business by employing someone with relevant skills and a keenness to work with the company, while at the same time, providing an opportunity for the apprentice to learn new skills.

'I am a micro business, and it is very difficult for me to consider recruitment without the support of additional funding.' (Employer)

4.17 In a number of reports and case study findings, it was reported that apprentices had gained employment in a related career if not with the employer at the end of the programme.

4.18 Ten employers cited that free training was a part of their motivation to engage in training. This concurred with responses through employer, provider and SSC interviews, where the likelihood of employers engaging in further training was very much dependent upon whether the training was going to be free or highly subsidised. Indeed, many providers stated they were uncertain of the potential to deliver training in the future if there was a cost to the training.

Training Received

4.19 A considerable amount of training delivered was developed specifically to meet sector needs following on from research and consultations as well as delivery undertaken as part of SPFP Phase 1. Bespoke training, developed as a result, was often short in duration, delivered over a half or a full day and sometimes involved online resources and exercises to support learning. One group of employers developed and delivered a Masters qualification.

Table 4.3: Training Received (numbers)

	Count
Bespoke Training/knowledge Development (one day or short course)	18
Apprenticeships	12
Other accredited training (i.e. Diploma, NVQ, accredited units)	11
Don't Know	1
N/A	2

Source: YCL Employer E-Survey
 Base: 30 employers who answered yes to delivering some training to staff. Respondents were asked 'What type of training was received?' Closed question, multiple response.

4.20 An example of bespoke courses include a number of accredited qualifications developed by E&U Skills for the energy and utilities sector, such as organisation behaviour safety and working at height. Improve SPFP059 delivered training including food labelling, practical food safety and lean manufacturing, and Construction Skills SPFP091 developed a number of short courses to develop sustainable construction techniques.

4.21 Twelve employers responding to the survey had learners undertaking an apprenticeship. At the time of surveying employers, eight had completed their apprenticeship.

Quality of the Training Received

4.22 The survey suggested that the majority of employers were happy with the training provision with 27 survey respondents rating the provider’s performance as either good or very good and 28 stating it met their expectation. This was an important finding (when considering the sampling error, the responses could vary up to 29 or down to 25 employers) and one that was largely supported in the evaluation reports and from interviews with providers and employers.

Table 4.4: How research/training/qualification has impacted business (numbers)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	NA
Has been valuable to my business to date	2	3	4	20	17	1	4
Has been valuable to my sector to date	2	2	6	17	16	1	7
Will be valuable to my business in the future	3	-	7	21	18	-	2
Will be valuable to my sector in the future	2	2	5	19	19	-	4

Source: YCL Employer E-Survey

Base: All (51). Respondents were asked ‘To what extent to you agree with the following, the research/qualification/training....’ Closed question, single response.

4.23 The majority of employers felt the training had been, and would continue to be, valuable to their business and sector. However five employers disagreed (or strongly disagreed) it had been valuable to their business and four disagreed (or strongly disagreed) it had been valuable to their sector.

4.24 Employers were also asked to rate the performance of the provider. The majority (27) rated the provider as good or very good and only one employer rated the provider as poor.

4.25 Examples of evidence provided in reports are shown in Figure 4.2

Figure 4.2: Employers Views of the Quality of Provision

‘All employers responding to the survey would recommend the Level 4 Higher Apprenticeship in Creative and Digital Media to another employer in the sector.’
(Creative Skillset SPFP062 evaluation report)

'The course was very good; I wish the course had been longer so he, (the learner), could have picked up even more skills'. (Employer, Institute of Motor Industry SPFP068).

'The training has been impressive with a lot being offered to the apprentices. Other staff have been jealous, as the apprentices immerse themselves in the learning environment and visit different environments.' (Employer, Skills Active, SPFP083)

'The rotation worked very well. One apprentice, in particular, had several good ideas from working with another employer, which we implemented and benefited from. Working with three employers clearly benefited all our apprentices...' (Employer, People 1st SPFP066)

'I rate the programme very highly and the level of skills it brings is great.' (Employer People 1st (SPFP075)

4.26 Where training was delivered through trialling different methods of delivery, there was evidence that employers supported the greater scope and flexibility of provision being offered. This was exemplified in interviews with employers involved in the People 1st project SPFP066 that delivered a Shared Apprenticeship model of delivery.

Figure 4.3: People 1st Shared Apprenticeship Delivery in Hospitality

People 1st engaged key employers in the hospitality business, including Park Plaza Hotel in Cardiff, the Holiday Inn Express, Holland Hotel in Cardiff the Best Western Hotel at Llanelli and Machynys Golf Club in Llanelli among others. The Shared Apprenticeship enabled learners to experience two or three different work settings during their Apprenticeship, which enabled them to draw from a range of experiences of hotel and restaurant management. *'It gives people an insight in to the diversity of the industry...it's also good for the learner's confidence to rotate across different employers.'* (Provider). The project achieved three different models of shared Apprenticeships across Cardiff, Powys and Carmarthenshire with three training providers (one WBL and two FE colleges) recruited to deliver. The evaluation report concluded that the added value of the Shared Apprenticeship delivery model was largely proven. Eighteen learners were recruited on to the programme and 16 completed the Apprenticeship showing a high level of retention. Employers were

supportive of the innovative approach.

'I think it's important to support any new initiative to bring young people in to the industry, and it's difficult to find the right young people.' (Employer 1)

'This scheme will attract people who might not otherwise enter the industry and who become more widely skilled.' (Employer 2)

'The idea is good. Finding talent is difficult. It is imperative the scheme carries on. We have to think more widely in this sector.' (Employer 3)

Learners themselves supported the idea and reported having a very positive experience.

'I would always do a Shared Apprenticeship. You learn much more, and it is more interesting to see different employers and to work in different types of jobs.' (Learner)

'It was all very nice and supportive - as was my training provider.' (Learner)

'It all went smoothly, it is a good thing to do when you are really not sure what career path to follow. You learn a lot quickly about various jobs and roles, so the rotation is an important part of that.' (Learner)

'I liked working in the three different places. It also helps when you are thinking about what job is right for you. It was good to see how different kitchens work, good experience, got a qualification and got a good job. Good result.' (Learner)

Source: Teevan Final Report (2014)¹⁸

4.27 There were other examples of businesses benefiting from innovative approaches to delivery, such as in the People 1st project The Thriving High Street (SPFP057).

This project involved consultants with research expertise developing relationships with employers and providing mentoring advice.

Figure 4.4: People 1st, Mentoring Scheme for Retailers

Building on relationships forged through SPFP Phase 1 activity, People 1st contracted with a private training provider to deliver the mentoring training across Wales. The project was delivered through a Steering Group that included a representative from a local retailers, the Federation of Small Businesses, the Open University, and the Welsh Language Commission as well as People 1st. Additional Stakeholders included local

councils, and town centre managers who were included as part of the pilot. Training offered through the mentoring included business planning, finance, marketing and sales, multi-channel retailing and logistics. Training was inspired by the Mary Portas Guide to Successful Retailing. The focus was very much on the small independent retailers that needed additional support in a very competitive high street market. In addition to mentoring, the project also included training delivered through three 'skills shops' (two FE providers and a private training provider). The overall approach to mentoring, supported by additional training opportunities, was successful. Although, initially, recruitment was slower than expected, the project exceeded its targets and recruited 67 companies through mentoring and 121 participants on to short training courses.

According to the evaluation report¹⁹, there were clear signs that retailers involved in the pilot experienced rapid improvement in competitiveness and potentially longer term changes, in attitude and behaviour of staff.

'It's definitely made a difference, staff are more enthusiastic and aware now.'
(Employer)

'I can't say enough about it; it's made such a difference.' (Employer)

Training was delivered through a workshop situation that brought other retailers together. This approach had a positive impact on employers attending the training.

'The training has been good, getting to know other retailers who are working towards the same goal.' (Employer)

'The open discussions and group work were very helpful in seeing where we are compared to others.' (Employer)

'I feel excited to go back and start the ball rolling... it's given me more confidence.'
(Employer)

'Fantastic course, definitely left me with valuable skills to use in the workplace.'
(Employer)

Source: Miller Research (2014) SPFP057

4.28 In this example, the training helped to draw on the experience and knowledge within the sector and this approach was valued by participants.

4.29 Employers engaged in the e-skills project (SPFP082) stated how they found the suite of innovative courses available through face to face and online as highly valuable. Just under 200 IT professionals engaged in the online training support programme.

'The trainer at agil8 was an excellent and knowledgeable trainer who adapted the training to suit everyone's learning styles. It was one of [the] best courses I've been on both personally and for my career.' (e-Skills Employer)

'As a small company with limited resources for training, without the support of the Pathways to Digital Growth programme, we would not have been able to give our staff the opportunity for this type of training. The future is looking extremely bright for both the company and my colleagues.' (e-Skills Employer)

4.30 There were also examples of employers expressing some short comings with the training and that the training did not meet expectations. These comments were generated from the survey and so cannot be attributed to any one project.

Figure 4.5: Employer Dissatisfaction with Training Provision

'The training was poor, the provider didn't seem geared up to provide training and support at the right level.' (Employer)

'The training was not in-depth enough, and we felt the provider did not fully understand the nature of our business.' (Employer)

'This was a pilot scheme which started later than it should have. As a result, the course seemed rushed at times. Hence, why I have given a "neither" on the performance of the training provider.' (Employer)

'The provider did not communicate effectively, and we had learners complaining that they didn't know where they were at on their apprenticeship - what was coming next.' (Employer)

'The training was not clearly explained before the course and did not really meet our needs. It was very basic.' (Employer)

Source: YCL Employer E-Survey

4.31 The project evaluation reports also reported problems with some providers not being fully ready to deliver, due to the shortened time frames at the start of delivery or providers not undertaking a detailed enough training needs analysis or struggling to deliver complex qualifications. Some of the challenges were around delivering the essential skills elements of Apprenticeships that affected the extent to which some learners and some employers perceived a benefit of undertaking the Apprenticeship framework as opposed to single qualifications.

4.32 However, as already stated, it appeared that the majority of employers (and learners) overwhelmingly had a positive experience.

Impact of the Training

4.33 There were many examples of employers recognising improved skills, knowledge and confidence of the individual, rather than the immediate business benefits. This was perhaps due to the training being completed recently. In a small number of projects, apprentices had not actually completed the programme of learning and so impact on business performance would not have been evident. The case below provides an example of how training improved the knowledge and confidence of learners, which will ultimately help business performance.

Figure 4.6: Business Benefits of Training in Sustainable Energy (SPFP080)

Training to business as part of the Low Carbon Energy and Marine Power Institute Project by E & U Skills delivered a range of benefits to businesses, according to the evaluators. Businesses interviewed during the final evaluation highlighted that the training had improved confidence across the workforce and made employees more effective and knowledgeable in their positions. Companies also stated that employees undertaking technical training such as working at height had not only increased their employee's skillset but had also opened new areas of opportunity for the organisation.

Businesses who sent employees on courses around health and safety discussed how the training had made employees aware of up to date safety protocol, which had ultimately made the company a safer environment to work. One participant highlighted:

'[The training] instilled confidence and reassurance that if in the event of an emergency and rescue needed, the right skills and practices were learnt and taught very effectively by the trainer.' (Learner)

A number of companies also discussed how it was not simply internal health and safety that had improved, but the training delivered under the institute had made employees more aware of safety issues, which would help to protect the public.

Businesses that sent employees on the energy sector training courses outlined that the course might help reduce the company's spend on training and improve the quality of internal provision across the company, helping to create a better skilled workforce. A number of companies interviewed, during the final Phases of the evaluation, also highlighted that the training carried a high level of acclaim within the sector as employees had obtained an EU skills card and certificate.

Source: Miller Research (2015)²⁰

4.34 A number of employers surveyed had recognised benefit in terms of workforce progression as a result of the training undertaken.

Table 4.5: Employers' Observed Changes in Learners (numbers)

	No Change	Limited Change	Some Change	Considerable Change	Don't Know	N/A
Actual career progression/promotion within the organisation	8	4	7	13	1	6
Potential to progress further within the organisation	5	5	10	12	0	7
Potential to progress onto further learning	6	4	12	11	1	5

Source: YCL Employer E-Survey

Base: 30, all businesses whose project had involved some training. Respondents were asked 'What, if any, changes have you seen in learners?' Closed question, single response.

4.35 The response rates were too low to make any generalisations of impact on career progression, but 25 employers suggested that learners had either been promoted or where likely to progress in the organisation as a result of their learning.

4.36 This was evident in the Skills for Justice Project where a line manager suggested that one of his team members was more likely to be promoted as a result of her studying an Apprenticeship in Administration in Her Majesties Courts and Tribunals.

‘She has completed a very strong application, because she has a greater understanding of what she knows now, and I believe that this time she will get promoted. She has shown commitment doing these qualifications, which will also be recognised.’ (Line Manager)

4.37 Employers reported observing a number of changes in learners’ competency and capacity to undertake their role. Over half (n=17) of employers, who received training, felt they had observed considerable impact on learners’ competence in their job and three fifths (n=18) of employers felt they had observed considerable impact on learners’ confidence at work.

Table 4.6: Observed changes in learners (numbers)

	No Impact	Limited Impact	Some Impact	Considerable Impact	Don't Know	N/A
Competence in their current job role	2	2	9	17	0	0
Improved morale	3	5	8	12	0	2
Greater confidence at work	2	3	6	18	0	1
Greater enthusiasm at work	3	4	11	11	0	1
More willing to take part in company	5	1	12	10	1	1
Willingness to take on responsibility	4	3	11	11	0	1

Source: YCL Employer E-Survey
 Base: 30. Respondents were asked, ‘As a result of the business's involvement with the programme, have you observed any of the following impacts amongst those who participated in the learning?’ Closed question, single response.

4.38 The majority of employers felt that the business’s involvement in the programme had improved the skills and knowledge of learners. The perceived impact on learners’ skills (Table 4.7) should be considered in light of those employers that had learners engaged on apprenticeships, and therefore, had the opportunity to improve their essential skills (literacy, numeracy, ICT).

