Business West and our business partners are working with the new West of England Combined (WoE) Authority, WoE LEP, Local Authorities, FE Colleges and training partners to gather intelligence to feed into the overall West of England Skills Strategy.

The Skills West business and training survey will gather information on skills shortages, recruitment and workforce development across West of England businesses. This is your opportunity to share your views and ensure that skills and training provision is relevant to business needs.   The insight gained from the survey will also help the region identify future skills requirements and priorities for your sector.   In return for your help we'll make a copy of the full report available to you online (all results will be anonymised). You'll also be entered into a prize draw to win a £200, £75 or £50 Amazon or Cabot Circus gift card.

Thanks in advance for your time.

1. We'd like to start by finding out some information about your business. *

Company Name
[   ]
*

Postcode
[   ]
*

Full Name
[   ]
*

Job Title
[   ]
*

Email
[   ]
*

Phone Number
[   ]
*

2. Approximately how many people work in your business? *

3. Does your business have a UK salary bill over £3 million? (This is relevant to the apprenticeship levy). *

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't know

4. Does your business sell its products or services to individuals or businesses from overseas? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

5. Do you consider your business to be a social enterprise? *

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Don't know

6. Do you consider your business to be part of the low carbon economy? *

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No   Go to Q8
- [ ] Don't know   Go to Q8

7. Which area of the low carbon economy does your business belong to? *

- [ ] Circular economy
- [ ] Environmental products/services
- [ ] Research and development
- [ ] Innovation
- [ ] Other (please specify):

4. Recruitment

We'd like to find out about your experience of recruiting over the past 12 months.

8. What methods do you use when recruiting? *

- [ ] Social media
- [ ] Recruitment websites
- [ ] Print
- [ ] Your Website
- [ ] Word of mouth
- [ ] Recruitment agencies
- [ ] Open days/job fairs
- [ ] Graduate recruitment

☐ Apprenticeship recruitment

☐ Universities, colleges, schools

☐ Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

☐ Other (please specify):

9. Looking back over the past 12 months, has your business advertised any vacancies? *

☐ Yes

☐ No   Go to Q15

☐ Unsure   Go to Q15

☐ NA   Go to Q15

10. In the last 12 months did you recruit any of the following individuals? (Please tick as many as apply).

☐ Apprentices

☐ University interns/placements

☐ Recent graduates

☐ Experienced/skilled workers

☐ School/college leavers - 18 years plus

☐ 16 -18 year olds not in training

☐ Women returners

☐ Paid seasonal contract staff

11. Thinking back to your vacancies, were any of them difficult to fill? *

☐ Yes

☐ No   Go to Q15

☐ Don't know   Go to Q15

12. Which types of roles were difficult to fill? (Please tick all that apply) *

☐ Semi/unskilled

☐ Clerical/administration

☐ Sales/customer service

☐ Skilled manual / Technical

☐ Professional/managerial

☐ Other (please specify):

  [   ]

13. Why did you struggle to fill these roles? *

☐ Competition from other employers

☐ Low number of applicants with the required skills or qualifications

☐ Low number of applicants with the required attitude, motivation or personality

☐ Low number of applicants with required experience

☐ Shift work/unsociable hours

☐ Remote location/poor public transport

☐ Short term/temporary contract

☐ Poor perception or lack of understanding of industry

☐ Brexit implications on EU workers

☐ Cost implications for employing foreign nationals

☐ Other (please specify):

  [   ]

14. What changes are you making to address these recruitment issues? *

☐ Increasing salaries

☐ Increasing development of existing staff into new roles

☐ Using new recruitment methods or channels

☐ Offering flexible working

☐ Training less qualified recruits

☐ Bringing in contractors or contracting out the work

☐ Recruiting workers who are non-UK nationals

☐ Working with organisations which engage with under-represented groups (please specify below)

☐ Nothing

☐ Don't know

☐ Other (please specify):
_____

15. What do you feel is the biggest barrier to young people choosing a career in your sector?

☐ Poor perception of the industry

☐ Lack of understanding of the industry

☐ Lack of training available locally

☐ Competition from other sectors

☐ Unclear career progression routes

☐ Other (please specify):
_____

7. Skills and Training

We'd like to find out more about your skills and training needs.

