



Department  
for Education



# **Traineeships: Year Two Process Evaluation**

**Research report**

**July 2017**

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## **Acknowledgements**

The authors would like to thank the research team at BIS for their support during the project, in particular Sophie Gerrard, Katya Williams and Rob Haynes.

Above all, we would like to thank the providers, employers and trainees who gave up their time to take part in this survey.

This research was commissioned by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. Policy responsibility for this topic transferred to the Department for Education. As such, the research is being published by DfE.

# Summary

## Background and methodology

Traineeships are an education and training programme that provide young people aged 16-24 with an intensive period of work experience and work preparation training, as well as offering them support in improving their English and maths to give them the best opportunity of entering an apprenticeship or employment. The first evaluation report published in March 2015 can be found [here](#).

This executive summary presents the topline findings of the Traineeship Process Evaluation conducted in 2015. The evaluation explored the views and experiences of:

- Year Two Survey of Trainees: 2,153 trainees who commenced a traineeship programme between August 2014 and July 2015.
- Trainee's Follow Up Survey: 416 trainees who were interviewed as part of the Year One evaluation programme and then interviewed again between 18-30 months after the traineeship (December 2015 and January 2016).
- Providers, trainees, employers and local referral agents who were interviewed as part of six qualitative case studies between November 2015 and February 2016.

The main aim of the research was to understand learner viewpoints on how the implementation of traineeships is working, with a particular focus around short and medium term outcomes for trainees alongside risks to successful implementation and barriers to delivery.

## Year Two Survey of Trainees

This section summarises the findings from the survey of 2,153 trainees who participated in a telephone interview which sought to collect information on their experiences and attitudes in relation to their traineeship undertaken between August 2014 and July 2015.

### Key characteristics

#### *Demographics*

The demographic profile of trainees in the year two evaluation closely matches the profiles found in the Statistical First Release for Traineeships<sup>1</sup>. Within the year two

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<sup>1</sup> Statistical First Release figures (18 April 2016) <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-other-statistics-and-research>

evaluation of trainees, 58% of trainees were aged 16-18 and 42% were aged 19 or over. Just over a fifth of trainees (23%) reported that they considered themselves to have a disability or learning disabilities. The data are weighted to be representative of trainees included on the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) where sufficient information was present. Prior to starting the traineeship the majority of trainees reported that they were qualified to a Level 2 or below (85%). Although the target group for traineeships is young people qualified below a Level 3, a small proportion (10%) of trainees stated that they had already reached a Level 3 qualification or above prior to the traineeship. It is worth noting that previous studies have found that qualification levels can be overstated during an interview because of issues with recall, and the complexity of identifying which qualifications constitute a full Level 2 or 3<sup>2</sup>.

### ***Prior Experience***

In the three months before starting their traineeship, most trainees were studying (36%) or looking for work (39%), with one in ten (12%) reporting that they were either in full or part time employment. Economic activity immediately prior to starting the traineeship varied by the age of trainees at this point, with those aged 16-18 more likely to be engaged in education or training than those aged 19 or over (58% compared with 15%) and less likely to be unemployed and looking for work (25% compared with 58%).

The majority of trainees (76%) reported that they had some form of work experience before starting their traineeship<sup>3</sup>. This ranged from voluntary or unpaid work experience (47%) and paid casual or seasonal work (12%), to paid full-time or part time work (35%). The amount of reported work experience varied in length with two-thirds (67%) having under 6 months total experience.

### **Motivations behind applying for the traineeship programme**

When asked spontaneously about the benefits trainees expected to gain from the traineeship, trainees most commonly reported increased chances of obtaining paid employment or an apprenticeship (28%) and providing useful work experience (41%). When trainees were prompted as to which benefits they expected to achieve as a result

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<sup>2</sup> Level 2 & 3 refers to a wide range of qualifications. For example, Level 2 may refer to someone with 5 GCSEs at A\*-C whereas Level 3 would be obtained by someone with two A Levels. Both levels contain many other qualification types.

<sup>3</sup> Commencing a traineeship programme requires providers to assess a young person as lacking the work experience and skills required to progress to an apprenticeship or sustainable employment, and the young person to enrol voluntarily as they feel that the programme will assist their progression. This survey did not explore the nature, content, and quality of reported work experience.

of the traineeship, seven in ten (69%) were hoping to find paid employment and 42% hoped that the traineeship would help them progress to further education or training.

## **Experience of the traineeship**

### **The referral process**

When asked how they had first heard about the traineeship, trainees cited a wide range of sources including Jobcentre Plus (22%), family and friends (15%), and learning providers (24%). Despite the introduction of a Government website with the option to proactively search for traineeships, respondents were not specifically asked about this during the study. Younger trainees aged 16-18 were more likely than trainees aged 19 and over to have heard of traineeships via a learning provider.

Just under a quarter of trainees (23%) indicated that they applied to the traineeship directly without a referral. This is a decrease from the year one survey where 31% of trainees had applied directly. In contrast, referrals by Jobcentre Plus have risen by 7 percentage points (to 25%) which together with career advisors accounts for 40% of referrals. College or learning providers are the next largest source of referrals with a quarter of trainees (26%) having taken this path. Findings from the qualitative research suggest that some providers felt that Jobcentre Plus have been better integrated into the traineeship process and so this may offer an explanation for the rise in referrals from them (see Referrals Pathways in 'Year Two qualitative results' chapter).

### **Discussion of the traineeship structure**

Overall seven in ten (69%) trainees recalled attending a meeting with their traineeship college or learning provider prior to beginning the traineeship programme. Most trainees felt that their views were taken into account in the design of the traineeship, including four in ten (45%) who said that their views were taken into account a great deal in relation to which employer they would complete their work experience with.

### **Completing the traineeship**

By the time of the survey the majority (65%) had completed the traineeship, three in ten (30%) had left before the end of their traineeship and 5% were still on the traineeship. Reasons for leaving the traineeship early included leaving to start paid work and to continue studying<sup>4</sup>. Traineeships are generally intended to last for a maximum of 6 months; when asked, the majority of trainees (85%) completed their traineeship within this time period. One in ten (11%) reported that it lasted (or was supposed to last) more

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<sup>4</sup> Leaving for employment or an apprenticeship is seen as a 'positive outcome' for trainees, which can cause issues with comparisons between 'early leavers' and those who complete the traineeship.



than 6 months, although this could be due to continued English and Maths training or the accuracy of recall by trainees more generally. There was no difference in the length of time spent on the traineeship for those who reported having a disability and those who did not. Age in contrast was a key indicator of traineeship length, with those aged 19 or over at the start of the traineeship more likely to spend less than 3 months on the traineeship (59%) compared with those aged 16-18 at the start of the traineeship (45%).

## **Satisfaction with the traineeship**

The majority of trainees were very satisfied with their experience of the traineeship; eight in ten (82%) were satisfied with the traineeship overall including half (47%) who were very satisfied, a very positive endorsement of the programme by trainees. Overall levels of satisfaction have increased since the first year evaluation when 79% of trainees were satisfied overall. As expected, levels of satisfaction were lower amongst trainees who left the traineeship early for any reason (including those leaving for a positive destination) compared to those who completed the programme: (70% of trainees who left the programme early were satisfied compared with 88% of trainees who completed the programme). This difference is particularly pronounced when looking at satisfaction with the work experience element of the traineeship; just 58% of trainees who left early were satisfied compared with 80% of completers.

## **Early outcomes and perceived impacts**

These findings give an important insight into the perceptions of trainees about the extent to which traineeships have helped them move into an apprenticeship, employment or further education/training. However, this survey is not intended to provide robust measures of the impact of the traineeship programme. In general, trainees were very positive about the impact they felt the traineeship had had, with 84% feeling that it had helped them to develop skills required for the workplace and 83% feeling it had improved their chances in future job applications.

At the time of the survey, half (54%) who were not currently still on the traineeship reported that they were either on an apprenticeship (20%) or in work (34%). A further 12% were in training or education. This demonstrates that the majority (66%) of trainees were in what the programme defines as a positive outcome, either in employment, an apprenticeship or further education/training. Furthermore the proportion who reported being in work currently is greater than seen in the year one evaluation (34% compared with 28%) with those in training falling by 4 percentage points (17% to 13%), whilst there was no change in those on an apprenticeship.

The destinations of those who left the traineeship early were similar to those who completed the traineeship, although they were less likely to be on an apprenticeship at the time of interview (17% compared with 22%). There were other differences between

sub-groups of trainees: those aged 16-18 at the start of the traineeship were more likely to be in a positive outcome than those aged 19 or over at the start of the traineeship (74% compared with 56%). This difference was especially marked when looking at the proportion on an apprenticeship at the time of interview (27% of 16-18s compared with 11% of those aged 19+ at the start of the traineeship).

Of trainees who reported that they were currently employed or on an apprenticeship, four in ten (40%) were in the same organisation where they did the work experience element of the traineeship and a quarter (24%) were with a different organisation but in the same industry that their traineeship was in.

## **Year Two Qualitative Evaluation**

This section summarises the key findings from the six qualitative case studies conducted. These involved in-depth interviews with providers, trainees, employers and local referral agents. The interviews also explored the on-going delivery of traineeships, the changes and improvements implemented by providers and perceived impact of key changes to the traineeship delivery framework and requirements for providers in 2015-2016.

### **Experience of Trainees**

Trainees' views of the traineeship programme and their experiences with their providers were broadly positive. Most had embarked on a traineeship to gain the hard and soft skills necessary to progress onto an apprenticeship or into employment: typically they lacked the English and maths skills and / or work experience necessary to reach their career or study aspirations and saw a traineeship as a way to fill their skills / employment gaps. The majority had no formal qualifications, some had gained level 1-2 qualifications following school and in a further education setting. A minority had achieved A\*-C grades in some subjects at GCSE.

For the most part, trainees felt the programme had met their needs. The programme provided the 'first steps' needed to raise both their skills and confidence to get closer to the labour market through flexible and intensive support and training both before and during their work placements. Trainees who had previously negative experiences of school due to low engagement or learning disabilities particularly valued the flexibility of the programme to provide smaller classes and individually tailored learning. Trainees were particularly positive about the engaging and interactive delivery of work preparation which was focused around their sector of choice and provided individualised learning plans. Their work placement enabled them to get the work experience required to gain employment, while English and maths training enabled them to meet the entry requirements for an apprenticeship (or work). Almost all trainees reported future plans of

some sort, with many of those interviewed already embarking on apprenticeships or currently applying.

## **Experience of Providers**

Year two providers of traineeships viewed the programme as a high quality pathway to support young people who lack the employability or qualifications for successful applications for either employment or apprenticeships. They targeted young people on this basis, generally approaching those which had applied to their organisation for other pathways and been unsuccessful, or suggesting it as a potential pathway to those already engaged by their organisation and whom they feel met / would meet the traineeships criteria. As in year one, some challenges have been encountered working with referral agencies. Variation in experiences of the case study providers shows that there is still work to be done in supporting a steady flow of referrals from Job Centre Plus, the National Citizen Service and National Careers Service. Interviews were conducted in the following regions:

- North West
- Yorkshire and the Humber
- East Midlands
- South East

Programme delivery was managed internally with existing staff used to deliver English and maths and work preparation content. Class groups were typically small, sessions highly interactive and content focused on the 'real world' application of skills. The work placement component was viewed as key to the programme as a whole and believed to differentiate it from other pathways. To facilitate the success of the placement, work placements were generally matched to young people's aspirations and areas of interests. Many employers engaged in the research viewed traineeships as an opportunity to really get to know potential candidates before recruiting them to an apprenticeship or open role. Several providers actively sought employers which had progression opportunities, e.g. a potential up-coming vacancy, or apprenticeship placement. Overall, the positioning of traineeships to potential trainees is a key facilitator to their engagement with the programme and in managing their expectations. Where the traineeship was closely aligned to an apprenticeship, young people were generally more easily engaged and their expectations better managed.

## **Experience of non-providers**

Non-providers – those who are eligible, but have decided not to progress with the programme – cited a number of perceived barriers to implementing the programme. These include: lack of guidance / information on funding; concerns on the feasibility of engaging adequate / suitable employers; belief that existing provision is suitable; limited

expertise to deliver both learning and workplace support without engaging a partner organisation; concerns over negative media coverage and public perceptions; and, uncertainty over the employer engagement element of the programme. While some viewed these barriers as insurmountable, others were open to exploring the traineeship proposition further in the future with a clear appetite for further information on the pathway.

## **Trainees' Follow-up survey**

The follow up survey with trainees was conducted approximately 18-30 months after they started their traineeship. This section summarises the key findings of the telephone survey of 416 trainees who were earlier interviewed as part of the year one Study of Trainees. This represents around a third of the trainees who were interviewed at Year One. The data have been weighted to be representative of trainees starting the traineeship programme in year one. The primary purpose of the follow-up survey was to understand the medium term outcomes of the programme.

## **Experience of traineeship**

The main perceived benefits of traineeships were regarded as an improvement in the chance of getting paid work (22%), good work experience (20%) and increased self-confidence or self-belief (19%). When asked specifically about the impact of the traineeship on getting work, seven in ten trainees (74%) said that it had helped their chances of getting paid work, including one in three (34%) who said it had directly increased their chances of getting paid work. One in four trainees (24%) said that it had made no difference. These trainees were less likely to be in any form of employment (including on an apprenticeship) than other trainees (59% compared with 70%). As in the first survey, trainees were very positive about their time on a traineeship. Nine in ten trainees (92%) would recommend traineeships to other people. Seven in ten trainees (70%) would speak highly of traineeships when speaking to others, including 38% who said they would do so without being asked. The remainder said they would either be neutral (19%) or critical (7%).

## **Movement into employment**

In total, 80% of trainees said that they had been in employment (including on an apprenticeship) or had been self-employed at some time since they finished their traineeship. This was higher among younger trainees aged 16-17 at the start of the traineeship, more qualified trainees (trainees reporting being qualified to level 2 or above before the traineeship) and those who had some experience of paid work before the traineeship.

Among those who had worked since the traineeship, half (49%) found work either straight away or within a month of the traineeship. One in three (33%) said that it took between 2 and 6 months, while 11% said it took more than 6 months.

Summarising their time since the traineeship, of those who had been employed at some point since the traineeship:

- 15% had worked solidly with one or two breaks
- 55% spent all or most of their time working
- 12% had spent an equal amount of time in and out of work
- 16% spent most of their time out of work.

Trainees who had not worked at all (20%) were no more likely than those who had been employed to suggest the traineeship programme needed improving (59% compared with 64%).

More detailed analysis of trainees' main activity status shows that:

- 50% of trainees said their main status in the three months after finishing the traineeship was being employed or on an apprenticeship. This increased to 57% 3-6 months after finishing, and 67% by the time of the follow-up survey.
- Around one in four said they were unemployed (including those looking for work and those not looking) in the 3 months after finishing the traineeship (26%). This proportion decreased slightly to 21% 3-6 months after finishing the traineeship, and then remained similar at the time of the follow-up survey (23%).

## Details of employment since traineeship

Among trainees who had worked since their traineeship, the majority (61%) had mainly worked full-time, with 2% being self-employed. One in four (25%) had mainly worked in part-time work or in job shares, while 11% had mainly done temporary/casual work.

The most common sectors worked in were wholesale and retail (21%), health and social work (17%), accommodation and food services (9%), administrative and support services (9%), manufacturing (9%), construction (8%) and education (7%). Trainees' jobs were most likely to be in elementary occupations<sup>5</sup> (26%), caring, leisure and other service occupations (20%) and sales and customer services roles (20%).

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/HTMLDocs/dev3/data/SingleClass.html?soc=9>

This major group covers occupations which require the knowledge and experience necessary to perform mostly routine tasks, often involving the use of simple hand-held tools and, in some cases, requiring a degree of physical effort.

Almost half of trainees currently employed and not on an apprenticeship (45%) said their current job includes formal training; of these 30% said the training leads to a certificate or qualification. There was no significant difference between age groups.

One in four trainees (24%) who had worked since finishing their traineeship said their current or most recent job was with the same employer that they did their traineeship with. If trainees were working with a different employer, around one in three (32%) said the job was in an area, sector or industry related to their traineeship.

The majority of trainees (70%) said that their current or most recent job was in an area of work they would like to pursue as a career. Six in ten (59%) trainees who had been employed since the traineeship in a different sector or employer to the traineeship stated that their last or current job was in an area of work they would like to pursue as a career.

### **Perceived impact of traineeship on finding work**

Among trainees who had worked since the traineeship, 48% said that it helped them get a job, while a further one in five (19%) said they got a job directly because of the traineeship. One in three (34%) said that the traineeship made no difference to the job that they got. Perhaps unsurprisingly, trainees who went on to work with their traineeship work experience provider or in the same area were more likely to agree that the traineeship helped them in getting a job (85%) compared with those who moved into another sector (49%).

Trainees who were in work or looking for work at the time of the survey were asked if the support they had received during their traineeship had helped them to improve their search for paid work. The majority of trainees felt that the support had helped them, either a lot (47%) or a little (32%). Around one in five (19%) said that it had not helped at all.

Trainees who were unemployed and looking for work at the time of the survey were asked how likely they thought it was that they would find a paid job in the next six months. One in three (33%) thought it was very likely, with a further 44% saying it was fairly likely. Around one in six (16%) thought it was very or fairly unlikely. Asked about their barriers to work, these trainees were most likely to mention their lack of qualifications or education (25%), lack of sufficient work experience (24%) and the shortage of jobs in the local area (17%).

### **Impact on Apprenticeship uptake**

At the time of the survey, 9% of trainees said that their main activity was being employed on an apprenticeship. A further 22% said that they had been on an apprenticeship at some point since finishing the traineeship; this gives a total of 31% of trainees who had

been on an apprenticeship since finishing the traineeship. The majority of trainees who had been on an apprenticeship said they started it directly after the traineeship (65%). At the time of interview 57% of trainees who had started an apprenticeship had completed it, a quarter were still ongoing (26%) and 17% had not completed it. This 17% represents only 16 trainees and as such it is not possible to look at reasons behind not completing the apprenticeship.

Trainees who went onto an apprenticeship were asked which aspect of the traineeship was most useful in preparing them for the apprenticeship. Trainees were most likely to say that the work experience placement was the most useful (52%), followed by the work preparation training (28%) and the English and maths training (11%).

Two-fifths (41%) said that it helped them get an apprenticeship, while around one in three trainees (32%) said they got an apprenticeship directly because of the traineeship. One in four (26%) said that the traineeship made no difference.

### **Impact on continued learning**

More than one in three trainees (36%) said that, following their traineeship, they had been on a course that resulted in a qualification of some sort. The qualification was most likely to be at Level 2 (48%) or Level 3 (24%). At the time of the follow-up survey, 8% of all trainees said that education or training was their main activity.

If respondents had studied English and maths as part of the traineeship, and had gone on to other courses involving a qualification afterwards, they were asked about the impact of the English and maths training they received as part of the traineeship. Two in five (41%) said that it helped encourage them to join or complete other courses, while around one in five (19%) said that it directly encouraged them to do this. The remainder (40%) said that this had made no difference to them going on other courses.



## Introduction

Traineeships are an education and training programme that provide young people aged 16-24 with an intensive period of work experience and work preparation training, as well as offering them support in improving their English and maths to give them the best opportunity of entering an apprenticeship or employment.

Traineeships were introduced in August 2013 and the findings in this report explore:

- Trainees' motivations, attitudes and experiences of traineeships in the second year of the programme (August 2014-July 2015).
- The extent to which any early impacts seen after the initial evaluation<sup>6</sup> are sustained over the longer term. This was achieved by re-contacting trainees who took part in the initial year one evaluation and agreed to be re-contacted.
- Key stakeholder perceptions of set up, referral pathways and delivery of the programme.

## Policy context

Traineeships are an integral part of the Government's plans to tackle youth unemployment. Backed by employers, they give motivated young people the skills, qualifications, experience and behaviours that employers look for when recruiting for apprenticeships and other jobs.

Traineeships are primarily intended for young people who:

- are not currently in employment and have little work experience, but who are focused on work and the prospect of it;
- are aged 16-24 and qualified below level 3; and
- are believed by providers and employers to have a reasonable chance of being ready for employment or an apprenticeship within six months of engaging in a traineeship.<sup>7</sup>

Traineeships are intended to last between six weeks and six months. The high degree of flexibility and freedom in the way traineeships have been designed allows providers and employers to tailor traineeships to the needs of individual trainees as well as local employers. This flexibility is also reflected in the range of organisations that are involved

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<sup>6</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/412424/bis-15-189-traineeships-first-year-process-evaluation.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/412424/bis-15-189-traineeships-first-year-process-evaluation.pdf)

<sup>7</sup>

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/410737/Framework\\_for\\_delivery\\_2015-2016.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/410737/Framework_for_delivery_2015-2016.pdf)



in referring trainees and delivering traineeships – including Jobcentre Plus (JCP), local authorities, schools, colleges, Youth Contract providers, National Careers Service advisers and National Citizen Service providers. Traineeships are built around several of the same principles as apprenticeships; however, traineeships are not jobs (unlike apprenticeships) so offer unpaid work experience. An overview of the traineeship programme and policy changes made since August 2014 are included in the 2015/16 Framework for Delivery<sup>8</sup>.

A successful traineeship programme is one that secures a positive outcome for participants in the form of apprenticeships or other sustainable employment, reducing the proportion of young people not in employment, education and training (NEET).

## Methodology

### Year two survey of trainees

Interviews were conducted by telephone, using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). In total, 2,153 interviews were conducted between October 2015 and January 2016 with trainees who had participated in the programme between August 2014 and July 2015. This means that the period between starting the traineeship and interview was between 3 months and 18 months. The survey response rate was 42%.

The sample frame of trainees was derived from the Individual Learner Record<sup>9</sup> (ILR) files and included all trainees where trainees had valid contact details and agreed to be contacted by post and telephone. All these cases were selected to take part in the survey.

The distributions of age, gender, ethnicity, and working status within the population of trainees on the ILR where sufficient information was present were treated as weighting targets for the calibration of the survey data. Details of the number of records within the ILR and loaded for the sample are outlined in Appendix A.

### Year two qualitative research

A qualitative case study approach was conducted to provide a holistic and comprehensive overview of the programme's delivery. Six case studies were undertaken

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<sup>8</sup>[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/410737/Framework\\_for\\_delivery\\_2015-2016.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/410737/Framework_for_delivery_2015-2016.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Information about learner data that publicly funded colleges, training organisations, local authorities and employers (FE providers) must collect and return.

between November 2015 and February 2016. Case studies involved speaking with providers' staff, trainees of the provider, employers providing work experience and referral agencies. In-depth interviews (approx. 60 minutes) were undertaken with:

- 12 providers
- 24 trainees
- 11 employers
- 10 local referral agencies (including 3 interviews with local JCP staff).

In addition to the case studies a further four out of six providers from the year 1 evaluation were re-visited via a short telephone interview (approx. 20-30 minutes) to explore changes to delivery since the initial implementation of the programme.

Six telephone interviews (25 -30 minutes) were also conducted with non-providers who were eligible to offer the programme but decided not to do so, to explore the reasons why eligible providers do not intend to deliver provision.

Case studies were selected to represent a range of traineeship provision taking into account variation in delivery by age group, type of provider (e.g. Local Authority, Private, and Further Education), the sector that the traineeship provided training and work placement for, and a geographical spread across England. Please see appendix B for a full breakdown of the sample.

## **Follow up survey of trainees**

An additional survey of 416 trainees was undertaken between December 2015 and January 2016. The sample was sourced from trainees interviewed in the 2014 traineeship survey. These trainees had completed their traineeship between 18-30 months previously. The telephone survey had a response rate of 48%.

## **Weighting**

Responses were weighted to ensure that the profile of the trainees' follow up survey matches the profile of the ILR where sufficient information was known about trainees who started their traineeship between August 2013 and July 2014. The weighting approach accounted for the differential probabilities of trainees' likelihood to respond to the survey to compensate for non-response.

## Year Two Survey of Trainees (2015)

This survey was made up of trainees who had begun a traineeship between August 2014 and July 2015. These trainees had not previously been interviewed as part of this study. In total, 2,153 trainees completed a survey using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). The interviews were conducted between October 2015 and January 2016 and achieved a response rate of 42%.

The survey builds on the previous research conducted with trainees in 2014; however it is important to note that the survey instrument was changed significantly to take into account programme changes / revised policy objectives. Where possible, results have been compared back to the 2014 survey.

### Summary

- Employment outcomes have improved since 2014. About 3-18 months after embarking on the traineeship, a third of trainees (34%) were in **paid employment** which is higher than the 2014 figure of 28%. Just over half (54%) who were not still on the traineeship reported being **in some form of employment**.
- Eight in ten trainees (82%) were **satisfied with the traineeship**.
- Trainees perceived the programme to have helped them **improve their chances** in future job applications (83%), **motivate them** to look for work (81%) and to **develop new skills** that helped/could help them **find paid work** (84%).
- Trainees aged 16-18 were more likely to be in a 'positive outcome' situation (defined as being in employment, on an apprenticeship or in education or training) than those aged 19 or over (74% compared with 56%). Most notably 16-18 year olds were more likely to be on an apprenticeship than trainees aged 19 or over (27% compared with 11%).

### Key characteristics of trainees

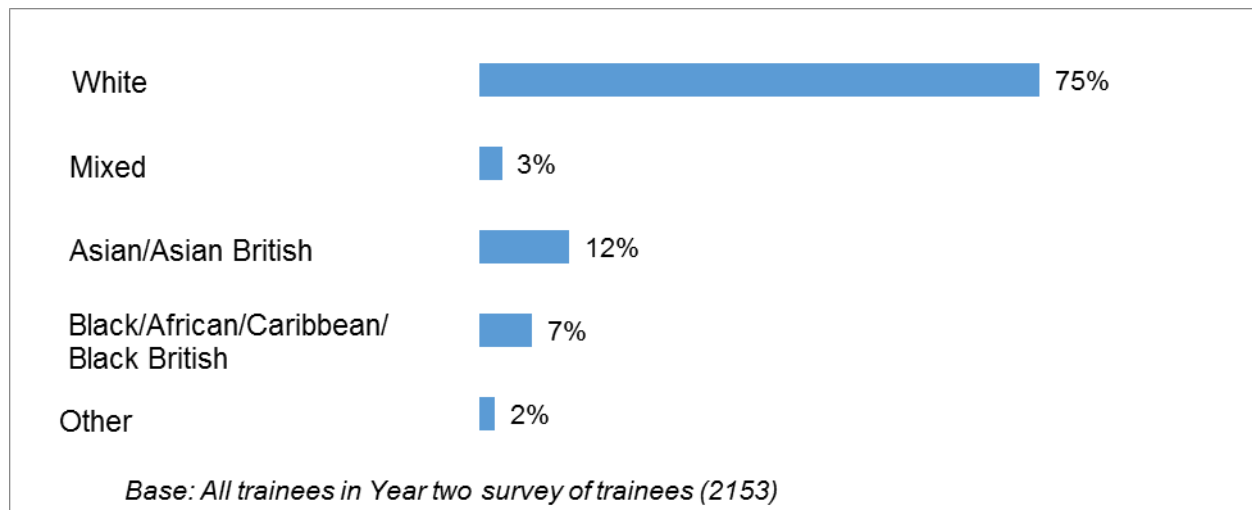
In this section we examine the demographic profile of trainees, their background and their previous experience of work and study. Ages reported are based on age at the start of the traineeship.

#### Demographic profile

Three in five (58%) trainees were aged 16-18 whilst 42% were aged 19 or above.

Six in ten (59%) trainees were males, and four in ten (40%) trainees were female. Three-quarters (75%) of trainees described their ethnicity as white as shown below in Figure 1. These proportions reflect the overall population of trainees as found in the Statistical First Release for Traineeships<sup>10</sup>.

**Figure 1: Ethnicity of trainees**



Just over a fifth of trainees (23%) considered themselves as having a disability or learning disability.

## Prior qualifications

The majority of trainees (85%) said that they were qualified to a Level 2 or below before the traineeship. Although the core target group for traineeships for 2015-16 were young people qualified below a Level 3, a small proportion (10%) said they had already reached Level 3 or above prior to the traineeship<sup>11</sup>. Of these six in ten (60%) reported that they had already achieved GCSE in English and maths prior to their traineeship, with only two in ten (20%) having not achieved a GCSE in either English or maths.

All trainees who had achieved a minimum of a Level 2 qualification were asked whether they had achieved a GCSE grade A\*-C in English or maths prior to the traineeship. Of these, 36% held a GCSE grade A\*-C qualification in both English and maths.

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<sup>10</sup> Statistical First Release figures (18 April 2016) – 16-18 (60%), 19+ (40%); Male (60%), Female (40%). <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-other-statistics-and-research>

<sup>11</sup> See page 7 for a fuller explanation of the issues with accurately identifying Levels.

Table 1: Highest educational achievement by age prior to starting the traineeship

Qualification level	All (%)	16-18 years old (%)	19 or over (%)
None	5	5	6
Entry level qualification	3	3	3
Level One (GCSEs D-G, Vocational level 1 qualifications and equivalent)	17	15	20
Level Two (5+ GCSEs A*-C (neither or only one of English or maths) Vocational Level 2 qualifications and equivalent)	30	28	33
Full Level 2 (5+ GCSEs including English and maths)	29	37	19
Level 3 (2 A-levels, Vocational level 3 qualifications and equivalent)	9	8	12
Above level 3	1	1	1
Don't know	5	5	4
Base	2153	1397	719

## Activity and experience prior to traineeship

Three months prior to starting their traineeship, trainees were most likely to be either studying (36%) or looking for work (39%). A further 12% were working (6% full-time, 7% part-time)<sup>12</sup>, and 6% were occupied with other activities such as unpaid work and personal commitments.

