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Evaluation of the Workforce Development Programme (WDP)

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

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Glossary of acronyms

BSc	Bachelor of Science
CII	Chartered Insurance Institute
CIMA	Chartered Institute of Management Accountants
CITB	Construction Industry Training Board
CMI	Chartered Management Institute
DBETS	Department for Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
ELMS	Enhancing Leadership and Management Skills
ESF	European Social Fund
ESIW	Essential Skills in the Workplace
FE	Further Education
FEI	Further Education Institute
GVA	Gross Value Added
HNC	Higher National Certificate
HPW	High Performance Working
HR	Human Resources
HRD	Human Resource Development
HRDA	Human Resource Development Advisor
ICAEW	Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
liP	Investors in People
ILM	Institute of Leadership and Management
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
ReACT	Redundancy Action Scheme
RICs	Regionally Important Companies
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
USA	United States of America
WDA	Workforce Development Advisor
WDP	Workforce Development Programme

Executive Summary

Background to the Workforce Development Programme

The Workforce Development Programme (WDP) was a training programme funded and managed by the Welsh Government. It was initially launched in 2005 and closed to new entrants on 31st January 2015 with all funded training activity coming to an end by 31st August 2015.

The WDP funded the activities of a network of Workforce Development Advisors (WDAs) contracted by the Welsh Government to help businesses in Wales review their staff development activities and to identify training needs. WDAs carried out a diagnostic review of staff development and helped build a skills development plan for businesses based on identifying existing approaches to training, training requirements and broader issues and challenges facing each business.

The WDP also contained a discretionary fund which financially supported companies with the cost of training their staff. Financial support was awarded at a 50 percent intervention rate for businesses who wanted to provide training for staff that was accredited, qualification based or met widely recognised industry standards. Advice and guidance and, where appropriate a short application form were provided to businesses via the Welsh Government's Business Skills Hotline team and directly from Workforce Development Advisors.

Evaluation Aims and Methodology

The WDP had already been the subject of an earlier evaluation (covering the period 2008-2011). The aims of this final evaluation (covering the period 2012-2015) were to:

- assess the level of engagement/service provided through the Hotline and WDAs

- examine how effectively the application and decisions process worked (e.g. the speed of decisions, input to decisions made using relevant WG expertise)
- assess the training delivered in terms of quality, relevance, flexibility and value for money
- assess the additionality of funded training
- assess the overall impact of the WDP.

The methodology adopted for this final evaluation included reviewing monitoring information and earlier evaluation reports. It also involved the preparation of appropriate quantitative and qualitative research instruments and undertaking a telephone survey between March and May 2015 using a census approach to a database of supported businesses provided by the Welsh Government¹. Follow-up visits were undertaken with a sample of 20 WDP supported businesses and where possible, these also included interviews with the relevant training providers and WDAs. Consultation interviews were also undertaken with five Welsh Government officials involved in managing and implementing the WDP.

Level of engagement and service provided

The evaluation found that the WDP had succeeded in engaging with a wide range of businesses across a number of sectors and throughout different parts of Wales providing them with high quality workforce development advice and support services and funding to help train their staff.

Overall, the programme supported some 4,315 businesses between April 2011 and March 2015, most of which have been SMEs, and performed solidly against its key performance indicators.

¹ A total of 353 telephone survey interviews were completed.

Workforce Development Advisors have played an important and proactive role in promoting awareness of and engagement with the WDP by consolidating existing and developing new relationships with businesses across Wales.

While WDAs provided a valued diagnostic service aimed at identifying skills gaps and training needs, most supported businesses felt that they already had a reasonably good awareness and understanding of their particular requirements.

Small businesses (ranging from 10 to 50 or so employees) without dedicated HR professionals seemed to gain the most from the diagnostic and advisory services of WDAs. There was also evidence to suggest that the WDAs improved and professionalised the way businesses specified and procured training without creating an over-dependence on external advice and guidance.

Feedback from businesses on the quality of the service they received from their WDA was very positive with businesses having found the impartial advice on identifying appropriate training providers particularly helpful. WDAs also played a key role in assisting businesses to access financial support to help them meet the costs of training via the WDP discretionary fund and from other skills development programmes and initiatives.

The evaluation found that only a relatively small proportion of supported businesses could recall having received post-training evaluation advice from their WDA and this was a slightly weaker aspect of the service despite it having been a payment milestone for the WDAs themselves. Where follow-up evaluation did occur, feedback showed this to have been a valuable part of the service from a business perspective suggesting it may have been an under prioritised element of the overall support package.

Only a minority of businesses had heard of or used the Skills Hotline service. Those that had used it gave positive feedback about the efficiency of the service and the quality of the advice they received.

Effectiveness of application and decision processes

Feedback from supported businesses on the process of applying for discretionary funding was generally positive in relation to the processes involved and the amount of time taken by Welsh Government to assess and respond to funding applications. The evaluation also found that WDAs had added value to the process of supporting companies with their applications.

There were some exceptions to the positive feedback, notably during a period in autumn 2014 when a spending moratorium was put in place by the Welsh Government. The moratorium had been introduced because of challenges in relation to budget forecasting caused by uncertainty over how much of their approved discretionary funding supported businesses would actually draw down in the final year of the programme.

Both WDAs and supported businesses felt that during the moratorium period, communication from Welsh Government (keeping them informed of the status of their discretionary fund applications) could have been much better. Key learning points were identified from this experience including the need to set more clearly defined start and end dates (of no more than one year) for funded training to take place.

Assessing and processing discretionary fund applications was labour intensive for Welsh Government. The direct application route for micro businesses to the discretionary fund (i.e. without advisory support from a WDA) worked well and was appropriate for the smaller amounts of funding requested.

Quality and relevance of training

The evaluation found that discretionary funding was used by supported businesses to help co-finance an appropriately wide range of general and job specific technical training courses, in-line with the broad and flexible way in which the programme was designed.

Supported businesses rated the quality of the training they had received very highly and the open market approach, allowing companies to select their own training providers worked well. For most businesses (72 percent) the main consideration in selecting their training provider was price.

Some supported businesses and WDAs felt that, particularly towards the end of the programme, there was a lack of flexibility in accommodating requests for changes to company training plans – some of which came about due to factors outside of the control of supported businesses (such as cancellations of some courses by training providers for instance).

Overall, the evaluation found that the training undertaken by supported businesses had been highly relevant which was demonstrated by strong levels of post-training skills utilisation.

Additionality of funded training

The evaluation found that evidence relating to levels of additionality from WDP funded training was reasonably positive. There was complete additionality for 14 percent of businesses (i.e. none of the training would have taken place without WDP support), partial additionality for 68 percent of businesses and no additionality for 16 percent of businesses.

Almost all of the businesses that demonstrated complete additionality (98 percent) said that they could not have afforded to do the training without WDP support while more than three quarters (77 percent) of supported businesses which would only have undertaken some of the training would have undertaken less than half of it without WDP support.

A significant minority (16 percent) of businesses that had been offered discretionary funding did not use any of it. The main reason for non-uptake was being too busy to release staff and training no longer being a priority.

Value and impact of the WDP training

The evaluation found that WDP training added value to and led to a range of positive impacts on supported businesses with 87 percent stating that it had improved their prospects going forward. Sixty percent of supported businesses felt that WDP training had led to positive impacts on turnover and profitability though the scale of the increases to profit were quite modest (less than a 10 percent increase in profit for 42 percent of businesses).

The evaluation also found evidence of positive outcomes for trainees in relation to willingness to participate and preparedness to take responsibility. Evidence of impacts relating to pay and staff retention levels were also positive but less pronounced.

Future Investment in Training

The evaluation found that the majority of supported businesses (88 percent) responding to the survey and who had provided training were likely to undertake further training in the next 12 months. Three quarters of these said that their involvement with the WDP made it more likely that they would undertake more training.

The evaluation found evidence of a clear willingness on the part of supported businesses to co-invest their own funds alongside Government in training. Two-thirds of the WDP supported businesses that participated in the evaluation survey envisaged future training being co-financed in this way with most of those (72 percent) expecting their own contribution to the cost of training being between 25 and 50 percent.

Recommendations

The final evaluation report makes a series of five recommendations in relation to the design and implementation of future programmes.

Recommendation 1

The Welsh Government should incorporate some of the key learning points from the WDP programme into the design of future training programmes. In particular, the Welsh Government should take account of the fact that employers have genuinely valued the in-built flexibility of the WDP programme to support a range of practical and relevant training courses whilst using an open market approach to selecting their own training providers.

Recommendation 2

Whilst it is recognised that budgetary constraints may require different approaches to the design and scale of future skills and workforce development programmes, the Welsh Government should look to continue to combine elements of information, advice and financial support to businesses. There is clear evidence that businesses are prepared to co-invest in training but without some form of financial support from Government, less training will take place and at a slower pace.

Recommendation 3

WDAs have clearly added a substantial amount of value in proactively promoting awareness and up-take of WDP services amongst businesses. However, should the Welsh Government not be in a position to re-commission a workforce development advisory service or network of this nature in future, it should carefully consider how it can retain a proactive dimension to promoting awareness and engagement in training activity in order to avoid the risk of lower participation in future programmes as a result of taking a more passive approach.

Recommendation 4

Should the Welsh Government decide to commission a workforce development advisory service (to take forward some of the functions of the previous WDA network) in the future, it should consider how this service can be targeted for maximum effect and best value. In particular, the Welsh Government should consider (in light of key learning points from the WDP) targeting in-depth diagnostic and advisory aspects of such a service at small

businesses while allowing micro enterprises and larger companies (especially ones with in house HR capability) to apply direct for any co-investment based financial support instruments.

Recommendation 5

It is clear that Welsh Government officials have identified and have already implemented a number of process related changes emerging from the challenges of managing the budget and expenditure of the WDP. While this is positive, it is recommended that these lessons, including the need for a clearly specified 'use it or lose it' delivery timeframe in which companies can draw down co-investment funding for training are carried forward and incorporated into the design of future programmes. Senior officials within Welsh Government should ensure that this learning is shared with any new personnel (not previously involved with the WDP) responsible for the design and implementation of new programmes so that important knowledge and experience is not lost. Delivery timeframes should allow companies sufficient time to plan, commission and complete training but should avoid being overly long which might lead to a loss of focus and momentum and could result in financial planning uncertainties for those managing programme expenditure. In this context, it is also recommended that any future skills or workforce development advisory service put in place by the Welsh Government should strongly encourage businesses to submit realistic and achievable training plans.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Old Bell 3 Ltd. was commissioned by the Welsh Government to undertake an evaluation of the Workforce Development Programme (WDP) in July 2014.
- 1.2 The WDP was launched in 2005 and was funded by the Welsh Government. It closed to new entrants on 31st January 2015 with all training activity coming to an end by 31st August 2015. The WDP funded the activities of a network of Workforce Development Advisors (WDAs) contracted by the Welsh Government to help businesses review their staff development activities and to identify training needs. WDAs carried out a diagnostic review of staff development and helped build a skills development plan for businesses based on:
- current approach to management and training
 - training needs
 - issues and challenges facing the business.
- 1.3 The WDP also contained a discretionary fund which financially supported companies with the cost of training for their staff. Financial support was awarded at a 50 percent intervention rate for businesses who wanted to provide training for staff that was accredited, qualification based or met widely recognised industry standards. Advice and guidance and, where appropriate a short application form were provided to businesses via the Welsh Government's Business Skills Hotline team² and directly from Workforce Development Advisors.
- 1.4 The discretionary fund element was also used by another Welsh Government Programme – Enhancing Leadership and Management Skills (ELMS) which has been the subject of a separate evaluation which was also undertaken by Old Bell 3. The ELMS Programme, which was part funded by the European Social Fund (ESF), used the discretionary

² Source: Specification for the evaluation of the Workforce Development Programme. Page 2.

fund to financially assist companies with leadership and management training courses.

Evaluation aims

1.5 The evaluation specification stated that the WDP had been evaluated in the period 2008-2011 (the findings from this work are considered in Chapter 2) and that this final evaluation should complement earlier work by focusing on the latter period of delivery.

1.6 Thus, the specific aims of this final evaluation are to:

- assess the level of engagement/service provided through the Hotline and WDAs
- examine how effectively the application and decisions process worked (e.g. the speed of decisions, input to decisions made using relevant WG expertise)
- assess the training delivered in terms of quality, relevance, flexibility and value for money
- assess the additionality of funded training
- assess the overall impact of the WDP³.

Work programme

1.7 The work programme underpinning this final evaluation has involved the following elements:

- reviewing performance data on up-take of and expenditure via the WDP
- reviewing the findings and conclusions of earlier evaluations of the WDP
- preparing a package of research instruments including a telephone survey questionnaire for use with supported

³ Ibid. Pages 2 and 3.

businesses⁴ and tailored semi-structured discussion guides for use in undertaking qualitative interviews with Welsh Government officials, training providers, WDAs, supported businesses and trained individuals (members of staff)

- analysing a database of businesses supported via the WDP between October 2012 and October 2014⁵ and removing i) duplicate contacts and ii) contacts in receipt of ELMS discretionary funding that would have recently participated in the separate final evaluation of ELMS. The initial database of WDP supported businesses contained 1,053 entries. After cleansing and de-duplication there were 862 useable contacts available to the survey team
- undertaking a telephone survey using a census approach to the database. The survey pilot took place on 23rd and 24th March 2015 and the main stage of the fieldwork took place between 30th March and 5th May 2015. A total of 353 telephone interviews were completed giving a response rate of 41 percent. The response rate was boosted by seeking replacement telephone numbers for companies where the phone number proved incorrect or outdated
- drawing a sample of supported businesses that had completed a telephone survey and had agreed to participate in a qualitative follow-up visit The sample was constructed to reflect information relating to the regional spread of supported businesses, their industry sector and size (staff numbers) held on the Welsh Government database
- acquiring and analysing relevant training plans for the qualitative sample and conducting follow-up visits with 20 supported businesses. Where possible interviews were also conducted with the relevant WDAs and training providers that worked with these companies

⁴ The questionnaire drew on the design of the ELMS evaluation survey questionnaire. It omitted questions relating to ELMS leadership and management training and introduced questions relating to support provided by WDAs.

⁵ Based on 'start dates' with the WDP.

- undertaking qualitative interviews with five Welsh Government officials involved in managing and implementing the WDP.

Report structure

1.8 In the remainder of this report, we consider:

- the background to the WDP and the key findings from earlier evaluations of the programme (Chapter 2)
- the performance of the WDP relating to output targets and expenditure (Chapter 3)
- the types of businesses supported by the programme (Chapter 4)
- the initial route into the WDP and the motivations for business participation in the programme (Chapter 5)
- the nature of participation by supported businesses in the programme and feedback on the services they received (Chapter 6)
- the outcomes and impacts generated by the programme (Chapter 7)
- the conclusions and recommendations emerging from the evaluation evidence (Chapter 8).

2 Workforce Development Programme - Background

2.1 In this chapter, we consider the background to and specification for the WDP and the main findings of previous evaluations. The chapter draws on background information and documents provided to the evaluation team by Welsh Government, prior evaluation reports and evidence taken from stakeholders via qualitative interviews.

Key findings outlined in this chapter:

Programme Design

- The WDP was intentionally designed as a broad and flexible programme to support training and workforce development activities (via advice and financial assistance) to a wide range of businesses (of various sizes and sectors) across Wales.
- The WDP consisted of two main elements, namely advice and support delivered through a network of contracted Workforce Development Advisors (WDAs) whose work was intended to raise awareness of and complement other training programmes in Wales and a discretionary fund of last resort which offered to assist businesses with up to 50 percent of the cost of meeting their training needs where other funding was not available. Advice and guidance, and where appropriate, a short application form was provided by the Business Skills Hotline team.

Previous evaluation findings

- There were high levels of satisfaction amongst supported businesses with information and advice received (via WDAs) though there were some concerns about the perceived impartiality of WDAs in a small minority of cases.
- The discretionary fund was a key motivation for participation in the WDP but the diagnostic processes involved were also seen as important and valuable reasons for getting involved in the programme by supported businesses.
- Employee time pressure was found to be the main reason why

supported businesses did not draw down or utilise their full allocation of approved discretionary funding.

- The WDP was considered to be partially additional for the majority (78 percent) of supported businesses with full additionality in nine percent and complete deadweight in 14 percent of cases. Deadweight levels were higher amongst larger organisations.
- Positive outcomes from participation in the WDP included improvements in productivity, product or service quality, reduced staff turnover, new market opportunities and reduced costs.

About the WDP

2.2 The WDP was a 'programme of tailored advice and support to enhance the skills of the workforce, leading to improved business performance'. The programme was intended to be 'comprehensive in scope and flexible enough to meet the needs of individual businesses' and was seen as being 'a key component of the Welsh Government's vision for education and training'⁶.

2.3 The WDP was also intended to 'play a central role in strengthening the contribution of skills development to economic development and integrating the work of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) with the Department for Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science (DBETS)'⁷.

2.4 The WDP 'offer' to businesses in Wales contained two main elements – advisory support through an appointed network of Workforce Development Advisors (WDAs) and financial support to help meet the cost of general and specific training via a discretionary fund. This was

⁶ Source: Invitation to Tender. Specification for Workforce Development programme Tender. June 2012 to May 2015. Page 5.

⁷ Ibid. Page 6.

complemented by advice and guidance and, where appropriate a short application form was provided by the Business Skills Hotline team.

- 2.5 A small team of Workforce Development Managers within the Welsh Government contract managed the inputs of WDAs. Welsh Government officials convened a panel to assess company applications in terms of eligibility and to agree funding levels depending on the strength of the applications submitted against the criteria set.

Workforce Development Advisors

- 2.6 In a tender specification document intended to procure the network of WDAs in 2012, the Welsh Government explained that the WDP 'is a delivery framework that provides an integrated package of products and services that meet the development needs of businesses and organisations'. Specifically, this document set out that delivery priorities for the WDP included (summarised):

- increasing the number of organisations taking up the Investors in People (IiP) standard and the number of employees working for IiP recognised organisations. The WDP was intended to promote the benefits of IiP and provide a level of free advice and guidance from IiP specialists and a financial contribution to the costs of first time assessment. Progressing organisations that engaged with the WDP towards IiP recognition was a key objective
- ensuring that the Business Skills Delivery Team (within DfES) would work closely with DBETS colleagues to identify businesses that had or could demonstrate the potential to have a significant economic impact. This would involve WDAs working with DBETS sector teams and developing relationships with so-called Anchor⁸ and Regionally Important Companies (RICs)⁹

⁸ An anchor company is considered as: a company which is a global or international organisation and has a Welsh headquarters or significant corporate presence in Wales. Source: Welsh Government website.

⁹ A regionally important company is considered as a company which is of significant importance to the region of Wales in which they are located as a result of, for example, number of employees, commitment to a skilled workforce development of the supply chain and investment in the Welsh site. Source: Welsh Government website.

- promoting leadership skills, via the Wales Leadership Award and ELMS. WDAs were expected to facilitate employer access to ELMS – particularly the leadership and management workshops and the ELMS discretionary fund via the WDP
- integrating the assessment of basic skills as part of the WDP. WDAs were expected to promote effective facilitation and support employers in identifying and addressing basic skills needs
- helping (as a key support mechanism) in meeting the skills needs of the Welsh Government's priority sectors
- ensuring that across Wales, any business or organisation could access any aspect of the WDP through the medium of Welsh¹⁰.

2.7 The Welsh Government's specification set out the role WDAs were expected to play in the context of the WDP. This included the need to:

- act as an honest broker at all times when providing information, advice and guidance to employers
- comply with a code of conduct
- generate leads regarding employers that would benefit from the service. The specification noted that the Welsh Government would approve leads based on a number of factors and that it reserved the right to review and revise criteria in order to support the Welsh Government's economic development strategy
- assist employers to clarify their business strategy and objectives, providing constructive challenge and critique
- review business plans to identify strategic development needs
- support employers to overcome obstacles/barriers to achieving their development through advice, guidance and mentoring
- provide a skills brokerage function to ensure employers accessed relevant employee training and development support, including funded programmes and projects, further and higher education

¹⁰ Source: Invitation to Tender. Specification for Workforce Development programme Tender. June 2012 to May 2015. Pages 7 and 8.

provision, private sector provision and support from wider business support mechanisms

- inform employers of the various support packages available from the Welsh Government, the wider business support network and the further and higher education networks
- promote the benefits of working with liP and incorporating high performance working practices (HPW)
- actively participate in on-going development through attendance at regional and local networking meetings and appropriate training activities
- actively seek opportunities to promote a range of programmes with businesses engaged in the WDP¹¹
- evaluate the efficiency, effectiveness and value for money of the support provided to the employer in terms of achieving strategic objectives
- measuring impact in terms of the economic benefits and business growth¹².

The Discretionary Fund

2.8 The discretionary fund provided 'last resort' financial support to businesses for training that was 'accredited, qualification based or met a widely recognised industry standard'. The Welsh Government's Business Skills Hotline Team provided potential applicants to the discretionary fund with 'advice and guidance and, where appropriate, a short application form'¹³. While the scope for the different types of training that could be eligible under the discretionary fund was therefore quite broad, officials involved in managing the WDP explained that their focus, particularly towards the latter stages of the programme was on funding training that 'improved capability – in other words helping to train staff to do things that they weren't able to before'. This meant that

¹¹ Including liP, Wales Leadership Award, Leadership and Management Development, Skills Growth Wales, Apprenticeships, Basic Skills, ReAcT and Jobs Growth Wales.

¹² Source: Invitation to Tender. Specification for Workforce Development programme Tender. June 2012 to May 2015. Pages 9 and 10.

¹³ Source: WDP Evaluation specification. Page 2.

training geared towards compliance was given less of a priority. 'We moved away from funding things like health and safety training'.

- 2.9 Applicants that were successful in securing discretionary fund support were offered financial assistance to help meet the costs of training at an intervention rate of 50 percent by Welsh Government¹⁴. Micro businesses were able to apply directly to the discretionary fund, while larger businesses did so with the assistance of their WDA.
- 2.10 The application process for discretionary funding involved businesses setting out the rationale for the training they required, details of the qualification, industry standard or accreditation that would be achieved, the training provider the business wished to use, the start and end dates for the training and the total cost.
- 2.11 The application form explained that 'the Welsh Government will pay a 50 percent contribution for training and a 25 percent contribution for any specific training¹⁵. The business will pay the remaining amount and all VAT'¹⁶.
- 2.12 Applications were then considered by a panel (consisting of Welsh Government officials) which met on a weekly basis.

Stakeholder Views on the Design of the WDP

- 2.13 Stakeholders confirmed in their evidence that the WDP had provided a good deal of flexibility, enabling officials to implement it as an 'umbrella' programme that complemented and 'fitted around' other initiatives such as the 'Dyfodol' project¹⁷ (operating in North Wales), Skills Growth

¹⁴ Source: Workforce Development Programme Application Form.

¹⁵ Specific training related to training that was not transferrable to any other organisation.

¹⁶ Source: Workforce Development Programme Application Form.

¹⁷ This was an ESF funded project led by the Further Education Sector which aimed to help over 5,000 workers in North Wales gain new skills and drive forward productivity in the workplace.

