



Department  
for Education

# Evaluation of Skills Bootcamps

Wave 2 Implementation Report

March 2023

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Government  
Social Research

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## Glossary

Applicant	One person can apply for more than one Skills Bootcamp. In the management information analysis, an applicant covers people who applied but did not participate
CAD	Computer-Aided Design
Co-Funded Learner	A learner whose employer is funding 30% of the cost of the Skills Bootcamp to upskill their employee(s)
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CV	Curriculum Vitae – used in job applications to summarise skills and relevant experience
DfE	Department for Education
DfT	Department for Transport
DVLA	Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency
DVSA	Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency
F2F	Face-to-Face delivery
GIAS	Get Information About Schools dataset
GLH	Guided Learning Hours
Guaranteed Interview	On completion of the course, participants have a guaranteed interview with an employer. This is not a requirement for self-employed or co-funded participants
HGV	Heavy Goods Vehicle
HGV W2	Dataset provided by the DfE with all Wave 2 applicants and participants of Skills Bootcamps in HGV Driving
IAG	Information, Advice and Guidance
ILR	Individualised Learner Record
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation
KPI	Key Performance Indicator. KPIs are set out in the contracts that DfE agree with suppliers. The aim is for 100% completion of the attainment of new skills and offers of guaranteed interviews. For positive outcomes, 75% of those who complete the programme with a guaranteed interview should achieve a positive outcome, which in most cases is a new job, a substantial

change in responsibilities or ability to strengthen or adapt their business if self-employed.

LGV	Large Goods Vehicle
MI	Management Information
NINO	National Insurance Number
ONS	Office for National Statistics
Participant	Information provided by providers on the individuals regarding their Skills Bootcamps, identified by the presence of a start date listed in the management information. The total number of participants were used to recruit for the participant survey
Payment Milestone	Providers were required to submit evidence for each payment milestone before they received payment. Providers did not receive payment if no evidence was submitted. For the milestone 2 payment (Completion), providers had to submit evidence that learners had completed their training and had been offered a guaranteed interview (where applicable). For the milestone 3 payment (Outcomes), providers were required to submit evidence that learners had secured a new job that utilised the skills gained on the Skills Bootcamp, gained increased responsibilities in the same job, or started new self-employed work.
SIC	Standard Industrial Classification of economic activities
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
SOC	Standard Occupational Classification
Start	A stricter version of a participant. Entries in the management information which are participants, plus other qualifying information (start date, attendance rate, and payment date) to verify as a valid start
UC	Universal Credit
UKPRN	UK Provider Reference Number
Wave 1 Extension (W1 Ext)	Data from Wave 1 Extension Skills Bootcamps. These are Skills Bootcamps where the provider delivered Skills Bootcamps during Wave 1, and their contract was then extended to deliver new Skills Bootcamps in FY21/22 (Wave 2).
Wave 2	For the purpose of this report, Skills Bootcamps which commenced delivery between 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2021 and 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022
Wave 2 (dataset name)	Dataset containing applicants and participants of Skills Bootcamps in Digital and 'Other' (including Green, Engineering, Construction, and Technical)



W2 Cold (dataset name)	Cold Spots data. DfE-identified gaps in provision in England where some targeted recruitment took place
W2 Recovered (dataset name)	Dataset containing applicants and participants whose personal data (NINO, surname) required additional exploration to recover

## Executive summary

CFE Research was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) to undertake a process evaluation of the government-funded Skills Bootcamps programme. Skills Bootcamps form part of the UK Government's economic strategy to achieve growth, prosperity and a more equal society. Skills Bootcamps are free, flexible training courses that last up to 16 weeks for adults in England. The process evaluation of Skills Bootcamps runs from February 2022–July 2024. The London School of Economics is running a parallel impact evaluation of the programme.

This report covers the implementation phase of Wave 2 Skills Bootcamps, which were delivered during the financial year of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021–31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. Most Skills Bootcamps in Wave 2 were in Digital Skills and HGV Driving, but some Skills Bootcamps in Green, Engineering, Construction and Technical Skills were also delivered.

## Context for the evaluation

Skills Bootcamps were introduced to support the 2019 UK Government's manifesto commitment to giving adults the opportunity to build sector-specific skills and to help employers by giving people the skills they need to move into jobs in sectors with skills shortages. Skills Bootcamps are short, flexible courses, co-designed with employers and run for up to 16 weeks. Most are equivalent to NVQ levels 3-5 in the national qualifications framework. Alongside the technical skills and wraparound support for learners, providers should offer a guaranteed job interview on completion of the course (where applicable).<sup>1</sup>

The guaranteed interview is a core component of the Skills Bootcamps offer and must be for a role which aligns with the skills acquired through the successful completion of the Skills Bootcamp. Providers must provide evidence of an interview being offered that matches this requirement in order to receive payment.

The primary aim of the programme is to support people to get better jobs and improve productivity (measured by learner outcomes). We define a positive outcome as follows:

- A job for those unemployed (including an apprenticeship)
- A new role or increased responsibilities for those in work
- For the self-employed, access to new contracts or opportunities

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<sup>1</sup> A job interview is not a requirement for participants who are self-employed or undertaking a Skills Bootcamp through their current employer

## Evaluation aims and objectives

This process evaluation will explore the effectiveness of Skills Bootcamps' delivery, the experiences of those involved in the training, and early perceptions of outcomes achieved through participation. The analysis explores what works, or otherwise, to support the delivery of Skills Bootcamps and ongoing improvements to them. Underpinning the evaluation is an evaluation framework which provides key indicators to measure and explore the policy aims associated with Skills Bootcamps.

This report covers the implementation phase of Wave 2, which involves analysing evidence to understand how Skills Bootcamps were operationalised and delivered. Evidence was collected using mixed methods to capture insights from participants, providers, and employers. Fieldwork for the implementation stage was conducted between May–July 2022.

Management information (MI) describing participants, providers and employers was analysed. Additional data matching for employers was conducted. Implementation surveys were administered to participants (1,680 usable responses) and employers (30 usable responses). Semi-structured interviews with providers (n=26) and employers (n=30) were conducted. Twelve focus groups with participants were conducted that were sampled by Skills Bootcamp 'type' and employment status.

## Key findings

### Participant, employer, and provider characteristics

The management information shows that 16,120 people started a Skills Bootcamp (called 'starts' in this report) against a DfE target of 16,000. Participation in Skills Bootcamps was diverse when compared against workforce statistics. Two-thirds of starts (67%) were male. However, the proportion of women starting Skills Bootcamps in Digital and HGV Driving was higher than the UK's female workforce in related sectors.

Three in ten (28%) received Universal Credit when they started a Skills Bootcamp and one quarter (23%) of starts were unemployed for less than 12 months. One quarter (26%) of starts stated that they had caring responsibilities for children or other adults. Those who applied and started a Skills Bootcamp were more likely to live in areas of high disadvantage as measured by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

The May 2022 management information shows 2,648 employers engaging with Skills Bootcamps. Nearly two thirds (65%) of employers who engaged with Skills Bootcamps were small or medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) employing up to 249 people. Employers engaged with Skills Bootcamps in a variety of ways. An analysis of employer

management information shows that one quarter (26%) offered an interview, 15% gave time to employees to attend Skills Bootcamp training, and 10% provided an offer of employment.

Skills Bootcamp providers were independent training providers that specialised in defined industrial sectors, universities, or further education colleges. Most providers offered Skills Bootcamps in one occupational area (e.g. Skills Bootcamps in Digital), whereas a small number offered training across multiple Skills Bootcamp types.

## **Motivations for engaging with Skills Bootcamps**

A survey and focus groups were conducted with participants and qualitative interviews were carried out with employers and providers. This primary fieldwork explored individual and organisational motivations for engaging with Skills Bootcamps.

### **Participants**

Participants gave a variety of reasons as to why they engaged with Skills Bootcamps. For 94% of survey respondents, obtaining a new job or changing career was a key motivating factor. Other reasons for participants to apply for and take part in a Skills Bootcamp included:

- The offer of a guaranteed interview. Four in five (81%) survey respondents thought that the offer of a guaranteed interview was attractive when they applied. The guaranteed interview was seen by some interviewees as an opportunity to secure their dream role.
- To improve job prospects. Through a Skills Bootcamp, three quarters (73%) of survey respondents felt that they could earn more money. Many participant focus group attendees felt that the training would allow them to 'get a better life', through improved job prospects and stability for them and their families.
- To gain new knowledge and improve vocational skills. Many participant focus group attendees believed that learning new skills made them more employable. Self-employed participants were especially motivated to learn new skills that they could implement to improve the efficiency and performance of their business.
- The attraction of flexible training. Employed and self-employed participants as well as those with caring responsibilities were especially attracted to the flexibility of courses that would fit around other commitments. Online delivery was a feature of such flexibility.
- The offer of free training. Many participants could not afford training similar to that offered by Skills Bootcamps. Providers felt that this was a reason as to why Skills

Bootcamp participants came from more diverse backgrounds in comparison to similar commercial courses.

## **Employers**

Many employers stated that they engaged with Skills Bootcamps to enhance the performance of their organisation. Employers valued the opportunity to be involved with curriculum design and delivery of Skills Bootcamps, which they believe made the training more relevant to their industry compared to other training programmes.

Employers felt that Skills Bootcamps helped to increase the diversity of their organisation. Engaging with Skills Bootcamps allowed employers to recruit underrepresented groups with diverse previous experiences. These recruits offered new perspectives and encouraged different ways of thinking. Skills Bootcamps were described as a new 'talent pipeline' and recruitment stream for some employers looking to fill vacancies.

Employers that trained existing employees through Skills Bootcamps saw improved staff retention and employee satisfaction. Several employers also stated that engaging with Skills Bootcamps led to financial benefits for their organisation. Digital and Green (Rail) employers often felt that a better skilled workforce commanded higher fees from clients and reduced costs to pay associates to deliver the work.

Many employers stated that Skills Bootcamp participants need the opportunity to embed and practise their learning when they finish their training. Some of these employers thought that Skills Bootcamps should sit within a larger programme of employee development and felt that Skills Bootcamps were less effective as a standalone piece of training.

## **Providers**

Skills Bootcamps offered organisational benefits for the training providers. Through delivering high-quality Skills Bootcamps, some interviewees believed that they could expand their training offer and improve their reputation. Some interviewees working for smaller independent training providers stated that Skills Bootcamp funding helped to keep their company in business.

Providers were also motivated through a desire to support the needs of their sector of delivery. The flexibility of the Skills Bootcamps programme helped providers to create bespoke training to fit the demand in their sector of delivery. Some providers with a strong ethical social responsibility ethos emphasised the opportunity to reach a wide range of participants and offer training to those who otherwise would not be able to access it.

## **Delivery features of successful Skills Bootcamps**

### **Applied learning and facilitation**

Skills Bootcamp participants valued opportunities to practise and embed learning through applied projects and vocational experience that were relevant to potential future employment. Participants also valued facilitators who were engaging, committed and knowledgeable about the industry.

Green (Rail) employers felt that more opportunities for participants to gain ‘on-track’ experience would reduce the need for follow-up and mentoring. Employers emphasised the importance of quality as many only wanted to engage with providers offering high-quality and industry-relevant training. For employers, quality referred to facilitators who were experienced in teaching and knowledgeable about the sector as well as industry-relevant curricula that were specific to the needs of the sector.

### **Establishing and maintaining strong employer–provider relationships**

Many employers and providers equated successful employment outcomes to strong employer–provider relationships. These interviewees said Skills Bootcamps were more relevant to their industry compared to other training programmes and participants were more confident about a positive outcome (such as a new job or role) when employers and providers worked together. An example of a good partnership was a provider working backwards from an employer’s intended outcomes to identify what skills, knowledge and attributes were necessary within a Skills Bootcamp.

Employers and providers believed that strong employer–provider relationships helped to embed learning and made the Skills Bootcamps more meaningful for learners. Involving employers when developing and delivering a Skills Bootcamp meant that learners were more likely to retain what they were taught, develop a better understanding of the sector, and apply their learning to future employment. Employers emphasised that early employer engagement during a Skills Bootcamp also helped to set learner expectations and increase levels of satisfaction.

## **Challenges when delivering Skills Bootcamps**

Interviews uncovered much high-quality provision and good practice. However, participants and employers still provided several suggestions regarding ways to improve delivery.

- Some participants of Skills Bootcamps in Digital felt that the training content was too complex and required higher levels of pre-knowledge (e.g. coding and different software languages). In contrast, some participants of Skills Bootcamps in HGV Driving felt that some of their theoretical sessions were too basic and/or irrelevant

(e.g. theoretical knowledge of driving). Ensuring that quality information, advice and guidance (IAG) is provided at the application stage would help to ensure that participants are aware of what is expected and can fully access the learning.

- One fifth (21%) of survey respondents felt that there was not enough time to learn the necessary skills and knowledge in their Skills Bootcamp. This was particularly problematic for participants on higher-level Skills Bootcamp in Digital courses (e.g. coding, software development, cybersecurity). Some participants felt that their provider had tried to condense too much curricula, from pre-existing, longer-duration training programmes into their Skill Bootcamp training.
- Participants generally felt that interspersing employability sessions throughout the Skills Bootcamp was more effective than delivering them as a 'block'. Some participants with extensive employment experience felt that the employability sessions were too simple and of no benefit to future employment opportunities. In contrast, when employability training was personalised and sensitive to their employment history, participants could attribute successful outcomes to their employability support.
- Some participants of Skills Bootcamps in Digital experienced disruption because the hardware to access the training did not have a suitable specification. Sessions often were stopped to sort out technical issues, which reduced the time available for learning.

### **Delays in HGV driving tests**

Some delays associated with HGV driver testing slot shortages caused frustration for participants, employers, and providers. As a result, Skills Bootcamps in HGV Driving often took much longer than the advertised 16 weeks. Some providers reported losing money due to the delays, as they were unable to claim funding. Rising petrol prices and funding delays left some providers questioning the financial viability of Skills Bootcamps.

Unemployed participants and those claiming financial benefits were the hardest hit by the delays in testing. Some unemployed participants stated that the delays led to lost income which had a negative impact on their health, social life, and financial security.

### **Provider key performance indicators (KPIs) and funding**

Providers felt that the KPI targets of 100% of eligible learners<sup>2</sup> attending a guaranteed interview and 75% achieving a positive outcome were unrealistic and differed from other comparable training programmes. Many learners were sent lists of job adverts rather than an arranged interview. For participants who received an interview, the quality varied. Often the interview offered was inappropriate because the role was in the wrong location, was unrelated to the training or offered an insufficient salary. One explanation for these

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<sup>2</sup> Guaranteed interviews are not applicable for self-employed or co-funded participants.

findings is the timing of this report. This report focused on the implementation phase of Skills Bootcamps and not all learners who participated in the fieldwork had completed their training and therefore some participants may have been offered further interviews after the fieldwork took place<sup>3</sup>. The management information data for completion rates was also incomplete. Participant perceptions about the guaranteed interview process and associated outcomes will be explored in more detail in future reports.

Some providers were concerned that the link between outcome and payment influenced who they accepted onto courses. They feared long-term unemployed participants with more complex needs may be less successful on application, which would limit Skills Bootcamps in providing training to those that otherwise would not be able to access it.

Many providers found it difficult to meet and evidence programme KPIs. The payment schedules have been designed to ensure that as many learners as possible can secure new jobs, or additional responsibilities as part of their existing role because of their training. Providers received guidance about the payment schedules ahead of signing up to Skills Bootcamp. However, many providers felt that the payment schedules were 'unfair' because they were unpaid for delivery where they were unable to evidence successful outcomes. Chasing evidence adds a significant administrative burden upon providers. Interviews showed that some larger employers had employed specific people to chase evidence, which may mean that larger providers are more able to evidence KPIs and receive payment for their training in comparison to smaller providers.

## Early self-reported impacts of Skills Bootcamps

Some participants stated that Skills Bootcamps increased confidence in their skills to perform their job and when applying for jobs and/or performing in interviews. Some participants felt that adding a Skills Bootcamp to their CV helped them to obtain interviews and positively filled unemployment gaps by showing a commitment to continued development.

Skills Bootcamps demonstrably changed the lives of some participants. Skills Bootcamps afforded the opportunity to train in areas that were previously inaccessible for some by circumventing barriers to equivalent training and subsequent employment:

Skills Bootcamps has given a lot of people the opportunity to do something they've always wanted to do. People say, 'I've wanted to do this since I was a child'. When you see Skills Bootcamps changes

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<sup>3</sup> Providers may offer more than one interview opportunity per learner.



people's lives, that's where the big impact is. Even if it's just changing one person's life, that's made it all worthwhile. *Provider – HGV.*

Skills Bootcamps helped some employers to fill vacancies. Some employers described Skills Bootcamps as an extended job interview where they can get to know the person, and the participant can make an informed decision about whether the employer is right for them. Employers stated that this can lead to more sustainable recruitment that results in loyal employees who stay for longer.

## Areas for consideration

Providers and employers were positive about Skills Bootcamps and thought that the programme was important for the development of the economy. However, they felt that tighter regulation of the quality of Skills Bootcamps is needed to ensure that programmes are of comparable quality and offer a similar experience to all participants. They want a balance between flexibility and quality. Other emerging areas for consideration include:

- Quality IAG is critical. All participants need to be fully aware of course expectations, the level at which training is pitched, realistic outcomes and likely salaries, as well as 'what next'. This would reduce ambiguity and manage participant expectations.
- High-quality employer–provider relationships underpin the design and delivery of Skills Bootcamps. However, many successful relationships predate Skills Bootcamps, showing that successful employer–provider partnerships take time to develop. Opportunities to embed learning help participants to retain skills and knowledge and 'see' their route into employment as achievable. Ensuring that opportunities are present can increase participant confidence and belief when entering junior roles.
- Clarity and consistency of a guaranteed interview. Improving communication regarding what is expected as well as ensuring that providers are offering appropriate job interviews would help participants to achieve positive employment outcomes.
- Participants have different expectations and needs from Skills Bootcamps. Delivery should be sensitive to circumstances such as the differential aspirations of the self-employed, employed, and unemployed to ensure that all participants are given the skills and confidence to achieve a positive outcome.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

The UK Government's introduction of Skills Bootcamps forms part of the economic strategy to achieve economic growth, prosperity and a more equal society. Skills Bootcamps represent free, flexible training courses that last up to 16 weeks for adults aged over 19 in England who are either in work or recently unemployed. The aim of Skills Bootcamps is to give participants the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills and fast-track them to an interview with an employer.

The guaranteed interview is a core component of the Skills Bootcamp offer. It is required in supplier contracts that learners should be offered a job interview with an employer where relevant<sup>4</sup>. That interview must be for a role which aligns with the skills acquired through the successful completion of the Skills Bootcamp. Providers may offer more than one interview to a participant, with evidence of this offer provided to DfE. If this evidence cannot be provided the provider will not receive payment at milestone 2.<sup>5</sup>

The six areas of the economy in which Skills Bootcamps are delivered are those with identified skills shortages. Skills Bootcamps in Digital and HGV Driving were the main focus of Wave 2; more Skills Bootcamps in Green, Engineering, Construction, and Technical skills form part of Wave 3. Waves refer to the periods of planned delivery. This report considers Wave 2 delivery, which began in the financial year of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. Some Skills Bootcamps may continue to be delivered into the next financial year, alongside Wave 3 (1<sup>st</sup> April 2022–31<sup>st</sup> March 2023). In practice, the reality of implementing and delivering Skills Bootcamps has meant that delivery has spanned several financial years to date. This report covers the implementation and delivery of Wave 2 of the programme.

### About the evaluation

The Department for Education (DfE) commissioned CFE Research to deliver a process evaluation of Wave 2 of Skills Bootcamps. The process evaluation considers whether Skills Bootcamps effectively support people in accessing better jobs, increased wages, and improved productivity.

The evaluation uses mixed methods to capture insights into the delivery and self-reported impact of Skills Bootcamps from the perspective of participants, providers and employers. This allows all stakeholders to share their experiences of Skills Bootcamps,

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<sup>4</sup> Guaranteed interviews are not applicable for self-employed or co-funded participants.

<sup>5</sup> For Wave 2 delivery this process is assured by checks on a random sample of evidence. Where the checks showed that that the interview was not appropriate or had not taken place, these funds were either taken out of the payment or recovered from the provider.

offering a holistic understanding of the policy's benefits, impacts, and potential areas for improvement that are required.

This report focuses on the implementation of Skills Bootcamps, mostly for participants who started their training before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. Whilst this report considers some of the immediate self-reported outcomes and impacts, the primary focus is on how Skills Bootcamps have been designed and delivered, as well as how this has been received by participants. From this, elements that constitute a 'good' Skills Bootcamp can be identified. This report also presents an overview of applicants to and participants in Skills Bootcamps and, for participants, provides demographic information on their status at the start of their training. This will allow future completion and outcome reports to show any changes that can be attributed to participation in Skills Bootcamps.

## Methodology

This process evaluation uses a variety of methods to explore different experiences of delivery of and participation in Skills Bootcamps. Primary research methods with participants, employers and providers have been combined with an analysis of existing management information to understand who is engaging with Skills Bootcamps, their motivations and outcomes that have occurred because of their engagement. The combination of methods used in this process evaluation is presented below.

### Stage 1: Management information analysis, conducted March–September 2022

- The analysis covers management information received about applicants and those who started a Skills Bootcamp between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.
- The analysis explored differences in the demographics of those starting a Skills Bootcamp, their prior education level and their employment status.
- Management information was linked to Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) data to conduct more detailed socio-economic analysis of Skills Bootcamp starts.

### Stage 2: Implementation survey (Wave 2), conducted April–July 2022

- An implementation survey was disseminated to a sample of 7,061 people listed in the management information. These people all had a valid Skills Bootcamp start date of between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 and all gave prior consent to participate in research. 1,680 usable responses were received and 941 provided further consent for follow-up research.
- An employer implementation survey was disseminated to 365 employers engaged with Skills Bootcamps. 8% response rate resulting in 30 usable responses.

- Providers were sent proforma to complete to provide information about the employers they work with to support employer data matching and sectoral analysis.

### **Stage 3: Qualitative Interviews and Focus Groups, conducted May–July 2022**

- Twelve participant focus groups were conducted between May–July. Focus groups were split by Skills Bootcamp ‘type’: Digital (x7), HGV (x3) and Construction/Green (x2).
- Focus groups attendees included participants with successful or unsuccessful outcomes, as well as those with a range of different employment statuses.
- Interviews were conducted with 30 employers, half of which engaged with Skills Bootcamps in Digital. There were 26 provider interviews and half of the interviews were conducted with providers that designed and delivered the training. Two-thirds of providers offered Skills Bootcamps in Digital, and a third HGV.

The participant survey data are unweighted, primarily because the distribution of responses by key demographics is similar to the profile of Skills Bootcamp starts.

More details on the methodology adopted can be found in Appendix 1.

## **About this report**

This report presents findings from the Wave 2 implementation phase of the evaluation. It provides an exploration of participants’ motivations for engaging with Skills Bootcamps, as well as providing a summary of the demographics and characteristics of applicants in comparison with participants. Data are also provided on employers’ and providers’ perspective on the implementation of Skills Bootcamps. The implementation phase of the fieldwork provides a snapshot of participant, employer and provider perspectives both prior to and during their training, which will be used in future completion and outcome reports to compare to findings from the completion survey and associated qualitative fieldwork<sup>6</sup>. Differences in survey findings between key demographic groups (especially employment status) are explored. Due to the small numbers of participants in all Skills Bootcamps except for those relating to Digital and HGV, differences between Skills Bootcamp types are categorised as ‘Digital’, ‘HGV’ or ‘Other’. Other refers to the remaining types of Skills Bootcamp: Construction, Engineering, Green, Green Engineering, and Technical.

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<sup>6</sup> Qualitative focus groups with participants were completed at various times on individual participant learner journeys. Some participants had finished their training, whilst others were still completing elements of their Skills Bootcamp.

Where possible, and when base numbers allow, differences have been tested for statistical significance and only those that are significant at the 5% level are reported in the commentary. All data tables are provided in the technical appendix alongside this report. Where figure proportions do not equal 100%, this is due to rounding.

The interviews and focus groups produced a significant volume of qualitative data that have been thematically coded. Where appropriate, the relative size is provided for themes to provide a sense of how widespread the finding is. Throughout the report, findings are informed by the management information data, survey data, interviews, and focus groups. In this report, a distinction is made throughout between Skills Bootcamp 'type' or 'category' (e.g. Digital/HGV/Green, etc.) and industrial sector (e.g. Agriculture, Banking, Manufacturing).

Chapter 2 reports on the baseline characteristics of the participants, providers and employers who have engaged with the Skills Bootcamps programme. Chapter 3 provides an exploration of the different motivating factors for participants, employers and providers who have engaged with Skills Bootcamps.

Chapter 4 explores the factors influencing the design and implementation of Skills Bootcamps that subsequently contribute to a successful Skills Bootcamp. The enablers and barriers that providers and employers have faced are also considered.

Chapter 5 presents initial findings from the qualitative fieldwork to highlight examples of outcomes and impacts that can be attributed to Skills Bootcamp participation. Chapter 6 summarises emerging conclusions.

## Chapter 2: Characteristics of those engaged in Skills Bootcamps

Drawing on analysis of management information and the survey findings, this chapter documents the characteristics of applicants, starts, providers, and employers who have engaged with Skills Bootcamps. The steps taken to process the data and the descriptive tables can be found in Appendix 1.

