



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

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Summary

Work experience and sector-based work academies are key elements of the Government's Youth Contract measures. As part of the Youth Contract which was implemented from April 2012, it was announced that an extra 250,000 work experience or sector-based work academy places would be made available over three years. This will offer at least 100,000 opportunities a year and will offer a place for every 18-24 year old who wants one, before they enter the Work Programme.

This report contains findings from the quantitative survey with 3,000 employers offering work experience opportunities or taking part in sector-based work academies. It examines the characteristics of employers; the success of employer engagement and marketing and how employers have responded to the work experience offer; and how different types of employers have responded to the policy.

This survey of work experience and sector-based work academy employers forms part of the evaluation of the Youth Contract. The evaluation consists of a mixed methods approach including in-house analysis of administrative data as well as externally commissioned research involving interviews and surveys with staff, claimants, employers and Work Programme providers.

Contents

Acknowledgements	12
The Authors	13
Abbreviations and glossary of terms	14
Notes on terminology.....	16
Executive summary	17
1 Introduction.....	24
1.1 Background	24
1.2 Youth Contract Evaluation.....	26
1.3 Research on work experience and sector-based work academies	27
1.4 Research covered in this report	28
1.5 Interpretation of data and analysis	29
2 Involvement in the schemes	30
2.1 Involvement in schemes.....	30
2.2 Elements of sector-based work academies.....	31
3 Employer characteristics	33
3.1 Size of organisation.....	33
3.2 Sector.....	34
3.3 Industry.....	34
3.3.1 Work experience.....	35
3.3.2 Sector-based work academies.....	35
4 Involvement with work experience/sector-based work academies.....	37
4.1 How employers first heard about the schemes	37
4.1.1 Work experience	38
4.1.2 Sector-based work academies.....	39
4.2 Whether employer approached Jobcentre Plus, or Jobcentre Plus approached employer.....	39
4.2.1 Work experience	39
4.2.2 Sector-based work academies	40

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

4.3	Awareness and usefulness of guides	41
4.4	Reasons for involvement.....	43
4.4.1	Work experience	43
4.4.2	Sector-based work academies.....	44
4.5	Concerns about involvement.....	45
4.5.1	Work experience	45
4.5.2	Sector-based work academies.....	46
4.6	Reasons for involvement in both work experience and sector-based work academies.....	47
4.7	Reasons for not being involved in all elements of a sector-based work academy	50
5	Setting up of placements	50
5.1	Responsibility for interviewing candidates.....	50
5.1.1	Work experience	51
5.1.2	Sector-based work academies.....	52
5.2	Rating of Jobcentre Plus in identifying suitable people	52
5.2.1	Work experience	52
5.2.2	Sector-based work academies.....	52
5.3	Whether employers received enough candidates from Jobcentre Plus for the opportunities offered.....	53
5.3.1	Work experience	53
5.3.2	Sector-based work academies.....	54
5.4	Amount of work for employers setting up work experience opportunities and sector-based work academies.....	54
5.4.1	Work experience	54
5.4.2	Sector-based work academies.....	55
5.5	How well the set-up process worked.....	57
5.5.1	Work experience	57
5.5.2	Sector-based work academies.....	57

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

5.6	Effectiveness of Jobcentre Plus in setting up placements	58
5.6.1	Work experience	58
5.6.2	Sector-based work academies.....	59
5.7	Suggested improvements to set-up process	60
5.7.1	Work experience	60
5.7.2	Sector-based work academies.....	60
6	Placement details	62
6.1	Number of placements taken on	62
6.1.1	Work experience	62
6.1.2	Sector-based work academies.....	64
6.2	Whether placements covered people aged 25 or over as well as under-25s.....	65
6.2.1	Work experience	65
6.2.2	Sector-based work academies.....	65
6.3	Whether placements were completed	66
6.3.1	Work experience	66
6.3.2	Sector-based work academies.....	67
6.4	Whether filled all placements	68
6.4.1	Work experience	68
6.4.1	Sector-based work academies.....	68
6.5	Length of placements	68
6.5.1	Work experience	69
6.5.2	Sector-based work academies.....	70
6.6	Type of work done on placements.....	71
6.6.1	Work experience	71
6.6.2	Sector-based work academies.....	71
6.7	Support provided on placements.....	71
6.7.1	Work experience	71
6.7.2	Sector-based work academies.....	72

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

7	Quality of people on placements	73
7.1	Satisfaction with people on placements	74
7.1.1	Work experience	74
7.1.2	Sector-based work academies.....	75
7.1.3	Reasons for positive views	76
7.1.4	Reasons for dissatisfaction.....	77
7.2	Comparison with expectations	78
7.2.1	Work experience	79
7.2.2	Sector-based work academies.....	79
7.3	Issues of misconduct.....	80
7.3.1	Work experience	80
7.3.2	Sector-based work academies.....	81
7.4	Comparison with other government schemes	83
7.4.1	Work experience	83
7.4.2	Sector-based work academies.....	84
7.5	Reasons for difference in standard	84
7.6	Comparison with work experience scheme prior to February 2012	85
8	Experience of sector-based work academies.....	87
8.1	Importance of the different elements of sector-based work academies	87
8.2	How different elements work together.....	88
8.3	Length of sector-based work academies.....	89
8.4	Attitudes to courses offered by training providers	90
9	Overall attitudes to the schemes	92
9.1	Benefits of involvement	92
9.2	Suggested improvements.....	94
9.3	Likelihood of taking someone on in the future.....	98
9.3.1	Work experience	98

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

9.3.2	Sector-based work academies.....	99
9.4	Does scheme allow employers to take a risk on people?	100
9.5	Would employers recommend the scheme?	100
10	Impact of schemes	101
10.1	Taking people on after placement	101
10.1.1	Work experience	101
10.1.2	Sector-based work academies.....	102
10.2	Numbers taken on after placement	103
10.2.1	Work experience	103
10.2.2	Sector-based work academies.....	104
10.3	Impact of scheme on number of vacancies for paid work	105
10.4	Increasing recruitment of young, unemployed people.....	105
10.4.1	Work experience	105
10.4.2	Sector-based work academies.....	106
10.5	Recruitment focus on young people.....	106
10.5.1	Work experience	107
10.5.2	Sector-based work academies.....	107
11	Awareness of other schemes	108
11.1	Whether heard of other schemes	108
11.1.1	Work experience	108
11.1.2	Sector-based work academies.....	109
11.2	Whether taken up other schemes	109
11.2.1	Work experience	110
11.2.2	Sector-based work academies.....	110
11.3	Confusion of schemes.....	110
12	Conclusions.....	112
12.1	Participating employers	112
12.1.1	Employer characteristics.....	112

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

12.1.2	Nature of participation.....	112
12.1.3	Reasons for participation	112
12.1.4	Placements offered	113
12.1.5	Outcomes.....	113
12.2	Attitudes towards the schemes	114
12.2.1	Overall attitudes	114
12.2.2	Set-up	114
12.2.3	Rating of people on placements	115
12.2.4	Impact on future behaviour	115
12.2.5	Employers who were more or less positive.....	115
12.3	Suggestions for improvement.....	115
12.3.1	Quality of people on placements.....	115
12.3.2	Communication with Jobcentre Plus.....	116
12.3.3	Other suggested improvements.....	116
12.4	Encouraging take-up	117
Appendix A	Advance letter to employers.....	118
Appendix B	Survey response rate	119
Appendix C	Industry sectors	120
Appendix D	Questionnaire	121
References	137

List of tables

Table 2.1	Elements of sector-based work academy	32
Table 3.1	Characteristics of employers: size and number of sites.....	34
Table 3.2	Characteristics of employers: sector	34
Table 6.1	Completion of work experience placements as part of a sector-based work academy	68
Table 6.2	Type of work done on placements	71
Table 7.1	Reasons for dissatisfaction with people on work experience placements	77
Table 7.2	Issues of misconduct.....	81
Table 7.3	Perceived changes since before February 2012.....	86

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

Table 8.1	Importance of the different elements of sector-based work academies.....	88
Table 8.2	Attitudes to course run by training providers.....	90
Table 9.1	Whether benefits worth time and resource in setting up work experience opportunities/sector-based work academies.....	94
Table 9.2	Ways in which schemes could be improved.....	97
Table 9.3	Whether agree or disagree that 'work experience/sector-based work academies let you take a risk on someone you otherwise wouldn't'.....	100
Table 10.1	Whether employers took anyone on at end of placement.....	102
Table 10.2	Proportion taken on at the end of placement (work experience).....	104
Table 10.3	Proportion taken on at the end of placement (sector-based work academies).....	104
Table 10.4	Whether agree or disagree that 'since taking part in work experience/sector-based work academies, our recruitment has focused more on young people'.....	107
Table B.1	Response details.....	119
Table C.1	List of UK SIC 2007 categories.....	120

List of figures

Figure 3.1	Industry sector.....	36
Figure 4.1	How employers first heard of work experience scheme.....	38
Figure 4.2	How employers first heard about sector-based work academies.....	39
Figure 4.3	How employer became involved in the work experience or sector-based work academy scheme.....	41
Figure 4.4	Awareness and usefulness of employer guides to work experience.....	42
Figure 4.5	Reasons for involvement in work experience scheme.....	44
Figure 4.6	Reasons for involvement in a sector-based work academy.....	45
Figure 4.7	Reasons why employers were not involved in all elements of sector-based work academy.....	49
Figure 5.1	Responsibility for interviewing candidates.....	51
Figure 5.2	Whether received enough candidates from Jobcentre Plus.....	53
Figure 5.3	Work involved in setting up work experience placement.....	55
Figure 5.4	Work involved in setting up sector-based work academy.....	56
Figure 5.5	How well set-up worked overall.....	58
Figure 5.6	How effective Jobcentre Plus were in setting up placements.....	59
Figure 6.1	Number taken part in a work experience placement.....	63
Figure 6.2	Number of sector-based work academies.....	64

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

Figure 6.3	Age of participants	66
Figure 6.4	Completion of work experience placements	67
Figure 6.5	Designed length of work experience placements.....	69
Figure 6.6	Designed length of sector-based work academies	70
Figure 6.7	What materials were provided by organisation to participants.....	72
Figure 7.1	Rating of people on placements (work experience employers)	74
Figure 7.2	Rating of people on placements (sector-based work academy employers).....	75
Figure 7.3	Rating of people on placements relative to expectations (work experience employers)	79
Figure 7.4	Rating of people on placements relative to expectations (sector-based work academy employers)	80
Figure 7.5	Rating of people on placements relative to previous programmes	83
Figure 8.1	How different elements work together.....	89
Figure 9.1	Benefits to organisation of taking people on as part of work experience placements/sector-based work academies	93
Figure 9.2	Whether would take someone on a work experience placement in the future: work experience employers	98
Figure 9.3	Whether would take someone on a work experience placement in the future: sector-based work academy employers	99
Figure 10.1	Number of people taken on at end of placement	103
Figure 10.2	Whether taking part in scheme has made establishment more or less likely to recruit young people with a recent history of unemployment	106
Figure 11.1	Levels of awareness of different schemes	109
Figure 11.2	Confusion about the different schemes offered.....	111

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The Authors

Nick Coleman is an independent research consultant who has worked closely with TNS BMRB Social Research on this evaluation. He has over 20 years' experience in social survey research, and has managed a range of major studies for the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). He specialises in quantitative research design, as well as analysis and reporting of quantitative studies.

Stephen McGinigal is a research manager within the quantitative research team at TNS BMRB Social Research. Stephen was responsible for the day to day management of the survey, and as such was involved in all stages of the project. Responsibilities included fieldwork set-up and management, analysis, and reporting. During his time at TNS BMRB Social Research he has been involved in wide range of surveys for clients including HM Revenue & Customs, the Department for Education (DfE) and the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS).

Sarah Hingley is a research executive within the research team at TNS BMRB Social Research. Sarah assisted Stephen in the day to day management of the project. Her responsibilities included managing fieldwork, analysis and reporting. She has worked for a variety of clients, including BIS, DfE and NHS Clinical Commissioners.

Abbreviations and glossary of terms

Apprenticeship Grant for employers of 16-24 year olds	Employers employing up to 1,000 employees can receive a £1,500 grant for recruiting a young Apprentice. The grant is available in England only.
CATI	Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
ESA	Employment and Support Allowance
JSA	Jobseeker's Allowance
NEET	Not in employment, education or training
Sector-based work academies	Sector-based work academies are designed to support recipients of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) or Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) (work-related activity group) who are close to the labour market but have been unable to find work. They consist of the following three elements: sector-based pre-employment training; a work-experience placement with an employer in that sector; and a guaranteed job interview. Where an employer is unable to guarantee a job interview (for example, because of 'fair and open' recruitment policies), other help will be offered to help participants through the employer's application process.
SIC	Standard Industrial Classification
SOC	Standard Occupational Classification
Wage incentives	Over three years from April 2012, the Youth Contract will offer wage incentive payments of up to £2,275 to employers when they recruit an 18-24 year old from the Work Programme. Availability was expanded in July 2012 to include 18-24 year olds in Jobcentre Plus 'youth unemployment hotspots' with claim durations which had reached six months. Over this three-year period 160,000 wage incentives have been funded.
Work experience scheme	The work experience scheme gives young unemployed people the opportunity to be placed with local employers where they are able to gain work experience, improve their CVs and marketability to potential employers. Placement opportunities last between two and eight weeks.

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

Work Programme

The Work Programme is a major payment-for-results welfare-to-work programme that was launched throughout Great Britain in June 2011. The Work Programme is being delivered by a range of private, public and voluntary sector organisations which are supporting benefit claimants who are at risk of becoming long-term unemployed to find work.

Youth Contract

The Youth Contract was implemented from April 2012, to provide a range of additional help for unemployed young people to better prepare them for work, and to offer greater opportunities to find and take up sustained employment.

Notes on terminology

A large number of tables and charts appear in this report. The following conventions have been used:

0 = a 'true zero' (i.e. no responses in the category);

* = less than 0.5 per cent, but more than zero responses.

Significance testing has been carried out at the five per cent level, unless otherwise stated. All comparative data described in the report is significant.

Where net figures are described in the body of the report these have been taken directly from the raw data and, therefore, may not always equal the sum of the figures in the charts due to rounding. Similarly, figures may not always total 100 per cent due to rounding.

Executive summary

Background

Work experience and sector-based work academies are key elements of the Government's Youth Contract measures. As part of the Youth Contract, which was implemented from April 2012, it was announced that an extra 250,000 work experience or sector-based work academy places would be made available over three years. This will offer at least 100,000 opportunities a year and will offer a place for every 18-24 year old who wants one, before they enter the Work Programme.

The findings in this report are based on a quantitative survey of 3,000 employers who were involved in either the work experience scheme or with sector-based work academies.

Involvement in the schemes

The majority of employers who took part in this survey were sampled as being involved in the work experience scheme. During the interview, seven per cent of these employers said they had also been involved with a sector-based work academy. In the sample of employers involved with a sector-based work academy, almost half (47 per cent) said they had also been involved with the work experience scheme.¹

Of the employers who reported involvement with a sector-based work academy, 52 per cent said they were involved with all three 'core' elements: sector-specific training, work experience placement and guaranteed job interview². The sample also included employers who were only involved in some elements: nine per cent offered a placement and training only, eight per cent offered a placement and interview, seven per cent offered training and an interview, and 21 per cent offered just one element.³

Employer characteristics

Overall, the employers who were involved in the work experience scheme had more diverse characteristics than those involved with a sector-based work academy. Sector-based work academy employers were mostly large organisations (59 per cent had 250 or more employees) and 76 per cent were multi-site organisations. This is likely to be due to the nature of the scheme. A number of vacancies may be required to make it worthwhile to set up a sector-based work academy so large employers were more likely to be targeted by Jobcentre Plus (see below).

¹ This was as reported by respondents during the interview. Because of possible confusion between the two schemes, these percentages should be seen as indicative rather than as precise figures for take-up of the schemes.

² Sector-based work academy opportunities can offer help with the application process in lieu of a job interview; however, questions were not asked about this element of support.

³ It is important to note that the DWP definition of a sector-based work academy is that it must contain all three 'core' elements. Some of the employers included in the survey were not involved in all elements and therefore may not meet the full criteria of a sector-based work academy. This should be taken into account when considering the findings within this report and any conclusions made about the policy (see Chapter 2 for further details).

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

By contrast, while 38 per cent of work experience employers were large organisations, 36 per cent were micro-organisations (with fewer than ten employees).

Similarly, while most sector-based work academy employers were in the private sector (70 per cent), the proportion was lower among work experience employers (57 per cent), with 19 per cent in the public sector and 20 per cent in the non-profit/voluntary sector.

The majority of employers in both schemes were in 'service' sectors (76 per cent for work experience and 67 per cent for sector-based work academies), most commonly Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) Group G (the wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles).

Getting involved in the schemes

More than half of employers involved in work experience (57 per cent) and sector-based work academies (56 per cent) first heard of the schemes from Jobcentre Plus staff. Survey respondents in large organisations often found out about the schemes from within their own organisation (24 per cent for work experience, 20 per cent for sector-based work academies).

It was more likely that employers were approached by Jobcentre Plus about taking on a work experience opportunity (58 per cent), rather than the employer approaching Jobcentre Plus (32 per cent). Similarly, for sector-based work academies, 48 per cent were approached by Jobcentre Plus staff, while 24 per cent made the initial approach to Jobcentre Plus, and eight per cent became involved after being contacted by a training provider.⁴ Overall, the findings indicate that large, private sector organisations were often targeted by Jobcentre Plus about sector-based work academies, whereas for the work experience scheme there was a more even spread of employers and a greater emphasis on the public sector.

The most commonly reported reason for involvement in the schemes was to give young or unemployed people a chance (57 per cent for work experience, 43 per cent for sector-based work academies). Another main reason was to get extra resource at no/low cost (22 per cent for work experience, 23 per cent for sector-based work academies). This was the sole driver for six per cent of work experience and 12 per cent of sector-based work academies⁵. Many employers gave more than one reason for involvement; for example, ten per cent of work experience employers and six per cent of sector-based work academy employers became involved both to give young people a chance and also because they were able to get extra resource at no/low cost. It was also reported as a way of trying people out before hiring them for 21 per cent of work experience employers and 25 per cent of sector-based work academy employers.

The main concern for employers prior to participation in either scheme was the quality of candidates (31 per cent for work experience, 24 per cent for sector-based work academies).

⁴ Note that 'training providers' is used to represent all learning providers including both colleges and training providers.

⁵ In light of these survey findings the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will be reiterating the guidance to employer-facing staff to ensure that work experience employers are clear of their responsibilities to ensure that placements do not displace paid work, and that both work experience and sector-based work academy employers are clear on the policy intent.

Other concerns were around punctuality and the amount of time and cost it would take within their organisation. Very few employers mentioned negative publicity attached to work experience schemes.

Setting up placements

Among work experience employers, the responsibility for interviewing candidates was often shared between the employer and Jobcentre Plus (in 43 per cent of cases). Otherwise, it was more likely to be the employer who interviewed candidates (38 per cent) rather than

Jobcentre Plus (18 per cent). Sector-based work academy employers were less likely to do all of the interviewing themselves (28 per cent)⁶, with 23 per cent leaving the interviewing to Jobcentre Plus, and 44 per cent sharing the responsibility with Jobcentre Plus.

The majority of work experience employers (81 per cent) and sector-based work academy employers (82 per cent) thought that Jobcentre Plus did a good job in identifying suitable candidates for placements. Views were less positive where placements were not completed⁷.

Sector-based work academy employers were more likely than work experience employers to say that there had been a great deal or a fair amount of work for their organisation in setting up the placement (54 per cent compared with 42 per cent). For sector-based work academies, a greater burden was felt by those who were involved in all elements (76 per cent), while in both schemes, the perceived burden increased with the number of placements taken on.

A large majority of employers (91 per cent for work experience and 87 per cent for sector-based work academies) thought that the process of setting up placements went well. Similarly, a large proportion in both schemes thought that Jobcentre Plus were effective in supporting the set-up of the placements (83 per cent for work experience opportunities, 82 per cent for sector-based work academy placements). Views were particularly positive among those with a larger number of placements (often larger employers), despite the greater burden that these employers felt.

Placement details

The number of participants taken on by sector-based work academy employers was higher, on average, than for work experience employers. In total, 44 per cent of sector-based work academy employers took on ten or more participants, and this was particularly high (67 per cent) where employers offered all elements of the academy. By contrast, 20 per cent of work experience employers had ten or more participants, while a similar proportion (22 per cent) took just one person on.

Less than two in five work experience employers (37 per cent) saw all recruits complete their placements. An additional 45 per cent said that most or at least half completed their placements, while 18 per cent said that most or all of the placements were not completed. The figures for sector-based work academy employers were similar: 38 per cent said that

⁶ These figures refer to interviews for the placements or training rather than the job interview often offered at the end of the opportunity.

⁷ The survey did not cover reasons for non-completion of placements.

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

all placements were completed, 50 per cent said half or most were completed, and 12 per cent saw few, if any, placements completed.

Around three in four work experience employers (72 per cent) and sector-based work academy employers (75 per cent) filled all the positions that they had available.

There was a range of different types of work offered in both schemes. Work experience opportunities were most likely to be in elementary occupations (28 per cent), sales and customer service occupations (26 per cent) and administrative and secretarial occupations (21 per cent). Sector-based work academy placements were most commonly in elementary occupations (32 per cent), sales and customer service (16 per cent), personal services (15 per cent), administrative and secretarial (14 per cent) and technical operations (12 per cent). The spread of different occupations shows that both schemes were offering a range of different types of work at different levels.

Employers involved with sector-based work academies were more likely than work experience employers to provide support materials⁸. As many as 84 per cent offered internal training materials (compared with 69 per cent of work experience employers), 78 per cent offered guides or booklets about the organisation (compared with 61 per cent), and 51 per cent offered certificates (compared with 18 per cent).

Rating of people on placements

The majority of employers were satisfied with the people they took on for placements, specifically in relation to their attitude (82 per cent of work experience employers and 85 per cent of sector-based work academy employers), skills (82 per cent and 85 per cent respectively) and overall quality (83 per cent and 82 per cent respectively). Where placements had not been completed, employers were less likely to be satisfied. In addition, for the work experience schemes the smallest (micro-) employers were somewhat less positive, while in sector-based work academies private sector employers were less satisfied than those in the public or non-profit/voluntary sectors.

Positive views were most likely to concern the attitude and enthusiasm of people on placements and the desire to get work. Some respondents also commented on the high quality of the people they have taken on, and good attendance records. The main reasons for dissatisfaction focused on similar issues: the attitude or motivation of people, their overall quality, or their attendance record.

Employers tended to say that people were either better than they had expected (39 per cent of work experience employers and 34 per cent of sector-based work academy employers) or were no different (46 per cent and 53 per cent respectively). In both schemes, just 11 per cent said that people on placements were worse than they had expected.

⁸ This is not surprising given the training focus of sector-based work academy opportunities.

One in six work experience employers (16 per cent) said that they had experienced an issue with misconduct in at least one of their placements. Experience of misconduct was higher among employers involved in sector-based work academies (32 per cent).⁹ The most common problems related to attendance and behavioural issues.

If employers had also been involved in the work experience before February 2012¹⁰, around one in four said that there had been a change in either the quality of candidates (25 per cent), the attitude of candidates (27 per cent) or drop-out rates (28 per cent). Changes were more likely to be positive rather than negative changes, in relation to the quality and attitude of candidates. However, where changes had been seen in drop-out rates, these were more likely to be negative rather than positive (14 per cent compared with 11 per cent).

Experience of the different elements of sector-based work academies

All of the various elements were likely to be seen as very important by those who offered them. This applied to 74 per cent of employers in relation to the work experience placement, 80 per cent for job interviews and 81 per cent for training courses.

Where employers were involved in two or more elements of sector-based work academies, the majority said that they thought the different elements worked very well together (41 per cent) or fairly well (46 per cent).

The vast majority thought that the length of sector-based work academies was about right (85 per cent), although ten per cent said it was not long enough and three per cent thought it was too long. Employers in the non-profit or voluntary sector were more likely than those in other sectors to say that it was not long enough (22 per cent). The main reasons why employers thought the academies were not long enough mostly related to the work placement element.

Where employers were involved with a course run by a training provider, a large majority were satisfied with both the quality (87 per cent) and relevance (90 per cent) of the training. If employers offered provider-led training as well as at least one other element, nine per cent said that they had experienced problems co-ordinating the different elements.

Overall attitudes to schemes

Employers were mostly very positive about the schemes. Around three in four said that there had been benefits for their organisation in taking people on work experience opportunities (74 per cent) and sector-based work academies (76 per cent). The two most common benefits were providing a way of trying people out before hiring them and getting extra resource at no or low cost.

Among respondents who said there had been benefits to their organisation, almost all said that the benefits had been worth the time and resource in setting up the work experience opportunities (93 per cent) or sector-based work academies (92 per cent).

⁹ Sector-based work academy employers typically had a large number of placements so they were more likely to have at least one instance of misconduct over a large number of placements.

¹⁰ There was a change to work experience policy as described in the introduction section.

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

Many employers said that they would be very likely to take on someone in the future on a work experience placement (64 per cent) or as part of a sector-based work academy (55 per cent), with most of the remainder saying they would be fairly likely to do so. In addition, a very high proportion of employers said that they would recommend work experience (91 per cent) or sector-based work academies (88 per cent) to other employers.

In both schemes, employers mostly agreed that taking part let them 'take a risk on someone you otherwise wouldn't'. (77 per cent of work experience employers and 72 per cent of sector-based work academy employers).

On the different issues, views were particularly positive among work experience employers who were larger and had taken on more placements, and views were also more positive in the non-profit/voluntary sectors. Sector-based work academy employers were most positive if they had taken part in all elements. In both schemes, experience of previous work experience schemes tended to lead to more positive views, while non-completion of placements was the main factor leading to negative views.

Impact of the schemes

In total, 50 per cent of all work experience employers said they had taken at least one person on at the end of the placement, while the figure for sector-based work academy employers who offered placements was 78 per cent¹¹. In both cases, this was higher amongst larger employers who had taken on a greater number of placements. Among employers who took someone on at the end of the placement, 44 per cent of work experience employers took on half or more of the people, as did 60 per cent of sector-based work academy employers.

One concern over work experience placements is that they may be used by employers as a substitute for recruitment of paid workers. However, just six per cent of work experience employers said that they had fewer vacancies for paid work, as a result of offering work experience placements.

Excluding those who had only taken on people aged 25 or over (a small minority), around two in five respondents (41 per cent of work experience employers and 39 per cent of sector-based work academy employers) said that taking part in the scheme had made them more likely to recruit young people with a recent history of unemployment. The proportion was higher among employers who offered a greater number of placements. Around half of work experience employers (52 per cent) agreed that their recruitment had focused more on young people since taking part in the work experience scheme. This was somewhat lower (38 per cent) among sector-based work academy employers.

Involvement in other schemes

A large proportion of respondents had heard of apprenticeships (89 per cent of work experience employers and 91 per cent of sector-based work academy employers), while more than half had heard of the Apprenticeship Grant for employers of 16-24 year olds (56 per cent and 64 per cent respectively). Awareness of wage incentives was lower (29 per cent and 37 per cent respectively).

¹¹ Sector-based work academies are designed to help employers fill existing vacancies more efficiently. Due to the demand-led nature of the scheme, it is expected that more employers will offer paid work to participants than work experience employers.

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

More than a third of sector-based work academy employers had also previously taken someone on for an apprenticeship (36 per cent), higher than the figure for work experience employers (19 per cent). The proportion who had received an Apprenticeship Grant for Employers of 16-24 year olds was 16 per cent for sector-based work academy employers and eight per cent for work experience employers. The proportion who had received a wage incentive was seven per cent among sector-based work academy employers and two per cent among work experience employers, while two per cent and three per cent respectively had been involved with Mandatory Work Activity.

Around two in three employers who had heard of any of the other schemes agreed that the range of different schemes makes it confusing for employers to know what is available (67 per cent of work experience employers and 72 per cent of sector-based work academy employers).

Conclusions

Most employers were happy with the two schemes as they are currently offered (with nine in ten who would recommend them to other employers and eight in ten who were satisfied with the overall quality of the candidates), with many seeing a range of benefits for their organisation and for young people that take part. The main suggested improvements tended to focus either on the quality of people on placements (15 per cent work experience, 11 per cent sector-based) and the way they were prepared, or communication with Jobcentre Plus (one in ten for each).

1 Introduction

This report presents the findings from a survey of employers who offered work experience opportunities or were involved with a sector-based work academy. It is part of the evaluation of the Youth Contract, carried out by TNS BMRB Social Research.

1.1 Background

The Youth Contract was implemented from April 2012, to provide a range of additional help for unemployed young people to better prepare them for work, and to offer greater opportunities to find and take up sustained employment.

Work experience and sector-based work academies are two of the Government's Get Britain Working measures¹². They are part of the jobcentre Plus flexible menu of support to help claimants seek and obtain employment prior to their eligibility for referral to the Work Programme.

As part of the Youth Contract, it was announced that an extra 250,000 work experience or sector-based work academy places would be made available over three years. This will offer at least 100,000 opportunities a year and will offer a place for every 18-24 year old who wants one, before they enter the Work Programme. Both sector-based work academies and work experience are part of the Get Britain Working offer and are, therefore, also available to claimants aged 25 or over in certain circumstances. Consequently, the survey has included employers who have taken on participants from all age groups.

Get Britain Working work experience was originally launched in January 2011. It gives young unemployed people the opportunity to be placed with local employers where they are able to gain work experience, improve their CVs and marketability to potential employers. Work experience also provides young unemployed people with a new potential route onto an apprenticeship.

Work experience is targeted at claimants who have little or no experience of the world of work. Work experience offers eligible 16 to 24 year old unemployed people between two and eight weeks' work experience; in circumstances where the employer offers the young person an apprenticeship (and it is accepted) the placement can be extended by up to an additional four weeks to allow the apprenticeship to be put on a formal footing. Claimants aged 25 years and over can be referred at adviser discretion¹³.

People undertaking a work experience placement continue to receive their benefit and, therefore, are required to continue to sign for their benefit each fortnight and be available for, and actively seeking, employment during the period of their participation. Host employers are expected to provide time for job search and to release participants to attend interviews with employers or at the jobcentre Plus office.

¹² Other Get Britain Working Measures are Work Clubs, Work Together, Enterprise Clubs, New Enterprise Allowance and sector-based work academies.

¹³ From April 2013 the work experience scheme is available to under-25s only.

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

The decision as to whether to accept a work experience placement has always been entirely voluntary. However, prior to 29 February 2012, except for 16/17 year olds, participation became mandatory once the claimant made a decision to participate and was formally referred. Once referred, claimants were required to attend on day 1 of the placement; they could then choose to leave the placement during the first week without penalty if they decided it was not for them. However, after the end of the first week, participation became mandatory. Sanctions could be applied where the claimant could not show good cause for failing to attend or giving up a place on the programme or where a participant was dismissed by the host employer for misconduct.

From 29 February 2012, following a consultation with employers, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) agreed to revise the conditions, so that participation in work experience is entirely voluntary. Should a claimant leave a placement early then a sanction will not apply except where the claimant has been asked to leave the placement due to gross misconduct.

By November 2012, official statistics indicate that there had been 99,950 starts on the work experience scheme, since January 2011 (DWP, 2013). An impact analysis was carried out by DWP, based on work experience starts between January and May 2011. This showed that work experience decreased the likelihood of claiming benefit by six percentage points after 21 weeks following starting on placements. This means that work experience participants were about 16 per cent more likely to be off benefits than non-participants after 21 weeks (Ainsworth *et al.*, 2012).

From 1 April 2013 the Youth Contract element of work experience replaces Get Britain Working work experience – eligibility is for 18-24 year olds only.

Sector-based work academies were rolled out across England from August 2011 and Scotland from January 2012. The Welsh Government already offers a similar scheme called ‘Routeways to Work’ and this will continue to provide support to claimants in Wales in place of sector-based work academies. A sector-based work academy is designed to help employers fill vacancies more efficiently, whilst helping participants into jobs in a demand sector. The scheme is linked to genuine job opportunities. The work experience placement is short and should be seen as part of the recruitment process to see if someone is suited to a particular job.

Sector-based work academy placements last no more than six weeks. During this time, a claimant will receive pre-employment training, work experience with an employer in that sector, and a guaranteed interview for a job or an apprenticeship. Where an employer is unable to guarantee an interview, for example due to ‘fair and open’ recruitment policies, the claimant may receive other support to help them through the employer’s application process.

Participating employers work with training providers¹⁴ and Jobcentre Plus to make sure the training and work experience fit their recruitment needs.

Eligible claimants voluntarily opt into a sector-based work academy. Once they agree to participate, claimants may face a benefit sanction if they do not complete the required elements of the placement:

- Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA) claimants are required to complete the pre-employment training and a guaranteed job interview or apprenticeship. The work experience placement is voluntary, but claimants are required to maintain basic standards of good behaviour during the placement; and

¹⁴ Note that ‘training providers’ is used throughout the report to represent all learning providers including both colleges and training providers.

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

- Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) (work-related activity group) claimants are required to complete the pre-employment training element only.

In all instances, participants may be excused from completing the placement if the participating employer decides they are not suitable for the job on offer.

Official statistics indicate that as of November 2012, there had been 36,770 starts on the pre-employment training element of sector-based work academies¹⁵.

As well as work experience and sector-based work academies, the Youth Contract includes the following elements:

- 160,000 wage incentives over three years, worth up to £2,275 each, for employers who recruit an 18-24 year old from the Work Programme;
- at least 20,000 extra Apprenticeship Grants for Employers of 16-24 year olds, worth £1,500 each, for employers to take on young people as apprentices, taking the total to 40,000;
- more adviser support delivered through Jobcentre Plus for every 18-24 year old, including a referral to a National Careers Service for careers advice in the first three months of a claim to JSA;
- an extra £126m to provide new support over the next three years for the most disengaged 16 and 17 year olds in England to help them get into sustained learning, an apprenticeship or job with training¹⁶.

The Youth Contract builds on much of the support already available to young unemployed people, particularly through the Government's apprenticeships offer and the back to work support provided by Jobcentre Plus, the Get Britain Working measures and the Government's main employment programme, the Work Programme. Jobcentre Plus district managers and advisers have the flexibility to judge which interventions will help claimants at the most appropriate point in their jobseeking journey, tailoring this to individual need.

The critical success factors for the Youth Contract are to:

- increase benefit off-flow rates for 18-24 year olds and increase the proportion that are off-flows into employment; reduce the number of 16-24 year olds not in employment, education or training (NEET) (by helping more people into employment, education or training);
- decrease average time on benefit (getting claimants into work sooner); and
- increase average time in employment (promoting sustained jobs).

1.2 Youth Contract Evaluation

The DWP has commissioned TNS BMRB Social Research to conduct an evaluation of the Youth Contract. The evaluation focuses specifically on the DWP delivered elements of the Youth Contract policy not subject to existing evaluation, specifically: the wage incentive; work experience, including sector-based work academies; and additional Jobcentre Plus delivered

¹⁵ Department for Work and Pensions (2013). *Get Britain Working Measures Official Statistics*, published 13 February 2013, DWP.
http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/pwp/pwp_gbw_feb13.pdf

¹⁶ <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/youth-contract/>

support. The aim of the evaluation is to explore the delivery, experience and outcomes from the Youth Contract policy elements.

The research conducted by TNS BMRB Social Research will be complemented by statistical analysis carried out in-house at DWP, to measure benefit and employment outcomes of Youth Contract participants.

1.3 Research on work experience and sector-based work academies

The evaluation includes the following elements that focus on work experience and sector-based work academies:

- A quantitative survey with employers offering work experience opportunities and taking part in sector-based work academies. This is the focus of this report and is discussed in more detail below.
- A quantitative survey of claimants taking up work experience and sector-based work academies, to quantify views about the effects of the scheme and its usefulness, and to gather data on job outcomes and assess whether individuals remain with the same employer.
- Qualitative research with Jobcentre Plus staff. This focuses on employer engagement with the work experience strand, and examines how the additional support available under the Youth Contract is being utilised on the ground. This research found that staff were positive towards work experience, as a way of giving young people useful experience and opportunities to move into work (Jordan and Thomas, 2013)¹⁷.

The key questions to be answered by the research on work experience and sector-based work academies are listed below. Those in italics are covered in the survey of employers and are included in this report.

- *What types of employers are offering work experience placements? In what sector?*
- *Why have employers become involved in the work experience scheme?*
- What have been the benefit/employment outcomes for claimants taking up a work experience placement?
- What soft skills have claimants developed as a result of their work experience placement?
- What are the characteristics of claimants taking up work experience?
- How are Jobcentre Plus sourcing work experience opportunities?
- *How is the referrals process working between Jobcentre Plus and work experience employers?*
- *Has offering work experience placements influenced employers' likelihood to offer similar placements in the future/employ young people?*
- *What wider support do employers give to individuals on placement?*

¹⁷ <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2013-2014/rrep833.pdf>

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

- *What are the stakeholder views on the three-stage process involved (training, work experience, interview) in sector-based work academies? What are the benefits/disadvantages?*
- *The length of sector-based work academies – are they long enough/too long? What about the length of each element (training element, work experience or both)?*
- *Do employers feel they get more skilled employees due to sector-based work academies?*
- *Does the process remove some of the risk involved in hiring employees?*
- *Have local training providers responded well to sector-based work academies? Are they delivering the training required by employers?*

1.4 Research covered in this report

This report contains findings from the quantitative survey with employers offering work experience opportunities and taking part in sector-based work academies. It examines the characteristics of employers; the success of employer engagement and marketing and how employers have responded to the work experience offer; and how different types of employers have responded to the policy.

The survey covers employers who had taken on someone for a work experience opportunity or who had been involved with a sector-based work academy. Specifically, the sample comprised employers who had a work experience placement start between 1 June and 31 August 2012, and employers who participated in a sector-based work academy during the same time period. The sample for sector-based work academies included employers who had been involved in any of the elements, i.e. had done at least one of: offering placements, offering their own training, being involved in training courses by providers or offering job interviews. The sample was provided DWP. In total, 6,416 employers were included in the work experience sample, and 499 in the sector-based work academy sample.