Table 4.7: Impact on skills (numbers)

	No Impact	Limited Impact	Some Impact	Considerable Impact	Don't Know	N/A
Skills and knowledge of learners	1	3	12	14	0	0
Improved literacy	9	7	6	1	1	6
Improved numeracy	9	7	6	1	1	6
Improved ICT	7	7	7	4	0	5

Source: YCL Employer E-Survey

Base: 30. Respondents were asked 'As a result of the business's involvement with the programme, have you observed any of the following impacts amongst those who participated in the learning?' Closed question, single response.

4.39 Fourteen employers recognised considerable impact on learners' skills and knowledge but fewer on learners' essential skills. More employers recognised some impact on essential skills. However, not all employers were involved in essential skills training. Understanding the impact on essential skills as a direct result of the training is not straight forward.

4.40 The second most cited impact on business performance (either some or considerable impact) were raised workforce productivity and improved customer service.

Table 4.8: Impact on business performance (numbers)

	No Impact	Limited Impact	Some Impact	Considerable Impact	Don't Know	N/A
Improved public image of the organisation	4	3	12	8	1	2
Improved customer service	2	7	6	11	1	3
Raised workforce productivity	4	5	14	4	0	3
Increased organisation competitiveness	3	4	12	6	0	5
Improved efficiency	3	8	10	8	0	1
Increase in sales	10	2	8	3	0	7
Increase in profit	8	6	7	2	0	7
Reduced staff turnover	13	4	5	1	1	6
Reduced absence	15	3	4	1	1	6

Source: YCL Employer E-Survey

Base: 30. Respondents were asked 'Have you observed any of the following impacts to the business performance as a result of the business's involvement with the programme?' Closed question, single response, 'other' option provided but not used.

4.41 Employers felt that involvement with the programme had impacted the business performance in a number of ways. The most frequently cited benefit was an improved public image of the organisation with 12 feeling the programme had some impact and eight feeling the programme had considerable impact. One of the employers, interviewed as part of the Improve project, stated that one of their aims of engaging in training was to improve their public image with the local community.

Figure 4.7: Impact of Bespoke Training Delivered Through Improve (SPFP59)

Develop-U were contracted by Improve as part of the Tasty Bites, Tasty Networks project to deliver training courses to food manufacturing sector. Responding to a training specification from an employer, they competitively tendered and presented to the employer their proposed solutions to meet the business performance needs. The training needs were related to the fact that the business was a relatively young company that was working in a highly regulated industry, poultry farming and food processing. Develop-U stated that there were commonalities around their business needs that allowed the provider to focus on the needs of the business to help improve performance. The provider delivered a range of training including Practical Food Safety Provision and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP), Effective Audits and Inspection and High Performance Working for Team Leaders. Develop-U focussed the training on a range of factors that would help improve business performance that included:

- Creating more engaged and productive employees across the business through effective and informed leadership
- Further developing professional working practices
- Fostering greater responsibility amongst teams for high-performance
- Improving staff retention
- Maintaining a strong, consistent performance during audits
- Maintaining credibility as a supplier

'The business employs seasonal labour and migrant labour and has to respond to very high demand points, such as at Christmas, which places significant working challenges and requires high levels of compliance and flexibility within their internal systems. We helped the business focus on how they could work more efficiently and effectively. We provided leadership and development training as well as coaching and support to improve their processes.' (Develop-U)

The business recognised the value of the training and the fact that it was delivered with their own business needs in mind.

'They were able to challenge us in a way that worked; it was focussed on our business and how we could improve. They understood what we needed to do and it was so insightful. The impact on the staff that went through the learning (about 20 staff) was noticeable. They feel more valued... we wanted to do this for the staff, for the business, and to show the community that we were a company worth working for...it's been one of the best things we've done.' (Human Resource Manager)

Source: York Consulting Provider and Employer Interviews

4.42 All delivery projects, with the exception of one project (Construction Skills SPFP091), evidenced business benefits. Construction Skills largely failed to impact on businesses due to the low demand for the training. Although, there was some capacity building undertaken with providers.

4.43 The evaluation reports and interviews with employers evidenced a range of perceived business benefits.

'Since implementing the Agile Scrum...our relationships have got much stronger, from this we have seen a rise in repeat work and recommendations.' (e-Skills SPFP082)

'It's definitely made a difference. Staff are more enthusiastic and aware now or rather, they have been reminded of their purpose. I can't say enough about it; it's made such a difference.' (Employer, People 1st SPFP057).

4.44 As a general finding, employers valued the apprenticeship training. There was particular recognition of the increased capacity that newly recruited apprentices could bring to SMEs. An example of this was evidenced through the apprenticeship project delivered with the BBC Cymru Wales.

Figure 4.8: Creative and Cultural Skills, Interactive Media (SPFP062)

BBC Cymru Wales employed two apprentices for the duration of the pilot. They confirmed demand for apprentices, particularly at the BBC as the new digital platform has been announced. BBC Cymru Wales recognised the importance of the sector developing the skillset at a local level. A main implication for the wider sector was that of retaining the skills in Wales. The content of the Level 4 Apprenticeship was considered relevant and met BBC Cymru Wales' requirements. The apprentices worked on diverse projects including World War One, Sherlock, BBC homepage and I Wonder. Apprentices had to deal with copyright, organising content and output.

The block method of delivery worked well, as timetabling was known from the outset and therefore built into planning, with managers mentoring the apprentices as part of their job role. The Apprenticeship was delivered over 15 months, rather than 12, and *'gave them more time to establish skills and become more confident.'* (Provider)

The BBC wanted to keep the two apprentices, however, restructuring meant the loss of 7-9 posts, so they were unable to offer jobs to the apprentices within the terms of the restructure agreed with the unions. Therefore, opportunities for the apprentices were limited, with the work offered being on a freelance basis.

Source: Arad (2014) Evaluation Report

Future Involvement

- 4.45 Twenty eight employers felt that they were likely to continue their involvement with the SSC. Seventeen employers did not know if they were likely to continue.
- 4.46 Thirty one employers felt they were likely to continue their involvement with the provider.
- 4.47 Continuation of employer provider relationships in terms of accessing further training was difficult to capture. Most employers had positive experiences of the training and would like to have had the opportunity of accessing further training, but were unlikely to want to pay for it. This placed considerable constraints on the future delivery of the training without further Welsh Government funding, particularly where qualifications had not been mainstreamed.

Summary

- 4.48 There was strong evidence to suggest that training met business's needs and that businesses valued the quality of the training. There were a few comments stating that training was not pitched at the right level and that time constraints might have impacted on the quality of delivery.
- 4.49 Employers valued the flexibility of provision, for example, the development of a shared apprenticeship approach and online learning. In addition, bespoke and short course training received by many employers was particularly valued, as this met specific employer needs.
- 4.50 It was not possible to generalise from these findings regarding the impact on employers due to the low response rate. However, some employers reported that they had noticed improved productivity and improved literacy and numeracy skills.
- 4.51 Employers valued the apprenticeship training, and there was a recognition of the increased capacity that newly recruited apprentices could bring to SMEs.
- 4.52 There was also evidence that employers and providers developed good relationships, which they hoped would continue beyond the funded programme.

5 Impact on Learners

Introduction

- 5.1 This section evidences the impact on learners who engaged in training on the SPFP programme. Evidence is drawn from the quantitative survey with learners as part of the national evaluation and from evidence of impact on learners as part of each of the project evaluations.
- 5.2 Throughout this section, 'learners' will be synonymous with sample respondents. We have not reported findings by Convergence of ESF and non-ESF areas as cell numbers would become too small.

Key Findings from the Learner Survey

- 5.3 The learner e-survey returned 70 valid respondents. Based on the sample size and the population of learners, we considered sampling errors specified in the methodology section at the 95 per cent confidence level. The reader should consider these confidence intervals throughout this section.
- 5.4 Learners completing the survey, participated in courses from seven sector skills councils.

Table 5.1: Sector Skills Council (numbers)

	Count
Asset Skills	8
Construction Skills - Low Carbon	12
Creative & Cultural Skills	3
Energy & Utility Skills	10
People 1st	14
SEMTA	7
The Institute Of The Motor Industry	6
Total	60

Source: York Consulting Learner Survey 2015
Base: 60 (not all learners provided their SSC)

Course Details

- 5.5 Information regarding the courses studied was gathered to help put findings regarding skills developed and impact in to context. Most learners had completed their training, but three were still completing the course at time of completing the survey. The learners who did not complete the course indicated the reason for this was that the course did not meet their expectations.
- 5.6 To get a feel for the extent of training that learners experienced, learners were asked about the duration of the training programme. Just over one half of learners (35) were on the course for less than one week, indicating that many were doing short bespoke courses around a specific knowledge area such as food labelling or marketing.

Table 5.2: Course Duration (numbers)

	Count
Less than one week	35
1- 4 weeks	4
5-24 weeks	7
25-52 weeks	9
More than 52 weeks	11
Don't know	4
Total	70

Source: York Consulting Learner Survey 2015

Base: All (70). Respondents were asked 'Can you remember how long you were on the course in days, weeks, months, years.' Those who responded were asked 'how many was this', derived variable, open response.

- 5.7 Despite the high number of learners studying short courses, 51 learners stated that they had gained a qualification or accredited certificates as a result of the course. Of those that did not gain a qualification or accreditation (19), 11 specified that they did not gain any credits or units towards a qualification as part of the course.

Motivation for Taking the Course

5.8 The reasons for undertaking a training course varied. Over half of learners (40) identified that their main reason for undertaking training was to improve their skills or knowledge around their job. Just under a fifth of learners stated that their main reason was that their employer/line manager had recommended that they do the course.

Table 5.3: Course Motivation (numbers)

	Count
To improve your skills or knowledge around your job	40
Your employer/line manager recommended that you should attend this course as it was relevant to your particular needs	15
To improve or widen your career options	8
To improve your pay, promotion or other prospects at work	3
To achieve a higher level qualification	2
To learn something new for personal interest	2
To help you progress on to another education, training or learning course	-

Source: York Consulting Learner Survey 2015

Base: All (70). Respondents were asked, 'Which of these reasons was the most important reason for you doing the course?' Closed question, single response.

5.9 Very few learners (three) were motivated by a potential pay increase or to improve their prospects at work, and no learners stated they were using this training as a way of progressing on to other forms of learning.

Benefits from Undertaking the Course

5.10 Learners stated they received a number of benefits as a result of the course. The most cited (61) benefit was an increase in confidence around their abilities. Forty-nine learners stated that they were more enthusiastic about learning and that they felt their employment or career prospects had improved. It was interesting that 49 learners felt their job prospects had improved, but only three mentioned that this was a reason for taking the course.

Table 5.4: Benefits from the course (numbers)

	Count
More confident about your abilities	61
More enthusiastic about learning	49
Feeling you have improved employment or career prospects	49
Feeling better about yourself generally	45
Clearer about the range of opportunities open to you	40
Clearer about what you want to do in your life	37
Taking part in more voluntary or community activities	21
Thinking about setting up your own business or working self-employed	14

Source: York Consulting Learner Survey 2015

Base: All those who recalled being in employment before the course (68). Respondents were asked 'Thinking about the course, do you feel you benefited in any of the following ways by going on the course? Are you now...' Closed question, multiple response. Due to sampling errors these findings cannot be considered statistically significant.

5.11 Many evaluation reports evidenced improved confidence of learners through learner interviews.

'Excellent service and dedicated trainers has given me the confidence to approach new challenges with the skills I have learnt. The programme gave me exposure to a wide range of engineering skills that have stood me in good stead for my career as a mechanical engineer, covering both practical and theoretical elements.'

(Apprentice, SEMTA SPFP054).

5.12 The following learner case study evidenced the value of a short course delivered by Improve (SPFP059).

Figure 5.1: Experience of a Learner on a Food Labelling Course

Rachel* was the Customer Service Manager at a food company in Wales.

In February, 2014, Rachel attended the one day Food Labelling training course. The training was an open course that was attended by a number of businesses and delivered by Food Business Assistance (FBA). Rachel received an email from FBA explaining that there was going to be a change in food labelling regulations, as of mid-December 2014. Rachel realised that she needed to learn more about labelling.

Delivery of the training

Rachel attended the course alongside a variety of other food manufacturing businesses. The training took the form of a PowerPoint presentation that was “laid down in layman’s terms” and “was easy for all to understand”. Rachel stated that the training was “very informative” and made her more aware of what’s on labels. However, she felt that there was a lot of information to take in during the day. The training providers also recognised this and provided all participants with a CD, which contained all the information that had been covered during the day. The CD contained the PowerPoint presentation and an electronic, printable booklet with all the information on. Rachel found this CD really useful. She printed the booklet and refers to this on a regular basis.

Impact of the training

New regulations on labelling come into force in December 2014. The training enabled Rachel and the company to ensure that their labels comply with these new regulations. Although Rachel still checks with Trading Standards for compliance, being able to refer to the information she received from the training before checking with Trading Standards made it easier. Since her training, the business decided to produce new products that will be on sale from January 2015 onwards. The training not only equipped her to comply with labelling regulations for current products but also helped plan around compliance for future products.

Source: Arad Research Evaluation Report

* The learner’s name has been changed.

5.13 Forty learners stated that their motivation to undertake the course was to improve their skills, but at the end of the course, over 60 learners agreed that they had improved their work related skills.

Table 5.5: Benefits from the course (numbers)

	Count
Job-specific skills related to a specific occupation	61
Team working skills	47
Problem solving skills	48
Organisational skills	45
Communication skills	43
Leadership and/or strategic management skills	35
Literacy skills	26
IT skills	24
Numeracy skills	24
Other	6

Source: York Consulting Learner Survey 2015

Base: All those who recalled being in employment before the course (68). Respondents were asked 'Thinking about the course, do you feel you benefited in any of the following ways by going on the course? Are you now...' Closed question, multiple response. Due to sampling errors these findings cannot be considered statistically significant.

5.14 Although only 11 learners were studying for up to a year, (suggesting they may be undertaking an apprenticeship), a significant minority of learners (24-26) also reported improving their essential skills (literacy, ICT and numeracy skills). This suggested that learners felt that they developed additional skills as a result of the training.