Economic activity in the 3 month period before they started the traineeship varied significantly by age. Trainees aged 19 or over were more likely to be unemployed and looking for work (58%) than 16-18 year olds (25%). In contrast, 16-18 year olds were more likely to be engaged in education or training (58%) than trainees aged 19 or over (15%).

A similar pattern of activity was seen for the 3-6 month period prior to starting the traineeship, although trainees were more likely to be in training or education (42%) and less likely to be looking for work (32%). Overall however the same proportion of trainees reported they were not in work at both three and six months prior to starting their traineeship (85% and 86% respectively).

Three months prior to the traineeship, trainees aged 16-18 years old were more likely to have been in training or education (61%) compared with trainees aged 19 or over (17%).

Around half of trainees (46%) said that they had applied for an apprenticeship at some point before starting their traineeship, and of these 36% said they were offered an apprenticeship (17% of all trainees). Trainees who were offered an apprenticeship stated a variety of reasons why they did not pursue the offer. These reasons included young people who started but for whatever reason did not complete the apprenticeship (16%), the apprenticeship was not the kind of job they wanted (10%) or was not in the sector or industry that they wanted to work in (6%).

Trainees who were unsuccessful in their apprenticeship application before the traineeship reported that they felt this was because they lacked the academic qualifications required (26%) or that they lacked experience (24%).

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<sup>12</sup> Traineeships are not designed for those in employment but wider funding rules recognise that some students may undertake part time work whilst learning. For example, people who are working fewer than 16 hours a week and earning below wage thresholds outlined in Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) funding rules may undertake a traineeship, as under these conditions they meet the ESFA definition of being unemployed.

## Employment prior to starting the traineeship

The majority of trainees (76%) said that they had done work of some kind before starting their traineeship, including 42% who had done paid full-time or part-time work. Trainees also had experience of paid casual or seasonal work (15%) and voluntary or unpaid work experience (59%)<sup>13</sup>.

**Table 2: Type of work experience completed prior to starting the traineeship**

<b>Work Experience Type</b>	<b>All Trainees (%)</b>	<b>Trainees 16-18 at the start of the traineeship (%)</b>	<b>Trainees aged 19 or over at the start of the traineeship (%)</b>
<b>Paid full time</b>	26	17	36
<b>Paid part time during the week</b>	25	25	24
<b>Paid evening/weekend only</b>	18	21	13
<b>Paid casual/seasonal</b>	15	15	16
<b>Voluntary or unpaid work experience</b>	59	57	61
<b>Base</b>	<b>1685</b>	<b>1041</b>	<b>617</b>

*Base: All trainees who completed work experience prior to starting the traineeship<sup>14</sup>*

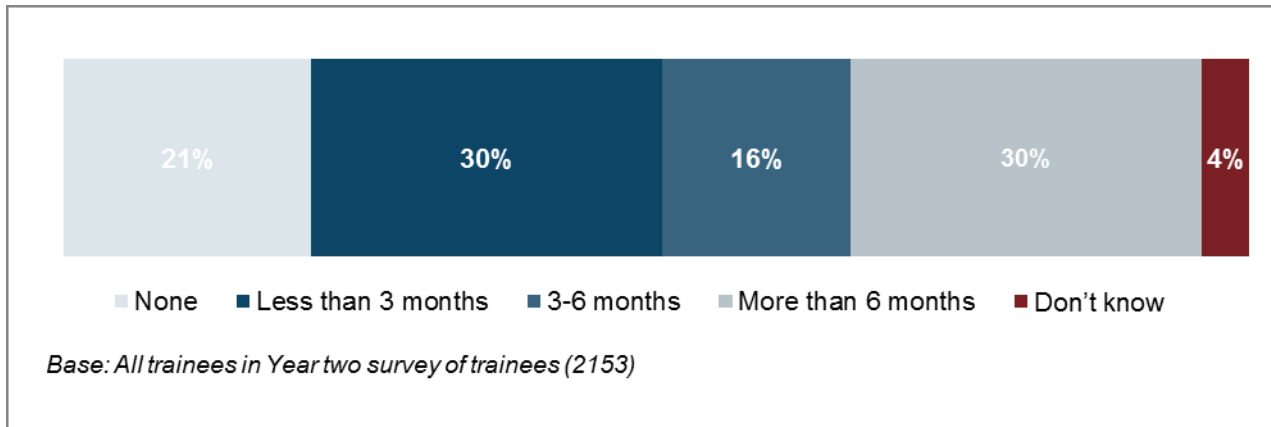
The work experience obtained before the traineeship varied in length with three in ten (30%) trainees having more than 6 months of work experience. A further 30% of trainees had less than 3 months' work experience, see Figure 2. Trainees were asked about the total work experience obtained and so this could have been spread out across multiple time periods with different employers or conducted continuously with the same employer<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> Traineeships are intended to be offered to young people who are not in work, or who are working less than 16 hours per week.

<sup>14</sup> Respondents could give more than one answer to this question- therefore, percentages will not sum to 100.

<sup>15</sup> See Page 7 for further explanation of the issues around accurate identification of work experience.

**Figure 2: Amount of work experience prior to traineeship**



The majority of trainees who had undertaken some type of work experience prior to their traineeship felt that this would have been sufficient to find the types of jobs they were interested in (66%). However when these trainees were asked about the main barriers faced to finding work at the start of the traineeship, the most commonly cited answers were a lack of experience (24%) and a lack of qualifications (19%).

Four in ten trainees (40%) said they were receiving benefits at the time they were referred to or applied for the traineeship. Trainees aged 19 or over were more likely to be in receipt of benefits at the start of their traineeship than 16-18 year olds (81% compared with 17%). Half of trainees (50%) who were receiving benefits at the start of the traineeship were referred to the programme by their local JobCentre Plus.

## **Barriers to finding work**

The main reported barriers that would have made it difficult for trainees to find work if they wanted to, at the time of their traineeship, were a lack of work experience (29%), a lack of qualifications (19%), a lack of jobs in the local areas (6%) and transport or travel difficulties (6%).

## **Motivations for applying for the traineeship programme**

This chapter examines the motivations of young people in applying for the traineeship programme, both in terms of the perceived benefits and the goals that young people



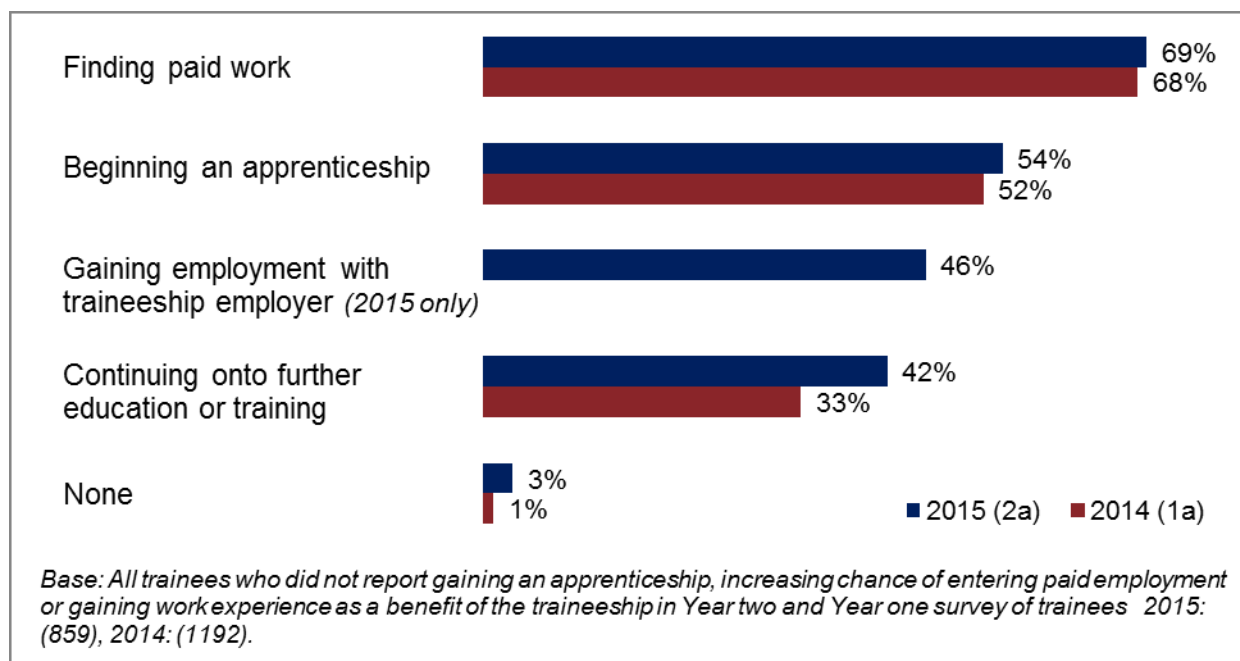
hoped to attain. It also reviews the other options considered by trainees prior to beginning the traineeship programme.

## Motivations for joining the traineeship programme

Traineeships are intended to support young people to develop the skills for apprenticeships and sustainable employment. This is reflected in the main benefits that trainees perceived they would gain from a traineeship: increasing the chance of obtaining paid employment or an apprenticeship (28%) and providing useful work experience (41%).

Trainees who did not spontaneously mention these benefits were prompted on the outcome they were hoping to achieve as a result of the traineeship. Overall seven in ten (69%) were hoping to find paid work, over half aimed to move on to an apprenticeship (54%) and 46% wanted to secure a position with their traineeship employer. In addition, just over four in ten (42%) hoped that the traineeship would help them progress to further education or training. These figures help to illustrate the wide range of outcomes and the absence of singular focus that trainees hoped to achieved as a result of the traineeship. In comparison with 2014, the proportion of trainees who wanted to continue in education or training has risen by 9 percentage points whilst the figures for moving on to paid work or an apprenticeship have remained stable (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Overall motivations of those prompted**



The majority of trainees (64%) were not considering other options when applying for a traineeship although this differs by a number of attributes. Trainees who had no prior

work experience (72%) were more likely to only be applying for a traineeship in comparison with those with some work experience (61%). In addition, trainees with qualifications at Level 1 or lower only (68%) were among the most likely to be considering a traineeship only. This is in contrast to trainees who reported being educated to Level 3 or above – only 55% narrowed their options solely to a traineeship.

Of those trainees considering other options, gaining employment (with or without a training element) was the main consideration (63%) followed by training or learning (34%). Age is a key determinant in the type of other options considered. 16-18 year olds were more likely to have been considering other learning opportunities (39%) than trainees aged 19 and above (28%). Similarly, trainees aged 19 and above were more likely to have been considering other employment options (74%) than younger trainees aged 16-18 (55%). This suggests the different elements of the traineeship – work experience and training- were among the key reasons for the attractiveness of traineeships for different age groups.

## **Trainees' experience of the traineeship**

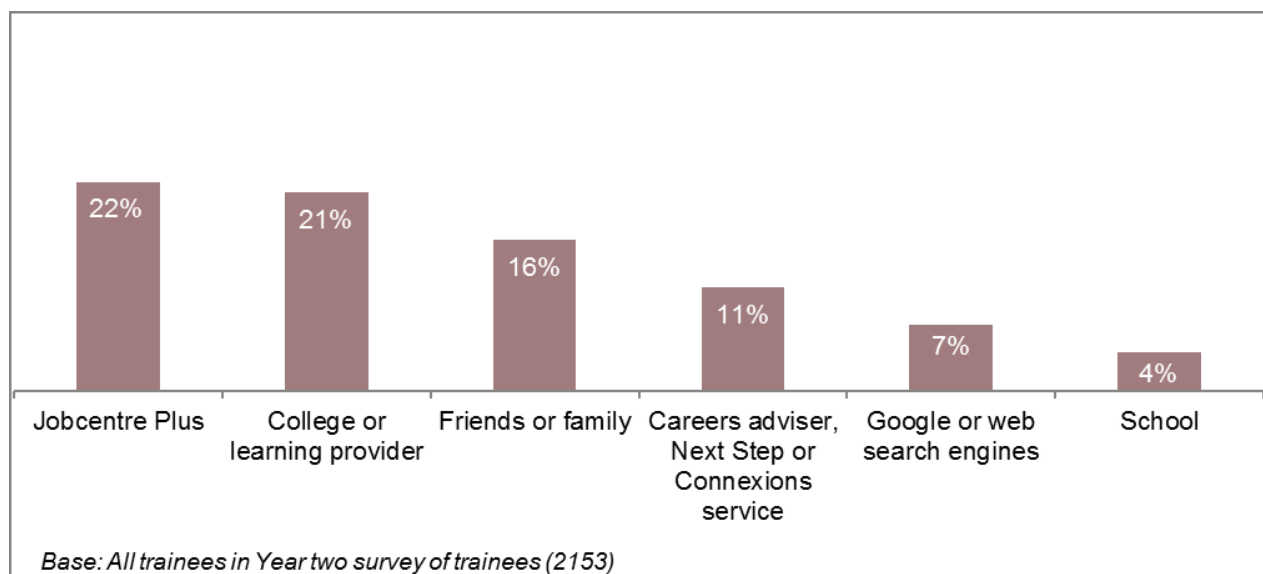
This section examines how trainees first found out about the traineeship programme, if they were referred and by whom, and the induction process for beginning their traineeship. The chapter then discusses the delivery, content and structure of the traineeship programme.

### **The referral, application and induction process**

#### **Information sources**

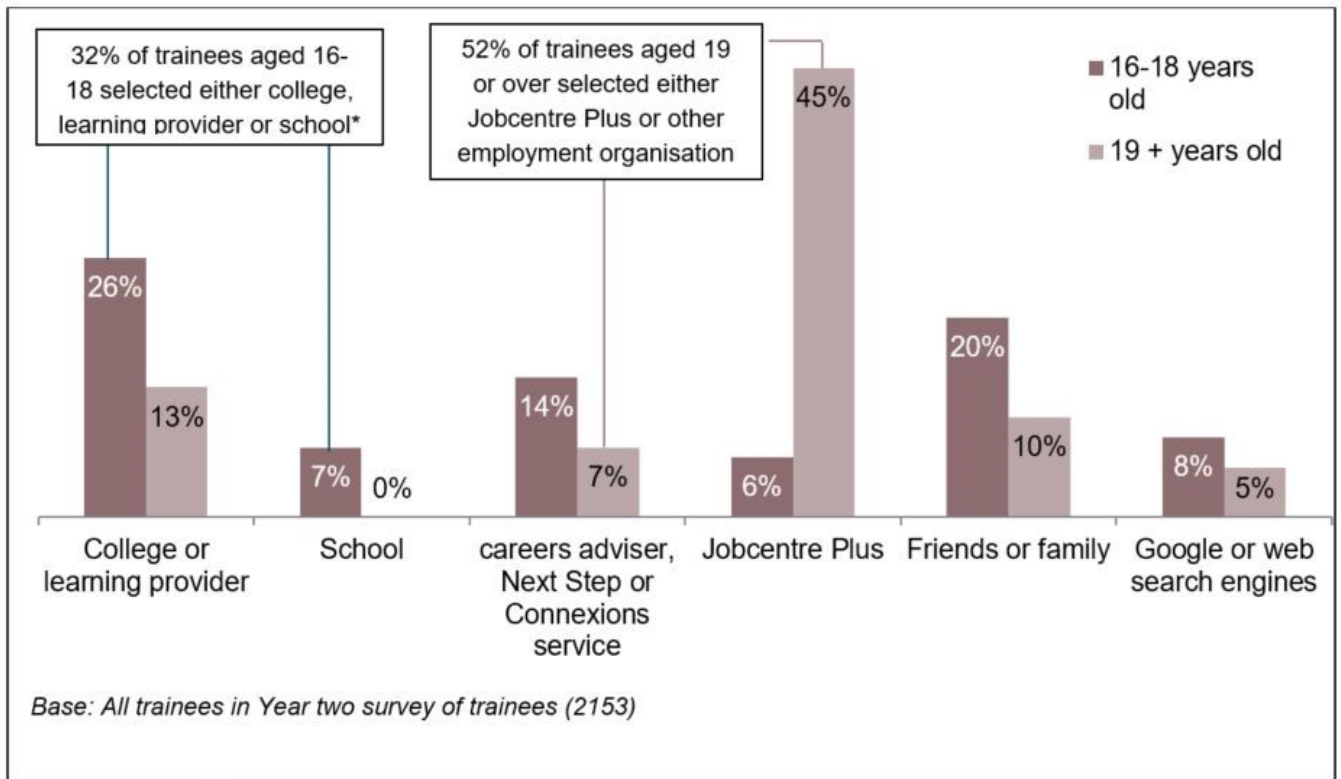
Trainees first learned about the traineeship programme from a number of different sources. Jobcentre Plus was the single most cited source (22%) followed by college or learning provider (21%) and family & friends (16%) – see Figure 4. There has been little change when comparing findings to the 2014 survey.

**Figure 4: How trainees first heard about the traineeship programme (top 6 answers shown)**



Trainees aged 16-18 were most likely to find out about traineeships from an education provider, such as a college, learning provider or school (32%). In contrast, those aged 19 or over were most likely to find out from an employment organisation such as Jobcentre Plus or a careers advisor (52%) – see Figure 5. This is most likely explained by the occupation of trainees when applying to the programme. Those in education were more likely to hear about traineeships through their education provider (38%) whilst those looking for work relied on an employment organisation for their information (50%).

**Figure 5: How trainees first heard of traineeship by age**



\*Respondents were able to give multiple answers at this question

## Referrals

Just under a quarter of trainees indicated that they applied to the traineeship without a referral (24%). This is a decrease from the 2014 survey which found that 31% of trainees had applied in this way. This may be as a result of clearer referral routes having been introduced over the past year. In contrast, the main access routes to a traineeship remain the same as in 2014. Careers advisors were the main referrers with 40% of trainees citing either Jobcentre Plus (25%) and/or careers advisors and similar groups (21%) followed by education providers (26%). Trainees not in work in the 3 month period before starting the traineeship were most likely to have been referred through their local JobCentre Plus (40%).

Age and occupation prior to the traineeship also have an effect on the referral process. Younger trainees (aged 16-18) were more likely to be referred by their education provider (33%) than any other source. Trainees aged 19 and above were much less likely to take this route (17%).

Consistent with expectations, over half of those looking for work (55%) were referred to the traineeship by a careers advisor, (including organisations such as Next Step, Connexions advisor or JobCentre Plus), compared with just over a quarter of those studying (27%) or three-tenths (30%) of those employed prior to the traineeship.

Looking further into these figures, young people who fall outside the core target group for a traineeship<sup>16</sup> were more likely to apply without a referral. Of these, trainees reporting having a level 3 qualification or above (29%) or those who were employed 3 months before the traineeship (31%) were among the most likely groups to apply directly to the traineeship without a referral (28% compared with 24% of trainees).

## **Application**

When applying for the traineeship, two-thirds of trainees received some form of help from one or more sources (63%). Advice from organisations such as careers advice providers (29%) and education providers (29%) were the main sources of help but informal assistance from friends and family was cited by a number of trainees (21%).

Three in ten (29%) trainees specifically applied to an employer that offered traineeships. Trainees who were working three months prior to the traineeship were more likely to apply specifically to an employer that offered a traineeship placement (35%) than those looking for work (26%).

## **Discussion of traineeship structure**

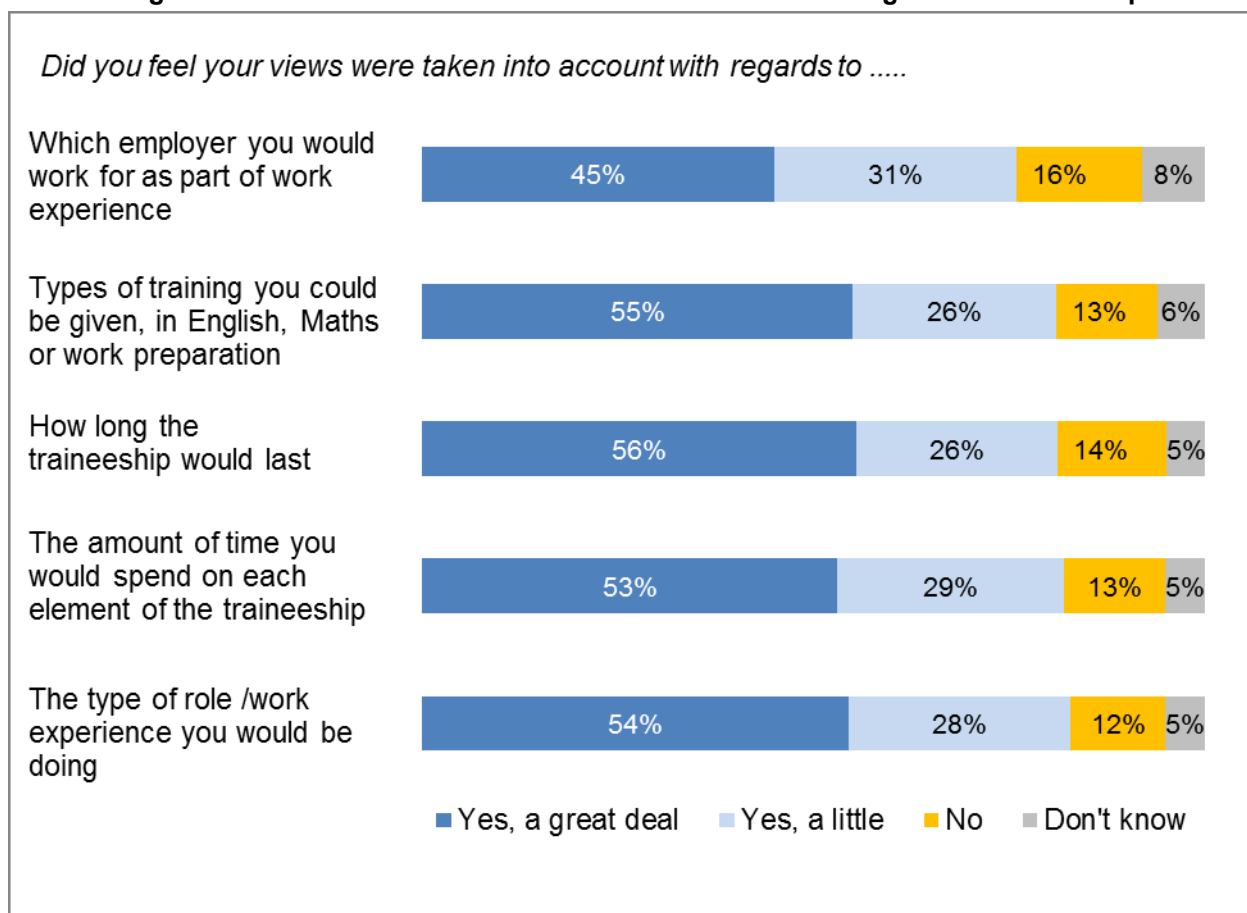
Around seven in ten trainees (69%) attended a meeting with their traineeship college or learning provider prior to beginning the programme. Of those, an overwhelming majority (90%) were informed that the completion of the traineeship could lead to an apprenticeship or job but that this was not guaranteed. Both figures reflect the 2014 survey. Following the meeting, most trainees were under the impression that the traineeship would last under 6 months (85%).

The majority of trainees felt that their views were taken into account in different aspects of the design of their traineeship. See Figure 7 for further details.

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<sup>16</sup> See page 7 for further explanation of the issues with accurately identifying Levels.

**Figure 7: Whether views were taken into account in the design of the traineeship**



Base: All trainees in Year two survey of trainees (2153)

Trainees who identified as Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) were less likely to feel that their views were taken into account in the design of their traineeship. See Table 3 for more details.

**Table 3: Trainees views not taken into account**

Table 3: Did not feel views were taken into account (%)		
	White	BME
The provider of work experience	14	22
Type of role/work	11	18
Types of training	11	18
Time spent on each element	11	17

**Table 3: Did not feel views were taken into account (%)**

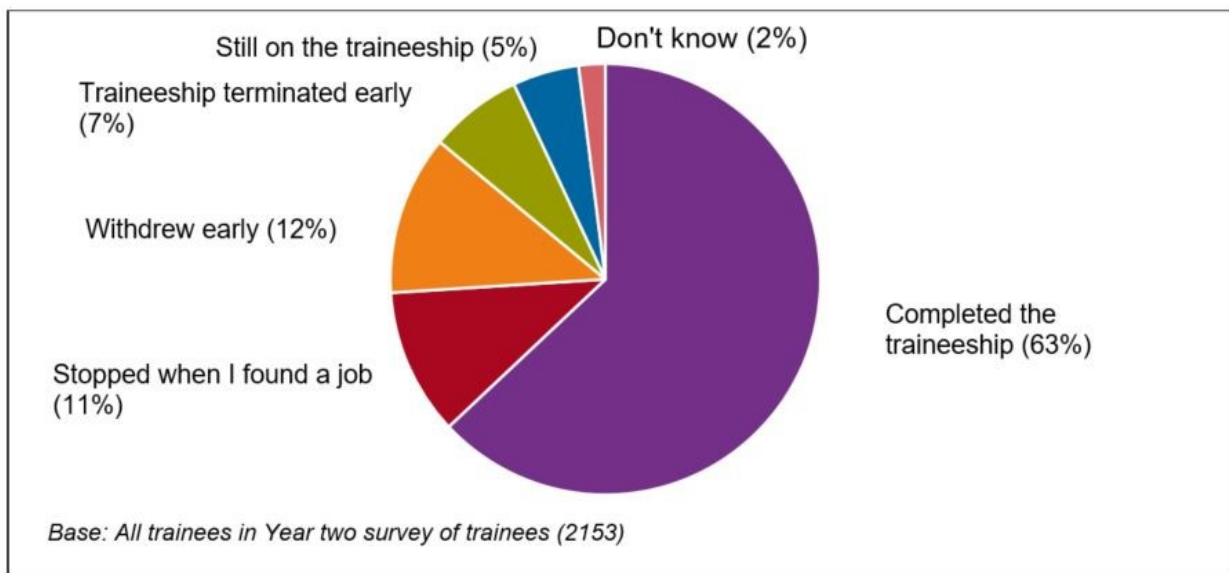
Base: White (1629), BME (524)

## The delivery, content and structure of the traineeship

### Completing the traineeship

Due to the wide range of dates in which trainees commenced their traineeship (August 2014 to July 2015), the date of completion also varied across a wide time period. At the time of the survey, the majority of trainees (63%) had completed their traineeship, 30% left before completing and 5% were still on the traineeship.

**Figure 8: Completion status of the traineeship**



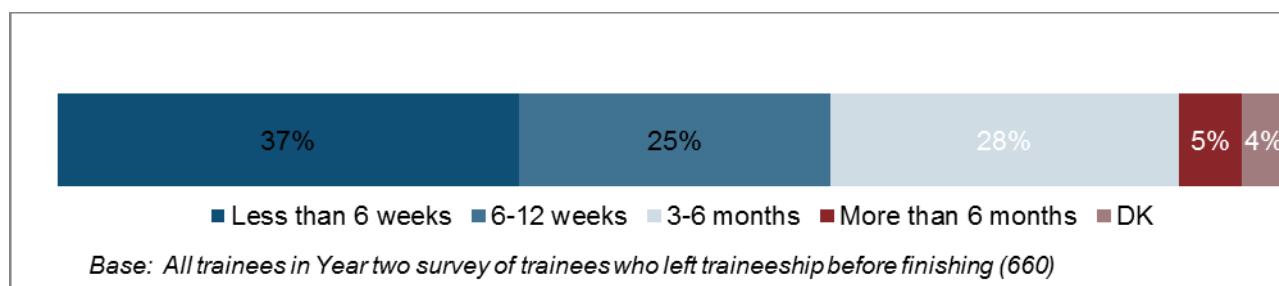
Where trainees left the traineeship early, the reasons can broadly be divided into stopping the traineeship when they found a job (11% of all trainees<sup>17</sup>); withdrawing from the traineeship early, e.g. for health or personal reasons or because they didn't like it (12% of all trainees) or the traineeship was terminated early (7% of all trainees). Elements mentioned by trainees who said they did not like the traineeship included the work experience placement, English and maths training, the work preparation training, travelling to and from the placement, and the hours they worked. Trainees that left the

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<sup>17</sup> As noted previously, leaving the traineeship early to start a job is considered a 'positive outcome' (and is recorded as such) - which affects comparisons between those trainees who completed and those who left early.

traineeship before completing did so with varying durations. Over half of these trainees (58%) spent at least 6 weeks on the programme.

**Figure 9: Total time spent on traineeship by those who left early**



### Length of traineeship elements

Traineeships are intended to last for a maximum of 6 months. When asked about the length of their traineeships, the majority (85%) completed the traineeship within this time period. One in ten trainees (11%) said that it lasted (or was supposed to last) more than 6 months. This may be due to English and Maths training continuing past 6 months, which is within the scope of traineeship rules.