It is important to note that the survey covers a small sample of employers, and is restricted to those who were involved at a particular point in time (June-August 2012), although some employers may also have been involved outside this time period. The findings should, therefore, not be generalised to the wider population of employers.

All respondents were sent an advance letter before the start of fieldwork (see Appendix A), which explained the purpose of the study, reasons for their inclusion in the research and the form that the survey would take. Respondents were invited to call TNS BMRB Social Research if they wished to enquire about further details of the research, or if the letter had been sent to the wrong person at the organisation.

Interviews were conducted by telephone, using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). In total, 3,000 interviews were conducted between 12 November and 10 December 2012. The response rate was 50 per cent. Full response details are in Appendix B.

In multi-site organisations, interviews focused on the establishment or workplace responsible for taking on the placement or managing the sector-based work academy, rather than the organisation as a whole.

A small pilot was conducted in October 2012, covering 47 interviews with employers.

The questionnaire (see Appendix D) covered:

- employer characteristics;
- getting involved in the schemes;
- setting up placements;
- placement details;
- rating of people on placements;
- experience of elements of sector-based work academies;
- overall attitudes to the schemes and impact of the schemes;
- awareness of, and involvement with, other Government schemes.

1.5 Interpretation of data and analysis

When interpreting the findings, it should be borne in mind that the survey is based on a sample of employers involved in the schemes rather than the total population. This means that all findings are subject to sampling tolerances. However, all differences highlighted in the report are statistically significant at the 95 per cent confidence level unless stated otherwise. The data was analysed using SPSS 17.

The total sample of 3,000 interviews comprised 2,862 interviews from the work experience sample and 138 interviews from the sector-based work academy sample. As discussed in Chapter 2, some employers were involved in both schemes, and for some questions these employers have been included in the analysis of work experience and/or sector-based work experience employers. For example, Table 2.1 includes both the 138 employers from the sector-based work academy sample, and the additional 191 employers from the work experience sample who said they were also involved in sector-based work academies. This gives a total of 329 sector-based work academy employers. Where respondents from the other sample have been included in this way, this is indicated in a note at the bottom of each chart or table. The purpose of this was to maximise the sample sizes where possible. Note that due to time constraints in the telephone interviews, some questions were only asked of the 'main' scheme. The 'main' scheme was defined by which of the two samples the employer was drawn from.

2 Involvement in the schemes

This chapter looks at whether employers were involved in both schemes. If employers were involved in sector-based work academies, it examines which elements they were involved with.

Key findings

- Seven per cent of work experience employers had also been involved with a sector-based work academy, while almost half (47 per cent) of sector-based work academy employers had also been involved with the work experience scheme.
- Fifty-two per cent of the sector-based work academy employers were involved with all three elements of the sector-based work academy: offering training, work experience placement and a job interview. Sixty-one per cent offered work experience and training (with or without an interview)¹⁸.

2.1 Involvement in schemes

Employers' involvement in the two schemes was recorded in sample information provided by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), and then reconfirmed during the interview. The majority of employers who took part in this survey came from a list of employers provided by DWP who offered a work experience opportunity (2,862 employers), while 138 were from a list of employers provided by DWP who were involved with a sector-based work academy.

During the interview, employers were asked about participation in both schemes. Seven per cent of work experience employers said they had also been involved with a sector-based work academy (191 employers). Almost half (47 per cent) of sector-based work academy employers said they had also been involved with the work experience scheme (66 employers)¹⁹.

It is important to note that the DWP definition of a sector-based work academy is sector specific training, a short work experience placement, and either a job interview with an employer or support to help participants through an employer's application process. However, some of the employers included in the survey were not involved in all elements. This is because the sample for the survey included employers who had been involved in some elements only, and screening questions at the start of the interview also allowed employers to be included if they offered some elements only. In practice, this means that some of the sector-based work academy employers interviewed in the survey may not meet the full criteria of a sector-based work academy. This should be taken into account when considering the sector-based work academy findings within this report and any conclusions made about the policy. Analysis of those employers included in the survey for sector-based

¹⁸ Questions were not asked whether these employers offered help with the job application process in lieu of a job interview.

¹⁹ This was as reported by respondents during the interview. Because of possible confusion between the two schemes, these percentages should be seen as indicative rather than as precise figures for take-up of the schemes.

work academies shows that 52 per cent were involved in a placement, training and job interview, although questions were not asked to establish how many more offered help with application process in lieu of a job interview.

More details on the impact and delivery of the sector-based work academy policy will be available via a large-scale customer survey of sector-based work academy participants, to be published in summer 2013. This will further inform the findings and conclusions for this policy.

2.2 Elements of sector-based work academies

All employers involved with a sector-based work academy were asked which elements they offered. A full breakdown is shown in Table 2.1:

- one half of employers (52 per cent) were involved with all three 'core' elements of the sector-based work academy (sector specific training, work experience placement and a job interview);
- a further nine per cent offered a work experience placement and training, but no job interview.

The remaining employers either offered only one element (21 per cent); offered a work experience placement and job interview but no training (eight per cent); offered a job interview and training but no placement (seven per cent); or were not sure which elements were offered (three per cent).

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

Table 2.1 Elements of sector-based work academy²⁰

	%
All three elements (work experience placement, job interview and training)	52
Work experience placement, interview and provider training	8
Work experience placement, interview and employer training	14
Work experience placement, interview, provider training and employer training	30
Work experience placement and training, but no interview	9
Employer training and work experience placement	3
Provider training and work experience placement	3
Provider training, employer training and work experience placement	3
One element only	21
Employer training only	4
Provider training only	5
Work experience placement only	7
Interview only	2
Provider training and employer training	2
Work experience placement and interview, but no training	8
Training and interview, but no work experience placement	7
Employer training and interview	3
Provider training and interview	1
Provider training, employer training and interview	3
Not known	3

Base: All sector-based work academy employers (329).

Note: Base includes employers from work experience sample who were also involved in sector-based work academies.

Note: Some percentages do not total 100 per cent due to percentage rounding.

Section 4.7 provides more information on why employers did not take part in all elements.

Of those who were involved in a training programme which was run in association with a training provider, 38 per cent were involved in delivering the training. One in nine (11 per cent) designed the training course and nine per cent monitored the training. Formal qualifications were offered by six per cent and five per cent conducted the interviews for candidates.

²⁰ Only employers who offered training and a work experience placement, or all three elements, meet the official definition of a sector-based work academy. Where an employer is unable to guarantee an interview, for example due to 'fair and open' recruitment policies, this element may be omitted, and the claimant may receive other support to help them through the employer's application process.

3 Employer characteristics

This chapter looks at the characteristics of employers involved in the schemes, specifically their size, the type of organisation (public, private or non-profit/voluntary sector) and industry sector.

Key findings

- A substantial proportion of participating employers were large organisations (38 per cent for work experience and 59 per cent for sector-based work academies).
- Employers involved with a sector-based work academy tended to be larger than those offering opportunities on the work experience scheme. Work experience employers included 36 per cent of micro-organisations (fewer than ten employees).
- Employers who were involved with a sector-based work academy were more likely to be in the private sector (70 per cent), compared with work experience employers (57 per cent).
- A large proportion of work experience employers (76 per cent) and sector-based work academy employers (67 per cent) were in 'service' sectors, most commonly in SIC Group G (the wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles).

3.1 Size of organisation

Table 3.1 shows the characteristics of employers who took someone on for a work experience opportunity, and of those involved with a sector-based work academy. One of the key points to note is the disproportionately high levels of large organisations. Employers with 250 or more employees comprise only two per cent of the UK business population, but make up more than a third of those involved with each scheme.

Employers involved with a sector-based work academy tended to be larger than those offering opportunities on the work experience scheme. More than half (59 per cent) of sector-based work academy employers were large organisations (with 250 or more employees), compared with 38 per cent of work experience employers.²¹ Just 21 per cent of sector-based work academy employers were small organisations (fewer than 50 employees). This is in contrast to work experience employers, 54 per cent of whom were small employers; this includes 36 per cent who were micro-organisations (with fewer than ten employees). In fact, the sample of work experience employers shows something of a dichotomy, with a sizeable representation of both small and large employers, but with very few medium-sized employers (eight per cent with 50-249 employees).

Employers in both schemes included a large proportion of multi-site organisations. Again, this was higher among sector-based work academy employers (76 per cent) than work experience employers (55 per cent).

²¹ This may be due to the nature of sector-based work academies. Setting up sector-based work academies can be resource intensive due to the different components. To make them worthwhile, a sufficient number of vacancies are required. This may be through a single large employer or a number of small employers with vacancies in the same sector working together. The findings in section 4 suggest that Jobcentre Plus often target large, private sector organisations.

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

Table 3.1 Characteristics of employers: size and number of sites

	Work experience employers %	Sector-based work academy employers %
Number of sites		
Single site	45	24
Multi-site	55	76
Number of employees in whole organisation¹		
Micro-(one to nine employees)	36	10
Small (ten to 49 employees)	18	11
Medium (50 to 249 employees)	8	19
Large (250+ employees)	38	59

¹ These definitions for size of organisation have been used throughout the report.

Base: All work experience employers: 2,862; all sector-based work academy employers: 138; Percentages for number of employees based on all giving an answer (work experience: 2,517; sector-based work academies: 129).

Note: Some percentages do not total 100 per cent due to percentage rounding.

3.2 Sector

In the work experience sample, 57 per cent were private sector organisations, while one in five were in the public sector (19 per cent) and a similar proportion were in the non-profit/voluntary sector (20 per cent). Employers who were involved with a sector-based work academy were more likely to be in the private sector (70 per cent), while 16 per cent were in the public sector and 12 per cent the non-profit or voluntary sector.

Table 3.2 Characteristics of employers: sector

	Work experience employers %	Sector-based work academy employers %
Sector		
Private	57	70
Public	19	16
Non-profit/voluntary	20	12

Base: All work experience employers: 2,862; all sector-based work academy employers: 138.

Note: Percentages total less than 100 per cent as 'don't know' responses are excluded from the chart.

3.3 Industry

Figure 3.1 summarises the industry sector that employers were in (a guide to industry sector classification, and how this has been used in the report, can be found in Appendix C).

3.3.1 Work experience

Three-quarters (76 per cent) of work experience employers were in 'service' sectors, including two in five (41 per cent) in Group G (the wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles). The business population of England has 70 per cent of workplaces in 'service' sectors with 19 per cent in Group G, so these proportions are higher for work experience employers than for the business population as a whole. Large organisations were particularly likely to be in this sector (64 per cent of large work experience employers were in Group G). This points towards large, multi-site 'chains' having a strong presence amongst employers who offer work experience opportunities.

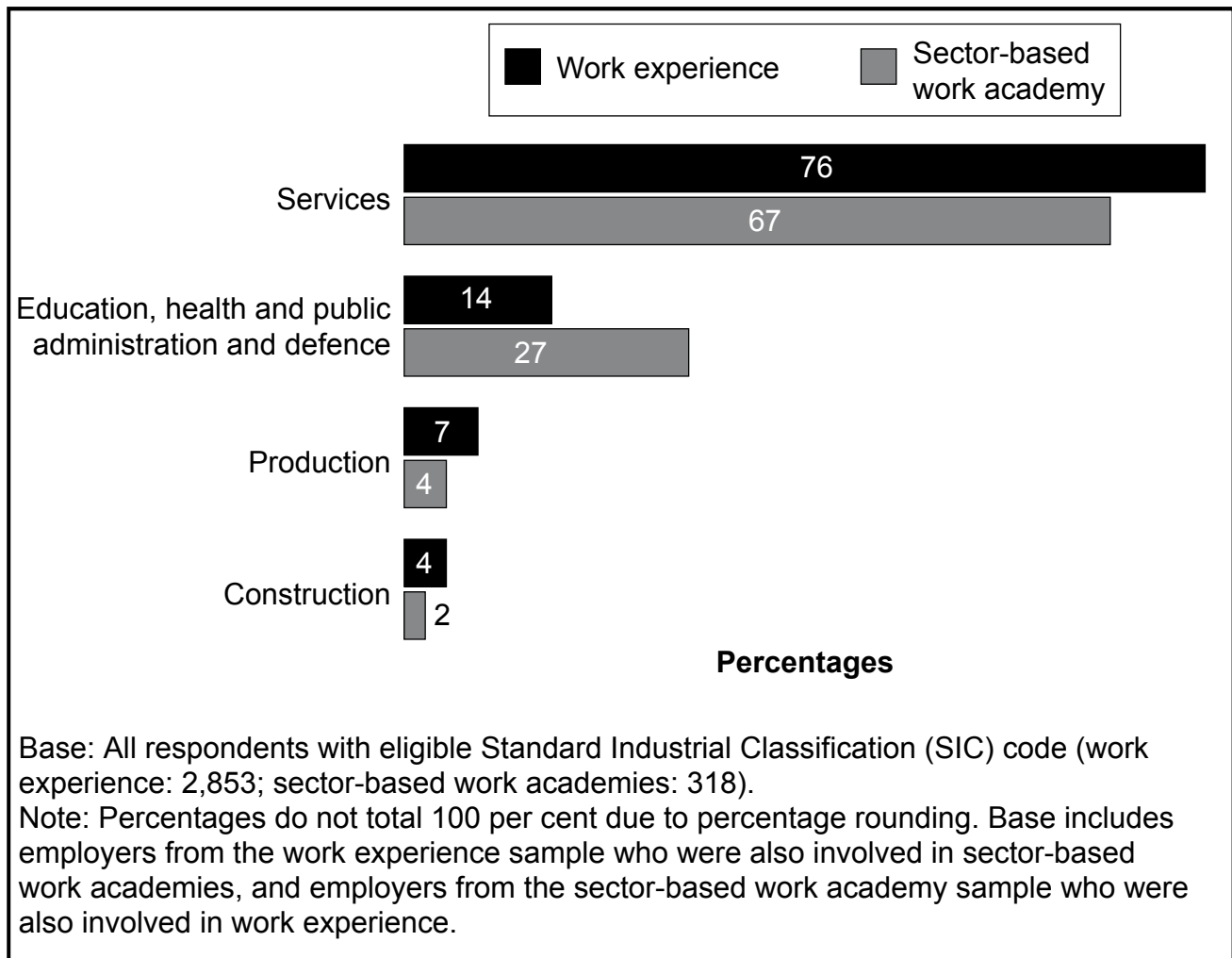
One in seven work experience employers (14 per cent) were in education, health, public administration and defence, with many of these (nine per cent overall) in Group Q (human health and social work activities). A small proportion (seven per cent) were in production sectors, including five per cent in manufacturing, while four per cent were in the construction industry.

3.3.2 Sector-based work academies

Similar to those who took part in the work experience scheme, the majority of sector-based work academy employers (67 per cent) were in the service industry, with 30 per cent in Group G (the wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles), and 15 per cent in Group I (accommodation and food service activities). In addition, one in four sector-based work academy employers (27 per cent) were in education, health, public administration and defence; specifically, 15 per cent were in Group Q (human health and social work activities).

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

Figure 3.1 Industry sector



4 Involvement with work experience/sector-based work academies

This chapter looks at how employers became involved with the work experience scheme or with sector-based work academies, and examines the reasons for participation. It also looks at employers who were involved with both schemes.

Key findings

- Just under six in ten first heard about work experience (57 per cent) or sector-based work academies (56 per cent) from Jobcentre Plus staff. A quarter (24 per cent) of respondents in large organisations heard about work experience from within their own organisation.
- Participation was a result of an approach by Jobcentre Plus for six in ten work experience employers (58 per cent), while 48 per cent were approached by Jobcentre Plus about involvement in a sector-based work academy. In both schemes, large employers were more likely than smaller employers to be approached by Jobcentre Plus.
- Four in ten (39 per cent) were aware of the guide *Work experience placements that work* and one in three (32 per cent) were aware of the guide *Could you offer work experience?* . Of those aware of the guides, around eight in ten found them useful.
- The most common reason for involvement was to give young or unemployed people a chance (57 per cent for work experience, 43 per cent for sector-based work academies). Other reasons were that it was a way of trying people before hiring them, and an opportunity to get labour at little or no cost to the employer.
- The main concerns of employers taking someone on for a work experience opportunity or sector-based work academy were the quality of the candidate and the time and cost involved in set-up and training.

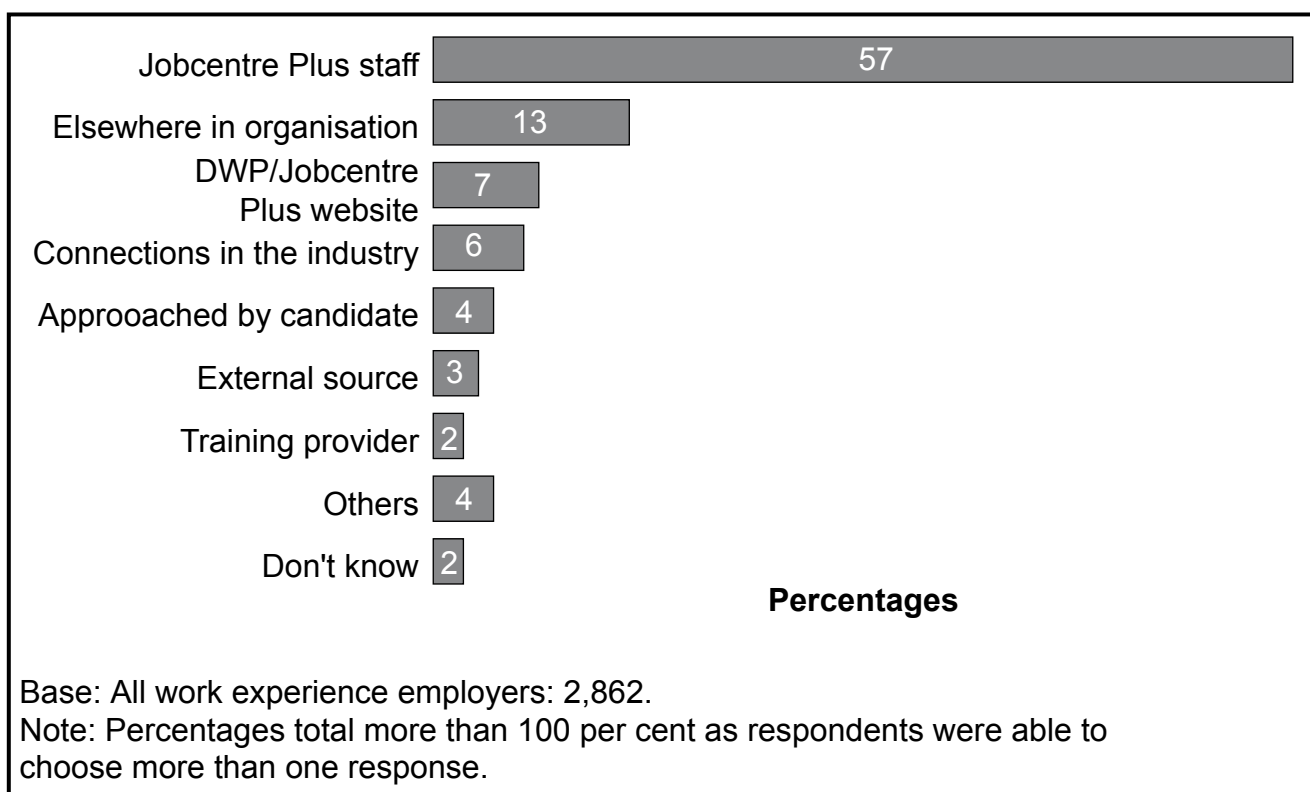
4.1 How employers first heard about the schemes

Employers who had taken someone on for a work experience opportunity or were involved in a sector-based work academy were asked how they first heard about the schemes. Campaign advertisements advise employers to contact their Jobcentre Plus Group Partnership Manager or their National Account Manager.

4.1.1 Work experience

By far the most common way that employers first heard of the work experience scheme was from Jobcentre Plus staff (57 per cent), and a further seven per cent first heard about it through the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) or Jobcentre Plus website. One in eight (13 per cent) first heard from within their organisation. One unexpected outcome was that four per cent of employers were approached directly by the candidate that they took on for the work experience opportunity. Figure 4.1 shows the list of responses given.

Figure 4.1 How employers first heard of work experience scheme



Some employers had an existing relationship with Jobcentre Plus, having previously taken on people for work placements from other government schemes. These employers were more likely to have first heard about the scheme from Jobcentre Plus staff (60 per cent) than those who did not have this previous experience (55 per cent). Similar results were seen for those who were involved in the work experience scheme prior to February 2012.

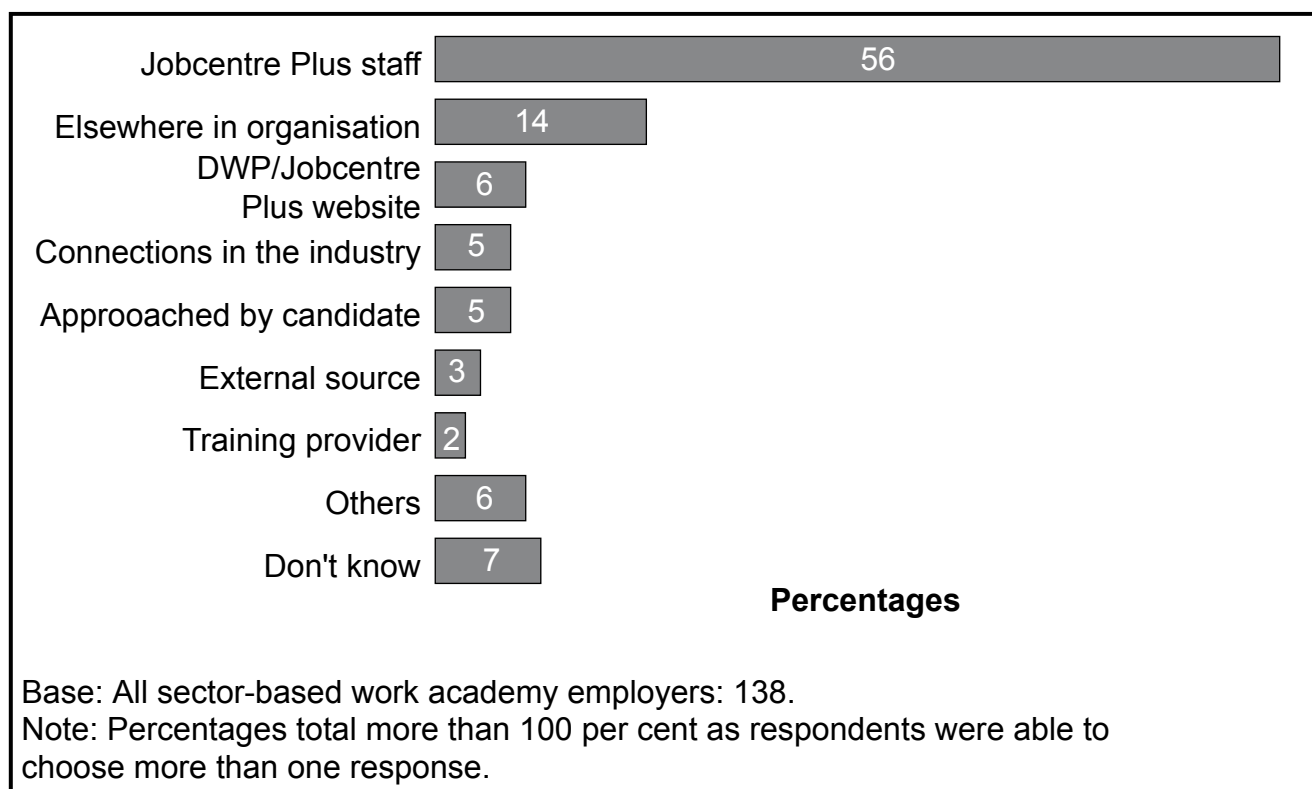
Large organisations were less likely to have first heard about the work experience scheme from Jobcentre Plus staff (55 per cent), compared with small and medium-sized employers (60 per cent and 63 per cent respectively), although the smallest (micro-) employers also showed a relatively low figure (56 per cent).

The lower figure among large organisations is linked to the high proportion of large employers (24 per cent) who found out from elsewhere within their own organisation. This was far higher than for smaller organisations (four per cent among micro-organisations and eight per cent among both small and medium-sized employers). This is not surprising, as smaller organisations would have less scope to liaise with colleagues throughout different business units, larger human resources teams, or multiple locations who may already have been involved with work experience.

4.1.2 Sector-based work academies

The initial sources of information for employers involved with sector-based work academies were similar to those in the work experience scheme. More than half (56 per cent) of those who became involved with a sector-based work academy first heard of the scheme from Jobcentre Plus staff, with 14 per cent hearing about it from within their own organisation. A small proportion first heard about sector-based work academies from connections in their industry (six per cent), the DWP or Jobcentre Plus website or an external source (five per cent for both).

Figure 4.2 How employers first heard about sector-based work academies



Large employers (20 per cent) were again more likely to have heard about sector-based work academies from somewhere else within their own organisation, compared with micro-, small or medium-sized employers (six per cent).

4.2 Whether employer approached Jobcentre Plus, or Jobcentre Plus approached employer

4.2.1 Work experience

As the previous section illustrated, more than half of the employers who took someone on for a work experience opportunity first heard about the scheme from Jobcentre Plus staff, rather than from other sources such as a website, or word of mouth. The fact that Jobcentre Plus staff are successfully selling work experience opportunities to employers is validated when looking at who took the initiative in introducing the scheme.

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

Around six in ten (58 per cent) employers who took someone on for a work experience opportunity were approached to take part by Jobcentre Plus, whereas one in three (32 per cent) approached Jobcentre Plus about taking someone on. The remainder either said the subject was brought up as part of an on-going discussion that they were having with Jobcentre Plus (five per cent) or did not know (five per cent). Details are in Figure 4.3.

Employers with just one site (37 per cent) were more likely than multi-site organisations (28 per cent) to have approached Jobcentre Plus. Related to this, smaller employers (39 per cent of micro-organisations, 33 per cent of small organisations and 38 per cent of medium-sized organisations) were more likely than large organisations (26 per cent) to have approached Jobcentre Plus.

Public sector organisations were more likely to be approached by Jobcentre Plus than private sector employers or those in the non-profit/voluntary sector (65 per cent compared with 56 per cent and 58 per cent respectively).

There were also differences by industry sector. Employers in SIC Group I (accommodation and food service activities) were most likely to be approached by Jobcentre Plus (70 per cent), while those in Group N (administrative and support service activities) were less likely to be approached by Jobcentre Plus (46 per cent).

4.2.2 Sector-based work academies

Around half (48 per cent) of the employers who were involved with a sector-based work academy were approached by Jobcentre Plus staff, while 24 per cent made the initial approach to Jobcentre Plus. Of the remainder, for 11 per cent the sector-based work academy was raised as part of an on-going discussion with Jobcentre Plus. A further eight per cent became involved after being contacted by a training provider. These figures are similar to those shown above for work experience employers.

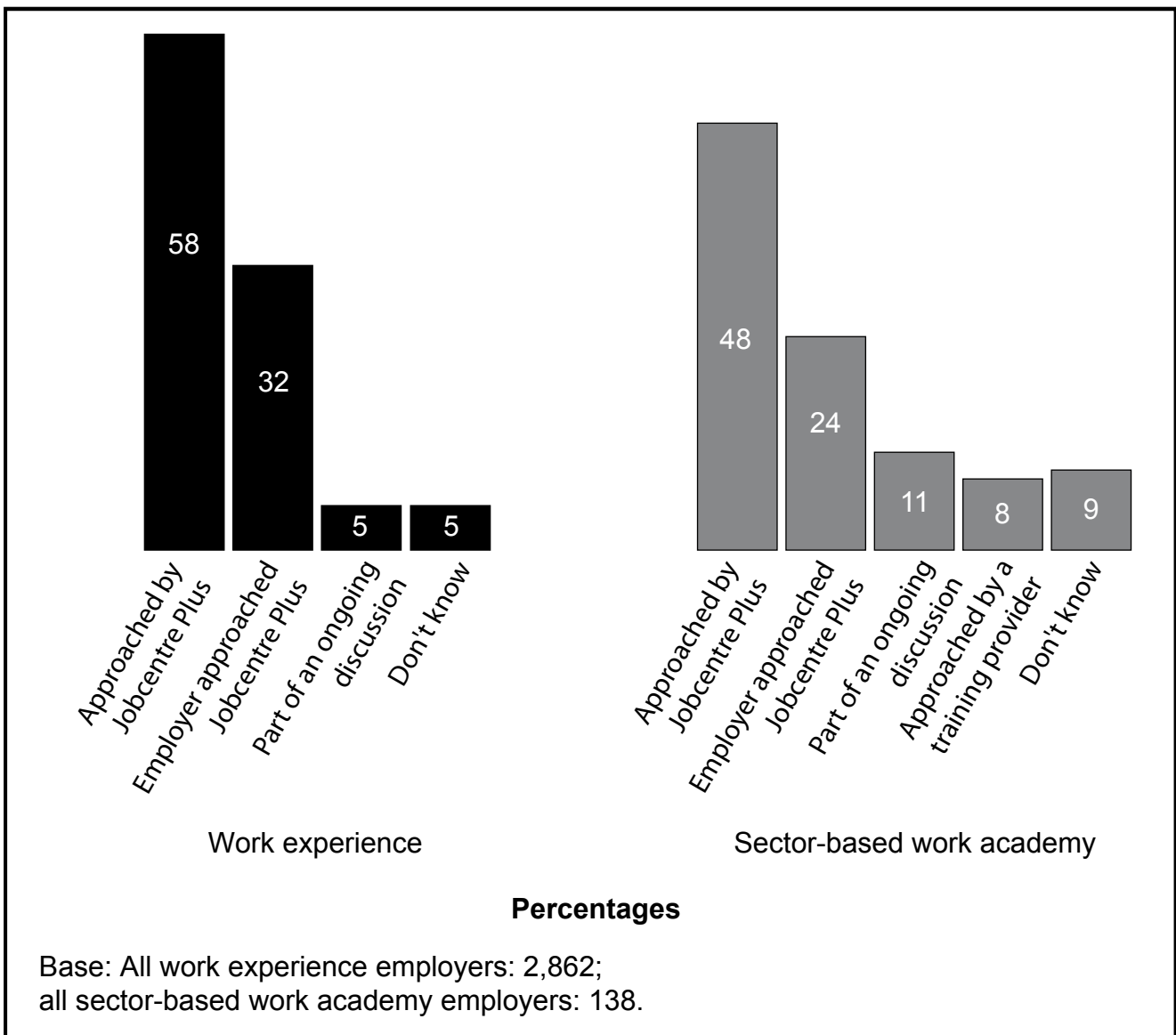
Large employers were significantly more likely than SMEs to have been approached by Jobcentre Plus (58 per cent compared with 32 per cent). This may be due to the nature of sector-based work academies. Setting up sector-based work academies can be resource intensive due to the different components. To make them worthwhile, a sufficient number of vacancies are required. This may be through a single large employer or a number of small employers with vacancies in the same sector working together. The latter may be more difficult to achieve.²² Small and medium-sized employers may also have less of an established relationship with Jobcentre Plus, and were therefore more likely to have contacted Jobcentre Plus to find out about becoming involved with a sector-based work academy.

As seen in Chapter 3, sector-based work academy employers were more likely than work experience employers to be in the private sector. It is interesting that a higher proportion of employers in the private sector were approached by Jobcentre Plus than was the case for public or non-profit/voluntary sector organisations (52 per cent compared with 38 per cent).

Overall, these findings indicate that large, private sector organisations were often targeted by Jobcentre Plus about sector-based work academies, whereas for the work experience scheme there was a more even spread of employers and a greater emphasis on the public sector. This is likely to reflect the nature of the two schemes.

²² Qualitative research in Oakley, J., Foley, B. and Hillage, J (2013) *Employment, Partnership and Skills*, DWP Research Report 830 suggested, "It can be difficult to include smaller establishments as they have smaller numbers of vacancies and less management capacity to organise their involvement" (pg 43).

Figure 4.3 How employer became involved in the work experience or sector-based work academy scheme



4.3 Awareness and usefulness of guides

Some information guides for employers about work experience have been published by Jobcentre Plus in co-ordination with other stakeholders. Employers who had recruited someone on a work experience opportunity were asked if they were aware of two of these guides: *Work experience placements that work*, produced by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) and Jobcentre Plus; and *Could you offer work experience?*, published by DWP and Jobcentre Plus. Those who were aware of either of these guides were asked if they had found them useful.

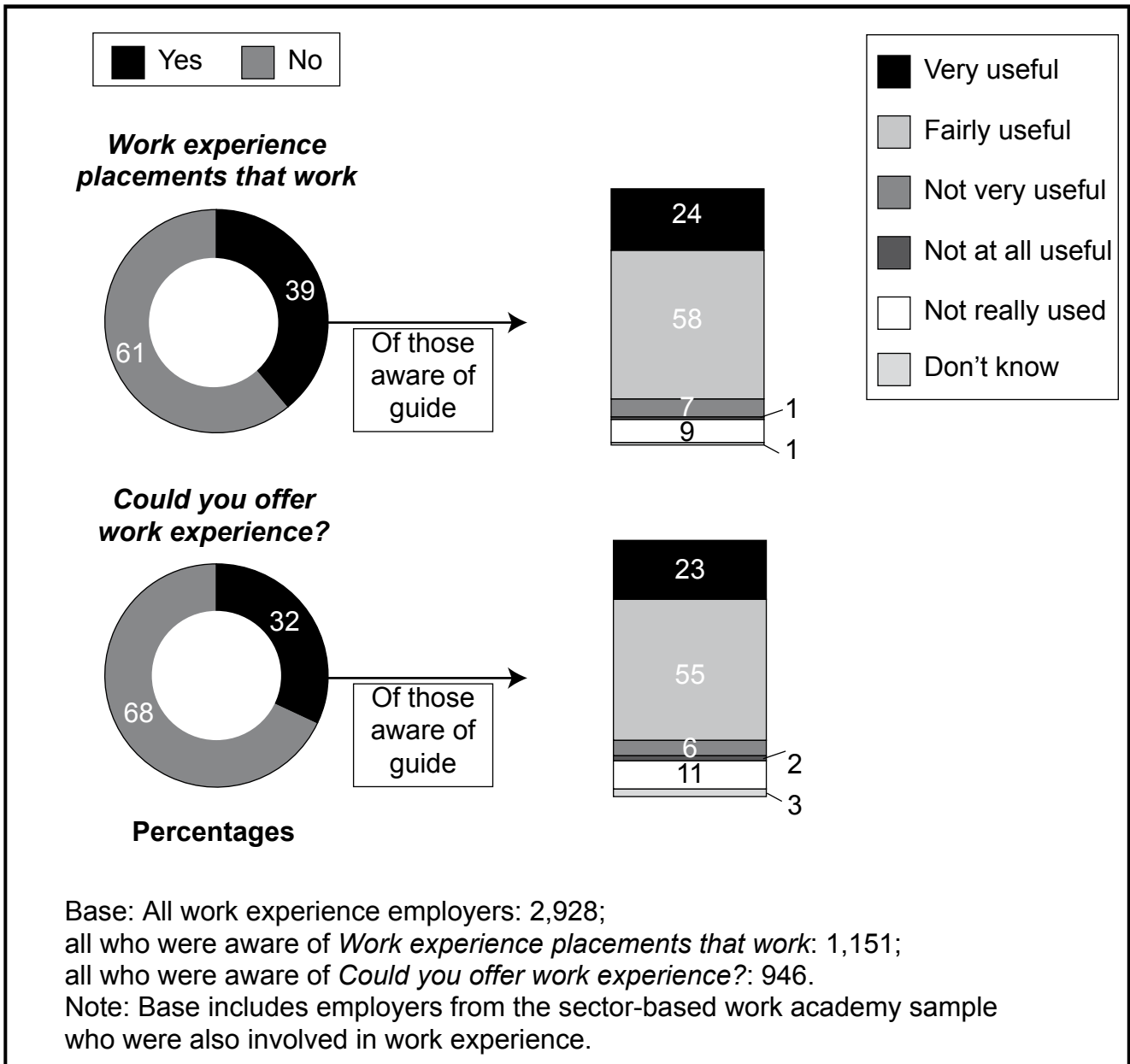
Figure 4.4 shows the proportion of work experience employers who had heard of the guides, and how useful they were for those who had heard of them.

Around four in ten (39 per cent) employers who had taken on someone for a work experience opportunity were aware of the *Work experience placements that work* guide published by CIPD and Jobcentre Plus. A large majority (82 per cent) of those who were aware of it thought it was useful, while just eight per cent did not think it was useful (the remainder either did not know, or had heard of the guide but had not really used it).

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

A slightly lower proportion were aware of the guide *Could you offer work experience?*, published by DWP and Jobcentre Plus (32 per cent). Again, around eight in ten (78 per cent) of those aware of the guide thought it was useful, and just eight per cent did not think it was useful.

Figure 4.4 Awareness and usefulness of employer guides to work experience



Some employers were very enthusiastic about the guides. Around a quarter of those aware of the guides thought that they were very useful (24 per cent for *Work experience placements that work* and 23 per cent for *Could you offer work experience?*), whereas the proportion who thought they were not at all useful was very low (one per cent for *Work experience placements that work*, and two per cent for *Could you offer work experience?*).

Employers with a closer link to the work experience scheme (those who had been involved prior to February 2012 or had taken on a larger number of placements) were more likely to be aware of both the guides, as were employers who had been approached by Jobcentre Plus about the scheme.

It is important to remember that these figures represent only those who offered a work experience opportunity and not the wider population of employers who may or may not have seen the guides.

4.4 Reasons for involvement

Employers who took someone on for a work experience opportunity or were involved in a sector-based work academy were asked their reasons for participation.