5.15 Some quotes, generated by the qualitative research with learners, revealed the benefits of the training courses.

'I did the programme for personnel progression reasons, I have been in the trade for 12 years and thought I still had some things to learn, and I did! I have only really worked in one kitchen so I needed to broaden out. The meat, butchery and practical cooking elements were all excellent.' (Learner, People 1st CPD for Chefs)

5.16 Some courses also provided other non-subject specific related benefits such as improving team working, problem solving, organisational and communication skills.

5.17 Consultations with providers delivering some of the more bespoke training revealed that the content of some of the training was based around ‘understanding what constitutes high performance’, ‘team effectiveness’ and ‘dealing with potential blockages and risks in systems and processes at work’

5.18 Many learners (46) felt they were able to apply what they learnt on the course. Although a sizeable minority (19) stated that they had not yet done so.

Table 5.6: Applying what was learnt on the course (numbers)

	Count
Yes	46
No / not yet	19
Don't know / not sure	5
Total	70

Source: York Consulting Learner Survey 2015
 Base: All (70). Respondents were asked ‘Have you been able to apply what you learnt on the course?’ Due to sampling errors these findings cannot be considered statistically significant.

5.19 An apprentice, on the Level 3 Outdoor Programmes Apprenticeship developed by Asset Skills and delivered by Babcock training, stated that she was able to apply her knowledge gained in her role as an outdoors education instructor.

Figure 5.2: Experience of Learner on the Apprenticeship Level 3 Outdoor Programme

Claire, aged: 22. Was an Outdoor Education Activities Instructor South Wales.

Why the Apprenticeship?

‘Having completed a Level 2, this was progression. I wanted more experience in the outdoor sector, and the Level 3 would help me to get employed.’

Claire entered the outdoor sector via a Jobs Growth Wales placement; this she followed with a Young Recruits place while completing her Level 2 in Sport and Active Leadership with Babcock Training Ltd. On completion of this, Claire accepted a full-time position at the Outdoor Centre in South Wales and embarked on the Level 3 Apprenticeship in Outdoor Programmes.

The Apprenticeship Experience

As a result of the apprenticeship, Claire considered that she had developed her skills and knowledge. *“I gained more experience in the outdoor sector. I was assessed*

running sessions so I practiced more, and my confidence improved; I have become much more confident running sessions. I also gained more knowledge about the policy and procedures involved in running a centre. I enjoyed the module about the environment, it required us to think about what we do to protect the land around us as we do an activity.”

What Next?

Claire considered the apprenticeship to be part of her overall progression and development as an outdoors instructor and is already considering further qualifications as a result of her positive experience. *“I have a full-time permanent contract at [name of centre] and I run activities. I want to add to my qualifications with caving and rock climbing in the near future. Longer term, if I continue to achieve more qualifications, I would like to become a senior instructor.”*

Source: Arad Research Evaluation Report (SPFP083)

5.20 The survey also suggested that learners had a greater level of job satisfaction as a result of undergoing training. Twenty nine learners stated that they had more job satisfaction, and 18 learners stated that the course had either helped or directly contributed to having a greater job security.

Table 5.7: Improvements in work (numbers)

	Directly because of the course	The course helped	The course made no difference	Not sure	This does not apply to me
I have more job satisfaction	5	24	31	5	5
I have better job security	4	14	41	3	8
I have more opportunities for training in my job	5	13	38	7	7

Source: York Consulting Learner Survey 2015

Base: All (70). Respondents were asked, ‘Compared to the work you were doing before the course, do any of the following improvements apply? Were any of these a direct result of the course?’

5.21 Although many learners stated that the course did not have any direct impact on job satisfaction or job security, a number of learners stated that they had been promoted as a result of completing the course (12), their pay had increased as a result of the course, (17) and their promotion prospects had improved (16).

Table 5.8: Pay and promotion benefits of the course (numbers)

	Directly because of the course	The course helped	The course made no difference	Not sure	This does not apply to me
I have been promoted	4	8	33	2	23
My pay rate, salary or income has increased	3	14	41	2	10
My future pay and promotion prospects have improved	5	11	39	6	9

Source: York Consulting Learner Survey 2015

Base: All (70). Respondents were asked, 'Compared to the work you were doing before the course, do any of the following improvements apply? Were any of these a direct result of the course?'

5.22 As a result of the course, learners reported an average increase in income of £3,238. Forty three learners felt that the course was either vital to or helped towards getting their current job role.

Course Satisfaction

5.23 The majority of learners were satisfied with the course. There were four learners that were dissatisfied with the course.

Table 5.9: Overall Satisfaction (numbers)

	Count
Very satisfied	31
Satisfied	27
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	8
Dissatisfied	2
Very dissatisfied	2
Don't know	-
Total	70

Source: York Consulting Learner Survey 2015

Base: All (70) Respondents were asked 'Overall how satisfied were you with the course?'

5.24 Consultations with learners and evaluation reports highlighted a few problems with some elements of apprenticeship units delivered on the Chef Apprenticeship programme (SPFP075), and some learners reported problems with undertaking essential skills elements of apprenticeship frameworks (SPFP050, SPFP074 and SPFP054).

5.25 However, the vast majority of learners were satisfied with their course provision. The majority of SSC evaluation reports evidenced high levels of satisfaction with provision. A learner who undertook the SEMTA Level 4 Apprenticeship in Advanced Manufacturing expressed high levels of satisfaction with the training.

Figure 5.3: Level 4 Higher Apprenticeship Learner

Max*, aged 27, had been working for eight years as a design engineer for a company that manufactures material landing attachments. He used Computer Aided Design (CAD) software to design attachments for lifting heavy goods on to landings.

He left school with A levels and chose not to go to university but to take a job that had training opportunities. Since leaving school, he undertook a Level 3 in Design Engineering, and this was his next step in terms of supporting his learning and career development. *'I am lucky that I have a manager who is on-board with apprenticeships and training in general, as he is an assessor. He encourages me to continue to train.'*

Max studied the NVQ level 4 in Engineering Manufacture and had already achieved the knowledge element of the Apprenticeship through the HNC route. Some of the units he found particularly useful were around developing his managerial knowledge. *'This is where I feel I gained the most from, as it's where I see my career going. But, overall, the content of the apprenticeship was very relevant, and it was very worthwhile.'*

He was the only learner in his workplace and considers it a valuable way of demonstrating commitment to his role and to the company.

In terms of the added elements of essential skills and employer rights and responsibilities, he considered these to be of lesser value.

'The essential skills was a real pain. I'm not bragging or anything but my skills are way beyond Level 2, and why I had to spend time demonstrating my abilities in this, I didn't really understand... I dealt with the Employer Rights and Responsibilities because I had to and it was okay.' (Learner)

Interestingly Max stated the employer would have paid for the training as they understood the value of it and it was worth the investment. His next steps were to aim for the level 5.

Source: YCL Learner Interview

5.26 In terms of additionality, over a third of learners would not have taken this course had it not been for the SPFP programme.,One quarter of learners (18) would have definitely done similar training anyway.

5.27 Many employers also reported that they would not have engaged with the training without SPFP. Therefore, the opportunity would not have been passed down to learners.

Table 5.10: Would have done similar training (numbers)

	Count
Definitely would have done similar training anyway	18
Probably would have done similar training anyway	22
Probably would not have done similar training	20
Definitely would not have done similar training	5
Don't Know	5
Total	70

Source: York Consulting Learner Survey 2015
 Base: All (70) Respondents were asked 'Had you not done this particular course, do you think you would...?' Closed question, single response.

Summary

5.28 This section evidenced a high level of satisfaction with the training provided to learners. There were some problems with the units of some apprenticeships, but this did not detract from the overall value of the apprenticeship. Learners improved their knowledge and developed new skills and have improved their confidence in their roles. A small number stated that they were promoted as a result of the training, and a small number stated they were more likely to get promoted as a result of their training.

5.29 There was also evidence of additionality from the training with many learners stating they would not have done the learning without it.

6 Impact on Provider Capacity and Provision

6.1 The section details the evidence available to show the development of an employer led training infrastructure including:

- development of new qualifications, training modules and apprenticeship units
- the development of provider knowledge, expertise and capacity
- improved relationship between providers and employers
- likely future demand and delivery of new qualifications and training units.

6.2 The information was generated from interviews with providers, SSC and project evaluation reports.

Development of New Qualifications and Training Modules

6.3 The project evaluation reports detailed the range of qualifications being piloted as part of Phase 2. We undertook a review of the qualifications piloted in order to ascertain the number of qualifications that were either newly developed, existing but newly delivered in Wales or not new but being delivered through a different medium such as online. Our understanding of the qualification outputs from the delivery (Table 6.1), indicated that:

- eleven new apprenticeship frameworks were developed and delivered
- one project developed and delivered new units of qualifications (Lantra)
- two existing apprenticeships were newly delivered in Wales (Skills for Justice SPFP074)
- five projects developed and delivered short courses (Asset Skills, Lantra, CITB, People 1st, Improve)
- four projects delivered bespoke courses (E & U Skills, e-skills, IMI and Mentor Mon)
- one project developed and delivered a Masters qualification (Atradius).

Table 6.1: Qualification and Learning Pathway Project Outputs

SSC	SPFP	Qualifications Developed/Delivered
Asset Skills	SPFP040	No new qualifications; improving awareness of apprenticeships at Level 2 and 3 and other short qualifications at Level 1 and 2 in building
Lantra	SPFP047	New units of learning to existing qualifications and new accredited learning for the food and drink chain
Construction	SPFP091	New short craft courses to develop traditional build maintenance and repair skills
E & U Skills	SPFP080	Development and Delivery of short training courses as well as a foundation degree module
Creative and Cultural	SPFP053	3 new Level 5 Apprenticeships in Craft, Design and Cultural Heritage developed.
Creative Skillset	SPFP062	New qualification in Level 4 Apprenticeship in Creative and Digital media and promoting existing pathway from Level 3.
Creative Skillset	SPFP076	1 New apprenticeship in Level 2 Fashion and Textiles
e-skills	SPFP046	1 new Level 3/Level 4 Apprenticeship Framework in IT
e-skills	SPFP082	Industry specific CPD pathway and vendor based qualifications
IMI	SPFP068	A new QAA in Vehicle Diagnostics
People 1 st	SPFP066	Delivery of a new hospitality shared apprenticeship model in Level 3
People 1 st	SPFP075	New short digital modular learning for taxi drivers
People 1 st	SPFP075	1 new Level 4 qualification for chefs
SEMTA	SPFP054	1 new Level 4 Apprenticeship for Advanced Manufacturing
Skills for Justice	SPFP058	1 new Level 4 Apprenticeship in Legal Services
Skills for Justice	SPFP050	1 new Level 3 Apprenticeship Home Office Policing
Skills for Justice	SPFP074	Delivery of 2 existing Level 2 and 3 Apprenticeship Frameworks in administration pathways, which are new to Wales.
Skills Active	SPFP052	New Level 3 Play work learning resources
Skills Active	SPFP083	2 New Level 3 Apprenticeships in Sports Excellence and Outdoors
Improve	SPFP059	New non accredited bespoke short courses
Atradius	SPFP084	New Level 7 graduate programme in Financial Services
Mentor Mon	SPFP096	3 new Level 4 modules for pharmaceuticals and medical employees

Source: SPFP project bids

- 6.4 Most SSCs' preferred method of training development was apprenticeship frameworks, followed by short one day and bespoke courses. The range of qualifications developed for different sectors was wide, as was the range of qualification levels (i.e. including from Level 2 to Level 7).
- 6.5 However, considering the freedom given by the Welsh Government on the types of training to be delivered, indeed the Welsh Government specified that training should be *'innovative...be that new qualifications delivery or new methods and systems for the delivery of training'*, it was somewhat disappointing that the primary focus was on developing apprenticeship frameworks. Clearly apprenticeships were still a priority of the Welsh Government at the time, but it appeared that this somewhat constrained the degree of innovation with regard to the development of new qualifications.
- 6.6 SSCs focussed on developing training that was free at the point of access for employers, rather than focussing on industry needs first and foremost. Although most apprenticeships were well received, there were challenges for employers, providers and learners in completing the frameworks, and these were not always the preferred route given the time required to undertake the qualification and the additional elements of study. There was limited testing of more flexible approaches to apprenticeship design such as happened in the Trailblazers in England. Certainly, at the higher level of learning, there was some scepticism of the added value of the apprenticeship framework elements.

*'One provider was sceptical regarding the value afforded to learners through the completion of Essential Skills and Employers Rights and Responsibilities, believing instead the programme would offer greater value through delivery of the NVQ alone.'*²¹

- 6.7 In sectors where there was little progression of staff and where staff had worked for a long time, there were unique challenges to the SSCs and providers in making apprenticeships relevant to the business.

'There is no indication of any further demand from employees within the [Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service] sector to undertake the qualification... It is feasible that a more appropriate training offer is the Essential Skills in the

*Workplace programme that provides free essential skills learning support and accreditation of ESW qualifications up to Level 2 in all areas of essential skills.'*²²

- 6.8 The Level 3 Apprenticeship in Home Office Policing, while having some benefits in terms of standardising an approach to police training, also had challenges relating to the perceived added value of essential skills training, affordability and ERR among key police training staff. A more efficient method of achieving consistency, and to address any skills gaps, may have been for the police service to move to accrediting the existing Level 3 Diploma in Home Office Policing and to address any gaps in essential skills on a needs basis.
- 6.9 It seemed important that the benefits to learners of undertaking an apprenticeship framework (as opposed to other forms of qualifications such as diplomas and NVQs) was clearly established beforehand. This meant that SSCs and providers needed to ensure that appropriately detailed training needs analyses were carried out in preparation of delivery and that delivery of essential skills and ERR components are contextualised for learning within different industries.
- 6.10 The short courses and bespoke courses were reported as being well received by employers who recognised the value of short focussed training such as lean manufacturing or web designing.
- 6.11 An example of the benefits of short courses specifically designed for business needs was provided through E & U Skills (SPFP080). The design of the Low Carbon Energy Institute aimed to aid the development of industry specific skills through a range of accredited courses at Levels 2 to Level 4. Although there were problems in procuring providers, the evaluation report stated that the institute had shown that the new approach to training delivery could be a success.

