



# Employer Qualification Perceptions Survey

**Final report**

July 2017

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## Executive summary

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### Overview of the research

In early 2017 Ofqual commissioned Pye Tait Consulting to undertake a pilot study to investigate employers' perceptions, confidence and use of a range of qualifications and assessments. Being the first survey of its kind for Ofqual, it tests a number of different questions for ascertaining employer views. As a pilot survey, it will establish a series of baseline metrics that can be tracked over time.

This study sought views on the following three groups of qualifications and assessments:

- Functional Skills qualifications<sup>1</sup> in maths and English
- Vocational and technical qualifications<sup>2</sup>
- Apprenticeship end point assessments

The research consisted of a telephone and online survey of over 2,000 employers in England, spanning all industry sectors (divided into 18 sectors<sup>3</sup>), organisation sizes<sup>4</sup> and all nine geographic regions. Follow up depth telephone interviews to obtain more detailed feedback were conducted with a sample of 40 survey respondents. For more information on the sample profile, please see Appendix 1.

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<sup>1</sup> If respondents asked for clarification, the definition provided by interviewers was: *"a qualification for work, study and life. Achievement of the qualification demonstrates the ability at an appropriate level to read, write, speak, listen and communicate in English, and to apply these skills effectively to a range of purposes in the workplace and in other real life situations"*

<sup>2</sup> If respondents asked for clarification, the definition provided by interviewers was: *"formal, non-formal and informal learning for the world of work, such as National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)"*

<sup>3</sup> Three of these eighteen were clustered into one category

<sup>4</sup> Micro – less than 9 employees; Small – 10-49 employees; Medium – 50-249 employees and Large – 250+ employees

**All of the conclusions in the key findings overview below are statistically significant<sup>5</sup>:**

**Key findings – overview**

- Large employers are significantly more likely than small and micro employers to:
  - Arrange or fund training that leads to a qualification
  - Report greater awareness and understanding of qualifications<sup>6</sup> and assessments
  - Report more positive perceptions of qualifications and assessments
  - Report involvement in development of qualifications or apprenticeships
- There are significant differences between employers who say they typically recruit people with, or train them in, Functional Skills, Vocational and Technical qualifications and those who do not. Generally, the former group have more positive perceptions of the qualifications than the latter, including of the business benefits that stem from achieving the qualification.
- Similarly, employers who have been involved in the development of Functional Skills and Vocational and Technical qualifications (e.g. responding to a consultation, participating in a working group), are significantly more likely to report more positive perceptions about them, than those respondents who have not been involved in their development.
- These conclusions should be considered in the context of the detailed qualitative feedback, where most employers interviewed do not have a detailed knowledge and understanding of qualifications, even where they

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<sup>5</sup> i.e. statistical tests have been conducted to determine whether results found in the survey sample can be reliably generalised to the general population. The tests take into account the variation within the groups to test whether the difference between groups is due to chance or whether represent an actual difference between the groups

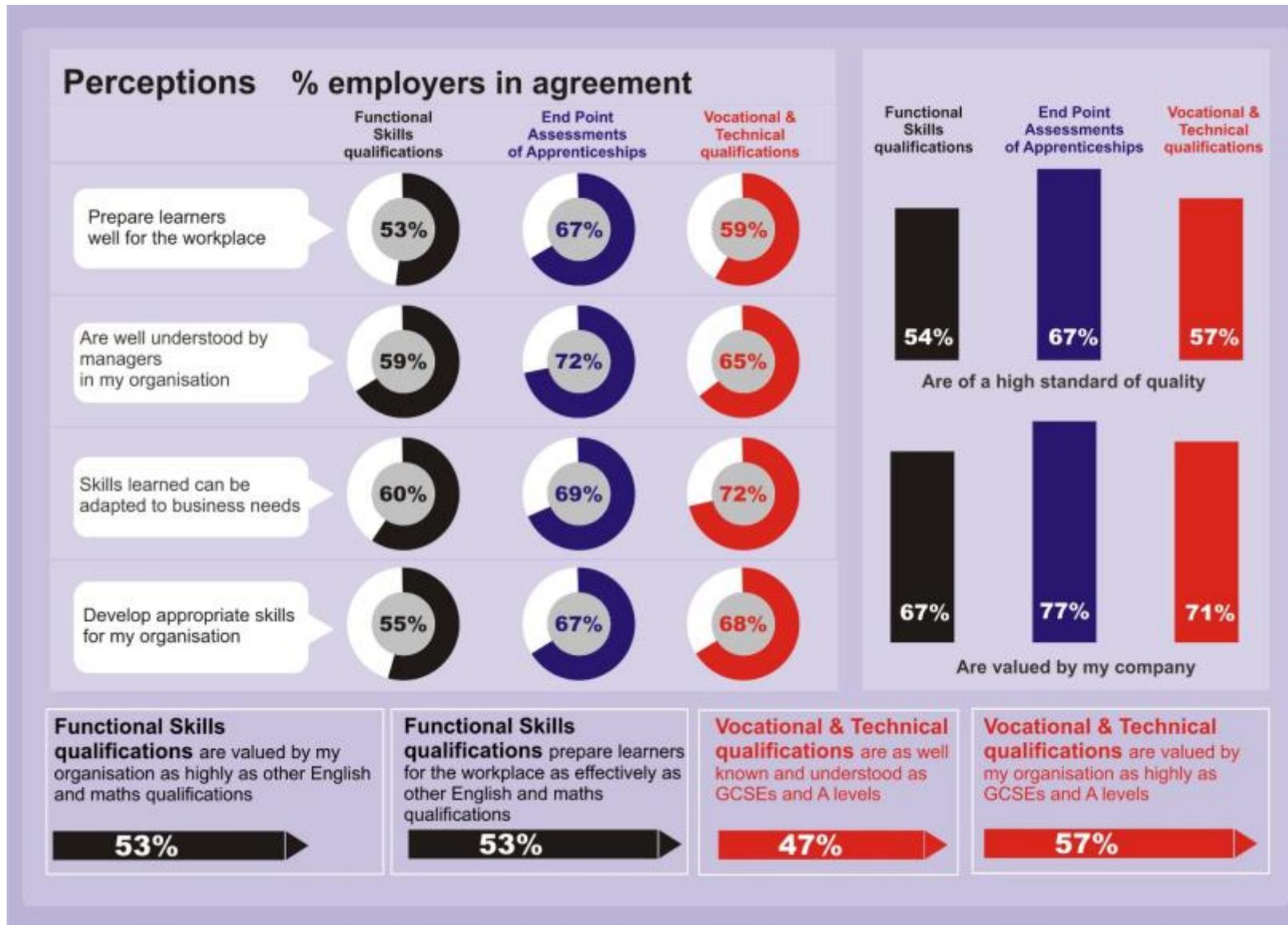
<sup>6</sup> The reference to 'qualifications' in this chapter means Functional Skills and Vocational and Technical qualifications in scope of this study

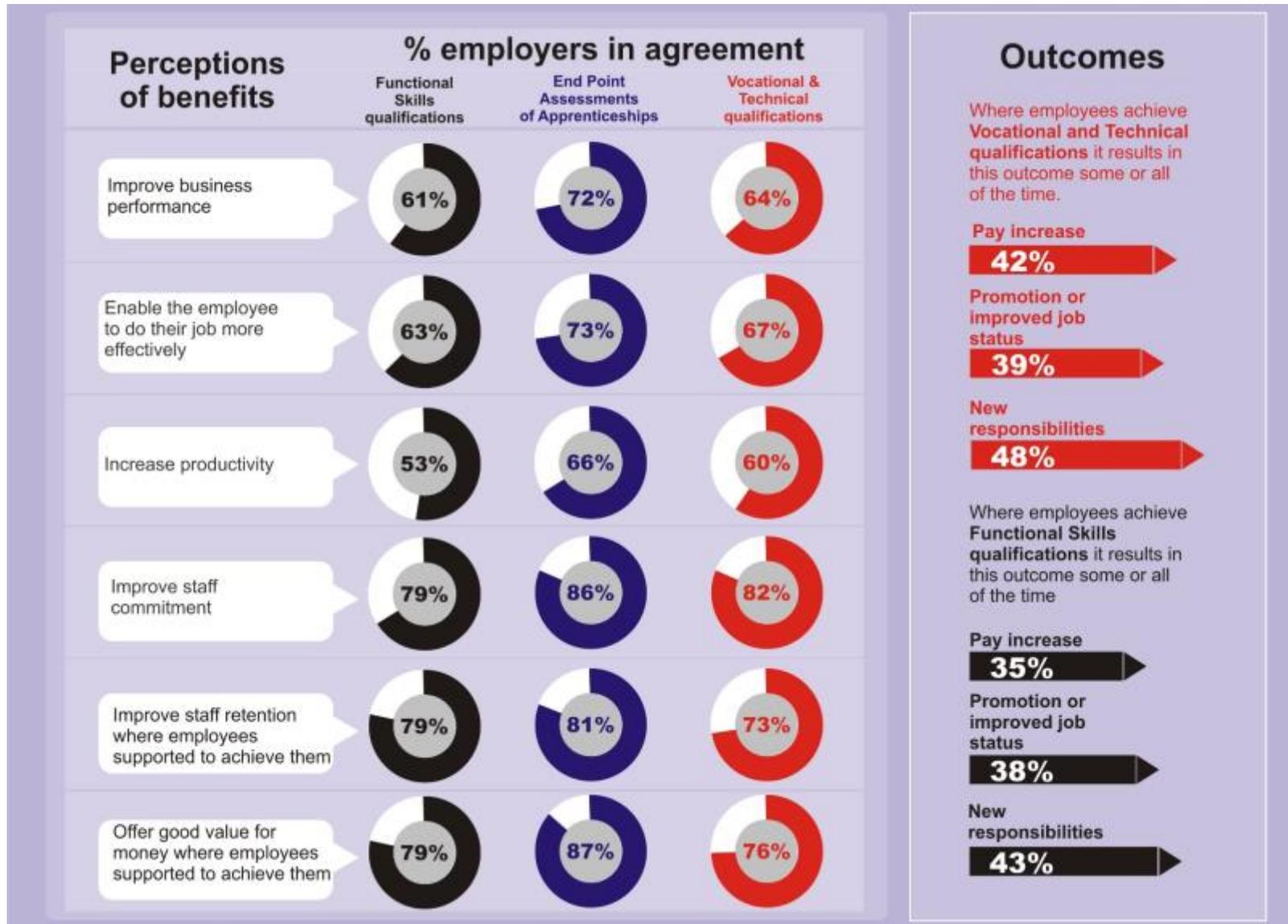
perceive themselves to have a very or quite good familiarity with them.

Cultural 'norms' tend to drive the use of certain qualifications. Employers in sectors that are regulated, such as childcare and healthcare are significantly more likely to be familiar with qualifications and end point assessments.

It is recommended that baseline metrics for future iterations of the survey focus on awareness, perceptions and business benefits, i.e. familiarity and favourability. Key metrics from this survey are shown in the following infographics. The key familiarity baseline should be drawn from the extent of understanding of the qualifications or assessments.

It should be noted when reading the following infographics, only those respondents who said they were familiar with end point assessments of apprenticeships were asked about their perceptions of them. For example where the infographic states that 67% of respondents say end point assessments of apprenticeships prepare learners well for the workplace, this means 67% of those 23% who are familiar with them.





## **Key findings by theme**

### ***Use of qualifications for recruitment and training***

- Around half of training provided typically results in a qualification, regardless of the level of role (i.e. admin, skilled etc.), although the proportion is slightly lower among admin and entry roles (45% say training leads to a qualification) than skilled & supervisory roles (53%) and professional & managerial (52%). There is a higher proportion of large businesses that report providing training that leads to a qualification, compared with small and micro businesses.
- Where training leads to a qualification, Vocational and Technical qualifications are most commonly offered (among nearly two-thirds of respondents, compared with nearly a quarter that say training led to a Functional Skills qualification). Most Vocational and Technical qualifications achieved are at Level 3, whereas most Functional Skills qualifications achieved are at Level 2.
- The most important considerations for employees when identifying which qualifications to offer employees, are the relevance of the qualification for their organisation, that the qualification is recognised/valued in their sector, and that it is of an appropriate level to meet their needs.
- Vocational and Technical qualifications are second only to relevant work experience in terms of importance to respondents recruiting to skilled & supervisory roles. Functional Skills in maths and English are almost as important as maths and English GCSEs when respondents recruit to entry level and administrative roles.

### ***Functional Skills qualifications***

- Familiarity with Functional Skills qualifications is broadly high among all respondents, with over 80% indicating they have some understanding, and nearly two-thirds of respondents who say they have a very or quite good

understanding. However it should be taken into account that employers participating in depth interviews did not have a comprehensive knowledge of Functional Skills qualifications.

- There is greater understanding of Functional Skills qualifications among large businesses than among micro businesses. Higher levels of engagement with Functional Skills qualifications are reported where respondents hold more senior roles in an organisation.
- Higher proportions of respondents in the public sector say their organisation recruits people with, or arranges training leading to functional skills qualifications, compared to in the third/voluntary sector and private sector.
- Nearly a third of respondents say they typically recruit people with or train in Functional Skills qualifications, but this proportion more than doubles (to 66%) among respondents who have supported their development (for example as part of a working group or responding to a consultation).
- Respondents most familiar with Functional Skills qualifications (for example as a result of supporting development and/or because they typically recruit or train in Functional Skills qualifications), report the most positive perceptions of them.
- A higher proportion of large businesses agree that Functional Skills qualifications result in organisation benefits, compared with micro, small and medium sized businesses. Perceptions of business benefits arising from Functional Skills qualifications were broadly similar between sectors and between regions.

## ***Vocational and Technical qualifications***

- Awareness of Vocational and Technical qualifications is predominantly high, with 87% of respondents having some form of understanding, and 66% of respondents saying they have a very or quite good understanding. There is greater awareness of Vocational and Technical qualifications reported by medium and large businesses, compared with micro businesses.
- Depth interviewees that hold positive perceptions of Vocational and Technical qualifications predominantly base their views on organisational culture i.e. accustomed to always recruiting or training in Vocational and Technical qualifications, rather than because they understand what the qualifications offer. However, employers working in sectors where qualifications are a regulatory requirement have greater knowledge and were able to give a detailed view about fitness for purpose of qualifications.
- Around three times as many large businesses say they recruit people with, or train people in Vocational and Technical qualifications, compared with micro businesses.
- Employers tend to have slightly better perceptions of Vocational and Technical qualifications than they do of Functional Skills qualifications. Employers who have been involved in supporting development of Vocational and Technical qualifications, and those that describe themselves as employer training providers, hold more positive perceptions than other respondents. Those that typically recruit or train in Vocational and Technical qualifications are more positive about them, than those that do not. Larger businesses report more favourable perceptions of Vocational and Technical qualifications than small and micro businesses do.
- Employers thinking about Vocational and Technical qualifications in the context of apprenticeships, have consistently more positive perceptions of them, than when they are considering them as standalone qualifications.

### ***End point assessments of apprenticeships***

- Nearly a quarter (23%) of respondents report that they are familiar with end point assessments of apprenticeships. This figure appears high in comparison with the number of end point assessments that have actually been delivered, however depth interview feedback suggests that it is likely that some respondents answered the questions in relation to apprenticeships more generally.
- Large businesses report a better understanding of end point assessments of apprenticeships in comparison with micro businesses. A higher proportion of large businesses perceive positive benefits for their business, where employees achieve end point assessments of apprenticeships, compared with small and micro businesses.
- Employers in the education sector are best informed about end point assessments in comparison with other sectors; understanding is also relatively high among construction and facilities management employers.

### ***General understanding and perceptions of the qualifications landscape***

- Nearly half of all respondents report awareness of qualifications reform – whether this be existing or proposed changes (45% aware of changes to Functional Skills; 45% aware of changes to assessment of apprenticeships; 48% aware of changes to Vocational and Technical qualifications).
- There is greater awareness of proposed or current changes (to both qualifications and assessments) among respondents who describe themselves as employer training providers, and among those with experience of supporting development of qualifications.

## List of abbreviations used in the report

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A Level	Advanced Level
AO	Awarding Organisation
BIS	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council
CACHE	Council of Awards in Care, Health and Education
CIPR	Chartered Institute of Public Relations
CSCS	Construction Skills Certification Scheme
EPA	End Point Assessment
FE	Further Education
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HNC	Higher National Certificate
ILM	Institute of Leadership and Management
NOS	National Occupational Standards
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
Ofqual	Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation
QCF	Qualifications and Credit Framework
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SSC	Sector Skills Council
SVQ	Scottish Vocational Qualification
VTQ	Vocational & Technical Qualifications

# 1. Introduction

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## 1.1 Research context

Ofqual is the independent qualifications regulator for England, responsible for regulating 159 awarding organisations, providing 17,784 live qualifications<sup>7</sup>. The organisation has five statutory objectives as stipulated in the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009, which are as follows:

- **Objective 1:** To secure qualifications standards
- **Objective 2:** To promote National Assessment standards
- **Objective 3:** To promote public confidence in regulated qualifications and National Assessment arrangements
- **Objective 4:** To promote awareness of the range of benefits of regulated qualifications
- **Objective 5:** To secure that regulated qualifications are provided efficiently<sup>8</sup>.

In recent years a number of changes were made to the qualifications landscape in England. General qualifications (including GCSEs) underwent a programme of reform, whereby a new grading scale of 9 to 1 was introduced, assessment was overhauled and new, more demanding content was developed by Awarding Organisations. Almost concurrently several thousand 'low-value'<sup>9</sup> vocational qualifications were removed from performance tables relating to 14–19 year-olds with the aim of making qualifications easier to interpret and understand and ensuring the remaining vocational qualifications are fit for purpose in the world of work<sup>10</sup>. The legacy of the Wolf report, which set much of this in train, continues to be felt.

In early 2016 the Government also embarked on a reform of Functional Skills qualifications in English and maths. First launched in 2008, they are available as

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<sup>7</sup> Ofqual register: <https://register.ofqual.gov.uk/Search?Category=Qualifications>

<sup>8</sup> Ofqual (2016) *Corporate Plan 2016-19*

<sup>9</sup> i.e. qualifications that are not valued or recognised widely by employers and which do not readily help learners to progress to employment or further study

<sup>10</sup> [Department for Education \(2016\), \*Educational Excellence Everywhere\*](#)

stand-alone qualifications and are also used in other contexts, such as part of an apprenticeship programme.

Since 2014, employers in England have been working together in 'Trailblazer' groups to develop apprenticeship standards, replacing existing apprenticeship frameworks<sup>11</sup>. The standards are intended to simplify the way in which apprenticeships are designed and specified and reflect employer needs.

A new Apprenticeship levy requires employers with an annual pay bill of more than £3 million to spend 0.5 per cent of the total on the levy; they will then be able to access that levy funding through a digital apprenticeship service account. The introduction of independent end point assessment (EPA) is one of the biggest changes in the Government's Apprenticeship Reforms, replacing the existing model of continuous assessment.

The qualifications landscape has undergone substantial change. The Post-16 Skills Plan (July 2016) is the Government's response to the Sainsbury report on technical education, which accepts every single recommendation put forward by the independent panel, chaired by Lord Sainsbury. It reinforces the Government's aims to streamline qualifications, encourage apprenticeships and involve employers in the setting of standards<sup>12</sup>. At 16, learners will be 'presented with two choices: the academic or the technical option' in the form of 15 routes covering 'college-based and employment-based (apprenticeship) education' from Levels 2 to 5. Applied general qualifications, which give learners the option of a broader post-16 programme of study, will be retained.

Despite these changes continuity exists around some qualifications. For example, the NVQ 'brand' has survived since the 1990s, despite various changes to the vocational qualifications landscape. Many apprenticeship frameworks are also still in place as the reforms develop, to help ensure a smooth transition to the standards.

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<sup>11</sup> Apprenticeship frameworks are based on the 2013 Specification of Apprenticeship Standards in England (SASE).

<sup>12</sup> [Department for Education and Department for Business \(2016\), Post-16 skills plan](#)

## 1.2 Aims and objectives

Against the backdrop of flux in the qualifications market in England, it is vital that Ofqual has a strong understanding of employers' perceptions and use of qualifications and the value they attach to them.

The core research objectives of this research, conducted in spring 2017, are to:

- Understand and assess employers' overall perceptions of, and confidence in, specific qualifications and assessments;
- Determine employers' use of such qualifications and assessments when recruiting new staff; and
- Determine employers' use of such qualifications and assessments as part of training programmes for staff.

## 1.3 Methodology

### 1.3.1 Overview of methodology

Pye Tait Consulting was commissioned in January 2017 to undertake Ofqual's first Employer Qualifications Perceptions Survey; this research is therefore a pilot and as such, has identified a number of considerations to be taken into account if the survey is repeated in subsequent years (also discussed in section 7.2).

The main data collection tool was a large-scale telephone survey of 2,037 employers in England, spanning all industry sectors and geographical areas. Survey data were supplemented by 40 in-depth telephone interviews. Interview participants<sup>13</sup> were recruited via the survey; a question included in the survey asked respondents if they would be willing to be re-contacted within the next 3 months to take part in a follow up interview. More detail on the sampling approach, questionnaire design and analysis is included in Appendix 2.

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<sup>13</sup> These included: Managing Director or equivalent; Operations Director; Head of Training; Training Manager; HR Manager

## **1.4 Methodological recommendations**

### **1.4.1 Guidance on interpreting findings**

Employer understanding and perceptions of qualifications are self-reported throughout. This should be taken into consideration when interpreting results about the extent of understanding of qualifications – particularly as feedback from the depth interviews revealed instances where employers actually had a fairly limited understanding.

Since in some cases respondents were routed to questions about only those qualifications/assessments with which they were familiar, the base number of respondents per question may vary where questions were routed. For example respondents were only asked about their perceptions of qualifications and assessments where they indicated they had some understanding of them.

