



Department  
for Education

# Apprenticeship Evaluation 2023: Learner and Non- completer Surveys

Research report

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This research report was written before the new UK Government took office on 5 July 2024. As a result, the content may not reflect current Government policy.

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## Executive summary

This report presents the findings of the 2023 Apprenticeship Evaluation Learner and Non-completer Surveys. It is the eighth in the series, the first of which took place in 2011, with the previous research taking place in 2021. It sits alongside the accompanying Employer report.

The research is intended to help monitor key progress indicators and to help shape future development of the apprenticeship programme. Specifically, it covers individuals' motivations for undertaking their apprenticeship, their experience of the training they received, their satisfaction with the apprenticeship both overall and in relation to specific elements, and the impact it has had on their career. The research is also used to investigate the impact of the apprenticeship reforms, including more recent changes such as a revision to the off-the-job training (OTJT) requirement and the increased flexibilities around achieving Level 2 English and maths qualifications. Since August 2020, all new apprenticeship starts were on the standards model, which also means the 2023 research offers the opportunity to evaluate more fully the experience of end-point assessments (EPAs).

As in 2021, the 2023 research continues to investigate the experiences of learners who did not complete their apprenticeship standards including satisfaction with their apprenticeship and reasons for their non-completion, as a part of the Department for Education's ongoing work to improve achievement rates.<sup>1</sup>

## Method and interpretation

The research involved two surveys. The Learner Survey achieved 4,919 interviews with current apprentices and those that had completed an apprenticeship. The Non-completer Survey achieved 506 interviews with former learners on apprenticeship standards that did not complete their apprenticeship. Interviews for both the Learner and Non-completer Surveys were conducted between July 2023 and September 2023. The research covered apprenticeships at all levels, from Level 2 through to Level 7.

Considering the Learner Survey groups, current apprentices interviewed were registered as being current on the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) in January 2023 and were still undertaking their apprenticeship at the time of interview. Those in the 'completer'<sup>2</sup> category had either completed their apprenticeship between March and December 2022 (termed 'recent completers') or between July 2021 and February 2022 ('longer-term completers'). This allowed the survey to capture views of apprentices at the time they

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<sup>1</sup> [Apprenticeship standards achievement rate ambition - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/apprenticeship-standards-achievement-rate-ambition)

<sup>2</sup> The term 'completer' is used rather than achiever, as this group consists of apprenticeships with an actual end data on the Individualised Learner Record (ILR), although they may not have reached an achieved status following an EPA.

experience their apprenticeship, while also capturing meaningful reflection after the apprenticeship and information on both short and longer-term progression.

For the Non-completer Survey, non-completers interviewed had withdrawn from their apprenticeship between September 2021 and December 2022.

For much of this report, the views of current and completer apprentices (i.e. those interviewed via the Learner Survey) are combined into an overall figure. Therefore, it is important to note that, unless specified otherwise, findings for the Learner Survey include both current apprentices and those who completed their apprenticeship in the timeframes outlined above. Results for the Non-completer Survey are reported separately in [Chapter 9](#).

Where applicable, comparisons are made to findings in the 2021 and earlier waves of the study. The 'recent-completer' group (covered in the Learner Survey) and 'non-completer' group (covered in the Non-completer Survey) were first introduced to the Apprenticeships Evaluation in 2021, so comparisons for these groups are restricted to 2021. For this same reason, a combined 'all apprenticeship' comparison can only be made to the 2021 Learner Survey, and not to any of the previous surveys. However, the current apprentices and longer-term completer subgroups can be compared to previous waves of the Learner Survey.

A number of changes to the methodology, including the sample and weighting approach, should be considered when comparing findings from 2023 with previous surveys. These changes are detailed in the [Introduction](#) and Technical Report.

A key difference is that the 2021 Learner Survey sample included apprentices that had had their apprenticeship paused. It also included those with a planned end date prior to survey selection which was not marked as being complete. In 2021 it was assumed these would also be 'paused' apprentices resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. These two groups of apprentices were not included in the 2023 sample. Further to this, in 2023 there was a change to fieldwork dates, so that fieldwork started later in July in 2023 compared with May in 2021.

Throughout the report analysis is conducted by Sector Subject Area (SSA), in line with previous iterations of the Apprenticeship Evaluation research. Where we discuss Business or Health apprenticeships, for example, this refers to the subject being undertaken, not the sector of the employer.

## Profile of apprentices

The profile of apprentices in this study represents a particular snapshot in time - those who were current on the ILR in January 2023 and still undertaking an apprenticeship at the time of fieldwork (between July 2023 and September 2023), those who completed

between July 2021 and December 2022 and those who withdrew from their apprenticeship between September 2021 and December 2022. Figures will therefore vary slightly from official statistics on annual apprenticeship starts and achievements. For further information on the definitions used for the different apprentice types, please see the accompanying Technical Report.

Based on counts within the ILR, the population of the combined 'all apprentices' group for the Learner Survey comprised mostly current apprentices (62%) with a relatively even split between recent (21%) and longer-term completers (17%).

Level 3 apprentices remain the most common (making up 45% of all apprentices), followed by Level 2 apprentices (21%). However, there were increases in the proportion of Level 6 and Level 7 apprentices compared with 2021 (Level 6: 10% vs. 5% in 2021; Level 7: 8% vs. 5% in 2021).

Three SSAs accounted for the majority of apprenticeships: Business (26%), Health (25%), and Engineering (19%).<sup>3</sup>

Over two-fifths of apprentices were aged 25 and above (42%). Three-in-ten (32%) were aged between 19 and 24, and just over a quarter (26%) were aged under 19.

The gender profile was fairly balanced with 52% of apprentices being male, and 48% female.

Learner Survey data shows that the vast majority of apprentices were from a white background (86%). The next most common group were those from an Asian or Asian British background (6%), followed by those from a black, black British, Caribbean or African background (3%), those from mixed or multiple ethnic groups (3%), and those from all other ethnic groups (1%).

Overall, 5% of apprentices identified as having a disability and 7% a learning difficulty (9% reported either a disability or learning difficulty).

Given the move to standards in August 2020, virtually all current apprentices in the survey were on standards, with this also being the case for the vast majority of completers (95% of recent completers, 82% of longer-term completers).

When looking at levels of deprivation, survey data showed that 19% of apprentices lived in the most deprived areas (the first Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) quintile) while 18% lived in the least deprived areas (the fifth quintile).

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<sup>3</sup> Subject names are abbreviated throughout, for full subject names, please see Table 1-1.

## Routes into apprenticeships and motivations

Around half (51%) of apprentices worked for their employer before starting their apprenticeship, with 48% new to their employer, having been recruited in for their apprenticeship. A slightly larger proportion were newly recruited by their employer in 2023 when compared with 2021 (44%).

Older apprentices (aged 25 and over) were much more likely to have already been working for their employer than their younger counterparts (79%, compared with 37% of those aged 19-24 and 25% of those under 19). This was also the case for apprentices undertaking Level 4 (61%) and Level 5 (91%) apprenticeships, and also for those undertaking Agriculture (67%), Business (62%), Health (61%) and Retail (58%) apprenticeships.

Younger apprentices were substantially more likely to be new recruits to their employer (i.e. recruited to the apprenticeship) – this being the case for three-quarters (75%) of those aged under 19. Likewise, this was the case for apprentices undertaking Level 2 (57%) and Level 3 (54%) apprenticeships, as well as Leisure (74%), Arts (73%), Engineering (67%) and Construction (65%) apprentices.

Among apprentices who were new to their employer, many were working for a different employer beforehand (43%) or came straight from school or college (41%); 8% were unemployed prior to starting their apprenticeship.

The vast majority of apprentices were aware that their course or training was part of an apprenticeship (95%). This awareness increased over time, from 91% in 2021. Apprentices were less likely to be aware they were on an apprenticeship if they were already working for their employer prior to the start of their learning (91% aware vs. 98% new to their employer), or if they were undertaking Health apprenticeships (89%).

An apprenticeship was the first choice for around half of all apprentices (51%, rising to 67% of those aged under 19) - while around two-fifths (43%) had no preference. Compared with 2021, there was an increase in the proportion of apprentices who said their apprenticeship was their preferred choice (up by 4 percentage points, from 47%). Few (5%) would have actively preferred to do something else, with the most common alternative being university (cited by 38% of those who would have actively preferred to do something else, equivalent to 2% of all apprentices). Mentions of university as the alternative preference were higher in the 2023 survey compared with 2021.

As in previous survey waves, the most cited main reason for undertaking an apprenticeship was a desire to enter into or progress in a specific career (37%), followed by wanting to develop work-related skills (18%) or to gain a qualification (14%). Wanting to enter or progress in a specific career was mentioned slightly more often than in 2021

(37% vs. 34%). A slightly higher proportion mentioned wanting to be paid whilst training in 2023 compared with 2021 (10% vs. 8% in 2021).

## Quality and content of apprenticeships

### Duration

The average intended duration of apprenticeships was reported as just under two years (23 months), compared with 22 months in 2021. Four-in-ten (40%) were expected to last two years or longer. The longest planned apprenticeship durations were reported among Level 6 apprentices (a mean average of 38 months) and the shortest durations among those at Level 2 (17 months). All SSAs had average intended durations of at least 15 months (similar to 2021). A minority of all apprentices (1%) said they expected their apprenticeships to last less than a year, despite the mandatory minimum duration requirement of 12 months for apprenticeships.<sup>4</sup>

As in 2021, four-in-five apprentices (81%) felt the intended duration of their apprenticeship was about right to provide them with the required skills. Most felt the intended duration was about right regardless of level or subject. That said, this feeling was particularly held by Level 5 apprentices (88%), Leisure apprentices (88%) and Engineering apprentices (84%). In contrast, Level 6 apprentices were slightly more likely to consider their apprenticeship too long (19%), and Level 7 apprenticeships too short (9%). By subject, Agriculture apprentices were more likely to report that their apprenticeship was too short (8% vs. 5% on average).

### Employment status and working hours

The majority of apprentices (95%) reported that they had a written contract of employment with their employer (4% did not), and just over three-quarters (77%) said they were employed on a permanent basis with no fixed end point. These levels were in line with those recorded in 2021.

Apprentices least likely to have a written contract were those unemployed at the time of the survey (15% vs. 4% on average),<sup>5</sup> current apprentices paid less than £5.28 per hour (12%), recent completers (6%), all apprentices on apprenticeship frameworks (8%), those undertaking Level 2 apprenticeships (7%), those in Engineering (6%) or Retail (9%), and those under the age of 19 (7%). Level 2 and Level 3 apprentices were most likely to be employed only for the duration of their training (both 16% compared with 14%

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<sup>4</sup> [New minimum 12 month duration for all apprenticeships - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-minimum-12-month-duration-for-all-apprenticeships)

<sup>5</sup> These individuals were all apprenticeship completers, given that current apprentices would have been undertaking an apprenticeship (i.e. in employment) at the time of interview.



on average), as were those undertaking Leisure (31%), Art (26%), Education (25%), Science (23%), ICT (21%), Engineering (18%) and Construction (17%) apprenticeships.

Nearly all apprentices (93%) worked 31 hours or more a week, averaging 38 hours per week (up from 37 hours in 2021). Apprentices in Construction (40 hours), Engineering (39 hours) and at Level 6 and above (38 hours) worked the highest average number of hours per week.

## Median pay

Current apprentices reported a median gross hourly pay of £11.63 an hour (compared with £9.98 an hour in 2021). Pay generally increased with level, ranging from £8.56 an hour among current Level 2 apprentices to £17.34 an hour for current Level 7 apprentices. The exception to this was Level 6 (£13.36) apprentices, whose reported median gross hourly pay was lower than that of Level 4 (£13.39), Level 5 (£16.45) and Level 7 (£17.34) apprentices. This may be in part related to the age of apprentices, with those aged 25 or over earning substantially more than their counterparts (median gross hourly pay of £14.00, compared with £8.00 among those aged under 19). By SSA, pay was highest in Business (£14.26 an hour) and ICT (£14.29) and lowest in Leisure (£5.77). These were in line with the sectors that paid the highest and lowest in 2021.

## English and maths

Just over seven-in-ten apprentices (72%) reported receiving initial assessments to check both their English and maths abilities, lower than the 77% figure recorded in 2021. Current apprentices (74%) and recent completers (71%) were more likely to have reported being assessed compared with longer-term completers (66%). Compared with 2021, these incidences had decreased for each of the 3 sample types (2021: current 79%, recent completers 77%, longer-term completers 72%), with this decrease also evident across all levels except Level 5. In 2023, those studying Construction (63%), ICT (67%) and Science (54%) apprentices were least likely to have reported being assessed for both their English and maths ability.

Assessments were most commonly carried out solely by a training provider (for 55% of those who reported receiving an assessment), although a further 34% said their assessments were carried out by both their employer and training provider (with an increase on this joint approach in comparison to 2021, up from 27%).

Overall, 14% of apprentices studied towards an English qualification and 17% towards a maths qualification during their apprenticeship (the equivalent figures in 2021 were 13% and 16% respectively). Overall, 21% of apprentices studied towards either an English or maths qualification during the apprenticeship; 10% studied towards both.

Level 2 apprenticeships were the most likely to involve study for English (24%) or maths qualifications (29%), with an increase in Level 2 apprentices studying for these qualifications compared with 2021 (the respective 2021 figures were 19% and 22%). Retail and Health apprentices were also particularly likely to have studied each subject (English: 19% and 18%, maths: 26% and 25%), as were those with a learning difficulty (English: 19%, maths: 26%).

Apprentices' views were mixed in terms of how they felt about studying for their English and / or maths qualification, with slightly more saying they did not like it than liked it. Overall, a half (50%) did not mind either way, 21% said they liked it and 28% said they did not like it. Female apprentices (33%) and older apprentices (30%) who studied for an English or maths qualification were more likely to say they did not like the study. Apprentices with a learning difficulty and / or a disability were also less likely to say they liked it compared with those without a learning difficulty or disability (10% vs. 23%).

The predominant reason for not liking the English and / or maths study was that it was too difficult (52% who did not like the study), although a sizeable proportion (26%) felt it was not relevant to the job the apprenticeship was for.

A large majority of completer apprentices who undertook English or maths qualifications during their apprenticeship said their skills in these areas had improved (80% undertaking an English qualification said their English skills improved, 78% undertaking a maths qualification said their maths skills improved).

## **Training undertaken**

The types of training and learning most commonly undertaken tended to be done within normal working hours and were indicative of off-the-job training. This includes training from an employer, including training sessions, job shadowing or mentoring (86%); learning or training from a college or training provided such as classes, workshops, lectures and webinars (83%); and other study during working hours, such as assignments, self-assessments or exam revision (70%). Training undertaken as part of normal day-to-day work duties was also common (84%).

## **How well employer and training provider worked together**

Apprentices who received training from a training provider generally felt their employer and training provider worked well together – 83% felt this was the case; 16% felt this was not the case, with this sentiment more likely to be held by Level 6 apprentices (22%) and Engineering apprentices (19%).

## Off-the-job training requirement

Overall, close to four-fifths (78%) of apprentices said they were aware of the requirement for full-time apprentices to spend at least 6 hours per week on OTJT. This was the same proportion that reported awareness in 2021, though since 2021 the rules have changed.<sup>6</sup> Awareness among current apprentices stood at 83% (similar to the proportion in 2021).

As found previously, awareness of the OTJT requirement generally increased with level, ranging from 71% aware among Level 2 apprentices to 83% aware at Level 6 and above (peaking at 86% for Level 5 apprentices). Degree apprentices at Level 6 and above were more likely than non-degree apprentices at Level 6 and above to be aware of the requirement. Awareness varied widely by SSA, and was highest among Science apprentices (95%), and lowest for Leisure (69%), Health (73%) and Retail (74%) apprentices, similar to the pattern by SSA recorded in 2021.

During the apprenticeship, the vast majority of apprentices (86%) said they received training from their employer that was delivered within normal working hours, with a near similar proportion of apprentices (83%) receiving training from their training provider within normal working hours. Both these incidence rates record an uplift compared with 2021, with a particularly marked increase in training from their training provider within normal working hours (2021: employer 81%, training provider 70%).

On average, 21% of an apprentice's working hours were spent on OTJT, compared with 19% in 2021. Three-fifths (60%) of apprentices reported compliant OTJT hours. This was a notable increase since 2021, when fewer than half (46%) of apprentices reported compliant OTJT hours, though the changes in OTJT requirements should be noted.<sup>6</sup> A further 9% of apprentices reported doing hours 'close to compliant' with OTJT requirements.<sup>7</sup>

All SSAs recorded increases in hours considered compliant with OTJT requirements against 2021, but patterns remained similar in terms of the most and least compliant SSAs. Those in Education (43%), Health (47%) and Retail (54%) reported the lowest

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<sup>6</sup> The policy around off-the-job training was updated for new apprenticeship starts from 1 August 2022 so that a maximum of 30 working hours are used in the off-the-job training calculation, irrespective of how many hours the apprentice works. The 2021 survey asked awareness of requirement for apprentices to spend at least 20% of their contracted hours on off-the-job training. When apprentices answer for their awareness of the off-the-job training requirement it is possible that they are thinking about the requirements more generally rather than the specific updated rules.

<sup>7</sup> Learners were considered to have undertaken 'close' to compliant levels of off-the-job training if the amount of training reported was not compliant but represented at least 80% of the minimum requirement (but less than 100%). This varied depending on which off-the-job training rules applied at the time their apprenticeship started. For those who started before August 2022, 'close to compliant' covers apprentices whose off-the-job training accounted for 16 to 19.99% of their working hours. This also applies to those who started an apprenticeship in August 2022 or later but worked fewer than 30 hours per week. For those who started their apprenticeship in August 2022 or later and worked 30 or more hours per week (i.e. where the required off-the-job training hours were capped at 6 hours), 'close to compliant' covers those who undertook between 4.8 and 5.99 hours of off-the-job training.

compliance levels in 2023, while the highest compliance levels were reported in ICT (77%) and Construction (71%).

Reported compliance with the OTJT requirement increased with level, ranging from 55% at Level 2 to 75% for Level 6 and 70% for Level 7. Although Level 2 had the lowest reported compliance, this level recorded the largest increase in compliance compared with 2021 (up by 16 percentage points from 39%).

A higher proportion of current apprentices reported compliant OTJT hours (66%) than recent (50%) and longer-term completers (51%). There has always been a relationship between recency of apprenticeships and reported compliance, but the higher reported compliance levels among current apprentices also reflects the relaxing of the OTJT requirements from August 2022 onwards for those working 30 or more hours. Among current apprentices, 73% of post-August 2022 starts reported compliant levels of OTJT, compared with 58% that started pre-August 2022.

## End-point assessments

Most current apprentices on standards (84%) rated their understanding of end-point assessments (EPAs) as good or reasonable. This was an improvement against 2021 (71%). Understanding of EPAs was higher among Arts, Retail and Construction apprentices (66%, 60% and 59% respectively had good knowledge).

Among those with some understanding of EPAs, approaching four-fifths (78%) were first made aware of EPAs within a month of starting their apprenticeship (similar to the proportion in 2021). Engineering apprentices (71%) and Level 6 apprentices (67%) were less likely to have been made aware within a month of first starting, as were those on longer apprenticeships. Both Engineering and Level 6 apprenticeships tended to be of longer length.

Apprentices usually first heard about EPAs from their training provider (87%), similar to the situation in 2021. In contrast, around one-in-six (16%) first heard about them from their employer,<sup>8</sup> with this more common among Level 6 (23%), Engineering (20%) and particularly Leisure (35%) apprentices.<sup>9</sup>

Nearly all apprentices said their training providers (98%) or employer (93%) had undertaken activities to help them prepare for the EPA (again, similar to the situation recorded in 2021). Training providers most commonly provided support through regular reviews of progress (91%) or familiarisation with assessment methods (85%). Employers

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<sup>8</sup> Apprentices could say that they were first told about their EPA by both their training provider and employer at the same time.

<sup>9</sup> Note, it was possible for apprentices to say that both their training provider and employer had both informed them first about EPAs, as feedback from 2021 cognitive interviews mentioned employer and training providers co-delivering introductory workshops where information on EPAs was shared.

most commonly allowed apprentices to complete different project types (81%), provided more on-the-job training opportunities (72%) and undertook regular reviews of progress (71%). The incidence of all forms of support from employers increased compared with 2021, with the largest increases for support with mock assessments (39% vs. 33% in 2021) and helping learners to familiarise themselves with assessment methods (46% vs. 40%).

Overall, 90% of apprentices on standards and with some knowledge of EPAs found their training provider helpful and 75% found their employer helpful in preparing for their EPA. Ratings were slightly higher against 2021, with an increase in apprentices who thought their training provider was very helpful (60% vs. 57% in 2021), and their employer helpful (75% vs. 72%).

Of note, learners with learning difficulties and / or disabilities were slightly less likely than those with neither to mention receiving specific help to prepare for EPAs from their training provider (95% vs. 98%), or to consider them helpful (training providers: 85% vs. 90%; employers: 69% vs. 76%).

The majority (84%) of completer apprentices aware of EPAs were satisfied with their experience of the EPA.

Nearly two-thirds (64%) of apprentices who had completed their apprenticeship standards said their EPAs took place on time – a third (34%) reported a delay. Construction (50%) and Engineering apprentices (46%) were more likely to have experienced a delay. Half of those reporting a delay said the delay lasted for three months or longer, equating to 17% of all apprentices who had completed their apprenticeship standard.

## **Satisfaction with apprenticeships**

The majority (86%) of apprentices were satisfied with their apprenticeship overall.<sup>10</sup> Among the 7% who were dissatisfied, the main reasons were a lack of support or contact from the training provider, the apprenticeship being badly organised, and the poor quality of training received.

Current apprentices were the most satisfied of the three survey groups (87%, vs. 85% of recent and 84% of longer-term completers), a reverse of the situation in 2021 when current apprentices were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and some

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<sup>10</sup> Defined as a score of 6-10 out of a 11-point scale (0 = very dissatisfied, 10 = very satisfied, 5 = neither satisfied nor dissatisfied).

apprenticeships had been paused.<sup>11</sup> Overall satisfaction among current apprentices (87%) increased compared with 2021 (82%) and 2018-19 (83%).<sup>12</sup>

The apprenticeship experience of longer-term completers was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with this also being the case for some recent completers. Both these groups saw a decrease in overall satisfaction ratings compared with the 2021 survey (longer-term completers: 84% in 2023 vs. 88% 2021; recent completers: 85% vs. 90%). For longer-term completers there has been a continued downward trend in the proportion very satisfied since 2015.

Satisfaction was generally similar (and high) in terms of level, although Level 2 and Level 5 apprentices reported the highest degree of satisfaction (64% and 66% respectively saying very satisfied), and Level 4 the highest dissatisfaction (10% vs. 7% on average).

By subject, Science (90%) and Leisure (89%) apprentices gave the highest overall satisfaction ratings, while Education (81%) and ICT (82%) apprentices the lowest. Science apprentices were also indicatively the most satisfied in 2021 and Education apprentices the least satisfied.

Satisfaction levels varied a little by age of apprentices, with those aged under 19 more likely to be satisfied overall (88%, compared with 87% of those aged between 19 and 24 years old and 85% of those aged 25 and over). Lower overall satisfaction was also recorded for apprentices with a disability (78%) or learning difficulty (81%) (compared with 87% of those without). These differences by age and whether or not an apprentice had learning difficulties and / or disabilities were also evident in 2021.

Apprentices who studied for an English or maths qualification during their apprenticeship were also marginally more likely be satisfied with their apprenticeship overall than those who had not studied for this type of qualification (89% vs. 86%).

Apprentices that reported receiving compliant levels of off-the-job training (OTJT) were more satisfied than those reporting non-compliant levels (89% vs. 84%).

Satisfaction was particularly high for certain elements of apprenticeships, namely enabling better job performance (87%) and the feedback received on progress (86%). Satisfaction was lowest in respect of the balance between the time spent learning and working (78%), however only 11% of apprentices reported specifically being dissatisfied with this element. Those who reported compliant levels of off-the-job training were generally more satisfied across the various elements of their apprenticeship (this holding

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<sup>11</sup> The current apprenticeship dataset has been weighted to the cohort still current at the time of the survey and therefore slightly under-represents Level 2 and shorter apprenticeships (who would have completed between the sample selection and the fieldwork period). Level 2 current apprentices are slightly more satisfied than average (91% of current Level 2 apprentices vs. 87% on average), but the impact of this difference is estimated to be minimal on this overall figure.

<sup>12</sup> This trend is still evident even if 'paused' apprentices are removed from the 2021 data to give a more direct like-for-like comparison.

true for 6 out of the 10 elements measured in the survey), with this being similar to the pattern of findings in 2021.

Satisfaction ratings with individual elements of the apprenticeship were generally high across levels and subjects, though of note there was a sizeable gap in satisfaction with the quality of learning received between Level 6 and above non-degree and degree apprentices; non-degree apprentices gave a high satisfaction rating (94%) and degree apprentices gave a lower satisfaction rating (81%).

## **Apprenticeship outcomes**

Virtually all (99%) apprenticeship completers gained skills during their apprenticeship. The main skills gained were related to their current or desired area of work (94%); skills that can be used across a range of jobs (92%); communication skills (87%) and collaboration (81%). Many also improved their digital skills (64%), English (56% of all apprentices, 80% of those who undertook English training) and maths skills (50% of all apprentices, 78% of those who undertook maths training).

Compared with 2021, there was a slight fall in the proportion of completers who reported that they had gained a number of skills, with a fall recorded for collaboration (down 4 percentage points), digital skills (down 5 percentage points), English skills (down 5 percentage points) and maths skills (down 3 percentage points). As noted earlier, completers (especially longer-term completers) would likely have had their apprenticeship experience impacted by COVID-19.

Most apprenticeship completers were in work at the time of the interview (95%), typically in full-time work (86%). Against 2021, there was a small uplift in the proportion in full-time work (83% in 2021). Only 3% were unemployed at the time of the survey. This was higher for Leisure (7%) and Construction (7%) completer apprentices.

Just over two-thirds (68%) of completers were still employed by the same organisation with whom they completed their apprenticeship, similar to the situation in 2021. Recent completers were more likely to still be with the same organisation (72% vs. 61% of longer-term completers), with likelihood also increasing in line with apprenticeship level (Level 2: 62%, Level 6 and above: 76%, Degree level: 83%).

Almost all (97%) apprentices reported at least one positive impact on their job or career prospects since starting or completing their apprenticeship, with generally higher agreement recorded compared with 2021 (for example 90% of completers said they felt better at doing their job vs. 85% in 2021). This increase was generally driven by more positive responses from current apprentices (there were no changes in views for longer-term completers in 2023 against longer-term completers in 2021).

Almost half (48%) of apprenticeship completers had been promoted at work since completing their apprenticeship, and three-quarters (75%) had received a pay rise – 45% had received both a promotion and a pay rise. These figures were higher than in 2021 (34% received both a promotion and pay rise in 2021). In contrast to 2021, when longer-term completers were more likely to have been promoted or received a pay rise, there were no real differences recorded for recent and longer-term completers in 2023.

Most apprentices that had received a promotion or a pay rise said that their apprenticeship had some influence on this (82% of those receiving a promotion and 70% receiving a pay rise), with around a quarter in each case saying it was a direct result of completing the apprenticeship.

The proportion of all completers who felt that their promotion was influenced directly or to some extent by completing their apprenticeship increased with level, from 28% of Level 2 completers to 64% of Level 7 completers.

Most (72%) current apprentices planned to carry on working for the same employer once they completed their apprenticeship. There has been an indicative upward trend in the proportion who wanted to carry on working with the same employer (64% in 2018-19, 70% in 2021). As found previously, apprentices at Level 6 and above were most likely to be planning to carry on working for the same employer (76%). This intention was also higher for Arts apprentices (80%).

The majority of apprentices (91%) felt that their apprenticeship had prepared them well for what they wanted to do next, and almost half (47%) felt it had prepared them very well. Sentiment around this fell somewhat among longer-term completers from 95% in 2021 to 86% in 2023.

The majority (85%) of apprentices agreed that their employer actively supported their career development, with this increasing in comparison with 2021 (81%). Most (74%) also agreed that they were aware of post-apprenticeship training options, with six-in-ten (62%) saying their employer had discussed further post-apprenticeship training.

Almost all (98%) current apprentices said they were likely to complete their apprenticeship (83% said they were very likely to do so).<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The official achievement rate for those undertaking apprenticeship standards currently stands at 51%. The difference between this figure and the intentions of those undertaking the survey is likely due to the time between sampling (1 January 2023) and fieldwork beginning (4 July 2023), which means that apprentices interviewed will have been undertaking their apprenticeships for at least six months by the time of interview. The Non-completer Survey indicates that half (49%) of apprentices who do not complete leave their apprenticeship within the first six months (among those able to provide this data), and on average undertake nine months before withdrawing. This effectively means that there is a high likelihood that an apprentice would have already withdrawn by the time of interview given the time of sampling, which goes some way to explaining the disparity between these figures and the official achievement rate. The latest national achievement rate tables can be found [here](#).



One-third (34%) of apprentices had started or were considering another apprenticeship or qualification at the time of the survey, rising to 41% of longer-term completers. More specifically, 16% of completers and 3% of current apprentices had actually started a further qualification or apprenticeship.

## **Experiences of non-completers on apprenticeship standards**

The Non-completers Survey explored the experiences of those that did not complete their apprenticeship. Two-thirds (65%) of non-completers left their apprenticeship within the first 12 months, on average completing 9 months of their apprenticeship before leaving, in line with 2021.

The profile of non-completers was slightly older than the completer age profile (52% aged 25 and over vs. 44% of completers). Non-completers were also more likely to be from ethnic minorities (excluding white minorities) (16% vs. 12% completers), and to report having a learning difficulty and / or a disability (14% vs. 8%). This incidence of having a learning difficulty and / or a disability amongst non-completers was higher than in 2021 (9%).

Non-completers were less likely than completers to say doing an apprenticeship was their preferred choice when they first considered it (34% vs. 47%). Among those that would have preferred to do something else, non-completers most commonly said they wanted to do a different qualification or academic course (22%), while completers most commonly said they wanted to go to university (44%). Of note, non-completers were more likely to have worked for the same employer before starting their apprenticeship than apprenticeship completers (66% vs. 55%).

## **Reasons for non-completion**

In the Non-completer Survey, respondents were prompted with a list of potential employer and training related reasons for withdrawing from their apprenticeships and, for each, were asked whether it was a key reason, part of the reason, or not a reason at all for them not completing their apprenticeship.

Just over a third (36%) of non-completers reported that personal or domestic factors contributed to them withdrawing from their apprenticeship. Most commonly these were caring responsibilities (11%), mental health issues (8%), personal, family or relationship issues (7%) and physical health issues (not related to COVID-19) (7%). Health apprentices (51%), older apprentices aged 25 and over (40%) and female apprentices (44%) were the groups most likely to report a personal or domestic factor as having an impact on their decision to withdraw from the apprenticeship.

The most common apprenticeship-related reasons that contributed to former apprentices not completing were: the apprenticeship being badly run or poorly organised (49%),

training not being as good as hoped for (46%) and not enough time for learning or training (43%).

There was some variation in contributing reasons by level and subject, for example Level 2 apprentices more likely to have struggled financially (38% vs. 27% overall) and apprentices at Level 6 and above more likely to feel they could progress in their role without completing (42% vs. 31% overall). This latter group were also more likely to mention finding the prospect of the EPA daunting (26% vs. 17% overall).

More generally, contributing reasons for not completing the apprenticeship varied by demographics. For example, female apprentices were more likely than male apprentices to report not having enough time to learn or train (47% vs. 38%) and that they found it too difficult or were falling behind (43% vs. 27%). As a further example, non-completers with learning difficulties and / or disabilities were more likely to mention aspects of their apprenticeship being disrupted (e.g. the apprenticeship was stopped or cancelled, 30% vs. 16% of non-completers with neither a disability nor learning difficulty) or being made redundant (15% vs. 5%).

There was also variation when looking at when the non-completer withdrew from their apprenticeship, whether the apprentice was new to their employer, and whether the non-completer stayed with their employer after withdrawing. For example, those withdrawing more than halfway through their apprenticeship were more likely to cite being offered another / better job (46% vs. 28% of those who left less than halfway through) and that they found the prospect of the EPA daunting (23% vs. 13%).

Overall, there were some differences in reasons for withdrawing from the apprenticeship in comparison to 2021, with greater mentions in 2023 of the poor organisation of the apprenticeship (49% vs. 41%), difficulties managing the course (35% vs. 29%), and financial struggles (potentially linked to the rise in cost of living and inflation across 2022) (27% vs. 22%). In contrast, there were fewer mentions made of the apprenticeship being stopped or cancelled (18% vs. 25% in 2021), or that COVID-19 had a negative impact on delivery (12% vs. 17% in 2021).

Once contributing reasons (apprenticeship-related or personal or domestic) had been established, non-completers were asked to identify the main reason why they did not complete their apprenticeship. The single most common main reason for not completing was receiving a better job offer (16%). This was followed by not getting on with the apprenticeship employer (11%) and not having enough time for learning and training (10%). Non-completers that undertook Level 6 or above apprenticeships were particularly likely to say they had received a better job offer (24%), as were those aged 19 to 24 (22%).

## Apprenticeship experiences of non-completers

Around six-in-ten (59%) non-completers felt the apprenticeship differed in some way to their expectations. The most commonly mentioned differences were apprentices being treated worse than expected by their provider or employer (11% of all non-completers), no face-to-face training (9%), and the training not covering the full range of, or particular, SSAs they expected (9%). There was an increase in mentions of the lack of face-to-face training compared with 2021 (just 1% cited this in 2021).

Overall satisfaction was much lower among non-completers than completers. Fewer than half (48%) of non-completers were satisfied with their apprenticeship overall compared with 85% of completers. While this was in line with 2021, there was an increase in the proportion indicating they were very dissatisfied with their apprenticeship (17% vs. 10% in 2021).<sup>14</sup> Among those dissatisfied with their apprenticeship, the most common reason was a lack of support from the training provider (42%), followed by problems with their employer (25%) and the apprenticeship being badly organised (22%). Reasons for dissatisfaction were similar to 2021.

Just over half (55%) of non-completers rated the support that they received from their training provider as good (good or very good), and just under a half (47%) gave this rating to the support received from their employer. Compared with 2021 there was a fall in the proportion of non-completers rating the support from their training provider as good (55% vs. 61% in 2021), and an increase in the proportion who rated the support from their employer as poor (32% vs. 25% in 2021).

Around two-thirds (67%) of non-completers who had received learning or training during their apprenticeship reported that more than half of their learning had been delivered online, with 45% reporting that all of their learning was delivered in this way. Around half (52%) were happy with this amount, but 38% said they wanted less online training.

Just over a third (36%) of non-completers had studied, or were due to study, English or maths as part of their apprenticeship to meet the requirements of the course. Among these non-completer apprentices who had studied English or maths, a quarter (25%)<sup>15</sup> cited that not enjoying or wanting to study these subjects had contributed to them not completing their course, though only 1% cited this as their main reason.

Two-fifths (40%) of non-completers said that undertaking their apprenticeship made their mental health worse, with 25% reporting it made their mental health a little worse and 15% saying it made it a lot worse. Around two-thirds (64%) felt that they had a good or reasonable work-life balance while doing the apprenticeship, with around a third (34%) indicating the balance was poor. Most non-completers (69%) felt their apprenticeship had no impact on their financial situation. Of the remainder, views were divided with 16%

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<sup>14</sup> Those giving a score of 0-2 out of 10.

<sup>15</sup> This amounted to 9% of all non-completers.

reporting that it had improved their financial situation, and a near equal proportion (14%) reporting that it had made their financial situation worse.

## **Activity since leaving apprenticeship**

Over nine-in-ten (91%) non-completers continued in work after leaving their apprenticeship, typically either with a different employer (48%) or with the same company (40%). The proportion continuing in work increased against the 83% figure in 2021, due to an increased number of non-completers changing employers (48% vs. 35% in 2021) and fewer becoming unemployed (6% vs. 12%).

Similar to 2021, approaching half (46%) of non-completers said their level of interest in the line of work of their apprenticeship had not changed following their apprenticeship experience. Almost a third (30%) were less interested, while 22% were more interested.

# 1. Introduction

This report presents the findings from the 2023 Apprenticeship Evaluation Learner and Non-completer Surveys and sits alongside the report from an accompanying Employer survey. The Learner survey comprised 4,919 interviews with current apprentices and apprenticeship completers, while the Non-completer Survey comprised 506 interviews with learners who did not complete their apprenticeship.

Apprenticeships remain a priority policy for the Government in England and are a fundamental part of the Department for Education's (DfE) skills strategy to increase productivity, support economic growth and give individuals from all backgrounds opportunities to succeed and progress in their careers. Apprenticeships are a cornerstone for encouraging lifelong learning and key to addressing skills gaps within the workforce, particularly in respect of technical skills.

There is an ongoing need to understand the programme from the point of view of current and recent apprentices and apprentice employers in order to monitor quality, customer satisfaction and likely social and economic impacts.

## Survey Background and policy context

The Apprenticeship Evaluation surveys, the first of which took place in 2011,<sup>16</sup> have been an integral part of the evaluation strategy for the apprenticeships programme in England. The surveys enable robust time series monitoring of the programme, in particular with regard to quality, satisfaction, motivation, benefits, progression and post-apprenticeship retention.

## Apprenticeship reforms

Apprenticeships were fundamentally reformed from 2015 to improve quality and better meet the needs of employers and individuals, supported by sustainable funding. As a result of these reforms:

- Employers now design apprenticeship standards to meet their skills needs, and there are over 690 industry-designed occupational standards available from entry-level to degree-level. Apprenticeship standards were introduced in 2017, with the previous framework model being closed to new starters from August 2020.
- The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) was established to work with employers to design and introduce apprenticeships and quality assure

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<sup>16</sup> [BIS research paper number 76. Evaluation of apprenticeships: learners \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

assessment plans, determine funding bands and approve apprenticeship standards and assessment plans. Training is delivered by registered providers that are regularly inspected by Ofsted.<sup>17</sup>

- Apprentices complete a rigorous independent end-point assessment to show they are fully competent in their role and there is now a mandated 12-month minimum apprenticeship duration. EPAs are an independent assessment of the knowledge, skills and behaviours which have been learnt throughout an apprenticeship standard and tests the apprentice's ability to apply them in the workplace. Every apprentice is required to undertake an assessment at the end of their training to confirm that they have achieved occupational competence and completed the apprenticeship. EPAs are delivered by end-point assessment organisations (EPAOs).
- The apprenticeship levy was introduced from May 2017, payable at 0.5% of the annual pay bill of UK employers where this exceeded £3m to address perceived employer under-investment in training, coupled with the need to fund increased apprenticeship volumes. Non-levy payers need to make a 5% contribution toward the cost of apprenticeship off-the-job-training (OTJT). From February 2022, changes were made to allow levy-paying employers to transfer some of their funds to other employers to support their supply chains and local areas.
- The Apprenticeship Service was introduced in England in 2017 as an online service for employers that pay the apprenticeship levy. It provides a full range of services to support employers to manage all aspects of apprenticeships from recruitment, through management of funding to final end-point-assessment and issuing of final apprenticeship certificates. The service also hosts apprentices, training providers and End-Point-Assessment Organisations (EPAOs) who together with employers, collaborate through the service. Since 2021 it was expanded to include all employers and there are currently over 260k employer accounts registered with the service. The Apprenticeship Service also hosts the campaign website for Apprenticeships which provides advice and guidance on all aspects of apprenticeships for employers, apprentices, and 'influencers'.

## **Increasing starts and widening participation**

Alongside these fundamental reforms, the Government have worked to increase take-up of, and access to, apprenticeships. The Government has:

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<sup>17</sup> [Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education](#)

- Provided additional funding to employers and training providers who take on young apprentices, apprentices with learning difficulties and / or disabilities, and care leavers.
- Continued to promote apprenticeships in schools and colleges through the Apprenticeship Support & Knowledge programme (ASK). Over 2 million students have received support from ASK.<sup>18</sup> In addition the 'Get the Jump' campaign aims to raise awareness and understanding of all the different education and training pathways open at post-16 and post-18, including apprenticeships.<sup>19</sup>
- Supported degree apprenticeship providers to expand and improve access to their offers, through a £40m Degree Apprenticeship Development Fund, delivered by the Office for Students

## Improving quality and supporting achievements

Achievement rates on apprenticeship standards (introduced in 2017) have been lower than those recorded for frameworks.<sup>20</sup> To address this, in June 2022 the Government announced an ambition to reach a 67% achievement rate for apprenticeship standards by 2025. Building on the programme of continuous improvement, actions are in place to improve quality to ensure more apprentices successfully complete their apprenticeships:

- By taking swift action where training quality is poor, supported by Ofsted inspecting all apprenticeship providers by 2025.
- Improved practical guidance toolkits for employers, training providers and apprenticeship practitioners to spread effective practice.<sup>21</sup>
- For providers, initiatives include refreshing the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers with more stringent criteria and a £7.5 million investment in an Apprenticeship Workforce Development (AWD) programme for teachers and trainers of apprentices.<sup>22</sup>
- Through the introduction in 2017 of a minimum 20% OTJT requirement to ensure the development of new skills beyond their prior knowledge and current job

<sup>18</sup> [The ASK programme \(apprenticeships.gov.uk\)](https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk)

<sup>19</sup> [Get the Jump: explore your education and training choices | National Careers Service](https://www.nationalcareersservice.co.uk/get-the-jump)

<sup>20</sup> The official achievement for the 2021-22 academic year was 51% for those undertaking apprenticeship standards, for those in apprenticeship frameworks it was 65%. More information can be found by looking at the 'National achievement rate tables' here: [Apprenticeships and traineeships, Academic year 2022/23 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/apprenticeships-and-traineeships-academic-year-2022-23)

<sup>21</sup> [SMC-Apprenticeships-Toolkit.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/111111)

<sup>22</sup> [Apprenticeship Workforce Development - The ETF \(et-foundation.co.uk\)](https://www.et-foundation.co.uk)

experience.<sup>23</sup> In August 2022, this was revised to 20% of a maximum 30 hour week (6 hours), regardless of the apprentice's actual full-time working hours.<sup>24</sup>

The collective aim of these reforms and policy changes is to raise the quality of apprenticeships and ensure they meet employers' skills needs. This survey comes at a time when the apprenticeship reforms from 2017 are well embedded in the skills system. There is a strong focus on ensuring the changes are delivering the desired impact, providing value for money and meeting apprentice and employer needs. This reaffirms the need to better understand what drives apprenticeship satisfaction and reasons why individuals leave their apprenticeships before completing.

## Wider context for the 2023 surveys

The COVID-19 pandemic and associated social distancing restrictions had a significant impact on apprenticeships, and temporary flexibilities to apprenticeships in certain cases were introduced in 2020. These allowed employers and training providers to initiate and report a break in learning. These flexibilities and pauses to apprenticeships ended in March 2022.<sup>25</sup>

COVID-19 is recognised as having had a longer-term impact on how we live and work, and it is important to note that the 2023 Apprenticeship Evaluation took place in the context of a sustained period of change to working practices.

The context of the COVID-19 pandemic is most important for the 2023 surveys when considering its impact on apprenticeship completers (defined as those completing between March 2021 and December 2022) and those who did not complete their apprenticeship (defined as those who withdrew between September 2021 and December 2022). The impact of COVID-19 should also be considered throughout when comparing to results from the 2021 surveys.

The cost of living crisis, marked by high levels of inflation and a reduction in disposable incomes, may also have impacted the apprenticeship market as rising costs may have created a barrier to employers and individuals' participation.

## Research aims

This research was commissioned to monitor indicators in line with the previous Apprenticeship Evaluation surveys, to continue to develop the Government's

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<sup>23</sup> [Apprenticeship off-the-job training \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

<sup>24</sup> Prior to this change, off-the-job training used to have to account for at least 20% of an apprentice's employed time during their apprenticeship (regardless of hours worked). This training must be received as part of their employed hours, for the purpose of achieving their apprenticeship. It is not training delivered for the sole purpose of enabling the apprentice to perform the work for which they have been employed.

<sup>25</sup> [Providing apprenticeships during the COVID-19 pandemic - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)



understanding of the apprenticeship programme, and to monitor the implementation of reforms such as EPAs within standards and minimum requirements for OTJT.

This report explores the profile of apprentices; their motivations for choosing apprenticeship training; their entry routes into apprenticeships; the nature and amount of training undertaken; satisfaction with apprenticeships and their impact on skills; progression through and following their apprenticeships; apprentices views on, and experiences of, EPAs within standards; and, among those who completed the Non-completers Survey, their reasons for non-completion.

Changes to the 2023 surveys included the removal of questions that specifically asked about COVID-19, though the impact of COVID-19 is still included in answer code options at relevant questions. Instead, both the 2023 Learner and Non-completer Surveys included greater coverage of apprentices' views and experiences of studying English and maths. The Learner Survey introduced new questions exploring views on how well employers and training providers worked together, and whether apprentices had experienced any delays to their EPA. The Non-completer Survey asked new questions about the extent to which training was delivered online (and preference for this) and the impact of apprenticeships on non-completers work-life balance, finances and overall wellbeing.<sup>26</sup>

## Methodology

### Sampling and weighting

The research involved two surveys. The Learner Survey involved interviews with a random stratified sample of 4,919 current apprentices and those that had completed their apprenticeship. The Non-completer Survey comprised interviews with a random stratified sample of 506 individuals who did not complete their apprenticeship.

The sample of learners that were contacted for the Learner Survey covered:

- Apprentices marked on the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) (the R06 release) as undertaking an apprenticeship as of 1 January 2023, excluding those who were expected to have completed their apprenticeship by the start of survey fieldwork (according to information on their planned end date on the ILR). It should be noted that those with a start date after the sample was drawn (i.e. after 1 January 2023) would not be included as current apprentices. Interviews with current apprentices aimed to capture views of those while on the programme (and in contrast to 2021

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<sup>26</sup> Other changes included whether apprentices experienced delays to their EPA; whether non-completers training took place online and their training preferences; small wording updates; and the modularisation of certain questions due to survey length.

excluded any 'paused apprentices' or apprentices with an end-date prior to survey selection that had not been marked on the ILR as being complete).

- Apprentices marked on the ILR as having completed their apprenticeship between 1 March and 31 December 2022 (recent completers) and between 1 July 2021 and 28 February 2022 (longer-term completers), enabling an assessment of progression and the impact of the apprenticeship up to two years after completion.<sup>27</sup> Please note, the 'longer-term completers' represents a similar sample window (i.e. the gap between completion and the fieldwork) to 'completers' in previous Apprenticeship Evaluations. See [A note on comparability](#) for further detail.<sup>28</sup>

The Non-completer Survey covered former apprentices on apprenticeship standards who, according to the ILR, had withdrawn from their apprenticeship between 1 September 2021 and 31 December 2022 and had not subsequently started another apprenticeship. This survey was first introduced in 2021.

In summary, the groups of apprentices referenced in the report are:

- **Current apprentices:** those who were undertaking an apprenticeship at the time of the fieldwork from July to September 2023, and were current on the ILR as of 1 January 2023 (2,970 interviews were conducted with current apprentices via the Learner Survey).
- **Recent completers:** those who had completed their apprenticeship between March and December 2022, hence approximately 6-18 months prior to being interviewed (991 interviews were conducted with recent completers via the Learner Survey).
- **Longer-term completers:** those who had completed their apprenticeship between July 2021 and February 2022, hence approximately 16-26 months prior to being interviewed (958 interviews were conducted with longer-term completers via the Learner Survey).

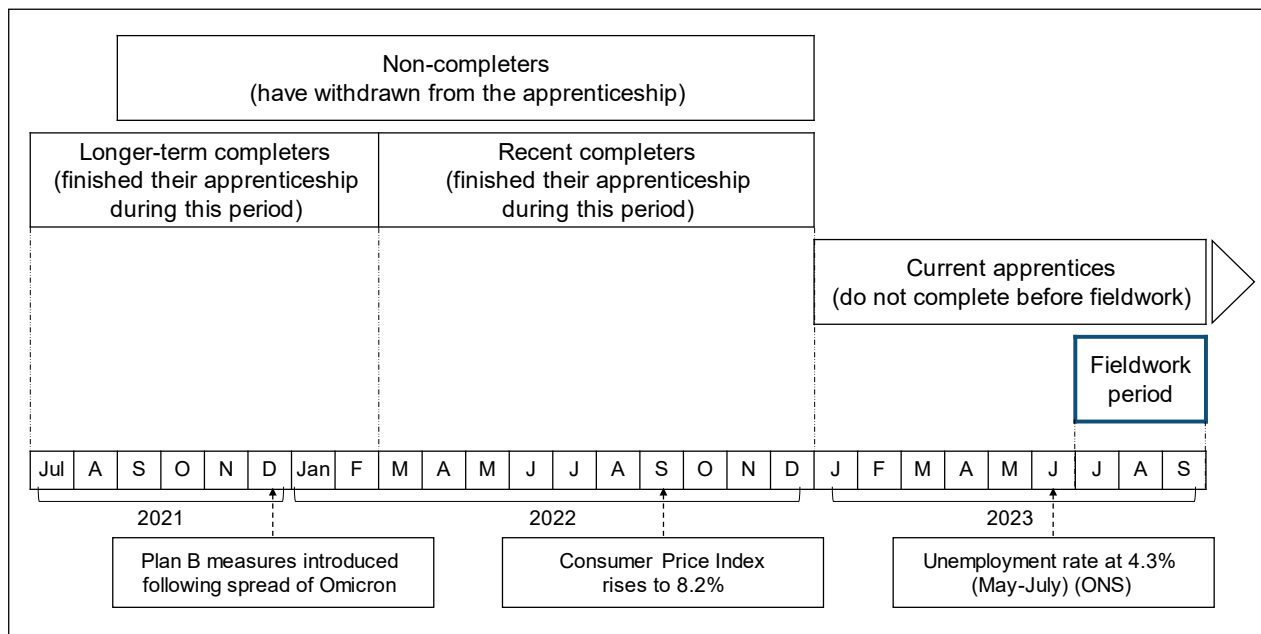
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<sup>27</sup> The term 'completer' is used rather than achiever, as this group consists of apprentices with an actual end date on the ILR, although they may not have reached an achieved status following an EPA. At the time of sampling, 91% of completers had officially become an achiever (97% of longer-term completers and 84% of recent completers). It is likely that this proportion would have increased in the period of time between sampling and the beginning of fieldwork.