'It has created a portfolio of energy and renewable training courses, and the uptake from business has shown that the institute caters well for SMEs who typically struggle to cover the costs and time barriers to access training.' (Miller Research)²³

- 6.12 However, this does not suggest that shorter courses were the preferred option, but it was possible that more flexibility in training delivery needed to be explored for sectors that were characterised by SME businesses in particular.

The Development of Provider Expertise and Capacity to Deliver

- 6.13 Many SSCs focussed specifically on developing the infrastructure of provision across Wales with the aim of improving the knowledge and expertise of tutors to meet the changing needs of industries.
- 6.14 Creative Skillset SPFP077 focussed on developing knowledge and understanding among providers of industry to improve creative education and training through workshops with tutors. The evaluation report stated that course tutors had, as a result of the SPFP project, *'updated and expanding their knowledge to help improve creative teaching and learning for students.'*²⁴

'The programme has encouraged me to enhance the industry focus and explore avenues we hadn't previously considered. For example, my mentor got me to think more locally. Previously, we tended to look further afield in terms of student progression and links with companies, but the programme has encouraged us to look locally. Really, it's about getting the balance right between local, regional and national and understanding where there are opportunities in [our area of] Wales.' (FE Course leader)

'We have revised the way we are organising the units in the BTEC ... We've organised the course in strands and tied three units up into one project, which gives the student more time for testing and experimenting. We couldn't do this with everything, because then all the assessment would be at end of year, but it changes the scope of what's possible. We've also considered the content of each unit so that they inform each other, rather than being standalone, in order to better reflect industry practice.' (FE Course leader)

- 6.15 The evaluation reported stated, *'...it is clear that the Creative Provision programme has been a catalyst for change and that the time spent with industry practitioners has had a real and direct impact on tutors.'*²⁵

6.16 Lantra SPFP047 delivered a number of CPD events across Wales for tutors and trainers working with the food and drink supply chain. The focus was on sharing innovation and best practice and on developing collaborative approaches across providers. Some comments from providers demonstrated the value of the events:

*'For me it covered the areas I wanted to update my CPD, and we deliver food safety as well so it gave tutors practical knowledge.'*²⁶

*'The sharing of knowledge, getting ideas and meeting other lecturers in Wales who are in the same area and looking at improving their course too and using Welsh produce, hearing from Welsh businesses about their ventures....I've looked to take students to them now, it's opened a lot of doors for us...it really was all very good.'*²⁷

6.17 The development of the training courses were generally undertaken in close partnership with the awarding bodies and employers. Training providers reported developing a strong relationship with the awarding organisation through this method of development.

6.18 A number of other training providers outlined similar experiences. For example, one provider reported that they also became qualified as an assessor centre to be able to deliver the qualifications required under SPFP040 detailed in Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1: Evidence of Qualification Development for Asset Skills Training (SPFP040)

As an outcome of the project, Neath Port Talbot College Group worked with Agored Cymru to begin development of two new qualification units:

- Level 3 'train-the-trainer' unit titled 'Sustainability and energy efficiency in pre and post 1919 buildings' - designed to provide CPD knowledge for trainers already engaged within the delivery of traditional construction learning; and
- Level 1 unit covering traditional, sustainable and heritage construction, to be delivered as part of the Community Learner Industry Focus (CLIF) content of existing qualifications.

Source: Evaluation of the Building Future's Group Sector Priority Fund evaluation report

- 6.19 Asset Skills reported that participants in the train-the-trainer courses were since asked to impart their learning to other relevant construction trainers within their college – most importantly an understanding of the need to treat traditional buildings using different methods, materials and tools to modern buildings.
- 6.20 E & U developed training provision as part of the Low Carbon Energy Institute to help develop an industry focus for the development of high quality training provision. Providers were in support of the development and stated the training being developed as part of the institute was the right type of training and of a high quality.

Challenges in Provider Capacity and Expertise

- 6.21 As may be expected, the piloting of new qualifications presented some challenges to the provider network in Wales.
- 6.22 Asset Skills reported a number of challenges in providers being able to respond to their specification for building a sustainable training infrastructure. One FE college was the only FE college able deliver the Energy Apprenticeship Level 3 and another FE college failed to deliver any successful outcomes in this qualification from their four participants; all of whom left training early. One private training provider also underestimated the complexity of the qualification and suffered a 64 per cent early leaver rate in this qualification.
- 6.23 There were other problems observed in delivering the Housing (Homelessness) Level 3 qualification with a high early leaver rate of 37% in this new qualification. It would appear that candidates were unable to generate evidence for specific units in the qualification. For the delivery of the Facilities Management Level 4, the private training provider suffered an early leaver rate of 65%, and the FE College suffered a high early leaver rate of 35% in this new qualification. Asset Skills reported that the complexities of the qualification were underestimated by providers.

- 6.24 In the December progress report E & U Skills described how some of the submissions received, as part of the procurement process for the piloting of training programmes and qualifications, were disappointing. The report highlighted that the collective response from the FE Sector was particularly disappointing citing an overall lack of understanding of the requirements set out in the ITT as well as poorer quality of submissions relative to private training providers' submissions. E & U Skills highlighted that the level of detail supplied by some FE institutions was superficial, whilst entire sections of some submissions were missing. *'Many submissions fell short of the quality expected to deliver training.'* (E & U Skills)
- 6.25 Improve's Phase 1 SPFP project identified a lack of adequate training provision for the food and drink sector within Wales. To address this issue, Improve planned to develop the capacity of providers within Wales by establishing a network of providers that would benefit from training and development workshops and expertise to raise their knowledge and ultimately, quality of training provision. However, according to Improve, the provider network failed to grasp the concept and did not respond to the procurement round to be a partner on the network. The original plan of recruiting ten providers failed, and the result was that seven were recruited in Wales and a further ten in England. Problems with the recruitment of providers was considered, by some providers, to be a consequence of Improve's lack of understanding of the infrastructure in Wales.
- 6.26 However, since then, providers effectively engaged on the project, although not necessarily to develop their capacity and expertise in training delivery, but they benefitted from the opportunity to deliver training. One provider stated that being part of the network led to a stronger working relationship with Improve and greater engagement with the sector.

Examples of Effective Delivery Meeting Employer Needs

6.27 Despite the challenges described above, there was evidence that most SSCs had a good understanding of the provider network in Wales and procured a range of providers to deliver across all of Wales. Many SSCs developed new relationships with providers, as well as building on existing relationships. In addition, there was also evidence that the SPFP programme facilitated the development of new relationships between providers and employers with whom, previously, providers had not engaged.

'We have developed good links with new employers who have seen the benefit of the apprenticeship and very keen to continue to offer this to their employees.'

(WBL provider).

6.28 The evaluation reports and interviews with providers and employers revealed that positive relationships had developed between providers and employers. There was evidence that supports a general finding that a lot of provision was shaped to meet business and sector needs.

Figure 6.2: Workforce Development in Vehicle Diagnostics (SPFP 068)

Coleg Llandrillo Menai was a registered IMI (Institute of the Motor Industry) training centre and had a long standing relationship with the SSC. They had strong links with employers in the local area and were trusted with understanding the skills and training needs of many smaller garages. Coleg Landrillo Menai worked with IMI on SPFP Phase 1 project and developed the Phase 2 as a result of understanding businesses' needs. This resulted in a bespoke training course to train mechanics in the use of a vehicle diagnostic unit that would help ensure garages remained competitive in a market that was experiencing considerable technological advances. This training was been very well received and would continue beyond the life of SPFP; although, the cost of the training for some smaller garages may be prohibitive without assisted funding.

Source: YCL interviews with providers

6.29 Consultations with all providers evidenced the positive relationships developed with SSCs. Providers responded to invitations to tender to develop and deliver new learning, and as a result, have begun working with the SSCs creating relationships that previously did not exist.

Figure 6.3: Higher Level Apprenticeship for the Legal Service (SPFP058)

Acorn Training and Kaplan joined forces to deliver a higher level Apprenticeship in the Legal Services in Wales. This was a new partnership between Acorn and Kaplan and a new relationship with Skills for Justice. The framework supported staff wishing to progress in the legal services while working as a paralegal advisor. The qualification and underpinning knowledge was well received and the framework mainstreamed. The partnership continues to deliver beyond SPFP.

Source: Evaluation of HALS (SPFP058) York Consulting

6.30 Relationships with providers continued to develop as a result of the SPFP programme.

Figure 6.4: SSC and Private Training Provider Delivering Higher Level Apprenticeship

Network Training Services Ltd had provided training, recruitment and consultancy services to industry and commerce throughout south Wales for 23 years. At the time, it employed more than 40 staff and delivered a range of nationally accredited qualifications, both commercially and through Welsh Government funded learning programmes.

Network Training Services Ltd had been a member of the National Skills Academy for a number of years, and it was through this membership that the provider found out about the training provider network opportunity and submitted an application to join.

Network Training Services stated they benefited from being a member of the Tasty Network. The main benefit was that the provider received referrals for employer training needs from Improve Ltd. The provider delivered to two employers as a result of the referrals.

Network Training Services Ltd was of the view that the Tasty Network Sustainability Investment might not have offered them good value for money but appreciated that this

was mainly due to the fact that they did not take advantage of the possible CPD support that was available through the network.

However, during 2014, the provider met with Improve Ltd to review their unsuccessful bids and Improve offered useful feedback as to why they were not successful.

Improve also gave the provider one-to-one support to review their portfolio of training and advised them as to which programmes offered the closest match to what could be delivered through the SPFP project.

Source: Arad Research, Evaluation of Sector Priorities Fund Pilot 2 (SPFP2) Programme Project delivered by Improve Ltd

SPFP Encouraging Provider Collaboration

6.31 Provider collaboration was also a feature of the SPFP programme, and there were some good examples of providers sharing resources and discussing how to deliver apprenticeships for certain sectors. These two, examples below, were provided in the evaluation reports for each SSC.

Figure 6.5: Higher apprenticeship for advanced manufacturing in Wales (SPFP054)

The Higher Apprenticeship for Advanced Manufacturing project was successful in encouraging collaboration between FE providers and private training providers, as seen by the working relationship developed by Glyndwr University and Myrick Training. Glyndwr University delivered the knowledge component of the apprenticeship to their cohort of learners with Myrick Training delivering of the NVQ Level 4. Other FE providers also commented on the benefits of networking with providers working in the private sector. In addition, SEMTA staff provided support in facilitating opportunities for the providers delivering the programme to discuss areas of mutual interest and possible collaboration.²⁸ There were, however, challenges in the ongoing delivery of this apprenticeship, due to some complexities in bridging the funding between FE and HE.

Source: Rees, H. et al. The Higher Apprenticeship Advance Manufacturing in Wales evaluation report

Figure 6.6: IT Professional Apprenticeships in Wales (SPFP046)

e-skills UK developed and delivered a Level 3 IT Professional Apprenticeships in Wales. The programme created a new flexible funding model for providers and new working partnerships between FEIs and WBL Providers. This programme trialled a new delivery model, which encouraged greater collaboration between FEIs and WBL Providers. The providers met regularly to discuss progress and best practice. The group formed an informal 'consortium', which removed much of the traditional competition seen across apprenticeship providers, and encouraged sharing of information and lessons learned.

Under the new model, FEIs and WBL Providers were required to form a delivery partnership, with FEIs responsible for the knowledge aspects of the course, and WBL Providers managing the WBL assessment and learner management aspects. Both parties would draw down a percentage of the available funding, essentially "splitting" the Apprenticeship allocation per learner between providers.

Learners worked towards Apprenticeships made up from vendor qualifications, such as CompTIA Network Plus part of the City and Guilds Framework, and different providers offered different vendor qualifications²⁹.

Source: adroit economics ltd: IT Professional Apprenticeships Programme in Wales evaluation report

6.32 There were many more examples of providers working in partnership to deliver apprenticeships, in particular, due to the different elements of the framework and expertise procured from different organisations. Another interesting example was provided through the Skills Active Programme that involved a secondary school that was recognised for excellence in Rugby League and a further education college contracted to deliver the programme.

Figure 6.7: Level 3 Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence (SPFP 083)

Partnerships with training providers and the National Governing Body of Sport proved invaluable during the development and delivery of the Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence (ASE). Skills Active successfully brokered links between training providers and, as a result, training providers began to work with new employers to deliver the framework. The ASE was delivered as a partnership of Wales Rugby League, Wigan Warriors, Maesteg Comprehensive School and Coleg y Cymoedd. The Maesteg Academy at Maesteg Comprehensive School was recognised as a centre of excellence for Rugby League and launched a Rugby League Academy at the school.³⁰ However, the chain of providers required to deliver the apprenticeship added a complexity to the provision and might not be the most effective or efficient way of continuing to delivery in the future.

Source: Arad Research: Evaluation of the development and delivery of SASW compliant Level 3 Apprenticeships across Sport and Active Leisure

6.33 To a large extent, provider relationships already exist in Wales, particularly through bodies such as the National Training Federation of Wales (NTFW). However, projects provided opportunities for further collaboration in the development of different and higher level qualifications.

Summary

6.34 SSCs successfully procured providers to develop and test the new frameworks, qualification units and short courses. New relationships between providers and employers were developed as a result of the delivery of training, which providers could be in a position to exploit in the future.

6.35 Providers developed their knowledge and capacity where training was based on new apprenticeships or other forms of bespoke training. Relationships with providers and awarding bodies, for some providers, was forged which would help ensure that qualifications were fit for purpose. However, some qualifications had a complex delivery chain making on-going delivery a challenge. In some sectors, SSCs struggled to procure the number of providers required to deliver their apprenticeship or course, indicating gaps in the provider infrastructure.

