



Department
for Education

Apprenticeships Evaluation 2021 - Employers

Technical report

March 2022

IFF Research



Government
Social Research

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1. Introduction

About this report

The Apprenticeship Evaluation Employer Survey 2021 was the seventh in a series that started in 2011. This is the first survey in the series to be undertaken since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, and therefore provides valuable insight into how the pandemic has affected the employment of apprentices. This technical report details how the survey of employers of apprentices 2021 was sampled, conducted, weighted, and analysed, and how this compares to the previous surveys.

The 2021 survey comprised 4,085 telephone interviews conducted between May and August 2021 and was conducted with two groups of employers. The first group, employers of completer apprentices, had at least one apprentice complete their training between July 2019 and February 2020 (977). The second group, new for the 2021 research, were employers with apprentices on 1st January 2021 (3,108), referred to as employers of current apprentices¹. Table 1.1 shows the timing and sampling of the current and previous surveys in the series:

Table 1.1 Apprenticeship evaluation: employer surveys conducted

Year	Published	Fieldwork period	Sample window (employer had apprentices completing their apprenticeship in the period...)	Reference date (current apprentices)
2011	May 2012	Nov 2011 – Dec 2011	Aug 2010 – Mar 2011	N/A
2012-13	Aug 2013	Dec 2012 – Feb 2013	Aug 2011 – Mar 2012	N/A
2013-14	Dec 2014	Jan 2014 – Mar 2014	Aug 2012 – Mar 2013	N/A
2015	Oct 2016	Oct 2015 – Jan 2016	Mar 2014 – Oct 2014	N/A
2017	Nov 2017	Feb 2017 – Mar 2017	Jun 2015 – Jan 2016	N/A
2019	Aug 2019	Dec 2018 – Mar 2019	Jan 2017 – Sep 2017	N/A
2021	May 2022	May 2021 – Aug 2021	Jul 2019 – Feb 2020	1 st Jan 2021

There was a timing gap between apprentice completion and fieldwork of 15 to 27 months, among completer employers. This allowed time to assess the subsequent impact of the

¹ This date was selected because it was the most recent available for sampling purposes.

apprentice on the employer, and kept the gap between completion and survey broadly consistent with previous surveys.

The survey targeted people in charge of training and development for a specific establishment (i.e., workplace). The interviewee could be at the site or off-site, as long as they had charge of training and development for the particular location selected in the sample. In line with other employer surveys² related to skills and training, there are three key benefits to conducting the survey at a site-specific level:

- respondents are likely to give a more accurate and granular account of a particular apprenticeship framework or standard and its impacts; generalising for a whole multi-site organisation is more difficult;
- it allows for findings to be disaggregated at a geographical level (which would not be possible if head offices were asked to respond on behalf of a whole multi-region organisation);
- previous surveys have shown that decisions regarding the recruitment of apprentices are highly likely to be taken at site level, rather than at head office.

In any case, as discussed in Chapter 2, the design of the key sample source for the research would make a survey at an enterprise level impractical.

The person spoken to was required to be an employee of the organisation, so no training consultants or providers were interviewed (other than regarding their own apprentices).

² Such as the [Employer Skills Survey](#).

2. Sample design and selection

Sample source

The sample for the Apprenticeships Evaluation Employer Survey 2021 was drawn from the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) for England, which is held by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The ILR is the official data collection for publicly funded further education and work-based learning in England. The data is used to monitor policy implementation and the performance of the sector, and to disburse funding to training providers, providing a strong incentive for training providers to complete it accurately.

The sample was drawn from the 2020/21 R06 ILR release, the most up to date at the time the sampling process was undertaken. This contained records of all apprenticeships started up to 1st January 2021, together with basic details of the site of employment³.

For employers, the ILR records individual site of employment, as registered by the employer, via the learning provider's enrolment process for the apprentices. While an employer is intended to use the same employer ID across multiple learning providers⁴, they are intended to use different IDs where they train at multiple sites⁵. Since no parent organisation information is recorded, these sites cannot be connected. Therefore, all sampling, fieldwork and analysis for the employer survey had to take place at a site level, not an organisation level.

Defining the sample windows

The sample comprised employers who had apprentices either in learning or paused as of 1st January 2021 ('employers with current apprentices'), and employers who had apprentices who had completed their learning 15 to 24 months before the survey ('employer with completer apprentices'). This latter group were defined to be consistent with those employers interviewed in the 2019 survey, in terms of the number of months between completion and survey⁶.

Employers with current apprentices were new to the survey for 2021. The rationale for including these employers was to examine the impact of recent policy more quickly than

³ This information includes only the location of the site, the name of the organisation or site, and details of any Apprenticeship learning taking place there; SIC sector and size of employer are not recorded on the ILR, and were added through the survey.

⁴ Except in cases of error. In an unknown number of cases, the same site registers multiple times for apprenticeships. This would occur if staff in one department were unaware of apprenticeship training activities in other departments on the same site, or sometimes in the case of sites merging.

⁵ Again, in an unknown number of cases guidance is not followed, and on occasion a Head Office address may be used instead for all apprentices in an organisation.

⁶ This approach is taken because it allows comparable measures to be taken of outcomes for apprentices who completed a set number of months before fieldwork commenced. However, it does mean that if fieldwork takes place at a different time of year relative to the previous wave, as occurred in this case, there will be seasonal differences in the number and type of apprenticeships covered.

previous surveys, and in particular to assist in examining how COVID-19 had impacted on employers' use of apprenticeships. Employers with completer apprentices were retained both to allow time series comparisons with the 2019 survey, and to allow an understanding to be gained of the benefits of apprenticeships to the employer, over the full length of the programme and in the months after the apprentice had completed their learning. In many cases, especially if they have an ongoing apprenticeship scheme of a significant scale, employers have both current apprentices and completer apprentices, creating an overlap between sample windows; the impact of this on sampling is described on the next page.

Table 2.1 summarises the key survey groups covered by the Learner Survey and the differences in the sample window definitions for these groups compared with the 2018-19 survey. The surveys prior to 2019 used very similar definitions of sample windows (other than the timing of sampling and fieldwork, shown in Table 1.1), and so can be assumed to be similarly comparable.

Table 2.1 Apprenticeship Evaluation sampling approach for employer groups, and comparison with approach used to sample these groups in the 2019 survey

Sample group	Criteria for inclusion in 2021	Key differences vs. 2019 survey
Employers of current apprentices (Employer Survey)	Any employees at site undertaking an apprenticeship as of 1 January 2020 ⁷ (including apprentices whose learning had temporarily paused), where the apprenticeship was not due to end before fieldwork. ⁸	This group of employers were newly included in the 2021 survey ⁹ .
Employers of completer apprentices (Employer survey)	Employers with any apprentices at site marked on the ILR as having completed their apprenticeship between 1 st July 2019 and 29 th February 2020 (between 15 and 16 months before the survey, consistent with 2019). Unlike the learner survey, recent completers were not included.	This group made up a minority of the survey respondents (by design, 25%). The completion window in 2019 was 1 st January 2017 to 30 th September 2017. While consistent in terms of length of time passing before the survey, seasonal variation in the types of apprenticeship completed may cause some differences.

⁷ Employers with apprentices starting their apprenticeship more recently than 1 January 2020 could not be included in the sample window due to lag in the availability of ILR data.

⁸ These were included equally on the basis that the main reason for pausing apprenticeships in January 2021 would be COVID-19, and many would have un-paused by the time of the survey. This assumption was borne out by events; in the learner survey 81% of paused apprentices contacted had resumed training by the time they were interviewed.

⁹ Although those employers who also had completer apprentices would have been in scope in 2019.

Sampling method

Historically, the employer strand of the evaluation used a quota sampling method (where sample of a particular category is withdrawn once the quota target for that category is achieved). In 2021, a stratified random probability sampling approach was fully adopted for all strands of the Apprenticeship Evaluation surveys.

This meant that, once selected, an employer was called an agreed minimum number of times, and not withdrawn once the target number of interviews for that category of sample had been reached. The advantage of using an RPS approach include:

- Being able to assign a known probability of being sampled to every employer in the sampling frame enhances estimates of statistical confidence.
- It leads to more efficient use of issued sample (since no sample is withdrawn simply because enough interviews of that type have been achieved), and therefore less sample needs to be issued to achieve the overall target number of interviews. This approach gives better coverage of difficult to reach respondents.
- It ensures equal treatment of all units of sample within a cell, both in terms of probability of selection and the fieldwork processes administered in order to achieve interviews.
- It is considered the most robust method for national statistics and public sector surveys.

At the same time there are potential downsides of an RPS approach, including, if initial assumptions on conversion rates are too high, not achieving the overall target number of interviews (or not achieving enough interviews among a particular respondent group). More sample cannot be added towards the very end of fieldwork to 'make up' any likely shortfall since there would not be sufficient time to call all records the agreed minimum number of times (i.e., sample would not all be treated equally).

Sample window overlaps

In the employer survey, there is a substantial overlap in eligibility for the two sample windows. For employers with larger apprenticeship schemes, nearly all would be eligible for both windows, since they would have ongoing apprenticeship schemes, with a continuous flow of completers and new starts. Employers in the overlap between sample windows were given a double chance of selection.

The sampling of windows was carried out sequentially without replacement, to avoid the possibility of the same record being selected twice. However, because the availability of sample was taken into account in the calculation of targets (as described in the 'Setting Interview Targets' section below) and therefore in the quantity of sample drawn, no shortfalls occurred except due to rounding error. As such, both the first and second samples drawn can be considered to have been randomly drawn.

It was also necessary to determine how this sample would be interviewed, because it was not practical to interview the same interviewee about both their current apprentices and their completer apprentices within an interview of reasonable length. This is covered in Chapter 4.

Sample verification and preparation

On receipt of the ILR sample from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), the sample was checked against the specification laid out in the data request. Labels and additional course information were matched on from the Learner Aims Reference Service (LARS) database,¹⁰ and sample from different academic years was merged and deduped.

The file was first reduced to a list of individual apprenticeships, rather than learning aims, bringing together data regarding the apprenticeship framework with that of the main apprenticeship qualification. The file was then reduced a second time, bringing together data regarding apprenticeships studied at each individual employer. This was used to produce the population profile for sampling and weighting purposes (as shown in Table 2.3 to Table 2.6).

This population file did not initially contain the names of employers, or their contact details. For data protection reasons, ESFA do not typically release contact details for the whole population of employers, but only for those records drawn in the selected sample. This introduced an uncertainty into the process, since the proportion of records with viable contact details would not be known until after the sample was drawn.

Estimates based on the proportion of valid contact details in previous years of the Apprenticeships Evaluation¹¹ were therefore used to calculate the amount of sample that needed to be requested. It was assumed that approximately 80% of the sample requested would be returned with valid contact details.¹² This broad approach was unchanged from 2019.

Population of employers

For sampling, employers were broken down by sample window, subject area of apprenticeships, levels of apprenticeships, and banded number of apprenticeships¹³, each

¹⁰ LARS is a database of qualifications, units, apprenticeship frameworks and standards, and their associated validity and funding details (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/learning-aim-reference-services-lars>). This matches onto identifiers stored on the ILR to provide background information on the apprenticeships, including their full title, Sector Subject Area, QCF Level and other related information.

¹¹ 83% in 2019, 84% in 2017 and 91% in 2015.

¹² This was broadly proved correct; as shown in Table 5.1, 84% of sample was returned with a phone number, but only 82% with a usable, non-duplicate phone number.

¹³ 1 to 5 apprentices, 6 to 9 apprentices, and 10 or more apprentices within the sample window.

counted within the survey window. All of this information was derived from the records of learning for that employer on the ILR.

Subject areas were classified by Sector Subject Area (Tier 1), the standard classification used by ESFA for learning on the ILR, and originally developed by Ofqual¹⁴. Due to their long titles, these are abbreviated in the report, as shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Abbreviations of Sector Subject Area (SSA Tier 1) titles used in this report

Sector Subject Area (SSA) title	SSA Tier 1 code	Abbreviation
Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	03	Agriculture
Arts, Media, and Publishing	09	Arts & Media
Business, Administration and Law	15	Business
Construction, Planning, and the Built Environment	05	Construction
Education and Training	13	Education
Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	04	Engineering
Health, Public Services and Care	01	Health
Information and Communication Technology	06	ICT
Leisure, Travel and Tourism	08	Leisure
Retail and Commercial Enterprise	07	Retail
Science and Mathematics	02	Science
Social Sciences	11	Social Sciences

Source: Ofqual (2020). *Guidance: Qualification Descriptions*. May 2020. Accessed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/types-of-regulated-qualifications/qualification-descriptions>.

However, employers could have multiple levels of apprenticeship, and use multiple subject areas of apprenticeships within each sample window. For sampling, this required simplification to allow a viable sample design. Therefore, the subject area and level with the most learners in the sample window concerned was selected for each employer (the ‘most common’ subject area and level). Because of the smaller numbers of apprentices at Levels 4 to 7, these were merged a single category for making this calculation.

Finally, where a tie occurred, and an employer had an equal number of apprentices at two levels or two subject areas:

- Higher levels were prioritised (so if an employer had an equal number of apprentices in Level 3 as they did in Levels 4 to 7 combined, the ‘most common level’ would be set at Level 4 to 7).
- Less common subject areas (identified by calculating the total number of employers using that subject area at all within each survey window) were prioritised over more common subject areas.

¹⁴ Ofqual (2020). *Guidance: Qualification Descriptions*. May 2020. Accessed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/types-of-regulated-qualifications/qualification-descriptions>

This breakdown was used to produce employer population profiles, shown in Table 2.3 and Table 2.4, for employers of current apprentices, and in Table 2.5 and Table 2.6 for employers of completer apprentices.

Table 2.3 Employer population profile, by most common subject area and most common level, Employers of current apprentices

	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4 to 7	Total
Agriculture	2,240	2,480	90	4,810
Arts & Media	10	530	50	580
Business	2,930	10,440	13,810	27,170
Construction	9,530	4,490	2,910	16,920
Education	150	1,820	840	2,810
Engineering	5,680	24,610	1,480	31,770
Health	5,270	14,500	6,120	25,890
ICT	40	3,050	2,380	5,460
Leisure	420	760	20	1,200
Retail	9,770	4,090	1,110	14,980
Science	0	-	100	100
Social Sciences	0	0	20	20
Total	36,030	66,770	28,920	131,710

Source: ILR (2020/21 R06, 2018/19 R14 and 2019/20 R14). Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. “-“ indicates less than five but more than zero. Numbers do not sum to totals because they were added before rounding.

Table 2.4 Employer population profile, by banded number of apprentices and most common level, Employers of current apprentices

	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4 to 7	Total
1 to 5	34,540	62,600	25,150	122,290
6 to 9	870	2,310	1,580	4,760
10 or more	620	1,850	2,190	4,660
Total	36,030	66,770	28,920	131,710

Source: ILR (2020/21 R06, 2018/19 R14 and 2019/20 R14). Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. “-“ indicates less than five but more than zero. Numbers do not sum to totals because they were added before rounding.

Table 2.5 Employer population profile, by most common subject area and most common level, Employers of completer apprentices

	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4 to 7	Total
Agriculture	1,060	740	20	1,820
Arts & Media	20	220	10	250
Business	5,920	7,350	2,710	15,980
Construction	3,810	1,420	180	5,420
Education	540	930	70	1,540
Engineering	5,040	6,900	180	12,120
Health	4,260	8,110	1,880	14,240
ICT	160	2,140	550	2,840
Leisure	670	860	10	1,530
Retail	6,520	4,110	360	10,990
Science	-	20	20	40
Social Sciences	0	0	0	0
Total	28,010	32,790	5,980	66,780

Source: ILR (2020/21 R06, 2018/19 R14 and 2019/20 R14). Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. “-“ indicates less than five but more than zero. Numbers do not sum to totals because were added before rounding.

Table 2.6 Employer population profile, by banded number of apprentices and most common level, Employers of completer apprentices

	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4 to 7	Total
1 to 5	27,070	31,590	5,610	64,270
6 to 9	510	700	190	1,400
10 or more	440	500	180	1,120
Total	28,010	32,790	5,980	66,780

Source: ILR (2020/21 R06, 2018/19 R14 and 2019/20 R14). Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. “-“ indicates less than five but more than zero. Numbers do not sum to totals because were added before rounding.

Setting interview targets

Overall approach

As noted previously, the sampling method changed from a quota sampling approach used in the 2019 and earlier waves of the employer survey (where sample was withdrawn once a particular target is achieved) to a stratified random probability approach.

This approach meant that although the sample was drawn on a stratified basis to achieve a desired profile of employer interviews, no quota targets were imposed. Rather, from the drawn sample, as many interviews as possible were attempted. This meant that it was necessary to estimate with some accuracy the amount of sample that would need to be requested from ESFA, and then used for fieldwork, to meet targets in advance.

Overall, targets for the number of interviews in each sample window were set on a purposive basis, with consultation with DfE regarding the proposed uses of the datasets – these were:

- 3,000 employers of current apprentices; and
- 1,000 employers of completer apprentices.

Within these overall targets for each sample window, detailed targets were also set for each group, based on a three-dimensional grid of most common level by most common subject area by banded number of apprentices.

Frameworks and standards were treated equally, as were regions, with the resulting sample reflecting their proportion in the population within each cell sampled.

A four-stage process was used for setting an overall target for each sample cell, as described in the following sections.

1) Estimating likely response rates for each cell

For each cell, an estimated response rate was calculated, primarily using data from previous apprenticeship evaluation employer surveys, bolstered by data on changes in response rate during COVID-19 encountered in other IFF surveys. The estimated sample ratios required per cell ranged from 4.9:1 (for current employers of small numbers of apprentices in Agriculture) to 9.6:1 (for employers of completer apprentices in Retail). For the purposes of requesting sample from ESFA, a separate version of these estimates was also calculated, which made an additional 17% allowance for the likely rate of availability of valid contact details from ESFA.

By their nature these were best estimates. It is not possible to estimate response rates for a survey in advance with complete accuracy. However, the response rate estimates did not need to be perfectly accurate, as sample could be loaded in batches, with additional batches loaded in response to real response rates encountered during the first few weeks of the survey.

2) Cell minimum targets

Minimum targets were set purposively for numbers of interviews at each most common level and subject area (interlocking), as shown in Table 2.7. Within each level and subject area cell, minimum targets were distributed by scheme size (number of apprentices in the survey window) in line with the population of those cells. The aim of setting these minimum targets was to ensure sufficient interviews among key subgroups (by level and subject area) for reliable analysis. For the cells with the smallest population, where the estimated response rates suggested these targets could not be achieved with the available sample, a target was set to use all available sample.¹⁵

Table 2.7 Target number of interviews with employers, by sample window and most common level, for employers within each most common subject area

	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4 to 7	Total
Current, per subject area	40	40	20	100
Completer, per subject area	20	20	10	50
Total	60	60	30	150 per subject area

Source: ILR (2020/21 R06, 2018/19 R14 and 2019/20 R14). Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. “-” indicates less than five but more than zero. Numbers were added before rounding.

In total, 1,344 interviews were allocated to achieving minimum targets, or 34% of the total target of 4,000 interviews. This approach was broadly the same as in 2019, although the minimum targets for each cell were lower than 2019 for employers of completer apprentices due to the much smaller overall size of the survey with this group (1,000 vs. 4,000 interviews).

3) Census element

A particular challenge with the employer element of the apprenticeships research is to produce a dataset which is capable of producing representative results, and yet able to produce separate results for the employers with large apprenticeship schemes, who may have quite a different experience of apprenticeships to those employers who just have one or two apprentices.

As in 2019, given the very small number of employers with more than ten apprentices (an estimated 4,660 employers of current apprentices, and 1,120 employers of completer apprentices, with a large overlap), and the likelihood of a relatively low response rate for

¹⁵ A new apprenticeship subject area, Social Sciences, was introduced between 2019 and 2021, only found among current apprentices – there were fewer than 20 employers using this subject area nationally, too few for reporting even at a very high response rate. Eight employers were included in the survey sample who used this main subject area, but none responded to the survey.

this group, the targets for this group were set at the maximum believed to be achievable from the available sample, an effective census of this group.

In addition, the similarly sized group of employers with six to nine apprentices were set targets corresponding to a minimum sampling fraction of 50% of the population across all cells, where the cell minimums had not already reached this level.

In total, an additional 883 interviews were allocated through this stage (22% of the total target).

4) Top-up sampling

Finally, the remaining 44% of the interviews required were allocated to each target cell in proportion with their distribution by most common level and most common subject area in the overall population of employers of apprentices, prior to the removal of uncontactable cases. Again, the setting of targets was capped by sample availability, using the estimated response rates mentioned above.

This approach reduced the skew of the sample relative to the population, and hence reduced the extent of weighting required, increasing the effective sample size of the survey.¹⁶

Initial sample selection

Once the target numbers of interviews were set for each cell in the sampling grid, the estimated response rates or sample ratios mentioned above were used to determine the volume of sample required for each target 'cell'.

Sample was then drawn using simple random selection within each cell, separately for employers of current apprentices and employers of completer apprentices. Where employers might be eligible for more than one sample window, they were given a proportionate chance of selection for both.¹⁷

The selected records were securely sent to ESFA, and were returned with contact details sourced from the Employer Data Service (EDS),¹⁸ where available.

¹⁶ Where survey data is weighted, one case may be taken to represent more employers in the population than another case. This reduces the effective sample size, since the impact of random variation (i.e., sampling error which occurs in all data) among cases which represent very large numbers of employers is also larger.

¹⁷ This was done at the stage of calculating targets; the calculated cell overlap was allocated 75% to employers of current apprentices, and 25% to employers of completer apprentices (in line with the relative scale of the surveys). This ensured that the number of sample records that were sought from the available sample never exceeded the number available to draw by more than a rounding error, thus ensuring that the selection of both was random.

¹⁸ The Employer Data Service (EDS) contains company names, postal, phone and email contacts for employers who register learners on the ILR, indexed by an Employer Registration Number (ERN). Only the ERN is stored on the ILR, and additional data, such as contact details, must be linked in from the EDS.

