

Cardiff and Vale College  
Coleg Caerdydd a'r Fro



# SME Skills Survey 2017

## Final Report

Prepared for: South East Wales Regional Skills Partnership (LSKIP)

Procured by: Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)

Delivered by: Cardiff and Vale College (CAVC)

Report Authors: James Scorey & Professor Dylan Jones-Evans OBE

June 2017

**Inspirational.**  
**Ysbrydoledig.**

**Inclusive.**  
**Cynhwysol.**

**Influential.**  
**Dylanwadol.**

[www.cardiffandvalecollege.ac.uk](http://www.cardiffandvalecollege.ac.uk)



# Contents

Executive Summary	04
Introduction	07
Methodology	08
Response Summary	10
Results and Analysis	12
Skill gaps amongst existing employees	13
Skill shortages and recruitment issues for new employees	16
Utilisation of the skills and qualifications of employees	20
Future recruitment issues and skills shortages	22
Training and skills providers	24
Apprenticeships	28
Key drivers of change	30
Conclusion	34

# Executive Summary

The report captures the key findings of the 2017 SME Skills Survey completed by Cardiff and Vale College, with the support of Professor Dylan Jones-Evans OBE. The aim of the project was to complete a qualitative study and gain a rich insight into the skill needs of SMEs across priority sectors as identified by the South East Wales Regional Skills Partnership.

The focus was to look at future needs and current skill gaps and shortages, bringing together demand, supply and key drivers of change. Analysis of findings has led to a number of recommendations and calls for action to consider as part of the next iteration of the Employment and Skills Plan.



## The research concludes:



**Digital Technology** will have a profound impact as new technologies are adopted and change existing business models. There is a cross-sector requirement to ensure employees are equipped with basic digital skills and some in specialist areas such as cyber security and big data.



**Essential/Soft Skills<sup>1</sup>** are important to all organisations regardless of size or sector and it is the role of both the employer and the education system, particularly colleges and universities, to ensure that future workers meet employer need.



**Leadership and Management** is a notable training requirement for existing staff, with a tendency across sectors to promote from within the organisation based on technical experience and competence.



**Welsh Language** is not an issue for most firms although a small number see it as creating a competitive advantage and a requirement for public sector procurement opportunities.



**Ageing Workforce** is a challenge where experienced, skilled and well paid staff are exiting the market early and with little succession planning and talent supply in place.



**Infrastructure Projects** noted and concerns raised around the ability to respond and take advantage of these projects and the threat to employed staff being attracted to higher wages at other firms.



**Apprenticeship Opportunities** exist to meet skill requirements in sectors such as financial and professional services and Digital/ICT and in occupations which span across sector including administration and management.



**Collaboration between Industry and Education** is key to supporting change and ensuring that workforce supply meets business need and that young people are aware of career opportunities and pathways to employment in sectors such as manufacturing and construction. Collaboration with the education sector is critically important, local colleges, training providers and universities need to understand and respond to business need with bespoke and tailored programmes which meet existing and future skill requirements.

1. Essential Skills in conversations with employers typically encompasses a spectrum of literacy, numeracy, digital, employability and soft skills (including leading, decision making, work ethic, confidence, problem solving, communication, project and team work) which are considered to be of high importance and transferable across all sectors. It is important to note that this is different to the traditional interpretation of Essential Skills, particularly within the education sector.

# Introduction

Cardiff and Vale College (CAVC) is pleased to present the findings of the SME Skills Survey delivered on behalf of the South East Wales Regional Skills Partnership, LSKIP, and procured via the Welsh Local Government Association.

As a college, our mission is to deliver high quality education and training, outstanding results, skilled and employable people, excellent customer experience, innovative business growth and continued investment that supports prosperous communities and a thriving economy. Our vision is to be a leading educational business. Engaging and partnering with employers and stakeholders from across South East Wales and beyond is key to our success. Our approach is underpinned through research and labour market intelligence which is used to make evidence based decisions. In 2016, we partnered with the University of South Wales to successfully deliver the 'Large Employers Skills Survey' and we take great pleasure in leading and delivering the 2017 SME Skills Survey.

A qualitative study has been completed, targeting Small and Medium Sized Employers (SMEs) to understand current and future workforce skills needs, current training offer and training supply. It is hoped the study will support

LSKIP in building a 'Mittelstand' approach<sup>2</sup>. Understanding the needs of SMEs across the ten local authorities of South East Wales is important and this report will help to inform future skills policy and provision. A qualitative focus has provided real insight into the needs of SMEs and provides another layer to enhance existing research which is quantitative in nature and other reports which offer an insight into future skill requirements.

The research has been carried out over an intense 12-week period, February to April 2017, with the vast majority of field research being completed in March. The project has benefited from the support of Professor Dylan Jones-Evans OBE who has fulfilled the role of Academic Lead and Report Author, working closely with the project team at CAVC.

The project team have completed 46 interviews across key priority sectors during this period and held a SME Skills Survey Forum event, a total of 55 unique companies have been consulted as part of the

process. Over 4,000 individuals were engaged through the course of the campaign.

We would like to extend sincere thanks to Professor Dylan Jones-Evans OBE for his role in supporting the delivery of the project and final report and extend this to partners from across the LSKIP network for their support of the project. Finally, we would like to thank all of the employers who have been involved and have engaged with this process, valuable time has been invested in sharing rich and insightful information which has provided the foundation for this report.

The report includes a number of recommendations and calls for action and we look forward to working with partners to achieve these and make a real difference to provision and support growth across the Cardiff Capital Region by meeting the needs of SMEs.

**James Scorey**

**SME Skills Survey Project Lead  
Cardiff and Vale College**

2. LSKIP working definition: Mittelstand is a geographically based grouping of companies – entrepreneurial and growth orientated which are able to take advantage of shared skills, an interleaved production (supply) chain developing innovative approaches to improve for the long term. Companies are linked by common interests, collaborate readily and are supported by local academic institutions and training providers together offering an interleaved employment skills and training service up to a high level research capability and delivering a highly skilled workforce. The strength of the Mittelstand arises from the focus on particular specialisations – being the best, not standing still, innovating and turning their success back in on themselves (circular economy – circular skills) and looking to sell that strength abroad (not the company).



# Methodology

The research methodology was built on a robust approach which was used in 2016 for the Large Employers Skills Survey project and has incorporated lessons learned to aid question design, analysis and reporting of data.