Wales, ReAct¹⁸, Jobs Growth Wales, Essential Skills in the Workplace (ESIW) and ELMS. Officials also said that they considered the discretionary fund to be 'last resort' in nature, only approving applications if companies 'couldn't get their training funded elsewhere'.

2.14 Welsh Government officials felt that the in-built flexibility was positive in enabling them to ensure that the programme continued to be well-aligned with economic development and skills policies. For instance, as the Welsh Government's policy in relation to priority sectors evolved and expanded, the WDP was able to respond to this with 'an extra mark' being awarded to companies within priority sectors that applied for discretionary funding.

'Employers valued the flexibility. There were less strict criteria [than some ESF-funded schemes] and the administrative burden was much lower for them. Employers also valued the open-market approach of being able to select their own training providers'. (Welsh Government Official)

Previous Evaluation Findings

2.15 The WDP has been independently evaluated in the past. A report in August 2009¹⁹ focusing on the impact of the discretionary fund arrived at the following conclusions:

- the main barrier to WDP supported companies actually drawing down discretionary funding (once their applications had been approved) was 'employee time pressures'²⁰
- access to discretionary funding 'appears to be a key motivation for participation' in the WDP, but there was also evidence to suggest that 'support in identifying workforce development needs

¹⁸ The Redundancy Action Scheme.

¹⁹ Evaluation of the Workforce Development Programme. Year 2. Evaluation of the use and impact of the discretionary funding. August 2009. Cambridge Policy Consultants.

²⁰ Ibid. page 35.

and developing an action plan' were also important motivations for participation

- deadweight (i.e. the proportion of employers 'considering that they would have undertaken exactly the same workforce development activities in the absence of any support') was considered to be low (at around 14 percent)
- deadweight was found to be 'significantly higher for larger organisations'
- for the majority of supported employers (78 percent), the impact of the WDP (advice and funding) was considered to be 'partially additional'
- the support was considered to have been 'fully additional' in nine percent of cases with full additionality being 'significantly higher for smaller organisations'
- discretionary funding had directly resulted in the supported business increasing their spend on workforce development activity in 65 percent of cases
- only five percent of supported businesses said that they had substituted discretionary funding for existing expenditure on workforce development activities
- most supported businesses (89 percent) were found to have been able to 'identify at least one intermediate outcome arising from the activities undertaken'. Positive outcomes identified by employers in the evaluation included 'improvements in productivity, quality of service or product, reduced staff turnover, new market opportunities or reduced costs'
- over a quarter (27 percent) of supported businesses 'considered that the learning activities which were funded [via the discretionary fund] had a significant or partial impact on turnover'
- around a fifth of employers that received advice considered that 'the advice alone had a significant or partial impact on turnover'
- there was only a 'marginal difference in growth [measured by the average annual change in the number of employees] between

WDP participants [at 1.1 percent] and non-participants²¹ [0.9 percent]

- supported businesses with less than 50 employees ‘expanded at the rate of 3.3 percent per annum’ while those with more than 50 employees ‘expanded at the rate of 0.8 percent per annum’. This analysis led the evaluators to conclude that ‘smaller companies may be deriving more value from the support than larger companies’
- the mean GVA²² of supported businesses ‘grew by an average of £2,000 per annum’ while the GVA of non-participant businesses ‘fell by £3,600 per annum’²³. The same comparison using median values suggested that ‘participants overall may not have significantly different growth rates but are significantly less likely to experience very negative growth’²⁴.

2.16 Following on from the evaluation of the discretionary fund in August 2009, the contractors produced a thematic evaluation paper in July 2014²⁵. The purpose of this paper was to focus on:

- the relationship between the WDP support provided by DfES²⁶ and business support provided by the Department for Economy Science and Transport²⁷
- the relationship between the WDP and the support provided by Basic Skills Cymru
- the relationship between the WDP and the provider network – including an assessment of the brokerage skills of the Human

²¹ Non-participant data related to ‘all Welsh businesses’. The evaluation cited ‘MINT UK’ as the source of this data.

²² Gross Value Added.

²³ Non-participant data related to ‘all Welsh businesses’. The evaluation cited ‘MINT UK’ as the source of this data.

²⁴ Evaluation of the Workforce Development Programme. Year 2. Evaluation of the use and impact of the discretionary funding. August 2009. Cambridge Policy Consultants. Pages 35 to 38

²⁵ Thematic Paper: Linkages with partner organisations and referral processes. Cambridge Policy Consultants. July 2014.

²⁶ The Department was referred to in the report as DCELLS (Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills).

²⁷ The Department was referred to in the report as DE&T (Department for the Economy and Transport).

Resource Development advisory (HRDA) network²⁸ and ‘wider consideration of the overall effectiveness of the relationship between providers and the HRD advisory network’²⁹.

2.17 The thematic evaluation found that:

- most employers (90 percent) expressed high levels of satisfaction with the information they received from their HRD advisor
- employers were ‘impressed with their advisor’s skills in brokering workforce development provision’ though ‘some areas for potential improvement were identified’, including that:
 - Welsh Government could consider reviewing the necessity for three quotes for more specialist training provision which was not widely available
 - there could be increased flexibility to accommodate training which was more urgently required
 - Welsh Government should seek to ensure that all HRD advisors provided completely impartial recommendations. The evaluation pointed to a perception that a minority of advisors might have been referring companies to their own provision and found this to be ‘particularly damaging to the image’ of the WDP programme
- HRD advisors were referring employers to training providers in both the private sector (83 percent) and the Further Education sector (72 percent). However, up-take was higher for private sector providers (at 62 percent) than for the FE sector (21 percent) with 18 percent having received training from a combination of sources
- an employer’s selection of learning provider was seen to be complex and dependent on a number of factors, including:
 - availability at the right quality
 - sufficient flexibility to respond to a company’s needs

²⁸ Note that HRDAs were renamed as Workforce Development Advisers (WDAs).

²⁹ Thematic Paper: Linkages with partner organisations and referral processes. Cambridge Policy Consultants. July 2014. Page 1.

- the quality of provision
- Further Education colleges perceived that their relationships with HR advisors were 'improving' but that there was still 'some way to go'. In this context, the report noted that:
 - not all FEIs had a list of HRD advisors and some FEIs were reluctant to refer to the Business Skills Hotline due to 'previous negative feedback from companies'
 - some FEIs were confused about the 'different types of business support available through Welsh Government' – in particular 'the difference between the support offered by Relationship Managers and HRDAs'
- there were a number of issues concerning the linkages between private training providers and the WDP. These included:
 - a lack of awareness of HRD advisors amongst some private providers – including the types of advice and support they offered
 - providers being 'very confused over the different types of business support available through Welsh Government'
 - the need for better communication between Welsh Government and the 'private provider sector' though this would need to be done in a way that would avoid 'inundating' HRD advisors with 'marketing from prospective providers'

3 Performance (Outputs and Expenditure)

- 3.1 In this chapter, we examine the performance of the WDP in relation to output targets and expenditure on the programme. The chapter draws on monitoring information on targets and spend supplied by Welsh Government and the evidence of stakeholders via qualitative interviews.

Key findings outlined in this chapter:

Outputs

- Output targets for the WDP were based on the number of businesses to be supported by the programme and were set on a rolling basis with the target definitions and volumes being altered each financial year.
- The overall target for number of businesses supported increased in 2012/13 and again in 2013/14 but was reduced slightly in 2014/15.
- Overall performance against the profiled targets was very positive in both 2011-12 (112 percent of total number of businesses supported achieved) and 2012-13 (102 percent achievement). Overall performance against the targets for businesses supported was less positive in 2013-14 (86 percent achieved) and 2014-15 (70 percent achieved).

Expenditure

- The WDP supported 4,315 businesses between April 2011 and March 2015 at a total cost of £15.2m. The average unit cost per supported business over this period (discretionary funding and WDA advisory costs combined) was £3,523.
- The bulk of the WDP funding (75 percent) was channelled directly to businesses to help pay for training via the discretionary fund, while the remaining 25 percent was spent on advisory support to businesses via the WDA network.
- Forecasting the WDP budget and managing expenditure proved to be challenging for Welsh Government officials, particularly

during the relatively short period when businesses had a two year window in which they could conduct the training and draw down grant. This was further complicated by the fact that over the four year period under consideration, only 51 percent of the discretionary fund grant committed was actually drawn down by supported businesses.

- The challenges in relation to budget forecasting meant that Welsh Government imposed a moratorium on spending in autumn 2014 in order to conduct a detailed assessment into likely expenditure levels through to the end of the programme. Communication by Welsh Government during this period (with supported businesses and WDAs) was poor.
- Key learning points for future programmes were identified from this experience including the need to set more clearly defined start and end dates for funded training to take place.

Outputs

3.2 First, we consider how the WDP has performed in relation to its output targets. Performance targets for the WDP were based on the number of businesses to be supported by the programme. Since the programme was financed on a rolling basis via domestic Welsh Government funds, the targets set have been altered from year to year in response to various policy developments and a change in eligibility criteria.

3.3 **Figure 3.1** provides an overview of the profiled targets and achievements against those targets for the 2011-2012 financial year.

Figure 3.1: Performance against WDP targets (April 2011-March 2012)

Indicator	Target	Achieved	Numbers <i>Proportion achieved (percentage)</i>
Number of businesses supported (including Anchor and Regionally Important Companies)	900	1,022	114
Number of Tourism Businesses Supported	90	83	92
Total	990	1,105	112

Source: Monitoring information supplied by Welsh Government

3.4 This shows that the performance targets for the WDP programme in 2011-2012 related to the number of businesses supported and a separate target for the number of tourism businesses supported. Welsh Government officials interviewed as part of the evaluation explained that the tourism business target was designed to fulfil a commitment in the Programme for Government relating to ‘support[ing] investment in staff training and management to support a high quality tourism industry’³⁰.

3.5 Performance against the broader businesses supported target was very positive with the target itself having been exceeded. There was also a solid performance against the more modest target for tourism businesses supported, though this was very narrowly missed at 92 percent of the total.

3.6 **Figure 3.2** provides an overview of the WDP targets for the 2012-2013 financial year.

³⁰ Programme for Government. Chapter 1: Growth and Sustainable Jobs. Page 4.

Figure 3.2: Performance against WDP targets (April 2012-March 2013)

Indicator	Target	Achieved	Numbers <i>Proportion achieved (percentage)</i>
Support business development with selective and discretionary funding (including Anchor and Regionally Important Companies)	1,000	965	97
Support for businesses with less than nine employees	170	147	87
Support investment in staff training and management for tourism to support a high quality industry	82	169	206
Total	1,252	1,281	102

Source: Monitoring information supplied by Welsh Government

3.7 This shows a slight uplift in the output target for the number of businesses supported via the discretionary fund (from 900 to 1,000). Performance against this revised target was positive, with 97 percent achievement. The target relating to the number of tourism businesses supported was lowered slightly (from 90 to 82) to be in-line with the previous year's performance. Performance against this was strong, with 169 businesses having been assisted (an over-achievement of 87 businesses). A new target relating to the number of businesses supported with less than nine employees (defined as micro businesses) was also introduced.

3.8 **Figure 3.3** provides an overview of performance against targets for the 2013-2014 financial year.

Figure 3.3: Performance against WDP targets (April 2013-March 2014)

Indicator	Target	Achieved	Numbers <i>Proportion achieved (percentage)</i>
Support business development with selective and discretionary funding (including Anchor and Regionally Important Companies) – Number of micro businesses supported	300	276	92
Support business development with selective and discretionary funding (including Anchor and Regionally Important Companies) – Number of SMEs supported	750	692	92
Support business development with selective and discretionary funding (including Anchor and Regionally Important Companies) – Number of large businesses supported	100	93	93
Support investment in staff training and management for tourism to support a high quality industry	150	62	41
Total	1,300	1,123	86

Source: Monitoring information supplied by Welsh Government

3.9 This shows that for 2013-2014, the target for number of supported businesses was split further (according to company size) with individual categories for micro businesses, SMEs and larger businesses supported. The sector based target relating to number of businesses supported in the tourism industry was also retained for 2013-2014.

3.10 Overall, performance during the 2013-2014 financial year was generally strong with three of the four targets being only very narrowly missed. However, performance in relation to the tourism sector target dipped noticeably with less than half of the target 150 supported businesses being achieved.

3.11 **Figure 3.4** provides an overview of targets and performance in the 2014-2015 financial year.

Figure 3.4: Performance against WDP targets (April 2014-March 2015)

Indicator	Target	Achieved	Numbers <i>Proportion achieved (percentage)</i>
Support businesses to engage in skills development – Number of micro businesses supported	300	166	55
Support businesses to engage in skills development – Number of SMEs supported	750	575	77
Support businesses to engage in skills development – Number of large businesses supported	100	65	65
Total	1,150	806	70

Source: Monitoring information supplied by Welsh Government

3.12 This shows that the tourism sector target was no longer reported separately for 2014-2015. The targets relating to number of large businesses and number of micro businesses supported were both increased slightly (despite having been narrowly missed in the previous year) while the target for SMEs supported was reduced slightly compared to the 2013-2014. Performance in 2014-2015 was relatively strong in relation to SMEs but less so in relation to the micro enterprise target (71 percent achieved) and the target for supporting larger businesses (65 percent achieved). The overall number of businesses supported was also down on the previous year which reflects the fact that a spending moratorium was introduced for a period during autumn 2014.

Expenditure Analysis

3.13 **Figure 3.5** provides an overview of programme expenditure covering the financial years 2011/2012 through to 2014/2015.

Figure 3.5: WDP Expenditure

Year	Grant Amount Awarded (Discretionary Fund)	Grant Amount Claimed (Discretionary Fund)	Percentage Claimed	Annual Advisory Expenditure (WDAs)	£m WDA Advisory spend as percentage of DF grant claimed
2011/2012	6.3	1.1	18	2.2	200
2012/2013	5.0	2.3	46	0.5	22
2013/2014	6.6	3.0	46	0.4	13
2014/2015	4.3	5.0	116	0.7	14
Total	22.2	11.4	51	3.8	33

Source: Monitoring information supplied by Welsh Government

3.14 This shows that the mean average amount of grant awarded via the discretionary fund over the four year period in question has been £5.6m per annum with a mean average of £2.85m per annum actually being drawn down/claimed by supported businesses. It should be noted that the amounts drawn down include accruals from previous financial years where approvals were made (and companies were given a two year window in which to draw down the funding) but the funding was not claimed by the supported business until the following financial year. This accounts for the claimed figure being larger than the awarded figure in the 2014/15 financial year.

3.15 Figure 3.5 also shows that overall (over the four year period under consideration), 75 percent (£11.4m) of the £15.2m budget was spent directly with businesses via the discretionary fund while the remaining 25 percent (£3.8m) was spent on advisory services via the WDAs.

3.16 A further point to note on Figure 3.5 is that the expenditure on WDAs was notably higher in 2011/12 than in subsequent years. This related to the fact that in 2011/12 (and in preceding years), WDAs supported applications from a larger number of micro businesses that were only looking to secure funding for one item of training. In light of this, the

Welsh Government introduced the direct application process for micro businesses.

3.17 **Figure 3.6** provides an overview of the mean average amount of discretionary funding claimed per supported business.

Figure 3.6: Average (mean) WDP discretionary fund amount claimed per supported business

Year	Grant Amount Claimed (DF)	Total number of businesses supported	Mean average claimed per business supported
2011/2012	£1.1m	1,105	£996
2012/2013	£2.3m	1,281	£1,796
2013/2014	£3.0m	1,123	£2,671
2014/2015	£5.0m	806	£6,204
Total (2011-15)	£11.4m	4,315	£2,642

Source: Monitoring information supplied by Welsh Government

3.18 This shows that the overall mean average amount of discretionary funding claimed per supported business (over the treatment period under consideration i.e. 2011-2015) was £2,624. The mean average amount of grant claimed per business increased gradually from £996 per business in 2011/12 to £6,204 per business in 2014/15. It needs to be borne in mind that due to the rolling nature of the programme, businesses did not necessarily draw down grant in the year they were claimed (on monitoring information) as having been supported. Thus, the overall mean average (for the treatment period as a whole) is more representative than the averages for the individual years.

3.19 In terms of expenditure on the advisory side of the programme, the mean average expenditure has been £950k per annum over the four year period although this was notably higher at £2.2m in the 2011/12 financial year.

3.20 **Figure 3.7** provides an indication of the average total ‘unit cost’ of supporting each individual business taking into account WDA advisory and discretionary fund expenditure combined.

Figure 3.7: Average (mean) total unit cost per supported business

Year	Total Spend	Total number of businesses supported	Mean average total unit cost per business
2011/2012	£3.3m	1,105	£2,986
2012/2013	£2.8m	1,281	£2,186
2013/2014	£3.4m	1,123	£3,028
2014/2015	£5.7m	806	£7,072
Total	£15.2m	4,315	£3,523

Source: Monitoring information supplied by Welsh Government

3.21 Figure 3.7 shows that the total average unit cost per business was fairly consistent between 2011/12 and 2013/14 but increased sharply in 2014/15 in-line with the higher levels of expenditure (on both elements of the programme) but with fewer businesses having been supported. Again, the rolling nature of the programme, with businesses not necessarily drawing down grant in the same year as they were claimed needs to be borne in mind and as such, the overall mean average for the 2011-2015 treatment period under consideration (of £3,523) is more representative than the averages for the individual years. Welsh Government officials pointed to three main reasons as to why expenditure was higher and the number of businesses supported was lower during 2014/15. These reasons included:

- the closure of the ELMS Programme with pre-existing funding commitments made to companies under ELMS being honoured via the WDP discretionary fund element
- the reduction in the period in which businesses could use their WDP discretionary fund award was reduced from two years to one year in 2013/14. This meant that WDA payments were also condensed into a shorter timeframe. Payments to WDAs were

also somewhat higher in the final year due to the ending of the programme and the need for advisors to draw down budget at an earlier stage than would have been the norm in previous years

- during 2014/15, Welsh Government Workforce Development Managers contacted all businesses supported by the WDP (and having been offered discretionary funding) to identify any likely underspends against their Skills Development Plans. Officials explained that this prompted businesses to take-up some of their remaining discretionary fund allocations and arrange training prior to the claim deadline resulting in higher spend than would otherwise have been the case.

Forecasting and Managing WDP Expenditure

3.22 A key issue in relation to forecasting and managing expenditure on the WDP programme has been the lower amounts of discretionary grant funding actually claimed as compared to the amounts initially awarded to applicant businesses. The various reasons for non-uptake (from a supported business perspective) are analysed in Chapter 4 of this report.

3.23 Welsh Government officials explained that the lower up-take rates for the three years between 2011 and 2014 made managing the budget for the discretionary fund element challenging, particularly given that companies had two years in which they could claim their grant. In October 2014, as the programme was entering its final stages, a moratorium on spending was imposed which meant that new funding applications were not approved while companies already in the system were asked (by Welsh Government) how much of their allocated funding they intended to actually draw down and utilise.

3.24 Welsh Government officials explained that the moratorium on funding was lifted at the end of January 2015 once the situation relating to existing commitments became clearer. Businesses that had applications for funding on hold during the moratorium were invited to submit fresh

applications for up to £10,000 on the understanding that the training would have to be completed by 31st March 2015. Officials acknowledged that while the moratorium was in force, communication by Welsh Government with WDAs and supported businesses about the status of the programme and the progress of individual discretionary fund applications had been poor and that this had placed WDAs in a difficult position with the clients they were supporting at the time.

3.25 We understand that in the latter part of the programme, the time period for undertaking training and drawing down discretionary funding was reduced back down to one year after a pilot (which lasted one year) during which the time period for assisted businesses being able to deliver WDP funded training was extended to two years. A Welsh Government official explained that limiting the training delivery period to one year had ‘helped us manage the claims more effectively’.

3.26 A key learning point from this experience that might inform future programmes of this nature was that officials felt a tighter ‘use it or lose it’ time limit (of no more than a year) setting out a narrower and more defined start and end date for funded training was needed to help Welsh Government manage and forecast expenditure more effectively.

4 WDP Supported Businesses

4.1 In this chapter, we analyse the type of businesses supported by the WDP, their plans and growth ambitions and their training budgets. The chapter draws on monitoring information supplied by the Welsh Government and data from our telephone survey of supported businesses.

Key findings outlined in this chapter:

- The WDP has supported businesses, most of which have been SMEs from across Wales and from a wide range of sectors. Businesses from the manufacturing and construction sectors (both of which are Welsh Government priority sectors) used the programme most extensively.
- Most WDP supported businesses were well established with 73 percent having been in operation for more than 10 years.
- In-line with programme objectives, the majority (87 percent) of WDP supported businesses had growth aspirations.
- Around half of the WDP supported businesses (48 percent) had spent between £5k and £20k on training in the previous 12 months with larger businesses tending to spend more on training.
- Only 15 percent of WDP supported businesses had a current liP accreditation. Promoting liP was less of a priority in the actual delivery of the WDP (particularly in the latter stages) than was implied within the original programme objectives.

Analysis of Supported Businesses³¹

Sector, location, size and age

4.2 **Figure 4.1** provides a sector based overview of the supported businesses on the WDP database (between October 2012 and October 2014)

³¹ Supported businesses in this and subsequent Chapters refers to all businesses who had applied for and been granted discretionary funding, whether or not they drew down that funding for training.

Figure 4.1: Sector overview of WDP Supported Businesses

Sector	Number of database entries
Manufacturing	301
Construction	154
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	111
Scientific and technical activities	56
Administration and support service activities	41
Information and communication	41
Accounting and auditing services	34
Professional services	33
Holiday and short-stay accommodation	28
Solicitors	22
Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	21
Architectural Activities	20
Storage and transportation	19
Education	17
Human health and social care	17
Unclassified	17
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	11
Arts, entertainment and recreation	11
Information technology and computer service activities	11
Real estate activities	10
Passenger transport	9
Sports clubs	7
Food services	7
Hairdressing and beauty	7
Employment agencies	6
Insurance, mortgage or finance agencies	6
Mining or quarrying	5
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	4
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	4
Packaging	4
Call centres	3
Professional membership organisations	3
Private security activities	3
Veterinary activities and animal care	3
Travel agencies or tour operators	2
Landscape service activities	2
Artistic creation	1
Photographic activities	1
Mineral oil refining	1
Total	1,053

Source: Welsh Government Database. Period Oct 2012 - Oct 2014

- 4.3 This shows that the WDP has supported businesses from a wide range of industry sectors between 2012 and 2014 but with the manufacturing, construction and wholesale/retail trade³² sectors standing out as having used the programme most extensively.
- 4.4 The data from our telephone survey showed that the largest grouping of respondents (35 per cent or 122 businesses) were from the manufacturing sector. This was followed by construction (14 percent or 50 businesses) and professional services (14 percent or 50 businesses)³³. All three are Welsh Government priority sectors³⁴.
- 4.5 In terms of geographical location, **Figure 4.2** provides an overview of where WDP supported businesses are located.

