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for Education

# Apprenticeships Evaluation 2018-19 - Learners

Research report

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## Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of the Apprenticeship Evaluation Learner Survey 2018-19. It is the sixth in the series, the first of which was published in 2012, with the previous survey taking place in 2017. It sits alongside the accompanying Employer report.

The research is intended to help monitor key progress indicators and to help shape future development of the apprenticeship programme. Specifically, it covers individuals' motivations for undertaking their apprenticeship, their experience of the training they received, their satisfaction with the apprenticeship both overall and in relation to specific elements, and the impact it has had on their career.

## Method and interpretation

The learner research comprised 5,047 interviews between November 2018 and March 2019, covering apprenticeships at all levels, from Level 2 through those undertaking Degree apprenticeships at Level 6+.

In line with previous surveys in the series, this survey interviewed **current apprentices, those who recently completed an apprenticeship<sup>1</sup>, and those who completed an apprenticeship between 15 and 25 months before the interview was conducted.** This allows the survey to capture views of apprentices at the time they experience their apprenticeship, while also capturing meaningful reflection after the apprenticeship and information on progression.

For much of this report, the views of current and completer apprentices are combined into an overall figure, so it is important to note that, **unless specified otherwise, findings for the '2018-19 survey' include some individuals who completed their apprenticeship in earlier years.** The same applies when results for the 2015 and 2017 surveys are discussed. Continuing this methodology is important to maintain a consistent time series with previous surveys, but this approach does not provide a clean measure of changes following the recent reforms to apprenticeships which came into effect from May 2017. For instance, three-fifths (60%) of all apprentices interviewed in the 2018-19 survey started their apprenticeship before the May 2017 reforms came into effect.

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<sup>1</sup> Those who completed their apprenticeship at some point between September 2018 and March 2019

For a more clear-cut measure of changes before and after the apprenticeship reforms, this report presents additional figures shown in separate boxes at the start of each chapter which compare current apprentices from the 2017 survey (all of whom were on pre-May 2017 apprenticeships) with those who were current apprentices in the 2018-19 survey (85% of whom started after 1<sup>st</sup> May 2017).

## **Profile of apprentices**

The profile of apprentices in this study represents a particular snapshot in time - those who were undertaking an apprenticeship in late 2018 or early 2019, combined with those who had completed an apprenticeship between February and September 2017. Figures will therefore vary from official statistics on annual apprenticeship starts and achievements.

For the first time in the Apprenticeship Evaluation Learner Survey series, there were more Level 3 apprentices than Level 2 (46% of our overall sample of apprentices vs. 43%).

Four sector subject areas accounted for six out of every seven apprentices (Business, Administration and Law (26%), Health, Public Services and Care (25%), Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies (20%) and Retail and Commercial Enterprise (13%)).

Around two-fifths of apprentices were 25 or older (43%), with the remainder relatively evenly divided between those aged between 19 and 24 (30%) or under 19 (27%). Relative to the overall figures, younger apprentices aged under 19 accounted for a much larger share (between 41% and 51%) of all apprentices in Leisure, Construction, Agriculture, Arts and Engineering subjects, while those aged 25 plus comprised the majority of those training in Health, Education and Business (between 51% and 62%).

Overall, apprenticeships were equally likely to be taken up by men and women (49% and 51%), but there was considerable variation by subject area.

Around one in seven apprentices (14%) were Black or Minority Ethnic (BAME).

Overall, 3% of apprentices in the survey identified as having a disability and 4% a learning difficulty; 6% reported either.

## **Routes into apprenticeships and motivations**

Awareness that their training was part of an apprenticeship has continued to increase, with three-quarters (76%) now aware of this, up from 70% in the 2017 survey and 67% in

the 2015 survey. Awareness was close to universal among Level 6+ and Level 4 apprentices (95% and 92% respectively compared to 68% of Level 5 apprentices).

Apprentices were split between those for whom an apprenticeship was their first choice (47%) and those who had no particular preference (48%). The majority of apprentices (79%) had considered other alternatives alongside an apprenticeship, most often working with no apprenticeship.

Apprenticeships were most likely to be chosen as a way to enter into or progress in a specific career (for 28%) or to develop work-related skills (20%). Whilst obtaining a qualification remained a driver for a substantial proportion (19%), the importance of this appears to have reduced (27% in the 2017 survey and 25% in 2015). However, obtaining a degree qualification was an important factor for nearly all Degree apprentices.

The choice of a Higher or Degree apprenticeship over other qualifications at these levels was often due to an employer recommendation or suggestion, especially for Level 5 and Level 6+ non-degree apprentices. Course content was as much, or more, of a draw for Level 6 Degree and Level 4 apprentices.

Almost two-fifths (38%) of apprentices had not worked for the employer prior to their apprenticeship (and were therefore recruited to start their apprenticeship straightaway), a lower proportion than in the 2017 survey (43%) although a return to the level seen in 2015. The remaining three-fifths (61%) were already employed by the employer with whom they undertook their apprenticeship before it commenced (19% had been hired less than a year beforehand – although their apprenticeship training did not start immediately, their employer may have recruited them with the intention of placing them on an apprenticeship).

Recruitment patterns by subject area continue to show that apprentices in Arts, Science, and ICT were particularly likely to be 'new recruits' i.e. starting their apprenticeship on joining the employer (81%, 69%, 66% respectively), whilst the majority of those in Health, Retail, Education and Business had been with their employer for a year or longer before starting their apprenticeship.

Young apprentices aged under 19 were more likely to have actively chosen an apprenticeship (a preferred choice for 65%), and were far more likely to have started their apprenticeship when they joined the employer (71% compared to only 11% of those aged 25 or older).

## Quality and content of apprenticeships

### *Duration*

The average intended duration of apprenticeships was reported as 18 months, compared to 17 months in the 2017 and 2015 surveys, with each individual sector subject area showing average intended durations of at least 14 months. Overall, 4% of apprentices reported an intended duration of less than 12 months: most of these (74%) were aged 19 plus and started their apprenticeship before the reforms in May 2017 (and could therefore have been exempt from the 12-month minimum duration due to their prior learning). Intended duration increased with level, from an average of 15 months for Level 2 apprentices, to 21 months at Level 3 and 23 months for those at Level 4+.

Most thought the intended duration was about right (77%, down from 80% in the 2017 survey); and as in previous years, the remainder were more likely to think their intended apprenticeship duration too long (17%, up from 14% in 2017) than too short (5%).

### *Training*

Overall, 82% of apprentices reported undertaking any formal training as part of their apprenticeship (covering training at an external provider or formal training sessions in the workplace away from usual work activities). While it is not a direct measure for 'off-the-job' training, 'formal training' would have to be delivered for the 'off-the-job' requirement to be met. This survey suggests, then, that roughly one-fifth of apprenticeships in the 2018-19 survey did not meet the requirement to provide off-the-job training.

The overall proportion of apprentices who reported undertaking any formal training has fallen from 86% in the 2017 survey. This fall can be seen across all age groups, levels and almost all subject areas. However, the fall in the overall figure is also influenced by the composition of the 2018-19 survey: apprentices who are less likely to report receiving formal training (such as older apprentices and those already working for an employer when they started their apprenticeship) make up a greater proportion of the 2018-19 survey<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> This accurately reflects shifts in the population of apprentices between the two sampling windows for the 2017 and 2018-19 surveys; a slightly higher proportion of apprentices were aged 25+ in August 2018 than in November 2016. However, it is worth noting that when looking at full-year figures, apprentices aged 25+ made up a *smaller* proportion of apprenticeship starts in 2017/18 than in 2016/17 ([main tables of January 2019 Apprenticeships and traineeships statistical release](#)).

Among those receiving any training (5% reported receiving no training, a figure which did not vary significantly between current apprentices and completers), survey results suggest that an average of 10.8 hours per week were spent undertaking any training, of which an average of 5.6 hours per week was spent undertaking formal training. Both of these figures were lower than reported in the 2017 survey (11.5 hours of any training, 6.0 hours of formal training), but were higher than in the 2015 survey (10.1 hours of any training, 4.6 hours of formal training).

Around two-fifths of apprentices (38%) reported either receiving no training (5%) or were trained but for less than six hours per week on average (34% of those trained).<sup>3</sup> The results from this year's survey indicate that the likelihood of receiving less than six hours training a week on average is higher among: those aged 19-24, those who were existing employees when they started the apprenticeship, female apprentices, and those undertaking Business, Education and Health apprenticeships.

The survey results suggest that 30% of apprentices received formal training equivalent to at least 20% of their working hours, while 50% either received no formal training or received an amount equivalent to less than 10% of their working hours. Although the survey's definition of 'formal training' is slightly different to that within the 20% off-the-job training requirement, most 'off-the-job' training would be captured in the survey's measure of 'formal training'. Hence the survey findings suggest that a substantial proportion of apprentices are experiencing significantly less training than required by apprenticeship funding rules.

### *Maths and English*

Just over a quarter of apprentices studied with an external provider for a maths qualification (28%) and / or an English qualification (26%); a fifth (21%) studied both.

## **Satisfaction with apprenticeships**

Overall 86% of apprentices were satisfied with their apprenticeship, and 7% were dissatisfied. Among those who were dissatisfied, a lack of support or contact from training providers was the most common issue, followed by poor organisation and poor quality of training.

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<sup>3</sup> The Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England (SASE) states that, for frameworks, an Intermediate and Advanced level apprenticeship must contain a minimum of 280 Guided Learning Hours (GLH). This would require an *average* of approximately six hours training per week on a 12-month apprenticeship.

Satisfaction varied by level: Degree apprentices were the most likely to be satisfied (94%) whilst Level 5 and Level 6+ non-degree apprentices were the least satisfied (78% and 72% respectively). By subject area, overall satisfaction was highest among Science apprentices (94%). Arts (79%) and Education (81%) apprentices had the lowest proportion satisfied.

Satisfaction has fallen compared with the 2015 and 2017 surveys (in both years 89% were satisfied and 5% were dissatisfied) and across all levels. There has been a particular fall in the proportion 'very satisfied', from 73% in 2017 to 66% in 2018-19.

The fall in overall satisfaction is a result of a decrease in satisfaction among current apprentices, from 89% in the 2017 survey to 83% in 2018-19. The fall among current apprentices was reported across all levels although was greatest among Level 4+ apprentices (87% to 77%). Among those who had completed their apprenticeship there has been no change in overall satisfaction (87% in the 2018-19 survey vs. 88% in 2017).

Overall satisfaction fell across the majority of subject areas among current apprentices. In terms of those 'very satisfied', there were particularly large falls among current ICT and Business apprentices (29 and 19 percentage points respectively).

Likely to be contributing to this fall, satisfaction among current apprentices has decreased across a number of specific aspects of apprenticeships covered in the survey. This includes assessment on the job (82%, down from 87% in the 2017 survey), quality of feedback (83%, down from 87%), the balance between the time spent training and working (77%, down from 81%) and the amount of training received each week (77%, down from 80%).

The changing profile of current apprentices between the 2017 and 2018-19 surveys<sup>4</sup>, such as an increase in older apprentices who were less likely to be satisfied, has also contributed to the decrease in satisfaction.

There was no difference in overall satisfaction among apprentices currently on standards compared to those on frameworks (82% vs. 83%).

## Apprenticeship Outcomes

Outcomes for those who had completed their apprenticeships demonstrated a range of positive impacts, with benefits also accrued by many of those who were still undertaking their apprenticeships.

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<sup>4</sup> See footnote 2.

The vast majority of apprenticeship completers were in work (93%), including three-quarters (76%) in full time employment. This represents an increase compared with the 2017 survey (when comparative figures were 91% and 74% respectively).<sup>5</sup>

Employment levels were near universal among those who had completed apprenticeships in the more 'traditional' subjects of Construction and Engineering (98% and 97% in work). Younger apprenticeship completers were less likely to be in work (89% of those under 19 compared to 96% of those 25 or older), and were more likely to be in education or unemployed (both 5%) than their older counterparts. Female completers were less likely to be in full time work (71% compared to 82% among men).

Three-fifths (60%) of those who had completed their apprenticeship had received a pay rise and / or a promotion subsequently, with the majority reporting these being directly due to or helped by their having completed an apprenticeship. The proportion receiving both a pay rise and a promotion had increased from 25% in the 2015 survey, 26% in 2017 to 32% in the 2018-19 study. Again, Construction and Engineering apprenticeship completers were particularly likely to benefit, as were those who had trained at Level 6+ and Level 4.

Only 4% were unemployed following an apprenticeship, though this rose to 8-9% for Arts and ICT apprenticeship completers. Apprentices with a disability were also more likely than average to be unemployed post apprenticeship (9%).

Whilst overall only 2% of apprentices who had completed their training had moved into education, many had continued training alongside work (and overall 19% of completers had embarked upon a new qualification following their apprenticeship). Many more were considering a further qualification (54% of completers and 65% of current apprentices).

Across all apprentices (both those who had completed their training and those still undertaking it), nine out of ten (90%) felt they had gained skills or knowledge appropriate for their area of work as well as more transferable skills for a range of jobs or industries, whilst at least 80% reported improved softer skills (e.g. communication, team-working). The majority of apprentices reported improvements in their English skills (62%, rising to 80% of those who were given specific training), Maths skills (55%, rising to 78% of those who were given specific training) and IT skills (59%).

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<sup>5</sup> The proportion of apprentices in work (93%) is slightly higher than the most recent available figures (2015-16) reported in the [outcome-based success measures publication](#) (88%). Differences may be due to the fact that the latter measure requires sustained employment, whereas this survey represents a snapshot in time. Furthermore, whereas sustained employment outcomes were recorded in the subsequent academic year following apprenticeship completion, in general, this survey took place a longer time after apprenticeships had been completed (between 15 and 25 months).

Apprentices were largely positive about the potential future impact of their apprenticeship training with 89% reporting it had prepared them well for their next planned activity.

## **A comparison of current apprentices in the 2018-19 and 2017 surveys**

A comparison of current apprentices from the 2017 survey (all of whom were on pre-reform apprenticeships) with those who were current apprentices in the 2018-19 survey (85% of whom started after 1<sup>st</sup> May 2017) provides a reasonable proxy for comparing pre- and post-reform apprenticeships.

Current apprentices in the 2018-19 survey were more likely than those in 2017 survey to have been working for their employer before starting their apprenticeship (58% vs. 54% respectively).

There has been a marked increase in awareness that their training was part of an apprenticeship, from 73% among current apprentices in 2017 to 86% in the 2018-19 survey.

The reported intended average apprenticeship duration had also increased, from 19 months in 2017 to 22 months in the 2018-19 survey. Current apprentices were less likely in the 2018-19 survey to think the intended duration about right (77% vs. 82% in 2017), and more likely to think them too long (14% vs. 12% in 2017) or too short (7% vs 5%).

Current apprentices in the 2018-19 survey were less likely to report receiving any formal training (84% vs. 88% in the 2017 survey). The fall was particularly marked for training at an external provider (54%, down from 66% in 2017). In addition, fewer current apprentices in 2018-19 reported receiving training at the workplace while doing usual work activities (75% compared with 83% in 2017). Among those who reported receiving any training, the survey results suggest that current apprentices spend less time undertaking training per week, from a mean average of 11.7 hours in 2017 to 11.1 in the 2018-19 survey. This was also true for formal training, falling from an average of 6.2 hours per week in the 2017 survey to 5.8 hours in the 2018-19 survey (among those who received any kind of training).

Current apprentices in the 2018-19 survey were less positive than among current apprentices in 2017 on some of the benefits gained, with fewer reporting gaining English skills (61% vs 64% in 2017), maths skills (56% vs. 60%) and IT skills (57% vs 63%) and fewer feeling more satisfied with their job since starting their apprenticeship (76% vs 82% in 2017). Fewer felt very likely to complete their apprenticeship (80% vs 87% in 2017).



# 1 Introduction

This report presents the findings from the 2018-19 Apprenticeships Evaluation Learner Survey, and sits alongside the accompanying Employer report. The research comprised 5,047 interviews with a mixture of current and completed apprentices in England, covering all levels from Level 2 to Level 7.

It is important to note that most of those interviewed (60%) started their apprenticeship before recent apprenticeship reforms (discussed later in this chapter) came into effect in May 2017, although among current apprentices the vast majority (85%) started their apprenticeship after these reforms. Hence the report covers a mix of pre- and post-reform apprentices. To give an indication of changes in the apprenticeship landscape following the recent reforms, the report in places presents comparison between current apprentices in the 2018-19 survey and those in the previous (2017) survey (which took place just before the reforms came into effect).

Apprenticeships remain a priority policy for government in England, supporting the government's vision to improve skills, build sustainable growth and stronger communities, and to enable individuals to succeed and progress in their careers. The Department for Education leads on apprenticeships in partnership with other government departments (such as the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) and bodies (including the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, and the Education and Skills Funding Agency).

The Apprenticeship Evaluation Surveys, first undertaken in 2012, have been an integral part of the evaluation strategy for the Apprenticeships programme in England. The surveys enable robust time series monitoring of the programme, in particular with regard to quality, satisfaction, motivations, benefits, and progression.

The Apprenticeship Evaluation Surveys have helped both to shape and to monitor the impact of recent apprenticeship policy developments. These have included:

- The government's *English Apprenticeships: our 2020 vision*, published in 2015, which confirmed:
  - the commitment / target to achieve three million new, high quality apprenticeships by 2020;
  - the desire to ensure apprenticeships are seen as a high quality and prestigious path to successful careers, and for apprenticeship opportunities to be available across all sectors of the economy, in all parts of the country and at all levels; and
  - placing employers at the heart of designing apprenticeships focussed on the skills, knowledge and behaviours required of the workforce of the future.

- The introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy in May 2017. The levy is paid by large employers (with an annual pay bill of over £3 million). The levy rate is set at 0.5% of the value of the employer's pay bill, minus an apprenticeship levy allowance of £15,000 per financial year. The funds generated by the levy have to be spent on apprenticeship training costs. The government tops up the funds paid by the employer by 10%. Levy funds can be used to pay for apprenticeship training up to a funding band maximum for each apprenticeship, above which the employer needs to fund the difference themselves. Funds that are not used by the employer expire 24 months after they enter the employer's account.
- The introduction of a new 'co-investment' rate applying to non-levy paying employers whereby employers and government share the cost of training and assessing apprentices. At the time the fieldwork took place the employer rate was 10%. The co-investment rate recently changed for new apprenticeships starting on or after 1 April 2019, with the employer paying 5% towards the cost of apprenticeship training and the government paying 95% (up to the funding band maximum).
- A mandatory 20% minimum off the job training requirement for an apprenticeship to receive government funding (a commitment set out in *The Future of Apprenticeships in England: Implementation Plan* in 2013). This requirement applies to all apprenticeships and was clarified in May 2017. The guidance makes clear that off the-job training is about upskilling an individual to reach full occupational competency, not accrediting their existing skills. Additionally, off-the-job training must be for the purpose of achieving the apprenticeship, not training delivered for the sole purpose of enabling the apprentice to perform the work for which they have been employed.
- The move to apprenticeship standards (first introduced in September 2014) and a gradual move away from frameworks. Apprenticeship standards show what an apprentice will be doing and the skills required of them, by job role. They are developed by trailblazer groups of employers, who develop an apprenticeship standard for a particular occupation and an end-point assessment plan. Recent figures indicate that overall a quarter (25%) of apprenticeship starts were on standards in 2017/18, up from 2% in 2016/17.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> House of Commons Briefing Paper Number 06113 (February 2019), section 4.3.

- The removal in 2017 of the exemption from the 12-month minimum apprenticeship length for apprentices aged 19 and over with relevant prior experience. All apprenticeships in England are now required to last at least 12 months with no exceptions.

## Research Aims

This research was commissioned to monitor indicators in line with the previous Apprenticeship Evaluation Surveys, to help develop the government's understanding of the apprenticeship programme, and to monitor the implementation of reforms such as the Apprenticeship Levy and minimum requirements for off-the-job training.

This report explores the profile of apprentices; their motivations for choosing apprenticeship training; their entry routes to apprenticeships; the nature and amount of training undertaken and the apprenticeship experience; satisfaction with apprenticeships and their impact on skills; and progression through and following their apprenticeships.

## Methodology

Given the need for key indicators to be measured consistently over time, the methodology remained as consistent as possible with previous studies conducted in 2017, 2015 and before in regard to sampling, questionnaire design, data collection and analysis.

However, one major change was the merger of the Apprenticeship Evaluation Survey with the Apprenticeship Pay Survey, which was undertaken to improve efficiencies and reduce overall survey burden on apprentices. To avoid an excessively long questionnaire, some questions asked in previous evaluation surveys had to be cut or asked of a randomly selected sub-set of apprentices.

At the same time, some questions were added to the survey to reflect recent policy interest, for example, awareness of the requirement for apprentices to spend at least 20% of their contracted hours on off-the-job training, and whether workplace training was delivered by the employer, an external provider or both. (More information on questionnaire design and a copy of the questionnaire used is included in the Technical Report.)

One other change of note is that because of increasing numbers of apprenticeship starts at Level 4+ and because recent Apprenticeship Evaluation Surveys have covered all levels of apprentices, in the 2018-19 report results among 'all apprentices' is presented. Previously, results for Level 2 and 3 apprentices were reported separately from those at Level 4+. This new approach has required adopting a revised weighting strategy, which has also been applied to the 2015 and 2017 survey results. As such, some caution is needed when comparing results in this report for the 2015 and 2017 surveys with the previously published results for those studies.

The research involved interviews with a random stratified sample of 5,047 apprentices. The **sample** of learners that were contacted for the survey covered:

- Those who were undertaking an apprenticeship at the time the sample was drawn in August 2018. Interviews with these apprentices sought to capture views of those while on the programme.
- Apprentices that had completed their apprenticeship between February to September 2017, enabling an assessment of progression and the impact of the apprenticeship some 15-25 months after completion.

Some of those that were doing an apprenticeship in August 2018 had completed their apprenticeship by the time of the interview. Throughout the report these recent completers are included in the 'completer' category. In summary the groups of apprentices **referenced** in the report are:

- 'Current apprentices': those who were undertaking an apprenticeship at the time of the interview from November 2018 to 14 March 2019 (2,355 interviews with current apprentices were conducted)
- 'Apprentice completers': those who had completed their apprenticeship between February to September 2017 (1,580 such interviews were conducted) and those who completed from August 2018 to March 2019 (1,112 interviews with these recent completers were conducted).

The sample that was drawn for the survey was divided into four strata, reflecting the key groupings of apprentices for reporting purposes (current Level 2 / Level 3, current Level 4+, completer L2/L3 and completer L4+). Sample was drawn separately for each of these strata, with overall targets set of 5,000 interviews with L2/L3 apprentices, and 800 with L4+ apprentices; these were split as equally as possible given sample availability between completers and current apprentices.

The sampling within each of the four strata took account of sector subject area, aiming to achieve the best compromise between allowing separate results to be presented for less common subject areas, while at the same time minimising the weighting required to produce results representative of apprentices as a whole. The sector subject area classifications<sup>7</sup> used for sampling and reporting purposes are shown in the following table, alongside the abbreviated form used throughout the report.

**Table 1-1 Abbreviations of Sector Subject Area (SSA Tier 1) titles used in this report**

| <b>Sector Subject Area (SSA) title</b>           | <b>SSA Tier 1 code</b> | <b>Abbreviation</b> |
|--|------------------------|---------------------|
| Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care        | 03                     | Agriculture         |
| Arts, Media and Publishing                       | 09                     | Arts & Media        |
| Business, Administration and Law                 | 15                     | Business            |
| Construction, Planning and the Built Environment | 05                     | Construction        |
| Education and Training                           | 13                     | Education           |
| Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies       | 04                     | Engineering         |
| Health, Public Services and Care                 | 01                     | Health              |
| Information and Communication Technology         | 06                     | ICT                 |
| Leisure, Travel and Tourism                      | 08                     | Leisure             |
| Retail and Commercial Enterprise                 | 07                     | Retail              |
| Science and Mathematics                          | 02                     | Science             |

Source: Ofqual

Most interviews were conducted with Level 2 or 3 apprentices (4,273). Overall 774 interviews were conducted among current or apprentice completers at Level 4+, including 442 with those undertaking apprenticeships at Level 6+.

The final data were weighted to be representative of the populations of current and completed apprentices (based on whether they were a completer or a current apprentice at the time the sample was drawn), taking into account level, subject area and age. In the case of Level 2 and 3 apprentices, equal weight was given to current and completed apprentices (even though current apprentices outnumbered completers in the original sample files) in order to maintain consistency with previous years.

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<sup>7</sup> The report uses 'Sector subject areas'. These are described more fully in the following link [SSA](#).

It is important to reiterate that results for the 2018-19 survey cover those undertaking an apprenticeship at the time of the fieldwork from November 2018 to March 2019 (drawn from a sample of those that were current apprentices in August 2018), and those completing their apprenticeship between February to September 2017 or from August 2018 to March 2019.

The Technical Report provides more details of the sampling and weighting approach employed.

The fieldwork for the study was conducted by telephone and took place from 27 November 2018 to 14 March 2019. A total of 5,047 interviews were undertaken. The response rate was 20% (based on all sample loaded for the survey), rising to 28% among eligible sample (i.e. excluding unobtainable or wrong numbers and those where the respondent had no recollection of the learning, said they did not complete the apprenticeship, or where they said they did not complete between February to September 2017). Again, the Technical Report provides more details about the call outcomes and response rates.

## Report Structure

The report is structured to lead with figures for all apprentices overall, with differences among subgroups explored throughout. Each chapter contains a summary of findings, followed by a list of key, statistically significant<sup>8</sup> changes between the 2018-19 survey and the 2017 survey.

Chapter 2 looks at the profile of apprentices in terms of age, gender and ethnicity. Chapter 3 looks at routes into apprenticeships and motivations, including application methods, awareness and preference. Chapter 4 covers the quality and contact of apprenticeships, including duration, working hours, pay and training. Chapter 5 examines apprentices' satisfaction levels, both overall and with individual elements of the apprenticeship, and Chapter 6 looks at the outcomes of apprenticeships, including skills gained, employment status, impacts at work and on future careers, and plans for future training.

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<sup>8</sup> At the 95% confidence level, i.e. the statistics suggest we can be 95% confident that the difference between the results in the 2017 and the 2018-19 survey is a real one rather than being the result of the fact a sample of apprentices was undertaken (rather than a census of all apprentices).

## Comparisons with the 2015 and 2017 surveys

Throughout this report comparisons are made with previous recent Apprenticeship Evaluation surveys which involved:

- 2017: fieldwork took place between 22 February and 15 April 2017, and interviews were conducted with 5,825 apprentices, split evenly between current apprentices and completers, with the latter those who completed their apprenticeship between 1<sup>st</sup> June 2015 and 31<sup>st</sup> January 2016 (i.e. 13-21 months prior to being interviewed);
- 2015: fieldwork took place between October and December 2015, and interviews were conducted with 5,781 apprentices, split equally between current apprentices and completers (those who completed their apprenticeship between March and October 2014, i.e. 12-21 months prior to the interview).

It is worth noting that the 2015 and 2017 survey reports discussed findings among Level 2 and 3 apprentices separately from those at Level 4 and above. This was to provide continuity with the 2011 survey which had only included apprentices at Level 2 and 3. Because of interest in providing results for the 2019 survey among all apprentices combined, and in producing time series data, results for the 2015 and 2017 surveys were re-weighted to enable results among all apprentices to be analysed. These results have been used in the current report, but were not presented in the 2015 or 2017 survey reports.

## Pre- and post-reform apprenticeships

Although the 2018-19 survey was conducted after the apprenticeship reforms which came into effect in May 2017, it does not provide a clean measure of changes following these reforms since most (60%) of the apprentices interviewed in the 2018-19 survey started their apprenticeship before the reforms came into effect.

However, to provide an indication of the impacts of the reforms, comparisons have been made in the report between current apprentices in the 2018-19 survey (the vast majority (85%) of whom started their apprenticeship after the recent reforms came into effect) and current apprentices in the 2017 survey, all of whom started their apprenticeship before these reforms. The key differences between these two groups are discussed in summary boxes at the beginning of each chapter.

## 2 The profile of apprentices

Apprentices were selected for this research on the basis of their either undertaking an apprenticeship in the August 2018 ILR, the most up-to-date release at the time the sampling process was undertaken, or having completed an apprenticeship between February and September 2017. **The population profile of this group will therefore not match official statistics on apprenticeship starts. Instead this survey represents a particular snapshot in time of both current and completed apprentices.** This chapter examines the profile of apprentices drawn from these two sampling windows. Where we discuss ‘apprentice completers’ this covers those sampled as completers (from the February – September 2017 period) but also those sampled as current apprentices (as of August 2018) who by the time of the interview indicated that they had completed their apprenticeship. Level 2 and 3 results are compared with those from the surveys conducted in 2017 and 2015, which also covered a mix of current apprentices and completers.<sup>9</sup>

### Key findings

*(Some changes mentioned here are based on population data for apprentices within the sampling window rather than survey data and have therefore not been tested for statistical significance)*

- ILR data shows that Business, Administration and Law (‘Business’), Health, Public Services and Care (‘Health’), and Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies (‘Engineering’) apprentices accounted for around seven in ten apprentices (26%, 25% and 20% respectively).
- For the first time, Level 3 apprentices outnumbered Level 2 apprentices (46% and 43% of all apprentices respectively). This equates to a 52% vs. 48% split between these two groups. The 52% figure for Level 3 apprentices continues an upward trend from previous years (37% in 2013, 41% in 2014, 43% in 2015 and 44% in 2017).
- The proportion of Level 2 and 3 Business apprentices has continued to fall (23%, compared with 24% in 2017 and 26% in 2015), meaning it is no longer the most common apprenticeship within these levels (superseded by Health at 24%).

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<sup>9</sup> Time series comparisons are only made between Level 2 and 3 apprentices as historical ILR population information for ‘all apprentices’ was unavailable at the time of reporting. It is worth noting though that official data on starts indicates an increase in higher level apprenticeships ([data](#)).



### Key findings (continued)

- Survey results show that more than two-fifths of apprentices (43%) were aged 25 and above at the start of their apprenticeship, three in ten (30%) were aged between 19 and 24 years old, and just over a quarter were aged under 19.
- The vast majority of apprentices were White (86%), with 14% in Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups.
- Overall, 6% of apprentices reported having either a disability (3%) or a learning difficulty (4%). This was higher among level 2 apprentices (8%, compared with 3% among those on Level 4+ apprenticeships) and those undertaking apprenticeships in Arts (15%) and Agriculture (14%) subject areas.

## Completion status

The population of apprentices within the two sampling windows (all who completed an apprenticeship between February and September 2017, and all who were listed as currently undertaking an apprenticeship in the 2017/18 ILR) comprised 635,062 apprentices. The majority (73%) were current apprentices, while over a quarter (27%) had completed their apprenticeship.<sup>10</sup>

In line with previous years, the survey sampling and weighting strategies gave equal weight to current and completed apprentices at Level 2 and 3, while Level 4+ apprentices were weighted in line with the ILR population, where 87% were current apprentices at the time of sampling (August 2018).<sup>11</sup>

Of the sample that was drawn as current (i.e. marked on the August 2018 ILR as a current apprentice), 73% started their apprenticeship after the reforms of May 2017. (Among those who indicated they were current apprentices at the time of the interview, 85% had started their apprenticeship after the reforms).

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<sup>10</sup> DfE publishes administrative [data on apprenticeship starts, achievements and participation](#).

<sup>11</sup> The rationale for the 50/50 weighting among Level 2 and Level 3 is to match the process employed in the Apprenticeship evaluation series previously, which aimed to give equal weight to the satisfaction of those who had completed and for those currently undergoing an apprenticeship. The same approach has not been employed for Level 4+ apprentices because of the lower number of interviews and the fact that they are predominantly current apprentices.

It is important to note that the profile of apprentices in this report will not precisely align with official apprenticeship figures<sup>12</sup> as they were weighted to match the ILR population covering the particular sampling windows mentioned above.

## Apprenticeship subject areas

Figure 2-1 shows the full population of apprentices by subject area. The three largest subject areas were Business (26%); Health (25%) and Engineering (20%); while Science and Art each made up less than 1% of all apprenticeships.

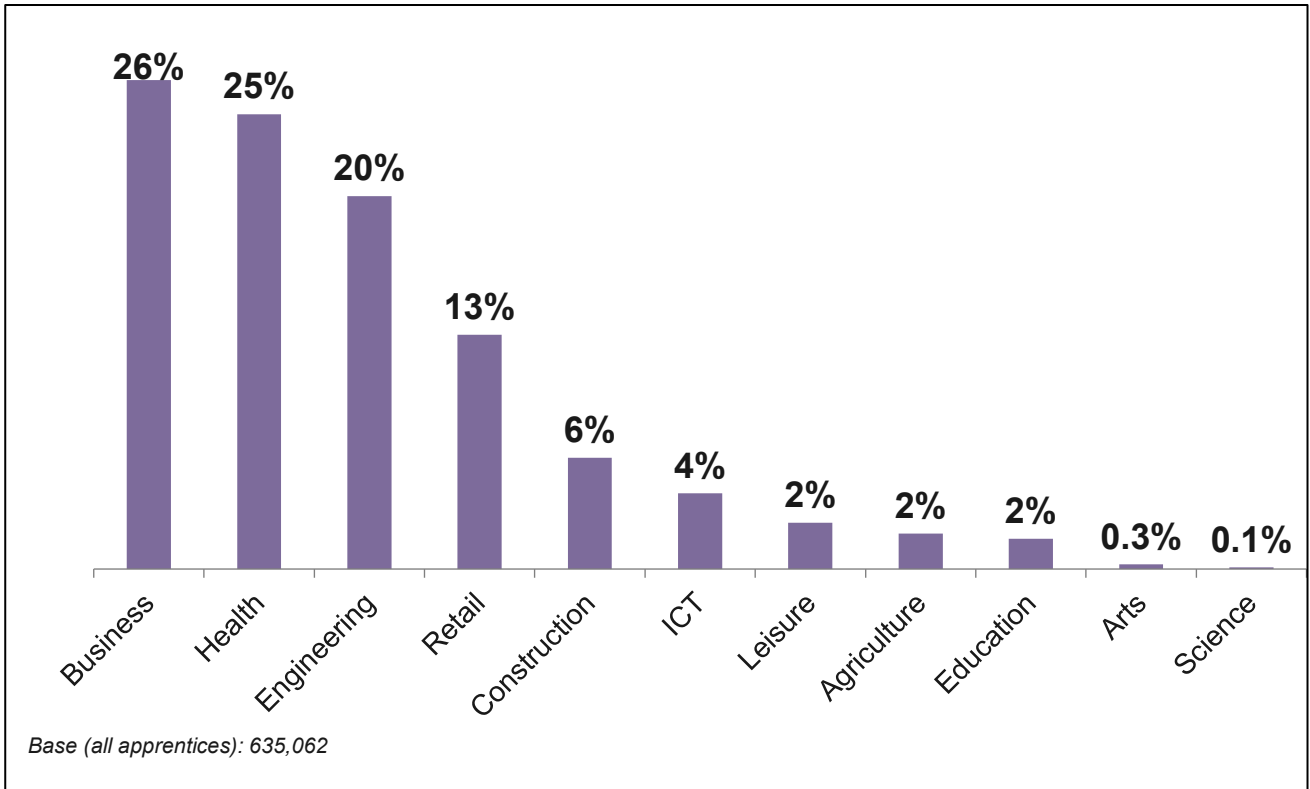
Looking at Level 2 and Level 3 apprentices, who together make up 89% of the total apprentice population, the main changes in profile were lower proportions of Business (23% in 2018-19, compared with 24% in 2017 and 26% in 2015) and Retail apprentices (14% in 2018-19, compared with 16% in 2017 and 2015). The proportion of Engineering apprentices increased from 19% in 2015, to 21% in 2017, and 22% in 2018-19, while there was also a small increase in the proportion of ICT apprentices at these levels (4% in 2018-19, compared with 3% in 2017 and 2015). These findings are shown in Figure 2-2.

Among those on Level 4+ apprenticeships, two subject areas predominate, Business (52%) and Health (28%). The first shows a slight increase from the levels found in the 2015 and 2017 surveys (46% and 47% respectively), the latter falls (40% and 37% respectively). The third most common subject area remains ICT (9% in the 2018-19 survey, 7% in each of the previous two surveys).

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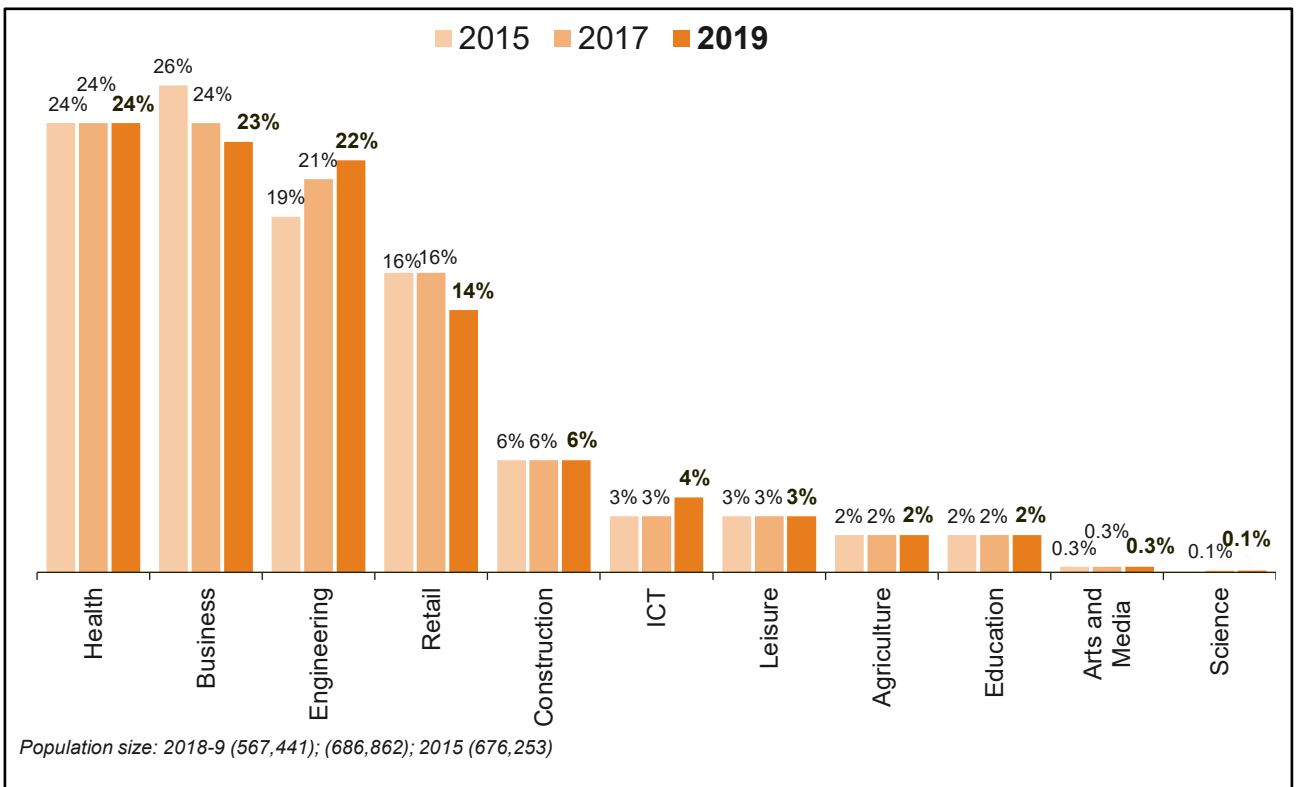
<sup>12</sup> Such as the Department for Education's 'Apprenticeship and traineeships: annual data', where the most [recent publication](#) can be found.