4.4.1 Work experience

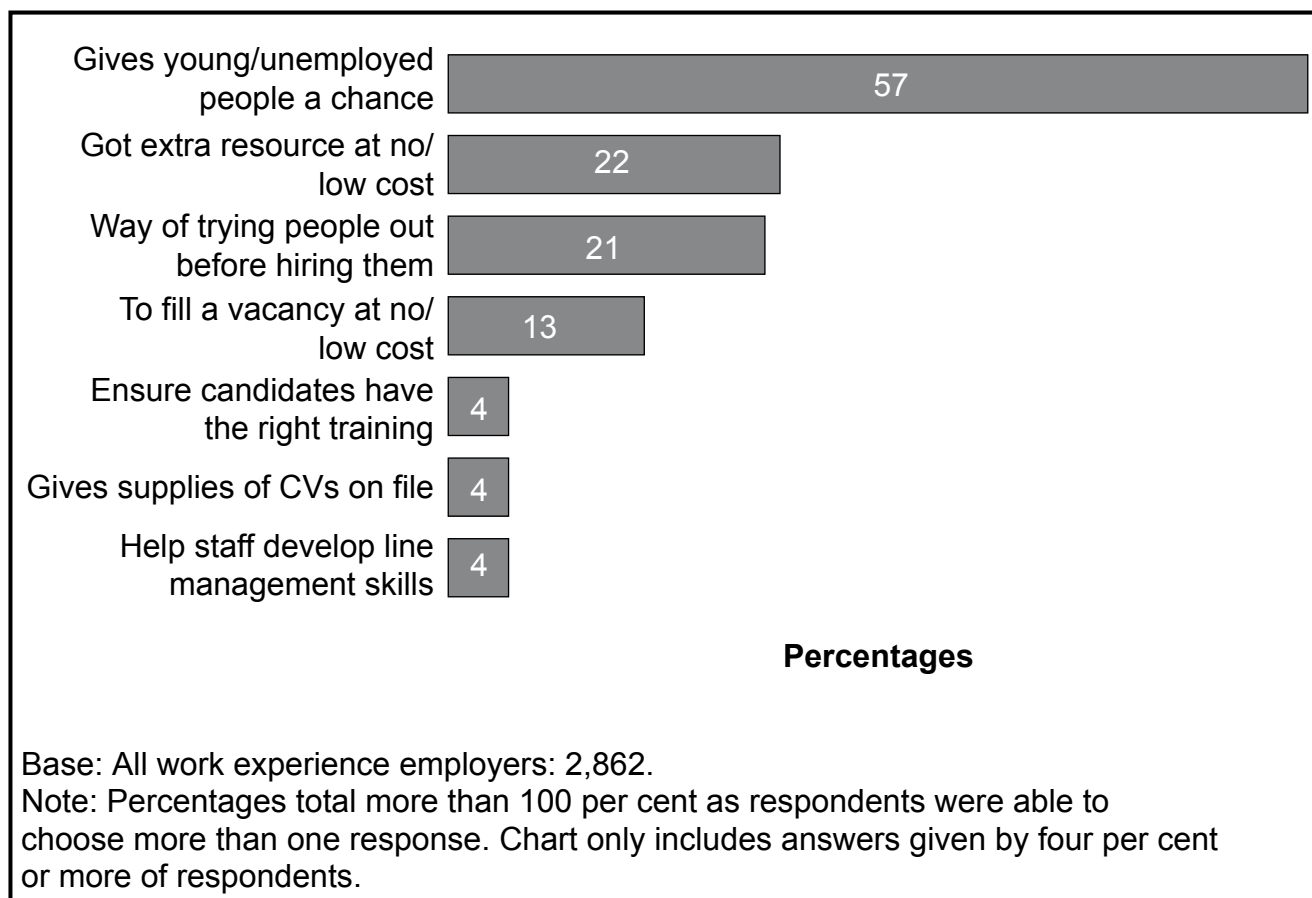
The most commonly reported reason for involvement in work experience was to give young or unemployed people a chance (57 per cent), with a further two per cent of respondents saying that it was to support their community²³. Employers could provide more than one response to this question; for example ten per cent of work experience employers also cited 'getting free/low cost resource' alongside 'giving a young/unemployed person a chance'. Overall 22 per cent of work experience employers said they had got involved in order to get free/low cost resource. However, only six per cent of work experience employers gave this as their sole reason for involvement. Nonetheless, in light of these findings Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will be reiterating the guidance to employer-facing staff to ensure that employers are clear on the policy intent and their responsibility to ensure placements do not displace paid work.

Quality control for new employees was also reported. One in five (21 per cent) said that a work experience opportunity was a way of trying people out before hiring them, while four per cent said that it was a way of ensuring that job candidates have the right training.

There were differences in relation to who made the initial contact about the work experience scheme (the employer or Jobcentre Plus). Those who were approached by Jobcentre Plus about taking someone on for a work experience opportunity were more likely to say they got involved in order to give young people a chance (59 per cent). Employers who approached Jobcentre Plus were more likely to have become involved to get extra resource at no or low cost (27 per cent, compared with 19 per cent of those who were approached by Jobcentre Plus) or to fill a vacancy at no or low cost (17 per cent, compared with 12 per cent of those who were approached by Jobcentre Plus). As discussed already, DWP will be reiterating guidance to employer-facing staff to ensure those employers who approach Jobcentre Plus are reminded of their commitment to the policy aims of the scheme.

²³ It should be noted that work experience is available to all age groups; in particular, those employers who had only recruited those aged 25 or over (seven per cent of work experience employers) would be unlikely to cite helping young people as their driver for participation.

Figure 4.5 Reasons for involvement in work experience scheme



4.4.2 Sector-based work academies

As was the case with work experience employers, the most common reason for employers becoming involved in a sector-based work academy was to give young or unemployed people a chance (43 per cent), with two per cent again saying that it was to support their community. Again, it should be noted that the scheme is available to all age groups; in particular, those employers who had only recruited people aged 25 or over (five per cent of sector-based work academy employers) would be unlikely to cite helping young people as their driver for participation.

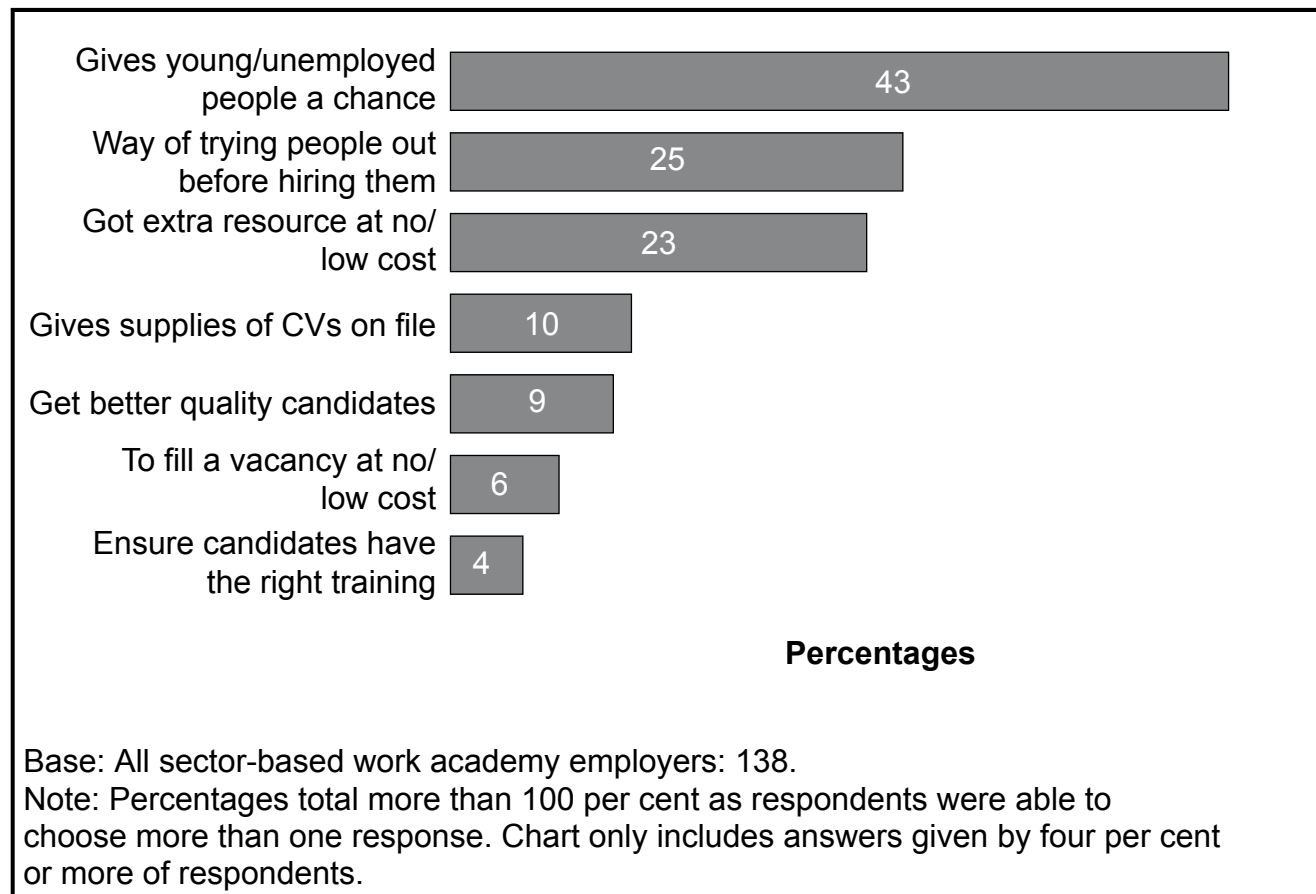
The sector-based work academy scheme is primarily focused on assisting employers with recruitment. Reflecting this, one in four (25 per cent) said that it was way of trying people out before hiring them, nine per cent thought it meant they would get better employees (if they had a placement and training) and four per cent said that it was a way of ensuring that candidates have the right training. Almost one in four (23 per cent) became involved as they got extra resource for no or low cost (this was the sole driver for 12 per cent)²⁴, and six per cent did it to fill a vacancy at no or low cost. Employers could provide more than one response to this question. In total, 28 per cent responded that they got involved either to get extra resource at no/low cost and/or to fill an existing vacancy at no/low cost. In light of these findings DWP will be reiterating guidance to employer-facing staff to ensure sector-based work academy employers are aware of the intent of the scheme and their responsibilities.

²⁴ Note that this finding is inconsistent with the policy intent. A sector-based work academy is designed to help employers fill vacancies. Getting extra resource at low or no cost is inconsistent with this as vacancies must exist for the scheme to be set up

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

These findings were similar for employers who met the DWP definition by offering all three elements and for other employers who did not meet this definition. The only difference was that those meeting this definition were more likely to say that they got involved to give young or unemployed people a chance (49 per cent compared with 38 per cent).

Figure 4.6 Reasons for involvement in a sector-based work academy



Employers who were approached by Jobcentre Plus about becoming involved with a sector-based work academy were more likely to report altruistic reasons, with 54 per cent becoming involved in order to give young or unemployed people a chance, compared with 27 per cent of those who did not make the initial approach to Jobcentre Plus.

4.5 Concerns about involvement

4.5.1 Work experience

Employers were asked if they had any concerns about getting involved in the work experience scheme prior to participation. Around four in ten employers who recruited someone for a work experience opportunity said they had no concerns at all (42 per cent). The main concern was the quality of the candidate that would be on the placement (31 per cent). Specific comments on this issue ranged from concerns about the recruit's skills and motivations, to concerns about issues like possible criminality. One employer typified the overall attitude of this group, who said:

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

'The only real concern is not getting a candidate that's not suitable to our business.'

(Work experience employer)

The concerns about quality of candidates were very similar between those involved previously in similar schemes and those who had not been involved previously. Private sector employers were more likely to be concerned about the quality of the candidate (34 per cent) than public sector (27 per cent) or non-profit/voluntary sector organisations (26 per cent).

The second most common concern was around punctuality, specifically whether the recruit would turn up on time throughout the placement (ten per cent gave this as a concern). One respondent said:

'Maybe sometimes them not turning up and not being reliable.'

(Work experience employer)

In addition, eight per cent were worried about the amount of time and cost it would take within their organisation to train someone for what was, at most, an eight-week placement.

Very few employers mentioned negative publicity attached to the work experience scheme. Three per cent were concerned that the candidate was forced to take part, two per cent were concerned that the candidate would have false hope of a job, and a further two per cent mentioned issues surrounding cheap labour, while one per cent reported that bad press was a concern. When adding these together, seven per cent of employers who had taken someone on for a work experience opportunity were concerned about something to do with the negative publicity that the scheme received. This was higher among large employers (who were generally the target of negative publicity in the media) and private sector employers.

4.5.2 Sector-based work academies

Half of employers involved with a sector-based work academy said they had no concerns at all about getting involved (49 per cent) prior to participation. Again, the main concern for those who were involved with a sector-based work academy was the quality of the candidate (24 per cent). As one employer involved with a sector-based work academy said:

'I didn't know what sort of candidate I would get: the quality of candidate, the experience of candidate, the knowledge, the attitude, how they would perform and deal with employers.'

(Sector-based work academy employer)

Some employers had a particular concern as to whether candidates were participating by rote, rather than out of motivation for a job:

'I wasn't sure about the kind of people they were going to send me – whether it would be people who were involved because they thought they had to, rather than they wanted to.'

(Sector-based work academy employer)

The second most common concern was the time and cost involved for their organisation, if the candidate does not continue on as a hired employee after the sector-based work academy (seven per cent).

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

'With it being such a small office we were concerned about the amount of time we could devote to training her properly.'

(Sector-based work academy employer)

A further five per cent were concerned about attendance from the candidate, and five per cent were also concerned about the lack of clarity in the information received from Jobcentre Plus. One employer did not know who would take responsibility between themselves and Jobcentre Plus:

'My main concern was who was going to take accountability – was it something that we would have to do entirely ourselves or would we be supported by the jobcentre.'

(Sector-based work academy employer)

A small number of employers involved with a sector-based work academy were concerned about the issues raised by the negative publicity of work experience schemes in the media. The level of concern was similar to that seen already for work experience employers. Specifically, three per cent were concerned that the candidate was forced to participate, two per cent mentioned issues surrounding cheap labour, two per cent were concerned about bad press, and a further two per cent were concerned about the false hope of a job for the candidate.

4.6 Reasons for involvement in both work experience and sector-based work academies

Ten per cent of those interviewed had taken part in both the work experience and sector-based work academy schemes. These employers were asked why they had participated in both schemes. The most common reasons given were that this allowed employers to continue to provide opportunities for jobseekers (24 per cent), provide extra avenues for potential employees (eight per cent) and that it was beneficial to the organisation (seven per cent).

'To try and give more young people a chance to get back into work, to give younger and older people something to put on their CVs.'

(Work experience and sector-based work academy employer)

'They went hand in hand. Any work experience we had – we'd have to go through all the basic training as well as forklift truck training, so they'd have to do that, so we thought we'd offer them all together.'

(Work experience and sector-based work academy employer)

A further seven per cent said they were involved with both schemes because they were asked by Jobcentre Plus to do so.

4.7 Reasons for not being involved in all elements of a sector-based work academy

A sector-based work academy should involve a work placement, sector-specific training and a guaranteed job interview, unless the employer's recruitment processes are incompatible with this requirement (for example, due to a 'fair and open' recruitment process). As seen earlier in the report, half of employers (52 per cent) were involved with all three elements of a sector-based work academy and a further nine per cent offered a placement and training (but no job interview). In cases where employers were not involved in all elements, respondents were asked why this was the case.

Around three in ten (29 per cent) could not give a reason why they did not participate in all of the elements of the scheme. Three in ten (30 per cent) said that it was not appropriate for their business. As one employer who was involved with a placement and interview but no training said:

'We interviewed the people and gave them the placement. We only wanted that involvement.'

(Sector-based work academy employer)

While work experience placements were the most common element of a sector-based work academy, almost one in four did not offer a work experience placement as part of the sector-based work academy. Reasons why this element was not appropriate tended to relate to capacity, skill levels required (and not enough time to train) or other reasons such as:

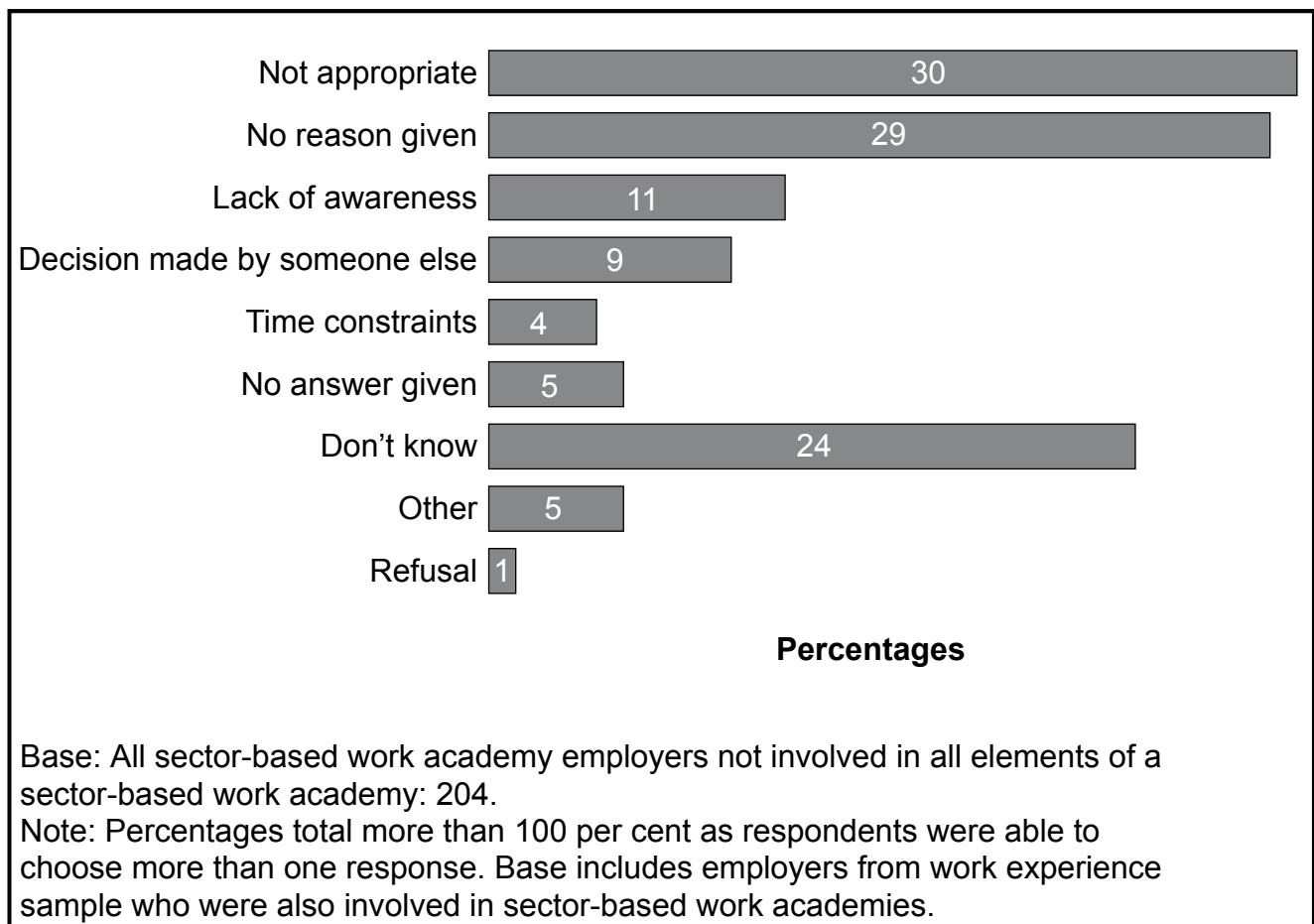
'Because we have insurance problems with people doing work experience, because it's a care industry.'²⁵

(Sector-based work academy employer)

Eleven per cent claimed that a lack of awareness about the elements of a sector-based work academy was the reason that not all were offered. In addition, nine per cent said that the decision about the content of the sector-based work academy was taken by someone else in their organisation. Only four per cent cited time constraints, particularly on matching work experience with the necessary on-the-job training needed to make the work experience placement successful.

²⁵ Note that this quote is just one example of a care industry employer. Other employers in the care sector may offer placement opportunities, as with other industries.

Figure 4.7 Reasons why employers were not involved in all elements of sector-based work academy



5 Setting up of placements

This chapter looks at the process of setting up a placement. Employers were asked about their rating of Jobcentre Plus in the process, whether they received enough candidates, and the amount of work involved.

The majority of employers thought that Jobcentre Plus did a good job in identifying suitable candidates for placements and most said that they received enough candidates from Jobcentre Plus. While many thought that there was a lot of work involved in setting up placements, the large majority thought that the set-up process went well and that Jobcentre Plus were effective in supporting the set-up of placements.

Key findings

- The responsibility for interviewing candidates was often shared between the employer and Jobcentre Plus. Work experience employers were more likely than sector-based work academy employers to do all of the interviewing themselves (38 per cent compared with 28 per cent).
- The majority of work experience employers (81 per cent) and sector-based work academy employers (82 per cent) thought that Jobcentre Plus did a good job in identifying suitable candidates for placements.
- Most work experience employers (73 per cent) and sector-based work academy employers (81 per cent) said they received enough candidates from Jobcentre Plus.
- More than half (54 per cent) of those involved with a sector-based work academy thought that there was a great deal or a fair amount of work involved in the set-up process. This was higher (76 per cent) for those involved in all elements of a sector-based work academy.
- Four in ten (42 per cent) of those involved in the work experience scheme thought there was a lot of work involved in the set up. This increased with number of placements.
- A large majority thought the set-up process went well: 91 per cent of work experience and 87 per cent of sector-based work academy employers. Similarly, a large proportion (83 per cent for work experience, 82 per cent for sector-based work academies) reported that Jobcentre Plus were effective in supporting the set-up of placements.

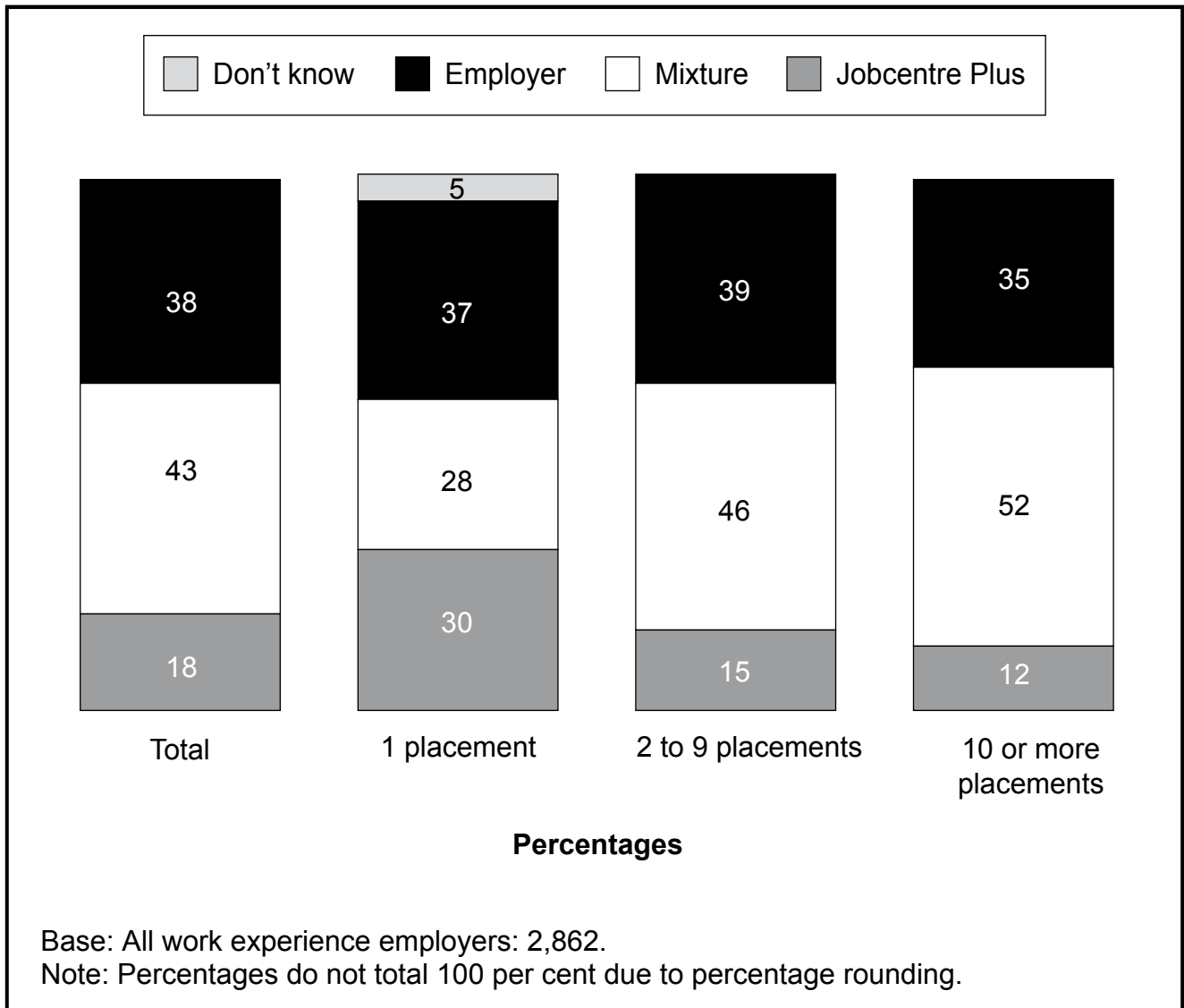
5.1 Responsibility for interviewing candidates

Work experience employers, and employers who offered a work experience placement as part of a sector-based work academy, were asked whether they interviewed all the candidates, whether Jobcentre Plus managed all of the selection, or if it varied between the employer and Jobcentre Plus.

5.1.1 Work experience

For 43 per cent of those in the work experience scheme, the responsibility for interviewing candidates was shared between the employer and Jobcentre Plus. Otherwise, it was more likely to be the employer who interviewed candidates (38 per cent) rather than Jobcentre Plus (18 per cent).

Figure 5.1 Responsibility for interviewing candidates



There was a relationship between the number of placements and responsibility for interviewing. As shown in Figure 5.1, the variation was not in the proportion of employers who took responsibility for interviewing all candidates: a similar proportion interviewed all candidates, no matter how many placements were taken on. However, there was variation in terms of the proportion that let Jobcentre Plus manage the entire selection (as opposed to responsibility being shared). Three in ten (30 per cent) of those who recruited for only one placement let Jobcentre Plus manage the entire selection process. This was lower among those who took on between two and nine placements (15 per cent) and those who took on ten or more placements (12 per cent). Correspondingly, the proportion who shared the interviewing between themselves and Jobcentre Plus was higher amongst those with more placements (52 per cent of those with ten or more placements).

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

Single-site organisations were more likely than multi-site organisations to interview all the candidates for work experience opportunities themselves (40 per cent compared with 35 per cent).

5.1.2 Sector-based work academies

For work experience placement components of sector-based work academies, around three in ten employers directly interviewed all of the candidates (28 per cent), while 23 per cent let Jobcentre Plus manage the selection process. In 44 per cent of cases, there was a mixture of the employer and Jobcentre Plus managing the selection.

These figures are broadly similar to those seen above for work experience employers, although employers involved with a sector-based work academy were less likely to do all of the interviewing themselves.

5.2 Rating of Jobcentre Plus in identifying suitable people

5.2.1 Work experience

The majority of employers (81 per cent) who took someone on a work experience opportunity thought that Jobcentre Plus did a good job in identifying suitable candidates, while 12 per cent thought that Jobcentre Plus did not do a good job in this (the remainder did not know or said it varied by Jobcentre Plus office).

Positive views were generally consistent across different employers, although the smallest (micro-) employers were less likely to report that Jobcentre Plus did a good job in identifying suitable candidates for placements (75 per cent). Single-site organisations (78 per cent) were also less likely than multi-site employers (84 per cent) to report that Jobcentre Plus did a good job. However, these differences reflect a higher number of 'don't know' responses, as much as a more negative opinion.

Otherwise, there were no differences by type of employer in whether Jobcentre Plus was perceived as doing a good job in identifying people. However, perceptions did vary according to placement completion. Where all placements were completed, employers were more likely to think that Jobcentre Plus did a good job than where most or all of the placements were not completed (83 per cent compared with 60 per cent). Three in ten (31 per cent) of the latter group thought that Jobcentre Plus did not do a good job of identifying suitable people²⁶.

5.2.2 Sector-based work academies

Eight in ten employers (82 per cent) who offered work experience placements as part of a sector-based work academy thought Jobcentre Plus did a good job in identifying suitable candidates. Only seven per cent felt that Jobcentre Plus was not very good, and five per cent believed that they had not done a good job at all. There were no differences by type of employer.

²⁶ The survey did not cover reasons for non-completion of placements.

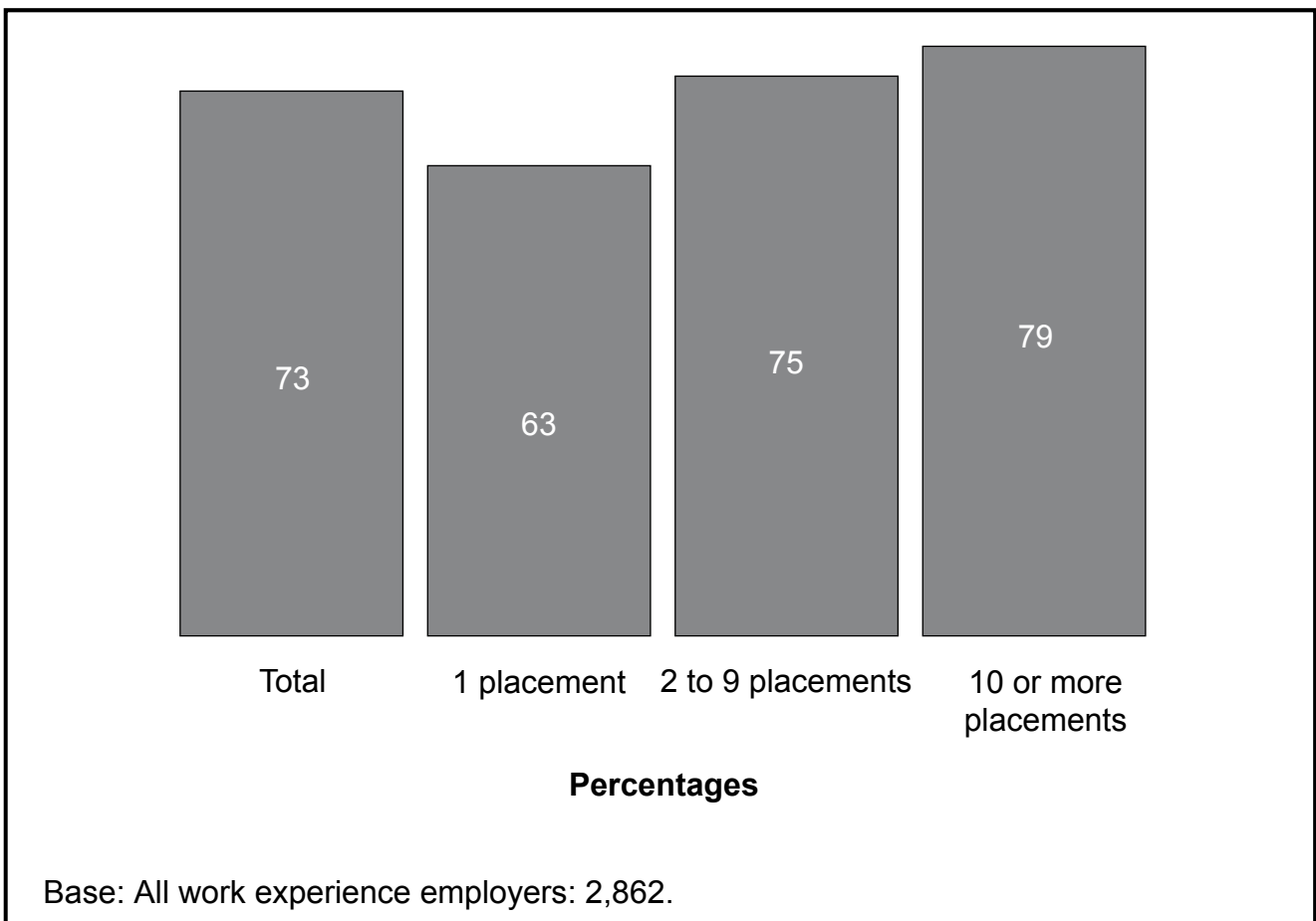
5.3 Whether employers received enough candidates from Jobcentre Plus for the opportunities offered

5.3.1 Work experience

Three in four employers (73 per cent) who took someone on for a work experience opportunity thought that they received enough candidates from Jobcentre Plus for the opportunities that they offered.

The perception of receiving enough candidates varied by number of work experience placements taken on: it was higher for those who recruited more work experience placements, as Figure 5.2 shows. While 63 per cent of employers who recruited one candidate thought that they received enough candidates from Jobcentre Plus, this rose to 75 per cent of those who took on between two and nine placements and 79 per cent of those who took on ten or more placements. These findings suggest that some employers (particularly those who only took on one placement) may have taken more people on, if more candidates had been available.

Figure 5.2 Whether received enough candidates from Jobcentre Plus



Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

The proportion who thought they received enough candidates was also lower among organisations with fewer than 50 employees (69 per cent) than those with 50 or more employees (76 per cent). This can be linked to Section 5.2.1, where the smallest employers were less likely to think that Jobcentre Plus did a good job of identifying suitable candidates.

5.3.2 Sector-based work academies

Similarly, a high proportion of employers (81 per cent) who offered a work experience placement as part of a sector-based work academy thought that they received enough candidates from Jobcentre Plus. There was no difference by size of employer or by number of candidates taken on. However, those who were involved in all elements of a sector-based work academy were less likely to think that they received enough candidates from Jobcentre Plus (73 per cent) than those who were not involved in all elements (86 per cent).

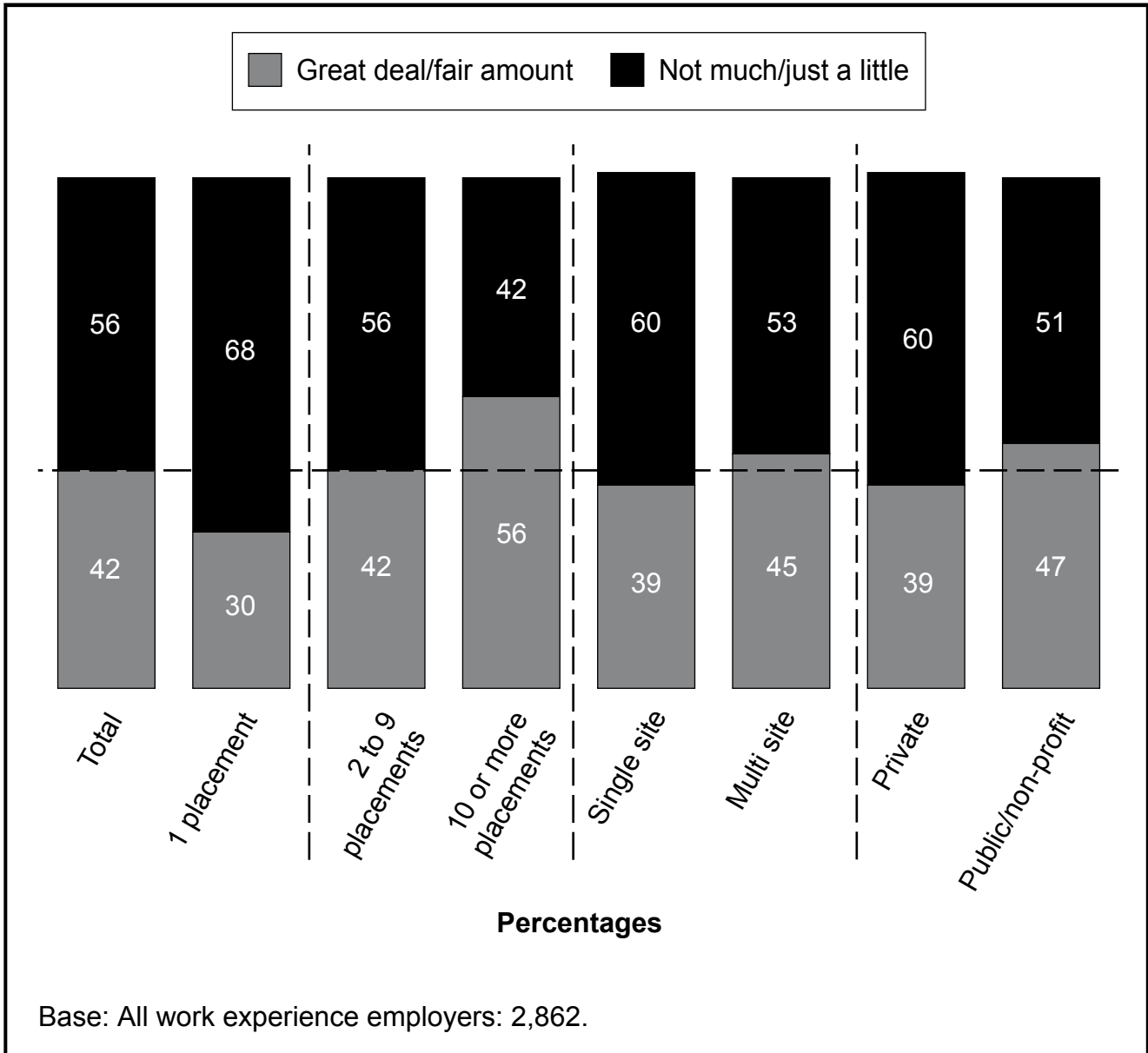
5.4 Amount of work for employers setting up work experience opportunities and sector-based work academies

5.4.1 Work experience

Only seven per cent of employers who took someone on for a work experience opportunity thought that there had been a great deal of work for their organisation in setting up the placement. A further 35 per cent thought that there was a fair amount of work to set up the placement. However, more than half (56 per cent) thought that the burden was quite light (21 per cent said there was just a little work and 34 per cent not much at all).

