

Research report

European Social Fund Cohort Study: Wave 3

by Tracy Anderson, Clare Tait and Cheryl Lloyd



DWP Department for
Work and Pensions

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Summary

The European Social Fund (ESF) Cohort Study is a large scale longitudinal quantitative survey designed to evaluate the longer term outcomes of the training and advice provided through the ESF programme. It involved three waves of interviews, which were mainly conducted by telephone supplemented by a small number of face-to-face interviews with more vulnerable respondents. Respondents were first interviewed between April and September 2009 after they had started their course, and approached again between January and March 2010 (Wave 2) and January and March 2011 (Wave 3) subject to consent to be recontacted. Full interviews were conducted with 2,740 respondents in Wave 3.

Survey data has been weighted so that it is representative of the profile of ESF and match participants according to management information available in April 2009, when the sample for the study was drawn.

The study covered four of the ESF priorities, including: Priorities 1 and 4, which have a focus on extending employment opportunities and tackling barriers to employment; and Priorities 2 and 5, which aim to develop and improve the skills of the workforce.

This report contains the findings from participants who responded to all three waves of the ESF Cohort Study, and uses responses from all three interviews. While the Wave 1 and 2 reports focused upon the characteristics of participants, respondents' experiences of the programme as well as outcomes, the purpose of the third wave (and this report) is to provide information on the longer term outcomes of ESF provision. This wave also collected data related to sustainability to explore the integration of this cross-cutting theme into ESF provision. The report examines the involvement of ESF and match funded participants in training about green issues and the degree to which they are employed by organisations providing related products and services.

Course completion

Only a minority of respondents (one per cent) had still to finish their course when they took part in the Wave 3 ESF Cohort Study, with 74 per cent of participants staying to the end of the course and 25 per cent leaving early.

The participants' courses lasted six months on average but ranged from less than one month to three years or more. Longer courses were more common among Priority 2 and 5 participants with average lengths of 13 and eight months respectively, compared with four months among Priority 1 participants and five months among Priority 4 participants.

A higher proportion of Priority 2 and 5 participants had stayed until the end of their course compared with those in Priorities 1 and 4. Five per cent of Priority 2 and 11 per cent of Priority 5 participants left their course early. Among participants in Priorities 1 and 4, the comparable figures were 29 per cent and 25 per cent respectively. Participants were also more likely to have left the course early if they had multiple disadvantages or if they had been 'made to' or 'persuaded to' take part in the course rather than it being their own idea. Being aged 16-19, not having prior qualifications and not being in employment were found to be significantly associated with non-completion once other factors were taken into consideration. While a proportion of participants left early because they found a job, this suggests that further support may be necessary to encourage continued participation among these groups. The level of satisfaction with the quality of the course was also a significant factor

Qualifications

Before starting the course, 16 per cent of participants had no qualifications, while a further 25 per cent had qualifications below Level 2 or had 'other' qualifications. Participants with a disability or long term limiting illness were less likely to have qualifications.

By the time of the Wave 3 interview, 36 per cent of participants had gained full qualifications through the course, although this figure was higher in Priority 2 (80 per cent) and Priority 5 (73 per cent). Gaining a qualification was more common among women compared with men and less common among participants aged 50 or more. Whether a Priority 2 participant gained a qualification also significantly differed with the size of the employer. Those working for smaller employers with less than 25 employees were more likely to gain a qualification than those working for very large employers. For Priorities 2 and 5, ESF funded participants were less likely to gain a full qualification compared with match funded participants (61 per cent compared with 90 per cent).

Once other respondent characteristics were controlled for, not gaining work skills on the course, being a lone parent and being female were found to have a significant negative relationship with qualification acquisition. Differences in provision by funding stream and course intensity also appear to play a role.

In addition to the acquisition of full qualifications, 12 per cent of participants had gained units or modules towards qualifications by the time of the Wave 3 interview. Again, this was higher among Priority 2 (24 per cent) and Priority 5 (22 per cent) participants.

A number of results targets relating to qualification acquisition exist for the Priorities 2 and 5. For both priorities, there is a 40 per cent target for the proportion of participants without a prior level 2 qualification gaining a full level 2 qualification. Similarly a target of 30 per cent exists for the achievement of a full level 3 qualification amongst those with only a level 2 prior to the course. The findings from the cohort study suggest that these targets have been met. At the time of interview, of those without a prior Level 2 qualification, 40 per cent of Priority 2 and 5 participants had obtained a Level 2 qualification. Of those participants without a prior Level 3 qualification, 32 per cent of Priority 2 and 5 participants had obtained a Level 3 qualification by the Wave 3 interview.

Forty-four per cent of participants had taken part in some form of vocational training since the course. Most commonly, participants had received training in how to look for a job (23 per cent), followed by general training in the world of work (20 per cent) and training in personal skills (18 per cent). Around half of these participants would not have done undertaken this training without the original course, suggesting that ESF and match funded provision plays an important in engaging participants with wider training opportunities.

Employment outcomes

Priorities 1 and 4 have a number of results targets related to employment. For Priority 1, there are targets of 22 per cent of participants in employment on leaving the course and 26 per cent in employment six months after this. The findings from the ESF Cohort Study suggest that the programme has been successful in this regard. While the study does not provide us with a snapshot of participants' employment status at the exact point of leaving and six months later, the employment status of participants at the various Waves is in line with these targets. Similarly for Priority 4 participants, targets were set at 24 per cent in employment on leaving and 30 per cent in employment six months later. Once again the survey data suggest that these targets have been met.

The study found that the employment rate among Priority 1 participants rose from six per cent on the week before the course to 32 per cent rate at the time of the Wave 3 interview, while the rate of unemployment fell from 70 per cent to 38 per cent over the same period and the proportion economically inactive rose from 24 to 30 per cent. Among Priority 4 participants the employment rate rose from 4 per cent to 34 per cent, with a corresponding fall in the proportion who were unemployed of 39 per cent to 20 per cent and a fall in the proportion who were economically inactive of 57 per cent to 46 per cent. When comparing the rate of unemployment at the time of interview with the rate 12 months before the course there was a small decline in unemployment (from 42% to 38% in Priority 1). It is also important to note that interviews took place during the economic recession, which may contribute to the reduction in unemployment not being higher.

Among the target groups, the lowest Wave 3 employment rates were reported for those participants with disabilities or health conditions and those aged 50 or older. Indeed, even once other factors were controlled for, having a physical or mental disability had a negative association with being in employment at Wave 3, presenting a considerable barrier in many cases. Having no prior qualifications and being long-term unemployed were also significant factors, as were having no recent work experience and being made to go on the course.

For Priorities 1 and 4, a greater increase in the proportion of participants in employment between the week before the course and the Wave 3 interview was seen among ESF funded participants (38 percentage points compared with 23 percentage points for match funded participants). As the courses funded by the ESF programme include a group of the population that have become unemployed and have been identified as potentially benefiting from these courses this is not unexpected.

For many, employment was sustained between earlier Waves and the Wave 3 interview. Among Priority 1 participants, 80 per cent of those employed at Wave 1 were still employed at Wave 3 and similarly 80 per cent of those employed at Wave 2. Among Priority 4 participants, 70 per cent of those employed at Wave 1 were still employed at Wave 3 and 76 per cent of those employed at Wave 2.

Of those participants who were in employment at the time of the interview and who had been out of work in the week before the course, 21 per cent said that someone on the course had suggested that they apply for their current job, while a similar proportion (22 per cent) had used contacts from the course when applying for their current job.

Of those Priority 1 and 4 participants not in work at the time of the Wave 3 interview, 66 per cent were looking for work, with a further 22 per cent wanting work although not currently looking. Intentions among this group were similar to those observed at Wave 2, as were their self rated likelihood of finding work and confidence in finding work.

Of those participants who were unemployed at the Wave 3 interview, most had made job applications (67 per cent) since the Wave 2 interview while a slightly smaller proportion had been to job interviews (63 per cent). Thirty-five per cent of unemployed participants had used contacts from the course in their job search, while 28 per cent said that someone on the course had suggested that they apply for particular jobs.

At this stage, as at previous Waves, the most cited barriers to getting a job were the lack of jobs locally, a lack of recent work experience and not having the right skills. While these barriers are based on participants' perceptions, consideration of local opportunities and matching skills training and work experience opportunities with these is clearly important in helping to ensure that ESF provision assists participants move towards work. At the time of the Wave 3 interview, access to and the cost of transportation and childcare was also cited as a barrier for some, suggesting that further support would be beneficial to participants after they have finished their course.

Improvements in employment were also observed among those participants in employment both before the course and at the time of the Wave 3 interview. Sixty-nine per cent of such participants said that, since they had been on the course, they had improved their job security. (This was more prevalent among participants working for small employers with less than 25 staff than larger employers.) A high proportion of participants (87 per cent) agreed that the course had helped them in this area. The course also seemed particularly beneficial to those employees who had taken on higher skilled work for an existing employer (51 per cent) – with 90 per cent acknowledging that the course had helped them to do this work. Participants also reported other positive changes such as increased hours, taking on responsibility for others and movement to a permanent contract. These positive changes suggest that the skills and qualifications acquired via the ESF provision have increased the value of participants to their employer and the labour market, although the degree to which these changes are attributable to this cannot be ascertained.

Green training

Fourteen per cent of participants reported having received training on green issues as part of their ESF/match funded programme. Of those in employment, 23 per cent had received such training in their current job. This most commonly covered recycling (18 per cent), reducing waste (17 per cent), energy conservation (15 per cent) and use of sustainable resources (14 per cent).

Overall, 45 per cent of working participants said they worked in organisations offering one or more green products or services; most commonly recycling (34 per cent) and other waste disposal (25 per cent).

Conclusion

This wave of the ESF Cohort Study aimed to provide information on the longer term outcomes of provision and whether the outcomes identified in earlier waves have been sustained.

Participants in ESF provision have reported improved employment prospects with some moving into employment since the course, evidence of progression within the workplace among those already in employment and the development of higher level skills and qualification acquisition amongst others.

While qualifications gained are a permanent achievement, employment outcomes can be transitory. However, the study suggests that that majority of those in employment at the previous wave have remained in employment at Wave 3 (and, in a period of economic difficulty, this proportion may be lower than would otherwise have been). Further improvements have also been observed since Wave 2 amongst those who have been in employment since the start of the course. Similarly, among those who have not secured employment, work search activity remains at similar levels to those seen at Wave 2; and levels of motivation to look for work and confidence in finding work appear to have been sustained. These outcomes have been observed across the board including amongst those participants facing disadvantages that hinder their labour market activities.

On the basis of the cohort study it appears that ESF and match-funded provision has had a positive and sustained impact upon participants in line with the targets that were set. The findings from the study do highlight some areas which could be given further consideration for future programmes with a view to improving outcomes. This includes additional efforts to engage younger participants and those ‘made to’ go on the course, additional support for participants who face certain disadvantages linked with poorer outcomes (i.e. those with disabilities or long term health problems, the long term unemployed and those with no prior qualifications), particularly provision to increase their confidence and greater work experience opportunities.

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview of European Social Fund programme

The European Social Fund (ESF) is one of the Structural Funds designed to strengthen economic and social cohesion in the European Union. The current programme runs from 2007 to 2013 and geographically covers England and Gibraltar.

The programme supports European Union (EU), national and regional strategies to tackle weaknesses in the labour market. These include: low employment rates and high inactivity rates among disadvantaged groups; and, poor basic skill levels and a high number of individuals who lack level 2 qualifications.

The overall strategic objective of the programme is to support sustainable economic growth and social inclusion in England by contributing to policies to increase the employment rate and to develop a skilled and adaptable workforce.

The ESF programme includes both the Convergence Objective (Cornwall and Isles of Scilly) and the Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective (the rest of England and Gibraltar)¹. Within the Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective, Merseyside and South Yorkshire receive ring-fenced funding in view of their transitional 'phasing-in' status.² The programme's budget is £5 billion (€6 billion) of which the contribution of the ESF is £2.5 billion (€3 billion). Of the ESF funding £164 million (€196 million) is ring-fenced for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly and £305 million (€386 million) for the 'phasing-in' areas of Merseyside and South Yorkshire.³

1.1.1 ESF priorities

The ESF programme contains six priorities as set out in the table below. There are three key priorities for the Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective, which cover the whole of England and Gibraltar except Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. There are also three priorities for the Convergence Objective area of Cornwall and Isles of Scilly. The broader scope of the Convergence Objective priorities reflects the wider range of activities that are eligible within Convergence areas and the higher intensity of Convergence funding.

¹ Convergence regions are those eligible for a higher level of funding because their gross per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is less than 75 per cent of the average of the EU25. In England, the only convergence area is Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. Regions eligible for funding from the Structural Funds at a lower intensity than those in Convergence areas are covered by the Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective.

² 'Phasing in' areas are those with Objective 1 status in the 2000-2006 programming period whose per capita GDP exceeds 75 per cent of the average GDP of the EU15. These areas are eligible for regional competitiveness and employment funding at a higher level until 2010.

³ In Merseyside, a Complementary Strand of delivery also exists, involving six contracts with the Merseyside local authorities that are outside co-financing.

Table 1.1 ESF priorities

	Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective (England except Cornwall)	Convergence Objective (Cornwall and Isles of Scilly)
Worklessness	Priority 1: Extending employment opportunities	Priority 4: Tackling barriers to employment
Workforce skills	Priority 2: Developing a skilled and adaptable workforce	Priority 5: Improving the skills of the local workforce
Technical assistance	Priority 3: Technical Assistance	Priority 6: Technical assistance

The ESF Cohort Study covers Priorities 1, 2, 4 and 5. Priorities 3 and 6, which cover technical assistance, are not a focus of the survey.

Priorities 1 and 4 aim to improve the employability and skills of unemployed and inactive people, and tackle barriers to work faced by people with disabilities or health conditions, lone parents, people aged 50 and over, ethnic minorities, people with no or low qualifications, young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and other disadvantaged groups, including people experiencing multiple disadvantages.

The aim of Priorities 2 and 5 is to improve the qualifications and skills of workers without basic skills and with no or low qualifications. Priority 2 particularly focuses on people who are least likely to receive training (such as workers in sectors with weak training records and part-time workers) and people at a disadvantage in the workplace (such as people with disabilities or health conditions, people aged over 50 and people from ethnic minorities). Priority 5 focuses upon workers without basic skills, workers who do not have level 2 qualifications relevant to their current occupation, and men and women who want to enter non-traditional occupations. These priorities also have a focus on developing managers and workers in small enterprises. Priority 5 also supports Cornwall's Higher Education and skills strategy.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has overall responsibility for ESF funds in England and manages this ESF programme at a national level. In London, some management functions are performed by the Greater London Authority acting as an intermediate body.

ESF funds are distributed through Co-financing Organisations (CFOs). The Skills Funding Agency, DWP and National Offender Management Service are the main co-financing organisations. A small number of other organisations are CFOs (for example, some Regional Development Agencies and local authorities). CFOs bring together ESF and domestic funding for employment and skills so that ESF complements domestic programmes. The Co-financing Organisations contract with the organisations or 'providers' that deliver ESF projects on the ground. The courses delivered differ between contracting CFOs and areas, and can include a combination of different elements including basic skills training, assistance with job search, work skills development, study towards formal qualifications and work placements.

CFOs are required to match ESF with domestic funding. The intention is that this leads to a more strategic approach to ESF delivery and ensures better alignment of ESF with EU and national employment and skills strategies.

1.2 Aims and objectives of the evaluation

The ESF Cohort Study is a survey of participants in projects funded by the ESF. The study covers England and aims to provide evidence on the longer term outcomes of the support provided by the 2007-2013 ESF programme. The Cohort study is also used to measure a number of indicators and targets that cannot be captured through respondent monitoring information.

The objectives of the cohort study are as follows:

- To acquire more detailed information on respondents which enables analysis of sub-groups and multiple disadvantages;
- To obtain more detail on the type of support offered and the views of respondents on the support they receive;
- To understand how individuals come to be on ESF training courses;
- To understand what activities they are engaged in on their course; and
- To understand their aspirations for their training.

The purpose of the third wave is to provide information on the longer term outcomes of ESF provision. Specifically, it aimed to explore whether the hard and soft outcomes identified in Waves 1 and 2 have been sustained, and highlight any additional programme effects that had not materialised at the time of the Wave 2 interview.

It addresses the following research questions:

- What are the (hard and soft) outcomes for participants who left ESF 18 months ago?
- What employment outcomes have been sustained?
- How has ESF impacted on participants' employment, employability, confidence, qualifications and skills levels?
- Has ESF supported progression in the workplace and, if so, in which ways (e.g. higher skilled work or more pay)?
- What has been the impact of ESF provision on disadvantaged groups?

It also explores the degree to which participants have received any training in green issues.

1.3 Evaluation methodology

The ESF Cohort Study involves a large scale longitudinal quantitative survey involving three waves of interviews. These are mainly telephone interviews supplemented by a small number of face-to-face interviews with more vulnerable respondents. Wave 1 took place between April and September 2009, during which 10,947 ESF (and match) respondents were interviewed. In Wave 2, all respondents from the first wave were contacted again, with interviews being achieved with 7,400 ESF and match respondents between January and March 2010. Between January and March 2011, all those respondents who agreed to be recontacted at Wave 2 were approached to take part in a further third wave of fieldwork. Full interviews were conducted with 2,740 respondents. (Information about Wave 3 response rates can be found in Appendix B).

Survey data has been weighted so that it is representative of the profile of ESF and match participants according to management information available in April 2009, when the sample for the study was drawn.

The Wave 1 report focused predominantly on levels of participation in ESF and match provision, and on participants' experiences of the programme.⁴ The Wave 2 report provided more information about the outcomes of participation exploring, for example, whether participants have gained qualifications or found work since they started training.⁵ The Wave 3 report focuses upon the longer terms outcomes 12 months on from Wave 2.

All differences commented on in this report have been found to be significant at the 95 per cent level. Estimates are not presented where unweighted base sizes are less than 50. Consequently, in some tables columns are left blank showing only the unweighted base. The estimates given represent the mid-point of a range given by their confidence intervals which indicate the range within which the true population value falls. In the tables, the following conventions apply:

- 0 True zero
- * Less than 0.5 per cent
- Cannot report, base size too small

1.4 Report structure

This report presents the results of the Wave 3 survey. The report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 examines course completion, focusing upon differences by priority and respondent characteristics.
- Chapter 3 considers the qualifications that respondents studied for and gained as part of ESF training, by priority and respondent characteristics.
- Chapter 4 looks at the employment outcomes of ESF provision, looking at whether ESF respondents found jobs or progressed in their existing employment following their participation in ESF training.
- Chapter 5 focuses upon difference in course completion, qualifications and employment outcomes by funding stream.
- Chapter 6 explores 'green' training received as part of the programme or since.
- Chapter 7 concludes by summarising the key findings and changes observed over time among the participants, comparing these with the ESF targets.

⁴ European Social Fund Cohort Study: Wave 1:
<http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2009-2010/rrep647.pdf>

⁵ European Social Fund Cohort Study: Wave 2:
<http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2009-2010/rrep709.pdf>

2 Course completion

This chapter reviews participants' progress through their course. The chapter begins with an overview of the range of activities funded by European Social Fund (ESF) (Section 2.1), before examining the rates at which participants had finished their course or left early (Section 2.2). Section 2.3 then explores the length of time people spent on their courses. The final section concludes by highlighting the implications of the findings for future provision.

2.1 Overview of European Social Fund activities

Within Priorities 1 and 4, which aim to increase employment and to reduce unemployment and economic inactivity, funded activities include:

- Job search help, advice and guidance.
- Work preparation activities, including work placements.
- Advice on self-employment and entrepreneurship.
- Skills for Life, including basic skills of literacy, numeracy, English for Speakers of Other Languages and ICT.
- Vocational training and qualifications for employability.
- Job brokerage.
- Access to childcare; and
- Interventions for people at risk of redundancy.

In addition, various activities are funded under Priorities 1 and 4 to support 14 to 19 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Priorities 2 and 5 have an objective to develop and improve the skills of the workforce. Specific activities include:

- supporting access to and provision of apprenticeships;
- skills for Life, including basic skills of literacy, numeracy, ESOL and ICT;
- training leading to qualifications at levels 2 and 3; and
- activities to support access to and progression from foundation level up to level 3.

Priority 2 particularly focuses on people who are least likely to receive training (such as workers in sectors with weak training records and part-time workers) and people at a disadvantage in the workplace (such as people with disabilities or health conditions, people aged over 50 and people from ethnic minorities). Priority 5 focuses upon workers without basic skills, workers who do not have level 2 qualifications relevant to their current occupation, and men and women who want to enter non-traditional occupations.

Priority 5 also supports activities to contribute to the strategy for Higher Education and Skills in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

2.2 Course completion and early leavers

At the time of the Wave 1 survey, 81 per cent of participants had already finished their course, and by the Wave 2 survey this figure had risen to 95 per cent. By Wave 3, 99 per cent of participants had finished their course, with 74 per cent having stayed to the end of their course and 25 per cent having left early. As discussed in the Wave 1 report, there were a wide variety of reasons why participants left early including ill health, caring responsibilities and dissatisfaction with the course. However, around one third of early leavers did so because they had found or moved jobs.

There was some variation by priority, with participants in Priority 2 being more likely than those from the other Priority groups to still be on their course. Those in Priority 2 (along with Priority 5) were also more likely to have finished the course and less likely to have left early without completing (Table 2.1). As reported in the Wave 2 report, a potential explanation for this is that Priority 2 participants were mostly in employment, in some cases attending the course as part of their job, and so more likely to complete the whole course.

Table 2.1 Course completion by priority

<i>ESF Cohort Survey Wave 3</i>						
Course completion	Priority					Total %
	1 %	2 %	4 %	5 %		
Still on course	1	7	2	1	2	
No longer on course						
Finished course	71	87	73	88	74	
Left early	29	5	25	11	25	
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	1,373	924	311	114	2,722	

However, among Priority 2 participants, those who worked for smaller employers were more likely to still be on their course compared with those who worked for employers with 250 or more employees (Table 2.2). (Similar figures for Priority 5 participants could not be calculated due to small base sizes.)

Table 2.2 Course completion by size of employer (Priority 2)

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>						
Course completion	Size of employer					Total %
	1-9 %	10-24 %	25-249 %	250-499 %	500 or more %	
Still on course	7	8	7	0	0	7
No longer on course						
Finished course	87	89	90	98	88	87
Left early	6	3	3	2	12	5
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	132	135	280	60	88	924

Participants aged 16-19 were more likely to still be on the course than older participants. Priority 2 participants were more likely to be aged 16-19 than the other groups,⁶ so this may also help to explain the high proportion of Priority 2 participants who were still on the course. There were no significant differences according to gender (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3 Course completion by age and gender

<i>ESF Cohort Survey Wave 3</i>								
Course completion	Age					Gender		Total %
	16-19 %	20-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50+ %	Male %	Female %	
Still on course	6	1	1	*	1	1	2	2
No longer on course								
Finished course	67	73	75	78	72	74	72	74
Left early	27	25	24	22	28	24	26	25
<i>Unweighted base</i>	359	316	346	975	726	1,491	1,231	2,722

As observed at Wave 2, differences in the proportion of participants completing their course by priority may also be due to the fact that, in general, participants in Priorities 1 and 4 faced more disadvantages than those in Priorities 2 and 5.⁷ Participants with fewer disadvantages were less likely to have left the course early. Participants with no disadvantages were also more likely to still be on the course (Table 2.4).

Table 2.4 Course completion by number of disadvantages

<i>ESF Cohort Survey Wave 3</i>						
Course completion	Number of disadvantages					Total %
	None %	1 %	2 %	3 %	4+ %	
Still on course	4	1	1	1	1	2
No longer on course						
Finished course	80	75	72	70	64	74
Left early	16	23	27	29	35	25
<i>Unweighted base</i>	689	881	601	357	194	2,722

Those participants who had ‘decided to’ go on the course were slightly more likely to still be on the course and least likely to have left early. Those who said they went on the course because they were ‘made to’ or ‘persuaded to’ were more likely to have left early (Table 2.5). As Table 2.6 shows participants from Priority 2 were more likely than others to give ‘decided to’ as their main reason for going on the course, so this may also explain why those from Priority 2 were less likely to have dropped out of the course before the end.