**Figure 2-1 Apprentice population for the 2018-19 survey, by subject area**



Source: Combination of ILR data on current apprentices in August 2018 and apprentices who completed between February - September 2017)

**Figure 2-2 Apprenticeship subject areas among Level 2 and 3 apprentices by year (ILR data)**



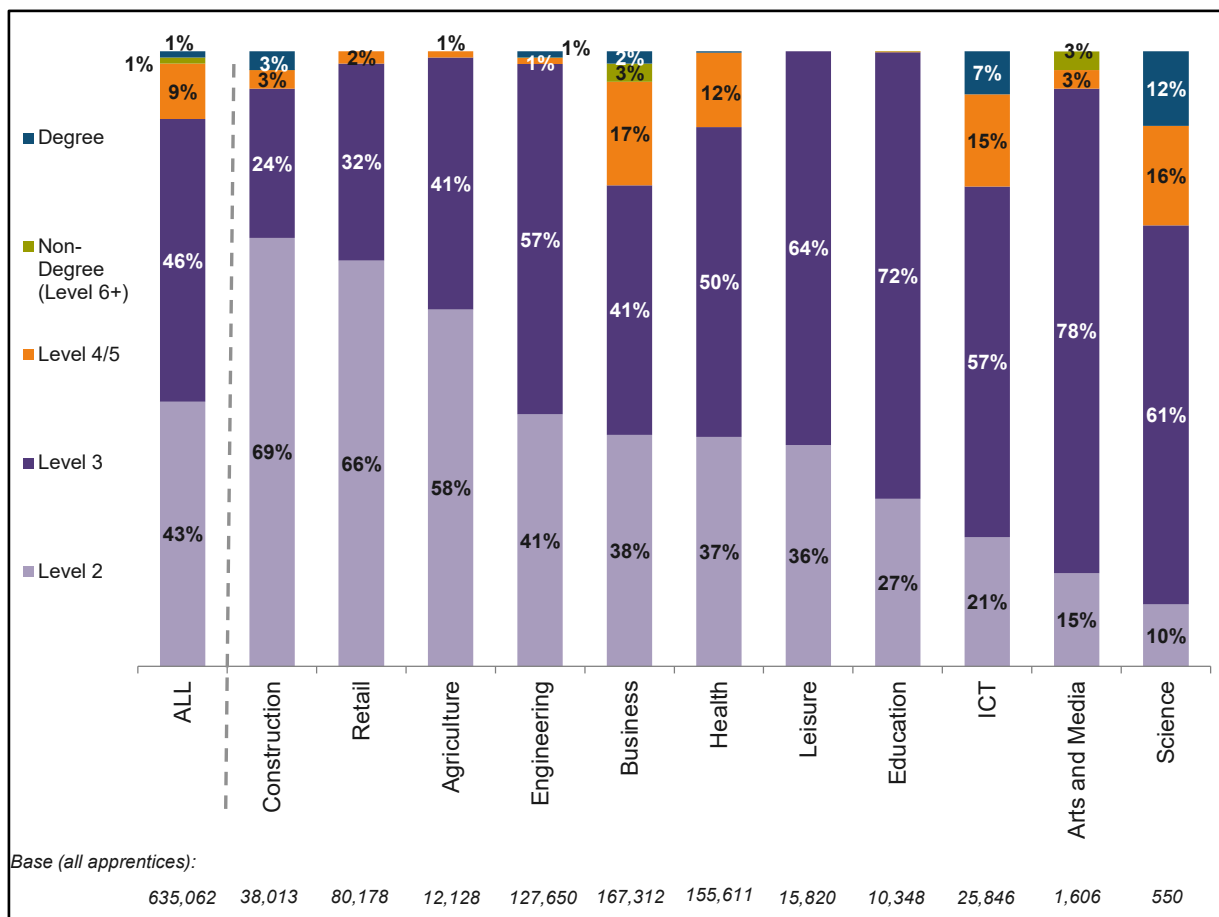
## Level of apprenticeship

As shown in Figure 2-3, the greatest proportion of apprentices were undertaking Level 3 Apprenticeships (46%), closely followed by Level 2 (43%). Almost one in ten were doing Apprenticeships at Level 4 or 5 (9%); while small minorities were doing non-degree apprenticeships at Level 6 and above (1%) or degree apprenticeships (1%).

The level distribution varied greatly by subject area. The majority of apprenticeships were undertaken at Level 2 in Construction (69%); Retail (66%) and Agriculture (58%), while most apprenticeships were undertaken at Level 3 in Arts (78%); Education (72%); Leisure (64%); Science (61%); and Engineering (57%). Higher apprenticeships at Level 4 and 5 were most common in Business (17%); Science (16%) and ICT (15%).

In terms of apprenticeships at Level 6 and above, non-degree apprenticeships were most common in Business and Arts (each 3%), while Science (12%); ICT (7%); and Construction (3%) had most degree apprenticeships.

**Figure 2-3 Proportion of apprentices in subject areas by level (ILR data)**



Considering the balance specifically between Level 2 and 3 apprentices (48% Level 2 vs. 52% Level 3), the increase in Level 3 apprenticeships from 2017 (44%) continues a notable trend taking place over the last few years (37% in 2013, 41% in 2014, 43% in 2015), although this is the first time that there were more Level 3 apprentices than Level 2 apprentices overall. This is an encouraging finding, given the drive for more apprenticeships to target achievement at Level 3 as a result of new standards.<sup>13</sup>

The increase in dominance of Level 3 apprentices was consistent across all subject areas with the exception of ICT and Science. Business was the only subject area where the balance of Level 2 and Level 3 apprentices had changed to the extent that Level 3 apprentices switched to become the more dominant among the two (52% were Level 3 apprentices in 2018-19, compared with 41% in 2017). However there were also substantial increases in the proportion of Level 3 apprentices compared with Level 2 among Leisure (64% in 2018-19, compared with 56% in 2017); Health apprentices (58% vs. 51%); and Engineering (58% vs. 52%).

## Post- vs. pre-reform apprentices

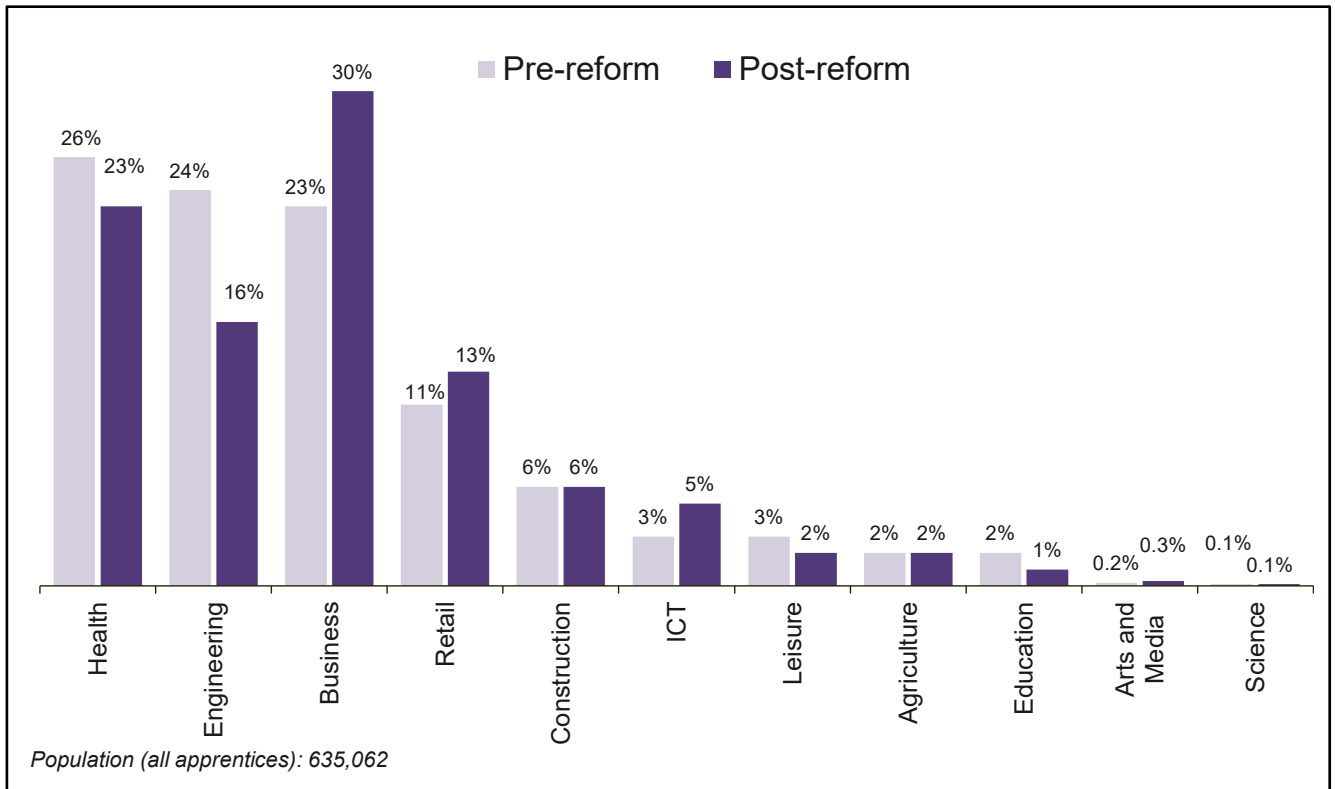
In this report, comparisons are made between pre- and post-reform apprentices. This is to distinguish between those who had an apprenticeship start date before the May 2017 reforms and those who started after the reforms were introduced (i.e. from 1 May 2017). According to ILR data covering current apprentices as of August 2018 and those who completed their apprenticeship between February and September 2017, there was an even split between pre- and post-reform apprentices (49% and 51% respectively). However, the balance between pre- and post-reform apprentices varied greatly between current apprentices and completers. Among current apprentices, seven in ten (70%) started their apprenticeship post-reform, whereas among completers almost all (99%) started their apprenticeship before the May 2017 reforms.

Looking at the composition of the two groups, Figure 2-4 shows differences in terms of the distribution of subjects. A higher proportion of pre-reform apprentices were in Engineering (24%, compared with 16% of post-reform apprentices), while more post-reform apprentices were in Business (30%, compared with 23% of pre-reform apprentices).

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<sup>13</sup> The Future of Apprenticeships in England: Next Steps from the Richard Review, Department for Education, March 2013 [document](#)

**Figure 2-4 Sector subject area distribution comparison for pre- and post-reform apprentices**



Among post-reform apprentices, there was a lower proportion of apprentices undertaking Level 2 and 3 apprenticeships (87%, compared with 92% of pre-reform apprentices).

## Apprenticeship standards vs. frameworks

Among all apprentices surveyed, four in five (80%) were on apprenticeship frameworks and one in five (20%) on apprenticeship standards. Given that apprenticeship standards only began to replace frameworks in April 2017, it is unsurprising that almost all (97%) completers at the time of interview were on frameworks (this includes sampled completers as well as those sampled as current apprentices who had completed by the time they were interviewed), compared with 3% on standards. In comparison, current apprentices were evenly split between those undertaking frameworks and standards (51% and 49% respectively).

Similar patterns were seen when comparing those with start dates pre- and post-apprenticeship reforms.<sup>14</sup> Almost all pre-reform apprentices were on frameworks (98%, vs 2% on standards), while there was a fairly even split between frameworks and standards among post-reform apprentices (54% and 46% respectively).

There was variation by level, with frameworks more common among lower level apprenticeships: 83% of Level 2 and 3 apprentices were on frameworks, compared with 67% of Level 4 of 5 apprentices. In contrast, almost all apprentices at Level 6 and above (99%) were on apprenticeship standards.

In terms of subject area, apprenticeship standards were more common among ICT (41%) and Business (27%) apprentices, whereas there were higher than average proportions of apprentices doing apprenticeship frameworks in Education (100%); Leisure (97%); Agriculture (93%); Construction (90%); Health (84%) and Engineering (83%).

## Age of apprentices

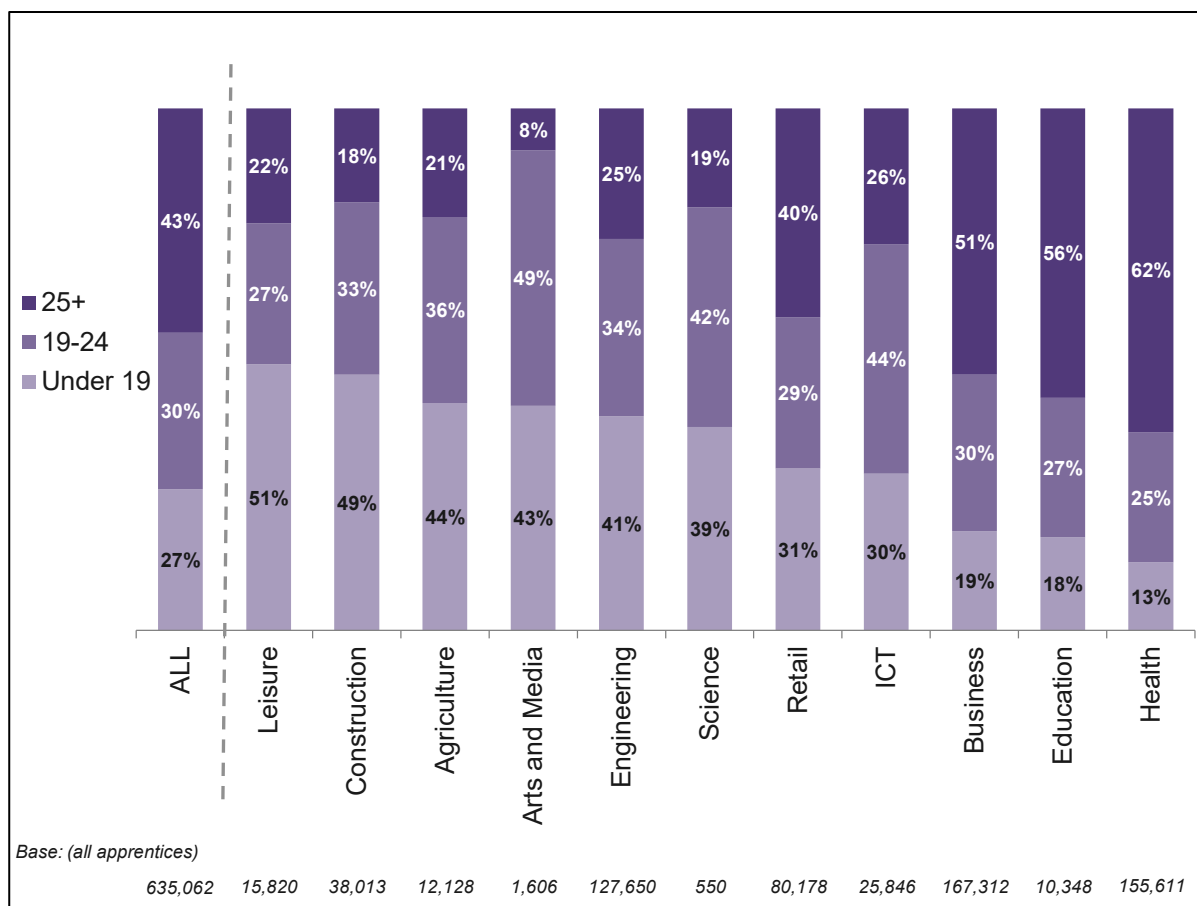
As shown in Figure 2-5, more than two-fifths of apprentices (43%) were aged 25 and above at the start of their apprenticeship, three in ten (30%) were aged between 19 and 24 years old, and just over a quarter were aged under 19. As with apprenticeship level there was significant variation by subject area. Apprentices tended to be older in Health (62% aged 25 and above) and Business (51% aged 25 above), which are the most popular subject areas overall, as well as Education (56% aged 25 and above). There were greater proportions of younger apprentices in Leisure (51% under 19) and Construction (49% under 19).

Age profile also differed by level. For Level 2 apprentices, 33% were aged under 19, compared with 27% of Level 3 apprentices, 6% of Level 4 and 5 apprentices and just 3% of non-degree apprentices at Level 6 and above. While degree apprentices had a higher proportion of younger apprentices than their other Level 6 and above counterparts (19% vs. 3% aged under 19), they also had a comparatively high proportion of older apprentices (40% aged 25 and above, compared with 33% of Level 6+ non-degree apprentices). Older apprentices aged 25 and above were most common among Level 5 apprentices (90%).

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<sup>14</sup> For this measure, apprentices with start dates before May 1 2017 (the date when the new reformed funding approach came into force) are treated as 'pre-reform' and those with start dates of May 1 2017 or later 'post-reform'.

**Figure 2-5 Proportion of apprentices in subject areas by age band (ILR data)**



## Gender distribution

There was a roughly even split between male and female apprentices (49% and 51% respectively). Female apprentices had higher representation in Level 4 and 5 apprenticeships (61%) than men (39%), while men were more likely to undertake degree apprenticeships (62% vs. 38% undertaken by women). There was great variation by subject area. Men made up the majority apprentices in:

- Construction, Planning & the Built Environment (96%)
- Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies (93%)
- Information & Communication Technology (80%)
- Agriculture, Horticulture & Animal Care (63%)
- Leisure, Travel & Tourism (63%).

In contrast, women made up the majority of apprentices in:

- Health, Public Services & Care (85%)
- Education & Training (84%)



- Retail and Commercial Enterprise (61%)
- Business, Administration & Law (59%).

## Ethnicity of apprentices

According to the survey data, the vast majority of apprentices were White (86%), with 14% in Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups. This represents an increase in BAME apprentices since 2017 (11%) and 2015 (9%). By way of comparison, the most recent quarter (January-March 2019) of the Labour Force Survey showed that 88% of those aged 16 and over and in employment were of 'white ethnicity' and 12% in BAME groups.<sup>15</sup>

Apprentices at Level 4 and above were more likely than average to come from BAME groups (22%), while the Health and Business subject areas also had a greater proportion of BAME apprentices (22% and 17% respectively). BAME apprentices were least common in Agriculture (1%) and Construction (3%).

A higher proportion of apprentices aged 25 and above had a BAME background, while under 19s were more likely to be White (92%).

## NEET status

One in six apprentices aged under 25 (16%) were not in employment, education or training (NEET) in the period before starting their apprenticeship.<sup>16</sup> This group comprises around one in ten (9%) of all apprentices. This is discussed further in the 'Routes into apprenticeships and motivations' chapter.

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<sup>15</sup> [ONS data](#) [Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> May 2019]

<sup>16</sup> Those aged 16-24 and not in employment, education or training for a period of at least three months in the 12 months prior to starting their apprenticeship.

## Disability and learning difficulties

Overall, 3% of apprentices identified as having a disability and 4% a learning difficulty; 6% reported either<sup>17</sup>. The proportion reporting either a learning difficulty or disability was higher among Level 2 apprentices (8%, compared with 3% among those on Level 4+ apprenticeships) and those undertaking apprenticeships in Arts (15%) and Agriculture (14%) subject areas.

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<sup>17</sup> [Administrative data](#) show that 11.2% of apprenticeship starts in 2017/18 were by apprentices who identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities and/or health problems. The inclusion of 'health problems' is a likely reason why the figure from administrative data is higher than the figure from this survey. Additionally, this survey only asked apprentices if they had a disability or learning difficulty if this was already recorded on the ILR sample file.

[Figures for January-March 2019](#) showed that 7.6m people in the UK aged 16-64 (18% of the working age population) had a disability. Of these 7.6 million people of working age with disabilities, 3.9 million (51.7%) were in work. This compares to 81.7% of those without disabilities.

### 3 Routes into apprenticeships and motivations

This chapter examines how apprentices came to undertake their apprenticeship, looking at recruitment, prior employment and methods of application, as well as awareness of apprenticeships, reasons for becoming an apprentice and any alternatives considered.

#### Key findings

- **Almost two-fifths (38%) of apprentices had not worked for their employer prior to their apprenticeship** (and were therefore 'new recruits') and a further fifth (19%) were recent recruits who had started an apprenticeship within a year of joining. The remaining two-fifths (42%) were long term existing employees. Combining long term and recent recruits, **three-fifths (61%) of apprentices worked for their employer prior to starting their apprenticeship, an increase from 57% in 2017.**
- In addition, **more apprentices were long-term existing employees** (42% for a year or longer compared to 39% in 2017) and fewer recruited to start their apprenticeship immediately (38% compared to 43% in 2017). **The proportion of apprentices who were new to their employer appears to have peaked in the 2017 survey**, with figures from the 2018-19 survey showing a return to levels in the 2015 survey.
- **Younger apprentices were far more likely to be new recruits who had not to have worked for their employer prior to their apprenticeship** (71% of those under 19 compared to only 11% of those 25 or older).
- **Apprentices in Arts, Science and ICT were most likely to be new recruits** (81%, 69%, 66% respectively) whilst at least half of those in Education, Health, Retail, and Business had already been with their employer for a year or longer.
- **An apprenticeship was the first choice for almost half of apprentices** (47%, rising to 65% of those aged 19 or younger), and a similar proportion had no particular preference (48%).
- **Most apprentices (79%) had considered other alternatives at the same time as considering an apprenticeship** – most commonly to work without undertaking an apprenticeship.

### Key findings (continued)

- **The most common main reason for undertaking an apprenticeship was a desire to enter into or progress in a specific career** (for 28%, up from 25% in 2017), followed by wanting to develop work-related skills (20%) or to gain a qualification (19%). **The proportion primarily wishing to gain a qualification is however lower** than in 2017 and 2015 (19% compared to 27% in 2017 and 25% in 2015).
- **Employer influence was the most likely main factor in choosing a Higher or Degree apprenticeship over another qualification** (for 26%, rising to over a third of Level 5 and Level 6+ non-degree apprentices), though course content was as or more important for Level 6 Degree and Level 4 apprentices. **Obtaining a degree qualification was important in the decision to undertake a Degree apprenticeship for nearly all (94%).**
- **Awareness continues to increase, with 76% aware that their course or training was part of an apprenticeship**, up from 70% in 2017 and 67% in 2015. Awareness was higher among those who started their apprenticeship as they joined their employer (94%) and among those under 19 (96%). **Awareness among Level 4+ apprentices has particularly increased** from 57% in 2015 and 64% in 2017 to 81% in 2018-19.

### Comparison of current apprentices in the 2018-19 and 2017 surveys

- Current apprentices in the 2018-19 survey were more likely than those in the 2017 survey to have been working for their employer before starting their apprenticeship (58% vs. 54% respectively). The pattern is different among Level 4+ apprentices: although this group remain more likely than average to have been working for their employer before starting) the figure has fallen compared with 2017 (from 71% to 64% in the 2018-19 survey).
- Those apprentices that were new to their employer were less likely to say their main activity before starting their apprenticeship was studying at school or college than was the case in 2017 (43% vs 53% respectively), and more likely to have been unemployed (12% vs 8%).
- Current apprentices in the 2018-19 survey were far more likely to be aware that their training was an apprenticeship than those in the 2017 survey (86% vs 73% respectively).

## Activity prior to apprenticeships

The majority of apprentices (61%) were already employed by the employer with whom they undertook their apprenticeship before it commenced, higher than in the 2017 survey (57%) but very similar to 2015 (62%). Just over two-fifths of apprentices (42%) were long term existing employees prior to their apprenticeship (working for them for at least 12 months prior to their apprenticeship). This is a return to the level seen in 2015, and slightly higher than in 2017 (39%). However, as in previous years, just under a fifth of apprentices (19%) had been hired less than a year beforehand – although their apprenticeship training did not start immediately their employer may have recruited them with the intention of placing them on an apprenticeship, potentially after a trial period.

There has been a corresponding fall compared to the 2017 survey, from 43% to 38% in the 2018-19 survey, in the proportion of apprentices that had not worked for the employer prior to their apprenticeship (and who were therefore recruited to start their apprenticeship straightaway).<sup>18</sup> The 2018-19 figure is a return to the level found in the 2015 survey.

An area of policy interest is the extent to which results on prior employment with the employer compared with being a new recruit may have changed following the apprenticeship reforms introduced in May 2017. To this end, figures in Table 3-1 compare results among current apprentices in the 2015, 2017 and 2018-19 surveys (as mentioned previously, the vast majority (85%) of current apprentices in the 2018-19 survey started their apprenticeship after the reforms came into effect). Results indicate that approaching three-fifths (58%) of current apprentices in the 2018-19 survey were already employed by their apprenticeship employer at the time their apprenticeship started, compared with two-fifths (41%) new to the employer. Current apprentices aged under 19s were far more likely to be new to the employer (72%).

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<sup>18</sup> These figures are derived from a question (A18) which asked respondents if they worked for their employer before starting their course or training. It is important to note that this is different to the findings discussed in the 2015 and 2017 survey reports, which examined the proportion of apprentices *recruited specifically as apprentices*. The latter produces a higher figure as it includes both those who were recruited to start their apprenticeship training straight away and also those who were recruited as an apprentice but where the training did not start immediately. In the 2017 survey, among Level 2 and Level 3 apprentices, 38% were recruited to start their apprenticeship training straight away and an additional 18% were recruited as an apprentice but where the training did not start immediately.

**Table 3-1 Whether current apprentices were already employed by the employer at the time they started their apprenticeship, by age and level 2015-2018/19**

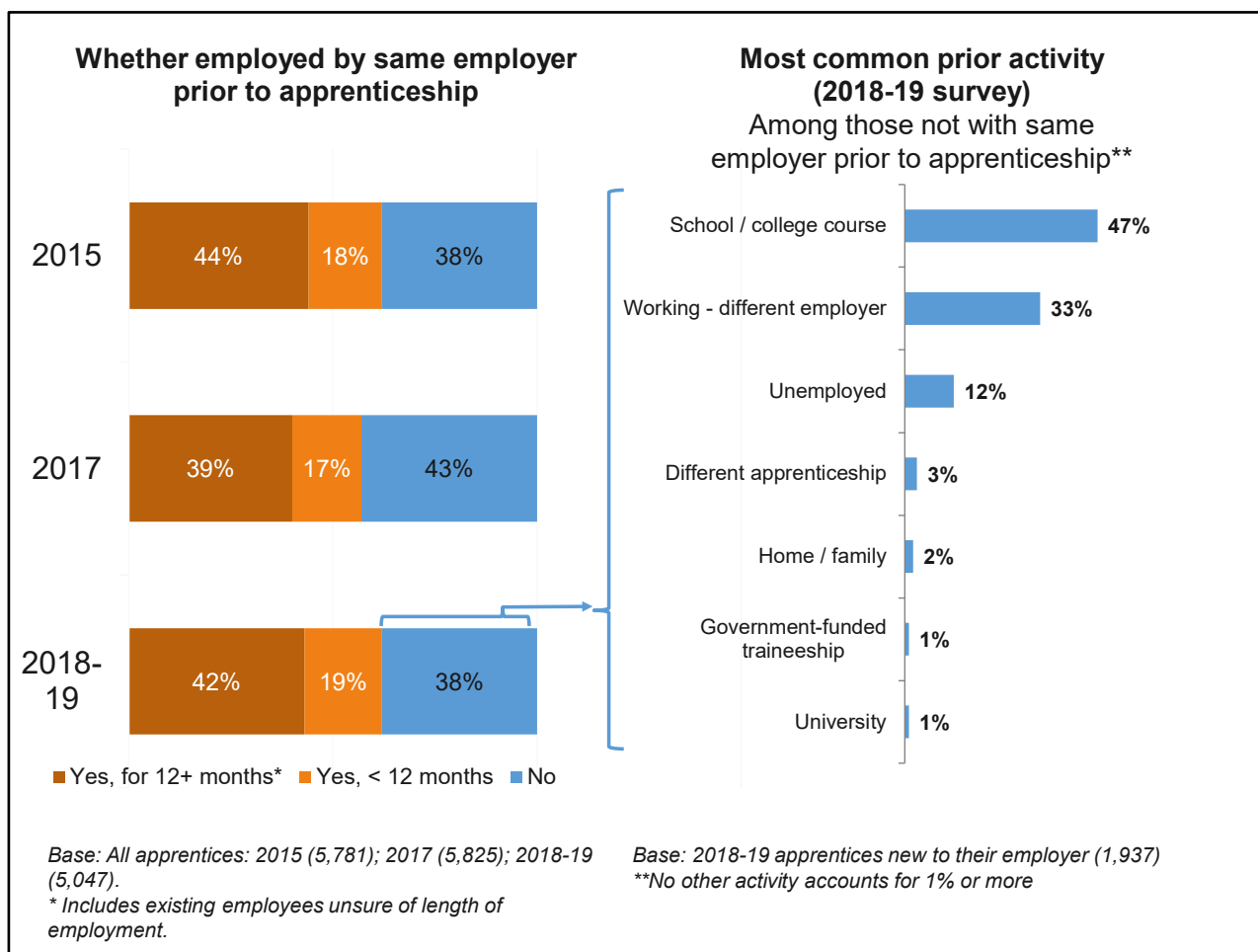
| <i>Column percentages</i>             | <b>ALL</b>   | <b>Under 19</b> | <b>19-24</b> | <b>25+</b> | <b>Level 2</b> | <b>Level 3</b> | <b>Level 4+</b> |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| <i>Base: current apprentices only</i> | %            | %               | %            | %          | %              | %              | %               |
| <b>2015 survey</b>                    |              |                 |              |            |                |                |                 |
| Already employed by the employer      | <b>57</b>    | 27              | 45           | 86         | 55             | 56             | 77              |
| Not already employed by the employer  | <b>43</b>    | 72              | 55           | 14         | 45             | 44             | 23              |
| <b>2017 survey</b>                    |              |                 |              |            |                |                |                 |
| Already employed by the employer      | <b>54</b>    | 23              | 41           | 86         | 53             | 51             | 71              |
| Not already employed by the employer  | <b>46</b>    | 77              | 59           | 14         | 47             | 49             | 29              |
| <b>2018-19 survey</b>                 |              |                 |              |            |                |                |                 |
| Already employed by the employer      | <b>58</b>    | 28              | 47           | 84         | 54             | 58             | 64              |
| Not already employed by the employer  | <b>41</b>    | 72              | 52           | 15         | 45             | 41             | 35              |
| <i>2015 base</i>                      | <b>2,033</b> | 541             | 632          | 860        | 914            | 668            | 451             |
| <i>2017 base</i>                      | <b>2,427</b> | 910             | 769          | 748        | 971            | 973            | 483             |
| <i>2018-19 base</i>                   | <b>2,355</b> | 791             | 810          | 754        | 664            | 1,093          | 598             |

**Note:** not all figures sum to 100% due to rounding and a very small number of 'don't know' responses

Results in 2018-19 are very similar to 2015; but show a smaller proportion of apprentices new to the employer than in 2017. A notable exception is among Level 4+ apprentices for whom an increasing proportion were new to the employer (23% in the 2015 survey, 29% in 2017 and 35% in 2018-19). This appears to be driven by the increase in Level 6 Degree apprentices; 47% of current Level 6 Degree apprentices in 2018-19 were new to the employer.

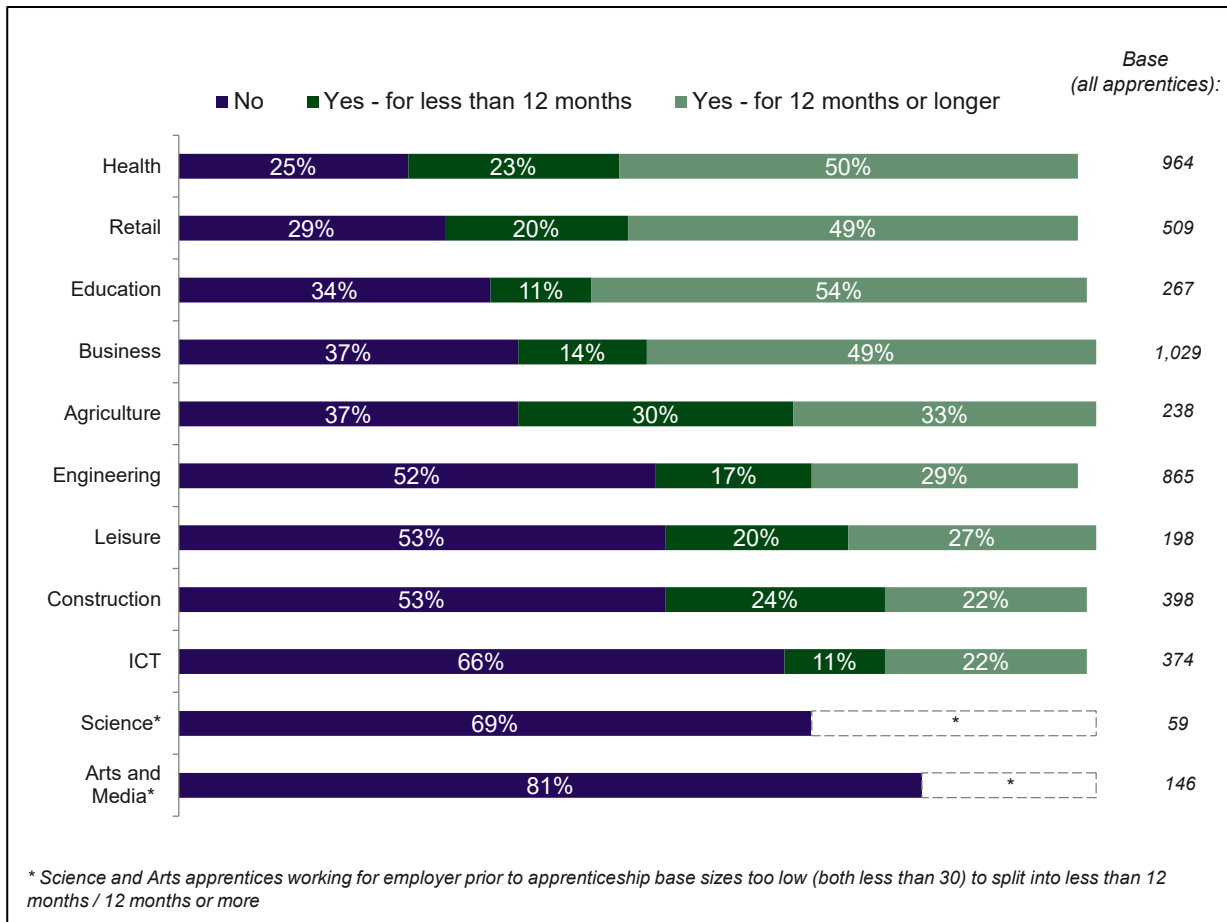
Almost half (47%) of these apprentices who started their employment at the same time as their apprenticeship had previously been undertaking a course at school or college. A third (33%) had been working for a different employer. Around one in eight (12%) had been unemployed prior to starting their apprenticeship. Small proportions had progressed from a different apprenticeship (3%) or a government-funded traineeship at a college or training provider (1%). Other less common prior activities included looking after home and family (2%) or a university course (1%).

**Figure 3-1 Activity prior to apprenticeship**



Apprentices in Arts, Science and ICT were the most likely to have started their employment at the same time as their apprenticeship - at least two-thirds of apprentices in each of these subject areas were new to their employers when they started their apprenticeship, as shown in Figure 3-2. Apprentices in Education, Health, Retail and Business were more likely than their counterparts in other subject areas to have been at the same employer before their apprenticeship - half or more of apprentices in these areas had been with the employer for at least 12 months prior to their apprenticeship.

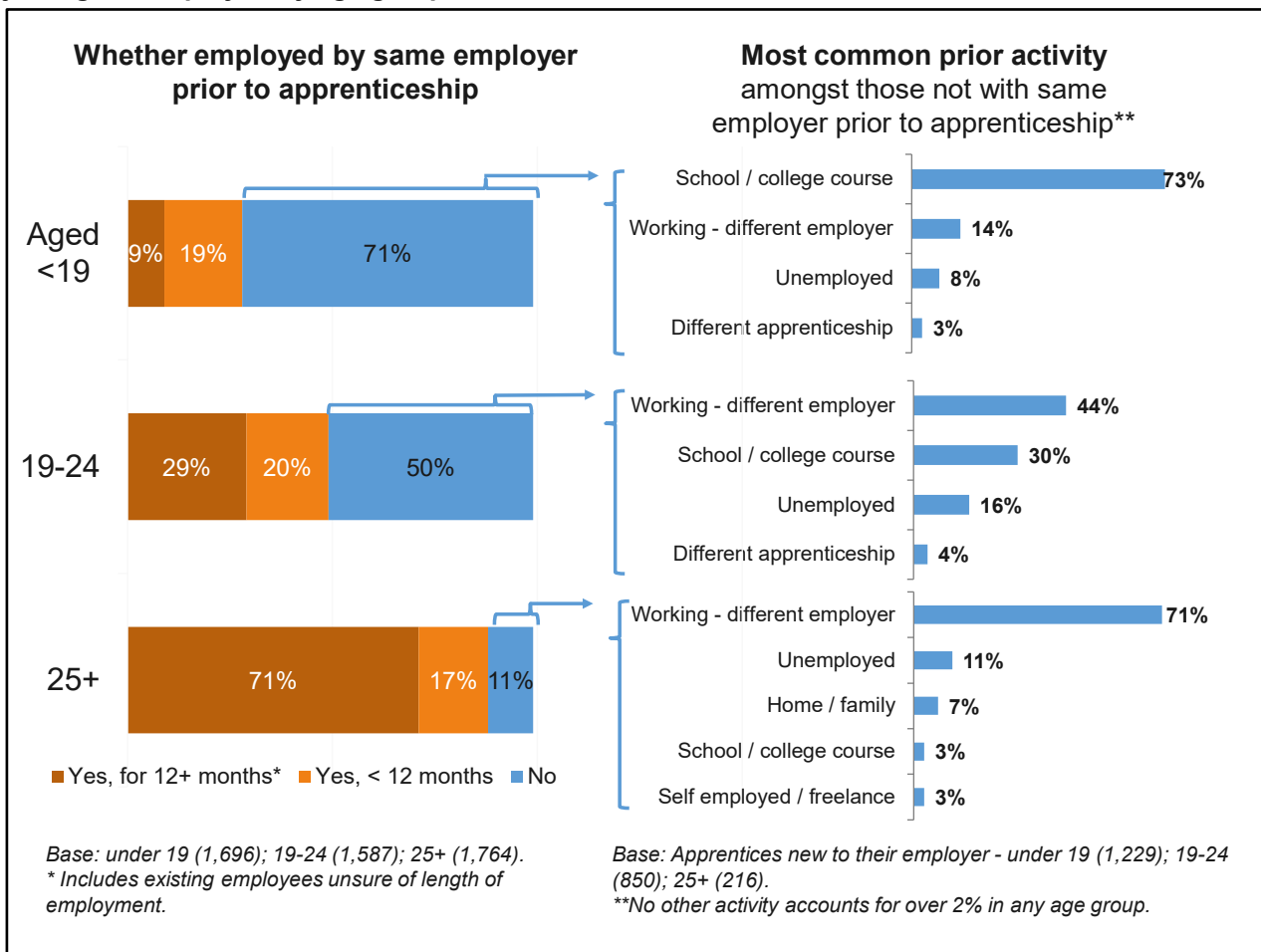
**Figure 3-2 Whether employed by the same employer prior to their apprenticeship, by subject area**



Age links strongly to prior activity, with apprentices aged under 19 or 19-24 much more likely than those aged 25 or older to have commenced their apprenticeship on recruitment (71% and 50% compared to 11%), as shown in Figure 3-3. The majority of apprentices aged 25 or older were existing employees of the employer they undertook their apprenticeship with (72% had been employed by their employer for at least a year, compared to only 29% of those aged 19-24 and 9% of those aged under 19).



**Figure 3-3 Activity prior to apprenticeship among those commencing their apprenticeship on joining the employer, by age group**



Female apprentices were also more likely to have been working for the employer with whom they undertook their apprenticeship before starting their apprenticeship (69% compared to 54% of male apprentices). To an extent this reflects their age profile - more than half of female apprentices were aged 25 or older compared to just over a third of male apprentices.

As might be expected, starting an apprenticeship following a school or college course was particularly common among younger apprentices (73% of those under 19 recruited to start their apprenticeship straightaway, compared to 30% of those aged 19-24 and 3% of those aged 25 or older). Degree apprentices who commenced their apprenticeship on recruitment, and to a slightly lesser extent Level 3 apprentices, were also more likely to have been studying at school or college beforehand (58% and 50% respectively compared to 43% of Level 2 apprentices, 42% of Level 4 /5 apprentices and 43% of non-degree Level 6 apprentices who were not previously working for the same employer).

The majority of older apprentices who had not been working for the same employer prior to their apprenticeship had been in other employment (71% of those aged 25 or older, compared with 44% of those aged 19-24 and 14% of those under 19). Apprentices training in Health who had not been working for the same employer prior to their apprenticeship were also particularly likely to have started their apprenticeship after working elsewhere (49% compared to 33% overall).

Among those who commenced their apprenticeship on recruitment (i.e. who had not been working for the employer before starting their apprenticeship), 12% described their main activity before starting as 'unemployed'. This was higher among: 19-24s (16% compared to 11% of those aged 25 or older and 8% of those under 19); Level 2 apprentices (16%, compared to 8% of Level 3 apprentices); those with a disability (30%); and those in the Business subject group (20%). Among all apprentices, i.e. not just those who commenced their apprenticeship on recruitment, 5% had been unemployed immediately prior to starting their apprenticeship (higher among Arts and Media apprentices (15%), those with a disability (12%) and those aged 19-24 (8%)).

