Introduction

This is the fourth survey in this biennial series. A number of changes were made to the questionnaire to reflect changing policy requirements. The study focused on the following areas:

- How to support the pipeline of talent into business
- Employers’ approaches to recruitment
- What employers look for in applicants and recruitment of education leavers
- Employer engagement with work experience
- Staff development and employers’ decisions on this
- Skills initiatives and vocational qualifications
- Employer engagement with and attitudes towards apprenticeships

Employer Perspectives Survey 2016

18,028 interviews achieved

22 minute telephone interviews

With person responsible for training and HR issues

Sites with 2+ employees were eligible

Cover all business sectors of the economy

England: 10,015 interviews
Northern Ireland: 2,007
Scotland: 4,009
Wales: 1,997

Fieldwork carried out between May and August 2016

Questionnaire Coverage

- This is the fourth survey in this biennial series
- A number of changes were made to the questionnaire to reflect changing policy requirements.
- The study focused on the following areas:
  - How to support the pipeline of talent into business
  - Employers’ approaches to recruitment
  - What employers look for in applicants and recruitment of education leavers
  - Employer engagement with work experience
  - Staff development and employers’ decisions on this
  - Skills initiatives and vocational qualifications
  - Employer engagement with and attitudes towards apprenticeships

Produced by IFF Research
Achieved interviews and confidence intervals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Number of interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>UK</strong></td>
<td>1,884,619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>By country</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>1,591,571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>55,104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>150,876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>87,068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>By size of establishment</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>996,002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>411,578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-24</td>
<td>283,116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-49</td>
<td>103,307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-99</td>
<td>51,253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100+</td>
<td>39,363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>By sector</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Sector &amp; Utilities</td>
<td>110,312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>100,752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>170,296</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wholesale &amp; Retail</td>
<td>379,922</td>
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<td>174,736</td>
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<td>135,650</td>
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<td>39,235</td>
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<td>414,047</td>
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<td>Public Admin.</td>
<td>18,940</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>59,052</td>
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<tr>
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<td>135,604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Other</td>
<td>145,073</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the figures presented in this slide pack are subject to a margin of error; typically between 1 and 2 percentage points. The EPS 2016 technical report provides a full breakdown of confidence intervals by key sub-groups.
Survey population: size

% of all establishments

% of all employment

Source: ONS Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR), March 2015
Survey population: sector

% of all establishments

% of all employment

Source: ONS Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR), March 2015

Department for Education

Produced by IFF Research
Employer attitudes

Staff happiness is as important as organisational performance
- 10% Disagree strongly
- 27% Disagree slightly
- 59% Neither agree nor disagree
- 0% Agree slightly
- 0% Agree strongly
- 86% Total agreement

Staff ability to do job is more important than formal qualifications
- 11% Disagree strongly
- 25% Disagree slightly
- 58% Neither agree nor disagree
- 0% Agree slightly
- 0% Agree strongly
- 83% Total agreement

Happy to pay towards training and development
- 7% Disagree strongly
- 6% Disagree slightly
- 21% Neither agree nor disagree
- 22% Agree slightly
- 41% Agree strongly
- 63% Total agreement

Always looking for new opportunities
- 9% Disagree strongly
- 9% Disagree slightly
- 24% Neither agree nor disagree
- 23% Agree slightly
- 33% Agree strongly
- 56% Total agreement

Investing in management skills is a top priority
- 10% Disagree strongly
- 11% Disagree slightly
- 26% Neither agree nor disagree
- 24% Agree slightly
- 28% Agree strongly
- 51% Total agreement

Base: All establishments (18,028)
Entry to work
Employers with vacancies in the past 12 months

UK: 52%
Of employers had vacancies in the last 12 months

Base: All establishments (18,028)

Base: All establishments: England (10,015), Northern Ireland (2,007), Scotland (4,009), Wales (1,997)

Department for Education

Base: All establishments: Education (990), Public Admin. (403), Health & Social Work (2,023), Hotels & Restaurants (1,792), Arts & Other (1,125), Wholesale & Retail (3,933), Manufacturing (1,065), Financial Services (395), Business Services (3,081), Transport & Comms (1,143), Construction (1,212), Primary Sector & Utilities. (866)
Recruitment channels used

- **Word of mouth or personal recommendations**: 79%
- **Placed adverts on your own website using internal resources**: 54%
- **Placed adverts on social media using internal resources**: 46%
- **Another form of paid-for recruitment service, including the press**: 44%
- **Government recruitment service or scheme**: 38%
- **School, college or university job fairs or careers services**: 19%
- **Paid someone to place adverts on your website or social media**: 10%

**Internal resources**
- ANY: 91%
- SOLE: 28%

**External resources**
- ANY: 69%
- SOLE: 6%

Base: All recruiting employers (12,151)
Note: multiple responses were allowed.