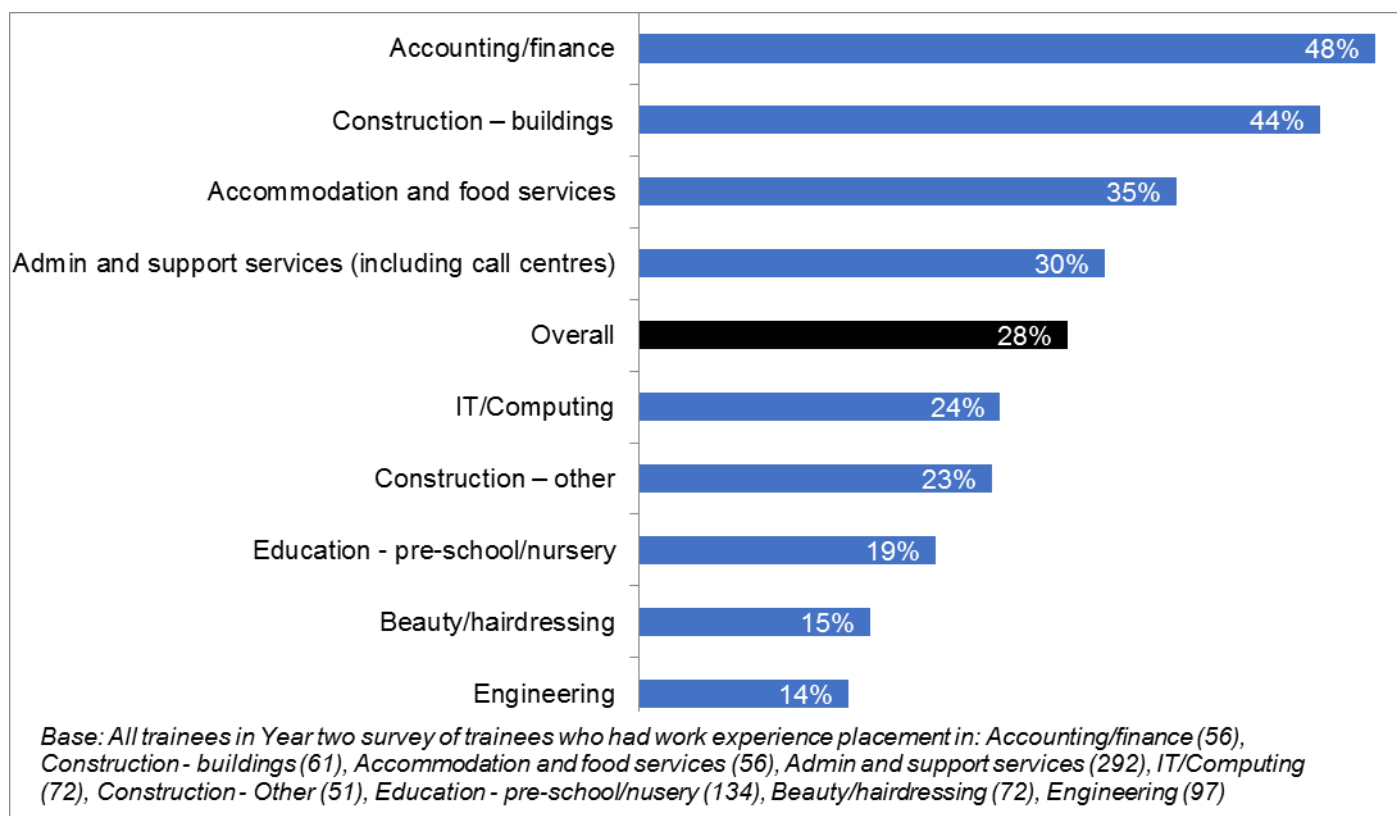
Trainees who identified themselves as having a disability or learning difficulties did not display any significant differences in the length of time spent on the traineeship compared with the overall figures. This is an encouraging finding as it suggests that traineeship providers are giving enough support to allow those with special educational needs (SEN) to match those without a disability or learning difficulty. This is also reflected in completion rates for trainees with SEN – 61% compared with 63% for trainees overall.

In contrast, age is a key indicator of traineeship length: 59% of trainees aged 19 and over spent less than 3 months on a traineeship compared with 47% of younger trainees (16-18). This seems to be driven by the length of the work experience placement. Whereas only 36% of 16-18 year olds spent less than 6 weeks on their placement, older trainees (19 and over) were more likely to (45%). Another factor in the difference between the age groups is the duration of the English & maths training (though this may be explained partially by prior attainment). Overall older trainees (19 and over) are more likely to receive English or maths training but spend less time on it: 82% of older trainees attended English or maths training and 61% of those spent less than 3 months on the course. This compares with 70% of 16-18 year olds who received English or maths training, with only 53% of these doing so for less than 3 months.



Another factor related to the length of the traineeship is the sector or industry of the work experience element. Figure 10 shows the percentage of trainees spending less than 2 months on their work experience in each sector (only those sectors with a minimum base size of 50 are included).

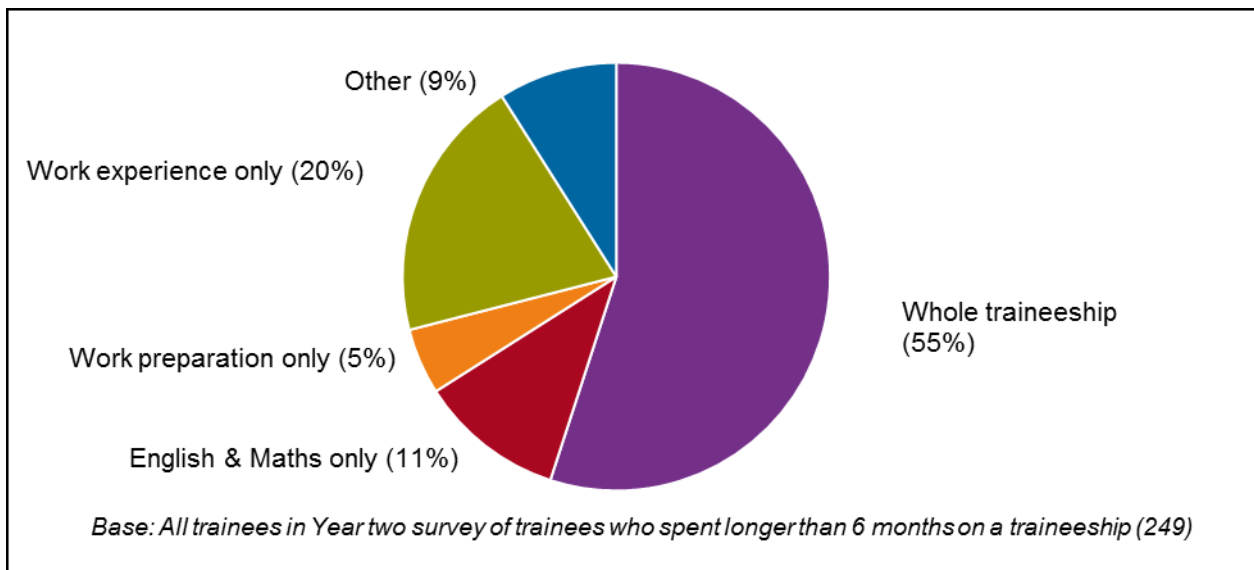
**Figure 10: Percentage of trainees spending less than 2 months on work experience by sector**



Among trainees who mentioned that the traineeship lasted over 6 months, 55% stated the whole traineeship lasted longer than 6 months (see Figure 11). Some issues with recall to this question were identified in 2014 as a re-contact exercise with a small number of trainees revealed that some had difficulty identifying the length of their traineeship. For example, when re-contacted, 5 out of the 7 trainees contacted revealed their traineeship lasted six months; having previously reported the traineeship lasted more than six months. In terms of profile, those who spend over 6 months on the traineeship are more likely to be aged 16-18 (69%) than those aged 19 and over (31%) but as mentioned above, this is most likely related to younger trainees spending longer on the work experience element than older trainees.

Most trainees (74%) felt the length of the traineeship was about right, 11% felt it was too short and a similar proportion too long (12%).

**Figure 11: Element(s) trainee still occupied with after 6 months**



### English & maths training

The learning elements of the traineeship were provided by dedicated training organisations for four in ten trainees (41%). A quarter (25%) spent their study time with a business or employer and 26% attended a school or college. A further 8% had other arrangements for their training.

Three-quarters of trainees (75%) reported receiving English or maths training as part of their traineeship. Those who felt they did not receive either English or maths training were more likely to be those reporting having Level 3 qualifications or above<sup>18</sup> (59%) or those whose traineeship lasted less than 8 weeks (65%). When prompted for the reason that they did not receive English or maths training, already having similar or higher qualifications (65%) was by far the most cited reason.

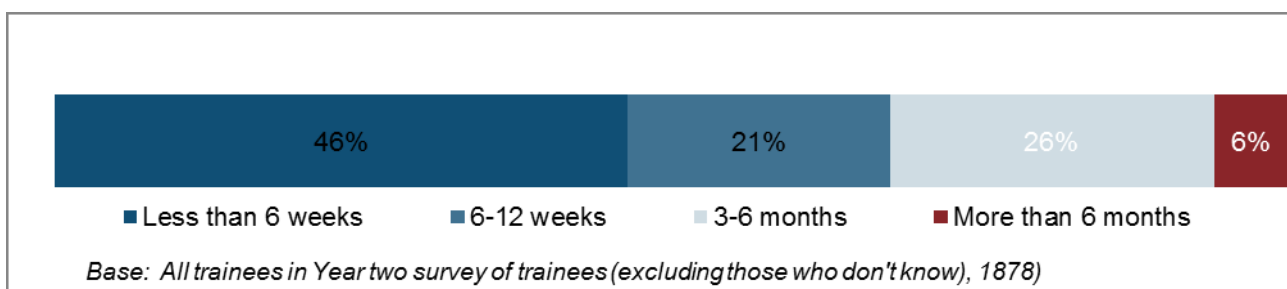
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<sup>18</sup> See page 7 for further explanation of the issues with accurately identifying Levels

A small proportion of trainees without English or maths at grades A\* - C at GCSE reported not receiving the relevant English or maths training – a key component of the programme. Overall, 16% of trainees without the necessary maths grade did not receive training in maths whilst the figure for English was 17%. This can be partly explained by some trainees leaving the traineeship early, and possible issues with recall. It is also possible that the applied nature of the English and maths training meant that some trainees did not consider it part of their learning on the programme.

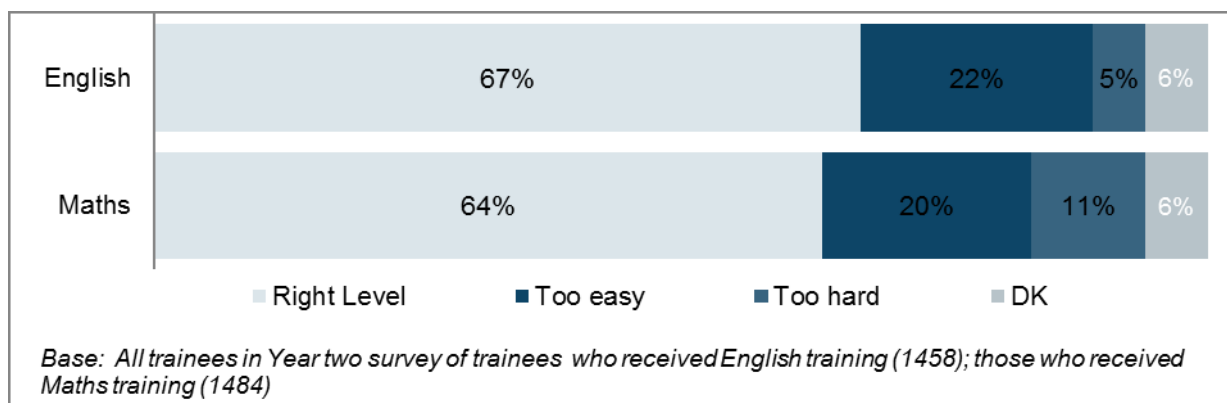
When English or maths training was included in the traineeship, the length of the training was relatively varied but on average lasted around 6 weeks. Figure 12 gives a breakdown of the duration of English and maths training.

**Figure 12: Length of English & maths training**



When asked to consider the English or maths training they had received, around two-thirds (66%) felt that the level of training was appropriate for them, no change from the 2014 evaluation (see Figure 13). Of those who felt the English or maths training was too easy, just over half indicated that they had studied the material previously (53% and 51% respectively) whilst around a third had studied more difficult material beforehand (34% and 38% respectively). Encouragingly, eight in ten trainees (82%) who thought the training was too easy agreed that the training was still useful.

**Figure 13: Whether training was at correct level**



One in five trainees (19%) who undertook English and maths training continued training in both English and maths after their traineeship ended. This suggests that the traineeship may have helped to promote continuing training and education. A fifth (22%) continued with English training, and one in four (25%) continued with maths. Two thirds of those who continued the training were aged 16-18 (63%) and one third (35%) were aged 19 or over<sup>19</sup>.

Of trainees who are continuing with English training the majority (61%) were working towards functional skills in English and one in four (26%) were working towards achieving a GCSE in English, which is in line with the overall aim of the traineeship programme. For trainees who were continuing with training in maths the majority said they were working at developing functional skills in maths (58%), but again one in four (26%) were working towards achieving a GCSE in maths.

Trainees aged 16-18 who received English or maths training were more likely than those aged 19 and over (who received English or maths training) to continue with these subjects after the traineeship. Just over a quarter of 16-18 year olds (26%) continued with English compared with 18% for older trainees (19 and over). They were also more likely to continue with maths (30%) than trainees aged 19 and above (19%).

This age difference is also apparent when looking at the level of qualification that trainees are working towards after the traineeship.

Trainees aged 16-18 and undertaking English training were more likely than older trainees (19 and over) to be working to develop functional skills (63% compared with 58%) or to GCSE level (28% compared with 23%). Similarly, trainees aged 16-18 were more likely than to be working towards a GCSE in maths (28%) than trainees aged 19 and above (22%). Female trainees continuing training were more likely to be working towards a GCSE in English (29%) or working towards a GCSE in maths (29%) than males (24% and 25% respectively).

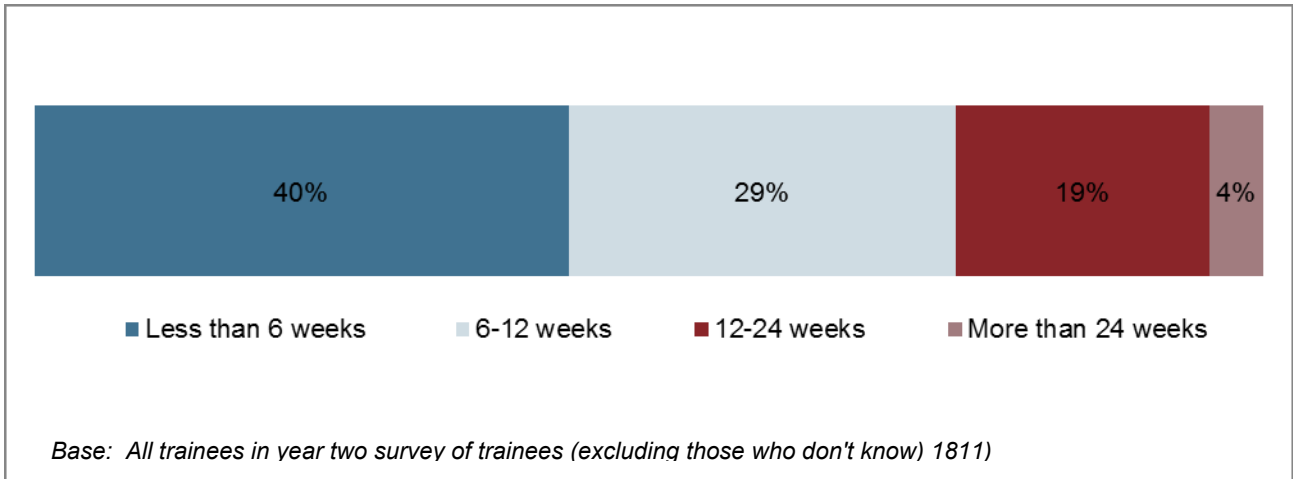
### **Structure of work experience**

When asked about the duration of their work experience, 47% completed it in less than 6 weeks, while 4% spent more than 26 weeks on the work experience placement. As trainees may have completed their traineeship some time ago there may be issues with recall.

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<sup>19</sup> We did not collect details on English and Maths training continued beyond the traineeship.

**Figure 14: Duration of traineeship work experience**



For the majority (65%) the work experience element ran for the duration of the traineeship.

The work experience involved a diverse range of types of organisation. The most common activities were in retail (16%) and administrative and support services (13%). Women were more likely than men to undertake their work experience in administrative and support services, beauty/hairdressing and education. On the other hand, males were more likely to undertake work experience in construction, engineering and retail. These patterns are broadly in line with wider employment trends in the sectors. See Table 4.

**Table 4: Sector or industry of work experience (%)**

<b>Industry</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Accommodation & food services	3	2	3
Accounting/finance	3	2	3
Admin and support services	13	11	17
Automotive repairs	1	2	*
Beauty/hairdressing	3	1	6
Construction (any)	5	9	1
Education (any)	8	3	16
Engineering	4	7	1
Gym/fitness	2	2	1
Health & social work	4	2	7
IT/Computing	3	5	1
Manufacturing	1	1	*
Retail	16	18	14
Other	33	34	31
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>Base: All trainees in Year two survey of trainees (2153), Males (1223), Females (930)</i>			

Half of trainees (48%) reported that their work experience placement was with an external employer, four in ten (41%) stated the placement was with their training organisation or learning provider and one in ten (12%) had some other arrangement.

To ensure trainees get the most out of the work experience placement, it is intended to be led by an employer in a real-life employment environment. This may include training providers who provide work experience placements in their back office functions, provided they are real, not simulated, roles. In addition, some large employers are funded to deliver traineeships. Both categories constitute valid work experience being delivered by training providers. Previous research has also highlighted some confusion by young people around what is meant by an 'external employer', which could account for the large proportion of trainees reporting undertaking the work experience with their provider, rather than with an external employer.

Across a range of metrics including satisfaction with the placement and outcomes from the traineeship, there does not appear to be any significant differences between trainees regardless of whether they reported their placement was provided by a provider or externally. This supports the view that where trainees report that they undertook work experience with their provider, it is of the kind supported by the funding rules – i.e. in a real-life environment – rather than simulated work experience.

While the majority of trainees (68%) undertook their work experience in a role or sector they particularly wanted to work in beforehand, just under a third (30%) did not. Having a work experience placement in a sector of interest is linked to perceptions of the traineeship as a whole. Only 11% of trainees who secured a work placement in a sector of interest thought the traineeship programme as a whole was worse than expected, whereas this figure nearly doubles to one-fifth (20%) among those who were not able to gain a placement in a sector that was of interest to them.

### **Additional support and content**

The majority of trainees (84%) said they were offered additional support (above that expected as part of their traineeship). Among all trainees, just under two-thirds (64%) received careers guidance, whilst mentoring (56%), support outside their normal working or teaching hours (46%) and additional course/qualifications (46%) were also taken up by trainees.

Among trainees who had completed the traineeship, the majority (81%) said they received some form of feedback from the employer, although for a third of trainees (34%) this appears to be informal only. Around half (47%) recalled receiving a formal reference from their work placement provider. As part of the traineeship guidelines, trainees are expected to receive a written reference on the completion of the traineeship. This finding suggests that providers may be failing to provide this in some cases.

Traineeship programmes are also expected to offer an exit interview with the work experience host; however only four in ten (44%) trainees who completed the traineeship recalled having an interview with their host. Seven in ten (73%) trainees who had an interview stated this was a real job interview where a post or apprenticeship had become available.

Trainees who had reported achieving a Level 3 qualification prior to the traineeship were more likely than those with a Level 2 qualification to have had an interview at the end of the traineeship (55% compared with 44%).

It is possible that further trainees may have had a mock interview but not included this when asked if they had an exit interview.

Three quarters (75%) of trainees who had a real job interview with their work placement host were offered a job. Of those trainees offered a job the vast majority, 88%, took up the position they were offered.

## **Satisfaction with the traineeship**

Most trainees gave very positive feedback about their time on the traineeship: eight in ten (82%) were satisfied with the traineeship overall, including 47% who were very satisfied, while 10% were dissatisfied. Overall levels of satisfaction have increased since the first year of the evaluation where 79% of trainees were satisfied overall, which is encouraging given the baseline levels were already very high.

Levels of satisfaction with the traineeship overall varied by age. Trainees aged 16-18 were less likely to say that they were very satisfied than those age 19 or over (44% compared with 52%).

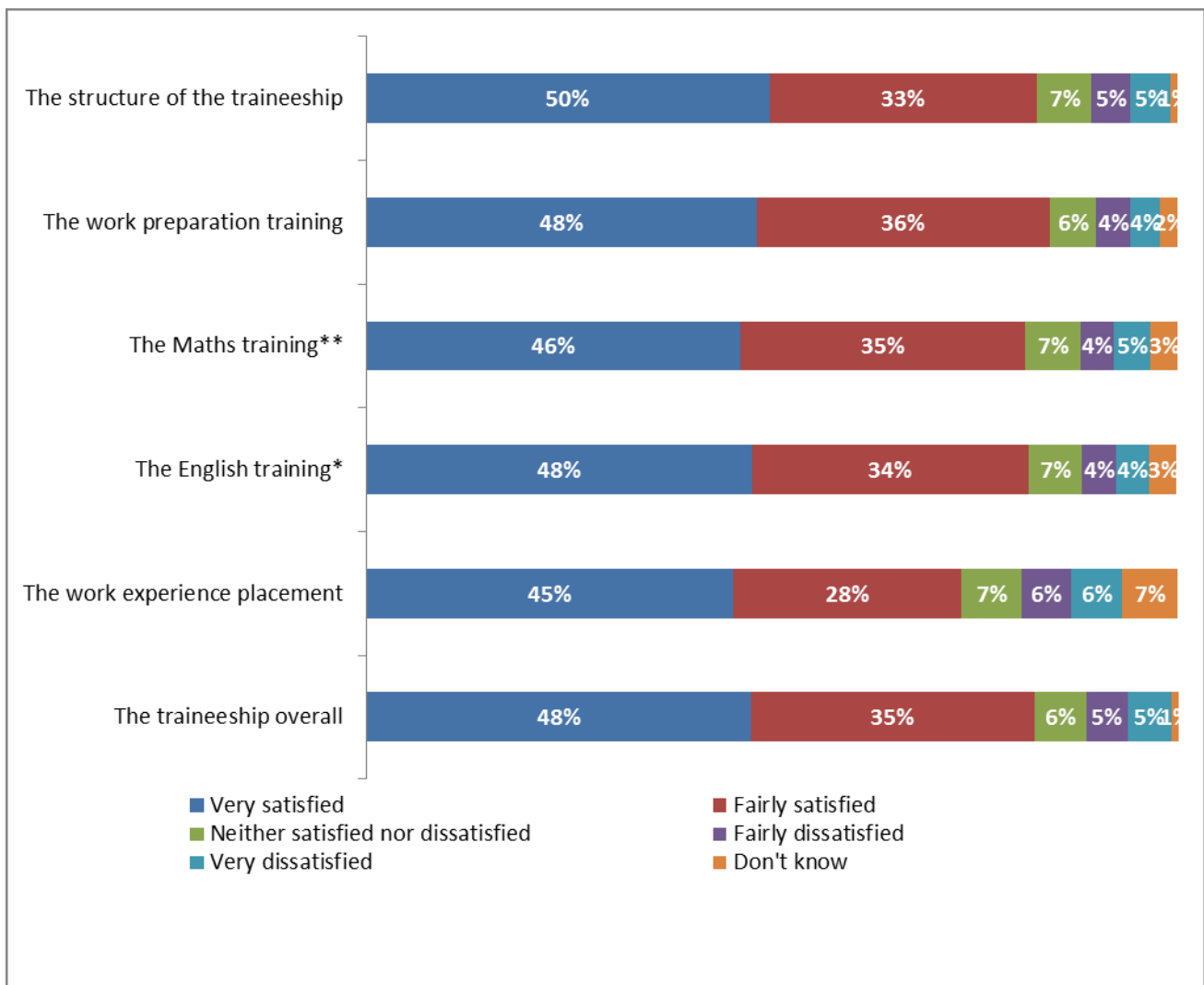
Levels of satisfaction were lower among trainees who had left their traineeship early: 70% of leavers were satisfied with the traineeship overall compared with 88% of completers who were satisfied. This difference is particularly pronounced in relation to the work experience element: just 58% of trainees who left early were satisfied with this element, compared with 80% of completers.



Levels of satisfaction were also lower among trainees who at the time of interview were in training or education, compared to those who were employed or looking for work (73% satisfied compared with 84% and 82%). Trainees with a disability or learning difficulty were also slightly less likely to be satisfied with the traineeship overall (79% versus 83%).

Trainees gave similar ratings for the specific elements of the programme (between 73% and 84% were satisfied with each of the elements), as well as for the way that the traineeship was structured (83% satisfied). See Figure 15 for more detailed satisfaction levels.

**Figure 15: Satisfaction with traineeship programme**



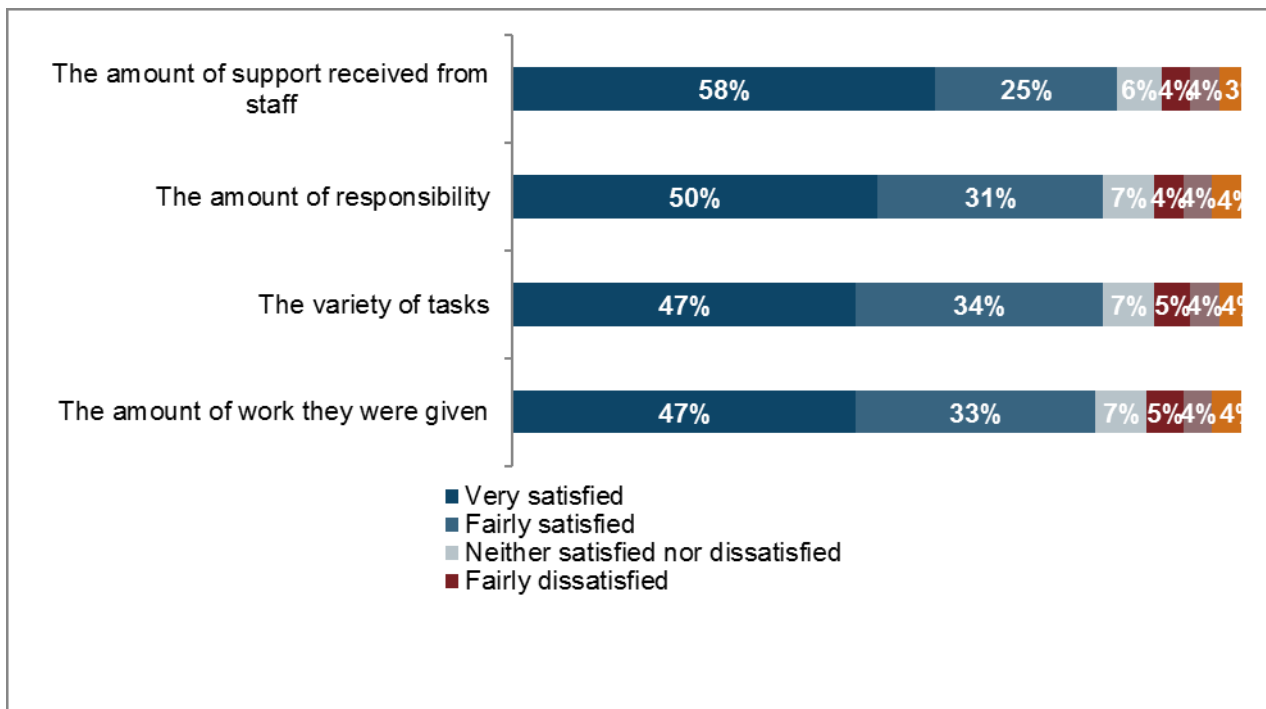
Base: All trainees in Year two survey of trainees (2,153) \*All trainees in Year two survey of trainees who took part in the English training (1,488) \*\* All trainees who took part in maths training (1,506)

Trainees were also positive towards the work experience element, particularly the amount of support they received from staff: 82% were satisfied, including 58% who were

very satisfied. At least 80% of trainees were satisfied with other aspects of the work experience element (see Figure 16).

Once again, trainees who left early were less positive than those who completed the traineeship. Trainees with a disability or learning difficulty showed no significant differences from trainees overall in terms of their satisfaction with the traineeship.

**Figure 16: Satisfaction with the traineeship programme**



*Base: All trainees in Year two survey of trainees (2,153)*

Just over half of trainees (55%) said that the traineeship overall was better than they had expected while 29% said it was in line with their expectations and 14% said it was worse than they had expected. Once again, trainees who left their traineeship early were more likely to be critical (26% said the traineeship was worse than they had expected, compared with 9% of those who completed the traineeship).

Trainees who said the traineeship did not live up to their expectations were asked why not. The most commonly selected reasons were: the traineeship was badly organised (15%), a lack of support or contact from provider/college/tutor (11%) and that there was no job at the end of the training (10%).

