

**Qualifications and an Employer-Led System: Recruitment Practices in the UK  
Fitness Industry**

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## **Editor's Foreword**

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## **Abstract**

Current UK skills policy is centred on the need to drive up qualification obtainment and make the system more employer-led with Sector Skills Councils (SSC) being given the role of articulating the 'voice' of employers. Through a study of recruitment and selection processes in the fitness industry, this paper explores employers' attitudes to existing qualifications and whether their skill needs are being identified by their SSC. It also considers the broader implications of an employer-led system. The research is based upon interviews undertaken in 17 gyms, focusing on the occupation of fitness instructor. The paper examines who does the recruitment and selection, what qualifications and skills are actually being recruited and how this relates to subsequent training levels. The findings reveal that managers adopt a wide range of approaches in how they recruit, train and value qualifications on the labour market. Although qualifications in this sector are important in recruitment and some improvements have been made in raising skill levels, the over-supply of 'qualified' workers means there is little incentive for most employers to tackle low wages or improve opportunities for training and development.

## *Introduction*

The UK Labour government has increasingly identified skills as key to both economic success and social justice. In the drive to improve workforce skills, policy has focused on making the vocational education and training (VET) system more ‘demand-led’, with employers designated as playing the major role. They will have ‘new powers to shape the design, content and delivery of training to meet their needs’ while government looks to employers to ‘invest more in training... to engage more actively in developing and deploying skills to meet business priorities, and to articulate their needs in a way that schools, colleges, universities and training providers can understand and act on’ (DfES *et al.* 2005:9). In a system where the collective institutions of employer representation have been traditionally relatively weak and were further decimated during the 1980s, Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) were recently formed to act as the main conduit through which employer demand will be articulated.

Despite the requirement to be demand-led, the priorities of the education and training system remain state-driven (see Keep 2006), aimed at delivering an increased stock of qualifications (Leitch 2006). To what extent do employers want these additional qualifications and how far are they able to shape them towards the skills that they actually need? This paper seeks to explore these issues by examining the recruitment and selection approaches of employers within the fitness industry. It is in the process of recruitment that firms identify and value qualifications and/or skills on the external labour market and contrast them with the prospect of developing skills within the workplace. By examining the actual practices that take place we can also begin to assess the relevance of the skill needs that are being articulated through the ‘voice’ of employers - the Sector Skills Councils.

The first section of this paper considers the existing evidence as to the salience of qualifications in the recruitment and selection process from the external labour market. Research in the area indicates that a large number of jobs do not require any qualifications for entry, while personal characteristics and attributes are frequently highlighted. The picture that emerges, however, is far from straightforward and a key issue is whether the system of SSCs can establish a coherent voice that reflects the often divergent requirements of employers. The main part of the paper focuses on research drawn from a study of fitness instructors. As an interactive service sector job, it was chosen to illustrate one of the mid-level occupations that might be expected

to be relatively well-organised given the existence of a codified body of technical knowledge and a voluntary licence to practice. A brief overview is presented of the key characteristics of the job, the relevant qualifications and the perspective presented on skill needs and provision provided by SkillsActive - the Sector Skills Council. The background and methodology to the research is then outlined. Based upon interviews in 17 fitness clubs, the paper explores who does the recruitment and selection, the qualifications and skills that workers possess when they are recruited and how this relates to subsequent training levels. Examples of workplaces are then provided to illustrate the varied approaches open to management in how they recruit, train and utilise their staff. The paper then concludes by discussing the implications for current policy. It is argued that qualifications in this sector are important within the labour market and that some improvements have been made in raising skill levels at the bottom end. However, rather than there being a skills or qualification shortage, the signs are of an over-supply of workers with academic and/or vocational qualifications.

### **Recruiting qualifications?**

Government policy aimed at expanding the provision of skills within the economy is premised upon the view that employers value qualifications and will seek to recruit the most highly qualified workers available. Evidence from the 2004 WERS survey finds little support for this view. Since 1998 employers report a slight decline in the prominence given to pre-existing skills (down from 87% to 83%) and qualifications (64% to 54%) in the recruitment criteria of employers (Kersley *et al.* 2006:74). The recent UK Skills Survey estimates that there has been a growth in the number of jobs that do not require a qualification on entry, rising from 6.5 million in 2001 to 7.4 million or 28% of all jobs in 2006 (Felstead *et al.* 2002:104, 2007:45). Interviews with recruiters of young people in Bradford covering a broad range of jobs found that ‘with a small number of exceptions employers place relatively little emphasis upon formal qualifications or specific technical skills or experience’ (Johnson and Burden 2003:24). Instead they were seeking ‘generic skills’ or ‘attributes’.

Does the apparent declining importance of qualifications in recruitment, alongside evidence of a rise in the extent of workplace training, indicate that ‘employers are opting instead to provide training in order to obtain the skills they require’ (Kersley *et al.* 2006:74)? A study by Miller *et al.* (2002) questions the proposition that employers are either recruiting workers with qualifications or they are

training them within the firm. Their survey of UK employers found that for most occupational groups those who recruited without qualifications were also less likely to subsequently train. The alternative proposition then is that many jobs simply do not require very many skills in order to do them. Keep claims that this is reflected in a 'patchy and possibly declining salience of qualifications (particularly below degree level) in the recruitment and selection process across large swathes of the labour market' (2004:13-14).

In areas of interactive service work, it is widely argued that 'personality' and 'social skills' are central to recruitment and that technical aspects are of lesser importance (Korczynski 2002). Others confirm this view through in-depth studies of parts of the hospitality and retail sector, where 'customer focus, interpersonal skills and self-presentation' are the key (Nickson *et al.* 2004:18), and call centres where recruitment can involve seeking workers with an 'empathy towards the customer' (Callaghan and Thompson 2002:234). Selection then focuses on those who 'already have the right attitudes' (Nickson *et al.* 2004:7) or as Callaghan and Thompson put it: 'suitable employees are thus screened *in*, as well as unsuitable ones selected out' (2002:234). In these cases, qualifications do not appear to be a factor in recruitment, although the focus of the Nickson *et al.* study was of university students. It is, however, important to remember that many of the current demands are not particularly new, with a similar type of rhetoric found amongst employers over 30 years ago. Blackburn and Mann's study of male manual workers in the early 1970s found qualifications to be unimportant, rather 'the quality they [employers] seek is not ability – for which the demands are low – but co-operativeness' (1979:110). Similarly a study of young people by Williams in 1979 found that only 40 per cent of vacancies specified some sort of educational qualification and that 'willingness to learn' and 'willingness to work hard' topped the list of qualities that were sought (1981:111).

