

A Study into Reasons for Younger Worker Drop-Out from Full NVQs/NVQ Units

Philip Thornhill
PRISM Management Consultants

**Research Report
No 298**

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for Younger Worker Drop-Out
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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, KEY CONCLUSIONS AND ACTIONS

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The primary aim of the study was to establish the extent of, and reasons for, younger workers' failure to complete NVQ units or full awards for which they have been registered. The initial brief was to cover both those young people working towards NVQs on government-funded programmes and those who were not.

1.1.2 Underpinning aims were:

- to examine the particular needs of the younger worker group in terms of NVQ access and attainment and improved progress towards the National Targets for this age group
- to address the issue of whether there are particular problems or barriers which need to be overcome for young people as opposed to the older person
- to look at, amongst other things, the design and delivery of NVQs (to address the question of whether bite-sized "chunks" of learning put off young people in particular)
- to consider the impact of the role of the Careers Service and careers guidance at schools.

1.2 Research

1.2.1 Our research has embraced:

- Quantitative data analysis using the DfES's Work Based Training for Young People database
- Literature review
- In-depth telephone research with third party organisations
- In-depth telephone research with 115 employers across eight Frameworks
- In-depth telephone research with 235 young workers across 10 Frameworks

1.3 Key conclusions

Fundamental conclusion

1.3.1 Our fundamental conclusion is that NVQ non-completion has little to do with the NVQ per se in terms of its learning structure. The significant majority of young workers provide positive comments on the NVQ in terms of its structure and portfolio development. They are also very positive about the fact that NVQs offer an opportunity to work and gain a qualification at the same time. The work-based nature of NVQs is seen as a benefit, since many of the young workers we have spoken with prefer not to be in a formal 'taught' environment; preferring instead an 'experiential' learning process.

Key influencing factors leading to NVQ non-completion

1.3.2 Young workers give the most significant factors leading to NVQ non-completion as:

- **Changing employer or occupation for one with better prospects;** 44% of the young workers we contacted were still in the same or similar occupation but not being trained to NVQ standards
- **Insufficient employer involvement and support,** particularly by allowing sufficient time to develop NVQ portfolios (but very often lack of support here equates to more general perceptions of a poor employer, triggering the young worker to move 'for better prospects')

- **Inadequate quality, consistency and frequency of trainer and assessor support.** Under-performance here means that the NVQ process takes longer. Young people are impatient to see success; slow progress leads to loss of interest and demotivation

1.3.3 The employers we contacted have proven to be atypical. The majority report young worker NVQ completion rates above 70%. For them NVQ drop-out is not an issue. Having analysed our discussions, what differentiates these employers is the fact that they generally take significant steps to positively address time availability and training and assessment support. Those that do not tend to see higher drop-out rates.

1.4 What the data shows

- **It is estimated that 51% of those in Government Supported Training (GST) are aiming for NVQ L2 and 47% for NVQ L3.** Our re-analysis of the National Training Database suggests that drop-out rates are broadly similar - 53% and 47% respectively
- **47% of young people in GST do not achieve a qualification.** Our analysis of the database indicates that, of this group, around a quarter leave within 3 months of starting, a half within 6 months and three quarters within 12 months (around half the time that an NVQ L2 might typically be targeted to take)
- **For those in GST, the single most important factor influencing early drop-out is whether the young person has employed status at the start of training**
- **Irrespective of the measure or Frameworks used, the overall rate of drop out tends to peak at around 2-3 months and begins to 'bottom out' at around 12 months**
- **Drop-out rates are remarkably similar across very different occupational Frameworks.** This suggests that drop-out issues have little to do with NVQs/occupations per se
- **NVQ level aimed for has a relationship with overall drop-out rates.** Those aiming for NVQ L2 comprise 53% of drop-outs. This group tends to peak at 3 months in training (with non-employed individuals comprising a significant proportion of this group)
- **Ethnicity, previous experience of GST, age at start of training and time of year in which training started have no significant impact on drop-out rate**

1.5 What employers tell us

- **Current NVQ training:** Overall, younger worker NVQ training equates to 5% of the combined workforces of the employers surveyed. 88% of these employers are accessing Government funding to support young worker training
- **An increase in training to NVQ standard:** Notably in Frameworks 5 (manufacturing), 8 (health and social care) and 9 (business services). However, a move away from NVQ training is indicated in Framework 7 (providing goods and services). This is the most significant Framework in terms of volume
- **Employer perceptions of young worker expectations and career advice:** The marginal majority view is that young workers have little idea or understanding of the occupation they choose. Employers tend to the view that, while school/career service advice has improved, it is still often unrealistic, poor or out of touch. In certain sectors (eg manufacturing) the high-tech high skill nature of work is not understood
- **Good pay is a significant factor:** This is not perceived by employers to be at the expense of training and qualifications which are also seen as significant in young workers' minds by employers (and confirmed through our discussions with younger workers)

- **NVQ non-completion is not a significant issue:** The majority of employers report young worker NVQ completion rates at over 70%
- **NVQs fit well with work:** Overall, 59% of employers regard NVQs as fitting well with their business. Employers say that there can be difficulties balancing work with learning and portfolio development (a time availability issue) and unsociable hours can be problematical. (These also tend to feature as key reasons from young workers)
- **Effort is put into supporting young workers:** Through formal and informal study time and access to work-based in-house assessors. The impact of this is to maintain momentum and motivation
- **NVQ structure has generally improved and jargon reduced:** But still room for improvement
- **In-house workbooks, unit matrices and support material:** Developed to make the NVQ process more manageable and less complex - especially in overcoming jargon and repetition. (Key negative issues for young workers are paperwork, repetition and complexity - addressing these eases and speeds the learning process)
- **Key Skills are not seen as relevant by young workers and are integrated with the NVQ:** The overriding view is that exam-based Key Skills are a retrograde step that may lead to increased NVQ non-completion

1.6 What young workers tell us

- **Completion of NVQ and current occupation:** Of those that were contacted and had been thought to have dropped out, 20% had either completed, restarted or were working on their initial NVQ. 44% were in occupations that related to the Framework in which they trained. NVQs were frequently not available at their new employer
- **NVQ non-completion has little to do with the NVQ itself:** Aspects such as poor initial choice of career or occupation, redundancy, better prospects with another employers and inadequate off-on job support and assessment are greater issues (in contrast the employers researched generally 'score' highly on these aspects and drop-out is low)
- **NVQs are secondary to getting training and an occupation.** However, having defined an occupation with training, 53% and 27% of young workers regard NVQs as either very important or slightly important. When they started, 73% expected to stay with the same employer and complete their NVQ
- **Occupational and employment preferences were generally clearly established:** Influencing factors are extremely diverse; career guidance accounting for 10% of responses. Irrespective of source, 48% regarded their advice as being good, with 13% saying it was very good
- **Very satisfied with initial choice:** Retrospectively, 69% of young workers still regarded their initial choices as good - even though they may have discovered that their choice of occupation or employer was not what they expected. The fact that 44% of young workers' are in occupations closely related to their initial choice tends to underline young workers belief of making a good initial choice. A significant minority feel that they would have benefited from more information about what an NVQ involved (eg units, elements, portfolios, assessment process) before they started
- **Highly satisfied with the NVQ training:** 37% were very satisfied and 39% satisfied with their NVQ training. The combined 'score' of 79% varied $\pm 10\%$ across Frameworks. The primary reason for high ratings tends to be the quality of training content and delivery and high tutor/assessor input.

- **Few difficulties with the NVQ itself:** Acknowledging that there are differences between Frameworks, adverse comments were made as follows: 17% on NVQ structure; 13% on portfolio development; 24% on assessment and 25% in relation to off-on job aspects
- **Key skills are OK:** Most frequently seen as OK or useful, so 'not a ringing endorsement', but not a factor in failing to complete an NVQ. However, it has to be stressed that this is in the context of Key Skills integrated with NVQs rather than as part of an exam based approach. Young workers like the fact that NVQs are done experientially rather than taught

1.7 Recommendations for action

1.7.1 We recommend that the Department for Education and Skills take the following actions:

Develop mechanisms to re-engage those who drop-out

1.7.2 Around 5 to 10% (depending on Framework) of those who had not completed their NVQ asked us to signpost them in how to re-start. 44% of young workers we contacted were in the same or related occupations and positive about NVQs (but very often currently working with an employer not offering NVQs). Around 20% had (or were) in fact completing their NVQ, even though the initial data suggested they had dropped out. We estimate that around 20% of young workers are positive about NVQs and are in the same or similar occupation but have not completed an NVQ.

1.7.3 Many young people commented on the number of follow-up questionnaires they had received from the DfES. This would seem an ideal vehicle through which to re-contact and re-engage those who had failed to complete - perhaps through signposting to Learndirect or local LSCs.

Work with NTO and Awarding Body partners to review the pace at which NVQs are delivered

1.7.4 Young workers commented adversely on having to wait for assessment and help on 'next steps', indicating that this slowed their progress.

1.7.5 In the case of employer-based NVQ centres with in-house assessors and verifiers, the pace of learning and assessment is as fast as a young worker's ability to progress. This differentiates the employers we contacted (in the main NVQ centres or very committed to NVQs) from the general and numerically more dominant experience of young workers contacted - often employed by smaller and less well resourced employers. The majority of young workers are supported by external training organisations such as colleges or private providers. The pace of their progression through an NVQ is determined by assessor or training support visit frequency to their workplace and other external factors such as anticipated occupational achievement timescales set out by NTOs, TECs and now the LSC. Although outside the scope of this report, examination of DfES data on achiever timescales suggests that the actual peak in NVQ achievement rates is likely to be noticeably shorter than established guidelines.

1.7.6 A young worker's learning process is very often influenced by external factors - young workers achieve milestones but then cannot progress without guidance on the next unit or 'signing off' of the completed unit. They therefore lose momentum.

1.7.7 Changing the externally imposed guidelines on anticipated times to achieve an NVQ, and basing instead on achievement timing range around an actual peak would contribute to better matching of the 'pace of training' with individual ability.

Work with the Learning and Skills Council to review the way that NVQs under GST are being funded to support an increase in the pace of NVQ delivery

- 1.7.8 In many respects this is allied to the previous point. However, GST is the main vehicle for young worker NVQs and the LSC has a pivotal role in GST.
- 1.7.9 The establishing of expected timescales to achievement by the LSC and linkage to funding tends to reinforce a calendar-based, rather than individual learning pace, approach to training support and assessment by providers.
- 1.7.10 Greater recognition in LSC funding and achievement timescale guidelines of peak achievement timing, the spread of minimum and maximum achievement timescales around this and elements that motivated or supported increased visit frequency by training organisations would assist improvement and 'optimisation' in the pace of individual young worker progression.

Work with careers, schools and training providers to ensure that young workers and smaller employers are fully aware of what NVQs entail

- 1.7.11 Young workers indicated that they would have liked to be better briefed on what an NVQ entailed before starting. This has less to do with occupational issues, but rather NVQ basic structure, standards, examples of portfolios, units, assessment process and so on. In this regard, schools, careers and 'less engaged' employers are seen as not being well-informed.
- 1.7.12 Both young workers and their employers see NVQs as 'being done on the job'. There seems a tendency in certain sectors (notably manufacturing, retail and hospitality) for '*being done on the job*' to be interpreted as (or 'sold' by training organisations in terms of) '*does not require any additional time input*'. There is evidence of disillusionment by young workers and 'less engaged' employers resulting from the unanticipated need to find time to build portfolios and participate in assessment visits.
- 1.7.13 We advocate that time commitments need to be spelled out at the outset of an NVQ so that young workers and employers can plan accordingly.

Work with NTO and Awarding Body partners to ensure that effective in-training support mechanisms are provided for those undertaking NVQs

- 1.7.14 Again, this relates to optimising the pace of progression through an NVQ. In many instances, training support visits are short (15-30 minutes is not uncommon) and/or may be infrequent (for example, monthly).
- 1.7.15 Comments from young workers indicate that short frequent visits are preferable to maintain momentum and answer queries. However, our view is that 15 minutes is generally insufficient and greater time input and more rapid visit cycles are desirable to ensure quality in the NVQ.
- 1.7.16 We recommend that Awarding Body (and perhaps also LSC) quality assurance procedures should also consider the time input/frequency of assessment and support input.

Develop web-based support material for NVQs (such as summary matrices of standards to assist candidate portfolio building)

- 1.7.17 Young workers make positive and negative comments about the relative ease in understanding what they have to do to progress through their NVQ and develop a portfolio.
- 1.7.18 The better regarded (by young workers) training organisations and engaged employers achieve this through, for example, the development of matrices (or workbooks) of activities, evidence and units required to support portfolio development and NVQ progression. In essence, NVQ jargon is translated into simple and more understandable chunks. Less well regarded organisations tend to approach this in

a more ad-hoc manner. Smaller or less engaged employers are usually unable to provide much assistance to a young worker between training support visits.

- 1.7.19 We recommend working with NTOs and Awarding Bodies to develop simple and accessible web-based matrices that allow young workers to see at a glance a 'translation' of their NVQ into headline tasks and achievements.

Ensure that employers make a meaningful commitment to supporting trainees who are undertaking NVQs

- 1.7.20 Lack of on- and off-job time has been an issue for many of those failing to complete. Although a legal requirement, Time off for Study does not appear to be a reality for many young workers. In other instances resources, informed support and relevant learning opportunities have not been available in the workplace.
- 1.7.21 Connected with this and previous points, it would be valuable to ensure the undertaking of a short pre-NVQ employer survey (particularly with employers new to NVQs). A particular focus on gaining their understanding of, and commitment to, what is involved in an NVQ would be desirable.

Establish and disseminate reports to NTOs and Awarding Bodies on drop-out and achievement timing for GST - ideally by key occupational groupings within Frameworks

- 1.7.22 NTOs and Awarding Bodies are well informed in terms of registrations and elapse time between registration and award. They are less well-informed about the timing of non-completion, age and related issues. Better information may assist them in appraisal of NVQ delivery and design.
- 1.7.23 Development of standard data analyses on non-completion timing, mix relative to Framework and so on (such as those in this report) would provide a useful resource for NTOs and Awarding Bodies.

2 THE CONTEXT

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 The Department for Education and Employment (DfES) wished to carry out a study to isolate the factors that account for younger worker drop-out from NVQ units and full NVQs. The study relates to three of the DfES's themes:

- the inclusion of the younger work group
- access and participation
- enhancing skills and employability

2.1.2 The primary objective has been to provide an explanation for the evidence of failure to complete NVQ units or full awards and provide indications of where and how an intervention to help prevent this failure could be made. It was considered particularly important to examine the factors that predispose a younger person to stop working towards the whole qualification or NVQ units compared with older workers (amongst whom an assignment was concluded in early 2000). It was intended that the study should build on (rather than replicate) recent work that has looked, in particular, at Modern Apprenticeships (notably, *Evaluation of Modern Apprenticeships: 1998 Survey of Young People*).

2.1.3 Underpinning aims of the study have been:

- to examine the particular needs of the younger worker group in terms of NVQ access and attainment and improved progress towards the National Targets for this age group
- to address the issue of whether there are particular problems or barriers which need to be overcome for young people as opposed to the older person
- to look at, amongst other things, the design and delivery of NVQs (to address the question of whether bite-sized “chunks” of learning put off young people in particular)
- to consider the impact of the role of the Careers Service and careers guidance at schools

2.1.4 It was intended that the study should cover both those young people working towards NVQs on Government-funded programmes and those who are not. However, in reality, the study has determined that there is negligible NVQ training for young workers outside that that is funded by Government. Consequently (and given previous research into 'training programme' issues), the study has been strongly steered towards separating NVQ aspects from those associated with participation in Government-funded training initiatives for younger people. In particular, significant steps have been taken to ensure that younger worker NVQ non-completion issues are separated from those that are associated with drop-out from Government-funded training initiatives. The study has been successful in achieving this objective.

2.2 Research aims and objectives

2.2.1 The study's research aims were:

- to identify, from existing DfES and FEFC statistics and previous research, the proportion of younger workers who commence training towards an NVQ, but do not achieve the units or full NVQ for which they are registered
- to supplement this quantitative information through further quantitative and qualitative investigations with a sample of employers, awarding bodies, careers advisory bodies and individual candidates

2.2.2 Research objectives were:

- to identify the major reasons for non-completion (for example, design of the NVQ itself, design of the learning programme, job structure, advisory service connections, financial or social impediments, administrative or related structures affecting the workplace)
- to report on the above including recommendations on how DfES and other national partners might address the barriers to completion identified

3 RESEARCH APPROACH

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 Our research has embraced:

- Quantitative data analysis using the DfES's Work Based Training for Young People database (part of this analysis is on-going at the completion of this draft report)
- Literature review
- In-depth telephone research with third party organisations
- In-depth telephone research with 115 employers across eight Frameworks
- In-depth telephone research with 235 young workers (across 10 Frameworks) who had left Government funded training at a point 6 or 12 months after starting

3.2 Our research strategy – a progressive deployment

3.2.1 A progressive issue identification and testing approach has been deployed as illustrated in Table 1. The research strategy has been to identify isolate, explore and prioritise issues at each stage. Initial views and direction were based upon reviews of DfES internal literature and data. This has been supplemented by steering group input, our own experience and views, and by external research with key 'third party' organisations.

Table 1: Research strategy – a progressive deployment

Group	Research input	Research output
DfES, partners, PRISM		
	Statistical data Views Experience	Initial list of 'drop-out' factors Initial quantitative assessment Preliminary qualitative test issues
Research with 'key' third party organisations (eg ABs, NTOs, careers, colleges)		
	Test DfES and PRISM perceptions Gather external viewpoints Gain views on what would improve retention	Refine qualitative issues Amplify & add to 'internal' views Incorporate new perceptions Initial prioritisation of 'drop-out' factors
Research with employers		
Contacts: 115	Test 'cumulative' views Employer perspective on 'drop-out' reasons Test relative importance of drop-out factors Views on what would improve retention	Refine qualitative issues Incorporate new perceptions Refine prioritisation of 'drop-out' factors
Research with young workers		
Contacts: 235	Further testing of 'cumulative' views Young worker's view of 'drop-out' reasons Test relative importance of drop-out factors Test ideas that would help raise 'stay-on'	Refine qualitative issues Incorporate new perceptions Final prioritisation of 'drop-out' factors Develop assessment of what works or fails

3.3 Framework Glossary

3.3.1 Research has been undertaken across Frameworks to ensure, within the confines of a primarily qualitative study, that occupational issues have an opportunity to emerge in discussion with third parties, employers and young workers. Table 2 provides a glossary of Framework descriptions, numbering (as used in the report text) and abbreviated descriptor (as used in report charts).

Table 2: Framework glossary

Frame number	Occupations	Chart descriptor
1	Tending animals, plants and land	AGR
2	Extracting and providing natural resources	EXT
3	Constructing	CON
4	Engineering	ENG
5	Manufacturing	MAN
6	Transporting	TRA
7	Providing goods and services	SER
8	Providing health, social care and protective services	CAR
9	Providing business services	BUS
10	Communicating	COM
11	Developing and extending knowledge and skills	INF

4 PRE-EXISTING KNOWLEDGE

- 4.1.1 Table 3 summarises pre-existing research into topics that provide indicators of issues associated with NVQ choice by young workers and/or reasons why young workers may fail to complete. The research is 'Government programme' oriented and focuses on Modern Apprenticeships and National Traineeships. Consequently, in relation to non-completion of the NVQ, there is no distinction between inherent 'programme' issues and those associated with the NVQ itself.
- 4.1.2 Nevertheless, research that existed at the start of the study provides some useful indicators of what is important to young workers. Coupled with review of DfES statistics and fresh analysis of DfES programme data, it has contributed to developing issues to test through discussion with third parties, employers and younger workers.

Table 3: Summary of key issues relevant to NVQ non-completion from pre-existing research

<p>Evaluation of Modern Apprenticeships: 1998 Survey of Young People (DfES)</p> <p>December 1998</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key influences on choice of career by Modern Apprentices include existing job experience and family and friends. External careers officers and training providers are significant, but less important. Schools based careers advice is regarded as relatively less useful • Modern Apprentices expect to have better job and pay prospects after training • Best aspects of training include gaining qualifications and hands-on job-related training whilst being paid • Worst aspects of training include low pay, long hours (including combining working with college studies) and too much theory/paperwork • Significant reasons for non-completion of a Modern Apprenticeship include poor training, wanting a different job, insufficient help and advice and low pay
<p>Modern Apprenticeship 6 Month Follow-up Survey (DfES)</p> <p>1998-1999</p>	<p>For non-completers (with multiple responses allowed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26% were unhappy with the way their Modern Apprenticeship was run • 21% felt they were not getting the training needed • 20% felt they were not getting the help and advice needed • 17% said they were not getting enough money • 6% stated that they did not want Key Skills
<p>Modern Apprenticeships and National Traineeships: Skills Utilisation and Progression (DfES)</p> <p>June 2000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people who remained within a sector generally felt that they utilised the skills they developed • Some employers experience difficulty in providing range of experience required to meet NVQ criteria • Key Skills are not perceived [by employers] to be relevant and may need to be delivered off the job - leading to young people perceiving them as not relevant to the job • Where training is delivered by an external organisation, the learning outcomes vary according to the level of employer involvement, range of workplace experience and quality of training programme

Table 3: Summary of key issues relevant to NVQ non-completion from pre-existing research

Barriers to Take-up of Modern Apprenticeships and National Traineeships by SMEs and Specific Sectors (DfES)	
June 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driven by short-term business imperatives, and operating within slim profit margins, SMEs tend to provide in-house training only for immediate requirements. They are often unresponsive to adopting external training initiatives • Many SMEs do not have the infrastructure and staff to introduce and manage training initiatives, including liaison with external bodies and related administration
Modern Apprenticeships: Exploring the Reasons for Non-completion in Five Sectors (DfES)	
August 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most frequent reasons given by young people for non-completion of Modern Apprenticeships is getting a new job (typically for reasons of pay or better prospects), followed by difficulty in combining training with workload • Where external training organisations are involved, many employers delegated responsibility for training delivery to them • Non-completers were generally positive about their Modern Apprenticeship training. The majority had changed the type of work they were doing. 50% were interested in continuing a Modern Apprenticeship, with a key barrier being that their new employer did not offer Modern Apprenticeship training

5 THE THIRD PARTY PERSPECTIVE

5.1.1 A range of organisations was contacted in the early stages of the assignment to help develop issues to test in discussion with employers and younger workers. These contacts proved valuable in both:

- providing a broader view on sectoral issues within Frameworks (especially from NTOs)
- adding to knowledge in 'minority' occupations where the qualitative nature of this study restricted coverage

5.1.2 Key issues identified through third party research are summarised in Table 4

Table 4: Issues identified through discussions with third parties

Frame and sector	Comments
Career choice and guidance	
Frame 4: Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some indications that 'educationalists' are pushing YPs towards service sector and A levels
Frame 7: Retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YPs entered for MAs although they were not of sufficient ability
Frame 8: Early years care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young men and academically capable young women are put off by careers (etc). Conversely less academically able may be encouraged • NTO believes guidance staff have preconceptions of sector and should have experienced sector • People with disabilities disqualify themselves • NTO has developed orientation
Frame 9: Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • guidance thought to be generally poor
Trainee expectations	
Frame 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job with prospects • Training in work
Frame 8: Security Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many YPs want to go straight to work
Frame 9: Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many YPs use admin as an arrival point and move on to other specialises or customer service
Sectoral issues	
Frame 1: Fishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • smaller employers dominate • tradition of son following father = low drop-out • high drop-out occurs if no family tradition • share fishing arrangements mean that £45 wage does not apply • general lack of interest in NVQ – seen as way to Maritime Certificate required by legislation • NVQ focus is on skippering and chief engineers in larger vessels
Frame 2: Gas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • smaller employers dominate • can't afford expense of training • YP goes through NVQ and then has to go through 500-question test for industry approval (ACS). YP can get NVQ, but can't operate without ACS
Frame 2: Extractive Industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainly employer-based; little drop-out • Tend to be few YPs – these follow in family tradition
Frame 3: Engineering Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nomadic industry • Drop-outs either not suited or don't like living away
Frame 4: Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop out not seen to be an issue • Employer based
Frame 5: Chemicals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop-out not an issue • Employer based • Strong lead from major employers that is filtering down – rather than training

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> supplier driven Uses college to support process rather than lead
Frame 6: Motor vehicle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NTO does not have good feel for drop out
Frame 7: Distributive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Division between large and small companies Large business tending to operate around occupational standards, but outside NVQ Smaller businesses tend to take on 'NVQ' – but allied to TEC funding
Frame 7: Food and Drink	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LOW TAKE-UP OF NVQs ESPECIALLY IN SMALL COMPANIES
Frame 7: Print and Graphic Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low drop out perceived (12-13%) – mainly YP related personal issues or moving to other jobs
Frame 8: Security Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drop-out not seen to be too big an issue Employers may not take on best candidates – often recruit due to recommendation by relatives Colleges not very pro-active
Frame 11: Information services; Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tend not to recruit younger workers

Timing	
Frame 2:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mainly employer-based; little drop-out Tend to be few YPs
Frame 4:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Likely to happen early on and connected with work-place discipline
Frame 7: Retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On MA, drop out after L2 when sufficient skills gained to find new employer and (usually) more money and better prospects Perception that age (young) on achieving L2 means little supervisory opportunity at L3
Frame 8: Early years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leavers tend to happen within first 6 months; otherwise usually complete
Frame 9: Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On MA, drop out after L2 when sufficient skills gained to find new employer and (usually) more money and better prospects Perception that age (young) on achieving L2 means little supervisory opportunity at L3

Work-related: employer and employment	
Frame 4:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of understanding of new system vs old High cost of the trainee an issue with smaller companies
Frame 7: Printing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MAAs tend to be employed at start – leads to low drop out
Frame 8: Early years care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low pay; few benefits; shift work are adverse factors Legislative registration needs
Frame 8: Security Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YPs who drop out tend to gain certain level of experience and move to new employer – new employer may not be interested in NVQs. Skills are achieved, qualification may not be Contributory factor to progressing NVQ is trade skills – not enough funds available to employers to support on-job assessment
Frame 10: Broadcast, Film, etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YPs tend to get first job with independent programme maker – 'transitory' businesses. Gain foothold and move on Qualification is portable, but new employer may not be interested in NVQ YPs tend to stay in industry Greater stability in 'sub-contract' lighting (etc) suppliers

Work-related: learning and training	
Frame 2 Gas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent and quality of communications between YP, employer and training provider Employer has to be aware that they are part of process (eg work-based assessment) Few private providers; mainly colleges. Latter perceived as tired and more concerned with funding

Frame 4: Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small companies can be antagonistic; training not seen as flexible enough
Frame 7: Retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller companies need lots of support from training providers
Frame 7: Printing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More incentives for YP completion needed
Frame 8: Early years care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative registration needs determines proportion of qualified staff – may not always be possible to assess trainee in normal working time
Frame 9: Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity and input of provider is key: good quality provider with good support = greater retention
Frame 9: Accountancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private sector better than colleges • Research with drop-outs indicates perception of being let down by colleges- lack of relevance to work environment
Frame 10: Broadcast, Film, etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those on structured training course tend to complete

Key skills	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • employers and YPs generally don't see relevance of Key Skills • employers believe Key Skills should have been done at school • a problem for YPs who have lower academic ability in certain sectors (eg hair, retail, care, construction) and is perceived to lead to drop -out
Frame 8: Security Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • employers have difficulty offering breadth of key skills opportunities

6 DATA REVIEW

6.1 Overview

6.1.1 The following DfES published data was evaluated:

- 16 Year Old Youth Cohort Study 2000
- 18 Year Old Youth Cohort Study 2000
- NVQ Awards by Age Band (at date of award) and Gender 1998-99 (NISVQ data)
- National Statistics: Work-based Training for Young People and Work-based Learning for Adults (SFR 10/2001 assessed here; earlier versions assessed at the outset of the assignment)

6.1.2 Research with NTOs and Awarding Bodies indicated a belief that that the vast majority of NVQ training for younger workers was delivered under the auspices of Government Supported Training (GST) initiatives such as Modern Apprenticeships and National Traineeships. The view emerged that very little (if any) NVQ training of younger workers was undertaken by employers outside GST. Research with Awarding Body NVQ Centre External Verifiers working under the DfES's Additional External Verification Visits Programme confirmed that virtually all younger workers training to NVQ standards received some contribution to training funding from Government.

