

i For information

>lsc

Leading learning and skills

Research into Expanding Apprenticeships

Final Report

August 2008

Of interest to everyone involved in young people's learning and the overall skills needs of employers

Contents

	Paragraph number
Executive Summary	1
Introduction	29
Background and aims of the research	29
Methodology	33
Key Findings and Policy Issues	37
Introduction	37
What drives employer participation in the Apprenticeship programme?	39
Why do employers stop participating?	59
Are non-participating employers unaware or simply not interested?	71
Do employers use skilled migrant workers from the EU instead of apprentices?	88
Why do young people choose one form of learning over another?	96
Barriers to choosing an Apprenticeship	108
What happens to unmet demand from learners?	114
Learner satisfaction with their course	120
Conclusions and Key Recommendations	134
General conclusions	134
Marketing Apprenticeships	146
Engaging employers	153
Recruiting young people	165
Annex: Technical Report	–

Executive Summary

1 The Government has committed to increase spending to £1 billion by 2010/11 to support apprenticeship expansion and quality improvement. Over the 10 year period from 2001/02 to 2010/11 more than 900,000 young people and adults will have successfully completed their apprenticeship with 130,000 in 2010/11 alone.

2 The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) commissioned Ipsos MORI and Cambridge Policy Consultants (CPC) to conduct research into how the Apprenticeship programme in England can be expanded to meet the recommendations of *Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills* (published by HM Treasury in December 2006).

3 The primary aim of the research was to provide an understanding of employers' and learners' attitudes towards the Apprenticeship programme. This will help the LSC to better understand the factors that lie behind the demand for Apprenticeships, and to consider how policy changes might bring about expansion.

4 The research involved 46 case studies with employers that participate in the Apprenticeship programme (participating employers) and those who don't (non-participating employers), colleges and training providers, as well as a representative sample of 1,000 employers.

5 Also included was a booster sample of 2,002 participating employers (drawn from the individualised learner record (ILR) data set) and 2,017 interviews with young people in Apprenticeships (1,019), further education (FE) (498) and Entry to Employment (E2E) (500). The research focused on three English regions: the North East, the West Midlands and the South East.

6 Employers get involved in the Apprenticeship programme for three main reasons:

- to develop the workforce of the future – Apprenticeships are the most effective route to providing skilled workers;
- to 'grow their own', training recruits in their way of doing things; and
- to support their recruitment activity – mostly as an alternative way of getting hold of fully skilled workers (who are rare), or of attracting better-quality candidates.

7 There has been an upward trend in participation: a quarter of the companies surveyed have increased the number of places on offer.

8 Business needs are the principal driver for both expansions and reductions in places. Changes in the local labour market – for example the limited availability of skilled workers – are seen as a push factor, which encourages participation.

9 Employer satisfaction with the Apprenticeship programme is high among both participating employers and those that have lapsed. Most concerns relate to problems with individual learners – not necessarily with Apprenticeships themselves.

10 Three in five participating employers have been approached by their college or training provider to increase the number of Apprenticeships on offer.

11 However, only one in five employers have been asked by their training provider whether they were interested in getting involved in an alternative framework. Some 10 per cent of employers had requested additional apprentices, but were told that this was not possible.

12 There may be a number of barriers here.

- Most often, employers were told that there were no additional funded places available from their college or training provider.
- A few employers were referred on to other colleges or training providers – to see if spare capacity existed elsewhere.
- Those employers that sought new or bespoke Apprenticeships were told not to bother – as it was too difficult to secure approval for qualifications that straddle a number of sectors.

13 Business needs dominate employers' views of their future involvement in the Apprenticeship programme, but a majority expressed interest in recruiting apprentices aged 25 or over; in a programme-led approach, where off-the-job training would be completed and the learner would subsequently be recruited by the company; and in some form of compensation for staff time spent learning outside work.

14 A lack of awareness of the Apprenticeship programme is an issue. Almost a third of non-participating employers had never heard of it, and almost as many again were aware of it but knew no detail. Moreover, two-thirds of non-participating employers said that they would not know where to go for advice about the programme. Fewer than 20 per cent of non-participating employers had been directly contacted by a training provider about the Apprenticeship programme.

15 However, awareness is not the only issue. There is a perception among many employers that young people are not always ready to settle down to work on leaving school. Three-quarters of employers that had recruited in the previous three years had not recruited a 16- to 17-year-old, and half had not recruited anyone under 25.

16 Around a third of non-participating employers thought it was very or fairly likely that they would get involved if a training provider contacted them with a bespoke offer. Their reasons for potentially doing so were similar to those of participating employers: to 'grow their own' or to address future workforce needs.

17 But other employers felt that national vocational qualifications (NVQs) offered better value for money, or were simply more appropriate for their needs.

18 There is no evidence to support the view that employers are hiring migrant workers instead of taking on apprentices. Fewer than 2 per cent of participating employers (and those non-participating employers that had recruited in the previous three years) had recruited a skilled migrant worker from the EU instead of taking on an apprentice.

19 Migrant workers are seen as a valued resource to enable employers to respond to short-term shifts in demand. Apprenticeships, on the other hand, are seen as long-term and as providing skills for the future.

20 There is strong evidence of unmet demand for Apprenticeships from individuals, with 25 per cent of learners not able to find an employer or provider. This is strongly supported by case study evidence with colleges and training providers. More support is needed for young people seeking a placement – most are currently left to find one on their own. Case studies suggest that some colleges and training providers are starting to address this, but resources are limited.

21 Most young learners are aware of Apprenticeships, but this knowledge can be superficial. (Having said this, awareness of Apprenticeships was comparatively low among non-white FE learners.)

22 Parents, friends and siblings are very influential in helping young people to make the decision to apply for an Apprenticeship. Connexions centres are a particularly significant source of information and advice for E2E learners, but are much less important for FE learners and advanced apprentices.

23 Most apprentices feel that qualifications have an important role to play in securing a desired career or job. (This was also the case for FE learners.) The ability to work and train at the same time is also considered to be significant.

24 There is a perception among FE learners that Apprenticeships can close off future career choices and academic progression. This contrasts with the majority of apprentices (particularly advanced apprentices), who said that they were focused on a particular career and had not considered any other options when choosing their course. For many, a job without training was the only alternative to an Apprenticeship.

25 There is evidence across all three groups of employers – those that are currently participating in the Apprenticeship programme, those that had participated in the past and those that have not yet participated – of interest in participation in the Apprenticeship programme in the future. This interest needs to be drawn out through a bespoke offer, and employers will need support to work their way through the programme's requirements.

26 Colleges and training providers are a key element of making the Apprenticeship market work. Case study discussions with them have highlighted the need for the LSC to communicate its vision for what the expanded programme should look like. This will help colleges and training providers to plan for the expansion.

27 Colleges and training providers need to play a bigger role in securing more employer engagement in the Apprenticeship programme, and in supporting interested young people to set up placements.

28 Much more has to be done to join up the work of training organisations, so that they are responding to the varied needs of employers. This initiative will need resourcing (to underwrite the risks involved) – there are too few incentives in the current funding and inspection regime for providers to make the required shift.

Introduction

Background and aims of the research

29 The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) commissioned Ipsos MORI and Cambridge Policy Consultants (CPC) to conduct research into how the Apprenticeship programme in England can be expanded to meet the recommendations of *Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills* (published by HM Treasury in December 2006). Lord Leitch's report calls for a step change in the major instruments of vocational training, including further education (FE) provision and Apprenticeships. A significant expansion in structured training provision is required to ensure that England can more than make up for the rapidly developing skills of competing economies.

In the 21st century, our natural resource is our people – and their potential is both untapped and vast. Skills will unlock that potential. The prize for our country will be enormous – higher productivity, the creation of wealth and social justice.

Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills

30 Lord Leitch's report recognises that this will be a formidable challenge. Apprenticeships have already proved to be a valuable mechanism for delivering skills to young people, but the scale of the recommended increase is unprecedented.