Project scope was agreed in consultation with LSKIP:

Variable	Agreed Parameters
<b>Employer Size</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small employers (10-49 employees)</li> <li>Medium sized employers (50 – 249 employees)</li> </ul>
<b>Sector Focus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advanced Materials and Manufacturing (AMM)</li> <li>Construction &amp; Financial and Professional Services (FPS)</li> <li>ICT/Digital (as a cross cutting theme)</li> <li>Human Foundational Economy includes Education, Health Services and Social Care</li> </ul>
<b>Firm Location</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Representation and spread of key sectors across the 10 local authorities of South East Wales.</li> </ul>
<b>Role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior decision maker/director</li> </ul>



## Research Design

- Questionnaire designed in consultation with Academic Lead and agreed with LSKIP network and revisions incorporated. Agreed to focus on seven key question areas with a number of agreed prompts to facilitate discussion.
- Qualitative focus conducted via a face to face interview, at a time and place which is most convenient for the interviewee. Interviews were semi structured to allow for emerging themes to be reviewed and explored.
- All participants were asked to read the research protocol and sign a consent form. The majority of interviews were audio recorded.
- Company information and demographics captured prior to interview starting.
- Interviews were scheduled to last no more than one hour.
- Company dataset was created in line with agreed parameters and project was communicated through an extensive network to maximise engagement.
- Summary of key points from discussion recorded against each of the seven key questions.
- All data collected will be kept only for analysis and will remain confidential. WLGA will be the owner of the data.
- Agreed to complete a minimum of 8 interviews for each of the five key priority sectors.

## Analysis

- Thematic analysis of qualitative data undertaken to review seven key questions and consideration under three key themes (demand; supply; drivers of change).
- Summary of findings presented to small engagement group, with a facilitated feedback session to explore key themes.
- Detailed analysis to include reflections by sector and geography and consideration to short, medium and long-term requirements.
- Final report to include recommendations from research.

## Project Management

- Agreement of project plan and key milestones with LSKIP.
- Interim progress reports provided to track delivery.
- Project meetings and discussions held to review progress.

# Response Summary



## Employer Size (Local Unit)

Employer Size	#	%
Medium	23	50%
Small	18	39%
Large	1	2%
Micro	4	9%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Sector Focus

Priority Sector	#	%
Advanced Materials and Manufacturing	8	17%
Construction	11	24%
Financial and Professional Services	10	22%
Human Foundational Economy	8	17%
ICT/Digital	9	20%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>100%</b>



## Firm Location

Local Authority	#	%
Blaenau Gwent	4	9%
Bridgend	2	4%
Caerphilly	3	7%
Cardiff	20	43%
Merthyr Tydfil	1	2%
Monmouthshire	3	7%
Newport	5	11%
Rhondda Cynon Taff	4	9%
Torfaen	2	4%
Vale of Glamorgan	2	4%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>100%</b>



## Role

Position	#	%
CEO/MD/Owner	14	30.4%
Director/Head	14	30.4%
Manager	14	30.4%
Other	4	8.7%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>100%</b>

# Results & Analysis



## 1. Skill gaps amongst existing employees

This section focuses on examining the skills gaps experienced amongst existing staff by the respondent organisations.

**It will attempt to understand a number of key issues including:**

- Why these skills gaps exist within organisations
- The main causes of these skill gaps
- The impact these skill gaps have on organisations
- What specialist skillsets/occupations are currently needed
- The skills that need improving amongst staff with skill gaps
- What is being done to overcome skill gaps

It will also explore whether there are skills gaps in areas such as leadership and management, digital and the Welsh language and the importance of these areas to the business. It will also examine the organisation's internal focus on skills development in terms of the human resources (HR) function, a workforce development strategy and a succession plan.

According to the responses from the interviews, there was a mixed view of skills gaps amongst existing staff within the business. A majority of organisations had identified skills gaps within their operations, although a sizeable minority are content with the current skills position within their organisation.

### Digital Skills

In terms of digital skills, the shortage of qualified employees is not limited to the ICT and digital sector although this does vary by industry. Indeed, the advent of developments such as big data, cyber security and artificial intelligence have a huge role to play in enhancing service provision for all firms although there is a lack of skills in all of these areas.

Within those businesses operating in the human foundational economy sector, most of the demand for digital skills is in relation to upskilling older members of staff, especially in basic areas such as Microsoft applications.

Whilst digital has been largely embraced within the advanced materials and manufacturing sector, there is a greater reliance on outsourcing to specialist organisations in areas such as software development, systems maintenance and programming. In contrast, firms in the construction sector have invested considerably in this area, mainly because of the encouragement by UK government to utilise BIM (Building Information Modelling) and this investment is considered to be a measure of future proofing against anticipated need. In terms of upskilling, most of the requirements are not around technical use of digital, but in areas such as social media and administration. In addition, clients in the construction industry are requiring project updates via tablets, which is an immediate challenge for older site workers who have been in the industry all of their lives, and are reluctant to acquire new 'digital' skills when near to retirement.

The biggest requirement for digital and ICT skills amongst the existing workforce seems to be within financial and professional services. This includes (a) having more advanced in-house IT skills to enable deeper technical work to be done with software and maximise existing IT architecture; (b) network and security management, and; (c) specific skillsets for positions such as social media specialists, content creators and press release writers.

This lack of digital skills amongst existing employees may be a generational issue especially if there is a low staff churn, and digital skills are lacking in the older members which have remained with the organisation. For example, a legal firm where lawyers or consultants do not use digital dictation software despite this being seven times faster than typing. In contrast, another legal business has reduced the number of legal secretaries due to solicitors using digital software to undertake their own administration more efficiently. Given this, there's a growing need for young recruits who are trained in digital business tools to be coming through the business.

One way to upskill the wider workforce to be digitally competent is through Essential Skills training which offers digital literacy development to employers, ensuring competence in service provision.

### Leadership and Management

Leadership and management training was seen as a key issue for existing employees by the majority of organisations and could have a real impact for their future development. For example, having more leaders within some of the organisations would free up the managing director to do other things and therefore help the growth of the business. This applied across all industries although there were specific requirements by each sector. For example, it was perceived by one legal company that whilst leadership and management skills are important, they had not been traditionally offered, as legal continuous professional development takes priority. Given this, it was suggested that having 'short and sharp solutions' in leadership and management to upskill staff would help to bring younger solicitors through the business. In the human foundational economy, one business noted that there were gaps in soft skills in leadership and management by those who had been working for the business for more than a decade, mainly because of complacency through length of service.

