National Traineeships: An Evaluation of the Development and Implementation Phase

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The Views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education and Employment.

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1   SUMMARY

MORI was commissioned by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) to carry out an evaluation of National Traineeships (NTrs). The main aims of the evaluation were to identify:

- key strengths and weaknesses of the initiative in its early stages

- examples of effective practice to disseminate to other TECs, NTOs, Careers Services, training providers and employers

- issues which need to be resolved for the future development of the initiative.

Additionally, the project examined the relationship between NTrs and Modern Apprenticeships (MAs) and NTrs and New Deal.

This final report presents the findings from both phases of the research. Phase 1 of the research - interviews with NTOs, TECs, Careers Services and employers took place at the end of 1997 and beginning of 1998. Phase 2 of the research - interviews with the same NTOs, TECs and Careers Services took place at the end of 1998 and beginning of 1999, along with 27 depth interviews with training providers and two focus groups with trainees. Surveys of employers of National Trainees (215) and trainees (900) were also conducted at the beginning of 1999.

The introduction of National Traineeships

National Traineeships were introduced from September 1997 as the result of the 'Review of 16-19 qualifications' by Sir Ron Dearing (1996). Since 1997, interested National Training Organisations (NTOs[1]) have been developing National Traineeship frameworks in conjunction with Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs).

Satisfaction with National Traineeships

What emerges from the evaluation is a generally positive picture but with a number of issues which need to be addressed.

Employers and trainees are mainly positive about their experiences of NTrs; the majority say they would recommend NTrs to their friends and colleagues (72% of trainees and 89% of

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[1] ITOs are becoming progressively absorbed into the National Training Organisation (NTO) network; the term NTO is therefore mainly used in the report.

employers). Over three quarters of *trainees* (77%) are satisfied with their NTr compared with one in ten (8%) who are dissatisfied.

It is the opportunity to learn real skills in the workplace that appeals most to young people about NTrs. In contrast, poor pay is consistently mentioned as a major source of dissatisfaction.

Trainees with employed status and those with below Level 2 qualifications on entry are more likely than average to feel positive about their experiences of NTrs. However, the latter group are also more likely to say they had planned to apply for a job with training on leaving school (50% vs. 41% overall).

In contrast, trainees doing communication/business support/administration frameworks are more likely to feel dissatisfied with their NTr (19% vs. 12% overall). However, a significant proportion of these trainees also have at least a Level 2 qualification on entry (50% vs. 36% overall).

The large majority of trainees currently doing a NTr expect to complete the programme (92%). Three fifths (61%) expect to stay with their employer after they complete/leave the programme.

The picture is equally positive among *employers*. Almost two-thirds agree that compared with previous training at this level, NTrs offer a more broad based training programme (64% agree), is more effective in raising skills level (64%) and is more beneficial to their industry as a whole (63%).

Frameworks for National Traineeships

Overall, the development of the frameworks is felt by participants to have been a success. This success has been helped substantially by the experience of developing MA frameworks. However, the findings from the interviews with NTOs and TECs indicate that, at the time of fieldwork, there were wide variations in take-up of NTrs between framework sectors, as well as between TECs.

The large majority of *employers* (84%) have not experienced any problems with the content of the frameworks to-date. For those who have experienced problems (16% of the sample), the most common reason is that the training is not adequate, both in terms of the level at which it is pitched and the depth of coverage, or is out-of-date.

Delivery

For almost two-thirds of *employers* (64%), training is being delivered through a combination of on- and off-the-job. A third (35%) are using exclusively on-the-job training.

The majority of *employers* and *trainees* who experience off-the-job training are satisfied with this aspect of the programme (74% and 63% respectively). One in eight employers (13%) are dissatisfied; this falls to 7% among trainees.

Among the minority of *employers* who are dissatisfied with off-the-job training, the most common complaint is that the teaching is of poor quality, or that the courses are out-of-date or take too long (39%).

Key skills

In Phase 1 of the evaluation, a number of NTOs felt that there was a lack of enthusiasm among some employers to the concept of key skills being provided as part of the training. NTOs continue to believe that key skills, particularly IT and application of number, remain an outstanding issue for employers in some sectors. They feel that these employers remain unconvinced about the relevance of key skills, and the levels at which they are pitched, in relation to their business. They are concerned that this will make it difficult to recruit employers onto NTrs.

By contrast, these views are not shared by the majority of employers in the survey. However, these employers have signed up to NTrs and this may explain why they are generally receptive towards key skills.

Examples of how some sectors are trying to address the issues relating to key skills are listed under 'Examples of effective practice'.

Employed status

Most TECs continue to take the view that they will aim for employed status wherever possible.

Where it is not possible to offer employed status at the outset, TECs are generally looking for conversion fairly quickly. The majority of the trainees in our sample (70%) have employed

status[2]. Trainees with employed status are generally more positive about their experiences on NTr than those without.

Relationship with Modern Apprenticeship and with New Deal

It is still too early to comment on whether the introduction of NTrs has led to a fall in the numbers recruited onto the MA. This is partly because take-up of NTrs has been relatively slow as TECs have been focusing on other priorities. However, the general feeling is that employers are likely to adopt a more cautious approach to MA recruitment by putting young people onto NTr in the first instance and converting them later on if appropriate. If this happens then it may be harder for TECs to meet their MA targets, although the number of MA 'early leavers' (which has been identified by a number of TECs as a problem) may also decline.

Some TECs and NTOs are also concerned that employers and training providers may put even those young people who are suited to the MA on NTr first, to reduce the risk of them not completing their training, as has happened in some cases with MA.

Most TECs and NTOs are marketing MAs and NTrs together so that the possibility of progression from NTr to MA is made clear. However, very few have thought about progression other than for marketing purposes as conversion will only begin to become a major issue later on this year.

It was not anticipated that NTr would have a direct impact on New Deal or vice-versa, because the two initiatives had different target groups on the whole - mainly 16-18 year olds for NTrs; 18-24 and unemployed for at least 6 months for the New Deal. However, it was not known whether employers would alter their recruitment practices in response to NTrs and New Deal. At the time of the study, the key players interviewed were not aware of New Deal having an impact on the numbers recruited onto NTrs.

Examples of effective practice

Some examples of how sectors are trying to address the issues relating to key skills include:

- incorporating key skills into the regular assessment of NVQs - although still having the key skills separately accredited

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[2] Based on management information provided by DfEE.

- running key skills workshops aimed at employers to show them how to fill gaps where key skills can not be integrated with the NVQ/or on-the-job training

- having key skills monitored by local assessors who meet one-to-one with the young person. The assessors help the young person recognise opportunities in the work place for key skills development. They also organise group training off-the-job, three or four times a week, starting with communication skills, then building up to IT and finally application of number.

The evaluation has also identified key messages that employers and trainees best respond to. According to NTOs and TECs, the messages that *employers* best respond to are:

- NTrs are national training programmes that have been developed specifically for the industry concerned

- it can be tailored to meet the needs of their businesses.

The messages that *trainees* best respond to are:

- NTrs offer training in the workplace

- they will receive nationally recognised qualifications which will help to enhance their employment prospects.

This is consistent with the attitudes expressed by trainees in the quantitative survey.

Sources of information about National Traineeships

NTOs and TECs continue to use a wide range of marketing activities to recruit employers and young people for NTrs, although the general feeling is that awareness among employers is still low.

The employer survey shows that a significant minority (34%) are dissatisfied with the level of publicity/advertising about NTrs. However according to NTOs and TECs, the response among employers that have been targeted has been positive.

The main channels for communicating about NTrs to employers are through private training providers and local colleges. Among trainees, the main information sources about NTrs are the Careers Service and schools.

Recruitment

Two-thirds of employers (67%) have been able to recruit the exact number of trainees which they had planned. A fifth (21%) say that they have not been able to recruit as many as planned compared with 5% who have recruited more than planned.

Half of the employers in our sample (52%) expect to recruit more National Trainees at their establishment in the next 12 months.

The base is too small to enable analysis by employee size and/or sector.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the TECs, NTOs and Careers Service staff who helped us with our evaluation, and to all the employers, training providers and trainees who gave up time to participate in our surveys.

2   INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

2.1   The introduction of National Traineeships

National Traineeships were proposed in the 'Review of 16-19 qualifications' by Sir Ron Dearing (1996) to replace Youth Training. These proposals received strong support from both employers and training practitioners. As a consequence, National Traineeships were introduced from September 1997. The new Labour Government has continued to support and develop these proposals and they now form part of the Investing in Young People initiative. Since 1997, interested NTOs[3] have been developing National Traineeship frameworks in conjunction with TECs.

2.2   What is a National Traineeship?

National Traineeships aim to provide a high quality work-based route for young people with skills and qualifications linked to the national qualifications framework. The government's contribution to funding is via TECs. The design and content criteria for NTrs are:

- a *core* element specifying the minimum outcomes of training including:

    - NVQ2 (or equivalent where no NVQ is available)

    - all key skills, normally at level 2, unless strong countervailing evidence from industry that a different level is appropriate - communication, number and IT to be separately certificated

    - compulsory qualifications required by the sector e.g. First Aid Certificate, Health and Safety requirements

- *optional* elements including:

    - training over and above the core which will assist the young person to progress to a Modern Apprenticeship or otherwise in the sector e.g. through additional GNVQ/NVQ units.

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[3] ITOs are becoming progressively absorbed into the National Training Organisation (NTO) network; the term NTO is therefore mainly used in the report.

2.3   Current position

The first frameworks were approved in Summer 1997. Currently, 47 frameworks have been approved. The number of trainees recruited by the end of December 1998 totalled 30,000.

2.4   The MORI evaluation

MORI was commissioned by the DfEE to carry out an evaluation of National Traineeships. The main aims of the evaluation were to identify:

- key strengths and weaknesses of the initiative in its early stages

- examples of effective practice to disseminate to other TECs and NTOs

- issues which need to be resolved for the future development of the initiative.

Additionally, the project examined the relationship between National Traineeships, Modern Apprenticeships, and the New Deal.

This evaluation consists of a number of phases which are summarised in the diagram opposite. More details on methodology can be found in the Appendices.

NTOs and TECs

This part of the study consisted of case studies in a number of sectors. These sectors were grouped into two - in the first, interviews were carried out with NTO and TEC staff; in the second, just NTO staff. The sectors were chosen to represent a range of industry sectors and likely sizes of the NTr programme. The group 1 and 2 sectors were as follows:

Group 1   **Group 2**
Retail/Distribution   Road Haulage
Health and Social Care   Polymers
Business Administration   Steel
Meat   Photography
Information Technology   Ceramics
Sport and Recreation   Security
Engineering and Marine

The stages of the evaluation

Phase 1 Baseline case studies - NTOs - TECs - Careers Services	**Timing** November 1997 - February 1998

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Phase 2 Follow-up case studies - NTOs - TECs - Careers Services	October 1998 - January 1999

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Phase 3 Participant surveys - trainees - employers Interviews with training providers Focus groups with trainees	January 1999 - February 1999
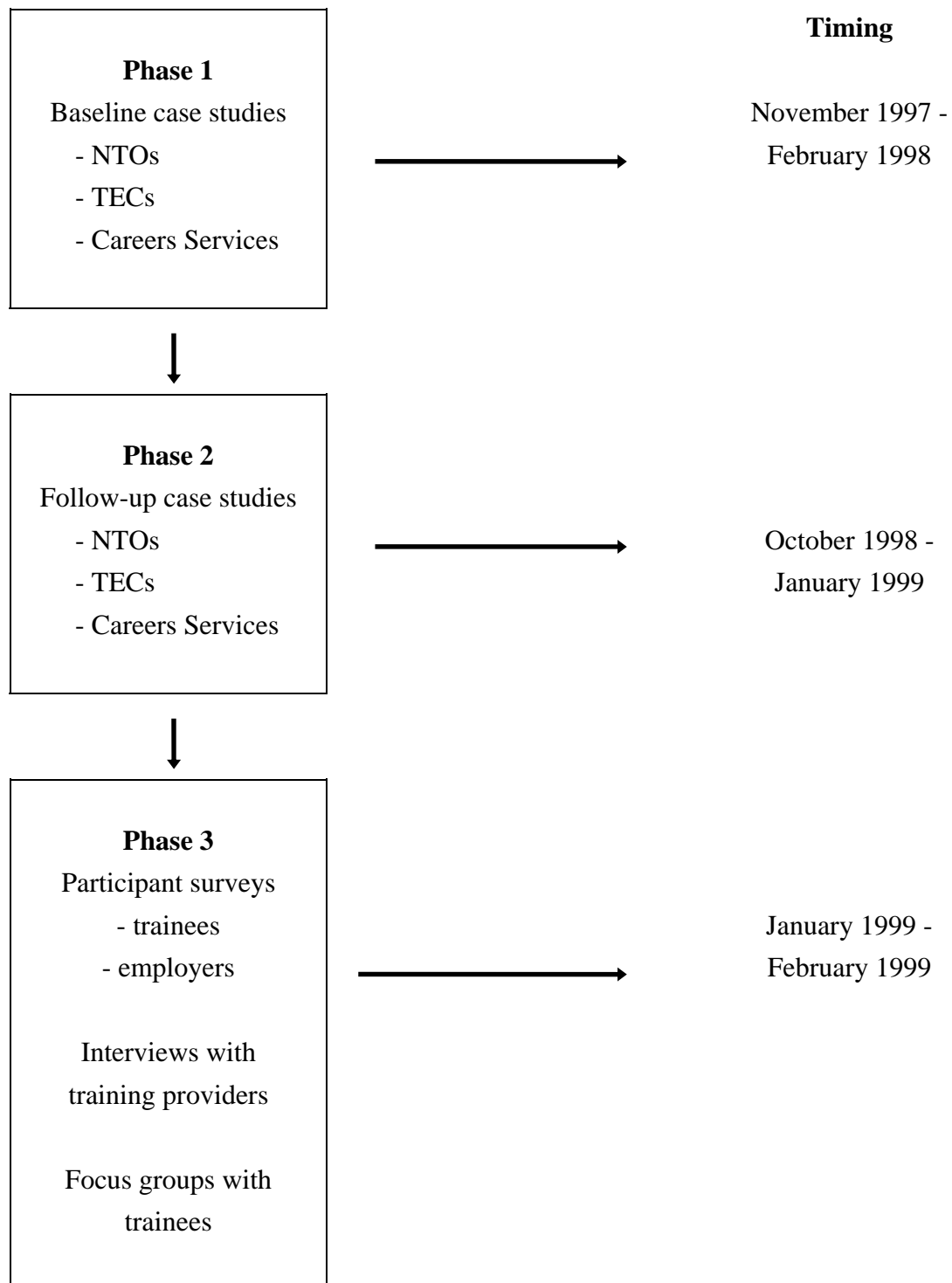
Careers Service

Interviews were carried out with five Careers Services linked to Group 1 sectors in Phase 1. In Phase 2, only two of these Careers Services took part. Therefore, the findings from the Careers Service interviews must be interpreted with caution.

