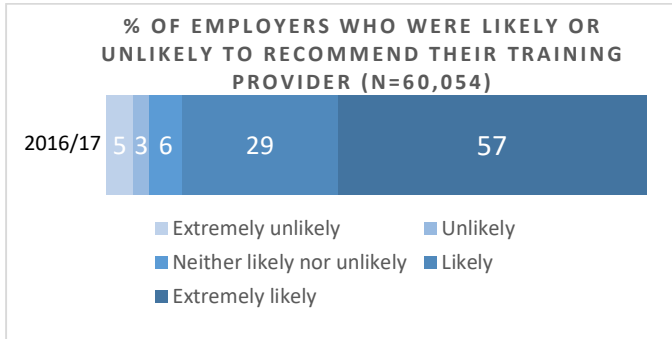




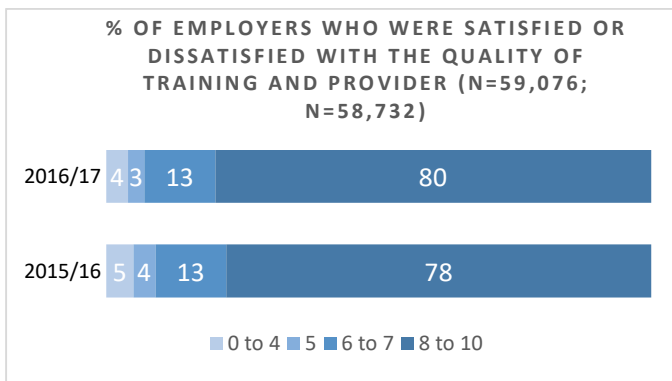
## Large majority of employers likely to recommend their training provider



Nearly nine in ten employers were either 'likely' or 'extremely likely' to recommend their training provider to another employer seeking similar training.

This high level of advocacy is consistent with high levels of satisfaction expressed by employers about their training provider: 80% gave their training provider an overall satisfaction score of 8 to 10 (out of 10).

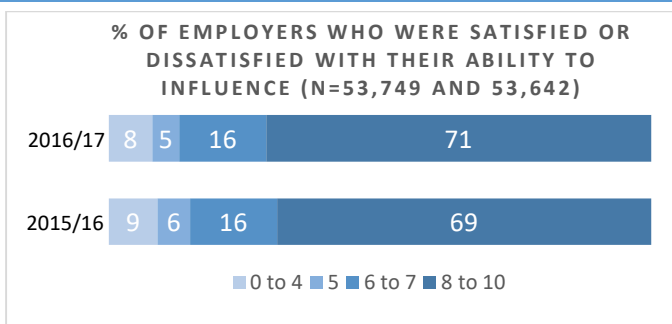
## Satisfaction with the overall quality of training remains high



Four in five employers were highly satisfied with the overall quality of the training, giving a score of at least 8 out of 10.

Satisfaction with the quality of training has increased by two percentage points compared with last year when 78% gave a score of at least 8 out of 10.

## Employers remain less satisfied with their ability to influence the training



Seven in ten employers were highly satisfied with their ability to influence the structure, content, delivery and duration of training.

Rating has also improved compared to last year when 69% of employers gave a score of at least 8 out of 10. However, rating on the ability to influence remains low compared to other aspects of training measured in this survey.

# Contents

1.	Employer Profile .....	3
	Training undertaken.....	4
2.	Recommendation and overall satisfaction.....	5
3.	Detailed ratings.....	7
	Differences by organisation size and industry sector.....	8
	Training undertaken.....	8
4.	Technical information.....	8
5.	Get in touch .....	10
	Media enquiries .....	10
	Other enquiries/feedback.....	10

## About this release

This publication provides the main findings of the FE Choices Employer Satisfaction Survey 2016 to 2017. This survey measures employers' satisfaction with training funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The survey applied to all general further education colleges, tertiary colleges, land-based colleges, art and design colleges and most independent learning providers that deliver Employer-Responsive training.

The survey used a multi-mode approach: postal, online and telephone. A total of 60,865 employers took part in the survey, from an eligible population of 271,544 employers across 708 colleges and other training providers. Fieldwork took place during April to July 2017.

Only differences which are statistically significant are reported in this release. The sample size is large so many small differences are statistically significant.

The survey was funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, and carried out by Ipsos MORI and RCU Limited. The main aim of the survey is to provide comparative satisfaction data that employers and learners would use to inform their choice of college or training provider.

