MAKING THE BEST USE OF MARKET INTELLIGENCE DATA

An Effective Practice Guide for Independent Learning Providers

September 2012 (Version 1.0)

Foreword

It has always been important for Independent Learning Providers to provide effective marketing information to prospective clients. However, this has never been more important than now as the market is opening up; learners and employers are expected to pay for training; and providers need to show how they are accountable and responding to the needs of industry, communities and individuals. The role of market intelligence data in the review, planning and promotion of provision is of critical and growing importance.

LSIS commissioned the Responsive College Unit (RCU) to undertake research into how providers are currently using market intelligence data. This guide provides feedback on that research and in combination with the expertise of RCU provides guidance on what market intelligence data is available and how to become more effective in using it to support both marketing and planning.

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Contents

5. Socio-Economic Data

6. Primary Research – Surveys and Focus Groups

7. **Background Information**

1. Introduction

1.1 What is Market Intelligence?

Market intelligence is the process of acquiring, processing and analysing key information about your customers and competitors. Market intelligence involves the collation of data from various sources including learner records, CRM systems, schools data, socio-economic data, labour market intelligence, surveys and focus groups.

1.2 Why use Market Intelligence?

Proactively using market intelligence can help independent learning providers become more successful and profitable through:

- Understanding its customers (learners, employers and funding agencies), so providing a service that is meeting their needs (and can demonstrate that this need is being met);
- Developing a market led rather than product led approach by developing training programmes and apprenticeship frameworks that are required by employers, are attractive, relevant and lead to successful outcomes, positioning itself in a competitive market to best advantage;
- Differentiating themselves from competitors, being aware of what is offered by other providers and adopting a recognisable and consistent market presence;
- Identifying and developing strategic alliances with other organisations, where this is in the best interests of the organisation.

The importance of the market intelligence has massively increased over the past 18 months. Declining population levels amongst 16-18 year olds and the growth in the number of Academies has meant that competition for 16-18 year olds has never been higher and many providers are renewing their focus on marketing activity across this age group. The recession and the tight squeeze on public expenditure has also increased the importance of marketing activity. Employers and increasingly individuals are increasingly concerned about securing good value for money at a time when Government funding has to be prioritised and learners and employers are expected to pay more for non-priority training. Independent Learning Providers need to understand what individuals and employers value and are prepared to pay for and to explain to them in a clear and concise way the overall benefits of training programmes.

The Government is committed to increasing competition still further and opening up the market by offering greater freedoms and flexibilities to providers. This will undoubtedly mean that independent learning providers have to be much smarter in the ways that they use market intelligence data. The Government strategy document Skills for Sustainable Growth (BIS, November 2010) signalled the current Government’s desire to move away from centralised targets and to give providers more freedom to respond to the needs of the market place. The document states:

"We must make bold changes and move to a new system where we do things differently. We must abandon a culture of bureaucratic central planning and regulatory control. We want to turn the system on its head so that it is those using the system, not the state, which drives the system. Under our new system learners will select training and qualifications valued by business and available through a broad range of autonomous providers who will attract learners depending on the quality of their offer."

1.3 Structure of the Guide

The Effective Practice Guide includes a set of resources for independent learning providers looking to improve their use of market intelligence data. The Guide is written specifically to help those people within a provider who have responsibility for ensuring that market intelligence is used effectively, but elements of the Guide should prove valuable for a wider audience. The key sections within the report (designed to be used independently) include:

- *The Effective Use of Market Intelligence*
  This shows how providers can utilise market intelligence to help develop provision that meets the needs of future learners and employers whilst also meeting the demands of government skills policy. It also indicates the key market intelliegce sources relevent to different forms of independent learning provider.

- *Learner Data*
  An information resource listing publically available datasets or information relating to learner recruitment, participation and success rates;

- *Employer Data*
  Provides information to support independent learning providers to utilisie local and national sources of labour market information and industrial sector based intelligence.

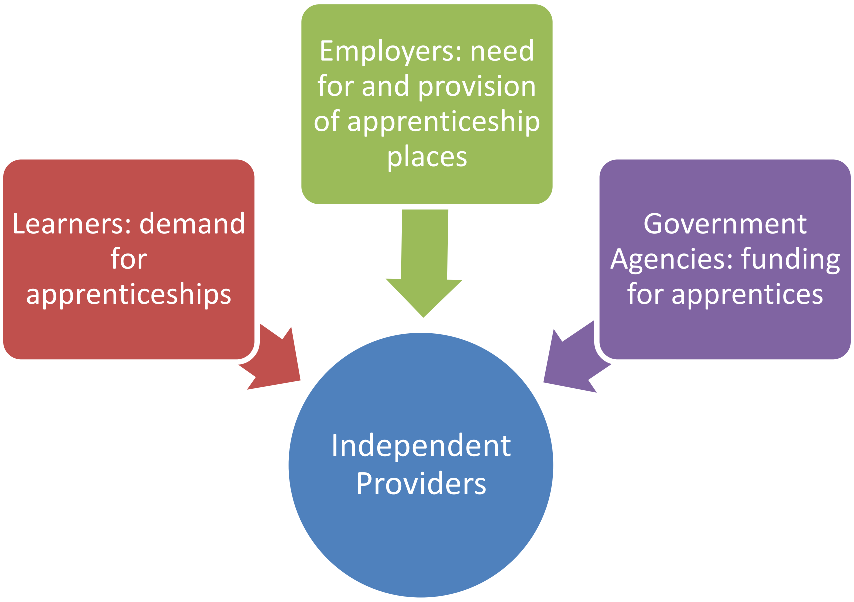
- *Socio- Economic Data and LMI*
  An information resource listing publically available datasets or information relating to labour market intelligence and socio-economic characteristics of a local community or region;

- *Primary Research*
  Hints and tips on how best to carry out primary market research, including questionniare design, survey sampling, conducting focus groups and carrying out stakeholder interviews.

2. Effective use of Market Intelligence

2.1 Classification of Market Intelligence Data

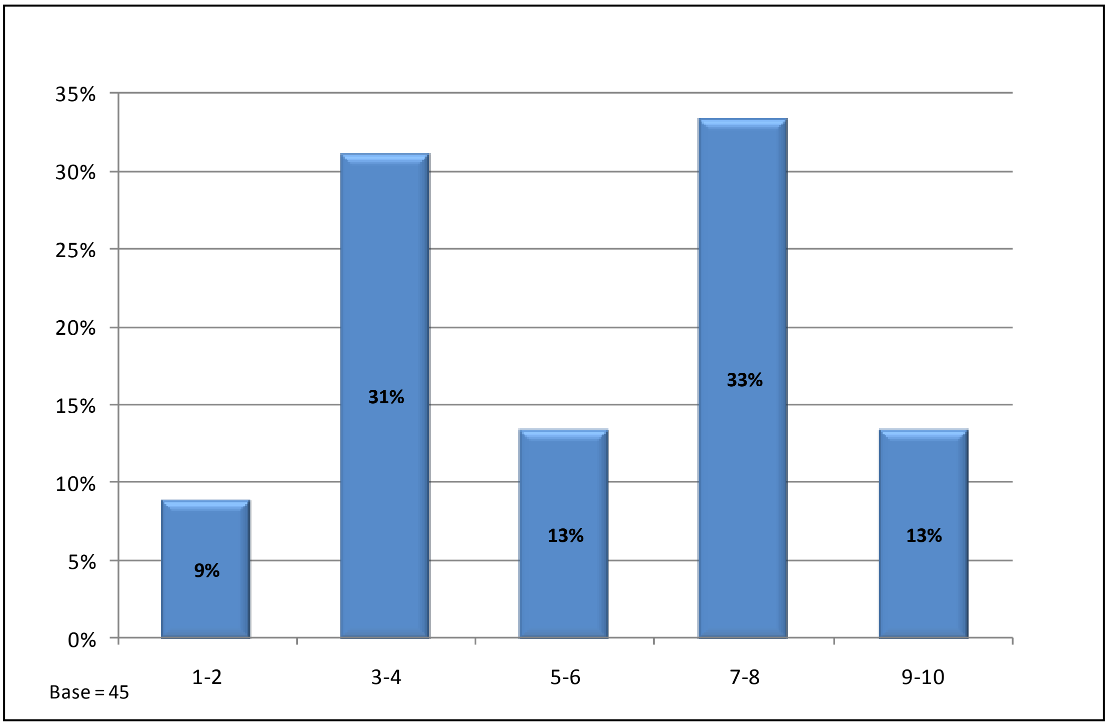
The market for apprenticeships is governed by three distinct factors – learner demand for apprenticeships, employer provision of placements and Government funding policy. A marketing strategy for independent training providers needs to be built upon robust market intelligence for each of these key drivers.



Providers in general have detailed information about their own learners via management information systems such as MAYTAS and PICS, allowing them to track learners from application to achievement. These systems also support funding returns and allow providers to model future income payments. Most providers will be analysing their own recruitment and success rate data from these sources and will be using this analysis for quality assurance and planning purposes.

Broader information about the learner and employer marketplace (including information about competitors) is used much less frequently. A recent survey of 46 independent learning providers, for example, found that over 40% rarely use market intelligence data to inform strategic decision making and 60% never looked at competitor market share data. The chart on the next page shows the extent to which market intelligence is used to inform strategic planning. The picture is extremely variable, suggesting that there is a great deal of scope for sharing good practice.

To what extent is market intelligence used to inform strategic planning?



(1= no involvement, 10 = extensive involvement)

Details of market intelligence data sources related to learners, employers and the wider economic landscape are listed in Sections 3, 4 and 5 of this report. A brief introduction is given below.

Information Related to Learners

Information related to learners can be sub-divided into young people and adults. In terms of young people it is important for providers to understand the volume of young people who will be leaving school within their geographic areas of operation and how these volumes will change over time. This gives an indication of the potential size of the learner market. The learner population can be further analysed by learner characteristics such as ethnicity and gender.

Demographic trends can be matched against the structure of post-16 learning within defined geographic areas of operation. The proportion of 16,17 and 18 year old learners staying on at school, attending Further Educational Colleges, or taking up an Apprenticeship will indicated relative market share and performance tables and Ofsted reports can give clues about how this market share might change over time. Learner information for a geographical area by subject area, Level of Study and qualification type will give further information about potential gaps in provision. Changes in post-16 structures including for example plans to open additional post-16 learning facilities such as an 11-18 Academy, University Technical College or Studio Schools may increase the competition for post-16 learners and therefore place additional pressure on the provider to supply the volume of apprentices needed by local employers. It is also useful knowing the volume of young people not in education, employment or training within a defined geographic area. This is an indication of the extent to which the availability of local provision is not meeting the needs of these young people and may need to be addressed.

Understanding the characteristics of adult learners seeking employment is also important for independent learning providers. There are, for example, basic datasets available at the local and national level that quantify the volume of adults registered for Jobseeker's Allowance by age and duration of unemployment. These datasets also indicate the industrial sectors and occupational areas of both their previous employment and the employment they are seeking. This can be matched with market intelligence from employers in order to try and balance the provision being offered by the provider with the employment opportunities being created by employers and those sought by the available workforce.

Existing learners can also be an extremely useful source of market intelligence. Focus groups and questionnaires can provide feedback on the effectiveness of the recruitment process and initial advice, the quality of training and support, and future training needs, how it is meeting expectations, how they believe it will help them develop a career or go onto further learning and study. These learners can also be a useful measure of the extent to which they would advocate the training they are involved in to others and what needs to change in order for that to happen.

Section 3 of this guide has detailed information on the specific data sets that are available and how they can be used to inform business planning.

Information Related to Employers

Information related to employers can take the form of statistical data on the current or historical position and sectoral intelligence on likely future training needs.

There is a wide range of statistical data that is collated by government and made publicly available through a variety of sources. Section 4 of this guide describes each of these in detail. The statistical datasets can show the volume of people employed within local to national geographies within each industrial sector and occupational areas. These datasets show how employment has changed over time. This can help to indicate if the industrial sectors in which the provider is operating is growing or declining. It also helps to identify alternative industrial sectors that may offer the provider the opportunity to diversify or expand into new growing markets. There are also sources of data from national employer surveys which are disaggregated to the regional level and provide detailed information on the proportion and type of training provided by different industrial sectors, the extent to which each industrial sector has recruited new staff and in what occupational areas, the extent to which they have unfilled vacancies and the nature of these vacancies. These sources of data also provide information on skills shortages and give details of the types of skills that are needed but potential workers are not able to offer.

Statistical data can be used alongside information on the future skills needs of each core industrial sector. The primary source of this data is via the Sector Skills Councils that cover almost all industrial sectors. Available information includes the volume of people that will be required for each specific industrial sector and the extent to which this is to fuel demand for additional staff or to replace existing staff volumes. These reports also outline the skills that will be required by the future workforce operating in each specific sector allowing providers to plan future provision.

It is also important to keep a close watch on local economic developments which may not be reflected in national statistics or surveys. At the very local level this can be through reading local business pages in newspapers, joining the local chamber of commerce and keeping in close contact with existing employers to understand the issues and recognising the impact this may have on immediate and longer term workforce requirements.

Information Related to Government Skills Policy

Independent learning providers are driven by the needs of learners and employers but must also keep up to date with changes in government skills policy that may impact on their business, particularly through funding rates and funding eligibility. This includes an understanding of broad policy direction (e.g. the introduction of FE loans) as well as detailed funding changes for individual frameworks.

Sources of information include the Skills Funding Agency, the Data Service and The Association of Employment and Learning Providers. The association, for example, produces regular briefings through its newsletter and can be contacted for specific help and assistance. Group training organisations act as umbrella organisations for individual providers and can provide help and guidance on interpreting and implementing changes to government skills policy.

2.2 The Data Needs of Different Types of Independent Learning Provider

The work based learning sector is extremely diverse and the ways in which market intelligence can best support the development of an independent learning provider will depend upon key characteristics of that organisation. In particular, this is likely to be dependent on the size of the provider, the range of industrial sectors in which it operates and whether it operates in a local, regional or national market. The chart on the next page provides an initial guide to the market intelligence needs of each provider category, based on discussions with a range of work based learning providers. This is followed by a chart suggesting possible data sources which might be most appropriate for this type of provider.

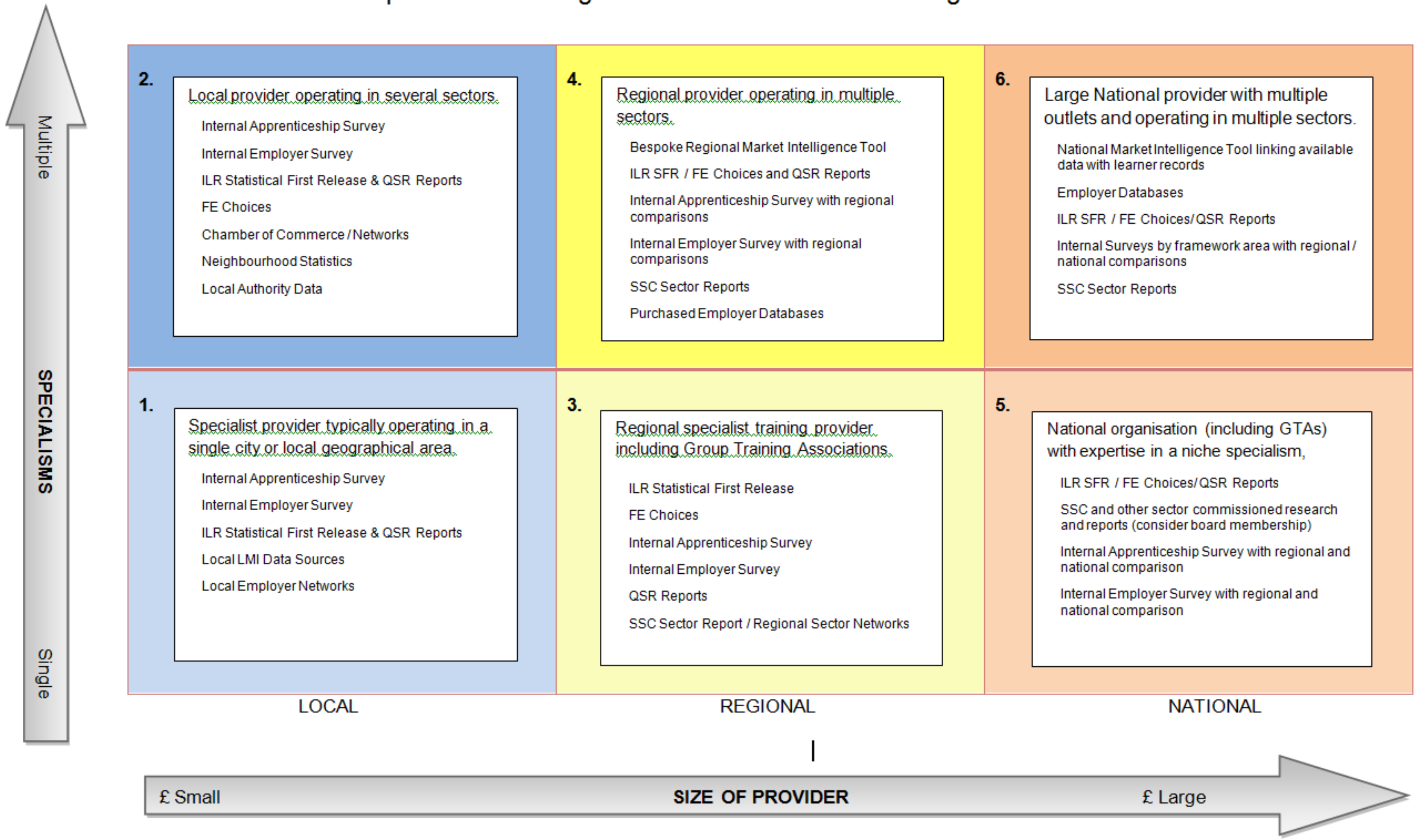
Users of this guide might wish to decide which of the six descriptions of independent learning providers most accurately reflects the characteristics of their own business. They can then focus on each of those sources of market intelligence that are described in more detail at a later stage within this guide (Sections 3-6). Of course, providers can also consider accessing and using a wider range or alternative sources of market intelligence, if after reading this guide they are of the opinion it would also assist in the strategic planning of their organisation.

Independent Learning Provider Market Intelligence <u>Needs</u>

SPECIALISMS	LOCAL	REGIONAL	NATIONAL
Multiple	**2.** Local provider operating in several sectors. <u>Market Intelligence Needs</u> Providers are likely to have limited market intelligence capacity (over and above reviewing their own recruitment and performance data). Will probably be operating in a very competitive environment and may lack information about competitors, school leaver projections and apprenticeship vacancies.	**4.** Regional provider operating in multiple sectors. <u>Market Intelligence Needs</u> Likely to have regional or local intelligence including a combination of personal contacts and specific data sources. Will often lack the capacity and skills of large national providers to analyse and process data.	**6.** Large National provider with multiple outlets and operating in multiple sectors. <u>Market Intelligence Needs</u> Provider will probably already have sophisticated management information systems and marketing expertise. Organisation may be looking to identify new sectors or geographical areas for expansion. Current and future employment forecasts by sector and competitor analysis possibly less well understood.
Single	**1.** Specialist provider typically operating in a single city or local geographical area. <u>Market Intelligence Needs</u> Skills funding Agency contract small and may be acting as a subcontractor. Good knowledge of local labour market trends but normally through personal contacts and word of mouth. Support often needed in setting up employer and stakeholder surveys to understand market position.	**3.** Regional specialist training provider including Group Training Associations. <u>Market Intelligence Needs</u> Detailed sector knowledge and understanding of key employment trends in region. However, will lack the capacity of larger national organisations to collect and analyse market intelligence data.	**5.** National organisation (including GTAs) with expertise in a niche specialism, sometimes with multiple subcontractors. <u>Market Intelligence Needs</u> Detailed sector knowledge and contacts. May commission independent research to support developments within this area including employment trends, impact of Government policy and learner perceptions.