31 The Government has committed to increase spending to £1 billion by 2010/11 to support apprenticeship expansion and quality improvement. Over the 10 year period from 2001/02 to 2010/11 more than 900,000 young people and adults will have successfully completed their apprenticeship with 130,000 in 2010/11 alone.

32 The primary aim of the research was to provide an understanding of employers' and learners' attitudes towards the Apprenticeship programme. This will help the LSC to better understand the factors that lie behind the demand for Apprenticeships, and to consider how policy changes might bring about expansion.

Methodology

33 The research focused on three English regions: the North East, the West Midlands and the South East. Fieldwork was undertaken in two phases. The first involved case studies across the three regions with:

- 15 participating employers;
- 12 non-participating employers;
- 3 lapsed employers;

- 10 training providers; and
- 6 colleges.

34 The second phase used the issues raised in the case studies to inform telephone surveys with:

- a representative sample of 1,000 employers;
- a booster sample of 2,002 participating employers (drawn from the individualised learner record (ILR) data set) that had an apprentice; and
- 2,017 young people (1,019 on Apprenticeships, 498 in FE and 500 in Entry to Employment (E2E)).

35 The primary structured sample was representative of employers across all three regions, but only around 10 per cent of them had taken part in the Apprenticeship programme. This was not enough of a proportion to be able to analyse any of the issues in detail, so a large booster sample was surveyed as well.

36 The booster sample helped us to understand participants' views in greater detail across size and sectors. It also helped to clarify the types of Apprenticeship training being undertaken by companies. However, the booster sample was not representative – the ILR does not offer complete coverage of participating employers (see the 'Sample' section under 'Employer survey' in the annex).

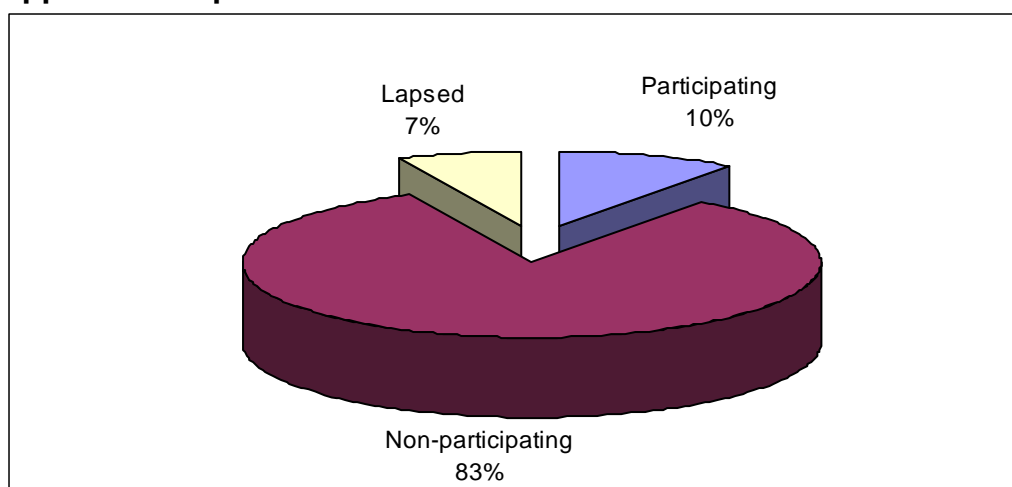
Key Findings and Policy Issues

Introduction

37 For the purposes of this research, employers are divided in three broad groups. The policy implications of expanding the Apprenticeship programme are different for each of them.

- Participating employers: the challenge is to encourage these employers to increase their involvement with the Apprenticeship programme – either by taking on additional apprentices as part of the same framework, or by getting involved with additional frameworks.
- Lapsed employers (employers that have participated in the programme in the past, but are no longer participating): the challenge is to re-engage these employers.
- Non-participating employers (employers that had no previous awareness of Apprenticeships, or that are not interested): the challenge is to engage these employers for the first time.

Figure 1: Employers across all three regions, by level of involvement with Apprenticeships



Source: Ipsos MORI Survey of Employers

38 Market penetration of Apprenticeships is highest in the Construction sector (20 per cent), followed by the Other Services sector (16 per cent), the Manufacturing sector (14 per cent) and the Education, Health and Public Administration sector (13 per cent). Market penetration is below average in the Wholesale, Retail and Repairs sector, the Hotels and Restaurants sector (7 per cent) and the Financial Services sector (6 per cent).

What drives employer participation in the Apprenticeship programme?

39 One in ten employers in the representative sample from all three regions had participated in the Apprenticeship programme at some point. According to the 2006 survey *Workforce Training in England* (published by the then Department for Education and Skills), just 6 per cent of employers in England claim to have participated in the Apprenticeship programme during the previous 12 months.

40 There are important regional differences in participation in Apprenticeships: the figure in the North East (15 per cent) is almost double that of the South East (8 per cent), with the West Midlands figure falling between the two (11 per cent).

41 More larger companies participate in Apprenticeships: over 25 per cent of companies with more than 50 employees, compared with just 4 per cent of very small firms (those with fewer than five employees).

42 Employers get involved in the Apprenticeship programme for three main reasons:

- to develop the workforce of the future – Apprenticeships are the most effective route to providing skilled workers;
- to ‘grow their own’, training recruits in their way of doing things; and
- to support their recruitment activity – mostly as an alternative way of getting hold of fully skilled workers (who are rare), or of attracting better-quality candidates.

43 The vast majority of participating employers host an average of one or two recruits every year. However, this varies with company size: the average annual intake in large firms is more than 10, but it is just over 1 in companies with fewer than 25 employees. The number of recruits taken on is determined first and foremost by a company’s business needs.

44 More than 2 in 5 employers from the booster sample did not know that their own company participated in the Apprenticeship programme. Medium-sized companies and those in the West Midlands were most likely to be unaware. There are a number of potential reasons for this: discussions with colleges and training providers suggest that training packages are often put together to address the needs of different groups of employees. Sources of funding might vary – depending on individual eligibility – but employers are not always interested in (or possibly told about) these differences. Their focus is on the cost to them.

45 There has been an upward trend in the take-up of Apprenticeships: over the past five years, a quarter of companies surveyed have increased the number of places on offer. This compares with the proportion that reduced their average annual intake over this period (6 per cent).

46 Business needs are the principal driver for both expansions and reductions in places. Changes in the local labour market – for example the limited availability of skilled workers – are seen as a push factor, which encourages participation.

47 Employers that reduced the number of Apprenticeships on offer mostly cited adverse trading conditions as the reason for doing so. Some 16 per cent mentioned legislative changes as the reason, compared with only 1 per cent of those employers that had increased their Apprenticeship places.

48 A lack of suitable candidates was another issue for employers that had reduced the number of Apprenticeship places on offer. This was raised most often among employers in sectors that have a limited tradition of Apprenticeships, but there are too few employers in this group for a robust analysis to be conducted.

49 Employer satisfaction with the programme is high. Most concerns relate to problems with individual learners (this was cited by just over 25 per cent of employers) – not necessarily with the programme itself. Dissatisfaction relating to training providers (17 per cent), the content of training (16 per cent), funding (13 per cent) and the amount of administration (10 per cent) was comparatively low.

50 There are some sectoral differences: employers in the Manufacturing sector are generally less likely to report difficulties. In the Construction sector, the proportion of employers reporting difficulties is above average. Likewise, there was some variation between employers of different sizes: not surprisingly, the administering the programme is a heavier burden for smaller firms.

51 An analysis of a subset of employers that were apparently unaware of their current participation in the Apprenticeship programme (but that claimed to have participated in the past) suggests a positive view of the programme. These employers award high scores to the Apprenticeship programme's ability to provide a thorough grounding for the trainee. They also commend the programme's value for money, the duration of an Apprenticeship and the programme's ability to deliver the skills needed for the job. Slightly lower scores are given for the support that is provided to employers to help them to recruit good-quality candidates, and to produce young people who have positive attitudes to work.