As seen in Figure 5.3, the scale of burden increased with the number of placements taken on. Three in ten (30 per cent) of those who took on just one work experience placement thought it was a great deal or fair amount of work. This rose to 42 per cent among those with between two and nine placements, and 56 per cent among those with ten or more placements. Multi-site organisations (that were more likely to have taken on a higher number of placements) also felt a greater burden: 45 per cent thought that they had a great deal or fair amount of work in setting up their placements. Public sector and non-profit or voluntary sector organisations tended to feel a greater burden than private sector employers (47 per cent compared with 39 per cent). This is also linked to number of placements (public and non-profit/voluntary sector organisations typically taking on more placements, as seen in Section 6.1).

Figure 5.3 Work involved in setting up work experience placement



5.4.2 Sector-based work academies

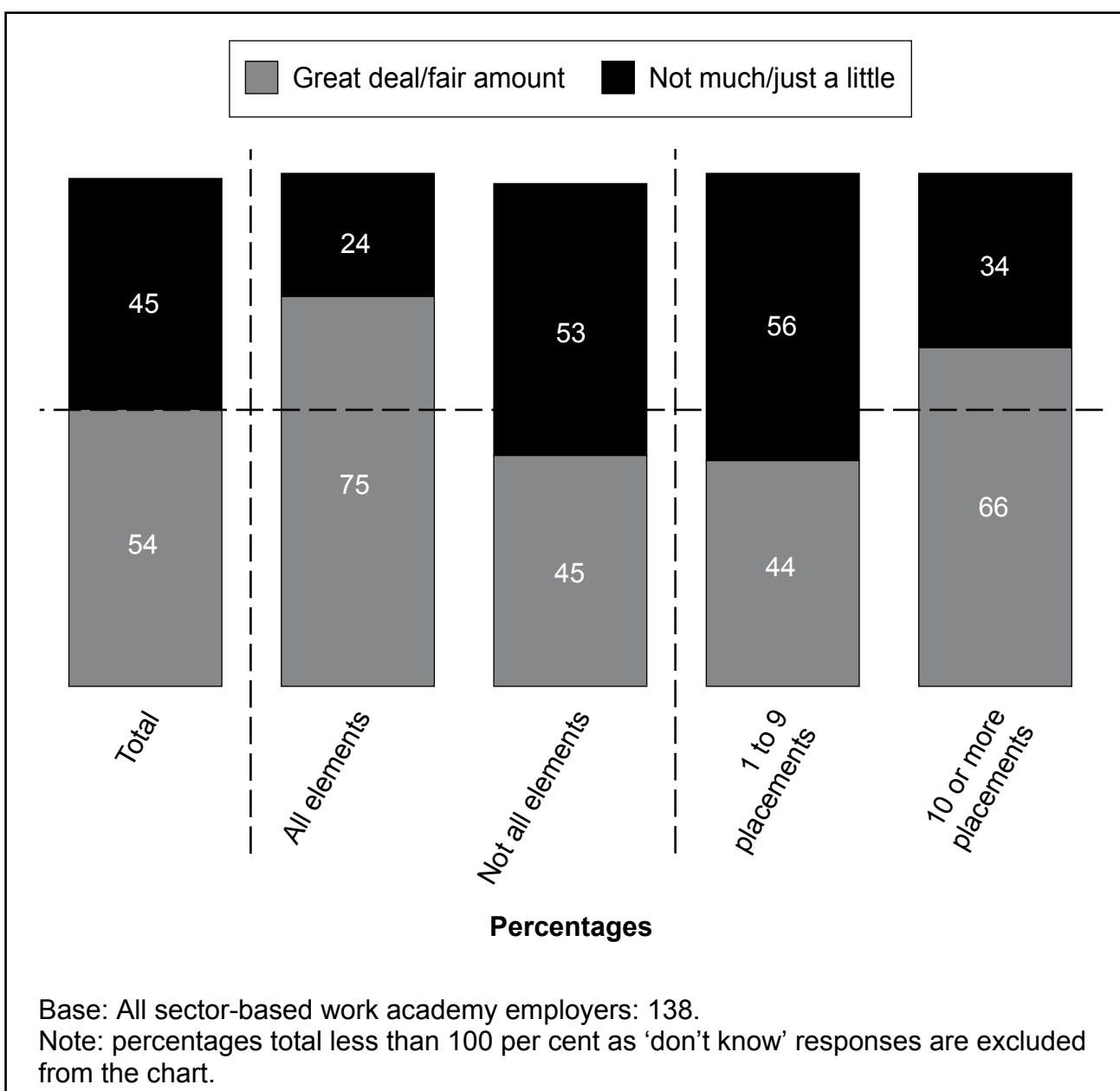
The perceived burden of set-up was slightly higher for those involved with a sector-based work academy than was the case for work experience employers. In total, 18 per cent said that there had been a great deal of work for their organisation in setting up the sector-based work academy, and 36 per cent thought there had been a fair amount of work. Less than half thought that it was either not much work at all (25 per cent) or just a little (20 per cent).

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

Not surprisingly a greater burden was felt by those who were involved in all elements of a sector-based work academy. As Figure 5.4 shows, there was felt to be a great deal or a fair amount of work involved in setting up sector-based work academies among 76 per cent of those involved in all elements (including 27 per cent who said there was a great deal of work). This fell to 45 per cent among those who were not involved in all elements. Although the base sizes are relatively small, it is clear that there is a significant burden involved in setting up all elements of a sector-based work academy for employers.

As with work experience opportunities, the burden on employers increased with the number of sector-based work academy placements taken on. Two in three employers (66 per cent) who had ten or more placements said that there was great deal or a fair amount of work involved, while this was lower (44 per cent) among those who took on fewer than ten placements.

Figure 5.4 Work involved in setting up sector-based work academy



5.5 How well the set-up process worked

5.5.1 Work experience

Nine in ten employers (91 per cent) that recruited someone on the work experience scheme thought that the process of setting up placements went well (with 45 per cent responding that the process went very well). Of the remainder, five per cent thought the process was not very well set up, and two per cent thought that it was not at all well set up (see Figure 5.5).

Large employers were the most likely to think that the set-up process went well (94 per cent, compared with 90 per cent of micro-, small and medium enterprises). Despite the additional burden on employers (see previous section) for taking on a higher number of placements, there was a correlation between satisfaction with the set-up process and higher number of placements. Among those who took on ten or more placements, 95 per cent thought the set-up process went well, while this was 91 per cent for those who took on between two and nine placements, and 89 per cent for those who took on just one placement.

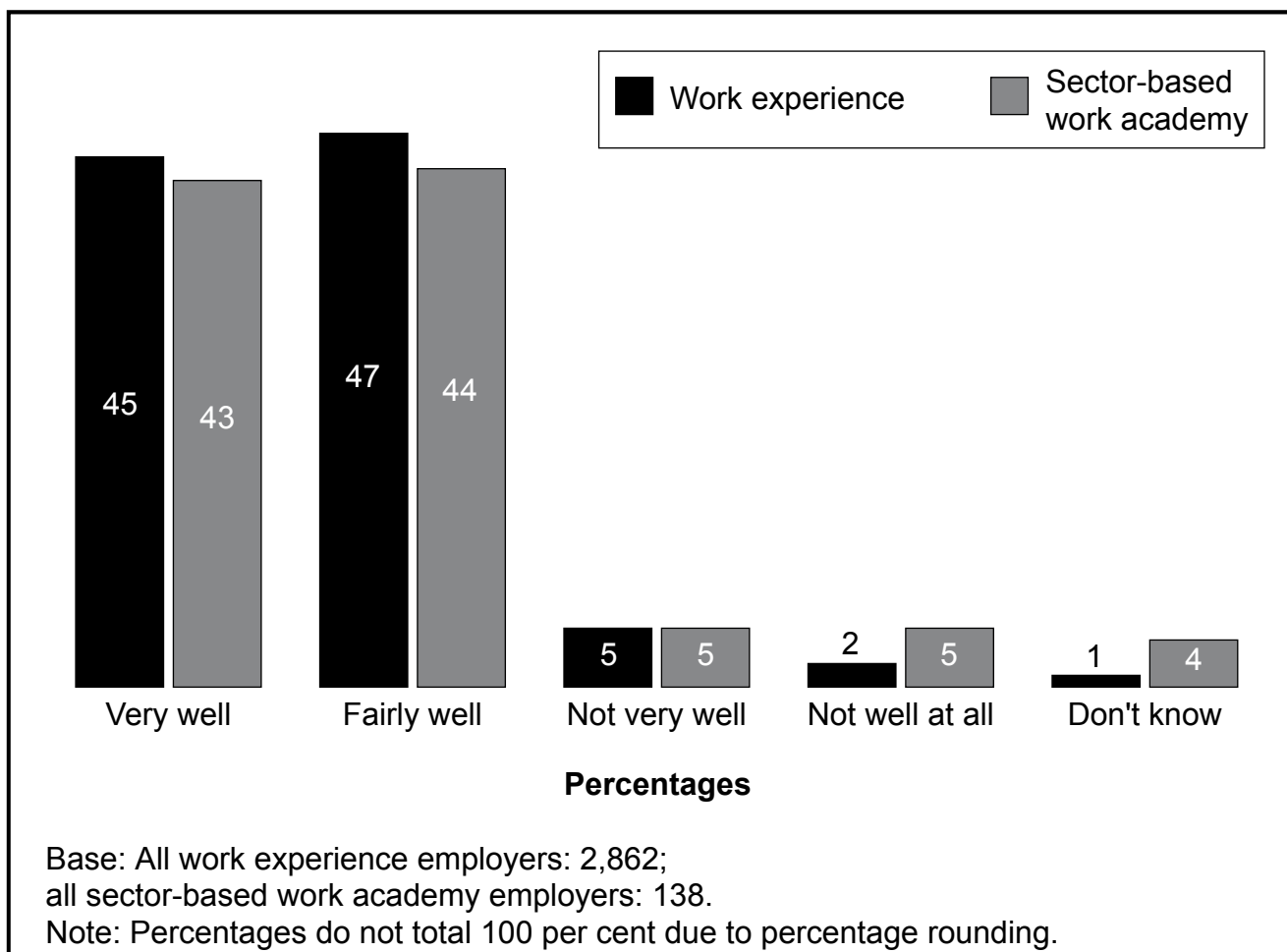
Again, attitudes were less positive where most or all placements were not completed (74 per cent said the set-up process went well)²⁷.

5.5.2 Sector-based work academies

A large majority (87 per cent) of employers involved with a sector-based work academy thought that the set-up process went well, including 43 per cent who thought it went very well. Just nine per cent did not think it went well; the reasons for this are covered in Section 5.7. As with the work experience scheme, those who took on a larger number of placements as part of a sector-based work academy were more likely to say that the set-up process went well (50 per cent of those who took on 10 or more placements said it went very well, compared with 32 per cent of those with fewer than 10 placements).

²⁷ The survey did not cover reasons for non-completion of placements.

Figure 5.5 How well set-up worked overall



5.6 Effectiveness of Jobcentre Plus in setting up placements

5.6.1 Work experience

A large majority (83 per cent) of employers who took someone on for a work experience opportunity thought that Jobcentre Plus had been effective in supporting the set-up of the placements. This includes 43 per cent who said that Jobcentre Plus were very effective, while 13 per cent thought they were not effective (see Figure 5.6).

Employers who took on just one placement were less likely to see Jobcentre Plus as effective (76 per cent) than those who took on between two and nine placements (85 per cent) or ten or more placements (87 per cent). Large (85 per cent) and multi-site employers (85 per cent) were more likely to say that Jobcentre Plus were effective than smaller organisations (80 per cent of micro-organisations) or single-site organisations (81 per cent).

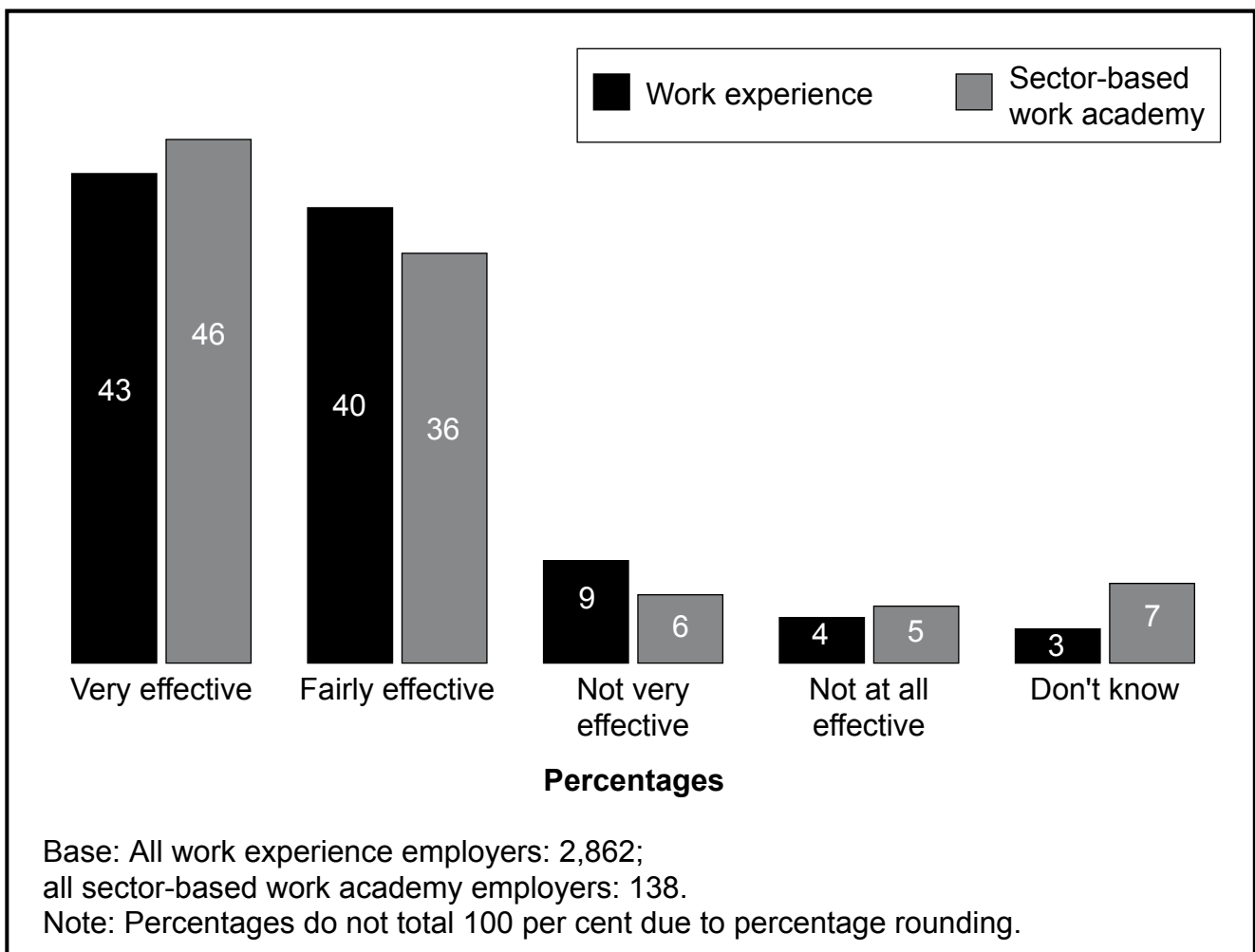
Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

Where most or all placements were not completed, employers were less likely to say that Jobcentre Plus were effective in supporting the set-up process (70 per cent)²⁸.

5.6.2 Sector-based work academies

Eight in ten (82 per cent) employers thought that Jobcentre Plus were effective in supporting the set-up of sector-based work academies, with 46 per cent saying they were very effective. Just 11 per cent said that Jobcentre Plus were not effective. Almost all (96 per cent) of those who took on ten or more sector-based work academy placements thought Jobcentre Plus were effective in supporting the set-up. Related to this, large employers were also more likely than SMEs to report that Jobcentre Plus were effective (87 per cent compared with 74 per cent).

Figure 5.6 How effective Jobcentre Plus were in setting up placements



²⁸ The survey did not cover reasons for non-completion of placements.

5.7 Suggested improvements to set-up process

Respondents were asked what improvements could be made to the set-up process. The question was not asked of those who thought Jobcentre Plus had been very effective.

5.7.1 Work experience

Around half of work experience employers (53 per cent) thought that the set-up process was either very effective or could not see any need for improvements.

The most common suggestion for improvement was that there should be more checks on candidate suitability (21 per cent).

'I still think there needs to be better screening of people. We've had one or two 'dud' ones, but the jobcentre were there 100 per cent in protecting us and supporting us. The people you interview and who go on these courses are not necessarily the ones that we end up recruiting.'

(Work experience employer)

In addition, nine per cent would have liked to see candidates prepared better. There was also a common theme about improved communications from Jobcentre Plus, with 15 per cent saying they would have liked better communication (generally), nine per cent more regular contact with Jobcentre Plus, and seven per cent more communication about the process from Jobcentre Plus.

'Maybe a bit more communication, there was an initial conversation but no real follow up from that at all.'

(Work experience employer)

'I just think that we could have more phone calls from Jobcentre Plus checking up on them. They do that for the first two weeks and then we hear nothing after that. Also, they don't ask us to send any feedback to the jobcentre.'

(Work experience employer)

'I think the only downfall is once they have given us the candidates they seem to cut contact with the candidates until it is nearly time for them to finish the placement. We think that it would be better if they kept contact with the candidates and us. We had an issue with one of the candidates that they weren't really suitable for the role, and the jobcentre said we could have cut his placement short, but weren't aware of this at the time due to lack of contact.'

(Work experience employer)

5.7.2 Sector-based work academies

Around six in ten of sector-based work academy employers (58 per cent) thought that the set-up process was either very effective or could not see any need for improvements.

The most common suggestion for improvement among sector-based work academy employers was also for more checks on candidate suitability (28 per cent), while a further five per cent said that Jobcentre Plus should prepare candidates better.

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

'Probably the quality of the candidates. We've had some low quality candidates or over-qualified ones – we just get the extremes and no middle-of-the-road.'

(Sector-based work academy employer)

As was the case for the work experience scheme, there were calls for better communication from Jobcentre Plus (12 per cent), more regular contact with the employer from Jobcentre Plus (six per cent) and more communication generally (six per cent).

'A bit more organised. It seemed a little bit haphazard. If there was a[n information] pack and someone came out from the jobcentre and explained the benefits for us and the person, and the financial side of things ...'

(Sector-based work academy employer)

More regular contact was seen as important as it would improve the monitoring of placements and reduce drop-out:

'Greater monitoring of the people on placements. It's just that the number of drop-outs could have been prevented if they had regular meetings with Jobcentre Plus staff.'

(Sector-based work academy employer)

6 Placement details

This chapter looks at details of the work experience opportunities and placements under sector-based work academies. This includes the numbers taken on, the age of the recruits, the length of placements and the level of completion.

As with the report as a whole, findings about placements relate to the individual establishment or workplace (rather than the whole organisation).

Work experience employers were more likely than sector-based work academy employers to hire younger recruits (under 25) and to have a smaller number of recruits. In both schemes, more than seven in ten filled all of the vacancies that they were recruiting for. A high proportion of employers offered support materials such as internal training materials.

Key findings

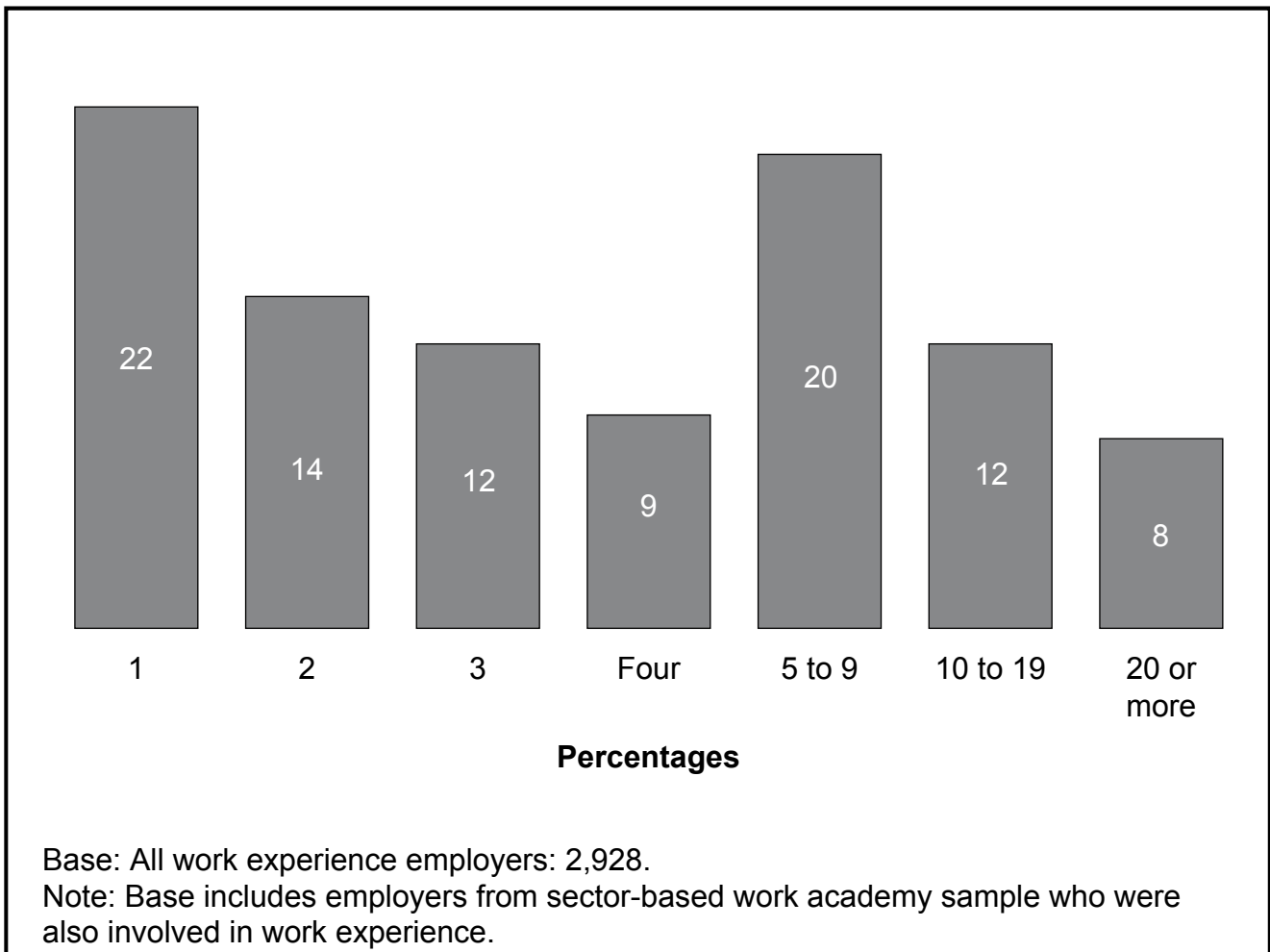
- One in five work experience employers took on just one placement (22 per cent), while 20 per cent had ten or more placements. Sector-based work academy employers were more likely to have a large number of placements (44 per cent had ten or more).
- Six in ten (61 per cent) work experience employers only recruited candidates aged under 25. Sector-based work academy participants were of a more mixed age, with just 37 per cent of employers only recruiting those under 25.
- Around four in ten employers saw all their work experience placements (37 per cent) or sector-based work academies (38 per cent) complete their placements.
- More than seven in ten work experience employers (72 per cent) and sector-based work academy employers (75 per cent) filled all the vacancies they were recruiting for.
- There was a range of different types of work offered in both schemes, including sales and customer service occupations, administrative and secretarial occupations and personal service occupations, as well as elementary occupations.
- Employers involved with sector-based work academies were more likely to offer support materials than work experience employers. For example, 84 per cent offered internal training materials, compared with 69 per cent of work experience employers.

6.1 Number of placements taken on

6.1.1 Work experience

The number of work experience placements per employer varied considerably. As seen in Figure 6.1, around half (48 per cent) had taken on up to three placements, with 22 per cent taking on just one. By contrast, 20 per cent had taken on between five and nine placements, and 20 per cent had taken on ten or more, including eight per cent who had 20 or more placements.

Figure 6.1 Number taken part in a work experience placement



There was an understandable link between size of organisation and number of placements. While 40 per cent of micro-organisations took on one placement, this decreased to 25 per cent for small employers, 16 per cent for medium and ten per cent for large employers. One in three large employers took on ten or more placements (31 per cent).

Private sector organisations (which tended to be smaller than public sector or non-profit/voluntary sector organisations) typically took on fewer placements: 27 per cent took on one, 55 per cent took on between two and nine and 16 per cent took on ten or more placements. In terms of individual industry sectors, employers in Group G (wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles) were most likely to take on ten or more placements (29 per cent). Again, this is partly linked to size (these employers being larger than those in other sectors).

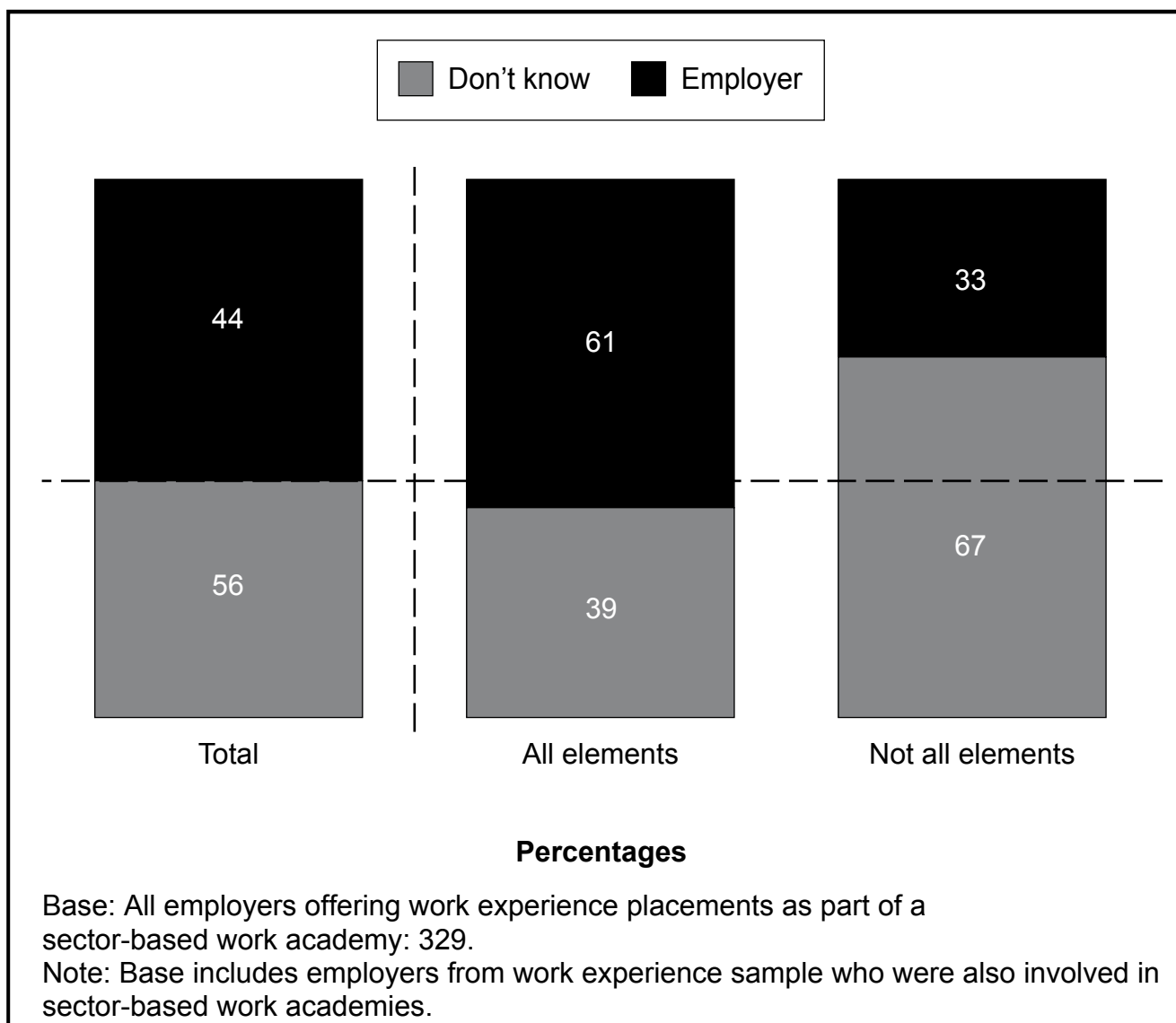
Employers who had taken part in work experience schemes previously were more likely to have taken on a larger number of placements than those who had not been involved in a scheme before (30 per cent and 17 per cent respectively took on ten or more placements). This is linked to size of employer (larger employers were more likely to have been involved in work experience schemes previously).

6.1.2 Sector-based work academies

Employers who offered work experience placements as part of a sector-based work academy were asked about the number of placements they provided. The number of placements taken on by sector-based work academy employers was higher on average than for work experience employers. This is likely to be due to the higher set-up costs for sector-based work academies, which employers can balance out with efficiencies of scale by having a larger number of placements. Around one in three (36 per cent) took on fewer than five placements, while 20 per cent took on between five and nine. In total, 44 per cent took on ten or more placements (18 per cent had between ten and 19, 20 per cent had between 20 and 49, and six per cent had 50 or more).

Those who were involved with all elements of a sector-based work academy tended to take on more placements than those who were not involved with all elements (61 per cent had ten or more placements, compared with 33 per cent), as seen in Figure 6.2.

Figure 6.2 Number of sector-based work academies



6.2 Whether placements covered people aged 25 or over as well as under-25s

Employers who had offered a work experience opportunity or a placement within a sector-based work academy were asked about the age range they had recruited for the placements. Work experience and sector-based work academies are not restricted to any particular age group but the Youth Contract has made extra places available for any 18 to 24 years old who wants one. As a result, we would expect to see a range of ages included.

6.2.1 Work experience

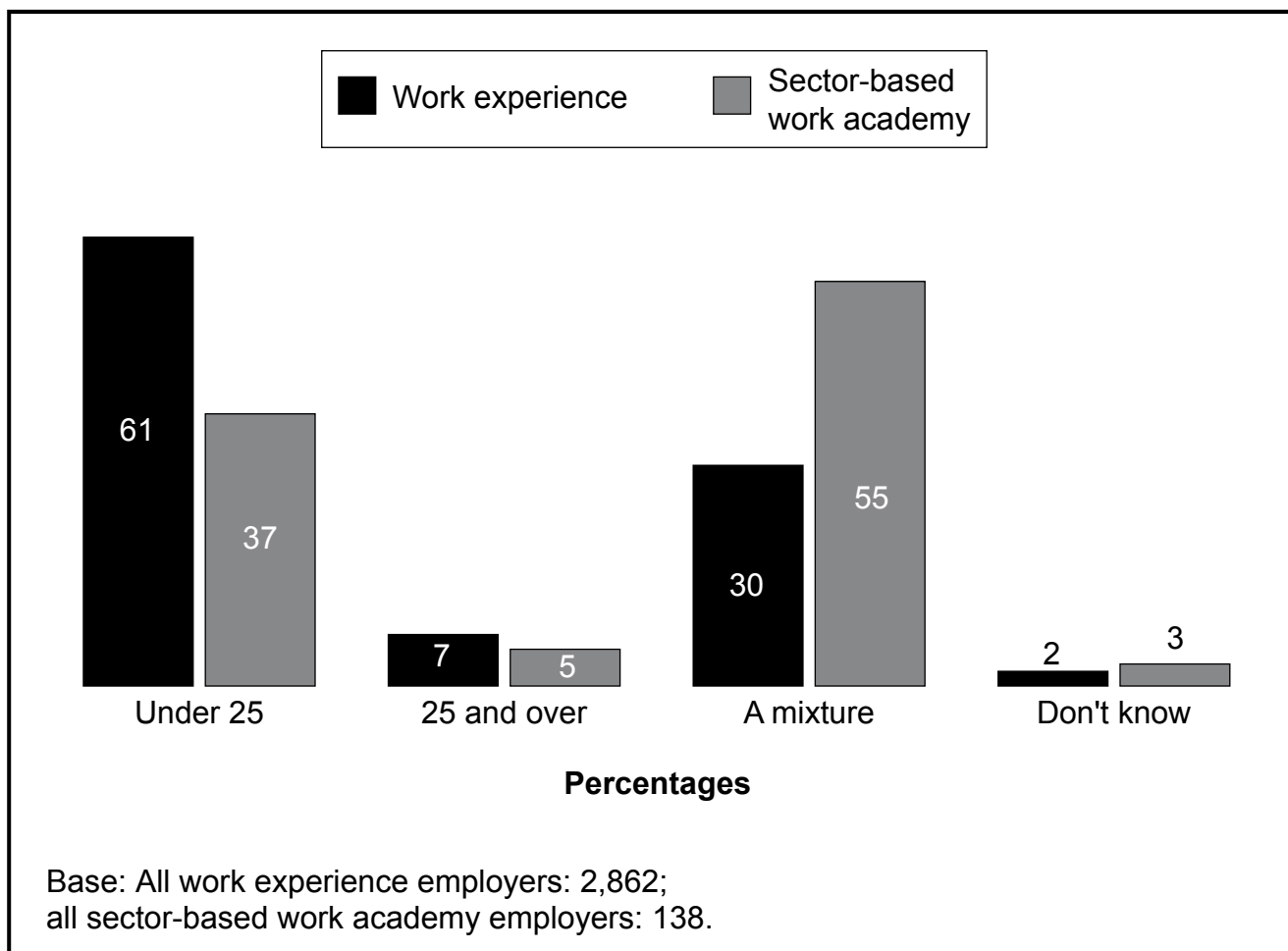
Six in ten (61 per cent) work experience employers only took on recruits aged under 25 for their placements. Three in ten (30 per cent) had a mixture of under-25s and over-25s, and seven per cent had only taken on recruits aged 25 or older for their work experience placements (see Figure 6.3).

As the number of placements taken on at a workplace increases, so does the proportion of employers taking on a mixture of ages, rather than just those under or over 25 years old. The proportion who were only aged under 25 ranged from 77 per cent among those who only took on one work experience placement, to 63 per cent of those who took on between two and nine placements, and 41 per cent of those who took on ten or more work experience placements.

6.2.2 Sector-based work academies

Employers taking on someone as part of a sector-based work academy were less likely than work experience employers to only recruit those aged under 25 (37 per cent), with the majority (55 per cent) recruiting a mixture of under-25s and those aged 25 or over. This reflects the policy intent of sector-based work academies and work experience given that work experience is primarily focused at the under-25s. Just five per cent only took on people aged 25 or over.

Figure 6.3 Age of participants



6.3 Whether placements were completed

As seen in previous sections, one of employers' main concerns is the reliability of candidates. It is therefore important to look at the extent to which placements were completed.

6.3.1 Work experience

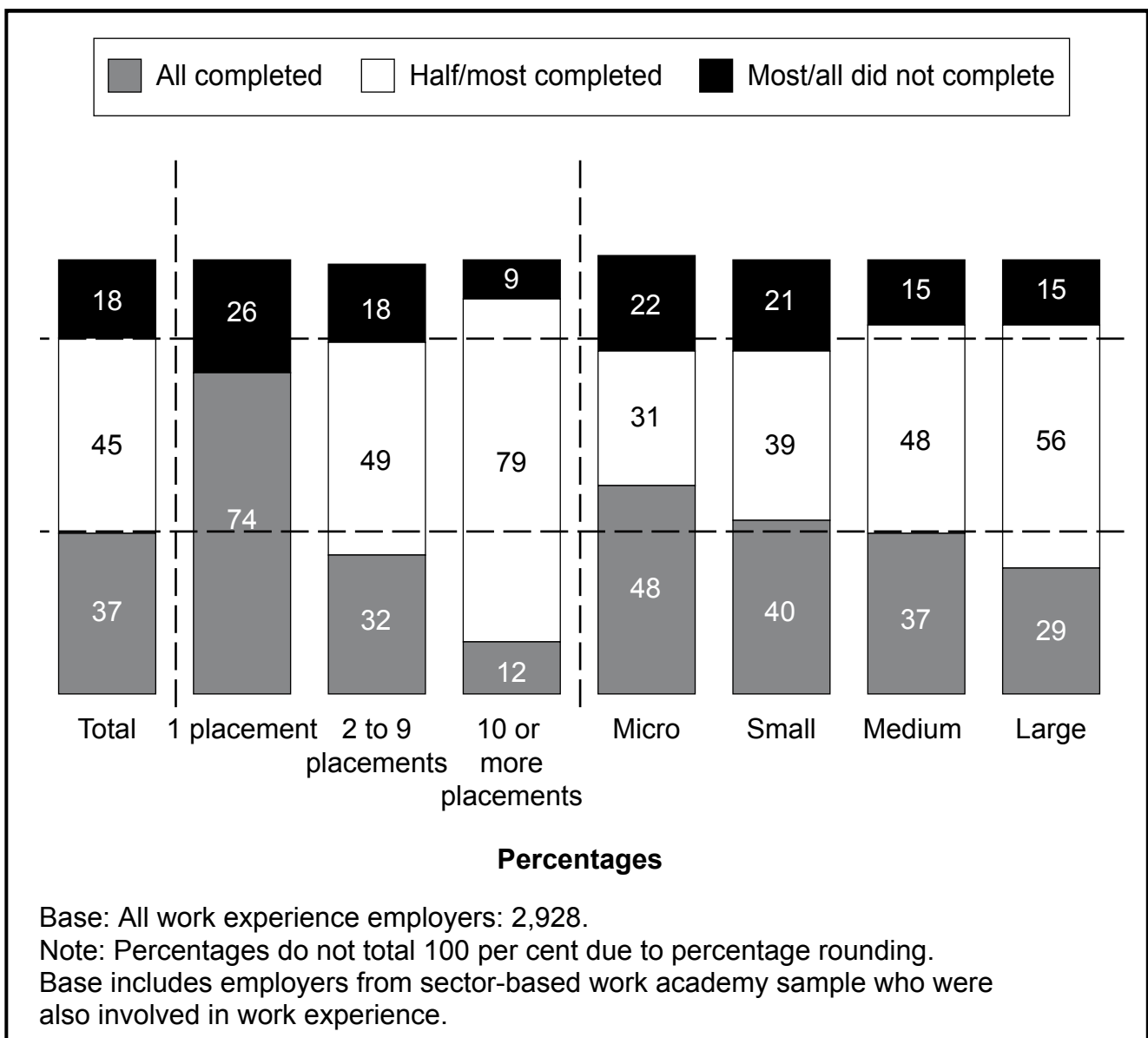
Less than two in five employers (37 per cent) saw all recruits complete their placements. In fact, for 18 per cent most or all did not complete their placements. The remaining 45 per cent of employers reported that most or at least half completed their placements. Employers were not asked about reasons for non-completion, so it cannot be confirmed what proportion were for positive reasons (such as the employee moving into paid employment elsewhere) or for negative reasons (such as the employee failing to attend or being asked not to return). However, findings throughout the survey indicate that non-completion of placements is linked to negative views (e.g. perceptions of how well Jobcentre Plus did in identifying candidates and perceptions of the quality of people on placements). This suggests that in many cases non-completion was for negative reasons.