<sup>28</sup> As mentioned in the note on comparability, where results for longer-term completers are compared with completers from previous surveys, we have excluded from previous surveys those who 'switched' from being sampled as a current apprentice to saying they had completed by the time of survey, since in the 2023 and 2021 surveys such 'switching' was no longer allowed.

- **Non-completers:** those who withdrew from their apprenticeship (standards only) between September 2021 and December 2022 (506 interviews with non-completers were conducted via the Non-completer Survey).

**Figure 1-1: Sample group definitions timeline**



Sample was drawn from the ILR. Sample was drawn separately for each of the apprenticeship groups listed above, in each case based on a grid of apprenticeship level<sup>29</sup> by Sector Subject Area (SSA Tier 1).<sup>30</sup>

Repeating the approach from 2021, Random Probability Sampling (RPS) was used. This method means that no fieldwork quotas were set, and all sample was treated equally in terms of attempting to convert sample to interviews. The sample was drawn to achieve a desired distribution of interviews necessary for analysis. Further information on the sampling process can be found in the accompanying Technical Report.

The SSA classifications used for sampling and reporting purposes are shown in Table 1-1, alongside the abbreviated form used throughout the report.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Apprenticeship levels range from Level 2 (lowest) up to Level 7 (highest). Level 2 (Intermediate) apprenticeships are equivalent to a GCSE level qualification; Level 3 (Advanced) are equivalent to an A-level qualification; Level 4 and above apprenticeships (Higher) are equivalent to a Foundation degree or above. Note that some Level 6 and 7 apprenticeships are undertaken as 'Degree apprenticeships', i.e. equivalent to a Bachelor's or Master's degree.

<sup>30</sup> For current apprentices, planned length of apprenticeship was also taken into account.

<sup>31</sup> The report uses 'Sector subject areas' (SSA). These are described more fully in the [Ofsted Further education and skills sector subject areas publication \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk).

**Table 1-1: Sector subject areas and abbreviations used for the report**

Sector Subject Area (SSA) title	SSA Tier 1 code	Abbreviation
Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	03	Agriculture
Arts, Media and Publishing	09	Arts
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

Source: Ofqual

The final datasets were weighted to be representative of the populations of apprentices who fitted each of the sample criteria for current apprentices, recent completers, longer-term completers and non-completers, based on the R06 ILR release. The current apprenticeship findings therefore represent learners sampled in January 2023 who were still undertaking their apprenticeship at the time of the survey (fieldwork ran from July to September 2023).

Weighting was applied separately for current apprentices, recent completers, longer-term completers (who undertook the Learner Survey) and non-completers (who undertook the Non-completer Survey), using a grid of level and SSA,<sup>32</sup> with additional calibration by age band. The weight was applied in three stages to take account of the RPS approach used: first a selection weight, then a non-response weight, and finally a calibration weight. Separate pay (current apprentices only) and module weights were also produced for the Learner Survey results. Learner Survey results for current apprentices, recent completers and longer-term completers are combined into an ‘all apprentices’ measure throughout the report, with the exception of [Chapter 9](#) which solely covers the experiences of non-completers who undertook the Non-completer Survey.

Due to differences between methodologies for the 2021 survey and other surveys in the Apprenticeship Evaluation series, ‘all apprentices’ time series comparisons are only

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<sup>32</sup> As well as, for current apprentices, planned length of apprenticeship.

made with data from 2021. Longer time trends comparisons are, however, provided for the individual groups of current apprentices and longer-term completers.

It should be noted that while the approach to the 2023 sampling and weighting is broadly consistent with the 2021 survey, there are some differences:

- **Sampling:** the 2023 sample of current apprentices includes apprentices who were likely to complete their apprenticeship during the fieldwork period ('expected current') but in contrast to 2021 excluded paused apprentices and apprentices with an end-date before 1 January 2023 (the point at which current apprentices were sampled) but not marked as completers in the ILR (in 2021 it was thought that this group would likely be 'paused' apprentices, specifically those with a planned end date between 1 March 2020 and 1 December 2020). In the 2021 survey paused apprentices represented 11% of the 'all apprentices' population.
- **Weighting:** current learners in 2023 have been weighted to the population that matches their selection criteria, whereas the 2021 current learners population weighting included apprentices who were marked as current as of 1 January 2023 on the R06 ILR release but had a planned end date after 1 January and before the start of fieldwork.<sup>33</sup>

More information on these aspects and comparisons of the 2023 survey against earlier years can be found in the section [A note on comparability](#) at the end of this chapter. The accompanying Technical Report also provides more details on the sampling and weighting approach employed.

## Fieldwork

Survey fieldwork for the Learner Survey (current apprentices, recent completers and longer-term completers) was conducted by telephone from 4 July to 15 September 2023; a total of 4,919 interviews were conducted. Fieldwork for the Non-completer Survey was also conducted by telephone, and a total of 506 interviews were completed between 12 July and 8 September 2023.

Consistent with 2021, but in a change from surveys conducted prior to this date, telephone fieldwork was managed using RPS in which a respondent, once selected, was called an agreed minimum number of times (ten for learners, eight for non-completers) and sample was not withdrawn once various quota targets by level, SSA and apprenticeship status (current, recent completer, or longer-term completer) had been reached.

Most Learner Survey interviews were conducted with Level 2 or 3 apprentices (3,380 of 4,919 interviews). Overall, 1,539 interviews were conducted among current or apprentice

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<sup>33</sup> Fieldwork for the 2021 Learner and Non-completer Surveys ran from May to July 2021.

completers at Level 4 or above, including 662 with those undertaking apprenticeships at Level 6 or above.

Table 1-2 shows the response rates for both the Learner and Non-completer Surveys based first on the issued sample and then based on 'eligible' sample (i.e. excluding unobtainable or wrong numbers and those where the respondent had no recollection of the learning, said they did not undertake the apprenticeship, or where they said they had completed or were still on the apprenticeship in contrast to what was indicated on the sample about them).

**Table 1-2: Response rate based on issued and eligible sample**

Survey	Issued sample	Number of achieved interviews	Response rate (based on issued sample)	Response rate (based on eligible sample)
Learner	18,126	4,919	27%	<b>32%</b>
Non-Completer	2,056	506	25%	<b>30%</b>

Again, the accompanying Technical Report provides more details about the call outcomes and response rates.

## Structure of the report

The report is structured as follows:

- [Chapter 2](#) presents an overview of the profile of apprentices in terms of level and SSA, and demographics such as age, gender and ethnicity. Further detail on the profile of apprentices can be found in [Appendix B](#).
- [Chapter 3](#) looks at routes into apprenticeships and motivations, including previous employment, reasons for undertaking their apprenticeship and whether it was their preferred choice.
- [Chapter 4](#) covers the quality and content of apprenticeships, including duration, working hours, pay and training.
- [Chapter 5](#) focuses on the OTJT requirement, examining the percentage of OTJT hours apprentices receive per week.
- [Chapter 6](#) looks at EPAs, including awareness of the revised minimum training thresholds and support from employer and training provider.

- [Chapter 7](#) examines apprentices' satisfaction levels, both overall and with individual elements of the apprenticeship.
- [Chapter 8](#) looks at the outcomes of apprenticeships, including skills gained, employment status, impacts at work and on future careers, and plans for future training.
- [Chapter 9](#) details findings from the Non-completer Survey, investigating experiences, satisfaction and reasons for non-completion.
- [Chapter 10](#) outlines the conclusions to this report.

## Reporting conventions

For Learner Survey results, the report leads with figures for 'all apprentices' by combining results for current apprentices, recent completers and longer-term completers (though some questions were not asked of all three groups). This is followed by discussion of differences among subgroups. The key subgroups that are analysed include the three sample groups (current apprentices, recent completers, and longer-term completers)<sup>34</sup>, apprenticeship level (taken from survey responses) and SSA (taken from sample data). Results for non-completers from the Non-completer Survey are reported separately in [Chapter 9](#). Where it is important to the narrative, differences are also commonly explored by demographics, such as age at the time of starting the apprenticeship, gender, ethnicity<sup>35</sup>, whether apprentices had a learning difficulty and / or disability and deprivation level. Further information on how this demographic information was sourced (i.e., whether from the ILR sample or the collected in the survey), can be found in the published Technical Report.

Levels of deprivation have been calculated using the latest Index of Multiple Deprivation data in England<sup>36</sup>, Northern Ireland<sup>37</sup>, Scotland<sup>38</sup> and Wales<sup>39</sup>, matched to apprentices' postcodes as recorded on the ILR.<sup>40</sup> This data is divided into quintiles, with those in the first quintile being those living in the most deprived areas, and the fifth quintile the least.

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<sup>34</sup> Where a recent completer or longer-term completer indicated they were in fact part of the other completer group, the survey response has been used instead here.

<sup>35</sup> Throughout the report, due to low base sizes, comparisons are sometimes made between apprentices from a white background and apprentices from all other ethnic groups combined. Please note that the white apprentice group includes white minorities.

<sup>36</sup> [English indices of deprivation 2019 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

<sup>37</sup> [Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017 \(NIMDM2017\) | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency \(nisra.gov.uk\)](https://www.nisra.gov.uk)

<sup>38</sup> [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020v2 local and national share calculator - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot)

<sup>39</sup> [Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation \(full Index update with ranks\): 2019 | GOV.WALES](https://gov.wales)

<sup>40</sup> While this study focuses on apprentices undertaking an apprenticeship with a training provider based in England, their residential address could have been outside England.

When percentages are provided in the text for sub-groups, such as by completion status and sector, this indicates that the proportion of this sub-group that gave an answer is statistically significantly different to the average of those not in that sub-group, at the 95% confidence level. The phrasing “most likely”, “more likely than average” or “particularly likely”, etc. is used as a shorthand for this. In tables and figures, significant figures are denoted with an asterisk (\*).

Unless explicitly noted, all findings are based on weighted data. Unweighted bases (the number of responses from which the findings are derived) are displayed on tables and charts as appropriate to give an indication of the robustness of results. Please note that, unless explicitly stated the minimum base size for reporting was  $n=50$  and base sizes lower than this have been suppressed in all charts.

For single-coded questions (i.e. where respondents can only choose one response), figures in charts and tables may not always sum to 100%, due to rounding. This may also be the case where results are aggregated at single-coded questions for analysis purposes (e.g. combining ‘not very well’ and ‘not at all well’ when considering the proportion of apprentices who did not feel their employer and training provider worked well together).

Throughout the report, the term ‘training provider’ is used to refer to any organisation (external to the business employing the apprentice) which delivers the training element of an apprenticeship.

A full list of the acronyms used in this report can be found in [Appendix A](#).

## A note on comparability

### Sampling, fieldwork and weighting changes in 2023 compared with 2021

Consistency with the 2021 methodology was largely maintained for the 2023 Learner and Non-completer Surveys. However, there were some notable differences.

- **The first of these was the exclusion of ‘paused apprentices’ from the current apprentice group in the Learner Survey, marking a return to the approach in 2018-19 and before.** The reason for the exclusion of paused apprentices was due to removal of questions from the survey aimed specifically at this group. The 2021 Learner Survey included apprentices who were marked as pauses on the ILR, and also apprentices with a planned end date prior 1 January 2023 (the point at which current apprentices were sampled) but who had not been marked as having completed. In 2021 it was thought that this group (specifically those with a planned end date between 1 March 2020 and 1 December 2020) would likely be ‘paused’



apprentices due to the impact of COVID-19. Neither of these sample groups were included in the 2023 survey.

- **The second notable difference was the change in fieldwork dates for both the Learner and Non-completer Surveys, which ran from July to September 2023 compared with May to July 2021 for the 2021 survey.** This meant the gap between the date of sampling (1 January 2023) and fieldwork was larger than it had been in the previous survey. To counteract the impact of this change, ‘expected current’ apprentices (namely those who were due to finish their apprenticeship during the fieldwork period) were included in the current apprentice group for the Learner Survey, with their sample prioritised in the early weeks of the fieldwork. The reason for this was to minimise the risk of those on shorter apprenticeships being underrepresented in the final data due to fieldwork taking place later in the calendar year compared with 2021 and there typically being a large intake of apprentices in August and September each year.<sup>41</sup> Although not included in the 2021 sample (but were included in the final weighted population), this group were included in the fieldwork sample for the 2018-19 survey.
- **The third difference was an adaptation to the population profile used for weighting current apprentices in the Learner Survey.** In 2023, current apprentices have been weighted to the population profile of apprentices that matched their sampling criteria, namely learners who were active apprentices in the January 2023 ILR release and who were still undertaking their apprenticeship at the time of fieldwork. The population profile used for weighting therefore excludes apprentices who had completed their apprenticeship in the gap between the sample selection in January 2023 and the fieldwork period beginning in early July. This group of apprentices has a slight tendency towards being shorter length apprentices and lower-level apprentices, as detailed in the accompanying Technical Report. In 2021, the population profile used for the weighting of current apprentices included this group of learners to adjust for this difference whereas in 2023 it did not. In neither 2021 nor 2023 were these apprentices included in the fieldwork sample.

### **Sampling, fieldwork and weighting changes in 2021 compared with 2018-19 and before**

More substantial changes to the methodological approach occurred in the 2021 Learner Survey compared with previous iterations of the study. These were:

- **Changes in status between the survey and the time of sampling.** In the 2018-19 survey, if a learner sampled as a current apprentice stated at the time of survey that they had completed, they were switched and interviewed as a completer. With

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<sup>41</sup> In 2021, fieldwork ran from May-July. In 2023, fieldwork ran from July-September.

the introduction of RPS for the 2021 survey a change in status was not allowed, except for recent- and longer-term completer, and vice versa. This continued to be the case in the 2023 survey.

- **Overlap between apprenticeship types.** For the 2018-19 survey, learners who were currently undertaking an apprenticeship when the sample was drawn and who had also completed an apprenticeship in the appropriate timeframe for completers were classed as current apprentices for the purpose of sampling, prioritising their most recent experience. In 2021, those learners falling into multiple groups (between current apprentices, recent completers and longer-term completers) were given an equal chance of selection as other records for each group. This continued to be the case in the 2023 survey.
- **Inclusion of recent completers in 2021.** Recent completers – those completing approximately 5-16 months prior to the being interviewed – as well as non-completers, were new to the 2021 study. In 2021, and now in 2023, recent completers are included in ‘all apprentice’ percentages.
- **Weighting.** The weighting approach taken in 2021 (and since then in 2023) was different to 2018-19, in that it was based on an RPS sampling approach. In 2018, a simpler weighting approach was used, calibrating the responses received to population figures derived from the ILR.

## 2023 questionnaires compared with 2021

The 2023 questionnaires were largely consistent with 2021, although some amendments and additions were made to ensure questions remained relevant and covered key areas of interest. Specific questions about COVID-19 were removed, and instead some new questions were added:

- **Learners questionnaire (current and completer apprentices):** New questions in the 2023 survey covered the topics of English and maths study, views on how the training provider and employer worked together, and whether the apprentice had experienced any delays to their EPA.
- **Non-completers questionnaire:** New questions in the 2023 survey covered the topics of English and maths study, the extent to which training was delivered online (and preference for this), and the impact of apprenticeship on work-life balance, finances and wellbeing.

Full details of the questionnaire amendments and updates are provided in the accompanying Technical Report.

## 2. The profile of apprentices

The 2023 research included four types of apprentices: current apprentices, recent completers, longer-term completers (interviewed via the Learner Survey) and non-completers of apprenticeship standards (interviewed via the Non-completer Survey). In line with the approach taken in 2021, an ‘all apprentices’ measure has often been used in this report, which combines current apprentices, recent completers and longer-term completers. This means the population profile of this group will therefore not match the latest official statistics from the ILR on [apprenticeship starts](#). Instead, the profile of apprentices in this study represents a particular grouping of apprentices. It is a combination of:

- Current apprentices including those in the R06 ILR release who were still on an active apprenticeship as of 1 January 2023, but excluding those who were expected to have completed their apprenticeship by the start of survey fieldwork (according to information on their planned end date on the ILR).
- Recent completers who completed an apprenticeship between March and December 2022.
- Longer-term completers who completed their apprenticeship between July 2021 and February 2022.

More information on the population groups and comparability to previous surveys can be found in the [Introduction](#) chapter.

A full breakdown of the population profile for current apprentices, recent completers and longer-term completers can be found in [Appendix B](#). However, the key points are summarised here:

- According to the ILR, the majority of the ‘all apprentices’ group consisted of current apprentices (62%), followed by recent completers (21%) and longer-term completers (17%). The proportion of current apprentices decreased from 65% in 2021, whilst the proportion of recent completers increased from 17%.
- The most common Sector Subject Areas (SSAs) were Business (26%), Health (25%) and Engineering (19%), while the least common was Arts (fewer than 0.5% were undertaking an apprenticeship in this SSA). Science and Leisure apprentices made up 1% each. These proportions were broadly in line with those seen in 2021.
- Level 3 apprentices remained the most common within the population (45% similar to the 46% figure in 2021), followed by Level 2 apprentices (21%). However, this represented a decrease compared with the proportion of Level 2 apprentices in

2021 (29%). There were increases in the proportion of Level 6 and Level 7 apprentices (Level 6: 10% vs. 5% in 2021); Level 7 (8% vs. 5%).

- Over four-in-ten apprentices (42%) were aged 25 and above, while around a third (32%) were aged between 19 and 24 and around a quarter (26%) were aged 18 and under. These proportions were in line with those seen in 2021.
- The weighted survey data showed there was a relatively even split by gender (52% male and 48% female) which was consistent with 2021. In 2023, current apprentices were more likely to be male (55% vs. 45% female) while apprenticeship completers were more likely to be female (53% vs. 47% male).
- The final sample was made up predominantly of apprentices from a white ethnic background (86%). The next most common group were those from an Asian or Asian British background (6%), followed by those from a black, black British, Caribbean or African background (3%), those from mixed or multiple ethnic groups (3%), and those from all other ethnic groups (1%). Again, this was similar to the profile in 2021.
- Before undertaking the apprenticeship, a minority of apprentices aged under 25 (4%) were not in employment, education or training (NEET) in the period before starting their apprenticeship.<sup>42</sup> This amounted to 2% of all apprentices.
- A minority (5%) of apprentices self-identified as having a disability while 7% self-identified as having a learning difficulty (9% self-identified as having either).<sup>43</sup>
- When looking at levels of deprivation, survey data showed that 19% of apprentices lived in the most deprived areas (the first IMD quintile) while 18% lived in the least deprived areas (the fifth quintile).
- Fewer than 0.5% of current apprentices and 5% of recent completers were on apprenticeship frameworks (decreasing from 10% and 44% respectively in 2021), compared with 18% of longer-term completers. This is likely due to the apprenticeship reforms in 2017, which introduced employer-led standards to replace the existing frameworks with the aim of improving the quality of apprenticeships.

Non-completers are discussed separately in [Chapter 9](#), where the profile of this group can be found.

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<sup>42</sup> NEET is defined as those aged 16-24 and not in employment, education or training for a period of at least three months immediately before starting their apprenticeship.

<sup>43</sup> Data on [apprenticeship starts](#) from 2022/23 show that 15.3% of apprentices were identified as having a learning difficulty and / or a disability. Additionally, this survey only asked apprentices if they had a disability or learning difficulty if this was already recorded on the ILR sample file (accurate as of 01/01/2023).

## Comparisons between sample groups

This report often compares responses from current apprentices, recent completers and longer-term completers, however it is important to note that there are some underlying differences between the profile of these groups which may underpin their differences in experience. Based on the ILR data, 23% of current apprentices were on Level 6 or 7 apprenticeships, compared with 11% of recent completers and 8% of longer-term completers. Current apprentices were also more likely to be younger, with 28% aged under 19 compared with 24% of apprenticeship completers. Further detail on profile differences between current apprentices, recent completers and longer-term completers can be found in [Appendix B](#).

## Comparisons with previous survey profiles

Throughout the report, comparisons are made with results from previous waves of the Apprenticeship Evaluation Surveys in 2015, 2017, 2018-19 and 2021. It is important to note that recent completers were introduced to the Learner Survey in 2021 and non-completers were first interviewed via the Non-completer Survey in 2021, and so comparisons for these groups can only be made against 2021. Longer-term completers can be compared against the 'completers' group in previous waves of the Learner Survey since 2015.

### 3. Routes into apprenticeships and motivations

This chapter examines how apprentices came to undertake their apprenticeship, looking at recruitment, prior employment, awareness that they were undertaking an apprenticeship, reasons for becoming an apprentice and any alternatives considered.

#### Key findings

- **Around half of apprentices (51%) worked for their employer prior to starting their apprenticeship**, with 48% starting their apprenticeship as a new recruit. A slightly larger proportion were recruited in new to the employer in 2023 compared with 2021 (44% in 2021).
- Agriculture (67%), Business (62%), Health (61%), and Retail (58%) apprentices were more likely than apprentices overall to have been working for their employer prior to starting their apprenticeship.
- **Apprentices who were new to their employer had predominantly been either working for a different employer (43%) or had just finished a course in school or college (41%)** before starting their apprenticeship.
- **The vast majority of apprentices (95%) were aware that their course or training was part of an apprenticeship**, an increase on 2021 levels (91%).
- **The most common reason for deciding to start an apprenticeship was to enter into or progress in a specific career (37%, up from 34% in 2021)**. Other common reasons included seeing the apprenticeship as a good way to develop work-related skills (18%) and wanting to gain a qualification (14%).
- **Around half of apprentices (51%) said that an apprenticeship was their preferred choice (up from 47% in 2021)**, followed by 43% who did not have a preference (5% wanted to do something else).
- Among those who would have rather done something else, **the most common alternative was to have gone to university** (cited by 38% of this group, equivalent to 2% of all apprentices).

#### Activity prior to apprenticeships

Around half (51%) of apprentices were already employed by the employer with whom they undertook their apprenticeship before it started, with the remainder (48%) being new recruits.<sup>44</sup> The proportion of apprentices that were already working for their employer

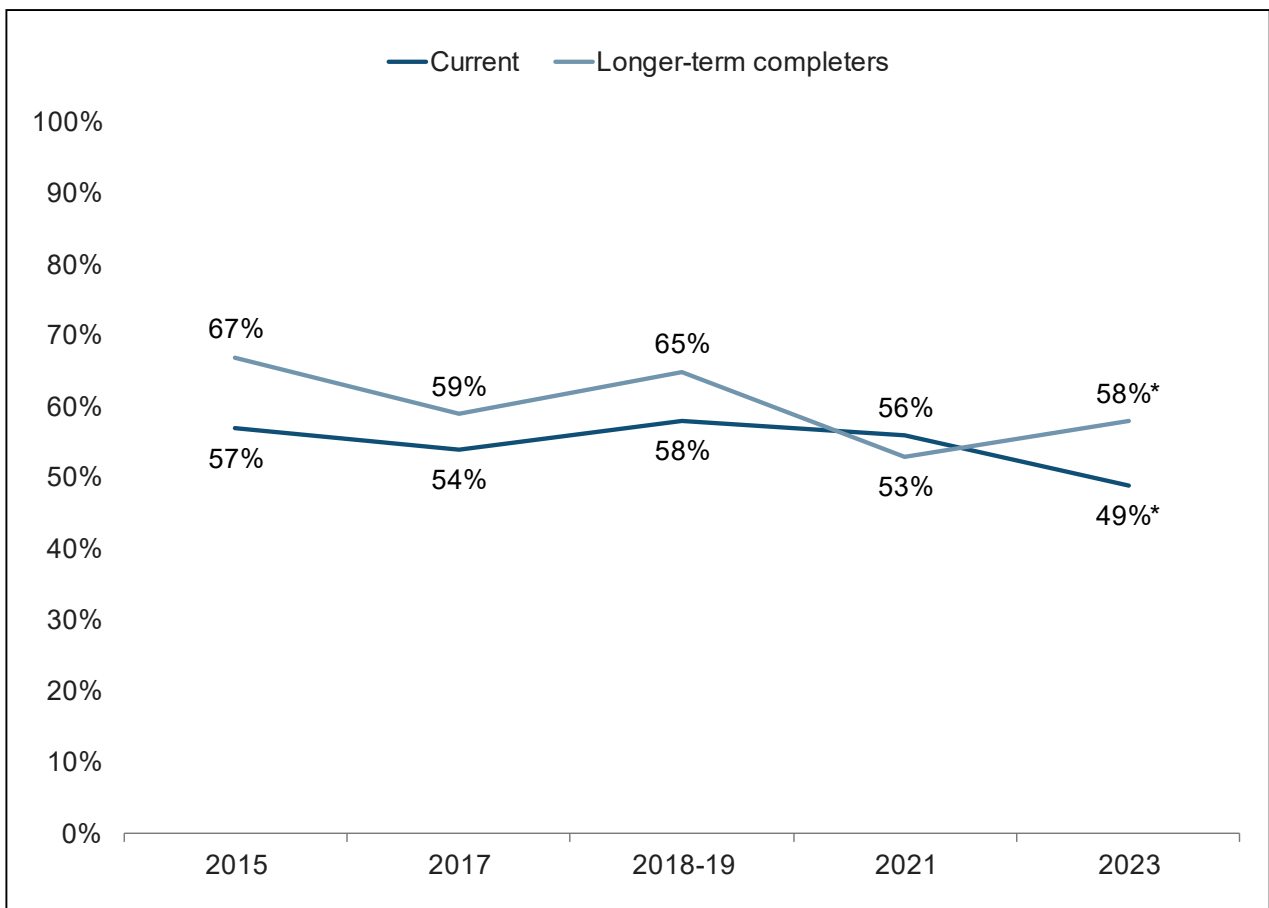
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<sup>44</sup> <0.5% reported that they did not know (hence the two figures reported do not add up to 100%).

prior to their apprenticeship was lower than in 2021 (51% in 2023 vs. 56% in 2021), while the proportion of apprentices that were new recruits increased (48% in 2023 vs. 44% in 2021).

Longer-term completers (58%) were more likely to have worked for their employer before starting the apprenticeship than recent completers (53%) and current apprentices (49%). It should be noted that recent completers were also more likely than current apprentices to report this. The proportion of longer-term completers that worked for their employer before beginning their apprenticeship increased compared with 2021 (58% vs. 53% in 2021). Conversely, current apprentices were less likely to have done so (49% vs. 56% in 2021), with this proportion dropping below 50% for the first time in the time series. There was no year-on-year difference among recent completers. Figure 3-1 shows the proportion of current apprentices and longer-term completers that were already with their employer over time.

**Figure 3-1: Whether apprentices were already working for their employer before the apprenticeship, by apprentice type**



Base: All current apprentices: 2023 (2,970); 2021 (3,047); 2018-19 (2,355); 2017 (2,427); 2015 (2,033).  
 Base: All longer-term completers: 2023 (958); 2021 (1,039); 2018-19 (1,580); 2017 (2,767); 2015 (2,736).

\* indicates where a result is significantly different from 2021.

As shown in Table 3-1, Level 2 and 3 apprentices were less likely than others to have already been working for their apprenticeship employer (43% and 45% respectively). In contrast, Apprentices at Level 5 were most likely to have been working for their employer prior to their apprenticeship (91%), though this situation was also relatively common among Level 4 and Level 7 apprentices (61% and 65% respectively). Level 5 apprentices were also significantly more likely to be already working for their apprenticeship employer in 2021 (90% vs. 56% overall).

As with level of apprenticeship, there were also some significant variations in the incidence of having previously worked for their employer by Sector Subject Area (SSA). Apprentices undertaking Agriculture (67%), Business (62%), Health (61%), and Retail (58%) apprenticeships were more likely than apprentices overall to have been working for their employer prior to starting their apprenticeship. In contrast, apprentices in Leisure (26%), Arts (27%), Engineering (33%) and Construction (35%) were less likely to have done so.

**Table 3-1: Whether apprentices were already employed by the apprenticeship employer, by level and SSA**

<i>Row percentages</i>	<b>2023: Base</b>	<b>2021: Base</b>	<b>2023: Already employed</b>	<b>2023: New to employer</b>	<b>2021: Already employed</b>	<b>2021: New to employer</b>
All	(4,919)	(5,122)	51%	48%	56%	44%
Level 2	(1,081)	(1,695)	43%	57%*	48%	52%*
Level 3	(2,299)	(2,316)	45%	54%*	55%	45%
Level 4	(461)	(334)	61%*	39%	65%*	35%
Level 5	(316)	(308)	91%*	9%	90%*	10%
Level 6	(470)	(277)	48%	52%	56%*	44%
Level 7	(292)	(192)	65%*	35%	54%	46%
Level 6+ non-degree	(120)	(95)	58%	42%	34%	66%*
Level 6+ degree	(642)	(374)	54%	46%	62%*	38%
Agriculture	(304)	(313)	67%*	33%	56%	44%
Arts	(175)	(190)	27%	73%*	27%	73%*
Business	(875)	(1,006)	62%*	37%	62%*	38%
Construction	(453)	(438)	35%	65%*	42%	58%*



<i>Row percentages</i>	<b>2023: Base</b>	<b>2021: Base</b>	<b>2023: Already employed</b>	<b>2023: New to employer</b>	<b>2021: Already employed</b>	<b>2021: New to employer</b>
Education	(310)	(331)	55%	44%	50%*	50%*
Engineering	(641)	(732)	33%	67%*	39%	61%*
Health	(902)	(811)	61%*	39%	67%*	33%
ICT	(415)	(377)	41%	59%*	38%	62%*
Leisure	(235)	(297)	26%	74%*	41%	58%*
Retail	(525)	(523)	58%*	41%	70%*	30%
Science	(60)	(72)	52%	48%	52%	48%

Base: All apprentices. \* indicates where a result is significantly higher than the average for that year.

In terms of age, older apprentices were more likely than younger apprentices to have already been working for their employer (79% of apprentices aged 25 and over compared with 37% of those aged 19-24 and 25% aged under 19). The same was evident for female apprentices compared with male apprentices (60% vs. 44%). This gender difference relates to the age and SSA differences, with female apprentices far more likely than male apprentices to be in categories associated with higher prevalence of working for the employer before the apprenticeship. For example, female apprentices were more likely to be aged 25 and over (53% vs. 32% of male apprentices) and to have been on apprenticeships in Business (31% vs. 22%), Health (42% vs. 9%) and Retail (10% vs. 6%).

Apprentices from an Asian or Asian British background, apprentices with a learning difficulty, and those living in the least deprived areas (the fifth Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) quintile) (all 46%) were less likely than average (51%) to have worked for their employer prior to their apprenticeship.

Among apprentices that were already working for their employer before starting their apprenticeship, many (69%) reported that this had been for 12 months or longer, while 30% had been working there for less than 12 months. The following groups were more likely to have been working for their employer for 12 months or longer:

- Level 5 and Level 6 apprentices (90% and 91% respectively); in contrast only 49% of Level 2 and 62% of Level 3 apprentices had worked for their employer this long.
- Those undertaking degree apprenticeships (87% vs. 68% of those undertaking Level 6 and above non-degree apprenticeships).

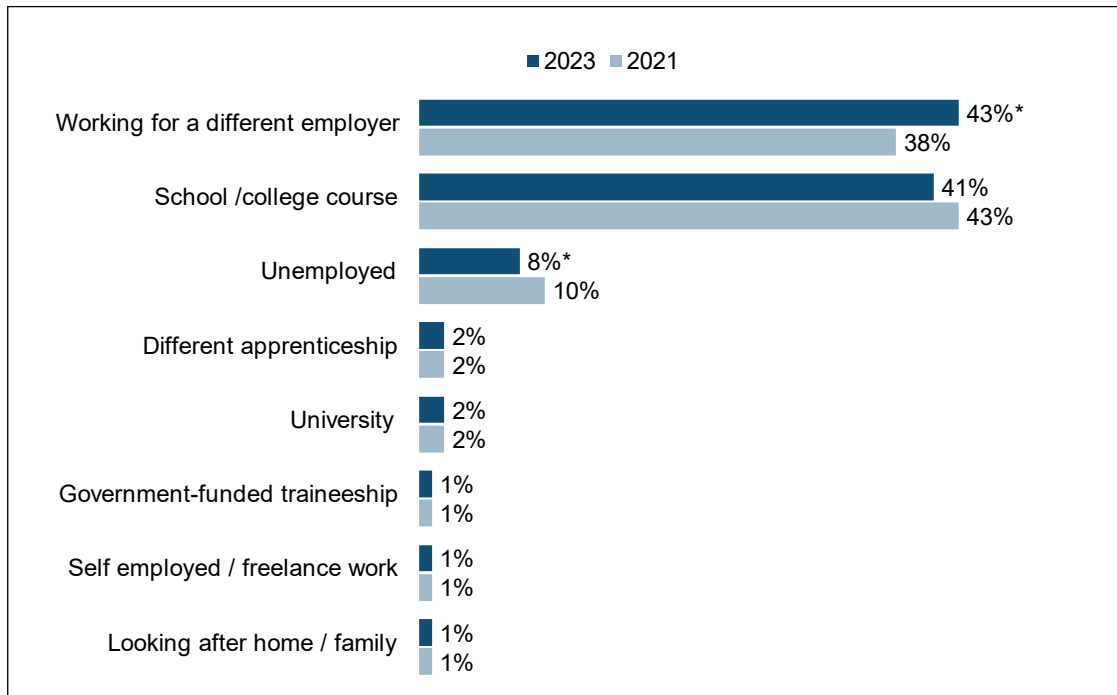
- Business (82%) and Education (78%) apprentices, compared with the average (69%).
- Female apprentices (75% vs. 62% of male apprentices).
- Older apprentices (84% of those aged 25 and over apprentices compared with 55% of those aged 19-24 and 23% aged under 19).
- Apprentices without a disability or learning difficulty (70%, compared with 63% of those with a disability and / or learning difficulty, though this difference was driven by apprentices with learning difficulties – 55% of those with a learning difficulty had been with their employer for 12 months or more, 72% of those with a disability).

### **Apprentices who were new to their employer**

Among apprentices who were new to their employer (i.e. recruited to their apprenticeship), the most common prior activities were working for a different employer (43%) and having done or recently completed a course in school or college (41%). Less than one-in-ten (8%) were unemployed prior to their apprenticeship. Figure 3-2 shows the full results on prior activity for apprentices, with comparisons to the 2021 findings.

Overall, the type of activity undertaken prior to their apprenticeship in 2023 was broadly similar to that recorded for 2021. That said, apprentices that were new to their employer were slightly more likely to be working for a different employer prior to their apprenticeship than they were in 2021 (43% vs. 38%) and slightly less likely to report having been unemployed prior to their apprenticeship (8% compared with 10% in 2021).

**Figure 3-2: Main activity prior to starting apprenticeship**



Base: Apprentices new to their employer: 2023 (2,316); 2021 (2,471). \* indicates where a result is significantly different from 2021.

Among apprentices who were new to their employer (i.e. recruited to their apprenticeship), working for a different employer (43%) overtook having done or recently completed a course in school or college (41%) as the most common prior activity. Undertaking a school or college course had previously been the most common prior activity in 2021 (43% of all apprentices) and in 2018-19 (43% of current apprentices and 47% of longer-term completers).

As in 2021, age was a key predictor of the main activity carried out by apprentices prior to starting their apprenticeship. Older apprentices were more likely than younger apprentices to have been working for a different employer before their apprenticeship (76% of apprentices aged 25 and over, compared with 54% of apprentices aged 19-24 and 18% aged under 19). The same applies to those who were self-employed previously (5% of apprentices aged 25 and over, compared with 1% of apprentices aged 19-24 and <0.5% aged under 19). In contrast, younger apprentices were more likely to have come from school or college (74% aged under 19, compared with 25% of those aged 19-24 and 2% of those aged 25 and over).

These differences by age largely determined differences by SSA. Health apprentices (54%) that were recruited to their apprenticeship were more likely than average to have been working for a different employer before their apprenticeship, and they were also more likely to be aged 25 or over. Conversely, Leisure (58%), Retail (51%) and Construction (50%) apprentices were most likely to have come straight from college or

school and these SSAs were more likely to be occupied by apprentices under the age of 19.

As noted above, among apprentices new to their employer, nearly one-in-ten (8%) had been unemployed prior to starting their apprenticeship. This was more common for:

- Those aged 19 and over (10% vs. 5% among under 19s).
- Apprentices from black, black British, Caribbean or African backgrounds (17%).
- Those doing Arts (16%) and ICT apprenticeships (17%).
- Those with a learning difficulty and / or disability (13%).
- Those based in London (15%).
- Those living in the most deprived areas (first IMD quintile) (11%).

## **Main activity prior to starting apprenticeship for younger apprentices**

The most common prior activity among apprentices who were under 25 and in employment less than 12 months before starting their apprenticeship was undertaking / completing a school or college course (47%). This was followed by around a third (36%) that had worked for a different employer.

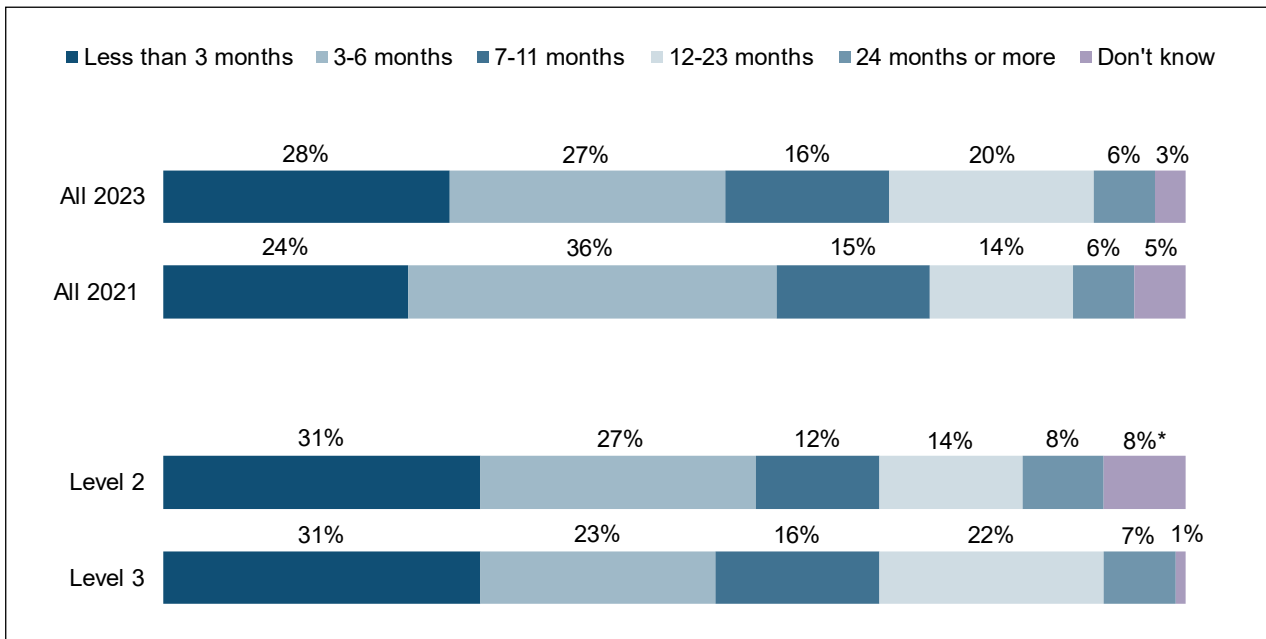
Less than one-in-ten (8%) were unemployed prior to their apprenticeship, with other apprentices being at university (3%), doing a different apprenticeship (3%), doing a government funded traineeship at a college or training provider (1%), and self-employed (1%). Overall, these activities were in line with findings from 2021.

Younger apprentices (aged under 25) who were considered not in employment, education or training (NEET) prior to their apprenticeship (2% of all apprentices and 4% of those under 25) were asked how long this had been the case.<sup>45</sup> Approaching three-in-ten (28%) had been NEET for less than three months prior to their apprenticeship, while 69% had been NEET for 3 months or more and around a quarter (26%) had been NEET for one year or more. These findings were in line with 2021 when 71% had been NEET for 3 months or more.

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<sup>45</sup> This was defined in the survey as learners who were aged under 25 and said that immediately before their apprenticeship they were either unemployed, looking after home or family, unable to work due to illness, or unable to work due to pregnancy.

**Figure 3-3: Length of time NEET prior to starting the apprenticeship**



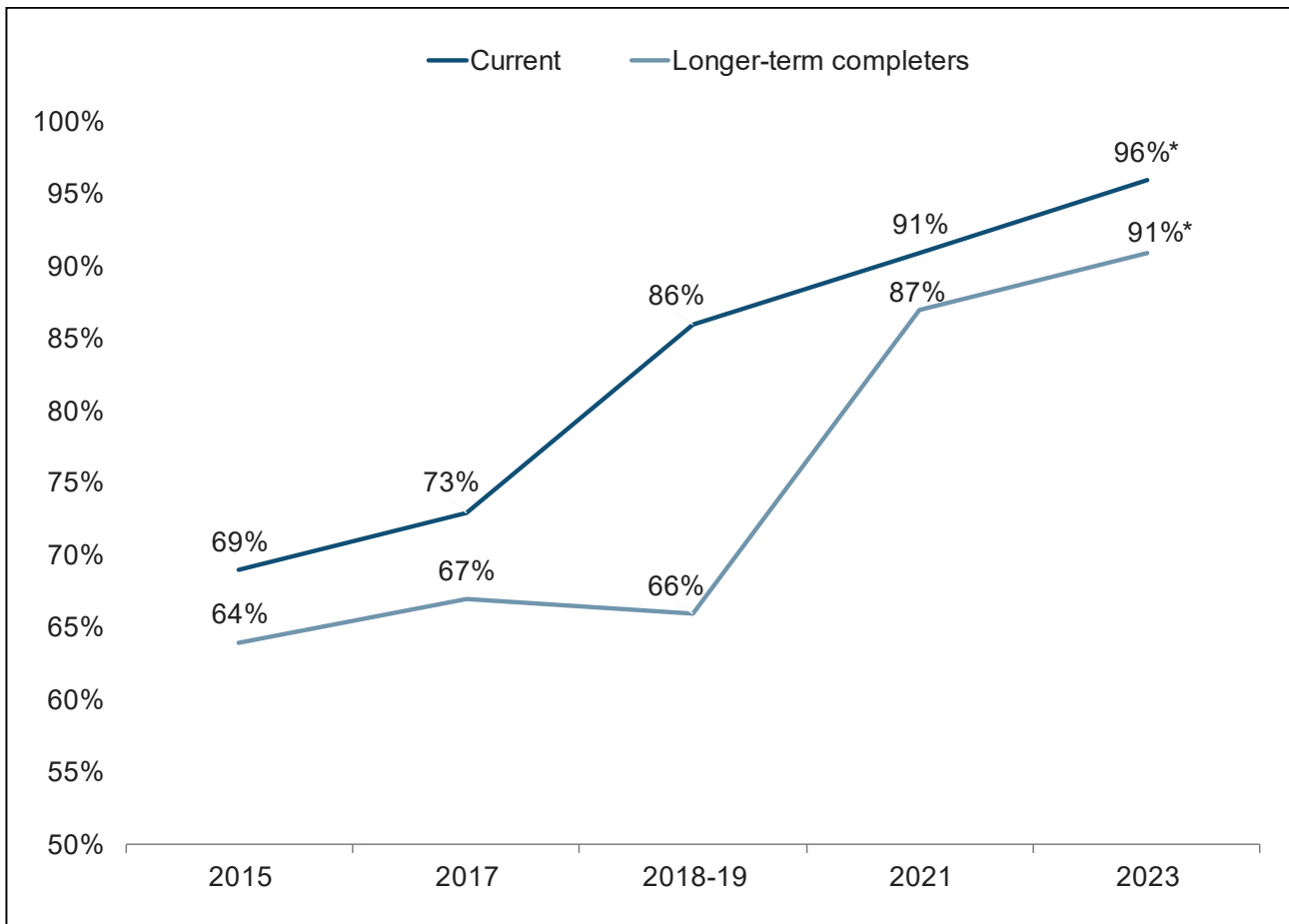
Base: Apprentices not in employment immediately before apprenticeship and aged 16-24 at the time of enrolment: 2023 (153); 2021 (226). \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the average in 2023.

## Awareness of apprenticeships

The vast majority (95%) of apprentices were aware that their course or training was part of an apprenticeship, 4% were not, and a further 2% did not know. The proportion of apprentices aware increased compared with 2021 (91%). Apprentices were less likely to be aware that they were on an apprenticeship if they were already working for their employer prior to starting their apprenticeship (91% vs. 98% of those new to their employer).

Current learners (96%) and recent completers (94%) were more likely than longer term completers (91%) to be aware that their course or training was part of an apprenticeship. Awareness increased for each group compared with 2021, but the largest increase was among current apprentices who saw an increase of 5 percentage points (96% aware in 2023 vs. 91% in 2021 and 86% in 2018-19). This is shown in Figure 3-4.

**Figure 3-4: Apprentices' awareness that their course or training is/was part of an apprenticeship**



Base: All current apprentices: 2015 (2,033); 2017 (2,427); 2018-19 (2,355); 2021 (3,047); 2023: (2,970), All longer-term completers: 2015 (2,736); 2017 (2,767); 2018-19 (1,580); 2021 (1,039); 2023 (958). \* indicates where a result is significantly different from 2021. Prior to 2021, completer apprentices only included longer-term completers.

Awareness was high across all apprenticeship levels. The same proportion were aware across Levels 2 to 5 (each 94%), while virtually all Level 6 and 7 apprentices were aware (98% and 99% respectively). Awareness was also high across all SSAs; around nine-in-ten or more apprentices in each SSA were aware their course was part of an apprenticeship, as shown in Table 3-2, and this was the case for almost all apprentices in Arts (99%), Engineering (99%), Construction (98%), and ICT (98%). Awareness was lower among those undertaking Health apprenticeships (89%), though positively, apprentices in this SSA saw the largest increase in awareness compared with 2021 (up 9 percentage points).

Apprentices living in the most deprived areas (first and second IMD quintiles) were least likely to be aware their training was part of an apprenticeship (both 93% vs 95% overall). Those in the least deprived areas (fifth IMD quintile), conversely, were most likely to be aware (97%).

Considering demographics, younger apprentices reported higher awareness levels compared with older apprentices (99% of apprentices under 19, compared with 96% of apprentices aged 19-24 and 91% aged 25 and over). Disabled apprentices reported relatively high levels of awareness (98% vs. 95% of those with neither a learning difficulty nor disability). There were no differences in awareness by ethnicity.

**Table 3-2: Those aware that they are / were on an apprenticeship**

<i>Row percentages</i>	<b>2023: Base</b>	<b>2021: Base</b>	<b>2023: All aware</b>	<b>2021: All aware</b>
All	(4,919)	(5,122)	95%	91%
Arts	(175)	(190)	<b>99%*</b>	<b>97%*</b>
Engineering	(641)	(732)	<b>99%*</b>	<b>95%*</b>
Construction	(453)	(438)	<b>98%*</b>	<b>96%*</b>
ICT	(415)	(377)	<b>98%*</b>	<b>97%*</b>
Agriculture	(304)	(313)	97%	<b>95%*</b>
Education	(310)	(331)	97%	<b>95%*</b>
Business	(875)	(1,006)	96%	<b>93%*</b>
Leisure	(235)	(297)	94%	88%
Retail	(525)	(532)	93%	93%
Science	(60)	(72)	93%	<b>98%*</b>
Health	(902)	(811)	89%*	80%*
Under 19	(1,217)	(1,486)	<b>99%*</b>	<b>98%*</b>
19 to 24	(1,461)	(1,575)	96%	91%
25 and over	(2,241)	(2,061)	91%*	86%*

Base: All apprentices. \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the average for that year (bold figures show results that are significantly higher than the average).