52 By and large, participating employers have been approached by their college or training provider to increase the number of Apprenticeships on offer. Three in five participating employers had been asked whether they were interested in taking on additional apprentices.

53 More than four in five of participating employers had heard of at least one of the four main cross-sectoral frameworks (sales, business administration, management and customer service). Half of participating employers were very or fairly likely to consider participating in one or more of these.

54 Only one in five had been asked whether they were interested in getting involved in an alternative framework to their current Apprenticeship programme.

55 Employers reported a significant level of unmet demand: 10 per cent had requested additional apprentices, but were told that this was not possible. This problem was worst in the North East, among medium-sized companies, and in the Education, Health and Public Administration sector. It was not as much of a problem in the Construction sector.

56 There may be a number of barriers here.

- Most often, employers were told that there were no additional funded places available from their college or training provider.
- A few employers were referred on to other colleges or training providers – to see if spare capacity existed elsewhere.
- Those employers that sought new or bespoke Apprenticeships were told not to bother – as it was too difficult to secure approval for qualifications that straddle a number of sectors.

57 Unprompted, participating employers were most likely to cite an upturn in business prospects as a factor that might encourage them to recruit more apprentices in the future (46 per cent). The costs of participation were a concern for around a fifth of participating firms, while a similar proportion indicated that nothing would encourage them to take on additional apprentices.

58 When prompted on which factors would drive increased participation in the future, employers' responses were slightly different.

- Business needs were most often cited (by 71 per cent of employers).
- Some 68 per cent of employers were interested in the prospect of recruiting apprentices aged 25 or over.
- Some 59 per cent of employers were interested in a programme-led approach, where off-the-job training would be completed and the learner would subsequently be recruited by the company.
- A similar proportion of employers (56 per cent) were interested in some form of compensation for staff time spent learning outside work.

Why do employers stop participating?

59 The research revealed that almost as many employers had lapsed as were currently participating in the Apprenticeship programme. There were small differences between different regions, sectors and company sizes (these differences do not always follow the pattern of market penetration), but the samples were too small to allow for robust conclusions.

60 The main reasons for lapsed employers having participated in the past were similar to the reasons given by participating employers:

- to address future workforce needs;
- to 'grow their own', training recruits in their way of doing things; and
- to support their recruitment activity.

61 However, addressing future workforce needs was less important to lapsed employers. This suggests that employers continue to remain involved in the Apprenticeship programme when they are focused on the long-term needs of their organisations – so this focus may be less common among lapsed employers.

62 Case study discussions suggested that there were other quite simple reasons for employers stopping offering Apprenticeships. Staff turnover was often cited as a factor – especially where the staff in question were responsible for undertaking the administration of the Apprenticeship programme, or for supervising apprentices. The quality and performance of the training provider were also mentioned.

63 Having said this, the available evidence suggests that lapsed employers were generally happy with the Apprenticeship programme: their decision to stop participating had little to do with general dissatisfaction with the programme.

64 About three quarters of lapsed employers rated the Apprenticeship programme as a very or fairly good way of providing a thorough grounding for trainees and of delivering the skills needed for the job. Employers awarded high scores to the programme's value for money and flexibility, and felt that the academic part of the training was pitched at the right level.

65 Lapsed employers gave lower scores to the programme's contribution to enabling employers to recruit candidates that were good enough for the job: just 54 per cent of them rated this aspect of the programme as very or fairly good. Lapsed employers were least happy with the quantity of paperwork associated with participation: only 42 per cent of them considered this to be very or fairly good.

66 The single most important reason for lapsed employers stopping participating was business needs: this was the issue for more than 2 in 5 of them. Other reasons included financial ones, or having had a previous negative experience of the Apprenticeship programme.

67 There were some indications that lapsed employers might be brought back on board fairly easily. Half of them said that it was very or fairly likely that they would consider participating again (compared with only one in three for other non-participating employers).

68 Three in four employers said that they would be likely to consider participating if they were able to recruit apprentices aged 25 or over, or if they were able to recruit apprentices from college after they had already completed their vocational qualification training.

69 Two in three of employers said that they would be likely to consider participating if there were compensation for lost staff time, less paperwork or an upturn in their business prospects. An upturn in business prospects is the highest-scoring incentive among participating employers (in terms of encouraging them to take on additional apprentices), but among lapsed employers it is only the fifth highest-scoring.

70 A significant minority of lapsed employers (8 per cent) indicated that there had been no particular reason for dropping out. More than one training organisation had recently approached lapsed employers to find that the original reason for stopping participating had disappeared. Employers that leave the programme during a downturn do not always re-engage when the market improves: an active approach to engaging lapsed employers will pay dividends.

Are non-participating employers unaware or simply not interested?

71 The third and largest group of employers (representing more than four in five of the overall employer population) are those employers that have never participated in the programme. Employers in the South East and smaller companies in all three regions are most likely to make up part of this group. The key questions are whether these employers are aware of the programme and, if so, why they are not participating. Another question is whether and how they can be brought on board.

72 Evidence suggests that awareness is a major barrier for this group. Over one in three of non-participating employers had never heard of the Apprenticeship programme, and an additional one in four had heard of the programme but knew nothing about it. Fewer than one in five felt that they knew a great deal or a fair amount about the programme.

73 Fewer than one in five of non-participating employers were aware of a specific Apprenticeship programme for their sector. More than half of non-participating employers had not heard of any of the four main cross-sectoral frameworks (sales, business administration, management and customer service).

74 More than two thirds of non-participating employers said that they would not know where to go for advice if they were interested in participating in the Apprenticeship programme.

75 Fewer than one in five of non-participating employers had ever been directly contacted by a training provider about the Apprenticeship programme. Non-participating employers were less likely than participating employers to have first heard about the programme from a training provider, and more likely than participating employers to have first heard about the programme through media advertising. This may mean that first hearing about the programme through a training provider increases the chances of an employer engaging with the programme.

76 However, awareness is not the only issue. There is a perception among many employers that young people are not always ready to settle down to work on leaving

school. Some 75 per cent of employers that had recruited in the previous three years had not recruited a 16- to 17-year-old, and half had not recruited anyone under 25.

77 Fewer than one in five of non-participating employers that had heard about the programme had actually considered participating. The vast majority (almost four in five) of those employers that had never considered participating had not recruited any young people aged 16 to 18 over the previous three years.

78 The reasons given by non-participating employers for considering participating were similar to those given by participating employers: to 'grow their own' or to address future workforce needs.

79 However, using the Apprenticeship programme to support recruitment activity was less important for this group. This suggests that the Apprenticeship programme is seen to offer long-term recruitment benefits to non-participating employers, rather than immediate benefits. And these long-term benefits are not enough to persuade them to participate.

80 One of the main reasons for non-participating employers not engaging with the programme was that they did not know enough about it, but many others simply did not know why they had not gone ahead. One in four employers cited one of these factors.

Can non-participating employers be encouraged to participate?

81 Just over one in three of non-participating employers thought it was very or fairly likely that they would get involved if a training provider contacted them with a bespoke offer. Fewer than one in three thought it was not at all likely that they would get involved under such circumstances.

82 There are twice as many opportunities in the South East as there are in the West Midlands, and particular opportunities among small employers (those with between 5 and 49 employees).

83 Just fewer than one in five of non-participating employers had considered participating in the past. Of this group, two thirds believed that it was very or fairly likely that they would get involved if a training provider contacted them with a bespoke offer.

84 Case study discussions with employers suggest that alternatives to Apprenticeships (such as NVQs through Train to Gain, or in-house schemes) are often seen as offering better value for money or as being more appropriate for the company. Some large companies do not participate in Apprenticeships, but instead use in-house training programmes or their own corporate training structures at head office level, as these are seen as more efficient and appropriate.

85 A key issue here is the focus on young people, who do not necessarily fit employers' recruitment profiles: some employers prefer not to recruit young people. In the retail and hospitality sectors, employers generally decide to use NVQs instead, because they are shorter.