Detailed explorations of how employers value qualifications and skills when selecting a new recruit, as opposed to what they say they do in surveys, are extremely rare. In addition, this type of research has tended to focus on a relatively narrow range of lower skilled occupations, such as in retail, hospitality and call centres or alternatively in 'blue-chip' graduate-level jobs (see Brown and Hesketh 2003) or the professions, thus missing some of the potentially more complex patterns at intermediate level. There has never been any suggestion that a doctor or a teacher is recruited principally on the basis of 'social skills', although they are still likely to be

important once the qualifications and experience boxes are ticked. Survey-based research supports the view that qualification requirements in recruitment generally reflect the occupational structure. Spilsbury and Lane's (2000) survey found that the proportion of jobs not requiring any academic qualifications varied from 29% in professional occupations up to 97% in plant and machine operatives (see also NFER 1989). Examining job adverts in the press, Jackson (2001:12) identified only 26% that asked for at least one qualification and confirmed that for occupations at the bottom end of the labour market, 'qualifications held little or no immediate value to employers'. Further evaluation of the data showed that the value placed on qualifications was highly variable and that even amongst professional and managerial occupational groups, there were a range of jobs where qualifications were given far less importance than other attributes (Jackson *et al.* 2002).

Earlier studies also uncovered a more complex picture, with Gordon (1983:17) arguing that they showed 'little uniformity in the way employers use educational qualifications as part of the selection criteria', partly reflecting occupation but also sector of employment. Windolf's study of recruitment and selection across a range of firms in Britain and Germany found that there was not just one way to recruit even for the same occupation. Instead, 'different firms recruit workers with different levels of skill and background characteristics for very similar types of job' (1986:238). These variations reflect an 'organizational decision-making process' that is likely to shift with changes in labour market conditions. Factors such as organisational structures, market conditions (product and labour), local traditions and patterns of industrial relations are cited as explaining management's approach to recruitment. There has, however, been little subsequent work that has explored these issues in any depth.

A further puzzle remains in the use of qualifications in the recruitment process. If between half and three-quarters of jobs do not require qualifications, why does other research indicate a positive wage return to most academic qualifications, and a positive association between participation in employment and all levels of qualifications that may even have become stronger over time, (Bynner and Parsons 2001, Dickerson 2006)? Employers may not be recruiting as they claim or 'social skills' and 'personality' could be correlated with educational achievement. Although not asking for a qualification, preference may still be given to those holding them (see Williams 1981, Bills 1992).

Existing research, therefore, presents a rather partial and confused picture of the influences on and the nature of employer recruitment decisions in relation to qualifications and skills. This raises a major challenge for the SSCs which are supposed to provide a substantial evidence base and a coherent voice in articulating the skill needs of employers in a more demand-driven system.

Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) are at the heart of delivering the Government's Skills Strategy. These are employer-led networks, designed to identify and deliver the skills that employers need to raise productivity. (HM Treasury *et al* 2004: 31)

The 25 Sector Skills Councils established between 2003 and 2005 are expected to usher in a new era of employer responsibility and collective action on skills. The SSCs would:

replace the relative weakness of the UK's sectoral arrangements with strong employer leadership capable of delivering sustained improvements in public and private sector productivity and competitiveness through the better use and development of people. (DfES Remit Letter to SSDA 30 July 2002, reported in SSDA 2002:3)

Despite being employer-led, however, their role and activities are tightly defined, while they are subject to on-going performance monitoring. Each SSC had to follow the same model of becoming licensed and then undertake a five stage process, that ends in March 2008, to establish a Sector Skills Agreement - designed to provide the basis for collaborative action between the SSC, employers and partners (principally education and training providers) to meet future sector skills needs. Although not long established, a recent evaluation indicated that on average across all SSCs, only about 5% of employers surveyed had any dealings with their own SSC (PRI/IES 2006:39). Recognition (even when prompted) averaged at 27% with considerable variation across sectors from 4% to 77%. The report cited the difficulties of involving smaller enterprises and tight budgets that limit the resources available for engagement activities.

There are two main issues that arise with this new role that has been given to SSCs: first, are employers best placed to designate skill provision and, second, are they able to articulate their requirements? There have already been criticisms of the government's approach with Coffield (2006) arguing that employers are being offered a role that they do not want. More critically Gleeson and Keep (2004:48) stress that employers have been given a 'voice without accountability' and that a key problem is that 'Relatively little has been said about what employers ought to be expected to do

and provide'. An evaluation of the early Sector Skills Agreements confirms that they found it difficult to translate employer dialogue 'into a substantive commitment to action' (SSDA 2005a:3). Finance is one issue, with less than 7% of SSC income derived from employers. If employers are driving the system but, as Gleeson and Keep argue, not really paying for it, then their best possible outcome is an 'oversupply of skilled labour, in order both to potentially bid down wages..... and also so that they can obtain a range of candidates... in selecting job applicants' (2004:39). This oversupply, however, may be costly for the state and the individual if the education and training is either not utilised or receives little reward. Employers also have a direct interest in pushing more of the training costs onto the state and the individual, through for example Train to Gain and the expansion of higher education (HE), the latter of which could be used to substitute for traditional employer-based apprenticeships (Gleeson and Keep 2004:53).

The following sections seek to explore two aspects of government policy outlined above; first, the expansion in the stock of qualifications, and second, the shift to an employer-driven skills system. By focusing on fitness instructors, a predominantly entry-level occupation which is relatively flexible in terms of the skills and qualifications required in the job, the importance and variability in the use of qualifications in recruitment can be assessed. Are managers recruiting those with the most relevant and highest level of qualification and are the future skill needs of the sector likely to be accurately predicted by the SSC? What then are the implications of following the demands presented by the 'employers'?