### Coverage of management information

Management information for each Skills Bootcamp was collated by providers through data templates. The totality of the management information includes data from multiple combined datasets of templates:

- 1) Wave 2 datasets. These include two main datasets, i.e. one for HGV (named HGV W2) and one for all other Wave 2 Skills Bootcamps (Wave 2).
- 2) Wave 1 extension data (W1 Ext). These are Skills Bootcamps that were an extension of Wave 1, delivered from April 2021 to bridge the gap until Wave 2 delivery was launched.
- 3) Cold Spots data (W2 Cold). DfE identified gaps in provision in England where targeted recruitment took place. This dataset covers Skills Bootcamps in these areas and comprised 171 unique records.
- 4) Recovered data (W2 Recovered). These cover 170 applicants and participants whose personal data (e.g. NINO, surname) required further exploration to recover.

Management information for Wave 1 extensions and W2 Cold Spots data were captured on older versions of the data templates and did not contain as much information as the other W2 datasets. This report contains data submitted to DfE up to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 regarding starts between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

The two Skills Bootcamp recipient types derived from the management information are defined as follows:

- **Applicants** – individuals who apply for a Skills Bootcamp. The data were processed to ensure that an individual applicant was only present once for each Skills Bootcamp. However, one person can apply for more than one Skills Bootcamp. Note that no date of application is included in the management information. The data in this report provide the numbers of total applicants present in the management information. The applicant metric is a count of applications not individuals. Not all applicants were successful in becoming ‘starts’.

- A valid **start** includes individual records with a start date between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. A start must also have a first payment date listed in the data to qualify. The payment date is when providers are paid for each delivery milestone (for payment milestone definitions, see Appendix 4).

## Units and data used in analysis

For the purposes of this report, analysis of management information covers applicants and starts only. Data on these audiences were collected between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 and 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022<sup>7</sup>. Limited management information exists for employers and providers who were engaged in Wave 2 Skills Bootcamps and is also analysed.

The sampling frame for the implementation survey was drawn from the management information. Individuals who had a recorded start date between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 and 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 and consented to research were contacted. The report uses ‘respondents’ when describing analysis of survey data.

Qualitative findings from participant focus groups are also presented. Focus group attendees were enrolled on a Skills Bootcamp and consented to be part of the fieldwork. Focus groups contained participants still undertaking their Skills Bootcamp as well as those who had completed. Where findings from these groups refer to completions and outcomes, these reflect only the views those who had completed. Further analysis of completions and outcomes will be presented in future reports.

## Skills Bootcamp applicants and starts

The subsequent sections describe the characteristics of Wave 2 Skills Bootcamp applicants and starts drawn from the management information and compares these profiles with the equivalent data collected in the implementation survey.

In total, the number of starts across all Skills Bootcamps for Wave 2 was 16,120<sup>8</sup>. Starts data in the following tables may not total 16,120 as missing data is excluded.

## Demographics

### Gender

Skills Bootcamp applicants were older (median age = 36) than starts (median age = 34: Appendix 2 provides a more detailed breakdown of age). There were large gender

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<sup>7</sup> These dates reflect the time between the start of Wave 1 delivery and the point at which CFE Research received data from DfE.

<sup>8</sup> Official Starts [Report](#)

differences. Men composed the majority of applicants and starts. Women represented proportionately fewer applicants than starts, which suggests that they were more successful than men in their applications (Table 1). The survey sample has a slightly lower proportion of females when compared with starts.

**Table 1: Gender of applicants and starts**

Gender	All applicants	Starts	Survey
Male	79%	69%	73%
Female	21%	31%	27%
Other	<1%	<1%	<1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>53,835</b>	<b>15,331</b>	<b>1,625</b>

Source: Management information excluding no gender given / prefer not to say; participant implementation survey

Wave 2 Skills Bootcamps effectively recruited women into digital training and employment opportunities. Estimating the proportion of women working in digital occupations is complex because digital occupations are present across the whole of England’s economic sectors. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) analysed digital employment across sectors and found that the female digital workforce composed 29% of all UK employees.<sup>9</sup> More than two in five starts on Skills Bootcamps in Digital starts (44%) were female, which suggests some success in recruiting women relative to the gender composition of the digital workforce reported by the DCMS.

In contrast, few women applied for or started Skills Bootcamps in HGV Driving. The proportion of female HGV starts (8%) is similar to the proportion of female employees in skilled trades (8%) or female process, plan and machine operatives (6%) in the Transport and Communication SOC sector (Table 2). This is a useful sector for comparison although other industrial sectors will employ some HGV drivers directly. These figures suggest that more work is needed to overcome gender-based perceptions of HGV driving and how attractive driving careers are for women. See Appendix 2 for detail on applicants and starts by gender.

<sup>9</sup> Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (2022) DCMS Sector Economic Estimates: Employment Apr 2021 – Mar 2022. Estimate derived from Table 2 of the Digital sector workforce analysis spreadsheet. Accessed on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2023. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/dcms-sector-economic-estimates-employment-apr-2021-mar-2022>



**Table 2: Female workforce representation in the Transport & Communication sector (SIC Section I), October 2021 to September 2022**

Standard Occupational Classification SOC 2020	Males (n)	Females (n)	% Females
1. Managers and Senior Officials	218,000	83,800	28%
2. Professional Occupations	651,100	209,500	24%
3. Associate Prof & Tech Occupations	264,000	132,700	33%
4. Administrative & Secretarial Occupations	73,500	113,200	61%
5. Skilled Trades Occupations	72,900	6,000	8%
6. Personal Service Occupations	28,600	41,300	59%
7. Sales and Customer Service Occupations	40,600	38,300	49%
8. Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	493,900	33,300	6%
9. Elementary Occupations	225,400	80,300	26%

Source: Annual Population Survey via Nomis – Oct. 2021-Sept. 2022

### Disability

A slightly higher proportion of Skills Bootcamp starts (10%) had a disability or long-term health condition in comparison with applicants (7%; Appendix 2 provides a more detailed breakdown).

### Ethnicity

Just over half of applicants were White British, but there were fewer White British starts in comparison with applicants. There were a higher proportion of Black, Black British, Caribbean or African, and Asian or Asian British starts in comparison to applicants (Table 3).

**Table 3: Ethnicity of applicants and starts**

Ethnicity	All applicants	Starts	Survey
White British	50%	46%	46%
Any other white background	14%	11%	16%
Asian or Asian British	11%	14%	12%
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	12%	17%	14%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	4%	4%	5%
Other ethnic group	6%	5%	4%
Prefer not to say	3%	4%	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>51,876</b>	<b>15,370</b>	<b>1,630</b>

Source: Management information excluding unknown; participant implementation survey

Skills Bootcamps in Digital attracted individuals from a diverse range of backgrounds in comparison to the overall figures for ethnicity: one third of starts (34%) were classed as White British in the management information (See Appendix 2 for more detail). The composition of other ethnicities starting a Skills Bootcamp in Digital were:

- Black, Black British, Caribbean or African – 20%
- Asian or Asian British – 17%
- Any other white background – 13%
- The remaining ethnicities (16%) include any other white background, mixed ethnic groups, other, or 'prefer not to say'.

By comparison, the last census (2021) found that seven in ten (71%) of the working population in England were White British.<sup>10</sup> The proportion of White British starts for Skills Bootcamps in HGV Driving was 68% and double that of White British starts in Digital. Even so, the HGV Driving proportion was still lower than that found for England as a whole.

### Region and disadvantage

One fifth of learners who started a Skills Bootcamp lived in London (21%) and a further one fifth (20%) lived in the North West (Table 4). Based on 2021 regional population estimates of people aged 16 to 64, more people applied or started a Skills Bootcamp in both these regions, especially in the North West. Many Skills Bootcamp courses were

<sup>10</sup> UK Government (2023) Ethnic group by age and sex in England and Wales. Analysis for England only; ages 16 to 65. ONS Dataset. Accessed on 3rd March 2023: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/ethnicity/datasets/ethnicgroupbyageandsexinenglandandwales>

delivered online which means that the distribution of starts by location does not necessarily align with the location of delivery and delivery provider.

There were far fewer Skills Bootcamp starts in the North East (5%), the South West (7%) and the East of England (7%). The population in the North East is markedly lower than anywhere else in England, but fewer people than might be expected applied for or started a Skills Bootcamp in the South West and the East of England based on the adult population living in these regions.

**Table 4: Applications and starts by Government Office Region**

Government Office Region	All applicants	Starts	Population aged 16 to 64
London	18%	21%	17%
North West	21%	20%	13%
West Midlands	12%	11%	10%
East Midlands	10%	11%	9%
South East	11%	10%	16%
Yorkshire and The Humber	10%	8%	10%
East of England	8%	7%	11%
South West	7%	7%	10%
North East	4%	5%	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48,330</b>	<b>12,616<sup>11</sup></b>	<b>35,600,300</b>

Sources: Management information excluding unknown; UK population estimates via Nomis – 2021

Table 5 shows that those who apply and start a Skills Bootcamp are more likely to live in more disadvantaged areas as measured by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). One in six applicants (17%) and starts (16%) lived in the most disadvantaged ten percent of postcodes in England. Conversely, one in 20 applications came from the least disadvantaged tenth of places in England. If recruitment was distributed evenly across England, around 10% of Skills Bootcamp applicants and starts would be found in each IMD decile.

<sup>11</sup> This number is lower than the reported total starts because some management information records do not have an accurate postcode, or no postcode listed.

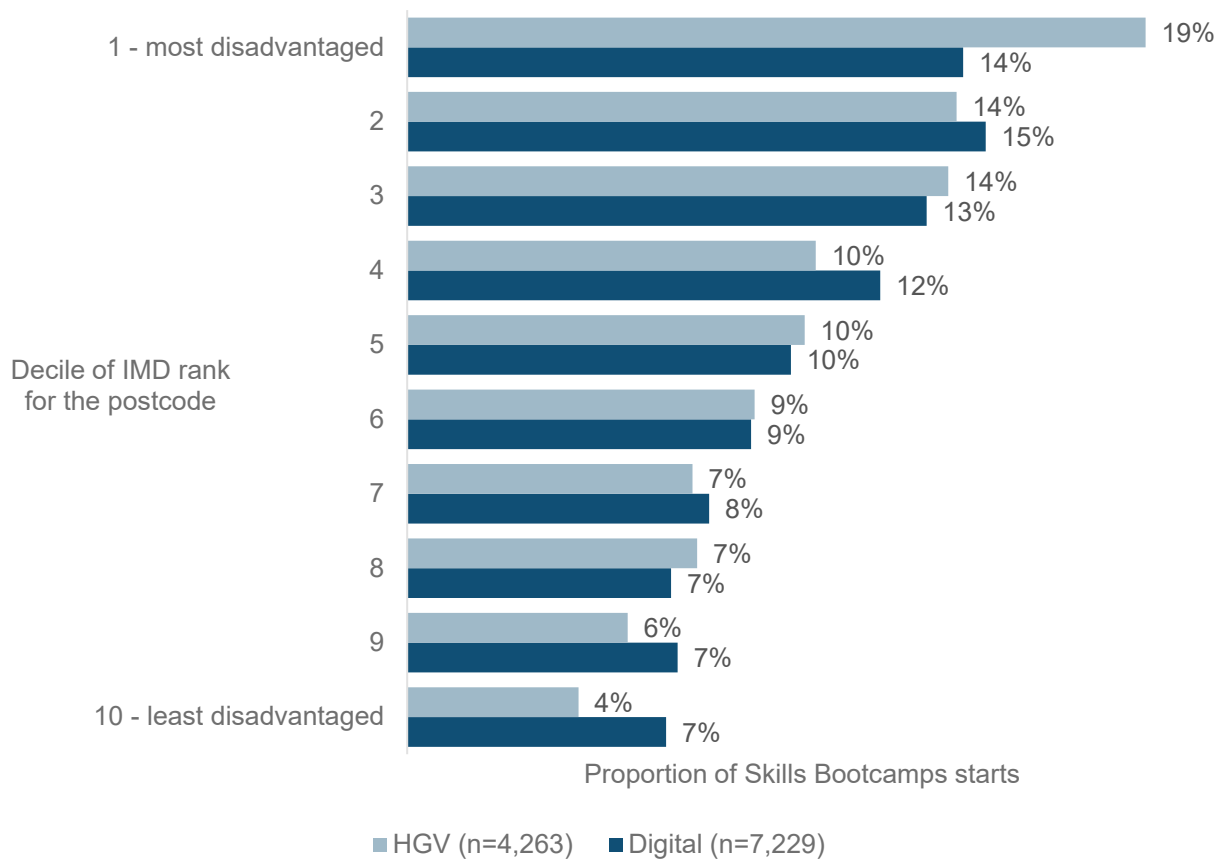
**Table 5: Applications and starts by IMD decile**

IMD Decile	All applicants	Starts
1 - Most disadvantaged	17%	16%
2	15%	14%
3	13%	13%
4	11%	11%
5	10%	10%
6	9%	9%
7	7%	8%
8	7%	7%
9	6%	6%
10 - Least disadvantaged	5%	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48,330</b>	<b>12,616</b>

Source: Management information excluding unknown

Furthermore, the differences between applications and starts for Skills Bootcamps in Digital and HGV Driving was only marked at the extremes (See Appendix 2 for a full breakdown). One fifth (19%) of HGV starts were people living in the tenth most disadvantaged postcodes compared to 14% of Digital starts. Conversely, the difference between HGV and Digital starts in the least disadvantaged postcodes was 4% and 7% respectively. The general trend of higher applications and starts from disadvantaged areas held for both Skills Bootcamps in Digital and HGV Driving (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Proportion of Skills Bootcamps in HGV Driving and Digital starts by IMD decile**



Sources: Management information excluding unknown

### Household characteristics

Just over one quarter of Skills Bootcamp starts claimed Universal Credit (UC) (28%, n = 12,830) and this was the same as the proportion for applicants. There are slightly greater differences when comparing course categories, with a smaller proportion of starts in Skills Bootcamps in Digital claiming UC (26%) in comparison with HGV starts (30%). See Appendix 2 for a more detailed breakdown.

Approximately one quarter of applicants and starts (mean proportion = 23%) had caring responsibilities for children or other adults. Slightly more Skills Bootcamp starts (25%) had no caring responsibilities in comparison with applicants (21%) (Table 6).

**Table 6: Caring responsibility for applicants and starts**

Caring responsibilities	All applicants	Starts	Survey
Yes - caring for children	23%	23%	24%
Yes - caring for adults	2%	2%	3%
Yes - caring for children and adults	2%	1%	1%
No caring responsibilities	73%	75%	72%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>50,015</b>	<b>15,214</b>	<b>1,633</b>

Source: Management information excluding unknown; participant implementation survey

## Employment profile of Skills Bootcamp applicants and starts

### Employment status

The management information shows that approximately two fifths of applicants (39%) and starts (37%) were in full-time employment prior to applying for, or starting, their Skills Bootcamp. Comparatively, nearly one in six applicants and starts (both 14%) were in part-time employment. One in five applicants (21%) were unemployed for less than 12 months in comparison to nearly one quarter (23%) of those starting a Skills Bootcamp (see Appendix 2 for a detailed breakdown of employment status).

Of the number of starts who were unemployed for less than 12 months, 48% were claiming UC.<sup>12</sup> Changes to the employment status of those who have completed a Skills Bootcamp will be a focus of the completion and outcome report to follow, rather than this report.

Some Skills Bootcamps were co-funded which means that the participant's employer paid a 30% contribution to training at Wave 2. In total, 825 starts were known to be co-funded, representing 5% of the total number of starts.

### Contract type prior to Skills Bootcamp

Over half (52%) of those surveyed were employed when they began their Skills Bootcamp. One in ten (10%) were self-employed and the remainder (38%) were not in employment.<sup>13</sup> This distribution is within a percentage point of the distribution of starts in the management information.

HGV survey respondents were more likely to be in full- or part-time employment prior to starting their training (63%) in comparison with Digital (44%) respondents. Conversely,

<sup>12</sup> This cross-break analysis excludes all starts where no data for the receipt of Universal Credit were provided.

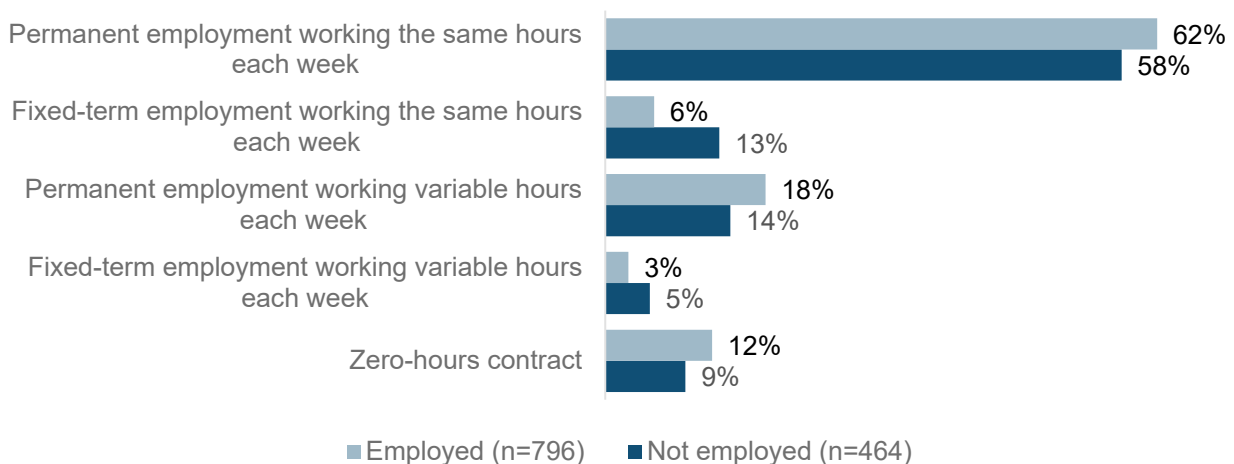
<sup>13</sup> As a reminder, not all percentages amount to 100% due to rounding errors.

Digital respondents were more likely to be out of employment (47%) than were HGV (25%) respondents. There were no differences in the proportion of those in self-employment prior to their training by Skills Bootcamp type.

All respondents except for the self-employed were asked for more details regarding their current or last employment contract. Figure 2 shows that more than half were permanently employed and working the same hours each week.

Fixed-term employment (where individuals worked the same hours each week) prior to participating in a Skills Bootcamp was nearly twice as common for those out of employment reporting on the last job that they had (11%) in comparison to those in employment when they enrolled in a Skills Bootcamp (6%). Whilst the reason for this difference is unknown, it is possible that the fixed-term contracts of those out of employment when they applied for a Skills Bootcamp could have ended and the training provided a timely opportunity to upskill ahead of securing further employment. Having more time available to complete training could be a further reason for the difference.

**Figure 2: Most recent employment contracts of survey respondents dependent on employment status prior to a Skills Bootcamp**



Source: Participant implementation survey

The contract status differed by Skills Bootcamp category. HGV survey respondents were more likely than Digital respondents to currently be in ‘permanent employment working variable hours each week’ (HGV: 20% vs. Digital: 11%) or have a ‘self-employed’ contract (HGV: 6% vs. Digital: 3%). Digital respondents were more likely than HGV respondents to have ‘fixed-term employment working the same hours each week’ (Digital: 12% vs. HGV: 4%) or have ‘zero-hours contracts’ (Digital: 12% vs. HGV: 7%).

## Working hours prior to Skills Bootcamp

Table 7 shows that respondents out of employment worked significantly longer hours ( $p < .01$ ) in the last job that they held in comparison to those in employment prior to their Skills Bootcamp. The employed cohort also worked one hour less on average in comparison with comparative data for the UK collected by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) from April to June 2022.<sup>14</sup> This information is important because it will be used to compare to self-reported working hours as part of the completion and outcome report, to indicate whether have been any changes as a result of their participation.

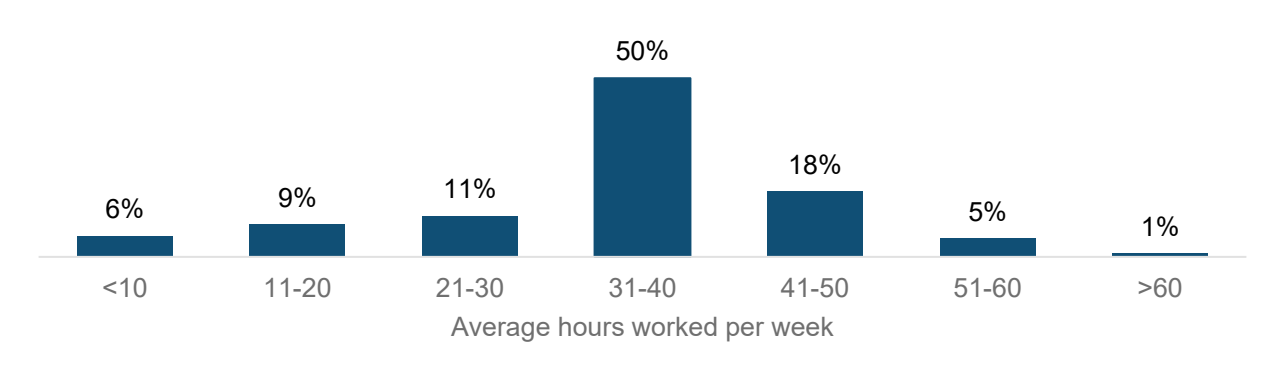
**Table 7: Mean and median working hours by pre-Skills Bootcamp employment status**

Status before starting Skills Bootcamp	Base	Mean working hours per week	Median working hours per week
In employment	845	35.6	38.0
Self-employed	170	34.7	37.0
Not in employment	623	37.1	40.0
<b>All</b>	<b>1,638</b>	<b>36.0</b>	<b>39.0</b>

Source: Participant implementation survey

Three quarters (74%) of survey respondents worked full-time hours in the job that they last held before starting a Skills Bootcamp. Figure 3 shows that half (50%) worked 31–40 hours per week and another 24% worked more than 40 hours. One quarter (26%) were part-time, working 30 hours or less in the job held prior to starting a Skills Bootcamp.

**Figure 3: Distribution of hours worked by respondents prior to starting their Skills Bootcamp training**



Source: Participant implementation survey (n=1,476)

<sup>14</sup> ONS' data indicate that the average actual weekly working hours for full-time workers (seasonally adjusted) is 36.4 hours per week (April–June 2022).



## Responsibilities held in most recent employment

Prior to starting their Skills Bootcamp, respondents tended to hold general responsibilities. These included prioritising their own workload (61% across the whole sample) and problem solving (34%). Responsibilities related to higher-level management and leadership skills, including managing budgets (9%), were less common. These responsibilities are depicted in Figure 4.

Within the survey, employed respondents were asked to report on their current job and associated responsibilities. Unemployed respondents were asked to reflect on their most recent job prior to completing their Skills Bootcamp, with any differences presented in Figure 4.

**Figure 4: Differences in responsibility level for job prior to starting Skills Bootcamp between employed and not employed respondents**



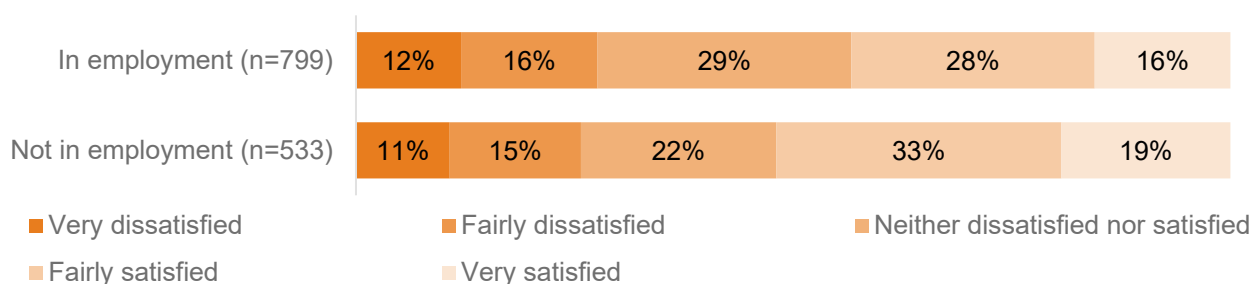
Source: Participant implementation survey

When reflecting on their most recent job, those unemployed prior to starting their Skills Bootcamp held more responsibilities than did those who were currently employed. More than one fifth of employed respondents (22%) stated that they did not hold any responsibilities prior to starting their training.

Respondents' satisfaction with the work responsibilities that they held prior to a Skills Bootcamp was varied. Almost half (47%) were satisfied<sup>15</sup> with their level of work responsibilities, whereas one quarter (27%) were dissatisfied.<sup>16</sup>

Perceptions of job satisfaction significantly differed by respondents' employment status, with over half of those not in employment (52%) prior to the Skills Bootcamp being satisfied with their levels of responsibility in their last job in comparison with 43% of those in employment<sup>17</sup> (Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Breakdown of satisfaction with work responsibilities in work prior to a Skills Bootcamp by employment status**



Source: Participant implementation survey (n=1,332)

Satisfaction with work responsibilities also differed between those undertaking Skills Bootcamps in Digital and HGV. Digital respondents were more dissatisfied (Digital: 32% vs. HGV: 20%) with the level of work responsibilities held in their last job. Conversely, more HGV respondents stated that they were very satisfied regarding the same measure (Digital: 13% vs. HGV: 22%).

### Occupation characteristics

The three largest occupation groups (SOC 2020) for applicants and starts were 'skilled trades occupations' (21% for applicants; 19% for starts), 'professional occupations' (20% for applicants; 19% for starts) and 'sales and customer service occupations' (19% for applicants; 18% for starts). Associate professional and technical occupations composed the smallest occupation group (4% for applicants; 6% for starts).