86 Apprenticeships have a reputation for generating a lot of bureaucracy and paperwork, and this was mentioned as another deterrent. Employers opt for NVQs rather than Apprenticeships because they are 'faster' and a less resource-heavy way of acquiring qualifications.

87 Some training providers suggested that NVQs delivered through Train to Gain were in direct competition with the Apprenticeship programme. Several training providers maintained that the demand for training had greatly increased in recent years, due to the introduction of Train to Gain as well as new regulatory requirements in some sectors (for example the Construction Skills Certification Scheme card).

Do employers use skilled migrant workers from the EU instead of apprentices?

88 A minority of employers that had recruited in the previous three years (two-thirds of non-participating employers had recruited in the previous three years, and all of the participating firms had of course recruited over the same time period) had employed a skilled migrant worker from one of the new EU member states. The figure was 12 per cent among non-participating employers and 15 per cent among participating employers.

89 The reasons given for recruiting skilled migrant workers were similar among both participating and non-participating employers, with the principal factor being the lack of suitably qualified individuals in the labour market. Slightly fewer employers said that the migrant worker had been the best qualified candidate for the job.

90 One in five non-participating employers said that migrant workers are more reliable, and that they have a better attitude and more motivation. This was not a factor in the responses from participating employers.

91 More employers in the South East had recruited skilled migrant workers than in the West Midlands, and fewer still had recruited migrant workers in the North East. Employers in the South East more often cited a lack of suitably qualified workers and a preference for the attitude and motivation of such workers. In each case, these findings are based on small numbers of respondents.

92 Some 16 per cent of non-participating employers and 13 per cent of participating employers that had recruited a skilled migrant worker had done so as an alternative to offering an Apprenticeship. This would suggest that 2 per cent of non-participating employers and between 1 and 2 per cent of participating employers had recruited a skilled migrant worker as an alternative to offering an Apprenticeship.

93 Case study interviews suggested that the Apprenticeship programme runs alongside the recruitment of skilled workers – 'quick fixes' to plug a gap when a skilled worker leaves unexpectedly. Migrant workers are recruited in response to short-term shifts in demand, and not as a direct replacement for apprentices.

94 Training providers and employers in the construction sector explained that sub-contracting and short-term contracts are very common, with many companies preferring to rely on migrant labour. (Although the construction sector's statutory levy system – which is aimed at securing a sufficient pool of skilled labour for the sector – has helped to mitigate this to some extent.)

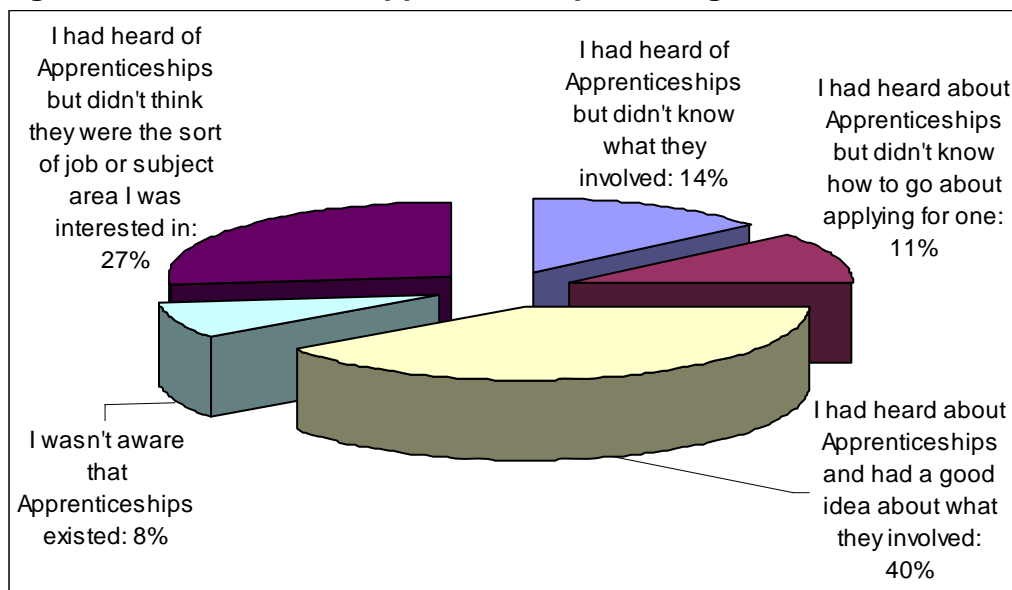
95 Some of these training providers and employers suggested that the large-scale recruitment of skilled migrant workers was predominantly an issue in very large construction projects (mostly in the South East), where labour is typically provided by employment agencies on short-term contracts. There is a concern that this issue might represent the 'thin end of the wedge', and that migrant workers will gradually spread out into other areas of construction and related industries.

Why do young people choose one form of learning over another?

96 Most young learners (40 per cent) on FE or E2E courses are aware of Apprenticeships and have a good idea of what they involve. Just 6 per cent of E2E learners and 8 per cent of FE learners said that they had never heard of them. That said, almost 25 per cent of learners on both E2E and FE courses had no functional knowledge of Apprenticeships.

97 Awareness and knowledge of Apprenticeships was, however, comparatively low among non-white FE learners: 20 per cent had not heard of Apprenticeships, and only 29 per cent claimed to have a good idea of what was involved. A greater proportion of learners were aware of the name but had no knowledge of what was involved. Non-white E2E learners were as aware of Apprenticeships as their white counterparts, but were more likely to say that they did not know how to go about applying for an Apprenticeship.

Figure 2: Awareness of Apprenticeships among FE learners



Source: Ipsos MORI survey of young people (single response) – answered by 995 out of 998 respondents

98 Any regional differences in awareness of Apprenticeships appear to be related to differences in ethnic composition.

99 Parents, friends and siblings are very influential in helping learners – especially younger ones (those aged between 16 and 18) – to make the decision to apply for an Apprenticeship. Information available at work was more significant among older learners (those aged between 19 and 24). Connexions centres are a particularly significant source of information and advice for E2E learners, but are much less important for FE learners and advanced apprentices. This differentiation in the use of Connexions centres is recognised by the learning market, but was mentioned by colleges and training providers as being a potential factor in stigmatising candidates: some employers are less likely to consider candidates who have been referred by Connexions.

100 Some colleges and training providers expressed a concern that limited marketing and awareness of the Apprenticeship route in schools are having an impact on the quality and understanding of the young people who choose that route.

101 Training providers feel strongly that both FE and higher education are typically presented by schools as the routes of choice. Our survey provides no direct evidence of this, but FE learners were three times more likely than apprentices to cite school-based advice as being an important factor in their decision.

102 There is no evidence that school-based advice puts young people off the Apprenticeship programme. FE learners themselves are positive about their learning, and fewer than 1 per cent said that their parents had advised them against the programme.

103 On the whole, apprentices are happier than FE and E2E learners with the level of advice received about potential courses. Although FE learners tended to want more information than average about the academic route, there was no evidence to suggest that they wanted more (or less) information than average about Apprenticeships. FE learners were more likely to want more information about vocational off-the-job training such as NVQs.

104 Most apprentices feel that qualifications have an important role to play in securing a desired career or job. (This was also the case for FE learners.) The ability to work and train at the same time is also considered to be significant.

105 FE learners were more likely to mention the nature of their course and more likely to say that they found it interesting. E2E learners highlighted the impact that their course would have on their future employment prospects and personal development goals.

106 More than four in five E2E and FE learners stated that they would have been more likely to apply for an Apprenticeship if it provided a route into their desired job. This was also significant for those who did not know what job they wanted to do in the future, with 75 per cent of them highlighting this as an issue – although they did not know what they wanted to do. Apprenticeships were seen to close off too many options.

107 Those who were undertaking an Advanced Apprenticeship had the clearest ideas about what sort of job they wanted to do when they first started their course: almost half had firm ideas, compared with less than 40 per cent of other apprentices, a third of FE students and 25 per cent of E2E learners. Not surprisingly, learners on occupation-related Apprenticeship frameworks were very clear about their future career.