6.1.3 Contacts with NTOs and Awarding Bodies indicated that data was not usually collected nor readily available that tracked issues surrounding young worker drop-out. While both were able to offer qualitative (and well-informed) perceptions of younger worker drop-out issues, there was no immediate access to relevant quantitative data. Typically, data held by these organisations considered registrations and NVQ completion, but did not support assessment of issues such as timing of non-completion (ie drop-out), or differentiation between age groups, training route and so on.

6.1.4 Given the predominance of Government support and absence of relevant external data, we undertook a re-analysis of the DfES National Trainee Database. This has had dual objectives:

- to produce a limited quantitative study of younger worker drop-out - in particular focussing on those trainees with employed status (which are deemed closest to the definition of 'young worker' in the context of this assignment's brief)
- to generate matrices of both younger workers and employers by Framework sector for subsequent telephone research

6.2 Key findings

6.2.1 The most significant overriding finding is that, irrespective of NVQ Framework, the drop-out pattern is very consistent (particularly in terms of peak drop-out) across a range of variables. Relative to the objectives of the study, the data suggests that young worker drop-out may have less to do with NVQs per se and more to do with other factors. (This has subsequently been borne out by qualitative research with employers and young workers).

6.2.2 The following points have also emerged from the review and/or re-analysis of existing quantitative data:

- The Youth Cohort Study probably underestimates those on GST
- It is estimated that 51% of those in GST are aiming for NVQ L2 and 47% for NVQ L3. Our re-analysis of the National Training Database suggests that drop-out rates are broadly similar - 53% and 47% respectively
- 47% of young people in GST do not achieve a qualification. Our analysis of the database indicates that, of this group, around a quarter leave within 3 months of starting, a half within

6 months and three quarters within 12 months (around half the time that an NVQ L2 might typically be targeted to take)

- For those in GST, the single most important factor influencing early drop-out is whether the young person has employed status at the start of training
- Irrespective of the measure or Frameworks used, the overall rate of drop out tends to peak at around 2-3 months and begins to 'bottom out' at around 12 months. (Six and 12 month points were used to select young people for qualitative research).
- Frameworks 4 (engineering), 7 (goods and services), 8 (health, social care and protective) and 9 (business services) comprise the greatest proportion of drop-outs. Drop-out rates are remarkably similar across these very different occupational Frameworks
- NVQ level aimed for has a relationship with overall drop-out rates. Those aiming for NVQ L2 comprise 53% of drop-outs. This group tends to peak at 3 months in training (with non-employed individuals comprising a significant proportion of this group). Those aiming for NVQ L3 who achieve no qualification comprise 34%, peaking at 3 months. A further group, aiming for NVQ L3, but achieving NVQ L2 at drop-out, comprise 13% of drop-outs, peaking at 12 months
- Females account for 48% of those in training. For non-employed starters there is little difference in drop-out relative to gender. However, employed status young women workers are slightly more likely to drop-out than males
- Ethnicity, previous experience of GST, age at start of training and time of year in which training started have no significant impact on drop-out rate

6.3 Key pointers from published DfES quantitative data

- 6.3.1 NISVQ data for 1998-99 indicates that 57% of all NVQ awards are made to people aged 16-25 (16-20: 41%; 21-25: 16%). Table 5 summarises key indicators for 16 and 18 year old cohorts in 2000 and is derived from the 2000 Youth Cohort Study (YCS). YCS data covers the whole cohort. In Table 5 YCS data has been recalculated (as percentages) relative to GST and NVQs only.
- 6.3.2 Around 10% of each cohort are in GST and 14% are aiming for an NVQ. This would suggest that 4% are undertaking an NVQ outside GST. This seems inconsistent with the views of NTOs, Awarding Bodies and External Verifiers, which indicates negligible NVQ training for young workers outside GST. Subsequent research with young workers (targeted via the GST National Training Database) sheds light on this discrepancy. In many instances, the young workers we have contacted have been unaware that their training was Government funded. Consequently, in the context of the Youth Cohort Study, while young workers can readily report that they are completing an NVQ, lack of awareness of participation in GST may lead to its underreporting.
- 6.3.3 Statistical First Release SFR 30/2001 (*The Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 year olds: 1999 and 2000*) indicates that around 9% of the 16-18 year-olds are in GST. A further 5% are in employer supported training, although this is not necessarily to NVQ standard

Table 5: Key statistics for 16 and 18 year old cohorts in 2000 for GST and NVQs

Characteristic	Age 16	Age 18
Employment and training		
Proportion in Government Supported Training (GST)	10%	11%
Proportion in full-time job (excluding GST)	8%	29%
Study aim (16) or achievement (18)		
Proportion aiming for NVQ L1 or L2 (and equivalents, but excluding GNVQ)	9%	na
Proportion aiming for NVQ L2 (any route)	na	5%
Proportion aiming for NVQ L3 (and equivalents, but excluding GNVQ)	5%	7%
Gender by NVQ L1 to L3		
Female	47%	44%
Male	53%	56%
Ethnic Group by NVQ L1 to L3		
White	92%	91%
Asian	4%	4%
Black	1%	>1%
Not stated and other	3%	4%
Disability by NVQ L1 to L3		
No disability nor health problem	94%	96%
Has disability or health problem	6%	4%

Notes:

1. Age 16 column derived from YCS Cohort 10 Sweep 1 (2000: 16 Year Olds)
2. Age 18 column derived from YCS Cohort 9 Sweep 3 (2000: 18 Year Olds)
3. Calculations are derived from YCS data, but re-based to GST and NVQs

- 6.3.4 In terms of gender and ethnic mix, both the YCS (Table 5) and National Statistics (Table 6) are broadly similar. 295,700 young people (16-24) were in training in 2000. Assuming that Modern Apprenticeship equates to NVQ L3, 47% of those in training were aiming for NVQ L3. It is estimated that 51% would have been aiming for NVQ L2 (assuming Other Training and National Traineeships equate with NVQ L2).
- 6.3.5 Table 6 illustrates that the split between male and female starters is roughly equal. Ethnic minority groups comprise 7% of young people who commence work based training. Overall, 47% of young people do not achieve a qualification - qualification success is 53%. Modern Apprenticeship (equates to NVQ L3) achievement rates are relatively high at 67%. Other Training and National Traineeships (equate with NVQ L 2) are relatively lower at 40% and 44% respectively.

Table 6: Relevant indicators for work-based training for young people in 2000

Indicator	
In-training	
Life Skills	2%
Other Training	25%
National Traineeships (now FMA)	26%
Modern Apprenticeships (now AMA)	47%
In-training NVQ aim (derived, assuming AMA = NVQ L3 and FMA/OT = NVQ L2)	
NVQ L2	51%
NVQ L3	47%
Gender (proportions at start)	
Female	48%
Male	52%
Ethnic Group (proportions at start)	
White	93%
Asian	3%
Black	3%
Not stated and other	1%
Qualifications gained by leavers	
Other Training	44%
National Traineeships (now FMA)	40%
Modern Apprenticeships (now AMA)	67%
Total all leavers	53%

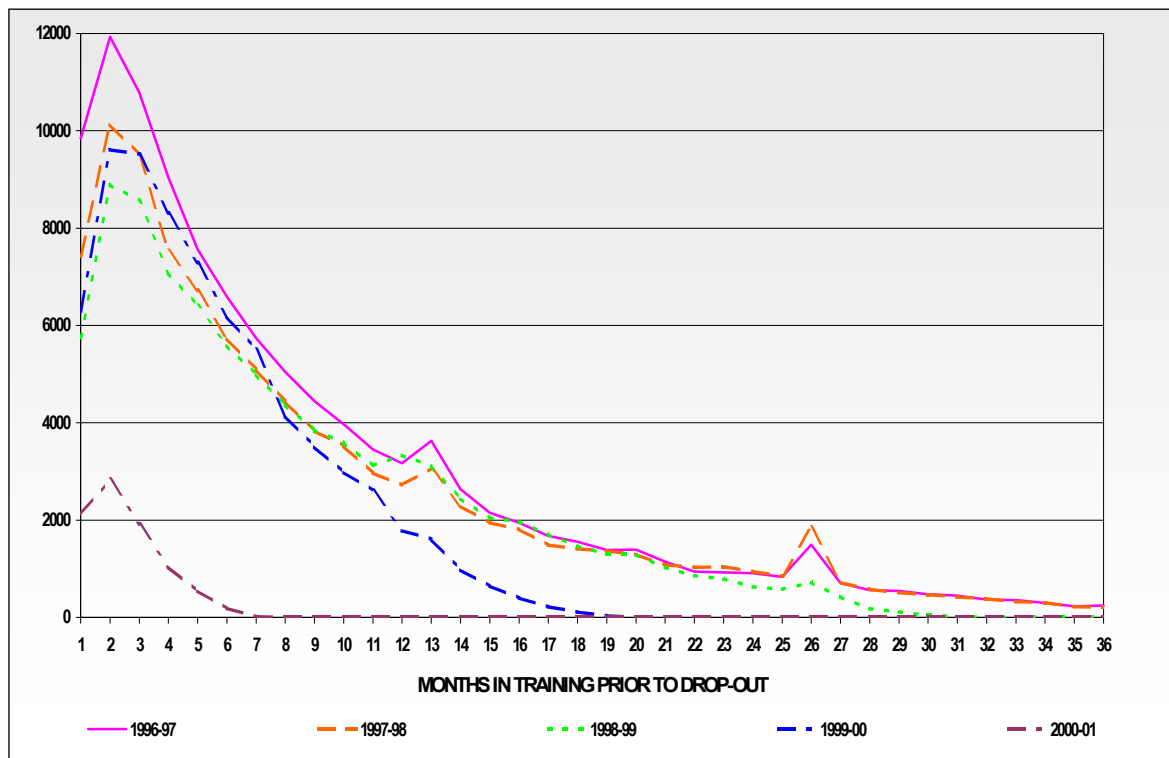
Notes:

1. Source: SFR 10/2001; 23 March 2001
2. Coverage: England & Wales

6.4 Re-analysis of the DfES National Trainee Database

- 6.4.1 Pre-existing analyses (Table 6) provided only 'headline' indicators of aspects such as type of training programme, NVQ aim, gender and ethnic participation and NVQ achievement. What pre-existing analyses did not provide were indicators of (for example) ethnic or gender differences, differences between frameworks (and so on) relative to time between starting and dropping out.
- 6.4.2 In collaboration with the DfES's Analytical Services team new sub-sets of the trainee database were generated. These were then analysed by adapting data analysis tools that PRISM Management Consultants had previously developed for performance reviews with TECs. The data sub-set for young people who had left prior to completing their intended qualification at the start of their training ("drop-outs") contained 442,130 individuals. Of these, 99.8% had started and left between 1 April 1994 and 30 November 2000; 84.6% between 1 April 1996 and 30 November 2000. The re-working of the dataset has enabled the examination of a range of factors relative to elapse time (in months) between start and drop-out
- 6.4.3 The period between 1 April 1996 and 31 March 1999 has been used as the basis for analyses presented in this section. This data sub-set contains 293,514 individuals (66% of total dataset) and ensures consistency in the pattern of start and leavers. The validity of this is illustrated by Chart 1, which summarises the number who drop-out relative to the time (in months) spent in training linked to financial year. The plots for both 1999-00 and 2000-01 demonstrate that insufficient time has elapsed to allow a representative drop-out pattern to emerge for each of these years. In the case of 1999-00 starters, while the pattern for the first 12 months is clear, the subsequent pattern (up to and beyond 36 months) is yet to emerge. In the case of 2000-01, only a partial year's data is available. Nevertheless, the plots for both of these years show a similar peak of drop-out after two months in training and the decay rate for both (and especially that for 1999-00) seem likely to reflect the pattern demonstrated up to and for 1998-99.

Chart 1: Duration of time in training to drop-out by year of start since 1 April 1996



Notes:
1. WBTYP National Trainee Database analysed by PRISM

- 6.4.4 Approximately 50% of those who do not complete the NVQ they aimed for leave within the first 6 months; 75% will have left within 12 months. DfES statistics show that 47% of young people leave Government funded training without a qualification - therefore around half of this group (ie 20-25% of all leavers) leave within the first six months on programme.
- 6.4.5 (By comparison, for those achieving NVQ L2 or L3, peak timing for more recent (1998-99 and 1999-00) starters occurs at around 12 months. For earlier starters (1996-97 and 1997-98) the peak was at around 7 months. The difference reflects the switch from NVQ L2 to Modern Apprenticeships and NVQ L3)
- 6.4.6 Table 7 summarises cumulative drop-out rates for the whole dataset in comparison with that used in analyses within this report.

Table 7: Cumulative drop-out rates - whole dataset in comparison with report dataset

Dataset timespan	Cumulative drop-out within:			
	3 months	6 months	9 months	12 months
1 April 1994 to 30 November 2000	31%	54%	68%	78%
1 April 1996 and 31 March 1999	25%	48%	64%	75%

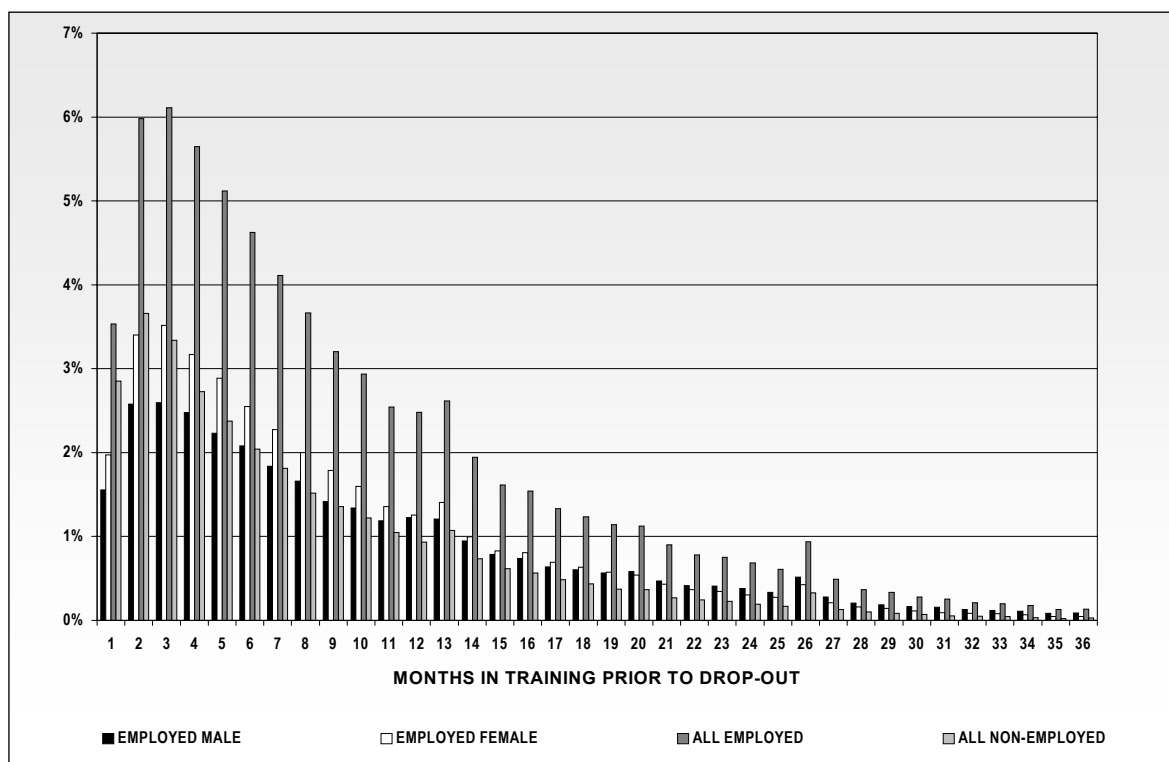
Note:
1. WBTYP National Trainee Database analysed by PRISM

- 6.4.7 Issues relating to early drop out from Government funded training have been considered in other research into Modern Apprenticeships and National Traineeships. As such, they are likely to be connected with 'training programme' and initial career/job selection issues more so than NVQs per se. Both Chart 1 and Table 7 illustrate that drop-out rates tend to 'bottom out' after 6 months. Therefore, for the purposes of targeting research in relation to drop-out from NVQs, we selected two 'slices' of young people - those leaving at 6 months and those at leaving at 12 months. This has ensured that qualitative research has moved beyond training programme aspects already covered in other research.

- 6.4.8 A range of possible factors was examined within the dataset. Some of the factors identified, although of interest, were not directly relevant to the study objectives covering reasons for young worker drop-out from NVQs.
- 6.4.9 **One feature that stands out in all analyses is a small but noticeable and consistent 'blip' in leave rates at around 13 months and 26 months in training (see Chart 1). This occurs irrespective of timing of start, gender, ethnicity, NVQ level or age. (The same 'blips' and timing are also seen in analyses of young workers who achieve their target NVQs).**
- 6.4.10 **It was hypothesised that this aspect might relate to type of provision - with young workers participating in college provision possibly dropping out after one or two years. Inaccuracies in the coding of provider type mean that it has not proven possible to look at this directly with any accuracy. However, examination of the quarter in which a young person dropped out (with college starts expected mainly in calendar Quarter 3) provides an indirect indicator of any college impact. While Quarter 3 is a little higher, 13 and 26 month 'blips' are present irrespective of the quarter in which a young person started.**
- 6.4.11 **It has not proven possible to isolate any factors (either quantitatively or qualitatively) that might influence this. Nevertheless, we believe that an external time-related factor seems likely.**

Employment status at start

- 6.4.12 Chart 2 illustrates the pattern of drop-out for employed and non-employed status young people. Of non-employed status young people, 43%, 63% and 74% (cumulatively) have left after 3, 6 and 9 months respectively. For non-employed individuals, drop-out peaks after 2 months in training. For employed individuals, drop-out rates are 22%, 44% and 59% (cumulatively) after 3, 6 and 9 months respectively. Drop-out peaks in month 3 for employed individuals.
- 6.4.13 *(By comparison, the peak for employed individuals who achieve their target NVQ occurs after 7 months).*
- 6.4.14 While non-employed groups were excluded from research (since they do not fit the assignment objectives and are likely to be leaving more for non-NVQ reasons) Chart 2 nevertheless underlines the importance of permanent employment (rather than a placement) to a young person.

Chart 2: Employment status and gender in relation to drop-out for 1996-1999 starters**Notes:**

1. WBTYP National Trainee Database analysed by PRISM
2. Period covers young people who started between 1 April 1996 and 31 March 1999

Gender

- 6.4.15 Male and female drop-out rates are broadly similar for non-employed individuals; however the picture is different within the employed group. Chart 2 illustrates that employed status female young workers represent a greater proportion of the employed group dropping out within the first 18 months. Cumulatively, at 18 months, employed female and male young workers account for 33% and 27% respectively of all drop-outs.
- 6.4.16 *(By comparison, the difference relative to gender for employed 'achievers' is less marked, but follows a similar pattern. A slightly higher proportion of employed females achieves during the first 9 months - thereafter the proportion switches in favour of males. After 18 months, employed females and males account for 22% and 22% respectively of all leavers).*
- 6.4.17 Drop-out peaks at month 3 for both males and females. Differences in female drop-out rate relative to time spent in training in comparison to males are greatest within the initial 2 to 6 months after starting, declining as time in training increases.
- 6.4.18 Females represent a consistent 48% of all starts, yet account for a greater proportion of early employed status drop-outs, suggesting that there are factors that lead to early drop-out for younger women workers. Evaluation by Framework shows a high proportion of female leavers in Frameworks 7, 8 and 9 (61%, 77% and 69% respectively).

Ethnicity

- 6.4.19 Ethnic minority groups comprise 6% of drop-outs - broadly in line with ethnic start and in-training proportions in published DfES statistics. Allowing for the relatively small proportion of ethnic minority groups, there is little difference between these groups in terms of the pattern of drop out.
- 6.4.20 Both ethnic minority and white groups demonstrate a peak in drop-out at 2 months. However, a higher proportion of the ethnic minority groups seem likely to leave at an earlier stage in training. Ethnic group drop-out peaks at 14% at 2 months; whites peak at 11% at 2 months (but whites are slightly more likely to drop out than ethnic groups after about 6 months in training)

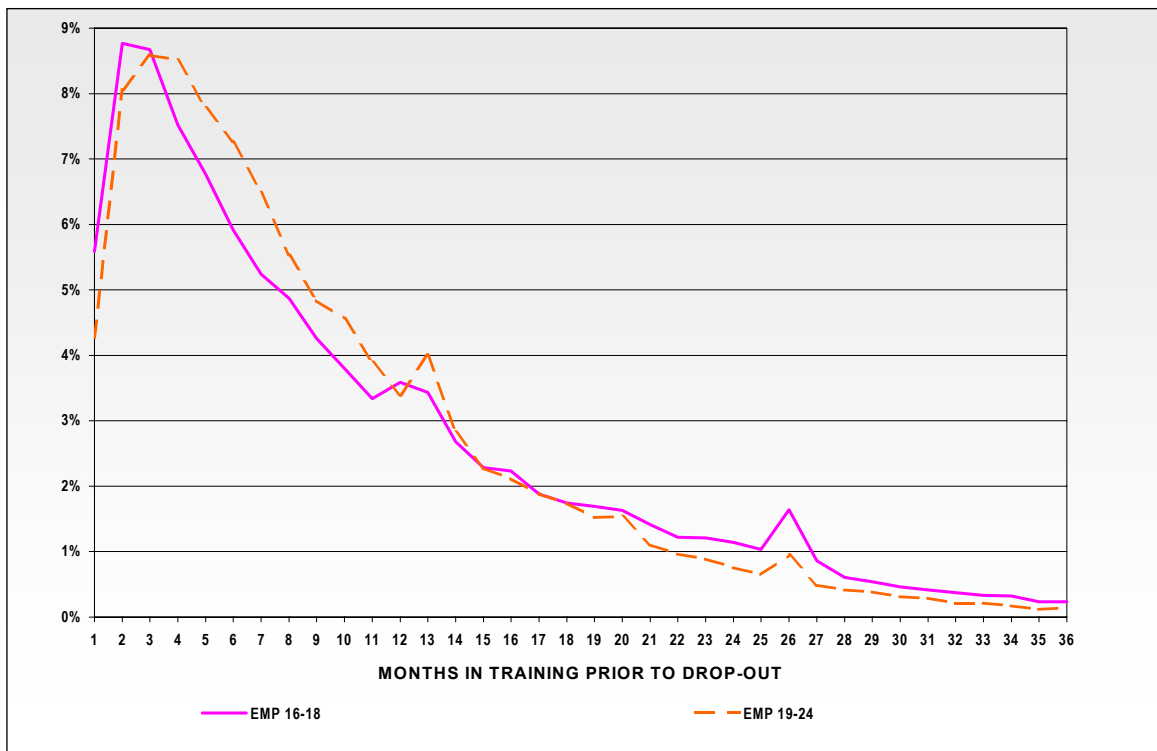
Whether the individual had previously been on any youth programme

- 6.4.21 Previous experience of GST in not a major factor in drop-out. Examination of employment status, age at start and whether an individual has previously been on a 'youth training' programme reveals that the most significant influence is employment status at start of training

Age at start of training

- 6.4.22 Any possible impact relative to age at start of training has been examined. Young workers were grouped into 16-18 and 19-24 age bands. As Chart 3 illustrates, the 16-18 year old employed drop-out rate peaks at about the same level as the employed 19-24 group. There is a small difference in the phasing of peaks for these age groupings (employed 16-18 drop-outs peak after two months in training; the peak for 19-24 employed drop-outs is 3 months).