“Any recruitment channel” refers to employers who used an internal or external recruitment channel, in conjunction with others. “Sole recruitment channel” refers to those employers who used either internal or external resources as their only method of recruitment.
What employers look for when recruiting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>No value</th>
<th>Small amount of value</th>
<th>Significant</th>
<th>Critical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relevant work experience</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maths &amp; English GCSE</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational qualifications</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic qualifications</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All employers (2016: 18,028, 2014: 18,059)
What employers look for: relevant work experience

**UK: 65%**
felt work experience was critical or significant

Base: All establishments (18,028)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Establishment</th>
<th>% Critical or Significant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 to 4</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 9</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 24</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 49</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 to 99</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100+</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All establishments: 2-4 (4,297), 5-9 (4,290), 10-24 (4,312), 25-49 (2,337), 50-99 (1,250), 100+ (1,542)

Base: All establishments: England (10,015), Northern Ireland (2,007), Scotland (4,009), Wales (1,997)

Base: All establishments: Education (990), Primary Sector & Utilities (866), Construction (1,212), Financial Services (395), Transport & Comms (1,143), Business Services (3,081), Public Admin. (403), Health & Social Work (2,023), Arts & Other (1,125), Manufacturing (1,065), Wholesale & Retail (3,933), Hotels & Restaurants (1,792)

Produced by IFF Research
What employers look for: maths and English

UK: 56% felt maths and English was critical or significant

Base: All establishments (18,028)

Base: All establishments: England (10,015), Northern Ireland (2,007), Scotland (4,009), Wales (1,997)

Base: All establishments: Financial Services (395), Business Services (3,081), Public Admin. (403), Transport & Comms (1,143), Health & Social Work (2,023), Construction (1,212), Wholesale & Retail (3,933), Manufacturing (1,065), Arts & Other (1,125), Primary Sector & Utilities (866), Hotels & Restaurants (1,792)

Produced by IFF Research
What employers look for: vocational qualifications

UK: 49% felt vocational qualifications were critical or significant
Base: All establishments (18,028)

49% 48% 57% 48%

Base: All establishments: Education (990), Health & Social Work (2,023), Primary Sector & Utilities (866), Construction (1,212), Arts & Other (1,125), Transport & Comms (1,143), Public Admin. (403), Business Services (3,081), Financial Services (395), Manufacturing (1,065), Wholesale & Retail (3,933), Hotels & Restaurants (1,792)

UK: 49%
Base: All establishments (18,028)

77%

Base: All establishments: 2-4 (4,297), 5-9 (4,290), 10-24 (4,312), 25-49 (2,337), 50-99 (1,250), 100+ (1,542)

Base: All establishments: England (10,015), Northern Ireland (2,007), Scotland (4,009), Wales (1,997)
What employers look for: academic qualifications

UK: 46% felt academic qualifications were critical or significant

Base: All establishments (18,028)

43% 47% 48% 53% 57% 62%

2 to 4 5 to 9 10 to 24 25 to 49 50 to 99 100+

Base: All establishments: 2-4 (4,297), 5-9 (4,290), 10-24 (4,312), 25-49 (2,337), 50-99 (1,250), 100+ (1,542)

84% 72% 67% 61% 54% 51% 43% 40% 40% 37% 28% 18%

Education Financial Services Public admin. Wholesale & Retail Primary & Secondary schools Hotels & Restaurants

Base: All establishments: Education (990), Financial Services (395), Public Admin. (403), Business Services (3,081), Transport & Comms (1,143), Health & Social Work (2,023), Arts & Other (1,125), Manufacturing (1,065), Construction (1,212), Wholesale & Retail (3,933), Primary Sector & Utilities. (866), Hotels & Restaurants (1,792)

Base: All establishments: England (10,015), Northern Ireland (2,007), Scotland (4,009), Wales (1,997)
Recruitment of young people (aged under 25)

UK: 66%
Of recruiting employers had taken on a young person in the last 12 months

Base: All employers who had recruited (11,501)

- 2 to 4: 53%
- 5 to 9: 62%
- 10 to 24: 71%
- 25 to 49: 79%
- 50 to 99: 85%
- 100+: 90%

Base: All employers who had recruited: 2-4 (1,076), 5-9 (2,419), 10-24 (3,300), 25-49 (2,082), 50-99 (1,156), 100+ (1,468)

Base: All establishments: England (10,015), Northern Ireland (2,007), Scotland (4,009), Wales (1,997)

Department for Education

Produced by IFF Research
Channels used to recruit young people

External resources

- ANY
  - Word of mouth or personal recommendations: 61%
  - Placed adverts on your own website using internal resources: 38%
  - Placed adverts on social media using internal resources: 26%
  - Another form of paid-for recruitment service, including the press: 21%
  - School, college or university job fairs or careers services: 13%
  - Government recruitment service or scheme: 10%
  - Paid someone to place adverts on your website or social media: 9%

- SOLE

Internal resources

- ANY
  - 78%

- SOLE
  - 51%

Base: All establishments that have taken on a young person (8,302)

Note: multiple responses were allowed.

“Any recruitment channel” refers to employers who used an internal or external recruitment channel, in conjunction with others. “Sole recruitment channel” refers to those employers who used either internal or external resources as their only method of recruitment.

Produced by IFF Research
Recruitment of education leavers

UK: 66%
Had recruited an education leaver in the last 12 months

Base: All establishments: England (10,015), Northern Ireland (2,007), Scotland (4,009), Wales (1,997)

31%

29%

32%

31%

Produced by IFF Research
Preparedness of education leavers for work

Scotland school leavers

Base: All establishments that have recruited each type of education leaver in the previous 2-3 years

*Scotland is shown separately as the preparedness of ‘school leavers’ was asked as one grouping for Scotland respondents, rather than split into age groups

**Scotland is shown separately as the ages of ‘FE college leavers’ was not specified for Scotland respondents

Produced by IFF Research
Work experience offered in last 12 months

38% of employers offered work placements

**Education placements:** 30%
- Students at school: 20%
- Students at FE or 6th Form College: 13%
- Students at University: 11%

**Broad Adult Placements:** 15%
- Work trials: 11%
- Placements for unemployed: 5%
- Voluntary work (unprompted*): 1%
- Special needs/Disability programme: <1%

**Internships:** 7%
- Internships, either paid or unpaid: 6%
- Graduate programme (unprompted*): <1%

**Work Inspiration**
10% of employers engaged with schools, colleges or universities to offer ‘work inspiration’ activities, such as mentoring, holding site visits and visiting educational institutions to talk with students about careers.

