



# Perceptions of Vocational and Technical Qualifications

## Wave 2

Final report

July 2019

<p><b>Pye Tait Consulting</b> Royal House, 110 Station Parade, Harrogate, HG1 1EP Tel: 01423-509433 Fax: 01423-509502 Email: <a href="mailto:info@pyetait.com">info@pyetait.com</a> Website: <a href="http://www.pyetait.com">www.pyetait.com</a></p>	 <p>MRS Evidence Matters™ Company Partner</p>  <p>NCC CERTIFICATION ISO9001:2008 Member of SN Registrars (Holdings) Ltd</p>  <p>UKAS MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS 8327</p> <p>Cert No: 76000/GB/Q</p>
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## Glossary of terms

<b>Apprenticeship framework</b>	These were developed by sector bodies, primarily focused on qualifications. They are being phased out by 2020/21 and being replaced by apprenticeship standards. Framework apprenticeships are assessed throughout by completing a unit at a time but there is no end-point assessment.
<b>Apprenticeship standard</b>	New apprenticeship standards, developed by employers, to show what an apprentice will be doing, and the skills required of them, by job role. Standards are developed by employer groups known as ‘trailblazers’. Standards are occupation-focused rather than qualification-led, with the apprentice being assessed through an end-point assessment.
<b>Awarding organisation</b>	An organisation recognised by the qualifications regulators in England, Wales or Northern Ireland to develop, deliver and award qualifications.
<b>Employer provider (sub-set of employer respondent group)</b>	Delivers some, or all, of the off-the-job training element of an apprenticeship to their own staff (and sometimes other employers’ staff too).
<b>End-point assessment of apprenticeship (EPA)</b>	The final assessment for an apprenticeship, taken at the end of the apprentice’s training and used to determine whether they are occupationally competent and will pass their apprenticeship.
<b>Functional Skills qualifications (FSQ)</b>	Functional Skills qualifications are available in English, maths and ICT and are available in levels from Entry 1 to Level 2. Functional Skills assessments test the fundamental, applied skills in these subjects for life, learning and work.
<b>Other Vocational &amp; Technical Qualifications (VTQ)</b>	These normally have a vocational focus and, for this report, refer to qualifications other than FSQs and EPAs. These include, amongst others, Technical Qualifications and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs).
<b>Trailblazer group</b>	Trailblazers are groups of employers that come together as the creators and early adopters of new apprenticeship standards. Focused on the specific knowledge, skills and behaviours for their sector, they work together, supported and guided by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, to develop new programmes of learning that will directly impact their workforce. The trailblazer membership covers a wide range of employers (at least 10).
<b>Training providers</b>	The scope of the survey sample included training providers in the following categories: Further Education (FE); Higher Education (HE); private class-based; private work-based; public sector community based; public sector ‘other’; schools; voluntary sector education.

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## Executive summary

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### Introduction

Ofqual is the independent qualifications regulator for England, responsible for regulating around 160 awarding organisations who between them provide around 15,000 live qualifications for learners. Ofqual regulates general qualifications such as GCSEs, AS and A levels, as well as other qualifications including Functional Skills (FSQs) and a wide range of other Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQs). It also regulates end-point assessments (EPAs) for over 60 apprenticeship standards where Trailblazers have selected Ofqual to provide External Quality Assurance.

Pye Tait Consulting was commissioned by Ofqual to gather employers', learners' and training providers' views of FSQs, VTQs and EPAs as part of a longitudinal study. This report presents the results of Wave 2 (2018/19) of the perceptions survey and compares them, where appropriate, with the results from Wave 1 (2017/18). The research for both Waves was conducted via telephone and online surveys. Each Wave targets a minimum of 2,000 employers, 500 training providers and 500 learners.

### Findings

#### Overview of perceptions across employers, training providers and learners

As with Wave 1 of the research, the views of employers, training providers and learners have been sought at a time of great flux within the education landscape.

Although comparisons have been made between Wave 1 and Wave 2 findings, any changes should not be viewed as indicating a trend, or pattern. It is too early to predict the likelihood of any identified improvements being maintained.

Overall, the findings indicate a good degree of consistency between the two Waves, although, perceptions amongst all three respondent groups have improved slightly.

A notable difference however is that, in Wave 2, more learners are choosing to take VTQs because they expect to progress, than for other reasons such as improving their skills or confidence.

In Wave 2, a new question on 'value for money' of VTQs was asked of training providers; learners and training providers were asked about value for money of FSQs. Training providers were also asked about value for money of EPAs.

#### Employer perceptions

1. Employers' reported understanding of FSQs and VTQs has improved markedly between Waves 1 and 2; the proportion of employers with a 'very good' understanding of apprenticeships in their sector, and of EPAs, has increased slightly.

2. Perceptions of FSQs remain largely unchanged, albeit slightly fewer employers in Wave 2 agree with positive statements about the qualifications. The change most notable is with regard to the proportion of employers who 'value FSQs'; the proportion has dropped from 72% to 62%.
3. A similar picture is apparent with regard to VTQs. Although a high proportion of employers in Waves 1 and 2 indicate that they value VTQs (90%), slightly fewer in Wave 2 agree with other positive statements about them.
4. When it comes to EPAs, more employers report that they value them in Wave 2 (56% compared with 52% in Wave 1).
5. In both Waves, employer size is a key factor influencing the level of understanding of qualifications and EPAs, and the likelihood of holding positive perceptions of them. Large employers tend to hold more positive views than micro/small employers.
6. Employers who have offered training to their staff in the last year, or those who are employer providers, are also more likely (in both Waves) to view qualifications and assessments positively.
7. In Wave 2, the findings suggest that training offered by employers in the last 12 months is more likely to lead to a qualification than in Wave 1. This is particularly true for skilled and supervisory staff, and for entry level and admin roles.

### Training providers' perceptions

8. Overall, training providers' perceptions have improved between Waves 1 and 2.
9. Across all metrics used to measure perceptions of FSQs, training providers report increased levels of agreement. This is most notable in terms of agreement that FSQs are good preparation for further study (65% in Wave 1; 71% in Wave 2).
10. The level of improvement in the perceptions of VTQs is similar to that of FSQs. The most notable improvement is the level of agreement with the statement 'the purpose of VTQs is well-understood by learners and their parents' (54% in Wave 1; 70% in Wave 2).
11. Training providers' perceptions of EPAs have improved between Waves 1 and 2<sup>1</sup>. However, training providers tend to report a high degree of uncertainty<sup>2</sup> when asked about EPAs, particularly when asked if assessments are sufficiently flexible<sup>3</sup> and when asked if they offer value for money<sup>4</sup>. This likely reflects the newness of EPAs, and training providers are therefore yet to form a view.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, when asked if: they value EPAs; learners understand the purpose of EPAs; Apprenticeships are good preparation for work

<sup>2</sup> This refers to respondents who selected 'neither agree nor disagree' in response to the questions on their perceptions of EPAs.

<sup>3</sup> 31% of training providers selected 'neither agree nor disagree'.

<sup>4</sup> 29% of training providers selected 'neither agree nor disagree'.

### Learners' perceptions

12. When it comes to learners, their perceptions of FSQs are largely unchanged. For example, in both Waves 78% say they value FSQs, and the same proportions in both Waves agree that people holding FSQs have the appropriate level of skill in English (70%) and maths (68%) needed by employers.
13. The proportions of learners who agree with positive statements about VTQs have remained similar. For example, in both Waves, 85% say they value VTQs, and 73% agree that they understand the purpose of VTQs.
14. When asked about EPAs, learners are more positive in Wave 2 than in Wave 1. In Wave 2, 72% of learners agree that they value EPAs compared with 68% in Wave 1 and 75% agree that they understand the purpose of EPA, compared with 70% in Wave 1.
15. There is a notable change in the reasons given by learners for taking FSQs, VTQs and EPAs, and in the expected benefits associated with achievement of these qualifications/assessments. For example, in Wave 2, more learners:
  - opt to take these qualifications/assessments to progress, either in their studies or in their current job;
  - expect to progress to higher level qualifications or to find a better job.
16. The change could be explained by a slightly different sample profile in Wave 2, which included a higher proportion of learners aged 25 or over and a lower proportion of those studying full time.

### Wave 2 perceptions – baseline drawn from average across all three respondent groups

The table overleaf shows an overview of respondent agreement (those who agree and strongly agree) with positive perceptions. When all three respondent groups (employers, training providers and learners) or two respondent groups (e.g. employers and learners) were asked about their level of agreement to the same statement, averages have been used. These averages were calculated by totalling the numbers of respondents in agreement across the respective groups and working out the proportion based on the combined bases.

Unless otherwise stated in footnotes, all questions were asked of employers, training providers and learners.<sup>5</sup>

Perception	FSQs	Other VTQs	EPAs
We have a very or quite good understanding of FSQs/other VTQs/apprenticeships in our sector	<b>37%</b> <sup>6</sup>	<b>48%</b> <sup>7</sup>	<b>38%</b> <sup>8</sup>
We have a very or quite good understanding of EPAs	-	-	<b>34%</b>
We value FSQs/other VTQs/EPAs	<b>69%</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>57%</b>
People holding FSQs have the appropriate level of skill in English needed by employers	<b>60%</b>	-	-
People holding FSQs have the appropriate level of skill in maths needed by employers	<b>59%</b>	-	-
People holding FSQs have the appropriate level of skill in ICT needed by employers	<b>55%</b>	-	-
FSQs/other VTQs/EPAs offer value for money	<b>48%</b> <sup>9</sup>	<b>74%</b> <sup>10</sup>	<b>26%</b> <sup>11</sup>
The purpose of other VTQs is well-understood by employers	-	<b>77%</b>	-
The purpose of other VTQs is well-understood by learners and parents	-	<b>75%</b> <sup>12</sup>	-
People achieving other VTQs/passing EPAs have the competence/ vocational and technical skills needed by employers	-	<b>79%</b> <sup>13</sup>	<b>58%</b>
Availability of FSQ courses & assessment/of other VTQs/of EPAs is sufficiently flexible	<b>47%</b> <sup>14</sup>	<b>68%</b> <sup>15</sup>	<b>45%</b>
FSQs/Other VTQs are good preparation for further study <sup>16</sup>	<b>73%</b>	<b>83%</b>	-
Other VTQs/EPAs prepare learners well for the workplace/are good preparation for work	-	<b>79%</b>	<b>58%</b>
Learners understand the purpose of EPAs	-	-	<b>57%</b> <sup>17</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The raw data for each respondent group was added together to create these averages. This differs to last year's report where the percentages from each group were combined and then averaged.

<sup>6</sup> This was asked of employers only

<sup>7</sup> This was asked of employers only

<sup>8</sup> This was asked of employers only

<sup>9</sup> This was asked of training providers and learners only

<sup>10</sup> This was asked of training providers only

<sup>11</sup> This was asked of training providers only

<sup>12</sup> This was asked of training providers and learners only

<sup>13</sup> This was asked of employers and training providers only

<sup>14</sup> This was asked of employers and learners only

<sup>15</sup> This was asked of employers and learners only

<sup>16</sup> This was asked of training providers and learners only

<sup>17</sup> This was asked of training providers and learners only

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

Ofqual is the independent qualifications regulator for England, responsible for regulating around 160 awarding organisations who between them provide over 15,000 live qualifications for learners. Ofqual regulates general qualifications such as GCSEs, AS levels and A levels, but also a wide range of other qualifications, and it is these qualifications that were asked about in this research. This includes Functional Skills Qualifications (FSQs) and apprenticeship end-point assessments (EPAs) which were asked about specifically, but also a wide range of other Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQs).

This project was commissioned by Ofqual and conducted by Pye Tait Consulting. This report presents the results of Wave 2 of a longitudinal study to understand perceptions of FSQs, VTQs and EPAs. Wave 1 was conducted in 2017/18 and the report published in September 2018. In each Wave, employers, learners and training providers were surveyed to understand how views are reflected through the entire system of education and training. Each Wave targeted a minimum of 2,000 employers, 500 training providers and 500 learners.

Ofqual has an interest in stakeholder views, both from the perspective of a regulator of those qualifications, some of which are currently subject to reform, and as an External Quality Assurance provider of some end-point assessments. The aim of this project is to understand how stakeholders (employers, training providers and learners) view and use these qualifications. It should be noted that some questions were not asked of all three respondent groups, where only relevant to one or two groups. For example, only employers were asked questions about their use of qualifications for recruitment and training.

The surveys followed a telephone and/or online method dependent on the respondent group and availability. The employer survey interviewed individuals with insight into and/or responsibility for training and qualifications, such as HR or Recruitment Managers, Operations Managers and (in smaller businesses) Managing Directors.

The final achieved samples were structured to be representative of employers and training providers whereas the learner sample was an opportunity sample. Further information on sampling and methodology is available in the accompanying technical annex.

	Number of survey completions		
	Employers	Training providers	Learners
<b>Wave 1 (2017/18)</b>	2,070	532	604
<b>Wave 2 (2018/19)</b>	2,145	577	599

This report focuses on the key findings from Wave 2, with statistically significant differences between respondent groups noted where relevant. Please note: reported differences are based on statistical significance testing as tested at the 95% confidence interval.

Where quotes are used in the report, these are intended to be representative of the majority view.

For the purposes of this report, other VTQs are defined as qualifications that normally have a vocational focus and refer to qualifications other than FSQs and EPAs. These include, amongst others, Technical Qualifications and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs).

## 1.2 Education and policy landscape

Since the 2018 employer perceptions survey, changes to the vocational and technical qualifications landscape have been progressing. The highlights are summarised below.

### Functional Skills Qualifications (FSQs)

**February 2018:** New subject content for reformed Functional Skills qualifications in English and maths published by the Department for Education (for first teaching September 2019)<sup>18</sup>.

**June 2018:** Ofqual published Conditions and Guidance for new Functional Skills Qualifications (for first teaching September 2019).

### Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQs)

**December 2018:** Department for Education published the T Level Action Plan and announced the second wave of T Levels to be taught from 2021: Health; Healthcare services; Science; Onsite construction; Building services engineering; Digital support and services; Digital business services.

**February 2019:** Contracts to deliver the first three T Levels from 2020 awarded (Design, surveying and planning; Education and Childcare; Digital Production, design and development)

**March 2019:** The Department for Education published a consultation on its review of post-16 qualifications at Level 3 and below.

### End-Point Assessment of Apprenticeships (EPA)

**October 2018:** Announcement that Apprenticeship fees for non-levy paying small and medium-sized employers are to be halved from 10% to 5%.

**January 2019:** The Department for Education launched a new 'Fire it up' promotional campaign.

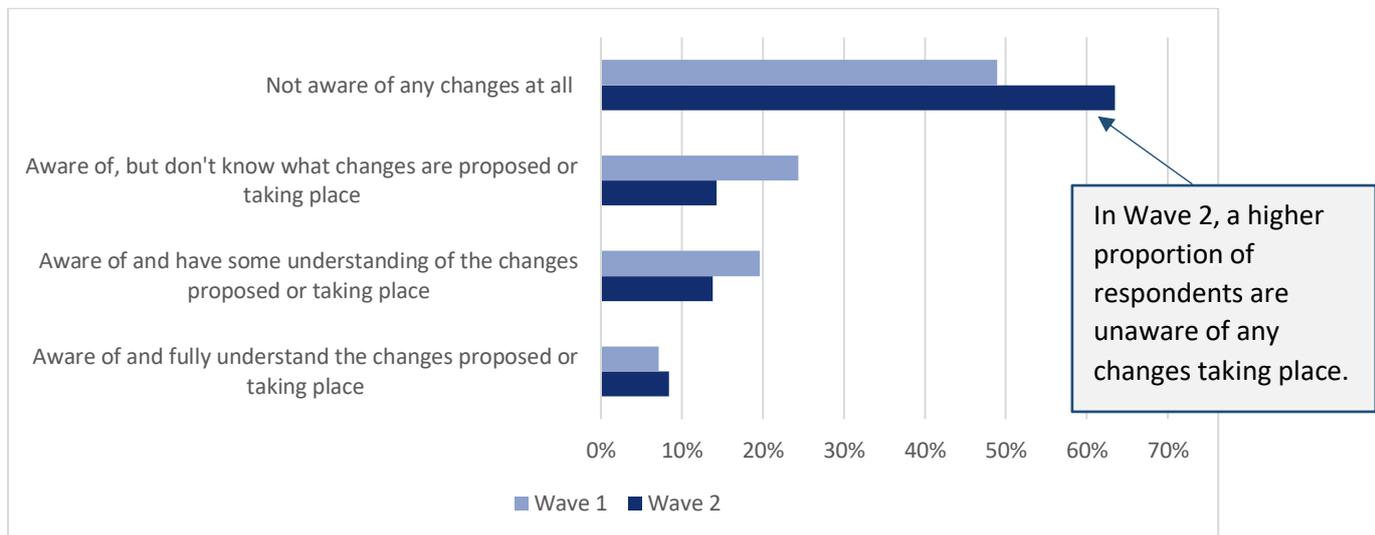
**January 2019:** The Institute for Apprenticeships became the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education.

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<sup>18</sup> References to Functional Skills qualifications in this document are to those currently taught, not the reformed qualifications which will be taught from September 2019.

### 1.3 Respondents' understanding of the changes

**Figure 1: Employer awareness and understanding of changes to other Vocational and Technical Qualifications (excluding Functional Skills Qualifications and End-Point Assessments)**



Base, all responses: Wave 1, 1219; Wave 2, 1466

Since the Wave 1 survey there have been very few changes in the landscape of “other VTQs”, other than the ongoing development of T Levels, therefore it is not surprising that a high proportion of employers (64%) are not aware of any changes at all.

Those who stated they are an employer provider are significantly more aware of changes (29%) than employers who are not providers (6%).

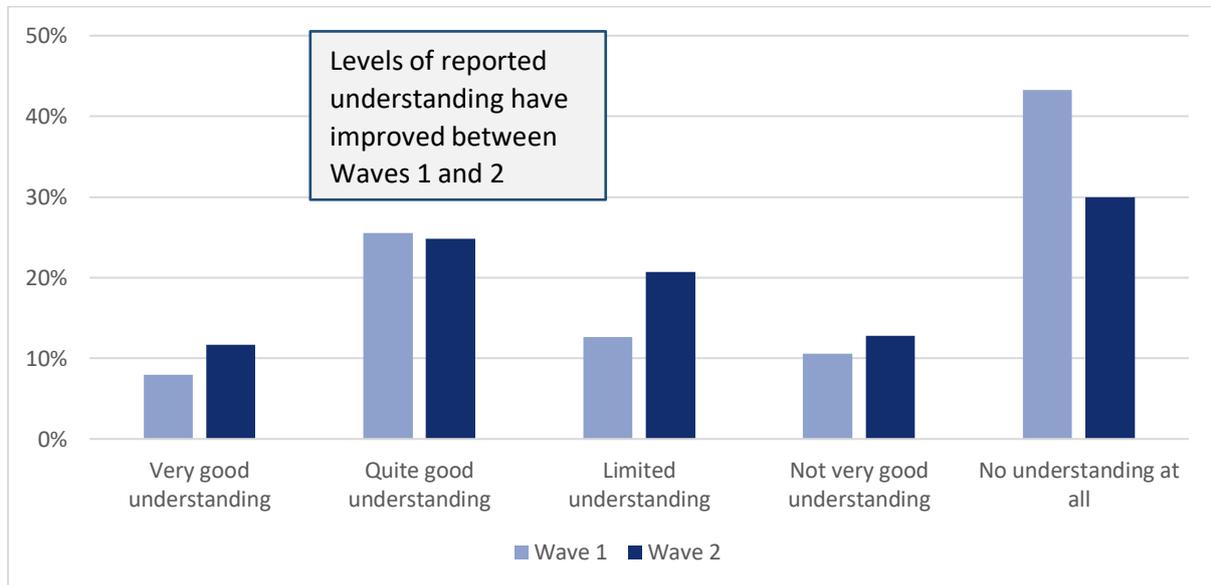
## 2. Perceptions of Functional Skills Qualifications

### 2.1 Key findings – Functional Skills Qualifications

- Employers have a reasonable understanding of Functional Skills Qualifications (FSQs), and this has improved between Waves 1 and 2.
- In both Waves, level of knowledge of FSQs increases with organisation size, with large businesses significantly more likely than micro businesses to have a very good or quite good understanding of them.
- In neither Wave of the survey were employers knowledgeable about 'brands' of FSQs; however, Edexcel and City and Guilds were most commonly quoted as being used.
- Employers continue to view FSQs positively, although levels of agreement with positive statements about FSQs have declined slightly.
- In both Waves, employer providers are significantly more likely than other employers to have a very/quite good understanding of FSQs, and to hold positive perceptions about them.
- In both Waves, organisation size (by number of employees and number of registered learners) is associated with perceptions. Large businesses and training providers with 2000+ learners are significantly more likely to have positive perceptions of FSQs than micro businesses and training providers with fewer than 100 learners.
- Training providers tend to be more positive towards FSQs in Wave 2 than in Wave 1.
- The reasons why learners choose to pursue FSQs appears to have changed; fewer are completing them as part of an apprenticeship and they are taking them primarily to improve their progression opportunities (either in work, or in their studies).
- FSQs are valued by employers because they set a minimum standard/level of competency, and because they can be built on to support progression.
- Where employers view FSQs negatively this is because they are regarded as being irrelevant to the job, too low a standard, or they are too generic.