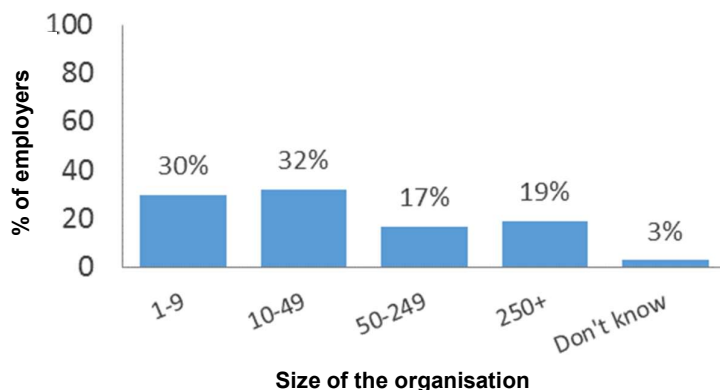
## Feedback

We are constantly monitoring and evaluating our release, and how our releases look. We would welcome feedback on any aspect of this document at [Andy.Cooke@education.gov.uk](mailto:Andy.Cooke@education.gov.uk).

# 1. Employer Profile

The majority of employers, 62%, worked in small organisations with 1-49 employees; 17% in organisations with 50-249 employees; and 19% in the largest organisations (250+ employees).<sup>1</sup> Correspondingly, 57%, were single site organisations, 28% were branches of an organisation, and a further 14% were head offices.

**Figure 1: Percentage of employers by size of the organisation (Number of employees in the UK)**



Base: 60,745

The largest group of employer respondents were in the Human health and Social work sector, followed by the Wholesale and Retail trade. This pattern was also observed in previous surveys (in the surveys of 2015-2016 and 2014-2015).

**Figure 2: Percentage of employers by Standard Industry Classification**



Base: 60,865

<sup>1</sup> Employer respondents were broadly representative of the population of employers who received training in terms of organisation size and industry sector – see Figures 9 and 10.

## Training undertaken

Almost three in four (74%) employers who took part in the survey reported that they had between 1-4 learners. One in ten (10%) had 5-9 learners and a similar proportion (11%) had 10+ learners.

Nearly one in two employers, 48%, used an independent training provider and 45% used a General Further Education (FE) College. A very small minority of employers used other public-funded organisations such as local authorities (4%) and Special and Specialist Colleges (3%).

The majority of employers, 67%, reported that they had not paid towards the cost of the training, compared with 24% who had. Eight per cent did not know whether their organisation had made a financial contribution or not.

Medium (50-249 employees) and large (250+ employees) organisations were more likely than small organisations to have contributed to the cost of the training: 28% and 34% respectively, compared with 21% of small organisations (1-49 employees).

The vast majority (99%) of employers delivered apprenticeship training. Three per cent delivered non-apprenticeship learning. Adult (aged 19+) apprenticeships were more common than apprenticeships for 16-18 year olds (65% and 51% respectively). Level 2 apprenticeships were more commonly delivered by employers than Level 3 qualifications.

Employers were involved in delivering training across a diverse range of sector subject areas (SSAs). The most common SSAs reported by employers delivering apprenticeships was Business, Administration and Law (31%), Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies (22%) and Health, Public Services Care (21%), which is the same as in 2015/2016.

Among the small minority of employers delivering non-apprenticeship learning, the most common SSAs were Health, Public Services and Care and Preparation for Life and Work (33% and 31%, respectively, of employers delivering non-apprenticeship learning).

**Figure 3: Percentage of employers delivering apprenticeships by sector subject area**



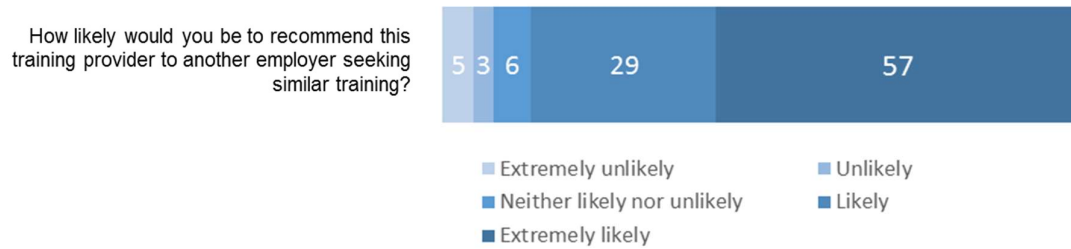
Base: 60,315

## 2. Recommendation and overall satisfaction

Overall, the large majority of employers were likely to recommend their training provider to another employer. Correspondingly, satisfaction with the overall quality of the training and the training provider were also very high.

