

# Perceptions of Vocational and Technical Qualifications in England – Wave 6

An Ofqual commissioned report

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The logo for YouGov, featuring the word "YouGov" in a bold, red, sans-serif font. A small registered trademark symbol (®) is located at the top right of the letter "v".

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## Executive summary

Every year Ofqual commissions a survey on the Perceptions of Vocational and Technical Qualifications. Its aim is to explore perceptions of Vocational and Technical Qualifications, Functional Skills Qualifications, End-Point Assessments of Apprenticeships and T Levels, as well as various themes surrounding employment and skills. This report presents the findings of wave 6 of this survey conducted by YouGov in 2022.

In interpreting these results, it should be reminded that 2022 saw the return of exams and formal assessments following two years in which alternative arrangements had been put in place due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. To provide contextual information and details on the methodology, a [background note](#) is published alongside this report.

A range of stakeholders are involved in this survey:

- providers
- learners
- employers

The full report provides detailed findings on respondents' perceptions from up to the past 4 waves, as well as a breakdown of responses by stakeholder group. Reported below are the key findings of this survey.

### Perceptions of Vocational and Technical Qualifications, Functional Skills Qualifications, and Apprenticeships and End-Point Assessments

#### General perceptions

Overall, employers reported similar levels of understanding of Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQ), Functional Skills Qualifications (FSQ) and End-Point Assessments (EPA), with levels of understanding being slightly higher for VTQs. They were broadly consistent year-on-year and understanding increased with the organisation size. Comparatively, while employers' reported understanding of EPAs was stable, for the provider group, understanding declined compared to previous waves, while learners' agreement increased.

Learners were most likely to value VTQs, FSQs and EPAs compared to the other groups, while employers especially showed lower levels of agreement here. Learners were also more likely to agree that FSQs offered value for money, an increase compared to wave 5, which was conducted when alternative arrangements were in place due to public health reasons. Likewise, compared to employers and providers, learners were most likely to agree that VTQs, FSQs and EPAs were sufficiently flexible. For providers, VTQs, and subsequently FSQs, were more likely to represent value for money than EPAs, although this wave saw decreased levels of disagreement when thinking about EPAs.

When deciding to undertake a VTQ or FSQ, learners most commonly agreed they did so in order to improve their skills, or progress further in their studies, and there were broadly comparable benefits associated with these qualifications as well, with confidence being another key theme. For EPAs, the reasoning to undertake these qualifications also focused on building skills and progressing in their

current jobs. Learners' perceived benefits for EPAs focused closely on their job: developing their knowledge for their job, progressing in their job, and building a broader range of skills in the workplace.

### **Perceptions of the qualifications system in 2022**

Given the special circumstances during the pandemic and the subsequent arrangements put back in place in 2022, respondents were presented with statements and questions similar to those asked in the annual survey but instructed to think specifically about perceptions for qualifications and arrangements in 2022 rather than their more general outlook.

In the context of 2022, providers and learners were consistently more positive about VTQs, FSQs and EPAs of apprenticeship standards than employers were. This finding is in line with results seen in previous years. In wave 6, employers expressed lower levels of agreement that the qualifications were good preparation for work, good preparation for further study, consistent in standards, trusted and well understood by people. In most cases, however, the lower levels of agreement among employers were caused by them expressing higher levels of uncertainty as opposed to higher levels of disagreement.

## **Perceptions of T Levels**

### **General perceptions**

Reported levels of understanding of T Levels, recently introduced to the education system in September 2020, were relatively low for both learners and employers in comparison with other types of qualifications. Among learners, there was also a fair degree of uncertainty expressed when it came to various perceptions including whether they value T Levels, understand their purpose and think availability is sufficiently flexible. Among learners who stated an opinion, however, agreement was much more prevalent than disagreement.

## **Industry and employment**

### **Relevance to organisations**

Employers increasingly agreed that it is clear what qualifications are relevant to their organisation. This was mainly driven by changes to levels of agreement reported by employers in micro-organisations and in the private sector, although this is somewhat to be expected given that micro-employers tend to sit within the private sector.

### **Recruitment and training**

Relevant work experience was seen as essential by many employers when thinking about recruiting to their organisation and was demonstrated to be equally as important as having a degree or equivalent for professional and managerial roles. This echoed findings from previous waves of research.

Relevance to the organisation was by far the most important factor reported by employers when deciding which qualifications to offer. When asked why they had not arranged or funded training

that led to a vocational qualification, apprenticeship or technical qualification, the most common reasons were related to lack of need.

# Introduction

This report presents the findings of wave 6 of the Perceptions of Vocational and Technical Qualifications Survey and should be read alongside the [background information document](#). To best appreciate the display of the data, this report should be viewed in colour.

The project was commissioned by Ofqual and conducted by YouGov. The aim of this study is to investigate learners', providers' and employers' perceptions of vocational and technical qualifications in England. In the context of this report, 'learners' refers to students and apprentices of all ages. The survey explored perceptions of a number of topical aspects of the system for vocational and technical qualifications.

The survey was conducted using an online method. The fieldwork for this wave was conducted between 21<sup>st</sup> December 2022 and 17<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

The final achieved samples were structured to be representative of the relevant target populations. While the sampling approach aimed to identify groups of participants who were representative. A survey of this kind only captures the views of those involved, so throughout this report responses attributed to groups reflect only those respondents included in the study. Further information on sampling and methodology is available in the accompanying [background information document](#).

YouGov have conducted the [wave 3 \(2020\)](#), [wave 4 \(2021\)](#) and [wave 5 \(2022\)](#) surveys, using a consistent sampling approach and survey mode. Prior to this, [wave 1 \(2018\)](#) and [wave 2 \(2019\)](#) of the research were conducted by another provider using a different sampling approach and survey mode. Throughout the report, wave 6 findings are mainly compared to wave 5, but those from waves 3, 4 and 5 are also reported. All references to differences in findings between waves refer to statistically significant differences. In some instances, apparent differences between figures may not be considered 'statistically significant'. Any non-significant differences in the data are within the margin of error and so cannot be viewed as a change from the previous wave(s). For further information on the significance testing applied, please refer to the [background information document](#).

There are various charts throughout the report that report on levels of agreement and disagreement. Please note that although not shown, there were also options provided in the survey for 'Neither agree nor disagree' and 'Don't know'. Where the sum of the proportion who agreed and disagreed appears particularly low, this is due to the fact that large proportions of responses fit within these other response categories. Only responses from the overall sample have been charted. Where relevant, any statistically significant differences between sample sub-groups have been noted in the text.

Throughout the analysis, employers are categorised based on the number of employees into four categories: micro (2-9 employees), small (10-49 employees), medium (50-249 employees) and large (250+ employees) organisations.

## The circumstances in 2022

The outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and the resulting measures applied across England from March 2020, has had a multitude of impacts on the education sector. For significant

parts of 2020 and 2021, schools and colleges in England were closed and there was a shift to remote and online learning for almost all students. During this period, many of the scheduled assessments did not take place or did not take place in the originally intended manner. Ofqual established rules that allowed alternative arrangements both in 2020 and 2021 (for further information, see the background notes document). These alternative arrangements were also available for some assessments and exams in 2022.

In 2022, VTQ assessments and examinations ran as normal in line with government policy. Some learners taking VTQs may have taken adapted assessments and may have used results from 2020 and 2021 towards qualifications taken in 2022.

For this reason, as for wave 4 and 5, the wave 6 questionnaire included a year-specific section to gauge perceptions of vocational and technical qualifications for 2022 specifically. Where the general perceptions questions were asked upfront in the survey, respondents were asked to think about these qualifications generally and were informed that a 2022-specific section would follow later in the survey. These modifications were made so that we could track key measures of perceptions over time, despite the exceptional circumstances of 2022.

## Section 1: 2022-specific perceptions of Vocational and Technical Qualifications, Functional Skills Qualifications and Apprenticeship End-Point Assessments in 2022

For waves 4, 5 and 6, a new series of questions were added to the survey to investigate perceptions specific to the qualifications system in 2020, 2021 and 2022.

These questions were asked in addition to questions asking about general perceptions of each qualification. For example, all stakeholder groups were asked to indicate their level agreement or disagreement with statements such as:

- Vocational and technical qualifications are good preparation for further study
- Vocational and technical qualifications in 2022 were good preparation for further study

This section of the report explores the general perceptions of Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQs), Functional Skills Qualifications (FSQs) and Apprenticeship End-Point Assessments (EPAs) assessments in relation to 2022.

### Key findings

- Overall, providers and learners were more positive about VTQs in 2022 than employers. For example, providers and learners reported higher levels of agreement than employers that VTQs in 2022 were good preparation for work (70%, 58%, 32% respectively) and further study (69%, 59%, 29% respectively), and that they are well understood by people (43%, 42%, 13% respectively).
- Providers and learners were also consistently more positive about FSQs in 2022 than employers. For example, 51% of learners and 46% of providers agreed that FSQs were trusted qualifications in 2022, compared with 20% of employers.
- Following the same trend, providers and learners demonstrated higher levels of positivity towards end-point assessments of apprenticeship standards in 2022 than employers. For example, 42% of learners and 33% of providers agreed that EPAs of apprenticeship standards were maintained in 2022, compared with 12% of employers.
- Overall, these findings mirrored trends observed when exploring perceptions of qualifications more generally, whereby employers often expressed lower levels of agreement with statements regarding VTQs, FSQs and EPAs than providers and learners. As is the case regarding 2022-specific perceptions, this could frequently be attributed to employers expressing higher levels of uncertainty as opposed to higher levels of disagreement.

For figures 1, 2 and 3, the wave 6 unweighted base is: All employers, n=2,003, all providers, n=494, all learners, n=508.

### Perceptions of Vocational and Technical Qualifications in 2022

Overall, as shown in Figure 1, providers and learners were more positive about VTQs in 2022 than employers, as also seen in waves 4 and 5. For example, they had higher levels of agreement that they were good preparation for work and further study, and well understood by people.

Seven in ten providers agreed that VTQs were good preparation for work (70%) and further study (69%). Learners expressed the highest levels of agreement about these statements, although a slightly smaller proportion agreed when compared with providers; six in ten felt they were good preparation for work (58%) or further study (59%). Comparatively, a minority of employers felt the same. Of this group, approximately three in ten felt that VTQs were good preparation for work (32%) or further study (29%).

The majority of providers and learners agreed that in 2022 VTQs were trusted qualifications (66% and 56% respectively), while employers reported significantly lower levels of agreement (31%).

Likewise, close to four in ten providers (43%) and learners (42%) agreed that VTQs were well understood in 2022, while levels of agreement were much lower among employers (13%). Instead, employers reported high levels of disagreement (31%).

Reflecting on 2022, nearly six in ten (57%) providers believed that standards were maintained. Agreement was slightly lower among learners (46%), while 15% of employers agreed. However, the low agreement among employers could be linked with high uncertainty; when thinking about standards in 2022, employers most commonly reported that they did not know whether they were maintained (45%). Indeed, high levels of uncertainty were observed across all 2022-specific VTQ statements.

**Figure 1. Results for perceptions of VTQs in 2022 (Learners, Providers, Employers)**



Statement	Employers Agree	Employers Disagree	Providers Agree	Providers Disagree	Learners Agree	Learners Disagree
Vocational and technical qualifications in 2022 were good preparation for work	32%	6%	70%	7%	58%	8%

Vocational and technical qualifications in 2022 were good preparation for further study	29%	5%	69%	8%	59%	7%
Vocational and technical qualifications standards were maintained in 2022	15%	7%	57%	5%	46%	8%
Vocational and technical qualifications in 2022 were trusted qualifications	31%	8%	66%	8%	56%	9%
Vocational and technical qualifications in 2022 were well understood by people	13%	30%	43%	20%	42%	15%

*Note: Respondents were also allowed to answer "Neither agree nor disagree" or "Don't know", which are not reported here. For this reason, the sum of the proportion who agreed and disagreed do not add up to 100%. Please note that in some cases, large proportions of respondents reported "Neither agree nor disagree" and "Don't know".*

## Perceptions of Functional Skills Qualifications in 2022

As shown in Figure 2, providers and learners were also more positive about Functional Skills qualifications (FSQs) in 2022 than employers, a trend that was similarly observed in waves 4 and 5.

Learners reported the highest levels of agreement that in 2022 FSQs were trusted qualifications (51%). Agreement was higher among providers (46%) than among employers (20%). Agreement that FSQs in 2022 were well understood by people was slightly lower for each group, though they were broadly consistent with wave 4 and 5 findings. Approximately four in ten learners (43%) and providers (41%) agreed that they were well understood, while this sentiment was much lower among employers (13%). As was observed with VTQs, this was due to a large proportion (36%) saying they did not know, as opposed to disagreement (23%).

Reflecting on 2022, half of providers (50%) and 46% of learners believed that FSQ standards were maintained that year, compared with 15% of employers. However, the majority of employers expressed uncertainty as opposed to disagreement; 30% said they neither agreed nor disagreed and 50% said they did not know. Additionally, while agreement was low for employers, this did represent an increase compared with levels of agreement reported for 2020 and 2021.

When thinking about whether FSQs in 2022 were good preparation for further study or work, perceptions among providers and learners were similar. Over half of providers agreed that in 2022 FSQs were good preparation for further study (55%), and a similar proportion reported the same for work (50%). Almost the same proportion of learners agreed that in 2022 FSQs were good preparation for further study (55%) and work (51%). As was seen with the other 2022-specific FSQ statements, employers reported lower agreement, with 25% reporting that they were good preparation for work or study.

**Figure 2. Results for perceptions of Functional Skills qualifications in 2022 (Learners, Providers, Employers)**



Statement	Employers Agree	Employers Disagree	Providers Agree	Providers Disagree	Learners Agree	Learners Disagree
Functional Skills qualifications in 2022 were good preparation for work	25%	7%	50%	16%	51%	9%
Functional Skills qualifications in 2022 were good preparation for further study	25%	6%	55%	13%	55%	8%
Functional Skills qualifications standards were maintained in 2022	15%	6%	50%	11%	46%	8%
Functional Skills qualifications in 2022 were trusted qualifications	20%	8%	46%	13%	51%	9%
Functional Skills qualifications in 2022 were well understood by people	13%	23%	41%	22%	43%	16%

*Note: Respondents were also allowed to answer "Neither agree nor disagree" or "Don't know", which are not reported here. For this reason, the sum of the proportion who agreed and disagreed do not add up to 100%. Please note that in some cases, large proportions of respondents reported "Neither agree nor disagree" and "Don't know".*

## Perceptions of Apprenticeship End-Point Assessments in 2022

The same pattern was seen for end-point assessments, or EPAs (see Figure 3), with providers and learners expressing more positivity towards these than employers.

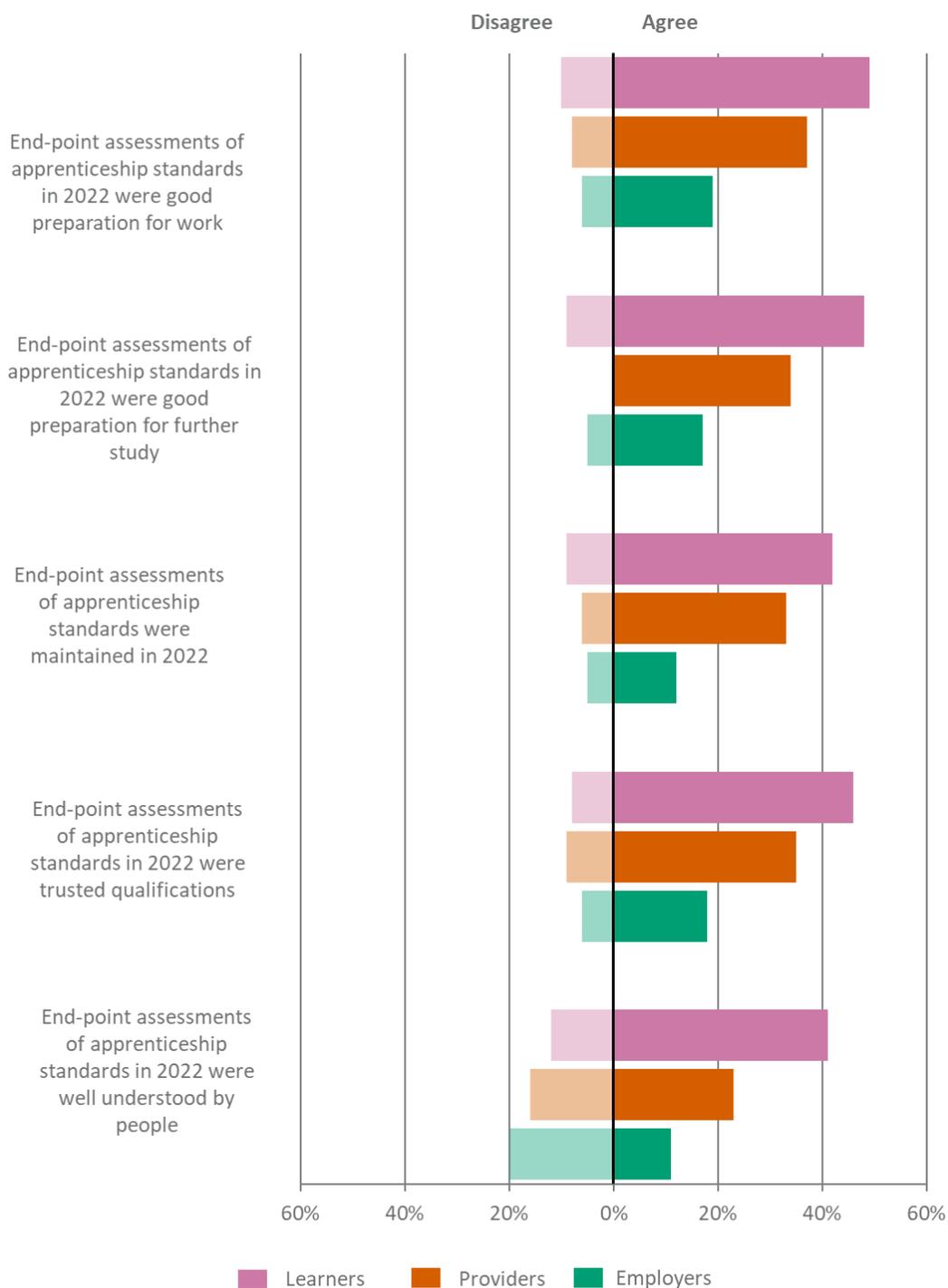
Four in ten (41%) learners agreed that EPAs were well understood by people. Agreement with this statement was somewhat lower among providers (23%), although they continued to show higher levels of agreement than employers (11%). Both providers and employers reported high levels of uncertainty when thinking about whether EPAs were understood; four in ten (38%) providers said they did not know and 46% of employers reported the same.

Compared with being well understood, there was relatively higher agreement that in 2022 EPAs were trusted qualifications, as 46% of learners, 35% of providers and 18% of employers agreed that EPAs were trusted. For employers, this represented an increase in agreement reported in comparison with 2020 and 2021-specific perceptions of EPAs (15% both years).

Roughly four in ten learners (42%) and 33% of providers agreed with the statement that standards were maintained in EPAs in 2022. For learners, this represented an increase in positive perceptions of maintenance of standards in EPAs since 2020 (29%) and 2021 (34%). For providers, this was a decline in agreement compared with wave 5 (44%). As with all other statements, agreement was lower among employers (12%). However, only 3% disagreed, with 83% responding that they neither agreed nor disagreed or did not know.

Learners had the highest levels of agreement that EPAs in 2022 were good for preparation for further work (49%) or study (48%). A slightly smaller proportion of providers agreed, with 37% who believed they were good preparation for work, and 34% who thought the same when thinking about further study. Roughly two in ten employers agreed with both statements (19% preparation for work, 17% further study).

**Figure 3. Results for perceptions of EPAs in 2022 (Learners, Providers, Employers)**



Statement	Employers Agree	Employers Disagree	Providers Agree	Providers Disagree	Learners Agree	Learners Disagree
End-point assessments of apprenticeship standards in 2022 were good preparation for work	19%	6%	37%	8%	49%	10%

End-point assessments of apprenticeship standards in 2022 were good preparation for further study	17%	5%	34%	9%	48%	9%
End-point assessments of apprenticeship standards were maintained in 2022	12%	5%	33%	6%	42%	9%
End-point assessments of apprenticeship standards in 2022 were trusted qualifications	18%	6%	35%	9%	46%	8%
End-point assessments of apprenticeship standards in 2022 were well understood by people	11%	20%	23%	16%	41%	12%

*Note: Respondents were also allowed to answer "Neither agree nor disagree" or "Don't know", which are not reported here. For this reason, the sum of the proportion who agreed and disagreed do not add up to 100%. Please note that in some cases, large proportions of respondents reported "Neither agree nor disagree" and "Don't know".*

## Section 2: Perceptions of Vocational and Technical Qualifications

The results in this section relate to general perceptions, as opposed to 2022-specific perceptions (presented in section 1).

This section covers perceptions of vocational and technical qualifications other than FSQs and EPAs.

### Key findings

- When thinking about VTQs in their sector, approximately four in ten (43%) employers reported having very or quite good understanding of these, and six in ten (61%) said they were aware of past or current changes to them. This was broadly consistent with wave 5.
- The most commonly given reason by learners for choosing to take a VTQ was wanting to improve their skills (37%), while the most frequently perceived benefit was being more confident using these skills (35%). This was in line with findings from wave 5.
- Of the three groups, consistent with wave 5, providers reported the highest agreement that they value VTQs (89%), followed by learners (68%) and then employers (46%).
- Just over half (53%) of learners agreed that the availability of vocational and technical qualifications is sufficiently flexible, while agreement with this statement was lower among employers (24%). This was broadly consistent with wave 5.
- Half (51%) of providers and learners agreed that the purpose of vocational and technical qualifications is well-understood by employers. However, agreement with this statement was lower among employers themselves, with approximately four in ten (38%) agreeing. These findings were generally consistent with wave 5.
- Consistent with wave 5, the majority of learners (72%) and providers (65%) agreed that the purpose of VTQs is well understood by learners.
- Agreement that vocational and technical qualifications prepare learners well for the workplace was lower among employers (41%) than providers (74%) and learners (67%). Similarly, levels of agreement that people achieving VTQs have the technical skills needed by employers were higher among providers (72%) than employers (34%). These findings were consistent with wave 5.
- Agreement that vocational and technical qualifications were good preparation for further study was highest for providers (75%), although still high for learners (70%). This was in line with wave 5.

### Understanding of Vocational and Technical Qualifications by employers

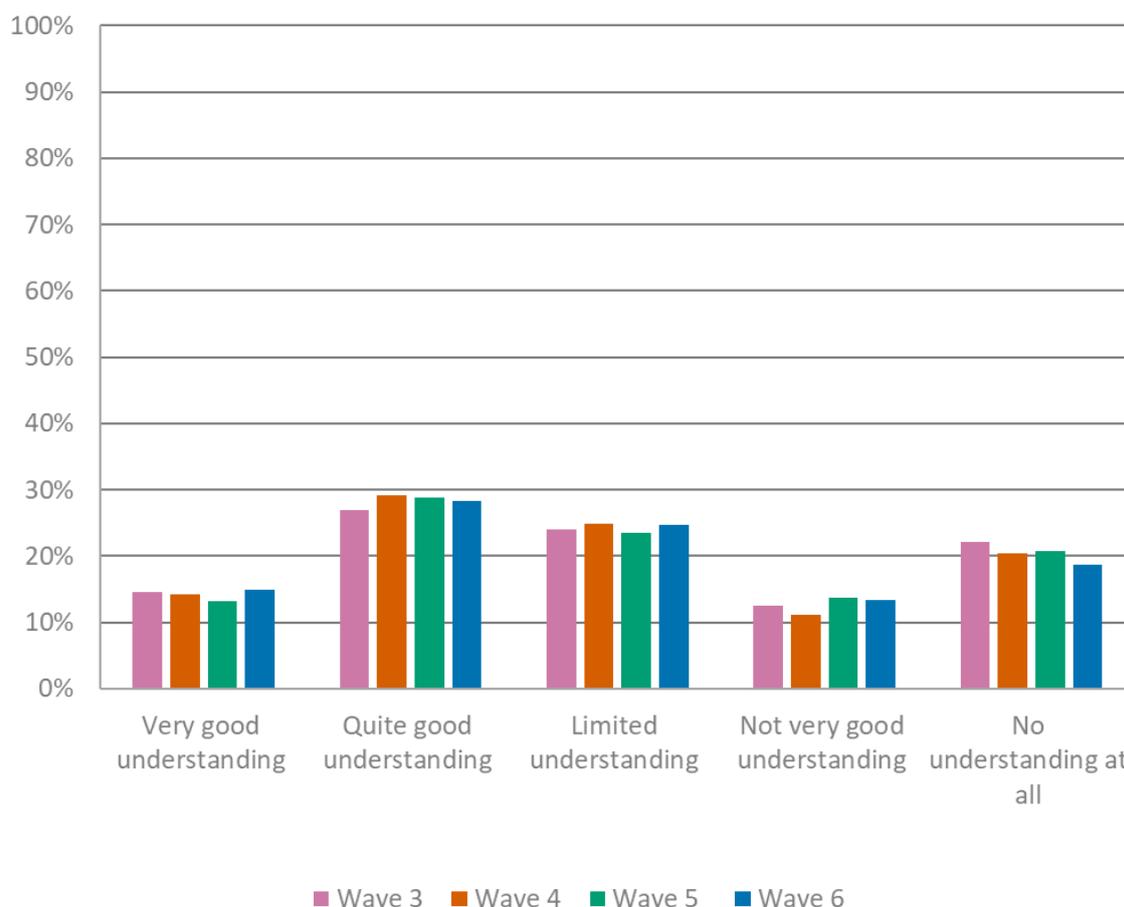
For figure 4, the wave 6 unweighted base is: All employers, n=2,003.

Overall, as shown in Figure 4, approximately four in ten (43%) employers reported having very or quite good understanding of VTQs in their sector. This was broadly consistent with wave 5. In wave 6, this was comprised of 15% who had 'very good understanding' and 28% who had 'quite good understanding'. Two in ten (19%) reported having 'no understanding at all' of VTQs in their sector. Although there were no changes in comparison with wave 5, this did represent a gradual decrease since wave 3 (22%).

Public sector (57%) and voluntary sector (58%) employers reported higher levels of very or quite good understanding of VTQs in their sector than private sector (42%) employers. This was consistent with wave 5 findings.

Large (67%) and medium (59%) employers had relatively high levels of very or quite good understanding of VTQs, compared with small (46%) or micro (42%) employers.

**Figure 4. Results for ‘Please indicate which of the following statements best describes your understanding of vocational and technical qualifications in my sector’ (Employers)**



Statement	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
Very good understanding	14%	14%	13%	15%
Quite good understanding	27%	29%	29%	28%
Limited understanding	24%	25%	24%	25%
Not very good understanding	13%	11%	14%	13%
No understanding at all	22%	20%	21%	19%

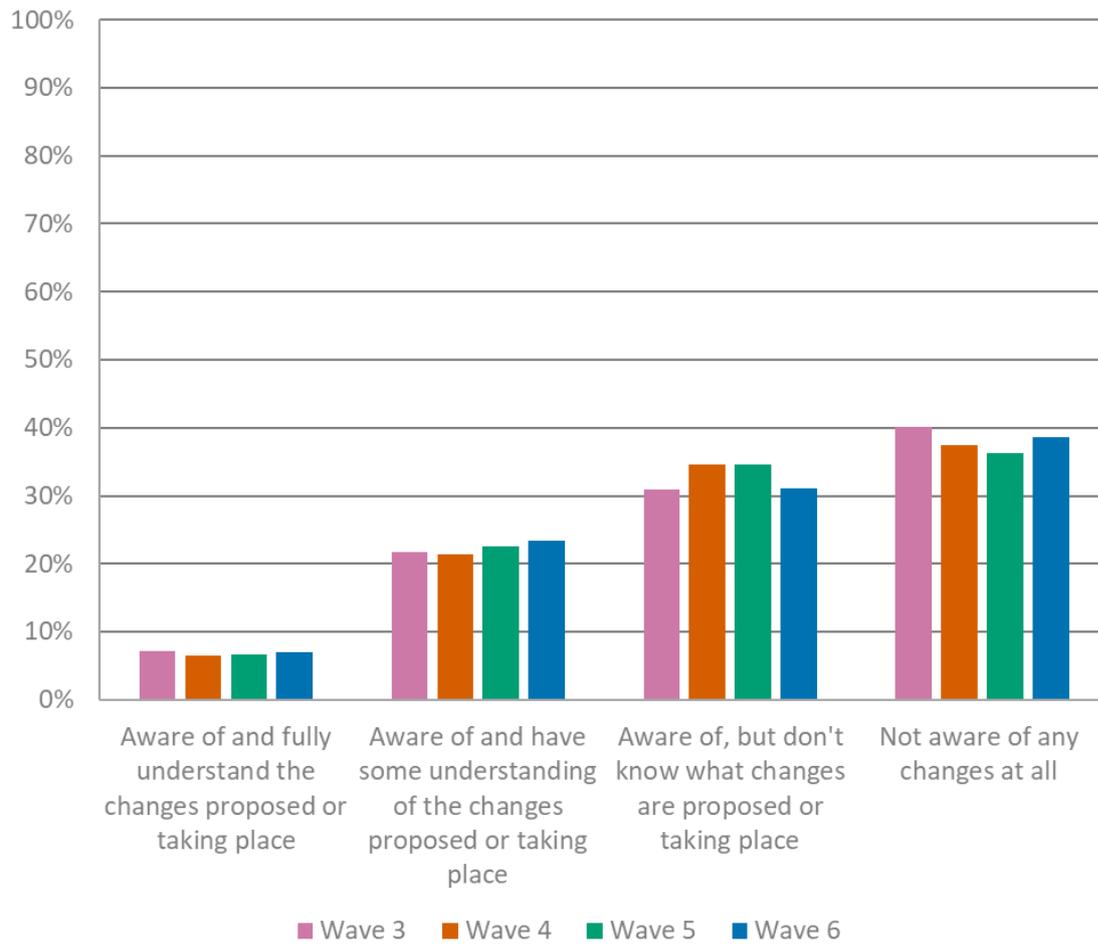
For figure 5, the wave 6 unweighted base is: All employers who indicated that they have at least a limited understanding of VTQs in their sector, n=1,435.