Among those aged 16-24 who had been NEET at some point in the year before starting their apprenticeship, a minority (39%) reported they were unemployed directly prior.<sup>19</sup>

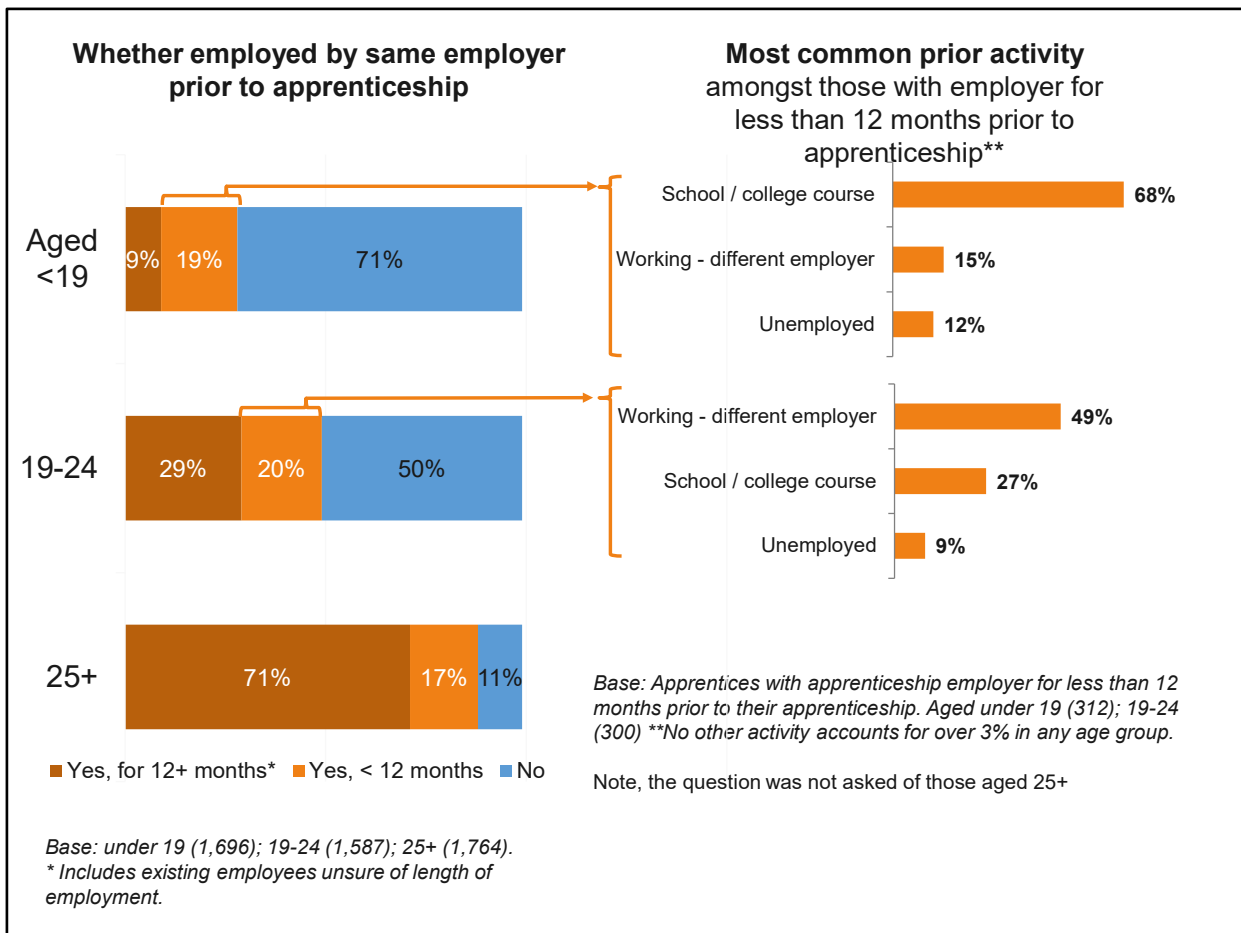
Among younger apprentices (aged under 25) who were recruited within 12 months of starting their apprenticeship, prior activities were similar to those just discussed among apprentices who were recruited to immediately start an apprenticeship. Almost half (45%) had been at school or college before being recruited, a third (34%) had been working for a different employer, and 10% had been unemployed. Very small proportions were recruited following a different apprenticeship (2%), or government funded traineeship (1%). There are understandable differences within this group of apprentices (those aged under 25 who were recruited within 12 months of starting their apprenticeship) by age. Under 19s were particularly likely to have been undertaking a school or college course (68%), with a smaller proportion working for a different employer (15%). Among those aged 19-24, a move from other employment was most common (49% had been working for a different employer), whilst only around a quarter had been studying at school or college (27%).

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<sup>19</sup> NEET is defined as having been out of work and not in education or training for a period of three months or more without a break in the year before starting their apprenticeship.

A small proportion (3%) of those who had not been with the same employer prior to their apprenticeship had been undertaking an apprenticeship with a previous employer. Half (51%) of this small cohort had progressed to an apprenticeship at a higher level but over a third (38%) had continued at the same level, and a small minority (8% of this group) had moved on to a lower level apprenticeship - Level 2 for nearly all. Three-fifths (60%) of those who had previously undertaken an apprenticeship had switched to a new occupational area, rising to three-quarters (75%) among those who moved to a lower level or continued at the same level.<sup>20</sup>

**Figure 3-4 Activity prior to employment with apprenticeship employer among recent recruits, by age group**

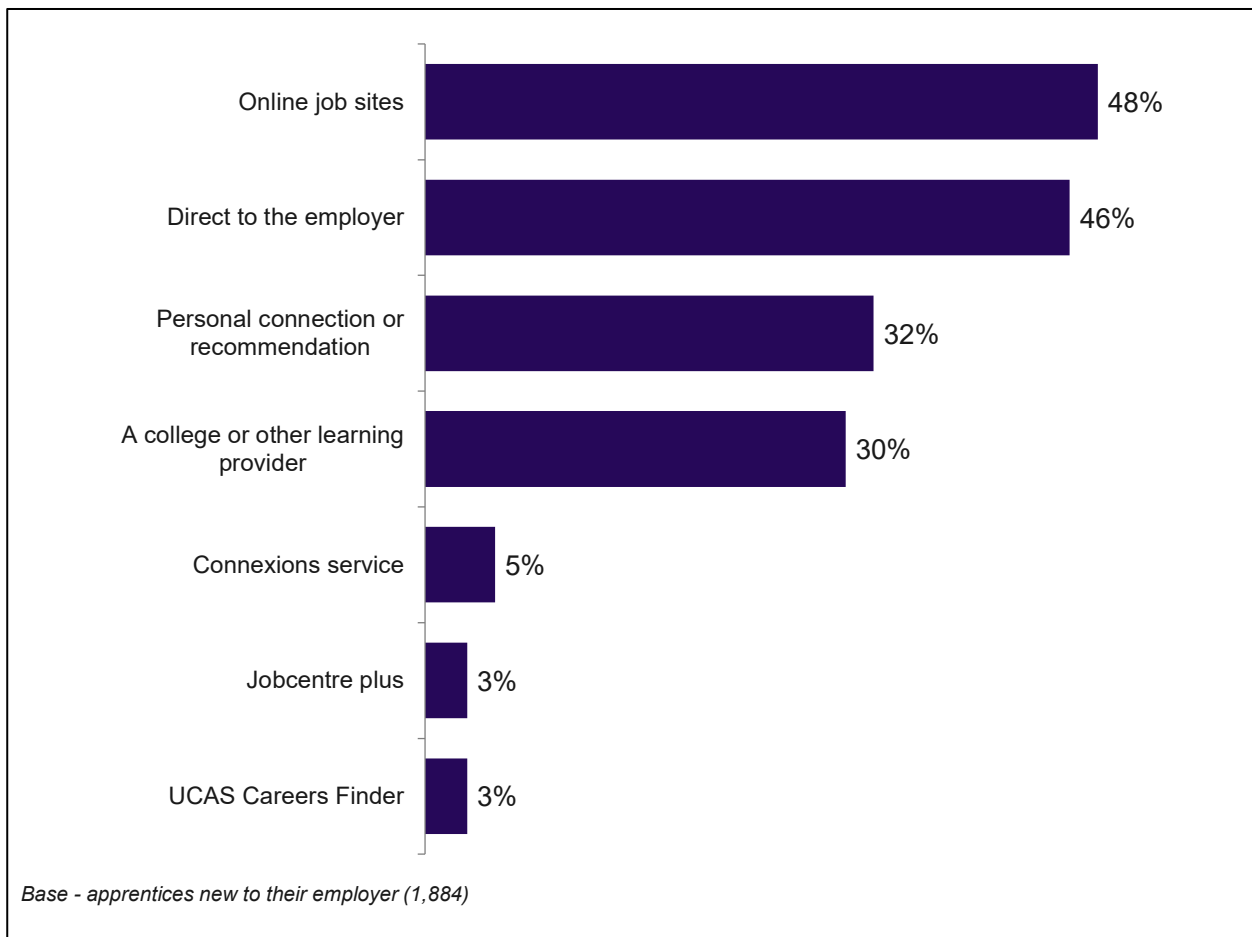


<sup>20</sup> The base size for apprentices who had undertaken a previous apprenticeship at the same or a lower level is low (37), and this finding should be treated with caution.

## Application methods used to apply for apprenticeships

The two main methods used to apply for apprenticeships were through online job sites and applying directly to the employer, each mentioned by just under half of those apprentices new to their employer when starting their apprenticeship (48% and 46% respectively). Just under a third mentioned a personal connection or recommendation, or applying via a college or other learning provider (32% and 30% respectively).

**Figure 3-5 Methods used to apply for apprenticeship vacancies**



Online job sites were especially likely to be used by those in the Business (66%), ICT (65%) and Arts (59%) subject areas, apprentices aged 19-24 (56% compared with 45% of younger apprentices and 34% of older apprentices) and NEET apprentices (57% compared to 46% among those who had not been NEET in the year prior to their apprenticeship).

The likelihood of having applied direct to an employer increases with apprenticeship level: 41% of Level 2 apprentices, 48% of Level 3 apprentices, 53% of Level 4 or 5 applicants and 79% of Level 6+ applicants had applied directly. Apprentices training in Retail (57%) or Engineering (51%) and older apprentices aged 25 or over were also more likely to have applied directly to an employer (55%).

Around a third (32%) of apprentices who were new to their employers applied via a personal connection or recommendation. This avenue was particularly likely to have been used by those on apprenticeships in Agriculture (53%) or Construction (51%).

Around three in ten (30%) apprentices who were new to their employers applied via a college or other learning provider. This was more common among Level 4 and 5 apprentices (39% compared to 30% of Level 2 or 3 and 21% of Level 6 or above), those in the Construction or Education subject areas (38%), and younger apprentices aged under 19 (35%).

Smaller proportions of apprentices who were new to their employers used the Connexions service (5%), Jobcentre Plus (3%) and / or the UCAS Careers Finder (3%).<sup>21</sup> Connexions is a more common route for those on Level 4 or 5 apprenticeships (12%).

Where directly comparable with previous surveys, results in 2018-19 generally appear little changed. This applies in particular to the proportion applying directly to an employer (46% in the 2018-19 survey, 44% in 2017 and 48% in the 2015 survey) and applying via a college or other learning provider (30% in the 2018-19 survey, 32% in 2017 and 29% in the 2015 survey). That said, the proportion mentioning the Connexions Service and Jobcentre Plus have fallen each year of the survey (from the 9% reported for each in 2015).

## **Awareness of apprenticeships**

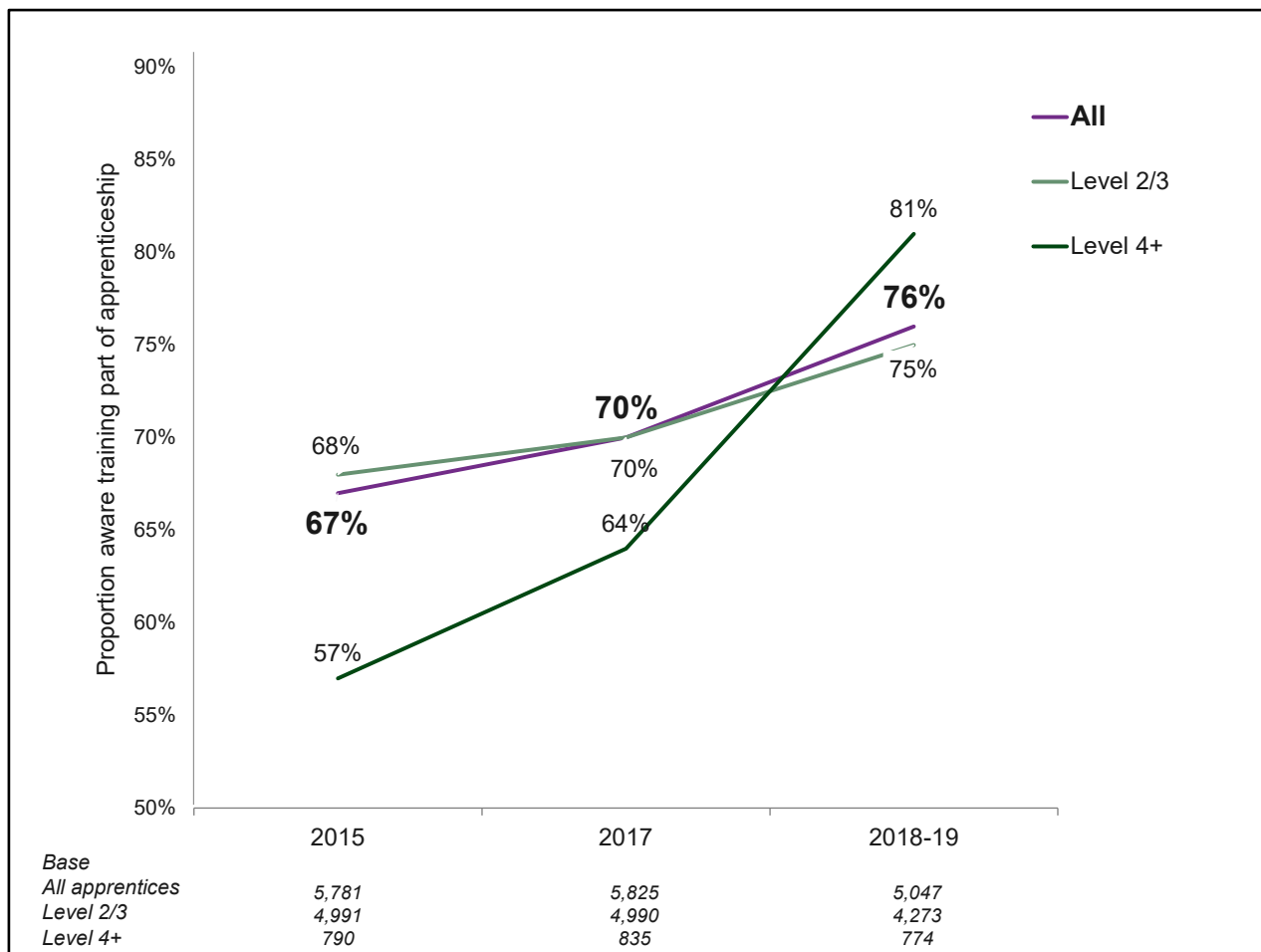
Awareness of being on an apprenticeship has continued to increase: three-quarters (76%) were aware that they were or had been on an apprenticeship, up from 70% in 2017 and 67% in 2015, as shown in Figure 3-6.

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<sup>21</sup> Connexions was established in 2000 providing information, advice, guidance and support services for young people aged 13 to 19 (up to 25 for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities). In April 2012 the National Careers Service replaced Connexions as the publicly funded provider of careers services in England (for all those aged 13 plus). The Connexions brand is still used in some parts of the country, but this is a local decision. Respondents referring to Connexions may have received advice pre-April 2012 or have received advice from a local Connexions service subsequent to this date.

Whilst awareness that they were or had been undertaking an apprenticeship among Level 2 / 3 apprentices has risen (from 68% in 2015 to 75% in 2018-19), the increase among those on a Level 4+ apprenticeships has been more dramatic, from 57% in 2015 to 81% in 2018-19. The high levels of awareness among Level 4+ apprentices have been largely driven by Level 6+ and Level 4 apprentices (95% and 92% respectively were aware that their training was part of apprenticeship in 2018-19 compared to just 68% of Level 5 apprentices). Level 3 apprentices were more likely than Level 2 apprentices to be aware they were or had been undertaking an apprenticeship (78% compared to 72%).

**Figure 3-6 Awareness that training was part of apprenticeship overall and by Level, 2015 - 2018/19**



Awareness was almost universal among apprentices who started their apprenticeship at the same time as joining their employer (94%, compared to 64% among those working for the employer before starting their apprenticeship), and among younger apprentices (96% of those aged under 19 and 84% of those aged 19 to 24, compared to just 57% of those aged 25 or above), as shown in Figure 3-7. Awareness was also much higher among current apprentices (86%) than completers (70%).

Female apprentices were less likely than their male counterparts to be aware they were or had been on an apprenticeship (69% compare to 82%). This reflects that older apprentices and female apprentices were more likely to have been working for their employer prior to starting their apprenticeship.

Awareness varies by subject area. Virtually all Science and Arts and Media apprentices (99% and 98% respectively) were aware they were or had been undertaking an apprenticeship. Similarly, over nine in ten apprentices in Construction and ICT were aware they were or had been undertaking an apprenticeship, linking with higher than average likelihood of apprentices in these subjects starting with their employer at the same time as their apprenticeship. At the other end of the scale Health and Education apprentices were least likely to be aware that their training was part of an apprenticeship (59% and 69% respectively), and were among those most likely to have already worked for their employer for a year or longer before undertaking their apprenticeship.

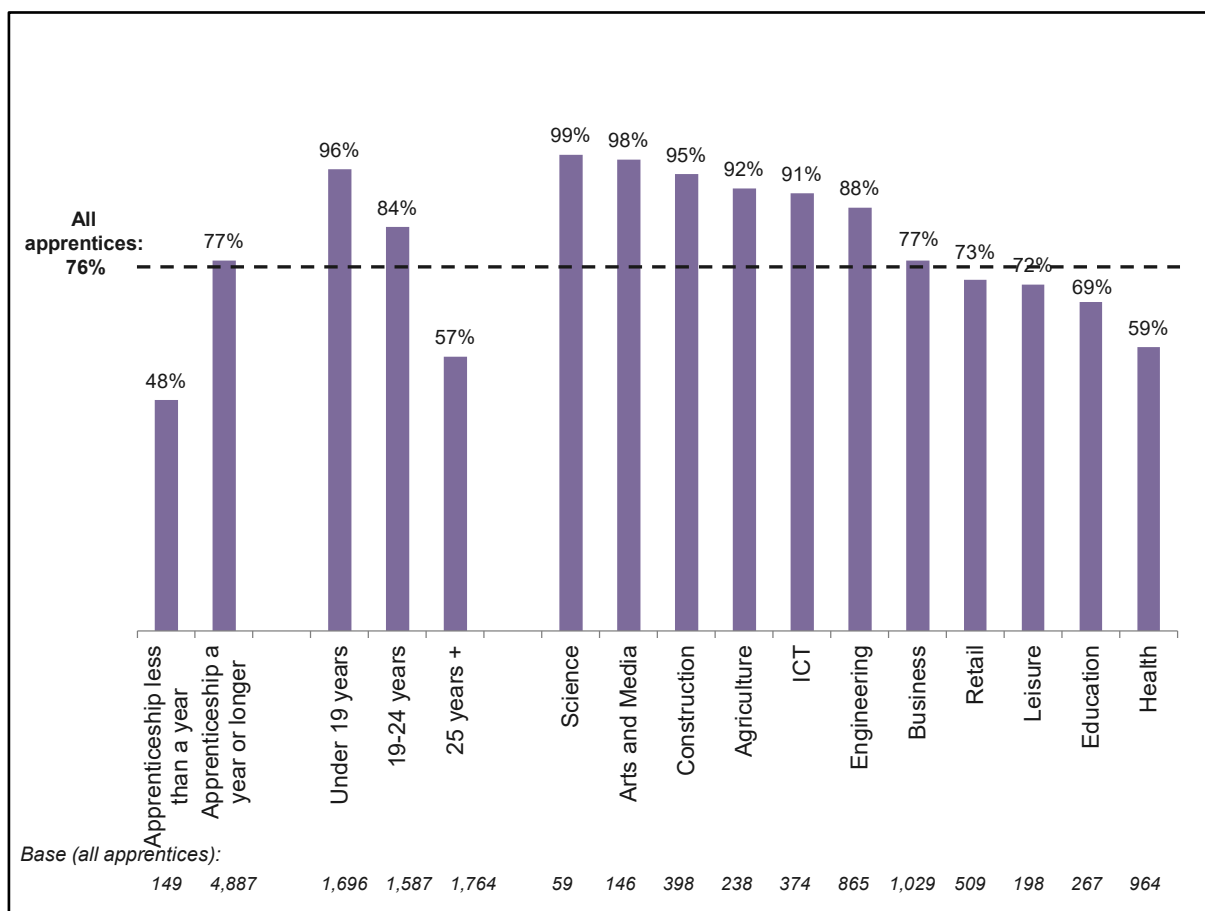
Awareness had risen most strongly among apprentices in Retail subjects (from 63% in 2017 to 73% in 2018-19). There were also increases in awareness of at least five percentage points among apprentices in the subjects of Business, Agriculture and Engineering. Awareness had dropped notably only among Education apprentices (from 74% in 2017 to 69% in 2018-19).

Among the small cohort of apprentices (4%) who reported that the intended duration of their apprenticeship was less than a year, only around half (48%) were aware they were or had been undertaking an apprenticeship.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Most of the apprentices in the 2018-19 survey reporting an intended duration of less than 12 months started their apprenticeship before the apprenticeship reforms of April 2017 and were aged 19+ (74%). Before the reforms learners aged 19+ could be exempt from the 12-month minimum apprenticeship duration if they had relevant prior learning. The duration of apprenticeships is discussed more fully in chapter 4.

**Figure 3-7 Awareness that training was part of an apprenticeship by apprenticeship duration, apprentice age and subject area, 2018-19 survey**



## Reasons for choosing apprenticeships

Motivations for undertaking an apprenticeship vary. The survey asked respondents to select their main reason for doing an apprenticeship - the most common response was a desire to enter into or progress in a specific career (mentioned by 28%, up from 23% in 2017<sup>23</sup>) followed by wanting to develop work-related skills (20%) or to gain a qualification (19%). The proportion primarily wishing to gain a qualification is lower than seen in 2017 and 2015 (27% and 25% respectively). The decrease in the proportion choosing an apprenticeship to develop work-related skills was smaller (from 23% in both 2017 and 2015 to 20%).

<sup>23</sup> It is worth noting a change between the questionnaire used in the current survey and that used in 2017 and 2015. In the earlier surveys respondents were read a list of potential reasons why they started their apprenticeship, and those giving more than one reason were asked which was their main reason. In 2019, respondents were asked a single question asking for the single main reason why they decided to take up an apprenticeship, and the list of options was not read out to them.

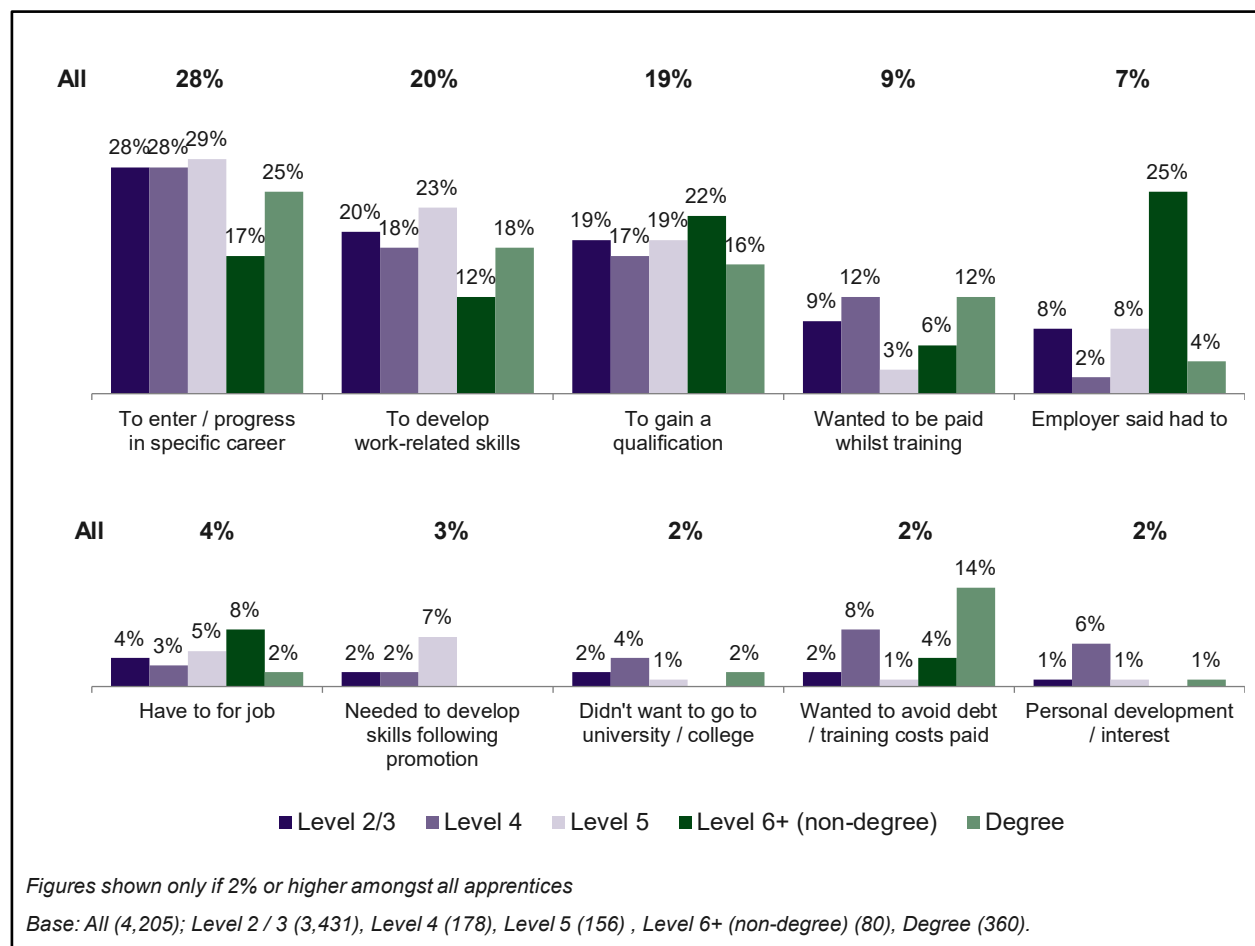


Wanting to receive pay whilst they trained was the core reason for just under one in ten apprentices (9%, similar to 10% in 2017). A further 2% of apprentices primarily chose an apprenticeship to avoid student debt or because their training costs would be covered.

An apprenticeship was described as obligatory by around one in ten apprentices, with 7% being required to undertake it by their employer and 4% being in a job which requires the qualification. These reasons were a little more likely to be mentioned in 2018-19 than in 2017 (when 4% reported it was required by their employer and 2% that their job needed the qualification).

Reasons for starting an apprenticeship were very similar between Level 2 and Level 3 apprentices, with no difference greater than three percentage points. However, there are more marked differences in motivation among apprentices on Level 4 or above, as shown in Figure 3-8.

**Figure 3-8 Main reason for starting their apprenticeship, by apprenticeship level (spontaneous mentions)**



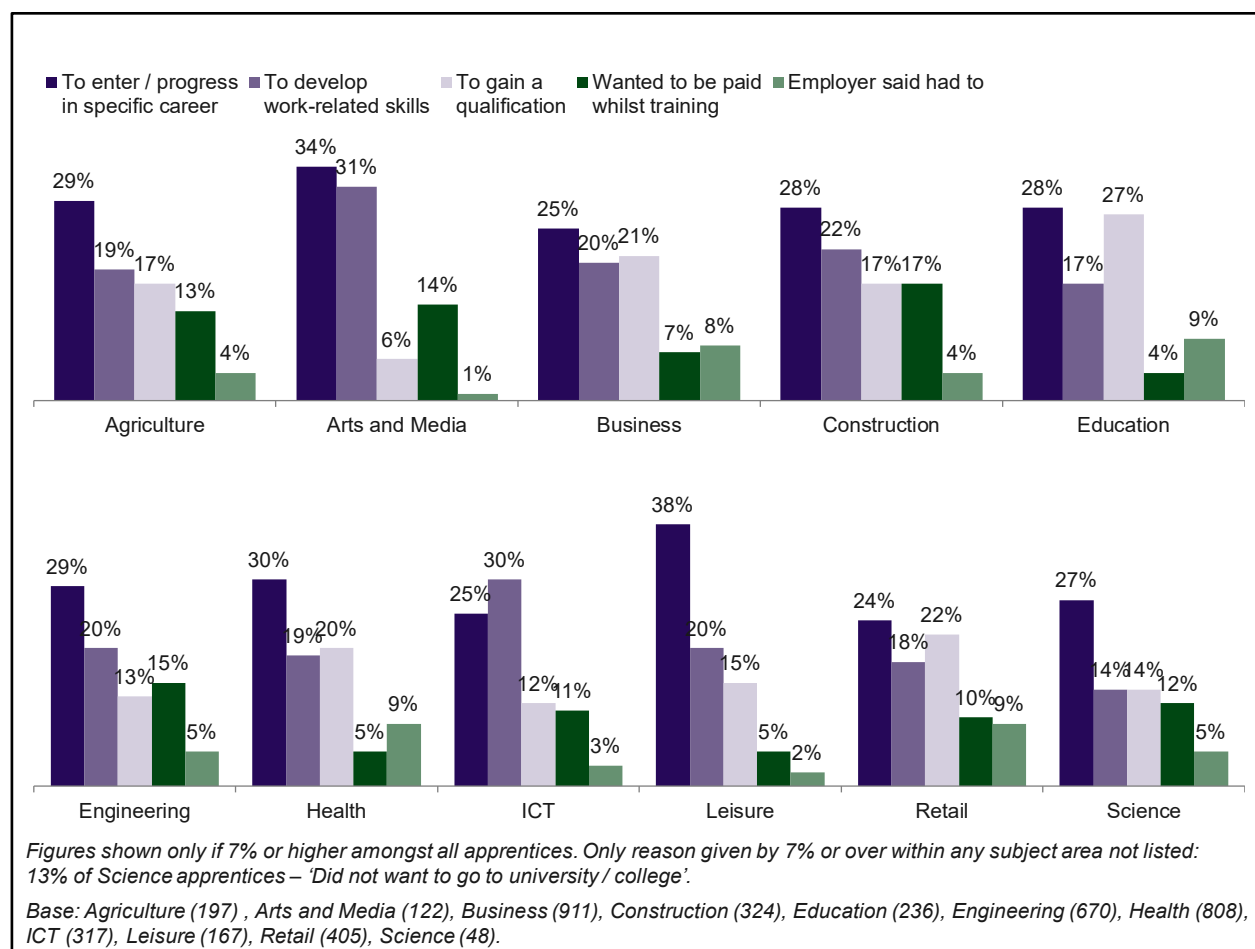
Costs were more likely to be a factor for Level 4 and Degree apprentices: both were more likely than average to have chosen an apprenticeship primarily as they wanted to be paid whilst training (12% in each group) or as they wanted to avoid debt and have their training costs paid (8% of Level 4 apprentices and 14% of Degree apprentices).

Level 5 apprentices were more likely than others to be training mainly as they needed to develop their skills following a promotion (7% compared to no more than 2% among any other group).

Level 6 and above non-degree apprentices have the most distinct set of motivations, being significantly more likely to have been required to undertake an apprenticeship either because their employer instructed them to (25% compared to no more than 8% among any other group) or because their job required it (8% compared to no more than 5% among any other group).

Motivations also vary by subject area: apprentices in Leisure, Travel and Tourism were particularly likely to want to enter into or progress in a specific career (38% compared to 28% overall), as shown in Figure 3-9.

**Figure 3-9 Main reason for starting their apprenticeship, by subject area (spontaneous mentions)**



Apprentices in ICT were the only group to be more likely to have chosen an apprenticeship primarily to develop work-related skills than any other reason (30% did so). Arts apprentices were also more likely than those in other subject areas to have undertaken an apprenticeship for this reason, though to enter into or progress in a specific career remained the most common reason for this group (34%).

Wanting a qualification was particularly likely to be a prime reason for apprentices in Education (27%).

Apprentices in Construction and Engineering and Arts were more likely than those in other subject areas mainly to have chosen an apprenticeship to be paid whilst training (17%, 15% and 14% respectively compared to 9% overall).

Science apprentices were at least twice as likely as those training in any other subject to have chosen an apprenticeship primarily to avoid having to go to university or college (13% compared to no more than 5% in any other subject area and 2% overall).

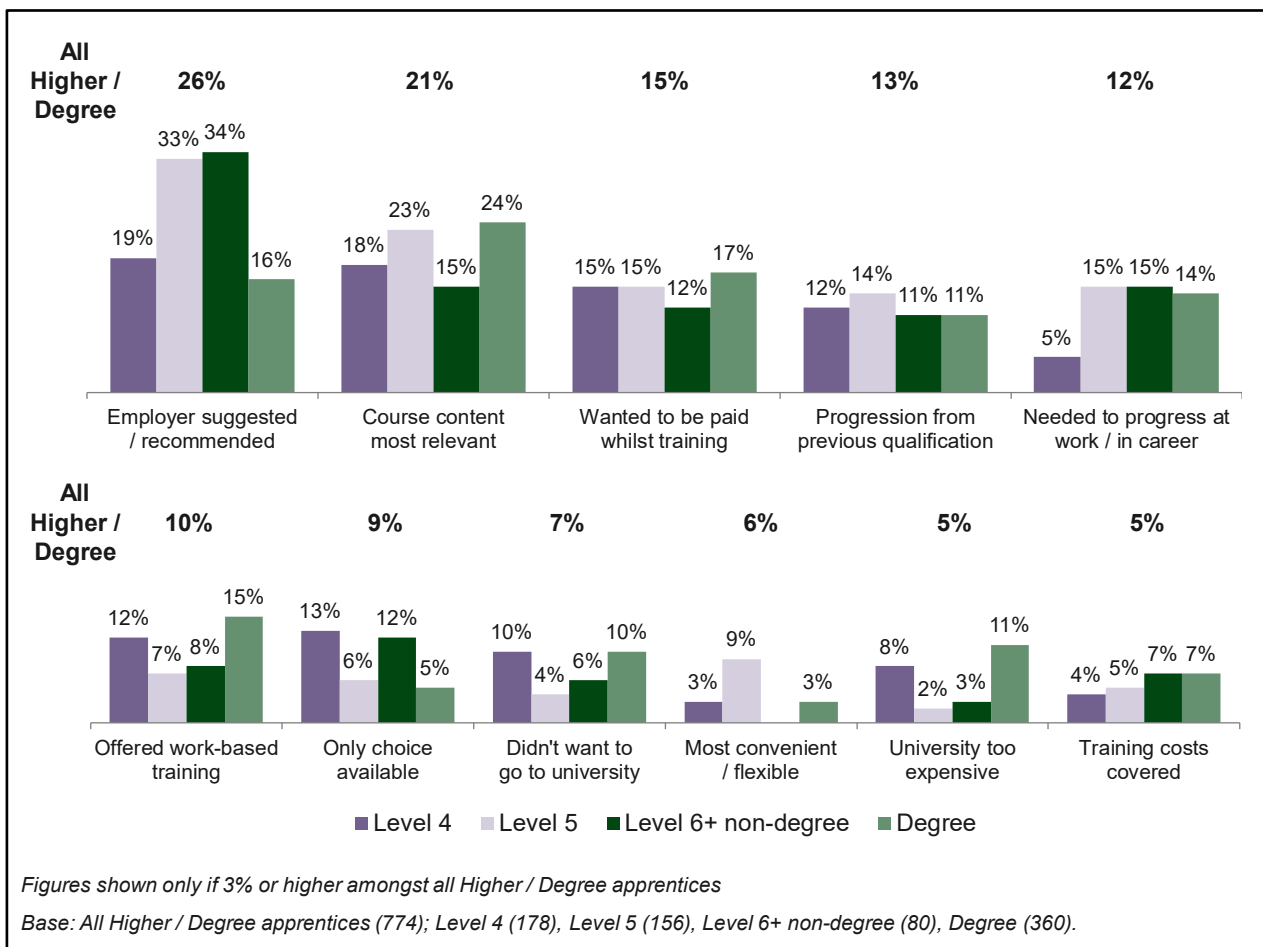
Gaining a qualification was more likely to be the motivator for older apprentices (for 23% of those aged 25 or older, compared to 18% of 19 to 24-year olds and 12% of those under 19). Older apprentices were also more likely than younger apprentices to have been required to undertake an apprenticeship, with 13% reporting their employer said they had to (compared to 5% of those aged 19 to 24 and only 1% of those under 19). This links to the higher likelihood of older apprentices to be working for the employer before starting their apprenticeship.

Being paid whilst training was more likely to be a motivator for younger apprentices (18% of those under 19 and 12% of those aged 19 to 24 compared to just 2% of those aged 25 or older) and those aged 16-24 who had been NEET at some point in the year prior to their apprenticeship (14%).

Among those who had been with their employer prior to the apprenticeship, gaining a qualification was notably more important as their main motivation (for 22% compared to 13% of those who were not). Wanting to gain a qualification was also more likely than average to have been the main reason for apprentices with a disability (28%).

Levels 4+ apprentices were asked why they chose an apprenticeship rather than another qualification, such as an HND, non-apprenticeship Degree or one obtained through a professional development organisation. Employer suggestion or recommendation was the most common reason, given by 26% of Level 4+ apprentices, as shown in Figure 3-10. Employer input was particularly likely to have been a factor for Level 5 and Level 6+ non-degree apprentices (33% and 34% respectively), for Business higher apprentices (34%), and older apprentices (33% of those 25 or older, compared to 16% of those aged 19 to 24 and 5% of those aged under 19).

**Figure 3-10 Reason for choosing a Higher, Degree or Level 6+ apprenticeship rather than another qualification, by apprenticeship level (spontaneous mentions)**



The course content of a Higher, Degree or Level 6+ apprenticeship being relevant to their job role or career aspirations was also a frequent factor, cited 21% of Level 4+ apprentices. The relevance of course content was similarly important across levels and subject areas.

Being able to earn money whilst training was the third most likely reason for choosing a Level 4+ apprenticeship (15%).

Around one in eight chose their Level 4+ apprenticeship because it was a progression from a previous qualification (13% of Level 4+ apprentices, rising to 20% among ICT Level 4+ apprentices) or because progression at work or in their career required a Higher or Degree Apprenticeship qualification (12%, though it was less likely, at 5%, for Level 4 apprentices specifically).

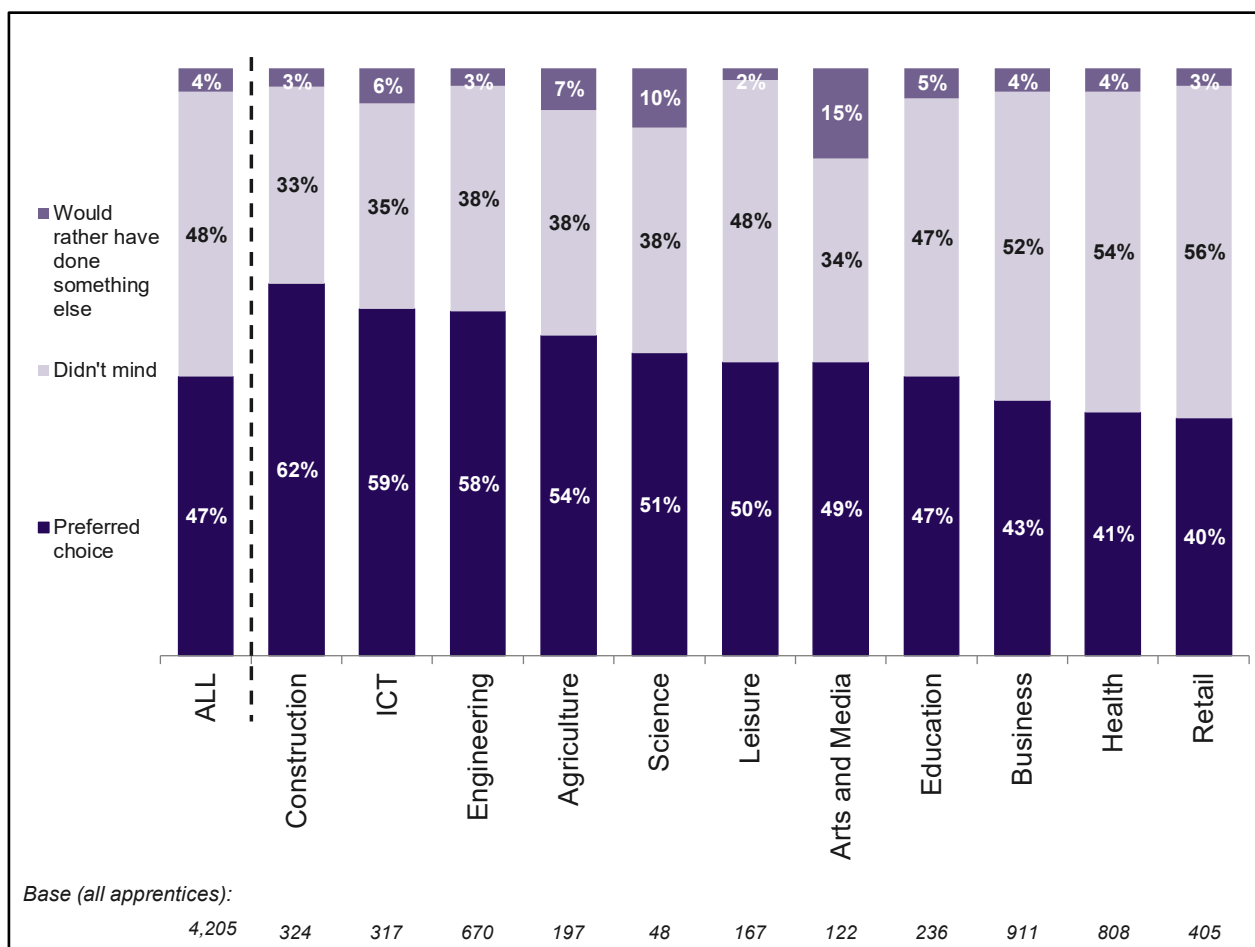
The work-based training nature of an apprenticeship was a reason for one in ten Level 4+ apprentices choosing their course over other qualifications, rising to 15% among Degree apprentices and to 21% among those under 19 years old.

Gaining a degree was important in the decision to undertake a degree apprenticeship for nearly all degree apprentices (94%), with the majority saying it was 'very important' (61%, rising to 84% in Health).