Figure 4.2: Geographic overview of WDP supported businesses³⁵

Sector	Numbers Number of database entries
South East Wales ³⁶	495
North Wales ³⁷	250
West Wales ³⁸	235
Mid Wales ³⁹	70
Outside of Wales ⁴⁰	3
Total	1,053

Source: Welsh Government Database. Period Oct 2012- Oct 2014

- 4.6 This shows that just under half (47 percent) of supported businesses were located in South East Wales with just under a quarter (24 percent) being located in North Wales and a similar proportion in West Wales (22

³² The wholesale/retail trade SIC code also includes repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles.

³³ Base: 353.

³⁴ Source: Welsh Government website (Business and Economy, Sectors pages).

³⁵ This analysis was undertaken using post codes.

³⁶ This includes businesses with addresses that contained postcodes beginning with CF and NP.

³⁷ LL and CH Postcodes

³⁸ SA Postcodes

³⁹ HR, LD and SY Postcodes

⁴⁰ The three businesses outside of Wales were each located in Chester.

percent). This is very much in line with what might be expected given the distribution of businesses across Wales, and suggests a fairly even level of penetration in all parts of the country.

- 4.7 In terms of size (according to staff numbers), **Figure 4.3** provides an overview in relation to the WDP supported businesses responding to our survey.

Figure 4.3: Size (by number of employees) of WDP supported businesses¹

Business Size Category (Number of Staff)	Percentages
Sole trader	2
2 – 9	17
10 – 49	55
50 – 249	21
250+	5
Total	100

¹ The question asked was: How many people does your organisation employ?

Source: IFF Survey data. Base 353 responses.

- 4.8 This shows that the vast majority (95 percent⁴¹) of WDP supported businesses in our survey sample fell into the small to medium sized enterprise (SME) category.
- 4.9 Our survey data showed that the majority of WDP supported businesses were well established firms with 73 percent having been in operation for more than 10 years.

Plans and growth ambitions

- 4.10 The majority of the WDP supported businesses responding to our survey (71 percent) said that they had a formal business plan in place which sets out their objectives for the coming year. 70 percent of responding businesses also said that they had a training plan in place that specifies in advance the level and type of training employees will need in the

⁴¹ Base for all percentages is 353 except where stated.

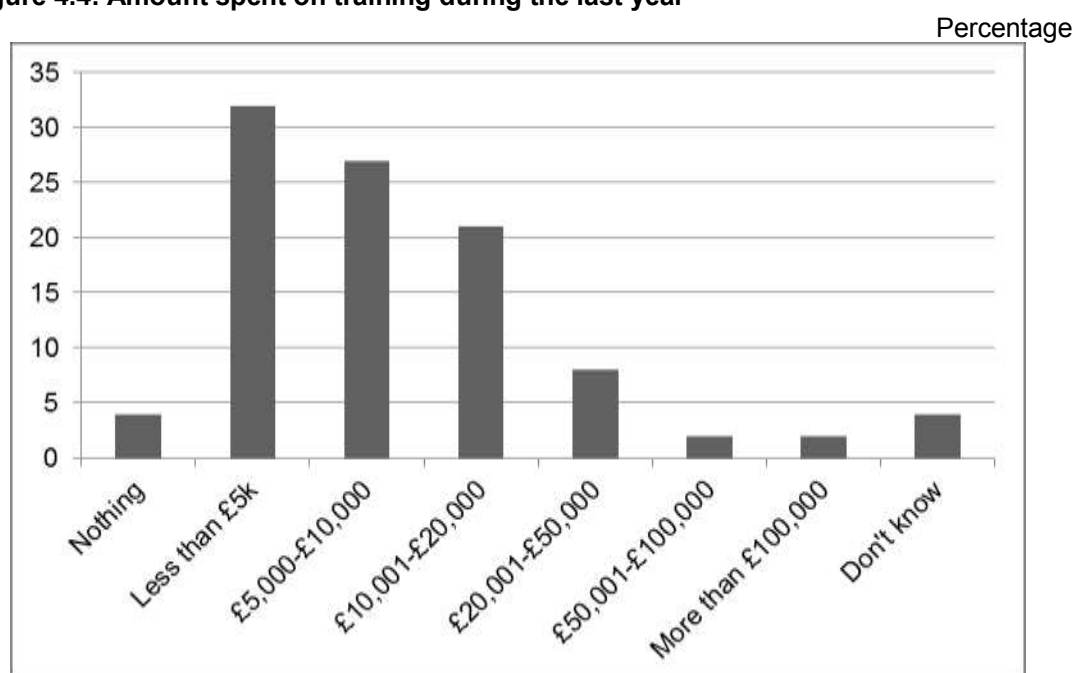
coming year. This suggests that businesses supported by the Programme were already more ‘training aware’ than the general population of Welsh businesses⁴².

4.11 In terms of growth ambitions, most of the WDP supported businesses that responded to our survey (87 percent) said that they had ambitions to grow over the coming three years or so. This is entirely consistent with the WDP’s aims of supporting growth businesses.

Training budgets

4.12 We asked WDP supported businesses responding to our survey to provide information on how much money they spent on training during the last year. **Figure 4.4** provides an overview of the responses received.

Figure 4.4: Amount spent on training during the last year¹



¹ The question asked was: Roughly how much did the organisation spend with outside companies on training last year?

Source: IFF Survey data. Base 353 responses.

⁴² The UK Employer Skills Survey 2013: Wales Report, Welsh Government p. 91 reported that only 42% of all Welsh establishments had a Training Plan in place.

- 4.13 This shows that around a third (32 percent) of the WDP supported businesses responding to our survey had spent less than £5,000 on training during the last year. Just under half (48 percent) of WDP supported businesses had spent between £5,000 and £20,000 on training during the last year. The data also showed that the larger the supported business, the more likely they were to have spent higher amounts on training during the past year.
- 4.14 The majority of WDP supported businesses responding to our survey (73 percent) said that they had never been accredited with Investors in People (IiP) status. Of the 15 percent⁴³ that were currently IiP accredited most (81 percent) had less than 50 employees. This shows that while promoting IiP had been a theoretical objective of the WDP, in practice the aims of the WDP were not synonymous with those of the IiP programme and separate employer engagement activities were undertaken.
- 4.15 In their evidence, Welsh Government officials acknowledged that the profile of IiP had probably faded somewhat, certainly during the latter stages of the programme and had become less of a feature in terms of the delivery and the advice given to businesses via the WDA network.

⁴³ 52 businesses.

5 Route into the WDP and Motivations for Participation

5.1 In this chapter, we consider how supported businesses got involved with the WDP and what their motivations for participation were. The chapter draws on analysis of survey data and qualitative evidence from interviews with stakeholders and follow-up interviews with supported businesses, WDAs and training providers.

Key findings outlined in this chapter:

- Supported businesses had become aware of the WDP via a range of different routes but the main engagement channels were via WDAs (41 percent) and by direct enquiry to Welsh Government (13 percent).
- Most businesses (91 percent) were already aware of the specific skills gaps and training needs they wanted to address prior to seeking WDP support whilst most (88 percent) were also motivated to seek financial support to help pay for training.
- The main benefits businesses expected to gain from WDP training were to build capacity helping the business to grow, improvements to products and services and improvements in staff relations and morale.

Initial Route into the WDP

5.2 The main way in which supported business got to know about the WDP was via a Workforce Development Advisor (WDA). Two fifths (41 percent) of the WDP supported businesses responding to our survey had first got to know about the programme in this way. This shows that the WDA's contacts and relationships with businesses had been a very important means of disseminating information about and stimulating up-take of the WDP.

- 5.3 In all, 13 percent had heard about the WDP via a Welsh Government official while a minority of two percent said that they had heard about the WDP via the telephone hotline.
- 5.4 Between them, just over a quarter (26 percent) of supported businesses that participated in our survey had found out about the WDP through a variety of other routes, which included:
- via the BusinessWales.gov.uk website (five percent)
 - via local business support centres (five percent)
 - via a learning provider (five percent)
 - word of mouth (four percent)
 - consultants or advisors (three percent)
 - business networks (two percent)
 - prior knowledge (one per cent)
 - Sector Skills Council (one percent).
- 5.5 The remaining businesses either did not know or could not remember how they had found out about the WDP (12 percent) or cited 'other' (seven percent).

Motivations for Participation

Reasons for Seeking Support

- 5.6 **Figure 5.1** provides an overview of what made businesses seek support under the WDP.

Figure 5.1: Reasons for seeking support under the WDP¹

Reason for seeking support under the WDP	Percentages
Looking for a way of addressing specific skills gaps that you were already aware of in the business	91
Looking for support with the costs of training that you had already decided your organisation needed	88
Looking to identify skills gaps and training needs within the business	79
Looking to improve the way in which the business manages its human resources in general	69
Looking for a way of developing skills within the business, though without a clear idea of where the skills gaps lay	45
None of the above	1

¹ The question asked was: What made you or the organisation decide to seek support under the Workforce Development Programme?

Source: IFF Survey data. Base 353 responses.

5.7 This shows that most businesses (91 percent) were already aware of the specific skills gaps and training needs they wanted to address before seeking support under the WDP. A high proportion (88 percent) were also motivated to seek financial support to help with the costs of training which they had already identified they needed.

Aspirations for what the WDP training would achieve

5.8 **Figure 5.2** outlines how supported businesses responded to a question on what they hoped the WDP training would help achieve.

Figure 5.2: Aspirations for WDP training

Aspiration for training	Percentages
Build capacity to help the business grow	93
Improve products or processes	87
Improve staff relations and morale	86
Allow staff to gain specific qualifications	73
None of the above	1

¹ The question asked was: When your organisation decided to apply for support, were you hoping the training would...?

Source: IFF Survey data. Base 353 responses.

- 5.9 This shows that businesses had a range of aspirations relating to what the WDP training would help them achieve. Chief amongst these was a hope that the training would help build capacity to help the business grow (for 93 percent), followed by an improvement in products or processes (for 87 percent) and improvements in staff relations and morale (86 percent). Gaining specific qualifications for staff was also of importance to a clear majority of employers, with 73 percent of businesses saying that they hoped the training would help achieve this.
- 5.10 These motivations were broadly reflected in the 20 case study companies that we visited, with staff capacity and product or process improvements being key motivators. In terms of the motivation relating to staff qualifications, a clear theme to emerge from the case study evidence was that where qualifications were a key motivator for participation, this tended to be in relation to qualifications that enabled statutory or regulatory compliance, for instance in relation to industry specific requirements or more general health and safety related qualifications.

Figure 5.3: Qualitative evidence from company visits: Motives for involvement in the WDP

Supported business K is a growing family run business based in South East Wales. The workforce at business K grew by six members of staff in the 12 months leading up to their participation in the programme to a total of 27. One of the Directors at business K came to hear about the WDP via a recommendation from a friend of theirs who also ran a business and had been supported via the programme. The Director followed up with a direct enquiry to Welsh Government and was subsequently assigned a WDA to support them.

Business K was already committed to developing their staff but their motivation for participation in the WDP was to strengthen the business during a period of growth. Specifically, they were looking to improve skills in relation to leadership, communication, customer relations, specific software skills and on-line marketing skills.

Supported business E operates in the automotive sector and employs 48 people. They initially made contact with the Welsh Government (though not via the skills hotline) to seek advice and support on training staff and were assigned a WDA who in turn introduced them to the WDP. The HR Director at supported business E said that prior to them getting in touch with the Welsh Government, they had not invested much in the way of training for their staff. Supported business E's motivation for getting involved in the WDP was to identify what training would be needed to improve efficiency and productivity within the company. Qualification outcomes for participating staff were not a priority for business E.

6 Nature of Participation and Feedback on Services Received

6.1 In this chapter, we consider the nature of participation in the WDP by supported businesses and their feedback on the services they received. The chapter draws on analysis of survey data and qualitative evidence from interviews with stakeholders and follow-up interviews with supported businesses, WDAs and training providers.

Key findings outlined in this chapter:

Advice and Guidance Services

- WDAs fulfilled a wide range of support functions to help businesses but there was a clear emphasis on WDAs confirming that the training needs they had already identified were eligible for financial support from various programmes.
- For around two-thirds of businesses working with a WDA, the relationship with their WDA was new.
- Feedback from businesses on the quality of the service they received from their WDA was very positive with businesses having found the skills diagnostic and impartial advice in identifying appropriate training providers helpful.
- Less than a third of supported businesses could recall having post-training evaluation advice from their WDA and Welsh Government officials confirmed that this was a weaker aspect of the service despite this being a milestone linked to WDA payment. Where follow-up evaluation did occur, feedback shows this to have been valuable from a business perspective suggesting it may have been an under prioritised element of the overall support package.
- Small businesses (ranging from 10 to 50 or so employees) without dedicated HR professionals seem to have gained the most from the diagnostic and advisory services of WDAs. There is evidence to suggest that the WDAs have improved and

professionalised the way businesses go about specifying and procuring training without creating an over-dependence on external advice and guidance.

- Only a small minority of businesses had heard of or used the Skills Hotline. Those that had used it gave positive feedback about the efficiency of the service and the quality of the advice received.

Discretionary Funded Training

- Feedback on the process of applying for discretionary funding was generally positive. There were some exceptions to this, notably during the spending moratorium where both WDAs and supported businesses felt that there could have been better communication from Welsh Government.
- Assessing and processing discretionary fund applications was labour intensive for Welsh Government and there may have been some scope to streamline the amount of paperwork involved by merging the discretionary fund application form and the skills development plan.
- The direct application route for micro businesses to the discretionary fund worked well.
- Some businesses and WDAs felt that, particularly towards the end of the programme, there was a lack of flexibility in accommodating requests for changes to training plans – some of which came about due to factors outside of the control of supported businesses.
- Discretionary funding was used by supported businesses to help fund a wide range of general and job specific technical training courses, in-line with the broad way in which the programme was designed.
- For most businesses which provided training (72 percent) the main consideration in selecting their training provider was price.
- A significant minority (16 percent) of businesses that had been offered discretionary funding did not use any of it. The main

reason for non-uptake was being too busy to release staff and training no longer being a priority.

- Overall feedback by the majority of businesses on various aspects of discretionary funded training was very positive.

Workforce Development Advisors

WDAs – Role and Relationships with Supported Businesses

6.2 **Figure 6.1** provides an overview of the role played by WDAs in advising supported businesses that had secured WDP discretionary funding. The base of 182 in Figure 6.1 relates to supported companies that received discretionary funding and had initially become aware of/involved with the programme via a WDA.

Figure 6.1: Role played by the WDA in helping organisations to secure discretionary fund support¹

Role played by WDA	Percentages
Confirm that training identified in the training plan would qualify for financial support	95
Help identify suitable training provision in line with the training plan	76
Advise on writing and costing training plan	74
Help diagnose skills gaps and training needs	73
Introduce good practice to workforce development	67
Help identify qualifications that relate to training needs identified	66
Assist in reviewing progress made against the training plan and evaluating the effects and effectiveness of training	63
Refer to other forms of business support	62
Write and cost a detailed training plan	48
Assist in choosing a training provider	47
Provide general guidance and advice regarding business issues	9
Provide support and advice to gain liP status	4
Provide administrative support	4
Other support	5
Don't know what the WDA provided	4

¹ The question asked was: What role did the Workforce Development Advisor play in helping you secure discretionary support under the Workforce Development Programme?

Source: IFF Survey data. Base 182 responses.

- 6.3 This shows that for businesses that initially got involved with the programme via a WDA, the advisor fulfilled a wide range of appropriate roles to support them with a clear emphasis, as one would expect (from a supported business perspective) being on the WDA's role confirming that the training they required was eligible for financial support under the discretionary fund. Figure 6.1 also shows that for those that initially got involved via a WDA, advisors were active in helping to identify suitable training, advised on writing and costing training plans and helped diagnose skills gaps and training needs.
- 6.4 In 63 percent of cases⁴⁴ the relationship between the supported business and the WDA was new, while the remaining 37 percent of businesses had worked with their assigned WDA previously. Where the relationship between the supported business and the WDA was already in existence, in nearly a quarter of cases (23 percent - the largest grouping), the relationship was more than three years old.
- 6.5 This shows (alongside the finding that most businesses got to know about the WDP via their WDA) that the proactive work of WDAs in approaching new businesses as well as their contacts with existing clients had both been important in terms of promoting awareness of and engagement with the WDP. Welsh Government officials underlined the importance of WDAs taking this proactive approach and had emphasised this in their most recent procurement exercise to recruit advisors during 2012.

WDAs – Feedback on Services Received

- 6.6 In terms of help to select appropriate training providers, feedback from supported businesses (who became involved in the programme via a WDA) regarding the WDAs was also positive with 89 percent⁴⁵ saying

⁴⁴ 114 of 182 businesses. The base of 182 comprises of 143 businesses that had direct initial contact with a WDA and 39 where a Welsh Government official referred the supported business to a WDA.

⁴⁵ 128 of 144 businesses.

that their advisor had been helpful in identifying or selecting appropriate training providers.

- 6.7 Turning to the entire sample of survey respondents, around two fifths (38 percent) of all supported WDP businesses said that their WDA had helped them diagnose skills gaps and training needs. This is in-keeping with the number of businesses cited in Figure 6.1 (133) that initially got involved via a WDA and said that they had received help to diagnose skills gaps and training needs. This is perhaps a lower proportion overall than might have been expected given that WDAs were expected to help diagnose skills gaps and training needs with all supported businesses. However, it might also be a reflection of the fact that supported businesses already felt that they had a good understanding of what their skills gaps and training needs were before they got involved with the WDP. Of those 133 supported businesses that said they had received help from their WDA with diagnosing skills gaps and training needs, 95 percent said that they had found the diagnostic review helpful.
- 6.8 Under a third (32 percent or 114) of all supported businesses said that they had received assistance to evaluate progress made against their training plan, the quality of the training undertaken and the impact the training had on the business. This is exactly the same as the number of businesses cited in Figure 6.1 (114) that initially got involved via a WDA and said that they had received help to evaluate progress against their training plan. Again, this is a somewhat lower proportion of the overall sample than might be expected, as a follow-up evaluation and report constituted the final payment milestone for WDAs under the terms of their contract with Welsh Government. The Welsh Government's own data shows that 46 percent of all projects (not necessarily individual businesses assisted) submitted an evaluation.
- 6.9 The majority (88 percent) of the 114 businesses that had received support from their WDA to evaluate progress said that they had found this follow-up assistance from their WDA helpful. This, along with the

Welsh Government's own data suggests that the post training evaluation may have been a somewhat under used and under prioritised element of the overall support package.

6.10 In terms of WDAs referring supported businesses onto other forms of support, around a third of those responding to our survey (32 percent) said that this had taken place. The majority of these (85 percent) said that the assistance provided by their WDA in referring them on to other sources had been helpful.

6.11 WDAs had provided 35 percent of supported businesses with examples of good practice with 92 percent of those that had received the examples of good practice saying that this had been helpful.

Figure 6.2: Qualitative evidence from company visits: Feedback on WDAs

Supported business A is a family run manufacturing operation based in mid Wales. The manager at business A had become aware of the WDP via another business support organisation that provides services to the Welsh Government.

Supported Business A had been very pleased with the support they had received from their allocated WDA and had established a good relationship with them. The manager at A felt that the diagnostic process undertaken with the WDA had been the most useful part of the whole process as *'you have to think what you really want...where you want to be in the future'*.

The manager from business A said that the WDA had also played an important role in helping them navigate their way through the different funding and support programmes available and noted that their WDA had suggested other training options and signposted them to other (i.e. non WDP) potential funding sources.

'It was very helpful to have someone who knows how the system worked'.

Supported business M is a family owned business operating in the electronics sector. The business employs 180 staff. In all, business M had worked with three WDAs during the period of their involvement with the WDP. The Operations Manager at business M was very happy with the first WDA they worked with and felt that they had genuinely understood the business, keeping in regular contact with them. This first WDA had helped prepare the skills diagnostic report, which the Operations Manager at business M felt was a 'live document' which was constantly being updated. Then, following a re-tender process for the WDA network in 2012, business M explained that they were assigned a different WDA by Welsh Government (the first advisor had not been re-appointed to the supplier framework).

The Operations Manager had been 'less impressed' with this second WDA who they felt had been illusive and less responsive to their needs. This led to business M requesting a change of WDA (which was subsequently actioned by Welsh Government). The second WDA argued that it had 'not been possible to maintain the level of support' business M was requesting within the terms of their WDA contract.

The third WDA had, according to business M 'picked up the pieces' but by this time, the Operations Manager had themselves 'learned the process by then – all I needed really was someone to advise me what I could claim for'.

6.12 Most of the case study businesses we visited said that (where they had been allocated a WDA), they had been very pleased with the level of service they had received.

6.13 A key theme to emerge from the case study evidence is that for larger businesses (of 100 or more employees), and in particular where a business had a HR Manager in place, the perceived value added by the WDAs in the context of the skills diagnostic and planning process was lower. Several of these businesses explained that they already had

training plans in place and knew what they needed. In these cases, the value of the WDA's services (whilst still on the whole appreciated) was felt more in terms of shielding the business from the mechanics and associated administration involved with the process of applying for discretionary funding.

- 6.14 For smaller businesses however (ranging from 10 to 50 or so employees) where there was no HR Manager, the perceived value attached to the WDA's advice and support in undertaking the diagnostic process was higher. The Welsh Government's Workforce Development Managers agreed that the WDAs had added significant value to businesses where there was no HR expertise or capacity and that in effect the programme had enabled them to 'have another member of staff on the team' that offered this additional expertise.
- 6.15 The Workforce Development Managers responsible for overseeing and managing the work of WDAs were satisfied on the whole that a high quality and appropriate advisory service had been delivered. Managers were also content that WDAs were being proactive in engaging with businesses and were generally doing a good job of balancing the need 'to be advocates for the companies they were supporting whilst also being advocates of Welsh Government at the same time'.
- 6.16 The quality of training development plans and applications to the discretionary fund were felt on the whole by Workforce Development Managers to have been good, though the quality and thoroughness of follow-up evaluation reports submitted by WDAs (which was also the trigger milestone for their final fee payment) was more varied. This, combined with our finding that only around a third of businesses received this aspect of the support package supports the sense that this was a relatively low priority for some WDAs despite the fact that businesses who received it valued it highly.

- 6.17 The re-tendering exercise in 2012 had according to one Manager 'refreshed' the network with some new advisors coming on board as well as some experienced advisors having their contracts extended thus providing a degree of continuity. Managers also said that the WDAs had provided constructive input into the design of the skills diagnostic process and that this had added considerable value.
- 6.18 There was no evidence to suggest that a concern raised by an earlier evaluation of the WDP relating to a perception that WDAs might not always have acted as impartially as they might have in recommending training providers continued to be an issue. One Workforce Development Manager pointed out that the 2012 in-take of WDAs were required to sign a conflict of interest statement and were also required by the terms of their contract to act in an impartial way, discussing and offering a range of appropriate training provision to supported businesses. Feedback from the 20 case study companies visited confirmed that there were no concerns regarding the impartiality of WDAs.
- 6.19 The Workforce Development Managers felt that the diagnostic and advisory roles undertaken by the WDAs had improved and 'professionalised' the approach of businesses to specifying and sourcing the training they needed and that this would have led to them securing better value for money. There was some evidence to support this from our fieldwork, particularly amongst the smaller businesses in our sample of 20 case studies that did not have a dedicated HR professional in post.
- 6.20 In most instances, training providers interviewed as part of the case studies were unaware that the training they provided to supported businesses had been subsidised via the WDP and were also unaware that a WDA had been advising the company to help them identify their training needs. This latter point supports the view that on the whole WDAs had been acting impartially and also shows that the open-market 'user-chooser' approach put the emphasis on the companies themselves

to take ownership over specifying, negotiating and procuring their training, thereby building their experience of doing this and avoiding over-dependence on the WDAs to broker training on their behalf.