Employers' awareness of changes that have been made, or those that are currently being made, to VTQs in their sector were broadly consistent with the findings of wave 5, with six in ten (61%) employers reporting they were aware of the changes. As shown in Figure 5, this was comprised of 7% who reported being aware and fully understanding the changes proposed or taking place, 23% who reported being aware and having some understanding of the changes, and 31% who were aware of them but did not know what the changes are. Overall, four in ten (39%) were not aware of any changes at all.

Micro employers reported having no awareness of changes taking place more frequently (42%) than small (28%), medium (26%), or large (20%) employers.

A higher proportion of public sector employers (25%) reported being aware and fully understanding the changes proposed or taking place than private sector (7%) or voluntary sector (4%) employers. Again, this was broadly in line with the findings in wave 5.

**Figure 5. Results for ‘Please say which of the following statements best describes your understanding of the changes that have been, or are currently being made to vocational and technical qualifications in your sector’ (Employers)**



Statement	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
Aware of and fully understand the changes proposed or taking place	7%	7%	7%	7%
Aware of and have some understanding of the changes proposed or taking place	22%	21%	23%	23%
Aware of, but don't know what changes are proposed or taking place	31%	35%	35%	31%
Not aware of any changes at all	40%	37%	36%	39%

## Why learners chose Vocational and Technical Qualifications

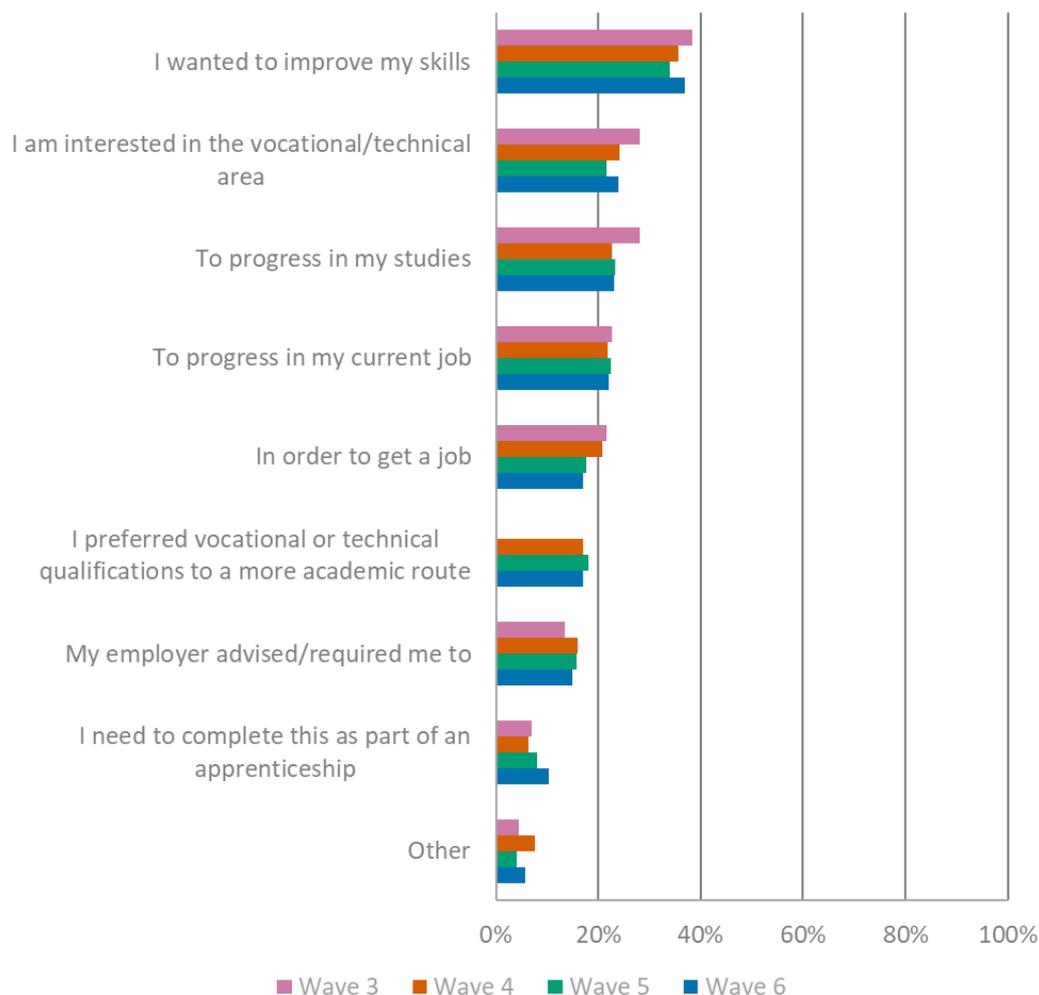
For figure 6, the wave 6 unweighted base is: All learners who are studying a VTQ, n=319  
Learners were asked their reasons for choosing to take a VTQ, before being asked about the benefits of this.

As shown in Figure 6, wanting to improve their skills was the most commonly given reason (37%) for choosing to take a VTQ, followed by being interested in the vocational/technical area (24%). This differed from wave 5, where wanting to progress in their studies was the second most commonly chosen reason (23%).

Those aged under 25 chose to take a VTQ to progress in their studies more frequently (41% for those under 19, and 30% for those aged 19 to 24) than those aged 25 or older (13%), and “to progress in my studies” was the most commonly given reason for those under 19 and for those aged 19 to 24. For those aged 25 or over, wanting to improve their skills (44%) was the most commonly given reason for undertaking a VTQ.

Among the under 19 age group, 36% reported wanting to improve their skills, an increase from wave 5 (20%). As a reason for choosing to take a VTQ, interest in the vocational/technical area (29%) among this age group has shown a slight decrease since wave 4 (30% for wave 4 and 23% for wave 5).

**Figure 6. Results for ‘Why did you decide to take a vocational or technical qualification?’ (Learners)**



Statement	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
I wanted to improve my skills	38%	36%	34%	37%
I am interested in the vocational/technical area	28%	24%	22%	24%
To progress in my studies	28%	23%	23%	23%
To progress in my current job	23%	22%	22%	22%
In order to get a job	22%	21%	18%	17%
I preferred vocational or technical qualifications to a more academic route		17%	18%	17%
My employer advised/required me to	13%	16%	16%	15%
I need to complete this as part of an apprenticeship	7%	6%	8%	10%
Other	4%	8%	4%	6%

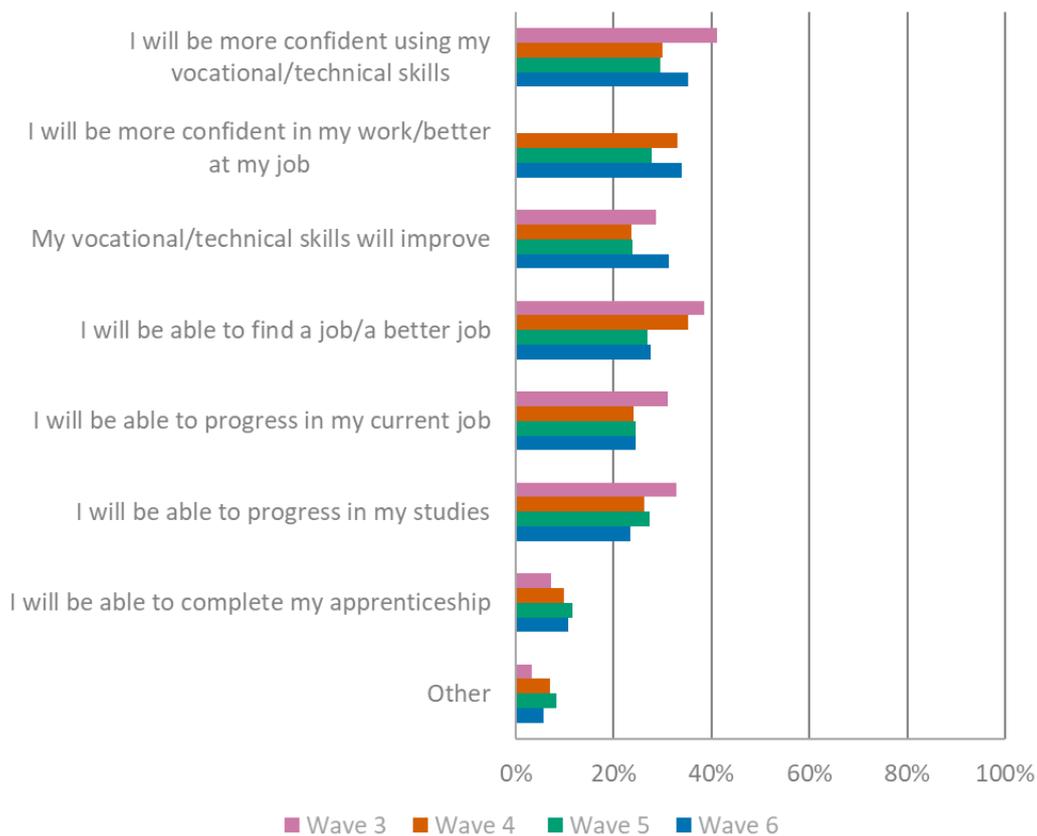
## Benefits associated with other Vocational and Technical Qualifications by learners

For figure 7, the wave 6 unweighted base is: All learners who are studying a VTQ, n=319.

As shown in Figure 7, the most frequently perceived benefit of taking a VTQ for learners was being more confident using their vocational or technical skills (35%). This was broadly consistent with wave 5. In wave 6, this was followed by being more confident in their work/better at their job (34%), which was again consistent with wave 5.

Those aged under 25 had higher rates than those aged 25 or over, of citing being able to progress in their studies (under 19 37%, 19 to 24 30%, 25 and over 16%) as a potential benefit of taking a VTQ. Those aged 19 or over cited being able to progress in their current job as a potential benefit (19 to 24 27%, 25 and over 29%) at higher rates than those aged under 19 (11%).

**Figure 7. Results for ‘Now that you have started learning/have completed learning, what benefits do you expect from taking a vocational and technical qualification?’ (Learners)**



Statement	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
I will be more confident using my vocational/technical skills	41%	30%	30%	35%
I will be more confident in my work/better at my job		33%	28%	34%

My vocational/technical skills will improve	29%	24%	24%	31%
I will be able to find a job/a better job	39%	35%	27%	28%
I will be able to progress in my current job	31%	24%	25%	25%
I will be able to progress in my studies	33%	26%	27%	24%
I will be able to complete my apprenticeship	7%	10%	12%	11%
Other	3%	7%	8%	6%

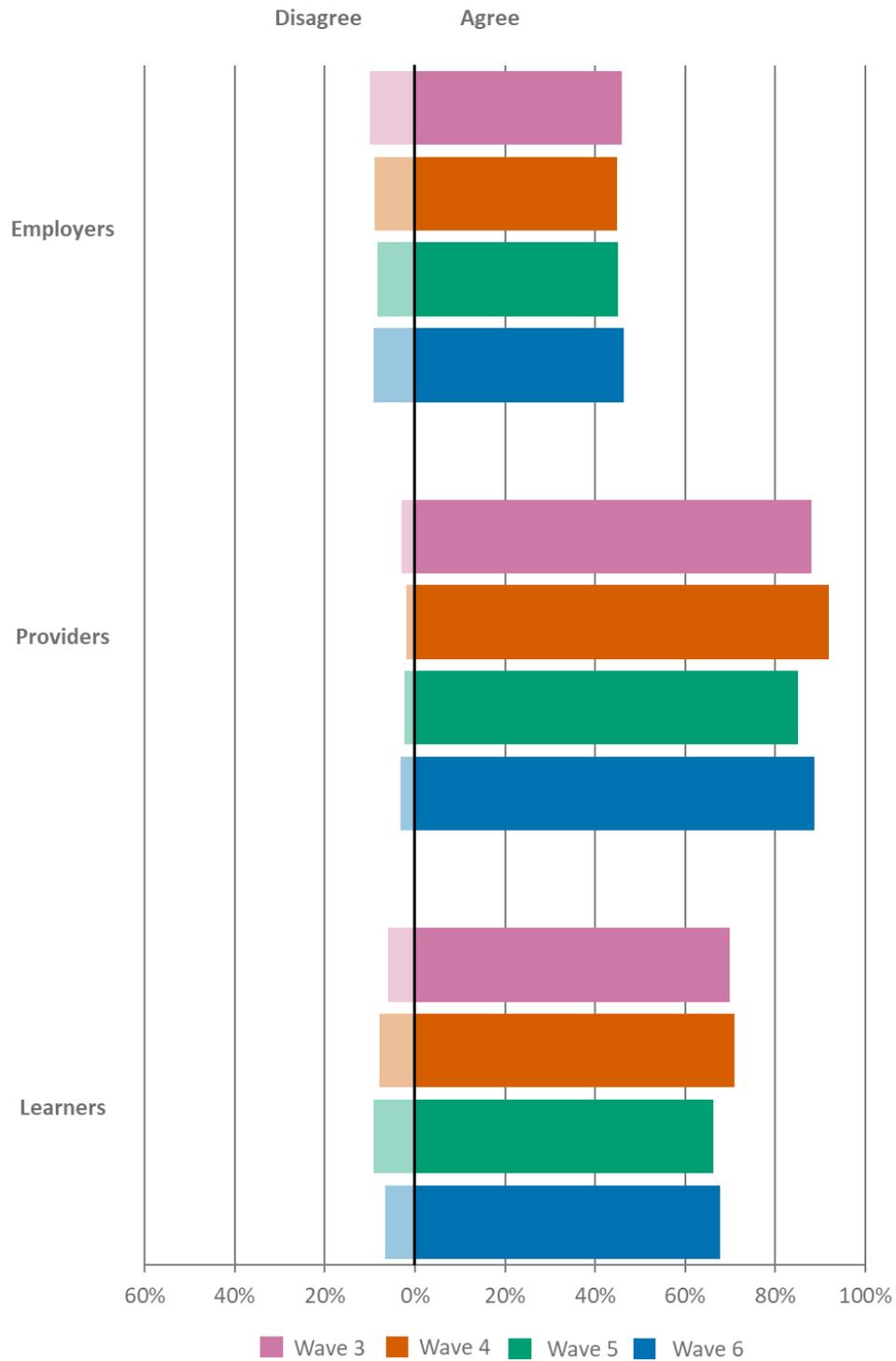
## Perceptions of Vocational and Technical Qualifications: value and flexibility

For figure 8, the wave 6 unweighted base is: All employers n=1,686; All types of providers, n=494; All learners, n=508.

As shown in Figure 8, providers had the highest agreement (89%) with the statement 'I value vocational and technical qualifications'. This was followed by learners (68%), and then employers with the lowest levels of agreement (46%). This was consistent with wave 5.

Among employers, public sector (70%) employers had the highest agreement with this statement, compared with private sector (46%) and voluntary sector (56%) employers. This represented an increase for public sector employers when compared with wave 5 (51%).

**Figure 8. Results for 'We value vocational and technical qualifications' (Employers) - 'I value vocational and technical qualifications' (All types of providers, Learners)**



Respondent Type – Agree/Disagree	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
Employers – agree	46%	45%	45%	46%

Employers – disagree	10%	9%	8%	9%
Providers – agree	88%	92%	85%	89%
Providers – disagree	3%	2%	2%	3%
Learners – agree	70%	71%	66%	68%
Learners – disagree	6%	8%	9%	7%

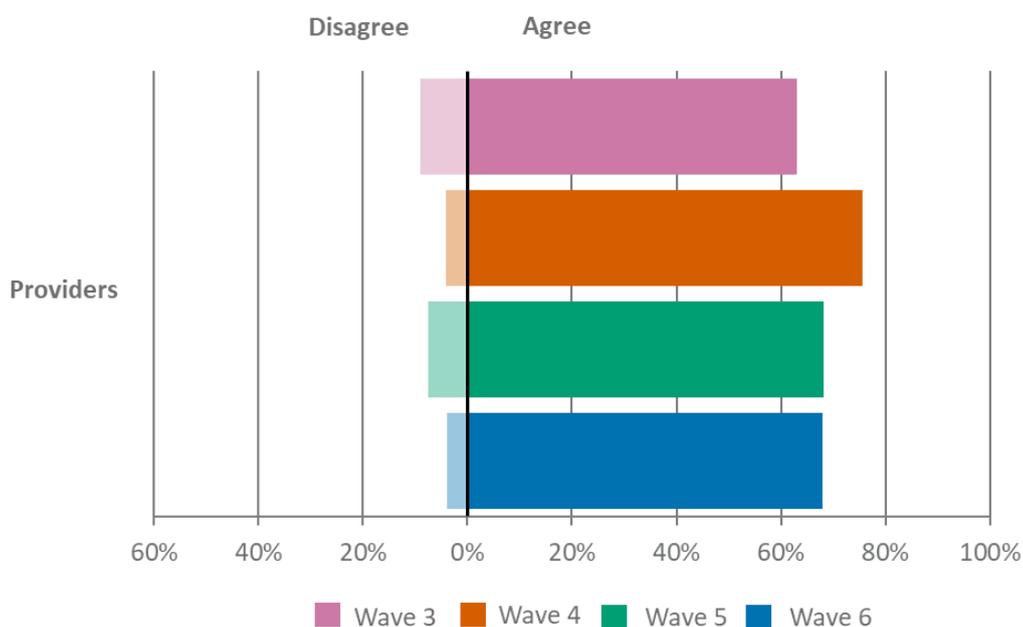
*Note: Respondents were also allowed to answer "Neither agree nor disagree" or "Don't know", which are not reported here. For this reason, the sum of the proportion who agreed and disagreed do not add up to 100%. Please note that in some cases, large proportions of respondents reported "Neither agree nor disagree" and "Don't know".*

For figure 9, the wave 6 unweighted base is: All types of providers, n=494.

Agreement with the statement ‘vocational and technical qualifications offer value for money’ remained consistently high (68%) among providers, consistent with wave 5 findings, as shown in Figure 9. Disagreement with this statement remained very low and broadly consistent with wave 5 as well, at four percent of providers.

Agreement was higher among Further Education (FE), Adult and Community Learning (ACL) or Local Authority (LA) establishments (75%) than sixth forms (46%), consistent with wave 5.

**Figure 9. Results for ‘Vocational and technical qualifications offer value for money’ (All types of providers)**



Respondent Type – Agree/Disagree	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
Providers – agree	63%	76%	68%	68%
Providers – disagree	9%	4%	7%	4%

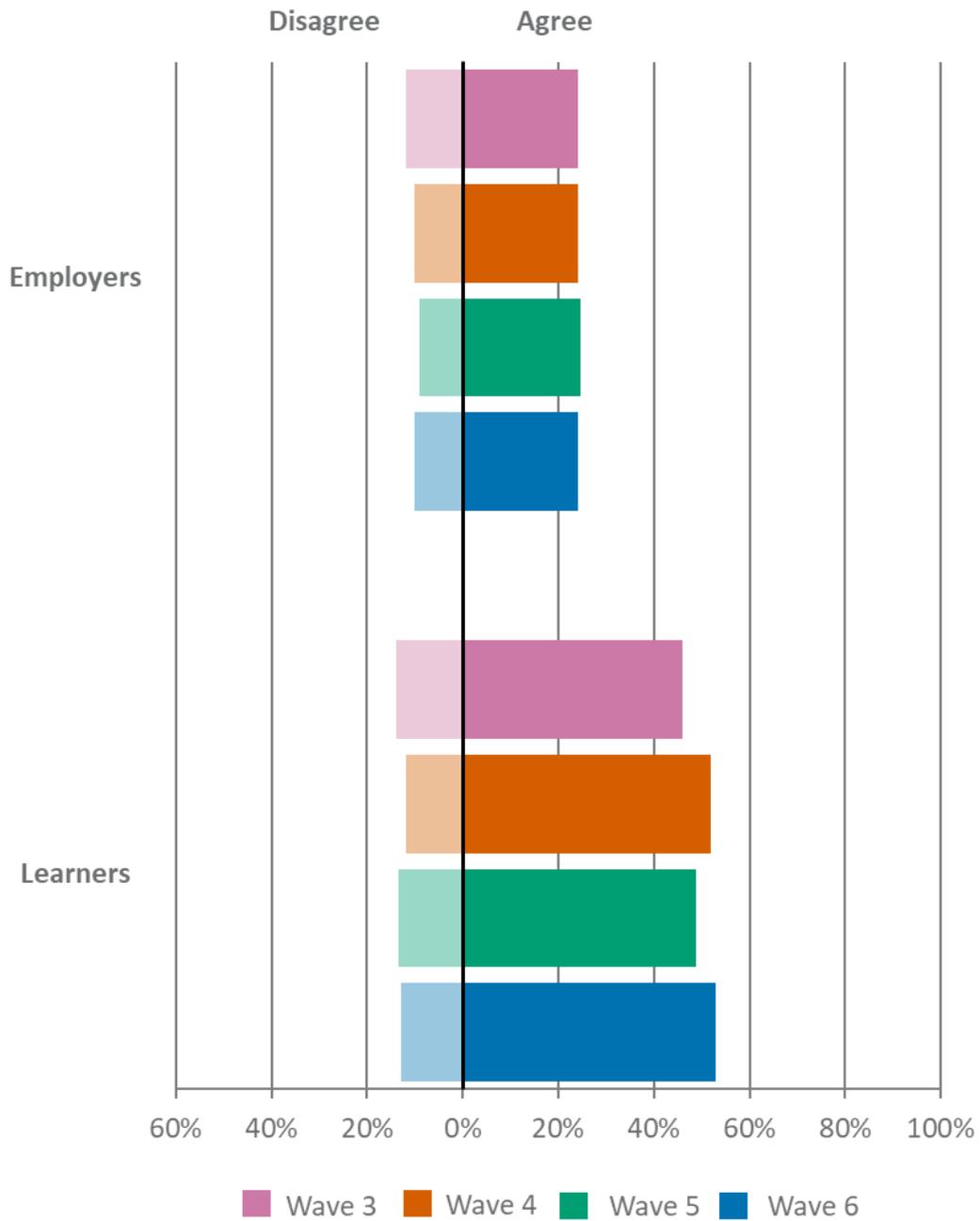
*Note: Respondents were also allowed to answer "Neither agree nor disagree" or "Don't know", which are not reported here. For this reason, the sum of the proportion who agreed and disagreed do not add up to 100%. Please note that in some cases, large proportions of respondents reported "Neither agree nor disagree" and "Don't know".*

For figure 10, the wave 6 unweighted base is: All employers, n=1,686; All learners, n=508.

As shown in Figure 10, just over half (53%) of learners agreed that 'the availability of vocational and technical qualifications is sufficiently flexible'. This was consistent with wave 5. Agreement with this statement was highest among the youngest learner group aged under 19 (61%), compared with those aged 19 to 24 (56%) and 25 and over (48%).

Agreement with this statement was lower overall among employers (24%), again consistent with wave 5. A substantial proportion of employers indicated that they either did not agree or disagree with the statement (35%) or that they did not know (31%). Agreement was highest for large employers (51%), when compared with medium (30%), small (30%) and micro (22%) employers. Agreement was highest among public sector employers (46%), compared with private sector (24%) and voluntary sector (21%) employers.

**Figure 10. Results for ‘The availability of vocational and technical qualifications is sufficiently flexible’ (Employers, Learners)**



*Note: Respondents were also allowed to answer "Neither agree nor disagree" or "Don't know", which are not reported here. For this reason, the sum of the proportion who agreed and disagreed do not add up to 100%. Please note that in some cases, large proportions of respondents reported "Neither agree nor disagree" and "Don't know".*

## Perceptions of Vocational and Technical Qualifications: purpose and future opportunity

For figure 11, the wave 6 unweighted base is: All employers n=1,686; All types of providers, n=494; All learners, n=508.

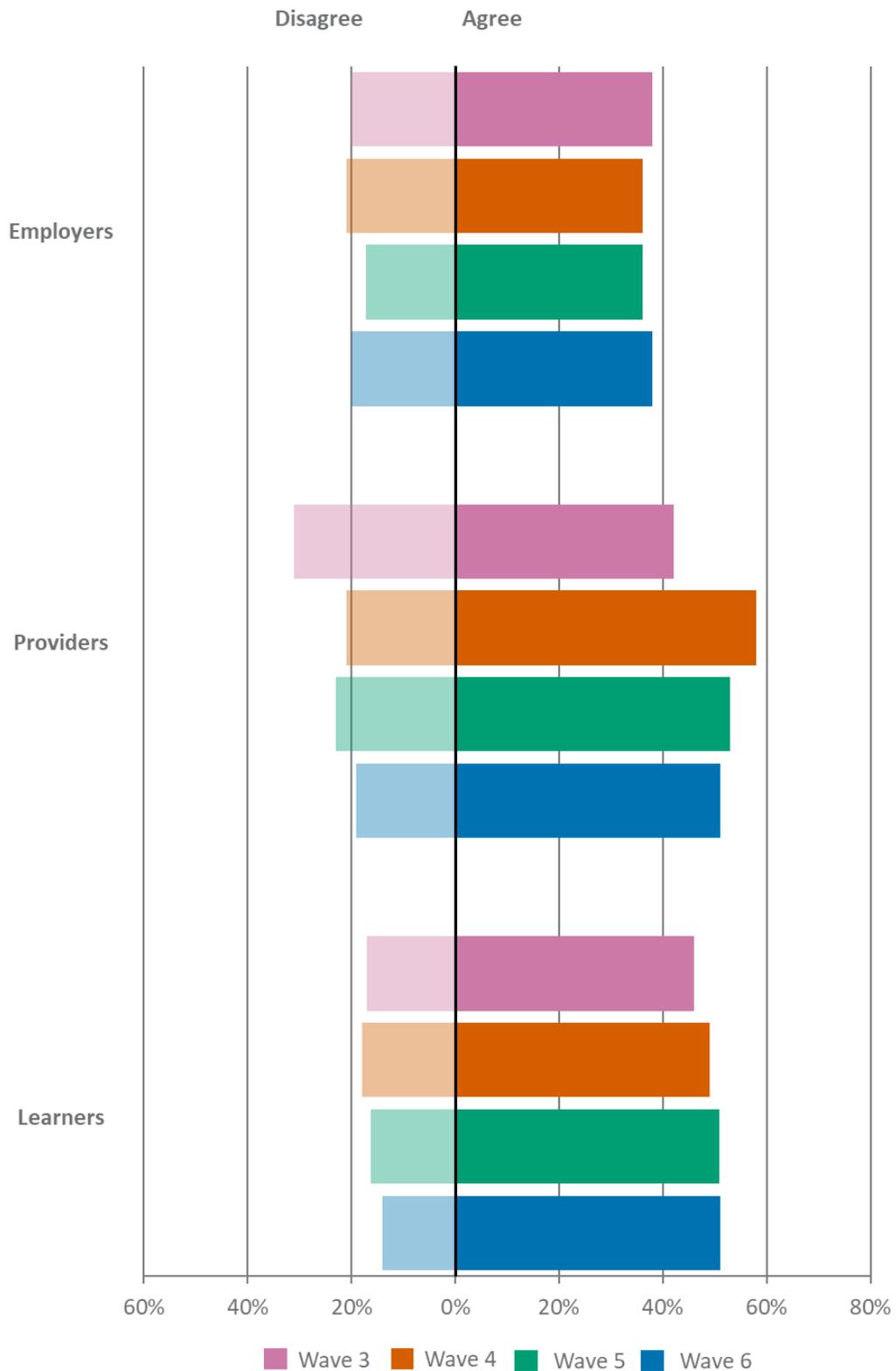
Agreement with the statement 'the purpose of vocational and technical qualifications is well-understood by employers' remained highest among providers and learners (both 51%). This was lower for employers, with approximately four in ten (38%) agreeing with this statement.

Among learners, agreement was highest among learners aged 19 to 24 (61%), compared with those aged under 19 (46%) and those aged 25 and over (49%).

Among employers, public sector (49%) employers had higher agreement than private sector (37%) employers.

Generally, wave 6 findings were consistent with those of wave 5.