Nearly nine in out of ten (86%) employers were either 'likely' or 'extremely likely' to recommend their training provider to another employer seeking similar training. Employers using private training providers were more likely to recommend their provider than those using general FE colleges, special and specialist colleges.

**Figure 6a: Likelihood to recommend the training provider**



Base: 60,054

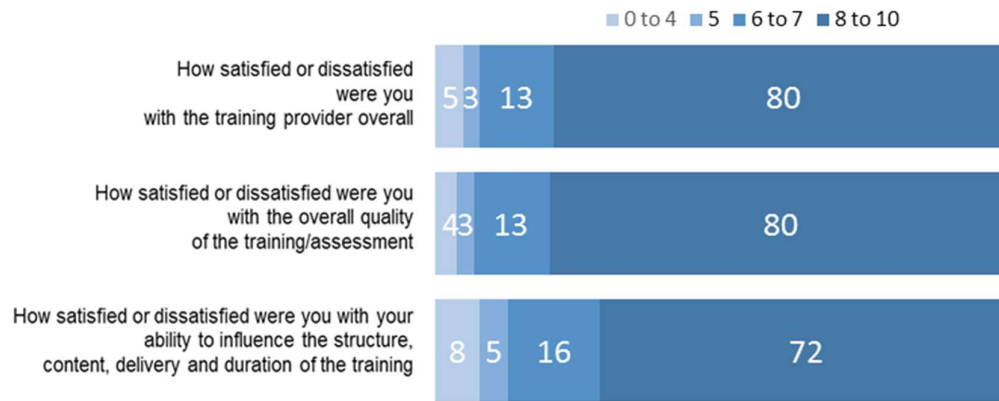
**Figure 6b: Likelihood to recommend the training provider by type of provider used**

Type of training provider	General further education college	Other publically funded	Private sector	Special college
Percentage likely or extremely likely to recommend to another employer	85	86	87	84

Four in five employers were highly satisfied with the overall quality of the training and their training provider, giving a score of at least 8 out of 10. Satisfaction with both quality of training and the training provider have increased by two percentage points compared with last year when 78% gave a score of at least 8 out of 10.

Employers remained less positive about their ability to influence the training, with 72% giving a positive rating of at least 8 out of 10. Rating on this aspect has improved compared with last year when 69% gave a rating of at least 8 out of 10.

**Figure 7a: Overall satisfaction across all three aspects**



Bases: 59,810; 59,076; and 53,749 respectively

**Figure 7b: Overall satisfaction by type of provider used**

Type of training provider	General further education college	Other publically funded	Private sector	Special college
Percentage highly satisfied with the training provider overall	77	76	83	74
Percentage highly satisfied with the overall quality of the training/assessment	77	76	83	74
Percentage highly satisfied with their ability to influence structure, content, delivery and duration of training	68	64	76	61

Across all three measures, private training providers received more positive ratings than other providers. Ratings for general FE colleges, other public-funded organisations, and special and specialist colleges were slightly lower (though still very positive). This pattern was also observed in previous years' surveys.

There were some differences in rating by organisation size and industry sector. Medium and large organisations (50 or more employees) were generally more satisfied (a score of at least 8 out of 10) than smaller organisations.

In terms of industry sector, employers in Construction tended to give less positive ratings than other sectors, while those in Accommodation and Food Service, and Human Health and Social work were most likely to award ratings of 8 to 10.

Employers who undertook non-apprenticeship learning were more satisfied with all aspects of their training than their counterparts who delivered apprenticeships. Similarly, ratings for adult apprentices were more positive than for those aged 16-18 only.

