

Local area report **Wigan**

Data from the Greater Manchester
Local Skills Improvement Plan



Funded by
UK Government



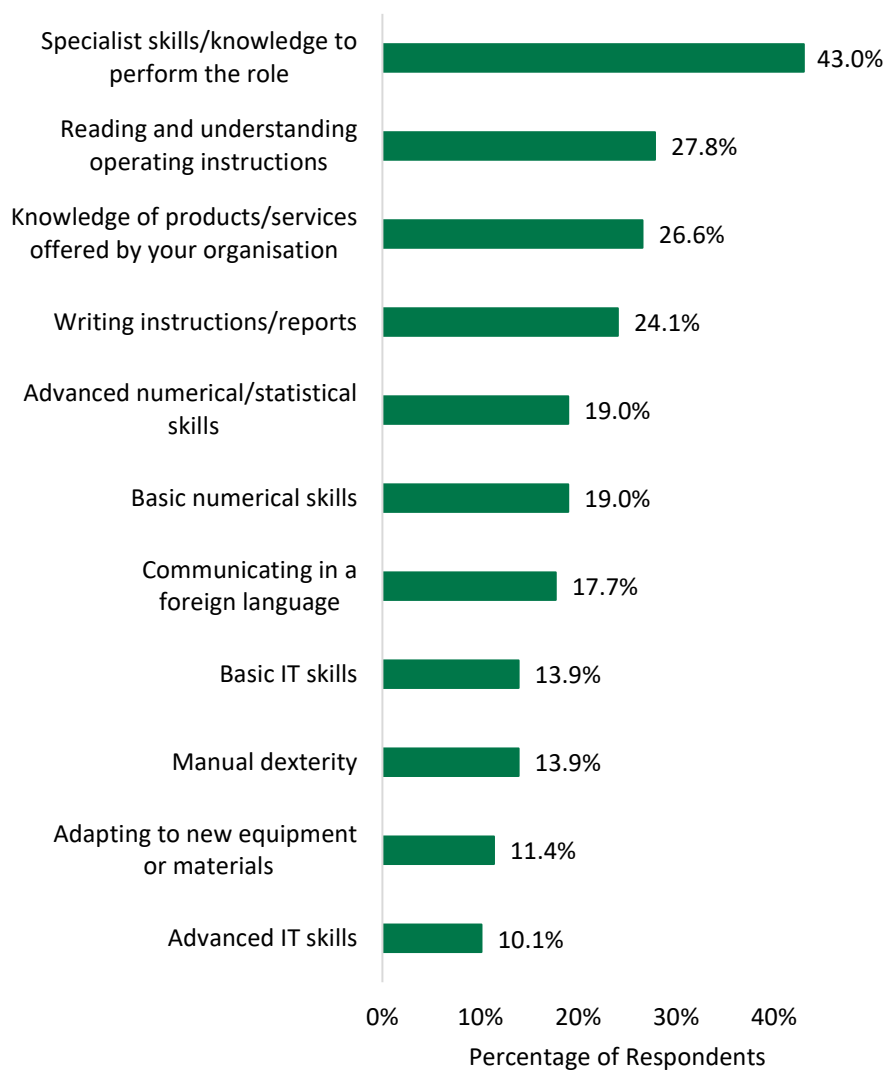
Greater Manchester
Chamber of Commerce

Wigan

71% of businesses in Wigan reported recruitment difficulties making it the local authority area with the third highest level of recruitment problems in Greater Manchester. Difficulties revolved around 'skilled and technical' and 'professional/managerial roles', with 42.4% and 30.4% of businesses saying such roles were hard to fill. This was followed by 'clerical' (22.8%) and 'unskilled and semi-skilled' (20.7%). Notably, recruitment difficulties were elevated for all types of roles.