## 2.2 Understanding of Functional Skills Qualifications

**Figure 2: Employer understanding of Functional Skills Qualifications (FSQs)**



Base: Wave 1: 2070<sup>19</sup>; Wave 2: 2145<sup>20</sup>

The level of understanding of FSQs increases with organisation size: 59% of large employers report a ‘very good’ or ‘quite good understanding’ compared with 58% of medium, 48% of small and 28% of micro companies.

Employer providers have a significantly better understanding (65% very good/quite good understanding), than employers who are not providers (32%).

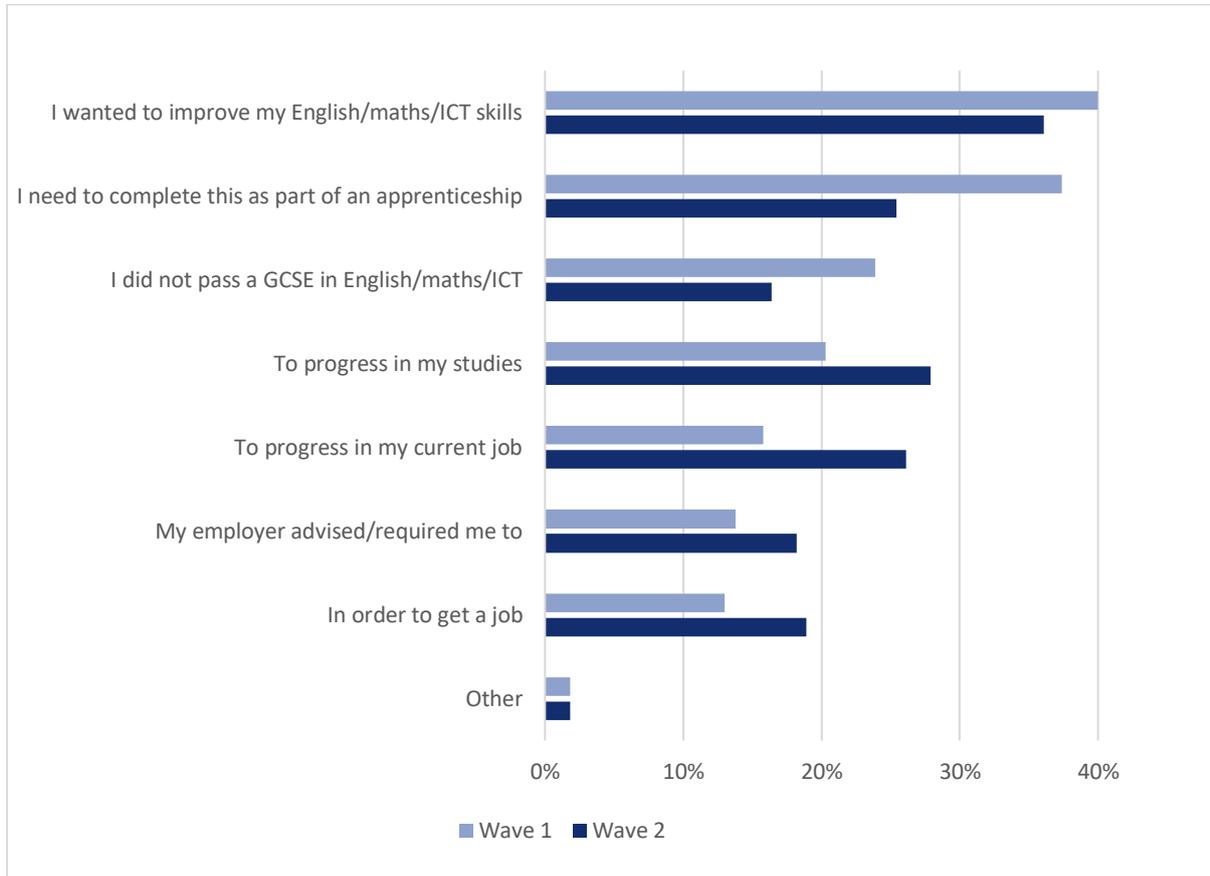
Understanding is lowest amongst administrative and support activities and agriculture, forestry and fishing (23% and 27% with a very good or quite good understanding). The education sector has the highest level of understanding (61%).

<sup>19</sup> The total base number of respondents in 2018 was 2070. The respondents that had no understanding at all was 897, meaning these respondents did not answer further questions related to functional skills and the new base was 1173.

<sup>20</sup> The total base number of respondents in 2019 was 2145. The respondents that had no understanding at all was 643, meaning these respondents did not answer further questions related to functional skills and the new base was 1502.

### 2.3 Why learners chose Functional Skills Qualifications

**Figure 3: Learner views on why they chose to take Functional Skills Qualifications (FSQs)**



Base: Wave 1: 386; Wave 2: 280

Reasons for taking FSQs have changed slightly between Waves 1 and 2, with fewer learners suggesting they need to complete an FSQ as part of an apprenticeship.

Learners in Wave 2 are more likely to be opting to take FSQs for progression, either in their studies (28%) or in their current job (26%).

Those aged 16-18 and 25-34 are significantly more likely to select ‘other’ reasons. Of a handful of respondents that provided ‘other’ reasons, these include: career progression (rather than progression in a current job); it being a mandatory requirement of the college; or preparing to return to work after maternity leave.

## 2.4 Perceptions of Functional Skills Qualifications

### 2.4.1 Functional Skills Qualifications 'brands'

In Wave 2, 6% of employers indicated that they 'arrange training leading to Functional Skills qualifications', and 21% stated that they both recruit people with, and arrange training leading to, Functional Skills qualifications. These employers were asked to identify the different 'brands' (the awarding organisation) they use when opting for FSQs.

Of the 395 employers who offer FSQs and/or recruit people with FSQs, half responded to a follow-up question about which brand they use. Of those who could identify the awarding organisation, City and Guilds was cited by half, followed by Edexcel/Pearson and AQA.

The most common reason for selecting the brand used is that this is imposed on them either by an educational institution or as a requirement of the business. This is the case in almost a third of responses. Just under a fifth determined that the quality of the provider (be that course content, reputation or resources) is the reason for their selection and just over a fifth suggest that the brand of the particular qualification means that the qualification is a benefit to the business.

### 2.4.2 Perceptions of Functional Skills Qualifications

Employers, training providers and learners were asked to rate their level of agreement with a series of statements about FSQs. The statements varied slightly depending on the respondent group – hence not all questions were asked of all three groups, or wording was adapted accordingly<sup>21</sup>.

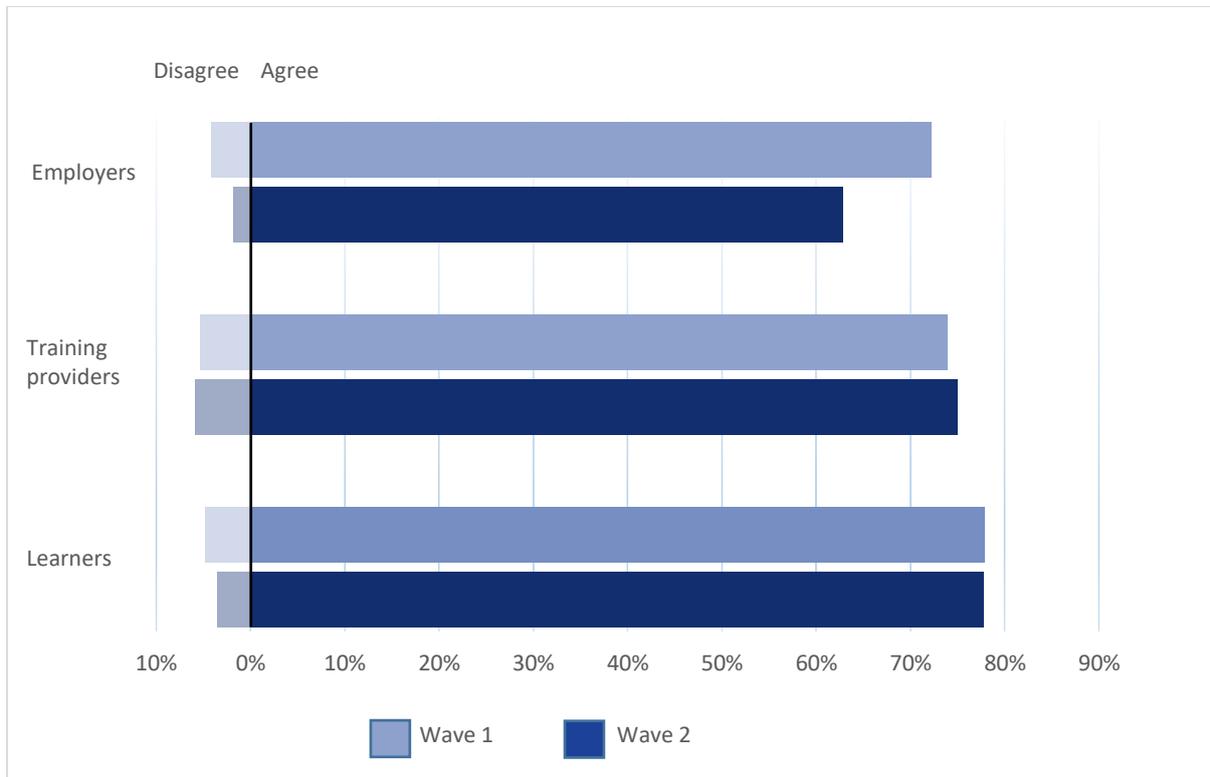
Figures 4 to 10 present these perceptions<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> See the Technical Annex for questionnaires showing how wording was adapted by respondent group.

<sup>22</sup> Figures show aggregations of strongly agree/agree and disagree/strongly disagree. Responses of neither agree or disagree, don't know, or prefer not to say, are not shown hence bars will not total 100%.

**Figure 4: Responses to “We value Functional Skills Qualifications (FSQs)”**

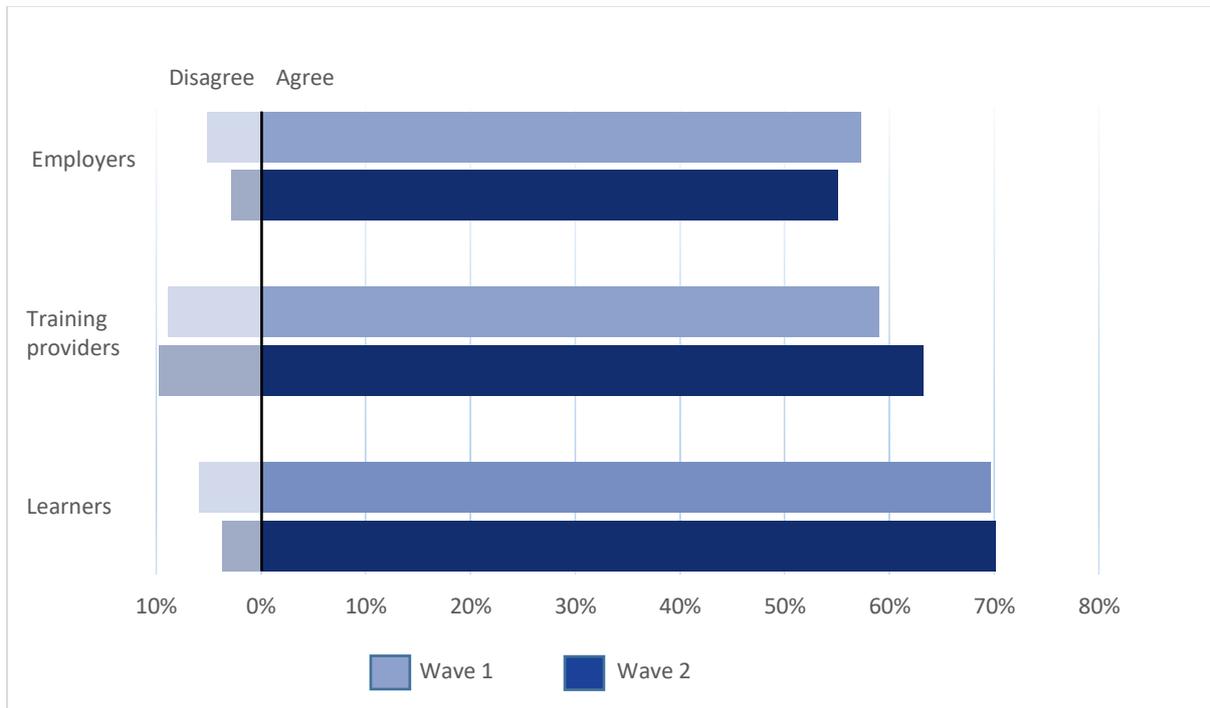


Base: Wave 1: employers (953), training providers (529), learners (604); Wave 2: employers (1228), training providers (572), learners (595)

A higher proportion of large employers agree (78%) compared with micro employers (56%). Employer providers are significantly more likely to agree (85%) than those who are not employer providers (57%).

Of training providers, agreement is stronger amongst the largest (2001+ learners) (80%) than those with 2000 or fewer learners.

**Figure 5: Responses to “People holding Functional Skills Qualifications (FSQs) have the appropriate level of skill in English needed”**



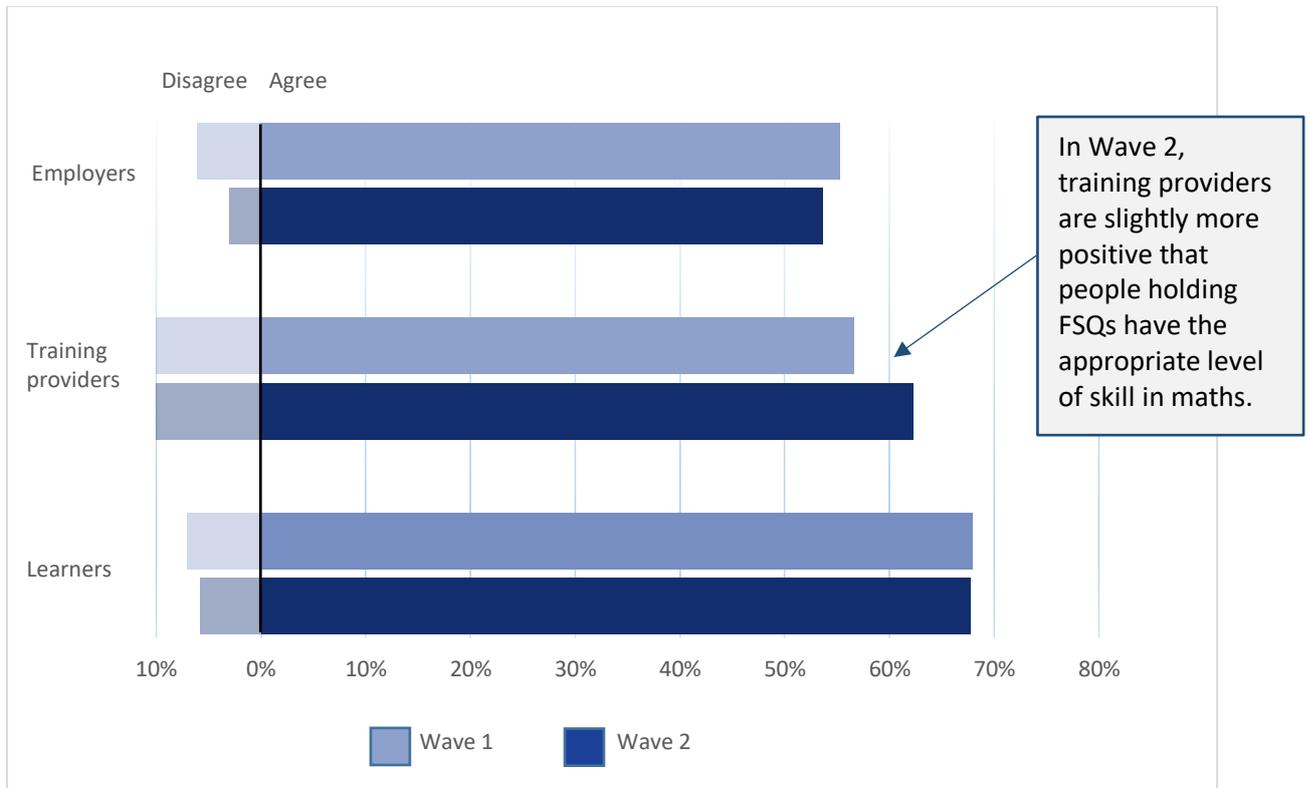
Base: Wave 1: employers (1173), training providers (527), learners (601); Wave 2: employers (1502), training providers (568), learners (596)

A higher proportion of medium-sized employers agree (77%); micro employers have the lowest levels of agreement (49%).

Employer providers are more likely to agree with the statement (83%) than those who are not employer providers (49%).

In Wave 2, the reason why more training providers both agree and disagree is because fewer selected ‘neither agree nor disagree’. Agreement is stronger amongst the larger training providers (501+ learners) than those with 500 or fewer learners.

**Figure 6: Responses to “People holding Functional Skills Qualifications (FSQs) have the appropriate level of skill in mathematics needed”**

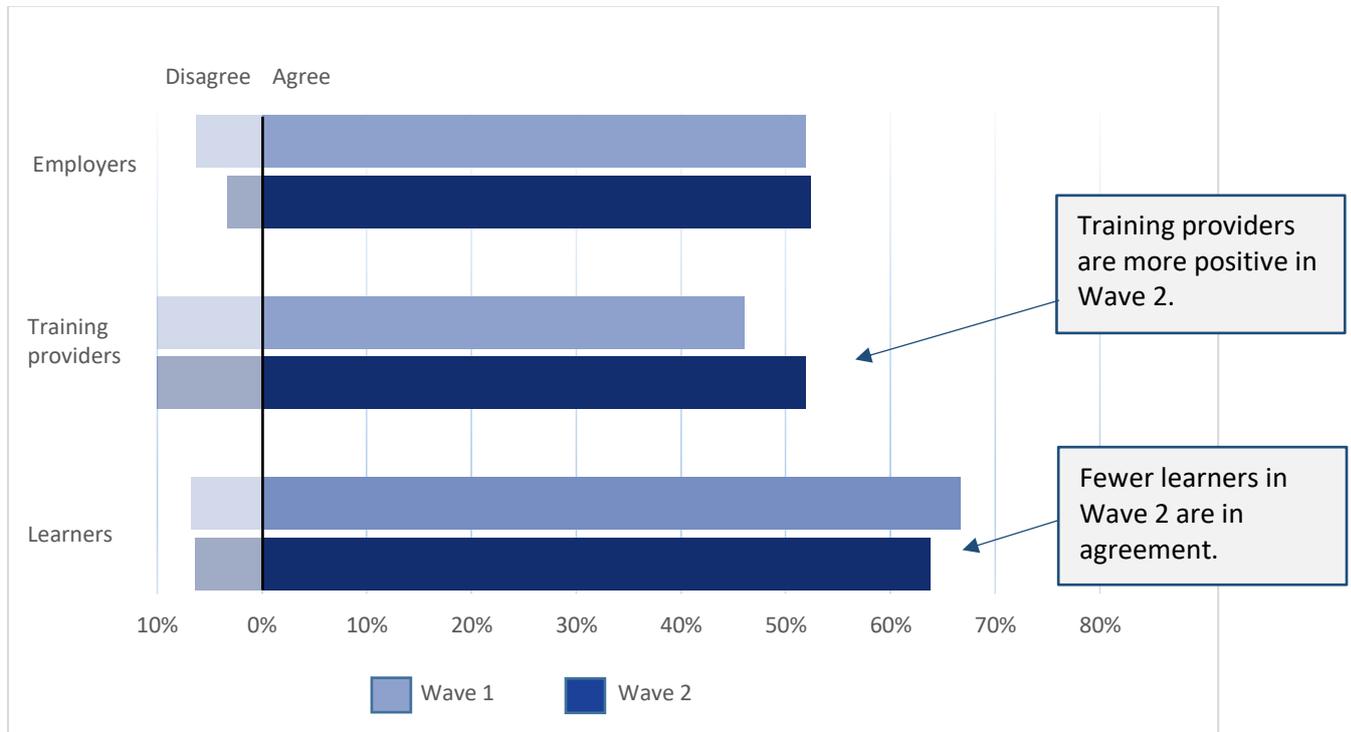


Base: Wave 1: employers (1173), training providers (527), learners (605); Wave 2: employers (1502), training providers (567), learners (595)

A higher proportion of medium and large employers agree (72% and 67%, respectively) compared with small (58%) and micro employers (47%).

Employer providers are significantly more likely to agree with the statement (82%) than those who are not employer providers (48%).