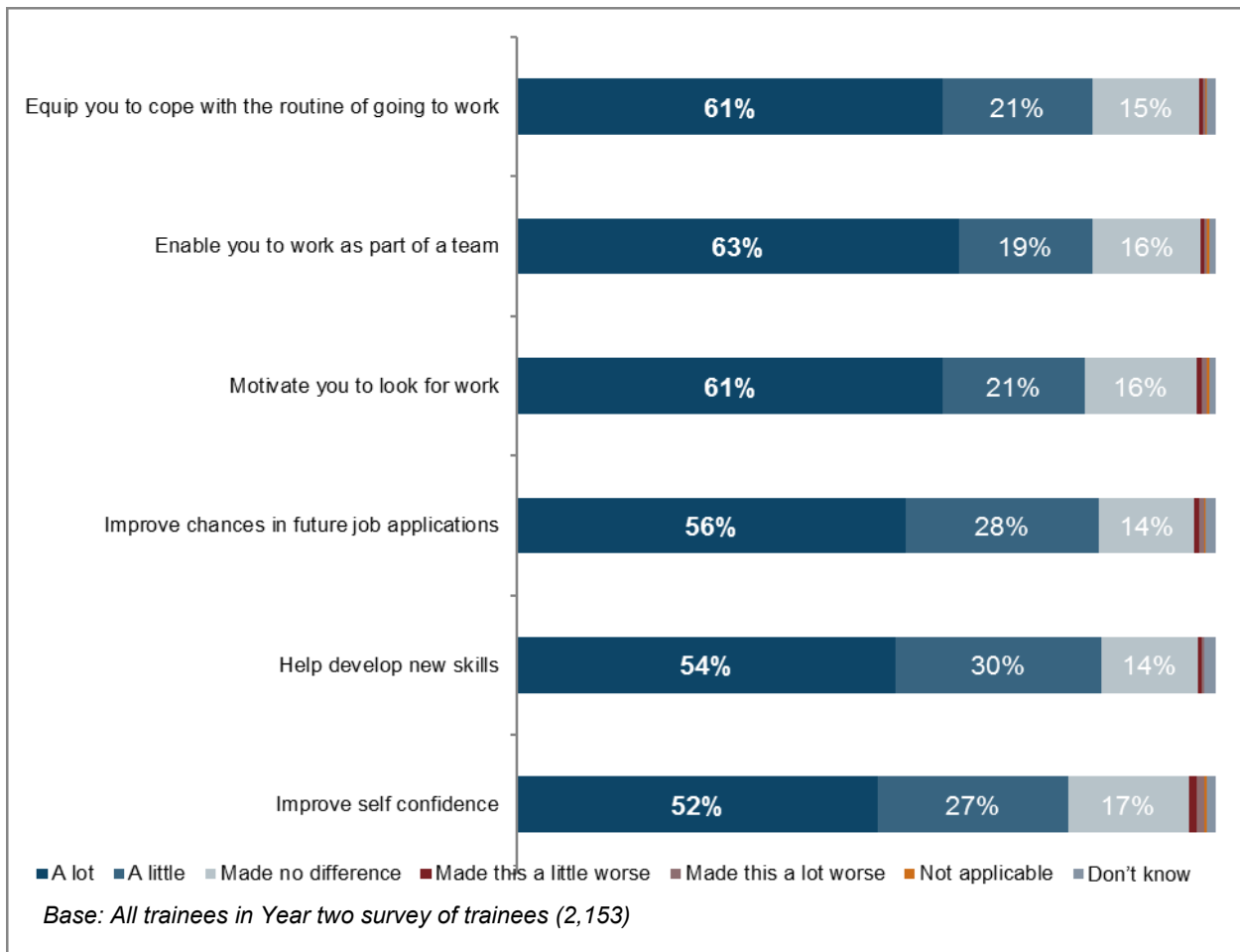
## Early outcomes and perceived impact

The findings give an important insight into the perceptions of trainees about the extent to which traineeships have helped them to move into (or closer towards) an apprenticeship, employment or education/training, as well as other perceived impacts of the programme (e.g. on confidence and motivation). This survey is not however intended to provide robust measures of the impact of the programme.

### Perceived benefits

Trainees generally felt that the traineeship had made a positive impact on their confidence and readiness for work. For example, 84% felt it had helped them to develop skills required for the workplace, and 83% felt it improved their chances in future job applications. See Figure 17.

**Figure 17: Whether traineeship helped improved skills**



Overall, trainees recognised the positive benefits that they had gained from their traineeship. More than four in five (84%) said that they had 'gained good experience',

while 79% said they had improved job interview skills and experience, and 76% had improved their chances of getting paid work.

Male trainees were more likely than female trainees to report that the traineeship had helped them improve their chances in future job applications (86% compared with 80%) and increase their chances of getting paid work (78% compared with 74%).

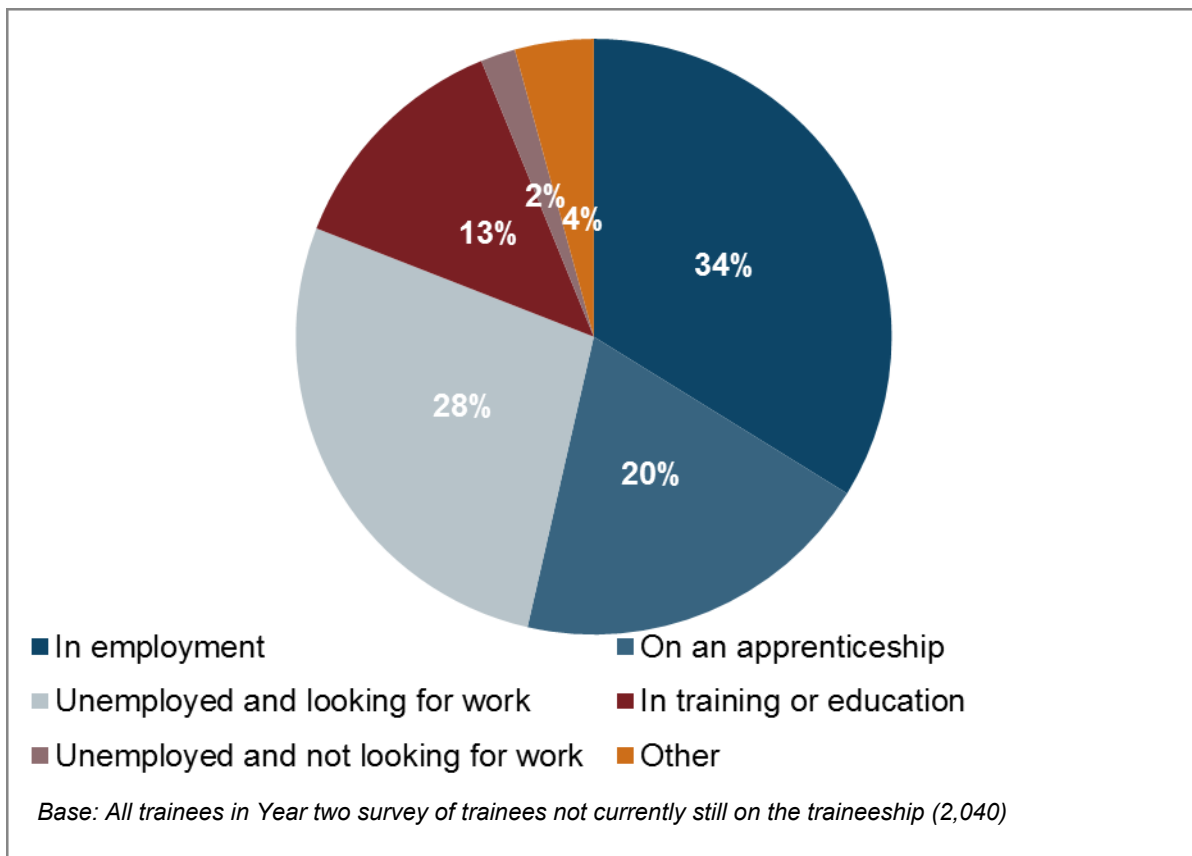
## **Current and planned destinations**

The trainees in the sample had been on a traineeship at different times. Some had left their traineeship early (30%), while some were still doing the traineeship at the time of the survey (5%) or had just finished it. It is important to bear this in mind when interpreting the findings in this section.

At the time of the survey (autumn/winter 2015), half (54%) of the trainees who had left or completed the traineeship reported that they were either on an apprenticeship (20%) or in work (34%). A further 13% were in training or education. These activities can be said to represent 'positive' outcomes, and when combined together, they account for two-thirds (66%) of the trainees in the sample.

The proportion of trainees who reported they were employed is statistically significantly higher than in year one (34% compared with 28%)

**Figure 18: Current employment status of trainees**



The destinations of those who left their traineeship early were similar to those who completed it, except that they were slightly less likely to be on an apprenticeship (17% compared with 22%).

Other reported sub-group variations were as follows:

- Trainees aged 16-18 were more likely to be in a 'positive outcome' (in employment, on an apprenticeship or in education or training) at the time of the survey (autumn/winter 2015) than those aged 19 or over at the start of their traineeship (74% compared with 56%). This difference is particularly marked when looking at those currently on an apprenticeship, 27% compared with 11%.
- Trainees who reported having achieved a Level 3 or higher qualification before the traineeship were more likely to be in a positive outcome than those who had achieved a Level 2 or Level 1 qualification (77% compared with 69% and 57%).

In total, over half of trainees (54%) said they were employed or on an apprenticeship at the time of the interview. Of these:

- 40% were in the same organisation where they did their work experience placement;
- 24% were in a different organisation but were in the same industry;
- 36% were not in the same industry.

Trainees still completing their traineeship at the time of interview were asked about their preferred destination in the future. They were most interested in finding paid work (54%), with 25% most interested in finding an apprenticeship and 17% in moving into further education or training.

Four in five trainees (82%) said the support they had received during the work preparation training had helped to improve their job search. Overall, 61% had submitted job applications during or since the traineeship, although this was higher among those who were still looking for work (77%). Four in ten trainees (40%) had applied for an apprenticeship, either during or since the traineeship. Most of those who had applied for a job or apprenticeship said that they mentioned the traineeship as part of the application (77%).

Of those trainees who had applied for a job or an apprenticeship, either during or since the traineeship, 62% said that they were sending out more job applications per week than before the traineeship, and 59% said that they had applied for jobs that they had never considered applying for previously, as a result of attending the traineeship.

Trainees who were aged 19 or over at the start of the traineeship were more likely than those aged 16-18 to apply for jobs during or since the traineeship (67% compared with 58%). However those aged 16-18 at the start of the traineeship were more likely to have applied for an apprenticeship during or since their traineeship (44% compared with 35%).

## Conclusions

The Year Two Survey of Trainees has built upon the findings of the previous year's survey to better understand the changing characteristics of trainees and to probe the effect of adaptations to the traineeship programme.

In comparison with 2014, employment outcomes have slightly improved. Just over a third of trainees (34%) were in employment at the time of the interview compared with 28% in 2014. A fifth of trainees were engaged in an apprenticeship (20%) which together with the employment figure means that over half of trainees (54%) who were not still on the traineeship were in some form of employment; this compared to an equivalent figure of 50% in 2014. A further 12% of trainees had entered into training or education. When all positive outcomes (employment, apprenticeship, training and education) are combined, this represents a positive outcome rate of 66%. This is stable on last year's 67% positive outcome rate but includes a higher percentage of trainees in employment.

Age was found to be a key factor in attaining a positive outcome after the traineeship. Trainees aged 16-18 at the start of their traineeship were more likely to be in a 'positive outcome' (as defined above) than older trainees aged 19 and over (74% compared with 56%).

Trainees also perceived a number of benefits from the programme:

- Improved their chances in job applications : 82% felt the traineeship helped to raise the likelihood of successful job applications
- Motivated them to apply for work : over eight in ten (81%) reported feeling more motivated to apply for employment positions as a result of the programme
- Developed new skills : a large majority of trainees (84%) agreed that the traineeship has helped them to develop new skills and capabilities
- Helped to cope with the routine of work : 82% of trainees felt the traineeship equipped them to cope with the routine of going to work each day

Satisfaction with the traineeship remains particularly high. Over eight in ten trainees (82%) were satisfied with the traineeship overall (compared with 79% in 2014). The individual elements of the traineeship - English & maths training, work preparation and a work experience placement – all received similar levels of satisfaction from trainees.

Four in five trainees (82%) said that the support that they had received during the work preparation training had helped to improve their job search. Overall, 61% had submitted job applications during or since the traineeship, although this was higher among those who were still looking for work (77%).

Overall, satisfaction with the traineeship programme remains extremely high and employment outcomes show some improvement from the Year One Survey of Trainees.

## Year Two Qualitative results

This chapter explores perspectives from trainees, providers, employers and referral agencies on the implementation and delivery of traineeships across the six case studies and five revisited year 1 providers. The chapter will first examine the experience and perceptions of trainees. It will then explore key stakeholder perceptions of set up, referral pathways and the content and delivery of the programme. The chapter will also examine the reasons why eligible non-providers did not take up the programme.

### Qualitative aims of the research

As discussed earlier, the overarching purpose of the evaluation was to assess whether traineeships offer an effective way of supporting young people into apprenticeships, sustainable employment or further training.

The aim of the qualitative research of the evaluation was to assess whether and how traineeships help young people achieve positive destination outcomes and identify best practice of delivery of the programme. As part of the year 1 evaluation, qualitative case studies were conducted to provide an in-depth picture of implementation and delivery of traineeships.

The specific objective of the year 2 qualitative case studies was to build on the year 1 findings and explore the on-going delivery of traineeships and the changes and improvements implemented by providers.

The interviews also explored the perceived impact of key changes to the traineeship delivery framework and requirements for providers in 2015-2016. In summary this included:

- Widened eligibility for 19 to 24 year olds qualified below a full level 3, (from 1 Jan 2015).
- Clarification that the duration and intensity of traineeships should last between 6 weeks and 6 months, with the reflection that the actual length should reflect the needs of the learner.
- Funding of work experience and work preparation training as a single programme for traineeships for 19 to 24 year olds rather than funding each component separately.
- Funding for 19-24 year olds to be outcomes based. The 20% achievement payment for this single work experience and work preparation rate is based on the learner progressing to one of the successful outcomes for a traineeship, rather than the achievement of a qualification.
- Flexible elements, such as the English, Maths and other qualifications, to be added as flexible elements and funded as separate components.



- Enabling all 16-24 year olds to engaging in work preparation training that is either accredited or non-accredited. In 2014/15 work preparation training had to consist of regulated units and qualifications on the Qualifications and Credit Framework.
- The removal of restrictive benefit rules.
- Improved and better use of destination and progression data to support minimum standards; and
- Improved outcome definitions of apprenticeships, sustainable employment and further learning.

## Methodology and sample

A qualitative case study approach was conducted to provide a holistic and comprehensive overview of the programme's delivery. Six case studies were undertaken between November 2015 and February 2016. Case studies were selected to represent a range of traineeship provision taking into account variation in delivery by age group, type of provider (e.g. Local Authority, Private, and Further Education), the sector that the traineeship provided training and work placement for, and a geographical spread across England. See Appendix B for a full breakdown of the sample.

Case studies involved speaking with providers' staff, trainees of the provider, employers providing work experience and referral agencies. In-depth interviews (approx. 60 minutes) were undertaken with:

- 12 providers
- 24 trainees
- 11 employers
- 10 local referral agencies (including 3 interviews with local JobCentre Plus (JCP) staff).

The case study interviews explored the following key themes:

- Changes from the first year of delivery – good practice; barriers overcome; and persistent challenges.
- Referrals and working links with referral agencies and providers.
- Delivery of the traineeship programme across the three core elements and flexible content.
- Traineeship progress/moving forward.
- Growth of the programme.

In addition to the case studies a further four out of six providers from the year 1 evaluation were re-visited via a short telephone interview (approx. 20-30 minutes) to explore changes to delivery since the initial implementation of the programme.

Six telephone interviews (25 - 30 minutes) were also conducted with non-providers who were eligible to offer the programme but decided not to do so, to explore the reasons why eligible providers do not intend to deliver provision.

## Trainees' experience and perceptions of traineeships

### Summary: Trainees

- Trainees' experiences on the programme were broadly positive, with many trainees believing they had gained the hard and soft skills needed to enter the world of work.
- Although awareness of the traineeship programme among young people was typically low, once it had been introduced most saw a traineeship as an opportunity to build their preparedness for either an apprenticeship or entry to the workplace.
- The positioning of traineeships to potential trainees is a key facilitator to their engagement with the programme and in managing their expectations. Where the traineeship was closely aligned to an apprenticeship, young people were generally more easily engaged and their expectations better managed. Progression onto an apprenticeship was a common aspiration among many trainees interviewed as part of this research.
- When on the programme, trainees generally found the work placement the most valuable component of the traineeship: they were able to gain practical skills, build their workplace confidence and improve their soft skills (e.g. communication, teamwork). Although often reluctant to engage with English and maths elements at the start of the programme, trainees also found this element useful: several mentioned their experiences compared favourably with English and maths provision at school and that they had achieved better outcomes due to smaller class sizes and greater relevance to the 'real-world'. This acted as a boost to their confidence and self-esteem as well as their hard skills.
- Almost all trainees reported future plans of some sort, with many of those interviewed already embarking on apprenticeships or involved in the application stage.

### Trainees' motivations for joining the traineeship programme

Trainees included in the second year of qualitative evaluation were aged 16-24 and had a range of existing qualification levels and educational experience. Some had no formal qualifications, some had gained Level 1-2 qualifications following school in a FE setting, and a minority had achieved A-C grades in some subjects at GCSE. Trainees also varied in terms of the level of prior work experience obtained, their confidence and personal circumstances. In the majority of cases, trainees had limited to no work experience, lacked functional skills in English and maths, lived at home with their parent(s) and lacked confidence in both the workplace and formal educational settings.

Overwhelmingly, trainees were attracted to the programme as a route into an apprenticeship and were further motivated to join on seeing a list of possible placements. Some were initially disappointed to discover that they could not immediately join an apprenticeship but the majority of the sample was pleased to have the opportunity to take a staged journey towards this end.

*'At the start I was more interested in apprenticeships, but X [name of referral agency] said traineeship is a step up towards it'. Case Study 1, Trainee 3, Male, Local Authority, General/Health/Social Care/SEN specialist provider*

Prior to joining the programme some trainees had been unclear about how they would obtain an apprenticeship and doubted their ability to identify and approach one alone. Some others, although attracted to an apprenticeship in theory, were not sure whether they would be well suited to working in that sector/role in practice. For these trainees, the programme provided them with a chance to test out their suitability to the work environment.

Reflecting the confidence issues that many trainees faced at the outset, the programme represented the 'first steps' that they felt they needed to take in order to get closer to the labour market. It was an opportunity to improve their job readiness, recognising their own self-belief issues, their lack of qualifications, lack of work experience and lack of experience of the routine that being in work provides.

*"Not being at college for quite a while, I didn't want to go straight into full-time and not being into that routine of getting up early..." Case Study 5, Trainee 2, Male, Private Local Provider, Security and Retail*

*"With not having the qualifications, it was that second chance to make something of myself and now I have the qualifications. I have my level 2 in maths and English which I didn't have before. I think I had an E in maths and D in English." Case Study 3, Trainee 1, Male, Further Education Provider, Engineering and Business Admin*

In some isolated cases, there was no initial attraction to the programme as such - even if this developed later - and the decision to join was motivated by the financial support of a bursary provided by the employer<sup>20</sup> or simply because there appeared to be no other options.

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<sup>20</sup> Training is fully funded by the Government, with providers and employers not required to provide extra funding. However, many employers and providers choose to offer some financial support to cover costs of travel, for example.

The positioning of traineeships to potential trainees is a key facilitator to their engagement with the programme and in managing their expectations. In the main, the programme either met or exceeded trainees' expectations (see section below) but many were initially put off by the name and/or were keen to access an apprenticeship. On viewing the traineeship as a route and an opportunity to build their own readiness for an apprenticeship and the workplace, trainees were positively engaged. In addition, the list of possible placements is a key tool in making the programme credible to potential trainees and therefore motivating them to be involved.

Building awareness and credibility of traineeships amongst referral agencies is important as it is also a key facilitator to engaging appropriate young people, for instance through networking and developing case studies. Awareness amongst trainees was extremely low and, without being directed by a referral agency/partner, they would not have known about the programme. In many cases, the traineeship was just what the trainee had been looking for, despite not knowing the opportunity existed.

With respect to completing the programme, the following are key facilitators:

- Building trainees' confidence before the placement and fostering confidence during the placement. Helpful approaches to achieve this included: mentoring, feedback, contact days, being accepted into the team, and realistic and manageable tasks which trainees can carry out and then build on.
- Allowing trainees to influence the choice of placement. Even where the trainee has not found the placement for himself or herself, taking personal responsibility for the placement creates attachment and connection between the trainee and the placement choice. This can be achieved via visits, interviews and taster days in the spirit of both the employer and trainee assessing each other's suitability.
- Flexible content has an important role to play in building trainees' confidence to apply for an apprenticeship or work in a specific sector of interest.

## **Trainees' experience of referral to traineeships**

Awareness of traineeships was generally low. Without being told about traineeships via a third party, most trainees would not have known about the opportunity. Some trainees felt that the programme is poorly advertised and that, given the suitability of the programme for many of them, it was concerning that they may never have come across it themselves.

There are several routes to finding out about traineeship programme, including proactive web search that resulted in individuals discovering the programme independently. However, this would appear to be the case for a small minority.

Some trainees found out about the programme from their existing education/training provider as a result of making enquiries about apprenticeships and discovering that they did not meet one or more of the criteria.

Other trainees found out about the programme in the process of looking for a job, often via JobCentre Plus. It is worth noting that in these cases trainees reported that JobCentre Plus was not able to provide much detail about the programme beyond its existence and the name of the organisation that should be approached.

Finally, a family member or friend told some trainees about the programme. In these cases, the family member or friend had experience of the programme or knew about it because they worked in the setting (placement or provider).

Reflecting on the Year 1 evaluation, referral pathways remain varied but self-referral appears to be the least likely route in. Initial awareness amongst trainees reflects to a large extent the provider model (including recruiting via their own provision) and referral mechanisms that providers have established with referral agencies and partners, such as Councils, colleges, services working with young people in a range of capacities and JobCentre Plus.

## **Trainees' experience of the programme**

Overall, trainees were positive about their experience of the programme. Both those who had completed and those still on the programme felt that the experience had benefited them in several regards, but most especially in terms of feeling more confident to enter the workplace. Based on the qualitative sample, the majority of those who had completed the traineeship either had plans to work or join an apprenticeship or had already begun one.

The workplace element was perceived to be the most valuable element by the trainees, although trainees pointed to the value of having done the English and maths and work preparation elements in advance of the work placement, even if they questioned the value and/or felt uneasy about these elements at the outset.

In contrast to Year 1, trainees in Year 2 reported a good level of understanding about the programme and what they could expect from it. In most cases, these expectations were met or exceeded. As a result, trainees struggled to think of ways in which the programme could be improved.

## **English and maths**

Overall, the English and maths element of the programme was very well thought of by trainees across the case studies. (Further detail on approaches to delivery can be found

later in the chapter from the perspective of providers, referral agencies and employers). This aspect of the programme has benefited trainees beyond improving their ability in English and maths. It has had added benefits of boosting individuals' confidence and self-belief, opening up the real possibility of obtaining further qualifications and transforming learning from something that was viewed as threatening to something that many felt positive about.

Many trainees were initially apprehensive about this element of the programme, as identified in Year 1. Many reported negative experiences of learning English and maths at school and anticipated that they would have to repeat what had been a painful experience. This apprehension in almost all cases quickly vanished as a result of one or more of the following aspects of the delivery approach and style:

- Small class sizes and individually tailored learning.
- Friendly environment and atmosphere.
- Relevance to the 'real world'.
- Interactive and fun approaches to learning.

To expand on these:

### **Small class sizes and individually tailored learning**

Class sizes are generally smaller than trainees experienced at school and trainees have access to more individual attention as a result. Some trainees reported they learned more with respect to maths and/or English in a period of weeks than they did in years in a school environment.

In addition, teaching approaches employed by providers generally acknowledged trainees' different stages of ability and adjusted the time commitment and/or syllabus accordingly.

*"They give you what you need. Not everyone in the class has to do the same thing. It's not like school; it's based on your individual needs". Case Study 2, Trainee 2, Male, Further Education Provider, Motor Vehicle Engineering*

### **Friendly environment and atmosphere**

Many trainees did not like their school environment and presumed training might be similar. In reality, they found the training environment more relaxed and more accepting of them in comparison.

*'I feel comfortable here. I'm taking in the information'*. Case Study 5, Trainee 1, Female, Private Local Provider, Security

*'Thought the training centre would be like school, boring, but it is not like school, it is better'*. Case Study 6, Trainee 3, Male, Local Authority, General/Health/Social Care/ SEN specialist provider

### **Relevance to the 'real world'**

Some trainees struggled to make the connection between school teaching of English and maths and the application of this to the 'real world'. The approach to teaching English and maths in the programme – with the emphasis being on functional skills – helped trainees to see the relevance of this learning. This was even more so the case for programme models which were sector specific, where trainees were learning English and maths skills they would be using in the context of working in a specific role.

*'Maths, didn't want to do that, but I can see how that can help'*. Case Study 6, Trainee 1, Female, Local Authority, General/Health/Social Care/SEN specialist provider.

### **Interactive and fun approaches to learning**

In almost all cases, trainees found the style of learning to be highly interactive. In English and maths, as well as work preparation, dynamic approaches to learning were used which were fun and often contrasted with trainees' experiences of studying while at school. In some cases, these approaches also contributed to confidence building as well as the intended learning of functional skills.

*'Lacked a bit of confidence, but staff work through that through role play'*. Case Study 6, Trainee 1, Female, Childcare

There are some aspects of trainees' experience of learning where there is less consensus as to the benefit of these.

Some trainees were pleased to use online resources and do some self-guided learning in their own time. However, for many others, the classroom based learning and being able to ask for help was key to their learning.

Similarly, whilst some were motivated by the prospect of a qualification, for others, the lack of focus on formal qualifications put them at their ease (note that not all models are set up for GCSE given the length of their specific programme).

*'It wasn't quite like just exams it wasn't just throwing these questions at you, you were eased into it, it was so much easier, at school you're sat there and there is so much pressure. There was no pressure. It is actually life skills that*



*you're learning rather than random questions."* Case Study 3, Trainee 1, Male, Further Education Provider, Engineering and Business Admin

## Work preparation

Work preparation is the first element of the programme and typically entails structured class-based sessions covering CV writing, employability and social skills, portfolio building, aspects of employment law, job searching and interview skills. Whilst the majority of work preparation is undertaken at the beginning and completed in a 4-6 week period, in many cases it continues in a less formal way during work placements through the contact day.

For the most part, trainees acknowledged the importance of the work preparation element in making them ready for the workplace, given they had little experience of being in a work setting and little experience of being in front of prospective employers. However, the value of work preparation was not appreciated until the work placement had begun.

*"I feel like there was a lot more than I expected to learn on that side of things (work preparation). It made more sense once I started the placement and we were putting what we learnt into action."* Case Study 6, Trainee 1, Male, Local Authority, Business Administration

In general, trainees were positive about all aspects of work preparation; it increased trainees' confidence in entering the workplace and alleviated anxiety for some of the more nervous trainees. The specificity of work preparation was particularly well received, for example, drafting CVs for different types of roles and sector specific health and safety.

*"Overall I think the content is brilliant - it's really good".* Case Study 2, Trainee 4, Male, Further Education Provider, Motor Vehicle/Business Administration

Trainees were especially positive about the engaging and interactive delivery of work preparation. Approaches such as group work and games (such as award for the best mock interview, obstacle courses for team building, etc.) in addition to more traditional approaches such as PowerPoint presentations, held trainees' interest and attention. Another tool which facilitated trainees' engagement with this element was an individual learning plan. Called slightly different names by different providers, this was essentially a reflective tool which captured progress made against trainees' own objectives. Key aspects of work preparation were captured here.

*"It is engaging everyone and we don't lose concentration".* Case Study 2, Trainee 1, Male, Further Education Provider, Motor Vehicle/Business Administration

In a small number of cases, trainees were unclear about whether the work preparation element, or aspects of it, would be accredited.

Some trainees received flexible content training that applied to the sector of their placement. As noted in Year 1, where this was the case, it was welcomed. Trainees recognised the relevance of this learning and were pleased to have further qualifications because of the perceived advantage this might give them over other apprentice applicants and in the labour market more generally. Examples of flexible content include: health and safety, ICT training (Excel and PowerPoint particularly), Security Industry Authority badge, physical intervention training (for security staff) and sales pitching/presentation skills.

## **Work placement**

As noted in Year 1, there were variations in the way young people came to their work placement. The approach employed by most providers was to identify a placement on behalf of the trainee. The trainee either attended an interview ahead of the placement or attended 'taster' days. If both the employer and the trainee were content after this point, the placement went ahead. In some cases, trainees were supported to identify a suitable placement for themselves. Though significant problems have not been identified with this approach, it is notable that it represents fewer allocations and that some young people reported anxiety about this aspect of their programme.

Overall, trainees found their work placement to be suitable on taking it up and that it met their expectations. They reported that their provider had sought to find a placement that reflected their interests and had taken in other factors such as the workplace itself and proximity to home. In some isolated cases, however, an alternative placement was found after a short time in the initial placement. In all of these few cases, the decision to change placement was driven by a change in interest expressed by the trainee.

Most went into the placement with a good awareness of the environment and the role that helped trainees' confidence on entering the work place. Some trainees reported lacking key information about their placement, for example, like the duration of the placement. This finding is not specific to one provider or delivery model and may reflect the overall flexibility of the traineeship programme.

In all but one case, trainees were happy with the tasks they were given to perform on the placement. Generally trainees felt comfortable in their role whilst at the same time felt that they were learning new skills. They enjoyed learning 'on the job' and observing colleagues performing the tasks repeatedly gave them confidence to try themselves. This contrasts with being told how to do a task once and then having to do it immediately.

*"Where I watch them quite a bit I get to learn more because I can just pick it up from them"* Case Study 2, Trainee 3, Female, Further Education Provider, Hair and Beauty

Work place environments were typically supportive. Some trainees had been allocated a workplace mentor or a 'buddy', as well as having a manager to report to. Many trainees remarked that they had been made to feel like 'one of the team' and had been included in the 'banter' of colleagues, which they enjoyed.

*"I feel like an adult (while on work placement) you get treated like an adult and you feel part of the team"*. Case Study 6, Trainee 1, Female, Local Authority, Childcare

The following factors appeared to impact the success of the work placement:

- Familiarity with the workplace, through visiting first or knowing the workplace for another reason (local business, friend had worked there, etc.)
- Good awareness of what the role would be
- Matched to the trainee's interests
- Reasonably accessible from home
- Supportive environment with opportunities for formal and informal feedback
- Being accepted as part of the team

There were very few suggestions for improvement of the work placement element. Generally trainees perceived this as the most useful and enjoyable element of the programme. However, in a small number of cases, awareness ahead of the placement could have been better. In addition, the duration of the work placement could have been longer for some trainees who felt that more time would have improved their sense of work routine.

## **Young people's early perceptions of the impact of the programme and plans/expectations for the future**

Overall, the traineeship – across various delivery models – met or in many cases exceeded trainees' expectations. Many would recommend it to others in a similar position and especially to people who are 'shy' and/or lacking in confidence. Providers and trainees agree that the programme has accelerated learning with respect to functional skills, job skills and personal development compared with being in college full time. There were limited suggestions for improvement to the programme beyond making the

traineeship paid to provide a financial incentive and making the work placement element longer so that they had more time to gain skills and understand the sector they were working within.