Barriers to choosing an Apprenticeship

Information

108 A lack of detailed information about Apprenticeships is limiting potential interest from young people. More than two-thirds of all learners – those with no awareness, those who thought that Apprenticeships were not designed for their desired jobs and those who knew a fair bit about the programme – said that more information would have made them more likely to apply for an Apprenticeship.

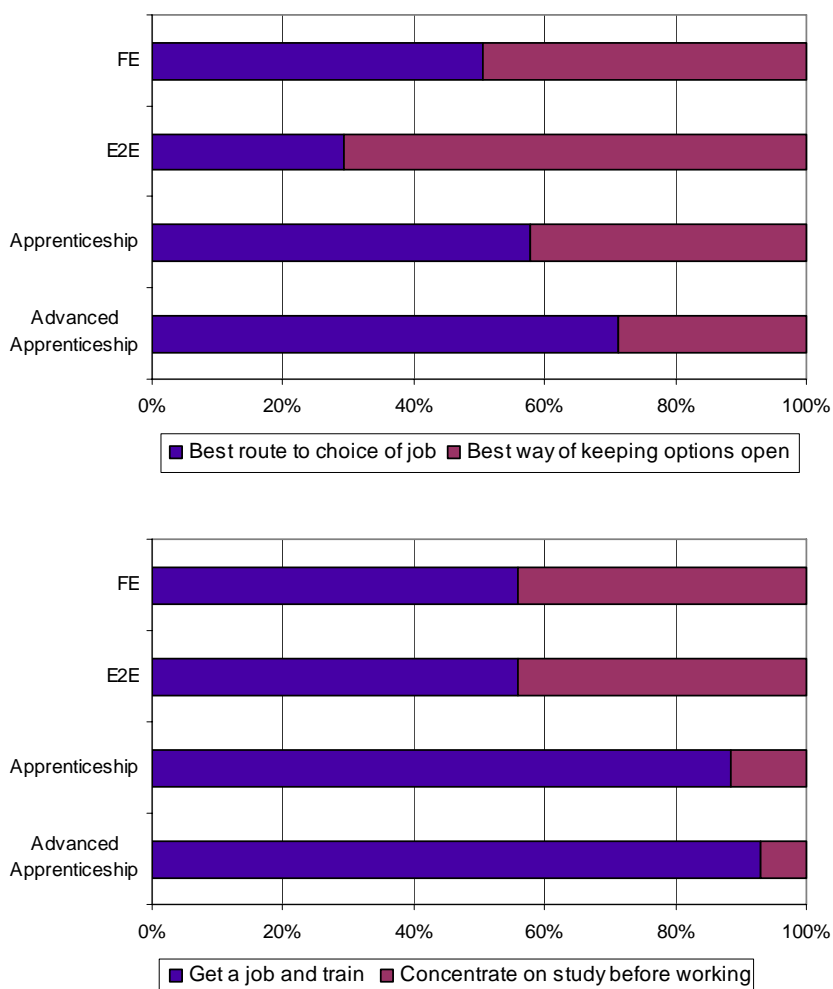
109 Knowledge about how to go about applying appeared to be equally important in encouraging more applications. Some 92 per cent of learners said that they knew about Apprenticeships but did not know how to go about applying for one.

Career and academic progression

110 There is a perception among FE learners that Apprenticeships can close off future career choices and academic progression. A majority of FE learners highlighted that they would have been more likely to apply if the Apprenticeship provided a route to university. (This was particularly the case for non-white learners.) Almost 75 per cent said they would be more likely to apply if an Apprenticeship did not tie them down to a particular job in future.

111 This distinction between apprentices having a vocational drive and those in FE wanting to keep their options open is also highlighted in the different reasons given by learners for choosing their course. (See Figure 3.)

Figure 3: Which statement best represents your reasons for choosing your course?



112 This perception that the Apprenticeship programme closes off future career options is related to learners 'postponing' their job choices until they have completed their studies. The majority of E2E and FE learners said that they were interested in undertaking training with a college or provider first – before moving on to gain work experience with an employer.

External perceptions and reputation

113 Most learners would respond positively to the Apprenticeship programme if it were held in higher regard by employers. This was the case across FE and E2E learners, men and women, and all age groups and ethnic groups. It was also the case for those who had no previous knowledge about Apprenticeships.

What happens to unmet demand from learners?

114 There is some evidence of unmet demand among learners, which is supported by the views of colleges and training providers that many Apprenticeships are heavily over-subscribed. Selection procedures tend to be used to pick the best candidates, but there are usually more candidates judged able to undertake an Apprenticeship than there are places available.

115 According to the survey, a significant proportion of those who did not undertake an Apprenticeship had considered doing so. Almost 60 per cent of E2E learners considered applying for an Apprenticeship, but almost half of them were then unable to secure a place.

116 Some 40 per cent of FE learners had thought about an Apprenticeship, but most could provide no specific reason for not having applied. They cited a range of 'pull factors' that had attracted them to alternatives, but almost a fifth were unable to find a placement at all.

117 The majority of apprentices (and particularly those on Advanced Apprenticeships) had not considered any other options when choosing their course. But around one in five had thought about getting a job (without training). (The figure was 14 per cent among those on Advanced Apprenticeships.) Fewer than one in ten apprentices had considered a vocational course at college.

118 Around half FE learners had not considered any other options when choosing their course. Of those who did think about other options, most thought about getting a job. Almost half of E2E learners thought about getting a job before choosing their course, while a third had not considered any other options.

119 A small proportion of FE and E2E learners appears to have tried to access an Apprenticeship but not been successful. Colleges and training providers suspect that many of these individuals end up just getting a job, but no specific information about them is available.

Learner satisfaction with their course

120 Respondents reported a high level of satisfaction with their choice of course. Those on Advanced Apprenticeships were most satisfied, with 95 per cent saying that they felt their choice of course was right.

121 Nine in ten apprentices and FE students said that they felt their choice of course was right. E2E students expressed the lowest level of satisfaction, with three-quarters saying that they felt their choice of course was not right.

122 Apprentices rated their career prospects on completing the training the most highly: almost nine in ten of those on Advanced Apprenticeships and three-quarters of those on Apprenticeships rated their career prospects on completing their training as good, compared with two-thirds of FE students and over half of E2E students.

123 Apprentices were also most likely to value the respect that others have for the qualification. But this was least likely to be important to apprentices on frameworks in the non-traditional sectors – where the qualification is not a licence to practice.

124 Four in five apprentices rate the quality of their training as good, which is slightly above the proportion for FE learners (seven in ten) and for E2E learners (two-thirds). Perhaps unsurprisingly, apprentices were also most likely to feel that what they had learned was relevant to the workplace.

125 Most apprentices could think of no particular necessary improvements to the programme. Apprentices on non-traditional frameworks were most likely to suggest that more support and feedback were needed from the external trainer or assessor (the figure was one in ten). This proportion rose to 38 per cent for those on the Manufacturing framework, compared with just 4 per cent for those on the Construction framework.

126 In total, 9 per cent of those on Advanced Apprenticeships and 16 per cent of those on Apprenticeships had stopped their course without completing the training. The main reasons given were that they had left the employer (usually to move to a higher-paying job) or that their personal circumstances had changed.

127 Around a third of those who had dropped out had done so because of a lack of interest, because they had changed their mind about what they wanted to do, or because they had changed to a different course.

128 Around a fifth of apprentices stated that nothing would have persuaded them to complete the programme. Those who could have been persuaded suggested that better pay or greater support with transport, materials and other costs would have been appreciated. This was the case among apprentices on traditional frameworks (which are typically longer than non-traditional ones), while those on non-traditional frameworks were more likely to cite more time to train during working hours.

129 Just under half of the sample were no longer participating in their course. Those on Advanced Apprenticeships had the highest completion rate – at 74 per cent – and completion rates for FE learners were also relatively high – at 71 per

cent. Completion rates for apprentices and E2E students were significantly lower – at 45 per cent and 46 per cent respectively.