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

As the number of placements increased, the more likely it was that employers experienced a mixture of placements being completed and not completed. Among those who only took on one placement, three in four (74 per cent) completed the placement. For those who recruited between two and nine placements, 32 per cent saw all of their placements completed, while the proportion was 12 per cent among those with ten or more work experience placements.

Employers in the construction industry were most likely to see all their placements completed (59 per cent); this is linked to some extent to the smaller size of organisations in this sector.

Figure 6.4 Completion of work experience placements



6.3.2 Sector-based work academies

Among employers who took people on for a work experience placement as part of a sector-based work academy, 38 per cent said that all placements were completed. Employers were not asked about reasons for non-completion.

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

There was no difference when looking at size of organisation. However, as was the case with work experience employers, as the number of placements increased, the more likely it was that there was a mixture of completed and non-completed placements, as shown in Table 6.1. When making a like-for-like comparison with work experience employers (taking into account the number of placements), the completion rate among sector-based work academy employers tended to be higher. For example, among those with ten or more placements, 26 per cent saw all placements completed, compared with 12 per cent of work experience employers

Table 6.1 Completion of work experience placements as part of a sector-based work academy

	Number of placements		
	1–9 %	10+ %	Total %
All completed	48	26	38
Most or half completed	36	67	50
Most/all did not complete	16	7	12
<i>Base: All sector-based work academy employers with work experience placements (excluding 'don't know' answers)</i>	119	84	203

Note: Base includes employers from work experience sample who were also involved in sector-based work academies.

6.4 Whether filled all placements

6.4.1 Work experience

Seven in ten (72 per cent) employers who were involved in the work experience scheme filled all the positions that they had available. Those who initially approached Jobcentre Plus about the scheme were less likely to have filled all available places than those who were approached by Jobcentre Plus (68 per cent compared with 75 per cent).

Non-profit/voluntary organisations were less likely to have filled all available positions (67 per cent) than private (73 per cent) or public sector organisations (75 per cent).

6.4.1 Sector-based work academies

A similar proportion of employers involved with a sector-based work academy filled all available places (75 per cent). There were no apparent differences when looking at size or type of business.

6.5 Length of placements

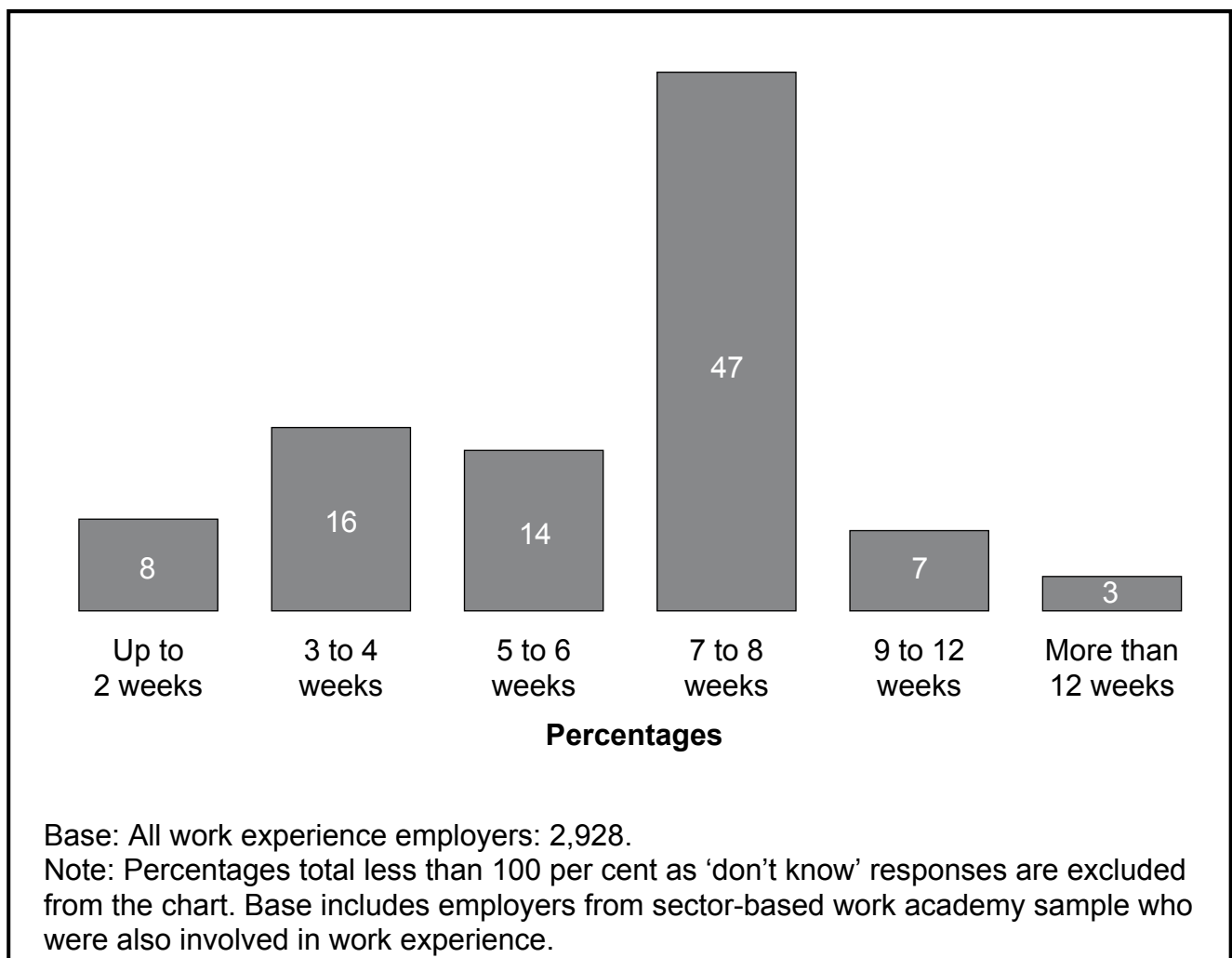
The Youth Contract website advertises that work experience placements are to last up to eight weeks, with the possibility of a four week extension where an employer makes an offer to take the recruit on an apprenticeship. Sector-based work academies can last up to six weeks across the training and work placement elements combined. Employers were asked how long their placements were designed to last (not how long they actually lasted). Sector-

based work academy employers were asked about the length of the academy as a whole (including training as well as placement).

6.5.1 Work experience

Only eight per cent of work experience employers said that their placements were designed to last the minimum mandated length of time for a work experience placement (two weeks). Around half (47 per cent) were designed to last seven or eight weeks, as shown in Figure 6.5.

Figure 6.5 Designed length of work experience placements



There was a relationship between placement length and the size of the organisation, with smaller employers more likely than larger employers to offer longer placements. The proportion who offered placements of seven weeks or more was 64 per cent for micro-organisations, 60 per cent for small organisations, 57 per cent for medium-sized organisations and 51 per cent for large organisations. Related to this, 62 per cent of single-site enterprises offered placements of seven weeks or more, compared with 54 per cent of multi-site enterprises.

This pattern extends to other factors associated with business size. Those with a larger number of placements were more likely to offer shorter placements. Around half (53 per cent) of employers with ten or more placements offered placements of seven weeks or more,

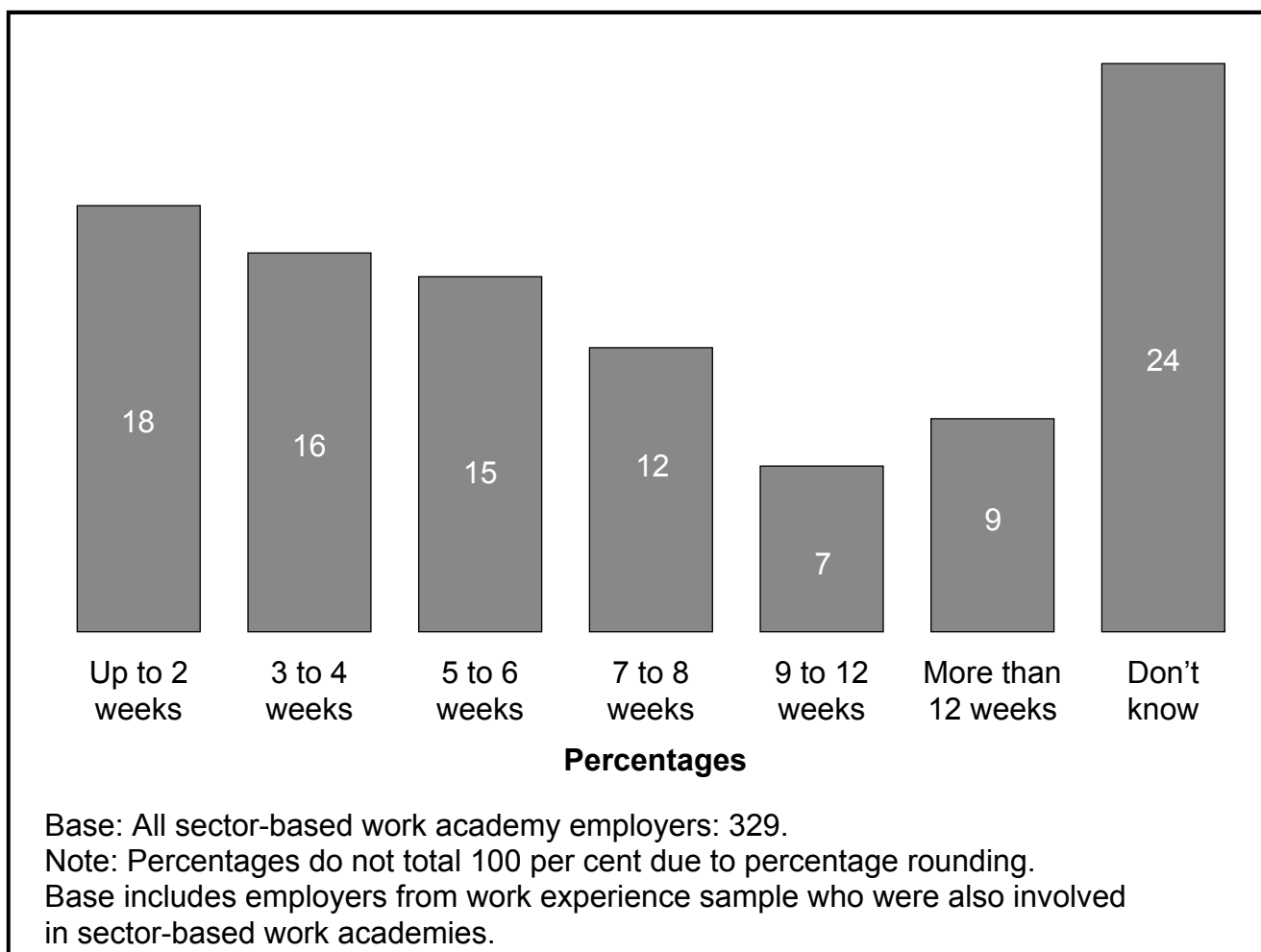
Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

lower than the figure for those with fewer than ten placements (60 per cent). Employers initially approached by Jobcentre Plus were less likely to offer placements of seven weeks or more (54 per cent) than those who approached Jobcentre Plus (65 per cent).

6.5.2 Sector-based work academies

Sector-based work academy employers were asked about the total length of the academy (including any training). One in six employers (18 per cent) said that the sector-based work academies offered by their organisation were designed to last no more than two weeks, with a further 31 per cent saying that they were designed to last between three and six weeks. One in four (26 per cent) said that they were longer than six weeks. Some caution should be used when interpreting these findings, as one in four respondents did not know the intended length of their sector-based work academies, and as already seen in this report, the elements included in sector-based work academies varied by employer.

Figure 6.6 Designed length of sector-based work academies



6.6 Type of work done on placements

6.6.1 Work experience

Work experience opportunities were most likely to be in elementary occupations (28 per cent), sales and customer service occupations (26 per cent) and administrative and secretarial occupations (21 per cent). The remainder were in personal service occupations (eight per cent), skilled trades (six per cent), plant and machinery operations (five per cent), technical operations (five per cent) and professional occupations (one per cent).²⁹

6.6.2 Sector-based work academies

Sector-based work academy placements were in the following job classifications: elementary occupations (32 per cent), sales and customer service (16 per cent), personal services (15 per cent), administrative and secretarial (14 per cent), technical operations (12 per cent), plant and machinery operations (five per cent), and skilled trades (four per cent).

The spread of different occupations shows that both schemes were offering a range of different types of work at different levels.

Table 6.2 Type of work done on placements

	Work experience employers %	Sector-based work academy employers %
Managerial/professional occupations	1	1
Associate professional and technical	5	12
Administrative and secretarial	21	14
Skilled trades	6	4
Personal service occupations	8	15
Sales and customer service	26	16
Process, plant and machine operatives	5	5
Elementary occupations	28	32
<i>Base: All employers with valid SOC code</i>	2,836	118

Note: Percentages do not total 100 per cent due to percentage rounding.

6.7 Support provided on placements

6.7.1 Work experience

Employers were asked about the support given to people on placements. Overall, a high proportion of employers offered support materials such as internal training materials. Almost all sector-based work academy employers offered support materials of some kind (98 per cent) and this also applied to 87 per cent of work experience employers.

²⁹ These are defined using Standard Occupational Classifications 2010 (SOC2010): <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/classifications/current-standard-classifications/soc2010/index.html>

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

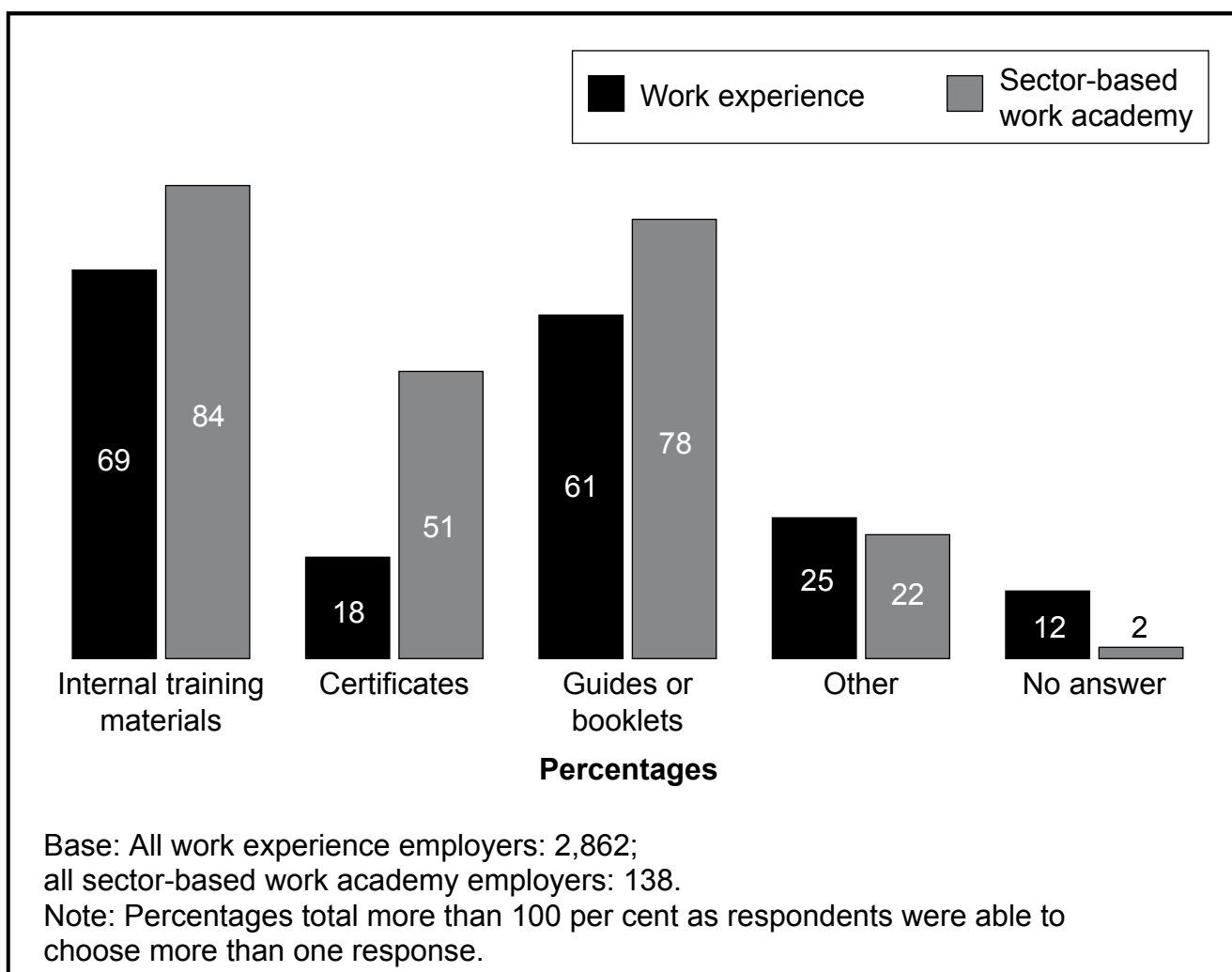
Seven in ten (69 per cent) work experience employers gave internal training materials. Larger employers were more likely to provide these (81 per cent of large employers, falling to 55 per cent of micro-organisations). Correspondingly, those who recruited a higher number of placements were more likely to provide training materials (79 per cent who offered ten or more placements, 71 per cent who had between two and nine placements, and 57 per cent with just one placement).

Six in ten (61 per cent) gave guides or booklets about the organisation (again this was higher for larger employers), and 18 per cent provided certificates. Twelve per cent offered none of these three support materials (see Figure 6.7).

6.7.2 Sector-based work academies

Employers involved with sector-based work academies were more likely than work experience employers to offer support materials, which reflects the focus on training as part of the inherent design of sector-based work academies. As many as 84 per cent offered internal training materials, 78 per cent offered guides or booklets about the organisation, and half (51 per cent) offered certificates.

Figure 6.7 What materials were provided by organisation to participants



7 Quality of people on placements

This chapter examines employers' assessments of the people they had on placements. It covers perceptions of the attitude, skills and overall quality of people on placements, and any issues of misconduct. It also examines employers' ratings of people they have taken on placement, relative to their experience of other Government schemes, and compared with the work experience scheme prior to February 2012.

Overall, it was felt that the quality of candidates taken on a placement was good, and employers were impressed by the candidates' attitudes, skills and overall quality. Expectations of participants had been met, or in many case surpassed. A minority had issues with misconduct but were still satisfied with the quality of participants in both schemes. Changes made to the work experience scheme since February 2012 have been received positively by employers.

Key findings

- The majority of employers were satisfied with the people they took on for placements, specifically in relation to their attitude (82 per cent of work experience employers and 85 per cent of sector-based work academy employers), skills (82 per cent and 85 per cent respectively) and overall quality (83 per cent and 82 per cent respectively).
- Employers tended to say that people were either better than they had expected (39 per cent of work experience employers and 34 per cent of sector-based work academy employers) or were no different (46 per cent and 53 per cent respectively).
- One in six work experience employers (16 per cent) said that they had experienced issues with people on placements in terms of misconduct. This was higher among employers involved in sector-based work academies (32 per cent).
- Where employers had been involved previously in work experience schemes, they were more likely to say that the quality was better rather than worse under both schemes.
- If employers had seen changes in the work experience scheme since February 2012, they were more likely to be positive rather than negative changes, in relation to the quality and attitude of candidates. However, where changes had been seen in drop-out rates, these were more likely to be negative rather than positive (14 per cent compared with 11 per cent).³⁰

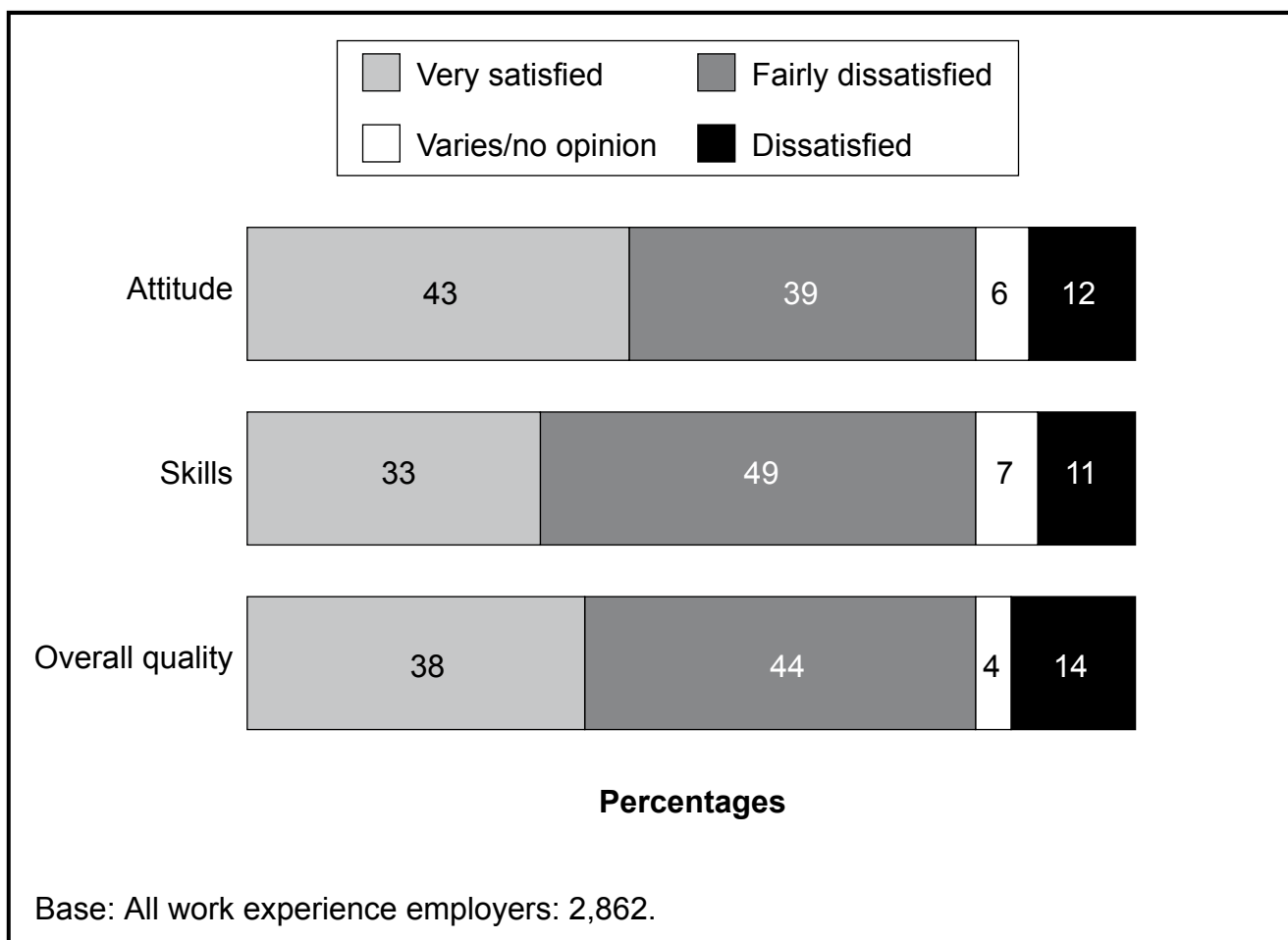
³⁰ In February 2012, the work experience scheme was changed so that participants are no longer sanctioned if they do not attend the placement (but can still be sanctioned if dismissed for gross misconduct). Prior to February 2012, the scheme was compulsory from the second week of the placement, and participants were sanctioned for non-attendance after this date.

7.1 Satisfaction with people on placements

7.1.1 Work experience

Most employers expressed positive attitudes about the people they took on for work experience opportunities. Around four in five said they were very or fairly satisfied with their attitude (82 per cent), skills (82 per cent) and overall quality (83 per cent), while in each case around one in eight employers was very or fairly dissatisfied (between 11 and 14 per cent for the three items). Figure 7.1 shows the detailed findings.

Figure 7.1 Rating of people on placements (work experience employers)



The main difference between employers was in whether people completed their placement. Where all had completed their placement, employers were very positive (95 per cent were satisfied with overall quality), but this was somewhat lower where half or most had completed (87 per cent), and much lower where less than half or none had completed the placement (48 per cent)³¹.

³¹ The survey did not cover reasons for non-completion of placements.

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

There were also differences by type of organisation. Micro-employers were slightly less positive than larger organisations (16 per cent were dissatisfied with overall quality), while employers in the non-profit or voluntary sector were more positive than those in the private or public sector (87 per cent in the non-profit/voluntary sector were satisfied with overall quality and just eight per cent dissatisfied).

Analysis by industry sector shows that views were most positive in Group F (construction) and in Group Q (human health and social work). Attitudes were least positive in production sectors³², as well as in Group I (accommodation and food service activities), and in 'other service' activities.

7.1.2 Sector-based work academies

Employers who offered work experience placements as part of a sector-based work academy were also positive towards the people they had on placement. Around four in five were very or fairly satisfied with the attitude (85 per cent), skills (85 per cent) and overall quality (82 per cent) of the people they took on. A relatively small proportion were very satisfied with their skills (18 per cent), although most were fairly satisfied. See Figure 7.2 for details.

Figure 7.2 Rating of people on placements (sector-based work academy employers)



³² Mainly manufacturing, as well as water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities.

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

The one significant difference for sector-based work academy employers was that those in the private sector were somewhat less positive than those in the public or non-profit/voluntary sectors: 76 per cent of private sector employers were satisfied with the overall quality of people on placements, compared with 93 per cent in other sectors.

7.1.3 Reasons for positive views

During the course of the survey, respondents were able to give comments in their own words about the people they had taken on for placements. This section gives an illustration of the types of comments made by employers.

Positive views were common place amongst employers, as seen in Section 7.1.2 and were most likely to focus on the attitude and enthusiasm of people on placements and the desire to get work.

'Just amazing attitudes, a desire to improve their skills and their own employability.'

(Work experience employer)

'They come with more of an open mind because they're looking to join the industry from an early age.'

(Sector-based work academy employer)

'They are eager to learn, desperate for a job.'

(Work experience employer)

'It's their attitude to be here – "right I'll do 30 hours a week just to try and gain myself employment even though I'm not being paid". It's their attitude, they've gone out of their way to make an impression.'

(Work experience employer)

'They want to better themselves and come off Jobseeker's [Allowance]. They tend to work a lot harder than if you just advertised and took someone on. They've got something to gain, and want to prove more.'

(Work experience employer)

In addition, some respondents commented on the high levels of performance and productivity from participants and their good attendance records.

'Polite, correct, all aspects of understanding and abilities were exceptional.'

(Work experience employer)

'They seem very efficient. I can't understand why they've not got a job, because they do everything you say, they're very efficient.'

(Work experience employer)

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

'They all seem very able to follow instructions and to be given tasks and do them unsupervised – and quite proactive in what they do.'

(Work experience employer)

'Arrived on time, not been off sick, attended every day with no issues and wanted to learn.'

(Work experience employer)

7.1.4 Reasons for dissatisfaction

The minority of respondents who said they were dissatisfied with the overall quality of people they had on placements were asked for the reasons for their dissatisfaction. As shown in Table 7.1, the main reasons for dissatisfaction were the attitude or motivation of people, their overall quality, or their attendance record.

Table 7.1 Reasons for dissatisfaction with people on work experience placements

	%
Attitude	51
Attendance record	30
Motivation	28
Quality of candidate	26
How long candidate lasted	3
Quality of work	1
Incident of theft	1
Other	5

Base: All work experience employers who were dissatisfied with the overall quality of people on placements (381).

Note: Percentages total more than 100 per cent as respondents were able to choose more than one response. Table includes findings for work experience only, as only 13 sector-based work academy employers were asked the question.

Some of the comments from employers highlight these reasons more clearly. In relation to attitude, some respondents felt that the people on placement did not have an understanding of the attitude required for the work. Others felt that people were only attending because they had been put forward by the jobcentre, and saw it as part of their benefit claim rather than as a job:

'They came in and didn't want to do any work. One person fell asleep, the other was on Facebook and Twitter and one used phones for personal use.'

(Work experience employer)

'Their attitude towards work. We found they weren't team players – they thought that they were going to come in, start the job and that was it. It doesn't work like that.'

(Work experience employer)

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

'Just didn't seem like they were that bothered – bad attitude and work ethic. I had to tell them to do things a number of times, really basic things.'

(Work experience employer)

Problems with attendance tended to relate to people wanting time off, general unreliability, or failure to complete the placement.

'Unreliability – people taking days off every week or having circumstances personally to deal with, having calls to go to interviews. Absenteeism isn't acceptable in that role.'

(Work experience employer)

'The first placement wanted time off every day to do personal activities, seeing his girlfriend, granny, "oh I'm ill today", he came in late, constant excuses. This is a place of employment, you can't do this anymore.'

(Work experience employer)

'Half of them didn't turn up after the first day, and some didn't even turn up to the first day.'

(Sector-based work academy employer)

Comments on the quality of people focused either on skills, lack of work experience or suitability for the working environment.

'Just very basic competencies – unable to file alphabetically, not understanding basic instructions and telephone messages not being able to say who she had spoken to.'

(Work experience employer)

'They had no experience of how to behave or how to conduct themselves in the workplace, e.g. they had no idea about phoning up if they are sick or going to be late.'

(Work experience employer)

'Some of the people turned up for interview that weren't suitably dressed, some were late, one gentleman was drunk.'

(Sector-based work academy employer)

As can be seen in Section 7.1.2, employers were largely very positive towards the people they had on placements. However, this section illustrates the types of negative experiences that occurred in the minority of instances.

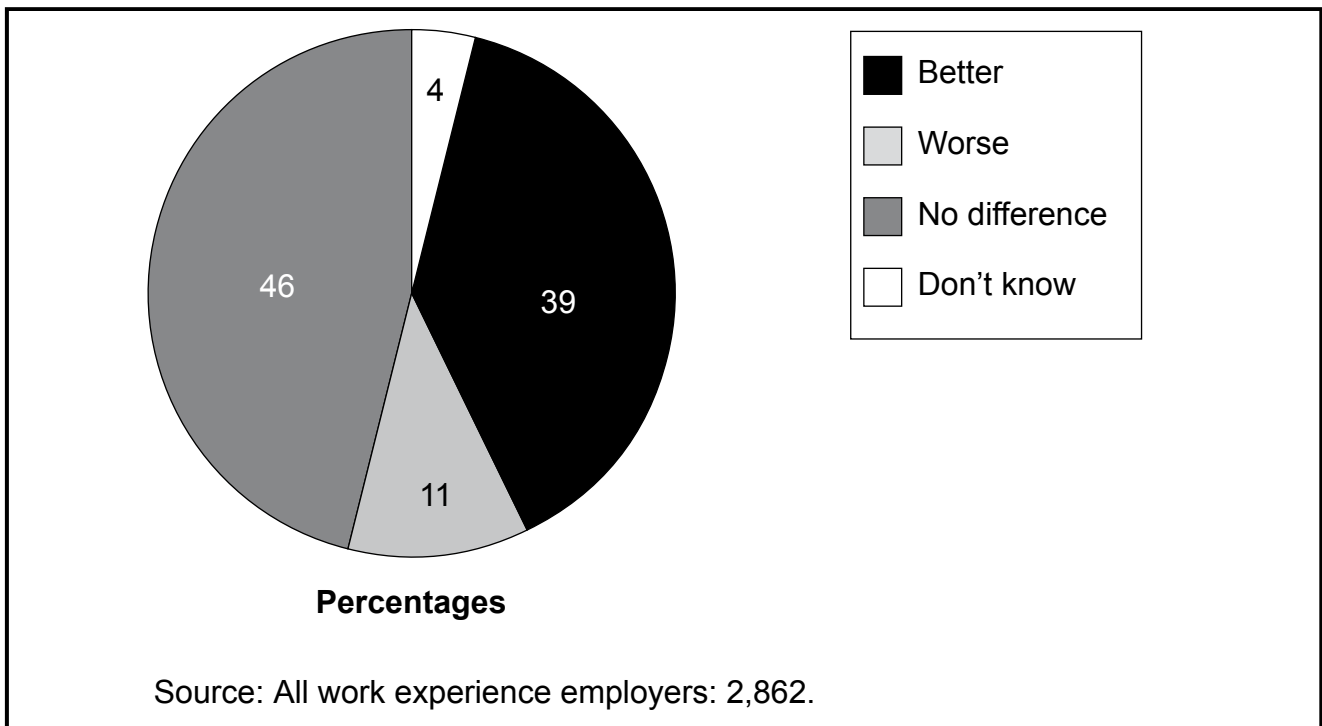
7.2 Comparison with expectations

Respondents were asked whether the quality of the people they had on placement was better or worse than they had expected.

7.2.1 Work experience

Work experience employers tended to say that people were either better than they had expected (39 per cent) or were no different (46 per cent). Just 11 per cent said that people on placements were worse than they had expected (see Figure 7.3).

Figure 7.3 Rating of people on placements relative to expectations (work experience employers)



As with the earlier question on satisfaction, the main factor that distinguished employers' views was whether the placements had been completed. The proportion who said that the quality was better than they expected ranged from 52 per cent where all had completed their placement, to 38 per cent where half or most had completed, and just 18 per cent where less than half had completed.

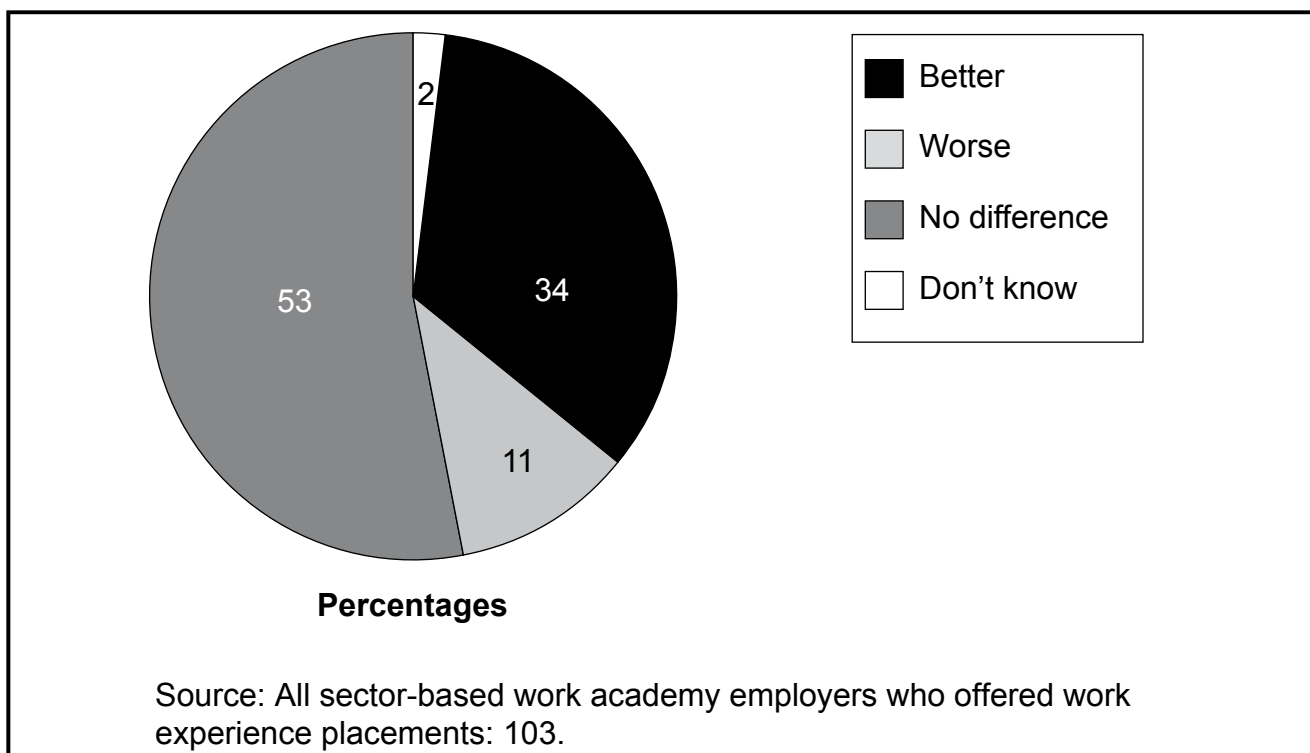
Micro-employers were once again a little more negative in their views (15 per cent said that the quality of people was worse than they had expected). Views were also less positive among employers in production sectors (16 per cent).

