



Social Mobility  
Commission

# Increasing in-work training and progression for frontline workers



**Technical appendix**

November 2020

## About the Commission

The Social Mobility Commission is an independent advisory non-departmental public body established under the Life Chances Act 2010 as modified by the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016. It has a duty to assess progress in improving social mobility in the UK and to promote social mobility in England.

The Commission board comprises:

- Sandra Wallace, Interim Co-Chair, Joint Managing Director Europe at DLA Piper
- Steven Cooper, Interim Co-Chair, Chief Executive Officer, C. Hoare & Co
- Alastair da Costa, Chair of Capital City College Group
- Farrah Storr, Editor-in-chief, Elle
- Harvey Matthewson, Aviation Activity Officer at Aerobility and Volunteer
- Jessica Oghenegweke, Presenter, BBC Earth Kids
- Jody Walker, Senior Vice President at TJX Europe (TK Maxx and Home Sense in the UK)
- Liz Williams, Chief Executive Officer of Futuredotnow
- Pippa Dunn, Founder of Broody, helping entrepreneurs and start ups
- Saeed Atcha, Chief Executive Officer of Youth Leads UK
- Sam Friedman, Associate Professor in Sociology at London School of Economics
- Sammy Wright, Vice Principal of Southmoor Academy, Sunderland

## About Kantar Public Division

Kantar Public Division specialises in social research. Our specialists provide evidence and capability-building for governments and multilateral organisations to deliver better public policies and communications. <https://www.kantar.com/>

# KANTAR

# Table of contents

<b>Appendix 1: Detailed methodology</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.1. Research aims</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.2. Methodology</b>	<b>3</b>
1.2.1. Overview	3
1.3. Stage one: Scoping (September 2019 - November 2019)	3
1.3.1. Policy experts	4
1.3.2. Policy and sector experts	4
1.3.3. Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA)	4
1.3.4. Retail, industrial and hospitality business interviews	5
1.4. Stage two: Case studies (August 2019- April 2020)	5
1.5. Stage three: Presentation and co-design workshop April 2020	7
1.6. Ethics and data protection	7
1.7. Analytical approach: thematic qualitative analysis	8
<b>Appendix 2: Rapid Evidence Assessment Protocol</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Appendix 3: Policy maker focus group topic guide</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Appendix 4: Policy and sector expert interviews topic guide</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Appendix 5: Managers / HR leads interviews topic guide</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Appendix 6: Managers / HR leads achieved sample</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Appendix 7: Case studies topic guide</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Appendix 8: Case studies achieved sample</b>	<b>Error!</b>
Bookmark not defined.	

# Appendix 1: Detailed methodology

This technical appendix includes the full and detailed methodology for the research and outlines how each stage was conducted.

## 1.1. Research aims

The Social Mobility Commission (the Commission) exists to assess and promote social mobility in the UK. Every stage of life offers opportunities for policies and services to promote mobility; and at every stage there are considerable challenges to achieving it. This piece of work focussed on realising opportunities that have the potential for impact on people once they are in work, specifically: training targeted at low-skilled employees; and support and encouragement for them to progress in their jobs and careers.

This project was intended to assess the Commission's hypotheses that these two issues present opportunities to increase mobility; to develop and test low-burden interventions which will drive improvements in the short term; and to draw conclusions about which interventions to trial at scale. More specifically, the project aimed to:

- **Provide insights** into what drives employers to offer training and career guidance to low-paid/skilled workers, and what prevents this; to understand how these factors could be leveraged and overcome to increase incidence; and to attempt to draw conclusions about the impact of doing so on social mobility
- **Design interventions** on the basis of this insight and understanding, and ensure that these are likely to be affordable, practical, effective, acceptable, safe and equitable (the APEASE criteria)

The purpose of this behavioural insights research was to build in depth understanding of barriers and facilitators to the provision and uptake of in-work training and career guidance broadly and within specific sectors to allow for interventions to be adequately targeted at key barriers. The research consisted of two phases of primary research with the aims of each phase being:

Phase One – Scoping phase aims:

- Build an in-depth understanding of government commitments, actions and ambitions;
- Provide a base of knowledge about the key facilitators of and barriers to training and career guidance for employers and workers more broadly as well as understanding some of the key influences on whether training and career guidance is taken up;

- Gain an understanding of the contexts, challenges and opportunities in industrial, retail and hospitality sectors specifically;
- Build an Organisational Practice Model that demonstrates what factors need to be in place throughout organisations for training and career guidance to be promoted and requested.

Phase Two – Case study aims:

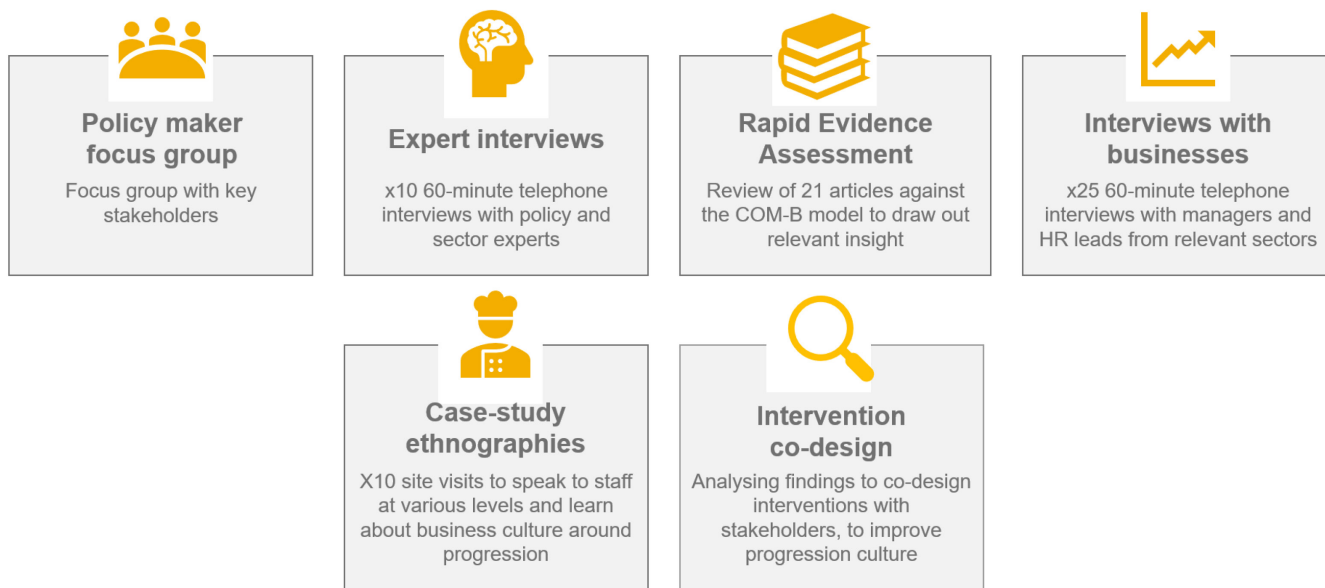
- Build an understanding of perceptions of training and career guidance from individuals at a range of organisational levels;
- Engage with businesses in the industrial, retail and hospitality sectors to take a holistic approach to observing and exploring the policies, practices, communications, structures, habits, cultures, attitudes and other factors which impact on training and career guidance uptake;
- Build on the existing Organisational Practice Models to identify key barriers and facilitators for businesses and workers;
- Develop interventions with stakeholders to test ensuring that these are likely to be affordable, practical, effective, acceptable, safe and equitable (the APEASE criteria).

## 1.2. Methodology

### 1.2.1. Overview

This qualitative research took an iterative approach and comprised of multiple stages of research, each with multiple research activities being undertaken.

Figure 1.1 Overview of the methodology



### 1.3. Stage one: Scoping (September 2019 - November 2019)

The scoping stage involved engaging with a range of experts and businesses to gain a full understanding of the contexts, challenges and opportunities to increase in-work training and progression in the retail, industrial and hospitality sectors; and a rapid review of existing

evidence into what promotes and inhibits in-work training and progression. This stage provided a firm basis for the Organisational Practice Model, and so drew on a broad, comprehensive range of evidence from across industry sectors. Below outlines how each element of the scoping review fed into the development of the Organisational Practice Model (OPM).

### **1.3.1. Policy experts**

The first step was to engage with policy experts with the purpose of gaining understanding of the Government's commitments, actions, engagements, intentions and ambitions in this area. We engaged with policy experts via a 90-minute face-to-face stakeholder workshop held in September 2019. The workshop had 13 participants from: the Department of Work and Pensions, the Cabinet Office, SMC Commissioners, the Department for Education, the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy and the National Careers Service. Experts were recommended by key contacts at the SMC. Within the workshop, a plenary session was held at the outset. This explained the purpose of the research, the phases involved, and their role within that. The group was then split into two smaller breakout groups: one focusing more heavily on retail and the other on manufacturing. This enabled dynamic discussion across relevant areas of expertise.