Training providers

In total 27 interviews were conducted with private training providers, FE colleges and Group Training Associations who are delivering NTrs. These were chosen to ensure that a range of locations and frameworks were covered.

More background details on the training providers interviewed can be found in the Appendices.

Employers

A telephone survey of employers who had recruited a National Trainee was conducted between 15 January - 1 February 1999. The sample was drawn from DfEE's database of trainees in September 1998. This database contained contact details of employers and training providers for each trainee but did not distinguish between the two. Consequently, contact details of organisations that were likely to be employers (as opposed to training providers) were manually selected from the database. In total, details of 570 establishments were drawn from the database of which 368 were eligible to participate. In total, 225 interviews were achieved. The valid response rate is 58%.

Given the way in which the sample was drawn, the results of the employer survey should be treated as indicative rather than as representative of employers who have experience of National Trainees. In addition, the relatively small sample size means that sub-group analysis are limited.

Trainees

Two focus groups with trainees were conducted in Essex and Doncaster between December 1998 - January 1999.

Trainees were recruited by training providers and represented the following sector frameworks:
- Hairdressing

- Retail/Distribution

- Customer service

- Business & Administration.

A postal survey of trainees in England and Wales was also conducted between 4 January - 3 February 1999. The sample was provided by DfEE and contained details of all trainees on their database in September 1998. The survey comprised a census of trainees on the database. In total, 3,412 questionnaires were sent to trainees; 929 completed questionnaires were returned to MORI within the fieldwork period giving a valid response rate of 27%.

The data have been weighted by gender, age, length of time on NTr and framework sector in line with known population characteristics, extracted from DfEE's database of National Trainees (as of September 1998). Thus the findings are representative of National Trainees on DfEE's database in September 1998. However, there were insufficient numbers (28 responses) to allow analysis by ethnic origin.

More details on methodology and response rate for both surveys are contained in the Appendices.

2.5 Presentation and interpretation of the data

Quantitative

When interpreting the findings it is important to note that the results are based on a sample of the population, and not on the entire population. Consequently, the results are subject to sampling tolerances, and not all differences between sub-groups (eg. small vs. large employers, trainees with employed status vs. those without, etc.) are therefore significant. A detailed guide to statistical significance is contained in the Appendices.

Throughout this report, the percentages quoted are weighted percentages whilst the base refers to the unweighted base.

Where percentages do not add up to 100%, this is due to multiple answers, computer rounding or to the exclusion of 'don't know' and/or non-response. Throughout the tables, an asterisk (*) denotes a value of less than 0.5 but greater than nought.

For the purpose of analysis, the sector frameworks were grouped under four headings. The following table lists the sector frameworks under the relevant heading.

Manufacturing, Construction & Industrial

Agriculture & commercial horticulture	Construction
Agriculture & garden machinery	Steel
Engineering manufacture	Electricity supply
Electrical & electrical servicing	Knitting, lace etc.
Polymers	Master bakers
Glass	Clothing
Surface coatings	Motor trade
	Food & drink

Communication, Business Support & Administration

Business administration	Telecommunications
IT	Accountancy

Consumer Services

	Childcare
Travel agents	Operating department practice
Residential estate agency	Health & social care
Hairdressing	Horses
Hospitality	Animal care
Security	Sports & recreation

Retail & Distribution

Retail	Floristry

In addition, trainees' qualifications prior to starting NTrs were grouped under the following three headings:

At least one Level 2 qualification	Below Level 2 qualifications	Other types of vocational qualifications
5 or more GCSEs (grades A-C) Intermediate/Advance GNVQ NVQ Levels 1/2	Less than 5 GCSEs (grades A-C) GCSEs below grade C	

Qualitative

Qualitative research provides depth and understanding to the experiences of a group of NTOs, TECs, training providers and Careers Service staff. It does not, and nor is it intended, to provide representative results.

2.6   Structure of the report

The rest of the report covers the following topics:

Section 3 - profile of employers and trainees

Section 4 - employers' and trainees' overall views on NTrs

Section 5 - key audiences' views on the frameworks

Section 6 - issues relating to delivery

Section 7 - marketing

Section 8 - recruitment

Section 9 - funding arrangements

Section 10 - plans and expectations

Section 11 - suggestions for improvement

Section 12 - conclusions.

The report contains a number of anonymised quotes from the interviews and focus groups to illustrate the points being made.

3   PROFILE OF EMPLOYERS AND TRAINEES

3.1   Employer survey

Employer profile

Just under half of the employers surveyed (47%) have less than 10 employees (ie. those who are not on temporary and/or fixed term contracts). Two-fifths (44%) have between 10-99 employees and one in twelve (8%) have 100 or more employees.

Two fifths of the businesses interviewed (41%) are private limited companies and 22% are sole traders. One in six (16%) are public limited companies and 12% are partnerships.

Current Status of trainees

The large majority (83%) currently have young people on NTrs; the remainder did have National Trainees, but do not at present (17%).

Of those employers currently with National Trainees, two fifths (44%) have one trainee and similar proportions have 2-5 trainees (43%). One in eight (13%) have more than five trainees.

A fifth (21%) also have trainees doing a Modern Apprenticeship and just 9 employers interviewed have trainees on New Deal.

3.2   Trainee survey

Just under three-quarters of the trainees in our sample (73%) were still doing a NTr at the time the survey took place (January - February 1999). One in ten trainees (9%) say they have completed their NTr and one in seven (15%) left their NTr without finishing it.

A fifth of the trainees in our sample (19%) are aged 16 years and a third (32%) are aged 17 years. Around a quarter each are aged 18 and 19 plus (23% and 26% respectively).

Trainees currently doing their NTr

Among the trainees who are still doing their NTr (73% of the sample), over a third (35%) are located in companies with less than 10 employees, 45% are in companies with 10-99 employees and 31% are in larger companies.

The majority of these trainees (72%) have been on their NTr at least six months, including 16% who have been on their NTr more than 9 months.

A significant minority of trainees (37%) are doing consumer services frameworks. A quarter (24%) are doing retail/distribution and a fifth each are doing manufacturing/construction/ industrial (20%) and communications/business support/administration frameworks (18%).

Early leavers

One in seven of the trainees in our sample (15%) left their NTr without finishing it. Around three in ten of these trainees each were doing retail/distribution and consumer services frameworks (31% and 29% respectively). Trainees doing manufacturing/construction/industrial and communication/business support/administration frameworks account for smaller proportions of early leavers (20% each).

Two-fifths of early leavers (38%) were on the programme for less than three months and an additional 32% stayed less than 6 months. Three in ten (30%) were on it for six months plus, including nine per cent who stayed over a year.

The most commonly mentioned reasons for leaving their NTr early are that the young person wanted to take up a different job (35%), and that they were not getting enough money (27%). A fifth (18%) felt they were not getting the training they needed and 16% were dismissed. One in ten each say they wanted to take up a different training or education opportunity (11%) and that they were not getting the help or advice they needed (10%). The base is too small to enable analysis by framework sector and/or employee size.

Activity pre-NTr

Prior to starting their NTr, half of *all* the trainees in our sample[4] were at school or college; over a third (36%) were doing GCSE courses and 14% were doing GNVQ/other vocational courses.

Over a quarter (27%) were in employment including a fifth (22%) who were in employment without training. Trainees doing retail/distribution frameworks are most likely to say they were in employment without training (33%). These trainees are also more likely than average to be aged 19 plus (44% vs. 26% overall).

Small minorities were either unemployed after leaving school (7%) or were doing a Modern Apprenticeship/other TEC supported training (6%).

Qualifications pre-NTr

The trainees in our sample had gained a wide range of qualifications prior to starting their NTr. However, the majority (56%) had below Level 2 qualifications.

Over a third (36%) had at least a Level 2 qualification, including a quarter (25%) with 5 or more GCSEs (grades A-C). Trainees doing communication/business support/administration frameworks are more likely than average to have 5 or more GCSEs (grades A-C) (38% vs. 25% overall).

Small minorities had other vocational qualifications (2%) or did not give an answer (5%).

Career plans

In their last compulsory year at school, two-fifths of all trainees in our sample (41%) had planned to apply for a job with training on leaving school; those with below Level 2 qualifications are more likely than average to have considered this option (50%).

A third (32%) had planned to continue with full-time education; this rises to 52% among those with Level 2 qualification(s) and above. Among these trainees, the most commonly mentioned reasons for choosing a NTr instead are that they changed their mind/did not like the course they were doing (15%), it came with the job/employer suggested it (15%), and they wanted work

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[4] Includes current trainees and those who have left.

experience and a salary (13%).

Small minorities wanted to enrol on a NTr or look for a job without training (8% and 6% respectively) or did not have any plan (8%).

4 OVERALL VIEWS ON NATIONAL TRAINEESHIPS

This section looks at employers' and trainees' evaluation of National Traineeships.

The survey findings show that, on the whole, both of these groups are positive about their experiences of NTrs; the majority say they would recommend NTrs to their friends and colleagues.

4.1 Trainees' evaluation of National Traineeships

Over three quarters of trainees (77%) are satisfied with their NTr, including 34% who are very satisfied. Less than one in ten (8%) are dissatisfied, and 12% do not have strong opinions either way. Satisfaction is slightly higher among trainees with employed status than those without (79% vs. 73%). However, trainees doing communication/business support/administration frameworks are more likely than average to feel dissatisfied with their NTr (14% vs. 8% overall).

The findings from the survey and focus groups with trainees consistently show that it is the opportunity to learn real skills in the workplace that appeals most to these young people about NTrs. For example, nine in ten trainees (90%) say that it is the chance to learn real skills in the workplace that attracted them to enrol on a NTr, including 73% who said this attracted them 'a lot'.

The findings from the focus groups also revealed that many trainees felt that for them, a NTr is a better approach to learning compared with full-time education because there are no exams, more personal support from tutors and they can learn at their own pace. These trainees regard NTrs as a *'good opportunity'* and a *'second chance for someone who didn't do as well at school'*.

This is consistent with the survey findings which show that trainees with below Level 2 qualifications on entry are more positive about their experiences on NTr than those with higher level qualifications (83% vs. 70% satisfied).

However, some trainees in the focus groups felt that NVQs are generally perceived as of less value than GCSEs.

Three-fifths of trainees (60%) agree that the NTr is better than they had expected. Just over one in ten (12%) feel it has not met their expectations but as many as a quarter (24%) do not have an opinion.

Figure 4.1.1: Trainees' satisfaction with National Traineeships

Q18   How satisfied are you with your NTrs?
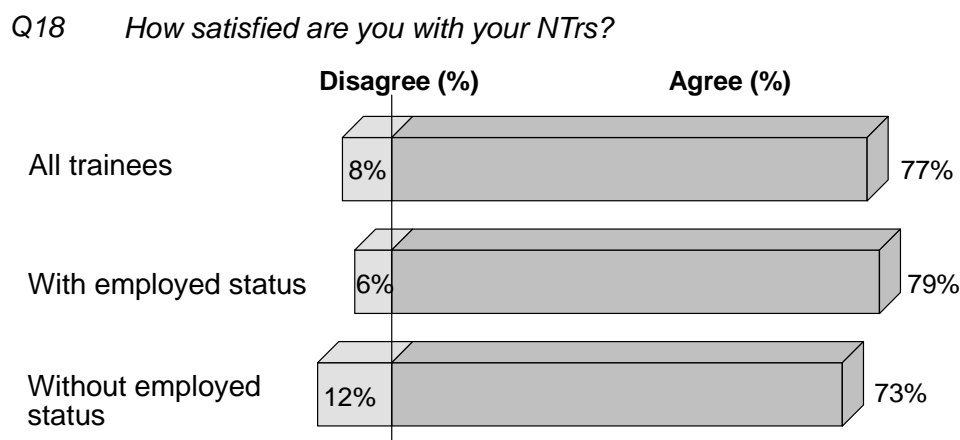
Base: All trainees who are/were doing a NTr (900)

Table 4.1.2: Expectations of National Traineeships by length on programme

Q15b   The NTr is better than I thought it would be

		Length of time on National Traineeships		
	All	**<6 months**	**6-9 months**	**>9 months**
	(900)	**(337)**	**(443)**	**(120)**
	%	**%**	**%**	**%**
Agree	60	63	62	51
Neither/nor	24	21	24	28
Disagree	12 2	14	11	14

Base: All trainees who are/were doing a NTr (900)

Again those with below Level 2 qualifications on entry are generally more positive about their experiences on NTr. In contrast, those doing communication/business support/administration frameworks are more likely to feel the NTr has not met their expectations (19% vs. 12% overall). However, a significant proportion of these trainees also have at least a Level 2 qualification on entry (50% vs. 35% overall).