Telephone Hotline

6.21 Of the six businesses in our survey that had come to hear about the WDP via the hotline, all gave positive feedback about the accuracy and relevance of the information they were provided with and five of the six gave positive feedback about how quickly their queries or requests had been responded to.

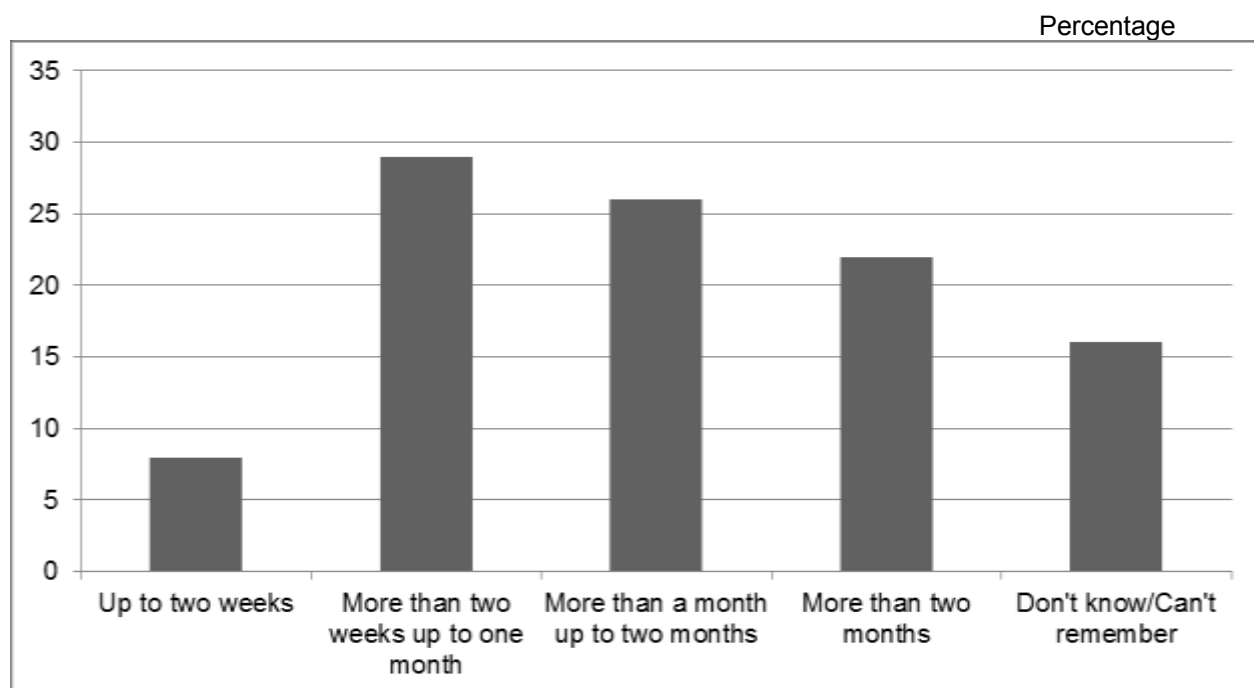
6.22 All six businesses that had used the telephone hotline gave positive feedback that the service they had received led to them being directed to the right kind of training or support for their organisation.

Discretionary Funded Training

Feedback on the process of applying for the Discretionary Fund

6.23 **Figure 6.3** provides an overview of the length of time taken between the submission of applications and businesses receiving confirmation of discretionary funding approval.

Figure 6.3: Time taken to process WDP discretionary fund applications¹



¹ The question asked was: How long did it take from the time you submitted your Skills Development Plan and application for discretionary support to being told that your application had been approved?

Source: IFF Survey data. Base 353 responses.

6.24 This shows that, for just over a third of businesses (37%), it took less than a month to process their application, with just over a quarter (26 percent) saying that it took more than a month and up to two months to process their application. In 22 percent of cases, the application took more than two months to process.

6.25 More than half of the supported businesses (52 percent) thought that the time taken to process their discretionary fund application was reasonable while 19 percent said that it had been 'quick'. In contrast, a minority (albeit a significant minority at 19 percent) felt that the process had taken too long.

6.26 Feedback from the 20 supported businesses that participated in qualitative follow-up interviews on how their applications had been processed was generally positive. It was clear that the WDAs had, in most instances added value to the application process (i.e. by reducing

the burden on companies to complete the application form) while most were also satisfied with the amount of time it had taken Welsh Government to assess their application and respond with a decision. There were a minority of exceptions to this – notably where applications had been submitted during the moratorium on spending (autumn 2014) which had caused some delays. In this context, there was also some negative feedback from a minority of supported businesses and WDAs relating to a lack of communication from Welsh Government during this period.

- 6.27 Welsh Government officials felt that on the whole, the process of receiving and assessing discretionary fund applications had been ‘fairly labour intensive’ but less so than the administrative processes involved with ESF projects. Even so, one official felt that there may have been some scope to streamline the amount of paperwork involved by merging the discretionary fund application form and the skills development plan.
- 6.28 One official felt that on reflection basic eligibility and compliance checks on discretionary fund applications could have been processed by one person and did not necessarily need to be taken to a full meeting of the assessment panel which might have helped speed the process up. Other officials argued however that the panel approach had ensured the application process was robust and that the assessment of applications would stand up to scrutiny.
- 6.29 There was also positive feedback from micro businesses who had applied directly to the WDP discretionary fund (such as in the case of supported business F in **Figure 6.4**). Micro businesses had been able to use a process introduced part way through the delivery of the WDP, after Welsh Government officials decided that the (smaller) scale of funding allocated to micro businesses warranted a direct application route (i.e. without support from a WDA). Officials argued that this was justified on the basis that in some instances the cost of the WDA’s support could exceed the amount of discretionary fund awarded.

Figure 6.4: Qualitative evidence from company visits: Process feedback on Discretionary Fund

Supported business F is a micro enterprise in the engineering sector. Business F's Managing Director contacted the Welsh Government's Business Skills team after making initial on-line enquiries via the Welsh Government website. The Business Skills team sent business F a direct application form for discretionary fund support. Business F applied for financial support to help pay for a week long course for one of its staff members. They were not assigned a WDA and did not undertake a skills diagnostic plan.

The MD of business F said that they were extremely happy with the direct application and approval process. They described the application form as 'straightforward' and within two weeks of submission, they had received confirmation that their application had been approved.

Supported Business L operates in the food production sector and employs over 300 people. It had experienced significant growth over the past nine years and had decided to take a more strategic and professional approach to staff training (including increasing the amount of on-site training). They were supported by a WDA whom the Training Manager at business L had found 'inspirational' and worked through the skills diagnostic process together with the WDA 'doing a lot of the background stuff'.

This had taken some time due to the thoroughness of the process and the scale of the business). *'To do it properly, it can take a long time – and you need several face-to-face meetings'.*

Business L submitted their application just as the Welsh Government instigated a moratorium on WDP spending in autumn 2014. This had proven to be somewhat frustrating for both the WDA and business L with a lack of information meaning that neither knew whether the application would be approved. *'There was a delay in the system – no activity for two months*

because of a review of funding at Welsh Government’.

Business L received approval for its discretionary fund application but the delay meant a condensed period in which they were able to deliver the training. This meant that less discretionary funded training actually took place: *‘I couldn’t put a lot of it through the budget or free up people within that timescale’*. Whilst waiting for funding approval, business L decided that they had to proceed with some training regardless and funded this themselves.

6.30 A handful of the supported businesses and some of the WDAs interviewed as part of the qualitative fieldwork made the point that towards the end of the programme, the WDP and in particular the administration of the discretionary fund lacked some flexibility. Specifically, it was felt that if a company’s plans changed or in two instances where training had not been delivered for reasons outside of the businesses’ control (including where a training provider withdrew a course because of a lack of overall up-take), it had not been possible to go back and revise the discretionary fund application to accommodate these changes and make alternative arrangements. This was clearly in contrast to the more general findings (of this and earlier evaluations) that overall one of the strengths of the WDP had been its inherent flexibility.

6.31 One of the Workforce Development Managers explained that as the programme drew to a close, there was inevitably less scope for flexibility in allowing companies to change their plans and the cost of training due to the issues and challenges relating to forecasting actual expenditure in order to avoid the risk of financial over-commitment.

Type and Nature of Discretionary Funded Training Delivered

6.32 **Figure 6.5** below provides an overview of the types of training courses undertaken by supported businesses with financial assistance from the WDP discretionary fund.

Figure 6.5: Types of training delivered via the WDP discretionary fund¹

Training delivered	Percentages
Job specific technical skills	79
Project or process management skills	50
Personal skills (e.g. interpersonal skills, communication)	40
Higher level health and safety, food hygiene, first aid etc...	38
ICT training	33
Training skills	29
Sales, marketing and account management skills	26
Financial skills	26
Environmental Management/Sustainability Training	17
Induction training	13
Basic literacy or numeracy training	10
Procurement/supply chain management skills	10
Equal opportunities training	6
Modern foreign language skills	1
Other	2
Don't know	1

¹ The question asked was: Which of the following kinds of training did your staff undertake (or are they still going through) thanks to discretionary support under the Workforce Development Programme?

Source: IFF Survey data. Base 298 responses.

6.33 This shows that the discretionary fund has been used to support an appropriately wide range of training with job specific technical skills being the most commonly supported form of training funded. Smaller companies (with fewer than 50 employees) were more likely (at 75 percent) than their larger counterparts (at 45 percent) to have sent staff on training to develop their personal skills. The same was true of higher level health and safety training at 69 percent for those with less than 50 employees and 45 percent for those with more than 50 staff.

6.34 Exactly half (50 percent)⁴⁶ of the supported businesses which had provided WDP-funded training said that the training they participated in had been put together as a package specifically for their organisation (rather than being training from a providers' standard portfolio). A

⁴⁶ 148 of 298 businesses.

minority (of 10 percent) said that this was partly the case, while 40 percent said that the training had been from the providers' standard portfolio.

6.35 Just over two thirds (68 percent)⁴⁷ of the supported businesses which had provided training said that the training their staff had participated in had been a single, stand-alone training session or course⁴⁸. Just under half (49 percent) said that their staff had participated in multiple stand-alone sessions or courses, while 47 percent said that their staff had been on a development programme comprising a series of linked training sessions with independent work between sessions.

Training Provider Selection

6.36 **Figure 6.6** provides an overview of how supported businesses which had provided training responded to a question regarding the reasons for selecting a training provider.

Figure 6.6: Reasons for selecting training provider

Reason	Percentages
The price quoted by them [the provider] was competitive	72
They proposed a programme of training that met your needs better than what other providers suggested	66
You had worked with them before and knew what they could do	61
They are the only organisation delivering this kind of training in your area	40
The WDA recommended them	29
You heard about them from other employers	26
None of the above/don't know	2

¹ The question asked was: What made you choose the provider to deliver the training?

Source: IFF Survey data. Base 298 responses.

6.37 This shows that for most businesses (72 percent), the price quoted was the main reason for selecting the training provider suggesting a high

⁴⁷ 204 of 298 businesses.

⁴⁸ The question asked was: Which of the following kinds of activities did staff undertake or participate in as part of the training? Respondents were able to select multiple response options.

degree of price sensitivity. This was followed by two thirds of respondents who said the fact that the appointed provider had offered an appropriate programme which better met the businesses' needs than that being offered by others had been a key reason.

6.38 It also shows that information or recommendations about training providers provided by WDAs (29 percent) or other businesses (26 percent) were less influential in selecting providers.

Numbers and Types of Participating Staff

6.39 **Figure 6.7** provides an overview of how many staff from supported businesses participated in WDP discretionary funded training.

Figure 6.7: Participating staff numbers

Participating staff numbers	Percentages
None	16
1	6
2 to 4	18
5 to 9	20
10 to 49	31
50 or more	6
Don't know/can't remember	3

Source: IFF Survey data. Base 353 responses.

6.40 This shows that 44 percent of supported businesses had trained between one and nine members of staff, while 37 percent had trained 10 or more staff. Unsurprisingly, supported businesses with more than 50 employees were most likely to have trained 10 or more of their staff members.

6.41 It is also notable however that 16 percent of responding businesses (55 businesses in all) said that none of their staff had participated in discretionary funded training despite having been offered non-repayable financial support via the programme. These businesses pointed to a wide range of factors that had prevented them from taking up the offer

and sending staff on WDP funded training. **Figure 6.8** provides an overview.

Figure 6.8: Reasons for non-uptake of discretionary funded training¹

Reasons	Percentages
Not a priority/too busy	20
Difficulties claiming funding	18
Timing wasn't right – couldn't arrange to suit both parties	15
Business not in a financial position to match funds that the training required	11
Haven't heard anything back/communication has been poor	7
Lack of internal resource to manage the programme	7
Lack of support from the WDA	7
Funding arrived too late	5
Don't know	20
Other	5

¹ The question asked was: What are the reasons why no one from your organisation has participated in training funded by discretionary support received under the WDP?

Source: IFF Survey data. Base 55 responses.

6.42 This shows that some of the reasons for not taking up training have been down to the business (e.g. training not being a priority or not being in a financial position to match fund training where a discretionary fund grant offer had been in place). However, other reasons appear to be down to the programme (e.g. difficulties in claiming funding and poor communication).

6.43 In terms of the type of staff that participated in WDP discretionary funded training, **Figure 6.9** provides an overview.

Figure 6.9: Participating staff¹

Participating staff categories	Percentages
Middle management	65
Junior management/supervisory	65
Technicians/skilled craft-people	64
Directors/Senior Management	54
Shop-floor or unskilled workers	46
Clerical or administrative workers	44
Owners	31
Other	3

¹ The question asked was: Were any of those that participated in training...

Source: IFF Survey data. Base 298 responses.

6.44 In-keeping with the flexible nature of training eligible under the discretionary fund, this shows that a fairly wide range of staff fulfilling different roles and at different levels of seniority within supported businesses have participated. Companies with 50 or more employees were more likely to have sent middle or junior managers on WDP funded training. In contrast, companies with 50 or less employees were more likely to send technicians and shop-floor workers on WDP funded training than their larger counterparts employing 50 or more staff.

Feedback on the Training Itself

6.45 **Figure 6.10** provides an overview of feedback given by supported businesses which had provided training about the WDP training they received. Figure 6.10 is based on combining positive and very positive responses to the various feedback questions asked.

Figure 6.10: Positive feedback on WDP training

	Percentages
Positive reaction by staff who participated in WDP training	96
Positive feedback about the relevance of training to those participating	95
Positive feedback about how well organised the training received has been	91
Positive feedback about how engaging the course tutors had been	85

Source: IFF Survey data. Base of 298 responses to all.

6.46 This shows that the vast majority of supported businesses which had provided training gave positive feedback in terms of the reaction of participating staff, the relevance and organisation of the training and the calibre of the tutors.

6.47 Most businesses (93 percent) also said that the content of the training had been pitched at the right level for the individuals participating.

6.48 Overall then, this is a very positive picture which is confirmed by the fact that 94 percent⁴⁹ of supported businesses which had provided training gave positive feedback about the quality of the training they had received, with 68 percent rating it as very good and 26 percent rating it as good. There were no notable differences in views (from either supported businesses or WDAs) with regards to the quality, relevance or flexibility of the training delivered by providers from different sectors. However, one of the Supported Businesses (I) said that they had transferred a learner from a University course to a private provider as the University had decided not to run the course they had selected. A second Supported Business in our qualitative sample (D) made a more general comment that they were more likely to use private providers (than colleges or Universities) since in their view private providers were more likely to offer the more specialist courses that they were interested in.

⁴⁹ 281 of 298 businesses.

Figure 6.10: Qualitative evidence from company visits: Feedback on Training Received

Supported business G is a small, service sector business operating in South East Wales. One of the managers of business G had made contact with the Welsh Government (via the Business Skills Hotline) to explore how they might be supported with training and business support and were allocated a WDA. The manager at business G gave positive feedback about the information and advice they had received via the hotline and this led to them also receiving business support via Business Wales.

Business G applied for discretionary funding to help pay for project management and customer care training as well as a number of more technical courses (of relevance to its business) and a safety related course for its staff. Business G completed three of the five training courses it had identified. One of the training courses (safety related) had not been approved for discretionary funding. The training providers were two FE colleges and one private sector provider.

Feedback on the quality of discretionary funded training undertaken by business G (from managers and training participants) was very positive with an appropriate mix of practical and theory based content (provided by both the FE colleges and the private provider).

‘It was really good. The content and the practical delivery was perfect’.

Supported business R is a specialist service provider employing 23 staff in South East Wales. They supply customers across Wales and the West country. They were supported by a WDA and had previously received assistance via Jobs Growth Wales (prior to applying for a discretionary fund grant). The WDA assisted business R to apply for discretionary funding for a range of training courses relating to risk management and health and safety. Supported business R described the diagnostic process and the work of the WDA as ‘superb’ and felt that the process of applying and getting approval

had been 'pretty simple'.

Business R completed 'about 60 percent' of the training approved. They did not manage to complete the remaining courses because of workload pressures. However at the time of the evaluation fieldwork, business R had yet to re-claim its discretionary fund grant from Welsh Government.

Business R used two private sector training providers and one local authority to deliver the discretionary funded training they undertook.

The manager at Business R and the staff that had taken part in the training were very satisfied with the quality of the training that they had received (across all three of the providers) and emphasised the importance of having practical elements that made the training directly relevant to participant's job roles. One of the private sector training providers involved explained that they achieved this by 'using a classroom type format but with a practical edge' to the content and its delivery. Business R also emphasised the fact that the prior knowledge training providers had of their business helped ensure that the training was tailored and relevant to their needs.

Other (non WDP) Skills Related Support Received

6.49 In terms of businesses having received other (i.e. non WDP) skills related support from publicly funded programmes over the past three years or so, nearly three quarters (73 percent)⁵⁰ said that they had not.

6.50 Of the 85 businesses in our sample that said they had received support from another publicly funded programme, 45 (53 percent) said that they had been supported by the Welsh Government's apprenticeships programme, while 44 (52 percent) had been supported via Jobs Growth Wales. Twenty five businesses (29 percent) had been supported via Essential Skills in the Workplace (ESIW), 18 businesses each

⁵⁰ 258 of 353 businesses. 24 percent (85 businesses) said they had and three percent (10 businesses) did not know.

(21percent each) had been supported by both Skills Growth Wales and by the Redundancy Action Scheme (ReACT) and 17 businesses (20 percent) had been supported via ELMS.

6.51 This suggests that WDAs were effective in introducing companies to support via other programmes and confirms the appropriate use of the discretionary fund as a last resort to help finance training that could not be subsidised from elsewhere within the Welsh Government's skills development portfolio.

7 Outcomes and Impacts

- 7.1 In this chapter, we consider the outcomes and impacts of involvement with the WDP on supported businesses. The chapter draws on analysis of survey data and qualitative evidence from interviews with stakeholders and follow-up interviews with supported businesses, WDAs and training providers.

Key findings outlined in this chapter:

Training and Qualification Outcomes

- Most WDP supported businesses which had provided training (72 percent) said that they had completed all of the discretionary funded training. However, not all businesses drew down the full amount of grant awarded to them (as the findings in Chapter 3 outline).
- The main reason (in 54 percent of cases) given for non-completion was that training was still on-going while a quarter (23 percent) said that staff could not be released due to work commitments. This suggests that some businesses submitted overly-ambitious training plans for discretionary support.
- Two thirds of businesses (64 percent) said that trained staff participating in discretionary funded courses had gained a qualification. Most of these businesses (61 percent) said that the qualification levels attained by staff were at NVQ Level 3 or below.
- The majority of businesses said that the fact that their staff would achieve a qualification as a result of discretionary funded training was an important consideration for them.
- There is evidence that the majority of supported businesses which provided training (87 percent) were clear beforehand how the skills to be gained from training would subsequently be applied within their organisations. There was also evidence that

the majority of these businesses (89 percent) discussed how they would apply what they had learned in the workplace.

- There is evidence of very positive levels of skills utilisation from discretionary funded training with 98 percent of businesses saying that newly acquired skills were being used in the workplace.
- The majority of supported businesses which provided training (97 percent) said that the new skills acquired by staff had helped them meet their specific business objectives.

Additionality

- There was complete additionality for 14 percent of businesses which provided training (i.e. none of the training would have taken place without WDP support), partial additionality for 68 percent of businesses and no additionality for 16 percent of businesses.
- Almost all (98 percent) businesses that demonstrated complete additionality said that they could not have afforded to do the training without WDP support.
- Around three quarters (77 percent) of supported businesses which provided training would have undertaken less than half of the training without WDP support.

Employee/Trainee Impacts

- Supported businesses which provided training felt that WDP funded training led to a range of positive impacts for trainees with 87 percent citing improved morale as one example.
- There is also evidence of positive outcomes for trainees in relation to willingness to participate and preparedness to take responsibility.
- Evidence of impacts relating to pay and staff retention levels were also positive but less pronounced.

Business Impacts

- WDP training led to a range of positive impacts on supported businesses with 87 percent stating that it had improved their

prospects going forward.

- Sixty percent of supported businesses which provided training felt that WDP training had led to positive impacts on turnover and profitability though the scale of the increases to profit were quite modest (less than a 10 percent increase in profit for 42 percent of businesses).

Future Investment in Training

- The majority of supported businesses responding to the survey and who provided training (88 percent) are likely to undertake further training in the next 12 months
- Three quarters of these said that their involvement with the WDP made it more likely that they would undertake more training.
- There is evidence of a clear willingness on the part of those businesses intending to provide more training to co-invest their own funds alongside Government in training. Two-thirds of these businesses envisaged future training being co-financed in this way with most of those (72 percent) expecting their own contribution to the cost of training being between 25 and 50 percent.

Completion of Training

7.2 The majority (72 percent)⁵¹ of WDP supported businesses which had provided training said that all of the discretionary funded training had been completed though this is notably higher than the monitoring data which shows that only around half of the discretionary funding approved was drawn down by businesses between 2011 and 2015. There are a number of possible reasons for this. One explanation might be that respondents to the survey based their response to the question on completing discretionary funded training that had actually been undertaken – rather than completing all of the discretionary funded training that had been approved for them. It may also be that some

⁵¹ 215 of 298 businesses.

training may have been completed but businesses (for whatever reason) never got around to re-claiming the discretionary fund grant for it. Our analysis of qualitative evidence from case study visits suggests the latter of these explanations is likely to have happened in some (albeit a minority) of instances.