**Figure 11. Results for ‘The purpose of vocational and technical qualifications is well-understood by my organisation’ (Employers) - ‘The purpose of vocational and technical qualifications is well-understood by employers’ (All types of providers, Learners)**



<b>Respondent Type – Agree/Disagree</b>	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
Employers – agree	38%	36%	36%	38%
Employers – disagree	20%	21%	17%	20%
Providers – agree	42%	58%	53%	51%
Providers – disagree	31%	21%	23%	19%
Learners – agree	46%	49%	51%	51%
Learners – disagree	17%	18%	16%	14%

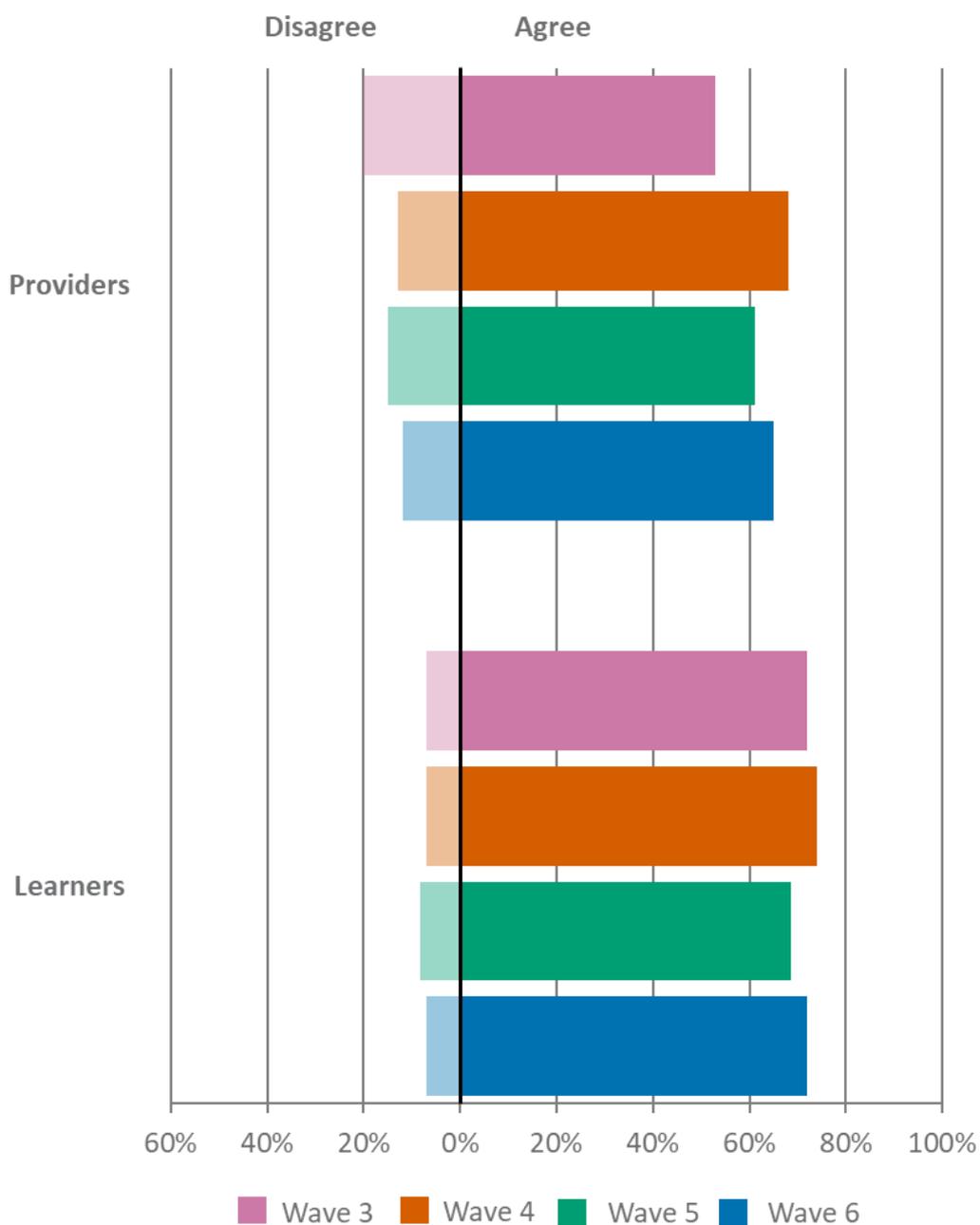
*Note: Respondents were also allowed to answer "Neither agree nor disagree" or "Don't know", which are not reported here. For this reason, the sum of the proportion who agreed and disagreed do not add up to 100%. Please note that in some cases, large proportions of respondents reported "Neither agree nor disagree" and "Don't know".*

For figure 12, the wave 6 unweighted base is: All types of providers, n=494; All learners, n=508.

As shown in Figure 12, the majority of learners and providers agreed that the purpose of VTQs is well understood by learners. Seven in ten learners (72%) agreed with this statement, with low disagreement overall (7%). A high proportion of providers (65%) also agreed with this statement. This was consistent with findings from wave 5.

For learners, agreement with this statement was highest among those learners aged 25 and over (77%) when compared with learners aged 19 to 24 (65%).

**Figure 12. Results for ‘The purpose of vocational and technical qualifications is well-understood by learners’ (All types of providers) - ‘I understand the purpose of vocational and technical qualifications’ (Learners)**



<b>Respondent Type – Agree/Disagree</b>	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
Providers – agree	53%	68%	61%	65%
Providers – disagree	20%	13%	15%	12%
Learners – agree	72%	74%	69%	72%
Learners – disagree	7%	7%	8%	7%

*Note: Respondents were also allowed to answer "Neither agree nor disagree" or "Don't know", which are not reported here. For this reason, the sum of the proportion who agreed and disagreed do not add up to 100%. Please note that in some cases, large proportions of respondents reported "Neither agree nor disagree" and "Don't know".*

For figure 13, the wave 6 unweighted base is: All employers n=1,686; All types of providers, n=494; All learners, n=508.

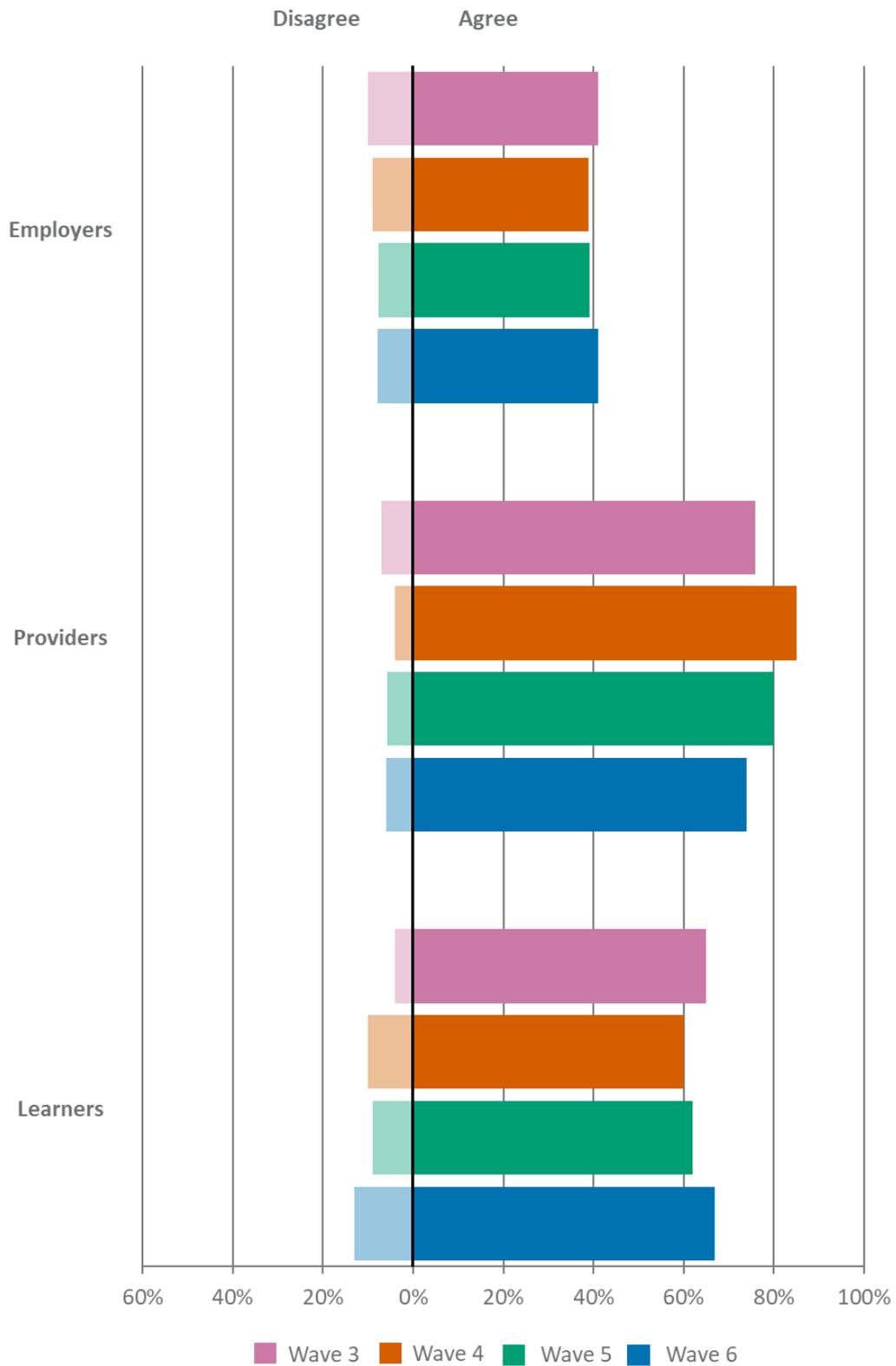
As shown in Figure 13, agreement that 'vocational and technical qualifications prepare learners well for the workplace' was consistent with wave 5 for all groups. Agreement was highest for providers (74%) followed by learners (67%), with slightly lower levels of agreement among employers (41%). Importantly, lower levels of agreement among employers were primarily caused by their increased likelihood to express a neutral response (32%) or say they did not know (20%), as opposed to by notably higher levels of disagreement.

As seen in previous waves, agreement with this statement was highest among those from FE, ACL or LA establishments (77%), compared with sixth forms (60%).

Learners under the age of 19 (13%) and aged 19 to 24 (12%) displayed higher levels of disagreement than those aged 25 and over (5%). This represented a decrease among the oldest learner age group when compared with wave 5 (10%).

Among employers, agreement was highest among public sector (56%) employers, when compared with private sector (40%) employers. This was consistent with previous waves.

**Figure 13. Results for 'Vocational and technical qualifications prepare learners well for the workplace' (Employers, All types of providers, Learners)**



<b>Respondent Type – Agree/Disagree</b>	<b>Wave 3</b>	<b>Wave 4</b>	<b>Wave 5</b>	<b>Wave 6</b>
Employers – agree	41%	39%	39%	41%
Employers – disagree	10%	9%	8%	8%
Providers – agree	76%	85%	80%	74%
Providers – disagree	7%	4%	6%	6%
Learners – agree	70%	66%	65%	67%
Learners – disagree	4%	9%	9%	13%

*Note: Respondents were also allowed to answer “Neither agree nor disagree” or “Don’t know”, which are not reported here. For this reason, the sum of the proportion who agreed and disagreed do not add up to 100%. Please note that in some cases, large proportions of respondents reported “Neither agree nor disagree” and “Don’t know”.*

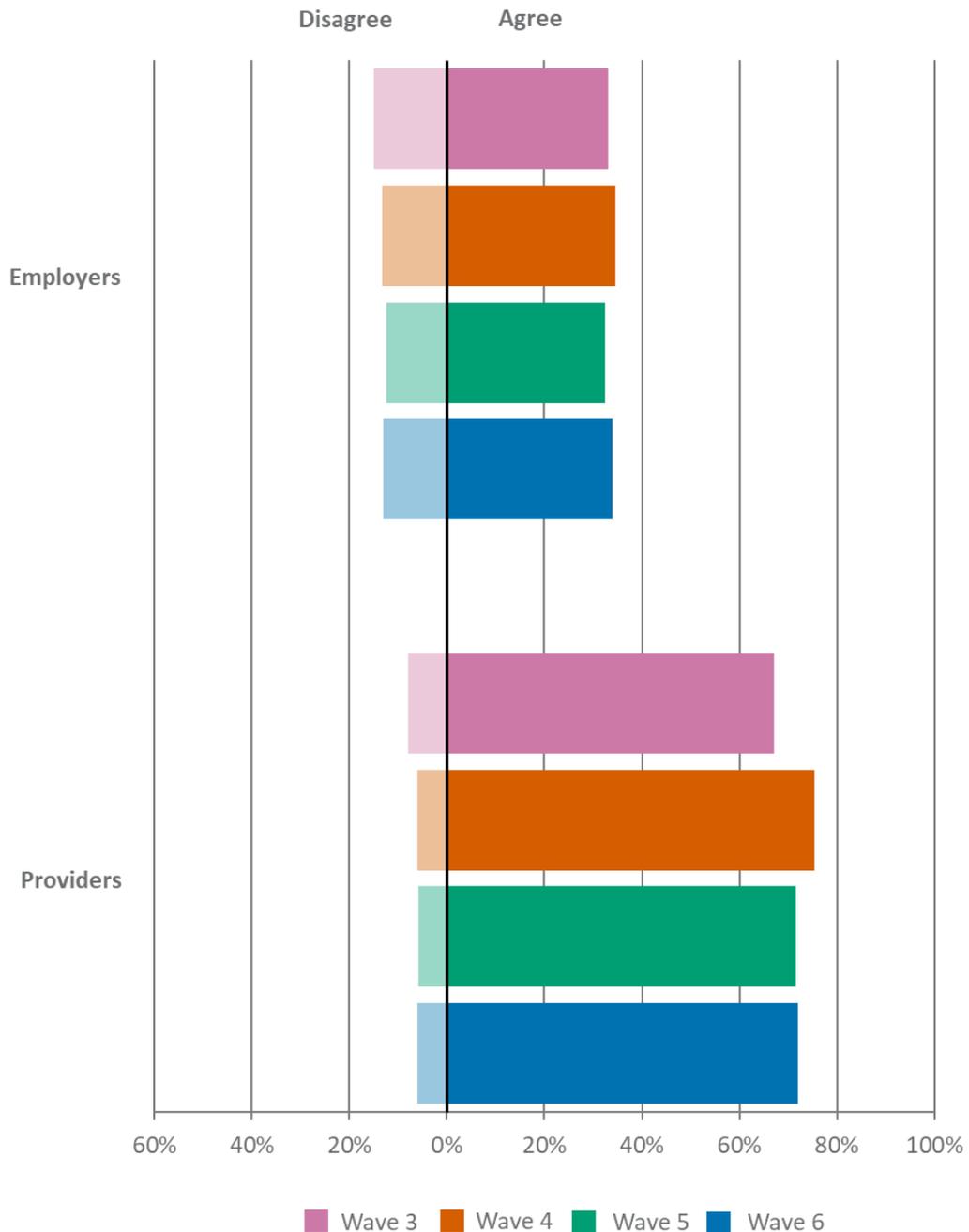
For figure 14, the wave 6 unweighted base is: All employers n=1,686; All types of providers, n=494.

As shown in Figure 14, agreement that people achieving VTQs had the technical skills needed by employers was consistent with wave 5. Agreement was higher for providers (72%), compared with employers (34%).

For providers, agreement was higher among FE, ACL or LA establishments (75%) than sixth forms (54%). Findings in wave 6 were consistent with wave 5 across subgroups.

Among employers, agreement with this statement was highest for large employers (58%) when compared with medium (46%), small (38%) and micro (33%) employers. Agreement was lowest for private sector employers (34%) when compared with public sector (59%) and voluntary sector (48%) employers. This was consistent with findings in wave 5.

**Figure 14. Results for ‘People achieving vocational and technical qualifications have the technical skills needed by employers in my organisation’ (Employers) - ‘People achieving vocational and technical qualifications have the technical skills needed by employers’ (All types of providers)**



Providers – agree	67%	75%	72%	72%
Providers – disagree	8%	6%	6%	6%

*Note: Respondents were also allowed to answer "Neither agree nor disagree" or "Don't know", which are not reported here. For this reason, the sum of the proportion who agreed and disagreed do not add up to 100%. Please note that in some cases, large proportions of respondents reported "Neither agree nor disagree" and "Don't know".*

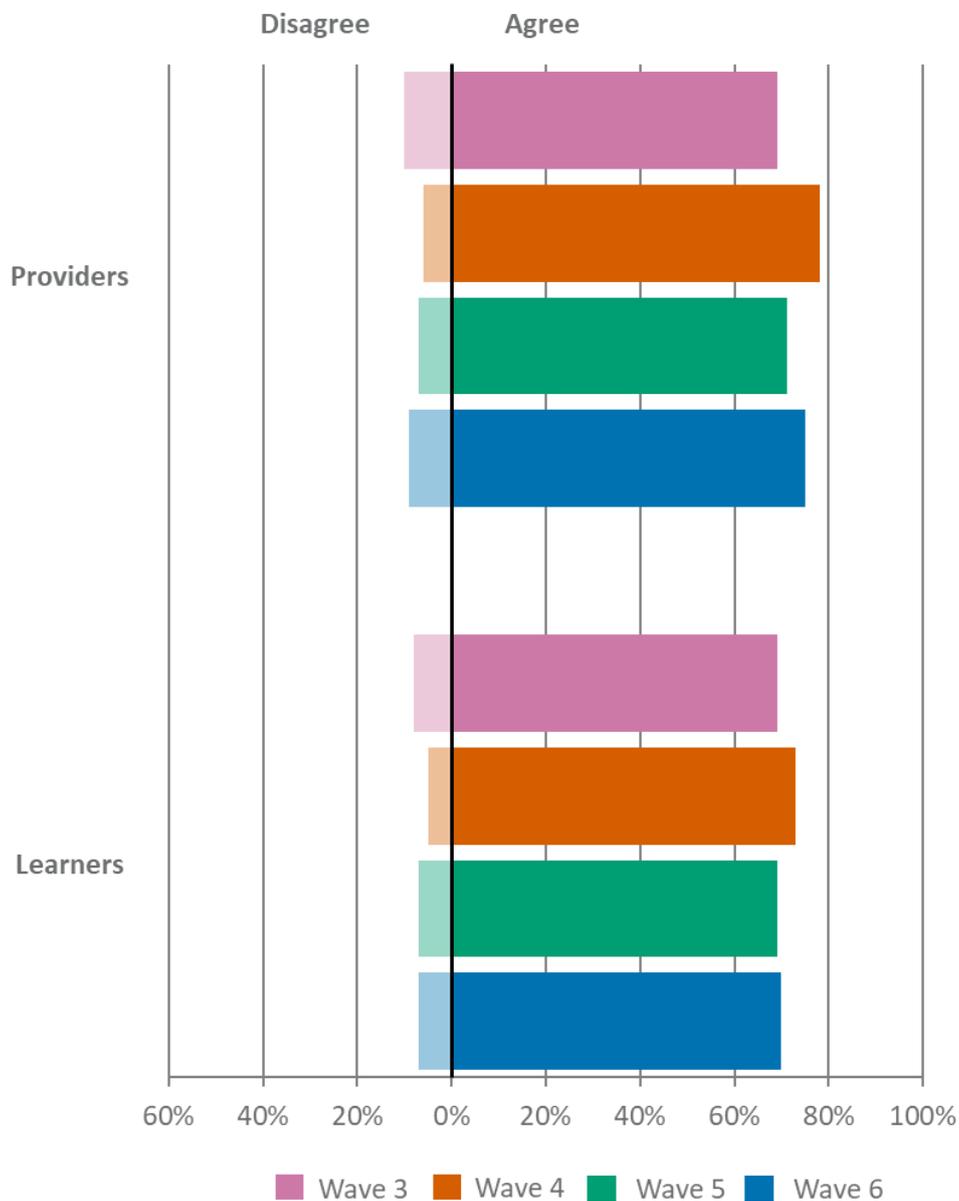
For figure 15, the wave 6 unweighted base is: All types of providers, n=494; All learners, n=508.

Agreement that vocational and technical qualifications were good preparation for further study was consistently high for both providers and learners (as shown in Figure 15). Agreement with this was highest for providers (75%), although still high for learners (70%). This was consistent with findings in wave 5.

Learners aged under 19 (12%) and aged 19 to 24 (9%) had higher levels of disagreement with this statement when compared with those aged 25 and over (3%), in line with wave 5.

Providers from FE, ACL or LA establishments (77%) had higher levels of agreement that vocational and technical qualifications were good preparation for further study than those at sixth forms (52%), consistent with wave 5.

**Figure 15. Results for ‘Vocational and technical qualifications are good preparation for further study’ (All types of providers, Learners)**



<b>Respondent Type – Agree/Disagree</b>	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
Providers – agree	69%	78%	71%	75%
Providers – disagree	10%	6%	7%	9%
Learners – agree	69%	73%	69%	70%
Learners – disagree	8%	5%	7%	7%

*Note: Respondents were also allowed to answer "Neither agree nor disagree" or "Don't know", which are not reported here. For this reason, the sum of the proportion who agreed and disagreed do not add up to 100%. Please note that in some cases, large proportions of respondents reported "Neither agree nor disagree" and "Don't know".*

For figure 16, the wave 6 unweighted base is: All employers who have arranged or funded training for employees in last 12 months, n=862.

Twenty-six percent of employers who had arranged or funded training for employees in the last 12 months reported that this led to pay increases all or most of the time (see Figure 16). This represented an increase when compared with wave 5 (21%).

When comparing sectors, a lower proportion of voluntary sector (15%) employers reported that this led to a pay increase when compared with public (28%) and private (27%) sector employers.

Two in ten (22%) reported that this led to a promotion or improved job status, and three in ten (30%) said it led to new responsibilities all or most of the time. This was consistent with findings in wave 5.

**Figure 16. Results for ‘For your employees who achieve vocational or technical qualifications outside an apprenticeship, how often, if ever, does this lead to the following?’ (Employers)**



<b>Pay increase</b>	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
Some of the time	35%	39%	38%	35%
None of the time	17%	18%	23%	19%
Most of the time	20%	16%	12%	17%
All of the time	7%	9%	9%	9%
Don't know	21%	18%	18%	19%

<b>A promotion or improved job status</b>	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
Some of the time	43%	44%	43%	42%
Most of the time	16%	16%	14%	16%
All of the time	4%	5%	5%	6%
None of the time	16%	17%	20%	17%
Don't know	21%	17%	18%	19%

<b>New responsibilities</b>	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
Some of the time	40%	40%	40%	38%
Most of the time	21%	25%	19%	22%
All of the time	7%	5%	7%	8%
None of the time	11%	17%	17%	14%
Don't know	20%	13%	17%	18%

## Employers' reasons for perceptions of Vocational and Technical Qualifications

Employers who agreed that their organisation values VTQs (46%) were asked to explain further through an open response question.

Those who agreed with this often mentioned that the qualifications guarantee a minimum level of skill and knowledge, provide training in more specific skills, and deliver experience in practical environments required for the workplace. These qualifications were generally seen as a good baseline upon which to build and develop further. Typical responses included:

*"They provide students with a comprehensive knowledge in the vocational area that involves theory and practical skills"*

*"Those who are vocationally and technically qualified are able to certify their work and that of others which makes them high-level contributors to the business"*

*"We expect a certain level of skill and understanding. The qualifications ensure that applicant[s] have this knowledge."*

There was also a sense that VTQs provide an alternative to university or other entry into their sector and allow for a more diverse range of individuals with 'real life' experience. This was seen as benefitting both those entering in their organisation and as a benefit for the business through gaining different perspectives. Typical responses included:

*"Alternative valuable route from traditional exams. Gives opportunity to show abilities and skills in a different form. More real world or work related."*

*"Directly relevant and applicable to the job at hand, do not rely on university attendance so widens the pool of candidates and ensures route for young people from diverse backgrounds"*

*"Link directly to job roles and allow those who don't flourish in an academic environment to achieve strong qualifications"*

*"Because it helps serving our clients better with diverse perspectives."*

While sentiment was broadly positive, 9% of employers disagreed that VTQs were valued in their organisations. When asked to explain this further, the need for further qualifications through university, or the need for more practical experience were regularly cited as reasons. They were seen as not being reflective of individual cases, and there was a sense that some case-by-case decisions were required, rather than VTQs providing a seal of approval in their organisation. Typical responses included:

*"Our clients value degrees and therefore our people need degrees to compete."*

*"What we do is very specific so is best learned within the company. We like people to have strong working habits - hard work, curiosity, professional, interest in our sector but then train them up ourselves."*

*"Rarely mirror real world - vocational qualifications without experiential components are not a substitute for real world experience."*

*"Qualifications don't transfer to real world workplace. We have employed people with zero qualifications who showed more initiative and work ethic than those with degrees"*

## Section 3: Perceptions of Functional Skills Qualifications

The results in this section relate to general perceptions, as opposed to 2022-specific perceptions (presented in section 1).

### Key findings

- Among employers, approximately three in ten (28%) reported having a very or quite good understanding of FSQs. Understanding of FSQs increased with organisation size: medium (16%) and large employers (20%) were significantly more likely than smaller employers to report a very good understanding. Overall understanding of FSQs was consistent with wave 5.
- Learners who had undertaken an FSQ in the last three years most commonly said they decided to do so in order to improve their English, maths or ICT skills (30%) or progress in their studies (28%). This was consistent with wave 5.
- Likewise, among learners who had started taking an FSQ, the top perceived benefits of taking them were improving their English, maths or ICT skills (26%), and a similar proportion felt they will be more confident (25%). This was consistent with wave 5. However, there was a gradual decrease from wave 4 (27%) in the proportion who believed that progressing to higher level qualifications is a benefit of FSQs (17% in wave 6).
- Providers and learners were most likely to agree that they value FSQs (both 61%). Agreement among employers is comparatively lower (34%). These figures were comparable with wave 5 findings. Large employers (54%) were more likely than medium (40%), small (37%) and micro (33%) employers to agree that their organisation values FSQs. Findings for all stakeholder groups were consistent compared to wave 5, although for learners there was a gradual increase in levels of agreement recorded between wave 3 (54%) and wave 6 (61%).
- The majority (61%) of learners agreed that FSQs offer value for money, while just under half (47%) of providers agreed. For learners, this represented a gradual increase in agreement from wave 3 (52%).
- Close to half (48%) of learners agreed that the availability of FSQs is sufficiently flexible, compared with a much smaller proportion of employers (22%). While learners' agreement was comparable with wave 5, this represented a significant increase for employers (19% in wave 5).
- Over half of learners and providers (65% and 52% respectively) agreed that those holding FSQs have the appropriate level of skill in English needed by employers, higher than among employers themselves (34%). This was consistent with wave 5 for all stakeholder groups.
- Three in ten (29%) employers agreed that those holding FSQs have the appropriate level of skill in maths needed by their organisation. Meanwhile, a notably larger proportion of learners and providers agreed when presented with the same statement (61% and 51% respectively). These levels of agreement were broadly consistent with wave 5.
- Similarly, agreement levels that those holding FSQs have the appropriate level of skill in ICT needed by employers were highest among learners (53%) and lowest among employers (27%), with providers (47%) falling in between the two. Again, these findings were broadly consistent with wave 5.
- Two-thirds (66%) of learners agreed that FSQs are good preparation for further study, alongside a slightly smaller proportion of providers (55%). These levels of agreement were broadly consistent with wave 5.

## Understanding of Functional Skills Qualifications by employers

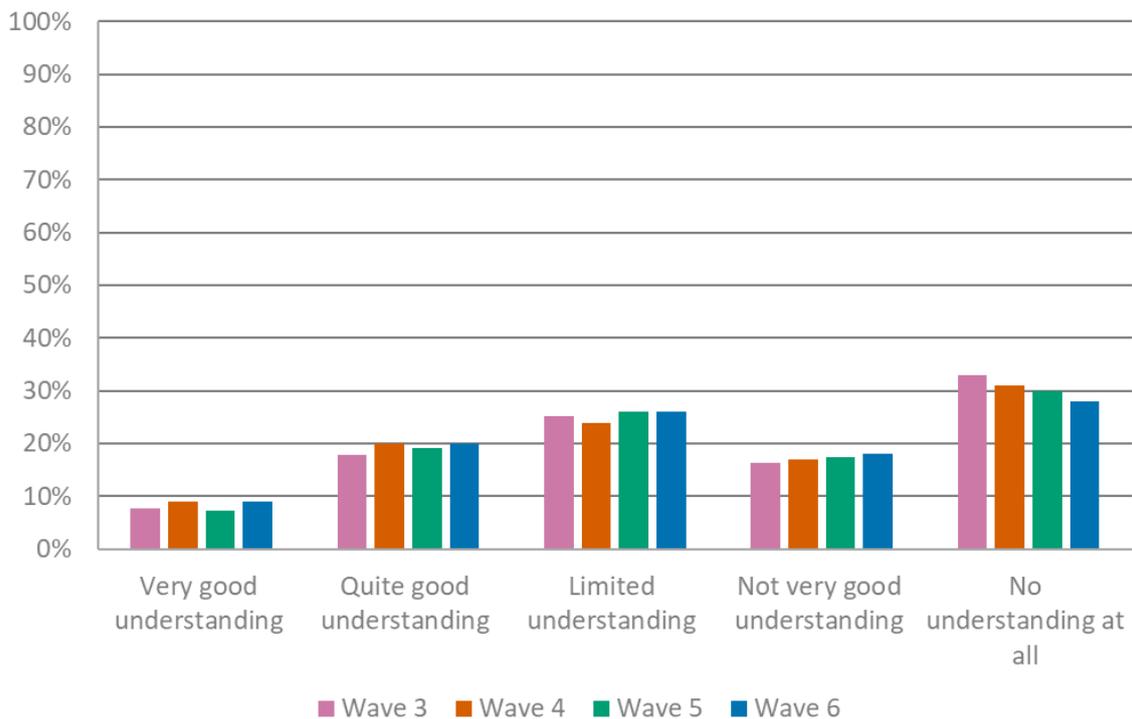
For figure 17, the wave 6 unweighted base is: All employers, n=2,003.

