Train to Gain Learner Evaluation: Report from Wave 2 Research

March 2009

Of interest to everyone involved in improving skills and learning opportunities in the workforce across England

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🛈 For information

The Institute for Employment Studies

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Executive Summary

1   The Train to Gain service, managed by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), aims to support employers to improve the skills of their workforce as a means of bolstering business performance. Businesses receive impartial advice that is delivered through a network of skills brokers who operate across England. The advice results in a skills solution package, which may include government training subsidies as well as investment on the part of employers themselves. In November 2007, the LSC published *A Plan for Growth*, which showed that 52,000 employers had engaged with the service and 240,000 learners had accessed training as a result. It is intended that, over the next four years, a third of the adult skills and further education (FE) budget will be invested through Train to Gain.

2   This report presents the results of wave 2 – the second in a series of four surveys of learners involved in workplace training through Train to Gain, conducted by Ipsos MORI and the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) as part of the evaluation of the service. As with the previous survey (conducted between May and June 2007), the sample is drawn from those learners who are wholly or partly funded by the LSC (i.e. taking Skills for Life, Level 2 or Level 3 qualifications). The sample is made up of two elements:

- re-interviews with respondents to the first survey (wave 1) – 5,072 in total and referred to in this report as the **longitudinal group**; and

- a new sample of learners who had recently started their qualification; these are termed the **new entrant group** (and include 2,436 fully funded and 106 part-funded (Level 3) learners). The new sample was drawn from the individualised learner record (ILR) at the end of June 2007, and all interviews took place in October and November 2007.

3   The survey design provides:

- a representative snapshot of learners in late 2007 (the wave 2 new entrant group), who can be compared with the wave 1 sample to see what has changed; and

- insights into how learners' experiences have developed over time and the real impact of the training on their working lives, through the longitudinal group.

4   Comparisons can also be drawn between the two samples, bearing in mind that they are at different points on their Train to Gain journey.

Key messages

5   The key messages to emerge from the second wave of telephone surveys are as follows.

- Learners' awareness of Train to Gain is rising. Two-thirds (67 per cent) of new entrants had heard of it, compared to 60 per cent in the wave 1 survey. Most learners hear about Train to Gain from their employer or at their workplace, as would be expected of an employer-oriented service.

- Recent learners are spread more broadly across occupational groups and are less concentrated in personal service jobs than are the earlier starters, suggesting that Train to Gain is reaching a more diverse range of employers – and, through them, learners.

- Good practice is spreading as learners engage with the Train to Gain process.

  o Two-thirds of learners discuss the suitability of doing some training before they start. Significantly more pre-entry discussions took place between learners and their training provider than in the wave 1 survey (54 per cent, compared with 50 per cent). Otherwise the discussion took place with the learner's employer.

- o Most (80 per cent) of the learners had some form of initial skills assessment and, as a result, a third followed an adapted training programme that focused on their particular skills gaps, while 10 per cent transferred to a more suitable qualification.

- o Half (51 per cent) of the learners had both a pre-entry discussion and a skills gap assessment (up from 46 per cent in wave 1), and 59 per cent of learners received an individual learning plan (ILP).

- Some 58 per cent of new entrants are training with a public sector provider (e.g. college), up from 54 per cent in the wave 1 survey; the rest are with independent training providers. Learners with independent providers are more likely to experience best practice in the early stages of delivery (e.g. have a pre-entry discussion, undergo all three forms of skills assessment and receive an individual learning plan).

- The relationship between a learner and their tutor/assessor is one of the most important factors influencing the learner's completion: the greater the level of support they receive, the easier learners find it to complete their course.

- Half of the learners in the longitudinal group who had completed their qualification reported that they had acquired new skills, and the vast majority of them (92 per cent) said they had used these skills in their current job.

- Almost a fifth (17 per cent) of completers had started further training, and 57 per cent of the rest thought it likely that they would start within the next three years.

- A quarter of completers got a financial reward (e.g. bonus, promotion or pay rise) as a **direct** result of gaining their qualification.

- Over nine learners in ten (92 per cent) are satisfied with their learning, and the same proportion is satisfied with the quality of teaching they had experienced.

Detailed findings and interpretation

6   The second survey (wave 2) of the Train to Gain learner evaluation paints a broadly similar picture to that revealed by the first. From a learner's perspective, Train to Gain appears to be working well, in that it is reaching a wide group of learners, who successfully take up the training on offer (often adapted to their particular needs) and apply the skills they gain in their jobs. While there has been a slight decline in satisfaction between the survey waves, learners overall are very satisfied with the training experience. The main findings from the second survey are summarised below.

Awareness of Train to Gain has increased significantly over time

7   Recognition of the Train to Gain brand is rising among learners (by 7 percentage points, from 60 per cent to 67 per cent, between the two survey waves); however, relatively few (10 per cent) feel they know much about it. Most learn about it through their employers, rather than via advertising or any other source – not wholly surprising, as marketing activity to date has largely focused on employers. Perhaps as a result, four learners in ten thought their employer was paying for their training, even though they were being funded through the LSC.

A wider range of employees are being trained

8   Recent learners are spread across a wider spectrum of occupational groups and are less concentrated in personal service jobs than are the early starters – for instance, in the latest survey, 25 per cent work in personal service occupations, compared with 35 per cent in the first survey. Similarly, under a quarter of the more recent survey sample were doing a care-related qualification, compared with over 30 per cent in wave 1. In the latest (wave 2) survey, it was more common for learners to be in process operative occupations (17 per cent of learners) and skilled trades (16 per cent).

Good practice at the start of training is spreading

9   Two-thirds of learners had had a discussion before they started training about whether a course would be appropriate and, if so, which one. The proportion that had this discussion with a training provider increased between the wave 1 and the wave 2 (new entrant) surveys (from 50 per cent to 54 per cent). Also, the proportion who said that in these discussions they were advised about the suitability of particular qualifications increased significantly – from 68 per cent to 72 per cent.

10   The new entrant learners are more likely than learners at wave 1 to have had an assessment of their existing skills – e.g. by having their prior qualifications checked (70 per cent), having a Skills for Life assessment (56 per cent) and/or having their skills matched against the qualification framework to identify any gaps (56 per cent). A third of these learners had all three forms of assessment.

11   As a result of the skills assessment, most learners had their original qualification and training plan confirmed, while a third had their training programme adapted and 14 per cent changed the qualification they were taking. The proportion of learners who said that nothing had happened as a result of the assessment fell from 28 per cent to 7 per cent.

12   Six learners in ten (59 per cent) received an ILP at the start of their training.

Independent training providers are most likely to build best practice into early learner engagement

13   In the early stages of the training experience, there was significant evidence that independent training providers were more likely to employ best practice.

- Independent training providers were more likely to involve learners in all three forms of skills assessment prior to training (36 per cent) than were public sector providers (31 per cent).

- Some 55 per cent of learners with independent training providers were involved in both a pre-entry discussion and a skills assessment, compared with 50 per cent of those with public sector providers.

- Some 63 per cent of learners with independent training providers received an ILP, compared with 56 per cent of those with public sector providers.

Training is workplace based

14   Train to Gain is designed to be delivered at work and, for most learners, assessments took place in the workplace (88 per cent), with an assessor from a training provider (86 per cent) at their workplace.

Nine in ten learners meet their assessor at least once a month

15   Most learners (66 per cent) met their assessor once or twice a month, while some (22 per cent) met them more frequently (i.e. three to four times a month); 7 per cent of learners, despite starting their training at least a month previously, said they had never met their assessor.

Learners spend an average of 22 hours a month on their qualification

16   Altogether, learners spent an average of 22 hours a month working towards their qualification, with little variation by subject matter. In total, it took learners an average of six months to complete their qualification, during which time they spent an average total of 130 hours learning: 20 per cent of this time with their assessor or tutor (generally at work), 40 per cent at work on independent learning and portfolio preparation, and a similar amount of time preparing and learning at home.

Generating evidence is the main area where support is needed

17   Learners reported that they received various forms of support to help them complete their qualification. Most important was support to help them understand how to generate evidence from their work (93 per cent of learners said they had been supported in this way). One learner in five (17 per cent) said they could have done with more support, particularly from their tutor, e.g. to discuss how tasks from work could be used as qualification evidence.

Satisfaction is high…

18   The completion rates among the longitudinal group are high. Nearly three-quarters (72 per cent) of longitudinal group learners had already completed

their training. (For the sake of comparison, success rates in general FE for the over-19s on national vocational qualification (NVQ) Level 2 courses stood at 69 per cent in 2006/07. See the LSC's statistical first release data at: **www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/Data/statistics/sfr/**). A fifth (21 per cent) were still learning and, at 6 per cent, the early leaver rate is low (though a proportion of those still learning may decide not to complete). (In the final year of the employer training pilots (2004/05), the proportion of early leavers was 16 per cent; see Hillage et al. (2006).

19   Over nine learners in ten (92 per cent) in the longitudinal group who had completed their qualification were satisfied with their overall experience: 18 per cent were 'extremely satisfied', 48 per cent were 'very satisfied', and 26 per cent 'fairly satisfied'.

20   The longitudinal group's satisfaction with particular elements of the process was also high. Over 85 per cent were satisfied with: initial information and advice; the length of time the training took; and the support received from their employers.

…especially when training is challenging and runs to time

21   Satisfaction levels were lowest among learners who thought that completing their qualification had taken longer than expected. Learners also like a challenge, and satisfaction levels were relatively high among those who found their training challenging.

Good assessors and pre-entry information, advice and guidance and assessment: the key to completion

22   A number of factors appear to facilitate completion.

- The greater the experience and competence of the learner in their job, the easier they found it to complete their qualification.

- The greater the level of support learners received from their tutor/assessor, the easier they found it to complete.

- Better initial preparation – for instance in terms of a pre-entry discussion about whether the training is appropriate and a skills gap assessment to see whether the training programme should be adapted to the individual learner's needs – also facilitated an easier or a quicker completion.

Learners get involved in further training…

23   Nearly a fifth (17 per cent) of those learners who had completed their course had started further training. In a third of the cases where the subsequent training was identified, the learner had gone on to do a Level 3 qualification (although some were also doing another Level 2 qualification or in-house training).

…particularly if they have a discussion about the options

24   If learners had engaged in a discussion about further learning options at the end of their course, they were more likely to be engaged in further training at the time of the survey. There is also the potential for learners to do more training in the longer term, as 57 per cent of the rest thought it likely that they would embark on further training within the next three years. In contrast to the early part of training delivery, best practice at the end stage is more likely to be seen among learners with a public training provider. This group was more likely than those with an independent provider to discuss further learning options.

Gaining a qualification is the key outcome for learners

25   A quarter of completers said they had seen some form of financial gain (e.g. bonus, promotion or pay rise) as a direct result of completing their qualification. However, for nearly all learners, the prime motivation for taking part is to gain the qualification itself – often the first such success for many years.

Introduction

26   This report presents the findings from the second wave of the Train to Gain learner evaluation and is based on survey analysis of 7,614 learners. Two surveys are reported: the first follow-up of learners recruited to the wave 1 survey (learners registered between August 2006 and February 2007) and a survey using a new sample of learners who registered for Train to Gain between January and June 2007.

Train to Gain

27   The Train to Gain service, managed by the LSC, provides impartial, independent advice on training to businesses through a network of skills brokers across England. The service aims to support employers to improve the skills of their workforce as a means of bolstering business performance. For employers, engaging with Train to Gain should mean a commitment to jointly invest in training with the Government. The benefits to employers include quality-assured advice in identifying the range of skills-development needs within their businesses and help in commissioning high-quality training to ensure that these needs are met. The advice employers receive results in a skills solution package, which may include government training subsidies, alongside the employers' own investment.

28   At the end of the first year of Train to Gain's implementation, in November 2007, the LSC published *A Plan for Growth*, covering the period between November 2007 and July 2011, based on findings from three strands of evaluation (reviewing the progress of the service from the perspectives of skills brokers, employers and learners). The plan records some significant achievements: 52,000 employers have been engaged by skills brokers and 240,000 staff have engaged in training and development. At the time of publication, 100,000 of these learners had achieved qualifications. Beyond the numbers participating, the evaluations revealed high levels of satisfaction among employers and learners, and significant interest among learners to progress in training.

29 Over the next four years, £1 billion will be invested in training through the Train to Gain service. This represents a third of the adult skills and FE budget. It is intended that this investment should lead to a significant increase in the number of businesses and individuals who up-skill by means of support from the service.

30 However, *A Plan for Growth* identifies some areas in which further development is required. In light of general criticism that the service had been presented with too great a focus on free training for a first Level 2 and lower-level skills development, these areas include a revised employer engagement strategy, with a greater emphasis on supporting training at all levels. The strategy will more clearly communicate the shared nature of the investment: the fact that, as government funding may be provided to support skills development at these lower levels, this will enable employers to focus their own investment on higher skills development. The business support available through Train to Gain will bring about this change by helping employers to understand the business benefits of their own investment in the skills of their workforce.

31 Other changes heralded in *A Plan for Growth* aim to provide greater flexibility for learners and employers. They include the extension of the service to those who are self-employed or operating in the third sector. Funding will also be made available to employers who recruit people from priority unemployed groups, in order to enable these new employees to retrain via a second Level 2 qualification. There is also a commitment to give a part subsidy for those doing a second Level 2 or Level 3 programme in certain circumstances.

32 It is intended that these and the other changes proposed in *A Plan for Growth* will enable Train to Gain to build towards the vision set out by the Leitch Review and will underpin the development of a world-class, demand-led service for businesses in England.

Getting the Train to Gain message out

33   The LSC has undertaken significant marketing and public relations activity to increase awareness of the Train to Gain service. The strategy has included national, regional and trade press advertising and advertisements on television (see Figure 1, which also shows the fieldwork periods for the learner evaluation).

34   The key purpose of the television marketing strategy is to target employers as consumers and to re-emphasise the benefits of the Train to Gain service in light of the issues identified within *A Plan for Growth*. As a medium, however, television is less able to target niche groups. Therefore, radio is seen as a key medium for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and breakfast, peak and drive-time slots have been selected to reach these employers before they arrive at work. Similarly, activity within the trade press aims to target this section of employers. It is intended that, by targeting employers in this way, the reach of Train to Gain in terms of learner engagements will be extended.

Figure 1: Train to Gain publicity campaign 2007 and survey fieldwork

			Wave 1 fieldwork						Wave 2 fieldwork			
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
PR							▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
TV							▓	▓				
Trade press		▓	▓	▓					▓	▓	▓	▓
Online		▓	▓				▓	▓	▓	▓		
Radio		▓	▓				▓	▓	▓	▓		
Regional press			▓									
National press			▓	▓			▓					
Regional tactical										▓	▓	
Out of home			▓									

Source: LSC marketing strategy, 2007

The evaluation

35   Learners' involvement with Train to Gain is being evaluated by Ipsos MORI
      and the IES on behalf of the LSC, in accordance with an overall evaluation
      framework developed with the Department for Innovation, Universities and
      Skills (DIUS) and other interested parties. The evaluation data reported here
      focus on employees or learners participating in Train to Gain training that is
      fully and part funded. (The focus on learners who are fully and part funded
      does not encompass the full Train to Gain offer; rather the evaluation
      (currently) reviews only those aspects of training that are funded by the
      Government.) This has the aims of:

- examining the key characteristics of the learners who have been engaged
  with the service;

- identifying the main elements of the training process as experienced by
  learners and, in particular, the extent to which the assess–train–assess
  approach is being followed;

- measuring learners' satisfaction with all the key aspects of Train to Gain
  and the training provided through it;

- assessing the factors affecting qualification completion and drop-out; and

- examining the subsequent employment experiences of learners who have
  completed their training, and assessing their perceptions of the impact the
  training has had on them and their workplace.

36   The learner evaluation started in the autumn of 2006, although the main
      stage of the first wave of fieldwork commenced in March 2007. The second
      wave of fieldwork, reported here, was undertaken six months later, between
      October and November 2007.

Method

Survey design

37   The survey element comprises four waves of quantitative research with learners, conducted by telephone. The design encompasses longitudinal and cross-sectional samples. There is a six-month gap between each survey wave.

Figure 2: The survey sample design

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4
Longitudinal group	7,500	5,072 LG1	3,500 LG2	
New entrant groups		2,542 T1		
			4,000 T2	2,300 LG3
				5,200 T3
N	7,500	7,614	7,500	7,500

Note: Waves 1 and 2 show actual numbers of learners in achieved sample; waves 3 and 4 show estimated numbers participating in each sample.

Source: Train to Gain learner evaluation framework

38   At wave 2, the longitudinal element involves following up the first wave of surveyed learners. These learners will be followed up for a final time in wave 3. In waves 2 and 3 the longitudinal group survey sample is complemented by a survey of the new entrant group, so that the combined samples include 7,614 and 7,500 learners respectively. The new entrant group surveys are based on a sample of learners drawn to represent the Train to Gain population at the time of each survey.

39   Following this, a final wave of survey research will follow up the new entrant group at wave 3 and complement this with a new entrant sample that is representative of the Train to Gain learner population at that time (Figure 2).

Longitudinal group

40   This sample was drawn from learners who took part in the first survey (wave 1) and was originally sampled from ILR data for the period between the beginning of August 2006 and the end of February 2007. The sample comprised learners in receipt of full funding through Train to Gain, since there were insufficient numbers of part-funded learners to include at this time. The characteristics of the longitudinal group have been checked against those of the wave 1 survey participants. This analysis has revealed no significant evidence of a non-response bias, and therefore the data have not been weighted.

41   In total, 5,072 learners of the wave 1 sample continued on to the second wave of research. The longitudinal group of learners had completed all (or a substantial part) of their qualifications by the time of the second wave survey, and therefore present a more comprehensive picture, with potentially some indication of the impact of their involvement in Train to Gain.

42   The wave 2 survey explored their experiences of training, e.g. how long it was taking, the frequency with which they saw their assessor, as well as their support needs and satisfaction with the service. It is intended that the experiences of this group should form the substantive analysis for reporting in this wave of research. Throughout this report, this group is referred to as the 'longitudinal group'.

New entrant group

43   This group was drawn from the ILR data available at the end of June 2007. The sample focused on learners who had registered for their qualifications after the first wave survey, i.e. between January and June 2007.

44   The number in the achieved sample (2,542 learners) was set to bring the total number of learners interviewed in the second wave to 7,614. This group included a small number of learners who were part funded for Level 3 qualifications. At the time of the survey, part subsidy of Level 3 qualifications

was being trialled in Greater London, the North West and the West Midlands. This aspect of policy has since been rolled out nationally.

45   The early parts of the learner experience were explored with the new entrant group, e.g. brand awareness and information, advice and guidance, using much the same questionnaire as that used in wave 1, with which the results can be compared. The analysis of this aspect of the survey tracks changes and developments in the early part of the Train to Gain experience as the service becomes embedded. Throughout the report, the term 'new entrant group' is used to describe these learners.