The workshop explored perspectives on the opportunities and challenges that in-work training and progression presents businesses with more broadly and in the relevant sectors, generated ideas on how best to communicate with individuals at different levels within businesses and provided a foundation for the OPM. The topic guide for the session can be found in Appendix three.

### **1.3.2. Policy and sector experts**

Ten 60-minute telephone interviews were conducted with policy and sector experts across September 2019. Policy and sector experts were interviewed to provide a broad picture of perspectives on the challenges and opportunities to increasing the take up of training and career guidance. This included academics who had studied the issue (providing a more detailed and international perspective). Desk research was completed to identify and contact relevant experts, as well as taking recommendations from policy experts involved in the workshop.

The interviews explored experts' understanding of the topic area and provided a foundation for the evidence review by helping to define the research questions, inclusion and exclusion criteria, the analysis framework, and by signposting to documents that participants knew about. The topic guide for these interviews can be found in Appendix four.

### **1.3.3. Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA)**

An REA of 21 documents formed a key part of developing the OPM. Two overarching questions were agreed with supplementary questions. The supplementary questions were explored using the literature identified in the search to address the main question. We produced an REA review protocol detailing the research questions, the scope (e.g. sectors and organisation types of interest), inclusion/ exclusion criteria, search terms, and databases and websites to be searched. The protocol can be found in Appendix two. We drew from a mix of academic and grey literature, and included sources recommended by stakeholders in the scoping work. During the search we reviewed titles and abstracts/introductions to identify documents for inclusion.

For each document, we recorded the citation, abstract, country of origin and methodology in a bibliographic database. Key findings were categorised and coded to build the OPM: the layers in the organisation that ‘house’ the factors that influence in-work training and progression policies and take-up; and the impact that those factors have on take-up in terms of COM-B.<sup>1</sup>

#### **1.3.4. Retail, industrial and hospitality business interviews**

To build on broader evidence gained from the REA, and to provide valuable insight into the sector-specific contexts and challenges, 25 interviews were conducted with businesses within the retail, industrial and hospitality sectors. Telephone interviews were arranged with HR managers and individuals responsible for training and progression (managers) in these businesses. The interviews explored in more detail how policies and practices relating to training were implemented and practiced in their organisations, to discuss how general findings emerging from the evidence assessment related to their businesses, and to examine points of detail left uncovered by the general review. The topic guide can be found in Appendix five.

Twenty-five 60-minute telephone interviews were conducted in October 2019, with nine in the retail sector, nine in the industrial sector and seven in the hospitality sector. A full sample frame can be found in Appendix six. Participants were recruited using free-find methods and were incentivised £50 for taking part.

#### **1.4. Stage two: Case studies (August 2019- April 2020)**

The scoping work and evidence review provided a solid foundation for the practice models and associated behavioural insights and identified a range of practical steps that could increase the take up of training and progression. However, it was also necessary to engage with businesses within the three sectors to observe and explore the policies, practices, communications, structures, attitudes and other factors which may impact on provision and take up in more depth.

Across December 2019 to March 2020, 10 businesses were engaged in ethnographic case study research across the three sectors; four retail, four hospitality and two industrial (complete sample frame found in Appendix eight). All case studies were conducted face-to-face taking an immersive approach to understand them holistically.

All case studies included:

- One 60-minute interview with a strategic leader;
- Up to three 60-minute policy implementer interviews, conducted either as one-to-one interviews or as mini groups;
- Up to three 60-minute frontline employee interviews, conducted either as one-to-one interviews or as mini groups.
- Observation of working practices where possible;
- Review of relevant training documents where granted permission, such as training documents used by businesses and means of recording training attendance.

---

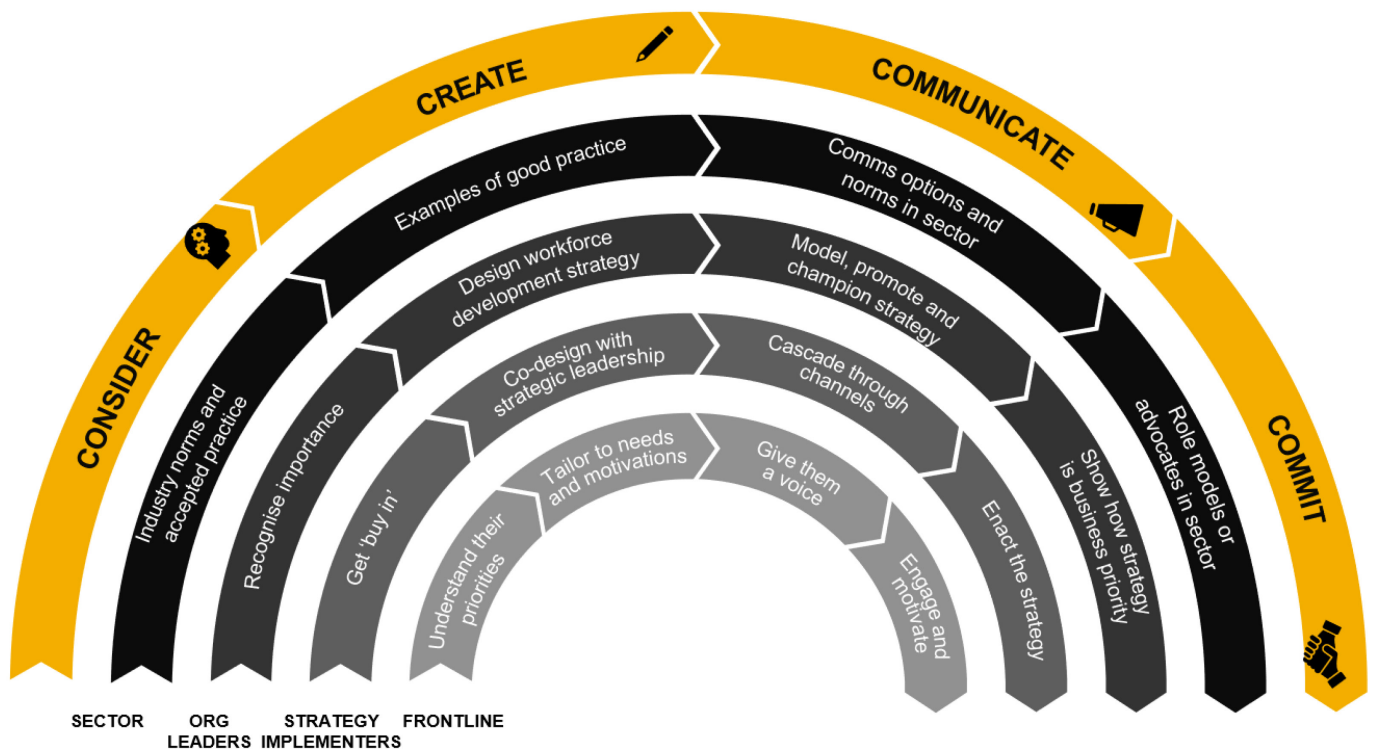
<sup>1</sup> COM-B is a model that identifies the three components: capability, motivation and opportunity are required for an intervention to be effective in changing behaviour. More can be read about COM-B at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3096582/>.

Multiple channels and approaches were used to recruit businesses for the case studies. Free-find approaches using a specialist business recruiter were used. Contacts were also provided by the SMC and approached directly by Kantar.

Each organisation was engaged via an initial lead participant who had sufficient authority and interest to represent the study internally. Time was spent ensuring that these individuals were familiar with the study’s aims and provenance, and were assured of Kantar’s independence, neutrality and adherence to market and social research codes of conduct. The lead then engaged internally as necessary, with whatever support was required, to gain the necessary permissions and arrange time with the relevant people. The lead participant received a £120 incentive and the other participants received £30 as a thank you for their time.

Interviews explored and were structured around the OPM (as shown in Figure 1.2). Firstly, they explored participant understanding of training and career progression. They then explored any current policies within the business and any involvement in creating the policy. Thirdly, interviews discussed the communication of training and career progression opportunities across the business. Finally, the extent to which, and how, training and career progression had been embedded into business culture was explored. The topic guide can be found in Appendix seven.