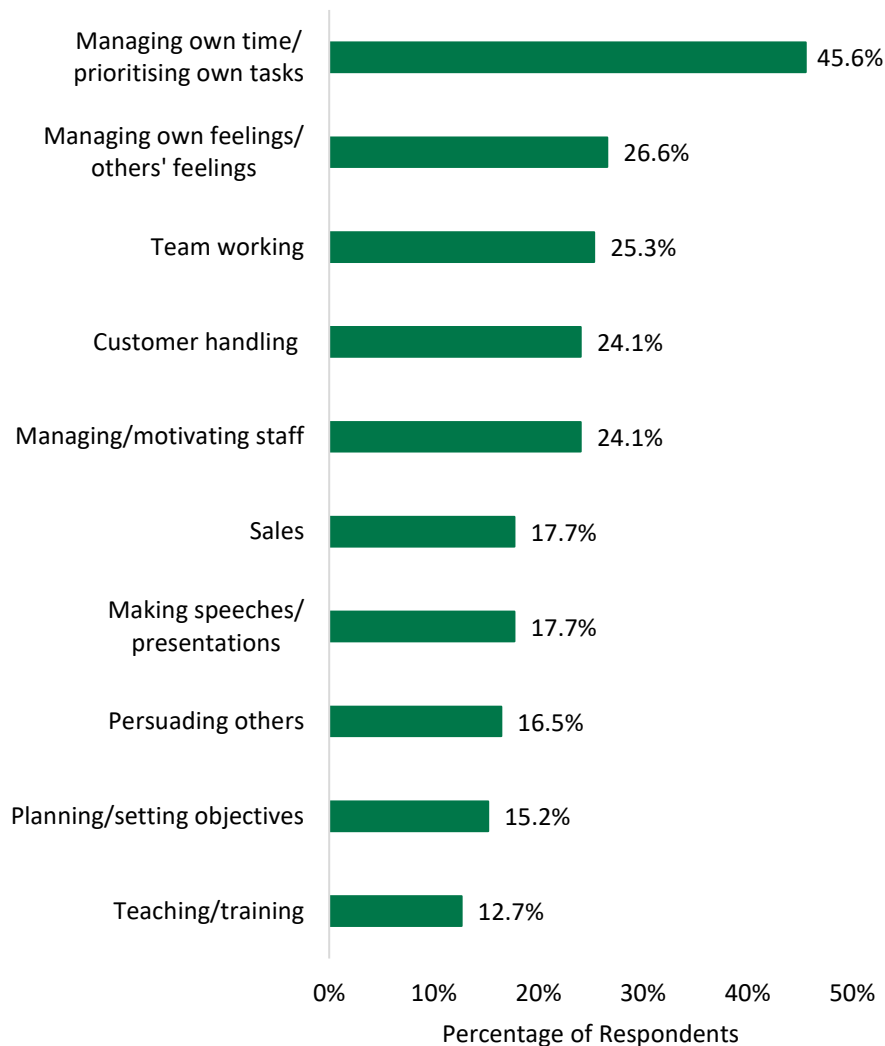
Skills shortages amongst candidates in Wigan were similar to that of Greater Manchester. 'Specialist skills/knowledge to perform the role' was the most difficult technical skill to find in candidates, with 43% of respondents reporting this. In second and third came 'reading and understanding operating instructions' (27.8%) and 'knowledge of products/services offered by their organisation' (26.6%).