Chart 3: Drop-outs by age bands 16-18 and 19-24 for 1996-99 employed starters



Notes:

1. WBTYP National Trainee Database analysed by PRISM
2. Period covers young people who started between 1 April 1996 and 31 March 1999

Level of NVQ aimed for

6.4.23 Those aiming for NVQ L2 ('L2:0') make up the greatest proportion of drop-outs from youth training - 53% overall. Within the 'sub-group' aiming for NVQ L2, 44% drop-out within the first 12 months (see Table 8 and Chart 4). Although 47% of those dropping out of training were aiming for NVQ L3, around a quarter of this group (and 13% of all drop-outs) actually achieved an NVQ L2 qualification prior to drop-out ('L3:2'). Overall, 34% of drop-outs aimed for an NVQ L3 but achieved no qualification ('L3:0').

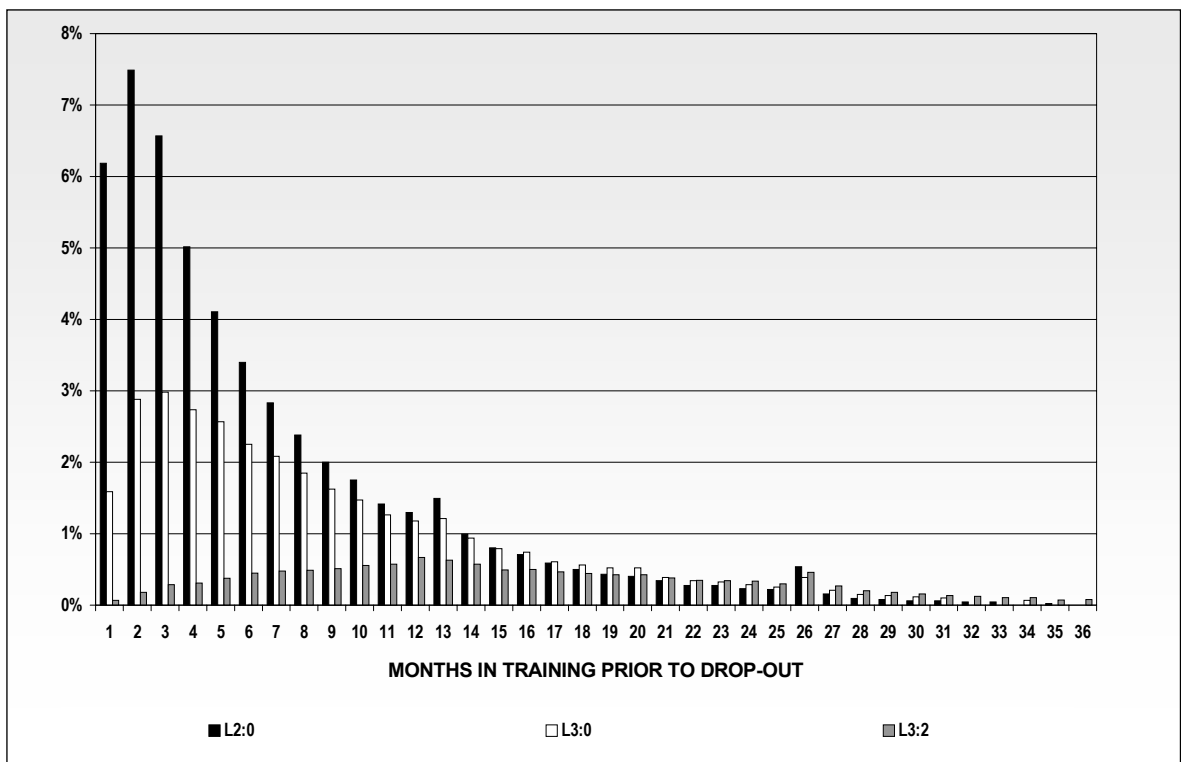
Table 8: Proportion of drop-outs by NVQ Level aimed for/achieved by all 1996-99 starters

NVQ Level aimed for:acheived	Cumulative drop-outs from NVQ group within:				Total
	3 months	6 months	9 months	12 months	
L2:0	20%	33%	40%	44%	53%
L3:0	7%	15%	21%	24%	34%
L3:2	1%	2%	3%	5%	13%

6.4.24 Chart 4 also illustrates that the drop-out pattern for those aiming for NVQ L2 peaks after 2 months. Those aiming for NVQ L3 but who did not achieve any NVQ peak at 3 months, whereas those aiming for NVQ L3 but who do achieve NVQ L2 peak at 12 months.

6.4.25 (By comparison, the peak for those aiming for and achieving NVQ L2 and L3 occurs after 7 and 12 months respectively).

Chart 4: Drop-outs by NVQ Level aimed for/achieved by all 1996-99 starters

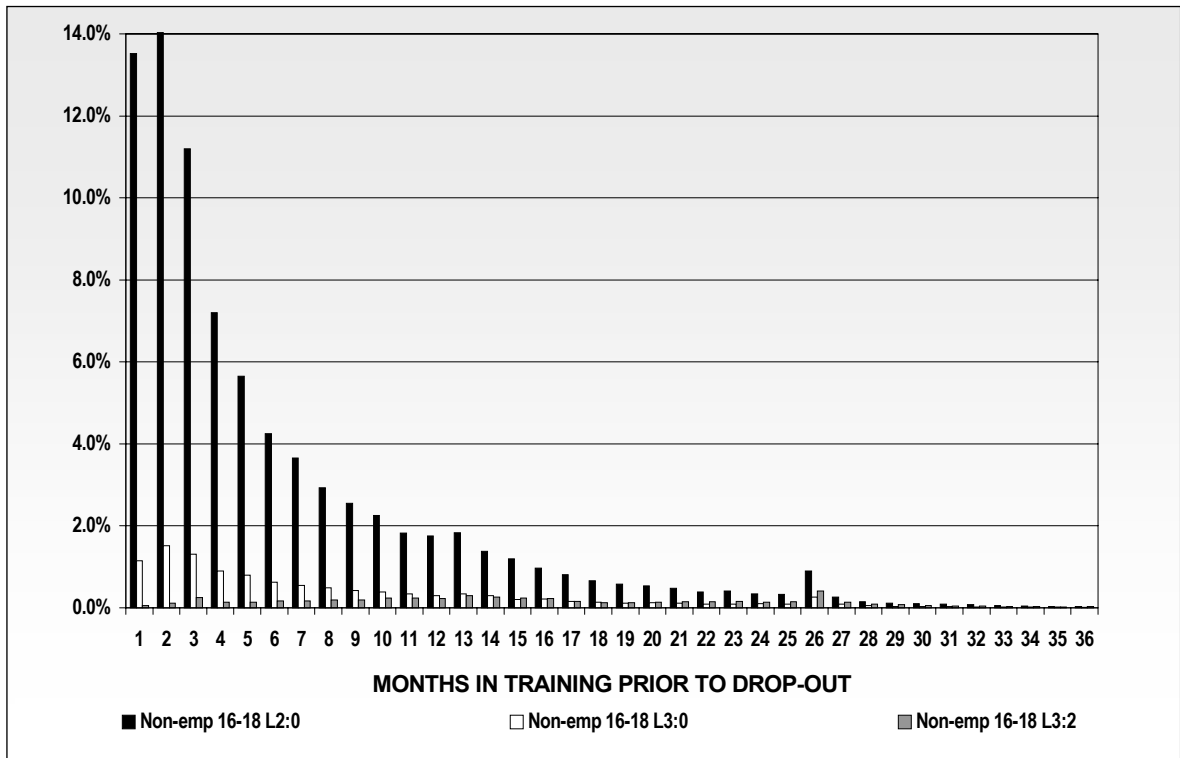


Notes:

1. WBTYP National Trainee Database analysed by PRISM
2. Period covers young people who started between 1 April 1996 and 31 March 1999

- 6.4.26 Employment status at start is again an overriding feature. This is especially true of NVQ L2, with little difference between non-employed 16-18 and 19-24 year olds. NVQ L2 drop-outs account for between 75% and 90% of all non-employed drop-outs for each age group within the first few months after starting training. Chart 5 provides an illustration for the non-employed 16-18 group.

Chart 5: Drop-outs by NVQ Level for non-employed status 1996-99 starters aged 16-18

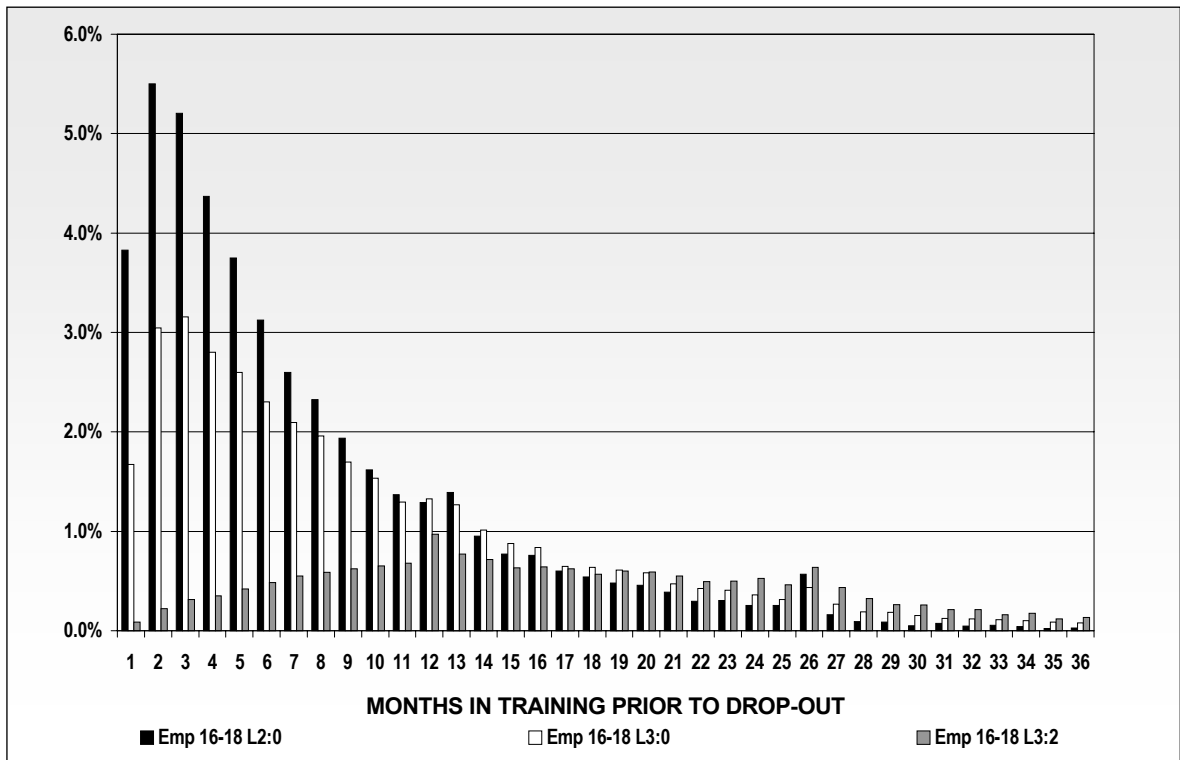


Notes:

1. WBTYP National Trainee Database analysed by PRISM
2. Period covers young people who started between 1 April 1996 and 31 March 1999

- 6.4.27 For employed status young workers there is little difference between the overall proportions of 16-18 and 19-24 young workers who drop-out - see Charts 6 and 7 respectively. However, within these age groups there are differences relative to NVQ level. A higher proportion of the 16-18 employed group is aiming for NVQ L2, but leave without achieving.
- 6.4.28 *(By comparison, for 16-18 year olds, peak achievement occurs for NVQ L2 and L3 at 9 and 25 months respectively. Peak timing for 19-24 year olds is 7 months for both NVQ L2 and L3).*

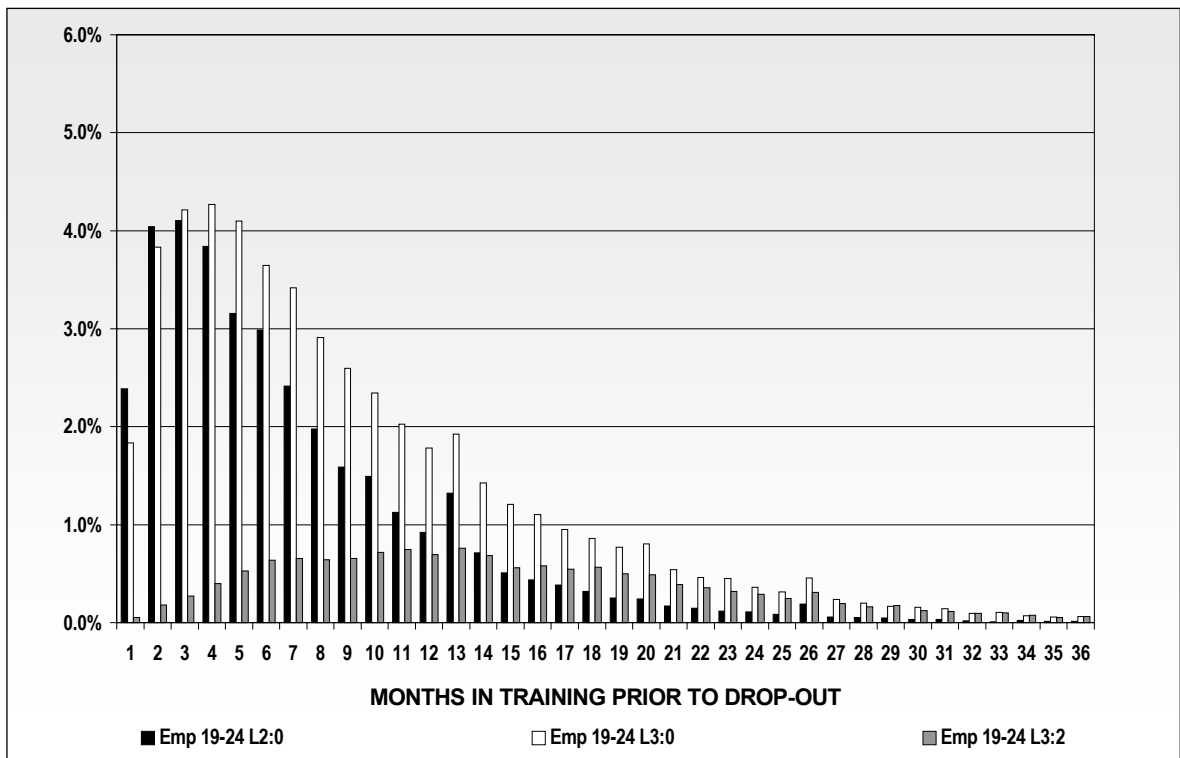
Chart 6: Drop-outs by NVQ Level for employed status 1996-99 starters aged 16-18



Notes:

1. WBTYP National Trainee Database analysed by PRISM
2. Period covers young people who started between 1 April 1996 and 31 March 1999

Chart 7: Drop-outs by NVQ Level for employed status 1996-99 starters aged 19-24



Notes:

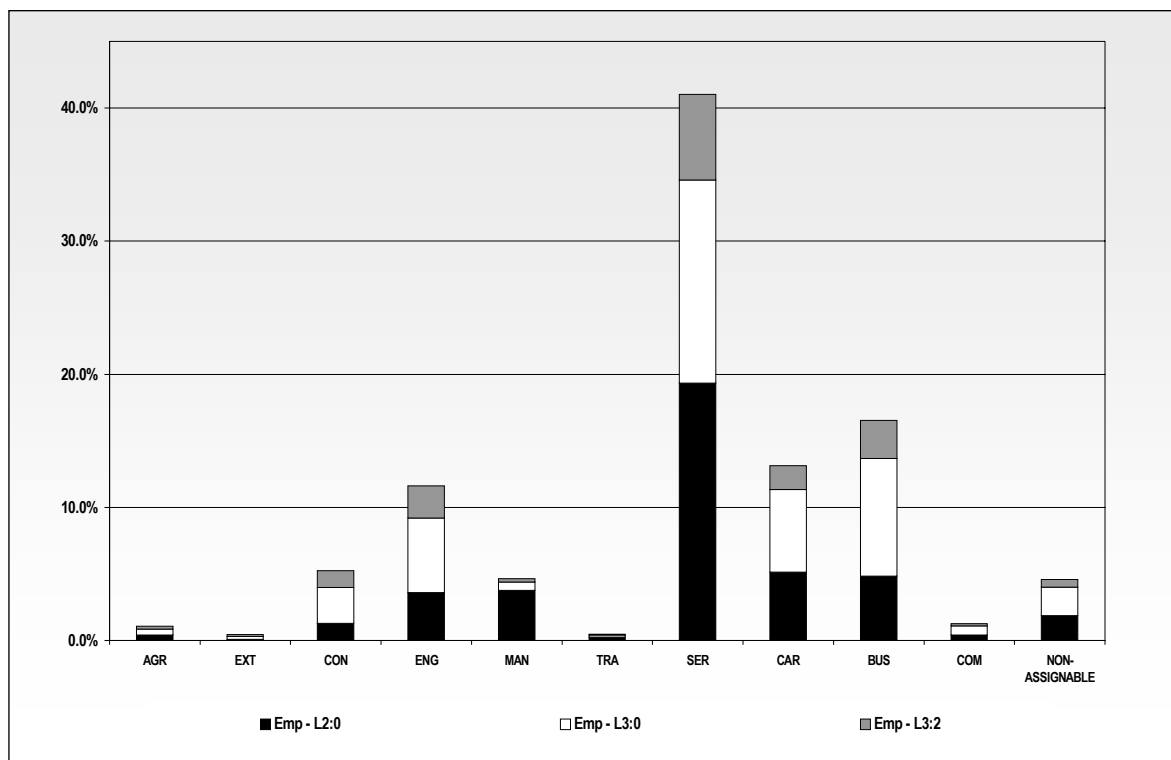
1. WBTYP National Trainee Database analysed by PRISM
2. Period covers young people who started between 1 April 1996 and 31 March 1999

NVQ Framework

6.4.29 Framework 7 accounts for the greatest proportion (41%) of employed drop-outs (see Chart 8). Frameworks 9, 8 and 4 are the next largest contributors (17%, 13% and 12% respectively). In comparison, for unemployed drop-outs, Frameworks 9 and 7 account for the greatest proportions of leavers - 31% and 26% respectively.

6.4.30 (For 'achievers', the proportions are broadly similar. Minor differences relative to the 'drop-out' group are that Frameworks 7 and 9 are each 5% points higher, while Framework 8 is 10% points lower).

Chart 8: Drop-outs by NVQ Level for employed status 1996-99 starters by NVQ Framework



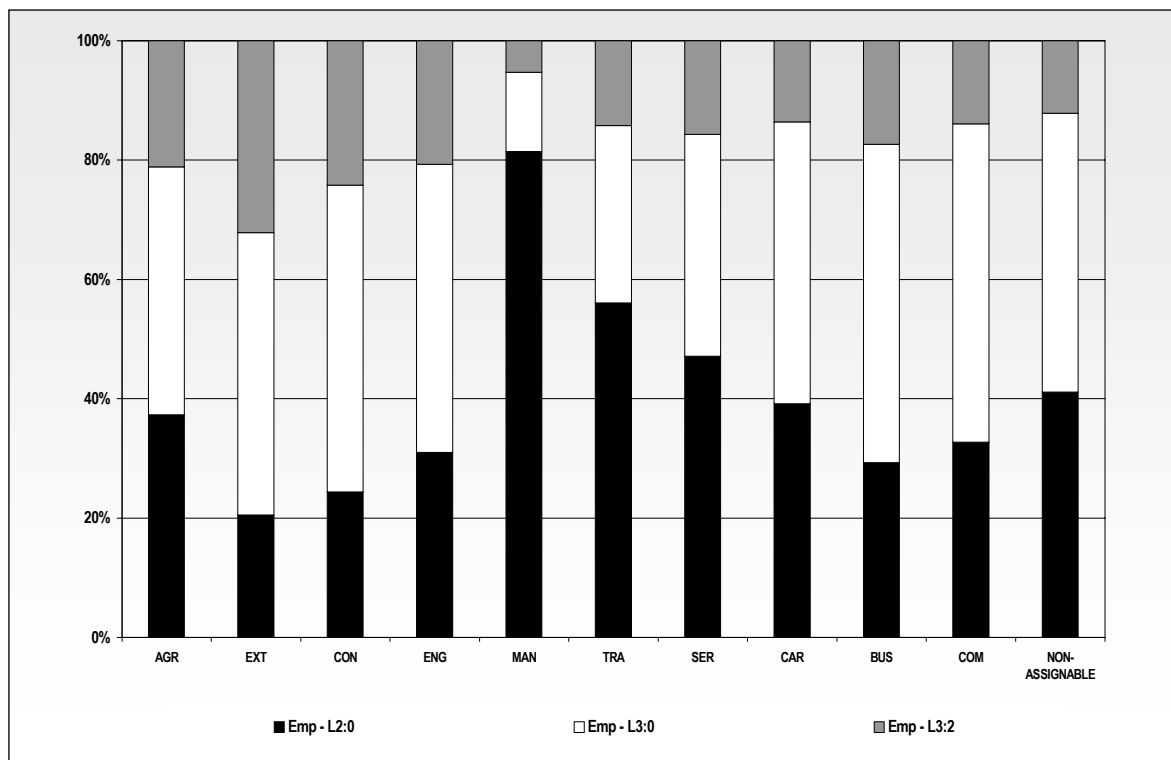
Notes:

1. WBTYP National Trainee Database analysed by PRISM
2. Period covers young people who started between 1 April 1996 and 31 March 1999
3. It was not possible to assign 5% of leavers to an NVQ Framework - these have been excluded from the above analysis

6.4.31 Chart 9 re-presents the data in Chart 8, but illustrates the proportions of employed drop-outs by NVQ aimed for/achieved within each Framework. It is notable that the proportions are relatively similar for the more significant (in volume terms) Frameworks (ie 4, 7, 8 and 9). The high proportion of NVQ L2 drop-outs in Framework 5 is also notable.

6.4.32 (By comparison, NVQ L2 'achievers' account for around 60% of all achievers, with NVQ L3 accounting for the remaining 40%. The higher proportion of NVQ L2 relative to that seen in the 'drop-out' group is generally repeated across all Frameworks).

Chart 9: Drop-outs by NVQ Level for employed status 1996-99 starters within NVQ Frameworks

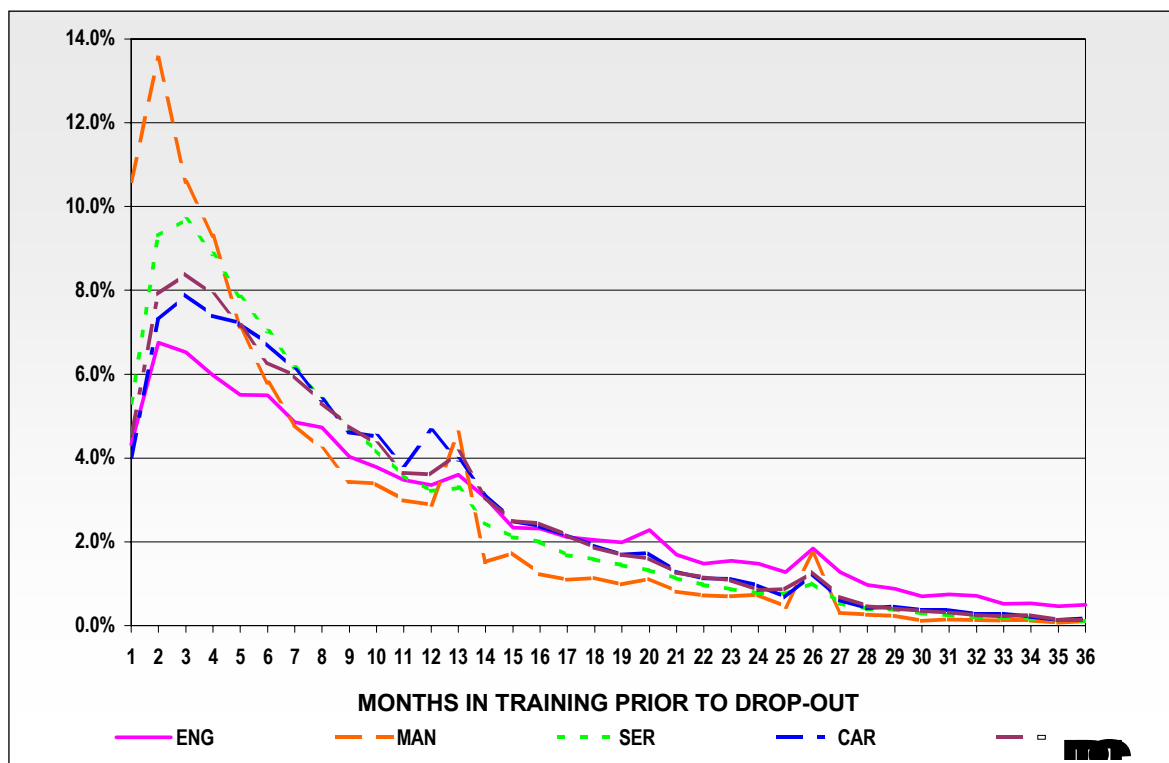


Notes:

1. WBTYP National Trainee Database analysed by PRISM
2. Period covers young people who started between 1 April 1996 and 31 March 1999
3. It was not possible to assign 5% of leavers to an NVQ Framework - these have been excluded from the above analysis

6.4.33 Chart 10 illustrates drop-out rates within each Framework for employed drop-outs. What is surprising is that peak drop-out and rate of drop-out show a very similar pattern irrespective of Framework. For example, it might have been expected that Framework 4 (predominantly motor vehicle and engineering with strong 'apprenticeship' traditions) would have behaved very differently from Framework 7 (predominantly, retail, catering and hospitality). The fact that these Frameworks have such similar patterns tends to suggest that non-NVQ issues are dominant in young worker drop-out.

