

# **Research project for the South Wilts Learning Partnership**

**Provision of 19+ Training and Education in  
South Wiltshire**

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	Executive Summary	
1.	Introduction	5
2.	Background	6
3.	Learning and Training initiatives aimed at 19+	6
4.	Observations	18
5.	Recommendations	21

## **APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A.** Summary of project brief

**APPENDIX B.** Provision of 19+ Training and Education  
Partner Organisations  
Geographic and Sector focus

**Appendix C.** Summary list of contributors

## **Executive Summary**

This report has been commissioned by the South Wiltshire Learning Partnership to establish the provision of 19+ training and education in South Wiltshire.

The main thrust of this project was to investigate the gaps in provision and need; both from the perspective of the trainee – the employee or prospective employee - and employers.

In talking to people seeking skills and training, in the main, we found there was a more than adequate match between needs and provision. In mapping the education and skills training provision in the South Wilts area, we have concluded that there is a wealth of wide ranging, flexible and high quality provision available.

By tracking the funding it is immediately evident that the Learning and Skills Council – Wiltshire and Swindon is the greatest local influencer with the bulk of local funding coming from the LSC.

During numerous discussions with employers about the skills lacking in potential employees (or indeed some current employees), their main concern was a lack of ‘people skills’. In the author’s view this people skills gap is not being adequately addressed in existing education and skills training provision but is a key area for development to ensure the continued commercial success of South Wiltshire. In the Summary below we have indicated (\*) the areas where Employers have identified there is little to no focused training provision and where much greater provision of learning is needed.

### **Summary of ‘People’ Skills Gap**

- Personal time management \*
- Team working skills
- Leadership – the ability to get the best out of other people
- Self leadership – the ability to get the best out of yourself \*
- Openness, trust and reliability \*
- Self motivation \*
- Speaking to be understood – communicating \*
- Courtesy – dealing with other people \*
- Building trust – building empathy \*
- Personal development
- Self empowerment – building self confidence \*
- Building relationships – getting on with people – team working skills \*

We have made a number of broad conclusions and recommendations, set out in detail in pages 19 to 21.

### **Summary Conclusions and Recommendations**

- We recommend that the Partnership actively encourage all local employers and organisations to integrate training in people skills and to ensure they have quality induction programmes.
- We recommend that the Partnership should promote this induction programme strategy.
- We recommend that the Partnership should commission the development of three short case studies
- We recommend that the Partnership should champion the development of a short series of Training Workshops
- We recommend that the information mapping training provision in the area should be posted on a web-site

## **1 Introduction**

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### **1.1 Introduction**

This report has been commissioned by the South Wiltshire Learning Partnership to establish the provision of 19+ training and education in South Wiltshire. A summary of the brief for this project is shown at Appendix A.

In order to establish which organisations are delivering 19+ training and education in South Wiltshire, a simple premise has been adopted; this is to follow the funding. By establishing the funding sources it has been possible to map the local providers and at the same time identify the programmes they are delivering.

The vast majority of the 19+ training and education comprises of national initiatives such as Skills for Life. Therefore on a local level the challenge is all centred around delivery and how to engage with the potential recipients.

By tracking the funding it is immediately evident that the Learning and Skills Council – Wiltshire and Swindon is the greatest local influencer with the bulk of local funding coming from the LSC.

Due to the social importance and high level of funding, the provision of 19+ training and education is the subject of considerable national and regional focus. There are many organisations that are involved in the actual delivery and also those who don't deliver but are pivotal when it comes to co-ordination and ensuring that all stakeholders are joined up. All of these organisations are identified together with an outline of their remit and contact details in Appendix B where they have been mapped showing their geographic and target audience focus.

Section 2 shows the products and services which are being delivered in South Wiltshire and identifies the training and education providers.

Section 3 identifies the feedback and intelligence that has been generated via the one to one interviews with both users and providers of training.

One of the difficulties in this report is separating local South Wiltshire providers because people are mobile. If somebody wishes to gain a plumbing qualification they can easily cross boundaries. So a provider may not be based in South Wiltshire but they are serving the South Wiltshire community. It also works in the opposite direction Salisbury College is now promoting some of its higher education courses to national and international students.