6.36 Many of the piloted qualifications and frameworks would continue to be delivered, due to high levels of industry demand and apprenticeships being mainstreamed. However, some apprenticeships were not considered fit for purpose by some businesses who did not recognise the value of essential skills and employer rights and responsibilities.

7 The Advocate Service

Introduction

7.1 This section discusses some of the key successes and challenges with regard to delivering the Advocate Service. Some of the key features of this programme stem from the funding and design of the programme, including:

- the Advocate Service to mediate between SSCs and providers on behalf of employers
- engagement with the Cross Cutting Themes
- teaching and learning provision through the medium of Welsh.

Impact of the Advocate Service

7.2 Following on from Phase 1 activity, the Advocate Service was reshaped to combine the sector and regional Advocate Service roles as previous roles were said to be conflated. The Advocate Service was originally provided by four sector Advocates, who were responsible for a portfolio of SSCs, and four regional Advocates, who covered specific geographical areas. The service was restructured in October 2012 following recommendations from the interim report.

7.3 A key function of the Advocate Service was to broker a dialogue between SSCs and training providers, in order to ensure that pilot activity was based on meaningful and comprehensive discussions using a combination of intelligence obtained at a national level (from SSCs) and at a local level (from providers).

7.4 Since October 2014, the service had been provided by four organisations:

- Gower College covering the South West and Mid Wales region and supporting for e-skills, Creative and Cultural, and Creative Skillset
- Impact Management Consultancy Ltd covering South Central Wales, and supporting Asset Skills, Construction Skills, E & U Skills and Atradius
- Glyndwr University covering Anglesey and North Wales

- Applied Skills Ltd covering South East Wales and supporting Lantra, Improve and People 1st.

Previous Evaluation Findings

7.5 Findings from the previous evaluation suggested a potential conflict in the role of Advocates, with some having a geographical remit and some supporting SSCs. This was exacerbated by the lack of awareness, as well as understanding, of the role of the Advocates at the start of the programme in Phase I. This, possibly, coloured the views of some SSCs regarding the added value of the Advocates Service through the whole programme.

‘Communication from some project teams is more difficult to ascertain than others, due mainly to early perceptions and possibly not likely to change.’ (Impact Management Consultancy Ltd)³¹.

7.6 Certainly, a number of SSCs we consulted with had limited involvement with the Advocate Service and only a small number recognised the added value of the service.

7.7 In addition, in Phase I, the Advocates themselves agreed that they were not kept informed of relevant policy direction from within Welsh Government. This sense of frustration, regarding the lack of clarity of their role and being ‘out of the loop’ during Phase I, was still apparent during the interviews with the Advocates.

7.8 However, as time went on, the Advocates each used their expertise and knowledge around sector and training needs to provide added value where they could.

Activities of the Advocate Service

7.9 Progress reports from the Advocate Service showed that support provided throughout the Phase 2 project has included:

- supporting SSCs in their bid development and assisted on revising on rejected bids
- advised SSCs on the procurement and delivery of providers and tender regulations

- developing sustainable relationships between SSCs and providers
- supporting SSC Collaboration to further project developments
- assisting in leveraging in employer cash contributions
- helping shape sector learning and development strategies
- understanding issues that affect supply and demand.

7.10 Advocates also added value by helping SSCs link up with other learning funds that enabled SSCs to offer a range of training to employers from different programmes including leadership and management and essential skills in the workplace.

7.11 Progress reports from Applied Skills Ltd evidenced quite considerable support for Lantra, People 1st and Improve. This support centred around the effective delivery of the collaborative project as well as individual projects. According to the evaluation report, Applied Skills Ltd attended the FDSP steering group, and acted as a ‘critical friend’ providing advice and guidance on a range of issues as required. The general feedback from stakeholders was that the advocate service provided a useful ‘challenge’ for the project at a steering group / senior management level. The insight provided into Welsh Government policy and processes was also described as being valuable. However, it was also noted by some stakeholders that ‘they had never fully understood the role and the exact parameters of the support that could be provided.’ (Miller 2014)

7.12 The support for Improve centred around liaising with the Welsh Government regarding procurement of Tasty Bites to support the effective delivery of the re-profiled targets. There was also considerable liaising with the Business Development Teams within FE Colleges to promote employer engagement and to support developing links with Capital City Region, the Regional Learning Partnership.

7.13 Applied Skills also supported the Training and Education Forum organised by Caerphilly County Borough Council to help develop a coordinated approach to further and higher education and to link in with Career Wales to provide effective information advice and guidance (IAG) for learners. The support provided by the Advocate included an 'at a glance sheet' for West Wales Regional Learning Partnership (RLP), the setting up of a local workshop included sector experts around energy and utilities, construction, and hospitality and tourism. The Advocates also helped tie in with opportunities presented through SPFP. They also helped produce an Energy and Environment report for the RLP in South West Central Wales.

'[Name of advocate] was able to use their expertise and knowledge to help us develop a clear action plan for employment and skills...their support has been of critical importance.' (County Borough Council)

7.14 Reports from Gower College showed that they supported the South West and Central RLP. They produced labour market intelligence supporting the gathering of regional intelligence and facilitated/brokered meetings in pursuit of the collection of data with SSCs, employers and other stakeholders groups such as Swansea Skills Group and Regional Creative Industries Network.

'These reports have been useful in providing an overview of a sector within the region with specific intelligence and, therefore, useful in assisting strategic decision making amongst providers for future interventions or pilot project proposals or indeed on prioritising regional proposals for the next round of European Funding.' (Gower College Advocate)

7.15 e-skills confirmed that the Advocate was useful when they were preparing their proposal for SPFP funding.

7.16 Glyndwr University worked as part of the Isle of Anglesey Energy Island Skills Group for the E & U (SPFP068) Low Carbon Energy and Marine Power Institute. The Advocate undertook considerable promotional activity of the project aims and objectives across Wales. The University assisted in adding a low carbon energy strand to a Foundation Degree in Engineering. The advocate sat on the Welsh Energy Sector Training Steering Group, ran a nuclear hands-on display at the Technocamps/STEM/Robotics event at Venue Cymru, Llandudno and other STEM promotional events at schools.

7.17 Impact Consultancy provided support to Atradius at their proposal writing stage. Feedback from Atradius confirmed that this support was very useful.

'The Advocate Service was very helpful in the initial stages...The Service was very helpful and should be continued, but it will be most useful for employers who have not been previously involved in such funding.' (Atradius)

7.18 The particular areas where the Advocate Service helped were shaping the proposal for funding. They did not need specific support with engaging the sector as Atradius already had good links developed and LMI was not a major requirement of the project.

Challenges of Delivering the Advocate Service

7.19 In their progress report of September 2014, the Advocate Service were reporting concerns with understanding the Welsh Government's policy details on the roles of SSCs. This was clearly a concern for SSCs and Advocates in taking forward a strategy of sector engagement in the shaping of provision.

7.20 The Advocates also endeavoured to improve collaborative working across each of the Advocate organisations to ensure that, as much as possible, information was shared on available LMI and on future delivery. The Advocate Service supported the provider network in Wales more generally in SPFP by sharing all procurement opportunities at the Advocate Service Group meetings. This ensured that SSCs received adequate responses from providers.

- 7.21 It was reported by the Advocates that there was a lack of any joined up approach between the RLPs and the Advocates and that this was somewhat symptomatic of the divisions within Welsh Government; between the DfES that was responsible for the development of the further and higher education infrastructure in Wales and the Department for Economy, Science and Transport that led on the sector development within Wales.
- 7.22 There were observations that the move to Regional Learning Partnerships needed to be considered within the context of the Work Based Learning provision, which was highly sector based and that a joint strategy that would bring together regional planning and sectoral strategies would be required.
- 7.23 To support broader understanding of sector and regional needs, the Advocates stated that the labour market research developed as part of the SPFP programme needed to be published wider than on the DfES website within the Welsh Government, in order to support greater planning of sector skills development across Wales.
- 7.24 A number of SSCs expressed some frustrations that the Advocate Service had moved in to a project closure support role and reporting back to the Welsh Government rather than adding value to their delivery.

'Towards the second half of Phase 2, it became really frustrating that I was having to find time to meet with them to tell them what I was doing, rather than the other way round. It was almost as if they had to talk to me to get an update on what I was doing.' (SSC)

7.25 According to the Advocate Service specification, they were asked to support SSCs in evaluating their projects. It was not clear how this was taken forward because there appeared to be no effort made to ensure the evaluators covered the key themes, such as sustainability of provision, strength of partnership between providers and employers or CCTs. To improve the quality of reporting on similar activities in the future evaluators could be asked to report on common themes which are important to programme delivery (in this instance, sustainability of provision, partnerships and CCTs in particular). This could help deliver a more rigorous understanding of the impact of SPFP. However, it would add to the number of requirements which are already considered exhaustive by some. Furthermore, all ESF programme interim and final evaluation reports are required to cover EC themes. The personnel engaged in delivering the Advocate Service clearly developed their role in their own way, drawing on their unique knowledge and areas of expertise.

Summary

7.26 The Advocate Service was re-organised following the recommendations from the Phase 1 report and the structure appeared to have been simplified. Advocates successfully developed relationships with SSCs, providing guidance and information on procurement, labour market information and intelligence and liaised with providers to promote the awareness of SPFP projects.

7.27 Advocates reported carrying out an extensive amount of networking, raising awareness of SSC projects among providers in particular. They provided considerable support to providers in the early phase of Phase 2, helping shape proposals and offer advice on procurement practices. They also provided SSCs and RLPS with knowledge and expertise on data available to support the production of labour market intelligence.

7.28 Not all SSCs felt the need for the service and towards the end, some expressed concerns that the service developed into more of a monitoring role and that SSCs felt as though they were reporting twice to government.

8 Engagement with the Cross Cutting Themes

8.1 The European Commission specifies that projects qualifying for funding support must incorporate the CCTs as these are essential for the achievement of a well-balanced, sustainable and innovative economy. The ESF are allocated to projects that can demonstrate their ability to achieve the outputs relevant to the programmes' priorities and individual measures.

8.2 ESF funded project activity required delivery projects and partners to engage with the parameters of Equality and Environmental Sustainability. This might be through either project design, or through considering the impact of the project delivery on equality and environmental sustainability.

8.3 The evaluation of Phase 1 stated:

*'Although individual projects have made a real contribution to the environmental sustainability agenda, attention to the CCTs has been limited across the programme.'*³² and

*'A recommendation that greater efforts need to be made to address the CCTs...the Welsh Government needs to work with all projects to ensure they understand the importance of addressing the themes.'*³³

8.4 Despite these recommendations, there was very limited evidence of any proactive engagement with the agendas. In addition, there was no consistency in terms of referencing evidence of engagement with the agenda in the evaluation reports, most do not reference CCTs, and SSCs admitted it was not a priority.

8.5 Equal opportunities was the most likely area addressed by SSCs, unless they were particularly working within the environmental sustainability sector, for example, E & U Carbon Energy and Marine Power Institute (SPFP080) and CITB Sustainable Construction Learning Sites (SPFP091).

8.6 In addition, there was no remit of the Advocate Services to support and challenge SSCs in engaging with the CCTs. This was perhaps an opportunity missed. For example, there was no reporting from the Advocates on this area in their progress reports.

8.7 One of the points often raised by SSCs, employers and participants was the amount of paper work that accompanies ESF project delivery. Project managers often complained about the burden of paper work and one project stated that a reason why some learners had left their course was due to the amount of paper work. Some SSCs requested that the Welsh Government should have made efforts to move to an iCloud system of recording engagement, supported by a more simplified paper trail of evidence.

Evidence of Engagement with Environmental Sustainability and Equality Agendas

8.8 Despite the lack of reporting on the CCTs in the evaluations, there were examples of how projects positively impacted on environmental sustainability and equality.

8.9 The funding of the Low Carbon Energy Project SPFP080 delivered by E & U Skills was clearly developing training capacity within a sector that aimed to reduce carbon emissions and promote/develop sustainable sources of energy. In Wales, there were a number of low carbon energy generation projects planned, or already under construction, such as Vattenfall's Pen Y Cymoed Wind farm, RWE Innogy's Gwynt y Mor off-shore wind farm, and Tidal Energy's 'Ramsey Sound' pilot (Miller 2014). The project, not only aimed to develop training provision for the industry, but also to develop a recognised institute and infrastructure of expert providers. This project performed well and engaged 123 participants and 44 employers according to data provided by the Welsh Government. Although the evaluation report was detailed and of a high quality, it made no reference to the impact on Cross Cutting Themes, and there was no reference to the potential environmental benefits of this project as a result of SPFP funding. Clearly the SSC had not requested the evaluator report on CCTs.

8.10 The IMI report on Workforce Development in Vehicle Diagnostics (SPFP058) did reference the potential to impact on the environment '*due to the benefits directly related to the tuning of vehicles and vehicle emissions...the end user output of this project has a direct positive impact upon the environment*'.³⁴ This report also referenced the fact that only male learners were on the training and recommended the SSC carry out research to determine the number of females in the industry with a view to promoting equal access to the training.

- 8.11 A few apprenticeships included units where learners were encouraged to consider the impact on the environment. The Level 3 Outdoors Apprenticeship SPFP052 designed by Asset skills encouraged apprentices to consider the impact of outdoor activities; the Level 4 Diploma in Professional Cuisine for Chefs SPFP075 included a unit on sourcing fresh produce sustainably (although there were problems reported with the delivery); and the application developed as part of the learning resources for apprentices on the Hospitality Shared Apprenticeship SPFP066 encouraged learners to have greater consideration for the impact that hospitality can have on the environment.
- 8.12 In terms of measuring the impact on Equality, the Welsh Government set a target of recruiting 1,785 female learners in the ESF (Convergence) areas of Wales. SSCs underperformed on this target and achieved 1,200 (67 per cent) of the target.
- 8.13 There was evidence that SSCs requested evidence of Equal Opportunities policies from providers and some SSCs did stipulate targets for recruiting female learners. Some SSCs actively monitored marketing materials to ensure a balanced marketing strategy.
- 8.14 Some SSCs also researched the gender, ethnicity and disability make-up of the workforce and used this as context for discussing and researching the benefits of training on improving the image of professions and businesses. There were examples of how engagement in essential skills promoted discussions around the potential to recruit more workers from diverse ethnic communities. As an example, the police force in Wales, supported by Skills for Justice SPFP050, discussed the potential benefits of increasing training in essential skills and creating a more diverse force.
- 8.15 There was evidence of engagement in CCTs, but the evidence could be more robust (i.e. accompanied by a project strategy) and more consistently reported through mechanisms such as Steering Groups and evaluation reports. The previous evaluation suggested that the Welsh Government could provide guidance on ways in which SSCs could be actively promoted CCTs in the project delivery and this recommendation is still relevant.