Chart 10: Drop-out rates for employed status 1996-99 starters in Frameworks 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9



Notes:

1. WBTYP National Trainee Database analysed by PRISM
2. Period covers young people who started between 1 April 1996 and 31 March 1999
3. It was not possible to assign 5% of leavers to an NVQ Framework - these have been excluded from the above analysis

Destination after leaving training

6.4.34 The leaving destination is unknown for 66% of drop-outs. Consequently, there is some uncertainty over the accuracy of the 'known' groups. Discounting 'unknowns', 42% of drop-outs starting in 1996-99 stayed with the same employer; 20% became unemployed.

Type of training organisation

6.4.35 Preliminary examination of provider names relative to organisation type (ie college, private or employer-based) revealed considerable inaccuracies in how organisations had been coded. Consequently it has proven impossible to undertake any valid analysis of differences between types of organisation.

Time of year in which the individual started (by calendar quarter)

6.4.36 A greater proportion of young workers start in calendar quarter 3 (July, August and September), reflecting the peak time for school leavers and recruitment into employment. This is illustrated in Table 9 for both employed and non-employed status young people.

Table 9: Proportion of drop-outs by quarter in which started for all 1996-99 starters

Quarter in which started	Employment status at start	
	Employed	Non-employed
January, February, March	17%	5%
April, May, June	14%	7%
July, August, September	25%	13%
October, November, December	16%	5%

6.4.37 Although calendar quarter 3 shows the greatest proportion of starters who subsequently drop out, it does not differ significantly from other quarters in terms of drop-out timing. This is illustrated in Table 10, which looks at cumulative drop-out rates within the first 12 months of training for employed young people. This demonstrates that the drop-out rate for calendar quarter 3 employed starters is slightly lower than other quarters, but not significantly so.

Table 10: Proportion of drop-outs by quarter in which started for 1996-99 employed starters

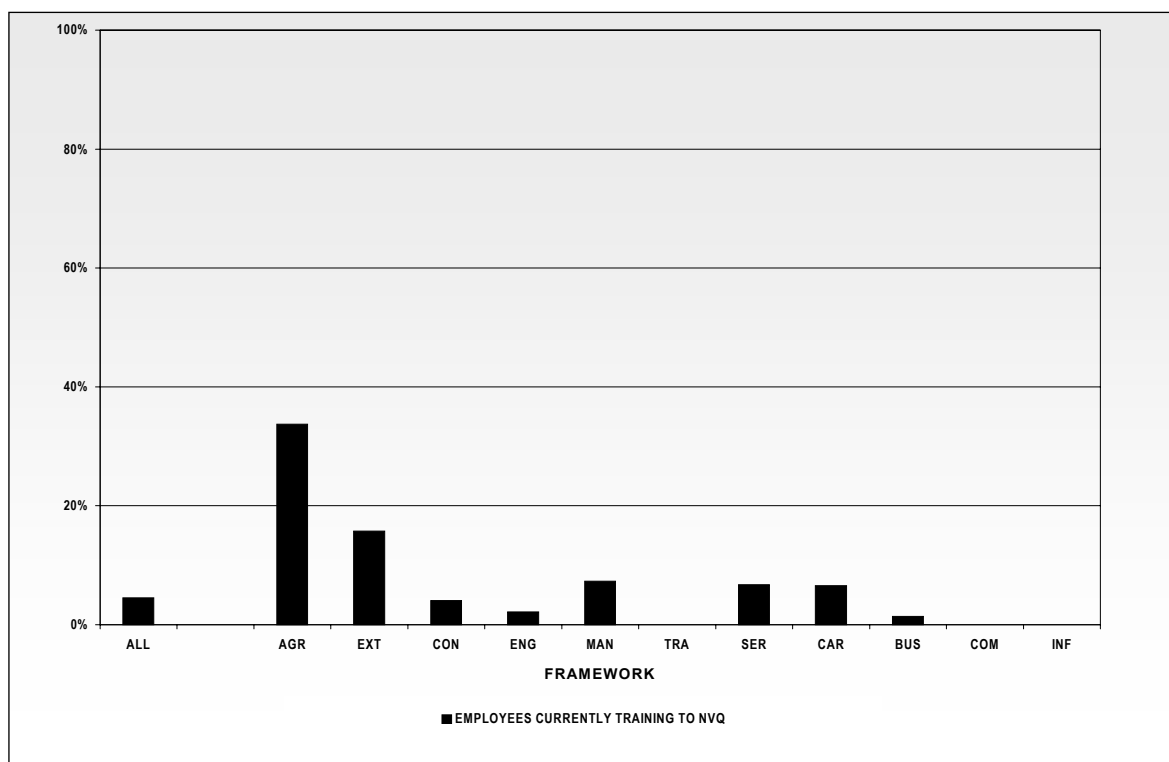
Quarter in which started	Cumulative drop-outs from quarter group within:			
	3 months	6 months	9 months	12 months
January, February, March	23%	46%	64%	74%
April, May, June	24%	47%	61%	72%
July, August, September	22%	40%	55%	67%
October, November, December	21%	44%	60%	72%

7 THE EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVE

7.1 NVQ Training dynamics

- 7.1.1 Measured as a proportion of the workforce, 5% of all employees were **currently** being trained to NVQ standard. There are relative differences between Frameworks as illustrated in Chart 11. The relatively low numbers of overall employees distorts the position illustrated in Frameworks 1 and 2. It is notable that higher proportions are being trained in Frameworks 5 (manufacturing), 7 (goods and services) and 8 health and social care). In terms of funding younger workers' NVQ training, 88% of employers accessed funding under a Government initiative (eg Modern Apprenticeship and National Traineeship - or New Deal in some instances)

Chart 11: Percentage of the workforce currently being trained to NVQ standard



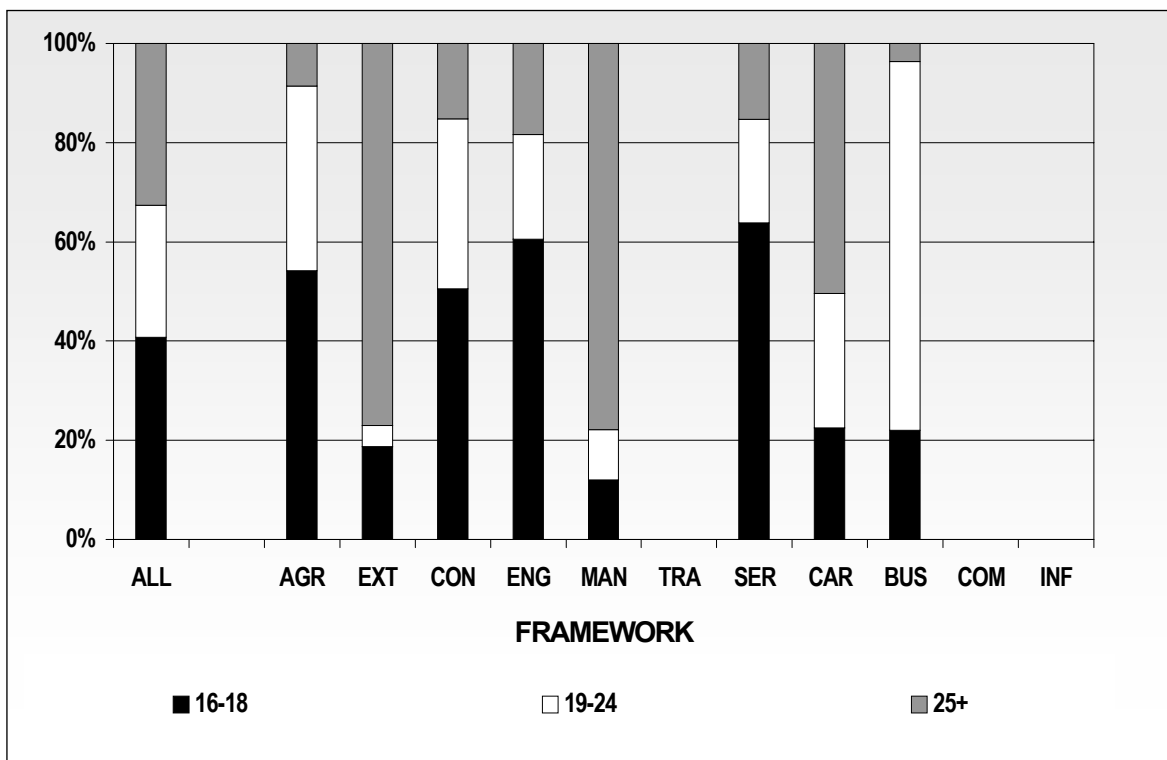
Notes:

1. Base: 115 organisations
2. No organisations in Frameworks 6, 10 and 11
3. Overall employee numbers in Frameworks 1 and 2 are small (1997 and 305 respectively) and this may unduly distort the data for these Frameworks

- 7.1.2 We asked employers about the mix of age groups currently being trained to NVQ standards. Chart 12 summarises responses by Framework. Overall, 41% of employees are in the 16-18 age group, with 27% in the 19-24 grouping and 33% aged 25 or over.

- 7.1.3 The relatively high proportion of age 25+ NVQ training in Frameworks 2, 5 and 8 is notable. In Framework 5 (manufacturing) many employers are using L2 NVQs for their entire workforce to ensure common standards and competencies (sometimes linked with pay structures). The higher proportion of older workers currently being trained in Framework 8 reflects legislative changes affecting minimum age requirements and skill levels.
- 7.1.4 16-18 year olds represent a higher proportion of workers training to NVQ standards in Frameworks 3, 4 and 7. This is unsurprising, given the tradition of younger apprentices in construction, engineering and (within Framework 7) hairdressing. Retail and catering and hospitality sectors within Framework 7 tend also to recruit younger workers. The high proportion of 19-24 year olds being trained in Framework 9 (typically Business Administration) is notable.

Chart 12: Proportions of the workforce by age currently being trained to NVQ standard

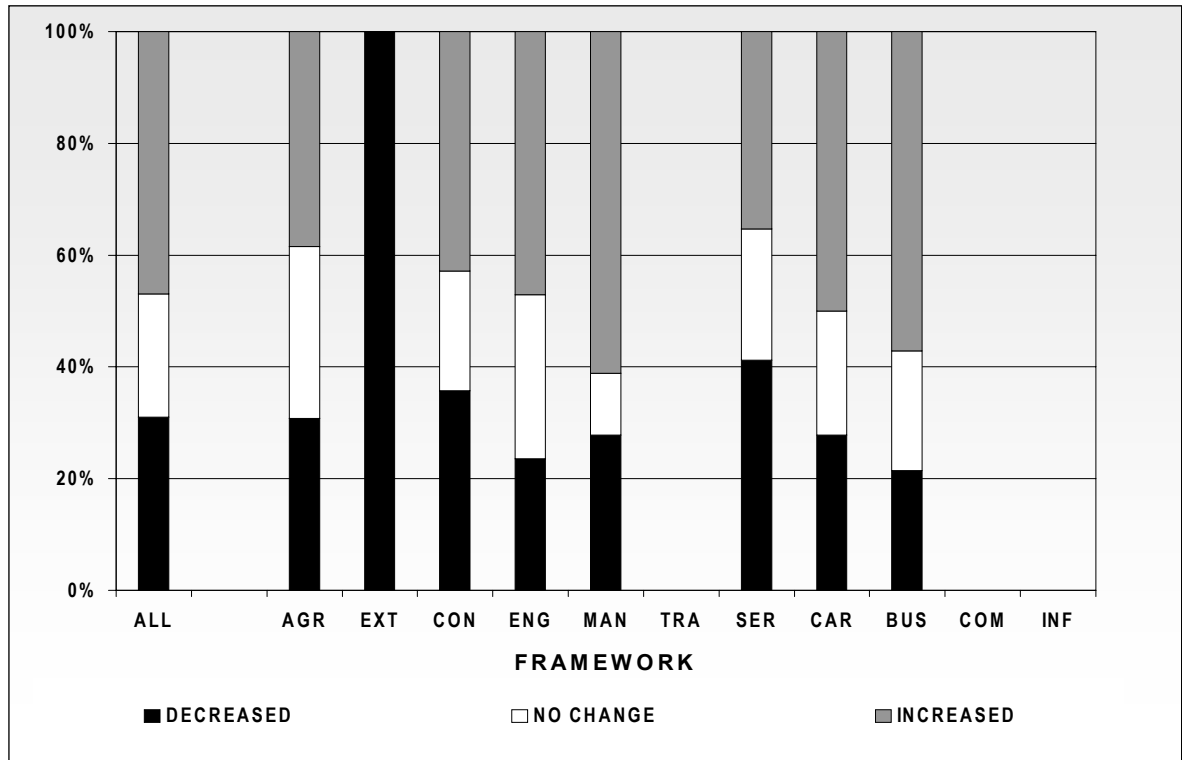


Notes:

1. Base: 115 organisations
2. No organisations in Frameworks 6, 10 and 11
3. Overall employee numbers in Frameworks 1 and 2 are small (1997 and 305 respectively) and this may unduly distort the data for these Frameworks

7.1.5 We also asked employers about whether they had increased or decreased training to NVQ standards. Chart 13 summarises responses by Framework (note that this is unweighted relative to workforce size or NVQ volume impact within Frameworks sector). Overall, NVQ training has increased in the last few years. The main contributors to this are Frameworks 5, 8 and 9. This coincides in these Frameworks with a higher proportion of NVQ training in 19-24 and 25+ age groups. Again the increases in Frameworks 5 and 8 also reflect (respectively) the growing desire for standardised competencies and legislative impacts. An overall decrease in NVQ training in Framework 7 is indicated - this group of occupations accounts for a very significant proportion of all NVQ training.

Chart 13: Changes in training to NVQ standard



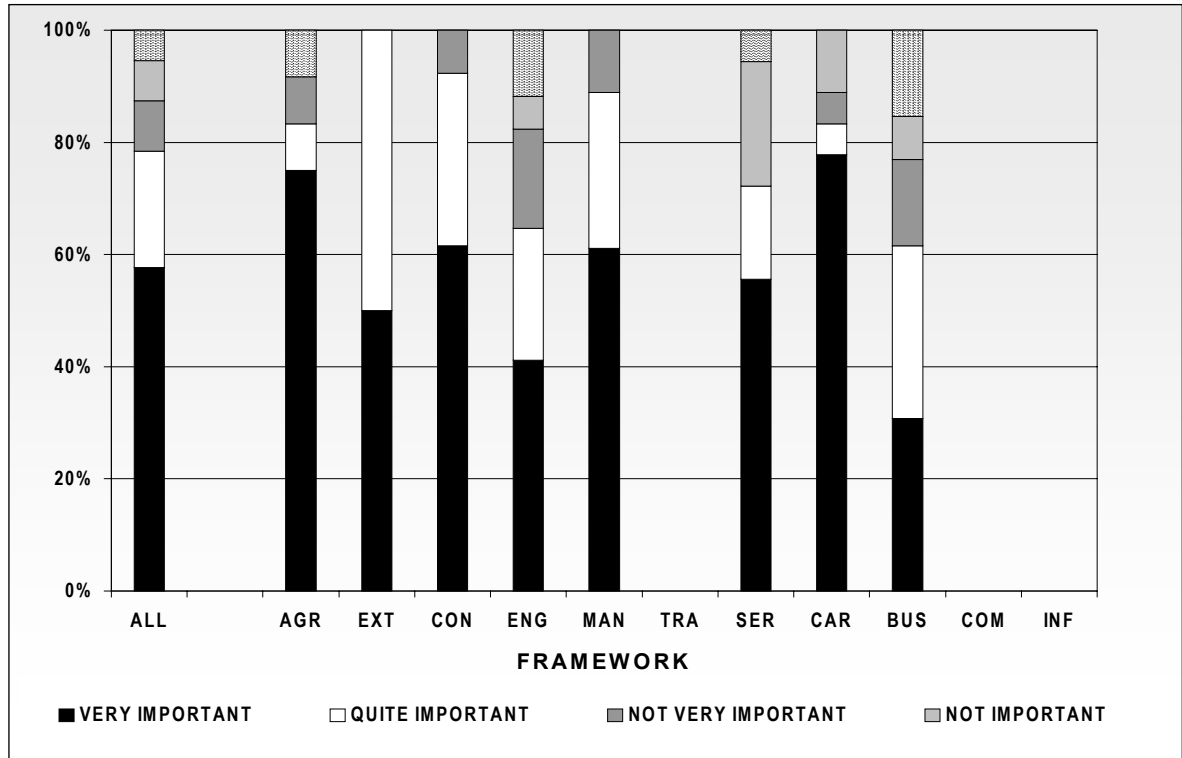
Notes:

1. Base: 115 organisations
2. No organisations in Frameworks 6, 10 and 11
3. Overall employee numbers in Frameworks 1 and 2 are small (1997 and 305 respectively) and this may unduly distort the data for these Frameworks

7.2 Importance of NVQs and factors influencing NVQ training

7.2.1 Employers were asked to identify the importance of NVQs to their organisation. Overall, 78% regarded NVQs as quite or very important. Chart 14 reflects Framework differences. The responses indicate that NVQs are relatively less important in Frameworks 4 and (in particular) 9.

Chart 14: Importance of NVQs to employers

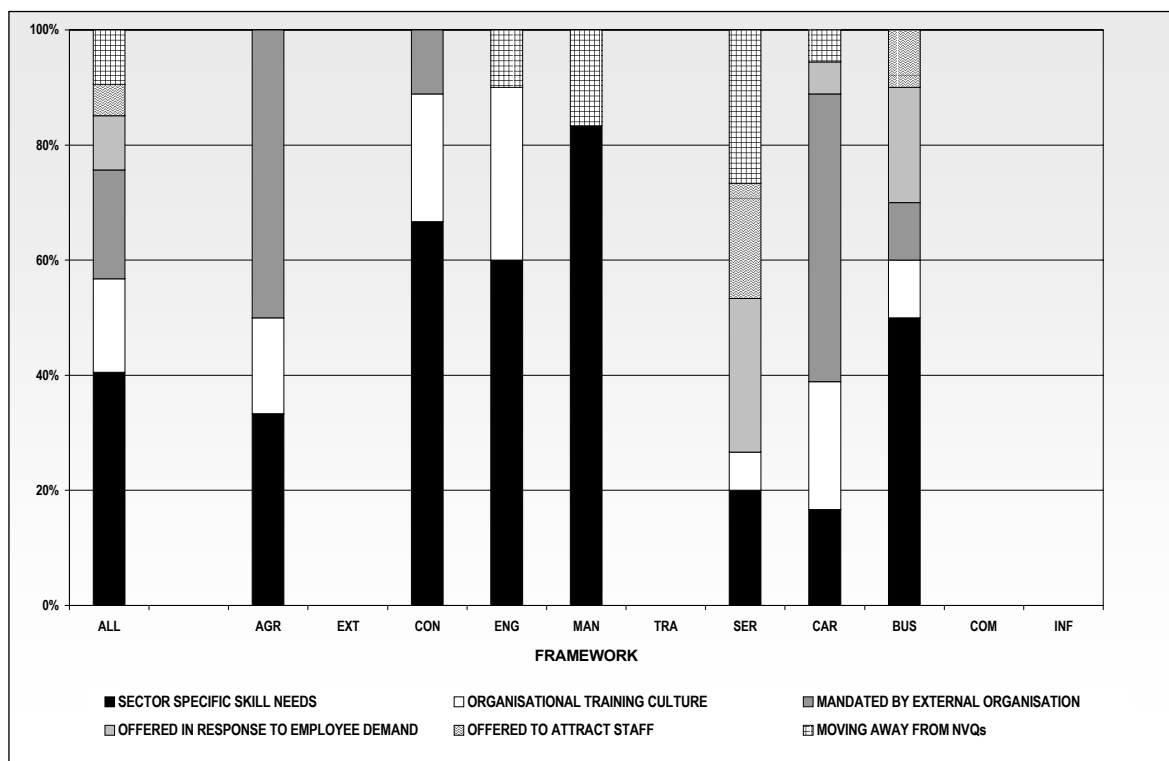


Notes:

1. Base: 111 organisations
2. No organisations in Frameworks 6, 10 and 11
3. Overall employee numbers in Frameworks 1 and 2 are small (1997 and 305 respectively) and this may unduly distort the data for these Frameworks

- 7.2.2 Employers were asked what factors influenced their training to NVQ standard. We have categorised the more significant responses in Chart 15. Overall, sector-specific skill needs are the main influencing factor - this is especially true of Frameworks 3 and 4. Skilling issues are highly significant in Framework 5, which accords with the needs of manufacturing employers to ensure consistent standards.

Chart 15: Influencing factors in training to NVQ standard



Notes:

1. Base: most significant groupings (74 responses)
2. No organisations in Frameworks 6, 10 and 11
3. Overall employee numbers in Frameworks 1 and 2 are small (1997 and 305 respectively) and this may unduly distort the data for these Frameworks

- 7.2.3 External legislative influences are apparent in Framework 8, where NVQs are increasingly mandated by Government departments. From the comments received, this seems likely to continue to drive NVQ uptake in this Framework for the next few years.
- 7.2.4 Framework 7 is notable in that skill needs achieve a relatively low rating overall; either responding to staff demand or offering NVQs to attract staff (essentially two closely related aspects) are much more significant. (Although not a factor for the group of employers researched, this finding accords with research with young workers in this Framework - it is common to find that a training organisation 'sells' the idea of an NVQ to a young worker who in turn convinces the employer of its merits). It is also notable that a number of (previously committed) organisations in Framework 7 are moving away from NVQs.

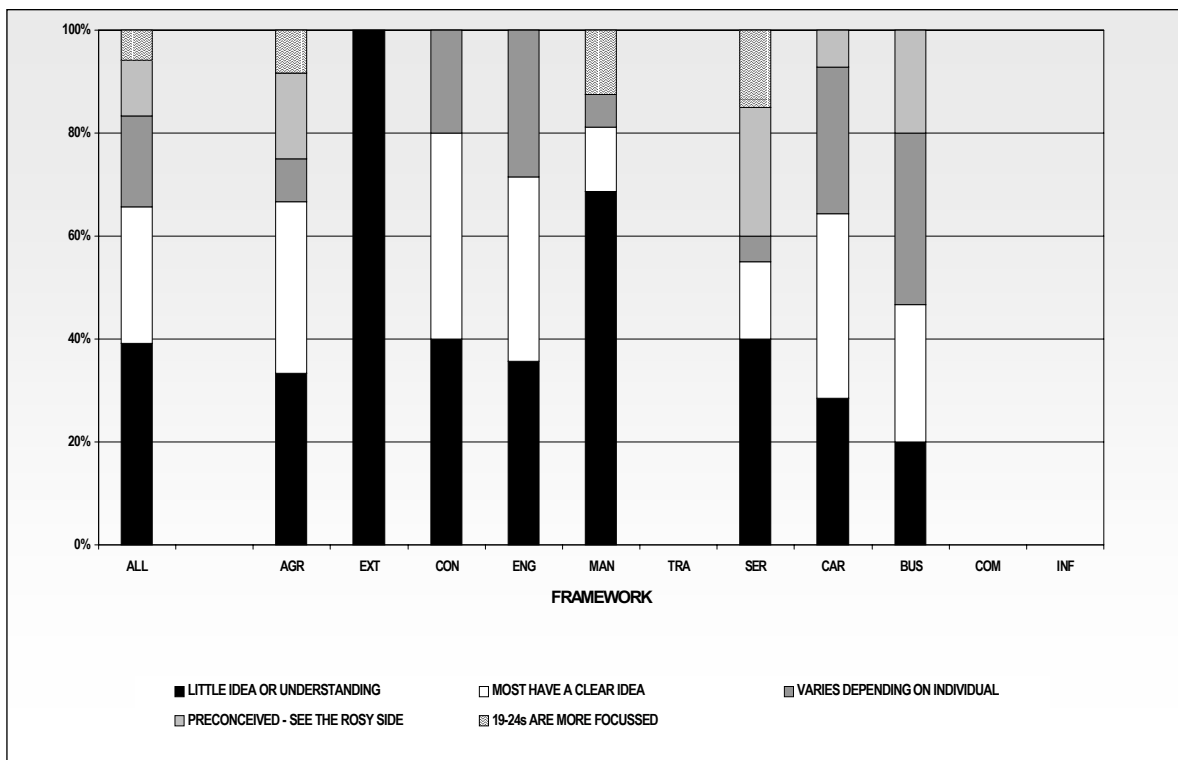
7.3 Employer perceptions of young worker's job, training and career expectations

- 7.3.1 Employers were asked for their views on how clear an understanding young workers had of the work they wanted to do, what they thought of the guidance they had received and what young workers expected of their job and training.