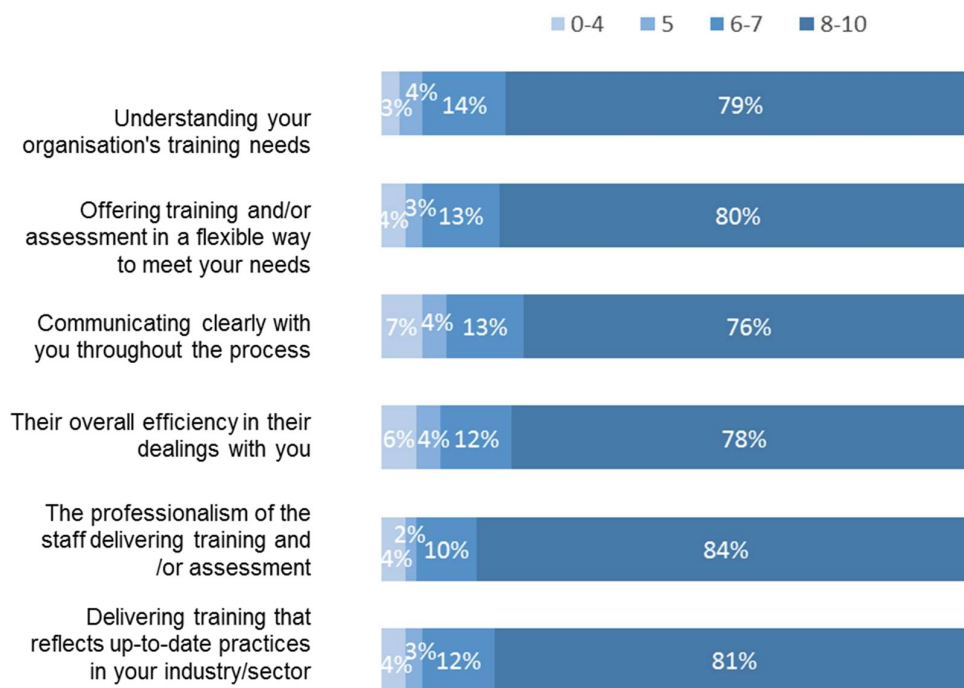
In comparison to other SSAs, employers delivering apprenticeships in Arts, Media and Publishing courses were less satisfied. This held true across both aspects, with one in two (50%) employers giving a score of 8 out of 10 for both quality of training and for the training provider overall. Employers delivering training in Retail and Commercial Enterprise, and Health, Public Services and Care received the highest satisfaction scores, with more than eight in ten employers giving a score of at least 8 out of 10 (84% across both aspects for both SSAs).

### 3. Detailed ratings

The majority of employers were satisfied with the various aspects of their training experience, with at least three in four giving a rating of 8 to 10. Ratings have improved for all aspects compared to last year's results.

Employers were most satisfied with the professionalism of staff who delivered the training. They were least likely to be satisfied with the clarity of communication throughout the process. This pattern was also observed in last year's survey results.

**Chart 8a: Overall performance on several aspects of training**



Bases: 59,099, 58,804, 59,822, 59,811, 58,926, 58,051 respectively

**Figure 8b: Change in satisfaction levels compared to 2015-16 survey**

8-10 score (in %) on several aspects of the training	2015-16 survey	% point change
Understanding organisation's training needs	76	+3
Offering training and/or assessment in a flexible way	78	+2
Communicating clearly	73	+3
Overall efficiency	76	+2
Professionalism of staff delivering training	82	+2
Delivering training that reflects up-to-date practices	79	+2

## Differences by organisation size and industry sector

Although the majority of employers were positive, there was some variation in views by size of organisation and industry sector.

As previously highlighted, smaller employers (with 1-9 employees) and those in Construction and Transport, Storage, Information and Communication Activities were less positive than average across the different measures. In contrast, employers in Accommodation and Food Service Activities and Human Health and Social Work remained particularly positive across all aspects of their training. This pattern is consistent with last year's survey results.

## Training undertaken

Employers using providers to deliver non-apprenticeship learning were consistently more positive than those delivering apprenticeships. In particular, they were more positive about the professionalism of staff who delivered the training and/or assessment (88% compared to 84%) and the delivery of training that reflects up-to-date practices in the respective industry/sector (87% compared to 81%). However, it should be noted that employers delivering non-apprenticeship learning account for a small percentage of the overall (3% compared to 99% delivering apprenticeships).

Employers delivering apprenticeships to 16-18 year olds only were least positive about the training. By contrast, those with both young and adult apprentices were significantly more positive, possibly reflecting their broader experience in delivering the programme.

Focusing specifically on apprenticeships in the four sector subject areas with the highest employer volumes<sup>2</sup>, ratings were generally higher for Retail and Commercial Enterprise and Health, Public Services and Care compared to Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies and Business, Administration and Law. This pattern is consistent with the 2015 to 2016 and 2014 to 2015 survey.

## 4. Technical information

A quality and methodology information document accompanies this SFR. This provides further information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data, including how it is validated and processed.