**Figure 7: Responses to “People holding Functional Skills Qualifications (FSQs) have the appropriate level of skill in ICT needed”**



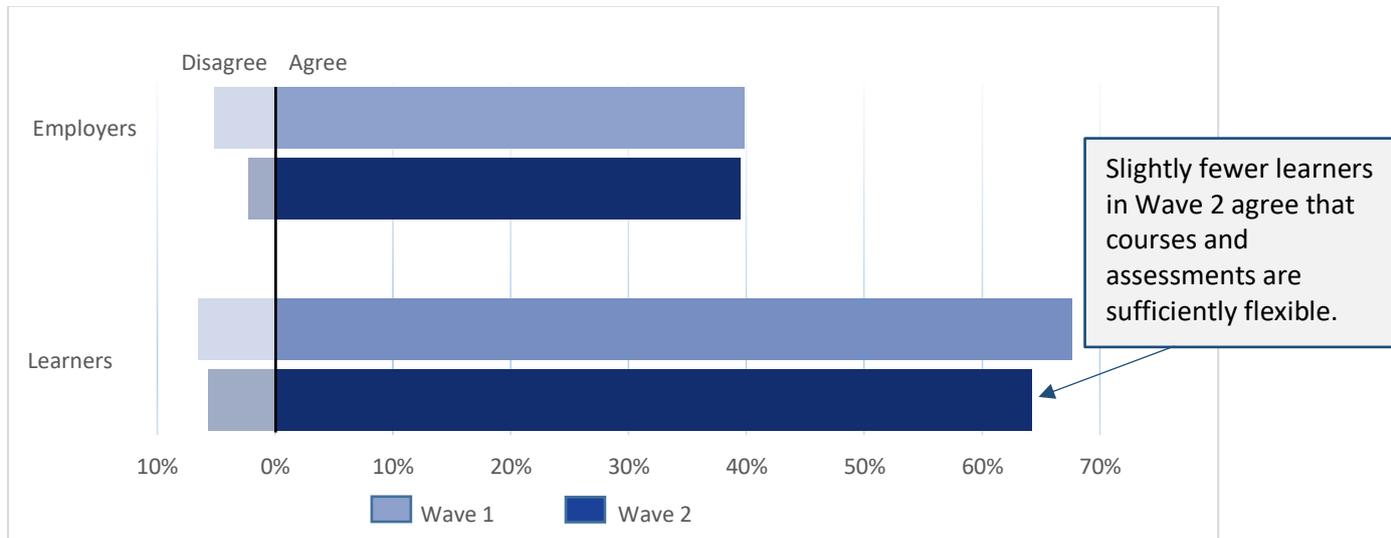
Base: Wave 1: (1173), training providers (527), learners (603) Wave 2: employers (1502), training providers (567), learners (596)

A higher proportion of medium-sized employers agree (73%) compared with micro employers (46%).

Employer providers are significantly more likely to agree with the statement (76%) than those who are not employer providers (47%).

In both Waves, agreement is stronger amongst the largest training providers (2001+ learners) than those with 2000 or fewer learners.

**Figure 8: Responses to “The availability of Functional Skills courses and assessment is sufficiently flexible”**

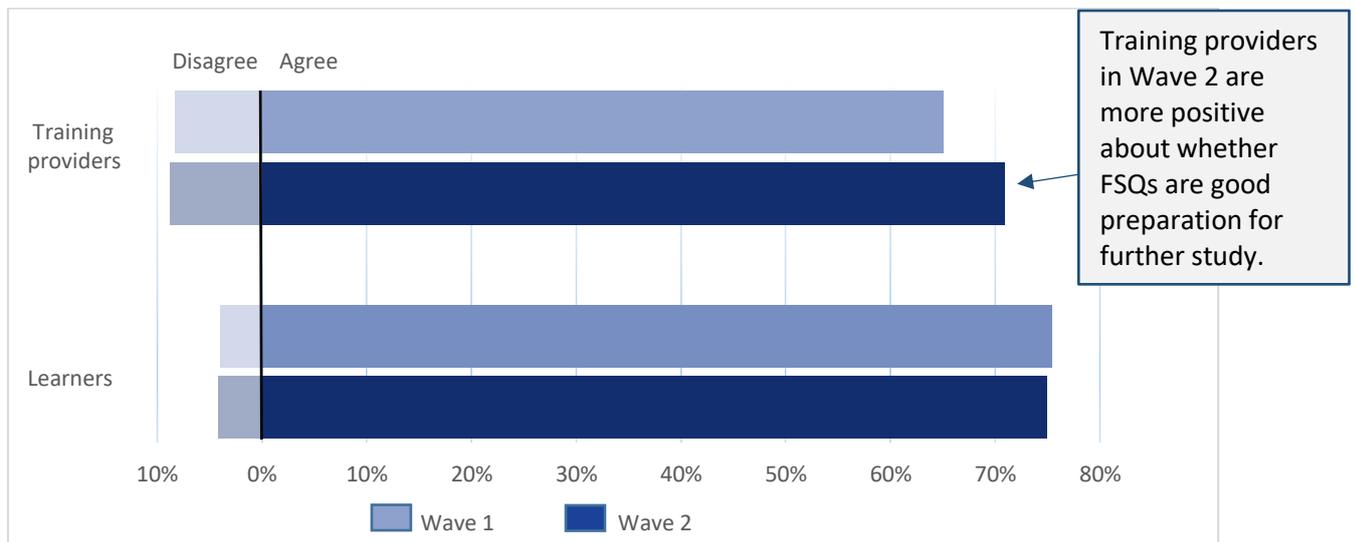


Base: Wave 1: employers (1173), learners (604) Wave 2: employers (1502), learners (596)

A higher proportion of medium-sized employers agree (57%) compared with micro employers (32%).

A higher proportion of employer providers agree (68%) compared with employers who are not providers (34%).

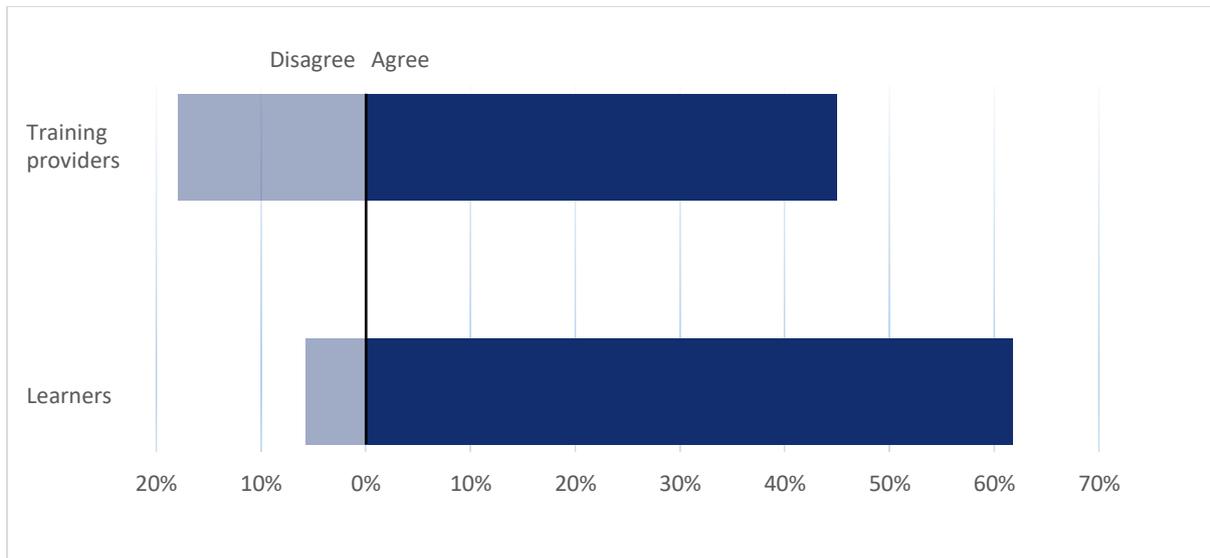
**Figure 9: Responses to “Functional Skills qualifications are good preparation for further study”**



Base: Wave 1: training providers (525), learners (605) Wave 2: training providers (568), learners (593)

The highest level of agreement is amongst training providers with 2001+ learners (79%), and lowest amongst those with 0-100 learners (68%).

**Figure 10: Responses to “Functional Skills qualifications offer value for money”<sup>23</sup>**



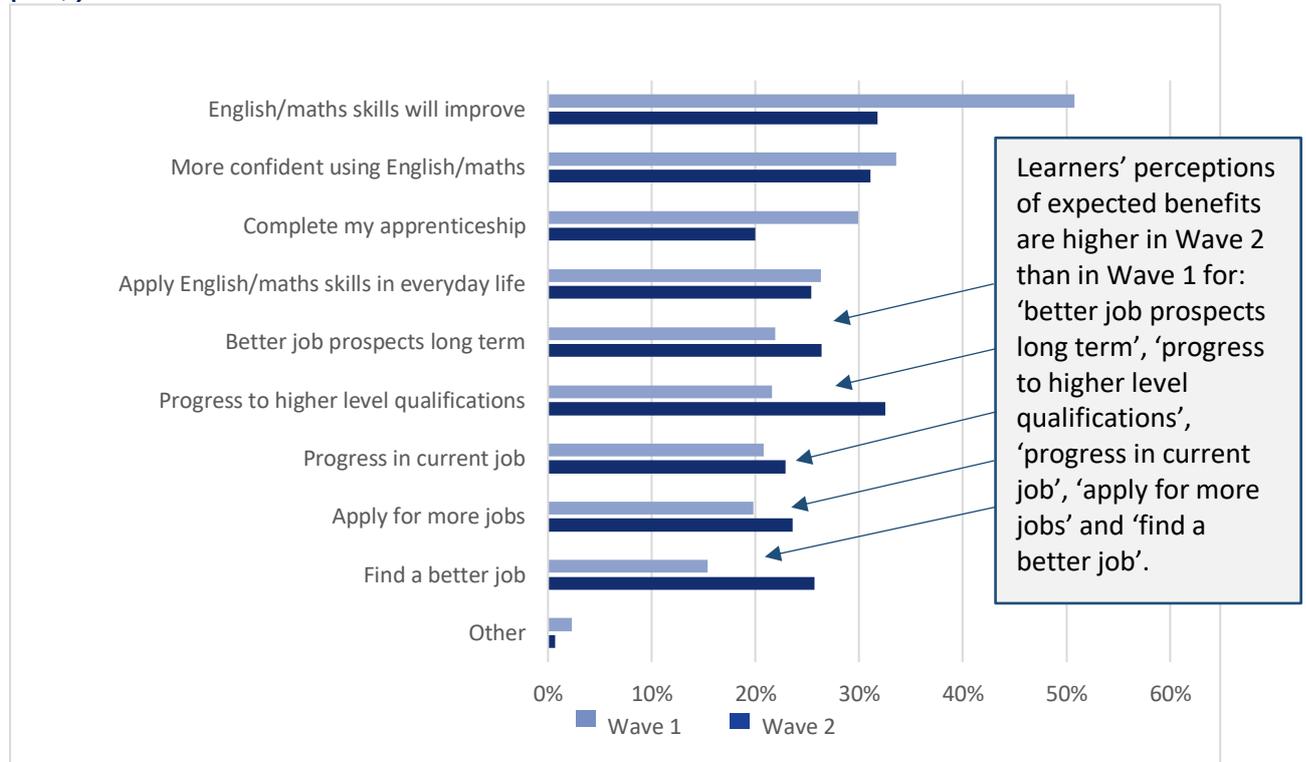
Base: Wave 2: providers (575), learners (595)

Training providers with 501-2000 learners are most in agreement (54%), compared to those with 101-300 learners (40%), who are least in agreement. 47% of those in the bracket between (301-500 learners) are in agreement.

<sup>23</sup> This question was asked in Wave 2 only.

## 2.5 Benefits associated with Functional Skills Qualifications

**Figure 11: Learner perceptions of expected benefits associated with Functional Skills Qualifications (FSQs)**



Learners’ perceptions of expected benefits are higher in Wave 2 than in Wave 1 for: ‘better job prospects long term’, ‘progress to higher level qualifications’, ‘progress in current job’, ‘apply for more jobs’ and ‘find a better job’.

\*Respondents could select more than one response  
 Base: Wave 1: 385; Wave 2: 280

In Wave 2, younger learners (aged 19-24 and 25-34) are significantly more likely than older learners to believe that completing an FSQ will help them find a better job.

## 2.6 Employer reasons for perceptions of Functional Skills Qualifications

Employers responding to the survey say they value FSQs for various different reasons. The majority of employers suggested that, where they value FSQs, this is because they are an essential requirement ‘to do the job’, or they are seen as a minimum requirement. Employers highlighted a view that FSQs can be built upon, to further develop their skills.

There are cases where FSQs have a specific value for certain roles or sectors, however, they are more commonly valued simply because they provide the basic level of skills in maths, English and ICT. English was also singled out for its importance to those who employ staff whose first language is not English. .

Where employers suggest they do not value FSQs, this is because they are viewed as being too generic, or of too low a standard, or they are not relevant to the business. Only 2% of respondents disagreed when asked if they value FSQs.

It should also be noted, however, that nearly all the employers who say they have negative perceptions of FSQs, recruit based on aptitude, attitude and relevant work experience, which are deemed more valuable than qualifications.

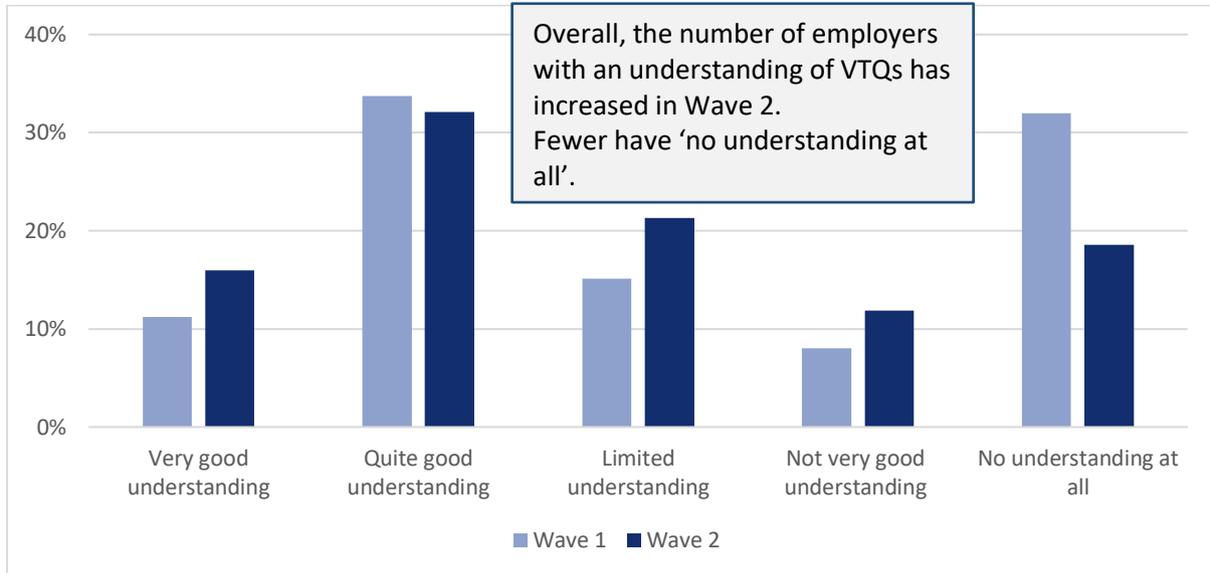
### 3. Perceptions of Other Vocational and Technical Qualifications

#### 3.1 Key findings – Other Vocational and Technical Qualifications

- Employers have a better understanding of vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs) than of FSQs. Understanding of VTQs increased markedly between Waves 1 and 2.
- Employers who provide training to their employees have a significantly better level of understanding than employers who do not provide training. Knowledge also increases with company size.
- As with FSQs and apprenticeships, learners in Wave 2 are more likely to take VTQs to progress in their job/career or in their studies than to improve their skills. In Wave 2, greater numbers of learners than in Wave 1 highlight these factors as expected benefits.
- The types of VTQs funded by employers are typically NVQs, with a small number funding qualifications such as Pearson BTECs and HNDs. Various subjects are taken, across the full range of sectors.
- Employers, training providers and learners continue to hold very positive views of VTQs regardless of whether the qualifications are pursued within apprenticeships, or standalone. Employers hold less positive views when asked if people achieving VTQs have the technical skills needed, and if the availability of VTQs is sufficiently flexible; fewer employers in Wave 2 agree with these statements where the VTQ is taken within an apprenticeship.
- Where employers fund VTQs for their workforce, this is mostly because the qualifications are relevant to the work being undertaken, and because they equip learners with employability and softer skills. Some employers in Wave 2 also highlight VTQs as being recognised as an industry standard.
- In Wave 2, positive outcomes of pay increase, promotion or improved job status and new responsibilities are more commonplace as a result of employees achieving a VTQ than in Wave 1.
- Only very few employers hold negative views of VTQs (2% in Wave 1 and 1% in Wave 2); reasons relate to a perception that these qualifications are not relevant, or that they are not fit for purpose.
- Amongst training providers, levels of agreement that learners/parents understand the purpose of VTQs has increased markedly (54% to 70%). More training providers in Wave 2 agree that VTQs are good preparation for further study.
- Almost three quarters of training providers agree that VTQs offer good value for money (employers and learners were not asked this question).

### 3.2 Understanding of other Vocational and Technical Qualifications<sup>24</sup>

**Figure 12: Employer understanding of other Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQs)**



Base: Wave 1: 2070; Wave 2: 2145

The level of understanding of VTQs has increased markedly amongst employers. The level of understanding of other VTQs increases with organisation size.

72% of large employers report a very good or quite good understanding, compared with 40% of micro employers.

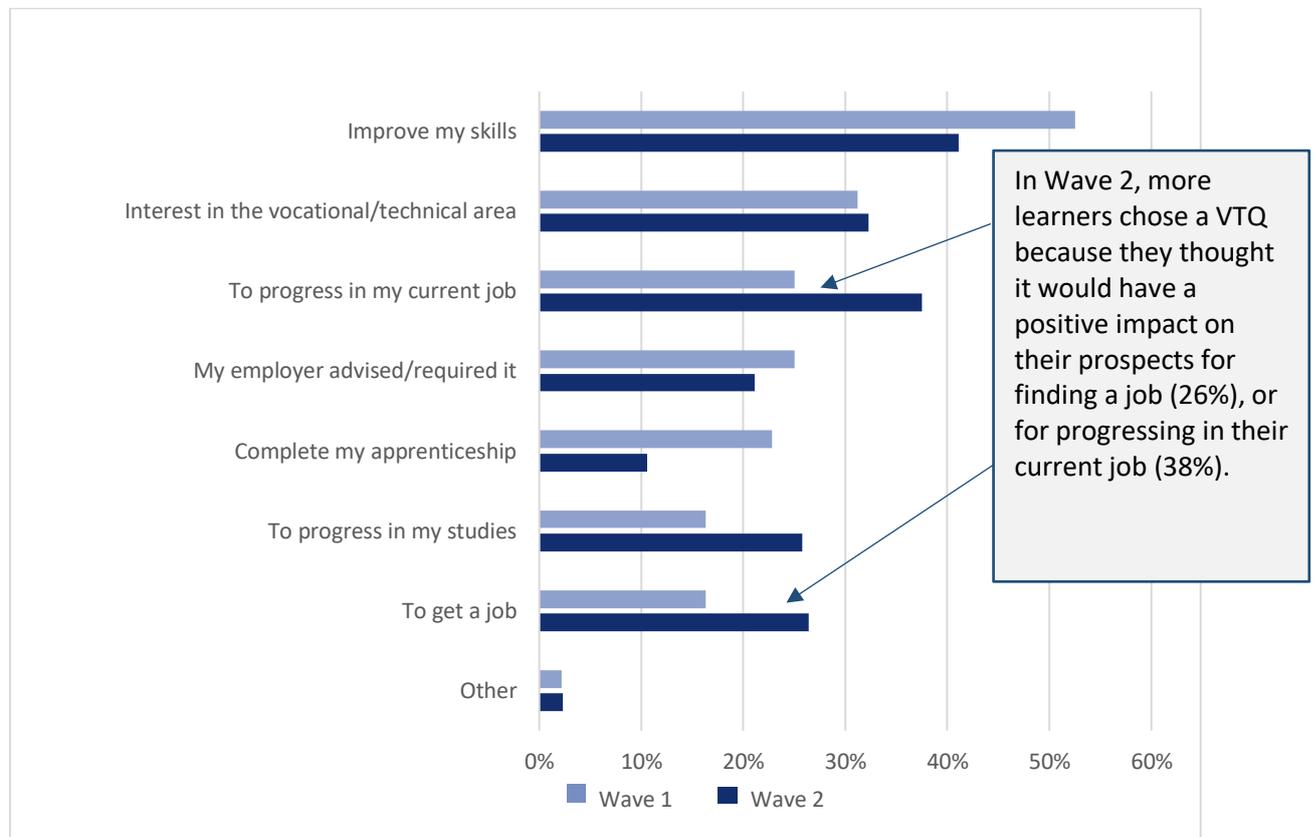
Understanding of other VTQs is lowest among employers in administrative and support services activities (32% with a very good or quite good understanding). Understanding is highest in the human health and social work activities sector (71% of respondents with a very good or quite good understanding).

Employers who have arranged or funded training have a significantly better understanding than employers that have not arranged funding.

<sup>24</sup> For the purposes of this report, other VTQs are defined as qualifications that normally have a vocational focus and refer to qualifications other than FSQs and EPAs. These include, amongst others, Technical Qualifications and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs).

### 3.3 Why learners chose other Vocational and Technical Qualifications

**Figure 13: Learner views on why they chose to take other Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQs)**



Base: Wave 1: 356; Wave 2: 341

### 3.4 Perceptions of other Vocational and Technical Qualifications

#### 3.4.1 Types of other Vocational and Technical Qualifications

Employers were asked which other VTQs they offer to their staff. The vast majority say they offer National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), with a small number referring to BTECs and HNDs.

As with Functional Skills Qualifications, few employers were aware of the brand (i.e. type of awarding organisation) and referred instead to the title of the qualification. Where employers were aware of the brand, it was predominantly City & Guilds and Pearson.

Employers cited a wide range of NVQs mostly at Levels 1, 2 and 3.