Sample for the longitudinal group

46   The objective was to interview as many learners as possible of those who had taken part in wave 1. Of the 7,500 who were interviewed during the first wave, 7,174 (96 per cent) agreed to be re-contacted. All these participants were re-contacted in the second wave, and Table 1 gives a breakdown of the survey response rate.

Table 1: Breakdown of leads provided – longitudinal group

Final sample status	Total sample used Number	Total sample used %	Valid sample %
Total sample issued	**7,174**	**100**	
Invalid sample			
Bad telephone numbers	506	7.05	
No longer at address	98	1.37	
Valid sample			**6,570**
Soft appointments	30	0.42	0.46
Hard appointments	32	0.45	0.49
Respondent quit interview	92	1.28	1.40
Refusal	647	9.02	9.85
Not available during fieldwork	12	0.17	0.18
Leads tried a max. number of times	685	9.55	10.43
Achieved interviews	**5,072**	**70.70**	**77.20**
Response rate summary			
Unadjusted response rate		**70.70**	
Adjusted response rate			**77.20**

Notes:

Bad telephone numbers: These are telephone numbers on which interviewers were unable to get through. These do not get counted towards response rate calculation.

Soft appointments: These were contacted, but could not respond to the survey at the time of the first call. They were contacted again so far as fieldwork target numbers allowed.

Hard appointments: These were contacted and completed the interview at the time of the call.

Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007

Assessment of non-response bias

47   The achieved longitudinal group sample at wave 2 was checked against the wave 1 achieved sample for non-response bias. The results of this are shown in Table 2. There are no significant differences between the two groups, and consequently the data have not been weighted in any way for the analysis presented in this report.

Table 2: Tests for non-response bias between waves 1 and 2 for longitudinal group

		Wave 1	Wave 2	Difference
		%	%	percentage points
Gender	Female	65	67	2
	Male	35	33	-2
Any disability	Disabled	7	7	0
	Not disabled	89	89	0
	No information provided by learner	4	4	0
Learning disabilities	Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD)	4	4	0
	Learners without LDD	92	92	0
	No information provided by learner	4	4	0
Age	18–25	8	6	-2
	26–35	18	16	-2
	36–45	36	36	1
	46–55	28	30	2
	56 to highest	11	12	1
Ethnicity	White	91	92	1
	Black and minority ethnic (BME)	8	7	-1
	No information provided by learner	2	2	0
Prior qualification	No qualifications held	34	34	-1
	Below Level 2	34	34	0
	Level 2	14	14	0
	Level 3	3	3	0
	Level 4 and higher	2	2	0
	No information provided by learner	13	14	0
Occupation	Managers and senior officials	6	5	0
	Professional occupations	3	3	0
	Associate professional and technical occupations	6	6	0
	Administrative and secretarial occupations	7	8	0
	Skilled trades occupations	12	11	-1
	Personal service occupations	35	36	1
	Sales and customer service occupations	9	9	0
	Process, plant and machine operatives	11	11	0
	Elementary occupations	11	11	0
	Unemployed	0	0	0
	Other	1	1	0
	No information provided by learner	0	0	0

		Wave 1	Wave 2	Difference
		%	%	percentage points
Region	East of England	7	7	0
	East Midlands	6	6	0
	Greater London	3	3	0
	North East	7	8	0
	North West	21	21	0
	South East	12	12	0
	South West	9	9	0
	West Midlands	20	20	0
	Yorkshire and Humberside	9	8	-1
	National	7	6	-1
Provider type	Independent	42	42	0
	Public	58	58	0

Note: All figures rounded to nearest percentage point; no significant differences at the 5 per cent level.

Source: Longitudinal group surveys, waves 1 and 2

Sample size and structure for the new entrant group

Fully funded learners

48   The new entrant group fully funded learner sample was drawn from the ILR, which comprised 42,493 learners who were fully funded for Level 2 Train to Gain qualifications, with start dates between January and June 2007. However, once learners who did not wish to be contacted for research and learners with incomplete/missing telephone numbers post-tracing were removed, the sample fell to 17,207.

49   A random sample of 9,673 leads was drawn from the sample above. This sample frame was compared against the ILR population on key variables (region, age, disability, gender and ethnicity) to ensure that it was representative. An advance letter was sent to the learners who were selected, giving them the chance to opt out of the survey. Some 67 learners did opt out (7 per cent), leaving 9,606 learners for the new entrant group survey, although only 7,569 of these learners were actually contacted. The valid response rate for the fully funded learners within the new entrant group was 41 per cent. A detailed breakdown of the response rate is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Breakdown of leads provided – new entrant group fully funded learners

Final sample status	Total sample used Number	Total sample used %	Valid sample %
Total sample available	**9,606**		
Total sample issued	**7,569**	**100**	
Invalid sample			
Bad telephone numbers	1,262	13.14	
No longer at address	131	1.36	
Ineligible (e.g. respondent says survey not applicable to them)	243	2.53	
Valid sample			
Soft appointments	1,866	24.65	31.45
Hard appointments	28	0.37	0.47
Respondent quit interview	64	0.85	1.08
Refusal	1236	16.33	20.83
Not available during fieldwork	62	0.82	1.05
Leads tried a max. number of times	239	3.16	4.03
Achieved interviews	**2,436**	32.18	41.06
Response rate summary			
Unadjusted response rate		**32.18**	
Adjusted response rate			**41.06**

Source: Wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

Part-funded Level 3 learners

50   In total, 594 part-funded learners who had agreed to be contacted for research purposes were flagged on the ILR database for inclusion in the sample frame. Again, once ineligible learners (e.g. 12 men in London, as this was a women-only trial area) and those whose telephone numbers could not be traced were removed, the sample fell to 327. These learners were also sent letters to give them the chance to opt out of the survey. Three learners did, leaving a sample of 324 learners. The valid response rate for the new entrant group sample of part-funded Level 3 learners was 39 per cent. A detailed breakdown of the response rate is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Breakdown of leads provided – part-funded Level 3 learners

Final sample status	Total sample used Number	Total sample used %	Valid sample %
Total sample issued	**324**	**100**	
Invalid sample			
Bad telephone numbers	44	13.58	
No longer at address	7	2.16	
Ineligible	3	0.93	
Valid sample			
Soft appointments	99	30.56	36.67
Hard appointments	0	0	0
Respondent quit interview	2	0.62	0.74
Refusal	40	12.35	14.81
Not available during fieldwork	5	1.54	1.85
Leads tried a max. number of times	18	5.56	6.67
Achieved interviews	**106**	32.72	39.26
Response rate summary			
Unadjusted response rate		**32.72**	
Adjusted response rate			**39.26**

Source: Wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

Comparison of the new entrant group sample frame and achieved sample with the learner population

Fully funded new entrant group learners

51 The profile of the achieved new entrant group sample of fully funded learners was broadly similar to that of the population from which it was drawn (i.e. learners who started Train to Gain Level 2 between January and June 2007; see Table 5).

Table 5: Comparison between achieved new entrant group sample of fully funded learners and ILR population

		ILR population*	New entrant group fully funded learners	Difference
		%	%	percentage points
Gender	Male	52	51	-1
	Female	48	49	1
Age	18–25	17	14	-3
	26–35	26	19	-7
	36–45	31	33	2
	46–55	19	26	7
	56 to highest	7	8	1
Disability/learning difficulty	Yes	6	6	0
	No	89	88	-1
	No information provided by learner	5	6	1
Ethnicity	White	85	87	2
	BME	12	10	-2
	No information provided by learner	3	3	0
Notional NVQ level	Level 1/Entry	1	1	0
	Level 2	93	93	0
	Level 3	6	6	0
	Level 4, 5 or higher	0	0	0
Region	National	3	3	0
	East of England	9	15	6
	East Midlands	10	10	0
	Greater London	9	6	-3
	North East	8	7	-2
	North West	16	15	-1
	South East	10	10	0
	South West	9	12	3
	West Midlands	14	11	-3
	Yorkshire and Humberside	11	11	0

Notes: * = profile based on Train to Gain learners who started between January and June 2007; fully funded learners only. All figures rounded to nearest percentage point.

Source: ILR data, end of June 2007; wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

52   The greatest variations with the Train to Gain learner population at the end of June 2007 were by age. The new entrant group comprised fewer young

learners (the biggest difference was in the 26–35 age group) than the ILR population, and more older learners (the biggest difference was in the 46–55 age group). Analysis of the survey data did not identify any significant variation by type of course between the Train to Gain population and the survey sample. The strongest regional difference between the survey sample and the ILR population was in the East of England. Here, learners formed 15 per cent of the survey sample but 9 per cent of the ILR population.

Part-funded new entrant group learners

53   Table 6 compares the achieved sample of part-funded Level 3 learners against the ILR population for this group available at the end of June 2007. Due to the small population size, this part of the survey was a census: no quotas were set, and there was more variance between the achieved sample and the population profile.

Table 6: Comparison between achieved new entrant group sample of part-funded Level 3 learners and ILR population

		ILR population*	New entrant group part-funded learners	Difference
		%	%	percentage points
Gender	Male	40	31	-9
	Female	60	69	9
Age	18–25	19	23	4
	26–35	29	27	-2
	36–45	32	30	-2
	46–55	15	15	0
	56 to highest	5	5	0
Disability/learning difficulty	Yes	2	3	1
	No	92	92	0
	Missing	5	5	0
Ethnicity	White	86	84	-2
	BME	13	16	3
	No information provided by learner	1	0	-1
Notional NVQ level	Level 1/Entry	0	0	0
	Level 2	0	0	0
	Level 3	96	100	4
	Level 4, 5 or higher	4	0	-4
Region	Greater London	13	16	3
	North West	35	29	-6
	West Midlands	52	55	3

Notes: * = profile based on 514 part-funded Level 3 learners. All figures rounded to nearest percentage point.

Source: ILR data, end of June 2007, wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

Comparison of the wave 2 longitudinal and new entrant groups

54   The survey samples are being drawn at six-monthly intervals. A census of learners registered for Train to Gain at the time of the wave 1 survey was required to generate the achieved sample. This had the benefit of producing a randomised survey group. However, the 'early adopter' population did not reflect the Train to Gain population over time. The differences between the learners registered at wave 1 (based on end of February 2007 ILR data) and

those when the wave 2 sample was drawn (end of June 2007 ILR data) were shown in the first report from the evaluation.

55   As a result of these population differences, there are some significant differences between the two survey groups, illustrated in Table 7. Since the new entrant group sample is representative of the current learner population, and the population of Train to Gain learners has changed since the time of the first survey, the data have not been weighted. Due to these differences, the two samples are always analysed separately.

Table 7: Differences between the survey samples (longitudinal and new entrant groups)

		Longitudinal group	New entrant group	Change
		%	%	percentage points
Gender	Female	67	48	-18*
	Male	33	52	18*
Any disability	Disabled	7	6	-1
	Not disabled	89	88	-1
	No information provided by learner	4	6	2
Learning disabilities	Learner with LDD	4	3	-1
	Not learner with LDD	92	91	-1
	No information provided by learner	4	6	2
Age	18–25	6	11	6*
	26–35	16	18	1
	36–45	36	32	-4*
	46–55	30	27	-3
	56 to highest	12	12	0
Ethnicity	White	92	87	-5*
	BME	7	10	4
	No information provided by learner	2	3	2
Prior qualification	No qualifications held	34	30	-4*
	Below Level 2	34	26	-8*
	Level 2	14	19	6*
	Level 3	3	4	1

		Longitudinal group	New entrant group	Change
		%	%	percentage points
	Level 4 and higher	2	4	2
	No information provided by learner	14	16	3
Occupation	Managers and senior officials	5	7	1
	Professional occupations	3	2	0
	Associate professional and technical occupations	6	6	0
	Administrative and secretarial occupations	8	7	0
	Skilled trades occupations	11	16	4*
	Personal service occupations	36	26	-10*
	Sales and customer service occupations	9	6	-2
	Process, plant and machine operatives	11	17	6*
	Elementary occupations	11	12	1
	Unemployed	0	–	–
	Other	1	1	0
	Don't know	0	–	–
Region	East of England	7	11	4
	East Midlands	6	8	3
	Greater London	3	7	4
	North East	8	6	-2*
	North West	21	16	-6
	South East	12	9	-3
	South West	9	11	2
	West Midlands	20	15	-5*
	Yorkshire and Humberside	8	13	4*
	National	6	4	-2

Notes: * = significant difference at the 5 per cent level. All figures rounded to nearest percentage point.

Source: Longitudinal group survey and new entrant group survey at wave 2

Finding Out and Signing Up

56   The wave 2 new entrant group survey (sampled from the ILR data available at the end of June 2007, following the wave 1 survey) asked learners how they had heard about Train to Gain. The results are reported in this section, which then examines work and training among this group. The findings on how learners get involved with, and sign up for, their training are then discussed. Throughout the section, the results are compared with the findings from wave 1.

Key findings

57   The key findings to emerge from the wave 2 survey are as follows.

- Awareness of Train to Gain among learners has increased significantly. In wave 2, two-thirds (67 per cent) of the new entrant learners had heard of Train to Gain, compared with 60 per cent in wave 1.

- Most of the new entrant learners (55 per cent) had heard of Train to Gain through their employer. A further 13 per cent had gained information at their workplace.

- There has been a significant shift in the occupations of learners who access Train to Gain training. A quarter of learners in the new entrant group were in personal service jobs – significantly lower than the 35 per cent in the wave 1 survey. Other common occupations include process operatives (17 per cent of learners), skilled trades (16 per cent) and elementary occupations (13 per cent).

- Some 58 per cent of the most recent entrants to Train to Gain-funded qualifications were signed up with public sector providers (including FE colleges), compared with 54 per cent in the first survey. The rest are with independent training providers (from the private and voluntary sectors).

- Learners generally first found out about the training opportunities through their employers and, in most cases, the decision to take part was initiated jointly by the employer and the learner (42 per cent of cases) or by the

employer alone (41 per cent). The proportion of learners who took the initiative themselves to take part in the training was 17 per cent – significantly lower than the 21 per cent recorded in the wave 1 survey.

- Over a third of learners whose training was initiated by their employer (36 per cent) felt they had had a great deal of choice over whether or not to take up any training, while 26 per cent felt they had had no choice (up from 23 per cent in wave 1).

The Train to Gain brand

Awareness and knowledge of Train to Gain

58   All learners in the wave 2 new entrant group survey were asked about the extent to which they were aware of Train to Gain. Figure 3 shows that 42 per cent were both aware of Train to Gain and had some knowledge of it, and an additional 25 per cent had heard of Train to Gain but knew nothing about it. Both of these percentages are an increase on the comparable figures from the wave 1 survey, and there has been a significant increase in awareness of Train to Gain overall.

Figure 3: Awareness and knowledge of Train to Gain
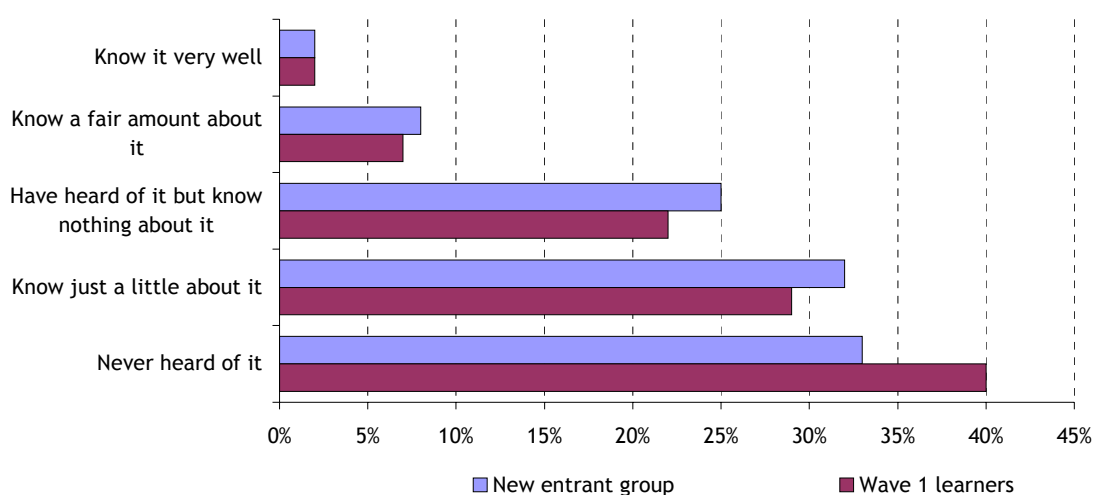
Base = all learners (N = 2,542).
Source: Wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

59   Using any awareness as the measure among the new entrant group (at 67 per cent), there were some variations. Awareness was higher for learners from white ethnic backgrounds (68 per cent) than for BME learners (57 per

cent). Awareness declined with age, from 71 per cent for the 18–25 age group to 61 per cent for the oldest age group of 56 and above. Awareness according to occupational group ranged from lows of 60 per cent within elementary occupations and 63 per cent for process, plant and machine operatives, to highs of 79 per cent for managers and senior officials and 76 per cent for both professional occupations and administrative and secretarial occupations.

Source of information about the Train to Gain brand

60   The 67 per cent of wave 2 new entrant group learners who had some awareness of the Train to Gain brand were asked how they had heard about it. Table 8 shows that the single most common source of information about Train to Gain was a manager, supervisor, human resources (HR) or training department, which accounted for 55 per cent of the responses (53 per cent at wave 1). The next most common sources, both with 9 per cent, were colleagues and TV advertisements. At wave 1, information from colleagues had been more frequently cited (at 13 per cent) and TV advertisements less so at 6 per cent.

Table 8: Source of information about the brand

	Number	%	Wave 1 comparison %
From a manager/supervisor/HR or training department	937	55	53
TV advertisement	156	9	6
From a colleague	151	9	13
From a training provider/college staff/assessor	120	7	12
Poster at work or billboard	74	4	(not reported)
Radio advertising	66	4	3
From friends or relations	64	4	4
Advert in local or national newspaper	44	3	3
Don't know	84	5	(not reported)

Base = all those who were aware of Train to Gain (N = 1,694); wave 1 (N = 4,470).
Notes: Multiple responses given; only responses over 2 per cent shown.

Source: Wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

Understanding of Train to Gain

61   All learners in the wave 2 new entrant group survey were asked about their understanding of Train to Gain. Figure 4 shows that 84 per cent agreed that 'it's a scheme for employees to get skills and qualifications at work'; 38 per cent agreed that 'it's a way for employers to get free training for their staff'; and 88 per cent disagreed with the statement that 'Train to Gain is more for employers than for employees'.

62   Agreement was significantly stronger in wave 2 that 'it's a way for employers to get free training for their staff' than was the case in wave 1 (up to 38 per cent from 33 per cent at wave 1).