The distributions by occupational group for applicants and starts were broadly comparable (Table 8). In comparison, the survey sample has slightly more respondents working in managerial and professional occupations and fewer in elementary occupations.

<sup>15</sup> The proportion of those choosing 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied'.

<sup>16</sup> The proportion of those choosing 'very dissatisfied' or 'fairly dissatisfied'.

<sup>17</sup> The proportion of those choosing 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied'.

**Table 8: Occupation group (SOC 2020) for applicants and starts (most recent occupation for those who were not currently employed)**

Occupation Group (SOC 2020)	All applicants	Starts	Survey
Managers, Directors and Senior Officials	6%	6%	8%
Professional Occupations	19%	20%	23%
Associate Professional and Technical Occupations	4%	6%	3%
Administrative and Secretarial Occupations	8%	10%	9%
Skilled Trades Occupations	21%	19%	19%
Caring, Leisure and Other Service Occupations	9%	10%	10%
Sales and Customer Service Occupations	19%	18%	17%
Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	7%	6%	6%
Elementary Occupations	8%	6%	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>33,285</b>	<b>14,221</b>	<b>1,559</b>

Source: Management information (Wave 2 excl. Cold Spots data & Wave 1 Extensions) excluding unknown; participant implementation survey

### Sectoral characteristics for current/most recent occupations

As described later in the section on employer management information analysis, an analysis by industrial sector for starts is difficult because of the way in which industrial sectors are coded in the management information. To summarise, most retail and service industries are collated under an 'other services' category in the management information. The comparable grouping of industrial sectors in the ONS's Standard Industrial Classification accounts for most of the English economy.

More than one third of starts (38%) were classed as 'other services' (Table 9). The volume of Skills Bootcamps in HGV Driving also explains why one quarter of starts (26%) were classed under Transport / communication, which is the next-largest group. The other largest sector was Public Admin / education / health.

**Table 9: Industrial sector in which applicants and starts worked prior to starting a Skills Bootcamp**

Management information groups	All applicants	Starts	Survey
Agriculture / forestry / fishing	1%	1%	1%
Banking / finance	3%	4%	4%
Construction	6%	6%	6%
Distribution / hotels / restaurants	2%	1%	2%
Energy / water	2%	2%	2%
Manufacturing	5%	6%	7%
Other service activities	36%	38%	35%
Public admin / education / health	15%	16%	16%
Transport / communication	30%	26%	27%
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,695</b>	<b>12,663</b>	<b>1,587</b>

Source: Management information (Wave 2 excl. Cold Spots data & Wave 1 Extensions) excluding unknown; participant implementation survey

### Current highest level of qualification

The distribution of applicants and starts differed by educational level, especially at levels 1, 6 and 7 (see Table 10 for data and descriptions regarding educational level equivalents).<sup>18</sup> Directly comparable data by individual educational level for England are unavailable; however, the Annual Population Survey does collect data for collapsed levels, which reports each year. This shows that nearly half (49%) of the English population aged 20 to 64 held at least a level 4 qualification in 2021 (where the level was known). By this measure, slightly more starts (55%) were from people with qualifications at level 4 or above in comparison to the working age population in England aged 20 to 64.

There were a higher proportion of level 1 applicants (12%) in comparison with starts (6%). In contrast, there were a higher proportion of level 6 and level 7 starts (level 6: 29%; level 7: 14%) in comparison with applicants (level 6: 22%; level 7: 9%). This suggests that those with a higher educational level more successfully converted to being a Skills Bootcamp start in comparison with those with a lower educational level. The survey respondents represented slightly more level 7 and 8 qualifications overall.

<sup>18</sup> For a full breakdown of different educational levels, see <https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean/list-of-qualification-levels>

**Table 10: Highest educational level for applicants and starts**

Highest educational level	All applicants	Starts	Survey
Entry level	6%	4%	4%
Level 1 – GCSE grades 1–3 or D–G equivalent	12%	6%	6%
Level 2 – GCSE grades 4–8 or A*–C equivalent	18%	15%	16%
Level 3 – AS/A Level, T Level equivalent	20%	20%	19%
Level 4 – Higher National Certificate, higher apprenticeship equivalent	6%	5%	4%
Level 5 – Higher National Diploma, foundation degree equivalent	7%	6%	5%
Level 6 – Degree apprenticeship, honours degree equivalent	22%	29%	28%
Level 7 – Master’s degree or postgraduate certificate equivalent	9%	14%	16%
Level 8 – Doctorate or equivalent	1%	1%	2%
Total Level 2 or lower	36%	25%	27%
Total Level 4 or higher	44%	55%	55%
<b>Total</b>	<b>43,044</b>	<b>14,147</b>	<b>1,472</b>

Source: Management information excluding unknown; participant implementation survey

## Chapter 3: Motivations for engaging in Skills Bootcamps

This chapter draws on findings from primary fieldwork to consider the main drivers of and motivations for engaging in Skills Bootcamps from the perspective of participants, employers and providers.

### Respondent perceptions of their prior job and skill levels

To understand the potential drivers of engaging in the training, the participant implementation survey explored perceptions of respondents' skill levels in their current or previous employment prior to starting the Skills Bootcamp. The subsequent completion and outcome report will assess changes in respondents' perceptions of skill levels in the completion survey to demonstrate self-reported impact.

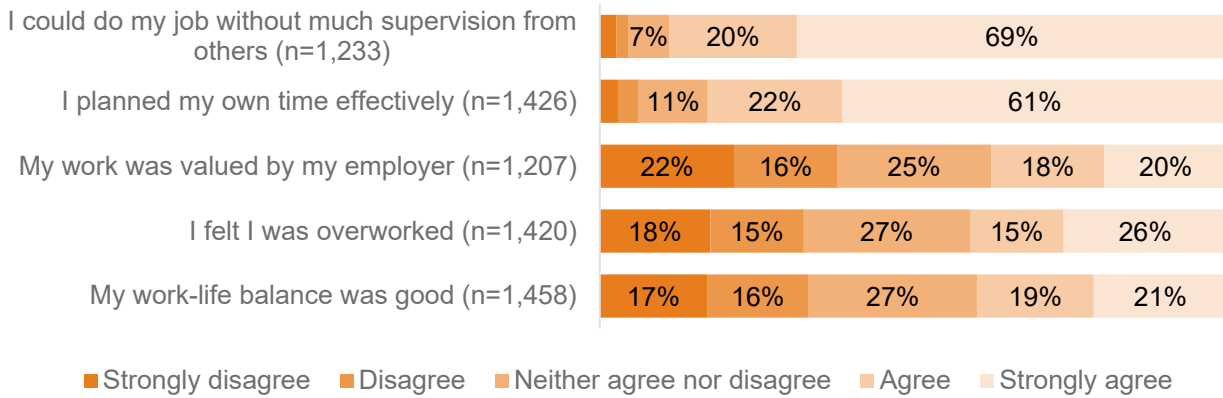
Over four in five survey respondents (85%) stated that they had all the skills that they needed to perform in their current or most recent job prior to starting their Skills Bootcamp. A higher proportion of those who were not in employment prior to training (89%) stated that they had the skills needed to do their last job in comparison to employed (83%) and self-employed respondents (80%). Subsequent sections show respondents were motivated to start a Skills Bootcamp by the opportunity for a new career, often in a new sector, that required new skills.

Overall, nearly nine in ten respondents (89%) agreed<sup>19</sup> that they could do their job without supervision from others and over four in five (83%) agreed that they could plan their time effectively (Figure 6). Two in five respondents agreed that they had a good work–life balance (40%) and that their work was valued by their employer (38%). However, the same proportion agreed that they were overworked (41%).

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<sup>19</sup> 'Agreed' refers to combined 'agree' and 'strongly agree' perceptions from survey items.

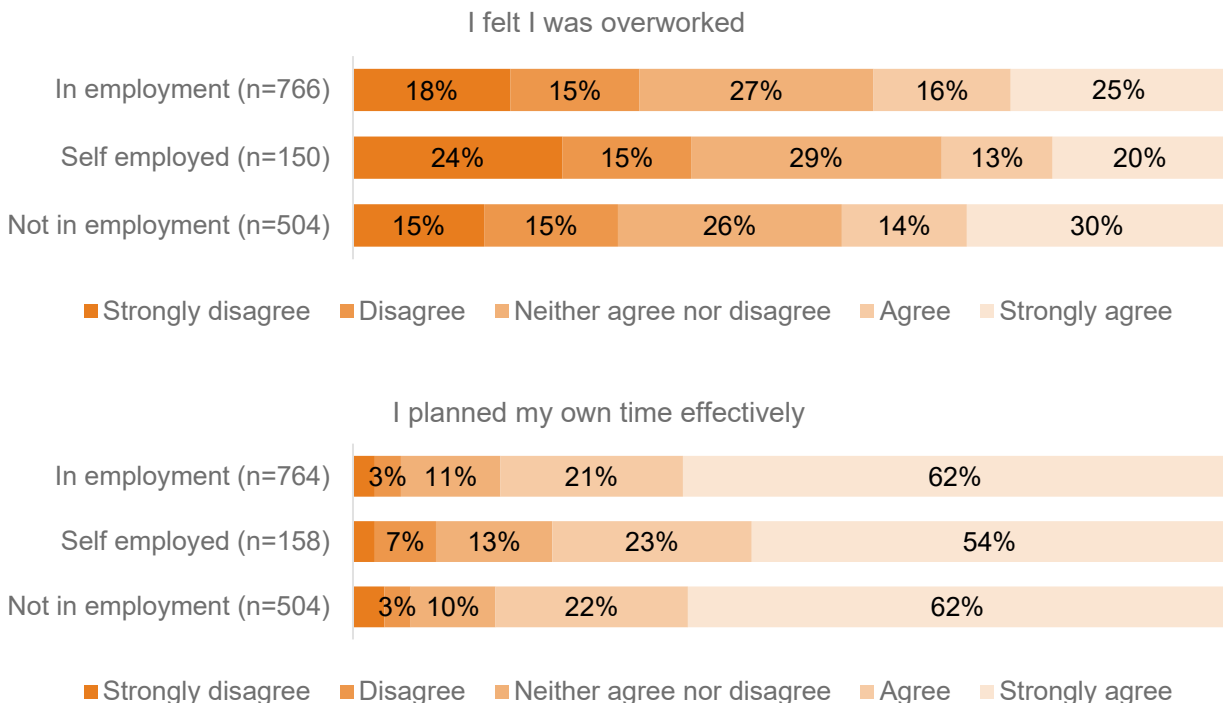
**Figure 6: Survey response proportions to job satisfaction measures**



Source: Participant implementation survey

A smaller proportion of self-employed respondents agreed that they were overworked and that they could plan their own time effectively in comparison with other respondents. Those not in employment prior to the Skills Bootcamp were more likely to agree that they were overworked in a previous role in comparison with others (Figure 7).

**Figure 7: Proportion of respondents' perspectives on job satisfaction measures by employment status**

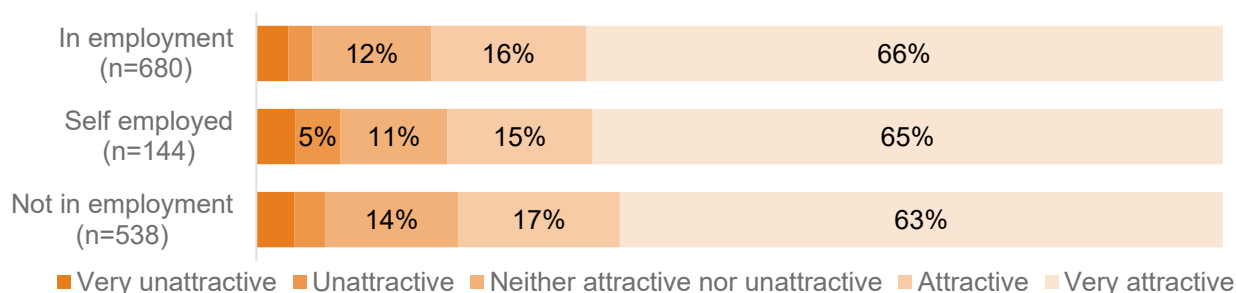


Source: Participant implementation survey

## Guaranteed interviews and securing a new job and/or career progression

The guarantee of an interview encouraged some respondents to apply for a Skills Bootcamp (Figure 8). Over four in five (81%) survey respondents identified that the guarantee of an interview with an employer on completion of a Skills Bootcamp was attractive or very attractive when they applied; only seven percent found this element of the Skills Bootcamp to be unattractive. More respondents enrolled in a Skills Bootcamp in Digital found the interview element to be unattractive (8%) in comparison with HGV respondents (5%). Guaranteed interviews were not applicable to co-funded or self-employed participants. It is not possible to further disaggregate survey findings based on whether the respondent was co-funded regarding their training. Only 23 survey respondents identified as being co-funded thus the base is too low for this analysis to be included in this report.

**Figure 8: Attraction of the guaranteed interview to respondents by employment status**

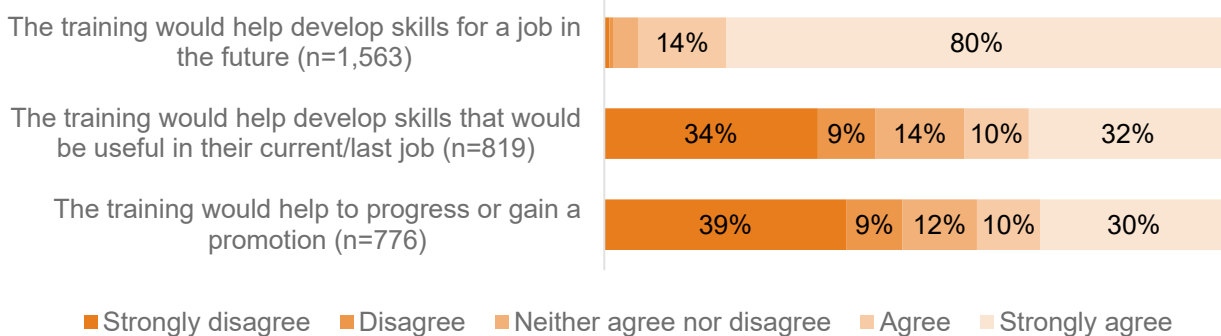


Source: Participant implementation survey

Obtaining a new job or securing a change in career motivated many respondents to undertake a Skills Bootcamp (Figure 9): 94% agreed that this was a reason why they applied. In contrast, engaging in Skills Bootcamps to help progress or gain promotion in their current job (40% agreed) and engaging to help them to learn skills for an existing job (42% agreed) were less important factors to the respondents. This highlights the perceived importance of Skills Bootcamps in helping individuals train for a new job role. Perceptions by employment status did not differ. One half of survey respondents enrolled in a Skills Bootcamp in Digital (49%) disagreed that the training would help them to learn skills for the job that they had prior to starting their training. This proportion is greater than those enrolled in a Skills Bootcamp in HGV Driving (41%).



**Figure 9: How the Skills Bootcamp met survey respondents' skills development needs**



Source: Participant implementation survey

The above survey findings were further reflected in the focus groups where participant attendees emphasised that the prospect of securing a new job often in a different sector, was the main driver for their application to undertake a Skills Bootcamp. A common theme was a desire to seek employment in a different industrial sector in which they believed that better job opportunities existed:

I was out of the job market for eight years due to relocation and childcare, so I decided I didn't want to go back to the administrative and financial roles I was doing when I was living in [another European country]. I thought I would embark on this [Skills Bootcamp] journey and try something new. The promise was great — new skills, job interviews, help with your CV, help with interview skills. So, I thought, "That's great. I want to be on it." *Participant - Digital*

HGV participant focus group attendees stated that they were aware of driver shortages through media reports. These participants were keen to capitalise on this opportunity, believing that they would secure an HGV job and that 'the money would be great'.

Skills Bootcamps in Digital offered participants the opportunity 'to get experience and put [them] in a better position for applying to trainee roles'. A theme from the Digital focus groups was that a Skills Bootcamp could offer a higher quality of learning in comparison with past experiences of teaching oneself. Participants felt that a Skills Bootcamp in Digital would produce faster improvement in their skills and knowledge in comparison with self-instruction.

Several Digital participant focus group attendees stated that feedback from unsuccessful interviews prior to a Skills Bootcamp concentrated on a lack of experience in specific digital techniques or concepts (e.g. the cloud, third line, coding). They hoped that the Skills Bootcamps would fill these gaps.

Unemployed participants hoped that a Skills Bootcamp would help them to secure a new role and re-enter the job market. Many had lost their previous jobs due to COVID-19 and/or relocation and, as such, were keen to earn money. As one unemployed HGV participant stated, 'I did the Bootcamp for a better life, a better job'. For other previously unemployed participants, a Skills Bootcamp offered an opportunity to retrain and secure a more interesting career in a different sector:

I was out of work and I was finding it difficult to get back into work. I was working as a project manager but I didn't want to go back into it. I came across the advert in the middle of a game on my phone. I thought, "That looks really cool. I'll give that a go." *Participant – Digital*

## Upskilling and gaining new knowledge

Evidence from participant focus groups shows that nearly one third of attendees were motivated by the opportunity to learn new skills and gain knowledge to secure a new job or career progression. Many HGV participants were motivated by the chance to acquire lifelong skills:

I thought, "This is an ideal opportunity to get a skill". It was a great chance to get a skill that is going to be there for life. *Participant – HGV*

For participant focus group attendees who were employed whilst undertaking a Skills Bootcamp course, their main motivation was to upskill and improve their performance in their current role at work. As a result, they would be learning new skills to be able to take back and apply to their employment, 'adding another string to [their] bow' (Participant – Digital).

Self-employed participants cited the importance of learning new skills that they could apply to their own business. For example, self-employed participants in Skills Bootcamps in Digital valued learning about marketing to enable them to apply such learning to their own social media or marketing activities:

I wanted to do a Skills Bootcamp because I'd been running my business for just over a year and I have ad hoc marketing knowledge here and there, but I don't have a background in it. I applied to get some knowledge behind those skills. I knew how to use Facebook and Instagram and Google Ads, but I didn't necessarily have a strategy. [The Skills Bootcamp] was just to get that grounding and be

able to make it into an effective strategy for my business. *Participant*  
– *Digital (self-employed)*

The survey asked respondents whether there was sufficient time during the Skills Bootcamp to learn everything that they needed to know — three in five agreed or strongly agreed (60%) that there was. One in five disagreed or strongly disagreed (21%) that there was sufficient time to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge, and this view did not differ by employment status. However, there were marked differences in respondent perceptions depending on the Skills Bootcamp that they were completing. A low proportion of HGV respondents (7%) disagreed that there was sufficient time to acquire the relevant skills in comparison to Digital respondents (31%). This suggests that there was insufficient time for some participants to cover the content or theory within Skills Bootcamps in Digital. Skills Bootcamps in Software Development/Coding (35%) and Cyber Security (40%) saw the highest proportion of respondents disagree that they had sufficient time to acquire their skills.

These findings are reinforced by the qualitative focus group findings, as Digital participants commonly stated that those running their course ‘wanted to push way too much [learning] in way too little time’. It may be beneficial to review the amount of content included in the training schedule for future Skills Bootcamps in Digital to ensure that participants have sufficient time to acquire the requisite skills and knowledge.

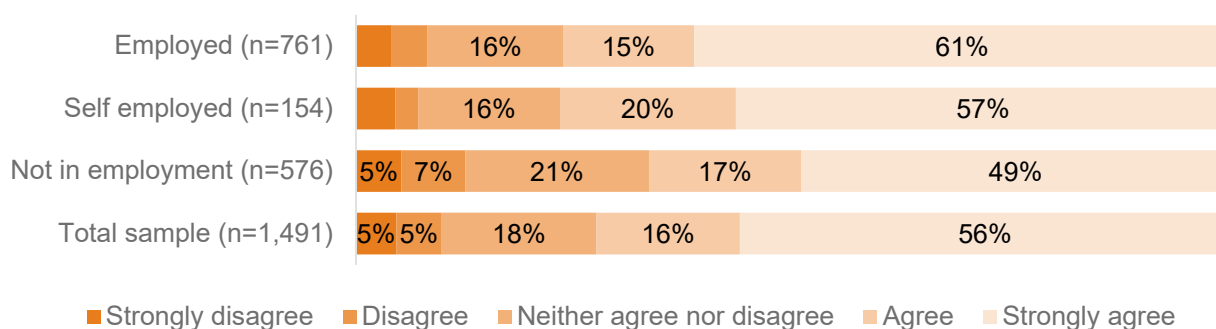
Some viewed Skills Bootcamps as a springboard to access further, higher-level training. Three quarters (75%) of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Skills Bootcamps would help them to progress to higher-level training. Significantly fewer of the self-employed cited this reason (64%) when compared with those in employment (77%) or those unemployed prior to their Skills Bootcamp (76%). Over four in five respondents in Data Technician (84%) and Cyber Security (81%) Skills Bootcamps believed that their training would lead to higher-level training in comparison with under three quarters of Digital Marketing (64%) respondents. This was not a central theme reflected in the participant focus groups, although one independent Digital training provider interviewee stated that most of their participants were aiming to undertake further and higher education (rather than employment) after completing their Skills Bootcamp.

The offer of unique training via Skills Bootcamps was a further reason to apply for some respondents — two thirds (67%) agreed or strongly agreed that Skills Bootcamps sounded different from other training that they could undertake. HGV respondents (71%) were more likely to agree that the training sounded different from other training that they could undertake in comparison with Digital respondents (64%). Views did not differ by employment status.

## Securing higher income

Nearly three quarters (73%) of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that completing the training would enable them to earn more money (Figure 10). This view was more prevalent amongst those employed prior to the Skills Bootcamp (77%) in comparison with those not in employment (66%). Perceptions of higher earning potential because of the Skills Bootcamp were greater among HGV respondents (81% agreed) in comparison with Digital respondents (67% agreed). In the participant focus groups, HGV attendees were particularly likely to think that a Skills Bootcamp would lead to higher income. These participants often referred to wider public awareness of the HGV driver shortage and the subsequent high salaries that were currently being offered in the sector.

**Figure 10: Proportion of survey respondents that agree that the Skills Bootcamp will mean that they could earn more money**



Source: Participant implementation survey

## Additional factors that motivated participants to apply for a Skills Bootcamp

### Advised to apply

Survey respondents gave a variety of other reasons for applying to undertake a Skills Bootcamp. Over one third (36%) stated that they were advised to apply, a view expressed more by HGV (44%) than Digital (29%) respondents. During the participant focus groups, several attendees had a Skills Bootcamp recommended to them by the Jobcentre or through the National Careers Service. A higher proportion of respondents claiming Universal Credit agreed that they were advised to apply for a Skills Bootcamp (41%, total n = 309) in comparison to others (34%, total n = 932).

## Offer of free training

The offer of free training via the Skills Bootcamp attracted nearly all (96%<sup>20</sup>) respondents to apply. Some participant focus group attendees who were unemployed prior to the Skills Bootcamp noted that they could not ordinarily afford vocational training. These participants believed that free training increased access to individuals from more diverse backgrounds, a view also held by providers and employers.

The normal process for something like this would cost a significant amount of money, and being given the opportunity to be involved and have that funded has given me a different direction for the future.

*Participant – HGV*

I spoke to students that have been like, “I’ve been waiting to do this course for seven years”. They’ve said they just gave up because they didn’t think they’d ever be able to afford it, and then, obviously, this opportunity has come around and they’ve been able to change their whole career. *Provider - Digital*

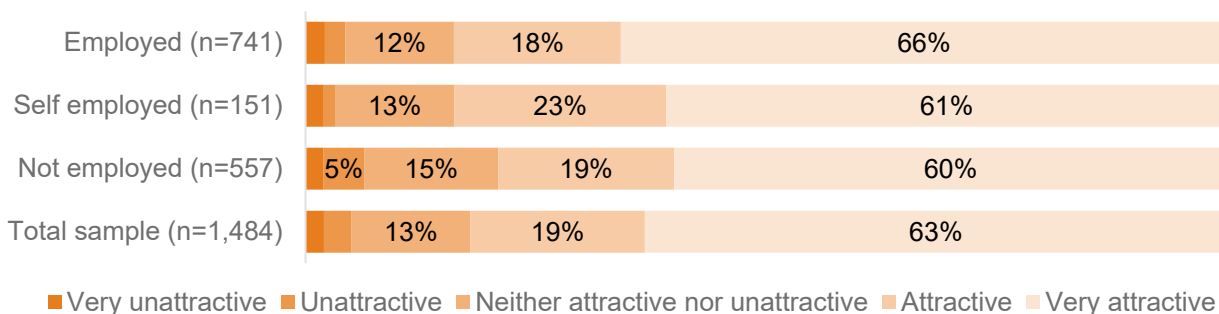
## Flexible training

A flexible training offer that enabled participants to fit around other commitments was a further factor that attracted survey respondents (Figure 11). Over eight in ten (82%) were attracted or very attracted to the flexibility afforded by Skills Bootcamps. HGV survey respondents (86%) were more likely to be attracted to the flexible training aspect of the training in comparison with Digital (79%) respondents. Higher proportions of employed (84%) and self-employed (84%) respondents felt that the flexible training was attractive in comparison to respondents out of employment prior to a Skills Bootcamp (79%).

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<sup>20</sup> Aggregate of ‘attracted’ and ‘very attracted’.

