



Department
for Business
Innovation & Skills

BIS RESEARCH PAPER NUMBER 164

Apprenticeship Evaluation:
London Learners Report

MARCH 2014

RESEARCH

John Higon is the Head of Skills Research at Ipsos MORI and has been researching Apprenticeship policy for a range of government departments over the past five years. John has been working in social research for eleven years specialising in the areas of further and higher education.

Rachael Emmett is a Senior Research Executive specialising in Education and Skills research. Rachael graduated from the London School of Economics with a BSc in Social Policy with Government.

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Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

1 Victoria Street

London SW1H 0ET

www.gov.uk/bis

Research paper number 164

March 2014

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London apprentices

This report presents the findings from the 397¹ London apprentice learners who responded to the 2012-13 Apprenticeship Evaluation Learner Survey. In total, the survey explored the views and experiences of 5,010 learners in England who had either finished an Apprenticeship programme between August 2011 and March 2012, or were currently in training.

In the analysis stage of this report, the data was reweighted to reflect the profile of apprentices in London. On the whole, the responses from the London apprentices are consistent with those provided nationally. Only statistically significant differences² are highlighted in this report.

This report presents:

- **The profile of London learners including:**
 - **Framework and level**
 - **Demographics**
 - **Terms of employment and length of Apprenticeship**
 - **Motivations, application channels and information, advice and guidance (IAG) used**
- **The training received, in terms of the balance of formal and informal methods and number of training hours per week**
- **Satisfaction with the programme overall and with specific aspects of delivery**
- **Perceived impacts, including:**
 - **Impacts on skills and abilities, including personal development impacts**
 - **Impacts for recent completers**
 - **Impacts for current learners**
- **Conclusions.**

¹ This figure represents the weighted total. The unweighted total was also 397. All figures in this report are weighted.

² Statistical significance has been calculated based on a 95% Confidence Interval (CI).

The profile of learners

Framework and Level

The most popular framework amongst learners in London was Business, Administration and Law (32%), followed by Health, Public Services and Care (23%) and Retail and Commercial Enterprise (15%). These were the most popular frameworks nationally too and the proportions were largely reflective of the national figures, although there were fewer apprentices from London on the Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies framework compared with nationally (7% vs. 14%).

Table 1: Profile of London and England apprentices by framework

Framework	England	London
Agriculture, Horticulture & Animal Care	2%	2%
Arts, Media & Publishing	0.3%	*
Business, Administration & Law	29%	32%
Construction, Planning & the Built Environment	6%	6%
Education & Training	1%	2%
Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies	14%	7%
Hairdressing	2%	2%
Health, Public Services & Care	21%	23%
Information & Communication Technology	3%	4%
Leisure, Travel & Tourism	4%	8%
Retail & Commercial Enterprise	18%	15%

Base: England (5,010); London (397)

About two-thirds of apprentices in London were studying at Level 2 (65%), with the rest studying at Level 3 (35%). Similar proportions were seen in England as a whole. Those studying Health, Public Services and Care were more likely to be doing so at Level 3; whereas those studying Retail and Commercial Enterprise were more likely to be doing so at Level 2.

Demographics

The gender profile of apprentices in London matches the national one, with 46% male and 54% female in London, compared with 47% male and 53% female nationally. In London, there were more males doing Business, Administration and Law (26% vs. 21%) and Leisure, Travel and Tourism (12% vs. 6%) but fewer doing Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies (15% vs. 28%) than nationally.

Although just 12% of London learners were from black and minority ethnic groups (BME), this was higher than all learners nationally (7%).

A fifth of learners in London (20%) were aged between 16-18 years old when they began their Apprenticeship, just over a third were aged between 19-24 years old (36%) with the rest aged 25+ (44%). These proportions match those seen in the national profile.

Younger apprentices aged under 25 were more likely to be doing frameworks in Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies and Construction, Planning and the Built Environment than older apprentices; whereas those aged 25+ were more likely to be doing frameworks in Business, Administration and Law and Health, Public Services and Care. These were patterns seen in the national figures too.

Table 2: Demographic profile of London and England apprentices

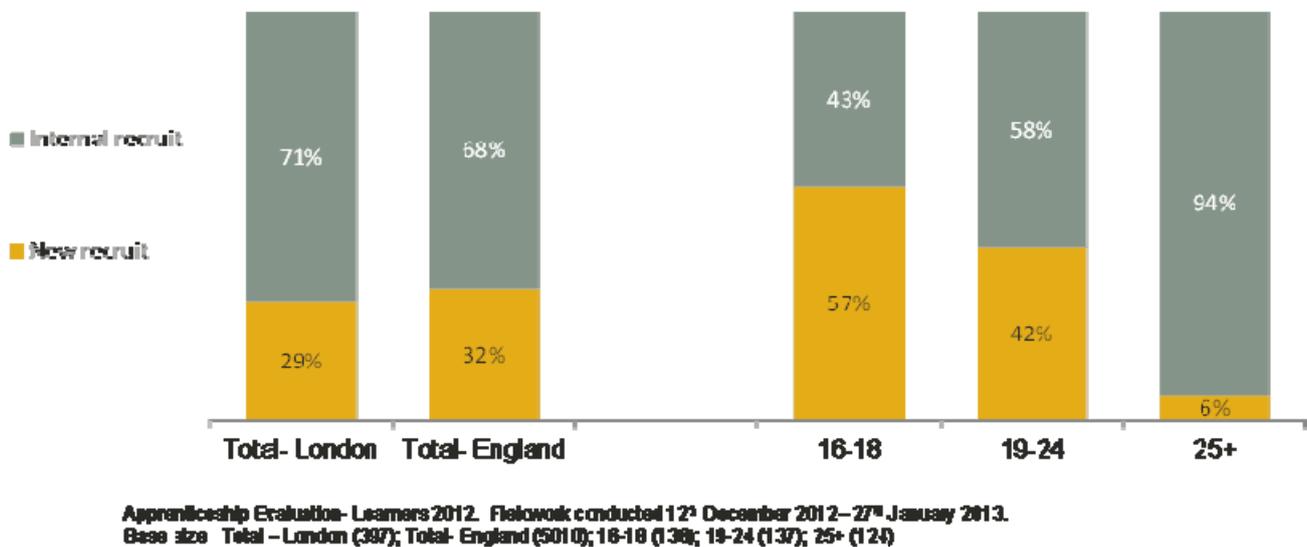
	England	London
Gender		
Male	47%	46%
Female	53%	54%
Ethnicity		
BME	7%	12%
White	91%	86%
Age		
16-18	22%	20%
19-24	36%	36%
25+	42%	44%