Employers are least familiar with apprenticeship end point assessments; in total 455 employers were directed to and answered questions on this subject. This compares with 1283 employers who were asked questions about their perceptions of Functional Skills qualifications and 1304 employers who were asked questions about their perceptions of vocational and technical qualifications.

Although interviewers explained the context of end point assessment of apprenticeships, when answering questions on this subject, it should be noted that employers might have also been thinking about apprenticeships in general, including current apprenticeship frameworks. As end point assessments are relatively recent, this makes it unlikely that as many as a quarter of respondents would have had exposure to them prior to completing the survey. This should be taken into account when considering these findings as the baseline position. However the survey also identified 64 employers (3% of the sample) that report training has led to an end point assessment – therefore while overall awareness seems quite high, actual training behaviours appear more realistic.

Respondents were asked if they, or anyone in their organisation had been involved

in supporting development of Functional Skills qualifications, Vocational and Technical qualifications or apprenticeships in their sector. ‘Supporting development’ was defined<sup>14</sup> as: *for example, as a member of a working group, responding to an online consultation or contributing to assessment design.*

When considering findings by sector, there are two overarching<sup>15</sup> sectors with lower numbers of respondents: Farming; forestry and fishing (39 respondents), and energy & utilities and mining (22 respondents). This should be taken into consideration when interpreting findings specifically in relation to these sectors.

#### **1.4.2 Considerations for future iterations of the survey**

If Ofqual is to repeat this survey in the future, the following should be taken into consideration:

- Some sectors were much harder to reach than others – notably those highly customer-facing (such as retail) or where respondents are not as easily accessible (such as farming). A future approach should consider the use of a panel and/or online approach for difficult to reach sectors, although the use of a telephone approach as the core method is still recommended.
- Employers were also asked whether or not they would describe themselves as an employer training provider, using the definition “**do you typically offer any training that leads to an accredited qualification either for your own staff or to people outside of your organisation?**” It seems likely from the high number of respondents that a proportion of these respondents have identified themselves as an employer training provider on the grounds that they regularly provide training to their staff. However there are clear differences between those that describe themselves as an employer training provider and those that not, suggesting there may be value in future iterations of the survey in asking respondents simply whether they would describe themselves as a ‘training

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<sup>14</sup> Interviewers included this explanation when asking the question

<sup>15</sup> i.e. the 16 overarching categories used (top level Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) code); each category comprises one or more industry sectors

organisation' or similar.

- It is likely that some respondents interpreted end point assessment of an apprenticeship, simply as an apprenticeship – given that the former is a relatively recent introduction to the assessment of apprenticeships. This should be taken into account when considering these findings as the baseline position – as should the comparatively low number of responses to these questions (asked of 455 respondents who described themselves as being familiar with end point assessments). In future years it can be reasonably expected that familiarity will increase, making the base number of respondents for future surveys higher – this needs to be considered when making comparisons with this baseline position.
- It is recommended that future baseline metrics focus on awareness, perceptions and business benefits, i.e. familiarity and favourability. Favourability baselines from this survey are summarised in the infographics in the executive summary. The key familiarity baseline should be drawn from the extent of understanding of the qualifications or assessments.

## **1.5 Report layout**

This report presents the key findings, using a number of charts to supplement the text where relevant. Where differences by sector are discussed, a footnote shows the base number of respondents to the survey for that sector. A separate annex provides full data tables, including breakdowns by region, organisation size and sector. Following this introduction, chapter 2 considers the use of qualifications for recruitment and training. Findings are presented separately for Functional Skills qualifications (chapter 3), Vocational and Technical qualifications (chapter 4) and end point assessments of apprenticeships (chapter 5). General awareness and understanding of the qualifications landscape is summarised in chapter 6, with conclusions and recommendations in chapter 7.

Appendix 1 shows the profile of survey respondents. Appendix 2 provides more detail about the sampling, questionnaire design and approach to analysis, while

Appendix 3 goes into more detail about data analysis and statistical testing used. Appendix 4 shows the results of the statistical testing. A copy of the survey questionnaire is provided at Appendix 5.

## 2. Use of qualifications for recruitment and training

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### Key findings

Around half of training provided typically results in a qualification, regardless of the level of role (i.e. admin, skilled etc.), although the proportion is slightly lower among admin and entry roles (with 45% saying training leads to a qualification) than skilled & supervisory roles (53%) and professional & managerial (52%). There is a higher proportion of large businesses that report providing training that leads to a qualification, compared with small and micro businesses.

Vocational and Technical qualifications are most commonly offered where training leads to a qualification (among nearly two-thirds of respondents, compared with nearly a quarter who say training led to a Functional Skills qualification). Most Vocational and Technical qualifications achieved are at Level 3, whereas most Functional Skills qualifications achieved are at Level 2.

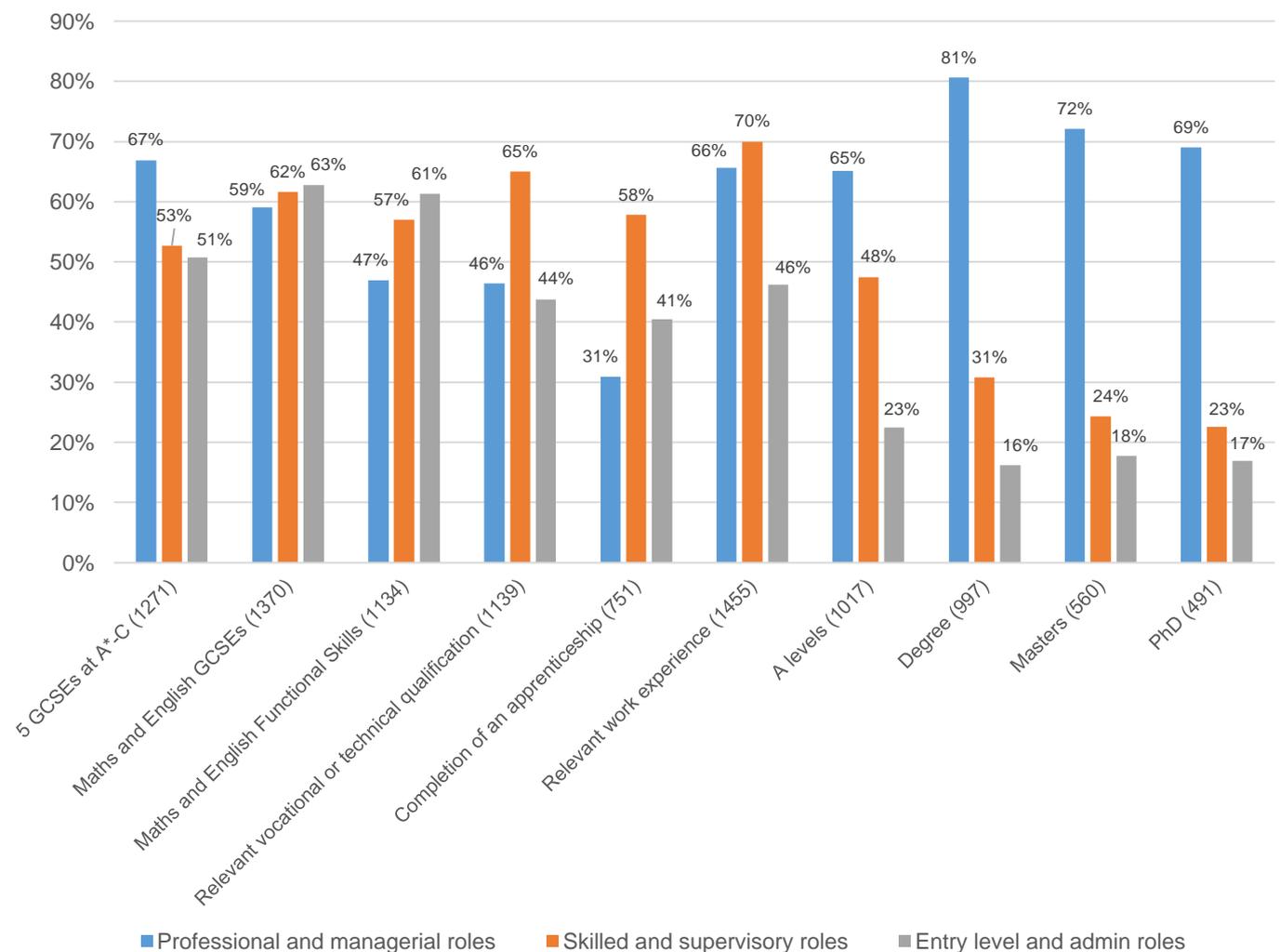
The most important considerations for employees when identifying which qualifications to offer employees, are the relevance of the qualification for their organisation, that the qualification is recognised/valued in their sector, and that it is of an appropriate level to meet their needs.

Vocational and Technical qualifications are second only to relevant work experience in terms of importance to respondents recruiting to skilled and supervisory roles. Functional Skills in maths and English are almost as important as maths and English GCSEs when respondents recruit to entry level and administrative roles.

## 2.1 Types of qualifications sought, at different levels

Respondents were asked to indicate which types and levels of qualifications are essential, at different job levels when recruiting new employees (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Qualifications employers describe as essential when recruiting into different job levels: professional & managerial, skilled & supervisory and entry level & admin**



The number of respondents who selected each option is indicated in brackets in the chart above. This is the 'base number' of respondents.

When looking at the findings by industry sector it is clear they are not uniform. Low base numbers of respondents should be noted when considering the examples:

- Relatively few employers consider it essential for a new recruit to have completed an apprenticeship; of those who do value apprenticeships, these are mostly in the **construction**<sup>16</sup>, **retail**<sup>17</sup> and **manufacturing**<sup>18</sup> sectors;
- Most employers consider 5 GCSEs A\*-C more essential for professional and managerial roles than for other, lower level roles, except employers in the following sectors: **energy and utility**<sup>19</sup>; **media and publishing**<sup>20</sup>; **pharmaceuticals**<sup>21</sup>; **rental and leasing**<sup>22</sup>; **scientific and technical activities**<sup>23</sup>; **travel and tourism**<sup>24</sup>, and; **veterinary**<sup>25</sup>. This does not necessarily mean that employers in these sectors consider 5 GCSEs A\*-C to be more important for lower level roles than higher level roles – they simply place more emphasis on them for their lower level roles;
- When considering vocational and technical qualifications, employers view these to be most suitable for skilled and supervisory roles (65% of respondents) over other types of roles; this is especially the case in **travel and tourism**; **insurance and banking**<sup>26</sup>; **forestry and fishing**<sup>27</sup> (although these are based on low numbers of respondents answering this question);
- Less than a third of employers consider apprenticeships essential for professional and managerial roles. These are most typically in **healthcare**<sup>28</sup> and **insurance and banking**; and

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<sup>16</sup> Base number of respondents: 177

<sup>17</sup> Base number of respondents: 247

<sup>18</sup> Base number of respondents: 149

<sup>19</sup> Base number of respondents: 19

<sup>20</sup> Base number of respondents: 41

<sup>21</sup> Base number of respondents: 5

<sup>22</sup> Base number of respondents: 23

<sup>23</sup> Base number of respondents: 21

<sup>24</sup> Base number of respondents: 31

<sup>25</sup> Base number of respondents: 7

<sup>26</sup> Base number of respondents: 17

<sup>27</sup> Base number of respondents: 13

<sup>28</sup> Base number of respondents: 44

- A small number of employers identified Degrees, Masters and PhDs as being essential for ‘entry level and admin roles’. These were most typically in **computing<sup>29</sup>; financial services<sup>30</sup>; hospitality<sup>31</sup>; legal and accounting<sup>32</sup>; rental and leasing; veterinary**. Respondents may have been thinking of certain ‘entry level roles’ (e.g. a vet) that require a degree or equivalent.

## 2.3 Recent use of training

Around 30% of respondents have arranged or funded training for their employees in the last 12 months. This could be any sort of training, including in-house training, informal non-accredited training from a provider, an accredited qualification or other recognised programme (including, but not limited to: Functional Skills qualifications, vocational and technical qualifications and apprenticeships).

This section includes the key findings from that group of just over 600 employers who said they had provided training to their staff in the last 12 months.

When breaking down the findings by organisation size, there are some notable differences. A higher proportion of large businesses (57%) have arranged or funded training for their employees in the last 12 months, compared with 19% of micro businesses. Large employers also generally report themselves to be more knowledgeable and positive about qualifications compared with how smaller organisations present their knowledge and understanding (see chapters 3 and 4).

Of those who have recently provided training to their employees and who participated in depth interviews, a small number of respondents expressed concerns about the quality of training and its variability between training providers. Although not within the remit of this research this is worth noting, as a negative experience with a training provider may give an individual or a business a negative impression of the qualification that was taught.

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<sup>29</sup> Base number of respondents: 119

<sup>30</sup> Base number of respondents: 74

<sup>31</sup> Base number of respondents: 146

<sup>32</sup> Base number of respondents: 25

It is clear from a small number of depth interviews conducted as a follow-up to the survey that some employers do not differentiate between the qualification itself and the delivery of it.

A small number of others – who are familiar with how qualifications are delivered and awarded – provided some further insight into how, in their view, this issue could potentially harm a qualification’s reputation.

The quote below helps to illustrate this.

*“I could set up a training centre tomorrow with no experience or knowledge. They [i.e. training centres] are only checked by the awarding body as to how the assessment is applied at the end, which doesn’t take into account the quality of the training”*

**Support services employer, large business**

## **2.4 Qualifications resulting from training and at what levels**

There are no strong differences between the *level* of role employers say they support to achieve a qualification via training – i.e. whether this is a professional/managerial, skilled/supervisory or entry/admin level role. Of those who have provided training to their staff in the last 12 months, over half (52%) of respondents say all, or most, training for professional and managerial roles typically results in a qualification. The proportion is similar for skilled and supervisory roles (53%) and slightly lower for entry level and admin roles (45%).

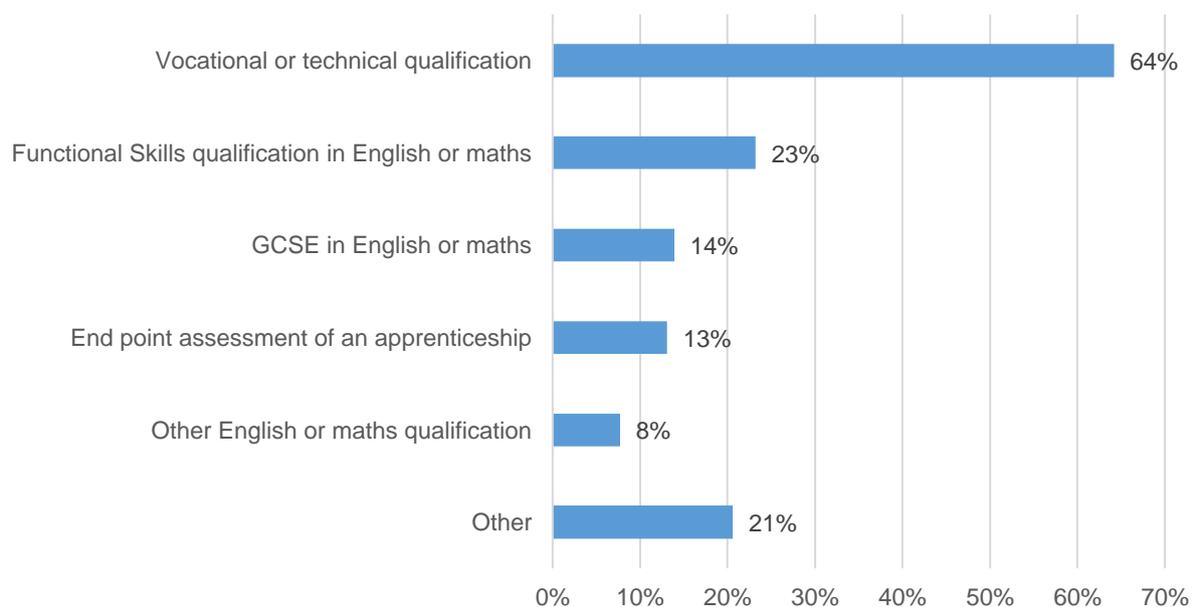
For professional roles, this proportion of around half of respondents is broadly reflected among micro, small and medium sized businesses, but increases slightly to 60% among large businesses. A similar pattern is evident for entry level and admin roles: for these roles a slightly higher proportion of large businesses say all or most

training typically results in a qualification (52%) compared with around 43% of micro, small and medium sized businesses.

Nearly two-thirds (64%) of respondents indicate that training arranged or funded in the last 12 months led to a Vocational and Technical qualification, half of which were taken as part of an apprenticeship.

Nearly a quarter (23%) of respondents show training resulted in Functional Skills qualifications in English or maths (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Outcome of training funded or arranged in the last 12 months**



Base 495

\* Note: when employers were answering questions about 'end point assessment of apprenticeships' they may have also been thinking about apprenticeships in general. See section 1.4.1 on interpreting findings.

In total 110 employers stated that Functional Skills qualifications were achieved as a result of training funded or arranged by the company, and a further 38 identified 'other' qualifications in English and maths. Most (38% of Functional Skills qualifications and 24% of other English and maths qualifications) were taken at Level 2. Qualifications arranged or funded were most typically Vocational or Technical qualifications – 310 respondents identified these as an outcome of training. Most were achieved at Level 3 (36%).

Of 64 employers identifying end point assessments of apprenticeships as an outcome of training, these were mostly at Level 3 (33%) and Level 2 (27%).

Not all qualifications/assessments are available at every level: for example Functional Skills qualifications are not available above Level 2; apprenticeship end point assessments are not available below level 2. However, it is important to note that a small number of respondents (66) suggested qualifications had been achieved at 'impossible' levels, such as Functional Skills qualification at Level 3, indicating that they do not have a detailed understanding of the qualifications/assessment in question.

## **2.5 Factors involved in choosing relevant qualifications**

Respondents who had arranged or funded training for their staff in the last 12 months were asked to indicate from a list of options, the factors taken into account when identifying which qualifications are offered to employees. These options are indicated in Figure 3 (respondents could select more than one).

Whilst 'relevance' is considered the most important factor (by 50% of respondents), sector recognition is also important (32%), and findings from the depth interviews that suggest 'sector norms' drive some employers' decision-making supports this. In these circumstances employers appear not to be basing their decisions on the appropriateness of the qualification content (or any other factors associated with its design or structure) but because it is accepted simply as 'the done thing'.

**Figure 3: Factors taken into account by employers when considering which qualifications to offer to their staff**



*Base 1,406 responses (excludes 'none of the above' responses)*

## 2.6 Reasons for not training staff

Respondents who have not arranged or funded training leading to an English or maths qualification were asked to give reasons why – the majority (70%) say there is no need for them to be delivered to their employees. It is a similar picture in respect of Vocational and Technical qualifications, with 68% of respondents saying they have no need for them.

Other reasons for not offering English or maths, or Vocational and Technical qualifications include (in order of priority and selected by less than 10% of employees):

- Being too expensive
- Taking employees away from the day job
- Being too time consuming

### 3. Functional Skills qualifications

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#### Key findings

Familiarity with Functional Skills qualifications is broadly high among all respondents, with over 80% indicating they have some understanding, and nearly two-thirds of respondents saying they have a very or quite good understanding. However it should be taken into account that employers participating in depth interviews did not have a comprehensive knowledge of Functional Skills qualifications.

There is greater understanding of Functional Skills qualifications among large businesses than among micro businesses.

Higher levels of engagement with Functional Skills qualifications are reported where respondents hold more senior roles in an organisation.

Higher proportions of respondents in the public sector say their organisation recruits people with, or arranges training leading to a Functional Skills qualification, compared to those in the third/voluntary sector and private sector.

Nearly a third of respondents say they typically recruit people with, or train in, Functional Skills qualifications, but this proportion more than doubles (to 66%) among respondents who have supported their development (for example as part of a working group or responding to a consultation).

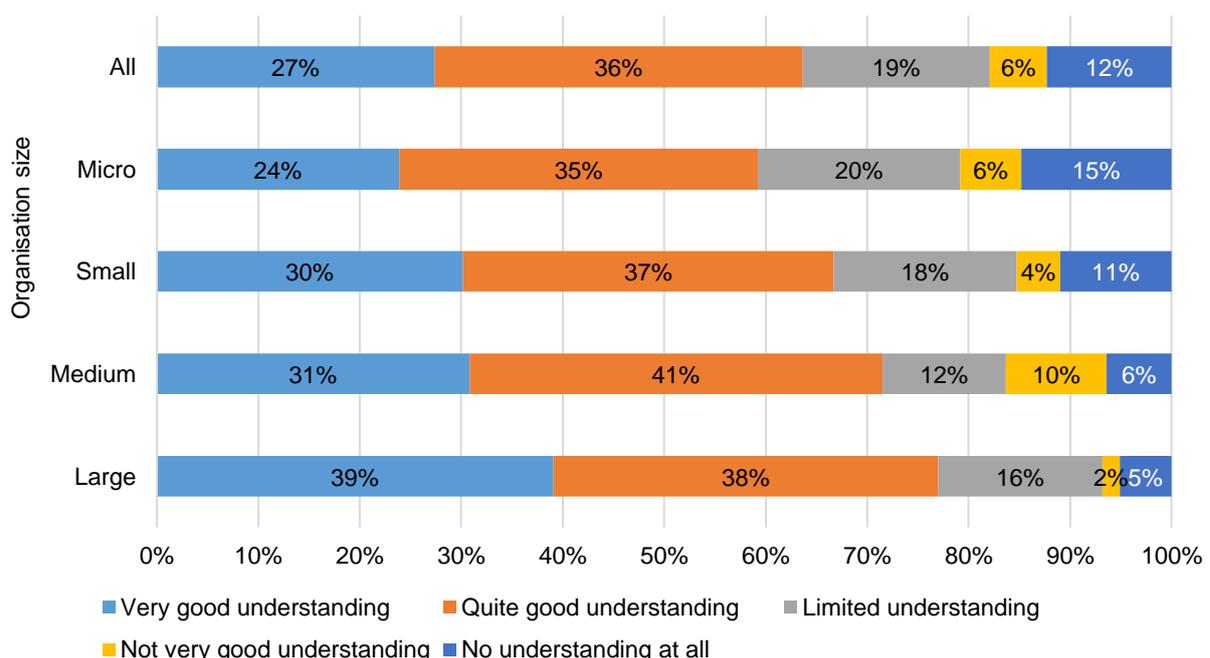
Respondents who are most familiar with Functional Skills qualifications (for example as a result of supporting development and/or because they typically recruit or train in Functional Skills qualifications), report the most positive perceptions of them.