**Figure 1.2. The Organisational Practice Model**

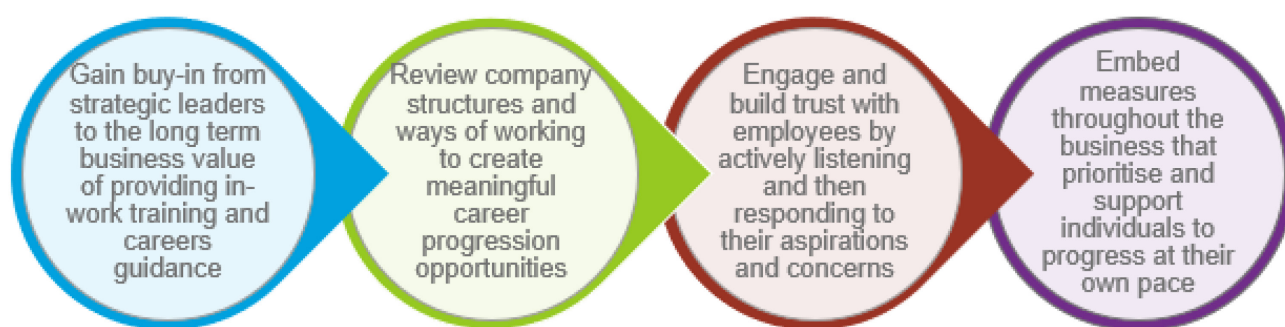




### 1.5. Stage three: Presentation and co-design workshop April 2020

Kantar then hosted a three-hour online co-creation workshop in April 2020. The workshop was originally intended to be conducted in person but was moved online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Eight attendees included policy experts and policymakers from government departments including the Social Mobility Commission, the Department for Work and Pensions, the National Careers Service, the Department for Education (Careers Policy Unit), and the National Retraining Scheme.

Within the workshop, a plenary session was held at the outset. This explained the purpose of the research, the phases involved, and the findings so far, namely the key barriers towards, and facilitators of, a strong culture of training and progression for frontline workers in the three sectors. Kantar then presented a number of ideas for interventions to address the key barriers. These fell within four groups:



After this, the session became more interactive and stakeholders explained which interventions they believed would be most effective, as well as how to go about engaging businesses with them. This interactive session enabled dynamic discussion across relevant areas of experience and expertise.

Following on from this workshop, Kantar presented these findings to a Social Mobility Commissioner with experience in running a business. The purpose of this was to refine the list of interventions to see what businesses would be likely to engage with in practice, and to begin formulating a plan to engage businesspeople (who are often time-poor and may not be bought-in to the benefits of social mobility).

### 1.6. Ethics and data protection

Kantar conducts research to the highest ethical standards. All participants took part voluntarily and provided informed consent for participation; this was ascertained through a recruitment screener which informed participants about the client, aims and purpose of the research, how data would be used, and what participation would involve. Further information was provided via a participant information sheet, that included that participants were able to withdraw from the research at any point during the interviews. Participants were also reassured of confidentiality and anonymity. No business names or the names of any individuals within businesses were shared with the SMC at any stage of the project, including within the case studies.

## 1.7. Analytical approach: thematic qualitative analysis

A robust and systematic approach was applied to analysing the rich and detailed qualitative data collected across all phases of the research process. This approach to analysis ensured that findings are grounded in raw data rather than researchers' impressions and have a strong focus on the research objectives and actionable insights. The analysis was continuous (during and after the fieldwork periods, and between phases) and iterative, moving between the data, research objectives, and emerging themes. The analysis process consisted of two key elements:

- Process-driven elements using Kantar's matrix mapping framework technique. Recordings of discussions were coded and systematically summarised into an analytical framework organised by issue and theme. The framework was developed to reflect the research objectives and emerging themes including facilitators and barriers to training and career progression across the industrial, hospitality and retail sectors, as well as potential interventions that could be implemented and tested to overcome these barriers.
- Interpretative elements focused on identifying patterns within the data and undertaking sub-group analysis between job role, level, business sector and business size. This process created descriptive accounts and explanatory data, which comes not only from aggregating patterns but by weighing up the salience and dynamics of issues. Researcher analysis sessions, led by the project Director, were conducted after each phase, during which the team came together to discuss and test emerging themes and insights, and were used to support interpretation of the data.

Verbatim quotes are used throughout the report to illuminate and bring to life key findings and are attributed as follows: "*Quote.*" (Job role, Business, Business size).

# Appendix 2: Rapid Evidence Assessment Protocol

## Research questions

Two overarching questions, with supplementary questions to be explored through the literature identified for the main questions:

1. What factors impact on organisations' provision of in-work training and career guidance/progression for low-skilled workers (drivers and barriers)?
  - a. What are a company's motivations for offering/not offering in-work training?
  - b. Where within the organisation does responsibility for these factors lie and/or where can they be influenced?
  - c. What effects do these factors have on individuals within the organisation, in terms of implementation of, communication of and support for in-work training and career guidance/progression arrangements (using COM-B as a framework)?
2. What types of in-work training and career guidance/progression do low-skilled workers find appealing?
  - a. How do arrangements differ across industry sectors?

## Sectors of interest

Food services, industrial (*Automobile industry, Chemical industry Consumer electronics, Industrial equipment, Steel production, Tobacco industry, Aerospace manufacturing, Brewing industry, Textile industry, Energy industry, metalworking Telecommunications*) and retail

## Search terms

Terms to help identify sources for the two main questions:

Factors: enablers, barriers, determinants, facilitators, policies, practices, procedures

Impact: influence, affect, impact, drive, prevent

Organisations: businesses, employers, organisations, teams

Arrangements: policies, practices, offers

Workers, workers, members, workers

## Literature search

Google Scholar (as a portal to other resources); signposting from stakeholders

## Inclusion criteria

Written in English; published in last 10 years; international studies (from Western developed nations); full range of industry and non-profit sectors; to include part-time and full time workers (literature dependent)

## Bibliography

Abramovsky, L., Battistin, E., Fitzsimons, E., Goodman, A., & Simpson, H. (2011). Providing employers with incentives to train low-skilled workers: Evidence from the UK Employer Training Pilots. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 29(1), 153-193.

D'Arcy, C., & Finch, D. (2016). Finding your routes: non-graduate pathways in the UK's labour market. *London: Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission*.

Devins, D., Bickerstaffe, T., Mitchell, B., & Halliday, S. (2014). Improving progression in low paid, low skilled jobs in the retail, catering and care sectors. *York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation*.

Devins, D., Bickerstaffe, T., Nunn, A., Mitchell, B., McQuaid, R., Egdell, V., & Lindsay, C. (2011). The role of skills from worklessness to sustainable employment with progression. (Project Report. UK Commission for Employment and Skills.)

Fouarge, D., Schils, T., & De Grip, A. (2013). Why do low-educated workers invest less in further training?. *Applied Economics*, 45(18), 2587-2601.

Green, A., Lee, N., & Sissons, P. (2017). Growth sectors: data analysis on employment change, wages and poverty. *Cardiff: Public Policy Institute for Wales*.

Green, A., Sissons, P., Broughton, K., De Hoyos, M., Warhurst, C., & Barnes, S. A. (2015). How cities can connect people in poverty with jobs. *York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation*.

Green, A., Sissons, P., & Lee, N. (2017). Harnessing Growth Sectors for Poverty Reduction: The Role of Policy. *Public Policy Institute for Wales*.

Green, A., Sissons, P., Qamar, A., & Broughton, B. (2018). Raising productivity in low-wage sectors and reducing poverty. *London: Joseph Rowntree Foundation*.

Hendra, R., Ray, K., Vegeris, S., Hevenstone, D., & Hudson, M. (2011). Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) Demonstration Delivery, Take-Up, and Outcomes of In-Work Training Support for Lone Parents. *Take-Up, and Outcomes of In-Work Training Support for Lone Parents*.

- Hurrell, A. (2013). Starting out or getting stuck?: An analysis of who gets trapped in low paid work—and who escapes. *British Politics and Policy at LSE*.
- Lashley, C. (2009). The right answers to the wrong questions? Observations on skill development and training in the United Kingdom's hospitality sector. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 9(4), 340-352.
- McQuaid, R., Raeside, R., Canduela, J., Egdell, V., Lindsay, C., & Berry, C. (2012). Engaging low skilled employees in workplace learning. (Evidence Report, 43. UK Commission for Employment and Skills.)
- Nedelkoska, L., & Quintini, G. (2018). Automation, skills use and training. *Paris: OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers*, No. 202.
- Panagiotakopoulos, A. (2011). Barriers to employee training and learning in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). *Development and Learning in Organizations: An International Journal*, 25(3), 15-18.
- Raemdonck, I., Tillema, H., de Grip, A., Valcke, M., & Segers, M. (2012). Does self-directedness in learning and careers predict the employability of low-qualified employees?. *Vocations and Learning*, 5(2), 137-151.
- Roberts, S. (2013). Gaining skills or just paying the bills? Workplace learning in low-level retail employment. *Journal of Education and Work*, 26(3), 267-290.
- Sanders, J., Oomens, S., Blonk, R. W., & Hazelzet, A. (2011). Explaining lower educated workers' training intentions. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 23(6), 402-416.
- Sissons, P., Green, A., & Lee, N. (2016). Supporting progression in growth sectors: a review of the international evidence. *Cardiff: Public Policy Institute for Wales*.
- Warhurst, C., & Findlay, P. (2012). More effective skills utilisation: Shifting the terrain of skills policy in Scotland. ESRC Centre on Skills, Knowledge and Organisational Performance (SKOPE) Research Papers.