Base: England (5010); London (397)

Terms of employment and length of Apprenticeship

The majority of apprentices in London were already working for their employer before they started their Apprenticeship with them (71%). The rest were recruited directly for the Apprenticeship (29%), a similar story as seen in the national figures.

Entry routes into Apprenticeships varied significantly across different age groups. As seen in Figure 1, while only 43% of those aged under 19 were already working for their employer, 94% of those aged 25+ were doing so; a pattern also reflected in the national figures and logical due to younger people likely to be starting their first jobs. However, there were more London apprentices aged over 25 and between 16-18 years old already working for their employers when they started their Apprenticeships, compared with the profile nationally.

Figure 1: Internal and new recruits by region and age

The majority of London apprentices who were internal recruits had been working at their company for at least a year before starting their Apprenticeship (68%), in line with England overall (66%).

There is a link between entry route and an apprentice's awareness that they are actually doing an Apprenticeship: over nine in ten (92%) new recruits were aware they were on an Apprenticeship compared with just half (53%) of internal recruits. This pattern was also apparent in the national figures as well as the employer survey. Overall, the findings suggest that the extent of information and degree of choice that apprentices have about their Apprenticeship prior to enrolment differs depending on how they were recruited.

The majority of London apprentices had a written contract of employment (88%), similar to England as a whole. Older apprentices and existing employees (who were also more likely to be older) were more likely to have written contracts compared with younger apprentices who were also more likely to be new recruits.

Just over seven in ten apprentices in London had permanent contracts (72%) while nearly a quarter were employed just for the duration of the training (24%). However, new recruits were significantly less likely to have been offered permanent positions (33% vs. 89% of internal recruits).

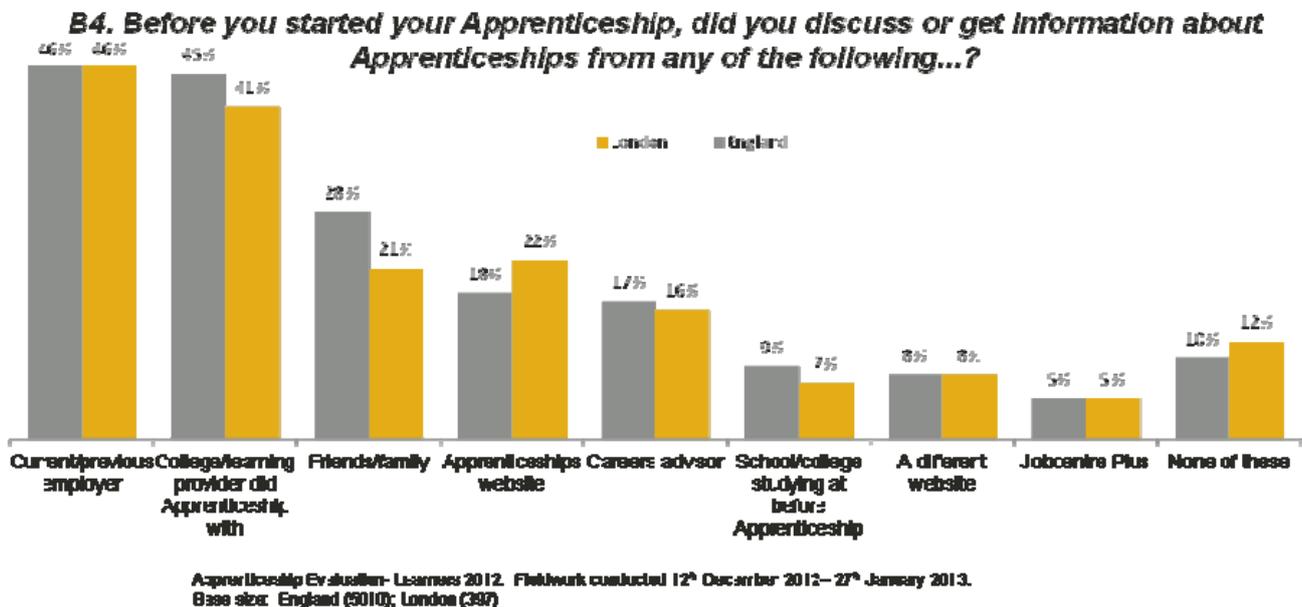
According to SASE guidelines, Apprenticeships should last at least 12 months (with exemptions for pre-existing skills). Based on learner reports (rather than ILR data), the average length of an Apprenticeship was 14 months and around half had Apprenticeships that took longer than 12 months (49%). Whilst the average length for Level 2 was just under 12 months, the average for Level 3 was almost 18 months. Four in five apprentices in London regarded the length of their Apprenticeship as being 'about right' (81%). Of the remainder, more thought it was too long (11%) than too short (6%).