Technical Skills Difficult to Obtain From Candidates



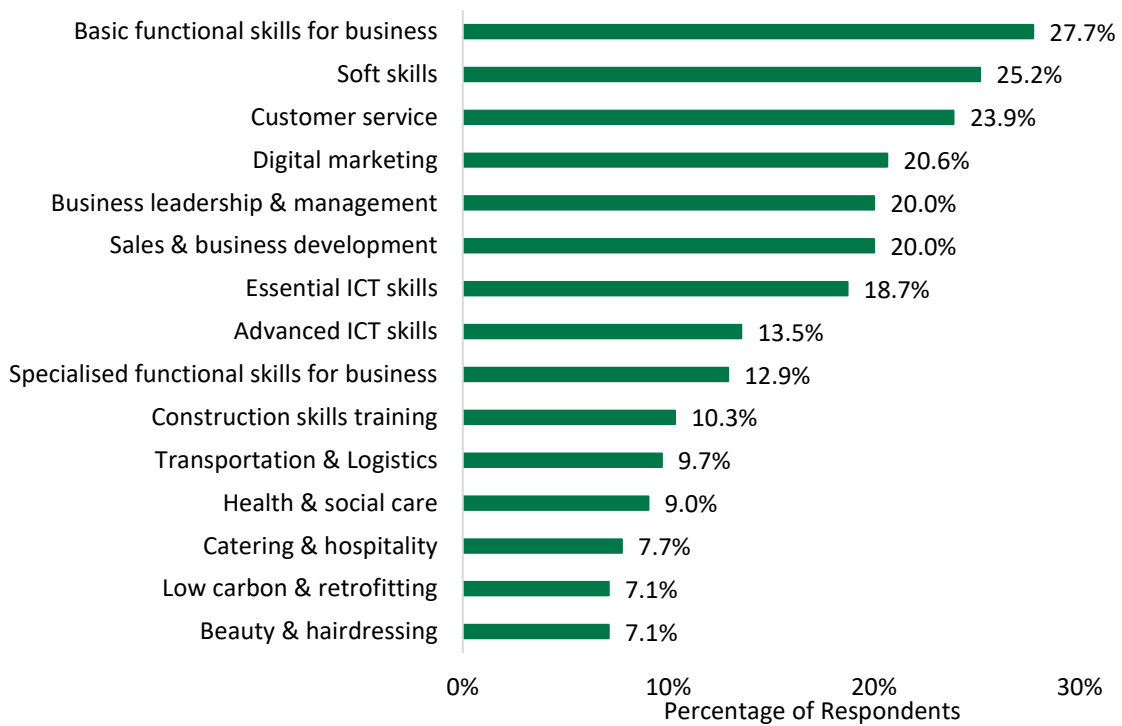
Regarding soft skills, 'ability to manage own time and prioritise own tasks' (45.6%, 36), 'managing own feelings or the feelings of others' (26.6%) and 'team working' (25.3%) were the hardest to get from candidates. Employers in Wigan required 'reading and understanding operating instructions' and 'team working' in higher proportions than the overall Greater Manchester average.

Soft Skills Difficult to Obtain From Candidates



The training area of greatest interest was 'basic functional skills for business', with 27.7% of businesses indicating they would provide this type of training to their staff. This was followed by 'soft skills' (25.2%), 'customer service' (23.9%) and 'digital marketing' (20.6%). 'Business leadership and management' came fifth but it was less popular in Wigan than in the other local authorities.

Training Areas of Interest for Businesses



The below table shows the top 10 occupations by total number of vacancy postings in Wigan from 2017 – 2022. This is from Adzuna data.

2017		2018		2019	
Job title	Postings	Job title	Postings	Job title	Postings
General Nurse	1009	General Nurse	937	General Nurse	1405
Social Care Worker	813	Social Care Worker	918	Social Care Worker	827
Lorry Driver	575	Warehouse Worker	826	Lorry Driver	790
Warehouse Worker	466	Lorry Driver	730	Teaching Assistant	631
Healthcare Assistant	399	Teaching Assistant	372	Warehouse Worker	575