# Appendix 3: Policy maker focus group topic guide

## 1. Introduction

*(5 minutes)*

- **Thanks & Introduction:** Introduce yourself and Kantar (Public Division) – independent research agency
- **About the client:** Research on behalf of SMC
- **Aims of the research:** Explain that the research aims to provide insight into facilitators and barriers to encourage businesses to increase the amount of training and career guidance offered to low-skilled workers through conducting case study research with businesses, then designing and testing interventions for the businesses. The businesses will remain anonymous
- **Purpose of discussion:** Explain that this discussion is part of the scoping phase of the research. Will enable research team to get up to speed and to gain a full understanding of the contexts, challenges and opportunities within the different sectors of interest
- **How their information will be used:** Their views and experiences, along with other experts in this area, will be used to inform the development of research materials to be used with businesses
- **Ethical considerations:** Anonymity, confidentiality, voluntary participation – names will not be used in the reporting
- **Duration:** 60 minutes
- **Reassurances:** No right or wrong answers - we are simply asking for people's views
- **Reminder about audio recording:** the discussion will be recorded so that we can accurately capture their views, and so researchers can listen back. The recorder is encrypted and only the research team will have access to the recordings
- **Any questions/concerns?**
- **Start recording:** acknowledge consent for being recorded

## 2. Background and context

*(5 minutes)*

### Participant introductions

- Name, role, organisations

- Interest in social mobility

### **Brief overview of participant views on the importance of training and career guidance for low-skilled workers**

- Do they think offering training and career guidance to low-skilled workers is important? Why?
- How they think training/career guidance is seen/understood/engaged with by others
- Business leaders
- Employers
- Employees

### **3. Employers and training/career guidance**

*(20 minutes)*

*Researcher to explain that while we recognise there are likely to be bigger priorities for businesses, we want to focus in on offering training/career guidance to lower skilled workers for the rest of the conversation*

#### **Explore their perceptions of businesses' attitudes towards offering training/career guidance**

- How much of a priority is it for businesses to consistently offer training/career guidance
- Why do businesses offer training/career guidance – what are their key drivers to
- Explore variation across sectors, specifically retail, industrial and hospitality
- Explore anticipated variations across business size
- Reasons for attitudes towards training/career guidance
- Explore actions being taken by businesses to implement training/career guidance
- Explore variation across sectors, specifically retail, industrial and hospitality
- Explore variation across business size
- Reasons for taking these actions
- Explore if/how attitudes have developed over time – has this become more/less of a priority for businesses
- Explore why it has changed

#### **Explore the opportunities that training/career guidance offers businesses**

- What opportunities businesses might see from offering training/career guidance to lower skilled workers
- Increased productivity, happier workforce, staff retention

- To what extent are businesses aware of these benefits
- Extent to which these opportunities vary between business size
- Extent to which these opportunities vary between sectors and why
- Retail, industrial, hospitality
- Where does the direction for training/career guidance come from within a business
- Who decides the priorities, areas of focus, amount of time to commit, which employees should be involved
- How does this vary by sector/business size

### **Explore the challenges that offering training/career guidance poses for businesses**

- What challenges offering training/career guidance has for businesses
- Business planning, continuity, risk of staff leaving, productivity
- Extent to which challenges vary by business size
- Extent to which challenges vary by sector
- Retail, industrial, hospitality
- Any strategies to overcome these challenges
- From businesses
- From government
- From staff

### **Explore the facilitators for employers to offer training/career guidance**

- What makes it easier for employers to provide opportunities
- Policy, advice, type of employees
- Variation by business size
- Variation by sector
- What more could be done to make it easier to provide opportunities
- By government, by employees, by sector representatives

## **4. Employees and training/career guidance**

**(15 minutes)**

### **Explore their perceptions of workers' attitudes towards being offered training/career guidance**

- Do the opportunities offered to employees differ depending on skill level
- Explore how and why
- Extent to which low skilled workers have responded to training/career guidance
- Levels of awareness of offer



- Uptake levels
- Types of training most commonly engaged with/in demand
- Extent to which attitudes vary between sectors
- Retail, industrial, hospitality
- Reasons why these sectors may have less uptake
- Extent to which attitudes vary based on demographics
- Gender, age, location of worker, type of worker (PT, FT, contract etc)
- Explore if/how attitudes have developed over time
- Are there differences between how lower skilled workers treat training opportunities compared to higher skilled workers
- Explore how and why

### **Explore the opportunities that training/career guidance offers individuals**

- What opportunities individuals might see from being offered training/career guidance
- Investment in company, higher quality of work, wellbeing
- Explore main beneficiaries of training/career guidance
- Differences in uptake between levels of seniority, gender, life stage
- What makes it easier for employees to take up training/career guidance
- Clear policies, management offering and supporting training/career guidance
- Explore differences in opportunities across sectors
- Retail, industrial, hospitality

### **Explore the barriers/challenges that workers face in taking up training/career guidance**

- What might stop a worker from taking up training/career guidance
- Awareness, support of management, relevance of training, time
- Extent to which this varies by sector – retail, industrial, hospitality
- Extent to which this varies by business size
- Any strategies to overcome these challenges in uptake
- From businesses
- From government
- Extent to which strategies vary by sector – retail, industrial, hospitality
- Extent to which strategies vary by business size

## **5. Influences on training and career guidance uptake**

*(5 minutes)*

### **Explore key influencers of training/career guidance uptake**

- Who the key influencers of training/career guidance uptake are
- Business leaders, government, unions, workers
- Relative influence of each influencer mentioned
- Actions taken by businesses that increase uptake
- Advertising policy, managers attending/delivering training
- Extent to which this varies by sector

### **6. Document suggestion**

**(5 minutes)**

*Researcher to explain that we will be conducting a review of literature around the topic of training/career guidance*

- Recommendations of literature to review
- Academic literature, policy papers, think tank reports
- How each one will build on training/career guidance

### **7. Close**

**(2 minutes)**

- Final thoughts / comments
- Explain what comes next in the research process
- Thank and close

# Appendix 4: Policy and sector expert interviews topic guide

## 1. Introduction

*(5 minutes)*

- **Thanks & Introduction:** Introduce yourself and Kantar (Public Division) – independent research agency
- **About the client:** Research on behalf of SMC
- **Aims of the research:** Explain that the research aims to provide insight into facilitators and barriers to encourage businesses to increase the amount of training and career guidance offered to low-skilled workers through conducting case study research with businesses, then designing and testing interventions for the businesses. The businesses will remain anonymous
- **Purpose of discussion:** Explain that this discussion is part of the scoping phase of the research. Will enable research team to get up to speed and to gain a full understanding of the contexts, challenges and opportunities within the different sectors of interest
- **How their information will be used:** Their views and experiences, along with other experts in this area, will be used to inform the development of research materials to be used with businesses
- **Ethical considerations:** Anonymity, confidentiality, voluntary participation – names will not be used in the reporting
- **Duration:** 60 minutes
- **Reassurances:** No right or wrong answers - we are simply asking for people's views.
- **Reminder about audio recording:** the discussion will be recorded so that we can accurately capture their views, and so researchers can listen back. The recorder is encrypted and only the research team will have access to the recordings
- **Any questions/concerns?**
- **Start recording:** acknowledge consent for being recorded

## 2. Participant background

*(5 minutes)*

- Participant introductions

- Name, role, organisations
- Interest in social mobility
- Brief overview of participant views on the importance of training and career guidance for low-skilled workers
  - Do they think offering training and career guidance to low-skilled workers is important? Why?
  - How they think training/career guidance is seen/understood/engaged with by others
    - Business leaders
    - Employers
    - Employees

### 3. Employers and training/career guidance

(15 minutes)

*Researcher to explain that we will now talk about employers' attitudes to offering training/career guidance in practice. Where participant is an expert in a specific sector, tailor questions to their sector of interest*

- Explore their perceptions of businesses' attitudes towards offering training/career guidance
  - Is encouraging training/career guidance something which business leaders support and want to invest in
    - Explore reasons why / why it is not supported
    - Opportunity to gain qualification
    - Explore understanding of support within their sector of expertise
    - Does this vary within other sectors
    - Retail, industrial, hospitality
    - Explore impact of size of company
- Explore actions being taken by businesses – how is this support demonstrated/not
  - Variations in business size, sector
  - Reasons for taking these actions
  - Any examples within their sector of expertise
- Explore the opportunities that training/career guidance offers businesses
  - What opportunities businesses might see from offering employees training/career guidance to lower skilled workers
    - Increased productivity, happier workforce, staff retention
    - Are there certain factors relevant to specific sectors
  - Extent to which these opportunities vary between business size and sectors
    - Retail, industrial, hospitality
    - Explore within their sector of expertise
    - Impact of size of company / level of worker / management
- Explore the current take up of training/career guidance in their given sector