*Where respondents had offered other types of work experience which did not fit within the pre-coded answer options, they were able to provide detail for an “other” type of experience.*
Work placement offering, by sector

**ANY PLACEMENT**

- Education: 74%
- Health & Social Work: 49%
- Arts & Other: 40%
- Public Admin.: 37%
- Hotels & Restaurants: 25%
- Business Services: 29%
- Wholesale & Retail: 27%
- Financial Services: 27%
- Primary Sector & Utilities: 25%
- Manufacturing: 25%
- Transport & Comms: 26%
- Construction: 23%

**ANY EDUCATION PLACEMENT**

- Education: 38%
- Health & Social Work: 24%
- Arts & Other: 27%
- Public Admin.: 21%
- Hotels & Restaurants: 15%
- Business Services: 11%
- Wholesale & Retail: 5%
- Financial Services: 14%
- Primary Sector & Utilities: 6%
- Manufacturing: 10%
- Transport & Comms: 10%
- Construction: 11%

**ANY BROAD ADULT PLACEMENT**

- Education: 78%
- Health & Social Work: 49%
- Arts & Other: 40%
- Public Admin.: 37%
- Hotels & Restaurants: 25%
- Business Services: 29%
- Wholesale & Retail: 27%
- Financial Services: 27%
- Primary Sector & Utilities: 25%
- Manufacturing: 25%
- Transport & Comms: 26%
- Construction: 23%

**ANY INTERNSHIP**

- Education: 60%
- Health & Social Work: 46%
- Arts & Other: 38%
- Public Admin.: 36%
- Hotels & Restaurants: 35%
- Business Services: 35%
- Wholesale & Retail: 35%
- Financial Services: 33%
- Primary Sector & Utilities: 32%
- Manufacturing: 32%
- Transport & Comms: 32%
- Construction: 23%

Base: All establishments (18,028): Education (990), Health & Social Work (2,023), Arts & Other (1,125), Public Admin. (403), Hotels & Restaurants (1,792), Business Services (3,081), Wholesale & Retail (3,933), Financial Services (395), Primary Sector & Utilities (866), Manufacturing (1,065), Transport & Comms (1,143), Construction (1,212),
Types of work placement offered

- Placements for students from school: 20% taken on individual into a job
- Placements for students from FE College or 6th form: 13%
- Placements for students from university: 11%
- Work trials for potential new recruits: 11%
- Placements targeted at the unemployed: 5%
- Voluntary work (unprompted): 1%
- Internships, either paid or unpaid: 6%

Base: All employers (18,028)

Base: Establishments who had each type of placement in the last 12 months: school (5,006), FE College (3,265), university (3,170), work trials (2,285), unemployed (1,460), voluntary (167), internships (1,787)

Produced by IFF Research
Mean number of work placements offered in the last 12 months

Base: All establishments who have had placements in the last 12 months: Public Admin. (221), Education (836), Health & Social Work (1,326), Hotels & Restaurants (881), Arts & Other (617), Wholesale & Retail (1,578), Financial Services (164), Business Services (1,465), Transport & Comms (500), Manufacturing (496), Primary Sector & Utilities (335), Construction (419)
Employers offering work inspiration activities to students

UK: 10%
Of employers offered work inspiration activities to students

Base: All establishments (18,028)

Work Inspiration activities include mentoring, holding site visits and visiting educational institutions to talk with students about careers

Base: All establishments: 2-4 (4,297), 5-9 (4,290), 10-24 (4,312), 25-49 (2,337), 50-99 (1,250) 100+ (1,542)

Base: All establishments: England (10,015), Northern Ireland (2,007), Scotland (4,009), Wales (1,997)

Base: All establishments: Public Admin. (403), Education (990), Health & Social Work (2,023), Arts & Other (1,125), Financial Services (395), Business Services (3,081), Transport & Comms (1,143), Primary Sector & Utilities (866), Manufacturing (1,065), Wholesale & Retail (3,933), Hotels & Restaurants (1,792), Construction (1,212)

Produced by IFF Research
Reasons for offering work experience opportunities

**PLACEMENTS**
- **69%** Altruistic
  - Gives them experience: 31%
  - Doing our 'bit' / uphold relations with the local community: 29%
  - Part of formal corporate social responsibility policy: 7%
  - Existing links with educational institutions: 2%

**INSPIRATION**
- **74%** Direct benefit
  - Helps with recruitment / as a trial: 7%
  - Helps with the workload: 6%
  - Raises our profile in the recruitment market: 5%
  - Beneficial to the company (e.g. fresh ideas/up to date skills etc.): 3%
  - Approached by student or educational institution: 8%
  - Favour for family member or friend: 4%

Base: All establishments who have had work placements / offered work inspiration in the last 12 months (8,838 / 2,872)
Note: multiple responses were allowed.
Reason for not offering work experience

- No suitable roles: 36%
- Do not have the time / resource to manage: 22%
- No one has approached us: 12%
- Not suitable due to the size of the establishment: 11%
- Recruitment freeze: 9%
- Does not offer us any business benefits: 6%
- Regulatory requirements: 5%
- Never thought about it: 5%
- Recruit experienced staff through other avenues: 4%
- No need (unspec.): 4%
- Company policy / Head Office decision: 4%
- Don't have the work to offer them: 3%
- Age restrictions: 3%