Employers offer other VTQs in the following subjects:

- **Construction** (including bricklaying, joinery, carpentry, plumbing, gas and electrical)

- **Transportation** and machinery operation (including mechanics and vehicle repairs)
- **Administration**
- **Health and Social Care** (including safeguarding, dentistry and pharmacist)
- **Hair and Beauty**
- **Engineering**
- **Hospitality, Catering and Food Safety**
- **Leadership and Management**
- **ICT and Digital**
- **Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal** (domestic and livestock)

### ***3.4.2 Perceptions of other Vocational and Technical Qualifications***

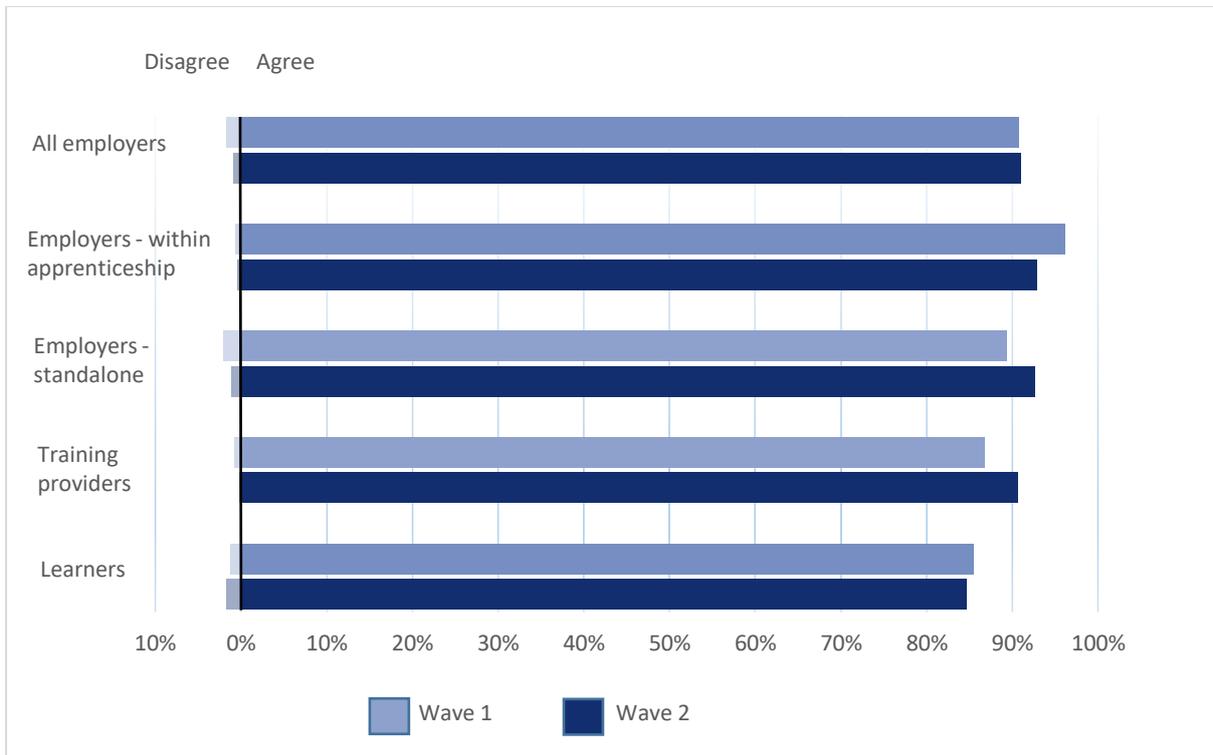
Employers, training providers and learners were asked to rate their level of agreement with a series of statements about other VTQs. Statements varied slightly depending on respondent group, hence wording was adapted accordingly and not all questions were asked of all three groups.

Figures 14 to 20 present these perceptions<sup>25</sup>. Employers were also asked whether they were thinking of VTQs within apprenticeships, or as standalone qualifications. The figures show the views of all employers, and then the two sub-sets of these i.e. employers speaking of other VTQs within apprenticeships, and employers speaking of other VTQs as standalone qualifications.

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<sup>25</sup> Figures show aggregations of strongly agree/agree and disagree/strongly disagree. Responses of 'neither agree or disagree', 'don't know' or 'prefer not to say' are not shown, hence bars will not total 100%.

**Figure 14: Responses to “We value Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQs)”**



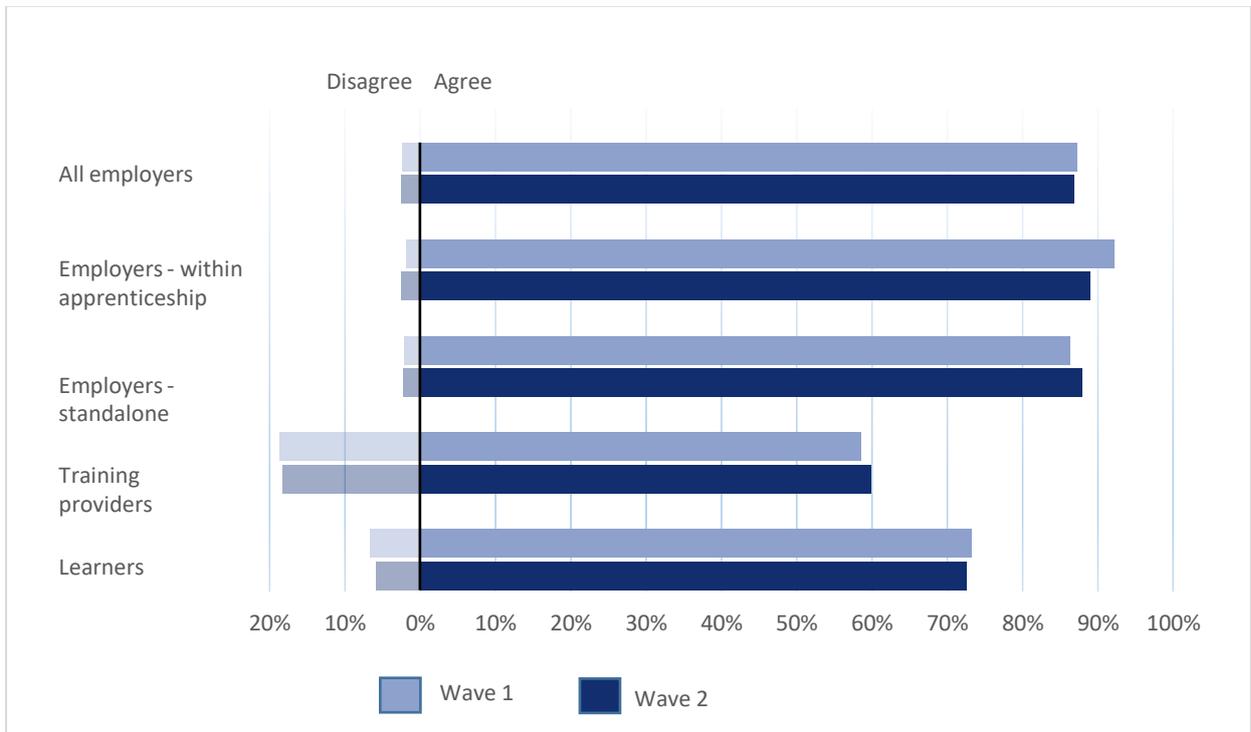
Base: Wave 1: all employers (968 [310 within apprenticeship, 617 standalone]<sup>26</sup>), training providers (531), learners (602)  
 Wave 2: all employers (1091 [475 within apprenticeship, 538 standalone]<sup>27</sup>), training providers (576), learners (597)

Employers who have arranged or funded training are significantly more likely to agree with this statement than employers who have not arranged or funded training.

<sup>26</sup> The remaining 41 preferred not to say

<sup>27</sup> The remaining 78 preferred not to say

**Figure 15: Responses to “The purpose of Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQs) is well-understood by employers”**



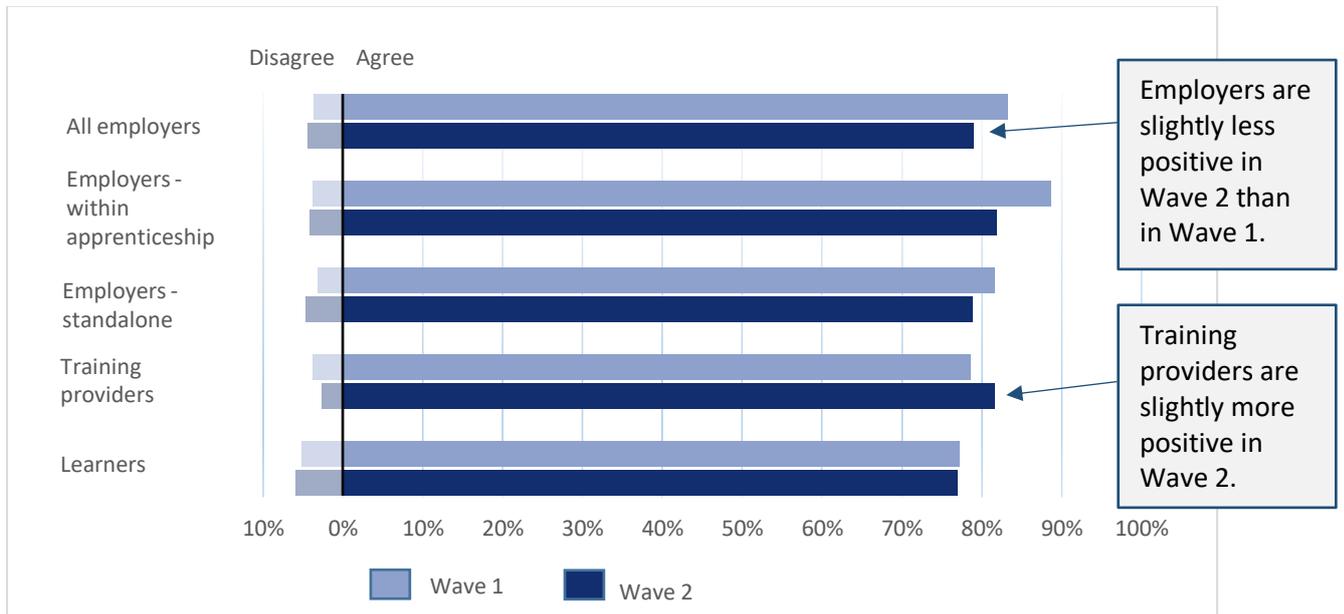
Base Wave 1: all employers (968 [310 within apprenticeship, 617 standalone]<sup>28</sup>), training providers (529), learners (601)  
 Wave 2: all employers (1091 [475 within apprenticeship, 538 standalone]<sup>29</sup>), training providers (574), learners (596)

Employers who have arranged or funded training are significantly more likely to agree with this statement than employers who have not arranged or funded training.

<sup>28</sup> The remaining 41 preferred not to say

<sup>29</sup> The remaining 110 preferred not to say

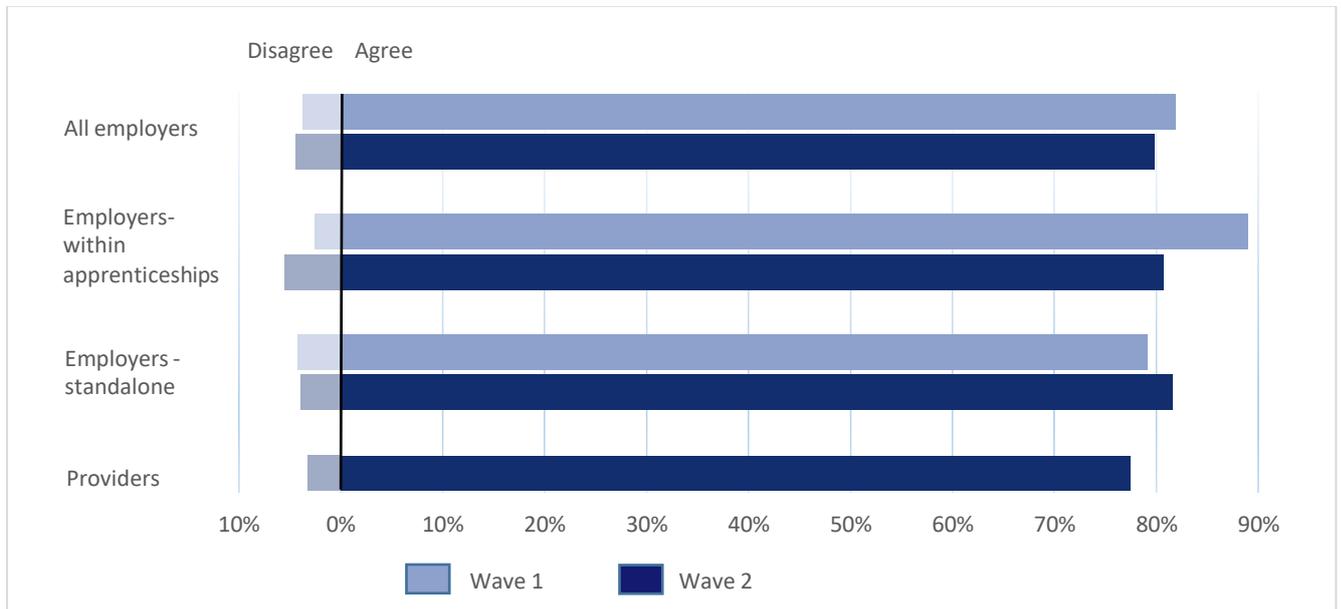
**Figure 16: Responses to “Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQs) prepare learners well for the workplace”**



Base: Wave 1: all employers (968 [310 within apprenticeship 617 standalone]), training providers (527), learners (602); Wave 2: all employers (1091 (475 within apprenticeship 538 standalone)), training providers (571), learners (594)

Employers who have arranged or funded training are significantly more likely to agree with this statement than employers who have not arranged or funded training.

**Figure 17: Responses to “People achieving Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQs) have the technical skills needed by employers”<sup>30</sup>**



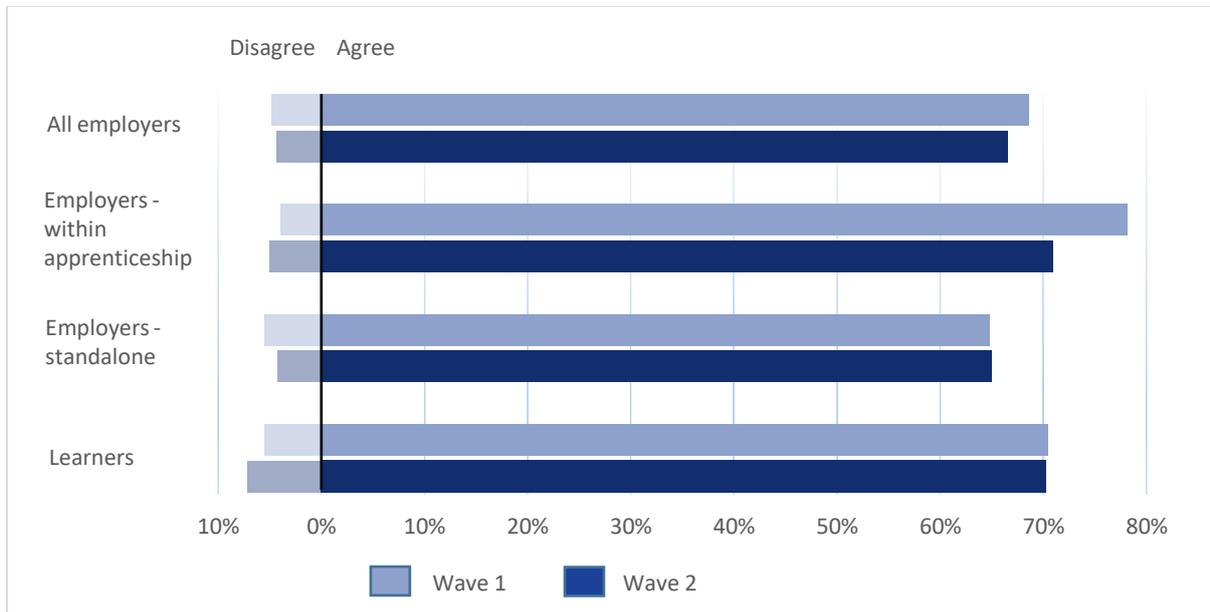
Base: Wave 1: all employers (968 [310 within apprenticeship, 617 standalone]), Wave 2: all employers (1091 [475 within apprenticeship, 538 standalone]), providers (572)

In Wave 2, slightly fewer employers agree that people achieving VTQs have the technical skills needed by employers. This is because fewer employers are in agreement when they are thinking about a VTQ within an apprenticeship (81% in Wave 2 compared with 89% in Wave 1).

Employers who have arranged or funded training are significantly more likely to agree with this statement than employers who have not arranged or funded training.

<sup>30</sup> This question was not asked of training providers in Wave 1.

**Figure 18: Responses to “Availability of Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQs) is sufficiently flexible”**

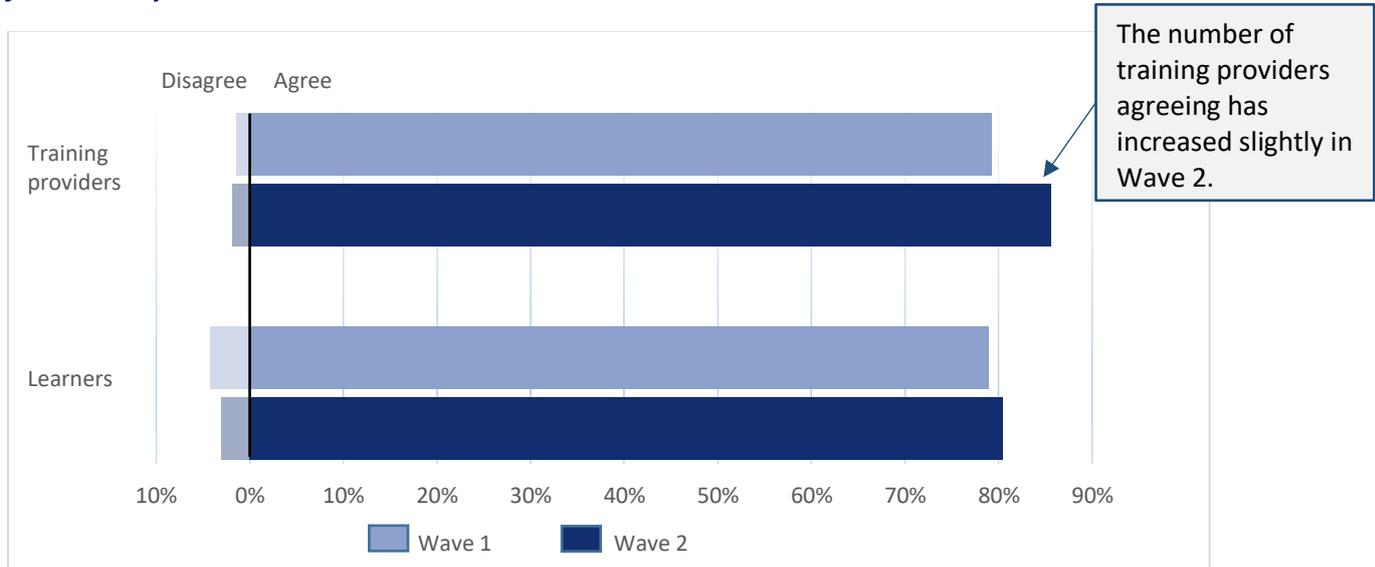


Base: Wave 1: all employers (968 [310 within apprenticeship, 617 standalone]), learners (602); Wave 2: all employers (1091 [475 within apprenticeship, 538 standalone]), learners (596)

In Wave 2, slightly fewer employers agree that the availability of VTQs is sufficiently flexible. In line with the other questions in this series, employers who were thinking about VTQs within apprenticeships, are less in agreement in Wave 2, than they were in Wave 1.

Employers who have arranged or funded training are significantly more likely to agree with this statement than employers who have not arranged or funded training.

**Figure 19: Responses to “Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQs) are good preparation for further study”**

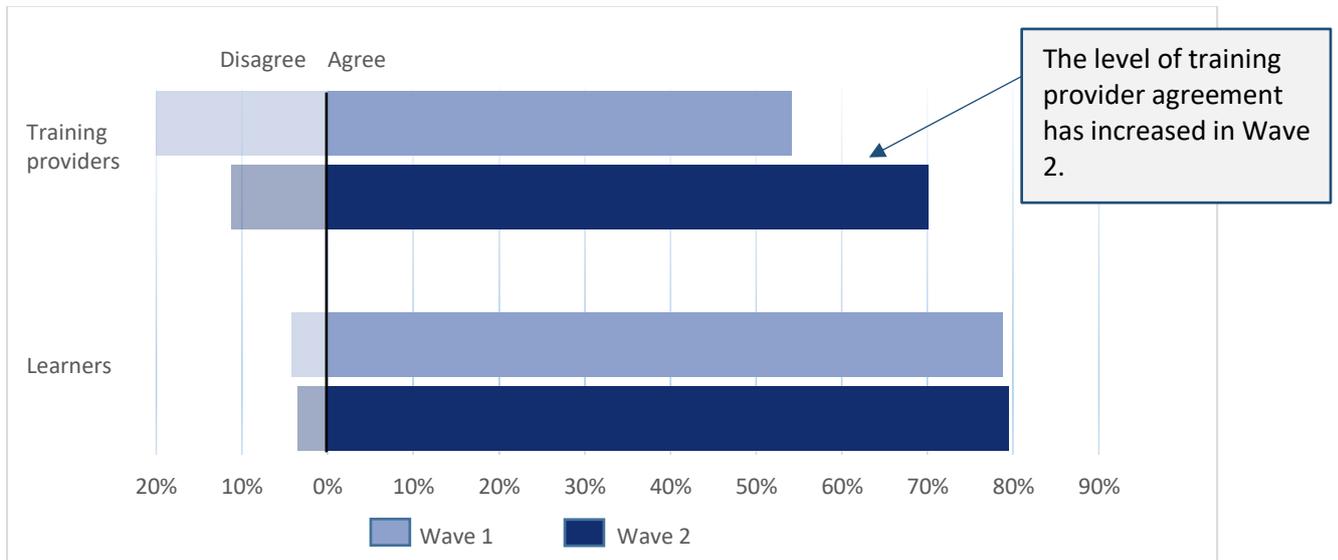


Base: Wave 1: training providers (526), learners (604); Wave 2: training providers (575), learners (595)

Schools are least likely to agree that VTQs are good preparation for further study (60%), compared with 88% of Further Education Colleges and 91% of independent training providers.