Figure 4: Statements about Train to Gain
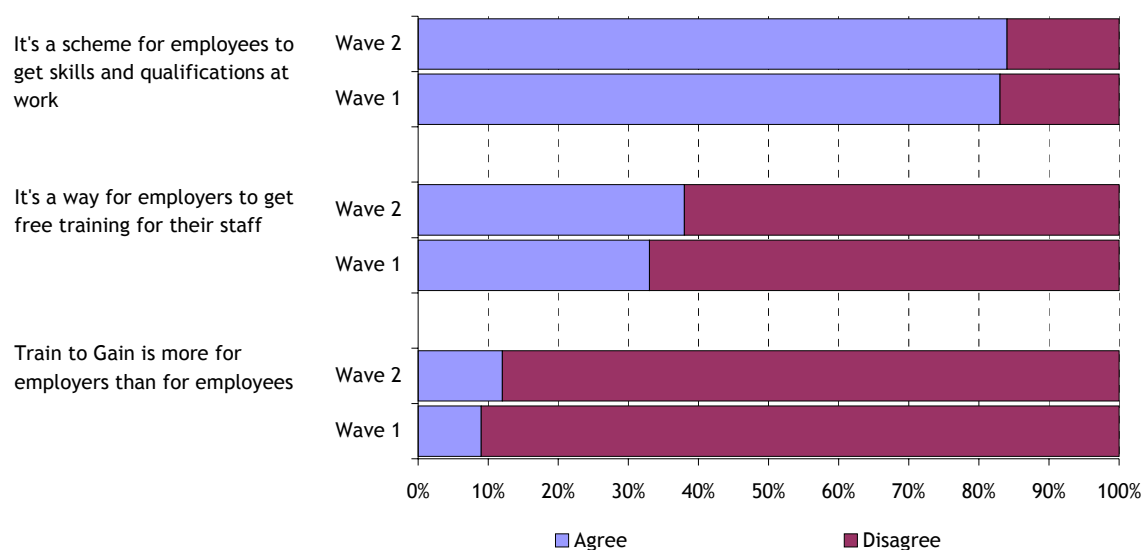
Base = all learners (N = 2,542); wave 1 (N = 4,470).

Source: Wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

Work and training among the new entrant group

Employment status

63   Almost all the new entrant group learners in wave 2 (N = 2,542) were currently working (97 per cent). The remainder had left the employer with whom they had originally signed up for training and were unemployed or inactive in the labour market when the survey took place (Annex A).

Occupation

64   Some 25 per cent of the fully funded learners in the new entrant group were employed in personal service occupations (which includes healthcare, childcare and animal care, and leisure services such as leisure and travel occupations, hairdressers, housekeepers and caretakers; Table 9). A higher proportion of the learners at wave 1 reported that they worked within these occupations (35 per cent).

Table 9: Occupations of fully funded new entrant group learners compared to comparable Labour Force Survey population and wave 1 sample

	Fully funded new entrant group		Part-funded new entrant group		Wave 1 comparison	Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimate of employed adults qualified to below Level 2
	Number	%	Number	%	%	%
Managers and senior officials	157	6	12	11	6	9
Professional occupations	61	3	2	2	3	3
Associate professional and technical	139	6	13	12	6	7
Administrative and secretarial	179	7	11	10	7	14
Skilled trades occupations	386	16	12	11	12	9
Personal service occupations	613	25	47	44	35	9
Sales and customer service occupations	161	7	3	3	9	11
Process, plant and machine operatives	416	17	5	5	11	14
Elementary occupations	307	13	1	1	11	25
Other/not known/unemployed	17	1	0	0	1	–

Base = new entrant group fully funded learners (N = 2,436); new entrant group part-funded learners (N = 106); wave 1 (N = 7,500).

Note: LFS July–September 2007.

Source: Wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

65   Among the fully funded new entrant group:

- 17 per cent worked as process, plant or machine operatives (compared to 11 per cent of the wave 1 survey); and

- 16 per cent worked in skilled trades (compared to 12 per cent of the learners at wave 1).

66   Comparison with the population of employees qualified below Level 2, as estimated by the Labour Force Survey (LFS) (spring 2006 in English regions only), shows that the new entrant group has a higher proportion of learners in

personal service occupations (16 percentage points more than their proportion in the estimated population). It also has higher proportions than seen in the LFS estimate in skilled trades (7 percentage points higher) and process, plant and machine operatives (3 percentage points higher).

67   Elementary occupations form 25 per cent of the LFS estimated population and 13 per cent of the new entrant group. The proportion of learners in administrative and secretarial roles is lower in the new entrant group than in the LFS estimated population (7 percentage points), as is the proportion in sales and customer service occupations (4 percentage points) and managers and senior officials (3 percentage points).

68   Some 44 per cent of the small group of part-funded new entrant group learners (N = 106) worked in personal service occupations; 12 per cent worked in associate professional and technical occupations; and 11 per cent each worked as managers and senior officials and in the skilled trades. Some 10 per cent of this group worked in administrative and secretarial jobs. The numbers of part-funded learners were too small to allow a reliable comparison with the estimated population in the LFS for this group.

Length of time in job

69   Some 71 per cent of the learners in the new entrant group survey had worked for their employer for between one and seven years (compared to 61 per cent of the learners at wave 1 – see Annex A). Some 14 per cent had joined their current employer within the last year (compared to 18 per cent of the learners at wave 1), and 7 per cent had been with their employer for 22 years or more (compared to 1 per cent at wave 1).

70   Analysis of the LFS (using a comparable population) showed that 20 per cent of individuals had worked for their employers for less than a year, and 11 per cent had been with their employers for 20 years or more.

71   Among those in the new entrant group who had joined their employer within the last year, 43 per cent had previously worked for a different employer doing a different job, and 37 per cent had worked for a different employer

doing the same sort of work. Some 10 per cent had previously been unemployed or had not worked for more than six months (compared to 12 per cent at wave 1).

Educational background

72 The educational experiences of the new entrant group were very similar to those of the respondents to the first survey. Among the new entrant group, 49 per cent had left school when they were 16 years old (Annex A, Table A3); 23 per cent had left school at age 15 (this is likely to relate to the age profile of learners: many would have been entitled to leave school at 15); 11 per cent had stayed in full-time education until they were 17; and 8 per cent had stayed until they were 18 years old. Some 9 per cent of the new entrant group learners had stayed in full-time education beyond the age of 18.

Provider type

73 In all, 58 per cent of the new entrant group were training with a public sector provider (compared to 54 per cent at wave 1). The remaining 42 per cent were registered with independent training providers (compared to 46 per cent at wave 1). The proportion varied by region – for instance, in Greater London 72 per cent of learners were with a public sector provider, compared to 48 per cent each in the North East and Yorkshire and Humberside. The fact that Greater London has the second highest proportion of learners taking care-related subjects (32 per cent, behind only the South East with 44 per cent) goes some way to explaining this, while Yorkshire and Humberside has the lowest proportion of care-related learners (14 per cent).

Prior qualification

74 Learners in the new entrant group survey were asked for their previous level of qualification, using the same question wording as in the Labour Force Survey (Table 10).

Table 10: Prior qualifications of fully and part-funded learners

Level of highest prior qualification	Fully funded new entrant group		Part-funded new entrant group		Overall new entrant group	Wave 1 comparison
	Number	%	Number	%	%	%
No qualifications held	751	31	6	6	30	34
Below Level 2	646	27	22	21	26	34
Level 2	456	19	35	33	19	14
Level 3	87	4	10	9	4	3
Level 4	95	4	15	14	4	2
Level 5	1	*	0	0		-
Not known	400	16	18	17	16	13

Base = fully funded new entrant group (N = 2,436); part-funded new entrant group (N=106); all new entrant group (N = 2,542); wave 1 survey (N = 7,500).

Source: Wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

75   Among those new entrant group learners who were fully funded, 58 per cent said that they either had no qualifications, or held qualifications below Level 2 (10 percentage points fewer than the learners surveyed in wave 1). Some 27 per cent said that they were already qualified to Level 2 or above; and for 16 per cent it was not possible to ascertain their prior educational level due to lack of response or insufficient detail.

76   Six in ten (60 per cent) of the new entrant group learners who were part funded for Level 3 qualifications held qualifications at Level 2 or below; 9 per cent claimed to already hold a Level 3; and 14 per cent said they already held a Level 4. It was not possible to ascertain the prior qualification level for 17 per cent of the new entrant group.

77   Table 11 shows the level of qualification learners are taking through Train to Gain by their prior level of qualification. This shows that six funded learners in ten are studying at a level that is higher than they had previously achieved.

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Table 11: Train to Gain-funded qualification by prior qualification level

Prior qualification	Level 1 N	%	Level 2 N	%	Level 3 N	%	Above Level 3 N	%	Total N	%
Not known	4	*	372	15	41	2	1	*	418	16
No qualifications	2	*	703	28	52	2	0	–	757	30
Below Level 2	4	*	601	24	63	3	0	–	668	26
Level 2	6	*	413	16	72	3	0	–	491	19
Level 3	0	–	78	3	18	1	1	*	97	4
Level 4 and above	2	*	89	4	19	1	1	*	111	4
Total	18	1	2,256	89	265	10	3	*	2,542	100

Base = all respondents (N = 2,542).

Notes: Shaded cells show learners studying at a higher level than their prior qualification; * = less than 1 per cent.
Source: Wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

Access to training and qualifications at work

78   All learners in the wave 2 new entrant group survey were asked about their access to training at work, and 46 per cent said that they had done some job-related training during the past year. Analysis of the Labour Force Survey showed that 47 per cent had been offered training by their employers, although it is not possible to say whether this training had led to qualifications.

79   Of these, 66 per cent said that they had done the training because they were legally required to, and 46 per cent said that the training had led to a qualification (these questions were new additions to the survey, and therefore comparative data do not exist).

80   Just over half the learners in the wave 2 new entrant group survey (52 per cent) reported that they could have done the qualification for which they were registered through Train to Gain before now; 41 per cent said they could not have done; and 7 per cent did not know.

81   Table 12 shows the reasons for not doing qualifications before, among those in the new entrant group who said it had been possible. The most common responses were that the course had not been offered before now (19 per cent), and the skills had not been needed before now (16 per cent).

82   Work-related factors had been a barrier to training for two-thirds (65 per cent) of these learners, and it may be inferred that Train to Gain has extended the amount of training available in learners' organisations.

Table 12: Reasons for not doing training earlier

Type of barrier		Number	%	Wave 1 comparison %
Learner related	Never thought of doing it	188	14	16
	Could not afford to pay for it myself	95	7	10
	Not interested in it	93	7	9
Work related	Was not offered before now	248	19	19
	Did not need these skills before	211	16	17
	Did not know training/qualification existed	144	11	14
	Did not have any time to train at work	142	11	15

Base = all those who said they could have done the training earlier (N = 1,320); wave 1 (N = 3,825).

Notes: Multiple responses given; responses above 8 per cent shown.

Source: Wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

83   The new entrant group learners who said that these skills had not been needed before now (N = 211) were asked why this was the case (this question was a new addition to the survey, and therefore comparative data do not exist). The most common reasons (multiple responses were allowed) were:

•   worked in a different industry/job (34 per cent);

•   it was not necessary for the job (17 per cent);

•   already had the required skills, knowledge or experience (14 per cent);

•   training is now required for the job (7 per cent); and

•   legal requirements/rules and regulations have changed (6 per cent).

84   The key message to arise from this is how changes to the nature of learners' work (e.g. that training or a qualification has now become necessary for work) have driven the need to qualify, since it is questionable how far the

training would have been relevant to learners previously working in a different industry or job.

Getting involved in Train to Gain

85   All learners in the wave 2 new entrant group survey were asked how they had become involved with Train to Gain, firstly by being questioned about where they had initially heard about the training, and then how they had come to take part.

Finding out about the training

86   Three learners in four (75 per cent) reported that they had first found out about the opportunity to do training via their employer, manager or supervisor. Other sources were named by far fewer learners, as Table 13 shows.

Table 13: Where learners first heard about their qualification

Source	Number	%	Wave 1 comparison %
Employer, manager or supervisor	1,906	75	74
Training provider or member of college staff came to work	184	7	7
HR/personnel or training manager	96	4	5
Other work colleague (non-supervisory)	72	3	4

Base = all learners (N = 2,542); wave 1 (N = 7,500).

Notes: Multiple response; only responses over 3 per cent shown.

Source: Wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

87   The source of information varied across occupational groups. The proportion of learners who had heard about their training from their employer, manager or supervisor varied from a high of 84 per cent for personal service occupations, to a low of 57 per cent for managers and senior officials. The proportion of learners who had had a discussion about Train to Gain with a training provider or a member of college staff varied from a high of 15 per cent for managers and senior officials, to a low of 3 per cent for personal service occupations.

Choosing to take part

Who initiated the training?

88   All wave 2 new entrant group learners were asked how they had come to take part in their training, and were offered a range of possible entry routes, shown in Table 14. The entry routes that gained the highest agreement were 'my employer asked if I was interested' (61 per cent agreed) and 'I put myself forward when I found out about the opportunity' (54 per cent agreed).

89   Significantly more of the new entrant group learners reported that they had been told by their employers that they would do the training than those who were surveyed at wave 1 (35 per cent, compared to 31 per cent).

Table 14: How learners came to take part in training

	Number	%	Wave 1 comparison %
Employer asked if I was interested	1,560	61	60
I put myself forward when I found out about the opportunity	1,361	54	54
My employer told me I would do it	883	35	31
My employer asked for volunteers	741	29	27
I requested this training	698	28	29
I progressed automatically to this training from a Level 1 qualification	487	19	16

Base = all learners (N = 2,542); wave 1 (N = 7,500).

Note: Multiple responses given.

Source: Wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

90   Further analysis of the results in Table 14 identifies three distinct groups of learners:

- those whose **training had been initiated jointly** by themselves and their employer (for instance, their employer had asked for volunteers and they had put themselves forward): this accounted for 42 per cent of the learners;

- those whose **training was initiated by their employer only** (i.e. their employer had asked for volunteers, had asked if they were interested, or

had told them they would do the training, but the learners had not also requested the training, nor had they put themselves forward): this accounted for 41 per cent of learners; and

- those whose **training was self-initiated only** (i.e. they had put themselves forward for training or had requested it, but their employer had not also approached them): this accounted for 17 per cent of the sample.

91   The proportion of the new entrant group whose training was **employer initiated only** showed considerable variation by occupation.

- The highest proportions were noted in the occupations of skilled trades, and process, plant and machine operatives – both at 48 per cent.

- By far the lowest percentage (25 per cent) was found among professional occupations, followed by 34 per cent of administrative and secretarial occupations.

92   The group whose training was **self-initiated only** also varied by occupation.

- Administrative and secretarial occupations had the highest proportion (29 per cent), followed by professional occupations (27 per cent).

- The lowest percentages were found among process, plant and machine operatives (12 per cent), followed by skilled trades occupations (13 per cent).

Amount of choice

93   Those new entrant group learners whose training was **initiated only by their employer** were asked to describe the amount of say they felt they had had over whether or not to participate in the training. Table 15 shows that, while nearly three in four (74 per cent) of this group felt they had had at least a little say in the training, 26 per cent felt that they had had no choice at all. While slight changes were evident between the two survey waves, there were no significant differences in the degree of choice experienced by learners.

94   Among those in the new entrant group survey, the percentage of the
      employer-initiated only group who reported that they had had no choice at
      all over whether to participate in the training varied according to the
      occupational group of the learner, with the highest proportion (36 per cent)
      found among process, plant and machine operatives, followed by 32 per cent
      among skilled trades occupations.

Table 15: Amount of say over whether or not to do the training

Amount of say	Number	%	Wave 1 comparison %
A great deal	364	36	40
A fair amount	234	23	22
A little	149	15	13
None at all	260	26	23
Don't know	13	1	2

Base = employer-initiated training only (N = 1,020); wave 1 (N = 2,816).

Source: Wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

Advice and Guidance Before Training Starts

95   The wave 2 new entrant group survey dealt with a group of learners that was sampled from the ILR data available at the end of June 2007, following the wave 1 survey. Generally, they were at an earlier stage of their qualifications than the longitudinal group. The survey asked these learners about what had happened to them as they started their training. In particular, they were questioned about whether they had been involved in an information session – for instance to enable them to make an informed choice about whether a course might be appropriate; and, if so, which one would be most suitable. This is referred to as a 'pre-entry discussion' and includes any information, advice and guidance the learner received. The survey also asked learners whether, once they had chosen their course, they had had some form of skills assessment before starting – e.g. of their prior level of qualification, any basic skills needs and/or assessment to enable their training plan to be adapted to their particular skills gaps.

Key findings

96   The key findings from the survey of this group were as follows.

- Two-thirds of new entrant group learners had had a discussion with either their employer or a training provider – a similar proportion to that seen in wave 1. However:

    o more learners in the second wave had their pre-entry discussion with a training provider (54 per cent, compared to 50 per cent of the wave 1 learner group); and

    o the proportion of learners who said that they were advised about the suitability of particular qualifications rose from 68 per cent (wave 1) to 72 per cent.

- Over four-fifths of learners in the latest survey had had some form of skills assessment(s). In the course of the assessment(s):

- 70 per cent reported that their prior qualifications had been checked;

- 56 per cent had had a Skills for Life assessment; and

- 56 per cent were involved in a 'skills gap' assessment (to tailor the work they had to do for their qualification to meet their particular needs).

- A third had all three forms of assessment.

- The assessments were generally carried out by a training provider (81 per cent of cases).

- Most learners who had an assessment reported a result (multiple responses possible):

  - two-thirds (68 per cent of all those who had had at least one form of assessment) were told that they would be trained and assessed for the whole qualification in which they were interested;

  - 18 per cent were told that they would just need to be assessed (and did not require any training);

  - 17 per cent were told that they would only need to be trained and/or assessed for part of the qualification; and

  - 10 per cent were put on a different (higher or lower) qualification that better matched their job and/or their skills.

- Best practice suggests that both a pre-entry discussion and a skills gap assessment are required. More learners at wave 2 had been involved in both (51 per cent) than at wave 1 (46 per cent):

  - fewer learners in wave 2 than in wave 1 had neither a discussion nor an assessment (13 per cent, compared to 18 per cent); and

- those working with independent training providers were more likely to have had both (55 per cent) than were those with public sector providers (50 per cent).

- 59 per cent of learners received an ILP at the start of their training (63 per cent of those with independent training providers).

Pre-entry discussion

97   A series of questions in the new entrant group survey examined the extent to which learners were spoken to and/or assessed prior to starting the training. Overall, 67 per cent of learners reported that they had been spoken to before their training had started, while 32 per cent had not been.

98   By occupation, those most likely to have received a pre-entry discussion were in personal service occupations (76 per cent), sales and customer service occupations (70 per cent), and associate professional and technical occupations (also 70 per cent). The occupations least likely to have had a discussion were administrative and secretarial occupations (55 per cent), process, plant and machine operatives (60 per cent) and managers and senior officials (61 per cent).

99   A greater difference was evident according to the qualification subject: those studying a care-related area were more likely to have had a pre-entry discussion than those studying other subjects (79 per cent, compared with 63 per cent). Variation according to the type of training provider was less marked, with a discussion being received by 70 per cent of those studying with an independent training provider, and 65 per cent of those with a public sector provider.