As can be seen in Table 4.1.2, views become less positive amongst those who had been on NTr for more than 9 months. In this context it is interesting to note that during the focus groups, a number of trainees mentioned that one aspect of the training that they had not anticipated was the

amount of work involved. In addition, poor pay is consistently mentioned as a major source of dissatisfaction, although the quantitative findings show that trainees doing communication/ business support/administration frameworks are more likely than average to say they are unhappy with poor pay. Thus the increasing weight of the training and the continuance of low levels of pay as training proceeds may help to explain why trainees' views become less positive once they have been on the programme for more than 9 months.

4.2   Employers' evaluation of National Traineeships

The picture is equally positive among employers. Almost two-thirds agree that compared with previous training at this level, NTrs offer a more broad based training programme (64% agree), is more effective in raising skills level (64%) and is more beneficial to their industry as a whole (63%).

The base is too small to enable analysis by employee size and/or sector framework.

4.3   Advocating National Traineeships

Trainees

The majority of trainees (72%) would recommend a NTr to their friends compared with 9% who would not. Trainees doing consumer services frameworks are more likely than those doing communications/business support/administration frameworks to recommend the programme (77% vs. 66%). This is consistent with the findings that trainees doing communications/business support/administration frameworks are, on average, more dissatisfied with their NTr.

Again there are differences in opinions according to whether a trainee has employed status; those with employed status are more likely to recommend the programme than those without (76% vs. 63%). Likewise, those with below Level 2 qualifications on entry are also more likely to recommend the programme (77%). These findings are consistent with these groups' generally more positive attitudes towards their NTr.

In contrast, willingness to recommend NTrs declines slightly with length on the programme. This is consistent with the findings that attitudes towards NTrs become less positive with length on programme.

Figure 4.2.1: Employers' evaluation of National Traineeships

Q32 Compared with previous training at this level, NTrs . . . . .
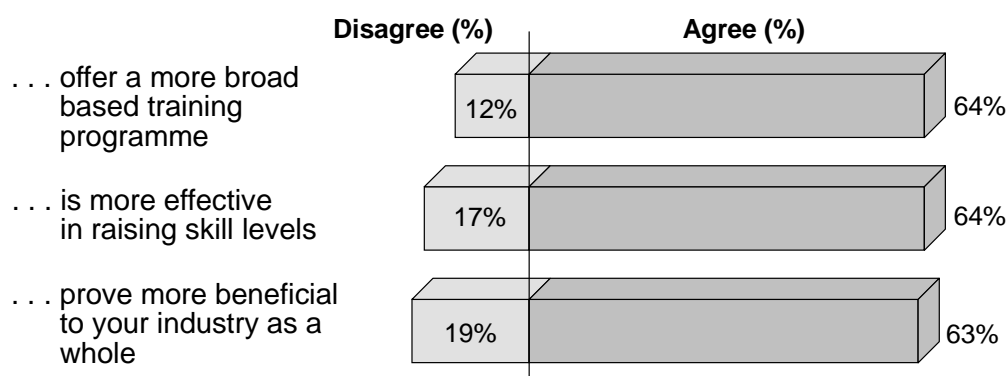
Base: All employers (225)

Table 4.3.1: Willingness to recommend National Traineeships by length on Programme

Base	All (900)	<6 months (337)	6-9 months (443)	>9 months (120)
	%	**%**	**%**	**%**
Yes	72	74	73	65
No	9	6	10	13
Don't know	16	17	15	18
Not stated	3	3	3	4

Base: All trainees who are/were doing a NTr (900)

Trainees give a wide range of reasons for recommending a NTr to their friends. Common mentions are that it allows them to gain qualifications and work experience, and leads to better job prospects. As we discuss in Section 7.2, these are also factors that influence trainees' decisions to do a NTr in the first place.

Among the small minority who would not recommend a NTr (9% of the sample), the main

reasons given are that it is poorly paid, they are not given enough help and support from their employer, and they do not feel they learn much at college. As already mentioned, low pay was also voiced as a major source of dissatisfaction by a large number of trainees during the focus groups.

Similarly, among those trainees who leave the programme without completing it (15% of the sample) it is the second commonly mentioned factor for abandoning the programme (mentioned by 27% of early leavers). The most common mention is because they wanted to take up a different job (35%) - see Section 3.2.

Employers

The vast majority of employers (89%) would recommend NTrs to other employers in their industry.

The most common reasons for recommendation are that the employer has had positive experience of similar scheme(s) in the past (24%) and because it offers on-the-job training which meets their requirements (20%). Other reasons relate to the opportunities for young people; giving young people prospects for the future (20%), a chance (16%) and a basic foundation (16%).

For those few employers who would not recommend NTrs to other employers (11%), the most common reason given is poor quality of off-the-job training. The base is too small to enable analysis by employee size and/or sector framework.

Figure 4.3.2: Advocating National Traineeships

Q29/35   Would you recommend NTrs to your friends/other employers in your industry?
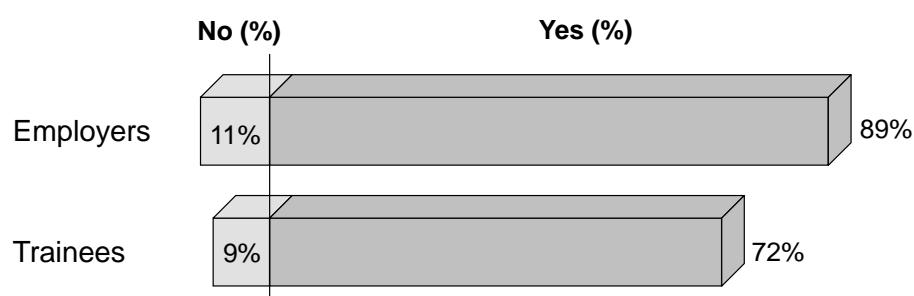
Base: All employers (225)/trainees who are/were doing a NTr (900)

5   THE FRAMEWORKS

This section explores the views of NTOs, TECs, training providers and employers towards the frameworks and focuses on the key issues that were highlighted in Phase 1, namely key skills and employed status. Also discussed is the background on how the frameworks were established and the relationships between key players.

5.1   Current position

NTOs

The NTOs are generally satisfied with the frameworks, but feel that there is insufficient feedback to make a definitive judgement yet. Some NTOs are currently conducting a review of Modern Apprenticeship frameworks, and there are no plans make changes to the NTr framework until this review is completed.

In Phase 1 of the evaluation, a number of NTOs felt that there was a lack of enthusiasm among some employers to the concept of key skills being provided as part of the training. These NTOs continue to believe that some employers in their sector remain unconvinced about the relevance of key skills, and the levels at which they are pitched, in relation to their business. They are concerned that this will make it difficult to recruit employers onto NTrs. This view is echoed by many of the training providers we interviewed (see Section 5.3).

At the time of interview (October 1998 - January 1999), the number of trainees recruited ranged from zero in some sectors to 500. A number of NTOs said that they could not provide this information because they had not received details on starts from the DfEE. As we later discuss, this is still one area in which NTOs would like to see further improvements made. However, NTOs now receive monthly reports from the DfEE database on National Traineeships starts and leavers.

Training providers

Training providers are generally positive about the quality of the frameworks although they do acknowledge that it does vary between sectors. Around half of those interviewed were involved in drawing up the frameworks.

On the positive side, NTrs are viewed by training providers as offering high quality training by

ensuring that areas such as the foundation training, NVQ and key skills are all covered. They are also seen as sufficiently flexible whilst tailored to a national standard. On the negative side, some feel that certain frameworks are too prescriptive, setting out unit by unit targets, and that the issue of key skills is still proving to be a difficulty, both in terms of getting employers on board and in delivery (see Section 5.3).

Employers

Our survey of employers shows that the large majority (84%) have not experienced any problems with the content of the frameworks; just one in six (16%) have experienced problems. However, given that the survey was conducted in the early stages of the initiative these findings should be treated as indicative of progress to-date.

Employers who are offering both on- and off-the-job training are more likely to have encountered problems than those offering on-the-job training only (20% vs. 6%).

For those who have experienced problems (16% of the sample), the most common reason is that the training is not adequate, both in terms of the level at which it is pitched and the depth of coverage, or is out-of-date (mentioned by 15 employers).

TECs

Generally the TECs we spoke to have received most of the frameworks although many continue to focus mainly on those frameworks that they consider to be in 'priority sectors'. This has caused resentment among some NTOs who have attributed their lack of progress to the lack of interest, and subsequent funding from TECs. However, some NTOs feel that this is beginning to change and that TECs are starting to express interest in their framework.

A number of the TECs we spoke to had not recruited as many National Trainees as they had anticipated. Some acknowledged that they had not pushed NTrs forward as much as they did for the MA, in the perceived absence of specific targets from some Government Offices. Others mentioned the lack of funding as a contributing factor.

> *The Government have very much left it to us* (TEC) *after this huge drive to have starts at any price for the MA, it's been very mixed messages about priority. Unless you put a squeeze on people then it will be slow in taking up.*

Table 5.1.1: Problems with content of the training - Employers

Q20 Have you experienced any problems with the content of the training in NTr?

	All	**Delivery of Training on-the-job only**	**With on-and-off-the-job**
Base:	**(225)**	**(78)**	
	%	**%**	**%**
Yes	16	6	20
No	84	94	80

Base: All employers (225)

Figure 5.1.2: Problems with content of the training - Employers

Q21 What were the problems?

Top 4 Mentions
n*

Training not adequate/ too basic/out-of-date	15
Key skills not relevant to our business	5
Key skills pitched at too high a level	5
Too confusing - need to simplify jargons	2
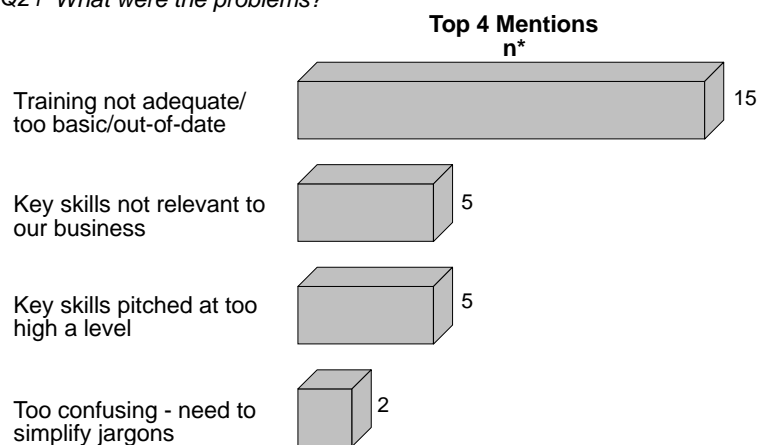
Base: All employers who have experienced problems with the content of the training (36)
* : Figures refer to number of responses and **not** percentages

Having said that, the level of success in recruitment does vary between TECs. Generally, the more successful TECs are those that have:

- actively promoted NTrs to training providers from the start

- pushed NTr as the preferred option for all new starts for Level 2 training

- are positive about the additionality aspect – key skills and employed status.

The construction and engineering frameworks continue to give concern to a number of TECs and training providers because of the large amount of off-the-training involved which is both costly and difficult to deliver. Some TECs want the GNVQ requirement in the construction framework to be made optional.

Some training providers are also having difficulties convincing employers to accept the off-the-job element of the engineering foundation. They would like to see the amount of off-the-job training reduced or at the very least, to shift some of the delivery to on-the-job. One training provider mentioned that unless this happens, the temptation will be to put trainees on the engineering manufacturing route which requires a shorter foundation training.

The Engineering NTO is aware of these difficulties. They have developed a manufacturing (engineering) framework which they hope will address some of these issues.

Relationships between NTOs and TECs

The relationships between NTOs and TECs remains largely unchanged from Phase 1 with both types of organisation continuing to focus on a small number of prospective partners. Existing relationships continue to be close but there are limited instances of new relationships forming. Relationships tend to be close where:

- the NTO is regarded as a priority sector by TEC

- there is a nominated contact at TEC with the relevant industry background

- there is an established relationship from the MA development.

Both NTOs and TECs continue to express a desire for more consistent administration from each other, for example issuing similar forms for registration and certification.

One NTO has also expressed concerns that some TECs are issuing a summary of the framework rather than the full document. They are not happy with this arrangement because the summaries are based on the TEC's interpretation of the framework.

Training Providers' views of NTOs and TECs

Many of the training providers we spoke to have a direct contract with at least one TEC to deliver NTrs, although a small number are contracted with more than one. Most have good

working relationships with the TEC although a small number would like to receive more information and updates from their TEC.

Training providers' relationships with NTOs vary. Some have regular contacts with NTOs whilst most tend to ring only when they have a query. Many are satisfied with this arrangement but some would like to receive more updates on changes to frameworks.

In terms of familiarising themselves with the frameworks, many training providers say they received little or no help from the TEC or NTO, although several say they did not seek help.

Employers' views of NTOs and TECs

Employers are also generally positive about their interaction with TECs and NTOs. Among those who have received help from the TEC (83% of the sample), the majority (76%) are satisfied with the help given. Slightly fewer have received help from the NTO (73%), although those who have are generally satisfied (69%).

Figure 5.1.3 Employers' satisfaction with NTOs and TECs

Q31   Satisfaction with . . .
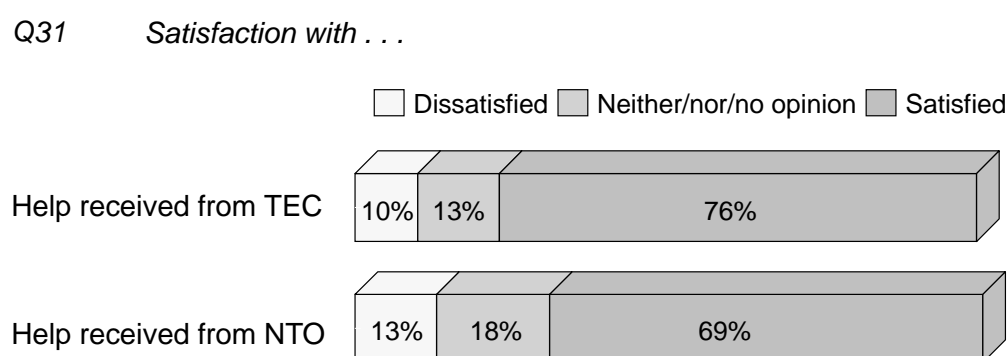
Base: All employers who have received help from TEC (186) and NTO (164)

Relationships with the Careers Service

The relationships that NTOs and TECs have with the Careers Service vary by sector and area. In certain sectors the Careers Service continues to play a vital role in the promotion of NTrs but generally Careers Service involvement have been limited since Phase 1 (see Section 5.2). However, a number of TECs and NTOs feel that the Careers Service is beginning to take an

interest in NTrs.