Motivations, application channels and IAG

The main motivation for doing an Apprenticeship among apprentices in London and in England as a whole was to gain a qualification (35%); followed by progressing or entering into a certain career (20%); and gaining work-related skills (19%).

Figure 2 shows that Apprentices sought information and/or advice from a range of people in deciding on whether to do an Apprenticeship: 46% consulted their current or previous employer; 41% consulted the training provider or college providing the Apprenticeship; and 22% sought information on the Apprenticeships website. Fewer apprentices in London consulted their friends and family compared with the rest of the country (21% vs. 28%).

Figure 2: Sources of information used by learners

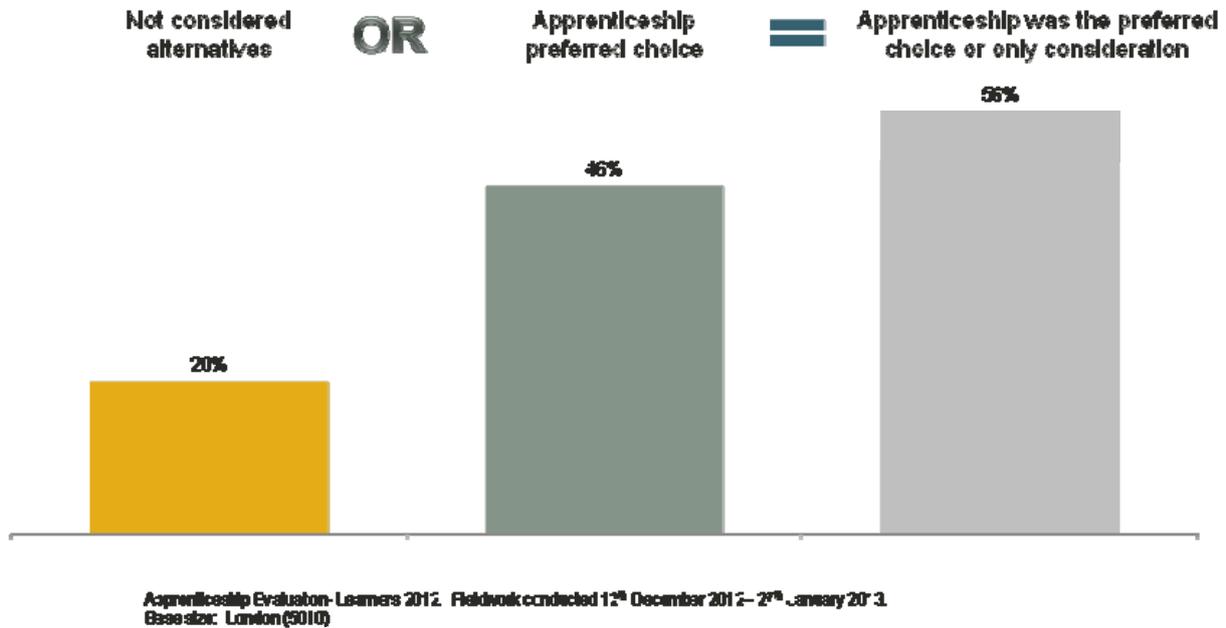


Whether the apprentice sought other options prior to choosing an Apprenticeship is an interesting factor to look at in terms of determining their motivation to study. A fifth of London apprentices cited Apprenticeships as the only option they had considered, a similar story to that seen in England as a whole. Other options that London apprentices explored before starting their course included staying in the job they already had (36%) and working towards a qualification in a Further Education College (33%).

If an apprentice had considered other options, they were asked more about whether an Apprenticeship was their preferred route or not. For those who had considered alternatives, Apprenticeships were the preferred choice for almost half (46%). By combining those who either *only* looked at doing an Apprenticeship and those for whom an Apprenticeship was the *preferred choice*, we get a clearer picture of motivations. This showed that Apprenticeships were the only or first choice training route for 56% of apprentice learners, a similar figure to England overall (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Whether an Apprenticeship was the only or preferred option

B11. When you first considered an Apprenticeship did you also consider any of the following alternatives...? B12. And was an Apprenticeship your preferred choice at the time or would you have rather have done something else or did you not mind either way?



When applying for an Apprenticeship, apprentices can make multiple applications. The average number of applications a successful apprentice made was five, broadly in line with the England average. Around half (49%) of London apprentice learners had made only one application for an Apprenticeship.

Apprentices applying directly for an Apprenticeship were asked about how they applied. The most popular method was to apply through the Apprenticeships Vacancies System on the Apprenticeships website (44%), whilst 43% applied directly through an employer which is fewer than in England as a whole (52%). A quarter applied through their college or learning provider (26%) or through online job sites (23%).

As in England overall, the majority in London regarded getting onto their Apprenticeship as easy (87% and 86% respectively). Of those who found it difficult (13%) the main reason was high competition (31%- similar to England as a whole) and the application process taking a long time (24%). One factor that was prevalent in the national figures but less so in London was the perception that not many employers offered Apprenticeships (an issue for 23% of those who found it difficult to get an Apprenticeship in England, compared with 13% in London). This suggests that apprentices felt there were more Apprenticeships available in London.

Delivery of Apprenticeship training

Balance of formal and informal delivery methods

Throughout this section we refer to two types of training, in line with the definitions used in the national report:

- Formal training is defined as training delivered by a college or external training provider, or training sessions held in the workplace but away from usual work activities.
- Informal training is defined as training in the workplace, from either the employer or the training provider, delivered while doing usual work activities.