Employers who had taken on just one person on placement tended to be more positive than those who had taken on two or more (47 per cent said the quality was better than they had expected, compared with 37 per cent).

7.2.2 Sector-based work academies

Employers who offered work experience placements as part of a sector-based work academy were also likely to say that the quality of people was either better (34 per cent) or no different to what they had expected (53 per cent); see Figure 7.4.

Figure 7.4 Rating of people on placements relative to expectations (sector-based work academy employers)



The one significant difference for sector-based work academy employers was that those in the private sector were somewhat less positive than those in the public or non-profit/voluntary sectors: 16 per cent of private sector employers said that the quality of people was worse than they had expected.

7.3 Issues of misconduct

7.3.1 Work experience

Although most employers were very positive towards the people they had on placements, one in six work experience employers (16 per cent) said that they had experienced issues with at least one instance of misconduct across the range of participants they had on placement.³³ This was slightly higher among employers in the non-profit or voluntary sector (21 per cent) and in 'service industry' sectors (18 per cent). There was a link between misconduct and non-completion of placements: experience of misconduct was higher where not all recruits had completed their placement (22 per cent).

The proportion of employers who experienced misconduct appears quite high, given the positive attitudes to recruits seen in Section 7.1. However, it should be noted that employers may have had only one instance of misconduct over a large number of placements. This is

³³ The question asked of respondents was 'Have you had any issues with the person/people in terms of misconduct?'. Misconduct was defined by the respondent, but generally related to behaviour which they felt was not acceptable in the work environment. This covered a range of issues, such as punctuality or not conforming to the company's standards through to theft or substance abuse.

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

confirmed by analysis of number of placements: employers who took just one person on a placement were unlikely to experience misconduct (six per cent), but this increased among employers who took on between two and nine people (17 per cent), and among those taking on ten or more (29 per cent). This explains why most employers had positive views overall, even where they had experienced (often isolated) instances of misconduct.

7.3.2 Sector-based work academies

Experience of misconduct was higher among employers involved in sector-based work academies. One in three employers (32 per cent) who had someone on a work experience placement as part of the scheme said that they had experienced issues at least one instance of misconduct. As noted above, employers may have had only one instance of misconduct over a large number of placements.

As with work experience employers, experience of misconduct was higher among those who took on a larger number of people: 46 per cent among those taking on 10 or more people on a placement, compared with 14 per cent who took on fewer than ten. Given that the number of placements was typically higher among sector-based work academy employers than work experience employers (see Section 6.1), it is, therefore, not surprising that the overall experience of misconduct was higher.

Table 7.2 shows the breakdown of types of misconduct experienced by employers who had at least one instance of misconduct. The most common problems were related to attendance and behavioural issues. The issues were very similar between the two schemes.

Table 7.2 Issues of misconduct

	Work experience employers	Sector-based work academy employers
	%	%
Behavioural issues	36	40
Attendance/absence	36	37
Time-keeping	22	18
Theft	15	3
Attitude	13	12
Didn't conform to the organisation's standards	10	15
Substance abuse	6	6
Sickness	1	3
Other	3	6

Base: All employers who had experienced issues of misconduct (work experience: 482; sector-based work academies: 33).

Note: Percentages total more than 100 per cent as respondents were able to choose more than one response.

Individual comments from employers provide examples of the types of misconduct they experienced. In some cases, these reflect the issues raised in Section 7.1.4, such as attitude, attendance and suitability for the working environment.

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

'It was only one or two. I think some found it really difficult to settle into the job, and had problems with attendance, not turning up and being late.'

(Sector-based work academy employer)

'Just issues with not following company guidelines and health and safety.'

(Work experience employer)

'Problems with dress code, social problems – not knowing how to deal with other people.'

(Work experience employer)

'There are clear rules about mobiles – not allowed on the shop floor, but people keep them out and hide them.'

(Work experience employer)

'Going on Facebook when I'd repeatedly told him not to.'

(Work experience employer)

There were also references by a minority of employers to more serious incidents of unacceptable workplace behaviour, use of drugs or alcohol, theft and violence.

'I had to discipline one of the people. He was talking in a way that was inappropriate with clients and staff members.'

(Work experience employer)

'Damaged property and swearing at one of my team leaders, but that was one person and I had him removed from the premises immediately. I liaised with the jobcentre, and they spoke to him, and he's issued an apology.'

(Sector-based work academy employer)

'The stealing of money from both the shop and customers. The language used was unacceptable.'

(Work experience employer)

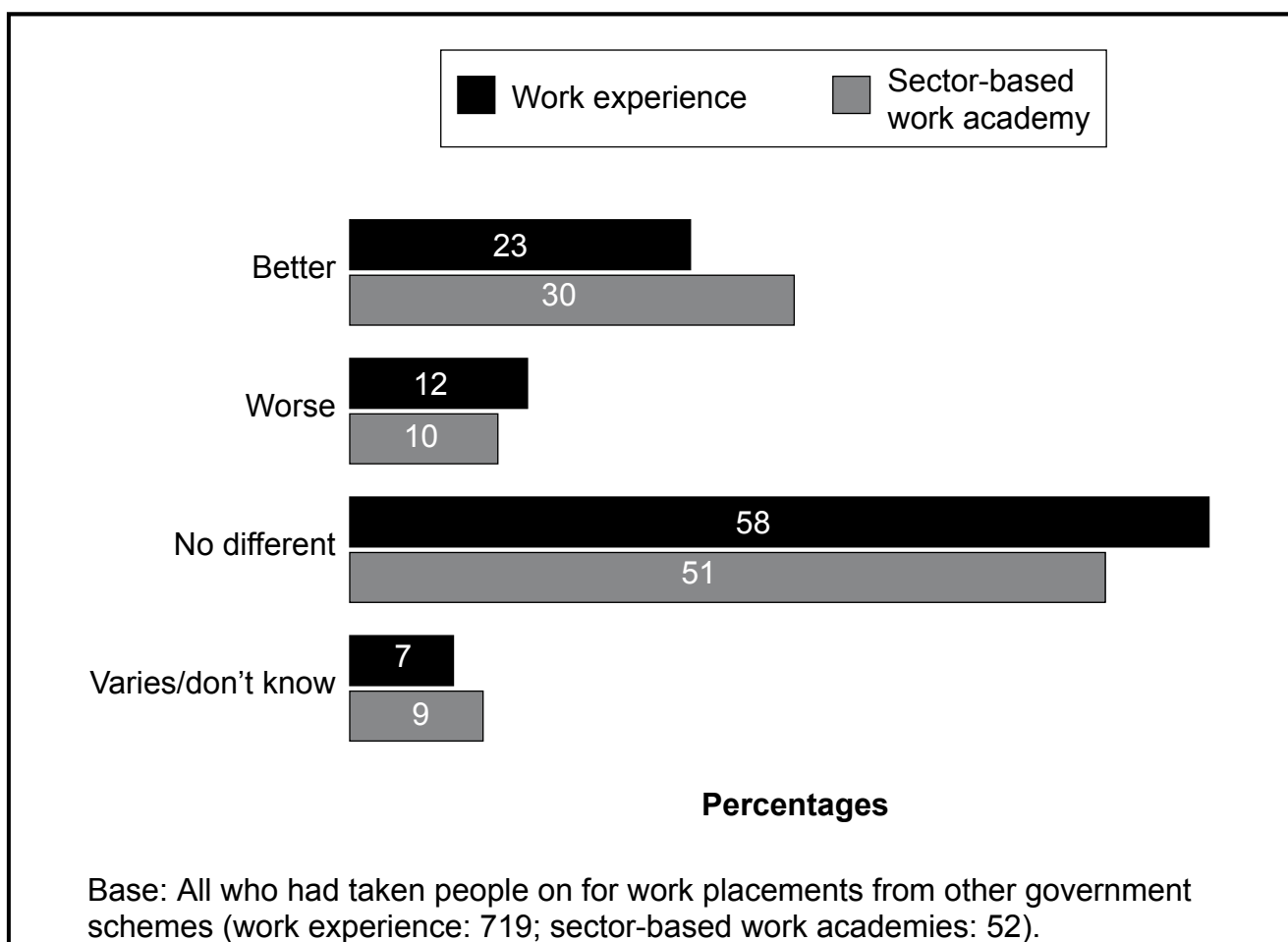
7.4 Comparison with other government schemes

Where employers had taken on people for work placements from other Government schemes, they were asked how the quality of people compared to their recent experiences of work experience or sector-based work academies.

7.4.1 Work experience

Just over half of work experience employers said that the quality of people was no different from other schemes (58 per cent). Respondents were more likely to say that the quality was better (23 per cent) rather than worse (12 per cent) under work Experience, compared with other schemes (see Figure 7.5).

Figure 7.5 Rating of people on placements relative to previous programmes



Among work experience employers, attitudes varied as follows:

- attitudes were less positive among employers in the non-profit/voluntary sector than in the public or private sectors (18 per cent in the non-profit/voluntary sector said the quality was better);
- respondents were more likely to say that the quality of people was better than in other programmes if they took on fewer placements (26 per cent who took on fewer than ten people, compared with 17 per cent who took on ten or more);

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

- employers who only took on people aged under 25 were more positive than those who took older people on as well (27 per cent and 19 per cent respectively said the quality was better);
- views were more negative when most or all of the placements were not completed (21 per cent of these employers said the quality was worse).

7.4.2 Sector-based work academies

As seen above in Figure 7.5, around half of sector-based work academy employers who had people on placements said that the quality was no different from other schemes (51 per cent). Respondents were more likely to say that the quality was better (30 per cent) rather than worse (ten per cent) under sector-based work academies, compared with other schemes. The figures are very similar for the two schemes: work experience and sector-based work academies.

7.5 Reasons for difference in standard

Employers were asked why they thought the quality of people had been better or worse (as appropriate) under work experience or sector-based work academies, compared with participants from other Government schemes. Respondents were most likely to mention the attitude or level of interest shown by people on placements. This applied both to respondents who said that people on work experience/sector-based work academy placements were better than those from other schemes, as well as those who said they were worse. This underlines the importance of attitude in employers' assessment of people on placements.

Individual comments from employers indicate that improvements from previous schemes sometimes relate to the voluntary nature of the work experience and sector-based work academy schemes.

'I haven't had a single person from another scheme do a single week let alone eight weeks. This is voluntary and people want to learn – other schemes are mandatory, so people don't really want to be there.'

(Work experience employer)

'The people that come here actually want to come here. The people on other schemes are forced to.'

(Work experience employer)

In addition, some employers felt that candidates had been chosen and prepared more carefully by Jobcentre Plus.

'Much better suited to the needs of the places we were offering. The jobcentre have been much better at matching to that.'

(Work experience employer)

'They have been chosen with more thought, especially in the academy scheme. They had previous retail experience whereas last year people had no experience.'

(Sector-based work academy employer)

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

'They have been better prepared when they join us, better at the outset. They have a better understanding of the job and what it involves.'

(Sector-based work academy employer)

In some cases, the specific aspects of sector-based work academies were felt to have made a positive difference.

'There are more people to select from and more of a chance to see what they are like before taking them on.'

(Sector-based work academy employer)

'They get training they are more likely to stay with us, they have bought into the company.'

(Sector-based work academy employer)

Where people on work experience opportunities or sector-based work academy placements were seen as worse than those from previous schemes, this generally related either to overall ability to do the job, or in some cases to the young age group taking part.

'Just in terms of lack of experience, lack of qualifications, lack of common sense, lack of enthusiasm.'

(Work experience employer)

'They're maybe younger, less life experienced.'

(Work experience employer)

7.6 Comparison with work experience scheme prior to February 2012

As mentioned previously, in February 2012 the guidelines for the work experience scheme were amended so that participants were not sanctioned for non-attendance of the placement, as they had been prior to February 2012 after the first week of their placement was completed.

In 37 per cent of cases, employers who had provided work experience opportunities said that they had also been involved in the scheme prior to February 2012. This was more common among large organisations (47 per cent) and those in the non-profit/voluntary sector (46 per cent).

The majority of employers said that they had not seen any changes since before February 2012, although around one in four said that there had been a change in either the quality of candidates (25 per cent), the attitude of candidates (27 per cent) or drop-out rates (28 per cent).

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

Where changes had been seen, they were more likely to be positive rather than negative changes, in relation to the quality and attitude of candidates. However, where changes had been seen in drop-out rates, these were more likely to be negative rather than positive. Table 7.3 provides further details.

Table 7.3 Perceived changes since before February 2012

	Quality of candidates	Attitude of candidates	Drop-out rates
	%	%	%
Positive change	17	18	11
Negative change	6	6	14
No change	70	68	68
Don't know	7	8	7

Base: All work experience employers who were involved in the scheme prior to February 2012 (1,086).

There were no differences between employers on these questions, except in relation to whether placements had been completed. Where most or all placements had not been completed, employers were more likely to say there had been a negative change. This applied to the quality and attitude of candidates, as well as to drop-out rates.

8 Experience of sector-based work academies

This chapter looks at the different aspects of sector-based work academies, and how well they work together. It also examines employers' views on the length of sector-based work academies. In addition, the chapter covers employers' attitudes to the training offered by training providers – its quality and relevance to the job.

Respondents were positive about the various elements of sector-based work academies, and felt that the elements worked well together. Training was seen as relevant and of high quality. The length of the placement was felt to be right by a large majority, with a small minority saying that it was not long enough.

Key findings

- All of the various elements of sector-based work academies were likely to be seen as very important by those who offered them (ranging from 74 per cent to 81 per cent for the different elements).
- Where employers were involved in two or more elements of sector-based work academies, the majority said that they thought the different elements worked well together (87 per cent).
- Most employers thought that the length of sector-based work academies was about right (85 per cent), although ten per cent said it was not long enough and three per cent thought it was too long.
- Where employers were involved with a course run by a training provider, 87 per cent were satisfied with the quality of the training and 90 per cent its relevance.
- If employers offered provider-led training as well as at least one other element, nine per cent said that they had experienced problems co-ordinating the different elements.

8.1 Importance of the different elements of sector-based work academies

Employers were asked about the elements of sector-based work academies that they were involved in. All of the various elements were likely to be seen as very important by those who offered them. This applied to 74 per cent of employers in relation to the work experience placement, 80 per cent for job interviews and 81 per cent for training courses (see Table 8.1).

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

Table 8.1 Importance of the different elements of sector-based work academies

	Work experience placement	Job interview	Training course run by training provider or employer
	%	%	%
Very important	74	80	81
Fairly important	22	17	12
Not very important	2	1	2
Not at all important	1	1	0
Don't know	2	1	5
<i>Base: All sector-based work academy employers involved in each element</i>	257	226	261

Note: Percentages do not total 100 per cent due to percentage rounding. Base includes employers from work experience sample who were also involved in sector-based work academies.

There were differences between employers in the findings for training courses. Employers who were involved in all elements of sector-based work academies were more likely than those involved only in some elements to say that the training was very important (87 per cent compared with 77 per cent). This suggests that the training is particularly valuable when it is part of the complete package. In addition, employers in education, health, public administration or defence were more likely to see the training as very important (91 per cent), while those in service industry sectors were less likely to say this (73 per cent).

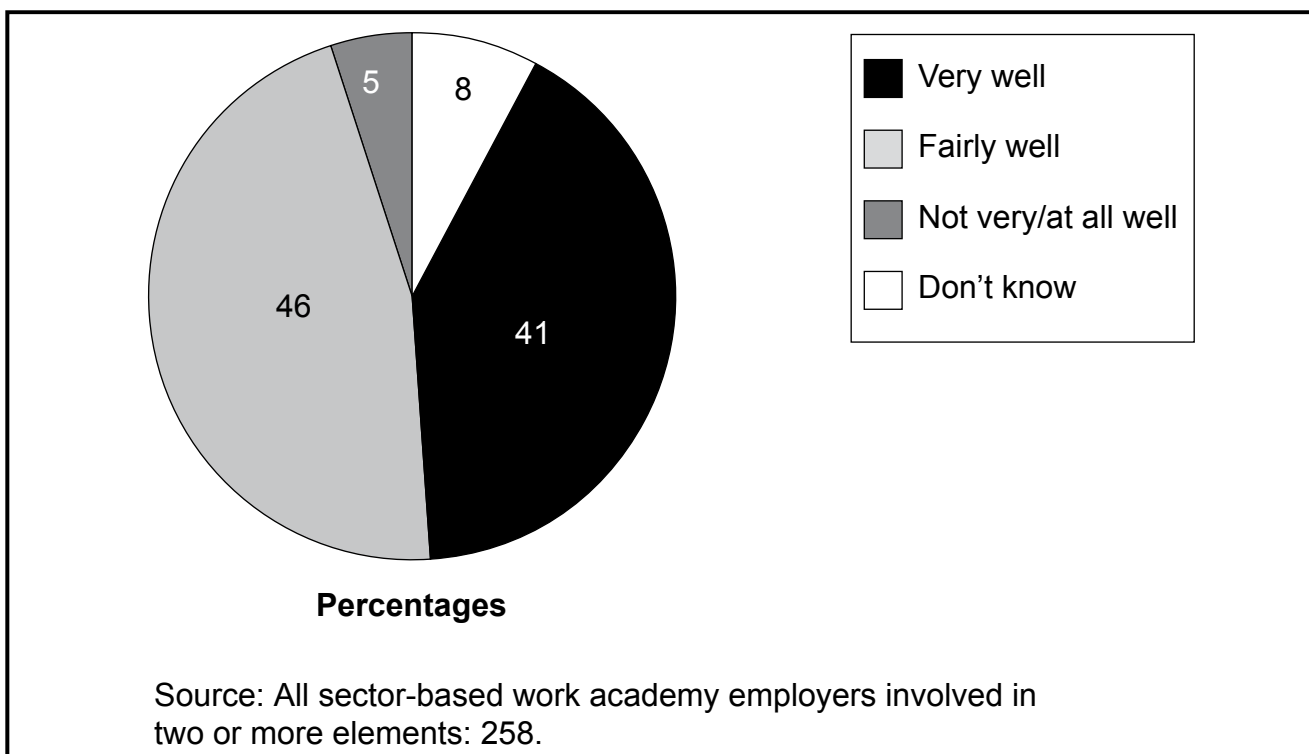
8.2 How different elements work together

Employers who were involved in two or more elements of sector-based work academies were asked how well they thought the different elements worked together. Most respondents said that they thought the different elements worked well together (41 per cent very well and 46 per cent fairly well), with just five per cent saying that they did not work well together (see Figure 8.1).

Views were more positive among employers who were involved in all elements (47 per cent said the elements worked very well together), compared with those who were only involved in two of the elements (36 per cent). In addition, views were more positive among employers who had taken on large number of placements (51 per cent of those with ten or more placements said the elements worked very well together).

Employers in education, health, public administration or defence were more likely to say the elements worked very well together (53 per cent), while those in service industry sectors were less likely to say this (33 per cent).

Figure 8.1 How different elements work together



Only 12 respondents said that the different elements did not work well together. Some of their comments are shown below.

'The college and the jobcentre didn't work together very well – they both had their own goals.'

(Sector-based work academy employer)

'Having all the different organisations is very confusing, you can't always get them to synchronise; and sometimes they haven't got enough resources.'

(Sector-based work academy employer)

'Too disjointed, not always clear who is responsible for what.'

(Sector-based work academy employer)

8.3 Length of sector-based work academies

Sector-based work academy employers who offered work experience placements were asked whether they thought the overall length of the academy was too long, not long enough or about right.

The vast majority thought that the length was about right (85 per cent), although ten per cent said it was not long enough and three per cent thought it was too long. Employers in the non-profit or voluntary sector were more likely than those in other sectors to say that it was not long enough (22 per cent). In addition, employers who took on a smaller number of placements (fewer than ten) were more likely to say that it was not long enough (16 per

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

cent, compared with five per cent of those with ten or more placements). There were no differences according to the actual length of the placement.

The main reasons why employers thought the academies were not long enough mostly related to the work placement element – that people didn't learn the job fully within the placement time and that people needed longer to settle at an organisation.

'I don't think it's long enough to gain suitable experience or skills to put on the CV. To look credible it needs to be a longer period of time.'

(Sector-based work academy employer)

'By the time you get them trained and they get settled in, they're off again. It could do with being three months.'

(Sector-based work academy employer)

'Sometimes there are different elements in the academy and you have to work them around each other, and only have two days to do it.'

(Sector-based work academy employer)

'By eight weeks they're alright, but most employers would want them to have a bit more experience before they'd trust to take them on.'

(Sector-based work academy employer)

8.4 Attitudes to courses offered by training providers

Employers who offered sector-based work academies that included a course run by a training provider were asked for their views on the training. A large majority of employers were satisfied with both the quality and relevance of the training, including around half in each case who were very satisfied (47 per cent were satisfied with the quality of training and 52 per cent with its relevance). Only a small proportion was dissatisfied (five per cent with quality, six per cent with relevance), as shown in Table 8.2.

Table 8.2 Attitudes to course run by training providers

	Quality of training	Relevance to organisation's needs
	%	%
Very satisfied	47	52
Fairly satisfied	40	38
Fairly dissatisfied	4	4
Very dissatisfied	1	2
No opinion	8	4

Base: All employers who offered sector-based work academies that included a training course (180).

Note: Base includes employers from work experience sample who were also involved in sector-based work academies.

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

The one sub-group difference on these questions was that multi-site organisations (typically larger) were more likely to be very satisfied with the quality of training: 51 per cent of multi-site organisations were very satisfied, compared with 39 per cent of single-site organisations.

If employers offered provider-led training as well as at least one other element, they were asked whether they had experienced problems co-ordinating the training course with other elements. Just nine per cent said that they had experienced problems, which generally involved difficulties either with the training provider or with Jobcentre Plus.

'By the time they completed the classroom training, we were left with only 30 per cent of the people we had selected. If you plan for a batch of 15 employees and are left with five, the resources we spent were a waste. So we changed it to bypass the training provider, so that we might be able to retain them, but that did fail as well.'

(Sector-based work academy employer)

'We couldn't secure any training, because they [the training provider] didn't have enough resources, and they were very difficult to get hold of.'

(Sector-based work academy employer)

'Advisers at the jobcentre insisted that candidates sign on when they should be in training.'

(Sector-based work academy employer)

'Mix-ups with when they were supposed to start because of the jobcentre.'

(Sector-based work academy employer)

9 Overall attitudes to the schemes

This chapter looks at employers' overall attitudes towards the two schemes, including the benefits of involvement and suggestions for improvement. It also examines whether employers would take someone on again in the future and whether they would recommend the schemes.

Employers were generally very positive towards both schemes. Most employers felt that they had benefited from participation, and said that these benefits were worth the time and resource spent in setting up the placements. A high proportion of employers would recommend the scheme they took part in to other employers, and the majority would take someone on a placement again.

Key findings

- Most employers saw benefits in participating in the work experience scheme (74 per cent) or with sector-based work academies (76 per cent). The two most common benefits were getting extra resource at no or low cost and providing a way of trying people out before hiring them.
- Where there had been benefits, almost all employers said that the benefits had been worth the time and resource in setting up the work experience opportunities (93 per cent) or sector-based work academies (92 per cent).
- In both schemes, the most frequent suggestions for improvement were greater support from Jobcentre Plus, and improvements in the quality of candidates.
- Many employers said that they would be very likely to take on someone in the future on a work experience opportunity (64 per cent) or as part of a sector-based work academy (55 per cent).
- A very high proportion of employers said that they would recommend work experience (91 per cent) or sector-based work academies (88 per cent) to other employers.
- In both schemes, employers mostly agreed that taking part let them 'take a risk on someone you otherwise wouldn't' (77 per cent of work experience employers and 72 per cent of sector-based work academy employers).

9.1 Benefits of involvement

Around three in four employers said that there had been benefits for their organisation in taking people on work experience opportunities (74 per cent) and sector-based work academies (76 per cent). Analysis of the work experience employers shows the following sub-groups were more likely to say there were benefits:

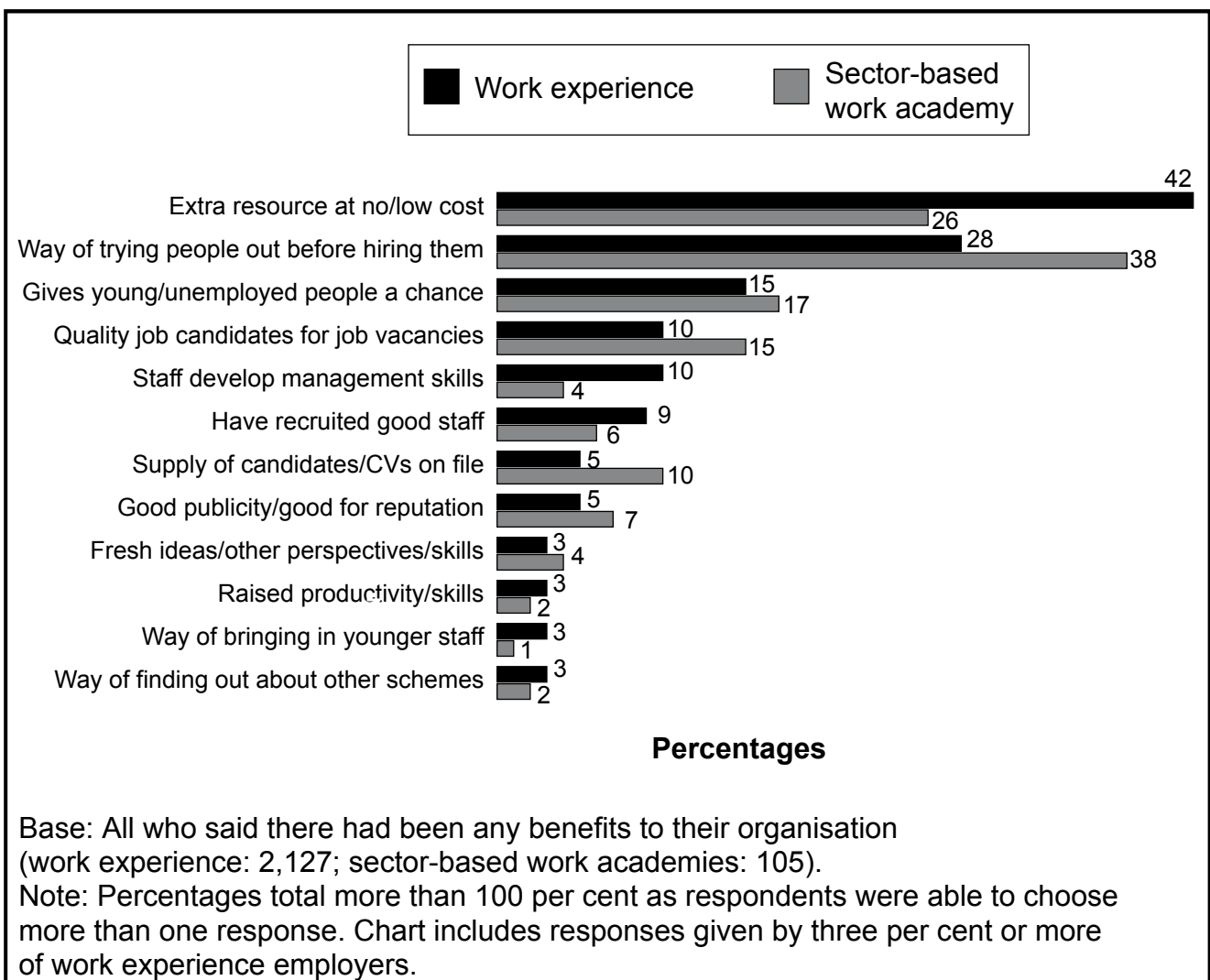
- non-profit and voluntary sector employers (86 per cent) were more likely than those in the public (67 per cent) or private sector (72 per cent) to say there were benefits;
- employers in Group O (public administration and defence and compulsory social security – 87 per cent) were most likely to see benefits for their organisation, while those in Group I (accommodation and food service activities) were least likely to do so (59 per cent);

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

- employers with two or more placements (80 per cent) were more likely to see benefits than those with one placement only (58 per cent). Related to this, small employers (with fewer than 50 employees) were less likely to say there had been benefits (67 per cent), compared with medium (78 per cent) and large organisations (81 per cent);
- those who were involved in the work experience scheme prior to February 2012 were more likely to see benefits than those who only became involved since then (80 per cent compared with 70 per cent);
- as on other issues, placement completion had an impact on attitudes. Where most or all placements were not completed, only 42 per cent of employers said there were benefits to their organisation.

Figure 9.1 shows the specific benefits that respondents mentioned. The two most common benefits were getting extra resource at no or low cost and providing a way of trying people out before hiring them. These benefits ranked highest amongst both work experience employers and sector-based work academy employers.

Figure 9.1 Benefits to organisation of taking people on as part of work experience placements/sector-based work academies



Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

Among respondents who said there had been benefits to their organisation, almost all said that the benefits had been worth the time and resource in setting up the work experience opportunities/sector-based work academies, as shown in Table 9.1.

Table 9.1 Whether benefits worth time and resource in setting up work experience opportunities/sector-based work academies

	Work experience employers	Sector-based work academy employers
	%	%
Yes	93	92
No	5	4
Has not been much/any resource	1	1
Don't know	1	3

Base: All who said there had been any benefits to their organisation (work experience: 2,127; sector-based work academies: 105).

9.2 Suggested improvements

All respondents were asked in what ways, if any, they thought the schemes could be improved (see Table 9.2). Reflecting the positive views expressed by employers throughout the survey, one in three respondents said that they could not think of any improvements.

'I don't think I could imagine any way of improving it.'

(Work experience employer)

'I'm really happy with the way it is.'

(Sector-based work academy employer)

'Jobcentre Plus have been very helpful, they've tried to fit with what we need.'

(Work experience employer)

'I just think it's a good idea. It is beneficial for the company because they get the time and effort put into them. It is beneficial for the client as they have the potential of employment afterwards.'

(Work experience employer)

'I think it was a good and easy process. It was beneficial for the company – the way the jobcentre handled the process, the follow up was very good.'

(Work experience employer)

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

'Completely happy with it – fab [sic] idea, gives the employer a good idea if they want to employ that person, saves employer money; really good scheme.'

(Work experience employer)

'I'm absolutely 100 per cent happy with the way the scheme goes and the support from the jobcentre.'

(Work experience employer)

'I don't think it could be [improved] really because the selection process is excellent and the jobcentre do a very good job.'

(Work experience employer)

'The calibre of people I have are good and have turned up every day.'

(Work experience employer)

'I find it nice and flexible and the jobcentre are supportive, I thought it was impressive.'

(Work experience employer)

For those employers who identified room for improvement (57 per cent for work experience and 56 per cent for sector-based work academies), the most frequent suggestion was greater support from Jobcentre Plus (17 per cent for work experience, 12 per cent for sector-based work academies), and more communication with employers (eight per cent and seven per cent respectively). This could either be before the placement, to discuss employers' requirements or to provide guidance; during the placement, to monitor progress; or at the end, to obtain feedback and discuss future needs.

'Jobcentre plus should follow up on calls from employers who want to take on work experience candidates – we really had to chase them.'

(Work experience employer)

'More regular meetings with myself and the jobcentre about how we both can help each other – such as by giving job descriptions for the different types of vacancies. so they know what they are getting into; involve us at an early stage of the interviewing process, so they don't miss out on people with certain skill levels.'

(Sector-based work academy employer)

'More communication between Jobcentre Plus and myself during the work experience. After the initial set up and application, I received no check up or calls from the jobcentre to see how he was doing. Also, I offered four positions and since that one applicant I've had no other communication – I can't believe that there's nobody out there to fill those positions, especially after the success of the first applicant.'

(Work experience employer)

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

There could be much improved dialogue with Jobcentre Plus and the employing organisation to ensure both quantity and quality of potential candidates is maintained, regular review meetings with Jobcentre Plus to ensure good dialogue to both organisations – to iron out any difficulties and identify any further opportunities for work-based training.'

(Work experience employer)

'I think the improvement could be at the end of the programme. We very rarely get asked for feedback, so they may have been here for six weeks and done a good job, but nobody asks us about it.'

(Work experience employer)

Some employers felt that Jobcentre Plus could improve its communication with candidates.

'Communication between candidates and the jobcentre, because we were told different things. We were told that the signing-on would fit in around the training, but they were told that they needed to stop [the training] to sign on, or stop what they were doing and go for interviews for other jobs – so we had to work our training around them.'

(Sector-based work academy employer)

'More contact from the jobcentre, the jobcentre being more involved with the candidates instead of just signing on once a fortnight.'

(Work experience employer)

I think maybe it could be made clearer for some of the candidates about the process, for example how long the placements are, more clear communication with the jobcentre about what the placement is and what they'll do.'

(Work experience employer)

Some respondents suggested longer placements:

'[It could be improved] by letting the placements do a longer placement other than four or eight weeks, maybe a three-month placement to give them a chance to get proper experience.'

(Work experience employer)

'Eight weeks would barely scratch the surfaces in making someone useful in our business. If they come and have a good attitude they could become a useful candidate after eight to 12 weeks, they need to be here longer to be more useful.'

(Work experience employer)

Respondents often commented on the candidates, asking for better candidates, or requesting that Jobcentre Plus checks the quality of candidates and makes sure they meet the employer's requirements.

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

'Making sure the people who are coming actually want to be here, in regards to matching their needs to the organisation.'

(Work experience employer)

'They need to understand about timekeeping and that business expects them to do what they are told.'

(Work experience employer)

'Candidates should be more closely monitored and should be screened before they are selected. I think it is the selection process and sometimes you feel as though you've become a dumping ground – it's a case of take as many as you can, it's like a conveyor belt.'

(Work experience employer)

'They need to ensure that the jobcentre place the right people for the right position. You don't want to put them in a position they had no interest in. One girl wanted to be a bouncer and had no interest in office work.'

(Work experience employer)

Table 9.2 Ways in which schemes could be improved

	Work experience employers	Sector-based work academy employers
	%	%
More support from Jobcentre Plus	17	12
Improve quality of candidates	9	7
Better communication	8	7
Longer placements	7	5
Make sure candidates meet requirements	6	8
Check quality of candidates	6	4
Increase motivation to participate	5	2
Inform candidates better	4	3
More candidates	4	1
Financial support for participating people	3	1
Better training for candidates	2	2
Financial support for employers	2	4
Make it mandatory	2	2
Advertise scheme better	1	3
Other	6	8
Nothing	33	32
Don't know	10	12

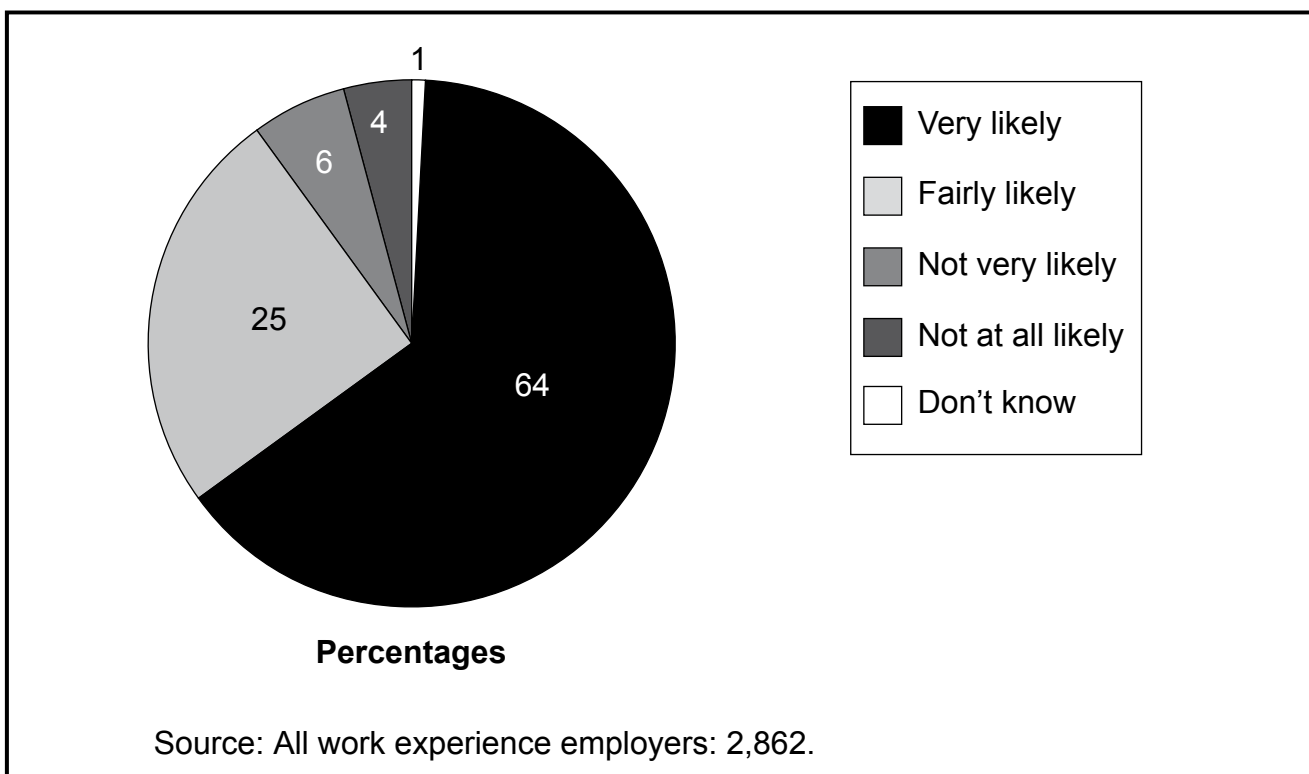
Base: All work experience employers (2,862) and sector-based work academy employers (138).
Note: Percentages total more than 100 per cent as respondents were able to choose more than one response.

9.3 Likelihood of taking someone on in the future

9.3.1 Work experience

Two in three work experience employers said that they would be very likely to take on someone in the future on a work experience opportunity (64 per cent), while a further 25 per cent said they would be fairly likely to do so. Just ten per cent said they would be unlikely to take someone on again (see Figure 9.2).