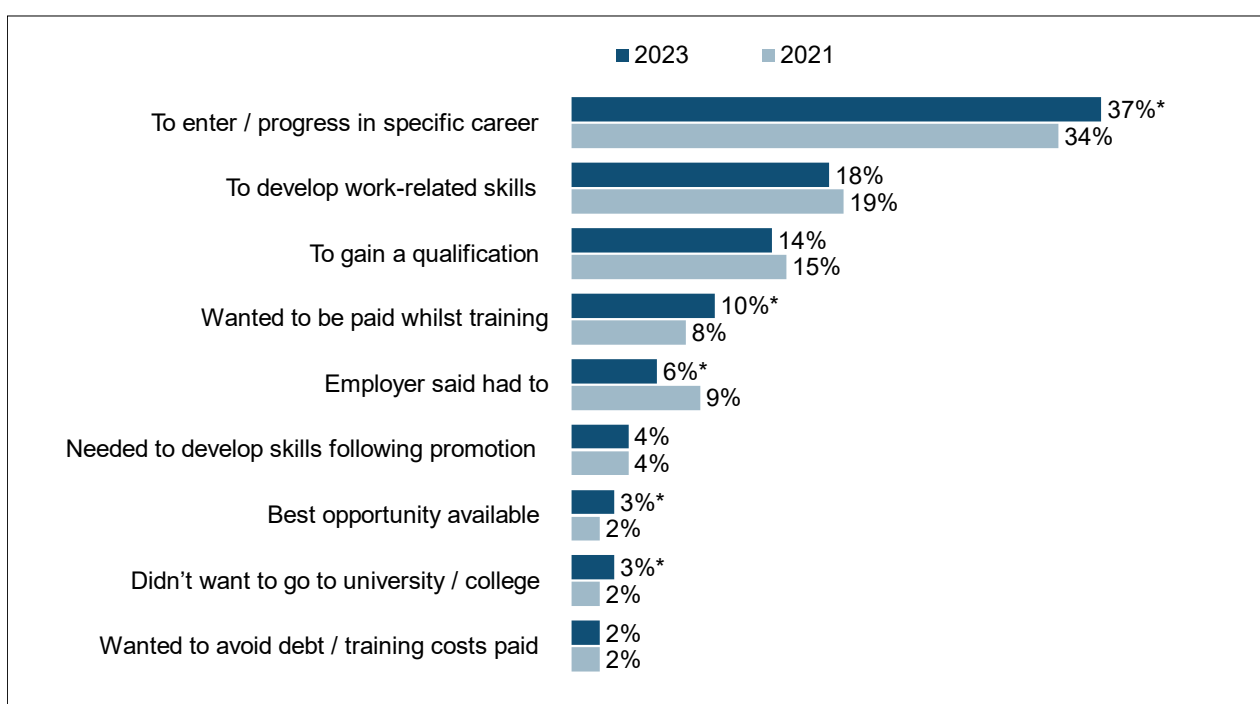
## Reasons for choosing apprenticeships

All apprentices were asked what their main reason was for taking up an apprenticeship. As in 2021, being able to enter or progress in a specific career was the main reason (37%), followed by the ability to develop work-related skills (18%) and to gain a qualification (14%). Figure 3-5 shows a breakdown of the top reasons given.

Notably, compared with 2021, apprentices were more likely to have reported that they decided to undertake an apprenticeship to enter or progress in a specific career (37%, compared with 34% in 2021) and because they wanted to be paid whilst training (10% compared with 8% in 2021). They were less likely to say they started an apprenticeship because their employer said that they had to (6%, compared with 9% in 2021).

There was little difference between current apprentices, recent completer and longer-term completers in their main reasons for doing an apprenticeship, though longer-term completers were slightly less likely to mention doing an apprenticeship to enter a specific career (33% vs. 38% of current apprentices), which ties-in with the increased prevalence of this reason over time.

**Figure 3-5: Main reason for deciding to undertake an apprenticeship**



Base: All apprentices (modularised): 2023 (2,506); 2021 (2,696). Figure shows answer options of 2% or above. \* indicates where a result is significantly different from 2021.

Table 3-3 shows how motivations for starting an apprenticeship varied by apprenticeship level (for the top 5 reasons), and highlights a number of differences:

- Level 2 apprentices were more likely than average to be influenced by wanting to develop work-related skills (21% vs. 18%).
- Level 4 apprentices were more likely than average to report that their employer said they had to undertake the apprenticeship (10% vs. 6%).
- Level 6 apprentices were more likely than average to mention wanting to be paid whilst training (15% vs. 10%).



- Level 7 apprentices were more likely than average to mention the opportunity to gain a qualification (21% vs. 14%); this was also particularly true of non-degree apprentices at Level 6 and above, compared with degree apprentices (27% vs. 17%).
- Though not shown in the table below as it was not in the top 5 reasons, Level 5 apprentices were more likely than average to be influenced by wanting to develop skills because of a promotion at work (12% vs. 4%).

**Table 3-3: Main reason for deciding to undertake an apprenticeship, by level**

<i>Row percentages</i>	<b>Base</b>	<b>To enter / progress in a specific career</b>	<b>To develop work-related skills</b>	<b>To gain a qualification</b>	<b>Wanted to be paid whilst training</b>	<b>Employer said had to</b>
All (modularised)	(2,506)	37%	18%	14%	10%	6%
Level 2	(549)	35%	<b>21%*</b>	13%	12%	5%
Level 3	(1,183)	38%	18%	14%	9%	6%
Level 4	(241)	33%	20%	14%	7%	<b>10%*</b>
Level 5	(151)	43%	14%	13%	6%	2%
Level 6	(229)	35%	14%	17%	<b>15%*</b>	6%
Level 7	(153)	33%	15%	<b>21%*</b>	11%	9%
Level 6+ non-degree	(56)	29%	10%	<b>27%*</b>	12%	<b>13%*</b>
Level 6+ Degree	(326)	35%	15%	17%	<b>13%*</b>	6%

Base: All apprentices (modularised). \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the average (bold figures show results that are significantly higher than the average).

Motivations also varied by SSA, as shown in Table 3-4. Apprentices in Arts (47%) and Health (46%) were more likely than average to have undertaken an apprenticeship to enter or progress in a career. Wanting to develop work related skills was particularly a key motivator for ICT apprentices (27%), whilst wanting to gain a qualification was more commonly mentioned by Business apprentices (17%) compared with others. Apprentices in Agriculture (17%) and Engineering (13%) were more likely than average to have undertaken an apprenticeship because they wanted to be paid whilst training. Health (9%) and Retail (10%) apprentices were more likely than average to say their employer said they had to do it.

**Table 3-4: Main reason for deciding to undertake an apprenticeship, by SSA**

<i>Row percentages</i>	<b>Base</b>	<b>To enter / progress in a specific career</b>	<b>To develop work-related skills</b>	<b>To gain a qualification</b>	<b>Wanted to be paid whilst training</b>	<b>Employer said had to</b>
All (modularised)	(2,506)	37%	18%	14%	10%	6%
Agriculture	(153)	35%	23%	7%*	<b>17%*</b>	7%
Arts	(92)	<b>47%*</b>	17%	10%	11%	3%
Business	(451)	33%*	19%	<b>17%*</b>	9%	5%
Construction	(229)	32%	17%	13%	13%	3%*
Education	(163)	35%	13%	17%	11%	6%
Engineering	(322)	37%	19%	13%	<b>13%*</b>	4%
Health	(444)	<b>46%*</b>	11%*	15%	7%*	<b>9%*</b>
ICT	(211)	31%	<b>27%*</b>	11%	8%	5%
Leisure	(123)	42%	11%	12%	11%	6%
Retail	(279)	36%	21%	11%	9%	<b>10%*</b>

Base: All apprentices (modularised). \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the average (bold figures show results that are significantly higher than the average). Science has been excluded due to the low base size (25).

There were also some differences in motivations for doing an apprenticeship across the different apprentice demographic groups, although generally the order and magnitude of reasons remained similar. Male apprentices were slightly more likely than female apprentices to undertake an apprenticeship because they wanted to be paid whilst training (12% vs. 8%), because they did not want to go to university or college (4% vs. 2%) and because it was the best opportunity available to them (4% vs. 2%). In contrast, female apprentices were slightly more likely to say they needed to develop skills because of a promotion at work (6% vs. 2% of male apprentices).

Older apprentices were more likely than younger apprentices to report that their reason for undertaking an apprenticeship was because they wanted to progress in a specific career (43% of apprentices aged 25 and over, compared with 37% of apprentices aged 19-24 and 27% aged under 19), and because their employer said that they had to (9% of apprentices aged 25 and over, compared with 5% of apprentices aged 19-24 and 1% aged under 19). In contrast, younger apprentices were more likely than older apprentices to state that they wanted to develop work-related skills (22% of apprentices under 19,

compared with 17% of apprentices aged 19-24 and 15% aged 25 and over) and because they would be paid whilst training (21% of apprentices under 19, compared with 9% of apprentices aged 19-24 and 4% aged 25 and over).

Apprentices who were not previously working for the employer when they started their apprenticeship were more likely to have started the apprenticeship so they could be paid while training (14% vs. 6% of those who already worked for employer), whereas those already working for their employer were more likely to say they were told they had to do an apprenticeship by their employer (8% vs. 4%).

Gaining a degree was important factor for those who undertook degree apprenticeships (89%), a similar proportion to 2021 (93%). Just under two-thirds (64%) felt it a was a very important factor in their decision. There were no differences in importance by whether they had a degree or not prior to starting their apprenticeship.

Apprentices living in the least deprived areas (fifth IMD quintile) (5%) were more likely to report not wanting to go to university or college than those in the most deprived areas (first IMD quintile) (1%). They were also more likely to have started an apprenticeship in order to avoid student debt (4% vs. 2%).

Comparisons between the motivations of completers and non-completers can be found in [Chapter 9](#).

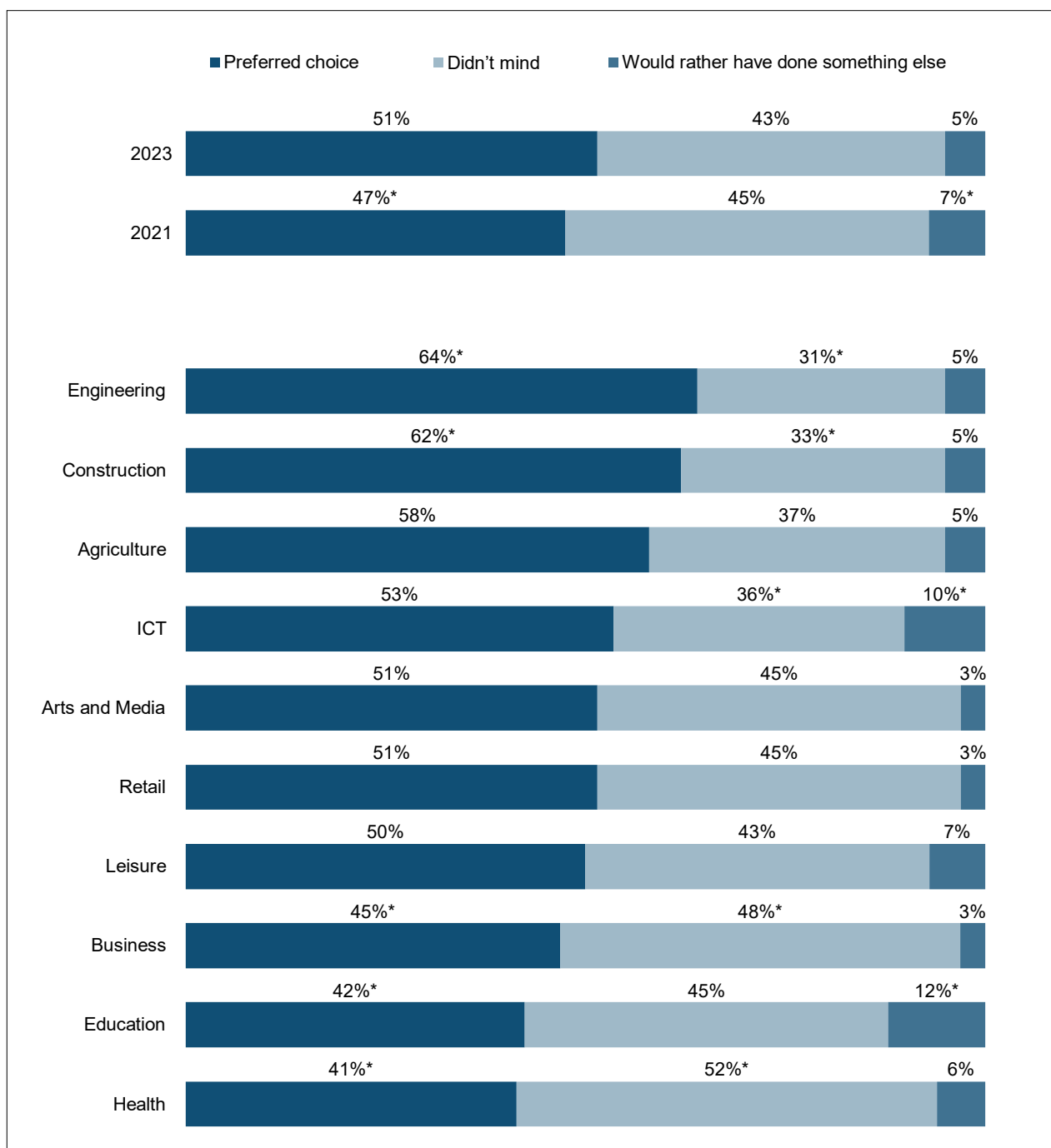
## Whether apprenticeship was preferred choice

Half of all apprentices (51%) said that an apprenticeship was their preferred choice at the time they first considered an apprenticeship, two-fifths (43%) did not have a preference, while a small proportion (5%) noted that they would have rather done something else (2% were unsure).

These results represent an improvement since 2021, when fewer than half (47%) said an apprenticeship was their preferred choice and 7% would have preferred to do something else. Reflecting this improvement over time, current apprentices were more likely than completers to have said an apprenticeship was their preferred choice (53%, compared with 47% of both recent and longer-term completers).

Differences by SSA are shown in Figure 3-6. As was the situation in 2021, Engineering and Construction apprentices were more likely than average to say an apprenticeship was their preferred choice (64% and 62% respectively). This was less commonly the case for Health (41%), Education (42%) and Business (45%) apprentices. Health was also one of the few SSAs to have seen a decrease on this measure compared with 2021 (41% vs. 46% in 2021). In contrast, there was a large increase in the proportion of Business apprentices that said an apprenticeship was their preferred choice (from 36% in 2021 to 45% in 2023).

**Figure 3-6: Whether an apprenticeship was their preferred choice when first considered, by SSA**



Base: All apprentices (modularised): 2023 (2,506); 2021 (2,696). \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the average in 2023.

Considering apprenticeship level, those undertaking apprenticeships at Level 6 were most likely to report an apprenticeship was their preferred choice (57%). The following groups were also more likely to have specifically wanted to undertake an apprenticeship (as their preferred choice):

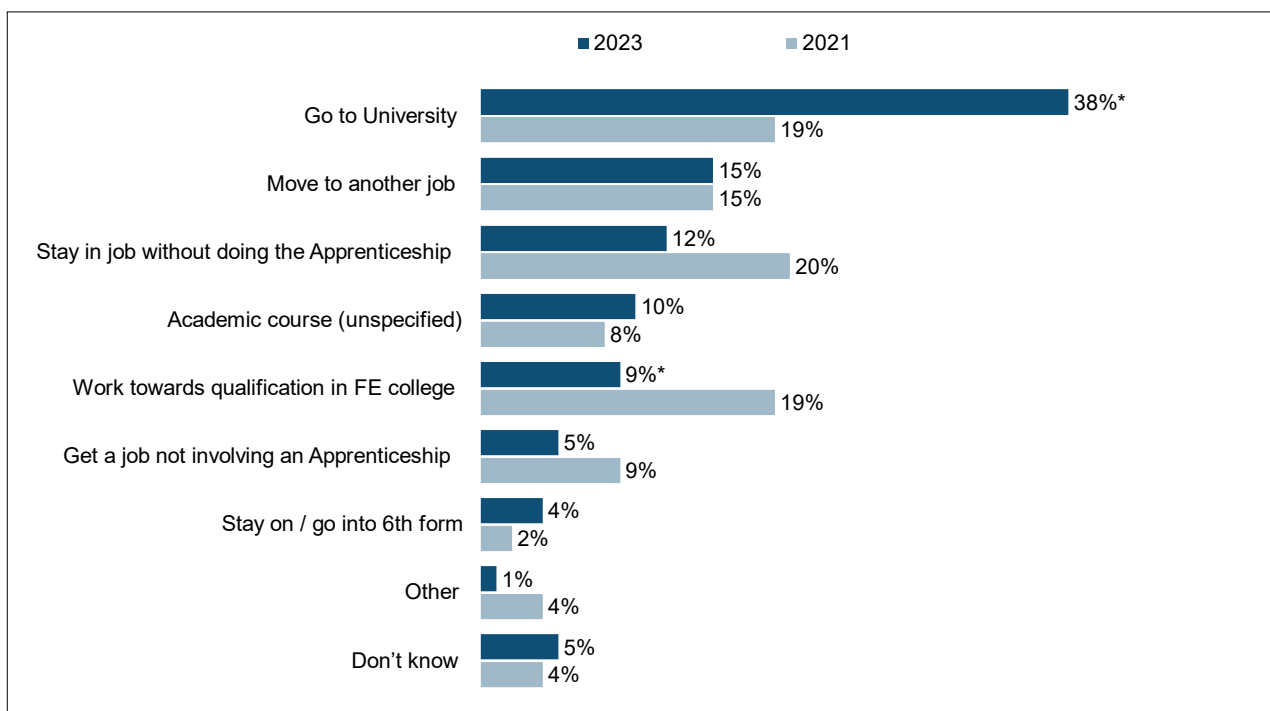
- Under 19s (67%, compared with 51% of 19-24s, and 40% of those aged 25 and over). Those aged 25 and over were far more likely to say they had no particular preference (53% vs. 28% among under 19s).
- Male apprentices (56% compared with 44% of female apprentices).
- Completers on frameworks compared with completers on standards (59% vs. 46%).
- Those recruited to the apprenticeship (56% vs. 46% among those who were already employed by their employer).
- Those in education or training before their apprenticeship (63%, compared with 47% who were in work and 51% that were unemployed).

## Alternatives to apprenticeships

The 5% of apprentices who would have rather done something else were asked what they would have preferred to have done. The most commonly cited preference was to go to university (38%, equivalent to 2% of all apprentices), followed by 15% who would have preferred to move to another job and 12% who wanted to stay in their job without doing the apprenticeship. Figure 3-7 shows a full breakdown of their preferences.

Compared with 2021, and still among the 5% of apprentices who would have preferred not to have started their apprenticeship, there was a rise in the proportion who would have preferred to go to university, from 19% in 2021 to 38% in 2023. However, among all apprentices this equates to a much smaller (and not statistically significant) rise of 1% in 2021 to 2% in 2023. In contrast, the proportion of apprentices who would have rather worked towards a qualification at a Further Education (FE) college decreased from 19% in 2021 to 9% in 2023 (though again, this represents a negligible change from fewer than 0.5% to 1% of all apprentices over this period). Apprentices on lower-level apprenticeships were more likely to have preferred to have studied at a FE college, than those higher-level apprenticeships (14% of Level 2-3 apprentices vs. 3% of Level 4+ apprentices).

**Figure 3-7: What apprentices would have preferred to have done instead of an apprenticeship**



Base: All apprentices who would rather have done something else (modularised): 2023 (141); 2021 (165).  
 \* indicates where a result is significantly different from 2021.

In terms of demographics, older apprentices (aged 25 and over at the start of their apprenticeship) were more likely than average to say that they would have preferred to have completed an unspecified different academic course or qualification (19% vs. 10%), while male apprentices were more likely than female apprentices to say they would have preferred to get a job without being involved in an apprenticeship (10% compared with 1% of female apprentices). Female apprentices were more likely to say that they would have preferred to stay in or go into sixth form (7% compared with fewer than 0.5% of male apprentices), despite their generally older age profile.

## 4. Quality and content of apprenticeships

This chapter examines indicators of quality in apprenticeships, such as the duration, the employment status and hours worked by apprentices. It reports whether apprentices were initially assessed in English and maths, if they studied towards English and maths qualifications during their apprenticeship and what they thought about this study.

This chapter also covers the types of training apprentices received and who delivered this.

### Key findings

- **On average, apprenticeships were expected to last 23 months, with four-in-ten (40%) expected to last 2 years or longer.** Level 6 apprenticeships were expected to last the longest (38 months). Apprenticeships in Leisure, Retail and Education had the shortest expected durations (15, 16 and 16 months on average respectively).
- **Most apprentices (81%) able to confirm the expected length of their apprenticeship felt that the duration of their apprenticeship was adequate to acquire the skills needed,** 5% felt it was too short, and 13% felt it was too long (highest among Level 6 apprentices: 19%).
- **The majority of all apprentices (95%) reported that they had a written contract of employment with their employer** (4% did not, with the rest unsure). Groups more likely to report not having a written contract included Level 2 (7%), Engineering (6%) and Retail apprentices (9%), as well as those aged under 19 (7%).
- **Just over three-quarters (77%) of all apprentices reported that they were employed on a permanent basis with no fixed end point during their apprenticeship, in line with the 2021 findings.** A further 14% were employed for the duration of their training only, and 7% had a fixed end date for their employment which was after the date they expected to complete their training.
- **Apprentices were contracted to work (or if they did not have a written contract, usually worked) an average of 38 hours per week.** This increased compared with 2021, when apprentices worked an average of 37 hours per week and continues an upward trend in contracted / working hours since 2015 (38.1 hours per week for current apprentices in 2023 vs. 35.2 hours in 2015).
- **Current apprentices reported a median gross hourly pay of £11.63 per hour, an increase compared with 2021 (£9.98 per hour).** Median pay was lowest for Level 2 apprentices (£8.56) and was highest for Level 7 (£17.34).

- **In line with 2021 findings, the majority of apprentices (86%) reported being assessed in terms of prior learning or qualifications:** 74% to check their ability in maths, 74% in English (72% reported receiving an assessment in both English and maths), IT skills (31%), other relevant prior qualifications (40%) and other relevant prior learning (30%). Assessments in English and maths were both less common than in 2021 (78% and 79% respectively).
- **Among all apprentices surveyed, 14% had studied or were currently studying for an English qualification as part of their apprenticeship, with slightly more (17%) studying for a maths qualification.** Compared with 2021, there was a marked increase in the proportion of Level 2 apprentices studying for each of these qualifications (English: 24% vs. 19% in 2021; maths: 29% vs. 22%).
- **Views on whether apprentices liked or disliked studying towards an English or maths qualification were fairly mixed, albeit with a slight net towards not liking it. Overall, half (50%) did not mind it, 21% liked it and 28% did not like it.** Apprentices who reported that they did not like studying English and / or maths, most commonly noted that they found it too difficult (52%), or that it was not relevant to the job or role the apprenticeship was for (26%).
- **The types of training or learning most commonly undertaken during apprenticeships was delivered by employers within normal working hours including training sessions, job shadowing or mentoring (86%),** followed by training done as part of normal day-to-day work duties (84%) and training delivered by their training provider (83%). All of these increased in incidence compared with 2021.
- **The majority of apprentices who received training from a college or training provider felt their employer and training provider worked well together (83%).** Around one-in-six (16%) felt this was not the case, with this more likely to be felt by Level 6 apprentices (22%) and Engineering apprentices (19%).

## Duration of apprenticeships

Apprentices were asked whether the expected duration of their apprenticeship recorded on the ILR was correct.<sup>46</sup> If not, they were asked how long they expected their apprenticeship to last, in months. This section examines the intended duration, rather than the actual length of time completers took to complete the apprenticeship. Findings are based on those who knew the duration of their apprenticeship, with the very small minority (<1%) who could not provide the length of their apprenticeship excluded from the calculations.

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<sup>46</sup> 85% reported that the expected duration as recorded on the ILR was correct, 13% said it was not correct, and 2% did not know. In 2021, these figures were 84%, 12% and 3% respectively.



On average, apprenticeships were expected to last 23 months (mean), with four-in-ten (40%) expected to last 2 years or longer. Compared with 2021, average apprenticeship duration increased (22 months in 2021), as did the proportion of apprenticeships expected to last 2 years or longer from 33%.<sup>47</sup>

A very small minority reported expecting the apprenticeship to last less than a year (1%), decreasing from 2% in 2021, reflecting the fact that the mandatory minimum requirement for apprenticeships is 12 months. Completers on apprenticeship frameworks were more likely to report that their apprenticeship was intended to last 2 years or longer (44% vs. 22% of apprenticeship standards), a pattern which held among both recent and longer-term completers. However, those on frameworks were also slightly more likely to say they expected their apprenticeship to last less than a year (5% vs. 3%).

As shown in

Table 4-1, expected apprenticeship duration tended to increase with apprenticeship level, though this pattern was not linear. The mean average expected duration was higher for Level 3 apprentices than those at Levels 4 and 5 (23 months, vs. 19 and 20 months respectively). The expected duration was also higher for Level 6 apprentices than those at Level 7 (average of 38 months vs. 29 months). The shortest expected apprenticeship duration was found at Level 2 (average of 17 months). Similar patterns were observed in 2021.

The overall increase in the proportion of apprentices with an expected apprenticeship duration of 2 years or longer compared with 2021 was driven by Level 2 and Level 3 apprentices (up 4 and 7 percentage points respectively). There were decreases among most other levels, the largest of which was seen at Level 7, where around two-thirds (67%) said their apprenticeship lasted 2 years or longer, down from 83% in 2021 (see

Table 4-1).

By subject, apprenticeships in Science, Engineering and Construction were expected to last the longest (40, 32 and 31 months on average respectively). In contrast, apprenticeships in Leisure, Retail and Education had the shortest expected durations (15, 16 and 16 months on average respectively). Across most Sector Subject Areas (SSAs), at least 70% of apprentices expected their apprenticeship to last between 1 and 2 years (defined as 12-23 months). The exceptions were Agriculture (48%), Construction (30%), Engineering (23%) and Science (6%). The largest increases in the proportion of apprenticeships reporting an expected duration of 2 years or longer compared with 2021

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<sup>47</sup> Please note that comparisons with 2021 here may be affected by the exclusion of 'expected completers' from the weighting profile in 2023. This group of apprentices tends to include a greater proportion of shorter length and lower-level apprentices which may explain why in the 2023 the mean expected duration had increased compared with 2021.

were found among apprentices in Science (up 14 percentage points), Arts (up 12 percentage points) and Agriculture (up 11 percentage points).

**Table 4-1: Average intended duration of apprenticeship by level and SSA**

<i>Row percentages</i>	Base	Average length (months)	<12 months	12-23 months	24-35 months	36 months or longer
All	(4,906)	23	1%	58%	20%	21%
Level 2	(1,078)	17	<b>3%*</b>	<b>76%*</b>	18%	3%*
Level 3	(2,294)	23	1%	60%*	13%*	<b>26%*</b>
Level 4	(459)	19	2%	<b>77%*</b>	16%*	5%*
Level 5	(313)	20	1%	<b>66%*</b>	<b>30%*</b>	3%*
Level 6	(470)	38	0%*	11%*	<b>27%*</b>	<b>62%*</b>
Level 7	(292)	29	0%*	33%*	<b>45%*</b>	22%
Level 6+ non-degree	(120)	28	0%	31%*	<b>48%*</b>	21%
Level 6+ degree	(642)	35	0%*	18%*	<b>32%*</b>	<b>50%*</b>
Agriculture	(304)	24	1%	48%*	<b>35%*</b>	16%
Arts	(174)	17	1%	<b>78%*</b>	19%	3%*
Business	(871)	21	2%	<b>70%*</b>	18%	11%*
Construction	(453)	31	1%	30%*	<b>32%*</b>	<b>37%*</b>
Education	(309)	16	1%	<b>92%*</b>	7%*	<0.5%*
Engineering	(638)	32	1%	23%*	<b>22%*</b>	<b>54%*</b>
Health	(899)	20	2%	<b>70%*</b>	21%	8%*
ICT	(415)	22	<0.5%*	<b>73%*</b>	8%*	19%
Leisure	(235)	15	3%	<b>96%*</b>	1%*	0%*
Retail	(524)	16	<b>55*</b>	<b>80%*</b>	12%*	3%*
Science	(60)	40	0%	6%*	28%	<b>65%*</b>

Base: All who gave a duration. \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the average (bold figures show results that are significantly higher than the average).

**Table 4-2: Intended duration of apprenticeship by level and SSA**

<i>Row percentages</i>	<b>2021 Base</b>	<b>2023 Base</b>	<b>Average length 2021 (months)</b>	<b>Average length 2023 (months)</b>	<b>2021: 2 years or longer</b>	<b>2023: 2 years or longer</b>
All	(5,112)	(4,906)	22	23	33%	<b>40%*</b>
Level 2	(1,691)	(1,078)	16	17	17%	<b>21%*</b>
Level 3	(2,311)	(2,294)	23	23	32%	<b>39%*</b>
Level 4	(334)	(459)	20	19	27%	21%*
Level 5	(307)	(313)	21	20	37%	33%*
Level 6	(277)	(470)	40	38	93%	89%
Level 7	(192)	(292)	30	29	83%	67%*
Agriculture	(313)	(304)	23	24	40%	<b>51%*</b>
Arts	(190)	(174)	16	17	10%	<b>22%*</b>
Business	(1,005)	(871)	19	21	27%	28%
Construction	(438)	(453)	29	31	66%	69%
Education	(328)	(309)	17	16	10%	7%
Engineering	(728)	(638)	31	32	68%	<b>77%*</b>
Health	(810)	(899)	18	20	17%	<b>28%*</b>
ICT	(377)	(415)	19	22	18%	<b>27%*</b>
Leisure	(296)	(235)	15	15	5%	1%
Retail	(523)	(524)	16	16	11%	15%
Science	(72)	(60)	36	40	80%	<b>94%*</b>

Base: All who gave a duration. \* indicates where a result is significantly different from 2021 (bold figures show results that are significantly higher than in 2021).

In terms of completion status, current apprentices typically had longer apprenticeships (26 months on average) than recent or longer-term completers (20 and 19 months on average respectively). As shown in Table 4-3, this pattern is in line with results from

previous years. However, the average apprenticeship duration for each completion status has gradually increased since 2015.

As expected from the above, current apprentices were substantially more likely to report an expected duration of 2 years or longer (50% vs. 24% of recent completers and 25% of longer-term completers). In contrast, longer-term completers were most likely to expect their apprenticeship to last less than a year, lower than the mandatory requirement (4% vs. 1% on average). The proportion of current apprentices with an expected apprenticeship duration of 2 years or longer was up 10 percentage points compared with 2021 (40%), while there was also an increase of 5 percentage points for longer-term completers (20% in 2021). There was no significant change for recent completers (23% in 2021).

**Table 4-3: Average intended duration of apprenticeship in months by completion status**

	2015	2017	2018-19	2021	2023
Current apprentices	19	19	22	24	26
Recent completers	-	-	-	19	20
Longer-term completers	16	16	16	18	19

Base: All who gave a duration: 2023 current (2,964); 2023 recent completers (988); 2023 longer-term completers (954). Lowest base size in previous year for 2021 was recent completers (1,034)

There was minimal difference in duration at regional level, with the exceptions of apprentices in London who were less likely to expect their apprenticeship to last 2 years or longer (35% vs. 40% overall), and apprentices in the South West who were more likely to expect their apprenticeship to last 2 years or longer (45% vs. 40% overall).

Male apprentices were substantially more likely to report longer apprenticeships than female apprentices, with 54% of male apprentices expecting their apprenticeship to last 2 years or longer (vs. 25% of female apprentices). This could, in part, be explained by female apprentices being less likely to undertake apprenticeships in subjects that typically lasted longer, such as Engineering and Construction (2% for both vs. 33% and 17% of male apprentices respectively).

Apprentices living in less deprived areas were more likely to be undertaking longer apprenticeships. This is most pronounced when comparing those in the fourth Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) quintile with those in the first (those living in the most deprived areas). Just under half (45%) of those in the fourth quintile were undertaking an apprenticeship which was intended to last 2 years or longer compared with 37% of those in the first quintile.

Other groups that were less likely to report apprenticeships that lasted 2 years or longer were:

- Apprentices from the black, black British, Caribbean or African and Asian or Asian British ethnic groups (32% and 35% vs. 41% of those from the white ethnic group).
- Apprentices aged 25 years and over (30% vs. 47% for 19-24 years and 49% for those aged under 19).
- Apprentices with learning difficulties and / or disabilities (34% compared with 41% without).

## Appropriateness of apprenticeship duration

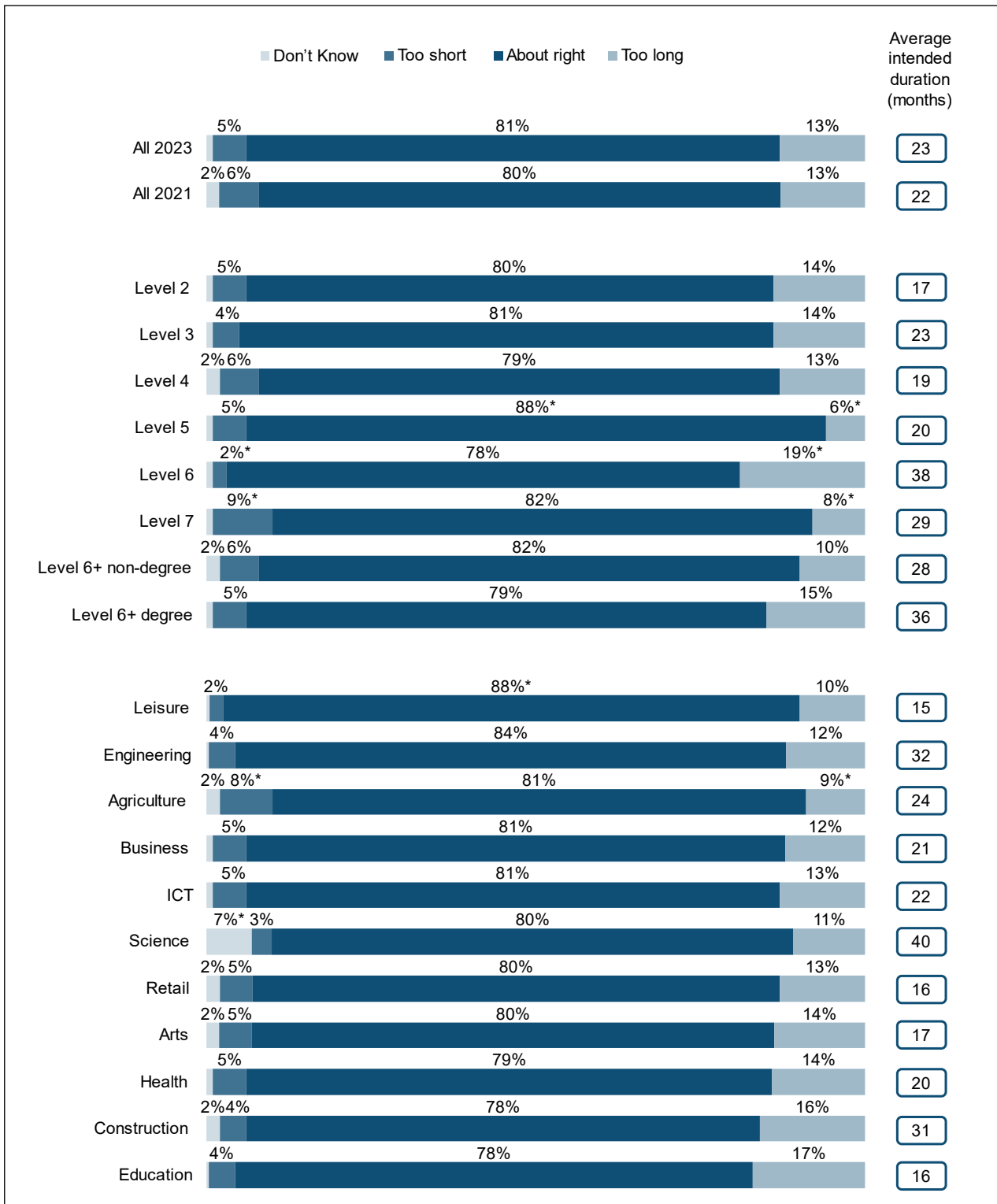
Among apprentices who were able to confirm the expected length of their apprenticeship, the majority (81%) felt that the duration of their apprenticeship was adequate to acquire the skills needed. Just 5% felt that it was too short, and 13% felt that it was too long. These findings were in line with 2021.

Apprenticeships expected to last 2-3 years (defined as 24-35 months) were more likely to be thought as about the right length (84% vs. 81% overall), whereas those expected to last 3 years or more were more likely to be thought of as too long (18% vs. 13% on average). Compared with 2021, there was an increase in the proportion who thought these longer-length apprenticeships were too long (up from 12% in 2021).

By level and by subject, most apprentices reported that the duration of their apprenticeship was about right, with this particularly the situation for Level 5 (88%), Leisure (88%) and Engineering apprentices (84%). Compared with the average, Level 6 apprentices were more likely to think their apprenticeship was too long (19%), and Level 7 apprentices were slightly more likely to consider their apprenticeship too short (9%). By subject, Agriculture apprentices were more likely to report that their apprenticeship was too short (8% vs. 5% on average).

By region, apprentices in London were more likely to consider their apprenticeship was too long (17% vs. 13% on average), despite being more likely to expect their apprenticeship to last less than two years. Those based in West Midlands were more likely to consider their apprenticeship was too short (7% vs. 5% on average).

**Figure 4-1: Whether intended duration is sufficient to acquire required skills by level and SSA**



Base: All apprentices for whom the intended length of apprenticeship is known: 2023: (4,808); 2021 (4,950). 2023 subgroups: Level 2 (1,060), Level 3 (2,248), Level 4 (447), Level 5 (307), Level 6 (461), Level 7 (285), Level 6+ non-degree (118), Level 6+ degree (628), Science (60), Engineering (624), Construction (439), Agriculture (298), Education (309), Business (852), ICT (403), Health (881), Retail (518), Arts (170), Leisure (230). \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the average in 2023. Note: Data labels <2% removed.

Across the different demographic groups of apprentices most thought that their apprenticeship was of the right length. That said, there were some variations in opinions:

- Younger apprentices (those under the age of 19) were more likely than average to have thought that the length of their apprenticeship was about right (84% vs. 81%).
- Apprentices from an Asian or Asian British ethnic group were more likely to have thought that their apprenticeship was too short (8% vs. 5% on average). In contrast, apprentices from a black, black British, Caribbean or African ethnic group, or from mixed or multiple ethnic groups were more likely to have thought their apprenticeship was too long (20% and 19% vs. 13% on average).
- Apprentices with a learning difficulty and / or a disability were more likely than average to have thought that their apprenticeship was too short (11% and 9% respectively vs. 4% without).

## Employment status during apprenticeships

The majority of all apprentices (95%) reported that they had a written contract of employment with their employer, while 4% did not and a further 1% did not know. There was no difference in the prevalence of written contracts between those who were existing employees for their employer prior to their apprenticeship and those who were not. These findings were in line with those reported in 2021.

Recent completers (6%), Level 2 apprentices (7%), Engineering apprentices (6%), Retail apprentices (9%), those on apprenticeship frameworks (8%), and apprentices under the age of 19 (7%) were among the groups more likely to report not having a written contract of employment. This was also the case for current apprentices who were paid less than £5.28 per hour (12%), and completers who were unemployed at the time of the survey (15%).

Conversely, those most likely to report having a written contract were Level 4 apprentices (97%), Level 7 apprentices (99%), Arts apprentices (98%), Business apprentices (97%), Education apprentices (98%), and apprentices aged 19+ (97%). Current apprentices paid more than £10.42 an hour (97%) were also more likely than average to have a written contract.

Just over three-quarters (77%) of all apprentices reported that they were employed on a permanent basis with no fixed end point during their apprenticeship, unchanged from 2021. A further 14% were employed for the duration of their training only, and 7% had a fixed end date for their employment but this was after the date they expected to complete their training. Current apprentices were less likely to have a permanent job with no fixed end date compared with completers (75% vs. 79% of both recent and longer-term

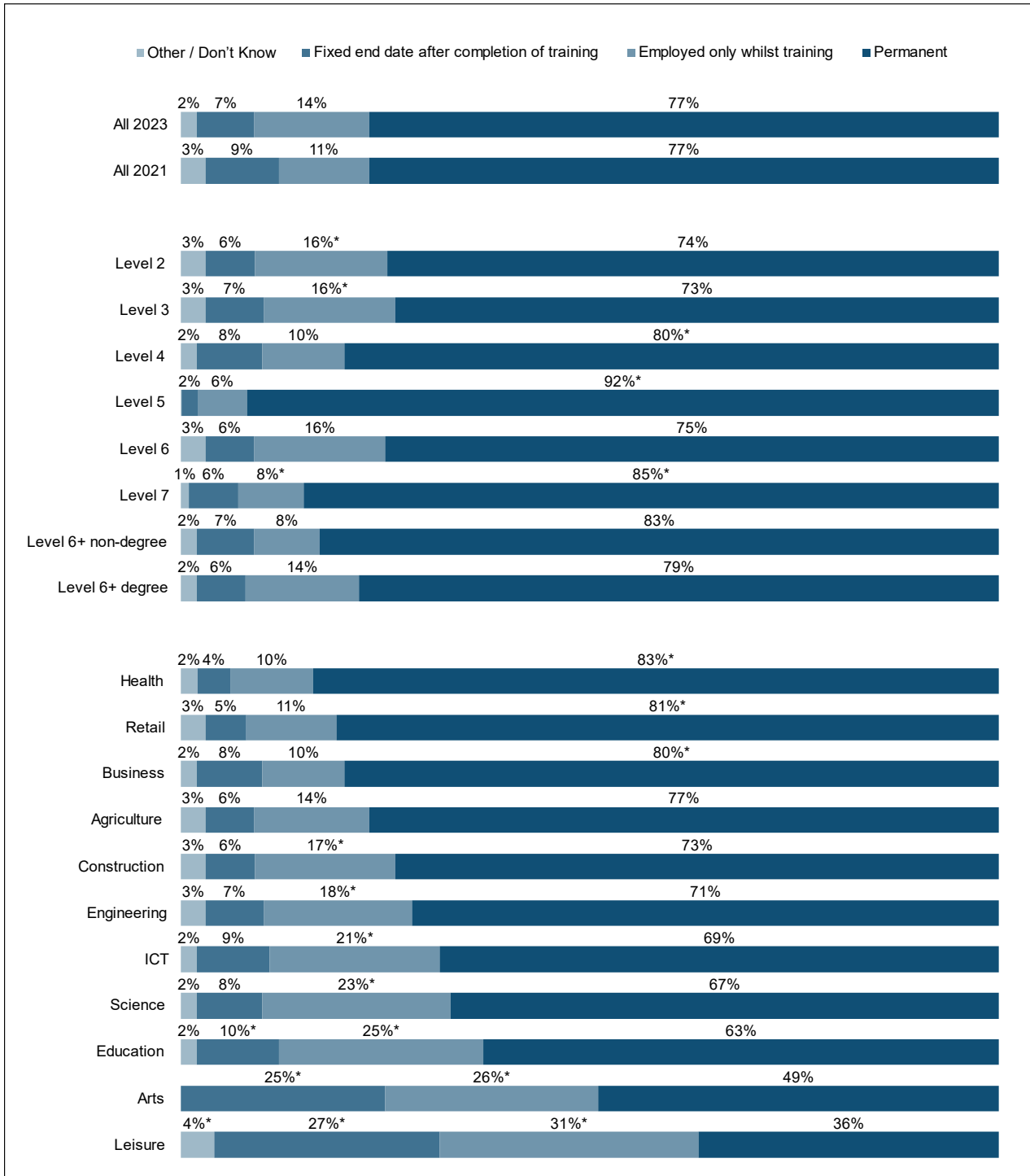
completers). This was in line with the proportions seen among these groups in 2021 and (among current apprentices and longer-term completers) prior. Permanent contracts were more common amongst those who had been working for the same employer before starting their apprenticeship (91% vs. 61% of those who had not).

Though permanent contracts were in place for the majority of apprentices at all levels, Level 4 and particularly Level 5 apprentices were more likely to be on permanent contracts (80% and 92% respectively vs. 77% overall). Those on Level 2, Level 3 and Level 6 apprenticeships were more likely than those at other levels to be employed only for the duration of the apprenticeships (each 16% vs. 10% at Level 4, 6% at Level 5 and 8% at Level 7).

There was substantial variation between apprenticeship SSA and contract type, as shown in Figure 4-2. Those undertaking Leisure (31%), Art (26%), Education (25%), Science (23%), Engineering (18%), Construction (17%), and ICT (21%) apprenticeships were all more likely than average to have been employed for the duration of their training only. In contrast those undertaking Health (83%), Retail (81%), and Business (80%) apprenticeships were all more likely than average to have had a permanent job with no fixed end date.



**Figure 4-2: Contract type during apprenticeship by level and SSA**



Base: All apprentices: 2023 (4,919); 2021(5,122). 2023 subgroups: Level 2 (1,081), Level 3 (2,299), Level 4 (461), Level 5 (316), Level 6 (470), Level 7 (292) Level 6+ non-degree (120), Level 6+ degree (642), Health (902), Retail (525), Education (310), Business (875), ICT (415), Engineering (641), Construction (453), Science (60), Agriculture (304), Leisure (235), Arts (175). \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the average in 2023.

Apprentices with a learning difficulty and / or a disability were more likely to have been employed for the duration of their training only (24% and 20% respectively, compared with 14% of apprentices who did not have a learning difficulty or disability). Overall,

around two-thirds of apprentices with either a physical disability or a learning difficulty (64% and 69% respectively) had a permanent job compared with 77% of apprentices without any disability.

Other apprenticeship groups who were more likely to have had a permanent job included:

- Older apprentices (25 and over) (88%), compared with apprentices aged 19 to 24 (71%) and those under the age of 19 (64%).
- Female apprentices (80% vs. 74% of male apprentices).
- Apprentices from a white background, compared with all other ethnic groups combined (78% vs. 69%).

Among current apprentices, those paid £10.42 or more per hour were also more likely than average to have had a permanent job with no fixed end date (84% vs. 62% of those paid less than £10.42 per hour).

## Working hours during apprenticeships

Apprentices were contracted to work (or if they did not have a written contract, usually worked) an average of 38 hours per week.<sup>48</sup> This included time spent learning or training onsite or off-site during the hours they were usually paid for, but excludes meal breaks and paid overtime. This increased slightly compared with 2021, when apprentices worked an average of 37 hours per week.

Nearly all apprentices (93%) worked 31 hours or more per week (up from 89% in 2021). Current apprentices (94%) were more likely than longer-term completers and recent completers (both 91%) to have worked 31 hours or more per week. Current apprentices have seen a gradual increase in working hours since 2015 (38.1 hours per week in 2023 vs. 35.2 hours in 2015).

As shown in Table 4-4, the average number of hours worked remained broadly consistent across apprenticeship levels. However, it was evident that Level 2 apprentices worked slightly fewer hours than the rest (87% worked 31 hours or more per week vs. 93% on average). In contrast, practically all (98%) apprentices at Level 6 and above worked 31 hours and more hours each week.

By SSA, Construction and Engineering apprentices worked the highest average number of hours per week (40 and 39 hours respectively), with 99% in both SSAs working 31

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<sup>48</sup> Those on zero hours contracts (5 respondents) were set to 'don't know' when determining the average number of hours worked by apprentices, as including those with a contracted hours value of 0 (these apprentices do not actually work 0 hours a week, but do not have a specified number of working hours in their contract) in this calculation would skew the average downwards. This marked a change from the approach taken in 2021, when those on zero hours contracts were included in the average.

hours per week or more. Education and Leisure apprentices worked the lowest mean average number of hours per week (mean average of 35 and 36 hours respectively). Leisure apprentices were least likely to work 31 hours or more per week (70%, followed by 80% of Retail and 81% of Education apprentices).

**Table 4-4: Average hours contracted or usually worked during apprenticeships by level and SSA**

<i>Row percentages</i>	<b>Base</b>	<b>Average hours (per week)</b>	<b>Zero hours contract</b>	<b>11 to 20 hours</b>	<b>21 to 30 hours</b>	<b>31 to 40 hours</b>	<b>More than 40 hours</b>
All 2023	(4,752)	38	<0.5%	1%	6%*	<b>84%*</b>	9%
All 2021	(4,970)	37	<0.5%	2%	8%	80%	9%
Level 2	(1,038)	38	<0.5%	<b>1%*</b>	<b>11%*</b>	75%*	<b>12%*</b>
Level 3	(2,208)	38	<0.5%	1%	7%	82%*	<b>11%*</b>
Level 4	(450)	38	0%	1%	3%*	<b>90%*</b>	6%*
Level 5	(312)	38	0%	<0.5%	5%	<b>90%*</b>	4%*
Level 6	(455)	38	0%	0%	3%*	<b>88%*</b>	9%
Level 7	(288)	38	0%	0%	2%*	<b>95%*</b>	3%*
Level 6+ non-degree	(116)	37	0%	0%	4%	<b>94%*</b>	3%*
Level 6+ degree	(627)	38	0%	0%*	2%*	<b>91%*</b>	7%
Engineering	(627)	39	0%	<0.5%	1%*	85%	<b>15%*</b>
Construction	(442)	40	0%	<0.5%	1%*	83%	<b>15%*</b>
Agriculture	(287)	39	0%	0%	5%	80%	<b>15%*</b>
Science	(59)	38	0%	1%	5%	<b>94%*</b>	0%*
ICT	(403)	38	0%	<0.5%	2%*	<b>94%*</b>	3%*
Business	(854)	37	0%	1%	4%*	<b>93%*</b>	3%*
Arts	(170)	37	0%	1%	3%	<b>94%*</b>	2%*
Health	(879)	37	<0.5%	1%	<b>12%*</b>	76%*	11%

<i>Row percentages</i>	Base	Average hours (per week)	Zero hours contract	11 to 20 hours	21 to 30 hours	31 to 40 hours	More than 40 hours
Retail	(511)	37	0%	<b>2%*</b>	<b>18%*</b>	67%*	<b>13%*</b>
Education	(290)	35	0%	<b>3%*</b>	<b>16%*</b>	79%*	2%*
Leisure	(205)	36	0%	<b>2%*</b>	<b>28%*</b>	63%*	7%

Base: All who gave their hours of work. \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the 2023 average (for subgroups) and 2021 (for time series) (bold figures show results that are significantly higher).