In line with the national picture, around half of London apprentices had received training from an **external provider** (47%, compared with 50% nationally), while three in five (59%) had received formal **off-the-job training in their workplace** but separate from their usual work activities. Combining these, 75% of London apprentices had received at least some formal training as part of their Apprenticeship, while 19% had only had informal on-the-job training. While this is lower than found in 2012 within London, it is in line with this year's national findings, where 77% had received formal training and 22% had not.

Apprentices complete a **portfolio** to provide evidence on what they have been doing as part of their training and enable them to reflect on their own learning. Like apprentices nationally, almost three-quarters of London apprentices (73%) had worked on their Apprenticeship portfolio during their normal working day. A similar proportion (75%) had done work or learning towards the Apprenticeship **in their own time**.

Training hours

SASE guidelines stipulate that an Apprenticeship should include at least 280 hours of guided learning, including at least 100 hours of off-the-job training. We asked apprentices how many hours they usually spent on various types of training, per week. We estimated that around 10% of apprentices may have overstated the amount of training they did in both 2012 and 2011, due to the way the question was asked: therefore the figures presented here are likely to be slight over-estimates³.

Apprentices spent the most amount of time training at their workplace while performing their usual work activities (an average of 8.2 hours per week) and going to a college or training provider for training (7.4 hours). They estimated spending on average 4.7 hours per week in formal training but away from their usual work duties, 4 hours per week doing extra work or learning in their own time and 2.6 hours across the week filling in their Apprenticeship portfolio during their normal working day.

SASE guidelines also specify that guided learning hours are completed during contracted working hours, and the funding rules for Apprenticeships state that the employer must

³ As reported in Ipsos MORI (2013), *Apprenticeship Evaluation: Learners*, BIS Research Paper Number 124, page 38.

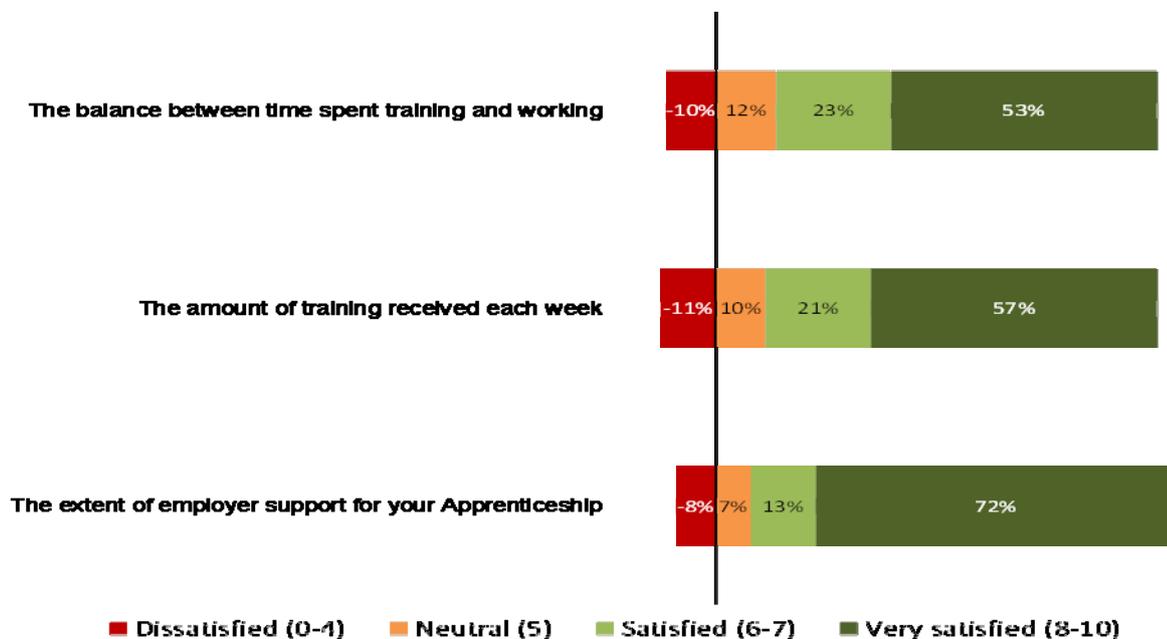
complete all elements of the framework within the contracted hours. With these requirements in mind it is important to focus on the detail of the training because it can tell us the extent to which the Apprenticeship is embedded within day-to-day work activities as well as providing a measure of the value that employers place on Apprenticeships by the extent to which they enable the apprentice to undertake training during contracted working hours.

Three in ten London apprentices (30%) stated they always did their training within contracted working hours; while a fifth (22%) said they usually or always did their training outside of their contracted hours. These figures are almost identical to those nationally.

London apprentices’ views on the balance and volume of training they received

Figure 4 shows that almost four in five London apprentices (78%) were satisfied with the **amount of training** they did as part of their Apprenticeship, including over half who were ‘very satisfied’ (rating it as eight or more out of ten). A similar proportion of London apprentices (76%) were satisfied with the **balance of time** they spent between training and work. In each case, around one in ten was dissatisfied (11% and 10% respectively). The overwhelming majority – 85% - of London apprentices were satisfied with the **support received from their employer** during the Apprenticeship. This included a very high proportion (72%) who felt ‘very satisfied’. The views of apprentices in London were no different from those of apprentices nationally.