⁶ Wave 2 Report, Table 2.3.

⁷ Wave 2 Report, Section 2.5.

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Table 2.5 Course completion by reason for going on course

ESF Cohort Survey Wave 3

Course completion	Reason for going on course				Total %
	Made to %	Persuaded %	Given opportunity %	Decided to %	
Still on course	1	*	1	4	2
No longer on course					
Finished course	73	69	75	74	74
Left early	27	30	24	22	25
<i>Unweighted base</i>	420	153	1,104	1,025	2,702

Table 2.6 Why went on course by priority

ESF Cohort Survey Wave 3

Why went on course	Priority				Total %
	1 %	2 %	4 %	5 %	
Made to go on it	35	7	24	10	30
Persuaded to go on it	8	2	6	5	7
Given opportunity to go on it	32	40	34	36	33
Decide myself to go on it	25	50	36	48	29
Other reason	*	1	0	1	*
<i>Unweighted base</i>	1,383	924	319	114	2,740

2.2.1 Factors associated with course completion

Multivariate analysis was carried out to look at the predictors of course completion.⁸

Multivariate methods can add an extra dimension to the analysis. It is possible that a statistically significant association can appear between two variables because both variables may be related to a third variable (for instance, reason for going on course is related to multiple disadvantage; both may be related to whether participants complete their course). Multivariate analysis, such as logistic regression, looks at all the variables in relation to each other, as well as in relation to the outcome variable; in this case course completion at Wave 3. In instances where two variables are both strongly related to course completion, but also strongly related to each other, the analysis will suggest which variable has the stronger relationship with completion.

⁸ More detailed information about the multivariate analysis can be found in Appendix D.

The following variables were explored with regard to course completion:

- Gender.
- Age.
- Funding stream.
- Region.
- Ethnicity.
- Lone parent status.
- Whether the participant has a dependent child.
- Whether the participant was an offender or ex-offender.
- Whether the participant was a carer.
- Disability variables (e.g. whether the respondent had a physical disability, learning disability, mental health problem, long-term limiting illness or other disability).
- Income.
- Tenure.
- Size of employer.
- Employment status at the time of the week before the course.
- Whether the participant has prior qualifications.
- Satisfaction with the course, in terms of quality.
- Satisfaction with the course, in terms of level.
- Intensity of the course.
- Whether the participant thought that the course was relevant to their needs.
- Whether the participant gained practical help in finding work on the course.
- Why participants had signed up to the course.

The multivariate analysis found that the following characteristics were **positively associated** with course completion, when other factors were controlled for:

- Being in an older age group (i.e. those above 16-19): this may reflect a higher level of commitment among older participants and/or that older participants are more likely to be on shorter courses (see section 2.3)
- Having dependent children: this may reflect a higher level commitment among those with children but it may be that having dependent children makes it more difficult to find a job which is one of the reasons why participants leave early
- Being a match funded participant (rather than ESF funded): this could reflect differences in the type of provision that make ESF funded provision more successful such that it gets more people into work (see section 5.3) or that match funded provision generates greater engagement such that participants see their course through the end. (It is interesting to note that match funded courses tend to be longer than ESF funded courses as discussed in Chapter 5.)

The following factors were found to have a **negative association**:

- Not having prior qualifications: those without prior qualifications may have had previously negative experiences of training and education which may influence their confidence, level of engagement and commitment to the course. It may also be that this group have additional needs which are not captured in the data which hinders their participation such as poor literacy and numeracy.
- Not being in employment in the week prior to the course: this may reflect the course being part of the participant's job amongst those in employment, such that there is greater incentive to complete and their employers support them in doing so.
- Being less than very satisfied with quality of the course: it is unsurprising that satisfaction and course completion are linked as it would be expected that those who are less satisfied would be more likely to leave prior to completion.

2.3 Length of course

This section presents information about the length of time participants reported their course lasted. Table 2.7 shows length of course by whether or not the participant had completed the course.

For those participants who had completed their course, the mean course length was six months. However actual course length, for those who had completed, was fairly evenly spread: 17 per cent had been on courses that had lasted less than one month, 30 per cent one or more but less than four months, 18 per cent four or more but less than six months and 22 per cent six or more but less than 12 months. Slightly fewer (13 per cent) had completed a course which lasted a year or more.

For those participants who had left their course early, the figures in Table 2.7 reflect the time they had spent on the course, not the originally intended course length. Average length of time spent on the course by those who left early was four months. However, 65 per cent had left the course less than four months after starting (21 per cent less than a month, 44 per cent one or more months but less than four), whilst 19 per cent had lasted six months or more before leaving (11 per cent leaving between six and less than 12 months, eight per cent between one and less than two years).

The few participants who were still on their course at the time of their Wave 3 interview were asked when they were expecting to finish the course. Unsurprisingly, all 38 reported that their course was over two years. The average length of 35 months suggests that these may all have been three year courses.

Table 2.7 Length of training course by course completion

ESF Cohort Survey Wave 3

Length of course	Course completion			Total %
	Still on the course %	Finished the course %	Left early %	
Less than a month	0	17	21	18
One month or more, less than four months	0	30	44	33
Four months or more, less than six months	0	18	17	17
Six months or more, less than 12 months	0	22	11	19
One year or more, less than two years	0	10	8	10
Two years or more	100	3	*	3
Average length (months)	35	6	4	6
<i>Unweighted base</i>	38	2,001	461	2,500

In order to give a closer estimate of actual course length according to Priority, Table 2.8 excludes those who left the course early and focuses just on the length of course for those who had completed or were still on their course. This confirms that there was considerable variation in length of 'full' courses according to Priority: While the overall average course length (for those who had completed or were still on the course) was six months, the mean length of Priority 2 courses was much higher than Priority 1 (13 months compared to four months). The biggest difference was that Priority 2 had a much higher proportion of courses lasting one year or more and fewer courses lasting four months or more but less than six months. The proportion of very short courses (lasting less than a month) was similar across all priorities, but highest in Priority 5.

Table 2.8 Length of 'full' training course by priority

ESF Cohort Survey Wave 3

Length of course	Priority				Total %
	1 %	2 %	4 %	5 %	
Less than a month	17	14	16	21	17
One month or more, less than four months	34	10	32	19	29
Four months or more, less than six months	21	5	18	6	18
Six months or more, less than 12 months	22	23	24	25	22
One year or more, less than two years	5	31	8	23	10
Two years or more	1	17	2	6	4
Average length (months)	4	13	5	8	6
<i>Unweighted base</i>	922	825	202	96	2,045

Base: All completed or still on course.

Younger people tended to be on longer courses than older people. Again just looking at those who had completed or were still on their course, the mean length of the 'full' course decreased steadily with age, from an average of 12 months for 16-19 year olds to four months for over 50s.

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In particular, those aged 16-19 were most likely to be on a course which lasted for a year or more (28 per cent one to two years, 13 per cent over two years, Table 2.9).

There were no significant differences in course length according to gender (Table 2.9).

Table 2.9 Length of 'full' training course by age and gender

ESF Cohort Survey Wave 3

Length of course	Age					Gender		Total %
	16-19 %	20-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50+ %	Male %	Female %	
Less than a month	3	15	22	20	18	18	14	17
One month or more, less than four months	14	28	28	35	35	30	27	29
Four months or more, less than six months	13	22	15	17	21	17	19	18
Six months or more, less than 12 months	29	18	25	21	20	22	22	22
One year or more, less than two years	28	9	8	6	5	9	13	10
Two years or more	13	8	2	1	*	4	5	4
Average length (months)	12	7	5	4	4	6	7	6
<i>Unweighted base</i>	241	232	261	758	553	1,139	906	2,045

Base: All completed or still on course.

Those working for smaller employers also tended to be on longer courses than those working for larger employers (Table 2.10).

Table 2.10 Length of 'full' training course by size of employer (Priority 2)

ESF Cohort Survey

Length of course	Size of employer					Total %
	1-9 %	10-24 %	25-249 %	250-499 %	500 or more %	
Less than a month	3	11	14	30	19	14
One month or more, less than four months	5	7	19	13	16	10
Four months or more, less than six months	3	3	5	5	9	5
Six months or more, less than 12 months	21	29	19	30	18	21
One year or more, less than two years	47	31	24	20	20	31
Two years or more	21	19	20	1	17	19
Average length (months)	16.2	14.8	11.3	7.0	10.4	13.7
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	116	119	251	53	80	825

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter examined course completion and the factors associated with this. The majority of participants fully completed their course but around one in four left early. In some cases this is a positive outcome as participants had found jobs; however, the majority left for other reasons relating to their own circumstances or the course itself.

A number of significant factors were identified as being associated with course completion in this chapter which may be helpfully considered for future provision.

- **Being in employment at the start of the course:** Completion rates were higher among those in employment the week before the course. It seems likely that this is a result of the course being part of their job. This suggests that the engagement of employers plays an important role in motivating participants and should be nurtured.
- **Having no prior qualifications:** This had a significant negative association with leaving early. Participants with no qualifications may lack confidence in their abilities particularly if they have had little or negative previous experiences of training and education; and may also face other barriers to participation such as poor literacy. As such consideration could be given to what further support may be required improve confidence among this particular group, facilitate their participation and maintain their engagement.
- **Age:** Younger participants were more likely to leave early than those in older age groups. While this may reflect their tendency to be on longer courses which require greater commitment, it may be worth considering whether other steps can be taken to facilitate completion among younger participants.
- **Satisfaction with quality of the course:** This had a positive relationship with course completion. Providers should therefore be encouraged to monitor levels of participant satisfaction and address the underlying causes of low levels of satisfaction promptly in order to improve completion rates.

3 Qualifications

This chapter explores the range of qualifications gained by participants on the course. Specifically, the chapter reviews:

- The qualification levels of participants before they began the course (Section 3.1).
- The full qualifications gained by participants on the course (Section 3.2). This section also contains a multivariate analysis to look at those characteristics and attitudes associated with gaining qualifications.
- The modules/units towards full qualifications gained by participants on the course (Section 3.3).
- The participants who stopped studying towards qualifications (Section 3.4); and
- Whether participants had undertaken any other type of vocational training since the course, and whether they planned to study any in the future (Section 3.5).

The final section concludes by setting out the key implications of the findings for future provision.

3.1 Qualification level before training

All participants were asked about what qualifications they held before starting the course.

The majority of participants (59 per cent) were educated to Level 2 or above, with 12 per cent educated to Level 3 and 11 per cent educated to Level 4. Sixteen per cent of participants had no qualifications. Participants in Priority 1 and Priority 4 were more likely to have no qualifications than those in other priorities (18 per cent in Priority 1 compared to four per cent among Priority 2 participants – Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 Qualification level prior to course by priority

Qualification level	Priority				Total %
	1 %	2 %	4 %	5 %	
Level 4 and above	10	12	15	23	11
Level 3 – A Level or equivalent	11	18	13	22	12
Level 2 – GCSE grades A*-C or equivalent	33	51	25	31	36
Below Level 2	21	12	28	13	19
Foreign and other qualifications	7	2	5	8	6
No qualifications	18	4	14	3	16
<i>Unweighted base</i>	1,383	923	319	114	2,739

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Priorities 2 and 5 have a specific objective to develop and improve the skills of the workforce, and have particular targets for the proportions of participants taking part in European Social Fund (ESF) courses at different qualification levels.

Priority 2 targets include:

- 41 per cent of participants to not have **relevant** Level 2 qualifications – ESF Cohort Study data suggest that 18 per cent of Priority 2 participants did not have a full Level 2 qualification, although many more may have been educated to Level 2 or above, but without Level 2 qualifications that were relevant to their occupation or sector.
- 12 per cent of Priority 2 participants to be **at** Level 2 (but without a relevant Level 3 qualification) – 51 per cent Priority 2 participants were educated to Level 2 (but without a full Level 3).

As well as targets for engaging participants with relevant Level 2 and 3 qualifications, Priority 5 has a target to ensure that eight per cent of participants have a Level 3 qualification (but not a full Level 4). Evidence from the ESF Cohort Study indicates that 22 per cent of Priority 5 participants meet this criterion (Table 3.1).

Priorities 2 and 5 also have targets around basic skills provision. The aim was for 41 per cent of Priority 2 participants and 36 per cent of Priority 5 participants to have basic skills needs. Participants were not asked specifically whether they had basic skills needs, although a possible proxy for this could be all those participants with no qualifications or with qualifications below Level 2 (19 per cent for Priority 2 and 24 per cent for Priority 5 – Table 3.1).

Qualifications held also varied by age, with younger people less likely to have no qualifications: ten per cent of those aged 16-19 had no qualifications, among those aged 50 and over, this proportion rose to 27 per cent). Unsurprisingly, younger participants were also less likely than older age groups to be educated to Level 4 and above, although they were more likely than those aged 20-49 to have Level 2 qualifications (Table 3.2). There were no significant differences according to gender.

Table 3.2 Prior qualification gained by age and gender

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>								
Qualification level	Age					Gender		Total %
	16-19 %	20-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50+ %	Male %	Female %	
Level 4 and above	1	10	11	15	12	9	12	11
Level 3 – A Level or equivalent	6	16	17	12	9	13	11	12
Level 2 – GCSE grades A*-C or equivalent	58	45	36	26	18	34	39	36
Below Level 2	23	17	16	19	24	22	15	19
Foreign and other qualifications	1	2	8	11	9	6	7	6
No qualifications	10	11	12	18	27	15	16	16
<i>Unweighted base</i>	359	317	350	981	732	1,500	1,239	2,739

There were two significant differences in levels of qualification according to whether the participant was from a disadvantaged group (Table 3.3). Participants with a disability or long-term limiting illness (LTLI) were less likely to have qualifications than those without (22 per cent compared with 12 per cent). Those from minority ethnic groups were more likely than white participants to have foreign or other qualifications.

Table 3.3 Prior qualification by disadvantage⁹

ESF Cohort Survey

Qualification level	Disadvantaged group							
	Not lone parent %	Lone parent %	Not carer %	Carer %	White %	Ethnic minority group %	No disability or LTLI %	Has a disability or LTLI %
Level 4 and above	10	14	10	14	11	8	10	11
Level 3 – A Level or equivalent	12	12	12	12	13	11	14	10
Level 2 – GCSE grades A*-C or equivalent	36	30	36	35	36	31	39	28
Below Level 2	20	14	19	21	21	13	19	19
Foreign and other qualifications	6	9	6	8	4	18	5	9
No qualifications	15	21	16	10	15	18	12	22
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>2,512</i>	<i>225</i>	<i>2,474</i>	<i>263</i>	<i>2,370</i>	<i>357</i>	<i>1,956</i>	<i>782</i>

3.2 Full qualifications gained

In the Wave 1 interview, all participants were asked whether they were studying towards any qualifications as part of the course. The Wave 2 and 3 interviews asked participants about whether they had successfully gained any full qualifications through the course.

The Wave 2 report stated that 27 per cent of participants had gained a full qualification by the time of the interview. This had increased to 36 per cent by the Wave 3 interview. Participants in Priorities 2 and 5 were more likely to have gained qualifications through the course. In fact by Wave 3, 80 per cent of Priority 2 participants and 73 per cent of Priority 5 participants had gained a full qualification as part of the course, compared with only 28 per cent of Priority 1 participants and 33 per cent of Priority 4 participants (Table 3.4).

Given that Priorities 2 and 5 had specific objectives for providing participants with qualifications, this result is unsurprising. Both Priorities 2 and 5 had a target for 40 per cent of participants (without a prior **relevant** Level 2 qualification) to gain a full Level 2 qualification as part of the course. Just looking at those participants without a prior Level 2 qualification, 40 per cent of Priority 2 and 5 participants had obtained a Level 2 qualification by the time of the Wave 3 interview with 18 per cent achieving a qualification of a higher level – suggesting that the 40 per cent target may have been met (Table 3.5).

It is also worth noting that participants who were **still studying towards qualifications** at the time of the Wave 3 interview have not been included in this analysis. In fact, 13 per cent of Priority 2 and 5 per cent of Priority 5 participants were still studying towards qualifications at the time of the interview (Table 3.6). It is therefore possible that the final proportion obtaining a qualification may rise further.

⁹ As recorded at Wave 1 interview. With the exception of ethnicity, all disadvantages are subject to change between waves. To avoid confusion and because the focus is on prior qualifications, Wave 1 status is used in this section.

Table 3.4 Full qualifications gained by priority

ESF Cohort Survey

Qualifications gained	Priority				Total %
	1 %	2 %	4 %	5 %	
No qualifications achieved	72	20	67	27	64
NQF Level 4 and above	2	6	5	11	3
NQF Level 3	2	30	4	26	6
NQF Level 2	9	33	10	24	12
NQF Level 1	15	11	13	12	15
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	1,329	871	313	110	2,623

Table 3.5 Full qualification gained by qualification level prior to course (Priorities 2 and 5)

ESF Cohort Survey

Qualification gained	Prior qualification level				Total %
	Level 4 and above %	Level 3 %	Level 2 %	Below Level 2 %	
No qualifications achieved	36	21	14	28	21
NQF Level 4 and above	18	11	2	5	6
NQF Level 3	14	34	39	13	29
NQF Level 2	18	24	36	40	32
NQF Level 1	13	11	9	15	11
<i>Unweighted base</i>	228	189	297	266	981

Below Level 2 includes those with no qualifications or foreign qualifications.

Both Priorities 2 and 5 had a target for 30 per cent of participants (without a relevant Level 3) to gain a full Level 3 qualification as part of the course. In fact, 30 per cent of Priority 2 participants and 26 per cent of Priority 5 participants had gained a Level 3 qualification at the time of interview (Table 3.4). Of those participants without a prior Level 3 qualification, 32 per cent of Priority 2 and 5 participants had obtained a Level 3 qualification – 29 per cent of those who had a prior Level 2 qualification and 13 per cent of those who had a lower or no qualification prior to the course (Table 3.5). Again, this figure may increase once those participants still studying towards qualifications are taken into account (Table 3.6).

Table 3.6 Whether still studying towards a qualification by priority

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>					
Whether still studying	Priority				Total %
	1 %	2 %	4 %	5 %	
Not still studying qualification	38	77	35	75	45
Still studying qualification	2	13	3	5	4
Did not undertake any study	59	10	62	21	52
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	1,383	924	319	114	2,740

Priority 5 had an additional target for 20 per cent of participants to obtain a full Level 4 qualification as part of the course. At the time of the Wave 3 interview, 11 per cent of Priority 5 participants had obtained a full Level 4 qualification.

Priorities 2 and 5 have a requirement to measure the proportion of female participants gaining full qualifications at Levels 2 and 3, although there are no specific targets in this area. ESF Cohort Study data indicates that female Priority 2 participants were more likely than male participants to have gained full qualifications (86 per cent compared with 74 per cent).

There is also a requirement to record the proportion of Priority 2 and 5 participants aged over 50 gaining full qualifications as part of the course. Participants aged over 50 were less likely than participants in younger age groups to have gained qualifications (Table 3.7).

Table 3.7 Full qualifications gained by age and gender (Priority 2)¹⁰

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>								
Qualification level	Age					Gender		Total %
	16-19 %	20-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50+ %	Male %	Female %	
No qualifications achieved	10	8	26	33	34	26	14	20
NQF Level 4 and above	2	3	13	8	9	4	8	6
NQF Level 3	44	37	27	16	18	28	32	30
NQF Level 2	42	42	21	26	22	29	37	33
NQF Level 1	2	10	13	18	16	13	9	11
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	53	75	104	365	274	494	377	871

Estimates are not reported where the base size is less than 50.

In Priority 2, 70 per cent of participants with a disability or long-term limiting illness had gained a qualification. Again, there was a requirement to measure the proportion of participants from this group gaining full qualifications, but no specific targets were set. There were no statistically significant differences in the proportions of people gaining any full qualifications by disability or LTLI status (Table 3.8).

¹⁰ The proportion of Priority 5 participants gaining full qualifications in Priority 5 has not been shown by age and gender due to the small base sizes.

Table 3.8 Full qualifications gained by disadvantage (Priority 2)¹¹

ESF Cohort Survey

Qualification level	Disadvantage									
	Not lone parent %	Lone parent %	Not carer %	Carer %	White %	Ethnic minority group %	No disability or LTLI %	Has a disability or LTLI %	Has qualifications %	No qualifications %
No qualifications achieved	21	-	20	27	20	16	19	30	20	27
NQF Level 4 and above	6	-	6	8	5	14	6	6	6	4
NQF Level 3	29	-	30	26	32	12	32	12	31	11
NQF Level 2	33	-	33	25	32	46	32	44	32	44
NQF Level 1	11	-	11	14	11	11	11	8	11	15
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	826	43	772	99	783	55	773	96	800	70

¹¹ The proportion of participants from disadvantaged groups gaining full qualifications in Priority 5 has not been shown due to the small base sizes.

There was also a requirement to record the proportion of ethnic minority participants who gained full qualifications. Results from the ESF Cohort Study suggest that, in Priority 2, 84 per cent of ethnic minority participants had gained qualifications, and that this was not significantly different from the proportion of White participants who gained qualifications (80%; Table 3.8). There were no significant differences in the proportion of participants gaining full qualifications by carer status. However, having existing qualifications was significantly associated with gaining qualifications, with those with no prior qualifications being less likely to have gained one on the course compared with those who had prior qualifications.

Priorities 2 and 5 have a requirement to measure the proportion of part-time female workers gaining full qualifications as part of the course. ESF Cohort Study data shows that 89 per cent of part-time female workers in Priority 2 gained full qualifications through the course. There were no significant differences in the proportion of part-time female workers gaining qualifications compared with full-time female workers (Tables 3.9).

Table 3.9 Full qualifications gained by part-time females (Priority 2)

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>			
Qualification level	Females in employment		Total %
	Full-time %	Part-time %	
No qualifications achieved	17	11	14
NQF Level 4 and above	9	10	8
NQF Level 3	34	37	32
NQF Level 2	29	36	37
NQF Level 1	12	6	9
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	224	119	377

Whether a Priority 2 participant gained a qualification was significantly associated with the size of the employer. Those working for smaller employers with less than 25 employees were more likely to gain a qualification than those working for very large employers (Table 3.10). This is particularly evident with Level 3 qualifications.

Table 3.10 Full qualifications gained by size of employer (Priority 2)

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>						
Qualification level	Size of employer					Total %
	1-9 %	10-24 %	25-249 %	250-499 %	500 or more %	
No qualifications achieved	12	8	30	35	37	20
NQF Level 4 and above	4	6	13	2	5	6
NQF Level 3	47	44	20	25	16	30
NQF Level 2	32	24	29	35	25	33
NQF Level 1	5	19	8	3	17	11
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	121	132	265	58	84	871

3.2.1 Factors associated with gaining qualifications

Multivariate analysis was carried out to look at the predictors of Priority 2 and 5 participants gaining qualifications on the course.¹² The following variables were considered in the model:¹³

- gender;
- age;
- funding stream;
- region;
- ethnicity;
- lone parent status;
- whether the participant was a carer;
- whether the participant was an offender or ex-offender;
- disability variables (e.g. whether the respondent had a physical disability, learning disability, mental health problem, LTLI or other disability);
- whether the participant had qualifications before the course;
- whether the participant had dependent children;
- tenure;
- satisfaction with the course, in terms of relevance, quality and level;
- why participants had signed up to the course;
- intensity of the course;
- employment status at the time of the Wave 3 interview (full-time/part-time/not in employment);
- size of employer;
- employment status 12 months before the course (in employment/unemployed/inactive);
- whether the participant gained work skills, soft skills or practical help in finding work on the course; and
- income.

The multivariate analysis found that the following characteristics were **positively associated** with gaining a full qualification through the course once other factors were controlled for:

- Being male: suggesting that in spite of a higher proportion of women gaining a qualification, women face additional barriers to gaining a qualification compared with men not captured in the variables noted above.

¹² More detailed information about the multivariate analysis can be found in Appendix D.

¹³ Whether participants had finished the course or left early was not included in the model. Similarly, the model did not include variables about the length of time that people spent on the course, or about the length of time since they left the course. It was felt that these variables were too closely linked with the outcome variable. Generally, most participants who had gained qualifications had finished their courses, had been on longer courses and (as qualifications were not awarded immediately) had finished the course longer ago on average. It was important to ensure that the model measured the demographic and attitudinal characteristics of participants who had gained qualifications. The inclusion of these related variables made the model less adequate in this regard.