Expectations of work

- 7.3.2 Chart 16 illustrates the employers' perception of young workers expectations. Again we have categorised employers' views. Although the prevailing view is that young workers have little understanding of the work they wish to do, there is a belief that a significant proportion do have a clear idea - with much depending upon the individual. Framework 5 demonstrates the greatest apparent disparity between young worker expectations and reality.

Chart 16: Employer perceptions of young workers expectations of work



Notes:

1. Base: most significant groupings (102 responses)
2. No organisations in Frameworks 6, 10 and 11
3. Overall employee numbers in Frameworks 1 and 2 are small (1997 and 305 respectively) and this may unduly distort the data for these Frameworks

Employer views on career guidance

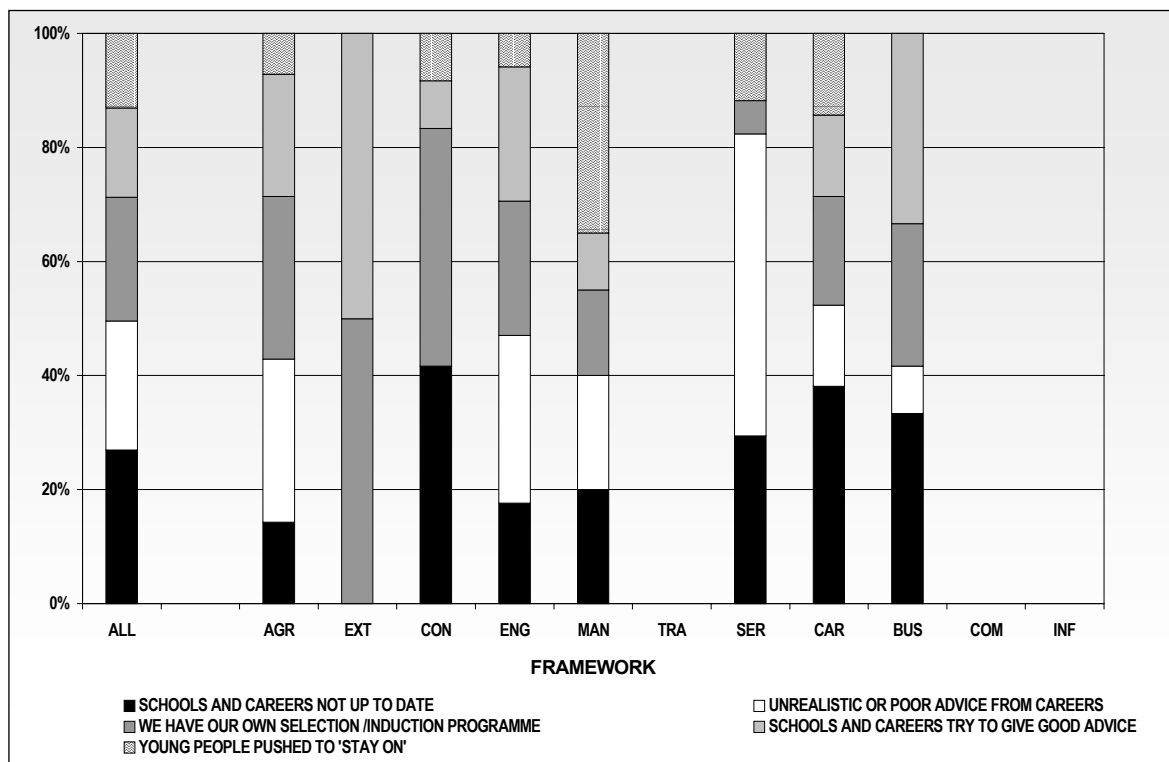
- 7.3.3 Chart 17 illustrates the employers' perception of the career guidance given to young workers. Employer's views have been categorised. Taken overall, the view (of 50%) of employers is that school/career service advice is unrealistic, poor or out of touch - this is especially true in Framework 7 (catering, hospitality, retail, hair and beauty occupations). In Frameworks 5 and 9 there is a strong perception that young people are pushed to 'stay on' at the age of 16.

- 7.3.4 A point frequently made by employers is that schools and careers services have fixed and outdated perceptions of their sector's activities. Some examples:

- Many employers have referred to the fact that schools or careers rarely visit their premises to see what they do (especially in 'productive' industries)
- Less academically able young women tend to be directed to early years care on the presumption that it is not particularly demanding. In reality, legislation is increasing the need for qualified staff - legislation will also mean a minimum age of 18 for workers in early years occupations

- Manufacturing occupations are seen as 'low grade' - yet very sophisticated high-tech computerised manufacturing equipment is now used in multi-skilled environments. This demands competent staff (and is reflected in increased NVQ training amongst Framework 5 employers)

Chart 17: Employer views on career guidance



Notes:

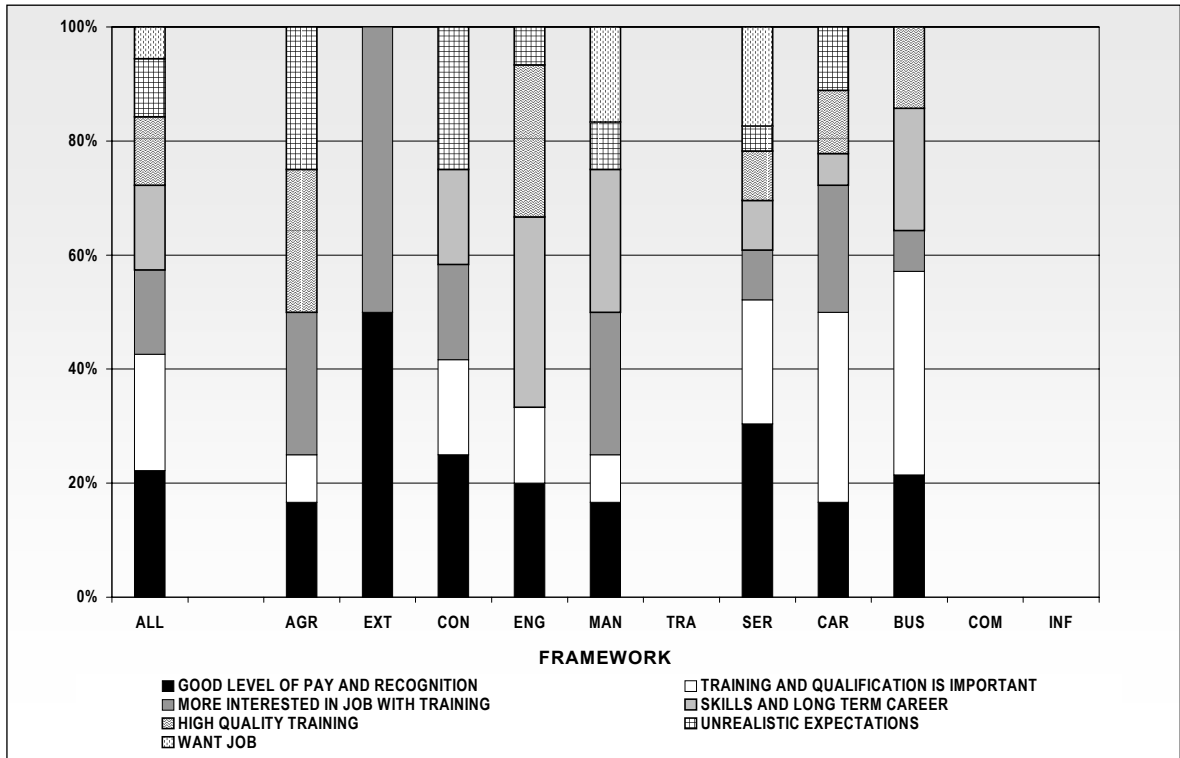
1. Base: most significant groupings (115 responses)
2. No organisations in Frameworks 6, 10 and 11
3. Overall employee numbers in Frameworks 1 and 2 are small (1997 and 305 respectively) and this may unduly distort the data for these Frameworks

Employer views on young worker's expectations of their job and training

7.3.5 Chart 18 illustrates employer perceptions of young worker's expectations of their job and training. Employers' views have been categorised. Pay is marginally the most significant individual point made by employers. Nevertheless, the desire for training and qualifications is significant (this also accords with findings from discussions with younger workers). Views overall are fairly evenly divided - but there are Framework/sectoral differences:

- **Frameworks 1 and 3:** young workers tend to have unrealistic expectations (also applies to the early years component of Framework 8)
- **Framework 4:** skills and long term career is significant
- **Framework 5:** job/job with training and skills is significant - the qualification less so
- **Framework 7:** job and pay tend to be more significant
- **Frameworks 8 and 9:** training and qualifications are the most significant aspects

Chart 18: Employer views on young worker's expectations of their job and training

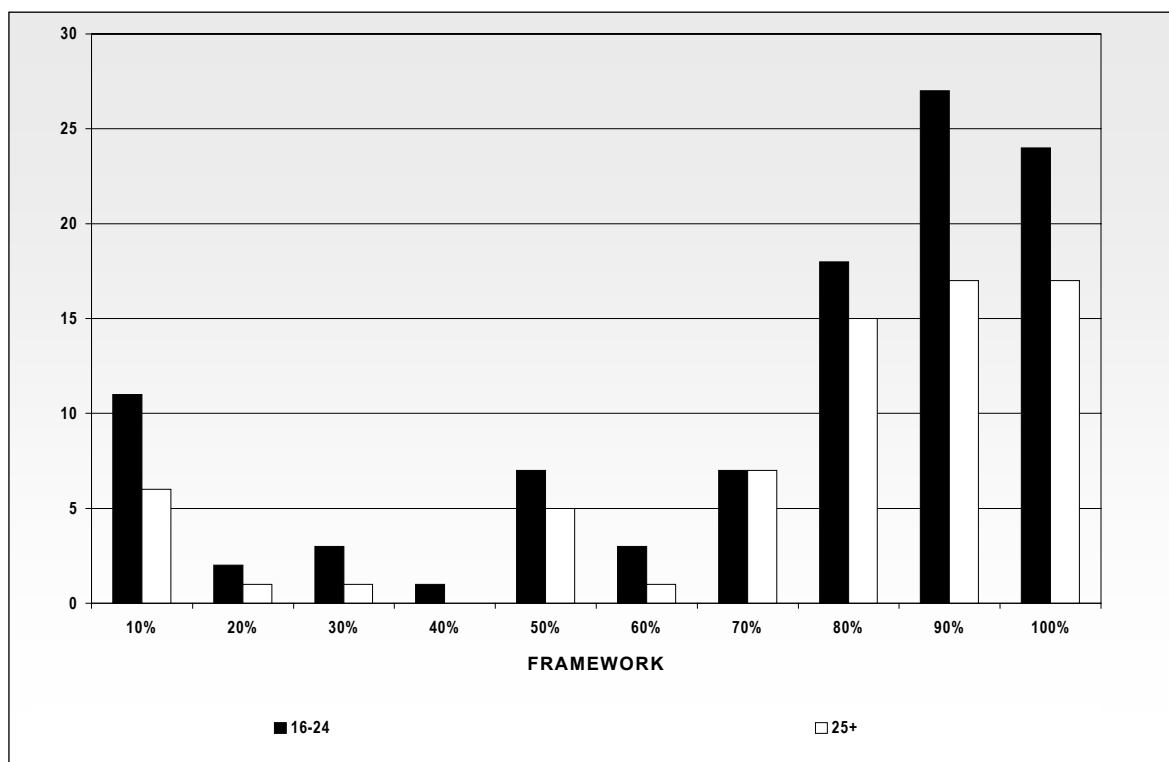


Notes:

1. Base: most significant groupings (115 responses)
2. No organisations in Frameworks 6, 10 and 11
3. Overall employee numbers in Frameworks 1 and 2 are small (1997 and 305 respectively) and this may unduly distort the data for these Frameworks

7.4 NVQs and the workplace

7.4.1 We discussed with employers completion rates for NVQs, how well they fitted with the workplace, and whether there were any particular work-related factors that might lead to non-completion. We also discussed the help and support they provided to young workers. The most surprising finding of the study was the high NVQ completion rates reported (as opposed to Modern Apprenticeship or National Traineeship completion rates). Chart 19 illustrates that the majority of the employers surveyed reported achievement rates of over 70%. Slightly fewer employers were training 25+ workers to NVQ standards; nevertheless the 'success' pattern is similar for both younger and older workers.

Chart 19: Count of employers relative to percentage NVQ completion rate**Notes:**

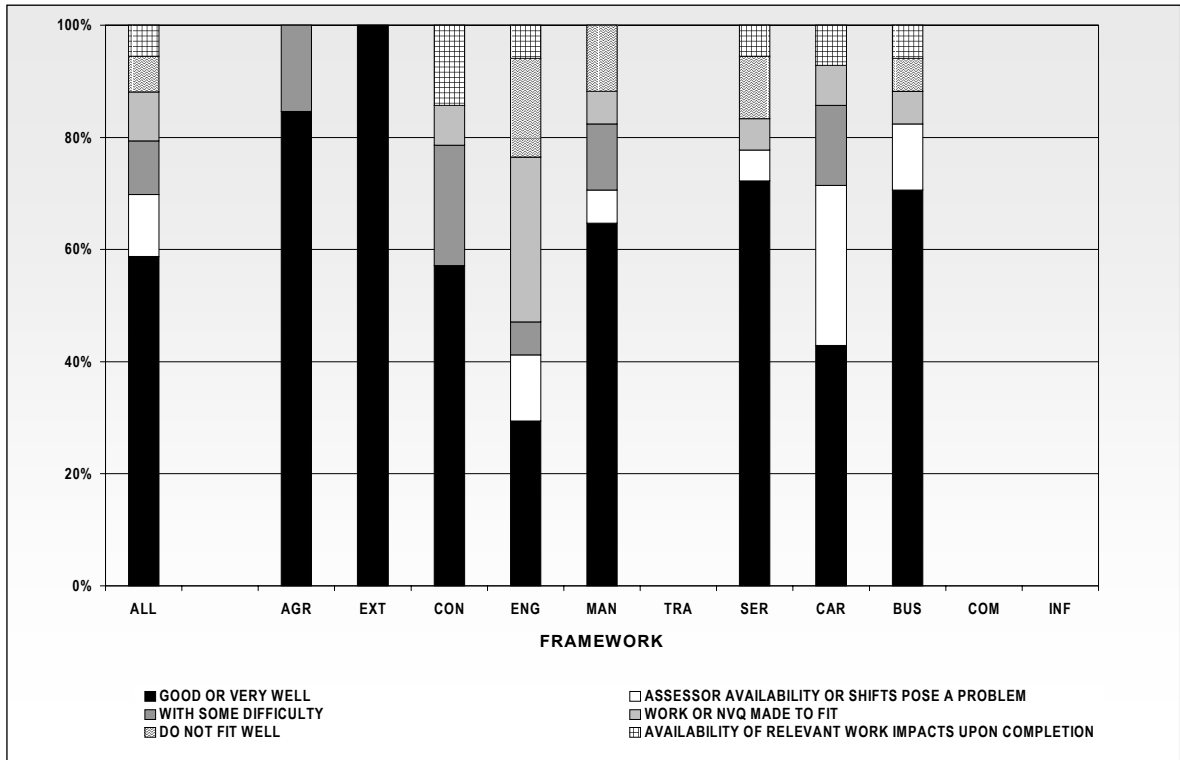
1. Base: 115 organisations
2. No organisations in Frameworks 6, 10 and 11

How well do NVQs fit with work?

7.4.2 Overall, 59% of employers regard NVQs as fitting well into the workplace. The main exceptions (illustrated in Chart 20) are

- **Framework 3:** where some employers have some difficulties. This is largely connected with the nature of construction work, workers moving between sites and availability of the right type of work at an opportune time for assessment
- **Framework 4:** where college-based block release is a feature and the match of college based theory and work-based practice/equipment may not be ideal. Employers also regard NVQs in this Framework as being cumbersome, with a lot of repetition and jargon (see later assessment of employer's views on the structure and delivery of NVQs)
- **Framework 8:** where, in relation to social care, shift patterns, time constraints, staff shortages and consequent impacts on candidate and assessor availability can constrain progress

Chart 20: Employer views on NVQ fit with working arrangements

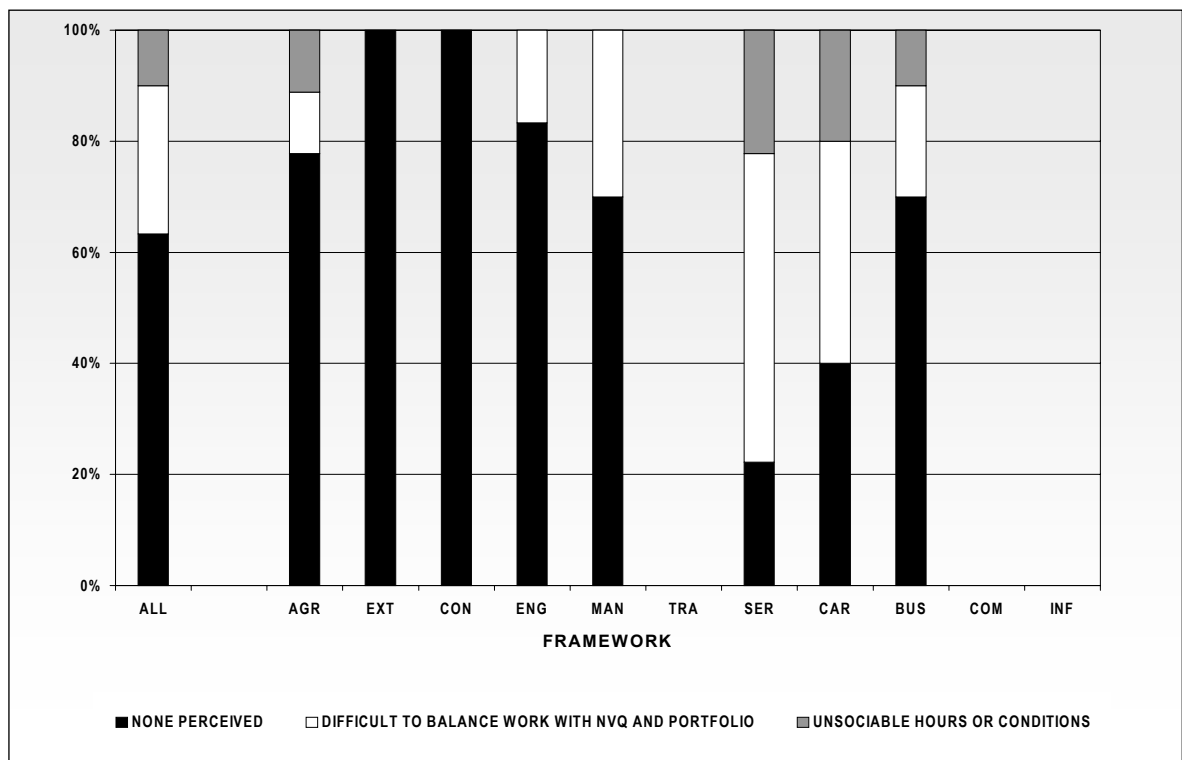


Notes:

1. Base: most significant groupings (126 responses)
2. No organisations in Frameworks 6, 10 and 11

Work-related factors that may lead to non-completion

- 7.4.3 Not all employers felt aware of work-related reasons why younger workers failed to complete the NVQ. In many cases time was allowed to elapse between a young worker starting employment and then being registered for an NVQ. This in itself seems likely to contribute to the low NVQ drop-out rates described by employers. Most employers that were able to respond perceived no particular work or NVQ reasons for young workers failing to complete.
- 7.4.4 However, as Chart 21 illustrates, difficulties in balancing the time demands of work with NVQ portfolio building and assessment feature notably in Frameworks 5, 7 and 8. Unsociable hours or conditions also feature in Frameworks 7 and 8 (principally catering and hospitality and social care). These observations are consistent with drop-out reasons highlighted by young workers themselves.

Chart 21: Employer views on work-related factors that may lead to non-completion**Notes:**

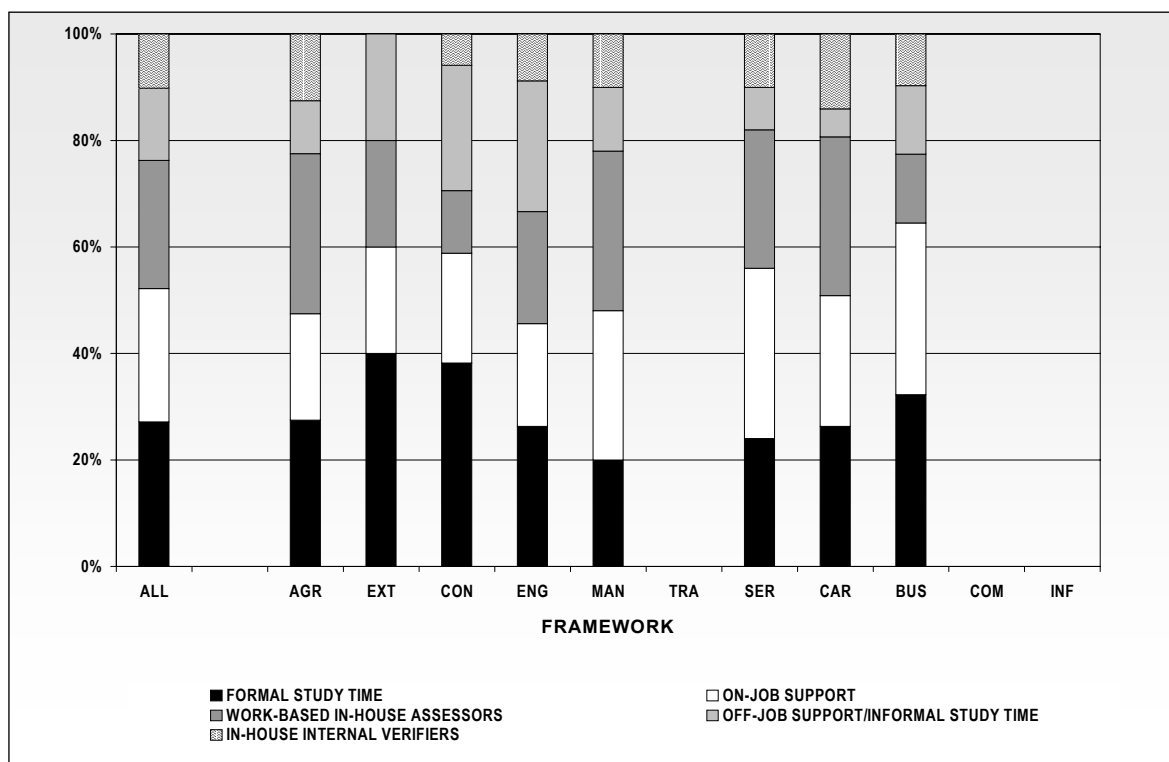
1. Base: most significant groupings (60 responses)
2. No organisations in Frameworks 6, 10 and 11

Help and support provided to young workers in their NVQs

7.4.5 Overall there is a fairly even division of formal and informal study time and access to work-based in-house assessors. This is a significant differentiating factor relative to comments from young workers about their experiences. We believe it is likely to be a significant factor in the high completion rates seen by the group of employers contacted. The main frustrations of younger workers are lack of time to undertake an NVQ, lack of employer support and inconsistency and time delay in the assessment process.