Base: All establishments offering no work experience opportunities in the last 12 months (8,512)
Note: multiple responses were allowed.
People development
Summary of approach to training

- 73% had provided training for staff
- 27% don’t provide or fund any training

- 62% provide internal training
- 36% provide both external & internal training
- 47% provide external training

- 44% provide external training through private providers
- 9% provide external training through both private and public providers
- 11% provide external training through public providers

Base: All employers (18,028)

Produced by IFF Research
## FE Colleges as a source of training

### Table: Geographical Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table: Sectoral Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Admin.</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Social Work</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Other</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Sector &amp; Utilities</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Services</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale &amp; Retail</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Services</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels &amp; Restaurants</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport &amp; Comms</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All establishments who train (14,820)

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*Produced by IFF Research*
### Higher Education Institutions as a source of training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Base:** All establishments who train (2014/2016): 2 to 4 (2,294/2,496), 5 to 9 (3,342/3,452), 10 to 24 (3,600/3,906), 25 to 49 (2,374/2,237), 50 to 99 (1,285/1,214), 100+ (1,606/1,515)

### Participation by Sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Admin.</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Social Work</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Services</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Services</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Sector &amp; Utilities</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Other</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport &amp; Comms</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale &amp; Retail</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels &amp; Restaurants</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Base:** All establishments who train (2014/2016): Education (1,059/950), Public Admin (436/381), Health & Social Work (1,979/1,903), Financial Services (423/339), Business Services (2,108/2,542), Primary Sector & Utilities (591/621), Manufacturing (975/855), Construction (1,053/944), Arts & Other (964/895), Transport & Comms (907/905), Wholesale & Retails (2,662/3,016), Hotels & Restaurants (1,344/1,469)
Commercial organisations as a source of training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All establishments who train (14,820)

Base: All establishments who train (2014/2016): 2 to 4 (2,294/2,496), 5 to 9 (3,342/3,452), 10 to 24 (3,600/3,906), 25 to 49 (2,374/2,237), 50 to 99 (1,285/1,214), 100+ (1,606/1,515)

Department for Education

Produced by IFF Research
Reasons for choosing to invest resource in public training providers

### Reasons for using

- **Relevant courses**
  - 2016: 59%
  - 2014: 65%
- **Offer a regulated qualification**
  - 2016: 16%
- **Quality of courses**
  - 2016: 12%
  - 2014: 11%
- **They are local**
  - 2016: 11%
  - 2014: 9%
- **Courses tailored to needs**
  - 2016: 9%
  - 2014: 9%

*This added as a pre-code answer in 2016*

**Base (2016/2014):** All who use FE Colleges or HEIs to deliver training (3,184/3,268)

Note: multiple responses were allowed.

### Barriers to using

#### FE Colleges

- **Courses not relevant**
  - 2016: 41%
  - 2014: 51%
- **Subject matter not relevant**
  - 2016: 12%
  - 2014: 9%
- **Do not know enough**
  - 2016: 7%
  - 2014: 7%
- **Prefer to train in-house**
  - 2016: 6%
  - 2014: 7%
- **Quality/standard unsatisfactory**
  - 2016: 6%
  - 2014: 4%

**Base (2016/2014):** All who have not used FE colleges for external training and were asked why (4,445/4,414)

#### HEIs

- **Courses not relevant**
  - 2016: 40%
  - 2014: 50%
- **Subject matter not relevant**
  - 2016: 13%
  - 2014: 9%
- **Do not know enough**
  - 2016: 9%
  - 2014: 7%
- **Training more advanced than needed**
  - 2016: 6%
  - 2014: 4%
- **Lack of information available**
  - 2016: 5%
  - 2014: 5%

**Base (2016/2014):** All who have not used HEIs for external training and were asked why (5,307/5,201)
Take-up of vocational qualifications

UK: 26%
Of employers had arranged or funded training designed to lead to a recognised vocational qualification in the last 12 months

Base: All establishments (18,028)

- 2-4: 15%
- 5-9: 27%
- 10-24: 42%
- 25-49: 53%
- 50-99: 63%
- 100+: 70%

Base: All establishments: 2-4 (4,297), 5-9 (4,290), 10-24 (4,312), 25-49 (2,337), 50-99 (1,250), 100+ (1,542)

Base: All establishments: England (10,015), Northern Ireland (2,007), Scotland (4,009), Wales (1,997)

- Education: 55%
- Health & Social Work: 54%
- Public Admin.: 49%
- Financial Services: 31%
- Construction: 30%
- Arts & Other: 26%
- Hotels & Restaurants: 22%
- Business Services: 22%
- Primary Sector & Utilities: 22%
- Wholesale & Retail: 20%
- Manufacturing: 20%
- Transport & Comms: 18%

Base: All establishments: Education (990), Health & Social Work (2,023), Public Admin. (403), Financial Services (395), Construction (1,212), Arts & Other (1,125), Hotels & Restaurants (1,792), Business Services (3,081), Primary Sector & Utilities (866), Wholesale & Retail (3,933), Manufacturing (1,065), Transport & Comms (1,143)

Produced by IFF Research
Business benefits and impacts of vocational qualifications

Business benefits of vocational qualifications

- Can be adapted to business needs
  - Agree strongly: 85% (2014: 82%)
  - Agree slightly: 71% (2014: 72%)
  - Neither agree nor disagree: 24% (2014: 26%)
  - Disagree slightly: 12% (2014: 14%)
  - Disagree strongly: 8% (2014: 6%)