£ Small — **SIZE OF PROVIDER** — £ Large

Independent Learning Provider Useful Market Intelligence Sources



2.3 Strategic Commitment

Providers who are using market intelligence data successfully regard the use of market intelligence as a strategic priority. Whilst this may seem an obvious point the lack of strategic commitment to market intelligence is often the key reason why some independent learning providers fail to use data effectively.

Independent learning providers that make good use of market intelligence data tend to have a very strong commercial or customer orientated focus. These providers are driven primarily by the needs of individuals and employers rather than funding opportunities. A provider that has a commercial focus will instinctively understand the value of market intelligence data and seek to use it where possible across the institution.

Effective use of market intelligence data requires good coordination and planning across the provider and can be resource intensive. It is recognised that using market intelligence for the first time within a provider can place additional responsibilities on already very busy members of staff. Clearly the extent to which time and resources can be invested into gathering market intelligence will vary depending on the size and nature of the individual provider. In section 2.2 of this guide there is a summary of the sorts of market intelligence that could be gathered by providers of different sizes and operational characteristics.

There are two key points within the provider planning cycle where market intelligence data can add significant value (see chart on next page) and can help ensure that the organisation achieves its strategic goals:

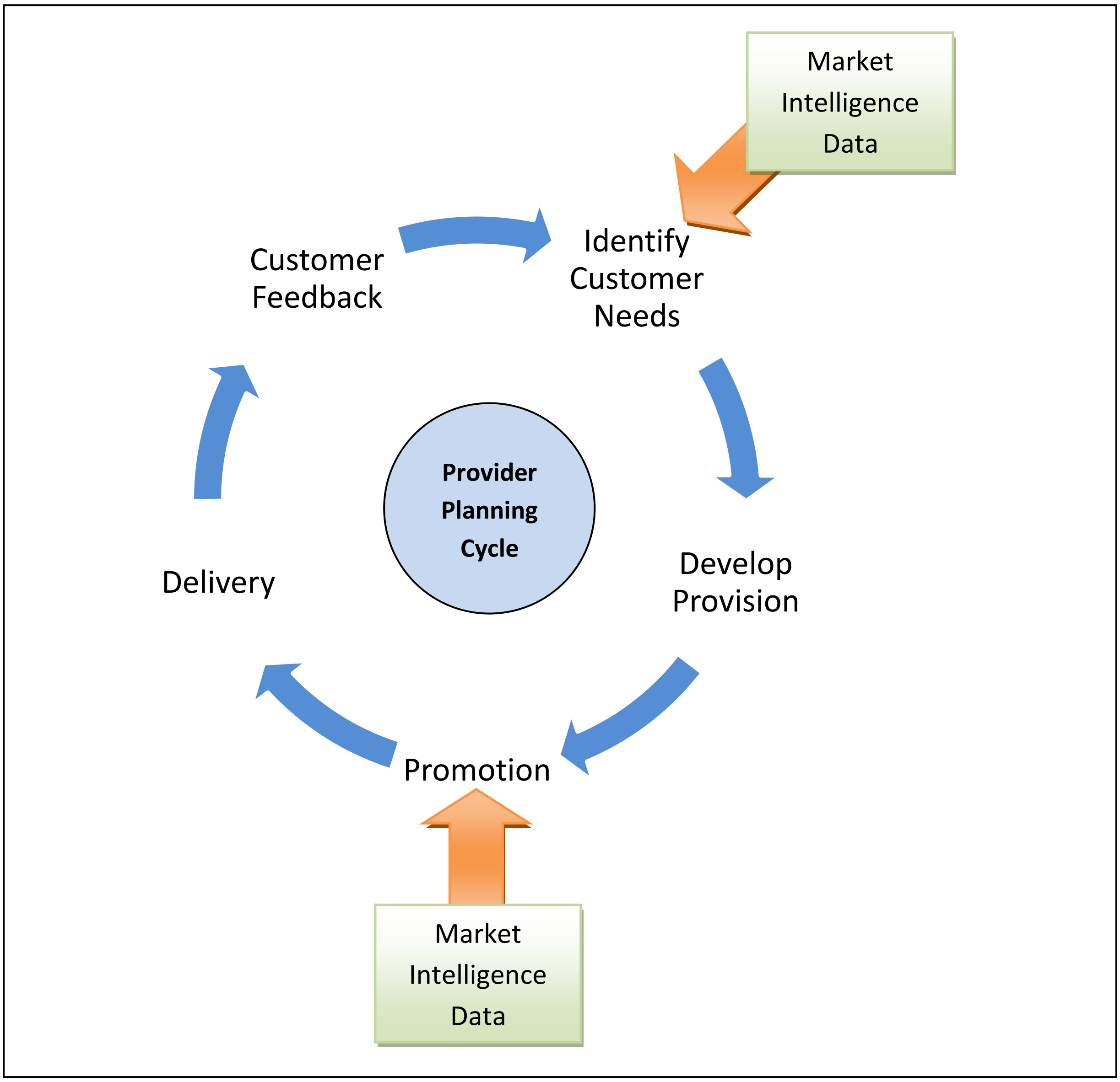
a) Market intelligence data can help identify customer needs and market potential so that providers can develop the right products and services.

b) Market intelligence can help in the promotion of products and services, explaining to potential customers (both learners and employers) the value and benefits of the training or apprenticeship (e.g. the likelihood of getting a job, an alternative route to University, addressing a skills needs or shortage).

Suggested Action Points/Key Questions:

- To what extent do key provider documents such as Strategic Plans, Operational Plans and Quality Improvement Plans refer to collecting and analysing market intelligence data? Is this systematic or is it done on an ad-hoc basis? What additions do you think should be made to these plans in the future to reflect the importance of market intelligence?
- To what extent is market intelligence data being used to help deliver the targets outlined in the business plan? What further opportunities are there for using market intelligence data and how could this be achieved?
- What opportunities can you identify to demonstrate how the use of market intelligence can help with key decision making points throughout the year?

Market Intelligence Opportunities in the Provider Business Planning Cycle



2.4 Key Questions that you wish to address using Market Intelligence

An important first step for a provider seeking to use market intelligence systematically for the first time is to identify a small number of questions that market intelligence and research can help to solve. In the early days the smaller the number of questions and the more precise and tightly focused they are the better. These questions will probably be taken from the organisation's Strategic Plan or Quality Improvement Action Plan and will typically include some or all of the following:

- What are the key characteristics of our customers and how has this changed in recent years?
- How can we increase our share of the 16-18 year old learner market?
- Who are our major competitors?
- What proportion of our learners complete their apprenticeship frameworks and remain in jobs? How does this compare to the national average?
- Which industrial sectors are likely to have the greatest scope for increasing our volume of apprenticeships?
- Which employers in our operating area/s are facing skills shortages?
- What economic development activities are taking place in our operating area/s that may offer opportunities or threats to our organisation?
- What do residents and employers in our operating areas know about us and think about us? How can we respond most effectively to their needs?
- What information do residents and employers in our operating areas require from us in order to choose which course to enrol on?

It is then helpful to try and identify what you feel are the key drivers or sub-issues that will affect the answer to these questions. This will help you to identify the most useful sources of market intelligence data to use in the first instance (although the matrix outlined earlier should help to simplify that process). For example, key drivers for the question "How can we increase our market share of the 16-18 year old learner market?" might be a perception of increased competition from school sixth forms and worries about having outdated provision and apprenticeship frameworks. Depending on the over-arching question there may be many key drivers or just one; they may be obvious or may require some thought and discussion.

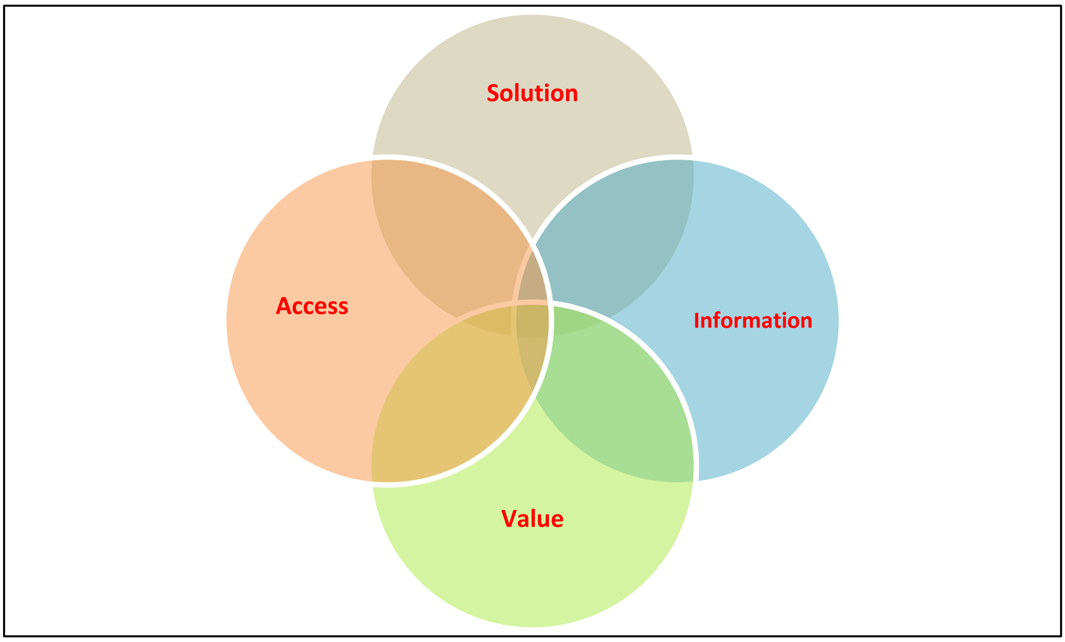
In order to help clarify your key questions and help you identify the range of data sources that you need to use (or generate) it is useful to think about the characteristics of your target markets and the stages in the learner/customer journey from enquiry to completion.

Engagement with employers is typically about developing a long term relationship with employers and offering them a high quality service. This involves working with them to identify solutions to problems that they have, providing them with information about training and education solutions, articulating the value of the training to them in terms of business benefits and negotiating a mutually acceptable price. It also means ensuring that training can be accessed at a time and place that meets the employer's needs. The provider may have regional or national specialisms and a range of different partnership agreements and training may be delivered over a wide geographical area, not just within the local community.

From a marketing point of view this is best described by the SIVA marketing model – *Solution, Information, Value* and *Access*. Market intelligence will focus on employers and the factors affecting their business. This typically includes analysing employer data by industrial sector classification and helping the provider to understand:

- Current and projected skills needs;
- Economic forecasts and local/regional economic plans;
- Market share, specialisms, competitor strengths and weaknesses;
- Business benefits from training (e.g. productivity or earnings gains);
- Employer perceptions and attitudes to training.

SIVA Marketing Model



Suggested Action Points/Key Questions:

- Identify a small number of tightly focused questions that are of strategic importance to your organisation. The answers to these questions should help you achieve your strategic goals.
- For each key question identify the key drivers and sub-issues that appear to be important in achieving these goals.
- Consider what market intelligence data you currently collect about learners and what do you collect about employers?
- Consider what scope there is within your organisation to bring this information together into a single source? What would be the benefits from doing this?
- List any market intelligence data sources you already have and highlight how each of these could be used to support the learner market and the employer market.
- Identify the additional market intelligence data sources you think you need to collect?

2.5 Market Intelligence Action Plans to address each Key Question

A market intelligence action plan for each of your key strategic questions will help you use market intelligence in the most effective and efficient way.

Existing data sources as they stand are rarely sufficient to answer the key strategic questions. In most cases the data that you have needs to be processed and analysed. In addition you are likely to have significant gaps in your knowledge which means that you will need to carry out new research or commission additional external support.

The form on the next page is designed to help you think through these challenges. For a particular question (e.g. how can we increase our share of the 16-18 learner market?) the form allows you to catalogue existing market intelligence sources, identify gaps in your knowledge and specify actions that you will need to take in order to process and analyse the data.

The form concludes with a section asking you to summarise the activity you are undertaking and identify the planned outcomes. It is vital at this stage to be absolutely clear about the outcomes you wish to achieve and the more focused and quantifiable these planned outcomes are the better.

It is important to have realistic expectations about what market intelligence can and cannot achieve, so that confidence in using market intelligence across your organisation is maintained. This means understanding not only the benefits but also the limitations of your data sources. Typical questions worth asking include; how old is the data?, which fields in a dataset are likely to be poorly completed?, are the findings from a survey statistically significant?, was external research neutral or was it commissioned by a vested interest?, how reliable are future forecasts for our area or would local context be more important? If you feel that there are significant limitations in your data make sure those making decisions based upon it are aware of this as soon as possible. However, in most cases, by thinking through the possible problems at the beginning, alternative solutions can be found which can help you answer your key strategic questions.

Suggested Action Points/Key Questions:

- For each of the key questions that you have identified create a market intelligence action plan.
- Identify any existing data sources that you currently have that can help you solve your key questions.
- Identify the limitations of your data sources.
- Identify how this data will need to be processed and analysed and consider who has the ability and skills to do this.
- Identify the gaps in your knowledge and how these will be overcome.
- Identify your planned outcomes from the market intelligence activity.

Key Question	How can we increase our share of the 16-18 year old learner market?
Drivers/sub-Issues	Competition, other learning providers, population changes, provision or apprenticeship frameworks where demand is declining.

Internal Market Intelligence Data Sources		
	Data Source	Comment on suitability, limitations and use
1	Applications Data	Applications by framework area each week
2	Apprenticeship Starts Data	Shows enrolment trends by subject, framework and level
3	Postcode mapping	Shows home postcode of existing learners and applicants
4	Learner surveys	Survey focuses on quality - some information about future needs
5		

External Market Intelligence Data Sources		
	Data Source	Comment on suitability, limitations and use
1	School leaver population trend	Shows potential cohort size over next 5/10 years
2	Competitor websites	Identifies possible gaps in provision / frameworks but no volumes
3	Ofsted reports	Identifies strengths and weaknesses of all providers in area
4	Local Authority Research	Created in 2009 and is now out of date
5		

Gaps in Market Intelligence		
	Identified Gap	Details
1	Market share	% of available learners and population it recruits by subject area
2	Details on gaps in provision	Learning activities 16-19 learners are taking at other providers
3	Market share of competitors	% of available learners and population competitors recruit
4	Future demand from learners	Likely demand for existing provision from Year 10 and 11
5	Reputation of provider	What does community/employers think of us & our provision

Key Actions			
	Action	By Whom	By When
1	Carry out survey of Year 11 pupils		Nov 2012
2	Carry out survey of employers		Nov 2012
3	Commission external research into 16-19 market share in local area		Oct 2012
4	Internal MI reports on recruitment trends by framework & feeder school for last 3 yrs. Volume of apprentices recruited by employers per framework		Oct 2012
5	Desk research – review and report on Ofsted reports		Oct 2012

Summary of Market Intelligence Activity and Planned Outcomes

Carry out surveys and commission market share analysis. Use the data to produce a summary report explaining why recruitment has fallen in recent years, what the potential growth areas are for the future and key actions that can be implemented by February 2013.

Is the market intelligence exercise a one-off or will it be repeated annually?

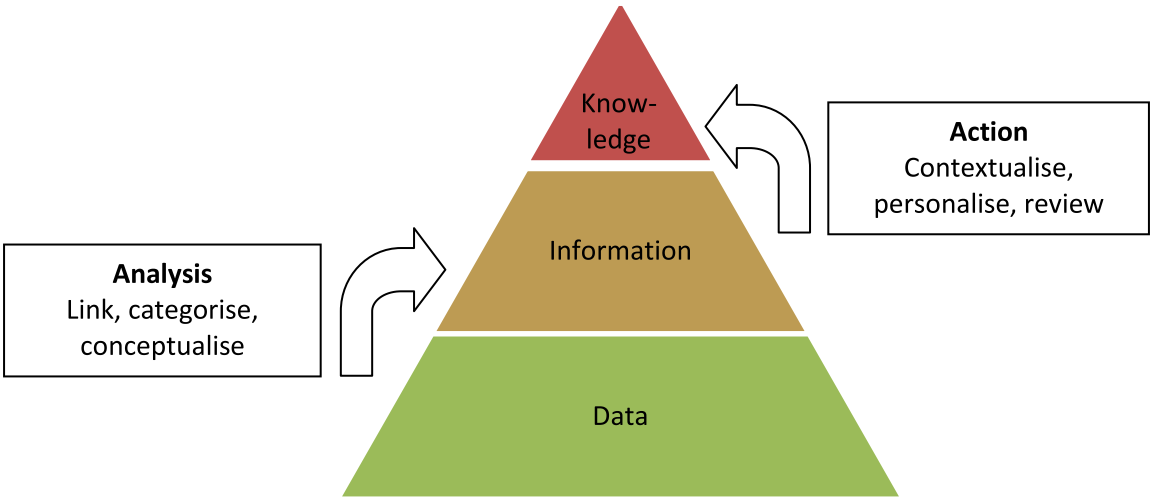
- [x] One-off
- [ ] Repeated

2.6 Market Intelligence Analysis Tools

Effective use of market intelligence requires effective analysis tools. Collecting large volumes of data is unlikely to be enough by itself, particularly if this is mainly in detailed tabular or spreadsheet format. Decision makers within a provider are busy people and are unlikely to have the time to digest all of this information and would find it difficult or often impossible to spot patterns in the data or identify important trends. This applies equally to the outputs of in-house produced surveys as it does to Labour Market Intelligence and learner recruitment data.

Market intelligence data analysis uses both internal management data and external market data (e.g. Labour market intelligence, competitor information, customer survey data) and aims to:

- Present information in easy to understand formats (e.g. maps showing learner recruitment and travel distances);
- Spot patterns in the data that may provide new insight into a particular problem and help with strategic decision making (e.g. employer satisfaction survey scores);
- Combine and compare two or more different datasets in order to identify relationships between data or the possible causes of certain events (e.g. relationship between success rates and feeder schools) ;
- Understand whether a relationship is statistically significant or not;
- Model future events by looking at different scenarios and different variables (e.g. skill needs projections and current market share).



Computer based Data Analysis Tools

Market intelligence analysis tools using the power of your computer can help you translate raw data into useful information, which if used appropriately can increase the provider's knowledge and success. In its simplest form computer based data analysis can involve simply taking a set of data that has been generated internally (such as recruitment numbers) and producing a chart or report (e.g. showing the trends in recruitment over time).