There was correlation between duration of apprenticeship and longer working hours. Learners on apprenticeships expected to last two years or longer were more likely than those on apprenticeships expected to last less than two years to report they worked 31 hours or more per week (97% vs. 90%).

Older apprentices (25 and over) were less likely to work longer hours than average (91% worked 31 hours or more per week vs. 93% overall). The same applies to female apprentices (88% worked 31 hours or more per week vs. 98% of male apprentices).

## Pay during apprenticeships

Current apprentices reported a median gross hourly pay of £11.63 per hour, an increase compared with 2021 (£9.98 per hour).<sup>49</sup> As Table 4-5 shows, median pay was lowest for Level 2 apprentices (£8.56) and was highest for Level 7 (£17.34). Generally, median pay increased in line with apprenticeship level, with the exception being Level 6 (£13.36) apprentices, whose reported median gross hourly pay was lower than that of Level 4 (£13.39), Level 5 (£16.45) and Level 7 (£17.34) apprentices.

By SSA, ICT (£14.29) and Business (£14.26) apprentices reported the highest median pay. In contrast, Leisure (£5.77) apprentices reported the lowest median pay. Leisure was also the only SSA where apprentices saw a decrease in pay compared with 2021 (down 12%).

As seen in 2021, pay also increased by age from a median pay of £8.00 per hour among apprentices under the age of 19, to £14.00 among apprentices aged 25 and over.

<sup>49</sup> Results are based on those for whom it was possible to derive gross hourly pay data (1,822 respondents). A specific pay weight was applied to this data to account for non-response. More information about how this figure was calculated can be found in the Technical Report.

**Table 4-5: Gross hourly pay among current apprentices (median), by year**

<i>Row percentages</i>	<b>2021: Base</b>	<b>2023: Base</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>% change</b>
All	(1,957)	(1,822)	£9.98	£11.63	17%
Level 2	(493)	(324)	£8.23	£8.56	4%
Level 3	(878)	(792)	£9.09	£10.42	15%
Level 4	(151)	(171)	£12.51	£13.39	7%
Level 5	(146)	(117)	£13.00	£16.45	27%
Level 6	(168)	(277)	£12.47	£13.36	19%
Level 7	(119)	(141)	£15.75	£17.34	31%
Level 6+ non-degree	(55)	(59)	£15.11	£14.92	-1%
Level 6+ degree	(232)	(359)	£13.84	£14.09	2%
Agriculture	(116)	(106)	£8.00	£10.18	27%
Arts	(66)	(86)	£8.70	£10.71	23%
Business	(369)	(323)	£12.73	£14.26	12%
Construction	(191)	(168)	£8.96	£9.75	9%
Education	(112)	(103)	£8.83	£11.62	32%
Engineering	(313)	(252)	£9.12	£10.00	10%
Health	(315)	(304)	£9.46	£11.85	25%
ICT	(137)	(150)	£11.64	£14.29	23%
Leisure	(89)	(75)	£6.56	£5.77	-12%
Retail	(188)	(205)	£9.09	£10.55	16%
Under 19	(518)	(484)	£6.58	£8.00	22%
19 – 24	(614)	(539)	£9.52	£11.54	21%
25 and over	(825)	(799)	£12.23	£14.00	14%
White	(1,679)	(1,577)	£9.89	£11.54	17%
All other ethnic groups combined	(277)	(245)	£10.83	£12.47	15%

<i>Row percentages</i>	<b>2021: Base</b>	<b>2023: Base</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>% change</b>
LLDD <sup>50</sup>	(158)	(200)	£9.36	£10.96	17%
Not LLDD	(1,797)	(1,617)	£10.00	£11.64	16%

Base: All of those for whom it was possible to derive a gross hourly pay figure. Note – Science is not shown due to a low base size (26 in 2021; 33 in 2023).

Over half (56%) of those giving information about their pay were reporting a gross hourly median pay figure from the first year of their apprenticeship. Around a third (35%) reported a figure from their second year, while just under one-in-ten (9%) were reporting a figure from their third, fourth or fifth year.<sup>51</sup>

Current apprentices in the first year of their apprenticeship (£11.02) reported lower median gross hourly pay compared with those in their second year (£12.09) and those in their third, fourth or fifth year (£12.82). This may be due to the fact that apprentices who have completed their first year and are aged over 19 are entitled the National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage rate for their age group.<sup>52</sup>

More information on apprenticeship pay, including further analysis of this pay data, can be found in the Low Pay Commission’s report.<sup>53</sup>

## **Initial assessments undertaken of learners prior to starting**

Before an apprentice starts their apprenticeship, their prior learning and experience must be assessed. This is to make sure that they are eligible to do the apprenticeship and it is the right programme for them. The training programme can then be tailored to meet the needs of the apprentice and the employer.<sup>54</sup> In line with the 2021 findings, the majority of apprentices (86%) reported receiving an assessment of their abilities and learning prior to their apprenticeship<sup>55</sup>, with this most commonly being to assess their ability in English

<sup>50</sup> Learners with a learning difficulty and / or a disability.

<sup>51</sup> Data was derived using apprenticeship start date in the ILR. This analysis should be treated with caution due to issues around accuracy of start dates (for example, in cases of paused apprenticeships, start date may actually reflect the restart point, and therefore may underestimate the amount of time an individual spends on an apprenticeship).

<sup>52</sup> [Employing an apprentice: Pay and conditions for apprentices - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/employing-an-apprentice-pay-and-conditions-for-apprentices)

<sup>53</sup> Median pay results in the Low Pay Commission’s report differ from those reported in this report, due to the Low Pay Commission typically only including apprentices eligible to be paid the Apprentice Rate of the minimum wage. Further details on the methodology can be found in the Low Pay Commission Report ([The National Minimum Wage Beyond 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-national-minimum-wage-beyond-2024)) and in the accompanying Learner Technical Report.

<sup>54</sup> More information on initial assessments can be found at: [Apprenticeships: initial assessment to recognise prior learning - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeships-initial-assessment-to-recognise-prior-learning)

<sup>55</sup> Respondents were asked, ‘when you started your apprenticeship, did you receive any initial assessments to check: i) your ability in English, ii) your ability in Maths, iii) your ability in IT, or IT skills, iv) any other relevant prior qualifications, v) any other relevant prior learning or work experience not leading to a qualification?’. The question is open to interpretation by the respondent in terms of what they feel constitutes an assessment.

and maths.<sup>56</sup> Three-quarters of apprentices reported that their ability in English and maths was assessed (each 74%), 40% reported receiving assessment for other relevant prior qualifications, 31% their ability in IT and 30% for other relevant prior learning or experience. Reported assessments in English and maths were both less common than in 2021 (78% and 79% respectively).

Just over seven-in-ten (72%) apprentices reported being assessed to check both their English and maths abilities, down from 77% in 2021. Current apprentices and recent completers (74% and 71% respectively) were more likely to report being assessed to check both their English and maths abilities compared with longer term completers (66%), though the proportion reduced for all of these groups compared with 2021 (current: 79%; recent completers: 77%; longer-term completers: 72%).

Leisure (80%), Art (79%), and Health apprentices (75%) were more likely than average (72%) to report being assessed on their English and maths abilities at the start of their apprenticeships. Science (54%), Construction (63%), ICT (67%) apprentices were least likely to report being assessed in this way.

Considering demographic differences, younger apprentices were less likely to report being assessed in both English and maths (66% of apprentices aged under 19, vs. 71% aged 19 to 24 and 76% aged 25 and over). Male apprentices were also less likely to report this than female apprentices (70% vs. 74%).

**Table 4-6: Assessment of English, maths and other relevant prior learning or qualifications by level, SSA and age**

		Any assessment (English or maths abilities, other relevant prior learning or qualifications) <sup>57</sup>		Assessment of both English and maths abilities	
Row percentages	Base 2023	2021	2023	2021	2023
All	(4,919)	86%	86%	77%	72%
Level 2	(1,081)	84%	83%*	74%	69%
Level 3	(2,299)	86%	86%	78%	<b>74%*</b>
Level 4	(461)	93%	87%	83%	75%
Level 5	(316)	91%	<b>90%*</b>	81%	<b>80%*</b>

<sup>56</sup> Other areas assessed included IT skills, other relevant prior qualifications and other prior learning or work experience.

<sup>57</sup> Note, the 2021 survey did not ask apprentices if an initial assessment was made of their IT skills.

		Any assessment (English or maths abilities, other relevant prior learning or qualifications) <sup>57</sup>		Assessment of both English and maths abilities	
Row percentages	Base 2023	2021	2023	2021	2023
Level 6	(470)	81%	85%	71%	63%*
Level 7	(292)	88%	88%	75%	65%*
Level 6+ non-degree	(120)	87%	91%	76%	75%
Level 6+ degree	(642)	84%	85%	71%	62%*
Leisure	(235)	84%	90%	77%	<b>80%*</b>
Arts	(175)	85%	90%	76%	<b>79%*</b>
Education	(310)	85%	89%	72%	76%
Health	(902)	92%	<b>88%*</b>	84%	<b>75%*</b>
Business	(875)	89%	87%	78%	71%
Science	(60)	82%	86%	74%	54%
ICT	(415)	83%	85%	77%	67%
Engineering	(641)	83%	85%	75%	74%
Agriculture	(304)	86%	83%	76%	69%
Retail	(525)	84%	81%*	75%	70%
Construction	(453)	73%	81%*	60%	63%*
Under 19	(1,217)	81%	80%	70%	66%*
19 to 24	(1,461)	85%	86%	73%	71%
25 and over	(2,241)	90%	<b>89%*</b>	84%	<b>76%*</b>

Base: All apprentices. Lowest base size for 2021 was \* indicates where a result is significantly different from 2021 (bold figures show results that are significantly higher than in 2021).

More than half (55%) of apprentices who reported providers undertaking assessments, said these were usually carried out solely by the training provider, while a further 34% said their assessments were carried out by both their employer and training provider (with a small increase in joint assessments compared with 2021, up from 27%). A small minority (9%) reported they had only been assessed by their employer.



Apprentices at Level 6 and above were more likely to have had their assessment undertaken by their employer (15% vs. 9% on average).

## English and maths qualifications

Apprentices were asked if they had studied towards an English or maths qualification as part of their apprenticeship. As shown in Figure 4-3, 14% of all apprentices had studied for an English qualification as part of their apprenticeship, in line with results from 2021. For maths qualifications, the results were broadly similar although a fractionally higher proportion had studied for a maths qualification than an English qualification (17% vs. 14%), as shown in Figure 4-4. The proportion that had studied maths was also similar to 2021. Overall, 21% of apprentices studied towards *either* an English or maths qualification during the apprenticeship; 10% studied towards *both*.

There were a number of differences in the prevalence of English and maths study when looking at various key subgroups:

- Apprentices in Retail and Health were more likely to have studied English (19% and 18% respectively) and maths (26% and 25% respectively).
- Arts and ICT were among those least likely to have studied English and maths (English: 5% and 10% respectively; maths: 5% and 7% respectively).
- The pattern by apprenticeship level was not linear, however those on the lowest level apprenticeships (Level 2) were far more likely to have studied English and maths than those on Level 6 and 7 apprenticeships (English: Level 2: 24% vs. 3% and 8% respectively for Levels 6 and 7; maths: 29% vs. 4% and 5% respectively for Levels 6 and 7).
- Current apprentices were less likely than completers to have studied English and maths (English: 13% vs. 15%; maths: 15% vs. 20%). There were no differences between recent and longer-term completers.
- By ethnicity, black, black British, Caribbean or African apprentices were most likely to have studied both English (25%) and maths (24%).
- By age, older groups were most likely to have studied English and maths (English: 21% of those aged 25 and over vs. 7% aged 19-24 and 10% under 19; maths: 24%, 10% and 15% respectively).
- Study of English and maths were both most common among learners with learning difficulties (English: 19% vs. 14% overall; maths: 26% vs. 17%).

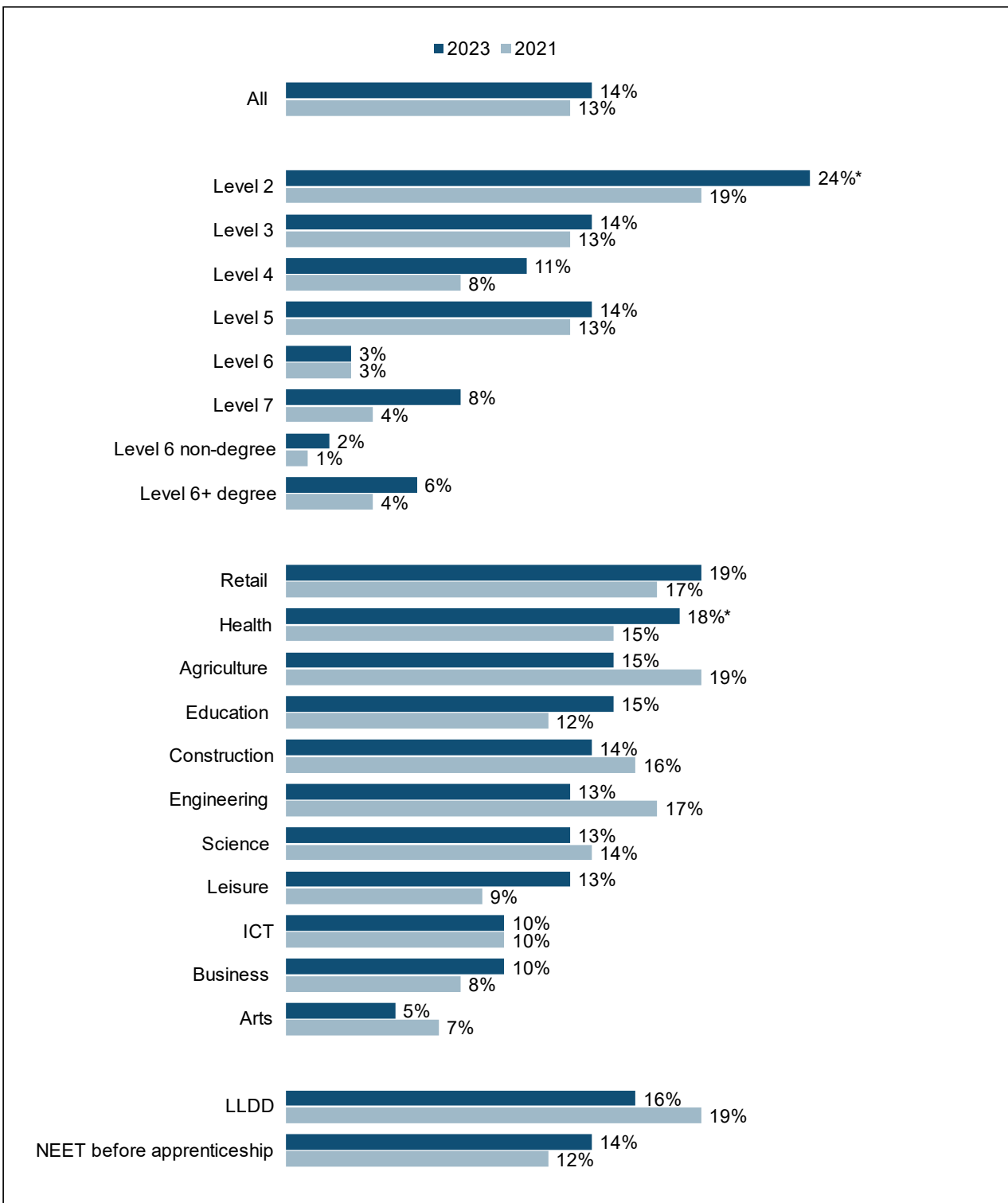
The proportion of Level 2 apprentices that studied English and maths increased compared with 2021 (English: 24% vs. 19% in 2021; maths: 29% vs. 22%). There were relatively few other differences compared with 2021 in terms of English study, though Health apprentices saw an increase (18% vs. 15% in 2021). The proportion studying maths also increased among Health apprentices (25% vs. 18% in 2021), along with Education apprentices (18% vs. 12%), but decreased among Arts apprentices (5% vs. 14%).

Unlike with English qualifications, the likelihood of having studied, maths differed by gender with female apprentices more likely to report studying maths compared with male apprentices (19% vs. 15%).

Apprentices living in the most deprived areas (first IMD quintile) were most likely to have studied English and / or maths. This group were more likely than those in the least deprived areas (fifth IMD quintile) to have:

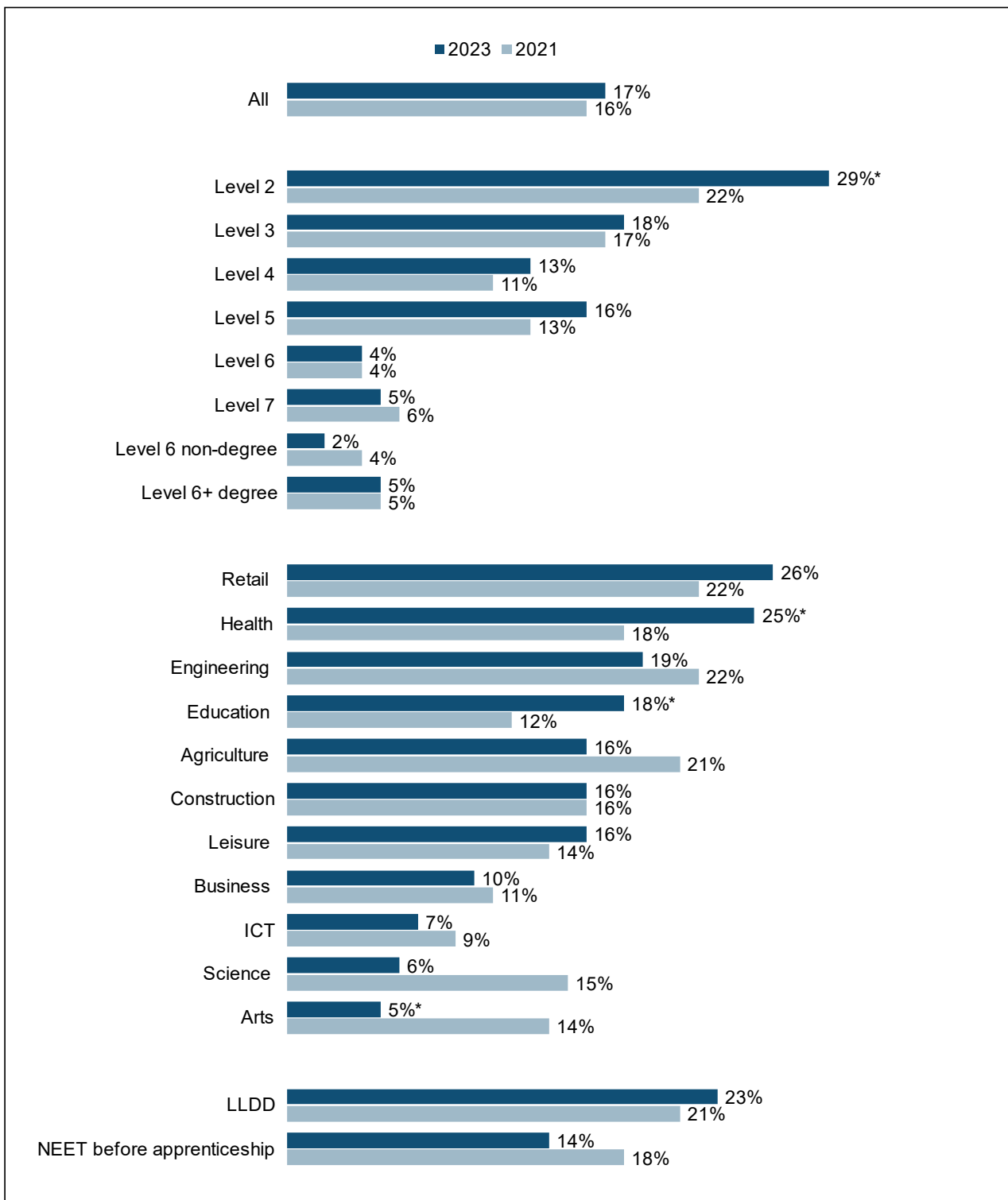
- Studied English (18% vs. 10%)
- Studied maths (21% vs. 14%)
- Studied either English or maths (25% vs. 17%)
- Studied English and maths (14% vs. 7%)

**Figure 4-3: Proportion of apprentices that had studied towards an English qualification**



Base: All 2023 apprentices: (4,919). 2023 subgroups: Level 2 (1,081); Level 3 (2,299); Level 4 (461); Level 5 (316); Level 6 (470); Level 7 (292); Level 6+ non-degree (120); Level 6+ degree (642); Agriculture (304); Arts (175); Business (875); Construction (453); Education (310); Engineering (641); Health (902); ICT (415), Leisure (235); Retail (525); Science (60). SSAs in order of those most likely to have studied towards an English qualification. \* indicates where a result is significantly different from 2021.

**Figure 4-4: Proportion of apprentices that had studied towards a maths qualification**



Base: All 2023 apprentices: (4,919). 2023 subgroups: Level 2 (1,081); Level 3 (2,299); Level 4 (461); Level 5 (316); Level 6 (470); Level 7 (292); Level 6+ non-degree (120); Level 6+ degree (642); Agriculture (304); Arts (175); Business (875); Construction (453); Education (310); Engineering (641); Health (902); ICT (415); Leisure (235); Retail (525); Science (60). SSAs in order of those most likely to have studied towards a maths qualification. \* indicates where a result is significantly different from 2021.

Apprentices who reported having studied towards an English or maths qualification were asked how they felt about doing so. As shown in Figure 4-5, views were fairly evenly balanced although veered just slightly towards a stance of not liking it. Overall, half (50%) did not mind it, 21% said they liked it and 28% did not like it. Non-completers views on studying English and / or maths can be found in [Chapter 9](#).

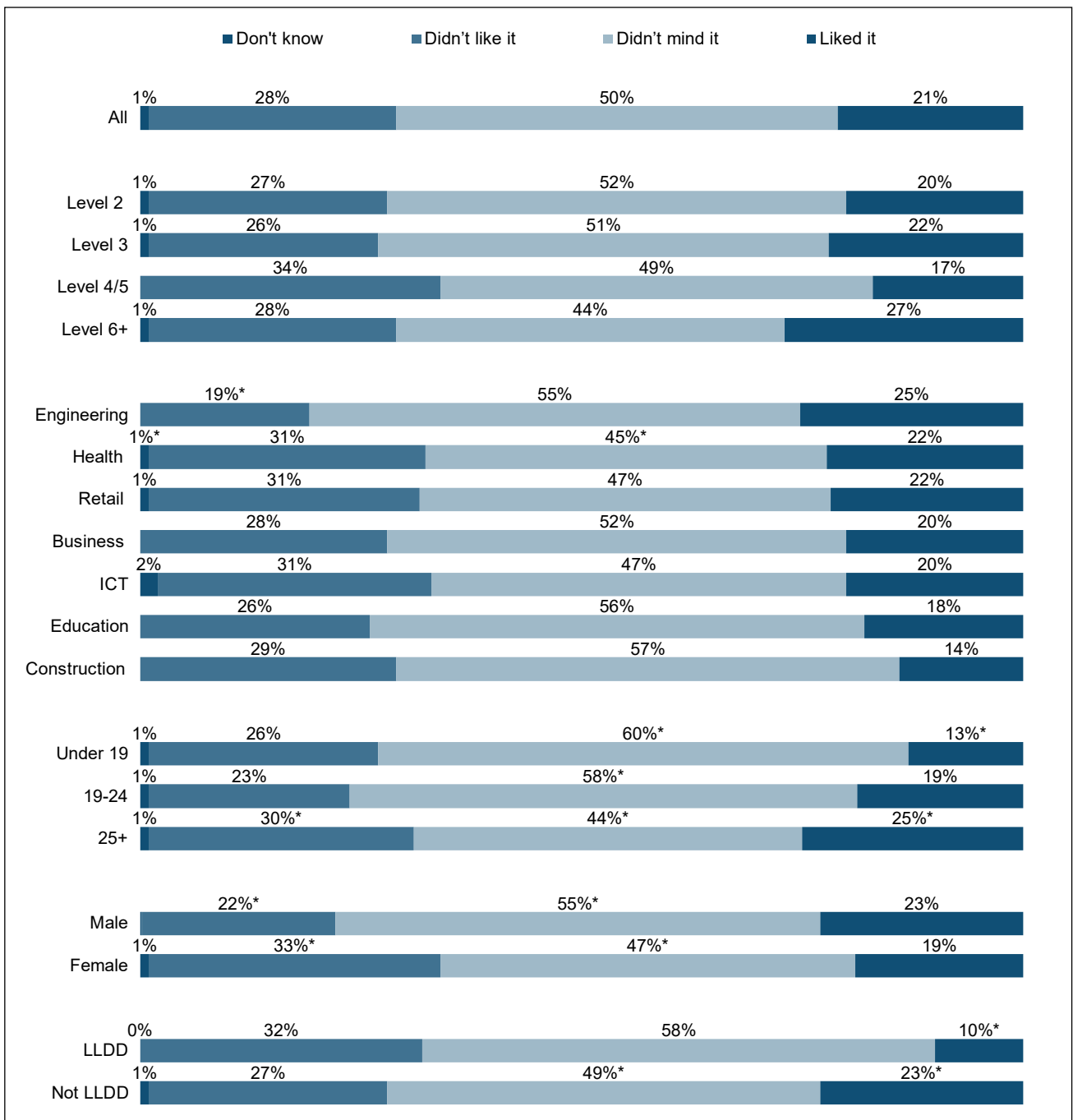
There was little difference in viewpoints by subject and level, with the exception that Engineering apprentices were less likely to report not liking studying English and / or maths (19% vs. 28% overall). More substantial attitudes were found by demographic groups:

- Apprentices with learning difficulties and / or disabilities were substantially less likely to report that they liked studying English and / or maths (10% vs. 23% without).
- Older apprentices aged 25 and over held stronger views either way (25% liked it, 30% disliked it and only 44% said they did not mind either way). In contrast the majority of apprentices aged under 19 and 19 to 24 did not mind (60% and 58% respectively).
- Female apprentices were more likely to report that they did not like it compared with male apprentices (33% vs. 22%, though there were no clear differences in the proportion that liked it).
- Apprentices belonging to the Asian or Asian British or black, black British, Caribbean or African ethnic groups were more likely to report they liked studying the subjects (47% each).
- Apprentices who were in work before starting their apprenticeship were more likely to report liking the study (23%). Those who were in education or training before their apprenticeship were less likely to say this (13%), though a relatively large majority reported not minding it (62%).
- Those living in more deprived areas were more likely to report liking English and maths study. This was most noticeable among those in the second IMD quintile (27% liked it vs. 21% average).

This question was new to 2023, it is therefore not possible to compare results against previous years. It is worth noting that this question was asked of apprentices who studied English, maths or both and so there is no way of isolating apprentices' answers in response to English or maths separately. However, when filtering responses by those studying English only and maths only those who studied an English qualification only were more likely to report liking it compared with those who studied maths only (28% vs.

16%). This also played out in those studying maths only being more likely to say they disliked studying it (38% vs. 25% studying English).

**Figure 4-5: Whether apprentices liked studying English and / or maths**

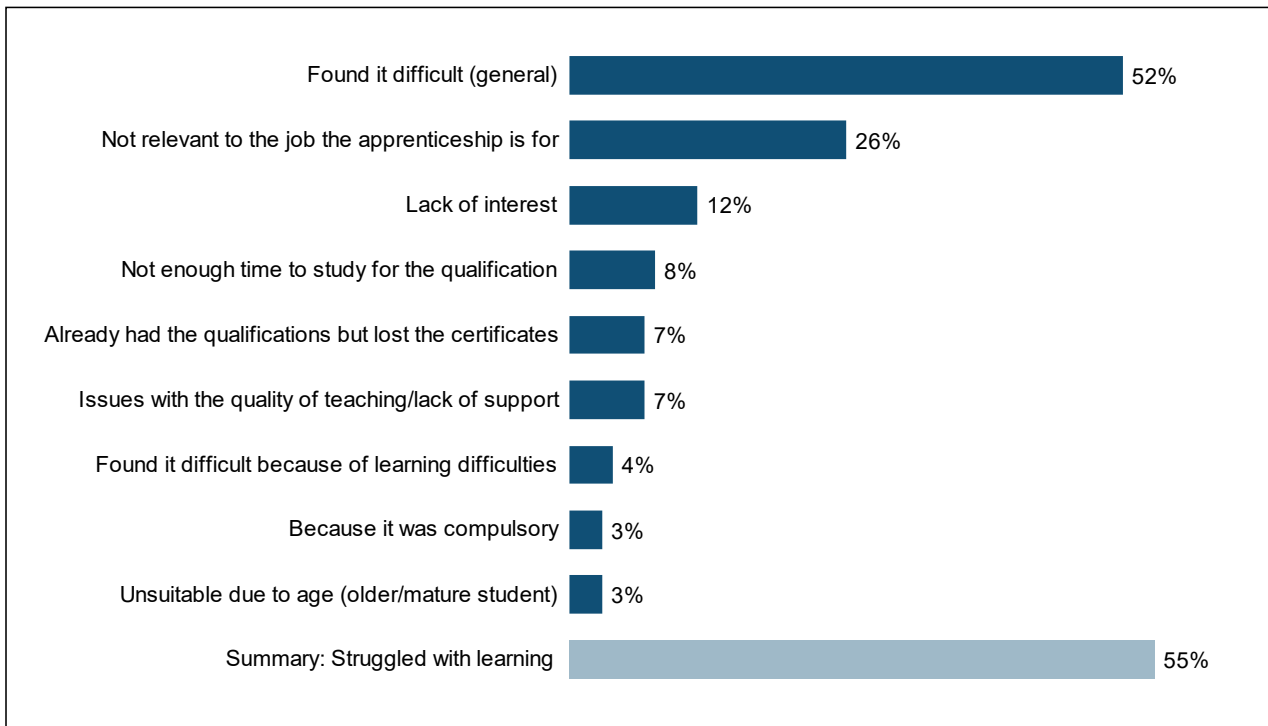


Base: All apprentices who studied for an English or maths qualification during their apprenticeship (1,058): Level 2 (380); Level 3 (489); Level 4/5 (127); Level 6+ (62); Engineering (147); Health (281); Retail (153); Business (136); ICT (72); Education (71); Construction (88); Under 19 (212); 19-24 (182); 25 and over (664); Male (521); Female (537), LLDD<sup>58</sup> (135), Not LLDD (918). SSAs in order of proportion who liked it. Leisure (42), Arts (11), Agriculture (48) and Science (8) excluded due to low base sizes. \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the average.

<sup>58</sup> Learners with a learning difficulty and / or a disability.

Apprentices who reported that they did not like studying English and / or maths were asked why this was the case. As shown in Figure 4-6, the most common reason was that they found it too difficult in general, reported by just over half (52%), followed by the qualification not being relevant to the job or role the apprenticeship is for (26%). Overall, 55% of apprentices who did not like studying for an English or maths qualification reported that they struggled with learning in some way, which contributed to them disliking it.<sup>59</sup>

**Figure 4-6: Reasons why apprentices did not like studying English and / or maths**



Base: All who did not like studying for an English or maths qualification during their apprenticeship (298).  
Responses under 3% not charted.

Female apprentices were more likely to report that they found it difficult generally (63% vs. 34% of male apprentices) and that they did not have enough time to study for the qualification (12% vs. 3%). In contrast, male apprentices were more likely to report that they disliked it because it was not relevant to the job or role the apprenticeship was for (32% vs. 22%) and that they lacked interest in the subject (20% vs. 7%). Older apprentices aged 25 and over were less likely than average to say they found it difficult (46%) and instead more likely to report it was not relevant to their job (32% vs. 26% overall), or they did not have enough time for the study (12% vs. 8% overall). A relatively high proportion also said they already had the qualification but had lost the certificate (11% of apprentices aged 25 and over).

<sup>59</sup> 'Struggled with learning' combines those saying either 'Found it difficult (general)', 'Unsure they will / would pass' or 'Found it difficult because of learning difficulties, e.g. dyslexia or dyscalculia'.

More information on apprentices' views of English and maths study, and any English and maths skills gained while undertaking the apprenticeship, can be found in the [‘Apprentices’ satisfaction with individual elements of their apprenticeship’](#) and [‘Skills gained during apprenticeships’](#) sections of this report.

## The type of training received during apprenticeships

Apprentices were prompted with different types of training (shown in Figure 4-7), and asked which if any they had undertaken, or that they planned to undertake during their apprenticeship. The main purpose of these questions was to establish which apprentices were in scope to be followed up about their off-the-job training (OTJT) hours (analysis of OTJT hours and reported compliance levels is covered in [Chapter 5](#)). Those who said they received training from a college of training provider, employer or undertook other study during their contracted working hours, were considered to have indicated that they had undertaken OTJT and therefore were followed up on their OTJT hours. The other forms of training listed are not considered to count as off the-job training and were simply used to help prompt apprentices on which types of training to exclude when giving their OTJT hours. This section summarises headline results from these questions.

Almost all apprentices (99%) took part in some type of training during their apprenticeship. As seen in 2021, the type of training or learning most commonly undertaken during apprenticeships was delivered by employers within normal working hours including training sessions, job shadowing or mentoring (86%). This was closely followed by learning or training from a college or training provider such as classes, workshops, lectures, or webinars and undertaken within normal working hours (undertaken by 83%). Most apprentices (70%) had also had other study or learning time during their working hours, such as assignments, self-assessments or exam revision.

Beyond training that may constitute OTJT under apprenticeship funding rules, a large majority (84%) said they had undertaken training as part of their normal day-to-day work duties. Around a third (32%) undertook English and maths training and learning.<sup>60</sup> A sizeable minority of apprentices undertook other learning or training not directly relevant to their apprenticeship (33%) and learning or training outside of their working hours (40%).

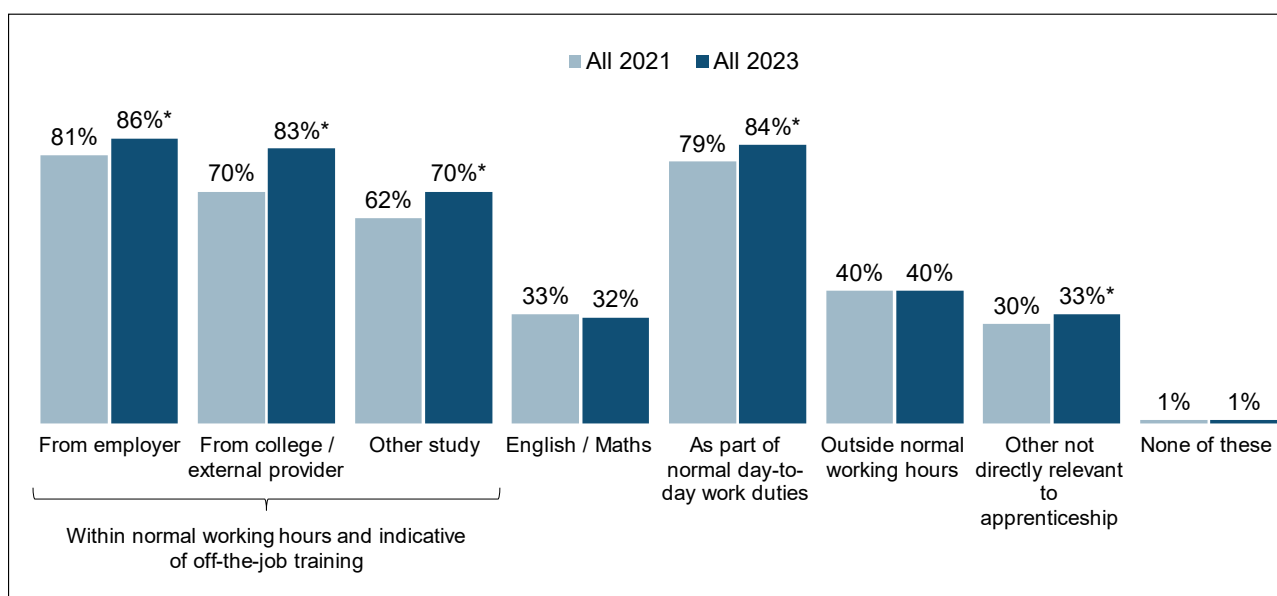
Compared with 2021 and as shown in Figure 4-7, there was an increase in the proportion of apprentices reporting that they had undertaken most of the types of training and learning, with the largest increase for training and learning from their college / external training provider (an uplift of 13 percentage points from 70% to 83%).

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<sup>60</sup> Note, this is higher than the 21% who said they studied towards either an English or maths qualification specifically.



**Figure 4-7: Type of training and learning undertaken during apprenticeship (prompted)**



Base: All apprentices: 2023 (4,919); 2021 (5,122). Don't know excluded, less than 0.5%. \* indicates where a result is significantly different from 2021.

In terms of the types of training and learning that occurred within normal working hours that could constitute training, some differences were evident by apprenticeship level as shown in Table 4-7. Level 6 and Level 7 apprentices were particularly likely to have undertaken learning or training in their normal working hours from the employer (92% and 90% respectively) or from their college / training provider (89% and 91% respectively). Level 6 apprentices were also more likely to have done other study within their normal working hours (79%).

**Table 4-7: Main types of learning and training undertaken during apprenticeships, within normal working hours, by level**

Row percentages	Base	Within normal working hours: From employer	Within normal working hours: From college / training provider	Within normal working hours: Other study
All	(4,919)	86%	83%	70%
Level 2	(1,081)	87%	84%	65%*
Level 3	(2,299)	85%	81%*	70%
Level 4	(461)	82%*	81%	69%
Level 5	(316)	83%	77%*	73%
Level 6	(470)	<b>92%*</b>	<b>89%*</b>	<b>79%*</b>

<i>Row percentages</i>	<b>Base</b>	<b>Within normal working hours: From employer</b>	<b>Within normal working hours: From college / training provider</b>	<b>Within normal working hours: Other study</b>
Level 7	(292)	<b>90%*</b>	<b>91%*</b>	67%
Level 6 + non-degree	(120)	<b>94%*</b>	<b>91%*</b>	66%
Level 6+ degree	(642)	<b>90%*</b>	<b>90%*</b>	<b>76%*</b>

Base: All apprentices. \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the average (bold figures show results that are significantly higher than the average).

There were also differences by SSA. Science (94%), Construction (91%), Engineering (88%), Agriculture (88%), ICT (88%), and Business (86%) apprentices were more likely than average to have undertaken learning or training in their normal working hours from their college / training provider. Further, Construction (91%), Agriculture (90%), and Engineering (90%) apprentices were also more likely than average to have undertaken learning or training in their normal working hours from their employer.

Those with a learning difficulty and / or a disability were less likely to report their employer and provider worked well together (77% vs. 83% of those with neither). Apprentices living in the least deprived areas were more likely to report they worked well together (85% in the first IMD quintile vs. 83% average).

Among longer-term completers, those on apprenticeship standards were more likely than those on apprenticeship frameworks to have received training or learning from their employer (82% vs. 74%) and other study or learning during their normal working hours (66% vs. 59%).

## How well employer and training provider worked together

Apprentices who received training from either a college or training provider were asked how well they believed their employer and their training provider worked together. Over eight-in-ten (83%) felt their employer and training provider worked well together, with around half of this group saying they had worked very well together (40%). Current apprentices (86%) were more likely to be positive about this aspect compared with both longer-term (79%) and recent (77%) completers.

Around one-in-six (16%) apprentices receiving training from a college or training provider felt their employer and training provider had not worked well together (12% not very well, 5% not at all well). This view was held most strongly amongst Level 6 apprentices (22%), and those completing Engineering apprenticeships (19%). In contrast, Art and Business apprentices had reported the most positive joined-up working approach between their

employer and training provider (90% and 86% respectively said they had worked well together).

## 5. Off-the-job training requirement

This chapter specifically examines awareness of the requirements around reported compliant levels of off-the-job training (OTJT), the amount of off-the-job learning undertaken, and how reported compliance with the OTJT requirement varies by different types of apprenticeship. Reported compliance was calculated using off-the-job-training hours data reported by apprentices during the survey.

In 2017, it became a requirement for an apprentice to spend a minimum of 20% of their working hours undertaking OTJT to ensure the development of new skills beyond their prior knowledge and current job experience.<sup>61</sup> In August 2022, this was revised to 20% of a maximum 30 hour week (6 hours), regardless of the apprentice's actual full-time working hours. Where compliant levels of OTJT are discussed in this chapter, this is based on the rules that were in place for apprentices at the time – i.e. the 6 hour cap only applies to those in the survey who started their apprenticeship from August 2022 onwards.

### Key findings

- **The proportion of apprentices that were aware of the latest OTJT requirements (78%) remained consistent with 2021, despite recent changes to the rules.**
- **Current apprentices were more likely to be aware of the 6 hour OTJT requirement** than recent and longer-term completers (83% vs. 73% and 67% respectively).
- There was also variation in awareness of the OTJT requirements by apprenticeship level. Awareness was highest among Level 5 apprentices (86%) and lowest among those at Level 2 (71%).
- **The proportion of apprentices reporting receiving compliant levels of OTJT increased, from 46% in 2021 to 60% in 2023.** Reported compliance levels were even higher when only considering post-August 2022 starts (73%), for whom the new rules apply.
- **Overall apprentices spent a mean average of 21% of their working hours on OTJT (up from 19% in 2021).**
- By sector, ICT, Construction and Engineering apprentices were most likely to report compliant levels of OTJT (77%, 71% and 69% respectively). The lowest levels were

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<sup>61</sup> [Apprenticeship off-the-job training \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

reported among Education, Health and Retail apprentices (43%, 47% and 54% respectively).

- Though a relatively low proportion of Level 2 apprentices reported receiving compliant levels of OTJT (55%), this group saw the largest increase in reported compliance compared with 2021 (up 16 percentage points from 39%).

## Awareness of the 6 or more hours per week off-the-job training requirement

DfE guidance documents state that to be eligible for government funding, all full-time apprentices must spend at least 20% of their normal working hours, over the planned duration of the apprenticeship period, on OTJT. The policy was updated for new starts from 1 August 2022 so that a maximum of 30 working hours are used in the OTJT calculation, irrespective of how many hours the apprentice works. This means that apprentices working more than 30 hours are required to undertake a minimum of 6 hours off OTJT, rather than 20% of the hours they work, as before. The purpose of this change was to make the system fairer and simpler to administrate.

To qualify as OTJT, training must:

- Be directly relevant to the apprenticeship standard or framework.
- Teach new knowledge, skills and behaviours.
- Take place within the apprentice's normal working hours.
- Take place away from the apprentice's normal work duties (though it may take place at the workplace).
- Exclude English and maths training.<sup>62</sup>

Overall, close to four-fifths (78%) of apprentices said they were aware of the requirement for full-time apprentices to spend at least 6 hours per week on OTJT. This was the same proportion that reported awareness in the 2021 survey, despite changes to the rules as noted above. Current apprentices (83%) were more likely to be aware of the requirement than recent and longer-term completers (73% and 67% respectively). This might be expected, given that the new rules only applied to current apprentices, however similar patterns were seen in the 2021 survey, when the 20% off-the-job requirement applied to all groups (82% of current apprentices aware; 76% of recent completers; 64% of longer-term completers). It is of course possible that when apprentices answered this question,

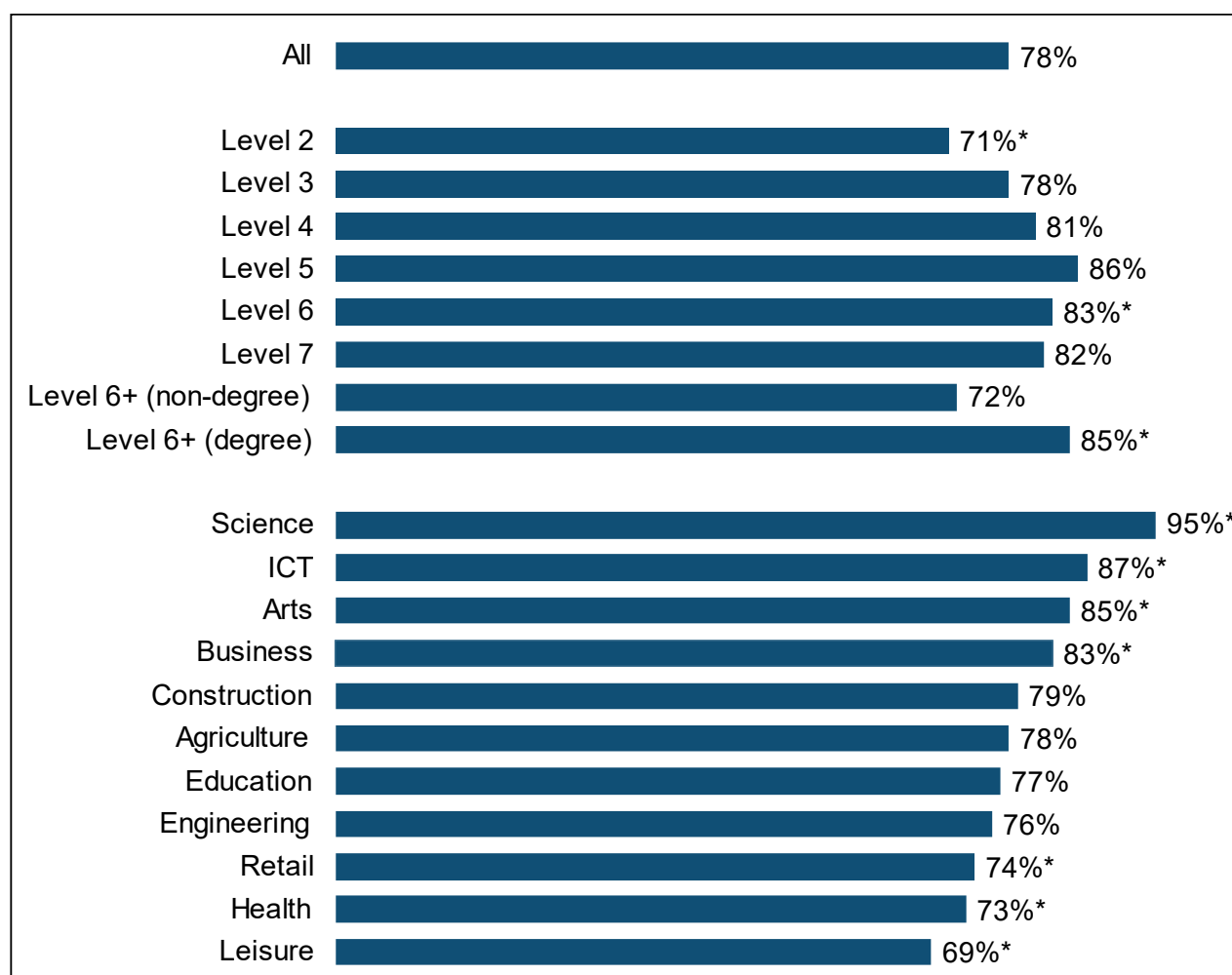
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<sup>62</sup> DfE 2023, [Apprenticeships: off-the-job training](#)

some were thinking about their awareness of off-the-job requirements more generally and the rules that applied to them, rather than the specific updated rules.

As shown in Figure 5-1, by apprenticeship level, awareness of the OTJT requirement was highest among Level 5 apprentices (86%) and lowest among those at Level 2 (71%), while similar proportions were aware at the other levels (ranging between 78% and 83% aware). Among Level 2 apprentices, awareness was lowest among those undertaking Engineering apprenticeships (64%). Degree apprentices at Level 6 and above were more likely than those not undertaking degree apprenticeships at this level to be aware of the requirements (85% vs. 72%). There were greater differences by Sector Subject Area (SSA) with awareness ranging from 69% among Leisure apprentices to 95% among Science apprentices. Alongside Leisure, those undertaking Health (73%) and Retail (74%) apprenticeships were less likely to be aware than overall.

**Figure 5-1: Proportion of apprentices aware of the 6 hours / 20% off-the-job training requirement**



Base: All apprentices (4,919); Level 2 (1,081); Level 3 (2,299); Level 4 (461); Level 5 (316); Level 6 (470); Level 7 (292); Science (60); ICT (415); Arts (175); Business (875); Construction (453); Agriculture (304); Education (310); Engineering (641); Retail (525); Health (902); Leisure (235). \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the average.

Awareness of the 6 hour OTJT requirement also varied by other learner characteristics. Considering age, younger apprentices under the age of 19 were more likely to be aware than those aged 25 and over (80% vs. 77%), though it should be noted that a larger proportion of under-19s were current apprentices, compared with those aged 25 and over (66% and 60% respectively). Among current apprentices only there were no differences by age.

Female apprentices were more likely to be aware of the training requirement than male apprentices (80% vs. 77%), though this is a narrower gap than in 2021 (81% vs. 75%). There were few differences at regional level, though apprentices residing in the South East were least likely to be aware of the 6 hour OTJT requirement (75%). In terms of ethnicity, awareness levels were lowest among black, black British, Caribbean or African apprentices (68%). When looking at deprivation, those living in the least deprived areas (fifth Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) quintile) were least likely to be aware of the OTJT requirement (75%).