As shown in Figure 17, approximately seven in ten employers (72%) reported that they have some level of understanding of Functional Skills Qualifications (FSQs), consistent with wave 5. More specifically, roughly three in ten (28%) reported having very or quite good understanding and 44% reported having limited or not very good understanding. The remainder, roughly three in ten (28%), said they have no understanding at all of these qualifications, which is broadly in line with previous waves

Levels of reported understanding of FSQs increased with organisation size. Roughly one in ten micro and small employers (8% and 11% respectively) stated that they have very good understanding of FSQs, compared with 16% of medium employers and two in ten large employers (20%).

Public sector employers reported higher levels of understanding of FSQs than private sector employers. Sixteen percent of public sector employers reported having a very good understanding, compared to approximately one in ten private sector employers (8%).

**Figure 17. Results for ‘Please indicate your level of understanding about the four types of qualifications listed below.’ – Functional Skills qualifications (Employers)**



Statement	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
Very good understanding	8%	9%	7%	9%
Quite good understanding	18%	20%	19%	20%
Limited understanding	25%	24%	26%	26%
Not very good understanding	16%	17%	18%	18%
No understanding at all	33%	31%	30%	28%

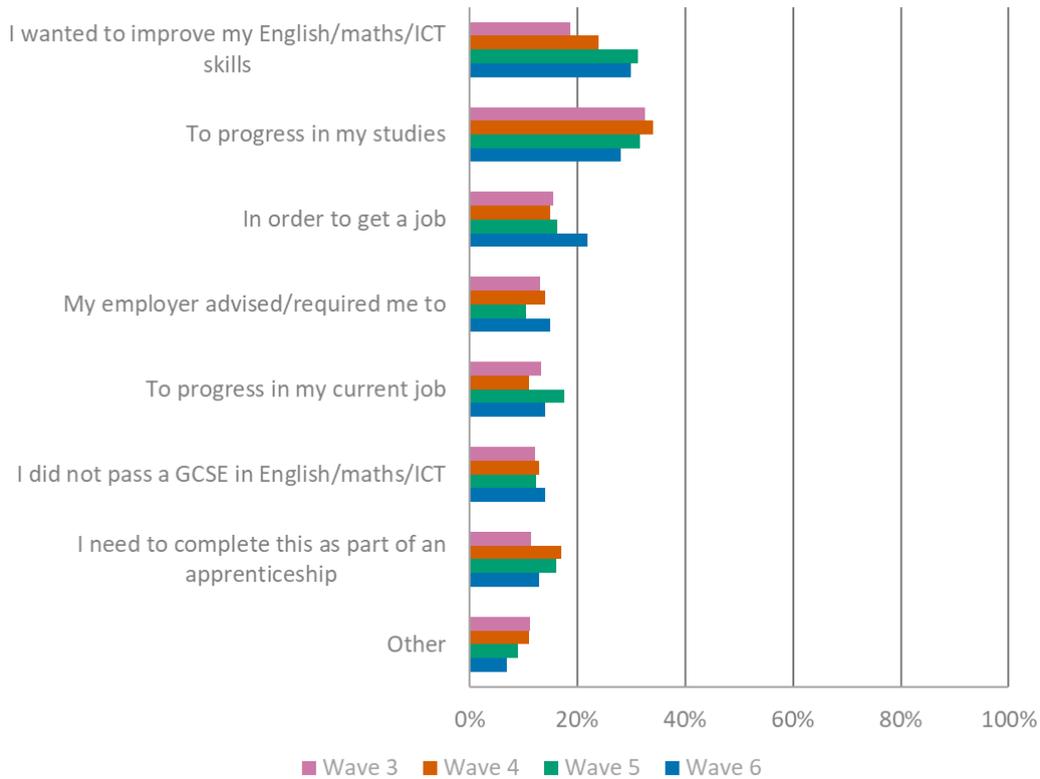


## Why learners chose Functional Skills Qualifications

For figure 18, the wave 6 unweighted base is: Learners who are studying or have studied an FSQ in the last three years, n=200.

As shown in Figure 18, the top reasons given by learners for deciding to take an FSQ were to improve their English/maths/ICT skills (30%) and to progress in their studies (28%), with roughly three in ten reporting each, consistent with wave 5 findings.

**Figure 18. Results for ‘Why did you decide to take a Functional Skills qualification?’ (Learners)**



Statement	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
I wanted to improve my English/maths/ICT skills	19%	24%	31%	30%
To progress in my studies	33%	34%	32%	28%
In order to get a job	16%	15%	16%	22%
My employer advised/required me to	13%	14%	11%	15%
I did not pass a GCSE in English/maths/ICT	12%	13%	12%	14%
To progress in my current job	13%	11%	18%	14%
I need to complete this as part of an apprenticeship	12%	17%	16%	13%
Other	11%	11%	9%	7%

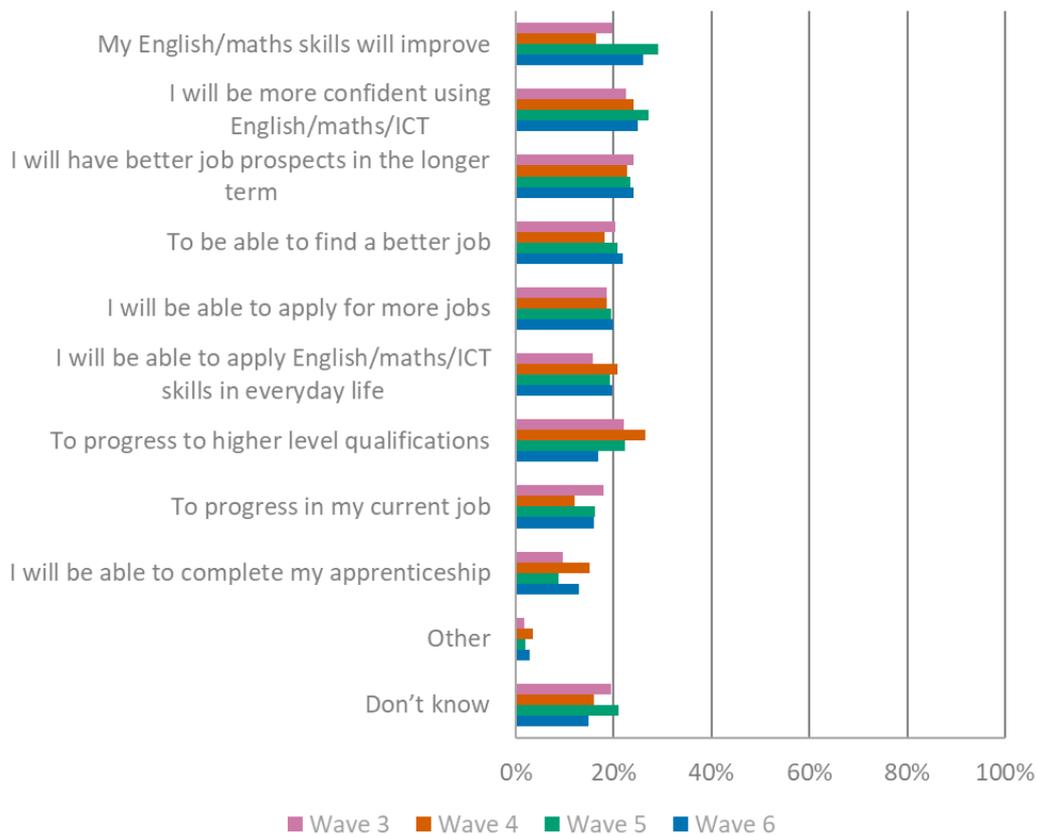
## Benefits associated with Functional Skills Qualifications by learners

For figure 19, the wave 6 unweighted base is: Learners who are studying or have studied an FSQ in the last three years, n=200.

After having started or completed the qualification, 26% of learners believed that their English/maths skills will improve and 25% of learners felt they will be more confident using English/maths/ICT (see Figure 19). Another commonly identified perceived benefit was that they will have better job prospects in the longer term (24%). These findings were broadly consistent with wave 5.

In comparison with wave 4 (27%), there was a gradual decrease in the proportion of learners who believed that progressing to higher level qualifications is a benefit of taking an FSQ (17% in wave 6).

**Figure 19. Results for ‘Now that you have started learning or have completed learning, what benefits do you expect from taking a Functional Skills qualification(s)?’ (Learners).**



Statement	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
My English/maths skills will improve	20%	16%	29%	26%
I will be more confident using English/maths/ICT	22%	24%	27%	25%
I will have better job prospects in the longer term	24%	23%	24%	24%

To be able to find a better job	20%	18%	21%	22%
I will be able to apply for more jobs	19%	19%	20%	20%
I will be able to apply English/maths/ICT skills in everyday life	16%	21%	19%	20%
To progress to higher level qualifications	22%	27%	22%	17%
To progress in my current job	18%	12%	16%	16%
I will be able to complete my apprenticeship	10%	15%	9%	13%
Other	2%	4%	2%	3%
Don't know	19%	16%	21%	15%

## Perceptions of Functional Skills Qualifications: value and flexibility

For figure 20, the wave 6 unweighted base is: Employers who indicated that they have an understanding of FSQs, n=1,527; All types of providers, n=494; All learners, n=508.

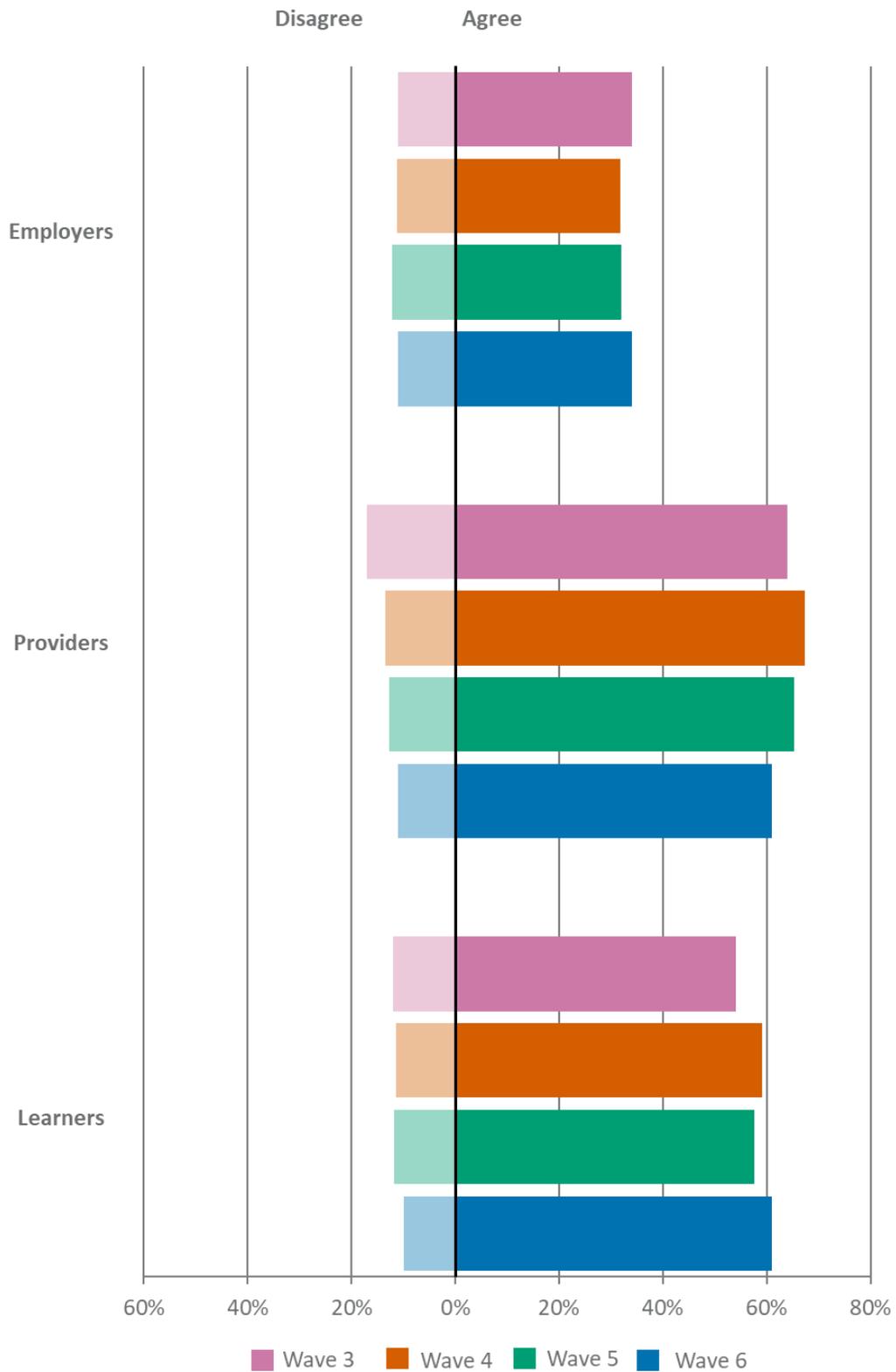
Across all stakeholder groups, levels of agreement regarding the value placed on FSQs were broadly consistent with wave 5 (see Figure 20). Learners and providers expressed equal levels of agreement that they value FSQs, with six in ten (61%) in both groups stating this, while this decreased to 34% of employers. Consistent with findings relating to other perceptions, the lower levels of agreement among employers could primarily be attributed to their increased likelihood to express a neutral opinion (39%) or to say they did not know (16%).

Large employers (54%) expressed higher levels of agreement than medium (40%), small (37%) and micro (33%) employers that their organisation values FSQs. This followed a similar trend to the reported levels of understanding of these qualifications.

Among the providers surveyed, those from sixth forms expressed lower levels of agreement than those from FE, ACL or LA establishments (40% compared with 68%).

Among learners overall, there was a gradual increase in levels of agreement recorded between wave 3 (54%) and wave 6 (61%). In wave 6, older learners aged 25 and over reported higher levels of agreement than those aged 19 to 24 that they value FSQs (66% compared with 50%). Meanwhile, the youngest cohort – those aged under 19 – were in between (61%).

**Figure 20. Results for ‘To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about Functional Skills qualifications?’ – I value Functional Skills qualifications (Learners, All types of providers) - We value Functional Skills qualifications (Employers)**



<b>Respondent Type – Agree/Disagree</b>	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
Employers – agree	46%	32%	32%	34%
Employers – disagree	10%	11%	12%	11%
Providers – agree	64%	67%	65%	61%
Providers – disagree	17%	13%	13%	11%
Learners – agree	54%	59%	58%	61%
Learners – disagree	12%	11%	12%	10%

*Note: Respondents were also allowed to answer "Neither agree nor disagree" or "Don't know", which are not reported here. For this reason, the sum of the proportion who agreed and disagreed do not add up to 100%. Please note that in some cases, large proportions of respondents reported "Neither agree nor disagree" and "Don't know".*

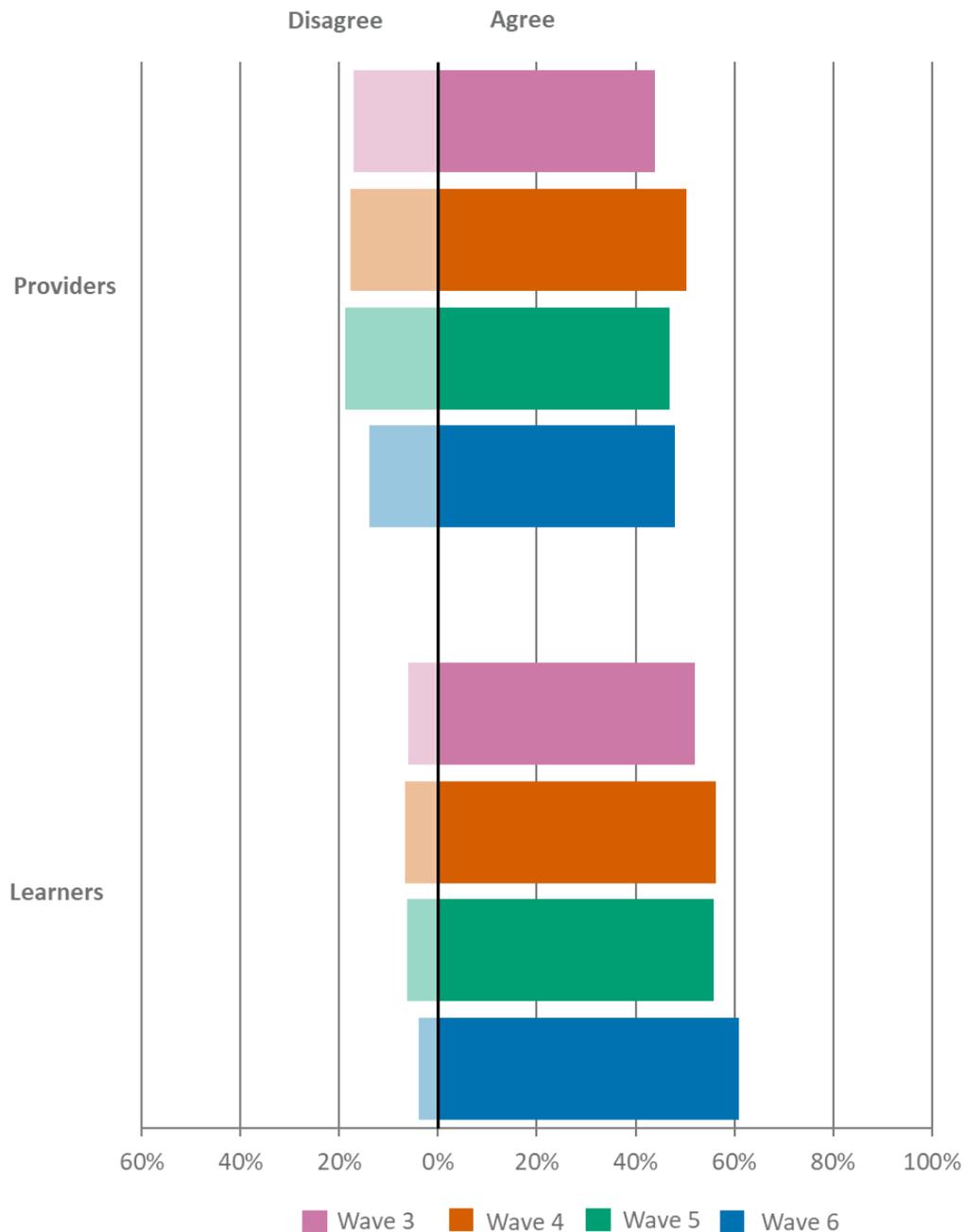
For figure 21, the wave 6 unweighted base is: All types of providers, n=494; All learners, n=508.

As shown in Figure 21, levels of agreement that FSQs offer value for money were broadly consistent with wave 5 for providers and learners. In wave 6, roughly half of providers (48%) and six in ten learners (61%) agreed with this statement. Among learners, this represented a gradual increase in agreement in comparison with wave 3 (52%).

Within the providers group, those from FE, ACL or LA establishments expressed higher levels of agreement that FSQs offer value for money than those from sixth forms (54% compared with 32%).

Among learners, levels of agreement were relatively consistent across the age groups.

**Figure 21. Results for ‘In 2022, employers, training providers or colleges paid awarding organisations in the region of £15-£20 per student for each Functional Skills qualification (Source: Ofqual 2022). To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? – Functional Skills Qualifications offer value for money.’ (Learners, All types of providers)**



Respondent Type – Agree/Disagree	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
Providers – agree	44%	50%	47%	48%
Providers – disagree	17%	18%	19%	14%

Learners – agree	52%	56%	56%	61%
Learners – disagree	6%	7%	6%	4%

*Note: Respondents were also allowed to answer "Neither agree nor disagree" or "Don't know", which are not reported here. For this reason, the sum of the proportion who agreed and disagreed do not add up to 100%. Please note that in some cases, large proportions of respondents reported "Neither agree nor disagree" and "Don't know".*

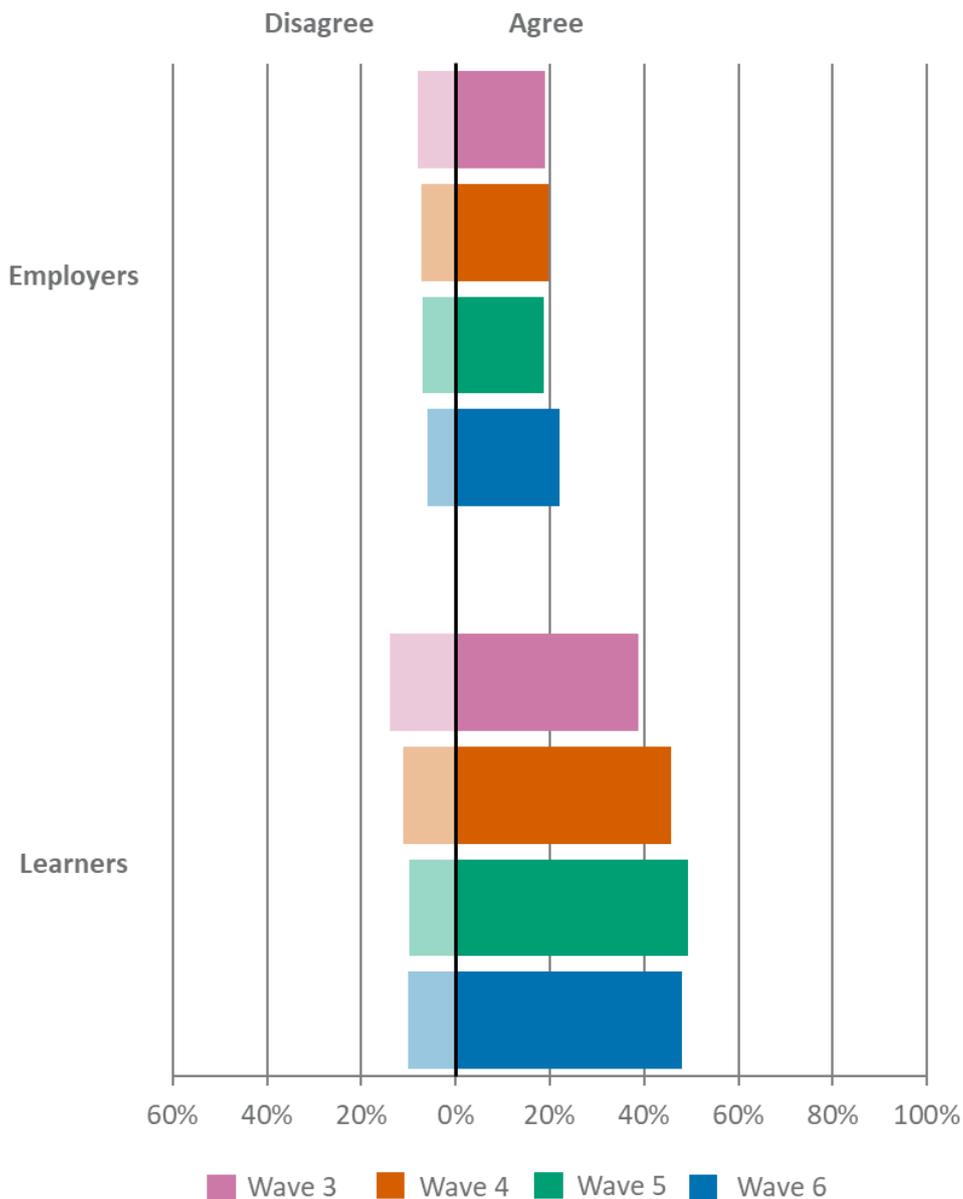
For figure 22, the wave 6 unweighted base is: Employers who indicated that they have an understanding of FSQs, n=1,527; All learners, n=508.

In wave 6, roughly two in ten employers (22%) agreed that the availability of FSQs is sufficiently flexible, which was an increase in comparison with wave 5 (19%). Consistent with findings regarding other perceptions of qualifications, these relatively low levels of agreement were primarily caused by high proportions of employers expressing a neutral opinion (36%) or saying they did not know (36%) rather than by high levels of disagreement (6%). Meanwhile, levels of agreement among learners were consistent with wave 5, with approximately half (48%) agreeing with the statement (see Figure 22).

Large employers (45%) stated much higher levels of agreement than medium (29%), small (27%) and micro (20%) employers.

Among learners, levels of agreement were consistent across all age groups.

**Figure 22. Results for ‘The availability of Functional Skills qualifications is sufficiently flexible’ (Employers, Learners)**



Respondent Type – Agree/Disagree	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
Employers – agree	19%	20%	19%	22%
Employers – disagree	8%	7%	7%	6%
Learners – agree	39%	46%	49%	48%
Learners – disagree	14%	11%	10%	10%

*Note: Respondents were also allowed to answer "Neither agree nor disagree" or "Don't know", which are not reported here. For this reason, the sum of the proportion who agreed and disagreed do not*

*add up to 100%. Please note that in some cases, large proportions of respondents reported “Neither agree nor disagree” and “Don’t know”.*

## Perceptions of Functional Skills Qualifications: purpose and future opportunity

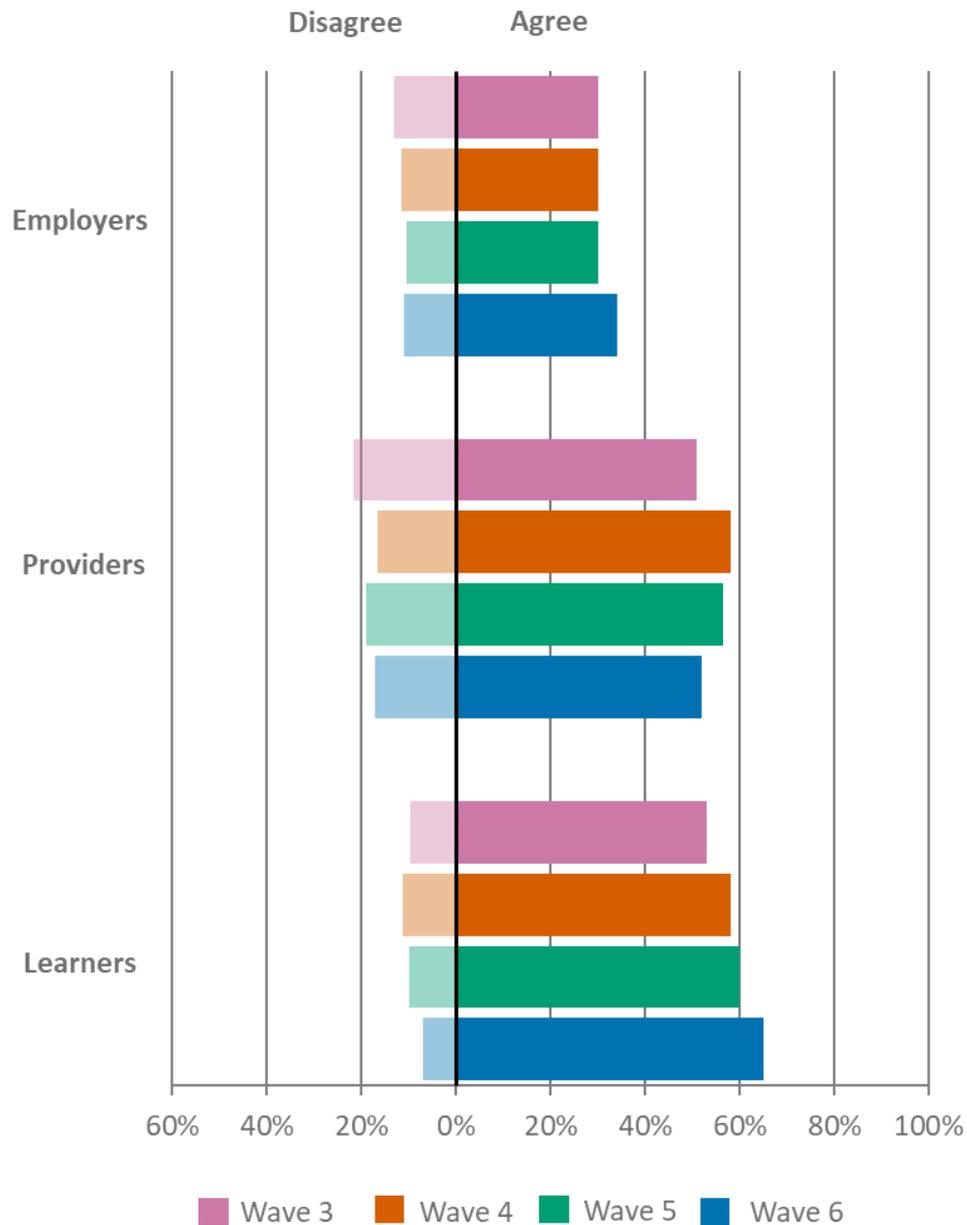
For figure 23, the wave 6 unweighted base is: Employers who indicated that they have an understanding of FSQs, n=1,527; All types of providers, n=494; All learners, n=508.

In comparison with wave 5, levels of agreement among employers that people holding FSQs have the appropriate level of skill in English needed by their organisation were broadly consistent, with 34% stating this in wave 6 (see Figure 23). Importantly, levels of disagreement among employers were low (11%); as seen elsewhere, the relatively low levels of agreement could be attributed to higher levels of uncertainty. Levels of agreement for providers were also consistent in comparison with wave 5; in wave 6, approximately half (52%) were in agreement. Learners reported the highest levels of agreement across the three groups (65%), with agreement broadly in line with wave 5.

Large employers (57%) expressed higher levels of agreement that people holding FSQs have the appropriate level of skill in English needed by their organisation than micro (32%), small (39%) and medium (42%) employers. When looking at organisation sector, public sector employers (45%) were more likely than those in the private sector (33%) to agree that people holding FSQs have the appropriate level of skill in English.