The simplest to use and most cost effective analysis tool is Microsoft Excel, for which most providers will have a site license. This is potentially a very powerful application, allowing staff within the provider to carry out their own analysis (if they have sufficient training and time). Excel includes a wide range of charting functions, statistical analysis tools, conditional formatting options and pivot table analysis. It also includes its own programming language VBA which allows you to customise and automate tasks. The data analysis capabilities of Excel are enhanced still further by installing free or commercially available plug-ins/add-ins such as PowerPivot (free from Microsoft).

The next stage up from Excel is the more specialised analysis and statistical packages (such as SPSS) and tools for manipulating database management systems (such as SQL). The most sophisticated level includes *Data Mining Tools* which look for patterns within large datasets.

Any staff with an elementary knowledge of market research or market intelligence should be capable of carrying out analysis using Excel and simple statistical packages. More complex technical analysis using databases will, however, require specialist training. Significant investment in time may be required to develop systems from scratch, although the time and resources needed to carry out some forms of analysis (e.g. postcode mapping of learners, linked to retention rates) may be extremely cost effective particularly in larger providers.

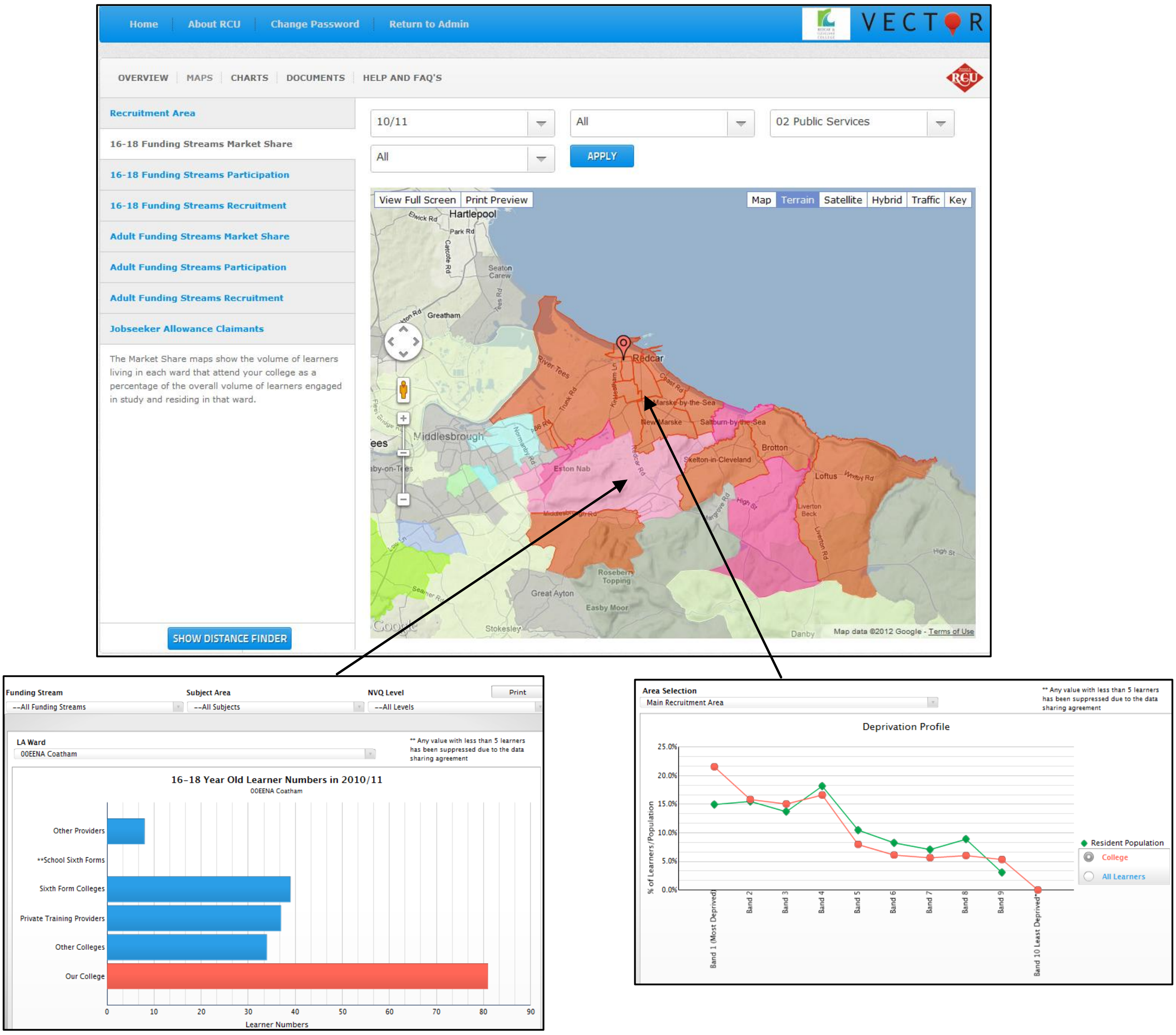
The alternative to internal development is to buy in external support in the form of commercially produced tools and/or consultancy. Commercial tools are likely to be easy to use and make use of some of the latest forms of technology. They are also likely to have access to market data that is difficult or expensive for an individual provider to obtain. If this route is chosen it is vital that responsibilities for market intelligence within the provider are clear, that the key issues that the organisation wishes to address are clarified and that the impact and target outcomes of the analysis are established.

Examples of Commercial Tools

RCU has created the ‘cloud based’ VECTOR Planning and Market Intelligence Tool to provide organisations with a detailed analysis of all post-16 learners within their recruitment area, including both the organisation’s learners and those attending other providers operating within the locality. VECTOR enables the organisation to analyse current penetration in key market segments, its market share and the coherence of its provision / framework offer in comparison with other providers in the area including other colleges, independent learning providers, school sixth forms and academies.

Active Informatics produce a tool called TSM (Total Solutions Mapping) which stores, collates, matches and visualises the organisation’s data against that from peers, the government or another third party organisation. An organisation can use TSM to define the geographic territories of account managers across the region. When new clients are recruited, they can be mapped against individual territories before being assigned to the appropriate account manager. The Analyst Tool identifies job areas that are growing or declining and an organisation can use this to ensure that its provision is meeting local need.

Market Intelligence Analysis Tools

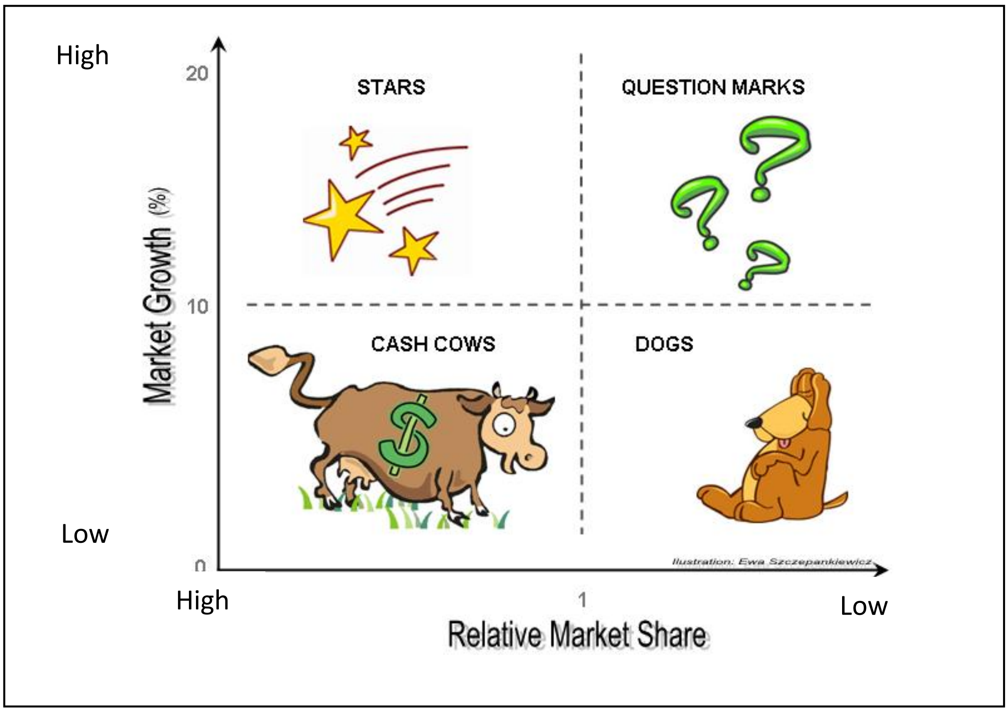


Strategic Analysis Tools

Strategic analysis tools provide a structured way of thinking about business issues and can be used with market intelligence data to help identify appropriate strategic priorities for an organisation. A good example is the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) Matrix, developed in the early 1970's and based on their relative market share and the growth rate of the market.

Courses or frameworks are classified into one of the four categories based on relative market share and market growth. Detailed market intelligence data can be used (either by the provider themselves or with external support) to provide objective evidence on how courses or frameworks are categorised within the matrix (i.e. by using the data service apprenticeship supplementary tables data and developing a table of market share and market growth statistics).

Boston Consulting Group (BCG) Growth-Share Matrix



The four categories defined by the BCG matrix are:

Dogs: Low Market Share/Low Market Growth
In these areas, your market presence is weak, so it's going to take a lot of hard work to get noticed. You won't enjoy the economies of scale of the larger players, so it's going to be difficult to make a good return. And because market growth is low, it's going to take a lot of hard work to improve the situation.

Cash Cows: High Market Share/Low Market Growth
Here, you're well-established, so it's easier to get attention and exploit new opportunities. However it is only worth expending a certain amount of effort, because the market is not growing and your opportunities are limited.

Stars: High Market Share/High Market Growth
Here you're well-established, and growth is exciting! There should be some strong opportunities here, and you should work hard to realize them.

Question Marks (Problem Child):Low Market Share/High Market Growth
These are the opportunities no one knows what to do with. They aren't generating much revenue right now because you don't have a large market share. But, they are in high growth markets so the potential to make money is there.

Question Marks might become Stars and eventual Cash Cows, but they could just as easily absorb effort with little return. These opportunities need serious thought as to whether increased investment is warranted.

Once completed the next task is to determine what to do with each course/product line.

There are typically four different strategies to apply:

- Build Market Share: Make further investments (for example, to maintain Star status, or to turn a Question Mark into a Star);
- Hold: Maintain the status quo (do nothing);
- Harvest: Reduce the investment (enjoy positive cash flow and maximize profits from a Star or a Cash Cow);
- Divest: For example, get rid of the Dogs, and use the capital you receive to invest in Stars and Question Marks.

Suggested Action Points/Key Questions:

- How effective are your current analysis tools in generating easy to understand and insightful information? How could the analysis be improved?
- Which computer based analysis tools are you currently using and who is responsible for carrying out this analysis? Is additional training required?
- What are the costs and benefits of using commercial packages and consultancy support? Have you identified the target outcomes from this investment?
- Are you using market intelligence data with strategic analysis tools in order to inform strategic decisions and priorities? What data or support might you require in order to do this?

2.7 Market Intelligence Reports

The output of the market intelligence analysis should be simple and effective reports tailored to the specific needs of the target audience. This could be Board Members, Senior Managers, Commercial Sales Advisors, Assessors or the external community. It is extremely important to agree the format and purpose of the report at the start of the process. It is also useful to share emerging findings with the target audience before creating the final report, allowing them to contribute to the conclusions.

A common mistake made by many organisations is to present too much information in the report, simply because it happens to be available – this will not help decision makers to use their time most effectively. Another mistake is to stop at the analysis stage without creating a summary report at all. This prevents the organisation from actively reviewing the findings from the research and developing key actions.

Reports should include charts and tables and summarise the most important findings. In many cases PowerPoint slides will be sufficient as the format of the slides encourages the author to highlight key issues. If appropriate appendices can be added which include more detailed findings.

Suggested Action Points/Key Questions:

- Who, if anyone, in your provider is responsible for producing market intelligence reports?
- Do you collect feedback from the target audience on how easy the reports are to use and whether they meet user expectations?
- What does the organisation need to do in order to improve the quality of its market intelligence reports?

2.8 Reviewing the Impact and Benefits of Market Intelligence

A systematic review of the costs and benefits of using market intelligence should, if possible, be carried out on a regular basis. This will ensure that data systems, analysis, reporting and communication improve over time in order to provide the best value for money. Ideally, the review should be part of the annual self assessment cycle and should seek views of key stakeholders in the organisation.

A review of market intelligence should focus on:

- **Planning**
  How effectively does the provider plan its market intelligence needs? Are roles and responsibilities clear and are the objectives of market intelligence activities clearly stated?
- **Processes**
  How effectively is data collected, stored, processed, analysed and reported on? Has the experience over the past year highlighted any training or development needs. Where external consultants or commercial tools have been used, how effectively were these managed and utilised?
- **Impact**
  What difference did market intelligence make to recruitment, development of new provision, quality or income? Is it possible to quantify the benefits and impact? Was the investment in market intelligence good value for money?

<u>Suggested Action Points/Key Questions</u>:

- Specify and agree a mechanism for reviewing the impact and benefits of using market intelligence data.
- Following the review agree on a series of actions and responsibilities for improving the use of market intelligence in the future.

2.9 Market Intelligence for External Communications

Detailed and up to date market intelligence can help providers tailor their promotion to the needs of individual learners and employers. This is consistent with the Government's aim of increasing the quality of public information allowing learners and employers to make more informed choices about the learning options available to them. The BIS Strategy document *Skills for Sustainable Growth* (November 2010) states:

"Clear information on the benefits of learning is critical to driving an informed system. By giving learners and employers a wide range of information about the curriculum, quality and value of different learning opportunities … they will be better informed to make choices about where and what to learn."

One provider, for example, used the results of an employer survey to promote the business benefits of employing Apprentices via their website.

Geodemographic segmentation can help a provider target its marketing campaign and develop a provision strategy that is appropriate to specific customer groups. Geodemographic classification systems segment small neighbourhoods, postcodes or consumer households into different categories and types. There is a growing use of geodemographic classification within the public sector as this type of analysis can provide a key way to achieve policy targets. Many different geographical segmentation systems have been developed, including ACORN, MOSAIC, OAC and CAMEO. The MOSAIC UK classification system developed as a commercial service by Experian Ltd, for example, uses 15 groups (see table below), 67 household types and 141 person types.

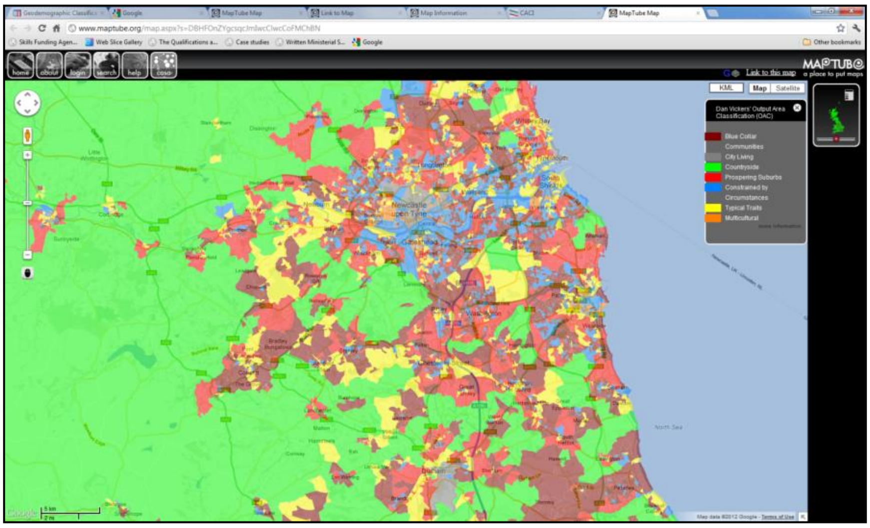
MOSAIC Segmentation Groups

Group	Mosaic Description
A	Alpha Territory
B	Professional Rewards
C	Rural Solitude
D	Small Town Diversity
E	Active Retirement
F	Suburban Mindsets
G	Carers & Kids
H	New Homemakers
I	Ex-Council Community
J	Claimant Cultures
K	Upper Floor Living
L	Elderly Needs
M	Industrial Heritage
N	Terraced Melting Pot
O	Liberal Opinions

The Output Area Classifications (OAC) system has been developed by the Office of National Statistics. OAC consists of 7 super-groups, 21 groups and 52 sub-groups. OAC is freely available, accredited as an official statistic by the Office for National Statistics, and is an open source allowing users to understand the data. The link below takes you to an interactive OAC map of the UK.

http://www.maptube.org/map.aspx?s=DBHFOnZYgcsqcJmIwcClwcCoFMChBN

OAC Classification Interactive Map



Suggested Action Points/Key Questions:

- What information are you currently providing members of the community and employers about your organisation? How is this information helping them to make a decision on which courses/apprenticeship frameworks to access?
- What would be the benefits of developing a community scorecard for the provider? What market intelligence data would you need to collect and display?
- To what extent is your current marketing and promotional activities segmented according to different customer types? How might segmentation help in recruitment, income generation and reputation building?

3. Learner Data

3.1 Introduction to Learner Data

Learner data is the primary source of information about customers and potential customers. Providers generally hold detailed records on their own learners within their Management Information Systems and regularly produce a wide range of different reports about recruitment, funding and performance.

Effective market intelligence, however, requires information about learners who are not enrolled at your organisation in order to fully understand how your organisation is performing in relation to the overall ‘learning market’. Collecting market intelligence on all learners allows a provider to understand issues such as:

- Market share i.e. the percentage of learners who are enrolled at your organisation compared to the total number of learners within a defined recruitment area and by postcode;
- Participation rates i.e. the percentage of learners engaged in learning compared with those that are not or who are not in employment, education or training (NEET);
- Trends in recruitment or performance levels compared to national, regional or other benchmarks;
- Comparisons by provider type, subject area, level of study or learner characteristics;
- Destinations of learners into employment or further learning;
- Satisfaction levels of learners or employers engaged with your organisation compared to national benchmarks.

The primary source of information about post-16 learners studying at independent learning providers, FE colleges, sixth form colleges, adult learning providers and specialist institutions is the Individualised Learner Record (ILR). Summary data from the national ILR is published on an annual basis by the Data Service as a series of *Statistical First Releases*. More detailed ILR data can be obtained by using specific tools (such as the AoC Apprenticeship tool) or through legitimate research projects where data sharing agreements and protocols have been established. These projects can be carried out by a provider itself or could be supported by external consultants or through partnership activity.

School sixth forms are not included in the ILR but instead complete a termly school census which is managed by the Department for Education.

Note: The use of learner data is subject to Data Protection legislation.

3.2 Individualised Learner Record (ILR)

The Individualised Learner Record (ILR) is a collection of data about learners and their learning that is requested from learning providers in the FE system. Information on the ILR is available from *The Information Authority* ILR web pages

http://www.theia.org.uk/ilr/

The data collected is used by organisations in the FE system to ensure that public money is being spent in line with government targets for quality and value-for-money, for future planning, and to make the case for the sector in seeking further funding. The returns therefore not only generate funding for providers but also underpin the production of performance monitoring including National Success Rate Tables (formerly Benchmarking), Provider Qualification Success Rate (QSR) reports, Minimum Level of Performance Reports and OFSTED Learner Responsive (LRPR) and Employer Responsive (ERPR) Performance Reports– see separate entries for above.