## Off-the-job training hours undertaken

The survey collected information from apprentices on the number of OTJT hours per week during their apprenticeship. Combined with data provided on the number of contracted / working hours undertaken per week, it is possible to derive the number and proportion of worked hours spent on OTJT in order to assess the extent to which the OTJT requirement was being met (i.e. reported compliance).

As discussed above, only apprentices who started their apprenticeship learning from 1 August 2022 or later were affected by the recent changes to the OTJT requirement which capped the 20% calculation at 30 hours (i.e. a minimum of 6 hours of OTJT for those working full-time). For those who started their apprenticeship before this date, to be compliant with the apprenticeship funding rules, OTJT had to make up 20% of their contracted hours, regardless of the number of hours worked. Analysis in this section of reported compliance with the OTJT requirements is therefore based on the rules in place at the time that individuals started their apprenticeship.

Of the 4,919 apprentices interviewed, 3,369 gave a valid exact figure for both the number of OTJT hours undertaken and their working hours, hence data covered in this section is based on 69% of apprentices in the survey.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> There are some differences between the weighted profiles of those who provided usable off-the-job training hours data and those who were unable to provide this. Those who were able to provide this information were more likely to be completers (40% vs. 34% of those who could not provide usable data); female (49% vs. 45%); aged 25 and over (44% vs. 39%); and undertaking Retail apprenticeships (8% vs. 6%). They were less likely to be in doing an apprenticeship at Level 6 (9% vs. 14%) or undertaking apprenticeships in Engineering (15% vs. 25%) or ICT (6% vs. 8%). The characteristics for those who were more likely to give usable data are associated with lower levels of reported compliance, with one exception

Overall, three-fifths (60%) of apprentices reported compliant OTJT hours. This is a notable increase since 2021, when fewer than half (46%) of apprentices reported compliant OTJT hours.<sup>64</sup> A further 9% of apprentices reported doing 'close to compliant' OTJT hours.<sup>65</sup> The mean average proportion of worked hours spent on OTJT was 21% (compared with 19% in 2021). It should be noted that if the new OTJT requirements for post-August 2022 starts were retrospectively applied to all apprentices, the proportion of apprentices that reported receiving compliant levels of OTJT increased to 69% (72% among current apprentices).

Table 5-1 shows that reported compliance levels varied by SSA. Those undertaking apprenticeships in ICT, Construction and Engineering were more likely to report compliance than overall (77%, 71% and 69% respectively). Results indicate that Science apprentices were also more likely to have reported receiving compliant levels of OTJT (82%), though a low base size of 33 respondents should be noted. Engineering apprentices reported the highest mean average percentage of working hours spent on OTJT (25.5%). In contrast, the Education, Health and Retail SSAs had the lowest reported compliance levels (43%, 47% and 54% respectively), with Education apprentices also reporting the lowest mean average percentage of working hours spent on OTJT (16.1%). Though all SSAs reported increases in compliance levels when compared with 2021, patterns remained similar in terms of the SSAs most and least compliant with the OTJT requirements. The largest increases in compliance levels by SSA were reported by Leisure and Retail apprentices (each with a 23 percentage point increase compared with 2021).

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in that Health apprentices were less likely to provide usable data and this SSA typically reported lower levels of compliance.

<sup>64</sup> Given that OTJT requirements now equate to a minimum of 6 working hours, it was expected that this proportion would have increased compared with 2021, when the requirement was 20% of all working hours.

<sup>65</sup> Learners were considered to have undertaken 'close' to compliant levels of off-the-job training if the amount of training received was not compliant but represented at least 80% of the minimum requirement (but less than 100%). This varied depending on which off-the-job training rules applied at the time their apprenticeship started. For those who started before August 2022, 'close to compliant' covers apprentices whose off-the-job training accounted for 16 to 19.99% of their working hours. This also applies to those who started an apprenticeship in August 2022 or later but worked fewer than 30 hours per week. For those who started their apprenticeship in August 2022 or later and worked 30 or more hours per week (i.e. where the required off-the-job training hours were capped at 6 hours), 'close to compliant' covers those who undertook between 4.8 and 5.99 hours of off-the-job training.



**Table 5-1: Percentage of working hours spent on off-the-job training and the proportion of apprentices that reported receiving compliant levels of off-the-job training, by SSA**

<i>Row percentages</i>	<b>2023: Base</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>&lt;20% (inc. none)</b>	<b>20%+</b>	<b>Compliant</b>	<b>Mean (%)</b>	<b>2021: Base</b>	<b>2021: Compliant</b>	<b>2021: Mean (%)</b>
All	(3,370)	10%	47%	53%	60%	20.8	(3,617)	46%	18.6
Agriculture	(183)	5%*	49%	51%	60%	23.5	(209)	43%	17.5
Arts	(118)	3%*	40%	60%	68%	22.2	(136)	50%	19.7
Business	(693)	7%*	48%	52%	61%	18.9	(803)	45%	17.7
Construction	(316)	10%	33%*	<b>67%*</b>	<b>71%*</b>	24.1	(284)	<b>64%*</b>	23.9
Education	(222)	13%	<b>67%*</b>	33%*	43%*	16.1	(255)	33%*	15.1
Engineering	(371)	9%	35%*	<b>65%*</b>	<b>69%*</b>	25.5	(461)	<b>55%*</b>	21.5
Health	(612)	<b>16%*</b>	<b>59%*</b>	41%*	47%*	18.7	(590)	38%*	17.1
ICT	(256)	5%*	34%*	<b>66%*</b>	<b>77%*</b>	22.8	(221)	<b>54%*</b>	20.5
Leisure	(150)	3%	41%	59%	66%	22.6	(202)	43%	18.3
Retail	(405)	10%	<b>52%*</b>	48%*	54%*	19.8	(404)	38%*	16.6

Base: All apprentices for whom it was possible to derive OTJT hours / hours worked information (base sizes shown in table). \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the average for that year (bold figures show results that are significantly higher than the average). Results for Science are not shown due to low sample size of 33 respondents in 2023 and 35 respondents in 2021.

Those undertaking apprenticeships at Level 6 and 7 were more likely to have reported receiving compliant levels of OTJT than overall (75% and 70% respectively). When combining Level 6 and 7 apprentices together, degree apprentices reported higher levels of compliance compared with non-degree apprentices (74% vs. 67%). The lowest reported compliance levels were among Level 2 apprentices (55%), however this represented the largest increase by level compared with 2021 (up 16 percentage points from 39%).

Current apprentices were more likely than recent and longer-term completers to have reported receiving compliant levels of OTJT (66% vs. 50% and 51% respectively). While historically there has always been a relationship between recency of apprenticeships and reported compliance, the higher reported compliance levels among current apprentices also reflects that they were the group most affected by the relaxing of the OTJT requirements from August 2022 onwards for those working 30 or more hours per week.

This is demonstrated by the fact that, among current apprentices, 73% of post-August 2022 starts reported compliant levels of OTJT, compared with 58% of current apprentices that started pre-August 2022. However, this 58% figure for pre-August 2022 starts in 2023 is still higher than the 49% of current apprentices that were compliant in 2021, which shows that improvements in reported compliance were not solely due to the change in the OTJT requirements.

**Table 5-2: Percentage of working hours spent on off-the-job training and the proportion of apprentices reportedly receiving compliant levels of off-the-job training, by apprenticeship level and survey group**

<i>Row percentages</i>	<b>2023: Base</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>&lt;20% (inc. none)</b>	<b>20%+</b>	<b>Compliant</b>	<b>Mean (%)</b>	<b>2021: Base</b>	<b>2021: Compliant</b>	<b>2021: Mean (%)</b>
All	(3,370)	10%	47%	53%	60%	20.8	(3,617)	46%	18.6
Level 2	(766)	10%	51%*	49%*	55%*	20.2	(1,199)	39%*	16.7
Level 3	(1,584)	<b>11%*</b>	48%	52%	58%	20.5	(1,657)	46%	18.8
Level 4	(307)	12%	51%	49%	59%	18.3	(249)	<b>54%*</b>	18.8
Level 5	(216)	10%	49%	51%	56%	<b>19.5</b>	(198)	41%	17.9
Level 6	(281)	4%*	29%*	<b>71%*</b>	<b>75%*</b>	26.1	(176)	<b>71%*</b>	27.0
Level 7	(216)	4%*	40%*	<b>60%*</b>	<b>70%*</b>	<b>22.2</b>	(138)	<b>56%*</b>	21.3
Level 6+ non-degree	(81)	3%*	44%	56%	67%	22.8	(66)	55%	21.6
Level 6+ degree	(416)	5%*	32%*	<b>68%*</b>	<b>74%*</b>	<b>24.5</b>	(248)	<b>66%*</b>	24.8
Current	(2,012)	10%	45%*	<b>55%*</b>	<b>66%*</b>	21.3	(2,151)	<b>49%*</b>	19.5
Recent completers	(670)	<b>12%*</b>	<b>50%*</b>	50%*	50%*	19.4	(757)	46%	18.5
Longer-term completers	(688)	9%	49%	51%	51%*	20.3	(709)	36%*	15.6

Base: All apprentices for whom it was possible to derive OTJT hours / hours worked information (base sizes shown in table). \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the average for that year (bold figures show results that are significantly higher than the average).

Reported compliance with the new 6 hour OTJT requirement was easier for those working longer hours as part of their apprenticeship. Among post-August 2022 starts, around three-quarters (74%) of those that worked 31 hours or more per week were

compliant with the OTJT rules, compared with 63% of those that worked under 31 hours per week. Those working 31 hours or more per week under the new rules were also more likely to be compliant than those working 31 hours or more per week under the old rules (54%), when the 6 hour cap was not in place.

As was the case in 2021, there was a relationship between awareness of the OTJT requirements and reported compliant levels of OTJT. Around two-thirds (65%) of those aware of the OTJT requirements had reported receiving compliant levels of OTJT, compared with two-fifths (40%) of those not aware.

Considering the influence of other learner characteristics, reported compliance levels decreased with apprentice age, ranging from 64% among those under 19 to 57% among those aged 25 and over. However, this was again largely due to a higher proportion of younger apprentices among the current apprentice group than other age groups. When considering current apprentices alone, there were no differences in reported compliant levels of OTJT by age.

Male apprentices were more likely than female apprentices to report compliant OTJT levels (65% vs. 54%), a pattern which held among current apprentices only (70% vs. 61%). These differences are in part influenced by the SSA composition of these groups. For example, Construction is a far more male-dominated sector (17% of male apprentices studied Construction apprenticeships vs. 2% of female apprentices), which, as discussed above, was the SSA with the highest reported compliance levels. Among current apprentices, learners with learning difficulties were less likely to report compliant levels of OTJT than overall (59% vs. 66% on average).

Apprentices who did not work for their apprenticeship employer prior to their apprenticeship were more likely to report compliant OTJT levels, compared with those already working for the employer (64% vs. 57%), as was the case in 2021. Those living in the most deprived areas, (first IMD quintile), were least likely to report compliance with the OTJT requirement (54% vs. 60% average).

## 6. End-point assessments

End-point assessments (EPA) are an assessment of the knowledge, skills and behaviours acquired throughout apprenticeship standards. To be certified as having achieved the apprenticeship, those on apprenticeship standards must pass their EPA, as well as any requirements in English, maths and any other mandatory qualifications. EPAs are conducted and certified by independent End-Point Assessment Organisations (EPAOs), who should be appointed by the employer at the start of the apprenticeship (the employer might also seek support from the training provider in selecting the EPAO). What is assessed varies for each apprenticeship standard and can include practical assessments, interviews, projects, written tests and / or presentations. EPAs replace the apprenticeship framework assessment method based on passing recognised qualifications.

This chapter covers the experiences of those who had undertaken or who had completed apprenticeship standards. The first section explores awareness of EPAs among current apprentices. The rest of the chapter then explores the support received from employers and training providers in preparing apprentices for their EPA, and whether there were any delays to the EPA.<sup>66</sup>

### Key findings

- **Among current apprentices on apprenticeship standards, a large majority (84%) had good (50%) or reasonable (34%) understanding of EPAs and what they involve, an increase from 71% in 2021.**
- **Understanding of EPAs was higher among Arts, Retail and Construction apprentices (66%, 60% and 59% respectively had good knowledge).** The largest improvements in good or reasonable understanding were seen among Leisure and Construction apprentices, increasing 22 percentage points and 19 percentage points respectively compared with 2021.
- **Among those on standards with some understanding of EPAs (completers, or current apprentices aware of EPAs beyond having heard of them), 78% had first heard about them by the end of the first month of their apprenticeship (similar to 2021).**
- **Training providers remained by far the most common initial source of information about EPAs – 87% of apprentices with some knowledge of EPAs first**

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<sup>66</sup> The term ‘completer’ is used rather than achiever, as this group consists of apprentices with an actual end date on the ILR, although they may not have reached an achieved status following an EPA. At the time of sampling, 91% of completers had officially become an achiever (97% of longer-term completers and 84% of recent completers). It is likely that this proportion would have increased in the period of time between sampling and the beginning of fieldwork.

heard about EPAs from their training provider, compared with 16% from their employer.

- **Virtually all (98%) apprentices on apprenticeship standards with some understanding of EPAs said their training provider had provided some form of support to help prepare them for EPAs** and a high proportion (93%) received support from employers.
- **Training providers most commonly provided support through regular reviews to assess progression against assessment plans (91%). For employers it was allowing apprentices to complete different types of projects (81%).** The prevalence of all types of employer support had increased since 2021.
- **Nine-in-ten (90%) apprentices on apprenticeship standards and with some knowledge of EPAs found their training provider helpful in respect of preparing for their EPA.** This was higher than the proportion that considered their employers helpful (75%), though the employer result improved compared with 2021 (72%).
- **Learners with learning difficulties and / or disabilities were slightly less likely than those without to mention receiving specific help to prepare for EPAs** from their training provider (95% vs. 98%) or their employer (90% vs. 93%), or to consider them helpful (training providers: 85% vs. 90%; employers: 69% vs. 76%).
- **Nearly two-thirds (64%) of apprentices who had completed their apprenticeship standards said their EPAs took place on time – a third (34%) reported a delay.**

## Awareness amongst current apprentices

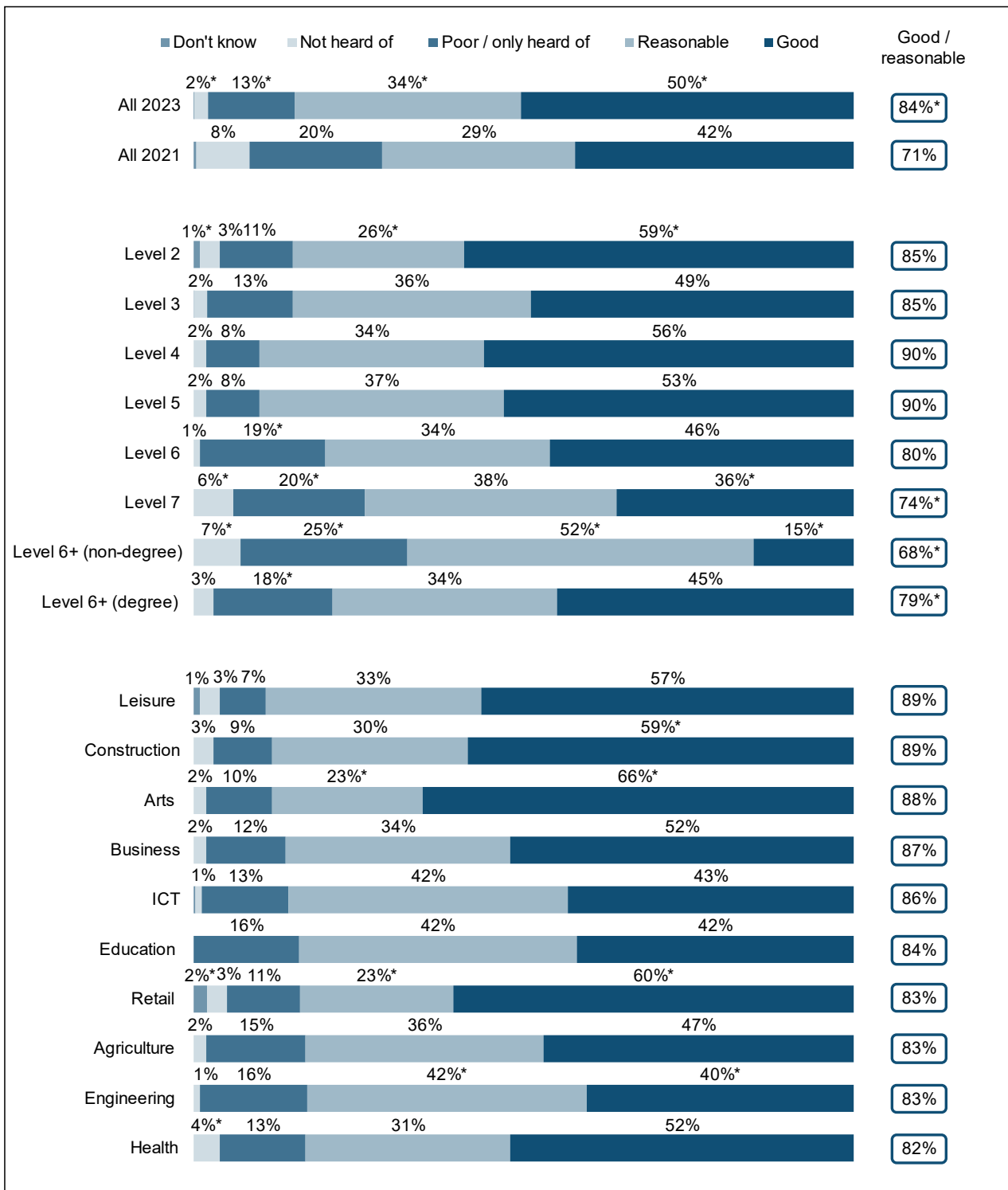
A large majority of current apprentices undertaking apprenticeship standards had a good (50%) or reasonable (34%) understanding of EPAs and what they involve. Of the remainder, 3% said they had a poor understanding, 10% knew nothing beyond having heard of them and 2% had not heard of them at all.

The proportion with good or reasonable knowledge (84%) represents a large increase on 2021, when the corresponding figure was 71%. The proportion that had a good understanding also increased compared with 2021 levels (50% vs. 42%).

As shown in Figure 6-1, Level 4 and Level 5 apprentices were more likely than those at Level 6 and 7 to have good to reasonable understanding of EPAs (90% for both Levels 4 and 5 vs. 80% of Level 6 and 74% of Level 7). Compared with 2021, there were large increases across all apprenticeship levels in understanding, in particular at Level 2, where the proportion increased by 17 percentage points from 68% in 2021 to 85% in 2023. There was little variation by sector in the proportion of apprentices with good to reasonable understanding of EPAs. Arts, Retail and Construction apprentices were most

likely to say they had a good understanding (66%, 60% and 59% respectively). Leisure and Construction apprentices saw the most improvement in understanding; the proportion with good or reasonable understanding increased by 22 percentage points and 19 percentage points respectively compared with 2021.

**Figure 6-1: Understanding of EPAs and what they involve**



Base: All current apprentices on apprenticeship standards: All 2023 (1,529); All 2021 (2,707). 2023 subgroups: Level 2 (278); Level 3 (710); Level 4 (138); Level 5 (94); Level 6 (195); Level 7 (114); Level 6+ non-degree (36); Level 6+ degree (273); Leisure (75); Construction (143); Arts (74); Business (264); ICT

(128); Education (89); Retail (176); Agriculture (90); Engineering (201); Health (254). Science is not shown due to a low base size of 21 respondents. \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the 2023 average (for subgroups) and 2021 (for time series).

While there were few differences by other learner characteristics in terms of understanding at the good to reasonable level, some differences were evident when focusing on those who gave the top rating of a good understanding. Groups less likely to report this included:

- Asian or Asian British apprentices (30%).
- Those with a disability (38%), though there was no difference compared with the average for those with learning difficulties.
- Apprentices residing in the West Midlands (42%). Conversely those based in the North East (62%) were by far the most likely to report good understanding.
- Male apprentices (47% vs. 54% of female apprentices).

## **When made aware of EPAs and who first told apprentices about them**

All subsequent sections in this chapter cover the views of those who had completed an apprenticeship on the newer standards, and those currently on an apprenticeship standard who were aware of EPAs beyond merely the name. They are referred to as 'apprentices with some knowledge of EPAs'. It excludes current apprentices who were unaware of EPAs or had only heard of them but knew nothing more.

Approaching four-fifths (78%) of apprentices with some knowledge of EPAs first heard about them by the end of the first month of their apprenticeship, similar to the proportion in 2021 (76%). This includes 30% who heard about EPAs prior to starting their apprenticeship (again similar to 32% reporting this in 2021). A small proportion (8%) only became aware of EPAs more than six months after starting their apprenticeship.

There was little difference between current apprentices, recent completers and longer-term completers in terms of when they first heard about EPAs (78%, 75% and 81% respectively), however current apprentices were less likely to have been told about EPAs prior to starting their apprenticeship than longer term completers (28% vs. 36%). Current apprentices were instead most likely to have been told within the first month of their apprenticeship starting (50%). While there was little change in the proportion of current apprentices and recent completers being informed about EPAs early in their apprenticeship, there were improvements for longer-term completers, with the proportion made aware by the end of the first month up 7 percentage points from 74% in 2021.

Apprentices who already worked for their apprenticeship employer before their apprenticeship were more likely than those who had not to have been informed about EPAs by the end of the first month of their apprenticeship (83% vs. 72%).

In terms of Sector Subject Area (SSA), Leisure apprentices were most likely to have been informed about EPAs by the end of the first month of their apprenticeship (89%). Engineering apprentices were least likely to report this (71%).

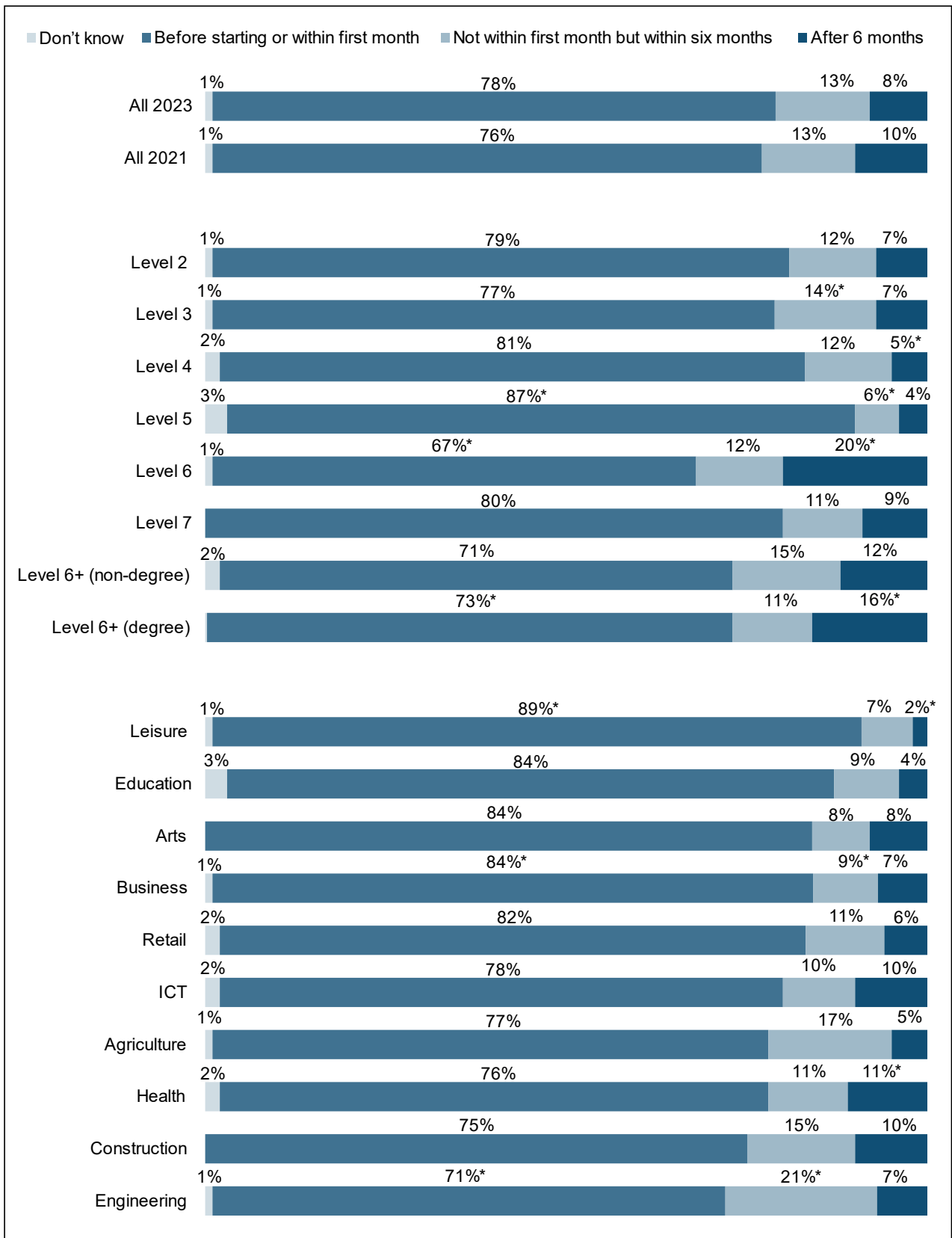
As shown in

Figure 6-2, Level 5 apprentices were most likely to have been told about EPAs by the end of the first month of their apprenticeship (87%) and Level 6 apprentices were least likely to report this (67%). A factor influencing this result is the greater number of longer duration apprenticeships at Level 6, compared with the wider population. Around three-fifths (62%) of apprenticeships at Level 6 were intended to last 3 years or longer, compared with a fifth (21%) overall. Those on apprenticeships intended to last for this



period of time were less likely to report being informed about EPAs in the first month (66%).

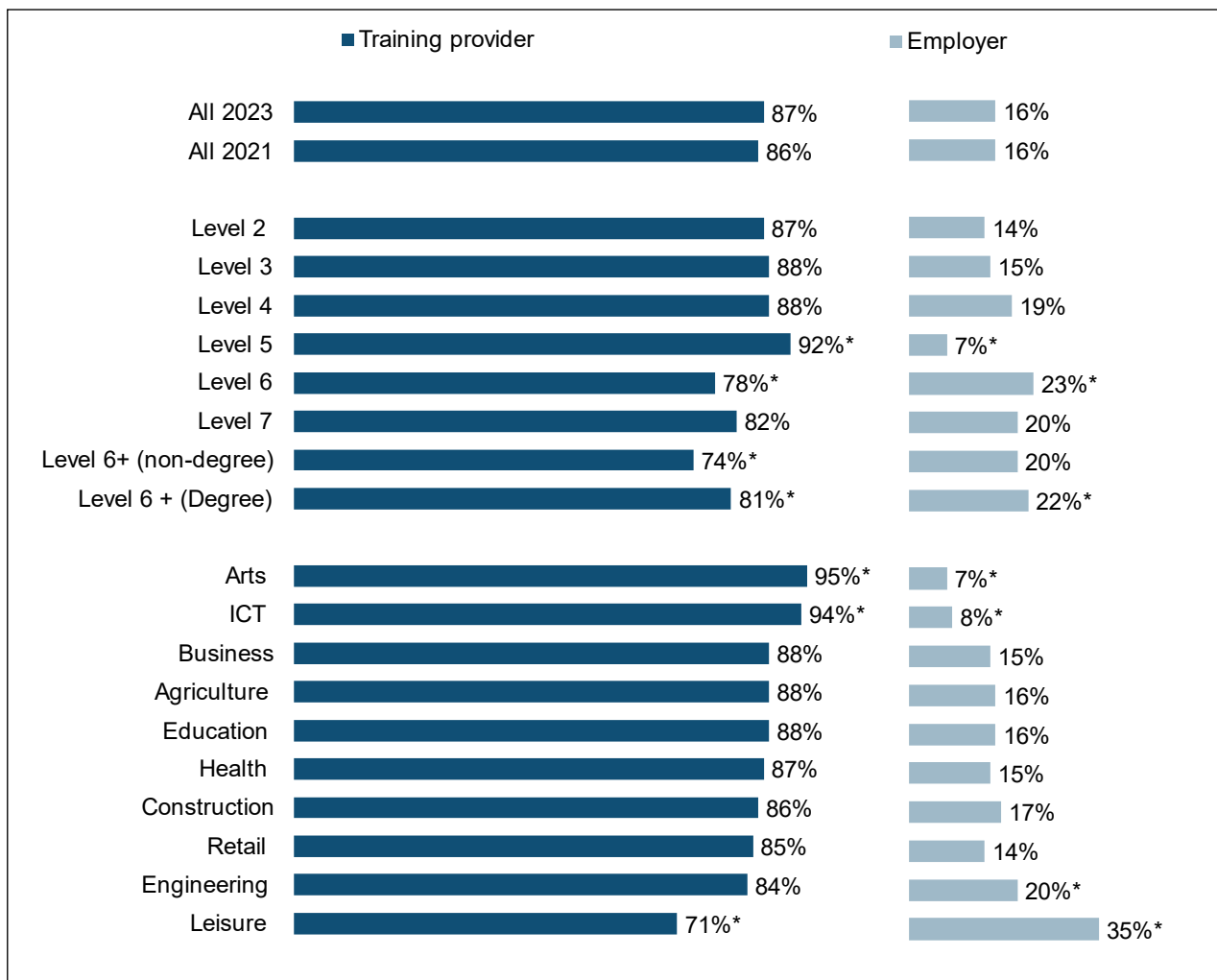
**Figure 6-2: When apprentices were first told about EPAs**



Base: Completers of apprenticeship standards and current apprentices undertaking apprenticeship standards aware of EPAs beyond the name: All 2023 (2,173) All 2021 (3,027). 2023 subgroups: Level 2 (451); Level 3 (1,037); Level 4 (218); Level 5 (131); Level 6 (204); Level 7 (132); Level 6+ non-degree (52); Level 6+ degree (284); Leisure (103); Education (130); Arts (86); Business (416); Retail (249); ICT (181); Agriculture (126); Health (394); Construction (193); Engineering (261). Science is not shown due to a low base size of 24 respondents. \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the average in 2023.

Figure 6-3 shows who first informed apprentices about EPAs. Overall, approaching nine-in-ten (87%) apprentices with some knowledge of EPAs said it was their training provider who first informed them about EPAs, similar to in 2021 (86%). It was less common for employers to first inform apprentices about EPAs (16%, the same proportion as in 2021).<sup>67</sup> A small minority (not shown in the chart), were first told about EPAs by their colleagues (1%) or somebody else (1%).

**Figure 6-3: Who first informed apprentices about EPAs**



Base: Completers of apprenticeship standards and current apprentices undertaking apprenticeship standards aware of EPAs beyond the name: All 2023 (2,169); All 2021 (3,020). 2023 subgroups: Level 2 (450); Level 3 (1,034); Level 4 (218); Level 5 (131); Level 6 (204); Level 7 (132); Level 6+ non-degree (52); Level 6+ degree (284); Leisure (102); Education (130); Arts (86); Business (415); Retail (249); ICT (181); Agriculture (126); Health (393); Construction (193); Engineering (260). Science is not shown due to a low base size of 24 respondents. \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the average in 2023.

All apprentice subgroups covered in the survey were more likely to be first informed about EPAs by a training provider than an employer. Those undertaking an

<sup>67</sup> Note, it was possible for apprentices to say that both their training provider and employer had both informed them first about EPAs, as feedback from 2021 cognitive interviews mentioned employer and training providers co-delivering introductory workshops where information on EPAs was shared.

apprenticeship at Level 5 (92%), and Art (95%) or ICT (94%) apprenticeships were more likely to be first informed by their training provider. In contrast, being first informed by an employer was most common at Level 6 (23%) and for Leisure apprenticeships (35%). Being informed first by the employer was also more common among those living the least deprived areas (fourth and fifth Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) quintiles) (29% vs. 16% on average).

Overall, taking into account who and when apprentices were told about EPAs, by the end of the first month of their apprenticeship, three-quarters (76%) of apprentices on standards with some knowledge of EPAs had been informed about EPAs by a training provider, while a third (32%) had been informed by their employer. The proportion of apprentices informed by their training provider by the end of the first month was higher than in 2021 (73%), though the corresponding proportion of apprentices informed by employers remained similar (31% in 2021).

## **Support from training providers and employers to help prepare for EPAs**

Apprentices on apprenticeship standards with some knowledge of EPAs were prompted with a number of types of support (listed in Figure 6-4) and asked which, if any, they had received from either their training provider or employer to help them prepare for their EPA.

Virtually all apprentices (98%) with some knowledge of EPAs said their training provider had provided some form of support to help prepare them for EPAs, as was the case in 2021 (97%). For employers, the proportion was slightly lower, though still the vast majority (93%) said their employer had supported them in some way, similar to 2021 (91%). Employer support was more commonly received by Arts (99%), Leisure (99%) and Construction (98%) apprentices, and individuals who were recruited to an apprenticeship (95%, compared with 91% of those already working for an employer prior to their apprenticeship).

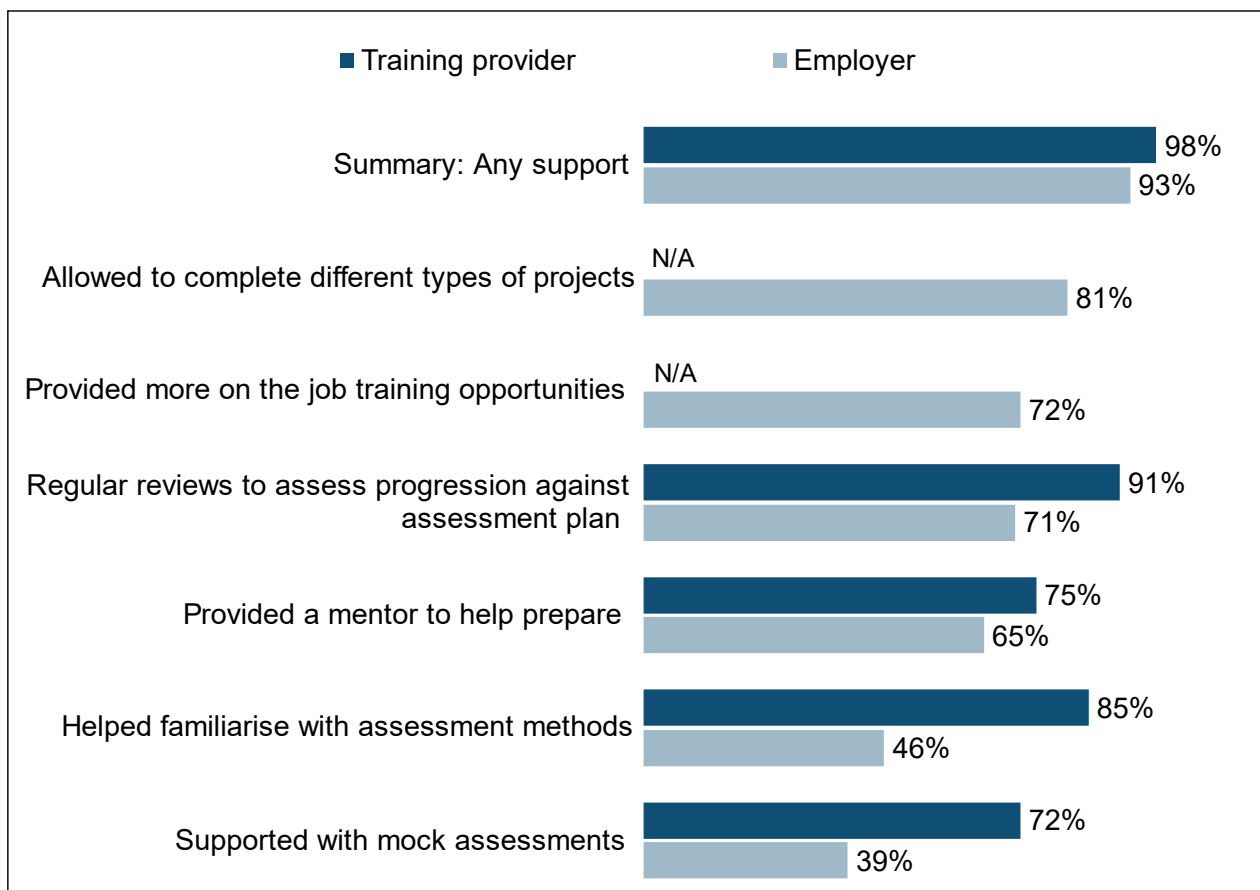
In terms of demographics, male apprentices were more likely than female apprentices to have mentioned a way in which employers had supported them in preparing for EPA (96% vs. 90%). Apprentices aged under 19 and 19 to 24 were both more likely than their older counterparts aged 25 and over to mention receiving employer support (95%, 94% and 90% respectively). Learners with learning difficulties and / or disabilities were less likely than those without to have received help from their employer (90% vs. 93%) and training provider (95% vs. 98%).

Figure 6-4 shows the main types of support received (learners were prompted with these categories in the survey). The most common type of support provided by training providers was regular reviews to assess learners' progression against assessment plans

(91%), with the proportion of learners receiving these reviews similar to 2021 (90%). There was however an increase compared with 2021 in the proportion of apprentices that mentioned their training provider helped to familiarise them with assessment methods (85% vs. 80% in 2021) and supporting them with mock assessments (72% vs. 66%).

The most common form of support from employers was allowing apprentices to complete different types of projects (81%, up from 77% in 2021). With regards to employers, the prevalence of all forms of support increased compared with 2021. The largest increases were in the proportion of apprentices receiving support with mock assessments (39% vs. 33% in 2021) and receiving help to familiarise themselves with mock assessments (46% vs. 40%).

**Figure 6-4: Support provided by training providers and employers to help prepare learners for EPAs (prompted)**



Base: Completers of apprenticeship standards and current apprentices undertaking apprenticeship standards aware of EPAs beyond the name (2,169). The chart only shows types of support that were prompted during the survey.

Nine-in-ten (90%) apprentices on apprenticeship standards with some knowledge of EPAs found their training provider helpful (very or fairly) in preparing them for the EPA, a similar result to 2021 (89%). This included six-in-ten (60%) that thought the training provider had been very helpful in preparing them for their EPA and three-in-ten (30%)

that considered their provider to have been fairly helpful. The proportion of apprentices that said their training provider had been very helpful was higher than in 2021 (57%).

Among the same group of apprentices, a lower proportion, though still a majority of 75%, felt their employer had been helpful in preparing them for their EPA (39% very helpful and 37% fairly helpful). This was an increase on the 2021 result (72%).

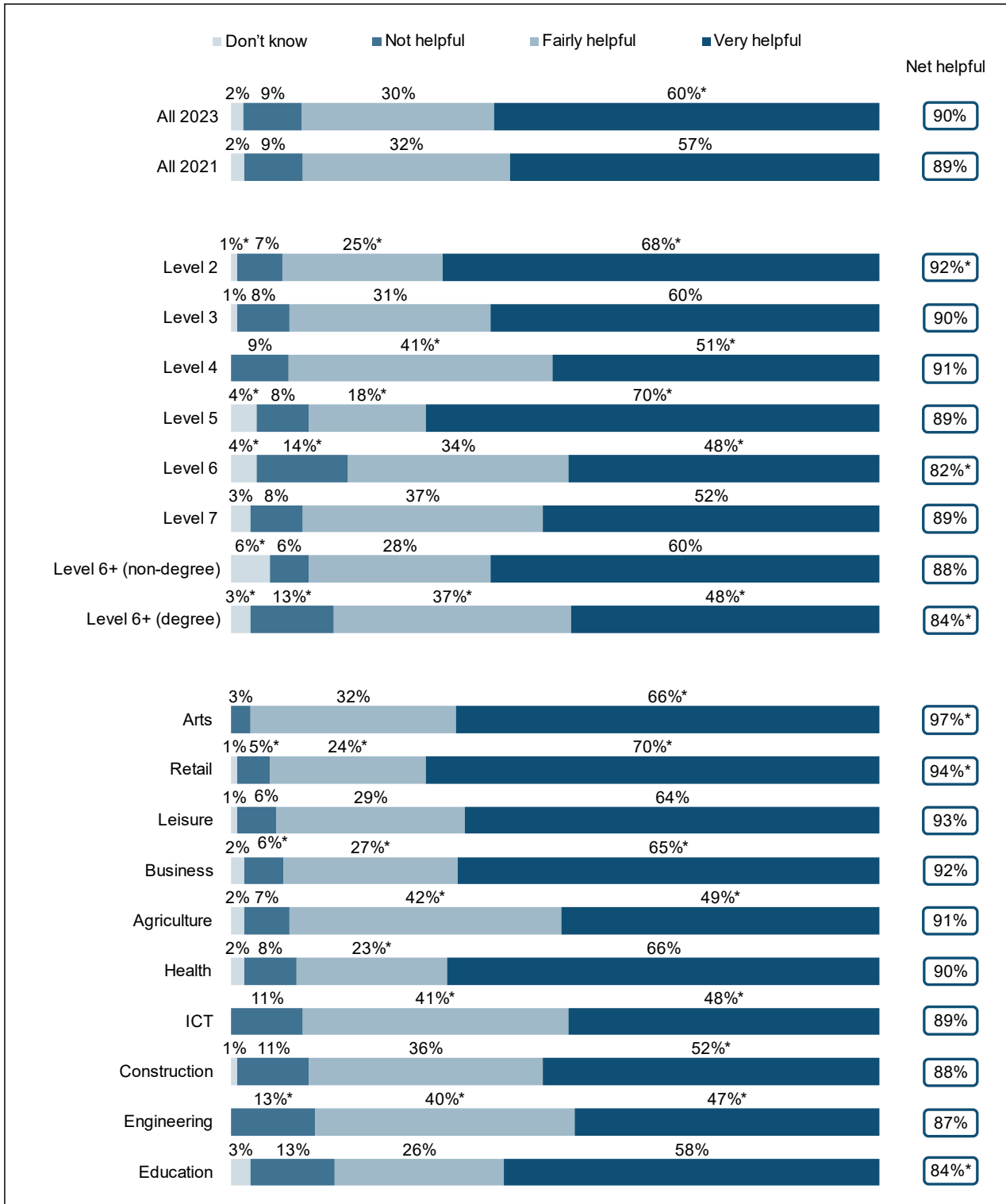
Current apprentices were more likely to say their employer had been helpful than completers (77% vs. 73%), while similar proportions said this in relation to their training providers (89% and 91% respectively).

Those on apprenticeship standards with some knowledge of EPAs living in the most deprived areas (first IMD quintile) were most likely to say their employer was helpful, with 80% in this group reporting this compared with 75% overall. Also among those on apprenticeship standards, those with a learning difficulty and / or a disability were less likely to say that both their training provider (85% vs. 90% of those with neither) and employer (69% vs. 76%) were helpful in preparing them for their EPA.

Overall, seven-in-ten (71%) apprentices on apprenticeship standards with some knowledge of EPAs considered both their training provider and their employer to have been helpful in preparing them for their EPA. Almost all (94%) of those that found their employer helpful also found their training provider helpful. Conversely, around eight-in-ten (79%) found their training provider helpful in preparing also said their employer had been helpful.

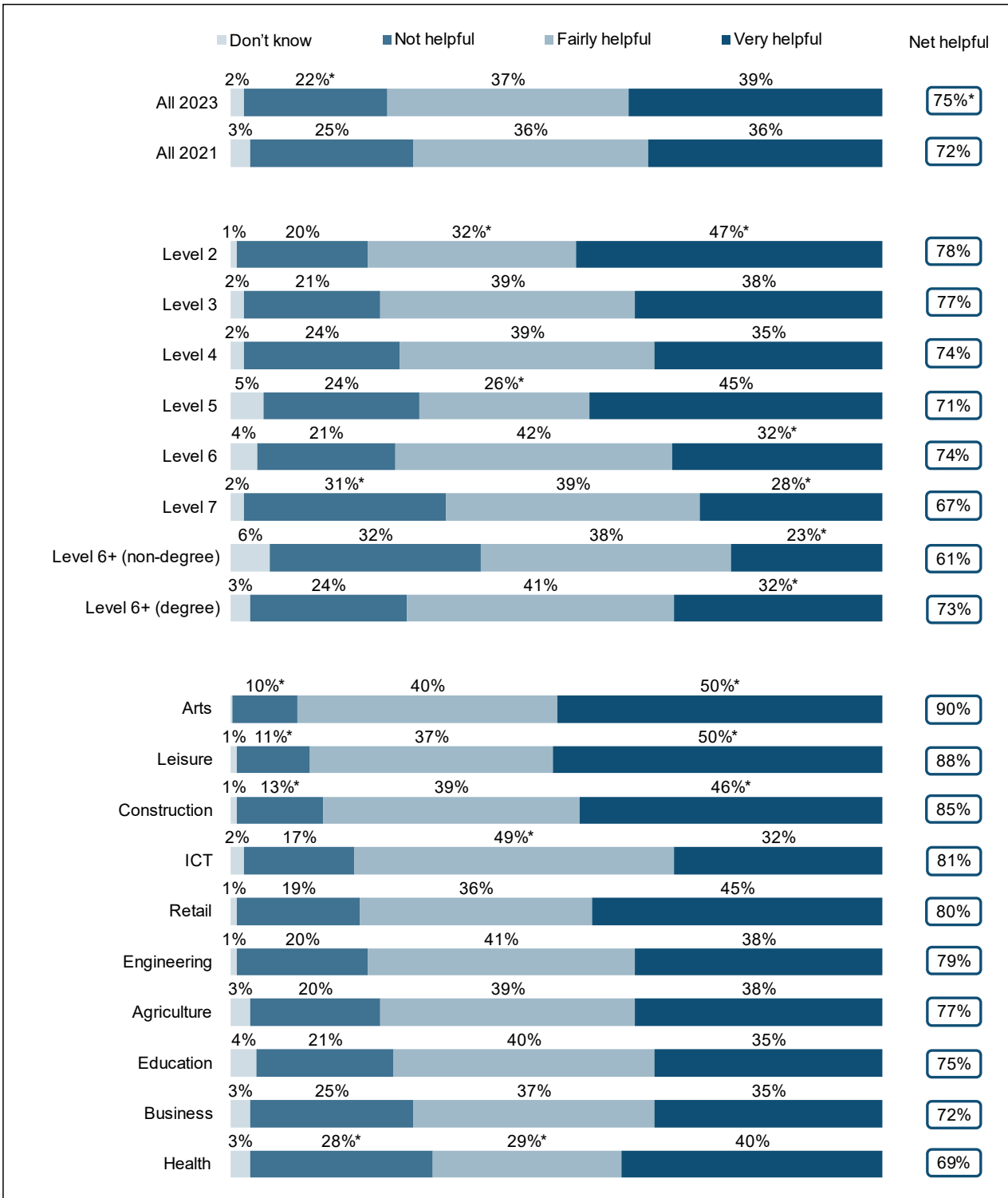
A full breakdown of training provider and employer results by apprenticeship level and SSA are shown in Figure 6-5 and Figure 6-6.

**Figure 6-5: Helpfulness of training providers in preparing apprentices for EPAs**



Base: Completers of apprenticeship standards and current apprentices undertaking apprenticeship standards aware of EPAs beyond the name. See Figure 6-3 for base sizes. \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the 2023 average (for subgroups) and 2021 (for time series).

**Figure 6-6: Helpfulness of employers in preparing apprentices for EPAs**



Base: Completers of apprenticeship standards and current apprentices undertaking apprenticeship standards aware of EPAs beyond the name. See Figure 6-3 for base sizes. \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the 2023 average (for subgroups) and 2021 (for time series).



## Delays to EPAs

New to the Learner Survey for 2023, apprentices that had completed apprenticeship standards were asked whether they encountered any delays to EPAs.

Overall, two-thirds (64%) said their EPAs took place on time, with a third (34%) reporting a delay. Half of those reporting a delay (17% overall) said the delay lasted for three months or longer. Recent completers were more likely than longer-term completers to have experienced a delay to their EPA (37% vs. 30%).

Construction (50%) and Engineering (46%) apprentices were most likely to have faced delays, with two-fifths (39%) of Construction apprentices reporting a delay that lasted for 3 months or longer. While there were few differences by apprenticeship level, those that undertook apprenticeships at Level 6 and above were less likely to have experienced delays (23%).

Considering demographics, those aged under 19 were more likely than those aged 25 and over to have experienced delays to their EPA (39% vs. 30%) and male apprentices were also more likely to report this than their female counterparts (38% vs. 31%). This was, in part, due to both younger apprentices aged under 19 and male apprentices accounting for a large proportion of apprentices undertaking Construction and Engineering apprenticeships.

## 7. Satisfaction with apprenticeships

This chapter examines levels of overall satisfaction with the apprenticeship and the degree to which apprentices were satisfied with individual elements of their apprenticeship, including how apprenticeships felt about the quality of learning received from their college or training provider.

Satisfaction questions were asked on a scale of 0 to 10, with respondents asked to consider 0 as very dissatisfied, 10 as very satisfied and 5 as neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Ratings in chapters have been grouped into broad bands, with scores of 6-10 classified as satisfied (and within this, scores of 8-10 as very satisfied), and scores of 0-4 classified as dissatisfied.