Figure 4: London apprentices’ satisfaction with amount of training, balance of training, and employer support



Base = All London apprentices (397)

Learner involvement

Apprentices were asked whether they had been able to influence the content of their Apprenticeship or the training methods used to deliver it. Two-thirds said they had been able to influence each to at least some extent (68% for both) with approximately three in ten who said they had done so ‘to a great extent’ (27% and 29% respectively).

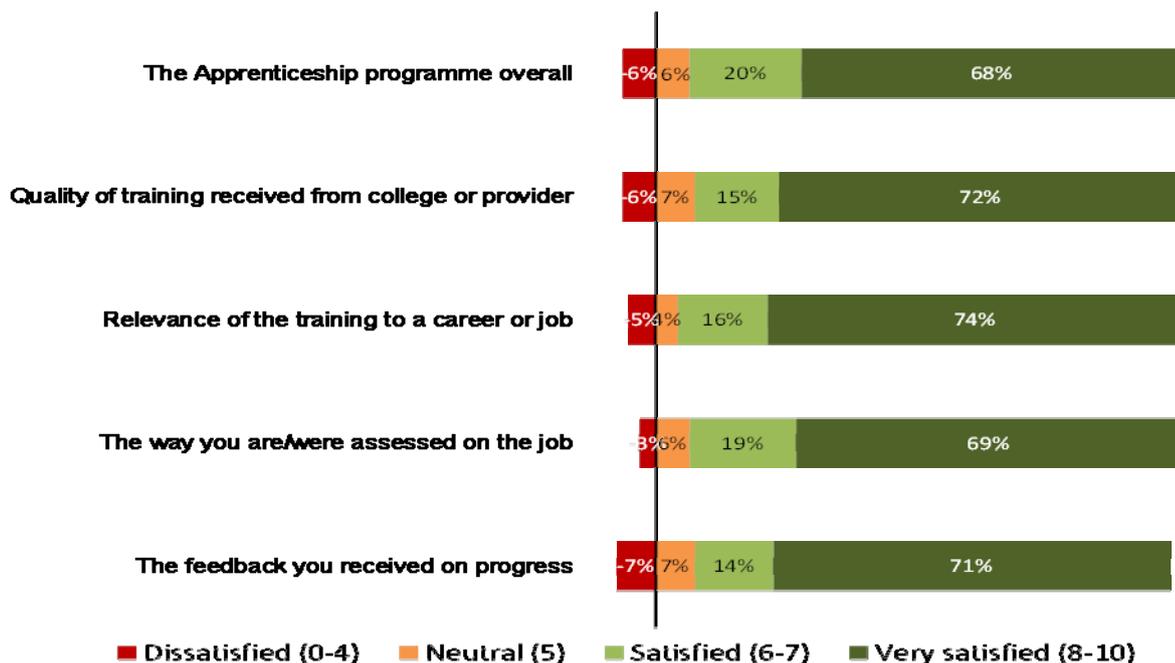
About three in ten (28%) London apprentices would have liked more of a say in their Apprenticeship, while the majority (71%) were satisfied with the extent of their influence over both content and delivery, identical to the national figures.

Satisfaction with Apprenticeships

In line with the national picture, **overall satisfaction** with Apprenticeships was high at 88%, including 68% who rated themselves as ‘very satisfied’ (scoring at least eight out of 10). Almost three in ten apprentices (29%) rated their satisfaction as ten out of ten (Figure 5).

There were no significant differences according to the level of the Apprenticeship or to whether the learner was an existing employee or recruited externally. Fewer women in London said they were ‘very satisfied’ than men (63% versus 74%), which appears to be related to gender differences in participation by Framework. The proportion of London apprentices who were ‘very satisfied’ with their training on Health, Public Services and Care Frameworks (where four in five apprentices are women) was 58% compared with 68% in London as a whole. London apprentices doing this Framework were also less likely than Health, Public Services and Care apprentices nationally to say they were ‘very satisfied’.

Figure 5: London apprentices’ satisfaction with aspects of their Apprenticeship Programme



Base = All London apprentices (397)

Reflecting their high levels of overall satisfaction with the Apprenticeship programme, most London apprentices were satisfied with the **quality of training** they received (87%) including 72% who were 'very satisfied'. Learners who started their Apprenticeship as existing employees were more likely to be 'very satisfied' with the quality of their training than those who were recruited externally (75% compared with 63%). Apprentices were equally positive about the **relevance** of the Apprenticeship training to their career (90% satisfied, including 74% who were 'very satisfied'). There were no significant differences on these measures between employers in London and those nationally.

The vast majority of apprentices were also satisfied with the way their training provider dealt with **on-the-job assessments** (88%) and the **quality of the feedback** they received from their training provider (85%). These patterns are almost identical to those found in 2011, as well as being in line with the national picture.

Advocacy for Apprenticeships

Reflecting their high levels of satisfaction with Apprenticeships, four in five London apprentices would recommend the programme (78%) including a third who would speak highly of it without being asked (34%). Just three per cent said they would be critical of it. The findings for London apprentices are in line with those nationally.

Perceived impacts

Work-related skills and abilities

When asked about the benefits they have directly gained as a result of their Apprenticeship, 85% of apprentices in London said it had given them skills and knowledge for a range of jobs and industries and nearly nine in ten (87%) said they had better skills and knowledge related to their current or desired area of work (Table 3). Other beneficial impacts included perceived improvements in career prospects (84%) and ability to do their job (83%). This positive picture was also seen in England as whole.

Only three percent reported no direct benefits from the Apprenticeship. Older apprentices aged 25+ were more likely to report no benefits compared with those aged 16-24 (6% vs. 1%), a pattern also seen in the whole of England.