7.4.6 Chart 22 illustrates differences in approach between Frameworks, for example:

- **Framework 3:** a relatively greater reliance on formal study time (typically college block release) with relatively little on-job support and assessment
- **Frameworks 5, 7 and 8:** where there is a greater reliance on on-job support and work based assessment
- **Framework 4:** with a more even spread of support mechanisms reflecting off-job (college), in-house training centres, work-based assessment and so on

Chart 22: Help and support provided to young workers in their NVQs**Notes:**

1. Base: most significant groupings (324 responses)
2. No organisations in Frameworks 6, 10 and 11

7.5 NVQ delivery

7.5.1 We discussed with employers their views on the structure and delivery of NVQs and whether there were any factors here that impacted upon younger workers and completion rates. With 'jargon' and 'paperwork' well-known adverse comments relating to NVQs, we were particularly interested to hear what steps employers took in relation to these. Given that Modern Apprenticeships and National Traineeships are almost synonymous with NVQs and younger workers, we also discussed employers views on Key Skills

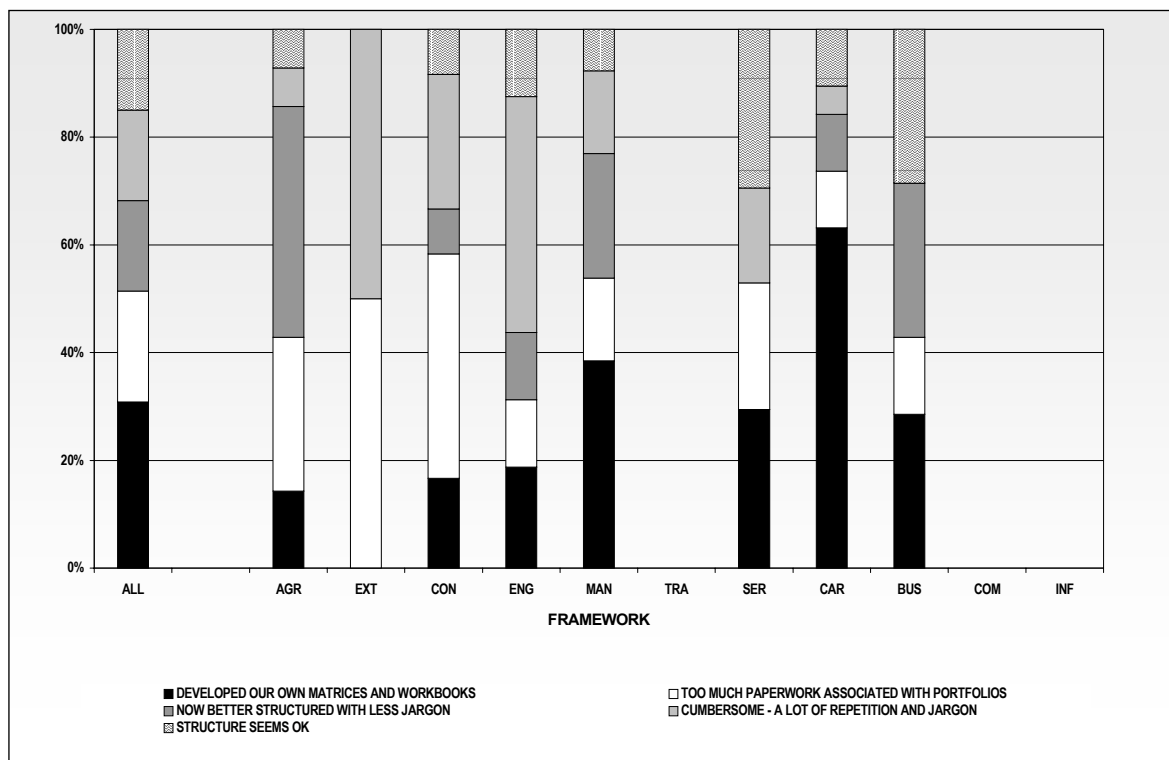
Structure and delivery of NVQs

7.5.2 Around one-third of employers told us that they had developed their own workbooks, matrices, etc to make NVQs more straightforward for young workers. As Chart 23 illustrates, views on structure and delivery of NVQs differ markedly across (and indeed within) Frameworks. The following points are notable:

- **Frameworks 5 and 8:** greater progress (especially Framework 8) in developing workbooks and matrices to support NVQ achievement - the net effect is to reduce paperwork and make the process easier for younger workers
- **Frameworks 1 and 9:** employers feel that NVQs are now better structured with less jargon. In the case of Framework 9 this is underlined by a high proportion of employers saying that the structure seems OK
- **Framework 4:** NVQs are seen to be cumbersome with a lot of repetition and jargon; no significant attempts seem to have been made to react to this by developing in-house materials

- **Framework 3:** too much paperwork, jargon and cumbersome; again no significant attempts seem to have been made to react to this by developing in-house materials

Chart 23: Employer's views on the structure and delivery of NVQs



Notes:

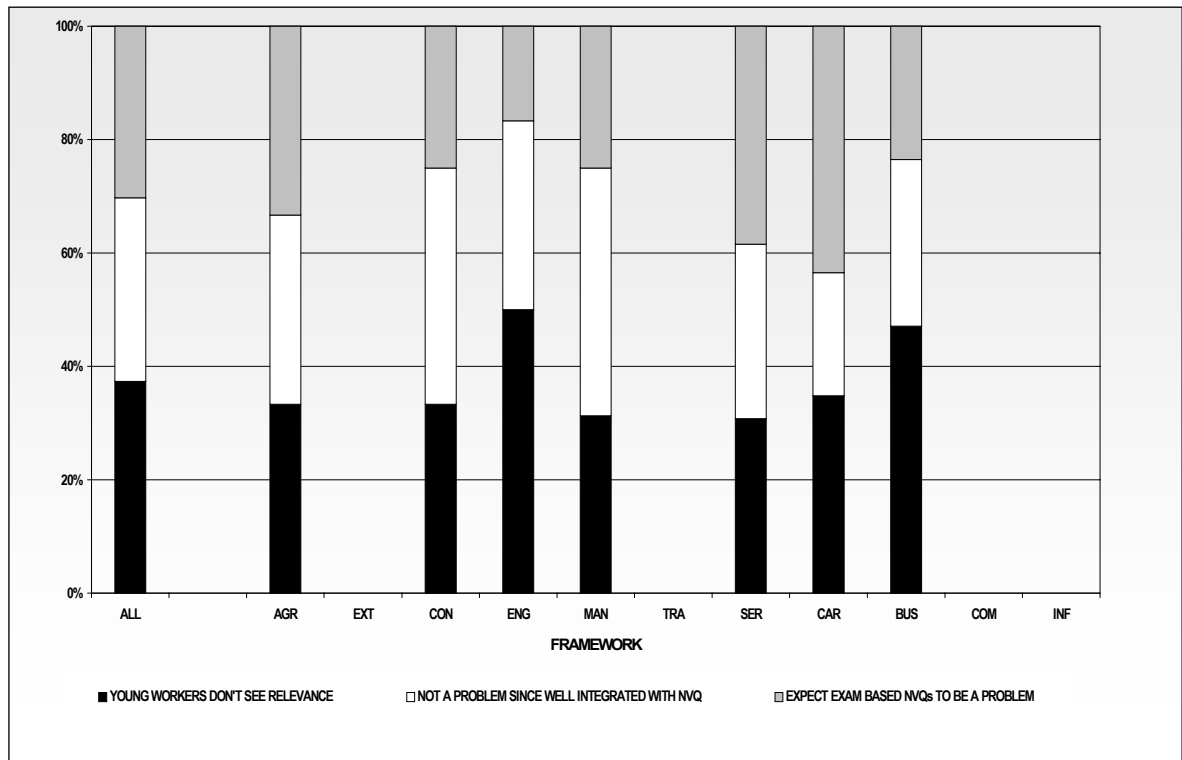
1. Base: most significant groupings (107 responses)
2. No organisations in Frameworks 6, 10 and 11

Views on Key Skills

7.5.3 As Chart 24 illustrates, views on Key Skills are equally divided into three categories:

- **Young workers don't see the relevance:** most notably in Frameworks 4 and 9
- **Not a problem since they are well integrated with the NVQ:** particularly in Frameworks 3 and 5
- **Expectations that exam based Key Skills will be a problem and could lead to increased drop-out:** more so in Frameworks 7 and 8

Chart 24: Employer's views on the structure and delivery of NVQs



Notes:

1. Base: most significant groupings (99 responses)
2. No organisations in Frameworks 6, 10 and 11

7.5.4 Our research with younger workers suggests that they are more 'relaxed' about Key Skills than employers. However, this is in the context of Key Skills being integrated within NVQs by either employers or training organisations. Young workers in Frameworks 3, 7 and 8 are notably averse to exam-based learning

8 THE YOUNG WORKER PERSPECTIVE

8.1 Employment and training dynamics

8.1.1 Table 11 compares the mix of DfES reported post-training destinations with the experiences of the young workers contacted. This reveals differences between DfES reported and actual destinations. Relative to the research sample matrix:

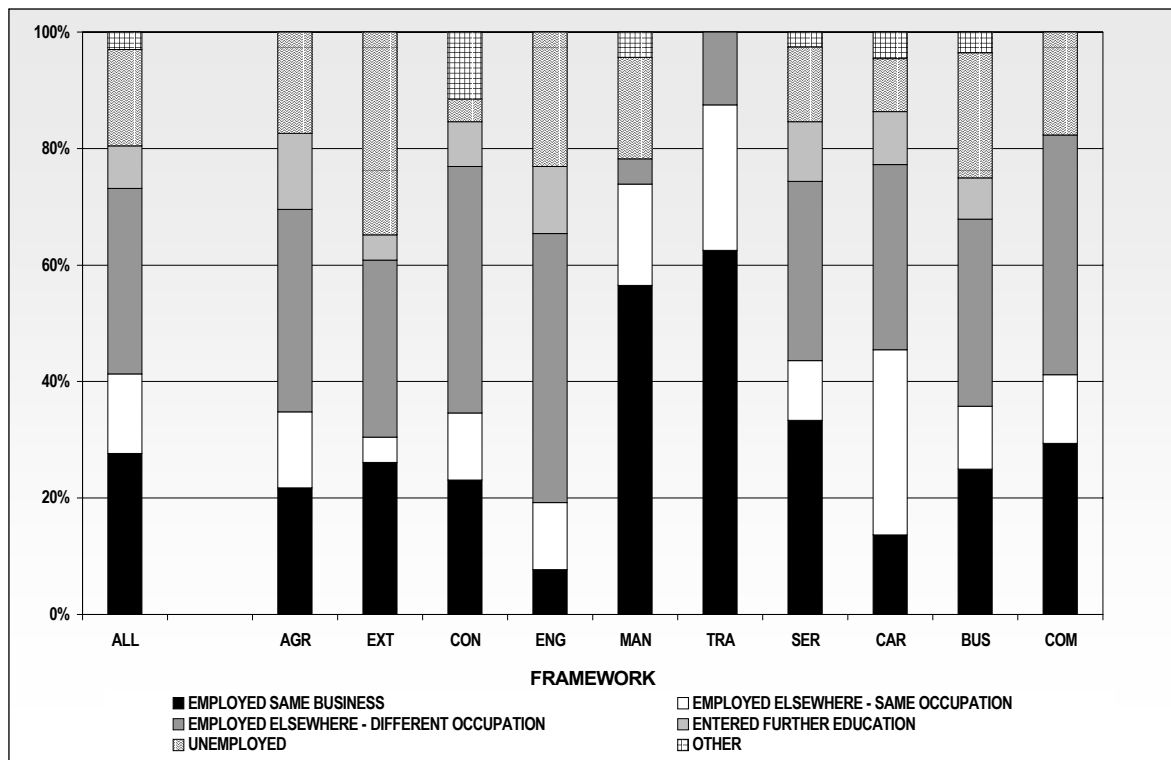
- a lower proportion (11% all respondents) remained with the same business
- a lower proportion (7% of all respondents) became unemployed
- a higher proportion (12% all respondents) have moved to a different employer in a different occupation

Table 11: Comparison of reported sample post-training destinations actual

Destination	Research sample matrix	Actual responses
Employed same business	39%	28%
Employed elsewhere - same occupation	12%	14%
Employed elsewhere - different occupation	20%	32%
Entered Further Education	5%	7%
Unemployed	24%	17%
Other	0%	3%

8.1.2 Chart 25 summarises the **actual** post-training destinations of those who have failed to complete an NVQ under a Government funded training initiative. Chart 25 reflects actual responses received.

Chart 25: Destination after failing to complete an NVQ on a Government programme



Notes:

1. Base: 235 respondents
2. Framework 6 contains only 8 respondents

- 8.1.3 Of the 235 young workers contacted, 20% (47) were either re-starting (3 individuals), continuing (15 individuals) or had completed (29 individuals) an NVQ - usually the one they had embarked upon initially. Relative to the mix of age 16-18 and age 19-24 workers contacted, there is little deference between the proportions of younger workers (16-18s: 25 individuals; 19-24s: 22) from either age group who have actually continued with an NVQ. However there is a greater likelihood of finding individuals who are or have completed their training in Framework 5 (manufacturing), 7 (goods and services) and 9 (business services) - 61%, 21% and 25% respectively of non-completers from these frameworks.
- 8.1.4 Frameworks 3 (constructing), 4 (engineering) , 5 (manufacturing) and 8 (health and social care) show notably different characteristics from the overall picture as summarised in Table 12

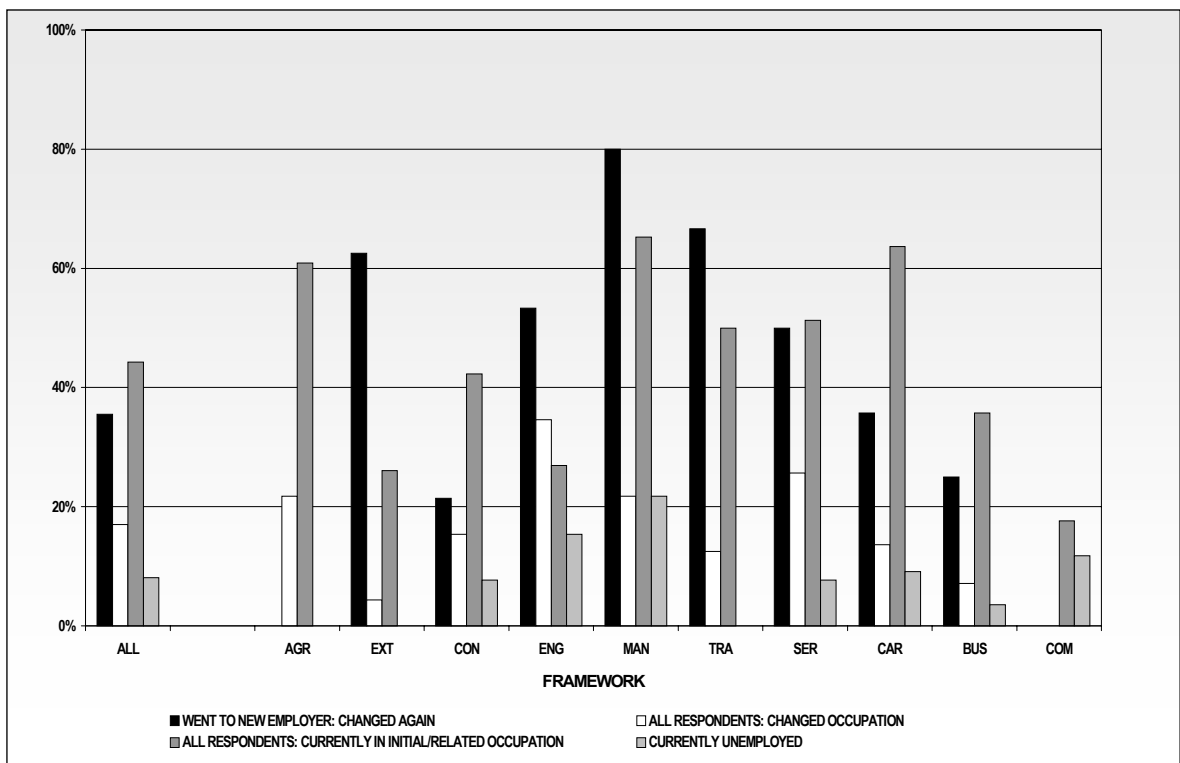
Table 12: Summary of key differences between Frameworks in terms of destinations on leaving

Frameworks 3 (Construction) and 4 (Engineering)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less likely that young workers will have remained with the same employer • More likely that young workers will have sought a change of career direction • Many respondents cite personal ambition as the main reason for choosing this career
Framework 5 (Manufacturing)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More likely that the young worker will remain with the employer • Significantly more likely to find that an NVQ has actually been completed • More likely that training will have been mandated by an employer • Highly likely that skills gained within NVQ are being applied in the same or another employer
Framework 8 (Providing health, social and protective services)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More likely that young workers will have moved to a similar job with another employer • In the 'elderly care' sector, quite likely that the worker has returned to the original employer, but not undertaking an NVQ

- 8.1.5 Chart 26 illustrates the occupational changes of respondents since dropping out of their NVQ. 36% of young workers who had moved to a different employer had changed employer again subsequently. Those initially undertaking an NVQ in Framework 1, 3 and 9 occupations are less likely to have changed employer again. Those initially in Framework 2, 4, 5 and 7 occupations are notably more likely to have changed employer.
- 8.1.6 17% of all respondents indicated that they had changed occupation subsequently. Those initially undertaking an NVQ in Framework 2 and 9 occupations are less likely to have changed occupation again. Those initially in Framework 4, 5 and 7 occupations are notably more likely to have changed occupation. Therefore, for engineering, manufacturing, provision of goods and service and business service occupations there seems a correlation between change of employer and change of occupation.

- 8.1.7 Recognising that respondents may have changed employer or occupation a number of times since failing to complete their NVQ, we asked what they were doing currently. 44% were currently in occupations that related to the Framework or occupation in which they were initially trained. There is a notably greater likelihood of young workers in Framework 1, 5 and 8 occupations remaining in or returning to work in their initial (or a closely related) occupation. This seems especially true of those who were training in social care within Framework 8. Here it is common to find that workers have returned to their original 'training' employer, but are not currently in training to NVQ standards. Young workers who left training in Frameworks 2, 4 and 10 are much less likely to be in the same occupation now.
- 8.1.8 Overall, 8% of respondents were unemployed when we contacted them. Frameworks 4 and 5 (engineering and manufacturing) are most notable, reflecting current competitive and economic difficulties facing these sectors.

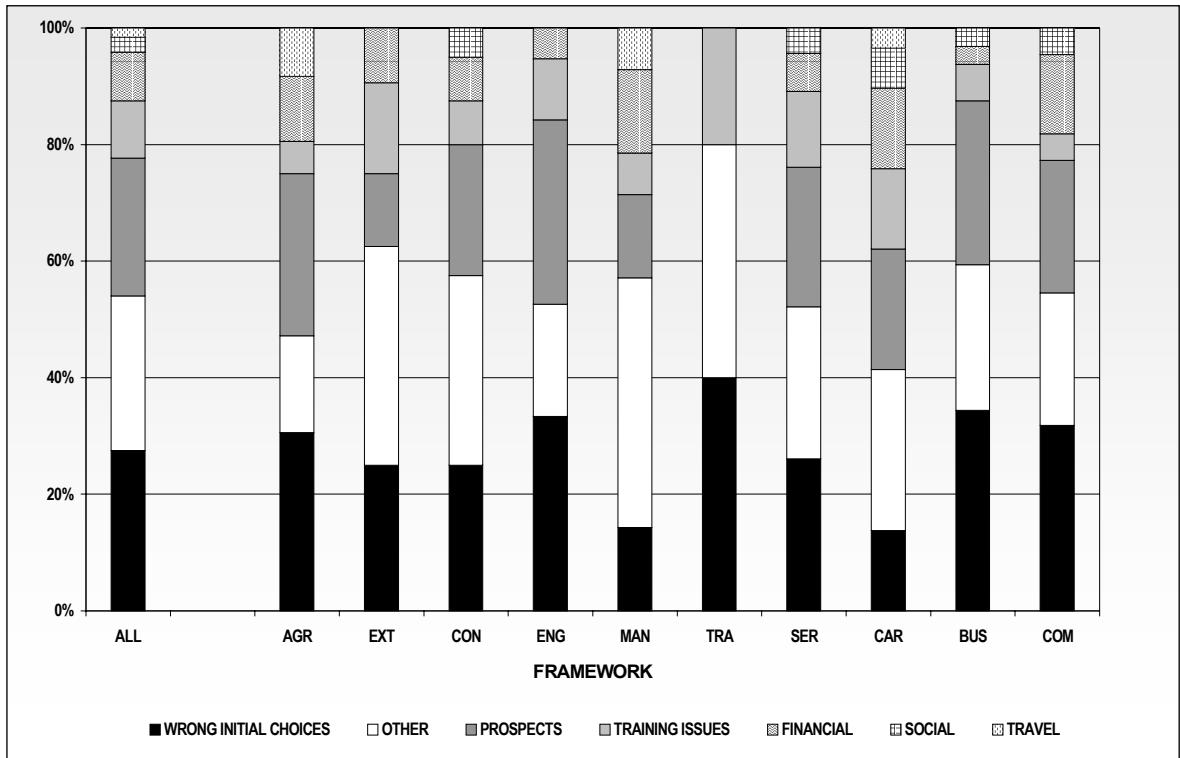
Chart 26: Occupational changes of respondents since dropping out of their NVQ



8.2 Reasons for NVQ non completion

8.2.1 Chart 27 illustrates the most frequent reasons given by young workers for failing to complete an NVQ. Table 13 provides a commentary on key points revealed through discussions with young workers. Table 13 illustrates that reasons for non-completion have really little to do with the NVQ itself and more to do with aspects such as poor initial choice of career or employer, redundancy, better prospects with another employer and inadequate on-off job training support. (Note that social and travel aspects account for 3% and 2% of responses and have not been included in the commentary in Table 13).

Chart 27: Reasons given by young workers for failing to complete an NVQ



- Notes:
1. Base: 313 responses
 2. Framework 6 contains only 8 respondents

Table 13: Summary of reasons for non-completion of NVQ

Wrong initial choice (27% total responses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This encompasses wrong NVQ, job or employer choices • Significant responses within this sub-grouping are employer: 44%; job: 30% and NVQ: 22%, indicating that the NVQ choice itself is less of an issue than work and employer aspects. (This is consistent with findings reported later which show a high satisfaction with NVQs) • Frameworks 5 and 8 are notably lower than the overall average. In Framework 5 young workers often had minimal input into the choice of their NVQ, with employers frequently suggesting or mandating NVQ training. In Framework 8, young workers are generally committed to their choice; reasons for leaving are more likely to be for better pay and/or job
Other (27% total responses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This encompasses dismissal, illness, redundancy, and other issues • Significant responses within this sub-grouping are redundancy: 25%; provider or employer ceasing NVQ training: 13%; leaving due to training programme ineligibility (ie 25+): 10%; dismissal: 7% and illness: 7% • While a relatively smaller proportion are likely to leave for other reasons in Frameworks 1 and 4 and relatively greater in Framework 5, there is no discernible pattern in terms of underlying reasons
Prospects (24% total responses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This encompasses better career, training/education and job prospects • Significant responses within this sub-grouping are career: 50%; job: 26% and training/education: 16% • Young workers in Framework 4 are notably more likely to cite better career prospects as a non-completion reason
Training issues (10% total responses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This encompasses a range of headings with inadequate training/training support the most significant • Significant responses within this sub-grouping are 'not getting enough training support from my employer': 25%; 'not getting the training I wanted': 26% and 'not getting enough training support from my training provider': 19% • Given the low number of comments and their diversity, no Framework exhibits notably different characteristics
Financial issues (8% total responses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is predominantly moving for better pay and is often linked with employer, career or job change issues • Frameworks where this is notably significant are those where low pay is known to predominate, namely Frameworks 1, 5, 8 and 10 • It is somewhat surprising to find that pay is less of an issue in Framework 7, which encompasses retail and catering occupations. In this Framework it is job/occupational choice and better prospects that seem to be the main motivators. Very often, in this sector, we have found that individuals have embarked upon an NVQ because they had already worked part-time or training providers had visited and 'sold' the idea to them

8.3 Initial priorities and intentions

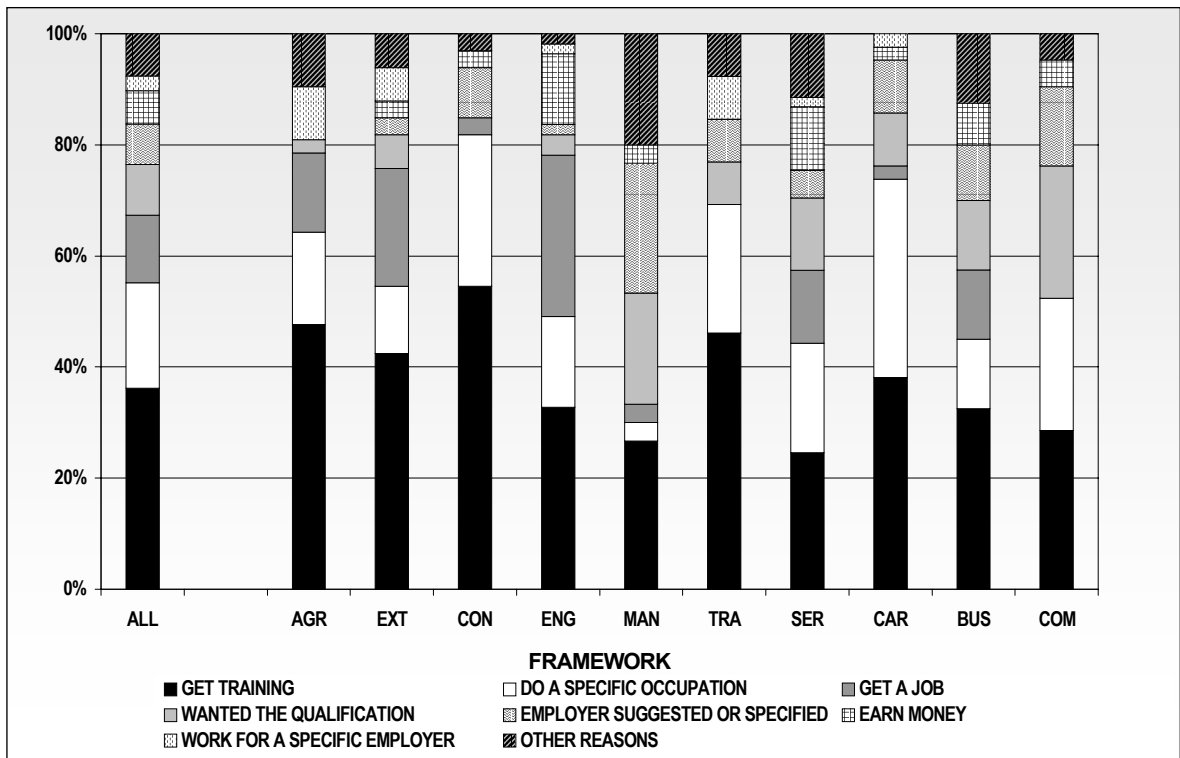
8.3.1 Chart 28 illustrates the priorities for young workers when starting their NVQ. Getting training (36%), doing a specific occupation (19%) and getting a job (12%) are the key overall priorities. The NVQ itself is ranked fourth at 9%. In the context of the conversations we have had with young workers, this understates the importance of the NVQ given the importance of the training with which it is associated. (We also asked young workers two related questions on the overall importance of the NVQ and the extent to which they intended to complete the NVQ - see Charts 29 and 30 and associated commentary).