### **Recruiting in the fitness industry**

Although there is no statutory requirement for fitness instructors to have a qualification, in 2002 a Register of Exercise Professionals was introduced supported by the Fitness Industry Association (the employers' body), the then National Training Organisation SPRITO and a number of leading private sector training providers (see Lloyd 2005a). The Register (REP) is voluntary with the aim that it will become a standard for qualifications in the sector. The minimum qualification requirement for a fitness instructor is level 2 (equivalent to 5 GCSEs graded A\*-C) and for a personnel trainer level 3 (equivalent to 2 'A' levels). A range of qualifications have been assessed to identify whether they meet the relevant occupational standards. The Register by the end of 2005 comprised nearly 22,000 members of which 39% were at

level 2 and 56% at level 3, although over a third of those at the higher level only had provisional status (SkillsActive 2005:55). Those registered probably represent around 80% of fitness workers in the UK. At the time of the research in 2004, the Register had been in operation for nearly two years and had over 10,000 members.

Confusion over the staggering array of qualifications available in the sector was one of the reasons for the establishment of the Register. Nevertheless, by 2005 there were still 179 REP-endorsed courses delivered by 51 organisations (SkillsActive 2006a). There are two distinctive types of relevant qualifications within the sector. One set relates to those that take between one and three years mainly in full-time education at further and higher education institutions leading to degrees and vocational qualifications such as Higher National Diplomas (HNDs), BTECs and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in subjects such as sports science and leisure and recreation. The numbers studying these types of courses has been expanding rapidly, with nearly 24,000 undergraduates on Sports Science degrees alone during 2004/5, an increase of over 40% in just two years. More recently, following industry concerns about the lack of readiness for employment of graduates, a range of foundation degrees have been developed aimed at ensuring students have relevant industry vocational qualifications as well as practical experience. Apart from specified NVQs, these qualifications do not give automatic access to the REP but have to be individually evaluated. In addition, those with degrees are required to have six months current work experience before they can acquire full status.

The other main set of qualifications are NVQs obtained via assessment in the workplace and Related Vocational Qualifications (RVQs), such as the popular YMCA and Premier courses, which involve training courses with assessments that may be undertaken prior to employment (around 2 weeks full-time for a level 2 and 12 weeks full-time for a level 3). These qualifications provide direct entry onto the REP. The SSC estimates that around 80% of training provision is undertaken by the private sector, including NVQs and RVQs. A substantial proportion of this training is paid for by individuals, with a typical level 2 course for a fitness instructor costing around £1000.

Labour turnover in the sector is very high, stemming from low pay - often not far above the NMW, a lack of career progression and shift work (Lloyd 2005b, SkillsActive 2006b). Data from the 2006 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings reports a median pay rate of £7.70 (£16,000 for a 40 hour week) for fitness

instructors, with 25% earning below £6.50, thus placing them in the bottom third of the earnings distribution. The relevant Sector Skills Council – SkillsActive - aims to raise skill levels in order to meet and encourage the expected growth in demand for fitness and exercise. In particular, this is linked to government objectives around preventative health care and increasing participation in sport. Central prominence is being given to what has been termed ‘GP referrals’ where patients suffering, for example, from obesity, post-operative or cardiac conditions, can be referred to a gym (and paid for by their local health authority) to undertake exercise. Dealing with these types of people requires the instructor to have a higher level of technical competence and training in the relevant area.

The perception of fitness needs to move away from the image of ‘gym and lycra’ to one with wider appeal and by increasing awareness of the health benefits. Increasingly individual staff can be the Unique Selling Point. (SkillsActive 2005:6)

In order to meet this challenge SkillsActive has been identifying the skills that will be required. The first step in developing a Sector Skills Agreement involves the SSC assessing the needs of the industry and any gaps in current education and training provision. SkillsActive, however, is not just a SSC for fitness and leisure, but also includes sport and recreation, the outdoors, caravan industry and playwork. Even within the fitness and leisure sub-sector, there are many different occupations, for example fitness instructor, receptionist, cleaner, nursery nurse, manager, sales rep, cook and bar worker. A survey of employers by SkillsActive in the sports, fitness and outdoors sectors found that top of the skill requirements were communication skills, with 90% of respondents citing this as very important. This was followed by team working, health and safety and customer service. A very surprisingly finding was that ‘sport-specific technical skill’ was 17th on the list, only mentioned by 42% of employers as being very important. Those working as instructors and personal trainers also appeared to discount the technical part of their jobs, stating the top five skills as communications skills, customer handling skills, personal appearance and attitude, dependability/ reliability and self-motivation/drive/ energy (SkillsActive 2005: 52-53). A rather lower proportion - although significantly higher than the view of employers - of between 65% and 78% (according to occupational group) stated that technical and practical skills were very important to their job (SkillsActive 2005: 67). These survey results appear to contradict the SSC and the FIA’s stated aim of

requiring all instructors and trainers to be registered on the REP, which is based on occupational standards linked to technical and practical skills and knowledge.

In terms of the supply of skills within the sector, SkillsActive analysis focuses almost exclusively on the provision of NVQs and RVQs qualifications that are linked directly to the REP and are predominantly delivered by the private sector.

Private Training Providers and Awarding bodies felt they were the best for the fitness industry and the employers tended to agree. (SkillsActive 2006a:4)

Private providers are claimed to offer ‘choice and flexibility’ in course delivery and timing that cannot be matched by further education (FE) colleges. Despite, this focus on REP-endorsed qualifications, when instructors were asked about their qualifications, the most frequently cited awarding body was a university (30%). As cited above, there are vast numbers of courses in both higher and further education that are undertaken prior to employment in the industry, yet the response to these is an apparent lack of knowledge and/or disparagement about the content. Employers complained that courses ‘contain insufficient experience’, ‘training provision should contain more ‘real life’ work experience so that entrants are ‘work ready’’, a response that reflects broader concerns raised by employers across the economy (see Gleeson and Keep 2004). There was also confusion as to the benefits of BTEC courses and that degree programmes were not appropriate.

Visioning research indicated employers across the UK were dissatisfied with HE/ FE courses not covering ‘core’ skills such as customer care, communication skills (letter writing and telephone) and the lack of practical experience. (SkillsActive 2006a:13)

Recommendations were that HE and FE courses should include work placements. ‘All workshops noted experience was ranked higher than qualifications, especially degrees’ (2006a:14). Employers’ criticisms of the lack of ‘work readiness’ of recruits was also directed at private providers of training courses that were criticised as being costly and not including ‘real life’ experiences.