Table 3: Benefits gained from Apprenticeship by London and age

	Region	Age		
	London	16-18	19-24	25+
Better skills and knowledge related to current/desired area of work	87%	94%	92%	79%
Skills and knowledge that used across a range of jobs and industries	85%	90%	91%	77%
Career prospects have improved	84%	95%	90%	75%

	Region	Age		
	London	16-18	19-24	25+
Ability to do job has improved	83%	92%	88%	75%
Now better able to work with others	78%	90%	83%	68%
Numeracy has improved	62%	56%	60%	67%
Literacy has improved	61%	58%	59%	64%
IT skills have improved	60%	68%	51%	64%
None of these	3%	0%	1%	6%

Base: London (397); 16- 18 (136); 19-24 (137); 25+ (124)

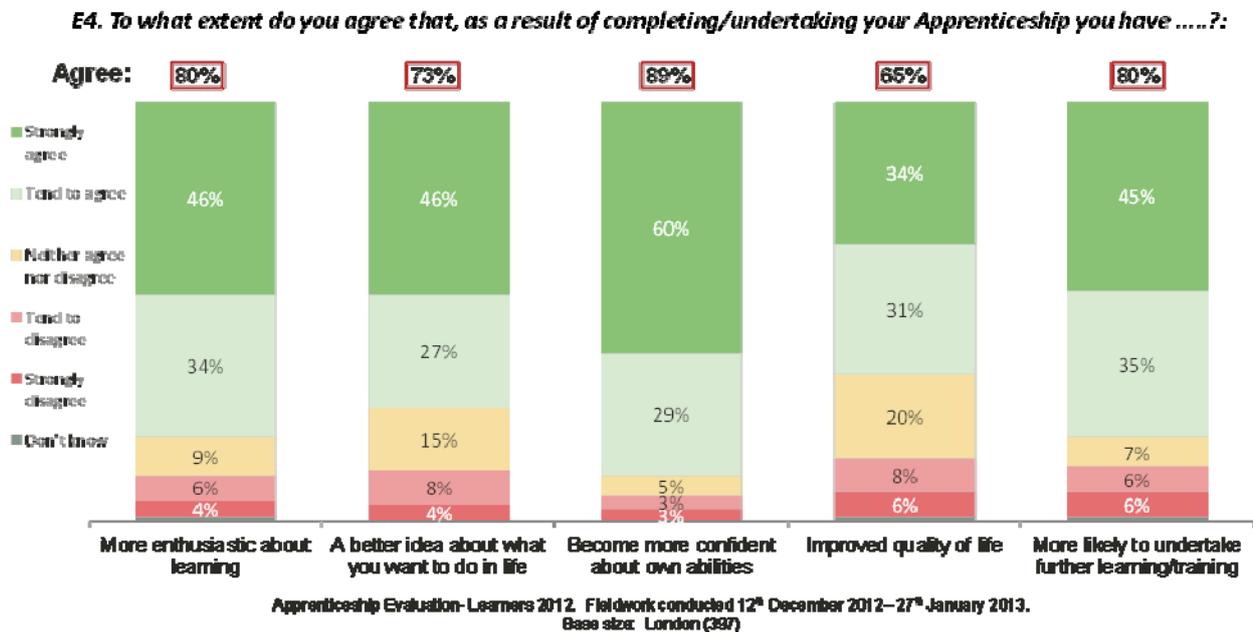
'Soft' skill impacts

Apprenticeship learners were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that their Apprenticeship had provided them with a range of 'soft' impacts such as raising aspirations and contributing towards their personal development (Figure 6).

Nine in ten London apprentices (89%) regarded their Apprenticeship as having led to improved confidence in their abilities and two-thirds (65%) agreed that it had improved their overall quality of life.

Four in five London apprentices said that their training had made them more enthusiastic about learning and more likely to undertake further learning and training in future (80% each). Three-quarters (73%) believed that it had given them a better idea about what they wanted to do in their life, which was understandably higher among younger apprentices than among those aged 25 or older (87% of those aged 16-18 vs. 62% of those aged 25+). All of these figures were in line with the national findings as well as with the 2012 London results.