However, the Careers Service staff interviewed in Phase 1 pointed out the difficulties they face in receiving information from a large number of sectors - in addition to the details they receive about other post-16 options. They accepted that face-to-face contact is the best way to communicate and promote NTrs but felt that this is difficult given the resource constraints and other priorities that organisations faced.

5.2   Establishing the frameworks

Overall, the development of the frameworks is felt by participants to have been a success. This success has been helped substantially by the experience of developing MA frameworks.

Frameworks were generally designed with the help of a development/steering group consisting of NTO, TEC and employer representatives. In a number of sectors, training providers were also involved at this initial stage. Most of these groups were formed out of similar groups that had been set up to develop MAs. In the vast majority of cases, participants said that these groups had worked successfully with each type of organisation bringing their own perspective.

One of the key lessons learnt from the development of MAs was the need to involve employers at the earliest possible stage in the framework discussions and this was a point that had been taken on board by all of the case study sectors. The views of employers were considered essential in terms of developing a framework that would meet the industry's needs. A couple of NTOs sent out questionnaires to employers to help inform framework development, all had employer representatives on the development groups. Some NTOs were also keen for the perspective of young people to inform their discussions - and one had a group looking solely at these issues.

> *I think the important thing is to involve employers in the design to make sure that it is going to meet their needs, but also wherever possible, to take advice from schools and young people themselves in the design. In other words, to satisfy the two key parties involved - the employer and young people - to make sure it's meeting both their needs*
> NTO

This desire led, in a number of sectors, to members of the Careers Service being asked to take part in the development groups - or to look at marketing issues once the frameworks had been agreed.

Where sectors have involved Careers Service staff in their framework development groups they have found their input valuable. The marketing materials in a number of sectors were thought to have benefited considerably from Careers Service input.

> *I think it's advisable, careers people have the interests of the young people at heart, and they do bring some interesting things to the table, so I think they should be involved*
> TEC

However, this was much easier to do in those sectors where the industry is concentrated in one geographical area. This meant that the Careers Services who should be involved could be identified and the Careers Services themselves were likely to have specific knowledge about the opportunities for young people within the sector.

For large sectors, with employers based across the country, identifying an appropriate Careers Service representative to take part was more difficult. In addition, once such an individual(s) had been chosen, they were unlikely to be in a position to feedback information to all Careers Services around the country.

5.3   Key skills

The issue of key skills has been the major challenge in developing the frameworks. The specific difficulties include:

- deciding the appropriate level of key skills - particularly in terms of IT and application of number

- the need to get key skills certificated separately rather than as an integral part of the relevant NVQ

- some employers felt that the level set exceeds their requirements in certain occupations

- concerns over the capability of training providers (mainly private sector providers) to deliver the required level of key skills - particularly those without experience of MAs

- a lack of enthusiasm on the part of some employers for the concept of key skills being provided as part of the training - the following quote illustrates this:

As with the MA, the issue of key skills, whilst accepted in principle, has been a problem. We don't think that a lot of employers have woken up to the idea of what key skills are all about, and there is a view that key skills have come about by the failure of the education system, and after levels and targets are set, employers are saying - why are we getting involved with this? Surely youngsters should have these skills after 10 years of school
NTO

Table 5.3.1 shows the key skill requirements for our case study sectors. This shows that IT and application of number are the key skills most likely to be required at Level 1 rather than Level 2. This is because in these areas there was a strong view that requiring young people to reach Level 2 would be beneficial neither to the employer or the young person as the skill levels are not required by the trainee in their day-to-day work.

A number of NTOs believe that the concept of key skills being provided as part of the training continues to be resisted by employers. This view is echoed by the training providers interviewed. Although they are supportive of the concept and recognise that they add value to existing qualifications, in practice they are concerned about the relevance of key skills and the levels at which they are pitched in some sectors (particularly in relation to IT and the application of number). Where this is the case, getting employers to accept key skills has been difficult.

Some TECs believe that employers' reactions to key skills are, to a large extent, determined by when the concept is introduced to them. These TECs have learnt from their experiences of the MA that employers are more likely to be receptive towards key skills if they are made aware of the requirements at the outset, rather than be told about it after they have taken on the trainee(s).

The results from the employer survey show that the majority of employers in our sample are receptive towards the concept of key skills. However, this is perhaps to be expected given that these are employers who have recruited National Trainees.

Only four percent of the employers in our sample say they could not see any benefit in the key skills aspect of the NTr framework. One in eight employers (13%) could not give an answer.

The main benefits of key skills are thought to be that they give the trainee a broader knowledge of the job, the industry and the skills which are required (23%), an opportunity to develop (18%), a recognised qualification at the end of the course (14%). Other benefits recognised by employers are that they enhance young people's personal skills (11%) and give them confidence (9%).

Table 5.3.1: Case study sectors and key skill requirements

	Communication	Application of Number	IT	Working with others	Improving own Learning and Performance	Problem* Solving
IT	2	2	2/3[a]	2	2	
Photography	2	2	2	2	2	
Sport	2	2	2	2	2	
Business Administration	2	1	2	2	2	
Health and Social Care	2	1	2	2	2	
Polymers	2	2	1	2	2	
Engineering[5]	2	2	1	2	2	
Retail	2	1	1	2	2	
Security	2	2	1			
Road Haulage	2	1/2[a]	1/2[a]			
Meat	2	1	1	2[b]	2[b]	2[b]
Steel	2	1	1	[c]	[c]	
Ceramics	1	1	1	1[b]	1[b]	1[b]

*   not accredited by NCVQ - treated as VQ units

a   level related to strand of framework followed

b   optional

c   available on employer request

Among the small proportion of employers who have experienced problems with the content of the training (16% of the sample), only a small minority mentioned key skills as the causal factor; five employers say that key skills are not relevant to their business and the same number say they are pitched at too high a level. The majority (73%), however, are satisfied with the help they have received in delivering key skills. One in seven (15%) are dissatisfied and 12% did not have strong feelings either way.

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[5] Not to be confused with the Manufacturing (Engineering) framework

The findings from the two focus groups we conducted with trainees also show that there is recognition of the importance of key skills, both to the individual and to the employer. The trainees we spoke to felt that all the key skills are relevant to their work as *'it is what you've got to do in real life'*.

Some examples of how sectors are trying to address the issues relating to key skills include:

- incorporating key skills into the regular assessment of NVQs - although still having the key skills separately accredited

- running key skills workshops aimed at employers to show them how to fill gaps where key skills can not be integrated with the NVQ/or on-the-job training

- having key skills monitored by local assessors who meet one-to-one with the trainee. The assessors help the trainee recognise opportunities in the work place for key skills development. They also organise group training off-the-job, three or four times a week, starting with communication skills, then building up to IT and finally application of number.

5.4   Employed status

The issue of whether or not young people should be required to have employed status while on a NTr caused some difficulty between TECs and NTOs in the early stage. Some NTOs were concerned that too rigid a requirement for employed status may deter some employers from taking on more young people. However, a point made by some of our Careers Service interviewees, and supported by a number of both TECs and NTOs in Phase 1, was that employed status is important in terms of marketing NTrs to young people. There was a general agreement that without employed status, some of the target client group may be attracted to take jobs without formalised training programmes because of the higher wages these jobs pay.

The results from the trainee survey support the view that employed status is an important marketing factor, although there are other factors that are considered important by a greater number of trainees (Section 7.2).

Three-fifths (59%) of trainees say their decision to do a NTr was influenced 'a lot' by the thought of being employed and an additional 24% say they were influenced 'a bit'. Less than one in ten (8%) say it did not influence their decision at all. Trainees doing manufacturing/construction/ industrial frameworks are more likely than average to say their decision was influenced 'a lot' by being employed (70% vs. 59% overall).

Most TECs continue to take the view that they will aim for employed status wherever possible. Where it is not possible to offer employed status at the outset, some TECs are looking for conversion fairly quickly – one TEC wants employed status to be granted within six months. It has become less of an issue among NTOs, although some feel that TECs are still pushing too hard for employed status.

Three in ten of the employers in our sample (30%) say they grant employed status to their trainees from the beginning of the NTr and an additional 26% on achievement of NVQ Level 2. One in seven (14%) grant employed status after a trial period/at the end of the first year and 16% say young people are already employed when they start. Three per cent say that they never offer employed status and the same proportion say it depends on individual ability/at the employer's discretion.

Figure 5.4.1 Employers' award of 'employed status'

Q28 At what stage are most National Trainees given formal employee status?

At commencement of NTr — 30%
On achievement of NVQ Level 2 — 26%
Already employed when started NTr — 16%
At end of first year/trial period — 14%
Down to individual/our discretion — 3%
Never - we don't offer employed status — 3%
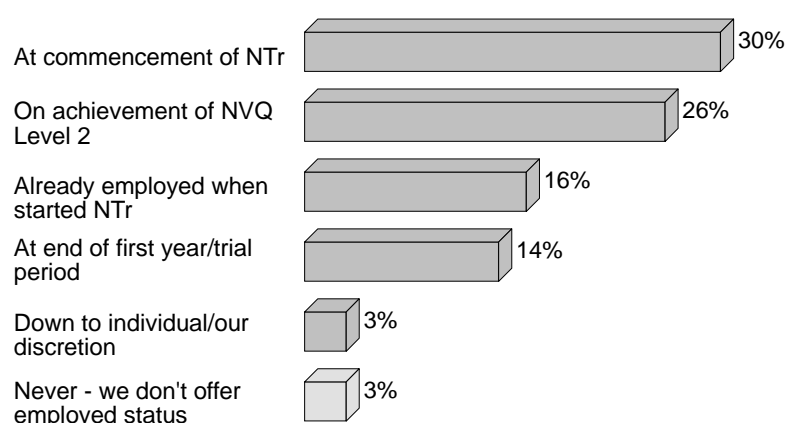
Base: All employers (225)

The majority of the trainees (70%) have employed status[6], although this falls to 61% among trainees who have been on the programme less than 6 months. However, over seven in ten of the trainees in our sample (72%) have been on their NTr *at least* 6 months. Trainees in companies with 100 plus employees are also less likely to have employed status (58%).

As can be seen throughout the report, trainees with employed status are generally more positive about their experiences on NTr than those without.

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[6] Based on management information provided by DfEE.

5.5   What would have happened without National Traineeships?

In phase 1 of the evaluation, TECs and NTOs were asked what would have happened to Level 2 training if NTrs had not developed. Most thought that Level 2 provision would have improved but that it would not necessarily have been linked so strongly to key skills. In some sectors (e.g. retail, road haulage, sport and recreation and photographic processing), Level 2 occupations represent the bulk of the industry – NTrs are therefore viewed as meeting the needs of a large number of employers. It was hoped that NTr will actually increase the number of employers and employees training to this level.

The findings from the employer survey show that although the majority of employers agree that NTr has improved the quality of training at Level 2 (63% agree vs. 15% disagree), opinion is divided on whether more trainees have been recruited, both overall (44% agree vs. 38% disagree) and into new occupations (43% agree vs. 35% disagree).

However, employers are more likely than not to agree that NTrs have replaced training that would have taken place anyway (56% agree vs. 34% disagree), although they clearly recognise that NTr has improved the quality of training at this level.

Overall the majority of employers (76%) agree with at least one of the (first) three statements on Figure 5.5.1. A quarter (24%) agree with two of these statements and similar proportions agree with all three (25%).

Prior to the introduction of NTrs, two-fifths of employers (40%) say they met their requirements for Level 2 training through in-house training schemes. A fifth (20%) used Youth Training or Training Credits, and one in ten (11%) say they did not previously have a requirement for NVQ Level 2 skills.

Figure 5.5.1: Employers' views of National Traineeships

Q18 How strongly do you agree or disagree with these statements?

NTrs have . . .	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)

. . . improved the quality of training at this level — 15% / 63%

. . . resulted in more trainees being taken on than would have been otherwise — 38% / 44%

. . . resulted in trainees being taken on in new occupations — 35% / 43%

. . . replaced training that would have taken place anyway — 34% / 56%

Base: All employers (225)
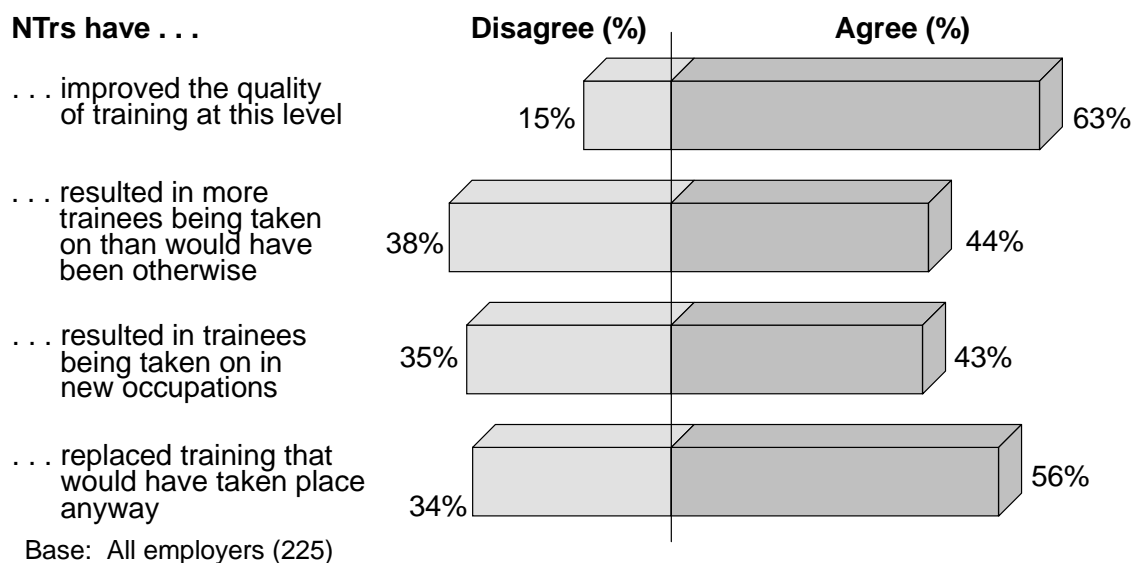
Figure 5.5.2: Previous requirements for NVQ Level 2

Q7 How did you meet your requirements for this type of trainees (ie. NVQ Level 2 skills) before the introduction of NTr?