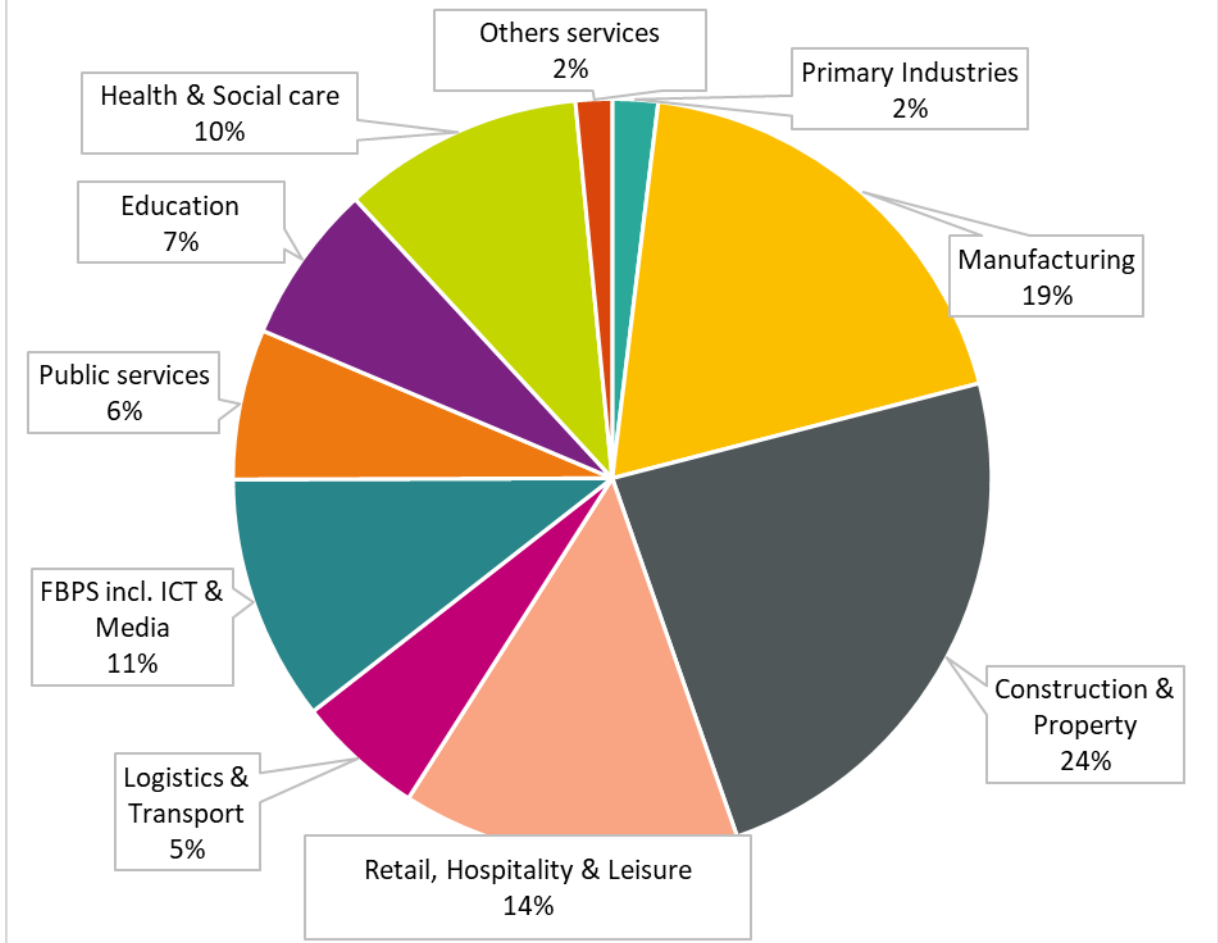
Primary School Teacher	388	Childminder	326	Primary School Teacher	442
Mental Health Nurse	364	Primary School Teacher	324	Driver	289
Maintenance Engineer	346	Production Operative	301	Manager	264
Driver	341	Driver	298	Assistant	259
Childminder	309	Mental Health Nurse	283	Sales Executive	250
2020		2021		2022	
Job title	Postings	Job title	Postings	Job title	Postings
General Nurse	1039	Warehouse Worker	1486	Warehouse Worker	1864
Lorry Driver	850	Social Care Worker	1392	Social Care Worker	1441
Social Care Worker	792	Lorry Driver	951	Software Developer	1052
Warehouse Worker	428	General Nurse	725	Lorry Driver	751
Teaching Assistant	427	Teaching Assistant	685	Hand Packer	695
Primary School Teacher	333	Driver	593	Production Operative	625
Disability Assessor	241	Production Operative	545	General Nurse	586
Cleaner	232	Cleaner	396	Associate	529