Summary

8.16 A few projects reported on the impact of Cross Cutting Themes and considered their impact on the environment and equality. However, the level of reporting by SSCs and project level evaluations was very low and inconsistent.

9 Provision Through The Medium Of Welsh

9.1 Ensuring that providers and the SSC provide equal opportunities for learners to receive learning through the medium of Welsh is a key priority of the Welsh Government. As such, the evaluation was tasked with:

- Exploring whether and to what extent activities delivered under SPFP have contributed to (and are compatible with) the wider Welsh Government policy objectives to increase Welsh language skills amongst the workforce.
- Measuring how effectively SSCs and training providers were able to identify the demand from employers and learners for delivering training through the medium of Welsh and explore how effective the programme was in responding to this demand.

9.2 Interviews with SSCs and providers clearly evidence the understanding of the need to provide teaching and learning (course curriculum, course resources and support) in Welsh. Providers are required by SSCs to demonstrate their capacity to deliver in Welsh.

Evidence of Provision through the Medium of Welsh

9.3 Welsh Government learner data did not indicate whether a learner received training in Welsh. Therefore, we do not know precise numbers. There were, clear examples of teaching and learning being delivered through the medium of Welsh.

9.4 According to the evaluation report, Creative and Cultural Skills SPFP053 delivered a good level of bilingual delivery and evidence of higher levels of engagement in the Welsh side of the online portal.

Figure 9.1: Example of the Demand for Accessing Learning in Welsh

Creative and Cultural Skills (SPFP053) created an online portal to assist learners to navigate through information on CPD opportunities. Since the site was launched in 2014, all Welsh language content received 30,846 page views and 4,778 sessions (as of 15/12/14). Welsh language content averaged a session duration of 6.47 minutes as opposed to the website overall having average session duration of 1.59 minutes. This showed that users were engaging with Welsh language content and, when doing so, were staying on the site longer than those accessing content in English.

The analytics also show that users were accessing more content in the Welsh language, with the average number of pages per session at 6.46 as opposed to the website overall having 2.54 over the same time period.

Source: Wavehill evaluation report (SPFP053)

- 9.5 Creative and Cultural Skillset delivered workshops in English and in Welsh depending upon the need and the make-up of learners. However, the content for the training was not yet been translated in to Welsh.
- 9.6 Some training units developed had a specific focus on developing Welsh language skills. For example, Lantra's Food and Drink project (SPFP047) developed a unit entitled 'Use the Welsh Language in a Food and Drink Setting'.
- 9.7 People 1st ensured delivery though the medium of Welsh through their work-based learning provider delivering on the Level 4 Higher Apprenticeship for Chefs. They delivered through the medium of Welsh in north and mid Wales.

'We have a tutor and assessor whose first language is Welsh, so we are able to deliver bilingually.' (WBL provider manager)

Challenges in Delivering in Welsh

- 9.8 Although some providers delivered in areas that have a large number of learners whose first language is Welsh, there were challenges in delivering learning in Welsh. There was evidence that some learners would have preferred to learn in Welsh but that the provider was not either proactive to, or able to, deliver in Welsh.
- 9.9 The evaluation report for IMI Vehicle Diagnostics (SPFP068) reported evidence of learners wanting to be taught in Welsh but not being able to do so.

Figure 9:2 Example of Learners Unable to Learn in Welsh

The provider commissioned to deliver the vehicle diagnostic in North Wales acknowledged that there were a number of learners whose first language was Welsh. However, when asked whether any delivery was provided through the medium of Welsh, they stated it was not.

'We have not delivered in Welsh because the learners prefer to learn in English. All the manufacturers' technical specifications [for the cars] that we refer to are all in English. This is also a shared learning environment and not all learners can speak Welsh making it very difficult to deliver in Welsh.' (Tutor)

Source: YLC interview with provider

9.10 However, the evaluation report did evidence that 11 per cent of the learners expressed a preference for Welsh Language delivery. The IMI made it a requirement that providers issue course materials/assessment in the Welsh language; however, the courses were all delivered in English. It should be noted that the providers were able to deliver in Welsh, but the cohorts chose to have English medium delivery. The evaluation report stated that the IMI and the providers should review their policy for promoting Welsh language.

9.11 There were other examples of providers saying that the demand for delivering in Welsh was definitely there, but it was difficult to deliver sessions in Welsh when there were English learners also on the training. Providers did not have the capacity to run parallel training sessions based on learners' preferred language.

'The demand is definitely there and it is important to be able to deliver in Welsh, but English is the working language and unless all learners are Welsh, this is what we default to.' (FE Provider for Skillset Level 4 in Digital Media)

9.12 The evaluation report from Asset Skills (Arad 2014) stated that there was a suggestion from learners that training could be improved if delivered through the medium of Welsh³⁵.

- 9.13 One training provider delivering Level 4 Higher Level Apprenticeship in Creative and Digital Media (SPFP062) highlighted that, currently, there was no equality between learners receiving learning in the English language and in the Welsh language, as the standards were not written in Welsh. At present, apprentices could do the oral parts of the course in Welsh in south Wales but there was no option to write in Welsh.
- 9.14 In addition, one or two SSCs reported problems with getting resources translated into Welsh, as the Welsh Government agreed to support this function, but then had problems with the service provider procured to undertake this support. Therefore, some SSCs were unable to translate resources into Welsh because of a shortfall in funds.
- 9.15 There was also evidence that a small number of providers were commissioned by Improve from England who could not deliver learning through the medium of Welsh. This was due to no Welsh providers having the relevant experience to deliver the required training.
- 9.16 Providers were able to recognise the demand for delivering through the medium of Welsh, and for those with the capacity for delivering in small learning environments, learning can be delivered either bilingually or in Welsh. Greater challenges were present for providers who did not have this capacity.

Summary

- 9.17 Training was delivered through the medium of Welsh but not to all learners who had requested it or would have preferred it. Although training providers stated they could deliver in Welsh, clearly they did not have the capacity to respond to each individual learner's need as they did not have the time or capacity to delivery twice. This would require learning to be delivered in parallel. There appeared to be challenges when considering the rights of learners to receive learning through the medium of Welsh and the capacity and/or capability of providers to honour this commitment.

10 Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

- 10.1 This section draws together the conclusions resulting from the overall evaluation of the SPFP programme and offers recommendations based upon the findings in the report.

Performance of SPFP

- 10.2 SPFP met its overall aims for the programme, to ‘design, develop and test innovative training’, to ‘improve the level of business engagement in training’ and to ‘extend provider capacity.’ There was evidence that this programme had a positive impact in all three areas; although the extent and sustainability of the improvements was unclear. Mainstreaming of qualifications would ensure continued demand, but it was too early to say whether this would happen.
- 10.3 Overall performance was slightly below revised targets and the performance against ESF Convergence revised target for delivery was generally below for participants and employers. As a result, the project showed a considerable underspend from original planned spend, but was closer to the revised target. This indicated reasonable performance when considering the targets, although, measured against the original targets, assessment of performance would be less positive. The programme engaged employers across Wales.

Was Training Demand Led?

- 10.4 Most SSCs were funded to undertake some form of research to capture and evidence need and there was evidence of a strong rationale for the development and delivery of qualifications and training. Evidence suggests training met employers’ needs in terms of the quality and content of training.

- 10.5 Providers tailored provision to meet specific business needs, such as increasing performance and improving efficiency; using digital media, web designing for small businesses, vehicle diagnostics, IT analytical skills, construction skills and working safely in the energy and utilities sector. Short courses were highly valued by employers and learners. Some were accredited and some were industry endorsed by the SSC.
- 10.6 New apprenticeships (or existing apprenticeships new to Wales) were developed and delivered. These ranged from entry level apprenticeships to higher level apprenticeships. Most were well received by employers and learners. There were some apprenticeships that were more challenging to deliver and would require further input from the SSCs if they were to continue to be delivered.
- 10.7 The financial contribution from employers was much lower than original targets and most employers stated they would not have undertaken the training without the financial support from the Welsh Government.

Was Provision Innovative?

- 10.8 Some provision was innovative, for example: apprenticeships were developed that were not previously available; short courses were adapted to meet an employer's specific business needs, a model of shared apprenticeship was trialled, Apps were designed and piloted to support learning in a more flexible way and online portals were launched to direct potential learners to learning.

What Was The Impact On Learners?

- 10.9 There was strong evidence that most of the training met the majority of learners' needs and that learners were satisfied with their training. The project evaluation reports provided strong evidence that learners valued the new skills they had developed, the new knowledge acquired and that they grew in confidence in their roles as a result. Learners were motivated to train in order to gain new skills and knowledge and to improve their career options. The data showed that over one half of all learners gained a qualification.

10.10 Nearly 500 learners undertook an apprenticeship. Some apprenticeships had not been completed within the programme's time frame, which presented challenges for SSCs in terms of negotiating with providers and employers to ensure completion. However, there was evidence from evaluation reports that some apprentices, employed as a result of SPFP, were remaining in their employment beyond the funded period, and some had found work elsewhere as the result of completing their apprenticeship. Some learners and employers expressed frustration with the essential skills element of the apprenticeship framework as it was not sufficiently contextualised.

What Was The Impact On Businesses And Sectors?

10.11 There was evidence that training met the needs of business. The majority of employers felt the training had been and would continue to be valuable to their business and sector. Small businesses benefited from being able to recruit apprentices that added to their overall capacity to deliver their service.

10.12 Some employers reported that they had noticed improved productivity and improved literacy and numeracy skills. There was evidence to suggest that the training would not have happened if there was no funding to pay for it. Only a small number of employers stated they would be prepared to pay for it, and the target for employer contributions was not achieved. In order to sustain or increase the level of take-up in training, SSCs and providers would need to continue to promote the training offer to the sectors.

To What Extent Have Sustainable Partnerships Been Forged?

10.13 Some providers were new to the SSCs and reported a positive relationship being developed. There were some issues with the commissioning of providers which caused some uncertainties and poor communication on behalf of SSCs that led to frustrations between SSCs and providers. However, the overall picture was of positive relationships having been developed. The sustainability of these relationships would depend on the viability of SSCs in Wales. Over the medium term (two or three years) we would anticipate that most partnerships would discontinue unless similar training/funding opportunities arise.

10.14 Some providers already had strong links with employers that would continue beyond SPFP and these strengthened as a result of SPFP. Some providers operated as a centre of expertise and had strong established links with employers in their field, which would continue beyond SPFP.

The Advocate Service

10.15 The Advocate Service was redesigned following Phase 1 which appeared to have simplified the structure of support and enabled the Advocates to develop their role with provider networks and SSCs. However, levels of engagement across all SSCs varied, and therefore, some SSCs reported a higher level of satisfaction with the service than others. The level of experience and expertise among the Advocates was evident and it was possible that a greater level of involvement of Advocates in the preparatory stages might have resulted in proposals with clearer more achievable targets.

Training Delivered Through the Medium of Welsh

10.16 Training was delivered through the medium of Welsh. However, programme data does not capture whether training was delivered in Welsh; therefore, precise numbers are unknown. Some providers were able to deliver bilingually because of the bilingual skills of the tutors and assessors. The general response from providers when asked, was that they can deliver through the medium of Welsh.

10.17 Providers often expressed that learners did not want to learn through the medium of Welsh, and evidence of learner demand for learning through the medium was limited. However, there were one or two examples of a small number of learners who wished to receive learning through the medium of Welsh but did not receive this.

10.18 For providers to extend provision to all learners who wished to learn through the medium of Welsh, parallel provision would need to have been offered, which would increase the cost of that provision to the provider and duplicated resource requirements.

Engagement In The Cross Cutting Themes

- 10.19 There was mixed evidence that SSC projects supported the Cross Cutting Themes. Clearly, the E & U Skills project contributed to the aim of reducing carbon omissions by extending and enhancing the capacity of the workforce in the energy renewable sector. One or two projects developed units in apprenticeships that encouraged greater consideration of their working practices on the environment, such as in hospitality and construction.
- 10.20 One or two projects considered the issues of equality within the context of their business or sector, such as the lack of female learners in the motor mechanics industry and the need for greater diversification in the police force. To this extent, SSCs engaged in the themes.
- 10.21 However, more often than not, there was no reference made to the CCTs during project delivery or in the evaluation reports. If this were to be a feature in future ESF funded projects, a more structured and consistent approach is needed.

Recommendations

- 10.22 SSCs played a key role in delivering LMI and training provision to meet the needs of sectors. The Welsh Government should review the role of SSCs in any future sector priorities programme considering their capacity in Wales to operate to a similar specification.
- 10.23 SSCs needed to consider the EC/WEFO guidance when evidencing the impact and evaluation of their projects to ensure it covered all areas stipulated in the guidance. Welsh Government should review the quality and content of evaluative reports before agreeing final payments.

- 10.24 Some providers need to improve strategies for contextualising essential skills delivery, especially in apprenticeships with adult participants, to avoid learners perceiving essential skills as separate or less valuable to other learning. The Welsh Government should consider how responsibility for employer engagement should be framed in any future similar projects. Employer engagement had an impact in the speed of project delivery and on the final volumes achieved. It is, therefore, a critical element in helping such projects achieve their targets.
- 10.25 All ESF funded projects are required to demonstrate engagement with the CCTs. Therefore, there is need for the Welsh Government to give clear direction for SSCs (and all other project management operators) to clearly report on engagement in the CCTs in future reporting
- 10.26 To help understand the extent of delivery through the medium of Welsh, ensure that data on the number of learners who received learning through the medium of Welsh is captured in programme monitoring data. This will help understand future demand and supply.