**Figure 11: Proportion of survey respondents that consider that the offer of flexible training was an attractive part of Skills Bootcamps**



Source: Participant implementation survey (n=1,484)

Participants focus group attendees also stated that they benefitted by fitting the training around family responsibilities or paid work:

[The flexibility] has been handy for me, so I can use the app when I’m offshore. When I’m not working, I can sit in my cabin and do the different sections. It’s been handy to do at my own pace. If there’s something I’m struggling with, I can take my own time learning that.  
*Participant – HGV*

[The advantage] of [being online] was that I could do it anywhere. I had chickenpox in the middle of my course, and I could still join the class and that was great. It was also a course of all women. All of us had childcare things that came up at one point or another and nobody minded when you had a kid in the background or were breastfeeding in class. That was great.  
*Participant – Digital (self-employed)*

Using online software enabled providers to increase their flexibility of the training that they offered, which was well received by many participants who could learn when they wanted to and reduce the travelling time required to attend training in person. This view aligns with provider decisions to develop a flexible training offer to increase access for participants:

We went for a part-time model for our Skills Bootcamp, and we did that very deliberately. We made the programme more accessible. We didn’t want to ruin that effect by then requiring people to do a full-time programme which, of course, would be unpaid [for the participant]. So the obvious thing was to do it part-time because it was about inclusion and accessibility.  
*Provider - Digital*

## Employer engagement with Skills Bootcamps

Providers were required to collect data on the employers with which they engaged in the management information template. However, these data were not always completed. In addition, the template used some non-standard categories to classify employers. These data required further processing prior to analysis.

As an example, the DfE data template asked providers to assign employers to an industrial sector from a drop-down list which loosely followed the Office for National Statistics 2007 Standard Industrial Classification (SIC). However, some of the ONS categories were aggregated for the data template, including an 'other service activity' class which covered diverse sectors of the economy including retail, computer programming and professional services.<sup>21</sup> The template's 'other service activity' comprised 44% of all employers listed in the management information. The class was larger for employers engaged with Skills Bootcamps in Digital and comprised two thirds (68%) of all those listed. The comparable aggregate group SIC sections for England comprised nearly three in five (58%) employers (see Table 14 later for more details). The size of the 'other service activity' class offers little insight in detailing the types of employers engaged with Skills Bootcamps. A fuller description of the data-processing activities is included in Appendix 1.

The total number of individual employers recorded in the Skills Bootcamp management information was 2,648.

To improve the analysis, CFE requested further details from providers on the employers with which they engaged (see Appendix 1; Analysing management information) for more detail). In future data collection, it is recommended that providers collect the postcode and the Company House/charity registration number to improve future analyses.

The analysis provided in this section uses both the management information and the matched Experian sample data. The origin of the data is identified.

### Firmographic data (from management information)

#### Business size

Providers were asked to use a predefined list on their management information pro forma to record employee numbers. The list was entitled 'size of employer (number of employees currently working for this employer)'. It is not clear as to whether instruction was given to providers to record employees for the whole business, or for one site for

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<sup>21</sup> ONS figures for businesses by activity, size and location. Accessed on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/business/activitysizeandlocation/datasets/ukbusinessactivitysizeandlocation>

multisite firms. In addition, some providers did not use the drop-down list provided, instead entering their own values or different-sized bands. The technical output outlines how anomalies were treated to create a consistent variable for analysis.

The pro forma did not use standard ONS size banding for employers, which means that an exact comparison between the management information and the published data is not possible. However, the data suggest that larger employers were more likely to engage with Skills Bootcamps than were smaller businesses. Table 12 shows a much higher proportion of small, medium-sized and large businesses engaging with Skills Bootcamps in the general management information when compared with the distribution of businesses in England.<sup>22</sup> The ONS figure for microbusinesses (1–9 employees) does not include those listed as employing no one. If the ONS data are adjusted to only include businesses with 5–9 employees, then larger businesses (250+ employees) still only account for 2% of the total proportion of businesses in England.

**Table 11: Size of employers (number of employees) engaging with Skills Bootcamps**

Size band	Category	Employers	Percentage
1–9 employees	Microbusiness	330	13%
10–149 employees	Small to medium-sized business	973	38%
150–249 employees	Medium-sized business	357	14%
250–749 employees	Large business	277	11%
750+ employees	Large business	640	25%
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,577</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Employer management information

**Table 12: Employers engaging with Skills Bootcamps compared with national data**

Category	Management information data	England (ONS)
Microbusiness	13%	90%
Small to medium-sized business	52%	10%
Large business	36%	<1%
<b>Base</b>	<b>2,577</b>	<b>2,408,040</b>

Source: Employer management information and ONS

<sup>22</sup> Derived from ONS figures for businesses by activity, size and location. Accessed 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/business/activitysizeandlocation/datasets/ukbusinessactivitysizeandlocation>



Data from the matched Experian sample also suggests larger employers engaged with Skills Bootcamps. The Experian data included two counts for an organisation's employees: those on site and those employed by the organisation as a whole. On average, organisations in the matched Experian sample employed 3,162 people as a whole. The median number of employees across the whole organisation was 50. The mean and median employed on sites was 373 and 60 respectively<sup>23</sup>. Single site companies can appear in both statistics here (i.e., some organisations have the same record for the total and the site).

## Industrial sector

The management information datasheet also includes a drop-down list for the provider to record the industrial sector in which the employer's company operates. This list is a truncated version of the 2007 Standard Industrial Classification's Sections.<sup>24</sup> The value of the data is limited because of the 'other services category'. This is a separate section in the SIC which accounts for 6% of the whole economy. However, the management information data collection template uses this term as a catch-all for many service industries.<sup>25</sup>

Table 13 shows the distribution of Skills Bootcamp employers by industrial sector in comparison with all businesses in England. The key point is that Transport and Communication was heavily represented amongst Skills Bootcamp employers due to the large number of Skills Bootcamps in HGV Driving. Skills Bootcamps in Digital comprised most of the remainder and engaged employers across the economy.

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<sup>23</sup> Total company employees – n = 396; site employees – n = 243.

<sup>24</sup> Using these categories: Agriculture / Forestry / Fishing; Banking / Finance; Construction; Distribution / Hotels / Restaurants; Energy / Water; Manufacturing; Other Services; Public Admin / Education / Health; and Transport / Communication. The ONS published the full classification here (accessed on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2022):

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/classificationsandstandards/ukstandardindustrialclassificationofeconomicactivities/uksic2007>

<sup>25</sup> These SIC sections were grouped into the Skills Bootcamp 'other service activities' category: G – Wholesale and retail; Repair of motor vehicles; J – Information & communication; I – Property; M – Professional, scientific & technical; N – Business administration and support services; and R, S, T, U – Arts, entertainment, recreation, and other services.

**Table 13: Industrial sectors in which Skills Bootcamp employers operated compared with all businesses in England<sup>26</sup>**

	All employers count	All employers % (column)	HGV count	HGV % (column)	Digital count	Digital % (column)	England (ONS) count	England (ONS) % (column)
Agriculture / forestry / fishing	4	0%	0	0%	3	0%	93,195	4%
Banking / finance	45	2%	0	0%	45	3%	54,470	2%
Construction	149	6%	21	2%	38	3%	327,615	14%
Distribution / hotels / restaurants	29	1%	9	1%	20	1%	146,105	6%
Energy / water + Manufacturing	158	6%	39	4%	92	6%	131,765	5%
Other services	1,153	44%	66	7%	1,025	68%	1,390,600	58%
Public admin / education / health	158	6%	3	0%	149	10%	142,025	6%
Transport / communication	894	34%	785	84%	82	5%	122,265	5%
Unclassed / not provided	58	2%	7	1%	45	3%	–	–
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,648</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>930</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>1,499</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>2,408,040</b>	<b>–</b>

Source: Employer management information and ONS

<sup>26</sup> Where percentages do not add up to 100%, this is due to rounding.

## Sector analysis using the matched Experian sample

Improving data collection on employers could improve sectoral analysis. Experian matches the most granular codes for the ONS SIC to postcode records. This provides a better understanding of the industrial sectors in which the employers who engaged with Skills Bootcamps operate.<sup>27</sup>

Table 14 shows the proportion of employers from selected SIC sections who engaged with different types of Skills Bootcamps. For example, 37% of employers who engaged with a Skills Bootcamp in Digital were based in the J Information and communication SIC Section.

Three in five employers (60%) engaged with a Skills Bootcamp in Digital and these employers operated across the entire economy. In addition to the J Information and communication SIC Section, Skills Bootcamps in Digital were mostly accessed by employers based in M Professional, scientific and technical activities, and N Administrative and support service activities SIC Sections.

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<sup>27</sup> This analysis is based on data from 500 organisation records and includes duplicates because organisations may engage with Skills Bootcamps in multiple sectors

**Table 14: Distribution of Skills Bootcamp types by employer’s SIC section**

SIC Section	Construction	Digital	Engineering	Green	HGV	Total
J – Information and communication	8%	37%	–	2%	5%	24%
M – Professional, scientific and technical activities	35%	20%	38%	10%	2%	19%
N – Administrative and support service activities	13%	13%	–	50%	11%	16%
F – Construction	33%	1%	29%	23%		8%
G – Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	–	4%	–	3%	28%	6%
H – Transportation and storage	–	1%	–	–	39%	5%
C – Manufacturing	3%	4%	21%		4%	4%
K – Financial and insurance activities	–	6%	–	–	–	4%
Other SIC Sections	8%	14%	12%	12%	11%	14%
<b>Total N</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>500</b>

Source: Provider employer data matched to Experian company records

## Employer counts by Skills Bootcamp (from management information)

### Categories of Skills Bootcamps

Most employers were engaged with either Skills Bootcamps in Digital (57%) or HGV Driving (35%); other types composed up the remainder (8%, Table 15).<sup>28</sup> Micro-employers (employing 1-9 people) accounted for one in eight (12%) of all Skills Bootcamp employers. Most of this size band (87%) were engaged in Skills Bootcamps in Digital.

<sup>28</sup> Others refer to Skills Bootcamps in the following areas: Construction, Engineering, Green, Green Engineering, and Technical. There are insufficient numbers of employers engaged with these Skills Bootcamps to be able to offer more granular data.

**Table 15: Employers by Skills Bootcamp category and company size**

Number of employees	None given	1–9	10–149	150–249	250–749	750+	Total
Digital N (%)	47 (3%)	286 (19%)	521 (35%)	123 (8%)	131 (9%)	391 (26%)	1,499
HGV N (%)	8 (1%)	30 (3%)	376 (40%)	211 (23%)	108 (12%)	197 (21%)	930
Other N (%)	16 (7%)	14 (6%)	76 (35%)	23 (11%)	38 (17%)	52 (24%)	219
<b>Total N (%)</b>	<b>71 (3%)</b>	<b>330 (12%)</b>	<b>973 (37%)</b>	<b>357 (13%)</b>	<b>277 (10%)</b>	<b>640 (24%)</b>	<b>2,648</b>

Source: Employer management information

The name of a Skills Bootcamp also provides information on the training content. Names were coded to create subgroups for the Digital and HGV categories.

For HGV, two subgroups were created: entry and progression.

- The entry group contains Skills Bootcamps for Pathways A to C, aimed at novice drivers. Around half of the Skills Bootcamps in HGV Driving (52%) were in the entry group.
- The progression group is for HGV drivers seeking to upgrade the categories of vehicle that they can drive. This covers Pathways D to I, and 48% were in this group.

**Table 16: Subgroup categorisation of Skills Bootcamps in Digital**

Digital subgroups	Employers	(%)
Coding and development	789	47%
Marketing	192	12%
Data	134	8%
Cyber	113	7%
General	97	6%
Networking and support	96	6%
Cloud	93	6%
Technical and engineering	91	5%
Computer-aided design (CAD)	52	3%
Digital theory	12	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,669</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Employer management information (excluding incomplete data)

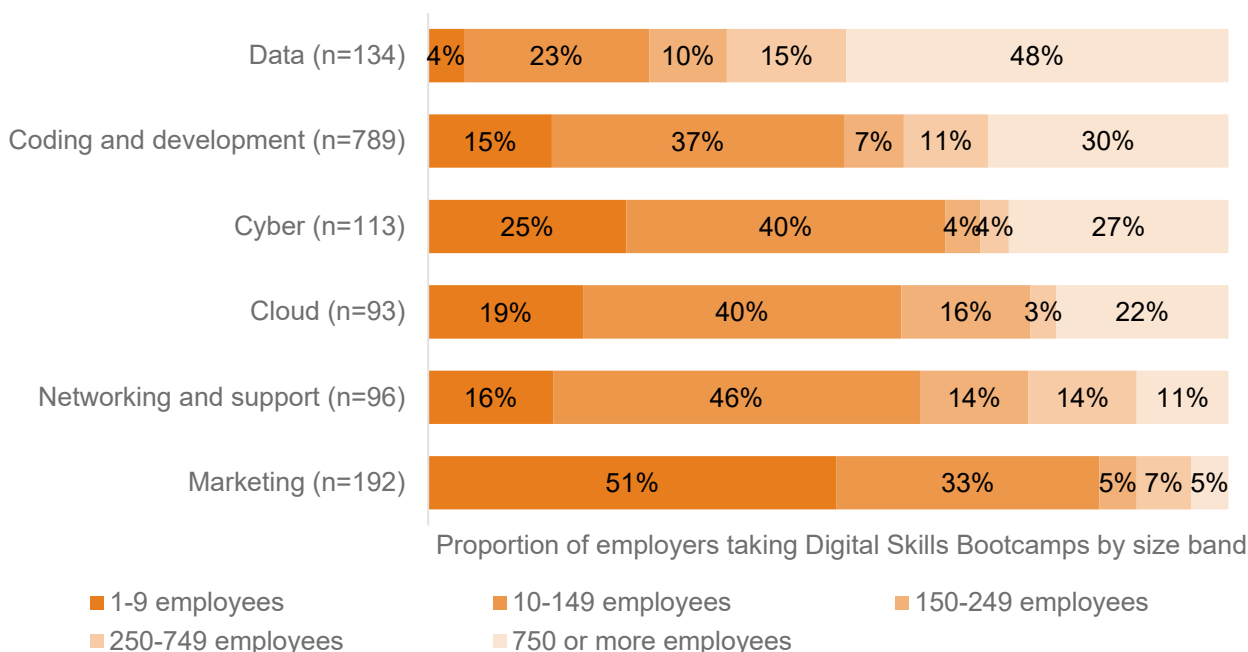
The case of Skills Bootcamps in Digital is nuanced (Table 16). Based on name, nearly half of all employers (47%) were engaged with Coding and Development Skills Bootcamps. Coding refers to Skills Bootcamps that cover specific computer languages or theoretical coding concepts. Development refers to building and creating computer applications or programs.

Marketing was the next-largest category, with which 14% of employers engaged. These Skills Bootcamps predominantly cover methods and techniques for using digital marketing. This subgroup of Skills Bootcamps in Digital was particularly popular for microbusinesses (employing 1–9 people), which accounted for nearly half (48%) of the total.

Conversely, nearly half (48%) of employers that engaged with Data Skills Bootcamps were large employers (employed 750+ people). The Data Skills Bootcamp covers skills with regard to databases, data analysis, and data management.

Figure 12 illustrates what proportion of employers by size were engaged with each of the largest Skills Bootcamps in Digital subgroups.

**Figure 12: Distribution of employers by size for selected Skills Bootcamps**



Source: Employer management information for selected Skills Bootcamps

### Lead providers

Information on lead providers and the types of Skills Bootcamp that they offered as of May 2022 can be found in Appendix 3.

### The number of vacancies attached to Skills Bootcamps offered by employers

The management information included data on employer vacancies. Providers entered different values, including text, into a numerical field. Entries included ranges, minimum numbers, and textual explanations. The technical output describes the data-cleaning process undertaken.

The employer section of the management information template collected details of all employers and their engagement with Skills Bootcamps. Employers could be involved with Skills Bootcamps in a variety of ways, including offering guaranteed interviews to fill recruitment gaps, providing venues/equipment to support delivery, providing mentors or sectoral expertise, and supporting curriculum design. Not all employers were engaged in the same way, and not all were able to use Skills Bootcamps to offer interviews and recruit participants.

Table 17 presents the mean and median statistics regarding the maximum number of vacancies offered by employers. Zero is treated as a valid entry for this analysis and the

management information shows that one fifth (20%) of employers had no vacancies to offer Skills Bootcamp participants. The mean number of vacancies offered was 14 and the median was two. Employers engaged with Skills Bootcamps in HGV Driving had many more vacancies on average (27) than did those engaged in Skills Bootcamps in Digital (7).

**Table 17: Number of vacancies offered by Skills Bootcamp employers**

Size of employer	Mean	Median	N	Min.	Max.
1–9 employees	1.96	1.0	281	0	40
10–149 employees	5.42	2.0	902	0	250
150–249 employees	12.97	3.0	329	0	200
250–749 employees	10.65	5.0	234	0	300
750 or more employees	37.13	5.0	565	0	1,000
Digital	7.33	1.0	1,325	0	500
HGV	26.70	5.0	832	1	1,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>14.33</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2,321</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,000</b>

Source: Employer management information (excluding missing values)

Table 17 also presents some anomalies. For example, the maximum numbers of vacancies listed for small, and some medium-sized employers exceed the band for the number of people employed. These data remain unadjusted because some employers may engage with Skills Bootcamps in partnership with other employers who could collectively offer vacancies to participants.

## Data from the employer survey and interviews

Employers who responded to the implementation survey were primarily commercial, profit-making organisations (27 out of 30). Only one respondent stated that their organisation was a charity. Most respondents represented multisite organisations (21 out of 30) out of organisations of varying sizes, ranging from three to 70,000 employees. The mean number of employees was 8,314 (median = 800) across the 30 employers who responded to the survey.

## Employer motivations for engaging with Skills Bootcamps

Employers stated that they engaged with Skills Bootcamps for a variety of reasons, with their motivations depending on the employer type, size and sector. Approximately half (n=14) of respondents trained their own employees. This is reflected in the interview



findings, where employers highlighted a range of motivations for their engagement with Skills Bootcamps, as detailed in the section below.

## Diversifying the workforce

Diversifying the workforce within their organisation was an important motivation that employers cited regarding their engagement in the Skills Bootcamps. Employers engaged with Skills Bootcamps in Digital and HGV Driving frequently stated that the workforce in related occupations was largely composed of white men. Many of these employers felt that Skills Bootcamps promoted occupations to a more diverse range of people. This was important to employers because it meant that their employees could draw on different experiences, skills and knowledge, improving creativity and effectiveness:

The kind of schemes [such as Skills Bootcamps] that can get underrepresented groups [in particular] trained up and with the skills to learn through technologies is something that is quite important to us. *Employer – Digital*

The Skills Bootcamps are really helpful on the diversity side for us as well. I think we've seen the value of that already. Because of the experience that they have, they're looking at things in a different way than I would, and that has helped to highlight different aspects [of how we work] that I hadn't considered before. So that's already paying off for us. *Employer – Digital*

## Addressing skills shortages to increase the talent pipeline

Skills Bootcamps were designed to address skills shortages in key sectors of the UK economy. Filling skills shortages across a range of occupations could enable employers to work more efficiently and at greater capacity, thus increasing their own revenue and supporting the economic prosperity of the country. There are occupational skills shortages, particularly for HGV drivers and Digital skills. For example, Department for Transport (DfT) data<sup>29</sup> show that there were approximately 45,000 fewer HGV drivers in 2020/21 in comparison to 2019/20 which has had a significant impact on the ability of the wider UK transport and logistics industry to meet demand.<sup>30</sup> Evidence from research

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<sup>29</sup> Department for Transport (2021) Driving Test Certificates, Table DRT0501: Practical large goods vehicles (LGV) test pass rates by gender, monthly: Great Britain, Department for Transport. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/driving-test-statistics-drt>

<sup>30</sup> Piecyk & Allen (2021). HGV Driver Shortages in the UK – Briefing Report. Centre for Sustainable Road Freight. [Technical report](#): ENG-TR.018

conducted by the Learning and Work Institute<sup>31</sup> shows that over three quarters (76%) of surveyed business representatives believed that a lack of digital skills affects the profitability of their organisation. One in four (23%) Digital employers stated that their current workforce lacked the basic digital skills that they needed.

Employers who responded to our Skills Bootcamp survey faced difficulty in filling vacancies in digital professions, including IT technicians, data analysts, software and cloud developers, and cybersecurity specialists. Five employers gave reasons as to why their vacancies were difficult to fill, including too much competition from other employers for skilled staff, insufficient applicants (especially those with the required skills), and a lack of relevant work experience amongst prospective employees.

Many employers thought that Skills Bootcamps meet the needs of their industry through the provision of high-quality training that can, in turn, help to address skills shortages in their sector. HGV employers were particularly positive. One employer stated that Skills Bootcamps are ‘a great idea which we’re fully supportive of — it’s what the sector needs and has needed for some time’. This view was representative of nearly all employers engaged with Skills Bootcamps in HGV Driving who were interviewed for this evaluation.

Many employers also stated that the flexibility of the Skills Bootcamps was a key benefit, as was the opportunity for the employer to influence the training content, design and delivery.

The Skills Bootcamps are an excellent opportunity for employers to get involved and shape the development of this country’s future.

*Employer – Green*

## Improving the skills of existing employees

Some employers used Skills Bootcamps to upskill their own employees to increase staff retention and satisfaction. One Green employer (i.e. an employer engaged with Skills Bootcamps in Green Technologies) said upskilling their own employees demonstrates to their staff that they are valued and worth investing in. Employers cited additional benefits of upskilling their own employees, such as larger skillsets, which means that they can offer more diverse services to their clients, ultimately resulting in greater financial returns. This is particularly relevant for Digital and Railway employers, for whom payment is often based on the level of skills/qualifications held by employees on projects.

One Digital employer emphasised caution regarding upskilling own staff, noting that there should be a responsibility of the employer to ensure that an individual has the opportunity

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<sup>31</sup> <https://learningandwork.org.uk/resources/research-and-reports/disconnected-exploring-the-digital-skills-gap/>

to regularly practise and implement their new skills after their training. The employer noted that failing to do so makes the training redundant and can be demoralising to the individual. Providing opportunities to embed and practise learning ensures that the training needs are structured within a larger programme of development for the employee.

Many employers believed that Skills Bootcamps could help them to recruit staff. A few employers cited that Skills Bootcamp participants are attractive to their organisation because they provide diverse skills and experience from a range of past careers, coupled with high levels of motivation. Digital employers emphasised in their interviews that the Skills Bootcamps offer a 'talent pipeline' for their organisation. One Digital employer emphasised that they already considered apprenticeships and that Skills Bootcamps offer an additional avenue to secure the skills required by their organisation. This offers a range of benefits for Digital employers:

When you start talking to the guys who have been through the Bootcamps, they've come from all sorts of diverse backgrounds, all sorts of careers in the past. Then you start really digging in and having powerful conversations. [These conversations] produce a perspective that never in a million years would I have come up [with]. The power of that is becoming more and more apparent, so it's a win-win — it's a talent pipeline that addresses a certain part of our development plan. *Employer – Digital*

Skills Bootcamps addressed recruitment shortages for a few HGV employers. One HGV employer believed that attracting workers to HGV occupations is sometimes difficult, and a Skills Bootcamp is an additional 'pathway for people to come and join the sector', emphasising the importance of the Skills Bootcamps in offering a different recruitment strategy for employers.

## **Increasing the visibility of employers with a reduced cost base**

A few employers mentioned that the subsidised cost of the training was an important motivating factor that enabled them to access the training for their employees. However, employers more frequently cited upskilling employees and filling recruitment gaps as their main motivations for engaging in the training. This suggests that employers valued Skills Bootcamp training and that subsidisation helped to attract them to the model.

Skills Bootcamps offered the opportunity for many employers to promote and market their services. For example, approximately one third of employers interviewed offered guest speaking, mentoring and expertise towards the design of the training as part of their Skills Bootcamp engagement. This helped to raise their organisation's profile and

positioned them to recruit Skills Bootcamp participants. Employers from smaller digital companies stated that the impact on recruitment was particularly important, as they face competition for staff from larger, well-known technology companies:

We gave our presentation and we touched a lot of people. In terms of individuals looking at our vacancies and our opportunities, they're now going, "Yes, that sounds great", and they're already over the hurdle of, "Well, who the hell are [company]?". They're already over that, so that's a real, real value. *Employer – Digital*

## Provider engagement with Skills Bootcamps

Skills Bootcamp providers tend to be specific training organisations that deliver similar training commercially or are universities or colleges. Of the 66 providers for which management information data are available, 50 deliver training in topics relating to one sector only, eleven deliver across two sectors and five providers deliver across three or more sectors. Table 18 summarises the combination of sectors offered by those that deliver across multiple sectors, ordered by the largest number of courses offered in each sector.

**Table 18: Breakdown of multi-sector Skills Bootcamps offered by providers**

	Construction	Digital	Engineering	Green	Green Engineering	HGV	Technical
Construction	–	5	4	3	1	1	3
Digital	5	26	–	3	–	1	2
Engineering	4	–	2	1	2	1	1
Green	3	3	1	2	–	–	–
Green Engineering	1	–	2	–	–	–	–
HGV	1	1	1	1	–	18	-
Technical	3	2	1	–	–	–	2

Source: Skills Bootcamps management information

## Skills Bootcamp funding and providers

Seven in ten (69%) Skills Bootcamps were funded nationally with the rest funded via direct grants. Table 19 shows more Skills Bootcamps in Green Engineering, Engineering and Technical were funded through grants compared to the average.

**Table 19: Type of Skills Bootcamp by funding method**

Type of Skills Bootcamp	Grant-funded (%)	Nationally-funded (%)	Total (n)
Construction	20%	80%	10
Digital	39%	61%	270
Engineering	58%	42%	12
Green	28%	72%	18
Green engineering	75%	25%	4
HGV	–	100%	83
Technical	67%	33%	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>403</b>

Source: Skills Bootcamps management information

As shown in Table 20, three-quarters of Skills Bootcamps were delivered by independent training providers (ITPs). More further education (FE) providers delivered Skills Bootcamps in Engineering and Technical Skills compared to the average.