- Gaining work skills on the course: participants who felt that they had gained work skills on the course may have had a greater sense of the relevance of the course and qualification and therefore been more inclined to complete it.
- Being on a match funded projects, rather than a project funded by ESF: this may reflect differences in the provision commissioned or differences in the participants not captured in the data.

The following factors had a **negative association** with gaining a qualification through the course:

- Being a lone parent: this may reflect the difficulty of balancing caring responsibilities with the work required to acquire the qualifications and suggests that lone parents may need more support in this area.
- Being on a course that had involved more than half a day per week compared with those whose course was less than a half day: given that more intensive course require greater commitment, it may be that courses of less than half a day encourage participants to maintain their efforts. However, this may reflect other differences between courses of different intensities which are not captured in the data.

3.3 Units/modules gained towards full qualifications

The Wave 2 and 3 interviews asked participants about whether they had gained any units or modules towards a full qualification on the course. By the Wave 3 interview, 12 per cent of participants had done so, slightly up from nine per cent in the Wave 2 report. In Priorities 2 and 5, the proportion of participants saying that they had obtained units or modules towards full qualifications was 24 per cent and 22 per cent respectively. The proportion was much less in Priorities 1 and 4, at ten and seven per cent respectively (Table 3.11).

Table 3.11 Partial qualifications gained by priority

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>					
Qualifications gained	Priority				
	1 %	2 %	4 %	5 %	Total %
No qualifications achieved	90	76	93	78	88
NQF Level 4 and above	2	6	1	8	2
NQF Level 3	*	6	*	6	1
NQF Level 2	2	6	1	7	3
NQF Level 1	5	6	4	1	5
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	1,329	871	313	110	2,623

There were no significant differences in the proportions of men and women achieving units or modules towards qualifications on Priority 2. Fourteen per cent of Priority 2 participants aged over 50 had gained units or modules towards qualifications. Generally, a higher proportion of participants in younger age groups had gained partial qualifications (Tables 3.12).

Table 3.12 Partial qualifications gained by age and gender (Priority 2)*ESF Cohort Survey*

Qualification level	Age					Gender		Total %
	16-19 %	20-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50+ %	Male %	Female %	
No qualifications achieved	72	74	78	75	86	75	76	76
NQF Level 4 and above	4	3	10	10	7	5	8	6
NQF Level 3	10	7	6	2	1	5	6	6
NQF Level 2	10	6	3	6	4	7	6	6
NQF Level 1	4	10	4	7	2	8	3	6
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	53	75	104	365	274	494	377	871

Table 3.13 Partial qualifications gained by disadvantage (Priority 2)

ESF Cohort Survey

Qualification level	Not lone parent %	Lone parent %	Not carer %	Carer %	White %	Ethnic minority group %	No disability or LTLI %	Has a disability or LTLI %	Has qualifications %	No qualifications %
No qualifications achieved	75	-	75	79	77	57	77	61	76	75
NQF Level 4 and above	6	-	6	7	6	12	6	7	6	5
NQF Level 3	6	-	6	2	6	2	6	1	6	0
NQF Level 2	6	-	6	9	5	22	5	21	7	1
NQF Level 1	6	-	6	3	6	7	6	9	5	19
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	<i>826</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>772</i>	<i>99</i>	<i>783</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>773</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>800</i>	<i>70</i>

In Priority 2, 39 per cent of participants with a disability or LTLI had gained units or modules as part of the course, compared with a lower proportion (23 per cent) among participants with no disability or LTLI. Among ethnic minority participants in Priority 2, 43 per cent had gained units or modules towards qualifications; this was higher than the proportion of White people (23 per cent; Table 3.13). (It was not possible to show the proportion of lone parents, carers, ethnic minority groups, disabled people or people with no qualifications gaining full qualifications in Priority 5 due to the small base sizes.)

Table 3.14 Partial qualifications gained by part-time females (Priority 2)*ESF Cohort Survey*

Qualification level	Females in employment		Total %
	Full-time %	Part-time %	
No qualifications achieved	77	73	76
NQF Level 4 and above	9	11	8
NQF Level 3	5	11	6
NQF Level 2	6	4	6
NQF Level 1	3	*	3
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	224	119	377

There is a requirement to measure the proportion of part-time female workers gaining units or modules towards full qualifications as part of the course in Priorities 2 and 5. Twenty-seven per cent of part-time female workers in Priority 2 gained units or modules towards qualifications. There were no significant differences in the proportion of part-time female workers gaining units or modules compared with full-time female workers (Table 3.14). (Similar figures are not reported for Priority 5 participants due to small base sizes.)

Table 3.15 Partial qualifications gained by size of employer (Priority 2)*ESF Cohort Survey*

Qualification level	Size of employer					Total %
	1-9 %	10-24 %	25-249 %	250-499 %	500 or more %	
No qualifications achieved	80	67	76	92	89	76
NQF Level 4 and above	4	7	13	5	4	6
NQF Level 3	7	10	2	1	1	6
NQF Level 2	6	9	8	0	0	6
NQF Level 1	3	8	2	2	7	6
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	121	132	265	58	84	871

As for full qualifications, for Priority 2 participants, size of employer was related to gaining partial qualifications. Once again those working for smaller employers were generally more likely to have gained modules or units compared with those working for large employers with 250 employees or more.

3.4 Participants who have stopped studying towards qualifications

Eighteen per cent of participants who had been undertaking some form of study towards qualifications stopped studying without achieving a full or part qualification.

This proportion was higher in Priority 1 than in Priority 2; while 21 per cent of Priority 1 participants had stopped studying towards qualifications, this proportion was only nine per cent among Priority 2 participants (Table 3.16).

Table 3.16 Whether stopped studying qualifications by Priority

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>					
Whether stopped studying	Priority				Total %
	1 %	2 %	4 %	5 %	
Did not stop studying qualification	79	92	81	91	82
Stopped studying qualification	21	8	19	9	18
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	666	734	98	82	1,580

Moreover, there were no significant patterns in the proportion of participants who stopped studying qualifications by age (Table 3.17).

Table 3.17 Whether stopped studying qualifications by age and gender

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>								
Whether stopped studying	Age					Gender		Total %
	16-19 %	20-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50+ %	Male %	Female %	
Did not stop studying qualification	85	77	85	89	76	85	80	83
Stopped studying qualification	15	23	15	11	24	15	20	17
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	271	188	206	545	370	867	713	1,580

There were few significant differences in the proportion of participants from disadvantaged groups who had stopped studying towards qualifications compared with people without disadvantages. However, people with a disability were more likely to have stopped studying than those without people without (25 per cent compared with 14 per cent), as were those with no prior qualifications compared with those with qualifications (30 per cent compared with 15 per cent; Table 3.18).

Table 3.18 Whether stopped studying by disadvantage (Priorities 2 and 5 only)

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>										
Whether stopped studying	Not lone parent %	Lone parent %	Not carer %	Carer %	White %	Ethnic minority group %	No disability or LTLI %	Has a disability or LTLI %	Has qualifications %	No qualifications %
Did not stop studying qualification	83	82	83	82	83	81	86	75	85	70
Stopped studying qualification	17	18	17	18	17	19	14	25	15	30
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	<i>1,450</i>	<i>128</i>	<i>1,409</i>	<i>169</i>	<i>1,317</i>	<i>183</i>	<i>1,235</i>	<i>342</i>	<i>1,418</i>	<i>161</i>

Table 3.19 Reasons for stopping studying qualifications

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>					
Reason stopped studying	Priority				Total %
	1 %	2 %	4 %	5 %	
Not satisfied with course	11	4	–	–	10
Started another qualification	6	1	–	–	5
Course not relevant to job	3	12	–	–	4
Illness	16	5	–	–	14
Disability	10	0	–	–	9
Personal/domestic issues	5	11	–	–	6
Caring responsibilities	3	8	–	–	4
Financial issues	3	6	–	–	4
Other reason	59	64	–	–	60
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	<i>137</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>233</i>

Estimates are not reported where the base size is less than 50.

Ten per cent of participants who stopped studying towards qualifications said that they were ‘not satisfied with the course’ while four per cent felt that it was ‘not relevant to their job’. Disabilities (nine per cent) and illness (14 per cent) were also given as reasons for stopping studying. Personal/domestic issues (six per cent) and caring responsibilities (four per cent) were also cited, predominantly by female participants. Most participants (60 per cent) gave other reasons for having stopped the qualification (Table 3.19).

3.5 Vocational training undertaken since the course

Participants who had finished the course at the time of the Wave 3 interview were asked about any vocational training they had undertaken since leaving the course.

Forty-four per cent of participants had taken part in some form of vocational training since the course. Most commonly, participants had received training in how to look for a job (23 per cent), followed by general training in the world of work (20 per cent) and training in personal skills (18 per cent). Furthermore, nine per cent of participants had received training in maths or number skills, and nine per cent had been training in reading or writing skills. Ten per cent had received help with basic Information Technology (IT) skills (Table 3.20).

Table 3.20 Vocational training undertaken since the course by Priority

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>					
Vocational training	Priority				Total %
	1 %	2 %	4 %	5 %	
Training in basic computer or IT skills	11	8	13	12	10
Training in intermediate or advanced computing or IT skills	4	4	7	3	4
Training in how to look for a job	27	7	18	5	23
Training in reading or writing skills	10	5	6	3	9
Training in maths or number skills	10	5	9	3	9
General training in the world of work	20	22	14	24	20
Training in personal skills	19	15	15	12	18
None	54	66	63	63	56
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	1,357	898	314	112	2,681

Table 3.21 Whether course helpful in finding training

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>					
Whether course helpful	Priority				Total %
	1 %	2 %	4 %	5 %	
Did help	60	63	66	–	60
Did not help	40	37	34	–	40
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	661	324	105	43	1,133

Of those participants who had been on vocational training since the course, 60 per cent felt that the original course (i.e. the original ESF or match-funded course) had helped them to find this additional training (Table 3.21).

Table 3.22 Whether would have done training without original course

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>					
Whether would have done training	Priority				Total %
	1 %	2 %	4 %	5 %	
Yes	50	48	43	–	49
No	50	52	57	–	51
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	635	317	103	44	1,099

In fact, 51 per cent of participants said that they would not have done the additional training if it had not been for the original course (Table 3.22).

Table 3.23 Likelihood of doing further training in future

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>					
Likelihood	Priority				Total %
	1 %	2 %	4 %	5 %	
Very likely	27	36	25	35	29
Fairly likely	36	33	30	23	35
Fairly unlikely	20	18	23	23	20
Or very unlikely	17	13	22	18	16
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	1,312	887	302	110	2,611

Sixty-four per cent of participants said that they were very likely or fairly likely to undertake training in the future (Table 3.23). This is lower than the proportion reporting this at Wave 2 (77 per cent). The likelihood of doing training in the future was lowest among those aged 50 or more, with only 44 per cent saying that they were 'very likely' or 'fairly likely' to do training in the future, compared with 65-70 per cent in the other age groups (Table 3.24).

Table 3.24 Likelihood of doing further training in future by age and gender

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>								
Likelihood	Age					Gender		Total %
	16-19 %	20-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50+ %	Male %	Female %	
Very likely	35	24	32	32	19	27	31	29
Fairly likely	33	41	38	36	25	36	34	35
Fairly unlikely	17	25	17	16	23	19	20	20
Or very unlikely	15	10	12	15	33	18	14	16
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	329	302	334	940	706	1,429	1,182	2,611

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter examined qualification acquisition among participants. Overall, just over one in three participants had gained full qualifications through their courses. A number of targets were set for qualification acquisition for Priority 2 and 5 as these priorities focus upon developing the skills of the workforce. The analysis presented in this chapter suggests that a high proportion of participants in these priorities did gain full qualifications and that these targets were met.

However, some differences were evident in the level of qualification acquisition among participants in terms of age, gender, prior qualifications and employer size. Once relevant participant characteristics were controlled for, a number of factors were identified as being significantly associated with whether a participant gains a full qualification. These point to areas for consideration in relation to future provision and efforts to further increase the proportion of participants who gain a qualification:

- **Gaining work skills on the course** was positively associated with gaining a qualification. Participants who felt that they had gained work skills may have a greater sense of the relevance of the course and associated qualification, and therefore been more inclined to finish working towards the qualification. This highlights the importance of ensuring that provision is relevant, that this relevance is recognised by participants and that participants feel that they are gaining something from the course if they are to remain engaged and complete a qualification.
- **Differences in the provision commissioned** may also have an impact. Being on a match funded project, rather than a project funded by ESF, was a positive factor in relation to qualification acquisition. Being on a course that had involved more than half a day per week, compared with those whose course was less than a half day, was a negative factor in relation to gaining a qualification. The significance of these may reflect other differences between courses of different intensities/with different funding streams which are not captured in the data rather than the significance of these factors themselves; although more intensive courses do require greater commitment which participants may find difficult to sustain.
- **Being a lone parent** was another significant negative factor in relation to qualification acquisition suggesting that additional support may be required to help this particular group work towards a qualification.
- **Gender** was another factor. While a higher proportion of women acquired qualifications, once other factors were taken into account being female had a negative association with gaining a qualification suggesting that further barriers not captured by the data may exist.

Continued development is important in maintaining a skilled workforce. The findings in this chapter also highlighted the role of the ESF/match funded courses in engaging participants with wider training opportunities. Just over one in four participants has undertaken some form of vocational training since the course and around half of these would not have done so without the original course. It is promising that 64 per cent of respondents reported that it was very or quite likely that they would undertake further training in the future and suggests that the ESF/match funded courses do encourage participants to consider further development.

4 Employment outcomes

This chapter explores the outcomes of participants:

- Section 4.1 provides an overview of the employment status of all course leavers;
- Section 4.2 looks in more detail at the employment status at the Wave 3 interview of Priority 1 and 4 participants (who had mostly been out of work before the course). This section includes a multivariate analysis to explore the characteristics of those participants who had found work at the time of the Wave 3 interview in more detail;
- Section 4.3 provides a profile of participants who entered employment since going on the course;
- Section 4.4 offers information about those participants who were in employment at the Wave 3 interview, who had also been in employment in the week before the course;
- Section 4.5 sheds light on those participants not in work at the Wave 3 interview; and
- Section 4.6 concludes by looking at the key factors associated with positive employment outcomes and implications for future provision.

This chapter only considers outcomes for those participants who had left the course by the time of the Wave 3 interview, accounting for 99 per cent of participants.

4.1 Employment status of course leavers – overview

Course leavers were asked about their employment status at five points in time: 12 months before they started the course; in the week before the course; and at the time of each of three interviews (Wave 1, 2 and 3), where participants had already finished the course.

The rate of unemployment among Priority 1 participants decreased by over 30 percentage points from the week before the course to the time of the Wave 3 interview (from 70 per cent to 38 per cent). For these participants, the rate of unemployment was slightly lower at the time of Wave 3 interview compared with 12 months before the course (38 per cent and 42 per cent). In Priority 4, the unemployment rate decreased from 39 per cent to 20 per cent from the week before the course to the time of the Wave 3 interview, although it was similar at the time of the Wave 3 interview to what it had been 12 months before the course (20 per cent and 21 per cent).

The employment rate among Priority 1 participants rose from six per cent in the week before the course to 32 per cent at the time of the Wave 3 interview, and there was also an increase from what it had been 12 months before the course (26 per cent). The employment rate rose from four per cent to 34 per cent among Priority 4 participants over the same period of time. It had been at 35 per cent 12 months before the course (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Employment patterns of course leavers by priority (Priorities 1 and 4)

European Social Fund (ESF) Cohort Survey

Employment status	Priority									
	Priority 1					Priority 4				
	12 months before course	Week before course	Wave 1 interview	Wave 2 interview	Wave 3 interview	12 months before course	Week before course	Wave 1 interview	Wave 2 interview	Wave 3 interview
%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
In employment	26	6	20	25	32	35	4	29	29	34
Unemployed	42	70	53	42	38	21	39	27	27	20
Economically inactive	32	24	27	33	30	44	57	45	45	46
<i>Unweighted bases¹</i>	<i>1,359</i>	<i>1,359</i>	<i>1,122</i>	<i>1,309</i>	<i>1,359</i>	<i>314</i>	<i>314</i>	<i>226</i>	<i>299</i>	<i>314</i>

¹ The Wave 1 and Wave 2 bases exclude respondents who had not completed the course by that time (i.e. by the time of the Wave 1/Wave 2 interview). This also applies to the tables that follow (4.2 to 4.10)

Table 4.2 Employment patterns of course leavers by priority (Priorities 2 and 5)

ESF Cohort Survey

Employment status	Priority									
	Priority 2					Priority 5				
	12 months before course	Week before course	Wave 1 interview	Wave 2 interview	Wave 3 interview	12 months before course	Week before course	Wave 1 interview	Wave 2 interview	Wave 3 interview
%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
In employment	65	79	78	83	88	86	92	92	90	94
Unemployed	2	12	13	8	5	0	6	0	3	3
Economically inactive	33	9	9	9	8	14	3	8	7	3
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	<i>900</i>	<i>900</i>	<i>657</i>	<i>826</i>	<i>900</i>	<i>112</i>	<i>112</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>112</i>

Among participants in Priority 2 (which did not have a specific objective to help participants into work), there was a rise in the employment rate from the week before the course (79 per cent) to the time of the Wave 3 interview (88 per cent). (There was no significant rise in employment rate among Priority 5 participants over the same period.) During this period, there was a corresponding decrease in the rate of unemployment, from 12 per cent to five per cent in Priority 2 (Table 4.2).

4.2 Employment status of Priority 1 and 4 participants

Among male participants, rates of employment rose by 25 percentage points among Priority 1 participants from the week before the course to the time of the Wave 3 interview. During the same period, the rate of employment among female participants rose by 28 percentage points. Unemployment rates among male and female participants from the week before the course to the time of interview fell by similar amounts (32 and 31 percentage points respectively).

Comparing participants' status from 12 months before the course to the Wave 3 interview, employment and unemployment rates were similar for men. For women, however, there was a 12 percentage point increase in employment (from 22 per cent to 34 per cent), and a corresponding decrease in unemployment (from 34 per cent to 27 per cent; Table 4.3).

Among Priority 4 participants, rates of employment among men rose by 30 percentage points from the week before the course to the time of the Wave 3 interview; among women, it rose by a similar amount (33 percentage points). During the same period, unemployment rates fell by 17 percentage points among men and by 24 percentage points among women. Unemployment rates were similar for both men and women, when comparing the time of the Wave 3 interview with 12 months before the course (Table 4.4). However employment rates were somewhat lower amongst male Priority 4 participants and higher among female participants.

The unemployment rate for female Priority 4 participants decreased between Waves 2 and 3, from 19 per cent to five per cent. There was no change amongst men in the same time period.

Among Priority 1 participants, employment rates from the week before the course to the time of the Wave 3 interview rose by a similar amount among 16 to 19 year olds and those aged 20 to 49 (25 and 29 percentage points respectively). The rise in the employment rate was lower among those aged 50 or over (15 percentage points). In fact, the employment rate for those aged 50 or over at Wave 3 had not reached the level that it had been 12 months before the course (35 per cent). By contrast, in the other age groups, employment rates were higher at Wave 3 than they had been 12 months before the course.

In the period from the week before the course to the Wave 3 interview, the rate of unemployment fell more among those aged 20 to 49, compared with those aged 16 to 19 and those aged over 50. Unemployment fell by 35 percentage points among those aged 20 to 49, by 20 percentage points among 16 to 19 year olds and by 26 percentage points among those aged over 50.

Generally, those aged 16 to 19 were starting from a lower base: 12 months before the course, only 12 per cent were in employment – 21 per cent were unemployed and 67 per cent were inactive (Table 4.5¹⁴).

There were no significant differences in the employment patterns of Priority 1 participants from ethnic minority groups compared with those of white people (Table 4.6).¹⁵

¹⁴ It has not been possible to produce a table showing the employment patterns of course leavers by age group for Priority 4 participants, due to small base sizes.

¹⁵ It has not been possible to produce a table showing the employment patterns of course leavers by ethnicity for Priority 4 participants, due to small base sizes. (Only three per cent of Priority 4 participants were from an ethnic minority group.)

Table 4.3 Employment patterns of course leavers by gender (Priority 1)

ESF Cohort Survey

Employment status	Gender									
	Male					Female				
	12 months before course %	Week before course %	Wave 1 interview %	Wave 2 interview %	Wave 3 interview %	12 months before course %	Week before course %	Wave 1 interview %	Wave 2 interview %	Wave 3 interview %
In employment	28	6	16	21	31	22	6	28	31	34
Unemployed	46	76	61	49	44	34	58	37	31	27
Economically inactive	26	17	23	30	25	44	36	35	38	39
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	724	724	596	700	724	635	635	526	609	635

Table 4.4 Employment patterns of course leavers by gender (Priority 4)

ESF Cohort Survey

Employment status	Gender									
	Male					Female				
	12 months before course %	Week before course %	Wave 1 interview %	Wave 2 interview %	Wave 3 interview %	12 months before course %	Week before course %	Wave 1 interview %	Wave 2 interview %	Wave 3 interview %
In employment	40	3	29	29	33	29	5	27	29	38
Unemployed	23	47	33	32	30	14	29	20	19	5
Economically inactive	37	50	38	39	37	57	67	53	52	57
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	185	185	136	175	185	129	129	90	124	129

Table 4.5 Employment patterns of course leavers by age (Priority 1)

ESF Cohort Survey

Employment status	Age														
	16-19					20-49					50+				
	12 months before course %	Week before course %	Wave 1 interview %	Wave 2 interview %	Wave 3 interview %	12 months before course %	Week before course %	Wave 1 interview %	Wave 2 interview %	Wave 3 interview %	12 months before course %	Week before course %	Wave 1 interview %	Wave 2 interview %	Wave 3 interview %
In employment	12	9	16	29	34	27	5	23	26	34	35	8	15	16	23
Unemployed	21	70	62	46	50	46	74	55	44	39	38	52	35	33	26
Economically inactive	67	21	22	26	16	27	21	22	30	27	28	41	50	50	51
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	253	253	191	241	253	787	787	657	761	787	319	319	274	307	319

Table 4.6 Employment patterns of course leavers by ethnicity (Priority 1)

ESF Cohort Survey

Employment status	Ethnicity									
	White					Ethnic minority				
	12 months before course %	Week before course %	Wave 1 interview %	Wave 2 interview %	Wave 3 interview %	12 months before course %	Week before course %	Wave 1 interview %	Wave 2 interview %	Wave 3 interview %
In employment	27	6	21	25	33	23	6	19	24	31
Unemployed	41	70	53	43	39	44	68	50	41	36
Economically inactive	32	24	26	33	29	33	27	31	36	33
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	1,070	1,070	884	1,034	1,070	284	284	234	271	284

Participants with disabilities or long-term limiting illnesses (LTLIs) were less likely than those without to find work between the time they started the course and the Wave 3 interview. Among Priority 1 participants, the employment rate rose by 20 percentage points in this period among people with a LTLI or disability, compared with a rise of 31 percentage points among non-disabled people, while the unemployment rates fell by 22 percentage points and 37 percentage points respectively.

Comparing employment rates at Wave 3 with those 12 months before the course, the employment rates were similar for participants with a LTLI or disability, while the employment rate had increased for non-disabled people (from 25 per cent to 38 per cent; Table 4.7).

The pattern was similar among Priority 4 participants. Among people with a disability or LTLI, the employment rate rose by 22 percentage points from the time they started the course to the Wave 3 interview, compared with a rise of 42 percentage points among non-disabled people. Correspondingly, the rate of unemployment over the same period fell by 28 percentage points among non-disabled people (from 60 per cent to 32 per cent), while among disabled people the fall was 13 percentage points (from 26 per cent to 13 per cent; Table 4.8).

At the time of the Wave 3 interview, 36 per cent of lone parent participants in Priorities 1 and 4 were in employment, an increase of 30 percentage points since the week before the course. This increase was similar to other participants: the increase among participants who were not lone parents was 26 percentage points. However, lone parents did show an increase from 12 months before the course to the Wave 3 interview (of 18 percentage points), which was higher than other participants (Table 4.9).