In-house/company training scheme	40%
Youth training/Training credits	20%
Training provided by external organisations	8%
Modern Apprenticeship	6%
Promoted less skilled workers	4%
Recruited fully trained workers	4%
Had no requirement for NVQ Level 2 skills before	11%

Base: All employers (225)
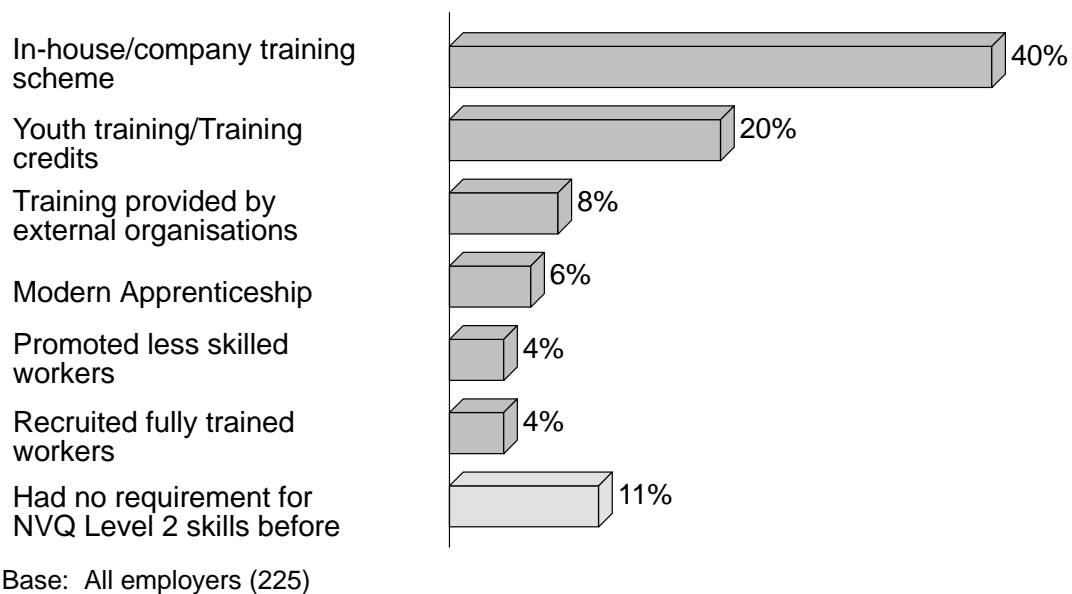
6   DELIVERING THE FRAMEWORKS

This section starts by looking at the current contracting arrangements between TECs and training providers and employers, and then focuses on the methods of delivery and trainees' and employers' reactions to them. Details on trainees' pay and training allowance are discussed towards the end of the section.

6.1   Contracting arrangements

Generally, delivery arrangements are based on those already in place for MAs and Other Training (OT)[7]. The majority of TEC contracts are with training providers. Where direct contracting with employers already exists these are being continued, although some of the TECs we spoke to do not offer this option to employers.

This is consistent with the findings from the employer survey which show that almost two-fifths of employers (38%) are contracted with a private training provider for NTrs. A quarter (27%) are contracted with their local college and a fifth (19%) contract directly with a TEC.

Figure 6.1.1: Contracting arrangements - Employers

Q10 What type of organisation are you contracted with for NTr?

A private training provider 38%
Local colleges 27%
TEC 19%
Group Training Association 5%
Chamber of Commerce 2%
Other 3%
Don't know 7%
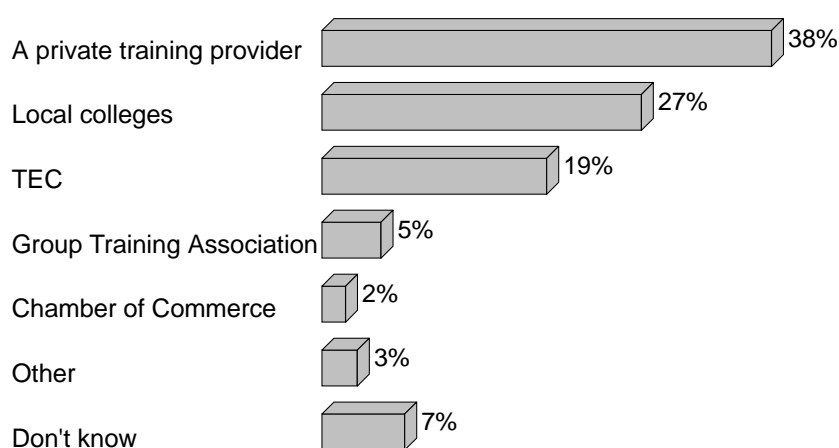
Base: All employers (225)

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[7] 'Other Training' was formerly known as YT and is referred to in this report as 'OT'.

A number of the training providers interviewed say that they normally win a contract to deliver NTrs from the TEC and then find employers to provide places. The number of trainee places on offer are set either by the TEC, in negotiation with the TEC, or as part of the TEC contract. Contracts are generally sector specific, although a small number of training providers have just an overall target for NTrs.

Approaches to recruiting employers vary between providers; some approach suitable employers in their areas, other rely on existing contacts or for employers to contact them.

6.2   Method of delivery

For almost two-thirds of *employers* (64%), training is being delivered through a combination of on- and off-the-job, although the majority of these employers (83%) say that less than a quarter of training is delivered off-the-job. A third (35%) are using exclusively on-the-job training.

Significantly fewer *trainees* say they receive off-the-job training as part of their NTr (48%). Trainees who have been on the programme less than 6 months are significantly more likely than those who have been on it longer to say they receive off-the-job training (63% vs. 42%). This figure is, therefore, consistent with the findings that a large proportion of the trainees in the sample have been on their NTr at least 6 months (72%).

Table 6.2.1: Method of delivery - Trainees

Q7a   Do you receive any off-the-job training as part of your NTr?

Framework Sector

Base:	All (900) %	Manufacturing/ Construction/ Industrial (173) %	Communication/ Business Support/ Administration (226) %	Consumer Services (323) %	Retail/ Distribution (178) %
Yes	48	66	52	57	19
No	48	31	42	40	72
Don't know	2	2	3	2	2

Base: All trainees who are/were doing a NTr (900)

Employers operating in the retail/distribution sectors are more likely to rely on exclusively on-the-job training (64% vs. 35% overall); this is consistent with the findings from the trainee survey. In contrast, manufacturing/construction/industrial employers are more likely to opt for a

combination of on- and off-the-job training (81% vs. 64% overall).

There are also variations by employee size. Trainees in small companies (less than 10 employees) are more likely than those in larger ones to say they receive off-the-job training (55% vs. 48%).

6.3   Location of off-the-job training

Among the *trainees* who receive off-the-job training, the majority (81%) say it is conducted away from their employers' premises. These are mainly held at a college of Further Education (48%) or a private training centre (42%). Only seven per cent mentioned a training centre run by their employer.

FE Colleges are more commonly mentioned by trainees doing manufacturing/construction/ industrial frameworks (64%). In contrast, those doing retail/distribution frameworks are more likely to receive their off-the-job training at a private training centre (65%). Training centres run by the employer is most commonly mentioned by trainees doing communication/business support/administration frameworks (14%).

These findings are consistent with the *employer* survey which show that local colleges and private training providers deliver the majority of off-the-job training (59% and 39% respectively). Three per cent of employers use an in-house training centre.

Figure 6.3.1: Location of off-the-job training
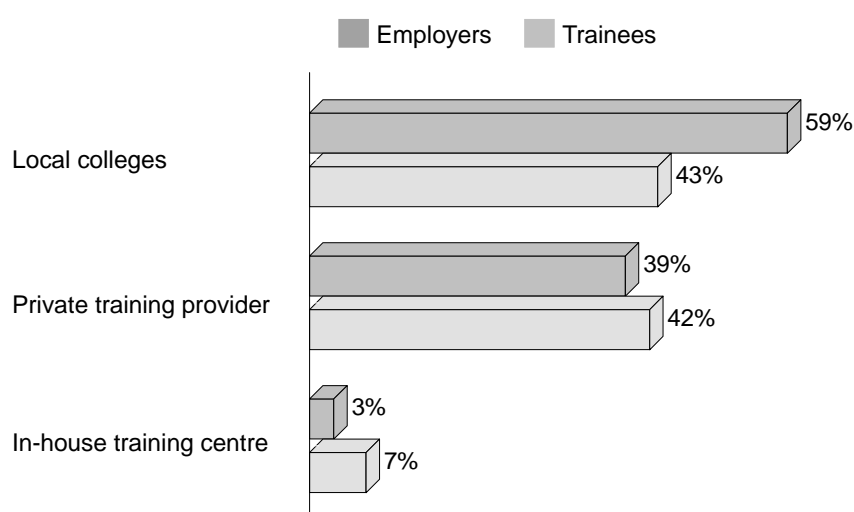
Base: All employers (144) and trainees (394) who say training involves off-the-job training

6.4   Time spent receiving off-the-job training

Two-thirds of trainees (67%) say their off-the-job training takes place as regular day release and one in ten (11%) say it is one continuous block. A fifth (20%) say it is a combination of these, although this rises to 28% among trainees in companies with at least 10 employees. In contrast, regular day release is more commonly mentioned by trainees in smaller companies (73%). There are no significant differences by sector framework.

The majority of these trainees (69%) have spent less than a quarter of their time receiving off-the-job training so far, including three percent who have not received any. A fifth (20%) have spent between a quarter to half of their time and eight per cent have spent at least half of their time receiving off-the-job training. Trainees with employed status have generally spent less time receiving off-the-job training than those without.

Nearly two-thirds (64%) of those who currently receive off-the-job training think that the amount of time they spend doing this is unlikely to change in the near future. Around one in seven (15%) think it is likely to increase and eight percent think the opposite. One in six (12%) are not sure.

6.5   Satisfaction with off-the-job training

The majority of *employers* and *trainees* who experience off-the-job training are satisfied with this aspect of the programme (74% and 63% respectively). One in eight employers (13%) are dissatisfied; this falls to 7% among trainees.

Figure 6.5.1: Satisfaction with off-the-job training
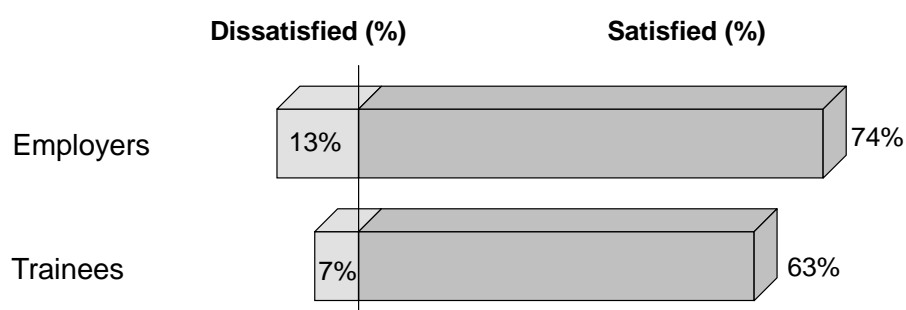
Base: All employers who says training involved off-the-job training (144)
Base: All trainees who are/were doing a NTr (900)

These views are consistent with the findings from the focus groups with trainees; many were very positive about their off-the-job training. They felt that it gave them the chance to consolidate what they learnt on-the-job. In addition, they were happy with the support they were getting from their course tutors as the following quote illustrates:

> *If you don't understand something, you know you can go to your trainer and they'll help you.*
> Trainee, Business and Administration, less than 6 months on NTr

However, a number of trainees complained that their Training Plan was not user friendly - *'They use really long words'*. Consequently they are more reliant on their tutor to explain it to them.

Trainees in small establishments (under 10 employees) are generally more satisfied with this aspect of their training than those in larger establishments (72% vs. 58%). Trainees who were previously in employment without training are least likely to feel satisfied with the training given by their training provider/college (52% satisfied).

Among the minority of *employers* who are dissatisfied with off-the-job training (13% of the sample), complaints about the courses are the most common reasons for dissatisfaction. Dissatisfied employers feel that the training is not adequate, both in terms of the level at which it is pitched and the depth of coverage, are out-of-date or take too long (39%). A fifth (22%) complain that teaching is of a poor, or inconsistent, standard. Others complain that they have to re-train young people on-site or that they learn more on-site anyway (28%). In the same vein, 17% feel that there is not enough practical training and too much theory.

6.6   Trainees' evaluation of the training given by employer

The majority of trainees (65%) are also satisfied with the training given by their employer. Less than one in ten (8%) are dissatisfied and 7% do not have strong opinions either way.

There is some variation in views by framework sector. Trainees who are doing manufacturing/ construction/industrial and consumer services frameworks are more likely to feel satisfied than those doing communication/business support/administration and retail/distribution (68% each vs. 55% and 56% respectively). Satisfaction is also higher among trainees with employed status than those without (65% vs. 55%).