## Whether apprenticeships were a preferred choice

For almost half (47%) of apprentices their apprenticeship was a preferred choice at the time they applied. Few (4%) would have preferred to do something else, although almost half (48%) had no particular preference. This is in line with results in 2017 and 2015.

**Figure 3-11 Whether an apprenticeship was their preferred choice at the time of application, by subject area**



Degree apprentices and Level 3 and 4 apprentices were more likely to have actively wanted to do an apprenticeship (56%, 53% and 55% respectively, compared to 41% of Level 2 apprentices, 38% of Level 5 apprentices and just 28% of non-degree Level 6+ apprentices).

Subject areas in which undertaking an apprenticeship was more likely to have been a preferred choice were Construction Planning and the Built Environment (62%), ICT (59%), Engineering (58%) and Agriculture (54%).

Younger apprentices were more likely to have wanted specifically to undertake an apprenticeship (65% of those under 19 and 50% of those aged 19 to 24, compared to just 34% of those 25 or older), while older apprentices were far more likely to say they had no particular preference / did not mind (60% among those aged 25 or older compared with 32% among those aged under 19). The proportion indicating they had a preferred alternative to their apprenticeship varied very little by age (3%-4% among under 19s, 19-24s and those aged 25 or older).

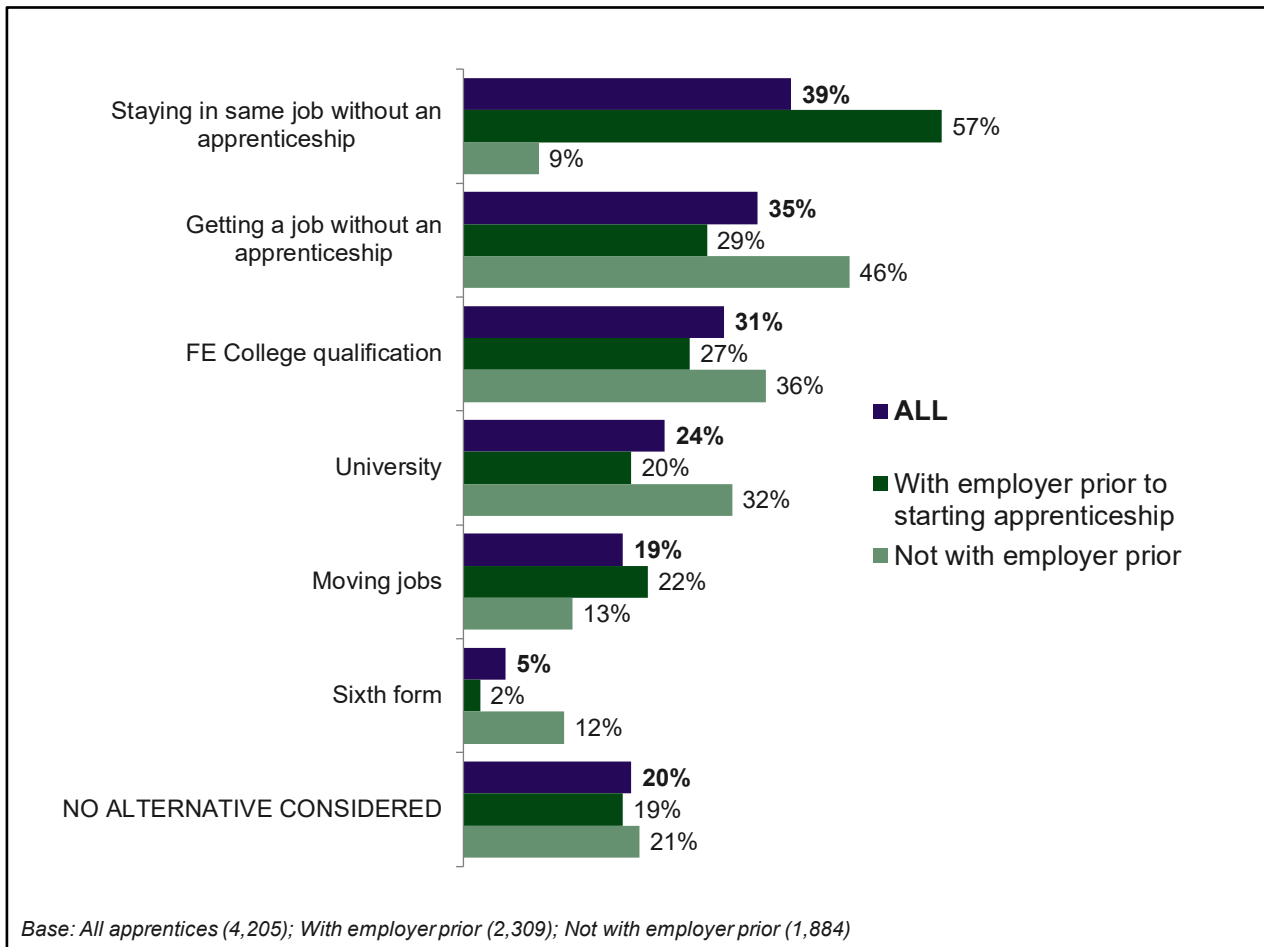
An apprenticeship was the preferred choice for almost three-fifths of those who started their apprenticeship at a new employer compared to only two-fifths of those who were already with their employer (58% versus 40%).

## **Alternatives to apprenticeships**

The majority of apprentices had considered other alternatives at the same time as considering an apprenticeship (79%, very similar to 77% in both the 2017 and 2015 surveys). Even three-quarters (75%) of those for whom an apprenticeship was their preferred choice had still considered alternatives.

Working without undertaking an apprenticeship was the most common alternative considered, rather than their undertaking some other form of training or learning, as shown in Figure 3-12. This covered staying in the same job without starting an apprenticeship (mentioned by 39% of all apprentices, and 57% of those who were with their employer prior to the apprenticeship), moving into employment (mentioned by 46% of those who were not with their employer before starting their apprenticeship), or moving jobs (considered by 19% overall).

**Figure 3-12 Whether alternatives to apprenticeships were considered, by prior employment situation**



There was considerable variation in the alternatives considered between apprentices on different levels, with Level 5 apprentices particularly likely to have considered just staying in the same job without undertaking an apprenticeship (59% compared to 39% overall) or moving jobs (28% compared to 19% overall). Level 6+ non-degree apprentices were most likely to have thought about getting a job without doing an apprenticeship (42% compared to 35% overall).

Level 4 and Degree apprentices were particularly likely to have considered university, (43% and 42% respectively, compared to 24% overall).

Studying for a qualification at a Further Education (FE) college was the most likely educational alternative considered, mentioned by almost a third of apprentices (31%). University was considered by around a quarter of apprentices (24%).

Alternative training or learning was more likely to have been considered by younger apprentices aged under 19: 38% considered an FE qualification, 30% considered university (as did 31% of those aged 19-24, compared to 16% of older apprentices) and 17% considered sixth form. Male apprentices were more likely to have considered each of these education options (for example, 33% considered studying a qualification in FE compared with 28% of female apprentices).

University was especially likely to have been considered by Science apprentices (66% compared to 24% overall), and to a lesser extent by Arts (47%), ICT (38%) and Leisure, Travel and Tourism apprentices (37%).



## 4 Quality and content of apprenticeships

This chapter examines indicators of quality in apprenticeships, such as the duration, the employment status and pay of apprentices, and the amount and type of training they received.

### Key findings

- The **average intended apprenticeship duration<sup>24</sup> was 18 months**, in line with levels reported in the 2017 and 2015 surveys (both 17 months). **All subject areas continue to have average intended durations of at least 14 months. Intended duration increased with level** (from an average of 15 months for Level 2 apprentices, to 21 months at Level 3 and 23 months for those at Level 4+).
- **Most thought the intended duration was about right** (77%, down from 80% in 2017); and as in previous years, the remainder were more likely to think their apprenticeship was too long (17%, up from 14% in 2017) than too short (5%).
- **Apprentices aged 19 and over were around twice as likely as younger apprentices to think the duration was too long.**
- **The proportion of apprentices undertaking formal training has decreased** (82%, down from 86% in the 2017 survey).<sup>25</sup> The decrease was a result of fewer reporting receiving training at an external provider (51%, compared with 63% in the 2017 survey). The fall in the proportion reporting any formal training compared with the 2017 survey is partly a result of the 2018-19 survey comprising a higher proportion of apprentices from groups that in both surveys were less likely than average to receive formal training (particularly older apprentices and those who already worked for their employer when they started their apprenticeship). But it is also the case that all key groups of apprentices (e.g. all age groups, subject areas and levels) show falls compared with the 2017 survey in the proportions reporting having received formal training.
- The proportion of apprentices undertaking training at the workplace while doing their usual activities has also decreased (77%, down from 82% in the 2017 survey).

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<sup>24</sup> All apprentices were asked to give the intended length of their apprenticeship, regardless of the time it actually took to complete.

<sup>25</sup> Formal training covers training at an external provider and formal training sessions in the workplace away from usual work activities.

### Key findings (continued)

- Among those receiving training, the survey results suggest that **the average time spent undertaking any training was 10.8 hours per week**, down slightly from the 11.5 hours estimated in the 2017 survey, but higher than the 10.1 hours reported in the 2015 survey.
- Among those receiving training, **apprentices reported an average of 5.6 hours of formal training hours each week**, again, slightly down from the average 6 hours reported in the 2017 survey, but higher than the 4.6 hours reported in 2015.
- **Two-fifths of apprentices reported either receiving no training (5%) or were trained but for less than six hours per week on average (34% of those trained)**. In comparison in the 2017 survey, 3% reported receiving no training, while 37% of those trained received less than six hours of training each week.
- **The survey results suggest that 30% of apprentices received formal training equivalent to at least 20% of their working hours**, while 50% received formal training equivalent to less than 10% of their working hours.

### Comparison of current apprentices in the 2018-19 and 2017 surveys

- Among current apprentices in the 2018-19 survey, the reported intended average apprenticeship duration was 22 months, higher than among current apprentices in the 2017 survey (19 months).
- Current apprentices in the 2018-19 survey were less likely than those in the 2017 survey to think the intended duration of their apprenticeship about right (77% and 82% respectively), and more likely to think them too long (14% vs. 12% in 2017) or too short (7% vs 5%).
- Current apprentices in the 2018-19 survey were less likely to report receiving any formal training (84% vs. 88% in the 2017 survey). The fall was particularly marked for any training at an external provider (54%, down from 66% in 2017). Fewer also reported receiving training at the workplace while doing usual work activities (75% compared with 83% in 2017). In contrast the proportion receiving formal training in the workplace away from their usual work activities was almost unchanged (64% in 2017, 65% in the 2018-19 survey).

### Comparison of current apprentices in the 2018-19 and 2017 surveys (continued)

- Current apprentices in the 2018-19 survey that received any training reported receiving an average (mean) of 11.1 hours a week, slightly lower than in 2017 (11.7 hours). The same was true for formal training – current apprentices reported an average of 5.8 hours per week in 2018-19 (among those receiving any kind of training) compared with 6.2 hours in 2017.

## Duration of apprenticeships

Current funding rules for apprenticeships state that all apprenticeships must provide for training that lasts for a minimum duration of 12 months. Before 2017 there was an exemption to the 12 month minimum duration. If the apprentice was aged 19 or over on the day the apprenticeship started and the apprenticeship was adjusted to account for relevant prior experience or learning, the minimum duration of the apprenticeship was six months. In 2017 this exemption was removed.

Nearly all (96%) apprentices reported that their apprenticeship was meant to last for 12 months or longer; this is the same proportion as in 2017 (up from 93% in 2015).

Just 4% said that their apprenticeship was intended to last for less than 12 months. Most of these apprentices had started their apprenticeship before the reforms introduced in May 2017 came into effect and were aged 19 or above (74%; as noted above this is a group for whom an exemption existed at the time to the 12-month minimum duration if they had relevant prior learning).

The proportion indicating that their apprenticeship was intended to last for less than 12 months was higher among apprentices who had been existing employees of the employer prior to starting (6%), apprentices in Leisure (8%) and Health (6%), and those aged 19 or over (6% vs. 1% of those aged under 19).

Specifically among current apprentices (those still undertaking their apprenticeship at the time the survey took place), fewer reported an intended duration of less than 12 months in the 2018-19 survey (1%) than did so in the 2017 survey (4%).

The average intended duration of apprenticeships was 18 months, similar to the 17-month average reported in 2017 and 2015.<sup>26</sup> Differences by subject area are shown in Table 4-1.

**Table 4-1 Average intended duration of apprenticeships in months by subject area and level 2015-2018/19**

| <i>Column Percentages</i>                     | <b>ALL</b>   | <b>Agriculture</b> | <b>Arts and Media</b> | <b>Business</b> | <b>Construction</b> | <b>Education</b> | <b>Engineering</b> | <b>Health</b> | <b>ICT</b> | <b>Leisure</b> | <b>Retail</b> | <b>Science</b> | <b>Level 2</b> | <b>Level 3</b> | <b>Level 4+</b> |
|---|--------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------|------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 2015 average length                           | <b>17</b>    | 20                 | 14                    | 14              | 24                  | 15               | 26                 | 15            | 15         | 15             | 14            | -              | 15             | 19             | 19              |
| 2017 average length                           | <b>17</b>    | 21                 | 16                    | 14              | 22                  | 15               | 27                 | 15            | 16         | 14             | 15            | 25             | 15             | 20             | 20              |
| 2018-19 average length                        | <b>18</b>    | 21                 | 16                    | 16              | 23                  | 14               | 28                 | 16            | 17         | 15             | 15            | 27             | 15             | 21             | 23              |
| <i>2015 Base (all who gave a duration)</i>    | <b>5,249</b> | 286                | 127                   | 1,235           | 353                 | 301              | 644                | 981           | 381        | 283            | 658           | -              | 2,557          | 1,986          | 706             |
| <i>2017 Base (all who gave a duration)</i>    | <b>5,812</b> | 216                | 153                   | 1,267           | 399                 | 274              | 849                | 1,113         | 442        | 316            | 697           | 86             | 2,670          | 2,308          | 834             |
| <i>2018-19 Base (all who gave a duration)</i> | <b>5,036</b> | 238                | 146                   | 1,026           | 398                 | 265              | 863                | 961           | 373        | 198            | 509           | 59             | 1,940          | 2,323          | 773             |

Average intended durations were longest in Engineering (28 months), Science (27 months), Construction (23 months) and Agriculture (21 months). The Education sector had the lowest average intended duration (14 months, compared with 15 months in 2017, the only subject area with a decrease compared with 2017). There was little change in average durations by subject area since 2017; the most notable change was in the Business and Science subject areas, where average durations for each rose by two months.

<sup>26</sup> Results here are very similar to DfE administrative data, which shows that the expected duration for apprenticeship starts in 2017/18 was 581 days, an increase of 14% on the 511 days recorded for starts in 2016/17 (figures taken from chapter 5 of DfE's Apprenticeships and levy statistics January 2019 [Statistics](#)).

Average intended duration among Level 2 apprentices was unchanged compared with 2015 and 2017, at 15 months. As with previous years, Level 3 apprentices reported longer average durations than Level 2 apprentices (21 months), which continued a trend of small rises from previous years for apprentices at this level (19 months in 2015 and 20 months in 2017).

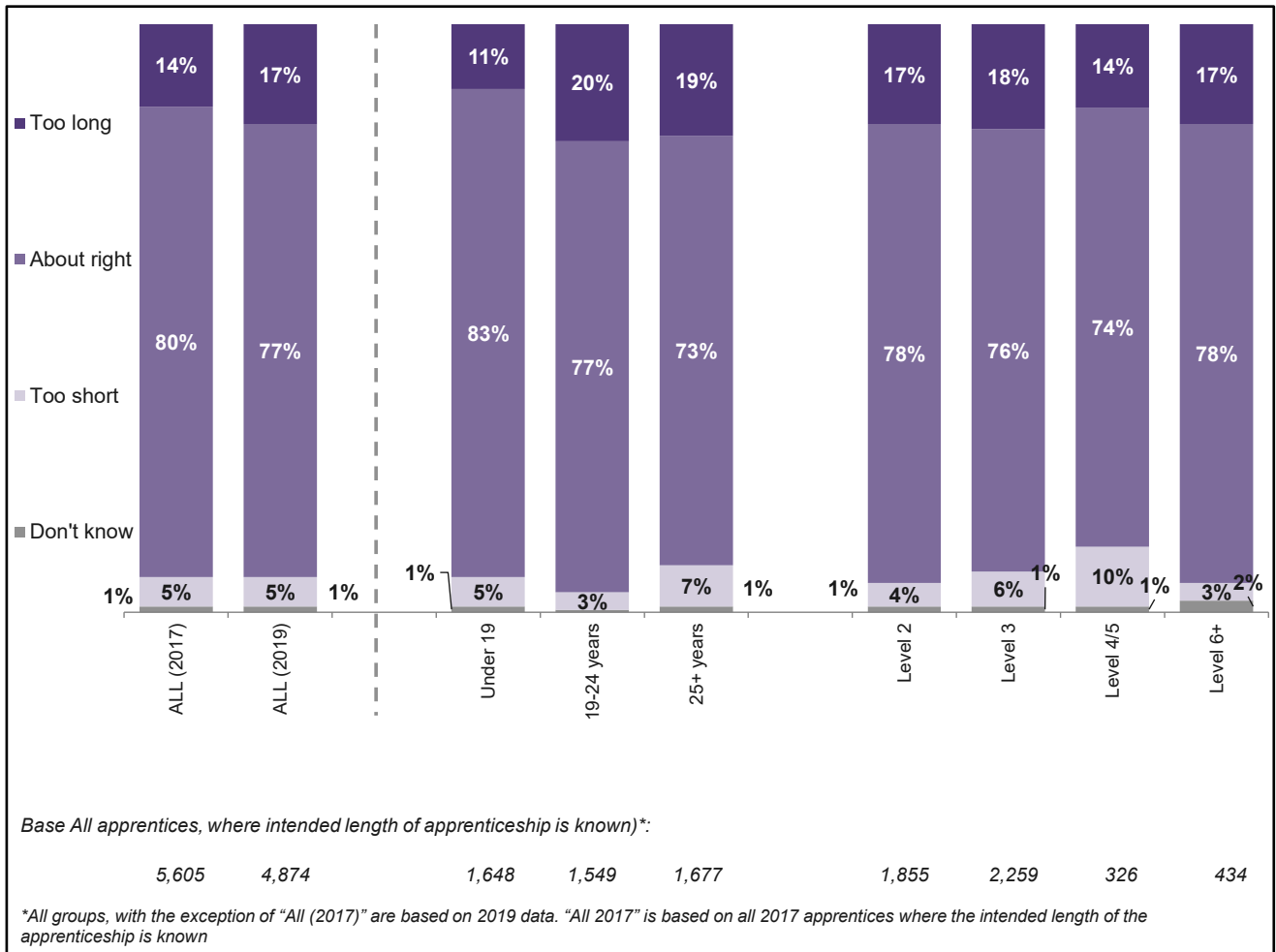
Apprentices at Level 4 and above reported an average intended duration of 23 months, higher than the 20 months reported in 2017 and 19 months in 2015. This was mainly due to the increase in the number of Degree Apprenticeships for which the average intended duration of apprenticeships was 43 months (compared with 32 months among non-degree Level 6+ apprentices and 19 months among Level 4 and 5 apprentices).

In the 'Profile of apprentices' chapter we have seen that younger apprentices aged under 19 and male apprentices were more likely than average to be undertaking traditional apprenticeships such as Construction or Engineering. As a result, these apprentices were more likely to report longer than average intended durations:

- 22 months for those aged under 19 vs. 16 months for those aged over 25
- 21 months for male apprentices vs. 16 months for female apprentices.

As shown in Figure 4-1, the majority (77%) of apprentices felt that the intended duration of their course was about right in order to acquire the skills they needed. Around one in six apprentices (17%) thought the intended duration of their apprenticeship was too long, (up from 14% in 2017, reflecting the slight increase in average intended durations just discussed) while just 5% thought it was too short. In terms of age, younger apprentices were less likely to feel their apprenticeship was too long; a fifth of those aged 19-24 (20%) and those aged 25+ (19%) reported this compared with just 11% of those aged under 19.

**Figure 4-1 Views regarding apprenticeship length**



Reflecting the pattern shown in Figure 4-1 among all apprentices, current apprentices in the 2018-19 survey were less likely than those in the 2017 survey to think the intended duration of their apprenticeship about right (77% and 82% respectively). Among current apprentices in the 2018-19 survey, 14% thought the intended duration too long (compared with 12% in 2017) and 7% thought it too short (5% in 2017).

By subject area, those in Arts (10%) and Construction (8%, despite being one of the longest duration apprenticeships on average) and Health (7%) were more likely to find the intended duration too short. Despite apprenticeships in Education, Leisure and Retail being shortest in intended duration on average, apprentices in these subject areas were not particularly likely to perceive them as too short (3% in Education and Leisure and 6% in Retail). Those in Business were most likely to say the duration of their apprenticeship was too long (20%) despite these apprenticeships also being relatively short in duration. Results varied relatively little by level, although Level 4 and 5 apprentices were more likely than average to feel the duration was too short (10%).

Those who were existing employees of their employer prior to their apprenticeship were slightly more likely than those who were not to perceive the duration of their apprenticeship to be too long (18% vs. 16%), although the majority (75%) still felt it was about right.

## **Employment status during apprenticeships**

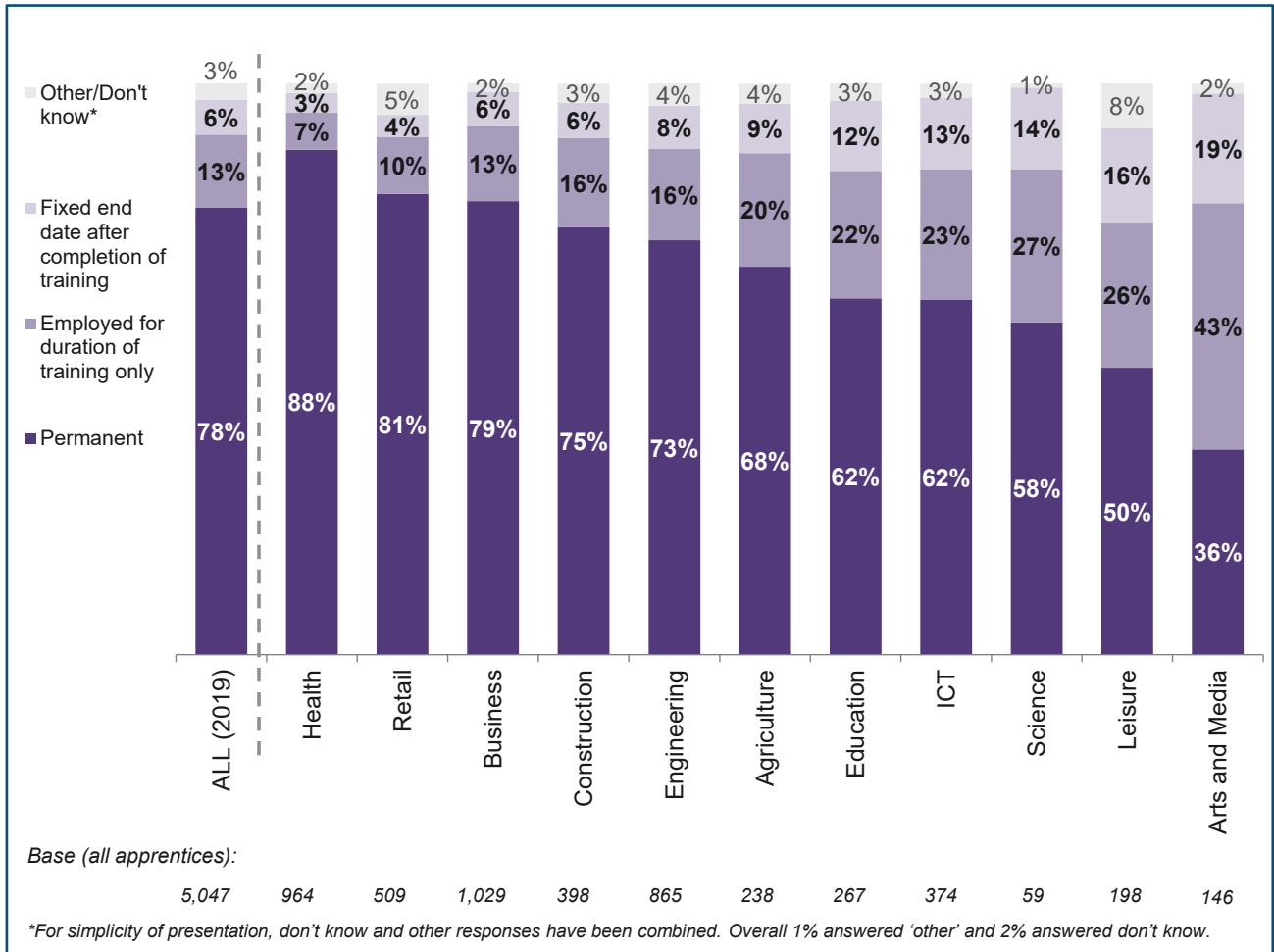
The vast majority (92%) of apprentices recalled having a written contract of employment with their employer, a small increase from 90% reporting this in the 2017 survey. There was no difference in prevalence of written contracts between those who were existing employees for their employer prior to their apprenticeship and those who were not. Those undertaking apprenticeships at higher levels were more likely to report having a written contract (98% of Level 4 and above, compared with 91% of Level 2 and 3 apprentices). All degree apprentices (100%) had a written contract with their employer. By subject area, those in Leisure (82%), Agriculture (83%), Construction (85%) and Retail (86%) were least likely to recall having a written contract.

More than three-quarters (78%) of apprentices were employed during their apprenticeship on a permanent basis with no fixed end point (up from 75% in 2017), 13% were employed for the duration of their training only, while 6% had a fixed end date for their employment after the date they expected to complete their training.

Contract types varied greatly by subject area, as shown in Figure 4-2. Apprentices in Arts and Media (36%), Leisure (50%), Science (58%), ICT (62%) and Education (62%) and Engineering (73%) were all less likely to have been employed on a permanent basis during their apprenticeship. Within ICT, significantly more ICT apprentices were working on a permanent basis than in 2017 (54%). Those in Health were the most likely to have been employed on a permanent basis during their apprenticeship, reflecting the fact they were most likely to have been existing employees.

In terms of demographics, younger apprentices were less likely to have been employed on a permanent basis; three in five (60%) apprentices aged under 19 and 71% of those aged 19 to 24 reported this, compared with almost all (94%) apprentices aged 25 and over. Female apprentices (82%) were more likely than male apprentices (74%) to have permanent contracts.

**Figure 4-2 Contract type during apprenticeships**



## Working hours during apprenticeships

Apprentices were contracted to work or usually worked an average of 36 hours per week, a slight increase from 2017 and 2015 levels (each 35 hours per week). Those who were not working for their employer prior to their apprenticeship worked slightly longer hours (37 per week) than those who were existing employees (36 hours).



As shown in Table 4-2, there were also differences by subject area. Longer hours were reported in Agriculture (39 hours per week), Construction, Engineering and Science (all 38-39 hours), while shorter hours were reported in Education and Leisure (31 and 32 hours respectively). Working hours remained fairly similar across all subject areas compared with 2017.

Apprentices in the Leisure subject area were more likely to report working 10 or fewer hours per week (8%, compared with just 1% overall), possibly reflecting the seasonal nature of jobs in tourism which is included within this subject area. The Education subject area had the highest proportion working between 11 and 30 hours per week on average (49%, compared with 16% overall), reflecting how common part time work is in this sector, and that some roles cover school hours.

At the other end of the spectrum, very long hours were most commonly reported in the Science subject area, in which a fifth (19%) reported over 40 hours per week on average, compared with 10% overall. Construction (17%), Agriculture (16%) and Engineering (13%) apprentices were also more likely to report working these hours.

**Table 4-2 Mean average contracted or usual hours per week**

| <i>Column percentages</i> | <b>ALL</b>   | <b>Agriculture</b> | <b>Arts and Media</b> | <b>Business</b> | <b>Construction</b> | <b>Education</b> | <b>Engineering</b> | <b>Health</b> | <b>ICT</b> | <b>Leisure</b> | <b>Retail</b> | <b>Science</b> | <b>Level 2</b> | <b>Level 3</b> | <b>Level 4+</b> |
|---------------------------|--------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------|------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 2015                      | <b>35</b>    | 39                 | 33                    | 36              | 39                  | 29               | 39                 | 33            | 36         | 31             | 34            | -              | 35             | 35             | 36              |
| 2017                      | <b>35</b>    | 38                 | 36                    | 36              | 39                  | 29               | 38                 | 33            | 36         | 30             | 34            | 37             | 35             | 35             | 37              |
| 2018-19                   | <b>36</b>    | 39                 | 36                    | 36              | 39                  | 31               | 39                 | 34            | 37         | 32             | 35            | 38             | 36             | 36             | 37              |
| <i>2015 Base</i>          | <b>5,399</b> | 297                | 122                   | 1,302           | 357                 | 293              | 672                | 1,004         | 396        | 287            | 669           | -              | 2,565          | 2,053          | 781             |
| <i>2017 Base</i>          | <b>5,397</b> | 187                | 131                   | 1,218           | 351                 | 268              | 800                | 1,018         | 424        | 263            | 653           | 84             | 2,434          | 2,149          | 814             |
| <i>2018-19 Base</i>       | <b>4,808</b> | 213                | 135                   | 1,015           | 378                 | 261              | 832                | 909           | 364        | 167            | 475           | 59             | 1,823          | 2,226          | 759             |

Younger apprentices tended to work longer hours, with those aged under 19 as well as those aged 19-24 reporting working an average of 37 hours per week compared with 35 hours among apprentices aged 25 and above. This partly reflects the fact that younger apprentices made up a greater proportion of traditional subject areas such as Construction and Engineering where longer working hours were reported. Male apprentices also reported working longer hours than women on average (38 hours per week and 34 hours per week respectively).

## Pay during apprenticeships

As detailed in the methodology section, the 2018-19 survey of apprentices was combined with the Apprenticeship Pay Survey for current apprentices. Results from the questions previously covered solely in the Apprenticeship Pay Survey, on such issues as the mean and median gross hourly pay of apprentices, and how many reported pay above and below the appropriate National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage rates<sup>27</sup>, and how this differs by age and other demographics, the subject and level of the apprenticeship and the year of the apprenticeship, have been reported separately in the 2018-19 Apprenticeship Pay Survey.<sup>28</sup>

In this section we report on annual net pay (after deductions for tax and national insurance). Respondents were asked if they wanted to give a weekly, monthly or annual figure; range / banded responses rather than precise figures were then collected. Figure 4-3 summarises the findings for annual net pay (weekly and monthly responses were converted to an annual figure) among those respondents able or willing to answer about their pay, who answered the evaluation-only not the joint questionnaire (because the joint survey respondents were asked only about gross pay) and who worked for 31 or more hours a week during their apprenticeship (to avoid results being skewed by those working shorter than average hours). This is a base of 1,947 respondents, 39% of all those interviewed. Among this group, 1% reported earning less than £4,500 annually and 6% earned between £4,500 and £6,499. Pay generally increased with level of apprenticeship, although Level 5 apprentices were more likely to be paid in the highest band of £25,000 or more (45%) than apprentices at Level 6 and above (32% of degree

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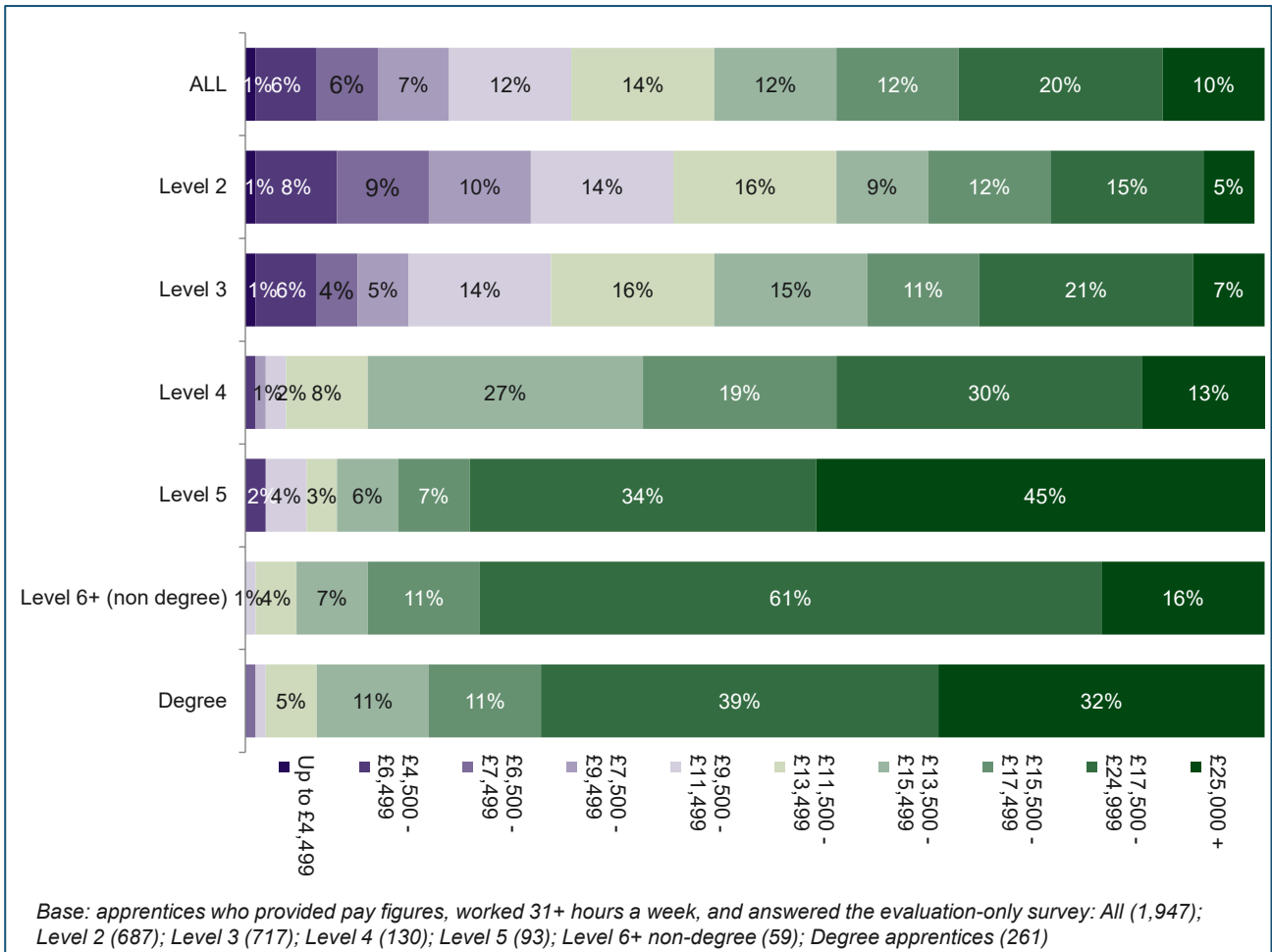
<sup>27</sup> The National Minimum Wage (NMW) is the minimum pay per hour almost all workers in the UK are entitled to by law. As well as separate NMW rates for those aged under 18, 18-20, 21-24, and a National Living Wage (NLW) for those aged 25 and over, there is a distinct NMW rate for apprentices which applies for apprentices aged under 19 and those aged 19 or over and in the first year of their apprenticeship. Details on the NMW and NLW rates can be found at on the GOV.UK website [here](#).

<sup>28</sup> The 2018-2019 Apprenticeship Pay Survey report is published separately by the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy.

apprentices and 16% of non-degree apprentices at Level 6 and above had annual earning within this band).

The higher pay levels among Level 5 apprentices is unsurprising as ILR data suggests that there are a particularly high proportion of older apprentices aged 25 and over at this level (90% compared with 43% on average), among whom pay was higher than average (21% earning £25,000 or more per year, compared with 10% overall).

**Figure 4-3 Annual net pay during apprenticeship among those working 31+ hours a week**



Apprentices in the Arts, Education and Leisure subject areas that worked at least 31 hours a week during their apprenticeship were more likely than average to report low annual pay; in each 23-24% of apprentices reported net annual earnings of less than £6,500, compared with 7% overall.

Those on Business and Engineering apprenticeships were the most likely to report annual net pay of £17,500 plus (40% and 35% respectively, compared with 31% overall). Those on Business apprenticeships were by far the most likely to report pay of £25,000 plus (18%). Although this relates to the fact that this sector subject area had a much higher proportion than average on apprenticeships at Level 4+ (21% compared with the 11% average), it does not entirely explain it as the ICT sector subject area also had a high proportion of Level 4+ apprenticeships (23%) but the proportion earning £25,000 or more annually (5%) was below average.

There were also differences in pay between those who started their apprenticeship pre- and post- the apprenticeship reforms that came into effect in May 2017, with post-reform apprenticeships more likely to earn higher annual pay (38% of post-reform apprentices working 31 or more hours a week reported annual net pay figures of £17,500 or more per year, compared with 28% of pre-reform apprentices). This partly reflects that post-reform apprentices were more likely to have been undertaking apprenticeships at Level 4+ (16% vs 7% among pre-reform apprentices).

In terms of differences by gender, male apprentices were more likely to report annual pay figures of £17,500 or more than female apprentices (34% and 26% respectively).

The majority (77%) of apprentices who worked for their employer before starting their apprenticeship experienced no change to their pay as a result of starting their apprenticeship. The proportion reporting a pay increase (18%) was similar to 2017 (20%). Experiencing a pay increase among existing employees was more common among:

- Apprentices at Level 6 and above (24%);
- Younger apprentices aged under 19 (34%, compared with 24% of 19-24 year olds and 13% of those aged 25 or above);
- Men (20% vs. 16% of women);
- The Construction and Engineering subject areas (32% and 24% respectively);
- Those whose apprenticeships lasted a year or longer (19%, compared to 10% of those with shorter apprenticeships); and,
- Those based in London (23%).

## The type of training received during apprenticeships

The survey collected information from respondents about whether they received any of the following types of training, teaching and tuition as part of their apprenticeship (and the typical hours per week): training at a college or another external provider (i.e. not at their employer); formal training sessions at their workplace from either their employer or training provider, away from your usual work activities; and training at their workplace from either their employer or a training provider whilst doing their usual work activities. For training undertaken in the workplace respondents were asked if this was provided by their employer, external provider or both. The survey also collected information on work or learning towards their apprenticeship undertaken in their own time, outside of their usual paid working hours.

In this chapter, we use the following definitions and terminology:

- 'Any training' refers to training undertaken at an external provider or undertaken at the workplace (but excludes work or learning undertaken in their own time outside of usual paid working hours);
- 'Formal training' refers to training taking place at an external provider or at the workplace away from their usual work activities (it excludes training at the workplace whilst doing usual work activities, and work or learning undertaken in the apprentice's own time outside of usual paid working hours);
- 'Informal training' refers to training at the workplace whilst doing usual work activities.

The survey's definition of 'formal training' may not in all cases exactly match 'off-the-job training' which forms part of the requirement to attract government funding whereby all apprentices must spend at least 20% of their employed hours doing occupational 'off-the-job' training during the apprenticeship.<sup>29</sup> The reasons why the two do not exactly match are discussed more fully in the 'off-the-job training requirement' section later in this chapter. However, it would be expected that a large majority of the 20% requirement would be met through training that would meet the survey's definition of 'formal training'. As such the survey's 'formal training' measure can be considered a rough proxy for the off-the-job training requirement, and gives us important insight into the quality of the programme.

Almost all apprentices (95%) reported receiving any training as part of their apprenticeship: this represents a slight decrease from the 97% who reported this in 2017.

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<sup>29</sup> Version 2 of DfE's 'Apprenticeship off-the-job training' [document](#) issued April 2019.

The proportion of apprentices doing formal training<sup>30</sup> has decreased (82%, down from 86% in 2017), as well as training being done at the workplace as part of normal work activities (77%, down from 82% in 2017).

Overall, 5% said that they had done no training at all as part of their apprenticeship (an assertion that was double checked if an apprentice responded 'no' to each individual type of training discussed with them).<sup>31</sup> No training being provided was more prevalent among:

- Those studying at Level 5 (9%);
- Apprentices in the Education (8%), Business (6%), Health (6%) subject areas;
- Older apprentices aged 25 and above (7%).

Around four in five (82%) apprentices had received formal training, defined as either that delivered by an external provider (received by 51%) or formal training within the workplace but away from usual work activities (received by 64%). While there was no change in the proportion of apprentices who had done formal training at their workplace from the 2017 survey (64%), the proportion who had been trained at an external provider fell from 63% in 2017 (although remained higher than 48% reported in 2015).