Table 4.7 Employment patterns of course leavers by disability (Priority 1)

ESF Cohort Survey

Employment status	Disability									
	Does not have disability					Has a disability				
	12 months before course	Week before course	Wave 1 interview	Wave 2 interview	Wave 3 interview	12 months before course	Week before course	Wave 1 interview	Wave 2 interview	Wave 3 interview
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
In employment	25	7	25	30	38	28	4	13	15	24
Unemployed	45	81	61	50	44	37	51	37	31	29
Economically inactive	30	12	14	20	19	36	45	50	55	47
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	913	913	764	883	913	446	446	358	426	446

Table 4.8 Employment patterns of course leavers by disability (Priority 4)

ESF Cohort Survey

Employment status	Disability									
	Does not have disability					Has a disability				
	12 months before course	Week before course	Wave 1 interview	Wave 2 interview	Wave 3 interview	12 months before course	Week before course	Wave 1 interview	Wave 2 interview	Wave 3 interview
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
In employment	37	5	44	47	47	32	3	15	19	25
Unemployed	26	60	38	26	32	16	26	20	26	13
Economically inactive	37	35	19	26	21	52	71	65	55	63
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	95	95	80	91	95	219	219	146	208	219

Table 4.9 Employment patterns of course leavers by lone parent status (Priorities 1 and 4)

ESF Cohort Survey

Employment status	Lone parent status									
	Not lone parent			Lone parent						
	12 months before course	Week before course	Wave 1 interview	Wave 2 interview	Wave 3 interview	12 months before course	Week before course	Wave 1 interview	Wave 2 interview	Wave 3 interview
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
In employment	27	6	20	24	32	18	6	27	28	36
Unemployed	42	70	55	44	40	38	57	28	27	18
Economically inactive	31	23	25	32	28	44	37	45	45	46
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	1,481	1,481	1,195	1,425	1,481	186	186	147	177	186

Table 4.10 Employment status – compared with 12 months before the course (Priority 1)

ESF Cohort Survey

Employment status at Wave 3 interview	Employment status 12 months before the course			Total %
	In employment %	Unemployed %	Economically inactive %	
In employment	38	27	35	32
Unemployed	31	48	32	38
Economically inactive	31	25	34	30
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	358	447	554	1,359

Among Priority 1 participants, those who had been unemployed 12 months before the course were less likely than other participants to be in work at the time of the Wave 3 interview (27 per cent; Table 4.10). However, participants who had been economically inactive 12 months before the course were as likely as those that had been in employment at that time to be in work at Wave 3.

Table 4.11 Employment status – compared with 12 months before the course (Priority 4)

ESF Cohort Survey

Employment status at Wave 3 interview	Employment status 12 months before the course			Total %
	In employment %	Unemployed %	Economically inactive %	
In employment	48	15	32	34
Unemployed	19	37	13	20
Economically inactive	33	47	55	46
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	110	58	146	314

In Priority 4, those that had been unemployed 12 months before the course were again less likely than other participants to be in work at the time of the Wave 3 interview (15 per cent; Table 4.11). Employment rates at Wave 3 were higher among those that had been in employment 12 months before the course, compared with those that had been economically inactive to be working at Wave 3.

Table 4.12 Employment status – compared with the week before the course (Priority 1)

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>				
Employment status in week before the course				
Employment status at Wave 3 interview	In employment %	Unemployed %	Economically inactive %	Total %
In employment	57	32	26	32
Unemployed	19	46	20	38
Economically inactive	24	22	53	30
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	<i>113</i>	<i>857</i>	<i>389</i>	<i>1,359</i>

In Priority 1, participants who were in employment in the week before the course were more likely than other participants to be in work at the time of the Wave 3 interview. There were no differences in the employment rates at Wave 3 between those who had been unemployed in the week before the course, and those that had been economically inactive at that time (Table 4.12¹⁶).

Table 4.13 Employment status – compared with time of Wave 1 interview (Priority 1)

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>				
Employment status at time of Wave 1 interview				
Employment status at Wave 3 interview	In employment %	Unemployed %	Economically inactive %	Total %
In employment	80	26	16	32
Unemployed	11	55	24	38
Economically inactive	9	19	60	30
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	<i>302</i>	<i>523</i>	<i>297</i>	<i>1,359</i>

Table 4.14 Employment status – compared with time of Wave 1 interview (Priority 4)

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>				
Employment status at time of Wave 1 interview				
Employment status at Wave 3 interview	In employment %	Unemployed %	Economically inactive %	Total %
In employment	70	31	14	34
Unemployed	21	32	17	20
Economically inactive	8	37	69	46
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	<i>64</i>	<i>57</i>	<i>105</i>	<i>314</i>

¹⁶ It has not been possible to produce a table showing the employment patterns of course leavers by employment status in the week before the course for Priority 4 participants, due to small base sizes.

Generally, the rate of employment among participants increased between the Wave 1 and 3 interviews. Of the participants who had found employment at the time of the Wave 1 interview, most were still in employment at the time of the Wave 3 interview (80 per cent in Priority 1 and 70 per cent in Priority 4).

In Priority 1, 26 per cent of those that had been unemployed at Wave 1 were in work at the time of the Wave 3 interview; the corresponding figure in Priority 4 was similar (31 per cent). These employment rates were higher than among participants who had been economically inactive at Wave 1; of these participants, 16 per cent were in work at Wave 3 in Priority 1, and 14 per cent in Priority 4 (Tables 4.13 and 4.14).

Table 4.15 Employment status – compared with time of Wave 2 interview (Priority 1)

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>				
Employment status at time of Wave 2 interview				
Employment status at Wave 3 interview	In employment %	Unemployed %	Economically inactive %	Total %
In employment	80	23	9	32
Unemployed	14	60	28	38
Economically inactive	6	17	63	30
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	<i>437</i>	<i>500</i>	<i>372</i>	<i>1,359</i>

Table 4.16 Employment status – compared with time of Wave 2 interview (Priority 4)

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>				
Employment status at time of Wave 2 interview				
Employment status at Wave 3 interview	In employment %	Unemployed %	Economically inactive %	Total %
In employment	76	21	15	34
Unemployed	14	45	10	20
Economically inactive	10	34	75	46
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	<i>86</i>	<i>76</i>	<i>137</i>	<i>314</i>

Again, there was a general increase in the rate of employment, this time between the Wave 2 and 3 interviews. Of the participants who had found employment at the time of the Wave 2 interview, most were still in employment at the time of the Wave 3 interview (80 per cent in Priority 1 and 76 per cent in Priority 4).

In Priority 1, 23 per cent of those that had been unemployed at Wave 2 were in work at the time of the Wave 3 interview; the corresponding figure in Priority 4 was similar (21 per cent). Among participants who had been economically inactive at Wave 2, the proportion was lower (nine per cent were in work at Wave 3 in Priority 1; Tables 4.15 and 4.16).

Table 4.17 Employment status by length of unemployment (Priorities 1 and 4)

ESF Cohort Study

Employment status at Wave 3 interview	Length of unemployment (in week before the course)						Total %
	Less than three months %	Between three and less than six months %	Between six and less than 12 months %	Between 12 months and less than two years %	Two years or more %	Never had a (full-time) job %	
In employment	52	48	36	35	21	24	32
Unemployed	36	35	49	46	45	55	46
Economically inactive	12	17	15	19	33	20	22
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	128	119	137	119	283	169	966

Generally, the longer participants had been unemployed in the week before the course, the less likely they were to be in employment at the time of the Wave 3 interview. For example, 52 per cent of Priority 1 participants who had been unemployed for less than three months were in work at the time of the Wave 3 interview, compared with 21 per cent among those who had been out of work for two years or more (Table 4.17).

Table 4.18 Employment status by satisfaction with the course (Priority 1 and 4)

ESF Cohort Survey

Relevant to needs	Employment status at Wave 3 interview			Total %
	In employment %	Unemployed %	Economically inactive %	
Not relevant	21	22	31	24
Relevant	79	78	69	76
Level of the course				
Too basic	39	40	44	41
About right	59	56	51	55
Too advanced	2	5	4	4
Satisfaction				
Very or fairly satisfied	72	75	64	71
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	13	11	13	12
Fairly or very dissatisfied	15	14	24	17
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	660	490	516	1,666

Table 4.18 analyses employment status at Wave 3 in relation to attitudes towards the course (as reported in the Wave 2 interview).

Attitudes towards the course were very similar between those participants who were in employment at Wave 3 and those who were unemployed. For example, 72 per cent of those who were employed at Wave 3 said they were very or fairly satisfied with the course, as did 75 per cent of those who were unemployed.

However, those who were economically inactive at Wave 3 were less positive than other participants towards the course. Specifically, they were less likely to say that the course was relevant to their needs (69 per cent), and were less likely to be satisfied with course (64 per cent).

Participants who had heard about the course from a jobcentre (30 per cent) were less likely to be in employment than those who had heard about the course from other sources, such as a school or college (38 per cent), a local community organisation (41 per cent) or from a friend or family member (44 per cent; Table 4.19).

Table 4.19 Employment status by where heard about the course (Priority 1 and 4)

ESF Cohort Study

Employment status at Wave 3 interview	Where heard about the course								Total %
	From a job centre %	From a college/school %	From a youth offending team/probation courts %	From another local community organisation %	From a friend/family member %	From an advert %	From an employer %	Other %	
In employment	30	38	–	41	44	41	–	38	32
Unemployed	40	34	–	32	31	16	–	31	38
Economically inactive	30	28	–	27	25	43	–	31	30
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	1,008	96	9	174	112	54	20	185	1,667

Estimates are not reported where the base size is less than 50.

Table 4.20 Employment status by why went on the course (Priority 1 and 4)

ESF Cohort Study

Employment status at Wave 3 interview	Why went on the course					Total %
	Made to go on it %	Persuaded %	Given the opportunity %	Decided myself %	Other %	
In employment	25	34	32	42	–	32
Unemployed	40	36	40	33	–	38
Economically inactive	35	30	28	25	–	30
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	315	115	623	610	4	1,667

Estimates are not reported where the base size is less than 50.

Where participants had been ‘made to go on the course’, they were less likely than other participants to be in employment (25 per cent) at the time of the Wave 3 interview, whereas those who had ‘decided themselves’ to go on it were more likely to be in employment (42 per cent; Table 4.20).

Table 4.21 Employment status by length of course (Priority 1 and 4)

ESF Cohort Study

Employment status at Wave 3 interview	Length of course					Total %
	Less than a month %	One month to four months %	Four months to six months %	Six months to 12 months %	A year or more %	
In employment	314	589	251	347	128	1,667
Unemployed	40	36	40	33	–	38
Economically inactive	35	30	28	25	–	30
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	315	115	623	610	4	1,667

Participants who attended shorter courses (specifically those lasting up to four months) were more likely to be in employment at the time of the Wave 3 interview than those on longer courses. For example, 41 per cent of participants on courses lasting less than one month were in work, as were 38 per cent of those on courses lasting between one and four months. By contrast, 22 per cent of those who had been on a course lasting four to six months were in employment (Table 4.21). This result is perhaps unsurprising; participants who are closer to the labour market may have been on shorter courses.

Table 4.22 Employment status by intensity of course (Priority 1 and 4)

ESF Cohort Study

Employment status at Wave 3 interview	Intensity of course					Total %
	Less than half a day %	Between half and one day %	More than one and less than two days %	More than two and less than five days %	More than five days %	
In employment	30	37	44	32	30	32
Unemployed	23	28	26	45	50	38
Economically inactive	47	35	30	23	21	30
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	454	274	168	592	168	1,667

There was no consistent pattern by the intensity of the course, in terms of the proportion of participants who were in employment at the time of the Wave 3 interview. However, there were differences in the proportions who were unemployed and economically inactive. Participants who had been on relatively intensive courses were more likely to be unemployed at the time of the Wave 3 interview than those on less intensive courses, but at the same time were less likely to be economically inactive. For example, 50 per cent of those on courses taking up five days per week or more were unemployed at Wave 3, and 21 per cent of these participants were economically inactive. By contrast, 23 per cent of those on courses taking up less than half a day per week were unemployed at Wave 3, and 47 per cent were economically inactive (Table 4.22).

Participants who were qualified to Level 2 or above were more likely than those with lower qualifications to be in work at the time of the Wave 3 interview. For example, 41 per cent of those qualified to Level 4 or above were in employment, as were 47 per cent of those qualified to Level 3 and 38 per cent of those qualified to Level 2. The proportion was then lower among those qualified to below Level 2 (24 per cent) or without qualifications (20 per cent). Participants without qualifications were more likely than those with qualifications to be economically inactive (44 per cent; Table 4.23).

Table 4.23 Employment status by qualification level (Priority 1 and 4)

Employment status at Wave 3 interview	Qualification level before course						Total %
	Level 4 and above	Level 3 – A Level or equivalent	Level 2 – GCSE grades A-C or equivalent	Below Level 2	Foreign and other qualifications	No qualifications	
In employment	41	47	38	24	24	20	32
Unemployed	23	23	41	52	31	36	38
Economically inactive	36	30	22	24	44	44	30
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	205	201	527	65	127	242	1,667

ESF Cohort Study

Table 4.24 Employment status by time since leaving the course (Priority 1 and 4)

ESF Cohort Survey

Employment status at Wave 3 interview	Time since leaving the course			Total %
	Up to one year %	One year to two years %	Two years or more %	
In employment	23	32	33	32
Unemployed	53	37	38	38
Economically inactive	24	30	29	30
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	52	778	778	1,667

As outlined in Chapter 3, courses lasted for different lengths of times and varied in their intensity. Participants also had a variety of start dates (generally between 1 August 2008 and 1 January 2009) and end dates. Wave 3 interviews (conducted between January and March 2011) were carried out at a distribution of times after participants had started the course, but typically at least two years later.

There were no significant differences in the rates of employment, unemployment and economic inactivity among participants who had left the course up to a year before the Wave 3 interview, compared with those who had left the course longer ago (Table 4.24).

Table 4.25 analyses employment status at different points in time for participants in Priorities 2 and 5, in relation to employer size (as given at the Wave 1 interview). The one difference was that those working for smaller employers (with less than 25 staff) were less likely to be in work at the Wave 2 interview.

Table 4.25 Employment status by employer size (Priority 2 and 5)

ESF Cohort Study

Employment status	Employer size				Total %
	1-9 %	10-24 %	25-249 %	250 or more %	
In employment at Wave 1	82	96	93	90	79
<i>Unweighted bases</i> ¹	97	105	225	108	740
In employment at Wave 2	86	87	94	92	84
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	132	142	275	139	924
In employment at Wave 3	86	97	94	94	88
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	146	159	304	154	1,015

¹ Bases exclude respondents who had not completed the course by the time of the interview.

4.2.1 Factors associated with employment

Multivariate analysis was carried out to look at the predictors of being in employment at Wave 3 among Priority 1 and 4 participants.¹⁷

The variables considered in this analysis were as follows:

- Demographic characteristics: gender, age, ethnicity.
- Funding stream.
- Region.
- Whether the participant had qualifications.
- Whether the participant had a physical disability, mental health issue, a long-term limiting illness, a learning difficulty or other type of disability.
- Whether the participant was an offender or ex-offender.
- Lone parent status.
- Whether the respondent was a carer.
- Whether the participant had dependent children.
- Whether the participant was a returner to the labour market.
- Employment status 12 months before the course.
- Tenure.
- Length of unemployment.
- Time spent on the course.
- Intensity of the course.
- Whether the participant gained work skills on the course.
- Whether the participant had gained confidence on the course.
- Whether the participant had gained practical help in finding work on the course.
- Why participants had signed up to the course.
- Where participants heard about the course.
- Whether the participant thought that the course was relevant to their needs.
- Satisfaction with the course in terms of level and quality.
- Time since finished the course.
- Highest qualification gained on the course.
- Attitudes to work (i.e. whether the respondent thought that finding work was important).
- Whether participants said that access to transport was a barrier to them finding work.
- Whether participants said that lack of experience was a barrier to them finding work.
- Whether participants said that lack of skills was a barrier to them finding work.

¹⁷ More detailed information about the multivariate analysis can be found in Appendix D.

- Whether participants said that lack of jobs in their local area was a barrier to them finding work.
- Whether participants said that lack of affordable/suitable childcare was a barrier to them finding work.

The multivariate analysis found that the following characteristics had a **positive association** with being in employment at Wave 3 once other significant factors were controlled for:

- being male;
- deciding to go on the course, being given the opportunity to go on the course or being persuaded to go on the course (as opposed to being made to go on it): this is likely to be a reflection of the motivation of the individual participants as those motivated to participate are likely to want to find a job.

The following factors had a **negative association** with gained being in employment at Wave 3:

- having a physical or mental disability;
- being unemployed for two years or more, or had never worked;
- having no prior qualifications;
- citing a lack of recent work experience as a barrier to employment: in addition to capturing a lack of experience, this may also reflect a lack of confidence in their own ability to find work;
- the course not resulting in improved self confidence: this suggests that improved confidence is an important soft outcome which has a significant impact on employment outcomes;
- spending a longer time on the course (4 months or more) compared with those who spent less than a month on the course: this may reflect differences in types of provision that is associated with courses of different lengths and differences in the participants not captured in the data (i.e. those on longer courses may be further from the labour market).

4.2.2 Employment pathways

Participants have been grouped according to their employment pathways over the different waves of the survey. This allows an examination of whether individual participants have moved into and stayed in work.

The groupings are as follows:

- Those who have worked at all waves since the course (i.e. in work at Waves 1, 2 and 3).
- Those not in work at any wave since the course.
- Those with broken employment since the course (i.e. moved into work but were no longer in work at a later wave).
- Those with delayed entry into work (not in work at Wave 1, but had found work by Wave 2 or 3).

Overall, 22 per cent of participants were in employment at all three waves, while 53 per cent were not in employment at any wave. In addition, eight per cent had a 'broken' employment pathway, while 17 per cent had a delayed entry into work (Table 4.26).

Table 4.26 Employment pathways by priority

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>					
Employment pathway	Priority				Total %
	1 %	2 %	4 %	5 %	
In employment at all of Waves 1, 2 and 3	15	71	17	78	22
Not in employment at any of Waves 1, 2 or 3	59	7	54	2	53
Broken employment (in employment at Wave 1 or 2 but not in employment at a later wave)	8	8	15	13	8
Delayed entry into employment (not in work at Wave 1, but found work in Wave 2 or 3)	18	14	15	7	17
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	1,114	652	225	78	2,069

In Priorities 1 and 4, the majority of participants were not in work at any wave (59 per cent in Priority 1, 54 per cent in Priority 4), whereas in Priorities 2 and 5, most participants were in work at all three waves (71 per cent in Priority 2, 78 per cent in Priority 5; Table 4.26).

Table 4.27 Employment pathways by age and gender

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>								
Socio-economic group	Age					Gender		Total %
	16-19 %	20-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50+ %	Male %	Female %	
In employment at all of Waves 1, 2 and 3	10	18	19	16	11	12	21	15
Not in employment at any of Waves 1, 2 or 3	51	59	53	58	71	61	56	59
Broken employment (in employment at Wave 1 or 2 but not in employment at a later wave)	17	6	9	6	5	7	9	8
Delayed entry into employment (not in work at Wave 1, but found work in Wave 2 or 3)	22	17	18	20	13	20	14	18
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	200	209	172	417	337	726	607	1,333

Among participants in Priorities 1 and 4, there were some differences by age group in terms of employment pathway. Those aged 16 to 19 were more likely than other participants to have had a 'broken' employment pathway (17 per cent), while those aged 50 or over were more likely than younger participants not to have worked at any of Waves 1 to 3 (71 per cent). Women were more likely than men to have been in employment at all waves (21 per cent compared with 12 per cent).

4.3 Profile of participants who have entered employment

This section presents a profile of participants who found work since going on the course.

4.3.1 Socio-economic group

The majority of participants who had found work since going on the course were in lower supervisory and semi-routine roles (49 per cent). One in seven (14 per cent) were in higher/lower managerial and professional jobs, 21 per cent were in intermediate occupations, while 16 per cent were in routine occupations. There was no significant variation in socio-economic group by priority; Table 4.28).

Table 4.28 Socio-economic group by priority

Socio-economic group	Priority		Total %
	Priority 1 and 4	Priority 2 and 5	
	%	%	
Higher/lower managerial and professions	13	15	14
Intermediate occupations/small employers	21	22	21
Lower supervisory and technical/semi-routine	49	50	49
Routine occupations	16	13	16
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	549	150	700

ESF Cohort Survey

There were no significant differences in socio-economic group by gender or by age group (Table 4.29).

Table 4.29 Socio-economic group by age and gender

Socio-economic group	Age					Gender		Total %
	16-19	20-24	25-34	35-49	50+	Male	Female	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Higher/lower managerial and professions	8	8	31	17	6	12	16	14
Intermediate occupations/small employers	12	30	10	21	27	22	20	21
Lower supervisory and technical/semi-routine	61	48	46	47	43	47	53	49
Routine occupations	19	14	14	15	23	19	11	16
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	107	103	90	232	168	408	292	700

ESF Cohort Survey

4.3.2 Income

Around half of participants who had found work since going on the course were earning less than £10,000, with 33 per cent earning between £5,000 and £9,999 and 15 per cent earning under £5,000. One in three participants were earning between £10,000 and £14,999 (33 per cent), while 19 per cent were earning £15,000 or more (Table 4.30).

Women were more likely than men to earn less than £10,000. For example, while 49 per cent of women earned between £5,000 and £9,999, the same was true of only 23 per cent of men. This discrepancy may be due to the fact that female participants were more likely to be working part-time. Participants aged 35-49 were more likely than other participants to be earning £15,000 or more (Table 4.30).

Table 4.30 Income by age and gender

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>								
Income	Age					Gender		Total %
	16-19 %	20-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50+ %	Male %	Female %	
Under £5,000	13	15	16	14	17	14	16	15
£5,000 – £9,999	32	42	24	30	30	23	49	33
£10,000 – £14,999	46	25	40	28	38	40	21	33
£15,000 or more	9	18	20	27	15	23	13	19
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	102	100	87	223	149	387	274	661

4.3.3 Type of contract

Of those participants who had found work since going on the course, 55 per cent had found a permanent job while 22 per cent had found temporary or casual work. Twenty-four per cent had another type of contract (Table 4.31).

Participants aged 16 to 19 were less likely than older participants to have found a permanent job (36 per cent). There was no significant variation in type of contract by gender (Table 4.31).

Table 4.31 Type of contract by age and gender

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>								
Type of contract	Age					Gender		Total %
	16-19 %	20-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50+ %	Male %	Female %	
Permanent job	36	63	50	58	58	53	57	55
Temporary or casual job	35	22	18	18	17	25	15	22
Other	29	15	32	24	26	21	27	24
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	107	102	90	233	168	411	289	700

4.3.4 Hours of work

More than half (58 per cent) of participants who had found a job since going on the course were working full-time, that is over 31 hours a week. Around one in three (32 per cent) were working less than 31 hours a week, but more than 16 hours, while ten per cent were working less than 16 hours per week (Table 4.32). Slightly more of this group worked full-time at Wave 3 compared with at Wave 2 (58 per cent compared with 53 per cent.)

Working hours varied by gender, with male participants being more likely to work full-time (73 per cent) than female participants (32 per cent). The only significant difference in working hours according to age was that those aged 50 or over were more likely than other participants to be working between 17 and 30 hours per week (45 per cent; Table 4.32).

Table 4.32 Hours of work by age and gender

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>								
Hours of work	Age					Gender		Total %
	16-19 %	20-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50+ %	Male %	Female %	
Over 31 hours a week	53	60	61	63	47	73	32	58
Less than 31 hours a week, but more than 16 hours	29	32	29	30	45	20	53	32
Less than 16 hours a week	18	8	10	8	8	7	15	10
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	107	100	91	233	166	408	289	697

4.3.5 Helpfulness of course

Those participants who had found work since attending ESF or match-funded training were asked about the usefulness of the course in terms of helping them to secure employment. Around one in five (21 per cent) said that someone on the course had suggested that they apply for the job (or one of the jobs) that they had started since the course, while a similar proportion (22 per cent) had used contacts from the course when applying for the job. Twenty-four per cent of participants said that someone from the course had contact with either themselves or their employer to discuss their progress in a new job (Table 4.33).