Trainees reported a wide range of benefits, some of which they had expected at the outset, as well as others that they were surprised by. Additional qualifications and/or functional skills in English and maths, along with work experience, CV writing and interview skills were among the main expected outcomes that trainees reported. All of these were felt to be advantageous. Trainees felt that the work experience combined with the work preparation elements would enable them to talk from experience about how they would respond in work scenarios that they might be asked about in job interviews. Trainees also reported gains in their inter-personal skills and felt more able to cope in an unfamiliar environment with new people. Some trainees also reported a greater sense of motivation. Some of this was borne out of the routine they had become accustomed to but it was also related to the sense of accomplishment that they had derived from the programme, which had given them new impetus.

*"Before I started this traineeship I were a little bit lazy... but now I know that I want to finish this traineeship, because I've been told where it's going to lead to".*

Case Study 5, Trainee 2, Male, Private Local Provider, Security and Retail

Virtually all trainees reported future plans of some sort. Many of those who had completed the traineeship had either started a related apprenticeship – often with the same employer, they anticipated starting one soon or were in the process of an application. In a few cases, trainees had moved into related employment or were planning to move directly to a job rather than an apprenticeship. This was more frequently the case for those whose programme had been in a security position, perhaps reflecting qualification paths in the sector and the ability to make an application for such a role after receiving their SIA badge.

In a couple of cases, trainees anticipated going on to achieve GCSE level maths following functional skills learning.

As might be expected, those who were yet to complete the traineeship anticipated one or more of the above paths but their plans were less developed. They expected discussing this at a review meeting with their provider.

In general, trainees felt that the programme had prepared them for an apprenticeship and in some cases for work. There is clear evidence that trainees were engaged in thinking seriously about what they wanted to achieve next by the end of the placement.

*'I don't think I'd have gotten into it [the apprenticeship] if it wasn't for this course'. 'I would say it is the easiest way to step into this sort of thing, and the college help*

*you get into where you want to get into'. Case Study 2, Trainee 4, Male, Further Education Provider, Motor Vehicle/Business Administration*

*"I can't wait for it to finish so I can get into work, the be all and end all is to get a job. I'll be happier... making my little girl's life good... and I can make something of myself, have a career and not just no qualifications". Case Study 5, Trainee 1, Female, Private Local Provider, Security and Retail*

## How the programme was delivered from the perspective of providers, employers and referral agencies

### Summary: Providers

- As in Year 1, providers had typically become aware of the programme through Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and Education Funding Agency (EFA) communications; all already held contracts with either the EFA or SFA.
- Providers generally viewed traineeships as a way to support young people into apprenticeships, where young people did not yet have the employability skills or qualifications for successful applications. They targeted young people on this basis, generally approaching those who had applied for other pathways and had been unsuccessful, or suggesting it as a potential pathway to those already engaged by their organisation and whom they felt met the traineeships criteria.
- As in Year 1, providers did face challenges raising awareness of the programme among young people and referral agencies. Although most providers feel referrers are more aware of the programme and which candidates may be suitable, some reported challenges engaging with and limited referrals from JCP, the National Citizen Service and National Careers Service, suggesting there may be scope to better promote traineeships with these bodies.
- Programme delivery was managed internally with existing staff used to deliver English and maths and work preparation content. Class groups were typically small, sessions highly interactive and content focused on 'real world' applications of skills.
- The work placement component was viewed as key to the programme as a whole and believed to differentiate it from other pathways. To facilitate the success of the work placements, they were matched to young people's aspirations and areas of interests. Many employers engaged in the research viewed traineeships as an opportunity to get to know potential candidates before recruiting them to an apprenticeship or open role. Several providers actively sought employers who had progression opportunities, e.g. a potential vacancy, or apprenticeship .

### Initial setup and awareness of the programme

Case study providers' awareness of the programme was from similar channels to those providers who were interviewed as part of the first year evaluation. Typically, they were informed through the Skills Funding Agency<sup>21</sup> (SFA) and Education Funding Agency

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<sup>21</sup> In April 2017, these merged to form the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

(EFA) communications (e.g. bulletins, websites), learning and education sector publications and communications, and regional and local provider forums. The overriding motivation to deliver the traineeship programme was the perceived value of a high quality progression pathway for young people with level 1 and 2 qualifications to apprenticeships and employment. It was felt that young people with qualifications below level 3 faced challenges securing good sustainable employment. Traineeships provided the opportunity to upskill motivated young people through the delivery of functional skills, develop in-work skills and experience so that they might be considered by employers for employment and apprenticeship vacancies.

*"It's a really good progression for young people on the study programmes; it gives them the opportunity to carry on with their maths and English, whereas they might have not been able to apply for an apprenticeship because they might not have those grades."* Provider, Case Study 1, Local Authority, General/Health/Social Care/SEN specialist provider

All of the training providers in the case studies already held EFA/SFA contracts, met minimum quality standards and were graded outstanding or good by Ofsted. As was the case in the first year evaluation case studies, providers had previously or were currently delivering pre-apprenticeship programmes and the 16-19 wider study programmes offer. Traineeships either superseded previous pre-apprenticeship programmes or reinforced their existing delivery of support programmes. Four out of the six case study providers additionally delivered apprenticeships. The traineeship programme was perceived as supporting pathways into apprenticeships for young people who did not have the employability skills or qualifications for successful applications. Providers also thought that it was important to deliver the programme to keep up with changes in the direction of government policy and remain competitive with other training providers within their regions who had already rolled out the programme.

*"We could see the changes to landscape of apprenticeships and new trailblazers and the majority of them were looking to be level 3. We started thinking are they going to change the level 2 apprenticeships into traineeships. We thought we need to get involved and develop a programme that works for us, employers and students."* Provider, Case Study 2, Further Education Provider, General -including: Motor Vehicle/Hairdressing/Business Administration

Providers received funding to implement and deliver the programme via existing SFA/EFA contracts, which were also used for other training and learning delivery<sup>22</sup>. In line with

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<sup>22</sup> Traineeships Framework for Delivery 2015/16.  
Funding routes include:

the experience of providers from the year 1 case studies, programme set-up was aided by the use of existing resource and experience of delivering functional and employability skills and by drawing on existing employer and referral agency relationships via established networks. However, some providers had to spend additional costs on tailoring and adapting current programmes to include elements of the programme which they had not previously delivered - for example, additional training for tutors to deliver work preparation. This subsequently had impact on spending across their allocated funding streams and decisions on how to prioritise spending over different programmes.

Providers in the first year of delivery had experienced challenges in establishing the programme because they felt they had received limited external guidance from funding agencies on setup and delivery. Providers wanted further guidance on the length and timing of work placements, accreditation and qualification options, and how they could provide evidence of trainee learning in the work placement. Since the first year of delivery the SFA/EFA no longer had the remit to provide this type of support through regional relationship managers. However, this was not reported as a barrier by providers in the second year evaluation. They felt in general that there was sufficient guidance and support via the delivery framework, supporting materials, NIACE best practice guidance and regional and national provider forums and networks, for example - the Traineeship Staff Support Programme (TSSP) supported by the Education and Training Foundation (ETF).

Providers still faced problems raising awareness of the establishment of the programme locally as they did not have additional budget for local and regional marketing (other than that included within core traineeships funding). However, local awareness was facilitated by strategically marketing traineeships within the wider communication of vocational and apprenticeship options. Again, as raised in the first year evaluation, providers felt that there was a need for national and government support in raising awareness of the programme and its purpose to support pathways into apprenticeships<sup>23</sup>.

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- Education and training providers who currently deliver provision for 16 to 19 year olds and hold a contract with the EFA are able to deliver traineeships within the study programme arrangements on the basis of funding per student.
  - Apprenticeship providers who currently deliver provision for 16 to 19 year olds but who do not hold an EFA contract are given a separate 16 to 18 traineeships contract with the SFA.
  - Education and training providers who currently deliver provision through the Adult Skills Budget run by the SFA are able to deliver traineeships for 19 to 24 year olds using the existing freedoms and flexibilities within this budget.

<sup>23</sup> Since the evaluation, there has been a Governmental Marketing and Communications exercise to raise awareness.



## Referral Pathways

Similar to the year 1 evaluation, the main referral pathways were self-referral, referrals via external agencies supporting young people, and referrals from other provider delivered programmes e.g. unsuccessful apprenticeship applicants. Regional and local learning provider forums that were attended by both provider and referral agencies were also regularly utilised to discuss traineeship opportunities and identify suitable traineeships and work placements.

External referral agencies which brokered young people's applications included JCP, Work Programme Providers, National Careers Services, local schools, further education providers and career services that had evolved from the former Connexions service. However not all providers accessed trainees across this range of services. Some providers discussed limited numbers of referrals coming from JCP, National Citizen Service and National Careers Service and were hoping to build relationships with those organisations in the future. One re-visited first year case study provider had decided to increase time allocated to proactively liaising with referral agencies to strengthen partnership relationships. This led to an increase in enrolled trainees and wider access pathways to the programme.

Providers who directly sought to include specific groups of disadvantaged young people targeted organisations working with vulnerable young people as a source of referrals. This included targeted youth support programmes for those who were NEET, Care Leaver Teams, Youth Justice Service Teams and The Prince's Trust. Additionally, some providers received the majority of the referrals through existing study programmes that provided alternative work skills development for those who were not yet ready for employment and/or apprenticeships.

Those referral agencies who had established referral links with the providers did so because it provided a learning opportunity for the young people who did not have English and maths at GCSE level A\*- C and/or lacked employability skills. Traineeships were also perceived as offering greater flexibility and a focus on vocational skills for young people who had struggled to engage with school and college learning in the past.

*"The group who benefit most are dropouts from college who find it too overwhelming, or those who have disciplinary problems. They can find out what it is like to be in the world of work but can do English and maths one day a week in a small environment."* Referral Agency, Case Study 1, Responsible for 'looked after' children

*"Pre-employment is important for those lacking qualifications or confidence... it's a good stepping stone. We have a lot of young people with a personal or academic issue who might not be ready to go and do an apprenticeship... they need to do a*

*trial through a traineeship first."* Referral Agency, Case Study 2, Charity for children at risk of becoming NEET

Some referral agencies were actively involved in shaping delivery of the programme by suggesting content for the work preparation element of the programme and by tailoring the traineeship offer for specific groups of young people. One case study provider was working with the youth justice system to develop a specific traineeship in construction for young offenders.

Referral agencies perceived their role as impartially presenting traineeships as an option where it was appropriate to the needs of the young person and they were eligible. Relationships had often been established through previous pre-employment programmes and apprenticeship programmes. Good provider and referral agency relationships were enabled by good local networking (via forums, roadshows and career fairs), by raising awareness of the programme, and by gaining referral agencies' confidence through evidence of impact via feedback on early progression routes and case studies.

In contrast to the findings of the first year evaluation, the year two referral agencies were broadly happy about their understanding of the traineeship programme and the information they had received to discuss the programme with young people. Inappropriate referrals that did not meet the eligibility of the programme (e.g. level of attainment or perceptions of work-readiness) had been reduced through explicit and clear guidance by providers.

As discussed in the first year evaluation there had been challenges in establishing a consistent flow of referrals from JCP and numbers of referrals had been lower than expected. During early delivery there were specific issues of low awareness of the programme by advisers, concerns that the programme took too long to move claimants into work and limited guidance and information as to where the traineeships programme fitted within a range of support and training on offer to claimants (e.g. Youth Contract and Sector-based Work Academies). A further factor was the fit of the programme with claimant benefit entitlement because participation on traineeships exceeded the 16-hour threshold allowed for claimants to take part in training. This rule was subsequently removed in 2014<sup>24</sup>.

There was evidence in the second year evaluation that referral pathways with JCP had improved, and reflected the experience of some first year case study providers who had seen increased referral numbers. Two of the second year case study providers had

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<sup>24</sup> In the early stages of delivery, there was an issue regarding the fit of the programme with claimant benefit entitlement because participation on traineeships exceeded the 16-hour threshold allowed for claimants to take part in training. To further support providers in tailoring programmes to the needs of benefit claimants, DWP removed, in traineeships, the 16-hour rule restricting the time JSA claimants can spend on skills training whilst still maintaining entitlement to benefit.

established good referral pathways with JCP where at least a third of referrals were JCP claimants. Relationships with JCP had been further developed and facilitated by JCP and providers working closely together to further adapt the traineeship offer for 18-24 year old claimants to fit with conditionality rules and internal time frames to get people back into work quickly. One provider adapted their 20-week model to co-develop a streamlined 12-week programme for those job-seeking and on benefits. Relationships were also enhanced through providers attending JCP team meetings and providing regular feedback and information on the benefits of the programme (e.g. attainment of functional skills, employability skills and work experience), progression routes and success stories. Job coaches interviewed discussed having increased knowledge and understanding of the aims of the programme. Subsequently traineeships had become embedded as an alternative option to Sector-Based Work Academies (SBWA) for those not yet ready for employment or an apprenticeship. Job coaches were also motivated to support the programme because the programme was focused on young people allocated to work placements based on employer need and the local economy.

However, other providers felt that they had made limited inroads in increasing referrals from JCP, despite the impact of efforts to further develop relationships through attending meetings with JCP work coaches, JCP attendance of local provider networks and the lifting of the 16-hour rule. Providers perceived that on the ground there was still limited understanding of the eligibility criteria for the programme and how the programme fits within JCP conditionality. The programme was viewed as too long to meet JCP expected timeframes for claimants to find employment. It was therefore not necessarily considered as an option to discuss directly with claimants who were eligible for the programme.

*"There are lots of issues there about JCP and mandating and what people can and cannot do and when they've got to be available for interviews."* Provider, Case Study 4, Local Authority, Customer Service/ Engineering/ Construction

One re-visited first year provider discussed effectively no longer offering 19-24 traineeships because there had been no further improvement to this referral pathway.

*"JCP were very poor in the way they were dealing with us, there was a lot of misunderstanding on what hours people could do... they don't come back to you and are difficult to contact, we weren't able to establish an effective working relationship."* Provider, Year 1, Case Study 4, Private Local Training Provider, Hairdressing

This suggests that more work could be done to raise awareness of traineeships as an option to support job seeking and claimants into work within specific regions or localities.

As in the first year evaluation the availability of eligible young people for the programme was dependent on the local labour market and young people's attainment in that area.

Overall numbers of referrals had increased from year one to year two of delivery and providers had seen growth in the programme as referral pathways strengthened and greater awareness of the programme by young people grew. Providers' targets for referral numbers were set according to factors such as the number of NEET young people in the local area, the level of funding available to deliver the programme per trainee and staffing/resource levels and budgets. Providers either worked to fixed times for delivery throughout the year or were driven by levels of referrals and waited to meet referral targets before implementing a programme for a cohort of trainees.

### **Barriers to growth**

Providers and referral agencies reported current barriers to growth which meant challenges in further developing the programme and increasing referral and enrolment rates. Barriers to such growth included:

- 1) Limited awareness of traineeships by young people and their parents, with the programme perceived as comparatively of less value than apprenticeships. Young people often wanted to go straight into an apprenticeship. However, this was seen as less important to young people when providers could offer a placement within a specific sector or a named employer from enrolment with a real prospect of an employment or apprenticeship vacancy.
- 2) Some providers and referral agencies did not feel it was fair to enrol young people on an unpaid work placement. However in practice financial support varied across providers and the provision of financial bursaries were perceived by referral agencies as a motivating factor for some young people.
- 3) There were some young people referred who were not yet ready for a traineeship and required alternative support programmes prior to applying for a traineeship place, for example, a young person who did not show motivation in wanting to go into work and required further training at entry level. This was facilitated by providers offering wider study programmes as part their training offer. One provider developed a tailored pre-traineeship programme after the first year of delivery which allowed young people to develop key basic skills (e.g. communication with others and attendance) before addressing employability and functional skills.
- 4) Other external agencies offered their own internal academic and vocational options which were more likely to be signposted and discussed with young people. These included JCP but also further education and sixth form providers. Some providers felt there was a lack of careers guidance focused on vocational options within schools which therefore led to lower numbers of referrals.

- 5) Another barrier was regarding decisions to provide small bursary payments for attendance of work placements and to provide financial support. The provision of such financial support was not always perceived to fit with JCP rules and was felt to dis-incentivise some young people to enrol on the programme. Some providers assumed that young people would have to sign off Jobseekers Allowance or Universal Credit and give up their guaranteed benefit entitlement if additional financial support or bursaries were offered. One provider ensured bursaries were at the same level of payment so that there was no disadvantage to claimants.
- 6) There were concerns about providers' ability to continue to increase take up and meet internal expected targets. Providers discussed a perceived decrease in national and local numbers of NEETs which meant fewer eligible young people and increased competition in areas with multiple traineeship providers. Some revisited first year case study providers had seen a drop in referral rates and were investing in increased engagement activities with referral agencies. One provider stated that they would reduce their expected trainee levels in the next year of delivery because of reductions to their funding budget and staffing capacity. Providers were also worried about impacts of lower numbers of NEET young people. There was concern that eligible young people would be concentrated on those hardest to reach and providers did not feel the programme was suitable for those young people with the most complex needs. This also had potential implications for effective programme delivery and successful trainee progression rates.

## Assessment and Recruitment

The trainees eligible for the programme were perceived as young people falling through the gaps of provision. Either those who were NEET or recent students who had not completed other further education programmes and were looking for an opportunity to develop work readiness and employability skills. Eligible young people were often vulnerable, with additional complex needs (e.g. care leavers, youth offenders, mental health problems, and mild to moderate learning difficulties) and lacking essential soft skills for the workplace, such as self-esteem and confidence. Several providers targeted specific learner groups of care leavers and young people with mild to moderate learning difficulties.

In the first year of the evaluation the eligibility thresholds were perceived as restrictive in targeting a niche group of young people in terms of age and attainment<sup>25</sup>. Referrals from agencies regularly included young people who were initially deemed suitable for the

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<sup>25</sup> In 2014/15, those aged 16 to 18 qualified to a full level 2 were able to participate in traineeships, whereas 19 to 24 year olds with a full level 2 were not.

programme in terms of their need for employability skills and work experience but were overly qualified when attainment levels were checked by the provider. However, this was perceived as less of an issue after the change in the eligibility criteria to include 18-24 years old with a full level 2 qualification and led to lower levels of interested young people excluded for that reason. Despite this greater flexibility in eligibility, providers and referral agencies still discussed a wider need for similar provision for adults aged 25 years and over at the same attainment level with low employability skills.

*"It would be good to be able to offer traineeships to those over 24 who might benefit, such as vulnerable people or those with limited experience of the world."*

Provider, Case Study 4, Local Authority, Customer Service/ Engineering/ Construction

Providers were also required to select young people they expected to be ready for a job or an apprenticeship within six months. Putting into practice the work-readiness criteria was challenging for providers and it took time to embed a robust way to make that assessment. Providers took into account factors such as the young person's self-confidence, experience at school, sector interest, motivations to work, expectations of work and prior work experience. These factors were assessed through multiple methods including application forms, diagnostic tests, skills audits and interview processes.

*"There isn't one method that helps to quantify that easily to whether the young person's work-ready"* Provider, Case Study 4, Local Authority, Customer Service/ Engineering/ Construction

However, some providers found in reality there were young people in the early cohorts of delivery who were not ready to enter a work environment due to issues such as behaviour, attitude or attendance. The impact of inappropriate referrals led to higher drop-out rates and this had a knock-on effect on relationships with employers and referral agencies and confidence in the programme meeting the needs of the young people and employers. Several providers made decisions to strengthen their recruitment and assessment processes to ensure they were enrolling young people who would most benefit from the programme and met the work-readiness criteria. For example – they asked for more detailed information from referral agencies about the young person and placed a greater focus on the individual's motivations through written personal statements and/or the interview process. One provider implemented a process of two interviews with the young person with different members of staff, and a separate interview with the young person's parent/guardian. Another provider established a work ready assessment day after feedback that young people were not perceived as work ready by employers at interviews for work placements. Young people completed a work ready assessment before being accepted on to the programme. The assessment day included an interview for the traineeship programme, interview skills technique training

and a mock employer interview. If successful, the young person was then interviewed for a work placement.

Another way that providers facilitated appropriate referrals was through recruiting via their own student services and internal candidates (e.g. those who had dropped out of other courses or were undertaking other pre-employment training programmes). This allowed providers to select young people already known to them. This in turn allowed young people to build up skills and gave provider staff the opportunity to liaise with colleagues to see whether the young person would be a successful candidate for the programme. Providers also used induction periods to assess closely work-readiness before the trainee was selected for a work placement interview. Two providers built in a trial period as part of the delivery of functional skills and work preparation. At the end it was decided whether they were suitable for a traineeship work placement, an alternative study programme or ready to apply directly for an apprenticeship.

*“It’s all about how they perform in the two-week induction, they are not guaranteed an [workplace] interview, so a few do leave.”* Provider, Case Study 6, Local Authority, Business Administration

## Delivery and programme content

### English and maths

Providers delivered this element either by using existing resources or internal experienced staff. Providers used comprehensive assessment and diagnostic tools to understand trainees’ needs and levels, with tools such as bksb’s diagnostic tool commonly used. Young people who had not achieved a GCSE grade A\*-C in English and maths were assessed as part of the interview or at the beginning of the programme. Providers reported that the majority of trainees had not achieved the necessary level and were required to undertake this element of the programme. One provider delivered the English and maths training to all trainees, including those who held qualifications at the required level, because they perceived functional skills training as valued by all employers due to its focus on the application of English and maths within real life experience.

As discussed in the first year evaluation, providers generally opted to deliver a functional skills qualification (accredited level 1-2). They took the view that trainees would attain the qualifications either by the end of the programme, or if not, could be offered units of qualifications to achieve a whole qualification after completion of the traineeship. Achieving a functional skills qualification was not a requirement of the programme. One provider delivered sessions of (unaccredited) training because they felt there was not

enough time for trainees to complete a qualification within the length of the traineeship programme<sup>26</sup>.

Providers did not generally offer GCSEs as their main provision because a 1-2 year GCSE course did not fit well with the length of traineeships (up to 6 months). Also trainees often had bad experiences of undertaking GCSEs at school and were more engaged in undertaking a different accredited qualification. Several providers did offer GCSEs if a young person started the traineeship programme at the beginning of the academic year, but there were challenges around ensuring timetabling of lessons did not clash with availability needed for work placements. The benefit of functional skills was it could often be completed during the length of the programme, but those trainees who did not, could continue their studies at the end of the programme and/or as part of an apprenticeship. It was also seen as a more flexible framework with which to work. It enabled content to be tailored to individual needs, including work towards broader aims of raising self-confidence of trainees.

Lessons were taught predominately through classroom teaching with online and interactive elements (e.g. self-guided learning online using BSKB). Providers facilitated learning through small class sizes and sessions taught in short blocks to minimise disengagement. One re-visited first year provider had made changes to ensure shorter blocks and online delivery. It was also important that the classroom environment felt relaxed and that young people had the opportunity to ask questions or access one to one teaching or support where necessary.

Providers ensured that they embedded learning within the context of the workplace to tailor it to the needs of trainees and vocational learning, for example, a provider specialising in security, incorporated how to write a comprehensive incident report within the literacy component. Tailoring learning to industry needs was more challenging where providers offered a range of sectors. But learning was designed in a way that related to everyday work life as much as possible.

Providers reported generally good levels of trainee engagement within the classroom despite some initial reluctance to study subjects they had not enjoyed in the past at school. Trainees were motivated to learn because they understood the importance of

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<sup>26</sup> Providers should aim to support young people to complete their English and maths qualifications within their traineeship where possible. In some cases it may take longer for a young person to achieve these crucial elements. It is expected that young people will continue and complete these qualifications, together with any vocational training they have begun, after the formal traineeship is achieved. For instance, this could be as part of further study towards employment, or as part of their apprenticeship.



achieving qualifications to enable them to be considered for apprenticeship vacancies and employment.

*“Some don't want to do it, but they do see the value to it, most of them want to do an apprenticeship or get a job, but don't have the right qualification, so see the value to doing it ... they are so excited about placements and they are happy to do it [maths]”.* Provider, Case Study 6, Local Authority, Business Administration

However, differences in trainees' attitude to learning and motivation did at times have a negative impact on the delivery of English or maths, with some incidences of behavioural issues within the classroom.

In line with the first year evaluation, employers had limited awareness of what English and maths elements entailed but were very keen on young people receiving training because good numeracy and literacy were viewed as necessary skills required for progression into employment and apprenticeships. In some industries, such as child care, there were set attainment requirements for vacancies. Employers felt that young people working towards a functional skill (level 1-2) was sufficient for the skills needed for the work placement. Numeracy and literacy skills could also be enhanced whilst the trainee was on placement (e.g. typing letters and updating spreadsheets). However, there were employers who questioned whether a GCSE C or equivalent qualification was necessary for all roles and were sympathetic to the fact that some young people found it harder to attain that level due to differences in academic ability. Other practical skills like customer service, self-motivation and group work were more highly valued.

## **Work Preparation**

The upskilling of young people in attaining good employability skills was seen as an essential part of the programme delivery because trainees had limited experience and knowledge of work. Generally work preparation was delivered as a block of group sessions as part of a two – six weeks training or induction period before the work placement. While some providers opted to continue offering work preparation sessions throughout the placement, others offered a dedicated extensive week at the start and end of the placement focused on skills for entering work. In some cases, work preparation was further supported via one-to-one tutorials or reflective sessions looking at progression and skills development on the work placement. Job coaches were also provided in one case study area to support trainees with mild to moderate learning difficulties.

Providers varied in whether they provided accreditation for this element. Accreditation included awards such as The Prince's Trust Award and Certificate in Personal Development and Employability Skills (PDE). Some providers chose not to offer accreditation because of limited additional funding and/or they felt they could not work to

available award frameworks within the six-month timescale. Also providers prioritised available teaching time for English and maths. Other providers decided to reward completion through a work skills certificate at the end of the work placement.

The purpose of the work preparation training was to equip trainees with the skills and attributes to meet employers' expectations and needs. The core content typically covered a mix of practical skills (e.g. interview technique, CV writing, job search skills and health and safety) and personal and social skills (e.g. confidence building, learning about a working environment and expectations, professional behaviour and wellbeing at work). Typically, trainees developed a portfolio of evidence of work and skills they developed by attending these sessions. Some providers also built in structured learning goals which were regularly set and reviewed throughout all elements of the programme including, for example - academic targets, work placement skills, personal and social development skills.

Additional work preparation provision included taster days with different sectors or employers in which students either went to an employer or department within the college to further understand a sector before being matched with a provider. Providers also facilitated employer open days and employer presentations. Providers who specialised in supporting sector based traineeships also delivered specific industry training and learning (e.g. in hairdressing and construction skills) and related certification needed for work placements, for example - the attainment of a Security Industry Authority (SIA) card for a security work placement.

As discussed by providers in the first year evaluation, tailored sector-based training was further supported when providers worked closely with employers. There were examples of employers being involved in reviewing the content of training and supporting broader work preparation during placements, for example, supporting course work and updating CVs. However, other employers felt they had little awareness of what was covered and would like to do more in supporting employability skills as part of the work placement.

Despite very structured programmes of work preparation some young people still did not have the attributes and behaviours that employers initially expected on their placement. Employers discussed examples of bad attendance, inappropriate work attire and unprofessional behaviour. Some employers felt work preparation could do more to address these essential requirements by focusing explicitly on expected behaviours and attitudes in the workplace.

## **Work Placement**

The role of the work placement was to provide a high quality learning experience tailored to the needs of each individual. Providers scheduled work placements from two – six weeks after enrolment on the programme and the completion of initial inductions and

work preparation. The time spent on work placements varied from three - four days per week and was dependent on the needs of the employer and length of working day expected within that industry. The length of placements ranged from three weeks to 22 weeks. Shorter placements (e.g. up to 12 weeks) were often due to business need, for example, the employer had an immediate need to recruit vacancies. Some case study areas had strategically decided to offer a shorter length or placement to meet the needs of JCP to encourage quicker movement into work and/or an apprenticeship. Other providers originally had shorter work placement lengths of 6 -8 weeks (maximum 4 days a week) but increased to up to 22 weeks because they learnt from feedback that young people need longer to acquire skills and develop a working relationship with the employer. In contrast, other providers decreased the length of the work placement as they felt engagement levels fell if the work placement was too long.

The delivery framework guidance allowed providers flexibility to allocate an employer within the first four weeks of enrolment on the programme which allowed providers to assess the aspirations and areas of interest of young person before offering a work experience placement. In practice the process for matching and allocating young people followed two main approaches:

- 1) To have an allocated named employer from the start of enrolment which allowed young people to apply for a specific placement as part of the application process. This subsequently meant that work placements were largely determined by labour market needs, with young people deciding whether allocated placements matched their interests.
- 2) To provide an induction and training period to upskill young people to decide on their area of interest and then apply for a placement with an employer who was sourced to match the young person's sector interest. In some circumstances the young person had a potential employer in mind and the provider worked to engage the employer to offer a work placement.

Similar to the first year evaluation, providers had both existing and new relationships with employers. Existing relationships had been made via training programmes or apprenticeships run by the provider. Local Authority providers utilised their access to internal departments and this enabled close relationships between the provider and employer in shaping the format and delivery of the placement. New relationships were developed through research of the local labour market and introductions from the apprenticeship team. Providers also used internal resource of existing business liaison teams and/or traineeship staff to broker relationships and explain the benefits of participating for both the trainee and employer. New relationships were facilitated by presenting the traineeship as part of a suite of vocational and pre-employment training on offer by the provider and could be offered as an alternative way to develop an apprentice suited to the needs of their business.