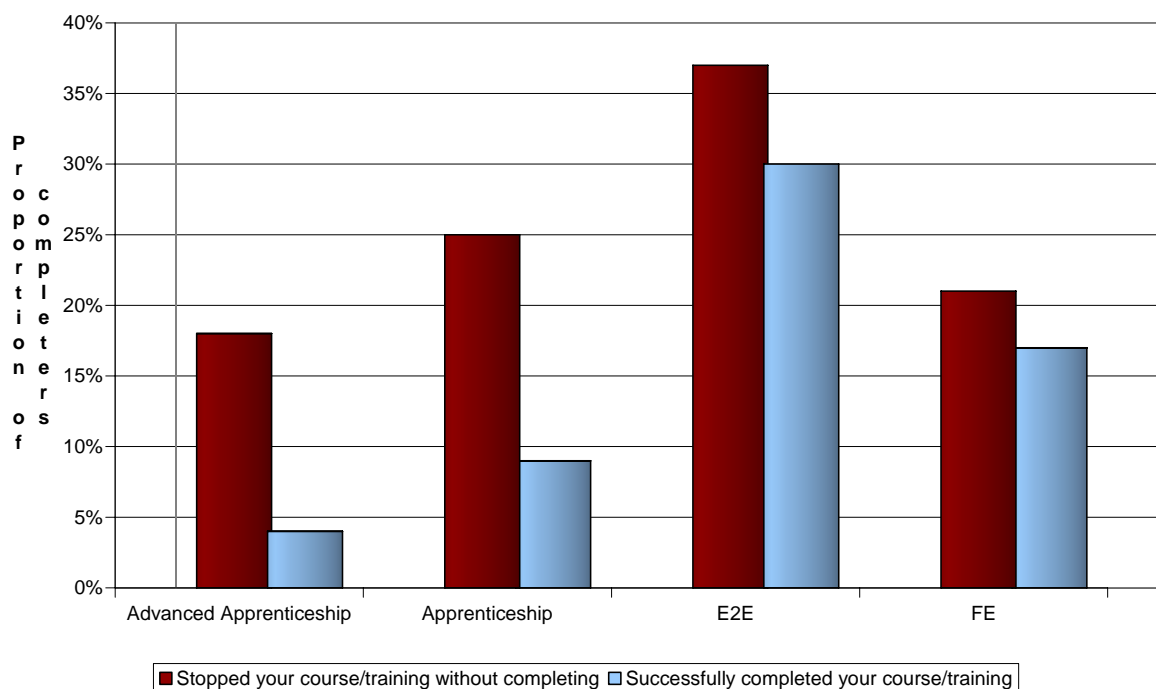
130 Completed Apprenticeships had a significant positive impact on unemployment rates: those who had completed their course were significantly less likely to be unemployed than those who had dropped out prematurely. Some 25 per cent of apprentices who had stopped their course early were unemployed at the time of the survey, compared with 9 per cent of those who had completed their training.

131 Similarly, 18 per cent of those on Advanced Apprenticeships who had stopped their course early were unemployed at the time of the survey, compared with just 4 per cent of those who had completed their training.

132 The link between completion and employment was much less pronounced among FE and E2E learners. Some 21 per cent of those who had stopped their course early were unemployed at the time of the survey, compared with 17 per cent of those who had successfully completed their training.

133 Some 37 per cent of E2E students who had stopped their course early were unemployed at the time of the survey, compared with 30 per cent of those who had completed their training.

Figure 4: The effect of completing a course on the unemployment rate



Source: MORI Survey of Young People 2007

Conclusions and Key Recommendations

General conclusions

134 There is evidence across all three groups of employers – those that are currently participating in the Apprenticeship programme, those that had participated in the past and those that have not yet participated – of interest in participation in the Apprenticeship programme in the future.

135 Some 10 per cent of employers that are currently participating in the programme have asked about additional places but been that told none were available.

136 The majority of these employers expressed interest in recruiting apprentices aged 25 or over; in a programme-led approach, where off-the-job training would be completed and the learner would subsequently be recruited by the company; and in some form of compensation for staff time spent learning outside work.

137 Half of lapsed employers said that it was very or fairly likely that they would consider participating. As with participating employers, the majority were interested in apprentices aged 25 or over, a programme-led approach and compensation for staff time spent learning outside work.

138 Around a third of non-participating employers said that it was very or fairly likely that they would consider participating. Given that these employers represent the largest slice of the market, this is potentially the most significant area into which to expand the programme.

139 Colleges and training providers are a key part of making the Apprenticeship market work. Case study discussions with them have highlighted the need for the LSC to communicate its vision for what the expanded programme should look like in order to help colleges and training providers plan for the expansion.

140 A number of providers said that they were not sure that it was their job to expand the programme, and that they would need clear guidance on:

- what type of (and how many) Apprenticeships should be prioritised;
- what the timeframe should be; and
- how the expansion is to be funded.

141 Expanding the Apprenticeship programme (through either creating additional Apprenticeship places in the same areas or through new apprentice occupations) is seen as a very risky undertaking among colleges and training providers. This is partly because there is no clarity over long-term funding – the general assumption is that budgets are unlikely to expand.

142 Many colleges and training providers said that they had not been told that it was important to expand the programme. And many feel that this is not necessarily their role – at least not without an explicit commitment on future funding priorities.

143 The overheads associated with the Ofsted inspection schemes mean that it is only really worth expanding into larger-scale training. Piloting new frameworks on a small scale or running small (but financially viable) courses is not worth the overhead cost.

144 More importantly, there is no sense of the long-term availability of resources to expand into new market areas: funding is closely associated with outcomes, and few colleges or providers have the resources to run any course that does not perform from day one.

145 No college or provider has the resources to market to or engage with new employers, let alone to test and trial new occupational areas. A number of colleges pointed to the vulnerability of some courses in terms of staff – more than one college had to withdraw from offering some occupational areas when staff left due to the difficulties of recruiting people with the appropriate skills.

Marketing Apprenticeships

146 Improving national awareness of Apprenticeships will help expansion, but the key to achieving this seems to be a bespoke offer. Non-participating employers were more likely to have heard about the programme from media advertising, and as a group they had less detailed knowledge of what the programme could offer. Non-participating employers were also unaware of how to go about finding out more about the programme.

147 Participating employers generally said that they had first heard about the programme from a college or training provider.

148 Most employers approach the programme from the perspective of their own specific training needs, rather than from the perspective of securing placements on particular training programmes. They are usually not specifically interested in recruiting an apprentice, but are looking for a training programme that will address their workforce development needs.

149 Advertising will raise general awareness of Apprenticeships, but individual programmes (such as the Apprenticeship programme) can rarely cover all of the training needs identified by an employer. Employers will be more likely to respond to an offer of a comprehensive training package that can address all of their training needs, than they will to a call to increase the take-up of apprentices. Colleges and training providers can help to deliver packages of training, some which might then involve Apprenticeships if individuals are eligible. Essentially, employer demand must be the starting point.

150 Colleges and training providers said that they have limited resources for marketing Apprenticeships to employers and trainees, and relatively few training providers appear to be actually undertaking outreach activities to engage with new employers; many tend to stick to a pool of employers that they have worked with in the past.

151 Those colleges and training providers that had undertaken to expand the number of Apprenticeship places found that existing, lapsed and new employers all responded well to marketing visits. There is some merit in undertaking these on a sectoral basis, but there needs to be some improvement in the links between different colleges and training providers. Too few refer employers to other potential sources of training when they themselves have no capacity or when they do not offer the frameworks required by the employer.

152 A number of employers, colleges and training providers suggested that there was not enough flexibility in colleges' responses to employer demands. Many of these respondents commented that they are looking for more modular approaches that have the ability to mix specific sectoral skills with elements such as customer service.

153 A couple of colleges and training providers had been advised by local LSCs or sector skills councils to drop ideas for Apprenticeships in new areas. One of them had been told that their idea for a new Apprenticeship (involving elements of construction and electrical engineering, combined with customer care) was a non-starter, as it cut across sectoral boundaries.