The ILR Specification defines what data is collected for each academic year from 1 August – 31 July. The data standards and specification of the ILR are owned and governed by *The information authority*, and any changes to the data collected in the ILR or collection arrangements must be approved by *The Information Authority* board. The ILR Specification for the current year can be found in the ILR Documents section of the website.

ILR data is collected from providers that are in receipt of any of the following types of funding from the Skills Funding Agency and the Education Funding Agency:

- 16-18 Learner Responsive;
- Adult Learner Responsive;
- Employer Responsive;
- Adult Safeguarded Learning (ASL);
- European Social Funds (ESF) [co-financed].

In addition the ILR requirement determines the majority (but not necessarily all) of the key data available for local analysis of performance.

The ILR is a rich dataset covering all learners in the country. Information about the provider's own learners is readily available via the internal Management Information System and MI staff will be able to produce standard and customised reports from this information. In order to produce benchmarks and understand learning patterns more globally the Data Service would need to supply information from the national ILR dataset. This would require strict data protocols to ensure that Data Protection legislation is adhered to and the data is being used for research purposes only.

3.3 Post-16 Learner Participation and Outcomes in England Statistical First Release

http://www.thedataservice.org.uk/statistics/statisticalfirstrelease/sfr_current/

The current Statistical First Release (SFR) was published on 29th March 2012. It shows information on learner participation and achievement for post-16 education from 2006/07 to 2010/11, as well as provisional data for the first two quarters of 2011/12. It includes information from the Labour Force Survey on the level of highest qualification held in England and information on vocational qualifications awarded in the United Kingdom.

The tables are available for download from the web page above and consist of;

- Tables 1 – 3 show standard performance metrics for the further education sector (including independent learning providers) - participation, achievement and success rates;
- Table 4 shows a demographic summary of learners participating in Further Education;
- Table 5 shows performance against the key programmes outlined in the relevant Government funding policy for the FE sector;
- Table 6 shows Skills for Life performance;
- Table 7 shows participation and achievement in Adult Safeguarded Learning;
- Tables 8 and 9 show starts and achievements for Apprenticeships and Train to Gain respectively. These are the standard performance metrics used to measure performance on these programmes;
- Tables 10 and 11 show level of attainment in the population (working age and economically active respectively) from the Labour Force Survey;
- Table 12 shows a quarterly time series of information on Vocational Qualifications awarded;
- Tables 13 to 19 repeat earlier tables; showing provisional in-year participation for the first six months of the 2010/11 academic year (August 2010 – January 2011).

The SFR also contains an extensive set of Supplementary Tables

http://www.thedataservice.org.uk/statistics/statisticalfirstrelease/sfr_supplementary_tables/

A list of the Supplementary Tables may be downloaded from the above webpage (in Excel format). These supplementary tables break down overall figures shown in the main Release by a variety of dimensions, including funding stream, geographical areas, Equality & Diversity characteristics, Sector Subject Area, Sector (SSC) and provider. There are also tables included which are not part of the main release.

Further Education and Skills
This includes further breakdowns of tables 1-6 and 13-17 of the main Release:
- Overall FE and skills participation and achievement by funding stream (including 'firstness' figures) and demographics;
- Skills for Life participation and achievement;
- FE (learner responsive) participation by mode of attendance;
- FE participation (aims) by Sector Subject Area and Level.

Success Rates
This includes further breakdowns of information shown in tables 1-3 of the main release:
- Further Education (Learner Responsive) success rates
- Apprenticeship Success Rates

Apprenticeships
This includes further breakdowns of information shown in tables 8 and 18 of the main release.

Other Employer-Based Training
This includes further breakdowns of information shown in tables 9 and 19 of the main release.

Level of Highest Qualification Held by Adults in the Population (using Labour Force Survey data)
This includes sub-national estimates of education attainment. National estimates of the level of highest qualification held by adults in the population are shown in tables 10 and 11 of the main release.

Vocational Qualifications
This includes breakdowns of Vocational Qualification awards. Information on VQ awards is also shown in table 12 of the main release.

International Comparisons
This provides summary information from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)'s Education at a Glance, showing the most recent relative ranking in education attainment of the 25-64 year old population in OECD countries.

Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)
This includes summary information, from the Department for Education's quarterly statistical brief, showing estimates of young people NEET in the 16-24, 19-24 and 18-24 age groups. It also provides a more detailed breakdown of the NEET group, showing the labour market status of these people (i.e. whether they are ILO unemployed or economically inactive) and reasons for economic inactivity. In addition to age and gender breakdowns, the DfE release provides estimates for each English Region.

3.4 Qualification Success Rates (QSR) Reports – Learner Responsive (LR) and Employer Responsive (ER)

The Data Service produces Qualification Success rate reports for all providers with appropriate provision.

The reports are published for individual providers via the Provider Gateway. As an individual provider, access to confidential organisation FE Choices data is also available via the Provider Gateway (for which a username and password is required – each provider has a Superuser able to provide this):

https://gateway.lsc.gov.uk/FFE/Default.aspx

Learner Responsive QSR reports are published annually (2009-2010 QSR report was published in December 2010) and provides data from the final ILR return (F05) on success rates by level, age, gender, ethnicity, Learning Difficulty and Disability (LLDD) and Sector Subject Area (SSA). National rates are also included for comparison.

Employer Responsive QSR reports are produced 4 times per year after periods 6, 9, 12 and 15. Similar analysis is provided as that for LR but with two success rates “Overall” and “Timely”.

For information on the methodology for LR QSR reports see:

http://www.thedataservice.org.uk/statistics/qsr_mlp/learner_responsive_qsr/

For information on the methodology for ER QSR reports (Apprenticeship and TtG) see:

http://www.thedataservice.org.uk/statistics/qsr_mlp/employer_responsive_qsr/

3.5 National Success Rates Tables

http://www.thedataservice.org.uk/statistics/success_rates/2010_11/lr/lr

The National Success Rates Tables for Learner Responsive provision (previously known as 'Benchmarking Data') set out levels of success, retention and achievement in further education (FE) providers in England for a three year period (including independent learning porviders). The Data Service publishes National Success Rates Tables annually.

The publication of National Success Rates Tables supports providers in raising the standard of their work. The Tables allow providers to assess their performance, and assists the planning of action programmes to improve the success, retention and achievement rates of their learners. There are four types of National Success Rates Tables Data presented:

- Overall data tables showing national averages of success, retention and achievement rates, plus spread of variability by provider type, notional level, age, gender, disability, ethnicity, length and locality;
- National data for success rates, retention and achievement by sector subject area;
- Qualification data showing success, retention and achievement by notional level and qualification type;
- Institution tables showing success, retention and achievement by provider, qualification type, age, gender, disability, ethnicity and subject area.

3.6 Apprenticeship Management Information Data

All Apprenticeship performance data is contained within the Statistical First Release (SFR) published by the Data Service. The data tables provide analysis of both learner starts and performance. For a link via the National Apprenticeship website service see:

http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/About-Us/Performance-data.aspx

Otherwise the data can be accessed directly via the Data Services website:

http://www.thedataservice.org.uk/statistics/statisticalfirstrelease/sfr_current/

In March 2011 release tables 8 and 18 refer to Apprenticeship starts and achievement.

Also see "Supplementary Tables" guide which includes signposting to a number of additional reports.

http://www.thedataservice.org.uk/statistics/statisticalfirstrelease/sfr_supplementary_tables/Apprenticeship_sfr_supplementary_tables/

These are primarily further breakdowns of tables 8 and 18 including geographical, framework, sector subject area, equality and diversity, gender and age.

3.7 The Learner Achievement Tracker (LAT) for 16-18 learners

The **Learner Achievement Tracker** (LAT) contains interactive Value Added (VA) and Distance Travelled (DT) reports for 16-18 learners including those registered at independent learning providers.

VA and DT for 16-18 learners aim to show the progress of individual learners relative to the average progress made by similar learners nationally for the same qualification and subject, taking prior attainment into account.

'Prior attainment' refers to the qualifications attained by a learner up to the end of Key Stage 4.

Statistical analysis has shown that prior attainment is the best predictor of future performance in post-16 qualifications for learners in this age group. A calculation based on prior attainment that compares learner performance for a given subject and qualification helps to:

- Predict learner attainment and, on the basis of the expected attainment, establish target grades (or pass rates) to which learners and providers may aspire;
- Make judgements about whether learners at a particular provider are performing at, below, or above a national average group of learners taking the same qualification and subject, and having the same prior attainment.

Individual provider access to LAT reports is via the Provider Gateway (for which a username and password is required – each provider has a Superuser able to provide this):

https://gateway.lsc.gov.uk/FFE/Default.aspx

For information and guidance on the LAT and the Value-Added and Distance Travelled reports see:

http://thegateway.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/training-support/achievement-tracker/

3.8 Inspection Scores Dataset

Link to the Inspection Judgements 2010/11 for maintained schools - autumn term:
http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Statistics/Maintained-schools/Inspection-outcomes/Inspection-judgements-2010-11-for-maintained-schools-autumn-term

Link to the Inspection Judgements 2009/10 for maintained schools - full year:
http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Statistics/Maintained-schools/Inspection-outcomes/Inspection-judgements-2009-10-for-maintained-schools

Each year Ofsted produces a summary of all the inspections carried out in maintained schools during that academic year and within the academic year of all the inspections carried out during the previous term. The data is presented in seven Excel workbooks that can be downloaded from the links above.

3.9 FE Choices – Learner and Employer Satisfaction - Skills Funding Agency (SFA)

http://fechoices.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/Pages/home.aspx

This tool allows you to search for and compare a series of performance indicators for up to 10 colleges/independent learning providers at a time, in order to make informed decisions about where to go as a learner or an employer looking to train staff. The Learner Views scores are calculated using the responses of learners/trainees to a survey asking them what they thought about their experience when learning or training with an organisation. The main survey questions are as follows:

1. How good or bad was the information you were given when you were choosing your course?
2. How good or bad was the help staff gave you in the first few weeks?
3. How good or bad is the teaching on your course?
4. How good or bad is the respect staff show to you?
5. How good or bad is the advice you have been given about what you can do after this course?
6. How good or bad is the support you get on this course?
7. How good or bad is the provider at listening to the views of learners?
8. How good or bad is the provider at acting on the views of learners?
9. Overall, how good or bad do you think the provider is?

As an individual provider access to confidential organisation data is also available via the Provider Gateway (for which a username and password is required – each provider has a Superuser able to provide this): https://gateway.lsc.gov.uk/FFE/Default.aspx

3.10 FE Choices – Learner Destinations - Skills Funding Agency (SFA)

http://fechoices.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/Pages/home.aspx

The Learner Destinations indicator allows you to see the estimated percentage of learners/trainees from a specified provider who have moved into further education, higher education, found employment or improved their career prospects after finishing their course at that organisation. The figures are currently based on a set number of known destinations of leavers in 2007/08. This indicator can be broken down further to show the Learning Rate (the proportion of learners/trainees who moved into further education or higher education following completion of their course) or the Employment Rate (the proportion of learners/trainees who found work, moved to a better job, or improved their prospects in their current job as a result of completing their course).

All learners on a priority programme who achieved at least one relevant qualification are included in the Learner Destinations performance indicator.

This indicator **does not** apply to employers who deliver training to their own employees only or to fewer than 10 learners from other employers. Where an employer delivers training to 10 or more learners from other employers, it will be in scope for those learners (but not for its own staff).

There is a Government requirement to ensure that vocational qualifications are of economic value. As part of the strategy to achieve this aim, the SFA and BIS are charged with continuing to develop the evidence base on the economic value of qualifications. Gathering data on the progression of learners into further learning and/or employment contributes to this work and demonstrates the sector's contribution to achieving the Government's aims.

As an individual provider access to confidential organisation data is also available via the Provider Gateway (for which a username and password is required – each provider has a Superuser able to provide this):

https://gateway.lsc.gov.uk/FFE/Default.aspx

3.11 School Pupil Census

This is an individual pupil level data collection exercise undertaken electronically by schools each term. This is a statutory return required by the Department for Education (DfE). This was formerly known as the yearly PLASC return (Pupil Level Annual School Census) and before that when in the form of a manual paper return, the Form 7. A range of pupil as well as some limited school information is collected from all maintained schools each term on the third Thursday in January and May and the first Thursday each October. Each school produces an electronic file generated by their Management Information System which is then transmitted via a secure electronic service (AVCO AnyComms) to the LA's Information Unit. The Information Unit then validate, resolve any errors and upload the files to the DfE. Key information from the Pupil Census is used by a variety of sections within the DfE and Local Authorities to inform funding, future planning and in order to respond to a wide range of requests for school and pupil data.

http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/schoolcensus.shtml

3.12 DfE Performance Tables

The DfE Performance Tables give information on the achievements of pupils in primary, secondary and 16-18 provision in schools and colleges, and how they compare with other schools in the Local Authority (LA) area and in England as a whole. The 2011 Tables present a much wider range of key performance measures than in previous years and now include information on finance, absence, school workforce and the most recent Ofsted reports.

http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance/index.html

3.13 Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training Statistical First Release

This includes summary information, from the Department for Education's quarterly statistical brief, showing estimates of young people NEET in the 16-24, 19-24 and 18-24 age groups. It also provides a more detailed breakdown of the NEET group, showing the labour market status of these people (i.e. whether they are ILO unemployed or economically inactive) and reasons for economic inactivity. In addition to age and gender breakdowns, the DfE release provides estimates for each English Region.

The NEET report is provided within the SFR Supplementary Tables and is available from:

http://www.thedataservice.org.uk/statistics/statisticalfirstrelease/sfr_supplementary_tables/neet

3.14 Longitudinal Study of Young People in England – LSYPE / Youth Cohort Study

http://www.esds.ac.uk/longitudinal/access/lsype/L5545.asp

ESDS (Economic and Social Data Service) Longitudinal provides a range of value-added data enhancements for a number of key UK longitudinal data collections, including the *Longitudinal Study of Young People in England* (LSYPE).

LSYPE, also known as Next Steps, commissioned by the former Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and now managed by the Department for Education (DfE), is a major innovative panel study of young people which brings together data from a number of different sources, including both annual interviews with young people and their parents and administrative sources. The main role of the study is to identify, and enable analysis and understanding of, the key factors affecting young people's progress in transition from the later years of compulsory education, through any subsequent education or training, to entry into the labour market or other outcomes. Data from the study will be used, among other things, to monitor the progress of the cohort group, evaluate the success or otherwise of policy aimed at this group and provide an evidence base for further policy development. Sample boosts took place for deprivation factors and for ethnicity. The latest data is available from:

http://www.esds.ac.uk/findingData/lsypeTitles.asp

3.15 National Pupil Projections: Future Trend in Pupil Numbers

This report is available for download at:

http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/STR/d000940/index.shtml

This Statistical Release provides national projections for the number of pupils in schools by type of school and age group. Findings presented here update those published in March 2010 (OSR 08/2010) and are based on mid-2008 based population projections from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) with trends in pupil numbers derived from data collected via the School Census (January 2010).

ONS population projections are based on assumptions about future levels of migration. Included in this report is an impact assessment of varying these migration assumptions on projected pupil numbers.

This is not a National Statistics publication. The statistics are presented as latest available findings and have been released to help planning, to study trends and to inform a variety of programmes and initiatives.

The key points from this release are:

- Overall pupil numbers (aged up to and including 15) in state funded schools were in decline but they are projected to increase from 2011 onwards;
- Pupil numbers in maintained nursery and primary schools have started to rise and are expected to continue to rise. By 2018 numbers are projected to reach levels last seen in the late 1970s;
- State funded secondary school rolls started to decline after 2004 and are expected to decline further until around 2015 (when the increases in primary pupil numbers start to flow through);
- If net migration is assumed to be zero when projecting the population for England, almost 13,000 fewer pupils aged 5 to 15 (some 0.2 per cent) are projected to be in state funded schools in 2014.

3.16 Fischer Family Trust School Data

For over 10 years, Fischer Family Trust (FFT) has been working with Local Authorities and schools to provide performance data to support target setting and self evaluation. Currently, 100% of Local Authorities in England and Wales subscribe to FFT with virtually all schools accessing FFT data through FFT Live (FFT's online reporting system), FFT databases or through LA generated data packages.

FFT is part of a consortium that is contracted to process all data for the Department for Education's (DFE) National Pupil Database and Achievement & Attainment Tables (Performance tables). FFT is also contracted to process pupil performance data for the Welsh Assembly Group. As a result, FFT has access to pupil performance and census data for the whole of England and Wales. FFT produces a wide range of innovative performance data allowing schools to quickly identify and understand key strengths and weaknesses, set challenging but realistic targets and help pupils to identify and realise their potential.

http://www.fischertrust.org/dap_overview.aspx

4. Employer Data

4.1 Introduction to Employer Data

Employer data provides detailed statistical information about the size and changes to the industrial sectors and occupational classifications and the nation’s workforce. This is supported by contextual evidence supplied by sector skills councils that document the current and longer term skills requirements of all the key industrial sectors. A summary of each of these reports is included in the section of the guide.

Providers can use employer data to identify changes affecting the industrial sectors in which they offer training programme and apprenticeship frameworks. The data will indicate if the volume of business in each industrial sector has grown or declined over recent years, whether the size of the workforce employed in the relevant industrial sectors has also increased or declined and the number of VAT registered businesses operating within each industrial sectors. The data can be useful in providing an indication to the average wage rates by occupational and industrial sector and also provides detailed information on the average highest level of qualification held by people undertaking different occupational activities within each industrial sector.

The Sector Skills Reports are useful in identifying new skill requirements in each industrial sector. This is useful in helping a provider to assess whether it needs to modify its current provision or diversify into new areas. The Sector Skills Reports also forecast the future demand for workers within each core industry which is also valuable information for providers to consider when undertaking strategic business planning.

4.2 Nomis®

Nomis is a service provided by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) which gives users free access to the most detailed and up-to-date Labour Market statistics from official sources for local areas throughout the UK.

What you will find in Nomis:

- Labour market and related population data for local areas from a variety of sources the Annual Population Survey (APS), Labour Force Survey (LFS), Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES), New Earnings Survey (NES), Census 2001 and earlier;
- Data from Official Government sources such as National Statistics, DWP, JSA Claimant Count;
- The latest published figures and time series data, in some cases back to the 1970s.