Sample cleaning

Unusable sample was then removed. There were several reasons why sample might not be usable, comprising:

- An absence of contact details from the EDS.
- The contact details on the EDS being invalid or unusable.
- Duplicate contact details with another record in the same survey window (where this occurred, the record with the largest number of apprentices in the selected sample window was retained).

Table 2.8 shows the total population figures for each survey window against the usable sample supplied for each 'most common' subject area:

Table 2.8 Total population figures vs. usable sample (employer survey)

	Employers of current apprentices	Employers of current apprentices	Employers of current apprentices	Employers of completer apprentices	Employers of completer apprentices	Employers of completer apprentices
	Total population	Usable sample	% usable sample from total population	Total population	Usable sample	% usable sample from total population
Agriculture	4,810	750	16%	1,820	290	16%
Arts & Media	580	270	47%	250	130	52%
Business	27,170	4,580	17%	15,980	2,480	16%
Construction	16,920	2,180	13%	5,420	730	13%
Education	2,810	770	27%	1,540	370	24%
Engineering	31,770	3,610	11%	12,120	1,490	12%
Health	25,890	3,340	13%	14,240	1,480	10%
ICT	5,460	1,030	19%	2,840	580	20%
Leisure	1,200	690	58%	1,530	460	30%
Retail	14,980	2,440	17%	10,990	1,350	12%
Science	100	60	60%	40	20	50%
Social Sciences	20	10	50%	0	0	n/a
Total	131,710	19,730	15%	66,780	9,380	14%

Source: ILR (2020/21 R06, 2019/20 R14 and 2018/19 R14). Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. “-“ indicates less than five but more than zero. Numbers were added before rounding.

Final sampling

Having obtained the required sample from ESFA, two more stages of sample reduction was carried out.

Firstly, sample was selected at random from the valid sample supplied by ESFA, in line with the amount of sample indicated as required using estimated response rates *excluding* the allowance for non-return of contact details from the EDS.

Unlike for the learner survey, no advance notification of the survey was sent to employers by post. This was not considered necessary since individuals were being contacted in a

professional capacity; however, it would also not have been possible since full postal addresses are not provided by the EDS.

Secondly, a final random sampling was carried out to produce a batch for initial interviewing, and a reserve batch. Loading a conservative number of records initially (c. two-thirds of the expected requirement, a total of 13,506 records) allowed monitoring of conversion rates to interviews, so that the second batch could be tailored to minimise the risk of substantially under or over-shooting the overall targets, as well as boosting individual grid cells which had fallen behind in terms of progress toward their individual target.

Additional sample from the reserve batch was loaded around two-thirds of the way through the fieldwork period, to maximise the reliability of conversion rates data at individual cell level, but also allowing enough time to ensure all records were contacted the agreed minimum number of times, in line with the requirement of the random probability sampling strategy. As a result of this process, an additional 3,431 records were loaded.

The profile of the sample loaded for fieldwork is shown in Table 2.9 to Table 2.12.

Table 2.9 Employer sample profile, by most common subject area and most common level, Employers of current apprentices

	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4 to 7	Total
Agriculture	168	243	57	468
Arts & Media	7	213	29	249
Business	318	1,036	1,823	3,177
Construction	604	447	347	1,398
Education	87	205	177	469
Engineering	468	1,772	247	2,487
Health	459	906	709	2,074
ICT	14	295	407	716
Leisure	154	218	16	388
Retail	696	444	261	1,401
Science	0	0	62	62
Social Sciences	0	0	8	8
Total	2,975	5,779	4,143	12,897

Source: IFF survey statistics

Table 2.10 Employer sample profile, by banded number of apprentices and most common level, Employers of current apprentices

	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4 to 7	Total
1 to 5	2,312	3,977	2,448	8,737
6 to 9	384	1,126	1,197	2,707
10 or more	279	676	498	1,453
Total	2,975	5,779	4,143	12,897

Source: IFF survey statistics.

Table 2.11 Employer sample profile, by most common subject area and most common level, Employers of completer apprentices

	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4 to 7	Total
Agriculture	79	69	7	155
Arts & Media	8	58	3	69
Business	345	454	184	983
Construction	179	110	38	327
Education	68	88	21	177
Engineering	250	303	32	585
Health	182	293	96	571
ICT	47	167	67	281
Leisure	107	104	1	212
Retail	340	265	62	667
Science	0	9	4	13
Social Sciences	0	0	0	0
Total	1,605	1,920	515	4,040

Source: IFF survey statistics.

Table 2.12 Employer sample profile, by banded number of apprentices and most common level, Employers of completer apprentices

	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4 to 7	Total
1 to 5	1,422	1,699	450	3,571
6 to 9	102	112	31	245
10 or more	81	109	34	224
Total	1,605	1,920	515	4,040

Source: IFF survey statistics.

3. Questionnaire development

Initial questionnaire changes

To ensure comparability, questions were kept as consistent as possible with the 2019 survey. There were, however, new areas of apprenticeship policy which the Department for Education (DfE) wanted the survey to explore, including the impact of COVID-19 on apprenticeships, Level 6+ and Degree apprenticeships, and employers' awareness, preparation for and experience of the End-Point Assessment process.

Testing and piloting

Cognitive testing

Cognitive testing was undertaken with both employers with completer apprentices and those with current apprentices, to test new questions.

In total, 15 cognitive interviews were conducted via telephone between 4th and 24th February 2021. In 12 of these interviews, employers had current apprentices, and in ten employers had apprentices who had completed their apprenticeship in the sample window; in six cases they had both. Cognitive interviews focused solely on new areas of the questionnaire to check that these were fit-for-purpose, covering:

- **Breaks in learning due to Covid-19** (Section C)
- **Covid-19 related amendments to existing questions on retention of apprentices after the completion of the programme** (Section C)
- **Amended questions on Level 6+ and Degree Apprenticeships** (Section D) – aiming to assess the extent of provision of additional learning outside the apprenticeship, and the extent to which these have replaced other Level 6+ or Degree level learning.
- **Elements provided as part of an apprenticeship** (Section E) – these long-standing questions aim to assess the extent to which employers provide and are able to influence training; they have been amended this wave to reflect changes in preferred DfE terminology over time.
- **Apprenticeship Standards** (Section G) – new questions on views of the benefits and disadvantages of apprenticeship standards as opposed to apprenticeship frameworks.
- **End Point Assessments** (Section G) – these questions explore employer awareness of end point assessments, choice of end point assessment

organisation, and how they informed their learners, and at what stage of their apprenticeship.

- **Plans for Apprenticeships in the light of Covid-19** (Section H) – these questions, building on those asked about a usual year, seek to understand the impact of Covid-19 on apprenticeship recruitment in the last year, and the impact of the incentive scheme put in place for employers to recruit apprentices.

For each of these question areas, interviewers administered the questions in the same way that they would during an actual interview, and after asking the survey questions asked follow-up cognitive questions to check respondent comprehension and whether there was anything they would change about the questions to make them easier to answer.

Overall, the cognitive interviews found that the questions were generally well understood, but some minor amendments were required:

- In Section C on COVID-19, some minor wording amendments were made to improve comprehension.
- In Section D on progression to Higher apprenticeships, there were some minor wording change recommendations with some additional prompts added for clarity.
- In Section E on perceptions of, and satisfaction with, apprenticeships there were some minor wording change recommendations with some additional prompts added for clarity.
- In Section G on Apprenticeship Standards, there was some confusion among employers that were unaware of changes to Standards and so a lead-in question to check awareness was added.
- In Section G, a new code was added at G11, G15 and G16 because some employers mentioned that only one EPAO was available to assess apprentices in the subject areas they used.
- In Section H on recent recruitment and future plans minor wording changes were implemented as result of the cognitive interviews.

After the cognitive testing, the questionnaire was also revised in various places to take into account changes in the sample. The technical approach to storing sample information about employers' apprenticeships in the system used to administer the questionnaire was changed. This was due to the increased number and range of apprenticeships, from c.350 at the time of the 2019 survey, to 1,071 at the time of the 2021 survey. The previous layout was therefore no longer viable, due to limits within the survey software used. This larger number of apprenticeship types was primarily due to the transition from frameworks to standards, and the introduction of more apprenticeships above Level 3 since 2019. Specific changes made were:

- At B1, the questions on awareness that a training course is an apprenticeship were removed, since it was no longer possible to take the same approach with the revised sample, and it was agreed that these questions were in any case not a good use of survey time.
- At E1 (asking which apprenticeship is the most important to the employer), the technical approach was changed, restricting the choice of ‘most important’ apprenticeship to the top three most commonly provided (among either current apprentices or completers) depending on whether the survey was taking the current apprentices or the completers route. This new approach did enable employers to be asked about only levels of apprenticeship which were available for the framework or standard specified.

Re-examination of 2019 data

As part of the cognitive exercise, 2019 data was re-examined to identify any areas where the questions could be improved, covering the questions which were not cognitively tested due to being the same or very similar to those asked in 2019.

These issues occurred in two places:

B4 – “Do or have you offered Apprenticeships to any of the following age groups?” was replaced with “If you had a place available on your apprenticeship scheme, which of the following age groups would you consider applications from?”.

The phrase “offered apprenticeships” in this question was frequently misinterpreted to include *only* having actually employed apprentices of that age. This question is followed up by question B5 which asks what would persuade the employer to offer Apprenticeships to young people aged 16 to 18. In previous waves, a frequent answer to the follow-up question has been “but we do” or “but we would if one applied”, due to the misunderstanding of question B4.

The updated wording used for 2021 shown above made clearer that the question was hypothetical, and therefore results from 2019 are not comparable with results from 2021 for either question B4 or B5.

H13 – “Over the next 2 to 3 years, do you expect to use any different or additional Degree and Level 6+ non-degree apprenticeships?” was replaced with “Over the next 2 to 3 years, do you expect to introduce any new Apprenticeship Standards at Degree or Level 6+?”

H13A – “In which new subject areas or levels would you expect to introduce these apprenticeships over the next 2 to 3 years?” was replaced with “In which new subject areas and levels would you expect to introduce these Apprenticeship Standards at Degree or Level 6+?”

These two questions first (at H13) ask if the employer plans to offer new apprenticeships at Level 6 or 7, and secondly (at H13A) in which subject areas and levels they would expect to introduce these new apprenticeships. However, in 2019 a proportion of the people who said 'Yes' to the first question wording went on to describe an apprenticeship they already provided, that they were planning to offer to *additional people*. Some also misheard the question, causing them to include apprenticeships at all levels. The wording of H13 and H13A was changed to reduce this issue by making clearer that these were entirely new apprenticeships rather than new apprentices, and therefore results from 2019 are not comparable with results from 2021 for these two questions.

Pilot survey

A pilot was conducted between 27th April and 5th May 2021, comprising 43 interviews (11 were interviewed regarding completer apprentices, and 32 regarding current apprentices) to test the length and flow of the full questionnaire and to test the comprehension and effectiveness of changes that were made following the cognitive interviews. The pilot used sample drawn from the ILR (taking a sub-sample of the draw for the main survey). Questions were administered as they would be in a normal survey.

The pilot found that:

- Interviews were running at an average of around 30 minutes (around 5 minutes over the maximum length).
- Nine multi-coded questions were sub-optimal in terms of layout for speed of coding; these were B5, B11, C3A, C3B, D3, D4, G1, G8A and G8B.
- Bar some minor revisions, the rest of the questionnaire was well understood by respondents.

To address issues with questionnaire length, it was agreed to remove some questions from the survey. The questions removed were:

- B1, B2 and B2A – awareness that the training was an apprenticeship
- B3A – reasons for starting to offer the apprenticeships; this partially duplicated G1 (reasons for offering apprenticeships rather than other forms of training)
- C1 – expectation of current apprentices completing their apprenticeship.
- C1A – expectation of offering permanent employment to current apprentices.
- C1B – reasons for not offering permanent employment to current apprentices.
- D2 codes not relating to Higher / Degree apprentices removed.
- D5A – prior attainment of Higher apprentices; this information can be derived from the ILR

- D5B – prior attainment of Degree apprentices; this information can be derived from the ILR
- E2 – elements of apprenticeship delivered; one code was deleted, removing the differentiation between influence over the apprenticeship prior to its start vs. influence over the apprenticeship after its start.
- G3 to G5 – questions regarding Traineeships; separate research was ongoing at the time regarding Traineeships.
- H12B – why the employer does *not* expect the number of apprentices to increase, previously asked where a steady level of apprenticeship recruitment was expected.

The final estimated interview length was c. 23 minutes.

Pilot data was included in the main dataset, given that changes focused on removals and amendments to question layout for speed of coding by interviewers.

Questionnaire content

Table 3.1 summarises the survey sections, and details all of the key changes to the questionnaire content since 2019. Changes were also made to the questionnaire to make it suitable for employers with current apprentices, who were a new sample window for 2021.

Table 3.1 Apprenticeship Evaluation Employer Survey questionnaire content, and changes since 2019¹⁹

Section	Overview of section content	Details of changes from 2019
Screener	Introducing the survey and GDPR permissions.	Revised question (S5A) asking if the courses offered according to the ILR were broadly correct.
Section A: Establishment/ Organisation details	Firmographic questions including business activity and size of organisation	Deleted question (A1) on main business activity according to ILR, since this is now supplied by ESFA. Question (H15B) on payroll wage bill moved here from Section H.

¹⁹ In all sections wording was updated and/or new versions of questions added, where appropriate, to make sense for the new audience of employers of current apprentices.

Section	Overview of section content	Details of changes from 2019
Section B: Involvement with apprenticeships	Who establishment offers apprenticeships too, how long they have been offering apprenticeships and why they decided to offer them	Deleted questions on awareness of apprenticeships (B1), and why establishment decided to start offering apprenticeships (B3A) due to similarity to question G1. New question (B11B) on how many apprentices currently employed by establishment.
Section C: Apprentice completion and retention	Whether apprentices stayed working for organisation after completion and why this did or didn't happen	New questions added (C1i and C1ii) on COVID-19 impact.
Section D: Progression from Advanced to Higher Apprenticeships	How much businesses know about Higher Apprenticeships, their relevance to the business whether or not they offer them and why	Deleted questions (D5a and D5b) on level of apprentices employed; (D6 and D7) on relevance of Higher apprenticeships to organisation. New questions (D2a) on whether organisation funds qualification content; and (D8 and D9) on whether Level 6 or 7 apprenticeships are a replacement for another programme to recruit graduates or other work-based learning programmes.
Section E: Perceptions of and satisfaction with Apprenticeships	Questions about the specific apprenticeship programmes that the organisation offers, what they consider most important for their business. As well as their views on training provision and satisfaction with the programme	No major changes
Section F: Employer Benefits	Benefits of offering apprenticeships and training apprenticeships has had for their organisation and what, if anything, they'd like to change about Apprenticeships	Deleted questions (F9 and F12) on Maths and English as part of the apprenticeship;

Section	Overview of section content	Details of changes from 2019
Section G: Apprenticeships vs. other Work-based learning (WBL) and alternatives	Opinion of apprenticeship standards including end point assessments	Deleted questions (G3, G4, G4A and G5) on traineeships; and (G6, G7 and G8) on new apprenticeship standards. New questions (G7a, G8, G8A and G8B) on how standards compare to frameworks; and new section (G9 to G22) on End Point Assessments.
Section H: Recent recruitment and future plans and intentions	How many, if any, apprentices they have recruited to start an apprenticeship in the last 12 months, whether this is the same as in a 'usual' year, and whether the government incentive payment has impacted their recruitment	Deleted questions (H14) on awareness of the way apprenticeships are funded; (H15) on recent policy changes; (H15B) on wage bill; (H16 and H19N to H24N) on apprenticeship reforms. New questions (H1 to H7C) on apprentices recruited; and (H13 and H13A) on introduction of new Apprenticeship Standards; (H14A) on changes to the apprenticeship levy

4. Fieldwork

Interviewer briefings

- 4.1 All interviewers working on the project attended a virtual briefing delivered by the research team at IFF Research. As part of this briefing, all interviewers received written briefing instructions to provide them with background information about the project, information on the sample design and methodology, as well as information on specific sections of the questionnaire.

Mainstage fieldwork period

Mainstage fieldwork for the employer survey took place between 24th May and 9th August 2021.

Contact procedures

Unlike the learner survey, employers were not sent an advanced letter to notify them that the research was taking place. However, they were given the option to request a reassurance email from the interviewer. This reassurance email acted to confirm validity of the research study and provide contact details for further information or to opt out.

Employers were given the option to opt out of the research while on the phone with an interviewer or by email; 110 employers did this.

The sample was contacted using a random probability sampling approach; one key element of this is that all sample is treated equally. Once selected, each sample record was called an agreed minimum number of times (12) and – unlike in previous surveys – sample was not withdrawn once various quotas by level, sector subject area and apprenticeship status (current or completer) had been reached.

Screen-out procedures and ‘switchers’

A series of screening questions were included at the start of the questionnaire to check the eligibility of potential respondents. If they were recorded as having completer apprentices on the ILR, they were asked whether they had provided apprenticeship training leading to a completed apprenticeship in the sample window. If they were recorded as having current apprentices on the ILR, or stated that they could not recall the completer apprentices recorded on the ILR, they were asked if they currently provided apprenticeship training to employees. At this question, respondents were screened out if they said they had not provided this training at all.

Respondents with both current and completer apprentices on the ILR, who confirmed that there were (or had been) both types of apprentice at the site, were then subject to an automated random selection process, in which 39% of employers received survey questions regarding completer apprentices, and 61% received survey questions regarding current apprentices. This mechanism did not function as designed for part of fieldwork, as explained below in the 'Sample routing error' section, and so was adjusted.

Employers were, in specific circumstances, able to switch from the selected apprenticeship type. If respondents were sampled in the completed apprenticeship employer category, but had recruited new apprentices by the time of telephone fieldwork, they were able to switch to the 'completer and current' employer category. Five employers switched category in this way.

Interview length

The average duration of the employer survey was 25 minutes and 22 seconds.²⁰

Interviews achieved

Overall, 4,085 interviews were completed on the employer survey (2,424 with employers with only current apprentices, 454 with employers with only completer apprentices, and 1,207 with both current and completer apprentices).

Of these, 3,108 employers were interviewed on their current apprentices, and 977 were interviewed on their completed apprentices.

Table 4.1 and Table 4.2 show the profile of interviews achieved based on the apprenticeship type the employer was interviewed about, split by main level and main Sector Subject Area, as identified by the employer in the survey. This forms the basis for analysis of the data, and therefore corresponds with base sizes used in the report.

Table 4.3 shows the profile of interviews achieved based on employers with *any* apprentices of each level and Sector Subject Area within the sample window they were interviewed. This breakdown is not generally used in the report, since this would create overlapping groups (because employers were also asked which was the 'most important'), but is included in the tables and dataset, and could be used for additional analysis carried out for other purposes.

Finally, Table 4.4 and Table 4.5 shows the profile of interviews achieved based on the breakdown used for sampling and weighting, the most common Level and Sector Subject Area. This breakdown is used in the calculation of response rates.

²⁰ This is longer than the estimated length; this is because the actual length is based on call times, and therefore includes time spent on hold, or being put through to the correct member of staff.

Table 4.1 Current and completed apprentice employer interviews achieved by main level and main Sector Subject Area (SSA Tier 1)*

	Interviewed regarding Current apprentices: Level 2	Interviewed regarding Current apprentices: Level 3	Interviewed regarding Current apprentices: Level 4 / 5	Interviewed regarding Current apprentices: Level 6 / 7	Interviewed regarding Current apprentices: Total	Interviewed regarding Completed apprentices: Level 2	Interviewed regarding Completed apprentices: Level 3	Interviewed regarding Completed apprentices: Level 4 / 5	Interviewed regarding Completed apprentices: Level 6 / 7	Interviewed regarding Completed apprentices: Total
Agriculture	57	95	6	0	158	23	24	2	0	49
Arts & Media	3	45	2	0	50	3	12	0	0	15
Business	76	210	140	134	560	64	74	19	6	163
Construction	179	104	16	44	343	35	30	8	0	73
Education	17	87	17	14	135	15	41	0	7	63
Engineering	124	439	31	22	616	51	81	6	1	139
Health	229	274	145	19	667	83	124	18	0	225
ICT	7	77	31	13	128	7	40	4	0	51
Leisure	46	44	0	0	90	24	27	0	0	51
Retail	194	97	38	2	331	88	48	6	0	142
Science	0	1	3	10	14	1	3	2	0	6
Other**	6	7	1	2	16	0	0	0	0	0
Total	938	1,480	430	260	3,108	394	504	65	14	977

*as identified by the respondent in the questionnaire. **response given could not be classified.

