



Skills Funding  
Agency

# Employer Satisfaction Survey 2014 to 2015 National Results

November 2015

# Contents

01 Introduction.....	2
02 Executive summary .....	4
03 Employer profile.....	6
04 Overall rating.....	14
05 Detailed analysis.....	20

# Introduction

01

# Introduction

- A total of 235,379 employers received training funded by the Skills Funding Agency between August 2014 and February 2015. The training was delivered by 713 providers including General Further Education (FE) Colleges, independent learning providers, other public-funded organisations, and Special and Specialist Colleges.
- Over 54,000 employers, representing almost 25% of employers receiving funding, took part in the Employer Satisfaction Survey 2014 to 2015 and gave their views on the training their employees received. Employer respondents are representative of the 235,379 employers who received training in terms of workplace size, industry sector and provider type. The findings in this report are unweighted for this reason.
- The survey took place between March and July 2015; 66% of employers completed the survey online, 23% used paper questionnaires and 11% responded by telephone. This report summarises key findings from the survey.

# Executive summary

02

# Executive Summary

- Employers remain overwhelming positive about their provider: 73% were satisfied with the overall quality and 77% would be advocates of the training provider.
- The vast majority of workplaces (97%) were using providers to deliver apprenticeship training. More were delivering apprenticeships for adults than young people (aged 16-18), with those only delivering training to young people the least positive about it.
- Apprenticeships in Business, Administration and Law continue to dominate although fewer employers were delivering it compared to last year (29% vs. 32%).
- Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies (23%) have overtaken Health, Public Services and Care as the subject with the second highest apprenticeship employer volume (20%).
- Slightly more employers contributed to the cost of the training than last year (24% compared to 23%) – the increase has been among large and small workplaces.

# Employer profile

03

# Employer profile

- A significant majority of employers taking part in the survey worked in small workplaces: 77% in workplaces with 1-49 employees; 16% in workplaces with 50-249 employees; and 6% in the largest workplaces (250+ employees). This pattern is line with that observed in the 2013 to 2014 survey.
- Employer respondents are broadly representative of the 235,379 employers who received training in terms of workplace size (below) and industry sector (slide 8).

	All workplaces receiving funding*		Survey respondents**	
Size of workplace	Number of workplaces	% of total	Number of responses	% of total
1	15,706	6.7	1,831	3.4%
2-9	76,767	32.6	18,898	34.7%
10-49	95,190	40.4	21,409	39.3%
50-249	32,577	13.8	8,909	16.3%
250+	11,610	4.9	3,301	6.0%
Don't know/missing	3,529	1.6	291	0.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>235,379</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>54,639</b>	<b>100%</b>

FE Choices Employer Satisfaction Survey 2014 to 2015. Total base size: 54,639. Base size varies for individual questions due to non-response. \*Based on sample information. \*\* Based on survey responses.



# Employer profile

- The largest group of employer respondents were in the “human health and social work activities” sector, followed by “wholesale and retail trade”. This pattern was also observed in the 2013 to 2014 survey.

Industry Sector of the workplace	All workplaces receiving funding		Survey respondents	
	Number of workplaces	% of total	Responses	% of total
Agriculture, forestry, and fishing	2,159	0.9	558	1.0%
Mining, quarrying, manufacturing, electricity, gas and water supply	16,912	7.1	4,870	9%
Construction	20,235	8.6	4,244	7.8%
Wholesale and retail trade: repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	28,705	12.2	6,588	12.1%
Accommodation and food service activities	11,231	4.8	1,734	3.2%
Transport, storage, information and communications	6,850	2.9	1,561	2.8%
Financial and insurance activities	2,681	1.1	586	1.1%
Real estate, professional/scientific/technical, administrative/support service activities	17,045	7.2	4,208	7.8%
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	3,612	1.5	752	1.4%
Education	15,169	6.4	3,646	6.7%
Human health and social work activities	36,376	15.5	8,590	15.7%
Arts/entertainment/recreation and other service activities	19,768	8.4	5,045	9.3%
Other	54,636	23.1	12,242	22.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>235,379</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>54,639</b>	<b>100%</b>

# Employer profile

- Over three quarters of employers (77%) had between 1-4 learners, which is in-line with the high number of small workplaces in England (77% of respondents were in workplaces with 1-49 employees).
- One in ten (10%) had 5-9 learners and a similar proportion (11%) had 10+ learners.

Number of employees receiving training	Number of employer responses	% of total
1	23,415	43%
2-4	18,549	34%
5-9	5,536	10%
10-19	3,040	6%
20-29	922	2%
30 or more	1,440	3%
Don't know/missing	1,537	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>54,439</b>	<b>100%</b>

# Employer profile

- Almost a quarter of employers (24%) had made a financial contribution to the cost of the training – an increase of one percentage point compared with the 2013 to 2014 survey.
- Medium (50-249 employees) and large (250+ employees) workplaces were more likely than small workplaces to have contributed to the cost of the training: 31% and 47% respectively, compared with 22% of workplaces with 1-49 employees.
- More large and small workplaces reported making a financial contribution compared to the previous year survey (45% and 20% respectively in the 2013 to 2014 survey).

Whether paid for training	Number	% of total
Yes, in all cases	5,673	10%
Yes, in some cases	7,798	14%
No	37,432	69%
Don't know	3,458	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>54,361</b>	<b>100%</b>

# Employer profile

- The vast majority of employers (94%) were using providers to deliver apprenticeship training. The percentage delivering workplace learning is similar to the 2013 to 2014 survey - 4%. An additional 3% of workplaces were delivering both.
- Among those delivering apprenticeships, adult apprenticeships were more common than apprenticeships for 16-18 year olds (47% compared with 35%). In addition, 17% were delivering both to young people and adults. This pattern is similar to the 2013 to 2014 survey.
- Level 2 qualifications were most commonly offered for both apprenticeships and workplace learning: 45% of employers delivering only apprenticeships and 73% of employers delivering only workplace learning were delivering Level 2. The equivalent figures for Level 3 are 32% and 14% respectively.

# Employer profile

- As in the 2013 to 2014 survey, employers were involved in delivering training across a diverse range of Sector Subject Areas (SSAs) – see slide 13. There were, however, some interesting changes in findings at the SSA level.
- The most common SSA among employers delivering **apprenticeships** was Business, Administration and Law (29% had employees undertaking these); the dominance of this SSA is consistent with the previous year's survey though there has been a slight *decline* in the overall proportion – from 32% to 29%.
- Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies has overtaken Health, Public Services and Care as the second most common apprenticeship SSA delivered by employers (23% and 20% respectively; 19% and 20% respectively in the 2013 to 2014 survey).
- Among the small minority of employers delivering **workplace learning**, the most common SSA was Health, Public Services and Care (2% of employers were delivering this).

# Employer profile

Sector Subject Area	Apprenticeship		Work Place Learning	
	Number of employers	% employers	Number of employers	% employers
1 Health, Public Services and Care	11,171	20.4	975	1.8
2 Science and Mathematics	79	0.1	3	*
3 Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	2,152	3.9	61	0.1
4 Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	12,528	22.9	418	0.8
5 Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	2,777	5.1	646	1.2
6 Information and Communication Technology	1,827	3.3	33	0.1
7 Retail and Commercial Enterprise	8,795	16.1	338	0.6
8 Leisure, Travel and Tourism	804	1.5	57	0.1
9 Arts, Media and Publishing	270	0.5	5	0
12 Languages, literature and culture	0	0	4	*
13 Education and Training	973	1.8	91	0.2
14 Preparation for Life and Work	0	0	485	0.9
15 Business, Administration and Law	16,607	29.4	328	0.6
Note: the total sum to more than 100% because employers can be delivering multiple subjects.				

# Overall rating

# 04

# Overall rating

- Just over half of employers (51%) used an independent training provider and 42% used a General FE College. A small minority of employers used other public-funded organisations (5%) and Special and Specialist Colleges (2%).
- As in the 2013 to 2014 survey, employers were generally very positive about the training received by their employees.
- Independent training providers consistently received the most positive ratings and this pattern was also observed in the 2013 to 2014, and 2012 to 2013 surveys. Ratings for providers in other sectors (General FE, other public-funded organisations, and Special and Specialist Colleges) were slightly lower though, on the whole, the majority of employers in these sectors remained very positive.



# Overall rating

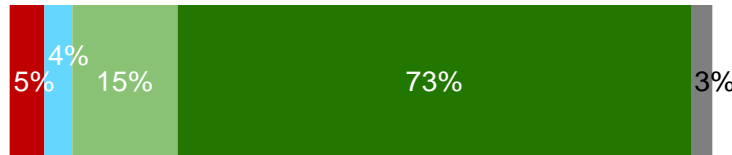
- Overall, almost three quarters of employers (73%) were positive about the **benefits of the training and assessment to their organisation** – giving a rating of 8-10 out of 10 (Q4). Rating for this aspect increased by two percentage points between the 2012 to 2013 survey and the 2013 to 2014 survey, but has since stabilised at 73%.
- Similarly, 73% were satisfied with the **overall quality of the training and assessment** (Q5). This rating is also unchanged from the 2013 to 2014 survey.
- The majority would be advocates of the training provider: 77% gave a score of 8-10 for **likelihood to recommend** their training provider (Q6). This rating also increased between the 2012 to 2013 survey and 2013 to 2014 survey (by one percentage point) but has stabilised this year at 77%.
- A minority of employers (around one in ten) gave an overall rating of 0-5, with only very slight differences across the three measures (Q4-6).

# Overall rating

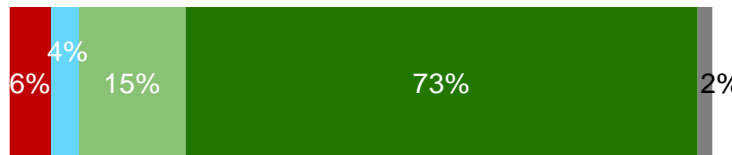
Please rate each of the following... (0=low score, 10=high score)

■ 0-4 ■ 5 ■ 6-7 ■ 8-10 ■ Don't know/too early to tell

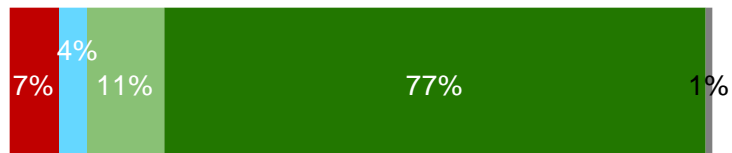
Q4 How would you rate the benefits of the training/assessment to your organisation



Q5 How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the overall quality of the training/assessment



Q6 How likely would you be to recommend this training provider to another employer seeking similar training



## Provider type (% score 8-10)

MEAN	General FE	Other Public	Private Sector	Special Colleges
<b>8.27</b>	70	70	77	64
<b>8.18</b>	70	69	77	63
<b>8.35</b>	74	73	80	69

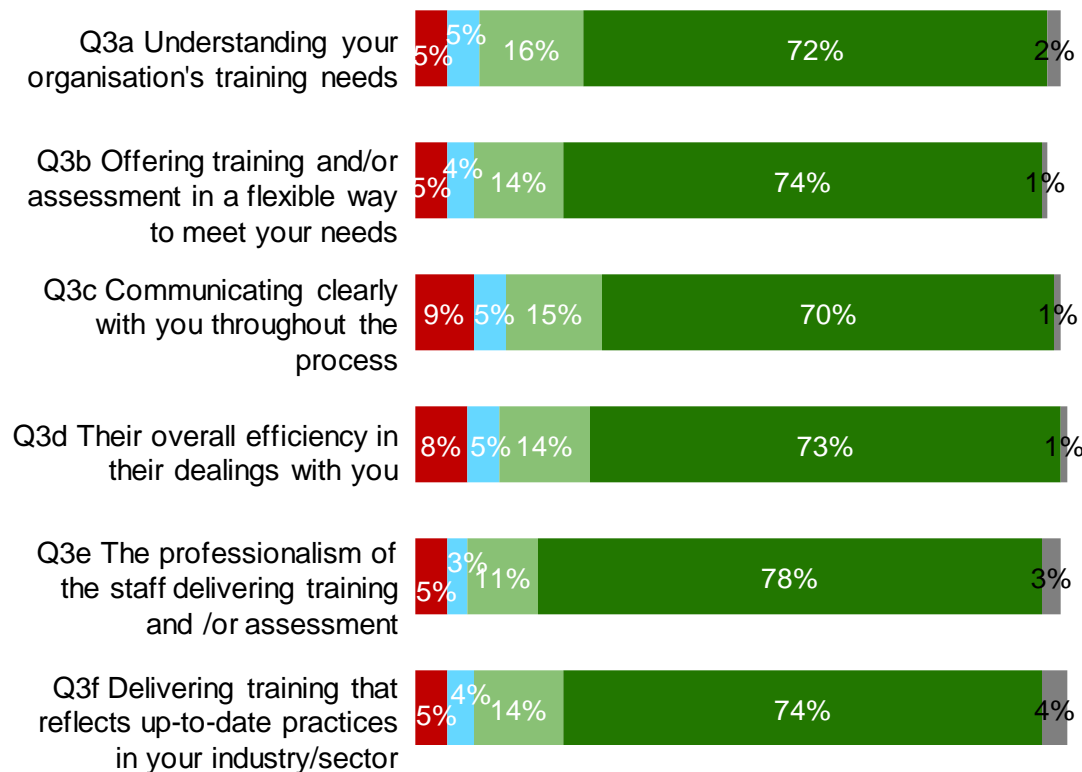
# Key aspects

- Employers were equally positive on key aspects of the training, with the majority (seven in ten or more) giving a rating of 8-10 across **all** key aspects that were measured.
- As in the 2013 to 2014 survey, employers were especially positive about the **professionalism of the staff delivering the training** (78% gave a rating of 8-10), the **flexibility of the training** (74%), and the use of **up-to-date industry practices** (74%)  
Rating for staff professionalism and flexibility of training have both fallen by one percentage point since the 2013 to 2014 survey, mainly among users of General FE Colleges and other public-funded organisations.
- Ratings on **understanding the employer's training needs, clarity of communication** and **overall efficiency of dealing** remain unchanged. Employers continue to be least positive about providers' clarity of communication with them with 14% giving a rating of 0-5 out of 10.