Figure 6.6.1 Trainees' evaluation of training given by employer

	Dissatisfied (%)	Satisfied (%)
All trainees	8%	62%
Framework		
- Manufacturing/ construction/industrial	9%	68%
- Communication/ business support/admin	6%	55%
- Consumer services	11%	68%
- Retail/distribution	6%	56%
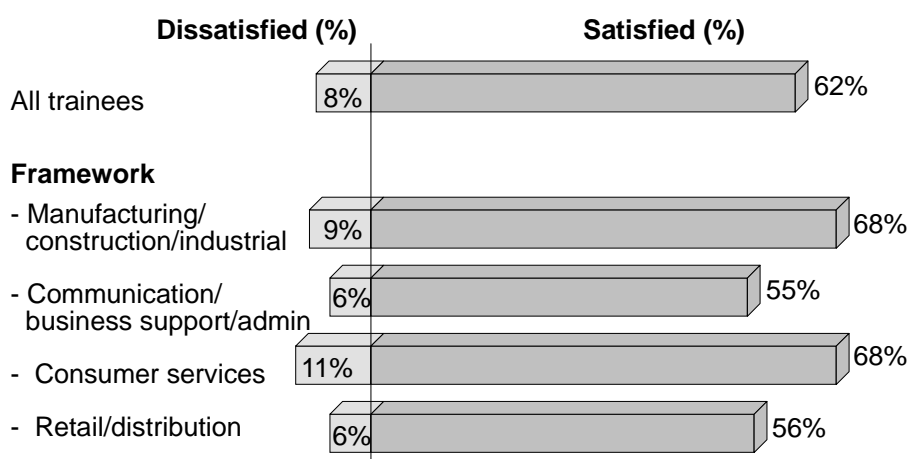
Base: All trainees who are/were doing a NTr (900)

6.7   Length of training

Two-thirds of employers (65%) expect their trainees to take between six months and two years to complete their NTr. Just seven per cent expect training to be completed within six months and twice as many (13%) expect it to last between two and three years. Eight percent say it varies by trainee.

Employers with trainees doing manufacturing/construction/industrial frameworks are more likely to expect training to last longer (38% expect training to last between two and three years).

6.8   Salary

We asked both employers and young people about the salary that trainees receive. Their responses, shown on the following page, should be treated with caution. This is because there are a number of difficulties involved in asking these audiences questions about pay. For example, DfEE management data indicates that some trainees and employers are confusing salary with training allowance - two-fifths of trainees *without* employed status say they are getting a salary and one in seven trainees *with* employed status (14%) say they are getting a training allowance. As we later discuss, these discrepancies appear to have made little difference to the overall results. Nevertheless, they highlight the need to treat these results with caution.

A third of *employers* (32%) say that they do not know what their trainees are currently paid and four per cent say that they only receive a training allowance.

Of those who know what their trainees are paid (64% of the sample), almost three in ten (28%) say that the weekly gross wage is £26-£50; this rises to 31% among trainees doing consumer services frameworks. A third (33%) say that the sum is £51-£75. A fifth (21%) say they pay £76-£100, and 19% over £100. The average weekly wage is £78.

The majority of *employers* (58%) say that they don't know what they expect to pay their trainees once they complete their NTr.

Of those who give a figure (40% of the sample), half (51%) expect to pay their trainees between £76-£125 and 45% say they expect to pay £126 plus. Only three per cent say £75 and less. The average weekly gross wage that employers expect to pay on completion of the NTr is £137.70.

We also asked *trainees* about their salary and training allowance. Two-thirds (66%) say they receive a salary from the company they are working for. Significantly fewer (25%) say they receive a training allowance. Although some trainees appear to have wrongly evaluated the source of their payments, this appear to have made little difference to the overall results.

Among those who say they receive a salary (66% of the sample), nearly a fifth (18%) say their weekly gross wage is £50 or less. An additional two-fifths (40%) say they receive £51-£100 per week, 28% mention £101-£200 and four per cent say they receive more than £200.

Trainees doing retail/distribution frameworks are significantly more likely to say their weekly gross wage is more than £100 than those doing consumer services frameworks (39% vs. 25%).

6.9   Training allowance

Among those trainees who say they receive a training allowance (25% of the sample), two-fifths (39%) say it is paid by their employer. A fifth (21%) say it is paid by the training provider/ college and 15% mention the TEC.

The large majority of trainees (77%) say they receive more than £35 per week. Only three per cent receive £30 and less and an additional 12% say they receive between £31-£35.

As mentioned above, one in seven trainees with employed status (14%) are under the impression that they receive a training allowance. Table 6.9.1 shows the response among those without employed status, in addition to the overall results. As can be seen, there appears to be little difference between the two.

Table 6.8.1: Current and future weekly salary (gross) - Employers

Salary (weekly)	Salary paid currently (145)	Salary on completion of NTr (90)
Up to £50	28%	1%
£51 - £75	33%	2%
£76 - £100	21%	31%
£101 - £125	8%	20%
£126 plus	11%	45%
Average (£)	£78	£138

Base: All employers who specify a salary

Table 6.8.2: Current weekly salary (gross) - Trainees

		Framework Sector			
Base:	All (554)	Manufacturing/ Construction/ Industrial (120)	Communication/ Business Support/ Administration (118)	Consumer Services (207)	Retail/ Distribution (109)
	%	%	%	%	%
Up to £50	18	11	16	31	7
£51 - £100	40	51	38	38	36
£101-£200	28	26	32	23	34
>£200	4	9	1	2	5

Base: All trainees who get a wage/salary from their employer (554)

Table 6.9.1: Training allowance per week - Trainees

	All (270)	Without Employed Status (172)
Up to £30	3%	5%
£31 - £35	12%	13%
£36 - £40	9%	9%
£41 - £45	23%	29%
£46 - £50	10%	9%
More than £50	35%	34%

Base: All trainees saying they get a training allowance (270)

7   MARKETING

This section looks at the different strands of marketing activities carried out by NTOs, TECs and training providers to promote NTrs to employers and young people. We look at some of the key selling messages and examine the extent to which these coincide with the factors that employers and trainees take into account when deciding whether to do a NTr.

The relationship between NTrs and MA, New Deal and OT is also explored in this section.

7.1   Sources of information

NTOs and TECs

NTOs and TECs continue to use a wide range of marketing activities to recruit employers and young people for NTrs, although the general feeling is that awareness among employers is still low. Some attribute this low level of awareness to the absence of a coherent national marketing strategy, although there is acknowledgement that some TECs have also not given NTrs very high priority in their marketing strategies. These views are consistent with the findings from both the employer and trainee surveys. A significant minority of employers (34%) are dissatisfied with the level of publicity/advertising about NTrs. Among trainees, only one in ten (11%) had heard about NTrs through the national press/magazine; the majority of trainees using these sources (60%) found them unhelpful.

A number of NTOs feel that lack of funding and interest shown by TECs is also partly responsible for the low awareness among employers.

However, there is a general belief that NTr is relevant to a wider range of employers than the MA. Among those employers that have been targeted, the response has been positive – these employers have viewed NTrs as 'more weighty' than OT because it sets national minimum standards.

Marketing activities used by TECs and NTOs to target employers and young people include:

- leaflets produced for young people and employers

- information sheets provided for the Careers Service

- articles in trade journals

- exhibitions at trade shows

- one-to-one meetings with employers/events for employers

- information provided on the Internet

- using training provider contacts to recruit employers.

For those NTOs whose industry is concentrated in a smaller number of geographical areas, accessing employers has been easier. Some NTOs, with more nationally spread employers have, however, concentrated on certain TEC areas where they have strong contacts and relationships.

Employers and Training Providers

The findings from the employer survey show that training providers, including local colleges, are the most common initial source of information about NTrs for employers (41%), followed by the local TEC (14%). Small minorities (8%) heard about NTrs from another employer/an employer group.

Indeed a number of the training providers we spoke to say that the most successful form of marketing has been direct contact with employers. Many are presenting NTrs as an 'intermediate' route to work-based training. The term 'National Traineeship' is not widely used as many believe that employers are either confused or indifferent to new initiatives.

Trainees

Among trainees, the most common and useful sources of information about NTrs are the Careers Service and school. Three-fifths of trainees (59%) had heard about NTrs through the Careers Service and just under half (48%) through the school. Large majorities found these sources helpful (89% and 82% respectively).

Other sources of information about NTrs include friends and relations (33%) and a visiting speaker at school (24%). Just under a fifth each had heard about the programme through their work, college, local newspaper or at a careers fair. These sources were generally regarded as helpful, although significant minorities found the information they received through the college and careers fair unhelpful (31% and 33% respectively).

Figure 7.1.1: Sources of information - Trainees

Q16 How did you hear about NTrs?
Q17 How helpful did you find this source?

Heard through	(Q16) %	Unhelpful (%)	Helpful (%)	Base
Careers Service	**59**	11	89	**572**
School	**48**	17	82	**485**
Friends & relations	**33**	17	80	**325**
A visiting speaker at school	**24**	22	77	**248**
Work/employer	**19**			**-**
College	**19**	31	67	**166**
In a local newspaper	**18**	43	52	**160**
At a careers fair	**18**	33	67	**170**
At jobcentre	**13**	49	50	**117**
In a national newspaper/magazine	**11**	60	36	**94**
On the radio	**9**	69	28	**86**

Base: All trainees who are/were doing a NTr (900)
(Table shows responses >5%)

We asked trainees to tell us how they describe themselves to other people in terms of their job and/or training. Over-two fifths (44%) say they describe themselves as a Trainee; 18% as an Apprentice and 16% as a National Trainee. Just under one in ten (8%) describe themselves by their job title (eg. office junior, care assistant).

As would be expected, trainees doing manufacturing/construction/industrial frameworks are most likely to describe themselves as an apprentice (41%) and least likely as a National Trainee (10%).

7.2   Key selling messages

The key selling messages identified by NTOs and TECs for *employers* are:

- the breadth and flexibility of training involved

- that NTrs increase employers' ability to attract high quality applicants

- the increase in motivation that putting a young person on a NTr will achieve

- that NTrs will train young people who are capable of change

- NTrs are national training programmes that have been developed by NTOs specifically for the industry concerned

- that they will receive a contribution to help with training costs.

However, the most common reasons given by employers for taking on National Trainees are filling vacancies (36%) and needing new skills (28%). Over one in ten (12%) also say it looked like a quality programme.

The key selling messages identified for *young people* are:

- that NTrs offer training in the workplace

- that the future is bright for those with transferable skills - and that the NTr will develop these transferable skills

- that training for a NTr will help the young person cope with change - a pre-requisite for a successful career

- that NTrs offer a chance of progression to a MA

- that NTr is really an intermediate apprenticeship.

In one TEC area, the term 'Intermediate Apprenticeship' is used instead of National Traineeship.

Trainees were also asked to indicate the extent to which different factors influenced their decision to do a NTr. The findings show that the majority are drawn by the desire to *learn real skills in the workplace* and the belief that it would give them *better job opportunities* (73% and 74% respectively, say these influenced their decision to do a NTr 'a lot').

> *I thought of coming to college full-time, but I thought that I would*
> *get more experience working in a salon*
> Hairdressing trainee, 7 months on NTr

Two-thirds (65%) were influenced 'a lot' by *good quality training*, although this rises to 72% among trainees doing consumer services frameworks.

Three-fifths (59%) were influenced 'a lot' by the thought of *being employed*; trainees doing manufacturing/construction/industrial frameworks are significantly more likely to be influenced by this (72%).

Earning a wage and receiving *training that is paid for* were regarded as influential by just over half each (53% and 51% say it influenced them 'a lot' respectively). However, earning a wage is more likely to be a deciding factor among trainees doing manufacturing/construction/industrial frameworks than those doing retail/distribution (62% and 46% respectively).

A third (33%) say that *not wanting to stay on at school* influenced their decision to do a NTr 'a lot'. A similar proportion say it was because they were *given some advice* about NTrs and a fifth (20%) say it was largely because they had *read/heard* something about it.

A quarter (26%) mentioned they were influenced 'a lot' by the belief that it was a better option than other qualifications. Trainees with below Level 2 qualifications on entry are more than twice as likely as those with higher qualifications to regard this as an influential factor (34% vs. 16%). Slightly fewer (21%) say there was no other way to get a qualification for their occupation. Trainees doing manufacturing/construction/industrial frameworks are most likely to say this influenced their decision 'a lot' (29%).

Only 13% say they were influenced 'a lot' by their friends and relations.

Figure 7.2.1: Factors influencing choice - Trainees

Q12   How much did these aspects of NTr attract you?

☐ Not at all ☐ A bit ■ A lot

Factor	Not at all	A bit	A lot
Learning real skills in the workplace	3%	17%	73%
Being employed	8%	24%	59%
Training paid for	10%	32%	51%
Earning a wage	11%	28%	53%
Good quality training	3%	25%	65%
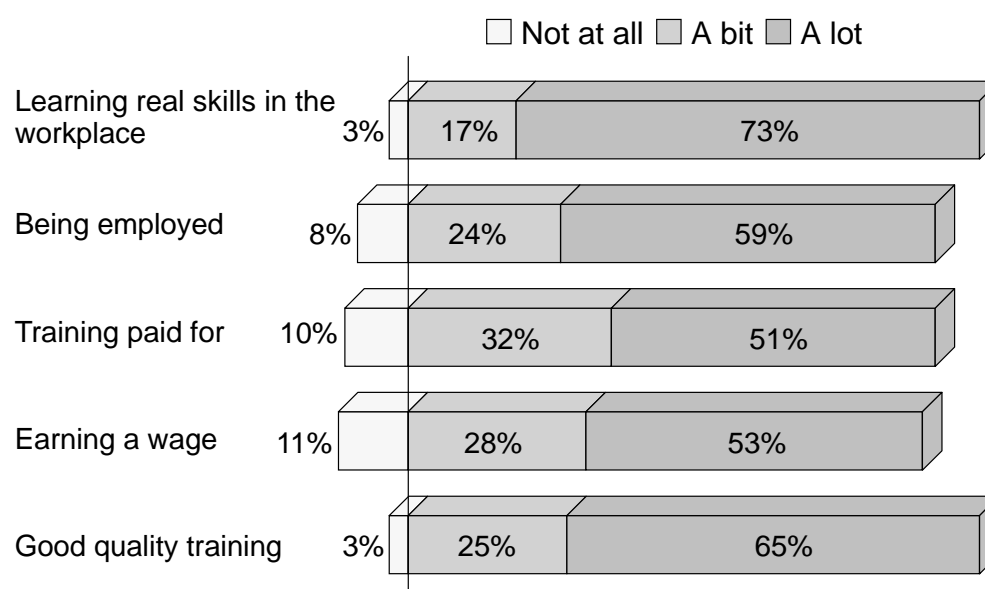
Base: All trainees who are/were doing a NTr (900)

7.3   The relationship with Modern Apprenticeship

A key aspect of our evaluation is to explore the relationship between NTrs and MAs. The main question relating to this from Phase 1 of the evaluation is to what extent NTrs will be used in a number of sectors as a 'stepping stone' to MAs. The possible progression from NTr to MA is written into all the sector frameworks where a MA exists – as a consequence some employers may be tempted to recruit trainees onto a NTr initially and then transfer appropriate candidates to the MA after their NTr has been successfully completed. If such a situation arises, then this may impact on a TEC's ability to reach its target number of recruits for MAs.