- Cover all skills needed by company
  - Agree strongly: 71% (2014: 72%)
  - Agree slightly: 35% (2014: 36%)
  - Neither agree nor disagree: 12% (2014: 10%)
  - Disagree slightly: 10% (2014: 12%)
  - Disagree strongly: 6% (2014: 6%)

- Offers good value for money
  - Agree strongly: 74% (2014: 74%)
  - Agree slightly: 35% (2014: 36%)
  - Neither agree nor disagree: 14% (2014: 10%)
  - Disagree slightly: 4% (2014: 27%)
  - Disagree strongly: 0% (2014: 0%)

Impact of vocational qualifications

- Better business performance
  - Agree strongly: 87% (2014: 86%)
  - Agree slightly: 27% (2014: 36%)
  - Neither agree nor disagree: 9% (2014: 10%)
  - Disagree slightly: 0% (2014: 0%)
  - Disagree strongly: 0% (2014: 0%)

- Improved staff retention
  - Agree strongly: 78% (2014: 78%)
  - Agree slightly: 50% (2014: 28%)
  - Neither agree nor disagree: 28% (2014: 28%)
  - Disagree slightly: 12% (2014: 10%)
  - Disagree strongly: 6% (2014: 0%)

Base: All who had arranged/funded training towards vocational qualifications in the previous 12 months (2014: 6,812), (2016: 6,662)

Figures will not add up to 100% as “don’t know” answers are not displayed

Produced by IFF Research
Barriers of training staff to vocational qualifications

- **VQs are too complicated for our needs**: 21%
- **VQs are too much bureaucracy**: 20%
- **VQs take too long to deliver**: 20%
- **Relevant VQs are not available to us**: 14%
- **VQs are not as rigorous as other qualifications**: 13%
- **Staff don’t want VQs**: 33%
- **The training we already provide is sufficient**: 14%
- **The government does not provide grants / funding to cover the costs**: 26%
- **VQs are too expensive to deliver**: 22%
- **Cutbacks in our training budget**: 17%
- **Lack of information / knowledge about VQs**: 35%

*Multiple responses allowed

Base: All who have not arranged training in the last 12 months that has led to a Vocational Qualification: (2014: 7,689), (2016: 8,158)

Note: multiple responses were allowed.
External help sought on skills and training

- 28% sought or received advice
- 7% experienced issues but did not seek advice
- 64% did not experience skills-related issues

**TRAINING PROVIDERS**
- Commercial or not for profit training provider: 15%
- College: 8%
- University: 3%

**COLLECTIVES & REPRESENTATIVES**
- Professional body: 12%
- Other employers: 6%
- Chamber of Commerce: 2%
- Trade Union: 1%

**PUBLIC SECTOR**
- Local Authority: 6%
- Sector Skills Council: 6%
- Gov.uk: 4%
- LEP: 2%

**OTHER PRIVATE**
- Consultancy: 5%
- Suppliers: <1%

Base: All employers (18,028)
Employer collaboration on skills and training practices

UK: 14% of employers have worked with others to develop skills or expertise in the workforce

Base: All establishments (18,028)

Base: All establishments: 2-4 (4,297), 5-9 (4,290), 10-24 (4,312), 25-49 (2,337), 50-99 (1,250), 100+ (1,542)

Base: All establishments: England (10,015); Northern Ireland (2,007); Scotland (4,009); Wales (1,997)

Base: All establishments: Education (990), Public Admin. (403), Health & Social Work (2,023), Arts & Other (1,125), Business Services (3,081), Financial Services (395), Construction (1,212), Hotels & Restaurants (1,792), Primary Sector & Utilities (866), Wholesale & Retail (3,933), Manufacturing (1,065), Transport & Comms (1,143)

Produced by IFF Research
Employer involvement in designing content of vocational qualifications

UK: 47% of employers who have arranged external training in the past 12 months that was designed to lead to a Vocational Qualification have had some involvement in the design of its content.

Base: All who had trained staff using vocational qualifications in last 12 months (6,662)

Base: 2-4 (621), 5-9 (1,154), 10-24 (1,786), 25-49 (1,225), 50-99 (780), 100+ (1,096)

Base: Arts & Other (375), Public Admin. (221), Business Services (995), Primary Sector & Utilities. (268), Manufacturing (356), Hotels & Restaurants (597), Health & Social Work (1,297), Education (576), Transport & Comms (329), Construction (473), Financial Services (158), Wholesale & Retail (1,017).
Employer involvement in designing content of external training

UK: 42% of employers who have arranged external training in the past 12 months have had some involvement in the design of its content.

Base: All establishments that provide external training (10,654)

Base: 2-4 (1,437), 5-9 (2,186), 10-24 (2,843), 25-49 (1,811), 50-99 (1,046), 100+ (1,331)

Base: Public Admin (312), Health & Social Work (1,636), Arts & Other (646), Education (859), Business Services (1,856), Manufacturing (677), Transport & Comms (617), Hotels & Restaurants (841), Primary Sector & Utilities (485), Financial Services (214), Construction (785), Wholesale & Retail (1,726).