The outcome of the consultation process with the various interested parties in the sector has led to a series of actions that are incorporated into the sector skills partnership agreement. The main recommendations relating to skills provision in the fitness occupations are: HE and FE courses to include work placements, vocational elements, communication and customer care skills; all courses to incorporate ‘real life’ practical experience; and more public funding of level 2 and 3 and for post-19

and those undertaking career changes. Although the agreement highlights that ‘pay and conditions are key factors in lack of retention in the sector’ (SkillsActive 2006c:21) and that career progression needs to be improved, it is not clear how these are to be addressed. As with some of the criticisms of the earlier Skills Agreements, it was difficult to ascertain exactly what employers were committing to improving skills within the sector. For example, no quantifiable inputs are included and there is no reference as to who will provide the work placements that would be needed to give trainees that practical experience.

The evidence from the existing industry reports suggest that social skills are ranked more highly than qualifications, yet qualifications are an essential requirement in order to work within the sector. Are employers recruiting on social skills and then training workers in these technical skills once they are in post? Are higher education courses completely out-of-touch with workplace requirements? Is the answer to criticisms of skill provision to subsidise private training more extensively within the sector?

### **Methodology**

The research is based upon a series of case studies undertaken within two urban areas - Midcity and Southtown<sup>1</sup> chosen to provide contrasting labour market characteristics. Southtown had significantly lower levels of unemployment and inactivity than Midcity, while median wage rates in 2004 were 22% higher. Various business directories were used to identify fitness clubs within the two areas - covering stand-alone, hotels, employer-based and local authority operated. Twenty-five clubs were identified in Midcity and 22 in Southtown. Agreement was reached with eight clubs in Midcity and nine in Southtown to undertake mini-case studies (see Table 1 for details). In order to improve the representativeness of the national chains, one of the Midcity and two of the Southtown clubs were drawn from areas of some distance away (a maximum of 12 miles). Only one independent club agreed to participate, thereby skewing the findings towards larger organisations.

A day was normally spent in each gym and interviews conducted with the gym manager, team leaders, fitness staff and, in some cases, senior operation managers and leisure attendants. Interviews were conducted either in a private room within the gym

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<sup>1</sup> Pseudonyms are used throughout to preserve confidentiality

or in the club's café or bar. The size of the gym staff was generally small ranging from 2 to 20, although employment in the club or leisure centre was more varied starting at 20 and reaching around 150 depending on the size and range of activities, e.g. cafes, swimming pool, crèche, beauty salons etc. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with gym management and verbatim notes were taken. For fitness employees, a more structured approach was used, which included open-ended questions, as well as some closed questions. Part of the interviews focused on the recruitment process, the qualifications and skills that were preferred by managers and the extent to which they were met. Fitness instructors were also asked their own perception of the interview process, the value of their qualifications and the skills that were required to work within the gym. Interviews lasted around one hour with management and at least 30 minutes with gym staff. A total of 86 interviews were conducted, 44 of those with gym staff. A tour of the gym was provided in all cases. Labour turnover amongst fitness instructors is high, so that despite the small size of the workforce, recruitment was an on-going process and all but one of the clubs had recruited workers within the previous 12 months.

**Table 1: Characteristics of the Case Study Organisations**

<b>Club</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Gym staff (FTE)</b>	<b>Number of members</b>	<b>Relative cost of membership</b>
<b>Southtown</b>				
Chain1	Multi-site stand-alone	5-9	4000+	High
Chain2	Multi-site stand-alone	10+	4000+	High
Indep1	Independent	1-4	1000-2000	Low
Corp1	Corporate	1-4	<1000	Low
Corp2	Corporate	1-4	n.a.	Very Low
Hotel1	Hotel	5-9	1000-1999	Mid
LA1	Local authority	1-4	<1000	Very Low
LA2	Local authority	5-9	2000-3999	Low
LA3	Local authority (contract)	1-4	<1000	Very Low
<b>Midcity</b>				
Chain3	Multi-site stand-alone	10+	4000+	High
Chain4	Multi-site stand-alone	5-9	2000-3999	High
Corp3	Corporate	5-9	2000-3999	Very Low
Hotel2	Hotel	5-9	<1000	Mid
Hotel3	Hotel	1-4	1000-1999	Low
Hotel4	Hotel	10+	4000+	Mid
Hotel5	Hotel	1-4	<1000	Mid
LA4	Local authority	10+	2000-3999	Very Low

*Where and how are decisions being made?*

First, it is essential to consider who actually undertakes recruitment and makes the decisions about the selection criteria and the value of qualifications. As shown in Table 2, 13 of the clubs were part of multi-operated sites and, in all but two (Chain2, Chain4), interviews were undertaken by the gym manager. It is important to note that a gym manager is normally responsible for managing the gym staff only and is not generally part of the senior management staff within the leisure centre, fitness club or hotel. Chain2 and Chain4 were part of the same company in which most of the initial recruitment was undertaken by head office. Those successful were then placed in a 'bank' that local gym managers were expected to draw upon when a vacancy arose, but had the option to reject following a local interview. Nevertheless, gym managers were also able to recruit locally on their own criteria. Of the other privately-run multi-site clubs only one head office (at Hotel5) provided qualification guidelines for these jobs, that is they preferred new recruits to have degree level qualifications, while local managers undertook the interviews. In some of the other cases, head office would provide job descriptions or the local HR officer would be involved in the interviewing process but the recruitment criteria and selection was decided by local gym managers.

The local authority employers (LA1, LA2, LA4) provided detailed job descriptions and personal specifications for gym instructors, which included requirements for a relevant fitness qualification - although this covered a broad range of possibilities. It remained the responsibility of the gym manager to interview and select the new recruits. At the four clubs that were single site, recruitment was undertaken jointly by the gym manager and a more senior operational manager or owner. Decisions about the validity or otherwise of particular qualifications depended on whether the operational manager had the relevant knowledge and this was generally obtained through having previously been a fitness instructor.

The selection process showed a general acceptance that qualifications reflected a particular educational level or knowledge of the recruits. Only three gyms undertook any sort of written test of knowledge. Two of these were part of the same local authority (LA1, LA2) selection process and candidates had to score 60% on an exam on physiology, anatomy and basic gym assessments. The gym manager stated that they had always done this: 'I worry that people have been pushed through the fitness industry qualifications'. Candidates also had to undertake a 'practical' to assess how well they instructed, this involved dealing with two or three pieces of

equipment. ‘It gives a general idea about how well they work and how easily they find explaining things’. The other club (Hotel5) gave candidates two tests: anatomy and physiology and management (customer service and finance). There was no pass rate and the deputy manager stressed that it was designed to establish the areas where they would require additional training. The one company which had centralised recruitment for two of the gyms (Chain2, Chain4), undertook an extensive selection process involving role plays, interaction, group work and writing skills. Of the other clubs, one (Hotel4) gave recruits a swimming test, as part of their job involved life guard duties and two (Chain3, Hotel2) required candidates to ‘walk the gym floor’ to show their interactive capabilities. The interview, however, remained a central part of the selection process, undertaken by the gym manager and either a deputy and/or a more senior operations manager or HR representative.