# Key aspects

Please rate each of the following... (0=low score, 10=high score)

■ 0-4 ■ 5 ■ 6-7 ■ 8-10 ■ Don't know



## Provider type (% score 8-10)

MEAN	General FE	Other Public	Private Sector	Special Colleges
<b>8.18</b>	69	67	76	62
<b>8.27</b>	70	66	78	65
<b>7.95</b>	66	65	74	57
<b>8.08</b>	69	68	77	62
<b>8.47</b>	75	74	82	70
<b>8.29</b>	70	70	78	67

# Detailed analysis

05

# Detailed analysis

- Although the majority of employers were positive, there was some variation in views by size of workplace and industry sector (slides 26, 30 and 34).
- As observed in the 2013 to 2014 survey, workplaces with **2-9 employees** were consistently less positive than average.
- Looking at industry sectors, two broad sector groupings consistently had lower than average rating across all three overall measures of satisfaction:
  - **Transport, storage, information and communications**
  - **Agriculture, hunting & fishing**
- In contrast, employers in **Human Health and Social Work** and **Public Administration** were especially positive across all three overall measures of satisfaction.

# Detailed analysis

- These *relative* differences by industry sector were also apparent in the 2012 to 2013 and 2013 to 2014 surveys and may partly be linked to the age of the trainees: employers with **young apprentices (aged 16-18) only** were generally less positive about the provider compared to those with older apprentices or those both young people and adult apprentices (slides 27, 31 and 35).
- Employers in **Agriculture, hunting & fishing** and **Transport, storage, information and communications** have significantly more young apprentices (56% and 28% respectively) compared with those in **Human Health and Social Work** and **Public Administration** (14% and 13 respectively). However, this is *not* the sole factor since this relationship is not evidenced across all industry sectors. For example, employers in the Wholesale and retail trade have a high volume of young apprentices (43%) yet they were more positive than those in the Transport, storage, information and communications sector.

# Detailed analysis

- Overall, employers using providers to deliver **workplace learning** were consistently more positive than those delivering apprenticeships (slides 27, 31 and 35). However, it should be noted that the differences are slight and employers delivering workplace learning account for a small percentage of the overall (4% delivering workplace learning only; 92% delivering apprenticeships only and 2% delivering both).
- Focusing specifically on apprenticeships in the four SSAs with the highest employer volumes (slide 13), ratings were generally (slightly) higher for **Retail & Commercial Enterprise** and **Health, Public Services & Care**, compared with **Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies** and **Business, Administration & Law**. This pattern is consistent with the 2013 to 2014 survey.
- As previously mentioned, employers delivering apprenticeships to 16-18 year olds **only** were least positive about the training. By contrast, those with both young and adult apprentices were significantly more positive, possibly reflecting their greater experience in delivering the programme.



# Detailed analysis

- Employers delivering workplace learning were more positive about their provider than those delivering apprenticeships in terms of their rating on the **quality of the training and assessment**; the **benefits of the training and assessment** to their organisation; and the likelihood of them **recommending the provider**. This was apparent across all qualification levels: 1, 2 and 3 (Level 4 have too few respondents).
- Among employers delivering apprenticeships, those delivering Level 4 only were more positive than those delivering just a Level 2 or a just a Level 3 - on both the **quality** of the training and assessment and the **perceived benefits** to their organisation.
- Employers delivering multiple qualification levels consistently gave the highest ratings; this applies to both those offering apprenticeships and those offering workplace learning.

# Detailed analysis

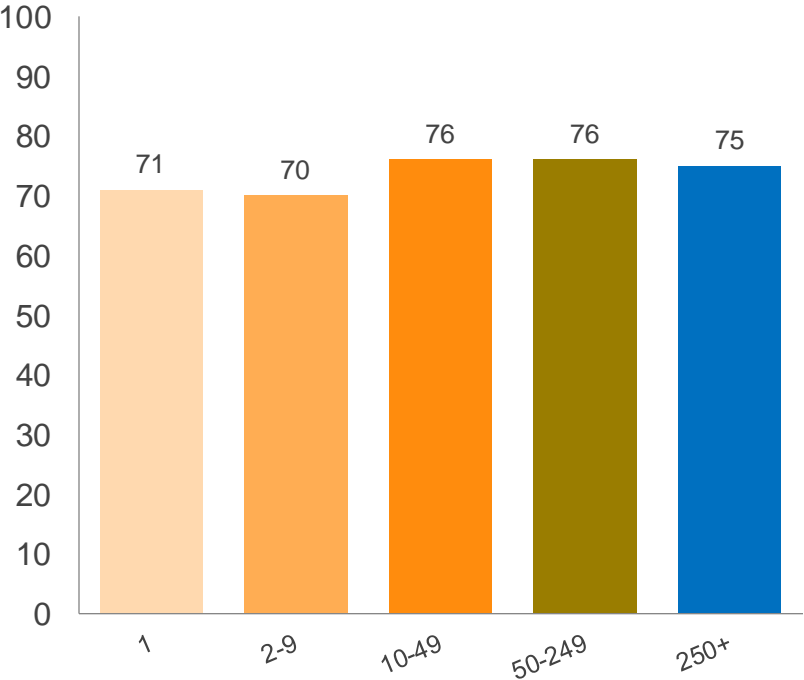
- There was some variation in employer views according to the LEP area in which they were based. The overall mean scores were:
  - Generally highest in Cumbria, Black Country and Liverpool City Region. (Cumbria and the Liverpool City Region also had higher than average mean scores in the 2013 to 2014 survey.)
  - Generally lowest in Northamptonshire, South East Midlands, Dorset and Hertfordshire (Northampton and Dorset also had lower than average mean scores in the 2013 to 2014 survey).
- However, the differences highlighted throughout this report are slight and should not detract from the findings that the majority were positive about their experience and willing to act as advocates for their provider.

Q4 How would you rate the benefits of the training/assessment to your organisation? 0=no benefits,10=very significant benefits

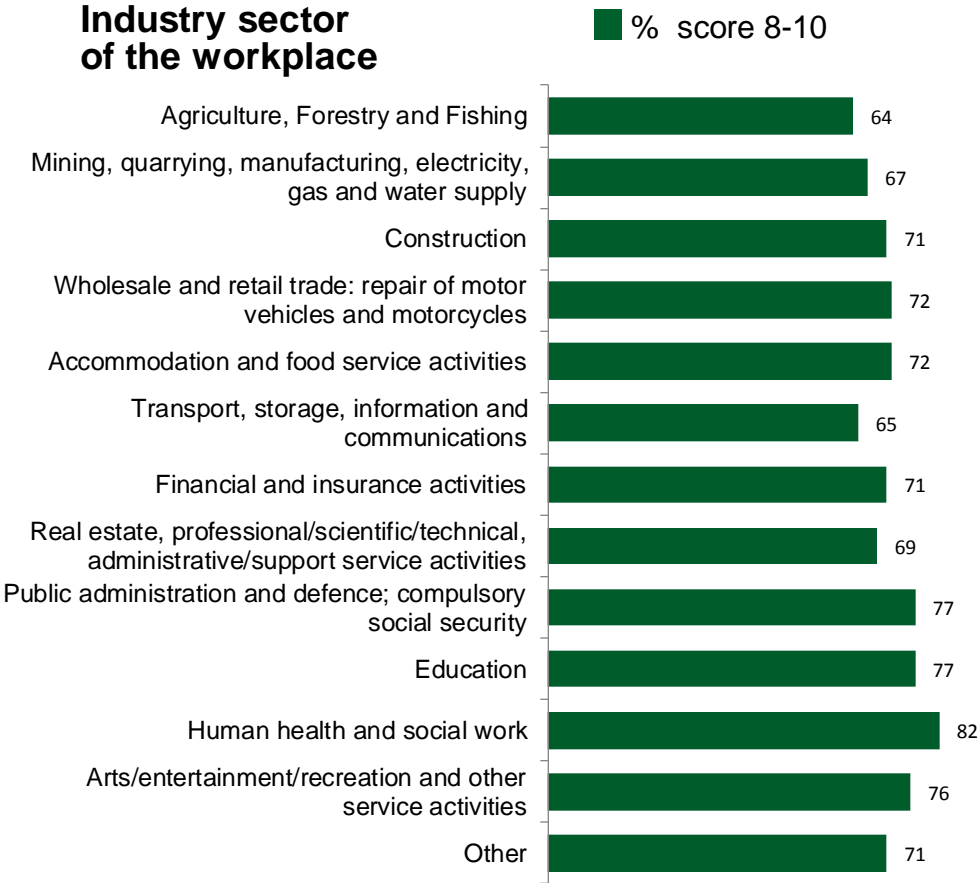


Mean score  
8.27

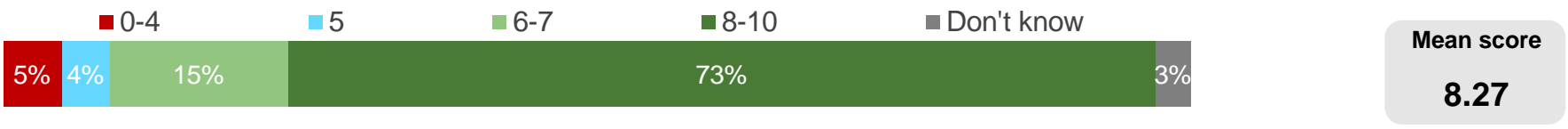
Size of workplace (% score 8-10)



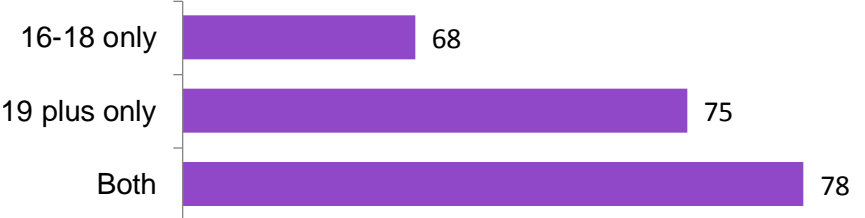
Industry sector of the workplace



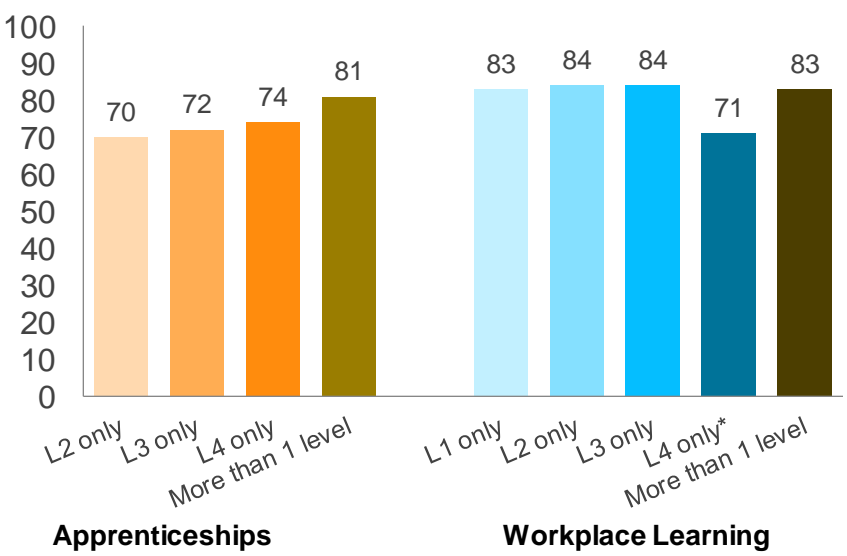
**Q4 How would you rate the benefits of the training/assessment to your organisation? 0=no benefits,10=very significant benefits**