Among providers, those from FE, ACL or LA establishments expressed much higher levels of agreement with the statement that people holding FSQs have the appropriate level of skill in English needed by employers than those from sixth forms (58% compared with 34%). Meanwhile, learners across various age groups reported roughly equal levels of agreement with the same statement.

**Figure 23. Results for ‘People holding Functional Skills qualifications have the appropriate level of skill in English needed by my organisation’ (Employers) - ‘People holding Functional Skills qualifications have the appropriate level of skill in English needed by employers’ (All types of providers and Learners)**



Respondent Type – Agree/Disagree	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
Employers – agree	30%	30%	30%	34%
Employers – disagree	13%	11%	11%	11%
Providers – agree	51%	58%	56%	52%
Providers – disagree	22%	17%	19%	17%
Learners – agree	53%	58%	60%	65%
Learners – disagree	10%	11%	10%	7%

*Note: Respondents were also allowed to answer "Neither agree nor disagree" or "Don't know", which are not reported here. For this reason, the sum of the proportion who agreed and disagreed do not add up to 100%. Please note that in some cases, large proportions of respondents reported "Neither agree nor disagree" and "Don't know".*

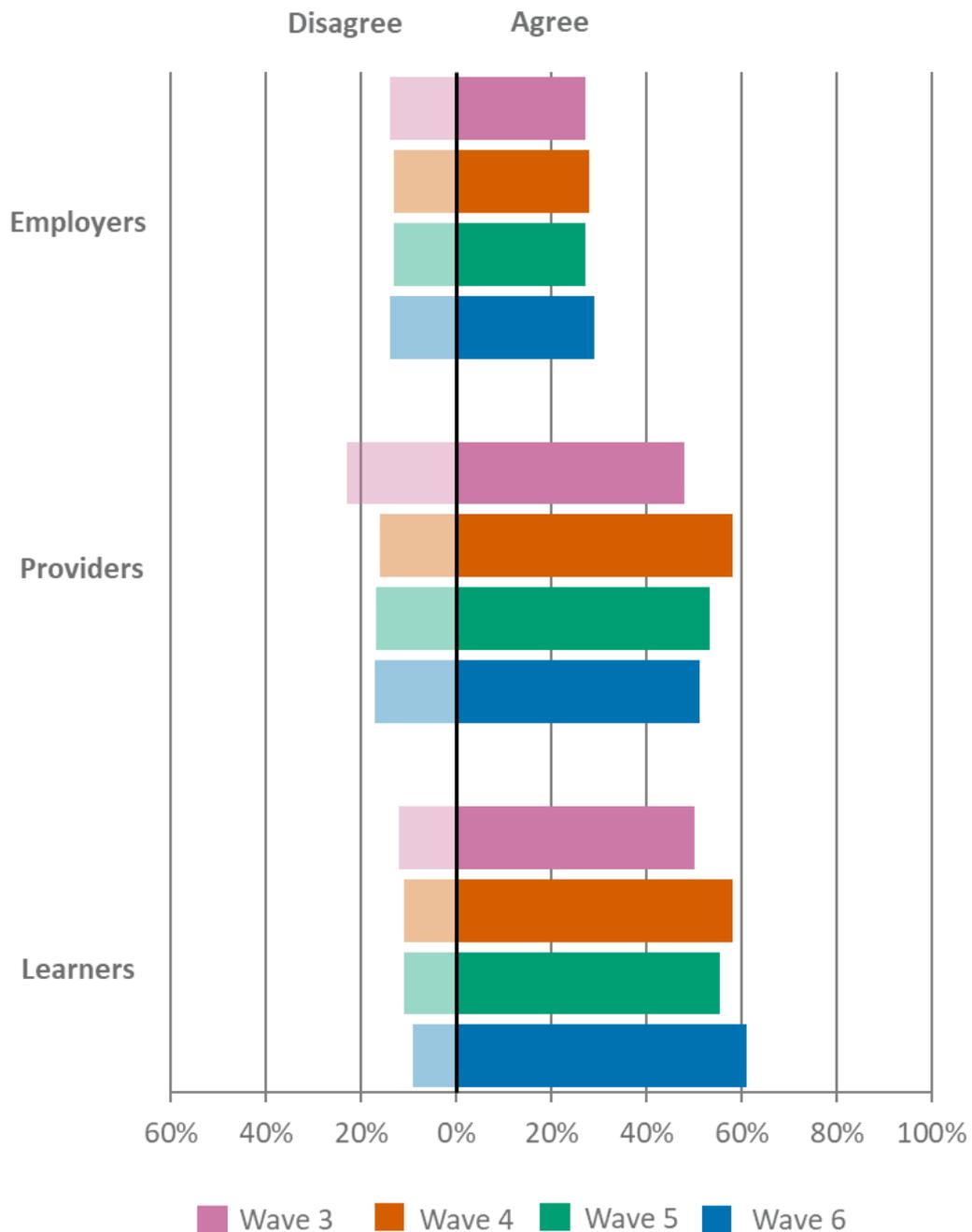
For figure 24, the wave 6 unweighted base is: Employers who indicated that they have an understanding of FSQs, n=1,527; All types of providers, n=494; All learners, n=508.

As shown in Figure 24, levels of agreement regarding whether people holding FSQs have the appropriate level of skill in maths were broadly in line with wave 5 across all three stakeholder groups. For employers this was in the context of their own organisation, and for providers and learners it was regarding the needs of employers generally. Levels of agreement were highest among learners, with six in ten (61%) in agreement, followed by half of providers (51%) and three in ten employers (29%). Regarding a similar statement focused instead on skills in English, trends were similar; however, levels of agreement were much lower among employers than learners or providers. This was also associated with higher levels of uncertainty.

Large employers (50%) expressed higher levels of agreement that people holding FSQs have the appropriate level of skill in maths needed by their organisation than micro (27%), small (36%) and medium (35%) employers. This was consistent with perceptions regarding English skills.

Providers from FE, ACL or LA establishments expressed relatively high levels of agreement with the statement that people holding FSQs have the appropriate level of skill in maths needed by employers, compared with providers from sixth forms (55% compared with 37%). Learners across various age groups, however, reported similar levels of agreement.

**Figure 24. Results for ‘People holding Functional Skills qualifications have the appropriate level of skill in maths needed by my organisation’ (Employers) - ‘People holding Functional Skills qualifications have the appropriate level of skill in maths needed by employers’ (All types of providers and Learners)**



Learners – agree	50%	58%	55%	61%
Learners – disagree	12%	11%	11%	9%

*Note: Respondents were also allowed to answer "Neither agree nor disagree" or "Don't know", which are not reported here. For this reason, the sum of the proportion who agreed and disagreed do not add up to 100%. Please note that in some cases, large proportions of respondents reported "Neither agree nor disagree" and "Don't know".*

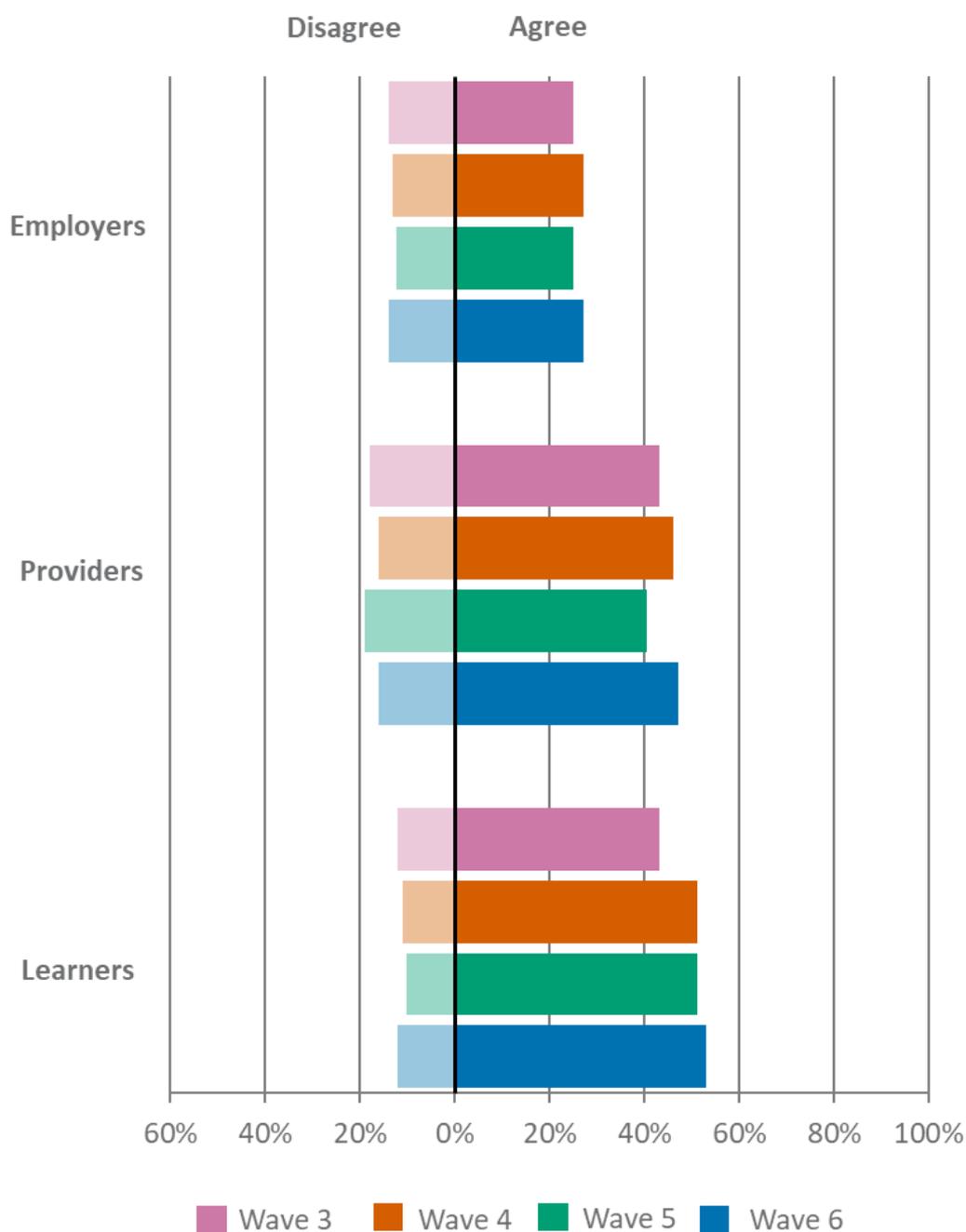
For figure 25, the wave 6 unweighted base is: Employers who indicated that they have an understanding of FSQs, n=1,527; All types of providers, n=494; All learners, n=508.

Among all stakeholder groups, levels of agreement that people holding FSQs have the appropriate level of skill in ICT needed in the context of employment were broadly consistent with wave 5 (see Figure 25). Roughly half of learners (53%) and providers (47%) in wave 6 agreed that people holding FSQs have the appropriate level of skill in ICT needed by employers, while approximately three in ten (27%) employers agreed that these individuals have the appropriate level of skill in ICT needed by their organisation.

As seen with perceptions of other skills, large employers (48%) reported higher levels of agreement that people holding FSQs have the appropriate level of skill in ICT needed by their organisation than micro (25%), small (33%) and medium (30%) employers. The same was true for public sector employers (43%) in comparison with private sector employers (26%).

Similarly, providers from FE, ACL or LA establishments expressed higher levels of agreement than those from sixth forms (50% compared with 37%) that people holding FSQs have the appropriate level of skill in ICT needed by employers. Meanwhile, learners across various age groups reported consistent levels of agreement.

**Figure 25. Results for ‘People holding Functional Skills qualifications have the appropriate level of skill in ICT needed by my organisation’ (Employers) ‘People holding Functional Skills qualifications have the appropriate level of skill in ICT needed by employers’ (All types of providers and Learners)**



Respondent Type – Agree/Disagree	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
Employers – agree	25%	27%	25%	27%
Employers – disagree	14%	13%	12%	14%
Providers – agree	43%	46%	40%	47%
Providers – disagree	18%	16%	19%	16%
Learners – agree	43%	51%	51%	53%

Learners – disagree	12%	11%	10%	12%
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*Note: Respondents were also allowed to answer "Neither agree nor disagree" or "Don't know", which are not reported here. For this reason, the sum of the proportion who agreed and disagreed do not add up to 100%. Please note that in some cases, large proportions of respondents reported "Neither agree nor disagree" and "Don't know".*

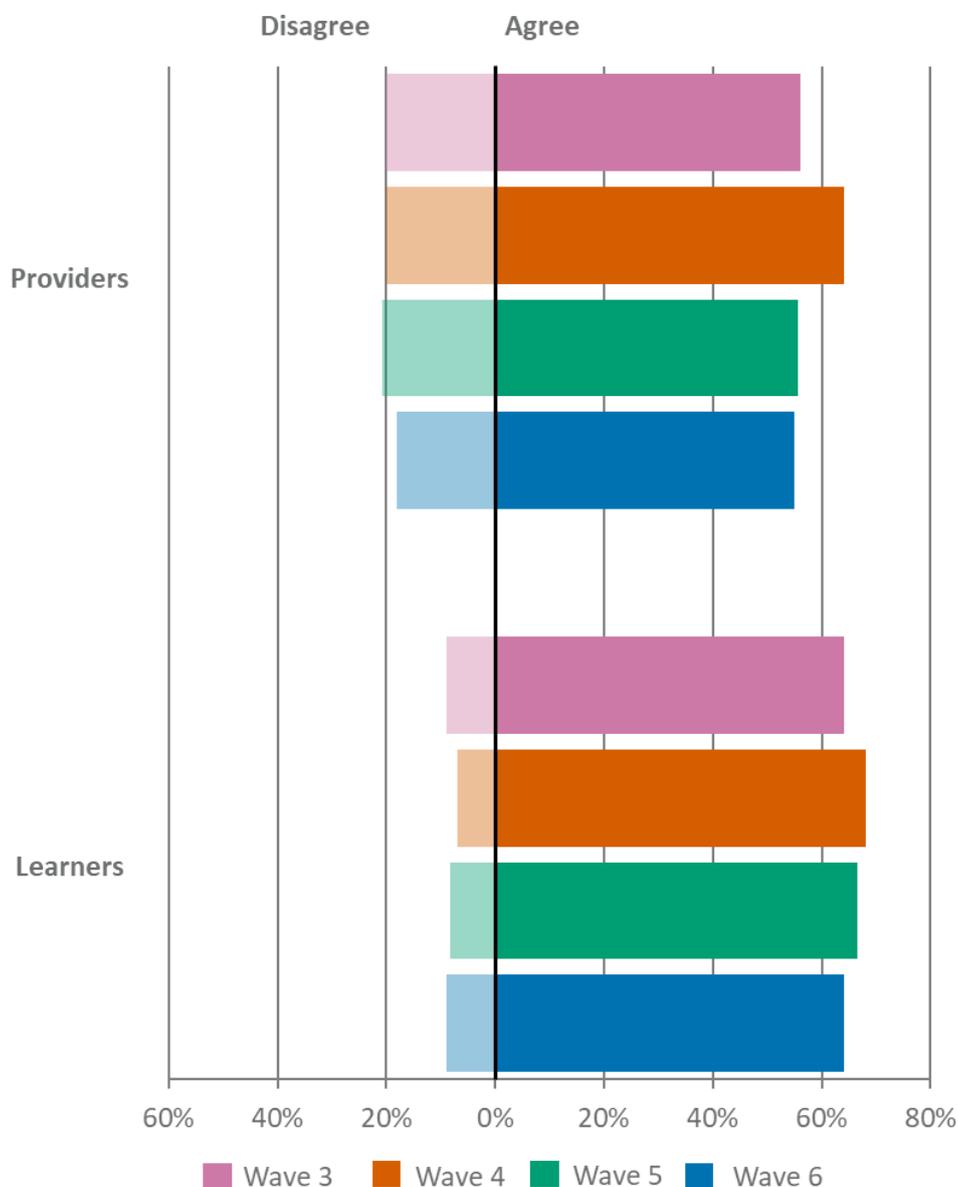
For figure 26, the wave 6 unweighted base is: All types of providers, n=494; All learners, n=508.

In comparison with wave 5, providers and learners reported consistent levels of agreement that FSQs are good preparation for further study. This was stated by 64% of learners and 55% of providers in wave 6.

Among the providers surveyed, those from FE, ACL or LA establishments reported much higher levels of agreement with the statement that FSQs are good preparation for further study than providers from sixth forms (66% compared with 38%).

Older learners aged 25 and over (73%) expressed considerably higher levels of agreement than the younger groups aged 19 to 24 (52%) and under 19 (56%).

**Figure 26. Results for ‘Functional Skills qualifications are good preparation for further study’ (All types of providers and Learners)**



<b>Respondent Type – Agree/Disagree</b>	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
Providers – agree	56%	64%	56%	55%
Providers – disagree	20%	20%	21%	18%
Learners – agree	64%	68%	67%	64%
Learners – disagree	9%	7%	8%	9%

*Note: Respondents were also allowed to answer "Neither agree nor disagree" or "Don't know", which are not reported here. For this reason, the sum of the proportion who agreed and disagreed do not add up to 100%. Please note that in some cases, large proportions of respondents reported "Neither agree nor disagree" and "Don't know".*

## Employers' reasons for perceptions of Functional Skills Qualifications

Among the 34% of employers who agreed that their organisation values FSQs, a variety of reasons were given for this. As observed in wave 5, many said this was because FSQs are a requirement for their organisation or that they provide assurance on a certain standard of basic skills (e.g. English or maths). Many employers also wrote that they are a good alternative to GCSEs, as well as indicating that they are supplemented with additional training within their organisation. Typical responses include:

*"Most of what we do is practical and functional, so more academic skills are not necessary for our work."*

*"We are constantly looking for apprentices as we believe in upskilling our workforce and look to succession planning"*

*"We don't recruit very often as our retention level is high. However when we do we require people with suitably good skills in our sector of operations. Then we will train them to a higher level."*

*"A useful equivalent for those who don't have GCSEs"*

*"Normally those with functional skills come into the workplace and after very limited additional training can take a role which is contributing to the company's bottom line."*

*"The input, practical application and assessment processes are robust and enable individual to contribute to organisations in an effective way"*

*"It shows a level of competency in areas like maths and English"*

*"Provides a surety that there is a sufficient grasp of the required skills to be able to do the job or at least engage at a level of functionality that allows us to train as additionally may be required"*

*"Where it's not been possible for people to complete GCSEs, FS qualifications are an indication of a willingness to gain a level of education that will help in the workplace"*

*"Guarantees a basic level of literacy and numeracy as well as ability to organise learning. Can be a bedrock for further training specific to job roles"*

*"Employees with even basic functional skills tend to work better, accept training more readily and perform better than someone without the same skills"*

*"It would be impossible for us to offer apprenticeships to anyone who did not have at least a basic grounding English and Maths"*

*"They are basic and universal skills applicable to all roles, and set a standard to uphold"*

*"These basic skills are a mandatory requirement, but people with FSQ's have demonstrated that they have these skills."*

## Section 4: Perceptions of Apprenticeships and End-Point Assessments

The results in this section relate to general perceptions, as opposed to 2022-specific perceptions (presented in section 1).

### Key findings

- Overall, approximately three in ten (30%) employers reported having a very or quite good understanding of apprenticeships in their sector. This was broadly in line with wave 5.
- Among employers who have at least some understanding of apprenticeship EPAs in their sector, 16% reported having a very or quite good understanding. Only 5% said that they have a very good understanding of these assessments, broadly consistent with the previous wave.
- Understanding of apprenticeship EPAs among the provider group declined in wave 6, with three in 10 (29%) of the provider group reporting having a very or quite good understanding of these, compared to 58% in wave 5.
- Among learners, six in ten (63%) reported a good (very or quite good) understanding of EPAs, an increase compared to wave 5 (45%).
- Seven in ten (72%) of the provider group said that they know the difference between apprenticeship frameworks and the new apprenticeship standards. Awareness of the difference was much lower among employers, with only 8% reporting this, although this was consistent with wave 5.
- Awareness that EPAs are specific to apprenticeship standards was highest among learners (66%), followed by providers (62%), with employers reporting much lower understanding (20%). For providers, this represented a decline compared to wave 5 (78%).
- It was most common for learners to say that they decided to take an apprenticeship because they can learn new skills on the job (50%). Following this, four in ten (41%) said it was because they wanted to improve their skills, and roughly three in ten (32%) said it was to progress in their current job. There were no statistically significant differences between waves 5 and 6.
- Learners were most likely to say that the benefits they expect from taking an apprenticeship would be to have better knowledge of how to do their job (52%), this represented an increase compared to wave 5 (36%). Half (50%) also expected to have a broader range of skills to apply in the workplace, followed by 46% who said they expect to be able to progress in their current job.
- Nearly six in ten (57%) of learners said that they value EPAs of apprenticeship standards, comparable with wave 5 (54%). A slightly lower proportion (44%) of employers and providers agreed that they value EPAs of apprenticeship standards. This was broadly in keeping with wave 5 for all stakeholder groups.
- Views for the provider group were split over whether or not apprenticeship EPAs offer value for money. A third (33%) agreed, whilst 13% disagreed. While agreement levels remained broadly consistent with wave 5, disagreement decreased from 31%.
- Almost half (46%) of learners agreed that the availability of EPAs is sufficiently flexible, compared to 38% of employers and 33% the provider group. Among both learners and

employers, the proportion agreeing increased from wave 5 (from 40% and 32% respectively).

- Overall, 63% of learners agreed that people passing EPAs have the competence and vocational and technical skills needed by employers, and increase compared with wave 5 (56%). Comparatively, agreement among providers declined from 63% in wave 5 to 55% in wave 6, while employers remained consistent (43%).
- Six in ten (59%) of learners said that they understand the purpose of apprenticeship EPAs, slightly higher than providers' agreement (50%), consistent with wave 5.

## Understanding of Apprenticeships and End-Point Assessments

For figure 27, the wave 6 unweighted base is: All employers, n=2,003.

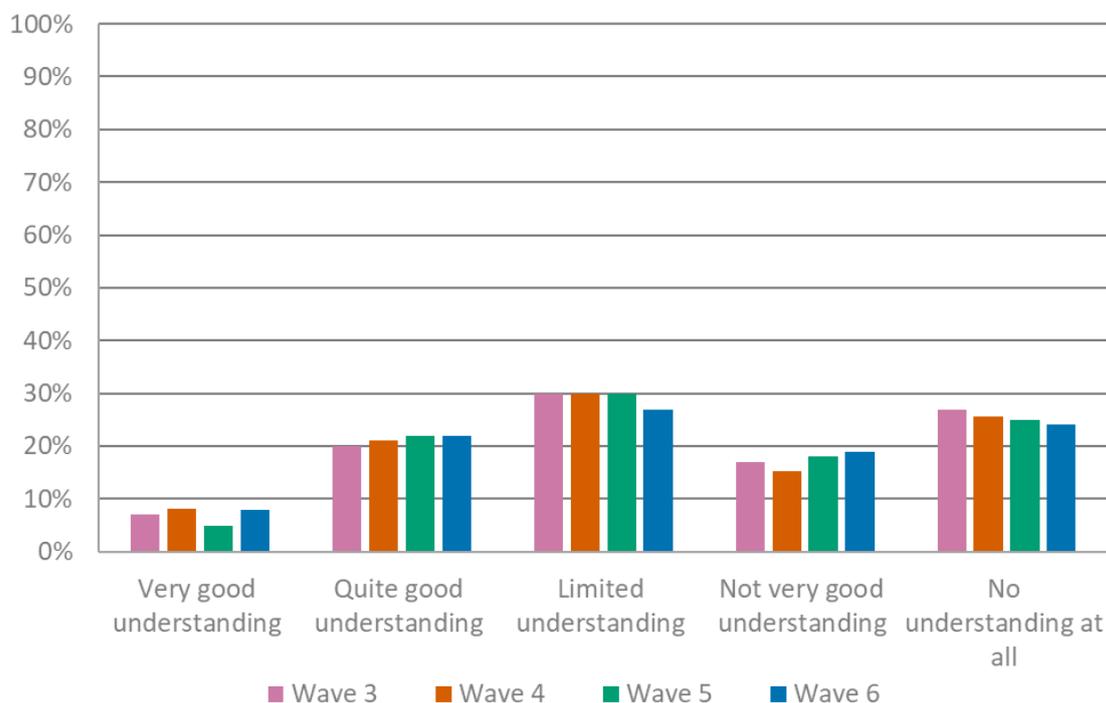
As shown in Figure 27, 76% of employers reported that they have some level of understanding of apprenticeships in their sector, broadly consistent with wave 5. Notably, three in ten (30%) reported very or quite good understanding, and 46% limited or not very good understanding.

The remainder, 24%, said they have no understanding at all of apprenticeships in their sector, broadly in line with wave 5.

Levels of reported understanding of apprenticeships in their sector increased with organisation size. Roughly two in ten (17%) large employers reported a very good understanding, compared with approximately one in ten micro (7%) and small (11%) employers.

Twenty-five percent of private sector employers said they have no understanding at all of apprenticeships in their sector, demonstrating lower levels of understanding compared with public sector and voluntary sector employers (both 10%).

**Figure 27. Results for ‘Please indicate your level of understanding about the four types of qualifications listed below<sup>1</sup>.’ – Apprenticeships in my sector (Employers)**



<sup>1</sup> The four qualifications asked about: ‘Functional Skills qualifications’; ‘Vocational and technical qualifications in my sector or organisation’; ‘Apprenticeships in my sector or organisation’; ‘T levels or the technical qualifications within T levels’

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Wave 3</b>	<b>Wave 4</b>	<b>Wave 5</b>	<b>Wave 6</b>
Very good understanding	7%	8%	5%	8%
Quite good understanding	20%	21%	22%	22%
Limited understanding	30%	30%	30%	27%
Not very good understanding	17%	15%	18%	19%
No understanding at all	27%	26%	25%	24%

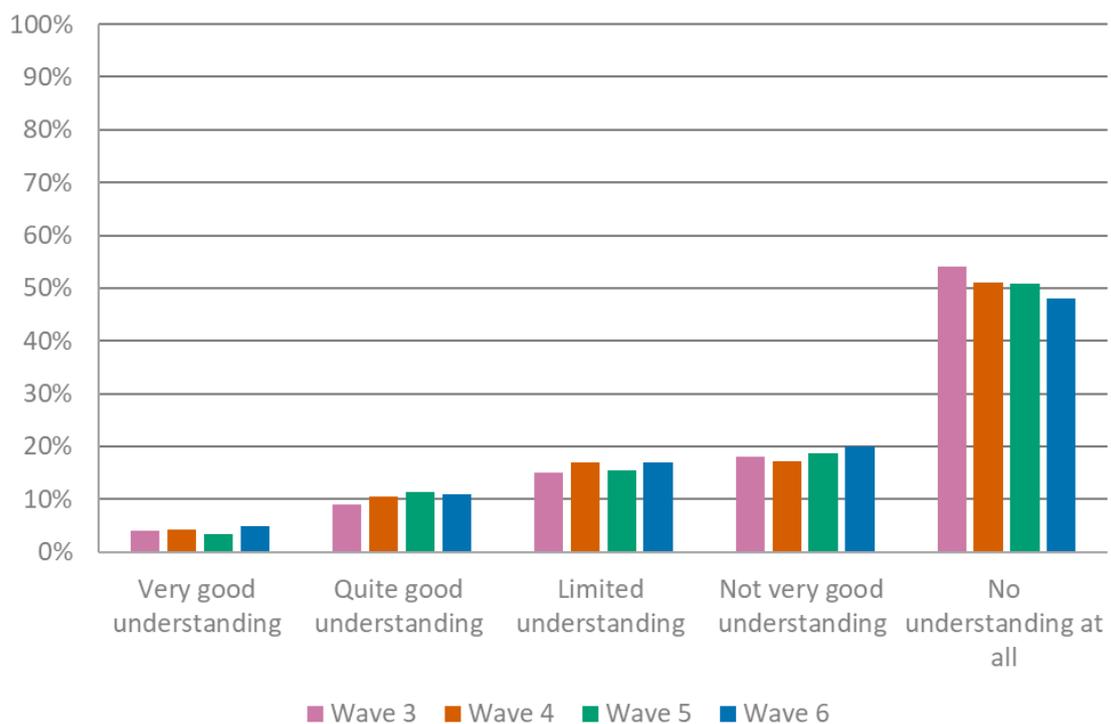
For figure 28, the wave 6 unweighted base is: All employers who indicated that they have at least a limited understanding of apprenticeship end-point assessments in their sector, n=1,602.

As shown in Figure 28, among employers who have at least some understanding of apprenticeship EPAs in their sector, levels of understanding of EPAs were broadly consistent with previous waves. Overall, 11% reported quite good understanding and 5% reported very good understanding of EPAs.

Levels of reported understanding of EPAs increased with organisation size. Roughly one in ten (13%) large employers reported very good understanding, compared with 4% of micro employers. A further three in ten (31%) large employers reported quite good understanding of EPAs.

Public sector employers demonstrated higher levels of understanding of EPAs than both private sector and voluntary sector workers. Approximately two in ten (18%) public sector employers reported very good understanding, compared with 4% of private sector and 5% of voluntary sector employers.