**Table 2: Recruitment and selection**

Club	Who recruits?			Selection process			
	Head office	Gym manager + assistant	Gym manager + senior staff/ HR	Interview only	Written test	Practical test	Other
<b>Multi-site</b>							
Chain1		x		x			
Chain2	x	x					x
Chain3		x				x	
Chain4	x	x					x
Hotel1			x	x			
Hotel2			x			x	
Hotel3		x		x			
Hotel4		x				x	
Hotel5		x			x		
LA1		x			x	x	
LA2		x			x	x	
LA3				x			
LA4			x	x			
<b>Single site</b>							
Indep1			x	x			
Corp1			x	x			
Corp2			x	x			
Corp3			x	x			

Although a mix of practices were found in the recruitment and selection process, in the majority of clubs it was the gym manager who was in the position to

assess and evaluate the qualifications that were available on the labour market and how they met the requirements of the job in that particular workplace. It was, therefore, essential to ask these workplace, and to some extent more junior, managers what they were seeking when recruiting fitness staff.

*What are they looking for?*

A fitness instructor's job involves a considerable amount of interaction with customers; meeting and greeting, showing round potential new members, the induction of new members, instructing through exercise programmes and giving advice. As a result, it was not surprising to find that 'social skills and attributes' were considered to be a key criteria in recruitment. Most frequently cited was the ability or rather confidence of the instructor to go up to people they did not know and speak to them.

'They have to be able to go out and talk to members' (gym manager, Chain1)

'looking for a person who won't have a problem going up to a stranger' (gym manager, Chain2)

'socially can interact with a 50 years old to an 18 year old' (gym manager, Chain3)

'willing to speak and approach people' (gym manager, Hotel3).

Many managers spoke of the right 'personality', as well as the 'communication skills'. Words such as 'out-going', 'lively', 'confident', 'chatty' and 'sociable' were used to refer to the kinds of personality traits that were required. Very few instances of 'aesthetic labour' were mentioned, although 'presentable and reasonably eloquent' (Corp2) and 'nice, pleasant' (Hotel5), 'a friendly face' (Chain4) were identified on a few occasions. Two gym managers emphasised that the type of members they had would be intimidated by instructors who were 'too tanned' (Hotel4) or 'body beautiful' (LA2). Other factors that were also identified was a passion and enthusiasm for fitness (LA2, Indep1, Hotel5) and a willingness to learn (Chain2, Indep1, Corp1, Hotel5). Perhaps a surprising finding might be that there was not a more widespread emphasis on the need to be active and enthusiastic about sport and fitness. This may reflect a criteria that is simply seen as too obvious to state. When asked what attracted them to work in the industry 36 out of the 43 fitness instructors and personal trainers spontaneously mentioned their interest in fitness and sport, with the overwhelming majority having a long-standing participation beginning at school.

Of the seven who did not specifically state this reason, four saw the industry as either a way to use their degree (sports science) or as a means to move on to other sport or health-related careers.

The question is whether personal attributes are dominant over qualifications. It was here that we begin to see much more variation in the requirements and how qualifications are used as a guide to technical competence. Rather than specify what the fitness instructors should be able to do and the knowledge that is required, invariably the managers stressed the particular qualification they were ideally looking for and whether they were able to obtain them.

An FIA recognised qualification, ideally a degree but not necessary ... sports science background is the icing on the cake. (gym manager, Corp3)

If they only have a basic qualification that is not a draw back... It skims over the surface but is needed for insurance purposes... (gym manager, Indep1).

NVQ2 or equivalent... I never recruit without qualifications. (gym manager, Chain1)

Gym people should have a gym qualification... I like vocational qualifications... I am looking for a NVQ 3 or above or a degree, a BTEC in sport and leisure. They have a lot of autonomy they need to be confident. (gym manager, Hotel3)

Ideally we want a degree, the worst would be a BTEC or HND in leisure... In an ideal world they would have a degree. It proves that you can work on your own initiative with independence. (deputy gym manager, Hotel5)

All but one organisation preferred new recruits to have relevant qualifications and these could range from any basic type of gym-related qualification through to degrees in sports science. Interviews with gym managers showed quite considerable variation in how they judged qualifications. Many considered that a BTEC/ HND or degree in sports science gave recruits a firm theoretical basis to undertake the job. Others complained that a degree did not make them 'job ready' as 'they couldn't give me a [exercise] programme' (gym manager, Chain2).

People have degrees but they haven't worked in the workplace, they can struggle with dealing with people. (gym manager, Hotel1)

I like vocational qualifications. I know the theory and can train an elite athlete but in a gym it is quite different. It is their keenness and how they are with the customer. (gym manager, Hotel3)

There were some managers who were prepared to accept any gym qualification that was linked to the REP, i.e. level 2 that could be undertaken over a few weeks (Chain1,

Hotel4, LA1, LA2, LA4) as providing an adequate basis to becoming a fitness instructor. Others, however, were sceptical about this level of qualification:

Level 2 is very basic. It skims over the surface... It is not enough to be a competent instructor. (gym manager, Indep1)

level 2 is not adequate. The level of knowledge and recognising the technique flaws are not there. (gym manager, Corp1)

Some managers were sceptical about industry courses in personal training that awarded a level 3 after a 12 week course.

they come out with that and they say I'm now a personal trainer or a fitness coach and they walk around like they can do anything. They are like cowboys. It takes quality people time and effort. [Level 2 industry course] it is a lot cheaper and they are not conceited and they want to learn more. (gym manager, Chain2)

However, desired recruitment characteristics have to be balanced against the potential costs of the employment package required to attract and retain these 'preferred workers' within the local labour market. Through asking about the actual practice, rather than preferences, alongside interviews with those who had been recruited, a rather complex picture emerges. Seven clubs only recruited instructors with the requisite REP qualifications (see Table 3). Of the ten that recruited without these qualifications, nine subsequently put new staff through the relevant training that matched the Register's requirements. The one exception (Hotel4) undertook its own structured internal training courses that loosely related to levels 1, 2 and 3, but had decided not to try to validate these courses through the very bureaucratic process of recognition as a REP 'industry award'.