- Reasons
- Similarities / differences in comparison to other sectors
- Impact of size of company / level of worker / management
- Explore drivers to these perceptions / behaviours
- Explore the challenges that offering training/career guidance poses for businesses
  - What challenges offering training/career guidance has for businesses
  - Business planning, continuity, consistency, productivity, cost
  - Why are some businesses resistant to offering training/career guidance to lower skilled workers
  - Explore whether and why businesses within their sector of expertise can be resistant to offering training/career guidance to lower skilled workers
  - Extent to which challenges vary by business size and sector
  - Any strategies to overcome these challenges
    - From businesses
    - From government
    - From employees
- Explore the facilitators for employers to offer training/career guidance
  - What makes it easier for employers to provide opportunities
    - Policy, advice, type of employees
    - Variation by business size, sector, level of workers
  - What more could be done to make it easier to provide opportunities
    - By government, by employees, by sector/union representatives

#### 4. Employees and training/career guidance

(15 minutes)

*Researcher note: where participant is a sector expert, tailor questions to their sector of interest*

- Explore their perceptions of workers' attitudes towards being offered training/career guidance
  - Extent to which low skilled workers have responded to training/career guidance
    - Levels of awareness of offer
    - Uptake levels
    - Types of training most commonly engaged with/in demand within their sector of expertise
  - Extent to which attitudes vary between sectors
    - Retail, industrial, hospitality
    - Reasons why these sectors may have less uptake
  - Extent to which attitudes vary based on demographics
    - Gender, age, location of worker, level of academic attainment/qualifications, type of worker (PT, FT, contract etc)
- Explore if/how attitudes have developed over time

- Are there differences between how lower skilled workers treat training opportunities compared to higher skilled workers
- Explore how and why
  - Opportunity to gain qualification
- Explore the opportunities that training/career guidance offers individuals
  - What opportunities individuals might see from being offered training/career guidance
    - Investment in company, higher quality of work, wellbeing
  - Explore main beneficiaries of training/career guidance
    - Differences in uptake between levels of seniority, gender, life stage
  - What makes it easier for employees to take up training/career guidance
    - Clear policies, management offering and supporting training/career guidance
  - Explore differences in opportunities across sectors
    - Retail, industrial, hospitality
- Explore the barriers/challenges that workers face in taking up training/career guidance
  - What might stop a worker from taking up training/career guidance
    - Awareness, support of management, relevance of training, time
    - Extent to which this varies by sector – retail, industrial, hospitality
    - Extent to which this varies by business size
  - Any strategies to overcome these challenges in uptake
    - From businesses
    - From government
    - Extent to which strategies vary by sector – retail, industrial, hospitality
    - Extent to which strategies vary by business size

## 5. Sector context

(15 minutes)

*Researcher note: only ask participant this section if they are an industrial, retail or hospitality expert and it has not already been covered by the above*

- Explore key influencers of training/career guidance uptake
  - Who the key influencers of training/career guidance uptake are within sector
    - Business leaders, government, unions, workers
    - Relative influence of each influencer mentioned
    - Specific tools/strategies used that been used to influence employers
    - How effective / not effective
  - Actions taken by businesses that increase uptake
    - Advertising policy, managers attending/delivering training
- Explore steps being taken to offset some of the difficulties faced
  - Explore steps being taken to change/reshape attitudes towards in work training / career guidance and encourage take up

## 6. Document suggestion

(5 minutes)

*Researcher to explain that we will be conducting a review of literature around the topic of in work training and career guidance*

- Recommendations of literature to review
  - Academic literature, policy papers, think tank reports
  - How each one will build on in work training/career guidance knowledge

## **7. Close**

**(5 minutes)**

- Final thoughts / comments
- Explain what comes next in the research process
- Thank and close

# Appendix 5: Managers / HR leads interviews topic guide

## 1. Introduction

*(5 minutes)*

- **Thanks & Introduction:** Introduce yourself and Kantar (Public Division) – independent research agency
- **About the client:** Research on behalf of the Social Mobility Commission
- **Aims of the research:** Explain that the research aims to provide insight into facilitators and barriers to encouraging businesses to increase the amount of in-work training and career guidance offered to low-skilled workers
- **Purpose of discussion:** Explain that this discussion is part of the scoping phase of the research. Will enable research team to get up to speed and to gain a full understanding of the contexts, challenges and opportunities within the different sectors of interest – including theirs
- **How their information will be used:** Their views and experiences, along with other businesses, will be used to inform the development of research materials for the rest of the project
- **Ethical considerations:** Anonymity, confidentiality, voluntary participation – names and name of their business will not be used in the reporting
- **Duration:** 60 minutes
- **Reassurances:** No right or wrong answers - we are simply asking for people's views
- **Reminder about audio recording:** the discussion will be recorded so that we can accurately capture their views, and so researchers can listen back. The recorder is encrypted and only the research team will have access to the recordings
- **Any questions/concerns?**
- **Start recording:** acknowledge consent for being recorded

## 2. Participant background

*(5 minutes)*

- Participant introductions
  - Name - role in business
  - Background to the business – size, sector, age
  - Role in relation to in-work training/career guidance



- Overview of the business structure
  - Offices, sites, factories
  - How does management work throughout the business
  - Progression pathways
  - What are a line managers' main responsibilities and priorities
  - Which roles within the business are filled by lower skilled workers

### 3. In-work training in their business

(20 minutes)

*Researcher to explain that we want to focus on offering in-work training/career guidance to lower skilled workers for the rest of the conversation*

- Explore in-work training currently offered to low-skilled workers
  - Explore what types of in-work training are available
    - Formal / informal (including any accredited)
    - Any policies in place
    - How is it decided what training will be offered and to whom
    - What is it the business hopes to achieve by offering in-work training
    - Who is encouraged to participate / how are they encouraged (line manager, made mandatory)
  - Explore any differences between training offered to low and higher skilled workers in terms of what training they get
    - What are the differences in training
    - Why are there differences
- Explore levels of uptake of in-work training and barriers to uptake
  - Explore current levels of uptake of in-work training
  - Any differences between demographics / roles / levels
  - Explore variation in uptake between different forms of in-work training
  - Formal training (certificated/accredited) / external trainer / internal trainer
  - Any differences between demographics / roles / levels / level of academic attainment / qualifications /type of worker (PT, FT, contract etc)
- Explore understanding of employee demand for in-work training
  - Why do employees attend training
  - What value do their employees place on it
  - What are they looking to achieve
  - What makes it worthwhile for them
  - Increased productivity, happier workforce, staff retention
- Explore if/how attitudes have changed over time
  - Are there differences between how lower skilled workers treat training opportunities compared to higher skilled workers
  - Explore how and why

- Explore barriers and motivators to businesses providing in-work training to low-skilled workers
- Explore motivators / benefits (if any) to the business providing in-work training opportunities
  - Upskilling workforce, staff progression and retention, happier workforce
  - Explore barriers to the business providing in-work training opportunities
  - Cost, business planning / continuity, risk of staff leaving, poor staff attendance
  - Explore what could encourage / facilitate the business to increase in-work training opportunities
    - Government policy, communication / education on the benefits to business and employees
    - Awareness / experiences of government interventions to encourage take up
    - Positives / negatives of hard or soft encouragement from government
- Explore barriers and motivators to employee uptake of in-work training
  - Explore motivators / benefits (if any) to employees taking up in-work training opportunities
    - Qualifications, career progression, upskilling
  - Explore barriers to employees taking up in-work training opportunities
    - Time, lack of encouragement / support from management, lack of interest
  - Explore how the business could encourage employee uptake of in-work training opportunities
    - Guidance, communication of policy, communication / education on the benefits to employees, support from senior management

#### 4. Career guidance in their business

*(15 minutes)*

- Explore career guidance offered to low-skilled workers
  - Explore what types of career guidance/opportunities for career conversations are available (if any)
    - Formal / informal
    - Appraisals, annual reviews, objectives etc
    - Any policies that inform these
    - Who is encouraged to participate / how are they encouraged (line manager, made mandatory)
    - How is it decided who is offered career guidance / conversations
  - Explore their views on why employers offer career guidance/conversations - what are they looking to achieve, what makes it worthwhile for them
    - How much of a priority is it the leadership team – explore why
    - What value do they see in offering career guidance and why
    - What are their motivations to offering career guidance
  - Explore any differences between career conversations offered/held to low and higher skilled workers in terms of what advice they get
    - What are the differences
    - Why are there differences

- Explore employee views of career guidance/conversations
  - Explore employee feelings towards career guidance/conversations being offered
  - Explore perception of the value employees place on career guidance/conversations
  - Explore variation in employees
    - Any differences between demographics / roles / levels, level of academic attainment/qualifications / type of worker (PT, FT, contract etc)
  - Are there differences between how lower skilled workers treat career guidance/conversations compared to higher skilled workers
    - Explore how and why
  
- Explore barriers and motivators to businesses offering career guidance / conversations
  - Explore motivators / benefits (if any) to the business providing career guidance
    - Staff retention and progression, happier workforce
  - Explore barriers to the business offering career guidance / conversations
    - Time, experience of managers, lack of progression opportunities available
  - Explore what could encourage / facilitate the business to prioritise having more, better quality conversations
    - Guidance, policy, communication / education on the benefits to the business and employees
  
