



Skills Funding  
Agency

# FE Choices Employer Satisfaction Survey

Summary Paper 2014 to 2015

March 2016

## **Introduction**

This report provides a national overview of findings from the FE Choices Employer Satisfaction Survey 2014 to 2015. FE Choices data, published on [GOV.UK](http://GOV.UK) and the [National Careers Service](http://NationalCareersService.gov.uk) website, provides consistent and comparable information for employers and learners to help them make informed choices about publicly funded education and training. It also provides consistent management information on key performance indicators.

More than 54,000 employers took part in the 2014 to 2015 FE Choices Employer Satisfaction Survey representing almost 25% of all employers who received training funded by the Skills Funding Agency between August 2014 and February 2015. Participating employers provided feedback on 713 providers including General Further Education (FE) Colleges, independent learning providers, other public-funded organisations, and Special and Specialist Colleges.

### **The characteristics of employers delivering public-funded learning**

The majority of employers work in small workplaces (77% have 1-49 employees) reflecting the high representation of small businesses in England. One in six (16%) have 50-249 employees, and 6% have 250+ employees.

A diverse range of industry sectors were represented, with the largest groups of employer respondents in the “human health and social work” and “wholesale and retail trade” sectors (16% and 12% respectively).

Almost a quarter (24%) had made a financial contribution towards the cost of the training – an increase of one percentage point compared to the 2012 to 2013 survey. The increase has been among large and small workplaces.

Apprenticeship training continues to outstrip workplace learning reflecting the government’s commitment to expand the apprenticeship programme: 97% of workplaces were delivering apprenticeships compared to just 7% delivering workplace learning).

Adult apprenticeships and Level 2 apprenticeships were most common, as were apprenticeships in Business, Administration and Law though the dominance of this Sector Subject Area has declined slightly compared to the previous years. In contrast, Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies has overtaken Health, Public Services and Care as the second most common apprenticeship SSA delivered by employers.

## Key findings

As in previous years of the survey, employers were very positive about the training received by their employees. Rating increased slightly between 2012 to 2013 and 2013 to 2014 but appears to have stabilised this year at these levels:

- 77% would **recommend the provider** to prospective employers.
- 73% were very satisfied with the **benefits of the training to their organisation**.
- 73% were very satisfied with the **overall quality of the training/assessment**.

Employers were equally positive regarding other aspects of the training, with at least seven in ten giving a rating of 8-10 (out of 10) across all key aspects that were measured. In particular, employers were especially positive about the **professionalism of the provider staff**, with 78% giving a rating of 8-10. They were also positive about the **flexibility of the training** and the **use of up-to-date industry practices**, with 74% rating both aspects highly. Ratings for staff professionalism and flexibility of training have both fallen by one percentage point since the 2013 to 2014 survey.

Ratings on **overall efficiency of dealing with the provider (73%)**, **understanding the employer's training needs (72%)**, and **clarity of communication (70%)** remain unchanged. Employers continue to be least positive about providers' clarity of communication with them with 14% giving a rating of 0-5 out of 10.

There were limited subgroup differences: workplaces with **2-9 employees** were generally less positive than average, as were employers who were only delivering **apprenticeships to 16-18 year olds**. In terms of provider type, private sector providers consistently received the most positive ratings from employers. These patterns were consistent with previous years' results.

Focusing specifically on apprenticeships in the four sector subject areas (SSAs) with the highest employer volumes, ratings were generally (slightly) higher for **Retail & Commercial Enterprise** and **Health, Public Services & Care**, compared with **Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies** and **Business, Administration & Law**.

Overall the subgroup differences are generally minor and should not detract from the findings that the majority of employers continue to have a positive experience and would willingly act as advocates for their provider.

### **Technical details**

The Employer Satisfaction Survey 2014 to 2015 took place between March and July 2015. The survey was administered using multi-mode: postal, online and telephone. Over 54,000 employers (23% of employers receiving funding) took part in the survey and gave their views on the training their employees received: 66% completed the survey online, 23% used paper questionnaires and 11% by telephone. The employers that took part in the survey were representative of the 235,379 employers that received training funded by the Skills Funding Agency in 2014 to 2015 in terms of workplace industry sector and size, and provider type. As a result the findings are unweighted. This report only comments on subgroup differences that are statistically significant.

### **Note regarding slides**

The 'total base size' is the number of employers answering a question. The base size varies because some employers do not answer all of the questions. Slide 7, for example, shows the total base size of 54,639, which is the total number of employers that responded to this question.

Slide 28 includes breakdown by Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP Areas) for each region. The regions are noted in abbreviated format, as follows: EE – East of England, EM – East Midlands, GL-Greater London, NE – North East, NW – North West, SE – South East, SW-South West, WM- West Midlands, YH - Yorkshire and Humber.



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