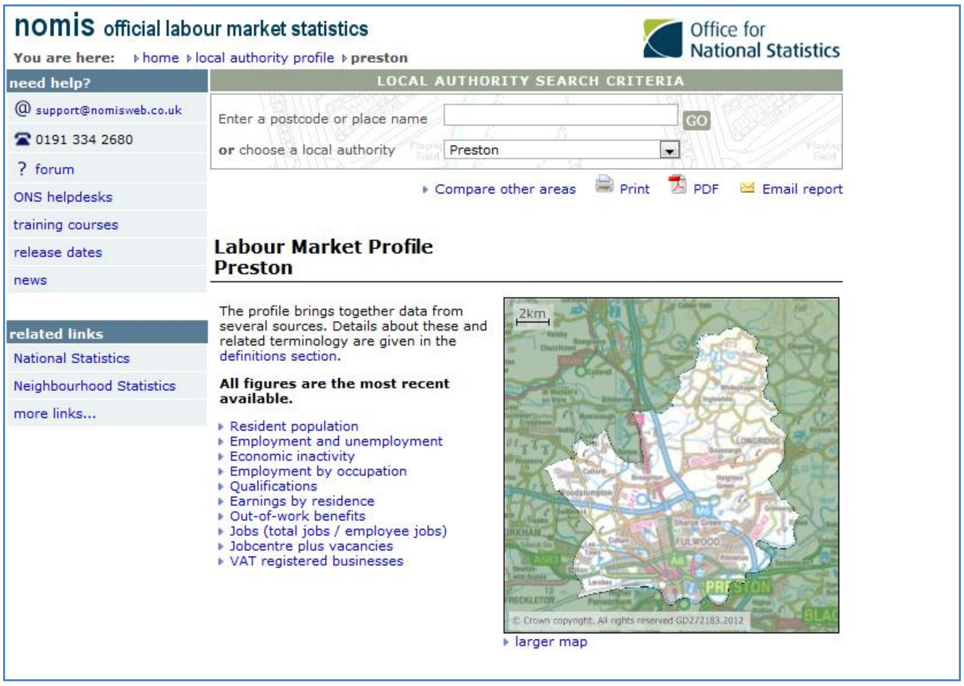
What you will NOT find in Nomis:

- Statistics for themes unrelated to the labour market, such as health and the economy; detailed results from the 2001 Census. For these use the main National Statistics website;
- Data from non-government sources;
- Data prior to the 1970s.

While access to Nomis is free the data supplied within the BRES requires a licence to access which currently (2011) costs £125+VAT.

Link to Nomis® website: https://www.nomisweb.co.uk

NOMIS Labour Market Intelligence Example for Preston, Lancashire



4.3 Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES)

The BRES is an Office for National Statistics (ONS) survey the aim of which is to maintain the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR), support regional estimation and provide the basis for annual estimates of employment. It is a sample survey of approximately 80,000 employers and in 2009 this survey integrated and replaced two existing ONS business surveys:

- Annual Business Inquiry - Collects employees' data at the business level to produce annual employment estimates. These estimates are currently published on the Nomis® website.
- Business Register Survey - Collects structural information at the business level and employees' data at the site level to maintain the sampling frame for ONS business surveys (the IDBR).

BRES collects comprehensive employment information from businesses in England, Scotland and Wales representing the majority of the Great Britain economy. The Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment in Northern Ireland (DETINI) collects the same information independently. Both data sources are then combined to produce BRES estimates on a UK basis.

High level UK BRES estimates are published on the ONS website, while detailed GB regional estimates are published on NOMIS. NOMIS is regarded as the definitive source of official Government employee statistics.

The outputs of this survey published on NOMIS allow you to view the number of jobs held down by full-time and/or part-time employees by detailed industry group. The industry group goes as detailed as a 5 digit SIC code (2007). These outputs are available from national level down to lower level super output area and Scottish datazone.

While access to NOMIS is free the data supplied within the BRES requires a licence to access which currently (2011) costs £125+VAT.

Link to NOMIS® website:

https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/articles/526.aspx

4.4 Sector Skills Councils

The Sector Skills Councils[1](SSCs) are the lead bodies in the provision of demand-led Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) and are responsible for identifying the skills and productivity needs of different sectors throughout the UK.

The SSCs all work towards four key goals: reduced skills gaps and shortages; improved productivity, business and public service performance; increased opportunities to boost the skills and productivity of everyone in the sector's workforce; and improved learning supply through national occupational standards, apprenticeships, and further and higher education. They have strong working relationships with the UK Government and the devolved administrations, training providers, bodies that fund training and other important skills stakeholders. They play a leading role on a range of skills issues, including:

- working with employers to identify future skills needs;
- developing skills and training solutions;
- setting occupational standards;
- influencing and shaping the future development of qualifications;
- designing apprenticeship frameworks;
- encouraging greater investment in training; and
- providing labour market information that assists in long-term business planning.

Brief summaries of each Sector Skills Council's Skills Assessment are presented below and on the following pages. You can also access any of the published full or summary Sector Skills Assessment reports via the following link on the Alliance of Sector Skills Councils website.

http://www.sscallianceextranet.org/Home-Public/Research/SectorSkillsAssessments/SectorSkillsAssessments.aspx

Asset Skills

http://www.assetskills.org/

Asset Skills is the Sector Skills Council for facilities management, housing, property, planning, cleaning and parking industries.

The Asset Skills workforce comprises 3% of the total UK workforce and the sector is overwhelmingly dominated by small companies (94%) employing between 1-10 people, which can have an impact of limiting the uptake of training and qualifications generally.

The skills mix across the Asset Skills sector is widening with a growing emphasis on the generic skills relating to customer service, communication, team working, employability and management and leadership.

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[1] For a full list of SSCs and the Industries they cover please see the Sector Skills Councils Contact Directory http://www.sscalliance.org/SectorSkillsCouncils/DirectoryofSSCs/DirectorySSCs.aspx

Evidence suggests that 21% of the Asset Skills workforce have no qualifications, compared with an average for all UK sectors of 8%. This is largely accounted for by the significant proportion of elementary workers within the cleaning industry who do not hold a qualification (34%).

As expected professional occupations (77%), associate professionals and technical occupations (42%) and managers and senior officials (43%) are qualified to level 4 and above.

Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI)

http://www.motor.org.uk/

The Institute of the Motor Industry is the professional association for individuals working in the motor industry. The institute is the Sector Skills Council for the automotive retail industry and the governing body for the Automotive Technician Accreditation (ATA) scheme.

The automotive retail sector generates £154 billion turnover annually and comprises 2% of the UK workforce, some 570,990 staff working across nearly 81,000 business units. The majority of these business units are micro businesses (85%), however the majority of staff (nearly two thirds) work in SMEs. The number of jobs in the sector is predicted to increase by 2% up to 2017.

'Skilled trade' staff represent the largest proportion of the workforce, the next largest group is 'managers and senior officials'. There is a view that the quality of managers and leaders in the sector in general needs improvement.

Technical skills are in constant demand and are the most recognised skills gap. This is largely due to the phenomenal pace of new technology being launched such as the transformation of the current, predominantly internal combustion engine fleet to lower emission alternatives. This will also place an increased demand for high level problem solving skills in the future. Smaller businesses with no vehicle manufacturer franchises agreements are at particular disadvantage.

Customer service, sales and problem solving are also skill priorities for the sector.

Historically employers have often found recruiting vehicle technicians (mechanics) challenging, however the recession has temporarily alleviated this recruitment challenge.

Skills for Care & Development

http://www.skillsforcareanddevelopment.org.uk/

Skills for Care & Development (SfC&D) is the Sector Skills Council for people providing social work, social care and children's services to the people of the UK and has a workforce of over 1.87 million people.

Good skills and the development of the workforce are vital for the growth of the economy and the well being of the UK population. Research shows that 70% of all people in the UK have personal or immediate family experience of using the services in this sector, and this is expected to grow. SfC&D is working with over 62,400 employers in the sector to invest in care and development in a number of ways.

New technologies and technical advances are likely to impact upon the workforce in a number of ways. These are summarised below:

- Commissioning, Procurement & Service development – knowledge requirements around developing appropriate technical specifications, accessing specialist advice; option appraisal (capabilities, costs and suitability) and analysis to identify what to decommission; as well as project management skills for implementation.
- Professional Development and leadership for change at all levels - Knowledge & skills for technology solutions to meet care needs need to be integrated into professional and vocational education.
- Awareness raising – Support to enable service users to see the potential of new technology to help them achieve their goals, maintain their independence and improve their feelings of safety, security and well being.
- Adult/Child protection – Everyone caring for children, young people and vulnerable adults must be aware of how they can help protect service users from harm/risk.
- Data analysis and interpretation – Managers, service providers and commissioners need the knowledge and skills to use the data available to them.
- Non-professional/indirect care roles – Workers in emerging non professional roles and indirect care roles (e.g. call centre staff, installation & maintenance staff) need basic social care skills such as communication, must understand adult/child protection issues and be able to deal with challenging behaviour.

Cogent

http://www.cogent-ssc.com/

Cogent is the Sector Skills Council (SSC) for the Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Nuclear, Oil and Gas, Petroleum and Polymer Industries. They are licensed by Government to help employers in these science-using industries to address their workforce development needs so that they can compete successfully.

These industries provide direct employment for approximately 40,000 people, within a network of 280 industrial sites across the UK. On average each site employs 580 people. Employment tends to be direct and full-time with the main routes into the sector being 'Mature Entrants', 'Apprentices', 'Graduates' and 'Agency'. Between 40% and 60% of employers reported recruitment in these categories. Across all sectors, 54% of employers reported dependence on contractors for routine operations.

In general, employers were satisfied with the supply of qualifications across the sector. However, satisfaction ratings for the use of 'Apprenticeships' and the 'Accessibility' of provision were the lowest reported (21% and 15% majority opinions, respectively). Employers in the sector place a high level of importance on Apprenticeships and in priority order valued 'Industry Awareness' followed by 'Technical Skills', 'Practical Skills' and 'Employability Skills' in equal measure.

Cogent sector has 30% of its national workforce below the level 2 threshold. The occupational composition is fairly typical across all regions.

Improve

http://www.summitskills.org.uk

Improve is the SSC for the food and drink manufacturing and processing industries. In England, the food and drink industries make a substantial and growing contribution to the UK economy, generating an annual turnover of £62.6bn, the largest turnover of any UK manufacturing sector.

Across England 19% of the food and drink workforce is qualified to Level 4 and above, 13% of the workforce is qualified to Level 3, 14 % are qualified to Level 2 and 18% have qualifications below Level 2. In total 11% of the food and drink workforce in England has no qualifications at all.

The food and drink industry is facing a number of skills issues which are negatively impacting on the ability of the sector to achieve its potential. Currently 11% of employers report vacancies, hard to fill vacancies are reported by 2% of businesses and 16% of food and drink manufacturing businesses report skills gaps amongst the workforce. The most severe skills gaps are amongst managers, skilled trades and machine operative roles.

Despite the sector anticipating a reduction in the volume of employees by 8% between 2007 and 2017 there is still significant demand for new workers to replace those retiring or leaving the sector. Over 103,000 new employees, equivalent to 30% of the current workforce will be required over this time period. Job contraction is expected to take place in low and intermediate skilled occupations with expanding numbers of jobs in high level skill occupations. Key job growth in the future is anticipated to be:

- Food scientists and technicians with higher level skills.
- Engineers with higher level skills that have the ability to adapt and learn about food production machinery. These skills will be required as the sector introduces automated production systems.
- Skills trades at intermediate qualification level including butchers and bakers.
- High quality managers and supervisors with higher level and intermediate skills within all food and drink subsectors and sizes of businesses to adopt new manufacturing and processing techniques.

Over the four year period between 2005/06 and 2008/09 the volume of food and drink related apprenticeship frameworks remained roughly static ranging from 439 to 387. In 2008/09 there were 21 contracted training providers within England delivering the Food Manufacture apprenticeship framework. Of these 21 contracted providers only six delivered ten or more apprentices. All of these six providers were located in the East of England region.

Creative Skillset

http://www.skillset.org/

Skillset is the SSC for creative media which comprises TV, film, radio, interactive media, animation, computer games, support facilities, photo imaging and publishing. The creative media sector is fundamentally a sector that remains dominated by small to medium enterprises. In 2010, Skillset published figures showing that creative employment totalled just under 2.3 million jobs which represented and average growth rate of 2% since 1997 compared to 1% for the whole economy over this period.

In relation to other sectors, the workforce is highly skilled across all sectors in scope. The entry level norm is Level 4, nearly a quarter (24%) of the workforce holds a post graduate degree, 56% are already qualified to degree level and less than 0.5% has a qualification below Level 2. However, in this sector, skills can rapidly become outdated and therefore, any training and provision should focus on updating higher level skills with an aim of increasing productivity and competitiveness.

Skills gaps occurring in Creative Media Industries continue to be:

- Multi-skilling: an understanding of different technology platforms and their impact on content development and digital work flow, and new approaches to working in cross-functional creative / technical teams within and across companies.
- Multi-platform skills: an understanding of how to create, market and distribute content across a range of channels, and the ability to understand and exploit technological advances.
- Management, leadership, business and entrepreneurial skills: especially project management for multi-platform development; the hybrid skills combining effective leadership with innovation, creativity and understanding of technology, and the analytical skills to understand audience interests and translate it into business intelligence.
- IP and monetisation of multi-platform content: understanding of intellectual property legislation to protect from piracy, and exploiting intellectual property internationally to take full advantage of emerging markets - with particular focus on the ability to deal with the problem of illegal downloading and copyright infringement.
- Broadcast engineering: continuing to be an area of skills shortage.
- Sales and marketing: being particularly important in Commercial Radio and an emerging need in other sectors.
- Diagonal thinking: the ability to tell great stories, then know how to monetise those stories to the best effect utilising media that cross platforms and territories well.

Construction Skills

http://www.cskills.org/

Construction Skills is the Sector Skills Council and Industry Training Board for the construction industry. They work with construction companies to help them improve skills, increase their competitive edge and respond to the many challenges employers face – from the low carbon agenda, through to reducing costs on-site and recruiting the best and brightest talent for their sector.

Construction Skills represent around 3 million construction workers and their links with all three UK Governments to support employers through the recession – helping them to retain their apprentices and, through shaping qualifications, have saved the NVQ to champion employer-led initiatives to deliver flexible learning for construction businesses. They understand that apprenticeships are the lifeblood of the construction industry, and work hard to encourage more young people to join the industry. They have campaigned for funding for adult apprentices and set up www.bconstructive.co.uk to give young people a flavour of the exciting career opportunities that lie in wait for new recruits.

The decline witnessed during the recession in both, house building and commercial development means that many construction workers are having difficulty in maintaining employment. Nevertheless, employers in the sector articulate a specific need to recruit more skilled trade workers, managers and senior officials between the years 2004 and 2014. The sector faces significant challenges in relation to qualifications and training. Due to the fragmented and short term structure of the industry, the majority of workers are often recruited into the industry through informal routes or temporary work opportunities. Therefore, only a low proportion of the workforce is actually qualified. The short term nature of the industry also presents difficulties in finding employers who are willing to recruit Apprentices. Also, for those who train in Further Education establishments there are problems with success rates. From over 50,000 starters each year, only 30,000 achieve a qualification. Evidently, there is a need for high quality, flexible provision and training in this sector.

Lantra

http://www.lantra.co.uk

Lantra is the UK's sector skills council for land-based and environmental industries. It includes 16 industries which are grouped around land management and production, animal health and welfare and environmental industries. It is a diverse and highly skilled sector comprising of almost 160,000 predominantly small and medium businesses employing around 905,000 people. With 97% of these businesses employing less than 10 people there is a paramount need to give these industries core business management and business development skills.

The sector needs to grow and rear more with less in order to keep the UK supplied with food. There is a need to deliver greater environmental sustainability through the efficient use of

water, soils, fertilisers, pesticides, energy and waste. To meet these challenges the sector needs to be more highly skilled and armed with the latest technology and knowledge.
A major concern for the sector is the scale of the ageing workforce. Lantra indicates that almost 195,000 new entrants are needed in the sector in England over the next ten years just to replace those who will retire. Apprenticeships are considered to be an important solution for encouraging and developing new entrants. However, traditionally apprenticeship uptake in the sector has been low with 66% of land-based businesses unaware of the relevant frameworks. Similarly, providers find it expensive and difficult to offer the full assessment and support service to a relatively low volume of people spread across a wide geographic area. The unit cost of delivery can be too high to make land-based apprenticeships a viable proposition to most training provider organisations.

Although the range of Lantra industries vary greatly there are a range of generic skills needs and solutions that apply to many land-based businesses. These skill needs which are common to the sector can be broadly grouped as:

- Business management and planning (including market analysis)
- ITC (particularly for record keeping)
- Marketing
- Health & Safety
- Risk management
- Management & leadership
- Negotiation skills
- Customer service

Delivering training to land-based businesses is difficult and traditional class room type activities are un-popular as are day long courses that takes people away from the farm businesses and could involve long journey times. Land-based businesses are seeking:

- Bite sized, unitised learning
- Short knowledge transfer activities delivered in relevant venues such as auction marts
- Achievement recognition through continued professional development
- Accurate and accessible careers guidance information and resources.

Skills for Health

http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/

Skills for Health is the SSC for the healthcare industry. The workforce in this sector has grown significantly over recent years to 2 million workers, accounting for approximately 7% of total employment in the UK. Compared to other sectors, this workforce is highly educated and qualified but is increasingly dependent upon part time and female workers.

Due to ageing UK population and an increase in the levels of chronic illnesses and obesity, employment in this sector is expected to grow. It is anticipated that there will be a high demand for managers & senior officials and professional occupations. There is also likely to be a decline in the need for administrative and clerical staff.

The sector skills assessment indicates that moving towards 2020; employers will face a growing range of skills-related priorities, including:

- Enhancement of the quality of management and leadership, particularly through excellent employee engagement and followership.
- Continued development of workforce planning capability in the sector to assist with changes to a highly complex set of services.
- Growth in the demand for those willing and able to undertake roles at NHS Career Framework levels three to four (Assistant Practitioners) and at level seven (often referred to as Advanced Practitioners).
- Ongoing development of new skills sets in the light of new opportunities to exploit technology, including healthcare navigator/facilitator roles.
- Ongoing willingness of health care professionals to deliver care in areas that require multi-disciplinary working within diverse teams.
- Growth in the skills and volume of those working in a range of non-traditional health care providers and community settings.
- The development of health skills for non-health specialists to assist family carers and to facilitate self care, supported by a combination of Information Technology and human contact.

Creative & Cultural Skills

http://www.ccskills.org.uk/

This is the Sector Skills Council for creative and cultural industries including craft, cultural heritage, design, literature, music, performing arts and visual arts.

Across England the creative and cultural industries employs 694,700 people. The industry is dominated by small enterprises. There are 61,620 businesses in England, 93% of which employ fewer than 10 people.

The sector is highly qualified – 57% of people working in the creative and cultural industries in England have at least a level 4 qualification, but skills shortages and gaps are still a significant issue.

Across England, almost a quarter of businesses who have tried to recruit recently have faced difficulties. Only 6% of employers facing recruitment difficulties believe this to be due to a lack of appropriate qualifications. Rather, candidates for vacancies in the sector are far more likely to lack the required experience and specialist skills. Just over one third of employers perceive that skills gaps exist in their current workforce. These skills gaps tend to relate to information communication technology (ICT), marketing and technical skills. These skills are also perceived by employers to be significantly important in the future.