**Table 4-3 Proportion of apprentices doing training**

| <i>Column percentages</i>   | <b>2015</b> | <b>2017</b> | <b>2018-19</b> |
|---|-------------|-------------|----------------|
| <i>Base: all apprentices (n)</i>  | 5,781       | 5,825       | 5,047          |
| Any training  | 95%         | 97%         | 95%            |
| Any formal training   | 79%         | 86%         | 82%            |
| <i>Training at college or external provider</i>                                   | 48%         | 63%         | 51%            |
| <i>Formal training at the workplace, away from usual work activities</i>          | 58%         | 64%         | 64%            |
| Training at the workplace, whilst doing usual work activities (informal training) | 78%         | 82%         | 77%            |

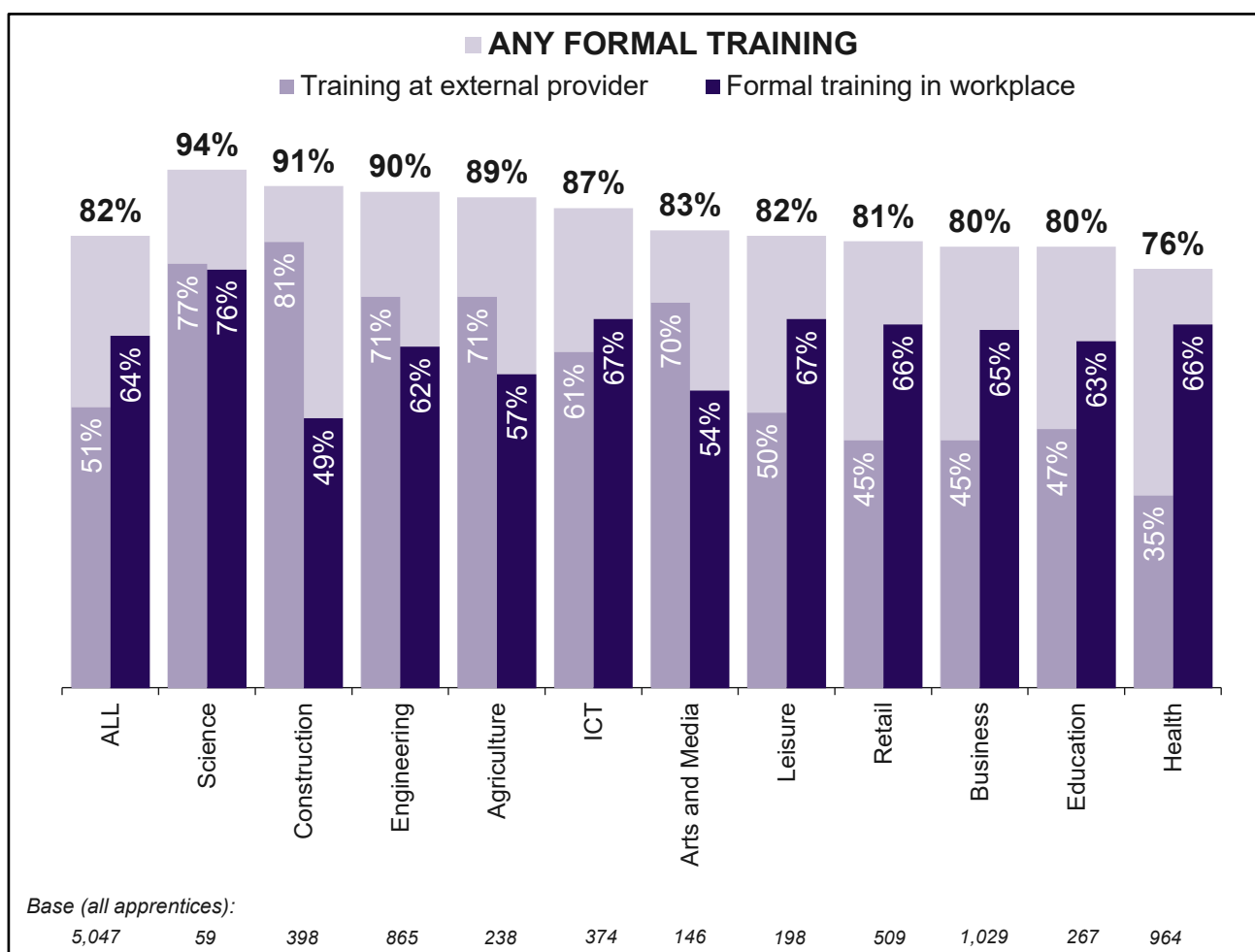
<sup>30</sup> Formal training encompasses training at an external provider or formal training sessions in the workplace, away from their usual work activities.

<sup>31</sup> It is possible that current apprentices could have received no training yet because their training would be delivered as block release and this had not yet taken place. However, there was no statistically significant difference between current apprentices and completers in the proportion saying they had received no training (4% and 5% respectively).

The proportion of apprentices doing formal training decreased from 2017 levels across all subject areas with the exception of Science. Apprentices within Science (94%), Construction (91%), Engineering (90%), Agriculture (89%) and ICT (87%) were all more likely to have done formal training, as shown in Figure 4-4.

While formal training at a college or external provider fell across all subject areas, the largest changes were seen in Health, Public Services & Care (falling 21 percentage points from 2017) and ICT (falling 18 percentage points from 2017). Again, while overall the proportion receiving formal training sessions in the workplace had remained unchanged from 2017, there were significant reductions in the Arts (down 20 percentage points) and Agriculture (down 9 percentage points) subject areas.

**Figure 4-4 Type of formal training received whilst on apprenticeship, by subject area**



As Table 4-4 shows, experiences of training varied greatly by subgroup. Level 2 apprentices were less likely than average to have received formal training (80%), whether at an external provider (46%) or provided in the workplace (62%).<sup>32</sup> In contrast almost all (96%) apprentices at Level 6 and above had done formal training. Those who worked for their employer before starting their apprenticeships were less likely to have done this than those who were new to their employer upon starting their apprenticeship (79% vs. 88%).

In terms of demographic differences, likelihood of having received any formal training decreased with age: nine in ten (90%) apprentices aged under 19 had received formal training compared with three in four (77%) of those aged 25 and above. By gender, male apprentices were more likely than female apprentices to have done formal training (86% vs 78%, and increase on the 5 percentage point gender gap in the 2017 survey).

Current apprentices were more likely to report receiving formal training (84%) than completers (81%). However, current apprentices in the 2018-19 survey were less likely than those in the 2017 study to report formal training (when the figure was 88%), with a large fall in those reporting any training at an external provider (54%, down from 66% among current apprentices in the 2017 survey).

The fall in the proportion of current apprentices reporting any formal training from the 2017 to the 2018-19 survey is partly due to an increase in the proportion of some types of apprentices that were less likely to report formal training (such as older apprentices; those aged 25+ comprised 40% of the cohort of current apprentices in 2017 but 43% in the 2018-19 survey). But it is also the case that the fall can be seen in all key groups of apprentices, hence the overall fall has not just been caused by changes in the composition of apprentices. For example, the proportion of current apprentices reporting receiving any formal training was lower than in the 2017 survey for each age band (90% of those aged under 19 reported receiving formal training in the 2018-19 survey, down from 95% in 2017; 85% of those aged 19-24 received formal training down from 88% in 2017; and 79% of current apprentices aged 25 plus reported receiving formal training, down from 82% in 2017).

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<sup>32</sup> Although 79% of Level 5 apprentices had done formal training as part of their apprenticeship, this was not a statistically significant different from the 82% average.



In a similar way, those in the 2018-19 survey (covering current apprentices and completers) who were existing employees before they started their apprenticeship remained, as in the 2017 survey, less likely to report receiving any formal training (79%) than those who were new to the employer on starting their apprenticeship (88%). It was also the case that the proportion of all apprentices that were already employed by the employer in the 2018-19 survey (61%) was higher than in 2017 (57%).

**Table 4-4 Training summary for apprenticeships: by age, recruitment status, gender, intended duration and level status**

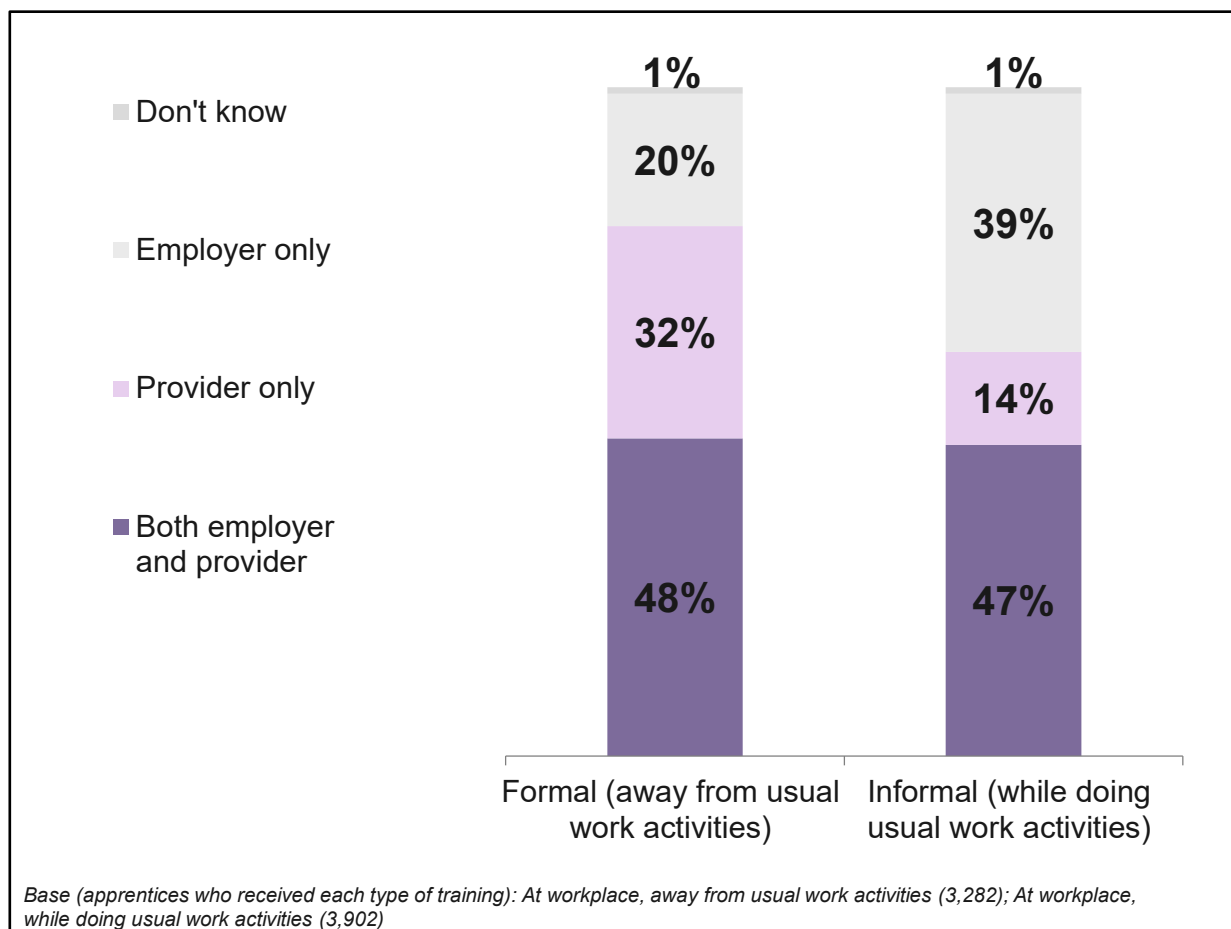
| <i>Row percentages</i>                            | <b>Base</b> | <b>Any training</b> | <b>Any formal training</b> | <b>Training at external provider</b> | <b>Formal training in workplace</b> | <b>Training at the workplace, whilst doing usual work activities</b> | <b>No training</b> |
|---|-------------|---------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|--------------------|
| All   | 5,047       | 95                  | 82                         | 51                                   | 64                                  | 77   | 5                  |
| Age under 19                                      | 1,696       | 98                  | 90                         | 68                                   | 65                                  | 83   | 2                  |
| Age 19-24   | 1,587       | 96                  | 83                         | 55                                   | 63                                  | 81   | 4                  |
| Age 25+   | 1,764       | 93                  | 77                         | 37                                   | 64                                  | 70   | 7                  |
| Existing employee when started the apprenticeship | 2,738       | 94                  | 79                         | 43                                   | 63                                  | 73   | 6                  |
| Not an existing employee                          | 2,295       | 98                  | 88                         | 63                                   | 65                                  | 82   | 2                  |
| Male  | 2,656       | 97                  | 86                         | 60                                   | 63                                  | 79   | 3                  |
| Female  | 2,391       | 94                  | 78                         | 42                                   | 65                                  | 74   | 6                  |
| Less than a year                                  | 149         | 96                  | 68                         | 36                                   | 56                                  | 76   | 4                  |
| A year or longer                                  | 4,887       | 95                  | 83                         | 52                                   | 64                                  | 77   | 5                  |
| Level 2   | 1,943       | 95                  | 80                         | 46                                   | 62                                  | 78   | 5                  |
| Level 3   | 2,330       | 96                  | 84                         | 54                                   | 64                                  | 77   | 4                  |
| Level 4   | 178         | 95                  | 85                         | 56                                   | 68                                  | 76   | 5                  |

|          |     |    |    |    |    |    |   |
|----------|-----|----|----|----|----|----|---|
| Level 5  | 156 | 91 | 79 | 51 | 65 | 62 | 9 |
| Level 6+ | 440 | 98 | 96 | 82 | 77 | 75 | 2 |

The vast majority (83%) of apprentices said they always (48%) or usually (35%) undertook training within their contracted working hours, showing little change from levels in 2017 (81%, 48% and 33% respectively), while the proportion never undertaking their training within contracted work hours also remained fairly static (4%, compared with 5% in 2017). However the proportion of apprentices reporting usually undertaking their training outside of their contracted working hours has fallen to 10%, from 13% in 2017. Overall 15% of those receiving training for their apprenticeship indicated that this training was usually or always undertaken outside of their contracted work hours: this was much higher among Level 5 (39%) and Level 6+ apprentices (23%), and those undertaking Health, Public Services and Care (30%) and Education and Training (31%) sector subject area apprenticeships.

Figure 4-5 shows who delivers workplace training. Informal workplace training (i.e. undertaken during usual work activities) was more likely to be solely delivered by the employer (39%) than solely by the provider (14%). The opposite was true for formal workplace training undertaken away from their usual work activities (32% of apprentices receiving this type of training indicated it was delivered solely by an external provider, compared with 20% saying it was delivered solely by their employer). However, around half (48%) of apprentices who received formal training sessions in the workplace reported that **both** their employer and an external training provider delivered these sessions. This was also the case for about half (47%) of those receiving informal training.

**Figure 4-5 Who delivers training at the workplace?**



## Time spent training whilst undertaking apprenticeships

The Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England (SASE) states that, for frameworks, an Intermediate and Advanced level apprenticeship must contain a minimum of 280 Guided Learning Hours (GLH), of which at least 100 GLH or 30% (whichever is greater) must be delivered off-the-job.<sup>33</sup> This would require an average of approximately six hours training per week on a 12-month apprenticeship, of which around two hours should be off-the-job, though the specification relates to the amount of training over the whole apprenticeship not the amount given per week or in an average week. Related to this, DfE guidance indicates that to attract government funding, all apprenticeship frameworks and apprenticeship standards require a minimum 20% threshold for the proportion of time that should be spent on occupational off-the-job

<sup>33</sup> Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England (SASE). DfE, August 2018.

training during the apprenticeship (this is discussed more fully in the 'off-the-job training requirement' section later in this chapter).<sup>34</sup>

The training hours reported by apprentices therefore give an important *indication* as to whether apprenticeships are meeting these requirements. Results should be treated with some caution as apprentices are asked to average the amount of training received per week, which may be a difficult calculation if the amount of training differs significantly each week.

Overall, apprentices reporting any training reported receiving an average of 10.8 hours (either formal or informal) per week, down from the 11.5 hours reported in the 2017 survey, but up from 10.1 hours reported in the 2015 survey. It should be noted that, as in previous years, there was a large variation in response<sup>35</sup>. Nevertheless, results suggest there may be a sizeable minority of apprentices not receiving the minimum hours laid out in the SASE requirements, with one in three apprentices (35%) reporting receiving five hours of training or less per week.

Apprentices who were existing employees (and had done training as part of their apprenticeship) were almost twice as likely as those who started their apprenticeship on joining the employer to receive five hours of training or less per week (43% vs. 23%).

Apprentices reported an average of 5.6 hours of formal training hours each week (training at an external provider or formal training at the workplace away from usual work activities), again down from the average 6 hours of formal training a week reported in the 2017 survey, but higher than the 4.6 hours reported in the 2015 survey.

As shown in Table 4-5, the highest levels of training occurred in traditional apprenticeships such as Construction (18.5 hours training per week, of which 9 were for formal hours) and Engineering (17.0 hours per week, of which 8.9 hours were for formal training). The average amount of training was lowest in Education, Health and Business (6.1, 7.6 and 7.7 hours of any training respectively, 3.4, 3.6 and 4.2 hours respectively of formal training per week); the first two of these sector subject areas have lower than average contracted or usual weekly working hours.

Apprentices who had received any training reported spending an average of 3.2 hours per week training at an external provider, again a slight fall from the figure reported in the 2017 (3.7 hours), but up from the 2015 survey (2.7 hours). As discussed earlier, the

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<sup>34</sup> Version 2 of DfE's 'Apprenticeship off-the-job training' [document](#) issued April 2019.

<sup>35</sup> Standard deviation of 10.7

main change from 2017 was an increase among those receiving training but not receiving training externally (47% in 2018-19, up from 34% in 2017).

Apprentices who commenced their apprenticeship on joining the employer received higher levels of training at an external college or provider (4.3 hours per week), than those who were existing employees (2.4 hours). This reflects the results by subject area, as subject areas with greater reliance on external recruitment for apprentices (i.e. where the recruits were not existing employees), such as Construction, Engineering and Science also tended to report higher levels of training at external providers on average.

**Table 4-5 Average hours training per week whilst undertaking apprenticeships among those receiving any training (and able to give relevant training figures), by subject area<sup>36</sup>**

| <i>Column percentages</i>                             | All   | Agriculture | Arts and Media | Business | Construction | Education | Engineering | Health | ICT  | Leisure | Retail | Science |
|---|-------|-------------|----------------|----------|--------------|-----------|-------------|--------|------|---------|--------|---------|
| <b>Total training 2015 survey</b>                     | 10.1  | 15.3        | 12.1           | 6.2      | 22.2         | 6.7       | 18.2        | 7.0    | 12.5 | 11.3    | 8.9    | -       |
| <b>Total training 2017 survey</b>                     | 11.5  | 16.7        | 15.1           | 7.8      | 21.3         | 7.0       | 19.0        | 8.2    | 16.5 | 11.8    | 10.5   | 15.6    |
| <b>Total training 2018-19 survey</b>                  | 10.8  | 13.7        | 12.2           | 7.7      | 18.5         | 6.1       | 17.0        | 7.6    | 11.9 | 10.0    | 10.4   | 13.9    |
| Formal training 2018-19                               | 5.6   | 7.1         | 6.6            | 4.2      | 9.0          | 3.4       | 8.9         | 3.6    | 7.4  | 5.5     | 5.3    | 8.1     |
| Training during usual activities 2018-19              | 5.2   | 6.9         | 5.9            | 3.5      | 9.3          | 2.5       | 8.4         | 4.1    | 4.8  | 4.5     | 5.1    | 5.9     |
| <i>Base: all receiving training 2015<sup>37</sup></i> | 4,857 | 285         | 111            | 1,167    | 327          | 245       | 575         | 877    | 351  | 292     | 627    | -       |

<sup>36</sup> Note, the average hours spent on 'formal training' and 'training during usual activities' do not always sum to the average total training hours measure. This is because there are some apprentices who were able to provide figures for one element but not the other. These have been excluded from the average total training hours measure but retained for the aspect they were able to answer.

<sup>37</sup> Bases for total training are all apprentices who had done any training where total training hours could be derived.

|   |       |     |     |       |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |    |
|---|-------|-----|-----|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| <i>Base: all receiving training 2017</i>                  | 4,829 | 177 | 131 | 1,101 | 312 | 231 | 664 | 905 | 370 | 265 | 597 | 76 |
| <i>Base: all receiving training 2018-19</i>               | 4,192 | 195 | 118 | 883   | 345 | 216 | 717 | 756 | 324 | 158 | 425 | 55 |
| <i>Formal training base 2018-19<sup>38</sup></i>          | 4,383 | 206 | 124 | 916   | 358 | 227 | 742 | 806 | 330 | 168 | 449 | 57 |
| <i>Training during usual activities base<sup>39</sup></i> | 4,453 | 211 | 128 | 918   | 362 | 232 | 762 | 817 | 344 | 172 | 451 | 56 |

As Table 4-6 shows, not only were Level 5 apprentices least likely to do any training but those who did reported the lowest levels of training hours per week (8.2 hours overall, of which around 4.4 hours a week was for formal training).

The amount of training undertaken decreased with age: apprentices aged 19 and under reported doing an average of 14.7 hours of training per week, compared with 12.4 hours among 19-24 year olds and 7.2 hours among those aged 25 and above. Older apprentices were also far more likely to have received five hours of training or less per week (49% of those aged 25 and above, compared with 29% of 19-24 year olds and 19% of those aged under 19).

Female apprentices who undertook training were far more likely than their male counterparts to receive fewer training hours per week, with 44% receiving five hours of training or less per week (and a mean of 8.5 hours), compared with 26% of male apprentices (and a mean of 14.8 hours). This is likely to reflect the fact that female apprentices were more common in subject areas where training hours were lower such as Business, Education, Health and Retail, and that women worked fewer hours per week (an average of 34) than male apprentices (an average of 38 hours per week).

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<sup>38</sup> Those who had done any training, where formal training hours could be derived.

<sup>39</sup> Those who had done any training and were able to provide number of hours spent on training during usual activities

**Table 4-6 Average hours training per week whilst undertaking apprenticeships among those receiving training (and able to give relevant training figures), by level, age and gender**

| <i>Column percentages</i>                        | All         | Level 2     | Level 3     | Level 4    | Level 5    | Level 6+    | Under 19    | 19-24       | 25+        | Male        | Female     |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| <b>Total training 2018-19</b>                    | <b>10.8</b> | <b>10.3</b> | <b>11.5</b> | <b>9.9</b> | <b>8.2</b> | <b>12.6</b> | <b>14.7</b> | <b>12.4</b> | <b>7.2</b> | <b>13.4</b> | <b>8.0</b> |
| Formal training                                  | 5.6         | 5.2         | 5.9         | 5.9        | 4.4        | 8.5         | 7.7         | 6.2         | 3.9        | 7.1         | 4.1        |
| Training during usual activities                 | 5.2         | 5.2         | 5.5         | 4.5        | 4.0        | 4.1         | 7.2         | 6.1         | 3.4        | 6.5         | 3.9        |
| <i>Base: all receiving training<sup>40</sup></i> | 4,192       | 1,611       | 1,918       | 155        | 128        | 380         | 1,437       | 1,329       | 1,426      | 2,242       | 1,950      |
| <i>Base: formal training</i>                     | 4,383       | 1,688       | 2,009       | 160        | 132        | 394         | 1,501       | 1,385       | 1,497      | 2,330       | 2,053      |
| <i>Base: Training during usual activities</i>    | 4,453       | 1,707       | 2,048       | 163        | 136        | 399         | 1,516       | 1,418       | 1,519      | 2,360       | 2,093      |

## ‘Off-the-job’ training requirement

### Definition and caveats

As outlined in recent guidance documents<sup>41</sup>, to meet government funding rules, off-the-job training must account for at least 20% of an apprentice’s employed time during their apprenticeship. Off-the-job training must be received as part of their employed hours, for

<sup>40</sup> Bases as per descriptions in previous Table 4.5

<sup>41</sup> DfE 2019, [Off-the-job training guidance](#)

the purpose of achieving their apprenticeship. It is not training delivered for the sole purpose of enabling the apprentice to perform the work for which they have been employed. Survey information on weekly hours worked and weekly hours spent on **formal** training (discussed in previous sections) were used to derive a proxy for the proportion of employed time doing 'off-the-job training'. The calculation used was:

$$\text{Hours of formal training}^{42} \text{ per week} / \text{Hours worked}^{43} \text{ per week}$$

This is the closest proxy the survey can provide for the 'off-the-job' training requirement, and we would expect most of the 20% requirement to be made up of what the survey defines as 'formal training'. However, some differences exist between the survey's measure of 'formal training' and the apprenticeship funding rules' definition of 'off-the-job training'. It is not clear to what degree the survey's formal training measure would over- or underestimate the amount of 'off-the-job' training; some elements are additional (such as English and maths learning, which should not count towards the 20% requirement) while others are missed (such as doing assignments and attending conferences which can count towards the 20% requirement). Beyond definitional differences, there is also some uncertainty around how apprentices report their training and work hours.<sup>44</sup> These issues are detailed in the technical report.

Subgroup patterns on the mean proportion of time spent on formal training were similar to those on those more likely to receive formal training as discussed earlier in the chapter. Particularly high averages were reported in the Construction (mean average of 22.4% of working hours spent on formal training); Science (21.3%) and Engineering (21.2%). These were also the only sectors where the majority of apprentices said that formal training accounted for 20% or more of their working hours. The lowest averages were reported in Health (10.5%); Business (10.9%); and Education (10.8%).

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<sup>42</sup> As outlined earlier in the chapter, formal training is defined as a combination of any time spent training at a college or external provider, plus any time training at the workplace away from usual work activities.

<sup>43</sup> For apprentices who report having a written contract, the calculations use their contracted hours. For those who report not having a written contract, we use responses to 'how many hours a week do you usually work?'

<sup>44</sup> Those apprentices without a written contract were asked about their usual working hours. Some of these apprentices may only include in their responses the time they spent at the workstation, rather than including total employed hours (i.e. including paid training). The technical report shows the impact of this on the estimate of formal training as a proportion of working hours.



**Table 4-7 Percentage of working hours spent on formal training level**

| <i>Row percentages</i> | <b>Base</b> | <b>None</b> | <b>&lt;5%</b> | <b>5-9.99%</b> | <b>10-19.99%</b> | <b>20%+</b> | <b>Mean (%)</b> |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| All                    | 4,323       | 18%         | 16%           | 16%            | 20%              | 30%         | 14.3            |
| Agriculture            | 188         | 9%          | 12%           | 10%            | 26%              | 44%         | 18.4            |
| Arts                   | 116         | 19%         | 4%            | 11%            | 33%              | 33%         | 17.9            |
| Business               | 954         | 21%         | 19%           | 20%            | 21%              | 18%         | 10.9            |
| Construction           | 340         | 10%         | 4%            | 4%             | 20%              | 61%         | 22.4            |
| Education              | 240         | 21%         | 20%           | 20%            | 24%              | 15%         | 10.8            |
| Engineering            | 713         | 10%         | 9%            | 8%             | 18%              | 54%         | 21.2            |
| Health                 | 807         | 25%         | 20%           | 19%            | 19%              | 18%         | 10.5            |
| ICT                    | 329         | 13%         | 11%           | 17%            | 21%              | 38%         | 18.8            |
| Leisure                | 142         | 20%         | 14%           | 16%            | 17%              | 33%         | 17.2            |
| Retail                 | 437         | 19%         | 14%           | 17%            | 20%              | 30%         | 14.1            |
| Science                | 57          | 6%          | 7%            | 9%             | 20%              | 58%         | 21.3            |

*Note: the table is based on those respondents where from their survey responses it was possible to calculate their training hours as a proportion of their working hours. The base of 4,323 respondents represents 85% of those interviewed.*

By level, again, apprentices at Level 6 and above reported the highest average proportion of formal training (22.6%), with more than half (54%) of these apprentices reporting that 20% or more of their working hours were spent on formal training, compared with a third or fewer at all other levels.

While there were no differences between current apprentices and those who had completed in terms of prevalence, current apprentices were more likely than completers to report that formal training accounted for 20% or more of their working hours (34% vs. 28%). This may reflect that it is likely that there would be more training towards the beginning of an apprenticeship than towards the end, hence current apprentices would, on average, be likely to have experienced a greater proportion of their overall training hours than their total working hours for their whole apprenticeship.

**Table 4-8 Percentage of working hours spent on formal training by level and completion status**

| <i>Row percentages</i> | <b>Base</b> | <b>None</b> | <b>&lt;5%</b> | <b>5-9.99%</b> | <b>10-19.99%</b> | <b>20%+</b> | <b>Mean (%)</b> |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| All                    | 4,323       | 18%         | 16%           | 16%            | 20%              | 30%         | 14.3            |
| Level 2                | 1,646       | 21%         | 16%           | 17%            | 19%              | 27%         | 13.2            |
| Level 3                | 1,988       | 16%         | 15%           | 16%            | 20%              | 33%         | 15.4            |
| Level 4                | 156         | 16%         | 10%           | 12%            | 30%              | 32%         | 15.1            |
| Level 5                | 143         | 23%         | 20%           | 16%            | 20%              | 21%         | 11.3            |
| Level 6+               | 390         | 4%          | 8%            | 9%             | 24%              | 54%         | 22.6            |
| Current                | 2,067       | 17%         | 14%           | 15%            | 20%              | 34%         | 14.8            |
| Completer              | 2,256       | 19%         | 16%           | 17%            | 20%              | 28%         | 14.0            |

As reported above, differences in prevalence of formal training between apprenticeship standards and apprenticeship frameworks only occurred among apprenticeship completers, and this was also true in terms of the average proportion of formal training undertaken. Among completers, those on standards reported that, on average, 19.4% of their working hours were spent on formal training, compared to 13.8% reported among those on frameworks. Further, around two-fifths (42%) of completers on standards said formal training accounted for 20% or more of their working hours, compared with around a quarter (27%) of those on frameworks.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, apprentices who were new to their employers at the start of their apprenticeship were more likely than those who were existing employees to have done any formal training. In addition, they were more likely to have spent a greater proportion of their employed time doing formal training than their counterparts (a mean average of 17.8% of working hours, compared with 12.2% among existing employees). Overall, two-fifths (41%) of these apprentices spent 20% or more of their working hours on formal training compared with a quarter (24%) of existing employees.

## Self-study among Level 4+ apprentices

All apprentices at Level 4 and above were asked whether they did any work or learning towards their apprenticeship in their own time, outside of their usual paid working hours. The vast majority (92%) had done so, in line with levels reported in 2017 and 2015 (93% and 91% respectively). Level 5 apprentices, who reported lower levels of guided training hours, were most likely to have studied in their own time (96%), while Level 6+ non-degree apprentices were least likely (79%). Women were more likely to have studied in their own time than men (96% vs. 87%), although this is likely to partly reflect the fact that they were also more likely to be on a Level 5 apprenticeship than men (7% vs. 3%).

On average, apprentices at Level 4 and above studying in their own time spent 6.4 hours a week doing so. The amount of time spent doing this per week increased with level; Level 4 apprentices reported doing 5.2 hours of studying in their own time per week, rising to 6.8 hours among Level 5 apprentices and 7.3 hours among Level 6+ apprentices. The latter figure appears to be especially driven by the high levels reported among degree apprentices (7.5 hours per week, compared with 6.7 hours reported by other Level 6+ apprentices).

## Assessment of prior learning and English and maths ability

Apprentices who received training from a college or external provider (regardless of where this took place) were asked whether, at the start of their apprenticeship, their provider conducted an initial assessment to check their ability in English, maths and any other relevant prior learning or qualifications. Overall, 92% of apprentices had received any such assessment. Around nine in ten of these apprentices reported having had their abilities assessed in English (88%) and maths (87%), while a small majority had other relevant prior learning assessed (56%).

Level 6+ apprentices trained by a college or external provider were less likely than other levels to have had their abilities assessed (87%), primarily driven by lower levels of assessment in English (77%) and maths (78%), however they were more likely than those at any other level to have had other relevant learning assessed (66%).

By subject area, these assessments were most likely to be conducted among Health apprentices (97%). Apprentices in Construction (80%) and Agriculture (86%) were least likely to have had their abilities assessed.

Older apprentices were also more likely to have had their abilities assessed; almost all (96%) of apprentices aged 25 and above reported this, compared with 91% of 19-24 year olds and 88% of those aged under 19. As Table 4-9 shows, these patterns held true both in terms of assessing ability in English and in maths.

**Table 4-9 Assessment of English, maths and other relevant prior learning of qualifications at the start of apprenticeship by age, gender, level and subject area<sup>45</sup>**

| <i>Row percentages</i> | <b>Base</b> | <b>ANY ASSESSMENT</b> | <b>Ability in English</b> | <b>Ability in maths</b> | <b>Other learning / qualifications</b> | <b>None</b> |
|------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|--|-------------|
| All                    | 4,414       | 92%                   | 88%                       | 87%                     | 56%                                    | 7%          |
| Age under 19           | 1,528       | 88%                   | 83%                       | 82%                     | 57%                                    | 12%         |
| Age 19-24              | 1,413       | 91%                   | 86%                       | 87%                     | 57%                                    | 8%          |
| Age 25+                | 1,473       | 96%                   | 93%                       | 91%                     | 54%                                    | 3%          |
| Male                   | 2,399       | 90%                   | 86%                       | 85%                     | 57%                                    | 9%          |
| Female                 | 2,015       | 93%                   | 90%                       | 89%                     | 55%                                    | 5%          |
|                        |             |                       |                           |                         |  |             |
| Level 2                | 1,667       | 91%                   | 87%                       | 87%                     | 49%                                    | 8%          |
| Level 3                | 2,028       | 92%                   | 89%                       | 88%                     | 62%                                    | 7%          |
| Level 4                | 166         | 94%                   | 91%                       | 90%                     | 60%                                    | 6%          |
| Level 5                | 135         | 96%                   | 91%                       | 88%                     | 52%                                    | 4%          |
| Level 6+               | 418         | 87%                   | 77%                       | 78%                     | 66%                                    | 13%         |
|                        |             |                       |                           |                         |  |             |
| Agriculture            | 220         | 86%                   | 79%                       | 77%                     | 36%                                    | 12%         |
| Arts                   | 130         | 88%                   | 74%                       | 76%                     | 67%                                    | 11%         |
| Business               | 884         | 92%                   | 88%                       | 87%                     | 59%                                    | 7%          |
| Construction           | 367         | 80%                   | 75%                       | 75%                     | 43%                                    | 18%         |
| Education              | 226         | 91%                   | 88%                       | 87%                     | 78%                                    | 9%          |
| Engineering            | 802         | 91%                   | 87%                       | 86%                     | 63%                                    | 8%          |
| Health                 | 782         | 97%                   | 93%                       | 92%                     | 56%                                    | 3%          |
| ICT                    | 343         | 90%                   | 85%                       | 83%                     | 61%                                    | 9%          |
| Leisure                | 169         | 92%                   | 86%                       | 86%                     | 52%                                    | 7%          |
| Retail                 | 435         | 93%                   | 90%                       | 91%                     | 42%                                    | 6%          |
| Science                | 56          | 89%                   | 83%                       | 83%                     | 67%                                    | 11%         |

<sup>45</sup> 'Don't know' results not shown (1% overall)

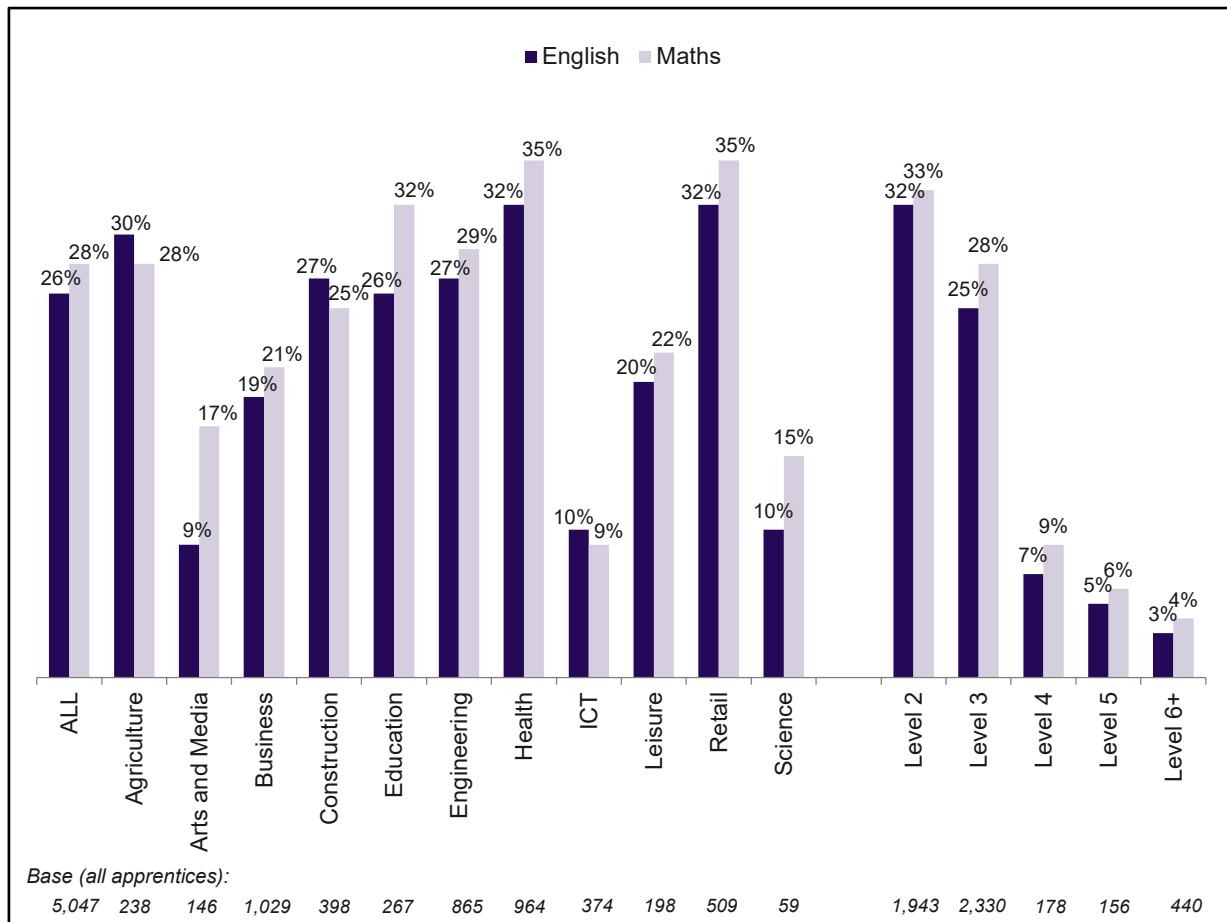
## English and maths qualifications

Those who received training from a college or external provider were asked whether they studied towards English or maths qualifications during their apprenticeship. Three in ten (30%, or 26% of all apprentices) studied for an English qualification during their apprenticeship, and a third (33%; 28% of all apprentices) studied for a maths qualification. Overall 25% studied towards both (21% of all apprentices).

As shown in Figure 4-6, Health and Retail apprentices were more likely than average to have studied English (each 32%) and maths (each 35%). Likelihood of studying English or maths decreased with apprenticeship level; around a third of Level 2 (32% and 33% respectively) and a quarter of Level 3 apprentices (25% and 28% respectively) studied these qualifications, compared with a small minority (5% and 7% respectively) of apprentices at Level 4 and above.

There was also great variation between pre- and post-reform apprentices, with the latter less likely to have studied towards English (20% vs. 30% of pre-reform apprentices) and maths qualifications (23% vs. 31% of pre-reform apprentices).

**Figure 4-6 Proportion of apprentices studying towards English and maths as part of their apprenticeship**



Looking at the specific qualifications studied (see Table 4-10), patterns were very similar for English and maths. The most common type undertaken was Functional Skills Level 2 (56% English; 52% maths), while 16% and 18% respectively studied at Functional Skills Level 1, one in ten studied at Functional Skills Level 3 (each 10%) and 6% and 7% respectively studied towards a GCSE qualification.

In terms of English qualifications, Level 3 apprentices were more likely to be working towards higher level English qualifications; around three in five (62%) studied towards a Functional Skills Level 2 English qualification, compared with half (52%) of Level 2 apprentices. They were also more likely to have studied towards a Functional Skills Level 3 qualification than Level 2 apprentices (17% and 6% respectively). In contrast, Level 2 apprentices were more likely to have studied English at Functional Skills Level 1 (24% vs. 5% of Level 3 apprentices)

Similar patterns were true for maths qualifications, with Level 3 apprentices more likely to report studying towards a Functional Skills Level 3 Maths qualification than Level 2 apprentices (16% and 5% respectively), while the reverse was true for the study of Functional Skills Level 1 qualifications (29% of Level 2 apprentices vs. 6% of Level 3 apprentices). By subject area, there were few significant differences, although Engineering apprentices were more likely to studying towards a Functional Skills Level 3 Maths qualification (15%).