- Explore barriers and motivators to employee uptake of career guidance / conversations
  - Explore motivators / benefits (if any) to employees engaging with career guidance / conversations
    - Awareness of progression opportunities, staff retention, happier workforce
  - Explore barriers to employees engaging with career guidance / conversations
    - Time, lack of (or lack of knowledge of) progression opportunities available
  - Explore how the business could encourage employee uptake of career guidance
    - Communication/education on the benefits to employees

## 5. Outcomes and impact

*(10 minutes)*

- Explore future plans for offering in-work training/career guidance
  - What aspects of their policy / actions that they will keep the same in the future
    - Reasons
  - What aspects of their policy / actions they will change in the future
    - Reasons
  
- Benefits of increasing the amount of in-house training/career guidance offered
  - Extent to which the business anticipates there would be benefits
    - Staff retention, happier workforce, productivity, greater range of applicants to vacancies
    - Whether / how this is being measured
  - Extent to which employees have recognised benefits of receiving in-work training/career guidance

- Extent to which the benefits vary by role / level / demographics (age, gender etc.)
- Challenges of increasing offer of in-work training/career guidance
  - Extent to which the business has recognises challenges
  - Extent to which there have been challenges for employees to take up training opportunities/career guidance
  - Extent to which the challenges vary by role / level / demographics (age, gender etc.)
  - Recommendations they would make to other businesses to offset these challenges

## 6. Close

*(5 minutes)*

- One piece of advice/support which would encourage a business to offer/encourage take up of in-work training/career guidance
- Explain what comes next in the research process – explain case study research and gauge interest in taking part
  - A Kantar researcher would spend one-two days with the business (could be split between different sites):
    - speaking to staff at different levels
    - observing practices (could attend a training session)
    - looking at policies or communication about training or career guidance
    - experiencing the culture
  - Incentive would be offered
  - Happy to be recontacted with more information about potentially taking part?  
*Researcher to record in chart for Field.*
- Confirm incentive process - £50 PERKS/ PayPal
- Thank and close

# Appendix 6: Managers / HR leads achieved sample

**Total: 25**

## Sector

Industrial	9
Retail	9
Food service	7

## Business size

0-9 employees	0
10-49 employees	8
50-249 employees	7
250+ employees	10

## Urban/rural

In a town	12
In the suburbs of town	8
Out of town	5

**Location**

Greater London	1
South East	4
South West	1
West Midlands	1
North West	3
North East	2
Yorkshire and The Humber	0
East Midlands	1
East of England	0
Scotland	0
Wales	6
Northern Ireland	6

# Appendix 7: Case studies topic guide

## Interview with lead contact and any other strategic leadership interviews (60 minutes)

*This should be conducted at the start of the visit with the lead contact in order to provide an overview of the organisation, context, and current state of play with regards to training and progression, before the site walk takes place. This guide is also to be used for any interviews with senior, HR, L&D or similar personnel after the site walk.*

### 1. Introduction

**(3 minutes)**

*To set the tone of the interview, provide clarity on what is expected of the participant, offer #*

- **Thanks & Introduction:** Introduce yourself and Kantar – independent research agency
- **Client:** Research on behalf of Social Mobility Commission
- **Aims of the research:** Explain that the research aims to provide insight into facilitators and barriers to encouraging businesses to increase the amount of in-work training and career guidance offered to low-skilled workers
- **Purpose of discussion:** Explain that this interview forms part of a case study for their business. We want to understand the key facilitators and barriers to providing training and supporting career progression in their organisation, for low skilled workers to help us to understand what steps or actions might help to improve uptake of opportunities in their business and others in their sector. *If necessary:* low skilled = no qualifications beyond Functional Skills Level 2 or GCSE.
- **How their information will be used:** Their views and experiences, along with the other seven business case studies, will be used to inform the development of targeted interventions aimed at increasing rates of training and instances of supporting career progression, where appropriate. These will be trialled with the business and evaluated, with the consent of the appropriate staff in the business.
- **Ethical considerations:** Anonymity, confidentiality, voluntary participation – names (theirs or their business') will not be used in the reporting
- **Duration:** 60 minutes (45 where not possible to do 60 minutes)
- **Reassurances:** No right or wrong answers - we are simply asking for people's views.

- **Audio recording:** the discussion will be recorded so that we can accurately capture their views, and so researchers can listen back. The recorder is encrypted and only the research team will have access to the recordings.
- **Any questions/concerns?**
- **Start recording:** acknowledge consent for being recorded

## 2. Background and context

*(10 minutes)*

- Participant introduction
  - Role in the business – more broadly, specifically in relation to training and enabling progression
  - Length of time in the business
  - Any other relevant career history
- Overview of the business
  - Sector, products / services, size, age
  - Shift work / speed of turnaround
  - Reputation as an employer and to what extent a priority
- Overview of business structure
  - Sites, management set up
  - Which types of roles are filled by low-skilled workers
- Overview of business hierarchy
  - Low-skilled roles vs managerial roles rough ratio
  - How does people management work in the company
- Overview of HR culture of business
  - Staff turnover rates
  - Prevalent age brackets of low-skilled workers
  - Proportion of employees belonging to a union
  - To what extent the frontline workers have a say in how company is run
- Current situation regarding training and progression
  - Brief overview of current training offer
  - Brief overview of progression pathways

## 3. Consider (understanding and perceptions of in-work training and the company's role in supporting progression) *(10 minutes)*

- Spontaneous perception of training



- What does in-work training for low skilled workers mean to them? Listen for a description that suggests it is 'for the current role' vs beyond that, or is structured vs on-the-job
- Views on training
  - What types of training they think should be offered to low-skilled workers in their business and sector
    - Any types of training that are not appropriate and reasons
  - Attitudes on the value of in-work training when it is beyond the role
    - Explore perceived benefits for the business
    - Concerns with providing this for business
  - Preference for structured or on-the-job training
  - Any concerns about or barriers to providing in-work training to low-skilled workers
- Views on career conversations and progression guidance
  - Attitudes towards providing career conversations to low-skilled workers
    - Explore perceived benefits for the business
    - Concerns with / barriers to providing this

#### 4. Create (designing policies on training and career progression)

(5 minutes)

- How the training policy is designed
  - How is it decided what training to provide to who
  - What considerations are taken into account when deciding this
    - And specifically to low-skilled workers
  - Methods of gauging demand for type of training
    - To what extent is there close liaison with frontline
- Company's progression policy and reasons for its design
  - Culture around progression / internal promotion in the company etc.
  - Any strong divides between white and blue collar, management and frontline, other?
    - Any roles predominantly one gender / age bracket
  - Did they progress internally. *If so:*
    - How did they find that
    - How did they go about doing that
    - Did they feel supported in progressing
  - Prevalence of progression from the frontline
    - Predominantly to one role or to a variety. Clear pathways?
  - What considerations are taken into account when deciding what the policy around progression ought to be
  - How would they go about increasing internal promotions / progression

#### 5. Communicate (communicating policies on training and career conversations)

(15 minutes)

- Explore communication of training to employees

- How training policies are communicated to employees
  - Format, tone, frequency
  - Who delivers the communications – reasons
  - Who is training beyond the role communicated to – reasons
- Explore effectiveness of communications for training
  - Perceived effectiveness of the aforementioned communications
    - What is working well / less well – reasons
    - How they think managers / frontline think about communications
    - Any steps that could improve communications about training
- Explore communication of progression opportunities / policy / career conversations to employees
  - How progression opportunities / policy are communicated to employees
    - Format, tone, frequency
    - Who delivers the communications – reasons
    - Who are progression opportunities communicated to – reasons
  - *If internally promotes*: how are internal promotions communicated (format, frequency, messenger(s))
  - How are personal goals organised and personal / performance review policies communicated
- Explore effectiveness of communications for progression opportunities / policy / career conversations
  - Perceived effectiveness of the aforementioned communications
    - What is working well / less well – reasons
    - How they think managers / frontline think about communications
    - Any steps that could improve communications about internal promotions / progression opportunities / career conversations
- Explore responses to communications
  - Explore *how* employees have responded to the:
    - training communications
    - progression-related communications
    - Differences by level, demographic – perceived reasons
    - How this compared with expected responses to communications
  - How employees could better communicate with them about training they'll attend, can't make, want to see etc.
  - How employees could better communicate with them about desires for trying new things and progressing internally
- Engaging middle and frontline levels
  - How would they get managers to talk to their staff more about progression
    - Overcoming issues of engagement of managers
    - Overcoming issues of engagement of low-skilled workers