Table 4.2 Current and completed apprentice employer interviews achieved by main level and size of scheme

	Interviewed regarding Current apprentices: Level 2	Interviewed regarding Current apprentices: Level 3	Interviewed regarding Current apprentices: Level 4 / 5	Interviewed regarding Current apprentices: Level 6 / 7	Interviewed regarding Current apprentices: Total	Interviewed regarding Completed apprentices: Level 2	Interviewed regarding Completed apprentices: Level 3	Interviewed regarding Completed apprentices: Level 4 / 5	Interviewed regarding Completed apprentices: Level 6 / 7	Interviewed regarding Completed apprentices: Total
Size of scheme: 1 to 5 apprentices	735	1,121	266	161	2,283	361	455	57	12	885
Size of scheme: 6 to 9 apprentices	94	144	48	31	317	14	23	4	2	43
Size of scheme: 10+ apprentices	109	215	116	67	507	19	26	4	0	49
Total	938	1,480	430	260	3,108	394	504	65	14	977

Table 4.3 Current and completed apprentice employer interviews achieved, with any apprentices in the survey window in each Sector Subject Area (SSA Tier 1) and Level*

	Interviewed regarding Current apprentices: Level 2	Interviewed regarding Current apprentices: Level 3	Interviewed regarding Current apprentices: Level 4 / 5	Interviewed regarding Current apprentices: Level 6 / 7	Interviewed regarding Current apprentices: Total	Interviewed regarding Completed apprentices: Level 2	Interviewed regarding Completed apprentices: Level 3	Interviewed regarding Completed apprentices: Level 4 / 5	Interviewed regarding Completed apprentices: Level 6 / 7	Interviewed regarding Completed apprentices: Total
Agriculture	84	116	25	15	175	28	24	3	0	51
Arts & Media	7	56	12	6	60	3	15	1	0	18
Business	320	608	443	329	926	130	135	48	9	226
Construction	275	244	100	115	442	54	30	13	1	78
Education	59	125	61	40	177	34	46	4	9	72
Engineering	247	570	133	117	715	77	100	13	2	148
Health	361	551	353	83	716	120	154	44	2	232
ICT	43	167	105	79	218	28	57	16	2	72
Leisure	58	63	9	6	106	33	33	1	0	59
Retail	276	205	113	34	414	99	79	12	0	159
Science	3	6	7	12	18	0	4	2	0	6
Total	1,264	1,940	811	448	3,108	503	558	108	18	977

*as identified from the Individualised Learner Record for that site of employment

Table 4.4 Current and completed apprentice employer interviews achieved, by most common Sector Subject Area (SSA Tier 1) and Level*

	Interviewed regarding Current apprentices: Level 2	Interviewed regarding Current apprentices: Level 3	Interviewed regarding Current apprentices: Level 4 to 7	Interviewed regarding Current apprentices: Total	Interviewed regarding Completed apprentices: Level 2	Interviewed regarding Completed apprentices: Level 3	Interviewed regarding Completed apprentices: Level 4 to 7	Interviewed regarding Completed apprentices: Total
Agriculture	57	89	11	157	25	23	2	50
Arts & Media	2	47	2	51	3	14	0	17
Business	76	208	283	567	64	67	29	160
Construction	171	110	65	346	41	23	11	75
Education	31	67	34	132	19	36	8	63
Engineering	122	432	54	608	53	73	8	134
Health	161	293	199	653	71	119	26	216
ICT	6	80	57	143	12	35	5	52
Leisure	43	51	3	97	27	28	0	55
Retail	181	103	56	340	73	67	9	149
Science	0	1	13	14	0	4	2	6
Total	850	1,481	777	3,108	388	489	100	977

*as identified from the Individualised Learner Record for that site of employment.

Table 4.5 Current and completed apprentice employer interviews achieved, by size of apprenticeship scheme* and most common Level*

	Interviewed regarding Current apprentices: Level 2	Interviewed regarding Current apprentices: Level 3	Interviewed regarding Current apprentices: Level 4 to 7	Interviewed regarding Current apprentices: Total	Interviewed regarding Completed apprentices: Level 2	Interviewed regarding Completed apprentices: Level 3	Interviewed regarding Completed apprentices: Level 4 to 7	Interviewed regarding Completed apprentices: Total
1 to 5 apprentices	667	1,074	513	2,252	353	446	86	885
6 to 9 apprentices	93	181	97	371	16	23	7	46
10 or more apprentices	90	228	167	485	19	20	7	46
Total	850	1,481	777	3,108	388	489	100	977

*as identified from the Individualised Learner Record for that site of employment.

Sample routing correction

Employers with both current apprentices and completer apprentices were selected via one of two routes – either due to having current apprentices, or due to having completer apprentices.

However, during fieldwork, these were both treated equally, regardless of the reason for selection. A proportion (61%) were randomly allocated to be interviewed as employers of current apprentices, while the remainder (39%) were interviewed as employers of completer apprentices.²¹ This approach was taken to reduce complexity in the sampling process, by avoiding the need to carry out a wholly separate sampling exercise for those employers with both current and completer apprentices.

However, during fieldwork, an error caused these groups to be reversed, with those allocated to be interviewed about their current apprentices instead interviewed about their completer apprentices, and vice versa. During this period, 849 interviews were carried out with employers with both current and completer apprentices; it is likely²² that if it were not for the error, 187 more of these would have been interviewed as employers of current apprentices rather than completer apprentices by this point.

When this was detected, while calculating the second batch of sample, the error was corrected. However, there remained a surplus of employers with both current and completer apprentices in the completer survey at that point, increasing the proportion of larger employers in the completer survey, and reducing it in the current survey.

To compensate for this, subsequent employers interviewed who had both types of apprentice were therefore interviewed only about their current apprentices (including remaining live records from the first batch of sample), largely correcting for the imbalance. This resulted in an estimated 140 additional employers being interviewed about their current apprentices than would have been using the random 39:61 distribution, leaving an imbalance of only 47 out of the 1,207 total (4%).

This does mean that a larger number of large employers in the current sample window came from the second batch of sample; however, since both batches were randomly selected and both batches were treated equally in terms of number of calls, this should not have impacted on the representative nature of the resulting dataset.

If a large effect were found, given that the key variables involved (size of employer, use of current / completer apprentices) were all controlled for in the weighting process, it would be expected that large weights would need to be applied to correct for this in the non-response stage of the weighting described in Chapter 6, which adjusted the dataset to match the population profile after the selection weight was applied. This was not the

²¹ It was not possible to interview employers about both their current apprentices and completer apprentices due to time constraints. The proportions allocated to each route are not equal due to the differing intended total size of the current and completer surveys (3,000 vs. 1,000 interviews).

²² Because of the random nature of the calculation this must be estimated; it cannot be precisely determined what the 'correct' route would be for any given case because it would depend on a random selection process.

case; no large weights requiring trimming were generated, indicating that the impact on the sample profile relative to the population was small.

5. Response rates

Overall response rates

The overall response rate across among all employers was 28% if ineligible and unusable sample are removed from the base calculation, as shown in Table 5.1. Overall, 24% of the sample loaded originally led to a completed survey; this was considerably in excess of the rate assumed to be possible in the sampling process, of 18%. However, this estimated rate was set deliberately low since the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on response rates from employers was unknown at the start of fieldwork.

As noted in Chapter 4, for the random probability sampling (RPS) approach loaded sample was withdrawn after reaching a pre-set maximum number of call attempts. Those categorised as ‘worked sample with no final outcome at the end of the fieldwork’ period, are cases that were still considered ‘live’ sample (for example, those who were engaged, unavailable, or did not answer the phone) but had reached the maximum number of call attempts.

Table 5.1 Sample outcomes and response rate

Sample outcome	Quantity of sample: Number of records	Quantity of sample: % of the sample used	Quantity of sample: % of the sample with valid phone number	Quantity of sample: % of the complete contacts
Records sent to ESFA for matching	28,103			
Total starting sample (records received with phone number)	23,614			
Phone number invalid or duplicate (prior to fieldwork)	509			
Sample received as eligible for interview	23,105			
Drawn for interview in final stage	16,937	100%		
Unobtainable / invalid numbers, or company closed	2,229	13%		
Sample with usable phone number	14,708	87%	100%	
Worked sample (i.e., no more calls required under RPS rules)	6,172	36%	42%	
Live sample at the end of the fieldwork period	0	0%	0%	
Ineligible (no recollection of any apprentices in relevant sample windows)	776	5%	5%	
Opted out	110	1%	1%	
Total complete contacts	7,650	45%	52%	100%
Achieved interviews	4,085	24%	28%	53%
Refused / not available during fieldwork	2,728	16%	19%	36%
Dealt with by person working from home, and unwilling to transfer	780	5%	5%	10%
Quits during interview	57	0%	0%	1%

Response rates by sub-group

Table 5.2 shows the response rates achieved by sector subject and level, relative to the quantity of sample loaded, compared to the average of 24% across the survey as a whole.

Table 5.2 Response rate by survey subgroup, relative to quantity of sample loaded

Most common subject area* (sample)	Current: Total loaded	Current: Number of interviews	Current: Response rate	Completers: Total loaded	Completers: Number of interviews	Completers: Response rate	All employers: Total loaded	All employers: Number of interviews	All employers: Response rate
Agriculture	468	157	34%	155	50	32%	623	207	33%
Arts & Media	249	51	20%	69	17	25%	318	68	21%
Business	3,177	567	18%	983	160	16%	4,160	727	17%
Construction	1,398	346	25%	327	75	23%	1,725	421	24%
Education	469	132	28%	177	63	36%	646	195	30%
Engineering	2,487	608	24%	585	134	23%	3,072	742	24%
Health	2,074	653	31%	571	216	38%	2,645	869	33%
ICT	716	143	20%	281	52	19%	997	195	20%
Leisure	388	97	25%	212	55	26%	600	152	25%
Retail	1,401	340	24%	667	149	22%	2,068	489	24%
Science	62	14	23%	13	6	46%	75	20	27%
Social Sciences	8	0	0%	0	0	n/a	8	0	0%
Most common Level* (sample)									
Level 2	2,975	850	29%	1,605	388	24%	4,580	1,238	27%
Level 3	5,779	1,481	26%	1,920	489	25%	7,699	1,970	26%
Level 4 to 7	4,143	777	19%	515	100	19%	4,658	877	19%
Apprenticeship scheme size*									
1 to 5	8,737	2,252	26%	3,571	855	24%	12,308	3,107	25%

6 to 9	2,707	371	14%	245	46	19%	2,952	417	14%
10+	1,453	485	33%	224	46	21%	1,677	531	32%
Total	12,897	3,108	24%	4,040	977	24%	16,937	4,085	24%

*within relevant survey window for sampling / fieldwork

6. Weighting

Introduction

In 2021, weighting for the employer survey was complex given that the population and sample of employers could be both employers of current apprentices and completer apprentices. This complexity did not exist in 2019, when only employers of completer apprentices were interviewed, and so a much simpler approach could be used.

Since each employer could only be interviewed for either one of the current or completer survey, but not both surveys, a complex random sampling process was used to sample from the full universe of employers, so that each employer was only sampled to be interviewed about one type of apprentice (current or completer), as described in Chapter 2. The process described below takes this into account, with the aim of producing weights enabling figures to be generated representative of the population of employers with apprentices in England, and sub-groups within that population.

The weighting approach for employers with completer apprentices, although differing in detail due to the use of Random Probability Sampling in 2021, was designed to have broadly similar results to the weighting approach used in 2019, enabling comparisons to be made with caution with previous results.

Rationale for calculating multiple weights

The underlying assumptions behind calculating multiple weights were, firstly, that the probabilities of selection for the two cohorts (employers selected for interview regarding their completer apprentices, and employers selected for interview regarding their current apprentices²³) were independent of each other.

The second assumption is that the selection probabilities for employers were conditional on the variables used for sample selection: the most common apprenticeship Sector Subject Area (SSA), the most common apprenticeship level (Level) and the banded size of the apprenticeship scheme (Sizeband) within the sample window of interview²⁴.

For employers in both the current and completer cohort, these variables (referred to in the remainder of this section as SSA, Level and Sizeband) often had different values²⁵.

²³ It was possible – although rare – for employers to be interviewed regarding current apprentices rather than completer apprentices, if they did not recall their completer apprentices. In these cases, weighting was applied for the cohort the employer was selected for, rather than that in which they were interviewed.

²⁴ These variables, used the same definitions and derivations as for the sampling process, described in detail in Chapter 2.

²⁵ For example, it is likely that either there is at least a different main SSA, main level or main sizeband depending on whether we are considering employment of current or completer apprentices, or that more than one of these variables might be different

Given these complexities, the selection probability for each establishment was estimated directly from the sampling data, comparing against the universe data, using two different sets of SSA, Level and Sizeband variables: one for cases sampled for interview regarding current apprentices, and one for cases sampled for interview regarding completer apprentices. Within each of these cohorts, different selection probabilities were assumed depending on whether employers were in the universe for a single cohort only or the universe for both cohorts.

As is the practice with these types of surveys the weighting process followed the following broad steps:

1. **Selection Weighting:** Selection weighting is performed on the issued sample to correct for differences in selection probability and ensure that its distribution after weighting matches that of the Universe. It was performed separately for the two main cohorts: employers selected to be interviewed regarding current apprentices, and employers selected to be interviewed regarding completer apprentices. Within each cohort, selection weighting was performed separately for employers in the universe for that cohort only and employers in the universe for both the current and completers cohorts. This weight (w_1) provides the input for non-Response weighting.
2. **Non-Response weighing:** The purpose of non-response weighting is to correct for bias in the distribution of the achieved sample²⁶ vs the rest of the issued sample, caused by differences in conversion rate for different cells. Due to the limitations of small base sizes, some cohorts were combined for this weighting. This weight (w_2) combined with the sampling weight (w_1) provides the final weight for each cohort (w_{12}). The final selection and non-response weighted samples of each cohort (current and completer employers) both represent the overlap group between the cohort universes and are designed to be analysed independently.
3. **Combined Employer Weight:** A further weight was created to combine the employers into one weighted sample representative of the current and/or completer employers combined universe, where the cohort overlap group is only represented once. This is implemented using an additional phase of selection weighting which assumes respectively that all current employers and completer employers in their respective universes have an equal opportunity of being represented in their respective weighted samples.

The weighting steps are described in more detail in the following sections.

²⁶ Achieved sample = sample where interviews were completed

Background data

Universe Data

The Universe source for the employers sample is the population of employers of current apprentices and completer apprentices (as defined in Chapter 2 of this technical report) broken down as shown in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Universe size for Employer Cohorts and overlap group

Cohort	Population
Current apprentice employers only	103,340
Completer apprentice employers only	38,410
Employers of both current and completer apprentices	28,370
All employers of apprentices	170,120

Although the universe is based on unique employers within each cohort, 28,370 employers are counted within both, because they qualified to fall into both sample windows as defined.

The selection and non-response weighting process is designed to be representative of each cohort and therefore aims to be representative of both instances of an employer where it appears in both windows²⁷.

The universe count of population members (employers) for each cohort was provided split by cells defined by SSA, Level and Sizeband. These dimensions are summarised in Table 6.2.

²⁷ Although designed to be representative of both instances the overlap samples for current and completers are mutually exclusive in terms of specific employers sampled

Table 6.2 Universe cell definitions, within each sample window

Most common Sector Subject Area (SSA)	Most common Level (Level)	Scheme size (Sizeband)
Agriculture	Level 2	1 to 5
Arts & Media	Level 3	6 to 9
Business	Levels 4 to 7	10+
Construction		
Education		
Engineering		
Health		
ICT		
Leisure		
Retail		
Science		
Others		

Due to sparsity within their universe totals, for all cohorts, 'Science' was combined with 'Engineering', and 'Others' was combined with 'Business' as it is the modal SSA category, yielding ten combined SSA cells. These were the only global merges of cell made in advance of selection weighting.

The Universe data was provided split by these cells for current and completer apprentice employers. A separate split was provided for the overlap group of employers in both cohorts. Two versions of the overlap group were provided: one split by the most common SSA, Level and Sizeband for current apprentices employed and the other split by the most common SSA, Level and Sizeband for the completer apprentices employed.

Issued Sample Data

A single database was provided for all employers in the either the current, completer or overlap cohorts. The overlap sample was further subdivided into overlap cases selected for the current sample and overlap cases selected for the completers sample. Fields in the database included: ID, sample type (cohort and whether or not part of overlap), whether a complete interview was obtained (yes or no), region and finally the sampling cell, split by SSA, Level and Sizeband²⁸.

This is the main data source used for weighting. A phase of data preparation was carried out on this data to reformat and combine categories of variables in an optimal format for weighting. All weights were scored directly onto this data, matched by ID which was unique for each employer in the sample across both cohorts.

²⁸ Separate copies of the last three variables were provided for cases in the current and/or completers cohort. Two versions of sizeband were provide: three category version matching the universe distribution and more granular seven category version to be used in non-response modelling.

Selection Weighting

The target number of achieved interviews and hence the resulting sampling fractions for each cell in each cohort were determined using a complex set of criteria described in Chapter 2 of this technical report. It was necessary to assume different sampling fractions for each SSA by Level by Sizeband sampling cell, with separate fractions assumed for cases in the overlap between the cohorts.

This initially gave 10 (SSA) × 3 (Level) × 3 (Sizeband) × 4 (cohort subtypes²⁹) = 360 cells with different sampling fractions. Due to the sparseness of either universe or issued sample in some tables, cells needed to be combined. These were all combined, where possible, across Level, within SSA. This enabled cells with either no employers in the universe and/or issued sample to be combined with their most similar cells. This strategy was also used on occasion to avoid an extreme or outlying high or low sampling weight. For the non-overlap completers survey where both universe and sampling grids are extremely sparse, it was also necessary to collapse cells across SSA.

For each cohort sub-type, a distribution across these merged cells was created and compared with the universe distribution to create selection probability (p) for each cell, defined by the number of sampled apprentices divided by the number of apprentices in the universe. The selection weight for the cell is then calculated at $1/p$. These weights were then scaled to sum to the sample size for each cohort sub-type.

Within each of the current and completer cohorts, the single cohort and overlap groups were combined to understand the weighting efficiency for the whole cohort. The weighting efficiencies of the untrimmed selection weights was 72% for the current employers and 65% for the recent employers.

The reduction in bias due to the weighting was assessed by comparing the universe distribution by SSA, Level and Sizeband for each cohort with that of the unweighted and then selection weighted sample. Similar comparisons were made for the single cohort and overlap group by each of these variables. The reduction in bias was found to be significant.

Some of the weights were quite extreme even after cell merging and therefore trimmed versions of the selection weight were investigated with trimming of the top 2.5% and bottom 2.5% of selection weights in each cohort. Given that these resulted in a similar reduction in bias but with higher weighting efficiencies it was decided to adopt the trimmed version of the selection weight for each cohort. The final weighting efficiencies were 76% and 66% respectively for the current and completer cohorts. In the rest of this chapter, we refer to this weight as w_1 .

²⁹ Four cohort subtypes = Current only, Current overlap, Completer only and Completer overlap

Non-Response Weighting

Non-response modelling was carried out on the selection-weighted³⁰ issued sample database for each cohort: current and completers. This involved use of logistic regression modelling to predict the probability of completing a survey, conditional on the response pattern on some predictor variables. The predictor variables available included sample type (cohort), Region, SSA, Level, and Sizeband and whether the case is part of the cohort overlap group. Some of the categories of these predictors were combined in the models for some cohorts, to achieve minimum base sizes for complete interviews and ensure that the granularity of the categories was appropriate for estimating robust effect sizes for those completing vs. not completing an interview, thus making the model more robust.

After several iterations, it was decided to include the main effects for all predictor variables in the non-response models for each cohort, as summarised in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3 Predictors in non-response models

Predictor	Current Employers	Completer Employers
Region ³¹	Yes	Yes
Most common Sector Subject Area (SSA)	Yes	Yes
Most common Level (Level)	Yes	Yes
Scheme size (Sizeband)	Yes	Yes
Whether in cohort overlap group	Yes	Yes

For each cohort, a probability of completing an interview was scored for each case on the sample (p). The non-response weight (w_2) was created for each model by taking $1/p$. These weights were multiplied by the previous selection weights (w_1) to create a new combined selection and non-response weight (w_{12}). Complete interviews weighted by this new w_{12} weight shows a significant reduction in bias vs. complete interviews weighted by the selection weight only.

Reduction in bias was measured by comparing the profile of complete interviews weighted by w_{12} by 'Level within SSA within Sizeband', Region, SSA, Level and Sizeband within overlap and non-overlap groups with the corresponding profile of the 'selection-weighted' (w_1) completers. Both of these profiles were benchmarked against the w_1 weighted issued sample.

Reduction in bias was significant and further it was not found necessary to trim the non-response component of weight. The final weighting efficiencies for the combined selection and non-response weights were 72% for the current cohort and 68% for the completers cohort.

³⁰ Weighted by w_1

³¹ Standard regions of England, as defined by ONS.

Final weights for Current and Completer employer cohorts

For each of the current and completers cohort, two different rescaled versions of the weight were provided, scaling the overlap between cohorts correctly to allow separate results representative of employers of current apprentices and employers of completer apprentices to be derived. The additional weights derived were:

- Final weights grossed to the population size for each cohort (w_{Finalg})
- Final weights scaled to the sample size for each Cohort (w_{Finaln})

The final weighting efficiency and effective sample sizes are summarised in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4 Final Individual Apprentice Weights: Weighting Efficiency

Group	Sample size	nEff	Efficiency %
Employers interviewed regarding current apprentices	3,108	2,247	72%
Employers interviewed regarding completer apprentices	977	660	68%

Combined Employer weight

It was necessary to create a combined version of the employer weight for analysis that is required to be run across both cohorts simultaneously which corrects for the fact that the cohort overlap is represented in both the current and completers survey (whereas this should be counted once in the combined sample³²). The additional weight also needs to weight current and completer employers appropriately given the differences in sampling fraction for these cohorts.

A further layer of selection weights was created for this purpose to be combined with the existing current and completers cohort weights. The selection probabilities for this final 'combined employers' selection weight are defined in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5 Combined employers selection probabilities

Group	Assumed selection probability (p)
Current Apprentice Employers ONLY	$p_{curr} = 3,108 / 131,710$ (i.e. current sample / current universe)
Completer Apprentice Employers ONLY	$p_{comp} = 977 / 66,780$ (i.e., completer sample / completer universe)
Employers of both current and Completer Apprentices	$p_{curr} + p_{comp} - (p_{curr} * p_{comp})$

³² In other words, if results correctly derived for employers of current employers are added to results representative of employers of completer apprentices, this will count employers of *both types of apprentice* twice, whereas in most cases, for analysis of employers of apprentices *as a whole* we would want to count this group just once.

The selection weight was created by inverting the selection probability ($1/p$). The assumption underlying this weight is that the sampling processes for each cohort are independent of each other and that within each cohort, after the previous weighting stages, each employer in the universe has an equal probability of being represented. The new selection weight was combined with the final weights for each cohort sub-type³³ to create the final combined employer weight.

Two versions of this weight were created: WFinalOrgN which is scaled to the combined sample size for all employers from both cohorts (4,085) and WFinalOrgG which is scaled to the universe size for all employers of apprentices from both cohorts (170,120).