- 7.3 For a small majority (54 percent) of the businesses where WDP funded training had not been completed, the reason given for this was that the training was still on-going and participants had yet to complete (though were expected to do so). In just under a quarter of cases where training had not been completed (23 percent) supported businesses said non-completion was due to unforeseen work commitments which prevented participants from being released to undertake training.
- 7.4 Welsh Government officials felt that some companies applying for discretionary funding might have over-estimated the amount of training they would be able to undertake at the application stage and this inevitably had an effect on how much training was actually undertaken and completed.
- 7.5 Workforce Development Managers pointed out however that over time, WDAs became more adept at advising companies to be 'more realistic' about how much training they put forward in the applications for discretionary funding. This was something that the Workforce Development Managers felt that they had 'tightened up on' in their communications with WDAs.
- 7.6 **Figure 7.1** highlights some of the reasons for non-completion amongst the case study businesses that participated in the qualitative follow-up phase of our research. Of the 20 businesses that were visited:
- six had completed their discretionary funded training in full
 - ten had completed some of the discretionary funded training

- one had been turned down for discretionary funding but proceeded with some of the training regardless
- three had completed the training but had not drawn down the funding allocation from Welsh Government.

7.7 The qualitative evidence supports the analysis that not all businesses drew down all of the discretionary funding that had been made available to them and that some, even after completing the training had not actually drawn down their grant funding from Welsh Government.

Figure 7.1: Qualitative evidence from company visits: Reasons for non-completion

Supported business C is a family business employing 22 staff in the construction sector. They were supported by a WDA to develop a skills development plan which identified five training courses for various staff within the company. Despite receiving approval for discretionary funding to part-finance all five courses, supported business C only completed one of the courses. The main reason for not having undertaken all of the funded courses was due to work pressures on staff which meant that they could not be released to undertake training: 'the timing wasn't right'. This had been exacerbated by the fact that a senior member of staff had been unwell for a prolonged period and this had added to the workloads of those involved.

Supported business D is a small business in the renewables sector employing 10 staff which had a long-standing relationship with their WDA. As part of their skills diagnostic process, business D identified the need for training relating to aspects of health and safety and handling hazardous materials. Their application for discretionary funding was processed within two weeks but the requests for funding were turned down. Supported business D said that the various courses had been turned down for a number of reasons including price (considered too expensive), relevance and added value (in relation to the health and safety courses) and a lack of accreditation.

Supported business D gave positive feedback about their WDA and felt that they had gained value from the skills diagnostic process. Business D went ahead with the training and met the entire costs from their own funds.

Qualification Outcomes

7.8 Almost two thirds (64 percent)⁵² of WDP supported businesses which had provided training said that those who had participated in discretionary funded training had received a qualification (or part qualification) as a result. **Figure 7.2** provides an overview of the qualification levels achieved.

Figure 7.2: Qualification levels achieved by WDP training participants¹

Response	Percentages
Level 2	29
Level 3	32
Level 4	17
Level 5	14
Level 6	4
Level 7	6
Professional/Technical qualification	11
Other	8
Don't know	23

¹ The question asked was: What levels were these qualifications at? Source: IFF Survey data.

Base 190 responses.

7.9 This shows that for just over three fifths (61 percent) of these businesses, the qualification levels achieved by trained staff were at NVQ level 3 or below (i.e. the equivalent of two A levels or below). More than half (56 percent)⁵³ said that these qualifications were at a higher level than the most advanced qualifications participants already held. Given that the specification for the WDP did not set out that the qualifications achieved should be at a specific level (other than that there

⁵² 190 of 298 businesses.

⁵³ 112 of 200 businesses.

should be accreditation), these qualification levels seem broadly appropriate.

7.10 The majority (87 percent)⁵⁴ of supported businesses whose employees were trained via the WDP and which led to qualifications said that achieving the qualification was important for the organisation. 90 percent⁵⁵ of these supported businesses also felt that achieving a qualification was important to the individuals that undertook the training.

Skills Utilisation

7.11 Most of the WDP supported businesses (87 percent) said that they were clear beforehand (i.e. before training commenced) how the skills developed would subsequently be applied within their organisation.

7.12 The majority (89 percent)⁵⁶ of supported businesses which provided training said that after the training, participants and their managers discussed how they would apply what they had learned in the workplace. This compares to a similar finding in the ELMS evaluation where 82 percent of supported businesses that were awarded discretionary funding for leadership and management training said that they had discussed beforehand how the training would be applied⁵⁷. Almost three quarters (71 percent)⁵⁸ also said that they offered those that participated in training some mentoring or coaching to follow-up what they had learned.

⁵⁴ 174 of 200 businesses. The question asked of those employers where a qualification had been gained was: How important was it to the organisation that the individual(s) who undertook the training achieved qualifications?

⁵⁵ 180 of 200 businesses. The question asked of those employers where a qualification had been gained was: How important was achieving qualifications to the individual(s) who undertook the training?

⁵⁶ 266 of 298 businesses.

⁵⁷ Page 98.

⁵⁸ 213 of 298 businesses.

7.13 **Figure 7.3** provides an overview of the extent to which supported businesses felt that trained staff had been able to put what they had learnt into practice.

Figure 7.3: Extent to which learning has been put into practice¹

Response	Percentages
To a very great extent	25
To a great extent	53
To some extent	20
Hardly at all	1
Don't know	1

¹ The question asked was: To what extent have those who participated in training been able to put into practice what they learnt...

Source: IFF Survey data. Base 298 responses.

7.14 This shows a very positive level of skills utilisation with 98 percent of supported businesses which had provided training saying that newly acquired skills had been utilised at least to some extent with more than three quarters (78 percent) saying that skills had been put into practice extensively.

7.15 Evidence of skills utilisation amongst the 20 case study businesses visited underlined this finding. We judged evidence of skills utilisation to be strong in 17 cases, moderate in one case and weak in two cases.

7.16 We asked supported businesses which had provided training whether anything had made it difficult for the learning to be put into practice. Around two thirds (67 percent)⁵⁹ said that nothing had made it difficult to put learning into practice. Just over a quarter (26 percent)⁶⁰ said that there had been some barriers, with 14 percent saying that this was down to a lack of time and 12 percent saying that there had either been no requirement or no opportunity as yet to put learning into practice.

⁵⁹ 199 of 298 businesses.

⁶⁰ 78 of 298 businesses.

Achievement of Specific Business Objectives

7.17 **Figure 7.4** provides an overview of the extent to which supported businesses which had provided training felt that skills gained from WDP funded training had enabled specific business objectives to be achieved.

Figure 7.4: Extent to which specific business objectives have been achieved¹

Response	Percentages
To a very great extent	17
To a great extent	49
To some extent	31
Hardly at all	2
Don't know	1

¹ The question asked was: Turning to what you originally envisaged the organisation would get out of the training, to what extent have the skills developed allowed specific business objectives to be achieved?

Source: IFF Survey data. Base 298 responses.

7.18 Again, this shows a positive picture, with the vast majority (97 percent) saying that skills developed as a result of WDP training have helped them achieve specific business objectives.

Levels of Additionality

7.19 **Figure 7.5** provides an overview of responses to a question on the likely levels of training that businesses would have undertaken without WDP support.

Figure 7.5: Likely levels of training had WDP support not been available¹

Response	Percentages
Done some of the training but over a longer period of time	41
Done the same training for the same number of people within the same timescales regardless	16
Done the same training for the same number of people, but over a longer period of time	15
Done none of the training without WDP support	14
Done some of the training within the same timescale regardless	12
Don't know	2

¹ The question asked was: Would you have provided any of this training if the Workforce Development Programme support hadn't been available to you? Would you have...

Source: IFF Survey data. Base 298 responses.

7.20 This shows that there was complete/full additionality for 14 percent of supported businesses which had provided training, partial additionality for 68 percent of businesses and no additionality (or in other words complete deadweight) for 16 percent of businesses. These additionality findings are similar to those of the 2009 evaluation of the WDP which is considered in Chapter 2 though there is a notable positive increase in full additionality from an estimated nine percent of cases in 2009.

7.21 Of the businesses that said they would have done some of the training (i.e. partial additionality) without the support of the WDP, half (49 percent)⁶¹ said that it would have taken more than 12 months longer to complete the training in the absence of support from the programme. Just under two fifths (38 percent) said that it would have taken more than six and up to 12 months longer while 11 percent said that it would have taken between three and six months longer for the training to have taken place. Only a minority (2 percent) said that the training would have taken place within three months regardless of the WDP support.

⁶¹ Base for this and the remainder of the paragraph is 167.

7.22 **Figure 7.6** provides an overview of the proportion of training that would have been undertaken anyway by those businesses that said that only some of the training would have taken place in the absence of WDP support.

Figure 7.6: Proportion of training that would have been undertaken without WDP assistance¹

Response	Percentages
Less than 25 percent	17
25 to 50 percent	60
51 percent to 75 percent	16
More than 75 percent	6
Don't know	1

¹ The question asked was: Roughly what proportion of the training would you have undertaken anyway?

Source: IFF Survey data. Base 159 responses.

7.23 This shows that around three quarters of these businesses (77 percent) said that they would have undertaken less than half of the training without WDP support.

7.24 In the absence of WDP discretionary funding, the majority (79 percent)⁶² of supported businesses that said they would have undertaken some training without WDP support said they would have done this using their own resources. Only a minority (10 percent) said that they would have turned to other Welsh Government grant support to finance the training.

7.25 Of the 42 businesses where there was complete additionality (i.e. those saying that they would not have undertaken any of the training without the WDP), almost all (98 percent) said that without the discretionary funding, they could not have afforded it. Businesses with fewer than 50 employees were more likely to say that no training would have taken place without the WDP (i.e. full additionality).

⁶² 199 of 251 businesses. The question asked was. How would you have funded some or all of the training in the absence of discretionary funding under the Workforce Development Programme?

7.26 The majority of these 42 businesses (86 percent) also said that they would still not have done the training (without WDP support) even if they had managed to find a cheaper provider while more than half (55 percent) said that they could not have delivered similar training in-house.

7.27 A similar pattern emerged from the qualitative fieldwork with 20 case study businesses. We judged the evidence of additionality to be strong (i.e. complete additionality) in two cases, moderate (i.e. partial additionality) in 11 cases and weak (i.e. full deadweight) in seven cases.

Impact on Training Participants

7.28 Turning to examine impact, we look firstly at the impact of the training on the participants from the perspective of supported businesses which had provided training. **Figure 7.7** provides an overview.

Figure 7.7: Positive impact of training on participants¹

	<i>Percentage responding positively²</i>
Staff morale*	87
Staff willingness to participate in training	78
Staff attitudes and preparedness to take responsibility	74
Promotion and being given more responsibility*	73
Staff flexibility or ability to multi-skill	72
Teamwork within the organisation	71
Staff understanding their roles within the organisation	71
Extent to which staff ask for training	52
Pay*	48
Staff retention*	30

1 The question asked was: On a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 is not at all and 5 is a great deal, how much would you say the training has impacted upon staff who participated in terms of...

2 Responding with a 4 or 5 on the scale.

*These responses used a slightly different scale. The positive responses included in this table included 'improved substantially' and 'improved a little'.

Source: IFF Survey data. Base 290 responses.

7.29 This shows that these businesses felt that WDP funded training had led to a range of positive impacts for participants with improvements in staff morale being cited by 87 percent of supported businesses which had provided training. There are also positive impacts in relation to willingness to participate in training, attitudes and preparedness to take responsibility and in relation to staff being promoted given more responsibilities.

7.30 While still positive, the impacts are less pronounced in relation to pay and staff retention levels.

Impact on Supported Businesses

7.31 **Figure 7.8** provides an overview of the impact of WDP funded training on supported businesses which had provided training.

Figure 7.8: Positive impact of training participants in terms of...¹

	<i>Percentage responding positively</i> ²
Organisation's prospects going forward	87
Productivity and efficiency	81
Product or service innovation	79
Quality of customer service	76
The quality of products or services	72
Profit levels/reducing losses	60
The use of new technologies	54
Accreditation for a particular quality standard	45
Wastage rates/down-time	44
Supply chain management/procurement processes	33

¹ The question asked was: How would you say the training has impacted upon staff who participated in terms of... The response scale included improved substantially, improved a little, made no change, deteriorated a little and deteriorated substantially.

Source: IFF Survey data. Base 298 responses.

² Responding by saying either 'improved substantially' or 'improved a little'.

- 7.32 This shows that the WDP funded training had led to a range of positive impacts on these businesses. The most commonly cited positive impacts have been in relation to the organisation's future prospects and productivity and efficiency.
- 7.33 Sixty percent of respondents said that the training had led to positive impacts on their business in terms of improving profitability or reducing losses. In terms of the scale of the improvements being reported, a quarter (25 percent) said that the improvement in profit had been less than five percent, with a further 17 percent saying that the improvement in profit had been between five and 10 percent. Only a minority (of six percent) could attribute positive impacts to profit levels in excess of 20 percent with almost half (46 percent) saying that it was too early to be able to attribute changes in profit to WDP training.
- 7.34 Of the 20 case study businesses that we visited as part of the qualitative element of our fieldwork, we judged the evidence in relation to attribution of positive outcomes (to the businesses themselves and training participants) to be strong in 10 cases, moderate in six cases and weak in four cases.

Negative Effects

- 7.35 Supported businesses which had provided training were asked whether their involvement with the WDP had led to any negative effects. The majority (90 percent)⁶³ said that it had not.
- 7.36 Only a minority of nine percent (28 businesses)⁶⁴ said that they had felt any kind of negative effect within their business. Ten of these said that the negative effect had been staff time away from work (in order to participate in training), eight said that there had been negative effects

⁶³ 269 of 298 businesses. The question asked was: Did involvement with the Workforce Development Programme have any negative effects within the business?

⁶⁴ The question asked was: What were the negative effects?

resulting from delays in assessing and/or approving their discretionary fund applications (such as delayed start to training) while a further eight said that there had been negative effects (including use of management time) as a result of excessive paperwork and administration associated with the WDP.

Case Study Evidence – Effects and Impacts

7.37 Anonymised case notes for each of the supported businesses (which include in most cases interviews with a representative of the business, a trained employee, the assigned WDA [where relevant] and one of the training providers) are included in annex 1.

7.38 **Figure 7.9** highlights some of the positive impacts and outcomes felt by supported businesses and trained individuals.

Figure 7.9: Qualitative evidence from company visits: Positive impacts and outcomes

Supported business I is a well-established business operating in the financial and professional services sector and employs 24 people.

Business I was supported by a WDA having initially turned to a University for support regarding professional training. A training plan was produced which identified the need for various forms of accredited training relating to business processes and one course which would lead to a professional industry qualification for two members of staff.

Having completed some of the training, business I felt that they had benefitted from having been able to retain good quality staff who might otherwise have looked elsewhere to develop their careers. The training had also enabled them to develop staff who would probably have remained with the firm in administrative/clerical roles and developed them into more professional roles, thus putting them in a better position to add value to the

business in the future. This was particularly important to business I since they envisaged a succession process happening in the not too distant future as some of the more senior partners approached retirement age.

Some of the trainees themselves reflected on the training as having been particularly important in the context of their career progression prospects and the professional qualifications that they had gained were also very significant in the sector within which business I operates.

Managers at business I also felt that the individuals trained had all become more confident in their job roles as a result of the training and in particular from having attained elements of a professional qualification. Specifically, these staff members were notably more 'at ease' in dealing with clients and were more prepared to 'have a go' at different tasks which would then be checked over by line managers.

Two members of staff trained at business I had not received pay increases as a result of training but would do so once fully qualified, while a third (on a lower salary and in a more administrative role) had been given a pay increase as a result of taking on additional responsibilities post-training.

Supported business O is the Welsh arm of a global electronics group which employs 155 people in a manufacturing plant in Wales. They had a long-standing relationship with their WDA and are committed to developing their workforce having a training plan and a HR manager in place.

The skills development plan for business O identified the need for manufacturing process training and a series of courses relating to software and automation. This was linked to investment in a new production line at the Welsh factory. Business O applied for discretionary funding which was approved. They undertook and completed all of the training except for one course.

Business O had benefitted in a number of ways from the training including a marked improvement in efficiency as a result of more advanced automation and use of robotics. The training had directly enabled business O to design and implement a new, more efficient production line.

The improvements to the manufacturing processes had, according to the company's HR manager, enabled them to secure new business in the UK but had also been viewed very favourably by senior staff in other parts of the group – notably in the USA. No redundancies have been made as a result of increased automation, but some staff have been re-deployed to other parts of the site to assist with the efficiency gains resulting from the training and the investment in new plant infrastructure.

Trained staff at business O said that there was a culture of staff development within the organisation and that the training made them feel valued and motivated.

Investment in Future Training Activity

7.39 The majority of supported businesses responding to the survey and who had provided training (88 percent)⁶⁵ said that they were likely to undertake further training in the coming 12 months.

7.40 Three quarters (75 percent)⁶⁶ of these said their involvement with the WDP had made it more likely (than would otherwise have been the case) that they would undertake more training.

7.41 Almost two thirds (65 percent)⁶⁷ said that the further training they envisaged undertaking would be part funded by the business with the balance of the cost being met by Government or other sources. More than a quarter (27 percent) said that future training would be funded

⁶⁵ 261 of 298 businesses.

⁶⁶ 196 of 261 businesses.

⁶⁷ 170 of 261 businesses.

entirely by the business, while a small minority (three percent) said that they expected future training to be entirely funded by Government or other sources.

7.42 For those 170 businesses that said they expected to share the cost of training with Government or other sources, nearly three quarters (72 percent) said they expected their own contribution to the training to be between 25 and 50 percent. Eighteen percent said that they expected their own contribution to be between 51 and 75 percent. Only a minority (four percent) expected their contribution to future training to be more than 75 percent while (two percent) thought that their own contribution would be less than 25 percent⁶⁸.

7.43 In terms of what might prevent them from meeting a greater share of the cost of future training, the majority (82 percent)⁶⁹ said that the main reason would be because the business could not afford it.

7.44 Overall then, this shows that involvement the WDP has had a positive influence on the likelihood of businesses undertaking future training. It also shows that there is a clear willingness amongst supported businesses to continue to co-invest their own funds alongside Government funding in future training activity.

⁶⁸ Four percent said that they did not know.

⁶⁹ 140 of 170 businesses.

8 Conclusions and Recommendations

- 8.1 In this final chapter, we outline our conclusions and recommendations.
The chapter is structured according to the original research objectives.

Level of engagement and service provided

- 8.2 The WDP has succeeded in engaging with a wide range of businesses across a number of sectors and throughout different parts of Wales providing them with high quality workforce development advice and support services and funding to help train their staff.
- 8.3 Overall, the programme supported some 4,315 businesses between April 2011 and March 2015, most of which have been SMEs, and has performed solidly against its key performance indicators.
- 8.4 Workforce Development Advisors have played an important and proactive role in promoting awareness of and engagement with the WDP by consolidating existing and developing new relationships with businesses across Wales.
- 8.5 While WDAs have provided a valued diagnostic service aimed at identifying skills gaps and training needs, most supported businesses felt that they already had a reasonably good awareness and understanding of their particular requirements.
- 8.6 Small businesses (ranging from 10 to 50 or so employees) without dedicated HR professionals seem to have gained the most from the diagnostic and advisory services of WDAs. There is evidence to suggest that the WDAs have also improved and professionalised the way businesses go about specifying and procuring training without creating an over-dependence on external advice and guidance.

- 8.7 Feedback from businesses on the quality of the service they received from their WDA was very positive with businesses having found the impartial advice on identifying appropriate training providers particularly helpful. WDAs have also played a key role in assisting businesses to access financial support to help them meet the costs of training via the WDP discretionary fund and from other skills development programmes and initiatives.
- 8.8 Only a relatively small proportion of supported businesses could recall having received post-training evaluation advice from their WDA and this seems to have been a slightly weaker aspect of the service despite this being a payment milestone for the WDAs themselves. Where follow-up evaluation did occur, feedback shows this to have been a valuable part of the service from a business perspective suggesting it may have been an under prioritised element of the overall support package.
- 8.9 Only a minority of businesses had heard of or used the Skills Hotline service. Those that had used it gave positive feedback about the efficiency of the service and the quality of the advice they received.

Effectiveness of application and decision processes

- 8.10 Feedback from supported businesses on the process of applying for discretionary funding was generally positive in relation to the processes involved and the amount of time taken by Welsh Government to assess and respond to funding applications. It is also clear that WDAs have added value to the process of supporting companies with their applications.
- 8.11 There were some exceptions to the positive feedback, notably during a period in autumn 2014 when a spending moratorium was put in place by the Welsh Government. The moratorium had been introduced because of challenges in relation to budget forecasting caused by uncertainty

over how much of their approved discretionary funding supported businesses would actually draw down in the final year of the programme.

8.12 Both WDAs and supported businesses felt that during the moratorium period, communication from Welsh Government (keeping them informed of the status of their discretionary fund applications) could have been much better. Key learning points were identified from this experience including the need to set more clearly defined start and end dates (of no more than one year) for funded training to take place.

8.13 Assessing and processing discretionary fund applications was labour intensive for Welsh Government. The direct application route for micro businesses to the discretionary fund (i.e. without advisory support from a WDA) worked well and was appropriate for the smaller amounts of funding requested.

Quality and relevance of training

8.14 Discretionary funding was used by supported businesses to help co-finance an appropriately wide range of general and job specific technical training courses, in-line with the broad and flexible way in which the programme was designed.

8.15 Supported businesses rated the quality of the training they had received very highly and the open market approach, allowing companies to select their own training providers has worked well. For most businesses (72 percent) the main consideration in selecting their training provider was price.

8.16 Some supported businesses and WDAs felt that, particularly towards the end of the programme, there was a lack of flexibility in accommodating requests for changes to company training plans – some of which came about due to factors outside of the control of supported businesses

(such as cancellations of some courses by training providers for instance).

- 8.17 Overall, the evidence suggests that the training undertaken by supported businesses has been highly relevant demonstrated by strong levels of post-training skills utilisation.

Additionality of funded training

- 8.18 Evidence relating to levels of additionality from WDP funded training was reasonably positive. There was complete additionality for 14 percent of businesses (i.e. none of the training would have taken place without WDP support), partial additionality for 68 percent of businesses and no additionality for 16 percent of businesses.

- 8.19 Almost all of the businesses that demonstrated complete additionality (98 percent) said that they could not have afforded to do the training without WDP support while more than three quarters (77 percent) of supported businesses which would only have undertaken some of the training would have undertaken less than half of it without WDP support.

- 8.20 A significant minority (16 percent) of businesses that had been offered discretionary funding did not use any of it. The main reason for non-uptake was being too busy to release staff and training no longer being a priority.

Value and impact of the WDP training

- 8.21 The evidence shows that WDP training has added value to and led to a range of positive impacts on supported businesses with 87 percent stating that it had improved their prospects going forward. Sixty percent of supported businesses felt that WDP training had led to positive impacts on turnover and profitability though the scale of the increases to

profit were quite modest (less than a 10 percent increase in profit for 42 percent of businesses).

- 8.22 There is also evidence of positive outcomes for trainees in relation to willingness to participate and preparedness to take responsibility. Evidence of impacts relating to pay and staff retention levels were also positive but less pronounced.