People 1st

http://www.people1st.co.uk/

The hospitality, leisure, travel & tourism sector is large and growing. In 2010 the workforce totalled 1.75 million people and this is set to reach 2.01 million by 2017. England's tourism strategy, 'a Strategic Framework for Tourism' sets out its ambition for an annual 5% growth in value over the next decade, leading to an additional 225,000 jobs (http://www.englandtourismframework.co.uk).

The sector continues to be dominated by small and micro independent operators (SMEs). Almost 25% of businesses in this sector employ no staff at all. This means there are large numbers of owner managed business and research shows many of these owners have no previous experience of the sector before opening their businesses. Many of these businesses are 'lifestyle' operations and owner operators are hard to reach in terms of training and business development.

The current economic downturn, changes to consumer expectations and technology are affecting all sector operators which means owner operators and managers in the sector need a wider range of skills. The three critical skills needs facing the sector are chef skills, customer service skills and managerial skills.

There is also demand for staff with almost 20% of businesses reporting unfilled vacancies and a further 5% of business had vacancies that had been available for a long period of time and were proving difficult to fill. Two thirds of these hard to fill vacancies were because applicants had not displayed the required skills, qualifications and work experience.

To attract higher calibre people into the sector there is a two way mindset required by both the industry and the workforce. The industry needs to be able to offer better and more attractive career pathways within the sector. These are considered to be weak, especially in the hospitality industries. Similarly, people entering the sector need to be looking for a career in the sector as opposed to a job in the sector.

To address the acute lack of trained chefs the People1st are promoting the delivery of the Diploma in Professional Cookery and the apprenticeships in Professional Cookery. In addition to the lack of available chefs there is also an issue with too many existing chefs lacking the broader range of culinary skills to operate in senior kitchen positions. This is exacerbated by the lack of suitable qualifications or units coupled with inflexible delivery styles that are not suitable to most chefs' lifestyles and employment responsibilities.

The current lack of skills shortages by sector managers also presents the sector with a critical skills gap. Once again the most pressing problem is the lack of strong development pathways to become a senior manager within the sector. This issue is greatest in the hospitality and events sector. In travel, the lack of large companies means that these types of progression routes are not available within small operations.

Tackling the needs of owner managers is critical. These managers need the same skills found in large organisations but the multiple pressures on their time mean addressing these remains untouched. The core support these people require is skills in financial planning and management and using modern IT. They tend not to be seeking formal qualifications.

Customer service remains a persistent skills gap. Customer expectations are driving up the level of customer service expected by the general public. The report highlights the importance of customer service training as part of a wider and genuine customer focused approached to hospitality right across the organisation, not just focused on front line reception, bar and restaurant staff. Customer service standards have also to be displayed by senior management which is regarded as often lacking. In larger organisations there is too much focus on maintaining brand image and standards rather than in offering genuine customer care where staff are empowered to make their own decisions.

An issue that is impacting on the sector more than ever before is technological change. Managers including owner managers will need to become proficient in a whole new range of technological skills including:

- Online booking systems including mobile technology booking systems;
- Customer relationship management systems;
- The impact of social network sites and online customer ratings sites;
- Data security; and
- In-room technologies and innovation.

Skills for Justice

http://www.skillsforjustice.com/

Skills for Justice is the SSC covering all employers, employees and volunteers working to provide essential public services in the UK justice and community safety sector. Employers in this sectors footprint provide services in seven main strands across the UK; community justice, courts and tribunal services, custodial care, fire and rescue services, forensic science, policing and law enforcement and public prosecution.

The Justice sector in England currently employs nearly 580,000 people and is responsible for just over 5% of public spending annually. It is made up of several strands according to their main function with well over half of the sector workforce employed in Policing and Law Enforcement. The custodial care strand and the fire and rescue sector employ between 12% and 13% of the workforce each. The occupational profile of the justice sector highlights the largest occupational areas, in terms of number of workers as 'associate professional and technical' (53%) and 'administrative and secretarial' (17%).

Workforce projections, for the period 2010-2020 forecast a modest decline of around 6% in total employment in the justice sector in England. This fall is expected to be lowest in the area of justice and judicial activities and highest in fire service activities. Some regional differences are likely to occur in the degree of overall job losses; Yorkshire and the Humber and the East of England are forecast to see more, whilst London and the North West will see fewer job losses.

Internal skills gaps present a greater challenge in the sector than hard to fill vacancies and the extent of internal skills gaps is by and large similar to that in the workforce of the wider economy. Skills gaps appear to be more prevalent amongst managers and senior officials, but even more amongst administrative and secretarial staff than other occupational groups.

An analysis of skills needs identified a further requirement in management and leadership, inter-agency working, ICT and in the area of equality and diversity. Further areas of need also include process improvement, research and communication skills.

An analysis of the highest level of qualification among justice sector employees in the UK shows that the majority of the sector, 34% are qualified to Level 4 or above which is in line with UK average for the wider economy. At the same time, the proportions qualified to Level 3 (21%) and Level 2 (21%) is somewhat higher than the average for the wider UK economy, with 16% at both Level 3 and Level 2.

E-Skills UK

http://www.e-skills.com/

E-Skills UK is the Sector Skills Council for Business and Information Technology, and work on behalf of employers to develop the software, internet, computer gaming, IT services and business change expertise necessary to thrive in today's global digital economy.

2.5 million people are employed in the Technology and Content sectors; 1.5 million people are employed in the Technology sector (this represents 1 in 18 of the working population, and 1 in 13 of the private sector workforce) and a further 937,850 people are employed in the Content sector.

Of the 149,000 companies in the Technology industry, 99% are organisations of less than 200 people. 28% of the industries' workforce is employed in companies of less than 10 people, compared to a UK average of 21%.

Overall, 34% of those working or available for work in the Creative Media industry are freelance, with a particular dominance in those areas most closely involved in the production process. This includes the majority of the workforce in some occupational groups, such as production, camera and lighting.

Despite the recession, finding insufficient suitable applicants for Technology posts is still very common, being reported by 43% of Technology industry employers who are recruiting. Skills shortages are most often reported by firms recruiting for programming, technical support and technology management roles. 92% of companies with problems recruiting Technology professionals report negative impacts on their company's activities, for example in customer service, quality standards and new product development. In addition, the sector is suffering from skills gaps amongst the current workforce as a result of globalisation and convergence. Those companies reporting skills gaps say that they affect over three quarters of their Technology professionals. The main development needs are at, or to, senior levels, focused particularly on IT programme management, supplier management and service management and delivery.

Proskills

http://www.proskills.co.uk/

Proskills UK is an employer-led organisation that represents the interests of the industries that make up the process and manufacturing sector to government.

The sector itself employs almost 800,000 people and is diverse – it consists of nine separate industries, each with their own issues, but which also share a significant number of needs. The recession has had a massive impact on the sector, and conditions are still hard for many companies in the sector. The upturn will improve circumstances, but will bring its own unique skills needs as companies readjust to improved business conditions and recruitment begins to improve.

Apprenticeship frameworks will be key for the future of this sector, as will having a flexible range of accredited provision that can be tailored to each company's needs. As the technologies and processes used increase in sophistication, there will be an increasing need for higher levels skills in the workforce – something that can be achieved through training new entrants and up-skilling the existing workforce. The low carbon and sustainability agendas will also have a growing influence on skill needs as regulations increase in number and scope. Companies are already adapting to this, helped by the current £7m worth of training that will be delivered through the Low Carbon Joint Investment Programme for the sector.

Despite the sharp fall in vacancies and skills shortages, around 19% of all Proskills employers reported skill gaps in their existing workforce in NESS 2009 - higher than in 2007 (16%). The rate of skill gaps amongst Proskills companies is comparable with that of the rest of the Manufacturing sector and just slightly below the average for the whole economy.

The Proskills sector has lower proportions of people qualified above level 3 than Manufacturing and the UK economy as a whole. The percentages of people qualified below level 2, or with no qualifications, are higher than Manufacturing and the UK.

Skills for Logistics

http://www.skillsforlogistics.org/

Skills for Logistics is the Sector Skills Council for the freight logistics industries. It is a registered charity and an independent, UK-wide organisation run for employers, by employers, to tackle the skills and productivity needs of the logistics sector.

The Logistics Sector employs 1.5 million people across 168,400 companies. It is dominated by workplaces employing 10 or fewer people (83%). Including those who work in logistics occupations in other sectors, the actual size of the sector is over 2 million people which equates to 8% of England's workforce. The workforce is predominantly male (73%). 42% of the workforce is over 45 and only 10% are under 25. Nearly half (46%), or 668,800 individuals, do not have a Level 2 qualification, a much higher proportion than the all-sectors figure of 29%. Managers comprise 19% of the logistics workforce. Of these, 53% hold a Level 3 qualification.

The sector generally undertakes training at local training providers or specialist logistics providers, with bite-sized courses favoured. Of the 682,500 employees that had received training in the previous 12 months only 16%, or nearly 111,900 employees, trained towards a nationally recognised qualification.

Working Futures III projects that 748,100 additional workers will be required to work in the sector by 2017. Considerable demand will be seen for managers (150,300), customer service positions (117,200) as well as for transport and machine operatives (97,400).

Energy & Utility Skills

http://www.euskills.co.uk/

Energy & Utility Skills (EU Skills) is the Sector Skills Council (SSC) for the gas, power, waste management and water industries, licensed by Government and working under the guidance of the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES).

Latest estimates show that a total of 528,700 workers are employed in this sector. 77,500 people are employed in the electricity industry, 20,000 in gas (upstream), 123,700 in gas (downstream), 141,000 in waste management and 166,500 in the water industry.

The size of the EU Skills workforce has decreased by around one-quarter over the past 20 years, mainly due to the down-sizing following the privatisation and deregulation of many aspects of the electricity, gas and water industries. In contrast, waste management has seen significant increases in employment. For example, employment in recycling activities increased three-fold over this period.

There is a very strong gender bias in the EU Skills sector as just one-quarter of the entire workforce is female. The proportion of females increases significantly in roles such as admin/secretarial and customer services, however there are still far too few employed in managerial and professional grades across the sector when compared to the whole economy.

More than one-quarter of employers across the sector have identified a skills gap amongst its current workforce; this compares with one-fifth of all employers in England. These tend to be mainly technical and job-specific in nature, but softer skills, such as team working, are also lacking.

Semta

http://www.semta.org.uk/

Semta is the SSC for science, engineering and manufacturing technologies. This sector accounts for 3.1% of all employment in the UK and approximately 93% of this workforce work on a full time basis. Future employment projections demonstrate that although a net decline in employment in this sector is likely between 2004 and 2014, significant numbers of staff will be needed to replace those leaving the workforce due to retirement or other reasons. The most significant net requirements for labour are predicted to be in relation to managerial and skilled trade occupations.

Compared to all sectors in the UK, the Semta footprint contains a higher proportion of micro-businesses, employing between 1-10 people (83% in Semta sectors compared to 85% in all sectors).

The Mature Engineering industries account for (47%) of employment in the Semta footprint, 815,600 employees, and of these, 143,400 are located in the West Midlands (18% of UK employment in these industries).

Leading-Edge Technology industries employ 47% (815,500) of the Semta footprint, the largest number being in South East England (15% of UK employment in these industries).

The Science Industries employ 6% (109,300) of the total UK footprint employment, the largest number being in South East England, accounting for 28% of Science Industries employment.

In terms of qualifications, a relatively high proportion of the working age population in this sector are unqualified. There are also relatively few workers qualified to NVQ Level 4 or above. Evidently, there is a need to up-skill the workforce in this sector. The main specific skill requirement reported in the UK was technical and engineering skills, specifically CNC machine operation. Other technical skills gaps included tool setting, welding, computer aided design, computer aided manufacturing and computer aided engineering.

Key skills requirements highlighted are:

- Increased need for higher-level skills to support emerging technologies.
- Percentage of graduates to increase from 30% to nearly 50%.
- Develop leadership and management skills to global standards.
- Increase licensed engineers in Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul.

Employers in this sector reported cost of training and availability of time as key reasons for not engaging or investing in the training of their staff. It was reported that investment in training would increase if cheaper training courses were provided or if there was more assistance with funding of courses.

Skillsmart Retail

http://www.skillsmartretail.com/

Established in 2002, Skillsmart Retail, the Sector Skills Council for Retail, is part-funded by government and aims to be the recognised authority on retailers' skills, needs and priorities.

Given its size and the comparatively low skills levels compared with the UK average, the retail sector does not appear to suffer acute problems in recruiting the skilled staff that it needs. There are approximately 189,000 retail companies in the UK who sell their goods in just under 287,000 individual retail outlets. These outlets vary in size and location, from corner shops to railway station kiosks, from market stalls to the major grocery superstores, from those with a traditional high street presence to pureplay online retailers.

The retail sector has a wide base due to the majority (99%) of retailers being small employers (<50 employees) of which a significant proportion (55%) are sole traders. There are comparatively few medium-sized businesses (1%) but this is comparable to the UK industry percentage (2%). There are relatively few large enterprises (>500 employees), but they dominate the retail landscape due to employee numbers and size of turnover.

Although formal qualifications do not give a comprehensive account of current skills levels in the sector, they are nevertheless an important benchmark. Retail employees in the UK are generally under-qualified compared with other industries. Just over one in ten (11%) of the workforce has no qualifications compared with 8% of workers across all UK industry. However, since 2002 the retail sector has made incremental steps in reducing the number of employees working in the sector without a qualification, from 17% to the current level of 11% (approximately 302,000 employees).

Some 11% of the retail workforce have no qualifications and 18% are below Level 2 (described by the majority of employers as their preferred minimum qualification level). Since 2002, there has been a six percentage point decrease in the number of retail workers with no recognised qualification. The UK national average for workers with no qualifications was 7%, a four percentage point drop on the 2002 figure of 11%. Female employees are almost twice as likely as male employees to have either no qualifications, or only a Level 1 qualification.

Some 30% of the retail management workforce has a Level 4 or above qualification (described by the majority of employers as their minimum preferred qualification level). Since 2002, there has been a ten percentage point increase in the number of retail managers with a Level 4 qualification or higher. The UK national average for managers with a Level 4 or higher qualification was 47%, an eight percentage point rise on the 2002 figure of 39%.

As part of the UK Vocational Qualification Reform Programme, the profile of retail qualifications and vocational programmes has been changed to a significantly simpler process. As from September 2009, a new Qualification and Credit Framework of fit-for-purpose retail qualifications, developed in partnership with employers in the sector, was created. Within this framework, Skillsmart Retail worked with the sector to reduce the number of retail titles from 150 to just ten. The new Retail Qualifications Framework focuses on:

- Retail Knowledge (knowledge and understanding)
- Retail Skills (competence)

- Retail Business (applied theory - first teaching in September 2010 in England and September 2011 in Wales)
- Retailing (Foundation Degree

Financial Skills Partnership

http://www.financialskillspartnership.org.uk/

The Financial Skills Partnership (FSP) is a strategic, impartial, employer-led organisation which aims to enhance professionalism and talent for finance, accountancy and financial services across the nations and regions of the UK. It acts as a link between industry, government and education and covers five main financial sub-sectors, including accountancy & finance, insurance, banking, financial advice and investment management.

The qualification level of the financial services workforce is higher compared with the UK‟s overall workforce. This is almost entirely due to the higher incidence of high-level entry qualifications, especially around degree level, where 42 per cent of England's financial services workforce is qualified at Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) Level 4 and above.

Skills shortages are the highest reported cause of vacancies even if they are not hard to fill. For financial services firms, 78 per cent reported skills shortage vacancies while accountancy practices reported a much higher incidence of skills shortage vacancies of 93 per cent.

Skills Active

http://www.skillsactive.com

SkillsActive is the Sector Skills Council for Active Leisure, Learning and Well-being, comprising sport and recreation, health and fitness, playwork, the outdoors and caravans. The sector makes a significant contribution to the UK economy through successful leisure, to the health of the nation and to social equality through community sport and play initiatives.

Over the past decade, in spite of the recession, the sector continually outperformed the UK economy in terms of wealth generation and employment growth. Furthermore, the sector has a number of reasons to feel optimistic as we embark on the "Golden Decade of Sport", which has already seen and will see numerous more major sporting events held at different locations across the UK, attracting world class competitors, and promoting the visitor economy.

Estimated employment totals over 670,000 people and the SkillsActive sector impacts on tourism, events, retailing, manufacturing and construction, and outperformed the UK four-fold in direct employment from 1999 to 2004. Sport and recreation is the largest sub-sector at 60% of employment, followed by playwork which is the second largest at 24%. Seventy-four per cent of SkillsActive's 39,800 UK workplaces have a maximum of 10 employees, 20% have between 11 and 49 employees, while just 6% and less than one per cent respectively fall into the 50- 199 and 200+ employee categories.

SkillsActive have identified that there are particular recruitment difficulties and skills issues facing employers in the sports, fitness and outdoors sub-sector, with the following job roles considered hard to fill:

- Sporting officials (paid and voluntary).
- Coaches, teachers, instructors and activity leaders (paid and voluntary).
- Operational help (volunteers).

The most common skills in need of improvement amongst existing staff were identified as:

- Sport specific technical skills.
- Communication.
- Management.
- Child protection.

SummitSkills

http://www.summitskills.org.uk

Summitskills is the SSC for the building services engineering sector and incorporates the electrotechnical, heating, ventilating, air conditioning, refrigeration and plumbing industries. The size of the sector is considerable and includes 61,000 businesses of which 23,000 are in the electrotechnical subsector, 13,000 in the heating, ventilation, air conditioning & refrigeration, 22,000 plumbing businesses and 3,000 consultants. It employers over 613,000 people and is a major source of apprenticeship opportunities with the sector training over 18,000 apprentices at any one time.

The impact of the 2008/11 recession on this sector was considerable due largely to the reduction in the volume of new buildings being constructed. The current Government spending cuts to capital projects will, according to SummitSkills, be of such magnitude to adversely affect the performance of the sector through until at least 2014. It is estimated that growth in the sector will be approximately 1.4% per annum between 2011 and 2014.

The significant growth area for the sector is predicted to be in the development of environmental technologies where there will be substantive training needs for the sector. As a result SummitSkills is developing a National Skills Academy for Environmental Technologies in England to meet the potential demand for training.

Another area of change which is impacting on the sector is the greater use of modularised buildings. These are buildings which are sectional prefabricated facilities which are built in a remote facility and then delivered to their intended site of use and pieced together on site. Drive through restaurants is a good example of this growing type of construction. Modularised building require all of the trades covered by Summitskills but evidence to date shows the sector has been slow to engage with these new building techniques and therefore overseas providers of sectional buildings are filling the void left open by UK businesses.

In general companies within the SummitSkills sector recognise Level 2 as being the requisite qualification for a craft operative working under supervision and Level 3 being the requisite qualification for a craft operative working without supervision. There are reducing numbers of employers that are willing to accept workers with no qualifications. For several years Summitskills has identified management training as a key issue for the sector.

The largest certification scheme operating in the sector is the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting (NICEIC) Part P Operative Requirements Certificate. However, demand for specific Part B qualified staff has remained lower than expected with only 34% of electrotechnical companies specifically seeking this qualification. Over 70% of companies will not recruit workers who only have the Part B certification. These companies require applicants to have relevant vocational NVQ qualifications in addition to the Part B certification.