## **1.2 Background**

### **1.2.1 Characteristics of local area**

South Wiltshire is a predominantly rural area, with one urban centre, Salisbury. There are high levels of military and agricultural land use. There are many rural settlements where access to public transport is poor. From talking to local organisations most people tend to look south towards Southampton rather than north towards Swindon this means that the collective of Wiltshire and Swindon is purely for administrative and statistical purposes.

Over the past 20 years South Wiltshire and Swindon has experienced greater relative prosperity compared to some parts of the UK, and the South West as a whole. The area has benefited from substantial inward investment, and Swindon, in particular, has been a popular location that will have benefited businesses in the South of the county. Wiltshire and Swindon support over 300,000 jobs and, combined, have one of the highest levels of GDP in the region.

The local population contains a greater proportion of pre-school and school-age residents, fewer people aged in their mid-teens to late twenties, and more people aged thirty to fifty years than is the case for England. The area has a higher than average projected population growth from 2000-2011, at 6.1% in Wiltshire.

### **1.2.2 Adult learning**

As is the case nationally, the Basic Skills Agency estimates that at least one in five of the working population lack numeracy and literacy skills to perform adequately in their jobs, and this failure to address these needs may deter take-up of further learning.

Recent promotional campaigns conducted by the LSC to attract Basic Skills learners have demonstrated the limitations of campaigns solely focussing on individuals' learning needs. By comparison campaigns targeted through employers have been far more successful in attracting learners. Future campaigns will stress the positive benefits derived from participation in, for example, Family Literacy and Numeracy.

At NVQ level 2, 3 and 4 adults tend to be better qualified than in England as a whole. However this masks an over-heated labour market locally where demand for skills by employers still outpaces supply.

A key local finding, however, is that where employers are appropriately incentivised and supported, they are prepared to engage. Free2Learn, Wiltshire and Swindon's Employer Training Pilot, has demonstrated that the offer of independent advice (skills brokerage), and modest compensation for releasing staff, will encourage employers of all sizes to take up training. Furthermore, amongst those that have participated, this has stimulated a commitment to developing a 'whole company' approach to identifying skills needs, and developing their workforces.

### 1.2.3 Learning infrastructure

South Wiltshire is served locally by one Further Education College – Salisbury College (with Wiltshire College to the North and two more in Swindon). Below is the LSC F.E funding for 2005/6 which on a national level is a 3% reduction on the previous year.

New College, Swindon	£10,943,891
Salisbury College	£7,106,968
Swindon College	£12,324,762
The Learning Curve	£300,988
Wiltshire College	£16,626,943

There are 20 private providers in the Wiltshire and Swindon LSC area that are contracted to deliver work-based learning for young people, a further 29 delivering workforce development. Most of these providers have been mapped during the production of this report.

### 1.2.4 Recruitment difficulties and skill shortage vacancies in Wiltshire and Swindon

The National Employers Skills Survey estimated that 18% of all establishments in Wiltshire and Swindon were facing vacancies, equating to some 4,345 vacant jobs. 10% (2,363) of establishments reported that they were facing hard-to-fill vacancies and 4% (974) were facing a skills shortage vacancy.

In the South West, just less than a fifth of vacancies are for higher level skilled occupations: 5% (233) being for Managers and Senior Officials, 9% (378) for Professionals and 10% (430) for Associate Professionals. These are considerably outweighed by the number of vacancies for elementary staff (20% - 871) and Sales and Customer Service Staff (17% - 735). This pattern is much the same for England as a whole.

### 1.2.5 Occupational profile of vacancies, hard-to-fill vacancies and skill shortage vacancies

In the majority of occupational groups the balance of overall vacancies, hard-to-fill vacancies and skill shortage vacancies is roughly the same. This is not the case for Skilled Trades, where in the South West these make up 10% (7,724) of all vacancies but constitute 17% (5,443) of hard-to-fill vacancies and 23% (2943) of skill shortage vacancies. The opposite situation exists for Sales and Customer Service Staff which constitute 19% of all vacancies, but only 15% of hard-to-fill vacancies and 12% of skill shortage vacancies and, to a lesser extent, Administrative Occupations (13% of all vacancies, 11% of hard-to-fill vacancies and 8% of skill shortage vacancies).