*"It's a whole offer; we don't just go out and talk to people about apprenticeships. They may have not heard of traineeships but you are sowing that seed. If an employer is struggling to fill an apprenticeship vacancy you can then talk about how a traineeship could provide someone ready to become an apprentice."*

Provider, Case Study 2, Local Centre for Higher Education, General -including: Motor Vehicle/Hairdressing/Business Administration

Providers felt there was often limited awareness of the programme in comparison to other work based training as part of 16 -19 wider study programmes and apprenticeships. It was perceived that awareness raising could be further supported centrally by the government providing national communications for, and marketing of, traineeships alongside apprenticeships.

*"Government are pushing apprenticeships but they've not given any sort of head tilt to traineeships as a way in."* Provider, Case Study 4, Local Authority, Customer Service/ Engineering/ Construction

As discussed in the first year evaluation, presenting the traineeship as a mutual opportunity to test and trial the relationship for both the employee and trainee was a key enabling factor for recruiting and engaging employers. Employers liked the fact that the work placement provided an extended trial and interview process to decide whether to offer an employment or apprenticeship opportunity. The length of time of a placement allowed employers to see how sustainable and effective a young person could be within their business, allowing them to observe attitude, motivation, quality of work and self-sufficiency. Getting the right candidate was seen as particularly important for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) who had small budgets for recruitment and retention of staff.

*"It allows me to see much more of the person, not just their skills and abilities, because we are not really looking for that at this stage, we're looking for potential. But it is more about their attitude towards work, how they fit in with the team, are they willing to learn. You see much more of the person which attracted me to it. And you know much more about the person when you decide whether to offer them apprenticeship or it comes to an end."* Employer, Case Study 2, Small Garage

Traineeships also allowed employer's access to younger potential employees whose development they could tailor to the needs of their business.

Other motivating factors for employers were the opportunities to provide development possibilities for young people, which met their personal or business corporate and social responsibility values. Some employers themselves had started their own careers via apprenticeships and were keen to support such pathways into work. Employers thought it

was important to give young people who were not academic a chance to gain self-confidence, work experience and skills necessary for employment and/or an apprenticeship.

*“We had something to offer to a young person, we also have the staff to mentor them ... we have to give back.”* Provider, Case Study 6, Local Authority, Business Administration

As discussed in the first year report, some providers had found that employers were less keen to take part in the programme because work placements were unpaid<sup>27</sup>. Providers had experienced employers turn down the programme because they were worried about negative public perceptions of an unpaid work placement. Those employers engaged with the programme generally saw the placement as mutually beneficial because they provided needed mentoring and training for trainees in the return for additional resource within the workplace.

It was optional for providers or employers to provide additional financial incentives if they decided that was needed to generate high quality placements. Some providers asked employers to contribute to a bursary payment (a weekly or monthly financial allowance). This was viewed as a small cost to cover travel and provide a small reward for the young person’s time. Employers were supportive of this because they did not want to be perceived as taking advantage of young people and free labour. Other financial support available for trainees was through hardship and discretionary funds via the provider.

Employers could also gain from having a close relationship with the provider in terms of accessing up to date industry training and information via the development of the trainee. Some employers felt that offering traineeships could help with wider networking and commercial interests where providers were part of wider organisations.

All young people undertook an interview and selection process with employers deciding whether to agree to a work placement. Some providers built in a taster day or trial period (one - two weeks) so that young people and employers had the chance to decide whether this was a suitable fit and could end the placement if either party was not happy. In the main providers and employers discussed good examples of matching, but there were incidences where young people were reassigned because they did not feel the role or sector was suited to them or the employer had concerns about the behaviour or performance of the trainee.

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<sup>27</sup> The traineeship framework guidance states that employers are not required to pay young people for the work placement under the traineeship. Traineeships fall under an exemption to the National Minimum Wage, but providers are encouraged to ask employers to consider providing trainees with support to meet their travel or meal costs.

Providers varied in their views as to the importance of matching a young person to their preferred sector area of interest and whether this should be driven by local labour market needs or individual interest. Most providers tried to combine both employer and trainees' needs to find a suitable fit.

*"It's about knowing the work placements and seeing who would be good for that employer, who would be able to contribute to the business but also get something out of it themselves, sometimes it's the confidence boost that they are capable of doing the job."* Provider, Case Study 3, Local Centre for Higher Education, Engineering/ Business Admin/ Facilities Management/ Customer Service

Some providers felt that just having the opportunity of a work placement in itself was most important in the trainee's development of employability skills that could be transferrable to different sectors. Also, getting the right fit in terms of the culture and type of employer could be more important, for example, sourcing a nurturing employer for those who were shy and lacked confidence.

However, there were concerns by employers that placements were likely to be less effective if the young person was not interested in that sector of work because in practice it would not lead to a realistic employment or apprenticeship opportunity at the end. This in turn was seen to reduce the benefit of providing a trial before committing to take on a young person on a more permanent basis. Placements were perceived as most effective where the young person had spent time in their work preparation element, having researched the industry and employer and had a genuine interest in a role at the employer or similar industry.

*"One of the things that concerns me is that there is not enough sifting to make sure that the candidates really want to do it rather than they are being pushed down a path that if you go there [to a specific provider], you'll likely get a job or it's better to go there than not go anywhere at all."* Provider, Case Study 3, Local Centre for Higher Education, Engineering/ Business Admin/ Facilities Management/ Customer Service

Some employers felt that greater early contact between employer and trainees before young people selected their area of interest would help facilitate better work placement matches. For example, this might present a clear explanation of the role and type of organisation before the interview and selection process. There was also a suggestion that some employers, who were interested in doing more, could be more involved directly in the selection process through conducting interviews or observing assessment days. Other employers felt that young people uncertain of their area interest should complete a shorter work experience opportunity before selecting a work placement.

As discussed in the first year evaluation, employers were given flexibility and autonomy to shape the experience of the placement to their business needs. Providers ensured that there were key elements in place to support the trainee in experiencing a high quality work placement. This included:

- An initial assessment of whether the employer could provide high quality support and mentoring – i.e. does the employer have the business structure and time available to support the trainee?
- Comprehensive induction and training opportunities to ensure the trainee receives the necessary training for their work placement role.
- Regular provider contact with employer and trainee to reflect on learning and skills development. This also provided an opportunity for any issues or problems to be discussed. Contact was facilitated through informal phone calls, regular face-to-face visits, and more formal assessments and reviews. This was further supported by the employer having one point of contact acting as relationship manager.
- Regular reviews and monitoring of the progression of the traineeship delivered through structured meetings with workbooks to record and review development and achievement within the work placement role.
- Employer mentoring and supervision arrangements (by employees or current apprentices) to enable informal learning and reflection of skills and personal development within the work placement.
- Trainee access to different elements of the business where possible (in line with meeting business needs) to ensure they were exposed to a range of roles within the sector.

There were mixed views as to whether a high quality placement was defined by having a guaranteed vacancy of employment or an apprenticeship attached. One school of thought was that the work placement must have a potential progression opportunity attached to ensure that there is a motivation for both the employer and trainee for a successful placement and facilitate progression pathways.

*"I don't take on employers that don't take on apprentices. There is no point. We have done it in the past and it doesn't work."* Provider, Case Study 2, Local Centre for Higher Education, General -including: Motor Vehicle/Hairdressing/Business Administration

Whilst others perceived the work placement as a pure work experience opportunity to develop transferrable employability skills because it was not possible for all employers to have guaranteed business need for recruitment to ensure high numbers of referrals in the specific industry sector. This reflected the challenges and realities of a competitive local labour market.

Most employers felt that they had received sufficient support through set guidelines, agreements and regular informal contact with the provider (via telephone or face-face).

However, there were some incidences where employers wanted more contact time with providers and information about the progression within the other elements of the programme so that they could best tailor the placement to the young person's needs.

Where there were problems with the suitability of the young person these were quickly addressed through discussion with the provider and joint meetings and in some cases the ending of placement agreements. Typical reasons for ending a placement were problems with the young person adapting to the work environment, communication, behavioural issues and wider personal and emotional problems.

Some employers felt that in practice the experience of offering a placement was more resource intensive than they initially imagined and that they had dedicated more time to training and mentoring than expected. However, employers were generally keen to ensure there was core training to ensure that the young person left with transferable skills which could be applied to another setting in the same sector. Providers also discussed challenges in engaging and running placements with employers who underestimated the time and resource required to support a trainee and were unable to effectively support the trainee's development and progress. It was felt this was specifically an issue for some SMEs who had not run similar work-based training programmes before (e.g. apprenticeships).

Good and sustained provider-employer relationships were maintained where the provider gave opportunities for employers to feedback their experience and shape future planning and key learning via one-to-one meetings, employer forums and breakfast meetings.

*"In the meetings we share and develop ideas with other employers, helps in refining the process."* Employer, Case Study 6, Business Admin

Some employers felt that there had been problems with the suitability of initial cohorts of young people (e.g. behavioural issues, limited functional skills) and subsequently led to providers making revisions to strengthen recruitment and screening processes.

## **Additional Flexibilities**

In addition to the core elements of the programme, the programme allowed the flexibility to deliver additional content in order to best meet learners' personal and labour market needs.

As discussed in the first year report, typically flexible content was incorporated within the work preparation element in order to focus on training and sector specific accreditation, for example - first aid and safety certificates, construction skills certification scheme (CSCS) and security card SIA badge.



Additional content was introduced to provide sector specific training to support the skills required once on the placement. The content aimed to give trainees realistic preparation for work. One provider had embedded an ICT qualification alongside the core traineeship because they had received feedback that employers required better ICT skills.

Theoretical and practical tuition was supported by industry specific accreditation and certifications, for example - level 2/3 qualifications or units in subjects including child care, hairdressing, ICT, business administration and catering. This was built in as separate sessions in specialist departments and scheduled as part of work preparation contact days or within separate blocks of training (e.g. an eight-day course leading to an SIA badge). Providers felt that this type of targeted learning incentivised trainees to complete the traineeship because they were seeing a tangible qualification or certificate which could be used for further employment or apprenticeship opportunities.

Access to funding posed a barrier to offering additional training and prevented the introduction of extra material in some case study areas.

## **Early perceptions of progression after traineeships**

The second year case study areas had delivered the traineeships programme for at least one - two years with multiple cohorts of trainees who had completed the programme. The findings reflect perceptions of progression so far and the monitoring and feedback received from trainees to providers.

Employers had no obligation to provide a guaranteed apprenticeship or employment. As discussed earlier, some providers ensured that employers did have an opportunity at the end of the traineeships. But a real interview for this would in practice be dependent on the performance of the trainee and current requirements of the employer. Internal recruitment budgets and business needs meant that not all employers were able to offer the trainee employment or an apprenticeship even when they were happy with the performance of the trainee.

Completion of a traineeship was typically marked by an exit interview. However, there was variation in whether this was conducted by the work placement employer or provider. Exit interviews in some case study areas were used as an opportunity to apply for, or express interest in, a job vacancy or apprenticeship with the work placement employer. In other case studies the exit interview was delivered by the provider and provided an opportunity for the trainee to reflect on their development. Where formal exit interviews were not undertaken by employers, there had been ongoing feedback with informal discussions of progress at the end of the placement.

Other forms of award and recognition for completion of the traineeship were: providing certificate for completion; celebration events and award ceremonies; accreditation and

qualification for functional skills and/or employability skills; and receipt of a formal reference by the employer or provider.

Successful transition to an apprenticeship or employment was facilitated by the provider discussing progression options with the employer from the outset of the placement so that there was a clear understanding of next steps, timings and apprenticeship eligibility criteria and application processes. Early conversations about employer expectations of progression and recruitment needs allowed providers to know whether they would need to facilitate other employment and apprenticeship opportunities through their business support teams, apprenticeship departments and employment networks. This was further facilitated by providers and employers offering support with interview technique and CV writing at the end of the placement. In some cases, providers themselves used their own employment networks to help young people secure an apprenticeship or employment with another employer in a similar or different sector.

*"If you keep supporting this programme and you're a small to medium sized business it is near to impossible to take them [trainees] all on, so what you're trying to do is up their skills and up their self-confidence and use the contacts that you have."* Employer, Case Study 3, Facilities Management

The first year evaluation found that some employers were unclear or confused about how to progress a trainee onto an apprenticeship and what the process involved. In some circumstances there were unanswered questions regarding what they needed to do next as an employer and whether it had any cost implications. However, this was not explicitly raised as a barrier by year two case study areas, with providers putting support in place to actively support successful apprenticeship pathways. For example, providers facilitated initial conversations with apprenticeship teams once an employer expressed an interest in offering an apprenticeship place and then delivered apprenticeship workshops to provide information on vacancies and support with application writing.

There were a range of pathways that young people entered at the end of their traineeships, these included apprenticeships, employment at the work placement employer, entry into education/training and seeking employment in other sectors. In some cases trainees were moved quickly onto an apprenticeship and employment (within three - six weeks of a work placement) because of a critical business need and/or the benefits of greater financial support for employers via apprenticeship schemes.

Providers reported steadily decreasing numbers of drop-outs as the programme had become embedded and they had refined recruitment and assessment methods. Although some young people continued to fail to complete the traineeship this was often due to the suitability of the work placement match. As discussed previously, cohorts included disadvantaged young people with complex needs. Engagement in traineeship sometimes broke down due to these and/or wider personal issues in young peoples' lives (e.g.

housing and relationships). Financial issues were not discussed explicitly as reason for drop-outs but some providers did discuss how some young people experienced difficulties in covering travel cost and subsistence, despite bursaries and discretionary funds available.

In some circumstances trainees completed their work placement and were not offered employment or apprenticeships. But subsequently providers offered support to find alternative opportunities (e.g. further training or learning at the provider or other providers); or signposted them to other career or support services for assistance (including external agencies already supporting the young person). They also supported trainees to continue qualifications begun on their traineeship such as English and maths or additional qualification and accreditations offered. Providers did this by either delivering training or referring young people to other training providers if they wanted to seek further qualifications.

Providers discussed further development of systems and processes to track progression routes as a result of the programme becoming more focused on quality outcomes and minimum standards through better use of progression and destination data. In the early stages of delivery, providers' methods for monitoring had been inconsistent and reliant on provider staff making informal contact calls or receiving information internally if trainees were on apprenticeships delivered by their organisation. Providers had systems in place of regular email and phone contact to ensure they were keeping in contact for up to six - twelve months after completion to update trainee outcomes. The frequency of this contact varied and was more intensive (as often as weekly) in the first few months. There were challenges in sustaining contact due to young people being more transient and changing addresses and contact details - one provider reported that they did not have access to 20% of trainees' outcomes. Providers tried to overcome this by collecting multiple contact information.

Overall, providers felt there were three key challenges going forward:

- Sustaining referral rates and success outcomes with numbers of young people NEET declining and a concern that the programme would move to supporting the most disengaged young people, who require very intensive support both by providers and employers.
- As the market for traineeships becomes more saturated with fewer eligible young people and competing providers, will fund levels within existing streams be sufficient for the resource needed to maintain programme delivery, effective referral pathways and employer engagement?
- There still remained barriers to good referral pathways and increasing traineeship opportunities. There is a need to further raise awareness of the programme and strengthen partnership with other agencies such as JCP, National Careers Service and National Citizen Service.

## Non-providers' perspectives on why they do not take up traineeships

**Summary: Non-providers** (those who are eligible, but have decided not to deliver the programme)

- Non-providers report experiencing a range of barriers to implementation. These include: lack of guidance / information on funding; concerns on the feasibility of engaging adequate / suitable employers; belief that existing provision is suitable; limited expertise to deliver both learning and workplace support without engaging a partner organisation; concerns over negative media coverage and public perceptions; and, uncertainty over the employer engagement element of the delivery.
- Awareness of the core elements of the traineeship programme was mixed. In some cases, understanding of the three main elements: English and maths, work preparation and work placement, was only partial. Once content was explained, non-providers generally viewed it as appropriate.
- Openness to offering the traineeships programme in the future was mixed. Some considered the barriers they faced to offering the programme insurmountable and did not plan to reconsider traineeships delivery. Others were open to the idea and desired more information to explore potential options.

As in Year 1, the qualitative research also included interviews with providers who decided not to participate in traineeships to gather their views on the programme and understand why eligible providers do not intend to deliver the provision. This chapter reports on the non-provider view in Year 2 and builds on the previous year's findings.

### Reasons for non-providers' decisions not to offer traineeships

As part of the research we engaged with 6 non-providers who were eligible to offer the programme but decided not to do so. This included a variety of organisations, such as: sector specialist providers in SEN, care and construction; FE college; a private healthcare provider with on-site training facilities; and, a residential college.

Given the variety of non-providers covered, it is unsurprising that some of the reasons for not offering traineeships are specific to individual organisations and do not represent themes in decision-making. For example, one non-provider was based in a remote location amplifying concerns about employer engagement. In another example, the potential provider was a residential college whose trainees came from all over the country. For them, the work placement element was an insurmountable challenge. In addition to the very specific circumstances of the potential providers discussed above,

there were six more commonly cited reasons why potential providers decide not to offer a traineeship programme. Note that these are not necessarily mutually exclusive:

### 1. Funding

In Year 1, lack of clear guidance and information about funding was identified as a factor in non-providers decision-making. This was again a dominant theme in providers' accounts of why they decided not to offer the provision in Year 2. Across the range of potential providers, some had limited awareness of traineeships and the eligibility criteria for funding. In a couple of cases, the potential provider reportedly struggled to find information and guidance that was specific to the circumstances of their organisation and were unclear on how the programme would align with their current delivery of learning. It is worth noting from Year 1 that the decision to get involved in the delivery of traineeships was facilitated by already holding EFA/SFA contracts for similar pre-employment and pre-apprenticeship programmes.

There are also concerns about whether the funding available would reflect the set up costs. In addition, some potential providers perceive that the programme is only economic with high volumes of trainees. There was some concern reported about employers waiting for more trainees and a throughput issue with regards to the availability of suitable trainees. It is possible that this reflects local labour market dynamics and local demographics.

### 2. Difficulty engaging employers locally

Some were concerned about engaging local employers in offering work placements and had experienced problems in identifying employers who were willing to take on a trainee. In some cases, potential providers speak from experience of looking to engage suitable local employers and having limited success. They reported that employers were concerned about the level of support the trainee would need and wanted a high degree of involvement from providers. They acknowledge that a narrow list of work placements would substantially reduce the attractiveness of the traineeship proposition to potential trainees.

### 3. Perception that existing provision is already suitable

There were providers who did not see any need to change or add to their existing provision. They felt that what they currently offer is suitable and reflects the needs and make-up of the local area and did not perceive any benefit in changing existing provision for their current client group. It is not possible, based on this small-scale research, to say whether this applies to a wide range of providers. However, it is the case that training in some sectors already assumes a very specific model that is thought to be fit for purpose. In addition, some potential providers (SEN and construction specifically) questioned the applicability of the eligibility criteria for their sector and client group. For example, two

potential providers were concerned that the age criteria, with trainees being accepted at age 16, was not appropriate for their respective sectors.

4. Limited expertise to deliver both learning and workplace support without engaging a partner

As was the case in Year 1, some potential providers were concerned about their capability to deliver all aspects of the programme, particularly the functional skills learning in English and maths, without partnership with an appropriate (and close by) partner as this was not the sort of training they have experience of delivering.

5. Concerns about negative media coverage and public perception

This is where potential providers reported concerns regarding public perception of the programme. In particular, they were aware of some early negative media coverage that had criticised traineeships for providing unpaid work placements to employers. In one case, the decision was made at a senior level not to progress with the programme out of concern for the company's reputation.

6. Belief that employer's role is not clear

Finally, there was also some concern expressed about the employer engagement aspect. The implication is that the role of the employer in the work placement is not clear and that there is a risk that trainees do not have a genuine work placement experience and instead have a light-touch work experience placement. This is covered in more detail below.

## **View on the Traineeships programme's delivery, content and structure**

Awareness of the core elements of the traineeship programme was mixed. In some cases, understanding of the three main elements: English and maths, work preparation and work placement, was only partial. In one case, the potential provider demonstrated little to no knowledge of the core elements. However, the residential nature of their organisation largely precluded them from offering the traineeship programme and so they had not engaged with information on traineeships.

Where awareness was partial, potential providers were told about the core elements. Despite their decision not to offer the traineeship programme, potential providers overall perceived the core elements of the programme positively. They felt it was appropriate for the intended client group. In particular, they pointed to functional skills in English and maths along with work preparation to be extremely valuable.

*"If you are going to choose three things, they would be the right three areas".*  
Case Study 6, Residential College, SEN specialist

As mentioned above, where there was some uncertainty was with respect to the work placement and specifically the intentions and role of employers offering the placement. Awareness of this aspect of the programme was highest yet understanding of how this aspect is delivered was lowest, suggesting a need for clearer communications on the role of the employer.

There was particular concern that the work placement element was being viewed as a 'try before you buy' offer to employers and that this was incompatible with the premise of a likely job offer.

*"It's a try before you buy... employers should be taking the traineeships with the consideration of employing that person, but I'm not sure that is how it'll work".*  
Case Study 5, FE Provider, Construction and Creative Media

Where there was concern about this, these providers felt employers should be encouraged to engage with the intent of finding a young person they can employ or offer an apprenticeship to, rather than just a work experience placement. They felt that this would make the programme more attractive to young people because there could be an apprenticeship or employment at the end of it.

There was some misunderstanding about the duration of the programme with some potential providers believing that it must last for a minimum term of 6 months.

Where awareness was lowest was with regard to the flexible content options within the programme structure. Once this was explained, it was welcomed. However, it was noted that this could add to the costs of delivery overall. Whilst it made the proposition more attractive to young people, it did not make the business case to potential providers any more attractive – especially given their limited understanding about funding of the programme.

Overall, potential providers did not have any significant issues with the structure, delivery or content of the programme, except for concerns about the work placement. Crucially though, regardless of how they perceived the traineeship programme, in most cases these views did not drive their decision making. Instead factors underpinning decision making included: the limits of their organisational model (e.g. residential); confidence in their ability to engage local employers; and, their views on the appropriateness of their current provision.

## **Future engagement/ plans going forward**

Despite having decided not to offer the traineeship programme at the time of the research, some of the potential providers were open to exploring the traineeship proposition further in the future. There was an appetite for more and better information, perhaps in the form of a briefing which is made relevant to their particular model and/ or sector. One SEN provider reported having seen case studies from the pilot phase and reported that these were not sufficiently detailed or compelling. There was also an appetite to understand how the traineeships could be delivered to smaller volumes and still make economic sense for the provider.

As found in Year 1, there was a desire to deliver the work placement aspect within the college environment, through proxy work place set-ups. However, it is worth noting that the real-life work place experience was the aspect most valued by trainees.



## Follow-up survey of trainees

### Summary: Follow-up survey of trainees

- Trainees were interviewed again approximately 18-30 months after their traineeship to look at the medium term impacts on outcomes for trainees, in particular around employment, apprenticeship uptake and further education/training.
- Outcomes for trainees 18-30 months after their traineeship were broadly positive with 80% reporting that they had been employed or self-employed at some point since finishing the traineeship.
- Of these around half (49%) found work straight away or within a month of their traineeship. Overall more than half (56%) had worked all or most of the time since their traineeship.
- Furthermore a quarter (24%) of trainees who have worked since the traineeship reported that their current or most recent job was with the same employer as the traineeship itself.
- Of those currently employed almost half (45%) reported that their current job involves some form of training that will lead to a formal qualification.
- One in three trainees (31%) had been on an apprenticeship at some point since their traineeship, with 9% reporting that they are currently on an apprenticeship. In the majority of cases (65%) trainees started their apprenticeship immediately after their traineeship.
- Trainees felt that they had gained a number of positive benefits from their time on the traineeship:
  - Improved job prospects - 34% said that it had directly increased their chances of finding paid work, while 40% said it had helped their chances.
  - Two in ten (19%) of trainees who had worked since the traineeship reported that they found a job as a direct result of the traineeship.
  - Improved job search skills - trainees who were in work or looking for work said that the support during the traineeship had helped to improve their search for paid work either a lot (42%) or a little (32%).
- Trainees' positive views of the traineeship were sustained, with 92% reporting that they would recommend traineeships to others.

This chapter covers the findings from the follow-up survey of trainees which was conducted approximately 18-30 months following the start of their traineeship. Firstly, it looks back to trainees' expectations of the programme, and then considers the benefits that they gained. The chapter then focuses on outcomes and perceived impact: on

employment and progression after finishing the traineeship; on trainees' ability to find work; on take-up of apprenticeships; and on continued learning.

## **Expectations and benefits of the traineeship**

Trainees were asked what they had hoped to achieve as a result of the traineeship, choosing as many answers as they liked from five options. Around three in four trainees (77%) said that they had hoped to find paid work as a result of the traineeship, while 61% had hoped to get on to an apprenticeship, and just over half (54%) had hoped to gain access to further learning or education. Around seven in ten (71%) said they had hoped that their confidence would improve as a result of the traineeship, and the same proportion (71%) had hoped to improve their job search skills (see Figure 19).

Trainees were able to give more than one answer, so by combining the responses for work and apprenticeships, we can see that: 50% were hoping for both an apprenticeship and paid work; 11% were hoping for an apprenticeship (without mentioning paid work), and 27% were hoping for paid work (but without specifying an apprenticeship).

Men were more likely than women to say that they had hoped to find paid work (82% compared with 72%), but otherwise there were no statistically significant differences between demographic sub-groups.

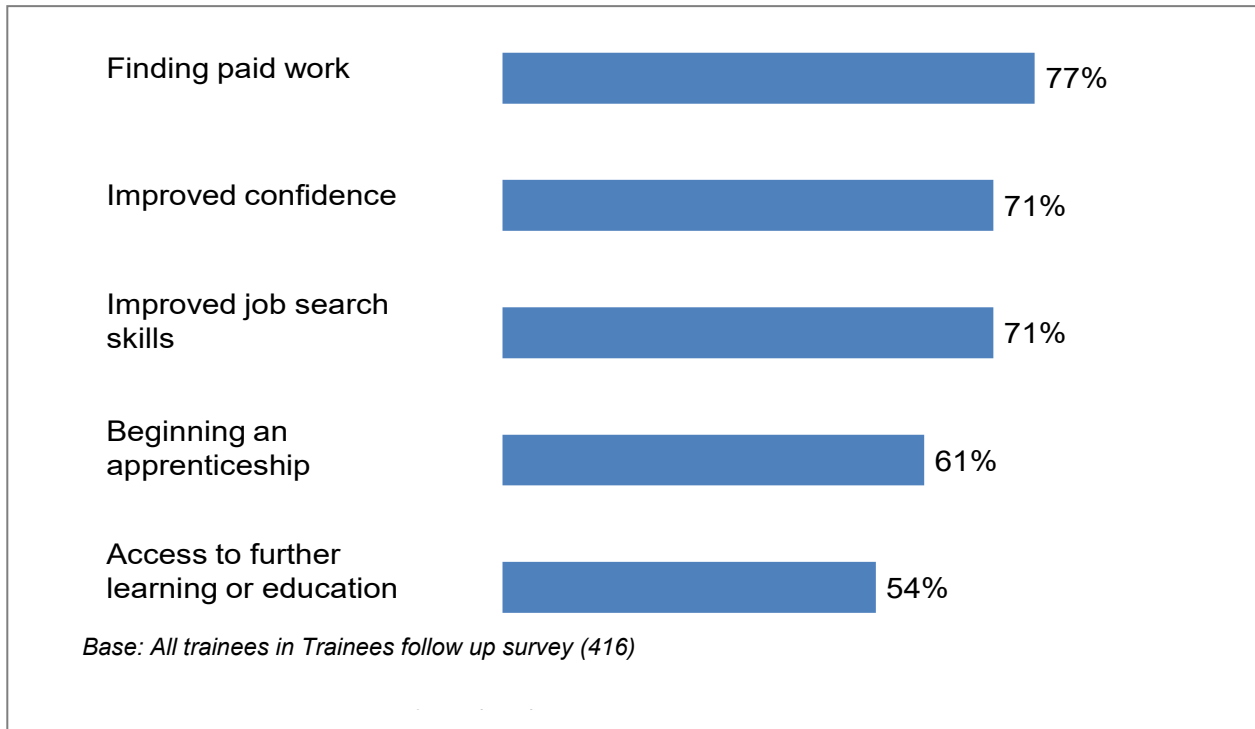
We can compare these findings with those given in the previous survey (1a), when trainees were also asked what they hoped to achieve. Trainees' priorities remained similar between the two survey waves: at the first survey, trainees were most likely to say they hoped to find paid work (68%), followed by beginning an apprenticeship (52%). In the first survey, only a third (33%) said they hoped to continue onto further education or training, lower than the proportion in the second survey (54% who hoped to achieve access to further learning or education). Trainees were not asked about improved confidence or job search skills in the first survey.

When asked (without prompting) about the main benefits of their traineeship, trainees were most likely to say that it had increased their chances of getting paid work (22%), offered them good work experience (20%) and increased their self-confidence or self-belief (19%).

By combining the various responses, we can see the broad areas where trainees felt they had benefitted: one in three (34%) thought the traineeship had developed their skills in some way, while one in four (26%) said that it had increased their chances of getting a job or apprenticeship, and a similar proportion (25%) that they had gained experience. Trainees were less likely to say that it had increased their learning or given them qualifications (13%).

If we compare trainees who got a job immediately after the traineeship with those who took longer to find a job (up to six months), there are some clear differences. Those who got a job immediately were more likely to say that the traineeship increased their chances of getting paid work (33% compared with 19%), but those who took longer to get work were more likely to say the traineeship increased their skills in some way (40% compared with 27%).