Driver	230	Primary School Teacher	382	Teaching Assistant	502
Production Operative	228	Assistant	374	Engineer	500

Employment in Wigan

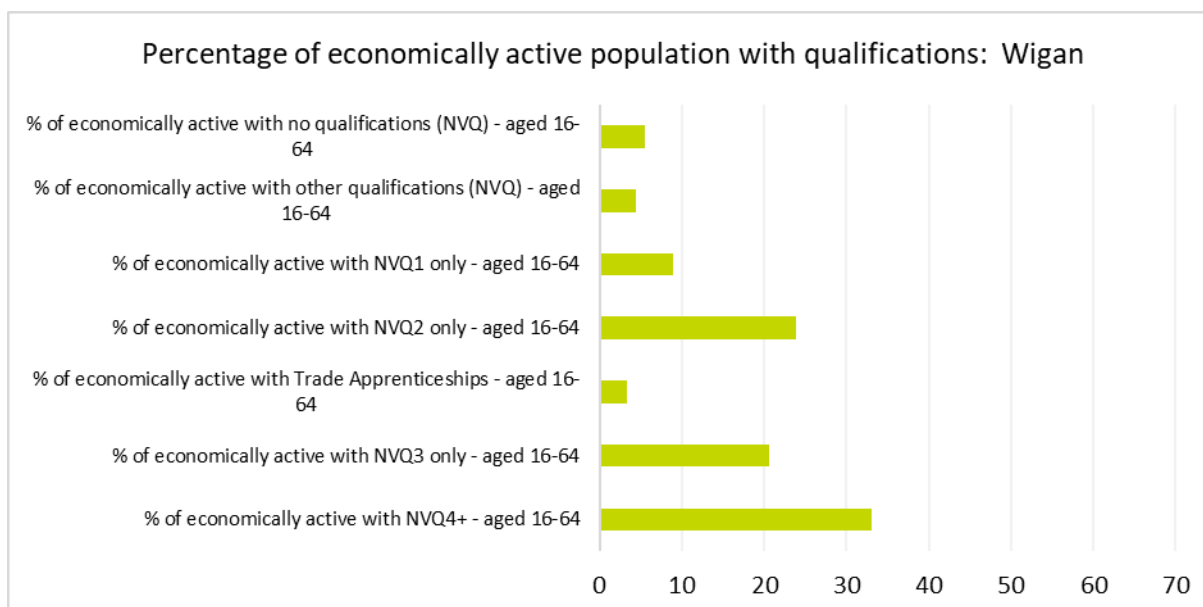
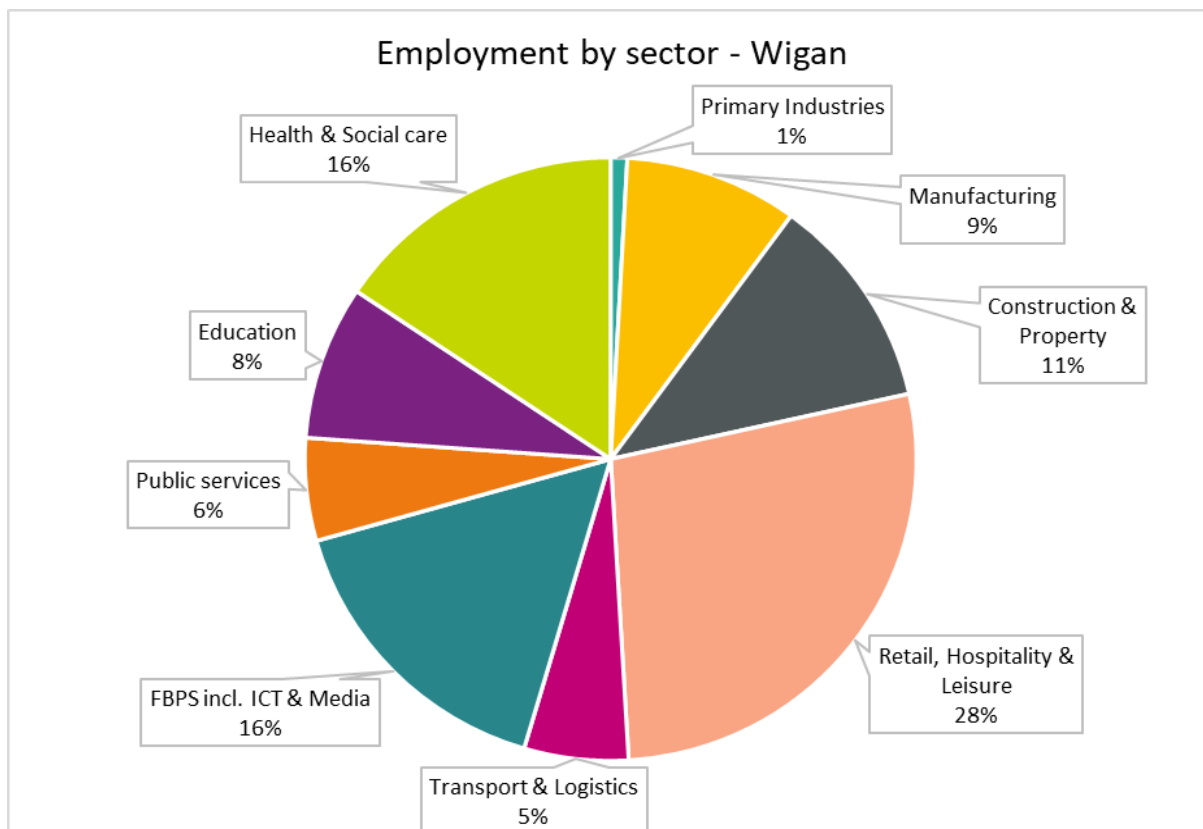