### Key findings

- **The majority of apprentices (86%) were satisfied with their apprenticeship overall, while 7% were dissatisfied with their apprenticeship.** As in 2021, dissatisfaction centred around a lack of support or contact from the training provider. The apprenticeship being badly organised, problems with the timeframe / management, poor quality training, and problems with the employer also contributed to dissatisfaction.
- **Current apprentices were the most satisfied of the three apprenticeship types (87%),** an increase compared with 2021 (82%).
- **There was a decrease in satisfaction for recent completers and for longer-term completers.** Satisfaction for recent completers decreased from 90% in 2021 to 85% in 2023, and satisfaction for longer-term completers decreased from 88% to 84%. Longer-term completers were the apprenticeship group most likely to have been affected by COVID-19 restrictions, having finished their apprenticeship between July 2021 and February 2022.
- **Satisfaction ratings were generally high across the different levels of apprenticeship,** although there were some variations in ratings. Level 2 (64%) and Level 5 (66%) apprentices were most likely to be very satisfied with their apprenticeship, while Level 4 apprentices had the highest levels of dissatisfaction (10%).
- **Science (90%) and Leisure (89%) apprentices gave the highest overall satisfaction ratings, while Education (81%) and ICT (82%) apprentices gave the lowest overall satisfaction ratings.** This reflects 2021 findings, when Science apprentices likewise recorded the highest levels of satisfaction, and Education apprentices the lowest.

- **Apprentices that reported receiving compliant levels of off-the-job training (OTJT) were more satisfied than those reporting non-compliant levels (89% vs. 84%).**
- **For specific elements of the apprenticeship experience, satisfaction was highest with how the learning enabled better job performance (87%) and the feedback apprentices received on their progress (86%).** Apprentices were least satisfied with the balance between the time spent learning and working (78%). For current apprentices in 2023 compared with current apprentices in 2021 (the period of COVID-19 restrictions) there was a recovery in ratings for most of these individual elements of the apprenticeship programme.
- **7% of apprentices were dissatisfied with their apprenticeship. The most common reason for dissatisfaction was a lack of support or contact from the training provider (55%).** Other commonly mentioned reasons for dissatisfaction included the apprenticeship being badly organised (31%), problems with the timeframe and management (27%), the poor quality of training (23%) and problems with their employer (20%).
- **Apprentices were less likely to report that the apprenticeship was badly organised, involved poor quality training, or a lack of training as reasons for being dissatisfied when compared with 2021.**

## Overall apprentice satisfaction

The majority of apprentices (86%) were satisfied with their apprenticeship overall.<sup>68</sup> Six-in-ten (60%) were very satisfied, while 7% were dissatisfied (Table 7-1).

Satisfaction ratings were high across current, recent and longer-term completers, although current apprentices reported slightly higher levels of overall satisfaction (87%) than longer-term completers (84%), a reverse of the situation between these 2 groups in 2021. Nearly one-in-ten (9%) longer-term completers said they were dissatisfied with their apprenticeship. This group of apprentices were most likely to have been affected by the COVID-19 restrictions, having finished their apprenticeship between July 2021 and February 2022.

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<sup>68</sup> Apprentices were asked to give their satisfaction with 0 being very dissatisfied and 10 being very satisfied. For analysis purposes, scores have been grouped into the following categories: 'any satisfied' (a score between 6 and 10), further broken down as very satisfied (8 to 10) or fairly satisfied (6-7), and 'any dissatisfied' (0-4).

**Table 7-1: Overall satisfaction by survey group**

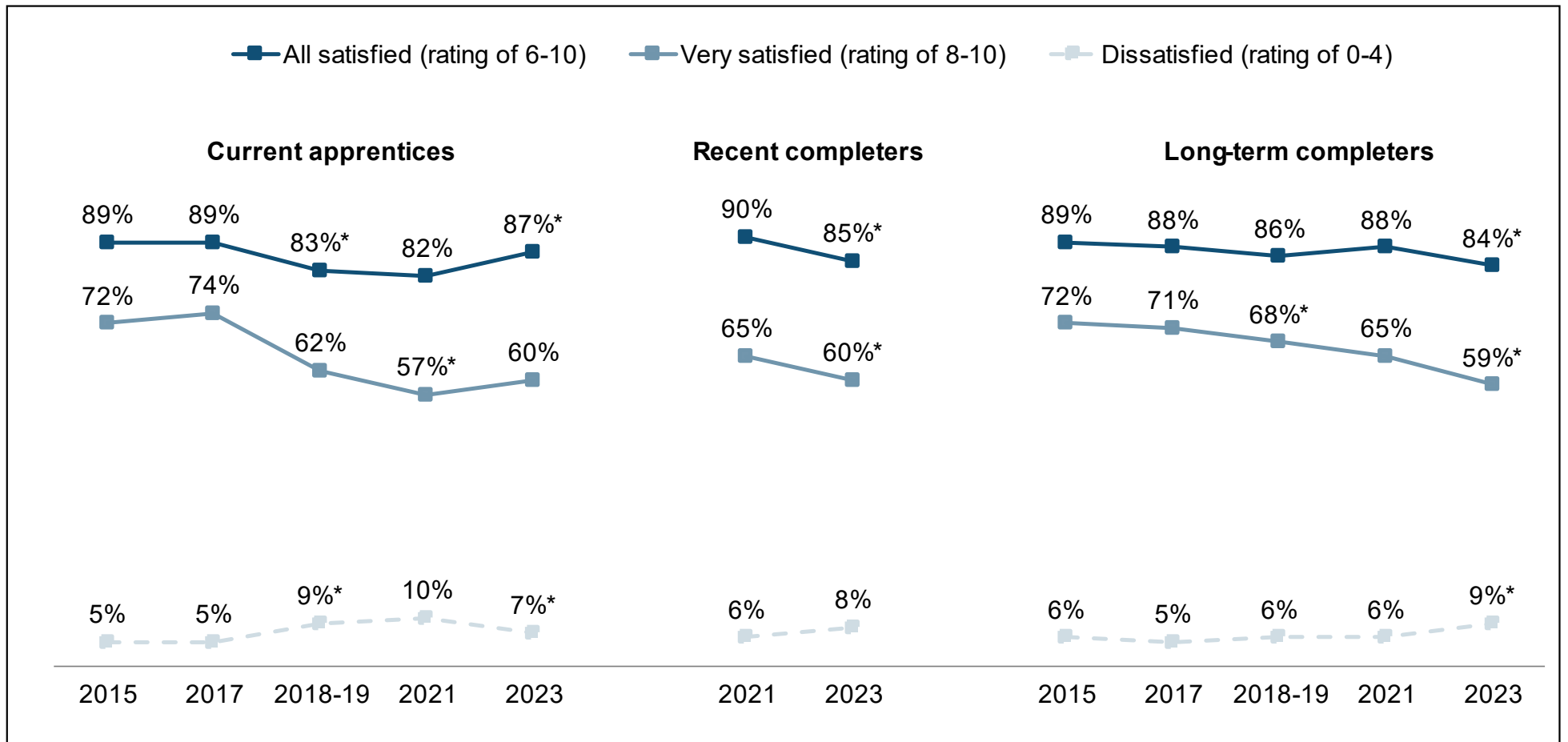
<i>Row percentages</i>	<b>Base</b>	<b>Dissatisfied (0-4)</b>	<b>Satisfied (6-10)</b>	<b>Very satisfied (8-10)</b>	<b>Mean score</b>	<b>Satisfied (6-10) 2021</b>	<b>Mean score 2021</b>
All	(4,919)	7%	86%	60%	7.6	84%	7.6
Current apprentices	(2,970)	7%	<b>87%*</b>	60%	7.6	82%	7.4
Recent completers	(991)	8%	85%*	60%	7.7	90%	7.9
Longer-term completers	(958)	9%	84%*	59%	7.6	88%	7.9

Base: All apprentices. \* indicates where a result is significantly different from 2021.

In 2023, and as shown in Figure 7-1, nearly nine-in-ten (87%) current apprentices were satisfied with their apprenticeship, an increase compared with 2021 and 2018-19 (82% and 83% respectively). The 2021 survey included apprentices who had had their apprenticeship paused due to COVID-19, with this group less satisfied than apprentices who had not had their apprenticeship paused. Removing these paused apprentices from the 2021 dataset (to create a more like-for-like comparison) continues to find a small but significant uplift in overall apprenticeship satisfaction for 2023, from 85% of apprentices in 2021 who did not have their apprenticeship paused to 87% of all current apprentices in 2023. While the 2023 satisfaction level is an improvement on the ratings seen in 2018-19 and 2021, the proportion satisfied was slightly lower when compared with 2017 and 2015 (both 89%).

As noted earlier, the apprenticeship experience of longer-term completers would have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic to some extent (having finished their apprenticeship between July 2021 and February 2022), with this also the case for some recent completers (having finished their apprenticeship between March 2022 and December 2022). Both these groups showed a decrease in overall satisfaction ratings compared with the 2021 survey. Among longer-term completers, the proportion satisfied with their apprenticeship fell from 88% in 2021 to 84% in 2023, and the proportion of recent completers satisfied fell from 90% to 85%. Broadly speaking, the proportion of longer-term completers satisfied has been relatively stable over time (prior to 2023, standing at between 86% and 89%), but there has been a continued downward trend in the proportion very satisfied since 2015. In 2023, 59% of longer-term completers were very satisfied with their apprenticeship, a similar level to that reported by recent completers and current apprentices (both 60%).

**Figure 7-1: Overall satisfaction over time, by current, recent and longer-term completer groups**



Base: Current apprentices: 2015 (2,033); 2017 (2,427); 2018-19 (2,355); 2021 (3,047); 2023 (2,970). Recent completers: 2021 (1,036); 2023: (991). Longer-term completers: 2015 (2,736); 2017 (2,767); 2018-19 (1,580); 2021 (1,039); 2023 (958) \* indicates where a result is significantly different from previous survey wave.

Satisfaction was generally high across the different levels of apprenticeship, albeit with some variation. As shown in Table 7-2, Level 2 and Level 5 apprentices were the most likely to report that they were very satisfied with their apprenticeship (64% and 66% respectively). In contrast, Level 4 apprentices reported the highest levels of dissatisfaction (10% were dissatisfied).

**Table 7-2: Overall satisfaction by level**

<i>Row percentages</i>	<b>Base</b>	<b>Dis-satisfied (0-4)</b>	<b>Satisfied (6-10)</b>	<b>Very satisfied (8-10)</b>	<b>Mean score</b>	<b>Satisfied (6-10) 2021</b>	<b>Mean score 2021</b>
All	(4,919)	7%	86%	60%	7.6	84%	7.6
Level 2	(1,081)	7%	87%	<b>64%*</b>	7.8	85%	7.7
Level 3	(2,299)	7%	86%	59%	7.6	84%	7.5
Level 4	(461)	<b>10%*</b>	84%	57%	7.5	84%	7.4
Level 5	(316)	5%	88%	<b>66%*</b>	7.9	82%	7.5
Level 6	(470)	9%	85%	55%*	7.4	88%	7.6
Level 7	(292)	5%	88%	59%	7.6	83%	7.0
Level 6+ non-degree	(120)	4%	87%	55%	7.5	71%	6.4
Level 6+ degree	(642)	8%	86%	57%	7.5	91%	7.6

Base: All apprentices. \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the average.

Compared with 2021, the most notable increase in overall satisfaction by level was among those undertaking Level 6 and above non-degree apprenticeships (87% vs. 71% in 2021).

By Sector Subject Area (SSA) (Table 7-3), Science (90%) and Leisure (89%) apprentices gave the highest overall satisfaction ratings, while Education (81%) and ICT (82%) apprentices gave the lowest overall satisfaction ratings. Science apprentices were also indicatively the most satisfied in 2021 (91%)<sup>69</sup> and Education apprentices the least satisfied (77%).

<sup>69</sup> As in 2021, there is a relatively low sample size base of 60 in 2023, the result for Science is not a statistically significant difference from the average, but reported here as an indicative result, and follows the pattern as seen in 2021.

**Table 7-3: Overall satisfaction by SSA**

<i>Row percentages</i>	<b>Base</b>	<b>Dissatisfied (0-4)</b>	<b>Satisfied (6-10)</b>	<b>Very satisfied (8-10)</b>	<b>Mean score</b>
All	(4,919)	7%	86%	60%	7.6
Science	(60)	6%	90%	60%	7.9
Leisure	(235)	6%	89%	<b>68%*</b>	8
Business	(875)	6%	88%	<b>62%*</b>	7.8
Retail	(525)	6%	87%	<b>65%*</b>	7.9
Construction	(453)	8%	87%	<b>64%*</b>	7.7
Arts	(175)	4%	86%	61%	7.6
Health	(902)	7%	86%	59%	7.7
Engineering	(641)	7%	85%	53%*	7.4
Agriculture	(304)	7%	84%	60%	7.6
ICT	(415)	<b>11%*</b>	82%*	56%	7.3
Education	(310)	8%	81%*	59%	7.5

Base: All apprentices. \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the average (bold figures show results that are significantly higher than the average).

There were some slight differences in satisfaction by demographic subgroups as shown in Table 7-4. Lower satisfaction levels were recorded for older apprentices (85% for those aged 25 and over vs. 88% of those under 19), and for apprentices with a disability (78%) or learning difficulty (81%) (compared with 87% of apprentices without). Although there was no difference in overall satisfaction between male and female apprentices, female apprentices were more likely to be very satisfied (62% vs. 58% of male apprentices). Higher satisfaction amongst younger apprentices, female apprentices, and apprentices without a learning difficulty or disability was also seen in 2021. Those living in the least deprived areas (fifth Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) quintile) were most likely to be satisfied with their apprenticeship (88% vs. 86% overall), whereas those in the most deprived areas (first IMD quintile) were most likely to be dissatisfied (9% vs. 7% overall).

**Table 7-4: Satisfaction by age, gender, and whether learner had a learning difficulty and / or a disability**

<i>Row percentages</i>	<b>Base</b>	<b>Dissatisfied (0-4)</b>	<b>Satisfied (6-10)</b>	<b>Very satisfied (8-10)</b>	<b>Mean score</b>
All	(4,919)	7%	86%	60%	7.6
Under 19	(1,217)	6%	<b>88%*</b>	62%	7.8
19 to 24	(1,461)	7%	87%	55%*	7.5
25 and over	(2,241)	<b>8%*</b>	85%*	<b>62%*</b>	7.7
Male	(2,555)	7%	86%	58%*	7.6
Female	(2,364)	7%	86%	<b>62%*</b>	7.7
Disability	(284)	<b>12%*</b>	78%*	52%*	7.1
Learning difficulty	(395)	<b>11%*</b>	81%*	54%*	7.3
LLDD <sup>70</sup>	(504)	<b>11%*</b>	80%*	54%*	7.3
Not LLDD	(4,393)	7%*	<b>87%*</b>	60%	7.7
IMD Quintile 1	(923)	<b>9%*</b>	85%	61%	7.7
IMD Quintile 2	(989)	7%	87%	59%	7.7
IMD Quintile 3	(1,072)	8%	85%	60%	7.6
IMD Quintile 4	(1,002)	6%	87%	60%	7.6
IMD Quintile 5	(919)	6%	<b>88%*</b>	60%	7.7

Base: All apprentices (4,919). \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the average (bold figures show results that are significantly higher than the average).

In terms of satisfaction ratings by ethnic group, satisfaction was lower amongst apprentices from mixed or multiple ethnic groups (79%, with 13% dissatisfied), and in contrast was highest for apprentices from an Asian or Asian British background (89%). Among current apprentices specifically, those from mixed or multiple ethnic groups were least satisfied (75% vs. 87% average).

There were minimal regional differences in terms of the overall proportion satisfied with their apprenticeship, with the exception of the East Midlands, where a higher proportion of apprentices were satisfied (90% vs. 86% across all regions). Apprentices in the North East were more likely to be very satisfied (65% vs. 60% of all apprentices); in 2021 there was also a higher proportion of satisfied apprentices in this region (89%). Within the

<sup>70</sup> Learners with a learning difficulty and / or a disability.



apprenticeship groups, satisfaction levels continued to be similar across regions, with just a few exceptions of lower than average satisfaction: current apprentices in Yorkshire (81% vs. 87% average), recent completers in the East of England (75% vs 85% average), longer-term completers in the South West (78% vs. 84% average). These differences could be due to apprenticeship profile differences within these regions.

Results continue to show that there is a link between the amount of off-the-job training (OTJT) apprentices reported receiving and satisfaction levels. As in 2021, those with reported compliant levels of OTJT were more likely to be satisfied than those who did not report receiving the required amount of OTJT (89% vs. 84%).

Apprentices who felt their apprenticeship employer and training provider worked well together during their apprenticeship were more likely to be satisfied with their apprenticeship overall than those who did not think they worked well together (94% vs. 51%).

Apprentices who studied for an English or maths qualification during their apprenticeship were also marginally more likely to be satisfied with their apprenticeship overall than those who had not studied for this type of qualification (89% vs. 86%).<sup>71</sup> Satisfaction increased markedly for apprentices who said they liked studying for the English or maths qualification or did not mind it (93%), but fell below the average for those who studied for one / both of these qualifications but did not like doing this (79%).

As seen in 2021, higher levels of pay among apprentices did not appear to have a direct influence on satisfaction levels. In fact, those earning less were more likely to be satisfied with their apprenticeship, with 90% of apprentices earning less than £10.42 an hour satisfied with their apprenticeship, compared with 85% earning £10.42 or more an hour.

In line with 2021, satisfaction was also higher among:

- Those for whom the apprenticeship was their preferred option (89%, compared with 56% of those for whom an apprenticeship was not first choice).
- Apprentices who were in education or training before starting their apprenticeship (89%), compared with those who were previously in work (85%), or previously were unemployed (83%) (this is likely to be related to the age difference seen).
- Completors who undertook apprenticeships standards rather than completors who undertook apprenticeship frameworks (85% vs. 80%).

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<sup>71</sup> A fifth of apprentices studied for either an English and / or maths qualification. Level 2 apprentices, who were more satisfied overall with their apprenticeship, were more likely than average to have studied for each of these qualifications (24% studied English compared with 14% on average / 29% studied Maths compared with 17% on average).

- Apprentices who continued to work for their employer after the apprenticeship (87%, compared with 80% who had completed but were with a different employer at the time of the survey).
- Apprentices who had not experienced a delay to their end-point assessment (EPA) (89%) compared with those who had experienced any sort of delay (78%) and, particularly notably, those whose EPA was delayed by three months or more (75%). This disparity was starkest when looking specifically at longer-term completers; 90% of longer-term completers whose EPA was on time were satisfied overall, compared to 70% of those whose EPA was delayed by at least three months.

Positive outcomes following the completion of the apprenticeship were, perhaps unsurprisingly, linked to higher levels of satisfaction with the apprenticeship. As examples, those that felt more satisfied with their job as a result of the apprenticeship (92%), and those who felt they were now better at their job (90%) were more likely than average to be satisfied with the apprenticeship. This was also the case for completers who reported gaining a higher number of skills as a direct result of their apprenticeship (92% who gained 6 or 7 skills were satisfied overall with the apprenticeship vs. 82% who gained 3-5 skills and 52% who gained 0-2 skills).

## Reasons for dissatisfaction with apprenticeships

Overall, 7% of apprentices were dissatisfied with their apprenticeship. The most common reason for dissatisfaction was a lack of support or contact from the training provider (55% of apprentices dissatisfied with their apprenticeship), with this also the most common driver of dissatisfaction in 2021 (54%) (Figure 7-2). This reason for dissatisfaction was more likely to be reported by those with either a learning difficulty and / or a disability (76% vs. 52% of those with neither), female apprentices (62% vs. 50% male) and older apprentices (62% of over 25s vs. 49% of under 25s).

Other commonly mentioned reasons for dissatisfaction included the apprenticeship being badly organised (31%), problems with the timeframe and management (27%), the poor quality of training (23%) and problems with their employer (20%). Issues with the timeframe and management were more commonly cited among current apprentices than recent completers (31% vs. 18%).

Apprentices were less likely to report the apprenticeship was badly organised, involved poor quality training, or a lack of training as reasons for being dissatisfied when compared with 2021. For example, as shown in Figure 7-2, while the apprenticeship being badly organised was one of the main reasons for dissatisfaction among apprentices, this figure decreased by 10 percentage points compared with 2021 (31%, down from 41% in 2021). The same was true for poor quality of training, which decreased

from 33% in 2021 to 23% in 2023, and may be in part due to the impact of COVID-19 on these measures in 2021.

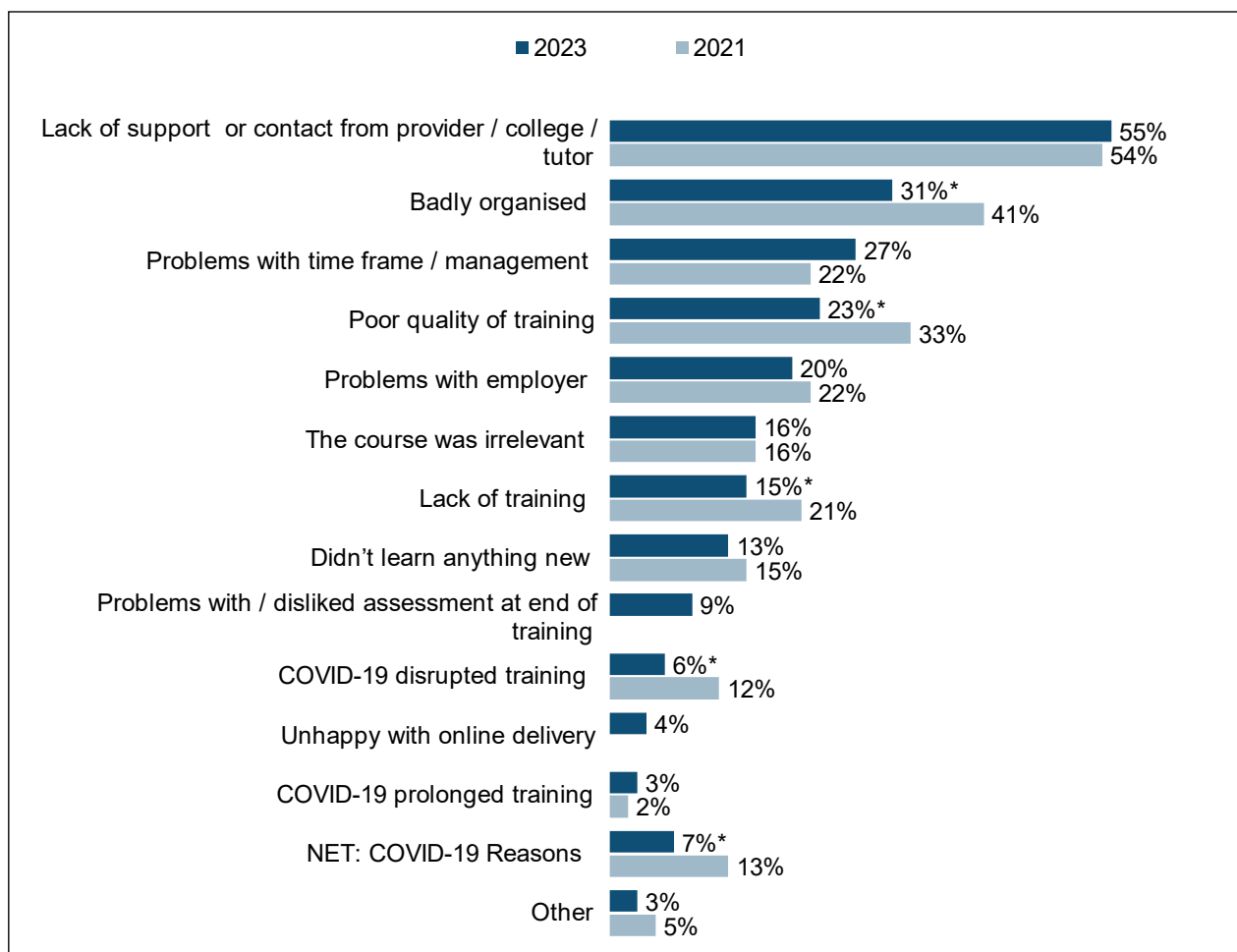
Less common reasons included problems with the employer (20%), irrelevance of the course (16%) and a lack of training (15%). Around one-in-ten apprentices dissatisfied with their apprenticeship mentioned problems with or a dislike of their end of apprenticeship assessment (9%), with this particularly mentioned by recent completers (15%).

Although it was not one of the main reasons mentioned, 7% of apprentices mentioned some form of disruption due to COVID-19 being a cause of their dissatisfaction.<sup>72</sup> Naturally, this decreased compared with 2021, when 13% of apprentices reported COVID-19 being a cause of their dissatisfaction. Of note, however, this was a prominent reason for dissatisfaction among longer-term completers, with nearly a quarter (23%) of those dissatisfied citing a COVID-related reason. This compares with only 3% of longer-term completers mentioning COVID-related reasons in 2021.

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<sup>72</sup> Note, this question was unprompted. The 7% figure comprises those who were coded to 'COVID-19 disrupted the provision of training' and / or 'COVID-19 has meant the apprenticeship has gone on for much longer than expected'. This includes those who were back-coded to these responses using verbatim collected at the 'other (specify)' option. It is possible that other responses may have been influenced by the experiences of COVID-19.

**Figure 7-2: Reasons for dissatisfaction with apprenticeship**



Base: All apprentices dissatisfied with apprenticeship overall: 2023 (360); 2021 (380). \* indicates where a result is significantly different from 2021. ^ did not emerge as a particular theme in 2021, and therefore code was not included in the code frame for analysing the data in 2021.

Among the different apprentice types, current apprentices were less likely when compared with 2021 to mention the apprenticeship being badly organised (27% vs. 41% in 2021), poor quality training (20% vs. 34%), lack of training (14% vs. 23%) COVID-19 reasons (3% vs. 16%), and that the tutor kept changing (2% vs. 9%) as reasons for dissatisfaction with their apprenticeship. The proportion of current apprentices citing the apprenticeship being badly organised, it having poor quality training, and the tutor continually changing was also lower compared with the 2018-19 survey (42%, 30% and 6% respectively).

Recent completers, when compared with 2021, were less likely to mention the tutor continually changing (2% vs. 17% in 2021) and health reasons (0% vs. 4%) as reasons for dissatisfaction. They were, however, more likely to mention poor quality training (30% vs. 15%) and issues receiving their qualification (5% vs. 0%).

Longer-term completers were less likely in 2023 to cite poor quality training compared with 2021 (25% vs. 46%) as well as the tutor consistently changing (2% vs. 13%). As

noted previously, this group were more likely to mention COVID-19 reasons in 2023 compared with 2021 (23% vs. 3%).

By level, there were several differences in the reasons for dissatisfaction with the apprenticeship:

- Apprentices at Level 6 and above were more likely than average to mention that their course was irrelevant (25%). This was also the case in 2021.
- Level 4 apprentices were more likely than average to cite poor quality of training (35%), but less likely than average to report a problem with their employer (7%).
- Level 2 or 3 apprentices were more likely than Level 4 or above apprentices to report a lack of training as a reason for dissatisfaction (19% vs. 8%), the same pattern as identified in 2021. Whereas Level 4 or above apprentices were more likely to be dissatisfied with the assessment at the end of the apprenticeship, compared with Level 2 or 3 apprentices (15% vs. 6%).

By SSA, dissatisfaction due to bad organisation was more common among Engineering apprentices (45%), and far less common among Retail apprentices (15%). The course being irrelevant was more commonly reported by Business apprentices (25% vs. 16% on average).

The age of apprentices also had some impact on the reasons given for dissatisfaction. As in 2021, those aged 25 and over were most likely to mention a lack of support or contact from their provider, college or tutor (62%). They were also the most likely to report having problems with or disliking the assessment at the end of the apprenticeship (14%).

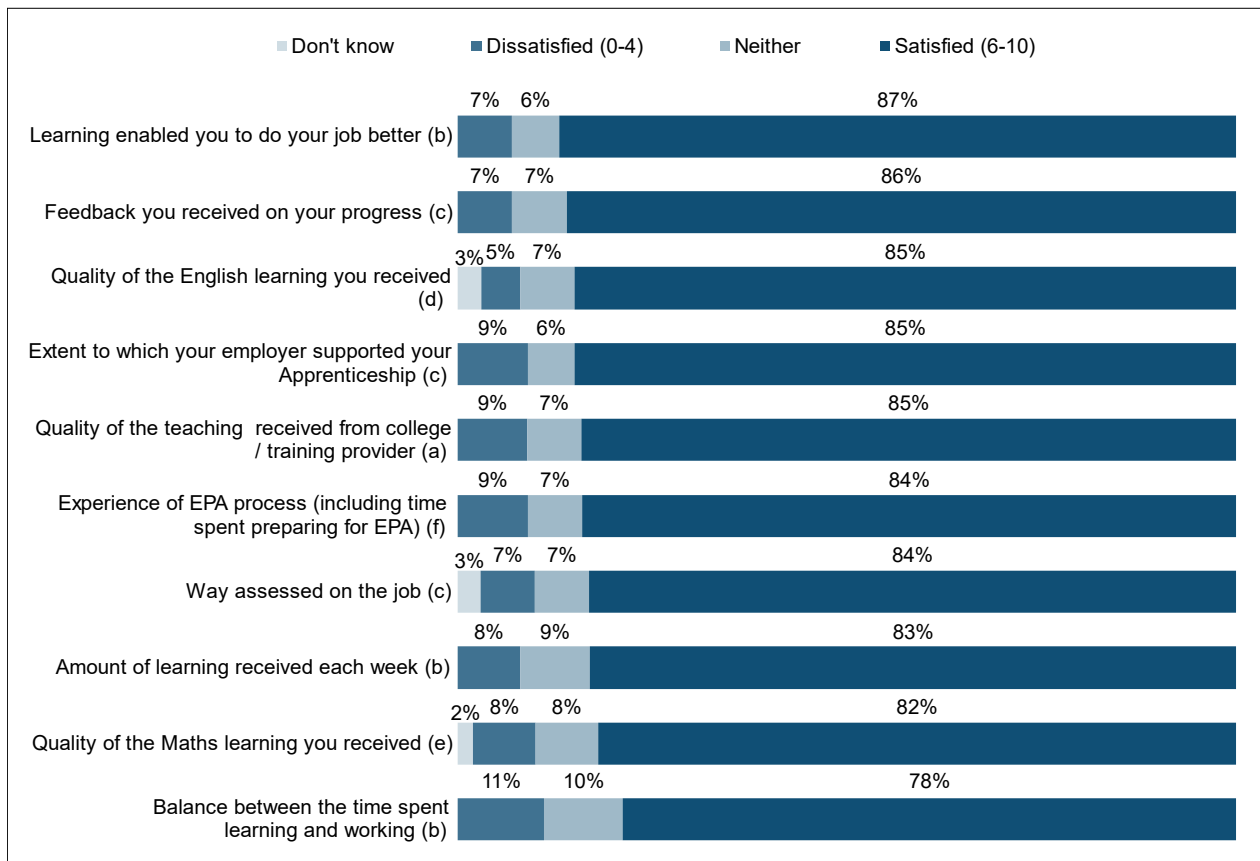
In terms of gender, female apprentices were more likely than male apprentices to be dissatisfied by the lack of support or contact from their provider, college or tutor (62% vs. 50%) and were more likely to have a problem with, or dislike, the end assessment (14% vs. 5%). In contrast, male apprentices were more likely than female apprentices to say their course was irrelevant (21% vs. 11%).

## **Apprentices' satisfaction with individual elements of their apprenticeship**

Apprentices were asked how satisfied they were with 10 different elements of their apprenticeship (Figure 7-3). Satisfaction ratings were generally high. Apprentices were most satisfied with how learning enabled better job performance (87%) and the feedback received on their progress (86%). Satisfaction was the lowest regarding the balance between the time spent learning and working (78%), however only 11% of apprentices reported specifically being dissatisfied with this element.

There were a further 3 elements of the apprenticeship where around one-in-ten apprentices were dissatisfied: the quality of the teaching they received from their college or training provider, the extent to which their employer supported their apprenticeship, and their experience of the EPA process (all 9%).

**Figure 7-3: Satisfaction with individual elements of the apprenticeship**



Base: Apprenticeship cohort asked each statement varied according to the statement being asked about and ranged from 'all apprentices' (4,919) to 'all receiving English training' (748). Bases: (a) receiving training from college / provider, (b) all receiving training, (c) all apprentices, (d) all receiving English training, (e) all receiving maths training, (f) all standards completers who have heard of EPAs (modularised).

Similarly to overall satisfaction, current apprentices were generally more satisfied with different elements of their apprenticeship compared with completers (Table 7-5). Current apprentices were more likely to be satisfied with the feedback on their progress (87% vs. 85%), employer support (87% vs. 81%), the amount of learning each week (84% vs. 81%) and the balance between time learning and working (80% vs. 76%).

For current apprentices, the 2021 survey recorded a fall in satisfaction for several aspects of the apprenticeship (namely the extent to which the employer supported the apprenticeship, the way apprentices were assessed on the job and the balance between time spent learning and working). In 2023 there was a recovery in these satisfaction ratings, with current apprentices now recording higher satisfaction for most aspects of their apprenticeship compared with 2021. The only two areas that showed no change

were quality of teaching received (84% in both 2021 and 2023) and the quality of maths learning (78% in 2021, 80% in 2023). Similar results were seen when comparing 2023 with 2018-19, although there were no differences when looking at training enabling apprentices to do a better job (87% in 2023 vs. 85% in 2018-19), employer support (87% vs. 86%) and the quality of English learning received (83% vs. 82%).

New to the 2023 survey, completers of apprenticeship standards were also asked the extent to which they were satisfied or dissatisfied with their experience of the EPA process, including any time spent preparing for it. Overall, 84% of these completers were satisfied with their experience of the EPA, with similar results seen among recent and longer-term completers (83% and 85% respectively).

**Table 7-5: Percentage satisfied (6-10 rating) with different aspects of apprenticeship, by survey group**

	2021: All	2023: All	2018-19: Current	2021: Current	2023: Current	2021: Recent completers	2023: Recent completers	2018-19: Longer- term completers	2021: Longer-term completers	2023: Longer-term completers
Quality of learning received (a)	85%	85%	86%	84%	84%	86%	87%	88%	86%	83%*
Training enabling better job performance (b)	85%	<b>87%*</b>	85%	84%	<b>87%*</b>	88%	88%	85%	86%	84%*
Amount of learning each week (b)	80%	<b>83%*</b>	77%	79%	<b>84%*</b>	83%	82%	79%	82%	78%*
Balance between time learning and working (b)	76%	<b>78%*</b>	77%	74%	<b>80%*</b>	80%	79%	81%	77%	72%*
Feedback on progress (c)	85%	<b>86%*</b>	83%	83%	<b>87%*</b>	88%	86%	86%	86%	82%*
Employer support (c)	81%	<b>85%*</b>	86%	81%	<b>87%*</b>	82%	82%	82%	78%	79%
Assessment on the job (c)	79%	<b>84%*</b>	82%	77%	<b>84%*</b>	84%	85%	87%	85%	79%*
Quality of English learning received (d)	81%	<b>85%*</b>	82%	76%	<b>83%*</b>	86%	88%	86%	87%	88%
Quality of maths learning received (e)	82%	82%	76%	78%	80%	87%	88%	86%	90%	83%*
Experience of the EPA process (f)	^	84%	^	N/A	N/A	^	83%	^	^	85%

Base: Apprenticeship cohort asked each statement varied according to the statement being asked about and in 2023 ranged from 'all apprentices' (4,919) to 'longer-term completers receiving English training' (166). Bases: (a) receiving training from college / provider, (b) all receiving training, (c) all apprentices, (d) all receiving English training, (e) all receiving maths training. (f) all standards completers who have heard of EPAs (modularised) \* indicates where a result is significantly different from 2021 (bold figures show results that are significantly higher than in 2021). ^ 'Experience of EPA process was not asked about in earlier surveys



Satisfaction ratings were generally high across apprenticeship levels and apprenticeship subjects. That said, some variation in views were recorded (Table 7-6 and Table 7-7). Of particular note, Level 6 and above (non-degree) apprentices were more likely than average to be satisfied with the quality of learning received (94% vs. 85%), whereas degree apprentices were least satisfied in this respect (81%). Degree apprentices were also the least satisfied in 2021 with this element of the apprenticeship (80%).

Across the specific elements of their apprenticeship, Level 7 apprentices were generally the most satisfied, including the quality of learning received (93%) and the amount of learning each week (89%). Level 6 apprentices were less likely than average to be satisfied that their training enabled better job performance (79% vs. 87% overall), the quality of the learning received (76% vs. 85% overall) and the amount of learning each week (79% vs. 83% overall).

Other notable differences by level included:

- Level 6 and above (non-degree) apprentices were more satisfied than average with employer support (94% vs. 85% overall). Level 2 apprentices were the least likely to be satisfied with this element (83%).
- Level 5 apprentices were less satisfied than average with the balance between time learning and working (73% vs. 78% overall). They were, however, most likely than others to report that training enabled better job performance (91% vs. 87% overall).
- Level 3 apprentices who completed standards and had heard of EPAs were the most satisfied with the experience of the EPA process (87% vs. 84% overall).

By SSA (Table 7-7), Leisure and Construction apprentices were the most satisfied with individual elements of the apprenticeship (these were two of the subject sector areas that recorded a higher than average very satisfied rating with their apprenticeship overall). Leisure apprentices recorded higher than average satisfaction with the quality of learning in their apprenticeship (92%), the feedback received on their progress (93%), the assessment on the job (91%), and balance between time learning and working (84%). Construction apprentices recorded higher than average satisfaction with employer support (90%), the amount of learning each week (88%), and the balance between time learning and working (87%). That said, Construction apprentices were less satisfied with the quality of learning received (80% compared with 85% overall).

ICT apprentices presented a mixed story. They were more satisfied with some elements of their apprenticeship compared with the average, namely the support they received from their employer (91% vs. 85% average), and the balance between time spent learning and working (83% vs. 78%). However, with other elements they were the less satisfied, with fewer than average satisfied with the quality of learning (80% vs. 85%

average) or that training enabled better job performance (82% vs. 87%). The same pattern of lower satisfaction for these elements was identified in 2021.

There were some other notable differences between specific SSAs and all apprentices overall, with the following less satisfied than average:

- Health and Retail apprentices with the support given by their employer (78% and 81% respectively, compared with 85% average).
- Health apprentices with the balance between time learning and working (70%, compared with 78% average) and the amount of learning each week (77%, compared with 83%).
- Engineering apprentices with the feedback received on their progress (83% vs. 86% average), the same pattern identified in 2021. Engineering apprentices also gave slightly lower ratings for the quality of learning received (80% vs. 85% overall).

**Table 7-6: Percentage satisfied (6-10 rating) with different aspects of apprenticeships, by level**

	All	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Level 6+ non-degree	Level 6+ degree
Quality of learning received (a)	85%	<b>88%*</b>	84%	82%	87%	76%*	<b>93%*</b>	<b>94%*</b>	81%*
Training enabling better job performance (b)	87%	<b>89%*</b>	87%	84%	<b>91%*</b>	79%*	<b>92%*</b>	87%	84%*
Amount of learning each week (b)	83%	83%	82%	83%	82%	79%*	<b>89%*</b>	89%	82%
Balance between time learning and working (b)	78%	80%	79%	76%	73%*	77%	78%	77%	77%
Feedback on progress (c)	86%	86%	87%	85%	88%	85%	88%	91%	85%
Employer support (c)	85%	83%*	84%	87%	87%	86%	88%	<b>94%*</b>	86%
Assessment on the job (c)	84%	85%	84%	81%	87%	82%	82%	90%	80%*
Quality of English learning received (d)	85%	87%	85%	85%	-	-	-	-	-
Quality of maths learning received (e)	82%	83%	83%	89%	-	-	-	-	-
Experience of the EPA process (f)	84%	81%	<b>87%*</b>	83%	-	-	-	-	83%

Base: Apprenticeship cohort asked each statement varied according to the statement being asked about and in 2023 ranged from 'all apprentices' (4,919) to 'Level 4 receiving English training' (54). Bases: (a) receiving training from college / provider, (b) all receiving training, (c) all apprentices, (d) all receiving English training, (e) all receiving maths training, (f) all standards completers who have heard of EPAs (modularised). \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the average (bold figures show results that are significantly higher than the average). - indicates figure has been suppressed due to low base size.

**Table 7-7: Percentage satisfied (6-10 rating) with different aspects of apprenticeship, by SSA**

	Agri-culture	Arts	Business	Con-struction	Edu-cation	Engin-eering	Health	ICT	Leisure	Retail	Science
Quality of learning received (a)	82%	88%	<b>89%*</b>	80%*	85%	80%*	85%	80%*	<b>92%*</b>	<b>89%*</b>	94%
Training enabling better job performance (b)	88%	84%	89%	86%	88%	86%	87%	82%*	88%	88%	86%
Amount of learning each week (b)	80%	79%	85%	<b>88%*</b>	79%	84%	77%*	83%	84%	84%	87%
Balance between time learning and working (b)	78%	82%	76%	<b>87%*</b>	77%	<b>85%*</b>	70%*	<b>83%*</b>	<b>84%*</b>	79%	86%
Feedback on progress (c)	83%	88%	<b>89%*</b>	85%	86%	83%*	86%	86%	<b>93%*</b>	<b>90%*</b>	81%
Employer support (a)	84%	<b>91%*</b>	86%	<b>90%*</b>	85%	87%	78%*	<b>91%*</b>	87%	81%*	89%
Assessment on the job (c)	81%	84%	82%	86%	84%	82%	85%	83%	<b>91%*</b>	85%	76%
Quality of English learning or training received (d)	-	-	80%	87%	87%	86%	85%	88%	-	85%	-
Quality of maths learning or training received (e)	-	-	84%	74%	78%	83%	81%	-	-	87%	-
Experience of the EPA process (f)	-	-	85%	82%	82%	83%	83%	85%	-	87%	-

Base: Apprenticeship cohort asked each statement varied according to the statement being asked about and in 2023 ranged from 'all apprentices' (4,919) to 'Education - receiving English training' (54). Bases: (a) receiving training from college / provider, (b) all receiving training, (c) all apprentices, (d) all receiving English training, (e) all receiving maths training, (f) all standards completers who have heard of EPAs (modularised). \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the average (bold figures show results that are significantly higher than the average). - indicates figure has been suppressed due to low base size.

Apprentices with reported compliant levels of OTJT<sup>73</sup> were more satisfied with aspects of their apprenticeship than those who did not receive the required hours of OTJT. This was true for 6 of the 10 elements measured in the survey, a similar pattern to that seen in 2021. As examples, they were more satisfied with the balance between the time spent learning and working (83% compliant vs. 69% non-compliant), and the amount of learning received each week (87% compliant vs. 75% non-compliant).

As referenced earlier in this report, the apprenticeship subjects undertaken by male and female apprentices differed, with male apprentices more likely to be enrolled in Construction, Engineering, ICT apprentices, and female apprentices more likely to be enrolled in Business, Education, Health and Retail apprentices. Within this context, male apprentices were more satisfied than their female counterparts with the balance between the time spent learning and working (83% vs. 73%), the extent to which their employer supported their apprenticeship (88% vs. 81%), and the amount of learning received each week (85% vs. 80%). Overall female apprentices were less likely than male apprentices to report receiving the compliant amount of OTJT (55% vs. 65%). This could explain their lower levels of satisfaction regarding the amount of learning received and the balance of time spent between learning and working. However, female apprentices were more satisfied than male apprentices with the quality of the teaching received from their college or training provider (86% vs. 84%).

Satisfaction was lower for some specific elements for older apprentices (those aged 25 and over) compared with younger apprentices. For example, 74% of those aged 25 and over were satisfied with the balance between the time spent learning and working, compared with an average of 78% across all apprentices. A higher proportion of apprentices aged 25 and over were on an apprenticeship with reported non-compliant OTJT levels (30%, compared with 25% of 19 to 24 year olds, and 24% of under 19s). This pattern was also seen in 2021. Despite higher levels of reported non-compliant OTJT levels, those aged 25 and over were on average more satisfied with the quality of the teaching (86% vs. 83% 19-24 year olds).

Apprentices without a disability nor a learning difficulty were more satisfied across the various apprenticeship elements compared with those that had either. This was most notable when looking at the balance between the time spent learning and working (79% vs. 69% of learners with a learning difficulty and / or a disability) and the quality of the English learning or training received (86% vs. 77%).

Those that had not experienced any delays to their EPA were notably more likely to express they were satisfied (87%) with their experience of the overall EPA process, compared with those that had experienced any sort of delay (78%).

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<sup>73</sup> This is the compliant measure relevant to the start date of the apprenticeship, for more recent apprentices this would be either 6 or more hours a week or 20% of normal working hours if they were working less than 30 hours a week.

Those who had completed their apprenticeships and had since moved employer were less satisfied with elements of their apprenticeship, compared with apprentices who had completed their course and stayed with the same employer. The largest difference between these groups was the extent to which apprentices thought their employer supported their apprenticeship (65% of those with a different employer by the time of the survey were satisfied vs. 86% of those with the same employer). Completers who had left their employer were also less satisfied with the way they were assessed on the job (75% vs. 85% of those still with the same employer), the balance between the time spent learning and working (66% vs. 79%), and that learning enabled them to do their job better (81% vs. 89%).

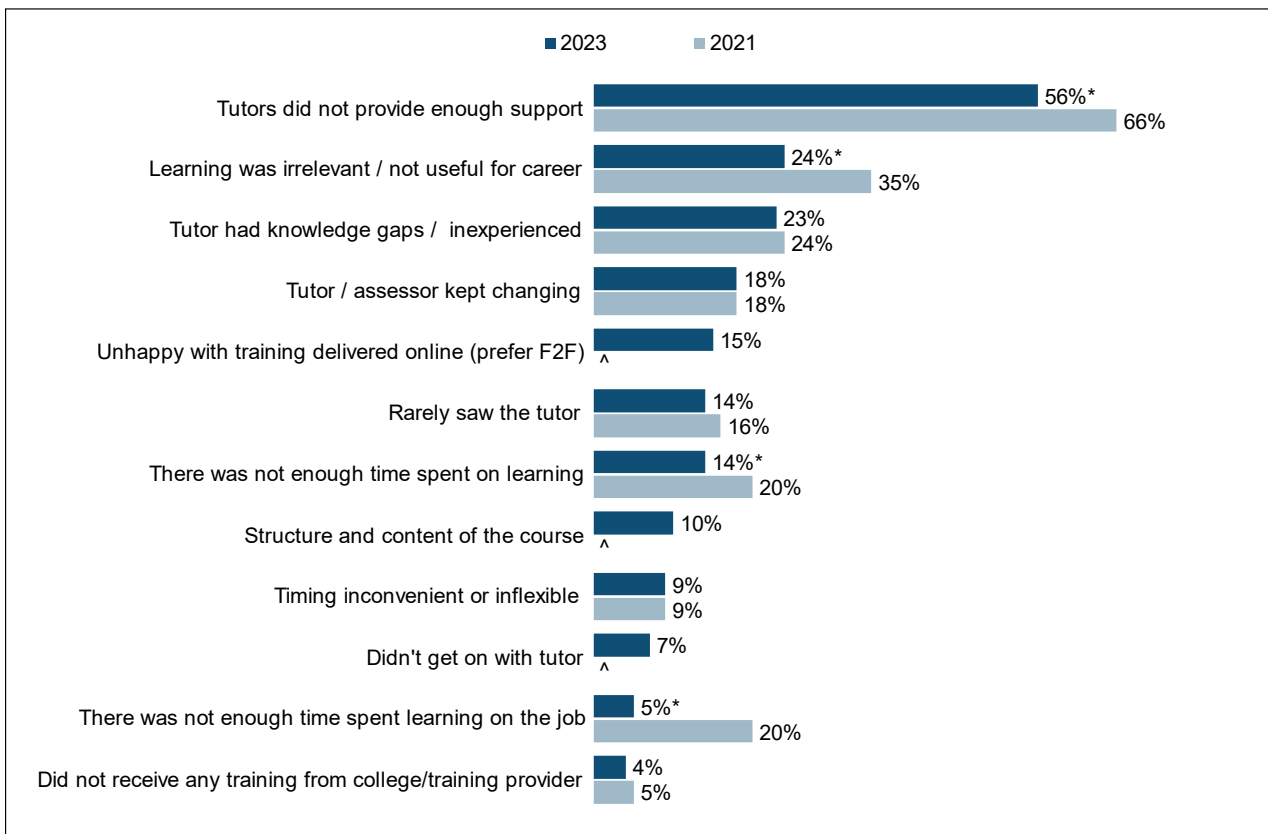
Looking at satisfaction with the different aspects of the apprenticeship by levels of deprivation found that apprentices in the most deprived areas (first IMD quintile) gave higher satisfaction ratings for several elements of their apprenticeship, compared with the average. These apprentices were more likely to be very satisfied with the feedback they received on their progress (72% very satisfied vs. 66% overall), the quality of teaching received from the college or provider (69% vs. 63%), the way they were assessed on the job (67% vs. 61%), and the quality of maths learning (70% vs. 62%). They were also more likely to be more satisfied generally with the quality of English learning (89% satisfied vs 85% overall).

### **Reasons for being dissatisfied with the quality of learning received from a college or training provider**

As shown in Figure 7-4, the leading reason for dissatisfaction with the quality of learning provided by a college or training provider was that tutors did not provide enough support, were not helpful, or were disorganised (56%). While this was also the main reason for dissatisfaction in 2021 (66%), fewer apprentices reported it as an issue in 2023 than in 2021. The learning being irrelevant or not useful for a career (24%) and the tutor having knowledge gaps or being inexperienced (23%) were other common reasons for dissatisfaction.