**Figure 19: What trainees hoped to achieve**

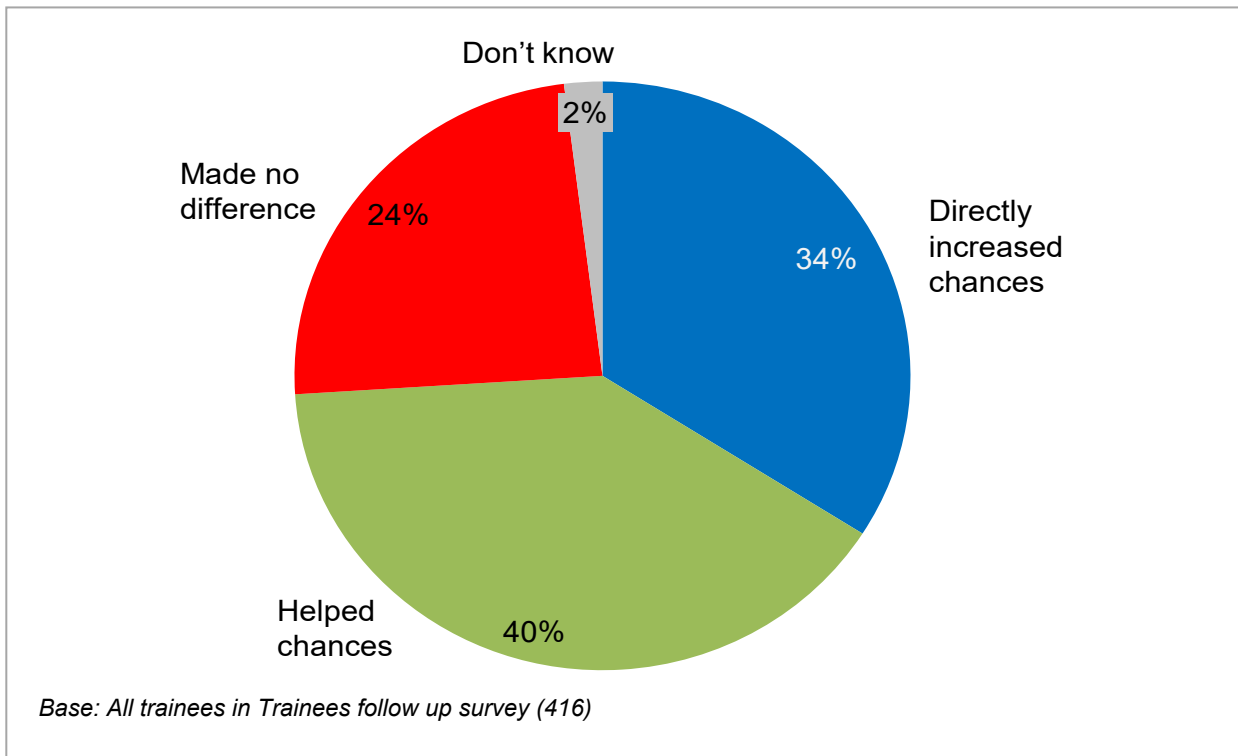


Once again, we can compare responses from the two waves of the survey, this time comparing the benefits that trainees said they *expected* to gain (at that year one survey) with the benefits they thought they had *actually gained* (at the year one follow up survey). At the first survey (1a), trainees were most likely to think that they would gain good work experience (41%), and this was also one of the top answers for benefits gained (20% at the follow up survey). The second highest answer in the first survey was gaining a qualification (24%), but only 5% gave this as an actual benefit at the second survey. This suggests that gaining a qualification proved to be less important (at least in trainees' own eyes) than they had expected. By contrast, only 10% of trainees in the first survey said that they expected increased self-confidence to be a main benefit of the traineeship, but at the second survey this was one of the most commonly reported benefits (by 19%). This indicates that improving self-confidence was not a primary aim of participation, but nonetheless proved to be an important benefit.

When asked specifically about the impact of the traineeship on getting work, one in three trainees (34%) said that it had directly increased their chances of getting paid work, while 40% said that it had helped their chances. One in four trainees (24%) said that it had made no difference to their chances of getting paid work (see Figure 20). Men were more

likely than women to say that the traineeship had directly increased their chances of getting paid work (39% compared with 28%).

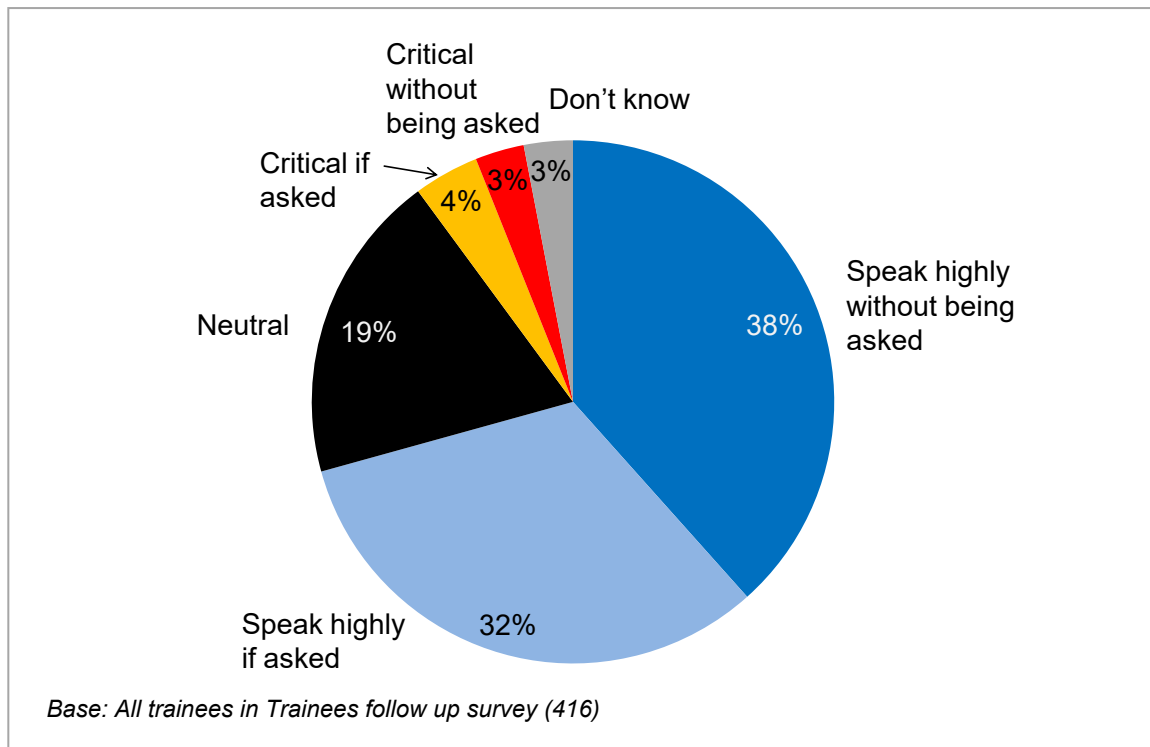
**Figure 20: Extent to which traineeship increased chances of getting paid work**



In the first survey, most trainees gave very positive feedback about their time on a traineeship, and it is clear that these positive views have been sustained in the second survey. More than nine in ten trainees (92%) said that they would recommend traineeships to other people. Older trainees were particularly likely to say they would recommend traineeships (97% of those who were aged 19 or over when they started the traineeship, compared with 90% of those who were aged 16-18).

Seven in ten trainees (70%) said that they would speak highly of traineeships when speaking to others, including 38% who said they would do so without being asked. Around one in five (19%) said they would be neutral about traineeships when speaking to others, while 7% said they would be critical of traineeships (see Figure 21).

**Figure 21: Advocacy of traineeships**



When asked (without prompting) why they would recommend traineeships to others, trainees said that it helped them to gain work or interview experience (24%), improved their chances of getting a job (18%), helped them to gain or improve skills (17%), built confidence (15%) and improved knowledge or learning (11%). Some trainees said that traineeships were helpful or useful generally (20%) or were good or worthwhile (12%).

If trainees said that they would not recommend traineeships to others, this was generally because they thought it wasn't useful or helpful to them (25%) or because they hadn't got anything out of it (24%).

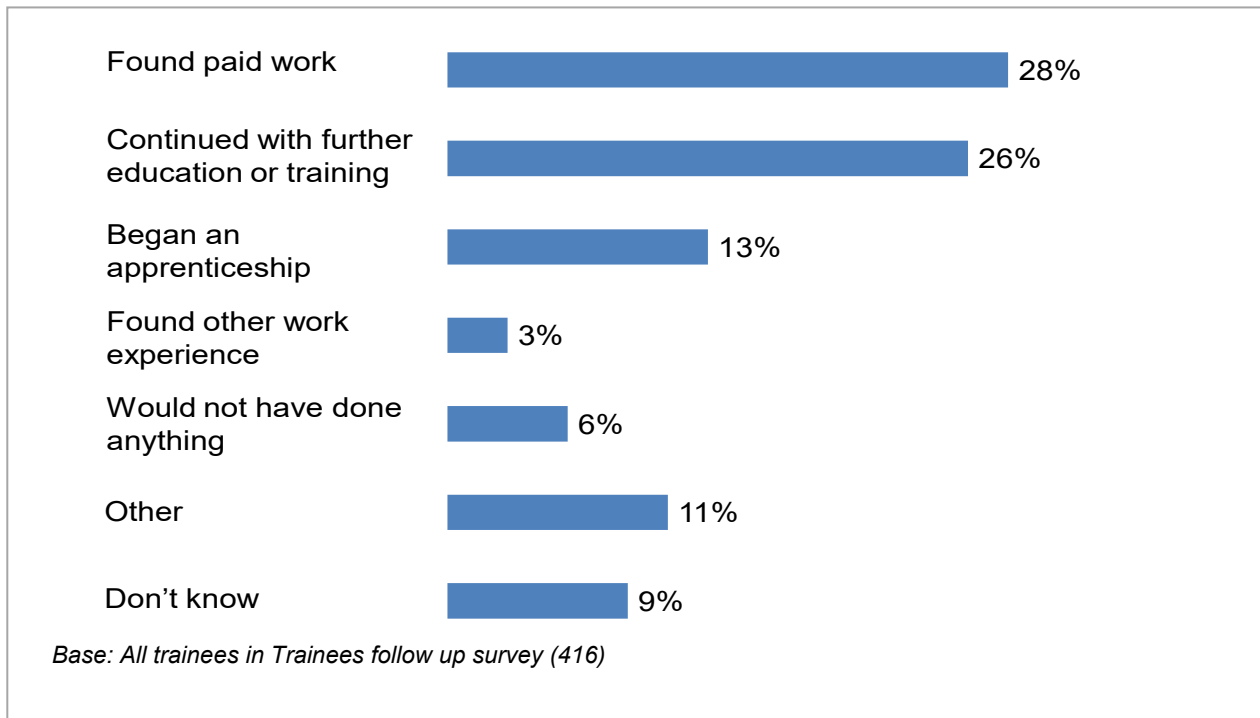
## Experience prior to completing the traineeship

Trainees were asked to think back to when they started the traineeship, and say what they think they most likely would have done if it had not been available. More than one in four (28%) said they would have found paid work, while one in eight (13%) said they would have begun an apprenticeship. One in four said they would have continued with further education or training (26%); see Figure 22.

Younger trainees were more likely to say they would have continued with further education or training if the traineeship had not been available (35% of trainees who were aged 16-17 when they started the traineeship, compared with 25% of those aged 18 and 16% of those aged 19 or over). Conversely, those who were 16 or 17 when they started the traineeship were less likely to say they would have found paid work (24% compared

with 33% of those aged 18 or over). Men were more likely than women to say they would have found paid work in the absence of the traineeship (33% compared with 23%).

**Figure 22: What trainees would have done if traineeship had not been available**



Around one in six trainees (18%) said they had been on other government funded training courses before they started their traineeship. As might be expected, this was more common among older trainees (25% of those who were aged 18 or over when they started the traineeship, compared with 11% of those who were aged 16-17).

The survey obtained further details about trainees who had been on other government-funded training courses<sup>28</sup>:

- Around half (49%) said the course included a substantial element of work experience;
- Views were mixed as to whether the previous training course was better than the traineeship, in terms of the skills they developed (37% said the previous course was better, 22% worse) and the experience they gained (48% better, 14% worse). The survey did not collect details on the previous training attended or on the reasons why it was perceived to be better or worse than the traineeship.

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<sup>28</sup> Only 75 respondents had been on prior government-funded training courses, so findings should be treated with a degree of caution.

## Outcomes and perceived impact

These findings give an important insight into trainees' destinations, as well as their perceptions about the extent to which traineeships have helped them to move into (or closer towards) an apprenticeship, employment or education/training. They are not intended to provide robust measures of the impact of the programme.

The trainees in the sample had been on a traineeship at different times, with start dates ranging from August 2013 to July 2014. It is important to bear this in mind when interpreting the findings in this section. However, analysis indicates that outcomes are generally consistent according to trainees' start date, suggesting that sufficient time had elapsed by the time of the follow-up survey for any differences in timing to have evened out.

### Movement into employment

In total, 80% of trainees said that they had been in employment (including on an apprenticeship) or been self-employed at some time since they finished their traineeship. This was higher among:

- Younger trainees: 85% of those who were aged 16-17 at the start of the traineeship, compared with 77% of those who were aged 18 or over at that time
- More qualified trainees: 83% of those who reported being<sup>29</sup> qualified to level 2 or above before the traineeship, compared with 73% of those qualified to below level 2;
- Those who had been in paid work before the traineeship (88% compared with 74% of other trainees).

The majority of trainees who had worked since finishing their traineeship had been in just one job during that time (59%), while 23% said they had two jobs, 12% had three jobs and 5% had four or more jobs since finishing their traineeship.

Trainees who had been in employment (including on an apprenticeship) or been self-employed at some time since finishing their traineeship were asked how long it took them to find work or become self-employed. One in three (33%) said that they found paid work or became self-employed during or straight after their traineeship, while 16% said it took

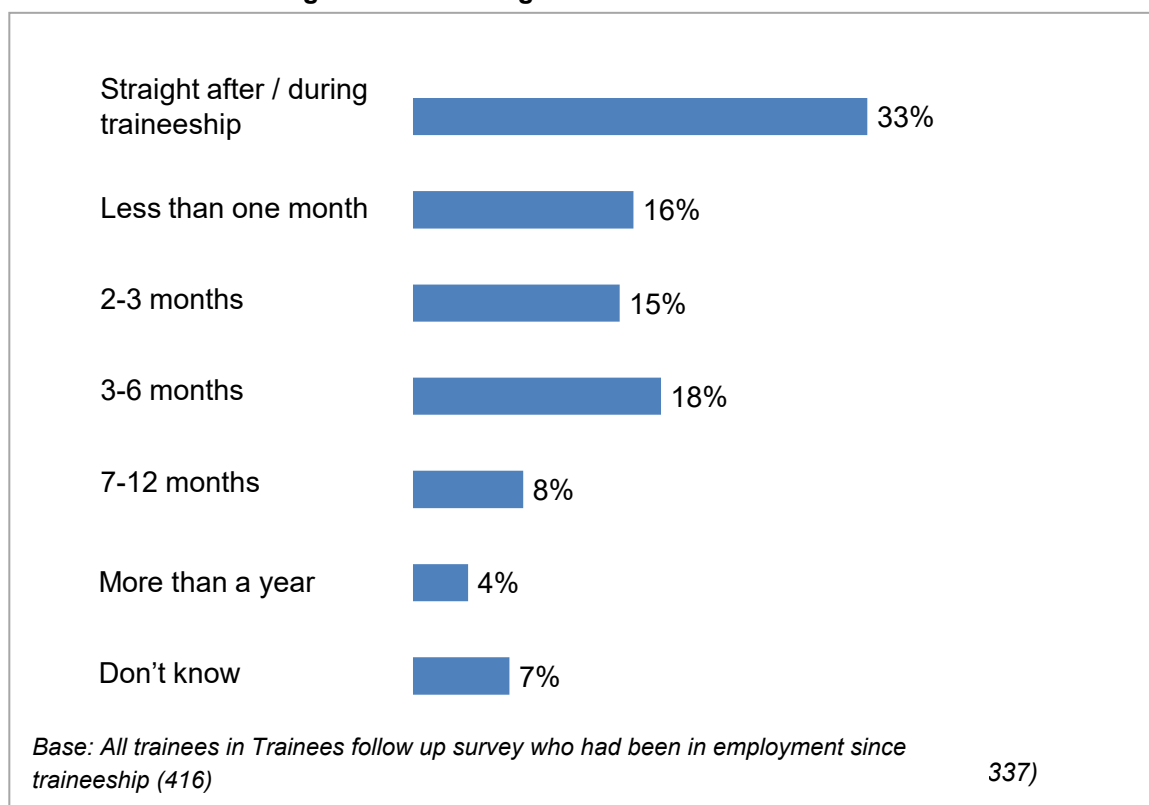
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<sup>29</sup> See page 7 for further explanation of the issues around accurate identification of work experience and Levels of qualification.

less than one month. One in three (33%) said that it took between 2 and 6 months, while 11% said it took more than 6 months for them to find paid work or become self-employed (see Figure 23).

White trainees were more likely than BME trainees to say that they found work during or straight after their traineeship (36% compared with 18%), with BME trainees more likely to say that it took between two and six months (49% compared with 29% of White trainees). There were also differences according to type of work. Trainees who had mainly been in full-time employment since the traineeship were more likely to find work straight away or during the traineeship (40%), compared with those who had worked mainly part-time or in job shares (22%).

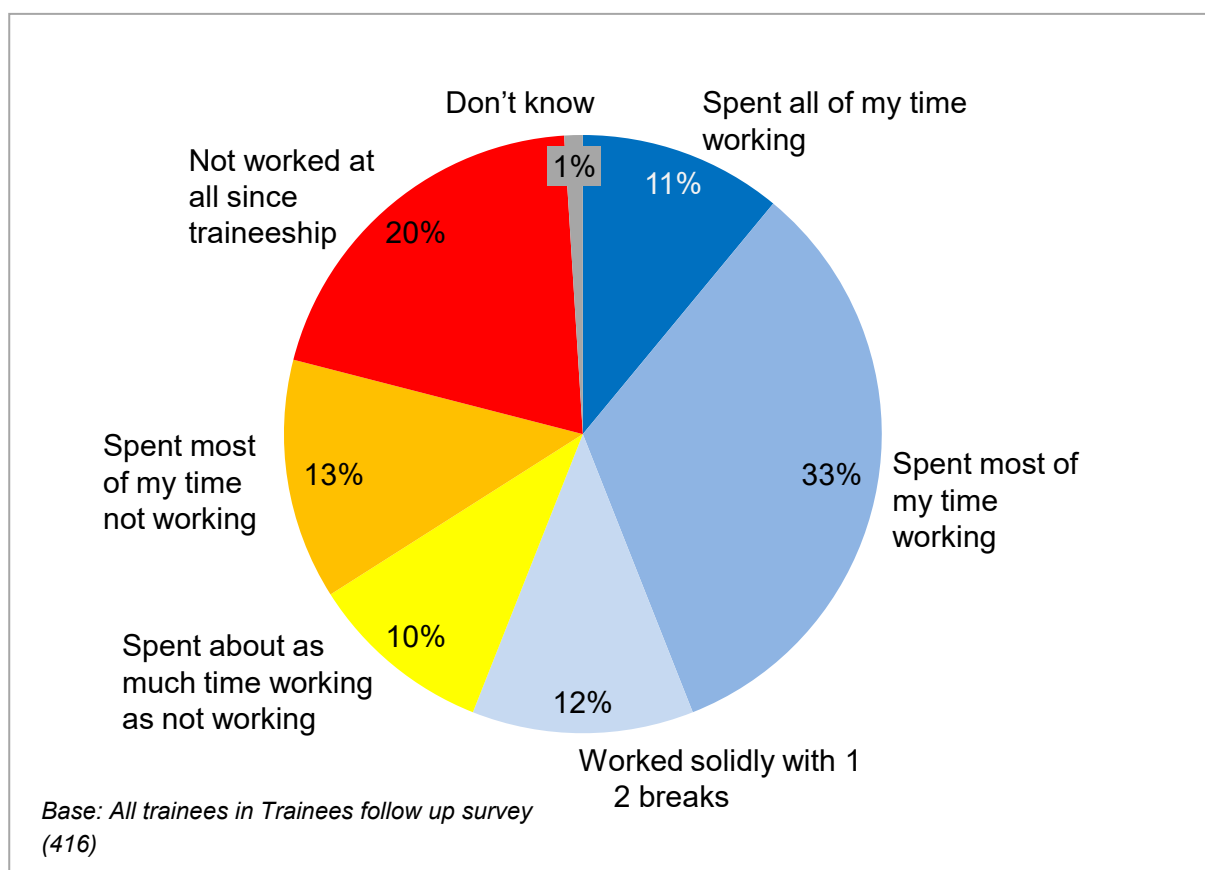
**Figure 23: How long it took trainees to find work**



When asked to summarise their time since finishing the traineeship, more than two in five trainees said that they spent either all of their time (11%) or most of their time (33%) working. A further 12% said they had worked solidly with one or two breaks. By contrast, one in eight (13%) said they had spent most of their time not working, while 10% said they spent about as much time working as not working. One in five trainees (20%) had not worked at all since finishing their traineeship (see Figure 24).



**Figure 24: Summary of employment since traineeship**



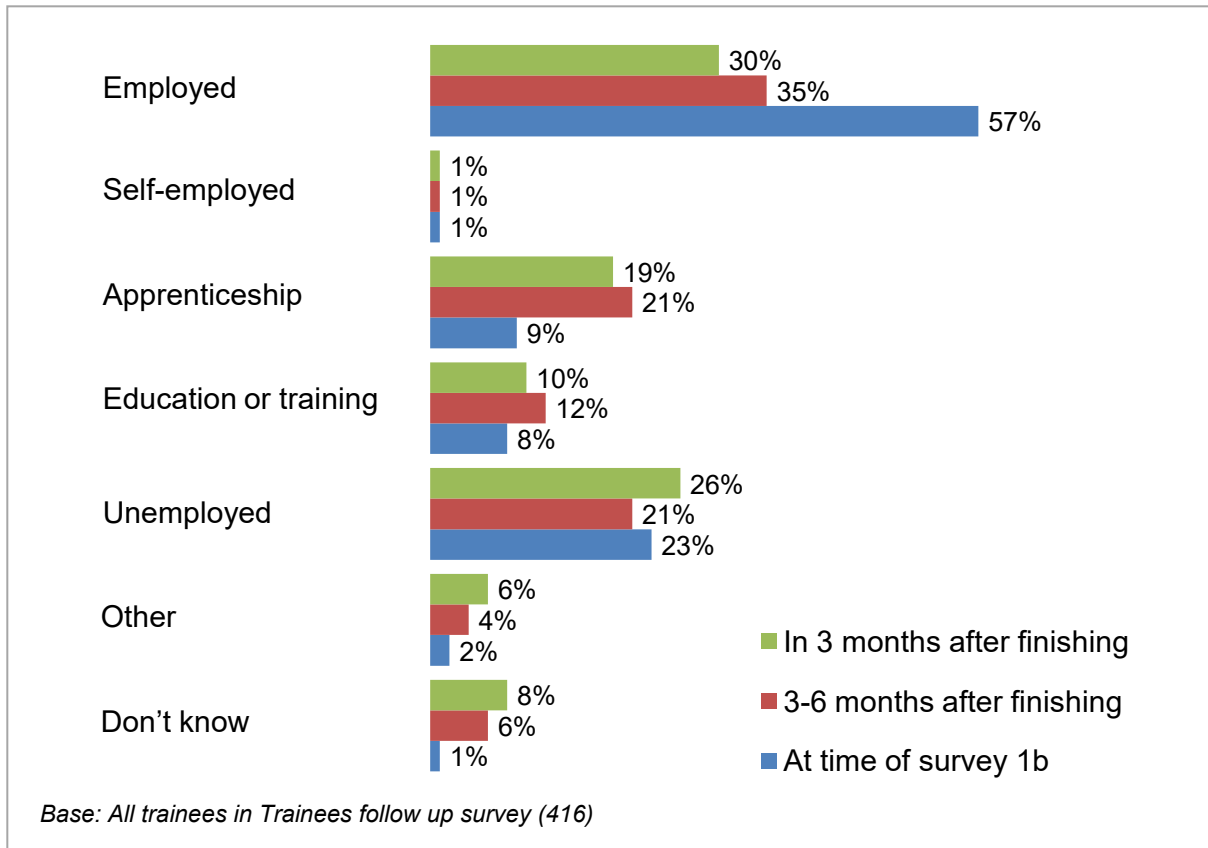
Trainees were asked what their main activity was in the first three months after finishing their traineeship, as well as 3-6 months after finishing. They were also asked about their main activity at the time of the follow-up survey (in December 2015-January 2016), approximately 18-30 months after starting the traineeship. This allows tracking of trainees' progress over time.

The findings are summarised in Figure 25. This shows that:

- 50% of trainees said that their main status was being employed or on an apprenticeship in the three months after finishing the traineeship. This increased to 57% 3-6 months after finishing, and 67% by the time of the follow-up survey.
- A consistent proportion (1%) was self-employed at all three time points.
- Around one in five trainees said they were on an apprenticeship after ending their traineeship (19% in the 3 months after finishing; 21% 3-6 months after finishing). This proportion fell to 9% by the time of the follow-up survey.
- Around one in ten were in education or training at the various time points (between 8% and 12%).

- Around one in four said they were unemployed (including those looking for work and those not looking) in the 3 months after finishing the traineeship (26%). This proportion decreased slightly to 21% 3-6 months after finishing the traineeship, and then remained similar at the time of the follow-up survey (23%).

**Figure 25: Main activity after finishing the traineeship**



More detailed analysis of trainees' status over time indicates that:

- 22% of trainees said their main status was being employed or self-employed at all three time points. This rises to 39% when apprenticeships are included.
- There was a large increase in the proportion who were employed between 3-6 months after finishing and the time of the follow up survey (from 35% to 57% overall). This is mainly the result of trainees moving from being on an apprenticeship to being employed between these two points in time (13% of all trainees), as well as trainees moving from unemployment to employment (9% of all trainees).
- 7% of trainees said that they were unemployed at all three time points.

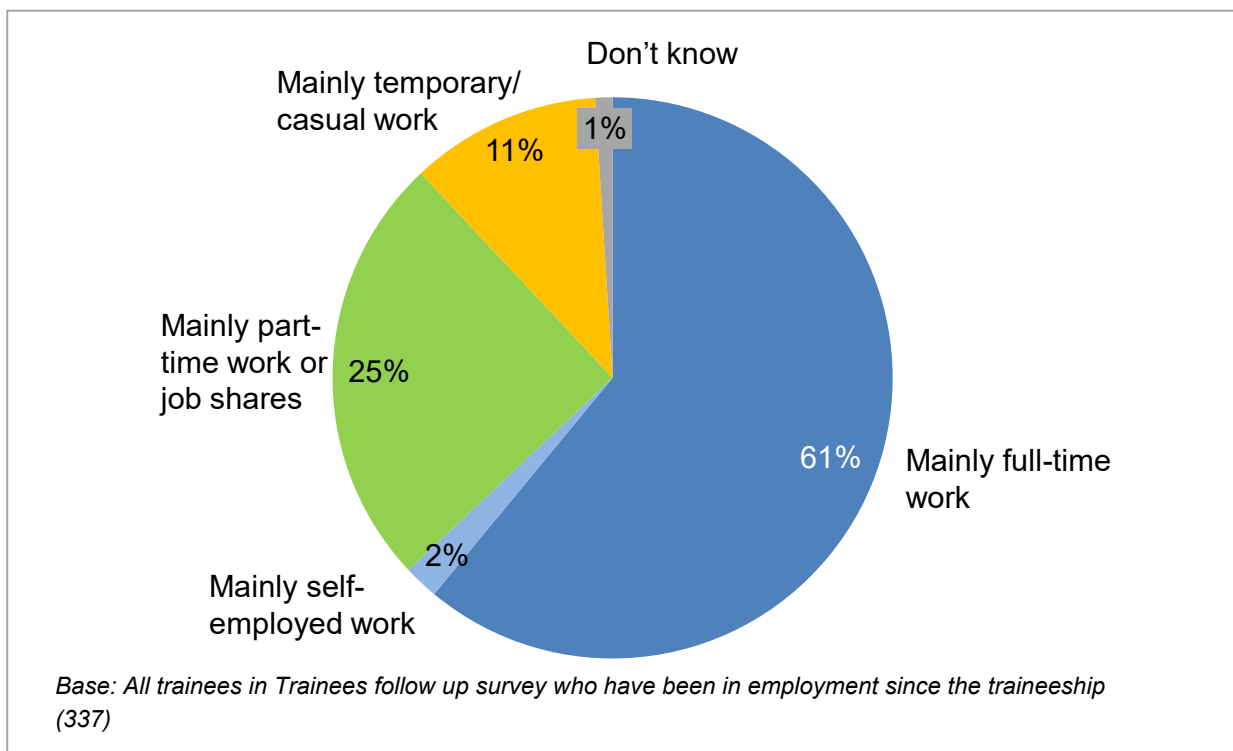
## Details of employment since traineeship

Trainees who had worked since finishing their traineeship were asked what type of work they had mainly done. The majority (61%) said that they had done mainly full-time work, with 2% saying they had mainly been self-employed. One in four (25%) said that they had mainly done part-time work or job shares, while 11% said they had mainly done temporary or casual work (see Figure 26).

Women were more likely than men to have done mainly part-time work or job shares (32% compared with 20%), while older trainees were more likely to have done mainly temporary or casual work (19% of those who were aged 19 or over when they started the traineeship, compared with 7% who were under 18). BME trainees were more likely than White trainees to have done mainly temporary or casual work (22% compared with 8%), and were less likely to have done mainly full-time work (49% compared with 63%).

Trainees who found work immediately after finishing the traineeship were more likely to have done mainly full-time work (74%), compared with those that took up to six months to find work (59%).