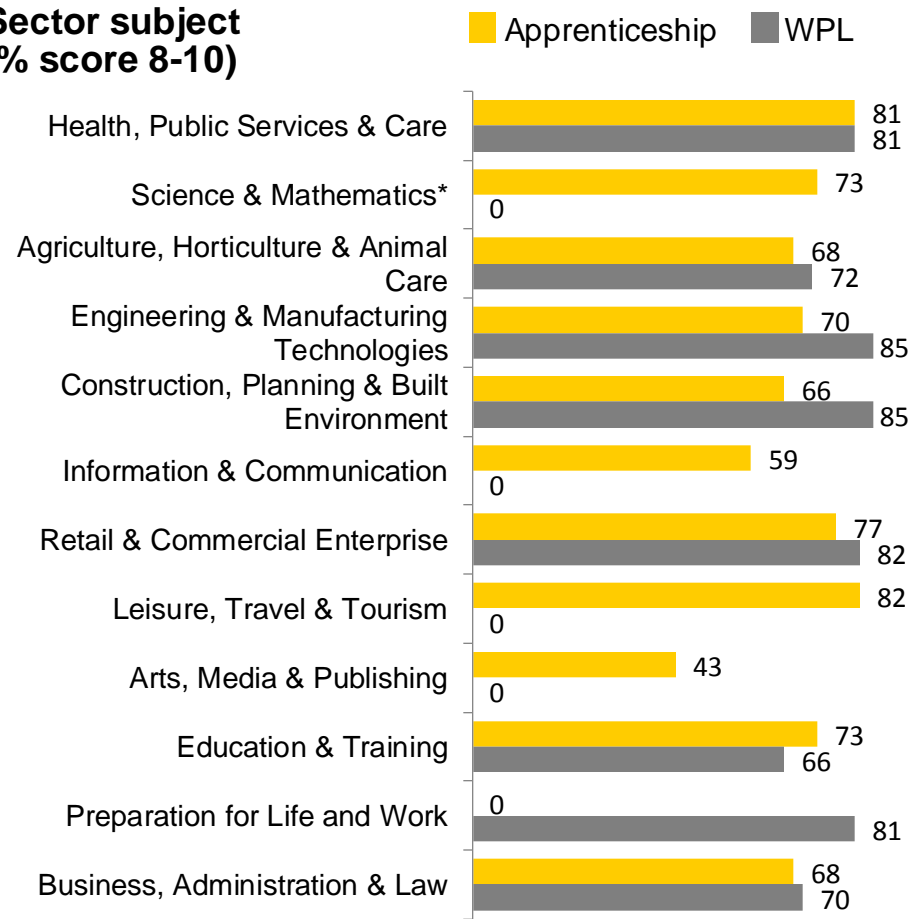
**Apprenticeship funding stream (% score 8-10)**



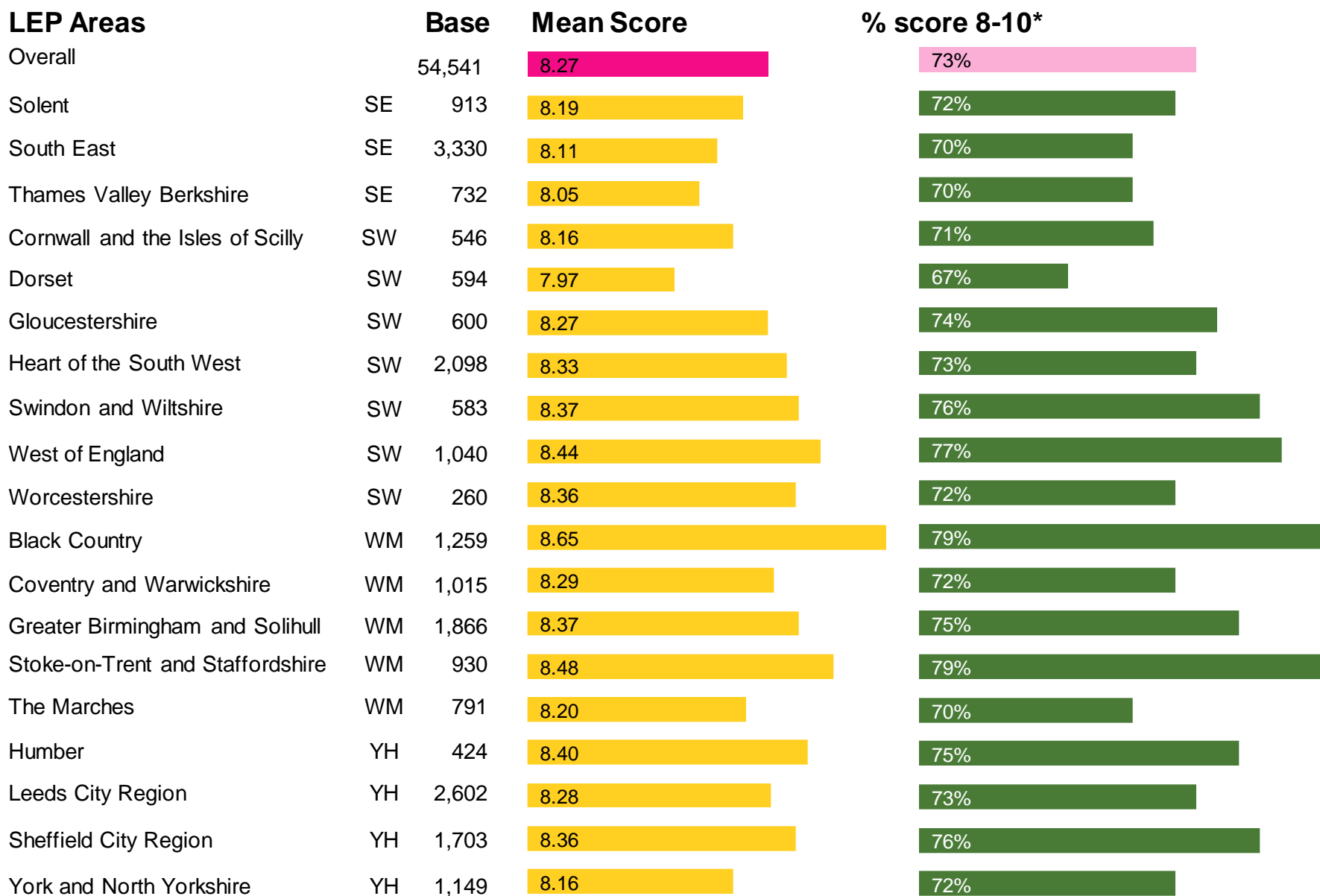
**Qualification level (% score 8-10)**



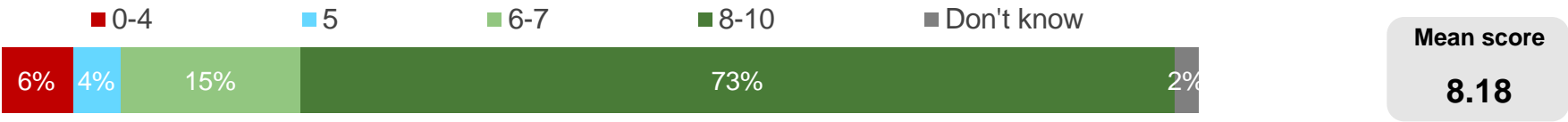
**Sector subject (% score 8-10)**



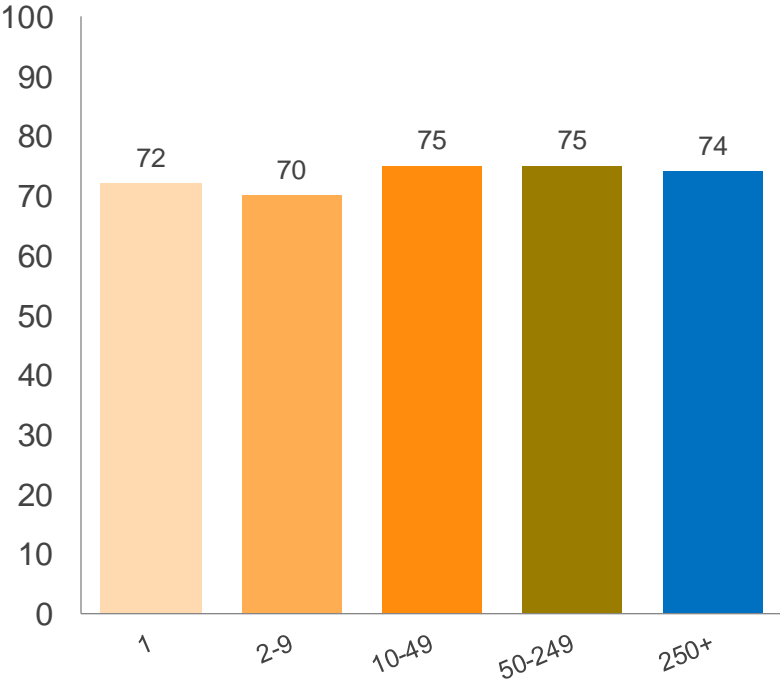
LEP Areas		Base	Mean Score	% score 8-10*
Overall		54,541	8.27	73%
Greater Cambridge & Greater Peterborough	EE	1,271	8.12	70%
Hertfordshire	EE	739	7.99	71%
New Anglia	EE	1,308	8.12	70%
Greater Lincolnshire	EM	1,361	8.41	76%
Leicester and Leicestershire	EM	969	8.12	69%
Northamptonshire	EM	176	7.63	63%
Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire	EM	1,906	8.24	73%
South East Midlands	EM	1,350	7.94	67%
London	GL	5,008	8.13	70%
North Eastern	NE	2,418	8.32	74%
Tees Valley	NE	1,080	8.30	74%
Cheshire and Warrington	NW	1,031	8.40	77%
Cumbria	NW	804	8.60	81%
Greater Manchester	NW	2,910	8.51	78%
Lancashire	NW	2,098	8.52	78%
Liverpool City Region	NW	2,296	8.63	81%
Buckinghamshire Thames Valley	SE	429	8.13	69%
Coast to Capital	SE	1,115	8.15	71%
Enterprise M3	SE	1,265	8.15	69%
Oxfordshire	SE	617	8.03	68%



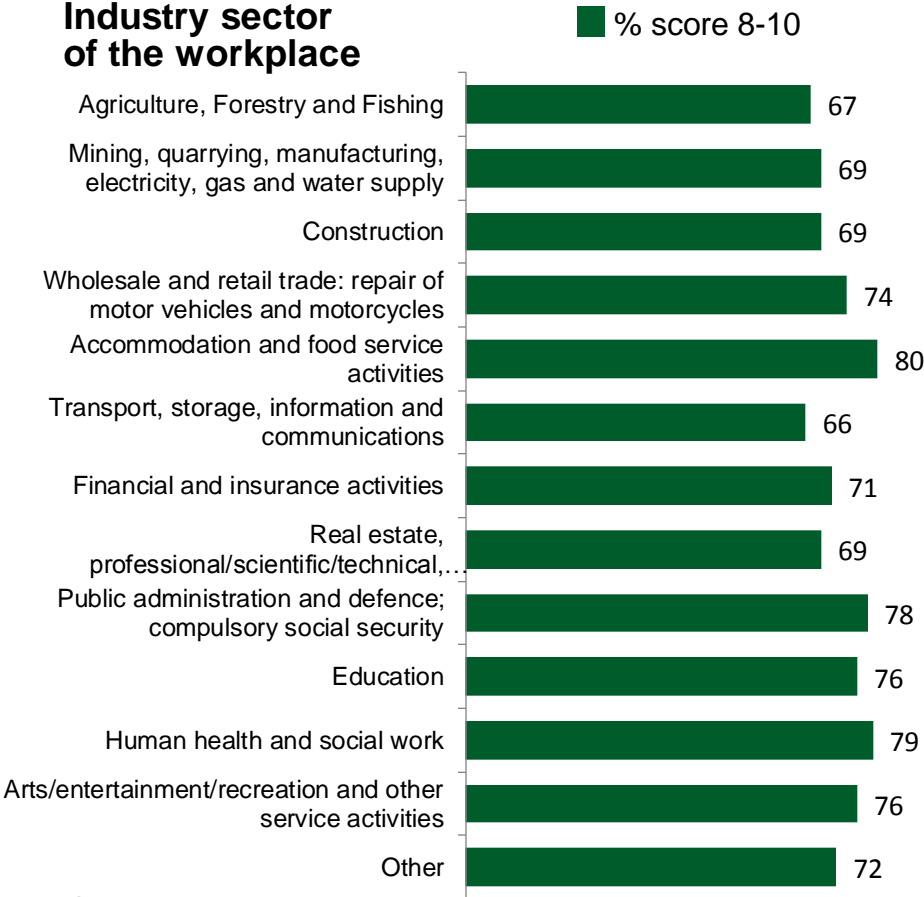
**Q5 How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the overall quality of the training/assessment? 0=extremely dissatisfied, 10=extremely satisfied**