100   Regional variation in the proportion of learners receiving information before the start of the training ranged from 64 per cent in both the South West and Yorkshire and Humberside, to 72 per cent in the North West and 70 per cent in the North East.

101 The new entrant group learners who had been spoken to about their current job and the skills that it required were asked who had spoken to them. Table 16 shows that training providers or college staff or assessors had spoken to 54 per cent of learners, with almost as many learners (48 per cent) spoken to by employers, managers or supervisors.

Table 16: Who spoke to you about your current job and required skills, prior to doing training?

Source			Wave 1 comparison
	Number	%	%
Training provider or college staff/assessor	918	54	50
Employer, manager or supervisor	808	48	49
HR/personnel or training manager	73	4	6
Other	58	3	(not reported)
Union learning rep/union staff member	3	*	1
Skills broker	6	*	1

Base = all those who had been spoken to prior to the training (N = 1,697); wave 1 (N = 4,897).
Note: Multiple responses given;* = less than 1 per cent.

Source: Wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

- Comparing these findings with the wave 1 survey, significantly more learners in the second wave had their pre-entry discussion with a training provider (54 per cent, compared to 50 per cent of the wave 1 learner group).

- Seven in ten (72 per cent) of the new entrant group who had been spoken to about their work and the skills needed to do it said that, as a result, they had been given some advice about which qualification would be the most suitable for them; 27 per cent said they had not received such advice. In the first wave of the research, the equivalent proportion of those receiving advice about qualifications was 68 per cent. This represents a significant increase in the numbers receiving advice between survey waves.

- The regions with the lowest proportions receiving advice were Yorkshire and Humberside and Greater London (both 69 per cent); those with the

highest proportions were the West Midlands (79 per cent) and the East Midlands (75 per cent).

- The 27 per cent who said that they had been spoken to but had not received any advice about which qualification would be the most suitable showed some variation by occupational group, ranging from highs of 38 per cent for process, plant and machine operatives, and 33 per cent of professional occupations, to lows of 18 per cent for sales and customer service occupations and 22 per cent of skilled trades occupations. The type of training provider also made a significant difference, with 31 per cent of those studying with a public sector provider, and 22 per cent with an independent training provider.

Skills assessment

102   In the first wave of survey research, learners were asked whether they had been involved before they started training in an assessment of their pre-existing skills in relation to their qualification. The analysis showed that 60 per cent had been, although the form of this assessment was not explored.

103   To expand on the available information, all learners in the wave 2 new entrant group survey were asked about three types of skills assessment they might have been involved in. These were an assessment of:

- their skills in relation to the requirements of the qualification (skills gap assessment);

- their pre-existing qualifications; and

- their ability in English, maths or language skills (Skills for Life assessment).

104   Table 17 shows that learners most frequently noted assessment of pre-existing qualifications (70 per cent), and more than half (56 per cent each) had been involved in a Skills for Life assessment or a skills gap assessment.

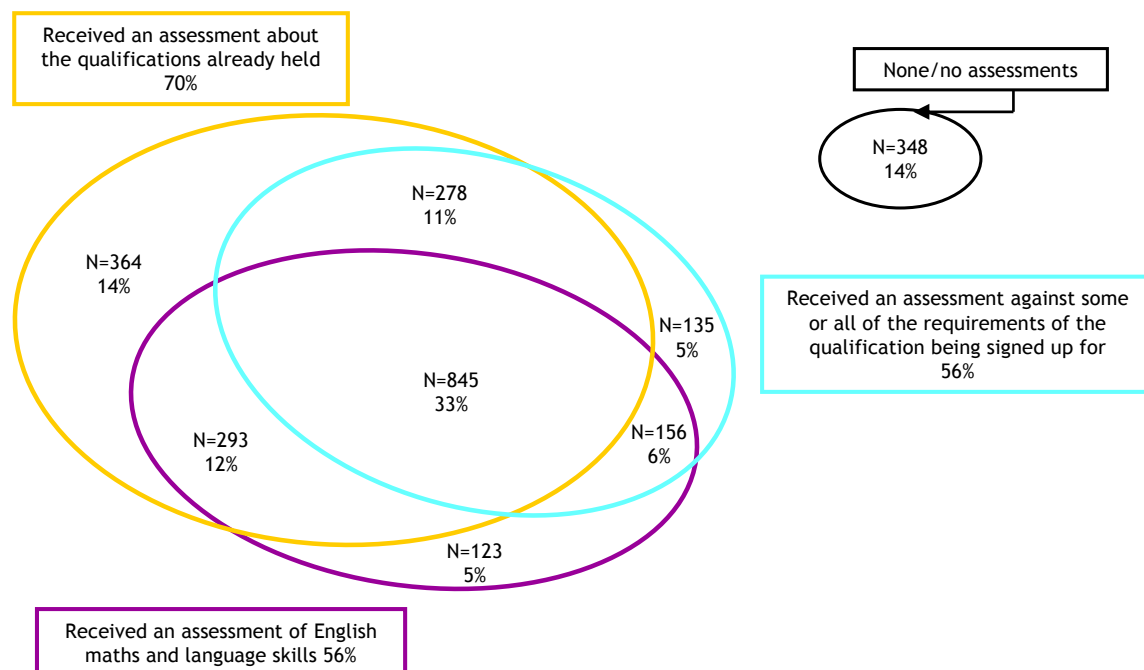**Table 17: Extent of assessment prior to starting the training**

	Number saying yes	% saying yes
Did anyone ask you about any qualifications you already had?	1,780	70
Did anyone assess your English, maths or language skills?	1,417	56
Did anyone assess you against some or all of the requirements of the qualification you were signing up to?	1,414	56

Base = all learners (N = 2,542).

Source: Wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

105 Reviewing the overlap between the experience of these three different types of prior assessment shows that the majority of the new entrant group (86 per cent) had had at least one type of assessment, and 14 per cent had been involved in none.

106 Figure 5 looks at the relationship between receiving the different forms of assessment. Best practice suggests that all three types should be received, and Train to Gain policy requires prior qualification checks to assess eligibility for funding. There is also policy emphasis on the provision of Skills for Life assessments to ensure that learners are able to engage fully with Level 2 (or higher) training.

Figure 5: Relationship between the three possible forms of assessment that learners receive

Received an assessment about
the qualifications already held
70%

None/no assessments

N=348
14%

N=278
11%

N=364
14%

N=135
5%

N=845
33%

Received an assessment against some
or all of the requirements of the
qualification being signed up for
56%

N=293
12%

N=156
6%

N=123
5%

Received an assessment of English
maths and language skills 56%

Base = all learners (N = 2,542).

Source: Wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

107 This analysis shows that:

- **33 per cent had all three elements of assessment.** This percentage rose to 45 per cent among personal service occupations, and fell to 24 per cent within elementary occupations. Independent training providers were more likely to provide all three assessments (36 per cent) than were public sector providers (31 per cent). The proportion of learners receiving all three assessments was particularly high among learners on a care-related subject (47 per cent). In other subject areas, the proportion fell to 29 per cent.

- **29 per cent had two of the three elements of assessment.** The most common combination was an assessment of the qualifications already held and a Skills for Life assessment.

- **25 per cent had one of the three elements of assessment.** The single most common was an assessment of the qualifications already held by learners.

- **14 per cent had no assessment of any type.** This group was over-represented among elementary occupations, where it accounted for 21 per cent of learners in the sector, and was least common within personal service occupations (7 per cent).

108 There was some regional variation in the number of forms of assessments received: the proportions of learners receiving no assessments at all ranged from lows of 8 per cent in the East of England and 10 per cent in both Greater London and the South East, to highs of 18 per cent in the South West and 17 per cent in both Yorkshire and Humberside and the East Midlands. At the other end of the scale, the proportions receiving the maximum of all three assessments ranged from 26 per cent in the East Midlands and 29 per cent in the North West, to 45 per cent in Greater London and 36 per cent in the South East.

109 Training providers conducted the prior assessments for most learners (81 per cent) and 14 per cent were assessed by their employer, manager or supervisor (Table 18).

Table 18: Who carried out the assessment(s) of skills and qualifications?

Source	Number	%	Wave 1 comparison %
Training provider or college staff/assessor	1,780	81	73
Employer, manager or supervisor	310	14	22
Other	105	5	(not reported)
HR/personnel or training manager	75	3	6
Skills broker	10	1	1
Union learning rep/union staff member	8	*	*

Base = all those having an assessment of any of the three possible types (N = 2,194); wave 1 (N = 4,500).

Notes: Multiple responses given;* = less than 1 per cent.

Source: Wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

110 As a consequence of the assessment(s), the most common outcome for new entrant group learners was to be told that they needed to be trained and assessed for the whole qualification (68 per cent of the learners; Table 19). A further 18 per cent were signed up to an assessment-only qualification, while for 17 per cent the qualification was tailored to their skills gaps.

111 Significantly fewer learners in the second wave felt that nothing had happened as a result of being assessed (7 per cent, compared to 28 per cent in wave 1). Fewer, too, had changed the level of their qualification as a consequence of a skills assessment (10 per cent, compared to 19 per cent in wave 1).

112 All new entrant group learners were asked whether they had received an ILP or a personal development plan (PDP) at the start of the training. Some 59 per cent reported that they had, while 35 per cent said that they had not (6 per cent did not know).

113 The proportion receiving an ILP/PDP was particularly high within the sales and customer service occupations, at 78 per cent of learners, followed by administrative and secretarial occupations (69 per cent). The occupations with the lowest levels of ILP/PDP were process, plant and machine operatives (47 per cent), and elementary occupations (51 per cent).

114 Independent training providers were more likely than public sector providers to provide an ILP/PDP (63 per cent independent, compared with 56 per cent public), and receipt of an ILP/PDP was more common on care-related courses (64 per cent) than other subjects (57 per cent). The regions with the lowest proportions receiving an ILP were Yorkshire and Humberside (53 per cent) and East Midlands (54 per cent), while the highest were to be found in the regions of the West Midlands (65 per cent) and the North East (64 per cent).

Table 19: Consequences of the skills and qualifications assessment

Action taken	Number	%	Wave 1 comparison %
I was told I would be trained and assessed for the whole qualification	1,499	68	n/c
I was told I didn't require any training and would just need to be assessed for the qualification	400	18	12
I was told I only needed to be trained and/or assessed in some parts of the qualification	374	17	n/c
I was put on a different level of the qualification	223	10	19
Nothing	160	7	28
I was put on a different qualification subject	97	4	n/c

Base = all those having an assessment of any of the three possible types (N = 2,194).

Notes: Multiple responses given; n/c – question wording changed therefore comparable data not available.

Source: Wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

Learners who transferred to a different level of qualification

115   The 10 per cent of learners who reported that they had transferred to a different level of qualification as a consequence of their skills assessment were asked about the level of the new qualification in relation to the original one.

116   Table 20 shows that, following their assessment, similar proportions of learners were placed on a higher-level qualification (41 per cent) as were placed on a lower level (45 per cent).

Table 20: Whether the qualification that was originally selected was at a higher or a lower level than the one being trained for now

Level of original qualification	Number	%
Higher	100	45
Lower	92	41
Don't know	31	14

Base = all those who were put on a different level of qualification following the assessment (N = 223).

Source: Wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

117   Table 21 examines the reasons behind the recommendation to change levels. This shows that 38 per cent were advised to change level because the original level was too low for their current skills and qualifications, and 24 per

cent because the original level was too low for the content of their current job. Some 13 per cent reported reasons other than those shown; however, there were no clear patterns in these.

Table 21: Reason for being recommended to change level

Reason	Number	%
Level was too low for my current skills and/or qualifications	85	38
Level was too low for what I do in my job	53	24
Other	29	13
Level was too high for my current skills and/or qualifications	18	8
Level was too high for what I do in my job	16	7
Don't know	11	5
Due to the type of work being done at the time	5	2
Had already completed the level	3	1
More experience	3	1

Base = all those who were put on a different level of qualification following the assessment (N = 223).

Source: Wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

Learners who transferred to a different qualification subject

118 The most common reason for learners to change the subject of their qualification was that the recommended alternative would be a better match for their job or skills (45 per cent and 22 per cent, respectively; Table 22).

Table 22: Reason for being recommended to change subject

Reason	Number	%
The recommended qualification was a better match for my job	44	45
The recommended qualification was a better match for my current skills	21	22
The recommended qualification was more appropriate to my future career	9	9
The original qualification was unavailable (e.g. there was no-one available to train or assess the qualification)	1	1
Other	16	17
Don't know	6	6

Base = all those who were put on a different qualification subject following the assessment (N = 97).

Source: Wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

Relationship between pre-entry discussion and skills assessment

119 Considering the learners' entry to Train to Gain as a whole – i.e. the advice and guidance with the assessment element – best practice suggests that learners should receive both a pre-entry discussion and a prior skills assessment. Table 23 shows the relationship between having had a pre-entry discussion and a prior skills gap assessment, and shows that almost half the learners (46 per cent) had both. (The wave 1 survey asked whether learners had received a skills gap assessment and did not ask whether prior qualifications and basic skill levels had also been assessed. To allow comparison between survey waves, the skills gap assessment for the new entrant group is shown in Table 23.)

Table 23: Relationship between pre-entry discussion and prior skills gap assessment

			Wave 1 comparison
Reason	**Number**	**%**	**%**
Pre-entry discussion only	389	15	19
Prior skills gap assessment only	471	19	14
Both pre-entry discussion AND prior skills gap assessment	1,290	51	46
Neither	335	13	18
Don't know	57	2	3

Base = all learners (N = 2,542); wave 1 (N = 7,500).

Source: Wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

120 Those who were studying with independent training providers were more likely than those studying with public sector providers to have received both a pre-entry discussion and a prior skills gap assessment (55 per cent independent, compared with 50 per cent public). Variation, however, was more marked in relation to the subject of the training course: those on a care-related subject were much more likely (68 per cent) to have received both than those in other subject areas (47 per cent).

Experiences of Training

121 This longitudinal group sample was drawn from learners who participated in the wave 1 survey (based on ILR data at the end of February 2007). Generally, they are at a later stage of learning than the new entrant group. The training experiences of this longitudinal group are initially explored in this section (e.g. the amount of time learners spent with their training provider and how much time they worked independently on their qualification at work and at home). This is followed by an examination of support needs and the nature of any difficulties experienced. The analysis reviews the experiences and characteristics of those who complete their qualifications and those who quit their training before achieving a qualification. In these latter sections, the analysis includes the new entrant group.

Key findings

122 The key findings from the survey are as follows.

- Most of these learners (86 per cent) said they had been assessed for their qualification by someone from their training provider, rather than by their employer (13 per cent).

  o Assessments generally took place at work (88 per cent of cases) and much less frequently on a provider's premises (8 per cent of cases).

- Most learners (66 per cent) met their assessor once or twice a month.

  o Learners spent an average of 1.6 hours with an assessor each time they met.

  o Altogether, learners spent an average of 22 hours a month working towards their qualification, with little variation by subject matter.

  o On average they spent between one and two hours a week at work (generally paid) and around two hours at home – mainly on independent study.

- Nearly three-quarters (72 per cent) of learners in the longitudinal group had completed. Completion of their qualification took an average of six months.

- Learners received various forms of support to help them complete their qualification. They rated support in understanding how to generate evidence from their work as the most important, and noted that it was the one type of support more frequently made available (93 per cent of learners said they had been supported in this way).

  o However, one learner in five (17 per cent) said they could have done with more support, particularly from their tutor.

- Half of the learners who had completed their qualification thought it had taken them about the length of time they had expected, and 32 per cent said it had taken less time than expected.

- The key factor that learners thought helped them complete was the amount of time spent with their assessor. Having a supportive and contactable assessor was most frequently identified as a positive influence on completion.

- Just over half found their qualification either fairly (37 per cent) or very (14 per cent) challenging to complete.

  o The level and the format of the qualification contributed to making the qualification challenging, along with the time needed to complete and the fact that the learner had not studied for a qualification for a long time (or indeed ever).

  o Some 13 per cent of learners said that they had experienced problems completing their qualification, mainly to do with understanding particular elements or assignments, or the general format of their qualification.

Experiences of training and assessment

Free training but conditions may apply

123   In all cases, the qualifications taken through Train to Gain should be
available at no cost to the learner. Employers are required to part fund Level
3 qualifications where learners progress from a previous Level 2 qualification.
The longitudinal group was questioned in wave 2 about how their
qualification was funded (Table 24). (No learners part funded for Level 3
qualifications were included in this sample due to their small number at the
time of the first survey.) Close to half (47 per cent) understood that the
government had paid for their training, while 42 per cent thought that their
employer had paid.

Table 24: Who paid for the qualification/training?

	Number	%
The government	2,401	47
Your employer	2,131	42
Don't know	460	9
Someone else	102	2
Yourself	39	1

Base = all learners who had been training for at least a month (N = 4,971).
Note: Multiple responses given.
Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007

124   The qualitative research in wave 1 showed that some employers attached
conditions to learners' participation, e.g. requiring them to remain with the
organisation for a set period following completion, or a payment should the
learner not complete. This second issue was explored in the first follow-up
survey, since there were cost implications for learners.

125   The learners in the longitudinal group who had been training for at least a
month (N = 4,971) were asked whether or not their employer had said they
would have to pay a contribution towards the cost of the training if they did
not complete it, and 16 per cent reported that they had.

126   The proportion that would have to pay a contribution was particularly high in
the personal services occupations (27 per cent). The occupations with the

lowest proportions were process, plant and machine operatives (6 per cent), and sales and customer service occupations (7 per cent) and administrative and secretarial occupations (also 7 per cent).

Training provider or workplace assessors?

127   All those in the longitudinal group survey who had been training for at least a month were asked about the type of organisation their assessor was from. Table 25 shows that 86 per cent of these learners had an assessor who worked for a college or training provider, and 13 per cent were training with an assessor from their workplace. A large majority of learners in the longitudinal group survey (86 per cent) reported that they had had the same assessor throughout their qualification.

Table 25: Where assessor is/was from

Assessor came from	Number	%
A college or training provider	4,275	86
The workplace (i.e. a manager or colleague)	636	13
Don't know	60	1

Base = all learners who had been training for at least a month (N = 4,971).
Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007

Where assessment takes place

128   The workplace was the most common place for meetings between the learner and their assessor (88 per cent), as Table 26 shows.

Table 26: Where assessor is/was seen most frequently

Location	Number	%
At work	4,394	88
At a college or training provider	416	8
At home	83	2
Somewhere else	45	1
Don't know	25	1
Assessor not been seen	8	*

Base = all learners who had been training for at least a month (N = 4,971).
Note: * = less than 1 per cent.
Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007

129   The location of the meetings with assessors showed some variation according to the type of provider. Those training with a public sector provider

were more likely to meet their assessor at the provider's premises than were those who were training with an independent training provider (13 per cent and 3 per cent, respectively).

Frequency of meetings with assessors

130 All those in the longitudinal group survey who had been training for at least a month were asked how often they saw their assessor. Two-thirds (66 per cent) of learners saw their assessor once or twice a month (Table 27). A smaller group had more frequent meetings with their assessor: 22 per cent typically met their assessor three or four times a month.