**6. Commit (embedding policy on training and supporting career progression)** **(10 minutes)**

- Who in their company champions in-work training
  - What levels are they
  - Do line managers receive training on management
- Explore extent to which steps have been taken to embed training into culture
  - Reasons for taking / not taking these steps
  - Explore further steps that could be taken to embed these policies
    - Likelihood of taking these steps – reasons
    - Priorities for next steps
- Explore extent to which steps have been taken to embed regular internal progression into culture
  - Reasons for taking / not taking these steps
  - Explore further steps that could be taken to embed these policies
    - Likelihood of taking these steps – reasons
    - Priorities for next steps

**7. Future thinking** **(5 minutes)**

- Explore any future plans for increasing in work training
  - Any expected challenges or barriers to implementing these
- Explore any future plans for supporting career guidance
  - Any expected challenges or barriers to implementing these

**8. Close** **(2 minutes)**

- Final thoughts / comments
- Explain what comes next in the research process
- Explain incentive arrangements for the day
- Thank and close

## Interview with middle management (40 minutes)

### 1. Introduction

(2 minutes)

To set the tone of the interview, provide clarity on what is expected of the participant, offer #

- **Thanks & Introduction:** Introduce yourself and Kantar – independent research agency
- **Client:** Research on behalf of Social Mobility Commission
- **Aims of the research:** Explain that the research aims to provide insight into facilitators and barriers to encouraging businesses to increase the amount of in-work training and career guidance offered to low-skilled workers
- **Purpose of discussion:** Explain that this interview forms part of a case study for their business. We want to understand the key facilitators and barriers to providing training and supporting career progression in their organisation, for low skilled workers to help us to understand what steps or actions might help to improve uptake of opportunities in their business and others in their sector. *If necessary:* low skilled = no qualifications beyond GCSE.
- **How their information will be used:** Their views and experiences, along with the other seven business case studies, will be used to inform the development of targeted interventions aimed at increasing rates of training and instances of supporting career progression, where appropriate. These will be trialled with the business and evaluated, with the consent of the appropriate staff in the business.
- **Ethical considerations:** Anonymity, confidentiality, voluntary participation – names (theirs or their business') will not be used in the reporting
- **Duration:** 40 minutes
- **Reassurances:** No right or wrong answers - we are simply asking for people's views.
- **Audio recording:** the discussion will be recorded so that we can accurately capture their views, and so researchers can listen back. The recorder is encrypted and only the research team will have access to the recordings.
- **Any questions/concerns?**
- **Start recording:** acknowledge consent for being recorded

### 2. Background and context

(6 minutes)

- Participant introduction
  - Role in the business
  - Length of time in the business
  - How many people they manage / supervise (all low-skilled?)
  - Age profile
  - FT/PT
  - How do they feel managing people
  - Were they trained / supported sufficiently

- How do they feel talking to the people they manager about long term goals and progression
- Current situation regarding training and progression
  - How often do they meet the people they manage
  - Their responsibilities and priorities (more day to day management or longer-term progression conversations)
  - How training is currently provided to workers and their role (if any) in this

**3. Consider (understanding and perceptions of in-work training and the company's role in supporting progression) (7 minutes)**

- Spontaneous perception of training
  - What does in-work training for low-skilled workers mean to them? Listen for a description that suggests its 'for the current role' vs beyond that, or is structured vs on-the-job
- Views on training
  - What types of training they think should be offered to low-skilled workers in their business and sector
    - Any types of training that are not appropriate and reasons
  - Attitudes on the value of in-work training when it is beyond the role
    - Explore perceived benefits for the business
    - Concerns with providing this for business
  - Preference for structured or on-the-job training
  - Any challenges in getting the people they manage to take up training
- Views on career conversations and progression guidance
  - Attitudes towards providing career conversations to low-skilled workers
    - Explore perceived benefits for the business
    - Concerns with providing this
  - Any challenges in getting the people they manage to 'step up' and try new things

**4. Create (designing a policy on training and career progression) (5 minutes)**

- Company's progression policy and reasons for its design
  - Culture around progression / internal promotion in the company etc.
    - Any strong divides between white and blue collar, management and frontline, other?
    - Any roles predominantly one gender / age bracket
  - Did they progress internally. *If so:*
    - How did they find that
    - How did they go about doing that
    - Did they feel supported in progressing
  - Prevalence of progression from the frontline
    - Predominantly to one role or to a variety. Clear pathways?

- Company's current training policy
  - What training is offered and to why
  - Content of training
  - Balance between in-work and external providers
  - How would they go about increasing internal promotions / progression

## 5. **Communicate (communicating policies on training and career conversations)** (8 minutes)

- Explore communication of training to employees
  - How training policies are communicated to middle managers and to frontline
    - Format, tone, frequency
    - Who delivers the communications – reasons
    - Who is training beyond the role communicated to – reasons
  - Perceived effectiveness of the aforementioned communications
    - What is working well / less well – reasons
    - Any steps that could improve communications about training or internal promotions/progression
  - Explore *how* employees have responded to the training communications
    - Differences by level, demographic – perceived reasons
    - How this compared with expected responses to communications
  - How employees could better communicate with them about training they'll attend, can't make, want to see etc.
    - Does this occur?
- Explore communication of career guidance to employees
  - How progression opportunities / policies are communicated to middle managers and to frontline
    - Format, tone, frequency
    - Who delivers the communications – reasons
  - *If internally promotes*: how are internal promotions communicated (format, frequency, messenger(s))
  - How are personal goals organised and personal / performance review policies communicated
  - Perceived effectiveness of the aforementioned communications
    - What is working well / less well – reasons
    - Any steps that could improve communications about training or internal promotions / progression
  - Explore *how* employees have responded to the progression-related communications
    - Differences by level, demographic – perceived reasons
    - How this compared with expected responses to communications
  - How employees could better communicate with them about desires for trying new things and progressing internally
  - Any issues in engaging the people they manage with performance reviews, progression etc.
    - What exactly is causing the problem

- Perceived remedies

## 6. **Commit (embedding policy on training and supporting career progression)** **(6 minutes)**

- Who in their company champions in-work training
  - What levels are they
- Explore extent to which steps have been taken to embed training into culture
  - Reasons for taking / not taking these steps
  - Explore further steps that could be taken to embed these policies
    - Likelihood of taking these steps – reasons
    - Priorities for next steps
- Explore extent to which steps have been taken to embed regular internal progression into culture
  - Reasons for taking / not taking these steps
  - Explore further steps that could be taken to embed these policies
    - Likelihood of taking these steps – reasons
    - Priorities for next steps

## 7. **Future thinking** **(4 minutes)**

- Explore awareness of any future plans for increasing in work training
  - Any expected challenges or barriers to implementing these
- Explore awareness of future plans for supporting progression
  - Any expected challenges or barriers to implementing these
- Explore recommendations
  - What could be done to help them increase the support they provide to the people they manage to progress
  - What could be done to help them increase the take up of internal promotions in the business
  - Explore ideas for future interventions

## 8. **Close** **(2 minutes)**

- Final thoughts / comments
- Explain what comes next in the research process
- Explain incentive arrangements for the day
- Thank and close

## **Interview with frontline (30 minutes)**

Researcher note: ensure that interviews are confidential and are undertaken without more senior members of staff present

## 1. Introduction

(2 minutes)

To set the tone of the interview, provide clarity on what is expected of the participant, offer

- **Thanks & Introduction:** Introduce yourself and Kantar – independent research agency
- **Client:** Research on behalf of Social Mobility Commission
- **Aims of the research:** Explain that the research aims to provide insight into facilitators and barriers to encouraging businesses to increase the amount of in-work training and career guidance offered to low-skilled workers
- **Purpose of discussion:** Explain that this interview forms part of a case study for their business. We want to understand the key facilitators and barriers to providing training and supporting career progression in their organisation, for low skilled workers to help us to understand what steps or actions might help to improve uptake of opportunities in their business and others in their sector. *If necessary:* low skilled = no qualifications beyond GCSE.
- **How their information will be used:** Their views and experiences, along with the other seven business case studies, will be used to inform the development of targeted interventions aimed at increasing rates of training and instances of supporting career progression, where appropriate. These will be trialled with the business and evaluated, with the consent of the appropriate staff in the business.
- **Ethical considerations:** Anonymity, confidentiality, voluntary participation – names (theirs or their business) will not be used in the reporting
- **Duration:** 30 minutes
- **Reassurances:** No right or wrong answers - we are simply asking for people's views.
- **Audio recording:** the discussion will be recorded so that we can accurately capture their views, and so researchers can listen back. The recorder is encrypted and only the research team will have access to the recordings.
- **Any questions/concerns?**
- **Start recording:** acknowledge consent for being recorded

## 2. Background and context

(3 minutes)

- Participant introduction
  - Role in the business
  - Length of time in the business
  - Any other relevant career history
  - How this job fits with their work plans for the future
  - Whether member of a union
- Overview of the business from frontline perspective
  - Products/services
  - Shift work / working hours
  - Speed of turnaround



- Reputation as an employer (locally)
- Progression pathways & clarity
- How often do low skilled workers meet with their managers/supervisors
- Line managers' priorities (more day to day management or longer-term progression conversations)
- To what extent the frontline workers have a say in how company is run. How so?