16. Please tell us how important the following skills are within your business, where 10 is most important and 1 is least important.

	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Communication (oral and written)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Problem solving	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Numeracy and analytical	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Team working	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Customer service	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Project management	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Presentation skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Facilitation skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sales	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Leadership and management	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
People management	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Foreign languages	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Basic computer literacy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Digital skills - marketing/social media	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Financial management/budget control	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
ICT (Technical, infrastrucuture, new software, security)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

17. Which of the following best reflects the sector your business operates in? *

☐ Advanced engineering   Go to Q19

☐ Aerospace   Go to Q19

☐ Construction   Go to Q21

☐ Creative and digital   Go to Q24

☐ Distribution   Go to Q28

☐ Health and life sciences

☐ High-tech   Go to Q30

☐ Professional and financial services   Go to Q32

☐ Retail   Go to Q34

☐ Rural / food economy

☐ Visitor economy   Go to Q37

☐ Other

18. What is your line of business? *

[Go to Q39   ]

19. In which areas of advanced engineering and aerospace do you operate? *

[   ]

20. In which of the following areas do you have skills shortages?

☐ Technical skills (please provide further details below)

☐ Technical sales (please provide further details below)

☐ Quality management

☐ Machine maintenance

☐ Other (please specify):

[Go to Q39   ]

21. In which areas of the construction sector does your business operate? *

[ ]

22. In which of the following areas do you have skills shortages?

- [ ] Senior, executive and business process managers
- [ ] Construction managers
- [ ] Project managers
- [ ] Non-construction professional, technical, IT and other office based staff
- [ ] High-skilled construction trades (please specify below)
- [ ] Low-skilled construction trades (please specify below)
- [ ] Civil engineers
- [ ] Architects / surveyors

23. If you employ sub-contractors do you offer them training? *

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Don't know
- [ ] We don't employ sub-contractors ⟶ Go to Q39

24. In which areas of the creative and digital sector does your business operate? *

[ ]

25. What software systems do you use?

[ ]

26. In which of the following areas do you have skills shortages?

- [ ] Web development
- [ ] Design
- [ ] Data and analysis

- [ ] Writing
- [ ] Programming
- [ ] Languages
- [ ] Other (please specify):

      _____

27. If you offer training to freelancers who pays for this training? *

- [ ] The freelancer
- [ ] Your organisation
- [ ] It varies or can be split between both
- [ ] Don't know
- [ ] We don't employ freelancers
- [ ] We employ freelancers but don't offer training
- [ ] Other (please specify):

      _____ | Go to Q39 |

28. In which areas of the distribution sector do you operate? *

_____

29. In which of the following areas do you have skills shortages?

- [ ] HGV driving
- [ ] FLT driving
- [ ] Health and safety
- [ ] Commercial
- [ ] Logistics engineering
- [ ] Procurement
- [ ] Business improvement

Please provide any further information.

_____ | Go to Q39 |

30. In which areas of the high-tech sector does your business operate? *

_____

31. Which of the following technical roles would you be looking to fill in the next 12 months?

- [ ] Developer
- [ ] Analyst
- [ ] Consultant
- [ ] Project manager
- [ ] Technical architect
- [ ] Administrator
- [ ] UX designer
- [ ] Network engineer
- [ ] Service engineer
- [ ] Other (please specify):

Go to Q39

32. In which areas of the professional and financial services sector does your business operate? *

33. In which of the following areas do you have skills shortages?

- [ ] Compliance and regulation
- [ ] Risk
- [ ] Customer service
- [ ] Digital and technology
- [ ] Sales
- [ ] Technical
- [ ] Other (please specify):

Go to Q39

34. In which areas of the retail sector do you operate? *

35. In which of the following areas do you have skills shortages?

- [ ] Product knowledge
- [ ] Electronic point of sale technology
- [ ] Merchandising
- [ ] Sales processing
- [ ] Stock control / warehousing
- [ ] Negotiating

Please provide any further information.