A higher proportion of large businesses agree that Functional Skills qualifications result in benefits for their organisation, compared with micro, small and medium sized businesses. Perceptions of business benefits arising from Functional Skills qualifications were broadly similar between sectors and between regions.

### 3.1 Familiarity with/extent of understanding

Familiarity with Functional Skills qualifications is broadly high among all respondents, with 82% indicating they have some understanding. Only 12% of respondents have no understanding of them at all. Over three-quarters (77%) of large business respondents report a very or quite good understanding of Functional Skills qualifications, compared with 59% of micro businesses (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Extent of understanding of Functional Skills qualifications**



Base 1,981

There is a fair degree of differentiation in these findings, by sector – although where base numbers are low, this should be taken into account:

- Employers in the energy, utilities and mining sector<sup>33</sup> report the strongest understanding of Functional Skills qualifications i.e. very or quite good (86%), followed by the education sector<sup>34</sup> (73%);

<sup>33</sup> Base number of respondents: 22

<sup>34</sup> Base number of respondents: 70

- Employers in the hospitality sector<sup>35</sup> report the lowest levels of understanding (48%), followed by the real estate sector<sup>36</sup> (54%).

There is very little difference in levels of reported understanding between those employers who have offered (any form of) training to their staff in the last 12 months and those who have not. However it is important to note that it is not clear what type of training was offered in the last 12 months – this could have been in more generic subjects such as health & safety or first aid, in which case it is perhaps unsurprising that it is not a differentiator of opinions. However, there is a marked difference in the level of reported understanding between those who typically recruit people with, or arrange training leading to, Functional Skills qualifications and those who do not. For example, of those who do recruit or arrange training in Functional Skills, 87% of employers suggest they have a very good or quite good understanding of Functional Skills qualifications. This compares with just 52% of employers who do not recruit or offer training in Functional Skills qualifications.

Just over a quarter (28%) of respondents have been involved in supporting development of Functional Skills qualifications (e.g. through a working group or responding to a consultation). Higher levels of engagement with Functional Skills qualifications are reported where respondents hold more senior roles in an organisation. The numbers are highest amongst employers in transport, logistics and warehousing<sup>37</sup> (42%) and education<sup>38</sup> (41%). Employers in farming and forestry<sup>39</sup> and office administration and support<sup>40</sup> are least involved. A noticeably higher proportion of large businesses have been involved in supporting development of Functional Skills qualifications (61%). By comparison, nearly a fifth (18%) of micro businesses, a third of small businesses and nearly half (49%) of medium sized businesses have supported development.

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<sup>35</sup> Base number of respondents: 146

<sup>36</sup> Base number of respondents: 81

<sup>37</sup> Base number of respondents: 98

<sup>38</sup> Base number of respondents: 70

<sup>39</sup> Base number of respondents: 39

<sup>40</sup> Base number of respondents: 100

### **3.2 Recruitment/training in relation to Functional Skills qualifications**

Nearly a third (31%) of respondents either recruit people with, or train them in, Functional Skills qualifications. The proportion of respondents who do this is slightly higher in the South (33%) than in the North (28%). It also increases to 67% among respondents who describe themselves as employer training providers, and to 66% among respondents who have supported the development of Functional Skills qualifications. Around a third of respondents who train/recruit in Functional Skills have had experience supporting their development in the last few years (for example as a member of a working group, responding to an online consultation or contributing to assessment design). There are also differences by organisation size, with 68% of large businesses saying they recruit people with, or train their employees in Functional Skills, compared with just 18% of micro businesses.

Higher proportions of respondents in the public sector say their organisation recruits people with, or arrange training leading to a Functional Skills qualification, compared to those in the third/voluntary sector and private sector (47%, 34% and 29% respectively).

### **3.3 Perceptions of Functional Skills qualifications**

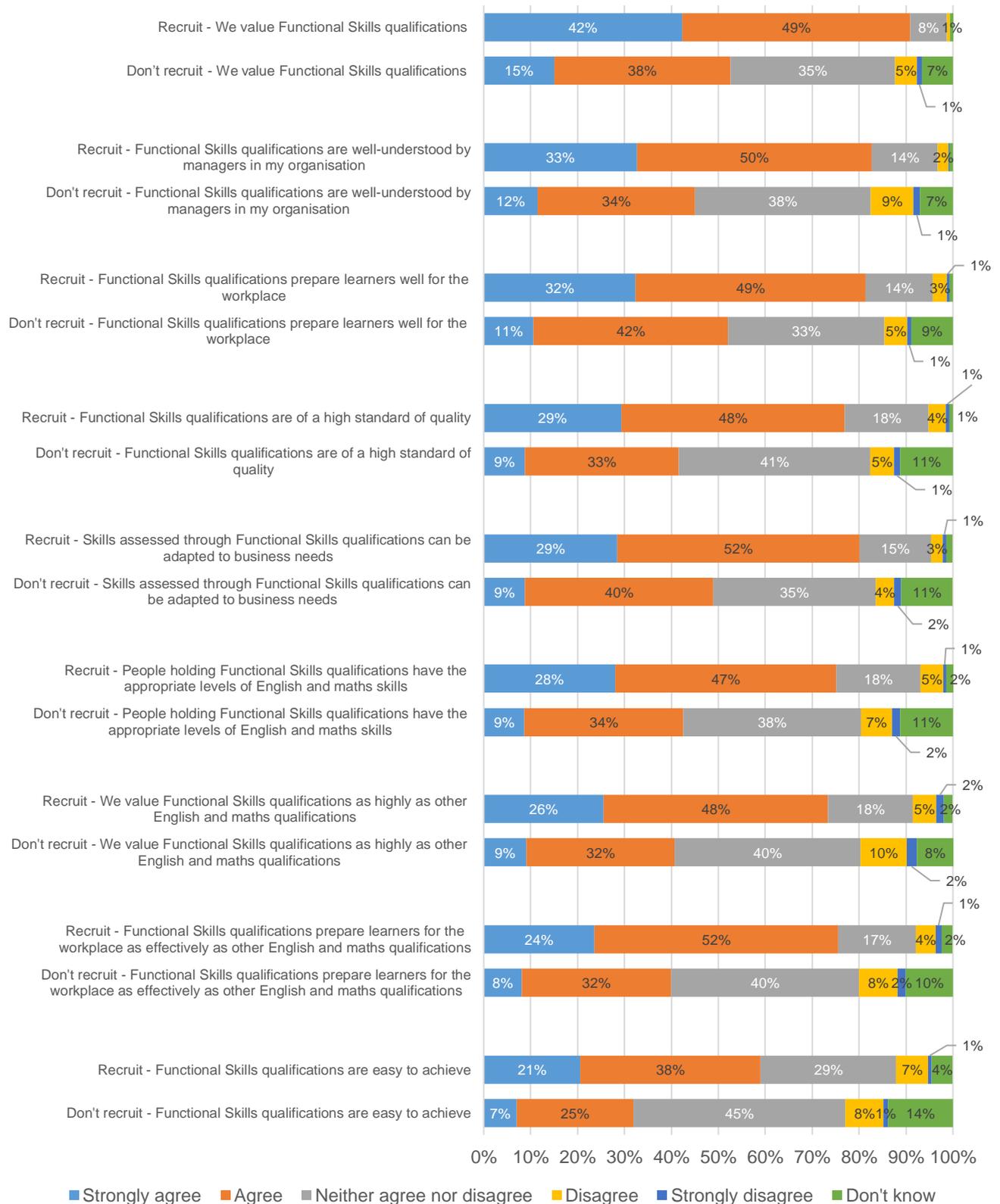
Respondents who indicated they have a very or quite good or limited (i.e. some) understanding of Functional Skills qualifications were asked about their perceptions of them, by giving a response to a number of statements made about the qualifications. Respondents who train in or recruit people with Functional Skills report more positive perceptions compared with those who do not (Figure 5).

Those with experience of developing the qualifications tend to be slightly more positive about them in certain respects; more of these types of employers tend to agree with positive statements about Functional Skills qualifications, in terms of valuing them as highly as other English and maths qualifications (71%), agreeing that they can be adapted to business needs (76%), and agreeing that they are of a

high standard (74%). Around 89% of respondents say they value Functional Skills qualifications if they have had involvement in their development - compared with 67% of all respondents.

Respondents who describe themselves as employer training providers are also more positive about Functional Skills qualifications than the overall sample of employers.

**Figure 5: Employer perceptions of Functional Skills qualifications - those who recruit or train and those who do not recruit or train individuals in Functional Skills qualifications**



Base 1,283

NB: For ease Figure 5 uses the word ‘recruit’ or ‘don’t recruit’ but this refers to recruit or train in Functional Skills qualifications.

Perceptions of Functional Skills vary by sector. Sectors with the most positive views are energy, utilities and mining<sup>41</sup>, and health and social care<sup>42</sup>. The sectors of farming and forestry<sup>43</sup> and arts, culture, sport and leisure<sup>44</sup> are least positive about Functional Skills.

A number of these responses were followed up in depth interviews. A mix of respondents were sampled, to include those with positive and negative perceptions of Functional Skills qualifications. It must be emphasised that it was clear that respondents did not have a great depth of understanding about the qualifications. The quotes below illustrate general reactions of employers when asked about whether they had positive, or negative, views about Functional Skills qualifications.

*“I think it is always good to upskill where you can. We are happy and don’t think they need to be changed.”*

**Social care, micro business**

*“I don’t know how it relates to us but it is a good thing in general.”*

**Office administration and support, micro business**

*“Don’t know a lot – a lot have Functional Skills qualifications when they come to us.”*

**Social care, micro business**

*“I view them positively. If they haven’t got the skills relevant to the job they are carrying out they need to be improved.”*

**Education, small business**

<sup>41</sup> Base number of respondents: 22

<sup>42</sup> Base number of respondents: 83

<sup>43</sup> Base number of respondents: 39

<sup>44</sup> Base number of respondents: 84

*“But for me it can sometimes be very difficult for people who have struggled at school. I know it is important but I know it can be very daunting. I think the way it is delivered could be changed or improved but we don’t deliver that so I’m not sure how. It’s having the right support, making it not scary etc. it’s a challenge.”*

**Social care, large business**

*“I know of them and am positive about them. But I don’t know a lot about them.”*

**Computing, digital, IT, small business**

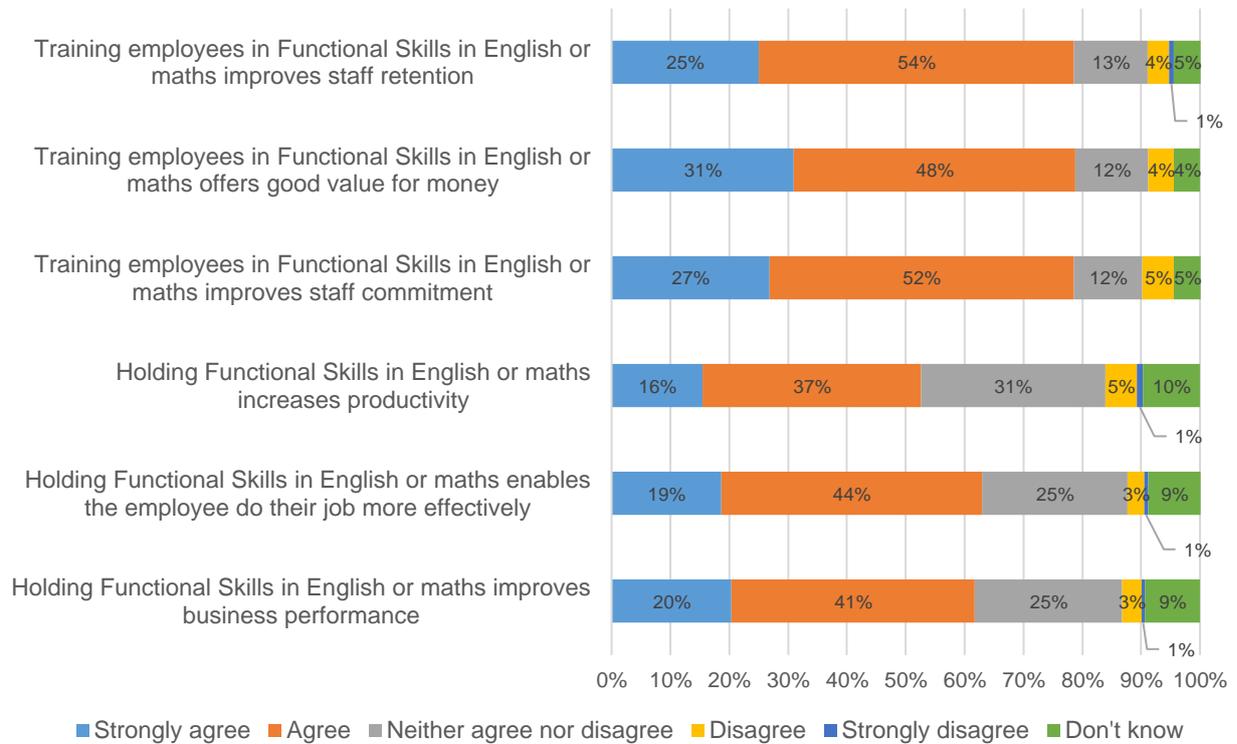
Respondents who disagreed that they value Functional Skills qualifications as highly as other English and maths qualifications were asked if they value them more or less highly. The majority (83%) value them less highly. It is the same picture among respondents who disagreed that Functional Skills qualifications prepare learners as effectively for the workplace as other English and maths qualifications; 83% say they prepare them less effectively.

### **3.4 Business benefits associated with Functional Skills qualifications**

Respondents who recruit or train in Functional Skills qualifications, or who said they had a very or quite good understanding of them, were asked to state their agreement with a list of statements given about the potential business benefits of Functional Skills (Figure 6). Perceptions of business benefits were broadly similar between sectors and between regions.

A higher proportion of large businesses agree that Functional Skills qualifications result in benefits for their organisation, compared with micro, small and medium sized businesses. However differences between organisation sizes are minimal when asked whether achieving a Functional Skills qualification leads to new responsibilities for employees. A higher proportion of large businesses say achieving a Functional Skills qualification leads to improved job status/a promotion or a pay increase either all or some of the time, compared with micro businesses.

**Figure 6: Business benefits perceived as a result of employees holding Functional Skills qualifications**



*Bases: 112; 113; 112; 1,661; 1,668; 1,671 (NB the first three options were only asked of respondents who had employees trained to achieve a Functional Skills qualification in the last 12 months)*

## 4. Vocational and technical qualifications

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### Key findings

Awareness of Vocational and Technical qualifications is predominantly high, with 87% of respondents having some form of understanding, and 66% of respondents with a very or quite good understanding. There is greater awareness of Vocational and Technical qualifications reported by medium and large businesses, compared with micro businesses.

Depth interviewees who hold positive perceptions of Vocational and Technical qualifications predominantly base their views on organisational culture i.e. accustomed to always recruiting or training in Vocational and Technical qualifications, rather than because they understand what the qualifications offer. However employers working in sectors where qualifications are a regulatory requirement have greater knowledge and were able to give a detailed view about fitness for purpose of qualifications.

Around three times as many large businesses say they recruit people with, or train people in Vocational and Technical qualifications, compared with micro businesses.

Employers tend to have slightly better perceptions of vocational and technical qualifications than they do of Functional Skills qualifications. Employers who have been involved in supporting development of Vocational and Technical qualifications, and those that describe themselves as employer training providers, hold more positive perceptions than other respondents. As with Functional Skills, those who typically recruit or train in Vocational and Technical qualifications are more positive about them, than those that do not. Larger businesses are more favourable than small and micro businesses about Vocational and Technical qualifications.

Employers thinking about Vocational and Technical qualifications in the context of apprenticeships, have consistently more positive perceptions of them, than when they are considering them as standalone qualifications.

## 4.1 Familiarity with/extent of understanding

Around 87% of respondents report some understanding of Vocational and Technical qualifications, with two-thirds of respondents saying they have a very or quite good understanding. Only 6% say they have no understanding at all. A higher proportion of medium and large businesses say they have a very or quite good understanding of Vocational and Technical qualifications (83%) compared with micro businesses (63%). However this needs to be considered in the context of the depth interview findings, which revealed that although employers report a very or quite good understanding, in practice their understanding appears limited.

For example, when judging the fitness-for-purpose of a qualification, employers taking part in depth interviews appear to base their views on a number of factors:

- what is accepted, or the norm, in the sector;
- whether or not they have heard of the qualification type or brand;
- the extent to which the holder of the qualification has the required aptitude for the job.

However it should be emphasised that most of the employers interviewed had only a very vague understanding of qualification content, even when they were able to give specific examples of qualifications typically held by those working in their sector. A much higher proportion (61%) of large businesses have been involved in developing Vocational and Technical qualifications, compared with nearly a fifth (18%) of micro businesses. However it was evident even among larger businesses that were interviewed, that respondents predominantly lacked a comprehensive understanding of the qualifications.

## 4.2 Recruitment/training in relation to Vocational and Technical qualifications

Over a quarter (27%) of respondents typically recruit people with, or train people in Vocational and Technical qualifications. The proportion of respondents who do this increases to 59% among respondents who describe themselves as employer training providers, and to 45% among respondents who have supported the development of Vocational and Technical qualifications.

However there is considerably less variation between sectors of the kind seen for Functional Skills qualifications.

Over half of large businesses say they recruit people with, or train people in Vocational and Technical qualifications compared with 17% of micro businesses saying the same.

## 4.3 Perceptions of Vocational and Technical qualifications

Employers in retail, manufacturing, food & drink and, sport and leisure who took part in depth interviews rate vocational and technical qualifications (specifically NVQs) highly but were not able to provide a reason as to why they held that view. It is important to note that for these employers, their perceptions were formed based on sector 'norms' suggesting there are culturally embedded views because recruitment and training is 'always done this way'. The majority of depth interview respondents appeared to form their views in this way rather than basing their opinion on a clear understanding of a qualification. When asked their views on vocational and technical qualifications generally, those with positive perceptions expressed a similar rationale.

*"I feel some positivity but not having come across anyone who has one because we haven't had to recruit I couldn't say."*

**Advertising and market research, micro business**

*"I view them positively. It's a good opportunity to learn through the vocation, rather than off the job."*

**Education, small business**

*“I guess [I view them] positively. We try and have a reasonably open mind about vocational qualifications. We wouldn’t exclude anyone because they had a vocational qualification.”*

**Computing, digital, IT, small business**

*“I think for us it is very important that we are doing qualifications that relate to the practice. All we want is for the qualification to meet the needs and I feel that they do that.”*

**Social care, large business**

*“It’s all a good thing to learn on the job. I don’t think there can be anything bad about having any sort of qualifications or undertaking any sort of training.”*

**Real estate, large business**

*“I view vocational qualifications positively. I’m not sure there’s any available in our sector though.”*

**Office administration and support, micro business**

Employers tend to have slightly better perceptions of vocational and technical qualifications than they do of Functional Skills qualifications.

Vocational and Technical qualifications are, according to respondents, best understood by managers in the health and social care, and real estate sectors. Sectors which are less positive about vocational and technical qualifications include energy, utilities and mining, manufacturing and arts, culture, sport and leisure.