In both Waves, learners with experience of work are more likely to agree. Those aged over 35 years of age have higher than average levels of agreement (>86%) than those aged 19-24 (70%).

**Figure 20: Responses to “The purpose of Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQs) is well-understood by learners/parents”<sup>31</sup>**



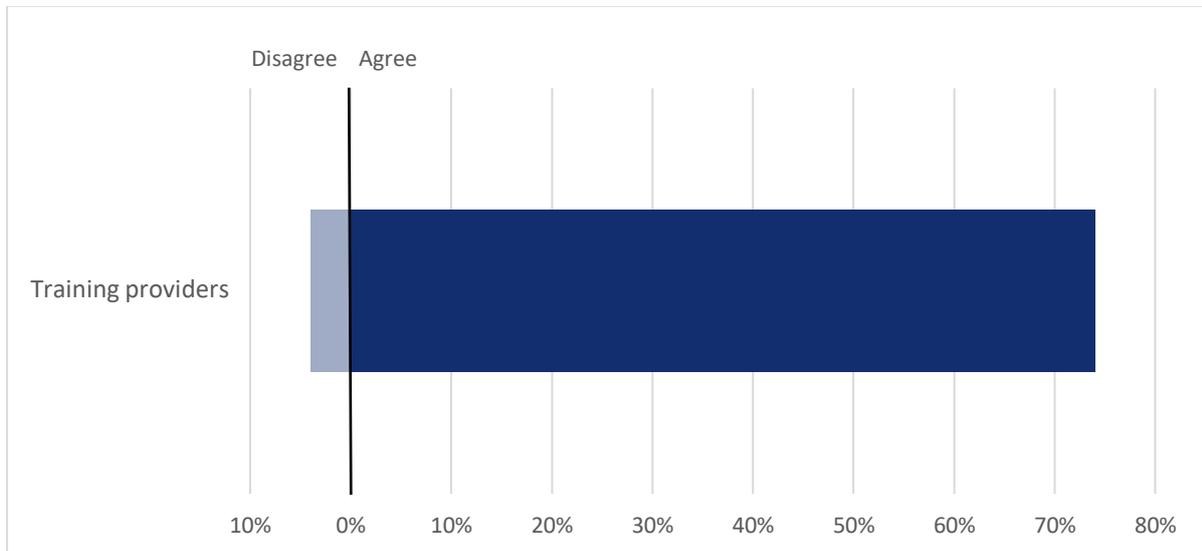
Base: Wave 1: training providers (529), learners (602); Wave 2: training providers (572), learners (593)

Training providers show much more agreement in Wave 2 than in Wave 1 that the purpose of VTQs is well-understood by learners/parents.

Further Education Colleges have high levels of agreement (71%), compared with just 38% of voluntary sector education organisations.

<sup>31</sup> Learners were asked to respond on their own behalf, while training providers were asked to respond about learners and parents where appropriate

**Figure 21: Provider responses to: “Vocational and technical qualifications offer good value for money”<sup>32</sup>**



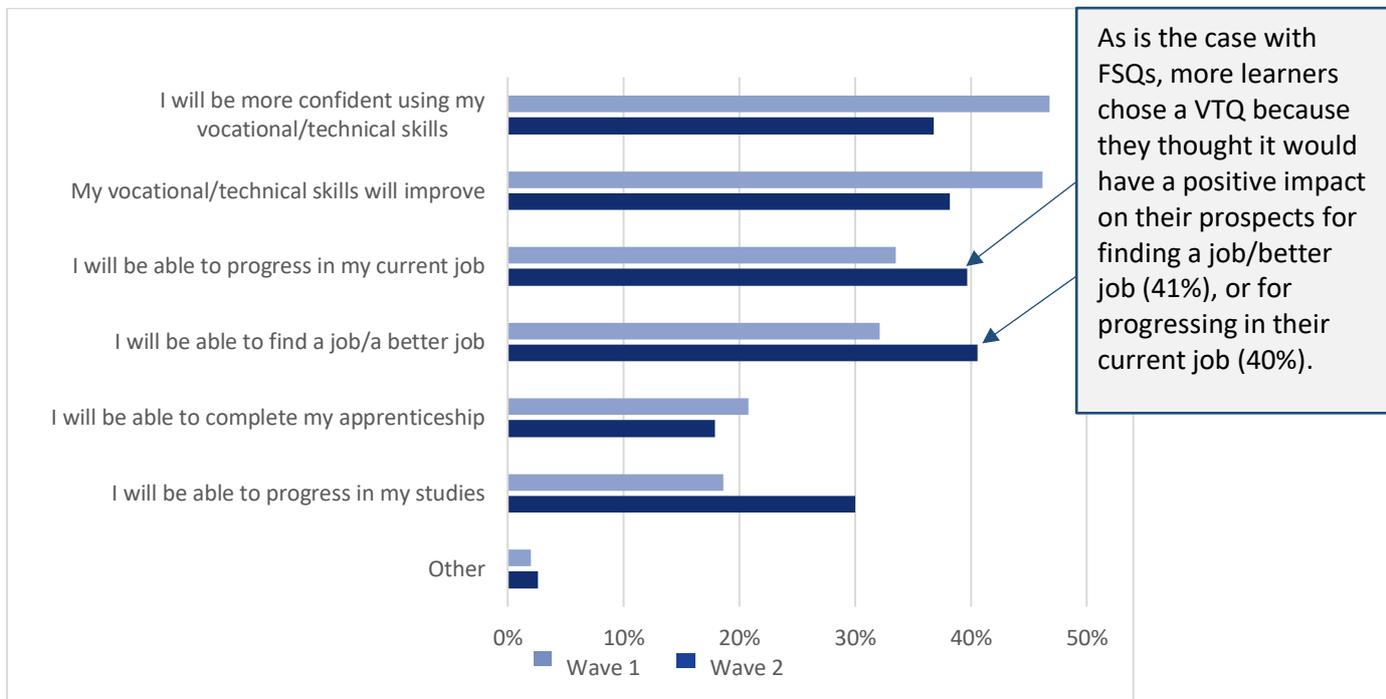
Base: 571

The majority of providers (74%) agree that VTQs offer good value for money; Further Education Colleges and independent training providers have above average levels of agreement (76% and 80%, respectively).

<sup>32</sup> This question was only asked of training providers.

### 3.5 Benefits associated with other Vocational and Technical Qualifications

**Figure 22: Learner perceptions of expected benefits associated with other Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQs)**



Base: Wave 1: 355; Wave 2: 340

Only a small number of learners selected 'other'. The quotes below are examples of these.

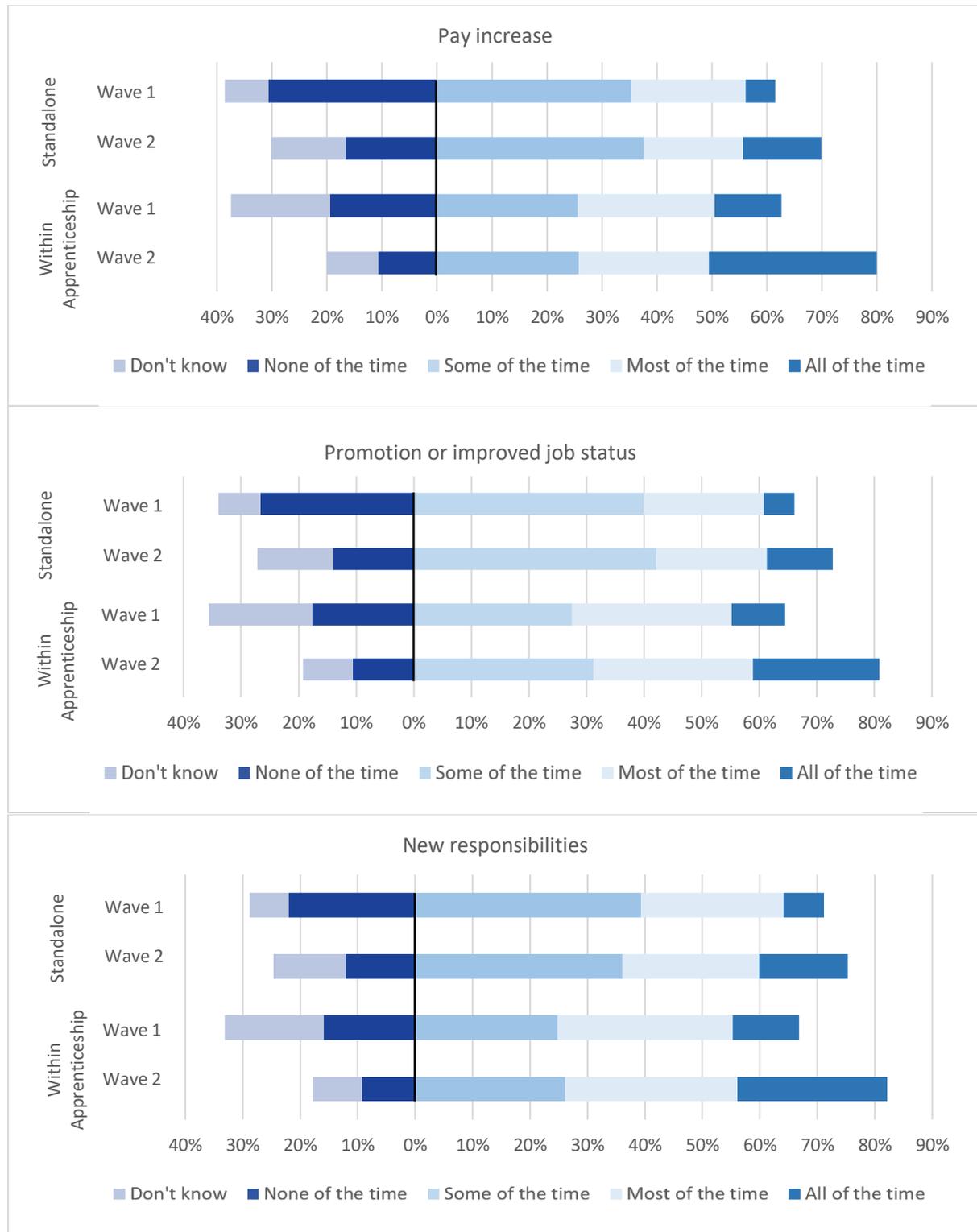
*"I have a wider range of skills and knowledge."*

Learner

*"I will be able to study the course I want at university."*

Learner

**Figure 23: Employer views – outcomes for employees after completion of other Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQs)**



Base: Wave 1: employers within an apprenticeship: pay increase (755), promotion/improved status (752), new responsibilities (754) and standalone: pay increase (672), promotion/improved status (674), new responsibilities (674)  
 Wave 2: employers within an apprenticeship: pay increase (690), promotion/improved status (690), new responsibilities (686) and standalone: pay increase (607), promotion/improved status (607), new responsibilities (604)

Employers were asked whether achieving other VTQs typically results in a pay rise, promotion or improved job status, or allocation of new responsibilities for employees (Figure 23).

In Wave 2, positive outcomes for achieving a VTQ are reported as more frequent than in Wave 1. This is true when VTQs are achieved both within an apprenticeship, and when they are standalone and for each of the outcomes of achieving a pay rise, promotion or improved job status and, new responsibilities.

In both Waves, respondents report that pay increases, promotion/improved job status or new responsibilities are more prevalent all or most of the time<sup>33</sup> where other VTQs are completed as part of an apprenticeship, rather than as a standalone qualification.

Employees being given new responsibilities is more often reported as the result of achieving a VTQ, rather than a pay increase or a promotion or improved job status.

### 3.6 Reasons for perceptions of other Vocational and Technical Qualifications

Employers who strongly agreed that they value other VTQs were asked to explain why. The most common reasons are that VTQs are seen as being very relevant to the work being undertaken and that they equip learners with employability skills (e.g. communication, team working and problem solving).

Employers also spoke about VTQs having clearly defined progression pathways; a good mix of learning practice and assessment; and, being a valuable alternative for learners who do not wish to pursue an academic route. Some also suggested that VTQs are a recognised industry standard.

Very few employers disagreed when asked if they value other VTQs<sup>34</sup>. Of this small number, reasons for negative perceptions were that they are not deemed relevant for the employer's workplace, and learners are not considered competent even after achieving the qualification, i.e. it is not considered fit for purpose. Employers also stated that workers still require hands on practical experience, but that those who do not have VTQs can do more lower skilled work and therefore are still employable.

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<sup>33</sup> Percentages for responses of 'all of the time' and 'most of the time' have been combined

<sup>34</sup> Wave 1: 1.7%; Wave 2: 0.9%

## 4. Perceptions of End-Point Assessments

### 4.1 Key findings – End-Point Assessments

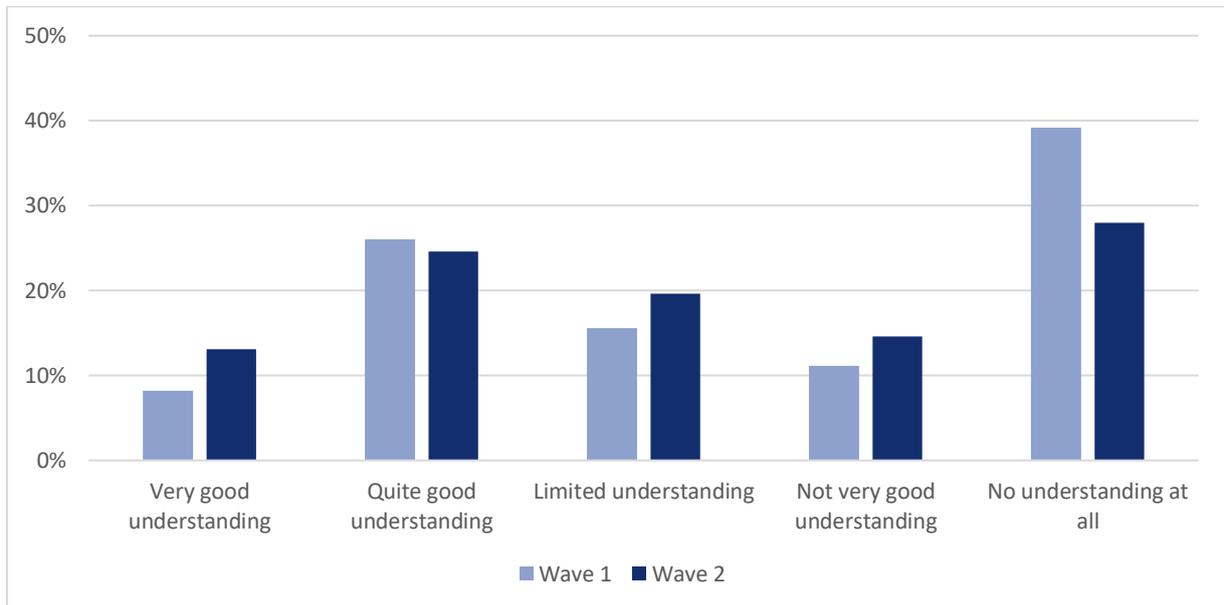
- Slightly more employers in Wave 2 report a ‘quite good’ or ‘very good’ level of understanding of apprenticeships in their sector than in Wave 1, with levels increasing from 34% to 38%. Employer providers and employers that have arranged or funded training for their employees have a significantly better understanding than those who have not. The level of understanding also increases with company size and where employers have apprentices.
- The proportion of employers reporting a very good understanding of EPAs has increased; providers and learners also report improved understanding of EPAs in Wave 2, each increasing by 10%.
- When it comes to employers’ and providers’ understanding of the difference between apprenticeship frameworks and new apprenticeship standards, this is largely unchanged: c.80% of employers in both Waves have no understanding. Understanding is best amongst large employers and the largest training providers.
- Employer awareness that EPAs are specific to apprenticeships standards is unchanged (c. 22%), whereas training providers and learners are more aware in Wave 2.
- As with FSQs and VTQs, learners in Wave 2 are more likely to take an apprenticeship to progress in their job/career or in their studies than to improve their skills. Expected benefits are also associated with progression.
- The proportion of respondents who value EPAs has improved across all groups; large employers have above average levels of agreement.

Almost two thirds (63%) of employers agree that people passing EPAs have the vocational and technical skills needed by employers, compared with 44% of providers and 70% of learners.

- Employers and learners are almost equally in agreement that availability of EPAs is sufficiently flexible (c. 60%), compared with only 23% of providers. Training providers do not tend to believe that learners understand the purpose of EPAs (27%). In Wave 2, 40% of providers agree learners have a good understanding. However, this finding is at odds with what learners report: 75% suggest they have a good understanding.
- The majority of employers, providers and learners agree that apprenticeships are good preparation for work. A quarter of providers agree EPAs are good value for money.
- Where negative views of EPAs are reported, this is predominantly amongst training providers. Views expressed included that EPAs are no more effective in ensuring quality than continual assessment, they disadvantage non-academic learners and they are costly.

## 4.2 Understanding of End-Point Assessments

**Figure 24: Employer understanding of apprenticeships in their sector**



Base: Wave 1: 2070; Wave 2: 2145

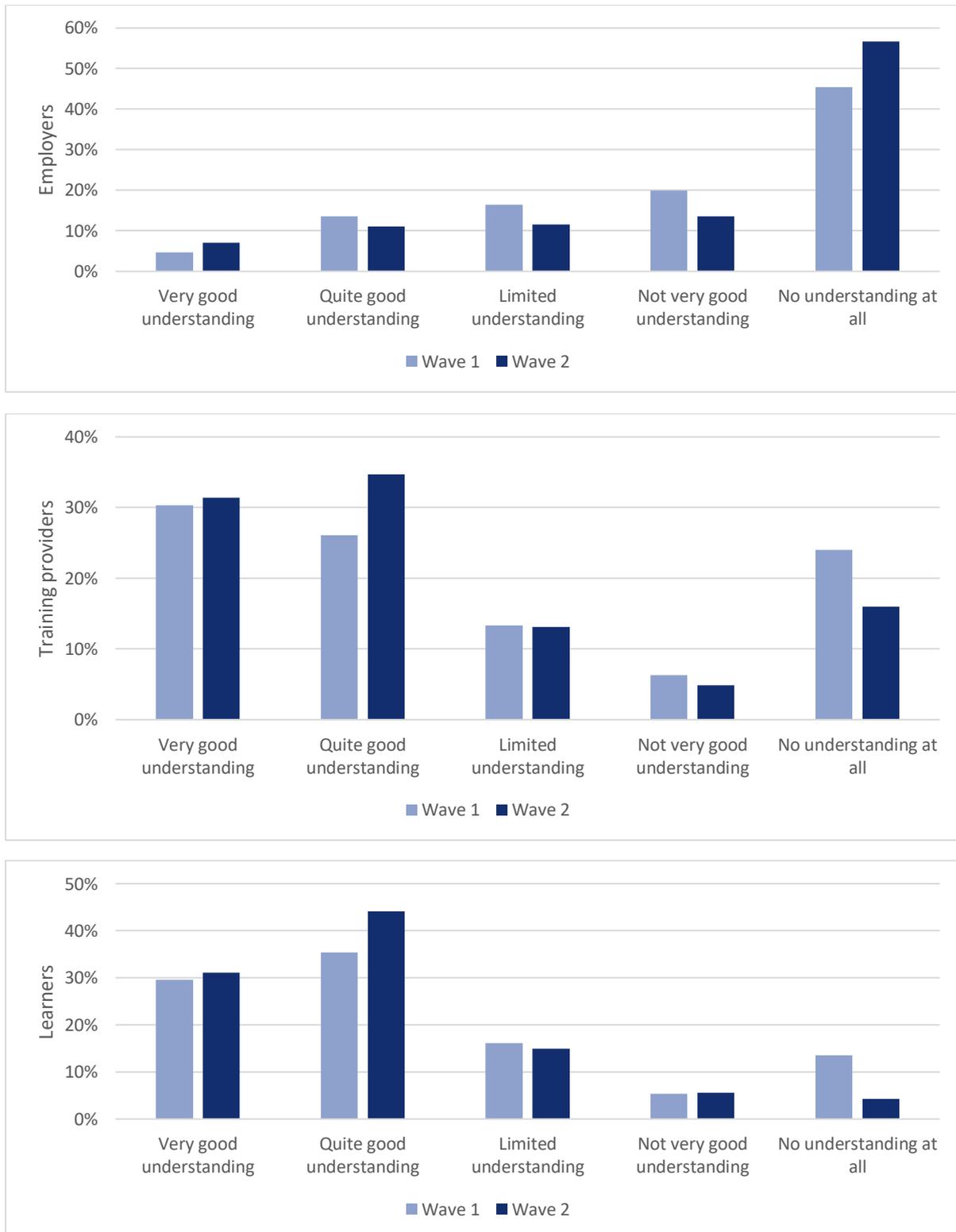
Reported understanding increases with organisation size: 65% of large employers report a very good or quite good understanding, compared with 30% of micro employers.