GVA by sector - Wigan



Employment: 155,700

- At 28% of total employment, the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure sector is the largest employer.
- Between 2017 & 2021, employment in the Construction and Property sector had the highest growth at 10.1% while the Primary Industries group saw the largest decline.
- Despite the significant growth in the GVA of the Manufacturing sector, employment in the sector declined by 4.5% from 2017.



LA priorities ¹⁸

- Logistics
- Manufacturing
- Retail
- Health and Social care
- Construction

Future investment / projects¹⁹

Wigan is part of the Wigan & Bolton Growth Corridor. The key priorities for this growth cluster and the implication for employment / skills development are laid out in the table below.

Investment benefits	Development	Skills areas or job titles
Construction	Transport infrastructure, bus corridor, motorways, rail expansion, homes, warehouses, future Wigan HS2 station	Civil engineer, labourer, site supervisor, quantity surveyor, roofer, tile fitter, scaffolder, plasterer, painter, bricklayer, ceiling fixer, highway engineer, rail engineer
Logistics	Transport and distribution	Driver, warehouse worker, forklift operator, transport manager, assembly operative
Health	Public Investment	Care worker, care assistant, nurse
Education	Public investment	Teachers, teaching assistant, tutor, SEN assistant
Professional services	Health research and innovation (biosensors, genomics and precision medicine, diagnostics, Biopharmaceuticals and application of advanced materials.)	Digital and AI transformation in health, pharmaceutical researcher, bioinformatician, epidemiologist, clinical data analyst
Green Opportunities	Green infrastructure, transport, manufacturing	Plumber – Heat Pump, retrofit assessor, retrofitting coordinator, digital skills needed for

¹⁸ Wigan Economic Vision <https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Docs/PDF/Business/Economic-vision/Wigan-Economic-Vision.pdf>

¹⁹ [Greater Manchester's Growth Locations \(aboutgreatermanchester.com\)](http://aboutgreatermanchester.com)

		green transformation, energy consultant, low carbon project manager, electrical engineer, waste recycling management roles
Manufacturing	Advanced manufacturing, commercialisation of advanced manufacturing techniques, research on advanced manufacturing	Production operative, software developer, mechanical engineer, electric engineer, automotive design engineer, project engineers (materials), AI skills, production design skills