Priorities

8.3.2 Chart 28 highlights some notable differences between Frameworks in terms of priorities:

- **Framework 3 (construction):** training and occupational priorities are notably higher. Respondents very often talk in terms of "getting a trade"
- **Framework 4 (engineering and motor vehicle):** getting a specific job is seen to be almost as important as getting training; in reality the two are closely inter-linked
- **Framework 5 (manufacturing):** doing a specific occupation or job are low priorities, since young workers are typically in work and directed to do the NVQ by their employers. In this Framework the qualification is seen as important since it provides an opportunity for better career or job prospects
- **Framework 7 (providing goods and services):** demonstrates a more even division of priorities. This Framework contains a broader range of employers and diverse occupational areas and this seems to be reflected in priorities of younger workers within this Framework
- **Framework 8 (health, social and protective services):** the desire to do a specific occupation (typically early years or social care) is a notably significant factor
- **Framework 10 (communicating):** many respondents had been undertaking a customer service NVQ. The portability of this NVQ to other jobs was seen as important in terms of improving prospects

Chart 28: Initial priorities when embarking upon an NVQ



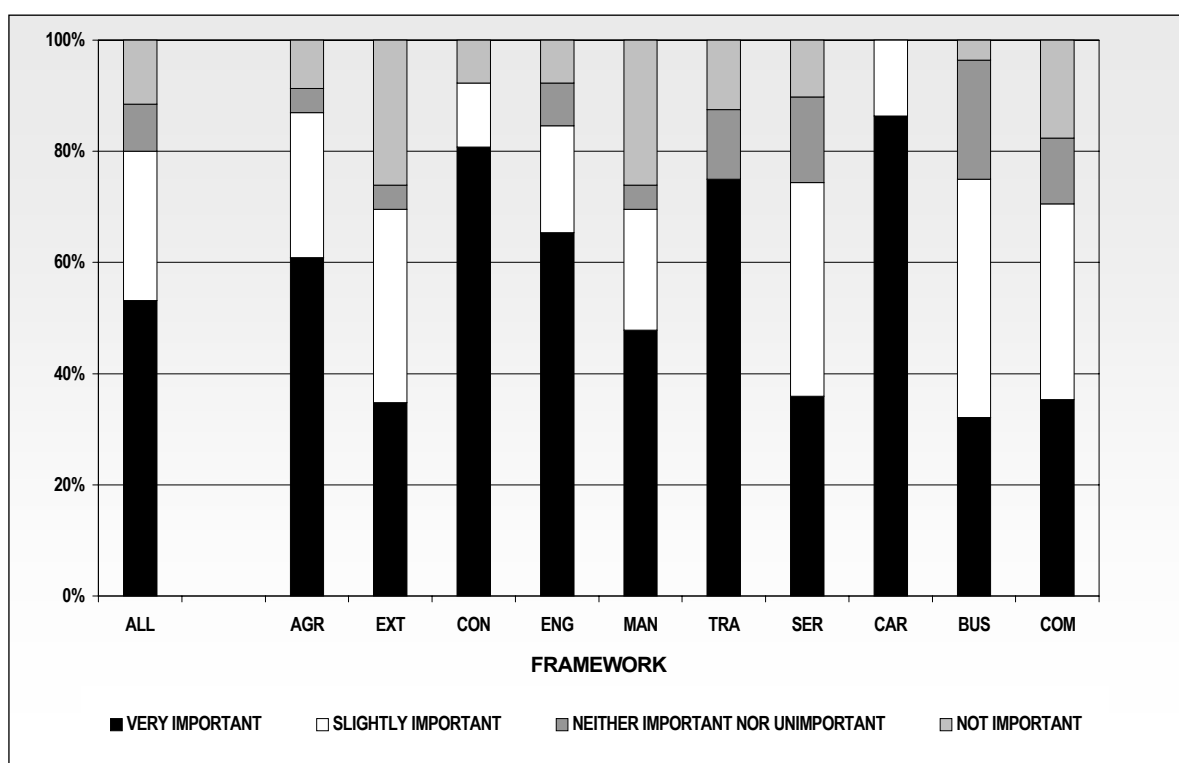
Notes:
 1. Base: 370 responses
 2. Framework 6 contains only 8 respondents

Importance of the NVQ

8.3.3 Chart 29 illustrates the importance of an NVQ to young workers. Set in the overriding context of getting training and doing a specific occupation, 53% of all young workers contacted regard the NVQ as very important with a further 27% regarding it as slightly important. Across the Framework the proportion of NVQ very/slightly important responses is $80\% \pm 10\%$ with the exception of Framework 8 where all young workers regarded the NVQ as very/slightly important. The relative strengths of the 'very important' responses provide a better indication of the importance of the NVQ:

- The relative strength of NVQ importance is likely to be **lower** in Frameworks 2, 7, 9 and 10
- The relative strength of NVQ importance is likely to be **higher** in Frameworks 3, 4 and 8 and tends to reflect the long-established training and formal qualification structure in construction and engineering and the increasing legislative requirements imposed within early years and social care occupations

Chart 29: Importance of the NVQ



Notes:

1. Base: 235 respondents
2. Framework 6 contains only 8 respondents

Expectations of completing an NVQ

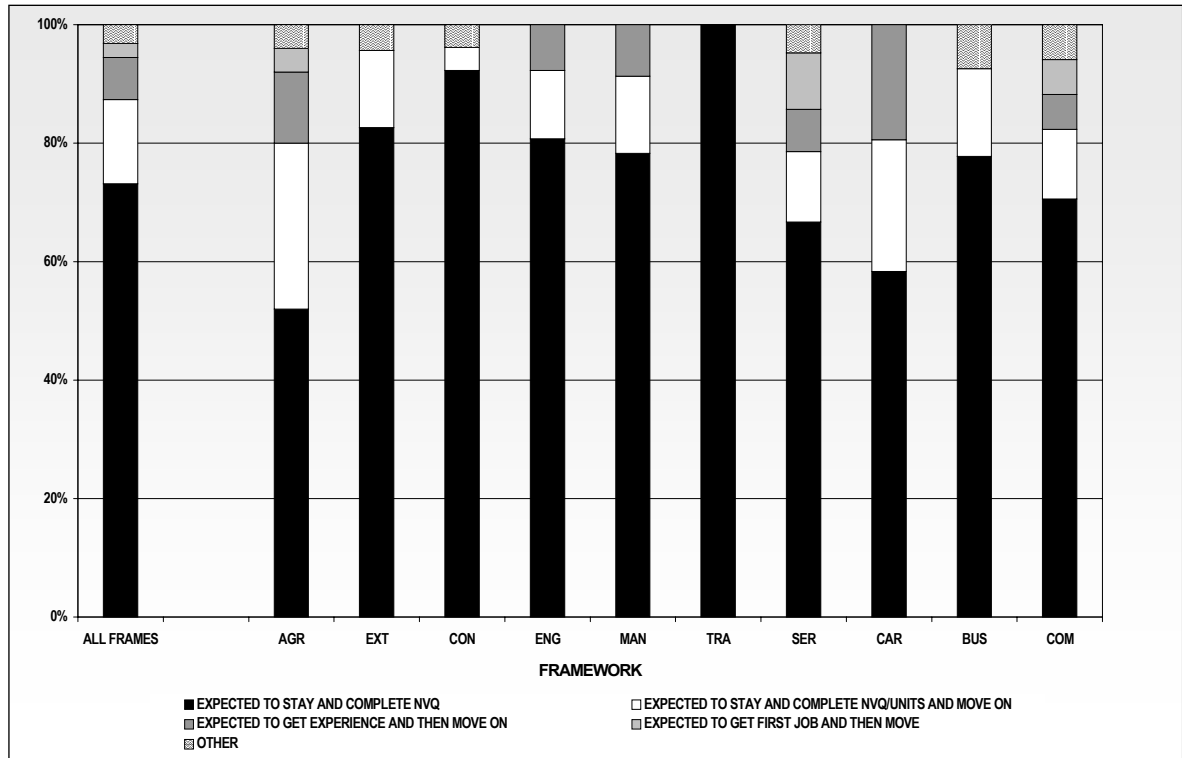
8.3.4 Chart 30 illustrates young workers expectations of completing their NVQ. A significant majority (73%) expected to complete the NVQ and stay with their employer. Those frameworks where expectations of completing the NVQ and remaining with the same employer are notably lower (and, conversely, expectations of completing NVQs. Units or gaining experience and moving on are higher) are:

- **Framework 1 (tending animals, plants and land):** where there is a high proportion of young workers in stables (for whom the British Horse Society qualification seems more important) or doing NVQs in their work experience year (in the case of college students studying National Diploma in Agriculture for whom there is unlikely to be sufficient time to achieve NVQ L2)

- **Framework 8 (health, social and protective services):** where there appears to be an expectation of starting an NVQ but then moving on for improved pay or conditions

8.3.5 In Frameworks 7 and 10 there is also slightly higher expectation of getting a job/experience and then moving on.

Chart 30: Expectations of completing an NVQ



Notes:

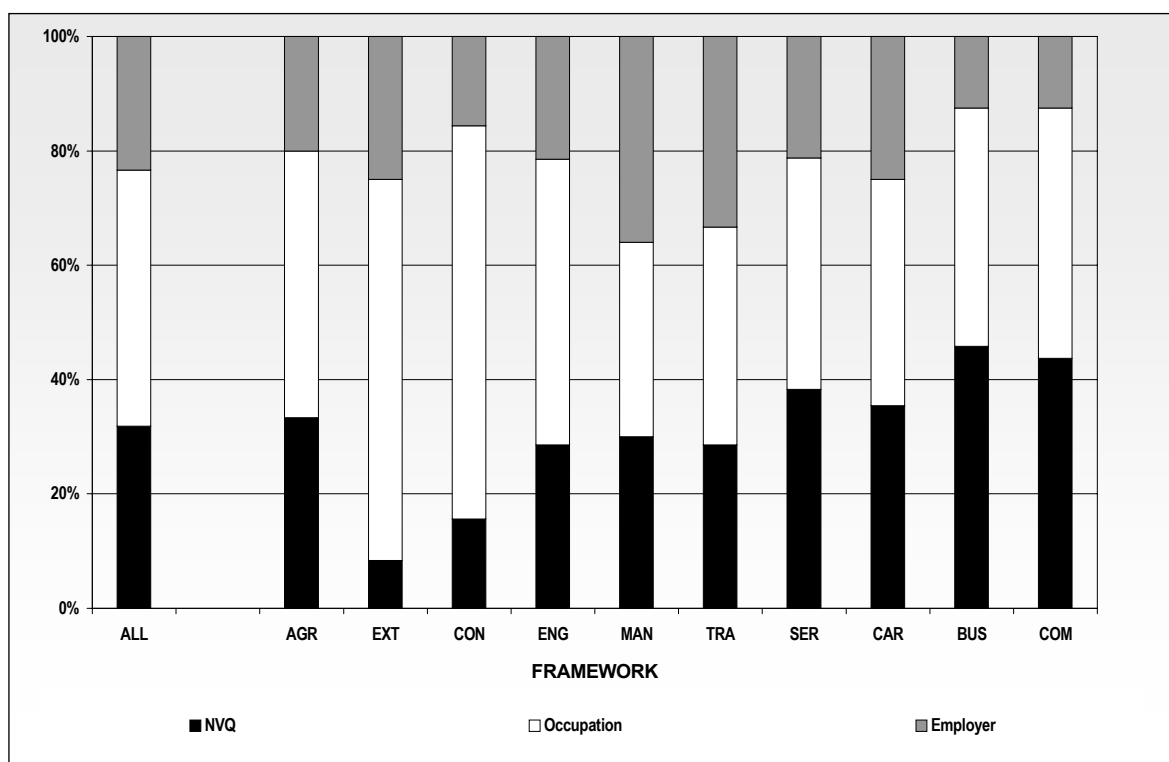
1. Base: 253 responses
2. Framework 6 contains only 8 respondents

8.4 Objectives, sources of advice and its perceived quality plus retrospective views

Objectives

8.4.1 Chart 31 illustrates the extent to which younger workers had a clear idea about NVQ, occupation and employer choice. Overall, occupational and employer objectives are more clearly established than NVQ choices. This is particularly true of Frameworks 2 and 3.

Chart 31: Younger workers who felt they had a clear idea of NVQ, occupation or employer



Notes:

1. Base: 308 responses
2. Framework 6 contains only 8 respondents

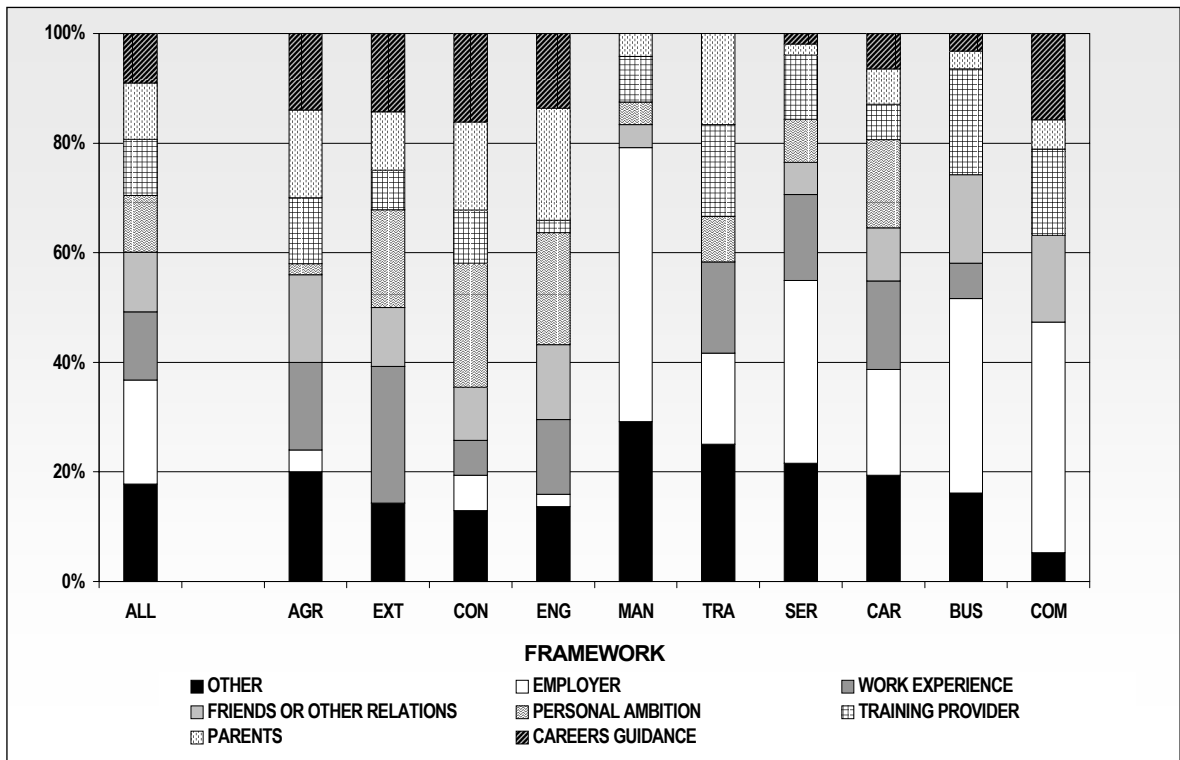
Sources of advice

8.4.2 Chart 32 illustrates the factors influencing younger workers choice of NVQ. A miscellany of reasons makes up the largest proportion (Category: Other in Chart 32). Excluding these:

- **The employer is the single most significant influencing factor in NVQ choice.** This is particularly true in Frameworks 5 (manufacturing), which is consistent with other findings relating to the impact of employers on NVQ take-up in this Framework. Employer influences are also greater in Frameworks 7, 9 and 10.
- **Work experience plays no role in Frameworks 5 and 10.** This perhaps reflects the absence of work experience opportunities in manufacturing operations and the fact that customer service per se is not an occupation, rather a subsidiary part of some other role.
- **Personal ambition is a significant factor in Frameworks 2, 3, and 4.** Again, this is consistent with other findings suggesting that young workers pursuing occupations within these Frameworks already have a clear idea of their occupational choice. This tends to be supported by the fact that employer influences are low in these Frameworks
- **Parental influences are higher in Frameworks 1, 3 and 4.** This reflects the fact that parents are often working in farming, construction or engineering occupations

- **Training providers play a more significant role in Frameworks 1, 7, 9 and 10.** Discussions with young workers reveal some interesting influences. In agricultural occupations it is likely that a college will have established a work experience NVQ placement for the work experience year within a National Diploma. In Frameworks 7, 9 and 10 young workers report that it is quite common for private training providers to 'sell' the idea of Modern Apprenticeships or National Traineeships as a training vehicle
- **Careers advice has minimal impact in Frameworks 5, 7 and 9, but is more significant in other Frameworks.**

Chart 32: Factors that influence young worker's choices



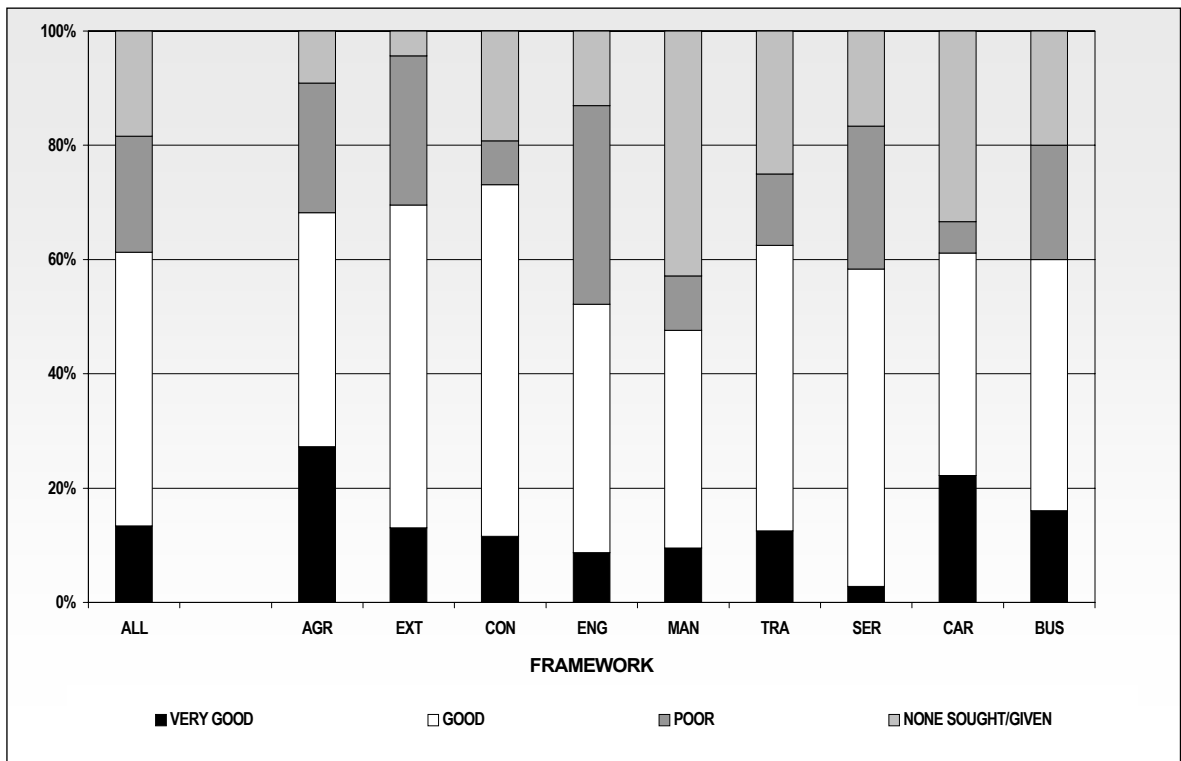
- Notes:**
1. Base: 308 responses
 2. Framework 6 contains only 8 respondents

Perceived quality of advice

8.4.3 Chart 33 summarises the views of young workers on their views of the advice they received (from whatever source) about their NVQ. An open question was asked and we have subsequently categorised responses.

8.4.4 Overall, 48% of young workers would regard their advice as good. A relatively small proportion (13%) regarded it as very good and 20% thought it was poor. In 18% of cases no advice was given - most notably in Frameworks 5 and 8 (in the case of the former, this is unsurprising given that that employers suggest/mandate an NVQ in this Framework). The perceived quality of advice tends to be regarded as poorer in Frameworks 4 and 5, with a notably higher proportion of young workers in Framework 4 regarding the advice they received as poor.

Chart 33: Younger workers views of the quality of advice they received about their NVQ



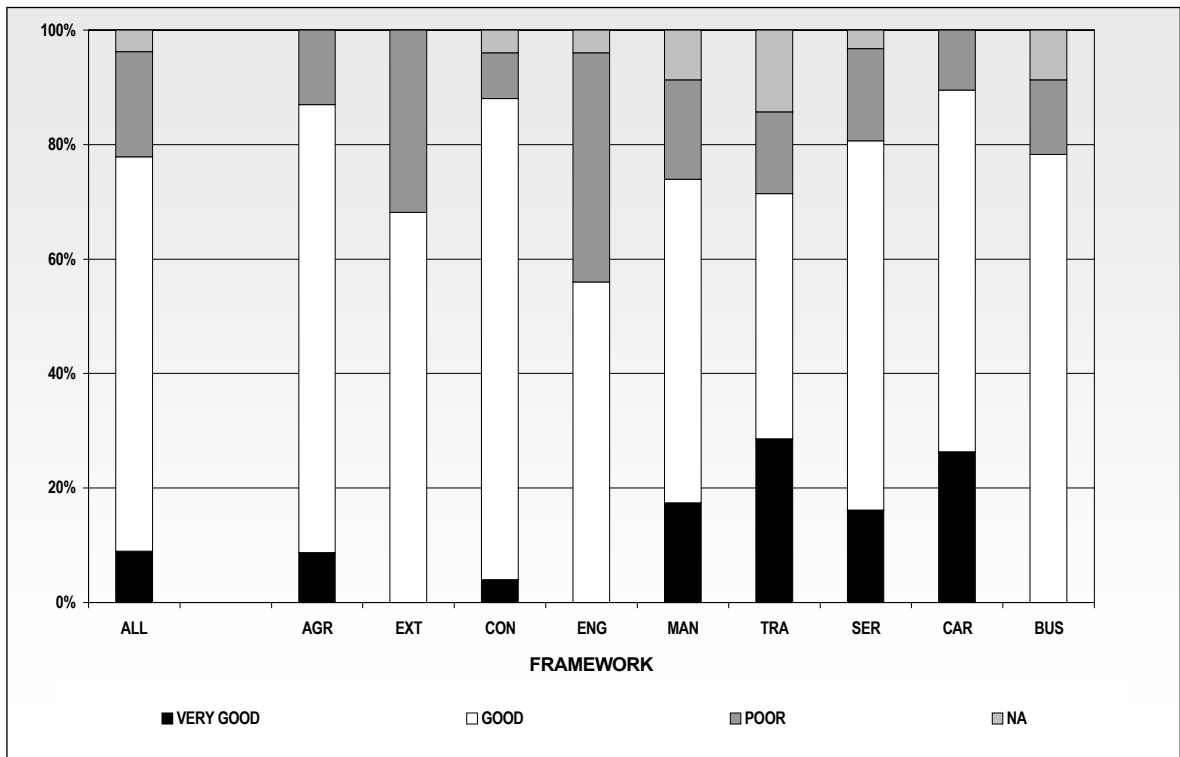
- Notes:**
1. Base: 217 respondents
 2. Framework 6 contains only 8 respondents

Retrospective views

8.4.5 Chart 34 summarises the retrospective views of young workers on the NVQ choice that they made. An open question was asked and we have subsequently categorised responses.

8.4.6 Overall, 69% of young workers would regard their choice as good. A small proportion (9%) regarded it as very good and 13% thought it was poor. Young workers in Frameworks 5, 7 and 8 tend to be more positive about their choice, with a higher proportion rating it as very good. Conversely, young workers in Frameworks 2 and 4 tend to be less positive about their choice - no younger workers regard their choice as very good and a greater proportion regard it as poor.

Chart 34: Younger workers retrospective views on their choice of NVQ



Notes:
 1. Base: 212 respondents
 2. Framework 6 contains only 8 respondents

8.4.7 The vast majority of young workers remained in the same NVQ and with the same employer between starting and failing to complete. A very small proportion (5%) of young workers had changed training course and left their employer. A further group (7%) had changed employer prior to dropping out of their NVQ - diverse reasons were offered for employer change.

8.4.8 Young workers were asked, again in retrospect, what additional support or information would have benefited them at the time they were about to start their NVQ. 25% felt that they needed more information or support. Given the low numbers, it is difficult to discern any specific Framework issues. We have subsequently categorised responses and these are summarised in Table 14. To highlight the key points:

- A substantial majority (75%) felt that no further assistance was required and that they had either all the information they needed (most people within this group) or that they had no choice since their employer had asked them to undertake NVQ training (a smaller proportion of this group).