### Welsh Language

The Welsh language is seen as not important by most firms as it has low impact on the business; this applies across all sectors and it is not seen as a barrier as most firms don't use it in their everyday business dealings. There are some exceptions, and fluent Welsh speakers are seen as an advantage to businesses working with Welsh Government and bidding for public sector contracts or for those operating in specific areas such as North Wales. In financial and professional services, there seems to be an increasing demand for Welsh medium legal service delivery and in one firm, nearly a third of its client facing teams are able to do business in the medium of Welsh. However, that is the exception rather than the norm as having Welsh language skills is not generally seen as a business asset by vast majority of organisations who expressed an opinion, although staff are supported if they want to learn and speak it.

### Experienced Employees

Various skills gaps were identified for those existing employees who had already been in post for a number of years. These included the need for formal qualifications and in a number of sectors, it was highlighted that because of the demographics of some of the workforce, there would be issues going forward. For example, in advanced materials and manufacturing and construction, roles such as labouring, steel erecting or carpentry now required employees to have NVQs. Companies feel at a disadvantage as a result with those unqualified individuals who had been doing the job for 20 years suddenly needing to demonstrate their competence.

### HR Function

Surprisingly, few of the respondent companies mentioned the importance of managing human resources within the organisation with a significant number outsourcing this function to other organisations. Only a small minority have a workforce development strategy which is currently being implemented although some with legal requirements (such as construction) did have a plan which ensured that workers' skills are renewed every 18 months. In addition, financial and professional services firms had stronger human resources functions than the other sectors.

### Sectoral Analysis

Within the advanced materials and manufacturing sector, most companies are having difficulties with technical skills (especially in specialist roles such as CNC Setters, AutoCAD Systems and Programming) but are focusing on addressing these gaps through intensive internal training as the technology changes or, where necessary, by promoting current staff and bringing in new recruits with the requisite skills. At least one manufacturing business was concerned that having staff without the required skills could have a detrimental effect on their growth in the future. Whilst there are companies that report they have no current skills gaps at present, this could change in the future and to deal with this, they aim to upskill existing employees through internal training which will enable some, if necessary, to move roles within the organisation e.g. from production to a customer facing role.

Within the construction industry, there seemed to be less of an issue with skills amongst the existing workforce with a focus predominantly on upskilling for legislative purposes i.e. staff are put on short courses to keep up to date with issues such as health and safety. However, more specialist providers within the industry were finding difficulties in finding specific niche skills for their business for example one organisation commented on technical skill gaps in Ecology; Quantity Surveying; Highways and Mechanical and Electrical Engineering. Whilst there are skill gaps amongst financial services businesses, they are proactive in addressing this issue

with existing employees by, for example, training with trade bodies, upskilling in key areas or hiring in trained employees from other organisations (although some may need further support to develop the right skills). Given the customer-focused nature of the sector, there was considerable emphasis placed on the development of soft skills especially in balancing the requirement for personal skills and those technical skills normally required within the industry.

Within the human foundational economy, the main issue is related to management, with staff having evolved into these positions over time but having received very little management training. As a result, they do not have the requisite skills required for managerial positions. Others have more specific skill requirements that are directly related to the work their organisations undertake e.g. audiology, life science regulation and construction. The lack of skills with existing employees is more acute within ICT and digital businesses where nearly all of the respondents have specific gaps not only in software skills but also in people skills. The lack of softer skills amongst employees could be slowing down business growth in some firms although one solution was to employ individuals from outside of Wales to introduce new ways of working. One respondent also suggested that there is a need to embed basic knowledge within computer skills courses (e.g. how a computer works) at school and college level whilst another suggested that there is not enough training in key areas being provided by the sector and educational organisations.

**“Leadership and management training was seen as a key issue for existing employees by the majority of organisations and could have a real impact for their future development.”**



**“Some organisations are looking to recruit individuals from outside the sector to deal with skill shortages.”**

## 2. Skill shortages and recruitment issues for new employees

This section focuses on examining the skills shortages and recruitment issues faced by organisations with regard to new and future employees.

**It will attempt to understand a number of key issues including:**

- Why these shortages exist and the cause
- The main skill challenges with new recruits
- How skill shortages have an impact on your business
- What is being done to overcome these skill shortages
- Whether organisations are experiencing skills shortages in areas such as leadership and management, digital and the Welsh language

Nearly all of the firms interviewed are experiencing recruitment issues when it comes to appointing new members of staff, with many of these being specific to the sectors in which the firms operate.

### Sectoral Analysis

In advanced materials and manufacturing, one firm had a problem in recruiting individuals with a background in refrigeration whilst others couldn't source maintenance electricians, steel erectors and machinists. Similarly, construction firms were struggling to find recruits with the right qualifications in both skilled areas such as structural engineering or quantity surveying, as well as less skilled posts such as fencing and fabrication.

Another specific problem identified in advanced materials and manufacturing was the age profile of the existing staff being employed. For example, many of the current Computer Numerically Controlled (CNC) operators are in their 50s and, because of good pensions, these employees will retire and leave a gap in the business unless they recruit or train younger staff to eventually replace the ageing workforce. In dealing with this issue, the firm has been proactive and is working with a local college to develop machinist and CNC qualifications. There also needs to be better succession planning in place within companies to replace those older workers nearing retirement.

In financial and professional services, the issue is less about graduate positions than recruiting suitable middle-tier managers. For example, one firm advertised for an experienced communications/marketing manager and despite offering an above average salary, there were difficulties in sourcing an individual with all of the required skills. Some ICT and digital companies were concerned that recruitment issues within their sector was due to a lack of interest in the subject at schools which meant pupils became disengaged, resulting in a lack of take-up at tertiary level. Given this, it is important for educational bodies to work with large companies, as well as innovative small firms to redefine education in the sector. It was also noted that it was difficult to recruit employees with basic software developer skills in South Wales.

ICT and digital companies expressed concern over skills availability for existing staff within their sector and some struggle to attract suitable staff with the required skills. One small ICT firm explained that the focus on web development skills and languages in Computer Science degrees has not been helpful to them due to the current gap in fundamental computing knowledge. The (Technical) ICT firms interviewed commonly said that there are core principles of computer science and older programming languages which should be taught to all computer science students because they train transferable skills that can be applied to the more modern, trend driven, technologies such as web or app development.