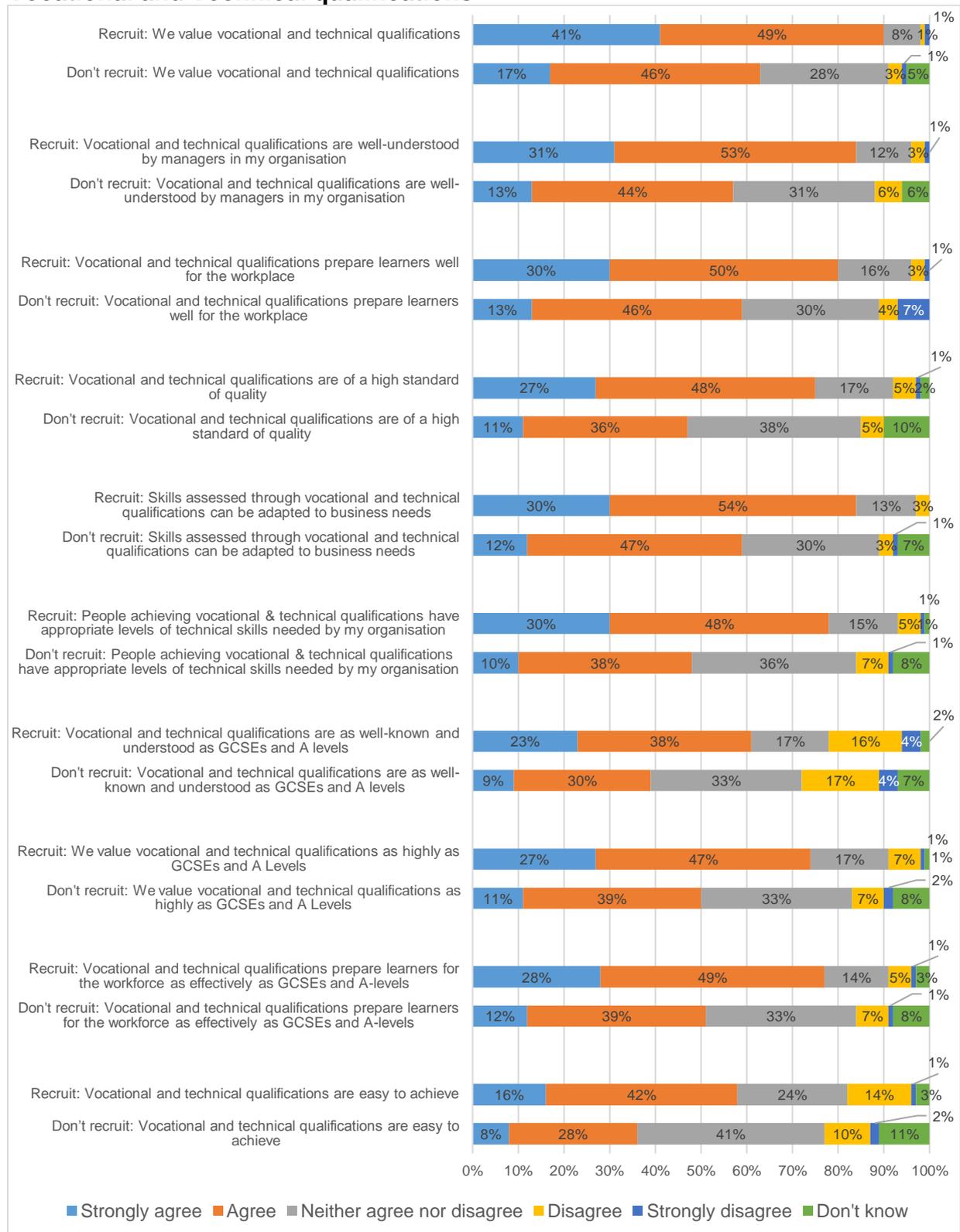
Respondents that indicated they have a very or quite good or limited (i.e. some) understanding of Vocational and Technical qualifications were asked about their perceptions of them, by giving a response to a number of statements made about the qualifications. On the whole, a higher proportion of respondents who describe

themselves as employer training providers, and those involved in the development of Vocational and Technical qualifications report positive perceptions compared with those who do not. As with Functional Skills, those that typically recruit or train in Vocational and Technical qualifications are more positive than those who do not (Figure 7).

Respondents who disagree that they value Vocational and Technical qualifications as highly as GCSEs and A Levels were asked if they value them more or less highly. Nearly three-quarters (74%) say they value them less highly.

Similarly respondents who disagree that Vocational and Technical qualifications prepare learners for the workplace as effectively as GCSEs and A Levels were asked if they prepare them less effectively or more effectively. Two-thirds say they prepare them less effectively.

**Figure 7: Employer perceptions of Vocational and Technical qualifications - those who recruit or train and those who do not recruit or train individuals in Vocational and Technical qualifications**

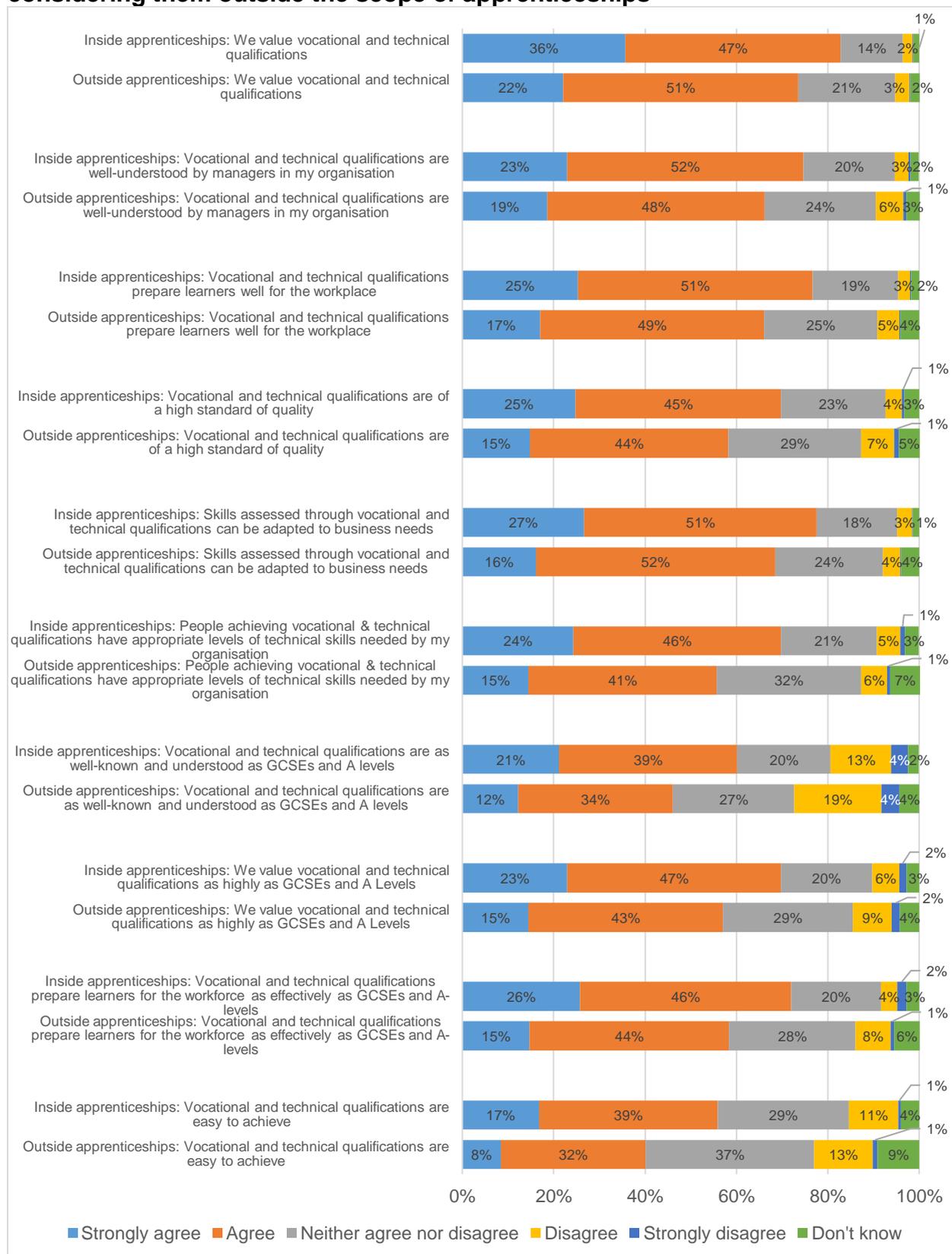


Bases 1,658; 1,665; 1,670; 1,666; 1,665; 1,670; 1,665; 1,663

NB: For ease Figure 7 uses the word 'recruit' or 'don't recruit' but this refers to recruit or train in Vocational and Technical qualifications.

It was important for Ofqual to understand whether responses given about Vocational and Technical qualifications were in the context of an apprentice taking them as part of the apprenticeship, or as standalone qualifications. The survey therefore asked for overall views, with subsequent questions used to determine whether respondents were thinking of qualifications inside or outside of apprenticeships. Responses were consistently more favourable where taken in the context of an apprenticeship, compared to where the respondent was thinking about a 'standalone' Vocational and Technical qualification (Figure 8).

**Figure 8: Employer perceptions of Vocational and Technical qualifications - those considering them inside the scope of apprenticeships and those considering them outside the scope of apprenticeships**



Bases: 1,331; 1,336; 1,340; 1,336; 1,344; 1,340; 1,336; 1,334

#### 4.4 Sector-specific awareness of qualification/career development paths

Employers were asked in follow-up depth interviews about the typical qualifications and career development pathways within their sector. Although a small number suggested this could vary significantly depending on the job role in question, some provided insights into the types of qualifications that are sought and the reasons for this.

A wide range of qualifications were mentioned in the depth interviews, but mostly those with an academic focus such as GCSEs, A-levels and degrees. This was certainly the case for employers in education, real estate, engineering, IT and public relations; GCSEs and A-levels were also cited by those in retail. Vocational and Technical qualifications were cited where there is a regulatory requirement, but aside from this were not mentioned by depth interviewees.

A small number of employers described vocational and technical qualifications as a requirement in their sector, and this was typically in those sectors where NVQs have been in existence for a number of years. Examples of these include education (for teaching assistants), childcare, and sport and leisure, as follows:

*“Teaching Assistants have NVQ Level 3 to work in a classroom and in pre-school”*

**Education, medium business**

*“Yes within the childcare sector because it’s a regulation requirement to complete within 2 years. With regards to development paths it is bound by compliance. It’s clear cut and regulatory... We have residential services so we do level 3 in childcare, Health and social care 2 and 3 and ILM qualifications at level 5 or level 7 for managers”*

**Childcare, large business**

*“Yes, at Level 2 the trainer needs to be qualified to take groups; then there is a Level 3 qualification for one-to-one training. The sector norm is to have Level 2 and Level 3. Then a private studio will do Level 4 for extra strength and fitness.”*  
**[this example referred to an NVQ]**

**Sport and leisure, micro business**

Employers in the food and drink and manufacturing sectors spoke about using in-house training and sometimes internationally branded qualifications to underpin career progression.

Five employers stated they did not look for any specific qualifications, one suggesting that career progression depends on the acquisition of skills but that these don't need to be formally assessed or accredited in any way. Another will offer in-house training, accredited qualifications and apprenticeships. Experience was valued by all of these employers, as well as good transferable skills, literacy and numeracy.

*“Again, no specific qualifications. It's more about skills. My husband is qualified under C&G carpenter background and I have a degree in health and post grad cert in education but it's unrelated to our jobs. The people skills and life experience is more helpful.”*

**Rental and leasing, micro business**

*“If they didn't have any experience I would require more qualifications. GCSEs would be good. Good English and maths. We don't want them serving customers and giving the wrong change or writing on the boards and spelling things wrong.”*

**Retail, micro business**

*“Don't expect anything. We give on the job training... We look for basic understanding of word, email and excel. Most people have this – and it's easily trained up.”*

**Professional services, small business**

## 4.5 Sector-specific awareness of qualification ‘brands’ and types of qualifications sought for recruitment and training

In terms of qualification ‘brands’, depth interviews sought to understand employer awareness of specific types of qualifications<sup>45</sup> and those offered by individual awarding organisations or examination boards. The results were very variable (as illustrated by the quotes overleaf).

On the whole employers were aware of GCSEs, A levels and degrees; of vocational and technical qualifications, employers were most aware of NVQs. However, not all employers require qualifications, instead providing in-house training once they have recruited staff, sometimes linked to a professional body for example.

Specific organisations offering qualifications most cited by employers were ILM (Institute of Leadership and Management), Edexcel and Pearson. Others mentioned included CSCS (the construction sector body that governs the competence card scheme) and CIPR (Chartered Institute of Public Relations), indicating some employers misunderstand what is meant by an awarding organisation. Employers typically referred to A levels, NVQs and BTECs among the types of qualifications with which they say they are familiar.

On the whole, employers tended to be familiar with the awarding organisations that typically operate in a certain sector – for example CACHE among childcare providers. However there was greater awareness across the board of the more generic ILM, applicable to multiple sectors.

*“I know universities give degrees and colleges do NVQs and things but that’s all I know.”*

**Manufacturing, micro business**

<sup>45</sup> Such as VRQs, NVQs, HNC/Ds, Foundation degrees, General Qualifications, A levels, Degrees.

*“CACHE and ILM are more established but all others are recognised [i.e. valued equally by our sector].”*

**Social care, large business**

*“People don’t tend to list out the exam board, people usually just take the qualification with whoever the college decides to go with.”*

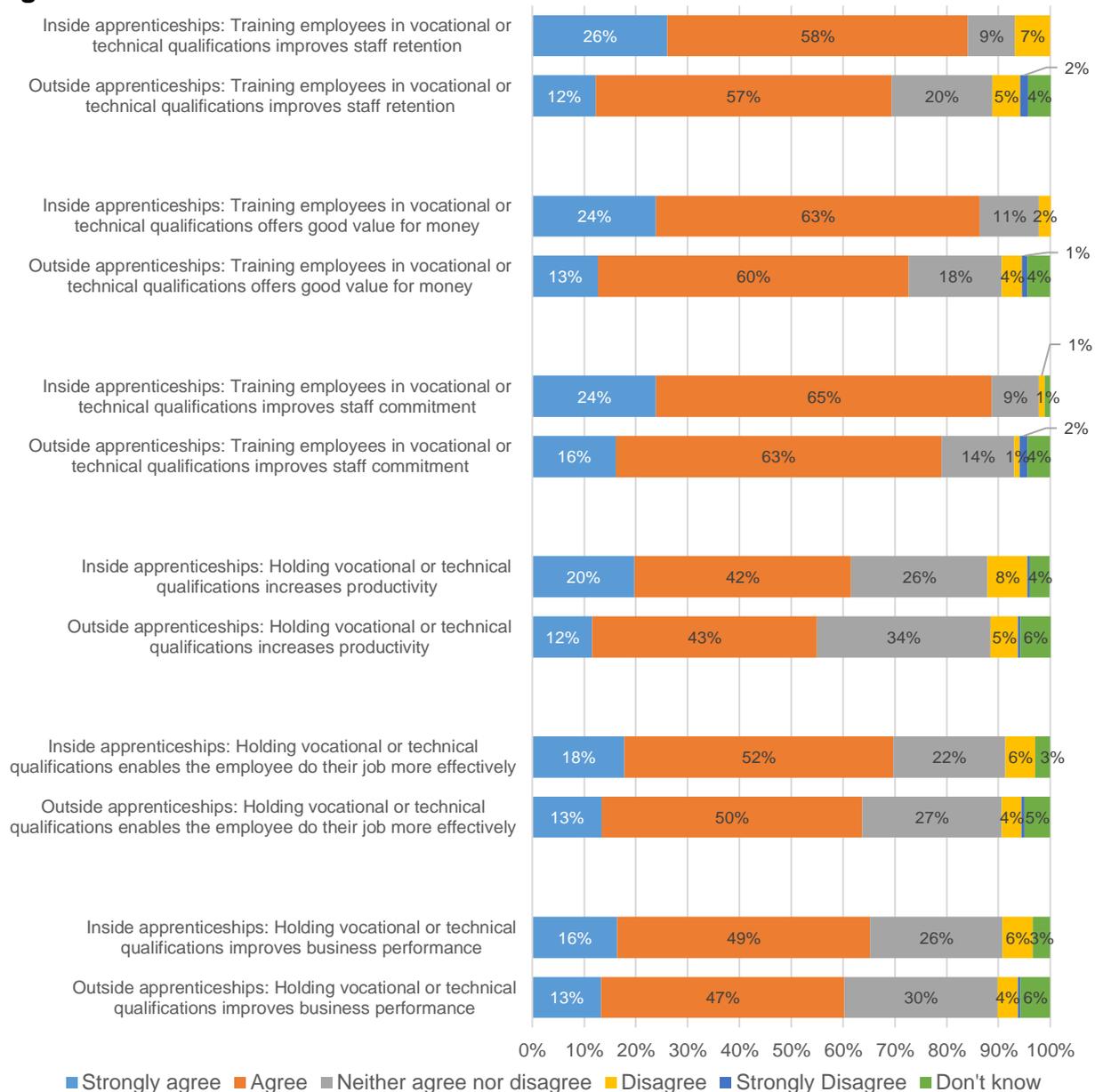
**Computing, digital, IT, small business**

#### **4.6 Business benefits associated with Vocational and Technical qualifications**

Respondents were asked to rate their extent of agreement with a range of business benefits associated with Vocational and Technical qualifications. As with Functional Skills, a higher proportion of respondents with experience of supporting development of Vocational and Technical qualifications report positive perceptions of business benefits, compared with those that do not have this experience. Also a higher proportion of large businesses report positive perceptions than small or micro businesses.

Respondents considering Vocational and Technical qualifications in the context of an apprenticeship are more positive about the business benefits than those respondents considering them on a standalone basis (Figure 9).

**Figure 9: Business benefits of Vocational and Technical Qualifications**



Bases<sup>46</sup>: 301; 301; 301; 1,006; 1,010; 1,009 (N.B. the first three options were only asked of respondents who had trained in Vocational and Technical qualifications in the last 12 months)

Similarly, respondents considering Vocational and Technical qualifications in the context of an apprenticeship say achievement of the qualifications are more likely to lead to positive outcomes for employees, compared with those that are standalone. Around 28% of respondents say achieving Vocational and Technical qualifications in

<sup>46</sup> Base numbers exclude those respondents who indicated they 'prefer not to say' if they are thinking about Vocational and Technical qualifications inside or outside of the context of apprenticeships

the context of an apprenticeship will result in a pay increase, compared with only 9% of respondents saying the same when they are standalone qualifications.

#### **4.7 Sector-specific views on fitness for purpose, rigour, relevance etc. of qualifications**

Whilst for the most part, depth interviews suggest employers do not have a clear understanding of qualifications, employers working in sectors where qualifications are a regulatory requirement have a much better knowledge, and were able to give a detailed view about fitness for purpose of qualifications. For example one childcare respondent was able to provide a detailed synopsis of the nature of childcare qualifications, how they are delivered and assessed. They were satisfied with the content and felt the current qualifications deliver the appropriate skills and knowledge.

*“Residential qualification for example has been designed to hit all areas relating to the services and sectors. It’s really accurate. We don’t have to make situations up as it is all related to the job they are doing. We don’t have to find situations to meet the needs. It’s moving over at the moment but we are hoping the residential childcare one won’t change too much because it already meets the needs.”*

**Social care, large business**

One respondent in the sport and leisure sector understood the content of Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications required in the sector and where these could be improved.

*“Like in most industries, the individual needs to get to Level 2 and Level 3. If you do the work you’re able to pass... Once someone has achieved a qualification they can broaden out into client management – in this industry the personal trainer is also a client manager. If someone has done their own reading on top of their qualifications, then they’d stand out.”*

**Sport and leisure, micro business**

Those who view Vocational and Technical qualifications positively pointed to the value of learning on the job, developing the required technical skills as well as vital transferable and soft skills. For these employers, on-the-job experience and employability skills are key.

Employers were also asked if they had ever had to retrain an employee because they were unable to do their job. Nearly all respondents stated they had never been faced with this situation because either they assess people as part of the recruitment process or they provide on-the-job training anyway (e.g. in food hygiene). Two employers suggested they would deal with the situation by sending an individual on refresher training.

## 5. End point assessment of apprenticeships

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### Key findings

Nearly a quarter (23%) of respondents report that they are familiar with end point assessments of apprenticeships. This figure appears high in comparison with the number of end point assessments have actually been delivered, however depth interview feedback suggests that it is likely that some respondents answered the questions in relation to apprenticeships more generally speaking. This needs to be taken into account when considering the findings.

Large businesses typically report a better understanding of end point assessments of apprenticeships in comparison with micro businesses.

Employers in the education sector are best informed about end point assessments in comparison with other sectors; understanding is also relatively high among construction and facilities management employers.

A higher proportion of large businesses perceive positive benefits for their business, where employees achieve end point assessments of apprenticeships, compared with small and micro businesses.

### 5.1 Familiarity with/extent of understanding

The aim of this study is to understand end point assessments of apprenticeships delivered in the context of a standards-based apprenticeship. Apprenticeship standards have been reformed from the former apprenticeship frameworks, which are being phased out. The survey findings described in this section of the report are based on questions that were intended to be about the end point assessment of apprenticeships, only. The questions were not concerned with apprenticeships in general (e.g. frameworks and standards) or training delivery. All of the questions asked specifically asked about “*end point assessment of apprenticeships*”.

Nearly a quarter (23%) of respondents report that they are familiar with end point assessments of apprenticeships (455 of the 1980 respondents that answered this question). Considering that few end point assessments have actually been delivered, this figure appears somewhat high. Feedback from the depth interviews however, suggests that it is likely that some respondents answered the questions in relation to apprenticeships more generally speaking and this should be taken into account when considering the findings. There is greater familiarity with end point assessments of apprenticeships among respondents who describe themselves as employer training providers. A higher proportion of large businesses (72%) have a very or quite good understanding of end point assessments of apprenticeships – compared with 38% of micro businesses.

Employers in the education sector<sup>47</sup> report being best informed about end point assessments (in comparison with other sectors)<sup>48</sup>, with 71% saying they have either a ‘very good’ or ‘quite good’ understanding of them. Employers in construction and facilities management<sup>49</sup> also report a fairly good understanding of end point assessment of apprenticeships (66%).

Involvement in developing end point assessments of apprenticeships is most commonplace amongst employers in energy, utilities and mining<sup>50</sup> (43% of employers having been involved) and in the education sector (40%). This compares with only 13% of those in farming and forestry<sup>51</sup> and 15% of employers in scientific sectors<sup>52</sup> (including pharmaceutical, scientific research and professional services). Many other sectors are around the average of a quarter of employers having been involved. Where employer involvement numbers are higher or lower, this may be a reflection of the sector’s early or late engagement with the reform programme.