The Employer Satisfaction Survey 2016 to 2017 measures employers' satisfaction with training funded by the ESFA during August 2016 to February 2017. The survey applied to all general further education colleges, tertiary colleges, land-based colleges, art and design colleges and most independent learning providers that deliver provision to employers. The exceptions were sixth-form colleges; employers in receipt of an Apprenticeship Direct Grant; and colleges and other training providers funded to deliver training exclusively to their own employees. A total of 270,000 employers, across 708 colleges and training providers were in-scope for the survey.

The survey was multi-mode comprising online, postal and telephone methodologies. A total of 60,865 employers took part in the survey. Employer respondents were broadly representative of the population as shown in the tables below. As a result the survey data was not weighted.

---

<sup>2</sup> Engineering and manufacturing technologies, Business, Administration and law, Health, Public Services and Care and Retail and Commercial Enterprise



**Figure 9: Comparison of survey respondents with survey population: Number of employees**

Number of employees (based on information in the sample)	Population		Survey	
	N	%	N	%
<b>Less than 10</b>	101,579	37.4%	22,850	37.5%
<b>10-49</b>	121,393	44.7%	26,439	43.4%
<b>50-249</b>	36,737	13.5%	8,626	14.2%
<b>250+</b>	11,817	4.4%	2,950	4.8%
<b>Don't know</b>	18	0%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	271,544	100%	60,865	100%

**Figure 10: Comparison of survey respondents with survey population: Standard Industry Classification (2007 classification)**

Industry (based on information held in the sample)	Population		Survey	
	N	%	N	%
<b>A-Agriculture, forestry and fishing</b>	3,148	1.2%	964	1.6%
<b>B-Mining and quarrying</b>	155	0.1%	42	0.1%
<b>C-Manufacturing</b>	19,180	7.1%	5,584	9.2%
<b>DE-Electricity, gas, water supply; sewerage; remediation activities</b>	1,238	0.5%	278	0.5%
<b>F-Construction</b>	31,436	11.6%	5,808	9.5%
<b>G-Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles</b>	32,406	11.9%	7,352	12.1%
<b>I-Accommodation and food service activities</b>	16,282	6.0%	2,075	3.4%
<b>JH-transport and storage, Information and communication</b>	9,813	3.6%	2,166	3.6%
<b>K-Financial and insurance activities</b>	4,206	1.5%	845	1.4%
<b>LMN-Real estate activities, Professional, scientific and technical activities, Administrative and support service activities</b>	24,504	9.0%	5,988	9.8%

<b>O-Public administration and defence; compulsory social security</b>	4,986	1.8%	1,125	1.8%
<b>P-Education</b>	19,949	7.3%	4,681	7.7%
<b>Q-Human health and social work activities</b>	53,215	19.6%	11,333	18.6%
<b>RS-Arts, entertainments and recreation; Other service activities</b>	24,980	9.2%	6,484	10.7%
<b>T-Activities of households as employers</b>	249	0.1%	60	0.1%
<b>U-Activities of extraterritorial organisations</b>	75	0%	16	0%
<b>Missing</b>	25,722	9.5%	6,064	10.0%
<b>Total</b>	271,544	100.0%	60,865	100.0%

Further details can be accessed on the Education and Skills Funding Agency's (ESFA) pages on GOV.UK.

## 5. Get in touch

### Media enquiries

Press Office News Desk, Department for Education, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT.

Tel: 020 7783 8300

### Other enquiries/feedback

Andy Cooke, Data Outputs Division, Department for Education, Cheylesmore House, Quinton Road, Coventry, CV1 2WT

Email: [andy.cooke@education.gov.uk](mailto:andy.cooke@education.gov.uk)



Department  
for Education

© Crown copyright 2015

This publication (not including logos) is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

To view this licence:

visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3)

email [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)

write to Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London, TW9 4DU

About this publication:

enquiries Andy Cooke, Data Output Division, Department for Education, Cheylesmore House, Quinton Road, Coventry, CV1 2WT. Email: [andy.cooke@education.gov.uk](mailto:andy.cooke@education.gov.uk)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fe-choices-employer-satisfaction-survey-2016-to-2017>

Reference: [SFR 51/2017]



Follow us on Twitter:  
[@educationgovuk](https://twitter.com/educationgovuk)



Like us on Facebook:  
[facebook.com/educationgovuk](https://facebook.com/educationgovuk)