**3. Consider (understanding and perceptions of in-work training and the company's role in supporting progression) (7 minutes)**

- Explore spontaneous perceptions of in-work training
  - What does in-work training mean to them? Listen for a description that suggests its 'for the current role' vs beyond that, or is structured vs on-the-job
  - Relevance to them specifically
- Explore attitudes towards in-work training in the business
  - Past / present experience of education – did /do they enjoy learning, formal / informal
  - Any types of training that are not appropriate for them that they've come across, and reasons
  - Attitudes on the value of in work training when it is beyond the role
    - Desired?
    - Past experiences of training
    - Explore perceived benefits for them
    - Concerns and costs
    - Dislikes / discomforts
  - Preference for structured or on-the-job training
  - Attitudes towards having career conversations
    - Explore perceived benefits for themselves
    - Concerns with having these
- Explore their attitude toward progression and attitudes towards and experiences of in-work careers guidance
  - Have they thought about where they see themselves in 2-5 years? Why not *if not?* Where *if so?*
  - Whether desire to progress in the business – why / why not?
  - Whether have a plan. Timescales
    - How did they form it if so
    - Reasons for not having one
    - Who would they communicate it to / who have they communicated it to
    - Steps needed to get there. *Probe for clarity*
    - Resources to get there. How can they get those?
    - Training needed to get there. How can they get that
  - Whether progression would be outside the company or not
  - Is progression common in their company
  - Relationship with managers

**4. Create (designing a policy on training and career progression)**

**(5 minutes)**

- Overview of training policy
- What do they think of the training on offer
  - Quantity
  - Quality
  - Relevance
  - Accessibility
- Is any of it accredited
  - Would they like it to be and why
  - Why do they think the training on offer is as it is / who designs it
- Overview of policy regarding progression and career conversations
  - How often do they chat to their LM / supervisor about career aspirations (if ever)
  - Relationship with LM
  - Attitudes towards having career chats & past experiences
- Explore their role in creating the policy
  - Can they influence training on offer?
  - How? Explore ease of doing so

**5. Communicate (communicating policies on training and career conversations)**  
(4 minutes)

- Explore how the training on offer is communicated to the frontline
  - By who, format, tone, frequency, notice given
  - Explore effectiveness of communications – accessibility, gaps, ways to improve
- Explore how the culture of supporting progression is communicated to the frontline
  - Do you get notified when a role above you opens up
    - By who
  - Formalness of application process to fill vacancies above
  - Something they talk about with their LM
    - Do they talk with their LM about progression outside the company or the department

**6. Commit (embedding a policy on training and supporting career progression)**  
(4 minutes)

- Who in their company champions in-work training
  - What levels are they
  - Have / could they ever request(ed) to go on training or for new training to be provided
  - Who to? Experiences of that
  - *If some workers are unionised:* does union play a role in providing training?
  - Attitudes towards any of that
- Explore confidence in requesting elements that facilitate progression

- Who would they ask and how do / would they feel about asking...
  - for a promotion
  - to get involved in different work
  - to shadow someone else

## 7. Future thinking

(3 minutes)

- Any awareness of future plans for training
- Awareness of future plans for supporting progression
  - How have these been communicated
- Explore recommendations
  - What could be done to help the company increase training provision and uptake in the business
  - What could be done to help the company increase the support provided for progression in the business

## 8. Close

(2 minutes)

- Final thoughts / comments
- Explain what comes next in the research process
- Incentive
- Thank and close

## Introduction for the site walk

### 1. Introduction

*To set the tone of the interview, provide clarity on what is expected of the participant, offer #*

- Explain to the participant that you would like them to give you a tour of the workplace, so that you can understand in more detail the context in which employees are working and the challenges the business faces when trying to provide more training or getting people to show up.
- Explain that along the way we would like to ask them some questions about how things work in their organisation. We would also like to ask a few people (frontline and managers) some quick questions where possible (ideally at the end of the tour). Explain that we would like to hear their views and experiences of training and of progression in this context.
- Ask permission to take photographs during the tour. Explain that we will anonymise people and the company and will not take photographs where permission is not given.
- Check if the participant has any questions or concerns.

## Introduction to shadow a frontline worker

### 1. Introduction

*To set the tone of the interview, provide clarity on what is expected of the participant, offer #*

- Explain to the worker you've been arranged to shadow that you would like to spend time with them while they work to understand in more detail the context in which employees are working and where any barriers in the process might make it difficult for training to fit in, as well as to get a better sense of how the different components of the business interact.
- Explain that we will make an effort not to get in the way but if it's appropriate we might ask them or their colleagues to explain things to us.
- Ask permission to take photographs during the time shadowing. Explain that we will anonymise people and the company and will not take photographs where permission is not given.
- Check if the participant has any questions or concerns.

**Probe guide for the ethnographic observations (site walk (30 min), worker-shadowing (45 min), training sessions and meetings)**

**2. General probes**

***Researcher note:** Use the prompts below where appropriate to explore how the business operates, how the space is used and the business culture. The researcher should adapt the questions based on who they are speaking to at each point. Questions below will be covered by a range of different employees.*

- Explore the use of physical space in the business
  - Explore the different sites of the business, if any
    - Number, function, who is based at each, how often they visit
    - Explore how different spaces are used
- Explore routines / habits in the workplace
  - Describe what a typical work day involves – what they do when first come in, at breaks, at the end of the day, who they interact with
  - Is the work quick-turnaround
  - What does a day look like in terms of intensity and how rushed the workers are (are there peaks and troughs or is it consistent)
  - What they like about current routine / what they might change
- Explore the culture of the business
  - Explore the hierarchy within the business
  - Formal structure, how important
  - Informal power dynamics e.g. based on longevity of service, age group etc.
  - Any divides
    - Do the frontline workers use entirely different spaces to the middle / senior managers e.g. for breaks
    - Is one group predominantly one gender / age bracket; does this facilitate a divide
    - Do low skilled workers seem competitive
    - Do many frontline workers have English as a foreign language?
    - If so explore any specific strategies used in training them

- Explore frontline relationship with management / senior leadership
  - Visibility, formality of interactions etc.
  - Line management, appraisals
- Explore how business communicates key messages to employees (including from noticeboards)
  - Types of things communicated, how
  - What works well / less well
- Explore perceptions of growth and success within the organisation
  - What success looks like to the business
  - What success looks like for each role within the business, how it is rewarded
- Explore how employee welfare and satisfaction is managed
  - Structures in place to ensure employee welfare – effectiveness
  - How employee satisfaction is measured – key figures

### 3. Probes on training and progression in the company

- Perceptions of training in the workplace
  - Extent to which it is seen as relevant / important / accessible
  - Who they think it is aimed at, differences across levels / demographics
  - Desire for more training
- Awareness of training on offer
  - How training has been communicated
- Experiences of training
  - Experience of colleagues requesting training
  - Benefits of training – when has it worked and why
  - Challenges of training – when has it not worked and why not
- Perceptions of progression from the frontline
  - Are there clear, well-trodden paths – various or one
  - Are low-skilled workers in the company driven to progress or would they rather stay in their current role
  - Does the company senior / middle managers expect the frontline to progress internally, to leave, or to stay in their role at length
- Awareness of progression pathways
  - How the policy on progression and internal promotions been communicated
- Experiences of progression
  - Experience of colleagues asking for promotion, company / managers' reactions and consequences

- Prevalence

## **Document review**

Researchers should ask to see any key documents on training and progression that the business is happy to share. Please stress that this should not include any personal information about any members of staff – rather we are interested in any formal policies or communications. Take copies of documents where possible, otherwise photograph any communications and posters.

### **Types of documents to review:**

- Past / existing policy documents on internal promotions, supporting progression, and training
- Training schedules
- Internal vacancy posts that don't have personal information
- Human Resources notes regarding training and progression
- Meeting minutes where training, progression and promotion policies have been discussed
- Other materials used to communicate the training on offer to employees
- Communications on noticeboards

### **Researcher to capture:**

- An overview of the content of the document
- Any key facts / figures included in the document
- Extent to which the document aligns with what has been observed / discussed during the case study visit
- Where in the Organisational Practice Model the document is focused (i.e. on creation, but less on communication?)
- View on the effectiveness of the document.

# Appendix 8: Case studies achieved sample

## Sector

Industrial	2
Retail	4
Food service	4

## Business size

1-49 employees	4
50-249 employees	3
250+ employees	3

## Low-skilled employee training

Not offered any training	9
Training to do their current role	1
Training on skills beyond their current role	1

## Union recogniser

Recognisers	1
Non-recognisers	9

**Location**

Greater London	3
South East	3
South West	0
West Midlands	2
North West	0
North East	0
Yorkshire and the Humber	0
East Midlands	0
East of England	1
Scotland	0
Wales	1
Northern Ireland	0