The weighting efficiency for the combined employer weight (taking account of all previous weighting stages) was 59%. The relatively low efficiency is due to the imbalance in the sampling fractions for current and completers, where completer employers have a lower probability of having been sampled and therefore take a higher combined employer weight. This is primarily due to the smaller target number of interviews with completer employers (1,000) relative to the target number of interviews with current employers (3,000), a distribution chosen due to the need for detailed insight on current policy initiatives.

Due to this relatively large weighting effect (i.e., low weighting efficiency), as described in Chapter 7, all significant differences and comparisons of sub-groups in this report use the effective sample size rather than the actual sample size, thus taking into account this effect.

³³ Four cohort subtypes = Current only, Current overlap, Completer only and Completer overlap

7. Analysis and interpretation

Survey data was analysed via a number of methods, including subgroup analysis and comparisons to previous years data. This chapter details the method used to carry out these types of analyses.

Data edits

The final SPSS data files and tables underwent an extensive set of quality assurance checks. This included:

- Checking data labels accurately reflect what the data shows.
- Checking derived variables / tables have been correctly defined / implemented.
- Checking that coding of verbatim responses was accurate and applied correctly.
- Checking base sizes for each question match the target base as per the questionnaire (including modularised questions)
 - This included editing various questions where back-coding of verbatim meant that some respondents did not receive follow-up questions that should have been asked. Due to the generally small number of cases involved, their responses to these questions were forced to 'don't know' or 'prefer not to say', depending on which was most suitable to 'route out' of other subsequent questions missed.
- Logic checks / editing to remove non-sensical or implausible data and manual edits (e.g. outliers at numeric questions).
- Checking that responses that should be single-coded (e.g. 'don't know') are not combined with other responses.
- Checking that weighting has been applied correctly / accurately.
- For tables, checking that summary codes (i.e. codes that combine more than one response code) are calculated correctly.
- Checking table crossbreaks have been correctly defined / implemented.

Use of different weights in analysis

There are two key weights used in analysis in reporting for this survey:

- The combined employer weight, used for analysis of all employers, and sub-groups of all employers (other than employers of current apprentices vs. employers of completer apprentices).

- The final current and completer employer weight, used for analysis which counts employers of current employers and employers of completer apprentices separately. This includes analysis comparing with data from the 2019 evaluation.

This is because there is a large group of employers who have both current apprentices and completer apprentices. If results representative of employers of current employers were added to results representative of employers of completer apprentices, the result would count employers of both types of apprentice twice. In most cases, for analysis of employers of apprentices as a whole we would want to count this group just once.

Comparing to previous waves

The main report leads with headlines figures based on ‘all employers’ – i.e., combining the results of those with former apprentices and current apprentices.

Unless otherwise stated, sub-group analysis is also conducted only within this combined ‘all employers’ group, except for where questions are asked of a specific subgroup of respondents (for example, COVID-19 questions were only asked of employers with current apprentices).

Given that employers with current apprentices were not included in the previous survey, it is not possible to compare the ‘all employers’ measure with the corresponding results in previous waves. Instead, throughout the report we compare employers with completers with their counterparts in previous years, where comparable questions were asked.

Sub-group analysis

To facilitate subgroup analysis, several analysis ‘cross breaks’ were applied to the data tables. The analysis breaks most commonly used for the main report were:

- **Main subject area:** The main subject area, selected as being the most important to their organisation by the employer in the survey at question E1, from a list of specific apprenticeships used at that site (sourced from the ILR), and then classified by Sector Subject Area (SSA) at Tier 1 level. As in previous Apprenticeships Evaluation surveys, these subject areas are defined using the Ofqual Sector Subject Area (SSA Tier 1) classification, with abbreviated titles. Sample data was used (looking at the most numerous specific apprenticeships offered) if they declined to select a subject area, or if they used only one subject area on the ILR. This approach was also taken in 2018/19.³⁴

³⁴ Employers were asked to select a single specific apprenticeship standard or framework which was ‘most important to the business’, from a list of the three they most commonly used within the survey window they were being interviewed about (current apprentices or completer apprentices). They were able to give a different apprenticeship if they did not wish to select any of these. Where they were unable to choose a specific standard or framework, the most commonly used within the survey window the employer was being

- For analysis and reporting purposes the SSA titles have been abbreviated for brevity. These titles and their corresponding abbreviations are shown in Table 7.1.
- The main subject area should not be assumed to be the same as the main sector of the employer's operations (i.e., SIC sector).
- **Main level:** The main apprenticeship level as selected by the employer in the survey at question E1A, from a list of those available for the specific apprenticeship they had selected as the most important to their organisation. Sample was used if they declined to select a subject area, or if the subject area chosen as the main subject area was only available at one level. For analysis, Levels 4 and 5 are grouped together to represent Higher apprenticeships, and separately, Levels 6 and 7 are grouped together to represent Degree and L6+ non-Degree apprenticeships.³⁵
- **Size of employer:** The number of staff at the site,³⁶ as given by respondents in the survey at question A5, banded into groups for convenient analysis (less than ten employees, ten to 99 employees, and 100 or more employees). In a small number of places in the report, where specifically required for analysis, the number of staff at the *organisation* is used rather than that site only.
- **Sector of the employer,** using the ONS SIC2007 classification, as given by respondents in the survey in free text format at question A3, and classified by a trained team of coders to the classification.³⁷
- **Use of frameworks and standards,** sourced from the ILR sample data. This is split into 'mostly standards' and 'mostly frameworks'.³⁸

Less commonly, some of the following classifications are used where useful for the report narrative:

- **Region,** using the ONS classification of English regions and based upon the site of employment postcode recorded by the Employer Data Service (EDS) and linked to the ILR, is shown where clear regional trends have emerged.

interviewed about was used instead. The specific apprenticeship programmes were grouped for analysis based upon the Sector Subject Area (Tier 1) of the programme.

³⁵ This approach was in broad terms also used in 2019. However, in 2019, employers interviewed were given a free choice of levels 2 to 7 regardless of the specific apprenticeship programme chosen. In 2021, due to advances in survey programming software, it was possible to restrict the employer's choice only to levels actually available for the specific apprenticeship programme chosen.

³⁶ This classification uses employment – i.e., including working proprietors – rather than employees.

³⁷ This information is not collected on the ILR.

³⁸ Where there was a 50/50 split in the number of apprentices between standards and frameworks, this classification attributed these to 'mostly standards', on the basis that the transition is likely to be toward standards.

- **Levy eligibility**, based on question H15B in the survey which asks if the organisation had a wage bill of £3m or more in the UK at the time of the survey; if they state that they did, it is assumed that they would be eligible for the Levy.
- **Size of apprenticeship scheme**, based on banded responses (1, 2, 3 to 5, 6 to 9, 10 or more) to questions B11A and B11B in the survey, asking about the number of apprentices in the sample window being asked about.
- **Percent of apprentices among staff**, based on the questions in the survey regarding the number of apprentices in the sample window and number of staff at the site detailed above, banded into four bands (less than 5%, 5% to 9.99%, 10% to 24.99%, more than 25%).
- **Recruitment techniques for apprentices**, based on the question B12 in the survey regarding whether apprentices in the sample window being asked about had been recruited specifically for an apprenticeship (whether the start was delayed after recruitment or not) or were existing staff who had been given an apprenticeship.
- **Use of fixed term contracts**, based on whether any of the apprentices were on fixed term contracts or not, according to survey question B15.
- **Employer type**, or whether the employer is public sector, private sector or third sector, based on survey question A4.
- **Growth outlook**, for private sector organisations only, or whether the employer expects the staff of the organisation to grow or contract, based on survey question A7.
- **Number of years offering apprenticeships**, from the survey question B3, banded into 0 to 3 years, 4 to 5 years, 5 to 9 years and 10 or more years.
- **COVID-19 impact**, or whether COVID-19 caused the business to reduce apprenticeship recruitment levels, asked in survey question H2.

Table 7.1 Abbreviations of Sector Subject Area (SSA Tier 1) titles used for analysis

Sector Subject Area (SSA Tier 1) title	SSA code	Abbreviation
Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	03	Agriculture
Arts, Media, and Publishing	09	Arts & Media
Business, Administration and Law	15	Business
Construction, Planning, and the Built Environment	05	Construction
Education and Training	13	Education
Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	04	Engineering
Health, Public Services and Care	01	Health
Information and Communication Technology	06	ICT
Leisure, Travel and Tourism	08	Leisure
Retail and Commercial Enterprise	07	Retail
Science and Mathematics	02	Science
Social Sciences	11	Social Sciences

Source: Ofqual / IFF Research

Links between sub-groups

Throughout this report, written analysis takes into account that some breaks are linked to each other. It is important that this is also borne in mind when viewing the tables which accompany the report.

The clearest example of this is where figures are presented for employers who have both current apprentices and completer apprentices. There are often statistically significant differences between this group and employers who have only current apprentices or only completer apprentices. However, it should not be assumed that differences shown for this group are *driven by* having both current or completer apprentices.

This is because it is rare for employers with only one apprentice in either sample window, or with very small numbers of employees overall, to feature in this group. It is also progressively more likely, as the size of the apprenticeship scheme and organisation increases, for employers to feature in this sub-group.

The result of this is that results for this group closely reflect the results for larger companies. Therefore, the driver for the differences seen between this group and employers with only current may simply be that the company involved is larger, rather than any impact relating to having both types of apprentice.

Many other sub-group breaks interact in a similar way, although typically to a lesser extent. For example:

- Larger employers, simply because they can have more apprentices, are more likely to have at least one of every specific type of apprentice, whether in terms of demographics or course type. To give an example, a lower proportion of small employers having an apprentice from an ethnic minority does not necessarily reflect badly on the performance of small employers in terms of diversity of apprentices recruited; it is simply that most small employers have only one apprentice and so *by definition* cannot recruit from more than one ethnicity³⁹.
- The employers where the main subject area of apprenticeships is Education and Health are much more likely to be mid-sized sites with 10 to 99 employees than average, so results for these subject areas may in some cases reflect this difference in size of site, rather than a difference purely due to the subject area studied. This does not invalidate the results for either size of site or main subject area; both remain valid but this link should be borne in mind in analysis.
- SIC Sector and main subject area of apprenticeships are linked, but are not the same, as shown in Table 7.3; while 80% of employers with a main subject area of Construction are Construction sector employers, employers with a main subject area of Retail are more likely to be in the Other Services section (43%) or in Accommodation and Food Service (31%) than in the Retail sector (15%).

The links between some key sub-groups for employers of apprentices eligible for the survey are shown in the tables below, using weighted survey data.

³⁹ To assess the relative performance of different sizes of employer in this area, a volumetric analysis taking into account the number of apprentices per employer would be required.

Table 7.2 Size of site of employment, by main Sector Subject Area (SSA Tier 1) of apprenticeships

	Agriculture	Arts & Media	Business	Construction	Education	Engineering	Health	ICT	Leisure	Retail	Total
Base	207	65	723	416	198	755	892	179	141	473	4,085
Less than 10	49%	47%	27%	55%	2%	42%	21%	38%	19%	45%	35%
10 to 99	48%	45%	53%	36%	79%	47%	70%	42%	69%	46%	52%
100 or more	1%	6%	19%	8%	19%	10%	7%	18%	11%	8%	11%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 7.3 SIC Sector (ONS SIC2007) of employer, by main Sector Subject Area (SSA Tier 1) of apprenticeships

	Agriculture	Arts & Media	Business	Construction	Education	Engineering	Health	ICT	Leisure	Retail	Total
Base	207	65	723	416	198	755	892	179	141	473	4,085
Agriculture etc.	18%	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1%
Mining and Utilities	*	*	1%	1%	*	1%	*	*	*	1%	1%
Manufacturing	5%	13%	10%	5%	*	29%	*	6%	*	1%	10%
Construction	*	*	3%	80%	*	33%	*	3%	*	1%	17%
Wholesale / Retail	6%	3%	10%	*	*	24%	5%	10%	*	15%	11%
Transport / Storage	*	*	2%	*	1%	2%	*	*	*	1%	1%
Accommodation / Food Service	1%	4%	4%	1%	*	*	*	*	3%	31%	5%
Information / Communications	*	13%	4%	*	*	*	*	44%	*	1%	3%
Financial / Real Estate	*	*	8%	2%	*	*	1%	3%	*	4%	3%
Professional / Scientific / Technology	34%	24%	22%	9%	1%	7%	*	12%	*	*	10%
Administrative / Support Services	12%	18%	6%	2%	1%	2%	*	6%	3%	*	3%
Public Administration / Defence	2%	*	3%	1%	1%	*	1%	*	*	*	1%
Education	2%	11%	11%	1%	94%	*	19%	9%	54%	1%	10%
Health / Social Work	*	1%	13%	*	2%	*	73%	4%	3%	1%	17%
Arts / Entertainment	16%	7%	3%	*	*	1%	*	1%	37%	*	2%
Other Services	4%	6%	1%	*	*	*	*	1%	*	43%	6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 7.4 Main Sector Subject Area (SSA Tier 1) of apprenticeships, by Region

	East of England	East Midlands	London	North East	North West	South East	South West	West Midlands	Yorkshire and the Humber	Total
Base	408	457	388	214	584	611	492	463	461	4,085
Agriculture	4%	6%	2%	3%	3%	5%	7%	4%	4%	4%
Arts & Media	*	*	1%	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Business	25%	16%	29%	32%	21%	19%	15%	25%	22%	22%
Construction	10%	13%	6%	13%	13%	8%	13%	8%	16%	11%
Education	4%	3%	3%	4%	3%	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%
Engineering	24%	26%	12%	20%	18%	22%	27%	21%	25%	22%
Health	15%	17%	28%	13%	20%	22%	20%	20%	13%	19%
ICT	3%	3%	5%	4%	4%	4%	2%	4%	4%	4%
Leisure	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Retail	13%	14%	13%	8%	13%	16%	11%	13%	11%	13%
Science	*	*	*	2%	2%	*	*	*	1%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 7.5 SIC sector (ONS SIC2007) of employer, by region

	East of England	East Midlands	London	North East	North West	South East	South West	West Midlands	Yorkshire and the Humber	Total
Base	408	457	388	214	584	611	492	463	461	4,085
Agriculture etc.	1%	1%	*	1%	*	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Mining and Utilities	*	*	*	*	1%	1%	1%	*	1%	1%
Manufacturing	12%	8%	4%	10%	14%	7%	9%	10%	17%	10%
Construction	17%	20%	10%	22%	17%	13%	20%	13%	20%	17%
Wholesale / Retail	14%	13%	9%	7%	7%	16%	12%	10%	9%	11%
Transport / Storage	1%	3%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%
Accommodation / Food Service	8%	5%	6%	3%	4%	5%	5%	5%	4%	5%
Information / Communications	1%	1%	4%	4%	4%	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%
Financial / Real Estate	3%	2%	7%	1%	3%	2%	1%	3%	3%	3%
Professional / Scientific / Technology	7%	10%	8%	13%	12%	7%	8%	12%	11%	10%
Administrative / Support Services	1%	3%	5%	5%	1%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Public Administration / Defence	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Education	12%	10%	17%	7%	9%	10%	8%	10%	7%	10%
Health / Social Work	16%	15%	21%	20%	16%	17%	19%	22%	12%	17%
Arts / Entertainment	3%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%
Other Services	4%	6%	7%	3%	7%	8%	5%	4%	6%	6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 7.6 Size of site of employment, by region

	East of England	East Midlands	London	North East	North West	South East	South West	West Midlands	Yorkshire and the Humber	Total
Base	408	457	388	214	584	611	492	463	461	4,085
Less than 10	33%	34%	33%	35%	38%	36%	38%	35%	33%	35%
10 to 99	56%	56%	49%	55%	50%	51%	51%	53%	53%	52%
100 or more	10%	9%	16%	9%	12%	12%	11%	11%	12%	11%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 7.7 Size of site of employment, by size of organisation

	Less than 10	10 to 99	100 or more	Total
Base	1,035	2,176	796	4,085
Less than 10	83%	*	*	29%
10 to 99	9%	65%	*	37%
100 or more	7%	31%	98%	31%
Don't know	1%	3%	2%	3%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 7.8 Size of site of employment, by likely Levy Payment status

	Less than 10	10 to 99	100 or more	Total
Base	1,035	2,176	796	4,085
Yes	4%	17%	64%	26%
No	90%	59%	9%	49%
Don't know	5%	23%	26%	17%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Significance testing

Differences between subgroups and between different surveys were tested to assess whether the differences between data were statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

The significance testing used independent sample t-tests for means and z-tests for percentages at the 95% confidence level. Two types of testing were used: a) between each set of cross break headings (e.g., comparing between different age categories within the age cross break header) and b) comparing data within each subgroup break to the total minus the data in the individual column.

To facilitate the types of analysis necessary, data tables were produced which employed significance tests (i.e., testing the results for a given subgroup against the results in each of the other subgroups within a given analysis 'break'). No significance test results are used in this report for sub-groups of less than 30 unweighted sample size.

Sampling error and statistical confidence intervals

Since the employer data used in this report is derived from a sample survey, it is therefore subject to sampling error. Sampling errors for the employer survey overall results and for key sub-groups are presented in Table 7.9 below. Table 7.10 shows the sampling error among employers with current apprentices and Table 7.11 shows the same for those with completer apprentices. Figures have been based on a survey result of 50% (the 'worst' case in terms of statistical reliability), and have used a 95% confidence level. No results are reported for sub-groups of less than 30 unweighted sample size.

To give an example, where the table indicates that a survey result based on all respondents has a sampling error of $\pm 2.0\%$, this should be interpreted as follows: 'for a question

asked of all apprentices where the survey result is 50.0%, we can be 95% confident that the true figure lies within the range 48.0% to 52.0%’.

Table 7.9 Sampling error (at the confidence 95% level) associated with findings of 50% for all employers, overall and key sub-groups

	Population**	Number of in- terviews	Effective sam- ple size	(Maximum) Sampling Error
All employers	170,120	4,085	2,417	± 2.0%
Main level: Level 2	57,460	1,332	806	± 3.5%
Main level: Level 3	85,480	1,984	1,171	± 2.9%
Main level: Levels 4 and 5	16,870	495	258	± 6.1%
Main level: Levels 6 and 7	10,310	274	199	± 6.9%
Main level: Levels 4 to 7	27,180	769	451	± 4.6%
Main subject area: Agriculture	7,500	207	175	± 7.4%
Main subject area: Arts	640	65	60	± 12.7%
Main subject area: Business	37,330	723	430	± 4.7%
Main subject area: Construction	18,500	416	308	± 5.6%
Main subject area: Education	4,630	198	129	± 8.6%
Main subject area: Engineering	36,840	755	444	± 4.7%
Main subject area: Health	32,850	892	477	± 4.5%
Main subject area: ICT	6,430	179	143	± 8.2%
Main subject area: Leisure	1,940	141	90	± 10.3%
Main subject area: Retail	21,830	473	379	± 5.0%
Main subject area: Science*	*	19	7	*
Main subject area: Other*	*	16	10	*

*results not presented here or in the report generally due to small size of sample. **estimated through weighting process, since this breakdown is not available from sample information alone.

Table 7.10 Sampling error (at the confidence 95% level) associated with findings of 50% for employers with current apprentices, overall and key sub-groups

	Population**	Number of interviews	Effective sample size	(Maximum) Sampling Error
Employers of current apprentices	131,710	3,108	2,247	± 2.1%
Main level: Level 2	39,720	938	706	± 3.7%
Main level: Level 3	66,330	1,480	1,070	± 3.0%
Main level: Levels 4 and 5	14,990	430	289	± 5.8%
Main level: Levels 6 and 7	10,670	260	192	± 7.1%
Main level: Levels 4 to 7	25,660	690	480	± 4.5%
Main subject area: Agriculture	6,010	158	137	± 8.4%
Main subject area: Arts & Media	450	50	48	± 14.1%
Main subject area: Business	27,130	560	448	± 4.6%
Main subject area: Construction	15,810	343	278	± 5.9%
Main subject area: Education	3,290	135	93	± 10.2%
Main subject area: Engineering	31,530	616	466	± 4.5%
Main subject area: Health	25,670	667	408	± 4.9%
Main subject area: ICT	4,970	128	115	± 9.1%
Main subject area: Leisure	1,090	90	66	± 12.1%
Main subject area: Retail	14,850	331	288	± 5.8%
Main subject area: Science*	*	13	12	*
Main subject area: Other*	*	16	10	*

*results not presented here or in the report generally due to small size of sample. **estimated through weighting process, since this breakdown is not available from sample information alone.

Table 7.11 Sampling error (at the confidence 95% level) associated with findings of 50% for employers with apprentice completers, overall and key sub-groups

	Population**	Number of interviews	Effective sample size	(Maximum) Sampling Error
Employers of completer apprentices	66,780	977	660	± 3.8%
Main level: Level 2	28,420	394	287	± 5.8%
Main level: Level 3	33,380	504	331	± 5.4%
Main level: Levels 4 and 5	4,360	65	35	± 16.6%
Main level: Levels 6 and 7	*	14	10	*
Main level: Levels 4 to 7	4,990	79	43	± 14.9%
Main subject area: Agriculture	2,310	49	46	± 14.4%
Main subject area: Arts & Media*	*	15	15	*
Main subject area: Business	16,170	163	119	± 9.0%
Main subject area: Construction	4,870	73	60	± 12.7%
Main subject area: Education	2,270	63	53	± 13.5%
Main subject area: Engineering	11,790	139	89	± 10.4%
Main subject area: Health	14,150	225	167	± 7.6%
Main subject area: ICT	2,170	51	40	± 15.5%
Main subject area: Leisure	1,410	51	47	± 14.3%
Main subject area: Retail	10,530	142	133	± 8.5%
Main subject area: Science*	*	6	4	*

*results not presented here or in the report generally due to small size of sample. **estimated through weighting process, since this breakdown is not available from sample information alone.

Differences in methodology from previous surveys

Changes from 2019 to 2021

As outlined through earlier sections, the research method used in 2021 differed in key aspects from 2019, in this section we summarise the key changes. In particular there has been a key shift in focus from a survey of employers of completer apprentices, to a survey of employers of both completer and current apprentices. In general, the survey of employers of completer apprentices was designed to produce results comparable with previous surveys of employers of completer apprentices in 2019 and prior. The survey of current apprentices is not comparable with other prior apprenticeship employer surveys.