Table 4.33 Helpfulness of course by age and gender

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>								
Helpfulness of course	Age					Gender		Total %
	16-19 %	20-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50+ %	Male %	Female %	
Someone on the course suggested that participant applied for the job	23	18	19	28	14	17	29	21
Participant used contacts from course when applied for the job	19	26	24	23	12	17	30	22
Someone from the course had contact with participant or their employer to discuss progress in new job	31	24	16	27	19	19	33	24
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	122	108	102	246	177	432	323	755

Women were more likely than men to say that they had used each of the three types of help. For example, 29 per cent of women said that someone on the course suggested that they applied for the job, compared with 17 per cent of men.

The only significant difference by age was that those aged 50 or over were less likely than other participants to have used contacts from the course when applying for a job (12 per cent; Table 4.33).

4.4 Profile of participants in employment (who were also in employment in the week before the course)

Most participants who were in jobs in the week before the course were also in employment at the time of the Wave 3 interview. This section looks at perceptions of whether – and in which ways – the course has impacted on those in employment.

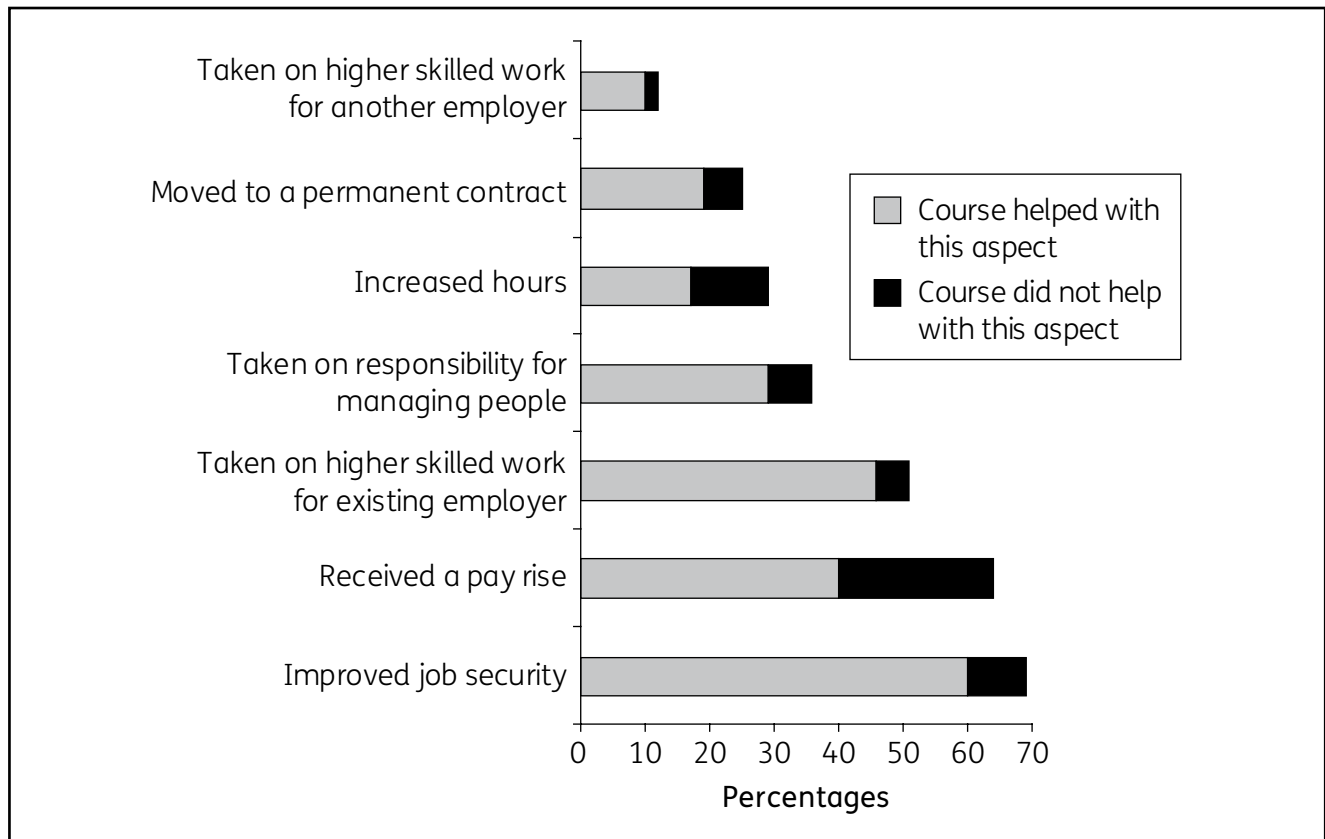
Participants were asked whether a number of things (e.g. pay, hours of work, job security) had changed or improved in their jobs since going on the course and, where there had been a positive change, whether the course helped them to improve this aspect of their work. Across many of these elements, a higher proportion of participants reported a positive change than at Wave 2 and they were more likely to credit the course with helping. Thus, in spite of the economic recession, it seems that some advances were still made in the quality of the employment of participants.

Table 4.34 Impact of course on employees

	<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>						
			Improvement				
	Moved to permanent contract %	Received a pay rise %	Taken on higher skilled work for existing employer %	Taken on higher skilled work for another employer %	Taken on responsibility for managing people %	Improved job security %	Increased hours %
Job status improved	25	64	51	12	36	69	29
Whether course helped							
Helped a lot	47	39	57	64	52	52	33
Helped a little	30	24	33	21	27	35	26
Not helped at all	23	37	10	15	20	13	40
Course helped with improvement (Total)	19	40	46	10	29	60	17
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	163	494	382	94	337	538	233

Sixty-nine per cent of participants said that, since they had been on the course, they had improved their job security. Of these, a high proportion (87 per cent) agreed that the course had helped them in this area (with 52 per cent saying that the course had ‘helped a lot’; Figure 4.1 and Table 4.34).

Figure 4.1 Changes in employment status



The course was also seen as beneficial to those participants who had taken on higher skilled work either for an existing employer (51 per cent) or for another employer (12 per cent) – with 90 per cent of those who had taken on work for an existing employer, and 85 per cent of those doing higher skilled work for another employer, acknowledging that the course had helped them to do so.

A relatively high proportion of the participants who had taken on responsibility for managing people also gave credit to the course. Of the 36 per cent of participants who had taken on management responsibilities since the course, 80 per cent said that the course had helped them in this area. A similar proportion of those who had moved to a permanent contract (25 per cent) said that the course had helped them to do this (76 per cent).

Sixty-four per cent of participants had received a pay rise since the course, while 29 per cent had increased their hours. In these areas, the course was deemed slightly less useful; 37 per cent of participants who had received a pay rise, and 40 per cent of those who had moved to a permanent contract, felt that the course had ‘not helped at all’ in these areas. In spite of the increased hours reported, the proportion of employed participants working full-time was similar at both Waves 1 and 3 (72 to 73 per cent).

Table 4.35 Changes in working conditions by priority (2 and 5)

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>			
	Priority		Total
	2	5	
Changes in working conditions	%	%	%
Moved to a permanent contract	22	13	25
Course helpful in this area?	74	76	76
Received a pay rise	70	62	64
Course helpful in this area?	67	48	63
Taken on higher skilled work for an existing employer	54	47	51
Course helpful in this area?	90	95	90
Taking on higher skilled work for another employer	13	19	12
Course helpful in this area?	85	90	85
Taken on responsibility for managing people	39	50	36
Course helpful in this area?	81	80	80
Improved job security	70	60	69
Course helpful in this area?	90	85	87
Increased hours	25	24	29
Course helpful in this area?	63	45	60
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	720	94	903

The majority of participants who had been in work in the week before the course (and were still in work at the time of the Wave 3 interview) were from Priorities 2 and 5, with most from Priority 2. There were no significant differences between Priority 2 and Priority 5 participants, either in terms of the proportions who had experienced the various aspects of working conditions, or in the proportions who said the course had helped them in these areas (Table 4.35).

Since going on the course, younger people aged 16 to 19 were more likely than older participants (aged 20-49) to have moved to a permanent contract and to have received a pay rise. Those aged 50 or over were less likely than those aged 20 to 49 to have moved to a permanent contract, taken on higher skilled work for another employer and improved job security.

Younger people (aged 16-19) were also more likely than older participants (20 or over) to say that the course had been helpful to them, particularly in terms of receiving a pay rise (Table 4.36).

Table 4.36 Changes in working conditions by age

		<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>		
		Age		
		16-19	20-49	50+
Changes in working conditions		%	%	%
Moved to a permanent contract		43	22	9
Helpfulness of course?		87	71	63
Received a pay rise		87	59	55
Helpfulness of course?		86	55	48
Taken on higher skilled work for an existing employer		60	49	45
Helpfulness of course?		97	89	82
Taking on higher skilled work for another employer		12	14	5
Helpfulness of course?		100	82	67
Taken on responsibility for managing people		29	38	36
Helpfulness of course?		95	78	72
Improved job security		82	68	55
Helpfulness of course?		91	85	91
Increased hours		30	28	32
Helpfulness of course?		73	53	70
<i>Unweighted bases</i>		60	585	258

Table 4.37 Changes in working conditions by gender

ESF Cohort Survey

Changes in working conditions	Gender		Total %
	Male %	Female %	
Moved to a permanent contract	23	27	25
Helpfulness of course?	70	81	76
Received a pay rise	64	64	64
Helpfulness of course?	59	67	63
Taken on higher skilled work for an existing employer	50	52	51
Helpfulness of course?	85	95	90
Taking on higher skilled work for another employer	13	11	12
Helpfulness of course?	85	85	85
Taken on responsibility for managing people	36	36	36
Helpfulness of course?	79	80	80
Improved job security	75	64	69
Helpfulness of course?	82	92	87
Increased hours	32	27	29
Helpfulness of course?	52	69	60
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	479	424	903

Male participants were more likely than female participants to say that they had improved their job security since going on the course (75 per cent compared with 64 per cent). In terms of the usefulness of the course in the various areas, women were more likely than men to say that the course had helped them to take on higher skilled work for an existing employer (95 per cent compared with 85 per cent), to improve job security (92 per cent compared with 82 per cent), and to increase their hours (69 per cent compared with 52 per cent; Table 4.37).

Table 4.38 Changes in working conditions by lone parent status*ESF Cohort Survey*

Changes in working conditions	Lone parent status		Total %
	Male %	Female %	
Moved to a permanent contract	25	25	25
Helpfulness of course?	78	46	76
Received a pay rise	65	44	64
Helpfulness of course?	63	59	63
Taken on higher skilled work for an existing employer	52	29	51
Helpfulness of course?	90	94	90
Taking on higher skilled work for another employer	12	9	12
Helpfulness of course?	86	56	85
Taken on responsibility for managing people	36	31	36
Helpfulness of course?	81	59	80
Improved job security	71	47	69
Helpfulness of course?	86	99	87
Increased hours	29	26	29
Helpfulness of course?	61	34	60
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	851	52	903

Lone parents were less likely than other participants to say that they had improved their job security since going on the course (47 per cent compared with 71 per cent). They were also less likely to say that they had taken on higher skilled work for an existing employer (29 per cent compared with 52 per cent).

Because of the small bases sizes involved, there were no statistically significant differences in terms of the helpfulness of the course (Table 4.38).

Table 4.39 Changes in working conditions by ethnicity

ESF Cohort Survey

Changes in working conditions	Ethnicity		Total %
	White %	Ethnic minority %	
Moved to a permanent contract	24	32	25
Helpfulness of course?	78	57	76
Received a pay rise	35	48	64
Helpfulness of course?	63	60	63
Taken on higher skilled work for an existing employer	50	61	51
Helpfulness of course?	90	88	90
Taking on higher skilled work for another employer	12	13	12
Helpfulness of course?	87	59	85
Taken on responsibility for managing people	35	51	36
Helpfulness of course?	81	64	80
Improved job security	69	81	69
Helpfulness of course?	86	98	87
Increased hours	28	44	29
Helpfulness of course?	60	57	60
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	835	61	903

There were no statistically significant differences between White participants and those from ethnic minority groups in terms of the proportions who had experienced the various aspects of working conditions. However, ethnic minority participants were more likely than their White counterparts to rate the course as useful in terms of helping them to improve job security (98 per cent compared with 86 per cent; Table 4.39).

Table 4.40 Changes in working conditions by disability

ESF Cohort Survey

Changes in working conditions	Disability		Total %
	No disability or LTLI %	Has a disability or LTLI %	
Moved to a permanent contract	25	18	25
Helpfulness of course?	78	42	76
Received a pay rise	65	50	64
Helpfulness of course?	63	64	63
Taken on higher skilled work for an existing employer	52	38	51
Helpfulness of course?	90	96	90
Taking on higher skilled work for another employer	12	12	12
Helpfulness of course?	85	88	85
Taken on responsibility for managing people	37	29	36
Helpfulness of course?	79	91	80
Improved job security	70	65	69
Helpfulness of course?	87	81	87
Increased hours	29	31	29
Helpfulness of course?	58	76	60
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	816	86	903

There were no significant differences in improvements to working conditions by disability or LTLI status, or in the proportions who said the course had helped them in these areas (Table 4.40).

Table 4.41 Changes in working conditions by socio-economic status

ESF Cohort Survey

Changes in working conditions	Socio-economic status				Total %
	Higher/lower managerial and professions %	Intermediate occupations/small employers %	Lower supervisory and technical/semi-routine %	Routine occupations %	
Moved to a permanent contract	15	31	31	21	25
Course helpful in this area?	79	77	80	56	76
Received a pay rise	66	68	69	51	64
Course helpful in this area?	54	74	62	65	63
Taken on higher skilled work for an existing employer	56	59	46	51	51
Course helpful in this area?	92	91	88	90	90
Taking on higher skilled work for another employer	13	18	11	6	12
Course helpful in this area?	89	82	78	100	85
Taken on responsibility for managing people	48	30	36	21	36
Course helpful in this area?	80	66	85	78	80
Improved job security	65	70	68	79	69
Course helpful in this area?	87	88	84	88	87
Increased hours	20	21	36	35	29
Course helpful in this area?	56	65	68	36	60
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	289	153	316	103	903

Participants in managerial or professional occupations were less likely than those in other occupations to have moved to a permanent contract since going on the course. These participants, along with those in intermediate occupations, were also less likely than those in lower supervisory or routine occupations to have increased their hours since the course. As might be expected, participants who were in managerial and professional roles were more likely than other participants to have taken on responsibility for managing people since the course.

There were no significant differences by socio-economic status in terms of the helpfulness of the course (Table 4.41).

Table 4.42 Changes in working conditions by income

ESF Cohort Survey

Changes in working conditions	Income			Total %
	Under £9,999 %	£10,000 - £19,999 %	£20,000 and over %	
Moved to a permanent contract	27	25	22	25
Course helpful in this area?	74	83	70	76
Received a pay rise	59	65	73	64
Course helpful in this area?	63	67	56	63
Taken on higher skilled work for an existing employer	37	57	61	51
Course helpful in this area?	90	92	86	90
Taking on higher skilled work for another employer	7	15	13	12
Course helpful in this area?	80	94	65	85
Taken on responsibility for managing people	22	40	46	36
Course helpful in this area?	72	84	81	80
Improved job security	63	74	69	69
Course helpful in this area?	77	93	87	87
Increased hours	32	27	30	29
Course helpful in this area?	64	59	52	60
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	201	369	256	903

Participants who were paid less than £10,000 per year were less likely than those paid £10,000 or more to have taken on higher skilled work with their existing employer, or to have taken on responsibility for managing people. In terms of the perceived usefulness of the course, participants who were paid less than £10,000 were less likely than those paid £10,000 or more to say that the course had helped them to improve their job security (Table 4.42).

Table 4.43 Changes in working conditions by employer size (Priorities 2 and 5)

ESF Cohort Survey

Changes in working conditions	Employer size			Total %
	0-24 %	25-249 %	250 or more %	
Moved to a permanent contract	31	16	19	25
Course helpful in this area?	80	69	66	76
Received a pay rise	69	67	68	64
Course helpful in this area?	68	59	44	63
Taken on higher skilled work for an existing employer	53	52	58	51
Course helpful in this area?	92	89	84	90
Taking on higher skilled work for another employer	12	13	9	12
Course helpful in this area?	86	84	63	85
Taken on responsibility for managing people	37	47	25	36
Course helpful in this area?	78	82	80	80
Improved job security	78	62	67	69
Course helpful in this area?	86	93	78	87
Increased hours	33	20	34	29
Course helpful in this area?	64	55	32	60
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	315	303	148	903

In Priorities 2 and 5, participants working for employers with less than 25 staff (at the time of the Wave 1 interview) were more likely than other participants to have moved to a permanent contract since going on the course. They were also more likely to have improved their job security. Those working in medium-sized organisations (employing between 25 and 249 staff) were more likely than other participants to say that they had taken on more responsibility for managing people since the course.

In terms of perceived helpfulness, those working for smaller employers (less than 25 employees) were more likely than other participants to say that the course had helped them to receive a pay rise. Those in organisations employing between 25 and 249 staff were more likely than other participants to say that the course had helped with job security (Table 4.43).

4.5 Profile of participants who were not in work at the Wave 3 interview

4.5.1 Participants who had left jobs

Nineteen per cent of participants who were not in work at the time of the Wave 3 interview had left jobs since starting the course, for a number of reasons including redundancy or the end of a temporary contract (55 per cent), health reasons (18 per cent), caring responsibilities (seven per cent) and finding another job (six per cent; Table 4.44).

Table 4.44 Why people left jobs by gender

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>			
	Gender		Total %
	Male %	Female %	
Whether left job			
Has not left job	81	81	81
Has left job	19	19	19
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	627	514	1,141
Why left job			
Found another job	7	4	6
To do more education and training	4	4	4
Health reasons	14	25	18
Caring responsibilities	6	9	7
Other personal reasons	22	20	21
Redundancy/end of contract	55	55	55
Other reason	21	20	21
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	105	88	193

Please note that participants were able to say an unlimited number of reasons for leaving their job so percentages sum to more than 100.

There was no difference between men and women in the proportions that had left a job since going on the course or in the reasons for leaving a job (Table 4.44).

Table 4.45 Whether left jobs by priority

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>			
Whether left job	Priority		Total %
	Priority 1 and 4 %	Priority 2 and 5 %	
Has not left job	81	64	81
Has left job	19	36	19
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	1,024	111	1,141

Participants in Priorities 2 and 5 were more likely than those in Priorities 1 and 4 to have left a job (36 per cent compared with 19 per cent; Table 4.45¹⁸).

Table 4.46 Whether left jobs by age

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>						
Whether left job	Age					Total %
	16-19 %	20-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50+ %	
Has not left job	74	70	84	88	85	81
Has left job	26	30	16	12	15	19
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	178	159	133	352	319	1,141

Participants aged under 25 were more likely than those aged 25 or over to have left a job since going on the course. This applied to 26 per cent of 16 to 19 year olds and 30 per cent of 20 to 24 year olds (Table 4.46).

4.5.2 Length of unemployment

Respondents who were not in work at the time of the Wave 3 interview were asked when they had last been in employment. Thirteen per cent of participants who were not in work had been out of work for less than six months; 18 per cent had been out of work between six months and two years; 60 per cent had been out of work for two years or more; and ten per cent had never had a job (Table 4.47).

Participants in Priorities 1 and 4 were more likely than those in Priorities 2 and 5 to have been unemployed for three years or more (39 per cent compared with six per cent) and, correspondingly, were less likely to have been out of work for less than 12 months (21 per cent compared with 53 per cent; (Table 4.48).

¹⁸ It has not been possible to produce a table showing the reasons for leaving a job by Priority or age group, due to small base sizes.

Table 4.47 Length of unemployment by priority

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>			
Length of time out of work	Priority		Total %
	Priority 1 and 4 %	Priority 2 and 5 %	
Less than three months	6	24	7
Between three and less than six months	6	10	6
Between six and less than 12 months	9	19	9
Between 12 months and less than two years	9	11	9
Between two years and less than three years	29	23	22
Three years or more	39	6	38
Never had a (full-time) job	10	7	10
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	1,024	111	1,141

Table 4.48 Length of unemployment by age and gender

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>								
Type of contract	Age					Gender		Total %
	16-19 %	20-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50+ %	Male %	Female %	
Less than three months	13	11	7	4	1	6	8	7
Between three and less than six months	12	7	5	3	4	7	4	6
Between six and less than 12 months	20	15	5	6	5	11	6	9
Between 12 months and less than two years	12	9	8	8	6	9	8	9
Between two years and less than three years	14	26	28	19	20	22	21	22
Three years or more	5	17	41	53	61	37	39	38
Never had a (full-time) job	23	16	4	8	3	8	15	10
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	178	159	133	352	319	627	514	1,141

Participants aged under 25 were more likely than older participants to say that they had never had a job (23 per cent of 16 to 19 year olds and 16 per cent of 20 to 24 year olds, compared with no more than eight per cent in the other age bands). Women were also more likely than men to say that they had never worked (15 per cent compared with eight per cent; Table 4.48).

Longer-term unemployment was greater in the older age bands: the proportion who had been unemployed for three years or more increased from 17 per cent among 20-24 year olds to 61 per cent among those aged 50 or over.

4.5.3 Whether participants want or are looking for work

Participants who were not in work at the time of the Wave 3 interview were asked whether they were currently looking for work. The majority of participants (65 per cent) said that they were looking for work, while 22 per cent wanted a job but were not actively looking. Thirteen per cent of participants were not looking for or wanting work (Table 4.49). Among the participant still unemployed at Wave 3, similar proportions reported looking for work and wanting work at Wave 2.

Table 4.49 Whether participant wants work by priority

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>			
Whether looking for work	Priority		Total %
	Priority 1 and 4 %	Priority 2 and 5 %	
Looking for work	66	58	65
Wanting work	22	17	22
Not looking for or wanting work	13	25	13
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	1,024	111	1,141

There were no significant differences between participants in Priorities 1 and 4 or in Priorities 2 and 5, in terms of whether they were looking for work (Table 4.49).

Table 4.50 Whether participant wants work by age and gender

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>								
Whether looking for work	Age					Gender		Total %
	16-19 %	20-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50+ %	Male %	Female %	
Looking for work	82	72	75	63	40	74	47	65
Wanting work	12	16	19	27	30	16	32	22
Not looking for or wanting work	6	13	6	10	30	9	21	13
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	178	159	133	352	319	627	514	1,141

Generally, younger people were more likely to be looking for work than older people. For example, while 82 per cent of those aged 16 to 19 said that they were looking for work, the same was true of only 40 per cent of people aged over 50. Men were also more likely than women to be looking for work (74 per cent compared with 47 per cent; Table 4.50).

Those participants who were not looking for or wanting work gave various reasons for this. Most commonly, they were not able to work because of an illness or health problem (45 per cent). Fifteen per cent of participants were looking after the family or home, while 13 per cent were studying full-time, and ten per cent were not looking for or wanting work because of a disability (Table 4.51).

Table 4.51 Why not looking for work by gender

ESF Cohort Survey

Why not looking for work	Gender		Total %
	Male %	Female %	
Unable to work because of illness or health problem	52	40	45
Unable to work because of disability	5	15	10
Studying full-time	19	7	13
Looking after the family/home	2	26	15
Caring for an elderly, ill or disabled relative or friend	9	3	6
Retired	12	6	9
Some other reason	1	2	1
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	81	112	193

Women (26 per cent) were more likely than men (two per cent) to say that they were unable to work because they were looking after the family or home (Table 4.51).¹⁹

4.5.4 Job search activities of those out of work

Participants not in work but looking for work were using a number of ways to look for work. Looking at adverts (94 per cent), using the internet (92 per cent) and going to Jobcentre Plus (88 per cent) were the most common forms of job search activities. Asking friends or relatives (81 per cent) and contacting employers directly (77 per cent) were also relatively common activities. Fifty-one per cent of respondents had visited recruitment agencies as part of their job searches (Table 4.52).

Table 4.52 Job search activities by age and gender

ESF Cohort Survey

Job search activities	Age					Gender		Total %
	16-19 %	20-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50+ %	Male %	Female %	
Looking at adverts	92	98	90	93	97	94	93	94
Going to Jobcentre Plus	90	95	86	88	72	88	89	88
Using the internet	97	98	96	90	72	92	91	92
Asking friends or relatives	85	88	82	75	68	82	78	81
Contacting employers directly	82	82	76	75	65	78	72	77
Going to recruitment agencies	34	57	67	53	34	56	38	51
Other ways	6	12	11	17	14	14	8	12
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	138	108	87	194	139	411	255	666

Participants aged 50 or over were less likely than other participants to be doing the following job search activities: looking for work by going to Jobcentre Plus, using the internet, or asking friends and family. In addition, both the oldest (50 or over) and youngest (16 to 19) age groups were less likely than other participants to use recruitment agencies.