**Table 20: Type of Skills Bootcamp by delivery partner**

Type of Skills Bootcamp	FE Provider (%)	HE Provider (%)	Independent training provider (%)	Total (n)
Construction	20%	10%	70%	10
Digital	15%	11%	74%	270
Engineering	42%	–	58%	12
Green	–	6%	94%	18
Green engineering	–	–	100%	4
HGV	18%	–	82%	83
Technical	33%	17%	50%	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>403</b>

Source: Skills Bootcamps management information

## Provider motivations for delivering Skills Bootcamps

Provider interviewees stated that they chose to deliver Skills Bootcamps for a variety of reasons, including the benefits that they derived from delivery and their existing focus on the industries and/or occupations relevant to a Skills Bootcamp.

## Organisational benefits

Many providers already offered training courses on similar topics to those targeted by the Skills Bootcamps programme. Most providers were confident that they could deliver high-quality provision, based on their existing delivery record. Providers believed that expanding their offer to include Skills Bootcamps would increase the visibility and reputation of their organisation. A key theme that emerged from the provider interviews was that delivering condensed training over a short period via Bootcamp-style training ‘is our bread and butter’ (Provider – HGV), and that it was ‘a natural segue’ (Provider – HGV) for the company to expand into delivering Skills Bootcamps. Many of these providers deliver pre-apprenticeship, short-duration training; therefore, they felt that extending into the Skills Bootcamps was a logical expansion of their current offer.

Several smaller providers stated that funding from the UK Government to deliver Skills Bootcamps was critical for the continued success of their business because of the struggles that SMEs faced following the COVID-19 pandemic as well as wider economic factors (e.g. inflation, cost of living):

The Bootcamp funding was absolutely critical. It’s been absolutely game-changing. I’m pretty sure that if it hadn’t been for Skills Bootcamps, we’d be completely underwater, and maybe not even operating anymore. *Provider – Digital*

Skills Bootcamp funding allowed some larger, national providers to adequately fund their pre-apprenticeship programmes to ensure that they were a viable part of their portfolio:

The Skills Bootcamp funding was exactly what we were looking for to make our programme complete and it allowed us to fund the pre-apprenticeship programme properly. *Provider – Digital*

The opportunity for providers to engage with employers via Skills Bootcamps is one of the many benefits, as it enables them to grow their network and offer more opportunities. Many providers welcomed the flexibility to design their own curriculum because they felt able to devise a course that was fit for purpose and addressed the key skills gaps of their sector which may not be covered in existing training courses. Through employer engagement, some providers have created employer networks or advisory boards which have strengthened the employer–provider relationship, with the assumption that this will help to secure future positive outcomes from their training programmes.

## Supporting the needs of the sector

The majority of providers emphasised that issues with skills shortages would be addressed through their engagement in the delivery of Skills Bootcamps. Providers across all Skills Bootcamps were acutely aware of the skills shortages within their sector and felt that they were well positioned to help address these gaps:

One of our missions, and our main mission as a company, has always been to close the digital skills gap within the industry, and there really is a digital skills gap. The fact that the government and the DfE are acknowledging this, and the fact that they are taking steps towards trying to improve this, is music to our ears. It's all we've ever wanted. *Provider – Digital*

The flexibility of the Skills Bootcamps programme offered providers the creativity to devise a unique training offer. A few providers stated that this was a benefit of the Skills Bootcamps and offered them some control in shaping the skills development landscape in their sector:

I think the openness to create something that's going to work and having the flexibility to design and create a course framework, and that opportunity was brilliant. *Provider – Digital*

## Ethical and social responsibility

Some providers were motivated to engage with the Skills Bootcamps for reasons related to social responsibility, such as supporting participants in building meaningful and rewarding careers and improving their overall quality of life:

[The organisation wanted to get involved with Skills Bootcamps] to improve people's lives, get them into jobs, improve the economy, [and] upskill people. *Provider – Technical*

Other providers were motivated to train people ordinarily unable to afford expensive training courses. For these providers, ensuring equality of access and opportunities is important and helps them to meet their social and ethical responsibility targets.

## Chapter 4: Factors influencing the design and implementation of Skills Bootcamps

Achieving positive outcomes and impacts for Skills Bootcamps is dependent on the quality of the delivery. This chapter explores the elements of Skills Bootcamp delivery that play an important role in the delivery of a high-quality experience for participants.

### Co-investment role of employers in Skills Bootcamps

The co-investment model for Skills Bootcamps has been designed to enable employers to engage in the programme in a variety of ways. For employers who wish to upskill their existing staff, co-investment is set at 30% of training costs. Employers can also co-invest in non-financial ways, including offering mentoring, guaranteed interviews, providing facilities, offering work placements, and supporting the design and subsequent content of Skills Bootcamps.

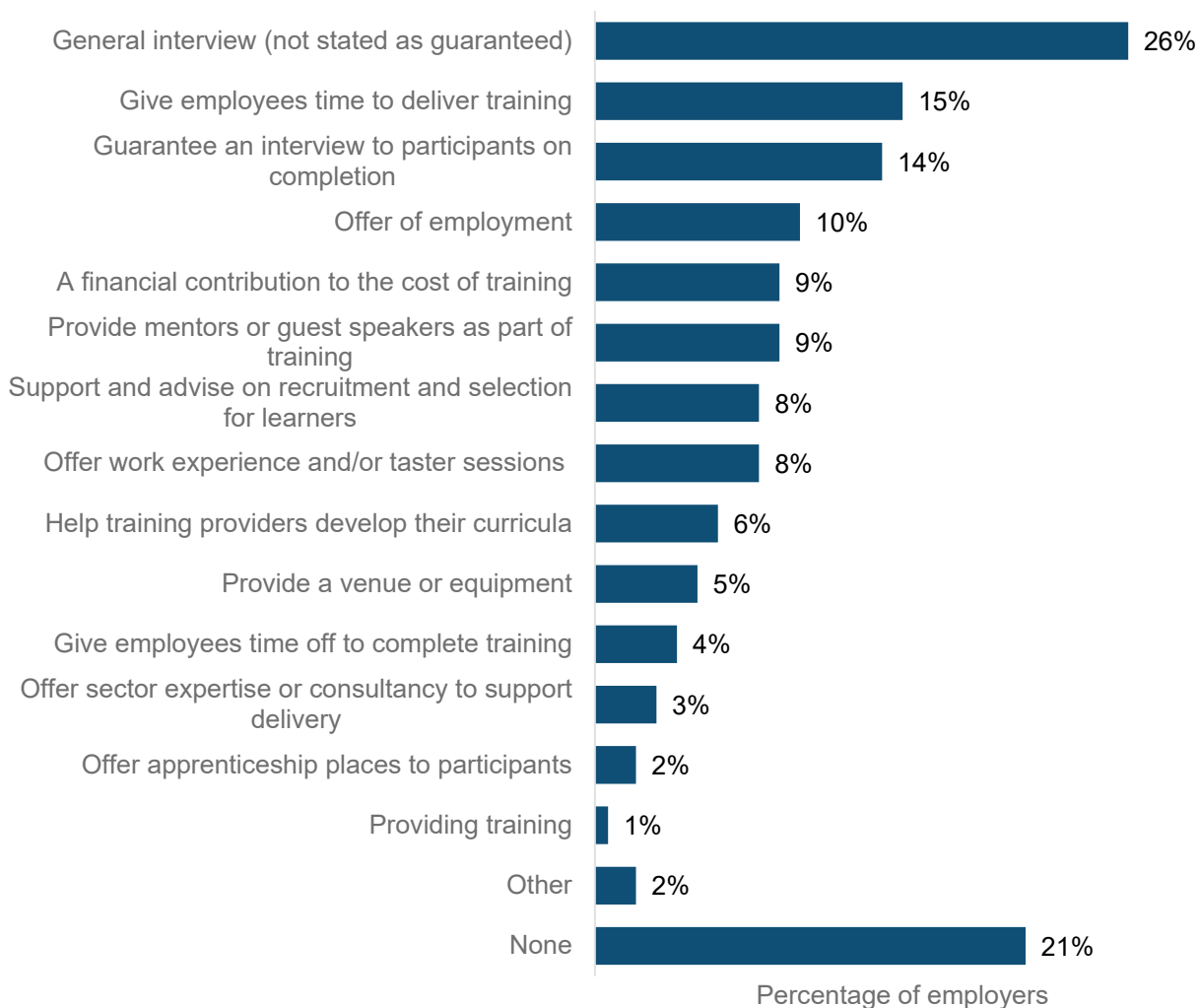
Providers completed an open-text field regarding the type of co-investment made by the employers with which they engaged. Figure 13 (overleaf) depicts the different ways in which providers recorded such employer engagement with Skills Bootcamps. More than one type of engagement could be listed for each employer. Figure 13 shows that interviews (guaranteed or otherwise) featured most. Providers recorded that one quarter (26%) of employers offered an interview where a guarantee was not stipulated; one in seven (14%) specifically stated that interviews were guaranteed. One in seven (15%) employers reportedly co-invested through giving employees time to deliver Skills Bootcamp training. One in 10 (10%) provided an offer of employment.

The most frequent non-financial co-investment activities offered by the small number of employer survey respondents were the offer of a guaranteed interview to Skills Bootcamp graduates (n=11) and allowing their own employees time off to complete their training (n=11). Only four employer survey respondents stated that they helped training providers to develop their curricula.

Only a small proportion of employers responded to the survey; thus, the findings must be interpreted with caution. An example of this is the small number of employer survey respondents that stated that they helped to support curriculum development. In contrast, this was frequently discussed during interviews with employers as an important element of co-investment and a strength of the Skills Bootcamps programme (see non-financial co-investment later).



**Figure 13: Types of co-investment made by employers (as reported by providers)**



Source: Coded from employer management information. Base: 2,648

From an employer’s perspective, most stated that successful outcomes have arisen when they have had stronger involvement in the design and development of the Skills Bootcamps. The following sections will outline the principles that underpin the design of Skills Bootcamps, coupled with different employers’ experiences of the co-investment model.

## Financial co-investment

### Benefits of co-investment

An analysis of employer interviews shows that the most common methods of co-investment were financial support for their own employees to undertake training (utilising the discounted 30% employer contribution) and offering guaranteed interviews to participants. Most employers were happy with the co-investment model because it

contributes to social responsibility, giving back to the system and sector. For these employers there is a financial benefit of engaging with the Skills Bootcamps, as their training budgets can be stretched further, and they can offer training where there has been no prior offer:

From a social-responsibility-type angle, we really like [the co-investment] model. So the co-funding element, we see it as absolutely fair — it's a really positive thing. *Employer – Digital*

However, one employer cited that a lack of work after participants have completed the training means that they are unable to offer further mentoring:

Honestly, I saw the subsidised cost of the 70/30 split and it was just too much of a gamble to not take it up. I was on the page that we were growing as a business, where we'd have [a] sufficient amount of work to be able to pay for this and to get something off the back of it. But the reality is that we train the lads up on the courses and don't have the work to further mentor them. *Employer – Green*

Some providers also appreciated the co-funding model because it means that more companies can access their training courses that may normally not be able to afford to do so.

### Challenges of co-investment

Despite these co-investment financial benefits, some providers highlighted issues relating to the practicalities of the investment. Firstly, some suggested that employers may feel that they are paying for training and for the time for which they release employees to train. The potential benefits of this trade-off for subsequent productivity and increased efficiency are detailed in Chapter 5: Early views on outcomes and impacts:

From a client perspective, I think the time out, that's the challenge for a lot of businesses. You have to weigh up what it is you're getting back from putting somebody out of the business [to undertake their training]. You're actually narrowing the pool of businesses that can afford this time-wise, not just financially, to get their team out [to undertake the training] for three months or whatever it is. *Employer – Digital*

Whilst the cost of training is significantly subsidised by the programme, some providers (mainly HGV) perceived that the training costs are too high for small employers and as a result may disproportionately benefit larger employers.

Providers interviewed stated that for some employers the financial co-investment appears to be a 'good deal' at the start of their involvement. However, this is dependent on the quality of the training and the benefits that the participant can subsequently offer the company. One employer was particularly frustrated, receiving no benefits from their co-investment — they sent a member of staff on a training course and within one week of finishing, the employee had secured a new job at a different company. This employer would consider engaging with Skills Bootcamps in the future, but emphasised that more stringent criteria would be required to ensure that participants could provide the company with a return on investment.

Other organisations, whilst positive about the co-investment model, felt that the requirement to support Skills Bootcamp graduates and mentor them in their role represents a hidden cost to the organisation. This was particularly problematic for Green pathway training relating to railways. Rail employers highlighted in their interviews that the cost of mentoring and supporting a participant through their sign-off was approximately £500.

## Non-financial co-investment

The types of non-financial co-investment offered by most employers included time spent supporting curriculum design, mentoring, or guest-speaking. For these employers, supporting curriculum design ensures that the content is industry-relevant and most likely to produce well-rounded graduates who could be employable in their sector:

I like the structure of employer involvement. So you get a generic course which, to an extent, you can mould to your own needs, but at the same time develops an employee who is richer and stronger.

*Employer – Digital*

For those involved in mentoring and guest speaking, there are pockets of employers who saw these in terms of social responsibility, giving back to the sector. Individuals involved in mentoring and guest speaking emphasised their need to repay the support that others gave them at the start of their career.

Other employers stated that their company profile had been raised in their sector through co-investment, with the additional effect of increasing their company's visibility to potential new recruits. Providers utilise employer engagement in this way to showcase lived experiences of how those completing a Skills Bootcamp can progress in their career:

We're really keen on ensuring that learners have visibility of employers from day one, all the way through the course, so that they

know that those opportunities are available and they just need to stick it out, give it 100% and there's no reason why they can't move into a job. *Provider – Digital*

Employer involvement regarding curriculum design is more common for Skills Bootcamps in Digital. This is because there is more scope to tailor provision to industry needs. In contrast, Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) requirements mean that there is less opportunity for employer engagement in the design of the curriculum for Skills Bootcamps in HGV Driving.

A few providers stated that there is no shortage of employers willing to offer talks, but there is a barrier that is preventing more from offering ongoing mentorship or guaranteed job opportunities. Employers may have jobs available but they often don't align with the timing of the Skills Bootcamps, which prevents them from offering jobs that might no longer be available when the participant has completed their Skills Bootcamp:

I could speak to all the companies in the world and get all of that advice, but it's not necessarily going to help [participant to get a job]. That's not going to push me and get me into employment. *Provider – Digital*

### **Providers and employers welcome lowering SME co-investment contribution to 10%**

The announcement from the DfE to lower the contribution to 10% for SMEs has been welcomed by these groups so that more employers can afford to upskill their employees through Skills Bootcamps. A few providers stated that this would mean that more voluntary and small organisations might be able to afford the training, thus reducing the skills gaps between different-sized companies in each sector:

When [the funding] changed to 10% for SMEs, absolutely fantastic...it's given them an opportunity to access funding to upskill the workforce, which we didn't necessarily have before. *Provider – Green*

### **Processes / timeline for designing Skills Bootcamps**

All Skills Bootcamps consist of acquiring both theoretical and practical skills. Skills Bootcamps in HGV Driving are usually designed to cover all of the theoretical learning and a theory test before participants complete one week of intensive practical HGV training. In contrast, Skills Bootcamps in Digital are designed to deliver both the

theoretical and the practical components in parallel via projects, problem solving, and group tasks to embed learning.

Many providers stated that they appreciated the openness and flexibility of the Skills Bootcamps programme because they could create courses that met the specific needs of their industry without being restricted to industry regulations when providing certified courses:

I think the opportunity [with Skills Bootcamps] to create something that's going to work and having the flexibility to design and create a course framework, that opportunity was brilliant. *Provider – Digital*

## Design factors that make a successful Skills Bootcamp

One method used by some employers and providers to design an effective Skills Bootcamp was to work backwards from the intended outcome and provide the skills and knowledge that a person would need to be successful. Adopting this approach enabled employers and providers to clearly integrate their intended outcomes at the planning phase. This meant that the Skills Bootcamp content was relevant to participants' needs for a new job or career:

We started by sharing information: here's the criteria, here's the KPIs, here's how the programme should run — it's got to be up to 16 weeks. We looked at it and thought about what we could deliver to learners in that time period. We looked at the end game: what were the knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need to leave with? We worked backwards from there. Everything was built with an end game of how [...] we get these people into work. *Employer – Digital*

An iterative process that incorporates strong collaboration between providers and employers appears to be successful in achieving the desired job outcomes. Collaboration helps to build a strong network, which increases confidence that there are jobs available and that Skills Bootcamps are not solely about training.

Some providers created employer and partner working groups in which stakeholders came together to discuss their needs, delivery priorities, and the required concepts in the programmes. This enabled providers to acquire a holistic perspective and ensure that their programmes were fit for purpose and able to meet industry needs.

Employers believed that involvement in the Skills Bootcamps can help to embed learning, ensure that participants are well equipped to understand the sector, and ultimately result in more positive outcomes:

Engagement with employers is the main difference [in comparison with other training]. You can teach someone something and they will forget it in five minutes. If you give them the experience [linked to an occupation], they will remember. They will remember the journey so that they can get to where they need to be. *Employer – Digital*

The importance of employer involvement in design is illustrated by two examples. Firstly, one Digital employer working with three providers to deliver their training identified that their recruitment had been most successful with the provider with which they work most closely. A second Digital employer has worked closely with their provider to tailor the employability and soft skills training, with the aim of maximising participants' chances of securing a job.

In contrast, most Skills Bootcamps programmes were designed and constructed from previously existing curricula delivered by the provider. This was mostly previous apprenticeship curricula of a similar level to Skills Bootcamps and can be condensed into the 16-week maximum delivery time. There are also similarities between the academic and practical elements of apprenticeship and Skills Bootcamp training. For providers, this reduced the burden of designing a programme from scratch. However, the relevance, appropriateness and link to outcomes for participants, particularly those in Skills Bootcamps in Digital, were weaker. Some participants on higher-level Digital courses felt that these courses were rushed, covered too much content, and were pitched at the wrong level. These participants were less satisfied with their Skills Bootcamp experience. This sentiment is reflected in the survey, where over four times as many Digital (31%) respondents disagreed that there was sufficient time to learn everything that they needed in comparison with HGV (7%) respondents. This highlights the importance of linking the Skills Bootcamps to sectoral needs and the challenges of having to deliver the training within 16 weeks.

## **Differences between designing Skills Bootcamps in HGV Driving and Digital**

Wave 2 curriculum design differs between Skills Bootcamps in HGV and Digital. For Skills Bootcamps in HGV Driving, the content of the programme is more stringently guided by industry regulations and is skills-heavy, ensuring that participants are capable of driving an HGV and passing their practical test. In contrast, for the majority of Digital employers, the actual skills that are taught in the Skills Bootcamps are secondary to developing a 'growth mindset' as well as cultivating a learning mentality that can thrive in the ever-changing digital world:

From our perspective as a business, what we need is people that understand the software development lifecycle and understand how

code hangs together and how you test things, all that side of it. But, ultimately, the language they will then be programming in with any employer, that's academic — it doesn't really matter. *Employer – Digital*

## Employability and soft skills

Providers also teach employability and soft skills alongside the technical and practical skills content of the Skills Bootcamp. This helps to ensure that participants are work-ready and can successfully secure a new job or career at the end of their training.

Some providers deliver employability sessions in a one-week block, while others integrate this content throughout the course. Participant focus group attendees viewed the latter as more effective because the timing of a one-week block was difficult. A few participants suggested that their employability sessions were scheduled too early on their course and they had forgotten the content by the time that the information would have been useful.

The range of previous employment experiences described by participants were varied, which meant that providers found it challenging to pitch the employability sessions at the right level. Some participants, particularly those with a significant career history and workplace experience, viewed the employability sessions as too basic. More successful employability sessions involved personalised feedback and support regarding activities such as job applications or CVs. These sessions enabled participants to reflect on their own employability skills:

One half of our course was employability. That ranged from self-reflection ([i.e.] “What are my skills?”) and things like CVs, writing pitches, and practice for interviews — a whole module on employability. I would say that was top to bottom, the best employability training I've ever had. *Participant – Digital*

## Relationship between delivery and outcomes

### Start rate

Management information analysis indicates that the ratio of applicants to starts is broadly comparable for all of the Skills Bootcamp categories with small numbers of applicants (Table 21 overleaf). Most of these Skills Bootcamps turned the majority of their applicants into starts.

By comparison, applications to Skills Bootcamps in the more popular two categories did not always turn into a start. This is especially the case for Skills Bootcamps in HGV Driving, where there were seven times as many applications as starts (a ratio of 7.0). This could be for several reasons, including delays between the date of application and starting a Skills Bootcamp, HGV courses being oversubscribed, individuals applying for multiple courses but only starting one, or applicants declining their place in the training. Skills Bootcamps in Digital also saw 2.1 times as many applications as starts.

**Table 21: Ratio of applicants to starts by Skills Bootcamp category**

Skills Bootcamp category	All applicants	Starts	Ratio
Construction	434	359	1.2
Digital	20,354	9,874	2.1
Engineering	295	218	1.4
Green	745	663	1.1
Green engineering	64	47	1.4
Technical	295	218	1.4
HGV	33,294	4,739	7.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>55,481</b>	<b>16,118</b>	<b>3.4</b>

Source: Management information

## Factors influencing participant satisfaction

Participant experiences of the Skills Bootcamps varied by sector, the participant's occupation and the training provider. Variance in the quality of the Skills Bootcamps, and in participants' perceptions of this, has an important role in participant satisfaction and their opinions on the strengths of the training and its usefulness.

Participants valued the new knowledge and skills that they developed through a Skills Bootcamp and understood how their new knowledge can lead to future employment. Participants particularly valued providers contextualising the training and applying it to real-world scenarios. For Digital participants, courses with practical projects mirroring real-life employment requirements were particularly valuable. These participants thought that practical projects linked training to future employment, offered greater insight into possible roles, and gave employers evidence that they were able to perform in their new digital industry:

The most valuable part of the [Skills Bootcamp] was the fact we worked on a final project that mirrored the way you work in industry. What I'm doing now [in my new job] is the same and it was



instrumental to me landing a job after the Skills Bootcamp.

*Participant – Digital*

Critical participants often held opposing views on the content of training, stating that it either was pitched at the wrong level, tried to include too much in the time available, or was irrelevant to any future employment:

The material was too much for beginners. I was lucky because I had some prior knowledge, but I found some classes a bit difficult, even with that knowledge, so maybe it was harder for others too.

*Participant – Digital*

The course was rushed. There was too much [content] for one day. It was all too much at one go, which wasn't helpful at all.

*Participant – Digital*

Many of those who held more negative views on the Skills Bootcamps could not extricate the delivery of the training from their disappointment that their training had not led to a change of career or a new job.

## Challenges in implementing Skills Bootcamps

### The number of applications

Many providers offering Skills Bootcamps in HGV Driving and Digital reported a large number of applications for their courses. This is supported in the management information, from which applications to Skills Bootcamps in Digital and HGV Driving were 17,615 and 33,593 respectively (see Table 22). This posed some problems which impacted on participants. These included a lack of staff at providers to deal with the volume of applications, less-than-ideal communication to unsuccessful applicants, and timing issues preventing successful participants from having sufficient time to prepare for the start of their training.

Conversely, one Construction provider identified that they had struggled to generate applications and recruit trainers to lead the delivery. This provider noted that existing financial incentives for manual labour were more appealing than training opportunities. Skills Bootcamps were viewed as an unnecessary steppingstone for employment within the construction industry, where employers would rather train individuals directly on the job.

## Delivery of content

### Aspects of online delivery

All providers stated that they were experienced in delivering similar training courses prior to embarking on Skills Bootcamps. However, participants often felt that the mechanisms and organisation of online delivery were lacking. This was particularly the case for participants of Skills Bootcamps in Digital. Online content often did not work because their computer specification was inadequate or their software setup was incorrect. Computer processing speeds and a requirement for a second screen were frequently mentioned barriers to engaging with online content.

In the participant focus groups, attendees who were enrolled in Skills Bootcamps earlier in the 2021–22 cycle faced more logistical, communication and ‘teething’ problems such as delayed responses from providers and receiving incorrect information (e.g. course codes, online technology). Many of these issues appear to have been subsequently corrected by employing dedicated staff to deal solely with Skills Bootcamps and allocating more resources for effective communication with participants.

The method of delivery posed some challenges to providers and employers delivering the content. During the design stage, it was challenging to implement a user-friendly platform that balanced usability with features that would enable collaborative or different ways of learning.

### In-person delivery and trainers

Participants valued delivery from engaging, experienced and organised trainers. Participants appreciated trainers who were experienced in the sector and invested time to help them to change career. Pedagogical tools such as discussions, videos, and group work activities helped learners to engage with the content and get the most out of their Skills Bootcamp. One employer noted that the quality of delivery is dependent on the quality of the trainer, which influences their engagement with the programme:

The quality of the learning, the quality of the faculty they commit [to the Skills Bootcamps]. I suppose there’s an opportunity for maybe the less scrupulous organisations to go, “Well, it’s kind of easy money. We don’t need to put our top faculty on these courses because we need them on blue-chip clients.” But if they do that to us, they won’t be around long. *Employer – Digital*

Numerous participants complained about the quality of the delivery to their provider, requesting changes to teaching personnel. Some providers were mentioned by

numerous participants as producing lower-quality Skills Bootcamps, which saw more incidents of negativity during participant feedback.