Produced by IFF Research
Apprenticeships
An overview of apprenticeships

UK: 18% of establishments offered apprenticeships
Base: All establishments (18,028)

- 11% for 2-4
- 18% for 5-9
- 27% for 10-24
- 35% for 25-49
- 39% for 50-99
- 51% for 100+

Base: All establishments: 2-4 (4,297), 5-9 (4,290), 10-24 (4,312), 25-49 (2,337), 50-99 (1,250), 100+ (1,542)

Base: All establishments: Education (990), Public Admin. (403), Construction (1,212), Arts & Other (1,125), Manufacturing (1,065), Health & Social Work (2,023), Wholesale & Retail (3,933), Hotels & Restaurants (1,792), Financial Services (395), Business Services (3,081), Transport & Comms (1,143), Primary Sector & Utilities (866).

Base: All establishments: England (10,015), Northern Ireland (2,007), Scotland (4,009), Wales (1,997)
Apprenticeships by country

Base for 2016: All establishments: UK (18,028), England (10,015), Northern Ireland (2,007), Scotland (4,009), Wales (1,997)
Apprenticeships by establishment size

% of establishments that have/off apprenticeships

Base for 2016: All establishments: Total (18,028), 2 to 4 (4,297), 5 to 9 (4,290), 10 to 24 (4,312), 25 to 49 (2,337), 50 to 99 (1,250), 100+ (1,542).
Apprenticeships by sector

% of establishments that have/off apprenticeships

Base for 2016: All establishments: Total (18,028), Education (990), Public Admin. (403), Construction (1,212), Arts & Other (1,125), Manufacturing (1,065), Health & Social Work (2,023), Wholesale & Retail (3,933), Hotels & Restaurants (1,792), Financial Services (395), Business Services (3,081), Transport & Comms (1,143), Primary Sector & Utilities (866)

Produced by IFF Research
**Average number of apprentices**

- **Number of establishments with current apprentices**
- **Mean number of apprentices**

Base: All establishments with current apprentices: Public Admin. (103), Health & Social & Work (322), Financial Services (46), Manufacturing (277), Transport & Comms (144), Education (276), Business Services (432), Hotels & Restaurants (153), Construction (362), Arts & Other (168), Wholesale & Retail (465), Primary Sector & Utilities (94).

"*" denotes a base size of <50 employers and should be treated with caution.
Change in apprentice numbers

UK

- Increase: 22%
- Remained about the same: 68%
- Decrease: 7%
- Don’t know: 7%

Northern Ireland

- Increase: 17%
- Remained about the same: 76%
- Decrease: 7%

Wales

- Increase: 19%
- Remained about the same: 68%
- Decrease: 7%

Base: All establishments with current apprentices: UK (2,842), England (1,766), Northern Ireland (215), Scotland (569), Wales (292). Note: percentages of 5% or less are not shown.

Change in apprentice numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2-4</th>
<th>5-9</th>
<th>10-24</th>
<th>25-49</th>
<th>50-99</th>
<th>100+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remained about the same</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All establishments with current apprentices: 2-4 (265), 5-9 (476), 10-24 (637), 25-49 (493), 50-99 (334), 100+ (637)

* denotes a base size of <50 employers and should be treated with caution.
Whether approached by external agencies about offering apprenticeships

- Initiated by the establishment
- Approached by another individual or organisation
- A bit of both
- Don't know

Base for pie chart: All establishments that started offering apprenticeships in the last 3 years (1,424)

Base for bars: All establishments that were approached by an individual / organisation (468)

- Commercial provider: 28%
- School / Further Education College: 26%
- The apprentice(s): 17%
- Professional body: 8%
- Local authority / government organisation: 3%
- Another employer: 3%
- Non-profit organisation: 3%
- Recruitment agency: 2%
Reasons for offering apprenticeships, amongst employers who have recently started to offer them

**Acquiring talent (48%)**
- Good way to get skilled staff: 39%
- Ensure young people continue to enter the company/industry: 14%
- Want to upskill current staff: 8%
- We could shape our own apprenticeship framework: 6%
- To train people from scratch/to our needs: 4%
- Demand among existing staff: 4%
- To improve general skills/knowledge of new and existing staff: 2%
- Improve staff morale/retention: 2%

**Nurturing talent (25%)**
- Good way to give young people a chance: 20%
- To help people into work: 2%
- To help the community/corporate social responsibility: 2%

**Altruistic (22%)**

**Financial (12%)**
- Good value for money/cost effective: 8%
- Availability of grants: 4%
- Anticipating the apprenticeship levy: 1%

Base: All establishments that started offering apprenticeships in the last three years (1,424).
Note: multiple responses were allowed.
Reasons for not offering apprenticeships

- Perceived structural barriers: 61%
  - Apprenticeships are not suitable for our size: 20%
  - Not looking to recruit new staff: 19%
  - Apprenticeships are not offered for our industry: 9%
  - Cannot afford to: 7%
  - Do not have the time to train them: 5%
  - No need as all staff are fully skilled: 13%
  - Does not suit our business model: 9%
  - Prefer to recruit experienced staff: 7%
  - Prefer other forms of training: 3%
  - Past apprentices were of a poor standard: 2%
  - Never have before so not considered it: 4%
  - Do not know enough about them: 2%
  - No one has enquired about doing one: 2%

- Actively choosing not to: 33%
- Lack of awareness: 10%

Base: All establishments not offering apprenticeships (13,763)
Note: multiple responses allowed.
Types of external training providers used for apprenticeships

82% of establishments offering apprenticeships had used an external provider to deliver at least some of the training for their apprentices.