### Digital Skills

Companies expressed a general concern with regards to the availability of digital skills. For example, one firm noted that digital skills are essential due to the ever-increasing reliance on IT and the importance of upskilling staff and recruiting new talent to use the technology better. Another stated that digital literacy is now something they would look for within new recruits and if not present, upskill them if necessary.

### Leadership and Management

Interestingly, very few of the respondents specifically identified leadership and management skills to be an issue amongst new recruits to the organisation with the emphasis more on training staff when they are in the post.

### Welsh Language

Only one company (in financial and professional services) had identified a Welsh language skill gap and that there will be an increasing need for bilingual staff within the organisation as it develops. Most others had not expressed an opinion or did not see it as an important attribute for new recruits.

### Remuneration

Pay was mentioned by some firms as a barrier to recruiting suitable new staff and they struggle to fill positions as they can't pay as much as the larger organisations. Also in ICT and digital firms, younger workers with modest qualifications have high expectations of salary and support.

As staff wages rise, firms are having to pay more to retain existing staff. One company discussed the struggle to bring people in from other companies as once they


offer a new recruit higher pay, the rest of the existing staff also demand a pay rise with negative effects on the firm's bottom line. Another firm would much rather upskill existing employees as opposed to employing new people.

### Workforce Supply

Some organisations are looking to recruit individuals from outside the sector to deal with skill shortages. For example, one construction firm have been attempting to attract people out of other industries (such as law or customer services) with the added benefit that they often bring a different culture to the organisation.

Staff are constantly being poached and they are not easy to replace. In fact, attraction of talent at an appropriate salary is a particular issue within the ICT and digital sector as there are only a handful of technology companies where employees can be appointed to and the talent pool is quite small. As a result, the increase in remote working means that specialists living in this area are being poached to work for London companies and receiving London salaries which makes it hard to compete.

Other businesses which have a wider national or international presence are drawing on their pool of workers in other sites based overseas to fill the gap or recruiting from further afield in the UK. For example, an ICT firm in Cardiff has had to recruit a person from Lithuania to fill one engineering position because of a lack of suitably qualified local people. There is also a lack of commercial property and corporate lawyers in the local market and one firm has had to look for new recruits in this field from Bristol and London to find the people with the right skillset and experience. For those who have no recruitment issues and are filling the gaps with new staff, they are utilising recruitment agencies successfully or developing relevant training programmes in-house to upskill those joining the organisation. This includes putting new recruits through trade apprenticeships, placing them on a ten-day internal course relevant to their employment when they join and filling gaps by promoting upwards.



**“Digital Skills are essential due to the ever-increasing reliance on IT and the importance of upskilling staff and recruiting new talent to use the technology better.”**

### Collaboration between Industry and Education

A number of businesses were critical about the knowledge of school-leavers and graduates when they finish education and enter the world of work. Some suggested that more basic skills - such as numeracy, literacy and communication - are lacking in some potential candidates for positions within their organisations.

One respondent was also critical about the lack of dialogue between industry and tertiary education which results in a low level of understanding by local colleges

and universities of the needs of businesses. This then leads to a lack of interest by the colleges in certain areas and courses being abolished despite a requirement for training within firms. This then has the knock-on effect on competitiveness as there is no new talent emerging to replace an ageing workforce.

Another particular challenge identified is the lack of understanding by school-leavers and graduates about key sectors such as advanced materials and manufacturing and construction and the failure to make positions within these sectors as attractive as those found in other industries.

### 3. Utilisation of the skills and qualifications of employees

This section focuses on the utilisation of the skills and qualifications within the respondent organisations.

**It will attempt to understand a number of key issues including:**

- Under-utilisation of skills and where this is the most prevalent
- The main reasons for this and whether this will change in the future
- Whether organisations would benefit by utilising these currently under-utilised skills/qualifications

The majority of the respondents across all sectors stated they are currently fully utilising the skills and qualifications of their employees, although reflections in other areas of the report note that employers are making efforts to better utilise skill sets to meet business need. It is generally noted that skill utilisation and use of transferable skills has a positive impact on retention and supporting staff to build a career within the business.

**Sectoral Analysis**

In advanced materials and manufacturing, a welding fabrication company stated that staff are trained up in this area and the firm utilises that experience effectively. Another business notes that whilst they recruit into job roles based on technical experience, they will upskill existing staff to address this requirement if there are no suitable recruits. In financial and professional services, one business actively encourages individuals to maximise their own potential whilst another had recently appointed a ‘talent and development manager’ to ensure that personal reviews are more detailed and aligned to career pathways, and therefore guarding against any missed opportunities to utilise and grow staff skills.

Most of the respondents based in the human foundational economy are looking to make the most of their staff’s experience and expertise. One employer goes so far as to state that an employer has a duty to develop its people to reach and fulfil their potential and that the biggest challenge is understanding the potential skills of staff. Another believes in developing staff and aspiring leaders and to support them with ILM training so they can cover when their manager is on leave or sick. Doing this results in an easier process to put someone in this position in the future as they have already had time in that role and are aware of the role and what is required.

In ICT and digital, the biggest concern is that some have staff with skills sets that probably rank them as over-qualified for the roles they occupy. Despite this, there are organisations that believe they could do more with the potential of their staff, especially within financial and professional services. One firm in this sector stated that there was a general lack of awareness of the skills which exist in the team and conversations with staff have uncovered skills which could be utilised in other teams. It was also noted that those employed have degrees that they aren’t necessarily using in their role, although the company is encouraging these people to feed into the business through their own projects. This has resulted in the organisation trying to understand what each employee is capable of and then using those skills to get the best out of them.

In other sectors, there are various strategies to ensure that staff are being fully utilised to the best of their abilities within different organisations. This includes helping staff to build a career around skills so that their job is shaped in the right way and assessing regularly what each employee is capable of, and using these skills effectively.

**Skill Utilisation**

More formal techniques are also enacted by organisations. These include utilising one-to-one staff appraisals to identify skills and qualifications of current staff and to regularly give staff the opportunity to upskill and move roles. It also involves creating an in-house Learning Management System which will show who has done what qualification and to identify which skill/qualification they may need to move to another part of the organisation.

One of the main drivers for encouraging continuous professional development amongst staff is the need to remain competitive in the market place. As was noted, firms need to stay better than good in a world were good is no longer good enough.