Figure 6: 'Soft' skills impacts experienced by apprentices in London



Impacts for recent completers

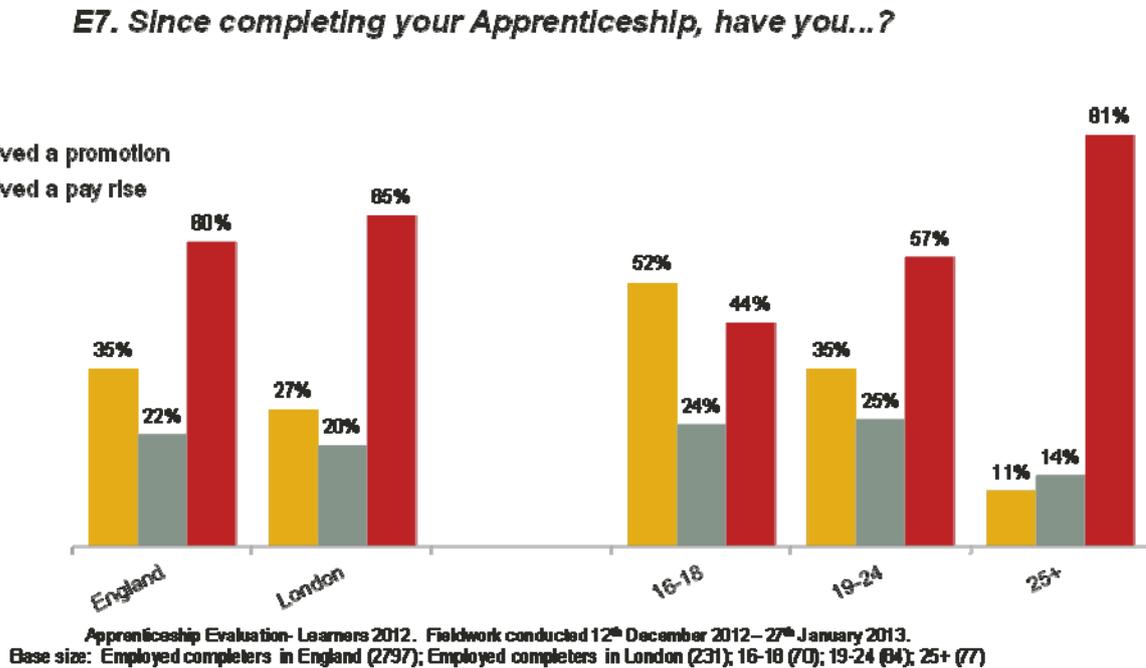
Learners who had completed their Apprenticeship were positive about the extent to which it had benefited them in their current job. Two thirds (67%) of apprentices who were in work felt that they had been given more responsibilities in their job and over seven in ten felt that they were now more secure in their job (71%) and more satisfied with it (73%). Almost nine in ten (87%) felt they were now better at doing their job. These were similar findings to the national figures.

Although pay increases at the start of an Apprenticeship were rare, they were more common once the Apprenticeship had finished. Only 13% of apprentices in London reported a pay increase on starting their Apprenticeship, with 2% reporting a pay decrease; whereas 27% reported a pay rise on completion. This is not surprising as employers can pay apprentices a reduced wage of £2.68 an hour (if aged under 19, or aged 19 year and in their first year) which would need to increase to at least national minimum wage upon completion. This is reflected in the number of younger apprentices who received a pay rise upon completion compared with older apprentices (52% of those aged 16-18 vs. 11% of those aged 25+).

However, apprentices in London were significantly less likely than those nationally to have received a pay rise upon completing their Apprenticeship (27% in London compared with 35% in England overall, see Figure 7). This could be for a number of reasons, including that London employers may already pay more than other regions because of initiatives such as the London living wage.

Apprentice wages tend to be lower due to the understanding that the apprentice is also training and there is an expectation that pay will increase once they complete their training and become fully qualified. Over six in ten (63%) apprentices in London agreed that earning less now is worth it because they will earn more after.

Figure 7: Pay rises and promotions by region and age



A fifth (20%) of London apprentices has been promoted since completion, less than those reporting a pay increase but still in line with the national figures. Unlike pay increases, promotions were not prevalent in any one particular age group.

Apprentices who had experienced a pay rise or promotion were asked to what extent they felt the Apprenticeship had helped them to achieve this. While the majority (84%) felt that the Apprenticeship had contributed in some way, only 18% attributed it directly to the Apprenticeship. This was also seen nationally.

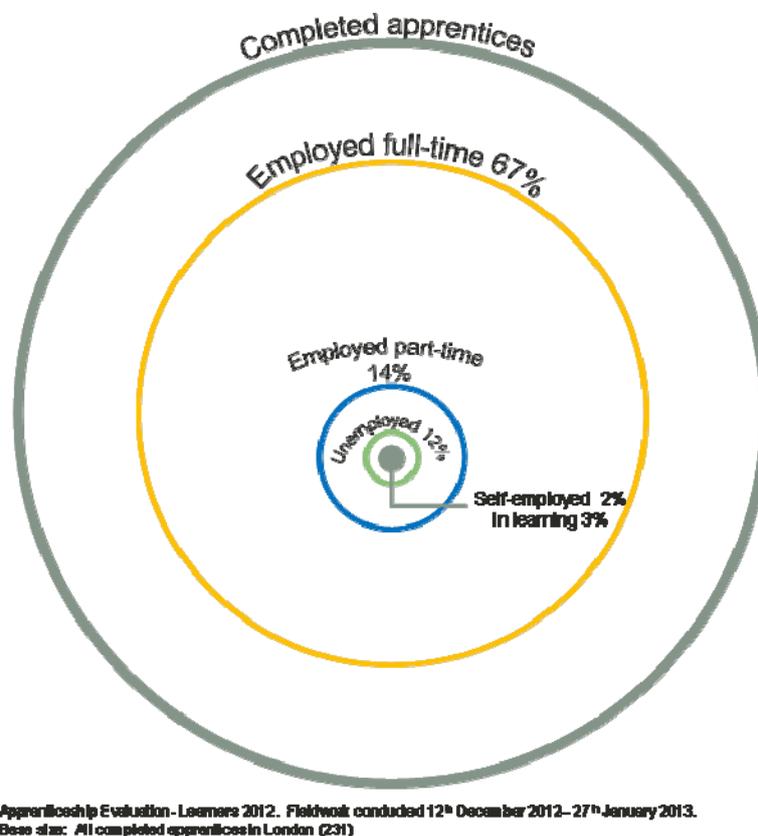
The majority (81%) of those who had completed their Apprenticeship were still either in full-time or part-time work (Figure 8). Of those still employed, 82% were employed by the same employer with whom they completed their Apprenticeship. Most of the remainder were unemployed (12%). Apprentice learners who had been recruited externally and who had completed their training were the most likely to be unemployed, which is logical as internal recruits were more likely to already hold permanent positions with the employer. At the time of the survey, two-thirds of those unemployed were looking for work (66%).