**Table 4-10 Types of English and maths qualifications undertaken, overall and by level**

| <i>Column percentages</i>                                  | English    |     |     |     | Maths        |     |     |     |
|--|------------|-----|-----|-----|--------------|-----|-----|-----|
|  | All        | L2  | L3  | L4+ | All          | L2  | L3  | L4+ |
| <i>Base: All studying qualifications (modularised) (n)</i> | <b>942</b> | 494 | 416 | 32  | <b>1,071</b> | 534 | 485 | 52  |
| Functional Skills Level 1                                  | <b>16</b>  | 24  | 5   | 3   | <b>18</b>    | 29  | 6   | 2   |
| Functional Skills Level 2                                  | <b>56</b>  | 52  | 62  | 65  | <b>52</b>    | 51  | 54  | 50  |
| Functional Skills Level 3                                  | <b>10</b>  | 6   | 17  | 18  | <b>10</b>    | 5   | 16  | 16  |
| GCSE   | <b>6</b>   | 6   | 7   | 3   | <b>7</b>     | 5   | 8   | 16  |
| Functional Skills (level unknown)                          | <b>2</b>   | 2   | 2   | 3   | <b>2</b>     | 2   | 2   | 2   |
| Other  | <b>3</b>   | 3   | 3   | 8   | <b>4</b>     | 1   | 8   | 15  |
| Don't know   | <b>14</b>  | 14  | 13  | 3   | <b>12</b>    | 12  | 12  | 4   |

As shown in Table 4-11, patterns were also similar for English and maths in terms of where the training was delivered. It was most common for teaching to take place at the workplace (each 45%), while three in ten (30% and 29% respectively) reported this taking place at a college. Others reported this teaching taking place at another external training provider (15% and 16% respectively) or online (14% and 13% respectively). College teaching was most likely to take place in Construction (86% among English students and 84% among maths students); Agriculture (75% and 76% respectively); and Engineering (53% and 61% respectively) subject areas, while Business apprentices undertaking English qualifications were far more likely to be trained at their workplace (61%).

**Table 4-11 Where English and maths training was delivered<sup>46</sup>**

| <i>Column percentages</i>                                  | <b>English</b> | <b>Maths</b> |
|--|----------------|--------------|
| <i>Base: All studying qualifications (modularised) (n)</i> | 942            | 1,071        |
| Delivered in workplace                                     | 45%            | 45%          |
| At a college   | 30%            | 29%          |
| At another external provider                               | 15%            | 16%          |
| Delivered online   | 14%            | 13%          |
| Other  | 6%             | 7%           |

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<sup>46</sup> 'Don't know' is not shown, but accounts for 1% of responses for each of English and Maths. Respondents could give more than one response.

## 5 Satisfaction with apprenticeships

This chapter examines levels of overall satisfaction, the degree to which apprentices were satisfied with individual elements of their apprenticeship and the degree to which they would speak highly of the apprenticeship programme.

### Key findings

- **Overall, 86% of apprentices were satisfied with their apprenticeship, and 7% were dissatisfied.**
- Degree apprentices were the most likely to be satisfied (94%) whilst Level 5 and Level 6+ non-degree apprentices were the least satisfied (78% and 72% respectively). By subject area, overall satisfaction was highest among Science apprentices (94%). Arts (79%) and Education (81%) apprentices had the lowest proportion satisfied.
- Common reasons given for dissatisfaction included a lack of support or contact from training providers (50% of those who were dissatisfied), apprenticeships being badly organised (42%), the poor quality of training (31%) and problems with the timeframe and management of the apprenticeship (25%).
- **Although satisfaction remains high, levels have dropped slightly since the 2017 survey** where 89% of apprentices were satisfied. The fall was particularly marked in the proportion 'very satisfied' (66% in the 2018-19 survey vs. 73% in 2017).
- **The fall in overall satisfaction was reported by apprentices at all levels but was greatest among Level 4 + apprentices** (81% in the 2018-19 survey vs. 87% in 2017).
- **Overall satisfaction among current apprentices has fallen from 89% in the 2017 survey to 83% in 2018-19 (with a decrease in those 'very satisfied' from 74% to 62%).** It is this fall that is behind the overall change. Among those who had completed their apprenticeship, there has been no change in overall satisfaction (87% in the 2018-19 survey vs. 88% in 2017).
- Overall satisfaction fell across the majority of subject areas among current apprentices. In terms of those 'very satisfied', there were particularly large falls among current ICT and Business apprentices (29 and 19 percentage points respectively).



### Key findings (continued)

- Satisfaction with a number of key aspects of apprenticeships has decreased among current apprentices which may help to partly explain the fall in overall satisfaction among this group. **Satisfaction among current apprentices has fallen in terms of assessment on the job** (82%, down from 87% in the 2017 survey), **quality of feedback** (83%, down from 87%), **the balance between the time spent training and working** (77%, down from 81%) and the **amount of training received each week** (77%, down from 80%).
- The changing profile of current apprentices, such as an increase in older apprentices who were less likely to be satisfied, has also contributed to the decrease in satisfaction.
- **There was no difference in overall satisfaction among apprentices currently on standards compared to those on frameworks (82% vs. 83%)** although the proportion 'very satisfied' was lower for standards (58% vs 66%).

## Overall satisfaction among all apprentices

The vast majority (86%) of apprentices were satisfied (giving a score between 6 and 10) with their apprenticeship. Two thirds (66%) were 'very satisfied' (giving a score of 8-10), while 7% were dissatisfied (giving a score of 0-4).

Satisfaction varied by level. Degree apprentices were the most likely to be satisfied (94%) whilst Level 5 and Level 6+ non-degree apprentices were the least likely (78% and 72% respectively).

By subject area, satisfaction was highest among Science apprentices (94%). Arts (79%) and Education (81%) apprentices had the lowest proportion satisfied with their apprenticeships, while ICT had the lowest proportion 'very satisfied' (52%).

**Table 5-1 Overall satisfaction by level, subject area and age**

| <i>Row percentages</i> | <b>Base</b> | <b>SATISFIED<br/>(6-10)</b> | <b>Very satisfied<br/>(8-10)</b> | <b>Fairly satisfied<br/>(6-7)</b> | <b>DISSATISFIED<br/>(0-4)</b> | <b>Mean score</b> |
|------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| All                    | 5,047       | 86%                         | 66%                              | 20%                               | 7%                            | 7.9               |
| <b>Level</b>           |             |                             |                                  |                                   |                               |                   |
| Level 2                | 1,943       | 85%                         | 67%                              | 18%                               | 6%                            | 7.9               |
| Level 3                | 2,330       | 87%                         | 66%                              | 21%                               | 6%                            | 7.9               |
| Level 4                | 178         | 83%                         | 59%                              | 24%                               | 11%                           | 7.3               |
| Level 5                | 156         | 78%                         | 61%                              | 17%                               | 12%                           | 7.4               |
| Level 6+ (non-degree)  | 80          | 72%                         | 44%                              | 27%                               | 23%                           | 6.6               |
| Degree apprentices     | 360         | 94%                         | 68%                              | 27%                               | 3%                            | 8.0               |
| <b>Subject area</b>    |             |                             |                                  |                                   |                               |                   |
| Science                | 59          | 94%                         | 84%                              | 10%                               | 5%                            | 8.5               |
| Leisure                | 198         | 88%                         | 67%                              | 21%                               | 3%                            | 8.0               |
| Health                 | 964         | 87%                         | 69%                              | 18%                               | 5%                            | 8.0               |
| Agriculture            | 238         | 87%                         | 66%                              | 21%                               | 8%                            | 7.9               |
| Engineering            | 865         | 87%                         | 68%                              | 19%                               | 6%                            | 7.9               |
| Construction           | 398         | 86%                         | 68%                              | 18%                               | 8%                            | 7.9               |
| Retail                 | 509         | 85%                         | 68%                              | 17%                               | 6%                            | 8.0               |
| Business               | 1,029       | 85%                         | 63%                              | 22%                               | 8%                            | 7.7               |
| ICT                    | 374         | 83%                         | 52%                              | 31%                               | 10%                           | 7.2               |
| Education              | 267         | 81%                         | 68%                              | 13%                               | 12%                           | 7.8               |
| Arts                   | 146         | 79%                         | 54%                              | 24%                               | 14%                           | 7.2               |

Levels of satisfaction also varied by demographic subgroups. Younger apprentices reported higher levels of satisfaction: 89% of apprentices aged under 19 were satisfied, compared with 86% of 19-24 year olds and 83% of those aged 25 and above.

While the proportion satisfied was the same among men and women (86%), the latter were more likely to be very satisfied with their apprenticeships than men (68% and 64% respectively).

In terms of other demographic differences, apprentices with a disability were notably less likely to be satisfied (75% compared to 86% of those without a disability). One in eight (12%) were dissatisfied. There were no differences by ethnicity.

By region, satisfaction levels were highest in the South East (89%) and lowest in London (82%).

**Table 5-2 Satisfaction by age, gender, disability and ethnicity**

| <i>Row percentages</i> | <b>Base</b> | <b>ANY SATISFIED (6-10)</b> | <b>Very satisfied (8-10)</b> | <b>Fairly satisfied (6-7)</b> | <b>ANY DISSATISFIED (0-4)</b> | <b>Mean score</b> |
|------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| All                    | 5,047       | 86%                         | 66%                          | 20%                           | 7%                            | 7.9               |
| <b>Age</b>             |             |                             |                              |                               |                               |                   |
| Age under 19           | 1,696       | 89%                         | 69%                          | 20%                           | 5%                            | 8.0               |
| Age 19-24              | 1,587       | 86%                         | 66%                          | 20%                           | 7%                            | 7.8               |
| Age 25+                | 1,764       | 83%                         | 65%                          | 19%                           | 7%                            | 7.8               |
| <b>Gender</b>          |             |                             |                              |                               |                               |                   |
| Male                   | 2,656       | 86%                         | 64%                          | 22%                           | 7%                            | 7.7               |
| Female                 | 2,391       | 86%                         | 68%                          | 19%                           | 6%                            | 8.0               |
| <b>Disability</b>      |             |                             |                              |                               |                               |                   |
| Disabled               | 157         | 75%                         | 56%                          | 18%                           | 12%                           | 7.3               |
| Not disabled           | 4,864       | 86%                         | 66%                          | 20%                           | 7%                            | 7.9               |
| <b>Ethnicity</b>       |             |                             |                              |                               |                               |                   |
| White                  | 4,432       | 86%                         | 66%                          | 20%                           | 7%                            | 7.9               |
| BAME                   | 607         | 86%                         | 66%                          | 20%                           | 7%                            | 7.8               |

There was no statistically significant difference in the satisfaction among those apprentices who were new to their employer when they started their apprenticeship (87%) and those who were existing employees (85%).

However, continuity with an employer following the apprenticeship is linked to higher levels of satisfaction: seven in ten apprentices who had completed their apprenticeship (71%) that were still working for their employer at the time of interview said they were 'very satisfied', compared with six in ten (61%) who were unemployed at the time of interview and two-thirds (66%) who had moved employer.

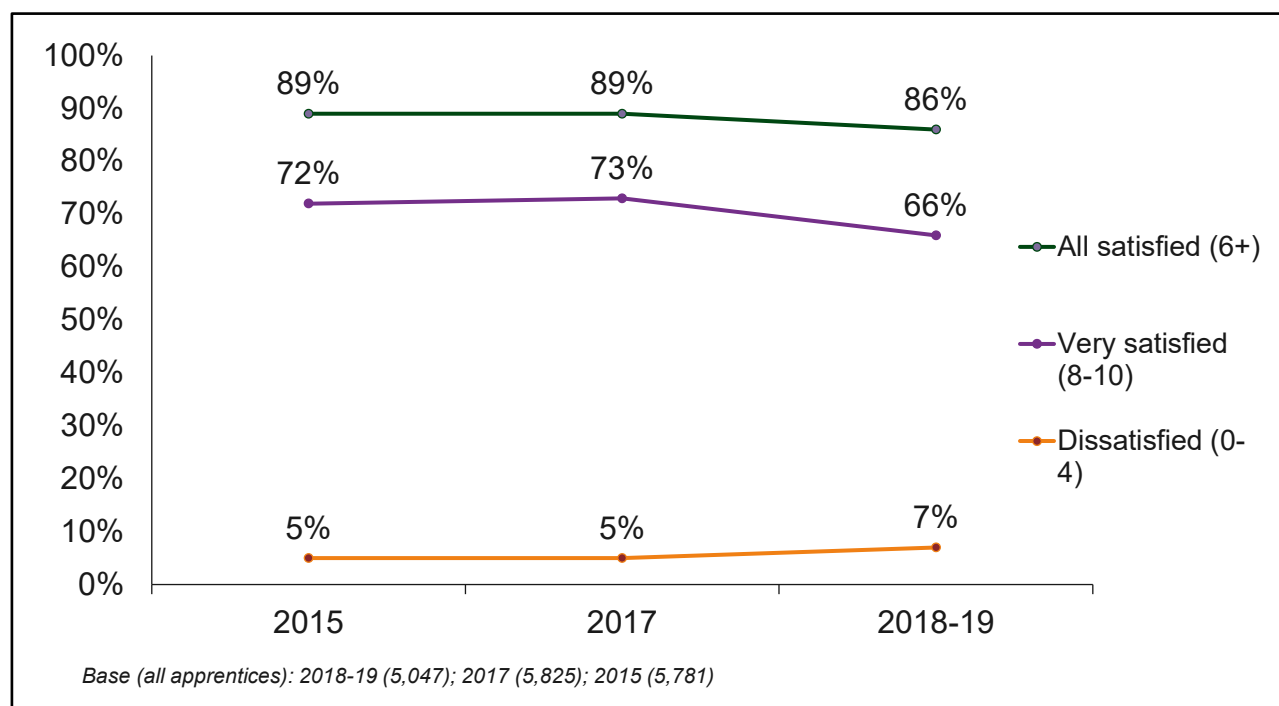
Those for whom an apprenticeship was their first choice were more likely to be satisfied with their apprenticeship (91% satisfied overall and 74% 'very satisfied') than those who did not have a particular preference (83% satisfied overall and 61% 'very satisfied') or who had an alternative preference (67% satisfied overall and 46% 'very satisfied').

## Overall satisfaction over time

As Figure 5-1 shows, the proportion satisfied has decreased slightly from the 89% level reported in both the 2017 and 2015 surveys. There was a bigger drop in the proportion of apprentices who were 'very satisfied' with their apprenticeship. This fell from approaching three-quarters in the 2017 and 2015 surveys (73% and 72% respectively) to two-thirds (66%) in 2018-19.

These changes have led to the mean satisfaction score falling from 8.1 in 2015 and 8.2 in the 2017 survey to 7.9 in 2018-19.

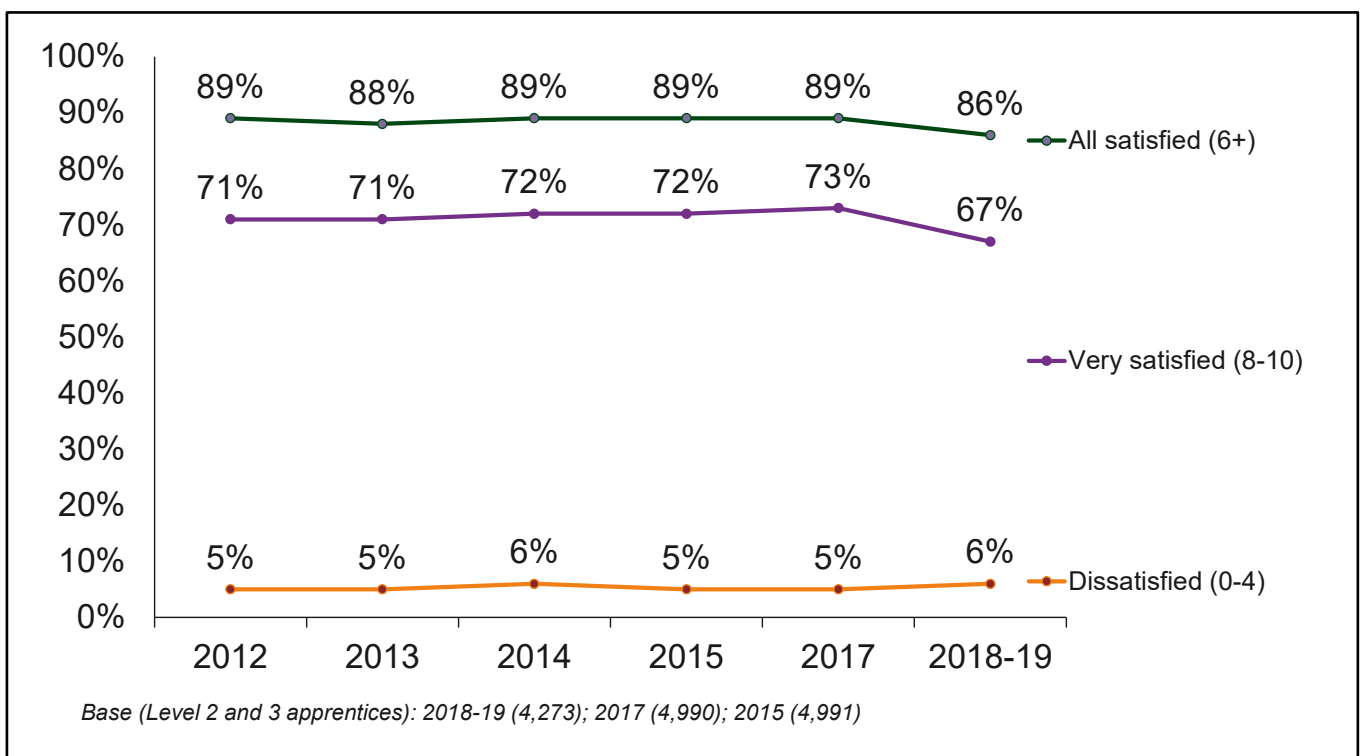
**Figure 5-1 Overall satisfaction among apprentices, 2015-2018/19 surveys**



Looking specifically at Level 2 and 3 apprentices (where further time series data is available) provides further evidence of the drop in satisfaction compared with previous years. As Figure 5-2 shows, the 2018-19 survey figures reflect a small but noticeable drop in satisfaction when compared to the broadly consistent results between 2012 and 2017. Again this was largely a result of the larger drop (7 percentage points) in those ‘very satisfied’ with their apprenticeship, compared with 2017.

In the 2017 survey, the same proportion of Level 2 and Level 3 apprentices were satisfied (89%). In the 2018-19 survey, although the results among both groups were lower than in 2017, Level 3 apprentices were slightly more satisfied than Level 2 apprentices (87% vs. 85%).

**Figure 5-2 Satisfaction among Level 2 and 3 apprentices, 2012-2018/19 surveys**



Four fifths (81%) of Level 4+ apprentices were satisfied, fewer than those on lower levels and a fall from 87% in the 2017 survey. Again, there has been a larger drop (10 percentage points, from 70% to 60%) in those ‘very satisfied’ with their apprenticeship, compared with 2017.

## Overall satisfaction among current apprentices

Those who were current apprentices at the time of interview were less likely to be satisfied than those who had completed their apprenticeship (83% vs. 87%), and particularly less likely to be 'very satisfied' (62% vs. 69%). By contrast, in the 2017 survey there were no differences in satisfaction between the two (89% vs 88%).

Among current apprentices, overall satisfaction has therefore fallen by 6 percentage points, from 89% in the 2017 survey to 83% in the 2018-19 survey (with a 12 percentage point fall in those 'very satisfied' from 74% to 62%). This decrease in overall satisfaction has been seen across all levels although was greatest among Level 4+ apprentices for whom it has fallen from 87% to 77%. Among Level 5 current apprentices specifically, the fall is even more substantial, from 85% in the 2017 survey to 66% in the 2018-19 survey, although note a relatively low base size of 68 current Level 5 apprentices in the 2018-19 survey.

Among those who had completed their apprenticeship there has been no change in overall satisfaction at the overall level (87% in the 2018-19 survey vs 88% in 2017) or by level.

Given that the fall in overall satisfaction is solely amongst current apprentices this would suggest that the reforms have had some effect on apprentice experience and satisfaction (remembering that all current apprentices from the 2017 survey were on pre-May 2017 apprenticeships and that 85% of current apprentices from the 2018-19 survey started after 1<sup>st</sup> May 2017).

Table 5-3 summarises overall satisfaction by level and completion status

**Table 5-3 Overall satisfaction by level and completion status, 2017 vs 2018-2019 surveys**

| <i>Row percentages</i> | Base<br>(2017 / 2018-19) | 2017 | 2018/2019 |
|------------------------|--------------------------|------|-----------|
| All                    | 5,825 / 5,047            | 89%  | 86%       |
| Current                | 2,427 / 2,355            | 89%  | 83%       |
| Completer              | 3,398 / 2,692            | 88%  | 87%       |
|                        |                          |      |           |
| Current – Level 2      | 971 / 664                | 91%  | 85%       |
| Current – Level 3      | 973 / 1,093              | 88%  | 84%       |
| Current – Level 4+     | 483 / 598                | 87%  | 77%       |
|                        |                          |      |           |
| Completer – Level 2    | 1,705 / 1,279            | 87%  | 85%       |
| Completer – Level 3    | 1,341 / 1,237            | 90%  | 89%       |
| Completer – Level 4+   | 352 / 176                | 90%  | 93%       |

Overall satisfaction fell across the majority of subject areas among current apprentices. In some of the smaller subject areas (Agriculture, ICT, Science and Education<sup>47</sup>), satisfaction fell by at least 10 percentage points from the 2017 survey, while Engineering, Health and Business all saw a fall of 5-6 percentage points. In terms of those ‘very satisfied’, there were particularly large falls among current ICT and Business apprentices (29 and 19 percentage points respectively).

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<sup>47</sup> Although the fall amongst current Education apprentices was not quite statistically significant.

**Table 5-4 Overall satisfaction of current apprentices by subject area, 2017 vs 2018-2019 surveys**

|                        | 2017        |                         |                              | 2018/19     |                         |                              |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Row percentages</i> | <i>Base</i> | <b>Satisfied (6-10)</b> | <b>Very satisfied (8-10)</b> | <i>Base</i> | <b>Satisfied (6-10)</b> | <b>Very satisfied (8-10)</b> |
| All                    | 2,427       | 89%                     | 74%                          | 2,355       | 83%                     | 62%                          |
| Agriculture            | 102         | 93%                     | 77%                          | 105         | 83%                     | 65%                          |
| Arts                   | 84          | 87%                     | 74%                          | 56          | 84%                     | 58%                          |
| Business               | 471         | 88%                     | 74%                          | 459         | 81%                     | 55%                          |
| Construction           | 227         | 96%                     | 82%                          | 231         | 88%                     | 70%                          |
| Education              | 101         | 86%                     | 72%                          | 72          | 75%                     | 55%                          |
| Engineering            | 479         | 92%                     | 76%                          | 504         | 86%                     | 69%                          |
| Health                 | 361         | 86%                     | 71%                          | 390         | 80%                     | 62%                          |
| ICT                    | 204         | 88%                     | 73%                          | 213         | 78%                     | 44%                          |
| Leisure                | 112         | 95%                     | 72%                          | 58          | 93%                     | 65%                          |
| Retail                 | 228         | 89%                     | 78%                          | 237         | 87%                     | 68%                          |

There have been some changes to the profile of apprentices that may be contributing to the decline in overall satisfaction among current apprentices. For example, younger apprentices reported higher levels of satisfaction: 90% of current apprentices aged under 19 were satisfied, compared with 84% of 19-24 year olds and 78% of those aged 25 and above. Older apprentices make up a slightly larger share of the current apprentice population for the 2018-19 survey than in 2017, hence this may explain some of the fall in overall satisfaction between the two surveys.

However, it is also the case that this older age group showed a slightly larger than average fall in satisfaction (falling seven percentage points from 85% in the 2017 survey, compared with a four percentage point decrease in satisfaction among under 19s). Hence findings by age suggest that the overall fall in satisfaction is a combination of a fall in satisfaction compared with the 2017 survey among all age groups, combined with a higher proportion of current apprentices in the 2018-19 survey being comprised of older apprentices among whom satisfaction is lower than average.



However, as already seen in terms of level and subject, most sub-groups of interest have seen a fall in overall satisfaction suggesting that the lower levels of satisfaction reflect genuine apprentice experience and are not purely an artefact of compositional changes in the profile of apprentices.

## **Apprenticeship standards vs. frameworks**

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, among all apprentices surveyed, four in five (80%) were on apprenticeship frameworks and one in five (20%) on apprenticeship standards. Given their relative infancy, it is unsurprising that almost all completers at the time of interview had been on frameworks. In comparison, current apprentices were evenly split between those undertaking frameworks and standards (51% and 49% respectively). For this reason, in this section we continue to focus on 'current apprentices' when comparing satisfaction with frameworks against satisfaction with standards.

Among current apprentices in the 2018-19 survey, there was no difference between those on frameworks and standards in terms of the proportion satisfied (83% vs 82%) although the proportion 'very satisfied' was lower for those on standards (58% vs 66%).

The apprenticeship landscape has evolved considerably since the last evaluation with new standards introduced and frameworks withdrawn. When contextualising these findings it is therefore important to also consider the profile of the two apprenticeship products in terms of their level and subject area (Table 5-5)<sup>48</sup>.

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<sup>48</sup> Please note that profile figures will not match not match official statistics on apprenticeship starts. This is because a) the survey represents a particular snapshot in time and b) while the data are weighted to reflect subject area, this is not broken down to take account of apprentices on standards vs those on frameworks.

**Table 5-5 Profile and overall satisfaction of current apprentices on standards vs frameworks by level and subject area**

|                            | Standards                 |       |                     |                          | Frameworks                |       |                     |                          |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------|---------------------|--------------------------|
|                            | Profile<br>(Base = 1,217) | Base  | Satisfied<br>(6-10) | Very satisfied<br>(8-10) | Profile<br>(Base = 1,138) | Base  | Satisfied<br>(6-10) | Very satisfied<br>(8-10) |
|                            | Col. %                    |       | Row %               |                          | Col. %                    |       | Row %               |                          |
| All                        |                           | 1,217 | 82%                 | 58%                      |                           | 1,138 | 83%                 | 66%                      |
| <b>Level</b>               |                           |       |                     |                          |                           |       |                     |                          |
| Level 2                    | 26%                       | 220   | 82%                 | 57%                      | 40%                       | 444   | 87%                 | 70%                      |
| Level 3                    | 49%                       | 516   | 83%                 | 59%                      | 44%                       | 577   | 85%                 | 65%                      |
| Level 4+                   | 26%                       | 481   | 81%                 | 56%                      | 17%                       | 117   | 71%                 | 56%                      |
| - Level 4                  | 9%                        | 51    | 87%                 | 57%                      | 6%                        | 60    | 75%                 | 57%                      |
| - Level 5                  | 7%                        | 24    |                     |                          | 11%                       | 44    | 68%                 | 56%                      |
| - Level 6+<br>(non-degree) | 3%                        | 77    | 71%                 | 43%                      | *                         | 1     |                     |                          |
| - Degree apprentices       | 7%                        | 329   | 94%                 | 68%                      | *                         | 12    |                     |                          |
| <b>Subject Area</b>        |                           |       |                     |                          |                           |       |                     |                          |
| Business                   | 36%                       | 333   | 82%                 | 52%                      | 21%                       | 126   | 78%                 | 59%                      |
| Health                     | 21%                       | 202   | 79%                 | 58%                      | 25%                       | 188   | 80%                 | 65%                      |
| Engineering                | 16%                       | 218   | 84%                 | 67%                      | 28%                       | 286   | 87%                 | 70%                      |
| Retail                     | 15%                       | 153   | 86%                 | 65%                      | 8%                        | 84    | 90%                 | 73%                      |
| ICT                        | 8%                        | 173   | 76%                 | 44%                      | 2%                        | 40    | 87%                 | 47%                      |
| Construction               | 3%                        | 92    |                     |                          | 10%                       | 139   | 85%                 | 69%                      |
| Agriculture                | 1%                        | 17    |                     |                          | 3%                        | 88    | 82%                 | 66%                      |
| Leisure                    | *                         | 7     |                     |                          | 2%                        | 51    | 92%                 | 64%                      |
| Arts                       | *                         | 19    |                     |                          | *                         | 37    | 88%                 | 69%                      |
| Science                    | *                         | 1     |                     |                          | *                         | 29    | 74%                 | 51%                      |
| Education                  | *                         | 2     |                     |                          | 2%                        | 70    | 75%                 | 55%                      |

Although there is little difference in overall satisfaction between those currently on standards and those on frameworks, there are differences by level and subject area pulling in different directions.

At Level 2 and 3, those currently on standards were less likely than those on frameworks to be 'very satisfied' with the difference particularly pronounced at Level 2 (57% vs 70%). A similar pattern can be seen across most subject areas.

Conversely, those on apprenticeship standards at Level 4 or above tended to have relatively high levels of satisfaction. For instance, those on standards at Level 4 were more likely to be satisfied than those on frameworks at the same level (87% vs 75%). Similarly, those on degree apprenticeships (which are all standards) reported very high levels of satisfaction (94%). However, the smaller number of apprentices undertaking standards at non-degree Level 6 and above reported lower levels of satisfaction (71%).

Even though there is little difference in overall satisfaction between apprentices currently on standards and those on frameworks, as discussed in the previous section of this chapter, satisfaction among *all* 'current' apprentices is down compared to the 2017 survey. Among those currently on frameworks it has fallen from 89% to 83% with the proportion 'very satisfied' falling from 75% to 66%. This decline has been seen across all levels with a 4 percentage point fall among Level 2 apprentices (91% to 87%) and a 3 percentage point fall among Level 3 apprentices (88% to 85%). However, it is at Level 4 or above where the fall has been particularly pronounced. In the 2017 survey, 88% of current Level 4 and 87% of Level 5 apprentices reported being satisfied with their apprenticeship framework. This compares to 75% and 68% in the 2018-19 survey, as shown in Table 5-5.

Only 128 interviews were conducted with current apprentices on standards in 2017 and these were skewed by subject area reflecting the standards that were available at the time (the vast majority were on Engineering, Business or IT standards). It is unwise therefore to draw time series comparisons specifically for those on standards.

## **Reasons for dissatisfaction with apprenticeships**

Common reasons given for dissatisfaction included a lack of support or contact from training providers (50% of those who were dissatisfied); apprenticeships being badly organised (42%); the poor quality of training (31%); and problems with the timeframe and management of the apprenticeship (25%).

There were few differences by subject area in reasons given for dissatisfaction, although those in Health were more likely to mention lack of support or contact from their provider (70%), as were older apprentices aged 25 and above (57%). Younger apprentices aged under 19 were more likely to cite problems with their employer (34%); lack of training (20%); low pay (12%); and no job at the end of their apprenticeship (5%).

Focussing on just current apprentices in the 2018-19 survey, those on apprenticeship standards were more likely to mention poor quality of training (41% of those dissatisfied, compared with 20% on frameworks), problems with their employer (24% and 10% respectively) and the irrelevance of the course (17% and 4%). Conversely, apprentices currently on standards were less likely to report a lack of support or contact from training providers (55%, compared to 72% of those currently on frameworks).

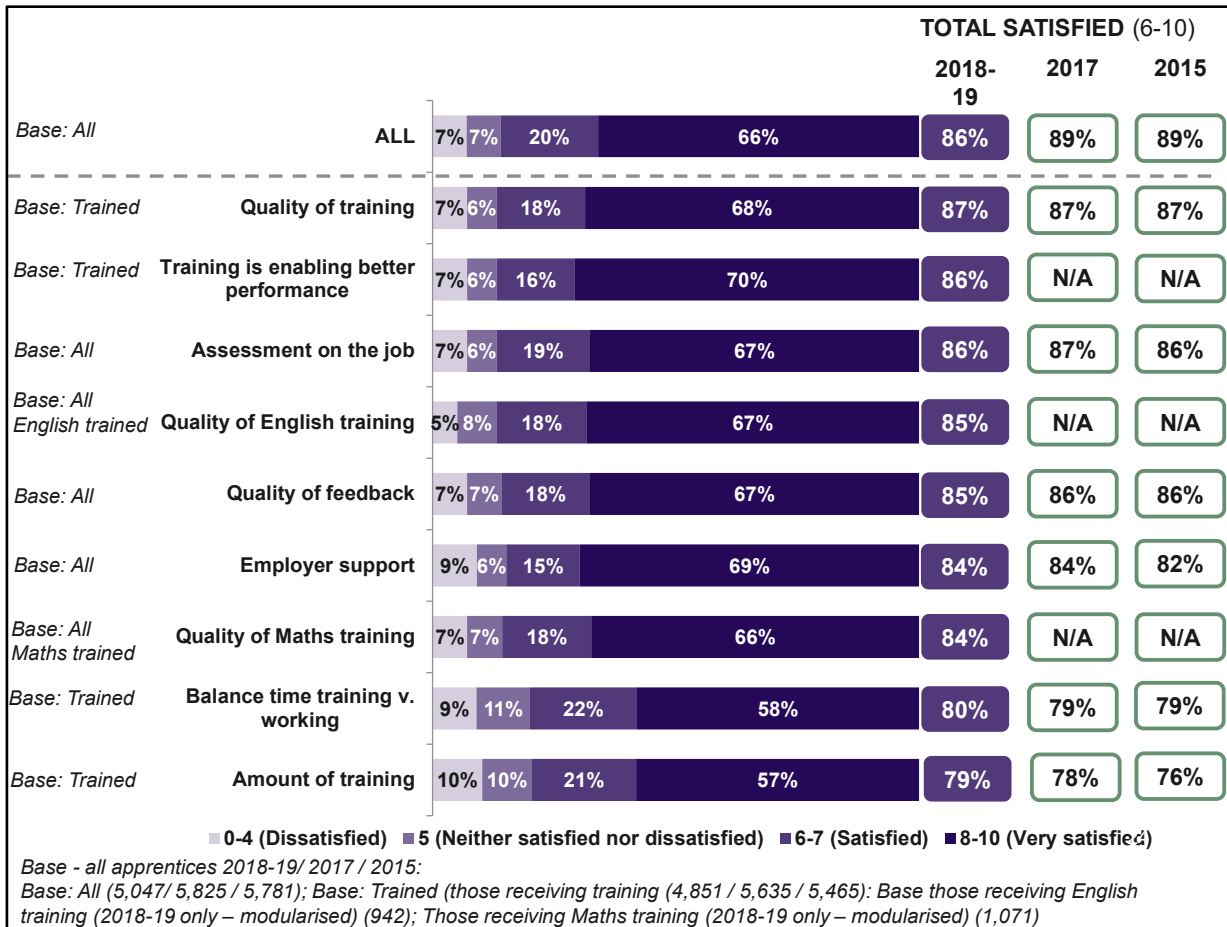
## **Apprentices' satisfaction with individual elements**

On most aspects of the apprenticeship, between 84% and 87% were satisfied. Satisfaction was slightly lower, as it was in the 2015 and 2017 surveys, with the balance of time between training and working (80%) and the amount of time training (79%). However, the latter continues an upward trend in satisfaction since the 2015 survey (where 76% were satisfied with the amount of training received).

As shown in Figure 5-3, on most measures the overall proportion satisfied was very similar to 2017 and 2015 survey levels. Although the proportions satisfied have remained largely consistent, there have been decreases in the proportion 'very satisfied' with several of these measures (although all smaller than the 7 percentage point decrease in the proportion 'very satisfied' overall):

- Assessment on the job (67%, down from 71% in the 2017 survey)
- The balance between time spent training and working (58%, down from 61% in 2017)
- The amount of training received each week (57%, down from 60% in 2017).
- The level of support received from employer (69%, down from 71% in 2017)
- The quality of training received (68%, down from 70% in 2017).

**Figure 5-3 Satisfaction with different aspects of apprenticeships**



As with overall satisfaction, those who were current apprentices at the time of interview were less likely to be satisfied with a number of aspects of the apprenticeship compared to those who had completed their apprenticeship. The largest difference was in the proportion satisfied with the assessment on the job (82% of current apprentices vs 88% of completers). There was also a 3 percentage point difference in the proportion satisfied with quality of the training (85% vs 88%), the quality of the feedback (83% vs 87%), the balance between the time spent training and working (77% vs 81%) and the amount of training received each week (77% vs 80%). Current apprentices were more likely to be satisfied with the level of support they received from their employer (86% vs 83%).

As a result of these differences, satisfaction among current apprentices has fallen since the 2017 survey across a number of measures which may help to partly explain the earlier reported drop in overall satisfaction among current apprentices (83%, down from 89%). Satisfaction among current apprentices has fallen in terms of assessment on the job (82%, down from 87%), quality of feedback (83%, down from 87%), the balance between the time spent training and working (77%, down from 81%) and the amount of training received each week (77%, down from 80%).

Considering differences by level shown in Table 5-6, Level 2 apprentices were more likely than Level 3 apprentices to be satisfied with the quality of training received (89% vs 86%), despite reporting having done fewer training hours on average. They were also more likely to have been satisfied with the way they were assessed on the job (88% vs 86%). Apprentices undertaking apprenticeships at Level 4 and above reported lower levels of satisfaction with the way they were assessed on the job (76-79% within each level, compared with 86% overall) and, with the exception of degree apprentices, with the feedback they received on their progress (77% among Level 4, 5 and non-degree apprentices at Level 6 and above, compared with 85% overall).

Level 5 apprentices, among whom overall satisfaction was lower on average, reported particularly low levels of satisfaction with the balance between time spent training and working (64%, compared with 80% overall), while Level 4 apprentices were less likely than average to be satisfied that their training was enabling them to do better at their job (76%, compared with 86% overall).

As discussed earlier in the chapter, Non-degree apprentices at Level 6 and above had the lowest levels of overall satisfaction by level (72% satisfied) with almost a quarter (23%) of their apprentices dissatisfied. Despite this, and with a degree of caution noted due to the low base, 92% reported they were satisfied with the quality of training and satisfaction with other elements was broadly similar to other Level 4+ apprentices. They did however, report higher levels of dissatisfaction with some specific aspects of their apprenticeship which may help to explain some of the overall dissatisfaction (15% were dissatisfied with the impact the training was having on job performance; 13% on the amount of training received and 12% on the feedback received).

Degree apprentices reported higher than average levels of satisfaction with the level of support received from their employer (92%); the amount of training received each week (88%, reflecting the fact that they reported high training hours) and with the balance between time spent training and working (85%).

**Table 5-6 Satisfaction with aspects of apprenticeships by level**

| <i>Column percentages</i>                                    | <b>ALL</b>   | <b>Level 2</b> | <b>Level 3</b> | <b>Level 4</b> | <b>Level 5</b> | <b>Level 6+ (non-degree)</b> | <b>Degree apprentices</b> |
|--|--------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Quality of training received                                 | <b>87%</b>   | 89%            | 86%            | 78%            | 82%            | 92%                          | 86%                       |
| Training is enabling better job performance                  | <b>86%</b>   | 86%            | 87%            | 76%            | 87%            | 80%                          | 87%                       |
| Balance between time spent training and working              | <b>80%</b>   | 81%            | 80%            | 77%            | 64%            | 80%                          | 85%                       |
| Amount of training received each week                        | <b>79%</b>   | 79%            | 78%            | 77%            | 76%            | 78%                          | 88%                       |
| <i>Base: all receiving training</i>                          | <b>4,851</b> | 1865           | 2234           | 174            | 144            | 78                           | 356                       |
| Assessment on the job  | <b>86%</b>   | 88%            | 86%            | 79%            | 75%            | 76%                          | 78%                       |
| Feedback received on progress                                | <b>85%</b>   | 86%            | 86%            | 77%            | 77%            | 77%                          | 88%                       |
| Extent to which employer supported apprenticeship            | <b>84%</b>   | 85%            | 84%            | 87%            | 82%            | 86%                          | 92%                       |
| <i>Base: all</i>   | <b>5,047</b> | 1943           | 2,330          | 178            | 156            | 80                           | 360                       |
| Quality of English training received                         | <b>85%</b>   | 86%            | 84%            | *              | *              | *                            | *                         |
| <i>Base: all who received English training (modularised)</i> | <b>942</b>   | 494            | 416            | *              | *              | *                            | *                         |
| Quality of maths training received                           | <b>84%</b>   | 85%            | 82%            | *              | *              | *                            | *                         |
| <i>Base: all who received maths training (modularised)</i>   | <b>1,071</b> | 534            | 485            | *              | *              | *                            | *                         |

*\*Data not shown due to low base sizes among subgroups*

There were various differences in satisfaction with these individual elements by subject area, as shown in Table 5-7. Arts and Media apprentices reported lowest levels of satisfaction on a number of measures including the amount of training received each week (68%); the quality of training received (69%); the way they were assessed on the job (75%); and that training has enabled them to do better in their job (76%, equal with ICT apprentices). Business and Health apprentices, who reported relatively low training hours (8.3 and 7.8 hours respectively) were also relatively dissatisfied with the amount of training received each week (76% each), with the latter also reporting lower levels of satisfaction with the balance between time spent training and working (75%) and the extent to which their employer supported their apprenticeship (81%). Despite this, Health apprentices were more likely than average to be satisfied with the assessment on the job (88%) and feedback received on their progress (87%).

Construction apprentices reported higher than average satisfaction with several aspects, including that their training has enabled them to do better in their job (91%); the balance between time spent training and working (88%); the amount of training received (84%); and the level of employer support received (90%).

Earlier in this chapter, a substantial decrease was reported in the proportion of ICT apprentices 'very satisfied' overall. In part, this may reflect a fall in satisfaction in terms of assessment on the job (78%, down from 84%) and feedback received on progress (79%, down from 85%).