Employer providers have a significantly better understanding than employers who are not providers.

Employers who arranged or funded training for their employees reported having a significantly better understanding than those who have not arranged or funded training.

Employers who currently employ apprentices report a better understanding of apprenticeships in their sector (86% quite good or very good understanding) compared with employers who have employed an apprentice in the past two years (45%) and those who never have and do not plan to employ apprentices in the next two years (43%).

**Figure 25: Understanding of End-Point Assessments (EPAs)**

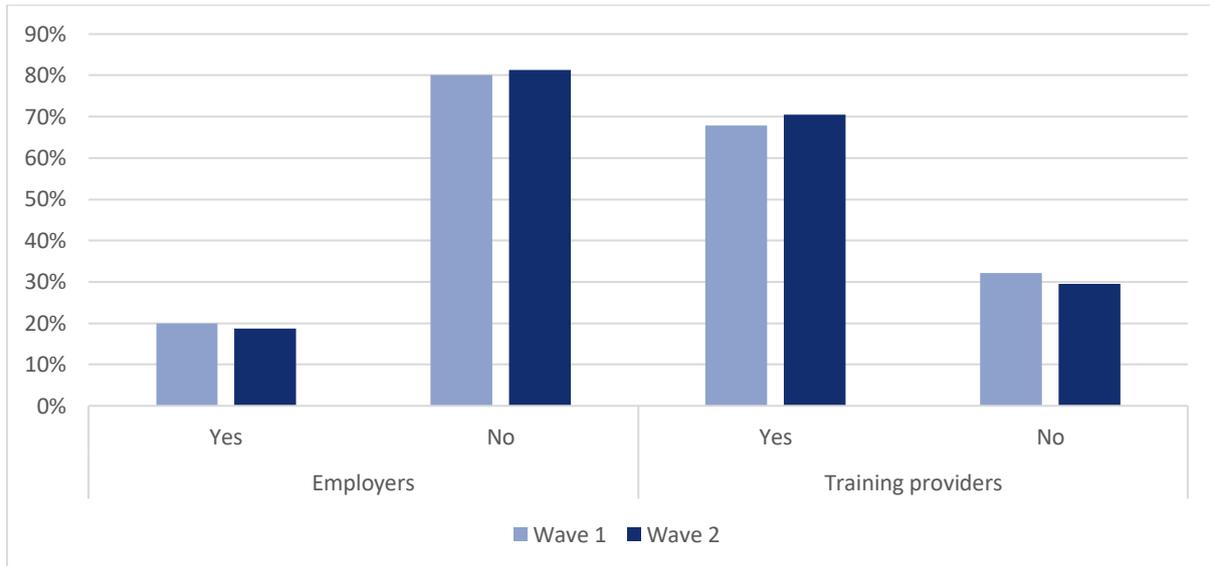


Base Wave 1: employers (1259), training providers (525), learners (280); Wave 2: employers (1544), training providers (574), learners (161)

The number of employers saying they have a ‘very good’ understanding has increased slightly (from 5% in Wave 1 to 7% in Wave 2) (Figure 25). Training providers are significantly more likely to report

an understanding of EPAs (66%) than employers (18%). The level of understanding reported by learners has increased by 10% since 2017.

**Figure 26: Do you understand the difference between apprenticeship frameworks and new apprenticeship standards?**



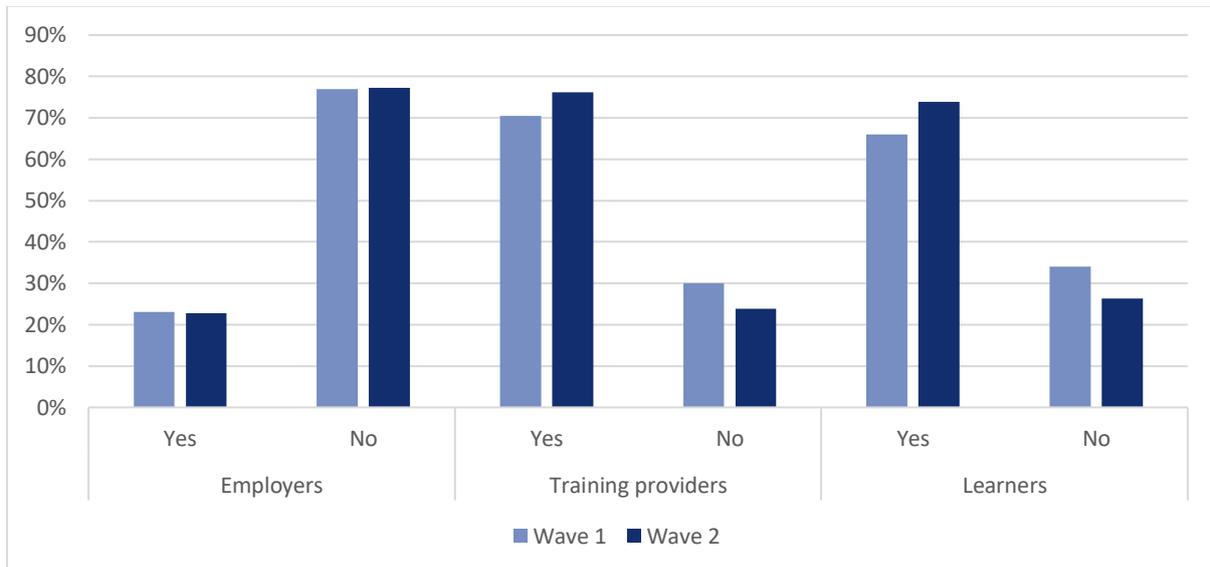
Base: Wave 1: employers (1253), training providers (526); Wave 2: employers (1544), training providers (569)

71% of training providers understood the difference between apprenticeship frameworks and new apprenticeship standards, compared with 19% of employers.

Understanding is higher among training providers with 2000+ learners (86%) than those with fewer than 100 learners (67%).

57% of large employers say they understand the difference, compared with 11% of micro businesses.

**Figure 27: Are you aware that End-Point Assessments (EPAs) are specific to apprenticeship standards?**



Base: Wave 1: Base: employers (1242), training providers (526), learners (276); Wave 2: employers (1544), training providers (573), learners (160)

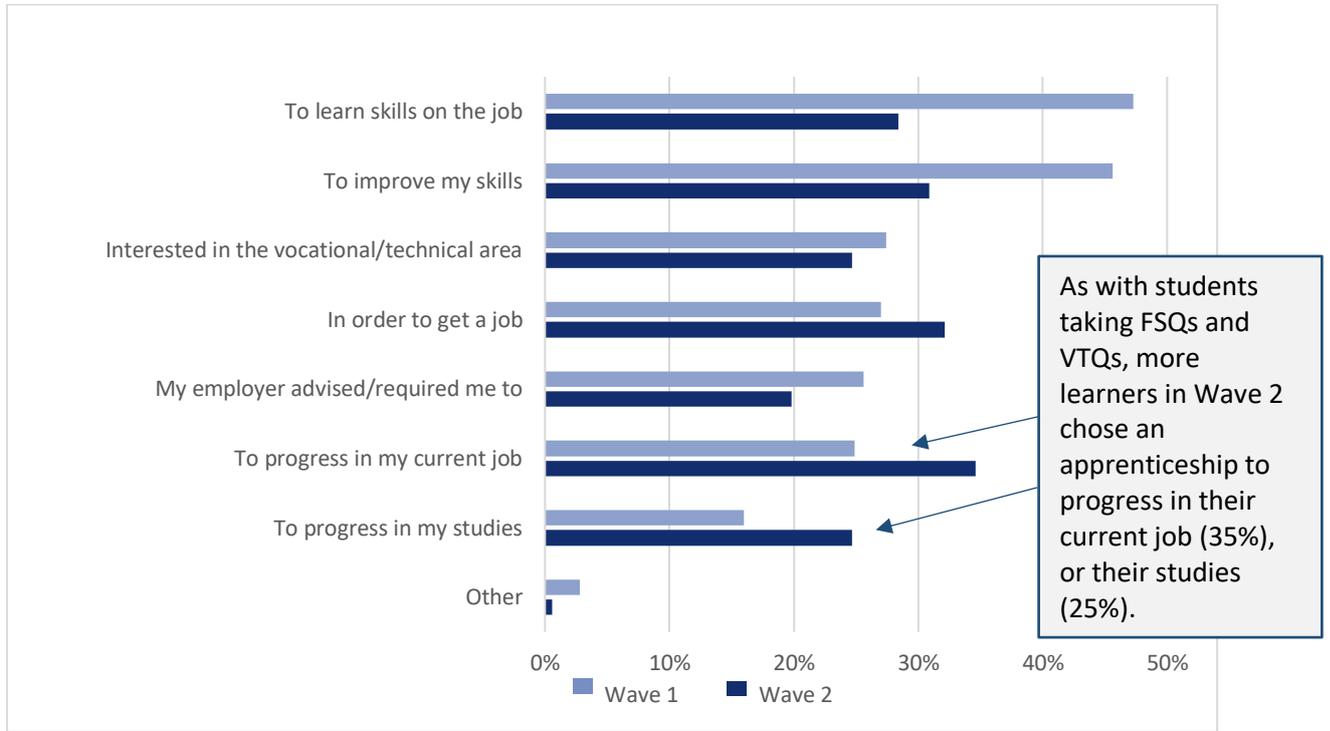
Employer awareness increases with company size. 59% of large employers say they are aware that EPAs are specific to apprenticeship standards, compared with 14% of micro businesses.

Larger training providers (2000+ learners) have a better awareness (85%) than the average across all training providers (76%).

Independent training providers have a higher level of awareness (91%) than Further Education Colleges (77%).

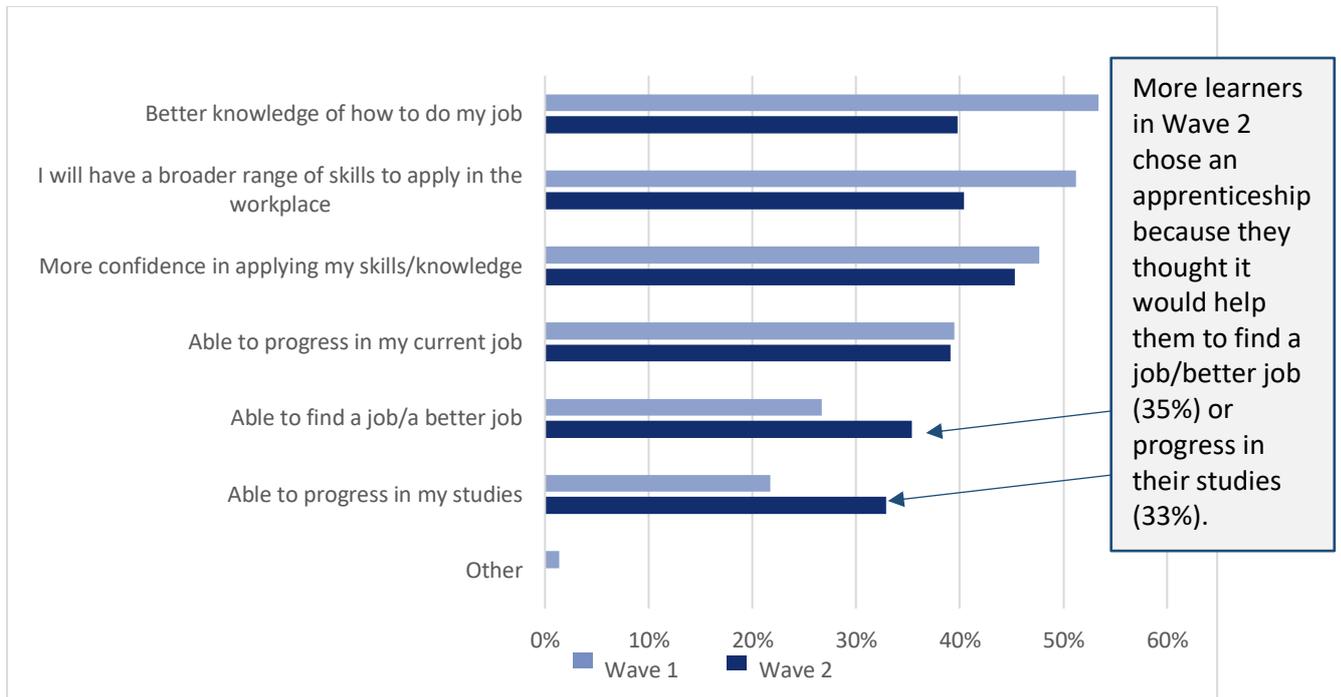
### 4.3 Why learners chose an apprenticeship

Figure 28: Why did you choose to take an apprenticeship?



Base: Wave 1: 281; Wave 2: 162

**Figure 29: What benefits did you expect to gain from completing an apprenticeship?**



Base: Wave 1: 281; Wave 2: 161

## 4.4 Perceptions of End-Point Assessments

### 4.4.1 Apprenticeships cited by respondents when answering the survey questions

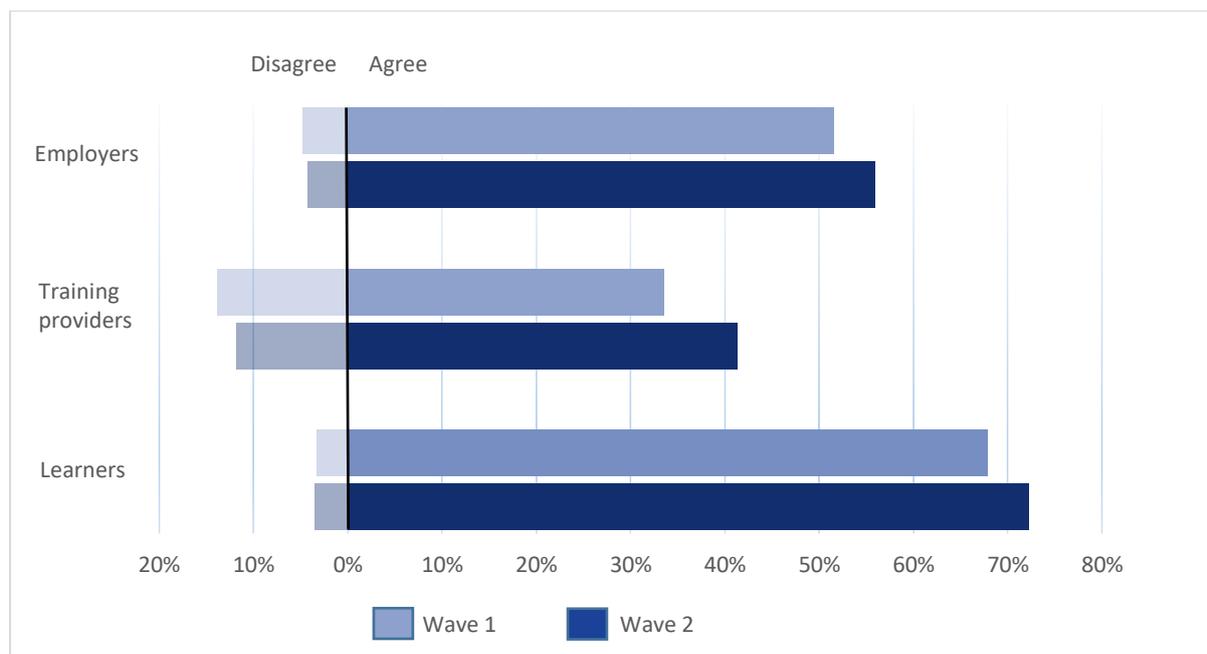
Respondents were asked which apprenticeships they had in mind, when answering questions about EPAs. The most commonly cited were:

- Business Administration
- Construction, (including Scaffolding, Plumbing and Joinery/Carpentry)
- Engineering
- Mechanics (including Motor and Vehicle Maintenance)
- Hairdressing
- Electrical
- Customer Service
- Leadership and Management
- Health & Social Care (including Childcare)
- Hospitality (including Travel and Tourism and Catering)
- IT and Digital

#### 4.4.2 Perceptions of End-Point Assessments

It should be noted that fewer respondents answered questions about their perceptions of EPAs compared with questions about FSQs and VTQs<sup>35</sup>. The numbers responding to each question are indicated in the bases below each chart.

**Figure 30: Responses to “We value End-Point Assessments (EPAs)”**



Base: Wave 1: employers (435), providers (529), learners (606), Wave 2: employers (458), providers (576), learners (597)

As in Wave 1, employers and learners have high levels of agreement with this statement. Large employers have higher levels of agreement (63%) than small employers (51%), who are least in agreement. 76% of learners with experience of the workplace agree, compared with 30% of learners with no prior work experience.

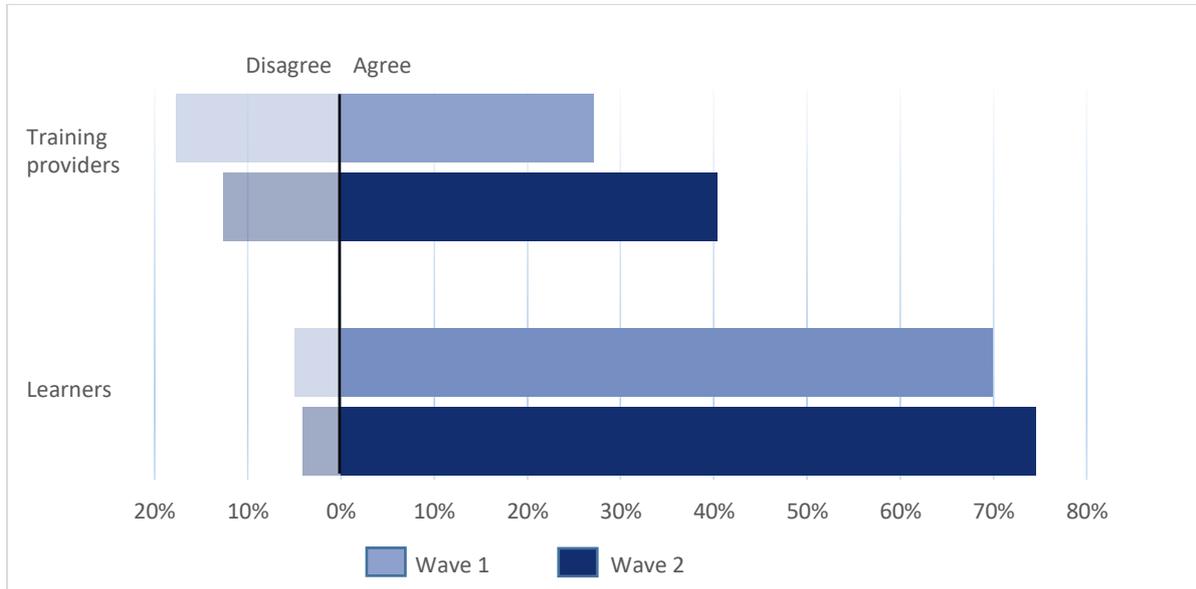
The proportion of training providers agreeing with this statement increased in Wave 2 by 8%. Training providers (12%) were significantly more likely to disagree that they value EPAs, compared with employers (4%) and learners (4%)<sup>36</sup>.

Amongst training providers and employers there is a high degree of uncertainty, with a quarter of training providers and over a quarter of employers answering ‘neither agree nor disagree’ in Wave 2.

<sup>35</sup> Only respondents who reported having an understanding of FQs, VTQs and EPAs were asked to answer questions on each respective qualification/assessment.

<sup>36</sup> This comment refers to the statistical significance, rather than the volume of responses.

**Figure 31: Responses to “Learners understand the purpose of End-Point Assessments (EPAs)”**

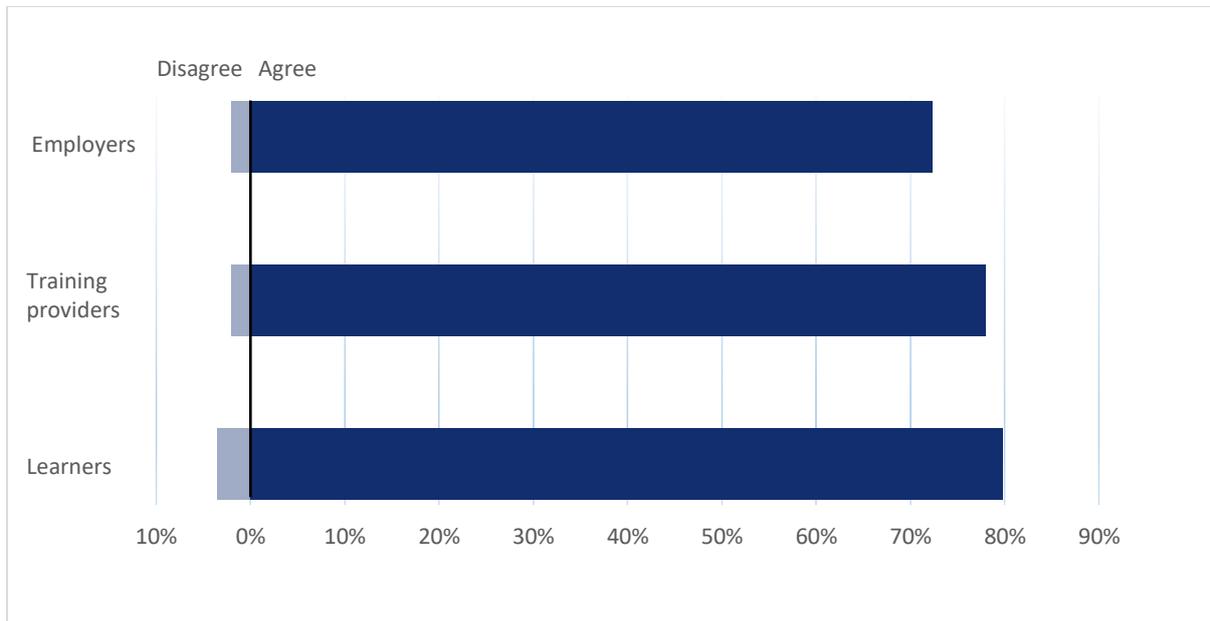


Base: Wave 1: training providers (524), learners (603); Wave 2 training providers (574), learners (595)

Between Waves 1 and 2, the levels of agreement of learners and training providers have improved, with 40% of training providers in Wave 2 agreeing that learners understand the purpose of EPA, compared with 27% in Wave 1. 74% of learners with experience of the workplace agree, compared with 50% of learners with no prior work experience.