Future Investment in Training

- 8.23 The majority of supported businesses responding to the survey and who had provided training (88 percent) are likely to undertake further training in the next 12 months. Three quarters of these said that their involvement with the WDP made it more likely that they would undertake more training.

- 8.24 There is evidence of a clear willingness on the part of supported businesses to co-invest their own funds alongside Government in training. Two-thirds of the WDP supported businesses envisaged future training being co-financed in this way with most of those (72 percent) expecting their own contribution to the cost of training being between 25 and 50 percent.

- 8.25 A series of recommendations are made in relation to the design and implementation of future programmes.

Recommendation 1

- 8.26 The Welsh Government should incorporate some of the key learning points from the WDP programme into the design of future training programmes. In particular, the Welsh Government should take account of the fact that employers have genuinely valued the in-built flexibility of the WDP programme to support a range of practical and relevant

training courses whilst using an open market approach to selecting their own training providers.

Recommendation 2

8.27 Whilst it is recognised that budgetary constraints may require different approaches to the design and scale of future skills and workforce development programmes, the Welsh Government should look to continue to combine elements of information, advice and financial support to businesses. There is clear evidence that businesses are prepared to co-invest in training but without some form of financial support from Government, the evidence clearly suggests that less training will take place and at a slower pace.

Recommendation 3

8.28 WDAs have clearly added a substantial amount of value in proactively promoting awareness and up-take of WDP services amongst businesses. However, should the Welsh Government not be in a position to re-commission a workforce development advisory service or network of this nature in future, it should carefully consider how it can retain a proactive dimension to promoting awareness and engagement in training activity in order to avoid the risk of lower participation in future programmes as a result of taking a more passive approach.

Recommendation 4

8.29 Should the Welsh Government decide to commission a workforce development advisory service (to take forward some of the functions of the previous WDA network) in the future, it should consider how this service can be targeted for maximum effect and best value. In particular, the Welsh Government should consider (in light of key learning points from the WDP) targeting in-depth diagnostic and advisory aspects of such a service at small businesses while allowing micro enterprises and larger companies (especially ones with in house HR capability) to apply direct for any co-investment based financial support instruments.

Recommendation 5

8.30 It is clear that Welsh Government officials have identified and have already implemented a number of process related changes emerging from the challenges of managing the budget and expenditure of the WDP. While this is positive, it is recommended that these lessons, including the need for a clearly specified 'use it or lose it' delivery timeframe in which companies can draw down co-investment funding for training are carried forward and incorporated into the design of future programmes. Senior officials within Welsh Government should ensure that this learning is shared with any new personnel (not previously involved with the WDP) responsible for the design and implementation of new programmes so that important knowledge and experience is not lost. Delivery timeframes should allow companies sufficient time to plan, commission and complete training but should avoid being overly long which might lead to a loss of focus and momentum and could result in financial planning uncertainties for those managing programme expenditure. In this context, it is also recommended that any future skills or workforce development advisory service put in place by the Welsh Government should strongly encourage businesses to submit realistic and achievable training plans.

Appendix 1: Anonymised Summary accounts of case studies

Company	Additionality	Attribution of Positive Outcomes	Skills Utilisation
A	Moderate	Strong	Strong
<p>Company A is a family business that has been operating for nearly 20 years. The company had always undertaken statutory training, but realised that they would need further support and development for the company to grow in-line with aspirations. The employer was put in touch with the WDA through an existing contact, and was unaware of the Business Skills Hotline. Company A participated in discretionary funded training courses, specifically On-Site Training for Enterprise Resource Management software and a CIMA Diploma in Management Accounting. The company also received ELMS discretionary funding for Leadership and Management Training. Company A had pre-identified the training they required and the training provider they wanted, although they found the WDA helpful and felt that the diagnostic process was the most useful part of the whole process. Their only concern was the time it took to approve their discretionary fund application.</p> <p>Both training courses were completed by the company and had been well received. Overall, Company A seemed very happy with the quality of the support provided by both the WDA and the training providers. The business has experienced significant benefits from the Business Management Software training, including ‘efficiencies throughout all processes’, increased staff morale and confidence. The participant who undertook the CIMA training successfully gained their qualification, although they have since moved on from the company to a relevant role at a higher level, in part due to their qualification. Company A would have completed the training even without WDP support as it was deemed essential, but is keen to continue with training as it now sees staff development as crucial to continued growth.</p>			
B	Weak	Weak	Weak
<p>Company B is an international brand, which acquired a family-run business for its main servicing centre in the UK. This was the first instance of training at the site, which came about after existing contacts put the general manager in touch with the WDA. The diagnostic process initially identified a mixture of management and leadership training and general training courses for the company. Only one of the courses Company B applied for was deemed eligible under the discretionary fund, although another course identified as part of the diagnostic process (relating to sales training) – was eventually funded via a separate Welsh Government (Department for Economy, Science and Transport) programme.</p> <p>Due to delays in processing Company B’s application for discretionary funding under the WDP, Company B proceeded with the training and funded it themselves. The ELMS funded Leadership and Management training changed following a recommendation from the training</p>			

Company	Additionality	Attribution of Positive Outcomes	Skills Utilisation
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provider to go down a slightly different training route (than that advised by the WDA) that allowed a higher level of funding.

Several outcomes have been realised as a result of the training, particularly the Leadership and Management courses, including improved skills, actual progression and prospects, and increased confidence and morale. While these outcomes cannot directly be attributed to the WDP, the programme via the support and diagnostic advice provided by the WDA has made the company more training aware.

C	Moderate	Strong	Strong
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Company C is a firm of civil engineers. The organisation met their WDA at a CITB networking event, with whom they have developed a good relationship. Five courses were identified by the company on their Skills Development Plan, but only one (a BSc in Occupational Health & Safety Management) was undertaken and completed. Staff were under added pressure at the time due to one of the owners suffering a prolonged period of ill health. Company staff hope that the courses will be taken up in the future. Overall, the company, participant and WDA all agreed that the quality of the training received was of good standard, although the participant noted some communication problems (from the training provider) which may have compromised their final grade.

The training has enabled Company C to develop the Health and Safety aspect of the business, with an employee now qualified to train other members of staff on a daily basis, saving the company an estimated £50 per hour on external training providers. The WDA noted improved efficiency and an increased ability to fulfil their customers' needs, as they are now able to comply with their customers' demand for training levels and qualifications which has helped to increase profitability, led to a better qualified workforce and improved productivity by having an increased customer base. Company C felt that the training might have gone ahead even without WDP funding, but would not have been done as quickly.

D	Weak	Weak	Weak
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Company D is a small business in the renewables sector employing 10 staff which had a long-standing relationship with their WDA. As part of their skills diagnostic process, business D identified the need for training relating to aspects of health and safety and handling hazardous materials. Their application for discretionary funding was processed within two weeks but the requests for funding were turned down. Supported business D said that the various courses had been turned down for a number of reasons including price (considered too expensive), relevance and added value (in relation to the health and safety courses) and a lack of accreditation.

Supported business D gave positive feedback about their WDA and felt that they had gained

Company	Additionality	Attribution of Positive Outcomes	Skills Utilisation
value from the skills diagnostic process. Business D went ahead with the training and met the entire costs from their own funds.			
E	Moderate	Strong	Strong
<p>Company E operates in the automotive sector and employs 48 people. They initially made contact with the Welsh Government (though not via the skills hotline) to seek advice and support on training staff and were assigned a WDA who in turn introduced them to the WDP.</p> <p>The HR Director at supported business E said that prior to them getting in touch with the Welsh Government, they had not invested much in the way of training for their staff. Supported business E's motivation for getting involved in the WDP was to identify what training would be needed to improve efficiency and productivity within the company. Qualification outcomes for participating staff were not a priority for business E.</p> <p>The company hoped to improve productivity through the programme, with one employee hopeful of learning new skills. Twelve training courses were identified and discretionary funding was approved to help meet the cost of these.</p> <p>Only six of these courses were completed by company E. The other six were not completed due to resource pressures. The training undertaken was relevant to the company's needs in that it was linked to the kind of skills that they were trying to develop in order to deliver a better service to its clients. The company and the employee gave positive feedback about the quality of the training provided. Company E continues to have a strong relationship with the WDA and the training provider, and are looking to repeat the training in the future.</p> <p>Both the company and the employee felt that all expected outcomes had been achieved. The company has improved its productivity, particularly staff flexibility and their ability to deal with service demands. The employee felt that their new skills are being put to good use on a daily basis and noted benefits including increased confidence, morale and motivation, improved efficiency, and a better understanding of business goals and objectives. The training provider believed the company impacts included improved efficiency, better compliance with regulation and policies, improved productivity and an increase in the knowledge base of key staff.</p>			
F	Moderate	Strong	Strong
<p>Company F is a micro enterprise in the engineering sector. Business F's Managing Director contacted the Welsh Government's Business Skills team after making initial on-line enquiries via the Welsh Government website. The Business Skills team sent company F a direct application form for discretionary fund support. Company F applied for financial support to help pay for a week long course for one of its staff members. They were not assigned a WDA</p>			

Company	Additionality	Attribution of Positive Outcomes	Skills Utilisation
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and did not undertake a skills diagnostic plan.

The MD of company F said that they were extremely happy with the direct application and approval process. They described the application form as 'straightforward' and within two weeks of submission, they had received confirmation that their application had been approved.

The course was successfully completed at a specialist training provider based in England. Both the employer and the participant felt that the course was excellent. The course has enabled Company F to offer a specialist service that no one else in the area is able to provide, broadening their expertise and 'filling a gap in the market'. Company F felt that an increase in efficiency, productivity, profitability and growth of the could be partially attributed to the training. The qualification is extremely important to both the business and the employee as the company can now offer another much needed service, therefore increasing turnover and profitability. The trained employee also feels that their confidence and morale has increased and that they have 'another string to his bow'.

G	Strong	Strong	Strong
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Company G is a small, service sector business operating in South East Wales. One of the managers of company G had made contact with the Welsh Government (via the skills hotline) to explore how they might be supported with training and business support and were allocated a WDA. The manager at company G gave positive feedback about the information and advice they had received via the hotline and this led to them also receiving business support via Business Wales.

Company G applied for discretionary funding to help pay for project management and customer care training as well as a number of more technical courses (of relevance to its business) and a safety related course for its staff. Company G completed three of the five training courses it had identified. One of the training courses (safety related) had not been approved for discretionary funding. The training providers were two FE colleges and one private sector provider.

Feedback on the quality of discretionary funded training undertaken by business G (from managers and training participants) was very positive with an appropriate mix of practical and theory based content (provided by both the FE colleges and the private provider).

'It was really good. The content and the practical delivery was perfect'.

Company G experienced positive outcomes for both the business and participating

Company	Additionality	Attribution of Positive Outcomes	Skills Utilisation
employees. The company has developed its capacity to deliver work, which in turn, led to a short-term increase in turnover (estimated to be in the region of 50-60 percent). A recent change in the UK Government's support for renewable energy (specifically the Green Deal) however meant that it was unlikely this level of growth would be sustained. Employees also developed their skills, knowledge and confidence, which had a positive impact on morale.			
H	Moderate	Moderate	Strong
Company H is a small firm of financial planning advisors. The company has always provided training for staff members, mostly through the Chartered Insurance Institute (CII). One of the company's partners met their WDA at a number of networking events. Their Skills Development plan identified a mixture of financial and technical training, and business administrative courses.			
In total, seven courses were taken up; two others were not pursued mainly due to time constraints. One advisor and two administrative staff undertook the training, which was seen as a necessity for staff looking to become qualified financial advisors. The company and its participants felt that the training was excellent and, despite being expensive, offered the best and most relevant training.			
All participants passed their exams, with the advisor gaining credits towards Chartered status. There has been an increase in confidence and technical investment knowledge, with advisors and administrative staff utilising their newly acquired skills on a daily basis. The WDA felt that qualifications were imperative as the company has now achieved an Investors in People award. The success of the training has motivated the staff to complete their remaining exams to achieve Chartered status, which will assist with marketing and hopefully lead to increased turnover. Company H is keen to continue training its staff and is happy to co-invest its own funds alongside any financial support available via the Welsh Government.			
I	Strong	Strong	Strong
Supported business I is a well-established business operating in the financial and professional services sector and employs 24 people.			
Business I was supported by a WDA having initially turned to a University for support regarding professional training. A training plan was produced which identified the need for various forms of accredited training relating to business processes and one course which would lead to a professional industry qualification for two members of staff.			
Having completed some of the training, business I felt that they had benefitted from having been able to retain good quality staff who might otherwise have looked elsewhere to develop their careers. The training had also enabled them to develop staff who would probably have			

Company	Additionality	Attribution of Positive Outcomes	Skills Utilisation
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remained with the firm in administrative/clerical roles and developed them into more professional roles, thus putting them in a better position to add value to the business in the future. This was particularly important to company I since they envisaged a succession process happening in the not too distant future as some of the more senior partners approached retirement age.

Some of the trainees themselves reflected on the training as having been particularly important in the context of their career progression prospects and the professional qualifications that they had gained were also very significant in the sector within which business I operates.

Managers at business I also felt that the individuals trained had all become more confident in their job roles as a result of the training and in particular from having attained elements of a professional qualification. Specifically, these staff members were notably more 'at ease' in dealing with clients and were more prepared to 'have a go' at different tasks which would then be checked over by line managers.

Two members of staff trained at business I had not received pay increases as a result of training but would do so once fully qualified, while a third (on a lower salary and in a more administrative role) had been given a pay increase as a result of taking on additional responsibilities post-training.

J	Weak	Weak	Strong
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Company J is a wholly owned subsidiary of a global airline, which services and repairs a wide range of avionic equipment. The company has a training programme in place, which includes an annual training plan, training budgets, designated trainers and assessors, and an annual appraisal system. Company J became involved in the WDP after initially approaching the Welsh Government to become part of the Skills Growth Wales scheme, for which they were not eligible. The Skills Development Plan identified several Leadership and Management courses, including ILM courses at Level 3 and 5, and some more general training including HNCs and Foundation Degrees in Engineering. The training was intended for a broad range of employees.

Discretionary funding was approved for approximately half of the Leadership and Management training. However, most of the general training was not funded, due mainly to the training dates falling outside of the dates required for discretionary fund approval. Company J completed the Skills Development Plan without the help of their WDA and sourced their own training providers, selecting a mixture of new providers and ones they had previously worked with. Company J was generally very satisfied with the quality of training

Company	Additionality	Attribution of Positive Outcomes	Skills Utilisation
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received. However, they found the discretionary fund application/approval process somewhat 'old-fashioned'.

The company has seen some positive outcomes emerge from the training, including improved time management and team leadership skills. Training on Employment Law had also enabled them to keep up to date with legislation. There has been an improvement in their Performance Management processes, with managers now able to deal with difficult situations much better. All ILM Level 5 participants (all Senior Managers) agreed that the training had helped them to better understand their own management styles and team leadership skills. This training has also been useful as part of their internal succession planning programme and helped the company identify future leaders. It is likely that a high proportion of the training undertaken by company J would have taken place even in the absence of support via the WDP.

K	Moderate	Moderate	Strong
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Company K is a growing family run business based in South East Wales. The workforce at company K grew by six members of staff in the 12 months leading up to their participation in the programme to a total of 27. One of the Directors at company K came to hear about the WDP via a recommendation from a friend of theirs who also ran a business and had been supported via the programme. The Director followed up with a direct enquiry to Welsh Government and was subsequently assigned a WDA to support them.

Company K was already committed to developing their staff but their motivation for participation in the WDP was to strengthen the business during a period of growth. Specifically, they were looking to improve skills in relation to leadership, communication, customer relations, specific software skills and on-line marketing skills.

Around half of the training identified in company K's skills plan was eventually undertaken. Only part of the Leadership course could be funded within the timescale. Some courses were cancelled (by the provider) and there was no flexibility within the WDP to re-apply for this funding, which the WDA felt was a weakness. Company K's WDA also expressed her disappointment with perceived levels of increasing bureaucracy around the WDP which resulted in a delayed response to Company K's discretionary fund application from the Welsh Government. Training providers were sourced with the help of the WDA, and company K was very satisfied with the quality of the training they received. Company K highly valued their WDA's advice.

The biggest outcome from the training is a recent re-branding of the company, which followed a 'lightbulb moment' by one of the directors after attending leadership training. Other

Company	Additionality	Attribution of Positive Outcomes	Skills Utilisation
<p>outcomes include more effective marketing, 'soaring confidence' and a boost in staff morale. An employee who participated in an online marketing course feels that their productivity in the workplace has increased and the quality of their work has also improved. This trainee has been assigned managerial responsibility, awarded a promotion and a salary increase. Company K's WDA felt that had the process been a little more flexible, Company K could have benefitted even further from their own advice and the training.</p>			
L	Weak	Weak	Strong
<p>Company L operates in the food production sector and employs over 300 people. It had experienced significant growth over the past nine years and had decided to take a more strategic and professional approach to staff training (including increasing the amount of on-site training). They were supported by a WDA whom the Training Manager at business L had found 'inspirational' and worked through the skills diagnostic process together with the WDA 'doing a lot of the background stuff'.</p> <p>This had taken some time due to the thoroughness of the process and the scale of the business). <i>'To do it properly, it can take a long time – and you need several face-to-face meetings'</i>.</p> <p>Business L submitted their application just as the Welsh Government instigated a moratorium on WDP spending in autumn 2014. This had proven to be somewhat frustrating for both the WDA and business L with a lack of information meaning that neither knew whether the application would be approved. <i>'There was a delay in the system – no activity for two months because of a review of funding at Welsh Government'</i>.</p> <p>Business L received approval for its discretionary fund application but the delay meant a condensed period in which they were able to deliver the training. This meant that less discretionary funded training actually took place: <i>'I couldn't put a lot of it through the budget or free up people within that timescale'</i>. Whilst waiting for funding approval, business L decided that they had to proceed with some training regardless and funded this themselves.</p> <p>Company L had been supported at the end of the WDP and they felt that it was too early (at the time of fieldwork) to be able to identify or attribute any positive outcomes as yet. They were hopeful that in due course some positive outcomes might emerge (including improvements in productivity) but there was no evidence of this as yet.</p>			
M	Moderate	Strong	Strong
<p>Company M is a family owned business operating in the electronics sector. The business employs 180 staff. In all, business M had worked with three WDAs during the period of their involvement with the WDP. The Operations Manager at business M was very happy with the</p>			

Company	Additionality	Attribution of Positive Outcomes	Skills Utilisation
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first WDA they worked with and felt that they had genuinely understood the business, keeping in regular contact with them. This first WDA had helped prepare the skills diagnostic report, which the Operations Manager at business M felt was a 'live document' which was constantly being updated. Then, following a re-tender process for the WDA network in 2012, business M explained that they were assigned a different WDA by Welsh Government (the first advisor had not been re-appointed to the supplier framework).

The Operations Manager had been 'less impressed' with this second WDA who they felt had been illusive and less responsive to their needs. This led to business M requesting a change of WDA (which was subsequently actioned by Welsh Government). The second WDA argued that it had 'not been possible to maintain the level of support' business M was requesting within the terms of their WDA contract.

The third WDA had, according to business M 'picked up the pieces' but by this time, the Operations Manager had themselves 'learned the process by then – all I needed really was someone to advise me what I could claim for'.

Company M undertook all of the training identified, apart from one course which was deemed ineligible for discretionary fund support. The company was happy with the quality of the training received from various training providers, with evidence of employees feeling that various gaps in their knowledge had been addressed.

Company M felt that the main outcome had been a higher skilled workforce and a stronger knowledge base. It is hoped that business growth will be achieved due to the ability to apply for specific contracts as a result one course (a health and safety related course for supervisors) and a second more specific course which Company M felt had already been pivotal in securing one new contract. In all, five funded courses undertaken by company M have resulted in staff gaining accreditations and qualifications. Participants now have improved confidence and better employment prospects, while one trained employee noted an ability to work more effectively and independently. Company M was dissatisfied with aspects of the service they had received via the WDP but could directly attribute positive outcomes to the training undertaken.

N	Moderate	Strong	Strong
Company N is an independent financial services consultancy, with a focus on pensions and employee benefits. Training is fundamental to the development of the company, and the firm is proactive in sourcing external support. The Skills Development Plan emphasised industry-specific training and qualifications with much importance placed on the involvement of approved bodies, including the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales			

Company	Additionality	Attribution of Positive Outcomes	Skills Utilisation
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(ICAEW). The need for Leadership and Management training, including Chartered Management Institute (CMI) modules and Prince II, were also outlined.

Most of the training was undertaken, and the funding enabled the company to undertake training that it would not have otherwise done. Company N chose to use professional bodies to deliver training to ensure good quality and high standards. Trainees working towards a Chartered Accountancy qualification and with the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries were pleased with the quality of the training.

With a dedicated HR Department, company N did not require significant advisory support although they valued the knowledge and advice provided by their WDA. This would have been more effective however with a higher level of one-to-one support and improved communication.

Overall, company N felt that the training had led to some tangible, positive outcomes. Since completion of training, company N has taken on more graduates and promoted existing staff. The company has also witnessed an increase in profits, the retention of staff, and strong internal morale. Employees have increased their knowledge, found new opportunities, became more marketable and have been financially rewarded for their efforts. While professional qualifications are a necessity in a regulated industry, the WDP has been a key factor in enabling Company N to progress with their strategic objectives.

O	Moderate	Strong	Strong
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Company O is the Welsh arm of a global electronics group which employs 155 people in a manufacturing plant in Wales. They had a long-standing relationship with their WDA and are committed to developing their workforce having a training plan and a HR manager in place.

The skills development plan for business O identified the need for manufacturing process training and a series of courses relating to software and automation. This was linked to investment in a new production line at the Welsh factory. Business O applied for discretionary funding which was approved. They undertook and completed all of the training except for one course.

Business O had benefitted in a number of ways from the training including a marked improvement in efficiency as a result of more advanced automation and use of robotics. The training had directly enabled business O to design and implement a new, more efficient production line.

The improvements to the manufacturing processes had, according to the company's HR

Company	Additionality	Attribution of Positive Outcomes	Skills Utilisation
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manager enabled them to secure new business in the UK but had also been viewed very favourably by senior staff in other parts of the group – notably in the USA. No redundancies have been made as a result of increased automation, but some staff have been re-deployed to other parts of the site to assist with the efficiency gains resulting from the training and the investment in new plant infrastructure.

Trained staff at business O said that there was a culture of staff development within the organisation and that the training made them feel valued and motivated.

P	Weak	Moderate	Moderate
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Company P is a family owned business that designs, sells and installs PVCu products . They had been supported by a WDA and applied to the discretionary fund for financial assistance to train staff in a number of courses including stress awareness, some technical, job specific training (e.g. Green Deal Assessor training) and training, health and safety and first aid. The stress awareness, first aid and health and safety training were funded separately via an ESF project (Dyfodol) while the job specific training (which provided installation related accreditations) was funded via the WDP discretionary fund.

Company P gave positive feedback on the support and advice they had received from their WDA and were also very pleased with the quality of the training they had received (both the job specific training via the WDP and also the training they had received via the Dyfodol scheme). 'There was no negative feedback and everything went as planned'. In general, staff working for company P were not always enthusiastic about training but saw it as a 'necessity' and something that was 'expected' in the PVCu industry.