**“Skill utilisation and use of transferable skills has a positive impact on retention and supporting staff to build a career within the business.”**



## 4. Future recruitment issues and skills shortages

This section focuses on the future recruitment issues and skills shortages within the respondent organisations.

### It will attempt to understand a number of key issues including:

- What organisations are doing to overcome shortages
- The impact of future skill shortages on organisations and how this will be addressed
- The future recruitment plans of organisations

There were a range of different and wide-ranging concerns on future skills shortages expressed by organisations across all sectors, including providing the right levels of training to staff over the medium term, although many were specific to the industry in which those businesses were operating.

### Sectoral Analysis

In advanced materials and manufacturing, these included building on current skills requirements as well as those which the companies felt would be needed in areas such as mechatronics, laser technology and robotics. In construction, there were requirements for structural engineers, ground-workers and those with software skills in BIM. In ICT and digital, it was considered that the companies needed technical skills in areas such as web development, cloud computing, virtualisation and cyber security although not in sales and business development.

In construction, firms were conscious that that management and administration within the sector is shifting to be more digitalised and there may be a skills gap in the future if this is not addressed. In financial and professional services, IT skills were seen as a priority skills shortage issue, especially in keeping up with system changes that can affect the operational efficiencies required as companies employ more people. More specific issues included developing courses that help the use of digital platforms in a strategic way for public relations and ensuring that IT is a part of the curriculum of educating lawyers given that legal firms are quickly digitising their operations. Succession for specialist jobs currently held by older people but who are now coming up to retirement was an issue in certain occupations within the advanced materials and manufacturing sector, such as welding, where younger people do not have the experience or expertise.

Another key issue for addressing future skills shortages in both construction and advanced materials and manufacturing is ensuring that it is seen as a more appealing career, particularly by young people who may consider both sectors to be dirty and tough environments to work in. One respondent suggested that construction is not publicised as a career and that students are going to university to do degrees in areas that will not utilise their skills in the future. This requires providing more support to careers services at both a secondary and tertiary level to provide more knowledge on the sectors as well as publicising the different career pathways directly to parents. It was also suggested that the sector could be promoted directly via work placements to encourage greater interest in the sector.

### Digital

The lack of digital skills going forward was not limited to the ICT sector and a skills gap in this area was highlighted as an issue by a number of companies, especially given that a whole range of industries will become digitised over the next few years. This ranges from industries as diverse as public relations, legal services, manufacturing and building.

### Leadership and Management

Recruiting senior management staff with greater entrepreneurial attitudes and ambition is a problem due to shortages in the market. One of the human foundational economy firms in the health sector was looking to recruit innovative people who can 'think big' to help grow the business in the future.

### Workforce Supply

One firm had adopted a proactive approach to dealing with future skills by recruiting a 'talent and development manager'. This provides the ability to conduct more strategic annual appraisal reviews with all staff and align the outcomes to specific career pathways. As a result, annual reviews are organised among team managers to identify themes around future key skills gaps.

### Remuneration

There was also some apprehension that regions such as London will continue to pay higher wages and attract talent from South Wales, especially for contracting staff across all sectors. As one construction business noted, the main struggle in recruitment is retaining staff on the basis of pay as it is highly competitive in the market. Losing trained workers can stop the business expanding and it is trying to counteract this by looking after the staff as best as possible by training them properly. On the other hand, highly specialised skills requirements in the short term mean that at least one company in

financial and professional services offers an attractive relocation package to a candidate from London although in the medium to long term, it would prefer to grow its own talent internally. Therefore, organisations believe that there is a need to attract new workers from other industries and locations as well as bring people through the company at an accelerated rate.

### Infrastructure Projects

In construction and advanced materials and manufacturing, it was felt that demand from a range of large projects in the next few years will put pressure on skilled staff. There were concerns that there were only a finite number of people available that are skilled to work on projects which include the Cardiff Metro, HS2, Tidal Lagoon and Hinkley Point. This is not only to deal with potential opportunities that may arise but also a concern that staff members may be lost to these projects if they are offered more competitive salaries than those currently being offered. In the construction industry these projects will put more stress on existing shortfall of ground workers and strain on infrastructure. For example, Hinkley Point is already paying £17.50 per/hour which is double the Cardiff rates for ground workers and this is attracting workers out of Wales.

### Collaboration between Industry and Education

Finally, it was noted that preparing future workers is the responsibility of both employers and colleges/universities and there should be an emphasis on work ethic; identification of jobs of tomorrow and recognition of existing opportunities in market; and the transferability of skills through utilising the armed forces recruitment model of communal induction to set baseline standards and skills which transfer into every area of the forces. Essential and soft skills are a key future requirement which is applicable across all sectors and it is vital that the education system responds to this requirement.

**“Preparing future workers is the responsibility of both employers and colleges and universities.”**

## 5. Training and skills providers

This section focuses on the how the training market responds to the respondent's recruitment and skills priorities.

### It will attempt to understand a number of key issues including:

- The types of training and workforce development being provided internally and externally and whether this will change in the future
- Whether external training providers are able to deliver the training required and if not, where are difficulties experienced
- Whether organisations will work with training providers to improve provision
- What can be done to improve skills provision in the local market

### Training Source

The majority of organisations were involved in sourcing external training for their employees although a small number of organisations were undertaking in-house courses. However, it was considered that this may well change in the future and that in areas such as leadership and management, external trainers will be required.

### Delivery Approach

A number of organisations suggested that providers needed to be more flexible and relevant to their needs. One of the main criticisms is that there are too many external training companies that are providing general support and not delivering bespoke programmes relevant to businesses i.e. a proper training needs analysis with industry knowledge and an agile response is lacking from many providers. An important consideration to this model is the ability of training consultants to not only conduct an analysis but to have flexibility in proposed solutions; ensuring the employer receives the most appropriate delivery expertise which could involve different training providers.

An implication of suggested improvements is to further consider the concept of 'train the trainers' and how colleges, training providers and universities are able to partner with industry and training providers to support this. The delivery mechanisms of external organisations are also perceived as not being reflective of the requirements of businesses and more flexibility is required by the providers. As one digital firm notes, very little has been done in the way of training with external providers because of the cost of training and of releasing staff from the business. Another suggested that their overall preference would be towards short, sharp training and blended learning where possible i.e. more bite-sized training which fits in with the time constraints of the organisation.

One suggestion was for a 'real' business development approach from training providers. Where they take the time to understand the business and then offer advice on future developments with a willingness to create solutions if they don't currently exist.