Amongst training providers there is a high degree of uncertainty, with a quarter of training providers in Wave 2 answering ‘neither agree nor disagree’.

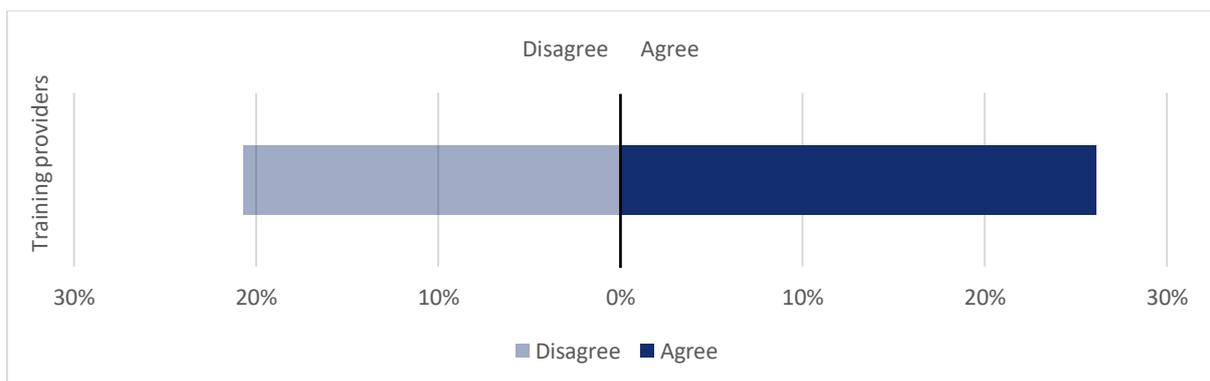
**Figure 32: Responses to “Apprenticeships are good preparation for work”<sup>37</sup>**



Base: Wave 2: employers (281), training providers (572), learners (597)

All three groups display high levels of agreement that apprenticeships are good preparation for work. For employers, levels of agreement are highest amongst medium (84%) and large (80%) companies, and lowest amongst small companies (58%).

**Figure 33: Training provider responses to “End-Point Assessments of Apprenticeships offer value for money”<sup>38</sup>**



Base: Wave 2: 570

Training providers are largely split over whether EPAs offer value for money, with the majority (29%) of training providers neither agreeing nor disagreeing with this question.

<sup>37</sup> This is a new question for Wave 2.

<sup>38</sup> This is a new question for Wave 2.

## 4.5 Reasons for perceptions of End-Point Assessments

Employers who said they value EPAs (56%) were asked to explain why they think this. The most common reason was that EPAs show the learner has reached the required standard; employers also felt that EPAs help the learner progress. Some went on to suggest that EPAs improve the value of the apprenticeship for the employer and that EPAs demonstrate the apprentice's areas of strength and weakness.

As described in section 4.4.2, a higher proportion of training providers, compared with employers and learners, hold negative perceptions of EPAs. Providers aired their concerns when asked if they had any final comments at the end of the survey. Providers were most concerned with the suitability of EPA and its cost. They also argued that continual assessment is a better approach, as one final assessment means that a learner can have "a bad day" and fail even though they are very capable of passing. Some also suggested the concept of a final assessment is off-putting for learners, who may decide against an apprenticeship as a result. Training providers also say the concept of EPAs may prevent learners from completing an apprenticeship if they lose their job prior to the completion date.

Of the small number of employers who stated they did not value EPAs (4%), a handful explained why. Those that did, suggested EPAs lack value because:

- competency has already been demonstrated;
- non-academic employees are disadvantaged;
- previous experience of EPAs has been negative; and
- they are costly.

## 5. Use of qualifications for recruitment and training

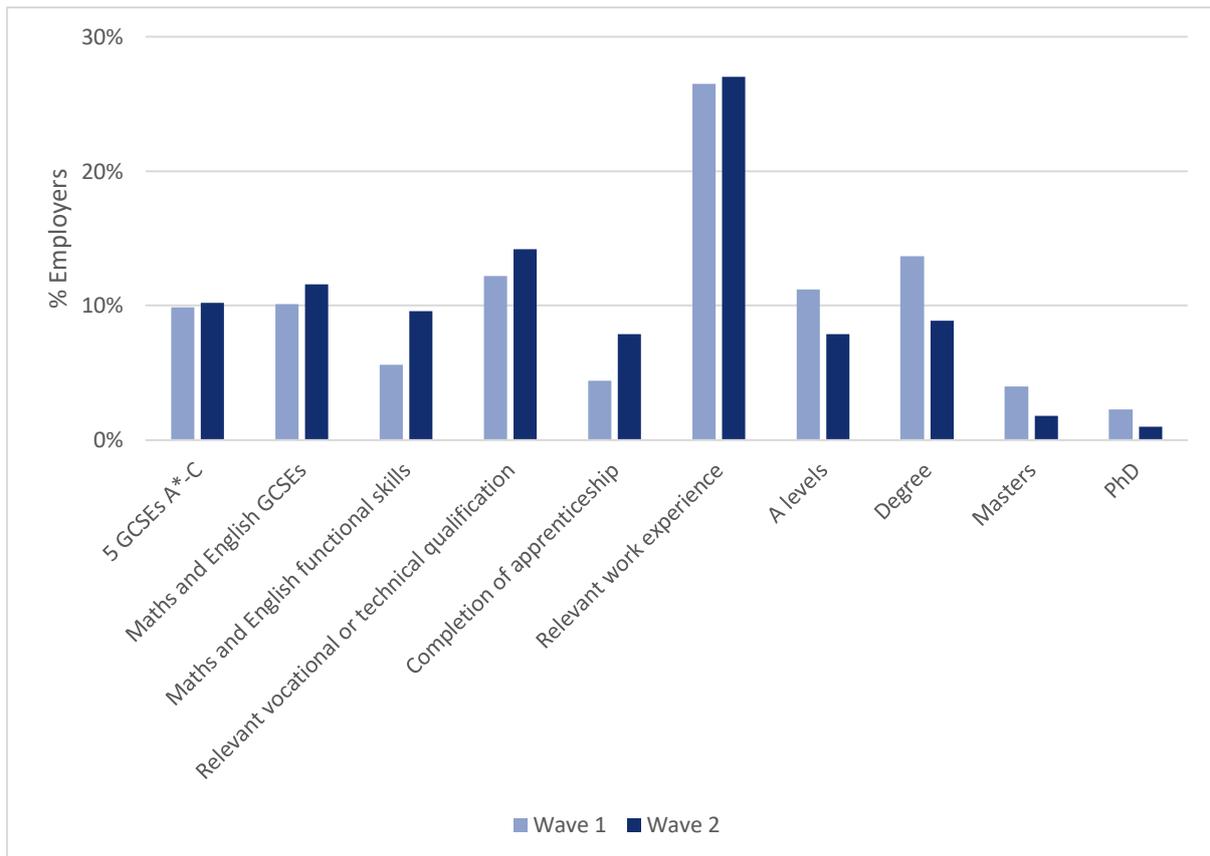
### 5.1 Key findings – use of qualifications for recruitment and training

- For roles at all levels, most employers consider relevant work experience as essential.
- The profile of the types of qualifications sought for professional and managerial roles is similar to that for skilled and supervisory roles. Vocational and technical qualifications are sought by 14% of employers for professional and managerial roles and by 19% for skilled and supervisory roles.
- For entry and admin roles, most employers look for relevant work experience (27%), followed by maths and English GCSEs (16%) and 15% look for a relevant vocational and technical qualification.
- In Wave 2, for all roles, training is more likely to result in a qualification than in Wave 1.
- In both Waves, the training arranged or paid for by employers in the last 12 months has most typically led to achievement of a vocational and technical qualification. Just over 60% of employers suggest this.
- The factors considered when choosing qualifications include (in priority order) their relevance, sector value and reputation of the awarding organisation.
- Where training has not resulted in a qualification, most employers suggest this is because there is 'no need for them', or because they do not have any apprentices in their organisation.

## 5.2 Qualifications deemed essential at different occupational levels

**All charts in sections 5.2 – 5.5 are employer perceptions only – only employers were asked these questions.**

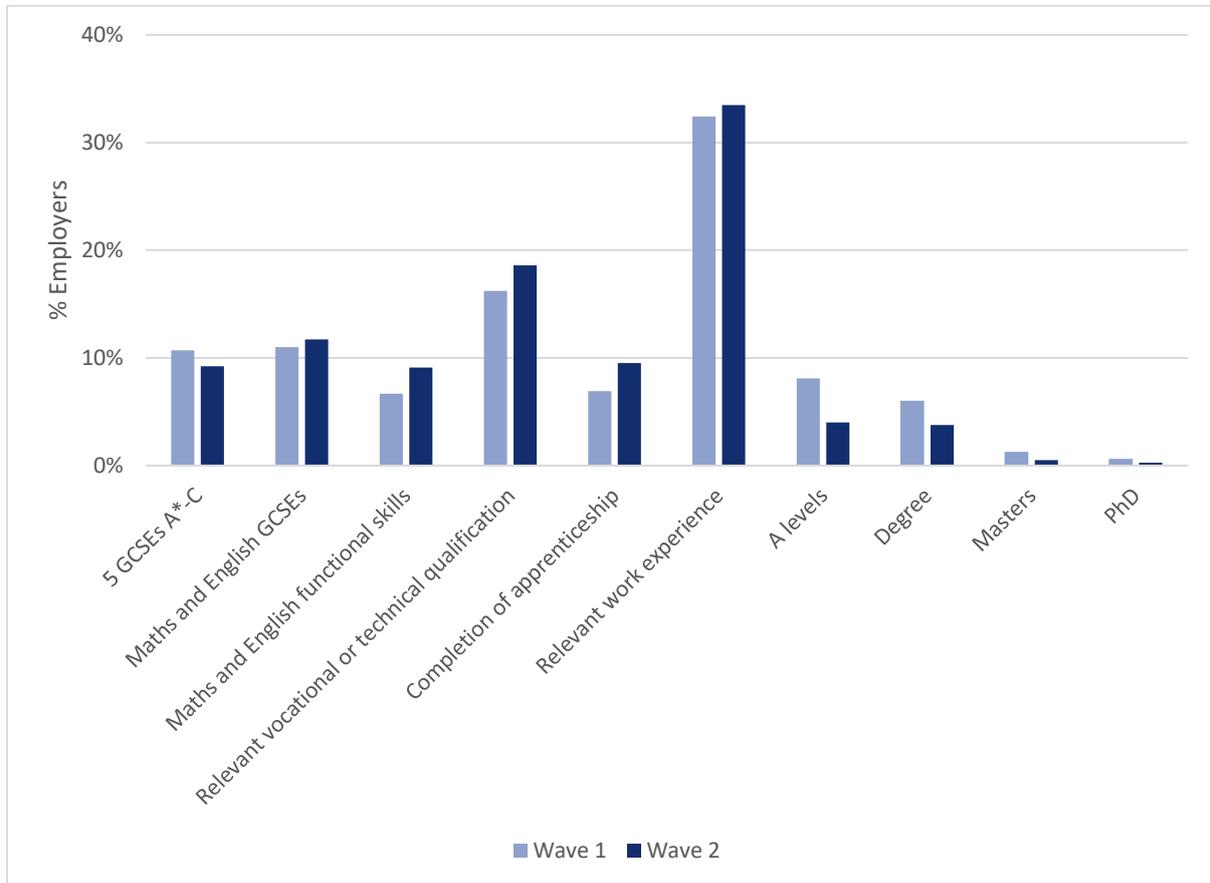
**Figure 34: When recruiting new employees, are any of the following essential for professional and managerial roles?**



Base: Wave 1: 4173, Wave 2: 4103

In both Waves, employers look mostly for relevant work experience (27%) for professional and managerial roles. Few employers look for higher level and academic qualifications (for example only 1% look for a PhD, 9% look for a degree) and the numbers suggesting vocational and technical qualifications and apprenticeships are ‘essential’ has increased between Waves 1 and 2 (Figure 34).

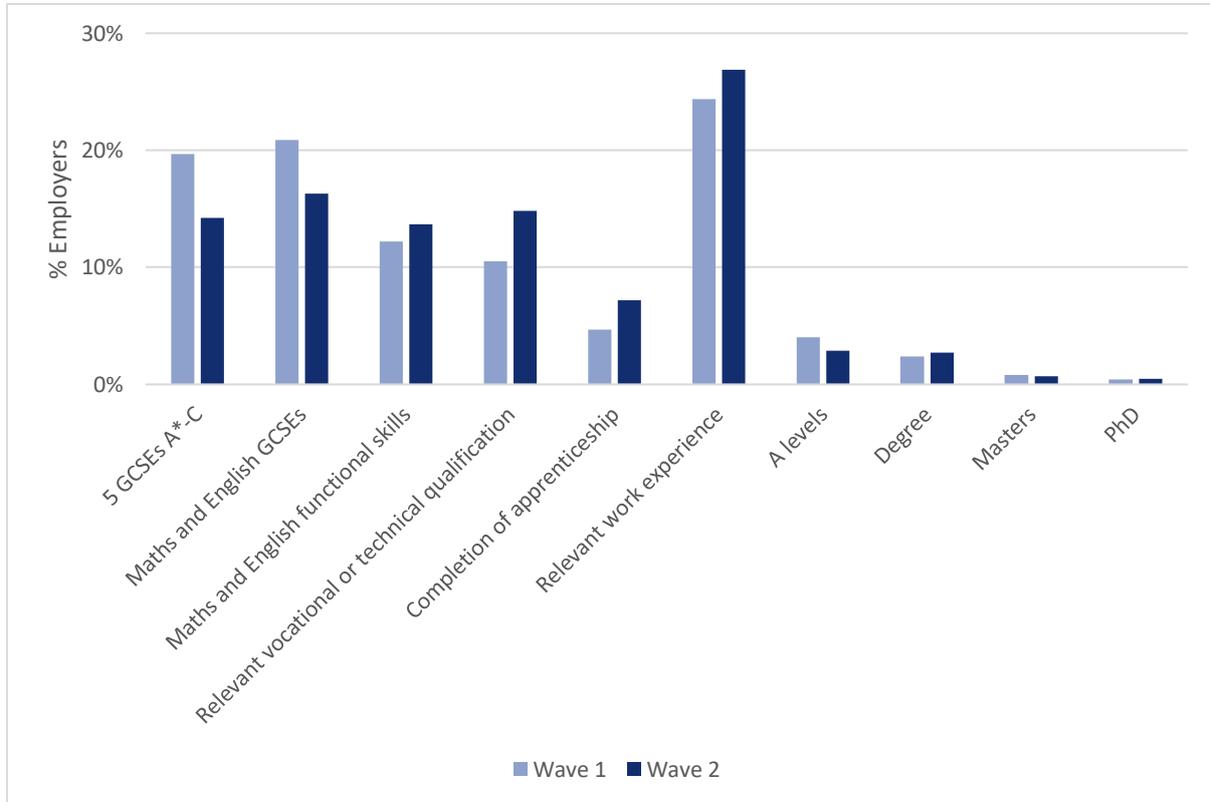
**Figure 35: When recruiting new employees, are any of the following essential for skilled and supervisory roles?**



Base: Wave 1: 3705, Wave 2: 3714

As with professional and managerial roles, work experience is most sought after for skilled and supervisory roles (34%) (Figure 35). More employers view vocational and technical qualifications as being essential for supervisory roles (19%) than for professional and managerial roles (14%).

**Figure 36: When recruiting new employees, are any of the following essential for entry and admin roles?**



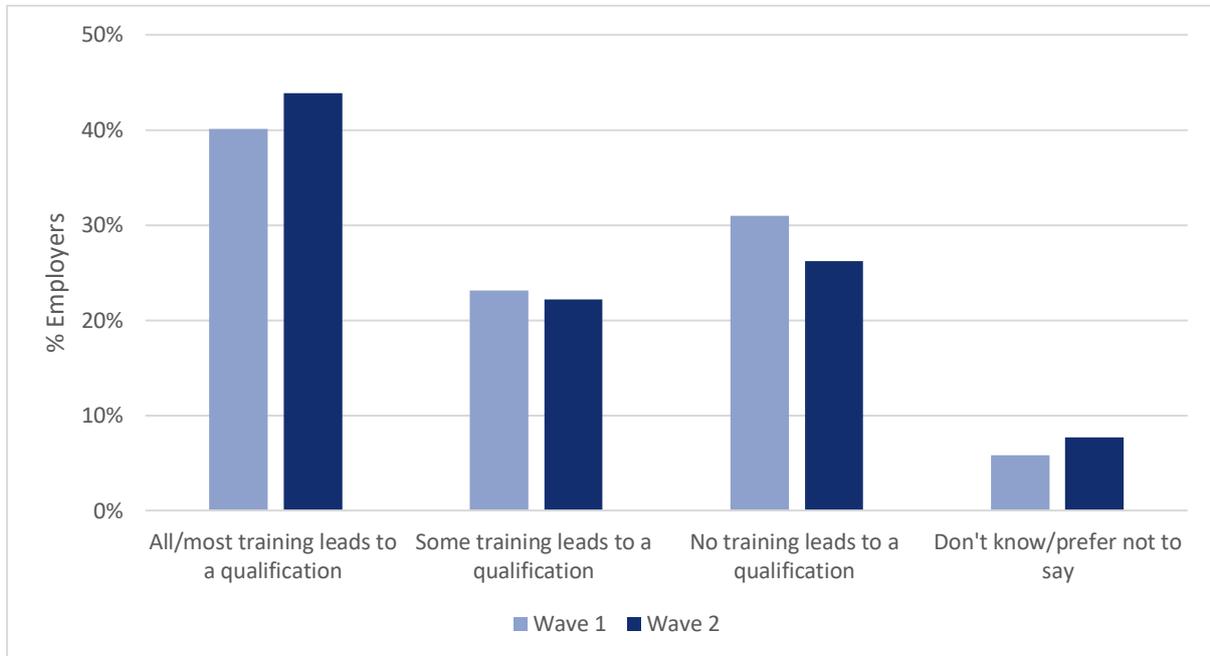
Base: Wave 1: 2750, Wave 2: 3130

For entry level and admin roles, employers prioritise GCSEs and Functional Skills more than for skilled and supervisory, and professional and managerial roles. In Wave 2, more employers consider Functional Skills (14%), vocational and technical qualifications (15%), apprenticeships (7%) and work experience (27%) to be essential than in Wave 1 (Figure 36).

### 5.3 Extent to which training leads to qualifications, and which types

Employers were asked how much training offered to employees typically results in a qualification.

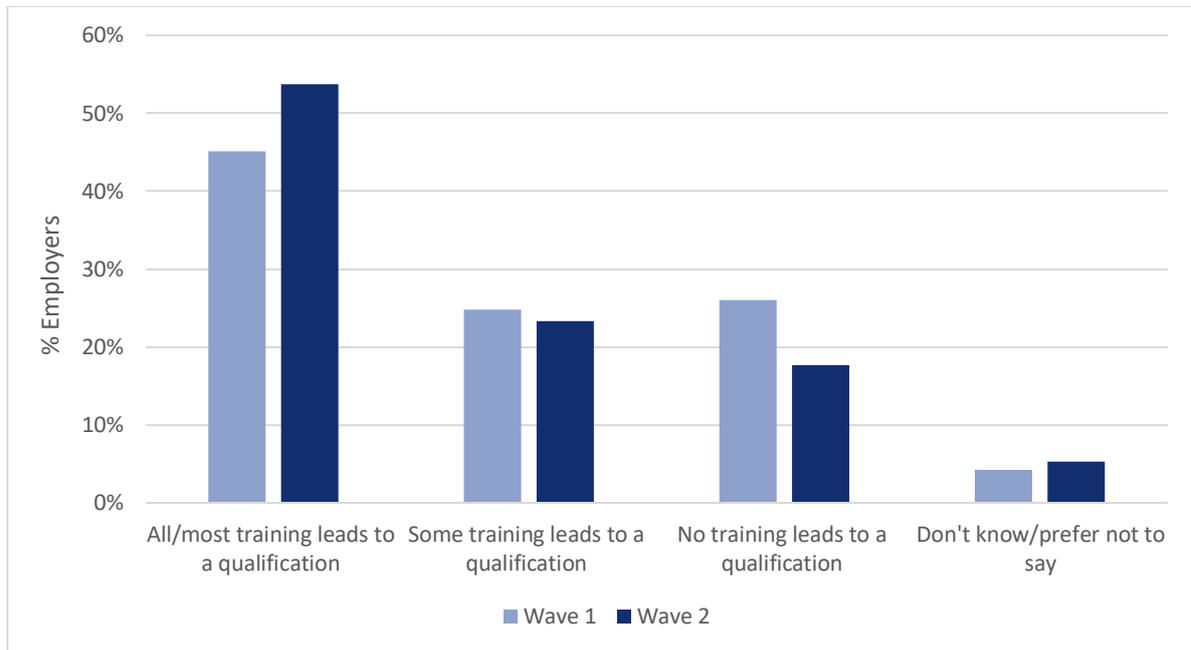
**Figure 37: Extent to which training results in a qualification – professional and managerial roles**



Base: Wave 1: 995, Wave 2: 722

More small employers (49%) say that training for professional and managerial roles results in a qualification than micro companies (40%), medium companies (45%) and large companies (47%).