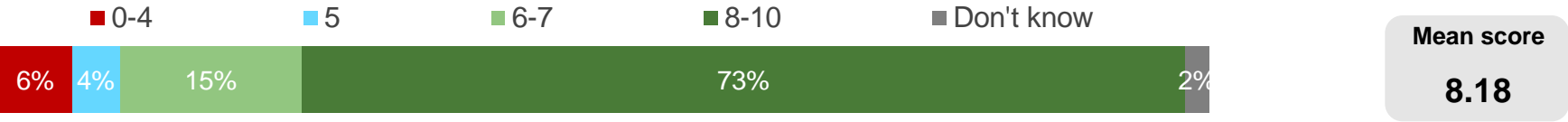
**Size of workplace (% score 8-10)**



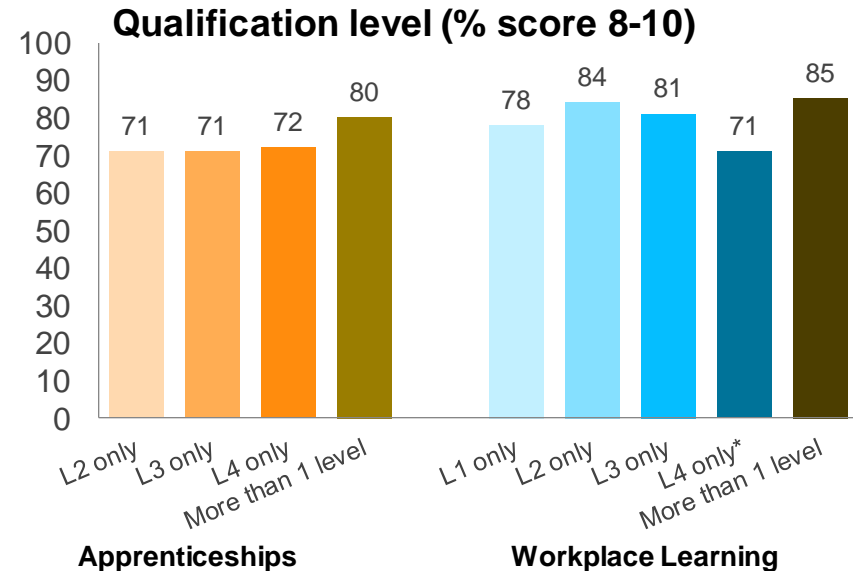
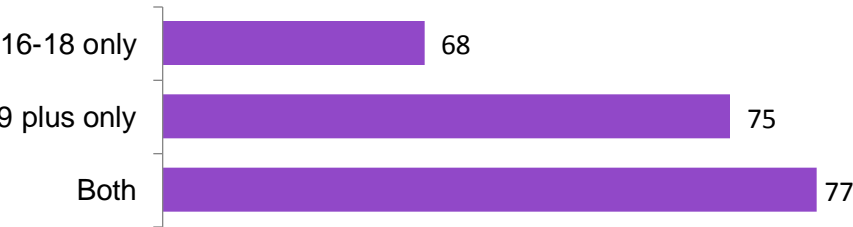
**Industry sector of the workplace**



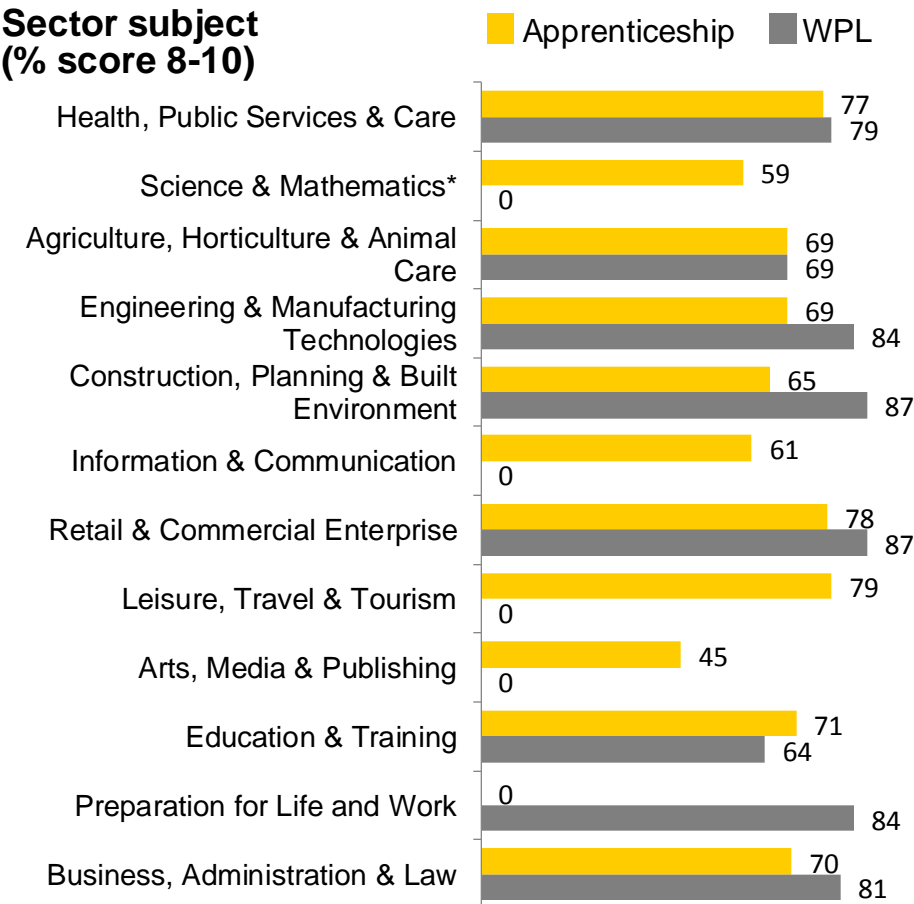
**Q5 How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the overall quality of the training/assessment? 0=extremely dissatisfied, 10=extremely satisfied**



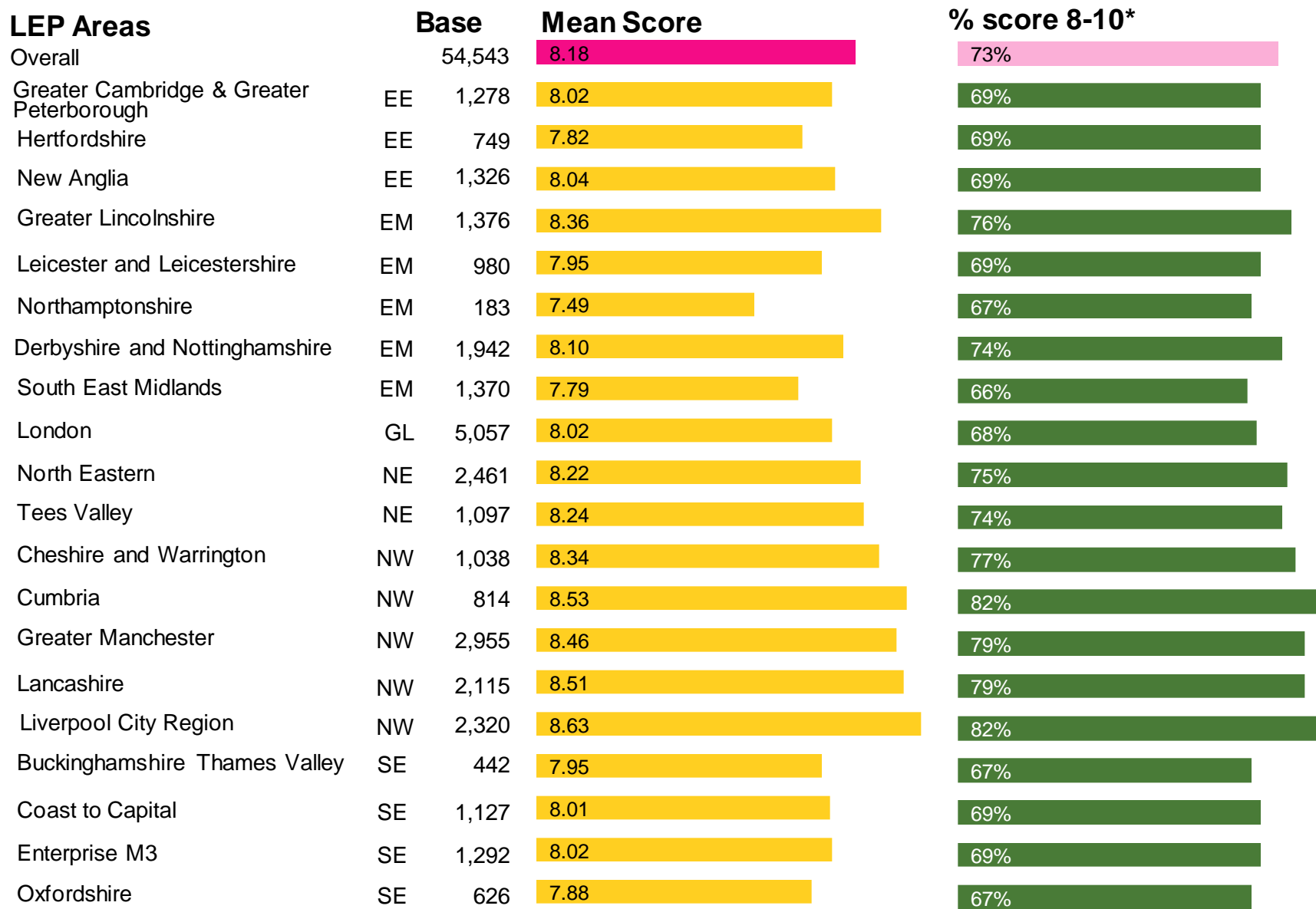
**Apprenticeship funding stream (% score 8-10)**