¹⁹ It has not been possible to produce a table showing the reasons for not looking for work by age group, due to small base sizes.

Men were more likely than women to go to recruitment agencies (56 per cent compared with 38 per cent; Table 4.52²⁰).

Table 4.53 Job search activity – Wave 2 versus Wave 3

Job search activities	Survey wave	
	Wave 2	Wave 3
	%	%
Looking at adverts	89	96
Going to Jobcentre Plus	86	91
Using the internet	91	95
Asking friends or relatives	88	81
Contacting employers directly	76	78
Going to recruitment agencies	55	54
Other ways	11	13
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	527	527

Participants who were looking for jobs in both the Wave 2 and the Wave 3 interviews were using the various activities in similar proportions at the two waves (Table 4.53).

4.5.5 Barriers to employment

Participants who were not working at the time of the Wave 3 interview were asked what, if anything, made it difficult for them to find work.

The most frequent answer was that there ‘weren’t any jobs where they lived’ (63 per cent), while 55 per cent said that they did ‘not have the right skills’, and 58 per cent said that they ‘did not have any recent experience of working’. In addition, 41 per cent faced problems with transport and eight per cent could not find suitable or affordable childcare (Table 4.54).

²⁰ It has not been possible to produce a table showing job search activities by Priority, due to small base sizes.

Table 4.54 Barriers by priority

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>					
Barriers	Priority				Total %
	1 %	2 %	4 %	5 %	
Did not have the right skills	56	33	52	–	55
Weren't any jobs where I live	63	60	71	–	63
No recent experience of working	59	39	49	–	58
Could not find suitable/affordable childcare	7	11	17	–	7
Problems with transport or the cost of transport	41	22	50	–	41
Other	8	5	10	–	8
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	825	97	208	11	1,141

Estimates are not reported where the base size is less than 50.

Participants in Priority 4 were more likely than other participants to say that they could not find suitable or affordable childcare (17 per cent) and that they had problems with transport or the cost of transport (50 per cent). Those in Priority 2 were less likely than other participants to say that they did not have the right skills (33 per cent), did not have recent experience of working (39 per cent) or had problems with transport (22 per cent; Table 4.54).

Table 4.55 Barriers by age and gender

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>								
Barriers	Age					Gender		Total %
	16-19 %	20-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50+ %	Male %	Female %	
Did not have the right skills	64	61	56	51	47	56	54	55
Weren't any jobs where I live	70	64	65	63	57	66	59	63
No recent experience of working	59	63	63	56	50	61	53	58
Could not find suitable/affordable childcare	5	11	10	7	*	3	14	7
Problems with transport or the cost of transport	30	43	38	48	38	42	39	41
Other	4	3	19	7	9	6	11	8
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	178	159	133	352	319	627	514	1,141

Generally, younger people were more likely than older participants to say that they did not have the right skills and that there were not any jobs where they lived. For example, 64 per cent of those aged 16 to 19 said that they did not have the right skills, compared with 47 per cent of those aged 50 or over. Similarly, 70 per cent of 16 to 19 year olds said that there were not any jobs where they lived, compared with 57 per cent of those aged 50 or over.

Women were more likely than men to have problems finding suitable or affordable childcare (14 per cent compared with three per cent; Table 4.55).

Table 4.56 Barriers by survey wave

<i>ESF Cohort Study</i>		
Barriers	Survey wave	
	Wave 2 %	Wave 3 %
Did not have the right skills	53	56
Weren't any jobs where I live	61	63
No recent experience of working	56	60
Could not find suitable/affordable childcare	4	6
Problems with transport or the cost of transport	38	42
Other	12	8
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	937	937

The barriers expressed by participants who were not working at either Wave 2 or Wave 3 were very similar between the two waves (Table 4.56).

4.5.6 Likelihood of finding work

All participants who were actively looking for jobs at the time of the Wave 2 interview were asked about their likelihood of finding work in the next six months. The majority (63 per cent) of participants said that they were 'very likely' or 'fairly likely' to find employment, while 36 per cent said that they were 'fairly unlikely' or 'very unlikely' to do so (Table 4.57).

Table 4.57 Likelihood of finding work by age and gender

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>								
Likelihood of finding work	Age					Gender		Total %
	16-19 %	20-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50+ %	Male %	Female %	
Very likely	24	18	26	26	15	22	22	22
Fairly likely	52	54	42	27	31	42	40	41
Fairly unlikely	20	17	17	16	29	18	20	19
Very unlikely	3	8	15	31	25	16	17	17
Found work already	2	3						
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	138	108	87	194	139	411	255	666

Older participants were less likely to say that they thought they would find work in the next six months. For example, 53 per cent of participants aged 35 to 49 said they were very or fairly likely to find a job, as were 46 per cent of those aged 50 or over. By contrast, at least 68 per cent in the younger age groups (under 35) said they were likely to find work. There were no differences between men and women (Table 4.56²¹).

²¹ It has not been possible to produce a table showing likelihood of finding work by Priority, due to small base sizes.

Table 4.58 Likelihood of finding work by survey wave

<i>ESF Cohort Study</i>		
Likelihood of finding work	Survey wave	
	Wave 2 %	Wave 3 %
Very likely	26	21
Fairly likely	41	41
Fairly unlikely	19	20
Very unlikely	12	17
Found work already	2	1
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	479	479

Participants who were looking for work at both the Wave 2 and the Wave 3 interviews were similar in their expectations of finding work at the two interviews (Table 4.58).

4.5.7 Confidence about finding work

Among participants who were looking for work at the time of the Wave 3 interview, 73 per cent said that they were more confident about finding work since going on the course (Table 4.59).

Table 4.59 Confidence about finding work by age and gender

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>								
More confident about finding work since going on the course?	Age					Gender		Total %
	16-19 %	20-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50+ %	Male %	Female %	
Yes	89	78	70	64	68	74	70	73
No	11	22	30	36	32	26	30	27
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	138	108	87	194	139	411	255	666

Since going on the course, young people aged 16 to 19 were more confident about finding work than older participants. There was no significant variation by gender (Table 4.58²²).

Participants were also asked whether they were now better skilled for the type of job they were looking for, as a result of going on the course. Overall, 63 per cent of participants said that they were (Table 4.60).

²² It has not been possible to produce a table showing confidence about finding work by Priority, due to small base sizes.

Table 4.60 Whether better skilled since course by age and gender

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>								
Better skilled since going on the course?	Age					Gender		Total %
	16-19 %	20-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50+ %	Male %	Female %	
Yes	86	66	57	54	56	64	61	63
No	14	34	43	46	44	36	39	37
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	138	108	87	194	139	411	255	666

Younger people (aged 16 to 19) felt that they were better skilled as a result of the course, when compared with other participants (86 per cent compared with no more than 66 per cent in the other age groups). There was no significant variation by gender (Table 4.60²³).

4.5.8 Interviews and applications

Of those participants out of work at the time of interview, the majority (67 per cent) had made job applications since the Wave 2 interview. In fact, on average, participants had made around 41 job applications during this period. A further 63 per cent of participants had attended job interviews since the Wave 2 interview, with participants attending an average of 7.8 interviews during this period. For 28 per cent of participants, someone from the course had suggested that they apply for at least one of these jobs, while 35 per cent had used contacts from the course in their job applications.

Priority 1 participants were more likely than those in Priorities 2 and 4 to have made job applications (68 per cent). They had also made more job applications on average (41.6) and been to more job interviews on average (7.9). They were also more likely to say that someone from the course had suggested that they apply for at least one of these jobs (29 per cent) and to have used contacts from the course in their job applications (36 per cent).

The average number of job applications was lower among participants in Priority 2 than in Priority 4 (14.9 compared with 26.1; Table 4.61).

Table 4.61 Interviews and applications by priority

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>					
Job search activities	Priority				Total %
	1 %	2 %	4 %	5 %	
Has made job applications	68	55	41	–	67
Average number of job applications	41.6	14.9	26.1	–	40.8
Whether someone on course suggested that they apply for a job	29	10	12	–	28
Whether used contacts from course	36	10	18	–	35
Has been to job interviews	64	53	66	–	63
Average number of interviews	7.9	5.8	5.3	–	7.8
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	825	97	208	11	1,141

Estimates are not reported where the base size is less than 50.

²³ It has not been possible to produce a table showing whether participants felt better skilled about going on the course by Priority, due to small base sizes.

Men were more likely than women to have applied for jobs (74 per cent compared with 54 per cent) and were also more likely to have used contacts from the course to apply for jobs (40 per cent compared with 23 per cent). On average, men had also been to more job interviews than women (8.9 compared with 5.2; Table 4.62).

Table 4.62 Interviews and applications by gender

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>			
Job search activities	Gender		Total %
	Male %	Female %	
Has made job applications	74	54	67
Average number of job applications	41.7	38.1	40.8
Whether someone on course suggested that they apply for a job	30	23	28
Whether used contacts from course	40	23	35
Has been to job interviews	62	66	63
Average number of interviews	8.9	5.2	7.8
<i>Unweighted base</i>	627	514	1,141

Participants aged over 50 were less likely than younger participants to have made job applications (41 per cent), and had attended fewer job interviews on average (4.2).

Those aged 16 to 19 were more likely than those aged 20 to 49 to have made job applications (82 per cent compared with 71 per cent), but had made fewer applications on average than older participants. Those aged 16-19 were also less likely than other participants to have used contacts from the course to apply for jobs (18 per cent; Table 4.63).

Table 4.63 Interviews and applications by age

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>				
Job search activities	Age			Total %
	16-19 %	20-49 %	50+ %	
Has made job applications	82	71	41	67
Average number of job applications	31.7	42.9	40.3	40.8
Whether someone on course suggested that apply for job	26	29	31	28
Whether used contacts from course	18	38	41	35
Has been to job interviews	58	65	58	63
Average number of interviews	7.3	8.4	4.2	7.8
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	178	644	319	1,141

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter explored employment outcomes among participants. The findings show an increase in employment rates amongst among Priority 1 and 4 participants since the week before the course and since the time of the Wave 2 interview. This is particularly notable given the prevailing economic climate. (A lack of jobs locally was the most cited barrier faced by those participants unemployed at the Wave 3 interview and highlights the importance of considering local opportunities in designing provision.)

Increasing employment rates were observed across all participant sub-groups. However some differences in levels were observed along the lines of age and disability, with those aged 50 or more and those with disabilities being less likely to be employment. Taking into account a variety of respondent characteristics, a number of the key factors found to be linked with poorer employment outcomes. Unsurprisingly these highlight known barriers to employment:

- having a physical or mental health disability;
- being unemployed for two or more years;
- having no previous qualifications;
- being female.

Participants in these groups may require further support to successfully move into employment such as further work experience placements.

In addition to long term unemployment, a lack of recent work experience (cited as a barrier to employment by respondents) was another factor significantly linked with poorer employment outcomes, as was reporting that the course had not resulting in improved self confidence. This highlights the importance of this soft outcome in helping people move into employment. Consideration could be given to whether further steps can be taken to improve self confidence among participants on future provision, so that they feel better able to find work, and whether further work experience opportunities can be offered.

A number of factors relating to the course itself were also identified as being significantly associated with being in employment. Spending longer (four months or more) on the course had a negative association with being employment. However, it seems likely that this may indicate differences in participants of longer and shorter courses not captured in the data (e.g. those on shorter courses being less removed from the labour market). Being made to go on the course also had a negative association and may reflect the underlying level of participant motivation. Consideration could be given to trying different ways to engage participants who do not enter provision voluntarily. Additional effort to convey the benefits of the course to them personally and of improving their employment chances may be helpful, although this may not be easy to achieve.

In addition to movements into employment, this chapter also highlighted the role of ESF/ match funded provision is improving the employment among employed participants who were in employment prior to the course. The reported improvements include increased job security, increased pay and higher skilled work. As such it appears that the skills and qualifications acquired may have increased the value of the participants to their employers and the labour market more generally.

5 Outcomes by funding stream

The previous chapters examined outcomes by respondent characteristics. This chapter focuses upon any differences in outcomes by funding stream, looking at course completion and qualifications and employment outcomes in turn.

5.1 Course completion by funding stream

Match participants in Priority 5 were most likely to still be on the course (ten per cent compared to less than two per cent for all other groups). This indicates that nearly all of those participants who were still on the course at Wave 3 were on Priority 5 Match funded courses.

As noted in Section 2.2, participants in Priority 1 and 4 courses were more likely to have left early than participants in Priorities 2 and 5. There was no significant difference between European Social Fund (ESF) and Match funded participants in Priority 1 and 4, or 2 and 5.

Table 5.1 Course completion by funding stream within Priority

Course completion	Funding stream within Priority						Total %
	Priority 1 and 4			Priority 2 and 5			
	ESF %	Match %	Other %	ESF %	Match %	Other %	
Still on course	2	*	–	*	10	–	2
No longer on course							
Finished course	68	70	–	92	85	–	74
Left early	31	29	–	7	5	–	25
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	908	745	31	644	351	43	2,722

ESF Cohort Survey Wave 3

Estimates are not reported where the base size is less than 50.

Participants in Priorities 1 and 4 were more likely than those in Priorities 2 and 5 to say they were made to go on the course (see Chapter 2). Table 5.2 shows that, within Priorities 1 and 4, reasons varied starkly by funding stream: 43 per cent of match participants said they were ‘made to go on the course’, compared with only nine per cent of ESF participants. ESF participants were more likely to say they had decided to go on it (46 per cent compared to 17 per cent). This may reflect the voluntary nature of much of the ESF provision and so be linked to the higher proportion of participants who wanted work or were looking for work among the ESF participants.

Within Priority 2 and 5, ESF participants were more likely to say they were given the opportunity to go on it, whilst Match participants were more likely to say they decided to go on it themselves.

Table 5.2 Why went on course by funding stream within Priority

ESF Cohort Survey Wave 3

Why went on course	Funding stream within Priority						Total %
	Priority 1 and 4			Priority 2 and 5			
	ESF %	Match %	Other %	ESF %	Match %	Other %	
Made to go on it	9	43	–	8	7	–	30
Persuaded to go on it	5	9	–	3	1	–	7
Given opportunity to go on it	39	30	–	48	36	–	33
Decide myself to go on it	46	17	–	40	55	–	29
Other reason	1	0	–	1	1	–	*
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	916	755	31	644	351	43	2,740

Estimates are not reported where the base size is less than 50.

The average (mean) length of Priority 2 courses was much higher than Priority 1 (Section 2.3), with Priority 2 having a much higher proportion of courses lasting over one year and fewer courses lasting four to six months. Table 5.3 shows a considerable difference within Priority 2 and 5 with Match courses typically being much longer than ESF courses: 65 per cent of Match courses in Priority 2 and 5 were over 12 months compared to only 12 per cent of ESF courses. Conversely, 59 per cent of ESF courses in Priority 2 and 5 lasted less than four months (25 per cent one or more months but less than four, 34 per cent less than one month) compared to only six per cent of Match courses.

ESF courses also tended to be shorter than Match courses within Priority 1 and 4: 24 per cent of ESF courses in Priority 1 and 4 were less than a month compared to 13 per cent of Match courses (Table 5.3).

Table 5.3 Length of ‘full’ course by funding stream within Priority

ESF Cohort Survey Wave 3

Length of course	Funding stream within Priority						Total %
	Priority 1 and 4			Priority 2 and 5			
	ESF %	Match %	Other %	ESF %	Match %	Other %	
Less than a month	24	13	–	34	2	–	17
One month or more, less than four months	34	35	–	25	4	–	29
Four months or more, less than six months	14	24	–	8	4	–	18
Six months or more, less than 12 months	22	21	–	20	25	–	22
One year or more, less than two years	4	5	–	11	41	–	10
Two years or more	2	1	–	1	24	–	4
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	601	495	28	571	308	42	2,045

Estimates are not reported where the base size is less than 50.

5.2 Qualifications by funding stream

A similar proportion of ESF and match participants had qualifications prior to the course. However, ESF participants were more likely to have a qualification above Level 2 compared with match participants (Table 5.4).

Table 5.4 Previous qualification level by funding stream (Priorities 2 and 5)

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>				
Qualification level	Funding stream			Total %
	ESF %	Match %	Other %	
Level 4 and above	29	5	–	13
Level 3 – A Level or equivalent	19	17	–	18
Level 2 – GCSE grades A*-C or equivalent	28	60	–	49
Below Level 2	13	12	–	12
Foreign and other qualifications	5	2	–	3
No qualifications	6	4	–	4
<i>Unweighted base</i>	643	351	43	1,037

Estimates are not reported where the base size is less than 50.

Table 5.5 Full qualifications gained by funding stream within Priority

<i>ESF Cohort Survey Wave 3</i>							
Qualifications gained	Funding stream within Priority						Total %
	Priority 1 and 4			Priority 2 and 5			
	ESF %	Match %	Other %	ESF %	Match %	Other %	
No qualifications achieved	65	74	–	39	10	–	64
NQF Level 4 and above	1	2	–	8	6	–	3
NQF Level 3	3	2	–	14	38	–	6
NQF Level 2	13	8	–	20	41	–	12
NQF Level 1	18	15	–	19	5	–	15
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	874	727	30	624	317	43	2,623

Estimates are not reported where the base size is less than 50.

ESF participants in Priorities 2 and 5 were less likely than match participants to have gained a full qualification as part of the course. This may reflect the increasing use of ESF to support flexible response to redundancy provision. For example, while 90 per cent of Match participants had gained a full qualification on the course by Wave 3, the same was true of only 61 per cent of ESF participants. Correspondingly, ESF participants were less likely than match participants to have gained qualifications at Level 2 (20 per cent compared with 41 per cent) and at Level 3 (14 per cent compared with 38 per cent), although a higher proportion of ESF participants had gained a Level 1 qualification (19 per cent compared with five per cent of match participants; Table 5.5). The differences between ESF and match participants in Priorities 1 and 4 were not significant.

Table 5.6 Partial qualifications gained by funding stream within Priority

ESF Cohort Survey Wave 3

Qualifications gained	Funding stream within Priority						Total %
	Priority 1 and 4			Priority 2 and 5			
	ESF %	Match %	Other %	ESF %	Match %	Other %	
No qualifications achieved	89	91	–	80	73	–	88
NQF Level 4 and above	*	2	–	6	7	–	2
NQF Level 3	*	*	–	3	8	–	1
NQF Level 2	2	3	–	6	7	–	3
NQF Level 1	8	4	–	5	6	–	5
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	<i>874</i>	<i>727</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>624</i>	<i>317</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>2,623</i>

Estimates are not reported where the base size is less than 50.

There were no significant associations between the proportion of Priorities 2 and 5 participants having gained units or modules towards full qualifications and funding stream. In Priorities 1 and 4, Match participants were slightly less likely to have gained a partial qualification overall, although more likely to have gained one at level 4 or above (Table 5.6).

Table 5.7 Whether stopped studying qualifications by funding stream within priority*ESF Cohort Survey Wave 3*

Whether stopped studying	Funding stream within Priority						Total %
	Priority 1 and 4			Priority 2 and 5			
	ESF %	Match %	Other %	ESF %	Match %	Other %	
Did not stop studying qualification	82	77	–	89	94	–	83
Stopped studying qualification	18	23	–	11	6	–	17
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	<i>439</i>	<i>306</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>457</i>	<i>338</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>1,580</i>

Estimates are not reported where the base size is less than 50.

Within Priorities 1 and 4 and Priorities 2 and 5, there were no significant differences in the proportions of ESF and match participants who stopped studying towards qualifications (Table 5.7).

5.3 Employment outcomes by funding stream

From the week before the course to the time of the Wave 3 interview, rates of employment increased by a higher proportion among ESF participants in Priorities 1 and 4, compared with match participants (employment rates rose by 38 percentage points among ESF participants, compared with 23 points among match participants). Correspondingly, rates of unemployment fell by a higher proportion among ESF participants than among match participants (unemployment fell by 36 percentage points among ESF participants compared with 30 percentage points among match participants).

At the time of the Wave 3 interview, rates of employment and unemployment among match participants were similar to what they had been 12 months before the course. Among ESF participants, rates of employment increased during this period (from 30 per cent to 45 per cent), although unemployment rates stayed the same. Rates of inactivity fell during this time (Table 5.8).

Within Priorities 1 and 4, ESF participants tended to earn more than match participants. For example, 58 per cent of ESF participants earned more than £10,000 compared with 42 per cent of match participants (Table 5.9²⁴).

²⁴ It has not been possible to produce a table showing income by funding stream for Priorities 2 and 5, due to small base sizes; this applies to Tables 6.20 to 6.23.

Table 5.8 Employment patterns of course leavers by funding stream (Priorities 1 and 4)

ESF Cohort Survey

Employment status	Funding stream									
	ESF			Match						
	12 months before course %	Week before course %	Wave 1 interview %	Wave 2 interview %	Wave 3 interview %	12 months before course %	Week before course %	Wave 1 interview %	Wave 2 interview %	Wave 3 interview %
In employment	30	7	28	34	45	24	5	17	21	28
Unemployed	33	69	46	41	33	44	69	55	43	39
Economically inactive	37	24	25	24	23	32	25	28	37	33
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	894	894	725	859	894	742	742	590	713	742

Table 5.9 Income by funding stream (priority 1 and 4)

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>				
Income	Funding stream			Total %
	ESF %	Match %	Other %	
Under £5,000	13	19	–	16
£5,000-£9,999	29	39	–	35
£10,000-£14,999	36	25	–	31
£15,000 or more	22	17	–	19
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	318	187	13	518

Estimates are not reported where the base size is less than 50.

Table 5.10 Type of contract by funding stream (priority 1 and 4)

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>				
Type of contract	Funding stream			Total %
	ESF %	Match %	Other %	
Permanent job	52	57	–	55
Temporary or casual job	19	25	–	22
Other	29	18	–	22
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	339	196	14	549

Estimates are not reported where the base size is less than 50.

There was no significant variation in the type of contract by funding stream within priority (Table 5.10).

Table 5.11 Hours of work by funding stream (priority 1 and 4)

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>				
Hours of work	Funding stream			Total %
	ESF %	Match %	Other %	
Over 31 hours a week	54	54	–	57
Less than 31 hours a week, but more than 16 hours	31	37	–	33
Less than 16 hours a week	15	9	–	10
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	339	196	14	549

Estimates are not reported where the base size is less than 50.

There were no differences in hours worked, between ESF and match participants in Priorities 1 and 4 (Table 5.11).

Table 5.12 Helpfulness of course by funding stream (priority 1 and 4)

ESF Cohort Survey

Hours of work	Funding stream			Total %
	ESF %	Match %	Other %	
Someone on the course suggested that participant applied for current job	23	20	–	25
Participant used contacts from the course when applied for current job	25	22	–	22
Someone from the course had contact with participant or their employer to discuss progress in new job	22	24	–	23
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	360	217	14	591

Estimates are not reported where the base size is less than 50.

Among participants from Priorities 1 and 4, there were no differences between ESF and match participants, in terms of having a job suggested to them by someone on their course, using contacts from the course when applying for a job, or having someone from the course keep in touch with them or their employer to discuss progress (Table 5.12).

Table 5.13 Changes in working conditions by funding stream (Priorities 2 and 5)*ESF Cohort Survey*

Changes in working conditions	Funding stream		Total %
	ESF %	Match %	
Moved to a permanent contract	17	23	21
Helpfulness of course?	63	80	74
Received a pay rise	60	75	70
Helpfulness of course?	46	73	65
Taken on higher skilled work for an existing employer	49	55	53
Helpfulness of course?	86	92	90
Taking on higher skilled work for another employer	11	15	14
Helpfulness of course?	88	85	86
Taken on responsibility for managing people	45	38	40
Helpfulness of course?	78	84	81
Improved job security	61	73	69
Helpfulness of course?	86	91	90
Increased hours	26	24	25
Helpfulness of course?	53	67	62
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	510	278	814

Match participants were more likely than ESF participants in Priorities 2 and 5 to have received a pay rise (75 per cent compared with 60 per cent) and seen improved job security (73 per cent compared with 61 per cent). Match participants were also more likely than ESF participants to say that the course had helped them with their pay rise (73 per cent compared with 46 per cent; Table 5.13).