As far as employers are concerned the main causes of skills gaps amongst Wiltshire and Swindon employees are either a lack of experience, or because staff have been recently recruited (77% - 3,989). Following this is employers' failure to train and develop staff (28% - 1,449), or the lack of staff motivation to train (27% - 1,402).

### 1.2.6 Skill deficiencies of applicants

The most common area of skills deficiency in applicants (Wiltshire & Swindon) was communication skills (54% - 1278 of employers who stated they had a hard-to-fill vacancy), followed by technical and practical skills, team working skills and problem solving skills (all 47 % - 1100).

Compared with the South West as a whole, the areas of skills deficiencies are broadly similar. Applicants to jobs found to be hard-to-fill in Swindon are more likely to demonstrate shortcomings in their communication, team working and problem solving skills; less likely to have shortfalls in customer handling and literacy skills.

Source: National Employer and Skills Survey 2003 (NESS) information taken from Wiltshire and Swindon LSC annual plan 2004/5

## 2. Learning and training initiatives aimed at 19+

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### 2.1 Apprenticeships



Apprenticeships are a mixture of work-based training and education. The frameworks are designed by Sector Skills Councils, or Sector Skills Bodies. Becoming an Apprentice allows learners to have a job, to earn a wage and to receive structured training in their chosen occupation. Learners can be fully employed or in a work placement. Centres can help learners find suitable work placements and arrange day release training at a college: Apprenticeships are made up of the following elements

- Achieve vocational, work-based qualifications (NVQs);
- Learn on the job;
- Build up knowledge and key skills;
- Gain new qualifications.
- Earn whilst they learn

There are two levels of Apprenticeship:

Level 2 of the National Qualifications Framework and Advanced Apprenticeships which lie at level 3 of the National Qualifications Framework.



Nationally there are currently over 150 different types of apprenticeships.

Apprenticeships are open to anyone aged 16-24 living in England and not taking part in full-time education. If somebody starts a course before their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday then they can continue until it is finished.

There is no set time for completion, typically it takes between 18 and 24 months.

### **Qualifications**

Students get a package of qualifications when they complete their Apprenticeship - a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ), a technical certificate such as a BTEC National Diploma or a City & Guilds Progression Award, and Key Skills qualifications. Apprenticeships lead to either an NVQ Level 2 or an NVQ Level 3.

### **Delivery**

All Swindon and Wiltshire organisations are included as they will cross boundaries.

Swindon Pressings Ltd	Swindon
Fortan	Swindon
Jigsaw Group	Swindon
Noah's Ark	Swindon
Swindon College	Swindon
Westgate Nursery School	Swindon
Babcock HCS	Chippenham
Defence Communication Services Agency	Corsham
Royal Armoured Corps	Tidworth
Salisbury College	Salisbury
Partners	Swindon
D C Leisure Management	Trowbridge
Royal Artillery Centre for Personal Development	Salisbury
Taurus Employment Development Ltd	Swindon
Army Foundation College VQ Office	Pewsey
Avon Vale Training Ltd	Chippenham
Haddon Business Training Centre	Marlborough
New College, Swindon	Swindon

## Observations

The majority of Apprenticeships are for under 18s. Out of the 80 people at Salisbury College studying only one is over 19.

### 2.2 Skills for Life

One of the LSC's top national priorities is to improve the basic skills of literacy, language and numeracy. They have been charged by Government with raising the literacy and numeracy skills of 1.5 million adults by 2007.