Why are some clubs recruiting with REP qualifications while others are prepared to undertake the required training themselves? This does not simply appear to be an issue of a lack of suitably qualified candidates in either of the two locations and there appeared to be no substantial differences that could be attributed to local labour markets. Only one club (LA3 - located in Southtown) found it very difficult to recruit new staff and this was largely due to wage levels being significantly lower than the other clubs in the area while, as a contracted local authority centre, being unable to offer other benefits that might compensate, such as a career structure, training or superior gym facilities.

**Table 3: Qualification requirements and subsequent training**

<b>Recruitment minimum</b>	<b>Minimal additional training</b>	<b>Training mainly state-funded</b>	<b>Substantial company-funded training</b>
<b>None</b>		Hotel1(S) Hotel2 (M) Hotel4 (M) LA3 (S)	Chain2 (S) Chain4 (M)
<b>REP level 2</b>	Chain1 (S), LA1 (S) LA2 (S) LA4 (M)		Indep1 (S)
<b>REP level 3</b>	Chain3 (M)		Corp2 (S)
<b>Higher academic qualifications</b>		Hotel3 (M)	Corp1 (S) Corp3 (M) Hotel5 (M)

Note: S = Southtown; M= Midcity

*Recruiting without REP qualifications*

Given the availability of qualified applicants, does recruiting without qualifications signal a preference for ‘social’ over ‘technical’ skills in the labour market? In the case of five of the clubs, this appeared to be the case with managers recruiting more for personality and with less concern about qualifications (Chain2, Chain4, Hotel1, Hotel2, Hotel4)

If they have an NVQ or YMCA it would take some consideration. Lifeguard or First Aid we are interested in, that is a bonus but it would not sway me. I would rather see how they handle the customers. (gym manager, Hotel2)

The amount of investment that then took place by the organisation in order to secure the required qualifications varied considerable. At three clubs, the predominant method was to put staff through NVQ courses that were state-funded. As one manager stated:

We do try to get our staff on a NVQ course and YMCA level 2 courses. It gives them the basis for gym work, how the body works. (team leader, Hotel4)

In contrast, the other two clubs (part of the same chain) provided considerable resources for staff training with recognised courses at levels 2, 3 and 4 in order to develop the higher level technical skills that were considered as essential to the job.

Everyone goes through level 2 and for personal training level 3. I would encourage them to level 4 - it is integrated flexible specialism, sports and training specialism ... and they are encouraged to do outside modules. (gym manager, Chain2)

Despite being prepared to take on those without REP qualification, in a number of cases new recruits in these clubs either had the relevant qualifications or had other qualifications, such as degrees, HNDs or NVQs.

The other four clubs not recruiting with REP qualifications prioritised candidates with higher academic qualifications that were industry-related but not necessarily fitness-related (Corp1, Corp3, Hotel3, Hotel5), indicating a desire to recruit those with either higher technical skills or greater capacity for learning. At one of the clubs new recruits were then put through state-funded NVQs at level 2 if they were under 25. These workers generally already had qualifications often at level 3 or 4, but received free training despite funding supposedly being only available for those who did not already possess a level 2 qualification.

We brought an outside company in and they do it for free, because they (the staff) are less than 25. Joanne wanted to do it but she is 30 and it would cost £1500 and so I had to say no. (gym manager, Hotel3)

The other three companies invested considerably more in training, either paying for staff to take external courses (Corp1, Corp3) or resourcing internal training (Hotel5).

#### *Recruit with REP qualifications*

Seven clubs recruited those with REP qualifications, either at level 2 or level 3. Five of these clubs provided little subsequent training within the company (Chain1, Chain3, LA1, LA2, LA4). All of these clubs had previously undertaken significant in-house training but financial constraints meant that this had been largely curtailed.

We don't have time for a lot of training on site. We like them to come in ready to go. (gym manager, LA2).

There is no training available from [Chain1] at the moment. We haven't had the resources to keep up to date. We need to address it in the new year. Me, I am the most out of date. (gym manager, Chain1)

In contrast, the other two clubs that recruited with REP qualifications (Indep1, Corp2) provided instructors with a set amount of money that they could use for their own personal development.

They have to have a basic level of [gym] qualifications. Personality is the biggest issue because of the club, we offer training here which we would

pay for...They organise their own training and the package we offer allows a certain spend per annum on courses. (Director, Indep1)

Despite this mixed demand in terms of recruitment, only seven out of the 43 fitness workers interviewed did not have academic qualifications of at least five good GCSEs or O levels (see Table 4). Eight of the 43 had been educated to A level (20%) and 12 had degrees (27%). Six of the seven instructors without level 2 academic qualifications were older workers (aged between 35 and 45) who had entered the sector after jobs in other areas and had in all but one case paid for themselves to be trained in the relevant industry qualification. The only younger worker without these academic qualifications had taken a NVQ 1 and 2 at a FE college in sport and recreation and had also paid for himself to undertake a YMCA level 2 course. Even for those with only GCSEs in academic qualifications, over half (ten) had vocational qualifications obtained through one or two year courses at FE or HE institutions of at least a level 3, such as BTECs and HNDs in sports science or, in a couple of cases, leisure and recreational management. In this way, we can see that despite recruitment failing to specify academic qualifications, virtually all of those recruited possessed them.

**Table 4: Fitness workers qualifications prior to entry into current job**

Academic Qualifications	Vocational Qualifications*						Total
	None	NVQ/RVQ level 2	NVQ/ RVQ level 3	BTEC/ equiv	HNDs	Un-related**	
None	0	2	3	1	0	1 (L3)	7
GCSEs	3	2	1	6	3	1 (L2) 1 (L4)	17
A Levels	3	0	4	0	1	0	8
Degree	7	1	1	3	0	0	12
<b>Total</b>	13	5	9	10	4	3	44

\* All vocational qualifications are fitness/leisure related, with the exception of the 'Unrelated' column.

\*\* L = level of qualification

### **Recruiting and Business Strategy - is there a link?**

The picture that emerges is one of considerable variation among the organisations in how they recruit and subsequently train gym staff. In exploring the reasons for this variation, there appeared to be no systematic link to the job requirements of the fitness instructors and/or the positioning of the club within the price/ quality continuum.