Employers based in the rail sector (using Skills Bootcamps categorised as Green) expressed that they would welcome more hands-on and practical delivery, which would reduce the amount of follow-up mentoring and support that participants would need at the end of the training. This poses a challenge because for these employers, individuals who have completed their Skills Bootcamp lack experience and are not fully prepared for employment.

## Delays with HGV Driving Skills Bootcamp

An essential element of a Skills Bootcamp in HGV Driving is the practical driving test. Many Skills Bootcamp providers reported difficulties in booking HGV testing slots within 16 weeks of a learner completing training. During the fieldwork period (June–July 2022) the demand for HGV driving tests was higher than normal. All testing ceased for several months due to COVID-19 social distancing restrictions, which, when lifted led to a backlog in tests.

DfE policy officials reported that difficulties in booking practical tests were starting to ease during the fieldwork period, but the backlog had an impact on the first year of delivery for Skills Bootcamps in HGV Driving. DfE policy officials approved an extension for the completion of tests to the end of March 2023 to ensure that all learners completing a Skills Bootcamp could undertake the relevant driving test.

Participants, employers and providers fed back the impact of the delays in delivery during the fieldwork:

We have to keep the learners engaged and their training fresh, waiting for tests, but also the employers from the other perspective are saying, “Well, where are my candidates? Where are my drivers?” Trying to keep both candidates upskilled and warm and employers engaged is the difficult point at the moment. *Provider – HGV*

Providers believed that testing delays would continue for the foreseeable future, and put strategies in place to offset the potential impact. For instance, providers did not organise participants’ guaranteed interviews until they had a test date, reducing the wait for both parties for when the candidate may be able to start employment.

Providers noted that the shortage of tests nationally was beyond their control but had a financial impact. One noted that they were paying for staff and equipment that they could not use:

You've got trainers that you're paying for and trucks that you've bought, that can't work because they can't get the test times.

*Provider – HGV*

Some providers stated that increasing fuel prices reduced the profitability and affordability of the training. Increases in petrol prices exceeded many providers' estimations following their contingency planning processes.

Delays in delivering HGV courses have been challenging for participants. The unemployed and those trying to change career felt the impact of the delays the most. A few HGV participants who were unemployed and receiving income support benefits at the time of the interview stated that they were placed in a difficult situation and risked losing benefits unless they obtained a job. The delays meant that they could not apply for positions requiring HGV training until they had completed their Skills Bootcamp. Some participants also stated that delays impacted on their health:

I'm on Universal Credit so have been out of a job for a while and I'm ready to work. But if I get a job, then I would lose the right to continue [my Bootcamp]. You're told the course is 15 weeks. I've been on it since February, and we are in July and I am out of a job and pocket for that long. It has affected my health and my social life and my money. For people like me who suffer anxiety, I am left in the dark and people need to be updated. Participant – HGV

Providers were sensitive to the impact of delays on participants. Some providers kept in regular contact with participants to ensure that they understood the situation and offer support:

It's just a case of going, "Hi, we're still here. We know you're here. Nothing's changed." It's just so people don't think they've been left.

*Provider – HGV*

Since the fieldwork for this implementation report was conducted, DfE, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) and the Department for Transport (DfT) have worked together including to improve sharing of forecast data from providers. Test waiting times are back to within normal parameters, the benefits of which began to be felt in autumn 2022.

### **Managing participants' expectations**

Providers, employers and participants had different expectations regarding what happens after the completion of Skills Bootcamps. Several providers stated that they began

managing HGV participants' expectations regarding test delays so that they could more accurately communicate the completion timelines to new Skills Bootcamp recruits. Providers of other Skills Bootcamps also stated that managing expectations of outcomes was important.

Participants often enrolled in Skills Bootcamp programmes to change career. Many chose to take a leap into a new career due to perceived increases in salary and financial incentives. Several providers stated that the reality of changing career may not result in a higher salary straight away; therefore, they 'coach candidates' to manage expectations:

There are people coming in with the expectation of "I'm going to earn £45,000 a year straight off the bat, coming in as a data analyst". But they find out that, actually, because they're jumping sector and they're new to that career path, even though they've got transferrable skills and even though they've been on a Bootcamp, they might have to lower their expectations about the level they're going to come in on initially. *Provider – Digital*

Employers also stated that they had to manage participants' expectations regarding securing a job at the end of their Skills Bootcamp. A guaranteed interview towards the end of a participant's training is part of the policy design; however, whether this interview is 'real' seems to vary significantly for participants, as detailed below.

## Guaranteed interviews

Participants often had very different experiences of the guaranteed interview process. Some participants did not have a guaranteed interview, despite it being a stipulated component during the application process<sup>32</sup>. For some participants, the interview that they were offered was unsuitable and not aligned with their skills gained. In these cases, participants often received emails from their provider that contained a long list of adverts. These job adverts were frequently not relevant to their Skills Bootcamp content and were pitched at the wrong level:

The jobs we were being offered were vastly removed from what the course was advertised towards. The guaranteed informal chat that I had was not with a games, movie or TV company [which is what my Skills Bootcamp was directed towards]. It was with a metal-recycling company for a learning development position. It wasn't relevant to the Bootcamp. *Participant – Digital*

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<sup>32</sup> A guaranteed interview does not apply to self-employed or co-funded participants, who were not asked about guaranteed interviews during their focus group.

One explanation for these findings is the timing of this report. This report focused on the implementation phase of Skills Bootcamps and not all learners who participated in focus groups had completed their training. As providers can offer more than one interview, these participants may have been offered further interviews after the fieldwork took place.<sup>33</sup>

## Salary expectations

Several participants were offered interviews for jobs with a salary that was lower than what they expected before they started the Skills Bootcamp. As discussed previously, providers have started to manage participant salary expectations. The comparison between actual entry-level and advertised mid-career professional salaries was a cause of false expectations amongst participants:

[I said to my provider], “The salary is significantly less than I’m on now”, and they said, “We have to guarantee an interview”. But the interview is not suitable and that’s an important distinction. A lot of people were getting frustrated. People would be offered the role, but it would be, “We’re offering you £14,000”, and they’d be like, “Well, I get more off benefits”. *Participant – Digital*

As the process and the participant journey through the Skills Bootcamp progressed, many of those who were not successful at securing a job became disillusioned and frustrated by the guaranteed interview element. The realisation that they might not be able to obtain a job in the sector that they wanted became problematic, and to these participants the Skills Bootcamp did not meet their expectations.

Many employers were willing to offer interviews; however, most stated that the interviews were to provide practice to participants, rather than leading to a job, as the vacancies available when a Skills Bootcamp began were often filled by the time that a candidate completed their training. Some providers noted that the time from when they wrote employers into their contracts and delivery plans to when they were ready for interviews could be over one year, meaning that often the same employers were not able to offer interviews. Some larger organisations felt that they could only offer mock interviews because the Skills Bootcamp did not fit with their recruitment cycles:

It’s very rarely true that employers [engaging with Skills Bootcamps] hold jobs for 13 months and [say], “Great, now the learners are here, thanks very much, we’ll take them”, and so I think a lot of the DfE can see that, and what we’re now having to do to get employment [for the

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<sup>33</sup> Providers may offer more than one interview opportunity per learner as an interview for a role that aligns with the skills acquired through the Skills Bootcamp must be offered in order for them to claim payment.

learners] is a pragmatic response to the fact that the original jobs aren't there. What we're doing is helping people on pathways to employment that exist now. *Provider – Digital*

This was particularly the case for HGV employers, who wanted to fill their vacancies as soon as possible. They did not want to wait until participants had completed their Skills Bootcamp, which currently had no set timescale due to the HGV testing delays.

### **Provider and employer engagement**

Establishing strong collaboration between employers and providers can help to mitigate the challenges associated with learner salary expectations and the types of guaranteed interviews offered. Early engagement with employers at the start of their Skills Bootcamp helps participants to acquire the confidence that there will be job opportunities:

We're engaging with employers so much earlier, which improves [participant] confidence that there are actually jobs out there and it's not just another course. *Provider – Digital*

Larger training providers operating similar training programmes had established links with recruitment organisations who could help to match employers with participants. This helps to alleviate the issue identified by participants that the job interviews offered are not appropriate to their experience. Building a network of employers that are embedded and invested in the programme can help to provide a reciprocal relationship between providers and employers. This ultimately benefits participants in ensuring that they are offered 'better' job opportunities:

Good practice is about having links to employers so participants know what they're signing up for, what the expectations are, and what that can actually lead to. The employers are the key, the relationship you have with them [...] you've got to have a good relationship with employers to make [Skills Bootcamps] work.. *Provider – Green*

## **Difficulties in meeting DfE contractual obligations**

### **Collecting and providing evidence**

Providers are paid for delivery at predetermined milestones. These payment milestones differ depending on the type of Skills Bootcamp, with Novice HGV, HGV, and non-HGV all having different payment schedules. However, providers receive a small proportion of the cost of funding upon evidence of training commencing, a larger proportion once the learner completes their training and secures an interview (if applicable), and a final

payment when they can evidence that the participant has a job offer or positive outcome. For a full breakdown of the different payment milestones, please see Appendix 4.

Providers across all Skills Bootcamp sectors perceived that a substantial amount of their training provision is unpaid and that the payment schedule is 'unfair'. This was a problem initially highlighted by HGV providers due to the delays in delivery which have extended the time over which they are not being paid. However, Digital providers and those in other sector also expressed concern surrounding the payment milestones and evidencing participant outcomes.

Providers viewed that the evidence required is rigid, which places a high burden on providers to chase and obtain information that some employers and/or participants are reluctant to provide:

Some, once they've got their job, they're unwilling to share their salary. They're unwilling to share any details of the job they're doing. The employer won't tell us the details of the job they're doing. We're tracking about 160 job outcomes at the minute and can only fully evidence 100 of them. One third we can't collect all the evidence, so we won't get paid for them. *Provider – Digital*

## Financial implications

Providers stated that they can only continue delivering Skills Bootcamps if the training is financially viable. Some providers suggested that the payment milestones and the associated evidence required are not conducive to a profitable endeavour, and some suggested that they might have to reconsider whether they would rebid for future contracts:

The profit on this scheme is only going to come from the interview stage. Up to the theory test, it just about pays for itself. I think that the Department needs to iron out and make them more appropriately funded, as there isn't enough incentive in the current funding model for providers. *Provider – HGV*

As mentioned, providers are only paid in full when learners obtain a successful outcome in the form of a job offer. Providers conveyed that the DfE has set a range of key performance indicators (KPIs), including 100% of learners being offered an interview and 75% of participants obtaining a successful outcome. These KPI targets were supplied in the tender documentation to providers. However, providers felt that these KPIs are unachievable, particularly regarding job outcomes. In similar and alternative adult training programmes, providers suggested that job outcome KPI rates range up to 35%, which is a considerable difference from the 75% rate for Skills Bootcamps:



The DfE are talking 60–70% job outcomes for this programme. I've never known a government programme ever get much more than 40%. When we ran adult education programmes, 15–16% job outcomes was good. [Regarding] work programmes, 30–35% job outcomes is good. *Provider – Digital*

There was a perceived danger, as reflected in some provider interviews, that the KPI expectations and the impact on provider payments may affect the 'type' of learner that is recruited. Providers may recruit 'more employable' learners as a 'safer bet' for achieving a return on their investment, rather than learners who may require additional support (e.g. long-term unemployed, ex-offenders):

So, to meet that 75% KPI, we'd really have to go after people who were absolutely immediately employable, immediately job-ready, really highly skilled, and professional. And you could [be] put in front of an employer in eight weeks' time (having done a Bootcamp) and be snapped up. But, unfortunately, those people aren't floating around wanting to do Bootcamp training. And maybe if we are a little-bit more inclusive, you take a risk on people. But there's a balance between a bit more inclusive and taking people that you feel would benefit from a Bootcamp [and ensuring that you meet the KPIs set].  
*Provider – Digital*

### **Difficulties in meeting contractual obligations**

Many providers also expressed frustration that the programme's process of data monitoring and reporting is complicated with a high risk of human error. Providers were working with large numbers of learners whose data were amalgamated and inputted in a DfE spreadsheet. Larger providers stated that this process was time-consuming and burdensome. Some providers were aware of the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) as a proposed data-monitoring tool. They welcomed this for future waves of delivery to streamline the reporting processes and increase the accuracy of the data.

Contractually, providers also faced challenges relating to procurement and delivery timelines. Some providers stated that delays in awarding contracts meant that they rushed the design and delivery of Skills Bootcamps, which reduced the quality of their training offer:

The initial contracting delay in an already tight programme, to set up, deliver, wind down and report, in what was effectively a few short months has been fairly painful. *Provider – Digital*

Contracts to deliver Skills Bootcamps are awarded annually for each subsequent wave. This can mean that there are periods of time in which providers are unaware of whether they are delivering Skills Bootcamps into the next year and wave. As a result, this uncertainty has been a challenge for providers in ensuring that they can have consistency in their provision. For smaller providers, not knowing whether they will be awarded future contracts can be problematic because they may not be able to financially justify retaining staff without the contractual guarantee, which may subsequently affect their ability to deliver training if they are awarded the contract. In contrast, larger organisations can absorb more of this uncertainty. Providers are therefore finding that it is challenging to plan their future training activities, and would prefer Skills Bootcamps to be procured via multiyear contracts to have more certainty and an increased ability to plan their delivery.

### Participant attendance during Skills Bootcamp training

An analysis of the available data for starts shows high rates of attendance during Skills Bootcamps (Table 22). Three quarters of Skills Bootcamp starts either fully attended or attended three quarters or more of their training. Only 1% of starts failed to attend any of their course.

Attendance data were present for 65% of starts in the management information records. At the time of analysis, providers were collating final data about participants still on Skills Bootcamps. These attendance numbers will be updated accordingly in future reports.

**Table 22: Attendance rate of starts during their Skills Bootcamp course**

Attendance rate	Starts
No attendance	1%
Attendance less than 25%	6%
Attendance between 25 and 49%	8%
Attendance between 50 and 74%	10%
Attendance between 75 and 99%	27%
Full attendance	49%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,482</b>

Source: Management information excluding unknown

In participant focus groups, most attendees accepted that the Skills Bootcamp training sessions, whilst not compulsory, required frequent attendance, and many participants treated them as a 'job'. Focus group attendees stated that they were unaware of providers' expectations regarding attendance and assumed that they had to attend

everything. This demonstrates that participants were committed to the Skills Bootcamp training, but that they would benefit from accurate information on attendance requirements at the outset of their training.

### **Participant experiences of attendance and dropout**

Participants stated that fitting Skills Bootcamp coursework around their other commitments and schedules was the greatest challenge to full attendance. A couple of participants said their provider was late in notifying acceptance to their Skills Bootcamp, which created difficulties in arranging cover for existing plans or childcare commitments.

Other attendees identified that some participants of the Skills Bootcamps did not have the prerequisite skills for the training, which subsequently led them to drop out. One participant reflected that the provider was:

More interested in selling the course and getting bums on seats, rather than getting the right people [...] which was [proven] on my course [because] 50% of them dropped out. *Participant – Digital*

Providers' strategies to increase attendance and reduce dropout could include offering flexible session times that fit with participants' other commitments (and to potentially differentiate those who are employed from those seeking work), ensuring that the teaching quality is high (including interactive sessions and knowledgeable and passionate teachers) and relevant in order to engage participants. This would ensure that the participants enrolled in Skills Bootcamps are fully aware of the course expectations and what it can lead to.

### **Employer perspective on attendance**

Employers stated that the location of the training presented a challenge for Skills Bootcamps that were delivered face to face. This was particularly the case for HGV and Green employers, for whom some of the training courses were only available at limited training sites across the country. These employers noted that some of their employees were interested in completing their Skills Bootcamp for their own development, but once they found out the location of the training, they refused to attend.

No other employer interviews expressed any challenges regarding non-completion or dropout from their employees.

### **Provider perspective on attendance**

Providers noted a variety of reasons for participants dropping out of their programmes. For Skills Bootcamps in Digital and 'Other' (non-HGV), providers cited a variety of reasons for participants dropping out, including personal, health, childcare, and clashes

with employment commitments. In contrast, for Skills Bootcamps in HGV Driving, providers noted that the main reason was the lack of testing availability and the length of the course taking longer than participants expected. Another specific factor of HGV courses is when participants can no longer participate due to failing their medical assessment. To reduce these dropouts, a few providers contemplated putting applicants through the medical before they start their course, which would be a cost risk to the employer but could reduce the dropout rate.

Some Digital providers noted that some participants realise early on that the course is not quite what they expected, and often switch to another more suitable course. When the training is free for participants, there is 'no penalty if they drop out' (Digital provider); as a result, providers felt that some participants' commitment to the training is lower than they would like.

Across the different types of Skills Bootcamps, providers identified people who could not be contacted after dropping out. In these instances, providers could neither find out why a participant left nor offer any support for participants to rejoin or catch up.

Other reasons for participants withdrawing from their Skills Bootcamp include early positive outcomes such as participants obtaining a full-time job, which means that they cannot commit the rest of the time to their Skills Bootcamp.

Providers from across the different sectors emphasised the importance of quality information, advice and guidance (IAG) to ensure that participants are fully aware of the expectations and the commitment that is required to their Skills Bootcamp. Providers who reported having low dropout rates cited their IAG as rigorous, which helps participants to be fully committed to their course.

## **Issues affecting conversion rates (applicant-to-participant ratio)**

Some providers were inundated with applications, noting that at times this had been overwhelming. This is particularly the case for HGV courses, where providers identified having 6,000–8,000 applicants for their courses (the management information supports this estimate for a few HGV providers). Providers stated that places are limited, which means that they require a method for selecting applicants, often having to select those who applied first, which raised concerns that capable candidates were not able to obtain a place on a Skills Bootcamp course.

The social responsibility angle to recruiting to Skills Bootcamps was a positive for many providers. These providers saw the importance of Skills Bootcamps in offering training to individuals who would not otherwise be able to access such opportunities. However, the nature of these applicants (e.g. long-term unemployed, vulnerable groups) was assumed, by some providers, to be more challenging in ensuring attendance, completion, and

successful outcomes. When providers are considering the financial viability of delivering Skills Bootcamps, selecting applicants who are more likely to succeed contrasts with elements of social responsibility that underpin the principles of Skills Bootcamps. Providers identified a tension between balancing the recruitment of applicants from different backgrounds, and those who were more committed to the vision of Skills Bootcamps found it easier to justify taking a 'risk' with applicants.

## Chapter 5: Early views on outcomes and impacts

There is some early evidence of positive outcomes for Skills Bootcamp participants. These are primarily for Skills Bootcamps in Digital and 'Other' (non-HGV) due to the delays in testing for HGV courses. Future completion and outcome reports will examine these issues in greater detail once all of the data for Wave 2 Skills Bootcamps are available.

### Participant employment outcomes

The aim of Skills Bootcamps is for participants to achieve a successful employment outcome within six months of completing their training. These outcomes include securing the offer of a new job, new role/responsibilities, or work/contracts for self-employment, which utilise the skills they've gained through the Skills Bootcamp

The provision of a guaranteed interview during a Skills Bootcamp course offers a key method through which participants can obtain a successful employment outcome. As the aforementioned chapters have explored, the quality of the interview offered has often been inconsistent; thus, this has not produced successful outcomes for some participants.

Self-employed participants often had different expectations regarding Skills Bootcamp outcomes in comparison to employed and non-employed participants. For instance, the self-employed were motivated to increase the number of contacts or clients, improve the efficiency of their systems, or implement marketing strategies to grow their business. The self-employed were less interested in guaranteed interviews because they were deemed to be irrelevant to self-employment:

I'm not looking for a job — I'm looking to enhance my business.  
*Participant – Digital (self-employed)*

### The guaranteed interview

Some participant focus group attendees had been offered an interview as part of their Skills Bootcamp training, depending on their stage of Skills Bootcamp training. Early insights show that some focus group attendees obtained a successful outcome from their guaranteed interview. Most obtained a new job in their sector of choice, with a smaller number increasing their responsibilities within their current role. The completion and outcome report will focus on the role of Skills Bootcamps in securing successful outcomes for participants.

## Role of Skills Bootcamp in interview performance

Participants identified increased confidence as a key benefit of Skills Bootcamps which helped them to perform in their arranged interviews. Other participants stated that talking about their Skills Bootcamp experiences during interviews helped to fill gaps in employment and showed self-motivation for continual development, which employers were believed to be seeking. From this perspective, the Skills Bootcamp itself did not directly lead to employment, but rather helped participants to gain an advantage over other candidates:

It made me look credible even when I was not working — it helped with the questions they asked me about what I was doing in my free time. *Participant – Digital*

Other participants suggested that having the Skills Bootcamp on their CV had helped them to obtain interviews which they were unable to achieve previously. In addition, the employability skills training has been positively linked to successful interviews:

I had a few interviews with [Digital companies]. They were big companies and I felt the questions and the way the interview was were very similar to the way [Skills Bootcamp provider] taught us. *Participant – Digital*

Skills Bootcamp in Digital focus group attendees believed that their training helped to improve their understanding of key terms, concepts and principles within the digital world, enabling them to converse confidently during their interviews.

Others were less effusive about the role of Skills Bootcamps in obtaining a job. For instance, some stated that the knowledge that they have gained in their Skills Bootcamp has helped them to perform in the job, but that it did not contribute to their obtainment of the job.

Providers felt that employability sessions and mock interviews helped participants in real interviews because they provided learners with valuable experiences as well as feedback on their strengths and weaknesses. Some participants who had been either employed and changing their career or long-term-unemployed may not have had much recent experience of interviews. These experiences provided on Skills Bootcamp courses can help to reduce nerves surrounding interviews and increase participants' feelings of confidence regarding the interview experience. In contrast to the provider perspective, participants were less explicit in linking the employability sessions to positive interview outcomes.

## Participants' careers

A number of participant focus group attendees noted that they have obtained their first job in their new career sector. This was primarily in the digital sector:

When it comes to job preparation, I had an amazing experience. I got my first job weeks after I finished, but [the Skills Bootcamp] definitely helped and opened my eyes to the actual process. When I had my apprenticeship interviews [before the Skills Bootcamp], I realise I could have done better if I'd have had this job preparation. For me, it was good, very useful, and got me a job. *Participant – Digital*

Many participants stated that they gained a new job because of what they learned on their Skills Bootcamp course and because of the confidence that they gained. Before starting their Skills Bootcamps, many participants suggested that they would not have believed that they could obtain the job that they wanted, feeling that applying to jobs was 'quite daunting' (Participant – Digital). This was reiterated by providers, i.e. that the Skills Bootcamps' influence on confidence is key to allowing learners to access successful outcomes:

This learner went and got a job at a really prestigious company. He attributed all of that success to us and our Skills Bootcamp for changing his mindset. Not just the skills, it was that mindset change and that confidence development. *Provider – Digital*

## Responsibilities and performance in current role

Early evidence suggests that employed participants perceived that their enhanced skills and knowledge obtained from Skills Bootcamps would lead to future increased responsibilities in their role:

I did get a letter from my line manager about how the Skills Bootcamp would enhance the responsibilities I had in my role.  
*Participant – Digital*

For some of these participants, completing a Skills Bootcamp was a personal choice, often viewed as separate from their working responsibilities. These participants noted that the Skills Bootcamp had increased their performance at work, citing improved efficiency. One participant also noted that their Skills Bootcamp may have an impact on their pay or promotion at their next review, but these benefits have not yet been realised.

Participants identified that their Skills Bootcamps had improved their performance at their current job by improving the efficiency of their current skills and adding new skills to their



portfolio. This is particularly key for Digital participants, who cited greater analytical and data-processing skills as enhancing the detail that they can include in their current roles. Self-employed participants also noted that the skills that they had learned could be applied to their business, such as social media marketing and promotion, which they hoped would produce positive business outcomes in the future:

I've used [the Skills Bootcamp knowledge] to rethink through my mission and vision as a business. In terms of whether it's improved the number of clients or revenue I'm bringing in, it's very early days [...] I've got more confidence from a self-employed perspective, which means you're more energetic and more motivated, and you're far more engaging with potential clients. Some of the softer outcomes are definitely being reaped as a result [of the Skills Bootcamps].

*Participant – Digital (self-employed)*

## Impact on participants' lives

Some providers stated that Skills Bootcamps can transform participants' lives. For many providers, the Skills Bootcamps offer participants the opportunity to learn and develop in an area that they have always wanted to explore but previously have not been able to access:

Skills Bootcamps has given a lot of people the opportunity to do something they've always wanted to do. People say, "I've wanted to do this since I was a child". When you see [that] Skills Bootcamps changes people's lives, that's where the big impact is. Even if it's just changing one person's life, that's made it all worthwhile. *Provider – HGV*

Despite the metrics and KPIs that dictate to providers the need for 75% of participants to obtain a positive outcome, many providers could identify individuals who exemplified the role of the Skills Bootcamps in changing people's lives. In making training available to people who normally may not be able to access it, the Skills Bootcamps are having 'incredibly powerful' impacts on participants (Provider – Green):

One [participant] mentioned that he was previously in prison, came out and then got onto the Skills Bootcamp, and then got hired and employed. He talked about how life-changing it is and how he's not now having to think about where the money's coming from. He's got a clear career path for the future of where he wants to go — it's given him a really good path to go down. *Provider – Green*

## Employers' recruitment through Skills Bootcamps

Some employers were able to use the Skills Bootcamps initiative as a recruitment stream, with a number of employers demonstrating that they have successfully recruited new members of staff. However, those who completed the survey also noted that some vacancies are difficult to fill, often due to too much competition from other employers or due to low numbers of applicants with the required skills. Details on the number of vacancies offered based on management information data can be found earlier in Table 18.