The improvement of literacy and numeracy skills is key to economic regeneration and social inclusion. Without immediate and sustainable action, individuals and communities will be hindered in playing their full part in the regeneration of the region's economy and in releasing their own potential. At a local level the following is extracted from the Wiltshire and Swindon LSC annual plan 2004/5:

“.....the LSC is committed to delivering “Skills for Life” – the national strategy for improving literacy and numeracy skills, which focuses resources on improving the skills of those groups where literacy and numeracy needs are greatest and the most impact can be made. In order to do this, we are targeting our activities on priority groups including the unemployed and benefit claimants, prisoners and those supervised in the community, public sector employees, low-skilled people in employment, and other groups at risk of exclusion, in order to raise standards and boost levels of achievement. This will involve building on the best of existing provision and developing new, attractive and flexible learning opportunities to draw in people who may not otherwise want to engage in learning.”

Each of the nine regions, led by LSC *Skills for Life* Regional Lead, has drawn up a regional delivery plan that will determine the activity for this phase of activity.

### Delivery

Salisbury College  
TAB Training, Salisbury  
Learning Curve

### 2.3 Learndirect



Learndirect which is funded by the Ufi recently celebrated its fifth anniversary. Recent research has put the awareness of Learndirect at 74% of the adult population.

It claims to have pioneered courses and technology to enable people to learn in "bite-size" chunks anywhere and at any time that suits.

More than 70% of its courses can be accessed via the internet.

Learndirect is looking to move its marketing focus. "We have the brand awareness but we need to market ourselves to business. We've been marketing ourselves to individuals"

Ufi now has the largest number of students of any educational organisation outside China. It is one of the largest e-learning networks in the world. Ufi now intends to increase the range of its courses beyond the staple introductory IT courses, for which demand seems to have peaked.

A report by the Commons Public Accounts Committee found that the Learndirect service operated by Ufi has in seven years provided courses to 1.7 million people, two-thirds of whom had not done any learning in the previous three years.

However, MPs also concluded that relatively few of the participants on the programme are taking up the level 2 courses aimed at tackling the lowest levels of literacy and numeracy skills.

And the report noted that while 37 per cent of small businesses realise that Learndirect is intended to support them and their employees and only one-in-twenty-five are using it. Committee chairman Edward Leigh said: "The economic competitiveness of the UK is being damaged by relatively low levels of skills, literacy and numeracy among adults. A large proportion (about 40%) of employers do not provide their staff with any training at all. "These employers could take advantage of the extensive e-learning network - the Learndirect service - established by Ufi. It is essential that this service is promoted more widely among employers and that it offers more business-oriented training."

The report recommended that Ufi should develop a strategy over the next two years to work more closely with employers.

This should include a campaign to highlight how Learndirect services could raise the productivity of businesses, MPs said.

The report also found that access to Learndirect was often limited in rural areas, but said that provision could be enhanced by providing services through online tutoring and within existing local amenities such as schools and community centres.

MPs were also concerned that Learndirect was still putting a heavy strain on public funding. Ultimately Ufi is supposed to be self-funding, but by July last year it had recovered only £12 million of commercial income compared with the £930m it has received in public funding.

One of the reasons for this, MPs said, was because up until last year, Ufi was spending one third of its budget on management and marketing costs. "Ufi should accelerate moves to cut these costs and channel the money towards learners," Leigh said.

Responding to the report, Ufi said it had introduced annual revenue targets of 44 per cent from the private sector between now and 2011.

[eGov monitor Newsdesk](#) Published Tuesday, 7 March, 2006

## **Delivery**

TAB Training, Salisbury

## **2.4 Train to Gain**

Train to Gain – formerly known in South Wiltshire as Skills4Business (ETP) – will be implemented region wide starting from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006. Train to Gain is a service to help companies and other organisations improve the skills of their workforces and business performance by assisting them in identifying and sourcing training provision which will meet their needs – some of which, although not all, may attract a full or partial public subsidy.

The "core" offer to employers who participate in Train to Gain will be free Skills for Life and free Level 2 provision which will be open to all employers, although it will be particularly targeted at "Hard to Reach" employers - these are defined as those employers who have not undertaken training using public funds in the last 12 months and do not hold Investors in People status.

In addition to 'Hard to Reach' employers there will be a further category of employers, which are classed as "existing" in the sense that these are in existing relationships with Providers.

Ultimately it will be for employers to choose the Provider which will deliver to meet their needs – not the LSC or an impartial skills broker, although the brokerage service will exist to assist employers in making a choice should they require support in this respect.