**“There is a need for training programmes that are tailored towards older workers as well as young people.”**

## Cost

Cost is not always an issue if there is a quality offering to the organisation. Businesses will pay for specialist advice and one business has paid a rate of up to £4k/day for a specialist provider from London although they argue that it was worth the expense given that the improvement was quickly measurable. Indeed, some viewed free training with suspicion and of lesser value.

## Quality

Overall, there were mixed messages about the external training being offered by providers in South East Wales. For example, one company was very pleased with their current provision of training and had found all training partners to be very helpful, the type of courses they require are easily available and flexible to fit around their needs. Others had different experiences, with complaints that some providers are not up-to-date in training methods and there are too many of them out there looking for work.

## Sectoral Analysis

ICT and digital firms tend to undertake internal training development but are not averse to working with external organisations if this cannot be offered by the business itself.

Human foundational economy firms also are comfortable with using external firms which are meeting their current training needs. However, another commented that smaller training companies are quick to respond and turnaround whereas larger businesses tend to be too slow to get back which causes frustration.

In both advanced materials and manufacturing and construction, some firms were satisfied with the way that external providers were meeting their standards although others felt that there were issues over relevance and competence. Examples from these sectors included the need to develop apprenticeships to meet skill shortages in areas such as groundwork and training issues in the areas of welding and fabrication. The issue of access to courses was also raised by one firm i.e. they have staff who may require evening classes in the trades like carpentry and haven't been able to source this option.

The biggest criticisms of external training providers came from those firms in the financial and professional services sector. One firm stated that the training market does not currently meet its needs from a digital

perspective and it is not possible to source a local training provider to support some of the digital skills shortages identified. Quality seemed to be an issue for some firms and they are highly selective in who they choose as providers. Others were critical that there seem to be too many training providers in the market and they are constantly being contacted by these firms looking for business rather than responding to the specific needs of the organisation.

## Leadership and Management

Very few organisations highlighted leadership and management training as being a key issue. One of the concerns highlighted by a financial services company was that many of their staff were already operating at a higher level than the essential skills being delivered via ILM. A human foundational economy organisation was only focusing its leadership training on those staff being promoted into management positions. One interesting point was a perception by one respondent that leadership and management training will need to change in the future as there are key areas that need to be looked at and addressed and they would like to work with a provider who can evaluate, consult and deliver this training. If this trend was replicated across other institutions, this could be an opportunity for training providers.

## Funding and Support

There is a need for training programmes that are tailored towards older workers as well as young people. Currently, as one of the human foundational economy organisations noted, there tends to be a lot of funded training options for young people. However, young people tend to leave college with more qualifications than the older staff they employ and it is the older staff who should be the focus of further upskilling. Another noted that the current training and skills market offering doesn't fit in with the age of employee they wish to upskill because it is usually only available to under 25s. Whilst there is no shortage of leadership and management training for older employees, there is little that offers basic skills for that age group especially in health and social care.

A number of organisations felt that funding and support for training and skills needs to be more transparent and accessible. One construction business felt that there are so many different types of funding streams and that there is confusion not only over financial support but regarding the provision of the training itself i.e. it's hard to track who has what and where it's from. Another had

made a decision on training because of the funding available rather than the quality of the provider and that had led to considerable problems going forward.

## Collaboration between Industry and Education

There was a mixed reaction with regard to the role of further education in supporting skills development. Some colleges were seen as market leading in terms of their approach in the way they go out to build relationships with employers whilst others offer training without understanding the needs of local businesses. One employer was unsure about what was on offer from colleges across the region and colleges were perceived by some as being slow to react to enquiries from organisations for training. As a result, opportunities were being lost for working more closely with business and to provide the training to encourage students to enter specific industries.

One advanced materials and manufacturing company noted that they had used private companies reluctantly because of the lack of response from local colleges, whilst another would have preferred to work with further education but there was no trainer available. Another believed that there was a gap for training in welding and fabrication, although the provision locally has been reduced. This gap was also mentioned by one of the construction firms interviewed.

It was also suggested that the training content of colleges can be out of date, although this can vary by institution. For example, whilst training on hydraulics and pneumatics is not current, the opposite was true about skills development in logistics. Another noted that local colleges were not providing courses at sufficient levels (in refrigeration training) although that could be down to a lack of demand.

One proposal to deal with this issue was for colleges to partner up with industry to gain access to the latest technology and equipment to ensure that their training is up to date. As students have to be retrained when they enter employment, one ICT company has been engaging with colleges to ensure that industry standard software is being made available. In the construction sector, the biggest issue was around the development of softer skills for students and in improving their confidence prior to joining the business.

Work ethic, language and culture are all leading to an increased need for soft skills in a diverse workforce. This means good communicators with transferable skills are needed at every level in the organisation. However, there are significant challenges with new entrants to the job market in terms of work ethic and employability and core skills which impacts across all sectors. One business has changed its recruitment model to prioritise hiring individuals on cultural fit and work ethic to ensure a better fit in the team. Technical competence is second priority as training can be done from a baseline. As a result, recruitment demand is driven by the 'people fit' and culture of an organisation. In addition, the role of technology is also resulting in an increasing need for soft skills and for staff to have an entrepreneurial mind-set to challenge thinking and be able to be creative and solve problems.

Therefore, it is essential that colleges and universities make employability a mandatory part of the learner experience and one suggestion is for a 'framework' for soft skills that can be embedded into delivery without changing the curriculum as there is a core set of behaviours regardless of sector.

**“Providers need to be more flexible and relevant to business needs.”**

## 6. Apprenticeships

This section focuses on the use of apprenticeships as a source of training.

### It will attempt to understand a number of key issues including:

- The current use of apprentices and whether this will increase in the future
- The impact of apprentices on the organisation
- Collaborating with other organisations to share apprentices
- The impact of the Apprenticeship Levy

### Use of Apprenticeships

The majority of respondents have used apprentices within their organisations although they tend to be utilised mainly by advanced materials and manufacturing and construction businesses in areas such as fabrication, carpentry, quantity surveying and bricklaying. Most will continue to do so if opportunities are available (one manufacturing firm will be looking to ensure that 10% of the workforce in the future will be apprentices). Others would want to explore utilising higher management apprenticeships which could be used as a vehicle for training. Fewer respondents from the human foundational economy, finance and professional services and ICT/digital have taken on apprenticeships although many are interested in doing so in the future.