**Figure 28. Results for ‘Please indicate which of the following statements best describes your understanding of end-point assessment of apprenticeships.’ (Employers)**



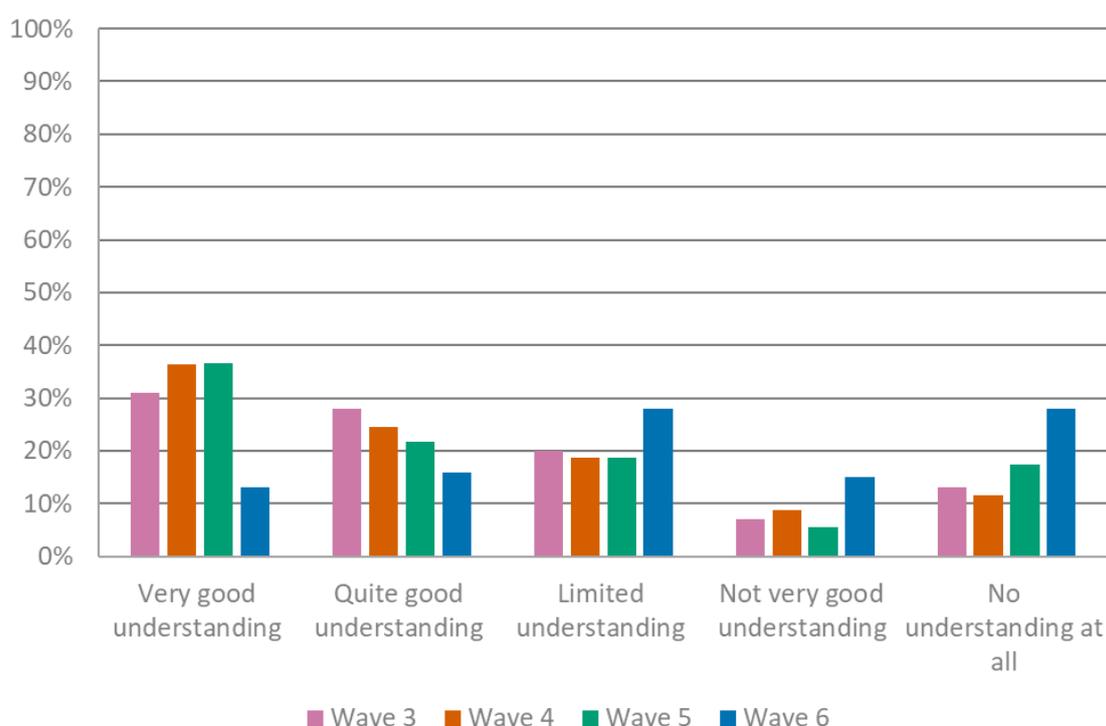
<b>Statement</b>	<b>Wave 3</b>	<b>Wave 4</b>	<b>Wave 5</b>	<b>Wave 6</b>
Very good understanding	4%	4%	3%	5%
Quite good understanding	9%	10%	11%	11%
Limited understanding	15%	17%	16%	17%
Not very good understanding	18%	17%	19%	20%
No understanding at all	54%	51%	51%	48%

For figure 29, the wave 6 unweighted base is: All types of providers, n=494.

As shown in Figure 29, approximately seven in ten providers (72%) reported having some level of understanding of EPAs. Compared with wave 5, there were lower levels of understanding, with approximately three in ten (28%) having reported no understanding at all of EPAs, compared with roughly two in ten (17%) in wave 5.

Looking at provider type, there were higher levels of understanding of apprenticeship EPAs among those from Further Education (FE), Adult and Community Learning (ACL) or Local Authority (LA) establishments than those from Sixth Forms. Approximately three in ten providers from FE, ACL or LA establishments (32%) reported good levels of understanding, while this decreased to 16% of sixth forms.

**Figure 29. Results for ‘Which of the following describes your understanding of the end-point assessment of apprenticeship standards?’ (All types of providers)**



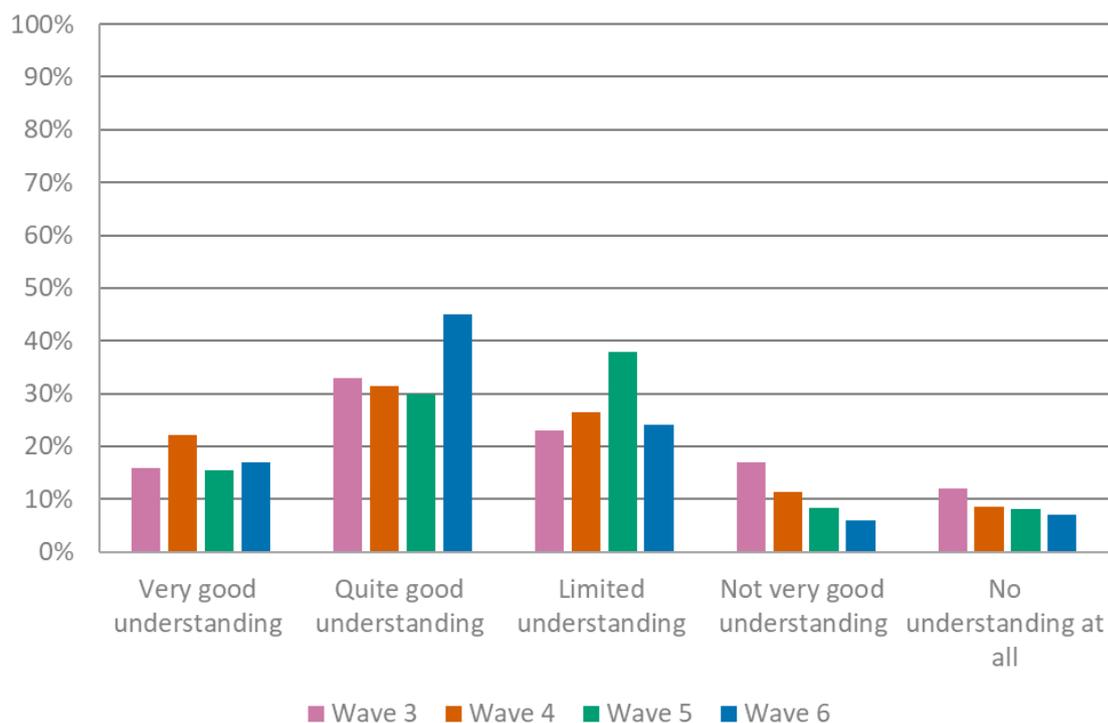
Statement	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
Very good understanding	31%	36%	37%	13%
Quite good understanding	28%	24%	22%	16%
Limited understanding	20%	19%	19%	28%
Not very good understanding	7%	9%	6%	15%
No understanding at all	13%	12%	17%	28%

For figure 30, the wave 6 unweighted base is: All learners who are taking an apprenticeship, n=71.

As shown in Figure 30, roughly six in ten (63%) learners who are taking an apprenticeship had a good understanding of EPAs, an increase in levels of understanding in comparison with wave 5 (45%).

Three in ten (30%) learners who are taking an apprenticeship had limited or not very good understanding of EPAs, while 7% reported having no understanding at all.

**Figure 30. Results for ‘Please tell us which of the following statements best describes your understanding of end-point assessment of apprenticeships’ (Learners)**



Statement	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
Very good understanding	16%	22%	15%	17%
Quite good understanding	33%	31%	30%	45%
Limited understanding	23%	27%	38%	24%
Not very good understanding	17%	11%	8%	6%
No understanding at all	12%	9%	8%	7%

For figure 31, the wave 6 unweighted base is: All employers who indicated that they have at least a limited understanding of EPAs, n=1,602; All types of providers, n=494. As shown in Figure 31, approximately nine in ten (92%) employers reported not knowing the difference between apprenticeship frameworks and the new apprenticeship standards, which was broadly in line with wave 5.

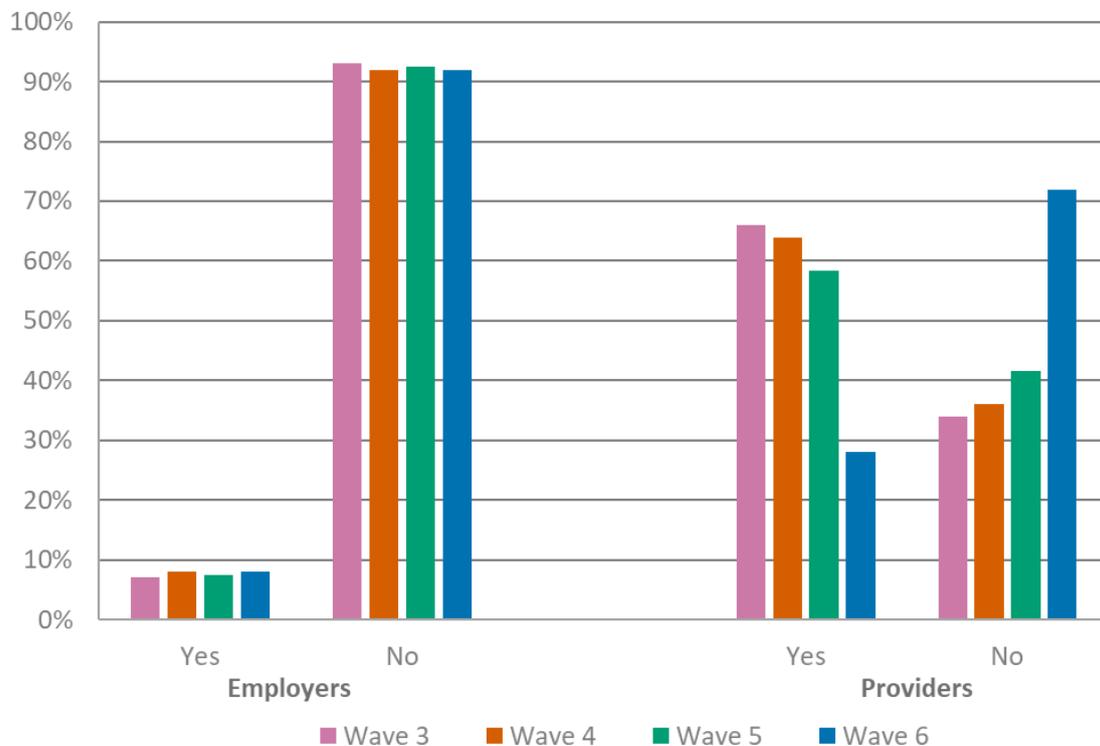
The level of understanding of the difference increased with organisation size. Two in ten (21%) large employers stated that they know the difference between apprenticeship frameworks and the new apprenticeship standards, compared with roughly one in ten (7%) employers from micro-organisations.

Employers from voluntary sector or public sector organisations also had higher levels of understanding than private sector employers. Seventeen percent of voluntary sector employers and 14% of public sector employers reported that they do understand the difference between apprenticeship frameworks and the new apprenticeship standards compared with 7% of private sector employers.

Roughly seven in ten (72%) providers reported not knowing the difference between apprenticeship frameworks and the new apprenticeship standards, which increased from wave 5 (42%).

Eight in ten (83%) providers from sixth forms said they did not understand the difference, compared with seven in ten (68%) providers from FE, ACL or LA establishments.

**Figure 31. Results for ‘Do you understand the difference between apprenticeship frameworks and the new apprenticeship standards?’ (Employers, All types of providers)**



<b>Respondent Type – Yes/No</b>	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
Employers - Yes	7%	8%	7%	8%
Employers - No	93%	92%	93%	92%
Providers - Yes	66%	64%	58%	28%
Providers - No	34%	36%	42%	72%

For figure 32, the wave 6 unweighted base is: All employers who indicated that they have at least a limited understanding of EPAs, n=1,602; All types of providers, n=494; All learners who are undertaking an apprenticeship, n=71.

As shown in Figure 32, eight in ten (80%) employers reported not being aware that EPAs are specific to apprenticeship standards, broadly consistent with wave 5.

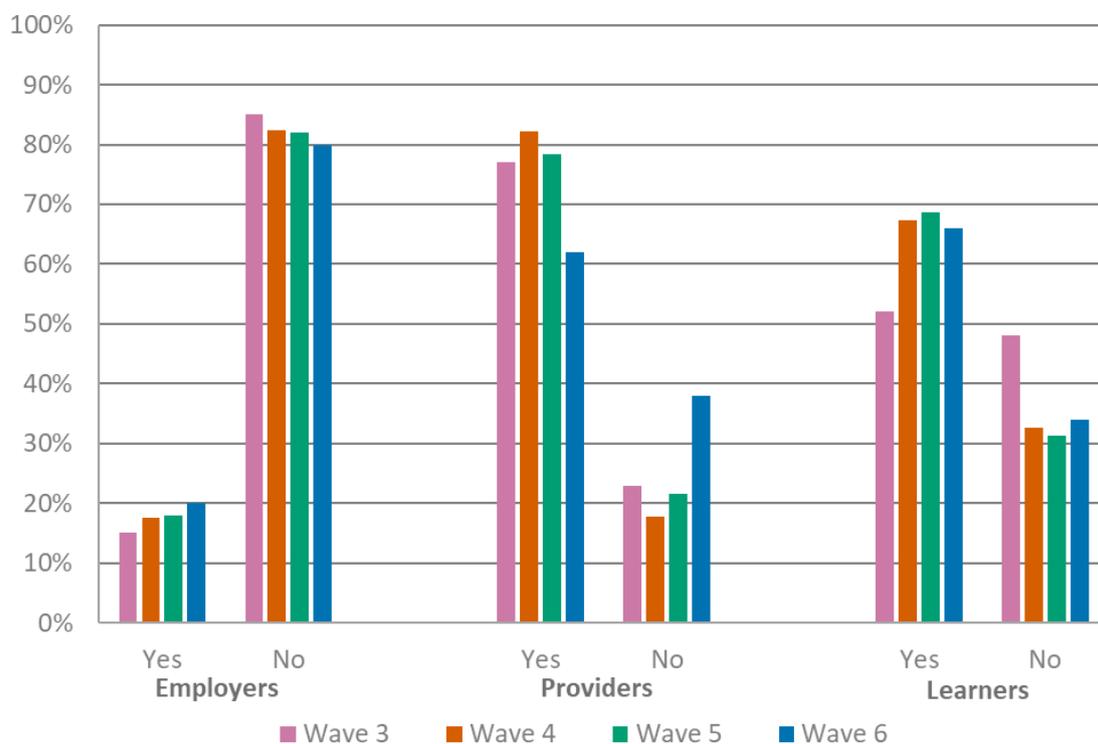
Awareness increased with organisation size, with three in ten (30%) medium employers and roughly four in ten (37%) large employers having said they were aware that EPAs are specific to apprenticeship standards, compared with approximately two in ten (18%) micro employers.

Awareness was higher among providers than employers, as roughly six in ten (62%) providers reported being aware that EPAs are specific to apprenticeship standards compared with 20% of employers. Since wave 5, there was a decrease in the proportion of providers who were aware (78%).

Among providers, awareness was higher among those from FE, ACL or LA establishments than those from sixth forms. Seven in ten providers from FE, ACL or LA establishments (70%) said they were aware, compared with roughly four in ten (37%) from sixth forms.

Sixty-six percent of learners reported being aware that EPAs are specific to apprenticeship standards, broadly consistent with levels of awareness in wave 5.

**Figure 32. Results for ‘Are you aware that End-Point Assessments (EPAs) are specific to apprenticeship standards?’ (Employers, All types of providers, Learners)**



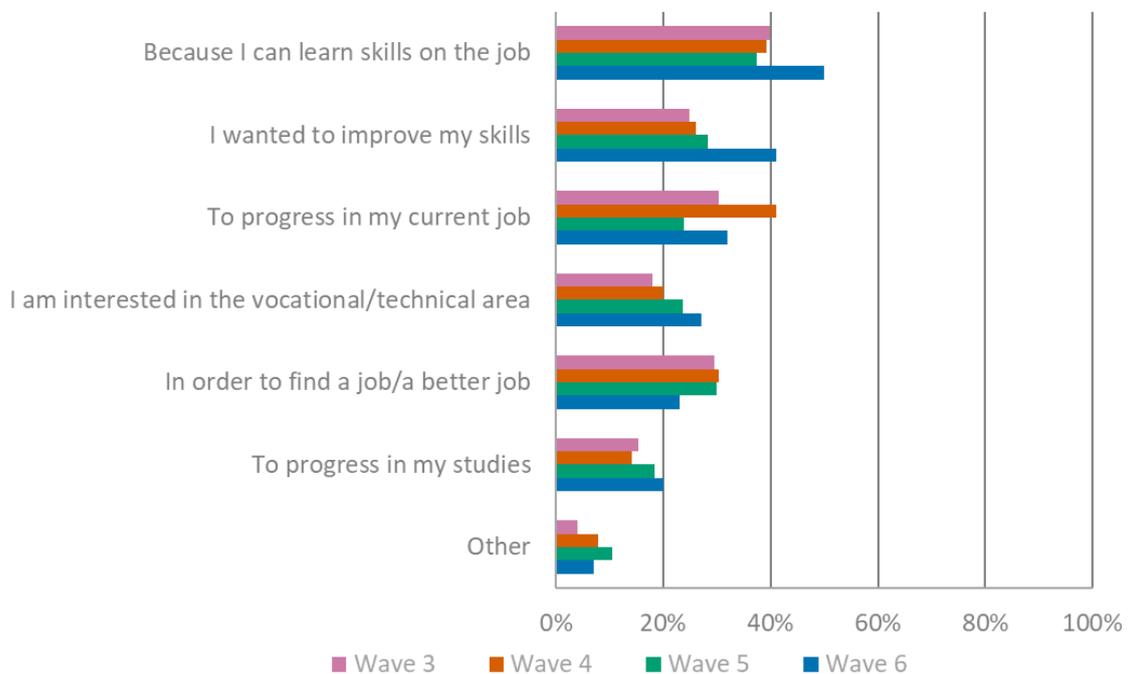
<b>Respondent type – Yes/No</b>	<b>Wave 3</b>	<b>Wave 4</b>	<b>Wave 5</b>	<b>Wave 6</b>
Employers - Yes	15%	18%	18%	20%
Employers - No	85%	82%	82%	80%
Providers - Yes	77%	82%	78%	62%
Providers - No	23%	18%	22%	38%
Learners - Yes	52%	67%	69%	66%
Learners - No	48%	33%	31%	34%

## Why learners chose an apprenticeship

For figures 33 and 34, the wave 6 unweighted base is: All learners who are taking an apprenticeship, n=71.

As shown in Figure 33, it was most common for learners to say they decided to take an apprenticeship because they can learn skills on the job (50%). Following this, four in ten (41%) said it was because they wanted to improve their skills, and roughly three in ten (32%) said it was to progress in their current job. Despite there being apparent differences between wave 5 and 6, these are not statistically significant changes.

**Figure 33. Results for ‘Why did you decide to take an apprenticeship?’ (Learners)**



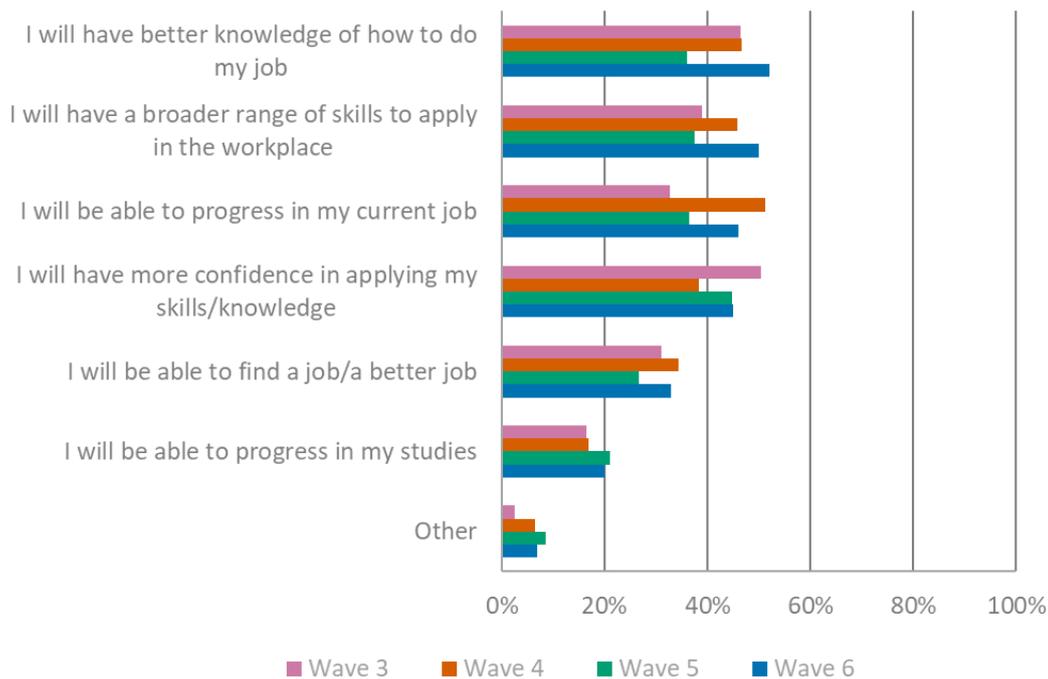
Statement	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
Because I can learn skills on the job	40%	39%	37%	50%
I wanted to improve my skills	25%	26%	28%	41%
To progress in my current job	30%	41%	24%	32%
I am interested in the vocational/technical area	18%	20%	24%	27%
In order to find a job/a better job	30%	30%	30%	23%
To progress in my studies	15%	14%	18%	20%
Other	4%	8%	10%	7%

## Benefits associated with apprenticeships by learners

As shown in Figure 34, approximately half (52%) of learners said they expect to have better knowledge of how to do their job from taking an apprenticeship, an increase from the proportion who had this expectation in wave 5 (36%).

Half (50%) expect to have a broader range of skills to apply in the workplace, followed by 46% who said they expect to be able to progress in their current job, and 45% who said they expect to have more confidence in applying their skills or knowledge.

**Figure 34. Results for ‘Now that you have started learning/have completed learning, what benefits do you expect to get from taking an apprenticeship?’ (Learners)**



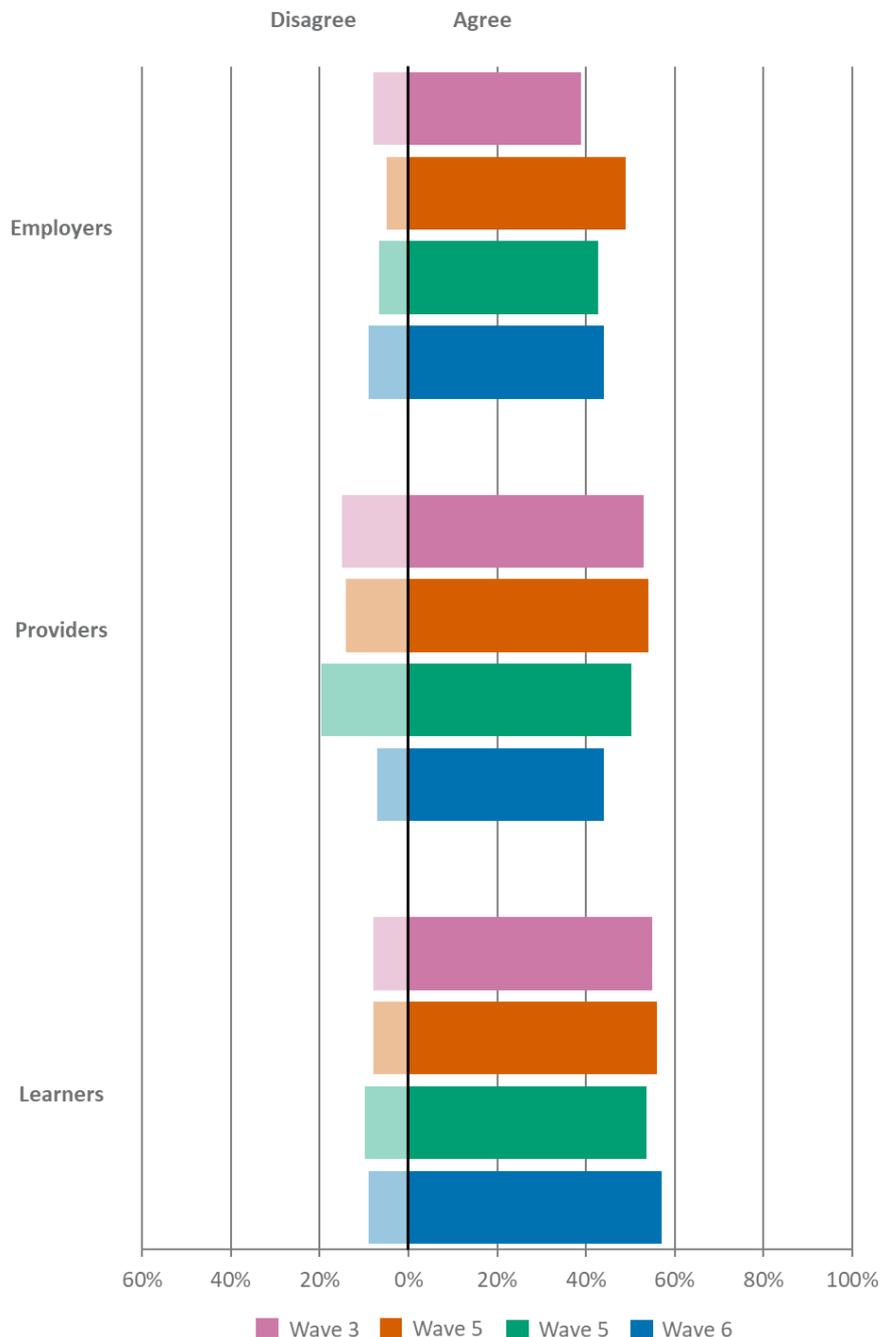
Statement	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
I will have better knowledge of how to do my job	46%	47%	36%	52%
I will have a broader range of skills to apply in the workplace	39%	46%	37%	50%
I will be able to progress in my current job	33%	51%	36%	46%
I will have more confidence in applying my skills/knowledge	50%	38%	45%	45%
I will be able to find a job/a better job	31%	34%	27%	33%
I will be able to progress in my studies	17%	17%	21%	20%
Other	3%	6%	9%	7%

## Perceptions of end-point assessments: value and flexibility

For figure 35, the wave 6 unweighted base is: All employers who have apprentices in their organisation, n=622; All types of providers n=494; Learners, n=508.

Learners displayed higher levels of agreement that they value EPAs than both providers and employers (see Figure 35). Nearly six in ten (57%) of this group said that they value EPAs, broadly consistent with wave 5. Among both providers and employers, 44% reported this, again broadly consistent with wave 5.

**Figure 35. Results for ‘We value end-point assessments of apprenticeships’ (Employers) - ‘I value end-point assessments of apprenticeships’ (All types of providers, Learners)**



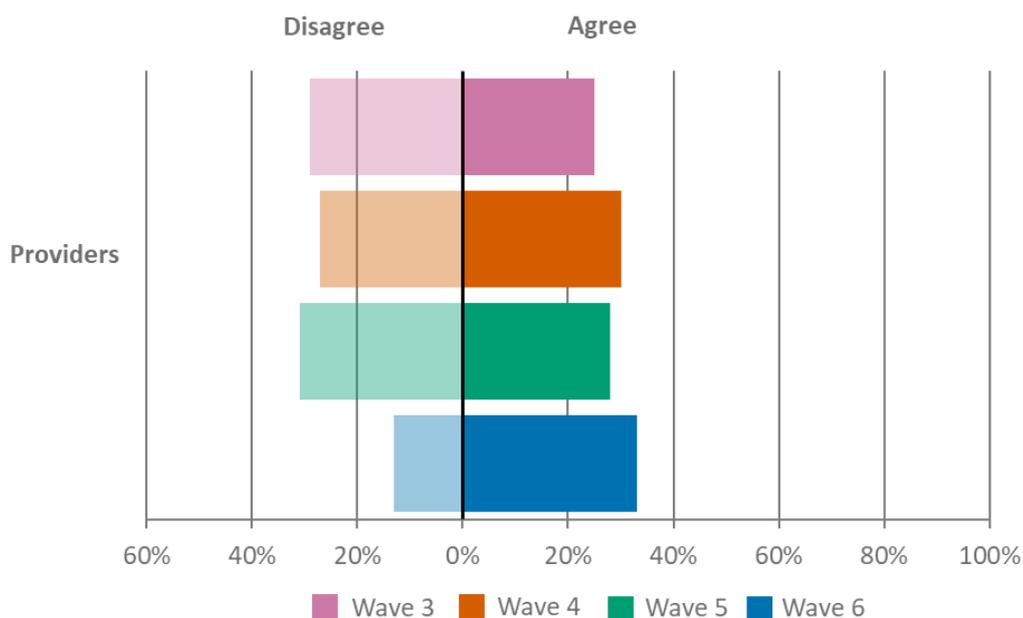
<b>Respondent Type – Agree/Disagree</b>	<b>Wave 3</b>	<b>Wave 4</b>	<b>Wave 5</b>	<b>Wave 6</b>
Employers – agree	39%	49%	43%	44%
Employers – disagree	8%	5%	7%	9%
Providers – agree	53%	54%	50%	44%
Providers – disagree	15%	14%	20%	7%
Learners – agree	55%	56%	54%	57%
Learners – disagree	8%	8%	10%	9%

*Note: Respondents were also allowed to answer "Neither agree nor disagree" or "Don't know", which are not reported here. For this reason, the sum of the proportion who agreed and disagreed do not add up to 100%. Please note that in some cases, large proportions of respondents reported "Neither agree nor disagree" and "Don't know".*

For figure 36, the wave 6 unweighted base is: All types of providers n=494.

As shown in Figure 36, in previous waves, views for the provider group were broadly split over whether or not EPAs offer value for money. However, in wave 6 the proportion disagreeing has decreased from 31% in wave 5 to 13%. By contrast, the proportion agreeing remained broadly consistent: 33% in wave 6 compared with 28% in wave 5.