It is fair to say that at this stage the whole programme is in a state of flux, there is a national directive with no confirmed local plans for implementation. At this moment there are no published plans for a transition. From talking to one of the providers they have been told that they will have to tender for the new contracts but have been asked to run the new contract until the end of July. Unfortunately at this stage they do not know the full details of the initiative.

For South Wiltshire the preferred contractor for delivery of the Brokerage Service is Business Link Berkshire and Wiltshire.

Below are the details that have been outlined in the White Paper.

### **Wage Compensation**

Exact arrangements relating to wage compensation under Train to Gain are still to be confirmed. However in the budget statement prior to Christmas the Chancellor announced that wage compensation would be made available through Train to Gain for employers who employ less than 50 staff and who release them for Skills for Life and/or first full Level 2 training. Details regarding this process are still to be confirmed.

### **Level 3 training**

Train to Gain will also differ from the pilots in that it will have a stronger emphasis on progression to, and investment in, skills at Level 3 and above. The Government is going to trial subsidising Level 3 training in two regions (£20m funding each year in 2006-07 and 2007-08) by giving brokers a budget to make a contribution towards the cost of Level 3 training delivered in the workplace with the proviso that this 'contribution should be at least matched by the employer'.

The increased provision of training at Level 3 will also be achieved by some new flexibility available in all regions. The main flexibility will allow employers to use the free funding for Level 2 training to enable some employees 'who want to progress direct to a first Level 3 and can do so (with their employer's support), rather than being limited to a Level 2' (2005 Skills White Paper). Obviously, this may entail additional costs for the employer, as training an employee up to Level 3 would normally cost more than a Level 2 qualification.

There is also a longer-term aspiration in the White Paper to route an increasing proportion of LSC funding for adult training via 'Train to Gain' so that the broker can directly draw on these funds to provide an element of subsidy alongside a contribution from the employer' (Skills White Paper, 2005). However, the Government emphasises that employers benefit much more directly from higher level training (e.g. because of productivity gains etc.) and that they themselves will therefore have to invest more in training at Level 3 and above.

### **The Employer Training Pilot results in Wiltshire and Swindon**

<b>Workstream</b>	<b>05-06 Target Starts</b>	<b>05-06 Actual Starts</b>
Skills4Life	2108	2096
Level 2	5175	5057
Level 3 / 4 (Two year target)	2331	1015
liP Commitments	200	190
liP Recognitions	120	120

<b>Completions</b>	<b>05-06 Actual</b>	<b>Success Rate</b>
Skills4Life	1281	82%
Level 2	3213	85%
Level 3 / 4	260	88%

### **Delivery**

These are the current Skills4Business providers and will all have to tender for the Train to Gain contract:

A2Z Security Training	Salisbury
Acacia Training & Consultancy Ltd	Biddulph
Accrington and Rossendale College	Accrington
Acorn Learning Solutions Limited	Newport
Active Learning And Development Ltd	Evesham
Avon Technical Products	Melksham
Avon Vale Training Ltd	Chippenham
Barford Education & Training / XR Training Ltd	Basildon
Bournemouth & Poole College	Poole

Bridgwater College	Yeovil
Bristol City Council	Bristol
CAD Centre	Swansea
City Of Bristol College	Bristol
Concorde Professional Development	Exeter
Construction Learning World Ltd	Nottingham
Cricklade College (NVQ Centre)	Andover
CSM Consulting	Somerset
D C Leisure Management	Trowbridge
Didac Limited	Bristol
Fortan	Swindon
Fuel Qualification Service	Wootton Bassett
Future-Wize	Barnsley
Genitt IT Training Ltd	Bracknell
Great Western Enterprise (CPD)	Swindon
Haddon Business Training Centre	Marlborough
Health & Safety Advisory Service Ltd	Swindon
Hotel & Catering Training Company Ltd	Newton Abbot
Hudson Hughes Training Ltd	Taunton
JHP Training	Gloucester
K D Training Solutions	Wootton Bassett
Key Training Limited	Swindon
L J Care Training	Swindon
Leisure Force UK	Chester
Lifetime Careers (Wiltshire) Ltd	Trowbridge
M2 Training Limited	Cirencester
National Plant Operators Registration Scheme Ltd (NPORS)	Wantage
NCS	Romsey
New College Swindon (Fast Forward)	Swindon
Newbury College	Newbury
North Wessex Training Ltd	Devizes
Norton Radstock College	Bath
Oaklands Resource Management	Westbury
Olympic Training Services Ltd	Cardiff
Partners In Progress Ltd	Havant
PDM Training & Consultancy Ltd	Andover
Pertemps Employment Alliance	Birmingham