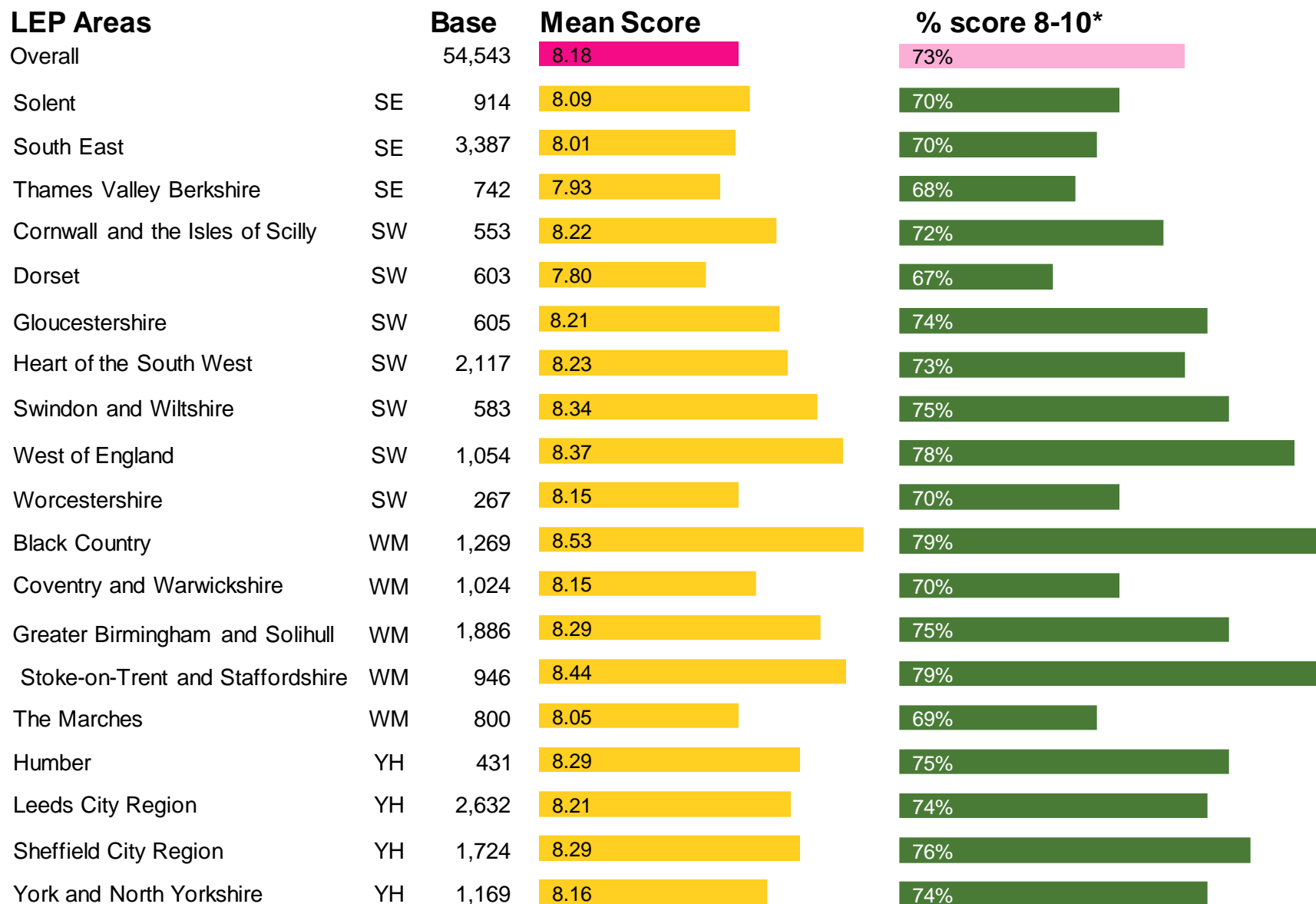


**Sector subject (% score 8-10)**

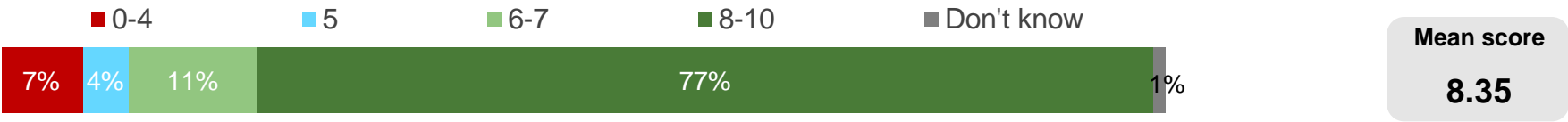




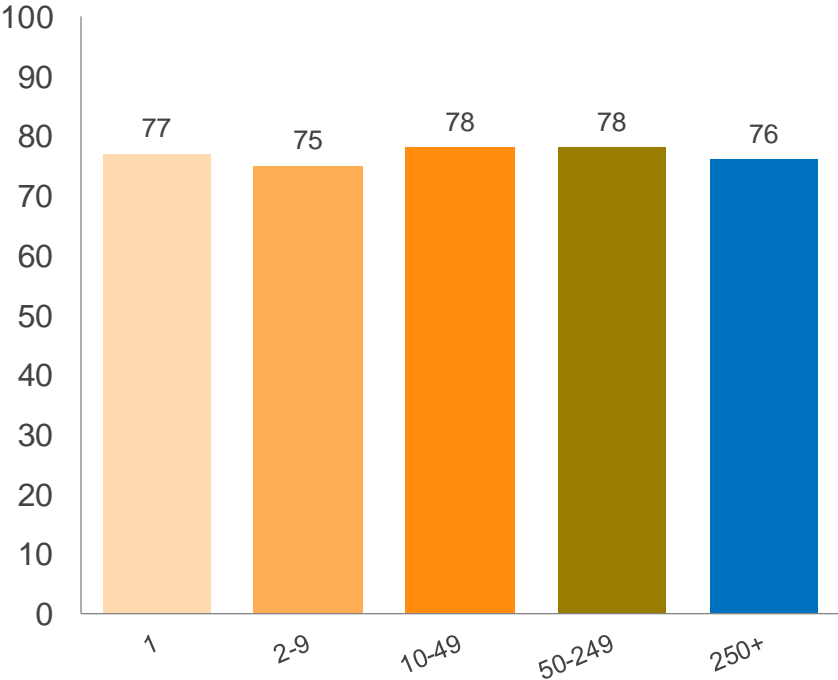




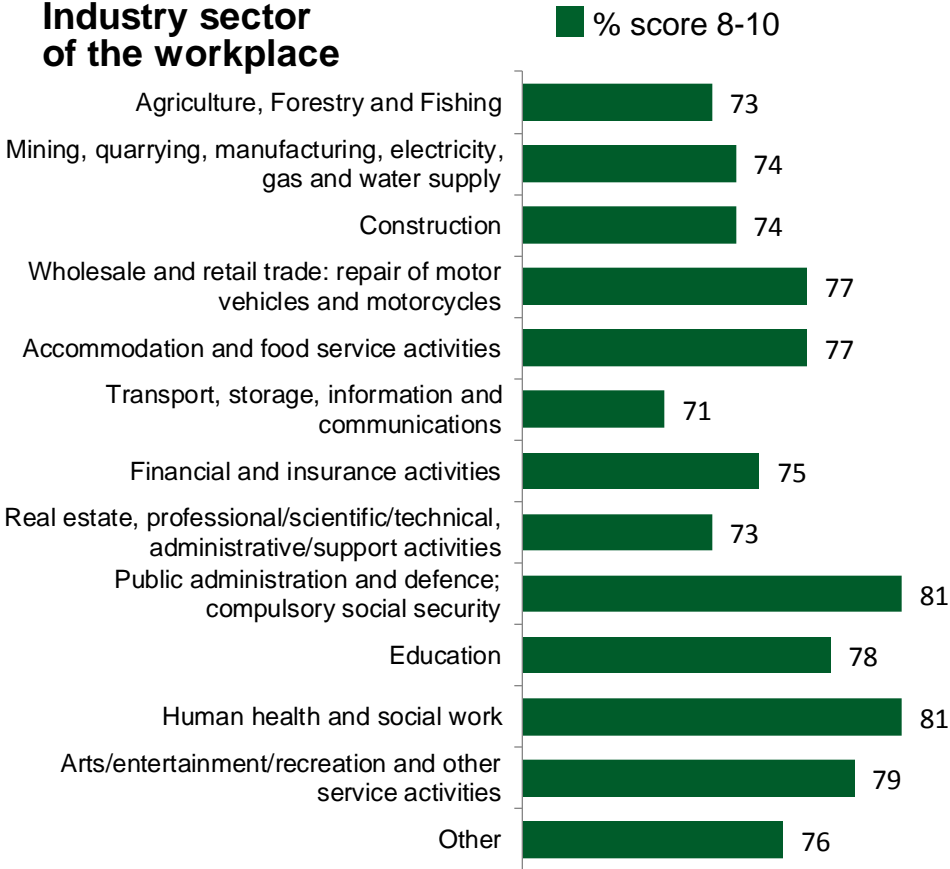
**Q6 How likely would you be to recommend this training provider to another employer seeking similar training? 0=highly unlikely, 10=highly likely**



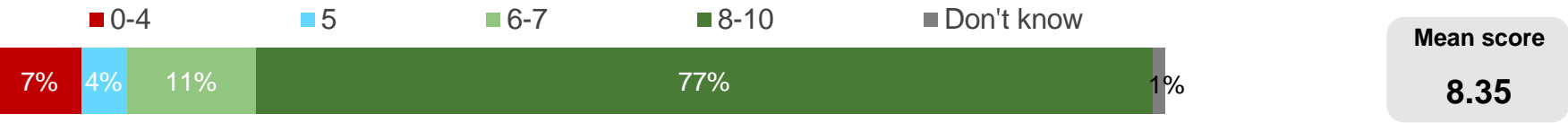
**Size of workplace (% score 8-10)**



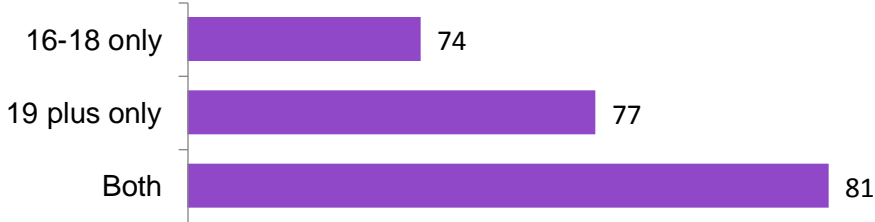
**Industry sector of the workplace**



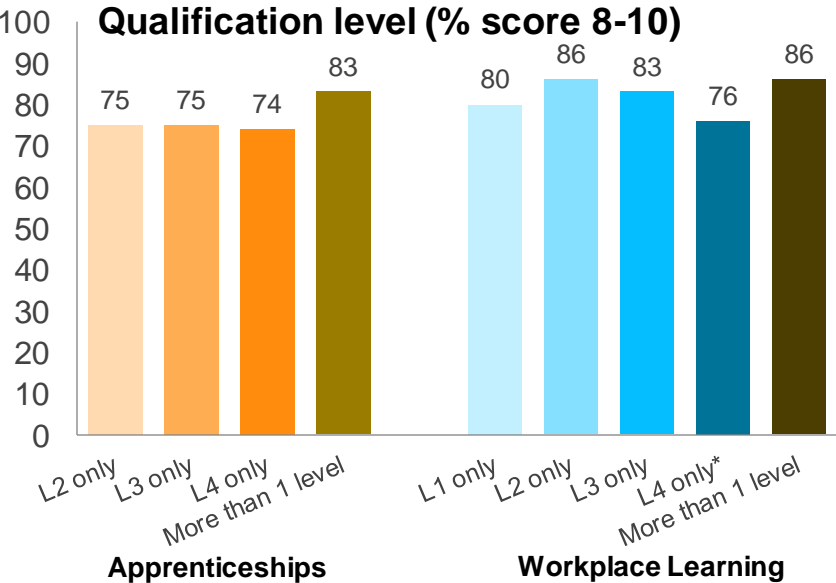
**Q6 How likely would you be to recommend this training provider to another employer seeking similar training? 0=highly unlikely, 10=highly likely**



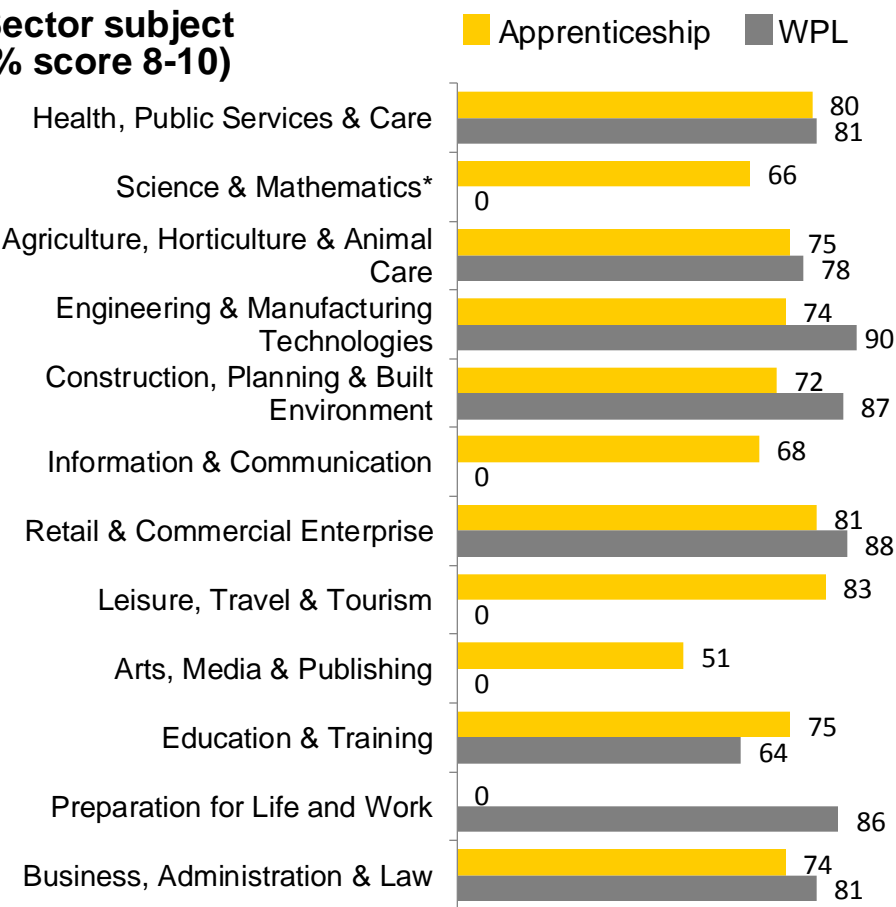
**Apprenticeship funding stream (% score 8-10)**