This sector is increasing the importance it places on formal off-the-job training. Despite the recession, engagement in off-the-job training increased by 12% between 2008 and 2009/10 whilst on-the-job training increased by just 3% over the same period. However, between 2008 and 2009/10, 36% of companies reduced their training budget, with 11% of those companies reducing the budget by 100%. This suggests that training budgets in this sector remain vulnerable in times of recession.

Despite being a large source for apprenticeship opportunities the percentage of employers taking on an apprentice reduced by 13% between 2008 and 2009/10. In a 2009/10 survey 77% of companies had no apprentices. SummitSkills has identified the proportion of employers who recruit apprentices is too low to meet the future skill needs of the sector. Of those employers who do recruit apprentices 61% believe an apprentice who has completed their framework is fully job-ready which is an encouraging baseline but with room for improvement.

4.5 National Employer Skills Survey

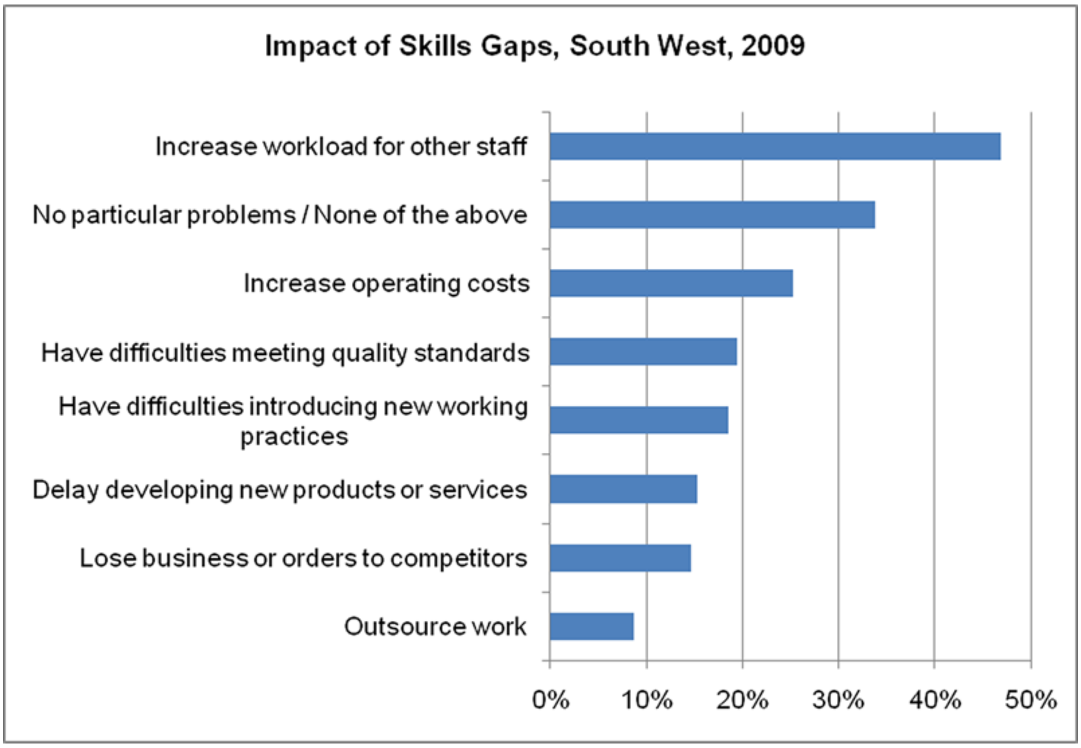
The National Employer Skills Survey (NESS) for England is the largest survey of English employers' training and recruitment practices and skills needs. Now carried out by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills, it continues a biennial time series established by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in 2003. NESS09 surveyed 79,152 employers. It asks establishments about (i) recruitment problems, (ii) skills gaps, (iii) training practices and training expenditure, as in previous years, but also about skill updating needs in their workforce, the recession and their product marketing strategies.

The main report was published in August 2010, following an abridged Key findings report which was published in March. There is also access to the Employer Perspectives Survey 2010. The UK Employer Skills Survey 2011 dataset will be uploaded onto the site later in 2012.

The reports can be access from the following link which will then require a user registration:

http://nessdata.ukces.org.uk/ness/KMS/News.aspx

Example of Data from NESS Report



4.6 Labour Force Survey

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is a quarterly sample survey of households living at private addresses in Great Britain.

Its purpose is to provide information on the UK labour market that can then be used to develop, manage, evaluate and report on labour market policies. The questionnaire design, sample selection, and interviewing are carried out by the Social and Vital Statistics Division of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on behalf of the Statistical Outputs Group of the ONS.

ONS publishes full UK LFS results. However, the fieldwork is carried out separately; by ONS for GB, and by the Central Survey Unit of the Department of Finance and Personnel in Northern Ireland on behalf of the Department of Trade and Investment (DETINI).

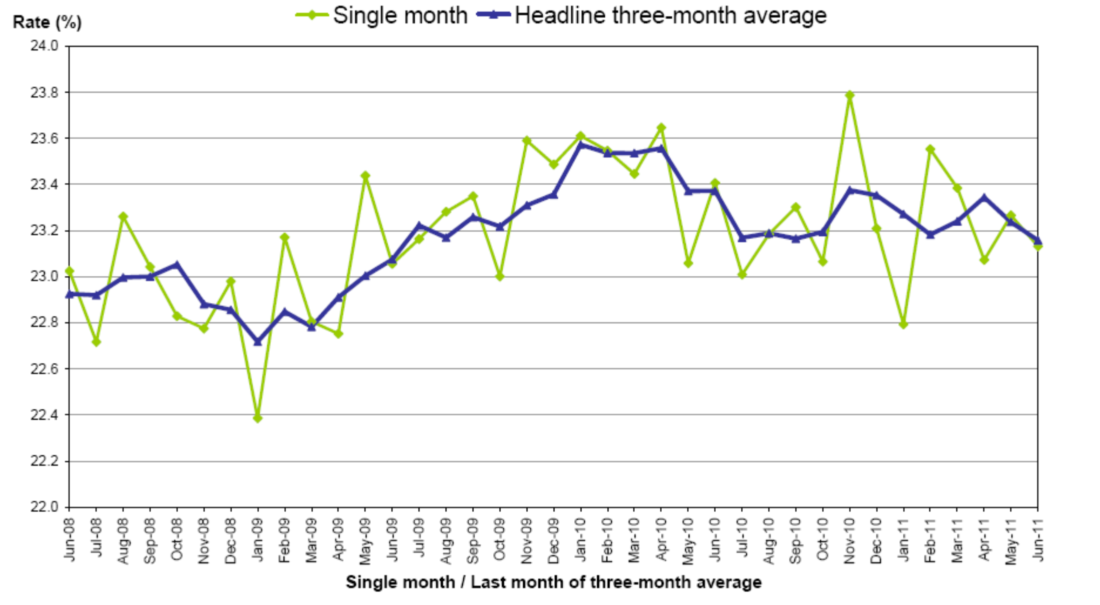
The survey seeks information on respondents' personal circumstances and their labour market status during a specific reference period, normally a period of one week or four weeks (depending on the topic) immediately prior to the interview.

Access to further information and quarterly reports via ONS website at:

http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/search/index.html?newquery=Labour%20Force%20Survey

Example of Chart from Labour Force Survey Report

Chart 4: Economic inactivity rate for people aged 16-64, UK, seasonally adjusted, June 2008 to June 2011



4.7 National Apprenticeship Service

The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) supports, funds and co-ordinates the delivery of Apprenticeships throughout England.

All Apprenticeship performance data is contained within the Statistical First Release which is published by the Data Service http://mireportslibrary.thedataservice.org.uk/apprenticeships/

.The published performance data tables show such information on learner participation and achievement by region, local authority, parliamentary constituency, sector frameworks and equality and diversity.

The Data Service also publish reports on the Apprenticeship vacancies recruitment system.

4.8 Purchasing Employer Databases for your CRM and Marketing

If you are looking to update your CRM system and business directories there are a number of routes you could take to purchase comprehensive lists of employers. Companies such as Experian or Dunn & Bradstreet have comprehensive business directories which you can purchase and compile a specific list which meets your requirements.

When purchasing this data the standard options you can choose from will include the employer name, main contact name, telephone number and email. You will also be able to further refine your requirements by filtering your required business activity (such as a Standard Industry Classification), geography (region, county, town or postcode), size of business (by turnover or number of employees) and type of contact (by job function or role).

Typically you can expect to pay for each record received and cost will increase the more information you request. For example if you require telephone numbers and emails you will pay more that if you just require a business and contact name.

For further information on Experian or Dunn & Bradstreet lead generation services you can visit their websites, shown below:

Experian: B2B Prospector - http://www.b2bprospector.co.uk/Site/

Dunn & Bradstreet: Lead Generation - http://salesmarketing.dnb.co.uk/data-plus/data-sourcing/

5. Socio-Economic Data

5.1 Introduction to Socio-Economic Data

Socio-economic data provides detailed information about the external context and environment in which learning and training is taking place and in particular provides the provider with important evidence on the level and scope of current and future demand for education and training. Socio-economic data is available for individuals, communities and employers/employment (i.e. labour market intelligence).

5.2 Local Data Sources

In the recent past there have been local and regional sources of information related to economic development and spatial planning. However, all regional and local responsibilities for developing such strategies and developing the underpinning data sets are undergoing significant change.

In July 2010 the Secretary of State for the Department of Communities and Local Government announced the intention to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies, which were the principal planning strategies. They will be replaced by Local Development Frameworks which will be developed on local authority boundaries rather than regional boundaries. The Local Development Frameworks in most local authorities across the country are still in development and therefore the regional spatial plan remains in place.

The regional development agencies were responsible for producing the regional economic strategy but these ceased operation on 31st March 2012. These have been replaced by Local Enterprise Partnerships and in most parts of the country the Local Enterprise Partnerships have only published their broad visions and challenges but have yet to formalise these policy documents.

The following BIS website contains information on which Local Enterprise Partnerships covers each area of the country:

http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/economic-development/leps

Some local authorities have produced websites that contain a range of useful information regarding their location and residents. These include datasets related to the economy, employment, education, communities and crime and safety. Examples of such websites are listed below. Checking your own local authority website could find similar useful resources:

Brighton & Hove local information service
http://www.bhlis.org/

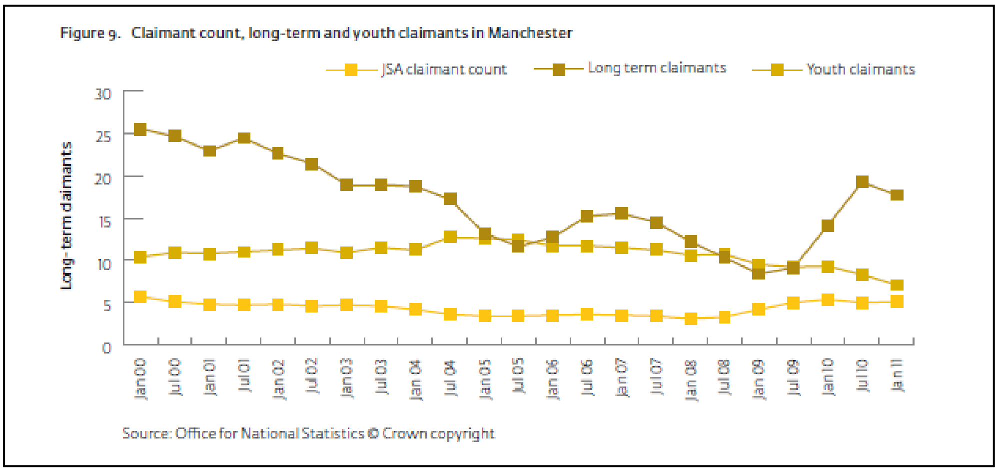
Lancashire County Council
http://www3.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/atoz/toptasks/index.asp?catID=16308

Manchester City Council
http://www.manchester.gov.uk/manchesterpartnership/downloads/download/5/state_of_the_city_report_2011

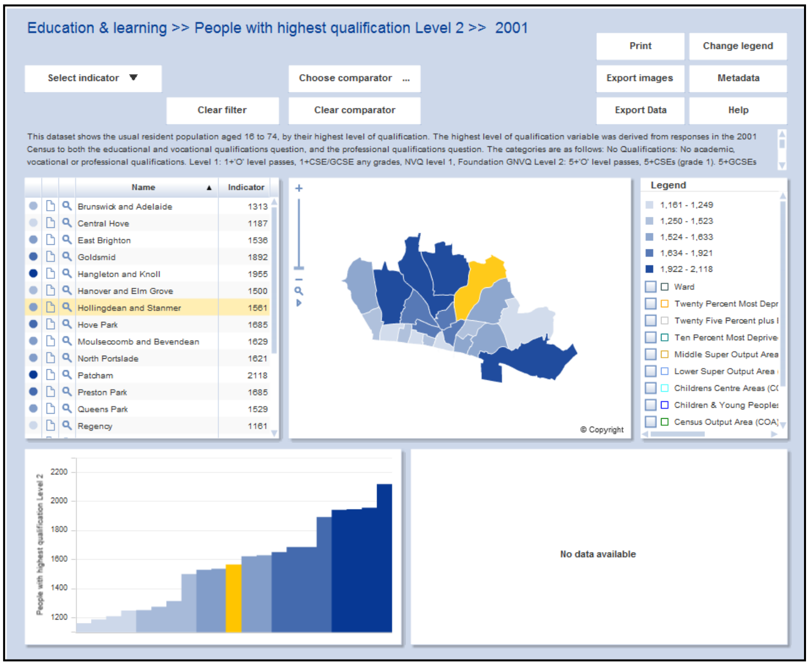
The London datastore
http://data.london.gov.uk/

Marketing Birmingham
http://www.marketingbirmingham.com/regional_observatory/business_economy/

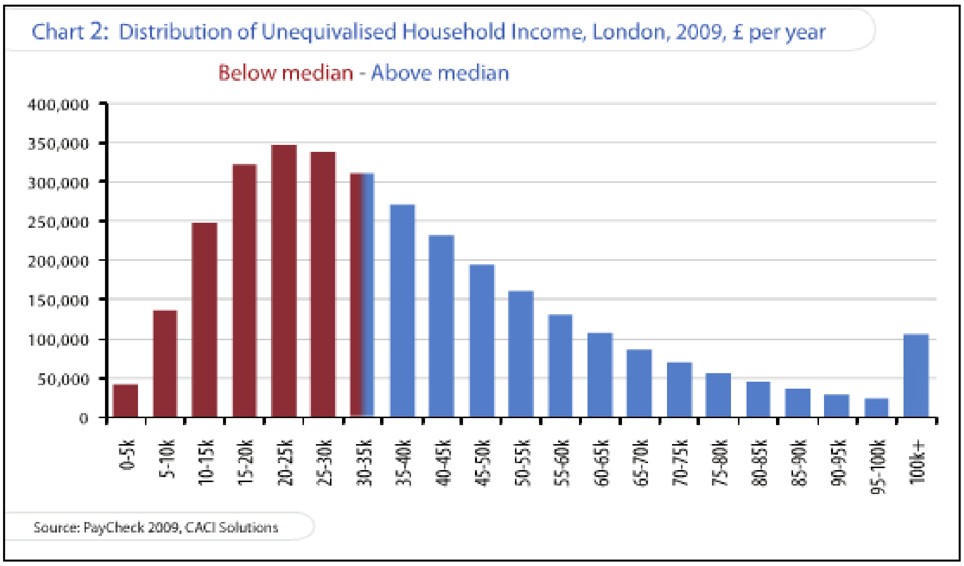
Manchester City Council Example Data – Claimant Count



Brighton and Hove City Council Dashboard



London Datastore – Household Income Example



5.3 Neighbourhood Statistics

Neighbourhood Statistics is a service run by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) which gives users the ability to generate detailed statistics of a specific geographical area or a summary report of their local neighbourhood. The summary report allows you to see the level of deprivation in terms of Income, Employment, Health, Education, Barriers to Housing and Services, Crime and Living Environment which could then be compared to the local authority or England as a whole.

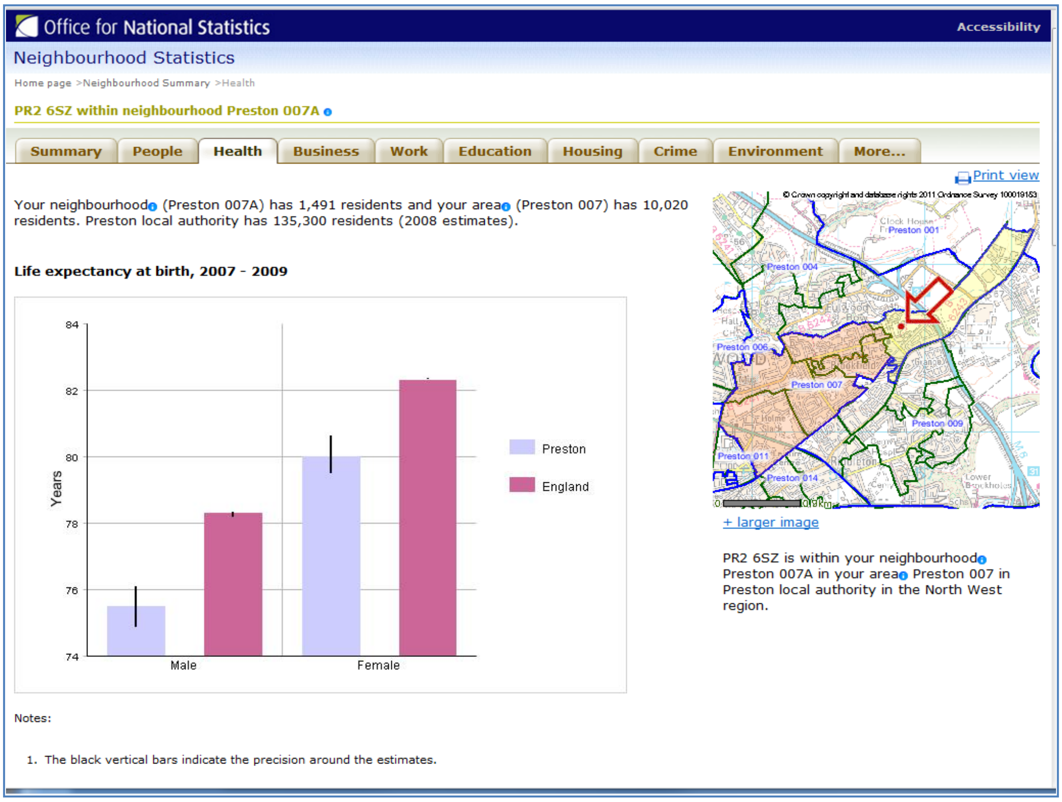
The more detailed statistics of an area allows you to access a wide range of tables such as:

- Census 2001 Key Statistics. The Census is a National Survey undertaken by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) every 10 years. The Census 2011 data should be released from July 2012 onwards;
- Work;
- Deprivation;
- Crime and Safety;
- Access to services;
- Community well-being;
- Economic deprivation;
- Education, Skills and Training;

....plus many more.