Occupations most in demand identified from Adzuna data:

Sector	Job Titles
FBPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Software developer • Manager • Administrator • Recruitment consultant • Project managers • Credit manager • Accountant • HR • Business development manager
Health and Social care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social care worker • General nurse • Healthcare assistant • Mental health nurse • Personal trainer
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching assistants • Primary school teacher • SEN assistant • English teacher secondary school • Cover supervisor • Mathematics teacher
Transport and storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warehouse worker • Cleaner • Driver
Manufacturing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production operative • Engineer • Machine operator

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technician • Product designer • Electrical maintenance engineer • Field service manager • Purchasing manager
Hospitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer assistant • Sales executive • Chef • Shift managers
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity surveyors • Labourers • Quantity surveyors • Labourers • Site managers

Survey findings

Jobs that are difficult to recruit

Businesses were asked “*What are the job title(s) that you face difficulties recruiting for?*” The table below shows the most cited job titles for the largest sectors in Wigan:

Sector	Job Titles
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction Labourer • Project Manager • Engineer
FBPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manager • Administrator • Accountant
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care Worker • Support Worker
Hospitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manager • Chef
Manufacturing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production Operative • Welder • Engineer

Key causes of recruitment difficulties

Businesses were asked “*What are the main reasons why you are facing recruitment difficulties?*”. The top reasons were:

- Low number of applicants with the required skills
- Not enough people interested in doing this type of job
- Lack of qualifications the company needs

Recommendations

1. The manufacturing sector is one of the priority areas for Wigan and the College already provides courses at a variety of levels that meet the emerging needs of the manufacturing and engineering sector. This provision will be required to continue in the future and will also need to evolve and adapt to take account of advancements in AI and other new technologies that increasingly impact on the sector.
2. Linked to the above is an increasing demand for reskilling from one role to another especially around the move away from 'heavy' industry, engineering and other roles in 'decline'. Workers with skills in operating advanced machinery and using hand/power tools means they could work in the construction, logistics and manufacturing sectors. Job roles such as steel fabrication and welding are in demand and the combination of existing soft skills and skills taught from new courses will mean new roles are accessible.
3. There are 19 courses available for 'construction crafts/construction studies' which will help towards the massive 12% increase in employment in the last 5 years. With construction being one of the three biggest contributors to GVA and a priority for this local authority, this should remain constant. The courses also range from entry level to degree level so there are no shortages of development. It is recommended that Wigan College implements courses related to solar energy and energy regulation, computer literacy with regards to architecture/engineering and green skills to supplement the offer.
4. Demand for more 'traditional' trades such as bricklaying is becoming a job role that is in high demand. It is important that provision matches demand and allows for growth rates within trades and sectors. There is already good provision in construction trade skills, but these must be able to switch to match demand. Additionally, there could be a gap for more advanced content including utilising technologies in the role, content tailored to carbon neutrality and more of the entrepreneurial side of the trade.
5. There is currently strong provision for Health and Social Care with courses offered from level 1 to degree level. Given the growth of technology in hospitals and health facilities, there will need to be training for technology-based skills to build fluidity between different care providers. Technology is underutilised in the care professions and many still operate on paper. Due to there being 17,000 workers, one of the biggest contributors to GVA, and it being a priority sector, Wigan College could incorporate courses for those roles where there is overlap around new digital technologies, the Internet of Things and health. There does seem to be an adequate number of courses in total, however implementing this technological aspect is important. This could just be a module or two, working hands-on with communication software and knowledge of the technology to make an impact on the

sector.

6. Management roles are in demand for many sectors, including construction and manufacturing, which are both priority sectors and two of the three biggest contributors to GVA. Due to the broad nature of the role of management, Wigan College could offer training in more specific duties and skills tailored for the respective industries. This could be warehouse management and site management which will teach existing management soft skills along with specific industry management skills. These should also contain awareness of green skills such as waste management and energy consciousness to contribute to meeting net zero targets.