Key changes are summarised below from the above sections of the report:

- The time period of the sample window, while comparable in terms of length of time between apprenticeship completion and survey (and therefore comparable for questions regarding impact of apprenticeships and retention of apprentices) is different in terms of timing within the year to the 2019 survey, although very similar to the 2017 survey (see Table 1.1), causing potential variation since some types of apprenticeship completions are seasonal.
- In a change from previous surveys, telephone fieldwork in 2021 was managed using Random Probability Sampling (RPS). A respondent, once selected, was called an agreed minimum number of times and, unlike in previous surveys, sample was not withdrawn once the targets for level, sector subject area and apprenticeship status (employer of current or completer apprentices) were reached. This means that some types of employer⁴⁰ were more likely to be included, while others were less likely to be included, meaning that comparisons between waves should be treated with some caution, although the effect of this on results would not normally be expected to be large.⁴¹ The advantages and disadvantages to this method are explained earlier in Chapter 2 of this report.
- A number of small changes were made to questionnaire design (as described in Chapter 3) to improve the survey and adapt it to current circumstances. Some of the changes were also made as a result of the proliferation of apprenticeship frameworks and standards in the period since 2019 making previous design choices no longer viable.
- The survey weighting took a more complex approach in 2021 than 2019, to allow for the greater complexity of the survey design, with two survey windows rather than one, and the use of RPS. Since both the 2019 and 2021 weighting approaches sought to weight to a similarly defined population using similar techniques, the results should be broadly comparable, although some caution should be exercised where changes in results are only marginally statistically significant.

Changes from 2017 to 2019

The research method for the 2019 evaluation largely mirrored that used in 2017. However, one important change was that due to employers' increasing usage of Level 6 and Level 7 (both Degree, and Non-Degree) apprenticeships, the level classification was revised in 2019 to be based on the level most used by the employer in the sample window

⁴⁰ Principally this group would consist of employers who required more prompting to take part, where they were within wider groups of employers requiring less prompting. In a quota-based system, these employers would not have been asked to take part, since the quota would have been completed with employers more willing to take part. The random probability sampling technique applied therefore makes the dataset more representative of the population, but in a way which does not map onto any specific sub-group of employer.

⁴¹ The larger differences might be found in opinion questions, since employers with particular views regarding apprenticeships or DfE might be more or less eager to take part without prompting.

(Level 2, 3 or 4+), rather than the previous classification inherited from earlier surveys, which is shown in Table 7.12.

This classification was calculated for the 2019 and 2021 datasets to assess the impact on comparability. The 2019 figures show that despite moving to using a different level classification for sampling and weighting, there was little change in the distribution of either sample or the design of the weighted dataset relative to the old level classification. This suggests that there was very little if any effect on comparability caused by this change.

In 2021, there was a change in the distribution relative to 2019, but this is a real effect caused by change in the levels of apprenticeship used among employers over time (see Chapter 3 of the main report).

Table 7.12 2017-style apprentice scheme level classification, comparability with 2019 and 2021

	2017 data Unweighted number	2017 data Weighted %	2019 data Unweighted number	2019 data Weighted %	2021 data (completers only) Unweighted number	2021 data (completers only) Weighted %
Level 2 but not Level 3	2,011 (50%)	52%	1,651 (41%)	48%	358 (37%)	40%
Level 3 but not Level 2	1,313 (33%)	34%	1,445 (36%)	35%	413 (42%)	43%
Both Level 2 and Level 3	614 (15%)	13%	718 (18%)	14%	145 (15%)	11%
Neither Level 2 nor Level 3, but some Level 4+	66 (2%)	1%	186 (5%)	3%	61 (6%)	6%
Total	4,004	100%	4,000	100%	977	100%

Changes from 2015 to 2017

The method for the 2017 evaluation also slightly differed from that used in 2015, with no substantive effect on comparability:

- Due to the introduction of Science and Mathematics apprenticeships, this framework was included in classifications for the first time, and sampled and weighted separately. These were introduced in 2011, but are quite long apprenticeships and have taken time to build up numbers of apprenticeship completers.

- Apprenticeship Standards were introduced in August 2014; these did not affect the employer sampling process in 2017 since no apprentices on these standards had reached the point of completing their apprenticeship during the sample window (June 2015 to January 2016). However, questionnaire and report terminology was changed to accommodate these, moving from referring to ‘broad frameworks’ to ‘subject areas’.
- Employers with Higher and Degree apprenticeships only (at Level 4 or higher) were included in the 2017 research, unlike in previous years. These employers comprised a small proportion of employers with apprentice completers (2% of achieved interviews and just 1% of the weighted dataset).
- The screening process was reviewed and slightly improved relative to 2015, with employers given more background information about the apprenticeship during the screening process, and additional attention being given to ensuring the contact details supplied to us were for the correct site within a large organisation.

Changes from 2014 to 2015

The sampling process in 2015 onwards differed from the 2014 evaluation in a number of ways, none of which affected the comparability of data at an overall level:

- Due to the changes in the subject areas of apprenticeship on offer over time (in particular the increasing popularity of some new apprenticeship subject areas such as Arts and Media), in 2015 all subject areas were sampled and weighted separately for the first time.
- The sampling and weighting was based on most common subject area among completers of apprenticeships during the sample window, rather than (as in 2014) weighting those with a single subject area in the sample window separately, and then splitting the remainder (with multiple subject areas) into groups using common combinations of subject areas. This change should have improved the accuracy of results among larger employers.
- The final data was grossed up to the population of employers from the ILR.

A1. Employer survey

S- Screener

ASK TELEPHONIST

S1. IF NECESSARY: Good morning / afternoon. My name is <NAME> and I'm calling from IFF Research, on behalf of the Department for Education. [IF HASCON = 1: Could I speak to <CONTACT>[IF HASJOB = 1:, <JOBTITLE>]? IF NECESSARY: I'm told they are the person in charge of training of staff at <COMPANY>'s site in or near <LOCATION>.] [IF HASCON = 2: May I speak to the person in charge of training of staff at <COMPANY>'s site in or near <LOCATION>]?

The call is regarding some research we're carrying out for the Department for Education about training and apprenticeships. IF NECESSARY: Our records suggest the training is or was in areas such as [IF TOTFIN_CURR >= 1:<APPTYPES_CURR_MAX1> / <APPTYPES_CURR_MAX2>][IF TOTFIN_COMP >= 1 AND TOTFIN_CURR = 0:<APPTYPES_COMP_MAX1> / <APPTYPES_COMP_MAX2>] or more generally in [IF TOTFIN_CURR >= 1:<SUBJECTAREAS_CURR>][IF TOTFIN_COMP >= 1 AND TOTFIN_CURR = 0:<SUBJECTAREAS_COMP>].

INTERVIEWER: If a number of people deal with training for the named site, ask for the person who deals with apprentices, or failing that the most senior person in charge of training. Do not take referrals to consultants or training providers.

1. Speaking. CONTINUE TO S2.
2. Transferred. CONTINUE TO S2.
3. Take new number / name. TAKE REFERRAL (AT S3A).
4. Hard appointment. TAKE DETAILS FOR APPOINTMENT.
5. Soft appointment. TAKE DETAILS FOR APPOINTMENT.
6. Named respondent / best person works from home – no phone number or direct email address given. THANK AND CLOSE.
7. Named respondent / best person works from home – direct email address given. TAKE REFERRAL (VIA COVID-19 MECHANISM).
8. Refusal. THANK AND CLOSE.
9. Refusal – company policy. THANK AND CLOSE.
10. Refusal – taken part in recent survey. THANK AND CLOSE.
11. Nobody at <COMPANY> who can talk about apprentices at <LOCATION>, here or at any other office. THANK AND CLOSE.
12. No such training at <COMPANY>'s site in <LOCATION>. THANK AND CLOSE.
13. Not available in deadline. THANK AND CLOSE.
14. Engaged. CALL BACK LATER.
15. No answer. CALL BACK LATER.
16. Answer phone. CALL BACK LATER.
17. Residential number. THANK AND CLOSE.
18. Company (or site) closed. THANK AND CLOSE.
19. Wrong number - no new number provided. THANK AND CLOSE.
20. Needs reassurances. SHOW REASSURANCES AND RETURN.

21. Request reassurance email. INTERVIEWER: To send to a new respondent, make sure you take a referral as well. SEND REASSURANCE EMAIL AND RETURN.
22. Terminate interview. CLOSE.

IF S1 = 1 OR 2 (TRANSFERRED / SPEAKING TO PERSON IN CHARGE OF TRAINING)

S2. IF NECESSARY: Good morning / afternoon, my name is <NAME>, calling from IFF Research, an independent research company. The Department for Education have asked us to find out what employers think about the quality of certain types of training in England.

We are contacting you because government records suggest that some of your employees at your site in <LOCATION> are or have recently been on training which may include apprenticeship training. Are you the best person to talk to about this? The interview would take about 25 minutes.

IF NECESSARY: Our records suggest the training is or was in areas such as [IF TOTFIN_CURR >= 1:<APPTYPES_CURR_MAX1> / <APPTYPES_CURR_MAX2>][IF TOTFIN_COMP >= 1 AND TOTFIN_CURR = 0:<APPTYPES_COMP_MAX1> / <APPTYPES_COMP_MAX2>] or more generally in [IF TOTFIN_CURR >= 1:<SUBJECTAREAS_CURR>][IF TOTFIN_COMP >= 1 AND TOTFIN_CURR = 0:<SUBJECTAREAS_COMP>].

1. Yes. CONTINUE (TO S3).
2. Maybe / one of the best people to talk to / depends on the questions. CONTINUE (TO S3).
3. No, not the right person. TAKE REFERRAL (AT S3A).
4. Hard appointment. MAKE APPOINTMENT.
5. Soft appointment. MAKE APPOINTMENT.
6. Refusal. THANK AND CLOSE.
7. Not available in deadline. THANK AND CLOSE.
11. Needs reassurances. SHOW REASSURANCES AND RETURN.
12. Request reassurance email. INTERVIEWER: To send to a new respondent, make sure you take a referral as well. SEND REASSURANCE EMAIL AND RETURN.

IF S2 = 1 OR 2 (SPEAKING TO PERSON IN CHARGE OF TRAINING)

S3. Can I just check, are you an employee of <COMPANY>, based at their site in or near <LOCATION>?

1. Yes, employee based at <LOCATION>. SET HRSITE = 2 CONTINUE.
2. Employee of <COMPANY> but not based at <LOCATION>. SET HRSITE = 1. CONTINUE
3. Not an employee of <COMPANY>. TAKE REFERRAL (GO TO S3A).

IF S1 = 3 OR S2 = 3 OR S3 = 3 OR S4A = 3 OR S4B = 3 (TAKING REFERRAL)

S3A. [IF S4A = 3 OR S4B = 3:We'll need to speak to someone with knowledge of training courses taking place][IF S4A AND S4B NOT ASKED: Could you give me contact details for the person in charge of training] at <COMPANY>'s site in or near <LOCATION>?

IF NECESSARY: They might deal with training in areas such as [IF TOTFIN_CURR >= 1:<APPTYPES_CURR_MAX1> / <APPTYPES_CURR_MAX2>][IF TOTFIN_COMP >= 1 AND TOTFIN_CURR = 0:<APPTYPES_COMP_MAX1> / <APPTYPES_COMP_MAX2>] or more generally in [IF TOTFIN_CURR >= 1:<SUBJECTAREAS_CURR>][IF TOTFIN_COMP >= 1

AND TOTFIN_CURR = 0:<SUBJECTAREAS_COMP>]. The call is regarding some research we're carrying out for the Department for Education.

INTERVIEWER: If no referral is available, leave blank and click next, and code the outcome at S1.

To send an information email to the referral, enter all available details below, click next, and select reassurance email at S1.

- 0. Name: WRITE IN. DS: WRITE TO <CONTACT>.
- 0. Job Title: WRITE IN. DS: WRITE TO <JOBTITLE>.
- 0. Phone number (Do not delete without replacement): WRITE IN DS: WRITE TO <PHONENUMBER>

DS: IF NAME LEFT BLANK, SET HASCON = 2. IF NAME POPULATED, SET HASCON = 1.

DS: RETURN ALL ASKED S3A TO S1 TO RECORD OUTCOME.

ASK ALL

S3B. Before we start, I have to give you some information about your rights under data protection law. All answers will be treated in the strictest confidence. You have the right to have a copy of your data, change your data or withdraw from the research at any point. To do this, you can consult our website at if-fresearch.com/gdpr.

Your answers will not be used in any way which would allow you or your organisation to be identified without your permission – we'll ask about this at the end of the survey.

The Department for Education will use reports and data based on the survey results to measure how apprenticeships are performing, and to improve how they are designed and delivered. Names and contact details will be deleted no more than 12 months after the end of the project.

For quality control, all interviews are recorded automatically. Is that OK?

- 1. Yes. CONTINUE.
- 2. No. THANK AND CLOSE.

IF HAVE COMPLETERS ON THE ILR (TOTFIN_COMP >= 1)

S4A. According to our records,[IF TOTFIN_COMP = 1: at least one][IF TOTFIN_COMP >= 2: some] of your employees[IF HRSITE = 1: at your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: at this site] successfully completed training between July 2019 and February 2020.] Is this correct? IF NECESSARY:[IF TOTFIN_COMP = 1:This may have been an apprenticeship.][IF TOTFIN_COMP >= 2:These may have been apprenticeships.]

IF NECESSARY: Our records suggest the training was in areas such as <APPTYPES_COMP_MAX1> / <APPTYPES_COMP_MAX2>, or more generally in <SUBJECTAREAS_COMP>. [IF HASDETAIL = 1: One of the learners completed a course in <COMBINEDTITLEDETAIL>, at level <COMBINEDLEVEL>, on <LEARNACTENDDATE>.[IF HASMAINQUAL = 1:The main qualification involved would have been a <LEARNAIMREFTYPE > in <LEARNAIMREFTITLE>.] It's possible they might have continued straight away to do a qualification at a higher level.]

- *PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE.*
1. Yes. CONTINUE TO S5A OR S4B.
 2. No. ASK ABOUT CURRENT AT S4B.
 3. Don't know. RETURN TO S3A TO SEEK NEW CONTACT.

IF CURRENT APPS ON ILR, OR CAN'T RECALL COMPLETERS (TOTFIN_CURR >= 1 OR S4A = 2)

S4B. [IF TOTFIN_CURR >= 1:According to our records,[IF TOTFIN_CURR = 1: at least one][IF TOTFIN_CURR >= 2: some] of your employees[IF HRSITE = 1: at your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: at this site] are currently undertaking training leading to a qualification. Is this correct? IF NECESSARY:][IF TOTFIN_CURR = 1:This may be an apprenticeship.][IF TOTFIN_CURR >= 2:These may be apprenticeships.]

[IF TOTFIN_CURR = 0: Do you have any apprentices currently undertaking an apprenticeship [IF HRSITE = 1: at your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: at this site]?] If learners are taking a break in learning, for example because they are ill, have had to self-isolate or because the provider cannot deliver training, please answer yes.

[IF TOTFIN_CURR >= 1:IF NECESSARY: Our records suggest the training is in areas such as <APPTYPES_CURR_MAX1> / <APPTYPES_CURR_MAX2>, or more generally in <SUBJECTAREAS_CURR>.]

- *PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE.*
1. Yes. CONTINUE TO S5A.
 2. No. IF S4A = 2 OR NULL (NOT ASKED) THANK AND CLOSE.
 3. Don't know. RETURN TO S3A TO SEEK NEW CONTACT.

ASK ALL

S5A. According to our records, the training [IF S4A = 1 AND S4B ≠ 1:was][IF S4B = 1:is now] most often in courses such as [IF S4B = 1:<APPTYPES_CURR_MAX1> / <APPTYPES_CURR_MAX2> / <APPTYPES_CURR_MAX3>][IF S4A = 1 AND S4B ≠ 1:<APPTYPES_COMP_MAX1> / <APPTYPES_COMP_MAX2> / <APPTYPES_COMP_MAX3>] or more generally in [IF S4B = 1:<SUBJECTAREAS_CURR>][IF S4A = 1 AND S4B ≠ 1:<SUBJECTAREAS_COMP>]. Is that broadly correct?

1. Yes / broadly correct. GO TO APPSTATUS.
2. No. GO TO S5B.
3. Don't know. GO TO S5B.

IF S5A = 2 OR 3

S5B. Which of the following broad subject areas best fit the types of formal training carried out by employees [IF HRSITE = 1: at your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: at this site]?

IF A <COMPANY> IS AN FE COLLEGE OR SIMILAR: We only want to include training provided to your own employees here.

- *READ OUT. MULTICODE.*
1. Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care.
 2. Arts, Media and Publishing.

3. Business, Administration and Law.
4. Construction, Planning and the Built Environment.
5. Education and Training.
6. Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies.
7. Health, Public Services and Care.
8. Information and Communication Technology.
9. Leisure, Travel and Tourism.
10. Retail and Commercial Enterprise.
11. Science and Mathematics.
12. DO NOT READ OUT: None of these.
13. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know.

DS: CONCATENATE RESPONSES AND WRITE TO SUBJECTAREA_CURR AND SUBJECTAREAS_COMP. SET HASDETAIL = 2.

DS: IF S5B = 12 OR 13, THANK AND CLOSE.

DUMMY VARIABLE <APPSTATUS>:

1. Completers only. S4A = 1 AND (S4B = 2 OR (S4B = NULL AND TOT-FIN_CURR = 0)). CONTINUE.
2. Current apprentices only. (S4A = 2 OR (S4A = NULL AND TOTFIN_COMP = 0)) AND S4B = 1. CONTINUE.
3. Both completers and current. S4A = 1 AND S4B = 1. CONTINUE.

DUMMY VARIABLE <APPROUTE>:

1. Discuss completers. See below. CONTINUE.
2. Discuss current apprentices. See below. CONTINUE.

DS:

IF APPSTATUS = 1, SET APPROUTE = 1.

IF APPSTATUS = 2, SET APPROUTE = 2.

IF APPSTATUS = 3, SET APPROUTE RANDOMLY TO 1 OR 2 – GIVE APPROUTE = 1 A 61% CHANCE, AT APPROUTE = 2 A 39% CHANCE – CAN USE SAMPLE VARIABLE FOR THIS.

DUMMY VARIABLE <SWITCH>:

1. Yes. IF (APPROUTE = 2 AND TOTFIN_CURR = 0).
2. No. All others.

ASK ALL

S6. So, for this survey we'll be [IF APPSTATUS = 3:mainly]discussing your trainees [IF APPROUTE = 1:who finished their course between July 2019 and February 2020][IF APPROUTE = 2:who are studying now].

Please remember that all the questions in this survey will be about trainees based at your <LOCATION> site, rather than training at your company as a whole.

DS: IF SWITCH = 1, SET ALL APPTYPES_CURR_MAX# TO BE THE SAME AS APPTYPES_COMP_MAX#.

- **Reassurances to use if necessary**

The interview will take around 20 to 25 minutes to complete.

This survey is being carried out for DfE (the Department for Education), and is de-signed to measure employer opinion and current and expected usage of government-backed schemes for in-work training. It will help DfE to plan future provision, and to assess whether the existing provision is meeting the needs of employers across the economy.

DfE is interested in your opinion even if you have no employees in training now, and if you have no plans to train any in the immediate future.

All data will be reported in aggregate form and your answers will not be reported to our client in any way that would allow you to be identified, without your express permission.

We got your organisation's details from the ILR (Individualised Learner Record), which is the official national record of training courses for adult learners. It's likely that someone at your organisation, or a training provider, gave your contact details when asked to give details of the employer of a person doing work-based training.

Your data will be held securely at IFF; we are ISO27001 accredited for information security, and comply fully with the Data Protection Act. We are members of the Market Research Society and regulated by their code of conduct. If you want to verify that IFF Research is a genuine market research company, you can contact:

MRS: Market Research Society on 0800 975 9596

If you'd like more information about this specific survey, or to get more information about its aims and objectives, you can contact:

IFF:

DfE:

A - Establishment / Organisation details

ASK ALL

A1. QUESTION REMOVED – SECTOR INFORMATION NO LONGER AVAILABLE

ASK ALL

A2. What is the main business activity[IF HRSITE = 1: at your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: at this site]?

PROMPT IF NECESSARY:

- What is the main product or service of this establishment?
- What exactly is made or done at this establishment?

0. WRITE IN

ASK ALL

A3. Would you classify your organisation as...

- *READ OUT. SINGLE CODE*
- 1. Mainly seeking to make a profit.
- 2. A charity, voluntary or co-operative organisation.
- 3. Or a public sector organisation.
- 4. DO NOT READ OUT: None of the above.

ASK ALL

A4. Is [IF HRSITE = 1:your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2:this site]...

- *READ OUT. SINGLE CODE*
- 1. The only site in the organisation.
- 2. The Head Office of an organisation with a number of sites.
- 3. Or a branch of an organisation with a number of sites.
- 4. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know.

ASK ALL

A5. Including [IF HRSITE = 2:you and any] working proprietors, approximately how many people are on the payroll [IF A4 >= 2:at [IF HRSITE = 1: your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: this site]]?

Do not include outside contractors / agency staff nor the self-employed other than a self-employed owner, but do include both full-time and part-time staff, trainees and partners in a partnership.

DS: ALLOW 0 TO 99999

IF DON'T KNOW (A5 = DK)

- 0. TAKE NUMBER.
- 1. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know.

A5A Is it approximately...

- *READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.*
- DS: FORCE RANGE TO MATCH A5.
- 1. DO NOT READ OUT: 1 (sole trader).
 - 2. 2-4.
 - 3. 5-9.
 - 4. 10-24.
 - 5. 25-49.
 - 6. 50-99.
 - 7. 100-199.
 - 8. 200-249.
 - 9. 250-499.
 - 10. 500 or more.
 - 11. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know / refused.