The remaining findings reported in this chapter are based only on those 455 employers who are familiar with end point assessments of apprenticeships. Bearing

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<sup>47</sup> Base number of respondents: 70

<sup>48</sup> Respondents in the education sector were also among the most well informed in relation to Functional Skills and Vocational and Technical qualifications

<sup>49</sup> Base number of respondents: 177

<sup>50</sup> Base number of respondents: 22

<sup>51</sup> Base number of respondents: 39

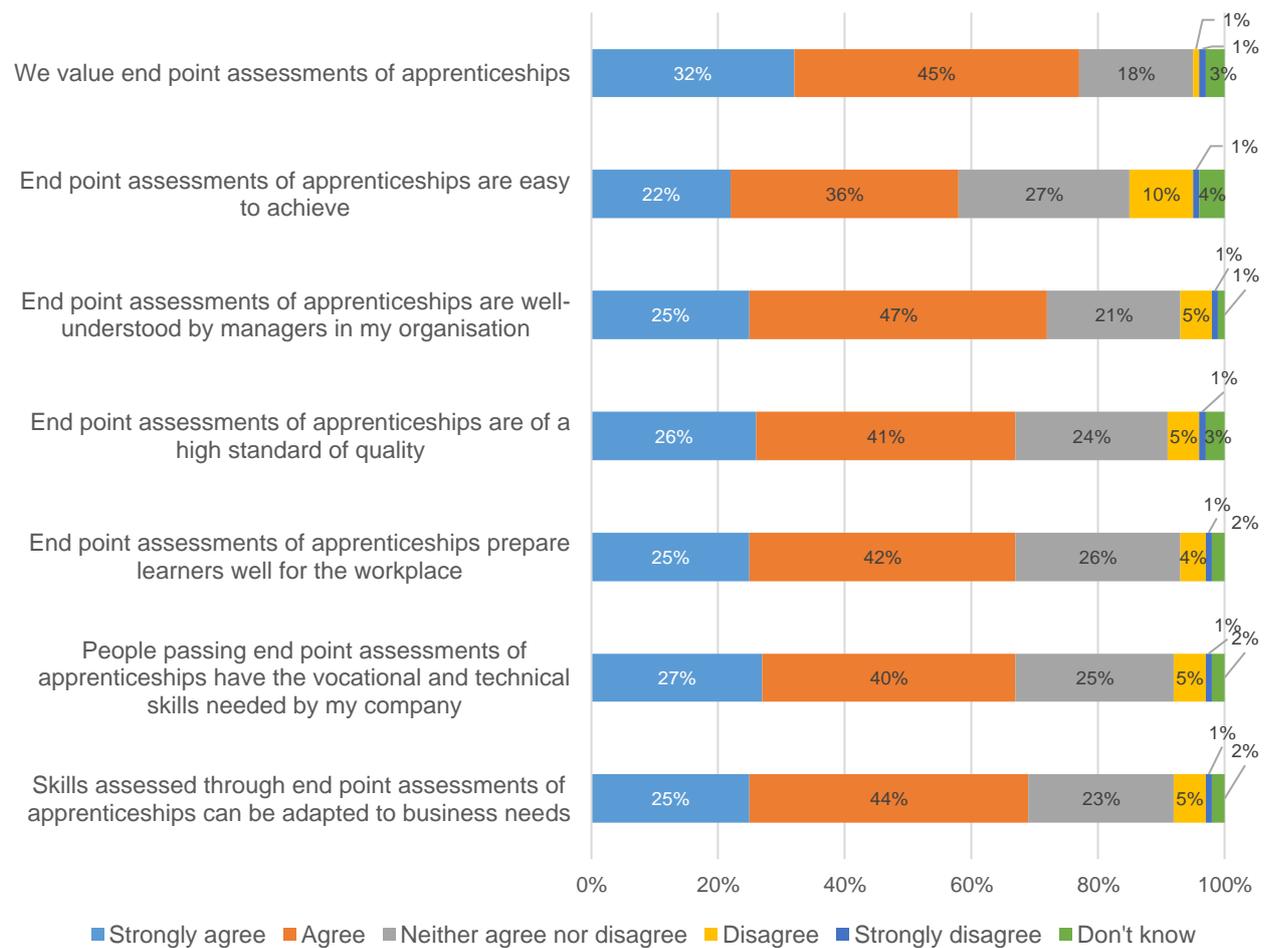
<sup>52</sup> Base number of respondents: 234

in mind that few EPAs have been delivered at the time of writing, it is unclear whether employers report them to be high quality because they have seen the new assessment plans, because the discussion about involving employers in assessment is making them positive, or because they are thinking about something other than an actual EPA.

## **5.2 Perceptions of end point assessments of apprenticeships**

Respondents who said they have a very or quite good or limited (i.e. some) understanding of them, were asked to give their views on a series of statements about their perceptions of them (Figure 10). As with Functional Skills and Vocational and Technical qualifications, a higher proportion of large businesses and those who describe themselves as employer training providers have more positive perceptions compared with smaller businesses and those less likely to provide training to their employees (of any kind).

**Figure 10: Perceptions of end point assessments of apprenticeships**



Base 455

End point assessments of apprenticeships are most valued by employers in the health and social care<sup>53</sup>, and manufacturing sectors<sup>54</sup> (94% and 87% of employers, respectively).

On the whole, employers in the health and social care sector agreed most with positive statements about end point assessment of apprenticeships. Other sectors with positive views include hospitality<sup>55</sup>, transport, logistics and warehousing<sup>56</sup>.

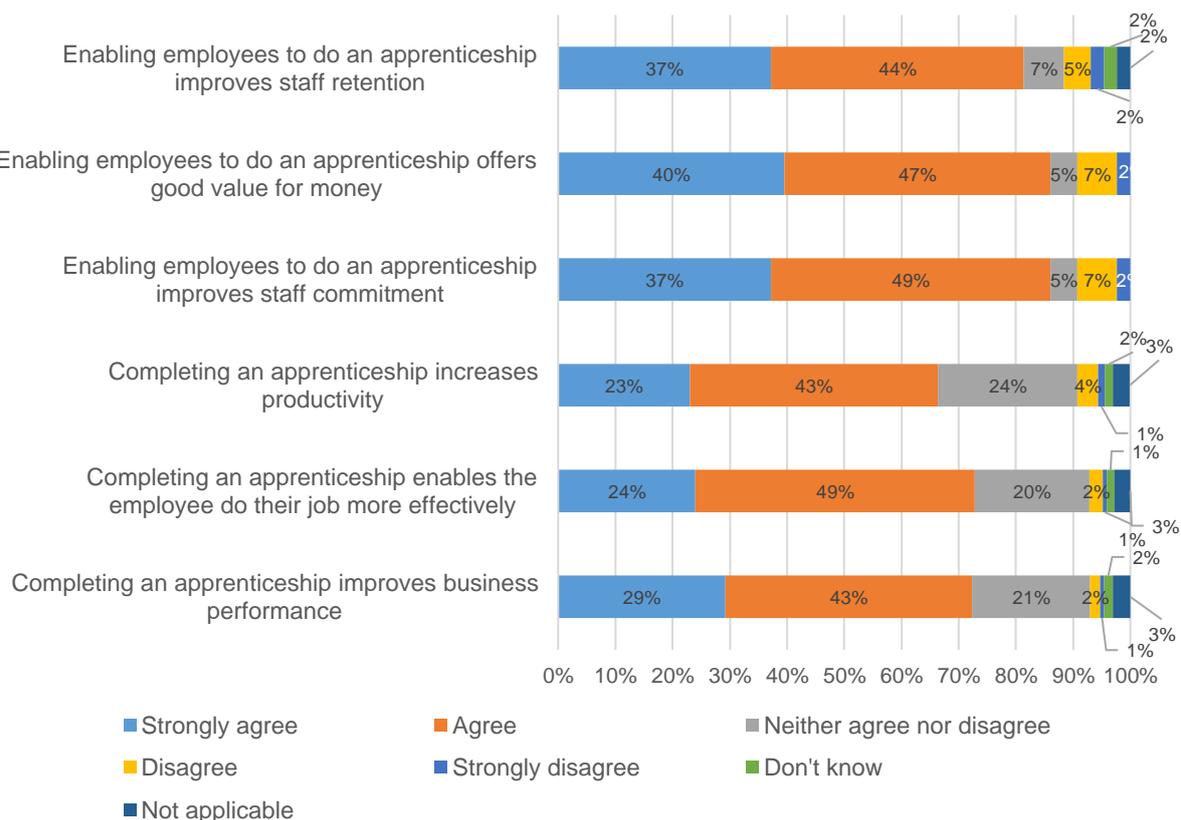
<sup>53</sup> Base number of respondents: 82  
<sup>54</sup> Base number of respondents: 153  
<sup>55</sup> Base number of respondents: 146  
<sup>56</sup> Base number of respondents: 98

### 5.3 Business benefits associated with end point assessment of apprenticeships

Respondents were asked about their perceptions of business benefits, and outcomes for employees where employees had completed the end point assessment of apprenticeships (Figure 11). Again it should be emphasised that it seems likely some respondents were thinking of apprenticeships more generally – particularly as there have been very few end point assessments at the time of writing.

A higher proportion of large businesses perceive positive benefits for their business, compared with small and micro businesses.

**Figure 11: Business benefits of end point assessments of apprenticeships**



*Bases: 43 (top three options – routed so that only those reporting training employees in end point assessments of apprenticeships answered these questions); 456-459 (last three options)*

## 6. General understanding and perceptions of the qualifications landscape

### Key findings

Nearly half of all respondents report awareness of qualifications reform – whether this be existing or proposed changes (45% aware of changes to Functional Skills; 45% aware of changes to assessment of apprenticeships; 48% aware of changes to Vocational and Technical qualifications).

There is greater awareness of proposed or current changes (to both qualifications and assessments) among respondents that describe themselves as employer training providers, and among those with experience of supporting development of qualifications.

Employers in the education sector, perhaps unsurprisingly, report the highest levels of awareness of reform, compared with other sectors.

Feedback from the depth interviews show that it is not typical for employers to liaise with Awarding Organisations and SSCs in connection with qualifications. A small number of respondents interviewed suggest trade and professional bodies should have a role in supporting qualifications development. Others interviewed consider that employers could do more to support setting standards and supporting qualification design, although could not clearly articulate what this should look like in practice.

## 6.1 Awareness of qualifications reform

### **Reform of the qualifications landscape**

The vocational qualifications landscape within England is changing, with reforms to Functional Skills qualifications, the introduction of new technical qualifications and the launch of apprenticeship standards.

#### **Functional Skills**

A comprehensive review of Functional Skills English and maths qualifications was instigated in early 2016. Drawing on widespread consultation with employers, subject bodies and the FE sector, new 'subject content' for the qualifications has been developed to bring them up to date and better respond to employers' needs.

#### **Vocational and Technical Qualifications**

In response to the findings of the Sainsbury Review, 15 new education routes are being introduced with the aim of streamlining qualifications. The reform is intended to ensure parity between academic and technical qualifications, and will see the introduction of new 'T-Level' qualifications as an alternative to A levels.

#### **Apprenticeships**

The way in which apprenticeships are designed, assessed and funded is undergoing significant change. The content of every apprenticeship will be described in a two-page 'standard' (replacing detailed 'frameworks') and at the end of their programme, every apprentice will undergo an end point assessment. Large employers will contribute to funding apprenticeship provision through a Levy payment on their annual wage bill.

All respondents were asked to comment on their extent of awareness of qualifications and assessment reform.

Of those respondents who are most well informed of current reforms, 169 respondents (8% of the overall sample) state they are aware of and understand all

three of the current reforms (Functional Skills, Vocational/Technical qualifications and how apprentices are assessed). Sixty-one respondents (3% of overall sample) are aware of and understand two types of reform, and 107 (5% of overall sample) are aware of and understand just one of the reforms<sup>57</sup>. When considering these findings, it should be taken into account that fieldwork took place in early 2017, at a time when reform of the way apprentices will be assessed, Functional Skills and Vocational and Technical qualifications, were all at very different stages.

Nearly half (45%) of respondents are aware of Functional Skills qualifications reform (i.e. everyone that gave a response beginning with 'yes' in Figure 12). Around 14% of respondents say they are aware of and understand them, and 15% of respondents have *some* understanding (Figure 12).

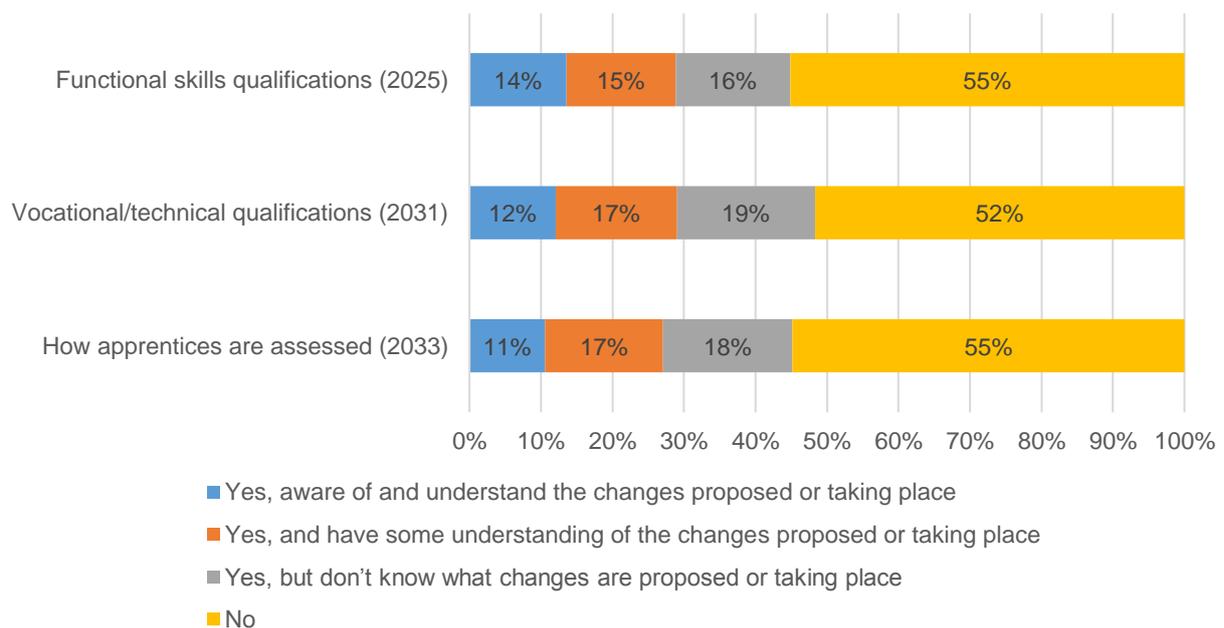
It is a similar picture in respect of Vocational and Technical qualifications reform; 48% of respondents are aware of reform proposed or taking place. In respect of changes to the way apprentices will be assessed, 45% of respondents have some awareness of proposed or current changes (i.e. everyone that gave a response beginning with 'yes' in Figure 12). Around 11% of respondents say they are aware of and understand them, and 17% of respondents have *some* understanding (Figure 12). This is broadly in alignment with the 23% of respondents who described themselves as being familiar with end point assessments of apprenticeships.

There is greater awareness of proposed or current changes (to both qualifications and assessments) among respondents that describe themselves as employer training providers, and among those with experience of supporting development of qualifications.

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<sup>57</sup> Responses in Figure 12 should not be compared with this analysis, which looked at the full sample

**Figure 12: Awareness of qualifications and assessment reform, as reported by employers surveyed**



*Base numbers shown in brackets*

There are differences between organisation size – notably between micro and large businesses. Just over a third (35%) of large businesses are aware of and understand proposed or current changes to Functional Skills qualifications, compared with 8% of micro businesses. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of micro businesses are unaware of any reform to Functional Skills qualifications.

Similarly, 61% of micro businesses are unaware of any reform to Vocational and Technical Qualifications. Nearly a third (30%) of large businesses are aware of and understand proposed or current changes to Vocational and Technical Qualifications.

Only 6% of micro businesses are aware of and understand proposed or current changes to the way apprentices will be assessed, compared with 30% of large businesses.

There are some differences by industry sector, although it should be taken into account that the base number of responses by sector bands ranges from 22 to 285, and where base numbers are low, findings are indicative only. For example, the highest proportion of employers that say they are aware of proposed or current

reforms to functional skills, are in the energy & utilities and mining sectors – but a low base number of 22 responses for these respondents should be taken into account. As may be expected, a comparatively high proportion of employers that say they are aware of proposed or current reforms to functional skills are from the education sector (55%).

The education and manufacturing sectors report the greatest awareness of vocational and technical qualifications reform. Around 58% of respondents from the education sector<sup>58</sup> and around 59% of respondents in the manufacturing sector<sup>59</sup> say they are aware of proposed or current changes. No respondents in the farming, forestry and fishing sectors say they are aware of and fully understand the changes, but the relatively low base number of respondents (37) should be taken into account when interpreting this finding.

There is also a relatively high proportion of respondents (62%) with full or partial understanding of apprenticeship assessment reform in the education sector, as may be expected. The sectors with the lowest proportions of respondents who say they fully understand the changes are real estate<sup>60</sup> (6%), healthcare/residential and social care<sup>61</sup> (8%) and hospitality<sup>62</sup> (8%). As stated previously, there are also very limited levels of awareness and understanding in the farming, forestry and fishing sectors<sup>63</sup> but again, the low base number means findings for the latter should be viewed as indicative only.

## 6.2 Awareness of apprenticeship reform

As described in the box at the start of the chapter, the design, assessment and funding of apprenticeships is subject to reform. Employers participating in depth interviews were asked about their awareness and understanding of the changes.

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<sup>58</sup> Base number of respondents: 70

<sup>59</sup> Base number of respondents: 149

<sup>60</sup> Base number of respondents: 81

<sup>61</sup> Base number of respondents: 101 (44, 18 and 39 respectively)

<sup>62</sup> Base number of respondents: 146

<sup>63</sup> Base number of respondents: 39

Although almost half of respondents surveyed either currently offer apprenticeships, or have offered them in the past few years, awareness of changes to apprenticeship frameworks and the associated assessment regime amongst those participating in depth interviews is extremely low. As described above, less than half of employers know about the impending changes to the way in which apprentices are assessed; findings from the depth interviews suggest awareness of the new apprenticeship standards is likely to be just as low, apart from exceptions where Vocational and Technical qualifications are well established.

Two respondents interviewed had personal involvement in the development of apprenticeship standards and spoke positively about their experience of being involved in a Trailblazer group. A handful of others suggested they had some awareness or they 'had heard of them'.

*"We are still working on our framework. We were the trailblazer for Level 7 chartered surveying route and we already do the Level 3 and Level 5 which existed previously – our own strategy not the government frameworks. They are important and we will be utilising them."*

**Real estate, large business**

*"Yes that's [trailblazers] what we are moving onto. We are regulated so it's what we are measured against. We have to do them. They are very important. We have to be careful as there are rules about ages. We couldn't take apprentices straight from school as there has to be a four year age gap between the worker and the person they are caring for. So, for example, if we are caring for a 19 year old, our "apprentice" would have to be at least 23. Because we have to do the qualifications they go through the apprenticeship but not technically as an apprentice."*

**Social care, large business**

Employers participating in depth interviews were also asked about their awareness of National Occupational Standards (NOS), to ascertain the extent to which they knew about the component parts of Vocational and Technical qualifications. NOS have been in existence for many years, traditionally underpinning competence qualifications such as NVQs (and SVQs in Scotland). Despite the widespread use of NOS for these purposes their existence is largely unknown by employers participating in depth interviews: a small number suggested they had either heard of them or they were 'vaguely' aware of them. The majority of employers interviewed had no knowledge at all.

A handful of employers interviewed had a fairly good to excellent understanding of NOS – these were large businesses in the food and drink, manufacturing and education sectors. Their knowledge stemmed from NOS being used as a foundation for vocational and technical qualifications where there is a tradition of undertaking these in the sector.

### **6.3 Extent of employer engagement with awarding organisations, sector bodies and training providers about qualifications and for what purpose**

Most employers participating in depth interviews have had some direct contact with qualifications- or training-related organisations, most typically with a local training provider and/or apprentice mentor and assessor. A handful of employers have liaised with Awarding Organisations and SSCs, but this is certainly not commonplace. However, where engagement does take place the following appear to be the scenarios where this typically occurs:

- when looking to offer, qualifications;
- to develop their own qualifications;
- regarding apprenticeship assessment.

*“Yes – to work out the EPA. They were helpful. We worked together to get something that works well for us. We liaise directly with them because they provide training in-house for us.”*

**Real Estate, large business**

*“We have developed our own qualification last year so we are a centre ourselves as well as buying externally. We developed a therapeutic childcare qualification. We liaise with providers on the ways we want it delivered and how we want it to meet the needs. We worked with one provider to integrate parts of qualifications into our induction so they’re working QCF level from induction.”*

**Social care, large employer**

*“Another revenue stream for us is potentially doing training. So, we’ve contacted Active IQ to talk about this, but we’re not going down that route because we can’t offer training on all the required pieces of equipment.”*

**Sport and leisure, micro business**

Two employers have previously worked with Sector Skills Councils or standards setting organisations.

*“We have worked with EU Skills on developing qualifications.”*

**Education, micro business**

*“I attend meetings with Skills for Care. To keep up with information to keep up with the changes to qualifications at the moment and to make sure we’re meeting requirements. “*

**Social care, large employer**

Employers participating in depth interviews within sectors which are the highest users of academic qualifications<sup>64</sup>, and which have less awareness of different qualifications brands, say they have little contact with training providers or AOs, but may have some contact with professional bodies.

#### **6.4 Employers’ role in setting skills standards and providing feedback about skills development and qualifications**

When asked, via depth interviews, about the employer role in qualifications development, a small number of employers felt that representative organisations such as trade and professional bodies should perform this role. Most respondents were unsure of what this would entail, but believed there is room for companies to do more in setting standards and supporting qualification design.