**Figure 36. Results for ‘End-Point Assessments offer value for money’ (All types of providers)**



Respondent Type – Agree/Disagree	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
Providers – agree	25%	30%	28%	33%
Providers – disagree	29%	27%	31%	13%

*Note: Respondents were also allowed to answer “Neither agree nor disagree” or “Don’t know”, which are not reported here. For this reason, the sum of the proportion who agreed and disagreed do not add up to 100%. Please note that in some cases, large proportions of respondents reported “Neither agree nor disagree” and “Don’t know”.*

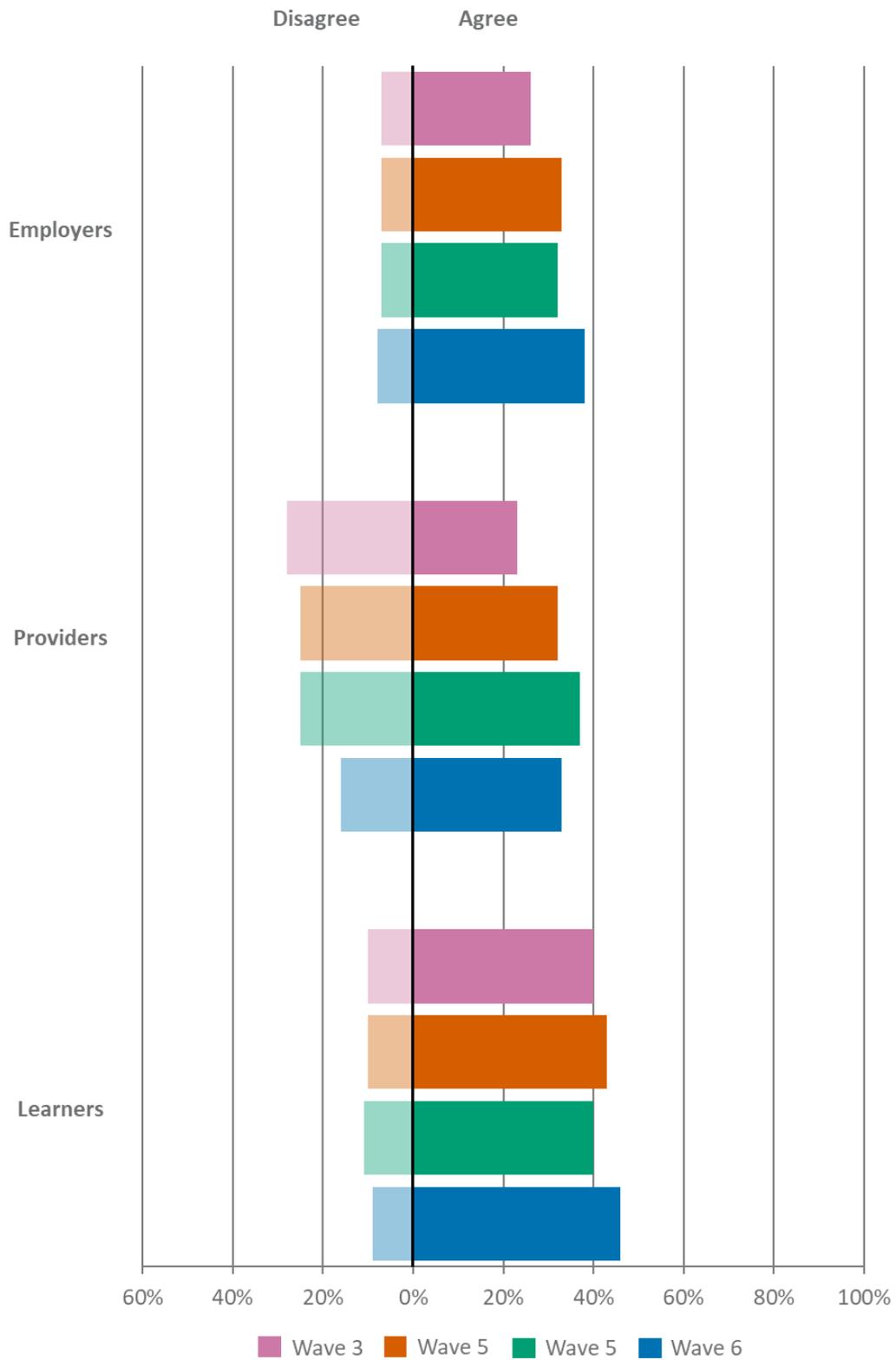
For figure 37, the wave 6 unweighted base is: All employers who indicated that they have at least a limited understanding of apprenticeship EPAs in their organisation, n=585; All types of providers, n=494; All learners n=508.

As shown in Figure 37, 46% of learners and roughly four in ten (38%) employers agreed that the availability of EPAs is sufficiently flexible. This was higher than the proportion of providers agreeing with this (33%). Providers also had higher levels of disagreement (16%) than both learners (9%) and employers (8%).

Among both learners and employers, the proportion agreeing increased from wave 5 (from 40% and 32% respectively).

Among the employer group, large employers (57%) had higher levels of agreement than small (36%) and micro employers (38%) of reporting that the availability of EPAs is sufficiently flexible.

**Figure 37. Results for ‘The availability of end-point assessments is sufficiently flexible’ (Employers and All types of providers and Learners)**



Respondent Type – Agree/Disagree	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
Employers – agree	26%	33%	32%	38%

Employers – disagree	7%	7%	7%	8%
Providers – agree	23%	32%	37%	33%
Providers – disagree	28%	25%	25%	16%
Learners – agree	40%	43%	40%	46%
Learners – disagree	10%	10%	11%	9%

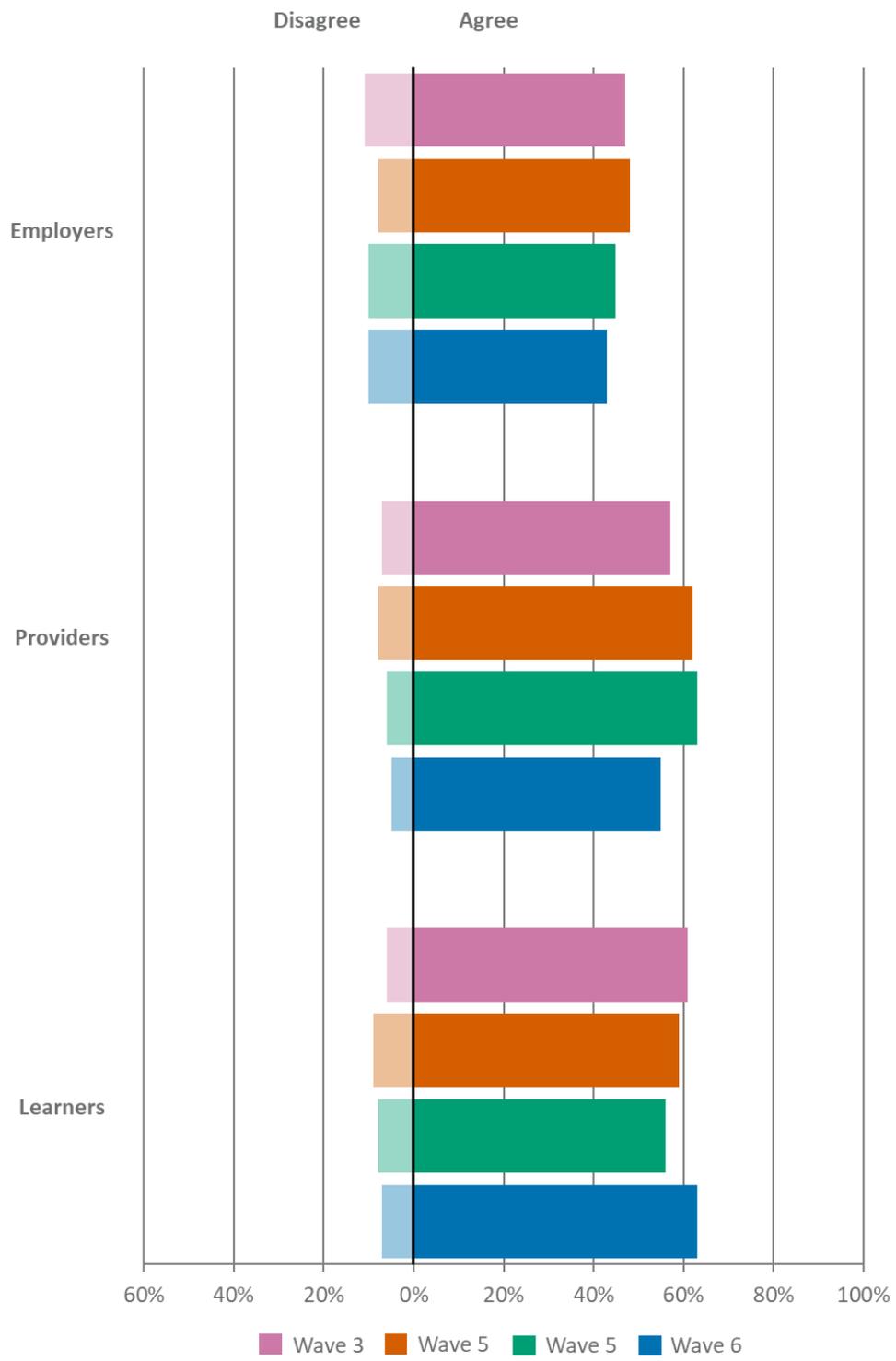
*Note: Respondents were also allowed to answer "Neither agree nor disagree" or "Don't know", which are not reported here. For this reason, the sum of the proportion who agreed and disagreed do not add up to 100%. Please note that in some cases, large proportions of respondents reported "Neither agree nor disagree" and "Don't know".*

## Perceptions of end-point assessments: purpose and future opportunity

For figure 38, the wave 6 unweighted base is: All employers who indicated that they have at least a limited understanding of apprenticeship EPAs in their organisation, n=622; All types of providers, n=494; All learners n=508.

As shown in Figure 38, the proportion of learners agreeing that EPAs test the competence and vocational and technical skills needed by employers increased from 56% in wave 5 to 63% in wave 6. Among providers, whilst the proportion agreeing looked to have fallen (from 63% to 55%), this change was not statistically significant. Employers were the group with lowest agreement that people passing EPAs have the competence and vocational and technical skills needed by employers, with around four in ten (43%) reporting this.

**Figure 38. Results for ‘People completing end-point assessments have the competence and vocational and technical skills needed by my organisation’ (Employers) ‘People passing end-point assessments have the competence and vocational and technical skills needed by employers’ (All types of providers) ‘End-point assessments test the competence and vocational and technical skills needed by employers’ (Learners)**



<b>Respondent Type – Agree/Disagree</b>	<b>Wave 3</b>	<b>Wave 4</b>	<b>Wave 5</b>	<b>Wave 6</b>
Employers – agree	47%	48%	45%	43%
Employers – disagree	11%	8%	10%	10%
Providers – agree	57%	62%	63%	55%
Providers – disagree	7%	8%	6%	5%
Learners – agree	61%	59%	56%	63%
Learners – disagree	6%	9%	8%	7%

*Note: Respondents were also allowed to answer "Neither agree nor disagree" or "Don't know", which are not reported here. For this reason, the sum of the proportion who agreed and disagreed do not add up to 100%. Please note that in some cases, large proportions of respondents reported "Neither agree nor disagree" and "Don't know".*

For figure 39, the wave 6 unweighted base is: All types of providers 494; Learners, 508.

As shown in Figure 39, approximately six in ten (59%) learners said that they understand the purpose of EPAs, broadly consistent with wave 5 findings. This was slightly higher than the proportion (50%) of providers agreeing with this statement, which was also broadly consistent with wave 5.

**Figure 39. Results for ‘Learners understand the purpose of end-point assessment’ (All types of providers) - ‘I understand the purpose of end-point assessments’ (Learners)**



Respondent Type – Agree/Disagree	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
Providers – agree	49%	55%	52%	50%
Providers – disagree	18%	12%	16%	8%
Learners – agree	60%	59%	56%	59%

Learners – disagree	10%	11%	11%	11%
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*Note: Respondents were also allowed to answer "Neither agree nor disagree" or "Don't know", which are not reported here. For this reason, the sum of the proportion who agreed and disagreed do not add up to 100%. Please note that in some cases, large proportions of respondents reported "Neither agree nor disagree" and "Don't know".*

## Employers' reasons for perceptions of End-Point Assessments

Employers who said that they value EPAs (44%) were asked to explain why they think this. Responses suggested that perceptions of the value of EPAs among this group comes from the view that EPAs are a good way of measuring or showing that the learner has reached the required standard. Additionally, responses indicated that it gives employers confidence that the learner has had appropriate training and could dedicate themselves to learning. Typical responses included:

*"They give an objective summary of the outcome of the 'training' and value of the candidate."*

*"It is necessary to ensure that the apprentice has reach the required standard to become a fully qualified operative."*

*"Confirms the level of learning/ability attained through the process."*

*"Shows that someone is willing to put in effort to attain qualifications."*

However, approximately one in ten (9%) employers said that they do not value EPAs. This group were asked to expand on their reasons. For some, this was because they do not hire people with apprenticeships or that they are not relevant for the role or industry. Typical responses included:

*"They are neither necessary nor useful in our company."*

*"We don't use apprenticeships."*

## Section 5: Perceptions of T Levels

All learners were shown a set of questions about T Levels, regardless of whether they studied them or not.

### Key findings

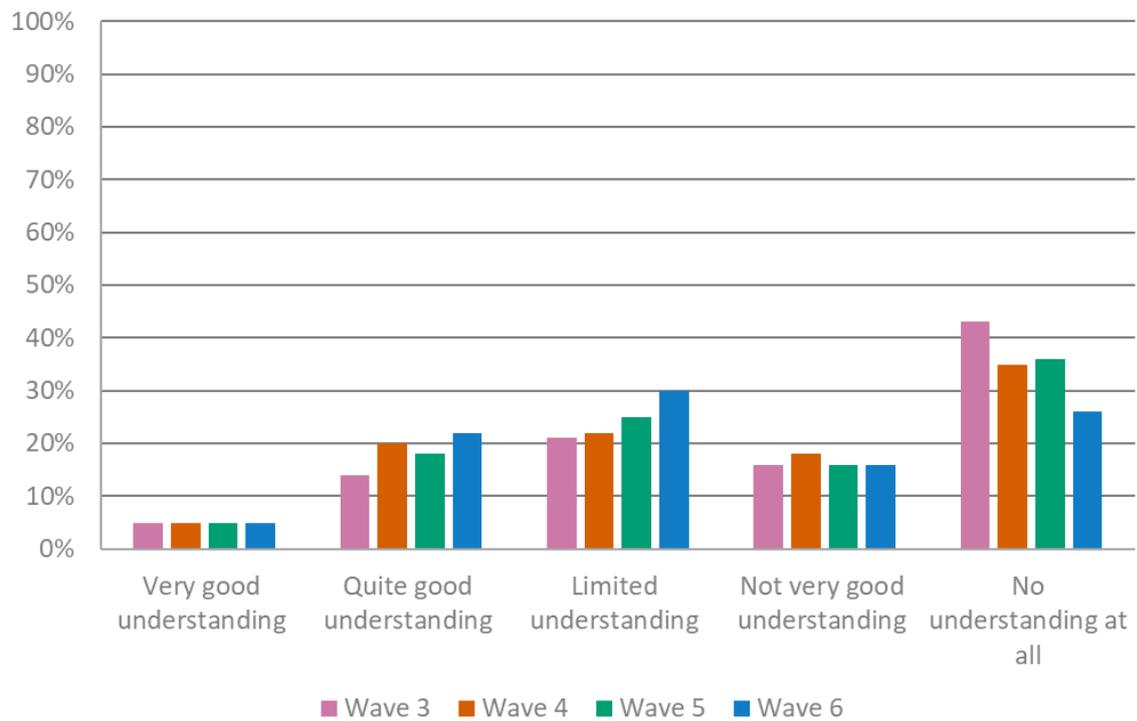
- Approximately three in ten (27%) learners reported having very or quite good understanding of T Levels. Among learners, the proportion who stated that they had no understanding at all saw a gradual decline in comparison with wave 3 (43%).
- In comparison, 14% of employers reported this level of understanding. The proportion who reported no understanding at all decreased in comparison with wave 5 (from 41% to 37%).
- Thirty-four percent of learners agreed that they understand the purpose of T Levels, and similar proportions agreed that they value T Levels (32%) and that they are good preparation for work (37%).

### Understanding of T Levels

For figure 40, the wave 6 unweighted base is all learners, n=508.

In wave 6, approximately three in ten (27%) learners reported having very or quite good understanding of T Levels, broadly consistent with wave 5 (see Figure 40). Forty-seven percent stated that they have limited or not very good understanding of T Levels, compared with 26% who reported having no understanding at all. While levels of understanding were broadly consistent with wave 5, there was a gradual decrease in the proportion who stated that they had no understanding at all in comparison with wave 3.

**Figure 40. Results for ‘Which of the following statements describes your understanding of T Levels?’ (Learners)**



Statement	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
Very good understanding	5%	5%	5%	5%
Quite good understanding	14%	20%	18%	22%
Limited understanding	21%	22%	25%	30%
Not very good understanding	16%	18%	16%	16%
No understanding at all	43%	35%	36%	26%

For figure 41, the wave 6 unweighted base is all employers, n=2,003.

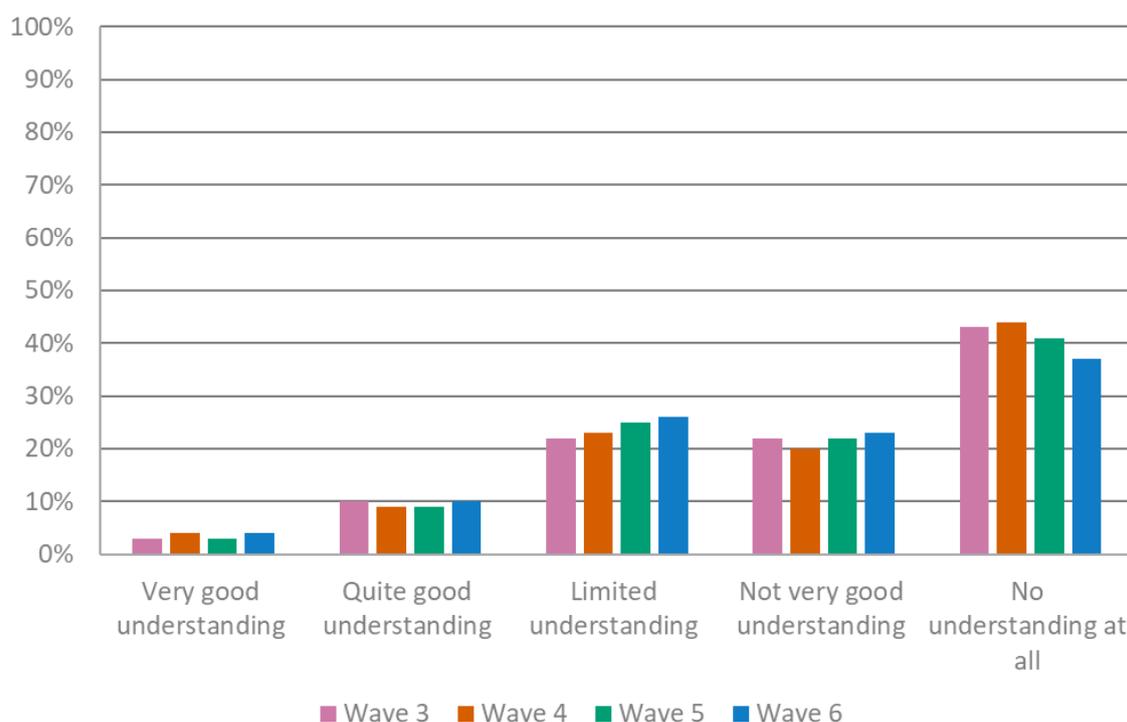
As indicated in Figure 41, the proportion of employers who stated that they have some understanding of T Levels remained consistent with wave 5, with 14% saying they have very or quite good understanding and half (49%) reporting limited or not very good understanding. There was a decrease in the proportion who reported no understanding at all in comparison with wave 5, from 41% to 37%.

A large proportion of this reported lack of understanding was driven by private sector employers, who reported the lowest levels of T Level understanding; 38% reported no understanding at all compared with 26% of voluntary sector employers and 19% of public sector employers.

Large employers had the highest reported levels of T Levels understanding, with 34% saying that their understanding was quite or very good. Meanwhile, micro employers had the lowest rates of understanding of any group – with four in ten (40%) reporting no understanding at all compared with only one in ten (12%) of large employers. However, this constitutes a decrease in the proportion of micro employers reporting no understanding at all in comparison with wave 5 (45%), indicating that understanding has slightly improved among this group since last year. Generally, however, understanding of T Levels was greater amongst larger employers than smaller employers.

Comparatively, employers reported less overall understanding of T Levels than learners; 14% of employers reported very or quite good understanding, compared with nearly three in ten (27%) learners. Correspondingly, employers (37%) displayed higher levels of no understanding at all than learners (26%).

**Figure 41. Results for ‘Please indicate your level of understanding about the four types of qualifications listed below.’ – T Levels or the technical qualifications within T Levels (Employers)**



<b>Statement</b>	<b>Wave 3</b>	<b>Wave 4</b>	<b>Wave 5</b>	<b>Wave 6</b>
Very good understanding	3%	4%	3%	4%
Quite good understanding	10%	9%	9%	10%
Limited understanding	22%	23%	25%	26%
Not very good understanding	22%	20%	22%	23%
No understanding at all	43%	44%	41%	37%

## Perceptions of T Levels

For figure 42, the wave 6 unweighted base is all learners, n=508.

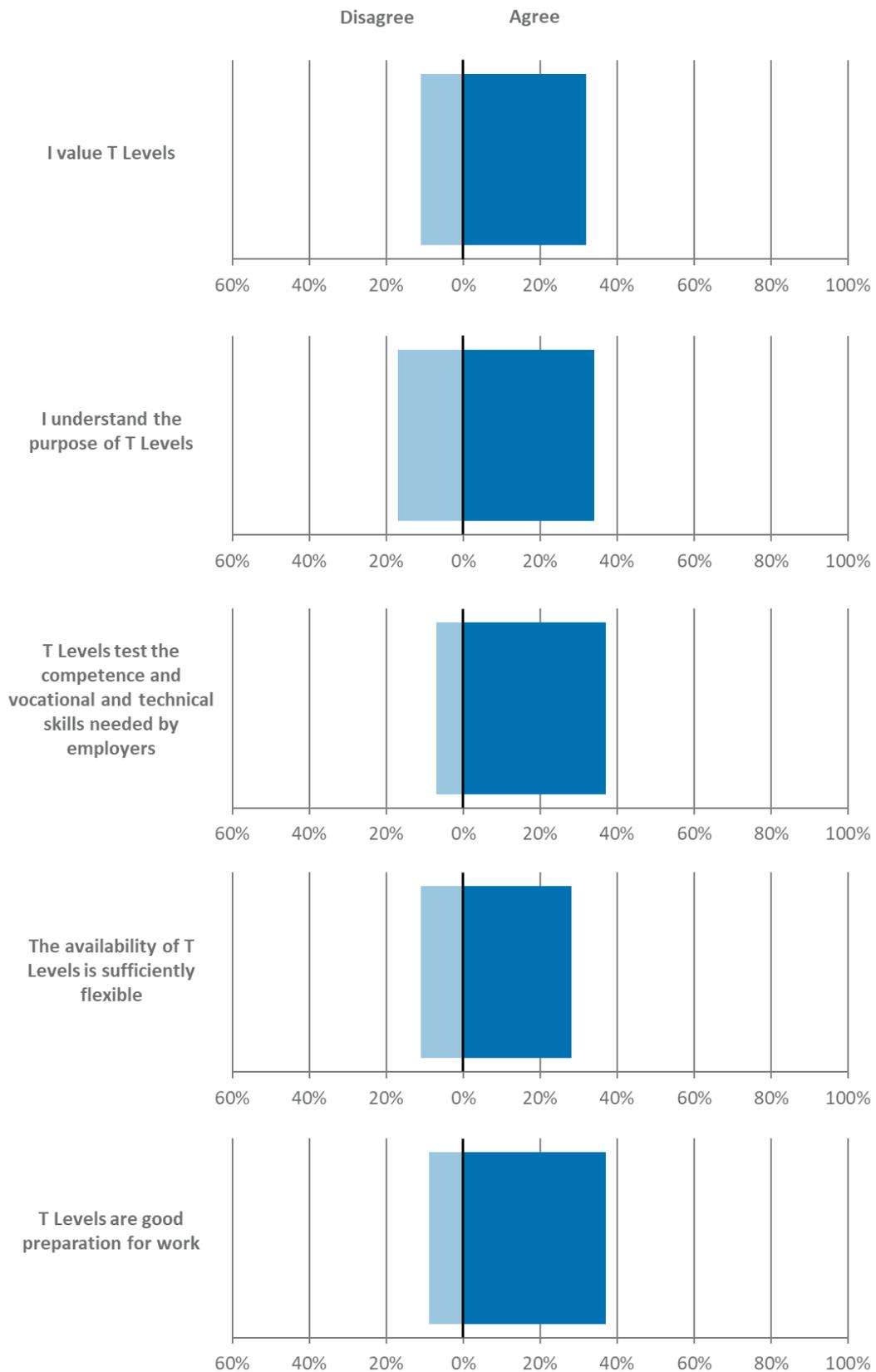
Learners were presented with five statements about T Levels, and for each statement there were relatively low levels of agreement (see Figure 42). This was broadly consistent with wave 5 and continued to be due to high proportions of people who answered 'don't know'.

The highest proportion of disagreement was associated with understanding the purpose of T Levels, with 17% who stated this. However, compared with wave 5 when the levels of agreement (23%) and disagreement (20%) were broadly similar, in wave 6 the gap between levels of agreement (34%) and disagreement (17%) had widened, predominantly due to increased levels of agreement.

The statement with the highest levels of agreement remained 'T Levels test the competence and vocational and technical skills needed by employers', with nearly four in ten (37%) agreeing. However, those aged under 19 had increased levels of disagreement (10%) with this statement compared with wave 5 (6%).

In wave 6, those aged under 19 (44%) and aged 19 to 24 (38%) reported an increased understanding of the purpose of T Levels, while just those under 19 had an increased belief that 'the availability of T Levels is sufficiently flexible' (31%). Those aged 25 and over (29%) reported increased rates of valuing T Levels in comparison with wave 5 (21%).

**Figure 42. Results for ‘To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about T Levels?’ (Learners)**



Note: The data shown in this chart is for wave 6 only.

<b>I value T Levels</b>	Wave 6
Agree	32%
Disagree	11%

<b>I understand the purpose of T Levels</b>	Wave 6
Agree	34%
Disagree	17%

<b>T Levels test the competence and vocational and technical skills needed by employers</b>	Wave 6
Agree	37%
Disagree	7%

<b>The availability of T Levels is sufficiently flexible</b>	Wave 6
Agree	28%
Disagree	11%

<b>T Levels are good preparation for work</b>	Wave 6
Agree	37%
Disagree	9%

Note: Respondents were also allowed to answer "Neither agree nor disagree" or "Don't know", which are not reported here. For this reason, the sum of the proportion who agreed and disagreed do not add up to 100%. Please note that in some cases, large proportions of respondents reported "Neither agree nor disagree" and "Don't know".

## Section 6: Clarity regarding industry relevant qualifications

### Key findings

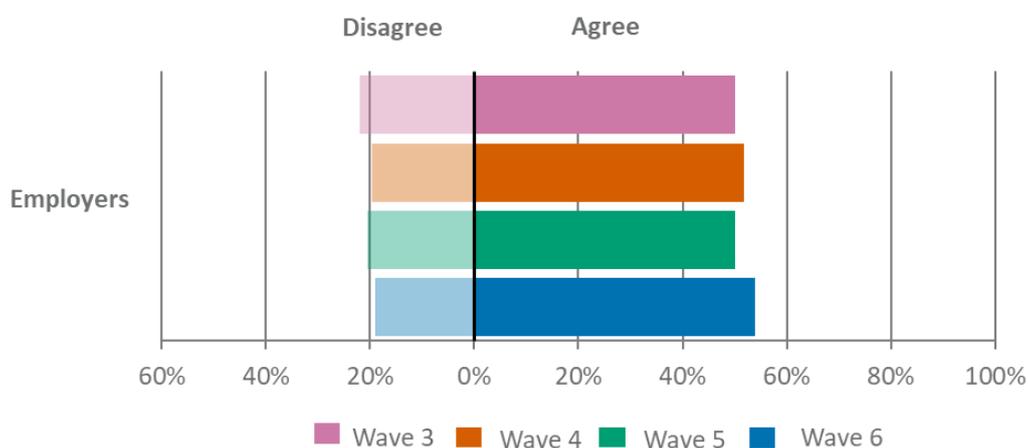
- Over half (54%) employers said it is clear which qualifications are relevant to their organisation, an increase on wave 5 (50%). This change was driven by an increase in the proportion of micro employers (52%) and private sector employers (54%) agreeing with this statement.
- Two thirds (66%) of learners reported that it is clear to them which qualifications are relevant to their needs. This was broadly in line with wave 5 (63%).

For figure 43, the wave 6 unweighted base is: All employers, n=2,003.

As shown in Figure 43, wave 6 saw an increase in the proportion of employers who stated it is clear which qualifications are relevant to their organisation, with 54% agreeing compared with half (50%) in wave 5. Meanwhile, the proportion who disagreed (19%) remained consistent with wave 5.