The message from NTOs, TECs and training providers is that it is still too early to comment on whether this has happened in practice given the relatively slow take-up of NTrs to-date. However, the general feeling is that employers are likely to adopt a more cautious approach by putting young people on to a NTr in the first instance. One of the TECs we spoke to says this has happened in a number of TECs within their region. The result is that these TECs have been unable to meet their MA targets.

Many hope that one of the impacts will be fewer drop-outs from the MA programmes. However, some NTOs and TECs are concerned that what may happen is that even those young people who are suited to the MA will get put on NTr first, to reduce the risk of them not completing their training, as has happened in some cases with MA.

Most TECs and NTOs are marketing MAs and NTrs together so that the possibility of progression from NTr to MA is made clear. However, very few have thought about progression beyond marketing as conversion will only begin to become an issue later on this year.

> *I think it is important that they're not marketed too differently. We put NTr into context (saying) that it's basically very similar to MA but at a lower level. We've got to keep the message clear and concise, and not make the market too confusing, with all these different options.*
> TEC

Only a fifth of the employers in our sample (21%) currently have Modern Apprentices so the findings need to be treated as indicative. The vast majority of these employers (91%) say their policy towards the MA has not changed since the introduction of NTrs.

Two-thirds (31 employers) say that the number of MA recruits at their company has stayed the same, a quarter (12 employers) say it has increased and just three employers say it has decreased.

Age related issues

Although most frameworks have been developed with 16-18 year olds in mind, the training specified could relate to entrants to the sector at whatever age. However, many TECs are restricting funding support to the 16-18 year old age group, and there are worries from NTOs that this may be restricting the possible take-up from employers. One NTO is particularly concerned about this issue as employers in their sector do not traditionally recruit from this age group, but NTr is seen as relevant to the industry. Some NTOs would like the issue of age related funding to be reviewed, and for funding to be extended beyond the Guarantee Group (i.e. 16-17 year olds) in sectors where both MA and NTr programmes are available.

7.4   The relationship with the New Deal

It was not anticipated that NTr would have a direct impact on New Deal or vice-versa, because the two initiatives had different target groups on the whole - mainly 16-18 year olds for NTrs; 18-24 and unemployed for at least 6 months for the New Deal. However, it was not known whether employers would alter their recruitment practices in response to NTr and New Deal.

At the time of the study, the key players interviewed were not aware of New Deal having an impact on the numbers recruited onto NTrs. In a number of sectors, NTOs believe that employers are concerned that young people on the New Deal are likely to be of a lower ability. Training providers have generally encountered the same views among employers. Only 9 of the employers in our sample (4%) currently have people on New Deal.

7.5   The relationship with Other Training

A number of TECs are insisting that *new* recruits are put on to NTr (as opposed to OT) where a NTr framework is available. Some TECs are also insisting on conversion from OT to NTr within a certain time frame among *existing* recruits. Where this is the case, NTrs is clearly having a negative impact on the numbers recruited on to OT.

Training providers believe that employers currently recruiting through OT will be receptive towards NTr, as long as they are not required to grant employed status from day one.

8   RECRUITMENT

This section looks at employers' and training providers' recruitment practices in relation to NTrs and discusses the extent to which key audiences think the quality of trainees has improved.

8.1   Employers' evaluation of recruitment

Two-thirds of employers (67%) have been able to recruit the exact number of trainees that they had planned. A fifth (21%) say that they have not been able to recruit as many as planned compared with 5% who have recruited more than planned. The base is too small to enable analysis by employee size and/or sector.

Employers are divided on whether NTr applicants are of the same or better quality than previous trainee applicants. Around two-fifths (38%) think the quality is the same and 27% think it is better. One in six (16%) feel that the quality of trainees is worse than before and a fifth (20%) don't know.

The general feeling among NTOs, TECs and training providers is that the quality of trainees is the same as previously. Training providers are divided on whether NTrs are a replacement for a previous way of recruiting or whether they are a new approach. Some think it is new and more flexible, whilst other believe it is a replacement for OT.

8.2   Sources of recruitment

A significant minority of companies (40%) have recruited their National Trainees internally. Similar proportions (37%) have recruited through local training providers and colleges and one in seven (14%) via newspapers or advertisements. One in ten (9%) recruit through their TEC.

In addition to taking on trainees that are sent to them by employers, a number of the training providers we spoke to say they recruit young people first and then match them to an employer.

8.3   Minimum qualifications required

The majority of employers (60%) say they do not require any minimum qualifications from their NTr recruits. More than a third (36%) require no further education beyond compulsory schooling. Just four per cent require 'reasonable' GCSEs.

Figure 8.3.1: Sources of recruitment

Q11 How were your National Trainees recruited?

Recruited internally	40%
Local Training providers	21%
Local colleges	16%
Advertisements/newspapers	14%
TEC	9%
Word-of-mouth/personal contact	6%
Schools	5%
Careers Services	3%
National Training Partnership	2%
Chamber of Commerce	2%
Head Office	1%

Base: All employers (225)

8.4   Tests and interviews

The vast majority of employers (89%) conduct face-to-face interviews as part of the recruitment process. One in six each conduct numeracy (17%), personality (16%) or literacy tests (16%) and slightly fewer (14%) also use an aptitude test. These tests and interviews are standard procedures among many of the training providers we spoke to. One training provider also puts the trainee on the job for a week for skills assessment.

8.5   Positions recruited

National trainees are being trained for junior positions, generally with direct supervision. The immediate positions include counter staff or retail assistants; trainee hairdressers or junior stylists; clerical or secretarial staff; trainee care assistants; catering staff/chefs; engineers and technicians. The positions that they will occupy on completion of training are very similar, although at a less junior level.

9 FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

During the course of our research we asked NTOs, TECs and training providers about the funding arrangements in place for NTrs. We also asked employers to tell us how satisfied they are with the level of funding available.

9.1 TEC funding arrangements

On the whole, TECs' funding arrangements are similar to those applied to OT, although there is additional funding available for the key skills elements of the frameworks. Some TECs operate a system where there are a number of bands for payments - representing different overall sums of money. Each sector framework is allocated to a band - allocation is usually based on a number of factors as the following quote from a TEC illustrates.

> *We think it's going to be identical to what we offered on training credits . . . We are hoping for a start payment, an outcome, and a penalty if they don't keep the evidence they need for new contracts we would negotiate.. plus a £500 bonus if the trainee has been employed continuously for 13 weeks within a 6 month frame. We operate on 3 bands and those bands are considered on 3 things; firstly the cost of training, secondly whether there is a skills shortage and thirdly the length of training*
> TEC

Other TECs offer the same total payment regardless of the framework. The argument put forward for this system is that frameworks which take longer to complete would receive more on-programme payments than those that are shorter, so that the overall amount paid would reflect the work involved.

Payments are generally made in three stages; start payment, on-going monthly payments and an outcome payment for both the NVQ and key skills. Some TECs have learnt from their experiences with the MA, where large start payments are lost when the young person leaves prior to completion, and are deferring a significant proportion of the payments until completion.

9.2 NTOs' views of funding

Generally NTOs do not know what funding arrangements are in place apart from that they vary enormously between TECs, and that this causes difficulties for employers who operate around the country. In addition, there is a worry that the range of funding arrangements leads to a lack of consistency in delivery.

Some NTOs feel it is too early to comment on funding arrangements as they believe that it has been a 'muddled year' in terms of funding, with some TECs using OT money to fund NTrs until quite late in 1998. Others acknowledge that the precise funding arrangements for each TEC are unlikely to be made available to them.

Currently, many TECs limit funding support to the Guarantee Group only (aged 16-17 years). One NTO mentioned that they would like the TEC to address the issue of funding in sectors where NTrs is clearly appropriate, but where most applicants are likely to be aged 18 plus.

9.3 Employers' views of funding

Among those employers who gave their views on funding (88% of the sample), over half (52%) are satisfied with the level of funding available. A fifth (22%) say they are dissatisfied but as many as a quarter (26%) did not have an opinion either way.

10   PLANS & EXPECTATIONS

10.1 NTOs

A number of NTOs are disappointed with the slow take-up on NTrs to-date but many believe that this will pick up in the near future as TECs and the Careers Service become more involved in the promotional aspect.

In Phase 1, a number of NTOs expressed concerns about how quality assurance issues would be handled in relation to NTrs and wanted the role of NTOs and TECs in this process to be clarified. This appears to have become less of an issue although a small number of NTOs have expressed concerns about the difficulties NTOs face in ensuring quality given that they are not directly involved in delivery. One NTO would like to see greater involvement from the Training Standards Council to address this.

NTOs continue to express concerns about the management information provided by the DfEE. Dissatisfaction is expressed about the length of time taken to receive details of the number of starts. Many would like to see the introduction of a national database that both TECs and NTOs could access.

Some NTOs would also like to see greater consistency in funding arrangements between TECs and for this process to be more transparent. In addition, they would like more standardisation of TEC issued forms.

10.2 TECs

At the time of interview, a number of TECs were under target in terms of the number of National Trainees recruited, although some were on target or have exceeded their target. There are variations in views concerning performance in the coming year. Those TECs that have exceeded their targets are optimistic that the numbers recruited will increase whilst others adopt a 'let's wait and see' approach.

One issue that will impact on the number of NTrs (as discussed in Section 7.3) is the degree to which NTrs are used as a 'stepping stone' to the MA. Where this is the case, the number of new starts for NTrs is likely to be higher, and the number of new starts for MAs correspondingly lower. TECs generally feel it is too early to evaluate this relationship.

10.3 Training providers and Employers

A number of training providers are looking to increase the number of young people recruited to NTrs this year providing there is sufficient funding and placements available. Those involved in delivering the engineering framework are less optimistic about take-up given the large amount of off-the-job training involved.

Half of the employers in our sample (52%) also expect to recruit more National Trainees at their establishment in the next 12 months. However, three in ten (31%) do not expect to recruit any more in the next year; this rises to 39% among companies with less than 10 employees.

10.4 Trainees

The large majority of trainees currently doing a NTr expect to complete the programme (92%), although trainees doing communications/business support/administration frameworks are slightly less positive (87%). This is consistent with the findings that this group are most dissatisfied with their NTr. Only three percent of trainees currently doing a NTr do not expect to finish the programme and four per cent say they are not sure.

Three fifths (61%) expect to stay with their employer after they complete/leave the programme; this rises to 72% among trainees doing manufacturing/construction/industrial frameworks. One in seven (14%) expect to stay in the same sort of job but change employer and five per cent want to change job completely. Small minorities want to do another NVQ (7%) or an MA (3%).

Table 10.4.1: Trainees' destination after completing/leaving NTrs

		Framework Sector			
	All	**Manuf/ Constrn/ Industrl**	**Commun/ Business Sup/ Admin**	**Consumer Services**	**Retail/ Distribution**
Base:	**(707)**	**(144)**	**(169)**	**(271)**	**(123)**
	%	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
Stay with present employer	61	72	58	58	61
Stay in same sort of job, but change employer	14	11	17	16	10
Do another NVQ	7	2	5	10	10

Base: All trainees currently doing a NTr (707). Table show responses >5%

11 SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS

At the end of the interview in both Phases 1 and 2, respondents were asked to put forward suggestions for improvements based on their experience of NTrs.

NTOs put forward the following suggestions:

- simplified administration among TECs

- quicker and more detailed feedback on the numbers and progress of trainees within each sector

- some clarification for employers about the relationships between NTrs, MAs and New Deal

Suggestions from *TECs* include:

- common certification and registration procedures

- a short checklist to be provided for each framework - to make checking that local schemes meet the national frameworks easier

- additional and better guidance on key skills - making them integral to the NVQs wherever possible.

Suggestions from *Careers Services* include:

- introduce a national database of frameworks which could be accessed by both young people and Careers Service staff

- use the Careers Service National Association as a focal point for improving the flow of information and securing Careers Service representation in framework development. This is important given that the Careers Service also deal with employers and may, therefore, have a role in recruitment and advice. The Careers Service are also well placed to help TECs prepare marketing materials which are relevant to young people.

Suggestions from *employers* include:

- more communication and support from colleges

- greater improvements in the quality of training, both in terms of the level at which it is pitched and the depth of coverage

- more funding

- better advertising of NTrs.

However, a third of employers (33%) do not suggest any future improvements to the programme and say that they are satisfied with NTrs at present.

Suggestions from *trainees* include:

- better pay

- simplify the language used in Training Plan.

12   CONCLUSIONS

The picture that has emerged from the evaluation is very encouraging. NTrs are clearly meeting the needs of a large number of employers and young people who have been recruited. In addition, the general view is that NTrs have improved the quality of training at Level 2.