ASK IF MULTI-SITE ORGANISATION (A4 = 2 OR 3)

A6. And approximately how many people are on the payroll across the whole organisation in the UK?

Do not include outside contractors / agency staff nor the self-employed other than a self-employed owner, but do include both full-time and part-time staff, trainees and partners in a partnership.

DS: ALLOW A5 TO 999999

IF DON'T KNOW (A6 = DK)

0. TAKE NUMBER.

1. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know.

A6A. Is it approximately...

- *READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.*

DS: FORCE RANGE TO MATCH A6. SHOW RANGES FROM A5A UPWARDS ONLY.

1. DO NOT READ OUT: 1 (sole trader).

2. 2-4.

3. 5-9.

4. 10-24.

5. 25-49.

6. 50-99.

7. 100-199.

8. 200-249.

9. 250-499.

10. 500 or more.

11. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know / refused.

IF HAVE 10 OR MORE EMPLOYEES (A6A=4 TO 10 OR A5A = 4 TO 10)

H15B. Does your organisation have a payroll wage bill of over £3m, across the UK?

INTERVIEWER NOTE: This is for the whole organisation across the whole of the UK. This is asked because this is the threshold for paying the Apprenticeship Levy.

1. Yes.

2. No.

3. Don't know.

4. Refused.

ASK ALL PRIVATE SECTOR COMPANIES (A3=1)

A7. Which of the following statements best applies to your outlook for the business over the next 12 months? We expect the business to...

- *READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.*

1. Grow significantly.

2. Grow slightly.

3. Remain about the same.
4. Contract slightly.
5. Contract significantly.
6. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know.
7. DO NOT READ OUT: Refused.

B - Involvement with Apprenticeships

IF MULTISITE ORGANISATION (A4 >= 2)

I'd like you to answer the following questions about training taking place at [IF HRSITE = 1: your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: this site].

IF ASKING ABOUT COMPLETERS AND TITLES KNOWN (APPROUTE = 1 AND HASDETAIL = 1)

B1. QUESTION DELETED

IF ASKING ABOUT CURRENT APPS, AND TITLES KNOWN (APPROUTE = 2 AND HASDETAIL = 1)

B2. QUESTION DELETED

ASK ALL

B3. How long have you been offering formal Apprenticeships, by which I mean Apprenticeships which lead to a government recognised certificate or qualification?

- *READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.*
- 2. 3 years or fewer.
- 3. More than 3 years, up to 5 years.
- 4. More than 5 years up to 10 years.
- 5. More than 10 years.
- 6. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know.

ASK THOSE NEW TO APPRENTICESHIPS (B3 = 2 OR 3)

B3A. QUESTION DELETED

ASK IF AWARE OF APPRENTICESHIPS (ANY B1 OR B2 ITERATION = 1 OR 2)

B4. If you had a place available on your apprenticeship scheme, which of the following age groups would you consider applications from?

- *READ OUT. MULTICODE.*
- 1. 16-18 year olds.
- 2. 19-24 year olds.
- 3. Those aged 25 or older.
- 4. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know.

ASK IF DO NOT OFFER TO 16-18 YEAR OLDS (B4 ≠ 1)

B5. What, if anything, would persuade you to offer Apprenticeships to young people aged 16-18?

- *DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE. INTERVIEWER – IF THEY SAY “NOTHING” PROMPT “WHY?”.*

IF THEY SAY CAN'T HAVE 16-18 YEAR OLDS ON SITE / AT WORKPLACE PROMPT “WHY?” TO DISTINGUISH CODES 1 AND 2

- REGULATIONS / RULES
 1. Health and Safety regulations prevent it.
 2. We cannot employ people aged 16-18 in our work (excluding for Health and Safety reasons).
 9. If there were changes to regulations / the law.
- NO NEED
 3. If we had a need for new recruits / staff generally.
 4. If we had a vacancy appropriate for a 16-18 year old.
- QUALITY OF APPLICANTS / TRAINING
 5. If a suitable 16-18 year old applicant applied.
 8. If the training was better / more relevant.
- FINANCIAL / RESOURCES
 6. If we did not have to prioritise training for existing staff.
 7. If we received funding / financial assistance to pay their wages.
- OTHER REASONS
 10. If it was company policy / the Board decided to do it
 11. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY).
 12. Nothing could persuade us DS: ALLOW SINGLE CODE ONLY.
 13. Don't know.

ASK ALL

B10. Do you feel there is sufficient information, support and guidance available to employers interested in offering Apprenticeships?

1. Yes.
2. No.
3. Can't remember / someone else made the decision.

ASK IF NO (B10 = 2)

B6. What information, support and guidance do you think is missing?

- *DO NOT READ OUT. PROBE AS TO SPECIFIC TYPES OF INFORMATION / ADVICE. MULTICODE.*
- FUNDING AND FEES
 1. What funding is available and how to get it.
 13. How to access Levy funds.
 10. Information about the level of fees / payments for Apprenticeships.
- FINDING INFORMATION

8. Who to approach / how to get information on Apprenticeships.
 9. A specific person they could contact regarding Apprenticeships.
 14. Existing information needs to be clearer / better written.
 15. Existing information needs to be promoted / provided more pro-actively.
- PRACTICAL OBSTACLES
 2. How to recruit apprentices.
 3. How to set up training for Apprentices.
 5. How to find suitable training providers.
 6. How to deliver the qualifications.
 7. Legal obligations / employment contracts.
 - APPRENTICESHIP DESIGN
 4. Understanding the requirements and benefits of an Apprenticeship.
 11. End point assessment.
 12. What standards are available.
 16. Occupational Maps.
 17. Progression Pathways.
 18. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY).
 19. Don't know.

IF ASKING ABOUT COMPLETERS (APPROUTE = 1)

B11A. [IF TOTFIN_COMP >= 1:Our records show that between July 2019 and February 2020 you had <TOTFIN_COMP> Apprentice[IF TOTFIN_COMP >= 2:s] who completed training[IF A4 >= 2: at[IF HRSITE = 1: your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: this site]]. Is that correct?][IF TOTFIN_COMP = 0:How many Ap-prentices completed their training[IF A4>= 2: at [IF HRSITE = 1: your <LOCA-TION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: this site]] between July 2019 and February 2020?]

IF <COMPANY> IS AN FE COLLEGE OR SIMILAR: Again, we only want to include training provided to your own employees.

IF NECESSARY: This number would include any employees who completed their Level 2 apprenticeship and moved straight on to Level 3 at that time.

IF NECESSARY: According to government records, at least some of the training completed by your employees in subject areas such as [IF HASDETAIL = 1:<AP-PTYPES_COMP_MAX1>][IF HASDETAIL = 2:<SUBJECTAREAS_COMP>] between July 2019 and February 2020 was recognised by the government as an apprenticeship.

ADD IF NECESSARY ONLY: This figure has been calculated from information held on the Individualised Learner Record, or ILR. The ILR is a database of all government-backed Further Education courses, including apprenticeships that take place in England. Our client, DfE, has allowed us access to it for the purposes of this research only.

PLEASE ENSURE RESPONDENT IS TALKING ABOUT THE NUMBER OF FINISHERS DURING THE PERIOD JULY 2019 AND FEBRUARY 2020. SINGLE CODE.

1. [IF TOTFIN_COMP >= 1:Yes].
2. No (PLEASE SPECIFY NUMBER) DS: ALLOW 1 TO 99999. DS: WRITE TO <TOTFIN_COMP>

3. Zero INTERVIEWER: IF THEY SAY THIS PLEASE USE PROBES ABOVE TO EN-SURE THERE IS NO MISUNDERSTANDING. THANK AND CLOSE.
4. Don't know.

IF ASKING ABOUT CURRENT APPS (APPROUTE = 2)

B11B. [IF TOTFIN_CURR >= 1:Our records show that you currently have <TOT-FIN_CURR> Apprentice[IF TOTFIN_CURR >= 2:s] who [IF TOTFIN_CURR = 1:is][IF TOTFIN_CURR >= 2:are] taking part in training[IF A4 >= 2: at [IF HRSITE = 1: your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: this site]]. Is that still correct now?][IF TOTFIN_CURR = 0:How many Apprentices are currently training [IF A4 >= 2:at [IF HRSITE = 1: your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: this site]]?]

IF <COMPANY> IS AN FE COLLEGE OR SIMILAR: **Again, we only want to include training provided to your own employees.**

IF NECESSARY: **According to government records, at least some of the training being provided to your employees in subject areas such as [IF HASDETAIL = 1:<APPTYPES_CURR_MAX1>][IF HASDETAIL = 2:<SUBJECTAREAS_CURR>] is recognised by the government as an apprenticeship.**

ADD IF NECESSARY ONLY: **This figure has been calculated from information held on the Individualised Learner Record, or ILR. The ILR is a database of all government-backed Further Education courses, including apprenticeships that take place in England. Our client, DfE, has allowed us access to it for the purposes of this research only.**

- *PLEASE ENSURE RESPONDENT IS TALKING ABOUT THE NUMBER OF CURRENT APPRENTICES. SINGLE CODE.*

1. IF TOTFIN_CURR >= 1:Yes.
[IF TOTFIN_CURR >= 1:No] (PLEASE SPECIFY NUMBER)
2. DS: ALLOW 1 TO 99999. DS: WRITE TO <TOTFIN_CURR>
3. Zero. INTERVIEWER: IF THEY SAY THIS PLEASE USE PROBES ABOVE TO ENSURE THERE IS NO MISUNDERSTANDING. THANK AND CLOSE.
4. Don't know.

ASK ALL

B7. I would now like to ask you some questions about [IF APPROUTE = 1:the apprentice[IF TOTFIN_COMP>=2:s] who completed training between July 2019 and February 2020[IF A4 >= 2: at[IF HRSITE = 1: your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: this site]].][IF APPROUTE = 2:your current apprentice[IF TOT-FIN_CURR>=2:s][IF A4 >= 2: at[IF HRSITE = 1: your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: this site]].] Were any...?

- *READ OUT. MULTICODE.*

DS: IF (APPROUTE = 1 AND ((B11A = 1 AND TOTFIN_COMP = 1) OR B11A_2 = 1) OR (APPROUTE = 2 AND (B11B = 1 AND TOTFIN_CURR = 1) OR B11B_2 = 1) ALLOW SINGLE CODE ONLY.

1. Recruited specifically to start an Apprenticeship, with the training starting straight away.
2. Recruited with the intention that they would start an Apprenticeship, but the training didn't start straight away.

3. Or existing employees that were already working for you.
4. DO NOT READ OUT: None of the above.
5. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know.

ASK IF TRAINING DIDN'T START STRAIGHT AWAY (B12=2)

B12A. Why did their training not start straight away?

- *DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.*
- RELATED TO LEARNER
 1. Induction / Probation period.
 5. To ensure the employee is suitable / capable of progressing in our industry.
 6. To give employee time to become familiarised with the organisation / the role.
 8. Ill health or personal circumstances.
- RELATED TO PROVIDER
 2. Delays in finding a suitable training provider.
 7. Apprenticeship timings dictated by training provider / college.
- OTHER ISSUES
 3. Had to wait for external funding.
 4. Had to wait until we had the money available.
 9. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY).
 10. Don't know / Can't remember.

IF B12 MULTICODED (RECRUITED IN MORE THAN ONE CATEGORY AND MORE THAN ONE APPRENTICE)

B8. Of the [IF APPROUTE = 1:<TOTFIN_COMP> apprentices who completed training between July 2019 and February 2020][IF APPROUTE = 2:<TOTFIN_CURR> apprentices currently working for you], roughly how many were...

- *WRITE IN NUMBERS.*

DS:

IF APPROUTE = 1, ALLOW 1 TO TOTFIN_COMP IN EACH. DISALLOW IF B13_1 + B13_2 > TOTFIN_COMP.

IF APPROUTE = 2, ALLOW 1 TO TOTFIN_CURR IN EACH. DISALLOW IF B13_1 + B13_2 > TOTFIN_CURR.

IF B12 = 1:

_1 Recruited specifically to start an Apprenticeship, with the training starting straight away?

0. Number.
1. Don't know.

IF (B12 = 2 AND B12 ≠ 1) OR (B12 = 1 AND 2 AND 3):

_2 [IF B12 = 1: And roughly how many were r][IF B12 ≠ 1:R]ecruited with the intention that they would start an Apprenticeship, but the training didn't start straight away?

0. Number.

1. Don't know.

B13A_DUM DUMMY VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK

Number recruited specifically to start an Apprenticeship, with the training starting straight away

IF B12 ≠ 1 = 0

IF B12 = 1 ONLY IF APPROUTE = 1: = TOTFIN_COMP

IF APPROUTE = 2: = TOTFIN_CURR

IF B12 = 1 MULTICODED IF B13_1 NUMERIC, = B13_1

IF B13_1 = DK, = 0

B13B_DUM DUMMY VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK

Number recruited with the intention that they would start an Apprenticeship, but the training didn't start straight away

IF B12 ≠ 2 = 0

IF B12 = 2 ONLY IF APPROUTE = 1: = TOTFIN_COMP

IF APPROUTE = 2: = TOTFIN_CURR

IF B12 = 1 AND 2 ONLY, AND B13_1 ≠ DK IF APPROUTE = 1: = TOTFIN_COMP – B13_1

IF APPROUTE = 2: = TOTFIN_CURR – B13_1

IF B12 = 1 AND 2 ONLY, AND B13_1 = DK = 0

IF B12 = 2 AND 3 IF B13_2 NUMERIC, = B13_2

IF B13_2 = DK, = 0

B13C_DUM DUMMY VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK

Number which were existing employees already working for the company

IF B12 ≠ 3 = 0

IF B12 = 3 ONLY IF APPROUTE = 1: = TOTFIN_COMP

IF APPROUTE = 2: = TOTFIN_CURR

IF B12 = 3 MULTICODED, AND B13_1 ≠ DK AND B13_2 ≠ DK

IF APPROUTE = 1: = TOTFIN_COMP – (B13_1 + B13_2)

IF APPROUTE = 2: = TOTFIN_CURR – (B13_1 + B13_2)

IF B12 = 3 MULTICODED, AND (B13_1 = DK OR B13_2 = DK) = 0

ASK IF 2+ RECRUITED SPECIFICALLY (B12 = 1 OR 2 AND (B13A_DUM + B13B_DUM > 1 OR B13A_DUM + B13B_DUM = 0))

B9. Of [IF B13A_DUM + B13B_DUM > 1:the <B13A_DUM + B13B_DUM>][IF B13A_DUM + B13B_DUM = 0:those] recruited specifically to start an Apprenticeship, roughly how many, if any, were recruited on a fixed-term contract for the period of the Apprenticeship?

ADD IF NECESSARY: A 'fixed-term contract' is an employment contract that ends on a particular date, or after a set time period

- *PROBE FOR BEST ESTIMATE.*

DS: ALLOW 0 TO B13A_DUM + B13B_DUM

IF B13A_DUM + B13B_DUM = 0 AND APPROUTE = 1, ALLOW 0 TO TOT-FIN_COMP.

IF B13A_DUM + B13B_DUM = 0 AND APPROUTE = 2, ALLOW 0 TO TOT-FIN_CURR.

0. WRITE IN NUMBER.

1. Some but don't know the number.
2. Don't know if any were recruited on fixed term contracts.

ASK IF ONE RECRUITED SPECIFICALLY (B12 = 1 OR 2 AND (B13A_DUM + B13B_DUM) = 1)

B14A. Was the Apprentice recruited on a fixed-term contract for the period of the Apprenticeship?

1. Yes.
2. No.
3. Don't know.

ASK ALL WHO OFFERED TO EXISTING EMPLOYEES (B12 = 3)

B10. And thinking about the staff who were already working for you when they started their Apprenticeship, were they doing the Apprenticeship to prepare for moving into a new job role, or to improve their skills in their existing job, or both?

- *SINGLE CODE.*
1. To prepare for a new job role.
 2. To improve skills in existing job.
 3. Both.
 4. DO NOT READ OUT: Accrediting existing skills.
 5. Don't know.

C - Apprentice completion and retention

IF ASKING ABOUT CURRENT APPRENTICES (APPROUTE = 2)

C1i. IF TOTFIN_CURR >= 2: Have any of your current apprentices taken a break in learning from their apprenticeship because of Covid at any point?

IF TOTFIN_CURR = 1: Has your current apprentice taken a break from their apprenticeship because of Covid at any point?

IF NECESSARY: Taking a break because of Covid could be due to illness, self-isolation, furlough or practical difficulties,

- *SINGLE CODE.*

1. Yes.
2. No.
- X. Don't know.

IF MORE THAN ONE POTENTIALLY TAKING A BREAK (C1I = 1 AND TOT-FIN_CURR >= 2)

C1ii. How many of your <TOTFIN_CURR> current apprentices are taking or have taken a break from their apprenticeship because of Covid?

DS: ALLOW 1 TO TOTFIN_CURR.

0. WRITE IN.
1. Don't know.

IF ASKING ABOUT CURRENT APPRENTICES (APPROUTE = 2)

C1. QUESTION DELETED.

IF ASKING ABOUT COMPLETERS (APPROUTE = 1)

C2. [IF TOTFIN_COMP = 1: Is the Apprentice who completed training in the July 2019 to February 2020 period still working for your organisation?]

[IF TOTFIN_COMP >= 2: Are all, none, or some of the Apprentices who completed training in the July 2019 to February 2020 period still working for your organisation?]

[IF A4 = 2 OR 3: This could be at another part of your organisation.]

- *SINGLE CODE.*

1. Yes (all still with us). Section D.
2. No (none are still with us). ASK C2A.
3. IF TOTFIN_COMP >= 2: Some still with us. ASK C2A.
4. Don't know. Section D.

ASK IF SOME APPRENTICES NO LONGER WITH THEM (C2 = 2 OR 3)

C2A. When the apprentices left, was the situation that...

- *READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.*

1. Your organisation decided not to offer them an ongoing role.
2. They decided to leave of their own accord.
3. IF TOTFIN_COMP >= 2: or both.
4. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know.

IF ANY LEFT OF THEIR OWN ACCORD (C2A= 2 or 3)

C3A. [IF C2A = 3:Thinking of those who you did offer an ongoing role to, w][IF C2A = 2 :W]hy did they decide to leave?

IF THEY FOUND ANOTHER JOB, PROBE: **Why do you think they chose the other job?**

IF THEY DIDN'T LIKE THE ROLE OFFERED, PROBE: **Why didn't they like it?**

[IF C2A = 3:INTERVIEWER: **We will ask at the next question about apprentices who left of their own accord.**]

- *DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.*
- COVID-19
 1. Because of Covid-19 risk in role.
 2. Impact of Covid-19 illness / absence on ability to do the job
- CHARACTERISTICS OF JOB
 3. Wanted higher pay.
 9. Didn't like working long hours / hard work.
 5. Wanted promotion / career prospects.
- HAD OTHER PLANS
 4. Wanted to go into another sector.
 6. Left to go to university.
 7. Left to do training (other than university).
- OTHER / PERSONAL
 8. Wanted to move away or change their location of work.
 10. Personal reasons, including family, health, maternity.
 11. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY).
 12. Don't know.
 13. Refused.

IF ANY NOT OFFERED A JOB (C2A = 1 or 3)

C3B. [IF C2A =3:Thinking of those who you couldn't or didn't offer an ongoing role to, w][IF C2A=1:W]hy was this?

IF THEIR CONTRACT ENDED, PROBE: **Why did you decide not to renew the contract?**

- *DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.*
- COVID-19
 1. Because of Covid-19 impact on business.
 2. Impact of Covid-19 illness / absence on ability to do the job.
- INDIVIDUAL APPRENTICE
 3. There were better candidates.
 6. Not performing to the standard we demand / dismissed / sacked.
 7. Didn't complete their training / dropped out.
- BUSINESS REASONS
 4. Couldn't afford it.
 5. Not enough work on / business uncertainty.
 8. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY).
 9. Don't know.
 10. Refused.

D - Progression from Advanced to Higher Apprenticeships

ASK ALL

D1. How much, if at all, do you feel you know about Higher Apprenticeships – these are Apprenticeships at Levels 4 to 7, including Degree Apprenticeships?

- *READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.*

DS: REVERSE THE CODES 50% OF THE TIME

1. A great deal.
2. A fair amount.
3. Just a little.
4. Heard of but know nothing about them.
5. Never heard of them.
6. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know.

ASK IF D1 = 1 TO 4 (HEARD OF HIGHER APPRENTICESHIPS)

D2. Does your organisation currently provide, or have plans in place to provide, any of the following qualifications for training staff or new recruits?

INTERVIEWER: If the respondent says they would provide a qualification only if proactively asked by an employee (e.g. 'we seriously consider all requests for training'), please do not select that option.

- *READ OUT. MULTICODE.*

1. Higher Apprenticeship at Level 4 or 5.
2. Degree Apprenticeship at Level 6 or 7.
9. Any other Level 6+ Non-Degree Apprenticeship.
7. None of these.
8. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know.

IF OFFER DEGREE LEVEL APPRENTICESHIPS (D2=2)

D2a. You mentioned offering or planning to offer degree level apprenticeships. Does or will your organisation fund degree qualification content in addition to the apprenticeship where it isn't included as a mandatory part of the training? IF NECESSARY: An example might be funding an MBA which is not included as a mandatory qualification in the Level 7 senior leader apprenticeship.

- *SINGLE CODE.*

1. Yes.
2. No.
3. Don't know.

ASK IF DON'T OFFER APPS AT LEVEL 4/5; 6+, OR DA ((D2 ≠ 1, 2 OR 9) AND D1 ≠ 5)

D3. Why do you not offer higher or degree level apprenticeships?