6 Green training

Sustainable development is one of the European Social Fund (ESF) cross-cutting themes. In the Wave 3 interview, respondents were asked about any training that they may have received on green issues such as conserving resources and energy sustainability. This chapter explores the contribution of ESF courses to the environmental sector. It examines how many participants have received green training on their ESF course or since the course, and the extent to which participants jobs are in the green sector.

6.1 Green skills training

6.1.1 Green skills training on ESF course

Participants were asked whether their ESF course had included ‘any training about any environmental or green issues at work?’

Overall, 14 per cent of participants said their ESF course had included training about environmental or green issues: 11 per cent were able to answer positively outright and a further three per cent went on, in response to a list of more detailed questions, to identify one or more green skills which had been included in the course (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1 Green skills training on course by priority

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>					
	Priority				Total %
	1 %	2 %	4 %	5 %	
Green skills training on course					
Yes	8	25	10	21	11
No	83	70	83	74	81
Not sure – later no	6	2	4	4	6
Not sure – later yes	3	3	3	*	3
<i>Unweighted base</i>	1,380	923	319	114	2,736

Those who had studied courses funded under Priorities 2 and 5 were more likely than others to have received green skills training on their course (Table 6.1).

The most frequently mentioned green issues were recycling (nine per cent), use of sustainable resources (eight per cent) and waste reduction (eight per cent), environmental legislation (seven per cent) and energy conservation (seven per cent). Using less water was mentioned by six per cent (Table 6.2).

Table 6.2 Topics covered by those studying green issues on ESF course

<i>ESF Cohort Survey Wave 3</i>	
Green issues covered on ESF course	Total %
Recycling	9
Use of sustainable resources	8
Waste reduction	8
Environmental legislation	7
Energy conservation	7
Using less water	6
Anything else	2
None of these	87
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>2,736</i>

6.1.2 Green skills training in current job

Employed participants seemed more able to say whether they had received any training or guidance about green issues in their current job: 23 per cent said they had and 76 per cent said they had not, with very few answering 'not sure' (Table 6.3).

Table 6.3 Green skills training in current job by priority

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>					
Green skills training post course	Priority				Total %
	1 %	2 %	4 %	5 %	
Yes	23	25	25	19	23
No	77	74	75	80	76
Not sure – later no	*	*	0	0	*
Not sure – later yes	1	*	0	1	*
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>519</i>	<i>809</i>	<i>103</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>1,531</i>

The green training in current employment appeared to focus particularly on recycling (18 per cent), reducing waste (17 per cent), energy conservation (15 per cent) and use of sustainable resources (14 per cent). Using less water and environmental legislation were mentioned less frequently (Table 6.4).

Table 6.4 Topics covered by training on green issues in current job

<i>ESF Cohort Survey Wave 3</i>	
Green issues covered in current job	Total %
Recycling more	18
Reducing waste	17
Energy conservation	15
Use of sustainable resources	14
Using less water	8
Environmental legislation	7
Anything else	3
None of these	78
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1,531</i>

6.2 Employment in green sector

Participants who were in paid work or self-employed were asked whether the company or organisation they worked for offered any green products or services. This included:

- Recycling collection or processing.
- Other waste collection or disposal.
- Water supply or waste water treatment.
- Pollution control or environmental/energy management.
- Cleaning the environment in any other way.
- Carbon capture, storage or carbon finance.
- Building technologies to reduce energy use.
- Alternative fuels or energy sources (including making or supplying renewable energy).

Overall, 45 per cent of working participants said they worked in organisations offering one or more green products or services (Table 6.5). There were no significant differences according to ESF priority.

Table 6.5 Green sector work by priority

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>					
Green sector work	Priority				Total %
	1 %	2 %	4 %	5 %	
Yes	45	46	53	48	45
No	47	48	45	49	48
Don't know	8	6	2	3	7
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	<i>521</i>	<i>810</i>	<i>103</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>1,534</i>

The most common forms of green services/products were recycling (34 per cent) and other waste disposal (25 per cent).

Table 6.6 Green products/services offered by current employer

<i>ESF Cohort Survey Wave 3</i>	
Green products/services offered	Total %
Recycling	34
Other waste collection/disposal	25
Water supply or waste water treatment	10
Pollution control or environmental/energy management	18
Building technology to reduce energy use	11
Other environmental cleaning	11
Alternative fuel/energy	7
Carbon capture, storage or finance	4
None of these	55
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1,531</i>

6.3 Conclusion

Around one in ten participants had undertaken training about environmental or green issues at work as part of their course. This was more common among Priority 2 and 5 participants which probably reflects direct links between their employment and the course they undertake. Indeed just under one half of Priority 2 and 5 participants said they worked in organisations offering green products and services. A similar proportion of Priority 1 and 4 participants also worked in such organisations, suggesting that the training they received may have facilitated their entry into these jobs. As such, the analysis in this chapter suggests that ESF and match funded provision has been successful in improving both skills and employment in green related sectors.

7 Conclusions

This final chapter summarises the findings in terms of the key outcomes that have been observed for European Social Fund (ESF) participants between them starting on the course and the Wave 3 interview. Where applicable, these are compared to the ESF results targets against which the performance of the programme is assessed.

7.1 Priorities 1 and 4

Priorities 1 and 4 aim to extend employment opportunities, and tackle barriers to work faced by people with disabilities or health conditions, lone parents, people aged 50 and over, ethnic minorities, people with no or low qualifications, young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and other disadvantaged groups, including people experiencing multiple disadvantages.

By the Wave 3 interview, 99 per cent of Priority 1 and Priority 4 participants were no longer on their course; however, 29 and 25 per cent respectively had left early prior to completion. This was more common among participants with a greater number of disadvantages. Being aged 16-19, not having prior qualifications and not being in employment were found to be particularly associated with non-completion once other factors were taken into consideration. While a proportion of participants left early because they found a job, this suggests that further support may be necessary to encourage continued participation among some of these groups.

Priorities 1 and 4 have a number of results targets related to employment. For Priority 1, there are targets of 22 per cent of participants in employment on leaving the course and 26 per cent in employment six months after this. The findings from the ESF Cohort Study suggest that the programme has been successful in this regard. While the study does not provide us with a snapshot of participants' employment status at the exact point of leaving and six months later, the employment status of participants at the various Waves is in line with these targets (Table 7.1). Similarly, for Priority 4 participants, targets were set at 24 per cent in employment on leaving and 30 per cent in employment six months later. Once again the survey data suggest that these targets have been met.

Table 7.1 Proportion of course leavers in employment

	<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>		
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
	%	%	%
Priority 1			
All those who have left course by Wave 1	22	–	–
All those who have left course by Wave 2	21	27	–
All those who have left course by Wave 3	20	25	32
Priority 4			
All those who have left course by Wave 1	22	–	–
All those who have left course by Wave 2	25	25	–
All those who have left course by Wave 3	29	29	34

This table draws upon figures from all three reports.

In addition to this, the Wave 3 findings show that the proportion of participants in employment had further increased since Wave 2, in spite of the challenges posed by the prevailing economic climate. While there were some participants who had become unemployed since the Wave 2 interview, and some who had found employment, 80 per cent of those Priority 1 participants in employment at the Wave 2 interview were still in employment at Wave 3 (and 76 per cent of Priority 4 participants who were in work at Wave 2). This suggests that employment outcomes were sustained between these Waves for the majority of participants.

Increases in employment were observed across all of the target groups (Table 7.2). Among the target groups, the lowest Wave 3 employment rates were reported for those participants with disabilities or health conditions and those aged 50 or older. Indeed, even once other factors were controlled for, having a physical or mental disability had a negative association with being in employment at Wave 3, presenting a considerable barrier to employment in many cases.

Table 7.2 Proportion in employment by target group (Priority 1)

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>			
Target group	Wave 1 %	Wave 2 %	Wave 3 %
Participants with disabilities or health conditions	13	15	24
Lone parents	27	28	36
Participants aged 50 or older	15	16	23
Ethnic minority participants	19	24	31
Female participants	28	31	34

Analysis was not undertaken looking at NEET due to small sample sizes.

Of those Priority 1 and 4 participants not in work at the time of the Wave 3 interview, 66 per cent were looking for work, with a further 22 per cent wanting work although not currently looking. Intentions among this group were similar to those observed at Wave 2, as were their self rated likelihood of finding work and confidence in finding work.

At this stage, as at previous Waves, the most cited barriers to getting a job were the lack of jobs locally, a lack of recent work experience and not having the right skills. While these barriers are based on participants’ perceptions, consideration of local opportunities and matching skills training and work experience opportunities with these is clearly important in helping to ensure that ESF provision assists participants move towards work. At the time of the Wave 3 interview, access to and the cost of transportation and childcare was also cited as a barrier by some.

7.2 Priorities 2 and 5

The aim of Priorities 2 and 5 is to improve the qualifications and skills of workers without basic skills and with no or low qualifications. Priority 2 particularly focuses on people who are least likely to receive training (such as workers in sectors with weak training records and part-time workers) and people at a disadvantage in the workplace (such as people with disabilities or health conditions, people aged over 50 and people from ethnic minorities). Priority 5 focuses upon workers without basic skills, workers who do not have level 2 qualifications relevant to their current occupation, and men and women who want to enter non-traditional occupations. Priority 5 also supports Higher Education and Skills activities in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

By the Wave 3 interview, 93 per cent of Priority 2 participants and 99 per cent of Priority 5 participants were no longer on their course; although five and 11 per cent respectively had left early prior to completion. At this point in time, 80 per cent of Priority 2 participants and 73 per cent of Priority 5 participants had achieved a full qualification as part of the course, predominantly at Levels 2 and 3.

A number of results targets relating to qualification acquisition exist for these priorities. For both priorities, there is a 40 per cent target for the proportion of participants without a prior level 2 qualification gaining a full level 2 qualification. Similarly a target of 30 per cent exists for achievement of a full level 3 qualification among those with only a level 2 prior to the course. The findings from the cohort study suggest that these targets have been met (Table 7.3).

Table 7.3 Full qualification gained by qualification level prior to course (Priorities 2 and 5)

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>		
Qualification gained	Level 2 %	Below Level 2 %
NQF Level 4 and above	2	5
NQF Level 3	39	13
NQF Level 2	36	40
<i>Unweighted base</i>	297	266

Below Level 2 includes those with no qualifications or foreign qualifications.

In addition to the achievement of full qualifications, 18 per cent of Priority 2 participants gained units/modules toward a qualification at Level 2 or higher, and 21 per cent of Priority 5 participants.

Priority 2 provision did aid participants in the targeted groups gain qualifications (Table 7.4), although the rates of achievement of full qualifications were lower among those with disabilities or health conditions. This group were also more likely than other groups to stop studying prior to getting either a full or partial qualification.

Table 7.4 Qualifications by target group (Priority 2)

<i>ESF Cohort Survey Wave 3</i>						
Target group	Full			Partial		
	Level 4 or above %	Level 3 %	Level 2 %	Level 4 or above %	Level 3 %	Level 2 %
Participants with disabilities or health conditions	6	12	44	7	1	21
Participants aged 50 or older	9	18	22	7	1	4
Ethnic minority participants	14	12	46	12	2	22
Female participants	8	32	37	8	6	6
Female part-time participants	10	37	36	11	11	4

A relatively large proportion of Priority 2 and 5 participants reported positive changes in their working conditions since going on the course – particularly in relation to job security (69 per cent), pay (64 per cent) and taking on higher skilled work for their existing employer (51 per cent). Furthermore, the majority who had experienced such a positive change felt that the course had helped them to achieve this. Participants also reported other positive changes such as increased hours, taking on responsibility for others, movement to a permanent contract and taking on higher skilled work for another employer. These positive changes suggest that the skills and qualifications acquired via the ESF provision have increased the value of participants to their employer and the labour market, although the degree to which these changes are attributable to this cannot be ascertained.

7.3 Concluding comments

Wave 3 of the ESF Cohort Study aimed to provide information on the longer term outcomes of provision and whether the outcome identified in earlier waves have been sustained.

Participants in ESF provision have reported improved employment prospects with some moving into employment since the course, evidence of progression within the workplace among those already in employment and the development of higher level skills and qualification acquisition among others.

While qualifications gained are a permanent achievement, employment outcomes can be transitory. However, the study suggests that the majority of those in employment at the previous wave have remained in employment at Wave 3 (and, in a period of economic difficulty, this proportion may be lower than would otherwise have been). Further improvements have also been observed since Wave 2 among those who have been in employment since the start of the course. Similarly, among those who have not secured employment, work search activity remains at similar levels to those seen at Wave; and levels of motivation to look for work and confidence in finding work appear to have been sustained. These outcomes have been observed across the board including amongst those participants facing disadvantages that hinder their labour market activities.

On the basis of the cohort study it appears that ESF and match-funded provision has had a positive and sustained impact upon participants in line with the targets that were set. The findings from the study do highlight some areas which could be given further consideration for future programmes with a view to improving outcomes. This includes additional efforts to engage younger participants and those ‘made to’ go on the course, additional support for participants who face certain disadvantages linked with poorer outcomes (i.e. those with disabilities or long term health problems, the long term unemployed and those with no prior qualifications), particularly provision to increase their confidence and greater work experience opportunities.

Appendix A

Characteristics of Wave 3 respondents

The following tables provide an overview of the characteristics of European Social Fund (ESF) participants. Further discussion of the characteristics of ESF respondents is available in the Wave 1 and Wave 2 reports. Please note that estimates are not reported where the base size is less than 50 cases.

Table A.1 ESF Priority by region

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>					
Region	Priority				Total %
	1 %	2 %	4 %	5 %	
East of England	5	5	0	0	5
London	17	1	0	0	14
East Midlands	8	2	0	0	7
North East	8	2	0	0	7
North West	15	47	0	0	19
South East	7	4	0	0	6
South West	10	3	0	0	8
West Midlands	10	10	0	0	10
Yorkshire and the Humber	8	1	0	0	7
Merseyside	8	20	0	0	10
South Yorkshire	4	5	0	0	4
Cornwall	0	0	100	100	3
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	1,283	924	319	114	

Table A.2 Region by funding stream

ESF Cohort Survey Wave 3

Region	Funding stream within Priority						Total %
	Priority 1 and 4			Priority 2 and 5			
	ESF %	Match %	Other %	ESF %	Match %	Other %	
East of England	4	6	–	3	2	–	5
London	9	19	–	2	*	–	14
East Midlands	6	6	–	6	*	–	7
North East	8	8	–	5	*	–	7
North West	13	15	–	9	60	–	19
South East	5	8	–	4	4	–	6
South West	9	10	–	8	1	–	8
West Midlands	26	6	–	29	1	–	10
Yorkshire and the Humber	4	10	–	0	1	–	7
Merseyside	4	4	–	19	19	–	10
South Yorkshire	8	3	–	1	7	–	4
Cornwall	6	2	–	15	6	–	3
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	909	751	31	646	352	43	2,740

Table A.3 Age and gender by Priority

ESF Cohort Survey

Age and gender	Priority				Total %
	1 %	2 %	4 %	5 %	
16-19	12	33	8	12	15
20-24	26	23	14	9	25
25-34	16	10	22	26	16
35-49	28	22	38	34	28
50+	17	12	17	20	16
Male	64	54	58	49	63
Female	36	46	42	51	37
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	1,383	924	319	114	2,740

Table A.4 Age and gender by funding stream

ESF Cohort Survey Wave 3

Age and gender	Funding stream within Priority						Total %
	Priority 1 and 4			Priority 2 and 5			
	ESF %	Match %	Other %	ESF %	Match %	Other %	
16-19	13	13	–	1	46	–	15
20-24	12	30	–	8	28	–	25
25-34	22	15	–	17	9	–	16
35-49	38	25	–	50	11	–	28
50+	16	18	–	24	6	–	16
Male	60	65	–	54	52	–	63
Female	40	35	–	46	48	–	37
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	909	751	31	646	352	43	2,740

Table A.5 Ethnicity by Priority

ESF Cohort Survey

Ethnic group	Priority				Total %
	1 %	2 %	4 %	5 %	
White	81	94	97	98	83
Indian	2	1	*	1	2
Pakistani	3	2	0	0	3
Bangladeshi	1	*	0	0	1
Other Asian	2	*	*	0	1
All Asian	8	3	1	1	7
Black Caribbean	3	1	*	0	3
Black African	4	*	*	0	4
Other black	*	*	0	0	*
All black	8	1	1	*	7
Mixed race	2	1	1	0	2
Chinese	*	0	0	1	*
Other	1	*	1	0	1
All ethnic minority groups	19	6	3	2	17
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	1,378	917	319	114	2,728

Table A.6 Ethnicity by funding stream

<i>ESF Cohort Survey Wave 3</i>							
Ethnicity	Funding stream within Priority						Total %
	Priority 1 and 4			Priority 2 and 5			
	ESF %	Match %	Other %	ESF %	Match %	Other %	
White	79	81	–	92	96	–	83
Indian	2	1	–	2	*	–	2
Pakistani	4	3	–	1	2	–	3
Bangladeshi	2	2	–	*	1	–	1
Other Asian	1	2	–	*	*	–	1
All Asian	9	8	–	4	3	–	3
Black Caribbean	3	4	–	2	*	–	3
Black African	5	4	–	1	*	–	4
Other black	*	*	–	*	0	–	*
All black	8	8	–	3	*	–	7
Mixed race	2	2	–	1	1	–	2
Chinese	*	*	–	*	0	–	*
Other	1	1	–	*	*	–	1
All ethnic minority groups	21	19	–	8	4	–	11
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	905	750	31	640	352	42	2,728

Table A.7 Participants with a disability or long-term limiting illness by Priority

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>					
Disability	Priority				Total %
	1 %	2 %	4 %	5 %	
No disability or long-term limiting illness (LTLI)	63	91	38	88	67
Physical disability	17	5	30	8	15
Learning disability/difficulty	2	1	6	0	2
Mental health problem	10	1	14	0	8
Long-term illness	22	3	30	7	19
Another type of disability or LTLI	3	1	3	0	2
Any disability or LTLI	37	9	62	12	33
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	1,378	921	318	114	2,731

Please note that participants were able to say an unlimited number of disabilities and illnesses so percentages sum to more than 100.

Table A.8 Disability and long-term limiting illness by funding stream

ESF Cohort Survey Wave 3

Disability	Funding stream within Priority							
	Priority 1 and 4				Priority 2 and 5			
	ESF %	Match %	Other %	Total %	ESF %	Match %	Other %	Total %
No disability or LTLI	68	57	–	61	90	90	–	66
Physical disability	17	18	–	17	4	5	–	15
Learning disability/ difficulty	3	2	–	2	*	1	–	2
Mental health problem	7	11	–	10	1	1	–	8
Long-term illness	15	24	–	22	6	4	–	19
Another type of disability or LTLI	1	3	–	3	*	1	–	2
Any disability or LTLI	32	43	–	39	10	10	–	34
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	907	748	31	1,686	645	351	43	2,733

Please note that participants were able to say an unlimited number of disabilities and illnesses so percentages sum to more than 100.

Table A.9 Lone parent status by Priority

ESF Cohort Survey

Lone parent status	Priority				
	1 %	2 %	4 %	5 %	Total %
Not lone parent	90	95	89	95	91
Lone parent	10	5	11	5	9
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	1,382	922	319	114	2,737

Table A.10 Lone parent status by funding stream within Priority

ESF Cohort Survey Wave 3

Lone parent status	Funding stream within Priority							
	Priority 1 and 4				Priority 2 and 5			
	ESF %	Match %	Other %	Total %	ESF %	Match %	Other %	Total %
Not lone parent	86	91	–	92	95	–	91	
Lone parent	14	9	–	8	5	–	9	
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	908	751	31	1,690	644	352	43	2,737

Table A.11 Caring responsibility status by Priority

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>					
Caring responsibilities	Priority				Total %
	1 %	2 %	4 %	5 %	
Not carer	92	94	88	93	92
Carer	8	6	12	7	8
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	1,379	924	319	114	2,736

Table A.12 Caring responsibility by funding stream

<i>ESF Cohort Survey Wave 3</i>							
Caring responsibilities	Funding stream within Priority						Total %
	Priority 1 and 4			Priority 2 and 5			
	ESF %	Match %	Other %	ESF %	Match %	Other %	
Not carer	87	93	–	88	96	–	92
Carer	13	7	–	12	4	–	8
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	907	750	30	646	352	43	2,736

Table A.13 Employment status by Priority (in week before course)

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>					
Employment status	Priority				Total %
	1 %	2 %	4 %	5 %	
NEET and aged 16-19 years	9	7	6	5	9
Long-term unemployed (aged 20+)	36	1	16	*	30
Unemployed (less than 12 months) (aged 20+)	25	7	19	*	21
Economically inactive (aged 20+)	24	9	55	5	22
In employment	6	76	4	89	18
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	1,383	924	319	114	2,740

Table A.14 Employment status by funding stream (in week before course)

ESF Cohort Survey Wave 3

Employment status	Funding stream within Priority						Total %
	Priority 1 and 4			Priority 2 and 5			
	ESF %	Match %	Other %	ESF %	Match %	Other %	
NEET and aged 16-19 years	10	9	–	1	10	–	9
Long-term unemployed (aged 20+)	30	38	–	2	1	–	30
Unemployed (less than 12 months) (aged 20+)	30	23	–	14	1	–	21
Economically inactive (aged 20+)	25	25	–	3	12	–	22
In employment	6	5	–	80	75	–	18
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	<i>909</i>	<i>751</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>646</i>	<i>352</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>2,740</i>

Table A.15 Employment status by age and gender (in week before course)

ESF Cohort Survey

Employment status	Age					Gender		Total %
	16-19 %	20-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50+ %	Male %	Female %	
NEET and aged 16-19 years	57	0	0	0	0	9	8	9
Long-term unemployed (aged 20+)	0	42	31	36	28	31	28	30
Unemployed (less than 12 months) (aged 20+)	0	33	31	20	18	28	11	21
Economically inactive (aged 20+)	20	8	21	28	36	16	32	22
In employment	23	17	18	15	17	15	22	18
All unemployed	*	75	62	56	46	59	39	51
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	<i>359</i>	<i>344</i>	<i>355</i>	<i>950</i>	<i>732</i>	<i>1,500</i>	<i>1,240</i>	<i>2,740</i>

Table A.16 Socio-economic group at baseline by funding stream (Priority 2)

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>				
Socio-economic group	Funding stream within Priority			
	Priority 2			
	ESF %	Match %	Other %	Total %
Higher/lower managerial and professions	45	18	–	27
Intermediate occupations/small employers	15	18	–	17
Lower supervisory and technical/semi-routine	32	41	–	38
Routine occupations	8	23	–	18
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	475	270	28	773

Table A.17 Socio-economic group at baseline by funding stream (Priority 5)

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>				
Socio-economic group	Funding stream within Priority			
	Priority 5			
	ESF %	Match %	Total %	
Higher/lower managerial and professions	45	–	34	
Intermediate occupations/small employers	25	–	17	
Lower supervisory and technical/semi-routine	23	–	42	
Routine occupations	7	–	7	
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	70	31	101	

Table A.18 Income at baseline by funding stream

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>				
Income	Funding stream within Priority			
	Priority 2 and 5			
	ESF %	Match %	Other %	Total %
Under £5,000	6	20	–	15
£5,000-£9,999	17	43	–	34
£10,000-£14,999	29	23	–	25
£15,000-£19,999	21	8	–	13
£20,000-£29,999	19	5	–	10
£30,000-£49,999	7	1	–	3
£50,000-£74,999	1	*	–	*
£75,000 or more	0	*	–	*
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	489	268	21	778

Table A.19 Part-time/full-time at baseline (Priorities 2 and 5)

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>				
	Funding stream within Priority			Total %
	Priority 2 and 5			
Hours of work	ESF %	Match %	Other %	
Over 31 hours a week	77	77	–	77
Less than 31 hours a week, but more than 16 hours	19	14	–	15
Less than 16 hours a week	4	9	–	7
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	545	301	28	874

Table A.20 Part-time/full-time at baseline by gender (Priority 2)