In practice, the training undertaken by company P was driven by the need to have certain qualifications or accreditations in place. As such, they would have undertaken the training regardless of whether they would have received external funding to help pay for it. Some of the skills (and accreditations) gained by company P had been put into practice and had enabled them to comply with industry standards. While impact of the Green Deal Training was less than hoped (in light of the UK Government's decision to stop funding the Green Deal), it has still been useful in helping to secure additional business for the company by helping to demonstrate the long term efficiencies and benefits of investing in more insulated doors and windows to clients.

Q	Weak	Moderate	Strong
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Company Q is a long established, family owned business operating in the logistics and warehousing sector. Company Q has 35 members of staff. The company was supported by a WDA whom they met via a networking event organised by a local enterprise agency which delivers part of the Welsh Government's Business Wales service.

Company	Additionality	Attribution of Positive Outcomes	Skills Utilisation
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The WDA worked with Company Q to undertake a skills diagnostic and prepared a skills development plan which identified the need for a range of training courses including the use of technical machinery, health and safety training and marketing. Company Q was pleased with the level of service that they received from their WDA... 'We knew what we wanted and he [the WDA] pulled everything together...' However, in practice, Company Q had a qualified HR professional who had already put a training plan in place and knew what their requirements were. The added value of the WDA was therefore in assisting with the application for funding. The HR manager at Company Q explained that they 'found the process very simple and [the WDA] was easy to work with'.

Company Q completed all of the training funded via the WDP discretionary fund and were very pleased with the overall quality of the training received. 'We're very lucky. One company that we deal with can provide bespoke training to us and we've known them for a long time'.

Company Q felt that staff were utilising their newly acquired skills in the workplace and the training meant that the company had greater flexibility in responding to busy periods with different individuals being able to undertake different tasks (that they previously were unable to). Staff that participated in training at Company Q felt more confident and said that they could now carry out a wider range of tasks that was benefitting the business. There was also evidence that WDP funded training had inspired participating staff (previously with low levels of qualifications) to undertake further training in future.

In terms of additionality, the HR manager at Company Q said that they would have undertaken the training without the discretionary fund. 'It's just fantastic that you can have something back but we would have done it anyway.'

R	Weak	Strong	Strong
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Company R is a specialist service provider employing 23 staff in South East Wales. They supply customers across Wales and the West country. They were supported by a WDA and had previously received assistance via Jobs Growth Wales (prior to applying for a discretionary fund grant). The WDA assisted business R to apply for discretionary funding for a range of training courses relating to risk management and health and safety. Supported business R described the diagnostic process and the work of the WDA as 'superb' and felt that the process of applying and getting approval had been 'pretty simple'.

Company R completed 'about 60 percent' of the training approved. They did not manage to complete the remaining courses because of workload pressures. Business R used two private sector training providers and one local authority to deliver the discretionary funded training they undertook.

Company	Additionality	Attribution of Positive Outcomes	Skills Utilisation
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Managers at Company R and their staff that had taken part in the training were very satisfied with the quality of the training that they had received (across all three of the providers) and emphasised the importance of having practical elements that made the training directly relevant to participant's job roles. One of the private sector training providers involved explained that they achieved this by 'using a classroom type format but with a practical edge' to the content and its delivery. Business R also emphasised the fact that the prior knowledge training providers had of their business helped ensure that the training was tailored and relevant to their needs

Skills utilisation in company R had been strong while the accreditations and new skills gained have helped strengthen the company's internal processes. This in turn has strengthened their ability to meet the requirements of clients (e.g. via competitive tender processes) and has enabled them to secure new business. 'We've won some pretty big contracts on the back of it [the training] and it has allowed us to kick-on for certain accreditations. With that, you can access bigger projects'.

Another crucial outcome for company R had been that they had succeeded in retaining the staff trained. Staff who participated in the training said that they felt rewarded by the company's investment in them and also felt better equipped to do their jobs to a high standard.

Company R estimated that they would probably have undertaken 80 percent of the training even without discretionary fund support and at the time of fieldwork, they had yet to draw down the funds from Welsh Government.

S	Moderate	Moderate	Strong
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Company S is a manufacturing business whose products have their main application in the automotive industry. It is part of a US owned group which employs 72 people in Wales. At the time of fieldwork, Company S was going through a transition phase with some key structural changes taking place within the wider group.

The HR Manager at Company S was supported by a WDA and the skills diagnostic identified the need for training including resolving conflict, leadership and management and specific software training with an overall focus on improving internal processes and customer service. These training requirements were linked to the on-going transition taking place within the wider business.

Company S applied for discretionary funding support via both the ELMS strand (for the leadership and management training) and the WDP strand for the more general training.

Company	Additionality	Attribution of Positive Outcomes	Skills Utilisation
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The HR Manager at Company S was impressed with the service that they received from their WDA and described the diagnostic and planning process as 'quite good'. They felt however, that they already had a good idea of what training was needed and so the WDA's role was more about helping to secure available funding to help pay for training to be undertaken. Feedback on the application process was broadly positive 'it wasn't particularly slow' and the information requested as part of the application process seemed reasonable to the HR Manager.

Company S only completed about a third of the training that they planned to (and had secured part funding for) due to other priorities. They had prioritised training to help build the capability of the production team and training to support the management team. Both the HR Manager and staff that participated in the training were pleased with the quality of the training that they had received. There was evidence of skills utilisation having occurred and trainees in particular felt that they had become more effective in managing teams and were planning their (and their teams') workloads more effectively. The HR Manager felt that some of their internal processes had been strengthened as a result of the training but could not directly attribute any wider positive outcomes on the business to the training undertaken.

Company S said that they would probably have undertaken some of the training regardless of WDP discretionary fund support. 'I don't think we would have done as much as we had done last year and I think it [the WDP] has been a useful tool in helping us formalise training'.

T	Moderate	Moderate	Strong
Company T is a family owned business in the Accommodation and Food Service Sector, the current owners having bought the business almost four years ago. The business currently employs some 25 individuals, though a number of these work on a part time and/or seasonal basis.			

Company T had been referred to the WDA by a local authority official dealing with capital grants for the tourism sector. The WDA had helped the business clarify its training needs in the context of the owners' ambitions for growth and 'took all the hassle away' by filling in WDP paperwork and helping the business to identify relevant training providers. The company felt that the WDA had a 'good knowledge' of the regional training market, though the owners themselves also had a reasonable sense of what was available, including from specialist training providers based outside Wales.

The business had not come across either the Business Wales Skills Hotline or web-site.

Company	Additionality	Attribution of Positive Outcomes	Skills Utilisation
		<p>Whilst company T had found the WDP discretionary support application process straightforward and timely (thanks to the WDA's involvement), it proved difficult to source the training provision required, despite such provision ostensibly being available. In essence, providers advertised particular courses, but did not run them because they were unable to attract sufficient numbers of participants. This meant that only about a third of the training planned took place.</p>	
		<p>Two courses undertaken by staff were delivered off-site in England and involved travel and accommodation costs for the company as well as granting staff additional time away from work. Whilst company T had intended to put more staff through these particular courses, these additional costs, which could not be part funded through the WDP, proved to be a deterrent.</p>	
		<p>Both the owners and participants had been pleased with the quality of the training undertaken with WDP support though none had achieved any qualifications. Participants had been able to utilise the skills developed, with particular outcomes for the business including greater flexibility as more members of staff were able to perform particular functions, improved sales as a result of the more effective use of social media and IT systems, key individuals becoming more skilled and confident in undertaking specific processes and an improvement in morale among the company's core staff. As a result of participating in courses, one key member of staff had come across new raw materials and developed contacts with industry suppliers, which had enabled the Company to innovate in terms of products and processes. Other members of staff had also developed contacts within the industry, which allowed them to share knowledge and ideas, though it was acknowledged that 'networking' is more difficult for the employees of businesses located in outlying rural areas.</p>	
		<p>Company T would probably have undertaken some elements of the training done regardless of WDP support, though fewer people would have been involved. Indeed, the company had funded some of the short courses which it was envisaged would be part funded by the WDP because 'it just wasn't worth doing the paperwork to claim £60'. Company T had also found means of undertaking training which it was unable to source from training providers in the region, by engaging suppliers to deliver training sessions 'free of charge', by using existing staff to coach more junior colleagues in specific technical skills and by encouraging staff to refer to YouTube, which was described as 'a wonderful thing where you've got motivated staff' willing to try things out for themselves.</p>	

Appendix 2: Telephone Survey Questionnaire

EVALUATION OF THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME J5470

Telephone Interview Questionnaire

FROM SAMPLE TAKE:

Contact name	
Workforce Development Advisor	SUPPLIED _____ NOT SUPPLIED ...X
Training provider (if applicable)	SUPPLIED _____ NOT SUPPLIED ...X
Number of participants	SUPPLIED _____ NOT SUPPLIED ...X

REASSURANCES TO USE IF NECESSARY

This research is being conducted by IFF research on behalf of the Welsh Government, and is being carried out to assess the effectiveness of the Workforce Development Programme. The interview should take around 25 minutes to complete.

IFF Research is an independent market research company. All of our work is carried out according to the strict Code of Conduct of the Market Research Society.

Everything you tell us will be treated in the strictest confidence and the Welsh Government will not know how named individuals or employers have responded.

To confirm the validity of survey or get more information about aims and objectives, you can call:

- a. **MRS: Market Research Society on 0500 396999**
- b. **IFF: Sam Morris, Research Manager on 020 7250 3035**
- c. **Welsh Government: Alison Spence on 02920 821636**

Screenener

ASK TELEPHONIST

- S1 **Good morning / afternoon. My name is <NAME> and I'm calling from IFF Research, on behalf of the Welsh Government. May I speak to <NAMED RESPONDENT>?**

Continue - named person speaking	1	GO TO S3
Transferred	2	
Person left the organisation / never heard of person / referred to another person	3	ASK S2
Hard appointment	4	MAKE APPOINTMENT
Soft Appointment	5	
Refusal	6	CLOSE
Nobody at site able to answer questions	7	
Not available in deadline	8	
Constantly engaged	9	
Fax Line	10	
No reply / Answer phone	11	
Residential Number	12	
Dead line	13	
Company closed	14	
Company moved	15	ASK FOR NEW NUMBER
Reassurances required	16	DISPLAY REASSURANCES
Welsh language requested	17	GO TO S8

IF S1 = 3 (NAMED PERSON LEFT)
S2 **If I could explain, I'm calling on behalf of the Welsh Government to discuss your organisation's involvement with the Workforce Development Programme.**

We had <NAMED RESPONDENT> as the contact for this. Is there someone else who would be able to answer about your organisation's involvement?

ADD IF NECESSARY: **Perhaps the Training Manager, the owner or a director?**

Continue – correct person speaking	1	CONTINUE TO S3
Referred to someone else at establishment NAME _____ PHONE NUMBER _____	2	TRANSFER AND RE-INTRODUCE
Hard appointment	3	MAKE APPOINTMENT
Soft appointment	4	
Refusal	5	THANK AND CLOSE
Not available in deadline	6	
Reassurances required	7	DISPLAY REASSURANCES
Reassurance email requested	8	SEND REASSURANCE EMAIL
Welsh language requested	9	GO TO S8

ASK ALL STILL IN SCOPE

- S3 **Hello, my name is <NAME>, calling from IFF Research, and I'm part of the team which has been commissioned by the Welsh Government to assess the effectiveness of its Workforce Development Programme, and to find out how it might be improved.**

The Workforce Development Programme is designed to help businesses review their current staff development strategies and source appropriate training provision. It also provides an element of discretionary funding to help with the implementation of agreed training plans. I understand that your organisation was involved with the Workforce Development Programme at some stage over the last couple of years. Is this right?

PROMPT IF NECESSARY: This may have involved working with a WDA (Workforce Development Adviser) or HRDA (Human Resources Development Adviser) and/or receiving training part-subsidised by Welsh Government Discretionary Funding.

Yes	1	GO TO S8
No	2	GO TO S3TEXT
Not sure	3	
Hard appointment	4	MAKE APPOINTMENT
Soft appointment	5	
Refusal	6	THANK AND CLOSE
Not available in deadline	7	THANK AND CLOSE
Reassurances required	8	SHOW REASSURANCES
Reassurance email requested	9	SEND REASSURANCE EMAIL

IF S3 = 2 OR 3

- S3TEXT **Unfortunately, we're only looking to interview organisations which took part in the programme, so we'll have to stop there. Thank you very much for your time.**

CLOSE

- S3a THERE IS NO S3a

ASK ALL

- S8 **I'd like to ask you some questions about your experience of the Workforce Development Programme and what difference participating in it made to your organisation. All responses will be treated in strict confidence. Can I check, would you prefer to conduct the interview in English or Welsh?**

English	1	GO TO S4
Welsh	2	ASK S9

IF S8 = 2 (WELSH)

- S9 **I'm not a Welsh speaker myself, but could a colleague who is give you a call within the next week or so?**

Make request for interview in Welsh	1	MAKE APPOINTMENT IN WELSH INTERVIEWER QUEUE. DS: RESET INTERVIEW TO S1 IN WELSH
Continue in English	3	GO TO S4

IF S9 = 1

- S9TEXT **A Welsh speaking colleague will ring you within the next few days. Thank you for agreeing to help us with our research.**

INTERVIEWER NOTE: We can't provide exact appointment times for Welsh language interviews due to interviewer availability. If the respondent has any general requests regarding the timing of the call back, please include these in the notes.

CLOSE

IF NAME OF WDA ADVISER SUPPLIED

- S4 **Am I right in saying that the Workforce Development Adviser that worked with your organisation was <'WDA Name'>?**

Yes	1	ASK S7
No	2	ASK S5
Not sure	3	

IF NO OR NOT SURE AT S4 OR NAME NOT SUPPLIED ON SAMPLE

- S5 **Do you recall which Workforce Development Adviser worked with your organisation (PROMPT IF NECESSARY)?**

Yes (COLLECT NAME)	1
Can't remember	X

DUMMY: ADVISER NAME

FROM SAMPLE IF S4=1; OR FROM S5=1; OR 'NOT KNOWN' OTHERWISE.

ASK ALL

S7 **Do you recall which organisation delivered the training or activity?**

PROMPT IF NECESSARY: **If more than one organisation delivered training funded by the Workforce Development Programme, which was the *main* organisation?**

Yes (COLLECT NAME)	1	CONTINUE
Can't remember	2	
No training undertaken via Workforce Development Programme (WDP)	3	

DUMMY: PROVIDER NAME

FROM SAMPLE IF S6=1; OR FROM S7=1; OTHERWISE **"the provider"**.

READ OUT FOR ALL

Please note, this call may be recorded for quality or training purposes. It takes around 20-25 minutes to complete.

A Organisation's Details

ASK ALL

- A1 **Before we start, I'd like to check a few things about your organisation. Firstly, how would you describe the main business activity of the organisation?**

PROBE FULLY:

What exactly is made or done by the organisation?

WRITE IN - MUST CODE TO 4-DIGIT SIC 2007.

--

ASK ALL

- A2 **How long has your organisation been in operation?** PROMPT IF NECESSARY

INTERVIEWER NOTE: This refers to the organisation as a whole

SINGLE CODE.

Less than 2 years	1
2 to 5 years	2
More than 5 and up to 10 years	3
More than 10 years	4
Don't know	5

ASK ALL

- A3 **Are there other establishments or sites in your organisation?**

SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

IF A3 = 1 OR 3

A4 **Is the Head Office located...**READ OUT (SINGLE CODE)

In Wales	1
Elsewhere in the UK	2
Elsewhere in Europe	3
Outside Europe	4
(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know	5

ASK ALL

A5 **How many people does your organisation employ** [IF A3 = 1 OR 3: **at the site where you work**]? Please include both full time and part time employees on your payroll, and any working proprietors or owners, but exclude any self-employed and outside contractors or agency staff.

PROMPT IF NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE.

No employees – just the respondent	X
Less than 10 employees	1
10 to 49 employees	2
50 to 249 employees	3
250+ employees	4
(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know	5

ASK ALL

A6 **How does this compare to the number of people employed** [IF A3 = 1 OR 3: **at the site**] 12 months ago? Do you have....READ OUT (SINGLE CODE)

More now than 12 months ago	1
Same	2
Fewer now than 12 months ago	3
(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know	4

ASK ALL

A7 **What is your job title and role within the organisation?**

WRITE IN (CODE TO SOC 2010 MAJOR GROUPS)

B Organisation's Training Behaviours

READ OUT FOR ALL

Before I talk to you about the involvement you have had with the Workforce Development Programme, I'd like to ask you a few questions about your organisation's approach to business planning and training.

ASK ALL

- B1 Does the organisation have a formal business plan which sets out the business' objectives for the coming year?**

SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

- B2 Would you say that the business' ambitions over the coming three years or so are...READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.**

To grow significantly	1
To grow a little	2
To maintain its current position	3
To survive	4
Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	5
(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know	6

- B3 Does the organisation have a training plan that specifies in advance the level and type of training your employees will need in the coming year?**

SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

IF B1 = 1 AND B3 = 1

B4 **Does this plan link to the objectives set in the organisation's business plan?**

SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

ASK ALL

B5 **Roughly how much did [A3=2 the organisation] [IF A3 = 1 OR 3: this site] spend with outside companies on training last year? Was it...READ OUT.**

SINGLE CODE

Nothing	1
Less than £5,000	2
£5,000 to £10,000	3
£10,001 to £20,000	4
£20,001 to £50,000	5
£50,001 to £100,000	6
More than £100,000	7
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know / refused	8

NB THERE IS NO B6

ASK ALL

B7 **Which of the following applies regarding your organisation or site's Investors in People (IIP) status...READ OUT?**

SINGLE CODE.

You are currently IIP accredited	1
You used to be IIP accredited but are not currently	2
Your organisation or site has never been IIP accredited	3
(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know	4

IF B7 = 1 (CURRENTLY ACCREDITED)
B8 **Roughly how long have you held the award?** PROMPT IF NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE.

Less than 12 months	1
1 to 2 years	2
More than 2 years	3
Don't know	4

C Route into the Workforce Development Programme {programme Section C from scratch}

SAY TO ALL: **Turning now to your organisation's involvement with the Workforce Development Programme.**

ASK ALL

- C1 **How did you or your organisation first hear about the Workforce Development Programme, was it...**READ OUT AND CODE FIRST MENTIONED

SINGLE CODE

ROTATE START POINT (THOUGH DON'T START WITH 6 TH CODE)		
Via a Welsh Government Official (other than a Workforce Development Manager)	1	ASK C2
Via a Workforce Development Adviser (READ OUT IF NECESSARY: they were at one time known as Human Resource Development, or HRD Advisers)	2	ASK C10
Via Business.Wales.gov.uk website	3	ASK C4
Via the Business Wales Helpline (READ OUT IF NECESSARY: this was previously known as the Flexible Support for Business Hotline)	4	ASK C5
Via a local business support centre	5	ASK C6
Via a learning provider	6	ASK C7
Via a Sector Skills Council	7	ASK C9
Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	8	ASK C18
(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know / Can't remember	9	

IF C1 = 1 (WELSH GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL)

- C2 **How helpful was the Welsh Government Official in enabling your organisation to find the right kind of training or support? Were they ...**READ OUT (SINGLE CODE).

Very helpful	1	ASK C3
Fairly helpful	2	
Neither helpful nor unhelpful	3	
Fairly unhelpful	4	
Very unhelpful	5	
(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know / Can't remember	6	

- IF C1 = 1 (WELSH GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL)
- C3 **Did the Welsh Government Official refer your organisation directly to a Workforce Development Adviser?**

SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1	ASK C10
No	2	ASK C18
(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know / Can't remember	3	

- IF C1 = 3 (BUSINESS WALES WEBSITE)
- C4 **How helpful was the Business Wales website in directing your organisation towards the right kind of training or support...READ OUT.**

SINGLE CODE.

Very helpful	1	ASK C18
Fairly helpful	2	
Neither helpful nor unhelpful	3	
Fairly unhelpful	4	
Very unhelpful	5	
(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know / Can't remember	6	

- IF C1 = 4 (BUSINESS WALES HELPLINE)
- C5 **How helpful was the Business Wales helpline in directing your organisation towards the right kind of training or support...READ OUT.**

SINGLE CODE.

Very helpful	1	ASK C5a
Fairly helpful	2	
Neither helpful nor unhelpful	3	
Fairly unhelpful	4	
Very unhelpful	5	
(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know / Can't remember	6	

IF C1 = 4 (BUSINESS WALES HELPLINE)

C5a **Thinking about the service your organisation received via the Business Wales helpline, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all and 5 is very...READ OUT.**
SINGLE CODE EACH ROW

	Not at all				Very	Don't know / NA
1. How quickly did you feel your queries or requests were responded to?	1	2	3	4	5	X
2. How accurate was the information with which you were provided?	1	2	3	4	5	X
3. How relevant was the information with which you were provided?	1	2	3	4	5	X
4. How appropriate were the referrals made e.g. putting you in contact with individuals or organisations that could help you?	1	2	3	4	5	X
5. How helpful were the people you dealt with	1	2	3	4	5	X

IF C1 = 5 (BUSINESS SUPPORT CENTRE)

C6 **How helpful was the local Business Support Centre in directing your organisation towards the right kind of training or support...READ OUT.**

SINGLE CODE.

Very helpful	1	ASK C18
Fairly helpful	2	
Neither helpful nor unhelpful	3	
Fairly unhelpful	4	
Very unhelpful	5	
(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know / Can't remember	X	

IF C1 = 6 (LEARNING PROVIDER)

- C7 **How helpful was the Learning Provider in enabling your organisation to find the kind of training and support you needed...READ OUT?**

SINGLE CODE.

Very helpful	1	ASK C8
Fairly helpful	2	
Neither helpful nor unhelpful	3	
Fairly unhelpful	4	
Very unhelpful	5	
(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know / Can't remember	X	

IF C1 = 6 (LEARNING PROVIDER)

- C8 **Has your organisation worked with this learning provider in the past?**

SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1	ASK C18
No	2	
(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know / Can't remember	3	

IF C1 = 7 (SECTOR SKILLS COUNCIL)

- C9 **How helpful was the Sector Skills Council in enabling your organisation to find the kind of training and support you needed...READ OUT?**

SINGLE CODE.