Link to Neighbourhood Statistics website:
http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk

ONS Neighbourhood Statistics Example Information by Postcode/Ward



5.4 General Lifestyle Survey

The General Lifestyle Survey (GLS) is a multi-purpose, continuous survey of 13,250 people living in private households, carried out by the Social Survey Division of the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The survey (previously called the General Household Survey) started in 1971 and has been carried out continuously since then, except for breaks in 1997/78 (when the survey was reviewed) and 1999/2000 when the survey was re-developed.

The main aim of the survey is to collect data on a range of core topics, comprising:

- Household and family information;
- Housing tenure and household accommodation;
- Consumer durables including vehicle ownership;
- Employment;
- Education;
- Health and use of health services;
- Smoking and drinking;
- Family information including marriage, cohabitation and fertility;
- Income;
- Demographic information about household members including migration.

The information is used by government departments and other organisations for planning, policy and monitoring purposes, and to present a picture of households, families and people in Great Britain.

The GLS has documented the major changes in households, families and people which have occurred over the last 30 years. These include the decline in average household size and the growth in the proportion of the population who live alone, the increase in the proportion of families headed by a lone parent and in the percentage of people who are cohabiting. It has also recorded changes in housing, such as the growth of home ownership, and the increasing proportion of homes with household facilities and goods such as central heating, washing machines, microwave ovens and home computers. The survey also monitors trends in the prevalence of smoking and drinking.

Access to the results and data for this survey can be found following the link below:

http://data.gov.uk/dataset/general_lifestyle_survey

5.5 Understanding Society – UK Household Longitudinal Survey

The study tracks 100,000 individuals in 40,000 British households over time seeing how their economic and personal situations change year after year. It is capturing the key data telling us:

- Who the people participating in the survey are;
- Whether they are young, old, working class, have a disability or are from an ethnic minority.

The study replaces the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) which began in 1991 and allows for deeper analysis of a wide range of sections of the population as they respond to regional, national and international change. It sweeps across a wide spectrum of questions that extract information to tell us about peoples circumstances like:

- Our state of health;
- Have we just lost our job?
- Have we been a victim of crime?
- Are we in debt?
- Are we involved in our local community?

Understanding Society will tell us how we are living our lives. It looks at peoples' ambitions for their children, their trust in government, their use of social media to communicate with friends, do we take drugs and are children staying out without their parents knowledge? What researchers can then do is stand back and make links between these quite distinct pieces of information and draw out key patterns to inform policymakers, so we get a much fuller profile about:

- Does a whole section of the community experience deteriorating health if they are out of work for months and months?
- Does relationship breakup now have an even bigger financial impact on women than it has in the past?
- Are some children more influenced by their friends at school than their parents, whether it be about drugs or career ambitions?
- How far are people changing their environmental behaviour as we face the onset of climate change?
- Are black teenagers in London more likely to feel education can give them a better life than Pakistani counterparts in the North West and why?

As the survey tracks people over the years we will build up an understanding of their past that enables us to see how different routes took them to different situations, whether it be to family breakup, poverty in old age, setting up a business or dropping out of university. The predecessor study - the British Household Panel Survey, has made a big impact on policy. The drive to help disabled people into work; the priority given to childcare for young mothers and the stronger commitment given to equal pay for women were all strongly influenced by this past panel study.

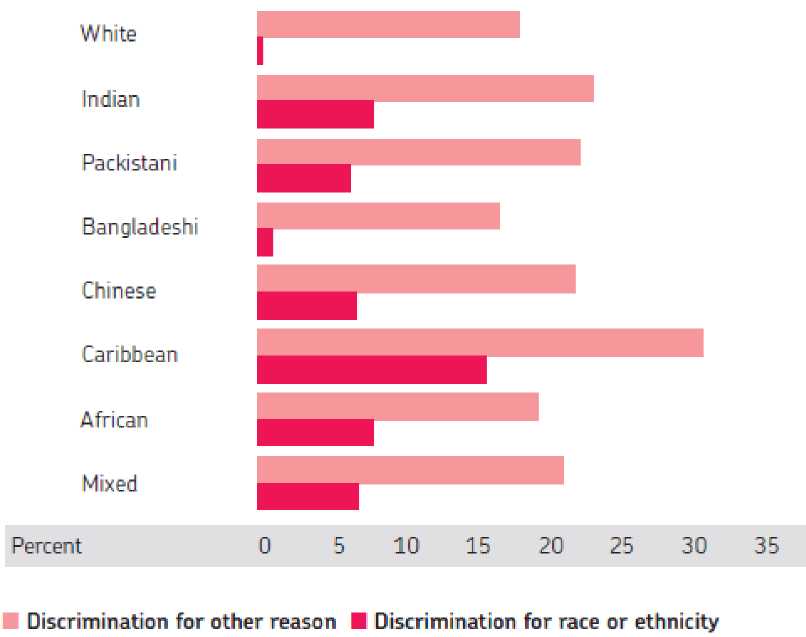
The study will supply data of great importance to decision makers. Managers of education services need to know how far parents are involved in their children's schooling. Transport planners need to know what influences how people travel to work. Housing managers will gain greater insight into how people view renting or buying. Local authorities will also be able to compare the experiences of groups strongly present in their district with how these groups fare regionally or nationally.

Link to the Understanding Society Survey:

http://research.understandingsociety.org.uk/findings/early-findings

Example of Chart from Understanding Society Survey Report

Figure 1 Perceived discrimination for being turned down for a job by reason among different ethnic groups



Notes: Weighted percentage. Source: *Understanding Society*, Wave 1

5.6 Families and Children Study (FACS)

The Families and Children Study (FACS) is a refreshed panel study of approximately 7000 families in Britain, investigating the circumstances of all families with dependent children.

It provides nationally representative cross-sectional estimates for all households with dependent children as well as panel data for all six of the annual waves that have been completed thus far. It covers a range of topics including: health; disability and caring; education; income; benefits and tax credits; childcare; child maintenance; housing; material deprivation; transport; and labour market activity. Families are sampled from child benefit records and are followed every year until their children are no longer dependent. New families, i.e. those that have had new babies are added to the sample every year. The mother is the main respondent. Partners are interviewed too (by proxy from 2007 onwards) and in some waves children aged between 11 and 15 are given a self-completion questionnaire.

FACS is commissioned and managed by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and is co-sponsored by the Department for Education and Skills and the Department for Transport. Within DWP FACS is primarily used to generate evidence in relation to child poverty and welfare to work policies for families, and in relation to childcare and child support.

http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/facs/

Research Reports 1999-2011 are available at:

http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rrs-index.asp

5.7 British Social Attitudes Survey

The scope, scale and potential uses of data sources relevant to the different dimensions of the learner journey

The British Social Attitudes survey is the primary social research survey in Britain. Since 1983, the annual surveys conducted by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) have continually monitored and interpreted the British public's changing attitudes towards social, economic, political and moral issues. Its findings are reported and interpreted in a series of annual reports; the 27th Report was published in December 2010. The 28th Report will be published in September 2012.

The web-site was developed by the Centre for Comparative European Survey Data (CCESD) to provide non-specialist users with on-line access and analysis of a cumulative database of over 20,000 survey questions asked in British Social Attitudes surveys over the last 26 years.

Illustrations and guidance of how providers might use the data

Registration required to use the site but this is free.

Website enables user to access the results on 29 topics and allows selection of results for the last five years (2004-2008); for the last 15 years (1994-2008); and all surveys.

Good for evidence on trends.

Index has drop down buttons to enable access to the data sets, for example Education/Vocational and lifetime training take the user to Academic qualifications versus skills and training (Years 2006, 2005, 2004, 2002, 1995 and 1993).

The graphs allow the user to apply changes and select chart type. The outputs can be sent to print or exported into other documents.

Web links to the NatCen social attitudes reports

http://www.natcen.ac.uk/our-research/social-and-political-attitudes

6.Primary Research – Surveys and Focus Groups

6.1 Introduction to Primary Research

Gathering quantitative/qualitative market research data need not be expensive. Most providers run their own surveys for learner and employer satisfaction already and market intelligence questions can be incorporated into these existing surveys focusing on gaps in current provision, future skills needs, the impact of training etc. Feedback can also be sought at events like open days, award ceremonies etc.

Some providers are increasingly using new technology such as Google Analytics to track hits on the website and the popularity of particular web pages. There is a great deal of interest amongst education marketing professionals in the potential of Facebook for identifying learners likes and dislikes, their views about the provider and their demographic profile.

6.2 Questionnaire Design – Ten Step Guide

Step 1: Keep it simple and make it interesting
Be concise. Short and simply-worded questions produce the most reliable results. But you also need to engage respondents' interest. Make sure some of the early questions cover issues that really matter to the respondents.

Step 2: Keep it short
Keep questionnaires short and to the point. Attention spans wane and respondents lose patience.
If you have kept your most important questions to the end, these will be given least consideration.
Stick to the things you really need to know.

Step 3: Use language the respondents would use
Use terms your respondents will understand. If the language used in instructions, questions or response options don't immediately make sense to respondents then their answers are less reliable. Pre-test your questionnaire with some of the intended audience.

Step 4: Think about the order of questions
Think carefully about question order. Our answers are strongly affected by the previous few questions. If you ask about facilities and then go straight to overall satisfaction, views about facilities will unduly influence the overall ratings. It's a good idea to ask general questions before going into specifics.

Step 5: Avoid subjective terms
Avoid subjective terms. Research shows that words like "usually" or "frequently" can vary hugely in their interpretation, whereas words like "never" or "always" don't. Where you can, give defined ranges e.g. twice a week.

Step 6: Don't worry about including a middle response option if it reflects what some respondents would want to say.

Don't worry about odd-numbered response scales. For most questions an answer meaning "not good but not bad" accurately reflects the views of a substantial number of people. Evidence suggests the validity of a survey can drop if middle options are artificially removed.

Step 7: Avoid double negatives

Watch out for double negatives. If you ask someone to agree or disagree with the question "Assessors should not socialise with their learners" the only way to express disapproval is to disagree. This double negative confuses people and you may get unintended answers.

Step 8: Make scales logical

If you are attaching scales or ratings make sure that high score = most positive answer. People generally expect scales to run from low on the left to high on the right. Options with clear verbal labels work best: excellent, very good, good etc.

Step 9: Don't forget zero!

If you are using a score out of ten (which research suggests respondents find easy to use) don't start with 1. Respondents think of 5 as a middle rating but this is only true if you scale runs from 0 to 10.

Step 10: Put the personal questions at the end

It is tempting to start with age, gender etc. to give respondents an easy start. Research evidence suggests that starting with these influences how people answer opinion-based or evaluative questions, especially if the survey is anonymous. It is safer to end the questionnaire with these.

If you want to read some of the background research behind these rules, try the following:

Reference:

Lietz, P (2010) "Research into questionnaire design – a summary of the literature" International Journal of Market Research Volume 52 Issue 2 p249.

6.3 Survey Sampling – Ten Step Guide

Sampling is an important part of the research process. It involves deciding who you are going to collect data from, how you are going to choose those elements and how many you will choose.

Step 1: What do you want to know?
Before you can consider collecting your data, you must have a clear idea of what you want to know. Your research aims will determine who the relevant participants will be and how you will go about collecting data from them.

Step 2: The Population
The population refers to the people, organisations or items of interest for your research questions. So who do you want to know about – is it your staff, your learners, your employers or a specific group such as adult apprentices or young people not completing their apprenticeship?

Step 3: Census or a sample?
The most valid and reliable information will come from data collected from every member of the population – a census. This is usually difficult to achieve due to cost and time constraints, so a sample is required, that is a smaller representative sub-set of the population.

Step 4: Choosing a sampling method
There are numerous ways to choose your sample, including simple, stratified and quota sampling. Picking the right method for your population and research needs is key to achieving a representative sample that will provide valid and reliable data.

Step 5: The sampling frame
Many sampling methods require a sampling frame. This is a list or database that identifies all or a subset of the target population. A good sampling frame must be accurate, up-to-date and allow a representative sample to be drawn from it.

Step 6: Sample size
The size of the sample is a very important factor when determining how precisely the sample represents the population. The aims of the research and the decisions that need to be taken as a result will help decide how big the sample should be.

Step 7: Sampling error
Sampling error is the difference between the sample statistics and the actual population statistics, and as such is always present unless you conduct a census. Sampling error can be reduced by increasing the sample size and having a good representative sample.

Step 8: Generalising from a sample

It's unlikely that the results you get from a sample will match perfectly the results you would get from the whole population, so you should always be careful when generalising your findings. This makes choosing a representative sample all the more important.

Step 9: Correcting bias

If the achieved sample is not fully representative (biased), there are statistical techniques that can be used to correct this and make the results more accurate. The most common technique is weighting, which increases or decreases the value of individuals if they are under or over represented in the sample.

Step 10: Statistical testing

If you are comparing the results of different groups in your sample or results from previous datasets make sure the size of each group is large enough to make a robust comparison. If necessary, carry out some statistical tests to see which differences are statistically significant and which may be down to chance.

As you have seen there are many different elements to sampling and survey analysis, all of which must be carefully considered when carrying out your research. The time and effort put in will certainly be rewarded with accurate, valid and reliable results which can be generalised to the whole.

6.4 Employer Surveys – Ten Step Guide

Employers are a key target market for independent learning providers. Finding out what employers think about your training portfolio, their needs and preferences are essential if you're going to sustain and grow this area of your business in a competitive market place.

Step 1: Be clear that your project is about research and not covert selling
The first thing is to be very clear on the purpose of your research. Research must not cross the line and become covert selling.

Step 2: Decide on who you are going to research and why
The next thing you'll need to decide on is who you are going to research – is it existing customers to gauge their satisfaction? Potential customers? A mixture of the two?

Step 3: Decide how you are going to inform employers about the research
You should think about how you can alert employers to your survey – maybe a letter? Perhaps a press release? Or even an announcement via the local Chamber of Commerce or relevant trade associations? That way you're warming up the audience to your research which should help get their cooperation.

Step 4: Design the survey but keep it short and simple
It's now time to design your survey – remember to keep it as simple and short as possible.

Step 5: Decide how you are going to get employers to take part in your research
You also need to think about the best way of contacting the employers you want to survey. Will they respond to a postal questionnaire or go onto your website? Is the best route a telephone survey or face-to-face contact? If you are thinking about offering an incentive, remember the incentive should not be one of your products or services or a discount, according to the Market Research Society Code of Conduct.

Step 6: Decide on the frequency and timing of the research
You also need to decide whether your research is a one-off event, or an annual survey.

Step 7: Allocate the time to analyse the results
If you do the research yourself, make sure you have the time and capability to analyse the results. Many DIY research projects fall foul of this and the effort of designing the survey and contacting employers is wasted.

Step 8: Share the results internally and do something about them
Once you have results from your research, share them within your organisation. Maybe the issues raised don't just relate to your employer-facing staff. There could be issues around learner records and portfolios, facilities, marketing and premises etc. which need to be addressed. Make sure your approach to the results will bring about the changes employers need, don't let the research sit on a shelf.

Step 9: Share the research findings with employers, where possible
Feedback results to employers, if possible. Many providers automatically disseminate 'you said, we did' messages to their learners after satisfaction surveys. The same approach can be taken to sharing the outcomes of your employer research.

Step 10: Evaluate your approach
The final stage is to evaluate your approach. For instance, do you need to make this activity 'routine'?

Almost all providers survey employers at some stage, but a number get a poor return on their investment of time and effort, not least through trying to save time at the all important analysis stage.

6.5 Focus Groups – Ten Step Guide

What is a focus group?

A focus group is a group interview of approximately six to twelve people who share similar characteristics or common interests. A facilitator guides the group based on a predetermined set of topics. The facilitator creates an environment that encourages participants to share their perceptions and points of view.

Step 1: Determine your purpose for conducting the focus group

The primary purpose of focus groups is typically to collect opinions, beliefs and attitudes of the focus population on a particular topic. Be very clear about your aims for the research so you can elicit the best information and ask the right questions.

Step 2: Invite the participants

The ideal size of a focus group is 8-10 participants, plus a facilitator and note taker. Likely participants should be sent personal invitations well in advance to give sufficient time for them to opt-out. If a research agency is engaged to carry out the focus groups and select participants from a client supplied database, then the research agency must be registered under the Data Protection Act.

Step 3: Decide on topic areas and develop questions

Choose questions that relate to the purpose and that will address your major objectives. Questions should be open-ended and should move from general to more specific.

Step 4: Generate a facilitator script

A script will ensure your focus group stays on time and remains consistent, especially if you are conducting a number of sessions in sequence. It is best to begin with factual questions (what, when, where) before proceeding to conceptual questions (why, how).

Step 5: Choose a location

The location should be convenient and comfortable for participants to encourage active participation. A quiet lounge area with comfortable furniture is preferable to a brightly lit classroom or noisy public space. If refreshments are provided make sure that participants have a convenient area to place plates and beverages as they engage in conversation.

Step 6: Select a facilitator

A good facilitator will keep the group on track, make sure all participants are heard, and will be able to deal with outspoken members. The facilitator must be impartial (i.e. express or even have no strong views about the research topic) and a good listener. Strongly consider engaging a market research firm or consultant with a good track record in carrying out this type of research.

Step 7: Ensure participant confidentiality

The Market Research Society Code of Conduct states the fundamental ethical principle that respondents' identities should remain anonymous and that such assurances made by researchers are upheld. The researcher therefore has primary responsibility for any form of recording made and its subsequent use. Respondents must be informed at the beginning of the focus group if observation techniques, tape or video recording/links are to be used. Such techniques must not be used if a respondent objects.

Step 8: Starting the focus group session

It is important to be well prepared so ensure that recording devices, equipment, pens, paper, clock, name tags, etc. are arranged in advance. Introduce each participant in the group and do an "ice-breaker" early on. Make sure you follow the script and timeline but try to be flexible and willing to explore other directions as the discussion takes shape. Some of the most useful feedback you receive can come from questions you did not think to ask.

Step 9: Conducting and closing the session

Promote equal participation among group members to ensure everyone is given the chance to make a contribution to the discussion. Paraphrase your understanding of participants' answers so they can be properly understood and documented. Leave no room for misinterpretation, but be careful not to make implications for participants. Close the session properly by thanking participants for their time and explaining how the research will be used.

Step 10: Summarising conclusions and reporting

Document the key findings from the session or sessions and create a formal report including background, purpose, session details, results, and conclusions. Above all, endeavour to remain objective at all times throughout the process and ensure your reporting is not influenced by any preconceptions you may have.

7. Background Information

7.1 LSIS Research Study

LSIS commissioned RCU to carry out a research study to look at how providers can most effectively use market intelligence data to identify needs and promote what they do. The research was conducted in partnership with the Association of Employment and Learning Providers. The specific aims of the study were:-

- To identify existing and/or emerging effective practice in the use of market intelligence;
- To provide guidance on how to obtain and use reliable data to identify market needs and on what information providers should make available to learners, employers and other stakeholder groups to market their services and demonstrate impact;
- To help individual organisations promote their activity effectively.

The survey took place in May and June 2012. The online survey was sent to Chief Executives/Managing Directors. A total of 46 providers responded to the survey.