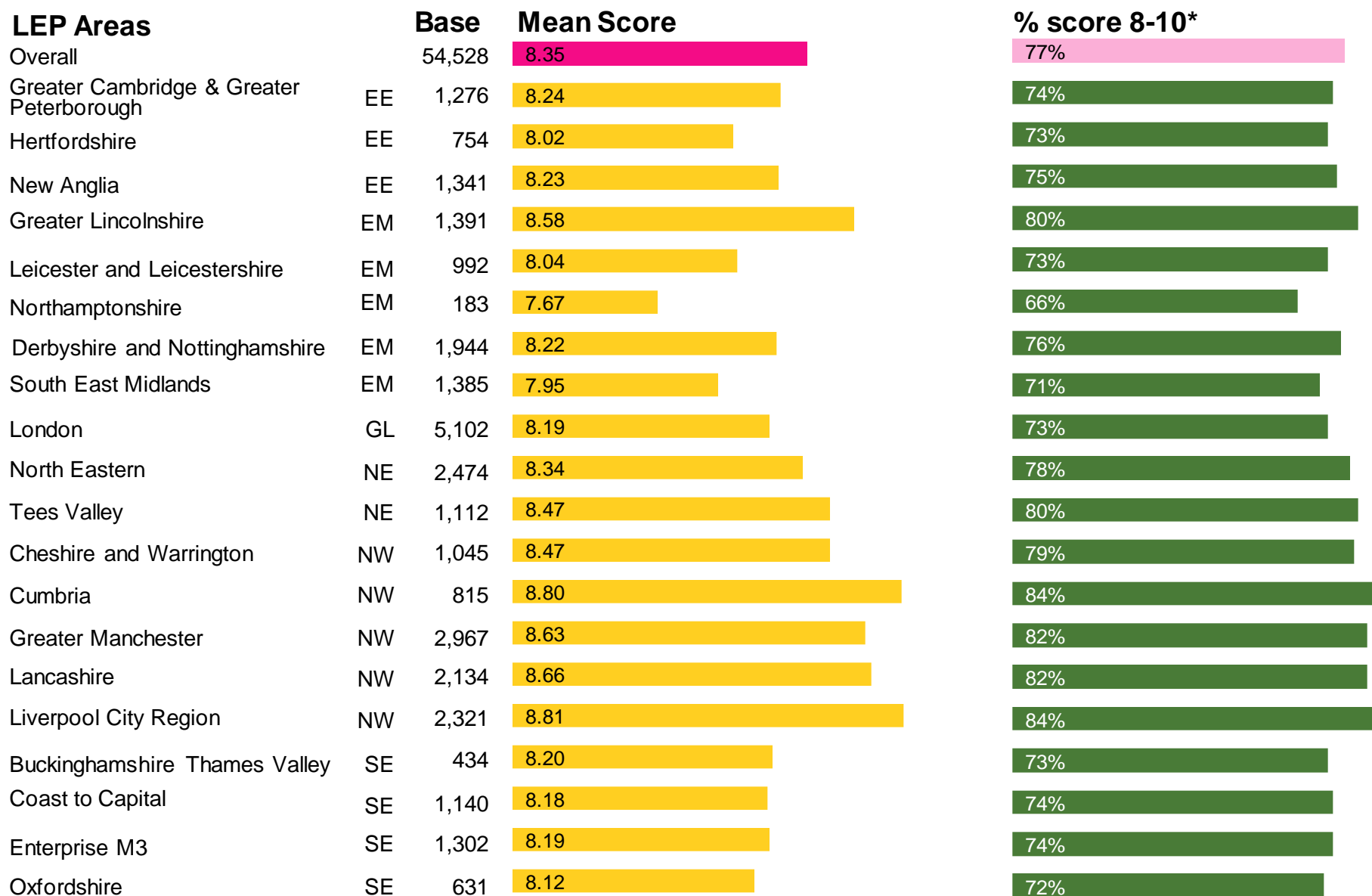


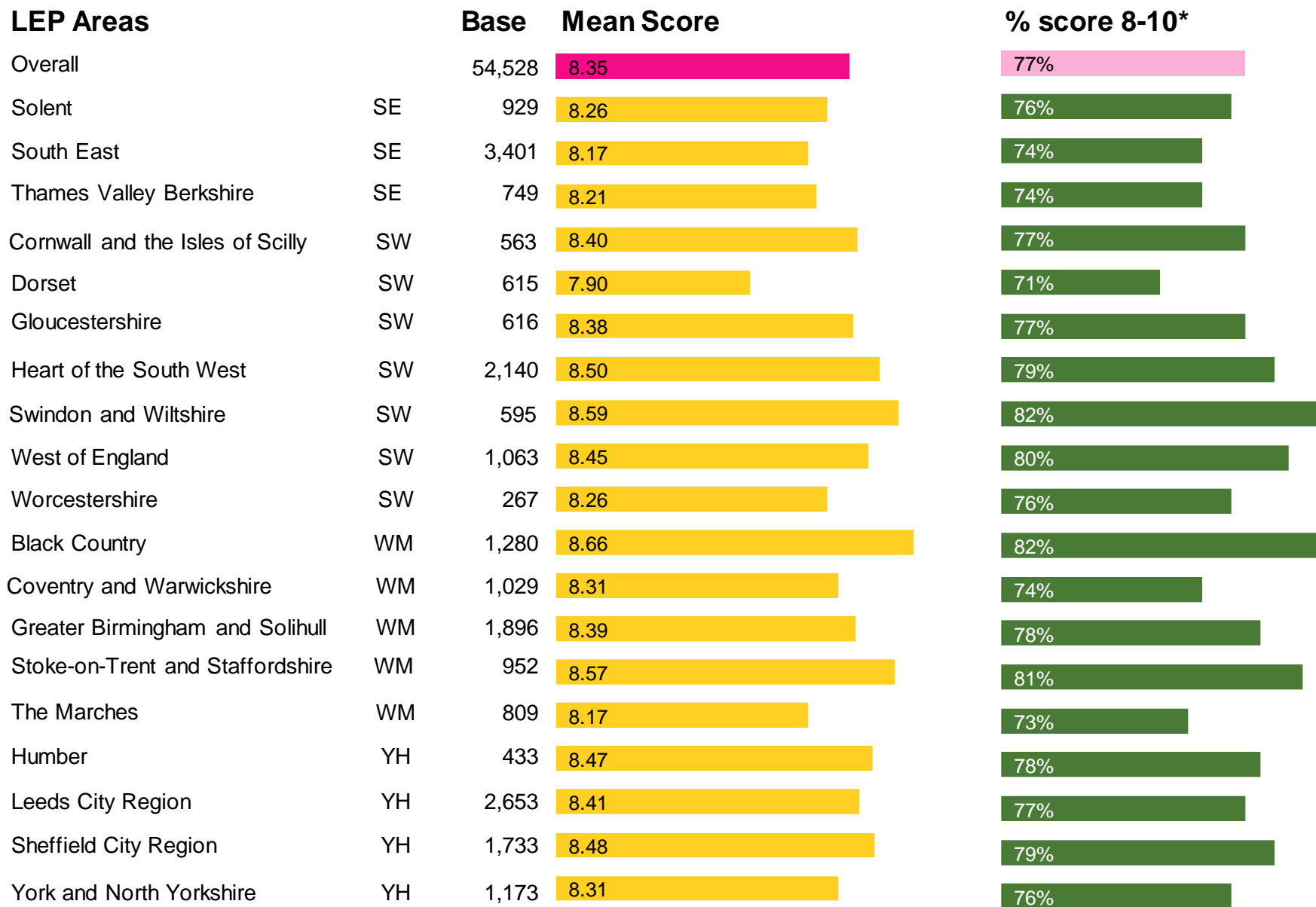
**Qualification level (% score 8-10)**



**Sector subject (% score 8-10)**





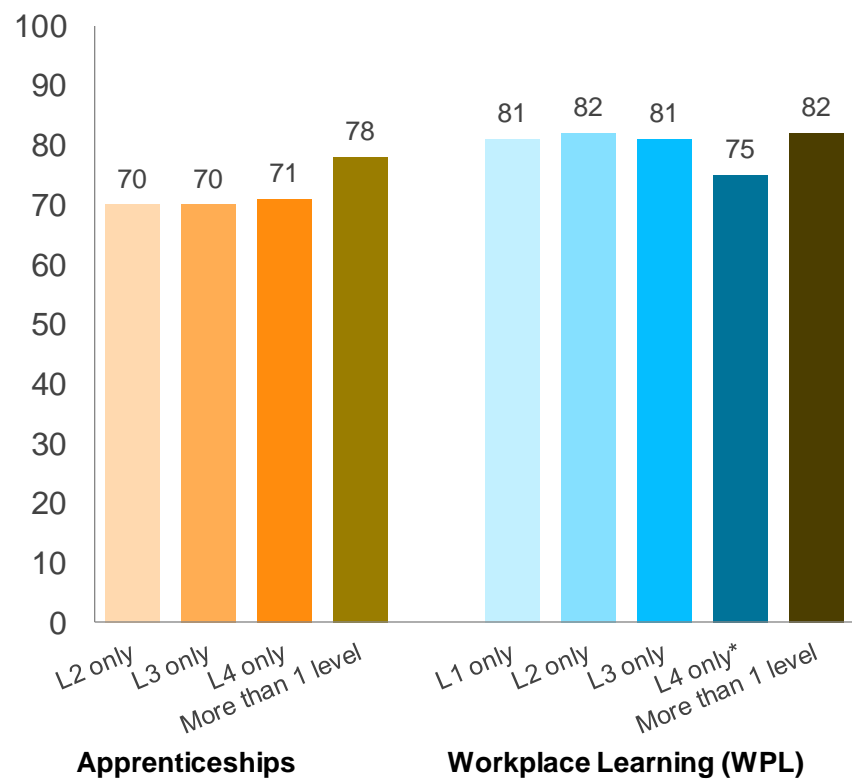


# **Q3a Understanding your organisation's training needs** (0=very poor, 10=excellent)

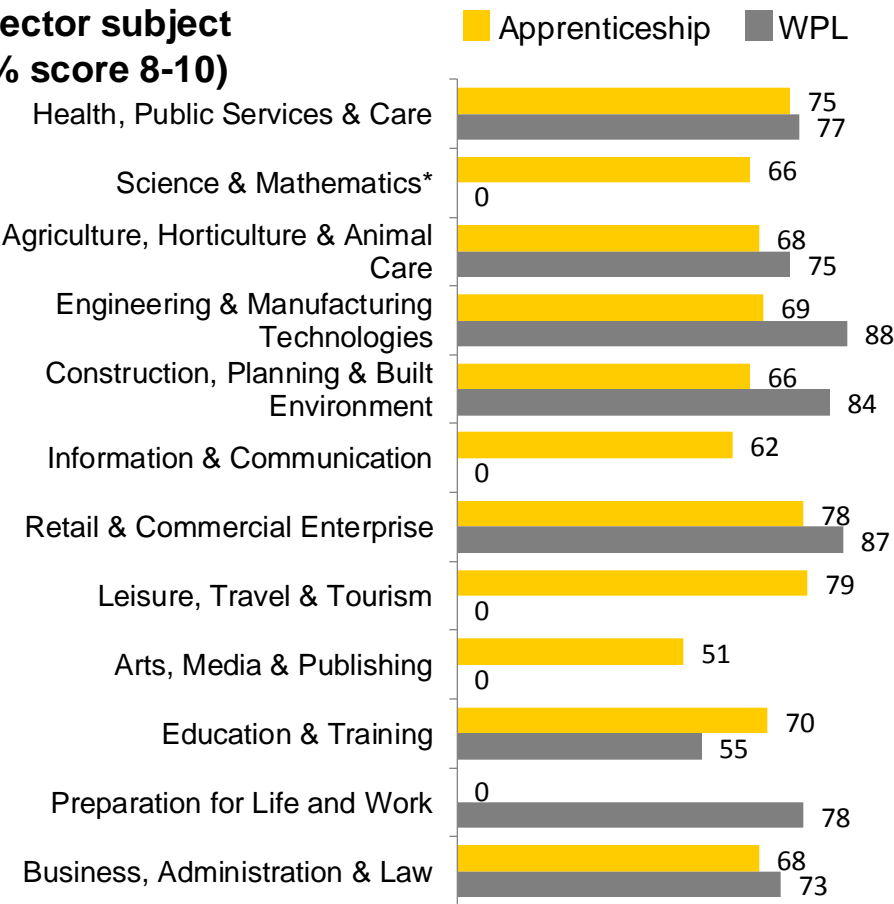


Mean score  
**8.18**

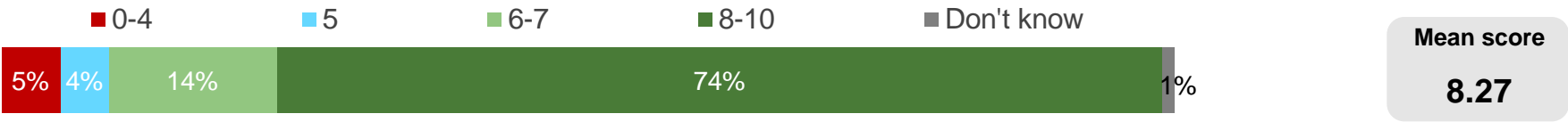
## **Qualification level (% score 8-10)**