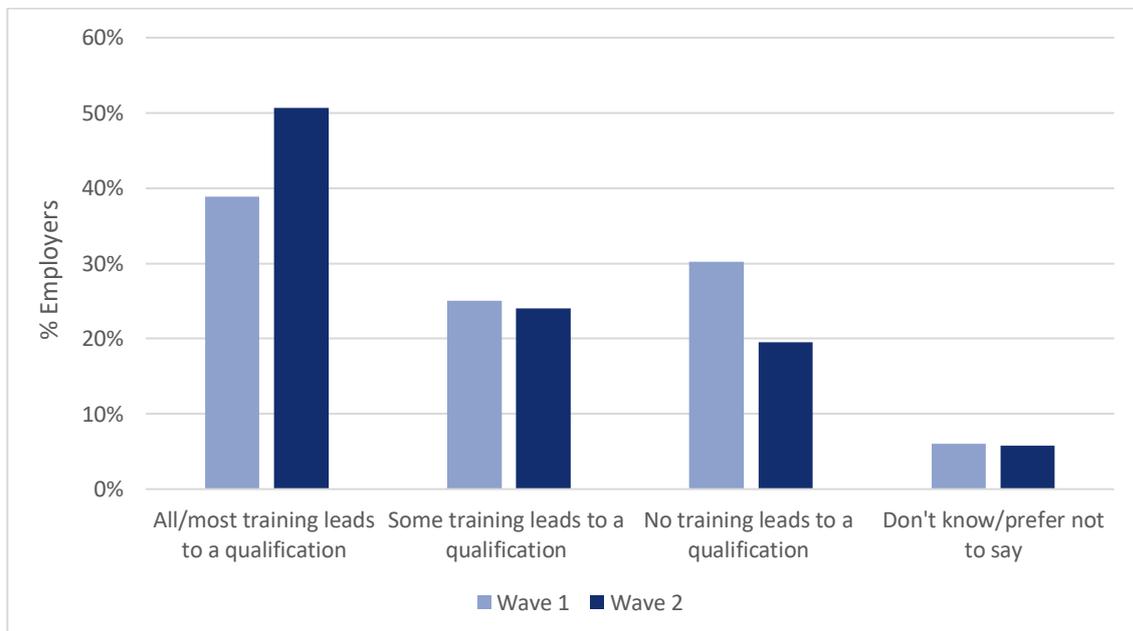
**Figure 38: Extent to which training leads to a qualification – skilled and supervisory roles**



Base: Wave 1: 1037, Wave 2: 781

More small employers (62%) say that training for skilled and supervisory roles results in a qualification than micro companies (50%), medium companies (49%) and large companies (55%).

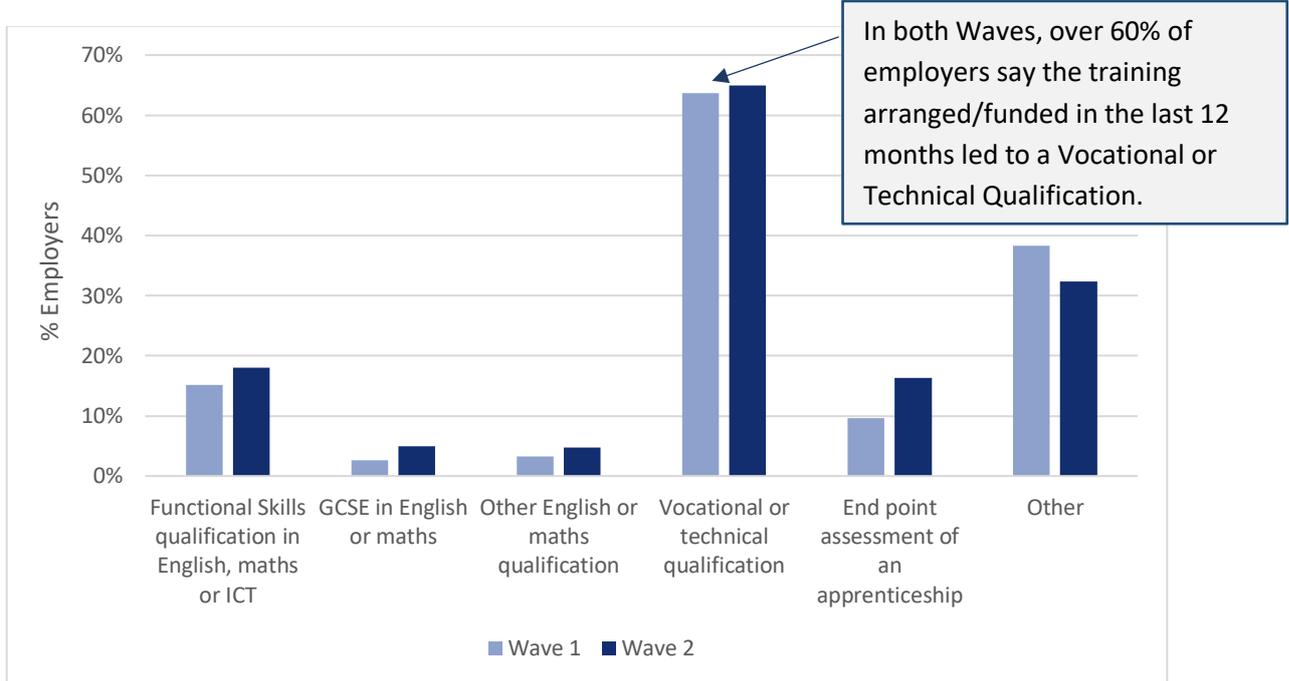
**Figure 39: Extent to which training leads to a qualification – entry and admin roles**



Base: Wave 1: 1014, Wave 2: 771

More large employers (58%) say that training for entry and admin roles results in a qualification than micro companies (47%), small companies (56%) and medium companies (46%).

**Figure 40: Has any of the training arranged or funded in the last 12 months led to any of the following?**



Base: Wave 1: 959, Wave 2: 701

When asked about ‘other’ types of qualifications, employers provided a wide range of qualification types, many of which are specific to roles or sectors, or aid career and personal development. The most frequently mentioned qualification types include:

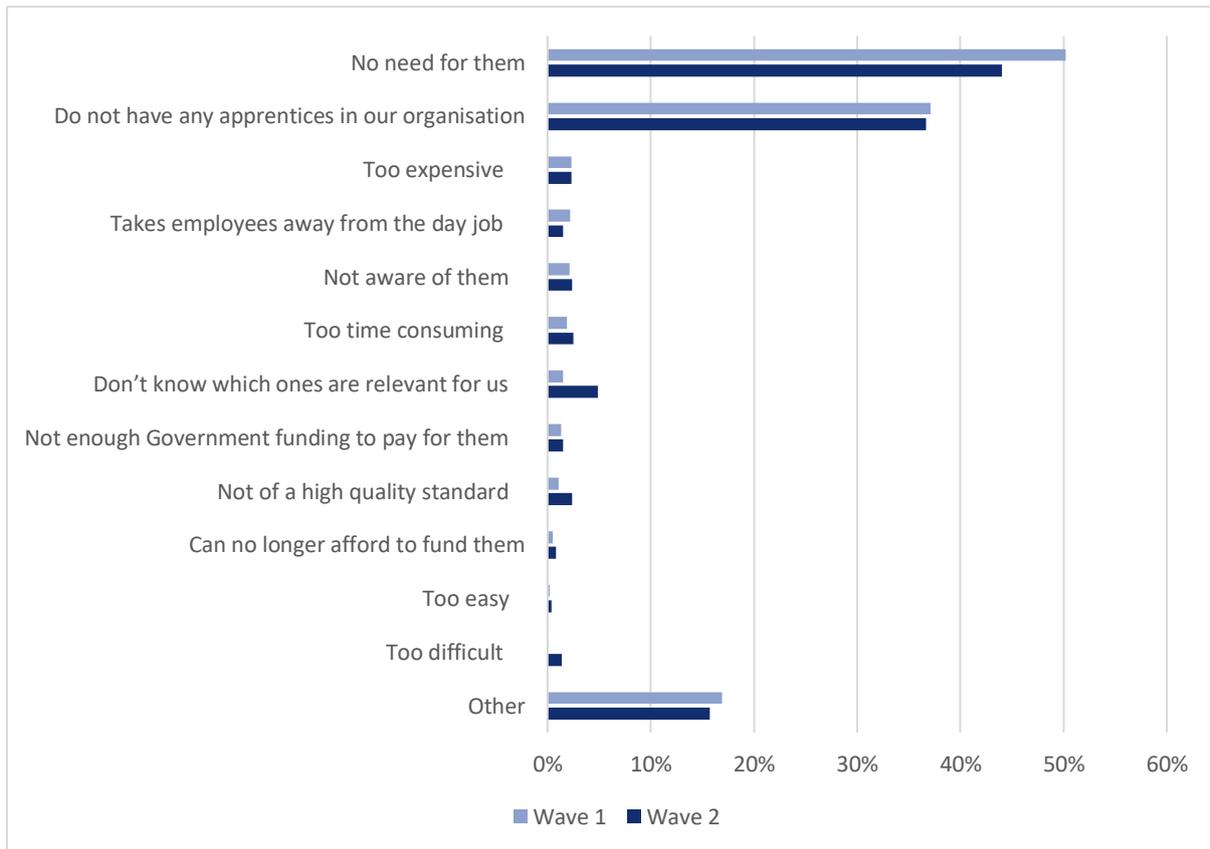
- Health and Safety (including Health and Hygiene and First Aid) – predominantly in the hospitality and education sectors;
- Care and safeguarding – mainly within the employment sector;
- Vehicle and machinery operation;
- Leadership and Management;
- Finance;
- IT.

Although there are a couple of examples in the list above, generally, there are no clear sector-related themes in response to this question.

### 5.4 Reasons for not offering training resulting in other VTQs

Employers who said the training they had arranged or funded in the last 12 months had not resulted in a qualification, were asked the reasons for this (selecting from a list of options, more than one of which could be selected).

**Figure 41: Why did the training offered not result in a qualification?**



Base: Wave 1: 913, Wave 2: 1167

Of the 44% of employers who said they have no need for training that leads to a qualification, in Wave 2, 59% suggest their employees do not need qualifications, 26% recruit people with relevant qualifications and one in ten (10%) test applicants' competence instead.

'Other' reasons suggested by employers include:

- Someone else is funding the training
- Someone else is arranging the training
- There is a lack of candidates
- There is a lack of funding
- The desired qualification is unavailable

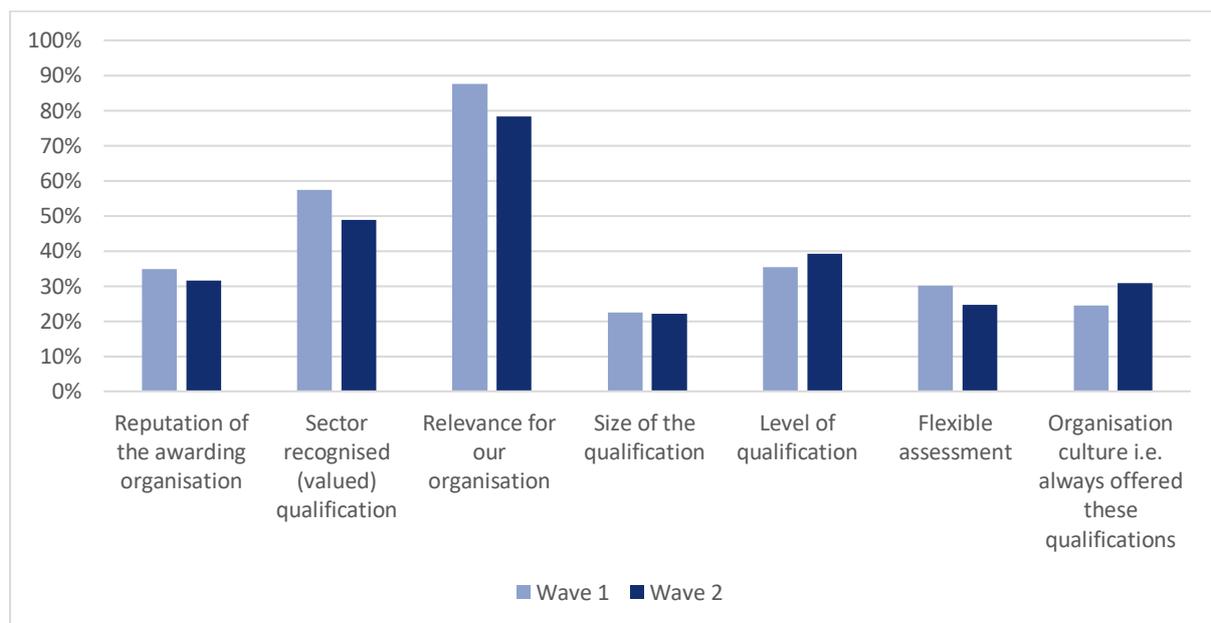


Of those employers who do not need to arrange or fund these qualifications, almost half (45%) say this is because employees already hold the required qualification. Over a quarter (27%) put this down to not recruiting and subcontracting if required (many of this group are sole traders or micro organisations with fewer than five staff). Other reasons they provide include:

- Staff are trained in-house
- The priority is practical skills and work experience
- There is a lack of candidates
- The qualification they would like to offer is not available

### 5.5 Factors taken into account when choosing qualifications to offer employees

**Figure 42: Which of the following factors are taken into account when choosing the qualifications to offer your employees?**



Base: Wave 1: 1038, Wave 2: 806

Other reasons given by employers (in order of priority) include:

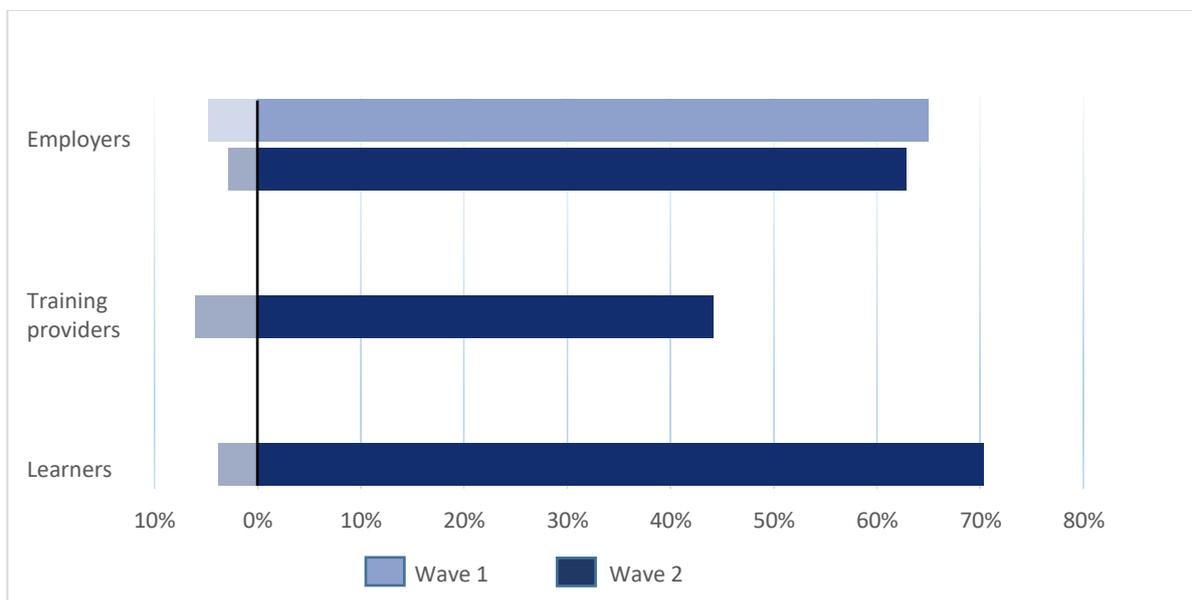
- The decision is made by an external provider or college
- It is based on the benefits to the employee
- Relevance to the organisation
- Cost
- Whether the qualification is mandatory for the role/company (e.g. Health & Hygiene)
- Flexibility and accessibility of the assessment
- Qualification level

## 6. Appendix 1

### 6.1 New questions for Wave 2 on perceptions of EPAs

The following two questions were asked of some, but not all, respondent groups in Wave 1, but were asked of all respondent groups in Wave 2.

**Figure 43: Response to “People passing End-Point Assessments (EPAs) have the competence and vocational and technical skills needed by employers”<sup>39</sup>**



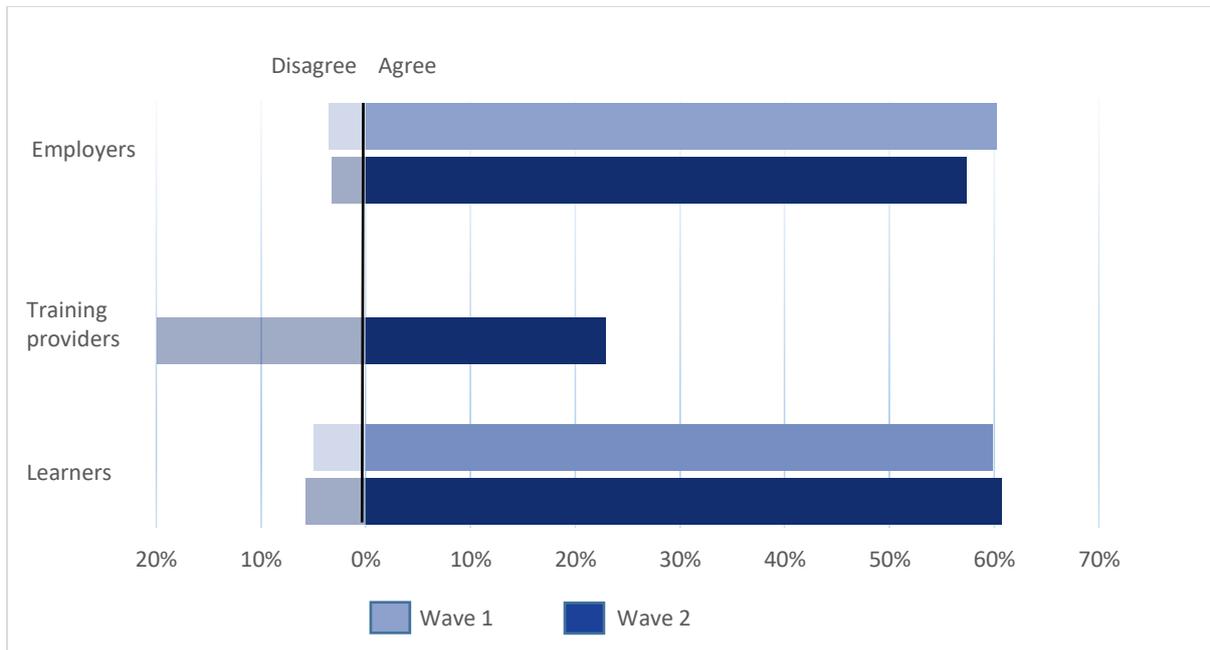
Base: Wave 1: employers (229); Wave 2: employers (281), training providers (573), learners (597)

The highest levels of agreement amongst employers are demonstrated by medium companies (75%), followed by large (74%), micro (62%) and small (48%).

Amongst training providers there is a fairly high degree of uncertainty, with 15% answering ‘neither agree nor disagree’ in Wave 2.

<sup>39</sup> This question was not asked of training providers and learners in Wave 1. The question asked of employers changed slightly between Waves, with the Wave 1 question being “People passing End-Point Assessments (EPAs) have the vocational and technical skills needed by my organisation”. Therefore, comparisons should be drawn with caution.

**Figure 44: Responses to “Availability of End-Point Assessments (EPAs) is sufficiently flexible”<sup>40</sup>**



Base: Wave 1: employers (229), learners (602); Wave 2: employers (281), training providers (569), learners (597)

The highest levels of agreement amongst employers are demonstrated by medium companies (78%), followed by large (62%), micro (57%) and small (43%). Amongst micro, small and large companies there is a high degree of uncertainty<sup>41</sup>.

Amongst training providers there is a high degree of uncertainty, with 31% answering ‘neither agree nor disagree’ in Wave 2.

<sup>40</sup> Training providers were not asked this question in Wave 1.

<sup>41</sup> Over a quarter of each employer size answered ‘neither agree nor disagree’ in response to this question.