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>				
	Funding stream within Priority			Total %
	Priority 2			
Hours of work	Male %	Female %		
Over 31 hours a week	89	67		78
Less than 31 hours a week, but more than 16 hours	6	24		15
Less than 16 hours a week	5	10		7
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	413	360		773

Table A.21 Part-time/full-time at baseline by gender (Priority 5)

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>				
	Funding stream within Priority			Total %
	Priority 5			
Hours of work	ESF %	Match %		
Over 31 hours a week	87	63		75
Less than 31 hours a week, but more than 16 hours	3	32		17
Less than 16 hours a week	10	5		8
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	44	57		101

Table A.22 Size of employer at baseline (Priorities 2 and 5)

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>				
Size of employer	Funding stream within Priority Priority 2 and 5			Total %
	ESF %	Match %	Other %	
1-9 employees	16	36	–	30
10-24 employees	23	24	–	24
25-249 employees	36	31	–	33
250-499 employees	12	3	–	6
500 or more employees	13	6	–	8
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	477	279	22	778

Table A.23 Type of contract at baseline (Priorities 2 and 5)

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>				
Type of contract	Funding stream within Priority Priority 2 and 5			Total %
	ESF %	Match %	Other %	
A permanent job	68	65	–	66
A temporary or casual job	9	9	–	9
Other	23	26	–	25
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	494	268	25	787

Table A.24 Length of time out of work at baseline (Priorities 1 and 4)

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>				
Length of time out of work	Funding stream within Priority Priority 1 and 4			Total %
	ESF %	Match %	Other %	
Less than three months	14	6	-	8
Between three and less than six months	14	12	-	12
Between six and less than 12 months	15	17	-	17
Between 12 months and less than two years	14	17	-	16
Two years or more	29	30	-	30
Never had a (full-time) job	14	18	-	17
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	760	666	26	1,452

Table A.25 Whether looking for work by priority (in week before course)

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>			
Whether looking for work	Priority		Total %
	1 %	4 %	
Looking for work	79	52	78
Wanting work	14	30	15
Not looking for or wanting work	7	18	7
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	1,189	288	1,477

Table A.26 Whether looking for work by funding stream (in week before course)

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>				
Whether looking for work	Funding stream within priority			Total %
	Priority 1 and 4			
	ESF %	Match %	Other %	
Looking for work	84	76	85	78
Wanting work	9	15	11	14
Not looking for or wanting work	7	8	4	8
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	815	723	29	1,567

Table A.27 Whether looking for work by gender (in week before course)

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>			
Whether looking for work	Funding stream within priority		Total %
	Priority 2		
	Male %	Female %	
Looking for work	83	70	78
Wanting work	13	18	15
Not looking for or wanting work	5	12	7
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	851	626	1,477

Table A.28 Barriers to work at baseline by priority

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>			
Barriers	Priority		Total %
	1 %	4 %	
Did not have the right skills	57	51	57
Weren't any jobs where I live	68	59	68
No recent experience of working	58	44	58
Could not find suitable/affordable childcare (parents of dependent children only)	41	38	41
Problems with transport or the cost of transport	37	43	37
Other	57	51	57
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	1,189	288	1,477

Table A.29 Barriers to work at baseline by age and gender

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>							
Barriers	Age					Gender	
	16-19 %	20-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50+ %	Male %	Female %
Did not have the right skills	67	63	66	51	44	57	58
Weren't any jobs where I live	67	77	72	62	59	71	61
No recent experience of working	71	70	57	54	38	54	65
Could not find suitable/affordable childcare (parents of dependent children only)	0	0	38	27	0	17	37
Problems with transport or the cost of transport	41	46	43	39	36	42	38
Other	35	49	24	43	26	31	47
<i>Any barrier</i>	97	98	92	85	77	91	87
<i>No barrier</i>	3	2	8	15	23	9	13
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	259	213	185	488	377	875	647

Table A.30 Barriers to work at baseline by disadvantaged groups

ESF Cohort Survey

Barriers	Disadvantage									
	Not lone parent	Lone parent	Not carer	Carer	Not ethnic minority	Ethnic minority	No disability or LTLI	Has disability or LTLI	Has qualifications	No qualifications
Did not have the right skills	58	60	58	57	57	62	62	52	57	67
Weren't any jobs where I live	65	62	66	57	66	62	70	56	6565	
No recent experience of working	54	61	56	46	54	61	58	50	55	53
Could not find suitable/affordable childcare (parents of dependent children only)	23	39	26	40	29	28	31	25	27	41
Problems with transport or the cost of transport	39	31	38	40	39	33	38	37	38	38
Other	40	43	42	35	42	35	45	35	42	33
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	<i>1,382</i>	<i>139</i>	<i>1,360</i>	<i>159</i>	<i>1,267</i>	<i>250</i>	<i>902</i>	<i>616</i>	<i>1,297</i>	<i>225</i>

Table A.31 Attitudes to work at baseline (Priorities 1 and 4)

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>				
Whether thought that work was important	Funding stream within Priority			
	Priority 1 and 4			
	ESF %	Match %	Other %	Total %
Very important	80	71	81	73
Quite important	17	24	19	22
Not important	2	4	0	3
Not at all important	1	1	0	1
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	758	677	26	1,461

Table A.32 Multiple disadvantage by priority

<i>ESF Cohort Survey</i>					
Disadvantages	Priority				Total %
	1 %	2 %	4 %	5 %	
No disadvantage	13	62	11	57	21
One disadvantage	27	26	24	29	27
Two disadvantages	27	9	34	12	24
Three disadvantages	18	2	21	2	15
Four disadvantages	11	*	8	0	9
Five or more disadvantages	4	*	2	0	3
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	1,383	924	319	114	2,740

Table A.33 Participants with multiple disadvantages by funding stream

<i>ESF Cohort Survey Wave 3</i>							
Multiple disadvantages	Funding stream within Priority						
	Priority 1 and 4			Priority 2 and 5			Total %
	ESF %	Match %	Other %	ESF %	Match %	Other %	
No disadvantage	13	12	–	47	67	–	21
One disadvantage	29	26	–	34	22	–	27
Two disadvantages	29	27	–	14	8	–	24
Three disadvantages	18	19	–	4	3	–	15
Four disadvantages	8	12	–	1	*	–	9
Five or more disadvantages	3	4	–	1	0	–	3
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	909	751	31	646	352	43	2,740

Table A.34 Participants with multiple disadvantages by age and gender

ESF Cohort Survey

Multiple disadvantages	Age					Gender		Total %
	16-19 %	20-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50+ %	Male %	Female %	
No disadvantage	33	34	21	17	0	23	19	21
One disadvantage	36	33	35	21	12	29	23	27
Two disadvantages	22	21	19	33	21	23	26	24
Three disadvantages	5	8	12	18	32	13	19	15
Four disadvantages	3	2	8	9	26	9	9	9
Five or more disadvantages	1	1	5	2	9	2	5	3
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	359	317	350	982	732	1,500	1,240	2,740

Appendix B

Response rates

At Wave 3 a total of 2,771 respondents were interviewed, 2,692 by telephone and 79 face-to-face. This represents 58 per cent of the issued sample. The response rate based on in-scope cases (i.e. total eligible cases assuming that all non-contacts were eligible) was also 58 per cent.

Outcome group ¹	n	Percentage of issued %	Percentage of in-scope %
Total issued	4,807	100	
Ineligible respondents	35	1	
Total eligible (in-scope cases)	4,772	99	100
Full interviews	2,740	57	57
Partial interviews (excluded from analysis)	31	1	1
Total interviews	2,771	58	58
Non contact	1,515	32	32
Refusal	405	8	8
Other unproductive	115	2	2

¹ **Response group descriptions** – Ineligible outcomes include people who say that they have not been on a work related training course, deceased respondents, and other people who say they are ineligible.

Non contact outcomes include no contact with any residents, telecommunication problems with contacting respondents and other reasons for not being able to contact respondents.

Refusals include all refusals (e.g. to the office, at the introduction or during the interview).

Other unproductive outcomes include people who are away or ill throughout the fieldwork period and people who are unable to do the telephone interview due to language difficulties, learning or physical difficulties.

Appendix C

Definitions

Carer	Respondents who have any caring responsibilities for a member of their immediate family or a close relative who has any long-standing illness, disability or infirmity. This may be a member of the household or someone who lives elsewhere.
Computer assisted telephone interview (CATI)	The mode of interview used. The questionnaire is a computer program that specifies the questions, range and structure of permissible answers and instructions for navigating through the questionnaire.
Disability or long-term limiting illness (LTLI)	Respondents who report a long-standing illness, health problem, mental or physical disability or infirmity, which limits their daily activities or the work they can do.
Economically inactive	People who are neither in employment or unemployment (only if aged over 20) and includes students. This includes those looking after a home, retired and permanently unable to work.
Employment status	Measures based on the International Labour Organisation (ILO) definition of economic activity and European Social Fund (ESF) targets. Status is derived based on respondent's main activity.
Ethnic minority groups	Results from this survey combine the 16-point census classification into two summary groups. All non-white ethnic groups are included in the two-group classification as 'ethnic minority groups'.
Full-time work	Respondents who work 31 hours or more per week.
In employment	People who are employees, self-employed, on a Government supported training scheme or an unpaid family worker.
Lone parents	People who said that they did not live with a husband, wife or partner and who had children living with them.
Long-term unemployed	Unemployed for 12 months or more and aged 20 years or over.
Multiple disadvantages	The number of 'disadvantaged groups' that a respondent belongs to. These include people from an ethnic minority group, those who do not normally speak English at home; those with a disability or LTLI; lone parents; those with caring responsibilities; those aged over 50; long-term unemployed people (for 12 months or more); young people classified as not in education, employment or training (NEET); returners to the labour market; offenders and ex-offenders; those with issues with alcohol or substance abuse; and those with citizenship and visa issues.

National Qualifications Framework	The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) sets out the levels against which a qualification can be recognised in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
NEET and aged 16-19	Not in employment, education or training and aged 16 to 19 years.
NVQ equivalent qualification Level	Most qualifications can be assigned to a standardised qualification level, often referred to as an NVQ equivalent level.
Part-time work	Respondents who work less than 31 hours per week.
Qualification levels	<p>Qualification levels have been coded as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 1 qualifications include: NVQ qualifications at Level 1; NVQ level unknown/other; Edexcel qualifications at Level 1; Edexcel level unknown/other; GNVQ Foundation Level; GNVQ level unknown/other; OCR Vocational Certificate; OCR level unknown/other; BTEC Introductory Certificate or Diploma; BTEC level unknown/other; City and Guild Level 1 or Part 1; City and Guild level unknown/other; AS Level pass; GCSE and Short Course GCSE pass (for a Level 2 qualification, five GCSEs are required at grades A-C); other vocational or work related qualifications at NVQ Level 1 (as identified by the respondent); other vocational or work related qualifications where NVQ level unknown. • Level 2 qualifications include: NVQ qualifications at Level 2; Edexcel qualifications at Level 2; GNVQ Intermediate; OCR Diploma; BTEC First Certificate or Diploma; City and Guild Level 2 or Part 2, Craft or Intermediate; A Level pass/award pending; other vocational or work related qualifications at NVQ Level 2 (as identified by the respondent). • Level 3 qualifications include: NVQ qualifications at Level 3; Edexcel qualifications at Level 3; GNVQ Advanced Award; OCR Advanced Diploma or Certificate; BTEC National Award, Certificate or Diploma; City and Guild Level 3 or Part 3, Final or Advanced Craft; Access qualification; other vocational or work related qualifications at NVQ Level 3 (as identified by the respondent). • Level 4 and above qualifications include: NVQ qualifications at Levels 4 and 5; Edexcel qualifications at Levels 4 and 5; BTEC Foundation Degree or HNC; PGCEs; degrees; post graduate qualifications; nursing qualifications; other vocational or work related qualifications at NVQ Levels 4 and 5 (as identified by the respondent).
Unemployed (less than 12 months)	Unemployed for less than 12 months and aged 20 years or over.

Appendix D

Multivariate analysis

Summary

The modelling was undertaken in two stages. First, a stepwise logistic regression model was used to identify the variables that predicted the outcome variable (e.g. course completion/qualifications gained/finding employment). The stepwise model identified the variables that were significantly related to the outcome variable, narrowing down the range of variables that were entered in the model at the second stage.

At the second stage, these variables were entered into a backwards regression model using the Complex Sample function of SPSS. This approach allows elements of the sample design (such as the stratification) to be taken into consideration when generating standard errors. The model was further refined by dropping any variables that were not significant (had a p-value more than 0.1).

Details of the two stages of modelling for all three models are given below.

Model 1: Predictors of course completion

The aim of this analysis was to understand the predictors of participants fully completing their course.

Variables added in Stage 1 (stepwise logistic regression)

As an initial step, age, gender, funding stream and region were locked into the model. The following variables were then added to the model using stepwise logistic regression:

- Employment status at the time of the week before the course.
- Whether the participant has prior qualifications.
- Whether the participant has a dependent child.
- Whether the participant was an offender or ex-offender.
- Satisfaction with the course, in terms of quality.
- Satisfaction with the course, in terms of level.
- Intensity of the course.

The following variables were tested but were not found to be significant:

- Ethnicity.
- Lone parent status.
- Whether the participant was a carer.
- Disability variables (e.g. whether the respondent had a physical disability, learning disability, mental health problem, long-term limiting illness or other disability).
- Income.
- Tenure.
- Size of employer.
- Whether the participant thought that the course was relevant to their needs.
- Why participants had signed up to the course.
- Whether the participant gained practical help in finding work on the course.

Variables removed at Stage 2 (logistic regression with complex survey design)

The following variables were removed at Stage 2 (as they were found to be not significant):

- whether the participant was an offender or ex-offender;
- satisfaction with the course, in terms of level.

Table D.1 Final model output – predictors of course completion

Variable	Odds ratio	Linearised Std Error	P Value	Sig
Gender				
Female				
Male	0.82	0.10	0.060	*
Age				
16 to 19				
20 to 24	1.38	0.15	0.038	**
25 to 34	1.48	0.17	0.024	**
35 to 49	2.15	0.16	0.000	**
50 or over	1.55	0.17	0.012	**
Funding stream				
ESF				
Match/other	1.61	0.13	0.000	**
Region				
East of England	1.85	0.38	0.102	NS
London	0.56	0.31	0.065	*
East Midlands	0.65	0.33	0.194	NS
North East	1.19	0.34	0.620	NS
North West	0.84	0.31	0.576	NS
South East	0.66	0.34	0.223	NS
South West	1.34	0.34	0.390	NS
West Midlands	1.23	0.32	0.528	NS
Yorkshire and the Humber	0.79	0.34	0.493	NS
Merseyside	2.60	0.36	0.008	**
South Yorkshire	1.04	0.37	0.912	NS
Cornwall				
Prior qualifications				
Yes				
No	0.53	0.12	0.000	**
Dependent child				
No				
Yes	1.56	0.13	0.001	**
Satisfaction with course quality				
Very satisfied				
Fairly satisfied	0.71	0.11	0.003	**
Neither satisfied/dissatisfied	0.65	0.16	0.009	**
Fairly dissatisfied	0.59	0.21	0.013	**
Very dissatisfied	0.30	0.16	0.000	**

Continued

Table D.1 Continued

Variable	Odds ratio	Linearised Std Error	P Value	Sig
Employment status				
In employment				
Unemployed	0.59	0.16	0.001	**
Economically inactive	0.61	0.17	0.004	**
Intensity of course				
Less than half a day				
Between half and one day	1.45	0.18	0.034	**
More than one, less than two days	0.88	0.21	0.530	NS
More than two, less than five days	0.61	0.14	0.000	**
More than five days	1.19	0.17	0.319	NS

* Significant to the 90 per cent level.

** Significant at least to the 95 per cent level.

Model 2: Predictors of gaining full qualifications on the course

The aim of this analysis was to understand the predictors of Priority 2 and 5 participants gaining full qualifications on the course.

Variables added in Stage 1 (stepwise logistic regression)

As an initial step, age, gender, funding stream and region were locked into the model. The following variables were then added to the model using stepwise logistic regression:

- Whether the participant gained work skills on the course.
- Satisfaction with the course, in terms of quality.
- Intensity of the course.
- Lone parent status.
- Tenure.

The following variables were tested but were not found to be significant:

- Ethnicity.
- Whether the participant was a carer.
- Whether the participant was an offender or ex-offender.
- Disability variables (e.g. whether the respondent had a physical disability, learning disability, mental health problem, long-term limiting illness or other disability).
- Whether the participant had qualifications before the course.
- Whether the participant had dependent children.
- Whether the participant thought that the course was relevant to their needs.

- Satisfaction with the course, in terms of level.
- Why participants had signed up to the course.
- Whether the participant gained confidence on the course.
- Whether the participant gained practical help in finding work on the course.
- Income.
- Size of employer.
- Employment status 12 months before the course (in employment/unemployed/inactive).
- Employment status at the time of the Wave 3 interview (full-time/part-time/not in employment).

Variables removed at Stage 2 (logistic regression with complex survey design)

The following variables were removed at Stage 2 (as they were found to be not significant):

- satisfaction with the course, in terms of quality.

Table D.2 Final model output – predictors of gaining full qualifications

Variable	Odds ratio	Linearised Std Error	P Value	Sig
Gender				
Female				
Male	1.72	0.19	0.005	**
Age				
16 to 19				
20 to 24	1.88	0.39	0.105	NS
25 to 34	0.70	0.44	0.405	NS
35 to 49	0.49	0.43	0.089	*
Over 50	0.62	0.44	0.287	NS
Funding stream				
ESF				
Match/other	2.61	0.26	0.000	**
Region				
East of England	0.47	0.42	0.073	*
London	0.97	0.84	0.968	NS
East Midlands	0.70	0.55	0.526	NS
North East	1.83	0.61	0.324	NS
North West	1.14	0.33	0.703	NS
South East	0.98	0.46	0.972	NS
South West	0.73	0.45	0.488	NS
West Midlands	0.78	0.34	0.460	NS
Merseyside	0.80	0.34	0.505	NS
South Yorkshire	2.27	0.52	0.114	NS
Cornwall				

Continued

Table D.2 Continued

Variable	Odds ratio	Linearised Std Error	P Value	Sig
Lone parent				
No				
Yes	0.26	0.54	0.012	**
Tenure				
Own outright				
Buying with mortgage	2.19	0.26	0.002	**
Renting	1.16	0.29	0.616	NS
Neither owner/renter	1.80	0.33	0.076	*
Improved work skills				
No				
Yes	4.77	0.27	0.000	**
Intensity of course				
Less than half a day				
Between half and one day	0.63	0.23	0.039	**
More than one, less than two days	0.34	0.31	0.000	**
More than two, less than five days	0.97	0.30	0.918	NS
More than five days	0.42	0.33	0.007	**

* Significant to the 90 per cent level.

** Significant at least to the 95 per cent level.

Model 3: Predictors of being in employment at the time of the Wave 3 interview

This analysis aimed to understand the predictors of Priority 1 and 4 participants (who had been unemployed or inactive in the week before the course) being in employment at the time of the Wave 3 interview.

Variables added in Stage 1 (stepwise logistic regression)

Firstly, age, gender, funding stream and region were locked into the model. The following variables were then added to the model using stepwise logistic regression:

- Whether the participant had a physical disability.
- Whether the participant had a mental health issue.
- Whether the participant had qualifications.
- Length of unemployment.
- Whether participants said that lack of experience was a barrier to them finding work.
- Time spent on the course.
- Why participants had signed up to the course.
- Whether the participant gained work skills on the course.
- Whether the participant had gained confidence on the course.

The following variables were tested but were not found to be significant:

- Ethnicity.
- Whether the participant had a learning difficulty or other type of disability.
- Whether the participant had a long-term limiting illness.
- Lone parent status.
- Whether the respondent was a carer.
- Whether the participant had dependent children.
- Whether the participant was a returner to the labour market.
- Whether the participant was an offender or ex-offender.
- Tenure.
- Attitudes to work (i.e. whether the respondent thought that finding work was important).
- Whether participants said that lack of skills was a barrier to them finding work.
- Whether participants said that lack of jobs in their local area was a barrier to them finding work.
- Whether participants said that access to transport was a barrier to them finding work.
- Whether participants said that lack of affordable/suitable childcare was a barrier to them finding work.
- Employment status 12 months before the course.
- Where participants heard about the course.
- Whether the participant thought that the course was relevant to their needs.
- Whether the participant had gained practical help in finding work on the course.
- Satisfaction with the course in terms of level.
- Satisfaction with the course in terms of quality.
- Highest qualification gained on the course.
- Intensity of the course.
- Whether the participant finished the course or left early.
- Time since finished the course.

Variables removed at Stage 2 (logistic regression with complex survey design)

The following variables were removed at Stage 2 (as they were found to be not significant):

- Whether the participant gained work skills on the course.

Table D.3 Final model output – predictors of being in employment at Wave 3

Variable	Odds ratio	Linearised Std Error	P Value	Sig
Gender				
Female				
Male	1.56	0.14	0.001	**
Age				
16 to 19	1.53	0.29	0.140	NS
20 to 49	1.25	0.19	0.246	NS
Over 50				
Funding stream				
ESF				
Match	0.74	0.17	0.081	*
Other	0.47	0.40	0.057	*
Region				
East of England	1.89	0.48	0.185	NS
London	0.83	0.44	0.683	NS
East Midlands	0.83	0.47	0.697	NS
North East	0.79	0.47	0.616	NS
North West	1.04	0.44	0.933	NS
South East	2.09	0.47	0.117	NS
South West	0.97	0.46	0.939	NS
West Midlands	0.86	0.45	0.740	NS
Yorkshire and the Humber	1.66	0.46	0.277	NS
Merseyside	1.30	0.50	0.600	NS
South Yorkshire	0.64	0.51	0.383	NS
Cornwall				
Had qualification before the course				
No	0.39	0.19	0.000	**
Yes				
Has physical disability				
No				
Yes	0.40	0.20	0.000	**
Has mental disability				
No				
Yes	0.31	0.28	0.000	**

Continued

Table D.3 Continued

Variable	Odds ratio	Linearised Std Error	P	Sig
Length of unemployment				
Less than three months				
Between three and less than six months	0.75	0.27	0.284	NS
Between six and less than 12 months	0.94	0.26	0.796	NS
Between 12 months and less than two years	0.94	0.26	0.801	NS
Two years or more	0.36	0.25	0.000	**
Never had a (full-time) job	0.37	0.28	0.000	**
Not known	0.68	0.45	0.394	NS
Time spent on course				
Less than a month				
One month to four months	1.07	0.17	0.688	NS
Four months to six months	0.37	0.21	0.000	**
Six months to 12 months	0.46	0.21	0.000	**
A year or more	0.46	0.32	0.018	**
Don't know	0.15	0.67	0.005	**
Improved self-confidence				
Yes				
No	0.60	0.16	0.002	**
Lack of recent experience of working as barrier				
Yes				
No	1.64	0.13	0.000	**
Why went on course				
Made to go on it				
Persuaded	2.08	0.24	0.002	**
Given the opportunity	1.57	0.17	0.009	**
Decided myself	2.66	0.19	0.000	**

* Significant to the 90 per cent level.

** Significant at least to the 95 per cent level.

The European Social Fund (ESF) Cohort Study explores the longer-term outcomes of the training and advice provided through ESF. The study covered four of the ESF priorities: Priorities 1 and 4, which have a focus on extending employment opportunities and tackling barriers to employment; and Priorities 2 and 5, which aim to develop and improve the skills of the workforce.

Wave 1 of the ESF Cohort Study took place between April and September 2009 and included interviews with 10,947 ESF and match participants. Wave 1 respondents were then approached again between January and March 2010 (Wave 2) and January and March 2011 (Wave 3), subject to consent to be recontacted. Full interviews were conducted with 7,400 respondents at Wave 2 and 2,740 respondents in Wave 3.

This report contains the findings from Wave 3 and focuses upon the longer term outcomes of ESF provision, particularly whether the outcomes observed at previous points in time have been sustained and whether any additional outcomes are evident. The report also examines the involvement of ESF and match-funded participants in training about green issues and the degree to which they are employed by organisations providing related products and services.

NatCen was commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to carry out the third wave of the study in 2010. The research was part-funded by European Social Fund technical assistance under the 2007-13 England and Gibraltar ESF programme evaluation strategy.

For more information see www.esf.gov.uk

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