Those who had recently completed were positive about their future long-term employment prospects. Almost nine in ten (87%) felt their Apprenticeship had given them more chance of finding work in the future with 53% saying it had given them *significantly* more chance. Just over one in ten (12%) said it had made no difference.

Three-quarters (74%) of Apprenticeship completers in London felt they were likely to stay with the same employer for the next 2-3 years and nearly nine in ten (89%) felt they were likely to remain at least within the same sector. As to be expected, internal recruits were more likely than new recruits to plan on remaining with the same employer (79% vs. 59%)

but there is no difference between the two in terms of likelihood of staying in the same sector.

Figure 8: The progression routes of completed apprentices in London



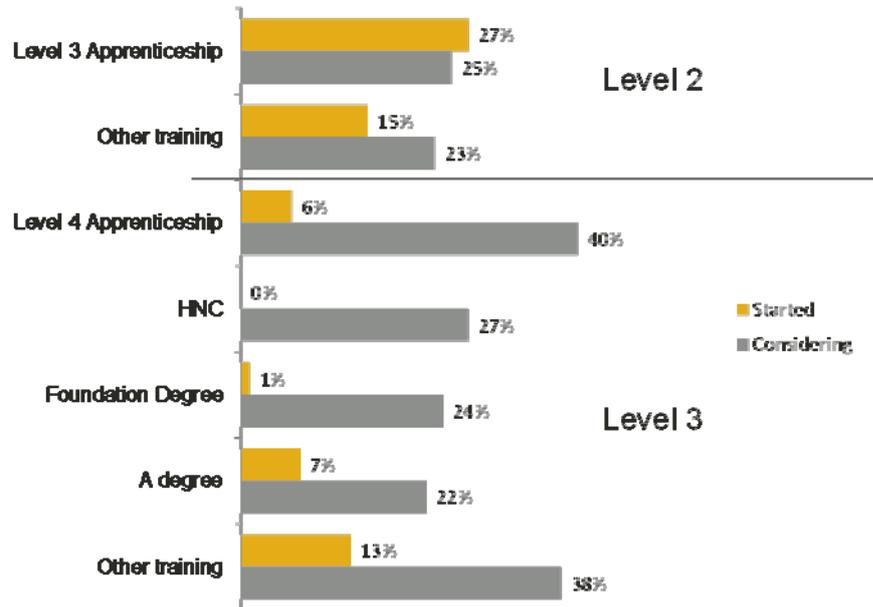
Since completing their course, around one in four (27%) Level 2 apprentices had since progressed to a Level 3 Apprenticeship with a similar proportion considering doing so (Figure 9).

Among Level 3 completers in London, one in twenty had progressed to a Higher Apprenticeship (6%) with a substantial minority considering doing so in future (40%), similar to the findings in the 2011 report⁴. Although no London apprentices said they had started a Higher National Certificate (HNC) since completion, a substantial minority (27%) were thinking of doing so (a reduction since 2012, when 4% had started a HNC and 40% were considering it). Again, compared with 2012, fewer Level 3 completers had started a higher education qualification (8% having started a Foundation or other undergraduate degree, compared with 17% previously), although a similar proportion was considering higher education as in 2012. All of these findings were in line with the results for England as a whole.

⁴ IFF Research (2012), *Evaluation of Apprenticeships: London Region Report*, BIS.

Figure 9: The education routes of completed apprentices in London

E14-E19. Since completing your [Advanced] Apprenticeship, have you started/currently considering any of the following ...



Apprenticeship Evaluation- Learners 2012. Fieldwork conducted 12th December 2012–27th January 2013.
Base size: London Level 2 completers (136); London Level 3 completers (95)

The plans of current apprentices

The overwhelming majority of current apprentices were committed to completing their training: all said they were likely to finish their Apprenticeship including 89% who said they were very likely to do so. This is no different to the national figures.

Seven out of ten apprentices thought they were likely to stay with the same employer for the next 2-3 years and 87% expected to stay in the same sector. Unlike the completed apprentices, there was no difference between new and internal recruits in likelihood to stay with their current employer.

Nearly eight out of ten (79%) of current apprentices in London thought it likely they would go on to further training or learning in the next 2-3 years of completing. The vast majority of these (94%) said this would be at a higher level.

Conclusions

There were very few differences between the views and experiences of apprentices in London and of those nationally. The conclusions presented here are therefore in line with those highlighted at national level:

Firstly, it is important to note that **Apprenticeships are meeting the majority of learner needs**. Apprentices report high levels of satisfaction with their training programmes and with the support they receive from their employer. They cite a range of positive impacts from completing the training, including greater confidence, improved skills and enhanced career prospects.

However, there is a **lack of awareness** among learners in some of the newer Frameworks that they are actually doing an Apprenticeship, particularly those recruited from among the existing workforce. Recent growth in Apprenticeship provision has centred in these newer Framework areas – where training tends to be shorter and less time-intensive, with fewer reported benefits. This warrants further investigation at national level and suggests that a significant minority of apprentice learners in those pathways may not specifically want to complete an Apprenticeship and as such are not reaping as many benefits from it.

One in five apprentices did not receive any **formalised off-the-job training** away from their usual work activities and are therefore missing out on a key component of Apprenticeship learning, stipulated under the SASE guidelines.

Finally, **progression** to Level 3 and beyond is limited and appears to be declining both in London and nationally compared with the previous year's findings. More work is needed to understand why apprentices do not take up the progression opportunities that employers say they offer, particularly in the light of recent changes to the funding regime for adult learning, such as the introduction of higher education-style loans for adult learners in further education.

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BIS/14/625