Shared apprentices are attractive to some companies if they were trained at the appropriate level in both (or multiple) firms. According to one advanced materials and manufacturing business, one of the advantages to this approach is the opportunity to gain different experiences and this makes them more attractive to employers.

### Benefits

The main advantages are bringing new people (and new ideas) into the business, additional energy into the team, positive influence leading to good PR and the development of committed staff. One business noted that apprentices have positive influences as it's a big decision to work while learning. Therefore, when apprentices enter the business, they are generally quite committed.

Another mentioned that apprentices appeal because

they are flexible, uncover potential and reignite employee passion e.g. one employee undertook a HND, had to stop and the opportunity of an apprenticeship gave him renewed faith in the firm's desire to develop him as a professional. In addition, on the job training and the project specific nature of apprenticeships suits the lateral growth plans of most companies which are limited to vertical growth due to relatively small workforces.

### Challenges

The key challenges are constant supervision, cost and loss of apprentices to other companies when training is completed. For example, despite wanting to help bring people into the industry, one firm was disillusioned when their apprentices were then headhunted by other firms and they questioned what they were getting out of the process.

For those not currently involved in apprenticeships, there is interest in taking on such staff. However, some believe that it is not relevant to their industry and that there are no relevant opportunities for their business. In fact, there was an impression by some that apprenticeships are more for the traditional vocational trades rather than office administration and consultancy. One financial and professional services firm noted that legal apprenticeships are not currently available in Wales but that they would be keen to become involved if this situation changed.

Those firms having to pay the Apprenticeship Levy are thinking about how to maximise apprenticeships as a result of this new tax and it is a great opportunity to attract young people into organisations. However, there remains uncertainty for employers around apprenticeship systems in Wales and England and how the Levy mechanics operate.

**“The main advantages are bringing new people (and new ideas) into the business, additional energy into the team, positive influence leading to good PR and the development of committed staff.”**



## 7. Key drivers of change

This section focuses on the key drivers of change affecting the respondent organisations.

**It will attempt to understand a number of key issues including:**

- The key drivers of change affecting each sector and the impact on the business
- The impact of these drivers on skills requirements
- The effect of issues such as Brexit and large infrastructure projects on the business
- How colleges and universities can help to develop the skills required by these organisations

### Digital Technologies

A small number of firms currently identify digital technologies as a key issue and all felt that digital technologies will have a really big impact, especially in terms of new systems and new processes. In particular, keeping up with the pace of change is a challenge both in terms of resources and logistics and there will need to be a change of business practice in many organisations. For firms working in the digital world, there is increased demand for the services being offered resulting in greater demand for staff with the right skillsets.

In construction, 3D printing is bringing significant changes and opportunities and civil engineering roles based on design and infrastructure are changing in light of 3D printing, including managing how projects will be run to budget. In addition, more automation across all sectors means that it is key to have core ICT skills to adapt to these changes and be a transferrable employee.


### Sectoral Analysis

Some of the key factors identified were highly specific to each industry. For example, two manufacturing firms stated that automation and the development of the smart factory (especially in relation to software-based solutions) would be a major influence on its development in the future. In housing, local housing allowances will have an impact as well as welfare reform and universal credit, bedroom tax and anything that will impact on a tenant's income.

### Infrastructure Projects

A number of factors were identified by firms from all sectors including public expenditure on infrastructure such as the M4 relief road, Hinkley Point and HS2, the different expectations of millennials as both staff and customers, and keeping up with the pace of change in the digital world. Succession planning was also perceived to be a key issue for many firms.

Those who expressed an opinion believed the new M4 relief road would be good for business as it currently makes it hard to travel, attract staff and motivate people. There is also the perception that it will also bring more business into South Wales. The reduction in tolls on the Severn Bridge was also welcomed especially if it reduced costs for those bringing in goods from England and for those goods going out from Wales.



**“Succession planning has become increasingly important to the future of business, especially in how to replace the skills of those retiring and attract young people with the right skills for today and tomorrow.”**



## Workforce Supply

The work ethic and the 'work readiness' of millennials was a concern of some firms, including the simple process of preparing a CV for potential employers. The statement, 'they do only what is asked, not what is around' was reflective of the concerns of employers. For education providers, the increased importance on soft skill requirements and ensuring individuals are employable when they leave education is a major challenge going forward.

Younger workers seem to lack initiative in the workplace as well as not understanding that how they respond now can affect their future career. They also lack those soft skills that are becoming increasingly important to employers. This changing mentality to work and work/life balance means that more people tend to work to the clock, mean productivity is down, leaving less time for training. However, managing change and being resilient is now a fundamental trait which is required in young people in employment, especially in coping with change and reacting to the opportunities created.

Succession planning has become increasingly important to the future of business, especially in how to replace the skills of those retiring and attract young people with the right skills for today and tomorrow. This may not be easy in some sectors. For example, one construction company noted that a third of their workforce are over 55, with increasing demand from infrastructure projects, one way to address this could be to introduce flexible working to ensure employees remain productive in their roles and to consider utilising these people in alternative ways to mentor and support 'training the trainer'.

## Political Drivers

Those companies that expressed an opinion felt that skills should be a priority for the City Deal as there was requirement to not only attract people back into Wales with the right skills but to also upskill the people who are already here.

Another important concern was the difference in skills policy between England and Wales and how the Industrial Strategy could be increasing the divide between both nations, especially as many clients operate in both economies and want a solution which is cross border.

The majority of companies felt that Brexit had not affected their business to date or were generally unsure of the impact it would have in the future. There was

a mixed reaction within the advanced materials and manufacturing sector and a number of firms were very concerned about Brexit due to the increased costs of importing raw materials and increased costs which would make increased productivity a necessity over the long term. However, another business had experienced a positive bounce in the last few months and felt that Brexit will encourage them to think more commercially.

Similarly, whilst one legal firm felt that there would be opportunities due to changes in immigration legislation, another was concerned that its international work would be affected due to uncertainties over future relationships with Europe. Other sectors were largely ambivalent although some were concerned at higher import costs, the loss of EU workers and access to European funded projects.

## Collaboration between Industry and Education

Organisations from all sectors were enthusiastic on developing links with colleges and universities, especially in having an open dialogue to share information and collaborate.