Polymer Training Limited	Telford
Protocol Skills (OLD UPIN)	Salisbury
Protocol Skills and Training Ltd	Salisbury
Protocol Training (NO NEW REGISTRATIONS)	Barnsley
Qube Qualification And Development Ltd	Henley on Thames
RACPD	Larkhill
Regis Training Company Ltd	Barnham
RTS Consultants (UK) Ltd	Chippenham
Safe & Sound Ltd	Trowbridge
Salisbury College	Salisbury
Sanctuary Care Ltd	Worcester
Shorterm Engineers Limited	West Drayton
Solomon Training	Swindon
South Western Regional Assessment Centre	Wimborne
Span Training Organisation	Abingdon
Sparsholt College Hampshire	Winchester
Swindon Borough Council (OLD UPIN)	Swindon
Swindon Borough Council (OLD UPIN)	Swindon
Swindon Borough Council - Social Services	Swindon
Swindon College	Swindon
Swindon Commercial Services	Swindon
Swindon Pressings Ltd	Swindon
TABS Ltd	Salisbury
TADS Training Ltd	Market Lavington
Taurus Skills Foundation	Swindon
Telford College Of Arts And Technology	Telford
The Insurance Training Consortium	Bristol
The Learning Curve	Chippenham
The Pre-School Learning Alliance	Leeds
The Skills Partnership Ltd	Leeds
Trackss Ltd	Whitstable
Training Express	Bradford on Avon
Twin Training International	London
UK Trainers	Tilshead
United Kingdom Home Care Association	Poole
VT Plus Training PLC	Gloucester
WEA	Bristol

Wessex Training & Assessment Centre	Cricklade
WEYAC	Devizes
Wiltshire College (Focus)	Lacock
Wiltshire County Council (NVQ Centre)	Trowbridge
WSSC - Kennet & North Wiltshire PCT	Warminster
WTTD	Devizes
Yeovil College	Yeovil

## 2.5 Nextstep



Nextstep is a network of organisations which have come together to provide Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) about learning and work to all adults across Wiltshire and Swindon.

Many of the organisations are well established in offering Information, Advice and Guidance to adults. The aim of the network is to ensure that individuals can access seamless, high quality provision and that organisations are supported to offer individuals the widest access to such provision.

There are 3 different categories of service available in a range of venues around Wiltshire and Swindon.

### 2.5.1 Advice and Guidance Centres

These organisations offer advice and guidance to adults about learning and work. They include colleges of further education, careers services, voluntary organisations and Jobcentres. Staff can give advice on CVs, job-hunting skills, course entry requirements, qualifications etc. Some organisations offer careers guidance for adults including access to psychometric assessment. This range of expert help is often supported by the provision of relevant information.

### 2.5.2 Information Centres

Some Organisations in the Network offer information to clients about learning and work. These organisations may hold local and national directories, or offer information about job seeking, self assessment, careers and career development and change. Some organisations will offer support to access the information they hold.



### 2.5.3 Signposting Centres

These centres advise people where they can access the range of Nextstep services. The Centres carry a range of information about organisations within the Network direct people to the Nextstep outreach Information, Advice and Guidance services in their area.

Many organisations in the Network offer all the above categories of service.

The Nextstep information and advice service can help get people on the road to improve their career prospects by learning new skills, retraining or gaining new qualifications.

On offer is free information on learning and work to anyone aged 20 and over. Nextstep can also offer free face-to-face advice if learners have less than 5 GCSEs or have not yet achieved an NVQ level 2 qualification.