Figure 9.2 Whether would take someone on a work experience placement in the future: work experience employers



As on other issues, placement completion rates had a bearing on employers' attitudes. Where most or all placements had not been completed, employers were less likely to think they would take someone on again (41 per cent very likely)³⁴.

Larger organisations were more likely than smaller organisations to say they would take on more placements in the future. The proportion who said they would be very likely to do this was 56 per cent among micro-organisations and 62 per cent of small employers, but was higher among medium-sized employers (68 per cent) and large employers (69 per cent). Related to this, organisations that had taken on more placements were also more likely to consider taking people on again (78 per cent of those who took on ten or more placements, compared with 65 per cent taking on between two and nine, and 47 per cent who took on just one placement).

³⁴ The survey did not cover reasons for non-completion of placements.

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

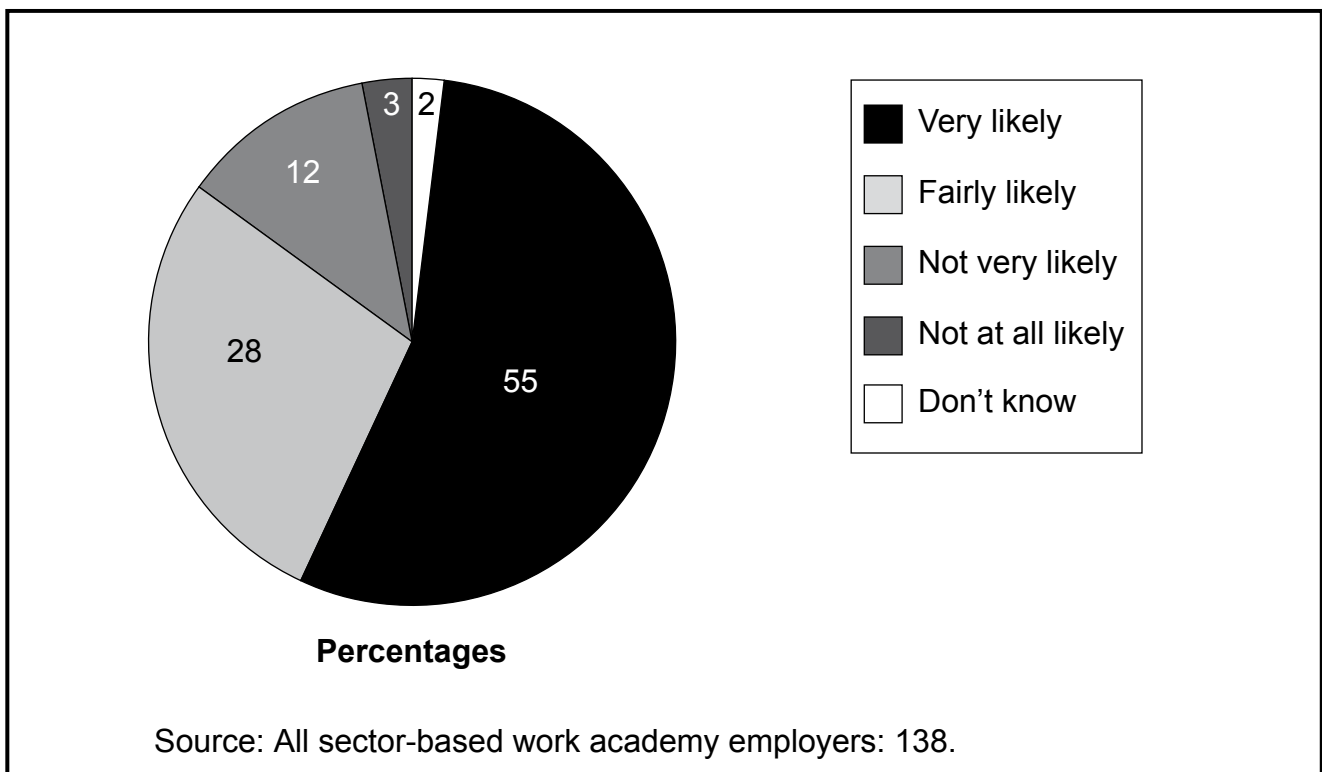
In addition, employers who had taken part in the work experience scheme before (prior to February 2012) and those who had also taken part in other Government schemes were more likely to say they would take people on in the future (71 per cent and 70 per cent respectively said they would be very likely to do so).

Analysis by type of organisation shows that those in the non-profit or voluntary sector were most likely to say they would take someone on again (76 per cent very likely, compared with 61 per cent in the public sector and 60 in the private sector), while the figure was lower than average amongst employers in production sectors (47 per cent).

9.3.2 Sector-based work academies

Among employers who had been involved with sector-based work academies, more than half (55 per cent) said that they would be very likely to take on someone in the future as part of an academy, while a further 28 per cent said they would be fairly likely to do so. Just 15 per cent said they would be unlikely to take someone on again (see Figure 9.3).

Figure 9.3 Whether would take someone on a work experience placement in the future: sector-based work academy employers



Employers were more likely to say they would take someone on again if they had taken part in all elements of a sector-based work academy (70 per cent very likely) rather than just some elements (49 per cent).

As was the case with work experience employers, those who had taken on a greater number of placements were also more likely to say they would take someone on in the future (72 per cent of those who took on ten or more people said they would be very likely to do so, compared with 41 per cent of those who took on less than ten). In addition, those with experience of other Government schemes were more likely than other employers to say they would take someone on again (70 per cent and 50 per cent very likely respectively).

9.4 Does scheme allow employers to take a risk on people?

In both schemes, employers mostly agreed that taking part let them ‘take a risk on someone you otherwise wouldn’t’. Three in four work experience employers agreed (77 per cent), including 37 per cent who agreed strongly, while 19 per cent disagreed. Figures were similar for sector-based work academies: 72 per cent of respondents agreed (32 per cent strongly), and 22 per cent disagreed; see Table 9.3 for details.

Table 9.3 Whether agree or disagree that ‘work experience/sector-based work academies let you take a risk on someone you otherwise wouldn’t’

	Work experience employers	Sector-based work academy employers
	%	%
Strongly agree	37	32
Tend to disagree	40	40
Tend to disagree	13	15
Strongly disagree	6	7
Don’t know	3	6

Base: All work experience employers (2,862) and sector-based work academy employers (138).

Note: Percentages do not total 100 per cent due to percentage rounding.

In the work experience sample, employers in the non-profit and voluntary sector were less likely to agree (70 per cent) than those in the public (78 per cent) or private sector (81 per cent). Organisations in production industries were more likely than other employers to agree (85 per cent).

9.5 Would employers recommend the scheme?

A very high proportion of employers said that they would recommend work experience (91 per cent) or sector-based work academies (88 per cent) to other employers. This was consistent across different types of organisations, and was lower only among work experience employers who had experienced low levels of placement completion (73 per cent of employers who said most or all placements had not been completed)³⁵.

³⁵ The survey did not cover reasons for non-completion of placements.

10 Impact of schemes

This chapter looks at the impact of the two schemes. Firstly, it examines the extent to which employers have taken people on at the end of the placements. It then looks at the more general impact on recruitment: whether employers have offered fewer vacancies for paid work as a result of offering placements, and whether employers have become more likely to recruit young, unemployed people as a result of their participation.

Around half of work experience employers and three-quarters of sector-based work academy employers took on at least one participant at the end of the scheme. Many of these took on half or more of the participants. Employers said that the schemes encouraged them to take on young people with a recent history of unemployment, and had led to an increased focus, particularly amongst work experience employers, on recruiting young people.

Key findings

- Half of all work experience employers (50 per cent) and 78 per cent of all sector-based work academy employers who offered placements said they had taken at least one participant on at the end of the placement.
- Among employers who took someone on at the end of the placement, 44 per cent of work experience employers took on half or more of the people, as did 60 per cent of sector-based work academy employers.
- Just six per cent of work experience employers said that they had fewer vacancies for paid work, as a result of offering work experience opportunities.
- Around two in five respondents (40 per cent of work experience employers and 38 per cent of sector-based work academy employers) said that taking part in the scheme had made them more likely to recruit young people with a recent history of unemployment³⁶.
- Half of work experience employers (50 per cent) agreed that their recruitment had focused more on young people since taking part in the work experience scheme. This was somewhat lower (37 per cent) among sector-based work academy employers.

10.1 Taking people on after placement

10.1.1 Work experience

Where at least one person had completed the work experience placement, respondents were asked whether they had taken anyone on after the placement had ended. More than half (56 per cent) said that they had taken someone on, the equivalent of 50 per cent of all work experience employers.

³⁶ Whilst the work experience scheme has been primarily targeted at under-25s, sector-based work academies are not focused on a particular age range. Therefore, sector-based work academies are less likely to have an impact on recruitment of young people.

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

As shown in Table 10.1, larger employers were more likely than smaller employers to take someone on. Related to this, those taking on a larger number of placements were also more likely to take someone on.

Table 10.1 Whether employers took anyone on at end of placement

	%
Total	56
Size of organisation	
Micro (fewer than 10 employees)	40
Small (10-49 employees)	60
Medium (50-249 employees)	59
Large (250 or more employees)	67
Number of placements	
One	36
Between two and nine	57
Ten or more	72

Base: All work experience employers where at least one placement was completed (2,585).

There were also differences by type of organisation. Non-profit or voluntary sector organisations were less likely to take someone on (42 per cent), compared with those in the public or private sector (60 per cent in each case).

Analysis by sector shows that:

- Employers in Group G (the wholesale, retail and motor repair sector) were more likely to take someone on (62 per cent), as were those in accommodation and food service activities (63 per cent). This is encouraging, as these sectors (particularly Group G) are well represented in the employers taking part in the scheme.
- Organisations in education, health, public administration and defence were less likely to take someone on (47 per cent), as were those in arts, entertainment and recreation (41 per cent) and in professional, scientific and technical activities (42 per cent).

Employers who had taken part in work experience prior to February 2012 were also more likely to take someone on (64 per cent).

10.1.2 Sector-based work academies

Among employers who had offered work experience placements as part of a sector-based work academy (excluding cases where no-one had completed the placement), 81 per cent said that they had taken someone on at the end of the placement, the equivalent of 78 per cent of all employers offering placements as part of a sector-based work academy.

This was higher among those who had offered a large number of placements: 94 per cent of those who had provided ten or more placements, compared with 64 per cent with fewer than ten placements.

If we restrict the analysis to employers who offered all three elements of a sector-based work academy (work experience placement, training and job interview), a higher proportion – 89 per cent – took at least one person on at the end of the placement (again this excludes cases where no-one had completed a placement).

10.2 Numbers taken on after placement

10.2.1 Work experience

Among work experience employers who took someone on at the end of the placement, around half (47 per cent) took one person on, while 21 per cent took on two, and 31 per cent three or more. Details are shown in Figure 10.1.

Figure 10.1 Number of people taken on at end of placement

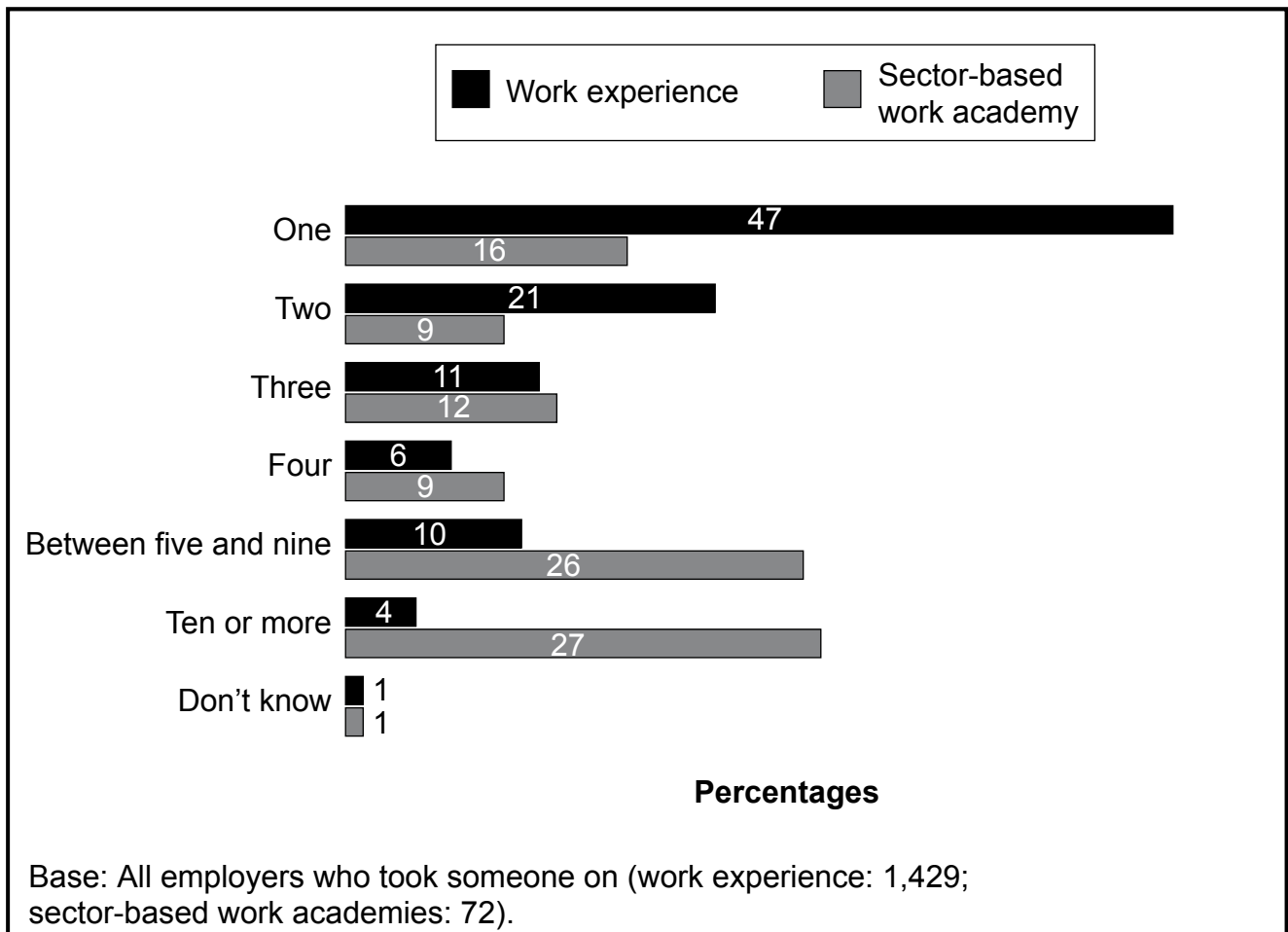


Table 10.2 shows the proportion of people taken on at the end of the placement. One in five employers (19 per cent) took all of the people on (or the only one if they had just one placement), while 25 per cent took on at least half (but not all). The remaining 57 per cent took on less than half of the people they had on placement. The table breaks this down by the number of placements.

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

Table 10.2 Proportion taken on at the end of placement (work experience)

	Number of placements			Total %
	One %	2–9 %	10+ %	
All	100	10	2	19
More than half (but not all)	–	14	7	10
Half	–	22	6	15
A quarter or more, but less than half	–	36	30	30
Less than a quarter	–	17	56	27
<i>Base: All work experience employers who took someone on, excluding don't know</i>	<i>171</i>	<i>815</i>	<i>430</i>	<i>1,416</i>

Note: Percentages do not total 100 per cent due to percentage rounding.

10.2.2 Sector-based work academies

Among employers who took someone on at the end of the sector-based work academy, around half (53 per cent) took on five or more people, including 27 per cent who took on ten or more. Details are shown in Figure 10.1.

On average, the number of people taken on by sector-based work academy employers was higher than for work experience employers. This is to be expected, given the nature of the schemes. In particular, sector-based work academies normally include a guaranteed job interview at the end of the placement. In addition, the total number of placements was typically higher among employers offering sector-based work academies, compared with work experience employers.

Table 10.3 shows the proportion of people that were taken on at the end of a sector-based work academy. The majority (60 per cent) took on at least half of the people, including 16 per cent who took all of them on.

Table 10.3 Proportion taken on at the end of placement (sector-based work academies)

	%
All	16
More than half (but not all)	28
Half	16
A quarter or more, but less than half	26
Less than a quarter	14

Base: All sector-based work academy employers who took someone on, excluding 'don't know' (70).

10.3 Impact of scheme on number of vacancies for paid work

One concern over work experience opportunities is that they may be used by employers as a substitute for recruitment of paid workers.

In general, the survey found that this was not happening as a result of the work experience scheme. Just six per cent of work experience employers said that they had fewer vacancies for paid work as a result of offering work experience opportunities. This was higher among large organisations (nine per cent) and among those who had offered a large number of placements (11 per cent with ten or more placements). The proportion was lower among non-profit/voluntary sector organisations (three per cent) than those in the public or private sector (seven per cent in each case).

10.4 Increasing recruitment of young, unemployed people

This section looks at the extent to which involvement in the schemes made employers more likely to recruit young, unemployed people. It should be noted that whilst both schemes are available to all age groups, the work experience scheme has been primarily targeted at under-25s. Therefore, sector-based work academies are less likely to have an impact on recruitment of young people.

The analysis in this section excludes employers who had only recruited people aged 25 or over (seven per cent of work experience employers and five per cent of sector-based work academy employers), as they would be unlikely to have changed their attitudes in this way.

10.4.1 Work experience

Two in five respondents (41 per cent) said that taking part in the scheme had made their establishment more likely to recruit young people with a recent history of unemployment. Most of the remaining respondents said it had not made any difference, although a small proportion (three per cent) said that their experience had made them less likely to recruit young, unemployed people.

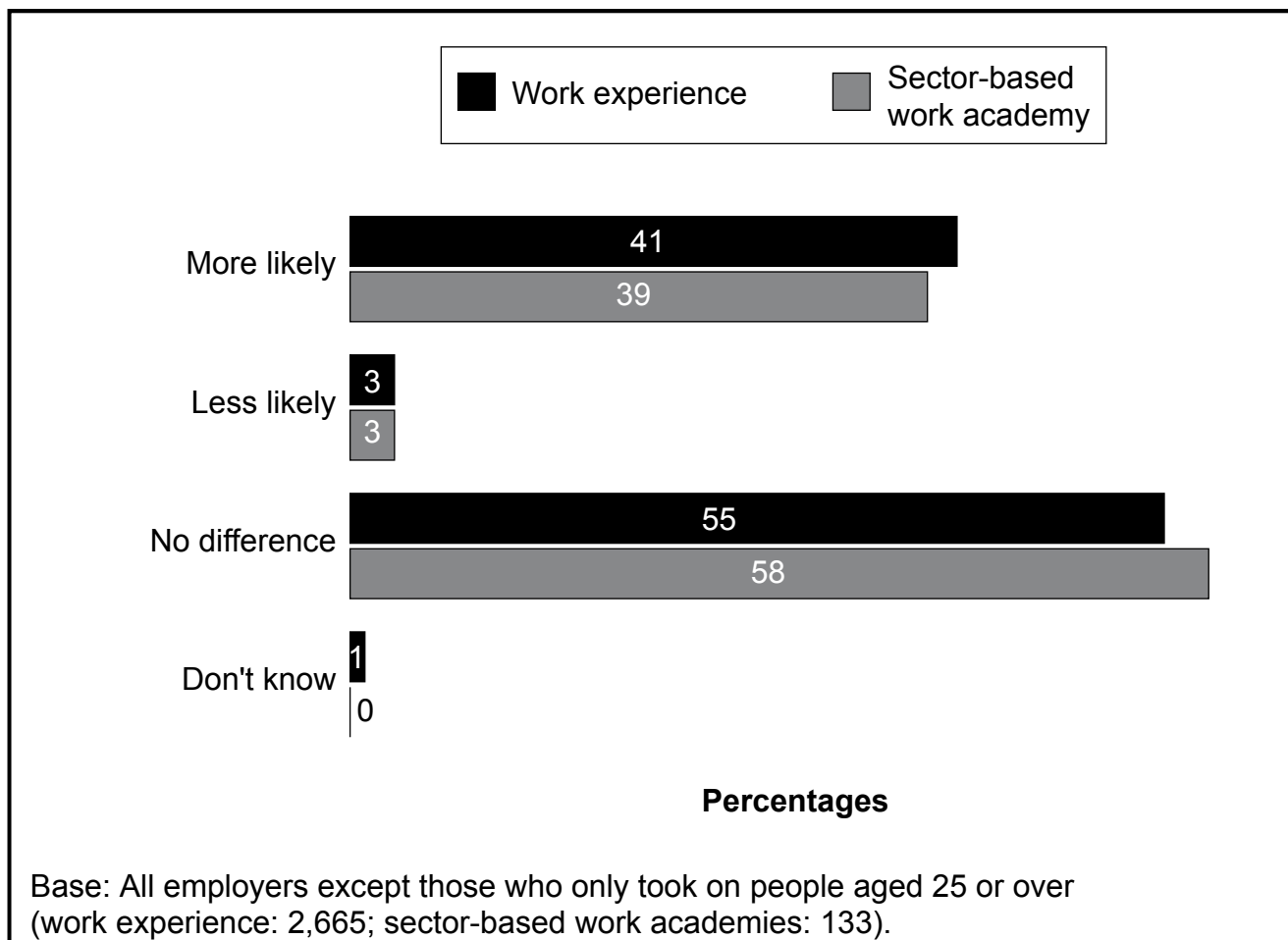
The main factor affecting responses was placement completion. Only 20 per cent of employers said it would make them more likely to recruit young, unemployed people, if most or all placements had not been completed³⁷.

In addition, employers who offered more placements were more likely to say it had encouraged their recruitment of young, unemployed people. The proportion was 51 per cent among employers with ten or more placements, 40 per cent among those with between two and nine placements, and 31 per cent of those with just one placement.

³⁷ The survey did not cover reasons for non-completion of placements.

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

Figure 10.2 Whether taking part in scheme has made establishment more or less likely to recruit young people with a recent history of unemployment



10.4.2 Sector-based work academies

The findings for sector-based work academy employers were very similar to those seen above for work experience employers.

Around two in five respondents (39 per cent) said that taking part in the scheme had made their establishment more likely to recruit young people with a recent history of unemployment, and three per cent said it had made them less likely to do so. The remainder said it had not made any difference (see Figure 10.2).

As was the case with work experience employers, those offering more placements were more likely to say their experience had made them more inclined to recruit young, unemployed people. The proportion was 50 per cent among employers with ten or more placements, and 36 per cent among those with fewer than ten placements.

10.5 Recruitment focus on young people

This section examines employers' perceptions of the impact of the schemes on their recruitment focus. As in the previous section, the analysis excludes employers who had only recruited people aged 25 or over (seven per cent of work experience employers and five per cent of sector-based work academy employers), as they would be unlikely to have changed their attitudes in this way.

10.5.1 Work experience

Respondents were divided as to whether their recruitment had focused more on young people since taking part in the work experience scheme. Around half of respondents (52 per cent) agreed that their focus had changed, although 41 per cent disagreed. The findings from the previous section (Section 10.4) suggest that these 41 per cent are likely to have maintained their existing recruitment focus (i.e. they had not focused less on young people).

Public sector employers were slightly more likely to agree that their recruitment now focused more on young people (57 per cent), compared with those in the private (50 per cent) or non-profit/voluntary sectors (50 per cent). Micro-employers (fewer than 10 employees) were also more likely to say their experience had changed their focus (58 per cent, compared with 52 per cent of small organisations, 43 per cent of medium-sized organisations and 47 per cent of large organisations).

Employers who only took people aged under 25 on placements were more likely than those who also took older people to say that their recruitment now focused more on young people (54 per cent compared with 48 per cent).

Table 10.4 Whether agree or disagree that ‘since taking part in work experience/ sector-based work academies, our recruitment has focused more on young people’

	Work experience employers	Sector-based work academy employers
	%	%
Strongly agree	24	17
Tend to disagree	28	21
Tend to disagree	28	35
Strongly disagree	13	15
Don't know	8	12

Base: All employers except those who only took on people aged 25 or over (work experience: 2,665; sector-based work academies: 133).

Note: Percentages do not total 100 per cent due to percentage rounding.

10.5.2 Sector-based work academies

As shown in Table 10.4, 38 per cent of sector-based academy employers agreed that, since taking part in the scheme, their recruitment had focused more on young people. Half of respondents (50 per cent) disagreed.

Small and medium-sized organisations were more likely than large organisations to say that their recruitment now focused more on young people (48 per cent compared with 28 per cent).

11 Awareness of other schemes

The Youth Contract aims to provide nearly half a million new opportunities for 18-24 year olds.³⁸ As well as work experience and sector-based work academies, the Youth Contract covers wage incentives, apprenticeships and further support for disengaged 16 and 17 year olds in England. It works alongside other key initiatives such as Get Britain Working and the Work Programme which offer these elements.

This chapter looks at employers' awareness and involvement in other schemes. Awareness of apprenticeships was high, with significant proportions of employers also having heard of the Apprenticeship Grant for Employers of 16-24 year olds. Awareness of wage incentives was lower amongst both groups of employers. There was a belief that the number of schemes was confusing amongst those who had heard of any of these other schemes.

Key findings

- Most respondents had heard of apprenticeships (89 per cent of work experience employers and 91 per cent of sector-based work academy employers), while 56 per cent and 64 per cent respectively had heard of the Apprenticeship Grant for Employers of 16-24 year olds. Awareness of wage incentives was lower.
- Sector-based work academy employers were more likely than work experience employers to have previously taken someone on for an apprenticeship (36 per cent compared with 19 per cent).
- Around two in three employers who had heard of any of the other schemes agreed that the range of different schemes makes it confusing for employers to know what is available (67 per cent of work experience employers and 72 per cent of sector-based work academy employers).

11.1 Whether heard of other schemes

11.1.1 Work experience

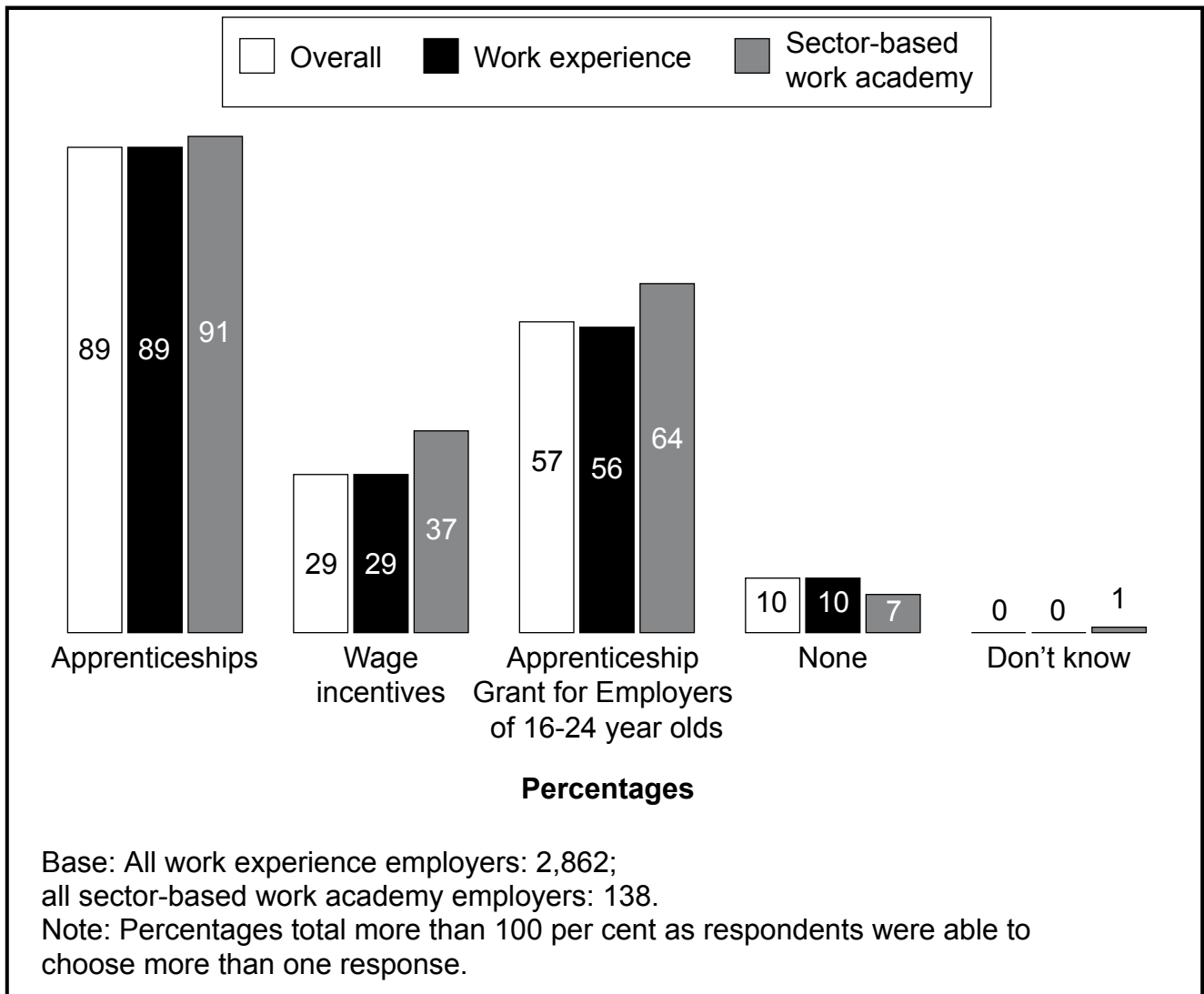
Most respondents (89 per cent) had heard of apprenticeships, while 56 per cent had heard of the Apprenticeship Grant for Employers of 16-24 year olds. Awareness of wage incentives was lower, with three in ten (29 per cent) having heard of it (see Figure 11.1).

Awareness of the Apprenticeship Grant for Employers of 16-24 year olds was higher among small or medium-sized organisations (67 per cent). This is encouraging, since a further 20,000 Grants have been released for small and medium-sized employers. As yet, however, take-up remains low within this sample of employers (as seen in Section 11.2) despite the high level of awareness.

Those who had previously taken part in the work experience scheme, prior to February 2012, had higher levels of awareness of the various schemes. Six in ten had heard of the Apprenticeship Grant for Employers of 16-24 year olds, and a third knew of the wage incentive.

³⁸ <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/youth-contract/>

Figure 11.1 Levels of awareness of different schemes



11.1.2 Sector-based work academies

Nine in ten (91 per cent) employers involved with a sector-based work academy were aware of apprenticeships, and 64 per cent were aware of the Apprenticeship Grant for 16 to 24 year olds. Compared with work experience employers, a slightly higher proportion of those involved with a sector-based work academy were aware of wage incentives (37 per cent). (See Figure 11.1 for details.)

The higher awareness of apprenticeships among both groups of employers is possibly related to the fact that apprenticeships have been established for longer than either Mandatory Work Activity or wage incentives, and form a prominent component of post-16 education.

11.2 Whether taken up other schemes

This survey was conducted with employers who were already involved with Jobcentre Plus in the work experience scheme, or with a sector-based work academy. For this reason, employers may be more likely to have taken up other Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Jobcentre Plus schemes than the employer population as a whole.

11.2.1 Work experience

Around one in five employers (19 per cent) who had taken someone on for a work experience opportunity had also previously taken someone on for an apprenticeship. This was the most commonly taken up of the schemes included in the questionnaire. Eight per cent had also received an Apprenticeship Grant for Employers of 16-24 year olds. Just three per cent had been involved with Mandatory Work Activity³⁹ and two per cent with wage incentives.

11.2.2 Sector-based work academies

Compared with work experience employers, a higher proportion of sector-based work academy employers had taken up an apprenticeship (36 per cent). One in six (16 per cent) had received an Apprenticeship Grant for Employers of 16-24 year olds. Seven per cent had received a wage incentive and two per cent were involved with Mandatory Work Activity⁴⁰.

11.3 Confusion of schemes

Two in three (67 per cent) work experience employers who had heard of any of the other schemes agreed that the range of different schemes makes it confusing for employers to know what is available. This rate was higher amongst those who took one person on for a work experience placement (72 per cent agreed) compared with those who took on between two and nine (67 per cent) and ten and more (64 per cent). This is understandable since the level of prior experience with work experience and Jobcentre Plus was higher among those who had recruited a larger number of work experience placements. Confusion relating to the range of schemes offered by DWP could be a barrier preventing the smaller employers from taking more people on within their organisation.

Those who had heard of at least one of the employer guides to work experience (*Work experience placements that work* and *Could you offer work experience?*) had slightly lower levels of confusion compared with those who had not heard of either guide (31 per cent agreed that the number of schemes confusing against 25 per cent).

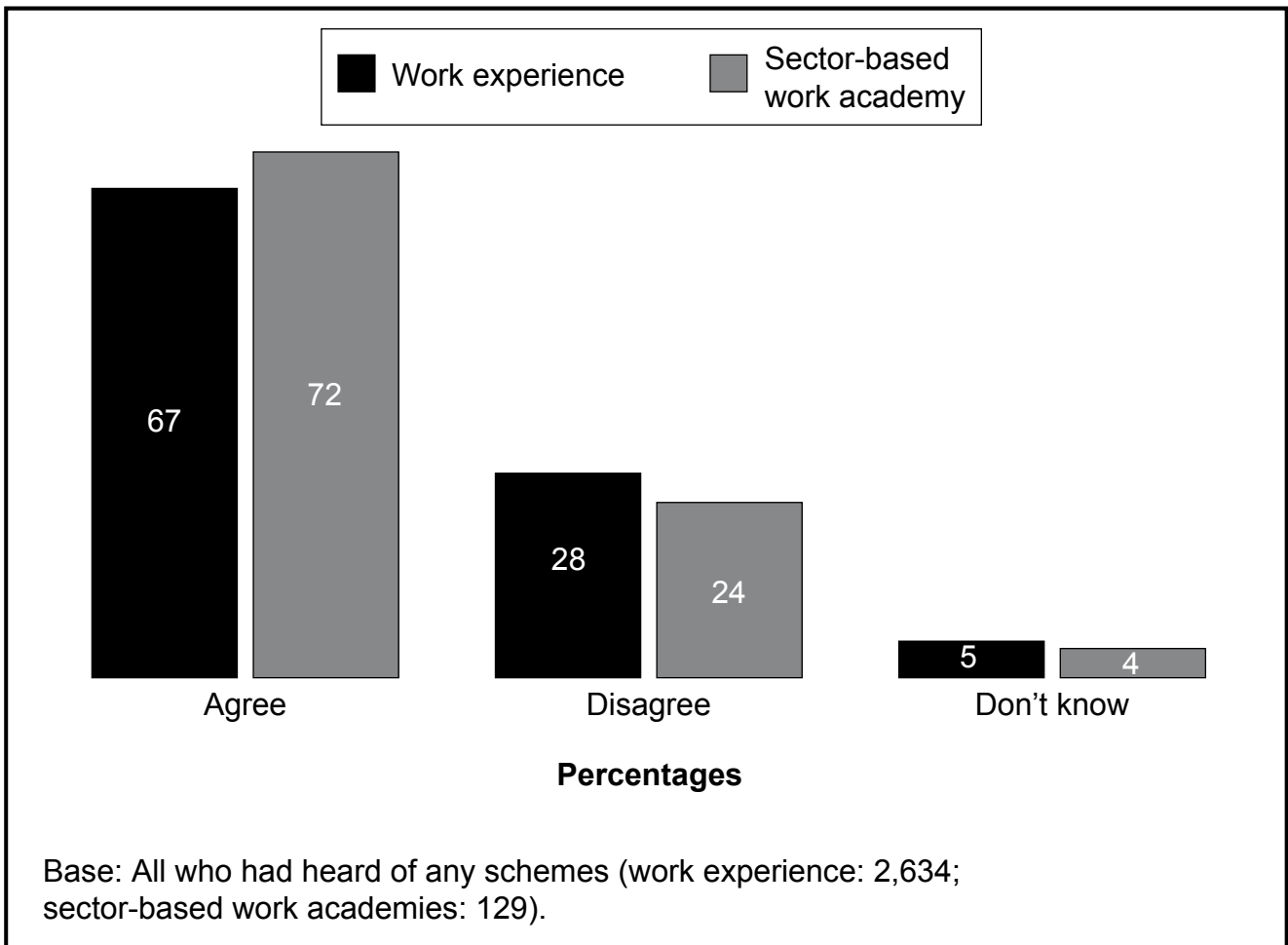
A similarly high proportion of employers involved with a sector-based work academy agreed that the range of different schemes makes it confusing to know what is available (72 per cent of those who had heard of any of the other schemes). The level of confusion was higher among large organisations (76 per cent, compared with 65 per cent of SMEs) and multi-site organisations (77 per cent, compared with 55 per cent of single-site organisations).

Eight of the 24 employers involved with a sector-based work academy that had taken up the wage incentive had used it for the person (or people) that they had on a sector-based work academy.

³⁹ Mandatory Work Activity involves community work mostly in the voluntary sector; therefore, it is not surprising that only a small proportion of work experience and sector-based work academy employers (mostly in the private sector) had been involved.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

Figure 11.2 Confusion about the different schemes offered



12 Conclusions

12.1 Participating employers

12.1.1 Employer characteristics

Overall, the employers who were involved in the work experience scheme had more diverse characteristics than those involved with a sector-based work academy. Sector-based work academy employers were typically large, multi-site organisations in the private sector. Work experience employers were more varied. Although some were large organisations, 36 per cent were micro-organisations (with fewer than ten employees), and only 57 per cent were in the private sector.

Both schemes had a large proportion of employers in 'service' sectors (76 per cent for work experience and 67 per cent for sector-based work academies), most commonly Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) Group G (the wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles).

12.1.2 Nature of participation

The survey indicates that there is overlap between the schemes. Almost half (47 per cent) of employers in the sample for sector-based work academies said that they were also involved in the work experience scheme, and a small proportion (seven per cent) of those in the work experience sample said they were involved with a sector-based work academy⁴¹. These employers generally saw the benefits of participating in both schemes (e.g. to provide extra avenues for potential employees), and this suggests that it is good practice to make participating employers aware of the other scheme where possible.