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- ¹⁰ Adroit (2014) *IT Professional Apprenticeships Programme in Wales Evaluation*
- ¹¹ Miller Research (2014) *Evaluation of the SPFP Low Carbon Energy & Marine Power Institute Project*.
- ¹² Arad Research (2014) *Final Evaluation of the Level 4 Higher Level Apprenticeship in Creative and Digital Media (Interactive Media Pathway) (L4 HLA CDM (IM))*
- ¹³ Adroit (2014) *IT Professional Apprenticeships Programme in Wales Evaluation*
- ¹⁴ Miller Research (2013) *The Thriving High Street Campaign, The Nation Skills Academy for Retail*.
- ¹⁵ Wavehill (2015) *Evaluation of the Welsh Food and Drink Skills Project*.
- ¹⁶ Wavehill (2014) *Evaluation of Digital Continuing Professional development Courses for the Creative and Cultural Industries*. Creative and Cultural Skills.
- ¹⁷ Wavehill (2015) *Evaluation of Digital Continuing Professional Development Courses for the Creative and Cultural Industries in Wales*. Townley, B.
- ¹⁸ Teevan Consulting Network (2014) *People 1st Cymru Final Report*
- ¹⁹ Miller Research (2013) *The Thriving High Street Campaign, The Nation Skills Academy for Retail*.
- ²⁰ Miller Research (2014) *Evaluation of the SPFP Low Carbon Energy & Marine Power Institute Project*.
- ²¹ Rees, H.T. (2014) *The Higher Apprenticeship for Advanced Manufacturing in Wales*. Brynsadler Associates Ltd.
- ²² York Consulting (2014) *Evaluation of the Pilot Apprenticeship in HMCTS and Prosecution Services*.
- ²³ Miller Research (2014) *Evaluation of the SPFP Low Carbon Energy & Marine Power Institute Project*.
- ²⁴ Trends Business Research (2014) *Creative Provision*. Creative Skillset.
- ²⁵ Ibid.
- ²⁶ Wavehill (2014) *Evaluation of the Welsh Food and Drink Skills Project*.
- ²⁷ Wavehill (2014) Ibid.
- ²⁸ HT Rees, Brynsadler Associates Ltd, *Closing Report and Evaluation*, SEMTA.
- ²⁹ Adroit economics Ltd (2015) *IT Professional Apprenticeship Programme in Wales*, e-skills UK.
- ³⁰ Arad Research (2014) *Evaluation of the Development and Delivery of SASW Compliant Level 3 Apprenticeships across Sports and Active Leisure*, Skills Active.
- ³¹ Impact Consultancy Management Consultancy Ltd, Advocate Monthly Report July 2014 to September 2014.
- ³² Williams, G. (2013) *Evaluation of the Sector Priorities Fund Programme*. Welsh Government.
- ³³ Ibid.
- ³⁴ Oakbank (2014) *Sector Priorities Fund Pilot 2 – Vehicle Diagnostic Systems*. Institute for the Motor Industry
- ³⁵ Arad (2014) *Evaluation of the Building Futures Group's Sector Priority Fund Pilot*. Page 42.

Annex A: Phase 2 Projects

Ref	Title	Lead/SSC
SPFP040	Building a Sustainable Training Infrastructure for the Built Environment	Asset Skills
SPFP044	Research into progression pathways	People 1st
SPFP046	IT professional Apprenticeships in Wales	E Skills
SPFP047	Food and Drink skills project 2012 – 14	Lantra
SPFP049	Research into the viability of a mediation centre in Wales	Skills for Justice
SPFP050	Apprenticeship in Home Office Policing	Skills for Justice
SPFP052	Playwork Principles into practice L3 (Certificate and diploma)	Skillsactive
SPFP053	Apprenticeship development and digital opportunities for the creative industries in Wales	Creative and Cultural skills
SPFP054	Higher Apprenticeship For Advanced Manufacturing In Wales	SEMTA
SPFP057	The Thriving High Street	Skillsmart Retail
SPFP058	Higher Level Apprenticeship for legal services	Skills for Justice
SPFP059	Tasty bites and tasty Networks	Improve
SPFP062	L4 Apprenticeship in Creative and Digital media. Interactive and Digital media pathway	Creative Skillset
SPFP066	Hospitality Shared Apprenticeships	People 1st
SPFP 068	Workforce development in vehicle diagnostics	IMI
SPFP069	Improving the skills to delivery transformative change in the Welsh Health Sector	Skills for Health
SPFP074	Apprenticeship in courts, tribunal and prosecution administration. L2 and 3.	Skills for Justice
SPFP075	CPD for chefs. Develop a new Higher Apprenticeship Framework.	People 1st
SPFP076	Apprenticeship in Fashion and Textiles	Creative Skillset
SPFP077	Creative provision – developing the industry relevance of courses (FE and HE)	Creative Skillset
SPFP079	Raising the Skills and professionalism of taxi and private hire drivers.	People1st
SPFP080	Low Carbon Energy and Marine Power Institute	E & U Skills
SPFP082	Upskill IT	E Skills
SPFP083	Development and delivery of L3 apprenticeships across Sports and Active Leisure	Skillsactive
SPFP084	2 Year Graduate Programme – Financial Services Wales	Atradius
SPFP090	LMI into advanced materials and technology	SEMTA
SPFP091	Sustainable construction learning sites	Construction Skills/CITB
SPFP092	LMI Into Hair and Beauty	Skillsactive
SPFP 096	NTERREG 4A Project – Security of Supply and Patient Safety through Good Distribution Practice	Menter Môn and the Irish Exporters Association

Annex B: Learner Survey Questionnaire

Sector Priorities Fund Pilot Learner e-Survey

Would you like to complete this survey in English or Welsh?

Hoffech chi gwblhau'r arolwg yn Gymraeg neu'n Saesneg?

- English
- Cymraeg

Sector Priorities Fund Pilot Learner e-Survey

Introduction

York Consulting is conducting a survey on behalf of the Welsh Government and the European Social Fund about courses they help finance. The Sector Priorities Fund Pilot supported many individuals across a range of sectors. The survey is looking at how useful people found the course and what they have done since.

All your answers will be treated in the strictest of confidence (nobody will know how individual people have responded).

The questionnaire should only take less than 10 minutes to complete. You will be asked for your contact details at the end of the questionnaire to claim your £10 Amazon shopping voucher.

- The European Social Fund helps finance courses and training that aim to improve work-related skills.
- All information collected will be treated in the strictest confidence. Responses will not be attributed to any individual.
- Results will be reported in an anonymised format.
- We work strictly within the Market Research Society Code of Conduct.
- Welsh Government contact is Faye Gracey if you would like to find out more about the survey (02920 821636).
- The York Consulting contact is Matthew Cutmore (0113 222 3545).
- The Welsh Government sent this questionnaire link to you and has not passed on your details to York Consulting.
- Participation in the study is completely voluntary, though we very much hope you will take part.

Q1 Do you recall undertaking the course described in the email?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q2 Did you complete the course, did you leave before the end or are you still on the course?

By 'completed' - we are referring to attending most or all of the course and staying on the course until it ended. By 'left early', we are also referring to having left a course before its end in order to start a new job or education and training.

- Completed
- Left early
- Still on the course
- Don't know

Q3 Have you completed any units or elements as part of your course?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

About your course

Q4 Where was the course undertaken? (please tick all that apply)

- College
- A training centre
- At home i.e. An online course/correspondence course
- At workplace / employer premises
- Elsewhere (please specify)
- Don't know

If you specified 'elsewhere' please specify where below:

Q5 When did you do the course?

- Evenings / weekends
- During the working week
- Don't know

Q6 How many hours a week did you typically spend on this course including both time spent receiving tuition and time spent studying independently? (If it varied please answer based on a typical week)

- 0-4 hours
- 5-9 hours
- 10-15 hours
- 16-24 hours
- 25 hours or more
- Don't know

Q7 Can you remember how long were you on the course in:

- Days
- Weeks
- Months
- Years
- Don't know

Q8 How many {Q7} was this:

Your reasons for taking the course

Q9 Which of these reasons was the most important reason for you doing the course? (please select only one)

- To improve your skills or knowledge around your job
- To improve or widen your career options

- To achieve a higher level qualification
 - To improve your pay, promotion or other prospects at work
 - To learn something new for personal interest
 - To help you progress on to another education, training or learning course
 - Your employer/line manager recommended that you should attend this course as it was relevant to your particular needs
 - Other (please specify below)
-
-

Q10 Why did you not complete the course? (please tick all that apply)

- Left to start a job
 - Course too advanced / too hard
 - Course too easy
 - Problems accessing course e.g. travel problems
 - Course did not meet expectations
 - Lack of support / help
 - Lack of time / too busy
 - Family / personal circumstances
 - Ill health / disability
 - Childcare difficulties
 - Course cancelled / closed down
 - Changed job or made redundant
 - Don't know / Can't remember
 - Other (please specify below)
-
-

Q11 Did you gain any qualifications or accredited certificates as a result of being on the course?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

- Q12 Did you gain any units or credits towards any qualifications while on the course?
- Yes
 - No
 - Don't Know

Before you started the course

- Q13 Which one of the following best describes your MAIN situation or activity in the week before starting the course...(please tick all that apply)
- Doing paid work as an employee
 - Working on a self-employed basis
 - Can't remember
- Q14 Are you still employed by the same employer?
- Yes
 - No
 - Don't Know
- Q15 Are you still self-employed?
- Yes
 - No
 - Don't Know
- Q16 Prior to taking the course, did you have formal responsibility for supervising the work of other employees?
- Yes
 - No
 - Don't Know
- Q17 Can you remember exactly how many hours, on average, a week you were working immediately before you started the course?
- Yes
 - No

Don't Know

Q18 How many hours a week, on average, were you usually working immediately before you started the course - excluding meal breaks but including any paid overtime?

Number of hours per week: _____

Q19 Can you remember whether it was approximately...

- 30 hours or more per week
- 16 to 29 hours per week
- Under 16 hours per week
- Don't Know

For us to understand to what extent your pay has increased as a result of the course we would like to know your gross pay before you started the course.

Q20 What was your gross pay before you started the course?

Q21 Please state whether this is annually, monthly, weekly or say don't know if you cannot remember precisely

- Annually
- Monthly
- Weekly
- Don't know

Please select the closest option to your gross pay before you started the course. This includes any overtime, bonuses, commissions or tips but BEFORE any deductions for tax, national insurance, pension contributions:

Q22 Weekly

- Less than £38
- £38-£76
- £77-£114
- £115-£153
- £154-£192
- £193-£230
- £231-£289
- £290-£346
- £347-£403
- £404-£461
- £462-£519
- £520-£577
- £578 or more
- Monthly
- Less than £166
- £166-£333
- £334-£499

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| £500-£666 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| £667-£832 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| £833-£999 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| £1,000-£1,249 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| £1,250-£1,499 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| £1,500-£1,749 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| £1,750-£1,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| £2,000-£2,249 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| £2,250-£2499 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| £2,500 or more | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Yearly | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Less than £2000 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| £2,000 - £3,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| £4,000 - £5,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| £6,000 - £7,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| £8,000 - £9,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| £10,000 - £11,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- £12,000 - £14,999
- £15,000 - £17,999
- £18,000 - £20,999
- £21,000 - £23,999
- £24,000- £26,999
- £27,000 -£29,999
- £30,000 or more

Since starting the course

Q25 Currently, which of the following do you regard as your main activity?

- Doing paid work as an employee
- Working on a self-employed basis
- In full-time education or training
- On a government funded employment or training programme
- On a training course that was not government funded
- Unemployed and looking for work
- Doing voluntary work
- Not in or looking for paid work (for example looking after children or relatives)
- Other (please specify below)

Relations with your supervisor or manager	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Job security	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunity to use your own initiative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The number of hours you work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The work takes place in a safe and healthy environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your capacity to fulfil your potential at work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All of the above considered, how satisfied are you with your present job overall?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

We would like to know your current gross pay. This is just so that if we interview you again in the future we can see how your pay compares.

Q32 What is your current gross pay?

Q33 Please state whether this is annually, monthly, weekly or say don't know if you cannot remember precisely

- Annually
- Monthly
- Weekly
- Don't know

Please select the closest option to your current gross pay. This includes any overtime, bonuses, commissions or tips but BEFORE any deductions for tax, national insurance, pension contributions:

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| Weekly | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Less than £38 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| £38-£76 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| £77-£114 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| £115-£153 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| £154-£192 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| £193-£230 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| £231-£289 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| £290-£346 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| £347-£403 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| £404-£461 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| £462-£519 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| £520-£577 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| £578 or more | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Monthly | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Less than £166 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| £166-£333 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- £334-£499
- £500-£666
- £667-£832
- £833-£999
- £1,000-£1,249
- £1,250-£1,499
- £1,500-£1,749
- £1,750-£1,999
- £2,000-£2,249
- £2,250-£2499
- £2,500 or more
- Yearly
- Less than £2000
- £2,000 - £3,999
- £4,000 - £5,999
- £6,000 - £7,999
- £8,000 - £9,999

£10,000 - £11,999	<input type="checkbox"/>
£12,000 - £14,999	<input type="checkbox"/>
£15,000 - £17,999	<input type="checkbox"/>
£18,000 - £20,999	<input type="checkbox"/>
£21,000 - £23,999	<input type="checkbox"/>
£24,000- £26,999	<input type="checkbox"/>
£27,000 -£29,999	<input type="checkbox"/>
£30,000 or more	<input type="checkbox"/>

Benefits of the course

Q37 Thinking about the course, do you feel you benefited in any of the following ways by going on the course? Are you now...

	Yes	No	Don't know
More enthusiastic about learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Taking part in more voluntary or community activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clearer about what you want to do in your life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More confident about your abilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clearer about the range of opportunities open to you	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Feeling better about yourself generally	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thinking about setting up your own business or working self-employed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feeling you have improved employment or career prospects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feeling more healthy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q38 Which, if any, of the following skills do you feel you have gained or improved from undertaking the course?