Base: All establishments who have or offer formal apprenticeships (4,264)

Base: All establishments whose apprentices receive external training (3,545)
Employer involvement in designing external training content of apprenticeships

UK: 55%
Employers whose apprentices receive external training have had involvement in the design of the content

Base: All whose apprentices receive external training (3,545)

71% 69% 66% 60% 57% 57% 57% 50% 49% 45% 44% 43%

Arts & Other Manufacturing Public Admin. Health & Social Work Primary Sector & Utilities Transport & Comms Business Services Wholesale & Retail Hotels & Restaurants Education Financial Services Construction

Base: Arts & Other (193), Manufacturing (298), Public Admin. (96), Health & Social Work (451), Primary Sector & Utilities (106), Transport & Comms (199), Business Services (489), Wholesale & Retail (641), Hotels & Restaurants (312), Education (320), Financial Services (64), Construction (376)

Base: 2-4 (344), 5-9 (594), 10-24 (900), 25-49 (654), 50-99 (388), 100+ (665)
UK: 33% employers not currently offering apprenticeships were aware of apprenticeships and had at least a (self described) **good** knowledge of what they involve.

Base: All establishments not offering apprenticeships (13,764)

### Awareness and knowledge of apprenticeships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Awareness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-24</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-49</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-99</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100+</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: 2-4 (3,842), 5-9 (3,543), 10-24 (3,239), 25-49 (1,579), 50-99 (791), 100+ (770)

### Sector Analysis

- **Construction**: 43%
- **Education**: 38%
- **Transport & Comms**: 36%
- **Manufacturing**: 36%
- **Business Services**: 35%
- **Arts & Other**: 32%
- **Public Admin.**: 31%
- **Hotels & Restaurants**: 29%
- **Financial Services**: 29%
- **Wholesale & Retail**: 29%
- **Health & Social Work**: 26%
- **Primary Sector & Utilities**: 26%

Base: All establishments not offering apprenticeships: England (7,332), Northern Ireland (1,681), Scotland (3,192), Wales (1,559)

Base: Construction (751), Education (616), Transport & Comms (913), Manufacturing (705), Business Services (2,482), Arts & Other (890), Public Admin (278), Hotels & Restaurants (1,399), Financial Services (322), Wholesale & Retail (3,149), Health & Social Work (1,522), Primary Sector & Utilities (737)

Produced by IFF Research
Future demand for apprenticeships

All establishments

Base: 18,028

Offers apprenticeships 18%

Whether plan to offer in future?

Yes, plan to offer in future 87%

No 8%

Don't know 6%

Base: 4,264

Does not offer apprenticeships 82%

Whether plan to offer in future?

Yes, plan to offer in future 18%

No 64%

Don't know 18%

Base: 13,764

30% of all establishments plan to offer apprenticeships in future
Future demand for apprenticeships, by country

UK 2016: 30%
UK 2014: 34%

Do not currently offer formal Apprenticeships but plan to do so in the future

Currently offer formal Apprenticeships and plan to continue doing so

Base: All establishments: England (10,015), Northern Ireland (2,007), Scotland (4,009), Wales (1,997)
Future demand for apprenticeships, by size and sector

Base: All establishments: 2-4 (4,297), 5-9 (4,290), 10-24 (4,312), 25-49 (2,337), 50-99 (1,250), 100+ (1,542)

Base: Education (990), Manufacturing (1,065), Construction (1,212), Public Admin. (403), Health & Social Work (2,023), Arts & Other (1,125), Business Services (3,081), Wholesale & Retail (3,933), Transport & Comms (1,143), Hotels & Restaurants (1,792), Financial Services (395), Primary Sector & Utilities (866)
Timescales in which employers plan to start offering apprenticeships

- Plan to start offering in some other (or unknown) timescale
- Plan to start offering in next 2-3 years
- Plan to start offering in next 12 months
- Currently offer apprenticeships and plan to continue doing so

Base: All establishments: Education (990), Manufacturing (1,065), Construction (1,212), Public Admin. (403), Health & Social Work (2,023), Arts & Other (1,125), Business Services (3,081), Wholesale & Retail (3,933), Transport & Comms (1,143), Hotels & Restaurants (1,792), Financial Services (395), Primary Sector & Utilities (866).
Reasons for planning to start offering apprenticeships

64% Acquiring talent
- Good way to get skilled staff: 34%
- To expand the business: 21%
- Ensure young people continue to enter the company/industry: 19%

22% Altruistic
- Good way to give young people a chance: 18%
- To help people into work: 5%
- Want to upskill current staff: 5%
- To train people from scratch/to our needs: 5%
- We can shape our own apprenticeship framework: 3%
- Improve skills/knowledge of new and existing staff: 3%
- Demand among existing staff: 2%

18% Nurturing talent
- Good value for money/cost effective: 3%
- Availability of grants: 2%
- Anticipating the apprenticeship levy: 1%

6% Financial

Base: All establishments that plan to start offering apprenticeships in future (2,525).
Note: multiple responses were allowed.
Reasons for planning to stop offering apprenticeships

Perceived structural barriers

57%

- Not looking to recruit new staff: 36%
- Cannot afford to: 15%
- Apprenticeships are not suitable for our size: 7%
- Takes too much time: 4%
- Apprenticeships are not offered for our industry: 1%

Actively choosing to stop offering

21%

- Past apprentices were of a poor standard: 7%
- Bad experience of training providers in the past: 6%
- No need as all staff are fully skilled: 5%
- Prefer to recruit experienced staff: 4%
- Prefer other forms of training: 1%

Responses do not sum to 100% as ‘other’, ‘no particular reason’ and ‘don’t know’ are not shown.