- A sizeable minority (9%) felt that they would have liked more detail on what's involved in an NVQ at the outset. Views here were quite general (and later sections explore in more detail the aspects involved). The most notable comments encompassed more detail on NVQ content (eg units), assessment and portfolio building (paperwork!) and on-off job time commitments
- Some individuals felt that they required more advice on career and occupational choices (6%) and course and training options (5%). We regard these as aspects of better careers advice, suggesting that 11% of young workers contacted would have liked more advice about the career and occupational choices available to them

Table 14: What young workers would like in terms of additional support

Additional support	Response
No additional assistance required	75%
More detail on what's involved in an NVQ	9%
More advice on career and occupational choices	6%
More information on alternative options available in terms of courses or occupational training	5%
Miscellaneous points	5%

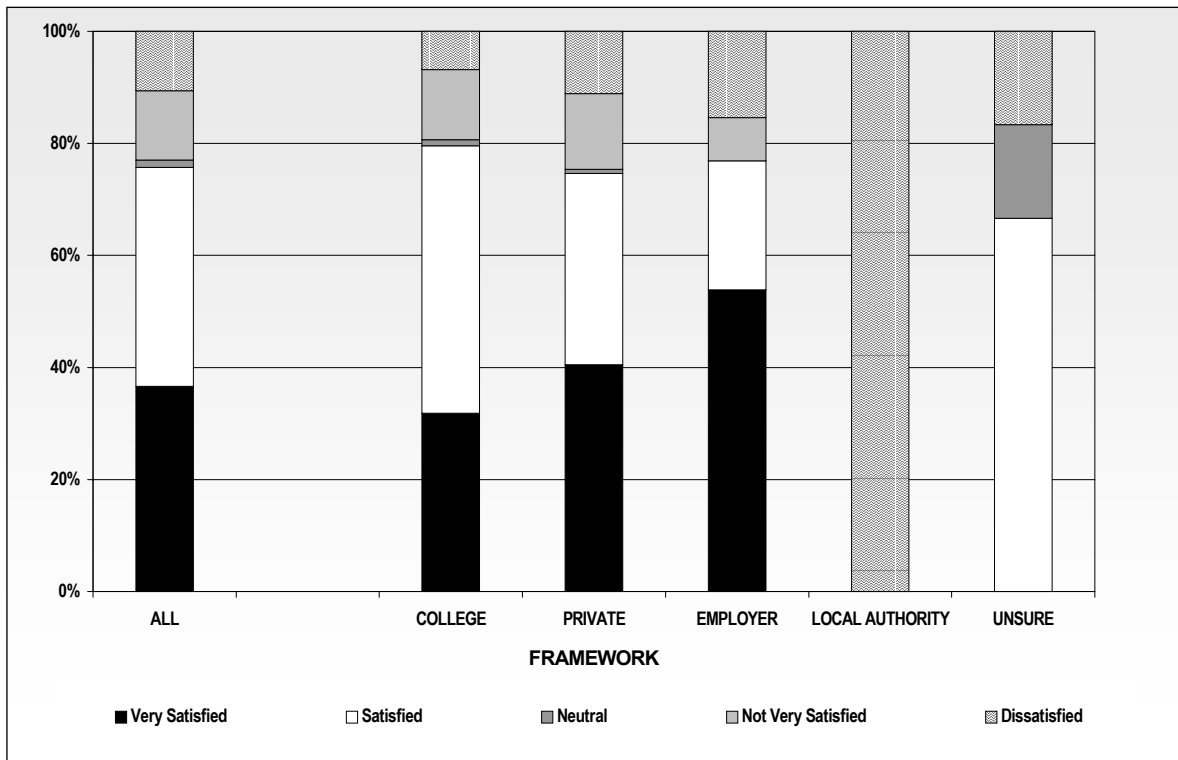
Notes:

1. Base: 235 respondents

8.5 Training provision and satisfaction with NVQ training

Overall satisfaction indicators

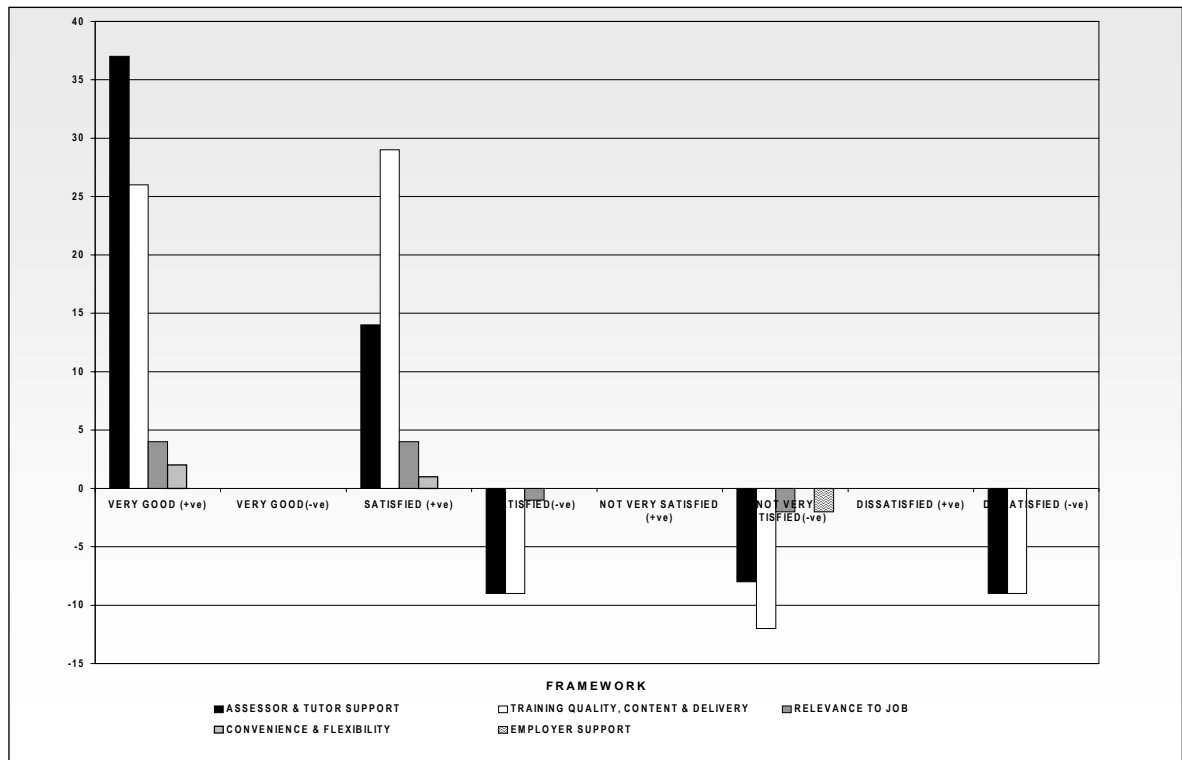
- 8.5.1 A small proportion (9%) of young workers had been trained by employers, local authorities or were uncertain of their type of training provider - this group has been excluded from the following commentary. The majority (54%) was being trained by a private training organisation. A smaller proportion (37%) was involved with a college. Chart 35 summarises the satisfaction levels of young workers on their training organisation.
- 8.5.2 Overall, 37% of young workers were very satisfied with their NVQ training. A further 39% were satisfied. Marginal differences appear to exist between young worker's satisfaction with college and private sector training. Colleges get a slightly better rating when combining very and satisfied scores, however private providers score more highly in the very satisfied category.
- 8.5.3 We have also looked at satisfaction levels by Framework. In terms of combined very and satisfied categories, no Framework varies by more than $\pm 10\%$ of the overall rating of 76%. However in Framework 2 only 9% say they are very satisfied with their training. In Frameworks 4 and 5 a notably higher proportion of younger workers said that they were very satisfied with their training.

Chart 35: Younger workers level of satisfaction with their NVQ training**Notes:**

1. Base: 235 respondents
2. Local Authority: 2 respondents; Unsure: 6 respondents; Employer: 13 respondents

Key reasons for satisfaction or dissatisfaction

- 8.5.4 Young workers were asked why they were satisfied or dissatisfied with their NVQ training. We have subsequently categorised responses and these are summarised in Chart 36. The primary reasons for differing levels of satisfaction are assessor and tutor support and training content, quality and delivery. Issues such as relevance to job, convenience and flexibility and employer have significantly lower impacts on young worker satisfaction with NVQ training.
- 8.5.5 The group of young workers who regarded their training as very good cited assessor and tutor support as the most significant reason for their satisfaction. They also regard training quality, content and delivery as being of high significance. As satisfaction levels decline from very good, so to do the ratings of support and training quality. For example, among those who are satisfied with their training, there is a swing to negative views on support. The net effect of this is to reduce substantially the overall rating of training support amongst the satisfied group. There is also a similar, albeit smaller impact in terms of perceptions of training quality for the satisfied group.
- 8.5.6 For young workers who are either not very satisfied or dissatisfied, support and training quality issues are the most significant reasons cited. A very significant observation in relation to support is that assessment visits are often infrequent, cancelled or there are frequent changes of assessor. This tends to lead to loss of momentum and inconsistency in the training process with a consequent drain on the young workers motivation or time available to complete the NVQ. Quality related issues are more diverse in range with poor quality teaching/tutorial and poor course organisation most notable.

Chart 36: Relative key reasons for satisfaction (+ve) or dissatisfaction (-ve) with NVQ training**Notes:**

1. Base: 178 respondents excluding miscellaneous responses

8.6 Views of young workers on NVQs and the learning and support process

8.6.1 Young workers were asked very open questions (and only prompted or given explanation where necessary) about what they thought of the NVQ in terms of key aspects:

- Structure (for example units, learning issues, application)
- Portfolio building (for example structure, ease of completion, value)
- Assessment process
- Off-on job aspects (for example. relevance of training and employer support)

8.6.2 Consistent with the high satisfaction levels on their NVQ training reported by young workers, only a relatively small proportion reported adverse comments on the key aspects above. These are analysed by Framework and are summarised in Table 15. In addition, a small but significant number of young people have reported having made no progress whatsoever on portfolio development nor received assessment visits. This is of some concern given that the trainees contacted would have been in training for at least six months and all had been registered for an NVQ. Table 16 provides an overview of the issues raised by young workers.

Table 15: Relativities of adverse issues raised by young workers on NVQ learning processes

Framework	Structure adverse	Portfolio building not done	adverse	Assessment not done	adverse	Off-on job difficulties
1	9%	13%	13%	13%	9%	43%
2	14%	30%	17%	9%	23%	47%
3	15%	31%	8%	21%	8%	24%
4	13%	20%	4%	8%	28%	40%
5	4%	17%	4%	0%	6%	0%
6	13%	13%	25%	0%	25%	0%
7	21%	11%	16%	0%	36%	50%
8	10%	24%	10%	11%	16%	5%
9	29%	0%	25%	4%	38%	32%
10	47%	0%	12%	0%	41%	41%
Total	17%	16%	13%	7%	24%	25%
Base	230		232		216	235

Notes:

1. Framework 6 contains only 8 respondents
2. Off-on job re-based to full sample size (235) to allow for Frameworks where NVQ is entirely job based (total respondents to original question: 171)

Table 16: Overview of issues raised by young workers on NVQ learning processes

NVQ structure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 83% of young workers experienced no difficulties with the NVQ structure; typical (paraphrased) positive comments are: <i>Helped in guiding me in what I had to do</i> <i>Organised - step by step</i> <i>Good structure - knew what you had to do</i> <i>Well set up</i> <i>Matched different situations</i> <i>Made me stand back and reflect - paperwork helped</i> • 17% of young workers made adverse comments about the NVQ structure; typical (paraphrased) adverse comments are: <i>Could have been clearer</i> <i>Seemed complicated - didn't relate to work</i> <i>Some were repetitive</i> <i>Some units not very relevant to job</i> • A higher proportion of young workers in Customer Service (Framework 10) cited lack of relevance to job as an issue. This would appear to be the result of the more 'generic' nature of the Customer Service NVQ

Table 16 (continued): Overview of issues raised by young workers on NVQ learning processes

Portfolio building	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16% of young workers indicated that they had not started a portfolio. Very often this is associated with infrequent assessment visits. The NVQ delivery methods adopted in the Construction sector tend to mitigate against portfolio development • 87% of young workers experienced no difficulties with portfolio building; typical (paraphrased) positive comments are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Good - permanent record of work</i> <i>Helpful in keeping me organised</i> <i>Took time at first, then became easier</i> <i>Quite a lot done, big impact on work, helped a lot</i> • 13% of young workers made adverse comments about portfolio building; typical (paraphrased) adverse comments are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Dragged out a bit - too much paperwork - could be simplified</i> <i>Repetitive and long winded</i> <i>Boring, repetitious - preferred practical work</i> <i>Box ticking</i> <i>Constantly printing stuff and putting in folder - not learning anything new</i> • Young workers in Business Administration (Framework 10) are more likely to cite 'paper gathering' as an issue
Assessment	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, only a small proportion (7%) of young workers indicated that they had not had an assessment. The Construction sector is notable (see portfolio building) • 76% of young workers experienced no difficulties with the assessment process; typical (paraphrased) positive comments are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Helpful - pushed me to get on</i> <i>Sound and straightforward - liked action planning</i> <i>Helps understanding</i> <i>Fair positive and negative feedback - helpful</i> <i>Good corrected mistakes</i> • Compared with other comments of the NVQ, a higher proportion (24%) of young workers made adverse comments about the assessment process. This is consistent with the high impacts that assessor and tutor support has on satisfaction ratings. Typical (paraphrased) adverse comments are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Two assessments at college in 10 months - none at work</i> <i>Didn't tell me how to improve</i> <i>Only talked to boss</i> <i>Inconvenient timing, hurried review and setting; had different assessors</i> <i>Infrequent</i> • Frameworks 7, 9 and 10 tend to generate a higher proportion of adverse comments about the assessment process (see Table 15). These Frameworks are predominantly work-based with little formal off the job time (eg college). Assessment tend to be rushed and infrequent

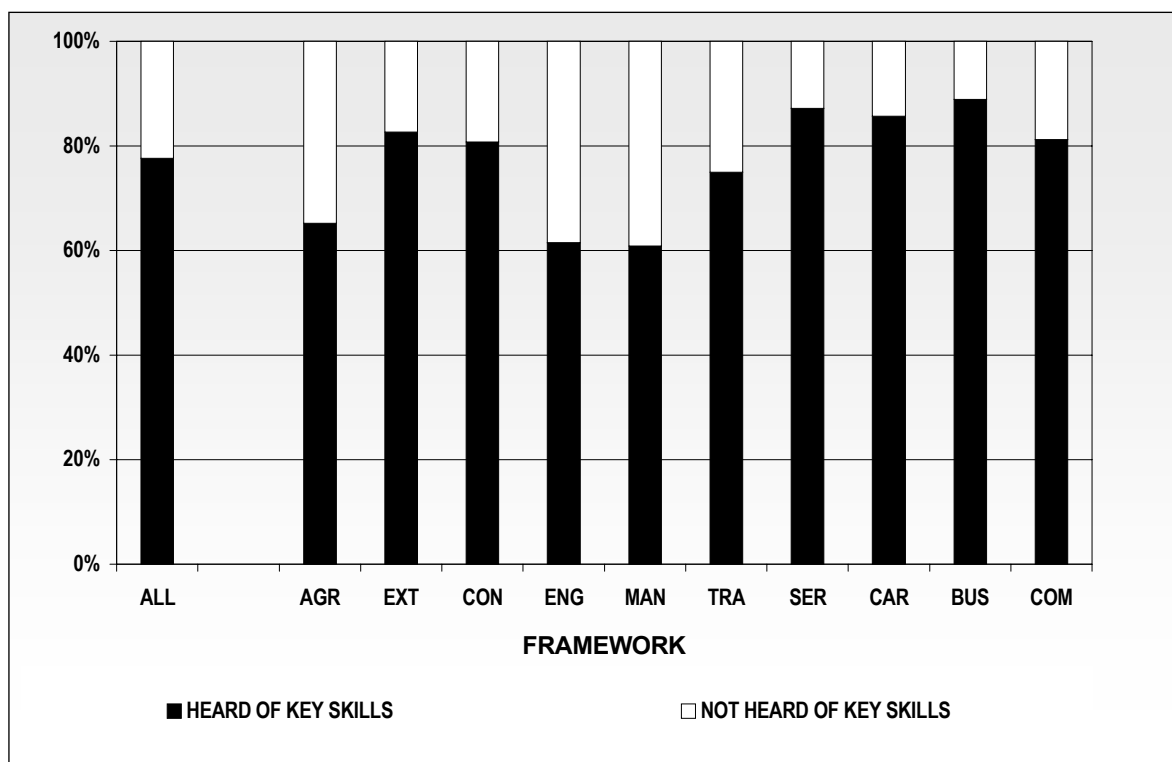
Table 16 (continued): Overview of issues raised by young workers on NVQ learning processes

Off-on job
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-off job aspects were only relevant to 171 young workers (73% of all young workers contacted). Re-basing to the full sample size, 75% of all young workers contacted experienced no difficulties with on-off job aspects; typical (paraphrased) positive comments are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Definitely good - right mixture</i> <i>Good support on job</i> <i>Liked - closely inter-linked</i> <i>Employer gave one day a week study leave</i> • A high proportion (25%) of young workers experienced difficulties associated with on-off job aspects. Issues raised generally fall into lack of relevance of training to work (again a key aspect in relation to young worker satisfaction with quality of training) and lack of support/interest by the employer. Typical (paraphrased) adverse comments are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Bad fit of college to job - wrong machines</i> <i>Good at college - didn't relate to work</i> <i>Employer had no interest in my training</i> <i>Employer supportive, but not involved - tended to work in my own time</i> <i>Employer didn't like assessors coming in during working hours</i> <i>Although forced by employer - no support & everything done out of work time</i> • On-off job elements are not an issue in Frameworks 5 and 8 - both are job based. In Framework 5 activity tends to be job based and leading to Level 2 NVQs. In Framework 8, employers tend to be supportive • In Frameworks 7, 9 and 10, the predominant reason for off-on job difficulties is lack of employer support - especially in allowing time for assessment and portfolio building. One of the issues here is that very often a training provider has 'sold' the idea of an NVQ on the basis that it 'drops' out of day to day work without additional time input • In all other Frameworks, reasons for off-on job difficulties tend to be more randomly spread

8.7 The impact of Key Skills

8.7.1 Young workers were asked if they had heard of Key Skills and what they thought of them. The results are surprising but, we feel, reflect the fact that training organisations tend to 'shield' young workers by integrating Key Skills within the NVQ learning process. Chart 37 illustrates awareness of Key Skills in response to a simple Yes-No question. Young workers were also asked what they thought about Key Skills. We have subsequently categorised responses to reflect insufficient time to make progress, positive, neutral and negative comments. These are summarised in Chart 38

Chart 37: Younger worker awareness of Key Skills



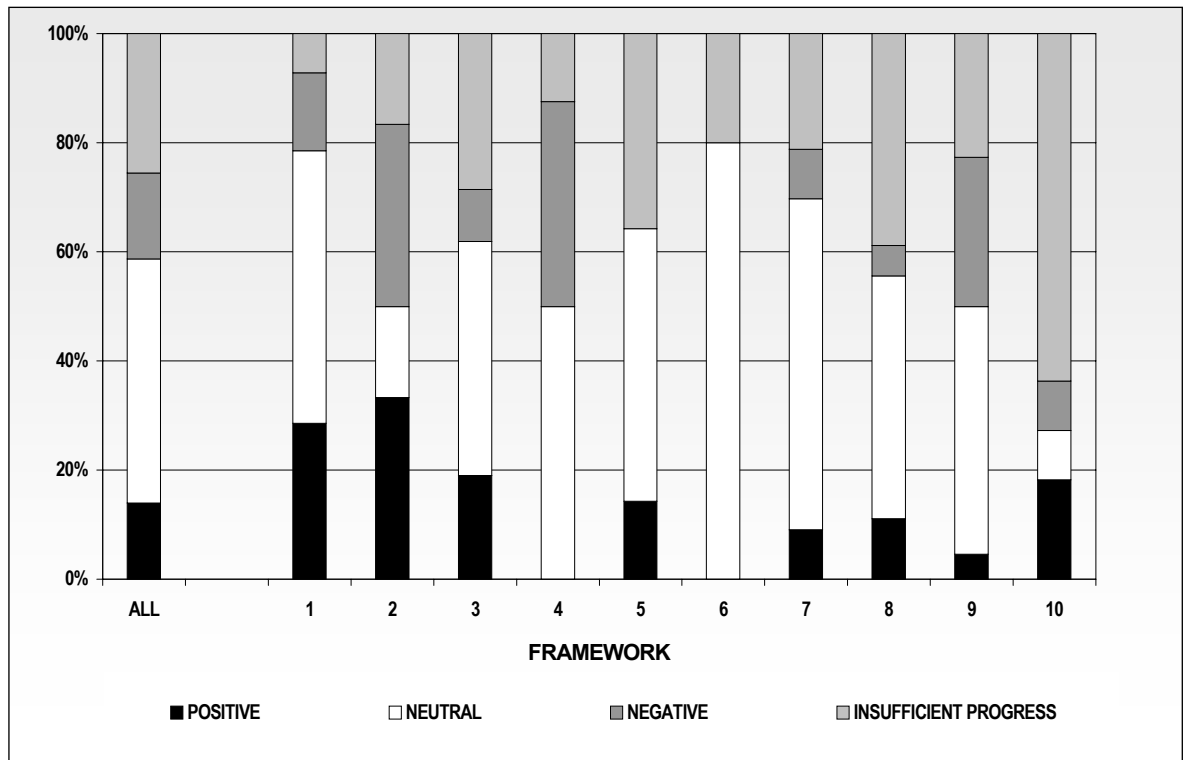
Notes:

1. Base: 235 respondents
2. Framework 6 contains only 8 respondents

8.7.2 Young workers were also asked what they thought about Key Skills. We have subsequently categorised responses to reflect insufficient time to make progress, positive, neutral (expressed as "OK" or "Good") and negative comments. These are summarised in Chart 38. Overall, Key Skills do not present a reason for Young Workers failing to complete NVQs.

8.7.3 However, we should stress that these views reflect the integration of Key Skills with Modern Apprenticeships and National Traineeships. Many young workers cite the fact that NVQs are not exam based and combine learning and working as a key positive feature. We would expect adverse comments if respondents had participated in exam-based Key Skills.

Chart 38: Younger workers views on Key Skills



Notes:

1. Base: 172 respondents
2. Framework 6 contains only 5 respondents

APPENDIX A: EMPLOYERS CONTACTED

Framework 1	Tending animals, plants and land
Battersea Old Windsor Kennels	
British Racing School	
Collins Landscapes	
CWT	
DMT Business Services	
Heaton Moor Golf Club	
Hedon Salads	
Hortic Limited	
Lakeland Equestrian Centre	
Lancashire Growers	
London Borough of Barnet	
Triple A Animal Hotel	
Framework 2	Extracting and providing natural resources
Blue Circle	
G W Lomas	
Framework 3	Constructing
Allcoopers	
BMB Builders Merchants	
CB Timbercraft	
Cleveland Bridge	
Greater Brighton Construction	
Jarvis Group	
John Laing Construction Limited	
London Underground	
MOD Royal Engineers	
N G Bailey	
Piggot & Whitehead Limited	
Sheffield Direct Services	
Wakefield MDC	
Warley Painters	

Framework 4	Engineering
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AES Drax Power Limited
BAe Systems Marine
BMW GB Limited
Britax Aircraft Cabin Interiors
Derby Specialist Fabrications Limited
Federal Mogul Engineering
GKN Sankey Autostructures
Jaguar Cars
Kbaum Associates
Lookers Group
Marconi Applied Technologies
Michelin Tyre plc
Perkins Engines
Rhodia Consumer Specialities
Rolls Royce Training
Transmitton Limited
TRW Training Services

Framework 5	Manufacturing
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ACS Home Improvements
Birds-Eye Walls
BP Chemicals
Delta Power Services
GlaxoSmithKline
GW Padley
HP Bulmer
Ingersoll Rand
Lucas Diesel Systems
Master Tools
Prima Doors
Relyon Limited
Rhodia Eco-Services
Rolls-Royce Filton
Rover Group
Swizzels Matlow
TMD Friction
Wellsprings Confectionery

Framework 7	Providing goods and services
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Charlie's Fish and Chip Shop
Co-operative Bank
Eldridge Pope & Co
Hilton National (East Midlands)
Ilkeston Co-operative Society
Irish Clothing Company
J & K Ross
J R Taylor
L'Emporio
Lincoln Co-operative Society
Lunn Poly
Palace Hotel
Redwood Lodge Hotel
Shearings Hotel
Spicers Wholesaling
Strands Hairdressing
Town & Country Cleaners
Troy UK

Framework 8	Providing health, social care and protective services
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Coverage Care Limited
Daisy Chain Daycare
Guild Care
H I Weldrick
Herefordshire Primary Care NHS Trust
Hollingham Day Nursery
Humberside Fire Brigade
Jancett Group of Day Nurseries
Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust
Kids Unlimited
Lodge Nursing Home
North Middlesex Hospital
Northumbria Police
Puffins Kindergarten
Rainbow Day Nursery
Richmond Churches Housing Trust
Royal Wolverhampton Hospitals NHS Trust
The Old Rectory Residential Care Home

Framework 9	Providing business services
	Armstrong Watson
	DAS Legal Expenses Insurance
	Dorset County Council
	Dunlop Aviation
	Gorvin Smith Fort
	HM Customs & Excise
	HP Bulmer
	Marshall Warren
	Myson Training
	National Library for the Blind
	National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside
	Nord Anglia Education
	Personal Taxation Services
	Samuel Walker & Sons
	Uttlesford District Council