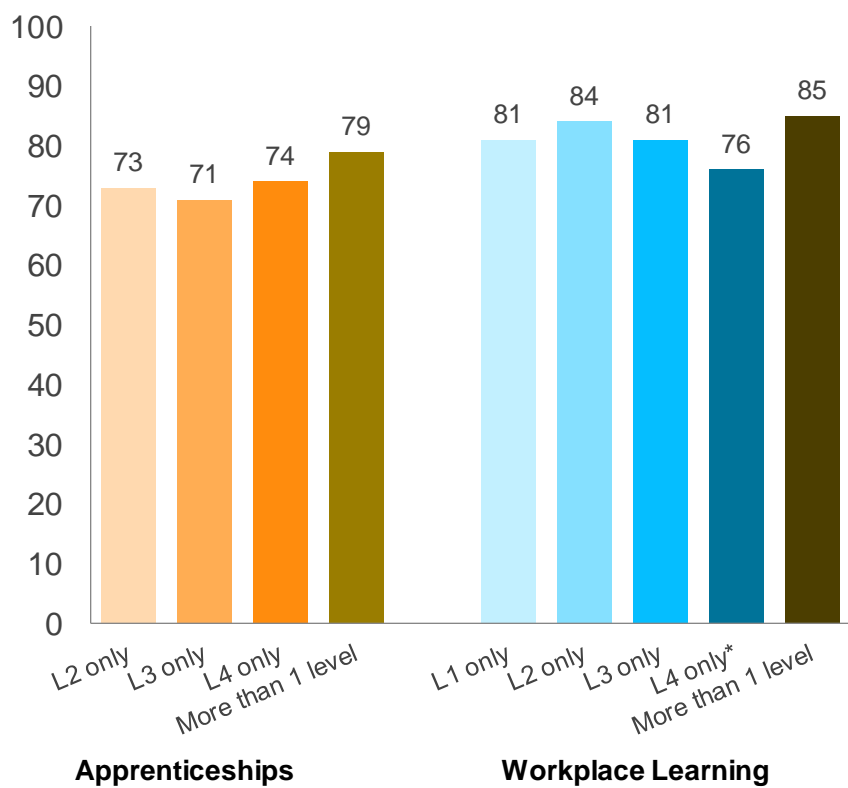
## **Sector subject (% score 8-10)**



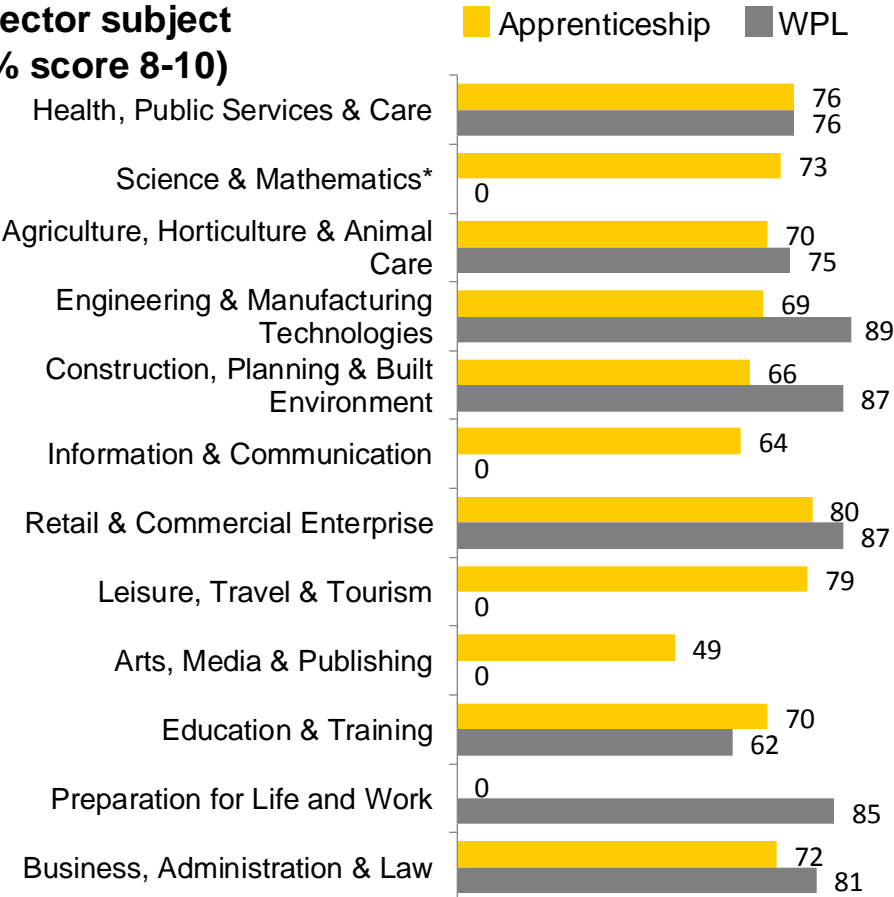
Q3b Offering training and/or assessment in a flexible way to meet your needs  
(0=very poor, 10=excellent)



Qualification level (% score 8-10)

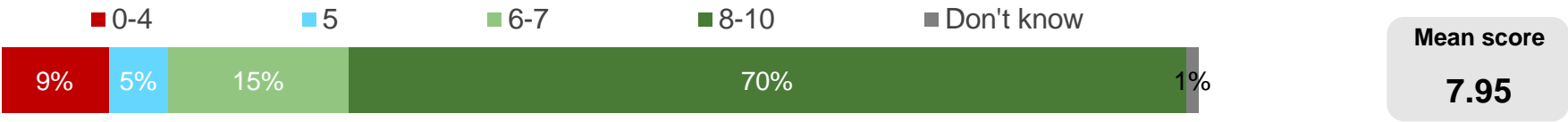


Sector subject  
(% score 8-10)

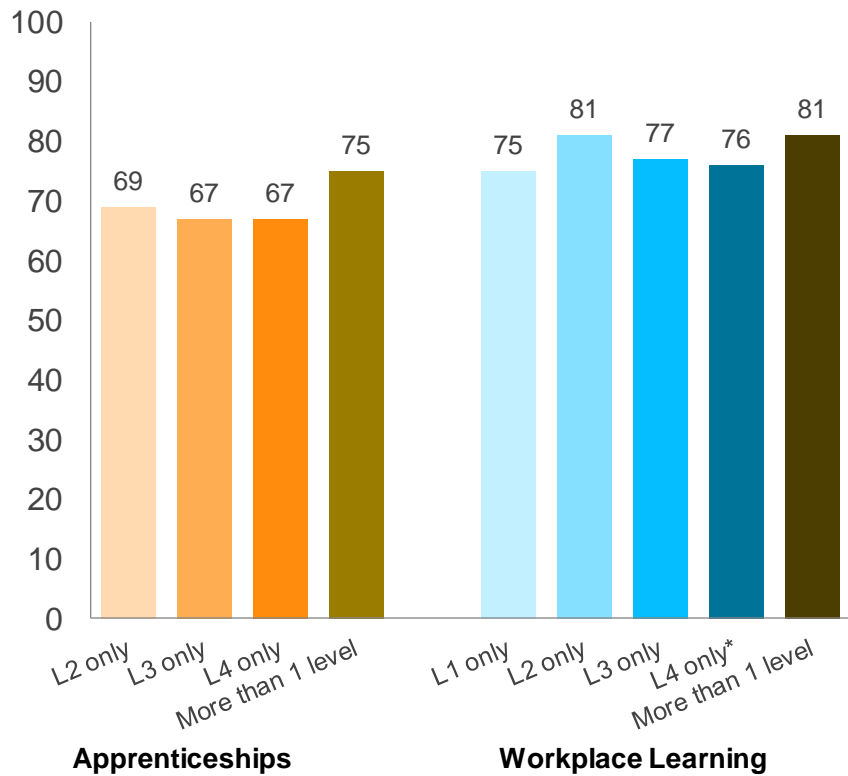




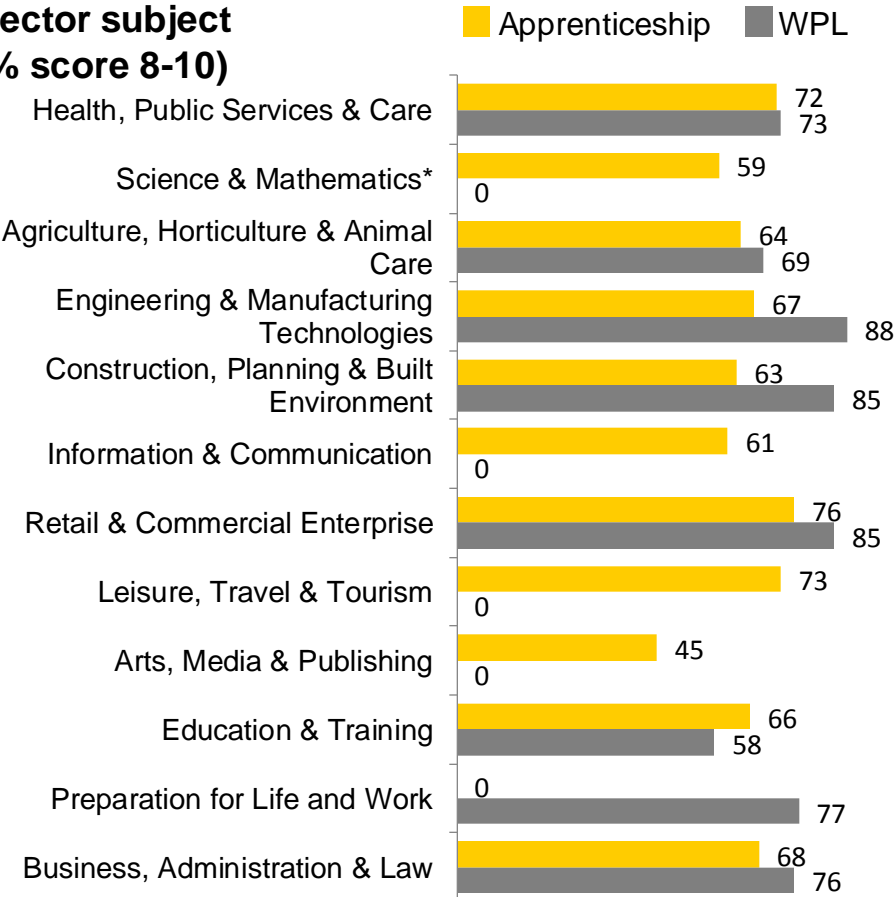
**Q3c Communicating clearly with you throughout the process**  
(0=very poor, 10=excellent)