Base: All establishments that plan to stop offering apprenticeships in future (197)

Note: multiple responses allowed.
Establishments with current apprentices with plans to continue offering apprenticeships in the future: UK (2,505), England (1,560), Northern Ireland (184), Scotland (502), Wales (259).

Note: percentages of 5% or less are not shown.

**Expected change in apprentice numbers in next 2 years**

- **UK**
  - Increase: 63%
  - Remained about the same: 66%
  - Decrease: 27%
  - Don’t know: 30%

- **Northern Ireland**
  - Increase: 42%
  - Remained about the same: 42%
  - Decrease: 6%
  - Don’t know: 35%

- **Wales**
  - Increase: 52%
  - Remained about the same: 55%
  - Decrease: 61%
  - Don’t know: 66%

- **Scotland**
  - Increase: 66%
  - Remained about the same: 66%
  - Decrease: 29%
  - Don’t know: 31%

- **England**
  - Increase: 50%
  - Remained about the same: 45%
  - Decrease: 62%
  - Don’t know: 31%

Base: 2-4 (199), 5-9 (392), 10-24 (559), 25-49 (452), 50-99 (307), 100+ (596)

Base: Public Admin (98), Financial Services (40), Hotels & Restaurants (141), Manufacturing (252), Arts & Other (154), Business Services (367), Transport & Comms (129), Health & Social Work (285), Wholesale & Retail (396), Construction (324), Education (250), Primary Sector & Utilities (69)

"*" denotes a base size of <50 employers and should be treated with caution.
### Reasons for expected change in apprentice numbers

**Among those expecting an increase...**
- *Business growth*: 54%
- *Increased demand for apprenticeship positions*: 14%
- *Good experiences of apprenticeships in the past*: 12%
- *To increase staff numbers / replace existing staff*: 8%
- *Effective method of recruitment*: 5%
- *To continue developing staff / improve their skills*: 5%
- *Introduction of the apprenticeship levy in 2017*: 5%

**Among those expecting no change...**
- *Content with current number / no business need*: 40%
- *We are not looking to recruit new staff*: 20%
- *Lack of business growth*: 15%
- *We cannot currently afford to offer more*: 10%
- *Not enough staff time/resource to train more apprentices*: 7%
- *Lack of demand for apprenticeship positions*: 5%

**Among those expecting a decrease...**
- *All our staff are fully skilled, no need*: 40%
- *We are not looking to recruit new staff*: 34%
- *Lack of demand for apprenticeship positions*: 20%
- *We cannot currently afford to offer more*: 19%
- *Prefer to recruit experienced staff*: 6%

**Base: all establishments that expect to increase their number of apprentices over the next two years (799)**

**Base: all establishments that expect their number of apprentices to stay the same over the next two years (1,549)**

**Base: all establishments that plan to decrease their number of apprentices over the next two years (93)**

Note: only reasons mentioned by at least 5% of employers are shown. Multiple responses were allowed.

Produced by IFF Research
Conclusions
How establishments support the pipeline of talent into businesses and entry routes into employment

- Despite deep and persistent issues relating to hard-to-fill and skill-shortage vacancies (as reported in ESS 2015), employers use a fairly limited number and range of recruitment channels to bring talent into their business.

- The majority of employers who recruited someone (79%) used word of mouth / personal recommendations to access the potential labour market.

- As well as limiting the range of potential applicants that employers have access to, this has the impact of restricting jobseekers’ routes to employment.

- Employers value work experience above qualifications (whether academic or vocational) as a means of gauging the quality and potential of new recruits. In this context it is perhaps concerning that employers were increasingly critical of the preparedness for work of the education leavers they recruit.

- Developing forms of work experience and work inspiration that genuinely respond to employers’ needs to develop and access experienced new recruits offers potential to improve individuals’ entry to the labour market.
How to increase the provision of apprenticeships

- In light of recent policy initiatives to increase the uptake and awareness of apprenticeships, EPS 2016 presents a positive picture in terms of increases in the proportion of establishments offering apprenticeships and the number of apprentices taken on.

- Among employers that had started offering apprenticeships in the last three years, the most common reasons for having done so related to them being viewed as a means to acquire new talent. Among employers not offering apprenticeships, perceived structural barriers were common (e.g. perceiving apprenticeships to be unsuitable for their size or sector).

- The findings on reasons why employers engage or not engage with apprenticeships may serve as useful tools to inform communications with employers to support increased engagement with apprenticeships.

- Nearly a third (30%) of UK establishments were planning to offer apprenticeships in the future. The survey helps identify where communication and resource might be best focussed to increase uptake of apprenticeships. For instance, there is appetite for increased engagement in the two largest sectors: Business Services and Manufacturing.

- Potential to increase apprenticeship numbers also exists among establishments already offering them. Almost a third (30%) of these employers expected to increase the number of apprenticeships they offered over the next two years, with larger employers (with over 100+ employees) most likely.
How to stimulate employer input into the design, delivery and content of skills initiatives

- New for EPS 2016, the survey provides a measure of the extent of collaboration and employer input into the skills system.

- Just over half (55%) of employers using an external training provider to deliver some of their apprenticeship training reported that they had some involvement in designing or tailoring the training content. This compares with 47% that had arranged training for their staff leading to a vocational qualification (VQ) being involved in designing the training content and 42% of employers that had arranged external training in general for their staff that were involved in designing the training content.

- The higher level of involvement of employers in designing the training content delivered to their apprentices suggests that perhaps employers offering apprenticeships were more engaged, or there is greater receptiveness among training providers to receive input from apprenticeship employers, suggesting there may be lessons to be learned from the apprenticeship model.