*“Employers should take the lead”*

**Manufacturing, large business**

*“Trade bodies should, people who lead the industry.”*

**Social care, medium business**

<sup>64</sup> Identified through analysis of sector qualification entry/achievement numbers

*“The apprenticeship levy has brought everything to the fore, it is important that feedback is given and acknowledged to make sure the standards stay appropriate and relevant for employers. Sector leads and sector experts could do this.”*

**Social care, large employer**

*“Probably. But it’s more of a government thing to set and for employers to work to those standards, otherwise employer could set very low standards.”*

**Computing, digital, IT, small business**

*“Yes, they should be getting an input. Employers are the best people to ask really.”*

**Retail , micro business**

*“It should all be done at a local level. We are part of a local partnership. It should be done at that level. There needs to be flexibility – to identify a core set of skills and then build specialism on top of that.”*

**Education, small business**

## 7. Conclusions and recommendations

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### 7.1 Conclusions

The main aim of this study is to investigate employers' perceptions, confidence and use of a range of qualifications and assessments. As a pilot survey, it will establish a series of baseline metrics that can be tracked over time. No attempt can therefore be made to draw comparisons over time in this first iteration of the research – however these baseline data are intended to be used for comparisons in the future, should the survey be repeated. Comparisons have, however, been made between organisation size, sector and qualification types.

Key conclusions drawn from the pilot, described below, are all statistically significant<sup>65</sup>:

1. Large businesses report a much better awareness and understanding of qualifications<sup>66</sup> and assessments in comparison with small, and particularly micro businesses.
2. A higher proportion of large businesses than micro businesses report positive perceptions about qualifications and assessments.
3. A higher proportion of large businesses say they have been involved in supporting development of qualifications or apprenticeships in some way, compared with small and micro businesses.
4. Large employers are also significantly more likely to arrange for, or fund, training that leads to a qualification than small and micro employers.

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<sup>65</sup> i.e. statistical tests have been conducted to determine whether results found in the survey sample can be reliably generalised to the general population. The tests take into account the variation within the groups to test whether the difference between groups is due to chance or whether represent an actual difference between the groups

<sup>66</sup> The reference to 'qualifications' in this chapter means Functional Skills and Vocational and Technical qualifications in scope of this study

5. There are significant differences between employers who say they typically recruit people with, or train them in, Functional Skills, Vocational and Technical qualifications and those that do not. Generally, the former group have more positive perceptions of the qualifications than the latter, including of the business benefits that stem from achieving the qualification.
6. Employers who have been involved in the development of Functional Skills and Vocational and Technical qualifications (e.g. responding to a consultation, participating in a working group), are significantly more likely to report more positive perceptions about them, than those respondents who have not been involved in their development.
7. Employers thinking of these qualifications in the context of apprenticeships, have consistently more positive perceptions of them, than when they are considering them as standalone.
8. These conclusions should be considered in the context of the more detailed qualitative feedback, which shows that the majority of employers interviewed do not have a detailed knowledge and understanding of qualifications, even where they perceive themselves to have a very or quite good familiarity with them. Cultural 'norms' tend to drive the use of certain qualifications. Employers in sectors that are regulated, such as childcare and healthcare are significantly more likely to be familiar with qualifications and end point assessments of apprenticeships.

## 7.2 Recommendations

If Ofqual is to repeat this survey in the future, the following should be taken into consideration:

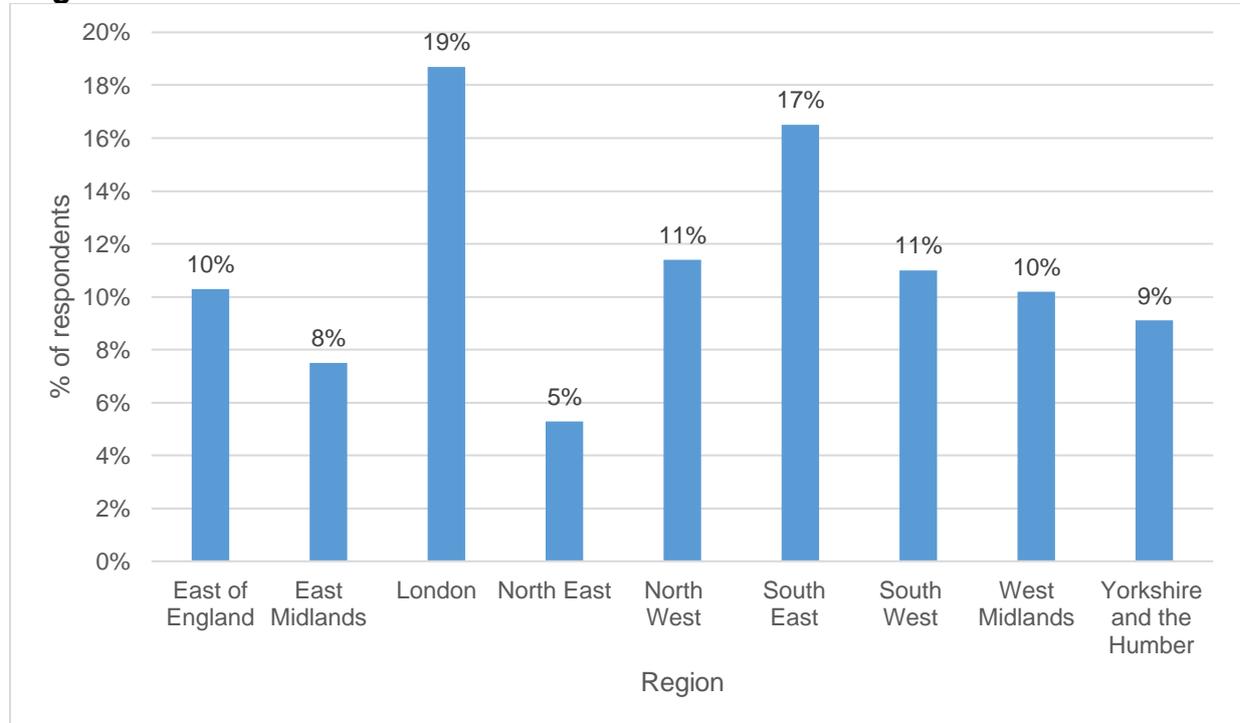
- Some sectors were much harder to reach than others – notably those highly customer-facing (such as retail) or where respondents are not easily accessible (such as farming). A future approach should consider the use of a panel and/or

online approach for difficult to reach sectors, although the use of a telephone approach as the core method is still recommended.

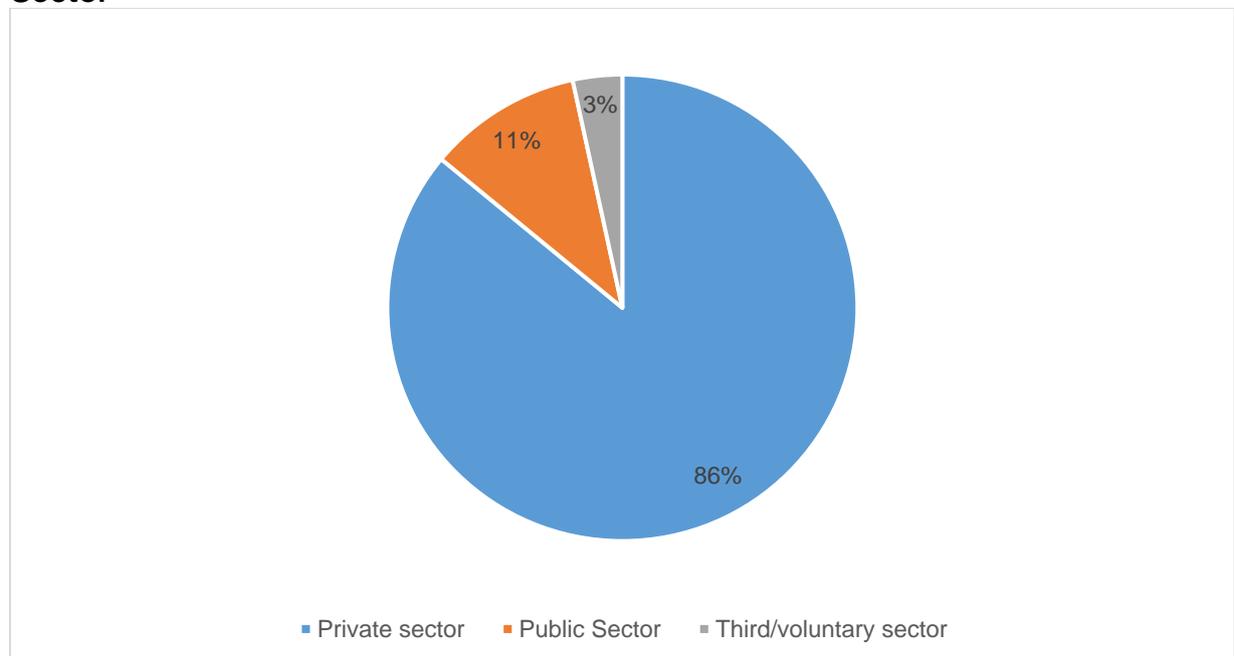
- Employers were also asked whether or not they would describe themselves as an employer training provider, using the definition “**do you typically offer any training that leads to an accredited qualification either for your own staff or to people outside of your organisation?**” It seems likely from the high number of respondents that a proportion of these respondents have identified themselves as an employer training provider on the grounds that they regularly provide training to their staff. However there are clear differences between those that describe themselves as an employer training provider and those that not, suggesting there may be value in future iterations of the survey in asking respondents simply whether they would describe themselves as a ‘training organisation’ or similar.
- It is likely that some respondents interpreted end point assessment of an apprenticeship, simply as an apprenticeship – given that the former are relatively recent. This should be taken into account when considering these findings as the baseline position – as should the comparatively low number of responses to these questions (asked of 455 respondents who described themselves as being familiar with end point assessments). In future years it can be reasonably expected that familiarity will increase, making the base number of respondents for future surveys higher – this needs to be considered when making comparisons with this baseline position.
- It is recommended that future baseline metrics focus on awareness, perceptions and business benefits, i.e. familiarity and favourability.

## Appendix 1: Profile of survey respondents

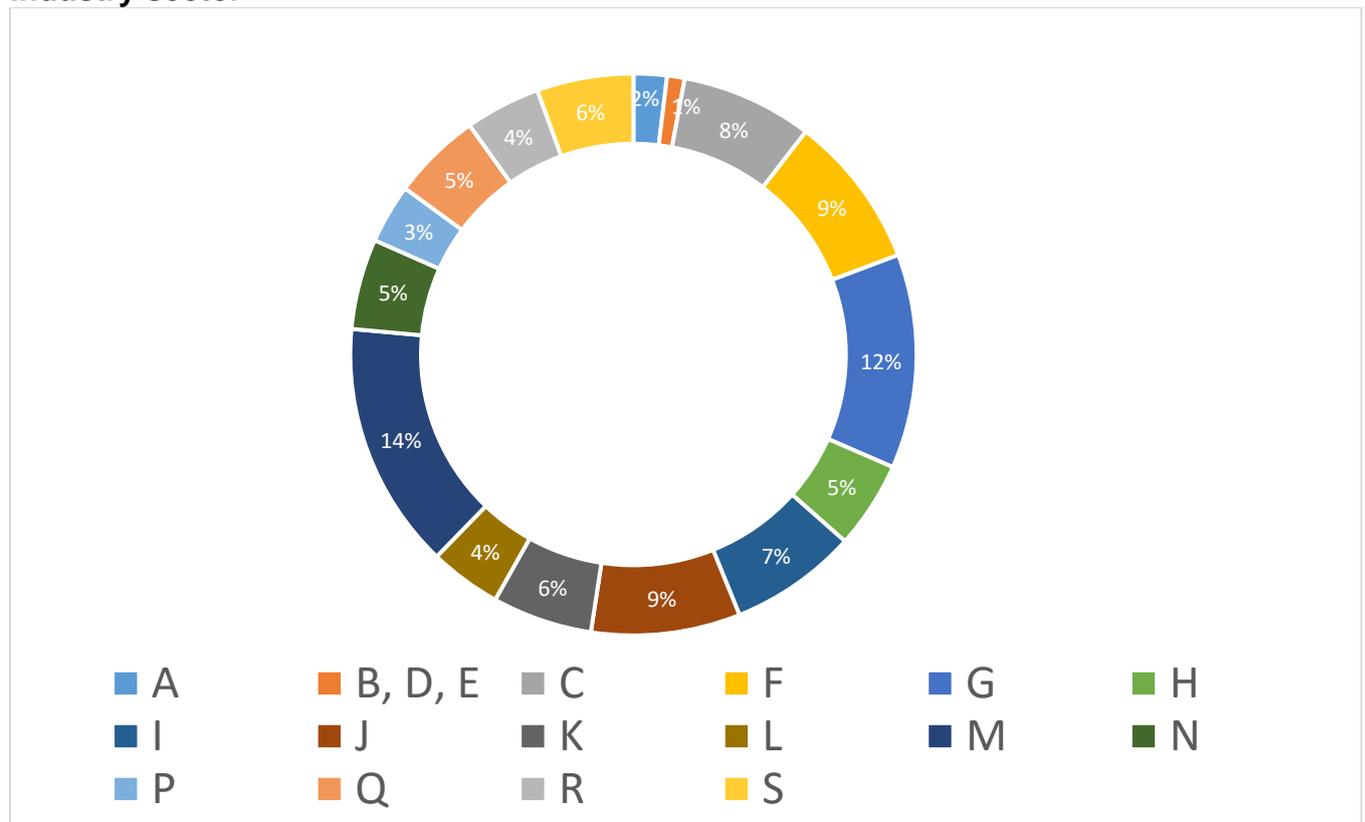
### Region



### Sector



### Industry sector

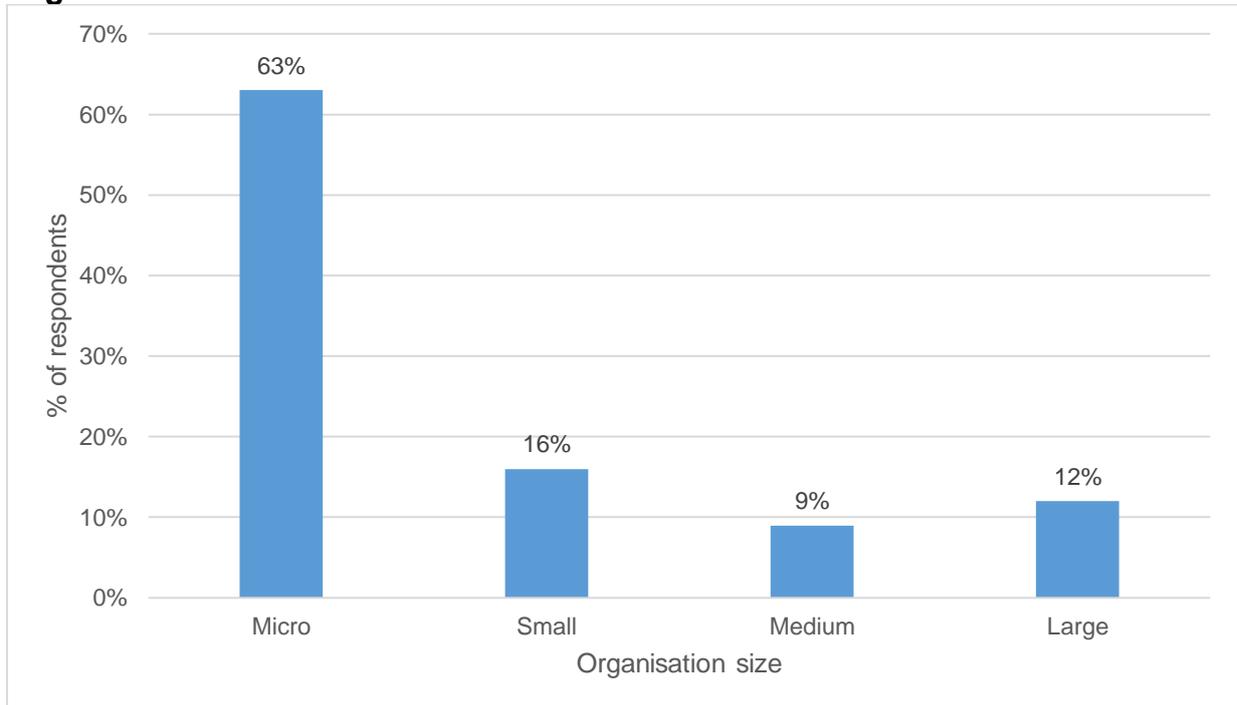


Base: 2,037 respondents

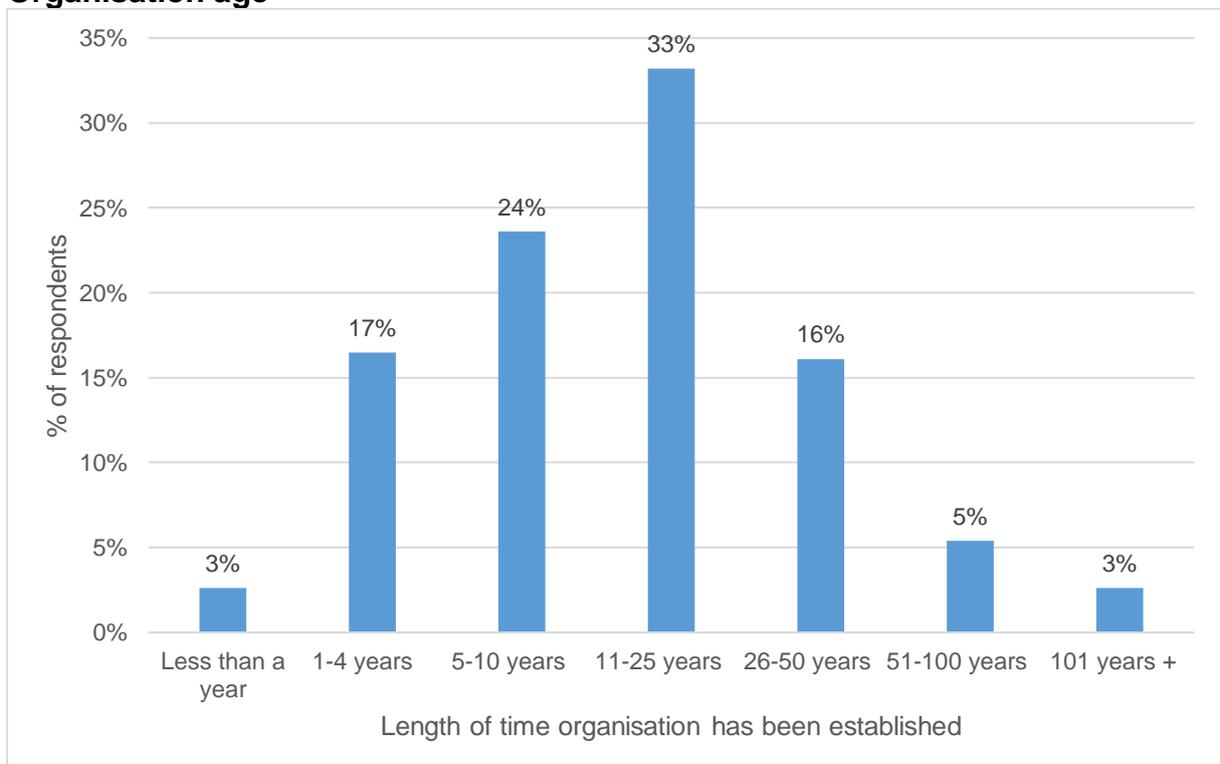
### Key:

A	Farming; forestry and fishing	K	Insurance and banking; financial services; legal and accounting
B, D, E	Energy and utilities; mining	L	Real estate
C	Manufacturing	M	Architecture and engineering; pharmaceuticals; professional services; scientific and technical activities; scientific research and development; veterinary
F	Construction and facilities management	N	Office administration and support
G	Retail	P	Education
H	Postal and courier; transport and logistics; warehousing	Q	Healthcare; residential care; social care
I	Hospitality	R	Arts, culture and entertainment; sport and leisure
J	Computing/digital/IT; media, publishing and journalism; telecommunications	S	Employment; rental and leasing; travel and tourism; advertising and market research