Engaging employers

154 More needs to be done to support young people who are seeking a placement. The survey of FE and E2E learners supports the views of colleges and training providers that many Apprenticeships are heavily over-subscribed, with many capable young people unable to secure a placement with an employer.

155 Colleges and training providers said that they had very limited resources to help young people to secure a placement with an employer once their 'usual sources' (mainly employers that they had worked with in the past) had been exhausted. In many cases, young people are left to find a placement on their own – which is clearly not an easy task. Few 16-year-olds are able to go out on their own and secure a placement.

156 Connexions centres are the obvious source of support for young people (other than their prospective college or training provider). However, these centres are too closely associated with the bottom end of the market: many colleges and training providers said that they were wary of referrals from Connexions, and were concerned that this potential stigmatisation would creep into the employment market.

157 A small number of colleges and training providers are setting up 'meet the employer' events to widen the pool of available placements. These have only started recently: it is too early to say whether or not they will be effective. But more initiatives of this type are needed, and any good practice in expanding provision should be shared.

158 While 60 per cent of participating employers had been asked whether they would consider taking on additional recruits within their current framework, only 20 per cent had been approached about using other frameworks. Colleges and training providers stick to their own to some extent (case study interviews support this). Staff

skills, regulation and assessment are all seen as carrying very high overheads and are a disincentive to trying out new frameworks.

159 Awareness of the cross-sectoral frameworks (sales, business administration, management and customer service) is relatively low, and more needs to be done to improve sharing and referral between training organisations.

160 While improving general awareness and delivering a bespoke offer will help to attract more new participants, case study interviews suggest that this broad approach may need to be refined to take account of different employers.

161 Engaging more smaller employers is potentially one of the more straightforward routes. A lack of awareness is the key reason for non-participation, and there is still scope to raise awareness among employers in traditional frameworks that may not be aware of or may have very limited knowledge about the programme and how it can benefit them.

162 Raising awareness among smaller, non-traditional employers will require greater marketing effort. However, there is evidence that once engaged, they are more committed to achieving the Apprenticeship qualification, and more 'hands-on' than larger employers. Apprenticeships are likely to offer greater added value to small employers, as their existing training is likely to be more limited.

163 On the whole there appears to be less scope for expansion among large, non-participating employers. They were more likely to have good awareness of the programme, and had usually already considered the costs and benefits of involvement in some detail.

164 In the majority of cases, large, non-participating employers used an in-house training programme that they felt was more tailored to the needs of their business. Any expansion would provide limited added value.

165 Another way of expanding the Apprenticeship programme is to increase take-up among newly established and growing organisations. Some training providers feel that there is a lack of strategic thinking or leadership when engaging with these employers. Organisations that provide business support are not always aware of the Apprenticeship programme, and lack any contact with the providers.

Recruiting young people

166 Whatever their chosen path, all young learners are very interested in what will get them into their chosen career.

167 However, a major issue is that many employers simply avoid recruiting young people altogether: three-quarters of those that had recruited in the previous three years had not employed a 16- to 18-year-old, and Half had not recruited a 19- to 24-year-old.

168 Case study interviews consistently showed that employers perceive young people to lack maturity, and suspect that they are not yet ready to settle down to work. Further work is needed to address this issue.

169 Employer interest in the programme-led delivery approach to Apprenticeships is partly driven by the fact that candidates are that bit older when they eventually enter the labour market. If the programme-led approach is rolled out more fully, employers need to be fully engaged in the process. This will ensure that young learners can move on to their employer experience immediately on completion of the college-based element of the programme.

170 Although more than one in ten employers who that had recruited in the previous three years had employed a skilled migrant worker from a new EU member state, this has not been at the expense of Apprenticeships. Only between 1 and 2 per cent of employers have employed a skilled migrant worker instead of an apprentice.

171 Employers see migrant workers and apprentices as serving different markets: migrant workers are readily available and make it possible for employers to respond to short-term changes in demand, while Apprenticeships are a long-term investment in developing the workforce of the future.

Annex: Technical Report

Introduction

1 This annex describes the technical details and methodological design of two telephone surveys conducted among employers and learners in three English regions – the North East, the West Midlands and the South East – as part of this research.

2 The learner survey comprised 2,017 interviews with individuals undertaking LSC-funded FE courses, E2E learning and Apprenticeships.

3 The employer survey comprised 2,002 interviews with both employers with apprentices and those without.

Employer survey

4 To understand the benefits of the Apprenticeship programme, and the scale and scope of any potential increases in the number of apprentices, it was important to speak to both employers that had supported staff through Apprenticeships ('participating employers') and those that had not. This provided an understanding of why employers choose to take part (or not to), and of how they might be encouraged to do so.

5 The employer survey comprised a representative sample of employers, but was backed up by a separate booster survey of participating employers. This provided enough of a total sample for detailed analysis of the participating employer group (according to the 2006 survey *Workforce Training in England* (published by the then Department for Education and Skills), just 6 per cent of employers in England claim to have participated in the Apprenticeship programme during the previous 12 months).

Sample

6 The employers taking part in the research were drawn from two different sources.

- A main sample of employers was drawn from the Experian Business Database – a total of 1,000 interviews were conducted with these employers. (The Experian database was cross-referenced with the ILR data prior to sample selection – in order to ensure that no records were duplicated.)
- A booster sample of participating employers was drawn from the LSC Individual Learner Records (ILRs) – a total of 2,002 interviews were conducted with these employers. (It became apparent during the fieldwork that a significant proportion of these employers did not actually realise that they had apprentices – but this issue is addressed in the main report.)

Main sample of employers

7 The main sample was drawn from the Experian Business Database, using profile information extracted from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR). The IDBR is a list of UK businesses that is maintained by ONS. It is based on inputs from three administrative sources: traders registered with HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) for VAT purposes, employers (also registered with HMRC) operating a PAYE scheme, and incorporated businesses registered at Companies House. The ONS Annual Business Register and other surveys are used to identify and maintain the business structures necessary to produce industry and small area statistics.

8 Prior to selection, the sample was stratified by region (the North East, the West Midlands and the South East), establishment size and broad industrial sector (as defined by Standard Industrial Classification categories).

9 Large establishments were over-sampled in order to have enough numbers for separate analysis. This was corrected at the analysis stage, through weighting (see the 'Sample profile and weighting' section, which begins at paragraph 13).

Booster sample of participating employers

10 There was no central database of participating employers from which to draw a sample, as contact details are held by individual providers. The only information held centrally on the ILR is employer names (variable A44) and postcodes (variable A45).

11 This information is available for 70 per cent of apprentices, which is obviously not ideal. However, given the tight deadlines and the lack of more robust alternatives, it was used to construct a sample of participating employers.

12 Firstly, duplicate entries (A44 and A45) – around 40 per cent of all entries – were removed. The remaining 37,200 unique entries were sent to Experian to be matched against their business database, generating telephone numbers and addresses for these employers. The total success rate was 57 per cent. Experian was asked to exclude any participating employers from the representative sample.

Sample profile and weighting

13 In the analysis, corrective weights (size, sector and region) were applied to the main sample to ensure that it matched the profile of employers on the IDBR. Table 1 shows the achieved and weighted sample profiles by region, employee size and industry sector.

14 A sample that is weighted is less accurate (it has a larger standard error) than an unweighted sample of the same size. The effect of this weighting (the 'design effect') therefore needs to be taken into account when considering statistical reliability. In this case, the weights applied to the main sample reduced the overall sample size from 1,000 to 632, resulting in an increase in the margins of error from more than 3 per cent to more than 4 per cent. In addition, the respondents to a

survey are only a sample of a total “population”, so we can never be certain that the figures obtained are exactly those that would have been if everybody had been interviewed (the “true” values). However, the extent to which the sample result might vary from the “true” values can be predicted from knowing the size of the samples on which the results are based and the number of times that a particular answer is given. This extent of uncertainty is represented as a “Confidence Interval” (CI), and it represents the level of confidence for a prediction of a “true”, underlying result from a sample result. A 95% CI is usual, and it means that there is a 95% chance that the “true” value will fall within a specified range.