Table 27: Frequency of seeing assessor (number of times per month)

Times per month	Number	%
1–2	3,282	66
3–4	1,077	22
5–6	76	2
7–8	33	1
9–10	10	*
More than 10	45	1
Don't know	109	2
None	339	7

Base = all learners who had been training for at least a month (N = 4,971).
Note: * = less than 1 per cent.

Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007

Time spent with the assessor

131 Learners in the longitudinal group who had been training for at least one month were then asked about the length of time typically spent with their assessor on each meeting. Figure 6 shows the results. Most learners spent up to an hour with their assessor each time they met (45 per cent). A third (32 per cent) typically spent up to two hours with their assessor, and 15 per cent spent three hours or more. On average, assessor meetings lasted 1.6 hours.

Figure 6: Length of time typically spent with assessor on each meeting
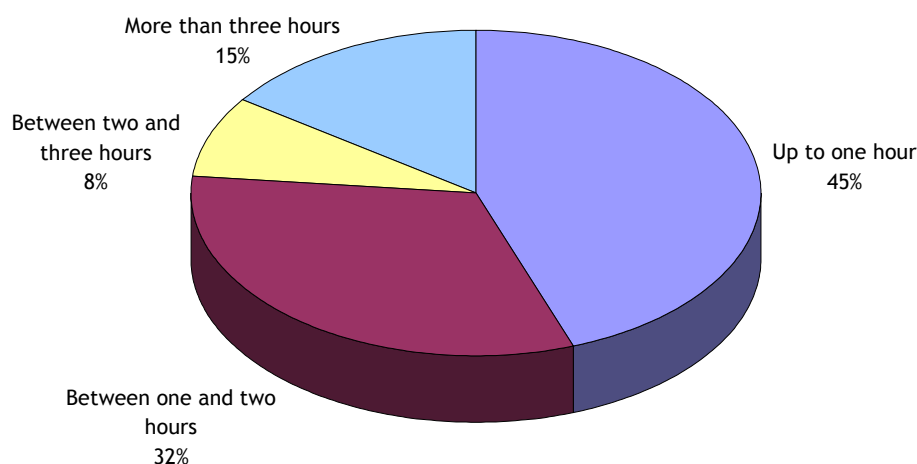
Base = all learners who had been training for at least a month (N = 4,971; 'don't know' responses excluded (1 per cent).

Note: The survey captured information by the half hour, and this has been combined into hourly intervals.

Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007

Time at work

132   The Train to Gain policy encourages employers to allow learners to spend time on their qualifications while at work, and in circumstances where wage compensation is paid to employers this is an entitlement. (Skills brokers and/or training providers advise employers about their funding entitlement; in essence, companies with fewer than 50 employees may claim wage compensation for time spent by employees on training and assessment.) Learners in the longitudinal group were asked whether or not they spent time on the training or qualification at work when their tutor or assessor was not present. Two out of three (64 per cent) said that they did, while the remaining 35 per cent did not. Figure 7 shows the typical number of hours at work each week learners spent on qualifications without their assessor.

133   Three in ten (29 per cent) of the longitudinal group spent three hours or more on their training each week while at work. Around a quarter spent an hour or less (27 per cent), or up to two hours (26 per cent) on their training each week at work.

Figure 7: Number of hours at work (per week) typically spent on training when assessor is not present
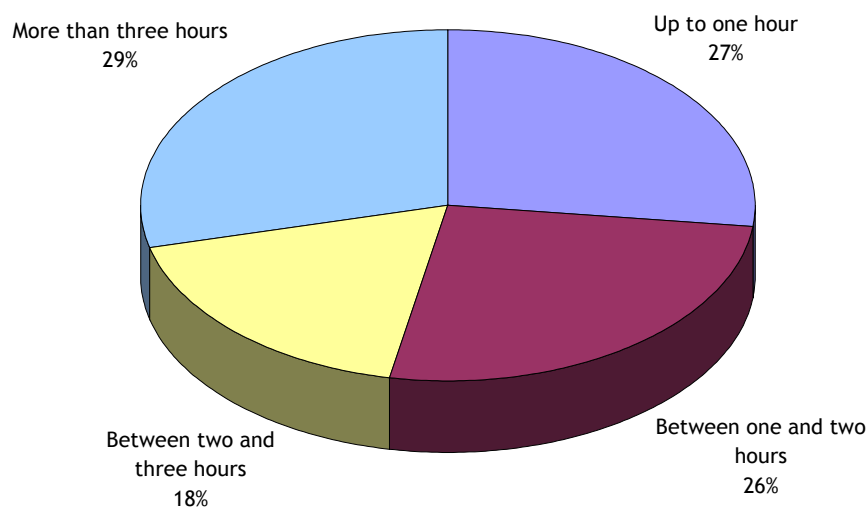
Base = all learners who had been training for at least a month and who spent some time on the training/qualification at work when the tutor/assessor was not present (N = 3,192); 'don't know' responses excluded (2 per cent).

Note: The survey captured information by the half hour and this has been combined into hourly intervals.

Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007

Paid for time spent training at work?

134 The learners in the longitudinal group who had been training for more than one month were asked whether their employer had paid for the time they spent on the training while at work (including time with the assessor and time spent alone on the qualification). Some 83 per cent reported that they had been paid, while 16 per cent said they had not.

135 This showed some variation by occupation and industry.

- The highest proportions of those being paid were in process, plant and machine operative occupations (93 per cent), administrative and secretarial occupations (91 per cent) and sales and customer service occupations (89 per cent).

- The lowest proportions were found in professional occupations (70 per cent), personal service occupations (77 per cent) and associate professional and technical occupations (78 per cent).

- By industrial sector, the highest proportions being paid for the time spent training were found in engineering and manufacturing (93 per cent) and distribution, transport and logistics (91 per cent).

- The sectors where the lowest proportion of learners were paid were hospitality, leisure, sport and travel (82 per cent), and community, social or personal service activities (83 per cent).

Time at home

136 The learners in the longitudinal group who had been training for more than one month were asked about any time they spent at home on their qualification. While 28 per cent said that they only spent time on the training during working hours, 72 per cent said that they put in some additional time at home.

137 Figure 8 shows the typical number of hours learners spent at home each week on their qualification. This shows that more than a third (37 per cent) spent three hours or more each week of their own time, 26 per cent spent between one and two hours, and 24 per cent put in an hour or less of their own time.

Figure 8: Number of hours at home (per week) typically spent on training
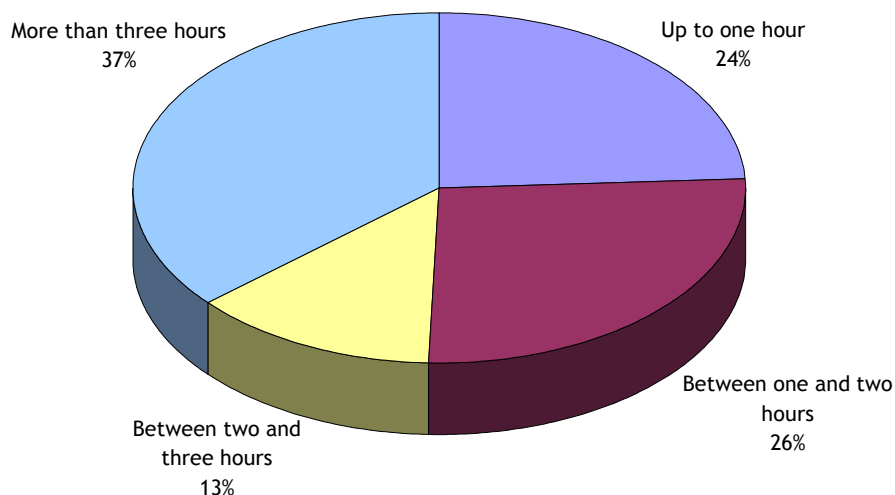
Base = all learners who had been training for at least a month and who spent some time at home on the training/qualification (N = 3,595); 'don't know' responses excluded (2 per cent).

Note: The survey captured information by the half hour and this has been combined into hourly intervals.

Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007

What takes up the bulk of learners' training and assessment time?

138   The learners in the longitudinal group who had been training for at least a month were asked about the distribution of time spent on the qualification. Table 28 shows that independent study took up most of the time for 37 per cent of the learners, while being assessed absorbed most of the time for 36 per cent. Some 34 per cent spent the bulk of the time being trained either by their tutor (17 per cent) or by their employer (7 per cent).

Table 28: What took/takes up most of the time spent on the qualification?

	Number	%
Independent study at home or at work	1,855	37
Being assessed	1,804	36
Training delivered by tutor	825	17
Training delivered by supervisor/employer/other colleague	370	7
Don't know	82	2
None of these	35	1

Base = all learners who had been training for at least a month (N = 4,971).

Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007

139　The subject of the qualification related to the task that took up most of the time spent on training: those studying a care-related subject were more likely to report independent study at home or at work (52 per cent) than were those on other subjects (30 per cent). Furthermore, those on a care-related subject were less likely to spend most of their time being assessed (26 per cent), than were those in other subject areas (41 per cent).

140　Some variation was also seen according to the type of training provider. Those studying with a public sector provider were more likely to report that most of their time was spent on independent study (40 per cent) than were those studying with an independent training provider (35 per cent). In contrast, those studying with a public sector provider were less likely to spend most of their time being assessed (33 per cent) than were those studying with an independent training provider (40 per cent).

Learners' progress with their qualifications

141　By the time of the wave 2 survey, 72 per cent of the longitudinal group had completed their qualifications (Table 29). Among the new entrant group sample, 52 per cent of learners were currently involved in training for their qualification and 37 per cent had completed. In its statistical first releases based on 2006/07 data, the LSC found that the success rate among those aged over 19 on NVQ Level 2 courses was 69 per cent. (The most popular qualifications being taken by the surveyed learners, and their involvement in Skills for Life provision, are shown in Annex A, Table A6 and Table A7.)

Table 29: Status of learners with their qualifications

Status	Wave 2 (longitudinal group)		Wave 2 (new entrant group)		Wave 1 comparison
	Number	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**%**
About to start	22	*	179	7	6
Still training	1,056	21	1,308	52	70
Early leaver/non-completer	286	6	113	4	3
Completed qualification	3,636	72	942	37	22
Course delayed or stopped due to provider problems	50	1	–	–	–
Other/not known	22	*	–	–	–

Base = all learners; wave 2 longitudinal group (N = 5,072); wave 2 new entrant group (N = 2,542); wave 1 survey (N = 7,500).

Note: * = less than 1 per cent.

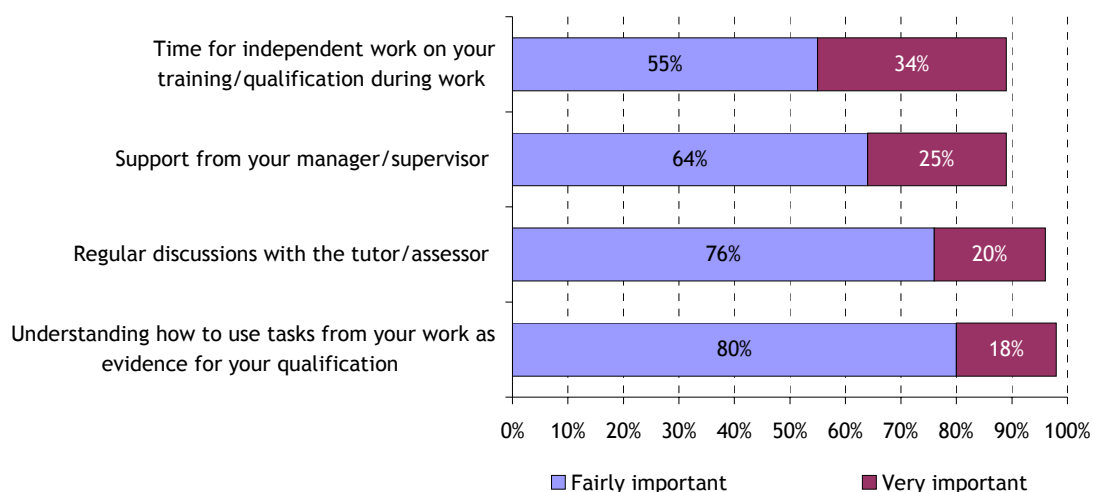*Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007; wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007*

Time taken to complete

142 The length of time it took to complete qualifications (among the 3,540 members of the longitudinal group) ranged from less than a week to around 18 months. The average duration of qualifications for this group was 26 weeks or six months.

143 If the number of hours spent with an assessor is combined with the number of hours spent working independently on qualifications both at home and at work, an estimate of the 'pace' of training can be calculated. Overall, the time spent per month was an average of 22 hours (with an inter-quartile range of 16 to 27 hours).

Learners' support needs

144 Learners in the longitudinal group were asked a series of questions to gauge the importance and presence of various types of support while engaged in their qualifications.

145 First, learners were asked about the importance of four different types of support. For each type, they were asked to rate its importance using a five-point scale, where a score of 1 means 'not at all important' and 5 means 'very important'. The results showed very high levels of importance for each of the types of support (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Importance of each type of support

Base = all learners who had been training for at least a month (N = 4,971).

Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007; wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

146 In Table 30, these results have been converted into an average or mean score, where a higher score indicates greater importance.

Table 30: Importance of types of support (mean score)

Support	Mean score
Understanding how to use tasks from your work as evidence for your qualification	4.8
Regular discussions with the tutor/assessor	4.7
Support from your manager/supervisor	4.4
Time for independent work on your training/qualification during work	4.4

Base = all learners who had been training for at least a month (N = 4,971).

Note: Mean scores range from 1 (not at all important) to 5 (very important).

Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007

147 Some variations in the mean scores were noted according to the personal characteristics of the learner. Most notable were as follows.

- By age, the youngest age group of 18- to 25-year-olds did not think any of the four types of support were as important as other age groups – their mean score for the importance of each of the support factors was lower than among those aged over 25.

- White learners reported lower levels of importance for all four types of support than those from BME groups.

- The views of learners with learning disabilities were largely consistent with other learners, although they placed a little more importance on support from managers and supervisors (4.5 mean score).

148 Table 31 shows that a high percentage of learners said they had received each of the four types of support. More than nine learners in ten (93 per cent) reported that they had received support that enabled them to understand how to use tasks taken from their work as evidence for their qualifications. The same number reported regular discussions with their training provider.

Table 31: Whether support was received

Support	Number saying yes	% saying yes
Understanding how to use tasks from your work as evidence for your qualification	4,609	93
Regular discussions with the tutor/assessor	4,614	93
Support from your manager/supervisor	4,177	84
Time for independent work on your training/qualification during work	4,096	83

Base = all learners who had been training for at least a month (N = 4,971).

Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007

149 Receipt of the types of support at work was noted slightly less frequently, with 84 per cent of the learners reporting support from their managers and 83 per cent reporting time at work for study.

150 Overall, 72 per cent of the learners received all four types of support, while 2 per cent reported that they had received none of them.

Relationship between the importance of each type of support and its receipt

151 The relationship between the importance of the support factors and the extent to which they were received is shown in Figure 10. Generally, the differences between the two scores are small, ranging from 3 per cent to 6 per cent, although the importance to learners of each type of support outstrips its supply. The largest discrepancy (of 6 per cent) was found with 'time for independent study', differences of 5 per cent were found with 'support from your manager/supervisor' and 'understanding how to use tasks

from your work as evidence', and a discrepancy of 3 per cent was found with 'regular discussions with the tutor/assessor'.

Figure 10: Relationship between each type of support and its receipt
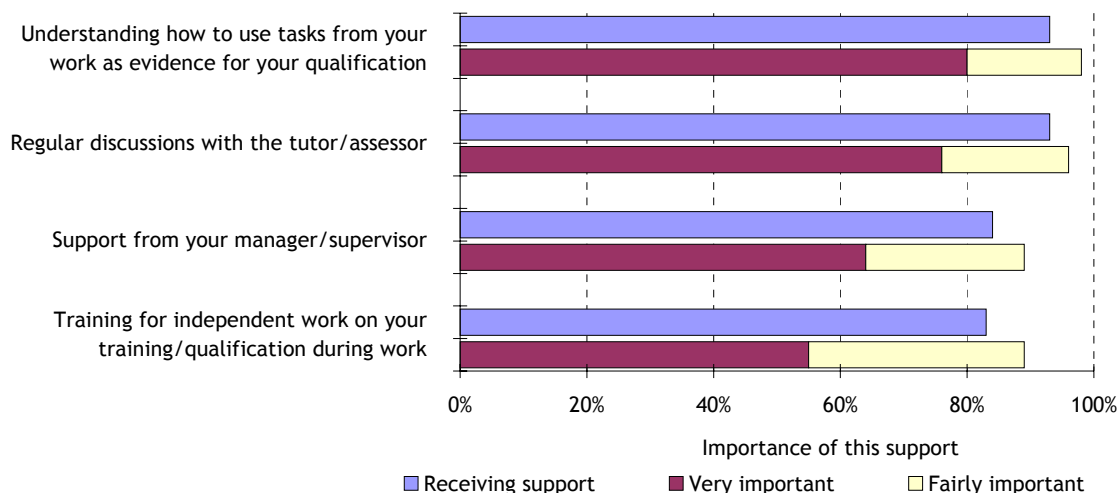
Base = all learners who had been training for at least a month (N = 4,971).
Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007

Further support needs

152 Learners were asked if there were other forms of support that they would have liked, in addition to the factors above; 17 per cent responded to this question (Table 32).

153 'Support from the assessor/tutor' was the most frequently mentioned form required (30 per cent). When this is clustered with 'support from assessor/tutor', 'support from the college/training provider' and 'time with/access to tutor', the importance of this kind of support is emphasised even more (55 per cent).

154 'Time in/off work' to enable learners to work towards their qualifications was the second most important factor and, when combined with 'more time to do the course', was important for 28 per cent of these learners. Fewer learners (7 per cent each) indicated the importance of the tutor keeping to the training plan and the importance of information before the training started about its content and the time it would take.

Table 32: Additional type of support required

	Number	%
Support from assessor/tutor	167	30
Time in/off work to do training	108	19
Time with/access to tutor	101	18
More time to do the course	50	9
Tutor being there/available as scheduled	42	7
Support from the college/training provider	39	7
Information in advance about the type and amount of work involved	38	7

Base = all learners who had been training for at least a month and who identified additional support needs (N = 567).

Notes: Multiple responses given; answers above 6 per cent shown.

Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007

155 The 7 per cent of learners who said they wanted more information in advance about the type and amount of work involved was examined in more detail to ascertain the extent of any information, advice and guidance they had received. There was no indication that they had received lower levels of advice or guidance than the group as a whole.

Expected and actual time to complete

156 The 3,633 learners in the longitudinal group who had already completed were asked some questions about the time it had taken to complete. Figure 11 shows that, for around half (52 per cent), completing the training took about as long as they had expected, while 32 per cent felt it had been shorter than expected and 16 per cent felt it had taken longer than expected.