One suggestion was encouragement and promotion of best practice models which exist and how this can be adopted by others as well as the creation of a 'think-tank' to generate feedback on courses and enable further and higher education to give an insight into those factors which may affect organisations in the future. This would enable businesses to be fully involved in developments for training and skills responses. Another proposal was for staff at FE and HE colleges to job-shadow with private sector company staff in order to give tertiary education organisations a real understanding/awareness of the commercial training needs of employers.

Tailoring programmes to the specific needs of businesses and sectors by understanding what challenges employers face was highlighted by a number of organisations. One business suggested that colleges have tended to take a product that they have off the shelf rather than working with clients to create a bespoke product and deliver the training they actually need. Therefore, rather than offering standardised courses, they could develop something more bespoke and cost-effective that meets the needs of clients and is able to demonstrate the positive impact this investment will have. This would require greater company input and engagement around course development and there needs to be openness to discuss those needs by all partners.

Colleges should offer more basic skills, including IT training to older employees. They can help further by ensuring that courses are more relevant to the existing workforce and by actively involving business in each sector with their curriculum and activities.

One important role was in promoting opportunities for graduates in their industry, especially in areas such as advanced materials and manufacturing and construction. Colleges can support them by continued support of subjects where there are skills gaps in industry and publicising of them as future career paths so that people can make informed decisions. For example, the construction industry is desperate for more ground-workers and apprenticeships in these roles. The issue is that it isn't an attractive area to young people/their parents and there isn't a recognition of the wider, higher skilled careers available within construction. Given this, there is scope for better promotion by career specialists to young people of the career pathways in construction.

Ensuring students improve on their people skills (e.g. confidence and independence) was seen as a priority. Softer skills are highly transferrable across all industries and would be beneficial to both the individual and the employing organisation. Colleges and universities need to better prepare people for the world of work, including focus on ensuring that students are more work-ready and not just exposed to theory.

For example, one manufacturing firm suggested that all engineering-related programmes should introduce sales training to grow soft skills in the industry so that graduates can clearly communicate with the customer and back into the business team. This requires a sales mind-set which has typically not been incorporated into traditional engineering courses and would be critical for those firms that need people who can go talk to customers, find their problems and understand them. Some firms were also interested in seeing more team-building approaches to students working on live employer briefs as this is a particularly useful skill in the workplace.



**“Organisations from all sectors were enthusiastic on developing links with colleges and universities.”**

# Conclusion

## Demand

The results show that the majority of organisations are currently facing skills gaps but cannot appoint new members of staff to fill these gaps for a variety of reasons.

There also seems to be difficulties with regard to flexibility within the businesses to take on further skills as current employees' skills and qualifications are, according to the companies interviewed, being fully utilised. This situation may not be too surprising given that there seems to be very little emphasis on human resource management as a strategic function within most of the organisations questioned and, more relevantly, few perceive workforce planning to be important.

### The key issues that emerge from the interviews in terms of demand for skills are as follows:

- The importance of soft skills in all organisations regardless of size or sector.
- The increasing relevance of leadership and management training for existing staff (although this was not perceived as an issue for newly recruited staff).
- The deficit in digital skills across all sectors not only in specialist subjects such as cyber security and big data but also in more basic skills for general applications.
- School-leavers and graduates have a lack of understanding of the world of work in industries such as manufacturing and construction and this is affecting recruitment into those sectors.
- Demographic issues with an ageing workforce both in terms of succession planning and upskilling, especially in digital skills.
- Organisations are looking to recruit from outside of the sector or local area to deal with skills shortages.
- There is an opportunity for organisations to adopt a range of different approaches to manage skills internally as well utilising external bodies such as recruitment agencies to help to identify and solve skills issues.
- The Welsh language is not an issue for most firms although a small number of organisations see its use as creating a competitive advantage in certain areas.
- Apprehension that organisations may not be ready to take full advantage of major infrastructure projects and that skilled staff could be lost to these projects over time.
- Ensuring that there is greater dialogue between industry and education as there is a perception that local colleges and universities lack an understanding of the needs of businesses.

## Supply

In terms of the supply of skills provision, there was extensive use of training from external providers by organisations, although a small number also delivered their own in-house courses. In addition, most organisations have taken on apprentices and will continue to do so if opportunities are available.

### The key issues that emerge from the interviews in terms of supply of skills are as follows:

- A number of organisations suggested that providers should be more flexible in their delivery of programmes with many external training companies providing general support rather than bespoke programmes relevant to individual businesses.
- Whilst some colleges were seen as market leading in terms of their approach in the way they go out to build relationships with employers, others offered training without understanding the needs of local businesses.
- Colleges, training providers and universities also need to ensure that their training content is up to date and can be provided across all levels.
- A need for colleges and universities to be marketing their offering in skills and training more effectively across the region and to respond more quickly to external enquiries.
- Funding and support for training and skills should to be more transparent and accessible and needs to be made available to older workers as well as young employees.
- Employability needs to be made a mandatory part of the learning experience within colleges and universities with soft skills embedded into the curriculum.
- Whilst apprenticeships are popular, there needs to be a widening of their utilisation within the region especially in ensuring they are taken on within all sectors of the economy and at different levels e.g. higher management apprenticeships. More should be done to promote shared apprenticeships that can be beneficial to those involved

## Key Drivers of Change

### There were a number of key issues as follows:

- Changes in digital technology were perceived to have a potentially large impact on all organisations in the region over the next few years, although many are not prepared for these changes.
- The 'work readiness' of millennials was a concern for some firms and the increased importance on soft skill requirements to ensure individuals are employable when they leave education is a major challenge going forward.
- Addressing the issue of succession planning in retaining and improving skills within the workforce is important to all organisations.
- The development of skills by policymakers for the region should be a priority for the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal but it should also ensure that the differences between Wales and England in this area is minimised.
- Brexit has not had an effect to date and organisations are generally unsure of the impact it would have in the future.
- Changes to the M4, including the relief road and toll reductions, were generally seen as being beneficial to the local economy.
- Creating better engagement between industry and tertiary education in the region was seen as critically important to businesses in the region, especially in ensuring that skills training was fit for purpose for all sectors.



Cardiff and Vale College  
Coleg Caerdydd a'r Fro

# For more information please contact:

**James Scorey**

SME Skills Survey Project Lead

Cardiff and Vale College

City Centre Campus, Dumballs Road, Cardiff Bay, CF10 5BF

**[jscorey@cavc.ac.uk](mailto:jscorey@cavc.ac.uk)**

**029 2025 0350**

**[www.cavc.ac.uk](http://www.cavc.ac.uk)**