This change was driven by an increase in the proportion of micro employers (52%) and private sector employers (54%) who reported higher levels of agreement in wave 6 compared with wave 5 (micro 48%, private sector 50%, respectively). These two findings are somewhat connected by the fact that micro employers tend to be within the private sector.

**Figure 43. Results for ‘It is clear which qualifications are relevant to my organisation’ (Employers)**



Respondent Type – Agree/Disagree	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
Employers – agree	50%	52%	50%	54%
Employers – disagree	22%	20%	20%	19%

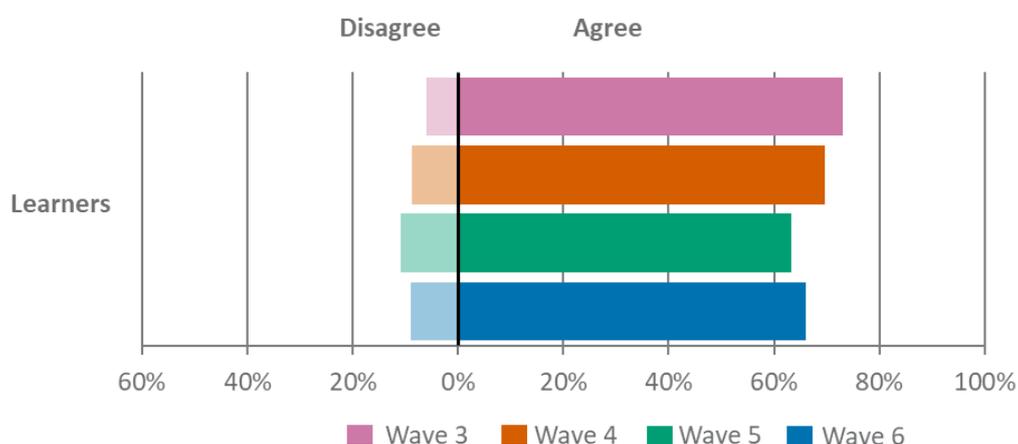
Note: Respondents were also allowed to answer "Neither agree nor disagree" or "Don't know", which are not reported here. For this reason, the sum of the proportion who agreed and disagreed do not add up to 100%. Please note that in some cases, large proportions of respondents reported "Neither agree nor disagree" and "Don't know".

For figure 44, the wave 6 unweighted base is: All learners, 508.

Sixty-six percent of learners stated that it is clear which qualifications are relevant to their needs, with one in ten (9%) who said it is not (see Figure 44). This was broadly in line with reported rates in wave 5.

There were higher levels of agreement among those aged 19 to 24 in wave 6 (73%) compared with wave 5 (56%).

**Figure 44. Results for 'It is clear which qualifications are relevant to my needs' (Learners)**



Respondent Type – Agree/Disagree	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
Learners – agree	73%	70%	63%	66%
Learners – disagree	6%	9%	11%	9%

Note: Respondents were also allowed to answer "Neither agree nor disagree" or "Don't know", which are not reported here. For this reason, the sum of the proportion who agreed and disagreed do not add up to 100%. Please note that in some cases, large proportions of respondents reported "Neither agree nor disagree" and "Don't know".

## Section 7: Use of qualifications for recruitment and training

### Key findings

- Relevant work experience was seen as essential to approximately three in ten employers when recruiting to skilled and supervisory roles (33%) and professional and managerial roles (31%). This was broadly in line with wave 5.
- For employers recruiting for professional and managerial roles, relevant work experience was considered equally as essential as having a degree or equivalent level 6 qualification (31%). Employers selected a degree or equivalent qualification as essential in higher proportions for professional/managerial roles than for skilled/supervisory roles (14%) and entry level/admin roles (7%). These trends were also broadly consistent with wave 5.
- Twenty-four percent of employers reported that all or most training at their organisation typically results in a qualification for people in entry level/admin roles. This was slightly lower than for professional/managerial roles (29%) and skilled/supervisory roles (30%). This was broadly consistent with wave 5.
- In line with wave 5, 35% of employers stated that training at their organisation had led to a vocational or technical qualification.
- When deciding which qualification to offer, relevance to their organisation (65%) remained the most important factor reported by employers, while approximately four in ten (37%) also mentioned the qualification being recognised or valued in their sector as a factor to consider. These findings were broadly consistent with wave 5.
- The reasons employers most commonly gave for not having arranged or funded training that led to a vocational qualification, apprenticeship or technical qualification were that there was no need for them (35%) and that they do not have any apprentices in their organisation (34%). This was consistent with wave 5.

### Qualifications deemed essential at different occupational levels

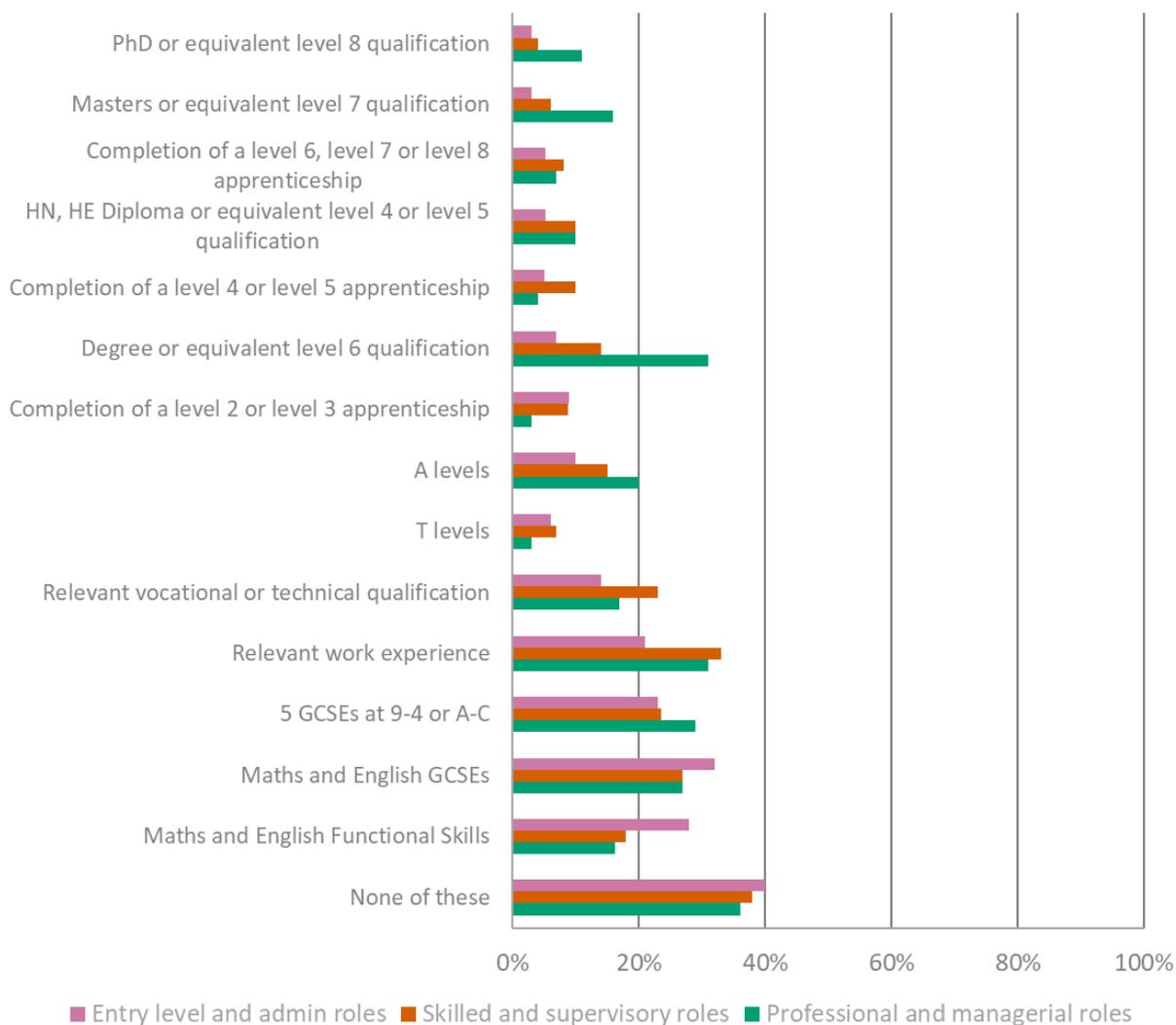
For figure 45, the unweighted base for wave 6 is: All employers, n=2,003.

As shown in Figure 45, relevant work experience was seen as essential to approximately three in ten employers when recruiting to skilled and supervisory roles (33%) and professional and managerial roles (31%). For employers recruiting for professional and managerial roles, this was considered the most essential along with having a degree or equivalent level 6 qualification (31%). Employers selected a degree or equivalent qualification as essential in higher proportions for professional/managerial roles than for skilled/supervisory roles (14%) and entry level/admin roles (7%). This trend was also mirrored when it came to having a Masters degree or equivalent level 7 qualification, with 16% of professional/managerial roles stating it as essential, compared with skilled/supervisory roles (6%) and entry/admin roles (3%). This trend was broadly in line with wave 5.

There was an increase in wave 6 in the proportion of medium employers selecting a PhD or equivalent level 8 qualification (4%) as essential since waves 4 and 5 (both 1%) for entry level and admin roles.

Maths and English GCSEs (32%) were considered the most essential for employers recruiting to entry level/admin roles, closely followed by Maths and English Functional Skills (28%). These results were consistent with findings from wave 5.

**Figure 45. Results for ‘When recruiting new employees, are any of the following essential for the following types of roles’ (Employers)**



**Note: the data shown in this chart is for wave 6 only.**

Statement	Professional and managerial roles	Skilled and supervisory roles	Entry level and admin roles
PhD or equivalent level 8 qualification	11%	4%	3%
Masters or equivalent level 7 qualification	16%	6%	3%
Completion of a level 6, level 7 or level 8 apprenticeship	7%	8%	5%
HN, HE Diploma or equivalent level 4 or level 5 qualification	10%	10%	5%
Completion of a level 4 or level 5 apprenticeship	4%	10%	5%
Degree or equivalent level 6 qualification	31%	14%	7%

Completion of a level 2 or level 3 apprenticeship	3%	9%	9%
A levels	20%	15%	10%
T-levels	3%	7%	6%
Relevant vocational or technical qualification	17%	23%	14%
Relevant work experience	31%	33%	21%
5 GCSEs at 9-4 or A-C	29%	24%	23%
Maths and English Functional Skills	16%	18%	28%
Maths and English GCSEs	27%	27%	32%
None of these	36%	38%	40%

For figures 46, 47 and 48, the wave 6 unweighted base is: Employers who have arranged or funded training for their employees in the last 12 months, n=862.

Across the differing levels of job roles, employers stated that all or most training typically leads to a qualification in similar proportions, in line with wave 5 (see Figure 46). For those in entry level/admin roles, 24% of employers reported that all or most training typically results in a qualification, compared with three in ten for professional/managerial roles (29%) and skilled/supervisory roles (30%). A similar proportion of employers also reported that only some training leads to a qualification in all levels of roles, with three in ten stating this for professional managerial roles (29%), skilled/supervisory roles (31%), and entry level/admin roles (29%).

There was an increase in the proportion of employers in the private sector who stated that no training led to a qualification for entry level and admin roles (35%) compared with wave 5 (27%).

Across all levels of job roles, micro employers (37% on average) stated in the highest proportions where no training led to a qualification, while this was highest for large employers where most (29% on average) and some (45% on average) training led to a qualification. This was consistent with wave 5.

**Figure 46. Results for ‘Thinking about the training your company has arranged or funded in the last 12 months, how much of it, if any, typically results in a qualification’ (Employers who have arranged or funded training for employees in last 12 months)**



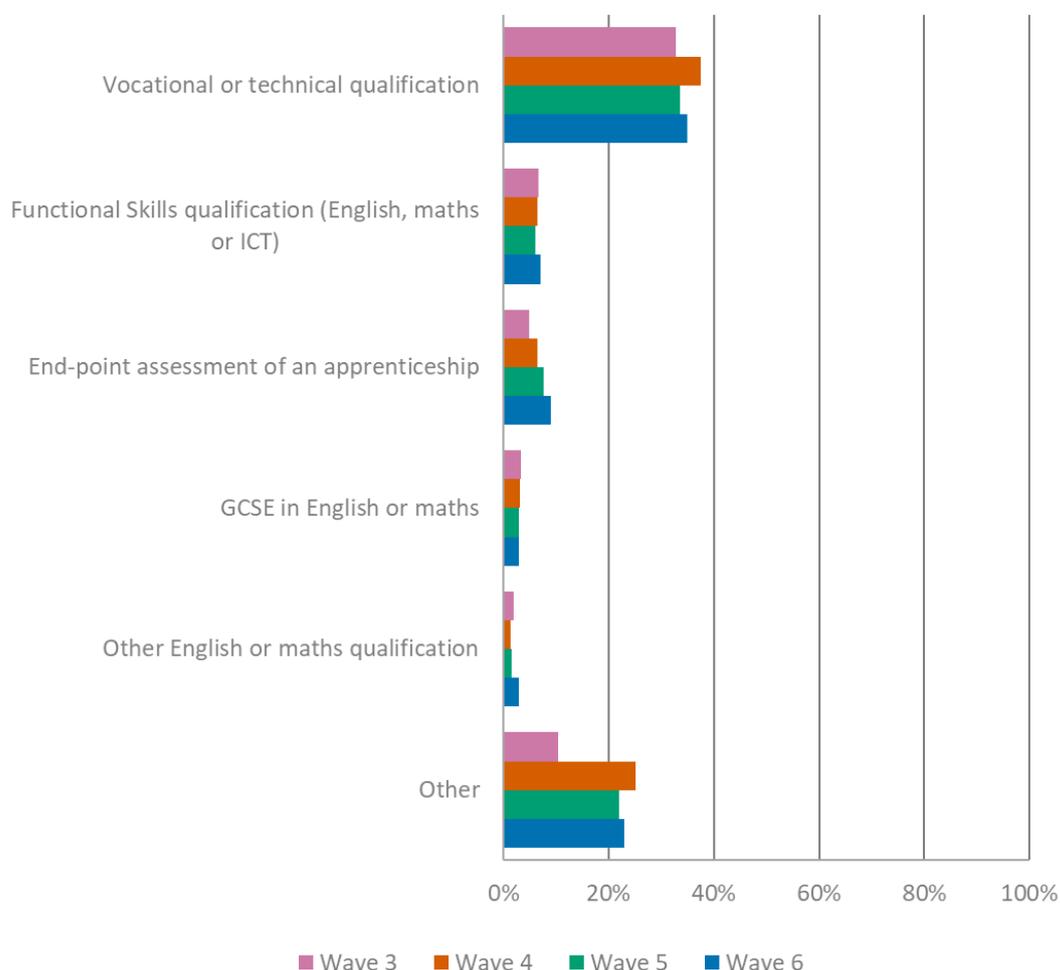
Note: The data shown in this chart is for wave 6 only.

Statement	Professional and managerial roles	Skilled and supervisory roles	Entry level and admin roles
All training leads to a qualification	13%	12%	10%
Most training leads to a qualification	16%	18%	14%
Some training leads to a qualification	29%	31%	29%
No training leads to a qualification	32%	29%	33%
Don't know	9%	10%	13%

As shown in Figure 47, 35% of employers stated that training led to a vocational or technical qualification, and approximately two in ten (23%) selected a different unspecified qualification ('other'). However, notably, a high proportion (34%) were uncertain and stated that they did not know if their organisation's training led to a qualification or not. This was consistent with wave 5.

Also broadly in line with wave 5, large employers reported higher rates of all qualifications or outcomes (except 'other') than all other organisation sizes, while public sector employers (12%) stated GCSE in English or maths at higher levels than both private sector (3%) and voluntary sector (2%) employers.

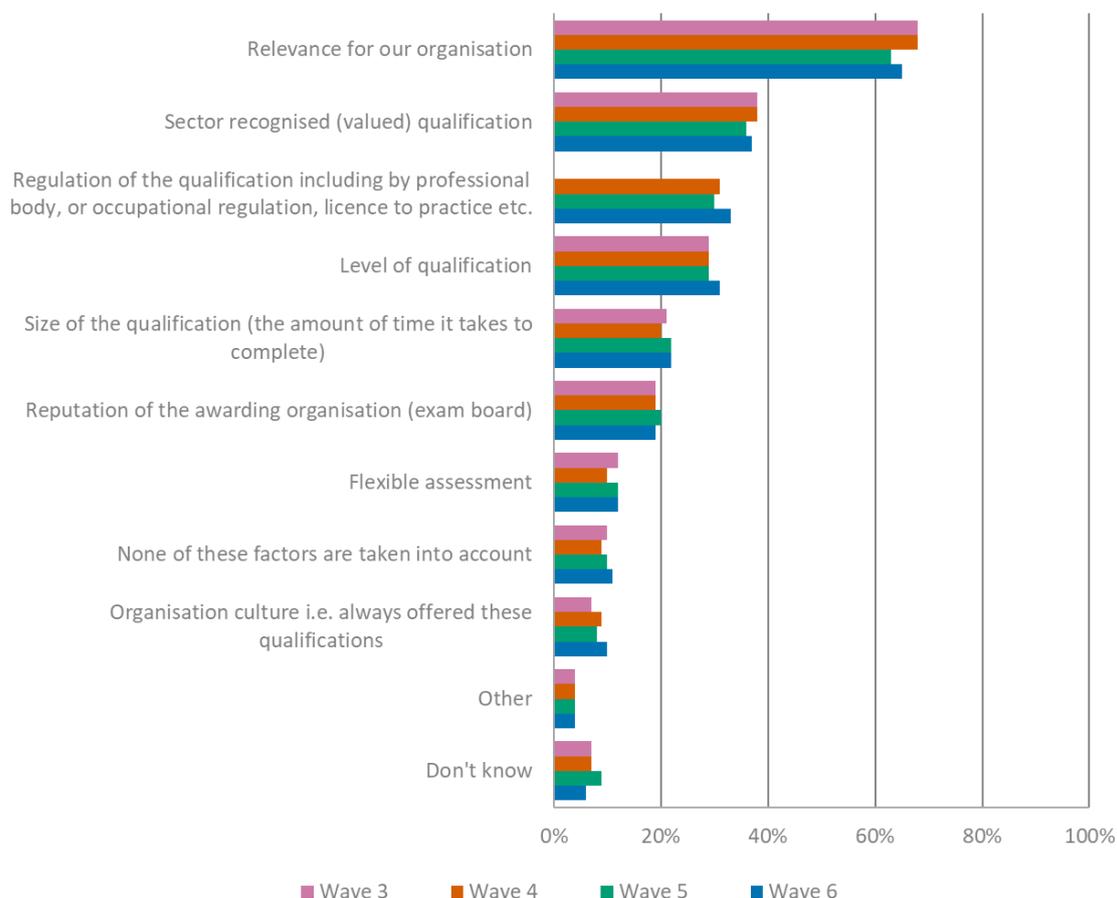
**Figure 47. Results for ‘Has any of the training your organisation has arranged or funded in the last 12 months led to any of the following?’ (Employers who have arranged or funded training for employees in last 12 months)**



Statement	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
Vocational or technical qualification	33%	38%	34%	35%
Functional Skills qualification (English, maths or ICT)	7%	6%	6%	7%
End-point assessment of an apprenticeship	5%	6%	8%	9%
GCSE in English or maths	3%	3%	3%	3%
Other English or maths qualification	2%	1%	2%	3%
Other	10%	25%	22%	23%

When deciding which qualification to offer, relevance to their organisation (65%) remained the most important factor reported by employers (see Figure 48). Roughly four in ten (37%) also mentioned that the qualification being recognised or valued in their sector was a factor to consider. One in ten (11%) said that none of the factors listed were taken into account when deciding which qualifications to offer employees. These findings were broadly consistent with wave 5.

**Figure 48. Results for ‘Can you please indicate which of the following factors are taken into account when your organisation decides which qualifications to offer its employees?’ (Employers who have arranged or funded training for employees in last 12 months)**



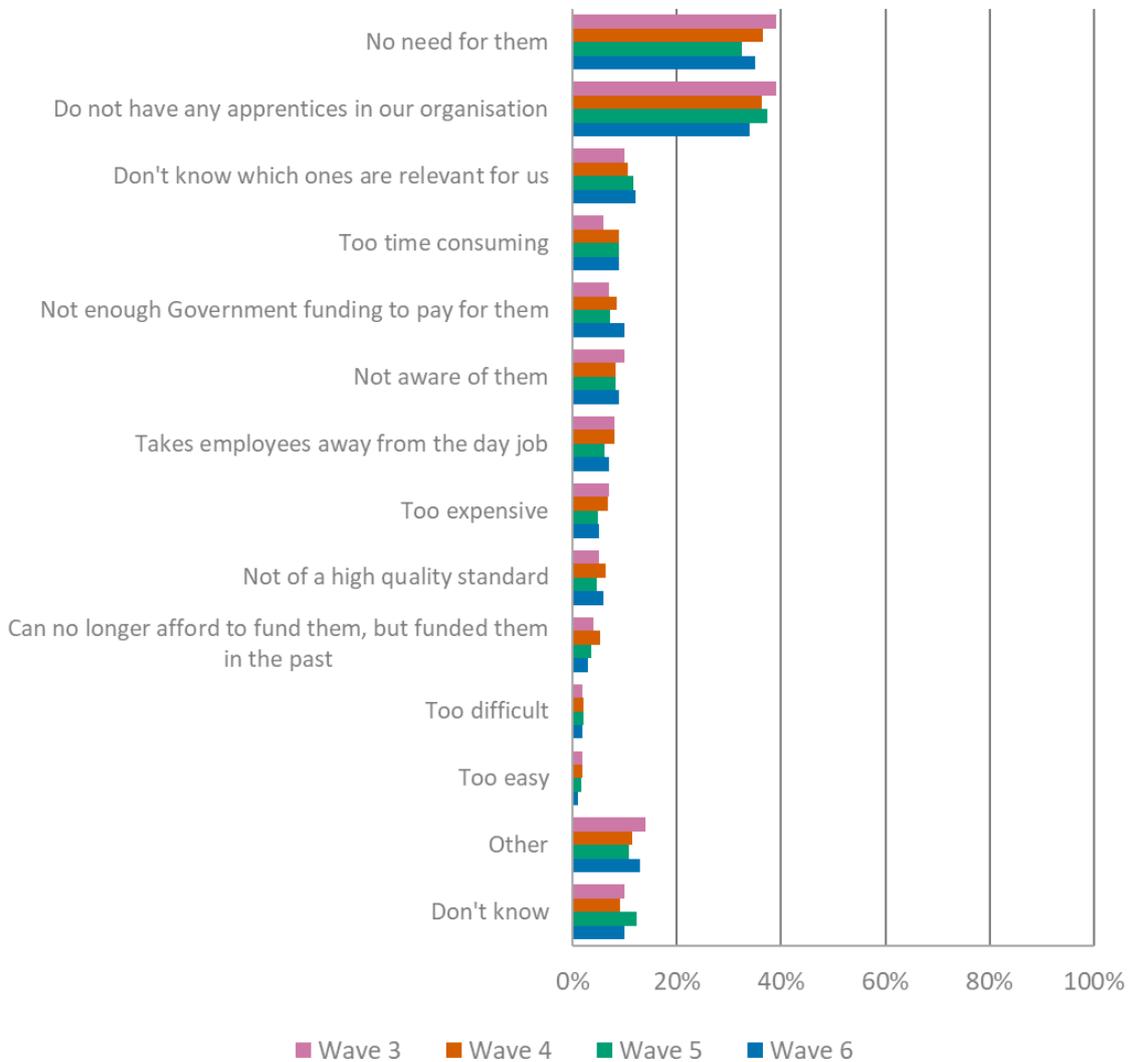
Statement	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
Relevance for our organisation	68%	68%	63%	65%
Sector recognised (valued) qualification	38%	38%	36%	37%
Level of qualification	29%	29%	29%	31%
Size of the qualification (the amount of time it takes to complete)	21%	20%	22%	22%
Reputation of the awarding organisation (exam board)	19%	19%	20%	19%
Flexible assessment	12%	10%	12%	12%
Organisation culture i.e. always offered these qualifications	7%	9%	8%	10%
Regulation of the qualification including by professional body, or occupational regulation, licence to practice etc.	0%	31%	30%	33%
Other	4%	4%	4%	4%
Don't know	7%	7%	9%	6%
None of these factors are taken into account	10%	9%	10%	11%

For figure 49, the wave 6 unweighted base is: Employers who arranged or funded training that did not lead to a vocational or technical qualification or EPA of an apprenticeship, n=793.

Employers who said that they had not arranged or funded training that led to a vocational qualification, an apprenticeship or technical qualification were asked why that was. Consistent with wave 5, the most commonly cited reasons were that there was no need for them (35%) and that they do not have any apprentices in their organisation (34%) (see Figure 49). Approximately one in ten said that they did not know which ones were relevant to them (12%) and that they were too time consuming (9%).

Across all organisation sizes, micro employers (39%) had the highest proportion mentioning that there was no need for them (compared with small 30%, medium 19%, large 15%), while large employers had the highest rates of stating they were too expensive (10%) compared with micro (5%), small (5%), and medium (9%) employers.

**Figure 49. Results for ‘Can you please say why your organisation hasn’t arranged or funded training that led to a vocational or technical qualification and/or apprenticeship?’ (Employers who have arranged or funded training for employees in last 12 months which has not led to Vocational/technical qualification or End-point assessment of an apprenticeship)**



Statement	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
Too easy	2%	2%	2%	1%
Too difficult	2%	2%	2%	2%
Can no longer afford to fund them, but funded them in the past	4%	5%	4%	3%
Not of a high quality standard	5%	6%	5%	6%
Too time consuming	6%	9%	9%	9%
Too expensive	7%	7%	5%	5%
Not enough Government funding to pay for them	7%	9%	7%	10%

Takes employees away from the day job	7%	8%	6%	7%
Not aware of them	10%	8%	8%	9%
Don't know which ones are relevant for us	10%	11%	12%	12%
Do not have any apprentices in our organisation	39%	36%	37%	34%
No need for them	39%	36%	32%	35%
Other	14%	12%	11%	13%
Don't know	10%	9%	12%	10%

## Annex A: Glossary of Terms

### **Adult and Community Learning (ACL)**

Adult and Community Learning includes a range of community based and outreach learning opportunities, primarily managed and delivered by local authorities and general further education colleges.

### **All provider types**

The scope of the survey sample included providers of all types such as in the following categories: Further Education (FE); Higher Education (HE); private class-based; private work-based; public sector community based; public sector 'other'; schools; voluntary sector education; Independent Training Provider (ITP). ITPs are distinct from other types of Further Education providers as they are 'independent' and not run or directly controlled by the state. In the report the category 'All provider types', may be referred to as the provider group or all types of providers or all providers.

### **Apprenticeship frameworks**

These were developed by sector bodies, primarily focused on qualifications. They were phased out in 2020-21 and replaced by apprenticeship standards. Framework apprenticeships are assessed throughout by completing a unit at a time but there is no endpoint assessment.

### **Apprenticeship standards**

New apprenticeship standards, developed by employers, to show what an apprentice will be doing, and the skills required of them, by job role. Standards are developed by employer groups known as 'trailblazers'. Standards are occupation-focused rather than qualification-led, with the apprentice being assessed through an end-point assessment. The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education ('iFATE'), supports employer groups in the development of apprenticeship standards. iFATE is an employer-led organisation focussed on enabling people of all ages and backgrounds have the opportunity to maximise their potential and contribute to improving social mobility and the UK's productivity.

### **Awarding organisation (AO)**

An organisation recognised by the qualifications' regulators in England, Wales or Northern Ireland to develop, deliver and award qualifications. In England, this includes organisations that are regulated by Ofqual as End Point Assessment Organisations (EPAOs).

### **Organisation size**

Throughout the report organisations are categorised by number of employees into micro (2-9 employees), small (10-49 employees), medium (50-249 employees) and large (250+ employees) organisations.

### **End-point assessment of apprenticeship (EPA)**

End-point assessment (EPA) is an independent assessment that takes place at the end of the apprenticeship training. This is to test that the apprentice is competent in their occupation.

### **Functional Skills Qualifications (FSQ)**

Functional Skills qualifications are available in English, maths and ICT and are available in levels from Entry 1 to Level 2. Functional Skills assessments test the fundamental, applied skills in these subjects for life, learning and work.

It should be noted that reformed Functional Skills qualifications were introduced for first teaching in September 2019. Legacy qualifications are no longer available.

**Vocational & Technical Qualifications (VTQs)**

These normally have a vocational focus and include, amongst others, Technical Qualifications and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). For this report, this term refers to qualifications other than FSQs, EPAs and T Levels.

**Further Education (FE)**

Further education (FE) includes any study after secondary education that's not part of higher education (that is, not taken as part of an undergraduate or graduate degree).

**Local Authorities (LAs)**

Local Authorities (LAs) are responsible for a range of vital services for people and businesses in defined areas, including social care, schools and adult education.

**T Levels**

T Levels are new programmes of study which follow GCSEs and are equivalent to 3 A levels. These 2-year courses, which launched for first teaching from September 2020, have been developed in collaboration with employers and businesses. T Levels offer students a mixture of classroom learning, through a compulsory Technical Qualification and English, maths and digital provision, and 'on-the-job' experience during an industry placement of at least 315 hours (approximately 45 days). Ofqual is responsible for regulating the Technical Qualification component of the T Level. The Institute also has responsibility for managing the development and approval of T Levels.

**Providers**

The scope of the survey sample included providers in the following categories: Further Education (FE); Higher Education (HE); private class-based; private work-based; public sector community based; public sector 'other'; schools; voluntary sector education.