Figure 11: Whether length of time to complete training/qualification was longer/shorter than expected
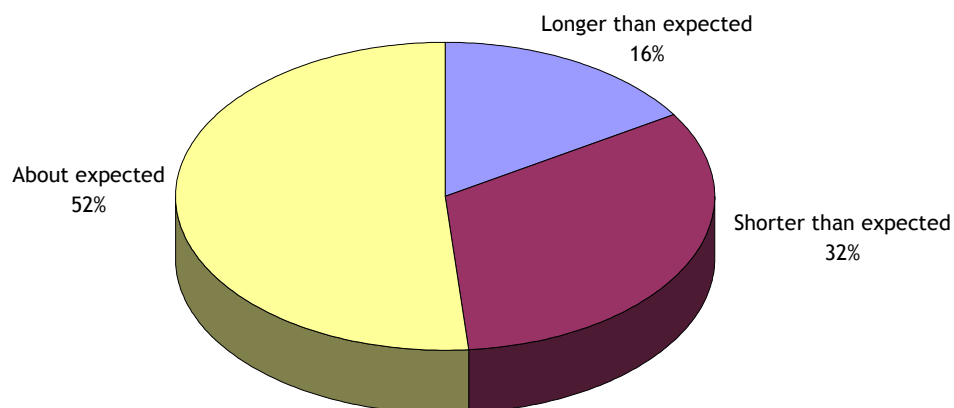
Base = completers only (N = 3,633); 'don't know' responses excluded (2 per cent).

Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007

157   There was some variation according to the subject being studied. Learners studying a care-related subject were more likely to report that their course had been shorter than expected (40 per cent, compared with 27 per cent of learners studying other subjects). The proportion saying that their training had taken longer than expected did not vary by subject (16 per cent for both subject groups), but those on a care-related course were less likely than those on other subjects to say that the duration of their course had been as expected (43 per cent and 55 per cent, respectively).

Factors that affect the speed of completion

158   The learners who had completed their qualifications were then asked to rate the importance of three different factors to the speed at which they had completed their training (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Factors affecting the speed of completion
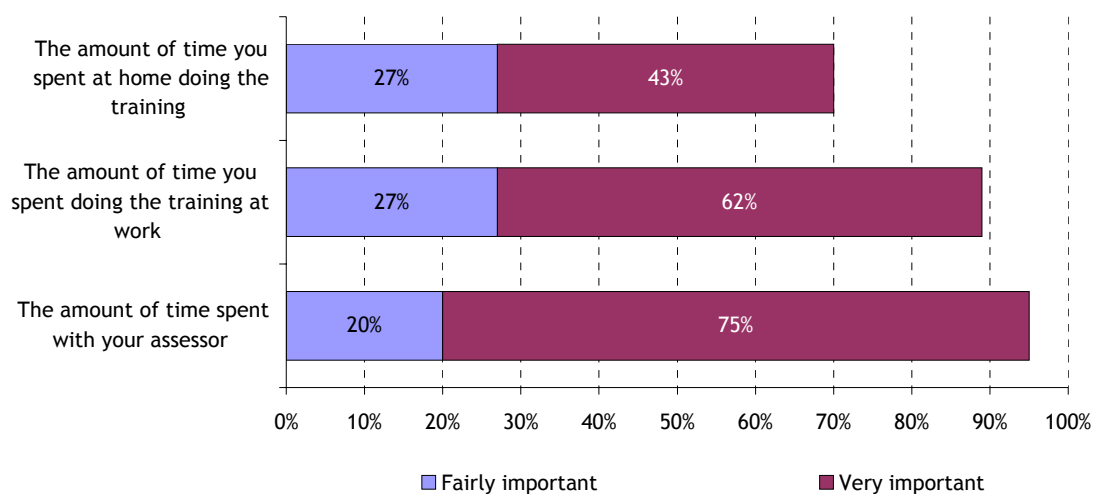
Base = completers only (N = 3,633).

Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007

159 Table 33 also shows these results as an average or mean score (column 1), where a higher score indicates greater importance. (Columns 2–4 show the variation in whether learners had completed in the time they had originally expected.) The first column shows that 'the amount of time spent with your assessor' was thought to be the most important of the three aspects, with a score of 4.7 out of a maximum 5.0.

Table 33: Importance of factors to speed at which training was completed (mean score) by length of time taken to complete

	Overall importance	Importance by time spent training		
		Longer than expected	Shorter than expected	As expected
	Mean score	Mean score	Mean score	Mean score
The amount of time spent with your assessor	4.7	4.6	4.7	4.7
The amount of time you spent doing the training at work	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.7
The amount of time you spent at home doing the training	3.7	3.6	4.0	3.7

Base = completers only (N = 3,633).

Note: Mean scores range from 1 (not at all important) to 5 (very important).

Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007

160 The amount of time spent with the assessor, despite being the most important overall, showed little difference according to the time taken to complete. The most notable differences were that those completing in a shorter time than expected more frequently mentioned the amount of time spent at home working towards their qualification; and those who finished in the expected time tended to think that the amount of time they had had at work was more of an influence.

161 The longitudinal group were offered an opportunity to identify other factors that affected the speed at which they had completed, and 65 per cent thought that other factors had influenced the speed at which they had completed their training. Table 34 shows these factors for those who completed more quickly than expected, and Table 35 for those who completed more slowly than expected. For both subgroups, the presence or absence of a good, supportive, contactable tutor was the factor most frequently highlighted.

162 Course-related factors were most important to those completing in less time than expected (Table 34). A good, supportive, contactable tutor (24 per cent) who visited learners frequently (7 per cent), along with training with colleagues or a group (6 per cent) formed the most positive influences on the speed of completion. The next strongest influences were learner related: 'personal hard work or motivation' (16 per cent); 'I wanted to get it completed as quickly as possible' (10 per cent); 'personal knowledge or experience' (6 per cent). Work-related factors were the third most important: having experience 'on the job' was the key factor here (12 per cent), while support from the employer (8 per cent) and the employer's push for learners to complete (6 per cent) were also important.

Table 34: Other (positive) influences on speed of completing the training (those completing in a shorter time than expected)

Factor		Number	%
Course related	Having a good, supportive or contactable assessor/tutor	113	24
	Frequent visits from assessor/tutor	31	7
	Doing the training with colleagues/group	27	6
Learner related	Personal hard work or motivation	74	16
	I wanted to get it completed as quickly as possible	47	10
	Personal knowledge or experience	28	6
Work related	Previous work or on-the-job experience	56	12
	Support from employer, manager or supervisor	36	8
	Employer wanted us to complete as quickly as possible	27	6

Base = completers who thought that other factors were important, and those completing in a shorter time than expected (N = 472).

Notes: Multiple responses given; answers over 5 per cent shown.

Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007

163 The greatest hindrances to the speed of completion (Table 35) were course related and surrounded the (poor) relationship with the tutor or assessor for 12 per cent, a lack of contact with the tutor for 9 per cent, and for 8 per cent of learners a change of tutor/assessor while they were taking their qualification. Work-related factors affected 12 per cent of learners (lack of time at work and pace of work – 6 per cent each). Personal issues affected the training experience of 8 per cent of these learners.

Table 35: (Negative) influences on speed of completing the training (those completing in a longer time than expected)

Factor		Number	%
Course related	Not having a good, supportive or contactable assessor/tutor	30	12
	Lack of contact with assessor/tutor	23	9
	Change of assessor/tutor	20	8
Learner related	Personal issues (e.g. bereavement, illness, pregnancy)	21	8
Work related	Not enough time at work to spend on the qualification	16	6
	Being busy at work	16	6

Base = completers who thought that other factors were important, and those completing in a longer time than expected (N = 250).

Notes: Multiple responses given; answers over 5 per cent shown.

Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007

Ease of completion

164 All completers in the longitudinal group survey were asked about the ease with which they had achieved their qualification. Table 36 shows that 51 per cent found the training challenging (either very or fairly), 42 per cent found it easy (either very or fairly). There was a tendency for those who found their training easy to have higher-level prior qualifications than those who found it challenging: 50 per cent of those who claimed to already hold a Level 2 or Level 3 qualification found the training easy, compared to 39 per cent of those with no qualifications or qualifications below Level 2.

Table 36: How easy or challenging was it to complete the training?

	Number	%
Very challenging	513	14
Fairly challenging	1,355	37
Neither challenging nor easy	251	7
Fairly easy	1,016	28
Very easy	492	14
Don't know	6	*

Base = completers only (N = 3,633).

Note: * = less than 1 per cent.

Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007

165 Despite being more likely to say that the duration of the course was shorter than expected (see paragraph 157), those studying a care-related subject were more likely to report that they had found the course to be challenging (60 per cent), when compared to learners working towards qualifications in other subjects (47 per cent).

166 Those with learning difficulties, disabilities or health problems were also more likely to have found the training to be challenging (60 per cent, compared with 51 per cent of the other learners). BME learners were a little more likely to have found the training challenging (58 per cent) than white learners (51 per cent) and, in general terms, older learners found the training to be more challenging than younger learners (45 per cent of 18- to 25-year-olds found the training challenging, compared to 52 per cent of those aged over 25).

167 The completers were then split into two groups – those who had found it easy to complete the training and those who had found it challenging – and were asked why this had been the case (see Tables 37 and 38). Those who had found it challenging were most likely to indicate the level of the course as the reason, while those who had found it easy were most likely to indicate their prior level of knowledge as being helpful.

Table 37: What made it challenging to complete the training

Factor		Number	%
Course related	The level of the course	310	17
	The format of the qualification	217	12
	Time needed to study/amount of work needed	204	11
	Difficulty understanding questions or assignments	148	8
	The pace of the course	97	5
	Gathering information/research	90	5
	The level of support received from the tutor/assessor	60	3
Learner related	Haven't studied for a qualification for a long time, or ever	181	10
	Problems with the written work, English or grammar	153	8
	New subject area or lack of previous experience	137	7
	Personal level of motivation	128	7
	My age	73	4
	Family commitments	66	4
Work related	Fitting the qualification around work	87	5

Base = completers only, and those saying it was very or fairly challenging to complete the training (N = 1,868).

Notes: Multiple responses given; answers above 2 per cent shown.

Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007

Table 38: What made it easy to complete the training

Factor		Number	%
Course related	The level of support received from the tutor/assessor	425	28
	The level of the course	366	24
	The format of the qualification	111	7
	The pace of the course	38	3
Learner related	Already have a good experience or knowledge of the area/my job	630	42
	Personal level of motivation	120	8
Work related	The level of support received from the employer	157	10

Base = completers only, and those saying it was very or fairly easy to complete the training (N = 1,508).

Notes: Multiple responses given; answers above 2 per cent shown.

Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007

Difficulties experienced by learners who completed

168 The 72 per cent of learners in the longitudinal group who had completed their qualifications were asked whether they had experienced any problems while training. The vast majority (87 per cent) said they had not, though 13 per cent said they had. The proportion of learners experiencing difficulties increased to 20 per cent if the assessor had changed during the qualification (see paragraph 163). In contrast, those who had had the same assessor throughout had a lower rate of difficulties (12 per cent). Other variations were also evident.

- Those on care-related subjects were more likely to report difficulties (16 per cent) than were those in other subject areas (11 per cent).

- Learners with a learning difficulty, disability or health problem were more likely to report a difficulty (19 per cent) than were other learners (13 per cent).

- Older learners were more likely to report a difficulty (16 per cent of those aged 46–55, and 14 per cent of those aged 56 and above) compared with younger learners (11 per cent of those aged 18–45).

- BME learners were also more likely to report difficulties during the qualification (18 per cent) than were white learners (12 per cent).

169 The completers who had experienced problems were asked what the difficulties had been (Table 39). The most frequently noted related to understanding the questions or assignments (19 per cent) and the format of the qualification (11 per cent).

Table 39: Difficulties experienced while doing the qualification

Factor		Number	%
Course related	Questions or assignments were hard to understand or ambiguous	78	19
	Didn't like the format of the qualification	46	11
	The quality of teaching/training or assessment was poor	36	9
	I needed more time with the assessor	20	5
	Level too high	19	5
	The assessor/trainer stopped coming to my workplace	16	4
	Pace too fast	14	4
Learner related	Level of literacy or numeracy	26	7
	My personal/domestic circumstances changed (e.g. moved house, illness, pregnancy, bereavement)	15	4
	I did not have enough time at home to do the training	11	3
	Learning difficulties	10	3
	I lost interest	8	2
Work related	I did not have enough time at work to do the training	28	7

Base = all completers who said they had difficulties (N = 403).
Notes: Multiple responses given; answers above 2 per cent shown.
Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007

170 Those who said they had experienced difficulties during the course were asked whether they had discussed their difficulties with anyone, and most (83 per cent) had. Learners had chosen a number of different people to speak to about their problems (see below; base = completers who had spoken to someone, N = 389; multiple responses given) and this again demonstrates the importance of contact with the tutor/assessor.

- 72 per cent discussed their difficulties with their tutor or assessor.

- 39 per cent discussed their difficulties with their employer, manager or supervisor.

- 8 per cent discussed their difficulties with colleagues.

- 3 per cent discussed their difficulties with friends or family.

- 2 per cent discussed their difficulties with their college or training provider.

- 2 per cent discussed their difficulties with their union or union learning representative.

Learners who pull out

171   In the longitudinal group survey, 254 learners (5 per cent of the total) had left the course without completing it, 90 of them by the time of the wave 1 survey, and 164 of them by wave 2. In year 2004/05 of the employer training pilots, the proportion of early leavers was 16 per cent (Hillage et al., 2006). Generally speaking, younger learners accounted for a higher proportion of early leavers than older learners – e.g. early leavers accounted for 10 per cent of the 18–25 age group, but only 4 per cent of the 56 and above age group.

Time spent before dropping out

172   The length of time spent before leaving the course ranged from less than a month to 18 months, with the highest proportion (69 per cent) saying that they had left the course after studying for between one and six months (see Table 40).

Table 40: Length of time spent before leaving/dropping out

Time spent training	Number	%
1–6 months	173	69
Less than 1 month	57	22
7–12 months	18	7
13–18 months	3	*
Don't know	3	*

Base = early leavers/non-completers only (N = 254).
Note: * = less than 1 per cent.
Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007

Reasons for leaving early

173 Both the longitudinal group survey and the new entrant group survey asked the non-completers (6 per cent of the longitudinal group and 4 per cent of the new entrants group) about their reasons for leaving their qualifications early. Table 41 shows that, for both survey groups, the most common reason was leaving their employer. While the magnitude of the longitudinal group's reasons had changed over time, the order (most to least frequently noted) remained much the same.

Table 41: Reasons for leaving course early

	Wave 2 (longitudinal group)		Wave 2 (new entrant group)		Wave 1 comparison
	Number	%	Number	%	%
I left the employer I originally signed up for training with	38	23	36	32	44
My personal/domestic circumstances changed (e.g. moved house, illness, pregnancy, bereavement)	32	20	18	16	19
I did not have enough time at work to do the training	21	13	17	15	17
The assessor/trainer stopped coming to my workplace	15	9	3	3	(not reported)
The quality of teaching/training or assessment was poor	10	6	9	8	9
I wasn't learning anything new	9	6	5	4	(not reported)
I did not have enough time at home to do the training	6	4	16	14	8
I lost interest	5	3	6	5	5
I changed to a different course	5	3	1	1	(not reported)
The training/qualification was not relevant to my job	4	2	5	4	8

Base = all those who left the training without completing it (N = 164 for longitudinal group and 113 for wave 2 new entrant group); wave 1 (N = 725).

Notes: Multiple responses given; answers above 1 per cent shown for longitudinal group and corresponding data for new entrant group.

Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007; wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

174 All early leavers in the longitudinal group survey were asked whether anything would have helped them to stay on the qualification. Half (47 per

cent) felt that there was, and this group was asked to specify what this help would have been (Table 42).

Table 42: What would have helped you to stay on the qualification?

	Number	%
More support/someone to go to for help	21	18
If I had stayed with the same employer	17	14
More time allowed for training in work hours	11	9
More time with the tutor/assessor	9	8
If the tutor had been there/available as scheduled	9	8
If training had been scheduled around work commitments/rota	8	7

Base = all non-completers who reported that something would have helped them to stay on the course (N = 118).

Notes: Multiple responses given; answers above 6 per cent shown.

Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007

175   This shows that, for many, it was the need for more support or someone to go to for help (18 per cent). Some 14 per cent said that staying with the same employer would have helped. Time was also a factor: for 9 per cent of these learners, more time at work would have helped; 8 per cent thought they might have completed if they had had more time with their assessor or tutor.

Gains and Results from Training

176 In this section, analyses are presented that combine the two survey samples (the longitudinal and the new entrant groups) although it is the longitudinal group that provides more detail. The section reviews the outcomes of training, who learners think has benefited, and their intentions towards further learning. Their satisfaction with their experience forms the final part of the analysis.

Key findings

177 The key findings of the survey are as follows.

- Nearly all the new entrant group hoped to gain a qualification (92 per cent) and the skills to help them in their current and future jobs (86 per cent) from their involvement with Train to Gain.

- Half of the learners who had completed their qualification in the longitudinal group reported that they had acquired new skills (47 per cent).

  o Of these, 92 per cent said they had used these skills in their current job.

  o Over nine in ten thought that achieving a qualification was important.

- Just under a quarter (22 per cent) of the longitudinal group who had completed their qualifications said that they had received a bonus, promotion or pay increase as a direct result. Accruing the responses for the longitudinal group across the survey waves, half had achieved a financial outcome following training.

  o Three-quarters of the longitudinal group completers (75 per cent) thought that they and their employer had gained in equal measure from the training.

- o Some 68 per cent were planning to stay with their employer for the foreseeable future.

- Just under half of the learners (46 per cent) who had completed their qualification in the longitudinal group had taken part in a discussion about further learning options, mainly with either their manager or their tutor/assessor.

  - o Almost a fifth (17 per cent) of these completers had started another training programme (typically either a Level 3 or in-house training).

- Of those who had not yet started any further training, 57 per cent thought it very or fairly likely that they would take a higher-level qualification in the next three years.

  - o Almost two-thirds (64 per cent) of those who had had a discussion about future learning options said they were likely to undertake a higher qualification, compared with 51 per cent of those who had had no discussion.

  - o Concerns about finance (12 per cent) and time (6 per cent) were the main barriers identified by learners who had yet to take up further learning.

- Over nine learners in ten (92 per cent) who had completed their qualification in the longitudinal sample were satisfied with their overall experience.

  - o Overall satisfaction was highest among learners who had had both a pre-entry discussion and an assessment of their skills gaps, and among those who found their qualification challenging. It was lowest among those who had had little or no say about whether or not they should do the training.

  - o Satisfaction with particular elements of the process was also high, with 88 per cent saying that they were satisfied with the initial information

and advice; 87 per cent were satisfied with the length of time it took to do the training; and 85 per cent were satisfied with the support they had received from their employer.