Fieldwork and sample management

15 The telephone survey was conducted by Ipsos MORI between 6 and 28 September 2007. Interviews were undertaken using the Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) technique, and the average interview length was 13 minutes.

16 Prior to starting fieldwork, interviewers were fully briefed by the Ipsos MORI project team. They also received full written instructions about all aspects of the survey.

17 For the main sample, employee size quotas were set for each region. For the booster sample, the target number of interviews in each region was proportionate to the number of apprentices. A sample ratio of 5:1 was provided for the Experian sample, and 4:1 for the ILR sample.

Response rates

18 As this was a quota survey, it was not possible to calculate the response rate in the same way as would be possible with a random probability sample. Instead, a detailed breakdown of the sample supplied is presented in Table 3.

19 Overall, 20 per cent of the total Experian sample issued resulted in an interview (this is the ‘unadjusted’ response rate). The rate was slightly higher – at 25 per cent – for the ILR sample.

20 The rate rises to 44 per cent of the in-scope Experian sample and 61 per cent of the in-scope ILR sample (this is the ‘adjusted’ response rate). The ‘in-scope sample’ refers to the sample that was eligible (not screened out) and that had an outcome. It excludes the sample that was not required because targets had already been met.

Table 1: Profile of the achieved sample (Experian)

	Unweighted main sample N	Weighted main sample N	Effective N ¹	95 per cent confidence intervals* (+/- per cent)
Total	1,000	1,000	632	4 per cent
North East	198	114	160	8 per cent
West Midlands	326	308	201	7 per cent
South East	476	578	325	5 per cent
Company size (number of employees)				
2 to 49	782	960	587	4 per cent
50 to 249	149	34	124	9 per cent
250+	69	5	56	13 per cent
Sector				
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	4	21	2	69 per cent
Mining and Quarrying; Manufacturing; Electricity, Gas and Water Supply	127	74	98	10 per cent
Construction	56	80	47	14 per cent
Wholesale, Retail and Repairs; Hotels and Restaurants	340	267	276	6 per cent
Transport, Storage and Communication	55	37	45	15 per cent
Financial Intermediation (excluding turnover); Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities	203	343	160	8 per cent
Education; Health; and Public Administration	136	102	103	10 per cent
Other Services	79	76	66	12 per cent
Status				
Offers Apprenticeships	149	96	79	11 per cent
Does not offer Apprenticeships	842	896	552	4 per cent
Do not know	9	8	–	–

Source: Ipsos MORI

- *For 50 per cent findings and unlimited universe size. Where weighted numbers do not sum to the total, this is due to computer rounding.

Note: no weights were applied to the booster sample of participating employers, as no profile exists for these employers. Table 2 shows the achieved profile for this group.

¹ Effective sample sizes for sub-groups do not necessarily sum to the overall effective sample size.

Table 2: Profile of the achieved sample (ILR)

	Unweighted booster sample N
Total	2,002
Region	
North East	404
West Midlands	721
South East	877
Company size (number of employees)	
2 to 49	1,619
50 to 249	320
250+	59
Unknown	4
Sector	
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	6
Mining and Quarrying; Manufacturing; Electricity, Gas and Water Supply	231
Construction	352
Wholesale, Retail and Repairs; Hotels and Restaurants	578
Transport, Storage and Communication	44
Financial Intermediation (excluding turnover); Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities	144
Education; Health; Public Administration	447
Other Services	200
Status	
Offers Apprenticeships	1,093
Does not offer Apprenticeships	899
Don't know	10

Source: Ipsos MORI

Table 3: Final sample status (employer survey)

	Total main sample	Total booster sample
Total sample issued	5,000	8,000
Achieved interviews	1,000	2,002
Unadjusted response rate	20 per cent	25 per cent
Adjusted response rate	44 per cent	61 per cent
Eligible sample		
Achieved interviews	1,000	2,002
Respondent refusal	1,262	1,307
Total eligible sample	2,262	3,309
Ineligible sample		
Incorrect telephone number	506	254
Out of quota	2	23
Other ineligible	743	262
Total ineligible sample	1,251	539
Not needed – target achieved	1,487	4,152

Source: Ipsos MORI

Note: the unadjusted response rate is the number of achieved interviews divided by the total number of leads issued. The adjusted response rate is the number of achieved interviews divided by the total number of leads issued, once the ineligible and unused leads have been removed.

Learner survey

21 The learner survey comprised apprentices as well as learners on E2E and FE courses. The aim was to explore the experiences of young people who had participated in the Apprenticeship programme, as well as the experiences of those who had not.

22 The survey explored how apprentices had come to be involved in the programme, what benefits they had derived from participation, and how the opportunity to participate had had an impact on their decisions about jobs or training.

23 For individuals who had not taken part in the Apprenticeship programme, the survey asked about their choice of course or training route, including why they had chosen not to follow the Apprenticeship route. The survey asked what might make the Apprenticeship programme more appealing to them.

Sample

24 The learner sample was selected from the ILR and included learners aged 16–25 in the following groups.

- Apprentices and those on Advanced Apprenticeships (a target of 1,000 interviews).
- Young people on both academic and vocational courses in FE (a target of 500 interviews).

- Young people on E2E courses (a target of 500 interviews).

25 The sample was structured to be representative of:

- regions;
- programme types (Apprenticeships vs Advanced Apprenticeships);
- age;
- gender; and
- broad course frameworks.

Sample profile and weighting

26 Corrective weights (age, gender and region) were applied to compensate for differential response rates. Table 4 shows the achieved and weighted sample sizes. The weights also reduced the effective sample sizes, and these are also shown below (along with the associated margins of error).

Table 4: Achieved sample

	Unweighted N	Weighted N	Effective N	95 per cent confidence intervals
Apprenticeships				(+/- per cent)
North East	211	220	161	8 per cent
West Midlands	369	346	320	6 per cent
South East	439	452	394	5 per cent
Total	1,019	1,018	875	3 per cent
E2E				
North East	142	133	91	10 per cent
West Midlands	207	216	152	8 per cent
South East	151	151	135	9 per cent
Total	500	500	378	6 per cent
FE				
North East	121	83	119	9 per cent
West Midlands	171	232	171	8 per cent
South East	206	182	204	7 per cent
Total	498	497	494	5 per cent

Source: Ipsos MORI

Fieldwork and sample management

27 The telephone survey was conducted by Ipsos MORI between 6 and 28 September 2007. Interviews were undertaken using the CATI technique, and the average interview length was 15 minutes.

28 In total, 2,017 interviews were conducted with learners:

- 324 interviews with young people on Advanced Apprenticeships;
- 695 interviews with young people on other Apprenticeships;
- 500 interviews with young people in E2E; and
- 498 interviews were achieved with young people in FE.

Response rates

29 A detailed breakdown of the sample supplied is presented in Table 5. Overall, 25 per cent of the total sample resulted in an interview (this is the ‘unadjusted’ response rate). The rate was higher – at 78 per cent – for the in-scope sample (this is the ‘adjusted’ response rate).

30 The ‘in-scope sample’ refers to the sample that was eligible (not screened out) and that had an outcome. It excludes the sample that was not required because targets had already been met.

Table 5: Final sample status (learner survey)

	Total sample
Total sample issued	8,000
Achieved interviews	2,017
Unadjusted response rate	25 per cent
Adjusted response rate	78 per cent
Eligible sample	
Achieved interviews	2,017
Respondent refusal	566
Total eligible sample	2,583
Ineligible sample	
Incorrect telephone number	1,426
Screened out	142
Other ineligible	111
Total ineligible sample	1,679
Not needed – target achieved	3,738

Source: Ipsos MORI

Outputs

31 The following sets of computer outputs were produced.

- Two sets for employers: one for the main sample (weighted data) and another set for the booster sample (unweighted data).
- One set for the learner sample (weighted data).
- A Statistical Package for the Social Sciences file was also produced for both employers and learners.