The employment opportunities that arise following the Skills Bootcamps mean that employers can fill their recruitment gaps and simultaneously develop a more skilful employee base. Many providers noted that the opportunity to upskill and fill the skills gaps was not possible prior to Skills Bootcamps. Providers noted that Skills Bootcamps have given 'employers hope' that their vacancies can be filled (Provider – HGV) and that there is an initiative that will support their needs.

## Skills Bootcamps and employers' productivity

For many employers, it was difficult to specifically notice improvement in productivity for their organisation. However, many employers noted that a more qualified workforce meant that they could offer 'better' services to clients. Employers also noted the potential impact on productivity of a more skilled workforce:

If you have a highly skilled, well-invested workforce and I've seen this happen, the productivity follows. *Employer – Digital*

In addition, employers believed that diversifying the workforce and bringing in new ideas has a positive impact on productivity by injecting new enthusiasm.

Increasing the skills of the workforce meant that some employers could charge more for their services; thus, the upskilling of their employees has had a positive financial impact on their company. This is particularly true for those in the rail industry, for whom increasing the skillset of their employees means that they rely less on outsourcing to their supply chain and delivering more contracts in house.

## Other workforce impacts for employers

The Skills Bootcamps programme is believed to improve workforce diversity and make sectors more inclusive. HGV<sup>34</sup> and digital<sup>35</sup> organisations in particular have historically been typecast as white and male. Providers and employers noted that Skills Bootcamps have been successful in recruiting more women to access HGV and digital careers. Comparing the management information with the ONS workforce does show slightly more applications, participation and starts amongst women than would be expected (see Table 3 for examples in the Transport sector for HGV).

Diversifying the workforce benefits the industry by offering new perspectives and angles to problem solving in their discipline. This was particularly noted by Digital employers, for whom offering different solutions can help to meet their clients' needs:

It's the way people think about solutions. It's how you can support clients best because if you have a diverse workforce, you are able to provide a brilliant service. So we build the best [workforce] out of what is there in the market, and usually those with the least [digital] experience have brilliant ideas because it's a very fresh way of looking at stuff. So it's always a very welcome aspect to bring someone new in [the company], especially from a different background. *Employer – Digital*

As a result of the increased diversity that has become possible, employers commended Skills Bootcamps on contributing to their 'objectives of boosting social mobility' (Employer – Digital). When Skills Bootcamps are of high quality, employers noted that participants can contribute to their company, offering more than merely their digital skills. People are being offered opportunities for jobs and progression that may not be possible without Skills Bootcamps:

[Skills Bootcamps] have really shown that you can take people from any background. They don't have to have had five years of experience in a particular role to come in and contribute to the business. Our demographic has been steadily changing — it was very white, middle-aged. We've reinvented ourselves and our age profile is coming down. We're diversifying our demographics and

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<sup>34</sup> The [Transport Exchange Group](#) reports that only 1–3% of HGV drivers are female, while only 4% of drivers are from [ethnically diverse backgrounds](#).

<sup>35</sup> A [Tech Nation report](#) shows that 19% of tech workers are women and 15% are from ethnically diverse backgrounds.

getting better and better each year. That's the main benefit of [Skills Bootcamps]. *Employer – Digital*

Working with the Skills Bootcamps programme led to some employers changing their recruitment practices. Many Digital employers noted that they want the right person over their skills. Subsequently, some Digital employers reflected on their recruitment processes and revised how they advertise for roles, changing to an emphasis on the requirement of the 'right' person over skills, as well as showcasing the potential for the successful candidate to grow in their company:

One of the things was how [...] we describe the role that we have [a vacancy for]. We thought we want a digital marketing person, so we would pick some things about what we needed. But [as a result of the Skills Bootcamps], we've realised how hard it is to translate that for an applicant. We need to change the language. We need to describe a learning, not just a job role. [After making these changes] we then got much better at finding the right kind of person for us. *Employer – Digital*

Employers who were heavily involved with the Skills Bootcamps strongly appreciated getting to know the participants throughout their 'journey', and some suggested that they will continue to explore relationships with providers to be a key part of their recruitment strategy moving forwards. Employers that work with Skills Bootcamps and engage with participants noted that they can get to know participants, acting as a form of a 'pre-screen' for their recruitment (Employer – Digital), ensuring that the right fit is maximised between the employer and participant:

[Because of Skills Bootcamps] we've almost built our relationship with the candidates before they're even employed. We get to know a bit of their background, and a bit about them before we even sit down to do any interviews. *Employer – Green*

Employers believed this to represent sustainable recruitment and increase the likelihood of being able to retain staff because better appointments can be made where employers are less likely to recruit someone who is not a good 'fit' for their company.

## **Barriers to achieving impact from Skills Bootcamps**

All employers and providers were effusive about the underlying premise of Skills Bootcamps and its position within their sector contributing to addressing skills shortages. Despite believing that Skills Bootcamps were fundamentally a good initiative and were

needed to support the economy, some employers and providers identified elements that could be improved to ensure consistency across the delivery of Skills Bootcamps:

This is a good programme, but it needs tightening up. Some of what the providers actually do and offer needs tidying up. They're not apples and apples. My Bootcamp with vendor certifications are not the same as another person's certificate of completion. I just think it needs sharpening up, some of the rules clarifying and getting some clarity about what it is that providers should be doing in this space.

*Provider – Digital*

Other providers felt that there is only so much learning that can happen within the length of a Skills Bootcamp. This limits the potential next steps for Skills Bootcamp graduates, with greater consideration needed as to what follows the training to try to bridge the gap between the Skills Bootcamp and future employment/training:

You're limited with what you can learn within a Bootcamp. Some of it is about making sure that [the participant] has someone that can support them after their training, someone who can push them a little and help them get where they want to be. [The Skills Bootcamps] need to be more joined up with the next thing. It might be that there's the Skills Bootcamp and then something to follow on, but there needs to be a clearer link to what is next, which might not be employment — it might be training. *Provider – Digital*

## Chapter 6: Conclusions

Across Wave 2, between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, there were 52,710 applications to Skills Bootcamps: 16,120 starts were recorded. Participants predominantly engaged with Skills Bootcamps in Digital and HGV Driving. A minority of participants engaged with Skills Bootcamps in Construction, Green, Engineering, and Technical skills.

### Initial engagement with Skills Bootcamps

Wave 2 delivery successfully reached a more diverse range of individuals than would have been expected based on the current UK workforce. These include more female, Black, Black British, Caribbean, and African participants and show that Skills Bootcamps created training opportunities that some may not have otherwise accessed. Women and those with higher levels of education were more successful at becoming Skills Bootcamp participants after their application. Those on Skills Bootcamps in Digital had higher levels of prior education in comparison to HGV participants. This suggests that the training is reaching different individuals to target specific skills shortages.

Evidence from the survey and focus groups show many participants were motivated to undertake a Skills Bootcamp to upskill and improve their employment prospects. This frequently meant aspirations to move into a new industry or a new job with a higher salary. Many participants were attracted to the guaranteed interview as part of their training, and that training was free to them.

There was a high demand for Skills Bootcamps in HGV Driving and Digital during Wave 2. Other sectors, such as Construction, faced recruitment challenges, and many providers did not meet their recruitment targets.

Skills Bootcamps in HGV Driving were oversubscribed in comparison with other sectors. Higher-than-expected levels of interest meant that some providers experienced challenges in selecting candidates and communicating enrolment and registration information to participants in a timely way.

Many participants of Skills Bootcamps in Digital felt that they would have benefitted from clearer signposting regarding the different Digital courses available. This would have helped to ensure that they applied for the most relevant course at the right level.

A diverse range of providers and delivery partners engaged with Skills Bootcamps, including colleges, specialist training providers, and local authorities. Many providers thought that Skills Bootcamps aligned with their model of social responsibility and provided an opportunity to increase access to training and diversify their sector. Other

providers engaged with Skills Bootcamps for financial and contractual reasons. Skills Bootcamps provided an additional source of income to supplement other training contracts such as apprenticeship schemes.

More than one third of employers (36%) engaging with Skills Bootcamps employed 250 people or more. By comparison, these large employers constitute less than 1% of all employers in England. Organisations employing 1–9 people constituted 19% of employers engaged with Skills Bootcamps in Digital.

Employers were attracted to the subsidised cost of Skills Bootcamp training. Many employers felt that the training could help to upskill their own staff and demographically diversify their workforce. The type and level of employer engagement were varied. Early indicators suggest that more engaged employers, such as through curriculum design, providing guest speakers/mentors, and offering guaranteed interviews, reported more positive outcomes.

## Skills Bootcamp delivery

Participants had varying experiences of their Skills Bootcamp, often dependent on the provider with which they were enrolled. Some participants believed that training that was adapted from pre-existing courses (e.g. apprenticeships) often included too much content and was not pitched at the right level. Effective training models included providing sufficient time for participants to practise and embed their skills, interactive activities with peers, and project-based work. This was particularly relevant for Skills Bootcamps in Digital.

The shortage of driving tests delayed the delivery of Skills Bootcamps in HGV Driving throughout Wave 2. Whilst most participants understood the reasons for the delays, more communication would have helped to ensure that participants and employers were aware of what was happening and the projected timelines. Employer and provider interviewees believed that test delays reduced the number of Skills Bootcamp starts and significantly reduced the number completing training.

Providers described their experiences of the Department for Education data collection process as complicated and time-consuming. The quality of management information available for programme monitoring and analysis in the evaluation could be improved through introducing data collection methods with stronger validation processes.

In some instances, providers did not meet their payment milestones. This was largely due to the challenges of evidencing successful Skills Bootcamp outcomes once participants had completed their course. It can be difficult to reach participants who have often moved on and do not respond to provider correspondence.

Well-structured employer–provider relationships reportedly helped Skills Bootcamp programmes to operate efficiently. Establishing employer ‘boards’ to direct and shape curriculum content helped to develop effective employer–provider engagement for a couple of providers. Existing and/or early employer–provider collaboration gave employers more opportunity to influence how Skills Bootcamps were designed and delivered, as well as the topics covered in the curriculum.

## Early outcomes and impacts

Providers, employers and participants all emphasised the importance of Skills Bootcamps in supporting the drive to overcome skills shortages and grow the economy. Employers and providers particularly felt that Skills Bootcamps were a ‘good idea’. Early evidence in this report shows that Skills Bootcamps can have positive impacts for all involved, which can have a knock-on impact on productivity and in addressing employers’ skills gaps. The evidence also suggests that Skills Bootcamps are offering opportunities for participants to secure jobs in new sectors, obtain higher salaries, and acquire lifelong skills.

Participants reported that their confidence when applying for jobs and their performance in interviews increased because of their Skills Bootcamp experience. A combination of employability sessions, support with CVs and interview preparation, and occupationally focused projects mirroring industry expectations gave participants the confidence that they could perform ‘on the job’. For unemployed participants, Skills Bootcamps offered a good addition to their CV to demonstrate a commitment to continued personal and professional development during unemployment.

Despite it being a condition of payment, guaranteed interviews had not always been offered to those who were eligible when focus group fieldwork took place<sup>36, 37</sup>. Not all focus group participants had completed their training when the group took place and may have been offered an interview at a later date. Where interviews had been offered there was uncertainty surrounding the expectations of these, and the reported quality of interviews varied. Mock interview practice sessions were sometimes offered (instead of a guaranteed interview for an actual job vacancy). As providers can offer more than one interview, these participants may have been offered further interviews after completing the fieldwork. Some participants were concerned about the proposed salaries of job vacancies, as these were lower than they had expected.

Employers reported varying degrees of success from interviews with Skills Bootcamp participants. Some participants performed well, and employers made subsequent

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<sup>36</sup> Providers are required to provide evidence of an interview offer for a role that aligns with the skills acquired through the Skills Bootcamp in order for them to claim payment.

<sup>37</sup> Guaranteed interviews are not required for self-employed or co-funded participants.



appointments. Larger organisations experienced issues regarding Skills Bootcamp participants struggling with assessment-day-style recruitment practices. Some larger employers offered employability support in the Skills Bootcamps to bridge this gap, including support on corporate-style assessment days and how to use previous experience to highlight transferrable skills and personal strengths during interviews.

Employers emphasised that employing Skills Bootcamp participants can help to diversify an organisation's workforce, bringing new ideas to the workplace. There are early indications that Skills Bootcamps increase productivity within organisations by upskilling their workforce.

## Areas for consideration

Based on the implementation report evidence, we suggest that the DfE may want to consider the following to further develop the design and delivery of Wave 3 Skills Bootcamps:

- Strong and robust IAG being offered to participants may help to manage expectations regarding the training as well as potential outcomes and changes in salary. IAG may also ensure that participants are enrolled on the best course for them and help to promote positive outcomes.
- Higher levels of employer–provider engagement at all stages of the Skills Bootcamp lifecycle were connected with more positive outcomes, experiences and quality for all involved. Developing successful employer–provider relationships can take time, and these may have been established for a long time before the Skills Bootcamps initiative.
- Where activities and methods of delivery allow for participants to embed their learning and apply their learning to scenarios that mirror those in industry, participants are better able to 'see' the route into employment as being achievable.
- Improving the quality and coverage of data collected will ensure that better analytical and evaluative questions can be answered. Whilst providers understood the need for good recordkeeping, many felt that the system could be simplified and were hopeful that this would change with future waves.
- There is a lack of clarity surrounding the guaranteed interview and what it entails. This means that some participant and employer expectations were not met. Greater communication regarding what is expected and strategies to ensure that appropriate job interviews are offered would help to ensure that participants achieve positive employment outcomes. Tailoring employability support to interview requirements could help to ensure that participants are able to make the transition into employment.

- The variety of training offered through Skills Bootcamps means that there are many different pathways that participants can take after completing their training. Mapping the routes and identifying to participants how to take their next steps will help to join the Skills Bootcamps initiative to other training mechanisms (e.g. apprenticeships, further Skills Bootcamps) which may be required prior to employment. More communication and information from providers to explain the level of learning as well as the different content areas and the potential routes following the training could better inform learners and help participants to gain more from training.
- Our findings support those of the Ofsted Thematic Report<sup>38</sup> that the quality of delivery and the assessment of learning vary too much between Skills Bootcamps, meaning that it is not possible to consistently measure progress. Improving consistent reporting could lead to greater accountability amongst providers regarding the quality of training and potentially improve outcomes.
- Scaling up the design and delivery of high-quality provision for Wave 2 was a challenge for some providers. More resources are needed to ensure that communication can remain of good quality when larger numbers of participants and employers are involved.

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<sup>38</sup> Ofsted Skills Bootcamp Thematic Survey [Report](#), 2022.

## Appendix 1: Detailed methodology

Our mixed-methods approach used secondary and primary research methods. We cleaned then analysed management information collected by providers regarding Skills Bootcamps applicants, starts and engaged employers. The primary research comprised surveys, focus groups and interviews to collect data directly from participants, employers, and providers. Fieldwork was conducted between May and July 2022.

This evaluation is based on a theory of change model that outlines the inputs and activities integral to the Skills Bootcamp, and the pathways that lead to outcomes and impacts (Figure 17).

### The management information held on Skills Bootcamps

Skills Bootcamp training providers complete management information which describes those who apply and participate on a Skills Bootcamp, and details of employers they engage.

This appendix mostly concerns data about Skills Bootcamps open to enrolment between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, also known as Wave 2 Skills Bootcamps.

The analysis of management information includes individuals added by providers and processed by DfE up to 31<sup>st</sup> July. Some delays in the delivery of Skills Bootcamps (especially HGV training) meant the window for Wave 2 delivery was extended.

DfE asks training providers to complete an excel workbook (the data template) designed for recording management information. A training provider completes a data template for each Skills Bootcamp.

The workbook records four broad categories of data:

1. Data about the provider and the Skills Bootcamp itself (metadata)
2. Individual records of those who apply for the Skills Bootcamp (applicants)
3. Individual records of those who participate in the Skills Bootcamp (starts)
4. Organisation records of the employers who providers engage in a Skills Bootcamp (employers)

Individual records contain sensitive data such as an applicant's national insurance number (NINO).

DfE completed some initial data processing to turn templates into two datasets:

1. **All applicants and starts.** All starts were an applicant at one point, however not all applicants became a start. DfE provided a single record for all applicants, including data about participation where relevant. Two main datasets were provided by DfE:

- a. one for all Wave 2 Skills Bootcamps in HGV driving applicants and starts (called **HGV W2**); and
- b. one for all applicants and starts from other Wave 2 Skills Bootcamps (**Wave 2**). The latter group were predominantly those related to Skills Bootcamps in Digital but also covered Construction, Engineering, Technical and Green Skills.

2. **Employers**. The employer data submitted by providers was processed by DfE and transferred for analysis in another dataset.

A further three applicant and start management information datasets were analysed:

3. **Wave 1 extension data** (W1 Ext). Data from Wave 1 Extension Skills Bootcamps. These are Skills Bootcamps where the provider delivered Skills Bootcamps during Wave 1, and their contract was then extended to deliver new Skills Bootcamps in FY21/22 (Wave 2).
4. **Cold spots data** (W2 Cold). DfE identified gaps in provision in England where some targeted recruitment took place.
5. **Recovered data** (W2 Recovered). This covers a handful of anomalous applicants and starts whose personal data (national insurance number, surname, etc.) required further exploration to recover.

All data processed by DfE was encrypted and transferred securely to CFE Research for further processing and analysis. Data was provided by DfE in comma separated values (.csv) format and stored as string variables.

## Data processing

Further data processing was necessary because of the data entry methods used by providers. The original data template included data validation text for many variables. However, providers could overwrite cell data validation and input their own values. As an example, employment status for applicants was recorded<sup>39</sup>. The template used data validation to present nine employment options to providers. The .csv file received from DfE contained 75 different text string variations of the validated codes.

All the validated variables in templates were overwritten by some providers.

This section summarises the subsequent data processing completed by CFE Research on the Skills Bootcamp datasets transferred by DfE.

## Key transformations

Four main types of transformations were undertaken. The common element was turning string variables into either date, numerical, ordinal or categorical variables. Sometimes

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<sup>39</sup> In a variable called "employment.status.on.day.prior.to.beginning.the.bootcamp."

this involved processing coded text strings to match the validation in the data template. Date and numerical variables were transformed to create variables that were consistent for analysis. We summarise the main transformations undertaken here.

## Dates

Several date variables were central to analysis including date of birth (from which age was derived) and the date when an individual started a Skills Bootcamp.

Dates were provided by DfE in mixed formats such as Excel five-digit format<sup>40</sup>, long and short standard date formats, American date formats and a range of different separators e.g. DD/MM/YYYY, MM.DD.YY, YYYY-MM-DD.

All dates were turned into SPSS's default format (SDATE10) using a mix of Excel formulae, SPSS syntax and manual coding.

Most cases of American dates (month before day) were obvious and corrected. For example, any day from the 13<sup>th</sup> is simple to identify: 12/23/2021 can only translate into 23/12/2021. However, it was clear in some cases that a mix of UK and American date formats were used by the provider, especially with the several start dates present in the data record (see "calculating the number of Skills Bootcamp starts" later for more detail and a definition of start date type). In cases where the first listed start date had a day that was 12 or under, it was not possible to accurately identify a true start date. As an example:

1. Recorded start date on the participation record = 4/2/2021
2. Recorded start date on the application record = 2/4/2021

In this instance, it is not possible from a .csv record to know if the 4<sup>th</sup> February or the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2021 is the correct start date. In such cases, a hierarchy was used to select a date: the presence of a participation start date took precedence over the applicant and metadata start date. The applicant start date took precedence over the metadata start date.

## Numeric data

The template included variables like income prior to starting a Skills Bootcamp<sup>41</sup>, attendance rate<sup>42</sup> and hours of attendance<sup>43</sup>. Providers entered a range of different values and text which required recoding into consistent variables.

In the case of income:

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<sup>40</sup> This format records the number of days since 01/01/1900

<sup>41</sup> A variable named:

"what.is.your.wage.if.you.are.currently.employed..or.your.most.recent.wage.if..not.currently.employed..input.total.yearly.earnings.before.tax."

<sup>42</sup> "attendance.rate.of.total.course...."

<sup>43</sup> "average.number.of.hours.learner.has.engaged.in.additional.activity...support.weekly"

- Some income was recorded as an hourly, weekly or monthly figure by the provider.
  - Hourly data was classed as unknown because the management information does not record the number of hours worked in a prior role
  - Weekly data was multiplied by 52 to create an annual salary
  - Monthly data was multiplied by 12 to create an annual salary
  - CFE Added an additional variable to identify data that was provided as a monthly or weekly rate.
- All data with additional text characters were manually transformed into a number. For example, “18k” → 18,000; “£20,000” → 20,000, etc.,
- Any other record (data in ranges, numbers lower than 10,000 without any text, data in foreign currencies) was classed as unknown.

Other numeric variables will become more important for the forthcoming completion and outcomes report. A more complete record for attendance data is expected in April 2023 for analysis.

Providers used two methods of listing an attendance rate: a decimal (e.g. 0.75) or a percentage (e.g. 75% or just 75). All data was cleaned to use a consistent method, namely a numeric between 1 and 100 to represent the percentage.

Hours of attendance per week was unchanged. However, the data range was large (0.1 to 300). The larger figure is inaccurate and likely reflects the total number of hours associated with the Skills Bootcamp. It would represent nearly 19 hours a week for a 16-week Skills Bootcamp. 212 records in the early data stated the individual undertook more than 40 hours a week on their Skills Bootcamp. The completion data will need editing prior to analysis.

### **Categorical and derived variables**

As noted above, some providers over-wrote the validated response lists in the data template. CFE used SPSS syntax to code provider responses back into the original validated lists. We used a three-stage process:

1. Run a frequency to identify all strings listed for each variable
2. Manually back-code all text items into the pre-existing template code list
3. Create an SPSS syntax that creates a new categorical or ordinal variable based on the original template codes from providers’ text strings

Some cleaned data was further transformed to create new analysis variables. These include:

1. Deriving age on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 based on and applicant's (and hence a start's) date of birth. Calculated ages younger than 18 or older than 65 were classed as unknown.
2. Placing numeric data like age and income into bands for sub-group analysis
3. Combining data to estimate important metrics. See "calculating the number of Skills Bootcamp starts" later as an example of one such transformation.

All such transformations were undertaken using SPSS syntax.

### Identifying duplicate records

DfE created .csv files for CFE Research to use for sampling and analysis at several points. Each file was an update on the previous data sent and included more applicant records, more start conversions and updated participation data. DfE's files collated all data submitted by providers using the template. DfE analysts used [R language](#) and [Power queries](#) to extract data from templates into a .csv file for subsequent use. This automated process resulted in two types of duplicate records within the .csv file sent to CFE Research:

1. Some original source template spreadsheets from training providers were entered twice (source copies) because the names of the spreadsheets were different. Providers do not typically use the same spreadsheet name in their data returns. This meant all or most individuals recorded on each submitted sheet were the same people.
2. There were also duplicate individuals listed as applying for, or starting, a single Skills Bootcamp (duplicate people). Subtle and hard-to-detect differences in records could result in the same person appearing several times within a Skills Bootcamp template. Whilst one person can undertake several Skills Bootcamps, they should not participate on the same Skills Bootcamp more than once.

DfE analysts kindly took significant time to identify duplicate source copies and sent a list of these to CFE to exclude from the management information analysis. CFE Research do not have access to the original data because it contains sensitive information like an applicant's national insurance number (NINO). Without access to the original data, CFE cannot conduct independent checks for duplicates.

DfE also added an identification variable for each individual that applied and/or participated on a Skills Bootcamp. However, this identifier:

1. Changed each time new data was sent i.e., the identifier in later data was not consistent with the one provided in earlier data; and
2. The same sequential numbering system was used for the HGV and Wave 2 datasets. This meant that the same identifier was present in each dataset. If code 10001 was used in the HGV data, the same 10001 code was present in the Wave 2 data.

3. Although the instances were likely very low, a person undertaking an HGV and a Wave 2 Skills Bootcamp was not assigned the same identifier between datasets.

The first datasets for HGV and Wave 2 applicants and starts were sent to CFE in March and May 2022 so that CFE could draw a primary research survey sample for those who agreed to take part in evaluation activity. DfE sent datasets in September 2022 from which all analysis for the implementation period up to June 2022 of Wave 2 was conducted.

DfE added the original identifiers used in March into the June to assist in matching management information to survey data.

## Analysing management information

The process evaluation includes analysis of this data including:

- Applicant and start data describes their demographics, prior education level and employment status prior to starting a Skills Bootcamp. The management information also includes tracking data on individuals as they progress through their Skills Bootcamp. The main analysis within this report considers the number of starts in the data provided. This emphasis is important because the actual number of starts is higher than reported here. The process evaluation analyses data on Wave 2 between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 in addition to data from Wave 1 Extension Skills Bootcamps. These are Skills Bootcamps where the provider delivered Skills Bootcamps during Wave 1, and their contract was then extended to deliver new Skills Bootcamps in FY21/22 (Wave 2). Updated analysis of all Wave 2 starts will be included in future completions and outcomes reports.
- Some limited employer data is also provided. However, management information records were insufficient to append further detail on participating businesses. Some limited descriptive analysis of the type and scale of employer involvement is included in this report.
- We aimed to improve employer data by postcode data matching. A proforma was designed and sent to providers for them to provide more complete details of the employers they engaged through Skills Bootcamps. The returns from this exercise were sent to Experian for data matching (see the short section below for more detail).