Potential and actual gains from training

Outcomes and career intentions

178 The new entrant group of learners was sampled from the ILR data available at the end of June 2007, following the wave 1 survey. Generally, they were at an earlier stage of their qualifications than the longitudinal group. In the survey of the new entrant group, two groups of learners were asked a similar question about the outcomes of training.

- Those who were currently training, or were waiting to start, were asked what they hoped to gain from the training – their responses are recorded as 'anticipated'.

- Those who had completed their qualification were asked what they had gained as a result of training – their responses are recorded as 'actual'.

179 Table 43 compares the results between these groups (and the responses of the learners at wave 1) and shows that agreement was high with most of the outcomes. Although the two groups comprised different learners, and therefore the responses were likely to vary a little, the magnitude and order of responses were relatively consistent. Both groups most frequently mentioned (92 per cent) that gaining a qualification was the outcome they were seeking. The next three most popular responses related to skills gained that would help with current and future jobs and employers.

Table 43: Outcomes of training – both anticipated and actual (different bases)

Outcome	Anticipated		Actual		Wave 1 comparison (anticipated)	Wave 1 comparison (actual)
	Number	%	Number	%	%	%
A qualification	1,365	92	864	92	93	93
Skills to help me do a better job in the future	1,284	86	753	80	88	81
Skills that will look good to future employers	1,273	86	817	87	87	88
Skills to help me do my current job better	1,211	81	701	75	n/a	n/a
The chance to learn something new	1,177	79	680	72	83	78
Improved self-confidence	1,095	74	692	74	79	78
Skills to help me do a different job in the future	901	61	552	59	65	63
Better pay	862	58	307	33	62	43
A promotion	601	40	213	23	n/a	n/a
None of these/nothing	13	1	17	2	1	1

Base = 'anticipated' columns represent all those currently training or those waiting to start (N = 1,487); 'actual' columns represent all completers (N = 939).

Note: Multiple responses given.

Source: Wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

180 Generally, there were only slight differences between what the new entrant group at wave 2 and learners at wave 1 felt they **would** gain, and what they felt they **had** gained. However, on a few factors, the new entrant group's responses were less positive than those seen at wave 1.

- Compared to the learners at wave 1, the new entrant group were significantly less likely to anticipate the opportunity to learn something new, to improve self-confidence, or to gain skills to help with a different job in the future and get better pay.

- The completers in the new entrant group were significantly less likely to say that they had had the chance to learn something new, had gained self-confidence and had gained skills for a future job or better pay.

181 The likelihood of achieving a financial outcome was explored, and learners studying care-related subjects were significantly more likely to achieve better pay than those on other subjects. This is borne out by the qualitative research in wave 1. The earlier research showed that workers in care-related employment were offered a small increase by their employers on qualification (this could be a few pence per hour).

182 Gains and outcomes were also explored among the learners in the longitudinal group who had been training for at least one month (the question included an open category, in addition to up to eight set options, none of which was 'gaining a qualification'). Table 44 shows that, for the survey as a whole, three out of four of the responses were related to skills in terms of future employers, future jobs and current jobs.

Table 44: Outcome of training

Outcome/what gained	Number	%
Skills that will look good to future employers	4,377	88
Skills to help me do a better job in the future	4,224	85
Improved self-confidence	3,800	76
Skills to help me do my current job better *	3,589	72
Improved motivation at work	3,384	68
Increased responsibility at work *	2,332	47
Increased promotion prospects	2,168	44
An award from my employer *	1,155	23

Base = all learners who had been training for at least a month (overall N = 4,971).

Notes: Multiple responses given; answers above 10 per cent shown;* = only asked of those in work.

Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007

183 Women exceeded men in their agreement with almost all the possible outcomes. The greatest gender differences were seen with the statements 'improved self-confidence' (indicated by 81 per cent of women, compared to 68 per cent of men), and 'skills to help me do my current job better' (agreed with by 76 per cent of women and 65 per cent of men).

184 Similarly, BME learners were more likely to agree with almost all the possible outcomes to a greater degree than were white learners. The greatest

differences by ethnicity were evident with 'increased responsibility at work' (69 per cent of BME learners and 46 per cent of white learners), 'increased promotion prospects' (58 per cent BME, and 43 per cent white) and 'an award from my employer' (38 per cent BME, and 22 per cent white).

185 Some patterns within age groups were also evident and related to the older learners' position in the labour market. For example, 56 per cent of the young age group (18- to 25-year-olds) were hoping for 'increased promotion prospects' but this declined with age to 30 per cent for learners aged 56 and over. Similarly, 'increased responsibility at work' decreased from 57 per cent of the 18- to 25-year-olds to 40 per cent of the oldest age group.

186 Learners in the longitudinal group survey were asked whether they thought they had learned any new skills as a result of the training, and 49 per cent reported that they had. This varied according to occupation, with the highest proportions of 57 per cent and 53 per cent being found among professional occupations and administrative and secretarial occupations, respectively. Learners who were less likely to agree worked as process, plant and machine operatives (40 per cent) and in skilled trades occupations (43 per cent).

187 Half (47 per cent) of the 2,106 learners who had completed in the longitudinal group had gained new skills and were asked whether or not they had used these new skills in their current job. More than nine in ten (92 per cent) had done so. This was highest among professional occupations (97 per cent), and sales and customer service occupations (96 per cent). The lowest skill-usage figures were found among managers and senior officials (87 per cent), and elementary occupations and administrative and secretarial occupations (both 89 per cent).

188 All the members of the longitudinal group who were working (N = 4,826) were then asked about their future career intentions. Table 45 shows that 68 per cent planned to stay with their current employer for the foreseeable future. Overall, their future career plans varied little from their position at wave 1.

Table 45: Future career intentions

	Number	%	Wave 1 comparison %
I plan to stay with my current employer for the foreseeable future	3,272	68	71
I am likely to stay with my current employer for at least another year	695	14	14
I plan to leave my current employer as soon as the opportunity arises	354	7	6
I am likely to leave my current employer within the next year	294	6	6
I expect to have to leave my current employer within the next year due to redundancy or relocation	96	2	3
I expect to have to leave my current employer when my contract ends	65	1	(not asked)
Don't know	50	1	(not reported)

Base = all those in employment, longitudinal group (N = 4,826); wave 1 survey (N = 7,192).

Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007

189 Grouping these responses into two general categories of intentions – to stay with or to leave their employer – showed that 82 per cent intended to stay and 17 per cent intended to leave. The early leaver group was more likely to be planning to leave their employer (24 per cent) than those who had completed their qualification or who were still training (both 16 per cent).

Importance of achieving the qualification

190 Learners in the longitudinal group who had completed their training by the time of the wave 2 survey (N = 3,633) were questioned about the importance of achieving the qualification, both on a personal level and for their employer. Table 46 shows their responses.

191 The personal importance of achieving a qualification was rated highly, i.e. 72 per cent said this was 'very important' and 21 per cent said it was 'fairly important'. Learners also thought that the achievement of a qualification was highly important to their employer (although less so than personally), with 59 per cent rating it as 'very important' and 24 per cent saying it was 'fairly important'.

Table 46: Importance of achieving qualification

	Personal		To employers	
	Number	**%**	**Number**	**%**
Very important	2,605	72	2,156	59
Fairly important	743	21	852	24
Neither important nor unimportant	61	2	151	4
Fairly unimportant	157	4	186	5
Not at all important	64	2	157	4
Don't know	3	*	131	4

Base = completers only (N = 3,633).

Note: * = less than 1 per cent.

Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007

192 The perceived importance of the qualifications to employers varied by industry.

- Health, social care, education and public services scored the highest (88 per cent).

- Distribution, transport and logistics (73 per cent) and the retail sector (67 per cent) scored the lowest.

193 All completers in the longitudinal group were then asked about the possible consequences of gaining the qualification, and 22 per cent reported that they had achieved a bonus, promotion or pay increase **as a direct result** of qualifying. This proportion was particularly high for those working in personal service occupations (33 per cent), and was lowest for process, plant and machine operatives (11 per cent). By sector, receiving a bonus, promotion or pay increase was least common in the retail sector (10 per cent) and engineering and manufacturing (12 per cent).

194 There is no direct comparison on this point from the wave 1 survey, as the question wording changed. At wave 1, learners were asked whether they had achieved a pay increase (43 per cent) and a promotion (30 per cent) **following** qualification, rather than as a direct result of it.

Who benefits from the training and who gains most

195 The new entrant group were asked about the extent to which they and/or their employers benefited from the training, while the completers in the longitudinal group were asked who had benefited most from the training.

196 Table 47 shows their responses. For new entrants (and the wave 1 comparison) results are shown for two groups: those currently training or waiting to start (i.e. an anticipated response of who would benefit from the training), and those who had already completed (i.e. an actual response of who had benefited).

Table 47: Who benefits from the training – both anticipated and actual (different bases)

	Longitudinal group		New entrant group				Wave 1 comparison	
	Actual		Anticipated		Actual		Anticipated	Actual
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	%	%
You only	693	19	167	12	117	12	13	18
Your employer only	123	3	64	4	55	6	2	4
Both you and your employer equally	2,711	75	1,180	82	735	78	83	74
Neither you nor your employer	90	3	28	2	31	3	2	4
Too early to say/Don't know	16	1	9	1	4	*	1	1

Base = 'anticipated' columns represent all those in the longitudinal group currently training or those waiting to start, and who are currently in work (N = 1,448); 'actual' columns represent all longitudinal group completers (N = 942); wave 1 'anticipated' (N = 5,586) and 'actual' (N = 1,642); longitudinal group completers (N = 3,633).

Source: Wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

197 Most learners think that both they and their employer benefit equally, with responses ranging from 75 per cent (completers in the longitudinal group) to 82 per cent (new entrant group that anticipated benefits).

198 There were only slight differences between the new entrant group and the responses of learners at wave 1. New entrant group learners who had completed were more likely than the completers in the wave 1 survey to think that the benefits were shared between them and their employers. The new

entrant group learners who had completed were also less likely than learners who had completed at wave 1 to think that only they had benefited. The longitudinal group's responses were consistent with those given at wave 1.

Further training

Many completers discuss further learning options

199 Both the longitudinal group survey and the new entrant group survey asked completers whether or not anyone had talked to them about further training options since they had finished their qualification.

200 Four completers in ten (39 per cent) in the new entrant group survey reported that they had been spoken to about further training options.

- By occupation, the highest proportions discussing further training were to be found in personal service occupations (60 per cent), and associate professional and technical occupations (53 per cent). The lowest proportions were in skilled trades occupations (24 per cent) and process, plant and machine operatives (26 per cent).

- Some 43 per cent of those studying with public sector providers had discussed further training options, compared with 36 per cent of those with independent training providers.

201 In the longitudinal group survey (learners who began and therefore completed their training earlier than the new entrants) 46 per cent of completers said they had discussed further training options. (In the wave 1 survey, 40 per cent of the completer group had discussed further training.) The likelihood of having a discussion about this varied in a similar way to the experience of the new entrant group.

202 Those in the longitudinal group survey who had been spoken to (N = 1,668, multiple responses given) had discussed further training with:

- employer, manager or supervisor (53 per cent);

- tutor or assessor (46 per cent);

- college or training provider (6 per cent);

- union representative or learning representative (3 per cent); and

- colleagues, friends/family, careers service/information, advice and guidance (IAG) (1 per cent each).

203 This group was asked how helpful it had been to discuss further training options. Table 48 shows that an overall 90 per cent found it helpful (64 per cent finding it 'very helpful' and 26 per cent finding it 'fairly helpful').

Table 48: How helpful was it to have been spoken to about further training options?

	Number	%
Very helpful	1,068	64
Fairly helpful	431	26
Not very helpful	107	6
Not helpful at all	38	2
Don't know	24	1

Base = all completers who had been spoken to about further training options (N = 1,668).
Source: Wave 2 longitudinal survey, first follow-up group, autumn 2007

204 Completers in the longitudinal and new entrant groups who had not yet started any further training were asked about the likelihood that they would do a **higher-level** qualification in the next three years. Responses were similar across the two surveys, with 57 per cent thinking it likely in the longitudinal group, and 61 per cent in the new entrant group (see Table 49).

205 The proportion of the longitudinal group who thought that training towards a higher qualification was likely fell between the two waves of the survey by 12 percentage points. This can be explained by a decrease in the proportion who thought further higher-level training was 'very likely'. This may suggest the importance of timely advice about progression opportunities.

Table 49: Likelihood of doing a higher-level qualification in the next three years

| | Wave 2 (longitudinal group) | | Wave 2 (new entrant group) | | Wave 1 comparison |
	Number	%	Number	%	%
Very likely	869	29	323	34	40
Fairly likely	838	28	252	27	29
Fairly unlikely	515	17	133	14	14
Very unlikely	630	21	175	19	13
Too early to say	101	3	29	3	3
Don't know	82	3	30	3	2

Base = longitudinal group learners who had completed and not yet started a subsequent course (N = 3,035); wave 2 new entrant group learners who had completed (N = 942); wave 1 (N = 1,642).

Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007; wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

206   Learners who discussed further training options were more likely to think about doing another higher-level qualification (Table 50). The proportion of the longitudinal group that was 'very likely' to do higher-level training rose from 23 per cent of those who had not been spoken to, to 37 per cent of those who had. Similarly, in the new entrant group survey, the equivalent proportions rose from 26 per cent to 47 per cent.

Table 50: Likelihood of doing a higher-level qualification in the next three years by whether learners had been involved in a discussion about further training options (%)

| | Wave 2 (longitudinal group) | | Wave 2 (new entrant group) | |
| | Whether been spoken to about further training options | | Whether been spoken to about further training options | |
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Very likely	37	23	47	26
Fairly likely	27	28	24	28
Fairly unlikely	14	19	10	17
Very unlikely	17	23	13	22
Too early to say	3	3	3	4
Don't know	2	3	2	4

Base = wave 2 (longitudinal group): completers who have not yet started a subsequent course (N = 3,035); wave 2 (new entrant group): all completers (N = 942).

Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007; wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

207 Those in the longitudinal group who had found their discussion about further learning helpful more frequently said that they were likely to do further training (75 per cent) than did those who had not found their discussion helpful (40 per cent).

Some learners had already started more training

208 The longitudinal group survey asked all completers (N = 3,633) whether they had subsequently started any additional training, and 17 per cent reported that they had. There was a slight difference according to the type of training provider they had studied with (19 per cent of those who had studied with a public sector provider, compared with 14 per cent of those who had studied with an independent training provider). Greater variation was found, however, in relation to the subject of the training course: 23 per cent of those studying a care-related subject had started subsequent study, compared with only 13 per cent of those on other subjects.

209 Learners who had completed their training in a shorter time than expected were the most likely to have signed up for additional training (18 per cent). Those who had completed their course in the time they had expected had a continuation rate of 16 per cent; and those who took longer than expected had the lowest rate (13 per cent).

210 Table 51 shows the training currently being taken by this group: the most popular qualification was an NVQ (32 per cent); 8 per cent had progressed into in-house training at their work. Two-fifths were involved in training but did not specify what this was. Among those involved in NVQs, Level 3 was most frequently cited (62 per cent). Some 31 per cent of the NVQ group were working towards a Level 2.

Table 51: The qualifications being taken by learners who progressed into further training

	Number	%
NVQ	191	32
(Entry Level	4	2)
(Level 1	3	2)
(Level 2	60	31)
(Level 3	119	62)
(Level 4	2	1)
(Not known	3	2)
In-house training	49	8
Other not specified	228	38

Base = completers who had started a subsequent course (N = 598).
Note: Only responses of 5 per cent or greater shown.

Source: Wave 2 longitudinal survey, first follow-up group, autumn 2007

Early leavers hopeful of returning to learning

211 The early leavers in the new entrant group were asked how likely it was that they would return to learning in the future. While they were less likely than the completers to feel that they would, 30 per cent said it was 'very likely', and 21 per cent said it was 'fairly likely' (Table 52).

Table 52: Likelihood of signing up for future training

	Number	%	Wave 1 comparison %
Very likely	34	30	42
Fairly likely	24	21	19
Fairly unlikely	14	12	13
Very unlikely	34	30	22
Too early to say	4	4	3
Don't know	3	3	2

Base = all those who left the training without completing it (N = 113); wave 1 (N = 186).

Source: Wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

Barriers to further learning

212   The completers in the longitudinal group who had not yet started a new course (N = 3,035) were asked about possible barriers to further learning. Some 59 per cent reported that there were no barriers to them progressing in training. Table 53 shows the barriers identified by the remaining 41 per cent. A lack of funding or money was most frequently mentioned (29 per cent) with a lack of time second most common (17 per cent). Age was a barrier for 13 per cent of this group, and a further 10 per cent said they had personal barriers, such as ill-health, to further learning.

Table 53: Barriers to taking up further learning.

	Number	%
Lack of funding/money	366	29
Lack of time	209	17
Age/soon to retire	159	13
Personal barriers (e.g. changed domestic circumstances)	125	10
Employer would not support it	89	7
Motivation, not interested, attitude to learning	87	7
Family/home commitments	81	7
If I was to change job	57	5
Job insecurity	45	4
Childcare costs/lack of childcare	38	3
Work commitments	24	2
Course not available	22	2

Base = completers who had not started a subsequent course and noted that there were barriers to further learning (N = 1,255).

Notes: Multiple responses given; answers above 1 per cent shown.

Source: Wave 2 longitudinal survey, first follow-up group, autumn 2007

Satisfaction with the training or qualification

213 The longitudinal group survey asked all completers (N = 3,633) about their satisfaction with five different elements of the training or qualification, and asked learners to rate their satisfaction on a seven-point scale where 1 means 'extremely dissatisfied' and 7 means 'extremely satisfied'. Their responses are shown in Figure 13.

Figure 13: Learners' satisfaction with elements of the training experience
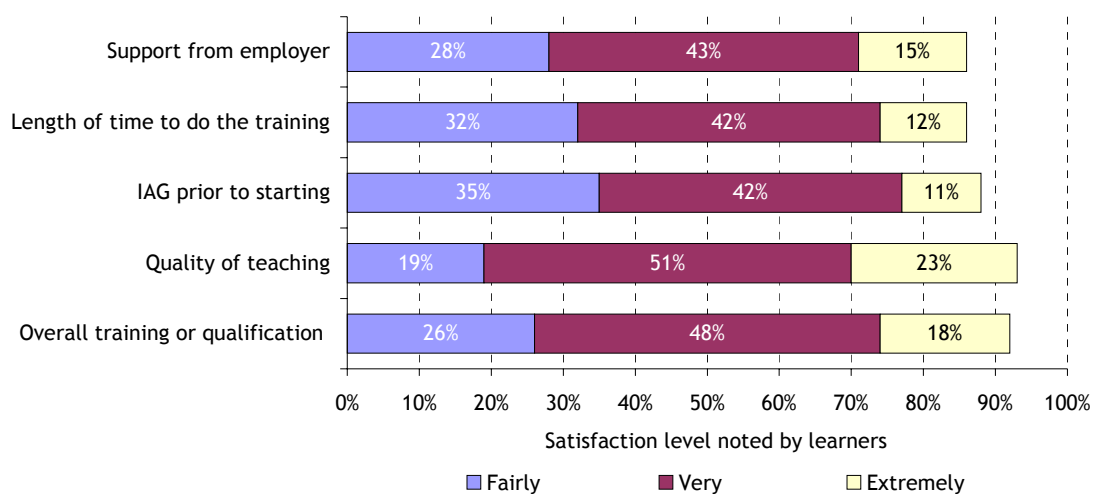
Source: Wave 2 longitudinal survey, first follow-up group, autumn 2007

214 The highest levels of satisfaction were noted for:

- the overall training or qualification (92 per cent); and

- the quality of the teaching received (93 per cent).