This could also extend to other schemes. Awareness of, and involvement in, apprenticeships was quite high (36 per cent of sector-based work academy employers had previously taken someone on for an apprenticeship) and the majority had heard of the Apprenticeship Grant for Employers of 16-24 year olds. However, awareness of wage incentives was lower. Communication of other schemes needs to recognise the confusion that some employers have – around two in three agreed that the range of different schemes makes it confusing for employers to know what is available.

Of the employers who reported involvement with a sector-based work academy, 52 per cent said they were involved with all three 'core' elements: sector-specific training, work experience placement and guaranteed job interview. A further nine per cent offered a placement and training; some of these employers may have offered help with their job application process in lieu of an interview but this was not explored in the survey.

12.1.3 Reasons for participation

The majority of employers first heard of the schemes from Jobcentre Plus staff (57 per cent of work experience and 56 per cent of sector-based work academies employers).

⁴¹ This was as reported by respondents during the interview. Because of possible confusion between the two schemes, these percentages should be seen as indicative rather than as precise figures for take-up of the schemes.

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

It was also more likely that employers were approached by Jobcentre Plus about offering a work experience opportunity, rather than the employer approaching Jobcentre Plus. This confirms that Jobcentre Plus are helping to make employers aware of the schemes and are encouraging participation. The findings indicate that large, private sector organisations were often targeted by Jobcentre Plus about sector-based work academies, whereas for the work experience scheme there was a more even spread of employers and a greater emphasis on the public sector.

In both schemes, there were three main reasons for participation: to give young or unemployed people a chance (the most commonly reported reason), to get extra resource at no/low cost, and as a way of trying people out before hiring them. The main concern prior to participation was the quality of candidates.

12.1.4 Placements offered

Many participating employers took on a large number of placements, and this applied particularly to sector-based work academies, where 44 per cent took on ten or more placements. By contrast, 20 per cent of work experience employers had ten or more placements, while a similar proportion (22 per cent) took just one person on.

In both schemes, the majority of employers said that placements were designed to be at the longer end of the permitted range. Among work experience employers, 57 per cent said they were designed to last seven weeks or more, and just 24 per cent said they were designed to last no more than four weeks. Sector-based work academy employers were more likely to say that academies were designed to last five weeks or more (43 per cent) than four weeks or fewer (34 per cent).

There was a range of different types of work offered in both schemes, including sales and customer service occupations, administrative and secretarial occupations, and personal services, as well as elementary occupations. The spread of different occupations shows that both schemes were offering a range of different types of work at different levels.

12.1.5 Outcomes

Less than two in five employers saw all recruits complete their placements (37 per cent for work experience and 38 per cent for sector-based work academies). Although this is not surprising given the large number of placements that many employers had, the findings suggest that completion rates have not improved in the last year or so. The survey did not gather evidence on the reasons for non-completion, which could be positive (e.g. leaving for paid work) in some cases. Among those involved in the work experience scheme before February 2012, changes in completion rates were slightly more likely to be negative rather than positive (14 per cent compared with 11 per cent).

Level of completion was found to be a key factor in determining employers' satisfaction with the schemes. While large majorities were positive about both schemes, negative views were much more common where placements had not been completed.⁴²

It is encouraging that 50 per cent of all work experience employers, and 78 per cent of all sector-based work academy employers who offered placements, said they had taken someone on at the end of the placement. Where this was the case, employers often took several people on (44 per cent of work experience employers took on half or more of the people, as did 60 per cent of sector-based work academy employers).

⁴² The survey did not cover reasons for non-completion of placements.

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

One concern over work experience opportunities is that they may be used by employers as a substitute for recruitment of paid workers. However, just six per cent of work experience employers said that they had fewer vacancies for paid work, as a result of offering work experience opportunities.

12.2 Attitudes towards the schemes

Most employers expressed positive views of the schemes, would take part again and would recommend it to other employers. The following sections give more details on the various elements of the schemes.

12.2.1 Overall attitudes

Employers were mostly very positive about the schemes. Most said that there had been benefits to their organisation in taking part, and where this was the case, almost all said that the benefits had been worth the time and resource in setting up the work experience placements (93 per cent) or sector-based work academies (92 per cent). The main benefits were getting extra resource at no or low cost and providing a way of trying people out before hiring them.

Many employers said that they would be very likely to take on someone in the future on a work experience opportunity (64 per cent) or as part of a sector-based work academy (55 per cent), with the remainder mostly saying they would be fairly likely to do so. In addition, a very high proportion of employers said that they would recommend work experience (91 per cent) or sector-based work academies (88 per cent) to other employers.

Respondents were also positive towards the specific elements of a sector-based work academy. All of the various elements were likely to be seen as very important by those that offered them. Where employers were involved in two or more elements of sector-based work academies, the majority said that they thought the different elements worked very well together (41 per cent) or fairly well (46 per cent).

There were also positive attitudes towards provider-led training, with a large majority of those involved satisfied with both the quality (87 per cent) and relevance (90 per cent) of the training.

12.2.2 Set-up

The majority of work experience employers (81 per cent) and sector-based work academy employers (82 per cent) thought that Jobcentre Plus did a good job in identifying suitable candidates for placements. Most employers also said that they received enough candidates from Jobcentre Plus.

Many employers did not feel there was very much work involved in set-up, although a greater burden was felt by sector-based work academy employers, particularly those who were involved in all elements (76 per cent). However, a large majority of employers (91 per cent for work experience and 87 per cent for sector-based work academies) thought that the process of setting up placements went well, and that Jobcentre Plus were effective in supporting the set-up of the placements (83 per cent for work experience, 82 per cent for sector-based work academy placements).

12.2.3 Rating of people on placements

The majority of employers were satisfied with the people they took on for placements. In both schemes, more than 80 per cent of employers were satisfied with their attitude, skills and overall quality. Employers were also likely to say that people were at least as good as they expected, sometimes better (39 per cent of work experience employers and 34 per cent of sector-based work academy employers). Those who had been involved in the work experience before February 2012 were also more likely to report positive rather than negative changes, in relation to the quality and attitude of candidates.

Nevertheless, one in six work experience employers (16 per cent) said that they had experienced at least one instance of misconduct. Experience of misconduct was higher among employers involved in sector-based work academies (32 per cent). The most common problems related to attendance and behavioural issues.

Positive views were most likely to concern the attitude and enthusiasm of people on placements and the desire to get work. Negative views also tended to be about the attitude or motivation of people, confirming the importance of a positive attitude in the success of a placement.

12.2.4 Impact on future behaviour

Respondents said that the impact of the schemes on their future recruitment behaviour was either positive or neutral. Around two in five respondents (41 per cent of work experience employers and 39 per cent of sector-based work academy employers) said that taking part in the scheme had made them more likely to recruit young people with a recent history of unemployment; most of the remainder said that it would make no difference (these figures exclude those who only took on people aged 25 or over).

12.2.5 Employers who were more or less positive

As noted above, placement completion was a key issue determining employers' satisfaction. In both schemes, non-completion of placements was the main factor leading to negative views.

In addition, views were particularly positive among work experience employers who were larger and had taken on more placements, and attitudes tended to be more positive in the non-profit/voluntary sectors. Sector-based work academy employers were most positive if they had taken part in all elements.

12.3 Suggestions for improvement

While employers were generally positive about both schemes, there were suggestions for improvement. These tended to focus either on the quality of people on placements and the way they were prepared, or communication with Jobcentre Plus.

12.3.1 Quality of people on placements

Some employers asked for improvements in the quality of candidates or the screening of candidates by Jobcentre Plus. The attitude and motivation of candidates was seen as particularly important, and as noted above placement completion was a key factor affecting employers' overall perceptions.

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

While it is clearly difficult to guarantee high quality candidates, there may be scope to brief and prepare candidates better. This was one of the suggestions for improvement made by employers. In some cases, employers requested better preparation for the particular type of work or organisation that they were going to, while other employers felt recruits should be more aware of standard practices in the workplace, such as what to do if they could not come in to work, time-keeping, dress codes, rules for using mobile phones, etc.

12.3.2 Communication with Jobcentre Plus

There were various ways in which respondents felt Jobcentre Plus could improve its communications with employers. Some employers wanted a greater level of support from Jobcentre Plus, particularly at the early stages, to discuss employers' requirements or to provide guidance.

There were also ways in which employers felt Jobcentre Plus could improve communications during the course of the employers' involvement. Some employers felt that communication fell away once the placement had started, and that it was important to maintain contact to discuss the progress of people on placements. In some cases, this could help to resolve problems and increase placement completion, a key factor affecting employers' overall perceptions of the schemes. Some employers said that there should be more communication at the end of the placement, to obtain feedback and discuss employers' future needs.

It is worth noting the findings from the recent research among Jobcentre Plus advisers on Mandatory Work Activity (ICF GHK and TNS-BMRB, 2012). In this research, advisers requested the same type of communication with employers, including more information on how people were getting on during placement and opportunities for advisers to visit workplaces to see, first-hand, what employers were actually doing. In other words, there appears to be agreement between employers and Jobcentre Plus staff that greater communication would be beneficial to all parties. However, there appears to be some confusion as to who should take the initiative for instigating this greater level of contact. This suggests that it is important for advisers to have a detailed discussion with employers at the outset, to discuss how communication can be maintained effectively throughout the process.

12.3.3 Other suggested improvements

Although the majority thought that the length of sector-based work academies was about right (85 per cent), ten per cent thought they were too short. Longer placements were suggested as the main improvement by seven per cent of work experience employers and five per cent of sector-based work academy employers. In this context, it is also worth noting that most employers offered placements that were at the longer end of the permitted range.

Reflecting the positive views of the schemes, a third of respondents could not think of anything that could be improved. This confirms that most employers were happy with the two schemes as they are currently offered, with many seeing a range of benefits for their organisation and for young people who take part.

12.4 Encouraging take-up

The survey provides guidance on how employers can be encouraged to get involved in the schemes. The most common reason for participation is to give young, unemployed people a chance, while many employers also see a benefit in trying people out before hiring them. These factors could be stressed in any marketing or communication with employers.

The positive findings from this survey could also be used to illustrate the benefits of participation to employers and to allay their concerns. The main concern that employers had before taking part related to the quality of candidates; however, a large majority were satisfied with the quality and attitude of the people they took on. Similarly, most employers felt that the benefits they gained from participation were worth the time and effort they put in. In addition, many participating employers took people on at the end of the placement and would recommend the schemes to others.

As well as encouraging new employers to get involved, the survey findings suggest that existing participants could take on more placements. Firstly, a proportion of employers (24 per cent of work experience employers and 18 per cent of sector-based work academy employers) said that they did not receive enough candidates for the opportunities they offered; this suggests that these employers may have taken more people on, if candidates had been available.

In addition, the majority of employers in both schemes said they would be 'very likely' to take someone on again in the future. This stresses the importance of maintaining contact with employers and encouraging continued participation. As noted above, increased communication at the end of a placement would serve both to review and learn for the experience, and to discuss future needs and placement opportunities.

Appendix A

Advance letter to employers

DWP Department for
Work and Pensions



12/11/12

Your Reference:112560

Dear Sir/Madam,

EVALUATION OF DWP WORK EXPERIENCE SCHEME: Employer survey.

I am writing to ask for your help in providing feedback on the Department for Work and Pensions Work Experience scheme. The Work Experience scheme is a voluntary work placement, mainly focused on young, unemployed people. We understand that your company has recently received a Work Experience participant and would like to hear about your experiences in order to evaluate the success of the policy.

DWP have commissioned an independent research company, TNS BMRB, to conduct a survey with employers to gather their views on this scheme.

TNS BMRB would like to speak to the person at your organisation who has been dealing with the Work Experience scheme. Each interview will take about 20 minutes. An interviewer from TNS BMRB will contact you in the next few weeks. We would be very grateful if you would agree to take part and tell us what you think of this scheme. I do hope you will feel able to take part in this important research.

If you have any questions about the research, or if there is someone else at your workplace who is in a better place to answer these questions please contact one of the researchers at TNS BMRB on the Freephone number: 0800 051 0881.

Any information you provide will be held in the strictest of confidence and will be handled securely throughout the study. The research findings will not identify you and no personal information will be shared with any third parties. Participation in this research is voluntary.

Your contribution will provide us with valuable information that will help us to review our services and support we provide our customers. We hope that you decide to take part.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Janet Allaker'.

Janet Allaker

Senior Research Officer

Evaluation Team

| Department for Work and Pensions

Appendix B

Survey response rate

Table B.1 Response details

Number sampled	6,914
Invalid sample data	929
Invalid/incomplete telephone number	473
Wrong number/unknown at number	456
Ineligible (not involved with scheme)	21
Valid sample (in scope of fieldwork)	5,964
Personal refusal	375
Abandoned interview	136
Unavailable during fieldwork	224
Respondent incapable of interview	19
Non-contact with respondent/unresolved	2,210
Interview	3,000
Fieldwork response rate	50%

Appendix C

Industry sectors

The analysis by industry sector in this report is based on the UK Standard Industrial Classification 2007 (UK SIC 2007). These are set out below.

Table C.1 List of UK SIC 2007 categories

Broad grouping	Individual Sectors
Production	A – Agriculture, forestry and fishing; Mining and Quarrying B – Mining and quarrying C – Manufacturing D – Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply E – Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities
Construction	F – Construction
Education, health, public administration and defence	O – Public administration and defence; compulsory social security P – Education Q – Human health and social work activities
Services	G – Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles I – Accommodation and food service activities H – Transport and storage J – Information and communication K – Financial and insurance activities L – Real estate activities M – Professional, scientific and technical activities N – Administrative and support service activities R – Arts, entertainment and recreation S – Other service activities T – Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods and services producing activities of households for own use U – Activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies

Appendix D

Questionnaire

DWP Work Experience and Sector Based Work Academies Employer Survey Post pilot questionnaire (26/10/12)

Introduction

ASK TO SPEAK TO NAMED PERSON ON SAMPLE

QA Good morning/afternoon. My name is [NAME] and I'm calling from TNS-BMRB Social Research. Can I just check that your organisation is <WORKPLACE NAME FROM SAMPLE>?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No – check sample

IF WORK EXPERIENCE SAMPLE, ASK QB-QD

QB Could I speak to the person at this site who would have the best overview of your organisation's involvement in the Government's Work Experience Scheme?

INTERVIEWER NOTE: IF RESPONDENT ATTEMPTS TO TRANSFER TO SOMEONE AT ANOTHER SITE, CHECK THAT THIS OTHER PERSON IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DEALING WITH WORK EXPERIENCE AND IS ABLE TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RECRUIT(S).

QC According to our records, you have had someone on placement as part of the Government's Work Experience Scheme – is that correct?

ADD IF NECESSARY: The Work Experience scheme is a voluntary work placement, mainly focused on young, unemployed people lasting between 2 and 8 weeks.

- 1 Yes
- 2 No – CHECK and then CLOSE

QD Has your organisation also been involved with a Sector Based Work Academy? ADD IF NECESSARY: Sector Based Work Academies are designed to help employers fill vacancies by offering specific pre-employment training, work placements and job interviews. By involvement we mean offering placements, training, being involved in training or having vacancies filled

- 1 Yes

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

- 2 No
- 3 Don't know

IF SBWA SAMPLE, ASK QE-QG

QE Could I speak to the person at this site who would have the best overview of your organisation's involvement with Sector Based Work Academies.

INTERVIEWER NOTE: IF RESPONDENT ATTEMPTS TO TRANSFER TO SOMEONE AT ANOTHER SITE, CHECK THAT THIS OTHER PERSON IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DEALING WITH SECTOR BASED WORK ACADEMIES AND IS ABLE TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RECRUIT(S).

QF According to our records, you have been involved with a Sector Based Work Academy – is that correct? **ADD IF NECESSARY: Sector Based Work Academies are designed to help employers fill vacancies by offering specific pre-employment training, work placements and job interviews.**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No – CHECK and then CLOSE

IF SBWA EMPLOYER⁴³ (yes as QD or QF)

SBelement Which elements of a sector based academy has your organisation been involved with? READ OUT. CODE YES/NO FOR EACH

- 1 Offered work experience placements
- 2 Offered job interviews
- 3 Involvement with training course run by training provider
- 4 Offered a training course at your work place

IF YES TO 3 OF SBelement

Invtrain What type of involvement did you have with the training course by providers?

OPEN/TYPE IN

QG In addition to Sector Based Work Academies, has your organisation also taken part in the Work Experience Scheme? **ADD IF NECESSARY: The Work Experience scheme is a voluntary work placement, mainly focused on young, unemployed people lasting between 2 and 8 weeks.**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know

1: DETAILS ABOUT THE ORGANISATION

ASK ALL

Firstly, I need to ask some details about this workplace.

Multi Is this workplace ...? READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

- 1 The only site in the organisation, or
- 2 One of a number of sites within a larger organisation

⁴³ These questions asked of the Sector-based work academies sample, plus employers in the work experience sample who said they had also offered sector-based work academies.

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

ASK ALL

Numemp1 **Approximately how many people currently work at this establishment or workplace? Please include yourself, full-time and part-time employees on your payroll, and any working proprietors or owners, but exclude the self-employed and outside contractor, freelance or agency staff.**

INTERVIEWER NOTE: NON-EMPLOYEE TRAINERS AND EMPLOYEES UNDER 16 SHOULD BE EXCLUDED.

PROBE FOR BEST ESTIMATE AND RECORD NUMBER

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| 1 | 1-4 |
| 2 | 5-9 |
| 3 | 10-24 |
| 4 | 25-49 |
| 5 | 50-249 |
| 6 | 250 or more |

IF ONE OF A NUMBER OF SITES AT MULTI

Wholeorg **Approximately how many people work across your organisation in the UK as a whole?**

ADD IF NECESSARY: **By that I mean both full-time and part-time employees on your payroll, as well as any working proprietors or owners.**

PROBE FOR BEST ESTIMATE AND RECORD NUMBER

(PROGRAMMING NOTE – ONLY ALLOW NUMBERS LARGER THAN GIVEN AT ESTABLISHMENT SIZE QUESTION

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| 1 | 2-4 |
| 2 | 5-9 |
| 3 | 10-24 |
| 4 | 25-49 |
| 5 | 50-249 |
| 6 | 250 or more |

2: PARTICIPATION IN WORK EXPERIENCE/SBWA SCHEME

ASK ALL

I'd now like to ask you about your involvement [in the work experience scheme/with sector based work academies⁴⁴]?

Howhear **How did you first hear about [the work experience scheme/sector based work academies]?**

CODE ALL THAT APPLY. PROMPT TO PRECODES

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| 1 | DWP/Jobcentre Plus website |
| 2 | Another website |
| 3 | Jobcentre Plus staff |
| 4 | Training provider |

⁴⁴ In this section, if employers took part in both schemes, they will be asked only about the scheme they were sampled for.

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

- 5 Connections in the industry
- 6 Elsewhere in this organisation
- 7 Other (TYPE IN)

Involve **And when you first got involved, were you approached by Jobcentre Plus [SWBA only: or a training provider] about getting involved, or did you approach them?**

- 1 Approached by Jobcentre Plus about getting involved
- 2 [SBWA only: approached by a training provider]
- 2 Employer approached Jobcentre Plus
- 3 (DO NOT READ OUT: Was part of on-going discussion (don't know)

ASK ALL

Whytake **What were the main reasons that this [organisation/establishment] decided to [offer work experience placements/get involved with sector based work academies]? PROBE FULLY. DO NOT PROMPT**

- 1 Way of trying people out before hiring them
- 2 Gives supply of candidates/CVs on file
- 3 Way of bringing in younger staff
- 4 Got extra resource at no/low cost
- 5 To fill a vacancy at no/low cost
- 6 Helps our staff to develop line management skills/experience
- 7 Good publicity/good for our reputation
- 8 Gives young/unemployed people a chance/to help (youth) unemployment
- 9 Get better quality candidates/job ready for my vacancies
- 10 Ensure candidates for my vacancies have the right training
- 11 Other (TYPE IN)

Concern **What concerns, if any, did you have about [offering work experience placements/getting involved in sector based work academies]?**

OPEN/TYPE IN (with code for 'none')

IF TOOK PART IN BOTH SCHEMES (yes at QD or QG)

Whyother **You said that you have also offered [work experience placements/sector based work academies]. Why did you decide to offer these as well as [work experience placements/sector based work academies]?**

OPEN/TYPE IN

3: SETTING UP PLACEMENTS

I'd now like to ask about the process of setting up [work experience placements/sector based work academies]?

ASK THOSE YES TO QC OR SAID YES TO SBELEMENT WORK EXPERIENCE OPTION

Interview **Has your organisation interviewed candidates for [work experience placements/sector based work academies placements], or has Jobcentre Plus done all of the selection?**

- 1 Employer interviewed candidates

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

- 2 Jobcentre Plus managed all of the selection
- 3 It varies/mixture
- 4 Don't know

JCPselect **How would you rate Jobcentre Plus in identifying suitable people for [placements/academy placements]?** READ OUT

- 1 Very good
 - 2 Fairly good
 - 3 Not very good
 - 4 Not at all good
- (DO NOT READ OUT) Varies by Jobcentre Plus office

Numbers **Have you received enough placement candidates from Jobcentre Plus for the opportunities you have offered?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know

ASK ALL

Setup **How much work has there been for your organisation in setting up [sector based work academies/work experience placements]?** READ OUT

- 1 A great deal
- 2 Fair amount
- 4 Not much at all
- 3 Just a little

ASK ALL

Howwork **And in your experience, how well did the process of setting up [sector based work academies/work experience placements] work overall?** READ OUT

- 1 Very well
- 2 Fairly well
- 3 Not very well
- 4 Not at all well

ASK ALL

JCPsup **How effective have Jobcentre Plus been in supporting the setting up of [sector based work academies/work experience placements]?** READ OUT

- 1 Very effective
- 2 Fairly effective
- 3 Not very effective
- 4 Not at all effective

UNLESS VERY EFFECTIVE

Notwell **How could the set-up of [sector based work academies/work experience**

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

placements] be improved?

OPEN/TYPE IN

IF WORK EXPERIENCE EMPLOYER (yes at QC or QG)⁴⁵

CIPD **Are you aware of the following guides for employers involved in Work Experience placements:**

a) firstly, the guide called *Work experience placements that work* – this is published by C.I.P.D. and Jobcentre Plus and includes a Quality Charter?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

IF YES

Useguide **How useful have you found this guide?** READ OUT

- 1 Very useful
- 2 Fairly useful
- 3 Not very useful
- 4 Not at all useful
- 5 (DO NOT READ OUT: Have heard of it but have not really used it)
- 6 (Don't know)

IF WORK EXPERIENCE EMPLOYER (yes at QC or QG)

CIPD **And are you aware of the guide called *Could you offer work experience?*, published by DWP and Jobcentre Plus?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

IF YES

Useguide **How useful have you found this guide?** READ OUT

- 1 Very useful
- 2 Fairly useful
- 3 Not very useful
- 4 Not at all useful
- 5 (DO NOT READ OUT: Have heard of it but have not really used it)
- 6 (Don't know)

4: PLACEMENT DETAILS

Now some questions about the actual placements.

IF WORK EXPERIENCE EMPLOYER⁴⁶ (yes at QC or QG)

⁴⁵ This question asked of the work experience sample, plus employers in the sector-based work academy sample who said they had also offered work experience.

⁴⁶ These questions asked of the work experience sample, plus employers in the sector-based work academy sample who said they had also offered work experience.

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

WENum **How many people have taken part in a placement at this workplace as part of the Work Experience Scheme? ADD IF NECESSARY: Include any people you took on but did not complete the placement.**

IF UNSURE, PROBE FOR ESTIMATE AND GET RANGE IF NECESSARY

TYPE IN NUMBER

IF 1 AT WENUM

WEcomp1 **Did this person complete the placement?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

IF 2+ AT WENUM

WEcomp2 **Did these people complete the placement? ADD IF NECESSARY: Please exclude anyone still doing their placement PROMPT TO PRECODES**

- 1 All completed
- 2 Most completed
- 3 About half/some completed, some didn't
- 4 Most did not complete
- 5 None completed

IF SBWA EMPLOYER (yes as QD or QF) AND NOT OFFERED ALL ELEMENTS (NOT ALL OF 1-3 AT SBELEMENT)

Whyno3 **Can you tell me why you were not involved in all of the different elements?**

OPEN/TYPE IN

DN: training question deleted and the type of involvement question moved to front to follow on from SBelement

IF SBWA EMPLOYER (yes as QD or QF) and offered work placements in SBelement

SBNum **How many people have taken part in a sector based work academy placements at this workplace? ADD IF NECESSARY: Include all people, even if they did not complete it.**

IF UNSURE, PROBE FOR ESTIMATE AND GET RANGE IF NECESSARY

TYPE IN NUMBER

IF 1 AT SBNUM AND OFFER WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENT AT SBelement

SBcomp1 **Did this person complete the work placement element of the sector based work academy?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

IF 2+ AT WENUM AND OFFER WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENT AT SBelement

SBcomp2 **Did these people complete the work experience placement? ADD IF**

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

NECESSARY: **Please exclude anyone still doing their placement.** PROMPT TO PRECODES

- 1 All completed
- 2 Most completed
- 3 About half/some completed, some didn't
- 4 Most did not complete
- 5 None completed

ASK ALL

Filled **Have you filled all the placements that you had available?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

IF NO

Numplace **How many placements did you have available in total?** ADD IF NECESSARY: Including those that were filled.

IF UNSURE, PROBE FOR ESTIMATE AND GET RANGE IF NECESSARY

TYPE IN NUMBER

IF SBWA EMPLOYER (yes as QD or QF)

SBimp **I'd now like to ask you about the different elements of sector based work academies. How important do you think each element is to the overall success of the scheme? Firstly ...**

ASK ABOUT EACH ELEMENT INCLUDED AT SBELEMENT

- a) the work experience placement
- b) a job interview
- c) the training course ran by training provider or employer

READ OUT

- 1 Very important
- 2 Fairly important
- 3 Not very important
- 4 Not at all important

IF SBWA EMPLOYER (yes as QD or QF) AND 2 or more elements at SBElement

Workwell **How well do you think the different parts of the sector based work academy work together?** READ OUT

- 1 Very well
- 2 Fairly well
- 3 Not very well
- 4 Not at all well

IF NOT VERY/NOT AT ALL WELL AT WORKWELL

Whynwell **Why have the different parts not worked well?**

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

OPEN/TYPE IN

ASK ALL WE EMPLOYERS

Howlong **How long [was the work experience placement/have work experience placements been] designed to last?** IF VARIES, PROBE FOR MOST TYPICAL/AVERAGE LENGTH

TYPE IN NUMBER OF WEEKS

ASK IF SBWA EMPLOYER WHO OFFERS WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENT (work experience at sbelement)

Howlong2 **How long was the sector base work academy designed to last?** [IF SBWA EMPLOYER AND TRAINING IS INCLUDED AT SBELEMENT: **Please include time spent on the placement as well as any training.**]

IF SBWA EMPLOYER AND ANSWER AT HOWLONG2

Amount **From your organisation's perspective, has this length of time been too long, not long enough, or about right?**

- 1 Too long
- 2 Not long enough
- 3 About right
- 4 Don't know

IF TOO LONG/NOT LONG ENOUGH

Whylong **Why has this [been too long/not been long enough]?** [IF SBWA EMPLOYER AND TRAINING IS INCLUDED AT SBELEMENT: **Please include time spent on the placement as well as any training.**]

OPEN/TYPE IN

ASK ALL WE EMPLOYERS or IF SBWA EMPLOYER WHO OFFERS WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENT (work experience at sbelement)

I'd like to ask about the jobs and activities that are offered as a placement. [IF 2+ PEOPLE TAKEN ON: **If different jobs are offered, please answer about the most common jobs or activity, or the ones offered most recently.**]

Jobtype **What is the main job that the [person has/people have] done on the placement?**

Whatdo **What do they mainly do in their job?**

CHECK SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS/TRAINING NEEDED TO DO THE JOB

(note: above 2 questions for SOC coding)

ASK ALL WE EMPLOYERS or IF SBWA EMPLOYER WHO OFFERS WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENT (work experience at sbelement)

Wider **Have you provided any of the following to the [person/people] on a placement?** READ OUT

- 1 Internal training materials
- 2 Certificates
- 3 Guides or booklets about the organisation or the job they are doing
- 4 Anything else
- 5 (None of these)

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

6 (Don't know)

Individ **Thinking about the [person/people] you have offered a placement, [was he or she/have they been] ... READ OUT ...?**

- 1 Under 25
- 2 25 or over
- 3 [IF 2+ TAKEN ON: A mixture of both]
- 4 (Don't know)

ASK ALL WE EMPLOYERS (except if none completed (NO at WEcomp1 or none completed at wecomp2)) or IF SBWA EMPLOYER WHO OFFERS WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENT (work experience at sbelement) (except if none completed (NO at sbcomp1 or none completed at sbcomp2))

Stay **Did you take [the person/any of the people] on after the placement? ADD IF NECESSARY: Not necessarily in the same job.**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know

IF YES AT STAY AND 2+ TAKEN ON

Numstay **How many people have you taken on after the placement? ADD IF NECESSARY: Not necessarily in the same job.**
TYPE IN NUMBER

ASK ALL WE EMPLOYERS or IF SBWA EMPLOYER WHO OFFERS WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENT (work experience at sbelement)

Satpart **And still thinking about the [person/people] you have offered a placement, have you been satisfied or dissatisfied the following:**

- a) their attitude
- b) their skills
- c) have you been satisfied or dissatisfied with the quality of the [person/people] overall?

IF SATISFIED/DISSATISFIED: **Is that very or fairly satisfied/dissatisfied?**

- 1 Very satisfied
- 2 Fairly satisfied
- 3 Fairly dissatisfied
- 4 Very dissatisfied
(No opinion)
(DO NOT READ OUT): varies too much to generalise

IF FAIRLY/VERY DISSATISFIED OVERALL

Whydis **Why were you dissatisfied overall?**

OPEN/TYPE IN

ASK ALL WE EMPLOYERS or IF SBWA EMPLOYER WHO OFFERS WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENT (work experience at sbelement)

Expect **Was the quality of the [person/people] better or worse than you expected, or was it no different?**

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

- 1 Better
- 2 Worse
- 3 No different
- 4 (DO NOT PROMPT – did not know what to expect)

Miscon **Have you had any issues with the [person/people] in terms of misconduct?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

IF YES

Whatmis **What issues have you had?**

OPEN/TYPE IN

ASK ALL

JCPVac **In the past year, how often have you used Jobcentre Plus to fill vacancies?**

- 1 Frequently
- 2 Occasionally
- 3 Never
- Don't Know

ASK ALL

JCPbefore **Have you taken on people for work placements from other government schemes? ADD IF NECESSARY: Other than [in the work experience scheme/with sector based work academies]?**

IF NECESSARY: This is just for work placements/experience, not permanent/long-term employment

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

IF YES AT JCPbefore

Compare **How has the quality of the [person/people] you've had on placement compare to those who have worked with you before from Jobcentre Plus or other employment programmes? Would you say they have been ...? READ OUT**

- 1 Better
- 2 Worse
- 3 No different
- 4 (It varies)
- 5 (Don't know)

IF BETTER/WORSE

Compare2**In what way [has the person/have the people] been [better/worse]?**

OPEN/TYPE IN

IF WORK EXPERIENCE EMPLOYER

WEPast **Were you involved in the Work Experience scheme prior to February 2012?**

- 1 Yes

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

2 No

IF YES

Change **Have you seen any changes since then, in terms of ...?** READ OUT. CODE YES/NO FOR EACH

- 1 Quality of candidates
- 2 Attitude of candidates
- 3 Drop out rates

IF YES AT CHANGE (1)

Poschange **Has the change in the quality of candidates been positive or negative?**

- 1 Positive
- 2 Negative
- 3 Neither/just different
- 4 Don't know

IF YES AT CHANGE (2)

Poschange **Has the change in the attitude of candidates been positive or negative?**

- 1 Positive
- 2 Negative
- 3 Neither/just different
- 4 Don't know

IF YES AT CHANGE (3)

Poschange **Has the change in the drop out rates been positive or negative?**

- 1 Positive
- 2 Negative
- 3 Neither/just different
- 4 Don't know

IF WORK EXPERIENCE EMPLOYER

Paidwork **As a result of offering work experience placements, have you had fewer vacancies for paid work, or has it made no difference?**

- 1 Fewer vacancies
- 2 No difference
- 3 Don't know

5: TRAINING

IF SBWA EMPLOYER (yes as QD or QF) AND 3 involved with training course by provider
TRAINING COURSE at SBEelement

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

Sattrain **Now thinking about the training course that you've been involved with – have you been satisfied or dissatisfied with the quality of the training delivered by the provider? IF SATISFIED/DISSATISFIED: Is that very or fairly satisfied/dissatisfied?**

- 1 Very satisfied~
- 2 Fairly satisfied
- 3 Fairly dissatisfied
- 4 Very dissatisfied
(No opinion)

IF SBWA EMPLOYER (yes as QD or QF) AND TRAINING COURSE at SBElement
Sattrain **And have you been satisfied or dissatisfied with the relevance of the training to your organisation's needs? IF SATISFIED/DISSATISFIED: Is that very or fairly satisfied/dissatisfied?**

- 1 Very satisfied
- 2 Fairly satisfied
- 3 Fairly dissatisfied
- 4 Very dissatisfied
(No opinion)

IF SBWA EMPLOYER (yes as QD or QF) AND TRAINING COURSE at SBElement AND AT LEAST 1 OTHER ELEMENT AT SBElement

Probtrain **Have you had any problems co-ordinating the training course with other elements of sector-based work academies?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

IF YES

Whatprob **What problems have you had?**

OPEN/TYPE IN

6: ATTITUDES TO SCHEMES

ASK ALL

Now some general questions about the scheme.

Anyben **Have there been any benefits for your organisation in taking people on [work experience placements/sector based work academies]?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

IF YES

Benefit **What have been the benefits for your organisation? DO NOT PROMPT**

- 1 Way of trying people out before hiring them
- 2 Gives supply of candidates/CVs on file

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

- 3 Way of bringing in younger staff
- 4 Got extra resource at no/low cost
- 5 Helps our staff to develop line management skills/experience
- 6 Good publicity/good for our reputation
- 7 Gives young/unemployed people a chance/to help (youth) unemployment
- 8 quality of candidates for job vacancies
- 9 way of finding out about/getting involved in other schemes (e.g. Apprentices)
- 9 Other (TYPE IN)
- 10 None

IF ANY AT BENEFIT

Worth **Would you say the benefits have been worth the time and resource in setting up [sector based work academies/work experience placements]?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 (has not been much/any time/resource)

ASK ALL

Improve **In what ways, if any, do you think the scheme[s] could be improved?**

OPEN/TYPER IN

ASK ALL

Recagain **How likely is it that you would take on someone in the future on a [work experience placement/sector based work academy]? READ OUT**

- 1 Very likely
- 2 Fairly likely
- 3 Not very likely
- 4 Not at all likely

Morelike **Do you think that taking part in the scheme[s] has made your establishment more or less likely to recruit young people with a recent history of unemployment, or has it made no difference?**

- 1 More likely
- 2 Less likely
- 3 No difference

Att **Do you agree or disagree with the following statements: IF AGREE/ DISAGREE: Do you strongly dis/agree or tend to dis/agree**

- a) **“[Work experience/sector based work academies] lets you take a risk on someone you otherwise wouldn’t”**
- b) **“Since taking part in [Work experience/sector based work academies], our recruitment has focused more on young people**

Strongly agree
Tend to agree

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

Tend to disagree
Strongly disagree
Don't know

Recom **Would you recommend [work experience/sector based work academies] to other employers?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know

7: OTHER SCHEMES

I'd now like to ask you about some other Government schemes.

ASK ALL

Aware **Have you heard of any of the following schemes?**

READ OUT. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

- 1 Apprenticeships
- 2 Wage Incentives
- 3 Mandatory Work Activity
- 4 None of these

AGE **And have you heard of the Apprenticeship Grant for employers of 16-24 year olds?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

IF HEARD OF ANY AT AWARE OR AGE

Takeup **And have you taken up or offered any of these in the past year or so? Which ones?** CATI TO ONLY DISPLAY THOSE MENTIONED IN PREVIOUS Q

- 1 Apprenticeships
- 2 Apprenticeship Grant for employers of 16-24 year olds
- 3 Wage Incentives
- 4 Mandatory Work Activity
- 5 None of these

IF TAKEN UP WAGE INCENTIVES AND SBWA EMPLOYER

Wageinc **Have you used the wage incentive for [the same person/any of the same people] that you have had on a sector based work academy?**

Employer perceptions of work experience and sector-based work academies

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know

IF HEARD OF ANY AT AWARE OR AGE

Confuse **Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The range of different schemes makes it confusing for employers to know what is available.**

- 1 Agree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Don't know

8: FINAL QUESTIONS

ASK ALL

Just a few final questions about the organisation and yourself.

Sector1 **How would you describe the main business activity of this establishment?**

PROBE IF NECESSARY: What is the main product or service of this establishment?
What exactly is made or done at this establishment?

OPEN/TYPE IN

(note: use above question for SIC coding)

Sector2 **Is this establishment in...?** READ OUT

IF NECESSARY PROMPT: The public sector includes local authorities, councils, government departments, civil service, state schools, the NHS etc. The private sector includes partnerships, PLCs (private limited companies). The voluntary sector includes charities and not for profit organisations.

- 1 the private sector
- 2 the public sector
- 3 or the non-profit/voluntary sector

ASK ALL

Jobt **Which of the following most closely describes your job title?**

READ OUT. CODE ONE ONLY.

- 1 Owner
- 2 General manager
- 3 Managing director
- 4 Other manager
- 5 Personnel/human resources manager
- 6 Other (SPECIFY)

Qrecon **The Department for Work and Pensions may be conducting some further research on these topics in the future. Would you be happy for someone from TNS BMRB to re-contact you and invite you to participate in this research?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

References

Ainsworth, P., Hillmore, A., Marlow, S. and Prince, S. (2012). *Early impacts of work experience*. DWP.

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