- *DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE. IF DUE TO SMALL COMPANY SIZE ASK "WHY DOES THE SMALL COMPANY SIZE PREVENT THIS?"*
- PRACTICAL OBSTACLES
 2. Lack of funding.
 9. Lack of time to deliver employer element of training.
 10. Lack of skills to deliver employer element of training.
- NO DEMAND OR NEED
 1. No demand from employees.
 11. No vacancies requiring this level of qualification.
 12. All relevant staff already qualified to this level.
 5. Higher level qualifications are not required to do the job.
- UNAVAILABLE / UNAWARE
 7. There are no higher level qualifications in my sector / for this type of work.
 6. Was not aware of higher level qualifications.
- PREFER OTHER METHODS
 4. Prefer to recruit graduates / use a Graduate Training Scheme.
 8. Employees to fund / arrange their own training (at that level).
- WE PLAN TO
 3. Have not progressed this far with the Apprenticeship scheme yet.
 13. Currently looking into it / planning it.
 14. Other (SPECIFY).
 15. Don't know.

IF D2 = 1 OR 2 OR 9 (IF OFFER APPS AT LEVEL 4+)

D4. Why do you offer these higher or degree level apprenticeships?

- *DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.*
- STAFF PROGRESSION / BENEFITS
 1. It is part of our staff retention strategy.
 3. We offer progression as part of our workforce development strategy.
 5. To help staff develop their skills.
 8. To attract better quality recruits.
- NEED FOR SKILLS
 6. Skills are required by clients / customers.
 7. To develop the business in new directions.
 4. Higher level qualifications are required for promotion / moving into a management role.
- REGULATION / SUBSIDY
 2. Funding is available to pay towards it.
 9. Regulatory or government requirements.
 10. Other [SPECIFY].
 11. Don't know.

D5. THERE IS NO D5

D6. QUESTION DELETED

D7. QUESTION DELETED

ASK ALL WITH L6+ APPS ((COMBINEDLEVEL_ALL_6 >= 1 OR COMBINEDLEVEL_ALL_7 >=1) AND D5B ≠ 6)

D8. Is the degree apprenticeship or Level 6+ non-degree apprenticeship training a replacement for a programme to recruit graduates...?

- *READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.*
- 1. ...in full.
- 2. In part.
- 3. Or not at all?
- 4. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know / Refused.

ASK ALL WITH L6+ APPS ((COMBINEDLEVEL_ALL_6 >= 1 OR COMBINEDLEVEL_ALL_7 >=1) AND D5B ≠ 6)

D9. Is the degree apprenticeship or Level 6+ non-degree apprenticeship training a replacement for a programme to provide other work-based learning at these levels, such as study toward a professional qualification...?

- *READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.*
- 1. ...in full.
- 2. In part.
- 3. Or not at all?
- 4. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know / Refused.

E - Perceptions of, and satisfaction, with Apprenticeships

READ OUT TO ALL

We'd now like to ask about one of your Apprenticeship programmes [IF AP-ROUTE = 1:with learners completing in the July 2019 to February 2020 period in more detail.

IF A <COMPANY> IS AN FE COLLEGE OR SIMILAR: Again, we only want to include training provided to your own employees.

ASK IF HAS MORE THAN ONE APPRENTICESHIP TYPE ON ILR AND AGREES WITH ILR SUBJECT AREAS (((APROUTE = 2 AND APPTYPES_COUNT_CURR > 1) OR (APROUTE = 1 AND APPTYPES_COUNT_COMP > 1)) AND HASDETAIL = 1)

E1. Which one of the following programmes [IF APPROUTE = 1:were][IF AP-ROUTE = 2:are] the most important to your business [IF A4 >= 2:at [IF HRSITE = 1: your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: this site]]?

- *READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.*
- INTERVIEWER NOTE: IF NONE ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT, ASK FOR THE ONE WITH THE MOST RECENT COMPLETER.
1. IF APPROUTE = 1: <APPTYPES_COMP_MAX1>.

1. IF APPROUTE = 2: <APPTYPES_CURR_MAX1>.
2. IF APPROUTE = 1: <APPTYPES_COMP_MAX2>.
2. IF APPROUTE = 2: <APPTYPES_CURR_MAX2>.
3. IF APPROUTE = 1 AND APPTYPES_COUNT_COMP >= 3: <AP-PTYPES_COMP_MAX3>.
3. IF APPROUTE = 2 AND APPTYPES_COUNT_CURR >= 3: <AP-PTYPES_CURR_MAX3>.
4. None of the above.
5. Don't know.

DS: IF (APPROUTE = 1 AND APPTYPES_COUNT_COMP = 1), SET E1 TO <AP-PTYPES_COMP_MAX1>. IF (APPROUTE = 2 AND APPTYPES_COUNT_CURR = 1), SET E1 TO <APPTYPES_CURR_MAX1>.

APPTYPE_E DUMMY VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK

= LABEL OF RESPONSE TO E1

SUBJECTAREA_E DUMMY VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK

= LOOKUP FROM RESPONSE TO E1 ON SEPARATE SPREADSHEET – N.B. CODES USED ARE THE SAME AS MAINBROADFRAME

LEVELMIN_E DUMMY VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK

IF E1 = 1 AND APPROUTE = 1, SET TO APPTYPELVMIN_COMP_1

IF E1 = 2 AND APPROUTE = 1, SET TO APPTYPELVMIN_COMP_2

IF E1 = 3 AND APPROUTE = 1, SET TO APPTYPELVMIN_COMP_3

IF E1 = 1 AND APPROUTE = 2, SET TO APPTYPELVMIN_CURR_1

IF E1 = 2 AND APPROUTE = 2, SET TO APPTYPELVMIN_CURR_2

IF E1 = 3 AND APPROUTE = 2, SET TO APPTYPELVMIN_CURR_3

LEVELMAX_E DUMMY VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK

IF E1 = 1 AND APPROUTE = 1, SET TO APPTYPELVMAX_COMP_1

IF E1 = 2 AND APPROUTE = 1, SET TO APPTYPELVMAX_COMP_2

IF E1 = 3 AND APPROUTE = 1, SET TO APPTYPELVMAX_COMP_3

IF E1 = 1 AND APPROUTE = 2, SET TO APPTYPELVMAX_CURR_1

IF E1 = 2 AND APPROUTE = 2, SET TO APPTYPELVMAX_CURR_2

IF E1 = 3 AND APPROUTE = 2, SET TO APPTYPELVMAX_CURR_3

ASK IF DISAGREE WITH ILR OR CAN'T CHOOSE FROM LIST, OR SWITCHED ROUTE TO TALK ABOUT CURRENT APPRENTICES NOT ON ILR (HASDETAIL = 2 OR E1 = 4, OR (APPROUTE = 2 AND APPTYPES_COUNT_CURR = 0))

E1X. Which single apprenticeship programme do you consider to be most important to your business [IF A4 >= 2:at[IF HRSITE = 1: your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: this site]]?

- *READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.*

INTERVIEWER NOTE: IF NONE ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT, ASK FOR THE ONE WITH THE MOST RECENT COMPLETER.

0. Subject area: WRITE IN

1. Don't know / Refused.

DS: WRITE E1X TEXT TO <APPTYPE_E>.

IF E1X = CODE 1 (MOST IMPORTANT APPRENTICESHIP UNKNOWN), GO TO F1.

ASK IF APP DOES NOT HAVE SPECIFIED LEVEL, OR DISAGREE WITH ILR ((LEVELMIN_E ≠ LEVELMAX_E) OR ((HASDETAIL = 2 OR E1 = 4) AND E1X ≠ CODE 1 AND E1 ≠ 5))

E1A. Which level of apprenticeship would you say was most important to your business, within your <APPTYPE_E> apprenticeship? Would it be...

INTERVIEWER: Higher Apprenticeships at Level 4 or 5 at a level between an A Level qualification and a degree. Higher Apprenticeships at Level 6 or 7 are equivalent to a degree – however, they are only called Degree Apprenticeships if they include a built-in degree qualification.

- *READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.*

2. IF (LEVELMIN_E <= 2 AND LEVELMAX_E >= 2) OR ((HASDETAIL = 2 OR E1 = 4) AND E1X ≠ CODE 1): Level 2, or Intermediate.

3. IF (LEVELMIN_E <= 3 AND LEVELMAX_E >= 3) OR ((HASDETAIL = 2 OR E1 = 4) AND E1X ≠ CODE 1): Level 3, or Advanced.

4. IF (LEVELMIN_E <= 4 AND LEVELMAX_E >= 4) OR ((HASDETAIL = 2 OR E1 = 4) AND E1X ≠ CODE 1): Level 4, or Higher.

5. IF (LEVELMIN_E <= 5 AND LEVELMAX_E >= 5) OR ((HASDETAIL = 2 OR E1 = 4) AND E1X ≠ CODE 1): Level 5.

6. IF (LEVELMIN_E <= 6 AND LEVELMAX_E >= 6) OR ((HASDETAIL = 2 OR E1 = 4) AND E1X ≠ CODE 1): Level 6.

7. IF (LEVELMIN_E <= 7 AND LEVELMAX_E >= 7) OR ((HASDETAIL = 2 OR E1 = 4) AND E1X ≠ CODE 1): Level 7, including most Degree Level apprenticeships.

8. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know.

LEVEL_E DUMMY VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK

IF LEVELMIN_E = LEVELMAX_E, SET TO LEVELMAX_E

IF E1A POPULATED, SET TO E1A

IF LEVEL_E NOT SET (LEVEL OF MOST IMPORTANT APPRENTICESHIP UN-KNOWN), GO TO F1.

ASK IF APPRENTICESHIP IDENTIFIED (LEVEL_E = 2 TO 7)

So, in the following section, we'd like to talk about your apprenticeships in <APPTYPE_E> at Level <LEVEL_E> [IF A4 >= 2:at [IF HRSITE = 1: your <LOCA-TION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: this site]] [IF APPROUTE = 1:who completed their apprenticeship between July 2019 and February 2020][IF APPROUTE = 2:now.]

ASK IF APPRENTICESHIP IDENTIFIED (LEVEL_E = 2 TO 7)

E2. So, thinking of those apprentices...

- *READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.*

DS: SHOW AS SIX INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS

ASK ALL

_1 [IF APPROUTE = 1:Did][IF APPROUTE = 2:Do] they receive learning delivered by a training provider separate to their day-to-day work duties?

1. Yes.
2. No.
3. Don't know.

ASK ALL

_2 [IF APPROUTE = 1:Did][IF APPROUTE = 2:Do] you as the employer provide learning sessions separate to their day-to-day work duties as part of the Apprenticeship?

1. Yes.
2. No.
3. Don't know.

ASK ALL

_3 Did the training provider assess the prior qualifications and training that the apprentice or apprentices had before starting?

1. Yes.
2. No.
3. Don't know.

IF E2_3 = NO ASK:

_4 Was this assessment done by your own staff?

1. Yes.
2. No.
3. Don't know.

ASK ALL

_5 Have you as an employer been able to influence the structure, content, delivery or duration of the Apprenticeship?

1. Yes.
2. No.
3. Don't know.

ASK IF DIDN'T INFLUENCE TRAINING (E2_5 = 2)

E3. And did you want to influence the content and delivery of the Apprenticeship at any stage?

1. Yes.
2. No.
3. Don't know.

ASK IF APPRENTICESHIP IDENTIFIED (LEVEL_E = 2 TO 7)

E4. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the Level <LEVEL_E> <AP-PTYPE_E> Apprenticeship programme? Please use a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is very dissatisfied, 5 is neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 10 is very satisfied.

DS: ALLOW 0 TO 10

0. WRITE IN NUMBER.
1. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know.

ASK IF APPRENTICESHIP IDENTIFIED (LEVEL_E = 2 TO 7)

E5. And how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following aspects of the Level <LEVEL_E> <APPTYPE_E> Apprenticeship? Again, please rate on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is very dissatisfied, 5 is neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 10 is very satisfied.

INTERVIEWER NOTE: An Apprenticeship framework or standard sets out the requirements for an Apprenticeship programme such as the key skills targets and the qualifications that need to be completed by the apprentice. It also includes information on job roles, entry routes, length of the Apprenticeship, and career paths available upon completion.

DS: ALLOW 0 TO 10.

IF RECRUITED EXTERNALLY (B12 = 1 OR 2):

_1 The quality of applicants for Apprenticeship positions

0. WRITE IN NUMBER.
1. Don't know.

ASK ALL

_2 Your ability to select an Apprenticeship relevant to your needs

0. WRITE IN NUMBER.
1. Don't know.

_3 Your ability to influence the structure, content, delivery and duration of the Apprenticeship training

0. WRITE IN NUMBER.

1. Don't know.

_4 The amount and complexity of any paperwork and administration required of you as the employer

0. WRITE IN NUMBER.

1. Don't know.

IF A PROVIDER TRAINS (E2_1=1)

_5 The quality of the learning delivered by the provider

0. WRITE IN NUMBER.

1. Don't know.

IF A PROVIDER TRAINS (E2_1=1)

_6 The support and communication from the provider

0. WRITE IN NUMBER.

1. Don't know.

IF A PROVIDER TRAINS (E2_1=1)

_7 How the provider offered learning in a flexible way to meet your needs

0. WRITE IN NUMBER.

1. Don't know.

IF A PROVIDER DOES THE ASSESSMENT (E2_3=1)

_8 The quality of the initial assessment of apprentices prior qualifications and training carried out by the provider

0. WRITE IN NUMBER.

1. Don't know.

F - Employer Benefits

ASK ALL

The following questions cover Apprenticeships at an overall level, rather than any specific frameworks, standards or levels.

F1. THERE IS NO F1

ASK ALL

F2. Which if any of the following benefits has your organisation experienced as a result of offering Apprenticeships?

PLEASE NOTE WE ARE STILL ASKING ABOUT THEIR SPECIFIC SITE <LOCA-TION>.

- *READ OUT. SINGLE CODE PER ROW.*

DS: ROTATE START.

_2 Improved productivity

1. Yes.
2. No .
3. DO NOT READ OUT: Not applicable.
4. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know.
5. DO NOT READ OUT: Too early to say.

_3 A lower overall wage bill

1. Yes.
2. No .
3. DO NOT READ OUT: Not applicable.
4. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know.
5. DO NOT READ OUT: Too early to say.

IF B12 = 3 (APPRENTICESHIPS FOR EXISTING STAFF): _4 It has helped improve staff retention

1. Yes.
2. No .
3. DO NOT READ OUT: Not applicable.
4. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know.
5. DO NOT READ OUT: Too early to say.

IF B12 = 1 OR 2 (RECRUITS APPRENTICES): _5 It has improved our ability to attract good staff

1. Yes.
2. No .
3. DO NOT READ OUT: Not applicable.
4. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know.
5. DO NOT READ OUT: Too early to say.

_6 Brought new ideas to the organisation

1. Yes.
2. No .
3. DO NOT READ OUT: Not applicable.
4. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know.
5. DO NOT READ OUT: Too early to say.

_9 Improved our image in the sector

1. Yes.
2. No .
3. DO NOT READ OUT: Not applicable.
4. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know.
5. DO NOT READ OUT: Too early to say.

_10 It has helped us develop skills that are relevant to the needs of our organisation

1. Yes.
2. No .
3. DO NOT READ OUT: Not applicable.
4. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know.
5. DO NOT READ OUT: Too early to say.

ASK ALL

F3. Is there anything you would like to change about the content, structure, delivery or duration of the Apprenticeships?

1. Yes. ASK F4.
2. No. ASK F5.
3. Don't know. ASK F5.

ASK IF WOULD HAVE LIKED TO HAVE CHANGED THE APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING (F3=1)

F4. What would you have liked to change?

- *PROMPT IF NECESSARY. MULTICODE.*

INTERVIEWER: Do not accept responses such as "length" because we don't know if they're saying it was too long or too short – similarly "amount of training" or "level of detail" – too much or too little?

IF NECESSARY: **Was it too short or too long? / Was there too much or too little?**

IF SAY "COURSE CONTENT" OR "NOT SUITED TO OUR NEEDS": **What would you have liked to change about the course content? Was the course content too wide-ranging or too narrow?**

- TRAINING PROVIDER / ASSESSOR
 1. Improved training provider communication.
 2. Improved training provider support / attitude.
 5. Improved training provider organisation.
 14. Improved quality of teaching / teacher / trainer knowledge.
 15. Improved end point assessment.
- APPRENTICESHIP CONTENT
 3. More opportunities for employer input.
 4. Course more specific / relevant to our organisation's needs.
 18. Less content relating to Maths and English.
 11. More challenging course content.
- APPRENTICESHIP STRUCTURE / FORMAT
 6. Shorter apprenticeships.
 7. Longer apprenticeships.
 8. Apprenticeships of flexible length.
 9. More flexible structure / timing.
 12. More practical / hands-on training.
 13. More theoretical / classroom training.
 16. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY).
 17. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know.

F5. QUESTION DELETED

ASK ALL

F4A. Which of the following best describes how you would speak about Apprenticeships to other employers?

- *READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.*
- 1. I would recommend them without being asked.
- 2. I would recommend them if asked.
- 3. I would be neutral.
- 4. I would recommend against them if asked.
- 5. I would recommend against them without being asked.
- 6. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know.

F6. QUESTION DELETED

F7. QUESTION DELETED

F8. QUESTION DELETED

F9. QUESTION DELETED

ASK ALL

F10. How important do you consider it is for your apprentices to have or to achieve Functional Skills Level 2 or a GCSE standard pass in Maths and English by the end of their apprenticeship? Is it...

- *READ OUT. SINGLE CODE*
- 1. Very important.
- 2. Quite important.
- 3. Neither important nor unimportant.
- 4. Not very important.
- 5. Not at all important.
- 6. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know.

F11. QUESTION DELETED

F12. QUESTION DELETED

G - Apprenticeships vs. other Work-based learning (WBL) and alternatives; Traineeships and Standards

ASK ALL

G1. Thinking about the people who have received Apprenticeship training [IF A4 >= 2:at[IF HRSITE = 1: your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: this site]], why did you offer them Apprenticeships rather than, or in addition to, other forms of training or qualification?

- *DO NOT READ OUT. PROMPT AS NECESSARY. MULTICODE.*
- FINANCIAL REASONS
- 1. To use our Apprenticeship Levy / Apprenticeship Account.

- 2. Cost / affordability / subsidy (if apprenticeship levy not mentioned).
- TRAINING CONTENT AND FORMAT
 - 4. Allows us to influence training.
 - 5. Content / design of training.
 - 6. Inclusion of practical / vocational training.
 - 7. Timing or format of training.
- HELPING PEOPLE / STAFF
 - 8. Retention of existing staff / staff morale.
 - 9. Recruitment of new staff.
 - 12. Benefit to the apprentice / community.
- TRAINING PROVIDER
 - 10. Support / advice from training provider (other than with recruitment).
 - 17. Provider helps to recruit.
 - 11. High opinion of specific training provider.
 - 18. Training provider approached us.
- NO CHOICE / OTHER
 - 3. Industry standard / norm.
 - 13. Decided by Head Office.
 - 14. No other options.
 - 15. Another reason (PLEASE SPECIFY).
 - 16. Don't know.

ASK ALL

G2. Besides the training delivered through Apprenticeships, have you funded or arranged any training for employees [IF A4 >= 2:at[IF HRSITE = 1: your <LOCA-TION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: this site]] in the last 12 months which led to either a Level 2 or a Level 3 qualification?

- *SINGLE CODE.*
 - 1. Level 2 only.
 - 2. Level 3 only.
 - 3. Both.
 - 4. No.
 - 5. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know.

G3. QUESTION DELETED

G4. QUESTION DELETED

G4A. QUESTION DELETED

G4B. QUESTION DELETED

G5. QUESTION DELETED

G6. QUESTION DELETED

G7. QUESTION DELETED

ASK ALL

G7A. From August 2020 all new apprenticeship starts in England are on apprenticeship standards. . Before this survey, were you aware that this change had taken place?

INTERVIEWER: If they say that they were aware that there had been a change but not the exact wording / details, please code 'yes'.

1. Yes.
2. No.

IF AWARE OF CHANGE TO STANDARDS (G7A = 1)

G8. How do you feel these standards compare to the previous frameworks, are they...

- *SINGLE CODE. READ OUT.*

1. Better.
2. Worse.
3. Or is there little difference?
4. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know / too early to say / Not heard of standards or don't know enough about the to comment.

IF BETTER (G8=1)

G8A. Why do you think apprenticeship standards are better than apprenticeship frameworks?

- *DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.*

1. More structured.
2. More focussed on the day-to-day duties of the job.
3. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY) DS: MAKE BOX LARGE.
4. Don't know.

IF WORSE (G8=2)

G8B. Why do you think apprenticeship standards are worse than apprenticeship frameworks?

- *DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.*

1. End Point Assessment puts more pressure on the apprentice.

2. Lack of flexibility.
3. End Point Assessment increases the burden on employers.
4. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY) DS: MAKE BOX LARGE.
5. Don't know.

End Point Assessment

SHOW IF HAS APPRENTICES ON STANDARDS ((APPROUTE = 1 AND STAND-ARD_COMP >= 1) OR (APPROUTE = 2 AND STANDARD_CURR >= 1))

The next few questions ask about end point assessment. This is the way that those doing apprenticeship standards, rather than frameworks, are assessed. IF NECESSARY: With standards, at the end of the apprenticeship, apprentices are assessed to see if they are fully capable of doing their job before they receive their apprenticeship certificate. This differs from the approach for apprenticeship frameworks where apprentices are assessed continuously throughout their apprenticeships, usually by compiling a portfolio.

SHOW IF ASKING ABOUT COMPLETED STANDARDS (APPROUTE = 1 AND STAND-ARD_COMP >= 1)

G9. Can I check, have any of your apprentices gone through end point assessment – this is the assessment apprentices have to pass at the end to achieve their apprenticeship?

1. Yes.
2. No.
3. Don't know.

IF COMPLETERS WHO HAVE GONE THROUGH EPA AND MORE THAN ONE COMPLETER OR MORE THAN ONE "SUBJECT AREA" WITH STANDARDS (IF G9 = 1 AND STAND-ARD_COMP >= 2 AND HASDETAIL = 1)

G9A. Is it right that the apprenticeship standard where you have had most apprentices go through end point assessment is called <APPTYPE_STDCOMP_#>?

