



Skills Funding Agency

FE Choices Employer Satisfaction Survey National Report 2012 to 2013

Introduction

This report provides a national overview of the findings of the FE Choices Employer Satisfaction Survey 2012 to 2013. The survey asked employers to rate their providers on learning delivered in 2011 to 2012. Approaching 279,000 employers received training funded by the Skills Funding Agency during this period.

FE Choices provides consistent and comparable information for learners and employers to help them make informed choices about publicly funded education and training as well as providing consistent management information on key performance indicators. FE Choices comprises a set of performance indicators that cover aspects of a college or provider's provision including success rates; learner destinations and satisfaction levels of learners and employers. This report focuses on the Employer Satisfaction Survey results only.

The Employer Satisfaction Survey 2012 to 2013 took place between April and August 2013. The survey was administered using multi-mode: postal, online and telephone. Over 57,000 employers (21% of employers receiving funding) took part in the survey and gave their views on the training their employees received: 59% completed the survey online, 27% used paper questionnaires and 14% by telephone. The employers that took part in the survey were representative of the 279,000 employers that received training funded by the Skills Funding Agency in 2010 to 2011 in terms of workplace size and industry sector, and provider type. As a result the findings are unweighted. This report only comments on subgroup differences that are statistically significant.

The survey focuses on training funded by the Skills Funding Agency and delivered by 732 providers which included General Further Education (FE) Colleges, private sector providers, other public-funded organisations and Special Colleges.

The characteristics of employers delivering public-funded learning

The profile of employer-respondents was similar to the 2011 to 2012 survey with the large majority representing small workplaces: Some 78% in workplaces with 1-49 employees compared with 15% in medium workplaces (50-249 employees) and six percent in the largest workplaces (250+ employees). A diverse range of industry sectors were represented with the largest groups of employer respondents by far in 'health and social work' (21%).



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The large majority of employers in the survey (86%) were using providers to deliver Apprenticeship training compared with 18% delivering workplace learning. Six per cent were delivering both. There were significantly more employer respondents using providers to deliver Apprenticeships compared with the 2011 to 2012 survey (66%) which is consistent with government policy to promote take-up of Apprenticeships. Reflecting the fact that the majority of employer-respondents were in small workplaces, three-quarters (74%) had between 1-4 learners undertaking training funded by the Skills Funding Agency.

Key findings

As in the 2011 to 2012 survey, employers were overwhelmingly positive about the training received by their employees. Over seven in ten (73%) were very satisfied with the **quality of training/assessment** (a rating of 8-10 out of 10). Employers were equally satisfied with the **benefits of the training to their organisation** (71% gave a rating of 8-10) and over three-in-four (76%) would be highly likely to **recommend the training provider** to other employers. There was some variation by provider type with private sector providers consistently attracting the highest rating from employers. Ratings were generally lower for FE and Special Colleges. These patterns were also observed in the 2011 to 2012 survey.

Providers were also rated highly by employers on a number of specific aspects. In particular, employers were positive about the **professionalism of the trainer and/or assessor** (77% gave a rating of 8-10), the way the provider **delivered training that reflects up-to-date practices** within the industry sector (74% gave a rating of 8-10), the **flexibility of the training and/or assessment** (75% gave a rating of 8-10), and the **efficient** way in which the provider conducts their dealing with them (72% gave a rating of 8-10). Employers were less positive on providers' **communication** with them and their **understanding** of the employer's training needs, though it should be noted that the differences are slight and the majority were highly satisfied (70% and 72% respectively gave a rating of 8-10).

Although the majority of employers were positive about their providers, there was some variation in levels of satisfaction by size and industry sector. In particular, workplaces with 2-9 employees were generally less positive than average, as were those in agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing, mining/quarrying, manufacturing, utilities, real estate, renting and business activities.

Of greater concern is the lower satisfaction level among employers using providers to deliver Apprenticeships (in particular Apprenticeships to young people aged 16-18 year olds only as opposed to older age groups) compared to those using providers for other workplace learning. This pattern was also observed in the 2011 to 2012 survey.



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However, subgroup differences are generally slight and should not detract from the findings that the majority of employers are positive about their experience and willing to act as advocates for their provider.

Note regarding slides

The 'total base size' is the number of employers answering a question. The base size varies because some employers do not answer all of the questions. Slide 15 shows the total base size of 57,390 which is the total number of employers that responded to these questions. Details of the total number of responses by type of provision delivered follow this.

Slide 24 includes breakdown by Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP Areas) for each region. The regions are noted in abbreviated format, as follows: EE – East of England, EM – East Midlands, GL-Greater London, NE – North East, NW – North West, SE – South East, SW- South West, WM- West Midlands, YH - Yorkshire and Humber.