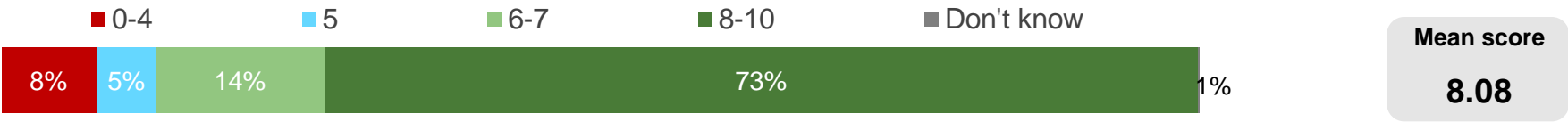
**Qualification level (% score 8-10)**



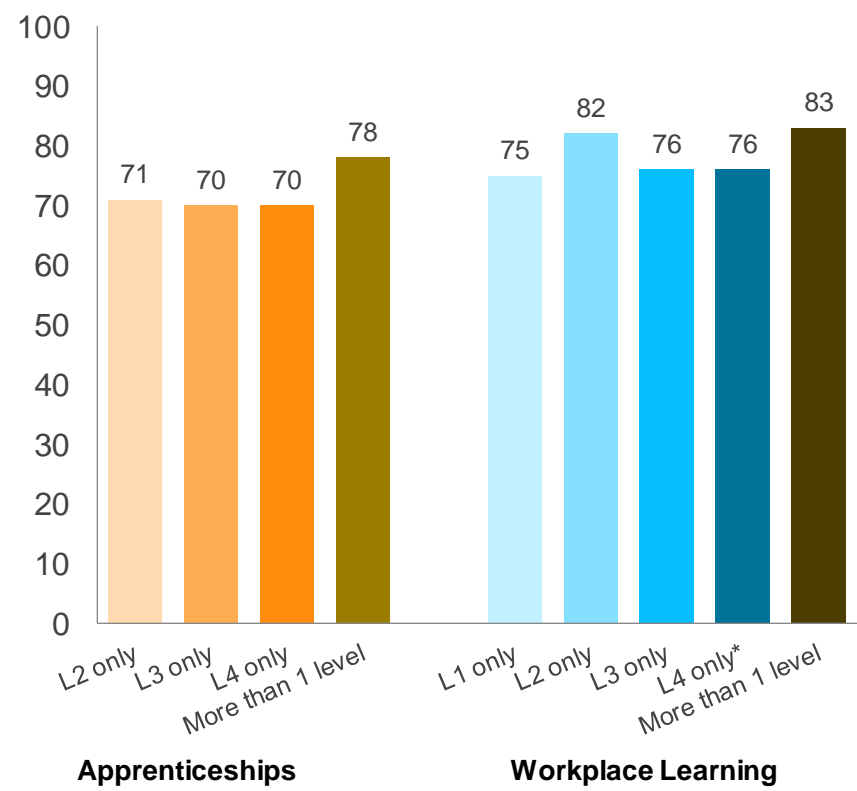
**Sector subject (% score 8-10)**



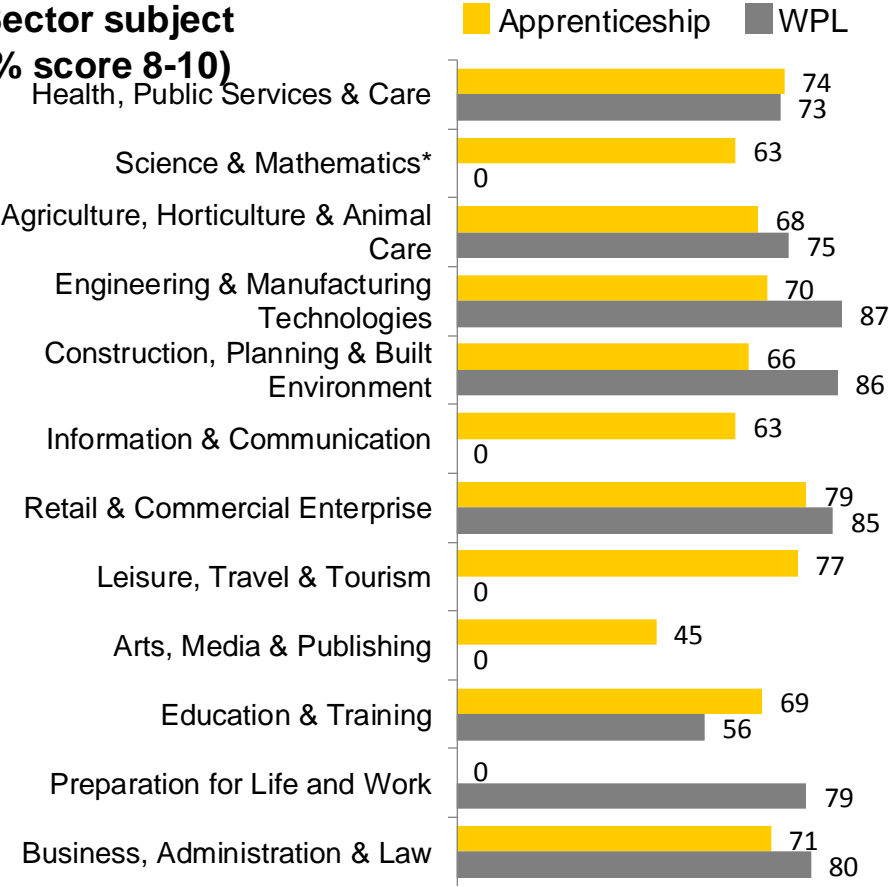
**Q3d Their overall efficiency in their dealings with you (0=very poor, 10=excellent)**



**Qualification level (% score 8-10)**



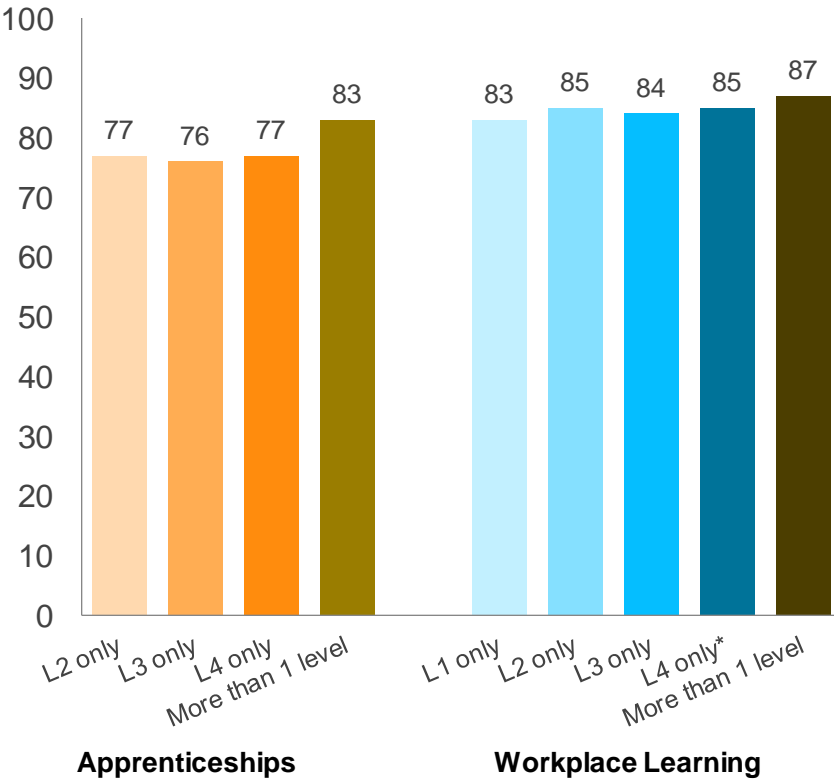
**Sector subject (% score 8-10)**



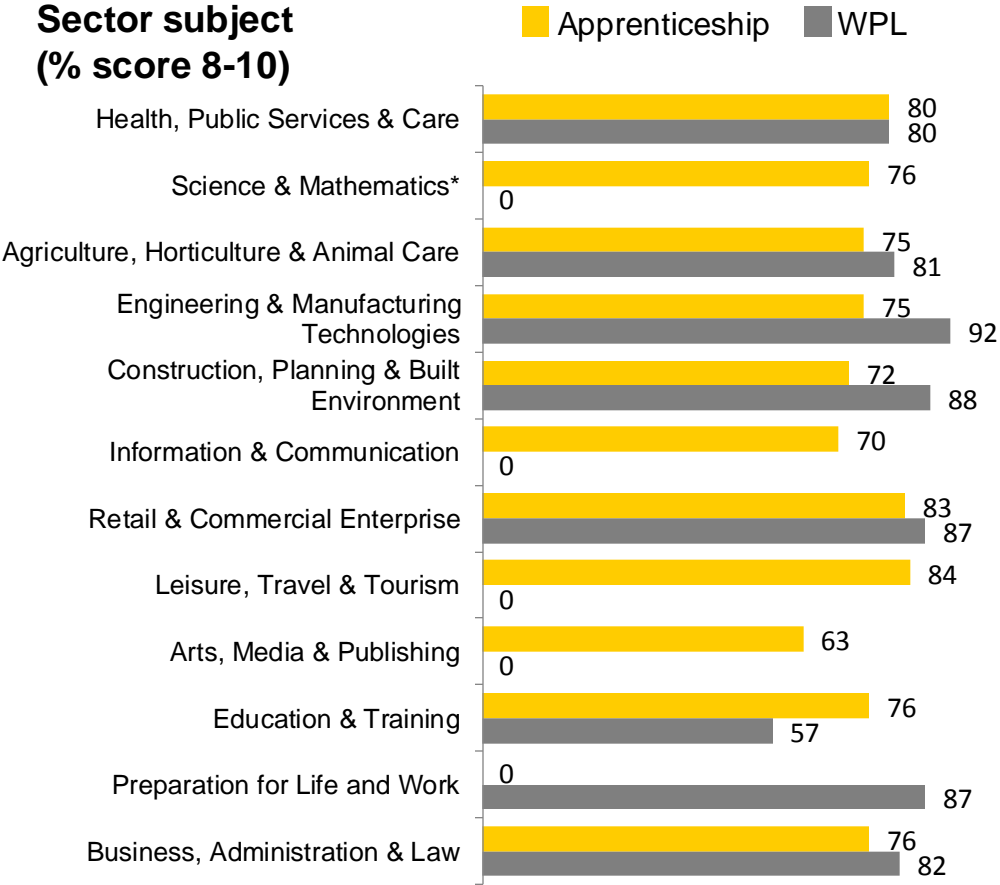
# **Q3e The professionalism of the staff delivering training and/or assessment** (0=very poor, 10=excellent)



**Qualification level (% score 8-10)**



**Sector subject (% score 8-10)**

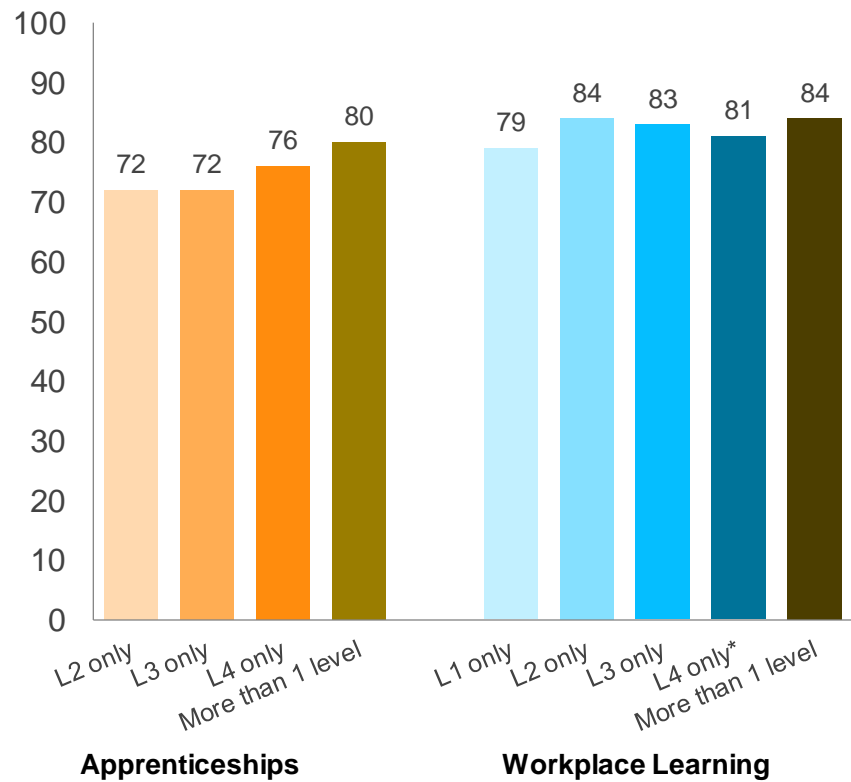


# Q3f Delivering training that reflects up-to-date practices in your industry/sector (0=very poor, 10=excellent)



Mean score  
**8.29**

## Qualification level (% score 8-10)



## Sector subject (% score 8-10)