[   ]

36. If you sell online what problems or skills issues do you face? (Please tick all that apply)

- [ ] Technical support
- [ ] Knowledge of platforms
- [ ] Design / content production
- [ ] Software development
- [ ] Other (please specify):

[   ] | Go to Q39 |

37. In which areas of the visitor economy sector does your business operate? *

[   ]

38. In which of the following areas do you have skills shortages?

- [ ] Health and safety
- [ ] Food safety
- [ ] Food service/customer service
- [ ] Chef/craft skills
- [ ] Cost control
- [ ] Stock management

Please provide any further information.

[   ]

18. Training & Development

39. Which of the following does your business have?

☐ A staff training and development plan

☐ A budget for training

☐ An annual appraisal process

☐ None of these

40. Have any of your staff undergone any form of training during the last 12 months? *

☐ Yes

☐ No   Go to Q42

☐ Don't know   Go to Q43

☐ NA   Go to Q43

41. Which of the following do you use when training staff? (Please tick all that apply).

☐ In-house (staff/trainers)

☐ Commercial training companies

☐ Independent training providers (e.g. for apprenticeships/traineeships, please tell us which providers you have used below)

☐ Colleges

☐ Universities

☐ Free online courses

☐ Paid for online courses

☐ Trade bodies, business networks, professional services

☐ Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)   Go to Q43

42. What barriers, if any, have prevented your business providing training to staff?

☐ Lack of budget for training

☐ Cost of training

☐ Time to release staff for training

☐ Quality of available training (please provide details below)

☐ Availability of training (please provide details below)

☐ Concerns over investing in staff who may not stay

☐ Other, please specify:

[   ]

21. Apprenticeships

As apprenticeships are currently undergoing huge reforms in the UK, we'd like to understand if and how you use them.

43. Have you used apprenticeships in your business to: *

☐ Recruit new staff (of all ages)

☐ Upskill existing staff

☐ Neither   [Go to Q45]

☐ Don't know   [Go to Q46]

44. Which roles do apprentices occupy in your business? (Please tick all that apply) *

☐ Semi/unskilled

☐ Clerical/administration

☐ Sales/customer service

☐ Skilled manual/technical

☐ Professional/managerial

☐ Unsure

☐ Other (please specify):

[   ] [Go to Q46]

45. What are the main reasons for not using an apprentice?

☐ Lack of knowledge

☐ Lack of time

☐ Heard negative stories

☐ Presume not available to my sector

☐ Perceived cost

☐ Other (please specify):

[   ]

46. How knowledgeable are you about the following aspects of apprenticeships?

	I'm very knowledgeable	I have some knowledge	I have no knowledge
Apprenticeship levy	☐	☐	☐
Apprenticeship standards	☐	☐	☐
Grants and funding to support apprenticeships	☐	☐	☐
Using apprenticeships to upskill existing staff	☐	☐	☐
Changes in apprenticeship age restrictions	☐	☐	☐

47. Do you have any other comments or questions you would like to add about apprenticeships?

[   ]

24. Supporting the future workforce

We'd like to understand how you work with schools and education and training providers.

48. Outside of any training you do as a business, do you engage with schools, colleges or other education and training providers?

☐ Yes

☐ No   [Go to Q50]

☐ Don't know   [Go to Q50]

49. Which of the following activities do you currently engage in? (Please tick all that apply)

☐ Work placements - 1-4 weeks

☐ Work placements - extended 1-3 months

☐ Traineeships

☐ Paid internships

☐ Workplace visits/virtual workplace tours or lectures

☐ Careers fairs and advice/talks

☐ Industry briefs/ projects to students

☐ Mock interviews/offering CV or job application advice

☐ Being a school/college governor

☐ Mentoring educational staff or students

[   ]

☐ Contribution to curriculum development and co-design of qualifications/training

50. Would you be interested in finding out how businesses can work with education and training providers?

☐ Yes
☐ No

53. Do you have any suggestions as to how business and education can work closer together to ensure a well skilled local workforce, or further comments on any of the issues covered in our survey?

54. We can arrange for a member of our skills team to contact you to discuss your skills needs, if this would be of interest to you please tick the box below.

☐ I'd like to be contacted by a skills adviser.

55. For admin purposes: form completion method

☐ Online (self-completed)
☐ Phone
☐ Face-to-face meeting