



FE choices employer satisfaction survey

2011 to 2012 national report

Executive summary

Introduction

This report provides an overview, at a national level, of the findings from the FE choices employer satisfaction survey 2011 to 2012.

The survey asked employers to rate their providers on learning delivered in 2010 to 2011. Over 265,000 employers received training funded by the Skills Funding Agency in 2010 to 2011.

FE choices provides consistent and comparable information for learners and employers to help them make informed choices about publicly funded education and training. It also provides consistent management information on key performance indicators. FE choices comprises a set of performance indicators that cover aspects of a college or provider's provision such as: success rates, learner destinations and satisfaction levels of learners and employers.

This report focuses on the employer satisfaction survey results only.

The employer satisfaction survey 2011 to 2012 took place between March and June 2012. The survey was administered using multi-mode: postal, online and telephone. Over 59,000 (22%) employers took part in the survey and gave their views on the training their employees received: 57% completed the survey online, 29% used paper questionnaires and 14% by telephone.

The employers that took part in the survey are representative of the 265,000 employers that received training funded by the Skills Funding Agency in 2010 to 2011 in terms of industry sector and size. As a result, the findings are unweighted. This report only comments on subgroup differences that are statistically significant.

The survey focuses on training funded by the Skills Funding Agency and delivered by 743 providers, which included general Further Education (FE) colleges, private sector providers, other public-funded organisations and special colleges.

The characteristics of employers delivering public-funded learning

The large majority of employer-respondents worked in small workplaces: 75% in workplaces with 1 to 49 employees compared with 8% in the largest workplaces (250+ employees). A diverse range of industry sectors are represented with the largest groups of employer respondents in 'health and social work' (22%) 'wholesale and retail trade' (13%) and 'construction' (12%).

Two in three employers in the survey (66%) were using providers to deliver Apprenticeship training compared with 43% delivering workplace learning. One in ten employers were delivering both.

Key findings

Overall employers were very positive about the training received by their employees. Seven in ten (69%) were very satisfied with the **quality of training/assessment** (a rating of 8 to 10 out of 10). Employers were equally satisfied with the **benefits of the training to their organisation** (70% gave a rating of 8 to 10) and approaching three-in-four (73%) would be highly likely to **recommend the training provider** to other employers. There was some variation by provider type with private sector providers consistently attracting the highest rating from employers. Ratings were generally lower for FE and special colleges.

Providers were also rated highly by employers on a number of specific aspects.

In particular, employers were positive about:

- the **professionalism of the trainer and/or assessor** (75% gave a rating of 8 to10)
- the way the provider **delivered training that reflects up-to-date practices** within the industry sector (72% gave a rating of 8 to10)
- the **flexibility of the training and/or assessment** (71% gave a rating of 8 to10)
- the **efficient** way in which the provider conducts their dealing with them (70% gave a rating of 8 to10)

Employers were less positive on providers' **communication** with them and their **understanding** of the employer's training needs, though it should be noted that the differences are slight (67% and 68% respectively gave a rating of 8 to10).

Although the majority of employers were positive about their providers, there is some variation in levels of satisfaction. In particular, workplaces with **2 to9 employees** were consistently less positive, as were those in agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing, and the education sector. In terms of the types of provision, employers offering **Apprenticeships**, in particular those delivering it to young people aged 16 to18 year olds only as opposed to older age groups, were less positive compared with employers delivering other workplace learning. Although the differences with overall ratings are slight, understanding how the experiences of these employers may be improved is key given the government commitment to increase Apprenticeship engagement among small businesses.

Note regarding slides

The 'total base size' is the volume of employers answering a question. The base size varies because some employers do not answer all of the questions. Slide 15 shows the total base size of 58,624, which is the total number of employers that

responded to these questions. Details of the total number of responses by type of provision delivered follow this.

Slide 25 includes breakdown by Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP areas) this is cross-referenced by region.

The regions are noted in abbreviated format:

- EE – East of England
- EM – East Midlands
- GL-Greater London
- NE – North East
- NW – North West
- SE – South East
- SW- South West
- WM- West Midlands
- YH- Yorkshire and Humber