- *PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE.*
1. Yes, <APPTYPES_STDCOMP_1>.
 2. IF APPTYPES_COUNT_STDCOMP >= 2: <APPTYPES_STDCOMP_2>.
 3. IF APPTYPES_COUNT_STDCOMP >= 3: <APPTYPES_STDCOMP_3>.
 4. No, don't recognise any of these (PLEASE SPECIFY).
 5. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know.

SHOW IF ASKING ABOUT CURRENT STANDARDS (APPROUTE = 2 AND STAND-ARD_CURR >= 1)

G10. Are any of your current apprentices on apprenticeship standards whereby they will be going through end point assessment?

1. Yes.
2. No.
3. Don't know.

SHOW IF ASKING ABOUT CURRENT STANDARDS (APPROUTE = 2 AND STANDARD_CURR >= 2 AND G10 = 1)

G10A. Is it right that the apprenticeship standard where you have most apprentices is called <APPTYPES_STDCURR_#>?

- *PROMPT AS NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE.*
- 1. Yes, <APPTYPES_STDCURR_1>.
- 2. IF APPTYPES_COUNT_STDCURR >= 2: <APPTYPES_STDCURR_2>.
- 3. IF APPTYPES_COUNT_STDCURR >= 3: <APPTYPES_STDCURR_3>.
- 4. No, don't recognise any of these (PLEASE SPECIFY).
- 5. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know.

STANDARD_G DUMMY VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK – CALCULATE FOR ALL

IF (G9 = 1 AND STANDARD_COMP = 1) OR G9A = 1, SET TO <AP-PTYPES_STDCOMP_1>.

IF G9A = 2, SET TO <APPTYPES_STDCOMP_2>.

IF G9A = 3, SET TO <APPTYPES_STDCOMP_3>.

IF G9A = 4, SET TO <G9A_4_TEXT>

IF G9A = 5 LEAVE BLANK

IF (G10 = 1 AND STANDARD_CURR = 1) OR G10A = 1, SET TO <AP-PTYPES_STDCURR_1>.

IF G10A = 2, SET TO <APPTYPES_STDCURR_2>.

IF G10A = 3, SET TO <APPTYPES_STDCURR_3>.

IF G10A = 4, SET TO <G10A_4_TEXT>.

IF G10A = 5 LEAVE BLANK

SHOW IF ASKING ABOUT COMPLETERS OF STANDARDS (APPROUTE = 1 AND G9 = 1 AND STANDARD_G NOT BLANK)

G11. For the apprentices that went through end point assessment on the <STANDARD_G> apprenticeship, who selected the end point assessment organisation to use? Was it...

- *READ OUT. SINGLE CODE*
- 1. All done by the training provider.
- 2. Or did the training provider give you a choice of organisations to select from.
- 3. Did you as the employer find and choose them.
- 4. Or was it a joint decision between you and the provider.
- 5. Or was there no choice because there was only one organisation available.
- 6. Or do none of the above describe the process IF SO: How were they selected? (PLEASE SPECIFY).
- 7. DO NOT READ OUT: Can't remember / don't know.

SHOW IF ASKING ABOUT COMPLETERS OF STANDARDS AND INVOLVED IN EPAO SELECTION (APPROUTE = 1 AND G9 = 1 AND G11 ≠ 1 AND G11 ≠ 5 AND STANDARD_G NOT BLANK)

G12. Thinking about when the selection of the end point assessment organisation to use for the <STANDARD_G> apprentices was made, which of the following best describes it. Was it....

• *READ OUT. SINGLE CODE. IF THEY SAY IT VARIED, ASK ABOUT THE APPROACH MOST COMMONLY TAKEN.*

1. At the very start of the apprenticeship.
2. In the first 6 months.
3. Just before Gateway – i.e. the point at which the employer and training provider review the apprentice's knowledge, skills and behaviours to see if they have met the minimum requirements of the apprenticeship standard, and are ready to take the assessment.
4. At Gateway.
5. After Gateway.
6. Or at some other point (SPECIFY).
7. DO NOT READ OUT: Can't remember / don't know.

SHOW IF ASKING ABOUT COMPLETERS OF STANDARDS (APPROUTE = 1 AND G9 = 1 AND STANDARD_G NOT BLANK)

G13. And when did you or the provider tell the <STANDARD_G> apprentices about end point assessment and what it would involve. Was it....

• *READ OUT. SINGLE CODE. IF THEY SAY IT VARIED, ASK ABOUT THE APPROACH MOST COMMONLY TAKEN.*

1. When they 'signed up' for the apprenticeship or before.
2. In the first month or so of the apprenticeship.
3. In the first 6 months.
4. After the first six months but more than a month before the end point assessment.
5. Less than a month before their end point assessment.
6. Or at some other point (SPECIFY).
7. DO NOT READ OUT: Can't remember / don't know.

SHOW IF ASKING ABOUT COMPLETERS OF STANDARDS (APPROUTE = 1 AND G9 = 1 AND STANDARD_G NOT BLANK)

G14. Do you feel that the assessment your <STANDARD_G> apprentices have completed are a good test of their occupational competence to do the job?

1. Yes. NOW GO TO THE NEXT SECTION.
2. No. NOW GO TO THE NEXT SECTION.
3. Don't know. NOW GO TO THE NEXT SECTION.

SHOW IF ASKING ABOUT CURRENT STANDARDS (APPROUTE = 2 AND G10 = 1 AND STANDARD_G NOT BLANK)

G15. Thinking about your current apprentices on <STANDARD_G> apprenticeships, have either you or the provider selected the end point assessment organisation to use?

1. Yes.
2. No.
3. Don't know.

IF HAVE SELECTED EPA PROVIDER (G15 = 1)

G16. Which of the following best describes how the selection of the end point assessment organisation for the <STANDARD_G> apprentices was made? Was it ...

• *READ OUT. SINGLE CODE. IF THEY SAY IT VARIES, ASK ABOUT THE AP-PROACH MOST COMMONLY TAKEN.*

1. Done by the training provider.
2. Or did the training provider give you a choice of organisations to select from.
3. Did you as the employer find and choose them.
4. Or was it a joint decision between you and the provider .
5. Or was there no choice because there was only one organisation available.
6. Or do none of the above describe the process IF SO: How were they selected? (PLEASE SPECIFY).
7. DO NOT READ OUT: Can't remember / don't know.

IF HAVE NOT SELECTED EPA PROVIDER (G15 = 2)

G17. Which of the following best describes how you expect the selection of the end point assessment organisation to use for the <STANDARD_G> apprentices to be made...

• *READ OUT. SINGLE CODE. IF THEY SAY IT VARIES, ASK ABOUT THE AP-PROACH MOST COMMONLY TAKEN.*

1. By the training provider.
2. Or with the training provider giving you a choice of organisations to select from.
3. Or you as the employer finding and choosing them.
4. Or do you expect it to be a joint decision between you and the provider.
5. Or is there no choice because there is only one organisation available.
6. Or in some other way (SPECIFY).
7. DO NOT READ OUT: Can't remember / don't know.

IF HAVE NOT SELECTED EPA PROVIDER AND NOT DONE BY TRAINING PROVIDER (G15 = 2 AND G17 ≠ 1 AND G17 ≠ 5)

G18. When do you expect to select the end point assessment organisation to use for your <STANDARD_G> apprenticeships? Will it be....

• *READ OUT. SINGLE CODE. IF THEY SAY IT VARIES, ASK ABOUT THE APPROACH MOST COMMONLY TAKEN.*

2. Well before Gateway – i.e. the point at which the employer and training provider review the apprentice's knowledge, skills and behaviours to see if they have met the minimum requirements of the apprenticeship standard, and are ready to take the assessment.

3. Just before Gateway .
4. At Gateway.
5. After Gateway.
6. Or at some other point (SPECIFY).
7. (DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know.

IF HAVE SELECTED EPA PROVIDER (G15 = 1 AND G16 ≠ 1 AND G16 ≠ 5)

G19. Thinking about when the selection of the end point assessment organisation to use for <STANDARD_G> apprentices was made, which of the following best describes it. Was it....

• *READ OUT. SINGLE CODE. IF THEY SAY IT VARIED, ASK ABOUT THE APPROACH MOST COMMONLY TAKEN.*

1. At the very start of the apprenticeship.
2. In the first 6 months.
3. Just before Gateway – i.e. the point at which the employer and training provider review the apprentice's knowledge, skills and behaviours to see if they have met the minimum requirements of the apprenticeship standard, and are ready to take the assessment.
4. At Gateway.
5. After Gateway.
6. Or at some other point (SPECIFY)
7. (DO NOT READ OUT) Can't remember / don't know.

IF HAVE SELECTED EPA PROVIDER (G15 = 1)

G20. Have either you or the provider told all, some or none of the current apprentices on the <STANDARD_G> apprenticeship about end point assessment and what it will involve?

1. All.
2. Some.
3. None.
4. (DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know.

IF ALL OR SOME APPRENTICES TOLD ABOUT EPA (G20 = 1 OR 2)

G21. And when did you or the provider tell the <STANDARD_G> apprentices about end point assessment and what it would involve. Was it....

• *READ OUT. SINGLE CODE. IF THEY SAY IT VARIED, ASK ABOUT THE APPROACH MOST COMMONLY TAKEN.*

1. When they 'signed up' for the apprenticeship or before.
3. In the first month or so of the apprenticeship.
4. In the first 6 months.
5. After the first six months, but more than a month before the end point assessment.
2. Less than a month before the end point assessment.
6. Or at some other point (SPECIFY).
7. (DO NOT READ OUT) Can't remember / don't know.

IF APPRENTICES NOT TOLD ABOUT EPA (G20 = 3)

G22. When do you expect your <STANDARD_G> apprentices to be told about end point assessment and what it will involve. Will it be it...

- *READ OUT. SINGLE CODE. IF THEY SAY IT VARIES, ASK ABOUT THE APPROACH MOST COMMONLY TAKEN.*

1. In the first 6 months of the apprenticeship.
2. In the first 12 months of the apprenticeship.
3. Just before they have to do their end point assessment.
4. Or at some other point (SPECIFY).
5. (DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know.

H - Recent recruitment and future plans and intentions

ASK ALL

H1. Thinking about the last 12 months, approximately how many people, if any, [IF A4 >= 2:has [IF HRSITE = 1: your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: this site]][IF A4 = 1:have you] recruited to start an apprenticeship? Please exclude any existing employees put on an apprenticeship.

PROBE FOR BEST ESTIMATE.

DS: ALLOW 1 TO 9999

0. WRITE IN

1. None.
2. Some, but don't know how many.
3. Don't know.

IF KNOW HOW MANY (H1 >= 1 OR H1 = CODE 1)

H2. [IF H1 >= 1:Is this more, less or about the same as if the last 12 months had been a 'usual' year?][IF H1 = CODE 1:Would you have recruited apprentices if the last 12 months had been a 'usual' year?]

- *SINGLE CODE.*

1. IF H1 >= 1:More.
2. [IF H1 >= 1: Less][IF H1 = CODE 1:Yes].
3. [IF H1 >= 1: About the same][IF H1 = CODE 1:No].
4. DO NOT READ OUT: No such thing as a 'usual' year.
5. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know.

IF LESS / YES (H2=2)

H2A. What were the reasons why the number was less than a usual year? PROMPT: Were there any other reasons?

- *DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.*

1. Cash flow (can't afford to recruit apprentices).
4. Downsizing / reducing size of workforce.
5. No need for new staff / not increasing size of workforce.

2. Economic uncertainty / hard to plan ahead.
3. Covid-19 / the pandemic.
6. Unable to find a provider.
7. Lack of (suitable) candidates applying.
8. Other (SPECIFY).
9. Don't know / no particular reason.

ASK ALL THAT RECRUITED IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS (H1 >= 1 OR H1 = CODE 2)

H3. How many people, if any, [IF A4 >= 2:has [IF HRSITE = 1: your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: this site]][IF A4 = 1:have you] recruited to start an apprenticeship since 1st August 2020?

- *PROBE FOR BEST ESTIMATE.*

DS: ALLOW 1 TO H1.

0. WRITE IN

1. None.
2. Some, but don't know how many.
3. Don't know.

ASK ALL

H4. In 2020, the government introduced a new incentive payment for employers who recruit an apprentice as a new employee to their organisation. Employers were eligible to receive the incentive payment for each new apprentice recruited from 1st August 2020. The payment [IF NOW >= 01/04/2021:was increased to][IF NOW <= 31/03/2021:will increase to] £3,000 per apprentice for recruits from 1st April 2021.] IF NECESSARY: Before April 2021, the payment was £2,000 for new apprentices aged 16-24, and £1,500 for new apprentices aged 25 and over.

Before today, had you heard about this incentive payment?

1. Yes.
2. No.
3. Not sure.

IF HEARD OF INCENTIVE PAYMENTS AND TOOK ON APPRENTICES (H4 = 1 AND H3 >= 1)

H5. Which one of the following applies?

IF NECESSARY (e.g. respondent says 'we had some apprentices so I imagine it was paid'): **The incentive payment is not automatic – you will only have received it if you applied for it.**

- *READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.*

1. We have received these incentive payments[IF NOW >= 01/04/2021, including at the lower rate before April,] for some or all the apprentices recruited since 1st August 2020.
2. We applied but have not received any payments yet.
3. We have not applied for these incentive payments, but plan to in future.
4. We don't intend to apply for these incentive payments.
5. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know.

IF DID NOT APPLY BUT DID TAKE ON APPRENTICES ((H5 = 3 OR 4) AND H3 >= 1)

H6. Why did you not apply for this incentive despite taking on apprentices since 1st August 2020?

- *DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.*
- 1. Paperwork and admin involved (not worth the return).
- 2. The size of the incentive was too small.
- 3. Didn't have time / resources to explore it.
- 4. Other issues more important (e.g. dealing with COVID etc).
- 5. Did not understand eligibility criteria.
- 6. No particular reason.
- 7. Other (SPECIFY).
- 8. Don't know.

IF HEARD OF INCENTIVE PAYMENT, DID NOT APPLY AND DID NOT TAKE ON APPRENTICES IN THAT TIME PERIOD (H4 = 1 AND H3 = CODE 1)

H7. Why did this incentive payment not cause you to recruit apprentices since 1st August 2020?

- *DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.*
- 1. Company closed / not operating due to Covid-19.
- 2. Reduction in work / not recruiting due to Covid-19.
- 3. Reduction in work / not recruiting for other reasons.
- 4. Already have apprentice(s).
- 5. Lack of staff time / resource for paperwork or admin.
- 6. Lack of staff time / resource to provide training / support.
- 7. Incentive not high enough / too low.
- 8. Heard about it too late.
- 9. No suitable training provision available (including provider closed due to Covid-19).
- 10. Other (SPECIFY).
- 11. Don't know / No reason.

IF RECEIVED OR EXPECTING INCENTIVE (H5 = 1 OR 2)

H7A. Thinking of the apprentices you recruited since 1st August 2020, which one of the following applies?

- *READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.*
- 1. We would not have recruited any of them if it had not been for the incentive payment.
- 2. We would have recruited exactly the same number even without the incentive payment.
- 3. We would have recruited fewer if it had not been for the incentive payment.
- 4. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know.

IF WOULD HAVE RECRUITED FEWER, AND KNOW NUMBER RECRUITED (H7A = 3 AND H3 >= 1)

H7B. You mentioned having recruited <H3> apprentices since 1st August 2020. How many of these do you think you would have recruited in this period anyway even without the incentive?

DS: ALLOW 1 TO H3.

- 0. WRITE IN
- 1. None.
- 2. Don't know.

IF WOULD HAVE RECRUITED FEWER OR NONE, AND KNOW NUMBER RE-CRUITED (H7A = 1 OR 3 AND H3 >= 1)

H7C. And still thinking of the <H3> apprentices you have recruited since 1st August 2020 how many of these, if any, did you plan to recruit anyway, but you brought the recruitment forward in order to get the incentive?

DS: ALLOW 1 TO H3.

- 0. WRITE IN.
- 1. None.
- 2. Don't know.

ASK ALL

H8. Do you plan to continue to offer Apprenticeships?

- 1. Yes.
- 2. No.
- 3. Don't know / it depends / undecided / reviewing it.

IF PLAN TO CONTINUE OR UNSURE (H8 = 1 OR 3)

H9. Do you expect your number of apprentices [IF A4 >= 2:at[IF HRSITE = 1: your <LOCATION> site][IF HRSITE = 2: this site]] over the next 2 to 3 years to...

- *READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.*
- 1. Increase .
- 2. Decrease.
- 3. Stay at about the same level.
- 4. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know.

H10. QUESTION DELETED

H11. QUESTION DELETED

H12. QUESTION DELETED

IF EXPECT NUMBER OF APPRENTICES TO INCREASE (H9=1)

H12A. Why do you expect the number of apprentices to increase?

- *DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.*

H12A

1. Business growth / we are expanding.
2. Good way to meet our skill needs.
3. Apprenticeships are becoming easier to recruit.
4. To claim back Apprenticeship Levy payments.
5. Changes to apprenticeships funding / funding reform.
6. Increased range of Apprenticeship options (incl. Degree Apprenticeships).
7. We have been encouraged to do so by other organisations.
8. Introduction of Apprenticeship Standards.
9. Due to high staff turnover.
10. Ability to influence content of training.
11. To claim the financial incentive before September 2021
14. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY).
15. Don't know.

H12B. QUESTION DELETED

IF EXPECT NUMBER OF APPRENTICES TO DECREASE OR STOP OFFERING (H9=2 OR H8=2)

H12C. [IF H9 = 2:Why do you expect the number of apprentices to decrease?]

[IF H8 = 2:Why do you expect to stop offering apprenticeships?]

- *DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.*

H12C

1. Business not growing (incl. we are contracting / poor sales).
2. Bad experience with training providers.
3. Apprentices have not been of a good enough standard.
4. Lack of (good) candidates.
5. We cannot currently afford to offer more.
6. Red tape / bureaucracy.
7. We will have to start paying for apprenticeships.
8. Changes to apprenticeships funding / funding reform.
9. Prefer other forms of training.
10. Prefer to recruit experienced staff.
11. All our staff are fully skilled.
12. We are not looking to recruit new staff.
13. Due to low staff turnover.
14. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY).
15. Don't know.

LEVEL 6+ EMPLOYERS WHO PLAN TO CONTINUE OR UNSURE ((COMBINEDLEVEL_ALL_6 >= 1 OR COMBINEDLEVEL_ALL_7 >= 1) AND (H8 = 1 OR 3))

H13. Over the next 2 to 3 years, do you expect to introduce any new Apprenticeship Standards at Degree or Level 6+?

1. Yes.

2. No.
3. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know.

IF PLAN NEW LEVEL 6+ SUBJECT AREAS (H13 = 1)

H13A. In which new subject areas and levels would you expect to introduce these Apprenticeship Standards at Degree or Level 6+?

- Subject area 1: WRITE IN
 - Level 1: WRITE IN
- Subject area 2: WRITE IN
 - Level 2: WRITE IN
- Any others: WRITE IN

1. Don't know.
2. Too early to say.

H14. DELETED

ASK ALL

H14A Over the last few years there have been significant changes in apprentice-ship funding in England, including the introduction in 2017 of the apprentice-ship levy for employers with a UK wage bill of more than £3m. How well do you think your organisation understands the apprenticeship funding process...?

- *READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.*
1. Very well.
 2. Fairly well.
 3. Not particularly well.
 4. Or not at all well.
 5. DO NOT READ OUT: No need to understand.
 6. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know.

H15. QUESTION DELETED

H15A. QUESTION DELETED

H15B. QUESTION MOVED

H16. QUESTION DELETED

H17. QUESTION DELETED

ASK ALL

H17A. How well do you feel your organisation understands which activities count towards the 20% off-the-job training requirement? Would you say it was...

- *READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.*
1. Very well.
 2. Fairly well.
 3. Not particularly well.

4. Or not at all well.
5. DO NOT READ OUT: No need to understand.
6. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know.

I - Closing Questions

ASK ALL

I1. Thank you, we are now at the end of the survey. Would you be willing for us to call you back regarding this particular study, if we need to clarify any of the information? If you say 'yes', we may re-contact you at some point before the end of the project, in December 2021?

1. Yes.
2. No.

ASK ALL

I2. The Department for Education (DfE) may wish to undertake follow-up research about apprenticeship policy. Would it be OK for them or their appointed sub-contractors to re-contact you to invite you to take part, within the next two years? This would involve transferring your name and contact details to DfE and their appointed sub-contractors. You have the right to change your mind. For more information, visit our website at [ifresearch.com/gdpr](http://fresearch.com/gdpr).

1. Yes.
2. No.

IF I2 = 1

I3. And for any DfE follow-up research, would it be OK for us to share your responses to this survey with DfE or their appointed sub-contractors, linked to your company name?

1. Yes.
2. No.

ASK ALL

I4. Finally, it is sometimes possible to link the data we have collected with other government surveys or datasets to enable further statistical analysis. Would you be happy for this to be done? IF NECESSARY: Your confidentiality will be maintained, and linked data will be anonymised and only used for statistical purposes.

1. Yes.
2. No.

IF I1 = 1 OR I2 = 1 OR I4 = 1

I4A. Can I just confirm your details so that we can contact you as we just agreed?

- *INTERVIEWER: CORRECT OR BLANK ANY INCORRECT INFO.*

DS: PRE-POPULATE WITH SAMPLE VARIABLES. ALLOW BLANK RESPONSES.

- Company Name: WRITE IN. <COMPANY>.
- Name: WRITE IN. <CONTACT>.
- Job Title: WRITE IN. <JOBTITLE>.

- IF I1 = 1 OR I2 = 1 OR I4 = 1: Email address: WRITE IN. <EMAIL>.
- IF I1 = 1 OR I2 = 1 OR I4 = 1: Phone number: WRITE IN. <PHONENUMBER>.

SAY TO ALL

I7. I hereby confirm that this interview has been carried out in accordance with the rules of the Market Research Society's Code of Conduct.

1. Yes.

THANK AND CLOSE INTERVIEW



Department
for Education

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Reference: DFE-RR1214

ISBN: 978-1-83870-372-1

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