**Table 5-7 Satisfaction with aspects of apprenticeships by subject area**

| <i>Column percentages</i>                                    | <b>ALL</b>   | <b>Agriculture</b> | <b>Arts and Media</b> | <b>Business</b> | <b>Construction</b> | <b>Education</b> | <b>Engineering</b> | <b>Health</b> | <b>ICT</b> | <b>Leisure</b> | <b>Retail</b> | <b>Science</b> |
|--|--------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------|------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| Quality of training received                                 | <b>87%</b>   | 86%                | 69%                   | 86%             | 84%                 | 81%              | 89%                | 87%           | 83%        | 89%            | 89%           | 93%            |
| Training is enabling better job performance                  | <b>86%</b>   | 85%                | 76%                   | 83%             | 91%                 | 84%              | 89%                | 87%           | 76%        | 87%            | 86%           | 87%            |
| Balance between time spent training and working              | <b>80%</b>   | 78%                | 78%                   | 78%             | 88%                 | 76%              | 84%                | 75%           | 79%        | 84%            | 81%           | 84%            |
| Amount of training received each week                        | <b>79%</b>   | 80%                | 68%                   | 76%             | 84%                 | 76%              | 84%                | 76%           | 79%        | 83%            | 77%           | 82%            |
| <i>Base: all receiving training</i>                          | <b>4,851</b> | 233                | 142                   | 975             | 394                 | 248              | 852                | 906           | 363        | 191            | 488           | 59             |
| Assessment on the job  | <b>86%</b>   | 84%                | 75%                   | 83%             | 88%                 | 86%              | 86%                | 88%           | 78%        | 88%            | 87%           | 76%            |
| Feedback received on progress                                | <b>85%</b>   | 84%                | 80%                   | 84%             | 85%                 | 85%              | 83%                | 87%           | 79%        | 85%            | 88%           | 88%            |
| Extent to which employer supported apprenticeship            | <b>84%</b>   | 80%                | 82%                   | 84%             | 90%                 | 83%              | 88%                | 81%           | 89%        | 80%            | 84%           | 93%            |
| <i>Base: all</i>   | <b>5,047</b> | 238                | 146                   | 1029            | 398                 | 267              | 865                | 964           | 374        | 198            | 509           | 59             |
| Quality of English training received                         | <b>85%</b>   | 93%                | *                     | 87%             | 77%                 | 82%              | 83%                | 85%           | *          | *              | 90%           | *              |
| <i>Base: all who received English training (modularised)</i> | <b>942</b>   | 52                 | *                     | 146             | 67                  | 56               | 158                | 254           | *          | *              | 128           | *              |
| Quality of maths training received                           | <b>84%</b>   | 82%                | *                     | 83%             | 78%                 | 74%              | 87%                | 84%           | *          | *              | 85%           | *              |
| <i>Base: all who received maths training (modularised)</i>   | <b>1,071</b> | 44                 | *                     | 172             | 64                  | 68               | 189                | 280           | *          | *              | 149           | *              |

\*Data not shown due to low base sizes among subgroups

As discussed earlier in this chapter, when comparing apprentices on standards against those on apprenticeship frameworks it makes sense to focus on current apprentices given that the vast majority of completers were on frameworks. As shown in Table 5-8, across most aspects, apprentices currently on standards reported slightly lower levels of satisfaction. The largest difference was in the proportion satisfied with assessment on the job, possibly a reflection of the move from assessment throughout the apprenticeship to a system of end-point assessment. There was no difference in satisfaction with the either the quality of training or the amount received each week.

**Table 5-8 Satisfaction with aspects of apprenticeships among current apprentices on standards vs frameworks**

| <i>Column percentages</i>                                    | <b>ALL CURRENT</b> | <b>Standards</b> | <b>Frameworks</b> |
|--|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Quality of training received                                 | <b>85%</b>         | 85%              | 85%               |
| Training is enabling better job performance                  | <b>85%</b>         | 83%              | 88%               |
| Balance between time spent training and working              | <b>77%</b>         | 75%              | 79%               |
| Amount of training received each week                        | <b>77%</b>         | 77%              | 77%               |
| <i>Base: all receiving training</i>                          | <b>2,277</b>       | 1,175            | 1,102             |
| Extent to which employer supported apprenticeship            | <b>86%</b>         | 84%              | 87%               |
| Feedback received on progress                                | <b>83%</b>         | 81%              | 84%               |
| Assessment on the job  | <b>82%</b>         | 78%              | 85%               |
| <i>Base: all</i>   | <b>2,355</b>       | 1,217            | 1,138             |
| Quality of English training received                         | <b>82%</b>         | 81%              | 83%               |
| <i>Base: all who received English training (modularised)</i> | <b>235</b>         | 99               | 136               |
| Quality of maths training received                           | <b>76%</b>         | 71%              | 79%               |
| <i>Base: all who received maths training (modularised)</i>   | <b>312</b>         | 133              | 179               |

In terms of demographics, reflecting that female apprentices and those aged 25 and above spent less time training (as detailed in the 'Quality and Content of Apprenticeships' chapter), these groups were less likely to be satisfied than their male and younger counterparts with the amount of time spent training (76% vs 81% among male apprentices; 75% vs 81% among those aged under 25); the balance between time spent training and working (78% vs 82%; 76% vs 82%); and the level of support they received from their employer (82% vs 86%; 81% vs 86%). Apprentices aged 25 and above also reported relatively low levels of satisfaction with the way they were assessed on the job (84%) and were less satisfied than average that training was enabling them to do better in their job (83%), however they were more likely to be satisfied than average with the quality of English (87%) and maths (86%) training.

There were also several differences between those who worked for their employer prior to their apprenticeship and those who were new to their employer. Existing employees were *more* satisfied than their counterparts with the quality of training received (88% vs. 85%); the feedback received on progress (86% vs. 83%); and the quality of English (87% vs. 80%) and maths (86% vs. 79%) training received. However, they were *less* satisfied that training was enabling them to do better in their job (85% vs 88%); with the balance between time spent training and working (78% vs. 82%) and with the level of support from their employer (82% vs 87%).

Apprentices who were dissatisfied with the quality of training received from their training provider were asked why they felt this way. The most common reasons given were not receiving enough support from their tutors (63%); rarely seeing tutors (33%) and not enough time being spent on training (29%), while more than one in six said training was irrelevant to their career (19%) or mentioned their tutors lack of experience or knowledge (18%).

## Advocacy

Reflecting apprentices' overall high levels of satisfaction with their apprenticeship, the majority of apprentices would advocate the benefits of apprenticeships. Four in five (79%) would speak highly of their apprenticeship, although this represented a slight drop from levels reported in the 2017 survey (81%). Again mirroring overall satisfaction findings, the proportion of current apprentices who would speak highly has fallen from 83% to 77%, whereas it has remained at 80% among those who had completed their apprenticeship at the time of the interview.

Among apprentices who would speak positively, there was an equal split between those who would speak highly without being asked and those who would speak highly if asked (each 39%). Only a small minority (4%) would speak critically about their apprenticeship.

As Table 5-9 shows, Level 5 and Level 6+ non-degree apprentices were most likely to be critical of apprenticeships (12% and 10% respectively), mirroring their lower relative levels of overall satisfaction. The highest levels of advocacy were reported among Degree apprentices (88%). Despite Level 4 apprentices being less likely to advocate apprenticeships overall (72%), they were much more likely than average to say they would speak highly of their apprenticeships without being asked (48%).

By subject area, Construction and Engineering apprentices were statistically most likely to be advocates of apprenticeships (84% and 83% respectively). The proportion who said they would be critical of their apprenticeships was fairly consistent across all subject areas (each between 3% and 5%), with the major exception of those in Arts, among whom 15% were critical.

In terms of demographics, older apprentices were more likely to be critical about their apprenticeship; 6% of those aged 25 and above reported this, compared with 3% of those aged under 25. Apprentices with a disability were also more likely to be critical than those without (8% vs. 4%). There were no differences by gender.

**Table 5-9 Advocacy by level and subject area**

| <i>Row percentages</i> | <b>Base</b> | <b>ANY POSITIVE</b> | <b>Would speak highly without being asked</b> | <b>Would speak highly if asked</b> | <b>Neutral</b> | <b>Critical</b> |
|------------------------|-------------|---------------------|---|------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| All                    | 5,047       | 79%                 | 39%   | 39%                                | 16%            | 4%              |
| Level 2                | 1,943       | 78%                 | 37%   | 41%                                | 17%            | 4%              |
| Level 3                | 2,330       | 80%                 | 40%   | 39%                                | 16%            | 4%              |
| Level 4                | 178         | 72%                 | 48%   | 25%                                | 24%            | 3%              |
| Level 5                | 156         | 75%                 | 38%   | 37%                                | 12%            | 12%             |
| Level 6+ (non-degree)  | 80          | 61%                 | 32%   | 30%                                | 29%            | 10%             |
| Degree apprentices     | 360         | 88%                 | 54%   | 34%                                | 9%             | 2%              |
| Science                | 59          | 87%                 | 57%   | 30%                                | 9%             | 3%              |
| Construction           | 398         | 84%                 | 48%   | 36%                                | 12%            | 4%              |
| Engineering            | 865         | 83%                 | 43%   | 40%                                | 13%            | 3%              |
| Agriculture            | 238         | 81%                 | 38%   | 43%                                | 13%            | 5%              |
| Education              | 267         | 81%                 | 42%   | 38%                                | 14%            | 4%              |
| Business               | 1,029       | 79%                 | 39%   | 39%                                | 16%            | 5%              |
| Health                 | 964         | 77%                 | 35%   | 41%                                | 18%            | 4%              |
| Leisure                | 198         | 74%                 | 27%   | 47%                                | 23%            | 3%              |
| Retail                 | 509         | 75%                 | 41%   | 35%                                | 19%            | 4%              |
| ICT                    | 374         | 73%                 | 36%   | 38%                                | 22%            | 5%              |
| Arts                   | 146         | 68%                 | 33%   | 35%                                | 17%            | 15%             |

## 6 Apprenticeship Outcomes

This chapter examines the outcomes of apprenticeships, looking at employment status as well as skills gained and changes to pay and any promotion. It also discusses the impacts of apprenticeships on apprentices' future careers, their likelihood of continuing with their employer or within the same industry, and any plans for further learning and training.

### Key findings

*(All differences noted here are statistically significant unless stated otherwise)*

- **Nearly all apprenticeship completers were in in work (93%), with three-quarters in full time employment (76%).** The proportion of completed apprentices who were in work has remained similar to levels in the 2017 and 2015 surveys (91% and 92% respectively).
- Employment, and full-time work was particularly high among Construction and Engineering and apprenticeship completers (98% and 97% in work) with those who are older, male or without a disability also more likely to be in work.
- **Only 4% of apprenticeship completers were unemployed,** though unemployment was at double this level among Arts and ICT apprenticeship completers (9% and 8%).
- **Three-fifths (60%) of completers had seen a positive impact on either their pay or progression** with a third (32%) receiving both a pay rise and a promotion, a notable rise from previous years (26% in the 2017 survey and 25% in 2015). These outcomes were particularly likely for Level 6+ and Level 4 apprenticeship completers, as well as those on Construction and Engineering apprenticeships. **The proportion seeing no impact on their pay or progression has dropped** from 49% in the 2015 survey and 44% in 2017 to 40%.
- **Nearly all apprentices felt they had gained skills and / or knowledge appropriate for their area of work (90%) and / or for a range of jobs or industries (90%).** Gaining softer skills such as communication and team working were reported for over 80%.
- **Most apprentices improved their English skills (62%), maths skills (55%) and IT skills (59%),** with English and maths skills improved for 80% and 78% of those who specifically studied these subjects at Level 2 as part of their apprenticeship. **However the overall proportion reporting an improvement in maths skills represents a slight fall from 2017 survey levels (60%),** despite a slightly higher proportion having studied maths as part of their apprenticeship.

### Key findings (continued)

- Across all subjects and Levels, **the majority of apprentices (62% overall) plan or planned to stay with their employer post apprenticeship**. Virtually all current apprentices (95%) think they will complete their apprenticeship.
- **Around a fifth (19%) of those who had completed their apprenticeship had started a new qualification**. Over half (54%) of apprenticeship completers and 65% of current apprentices were considering a further qualification.
- **Nearly nine in ten apprentices (89%) thought their apprenticeship had prepared them very or fairly well for their planned next activity** (rising to 94% of Degree apprentices).

### Comparisons of current apprentices in the 2018-19 and 2017 surveys

- Results among current apprentices in the 2018-19 survey were less positive than among current apprentices in the 2017 survey, with: fewer reporting gaining English skills (61% vs 64% in 2017), maths skills (56% vs. 60%) and IT skills (57% vs 63% in 2017); fewer more satisfied with their job since starting their apprenticeship (76% vs 82% in 2017); and fewer very likely to complete their apprenticeship (80% vs 87% in 2017).

## Skills gained during apprenticeships

Considering all apprentices (including current apprentices and completers), virtually all (97%) felt that they had gained skills as a direct result of their apprenticeship. Most commonly these encompassed both skills and / or knowledge appropriate for their area of work (90%) and for a range of jobs or industries (90%). Over four-fifths of apprentices felt their communication skills (84%) and team working skills had improved (81%).

Fewer, but still a majority, of apprentices had improved their English, IT and / or maths skills (62%, 59% and 55% respectively). Apprentices who had specifically studied Level 2 English or maths as part of their apprenticeship were markedly more likely to have improved these skills, although it was not universal (80% reported an improvement in English skills and 78% an improvement in maths skills compared to 55% and 45% among those who had not undertaken Level 2 English or maths within the apprenticeship).

As shown in Table 6-1, skills outcomes are very similar to those in previous years.<sup>49</sup> There has been a slight fall in the proportion reporting an improvement in maths skills (from 60% overall in the 2017 survey to 55% in 2018-19) despite a higher proportion having studied maths as part of their apprenticeship (28% compared to 21% in 2017).

**Table 6-1 Skills gained as a direct result of apprenticeship (prompted), 2015-2018-19**

| <i>Column percentages</i>                                 | <b>2015</b>  | <b>2017</b>  | <b>2018-19</b> |
|---|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| Have more appropriate skills / knowledge for area of work | 90%          | 92%          | 90%            |
| Skills / knowledge for a range of jobs / industries       | 89%          | 89%          | 90%            |
| Communication skills*                                     | 6%           | 7%           | 84%            |
| Better able to work with others                           | 82%          | 83%          | 81%            |
| English skills  | 63%          | 63%          | 62%            |
| IT skills   | 60%          | 62%          | 59%            |
| Maths skills  | 61%          | 60%          | 55%            |
| <i>Base: all apprentices</i>                              | <i>5,781</i> | <i>5,825</i> | <i>5,047</i>   |

\*Communication skills was only prompted in the 2018-19 survey. Figures prior to this reflect spontaneous mentions.

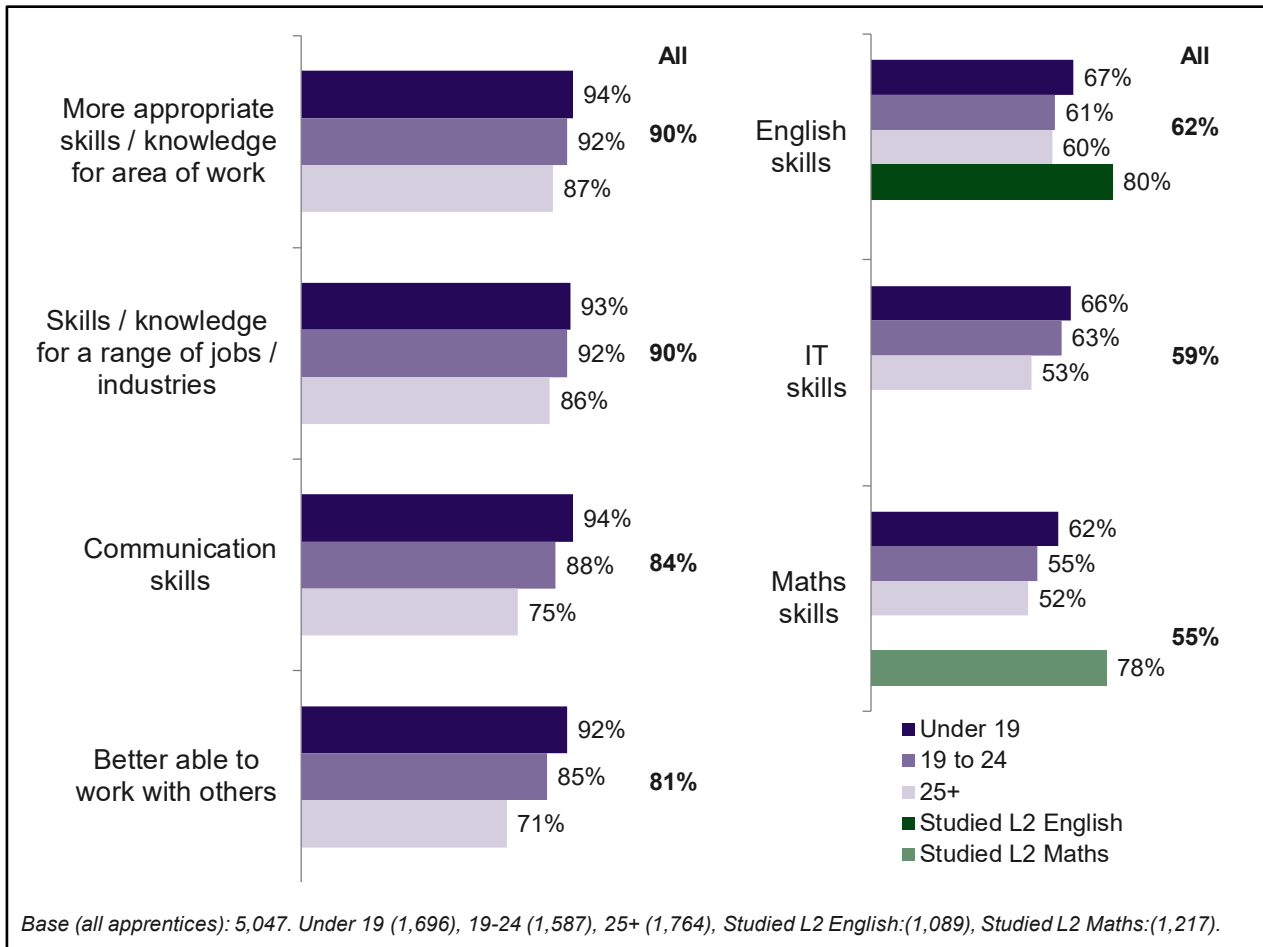
As shown in Figure 6-1, the youngest apprentices (aged under 19) were more likely to have improved skills in all listed areas than older apprentices (aged 25 or above), most notably in the 'softer' skills of communication and working with others (94% and 92% respectively among those under 19, compared to 75% and 71% of those 25 or older). The proportion of apprentices aged 19 to 24 experiencing improvements sat between younger and older apprentices, though with the proportions closer to the under 19s.

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<sup>49</sup> Communication skills was prompted for the first time in the 2018-19 survey - only unprompted data was collected in previous years.

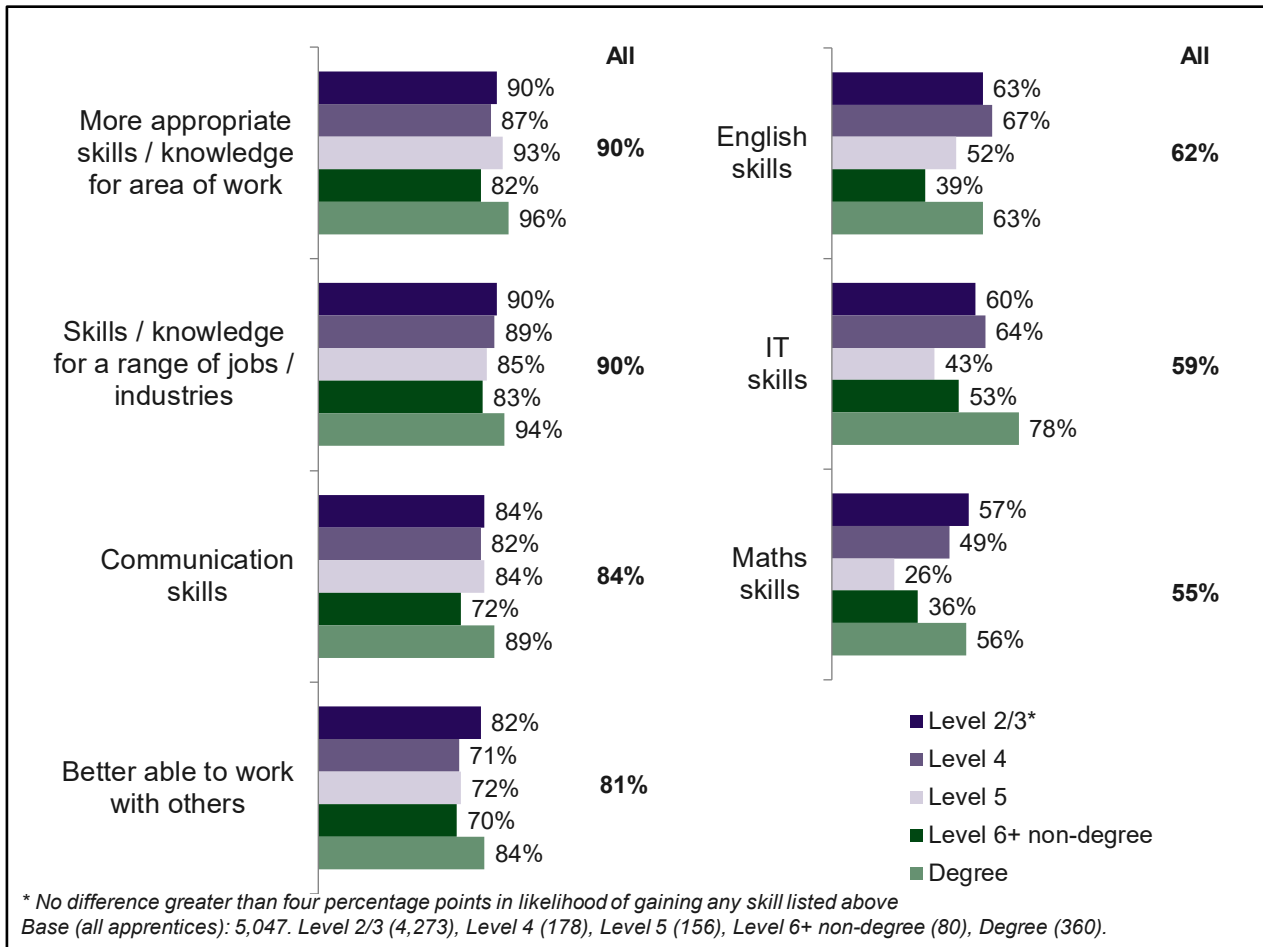


**Figure 6-1 Skills gained as a direct result of their apprenticeship, by age**



There were some differences in skills outcomes by level, particularly in regard to gains in maths, English and IT skills, as shown in Figure 6-2. Together, Level 2 and 3 apprentices were more likely than Level 4+ apprentices to have gained maths (57% compared to 38%), English (63% compared to 58%) and IT skills (60% compared to 55%) as well as an improved ability to work with others (82% compared to 73%). There were relatively few differences between Level 2 and 3 apprentices, and the two groups were similarly likely to gain all the skills listed in Figure 6-1, with no differences greater than the four percentage point higher likelihood of Level 3 apprentices to gain IT skills (62% compared to 58% of Level 2).

**Figure 6-2 Skills gained as direct result of apprenticeship, by Level**



As shown in Figure 6-2, degree apprentices were more likely than other Level 4+ apprentices to have gained skills related to their desired area of work; skills that could be used across a range of jobs and industries; communications skills; the ability to work with others; and to have improved their maths and IT skills. The proportion of degree apprentices reporting skills gains was also higher than Level 2 and 3 apprentices, except for English and maths where results were similar.

Level 4 apprentices were more likely than those at Level 5 to have improved English, maths and IT skills.

Apprentices in the more traditional subject areas of Construction and Engineering were most likely to report improvements in several softer skills as a result of their apprenticeship; 95% and 92% gained more appropriate skills and knowledge related to their current or desired area of work (compared to 90% overall), 94% and 92% can use the skills and knowledge gained across a range of jobs and industries (compared to 90% overall), and 87% and 84% can now work better with others (compared to 81% overall), as shown in Table 6-2.

These apprentices were also more likely to have improved their maths skills (72% and 65% compared to 55% overall), as were Science apprentices (74%). Less than two-fifths of Arts and ICT apprentices improved their maths skills through their apprenticeship (36%, 39%).

Education and Health apprentices were also more likely to report they had gained more appropriate skills and knowledge related to their current or desired area of work (94% and 93% compared to 90% overall).

Two-thirds (67%) of apprentices in both Health and Retail saw an improvement in their English skills compared to 62% overall (dropping to only around half of those on Arts, Agriculture, Science and Leisure).

IT skills were most likely to be gained by ICT and Science apprentices (88% and 84%) followed by Arts, Education and Business apprentices (76%, 72% and 65%) whilst less than two-fifths of those on Agriculture apprenticeships reported improved IT skills (37%).

**Table 6-2 Skills gained as result of apprenticeship, by subject area**

| <i>Column percentages</i>                            | <b>ALL</b>   | <b>Agriculture</b> | <b>Arts and Media</b> | <b>Business</b> | <b>Construction</b> | <b>Education</b> | <b>Engineering</b> | <b>Health</b> | <b>ICT</b> | <b>Leisure</b> | <b>Retail</b> | <b>Science</b> |
|--|--------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------|------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| More appropriate skills / knowledge for area of work | <b>90%</b>   | 92%                | 90%                   | 87%             | 95%                 | 94%              | 92%                | 93%           | 85%        | 90%            | 88%           | 93%            |
| Skills /knowledge for a range of jobs / industries   | <b>90%</b>   | 83%                | 90%                   | 91%             | 94%                 | 87%              | 92%                | 87%           | 86%        | 93%            | 89%           | 91%            |
| Communication skills                                 | <b>84%</b>   | 81%                | 88%                   | 83%             | 87%                 | 80%              | 86%                | 82%           | 83%        | 87%            | 86%           | 90%            |
| Better able to work with others                      | <b>81%</b>   | 83%                | 85%                   | 76%             | 87%                 | 75%              | 84%                | 81%           | 80%        | 84%            | 83%           | 90%            |
| English skills                                       | <b>62%</b>   | 51%                | 48%                   | 59%             | 60%                 | 63%              | 61%                | 67%           | 57%        | 53%            | 67%           | 51%            |
| IT skills  | <b>59%</b>   | 37%                | 76%                   | 65%             | 46%                 | 72%              | 53%                | 60%           | 88%        | 56%            | 55%           | 84%            |
| Maths skills   | <b>55%</b>   | 49%                | 36%                   | 45%             | 72%                 | 60%              | 65%                | 58%           | 39%        | 42%            | 59%           | 74%            |
| <i>Base; All</i>                                     | <b>5,047</b> | 238                | 146                   | 1,029           | 398                 | 267              | 865                | 964           | 374        | 198            | 509           | 59             |

Apprentices who were new to their employer at the time of starting their apprenticeship were more likely to have gained all the listed skills than those who were existing employees. The greatest differences were in the likelihood to have improved their ability to work with others (89% of new starters compared to 76% of existing employees), IT skills (66% of new starters compared to 55% of existing employees) and communication skills (90% vs. 80%).

Apprentices in London were more likely to have improved their communication skills (93% compared to 90% overall), English skills (69% compared to 62%) and IT skills (64% compared to 59%).

## **Employment status of apprentices that had completed their apprenticeship**

Nearly all apprentices who had completed their apprenticeship<sup>50</sup> were in work at the point they were surveyed (93%): three-quarters (76%) were in full time work, 11% were in part time work, 4% were self-employed and 2% had zero hours contracts, as shown in Table 6-3. Two per cent of completed apprentices were in education or training, mainly at university.<sup>51</sup>

As shown in Table 6-3, the proportion of completed apprentices who were in work has remained similar to levels in previous years (93% in 2018-19, compared to 91% in the 2017 survey and 92% in 2015), although part time employment reduced by three percentage points (14% in 2018-19, compared with 11% in 2015 and 2017).

Unemployment levels among completed apprentices (4%) also remained similar to 2017 and 2015 survey levels (each 5%). The proportion in education has not changed (2%).

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<sup>50</sup> Note that 'completers' includes apprentices who were sampled as current apprentices but at the time of interview said they had completed their apprenticeship.

<sup>51</sup> The proportion of apprentices in work (93%) is slightly higher than the most recent available figures (2015-16) reported in the [Longitudinal Education Outcomes \(LEO\) Study](#) (88%). Differences may be due to the fact that the latter measure requires sustained employment, whereas this survey is a snapshot in time. Furthermore, whereas sustained employment outcomes were recorded in the subsequent academic year following apprenticeship completion, in general, this survey took place a longer time after apprenticeships had been completed (between 15 and 25 months).

**Table 6-3 Employment status of apprenticeship completers, 2015-2018/19<sup>52</sup>**

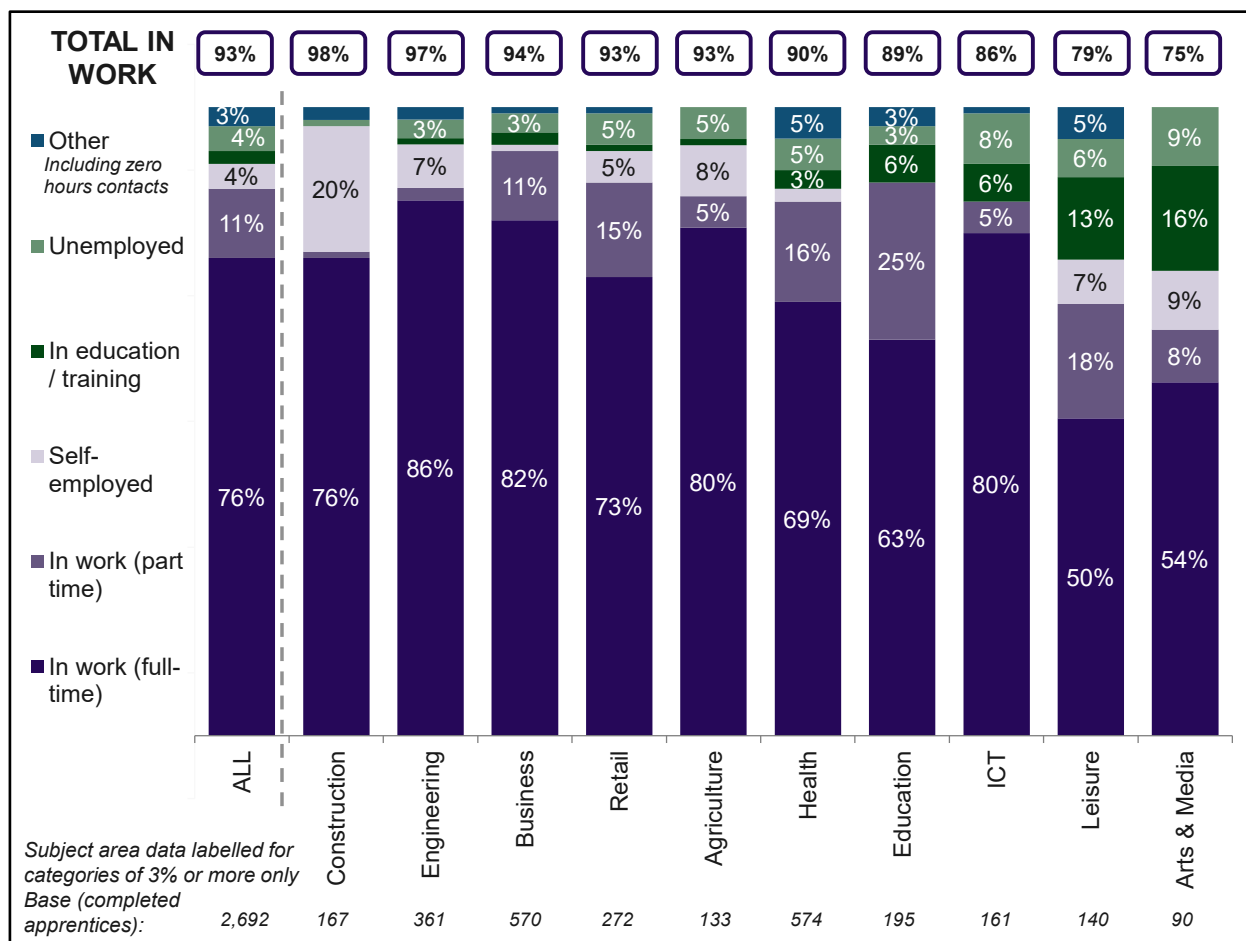
| <i>Column percentages</i>              | <b>2015</b>  | <b>2017</b>  | <b>2018-19</b> |
|--|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| In work (full-time)                    | 75%          | 74%          | 76%            |
| In work (part-time)                    | 14%          | 14%          | 11%            |
| Self-employed                          | 3%           | 4%           | 4%             |
| In education / training                | 2%           | 2%           | 2%             |
| Unemployed                             | 5%           | 5%           | 4%             |
| Other (including zero hours contracts) | 1%           | 2%           | 3%             |
| <b>IN WORK</b>                         | <b>92%</b>   | <b>91%</b>   | <b>93%</b>     |
| <i>Base: all completers</i>            | <b>3,748</b> | <b>3,398</b> | <b>2,692</b>   |

Apprentices most likely to be in work were those who had completed Construction (98%), Engineering (97%) and Business apprenticeships (94%), with those from the latter two subject areas particularly likely to be in full time employment (86% and 82% respectively compared to the 76% average). Construction apprentices were particularly likely to be self-employed (20%, more than double the proportion in any other subject area).

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<sup>52</sup> Note – there are differences across the three surveys in the gap between completion and the time of interview, which may underlie some of the differences. In 2018-19 the interval was 15-25 months, compared with 13-22 months for the 2017 survey and 12-20 months in 2015.

**Figure 6-3 Employment status of completed apprentices, by subject area**



Note – Science is not shown in the chart due to its low base size (29)

Part time work was higher among Education apprentice completers (25%), and was also particularly common among Leisure (18%), Health (16%) and Retail apprentices (15%).

Arts and Leisure apprentices were more likely than those in other subjects to be in education or training after completing their apprenticeship (16% and 13% compared to 2% on average).

Arts and ICT apprentices were most likely to be unemployed (9% and 8% respectively compared to 4% among all completed apprentices).

Compared to the 2017 cohort, 2018-19 Arts apprenticeship completers were less likely to be in work (75% compared to 82%) whilst completers of Agriculture apprenticeships were more likely to be in work (93% compared to 87%).

Outcomes were broadly similar across all Levels, with at least 92% in work among completers of each Level.<sup>53</sup> Full time employment was more likely for Level 4+ completers (84% compared to 75% of Level 2 or 3 completers). Unemployment was a little more likely among Level 2 completers than among Level 3 completers (5% vs. 3%), whereas the latter were a little more likely to be in education or training (4% vs. 1% of Level 2 completers).

Completers who had worked for their employer prior to their apprenticeship were more likely to be in work (95% compared to 89% of those who were new to their employer when they started their apprenticeship), and more likely to be in full time work (78% compared to 73%). Those who had been new starters were more likely to be unemployed or in education (6% and 4% respectively compared to 3% and 1% of those who had been existing employees).

Apprenticeship completers in the North East were more likely to be unemployed (7% compared to the 4% average across all regions), and with 88% in work compared to 93% overall.

The probability of a positive employment outcome varies by age, gender, disability and previous NEET status, with completers who were older, male, without a disability or who had not been NEET in the year prior to their apprenticeship more likely to be in work at the time of the survey. Likelihood of being in work post-apprenticeship increased with age; 89% of those 19 or younger and 91% of those aged 19 to 24 were in work compared to 96% of those aged 25 or older. Unemployment was a little more likely among younger apprenticeship completers – 5% of those under 25 compared to 3% of those aged 25 and over. Younger completers were also more likely to be in education or training (5% of those under 19 and 3% of those 19 to 24 compared to less than 1% of older apprentices).

Male apprenticeship completers were more likely to be in full time employment (82% compared to 71% of female) or self-employed (6% compared to 2%) whilst female completers were more likely to be in part time employment (17% compared to 4%). Overall, male apprenticeship completers were more likely to be in work (94% compared to 91% of female).

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<sup>53</sup> The likelihood of being in work generally increased with Level completed (Level 2 92%, Level 3 93%, Level 4 97%, Level 5 95%, Level 6+ 100%, but base sizes are small for the higher Levels (Level 4 67, Level 5 88, Level 6+ 21), and the differences are not statistically significant so this finding should be treated with caution.

Completers with a disability were twice as likely to work part-time (22% compared to 11% of those without a disability). Overall, they were less likely to be in work (87% compared to 93% of those without a disability), with less than two-thirds in full time employment (65%, compared to three-quarters (76%) of those without a disability). Disabled completers were more than twice as likely to be unemployed (9% compared to 4% of those without a disability).

Although the vast majority of completers who had experienced a period of being NEET in the year before their apprenticeship were in work (86%) this group was three times more likely to be unemployed (10% compared to 3% of those who had not experienced being NEET) and were less likely to be in full time work (69% compared to 77% those who had not been NEET).

## Impacts at work

The vast majority (93%) of apprentices felt that since starting their apprenticeship they had seen at least one of the positive impacts on their job or career prospects listed in Figure 6-4.<sup>54</sup> Overall this is similar to previous years (94% in the 2017 survey, 92% in 2015). Over half of apprentices in 2018-19 (53%) reported all five positive impacts, closer to the proportion in 2015 (51%) than the rise seen in 2017 (58%).

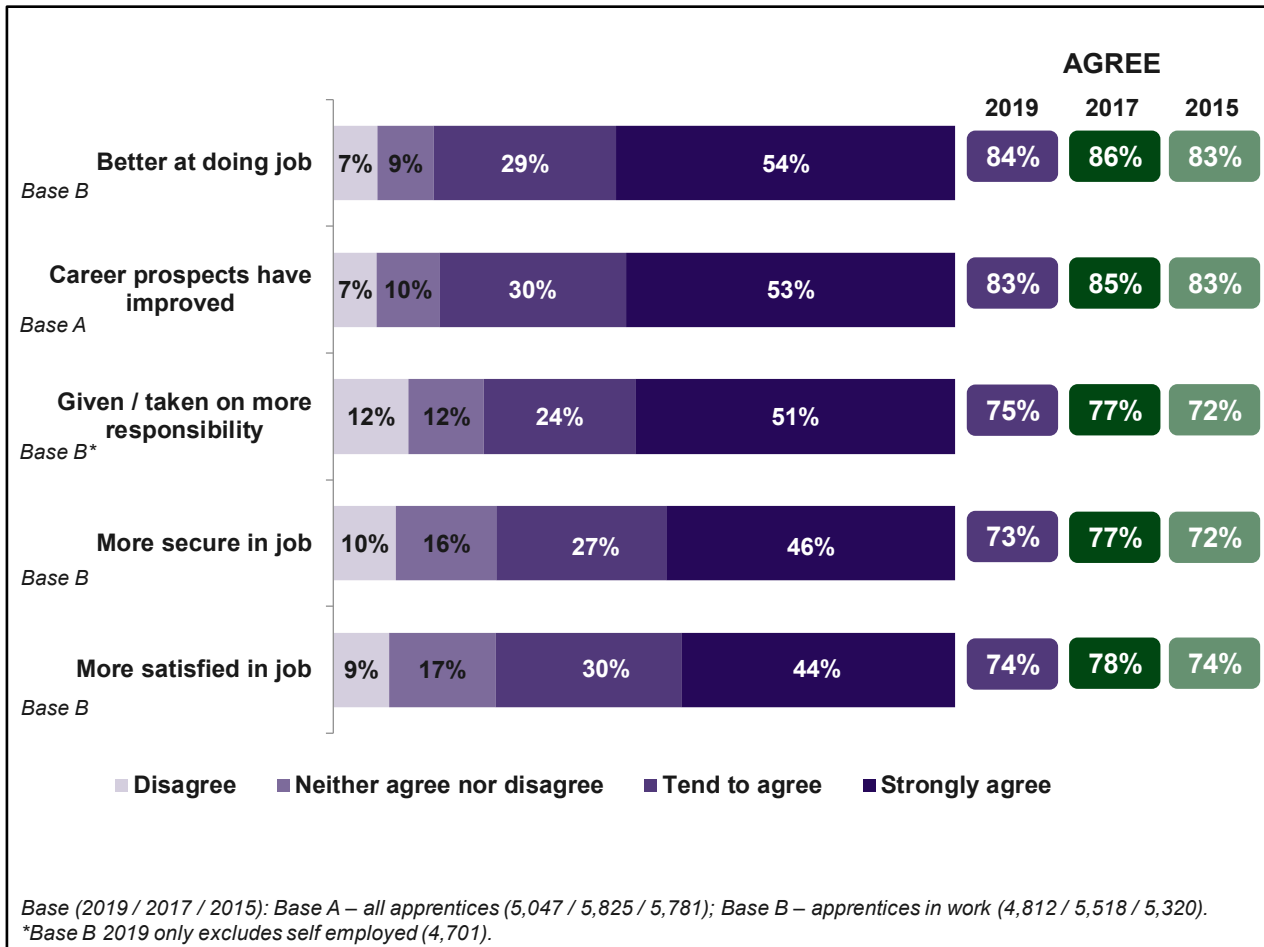
The positive outcomes apprentices were most likely to have seen were being better at their job (84% of those in work) and having improved career prospects (83% of all apprentices), both reported by marginally fewer than in the 2017 survey but in line with 2015 levels as shown on Figure 6-4. Only 7% of apprentices in work disagreed they were better at doing their job since starting their apprenticeship and only 7% of all apprentices disagreed that their career prospects had improved.