### 2.5.3 The Next Step Offer

Next step is for anyone who:

- Is aged 20+
- Has basic skills needs
- Is unemployed or employed
- Is a refugee
- Is homeless
- Is an offender or ex-offender
- Has mental health difficulties and learning difficulties and disabilities
- Needs to gain level three skills to meet priority sector demands, particularly in care/childcare and healthcare, public services (particularly basic skills), automotive manufacturing, retail, construction, ICT and hospitality.
- Is living or working in Wiltshire and Swindon

### Delivery

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### **3. Observations**

#### **3.1 What exists?**

In mapping the education and skills training provision in the South Wilts area, we have concluded that there is a wealth of wide ranging, flexible and high quality provision available.

We have also mapped, within the scope of the project, the organisations involved in delivering this provision. We have pointed out elsewhere in this report that some of this provision may be delivered 'cross border'.

There are still three main concerns within the 19+ age group regarding access to this training provision:

- (i) Lack of adequate public transport provision in out of town and more rural locations; the cost of transport, when it was available, was also a factor
- (ii) Difficulty in getting time off work to attend training sessions
- (iii) The cost of training sessions where this was paid by the trainee

We assume the Partnership will already be aware of these issues and will be addressing them within their remit – 'Promoting all kinds of learning to all kinds of people ....'

#### **3.2 What is missing?**

The main thrust of this project was to investigate the gaps in provision and need; both from the perspective of the trainee – the employee or prospective employee - and employers.

In talking to people seeking skills and training, in the main, we found there was a more than adequate match between needs and provision. In fact, if anything, some people felt overwhelmed with the choices available and needed to seek help and advice.

When we talked to employers about the skills lacking in potential employees (or indeed some current employees), their main concern was a lack of 'people skills'.

What follows concentrates on this identified gap but in no way is a criticism of the entire workforce of South Wiltshire! However, in our view this people skills gap is not being adequately addressed in existing education and skills training provision but is a critical area for development to ensure the continued commercial success of South Wiltshire.

### 3.3 Investigation of 'people skills'

It is fair to say that, during our investigation, when the issue of people skills arose the floodgates seemed to open! Most people were quite vociferous in their opinions and views of what was missing:

- Communication skills – being more articulate
- Self motivation and discipline – get up and go!
- Leadership – of themselves and others

In the context of this report 'people skills' are defined as those personal and social skills which, when combined with the education, basic or technical skills a person already has, makes them a more valuable and dynamic employee. A common complaint we heard frequently from employers was that a more than acceptable proportion of new and existing staff lacked enthusiasm to develop their career or progress through the company.

Some quotes from those interviewed:

“No general life skills”

“Can't communicate – don't have any way of talking themselves out of a situation”

“Even when they are told - they don't remember”

“There are rules, procedures and protocols – and people just don't get it”

“Gone are the days when people are dressed up for interviews” (comment from 24-year-old manager)

“Why should I spend my valuable time/expertise in teaching/training people to do the basic (people) skills they should know already”

“People will only learn what they want to”

“People will only learn something new if they think they will get something out of it”

“It may be about making learning/being more educated/having more skills sexy or cool or acceptable”

Here are the main suggestions we were given about where this lack of people skills originates:

- (i) Poor parenting skills at home
- (ii) Not enough input on 'The World of Work', by schools – and colleges
- (iii) Not enough done by business to address this issue at the induction stage

Regarding point (i) - if the Partnership wishes to influence a sustained improvement in Parenting Skills, it should establish:

- Who is responsible for providing Family Learning support in South Wiltshire
- How this support is funded
- What mechanisms are in place to deliver the required support
- What results against targets can be identified.

Regarding (ii), this issue needs to be qualified and quantified and – if proved to be the case- considered by the relevant organisations.

Regarding (iii), larger companies (Marks & Spencer and the like) fared slightly better than SMEs. The larger companies – although it is not inferred that this applies to all – tended to include inputs on what was expected of an employee in terms of skills, behaviour and contribution, and an explanation of the company ethos and culture. This was done at a very early stage of the relationship with a new employee; the induction stage.