The report offers a baseline analysis of applications, starts and employer engagement. Later completions and outcomes reports will explore final completion data in more detail. Applicant management information has been linked to other datasets such as the indices for multiple deprivation via the postcode given on application. This data matching enhances the demographic application and start data analysis. However, not all



management information records had accurate postcode data, thus there are some gaps in the matched data.

### Data matching employer records via Experian

CFE requested further details from providers on the employers with which they engaged. Of the 61 providers contacted, 23 completed another short spreadsheet collecting employers' postcode and, if known, Company House or charity registration number. The resulting 831 employer records were sent to Experian for matching to their extensive company database. The returned firmographic data included information such as the SIC code, whether the postcode was for the company headquarters or branch, the company turnover, the number of employees (total and on site), etc.

Two groups are used in the matched Experian data analysis: all organisations listed and unique organisations. One organisation or site could appear more than once in the data when they accessed two or more Skills Bootcamps and/or use more than one provider. Hence the analysis of all organisations is sometimes valid. However, analysis on individual organisation metrics like employee numbers is better undertaken after removing duplicate organisations.

### Calculating the number of Skills Bootcamp starts

Each applicant / start data collection included up to three start date variables drawn from the different parts of the management information spreadsheet. There are three versions of start date:

1. Start date from metadata. Here, some providers include a start date in the general description of the Skills Bootcamp.
2. Applicant data. The date given on the application record when present.
3. Participation data. The date given on the participation record when present.

The coverage of start dates for each collection is summarised in Table 23. An asterisk indicates the assumed location of the start date given.

**Table 23: Start date variables for each management information data collection**

Data collection	Meta data	Applicant data	Participation data
Wave 2 Data	Bootcamp start date	Bootcamp start date X	Bootcamp start date Y
HGV W2	–	Bootcamp start date X	Bootcamp start date Y
W1 Ext	Bootcamp start date*	–	–
W2 Cold	Bootcamp start date*	–	Bootcamp start date 5*
W2 Recovered	Bootcamp start date*	–	Bootcamp start date Y

Coverage of start dates was incomplete because providers did not have to fill in each start date variable. The structure between collections was also inconsistent.

When calculating the number of starts, we would ideally use the participation date variable which was completed when an individual started their Skills Bootcamp. However, there was an under-report in HGV W2's participation start date (4,651 valid dates) compared to the date at which a first payment is recorded (5,203 valid dates). That more payment milestones were present compared to participation start dates showed that date fields were unreliable.

Further, some differences were systemic. Certain providers did not complete participation start dates and instead used the applicant and/or meta data start date.

## Implications

When calculating the number of starts, CFE used the hierarchical approach described earlier:

1. The participation start date took precedence over the applicant and metadata start date
2. The applicant start date took precedence over the metadata start date

A record was also only classed as a start if it had a valid first payment date recorded in the management information.

## Appending management information to survey data

This was the most challenging aspect of the management information processing for the implementation period of Wave 2. Earlier, we noted that the identifiers assigned by DfE changed each time new data was sent. Further, the only unique way of identifying each Skills Bootcamp was the name of the spreadsheet. Whenever providers submitted revised figures via the template, they nearly always renamed the spreadsheet they used. We also described instances of duplicate records between and within Skills Bootcamps.

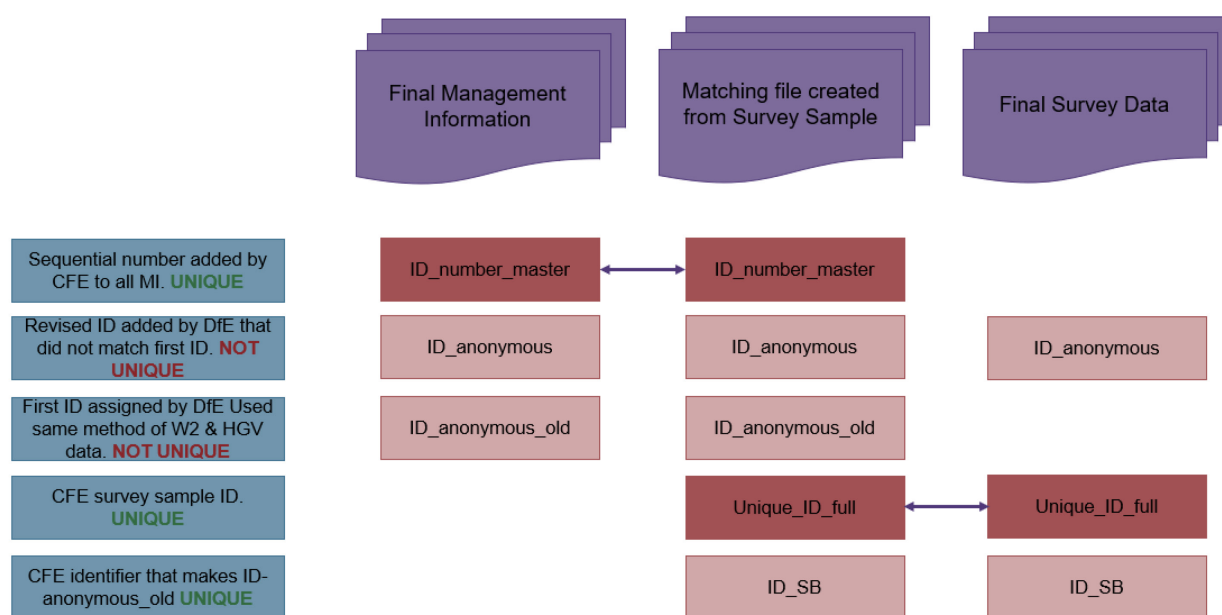
A survey sample was drawn from March and May 2022 cuts of the Wave 2 and HGV datasets. When faced with duplicates, we used a selection algorithm that selected the most recent Skills Bootcamp undertaken where that individual was a known start.

The management information analysis for the implementation report was conducted on data supplied in June 2022. It was necessary to match data (including the right sample record for duplicates) because the survey was designed to minimise the burden on respondents. Where variables like date of birth, gender and prior income were listed in the management information, the survey did not ask for the respondent's age, gender, or

prior income. Matching survey data to the management information was essential to conduct sub-group analyses.

CFE Research assigned some additional identification variables when drawing the survey sample and these were used to append management information to survey responses. Figure 14 summarises how the management information from June 2022 was appended to the final survey data.

**Figure 14: Pathway for appending management information to survey data**



## Skills Bootcamp participants

### Implementation survey

Individuals participating in a Skills Bootcamp completed a short, 5-minute implementation survey, administered online between April–July 2022. The survey supplements the management information data and included questions relating to:

- The nature of an individual’s employment status prior to starting a Skills Bootcamp
- The level of responsibility held in their most recent/current job
- Perception of skill level related to the required skill level for their job
- Overall job satisfaction
- Motivations to apply for a Skills Bootcamps

- Factors that attracted them to Skills Bootcamps

The survey also included a recall question to request permission to recontact about further Skills Bootcamps research. In total, 1,886 individuals responded to the survey, of which 1,680 responses are usable<sup>44</sup>, and a further 941 provided consent for recontact. The survey was sent to 7,061 individuals in the management information data that consented to contact, resulting in a cooperation rate of 24%. Table 24 shows the survey response rate for the different Skills Bootcamps.

**Table 24: Breakdown of survey responses by Skills Bootcamp category**

Skills Bootcamp category	Number of usable responses	Proportion of usable responses
Digital	920	55%
HGV	725	43%
Construction	4	0%
Green Skills	21	1%
Engineering	8	1%
Technical	1	0%
Unknown <sup>45</sup>	1	0%

Source: Participant implementation survey. Base=1,680

## Focus Groups

Twelve focus groups with participants from different Skills Bootcamp categories were carried out between May and July 2022 (Table 25). From the sample who consented to recontact, attendees were separated by Skills Bootcamp category. Where numbers allowed, attendees were sub-grouped by employment status prior to their training (employed, not employed or self-employed) and whether they achieved a successful outcome from their Skills Bootcamp (e.g. new job, successful interview). Attendees were invited to focus groups using a random sampling strategy from within subgroups.

The focus groups lasted between 60 and 90 minutes and were designed to address a common set of topics, whilst being sensitive to the different expectations and

<sup>44</sup> Usable in this instance refers to respondents that provided sufficient answers to a series of questions in the survey without answering all questions.

<sup>45</sup> Participants were asked to complete or modify data available in the management information about their Skills Bootcamp category in the implementation survey. Instances of unknown occurred when this question was not answered or left blank.

experiences depending on the attendees' Skills Bootcamp category and their previous employment status. The common topics included:

- Attendee perceptions of whether the training provision met expectations
- Perceptions about the effectiveness of the training methods used during delivery
- Attendee motivations for applying to do a Skills Bootcamp
- Perceptions about the short-term outcomes and impact that could be attributed to taking part in a Skills Bootcamp.

A specifically tailored focus group for self-employed Digital participants was carried out to capture their unique experiences of Skills Bootcamps compared with employed and unemployed participants.

**Table 25: Focus group characteristics**

Skills Bootcamp category	Number of Focus Groups	Total number of attendees
Digital	6	31
Self-employed Digital	1	2
HGV	3	16
Construction/Green	2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>52</b>

Source: Participant Focus Group attendance data

## Employers

### Implementation survey

A short, online survey for employers who offer Skills Bootcamp placements and/or guaranteed interviews was disseminated to 365 employers between May and June 2022. DfE provided contact details for these employers from those who had consented to participating in the evaluation. The survey was designed to supplement employer management information data, and included questions that:

- Explored the role of the employer in relation to the Skills Bootcamp programme
- Explored how the Skills Bootcamp programme fits into the employer's operational and recruitment strategies
- Obtained employer postcode for head office and/or regional sites
- Obtained the employer's Company House number which enabled the data to be appended to secondary data sources such as Standard Industrial Classification (SIC)

A low response rate of 30 usable survey responses was achieved (response rate of 8%), limiting the analysis options. Absolute numbers, rather than percentages are provided when employer survey findings are reported. Factors emerged during the data collection period that explained some of the employer low response rate. These included incorrect contact details for employers provided in the main dataset (contacts having left the organisation from which they were listed) as well as employers not considering themselves to have had engagement with the Skills Bootcamps, and thus not realising that they were eligible to complete the survey. To mitigate against these factors, DfE provided updated contact details for all employers, as well as engaging with their contract managers to encourage providers to speak with their employers regarding the importance of engaging with the evaluation.

## Interviews

Thirty in-depth interviews with employers explored their perceptions about the benefits of Skills Bootcamps to their organisation or industry and mechanisms through which employer engagement can produce positive outcomes. Employers were recruited via the survey recall question and by directly contacting employers. Direct contact proved effective at engaging employers that had previously not completed the survey. Half (15) of the interviews were with Digital employers with a further nine from Green, five from HGV and one from Construction. Representation was achieved for multi-national large companies and smaller organisations. At the end of the interviews, employer interviewees were asked if they would complete the survey to increase survey response rate.

**Table 26: Employer interview characteristics relating to employer sample**

Bootcamp category	Number of employer interviews	Proportion of employer interviews	Number of employers in MI sample	Proportion of employers in MI sample
Digital	15	50%	187	63%
HGV	5	17%	45	15%
Construction	1	3%	4	1%
Green Skills	9	30%	50	17%
Engineering	0	0%	8	3%
Technical	0	0%	3	1%

Source: Employer interview data and employer management information (MI) sample

As Table 26 shows, the proportion of interviews largely reflected the proportion of employers in the sample. However, a couple of discrepancies exist: the interview sample underrepresented Digital employers, despite being half of all interviews, and

overrepresented Green skills employers, particularly those associated with Skills Bootcamps serving the railway sector.

## Skills Bootcamp providers

### Interviews

Twenty-six in-depth interviews with providers explored their experiences of designing and delivering the Skills Bootcamps. Providers were selected to be interviewed dependent on their Skills Bootcamp sector, so that the interview sample could be representative of the breakdown of providers across the Skills Bootcamp system.

Data from DfE identified that in Wave 2, there are 61 lead providers associated with the Skills Bootcamp programme. The majority (84%) of these providers only offer Skills Bootcamps in one sector. The other providers offer Skills Bootcamps across one or more sectors. For the purpose of interview recruitment, the sector in which the provider delivers the most amount of Skills Bootcamp was taken as their primary sector.

Insights were gained from a range of sectors, but primarily from Digital providers (16) because this sector constitutes the greatest number of providers delivering training during Wave 2. The breakdown of provider interviews can be seen in Table 27. Half (13) of the providers were classified as both lead and delivery providers, meaning that they design and deliver the training; nine were solely lead providers and four were delivery providers.

**Table 27: Proportion of provider interviews relative to provider sample characteristics**

Sector	Number of interviews	Proportion of interviews	Number of providers in MI sample	Proportion of providers in MI sample
Digital	16	62%	37	61%
HGV	8	31%	16	26%
Construction	0	0%	1	2%
Green Skills	1	4%	1	2%
Engineering	0	0%	4	6%
Technical	1	4%	2	3%

Source: Provider interview data and Provider management information (MI) data

Table 27 shows that the make-up of the interviews reflects the wider sample of providers, particularly for Digital and HGV providers that represent the majority of providers in Wave

2. It was not possible to obtain an interview with an Engineering provider, despite approaching all possible providers.

Interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes and covered questions that explored a provider's perspective of the following issues relating to the design and delivery of the training:

- Strengths and limitation of delivery
- Design principles and processes of design
- Examples of good practice in delivery
- Impact and benefits of employer relationships during delivery
- Initial perceptions of impact arising from the Skills Bootcamps programmes

### **Provider proforma**

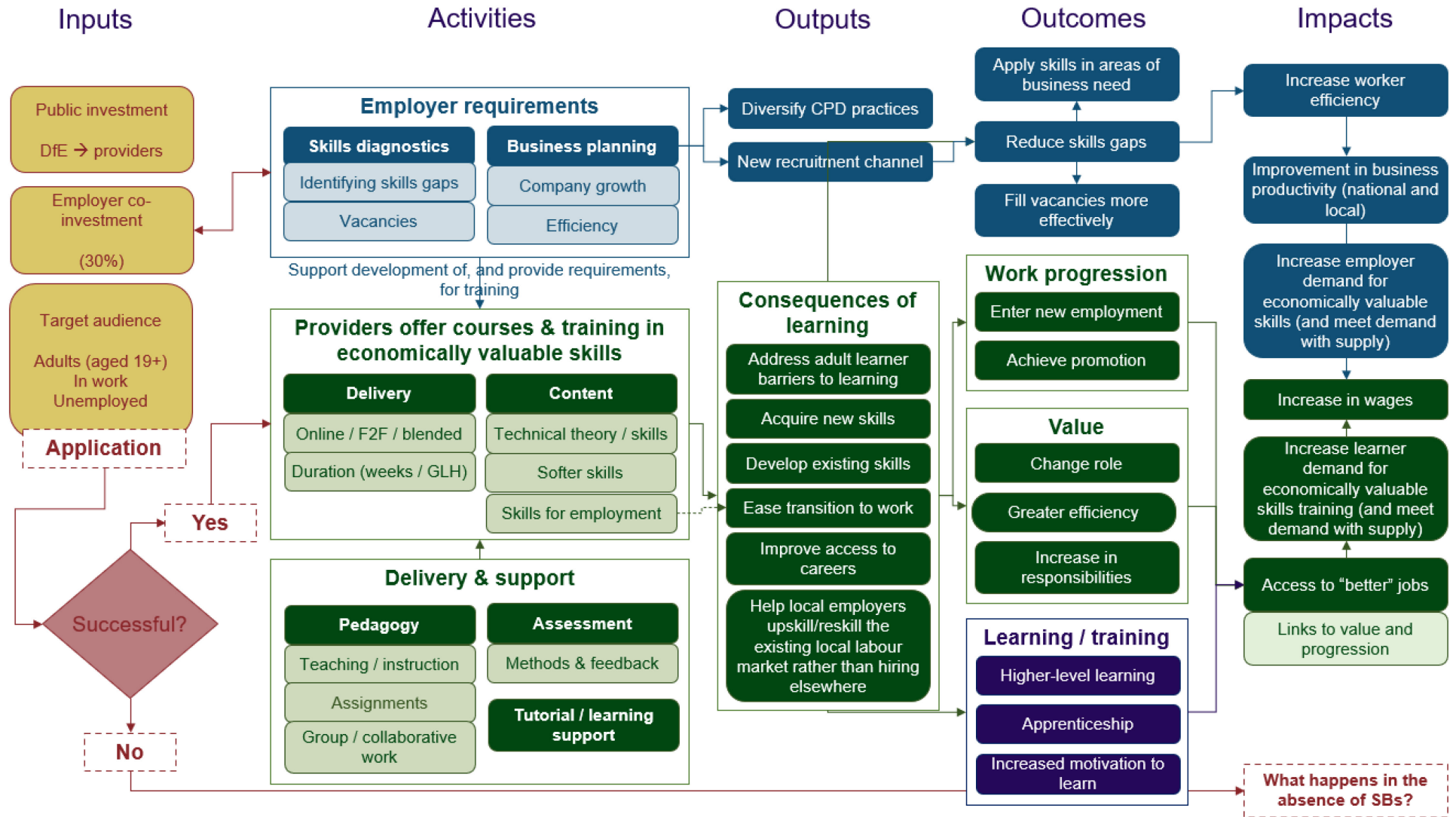
All providers (n=61) were sent a proforma requesting information about the different employers that they engage with. This information was used to support the ability to link data about employers engaged with the Skills Bootcamp, and provide the employer's Companies House number and postcode for the site and/or head office of the organisation. This information supplemented the information within the employer management information and allowed a greater analysis of variables including turnover and size of company. At the point of this implementation report, 23 providers have responded with information about 559 unique employers (839 total employers).

### **Provider management information data**

Information provided by DfE contains information about providers and the Skills Bootcamps they deliver. Using external datasets, the UK Provider Reference Number (UKPRN) has been used to supplement the management information with information from Get Information About Schools (GIAS), creating a more complete picture of the types of providers that are choosing to engage with Skills Bootcamps.



**Figure 15: CFE Theory of Change for the process evaluation of Skills Bootcamps**



## Appendix 2: Management information applicant and start demographics

**Table 28: Age of applicants by Skills Bootcamp type; based on age as of 31st March 2022**

Age band	Digital	HGV	Other	Total
19 to 24	19%	8%	17%	12%
25 to 34	41%	31%	37%	35%
35 to 44	27%	33%	27%	31%
45 to 54	11%	20%	14%	17%
55 to 67	3%	8%	5%	6%
68 plus	0%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,070</b>	<b>31,700</b>	<b>1,761</b>	<b>52,531</b>

Source: Management Information excluding no date of birth given

**Table 29: Age of starts by Skills Bootcamp type; based on age as of 31st March 2022**

Age band	Digital	HGV	Other	Total
19 to 24	17%	6%	17%	14%
25 to 34	40%	30%	37%	37%
35 to 44	28%	34%	27%	29%
45 to 54	12%	22%	15%	15%
55 to 67	3%	9%	5%	5%
68 plus	0%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,420</b>	<b>4,269</b>	<b>1,494</b>	<b>15,183</b>

Source: Management Information excluding no date of birth given

**Table 30: Gender of applicants by Skills Bootcamp type**

Gender	Digital	HGV	Other	Total
Male	55%	93%	85%	79%
Female	45%	7%	15%	21%
Other	1%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,208</b>	<b>31,859</b>	<b>1,768</b>	<b>52,835</b>

Source: Management Information excluding no gender given

**Table 31: Gender of starts by Skills Bootcamp type**

Gender	Digital	HGV	Other	Total
Male	55%	92%	86%	69%
Female	44%	8%	14%	31%
Other	1%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,498</b>	<b>4,335</b>	<b>1,498</b>	<b>15,331</b>

Source: Management Information excluding no gender given

**Table 32: Ethnicity of applicants by Skills Bootcamp type**

Ethnicity	Digital	HGV	Other	Total
White British	35%	58%	59%	50%
Any other white background	12%	15%	7%	14%
Asian or Asian British	17%	8%	11%	11%
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	18%	9%	15%	12%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	5%	3%	3%	4%
Other ethnic group	9%	4%	4%	6%
Prefer not to say	4%	3%	2%	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,239</b>	<b>31,876</b>	<b>1,761</b>	<b>51,876</b>

Source: Management Information excluding no ethnicity given

**Table 33: Ethnicity of starts by Skills Bootcamp type**

Ethnicity	Digital	HGV	Other	Total
White British	35%	66%	57%	46%
Any other white background	12%	11%	8%	11%
Asian or Asian British	17%	7%	11%	14%
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	22%	8%	16%	17%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	5%	3%	3%	4%
Other ethnic group	6%	2%	4%	5%
Prefer not to say	4%	3%	2%	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,576</b>	<b>4,302</b>	<b>1,492</b>	<b>15,370</b>

Source: Management Information excluding no ethnicity given

**Table 34: Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) decile of applicants by Skills Bootcamp type**

IMD Decile	Digital	HGV	Other	Total
1- Most disadvantaged	17%	18%	14%	17%
2	15%	15%	13%	15%
3	13%	14%	14%	13%
4	12%	11%	11%	11%
5	10%	10%	10%	10%
6	8%	9%	9%	9%
7	7%	7%	8%	7%
8	6%	7%	8%	7%
9	6%	6%	6%	6%
10 - Least disadvantaged	6%	4%	6%	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,372</b>	<b>30,637</b>	<b>1,321</b>	<b>48,330</b>

Source: Management Information excluding no postcode / incorrect postcode given

**Table 35: Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) decile of starts by Skills Bootcamp type**

IMD Decile	Digital	HGV	Other	Total
1- Most disadvantaged	14%	19%	15%	16%
2	15%	14%	13%	14%
3	13%	14%	14%	13%
4	12%	10%	12%	11%
5	10%	10%	10%	10%
6	9%	9%	9%	9%
7	8%	7%	8%	8%
8	7%	7%	8%	7%
9	7%	6%	6%	6%
10 - Least disadvantaged	7%	4%	6%	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,229</b>	<b>4,263</b>	<b>1,124</b>	<b>12,616</b>

Source: Management Information excluding no postcode / incorrect postcode given

**Table 36: Proportion of applicants and starts with a disability or long-term health condition**

Disability	Total Applicants	Starts
Yes	8%	10%
No	89%	87%
Prefer not to say	4%	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>51,598</b>	<b>15,126</b>

Source: Management Information excluding unknown

**Table 37: Proportion of applicants and starts who claimed Universal Credit**

Whether claiming Universal Credit	Total Applicants	Starts
Yes	28%	28%
No	73%	72%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48,502</b>	<b>12,830</b>

Source: Management Information excluding unknown

**Table 38: Employment status of applicants and starts**

Employment status	All Applicants	Start
Full-time employment	39%	37%
Part-time employment	14%	14%
Training/education	2%	2%
Long-term sickness	0%	1%
Parental leave/other caring responsibilities	1%	1%
Retired	0%	0%
Self-employed	11%	11%
Unemployed for less than 12 months	21%	23%
Unemployed for more than 12 months	11%	12%
Unemployed - unknown how long	1%	2%
Employed - unknown mode	0%	0%
Other	0%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>32,875</b>	<b>15,253</b>

Source: Management Information main Wave 2 files only excluding unknown

## Appendix 3: Lead provider information

Table 39 lists the number of employers engaged by the lead provider listed in Skills Bootcamps management information (based on data provided in May 2022). Two providers on the list offer Skills Bootcamps in Digital and HGV Driving. All other lead providers offer one of these, although three also offer a Skills Bootcamp in another category.

**Table 39: Number of employers engaged by lead provider, May 2022**

Provider name	HGV	Digital	Other	Total
Mainstream Training Ltd	320	0	0	320
University of Bath	0	243	22	265
D2N2	0	196	0	196
Mantra Learning Ltd	141	0	0	141
School of Code	0	138	0	138
Weston College	90	36	0	126
The Landing at MediaCity UK Ltd	0	123	0	123
Northcoders Limited	0	117	0	117
System Group	78	0	16	94
QA Ltd	0	90	0	90
Firebrand Training	0	89	0	89
Learning Curve Group	0	33	53	86
BCTG	26	43	0	69
CPCA	0	65	0	65
TRS Training	60	0	0	60
We Are Digital	0	60	0	60
Other	170	265	124	559
Unknown	45	1	4	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>930</b>	<b>1,499</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>2,648</b>

Source: Employer management information

## Appendix 4: Payment milestones

Table 40 presents the different payment milestones for each of the different Skills Bootcamps for Wave 2. Please note, guaranteed interviews are not applicable to all participants – it is not a requirement for self-employed or co-funded participants.

**Table 40: Payment milestones for the different Skills Bootcamps categories**

<b>HGV (Novice – Pathway A to C) Milestone</b>	<b>HGV (Novice – Pathway A to C) Payment</b>	<b>HGV (Other – Pathways- D-I) Milestone</b>	<b>HGV (Other – Pathways- D-I) Payment</b>	<b>Non-HGV (Digital, Green, Technical, Engineering, Construction) Milestone</b>	<b>Non-HGV (Digital, Green, Technical, Engineering, Construction) Payment</b>
M1 – first evidence of learning	25%	M1 – paperwork and course booking	20%	M1 – enrolment and delivery of 20% of planned tutor hours	30%
M2 – mid-training (theory test)	35%	–	–	–	–
M3 – completes training AND has interview booked	25%	M2 – passes practical and evidence of job interview	65%	M2 – guaranteed interview	60%
M4 – evidence of job offer	15%	M3 – evidence of job offer/new role	15%	M3 – evidence of positive outcome	10%



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**Reference:** RR1342

**ISBN:** 978-1-83870-469-8

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