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<sup>54</sup> Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that changes detailed had taken place at work since starting their apprenticeship or since completing (if a completer). They were not explicitly asked if these things had happened as a direct result of the apprenticeship.



**Figure 6-4 Impacts at work since starting apprenticeship**



Three-quarters of apprentices working for an employer felt that they had been given or taken on more responsibility since the apprenticeship (75%), felt more secure (73%) or more satisfied (74%) in their job. These results are lower than in the 2017 survey (by two to four percentage points), but similar or slightly higher than 2015.

Given that most completers interviewed in this survey had finished their apprenticeship before the reforms in May 2017, there is considerable overlap between the completion status of apprentices spoken to and whether their apprenticeship was pre or post the reforms in May 2017. Current apprentices were more likely to have started post-reform (85%) whilst most completers had started pre-reform (86%). Positively, both current apprentices and post-reform apprentices were more likely to report all five positive impacts (61% and 59%, compared to 48% of completers and 49% of pre-reform apprentices). Completers and pre-reform apprentices were more likely not to have experienced any of these positive outcomes (each 8%, compared to 5% among current apprentices and post-reform apprentices respectively). The patterns between current apprentices and completers were consistent with the 2017 and 2015 surveys, although current learners were more likely in 2017 to have reported all five positive impacts (68%).

The impacts showing greatest improvement were having improved career prospects (86% post-reform versus 81% pre-reform), being better at their job (86% versus 82%) and increased responsibility (78% versus 73%).

Degree and Level 2 and 3 apprentices were particularly likely to have seen all five listed positive impacts (58% and 54% compared to only 39% of non-degree Level 6 and 42% of Level 4 and 5 apprentices). Degree apprentices, followed by Level 2 and 3 apprentices, were the most likely, and Level 6+ non-degree followed by Level 4 and 5 apprentices, the least likely to report each individual impact except improved job security:

- Degree apprentices were more likely than Level 6 non-degree apprentices to report all the listed impacts; improved career prospects (90% compared to 77%), being better at job (87% compared to 76%), more responsibility (83% compared to 65%) and increased job satisfaction (73% compared to 53%).
- Level 2 and 3 apprentices were more likely than Level 4 and 5 apprentices to report increases in responsibility (76% compared to 68%), job security (75% compared to 59%) and job satisfaction (75% compared to 62%). Having improved career prospects was equally likely to be reported (83% both groups).

Apprentices from the more traditional subjects of Construction, Engineering and Agriculture were most likely to report all five positive outcomes as listed (68%, 67% and 64% respectively compared to 53% across all subjects). They were most likely to report improved career prospects (94%, 87%, and 88%), doing better at their job (91%, 90%, and 90%), increased job security (90%, 81%, 79%) and increased job satisfaction (87%, 81%, 81%).

Apprentices who were new to their employer when they started their apprenticeship were more likely to report all five positive outcomes (65% compared to 45% of existing employees). The greatest disparity between the two groups was in their likelihood to have increased responsibility (90% of those who were new to their employer compared to 66% of existing employees). One in eleven existing employees reported none of the listed positive impacts.

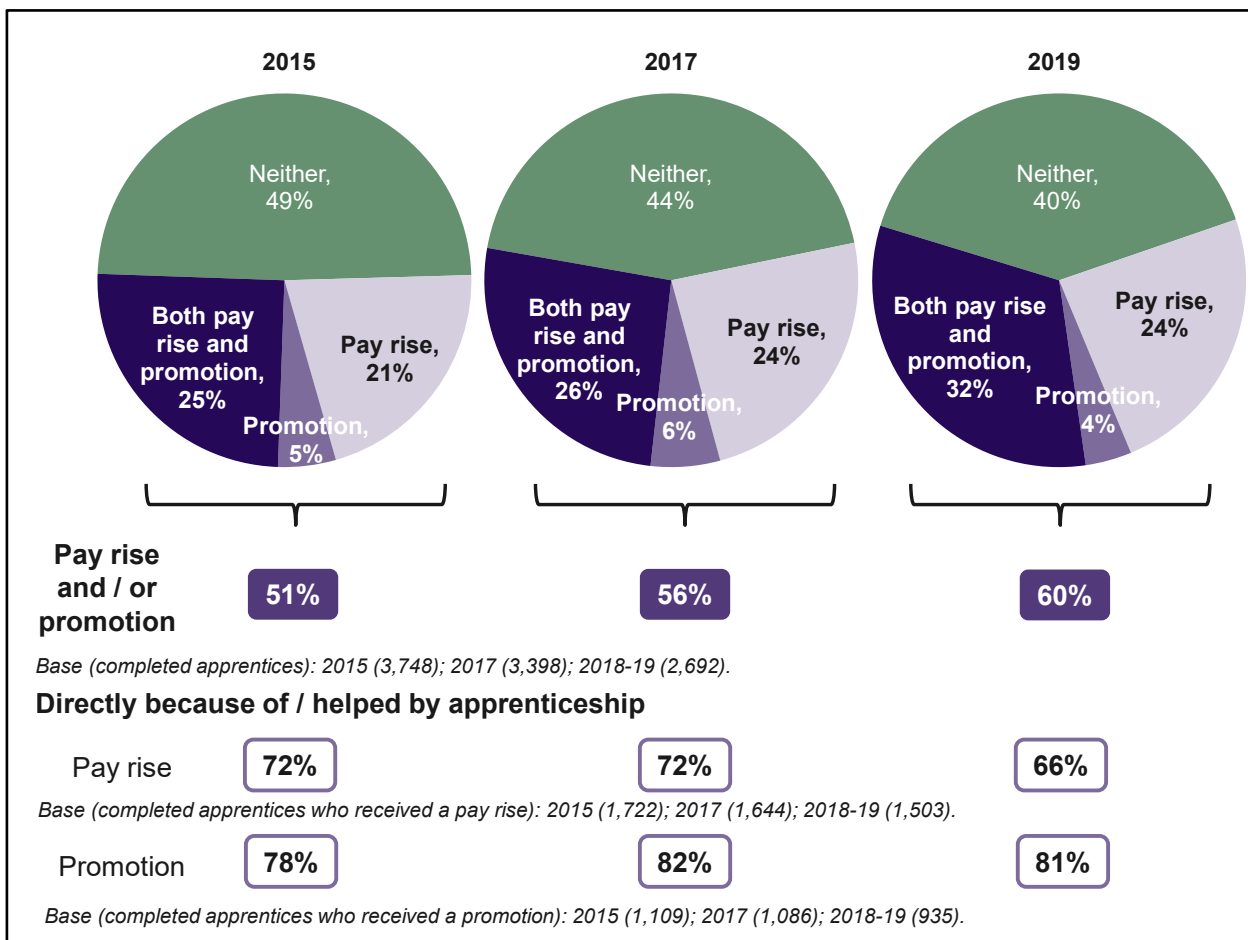
Demographic and social factors may also play a role, with apprentices who were younger, male, non-disabled or had experienced a NEET period most likely to see all five positive impacts after starting their apprenticeship. This applied for:

- 69% of apprentices aged under 19 and 61% of those aged 19 to 24 reported (compared to 37% of those aged 25 or above)
- 62% of those who had experienced a period of being NEET in the year before their apprenticeship (compared to 52% of those who had not)
- 57% of male apprentices compared to 49% of female

- 53% of apprentices without a disability (compared to 42% with a disability).

There is evidence of increased impact on pay and progression compared with the 2017 survey, with three-fifths (60%) of completers having seen a positive impact on their pay and / or progression as shown in Figure 6-5. A third (32%) of those who had completed their apprenticeship had received both a pay rise and a promotion, a notable increase from 26% in the 2017 survey and 25% in 2015. A further quarter (24%) of completers had received only a pay rise (as in 2017) and 4% only a promotion (slightly down from 6% in 2017). Two-fifths (40%) of completers reported no impact on their pay or progression, down from 44% in 2017 and 49% in 2015.

**Figure 6-5 Impact on pay and progression among apprenticeship completers, 2015-2018/19**

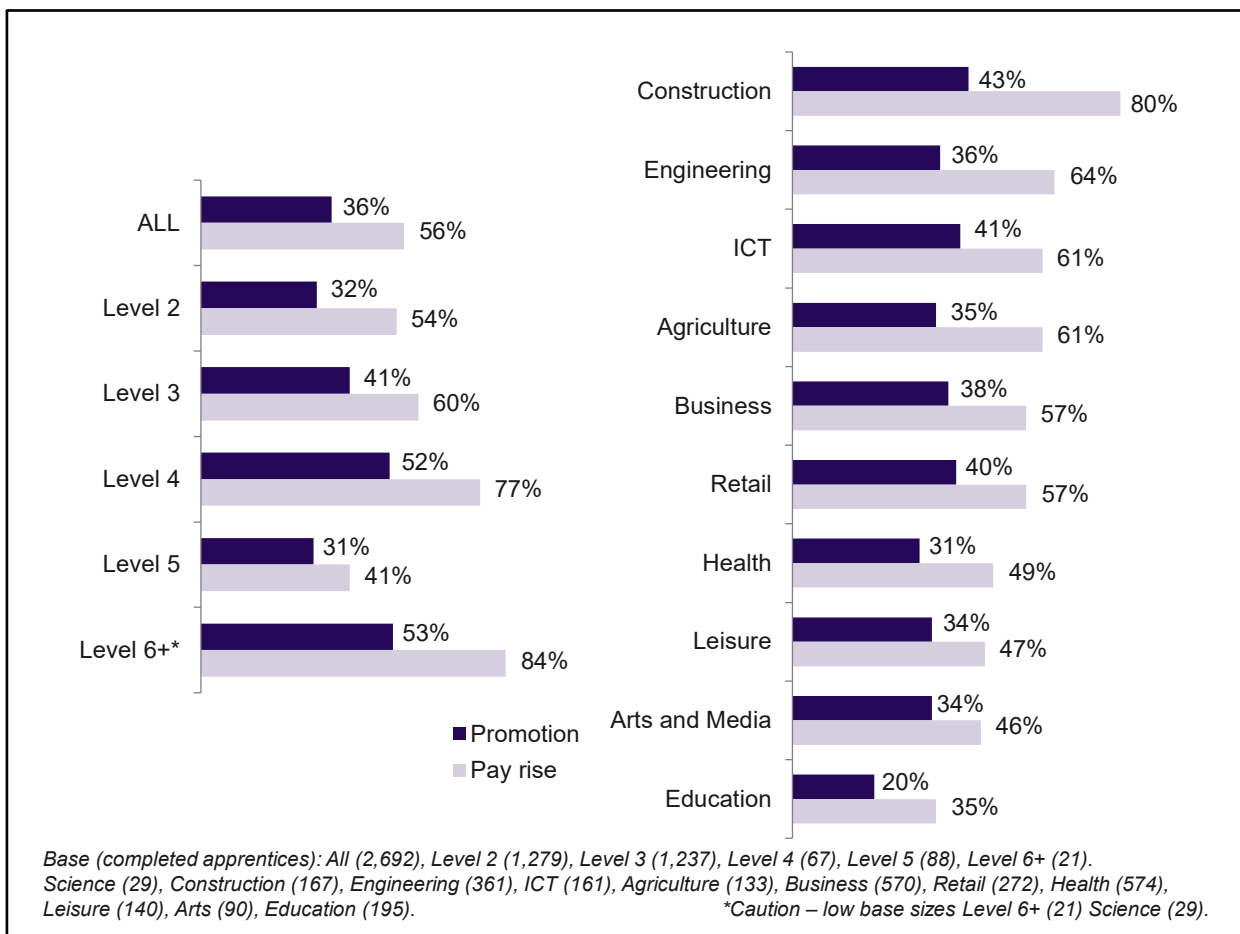


Four in five promotions (81%) and two-thirds of pay rises (66%) were at least helped by having completed an apprenticeship, with a fifth (21%) of those who received a pay rise, and a quarter (25%) of those who were promoted attributing these outcomes *directly* to their apprenticeship. The proportion attributing their pay rise at least partially to their apprenticeship is lower than in the 2017 and 2015 surveys (66% of those who received a pay rise compared to 72% in both previous waves).

Post reform apprentices who had received a pay rise were particularly likely to say this occurred directly because of their apprenticeship (33% of those who had received a pay rise compared to 24% of their pre-reform counterparts).

Positive pay and progression impacts were more likely for Level 6+ and Level 4 apprenticeship completers, as shown in Figure 6-6. Around half of Level 6+ (53%) and Level 4 (52%) apprenticeship completers reported a promotion compared to around a third of Level 2 (32%) and Level 5 (31%) completers. Around four-fifths of Level 6+ (84%) and Level 4 (77%) apprentices reported a pay rise compared to only two-fifths of Level 5 apprentices (41%) and just over half of Level 2 apprentice completers (54%). Level 3 and 4 apprentices were particularly likely to have been promoted directly because of their apprenticeship (27% and 29% respectively of those who had received a promotion compared to 15% of Level 2 apprentices). Level 3 apprentices were also more likely to have received a pay rise directly because of their apprenticeship (31% of those who had received a pay rise compared to 19% of Level 2 apprentices).

**Figure 6-6 Impact on pay and progression among apprenticeship completers, by level and subject area**



Repeating their likelihood to see the softer positive outcomes apprenticeship completers from the Construction and Engineering subject areas were also more likely to report the ‘harder’ positive outcome of a pay increase (80% and 64%). A pay rise being seen to be a direct result of their apprenticeship was particularly likely among completers in ICT (35%) or Engineering (33%). Education, Leisure and Health apprenticeship completers were less likely to receive either a pay rise or a promotion (61%, 49% and 48% respectively received neither).

Apprentices who had joined their employer at the same time as starting their apprenticeship were more likely to have seen both a promotion (41%) and / or a pay rise (70%) compared to those who were existing employees (33% and 48% respectively).

Related to this, younger apprenticeship completers were more likely to have received both a pay rise (71% of those under 19 and 70% of those 19 to 24, compared to 39% of those aged 25 or older) and / or a promotion (41% of those under 19 and 48% of those 19 to 24, compared to 25% of those aged 25 or older).

Whilst promotion chances were broadly similar by gender (38% of male completers and 35% of female completers), a pay rise was more likely to have happened for male completers (61% compared to 52% of female).

## **Impact of apprenticeships on future careers**

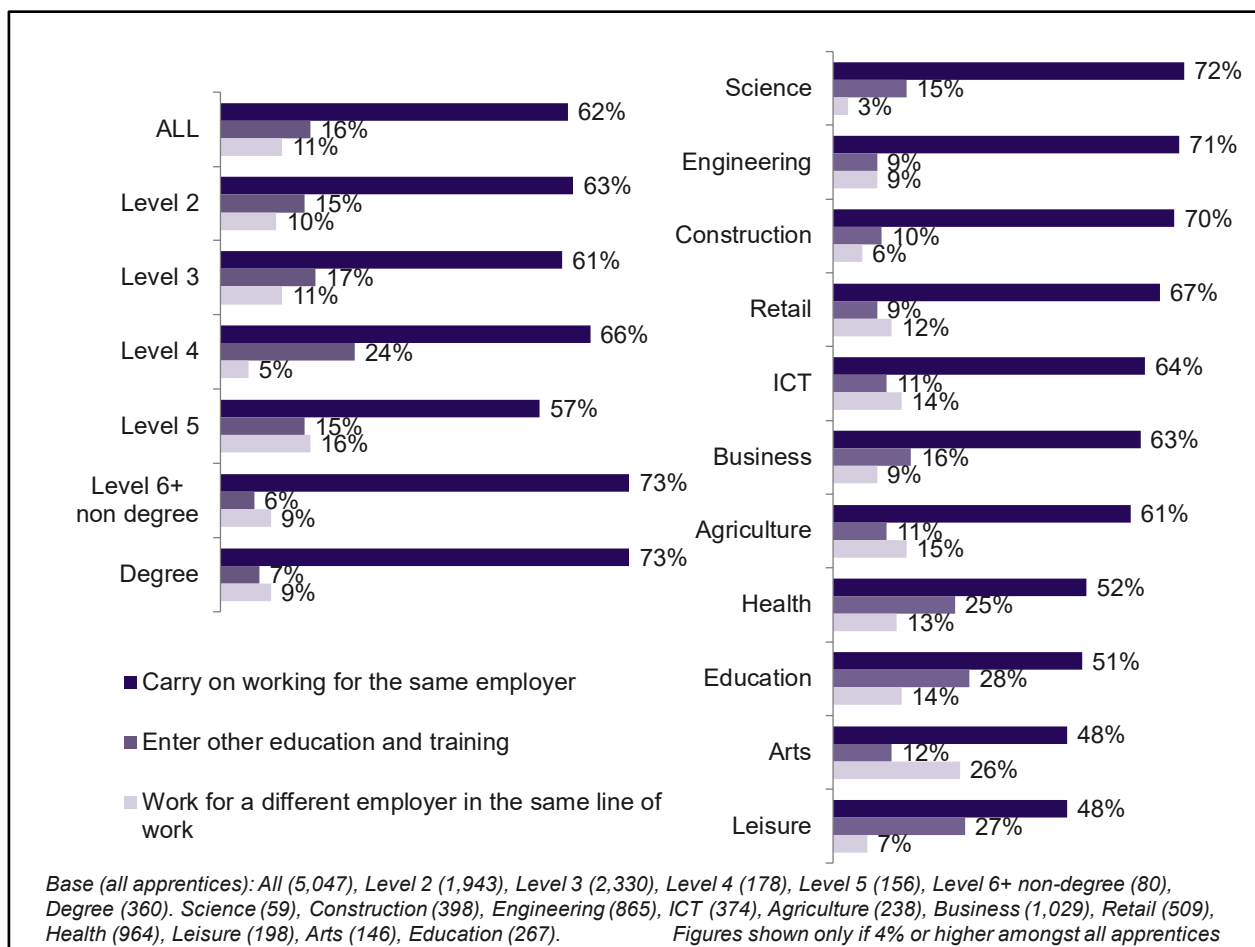
Continuing to work for the same employer was the intention for the majority of apprentices (62%) upon completion of their apprenticeship.<sup>55</sup> Entering other education or training was the intention of one in six (16%). Moving to work for a different employer was the plan for 13% of apprentices (11% in the same line of work, 3% in a different line of work). Becoming self-employed or setting up a business was the intention of a very small proportion (2%).

Figure 6-7 shows results for the most common planned destinations (continuing with the same employer; education or training; and working for a different employer in the same line of work) broken down by Level and subject area of apprenticeship. Level 6+ apprentices were more likely than average to intend to continue with the same employer (73% of degree and 71% of non-degree Level 6+ apprentices). Almost a quarter (24%) of Level 4 apprentices planned to enter other education or training, notably higher than 16% across all Levels).

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<sup>55</sup> Apprentices undertaking their apprenticeship at the time of research were asked about their post-apprenticeship plans, and those who had completed their apprenticeship were asked about their plan at the time of undertaking their apprenticeship (i.e. their intention, not necessarily the outcome).

**Figure 6-7 Most common post apprenticeship plans, by Level and subject area**



Intending to continue with the same employer was particularly common in Science (72%), Engineering (71%) and Construction (70%). In comparison just under half in Arts and Media and in Leisure intended to continue with the same employer. Wanting to continue in the same line of work but with a different employer was much higher among Arts apprentices (26%, compared to 11% overall). In Education, Health and Leisure a much higher proportion than average, around a quarter in each case, intended to continue in education or training. Wanting to completely change their line of work was rare for any group, but did rise to 6% of Leisure and 4% of Business apprentices.

Construction apprentices were the most likely to plan self-employment or starting a business (8%).

Intending to change employer was more likely among London apprentices (23% compared to no more than 14% in any other region), perhaps reflecting the wider choice of employers in the capital.

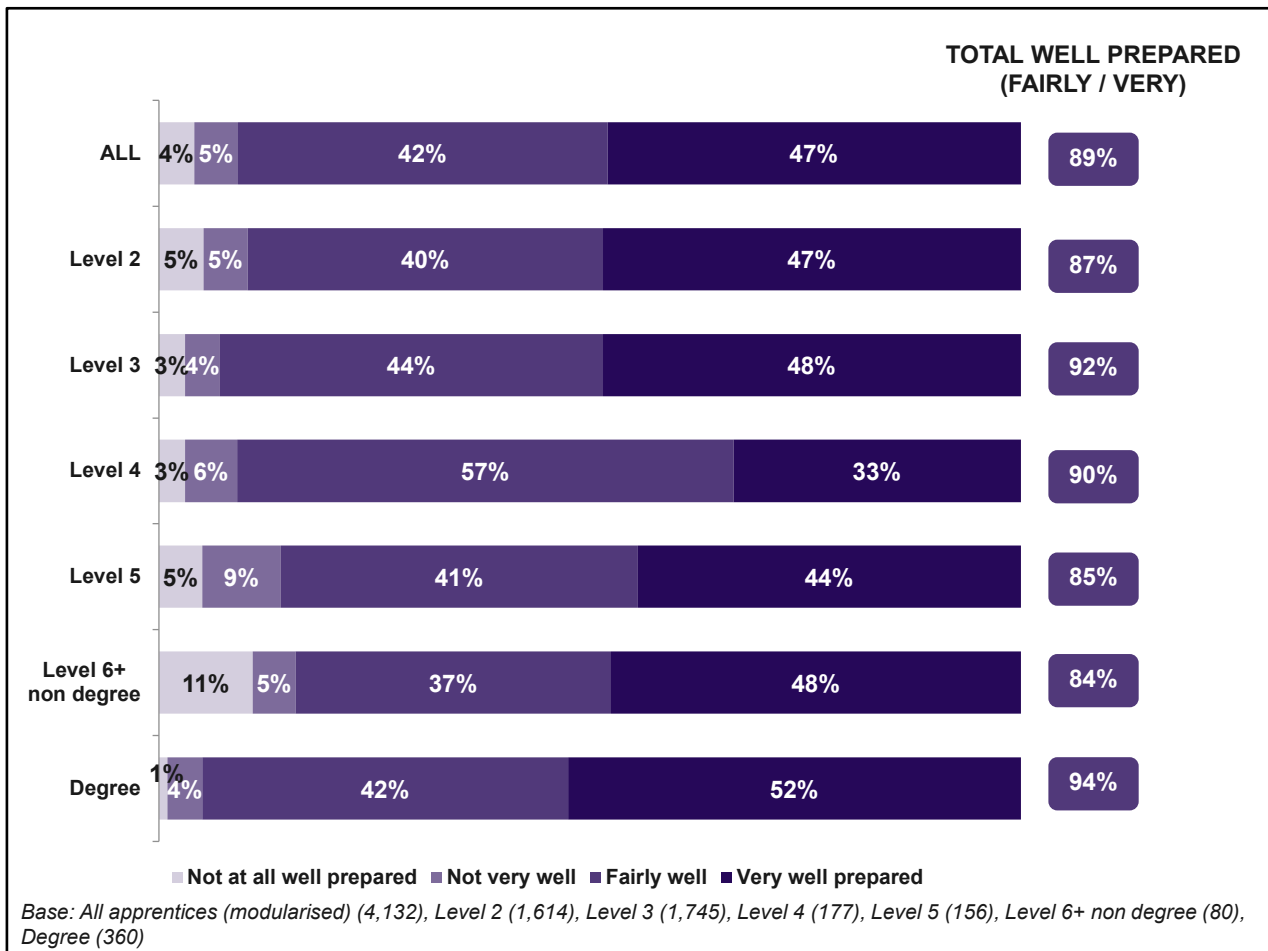
Older apprentices were more likely to intend to stay with their employer, 65% of those 25 plus compared to 60% of both 19 to 24 year olds and those under 19.

Male apprentices were more likely to plan to continue with their employer (66% compared to 58% of female), and less likely to plan to enter education or training (12% compared to 20% of female apprentices).

Whether apprentices had worked for their employer prior to their apprenticeship or not appeared to have little bearing on their intentions post-apprenticeship (63% of those who had done so and 61% of those who had not planned to stay).

Overall nearly nine in ten apprentices (89%) thought their apprenticeship had prepared them well for their planned next activity, as shown in Figure 6-8. Just under half of apprentices (47%) believed it had prepared them 'very well', rising to 50% of post-reform apprentices (compared to 46% of pre-reform apprentices).

**Figure 6-8 Extent to which apprenticeship has prepared them for their desired post apprenticeship activity**





Degree apprentices and Level 3 apprentices were more likely to think their apprenticeship had prepared them fairly or very well for their intended activity post apprenticeship (94% and 92% respectively compared to 84% of Level 6+ non-degree apprentices, 85% of Level 5 apprentices and 87% of Level 2 apprentices). Level 5 and Level 6+ non-degree apprentices were most likely to feel their apprenticeship had not prepared them well (14% and 16%).

Most positively over half of Construction, Engineering, Health and Agriculture apprentices felt their apprenticeship had prepared them very well (53%, 52%, 52%, 52%), whilst most negatively at least one in ten ICT, Arts, Retail and Business apprentices felt it had not prepared them well (12%, 12%, 11%, 10%).

Apprentices in the North East were the most likely to feel their apprenticeship had not prepared them well (13% compared to no more than 10% in any other region).

Younger apprentices were again more positive about the outcomes of their apprenticeship, with 91% of those under 19 and 92% of those between 19 and 24 feeling it had prepared them well for their future activity (compared to 86% of those aged 25 plus).

Apprentices with a disability were notably more likely to feel their apprenticeship had not prepared them well (17% compared to 9% of those without a disability).

The most common reasons for apprentices feeling their apprenticeship had not prepared them well were as follows (figures are based on those feeling their apprenticeship had not prepared them well):

- The training being felt irrelevant or not useful for career (26%, rising to 38% among Level 4+ apprentices)
- Not learning anything new (22%, rising to 30% among those aged 25 plus and 29% of those who were existing employees when their apprenticeship began)
- A lack of support or contact from provider, college or tutor (17%, rising to 38% of those in London)
- A lack of support from their employer (9%, rising to 16% of those aged under 19 and 13% of female apprentices)
- Insufficient time spent training (8%, rising to 15% of post reform apprentices and 15% of current apprentices).

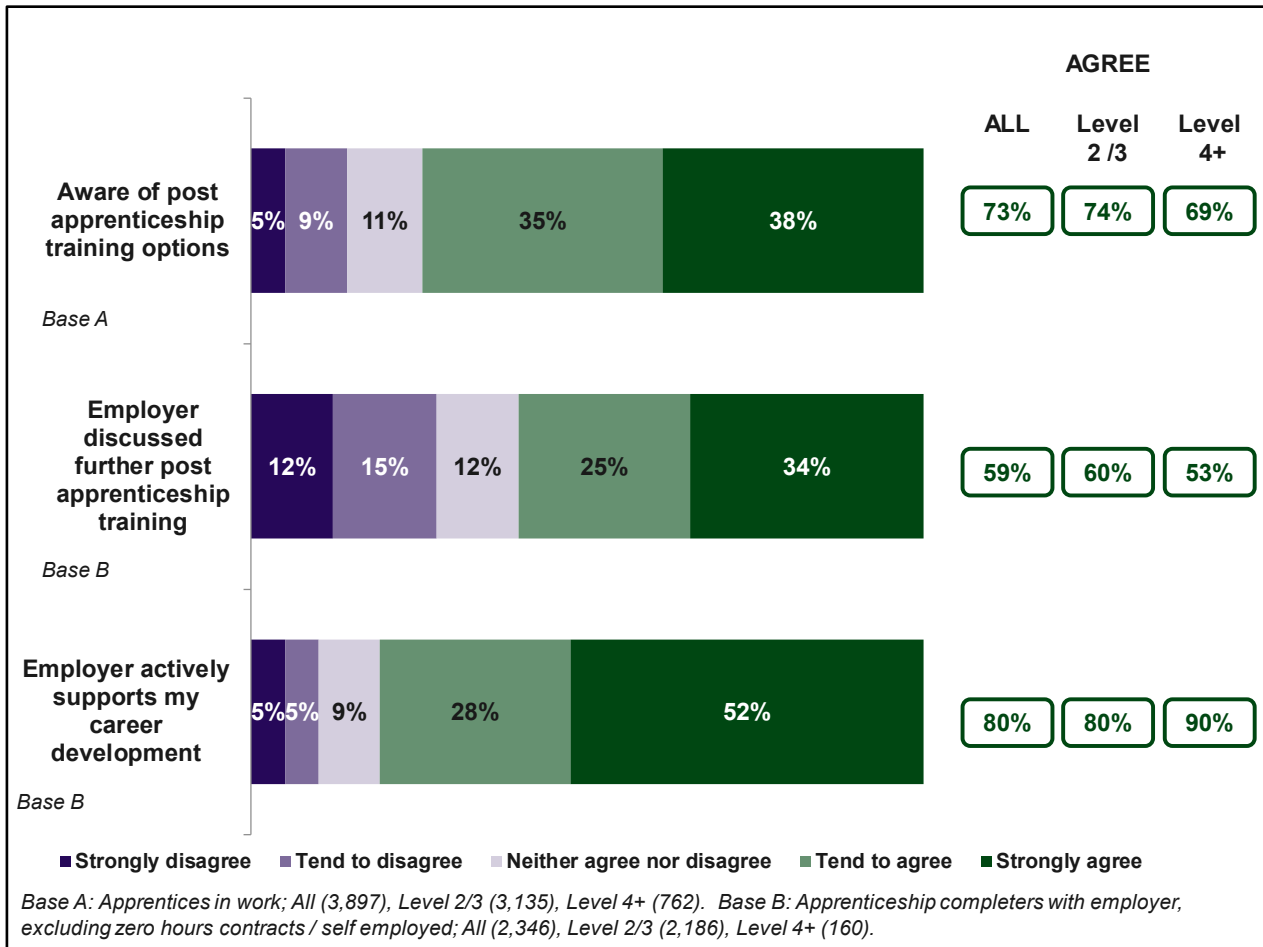
Virtually all current apprentices (95%) thought it was likely they would complete their apprenticeship, with 80% reporting it very likely. Only 4% thought it unlikely they would complete their apprenticeship, though this rises to almost a quarter (23%) of those with a disability and 12% of those who had switched employer during their apprenticeship. The most common reason for being unlikely to complete an apprenticeship was a perceived lack of support from employer and / or training provider (68%), followed by a lack of time (24%) and a lack of interest / enjoyment (19%).

## **Apprentices' plans for future training**

Around three-quarters of apprentices in work (73%) believed they were aware of the variety of training options available after completing an apprenticeship, although only 38% strongly agreed this was the case, as shown in Figure 6-9. Level 2 and 3 apprentices were more likely to think they were aware of their post-apprenticeship training options (74% compared with 69% of Level 4+ apprentices, dipping to 59% among Level 6+ non-degree apprentices).

Among apprenticeship completers those who had continued with the same employer were more likely to feel aware of their training options (75%) than those who had completed but changed employer (71%). Similarly among current apprentices those who had changed employers were twice as likely to disagree they were aware of future training opportunities as those who had not changed (27% compared to 13%).

**Figure 6-9 Awareness of and employer support for future training**



The following groups were all more likely (than the 14% average among all in work) not to feel they were aware of the training options available after their apprenticeship: Education apprentices (20%); older apprentices aged 25 plus (19%, compared to 11% of those aged 19 to 24 and 9% of those under 19); those with a disability (25%).

Overall four-fifths (80%) of employed apprenticeship completers believed that their employer actively supports their career development, indeed over half (52%) strongly agreed that this was the case. Those who had remained with the same employer post apprenticeship were more likely to agree that they were actively supported (82% compared to 76% of those who had moved to a new employer).

Level 4+ apprenticeship completers were particularly likely to feel that their career was supported by their employer (90% of those in employment compared to 80% of those on lower Levels). Apprenticeship completers particularly likely to find their employer supportive of their career development included; younger apprentices (86% of both those under 19 and those aged 19 to 24 compared to 73% of older apprentices), those who were existing employees before starting their apprenticeship (85% compared to 77% of those who were new employees) and post-reform apprentices (85% compared to 79% of pre-reform apprentices).

Arts apprenticeship completers and those with a disability were more likely to disagree that their employer was supportive of their career development (19% and 20% respectively disagreed, compared to 10% overall among apprenticeship completers with an employer).

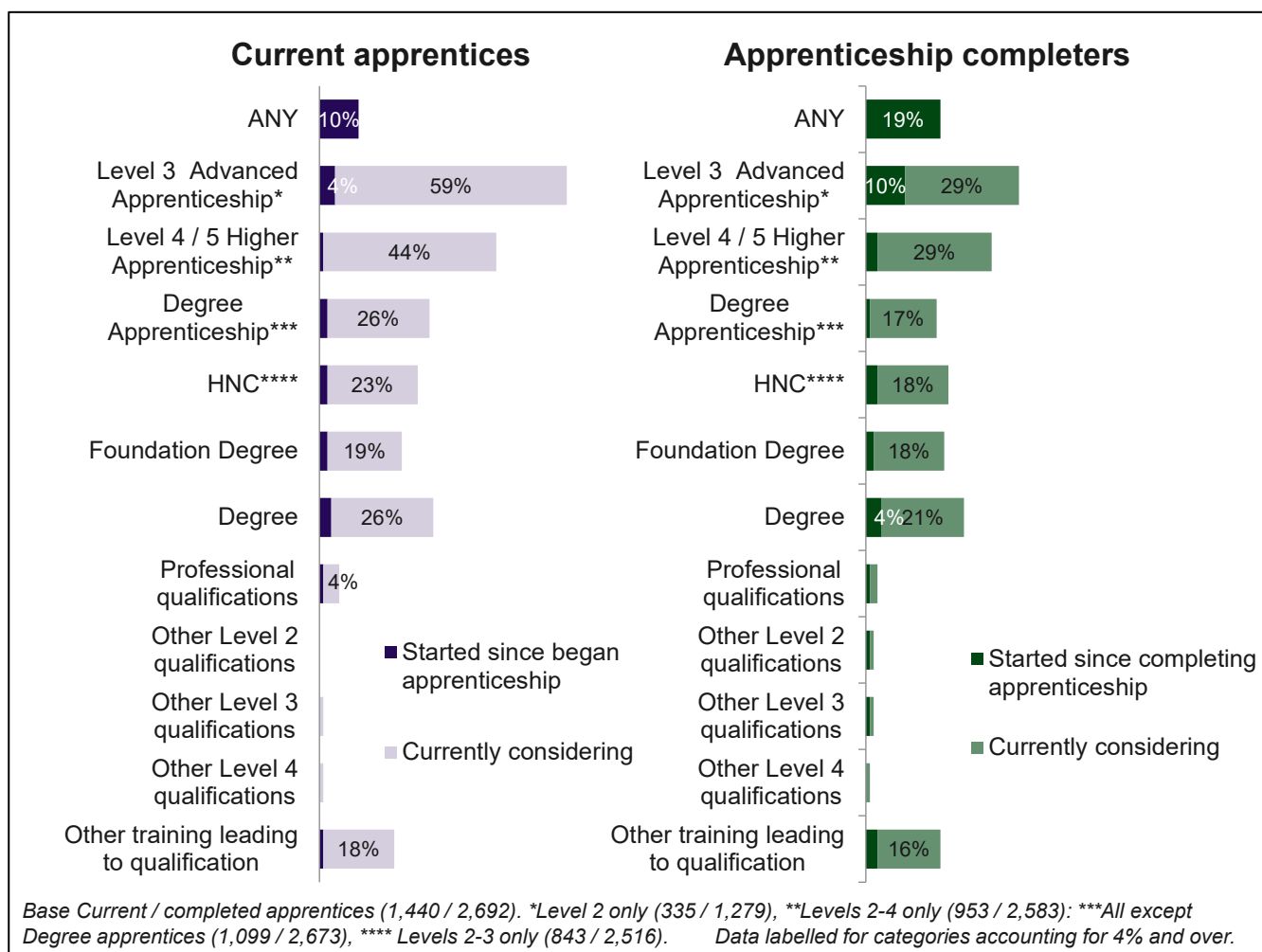
In more concrete terms only a third (34%) of employed apprenticeship completers strongly agreed that their employer had discussed post-apprenticeship training options, though 59% agreed that this had happened to some extent. Again, those who had remained with the same employer were more likely to have had these discussions, 63% compared to 50% of completers who had a new employer.

Discussions about post apprenticeship training were more common for younger apprentices (68% of those under 19 and 66% of those aged 19 to 24 compared to 50% of older apprentices) and for post-reform apprentices (68%, compared to 58% of pre-reform apprentices). Again, those with a disability were particularly likely to disagree (42% of apprenticeship completers with a disability disagreed they had had this discussion compared to 27% of those without a disability).

Around a fifth (19%) of those who had completed their apprenticeships had started a new qualification, and 10% of those who were still undertaking their apprenticeship had begun an additional qualification alongside. Over half (54%) of apprenticeship completers and 65% of current apprentices were considering a further qualification.

Among Level 2 completers 10% had started and 29% were considering a Level 3 / Advanced apprenticeship. Similarly 3% of Level 2 and 3 apprenticeship completers had progressed to a Level 4 or 5 / Higher apprenticeship, and 29% were considering doing so. Three per cent of Level 2 and 3 completed apprentices had started Higher National Certificate (HNC), 18% were considering doing so.

**Figure 6-10 Further qualifications started or being considered, current apprentices and apprenticeship completers**



One in six apprenticeship completers (17%) who had not undertaken a Degree apprenticeship were considering one, and 1% had started one. Perhaps surprisingly Level 2 and 3 apprenticeship completers were as likely to be considering this as their Level 5 counterparts (17% across both Level 2 and Level 3 apprentices compared to 18% among Level 5 apprentices) whilst Level 4 apprenticeship completers were less likely to be considering it (only 6%). Between one and two per cent of completers at Level 2 to 5 had started a Degree apprenticeship.

A foundation degree and other degrees were also being considered by around a fifth of those who had completed their apprenticeships (18% and 21%), with very small proportions having started already (2% and 4% respectively). They were more likely to be under consideration among those who had completed Level 3 apprenticeship (20% considering a foundation degree, 24% another degree), with Level 3 and 4 completers most likely to have started since their apprenticeship (3% of both Level 3 Level 4 completers had started foundation degrees and 6% of Level 3 and 4% of Level 4 completers had started other degrees).

Few apprentices were considering other Level 2, 3 or 4 qualifications or professional qualifications post apprenticeship but 16% of those who had completed their apprenticeships were considering other training leading to a qualification, and 3% had started such training.

Among those who had completed their apprenticeships those most likely to have started studying for a new qualification were: younger (28% of those under 19 and 21% of those aged 19 to 24 compared to 13% of those 25 or older), those who had joined their employer when they started their apprenticeship (24% compared to 17% of existing employees), and those who had completed Leisure (25%) or, Engineering (23%) or Education (24%) apprenticeships.<sup>56</sup> Level 4 and 5 apprenticeship completers were particularly unlikely to have started a new qualification, with only 11% doing so.

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<sup>56</sup> Particularly high levels of Science and Level 6+ apprenticeship completers had also started new qualifications (53% and 44% respectively), but low bases sizes (29 , 21) means these findings should be treated with caution.

## 7 Conclusions

This report presents findings from a large-scale survey of over 5,000 apprentices covering those still undertaking their apprenticeship and those that had completed. Although fieldwork took place from November 2018 and March 2019, well after major apprenticeship reforms came into effect in May 2017, it is important to note that most respondents (60%) started their apprenticeship before the reforms came into effect.

Compared with previous surveys conducted in 2015 and 2017, there are mixed signs on measures assessing the quality of apprenticeships. The average reported intended duration of the apprenticeships was slightly higher than found in the 2017 and 2015 surveys. On the other hand, a smaller proportion of apprentices in 2018-19 than in 2017 reported undertaking any formal training as part of their apprenticeship (covering training at an external provider or formal training sessions in the workplace away from usual work activities). Among those receiving training, results suggest apprentices received slightly less training, including formal training. Importantly, however, while the survey is not able to directly measure compliance with off-the-job training requirements, the findings do suggest a substantial proportion of apprenticeships are not complying with the requirement for 20% of working hours to be spent doing off-the-job training.

While apprentice satisfaction remains high overall, satisfaction has fallen slightly compared with the 2015 and 2017 surveys. There has been a particular fall in the proportion 'very satisfied'. This overall fall in satisfaction is driven by responses from current apprentices, especially among those at Level 5 and Level 6/7 non-degree apprenticeships. While some of the fall in satisfaction is due to changes in the composition of current apprentices, there have also been falls in satisfaction across most age groups, sector areas and levels. This does not appear to be driven by the move to standards, as satisfaction on frameworks has fallen by a similar proportion.

It is too early to tell if these changes represent a temporary fluctuation as employers and providers get used to the new post-reform apprenticeship environment, or something substantive. More generally, the findings indicate that ongoing monitoring will be required to assess the extent of changes in the quality of, and satisfaction with, apprenticeships from the learner perspective. This needs to assess experiences and views overall but also by level and subject of the apprenticeship, and the age of the apprentice, since results indicate quite wide differences by these characteristics.

While satisfaction is clearly a key measure, and falling satisfaction a concern, it is important to remember that most apprentices report positive outcomes from their apprenticeship. The vast majority of completers were in work at the time of the interview (93%), and this represents an increase (of two percentage points) compared with the 2017 survey. In terms of skills acquisition, among completers and current apprentices, nine in ten felt they had gained skills or knowledge appropriate for their area of work as well as more transferable skills for a range of jobs or industries, and eight in ten reported improved softer skills such as communication and team-working. Importantly, however, it is too early to assess the labour market outcomes for those on post-reform apprenticeships.





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