Level 6 and above apprentices (33%) were more likely to be dissatisfied because the learning was irrelevant or not useful for their career, compared with apprentices at some lower levels (Level 2: 15%, Level 4: 13%). This pattern was also seen in 2021. Although this difference in views by level of apprenticeship remained in 2023, at the overall level apprentices were less likely to report being dissatisfied because the learning was irrelevant / not useful for their career compared with 2021 (24% vs. 35%).

**Figure 7-4: Reasons for dissatisfaction with the quality of the training received from college or training provider**



Base: All dissatisfied with quality of training from training provider: 2023 (384); 2021 (294). Chart shows responses of 4% and above. \* indicates where a result is significantly different from 2021. ^ did not emerge as a particular theme in 2021, and therefore code was not included in the code frame for analysing the data in 2021.

## 8. Apprenticeship outcomes

This chapter looks at the outcomes resulting from apprenticeships, including skills gained, employment status and impacts on career prospects, including any pay rises or promotions. It then focuses on apprentices' future plans, their likelihood of continuing with their employer or within the same line of work, and any plans for further learning and training.

### Key findings

- **Almost all apprenticeship completers (99%) reported that they had gained skills during their apprenticeship.** The most commonly gained skills were those relevant to their current or desired area of work (94%), followed by skills that could be used in a range of jobs (92%) and communication (87%).
- **Most apprenticeship completers were in work at the time of the survey (95%), with the majority in full-time work (86%).** Over two-thirds (68%) of completers were still employed by the same organisation with whom they completed their apprenticeship with (consistent with 2021 findings).
- **Almost all apprentices (97%) reported at least one positive outcome (namely being better at their job, improved career prospects, more responsibility, or greater job satisfaction) since starting or completing their apprenticeship.** A greater proportion of apprentices agreed that they had experienced these positive outcomes compared with 2021.
- **Among completers, almost half (48%) had been promoted at work, while three-quarters (75%) had received a pay rise; 45% had received both.** Both of these outcomes were more common than in 2021 (when 39% had been promoted and 65% had received a pay rise). Most apprentices that had received a promotion or a pay rise said that their apprenticeship had some influence on this (82% of those receiving a promotion and 70% receiving a pay rise), with around a quarter (26%) in each case saying it was a direct result of completing the apprenticeship.
- **The majority of current apprentices planned to carry on working for the same employer upon completing their apprenticeship (72%).** Most of the rest intended to either go into education or training (11%) or work for a different employer but in the same line of work (7%).
- **Over nine-in-ten (91%) apprentices felt their apprenticeship had prepared them for what they wanted to do next** (unchanged from 2021). The one-in-ten (9%) who felt it did not prepare them well were most likely to attribute this to the training being irrelevant for their career (36% of this group).



- **Almost all (98%) current apprentices felt that they were likely to complete their apprenticeship**, with 83% reporting that they were very likely to do so.<sup>74</sup>
- **Three-quarters (74%) of current apprentices or apprenticeship completers who were employed felt that they were aware of post-apprenticeship training options.**
- **At the time of the survey, 30% of current apprentices had started or were considering further study, rising to 39% of recent completers and 41% of longer-term completers.** Overall, 16% of completers had started another apprenticeship / qualification.

## Skills gained during apprenticeships

All apprenticeship completers were asked which skills they had gained as a direct result of completing their apprenticeship. Almost all apprentices (99%) felt that they had gained at least one skill from their apprenticeship, the same proportion of 2021. Around half (51%) of apprenticeship completers had gained 6 or more skills from a prompted list of 7. This represents a slight decrease compared with 57% of apprenticeship completers that reported this in 2021, though still remains just above half. Both recent and longer-term completers saw a decline in the proportion of apprentices that had gained 6 or more skills (recent completers: 52% vs. 58% in 2021; longer-term completers: 49% vs. 56%). It is worth noting here that all longer-term completers in 2021 would have finished their apprenticeship before the first COVID-19 lockdown.

The vast majority (94%) of apprenticeship completers felt that they had acquired skills during their apprenticeship that were relevant to their desired area of work or that could be used across a range of jobs or industries (92%). A near similar proportion felt that their communication skills had improved (87%), while eight-in-ten reported that they were now better able to work with others (81%).

Further to the above skills, many felt that they had gained digital skills (64%), English skills (56%) and maths skills (50%). Apprentices who studied towards English or maths qualifications were more likely to report improved skills in each of these respective areas

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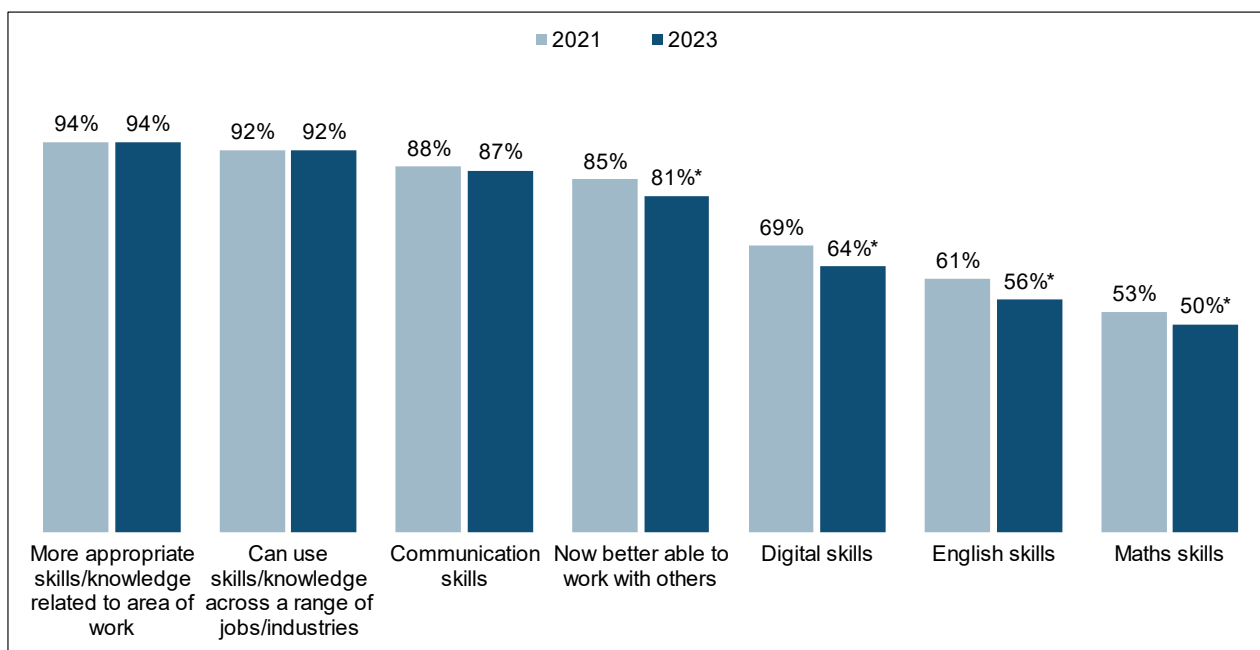
<sup>74</sup> The official achievement rate for those undertaking apprenticeship standards currently stands at 51%. The difference between this figure and the intentions of those undertaking the survey is likely due to the time between sampling (1 January 2023) and fieldwork beginning (4 July 2023), which means that apprentices interviewed will have been undertaking their apprenticeships for at least six months by the time of interview. The Non-completer Survey indicates that half (49%) of apprentices who do not complete leave their apprenticeship within the first six months, and on average undertake nine months before withdrawing. This effectively means that there is a high likelihood that an apprentice would have already withdrawn by the time of interview given the time of sampling, which goes some way to explaining the disparity between these figures and the official achievement rate. The latest national achievement rate tables can be found [here](#).

(80% who undertook English training said that their English skills improved, while 78% of those who undertook maths training said their maths skills improved).

This was particularly the case among those who enjoyed their study of English and / or maths, with 86% of this group saying they improved their skills in English (vs. 60% of those who did not enjoy it), and the same proportion saying they improved their skills in maths (vs. 63%). Although those who did not enjoy the English and / or maths study because they found it difficult were less likely to record such a positive outcome, they were still more likely than the overall average to say their maths skills improved (72% vs. 50% average).

As shown in Figure 8-1, 4 of the prompted skills had decreased in prevalence compared with 2021. These were being better able to work with others (81% vs. 85% in 2021), digital skills (64% vs. 69%), English skills (56% vs. 61%), and maths skills (50% vs. 53%).

**Figure 8-1: Skills gained as a result of the apprenticeship (prompted)**



Base: All apprenticeship completers: 2021 (2,075); 2023 (1,949). \* indicates where a result is significantly different from 2021.

Looking at changes over time for longer-term completers (this being the group for which longer time-series comparisons can be made), the gained skills recorded for longer-term completers were in line with 2021, except for a fall in the proportion reporting that they had gained digital skills (61% vs. 67% in 2021). This however was a return to the level recorded pre-2021 (61% in 2018-19). While not significant compared with 2021, the downward trend has continued in the proportion of longer-term completers reporting improved English and maths skills as shown in Table 8-1.

**Table 8-1: Skills gained as a result of the apprenticeship among longer-term completers over time (prompted)**

	2015	2017	2018-19	2021	2023
Base	(2,736)	(2,767)	(1,580)	(1,039)	(958)
More appropriate skills / knowledge for area of work	88%	90%	88%	93%	93%
Can use skills / knowledge for a range of jobs / industries	88%	88%	90%	91%	91%
Communication skills	-	-	83%	87%	86%
Now better able to work with others	81%	82%	80%	85%	82%
Digital skills~	59%	60%	61%	67%	61%*
English skills	61%	61%	62%	60%	56%
Maths skills	58%	59%	54%	54%	49%

Base: All longer-term completers. \* indicates where a result is significantly different from 2021. Prior to 2021, completed apprentices were only sampled for 'longer-term' completers. ~Prior to 2021 digital skills was referred to as IT skills. Communication skills results not shown for 2015 and 2017 as this option was previously unprompted.

Recent completers who had undertaken apprenticeship standards were more likely to report that their communication skills had improved compared with recent completers on apprenticeship frameworks (88% vs. 71%), and also that they had gained enhanced digital skills (67% vs. 54%). On the other hand, all completers (including longer-term completers) who had undertaken apprenticeship frameworks were more likely to report improved maths skills (60% vs. 48% on standards).

As shown in Table 8-2, there was a general trend that as level of apprenticeship increased, so did the proportion agreeing that they gained skills related to their current or desired area of work (92% for Level 2, compared with 100% for Level 5 and Level 6). Level 2 apprentices were least likely to report enhanced communication skills (84%), but more likely than overall to report improved English skills (62%), though this may be related to the fact that they were more likely than other levels to study for an English qualification during the apprenticeship. Level 6 apprentices were particularly likely to report improved digital skills (82%), however, in part this could be driven by the relatively high proportion of Level 6 apprentices who were undertaking an ICT apprenticeship among apprenticeship completers (23% vs. 7% on average).

**Table 8-2: Skills gained as a result of the apprenticeship (prompted), by level**

	All	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7
Base	(1,949)	(530)	(950)	(199)	(128)	(64)	(78)
Skills related to current or desired area of work	94%	92%	92%*	95%	<b>100%*</b>	<b>100%*</b>	98%
Skills that can be used across a range of jobs	92%	90%	92%	93%	94%	95%	97%
Communication skills	87%	84%*	87%	83%	91%	92%	89%
Better able to work with others	81%	83%	80%	77%	86%	<b>93%*</b>	75%
Digital skills	64%	62%	64%	67%	58%	<b>82%*</b>	64%
English skills	56%	<b>62%*</b>	54%	47%*	54%	65%	54%
Maths skills	50%	53%	50%	49%	38%*	52%	48%

Base: All apprenticeship completers. \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the average (bold figures show results that are significantly higher than the average).

By age, younger apprentices (under 19) were more likely than apprentices aged 25 or over to report gaining the following skills:

- Communication skills (94% under 19 vs. 82% 25 or over).
- Better able to work with others (89% vs. 77%).
- Digital skills (70% vs. 59%).
- Maths skills (60% vs. 44%).

There were also differences by Sector Subject Area (SSA), as shown in Table 8-3. Being better able to work with others was more commonly reported by those completing Leisure (96%), Construction (89%) and Retail (87%) apprenticeships. Digital skills were most likely to be gained in ICT apprenticeships (91%); English skills in Leisure (70%) and Health apprenticeships (63%); and maths skills in Construction apprenticeships (66%).

Looking at outcomes achieved by ethnicity, black, black British, Caribbean or African apprentices reported the highest levels of skills gained, with 72% reporting that they improved in at least 6 of the 7 prompted skills, compared with 50% of apprentices from a white background. This included 79% of black, black British, Caribbean or African apprentices reporting their digital skills had improved (compared with 63% of apprentices from a white background); 77% reporting their English skills had improved (compared

with 55% of apprentices from a white background); and 67% reporting their maths skills had improved (compared with 49% of apprentices from a white background).

The proportion reporting skills improvements as a direct result of the apprenticeship was comparable between apprentices with a learning difficulty and / or a disability and those without. The exception being that apprentices with a learning difficulty were more likely than those without to report improved maths skills (60% vs. 49% without), though it should be noted that apprentices with learning difficulties were more likely to have studied for a maths qualification (26% vs. 16% without a learning difficulty or disability).

Further to these differences, completers living in the most deprived areas (in the first Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) quintile) were most likely to report improved digital skills (69% vs. 64% overall) and, having been more likely than average to have studied towards an English and / or maths qualification (English: 18% vs. 14% overall; maths: 21% vs. 17% overall), this group was also most likely to report gaining English skills (63% vs. 56% overall) and maths skills (62% vs. 50%).

In addition to the prompted list, apprentices were asked if they had developed any other skills as a direct result of completing their apprenticeship. Other skills mentioned included:

- Personal development skills (6%); higher among female (7%) and Business apprentices (9%).
- Organisation / time management skills (4%); higher among Level 6 (9%) and black, black British, Caribbean or African apprentices (10%).
- Management / leadership skills (2%); higher among Level 5 (8%) and Asian or Asian British apprentices (6%).

**Table 8-3: Skills gained as a result of the apprenticeship (prompted), by SSA**

	Engineering	Leisure	ICT	Business	Agriculture	Retail	Construction	Health	Education
Base	(245)	(91)	(170)	(365)	(123)	(199)	(180)	(388)	(146)
Skills related to current or desired area of work	95%	95%	94%	93%	94%	91%	95%	95%	94%
Skills that can be used across a range of jobs	94%	92%	93%	94%	90%	91%	93%	90%*	89%
Communication skills	83%*	<b>94%*</b>	86%	86%	84%	85%	90%	89%	88%
Better able to work with others	81%	<b>96%*</b>	82%	79%	79%	<b>87%*</b>	<b>89%*</b>	80%	81%
Digital skills	58%*	68%	<b>91%*</b>	62%	51%*	58%	57%	68%	65%
English skills	49%*	<b>70%*</b>	49%	53%	55%	58%	59%	<b>63%*</b>	62%
Maths skills	<b>61%*</b>	47%	45%	38%*	48%	55%	<b>66%*</b>	51%	53%

Base: All apprenticeship completers; Arts (33) and Science (9) are not included due to a low base size. \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the average (bold figures show results that are significantly higher than the average).

## Current employment status of completers

Almost all (95%) apprenticeship completers<sup>75</sup> were in work at the time of the survey, with the majority (86%) in full-time work, an increase for full-time work from 83% in 2021. An additional 5% were in part-time work, 3% were self-employed and 1% were employed on a zero hours contract. Additionally, 1% were in education, and 3% were unemployed.

Level 2 apprentices were less likely to be in work (93%) and more likely to report being unemployed compared with all other levels (5% vs. 0-2% for other levels). As Level 2 apprentices comprised largely of younger apprentices (47% were under 19), this finding was in line with the results by age, with younger apprentices less likely to be in work than those aged 25 or over (93% vs. 97%).

There were also some differences in employment status at the time of the survey by SSA, as shown in Figure 8-2. Apprentices who had completed Business apprenticeships were most likely to be employed full-time (93%), though there was a notable increase in the proportion of apprentices from Retail apprenticeships who were employed full-time in comparison to 2021 (84% vs. 75%). Apprentices in Leisure (84%) and Construction (92%) were the least likely to be in work - instead 7% in both SSAs respectively reported that they were unemployed.

As well as age, employment outcomes also varied by gender, ethnicity and disability:

- Female completers were more likely than male completers to be employed part-time (8% vs. 2%), while male completers were more likely to be self-employed (5% vs. 1% of female completers).
- Completers from mixed or multiple ethnic groups and Asian or Asian British backgrounds were least likely to be in work (89% and 90% respectively), while completers from a white background were most likely to be in work (96%). Black, black British, Caribbean or African apprentices were most likely to be in education at the time of the survey (5%).
- Disabled completers were more likely than average to report being unemployed (7% vs. 3%).

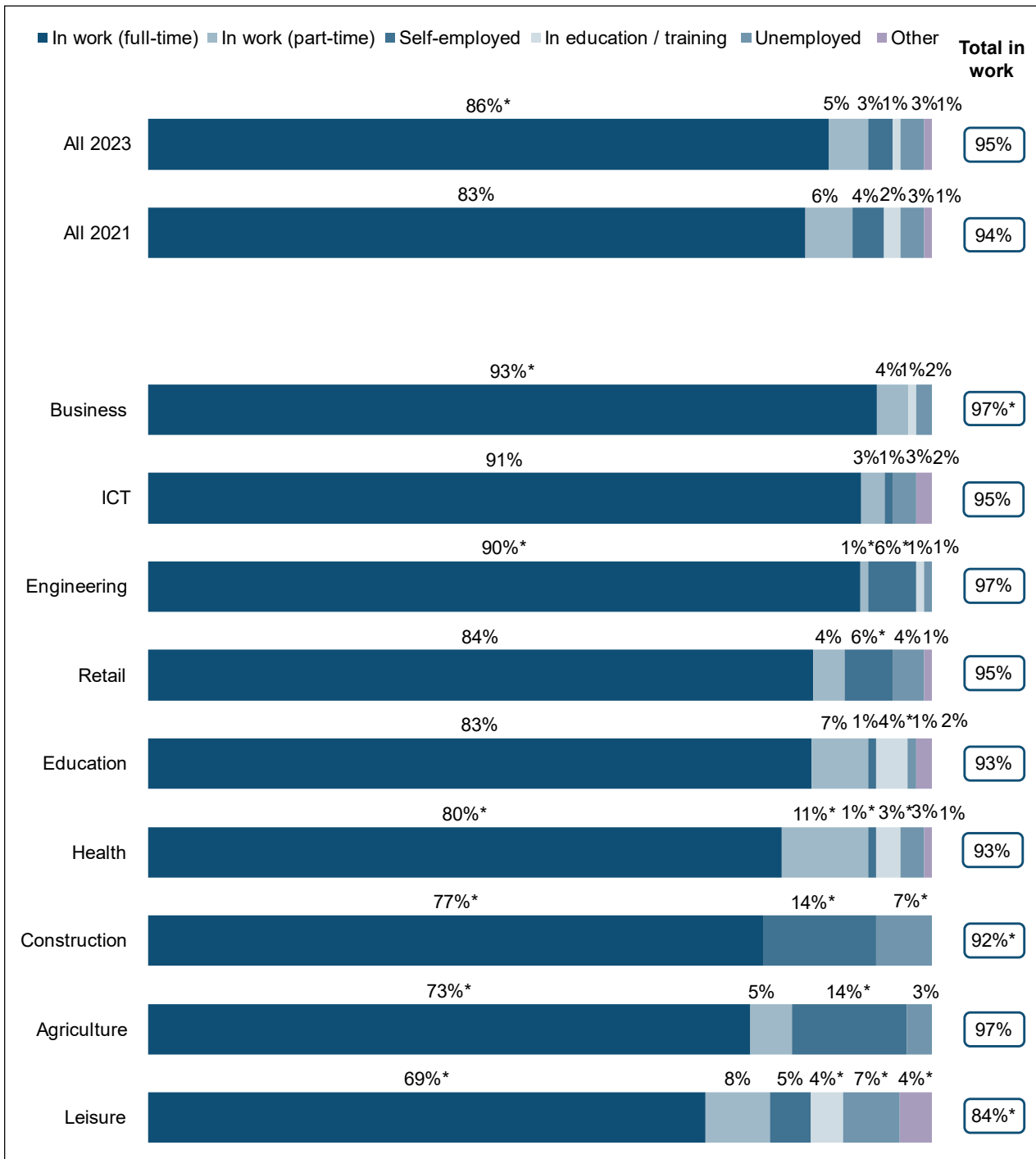
Completers who were NEET prior to the apprenticeship were less likely to be in work at the time of the survey compared with the average (84% vs. 95%). Instead, they were

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<sup>75</sup> 'Completers' includes both longer-term completers and recent completers. The former completed their apprenticeship between July 2021 and February 2022, while the latter completed their apprenticeship between March 2022 and December 2022. Fieldwork for the Learner Survey took place between July and September 2023. This meant longer-term completers had completed their apprenticeship between 16 and 26 months prior to interview, while recent completers had completed their apprenticeship between 6 and 18 months prior to interview.

more likely than average to be in education (7% vs. 1%) or doing something else (5% vs. 1%); 4% were unemployed comparable to the average of 3%.

**Figure 8-2: Employment status of completed apprentices, by SSA**



Base: All apprenticeship completers: 2023 (1,949); 2021 (2,075). 2023 subgroups: Construction (180); Engineering (245); Business (365); Retail (199); Agriculture (123); Health (388); Education (146); ICT (170); Leisure (91). Arts (33) and Science (9) are not included due to a low base size \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the 2023 average (for subgroups) and 2021 (for time series).



Table 8-4 shows the changes in employment status among longer-term completers over time. Since 2018, there has been a continued upward trajectory in the proportion of longer-term completers in full-time work, with a related decrease of those in part-time work.

**Table 8-4: Employment status of longer-term completers**

	2015	2017	2018-19	2021	2023
Base	(2,736)	(2,767)	(1,580)	(1,039)	(958)
Total: In work	92%	91%	93%	93%	94%
In work (full-time)	74%	74%	75%	81%	<b>84%*</b>
In work (part-time)	15%	14%	11%	7%	6%
Self-employed	3%	4%	5%	5%	3%
In education / training	2%	2%	3%	3%	2%
Unemployed	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%
Other (including zero hours contracts)	1%	2%	3%	1%	1%

Base: All longer-term completers. \* indicates where a result is significantly different from 2021 (bold figures show results that are significantly higher than in 2021). Prior to 2021, completed apprentices were only sampled for 'longer-term' completers.

## Whether still employed by the apprenticeship employer

Just over two-thirds (68%) of completers were still employed by the same organisation with whom they completed their apprenticeship with, similar to the 69% figure reported in 2021. As found in previous waves, still being with the same organisation was higher for recent completers (72%) than longer-term completers (61%).

Those that had permanent or open-ended contracts during their apprenticeship were most likely to report still being with the same organisation (71%), whereas fewer than half of those that had fixed-term contracts lasting the length of the apprenticeship (45%) reported the same. Around six-in-ten (62%) completers that had a fixed-term contract with an end date after the expected apprenticeship end date were still with the same organisation.

Likelihood of still being with the same organisation increased for recent completers in line with the level of the apprenticeship undertaken, with 62% of Level 2 completers employed by the same organisation, 76% of Level 6 and above completers, and 83% of degree apprenticeship completers.

This pattern of still being with the same organisation by level was only indicative (i.e. not statistically significant) for longer-term completers (61% of Level 2-3 completers, 62% of Level 6 and above completers, 64% of Level 4 and above completers and 71% of degree apprentice completers). Of note, longer-term completers on standards were more likely to still be with the same organisation at the time of the survey compared with their counterparts on frameworks (64% vs. 51%). No statistically significant difference in the situation between those on frameworks and standards was recorded for recent completers, although there were very few recent completers on frameworks as they have been phased out.

By SSA, recent and longer-term completers on Business (73%) apprenticeships were most likely to still be employed by the same organisation, while those on Agriculture apprenticeship were the least likely to remain so (39%, a decrease from 58% in 2021). This was to some extent inter-related to the level of the course that the apprentice was on, with Level 4 and above apprenticeships comprising a larger proportion of Business courses, and Level 2 / 3 apprenticeships comprising a larger proportion of Agriculture courses.

Considering apprentice age, apprentices aged 25 or over were more likely to remain employed by the same employer than the younger age groups (76% vs. 63% of those aged 19-24 and 59% aged under 19). This was also the case for apprentices without learning difficulties and / or disabilities compared with learners with learning difficulties and / or disabilities (68% vs. 59%). Those living in the most deprived areas (first IMD quintile) were least likely to still be with the same employer (61% vs. 68% overall).

Those who worked for their employer before starting their apprenticeship were more likely to still be working for them than those who started their apprenticeship with a new employer (71% vs. 64%). This was also true of those in work before their apprenticeship more generally (70%); in contrast, only around half (53%) of apprentices that were unemployed prior to their apprenticeship were still employed by their apprenticeship employer at the time of survey. Apprentices who were not NEET before the apprenticeship were also more likely to still be employed by the organisation compared with those who were NEET before the apprenticeship (68% vs. 49%).

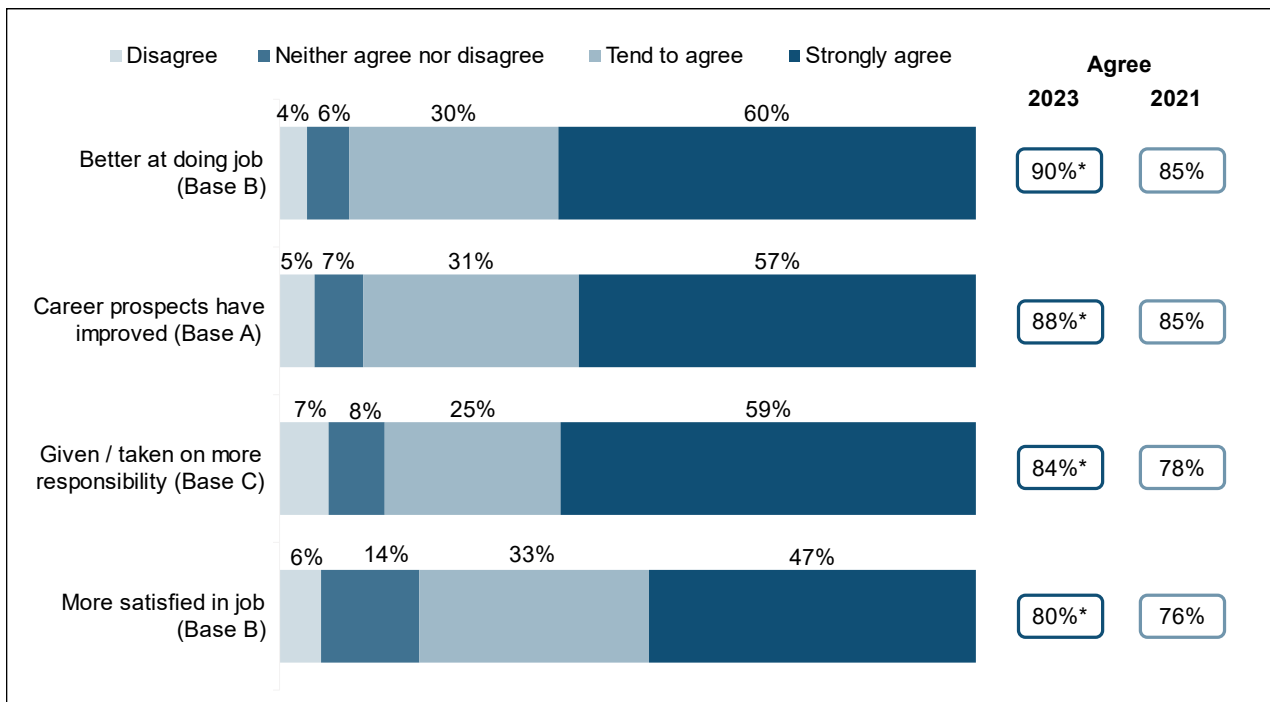
Among completers who had left the employer they undertook their apprenticeship with but who were in employment at the time of the survey, seven-in-ten (71%) reported that they remained in the same broad line of work (consistent with 69% reported in 2021). This proportion increased with level of apprenticeship, from 67% of Level 2/3 apprentices to 86% of Level 4 and above apprentices. There was also variation by SSAs, ranging from 42% of those in Retail to 90% of those in Construction.

## Impacts at work and on career prospects

All apprentices were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with up to 4 statements in relation to their apprenticeship and their job or career. This included whether they felt better at doing their job, if their career prospects had improved, if they had given or taken on more responsibility and if they were more satisfied in their job, as shown in Figure 8-3.

Almost all apprentices (97%) felt that they had received at least one positive outcome since starting or completing their apprenticeship, with two-thirds (67%) reporting that they had experienced all 4 outcomes. Agreement with all statements increased compared with 2021, with around nine-in-ten apprentices in 2023 agreeing that they were better at doing their job (90%) and that their career prospects had improved (88%). The majority of apprentices also agreed that they had been given or taken on more responsibility (84%) and were more satisfied in their job (80%).

**Figure 8-3: Impacts at work since starting apprenticeship (prompted)**



Base A: All apprentices (4,919); Base B: All employed apprentices (including self-employed) (4,816); Base C: All employed apprentices (excluding self-employed) (4,748). \* indicates where a result is significantly different from 2021. Don't know not charted (1% or less per statement).

As shown in Table 8-5, the increase in overall agreement with these statements compared with 2021 has largely been driven by increased positive outcomes for current apprentices; although a higher proportion of recent completers agreed that they had been given more responsibility (82% vs. 78% in 2021). There were no increases in agreement for longer-term completers in comparison to 2021, but agreement remained higher than 2018-19 for 3 of the 4 impacts (better at doing job, career prospects have improved,

given/taken on more responsibility, with the shift in agreement for these impacts recorded between the 2018-19 and 2021 surveys).

Current apprentices were more likely to agree that they had experienced all 4 positive outcomes in comparison to completers (72% vs. 59% of recent completers and 57% of longer-term completers). Current apprentices were more likely to agree with each statement, with just the exception of improved career prospects, where they were more positive than longer-term completers but their views were similar to recent completers.

**Table 8-5: Agreement with impacts at work since starting apprenticeship, by survey group**

<b>Better at doing job (Base A)</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2023</b>
Current	85%	89%	87%	85%	<b>91%*</b>
Recent completer	-	-	-	85%	87%
Longer-term completer	80%	84%	81%	85%	87%
<b>Career prospects have improved (Base B)</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2023</b>
Current	86%	88%	86%	84%	<b>89%*</b>
Recent completer	-	-	-	88%	87%
Longer-term completer	80%	82%	79%	86%	85%
<b>Given / taken on more responsibility (Base C)</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2023</b>
Current	76%	80%	79%	78%	<b>86%*</b>
Recent completer	-	-	-	78%	<b>82%*</b>
Longer-term completer	70%	75%	72%	78%	79%
<b>More satisfied in job (Base A)</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2023</b>
Current	78%	82%	76%	76%	<b>83%*</b>
Recent completer	-	-	-	77%	75%
Longer-term completer	71%	75%	72%	74%	74%

Bases: Base A: All employed (including self-employed); Base B: All apprentices; Base C: All employed. Lowest sample size included is 865 longer-term completers in the 'all employed' group in 2023. \* indicates where a result is significantly different from 2021 (bold figures show results that are significantly higher than in 2021). Prior to 2021, completed apprentices were only sampled for 'longer-term' completers.

There was some disparity in views within current, recent and longer-term completer groups when looking at positive outcomes experienced by apprenticeship level, shown in Table 8-6. Within current apprentices, those undertaking a lower-level apprenticeship were more likely than higher levels to report all 4 positive outcomes (78% for Level 2 vs. 68% for Level 6 and above), however for longer-term completers, apprentices on lower levels were less likely to report all 4 positive outcomes (53% Level 2 vs. 73% Level 6 and above). The highest levels of agreement for recent and longer-term completers were seen in the Level 5 group.

**Table 8-6: Agreement with impacts at work since starting apprenticeship, by level**

<b>All 4 positive outcomes (Base B)</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Level 3</b>	<b>Level 4</b>	<b>Level 5</b>	<b>Level 6+</b>
Current	<b>72%</b>	<b>78%*</b>	<b>76%*</b>	64%*	58%*	68%*
Recent completer	59%	55%	59%	<b>68%*</b>	<b>70%*</b>	51%
Longer-term completer	57%	53%	53%	58%	<b>73%*</b>	<b>73%*</b>
<b>Better at doing job (Base A)</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Level 3</b>	<b>Level 4</b>	<b>Level 5</b>	<b>Level 6+</b>
Current	<b>91%</b>	<b>94%*</b>	92%*	85%*	88%	91%
Recent completer	87%	86%	86%	80%	<b>96%*</b>	88%
Longer-term completer	87%	86%	86%	86%	<b>96%*</b>	86%
<b>Career prospects have improved (Base B)</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Level 3</b>	<b>Level 4</b>	<b>Level 5</b>	<b>Level 6+</b>
Current	<b>89%</b>	<b>91%*</b>	<b>90%*</b>	84%*	81%*	88%
Recent completer	87%	85%	86%	88%	90%	91%
Longer-term completer	85%	<b>79%*</b>	85%	87%	<b>95%*</b>	92%

<b>Given / taken on more responsibility (Base C)</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Level 3</b>	<b>Level 4</b>	<b>Level 5</b>	<b>Level 6+</b>
Current	<b>86%</b>	88%	<b>89%*</b>	79%*	75%*	85%
Recent completer	82%	80%	80%	85%	<b>93%*</b>	86%
Longer-term completer	79%	78%	77%	77%	<b>90%*</b>	83%
<b>More satisfied in job (Base A)</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Level 3</b>	<b>Level 4</b>	<b>Level 5</b>	<b>Level 6+</b>
Current	<b>83%</b>	<b>89%*</b>	<b>85%*</b>	80%	74%*	79%*
Recent completer	75%	79%	73%	81%	85%	58%*
Longer-term completer	74%	73%	72%	70%	<b>86%*</b>	81%

Bases: Base A: All employed (including self-employed); Base B: All apprentices; Base C: All employed. Lowest sample size included is 54 Level 6+ longer-term completers in the 'all employed' group. \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the average (bold figures show results that are significantly higher than the average).

By SSA, apprentices who had started or completed an Engineering course were most likely to agree with all 4 positive outcomes (77%), followed by those in Construction (75%) and Agriculture (72%), in line with the top 3 sectors in 2021.<sup>76</sup> Apprentices in these SSAs were more likely to agree that they were more satisfied with their job (86% in Engineering, 88% in Construction and 87% in Agriculture), that they had been given or taken more responsibility (90%, 92%, and 90%) and those in Engineering and Construction were more likely to report that their career prospects had improved (92% for both).

There were also some differences by the demographics of the apprentice – apprentices more likely to agree that they had experienced all 4 positive outcomes were:

- Younger apprentices (76% of under 19s vs. 70% of those aged 19-24 and 58% of those 25 and over).
- Male apprentices (70% vs. 63% of female apprentices).
- Apprentices without a learning difficulty and / or a disability (67% vs. 60% of those with either).

<sup>76</sup> In 2021, there were five outcomes covered rather than the four outcomes discussed here.

There were no differences by ethnicity at an overall level, however apprentices from a white background were more likely to agree that their career prospects had improved when compared with all other ethnic groups combined (88% vs. 85%). There no differences by levels of deprivation.

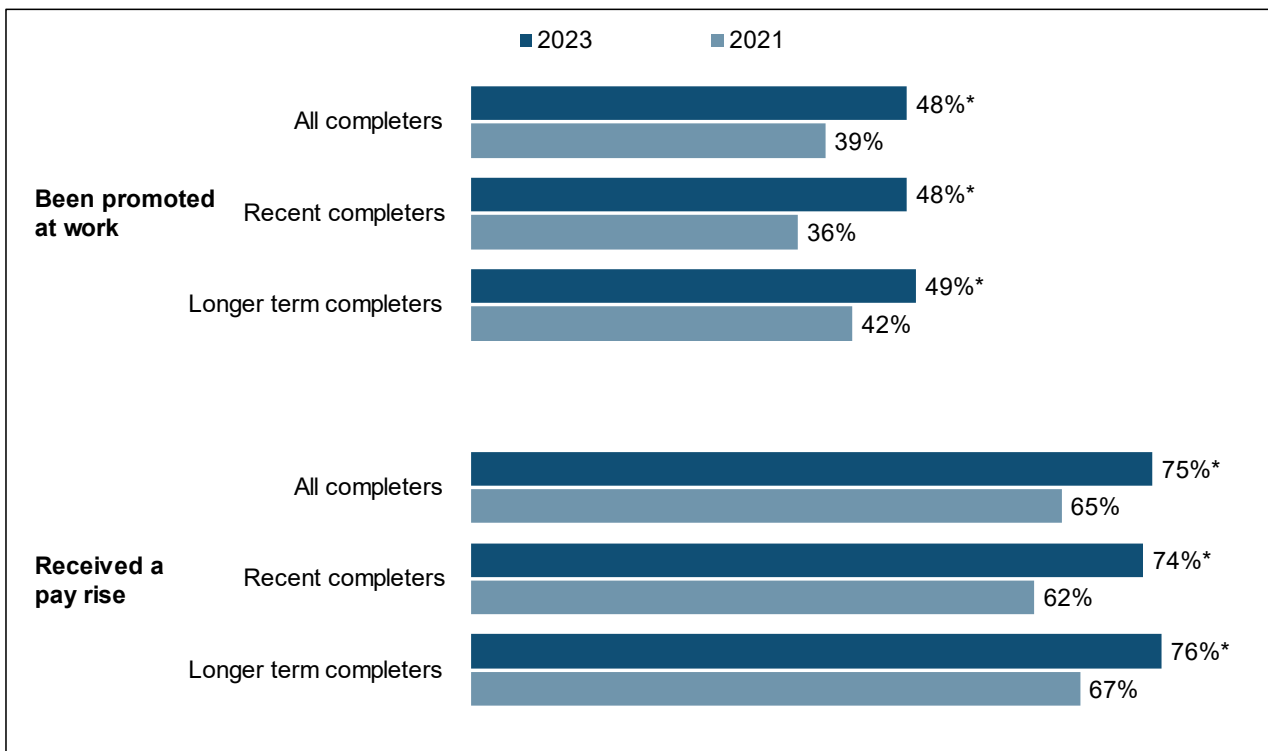
Of particular note, apprentices who reported compliant levels of off-the-job training (OTJT) were more likely than those without to experience all 4 positive outcomes (70% vs. 57%).

## **Promotions and pay rises**

Almost half (48%) of apprenticeship completers had been promoted at work since completing their apprenticeship, while three-quarters (75%) had received a pay rise. Among completers, 45% had received both a promotion and a pay rise.

These figures were higher than seen in 2021, as shown in Figure 8-4, where only 39% had been promoted and 65% had received a pay rise (34% had experienced both). There were no differences between recent and longer-term completers on whether they had experienced these outcomes, despite the longer time period for changes to occur, representing a change to the pattern seen in 2021, when longer-term completers were more likely to report these outcomes. This was due to recent completers seeing a more prominent increase than longer-term completers in terms of the proportion that had received promotions (48% vs. 36% in 2021; 49% vs. 42% for longer-term completers) and pay rises (74% vs. 62% in 2021; 76% vs. 67% for longer-term completers).

**Figure 8-4: Proportion of apprenticeship completers that received a promotion or a pay rise, by completer group**



Base: All completers: 2023 (1,949); 2021 (2,075); Recent completers: 2023 (991); 2021 (1,036); Longer term completers: 2023 (958); 2021 (1,039). \* indicates where a result is significantly different from 2021.

There was no linear pattern of receiving a promotion or pay rise by age, and instead it was completers aged 19 to 24 who were most likely to have been promoted (55%) or to have received a pay rise (82%), compared with those aged under 19 or 25 or over, as shown in Table 8-7.

In comparison to 2021, there were no differences in the proportion of apprentices aged under 19 who had been promoted at work or received a pay rise. Instead, the overall increase was driven by those in the older age categories:

- Being promoted at work increased from 43% to 55% for those aged 19 to 24, and 35% to 47% for those aged 25 and over.
- Receiving a pay rise increased from 70% to 82% for those aged 19 to 24, and 52% to 69% for those aged 25 and over.

There were differences by apprenticeship level, consistent with the trend seen in 2021, whereby those completing lower-level apprenticeships were less likely to have received a promotion at work compared with higher levels (37% for Level 2 vs. 67% for Level 6+), or a pay rise at work (71% vs. 81%). However, the pattern was not linear, with a particular difference at Level 5, where 52% had received a promotion and 69% had received a pay rise compared with the Level 4 figures of 55% and 76% respectively.



By SSA, and in line with 2021 results, ICT completers were the most likely to have received a promotion (61%), with Construction and Engineering completers the most likely to have received a pay rise (86% and 83% respectively). Potentially linked to the sample make-up of these groups, male apprentices were more likely than female apprentices to report receiving a pay rise (79% vs. 71%).

Those with either a learning difficulty and / or a disability were less likely than those without to report receiving a promotion at work (37% vs. 49%). Completers living in the most deprived areas (first IMD quintile) were also least likely to have been promoted (43% vs. 48% overall) or to have received a pay rise (67% vs. 75%).

Most apprentices that had received a promotion or a pay rise said that their apprenticeship had some influence on this (82% of those receiving a promotion and 70% receiving a pay rise). Around a quarter of apprentices felt that their promotion or pay rise was as a direct result of completing the apprenticeship (26% for both, among those who experienced these). This equated to 13% of all completers reporting they received a promotion and 19% a pay rise directly because of the apprenticeship. Among those that received a promotion or pay rise, 56% and 44% respectively felt that their apprenticeship helped to at least an extent (equivalent to 27% and 33% respectively of all completers).

This meant that, overall, 40% of all completers felt that they had been promoted at work in part due to their apprenticeship and 52% felt that their pay rise had been influenced by completing their apprenticeship. This marked an increase compared with 2021 for both measures (33% and 47% respectively).

The proportion of all completers who felt that their promotion was influenced by completing their apprenticeship increased with level, from 28% of Level 2 completers to 64% of Level 7 completers.

Those who were most likely to agree that their apprenticeship had some influence on their promotion were:

- Completers aged 19 to 24 (46% vs. 33% aged under 19).
- Those who had reported receiving compliant levels of OTJT (45% vs. 34% non-compliant).
- Completers in London and the East of England (47% for both).
- Those without learning difficulties and / or disabilities (41% vs. 29% of those with).

The groups more likely to report that their pay rise was influenced by completing their apprenticeship were:

- Level 7 completers (67% vs. 52% overall).

- Those on Construction (72%) or Engineering (65%) courses (vs. 52% overall).
- Younger apprentices (61% aged 19 to 24, and 57% aged under 19 vs. 43% of over 25s).
- Male completers (57% vs. 48% female completers).
- Those who reported receiving compliant levels of OTJT (57% vs. 47% non-compliant).

**Table 8-7: Impact on pay and progression among apprenticeship completers, by level and SSA**

<i>Row percentages</i>	<b>Base</b>	<b>Been promoted at work</b>	<b>Received a pay rise</b>	<b>Whether apprenticeship influenced promotion</b>	<b>Whether apprenticeship influenced pay rise</b>
All completers 2023	(1,949)	<b>48%*</b>	<b>75%*</b>	40%	52%
All completers 2021	(2,075)	39%	65%	33%	47%
Level 2	(530)	37%*	71%*	28%*	49%
Level 3	(950)	49%	76%	40%	52%
Level 4	(199)	<b>55%*</b>	76%	<b>47%*</b>	52%
Level 5	(128)	52%	69%	47%	49%
Level 6	(64)	<b>65%*</b>	82%	<b>54%*</b>	60%
Level 7	(78)	<b>68%*</b>	80%	<b>64%*</b>	<b>67%*</b>
Construction	(180)	50%	<b>86%*</b>	43%	<b>72%*</b>
Engineering	(245)	46%	<b>83%*</b>	40%	<b>65%*</b>
ICT	(170)	<b>61%*</b>	80%	46%	54%
Business	(365)	<b>58%*</b>	75%	<b>49%*</b>	50%
Agriculture	(123)	41%	70%	36%	51%
Health	(388)	39%*	70%*	32%*	48%
Retail	(199)	42%	68%*	30%*	39%*
Education	(146)	41%	65%*	33%	44%*
Leisure	(91)	29%*	64%*	19%*	36%*

<i>Row percentages</i>	<b>Base</b>	<b>Been promoted at work</b>	<b>Received a pay rise</b>	<b>Whether apprenticeship influenced promotion</b>	<b>Whether apprenticeship influenced pay rise</b>
Under 19	(415)	42%*	76%	33%*	<b>57%*</b>
19 to 24	(601)	<b>55%*</b>	<b>82%*</b>	<b>46%*</b>	<b>61%*</b>
25 and over	(933)	47%	69%*	39%	43%*

Base: All completers; Arts (33) and Science (9) are not included due to a low base size. \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the 2023 average (for subgroups) and 2021 (for time series) (bold figures show results that are significantly higher).

Among longer-term completers, there has been a continuing upward trend in the proportions who reported receiving a promotion (49% vs. 42% in 2021, going back to 32% in 2015) or a pay rise (76% vs. 67% in 2021, going back to 48% in 2015) since completing their apprenticeship. However, despite an increase in 2021 in the proportion of longer-term completers who directly attributed their pay rise to their apprenticeship, this proportion returned to the level seen in 2018-19 in 2023. The proportion of longer-term completers directly attributing their promotion to the apprenticeship remained consistent with 2021, as shown in Table 8-8.

**Table 8-8 Impact on pay and progression among longer-term completers**

	2015	2017	2018-19	2021	2023
Received a promotion (Base A)	32%	34%	39%	42%	<b>49%*</b>
Promotion a direct result of apprenticeship (Base B)	19%	22%	18%	25%	23%
Received a pay rise (Base A)	48%	51%	58%	67%	<b>76%*</b>
Pay rise a direct result of apprenticeship (Base C)	27%	28%	21%	27%	21%*

Base A: All longer-term completers: 2015 (2,736); 2017 (2,767); 2018-19 (1,580), 2021 (1,039); 2023 (958).

Base B: All longer-term completers who received a promotion since completing: 2015 (852); 2017 (916); 2018-19 (608); 2021 (438); 2023 (461). Base C: All longer-term completers who received a pay rise since completing: 2015 (1,297); 2017 (1,347); 2018-19 (901); 2021 (687); 2023 (712). \* indicates where a result is significantly different from 2021 (bold figures show results that are significantly higher than in 2021). Prior to 2021, completed apprentices were only sampled for 'longer-term' completers.

## Post apprenticeship plans

Table 8-9 shows the most common post-apprenticeship plans. The majority of current apprentices (72%) planned to continue working for the same employer, and one-in-ten (9%) planned to work for a different employer (7% in the same line of work, 2% in a different line of work). A further 11% planned on entering other education and training upon completing their apprenticeship. These figures were all similar to those reported in 2021 (as shown in Table 8-9), but there was a continued upward trend in the proportion who want to carry on working for the same employer compared with 2018-19 (64%).

Level 6 and 7 current apprentices were most likely to plan to remain working for the same employer (76%) or remain in the same line of work (9%), while those on lower-level apprenticeships were more likely to plan to continue with their education (Level 2, 15%; Level 3, 13%). Level 2 apprentices were also the most likely to consider moving to a different line of work (3%).

There were also some differences by SSA, with those in Health being more likely to plan to go on to further education or training (18%), while those in Leisure and ICT were most likely to plan to leave their employer but remain in the same line of work (15% and 11% respectively).

In terms of other demographics, planning to continue working for the same employer was more common among male apprentices (74% vs. 69% of female apprentices), those aged over 25 (74% vs. 68% of those under 19), and those from mixed or multiple ethnic groups or a white background (73% and 72% respectively). Only around three-fifths (59%) of black, black British, Caribbean or African apprentices said they planned to do

this. Planning to enter into other education was more common among female apprentices (14% vs. 9% of male apprentices), those aged under 19 (14%), black, black British, Caribbean or African apprentices (20%), and those with a learning difficulty and / or a disability (15% vs. 11% without).