**Figure 26: Main type of work since finishing traineeship**



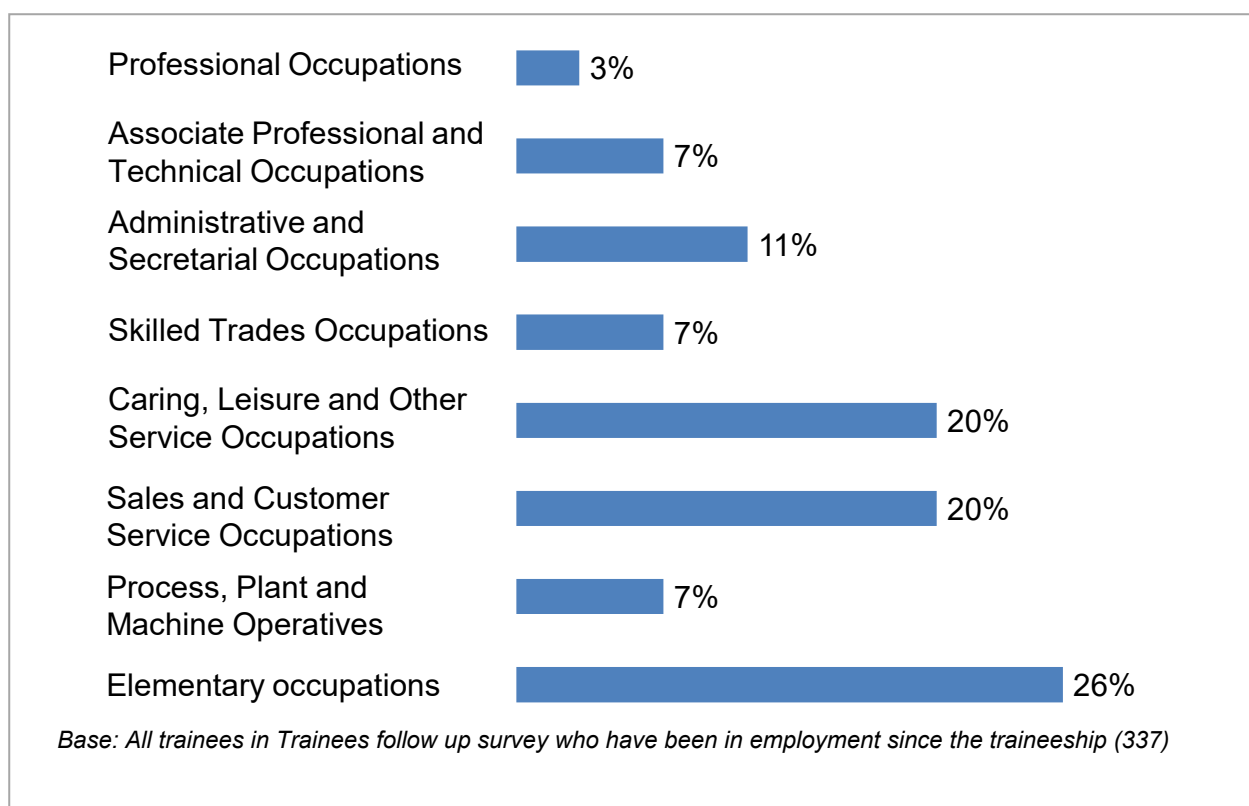
More detailed findings indicate that:

- When asked about their current or most recent job since finishing their traineeship, more than two in three trainees (69%) said that it was a permanent job, while one in seven (14%) said it was temporary. A further 8% said they were on a zero-hours contract, while 7% were on a short-term contract. BME trainees were more likely than White trainees to work on a zero hours contract (17% compared with 6%), and were less likely to have a permanent job (55% compared with 71%).
- Of those currently employed, the majority (69%) said that they were working 30 or more hours per week, while 18% said they were working 16-29 hours per week, and 13% less than 16 hours per week.

Trainees provided information about the occupation and industry sector for their current or most recent job. The most common sectors were wholesale and retail (21%), health and social work (17%), accommodation and food services (9%), administrative and support services (9%), manufacturing (9%), construction (8%) and education (7%).

Trainees' jobs were most likely to be in elementary occupations (26%), caring, leisure and other service occupations (20%) and sales and customer services roles (20%). Full details are shown in Figure 27.

**Figure 27: Occupation of current or most recent work**



The income from trainees' current or most recent job was most likely to be under £7,500 per year (30%), while 22% said it was between £7,500 and £11,499 per year; 19% between £11,500 and £15,499; 12% between £15,500 and £24,999; and 2% said their income was £25,000 per year or more (findings based on trainees who were willing or able to give an income figure).

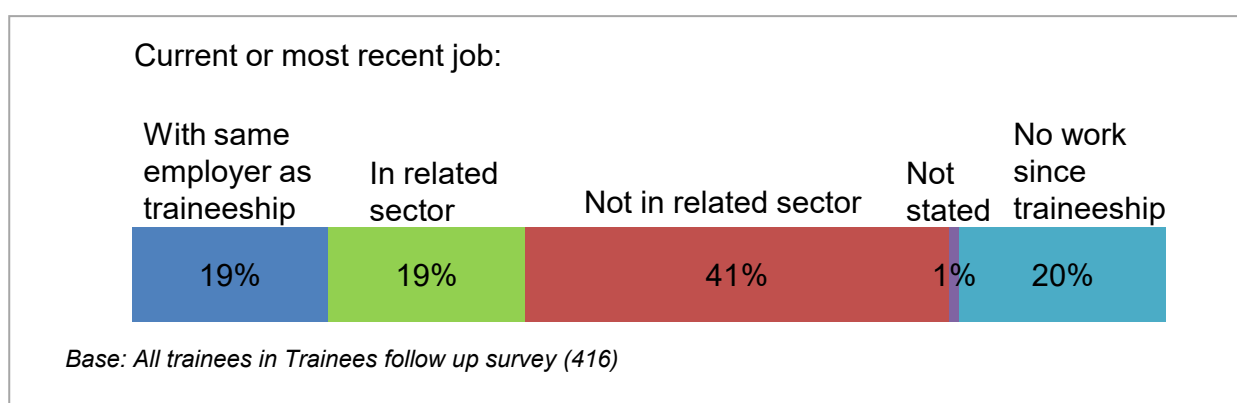
Almost half of trainees (45%) said their current job includes formal training, including 30% who said the training leads to a certificate or qualification. Jobs with formal training were particularly likely to be in health and social work, whereas formal training was least common for work in wholesale and retail trades, and in sales and customer service occupations.

One in four trainees (24%) who had worked since finishing their traineeship (or 19% of all trainees) said their current or most recent job was with the same employer that they did their traineeship with. These trainees were more likely than other trainees to be in permanent jobs (84% compared with 67%), and they were also more likely to be doing formal training as part of the job (55% compared with 40%).

Trainees whose current or most recent job was with their traineeship employer were most likely to be working in health and social work (23%). Those who were working with a different employer were most likely to be working in wholesale or retail trades (24%).

If trainees were working with a different employer, around one in three (32%) said the job was in an area, sector or industry related to their traineeship. Overall, 38% of all trainees said they had either got a job for the same employer that they did their traineeship with, or in a related sector; see Figure 28 for details.

**Figure 28: Work with traineeship employer or same sector**



The majority of trainees (70%) said that their current or most recent job was in an area of work they would like to pursue as a career. As might be expected, trainees were more likely to say this if the job was with the employer that they did their traineeship with, or was in a related sector (81%).

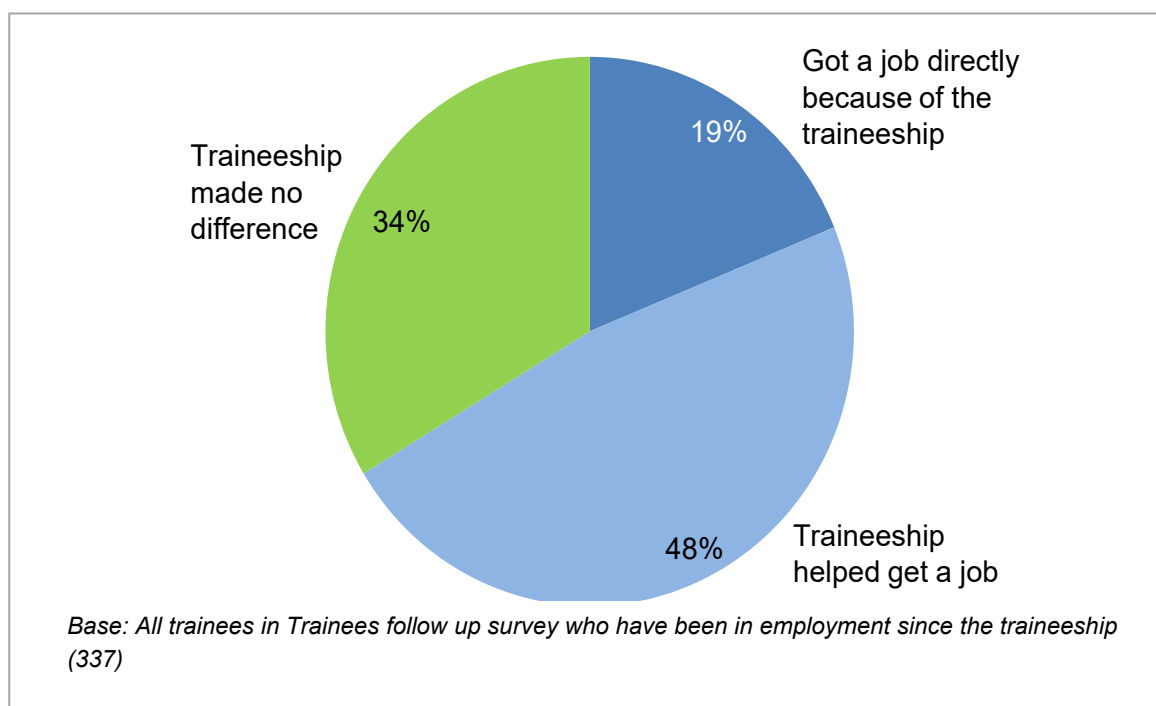
## Impact of traineeship on employment status

Trainees who had worked since they finished the traineeship were asked whether the traineeship had helped them get a job. Almost half of the trainees (48%) said that it helped them get a job. Around an additional one in five (19%) said they got a job directly because of the traineeship. One in three (34%) said that the traineeship made no difference to the job that they got (see Figure 29).

As might be expected, trainees were more likely to say that the traineeship had helped them get a job if they stayed with the same employer as they did their traineeship with (39% of these trainees said that they got a job directly because of the traineeship). By contrast, trainees whose job was with a different employer and in a different sector more commonly reported that the traineeship had made no difference (51%).

Trainees who withdrew from the traineeship or who said that it was terminated were less likely to say that it had helped them: 45% said the traineeship had made no difference, compared with 30% of those who completed the traineeship.

**Figure 29: Impact of traineeship on employment status**



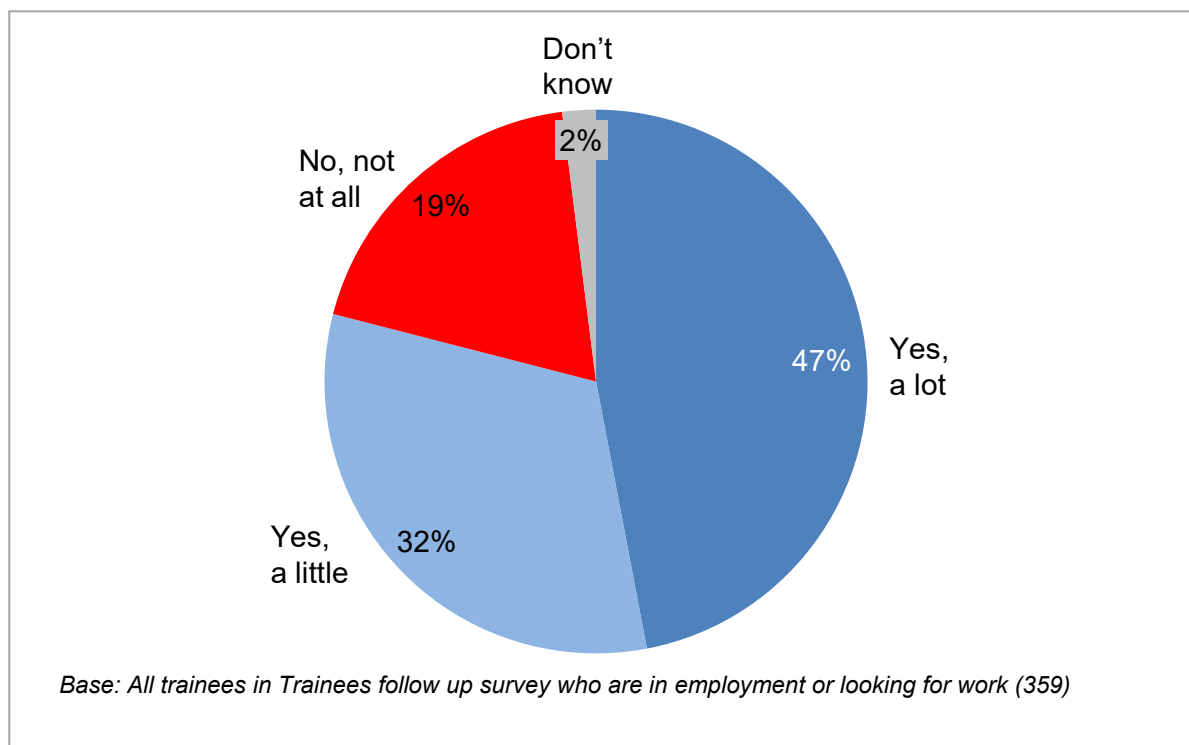
## Impact on ability to find work

Trainees who were in work or looking for work at the time of the survey were asked if the support they had received during their traineeship had helped them to improve their search for paid work. The majority of trainees felt that the support had helped them, either a lot (47%) or a little (32%). Around one in five (19%) said that it had not helped at

all (see Figure 30). Older trainees were particularly positive: 86% of trainees who were 19 or over when they started the traineeship said that the support had helped them a lot or a little, compared with 76% of those aged under 19 at the start of the traineeship.

Trainees who withdrew from the traineeship or who said that it was terminated were less likely to say that the support had helped them: 34% said it had not helped at all, compared with 17% of those who completed the traineeship.

**Figure 30: Impact of support during their traineeship in search for paid work**



If trainees said that the support had helped to improve their search for paid work, they were asked how it had helped. Trainees were most likely to say that it had improved their job search skills or how/where to look for a job (22%), with the same proportion saying that it had increased their confidence (22%). Trainees also mentioned specific skills, including writing their CV (9%), interview skills (7%) and how to apply for jobs or completing application forms (7%).

Trainees who said the support they received did not help improve their search for paid work were asked how the support could be improved. Trainees were most likely to mention one-to-one support, for example at the end of the traineeship (21%), help with job search and how to apply for jobs (16%) and more options for work to go on to (16%).

Trainees who were unemployed and looking for work at the time of the survey were asked how likely they thought it was that they would find a paid job in the next six

months. One in three (33%) thought it was very likely, with a further 44% saying it was fairly likely. Around one in six (16%) thought it was very or fairly unlikely.

Trainees who were unemployed and looking for work were asked about the type of work they were looking for:

- The majority said that they were looking for full-time work (80%), but many were also considering part-time work (60%). Some trainees were also looking for an apprenticeship (27%) or employment including further training (33%).
- Around one in four (27%) said that they were looking for a position with the organisation that provided their traineeship.
- Around one in three (31%) said that that were looking for jobs solely related to their traineeship or work experience placement, while 39% said they were looking for jobs which may be related or unrelated; 28% were only looking for jobs that were unrelated to their traineeship.

Trainees who were unemployed and looking for work were also asked about their barriers to work. Trainees were most likely to mention their lack of qualifications or education (25%), lack of work experience (24%) and the shortage of jobs in the local area (17%).

## Impact on Apprenticeship uptake

At the time of the survey, 9% of trainees said that their main activity was being employed on an apprenticeship. A further 22% said that they had been on an apprenticeship at some point since finishing the traineeship; this gives a total of 31% of trainees who had been on an apprenticeship since finishing the traineeship.

Younger trainees were more likely to have moved on to an apprenticeship: 40% of those who were aged 16-17 at the start of the traineeship, falling to 32% of those aged 18, and 21% of those aged 19 or over at the start of the traineeship.

The majority of trainees who had been on an apprenticeship since they finished their traineeship said they started it directly after the traineeship (65%). One in six (17%) had been on two separate apprenticeships since finishing the traineeship.

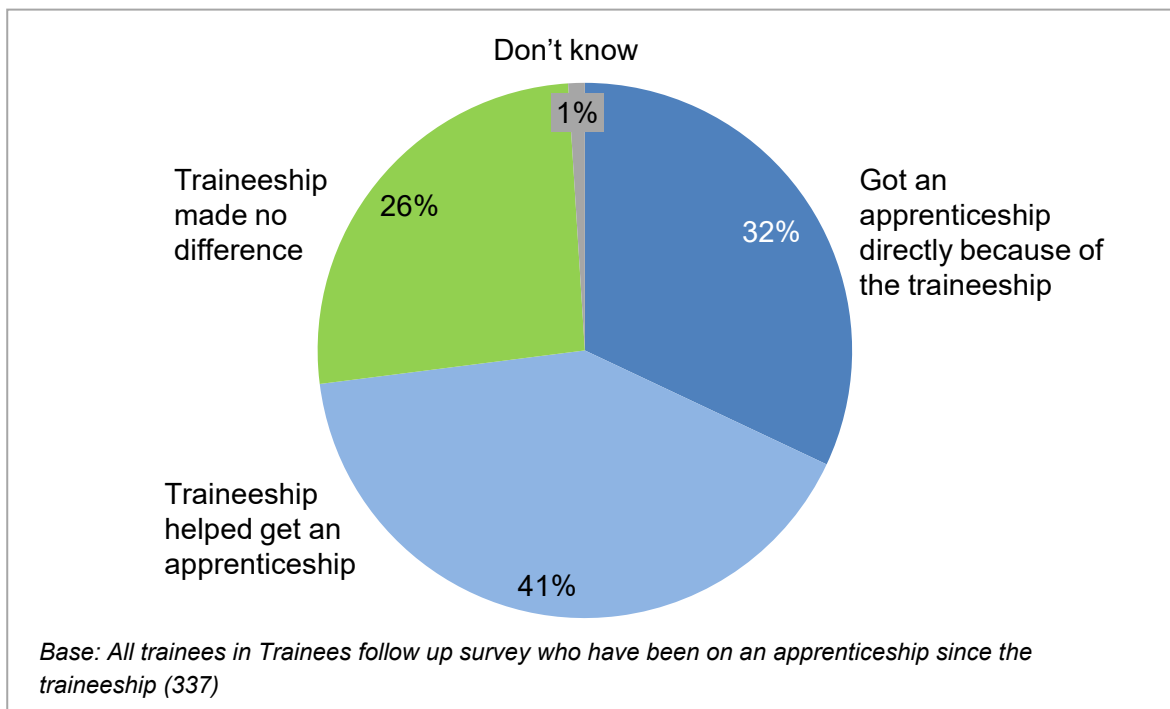
Trainees who went onto an apprenticeship were asked which aspect of the traineeship was most useful in preparing them for the apprenticeship. Trainees were most likely to say that the work experience placement was the most useful (52%), followed by the work preparation training (28%) and the English and maths training (11%).

Trainees were then asked whether the traineeship had helped them get an apprenticeship. Around one in three (32%) said they got an apprenticeship directly



because of the traineeship, while 41% said that it helped them get an apprenticeship. However, one in four (26%) said that the traineeship made no difference (see Figure 31).

**Figure 31: Impact of traineeship on getting an apprenticeship**

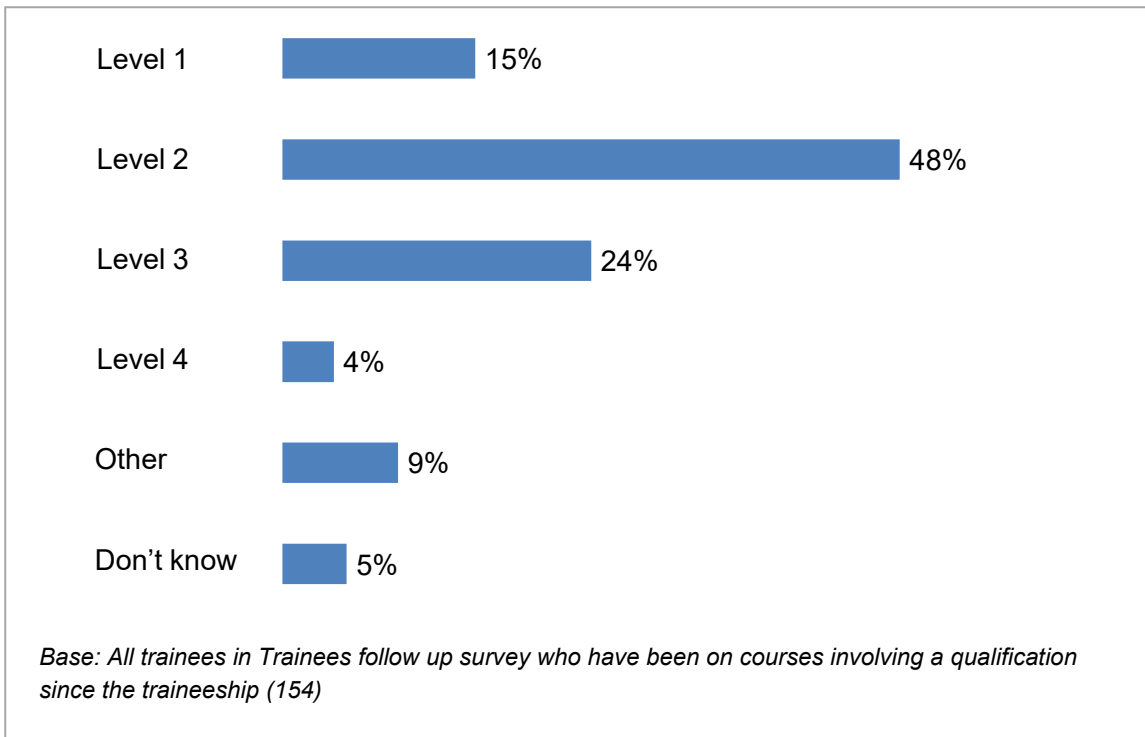


### Impact on continued learning

More than one in three trainees (36%) said that, following their traineeship, they had been on a course that ended in a qualification of some sort. There was no difference between those who started the traineeship aged 16-18 and those who were aged 19 or over in terms of being on a course that ended in a qualification of some sort following their traineeship.

The qualification was most likely to be at Level 2 (48%) or Level 3 (24%); see Figure 32 for further details.

**Figure 32: Qualification level studied since traineeship**



If trainees had studied English and maths as part of the traineeship, and had gone on to other courses involving a qualification afterwards, they were asked about the impact of the English and maths training they received as part of the traineeship. Around one in five (19%) said that this directly encouraged them to join or complete other courses, while two in five (41%) said that it helped encourage them to do this. The remainder (40%) said that this had made no difference to them going on other courses.

## Conclusions

The follow-up survey is able to give a good insight into trainees' destinations in the short and medium-term, as well as their perceptions of the impact of the traineeship, by contacting trainees a second time around 18-30 months after they started their traineeship.

Four in five trainees (80%) had been in paid work at some point since their traineeship; of these, around half (48%) found work straight away or in less than a month. Overall, more than half of trainees (56%) had worked all or most of the time, or had worked solidly with just short breaks, since their traineeship. Between 21% and 26% of trainees said they were unemployed (either looking or not looking for work) at various points since their traineeship.

Most jobs were full-time (61% said they had mainly worked full-time since the traineeship), with a small proportion (2%) working as self-employed. There appears to be a broad division between trainees working full-time, often for the same employer or in the same sector where they did their traineeship, and those working in less secure work in a different sector. Overall, the majority of trainees (70%) said that their current or most recent job was in an area of work they would like to pursue as a career.

Almost one in three trainees (31%) said they had been on an apprenticeship since finishing the traineeship; in the majority (65%) of cases they started it directly after the traineeship.

More than one in three trainees (36%) said that, following their traineeship, they had been on a course that ended in a qualification of some sort. The qualification was most likely to be at Level 2 (48%) or Level 3 (24%).

Trainees also felt that they had gained a number of positive benefits from their time on the traineeship:

- Improved job prospects: 40% said that it had helped their chances, while an additional 34% said that the traineeship had directly increased their chances of getting paid work.
- Getting a job: 48% who had worked since the traineeship said that it helped them get a job, with an additional 19% of trainees saying they got a job directly because of the traineeship.
- Improved job search: trainees who were in work or looking for work said that the support they had received during their traineeship had helped them to improve their search for paid work - either a lot (47%) or a little (32%).

- Access to apprenticeships: 41% of trainees who had been on an apprenticeship said that the traineeship had helped, in addition to 32% who said this was directly because of the traineeship.
- Further learning: among those who had studied English and maths as part of the traineeship, and had gone on to other courses involving a qualification afterwards, 19% said that the traineeship directly encouraged them to join or complete other courses, while 41% said that it helped encourage them to do this.

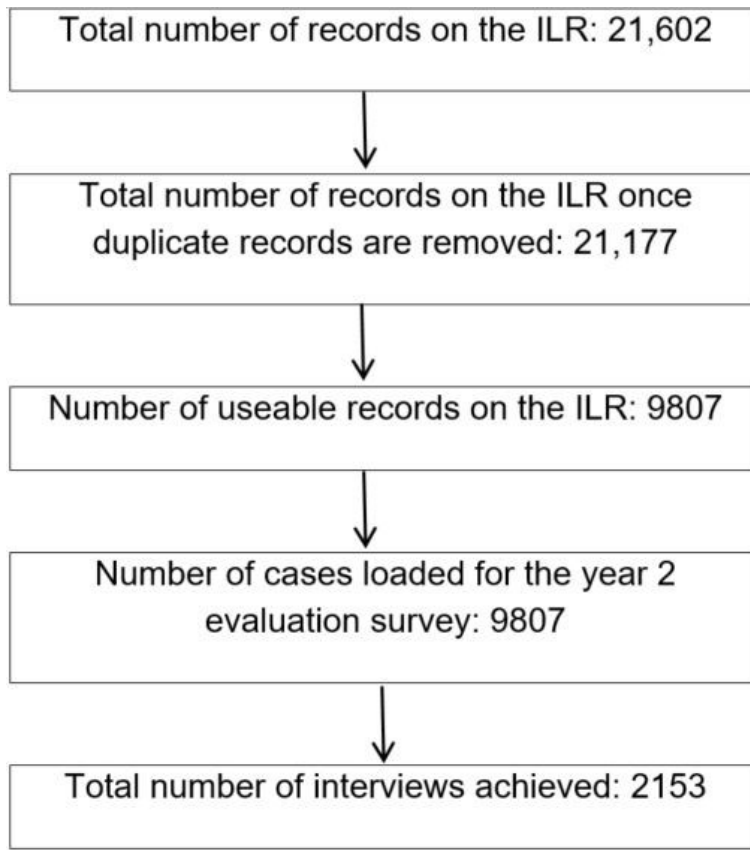
Overall, when asked without prompting, the main benefits of the traineeship were seen as improved chances of getting paid work (22%), good work experience (20%) and increased self-confidence or self-belief (19%).

As in the first survey, trainees were very positive about their time on a traineeship. More than nine in ten trainees (92%) said that they would recommend traineeships to other people, and seven in ten trainees (70%) said that they would speak highly of traineeships when speaking to others.

## Appendix A

Overview of the numbers of records within the ILR to complete interviews for the year 2 evaluation of traineeships.

**Figure One:**



## Appendix B

Six case studies were undertaken (November 2015 – February 2016) to create a full picture of the contexts of provision. The case studies were selected to represent a range of traineeship provision taking into account variation delivery by age group, type of provider (e.g. Local Authority, Private, and Further Education), the sector that the traineeship provided training and work placement for, and a geographical spread across England. Interviews were undertaken with the following:

Case Study	Provider Type	Providers	Employers	Referral Agencies	Trainees	Sector	Age
1	Local Authority	2	2	1	4	General/Health/Social Care	16-19
2	Local Centre for Higher Education	2	2	2	4	General -including: Motor Vehicle/Hairdressing/Business Administration	16- 24 (small cohort 19-24)
3	Local Centre for Higher Education	2	2	1	4	Engineering/ Business Admin/ Facilities Management/Customer Service	16-24
4	Local Authority	2	2	2	4	Customer Service/ Engineering/ Construction	16-24 (small cohort 19-24)
5	Private local provider	2	1	3	4	Security and Retail	19-24

Case Study	Provider Type	Providers	Employers	Referral Agencies	Trainees	Sector	Age
6	Local Authority	2	2	1	4	Business Administration	16-24

Re-contact interviews were conducted with four out of six year 1 evaluation providers. The interviews explored changes to delivery since the initial implementation of the programme.

Case Study	Provider Type	Sector	Age
1	National Training Provider	Childcare/Business Administration/Hospitality	16- 24
2	Local Centre for Higher Education	Horticulture/Retail year 1 – no longer delivering traineeships	19-25
4	Private Local Training Provider	Hairdressing	16- 18 (small cohort 18-24)
6	Private Local Training Provider	Childcare/Business Administration	16-18

Six interviews were also conducted with non-providers who were eligible to offer the programme but decided not to deliver to explore the reasons why eligible providers do not intend to deliver provision, outlined below.

Case Study	Sector
1	FE provider, SEN specialist
2	FE Provider, General FE
3	Employer, Automotive
4	FE Provider, General FE
5	FE Provider, Construction and Creative Media
6	Residential College, SEN specialist





Department  
for Education

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**Reference: DFE- RR694**

**ISBN: 978-1-78105-772-8**

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