This confirms earlier research indicating no direct relationship between recruitment criteria and the business strategy of the organisation at corporate level in this sector (see Lloyd 2005b). Nevertheless, this does not mean that recruitment and training decisions do not relate to business strategy rather that companies can pursue alternative approaches to meet similar business demands. The following two examples provide an illustration of this process.

*i.) The 'expert' fitness clubs*

Two clubs at the top end of the market pursued very different approaches to recruitment and training. The technical expertise and experience of their staff was a central part of both companies' business strategy. Chain3 was a stand-alone gym owned by a national chain in Midcity. It was the 'top' club (most expensive) in the area, with facilities that no other club could compete with. Part of the attraction for instructors to work in one of these clubs is the size of the gym and the range and state of the facilities. There are also more opportunities for fitness instructors to move into personal training and, because of the size of the organisation, to move to gym management and eventually club management. Chain3's pay was slightly higher than most private gyms in the area and it had no difficulty in recruiting staff with level 3 qualifications and experience - they never had to advertise. The local manager decided on the recruitment criteria and he stressed that 'I'm not a big qualifications person... A million people are doing courses'. However, he then went on to say that, 'they are not taken without qualifications... [I] prefer people with a year's course - college NVQ and people with experience'. The aim was to have 'service and quality that is unparalleled' with the higher premiums said to be justified by the facilities and the higher staff ratios: 'We push the interaction between member of staff and member' with 'programmes that are tailor-made'. Although they had previously paid for staff to undertake a range of continuous training, financial losses had led to all formal training provision being cut. Nevertheless, staff continued to undertake informal training and paid for courses and conferences related to their job.

Chain1 in Midtown was also amongst the most expensive clubs in the area, with high quality facilities and a reputation for knowledgeable staff. In order to expand the fitness experience beyond the traditional market of sports enthusiasts, senior management felt that they should also be 'famous for service'. Rather than driving up service through traditional customer care training courses, they embarked on a

programme of changing recruitment to 'bring in the behaviour and teach the skill'. Head office organised selection through what was described by one manager as a 'Pop Idol' competition. 'We are looking for people who show empathy with the member, build relationships with people, particularly those people who are least like themselves' (training manager, Head Office). However, 'they must be able to learn and have a big desire for learning.' New recruits were required to pass the club's level 2 qualification and then quickly move on to level 3 thereby enabling them to undertake personal training. The deputy gym manager at Chain1 reported that recruiting those without qualifications and experience did have its problems:

There are brand new people who have never used the equipment. They go to the academy and then have knowledge but no experience. Really you need experience because it is quite a fit club with healthy kinds of people.

The company accepted that there were difficulties with new recruits being unable to move rapidly through the qualifications and reach level 3. In effect, it then introduced a dual approach with an aim of 80% graduates and 20% recruited purely on personality. All new recruits were still required to undertake the company's extensive internal training programme, that covered techniques and knowledge as well as personal interaction.

#### *ii) The Leisure club*

An alternative approach to fitness is provided by hotel gyms, where membership prices tend to be mid-range and facilities usually include a swimming pool and often a small gym. These are seen more as 'leisure' rather than fitness clubs and their members are perceived as wanting to be pampered, i.e. given a towel at reception and warmly greeted, rather than looking for the latest gym equipment or challenging exercise programmes. We can identify two different approaches to recruitment and training within the clubs. More prevalent was an attitude of hotel management that regarded the gym as a marginal activity that they 'must have' and that provided a welcome source of income. However, they usually showed little interest or knowledge of the industry. For example, at Hotel2 in Midcity, the fitness staff complained that their pay was lower than receptionists, and that some staff were being paid the national minimum wage despite working shifts (6 to 2 and 2 to 10) and regular weekends. One fitness instructor stressed that 'people's lives are in our hands', while at the same time likening their work to 'scrubbing slaves', as most of

their time was spent on reception and cleaning. Despite the often routine nature of much of the work, they were still expected to be able to provide exercise programmes and advice when required. This type of job was generally seen as an entry point into the industry where those without experience or with limited qualifications could find their first job. For those not already qualified, they could gain industry vocational qualifications that were generally paid for by the state. Turnover, as a result, was high and the low pay meant that management often recruited those without the relevant REP qualifications although many had related qualifications.

An alternative response of management was found at Hotel5 in Midcity. Company policy had identified the hotel's gym as a recruitment source for management staff. Despite the work being very similar to that taking place in the other hotel gyms, at this company they sought to recruit graduates, with some industry-related qualification, whether in sports science or leisure management. They paid slightly higher than the other hotel gyms in the local area (around 50p per hour). Each new recruit had to pass two internal courses within three months, with training undertaken through structured programmes of self-study with teaching on-site by the deputy fitness manager. This was followed by a third advanced course that instructors were expected to complete within a year of recruitment. 'If they don't have their [advanced certificate] then effectively they can't move on to deputy manager. The whole idea is to train them up to deputy manager and move them on' (deputy manager, Hotel5). Once into a deputy manager role, there was a range of structured training programmes available with the express aim that they would move into gym management, and eventually to hotel management. This company found it relatively easy to attract graduates into these jobs because of the training and career path that was on offer.

### **Problems with an employer-led system**

The exploration of recruitment processes within the fitness industry raises a number of issues in relation to an employer-led system and the central focus of government policy on the expansion of the stock of qualifications. The research has found that it is extremely difficult to identify the 'voice' of employers, when the value placed on academic qualifications versus vocational qualifications and views about academic and private training providers are so diverse. The perspective that is presented by SkillsActive is largely one of unity leading to proposals that go in one direction, that

is more private provision, vocational qualifications and 'real life' work placements. These issues did not reflect the central concerns of those engaged in the recruitment process in the case study organisations. One problem is that the small proportion of employers who engage with SSCs and provide feedback on skill needs and the quality of provision are unlikely to be the same respondents as those local level gym managers who are actively deciding about the qualifications criteria. Senior management certainly provide the constraints within which gym managers operate, for example the pay rates on offer, training budgets, career progression possibilities and the nature of the product and service that is being delivered, but in most of the organisations it is the gym manager who has to decide how to meet these constraints within the given labour market. It is far from clear that SSCs are able to capture the voices of these managers who are the most closely involved in the recruitment and selection process.