**Organisation size<sup>67</sup>**

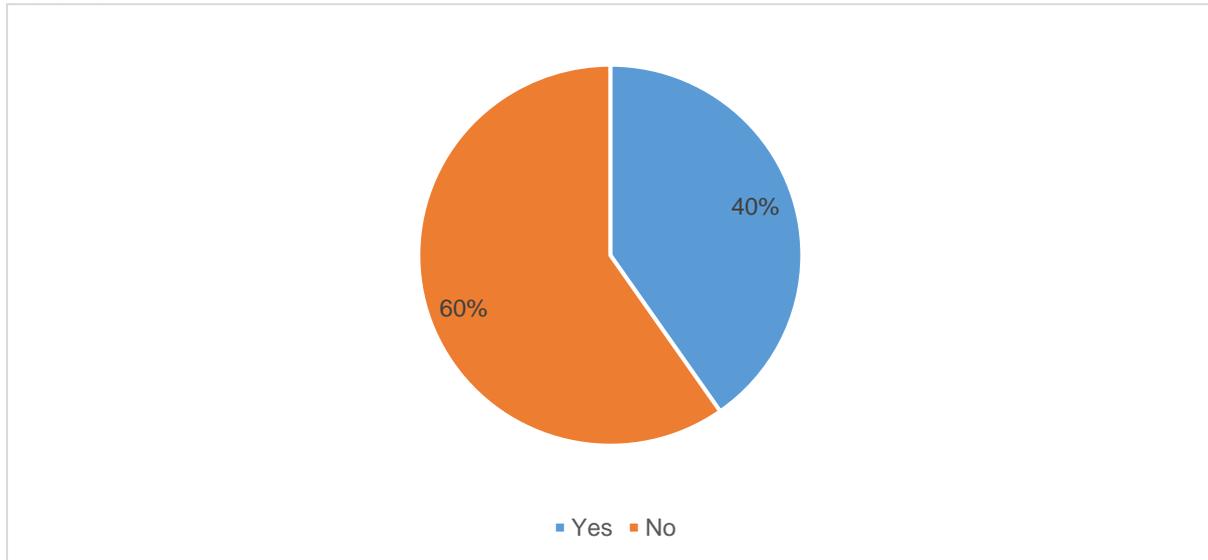


**Organisation age**

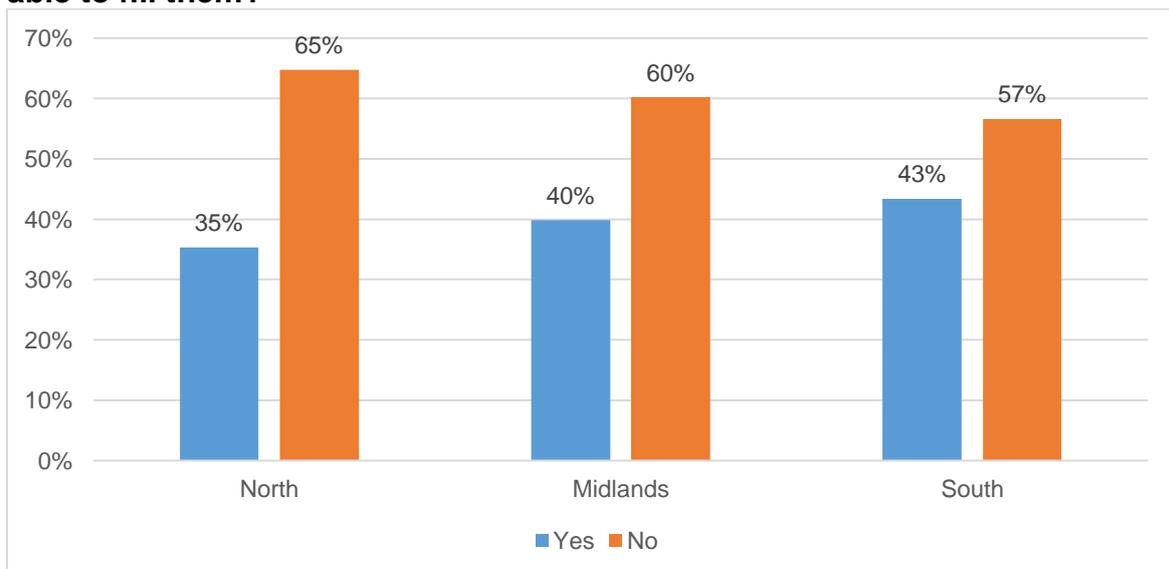


<sup>67</sup> Micro – less than 9 employees; Small – 10-49 employees; Medium – 50-249 employees and Large – 250+ employees

**In the last 12 months, have you had vacancies, regardless of whether you were able to fill them?**



**In the last 12 months, have you had vacancies, regardless of whether you were able to fill them?**

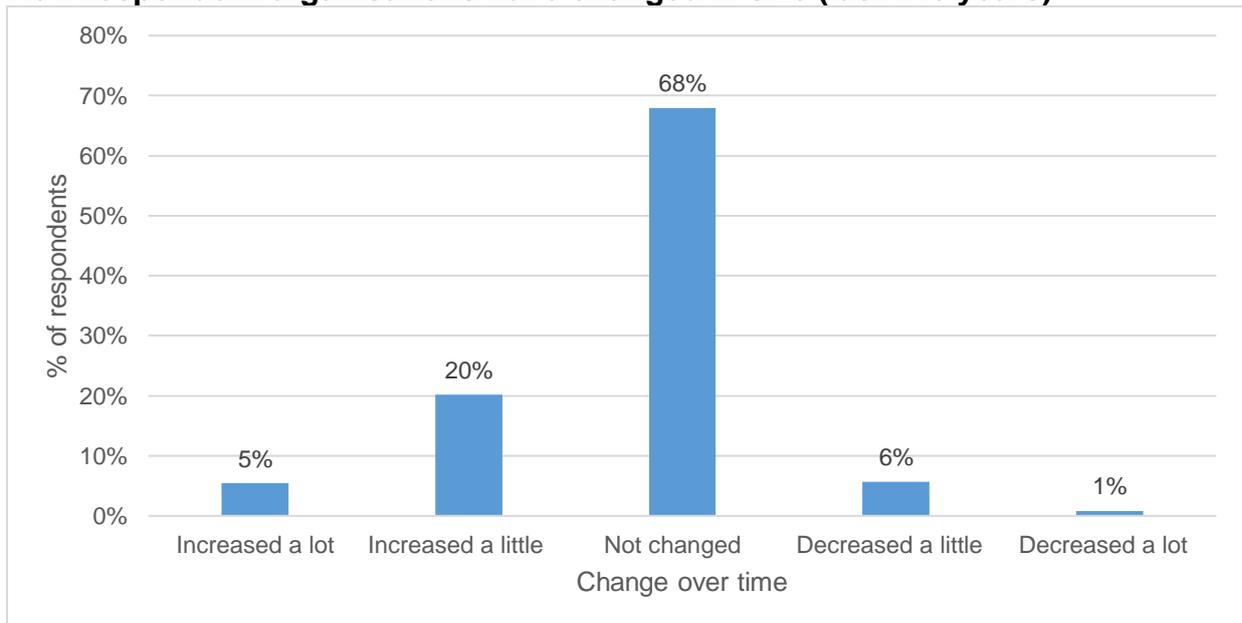


### **Recruiting practices**

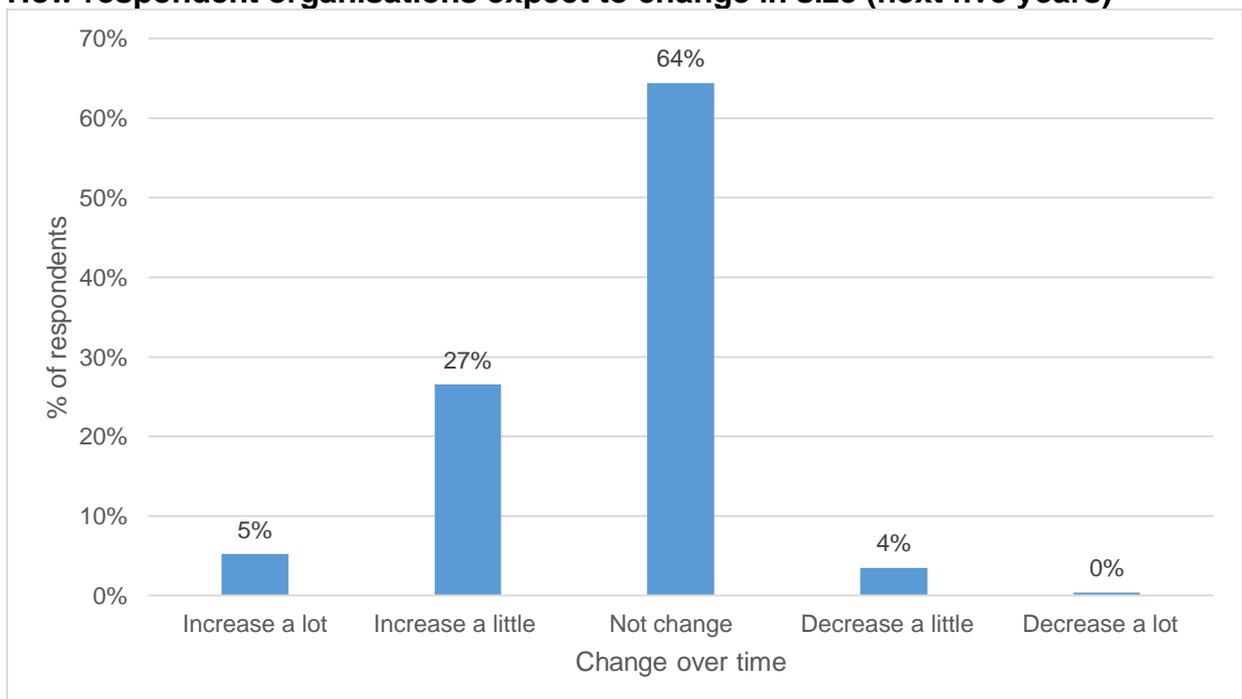
Nearly a fifth (18%) of respondents typically recruit people aged 16-18 direct from school, college or a training provider (i.e. this is their typical recruitment practice 'all' or 'most of the time'). A slightly higher proportion (21%) typically recruit people aged 19-24 ('all' or 'most of the time'). Over half (54%) of respondents never recruit people aged 16-18 into their first job straight from school, college etc.

A higher proportion of large businesses (42%) typically recruit people aged 16-18, compared with just 9% of micro businesses. Around 68% of micro businesses never recruit people aged 16-18 into their first job. Similarly, 59% of large businesses recruit people aged 19-24 into their first job all or some of the time, compared with 16% of micro businesses.

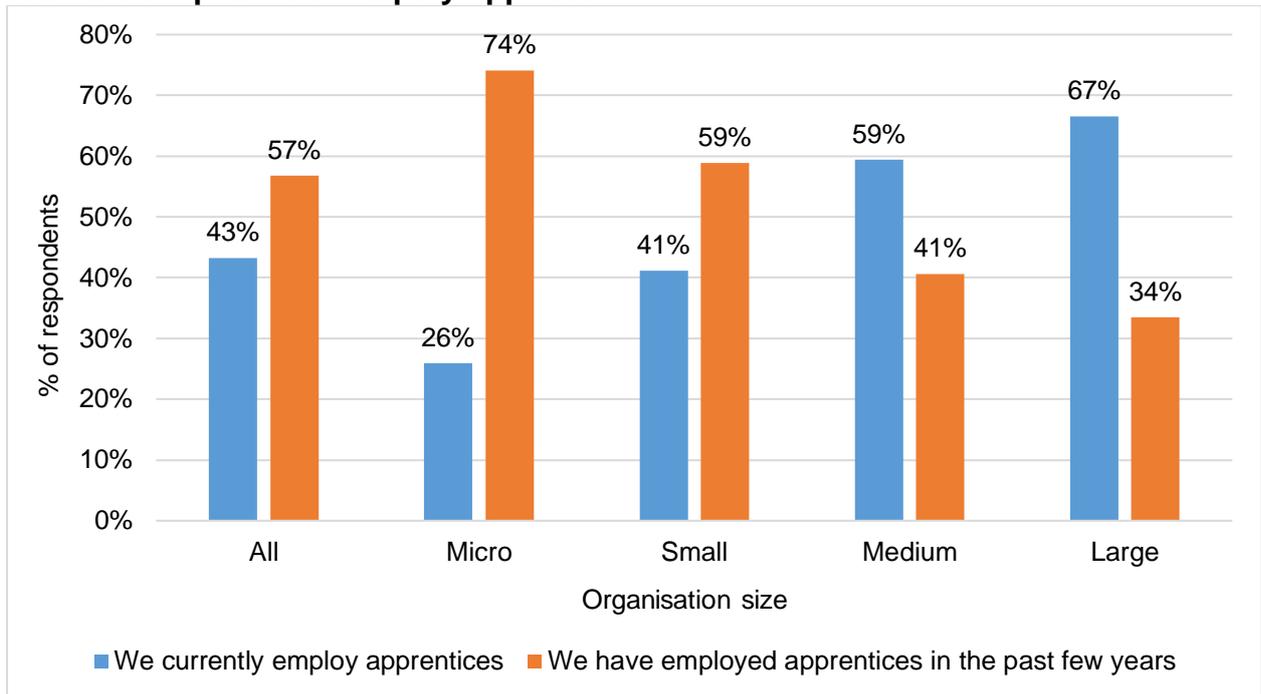
**How respondent organisations have changed in size (last five years)**



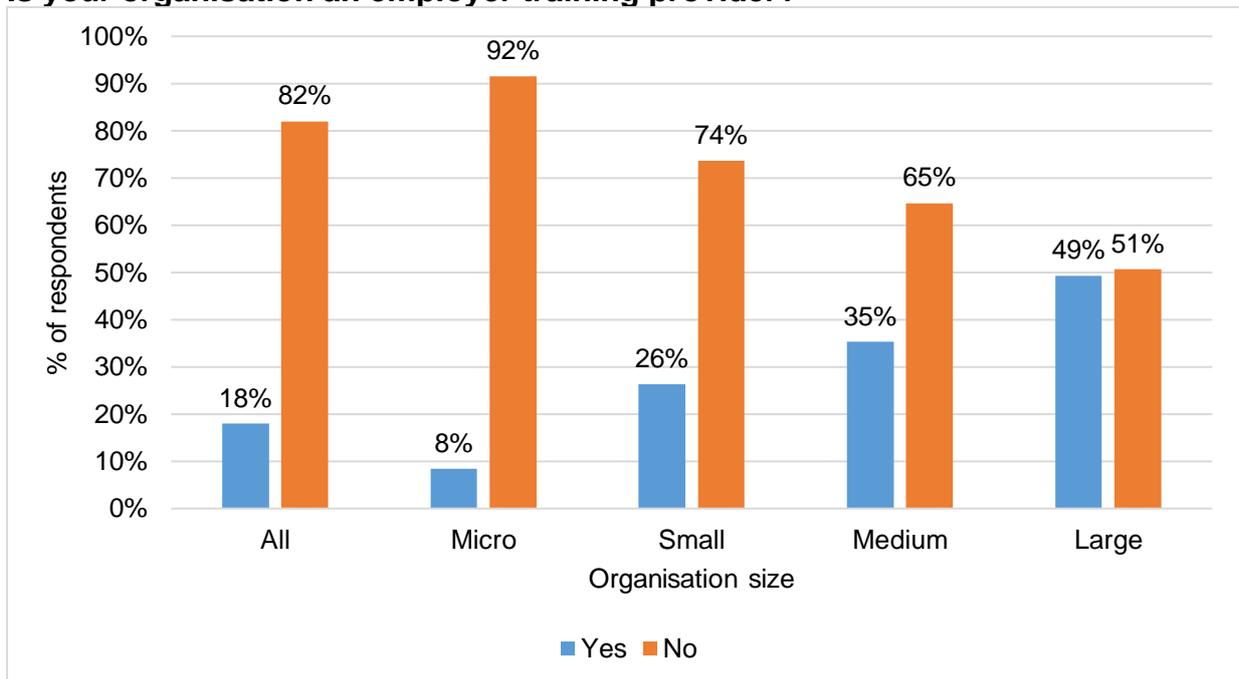
**How respondent organisations expect to change in size (next five years)**



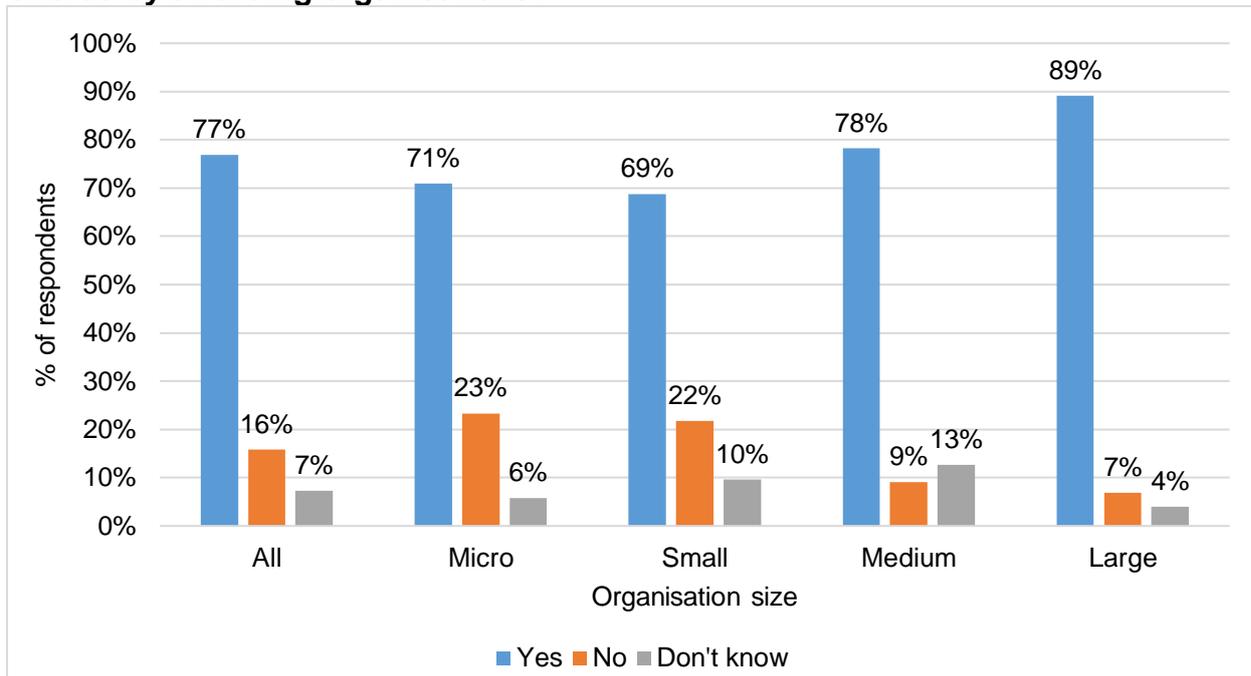
### Whether respondents employ apprentices



### Is your organisation an employer training provider?



**As an employer training provider, do you enrol learners on qualifications offered by awarding organisations?**



## Appendix 2: Sampling, questionnaire design and analysis

### Sampling approach

The overall survey target was 2,000 responses from employers. A structured quota approach was used, with overall quotas set by Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) code in order to be representative of the overall business population<sup>68</sup>.

A	Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
B, D & E <sup>69</sup>	Mining and Quarrying; Electricity, Gas, Steam and Air Conditioning Supply; Water Supply; Sewerage, Waste Management and Remediation Activities
C	Manufacturing
F	Construction
G	Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles
H	Transport and Storage
I	Accommodation and Food Service Activities
J	Information and Communication
K	Financial and Insurance Activities
L	Real Estate Activities
M	Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities
N	Administrative and Support Service Activities
P	Education
Q	Human Health and Social Work Activities
R	Arts, Entertainment and Recreation
S	Other Service Activities

A small number of sectors with lower numbers of employers (Transportation & Storage, Financial & Insurance Activities, Real Estate Activities, Education and Arts, Entertainment and Recreation) were oversampled in order to increase reliability of the data. Interlocking quotas were then set on organisation size<sup>70</sup> and English region – again to be representative of the overall business population.

The following table shows how a representative sample was calculated across the business population.

<sup>68</sup> BIS Business Population Estimates 2016 were used to provide the population

<sup>69</sup> These were combined into one category

<sup>70</sup> By number of employees, using four bands: micro business (0-9 employees); small business (10—49 employees); medium business (50-249 employees); large business (250+ employees)

Industry sector	BIS business population estimates	% of population	Target
A	40210	4%	80
B, D & E	6295	1%	50
C	75745	7%	120
F	134335	12%	200
G	206870	17%	260
H	33580	3%	100
I	106905	9%	160
J	69475	6%	120
K	18825	2%	80
L	36870	3%	100
M	162340	14%	240
N	98815	9%	160
P	16850	1%	50
Q	54425	5%	100
R	22075	2%	80
S	58600	5%	100
	<b>1142215</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2000</b>

Contact details were sourced from a commercial business database operated by Bureau Van Dyke available by subscription, and containing details of over 3.5 million businesses.

It became apparent after the survey had launched that the rate of completions was more challenging to achieve in certain sectors: for example agriculture (harder to speak to respondents predominantly working outside), retail, hospitality and real estate (customer-facing industries limiting the time available respondents have to participate in research). Therefore an online version of the survey was created and the link emailed to a sample of target respondents in these sectors, in order to boost responses. In total 16 completions were achieved via this route.

Targets were also slightly adjusted to compensate for the difficulty in engaging businesses in certain sectors – notably reducing the quota for micro businesses and boosting the quota for small, medium and large businesses. These adjustments are unlikely to affect the overall robustness of survey data as, whilst it is possible to

identify a representative sample of employers by organisation size, it is not clear what a representative sample of employers *using qualifications and apprenticeship assessments*, would be.

### **Questionnaire design**

The questionnaire was designed by Pye Tait Consulting, with input from Ofqual, and was piloted prior to finalisation and launch of the survey. Employers in all sectors and geographical regions were asked the same questions.

Respondents were however routed through the questionnaire to ensure that employers were only asked questions about the types of qualifications they offer to their staff, or those which they look for when recruiting staff.

The pilot – involving a sample of 21 employers – identified an important issue relating to how employers view vocational and technical qualifications. As a result, the final survey questionnaire captured information on whether, when answering questions about vocational and technical qualifications, employers were thinking of these being taken as part of an apprenticeship, or as a standalone qualification. For the purposes of the questionnaire these were referred to as ‘inside’ or ‘outside’ an apprenticeship, respectively.

For the depth interviews a topic guide was developed which followed-up on key areas of interest, and, for consistency with earlier research, also drew on the questionnaire design for a previous qualitative study undertaken on behalf of Ofqual by Pye Tait.

The survey questionnaire is provided in Appendix 5.

## Appendix 3: Data analysis and statistical testing

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### Data analysis

Survey data were analysed in SNAP and SPSS.

Using Snap Software, Chi Squared tests were carried out on the variables to investigate whether the data were independent (i.e. the variables differ from one another), or whether there was a relationship. Where the Chi Squared result is significant ( $p < 0.05$ ), the null hypothesis, that there is no relationship between the variables, can be rejected. In certain cases, as is usual with such surveys, low-count cells have been encountered. This is entirely normal given that certain responses (for example a rating of 1 on a 1-10 rating scale) will inevitably attract low numbers of respondents.

However, the reader is cautioned that, where there are high proportions of low-count cells, and taking into account the precise question under consideration, the resulting significance levels should be used with care. High proportions of low-count cells are indicated in footnotes in the main body of the report where applicable.