Obviously the initiative is still in its early stage and issues will emerge as the initiative progresses. At this stage, the key outstanding issue in a number of sectors is key skills, particularly in terms of IT and application of number. We have identified some examples of how sectors have tried to address this issue (see Section 5.3).

In addition, awareness of NTrs among employers and young people is still relatively low although those that are aware have responded positively to the messages that NTOs and TECs are trying to get across. In addition, the number recruited in many sectors and TEC areas are not as high as some would have hoped. This may point to the need for more vigorous marketing, particularly at the local level in some areas.

It is still too early to comment on whether the introduction of NTr has led to a fall in the numbers recruited onto the MA given the relatively slow take-up of NTrs at the time of fieldwork. Both TECs and NTOs have made the progression link from NTr to MA explicit in their marketing. The general feeling is that employers are likely to adopt a more cautious approach by putting young people onto NTr in the first instance and converting them later on if appropriate. If this happens then it will be harder for TECs to meet their MA targets.

APPENDICES

A   Overall methodology

The evaluation consisted of a number of phases. These are summarised below.

Phase 1 consisted of depth interviews with NTOs, TECs and Careers Service representatives in a number of sectors. These sectors were grouped into two - in the first, interviews were carried out with NTO and TEC staff and Careers Service representatives; in the second, just NTO staff.

The sectors were chosen to represent a range of industry sectors and likely sizes of the NTr programme. Interviews were conducted face-to-face and over the telephone. A separate topic guide, developed in consultation with the DfEE, was used for each audience group. Fieldwork took place between November 1997 - February 1998.

The group 1 and 2 sectors were as follows:

Group 1	**Group 2**
Retail	Road Haulage
Health and Social Care	Polymers
Business Administration	Steel
Meat	Photography
Information Technology	Ceramics
Sport and Recreation	Security
Engineering and Marine	

In **Phase 2**, follow-up interviews were conducted with the same audiences interviewed in Phase 1. The topic guides developed in Phase 1 were refined to take account of new issues. Fieldwork took place between October 1998 - January 1999.

Details of the interviews conducted are attached in Appendix B.

Phase 3 comprised the followings:

I.   depth interviews with training providers

II.   focus groups with trainees

III.   postal survey of trainees

IV.   telephone survey of employers who had National Trainees.

The following sections provide more details on each of the components of the evaluation.

B   Interviews with NTOs, TECs and the Careers Service

NTOs (Phases 1 & 2)

Business Administration	Council for Administration (CfA)
Ceramics	Association for Ceramic Training and Development (ACTD)
Engineering and Marine	Engineering and Marine Training Authority (EMTA)
Health and Social Care	Local Government Management Board (LGMB)
IT	Information Technology Industry Training Organisation (ITITO)
Meat	Meat Training Council (MTC)
Photography	Photo NTO
Polymers	Polymer and Associated Industries National Training Organisation (PAINTO)
Retail	National Retail Training Council (NRTC)
Road Haulage	Road Haulage and Distribution Training Council (RHDTC)
Security	Security Industry Training Organisation (SITO)
Sport and Recreation	National Training Organisation for Sport, Recreation and Allied Occupations (SPRITO)
Steel	Steel Training NTO

TECs (Phases 1 & 2)	**Careers Service**
Northampton TEC	Northampton Career Path
Lincolnshire	Stretford Careers
South East Cheshire	Prospects, Bexleyheath
Northampton CCTE	Bracknell Careers
Kent	Lincoln Careers
SOLOTEC	
Suffolk	
Dorset	
Walsall	
Leeds	
NW London	

Interviews were carried out with five Careers Services linked to Group 1 sectors in Phase 1. In Phase 2, only two of the five interviews were conducted. Therefore, the findings from the Careers Service interviews must be interpreted with caution.

C   Depth interviews with Training Providers

In total 27 interviews were conducted with private training providers, FE colleges and Group Training Associations who are delivering NTrs. These were chosen to ensure that a range of locations and frameworks were covered.

Fieldwork took place between January - February 1999. The topic guide, used as an aide-memoir, was developed in consultation with the DfEE.

The training providers in our sample generally offer around 3-5 NTr frameworks including IT, business administration, retail, estate agency, hairdressing, car maintenance, floristry, agriculture, horticulture, animal care, health and social care, construction and engineering. The most commonly mentioned frameworks were retail, administration and IT.

All say they offer a full service (eg. all aspects of off-the-job training/key skills, registration, dealing with certification/examination, recruitment of trainees, assessment etc.) and that the service does not depend on the size of the employer. The only exceptions are a couple of training providers who will tailor their service if a large employer wants to do the training themselves, in which case they will provide add-ons, support, etc.

All are involved in delivering Modern Apprenticeship. All except a handful offer Other Training and New Deal.

The majority of providers are involved in other activities. Some describe these as 'private' or 'corporate' training. Others specifically mention assessment at work, health and safety training, foundation courses, owner-manager NVQs and ISO 9000.

Length of time in business ranges from 18 months to 20 years, although many say they have been around 10-16 years. Most operate in one locality, although the service they offer is available county-wide.

D   Focus groups with trainees

Two focus groups with trainees were conducted in Essex and Doncaster between December 1998 - January 1999.

Trainees were recruited by training providers and represented the following sector frameworks:

- Hairdressing

- Retail

- Customer service

- Business administration.

All the trainees were aged 16-17 years. Most had been doing a National Traineeship between 6-18 months, although a small number had just started.

In the Doncaster group, all trainees had employed status. In contrast, only one trainee in the Essex group had employed status; the rest were on a placement.

Both group discussions were conducted by experienced MORI researchers.

E   Postal survey of trainees

Sample design

The sample was provided by the DfEE and contained details of all National Trainees in England and Wales on their database in September 1998. The survey comprised a census of trainees on the database. Only those records that did not have trainees' full names and/or addresses were excluded from the sample. In total, there were 281 records with incomplete names and/or addresses.

Self completion questionnaires were sent to 3,412 trainees. In total, 929 completed questionnaires were returned to MORI within the fieldwork period giving a valid response rate of 27%. An additional 80 questionnaires were returned after the fieldwork cut-off date. These are not included in the analysis. A summary of the response is shown below.

	Responses	
	<u>within</u> **fieldwork period**	<u>to-date</u> **(i.e. incl. those received after cut-off)**
Outcome	**n**	**n**
Total mail-out	3,412	3,412
- Successful (completed questionnaire)	900	980
- Partially completed	0	3
- Was never on a National Traineeship	29	32
- No longer at address/Post-office return	8	8
- Refused	8	8
- No response	2,467	2,381
Valid response rate	*27%*	*30%*

Fieldwork took place between 4 January - 3 February 1999. A reminder letter and questionnaire to all those who had not responded was sent two weeks after the initial mail-out.

Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was designed in consultation with representatives from the DfEE and covered the topics areas listed below.

- Present job and training
- Activities prior to starting a NTr
- Reasons for choosing NTr
- Sources of information about NTr
- Trainees' evaluation of NTr
- Future plans
- Personal details.

Where relevant, questions from the Modern Apprenticeship evaluation were included to enable comparisons between the two surveys. The questionnaire was piloted among 10 trainees.

Weighting

The data have been weighted by gender, age, length of time on NTr and framework sector in line with known population characteristics, extracted from the DfEE database of National Trainees (as of September 1998).

Analysis

For the purpose of analysis, the sector frameworks were grouped under four headings. The table below list the sector frameworks under each heading.

Manufacturing, Construction & Industrial	
Agriculture & commercial horticulture	Construction
Agriculture & garden machinery	Steel
Engineering manufacture	Electricity supply
Electrical & electrical servicing	Knitting, lace etc.
Polymers	Master bakers
Glass	Clothing
Surface coatings	Motor trade
	Food & drink

Communication, Business Support & Administration

Business administration   Telecommunications

IT   Accountancy

Consumer Services

Travel agents   Childcare

Residential estate agency   Operating department practice

Hairdressing   Health & social care

Hospitality   Horses

Security   Animal care

                                        Sports & recreation

Retail & Distribution

Retail   Floristry

In addition, trainees' qualifications prior to starting NTrs were grouped under the following three headings:

At least one Level 2 qualification	Below Level 2 qualifications	Other types of vocational qualifications
5 or more GCSEs (grades A-C) Intermediate/Advance GNVQ NVQ Levels 1/2	Less than 5 GCSEs (grades A-C) GCSEs below grade C	

F   Sample profile - Trainees

	Unweighted	Weighted	
	n	n	%
Gender			
Male	377	418	45
Female	552	511	55
Age			
16 years	280	177	19
17 years	333	297	32
18 years	181	218	23
19 years+	135	237	25
Framework Sector			
Manufacturing, Construction & Industrial	181	178	19
Communication, Business Support & Admin	233	179	19
Consumer Services	328	315	34
Retail & Distribution	187	257	28
Length of time on National Traineeship			
Less than 6 months	346	260	28
6 months - 9 months	454	516	56
More than 9 months	129	153	17
Employed status			
Yes	586	646	70
No	336	274	29
Activity pre-National Traineeship			
GCSEs	405	324	35
GNVQ/Other vocational training	103	121	13
MA/YT/Other in-work training	88	104	11
Employment without training	158	201	22
Other	122	122	13
Qualifications pre-National Traineeship			
NVQ level 2 or above	307	326	35
Below NVQ level 2	530	502	54
Other	18	22	2

G   Telephone survey of employers

Sample design

The sample was drawn from the DfEE database of trainees in September 1998. This database contained contact details of employers and training providers for each trainee but did not distinguish between the two.   Consequently, we manually selected contact details of organisations that were likely to be employers (as opposed to training providers). In total, details of 631 establishments were drawn from the database of which 61 were used during the pilot and an additional 202 records were invalid/ineligible, giving a total of 368 leads for the main survey. A summary of the response is shown below.

Outcome	n	Population in scope of fieldwork (%)
Total number of leads after the pilot	570	
Ineligible leads		
- company is a training provider	48	
- no reply/telephone number unobtainable	125	
- never had a National Trainee	29	
Valid leads	*368*	*100*
- refusals	32	91
- interview terminated by respondent	6	90
- relevant person based elsewhere	15	86
- appointments outside fieldwork	100	58
Response rate	*215*	*58*

Interviews were conducted with the Training Manager or equivalent. Fieldwork took place between 15 January - 1 February 1999. Interviews were conducted by Facts International Ltd using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI).

Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was designed in consultation with representatives from the DfEE and covered the topics areas listed below. The questionnaire was piloted among 10 establishments.

I.   Establishment details

II.   Current position

III.   Recruitment

IV.   Training framework

V.   Delivery

VI.   Views on NTrs.

Analysis

The 10 pilot interviews have been included in the analysis to give a total response of 225.

For the purpose of analysis, the sector frameworks were grouped under four headings - these are the same as for the Trainees Survey.

Given the way in which the sample was drawn, the results of the employer survey should be treated as indicative rather than as representative of employers who have experience of National Trainees.

H   Sample profile - Employers

Number of Employees	n	%
1 to 9	105	47
10 to 25	61	27
26 to 99	39	17
100+	17	8
Don't know	3	1

Standard Industrial Classification (SIC 1992)		
Distribution	71	32
Health and Social Work	29	13
Real estate, renting and business activities	25	11
Manufacturing	16	7
Hotels and restaurants	15	7
Construction	8	4
Financial intermediations	3	1
Transport, storage and communications	1	*
Public administration and defence, compulsory social security	1	*
Education	1	*
Other community, social and personal service activities	55	24

Nature of business		
A private limited company	92	41
A public limited company plc	36	16
A sole trader	49	22
A partnership	27	12
A franchise	1	*
Part of the public sector	3	1
A charity/voluntary organisation	3	1
Other	4	2
Don't know	10	4

Framework sector		
Retailing	61	27
Hairdressing	43	19
Business Administration	42	19
Health & Social Care	25	11
Engineering Manufacture	17	8
Food & Drink	8	4
Construction	5	2
Hotel & Catering	5	2
Motor Industry	4	2
Sports & Recreation	4	2
Agriculture & Commercial Horticulture	3	1
Information Technology	3	1
Animal Care	2	1
Don't know	3	1

I   Statistical reliability

The responses to the employer and trainee questionnaires are based on samples of the population, and not the entire population. Therefore, we cannot be certain that the figures obtained are exactly those that would have been obtained if everybody had been interviewed (the 'true' values). We can, however, predict the variation between the sample results and the 'true' values from a knowledge of the size of the samples on which the results are based. The confidence with which we can make this prediction is usually chosen to be 95% - that is, the chances are 95 in 100 that the 'true' value will fall within a specified range.

The table below illustrates the predicted ranges for different sample sizes and percentages results at the '95% confidence interval', based on a random sample.

Size of sample on which survey result is based	Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
	±	±	±
100 interviews	6	9	10
200 interviews	4	6	7
300 interviews	3	5	6
400 interviews	3	4	5
500 interviews	3	4	4
600 interviews	2	4	4
800 interviews	2	3	3
1000 interviews	2	3	3

For example, with a sample size of 200 interviews where 30% give a particular answer, the chances are 19 in 20 that the 'true' value (which would have been obtained if the whole population had been interviewed) will fall within the range ± 6 percentage point from the sample results.

When results are compared between separate groups within a sample, or between different surveys, different results may be obtained. The difference may be 'real', or it may occur by chance (because not everyone in the population has been interviewed). To test if the difference is a real one - i.e. if it is 'statistically significant', we again have to know the size of the samples, the percentage giving a certain answer and the degree of confidence chosen. If we assume '95% confidence interval', the differences between the two sample results must be greater than the values given in the table on the following page.

Size of samples compared	Differences required for significance at or near these percentage levels		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
50 and 50	12	18	19
50 and 60	11	17	18.5
50 and 70	11	16	18
60 and 60	11	16	18
60 and 70	10	15.5	17
70 and 70	10	15	16
100 and 100	8	13	14
250 and 250	5	8	9
500 and 500	4	6	6