Even if these voices could be heard, ascertaining skill requirements is still very difficult and not all clubs are seeking the same skill sets. When asked, managers found it easier to identify personal characteristics, while vocational qualifications were used as a proxy for technical skills and academic qualifications as a proxy for learning capability. There appeared to be little concern about shortages of 'social skills', as most appeared able to recruit the required staff if they selected carefully. Only two managers expected new recruits to be 'work ready' and this was because they were generally able to recruit experienced workers - normally those who had previously worked in smaller gyms, as they offered the best facilities in the area (Chain3) and the best wages and conditions (LA2). Other club managers recognised that new workers needed to go through a lengthy induction with work shadowing and learning on the job, particularly from more experienced colleagues. This type of training is 'learning by doing' and is not something that can be replicated within the classroom. A scorn was often shown for those new instructors who had undertaken particular courses and entered with a 'know it all' attitude.

Much of the evidence on recruitment has indicated a reduced reliance on academic qualifications, nevertheless those with qualifications are more likely to have a job. The research on the fitness industry indicates that the process is rather complicated. In most cases, academic qualifications were not explicitly sought or identified when managers were asked what they looked for in recruiting new staff. However, those instructors that were recruited did have, with a few exceptions for

older workers, at least good GCSEs. In effect, only seven out of the 44 fitness workers in this study did not have a level 3 qualification of some sort - either vocational or academic. The response from gym managers was also far more positive about provision by HE and FE institutions than that found by SkillsActive. This may, in part, reflect the position that ten of the gym managers had degrees themselves, seven of them in sports science.

Most of the report by SkillsActive on provision focuses on NVQs and RVQs, some of which are funded by employers, while there is little discussion of the large amounts of skill formation that takes place within full-time education. This is particularly the case for those with degrees, but also those with GCSEs who have then gone on to undertake BTECs and/or HNDs in a relevant area. Some of these qualifications are state-funded (e.g. BTEC and college-based NVQs), while others are subsidised and part-funded by the student (HNDs, degrees). The numbers on these courses has expanded substantially over recent years, while new foundation degrees that promise a greater practical element will also ensure a continued upward trend.

The appetite for these courses, particularly from young people, appears to be insatiable despite the prospects of relatively low pay and limited progression opportunities and the high labour turnover rates within these jobs. Amongst those instructors interviewed, just under half had less than one year's tenure, while a third had spent under a year in the industry. A national survey of employees in the fitness industry, that included instructors up to senior management, found that 50% had less than four years experience in the sector (Skills Active 2006b). The ready supply of newly qualified recruits and the subsidies available for work-based training means that high labour turnover can be relatively easily managed. As a result, there is little incentive for managers to raise pay levels, improve job quality or provide greater opportunities for skill and career development. Despite what could be described as an over-supply of labour in this sector, SkillsActive never appears to question the continued expansion of vocational qualifications or whether public investment is currently being well-spent.

## **Conclusion**

The research found that there is not a simple trend towards a greater emphasis upon 'social skills' and attributes to the detriment of qualifications in recruiting fitness instructors but that a more complex picture is evident. Organisations pursue different

approaches and strategies that incorporate not only the desired quality level and type of service to customers but also their wider financial position. The same job can be undertaken in many different ways with a variety of skill levels and qualifications and, therefore, employers do not automatically recruit those with the highest level of qualification available to them in the labour market. Rather than there being some sort of ‘best practice’ model, these varied approaches appear to suit individual organisation’s broader business strategy and local labour markets. The ability of Sector Skills Councils to reflect these divergent patterns and identify a coherent ‘demand’ from employers is clearly difficult even for what is a fairly narrowly defined occupational group. For other sectors that lack a relatively well-organised employer body and a recognised system of qualifications then the problems are likely to be far greater.

There are also a number of issues raised by the research that resonate elsewhere within the private service sector in particular. As we have seen, those engaged with the SSC typically voiced their demands in terms of social skills and attributes rather than technical requirements. This is indicative of research on skills across the UK economy where social skills are generally found to be of vital importance and are often claimed to be lacking in the labour market (LSC 2006). Three key problems flow from this. First, social skills are notoriously difficult to define, measure and assess (see for example Payne 2000 and Grugulis 2007:75). If these are the ‘skills’ that employers want, it presents difficulties for a skills system that is based upon the demand for skill being articulated and met through qualifications. How then can the system be judged to be successful, if the criteria for success is measured by the stock of qualifications that may not necessarily reflect the skill requirements of employers?

Second, there is a tendency to conflate the need for certain social skills with demands for new recruits to be ‘job-ready’. The desire for individuals to be able to fit directly into an organisation without the need for any initial training or support mirrors wider demands from some employers across the economy (see for example Education and Employment Select Committee 2001). Yet demands that new recruits, particularly those leaving full-time education, should be ready to go from day one may be ‘inherently impossible’ given that virtually all jobs require some element of organisational and workplace-specific skills (Gleeson and Keep 2004:55). Grugulis *et al.* (2004:12) also argue that by classifying attitudes and behaviour such as motivation

as a skill, employers have been able ‘to shift responsibility for the creation or reinforcement of some of these attitudes and traits away from their role as managers and motivators of their employees and onto the education and training system’.

Third, prioritising social skills can overlook the technical skill requirements that might or could form an important part of the job. If fitness instructors (and their employers) think that it is more important to smile and be enthusiastic rather than know how to work on a particular muscle group, then the use of the term ‘quality’ in service provision becomes something of a misnomer. Similar tensions were found by Grugulis and Vincent (2001) in their study of Post Office counter workers, where a new emphasis on customer service training was marginalising the actual technical skills that were needed for the job.

There is no doubt that some progress has been made in improving qualification levels within the fitness industry. However, a key part of the government’s skills strategy is that there should be a ‘matching of supply and demand’ (HM Treasury/ DfES 2002, SSSA 2005b). Instead we see employers and the SSC insisting on a continued expansion of qualifications and increased levels of subsidies despite widespread evidence of an oversupply of qualifications – indicated by low levels of pay and high labour turnover. It has been argued that in some contexts a surplus of skills can produce positive outcomes (see Regini 1995), nevertheless within the UK fitness industry an oversupply of labour is partly responsible for the widespread complacency about skill development, career progression and job quality. With the Leitch Review (Leitch 2006) insisting on a need for ever higher levels of qualifications for the British workforce, there seems little concern about the efficacy of such public investment or the possible detrimental effects oversupply can exert on an occupational group.

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