Addressing parental and home issues and influencing a change in how schools and colleges do, or do not, deliver adequate inputs on the bridge between education and work feel like medium (at best) or long term strategies. We feel the short-term solution is for businesses and organisations to take more responsibility for developing, training and nurturing people to create the kind of workforce that will take them to their next level of success.

We believe a key strategic role for the Partnership is to promote and support a widespread awareness of the importance of businesses and organisations in South Wiltshire developing and delivering a high quality induction programme for new employees. The induction experience should cover the key people skills (and specific skills) required of a new employee to ensure they are able to fully contribute to, and progress through, the organisation or business.

### **3.4 Summary of people skills gap**

In the Summary below we have indicated (\*) the areas where Employers have identified there is little to no focused training provision and therefore where much greater provision of learning is needed.

- Personal time management \*
- Team working skills
- Leadership – the ability to get the best out of other people
- Self leadership – the ability to get the best out of yourself \*
- Openness, trust and reliability \*
- Self motivation \*

- Speaking to be understood – communicating \*
- Courtesy – dealing with other people \*
- Building trust – building empathy \*
- Personal development
- Self empowerment – building self confidence \*
- Building relationships – getting on with people – team working skills \*

## **4 Recommendations**

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### **4.1 People skills**

We have identified in section 3 that a number of people skills are missing in a section of the potential and existing workforce within South Wiltshire.

- 4.1.1 We recommend that the Partnership actively encourage all local employers and organisations to integrate training in people skills into their induction programmes. Where induction programmes do not exist, to encourage their design, development and delivery. This could be done through a, low cost, publicity campaign involving press releases to the Salisbury Journal, contact with members of; the Salisbury Chamber of Commerce; Business Link; Federation for Small Businesses etc.
- 4.1.2 We recommend that Partnership members should promote this induction strategy within their own businesses and organisations and in this way become advocates of this strategy.
- 4.1.3 We recommend that the Partnership should commission the development of three short case studies (small, medium, large businesses/organisations) to illustrate good induction training practice. These case studies could be used in the publicity process and in promoting the induction strategy.
- 4.1.4 We recommend that the Partnership should champion the development of a short series of Training Workshops through which to offer the skills of designing and delivering high quality induction training to organisations and businesses who do not already have this facility. These workshops should be promoted by the Partnership and could be sponsored by Business Link, the Salisbury Chamber of Commerce etc.

## **4.2 Mapping information**

- 4.2.1 We recommend that the information mapping training provision in the area (attached to this report) should be posted on a web-site to make access to it, and updating of it, an easy process. We recommend the information should be updated regularly and its existence and whereabouts publicised throughout Partnership members and the wider business community.

## **4.3 The Future of the Partnership**

During the time that the South Wiltshire Learning Partnership has been in existence it has gained a reputation in the area as a group that helps to facilitate the networking of all parties interested in education and training.

- 4.3.1 We propose that the Partnership should build on the contacts that have been made and the reputation that has been gained.
- 4.3.2 We propose that the future role for the Partnership is to act as a collator and disseminator of examples of good practice and Learning related information. The research has established that there are numerous organisations, many of which are working in isolation with a low profile.
- 4.3.3 The Partnership should invite representatives from specific groups, organisations and businesses to visit and explain to the members what it is they offer and how the members can benefit from their provision. The invitation to members should be via email to speed the delivery and reduce costs; it will also make the invitation viral as people can forward the email to other people who might be interested. The practicalities of organizing such forums could mean that there are 2 speakers at each forum given the opportunity to present for 45 minutes each. It may transpire that the presenting organisations might be able to provide a contribution to the hosting and refreshment costs of the forum.
- 4.3.4 Through this recommendation, the partnership would add value to the business community by finding and arranging speakers on subjects that the membership should know about and will benefit from. The partnership are then synergising on all the good work that is already being promoted by a myriad of organisations but is probably not promoted/communicated to the business community as well as it could be.

A summary list of businesses and organisations that have contributed to this report is shown at Appendix C.