Using SPSS, where an ordinal scaled variable was analysed together with a nominal scaled variable, pair-wise Mann-Whitney U-Tests were performed. Where there were more than two groups of Independent Variables, a Kruskal Wallis test was carried out initially to investigate if there were any statistical differences between the variables (such as by size). Further Mann Whitney U tests were then carried out if the Kruskal Wallis highlighted a significance, in order to establish further details concerning the significance. Where multiple Mann Whitney U tests have been performed, the p value has been adjusted using the Bonferroni correction ( $p \text{ value} \times 0.05/\text{number of comparisons}$ ) to protect against type 1 error (incorrect rejection of a true null hypothesis).

The significance (p) level, was set to 0.05 for all tests. Results are described as significant where the p value is less than 0.05, and marginally significant when the p level is between 0.05 and 0.10. Results with  $p > 0.10$  are interpreted as not

significant.

Responses to open questions, and depth interview findings were analysed using TextStat software to identify concordance and frequency, content analysis was undertaken manually.

## Appendix 4: Results of statistical testing

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A Kruskal Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.001$ ) on the extent of respondents' understanding of Functional Skills qualifications, between sector groups. Further Mann Whitney U tests show that energy, utilities and mining have a significantly better understanding compared to farming ( $p = 0.003$ ) and real estate ( $p = 0.007$ ); education had a significantly better understanding compared to farming ( $p < 0.001$ ) and real estate ( $p = 0.002$ ).

A Kruskal Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference ( $p = 0.025$ ) whether respondents typically recruit people with or arrange training leading to Functional Skills qualifications, between sector groups. The transport and logistics sector is involved in supporting the development of Functional Skills significantly more than farming and office administration ( $p = 0.001$ ,  $p = 0.002$  respectively). There were no significant differences between the education sector and farming or office administration and support.

A Kruskal Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.001$ ) on the extent of respondents' understanding of Functional Skills qualifications, between size of organisation. Further Mann Whitney U tests show that small, medium and large organisations have a significantly better understanding than micro organisations ( $p = 0.003$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ,  $p < 0.001$  respectively); Large organisations have a significantly better understanding than small organisations ( $p = 0.002$ ).

A Kruskal Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.001$ ) whether respondents typically recruit people with or arrange training leading to Functional Skills qualifications, between size of organisation. Further Mann Whitney U tests show that small, medium and large organisations typically recruit people with or arrange training leading to Functional Skills significantly more than micro organisations ( $p < 0.001$ ); Large organisations recruit people with or arrange training leading to Functional Skills significantly more than small organisations ( $p < 0.001$ ).

A Kruskal Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant or marginally significant difference in four perception areas of functional skills between sector groups: *Functional Skills qualifications prepare learners well for the workplace*, *Skills assessed through Functional Skills qualifications can be adapted to business needs*, *Functional Skills qualifications prepare learners for the workplace as effectively as other English and maths qualifications*, *Functional Skills qualifications are easy to achieve*. Further Mann Whitney U tests show that energy, utilities and mining perceive Functional Skills significantly more favourably under “Functional Skills qualifications are easy to achieve” than farming ( $p=0.004$ ); health and social care perceive Functional Skills qualifications more favourably than farming in all four perception areas ( $p<0.01$ ). The other sectors did not differ significantly.

A Kruskal Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference ( $p<0.01$ ) on the extent of respondents’ understanding of Vocational and Technical qualifications. Further Mann Whitney U tests show that education sector have a significantly better understanding than real estate ( $p=0.011$ ) and farming ( $p=0.012$ ). Energy, utilities and mining did not differ significantly from real estate or farming.

A Kruskal Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference ( $p<0.001$ ) on the extent of respondents’ understanding of Vocational and Technical qualifications, between size of organisation. Further Mann Whitney U tests show that small, medium and large organisations have a significantly better understanding than micro organisations ( $p=0.008$ ,  $p<0.001$ ,  $p<0.001$  respectively); Large organisations have a significantly better understanding than small organisations ( $p=0.004$ ).

A Kruskal Wallis H test showed that there was a marginally statistically significant difference ( $p<0.085$ ) on whether organisations were involved in supporting the development of Vocational and technical qualifications and the sector group. Further Mann Whitney U tests show that energy, utilities and mining are significantly more involved than farming ( $p=0.004$ ). There were no statistically significant differences between the other four sector groups.

A Kruskal Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.001$ ) whether respondents typically recruit people with or arrange training leading to Vocational and Technical qualifications, between size of organisation. Further Mann Whitney U tests show that small, medium and large organisations typically recruit people with or arrange training leading to Vocational and Technical qualifications significantly more than Micro organisations ( $p < 0.001$ ).

A Kruskal Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.001$ ) across all perceptions of Vocational and Technical qualifications and whether they are taken as part of an apprenticeship or outside of an apprenticeship. Further Mann Whitney U tests show that respondents perceive all areas significantly more favourably if they are taken as part of an apprenticeship than outside of an apprenticeship ( $p < 0.001$ ).

A Kruskal Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.001$ ) across all perceptions of Vocational and Technical qualifications and whether they typically recruit people with or train in Vocational and Technical qualifications. Further Mann Whitney U tests show that respondents perceive all areas significantly more favourably if they do typically recruit people with or train in Vocational and Technical qualifications than if they do not ( $p < 0.001$ ).

A Kruskal Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.001$ ) on the extent of respondents' understanding of apprenticeships in their sector between sector groups. Education and construction sectors have a significantly higher understanding of apprenticeships than computing, office administration and support and real estate ( $p \leq 0.001$ ).

A Kruskal Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.001$ ) on the extent of respondents' understanding of end point assessment, between size of organisation. Further Mann Whitney U tests show that small, medium and large organisations have a significantly better understanding than micro organisations ( $p < 0.001$ ); Medium and large organisations have a significantly better understanding than small organisations ( $p = 0.003$ ,  $p < 0.001$  respectively).

A Kruskal Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.05$ ) across three perception areas of end point assessment and sector group. Further Mann Whitney U tests show that there were no significant differences between health and social care and manufacturing sectors with the education and scientific sectors.

A Kruskal Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference in the knowledge/awareness of qualification reform between size of organisation ( $p < 0.001$ ). Further Mann Whitney U tests show that small, medium and large organisations are significantly more aware than micro organisations ( $p < 0.001$ ); Medium and large organisations are significantly more aware than small organisations ( $p < 0.001$ ); Large organisations are significantly more aware than medium organisations about Functional Skills and apprenticeship reform ( $p = 0.007$ ,  $p = 0.005$  respectively).

A Kruskal Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference in all areas of perception of Functional Skills qualifications and whether or not respondents' were involved in the support and development of the qualifications ( $p < 0.001$ ). Further Mann Whitney U tests show that in all areas of perception, they were perceived significantly more favourably if the respondent or their organisation had been involved in the support and development of them ( $p < 0.001$ ).

A Kruskal Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference in all areas of perception of Functional Skills qualifications and whether or not respondents recruit people with or arrange training in Functional Skills ( $p < 0.001$ ). Further Mann Whitney U tests show that in all areas of perception, they were perceived significantly more favourably if the respondents recruited people with or arranged training for Functional Skills ( $p < 0.001$ ).

A Kruskal Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference in all areas of perception of Vocational and Technical qualifications and whether or not respondents were involved in the support and development of the qualifications

( $p < 0.001$ ). Further Mann Whitney U tests show that in all areas of perception, they were perceived significantly more favourably if the respondent or their organisation had been involved in the support and development of them ( $p < 0.001$ ).

## Appendix 5: Survey questionnaire

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**Q1 Your name:**

**Q2 Organisation name:**

**Q3 Telephone number:**

**Q4 What is your job title? (Allocate respondent to closest option)**

- Managing Director or equivalent level
- Operations Director or equivalent level
- Head of HR or equivalent level
- HR Manager or equivalent level
- HR Business Partner or equivalent level
- Head of Training or equivalent level
- Training Manager or equivalent level
- Head of Recruitment or equivalent level
- Recruitment Manager or equivalent level

**Q5 Please confirm the main type of work your company carries out:**

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising and market research        | <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Residential care                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture and engineering           | <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance and banking             | <input type="checkbox"/> Retail                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts, culture and entertainment        | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal and accounting              | <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific and technical activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Construction and facilities management | <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific research and development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computing/digital/IT                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Media, publishing and journalism  | <input type="checkbox"/> Security and investigation          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Social care                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employment                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Office administration and support | <input type="checkbox"/> Sport and leisure                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy and utilities                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Pharmaceutical                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Telecommunications                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Farming                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Postal and courier                | <input type="checkbox"/> Transport and logistics             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial services                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional services             | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel and tourism                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forestry and fishing                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Real estate                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Veterinary                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Rental and leasing                | <input type="checkbox"/> Warehousing                         |

**Q6 Is your company:**

- Private sector
- Public Sector
- Third/voluntary sector

**Q7 How long has your company been operating?**

- Less than a year
- 1-4 years
- 5-10 years
- 11-25 years
- 26-50 years
- 51-100 years
- 101 years +

**Q8 In which region is your company's Head Office based?**

- East of England
- East Midlands
- London
- North East
- North West
- South East
- South West
- West Midlands
- Yorkshire and the Humber

**Q9 Does your company operate across more than one site?**

- Yes
- No

**Q10 Are you able to respond only about the site where you are based, or about the whole company?**

- This site only
- Whole company

**Q11 How many people does your site employ in total** (Not including sub-contractors or temporary staff)

**Q12 How many people does your company employ in total** (Not including sub-contractors or temporary staff)

**Q13 In the past 12 months, has the number of people your company employs:**

- Increased a lot
- Increased a little
- Not changed
- Decreased a little
- Decreased a lot

**Q14 Over the next 12 months, do you expect the number of people your company employs to:**

- Increase a lot
- Increase a little
- Not change
- Decrease a little
- Decrease a lot

**Q15 Do you employ apprentices - either currently or have you done so in the past few years?**

- We currently employ apprentices
- We have employed apprentices in the past few years

**Q16 Is your company known as an employer training provider i.e. do you typically offer any training that leads to an accredited qualification either for your own staff or to people outside of your organisation?**

- Yes
- No

**Q17 Approximately how many accredited qualifications do you deliver per annum?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Q18 As an employer training provider, do you enrol learners on qualifications offered by awarding organisations?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

## Part 2: Perceptions of qualifications

**Q19 Please rate your understanding of the following, i.e. the extent to which you have a clear understanding of their content and of the skills they aim to develop:**

	<i>Very good understanding</i>	<i>Quite good understanding</i>	<i>Limited understanding</i>	<i>Not very good understanding</i>	<i>No understanding at all</i>
Functional skills qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vocational/technical qualifications in my sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Apprenticeships in my sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q20 Have you, or anyone else in your organisation, been involved in supporting development - for example as a member of a working group, responding to an online consultation or contributing to assessment design, of the following in the last few years:**

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Functional skills qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Apprenticeships in my sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vocational/technical qualifications in my sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q21 Does your organisation typically recruit people with, or arrange training leading to Functional Skills qualifications?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Q22 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements in relation to functional skills qualifications?** Please speak from the perspective of your own organisation/sector i.e. not the views you believe other employers have.

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
We value Functional Skills qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Functional Skills qualifications are well-understood by managers in my organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Functional Skills qualifications prepare learners well for the workplace	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Functional Skills qualifications are of a high standard of quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Skills assessed through Functional Skills qualifications can be adapted to business needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People holding Functional Skills qualifications have the appropriate levels of English and maths skills needed by my organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We value Functional Skills qualifications as highly as other English and maths qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Functional Skills qualifications prepare learners for the workplace as effectively as other English and maths qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Functional Skills qualifications are easy to achieve	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q23 You disagree that you value Functional Skills qualifications as highly as other English and maths qualifications, do you value them more or less highly than other English and maths qualifications?**

- More highly
- Less highly

**Q24 You disagree that Functional Skills qualifications prepare learners as effectively for the workplace as other English and maths qualifications, do you think they prepare learners more or less effectively than other English and maths qualifications?**

- More effectively
- Less effectively

**Q25 Does your organisation typically recruit people with, or arrange training leading to, vocational or technical qualifications?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Q26 Please can you tell me the top three vocational or technical qualifications your company typically arranges training in, or requires people to have upon joining the company? (If you do not know, please write 'unknown')**

**Q27 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements in relation to vocational qualifications in your sector? Please speak from the perspective of your own organisation/sector i.e. not the views you believe other employers have.**

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
We value vocational and technical qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vocational and technical qualifications are well-understood by managers in my organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vocational and technical qualifications prepare learners well for the workplace	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Skills assessed through vocational and technical qualifications can be adapted to business needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People achieving vocational and technical qualifications have the appropriate levels of technical skills needed by my organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vocational and technical qualifications are of a high standard of quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vocational and technical qualifications are as well-known and understood as GCSEs and A levels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We value vocational and technical qualifications as highly as GCSEs and A Levels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Vocational and technical qualifications prepare learners for the workforce as effectively as GCSEs and A-levels	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Vocational and technical qualifications are easy to achieve	<input type="checkbox"/>					

**Q28** When answering the previous question, were you thinking mostly about vocational and technical qualifications as part of an apprenticeship or taken outside of an apprenticeship?

- Mostly **as part of an** apprenticeship
- Mostly **taken outside of an** apprenticeship
- Prefer not to answer

**Q29** You disagree that you value vocational and technical qualifications as highly as GCSEs and A-levels, do you value them more or less highly?

- More highly
- Less highly

**Q30** You disagree that vocational and technical qualifications prepare learners as effectively for the workplace as GCSEs and A-levels, do you think they prepare them more or less effectively?

- More effectively
- Less effectively

**Q31** Are you familiar with end point assessments of apprenticeships?

- Yes
- No

**Q32** To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements in relation to end point assessments of apprenticeships? Please speak from the perspective of your own organisation/sector i.e. not the views you believe other employers have.

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
We value end point assessments of apprenticeships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
End point assessments of apprenticeships are well-understood by managers in my organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
End point assessments of apprenticeships prepare learners well for the workplace	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Skills assessed through end point assessments of apprenticeships can be adapted to business needs	<input type="checkbox"/>					
People passing end point assessments of apprenticeships have the vocational and technical skills needed by my company	<input type="checkbox"/>					
End point assessments of apprenticeships are of a high standard of quality	<input type="checkbox"/>					
End point assessments of apprenticeships are easy to achieve	<input type="checkbox"/>					

**Q33 When answering the previous question, which apprenticeships were you thinking of in relation to those end point assessments?** (if there are more than three, please state the three most commonly used in your organisation. If not known, please state 'unknown')

**Q34 Are you aware that the following are currently being reformed?**

	<i>Yes, aware of and understand the changes proposed or taking place</i>	<i>Yes, and have some understanding of the changes proposed or taking place</i>	<i>Yes, but don't know what changes are proposed or taking place</i>	<i>No</i>
Functional skills qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vocational/technical qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How apprentices are assessed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### **PART 3: Use of qualifications – recruitment**

**Q35 When recruiting new employees into these types of roles, are any of the following essential?**

	<i>Professional and managerial roles</i>	<i>Skilled and supervisory roles</i>	<i>Entry level and admin roles</i>
5 GCSEs at A*-C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maths and English GCSEs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maths and English Functional Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relevant vocational or technical qualification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Completion of an apprenticeship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relevant work experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A levels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Degree	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Masters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PhD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q36 Has your company had any vacancies in the last 12 months, regardless of whether you were able to fill them?**

- Yes
- No

**Q37 Does your company typically recruit people:**

	<i>All of the time</i>	<i>Most of the time</i>	<i>Some of the time</i>	<i>None of the time</i>
Aged 16-18 - first job from school, college or training provider	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aged 19-24 - first job from school, college or other training provider	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### Part 4: Use of qualifications - training

**Q38 In the last 12 months, have you arranged or funded training for your employees?**

- Yes
- No

**Q39 Thinking about the training your company has arranged or funded in the last 12 months, how much of it typically results in a qualification for the following levels of employee:**

	<i>All training leads to a qualification</i>	<i>Most training leads to a qualification</i>	<i>Some training leads to a qualification</i>	<i>No training leads to a qualification</i>
Professional and managerial roles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Skilled and supervisory roles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Entry level and admin roles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q40 Has any of the training your company has arranged or funded in the last 12 months led to any of the following:**

- Functional Skills qualification in English or maths
- GCSE in English or maths
- Other English or maths qualification
- Vocational or technical qualification
- End point assessment of an apprenticeship
- Other

If 'Other' please specify:

**Q41 Please can you tell me which other English or maths qualifications these are, if known?**

**Q42 When answering the question about the training your company has arranged in vocational and technical qualifications, were you mainly thinking about these as part of an apprenticeship or taken outside of an apprenticeship?**

- As part of an** apprenticeship
- Taken outside of an** apprenticeship
- Prefer not to answer

**Q43 Has any of the training your company has arranged or funded in the last 12 months led to any other types of qualification, please can you tell me what these are if so?**

**Q44 Typically speaking, at which level(s) were these qualifications gained? (select all that apply)**

	<i>Entry level</i>	<i>Level 1</i>	<i>Level 2</i>	<i>Level 3</i>	<i>Level 4</i>	<i>Level 5</i>	<i>Level 6</i>	<i>Level 7</i>	<i>Level 8</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Functional Skills in English or Maths	<input type="checkbox"/>									
Other qualifications in English or Maths	<input type="checkbox"/>									
Vocational or technical qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/>									
End point assessment of apprenticeships	<input type="checkbox"/>									

**Q45 Can you please say why your organisation hasn't arranged external training that led to an English or maths qualification? (Do not prompt, select all that apply)**

- No need for them
- Not aware of them
- Don't know which ones are relevant for us
- Too expensive
- Too time consuming
- Takes employees away from the day job
- Not of a high quality standard
- Too easy
- Too difficult
- Not enough Government funding to pay for them
- Can no longer afford to fund them, but funded them in the past
- Other

If 'Other' please specify:

**Q46 Can you please say why your organisation hasn't arranged external training that led to a vocational or technical qualification? (Do not prompt, select all that apply)**

- No need for them
- Not aware of them
- Don't know which ones are relevant for us
- Too expensive
- Too time consuming
- Takes employees away from the day job
- Not of a high quality standard
- Too easy
- Too difficult
- Not enough Government funding to pay for them
- Can no longer afford to fund them, but funded them in the past
- Other

If 'Other' please specify:

**Q47 Can you please say which of the following factors are taken into account when identifying which qualifications are offered to your employees (select all that apply):**

- Reputation of the awarding organisation (exam board)
- Sector recognised (valued) qualification
- Relevance for our organisation
- Size of the qualification
- Level of the qualification
- Flexible assessment
- Organisation culture i.e. always offered these qualifications
- None of these factors are taken into account

## Part 5: Business benefits associated with qualifications

**Q48 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements in relation to employees with Functional Skills qualifications in English or maths:**

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Holding Functional Skills in English or maths improves business performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Holding Functional Skills in English or maths enables the employee do their job more effectively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Holding Functional Skills in English or maths increases productivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Training employees in Functional Skills in English or maths improves staff commitment	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Training employees in Functional Skills in English or maths offers good value for money	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Training employees in Functional Skills in English or maths improves staff retention	<input type="checkbox"/>					

**Q49 For your employees who achieve Functional Skills in English or maths at Level 2, how often does this lead to:**

	<i>All of the time</i>	<i>Most of the time</i>	<i>Some of the time</i>	<i>None of the time</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
A pay increase	<input type="checkbox"/>				
A promotion or improved job status	<input type="checkbox"/>				
New responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>				

**Q50 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements in relation to employees with vocational or technical qualifications:**

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Holding vocational or technical qualifications improves business performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Holding vocational or technical qualifications enables the employee do their job more effectively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Holding vocational or technical qualifications increases productivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q51 When answering the previous question, were you thinking about vocational and technical qualifications as part of an apprenticeship or taken outside of an apprenticeship?**

- As **part of an** apprenticeship
- Taken **outside of an** apprenticeship
- Prefer not to answer

**Q52 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements in relation to employees with vocational or technical qualifications:**

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Training employees in vocational or technical qualifications improves staff commitment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training employees in vocational or technical qualifications offers good value for money	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training employees in vocational or technical qualifications improves staff retention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q53 When answering the previous question, were you thinking about vocational and technical qualifications as part of an apprenticeship or taken outside of an apprenticeship?**

- As **part of an** apprenticeship
- Taken **outside of an** apprenticeship
- Prefer not to answer

**Q54 For your employees who achieve vocational or technical qualifications, how often does this lead to:**

	<i>All of the time</i>	<i>Most of the time</i>	<i>Some of the time</i>	<i>None of the time</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
A pay increase	<input type="checkbox"/>				
A promotion or improved job status	<input type="checkbox"/>				
New responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>				

**Q55 When answering the previous question, were you thinking about vocational and technical qualifications as part of an apprenticeship or taken outside of an apprenticeship?**

- As **part of an** apprenticeship
- Taken **outside of an** apprenticeship
- Prefer not to answer

**Q56 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements in relation to employees who have passed the end point assessment of an apprenticeship:**

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
Completing an apprenticeship improves business performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Completing an apprenticeship enables the employee do their job more effectively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Completing an apprenticeship increases productivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enabling employees to do an apprenticeship improves staff commitment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enabling employees to do an apprenticeship offers good value for money	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enabling employees to do an apprenticeship improves staff retention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q57 For your employees who have passed the end point assessment of an apprenticeship, how often does this lead to:**

	<i>All of the time</i>	<i>Most of the time</i>	<i>Some of the time</i>	<i>None of the time</i>	<i>Don't know</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
A pay increase	<input type="checkbox"/>					
A promotion or improved job status	<input type="checkbox"/>					
New responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>					

## Part 6: Final comments

**Q58 Are you willing to be re-contacted within the next 3 months for a follow-up telephone interview to explore your views in more detail?**

- Yes
- No

**Q59 Thank you. Please provide us with your contact telephone number:**

**Q60 Please also provide us with your email address:**

**Q61 Do you have any final comments?**

**Thank you for your time completing this survey.**

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