Very helpful	1	ASK C18
Fairly helpful	2	
Neither helpful nor unhelpful	3	
Fairly unhelpful	4	
Very unhelpful	5	
(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know / Can't remember	6	

IF C1 = 2 (A WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ADVISER) OR IF C3 = 1 (YES)
 C10 **What role did the Workforce Development Adviser play in helping your organisation to secure discretionary support under the Workforce Development Programme? Did they** READ OUT

SINGLE CODE EACH ROW

		Yes	No	Don't Know
1	Help you diagnose skills gaps and training needs	1	2	3
2	Help you identify qualifications that related to the training needs identified	1	2	3
3	Advise you on writing and costing a training plan	1	2	3
4	Write and cost a detailed training plan for you	1	2	3
5	Confirm that training identified in the training plan would qualify for financial support	1	2	3
6	Help you identify suitable training provision in line with the training plan	1	2	3
7	Assist you in choosing a training provider	1	2	3
8	Assist you in reviewing the progress made against your training plan and evaluating the effects and effectiveness of the training	1	2	3
9	Refer you to other forms of business support	1	2	3
10	Introduce you to good practice relating to workforce development	1	2	3
11	Help in any other way (IF YES: please specify)	1	2	3

IF B7 = 3 (YOUR ORGANISATION OR SITE HAS NEVER BEEN IIP ACCREDITED)
 AND [C1 = 2 (A WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ADVISER) OR IF C3 = 1 (YES)]
 C10a **Did the Workforce Development Adviser encourage your organisation to consider working towards the Investors in People, or IIP, award?**

SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1
No	2
(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know / Can't remember	3

- IF C10_1 (Help you diagnose skills gaps and training needs ...) = 1
- C11 **How helpful did you find the strategic workforce development diagnostic review undertaken by < 'name' from 'DUMMY: ADVISER NAME; OR IF NOT KNOWN AT THAT SAY 'the adviser'>? Was it ...**READ OUT

SINGLE CODE

Very helpful	1
Fairly helpful	2
Neither helpful nor unhelpful	3
Fairly unhelpful	4
Very unhelpful	5
(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know / Can't remember	X

- IF C10_6 (Help you identify suitable training provision ...) OR C10_7 (Assist you in choosing a training provider) = 1
- C12 **Overall, how helpful was the Workforce Development Adviser in helping your organisation identify and/or select appropriate training providers? Were they...**READ OUT

SINGLE CODE

Very helpful	1
Fairly helpful	2
Neither helpful nor unhelpful	3
Fairly unhelpful	4
Very unhelpful	5
(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know / Can't remember	X

- IF C10_8 (Assist you in reviewing the progress made ...) = 1
- C13 **How helpful was < 'name' from 'DUMMY: ADVISER NAME; OR IF NOT KNOWN AT THAT SAY 'the adviser'> in assisting your organisation to evaluate the progress made against your training plan, the quality of the training undertaken, and/or the impact the training had on the business? Were they...READ OUT**

SINGLE CODE

Very helpful	1
Fairly helpful	2
Neither helpful nor unhelpful	3
Fairly unhelpful	4
Very unhelpful	5
(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know / Can't remember	X

- IF C10_9 (Refer you to other forms of business support ...) = 1 (YES)
- C14 **How helpful was the Workforce Development Adviser in referring your organisation to other forms of business support. Were they...READ OUT**

SINGLE CODE

Very helpful	1
Fairly helpful	2
Neither helpful nor unhelpful	3
Fairly unhelpful	4
Very unhelpful	5
(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know / Can't remember	X

IF C10_10 (Introduce you to good practice ...) = 1

- C15 **How helpful was** < 'name' from 'DUMMY: ADVISER NAME; OR IF NOT KNOWN AT THAT SAY 'the adviser'> **in providing your organisation with examples of good practice in relation to workforce development? Were they...**READ OUT

SINGLE CODE

Very helpful	1
Fairly helpful	2
Neither helpful nor unhelpful	3
Fairly unhelpful	4
Very unhelpful	5
(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know / Can't remember	X

IF C1 = 2 (A WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ADVISER) *OR IF C3 = 1 (YES)*

- C16 **Had your organisation worked with this Workforce Development Adviser previously (IF NECESSARY: before the dealings related to the Workforce Development programme)?**

SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1	ASK C17
No	2	ASK C18
(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know / Can't remember	3	

IF C16 = 1 (YES)

- C17 **How long has your organisation worked with this Workforce Development Adviser?**READ OUT.

SINGLE CODE.

Less than 1 year	1	ASK C18
Between 1 and 3 Years	2	
More than 3 years	3	
(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know / Can't remember	X	

ASK ALL

- C18 **How long did it take from the time you submitted your Skills Development Plan and application for discretionary support, to being told that your application had been approved?** PROMPT IF NECESSARY

SINGLE CODE

Up to 2 weeks	1
More than 2 weeks up to 1 month	2
More than a month up to 2 months	3
More than 2 months	4
(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know / Can't remember	X

ASK ALL

- C19 **Did you think that was...?** READ OUT

SINGLE CODE

Far too long a time	1
A bit too long	2
A reasonable time	3
A quick turnaround	4
A very quick turnaround	5
(DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know / Can't remember	X

D Motivation {programme section D from scratch}

- D1 **What made you or the organisation decide to seek support under the Workforce Development Programme? Were you:** READ OUT
GRID. SINGLE CODE ONE PER ROW

	Yes	No	Don't know
Looking to identify skills gaps and training needs within the business?	1	2	3
Looking for a way of developing skills within the business, though without a clear idea of where the skills gaps lay?	1	2	3
Looking for a way of addressing specific skills gaps that you were already aware of within the business?	1	2	3
Looking for support with the costs of training that you had already decided your organisation needed?	1	2	3
Looking to improve the way in which the business manages its human resources in general?	1	2	3

- D2 **Was the activity undertaken with discretionary support linked to specific business objectives?** PROMPT IF NECESSARY
SINGLE CODE.

Yes – it was linked to specific objectives	1
No – the training was done just to improve skills in general	2
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	3

- D3 **When your organisation decided to apply for support, were you hoping the training would...**READ OUT

SINGLE CODE PER ITEM.

ROTATE START POINT	Yes	No	Don't know
Allow staff to gain specific qualifications	1	2	3
Build capacity to help the business grow	1	2	3
Improve staff relations and morale	1	2	3
Improve products or processes	1	2	3

- D4 **What other benefits to the business did you hope to gain as a result of undertaking training funded by discretionary support?**

WRITE IN
None....V
Don't know....X

- D5 **Was it clear beforehand how the skills developed by the training would be applied within your organisation?**

Yes	1
No	2
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	3

- D6 **Has your organisation received skills related support under any other publicly supported programmes or schemes in the last three years or so?**

Yes	1
No	2
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	3

IF D6 = 1 (YES)

- D7 **Which of the following skills related programmes has the business been involved with? READ OUT**
GRID. SINGLE CODE ONE PER ROW

	Yes	No	Don't know
The Enhancing Leadership and Management Skills, or ELMS, Programme	1	2	3
The Redundancy Action Scheme, or ReACT	1	2	3
Apprenticeships	1	2	3
Foundation Degrees	1	2	3
Essential Skills in the Workplace	1	2	3
Jobs Growth Wales	1	2	3
Skills Growth Wales	1	2	3
A University led Work-based Learning Programme	1	2	3
Another skills related programme (SPECIFY)	1	2	3

E Participation

E1 There is no E1

ASK ALL

E2 **Approximately how many people from your organisation participated in training funded by discretionary support received under the Workforce Development Programme?**

ENTER NUMBER OR CODE.

ENTER NUMBER, ALLOW 0 – 99,999	
Don't know / Can't remember	X

IF E2=0

E2a **What are the reasons why no one from your organisation has participated in training funded by discretionary support received under the Workforce Development Programme? Why else?**

WRITE IN
Don't know / Can't remember
NOW SKIP TO I6

IF E2 <> 0

E3 **Were any of those that participated in training...READ OUT**

MULTICODE

Owners	1
Directors / Senior Management	2
Middle management	3
Junior management / supervisory	4
Technicians/skilled craft-people	5
Shop-floor or unskilled workers	6
Clerical or administrative workers	7
Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	8
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know / can't remember	9

IF E2 <> 0

- E4 **Which of the following kinds of training did your staff undertake (or are they still going through) thanks to discretionary support under the Workforce Development Programme...READ OUT.?**

ALLOW MULTICODE

Induction training	1
Basic literacy or numeracy training	2
ICT training	3
Job specific technical skills (e.g. craft and technician training)	4
Project or process management skills	5
Procurement/supply chain management skills	6
Personal skills (e.g. interpersonal skills, communication)	7
Sales, marketing and account management skills	8
Financial skills	9
Modern foreign language skills	10
Training skills	11
Higher level health and safety, food hygiene, first aid etc. skills	12
Equal Opportunities Training	13
Environmental Management/Sustainability Training	14
Other - please specify	15

- IF E2 <> 0
E5 **What made you choose <FROM DUMMY 'PROVIDER NAME'> to deliver the training? Was it because ... READ OUT**
MULTICODE OK

You had worked with them before and knew what they could do	1
You had heard about them from other employers	2
<FROM DUMMY 'WDA name'> recommended them	3
They are the only organisation delivering this kind of training in your area	4
They proposed a programme of training that met your needs better than what other providers suggested	5
The price quoted by them was competitive	6
(DO NOT READ OUT) None of the above	7
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	X

IF E2 <> 0

- E6 **Was the training put together as a package specifically for your organisation (rather than staff slotting into courses which formed part of the training providers' standard portfolio)?**

SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1
Partly	2
No	3
Don't know	4

IF E2 <> 0

- E7 **Where was the training undertaken, was it... READ OUT**

MULTICODE OK

At the provider's premises	1
At a venue selected by the provider	2
At your organisation's premises	3
	4
Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	5
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	6

IF E2 <> 0

- E8 **Which of the following kinds of activities did staff undertake or participate in as part of the training? READ OUT.**

MULTICODE OK

Long courses (over a period of several months)	1
A development programme comprising a series of linked training sessions, with independent work between sessions	2
Multiple stand-alone training sessions/courses	3
A single stand-alone training session/ course	4
Other types of training activities (PLEASE SPECIFY)	5
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	6

IF E2 <> 0

- E9 **Would you have provided any of this training if the Workforce Development Programme support hadn't been available to you? Would you have ...** READ OUT.

SINGLE CODE.

Done the same training for the same number of people within the same timescales regardless	1
Done the same training for the same number of people, but over a longer period of time	2
Done some of the training within the same timescales regardless	3
Done some of the training, but over a longer period of time	4
Done none of the training without Workforce Development Programme Support	5
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	6

IF E9 = 2 (the same training but over a longer timescale ...) OR E9 = 4 (some of the training, but over a longer period ...)

- E10 **Roughly how much longer would it have taken you to do the training?** READ OUT.

SINGLE CODE.

Less than 3 months longer	1
3 – 6 months longer	2
More than 6 up to 12 months longer	3
More than 12 months longer	4
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	X

IF E9 = 3 (some of the training within the same timescales ...) OR E9 = 4 (some of the training, but over a longer period ...)

- E11 **Roughly what proportion of the training would you have undertaken anyway?** READ OUT.

SINGLE CODE.

Less than 25%	1
25%-50%	2
51%-75%	3
>75%	4
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	5

IF E9 = 1, 2, 3 or 4 (ALL...) OR (SOME...)

- E12 **How would you have funded some or all of the training in the absence of discretionary funding under the Workforce Development Programme?** READ OUT.

SINGLE CODE.

Using the company's own resources	1
Using other Welsh Government grant support	2
Other – please specify	3
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	4

IF E9 = 5 (done none of the training ...)

- E13 **What would have prevented you from doing at least some of the training you did anyway?** READ OUT.

MULTICODE OKAY.

We couldn't have afforded it	1
The training was not a high priority for the business	2
Some other reason (specify if yes)	0
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	X

IF E9 = 5 (done none of the training ...)

- E14 **Even if you hadn't done any of the training you did via the Workforce Development Programme Support, would you have:** READ OUT GRID. SINGLE CODE ONE PER ROW

	Yes	No	Don't know
Done similar training, but using a cheaper provider	1	2	3
Done similar training, but delivering it in-house	1	2	3
Done similar training, but without accreditation	1	2	3

F Reaction

IF E2 <> 0

Now I'm going to ask you about participants' reaction to the training.

IF E2 <> 0

- F1 Overall, how would you describe the reaction of the staff who participated in training supported by the Workforce Development Programme? Was it...READ OUT**

SINGLE CODE.

Very positive	1
Fairly positive	2
Neutral/Mixed	3
Fairly negative	4
Very negative	5
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know / can't remember	6

IF E2 <> 0

- F2 Thinking about the training undertaken with Workforce Development Programme support most recently, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all and 5 is very...READ OUT. SINGLE CODE EACH ROW**

INTERVIEWER NOTE: If respondent says they don't have knowledge of the training delivery, please code DK / NA – do not take guesses or 'no-one told me of any problem'.

	Not at all				Very	Don't know / NA
1. How well organised was the training or activity?	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. How engaging were the tutors?	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. How appropriate was the pace of delivery?	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. How appropriate were the learning materials issued?	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. How relevant was the training to those participating	1	2	3	4	5	6

- IF E2 <> 0
- F3 **Was the content of the training pitched at the right level for the individuals attending?**
SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1
No	2
Difficult to say – the individuals had different levels of experience and knowledge	3
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	4

- IF E2 <> 0
- F4 **How would you rate the overall quality of the training...READ OUT?**
SINGLE CODE.

Very good	1
Good	2
Mixed	3
Poor	4
Very poor	5
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	6

- IF E2 <> 0
- F5 **Which of the following best describes how effectively the training achieved its specified learning outcomes, from the business' perspective...READ OUT?**
SINGLE CODE.

Fully achieved outcomes	1
Largely achieved outcomes	2
Achieved some of the outcomes	3
Largely failed to achieve outcomes	4
Totally failed to achieve outcomes	5
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	6

G Learning

IF E2 <> 0

I'd like to turn now to what participants actually learnt as a result of the training they undertook.

IF E2 <> 0

**G1 Has all of the training funded via discretionary support been completed?
SINGLE CODE.**

Yes	1	ASK G3
No	2	ASK G2
Don't know	3	ASK G3

IF G1 = 2 (NO)

**G2 What has prevented the discretionary funded training from being completed?
PROMPT IF NECESSARY MULTICODE OK**

The training is still on-going – participants have yet to complete but are expected to do so	1
The timetable originally set for the delivery of the training was unrealistic	2
Unforeseen work commitments prevented participant(s) from being released to undertake the training	3
The location of the training made attendance difficult	4
The content of the training was unsuitable	5
The quality of the training was low	6
Participant(s)' personal commitments got in the way	7
Participant(s) turned out not to be the right person/ people for this kind of training	8
Participant(s) didn't enjoy the training	9
Participant(s) became sick	10
Participant(s) left the company	11
Other (SPECIFY)	0
Don't know / can't remember	X

IF E2 <> 0

- G3 **Did those who participated in the training funded by discretionary support under the Workforce Development Programme achieve any sort of qualification(s) or part qualifications as a result?**
SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1	ASK G4
No	2	ASK G8
Don't know	3	

IF G3 = 1 (YES: QUALIFICATIONS ATTAINED)

- G4 **What level were these qualifications at?**
READ OUT. MULTI CODE.

Level 2	1
Level 3	2
Level 4	3
Level 5	4
Level 6	5
Level 7	6
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	7
Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	8

IF G3 = 1 (YES: QUALIFICATIONS ATTAINED)

- G5 **In general, were these qualifications at a higher, lower or the same level as the most advanced qualifications that participants already held?**
SINGLE CODE.

Higher	1
The same	2
Lower	3
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know / varied too much to say	4

- IF G3 = 1 (YES: QUALIFICATIONS ATTAINED)
- G6 **How important was it to the organisation that the individual(s) who undertook the training achieved qualifications? Was it...**READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Very important	1
Fairly important	2
Neither important nor unimportant	3
Fairly unimportant	4
Very unimportant	5
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	6

- IF G3 = 1 (YES: QUALIFICATIONS ATTAINED)
- G7 **How important was achieving qualifications to the individual(s) who undertook the training?** READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Very important	1
Fairly important	2
Neither important nor unimportant	3
Fairly unimportant	4
Very unimportant	5
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	6

- IF G3 = 2 OR 3 (QUALIFICATIONS NOT ATTAINED)
- G8 **How, if at all, was what participants learnt assessed by the provider?** PROMPT IF NECESSARY. MULTICODE OK.

Learning wasn't assessed	1
Test taken at the end of the activity	2
Portfolio produced at the end of the activity	3
Presentation given at the end of the activity	4
Trainer/assessor observed new skills being applied	5
Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	6
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	7

IF E2 <> 0

- G11 **After the training, did participants and their managers discuss how they would apply what they had learnt in the workplace?**
SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

IF E2 <> 0

- G12 **Does the organisation offer those that participated in training any mentoring or coaching to follow-up what was learnt?**
SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

H Behaviour

IF E2 <> 0

I'd now like to turn to the effects of what was learnt in the workplace.

IF E2 <> 0

- H1 **To what extent have those who participated in training been able to put into practice what they learnt...READ OUT**
SINGLE CODE.

To a very great extent	1
To a great extent	2
To some extent	3
Hardly at all	4
Not at all	5
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	X

IF E2 <> 0

- H2 **What, if anything, has made it difficult to put the learning into practice?**

Nothing has made this difficult	1
Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	2

IF E2 <> 0

- H3 **Turning to what you originally envisaged the organisation would get out of the training, to what extent have the skills developed allowed specific business objectives to be achieved?**
READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

To a very great extent	1
To a great extent	2
To some extent	3
Hardly at all	4
Not at all	5
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	6

IF E2 <> 0

H4 **Did involvement with the Workforce Development Programme have any negative effects within the business?**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

IF H4 = 1 (YES)

H4A What were these negative effects?

WRITE IN

IF E2 <> 0

H5 **How likely is your organisation to undertake further training in the coming 12 months....**

READ OUT

SINGLE CODE.

Very likely	1
Fairly likely	2
Neither likely nor unlikely	3
Fairly unlikely	4
Very unlikely	5
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	6

IF H5 = 1 or 2 (Very likely OR Fairly likely):

H6 **Has involvement with the Workforce Development Programme made it any more likely that the organisation will undertake more training than it would otherwise have?**

SINGLE CODE

Yes	1
No	2
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	3

IF H5 = 1 or 2 (Very likely OR Fairly likely):

H7 **How do you envisage that such training will be paid for? Will it be...** READ OUT
SINGLE CODE

Funded entirely by the business	1
Part funded by the business with the balance of the cost being met by government or other sources	2
Funded entirely by government or other sources	3
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	4

IF H7 = 2 (Part funded by the business...):

H8 **Roughly what proportion of the cost do you envisage the business will be prepared to pay?** PROMPT IF NECESSARY
SINGLE CODE.

Less than 25%	1
25%-50%	2
51%-75%	3
More than 75%	4
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	5

IF H7 = 2 (Part funded by the business...):

H8A **What would prevent the business from meeting a greater share of the cost of any future training?**READ OUT

MULTICODE OK .

The business couldn't afford it	1
The business wouldn't be prepared to pay the costs of accreditation, only the costs of training	2
Other (IF YES please specify)	0
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	X

I Impact

IF E2 <> 0

Finally, I'd like to ask you some questions about the impact which the training has had upon various aspects of business performance.

IF SOLE TRADER (A5=X), GO TO I4

IF A5 <> X AND E2 <> 0

- I1 On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all and 5 is a great deal, how much would you say the training has impacted upon staff who participated in terms of:**
READ OUT. SINGLE CODE EACH ROW

	Not at all				A great deal	Don't know / NA
1. Staff understanding of their roles within the organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Staff attitudes and preparedness to take responsibility	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Teamwork within the organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Staff flexibility or ability to multi-skill	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. The extent to which staff ask for training	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Staff's willingness to participate in training	1	2	3	4	5	6

IF A5 <> X AND E2 <> 0

- I2 Using the scale 'improved substantially', 'improved a little', 'made no change', 'got slightly worse' and 'got a lot worse', how would you say the workshops or training has impacted upon staff who participated in terms of:**
READ OUT. SINGLE CODE

	improved substantially	improved a little	made no change	got slightly worse	got a lot worse	Don't know / NA
1. Staff morale	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. The number and seriousness of personnel problems (e.g. grievances, disciplinaries)?	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Staff retention	1	2	3	4	5	6

IF A5 <> X AND E2 <> 0

- 13 **Again using the same options**, [READ OUT AGAIN IF NECESSARY: 'improved substantially', 'improved a little', 'made no change', 'got slightly worse' and 'got a lot worse'], **how would you say the training has impacted upon staff who participated in terms of:**

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE

	improved substantially	improved a little	made no change	got slightly worse	got a lot worse	Don't know / NA
1. Promotion and being given more responsibility	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Pay	1	2	3	4	5	6

IF E2 <> 0

- 14 [IF A5<>X: **Again using the same options**, [READ OUT AGAIN IF NECESSARY: 'improved substantially', 'improved a little', 'made no change', 'got slightly worse' and 'got a lot worse'], **how would you say the training has impacted upon staff who participated in terms of:]**

[IF SOLE TRADERS A5=X: **Using the scale 'improved substantially', 'improved a little', 'made no change', got slightly worse' and 'got a lot worse', how would you say the training has impacted upon your:]**

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE

INTERVIEWER NOTE: Please do not include changes the employer *expects to happen* but which have not happened yet.

	improved substantially	improved a little	made no change	got slightly worse	got a lot worse	Don't know / NA
1. Product or service improvement or innovation	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Quality of customer service	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Accreditation for particular quality standards	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Supply chain management/ procurement processes	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Productivity and efficiency	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Wastage rates/ down-time	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. The use of new technologies	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. The quality of products or services	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Profit levels / reducing losses	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Your organisation's prospects going forward	1	2	3	4	5	6

- IF I4_9 statement is 1-2 = 'improved substantially' or 'improved a little' ASK
- I5 **Are you able to say roughly how much of a percentage increase there has been in profit because of the training?**
PROMPT IF NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE

Less than 5%	1
Between 5 and 10%	2
Between 10 and 20%	3
More than 20%	4
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know / Too early to say	5

- ASK ALL
- I6 **What do you feel are the key business challenges your company has faced over the last 2 years?** DO NOT READ OUT. PROBE: What else?

Difficult to make enough sales/increased competition/insufficient demand	1
Falling profit margins	2
Economic downturn / recession generally	3
Have more work than can handle	4
Finding staff or workers / suitably skilled staff or workers	5
Retaining staff (or workers)	6
Getting finance to expand (banks not lending)	7
Clients slow to pay / late payment	8
Increased regulations / legislation / red tape (inc planning regulations)	9
Rising prices / materials costs (inc fuel costs)	10
Other (WRITE IN)	0
None / no particular challenges	V

J Future Studies

ASK ALL

- J1 **We are also hoping to hold some more in depth discussions with a handful of companies that have been involved in the Workforce Development Programme in order to better understand how the programme has affected them and how, potentially, things might be done differently.**

Our discussion just now suggests that your organisation might well provide some useful insight in that respect and I wonder whether you would be prepared for a colleague of mine to contact you with a view to paying your company a visit in the next few weeks. We would, of course, try to ensure that any such visit causes the minimum of disruption and will fit in with a timetable to suit you.

Would you potentially be willing to take part in this?

SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

IF J1 = 1 (YES):

- J2 **Could I just take your e-mail address so that my colleague can drop you a line to arrange a visit.**

--

THANK AND CLOSE SURVEY

I declare that this survey has been carried out under IFF instructions and within the rules of the MRS Code of Conduct.

INTERVIEWER SIGNATURE:

Date:

Finish time:

Interview Length

mins