	Yes	No	Don't know
Job-specific skills related to a specific occupation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Problem solving skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Team working skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organisational skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Literacy skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Numeracy skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
IT skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leadership and/or strategic management skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please list any other skills you feel you have gained or improved as a result of the course:

Q39 Have you been able to apply what you learnt on the course in your work or other areas of your life?

- Yes
- No / not yet
- Don't know / not sure

Q40 Compared to the work you were doing before the course, do any of the following improvements apply? Were any of these a direct result of the course?

	Directly because of the course	The course helped	The course made no difference	Not sure	This does not apply to me
I have been promoted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My pay rate, salary or income has increased	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have more job satisfaction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have better job security	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My future pay and promotion prospects have improved	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have more opportunities for training in my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q41 To what extent do you think the course helped you get your current job? Was it...

- Vital
- It did help
- It was not a factor in getting the job
- Don't know

Q42 Overall how satisfied were you with the course?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't know

Q43 Had you not done this particular course, do you think you would...?

- Definitely have done similar training anyway
- Probably have done similar training anyway
- Probably not have done similar training
- Definitely not have done similar training
- Don't Know

Claiming your Amazon voucher

Q44 In order to be eligible for the voucher you must provide the following information:

First name

Last name

Your address

Postcode

Email address

Telephone number

Your eligibility code (this can
be found in the email we sent
you)

These details will only be used to send you the £10 Amazon shopping voucher. The £10 Amazon shopping voucher will be sent to you by the end of March 2015.

National Sector Priorities Fund Pilot Programme Sector Priorities Fund Pilot Programme Employer Survey

Would you like to complete this survey in English or Welsh?

A garech chi gwblhau'r arolwg hwn yn y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg?

- English
- Cymraeg

National Sector Priorities Fund Pilot Programme Sector Priorities Fund Pilot Programme Employer Survey

We have been commissioned by the Welsh Government to undertake an evaluation of the Sector Priorities Fund Pilot Programme Sector Priorities Fund Pilot Programme (SPFP). The SPFP programme was led by Sector Skills Councils and involved employers in different ways to help develop new training solutions to develop sector skills and to generate labour market information and intelligence around sector skills needs.

All information collected will be treated in the strictest confidence. Responses will not be attributed to any individual. Results will be reported in an anonymised format.

Your feedback is extremely important to us - it will help shape future programmes.

Q1 Our records show that your business has been involved in the SPFP programme.

Do you recall this?

- Yes
- No

Q2 Is there anyone else that you think may have been involved in the programme who would be able to complete this short survey?

- Yes
- No

Your Involvement

Q3 How did you become involved in the programme? *(Please select one answer only)*

- Approached by Sector Skills Council (SSC)
- Approached by training provider
- Heard about it and proactively made contact
- Approached by another organisation
- Don't Know

Please Specify

Note: Sector Skills Councils involved were as follows:

Asset Skills

Sector: Property, housing, cleaning and facilities management

IMI - The Insitute for the Motor Industry

Sgiliau Asedau

Sector: Eiddo, tai, glanhau a rheoli cyfleusterau

IMI - Sefydliad y Diwydiant Moduro

Sector: Retail motor industry

Construction Skills

Sector: Construction

Creative & Cultural Skills

Sector: Arts, museums and galleries, heritage, craft and design

e-skills UK

Sector: Information technology, telecommunications and contact centres

Energy and Utility Skills

Sector: Electricity and renewables, gas, waste management and water

Improve

Sector: Food and Drink manufacturing & processing

Lantra

Sector: Environment and land-based industries

People 1st

Sector: Hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism

SEMTA

Sector: Science, engineering and manufacturing technologies

SkillsActive

Sector: Active leisure and learning

Skillset

Sector: Audio visual industries - Broadcast, film, video, interactive media and photo imaging

Skills for Health

Sector: Health including independent and voluntary sectors

Skills for Justice

Sector: Custodial care, community justice and police

Sector: y diwydiant moduro

Sgiliau Adeiladu

Sector: Adeiladu

Sgiliau Creadigol a Diwylliannol

Sector: Y celfyddydau, amgueddfeydd ac orielau, treftadaeth, crefft a chynllunio

e-skills UK

Sector: Technoleg gwybodaeth, telathrebu a chanolfannau cyswllt

Sgiliau Ynni a Chyfleustodau

Sector: Trydan ac ynni adnewyddadwy, nwy, rheoli gwastraff a dŵr

Improve

Sector: Gweithgynhyrchu a phrosesu bwyd a diod

Lantra

Sector: Diwydiannau'r amgylchedd a'r tir

People 1st

Sector: Lletygarwch, hamdden, teithio a thwristiaeth

SEMTA

Sector: Gwyddoniaeth, peirianeg a thechnolegau gweithgynhyrchu

SkillsActive

Sector: Hamdden a dysgu

Skillset

Sector: Diwydiannau clywedol - Ddrilledu, ffilm, fideo, cyfryngau rhyngweithiol a delweddu llun

Sgiliau Iechyd

Sector: Iechyd gan gynnwys y sectorau annibynnol a gwirfoddol

Sgiliau er Cyfiawnder

Sector: Gofal gwarchodol, cyfiawnder cymunedol a'r heddlu

Your Involvement

Q4 What was the business rationale for becoming involved? *(Please select all that apply)*

To gain free training

To support the development of qualifications in the sector

To improve training within the business

To provide new opportunities for the workforce

To increase the workforce capacity of the business

To achieve Corporate Social Responsibility goals

To train new entrants to the workforce

To increase the qualifications of the existing workforce

Other

Please State

Your Involvement

Q5 Which of these reasons was the most important business rationale for getting involved? *(Please select one only)*

To gain free training

To support the development of qualifications in the sector

To improve training within the business

To provide new opportunities for the workforce

To increase the workforce capacity of the business

To achieve Corporate Social Responsibility goals

To train new entrants to the workforce

To increase the qualifications of the existing workforce

Other

Your Involvement

Q6 Were you/the business involved in any of the following *(Please tick all that apply)*

- Qualifications development
- Developing skills needs diagnostics
- Labour market research
- Other

None
Please Specify

Q7 What did your participation involved? *(Please select all that apply)*

- Overseeing training for staff
- Attending management/steering group meetings
- Participating in labour market research
- Attending events/conferences
- Other

Please Specify

Q8 Did the project involve any delivery of training to staff?

- Yes No Don't Know N/A

Your Involvement

Q9 What type of training was received?

- Apprenticeships
- Other accredited training (i.e. Degree, Diploma, NVQ)
- Bespoke Training/knowledge Development (i.e. one day or short course)
- Don't Know
- N/A

Improved public image of the organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Raised workforce productivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increased organisation competitiveness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved efficiency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reduced staff turnover	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reduced absence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increase in sales	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increase in profit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Please Specify	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Impact of training on staff

Q14 Did the training meet your expectations?

- Yes
- No

Why?

The [research/training/qualification] has been valuable to my sector to date?

The [research/training/qualification] will be valuable to my business in the future?

The [research/training/qualification] will be valuable to my sector in the future?

Future Involvement

Q18 Are you likely to continue your involvement with the SSC?
 Yes No Don't Know N/A

Q19 Are you likely to continue your involvement with the provider?
 Yes No Don't Know N/A

Q20 Was your organisation involved with the SSC before this project?
 Yes No Don't Know N/A

Q21 Was your organisation involved with the training provider before this project?
 Yes No Don't Know N/A

About your business

Q22 Do you have a training budget?

- Yes No Don't Know

Q23 Do you have Investors in People Accreditation?

- Yes
 No - but we are working towards this
 No - and we are not working towards this
 Don't Know

Q24 What is the size of your business?

- Micro (up to 10 employees)
 Small (up to 50)
 Medium (up to 250)
 Large (over 250)

About your business

Q25 Which broad sector does your organisation operate in?

- Agriculture, forestry and fishing
 Manufacturing (inc. food and drinks)
 Construction
 Wholesale and retail motor vehicles

- Accommodations and food services activities
- Transport and storage
- Financial and insurance activities
- Arts, entertainment and recreation
- Other services
- Other
- Don't Know

Please specify

About your business

Q26 In which local authority is your business mainly based?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blaenau Gwent | <input type="checkbox"/> Monmouthshire |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bridgend | <input type="checkbox"/> Neath Port Talbot |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caerphilly | <input type="checkbox"/> Newport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cardiff | <input type="checkbox"/> Pembrokeshire |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carmarthen | <input type="checkbox"/> Powys |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ceredigion | <input type="checkbox"/> Rhondda Cynon Taff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conwy | <input type="checkbox"/> Swansea |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Denbighshire | <input type="checkbox"/> Torfaen |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flintshire | <input type="checkbox"/> Vale of Glamorgan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gwynedd | <input type="checkbox"/> Wrexham |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Isle of Anglesey | <input type="checkbox"/> Outside of Wales |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Merthyr Tydfil | |

Further Comments

Q27 Finally are there any additional comments/areas for improvement that you are able to share to help us understand the impact of the project?

Q28 Thank you for your time, are we able to re-contact you if we have any further questions or to clarify your responses?

Yes

No

Please provide your name and phone number

For further information about the Sector Priorities Fund Pilot Programme please visit:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/allsectorpolicies/europeansocialfund/projects/spfp/?lang=en>

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

Please forward the link you received on to the most appropriate person.

Thank you for your time. This questionnaire is for those who have been involved in the SPFP programme and therefore will not be relevant for you.

Annex C: Employer Survey Questionnaire

National Sector Priorities Fund Pilot Programme Sector Priorities Fund Pilot Programme Employer Survey

Would you like to complete this survey in English or Welsh?

A garech chi gwblhau'r arolwg hwn yn y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg?

- English
- Cymraeg

National Sector Priorities Fund Pilot Programme Sector Priorities Fund Pilot Programme Employer Survey

We have been commissioned by the Welsh Government to undertake an evaluation of the Sector Priorities Fund Pilot Programme Sector Priorities Fund Pilot Programme (SPFP). The SPFP programme was led by Sector Skills Councils and involved employers in different ways to help develop new training solutions to develop sector skills and to generate labour market information and intelligence around sector skills needs.

All information collected will be treated in the strictest confidence. Responses will not be attributed to any individual. Results will be reported in an anonymised format.

Your feedback is extremely important to us - it will help shape future programmes.

Q1

Our records show that your business has been involved in the SPFP programme.

Do you recall this?

- Yes
- No

Q2

Is there anyone else that you think may have been involved in the programme who would be able to complete this short survey?

- Yes
- No

|

Your Involvement

Q3

How did you become involved in the programme? *(Please select one answer only)*

- Approached by Sector Skills Council (SSC)
- Approached by training provider
- Heard about it and proactively made contact
- Approached by another organisation
- Don't Know

Please Specify

Note: Sector Skills Councils involved were as follows:

Asset Skills

Sector: Property, housing, cleaning and facilities management

IMI - The Institute for the Motor Industry

Sector: Retail motor industry

Construction Skills

Sector: Construction

Creative & Cultural Skills

Sector: Arts, museums and galleries, heritage, craft and design

e-skills UK

Sector: Information technology, telecommunications and contact centres

Energy and Utility Skills

Sector: Electricity and renewables, gas, waste management and water

Improve

Sector: Food and Drink manufacturing & processing

Lantra

Sector: Environment and land-based industries

People 1st

Sector: Hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism

SEMTA

Sector: Science, engineering and manufacturing technologies

SkillsActive

Sector: Active leisure and learning

Skillset

Sector: Audio visual industries - Broadcast, film, video, interactive media and photo imaging

Skills for Health

Sector: Health including independent and voluntary sectors

Skills for Justice

Sector: Custodial care, community justice and police

Your Involvement

Q4 What was the business rationale for becoming involved? *(Please select all that apply)*

To gain free training

To support the development of qualifications in the sector

To improve training within the business

To provide new opportunities for the workforce

To increase the workforce capacity of the business

To achieve Corporate Social Responsibility goals

To train new entrants to the workforce

To increase the qualifications of the existing workforce

Other

Please State

Your Involvement

Q5 Which of these reasons was the most important business rationale for getting involved? (*Please select one only*)

To gain free training

To support the development of qualifications in the sector

To improve training within the business

To provide new opportunities for the workforce

To increase the workforce capacity of the business

To achieve Corporate Social Responsibility goals

To train new entrants to the workforce

To increase the qualifications of the existing workforce

Other

Your Involvement

Q6 Were you/the business involved in any of the following (*Please tick all that apply*)

- Qualifications development
- Developing skills needs diagnostics
- Labour market research
- Other
- None

Please Specify

Q7 What did your participation involved? (*Please select all that apply*)

- Overseeing training for staff
- Attending management/steering group meetings
- Participating in labour market research
- Attending events/conferences
- Other

Please Specify

Q8 Did the project involve any delivery of training to staff?

- Yes No Don't Know N/A

Impact of training on staff

Q13 Have you observed any of the following impacts to the business performance as a result of the business's involvement with the programme?

	No Impact	Limited Impact	Some Impact	Considerable Impact	Don't Know	N/A
Improved customer service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved public image of the organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Raised workforce productivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increased organisation competitiveness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved efficiency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reduced staff turnover	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reduced absence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increase in sales	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increase in profit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Please Specify	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Impact of training on staff

Q14 Did the training meet your expectations?

Yes

No

Why?

Q15 Approximately how many of your staff were involved in the training?

1-5

6-10

11-15

16-20

More than 20

N/A

Q16 How would you rate the performance of the provider?

Very Poor

Poor

Neither

Good

Very Good

Don't Know

Future Involvement

- Q18 Are you likely to continue your involvement with the SSC?
 Yes No Don't Know N/A
- Q19 Are you likely to continue your involvement with the provider?
 Yes No Don't Know N/A
- Q20 Was your organisation involved with the SSC before this project?
 Yes No Don't Know N/A
- Q21 Was your organisation involved with the training provider before this project?
 Yes No Don't Know N/A

About your business

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