215 The LSC uses a combination of 'extremely satisfied' and 'very satisfied' to measure levels of satisfaction within its provision. In the FE sector generally, satisfaction by this measure is 67 per cent (LSC, 2006). In wave 1, 77 per cent of the Train to Gain learners were either 'extremely satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the overall training or qualification. By wave 2 there had been a significant decrease in satisfaction for the longitudinal group to 66 per cent. This can be explained by a significant decrease in the numbers who were 'extremely satisfied' with their training.

216 Satisfaction with the 'quality of the teaching' received and the 'overall training or qualification' was also discussed with completers in the wave 2 new entrant group survey (N = 942). Their results were of a similar magnitude.

- Some 91 per cent were satisfied with the 'quality of the teaching' received (23 per cent 'extremely', 48 per cent 'very', and 20 per cent 'fairly').

- Some 90 per cent were satisfied with the 'overall training or qualification' (26 per cent 'extremely', 45 per cent 'very', and 19 per cent 'fairly').

217 Seven in ten (71 per cent) of the new entrant group of learners were either 'extremely satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the 'overall training or qualification'. This was also a significant decrease on the overall satisfaction demonstrated in the wave 1 survey, although it is not significantly different from the longitudinal group at wave 2. It also compared favourably with overall satisfaction in the FE sector more generally.

218 The opinions of the new entrant group and the longitudinal group learners were not significantly different, and both demonstrated high levels of satisfaction with the **quality of the teaching** they had received (71 per cent of the new entrant group learners were 'extremely satisfied' or 'very satisfied', as were 74 per cent of the longitudinal group). Findings for the FE sector more generally show satisfaction by this measure at 66 per cent (LSC, 2006).

219 Table 54 shows the satisfaction levels converted into an average or mean score, where a higher score indicates greater satisfaction. Learners in the wave 1 survey were more satisfied overall than in wave 2, where both the new entrant group and the longitudinal group scored their overall satisfaction at 5.7, compared to 6.0 in the wave 1 survey.

Table 54: Satisfaction with different aspects of the training/qualification (mean score)

Satisfaction with	Wave 2 (longitudinal group) Mean score	Wave 2 (new entrant group) Mean score	Wave 1 comparison Mean score
The training/qualification overall	5.7	5.7	6.0
The quality of the teaching received	5.8	5.7	(not asked)
The information and advice prior to starting the training	5.4	(not asked)	(not asked)
The length of time it took to do the training	5.4	(not asked)	(not asked)
The support from your employer	5.4	(not asked)	(not asked)

Base = completers only (N = 3,633 for longitudinal group and N = 942 for wave 2 new entrant group); wave 1 (N = 1,642).

Note: Mean scores range from 1 (extremely dissatisfied) to 7 (extremely satisfied).

Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007; wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

220 New entrant group learners who had completed their qualification noted high levels of satisfaction in the survey. The mean score for their satisfaction with the training overall was 5.8, compared to 5.0 for other new entrant group learners. Similarly, their satisfaction with the quality of training was 5.8, compared to 5.1 for other new entrant group learners.

221 Satisfaction levels have been recorded at both survey waves for learners in the longitudinal group who had already completed their training by the time of the wave 1 survey (N = 1,086) and so it is possible to examine whether individual satisfaction levels have changed over time.

222 Most often, satisfaction levels stayed the same (42 per cent); for 39 per cent of learners, satisfaction levels decreased; and for 20 per cent they increased, partially explaining the fall in the overall average for the longitudinal group. Changes in the level of satisfaction were not great, however; if we take those learners whose satisfaction level did change (increased or decreased – 58 per cent of the group), for half (48 per cent) this was by one point on the rating scale. Furthermore, nine out of ten (92 per cent) of those learners whose satisfaction had decreased remained either 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' with their training.

Overall satisfaction with the training/qualification

223 Table 55 shows the overall satisfaction with the training, by various subgroups. Replicating findings at wave 1, the amount of information advice and guidance received continued to have a positive effect on satisfaction, as did the degree of choice over whether to do the training. Those who had found the training challenging reported higher overall satisfaction than those who had found it easy or neither easy nor challenging.

Table 55: Satisfaction with the training/qualification overall (mean scores) by subgroup

Factor		Wave 2 (longitudinal group)	Wave 2 (new entrant group)	Wave 1 comparison
		Mean score	Mean score	Mean score
Type of training provider	Independent	5.7	5.8	6.1
	Public	5.7	5.7	5.9
Who initiated the training	Self-initiated	5.7	5.8	6.2
	Employer-initiated	5.6	5.6	5.9
	Both self- and employer-initiated	5.7	5.8	6.0
Subject area	Care-related	5.7	6.0	6.0
	Other	5.6	5.7	5.9
Amount of pre-entry discussion or assessment	Discussion only	5.6	5.9	5.9
	Skills gap assessment only	5.7	5.4	6.0
	Both discussion and skills gap assessment	5.8	5.9	6.1
	Neither	5.4	5.1	5.6
Amount of say over whether to do the training or not	A great deal	5.7	*5.9*	6.1
	A fair amount	5.6	5.7	5.9
	A little	5.4	5.5	5.7
	None at all	5.4	5.5	5.6
Time taken to complete	Longer than expected	5.5	(not asked)	(not asked)
	Shorter than expected	5.9	(not asked)	(not asked)
	About expected	5.8	(not asked)	(not asked)
Whether received an individual learning plan or personal development plan	Yes	(not asked)	5.9	(not asked)
	No	(not asked)	5.4	(not asked)
How easy or challenging it was to complete the training	Challenging	5.9	(not asked)	(not asked)
	Neither	5.7	(not asked)	(not asked)
	Easy	5.7	(not asked)	(not asked)

Base = completers only (N = 3,633 for longitudinal group and 942 for wave 2 new entrant group); wave 1 (N = 1,642).
Note: Mean scores range from 1 (extremely dissatisfied) to 7 (extremely satisfied).
Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007; wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

Conclusions

224 The second survey of the rolling Train to Gain learner evaluation paints a broadly similar picture to that revealed by the first, wave 1, survey. Taking the wave 2 sample as a whole (bearing in mind that it comprises learners who started their qualifications in the first six months of Train to Gain (longitudinal group) and those who signed up six months later (new entrants)), it is clear that, from a learner's perspective, Train to Gain appears to be working well, in that it is reaching a wide group of learners, who successfully take up the fully funded or part-funded training on offer (often adapted to their particular needs) and are very satisfied with the experience.

225 However, the survey design enables us also:

- to make some comparisons between the first wave of participants in Train to Gain and those who more recently have taken up training (by comparing the new entrant group of the most recent survey with wave 1) to see what has changed; and

- through the longitudinal group, to see how learners' experiences have developed over time and to begin to assess the real impact of the training on their working lives.

226 Thus, comparing the two cohorts of Train to Gain learners, we can draw some further conclusions.

- Recognition of the Train to Gain brand is rising among learners. However, relatively few (10 per cent) feel they know much about it, and most learn about it through their employer, rather than through advertising or from any other source. Perhaps as a result, four learners in ten thought that their employer was paying for their training, even though they were being fully funded through the LSC.

- There are some suggestions in the more recent survey that employers have a stronger role in initiating the training and determining whether or

not employees will take part. In the previous report, drawing on a range of qualitative interviews with learners, the potential was identified for employers to do more about approaching learners to take part, rather than waiting for volunteers – especially as low-skilled employees often lack confidence about their capacity to undertake qualifications.

- Recent learners are spread across a wider spectrum of occupational groups and are less concentrated in personal service jobs than are the early starters – for instance, in the latest survey, 25 per cent work in personal services occupations, compared with 35 per cent in the first survey. Similarly, under a quarter of the more recent survey sample were doing a care-related qualification, compared with over 30 per cent in wave 1.

- The new entrant group are more likely to have had an assessment of their skills against the qualification framework, in order to identify the gaps. They are also more likely to identify a result from this assessment, even though in both surveys a similar proportion – two-thirds – were told that they would be trained and assessed for all elements of the qualification.

- Satisfaction levels have slipped slightly between the two waves of surveys – though it should still be emphasised that they remain relatively high. Close analysis indicates that:

  o average satisfaction levels have fallen, as fewer learners are 'extremely satisfied';

  o this is a result both of new learners having a slightly lower satisfaction level and of learners who were also in the first survey recording lower satisfaction levels second time around; and

  o satisfaction levels were lowest among learners who thought that completing their qualification had taken longer than expected. Learners also like a challenge, and satisfaction levels were relatively high among those who found their training challenging. However, little else distinguished learners with lower satisfaction levels from the rest.

227 From the longitudinal group we have learned more about the training process by examining the experience of the growing number of learners who have completed their qualification. And we have found, for example, that the level of commitment learners put into completing their qualification is considerable: over 130 hours on average, involving 20–25 hours' contact time with an assessor or tutor (generally at work), plus a further 50–55 hours at work on independent study and portfolio preparation, and a similar amount of time at home over a six-month period.

228 The completion rates across the learner population as a whole have not been examined within this report; but among our longitudinal group they are high – over 70 per cent had finished their qualification at the time of the survey.

229 Obviously this may not show the full picture, as only two-thirds of the wave 1 sample took part in the second survey, and we therefore do not know what has happened to the non-respondents; but the rate still seems relatively high, compared, say, to general FE completion rates. Similarly, at 6 per cent, the early leaver rate seems low (though a proportion of those still training may decide not to complete).

230 Detailed analysis of the data identifies some of the factors that appear to be facilitating completion.

- Not surprisingly, the greater the experience and competence of the learner in their job, the easier they found it to complete their qualification.

- The relationship between a learner and their tutor/assessor appears to be one of the most important factors influencing learner completion: the greater the level of support they received, the easier learners found it to complete.

- Better initial preparation – for instance, in terms of a pre-entry discussion about whether the training is appropriate and a skills gap assessment to see whether training and assessment inputs need to be adapted to the individual learner's needs – also facilitated an easier or a quicker completion.

231 Finally, the survey has also started to generate some firm evidence of the impact of the training on learners' subsequent employment behaviour and experiences. Two points stood out.

- Getting on for a fifth (17 per cent) of learners who completed their qualification had started further training. In a third of the cases where the subsequent training is identified, the learner had gone on to do a Level 3 qualification (although some were also doing another Level 2 qualification or employer-related training). Learners who had engaged in a discussion about further learning options at the end of their course were more likely to be engaged in further training at the time of the survey. There may be a message here about 'striking while the iron is hot', in order to maximise momentum and keep the learner journey going. However, there is also potential for learners to do more learning in the longer term, as 57 per cent of the rest think it likely that they will embark on further training within the next three years.

- A quarter of completers said that they had had some form of financial gain (e.g. bonus, promotion or pay rise) as a direct result of completing their qualification. However, for nearly all the learners, it is gaining the qualification itself – often the first such success for many years – that is the prime motivation for taking part.

Annex A: The Characteristics of the Train to Gain Learner Surveys

Working life

Longitudinal group

1   In the longitudinal group survey, 87 per cent of learners reported that they were still working for the same employer as they had been at the time of the initial wave 1 survey. Since the wave 1 survey, 8 per cent had changed jobs to a new employer, 3 per cent were currently not working, and 2 per cent were self-employed. In their current or most recent job, 41 per cent of the longitudinal group reported that they had managerial or supervisory responsibilities, while 59 per cent did not. The industries in which they were working at the time of the wave 2 survey are shown in Table A1.

Table A1: Industry of employer (current or most recent occupation)

	Number	%
Agriculture	26	1
Construction	334	7
Engineering and manufacturing	613	12
Distribution, transport and logistics	317	6
Hospitality, leisure, sport and travel	368	7
Retail	443	9
Health, social care, education and public services	2,519	50
Finance and business services	82	2
Electricity, gas or water supply	35	1
Community, social or personal service activities	224	4
Other/not known	111	2

Base = all learners (N = 5,072).
Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007

2   The size of the companies the longitudinal group learners were working for is as follows: 10 per cent worked for small employers with 10 employees or fewer; 27 per cent for employers with 11–49 employees; 25 per cent within companies of 50–249 employees; and 35 per cent for companies of more than 250 employees. The remaining 3 per cent of learners said that they did not know the size of the workforce.

New entrant group

3   Among the new entrant group learners, 14 per cent said that they had worked for their current, or most recent, employer for less than one year, while the remainder (86 per cent) had been with their employer for more than one year. Those who had been with their employer for less than one year were asked about their previous circumstances (Table A2).

Table A2: Previous circumstances

	Fully funded learners		Part funded learners		Overall new entrant group		Wave 1 comparison
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	%
Working for a different employer doing same sort of job	123	37	8	57	131	37	34
Working for a different employer doing a different job	144	43	3	21	147	42	46
In full-time training or learning	6	2	0	0	6	2	2
Not working/unemployed for less than 6 months	9	3	0	0	9	3	(not reported)
Not working/unemployed for more than 6 months	35	10	0	0	35	10	12
Other	19	6	3	21	22	6	(not reported)

Base = those who have been with their current or most recent employer for less than one year; fully funded new entrant group (N = 336); part-funded new entrant group (N = 14); all new entrant group (N = 350); wave 1 survey (N = 7,500).

Source: Wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

4   Those who had been with their employer for more than one year (N = 350) included some very long-term employees:

- 71 per cent had been employed for 1–7 years;
- 16 per cent had been employed for 8–14 years;
- 8 per cent had been employed for 15–21 years;
- 4 per cent had been employed for 22–28 years;
- 2 per cent had been employed for 29–35 years; and
- 1 per cent had been employed for more than 35 years.

Educational background of the new entrant group

Table A3: Age at which learner left full-time education

	Fully funded learners		Part-funded learners		Overall new entrant group		Wave 1 comparison
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	%
Under 16	564	23	18	17	582	23	22
16	1,212	50	46	43	1,258	49	52
17	268	11	7	7	275	11	11
18	187	8	16	15	203	8	8
Older than 18	205	8	19	18	224	9	7

Base = fully funded new entrant group (N = 2,436); part-funded new entrant group (N = 106); all new entrant group (N = 2,542); wave 1 (N = 7,500).

Source: Wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

Personal characteristics of new entrant group

Table A4: Gender

	Fully funded learners		Part-funded learners		Overall new entrant group		Wave 1 comparison
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	%
Male	1,248	51	33	31	1,281	50	35
Female	1,188	49	73	69	1,261	50	65

Base = fully funded new entrant group (N = 2,436); part-funded new entrant group (N = 106); all new entrant group (N = 2,542); wave 1 (N = 7,500).

Source: Wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

Table A5: Ethnicity

	Fully funded learners		Part-funded learners		Overall new entrant group		Wave 1 comparison
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	%
White	2,112	87	89	84	2,201	87	91
Asian/Asian British	108	4	10	9	118	5	3
Black/black British	90	4	5	5	95	4	3
Chinese or other ethnicity	28	1	1	1	29	1	1
Mixed heritage	18	1	1	1	19	1	1
Not recorded	80	3	0	0	80	3	2

Base = fully funded new entrant group (N = 2,436); part-funded new entrant group (N = 106); all new entrant group (N = 2,542); wave 1 (N = 7,500).

Source: Wave 2 new entrant group survey, autumn 2007

The qualifications taken by learners

5   Table A6 shows the most common qualifications being taken by the learners in the wave 2 survey. Most notable is the lower proportion of new entrant group learners taking NVQ Health and Social Care, compared to the learners in the first survey wave.

Table A6: Most popular qualifications taken by different groups of the wave 2 learners

	Longitudinal group wave 2		New entrant group fully funded learners		New entrant group part-funded learners	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
NVQ in Health and Social Care	1,615	32	611	23	22	20
NVQ in Customer Service	405	8	183	7	2	2
NVQ in Team Leading	223	4	106	4		
NVQ in Business and Administration	218	4	95	4	10	9
NVQ for IT Users (Itq)	184	4	126	5		
NVQ in Teaching Assistants	175	3			5	5
NVQ in Performing Manufacturing Operations	156	3	93	3		
NVQ in Retail Skills	129	3				
NVQ in Cleaning and Support Services	123	2	99	4		
NVQ in Children's Care, Learning and Development	121	2			17	16
NVQ in Business-Improvement Techniques	96	2	92	3		
NVQ in Distribution Warehousing and Storage Operations	91	2				
NVQ in Multi-Skilled Hospitality Services	88	2				
NVQ in Plant Operations			90	3		
NVQ in Driving Goods Vehicles			78	3		
NVQ in Management					17	16
NVQ in Accessing Operations and Rigging					11	10
NVQ in Construction Site Supervision					4	4
NVQ in Advice and Guidance					3	3
NVQ in Mechanical Manufacturing Engineering					3	3
Other courses	1,448	29	863	41	12	12
Total	**5,072**		**2,436**		**106**	

Base = all learners (N = 7,614).

Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007; wave 2 new entrant survey, autumn 2007

6 The majority of learners were taking their NVQ as a stand-alone qualification: 93 per cent of the longitudinal group and 95 per cent of the new entrant group (Table A7). Skills for Life qualifications were being taken by 6 per cent of the longitudinal group and 5 per cent of the new entrant group.

Table A7: Take-up of Skills for Life qualifications

	Longitudinal group wave 2		New entrant group fully funded learners		New entrant group part-funded learners	
	Number	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**
NVQ or equivalent only	4,726	93	2,299	94	106	100
NVQ or equivalent and Skills for Life	274	5	112	5		
Skills for Life only	72	1	25	1		
Total	**5,072**		**2,436**		**106**	

Base = all learners (N = 7,614).
Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007; wave 2 new entrant survey, autumn 2007

Attitudes to work and learning

7 There was no significant change in the attitudes of the longitudinal group to work and learning between the two survey waves (Table A8).

Table A8: Agreement with attitudes towards learning (mean scores)

	Mean score	**Wave 1 comparison** **Mean score**
You need qualifications to get anywhere these days	4.2	4.3
Generally employers seldom take notice of the learning, education or training you have done	3.0	2.9
The right experience is more important at work than qualifications	4.1	4.0
In the past I have avoided training to get new qualifications	2.3	2.3

Base = all learners (N = 5,072). Mean scores range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).
Source: Longitudinal group survey, autumn 2007

Annex B: References

Hillage, J., Loukas, G., Newton, B. and Tamkin, P. (2006) *Employer Training Pilots: Final Evaluation Report*, Research Report 774, Department for Education and Skills.

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