**Table 8-9: Most common post-apprenticeship plans (prompted), by level and SSA**

	Base	Carry on working for the same employer	Enter other education and training	Work for a different employer in the same line of work	Work for a different employer in a different line of work
All current 2023	(2,970)	72%	11%	7%	2%
All current 2021	(3,047)	70%	13%	7%	3%
All current 2018-19	(2,355)	64%	16%	8%	2%
Level 2	(551)	68%	<b>15%*</b>	6%	<b>3%*</b>
Level 3	(1,349)	71%	<b>13%*</b>	7%	2%
Level 4	(262)	73%	11%	6%	1%
Level 5	(188)	70%	14%	9%	<1%
Level 6	(406)	<b>76%*</b>	5%*	<b>10%*</b>	2%
Level 7	(214)	76%	5%*	8%	2%
Science	(51)	84%	2%*	8%	1%
Arts	(142)	<b>80%*</b>	3%*	8%	2%
Agriculture	(181)	77%	3%*	9%	1%
Engineering	(396)	75%	8%*	7%	2%
ICT	(245)	74%	5%*	<b>11%*</b>	2%
Retail	(326)	73%	12%	5%	2%
Construction	(273)	72%	8%	7%	3%
Business	(510)	71%	10%	8%	2%
Health	(514)	69%	<b>18%*</b>	6%	1%
Education	(164)	69%	15%	6%	2%
Leisure	(144)	65%	11%	<b>15%*</b>	1%

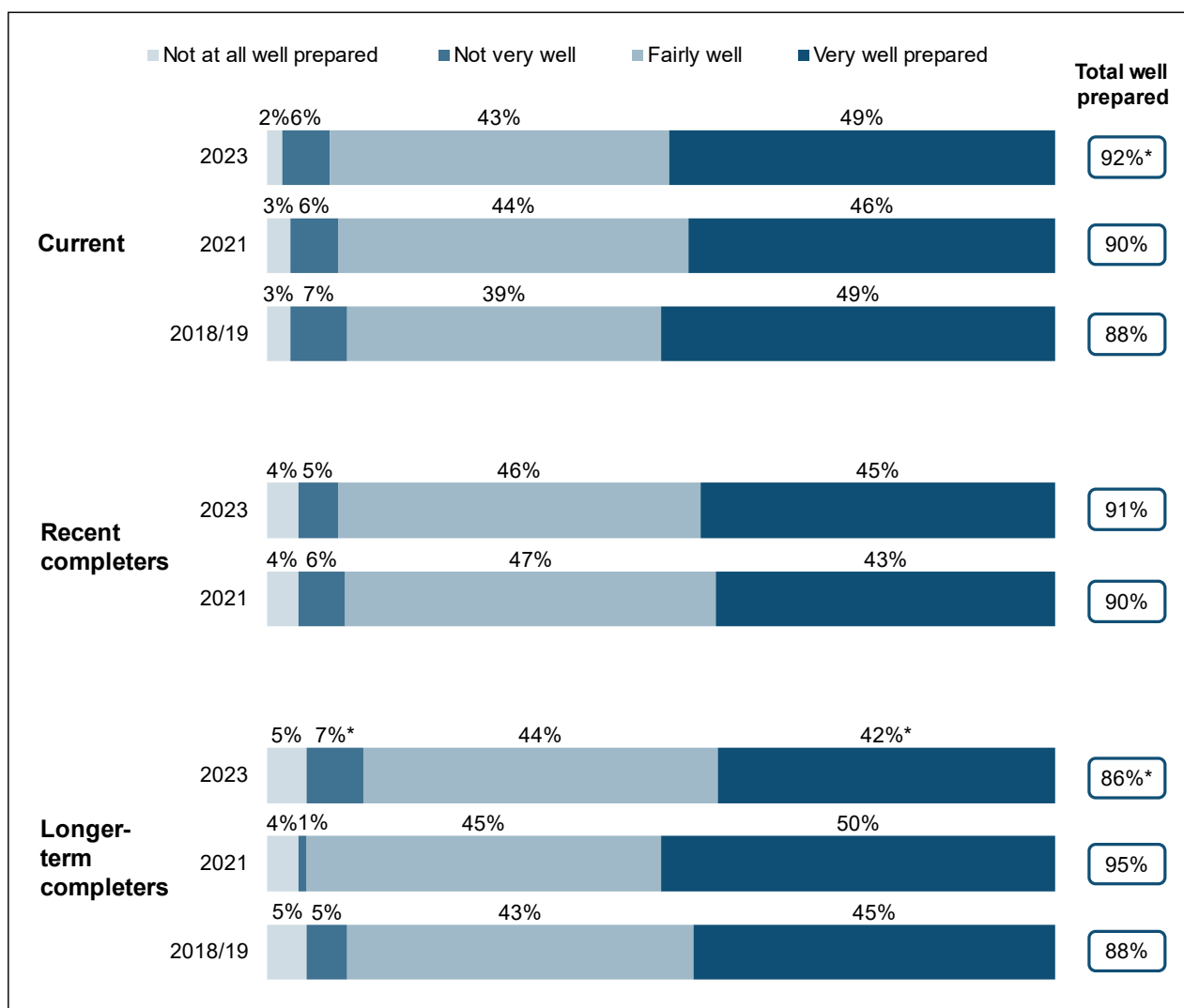
Base: All current apprentices. \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the average (bold figures show results that are significantly higher than the average).

Over nine-in-ten (91%) apprentices (current and completers) felt that their apprenticeship had prepared them for what they wanted to do next (the same proportion as in 2021), with almost half (47%) feeling that it prepared them very well.

Longer-term completers were less likely to agree that their apprenticeship had prepared them well (86%), compared with current apprentices (92%) and recent completers (91%). As shown in Figure 8-5, ratings for these longer-term completers fell by 9 percentage points compared with 2021, when 95% felt that their apprenticeship had prepared them well for what they wanted to do next. It is worth noting that longer-term completers in 2023 were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic during their apprenticeship, whereas in 2021 this group would have completed their apprenticeship before the pandemic began.

Those who had reported receiving OTJT to a level that was compliant with the apprenticeship funding rules were more likely to feel well prepared (92% vs. 87% of those who had reported not receiving compliant levels of OTJT).

**Figure 8-5: Extent to which apprenticeship had prepared apprentices for their desired post-apprenticeship activity**



Base: All current apprentices (modularised): 2023 (1,440); 2021 (1,442); 2018-19 (1,440). Base: All longer-term completers (modularised): 2023 (477); 2021 (504); 2018-19 (1,580). Base: All recent completers (modularised): 2023: (496); 2021 (480). \* indicates where a result is significantly different from 2021.

There was no overall difference by apprenticeship level in terms of the proportion that felt their apprenticeship had prepared them either very well or fairly well for what they wanted to do next. That said, Level 2 apprentices reported slightly stronger views, with 51% saying the apprenticeship had prepared them very well (compared with 47% on average), as did apprentices aged under 19 (51%). Agriculture (57%) and Construction (56%) apprentices were also most likely to feel that their apprenticeship had prepared them very well, with Business apprentices less likely than average to report this (43%).

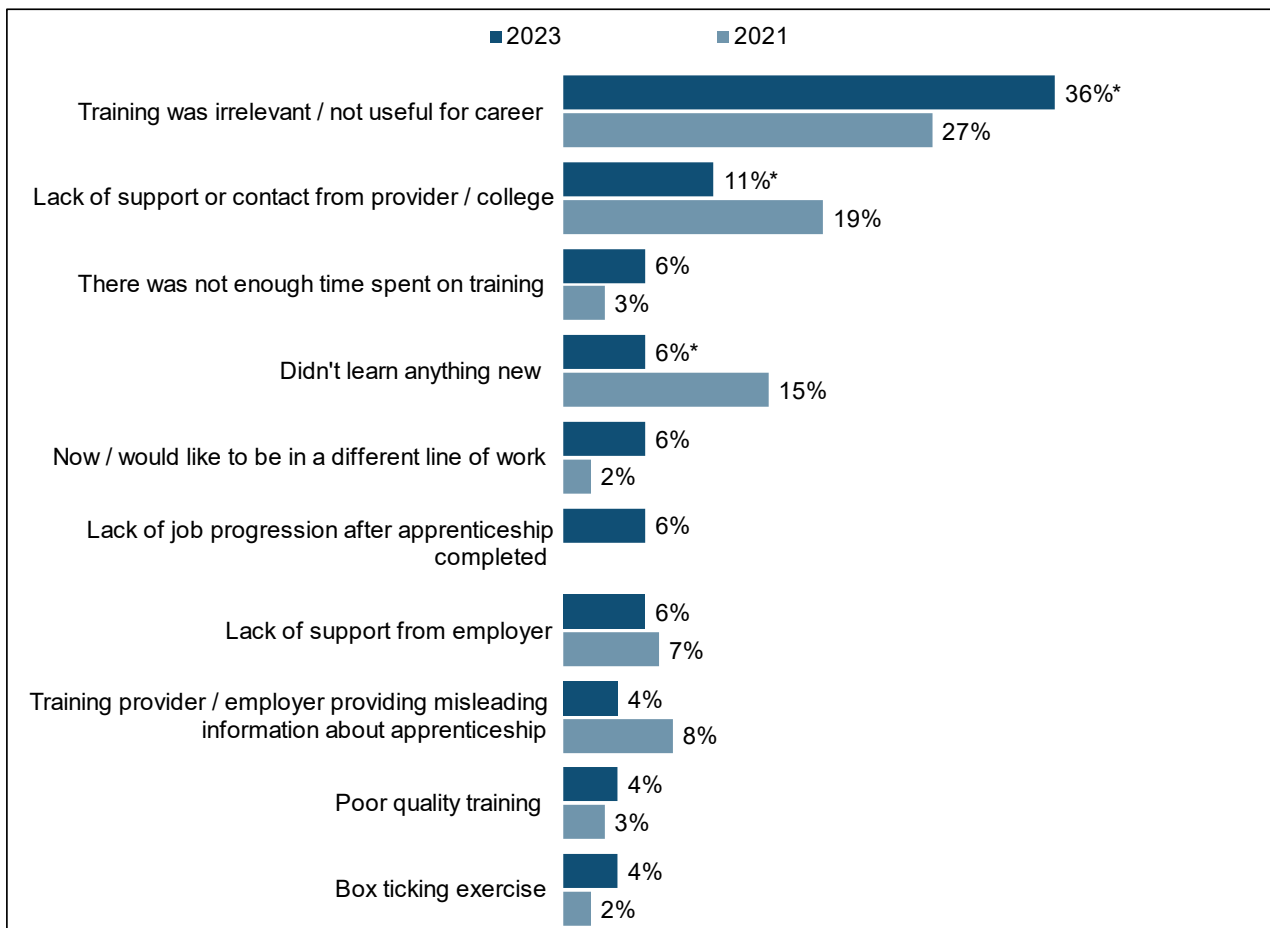
Apprentices who felt that their apprenticeship did not prepare them well for what they wanted to do next were asked why they said this. The most common reason given was that training they had received was irrelevant or not useful for their career (36%); more likely to be reported by longer-term completers (52%), followed by a lack of support from their provider (11%). Current apprentices were more likely to report issues with training,

including not enough time being spent on training (11% vs. less than 1% of completers), and poor-quality training (7% vs. 1% of completers).

The full list of reasons can be seen in Figure 8-6; apprentices were more likely to report that the training was irrelevant in 2023 compared with 2021 (36% vs. 27%), but less likely to report that there was a lack of support (11% vs. 19%) or that they did not learn anything new (6% vs. 15%).

For longer-term completers in particular, the proportion reporting that the training was irrelevant or not useful increased from 24% in 2018-19, to 52% in 2023. They were, however, less likely to feel they did not learn anything new from the apprenticeship (7% in 2023 vs. 23% in 2018-19).

**Figure 8-6: Reasons why apprentices did not feel well prepared for what they wanted to do next (unprompted)**



Base: All who felt their apprenticeship did not prepare them well for what they wanted to do next (modularised): 2023 (223); 2021 (196). \* indicates where a result is significantly different from 2021.



Almost all (98%) current apprentices felt that they were likely to complete their apprenticeship, in line with the corresponding 97% figure in 2021.<sup>77</sup> Over four-fifths (83%) said they were very likely to do so, an increase from 80% in both 2021 and 2018-19. Only 2% felt that they were not likely to complete their apprenticeship. Level 6 apprentices were more certain that they would complete their apprenticeship, with 90% very likely to do so, compared with 78% of Level 2 apprentices. A higher degree of certainty about completing was also more common among those without a disability or learning difficulty (84% very likely vs. 77% of those with either). Age also influenced how certain apprentices were about completing, with a lower proportion of apprentices aged under 19 saying they were very likely to do so (77% vs. 84% of those aged 19-24 and 86% aged 25 and over).

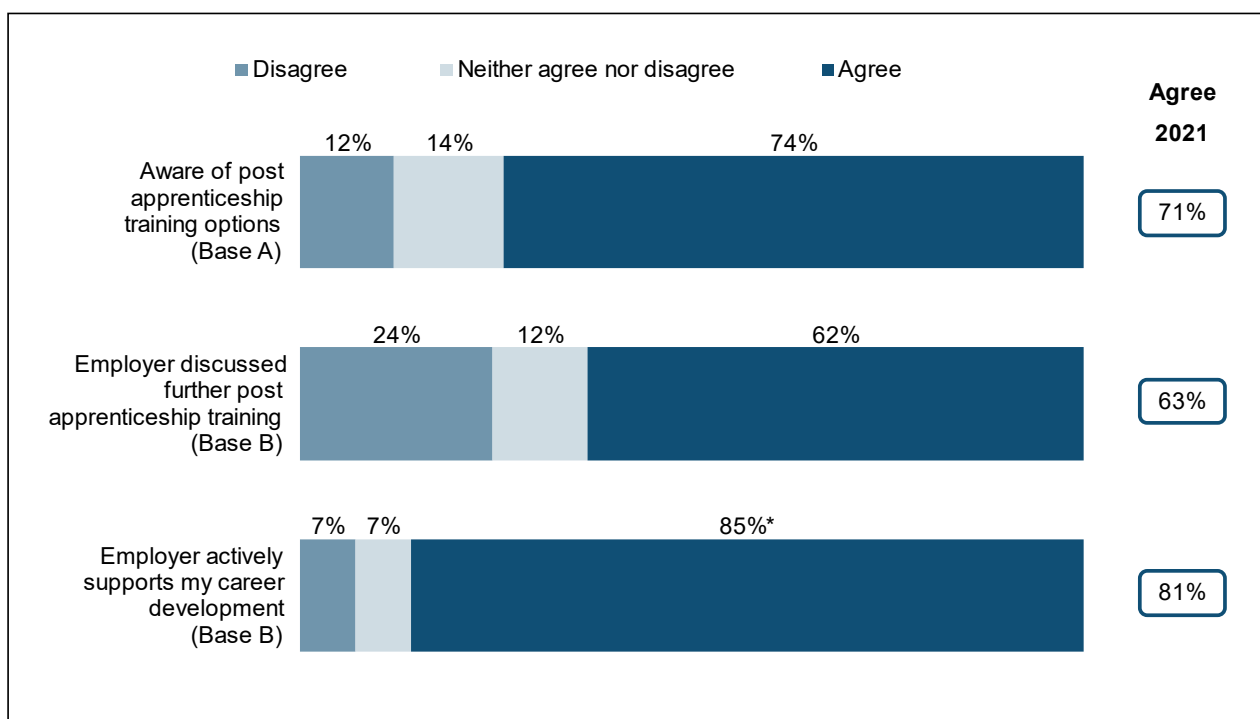
## Plans for future training

Three-quarters (74%) of apprentices agreed that they were aware of post-apprenticeship training options, and 62% said their employer had discussed further post-apprenticeship training. Most (85%) apprentices agreed that their employer actively supported their career development, with this increasing in comparison to 2021 (85% vs. 81% in 2021) as shown in Figure 8-7. Among longer-term completers specifically, the 2023 result (84%) represents an increase on both 2021 (80%) and 2018-19 (79%).

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<sup>77</sup> The official achievement rate for those undertaking apprenticeship standards currently stands at 51%. The difference between this figure and the intentions of those undertaking the survey is likely due to the time between sampling (1 January 2023) and fieldwork beginning (4 July 2023), which means that apprentices interviewed will have been undertaking their apprenticeships for at least six months by the time of interview. The Non-completer Survey indicates that half (49%) of apprentices who do not complete leave their apprenticeship within the first six months, and on average undertake nine months before withdrawing. This effectively means that there is a high likelihood that an apprentice would have already withdrawn by the time of interview given the time of sampling, which goes some way to explaining the disparity between these figures and the official achievement rate. The latest national achievement rate tables can be found [here](#).

**Figure 8-7: Awareness of future training options and employer support with future training**



Base A: All employed apprentices (modularised) (2,356); Base B: All employed completers (modularised) (881) \* indicates where a result is significantly different from 2021.

Some differences in awareness and views on support were found by apprenticeship level and subject. Level 2 apprentices were most likely to agree that they were aware of post-apprenticeship training options (79%). In contrast, only two-thirds (65%) of apprentices at Level 6 and above felt they were aware of these options; this was mainly driven by a particularly low proportion of Level 7 apprentices that agreed they were aware (59%). Level 2 apprentices were however less likely to feel that their employer actively supported their career development (78% vs. 85% overall). Full results by apprenticeship level are shown in Table 8-10.

By subject, Construction, Leisure and Agriculture apprentices were most likely to agree that they felt aware of post-apprenticeship training options (83%, 83% and 81% respectively), whereas those in Arts were least likely (56%). Education apprentices were least likely to agree that their employer had discussed any further training they could do after their apprenticeship (45%), while Engineering apprentices felt least supported by their employer in relation to their career development (70% agreed their employer had actively supported this).

**Table 8-10: Agreement with statements relating to plans for future training and employer support, by apprenticeship level**

	Total	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6+
Base A	(2,356)	(505)	(1,095)	(219)	(157)	(380)
Base B	(881)	(216)	(438)	(94)	(64)	(69)
Aware of post-apprenticeship training options (Base A)	74%	<b>79%*</b>	75%	74%	70%	65%*
Employer discussed further post apprenticeship training (Base B)	62%	64%	63%	62%	55%	47%*
Employer actively supports my career development (Base B)	85%	78%*	85%	91%	92%	89%

Base A: All employed apprentices (modularised) (2,356); Base B: All employed completers (modularised) (881). \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the average (bold figures show results that are significantly higher than the average).

There were also some differences in views on future training and employer support by demographics, including:

- Younger apprentices (aged under 19) were more likely than those aged 25 or over to report that their employer had discussed further training with them (68% vs. 57% of 25 and overs), potentially linked to their higher awareness of post-apprenticeship training options (83% vs. 69%).
- Apprentices from a white background were more likely than apprentices from all other ethnic groups combined to report that their employer had discussed further training with them (63% vs. 52%).
- Apprentices without a learning difficulty or a disability were more likely to report that their employer actively supported their career development compared with those with a learning difficulty and / or a disability (86% vs. 72%).
- Those living in the most deprived areas (first IMD quintile) were most likely to report that their employer had discussed further training options with them (70% vs. 62% overall).

Overall, one-third (34%) of apprentices had started or were considering another apprenticeship or qualification at the time of the survey. This was more common among completers than current apprentices (39% of recent completers, 41% of longer-term completers vs. 30% of current apprentices). Level 5 apprentices were most likely to have started or considered further study (47%); this compares with only one-fifth (20%) of

apprentices at Level 6 and above. By SSA, Health apprentices were most likely to have started or considered doing other qualifications (42%), while Agriculture and ICT apprentices were least likely to do so (21% and 24% respectively). There were no differences by age, gender, ethnicity or whether apprentices had a learning difficulty and / or a disability.

Apprentices who said they had started or were considering another apprenticeship / qualification were asked the type of further learning they had actually started or were currently considering. This found that 16% of completers and 3% of current apprentices had started a further qualification or apprenticeship, with a further 22% and 26% respectively not yet starting one but currently considering a specific qualification. The design of the question in respect of apprenticeships / qualifications started and considered was updated from the 2021 survey with the aim of achieving a more specific measure of consideration levels. As such only indicative changes in terms of ‘starting’ a further apprenticeship / qualification are commented on in this chapter of the report.

As shown in Table 8-11, completers were more likely to have started all the further level apprenticeships / qualifications, with the exception of foundation degrees where the figure was 1% for both completers and current apprentices. Completers were most likely to have started a Level 3 apprenticeship; 12% of Level 2 apprenticeship completers had done so, with this an indicative decrease from 19% in 2021. The other qualification most likely to have been started was a degree apprenticeship, with 8% of completers without a degree apprenticeship reporting that they had started this level of apprenticeship. Indicatively there was an uplift in the proportion of completers undertaking a degree apprenticeship compared with 2021 (8%, up from 4%).

Although few current apprentices had started any further apprenticeships / qualifications, larger proportions were considering them. Among Level 2 current apprentices a quarter (25%) were considering undertaking a Level 3 Advanced Apprenticeship. The lowest level of consideration was given to undertaking a foundation degree, with only one-in-ten (10%) of all current apprentices considering them at the time of survey.

**Table 8-11: Further qualifications started or being considered among current apprentices and apprenticeship completers**

	All apprentices	Current apprentices	Completer apprentices
Base: Level 2 apprentices	(532)	(273)	(259)
Level 3 Advanced Apprenticeship - started	6%	0%	<b>12%*</b>
Level 3 Advanced Apprenticeship - considering	18%	<b>25%*</b>	11%
Base: Level 4 or below apprentices	(1,868)	(1,036)	(832)

	All apprentices	Current apprentices	Completer apprentices
Level 4 / 5 Higher Apprenticeship- started	3%	1%	<b>5%*</b>
Level 4 / 5 Higher Apprenticeship - considering	18%	19%	17%
Base: Not done a Degree Apprenticeship	(449)	(261)	(188)
Degree Apprenticeship - started	5%	3%	<b>8%*</b>
Degree Apprenticeship - considering	19%	19%	18%
Base: Level 3 or below apprentices	(1,648)	(912)	(736)
Higher National Certificate - started	1%	1%	<b>2%*</b>
Higher National Certificate - considering	12%	<b>13%*</b>	10%
Base: All apprentices	(2,413)	(1,440)	(973)
Foundation Degree - started	1%	1%	1%
Foundation Degree - considering	10%	10%	10%
Base: All apprentices	(2,413)	(1,440)	(973)
Degree - started	2%	1%	<b>4%*</b>
Degree - considering	15%	15%	14%
Base: All apprentices	(2,413)	(1,440)	(973)
Other – started	2%	1%	<b>4%*</b>
Other - considering	18%	19%	18%

Base: All whom relevant for (modularised). \* indicates where result is significantly different between current and completer apprentices (bold figures show results that are significantly higher).

## 9. Experiences of apprentices who did not complete their apprenticeships

In June 2022, the Government announced an ambition to reach a 67% achievement rate for apprenticeship standards by 2025. This is against the backdrop that achievement rates on apprenticeship standards (introduced in 2017) have been lower than those recorded for frameworks.<sup>78</sup> The 'non-completers' survey is designed to understand the reasons why apprentices may leave their course, and potential areas for improvements to apprenticeships in order to achieve this ambition.

This chapter covers the experiences of learners who left an apprenticeship before completing it and includes responses from those who dropped out at the beginning of their apprenticeship through to those who dropped out just before their end-point assessment (EPA). This group are referred to as 'non-completers', and the Non-completer Survey gathered responses from 506 non-completers taking part in apprenticeship standards between 1 September 2021 and 31 December 2022 (unless they subsequently started another apprenticeship). In a number of instances in this chapter, non-completer responses are compared with those who completed their apprenticeship from the Learner Survey, who will be referred to as 'completers'. Time series comparisons to 2021 non-completers are also included where appropriate.

This chapter looks at the profile of non-completers, focusing on at which point they left their apprenticeship and the reasons why they did not complete their apprenticeship. It also explores satisfaction levels for non-completers, and the support received during the apprenticeship. It covers non-completers experience of any online learning, and impacts on their wellbeing and finances, before detailing what non-completers had done since leaving their apprenticeship.

### Key findings

- **Two-thirds (65%) of non-completers left their apprenticeship within the first 12 months. On average, non-completers did 9 months of their apprenticeship before leaving.**
- **Just over a third (36%) of non-completers said that personal or domestic factors made it difficult to complete the apprenticeship.** The most common personal or domestic issues were caring responsibilities (11%), mental health issues (8%), personal, family or relationship issues (7%) and physical health issues (not related to COVID-19) (7%).

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<sup>78</sup> The official achievement for the 2021-22 academic year was 51% for those undertaking apprenticeship standards. The Government has an ambition to increase the achievement rate to 67% by 2025. [Apprenticeship standards achievement rate ambition - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/apprenticeship-standards-achievement-rate-ambition)

- **Overall, the most common factors contributing to non-completers leaving were the apprenticeship being badly run or poorly organised (49%, up from 41% in 2021), training not being as good as they had hoped (46%) and not enough time for learning or training (43%).**
- Once contributing reasons for leaving were established, non-completers were asked to name their single main reason for leaving their apprenticeship. **The most common single main reason given for leaving was receiving a better job offer (16%),** followed by not getting on with the apprenticeship employer (11%) and not having enough time for learning or training (10%).
- **Overall, just over a third (36%) of non-completers had either studied, or were due to study, English or maths as part of their apprenticeship (31% had studied, 5% were due to prior to withdrawing).** A quarter of these non-completers (25%) reported that not enjoying or wanting to study these subjects had contributed to not completing their course.
- **Four-in-ten (39%) non-completers said their apprenticeship was as expected (similar to 2021 levels).** The most common ways the apprenticeship differed from expectations were apprentices being treated worse than expected by provider or employer (11%), not receiving face-to-face training (9%) and training not covering the full range or the Sector Subject Areas (SSAs) that they expected it to (9%).
- **Overall satisfaction for non-completers was markedly lower than that recorded for completers (48% vs. 85%), and a higher proportion of non-completers reported being very dissatisfied in 2023 than 2021 (17% vs. 10%).** The most common reason for dissatisfaction was a lack of support from the training provider, college or tutor (42%).
- **Six-in-ten (60%) non-completers were satisfied with the quality of training, down from, 65% in 2021.** Again, those dissatisfied were most likely to say they felt tutors did not provide enough support or were unhelpful or disorganised (44%).
- **A higher proportion of non-completers in 2023 than in 2021 rated the support that they received from their employer as poor (32% vs. 25%), and fewer rated the support from their training provider good (55% vs. 61%).**
- **Around two-thirds (67%) of non-completers who had received training during their apprenticeship reported that more than half of their training had been delivered online, with 45% reporting that all of it was delivered this way.** A slight majority (52%) were happy with the amount of online training they received, but nearly two-fifths (38%) reported that they wanted less online learning.

- **Two-fifths of non-completers (40%) said their apprenticeship had a negative impact on their mental health**, including 15% that said it made their mental health a lot worse.
- **Around seven-in-ten (69%) said the apprenticeship had no impact on their financial situation (the remainder were fairly evenly split between it improving (16%) or worsening (14%) their finances)**. There was also a fairly even split between those who felt their work—life balance was reasonable (37%), poor (34%) and good (27%).
- **Nine-in-ten (91%) non-completers continued in work immediately after they left their apprenticeship, an increase from 83% in 2021. A lower proportion than in 2021 reported that they were unemployed (6% vs. 12% in 2021)**.

## Profile of non-completers

All non-completers surveyed were on standards. Table 9-1 shows the level and SSA profile of non-completers according to the ILR population in 2021 and 2023. As in 2021, non-completers were predominantly Level 2 and 3, with most in Business, Health and Retail subjects. The proportion of Level 2 and 3 non-completers decreased compared with 2021 (Level 2: 29% vs. 32% in 2021; Level 3: 43% vs. 46%), while the largest increases were seen at Level 4 (11% vs. 8% in 2021) and Level 7 (5% vs. 3%). There were also increases in Health non-completers (29% vs. 23%), but a decrease in Business non-completers (30% vs. 37%).

**Table 9-1: Non-completer apprentice population, by level and SSA, according to the population information from ILR**

	2021: % of population	2023: % of population
Level 2	32%	29%
Level 3	46%	43%
Level 4	8%	11%
Level 5	8%	8%
Level 6	3%	4%
Level 7	3%	5%
Agriculture	1%	2%
Arts	<0.5%	1%



	2021: % of population	2023: % of population
Business	37%	30%
Construction	4%	6%
Education	1%	2%
Engineering	9%	11%
Health	23%	29%
ICT	5%	6%
Leisure	2%	1%
Retail	17%	12%
Science	<0.5%	<0.5%
Other	<0.5%	<0.5%

Base: All apprentices that had not completed their apprenticeship: 2021 (89,760); 2023 (133,600). Source: Individualised Learner Record.

Around a fifth of non-completers in the survey were aged under 19 when they started their apprenticeship (21%), just over a quarter (27%) were aged between 19 and 24 years old, leaving just over a half (52%) in the 25 or over age group. The age profile of non-completers was slightly older than the completer age profile (52% aged 25 and over vs. 44% of completers).

There was a relatively even split between male and female non-completer apprentices (48% vs. 52%). The majority of non-completers were from a white ethnic background (84%), with 16% from all other ethnic groups combined; higher than seen in the completer group (12% of completers were from all other ethnic groups combined). Among non-completers, 14% reported having either a learning difficulty and / or a disability, which was higher than both the proportion seen in 2021 (9%) and the completer group (8%).

## Routes into apprenticeships

Two-thirds (66%) of non-completers had been working for their employer before starting their apprenticeship (similar to 67% in 2021), compared with 55% of completers. Among those who were new to their employer when they started their apprenticeship, the most common prior activity was working for a different employer (45%), although other common activities included doing or recently completing a school or college course (29%) or being unemployed (16%). Non-completers were as likely as completers to have been working with a different employer (42% of completers) but were less likely to have

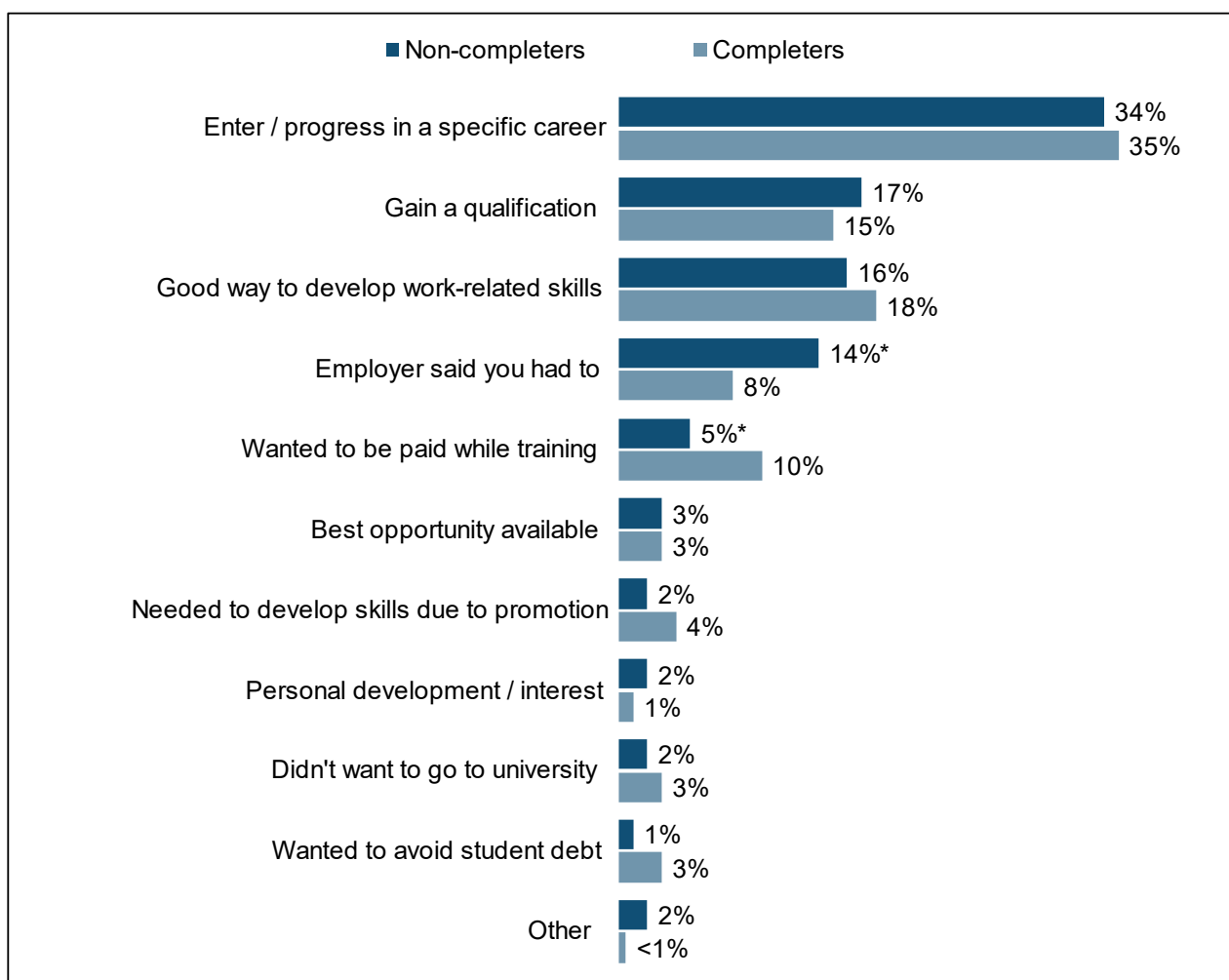
recently completed a school or college course (39% of completers), and more likely to report being unemployed (10% of completers).

Overall, 92% of non-completers were aware that their course or training was part of an apprenticeship, in line with 2021 levels (89%). A similar proportion of apprenticeship completers aware of this (93%). The main reasons for starting their apprenticeship were the same between non-completers and completers, namely to enter into or progress in a specific career (34%), to gain a qualification (17%) and it being a good way to develop work-related skills (16%), as shown in Figure 9-1. However, there were some differences between the two groups of learners. Non-completers were more likely to report that they started an apprenticeship because their employer said they had to (14% vs. 8%), though less likely to have been motivated by wanting to be paid while training (5% vs. 10%). This may be partially explained by the fact that a greater proportion of non-completers were already working with the employer that they undertook the apprenticeship with compared with completers.

Non-completers that undertook Level 3 apprenticeships (18%), those who undertook Health apprenticeships (22%), and those aged 25 and over (18%) were all more likely to report that their employer said they had to do an apprenticeship.

In comparison to 2021, non-completers were more likely to have been motivated by wanting to progress into a specific career (34% vs. 28%), though it was also the most common reason given in the 2021 survey. In contrast, non-completers in 2023 were less likely to report starting an apprenticeship because they needed to develop skills due to a promotion at work (2% vs. 5% in 2021).

**Figure 9-1: Main reason for starting an apprenticeship (non-completers vs. completers)**



Base: All non-completers (506); All completers (modularised) (976). Responses shown if mentioned by 2% or more in either group. \* indicates where result for non-completers is significantly different from completers.

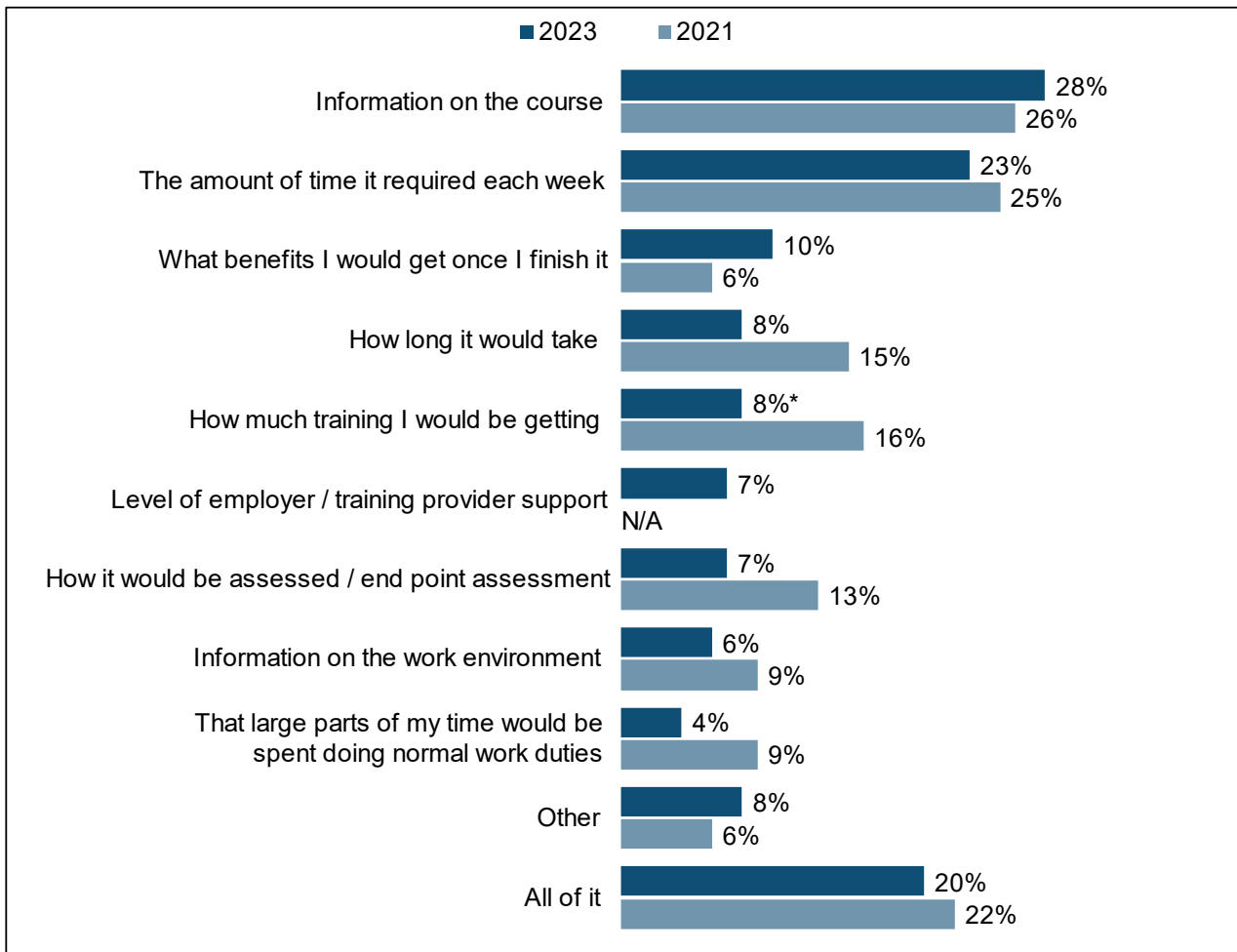
Around a third (34%) of non-completers said doing an apprenticeship was their preferred choice at the time they first considered starting an apprenticeship. This is a lower proportion compared with completers, among whom almost half (47%) said it was their preferred choice. Non-completers, as mentioned earlier, had an older age profile than completers (52% were aged 25 and over compared with 44% of completers), with this older age group less likely to say that doing an apprenticeship was their preferred choice (27% of non-completers aged 25 and over vs. 34% on average).

Among those who would have preferred to do something else (14% of non-completers and 5% of completers), non-completers most commonly said that they wanted to do a different qualification or academic course (22%), while completers most commonly said they wanted to go to university (44%). The proportion of non-completers that mentioned wanting to go to university instead was far lower (6%).

Just over six-in-ten (62%) non-completers felt that they had enough information and guidance about the apprenticeship before they signed up, a decrease from the seven-in-ten (70%) that reported this in 2021. There was a particularly large decrease in the proportion of Level 3 non-completers that felt they had enough information (62% vs. 74% in 2021).

Among those who wanted more information or guidance, the most common responses were wanting more information on the course (28%), and the amount of time it would require each week (23%); these were also the two most common examples given in 2021 (Figure 9-2). Non-completers on Business apprenticeships were more likely to mention wanting to know the time it would require each week (35%). In comparison to 2021, fewer apprentices wanted information on how much training they would be getting (8% vs. 16%).

**Figure 9-2: Aspects of the apprenticeship non-completers needed more information and guidance on<sup>79</sup>**



Base: All non-completers who needed more information or guidance: 2023 (180); 2021 (141). Responses charted given by more than 2% of respondents. \* indicates where a result is significantly different from 2021.

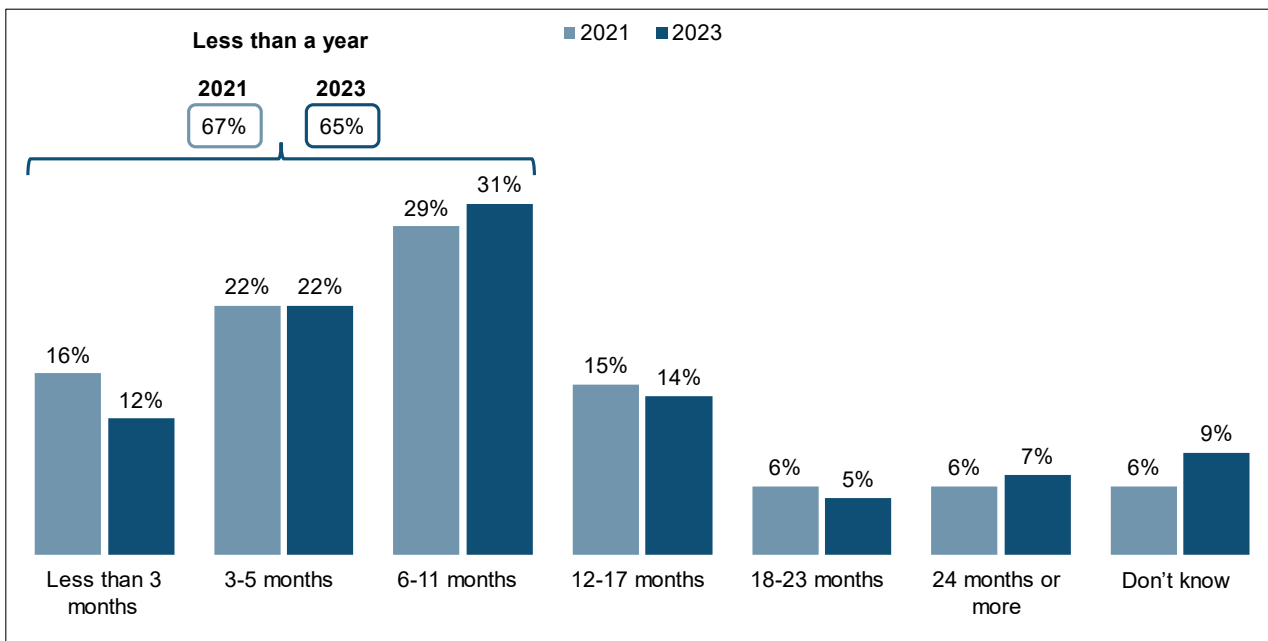
## Point of apprenticeship where individuals left

Two-thirds (65%) of non-completers left their apprenticeship within the first 12 months, a similar proportion to 2021 (67%), while a quarter (26%) did their apprenticeship for more than a year (9% were unsure). Non-completers were most likely to leave after completing between 6 and 11 months of the apprenticeship (31%), as shown in Figure 9-3.<sup>80</sup> The mean average number of months of the apprenticeship completed before leaving was 9; as was the case in 2021.

<sup>79</sup> 'Level of employer support' was added as a new code based on verbatim responses. A comparable figure for the 2021 survey is not shown as there were not enough mentions of this issue to establish a new coded response. There should be caution applied in interpreting this as a 0% result for 2021, as it is possible this was mentioned but included in the 'other' code.

<sup>80</sup> Around half (49%) of non-completers had left their apprenticeship within 6 months of joining.

**Figure 9-3: Proportion of non-completers leaving by number of months of apprenticeship completed**



Base: All non-completers: 2021 (541); 2023 (506).

Table 9-2 compares the point at which the apprentice left their course with the planned length of their course. Where an apprenticeship was planned to last for at least two years, half of non-completers (51%) undertook at least a year of it, whereas around four-in-ten (39%) withdrew within the first year. Among those with a planned apprenticeship length of less than two years, seven-in-ten (70%) left within the first year, compared to two-in-ten (21%) that left after the first year.

**Table 9-2: Point at which non-completer left the apprenticeship by planned length**

	Total	Planned length: Less than 23 months	Planned length: 24 months or more
Total: Less than a year	65%	70%*	39%*
Total: A year or more	26%	21%*	51%*
Left within 3 months	12%	13%*	5%*
Left within 3-5 months	22%	25%*	7%*
Left within 6-11 months	31%	32%	27%
Left within 12-17 months	14%	13%*	22%*
Left within 18-23 months	5%	4%*	14%*
Left after 24 months or more	7%	5%*	15%*
Don't know	9%	8%	10%

Base: All non-completers (506). Planned length less than 23 months (397); Planned length 24 months or more (109). \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the total.

Level 6 and above non-completers stayed for a longer time before leaving their apprenticeship than others, with notably more completing a year or more of their apprenticeship (57% vs. 26% on average). This was also the case with male non-completers compared with female non-completers (31% vs. 23%), although there were a higher proportion of male non-completers undertaking Level 6 and above apprenticeships than female non-completers (59% vs. 41%). As seen in the previous wave, those who undertook a Business apprenticeship were more likely to have done a year or more before leaving their apprenticeship (33%), while those in Health were less likely (17%). Retail non-completers were most likely to say they had done less than a year of their apprenticeship (77%).

Non-completers aged under 19 were more likely than those aged 25 or over to have completed a year or more of their apprenticeship (39% vs. 21%), and the proportion reporting this among under 19s was higher than in 2021 (when only 25% of under 19s had completed a year or more of their apprenticeship). Unlike in 2021, there were no differences looking at ethnicity in 2023 – previously apprentices from a white background had been more likely than those from all other ethnic groups combined to have left within a year of starting their apprenticeship.

## Reasons for not completing

This section explores why non-completers did not complete their apprenticeship. In the survey, respondents were prompted with a list of potential employer and training related reasons for dropping out of their apprenticeships and, for each, were asked whether it was a key reason, part of the reason, or not a reason at all for them not completing their apprenticeship. They were also specifically asked if there were any personal or domestic reasons for not completing their apprenticeship and, if so, what these were. After going through all the reasons for not completing their apprenticeship, non-completers were then asked to consider which one aspect was the single most important factor for them.

## Contributing reasons for not completing

Overall, more than a third (36%) of non-completers said that personal or domestic factors made it difficult to complete the apprenticeship; in line with the proportion in 2021. Those who were more likely to report personal or domestic factors as having an impact included:

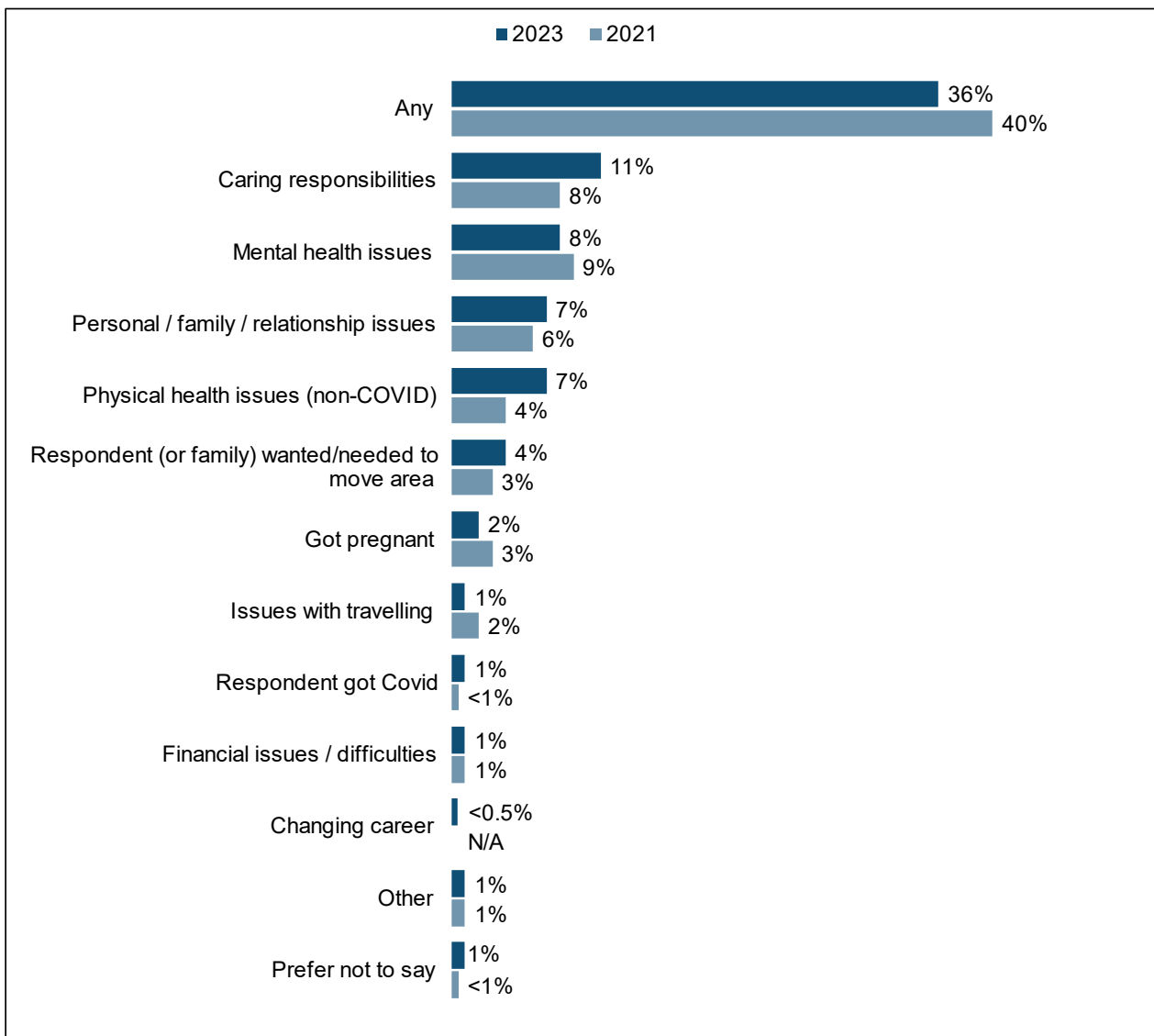
- Non-completers who had been undertaking Health apprenticeships (51%, a decrease from 58% in 2021).
- Non-completers aged 25 or over (40%); fewer apprentices aged 19 to 24 reported any personal or domestic reason compared with 2021 (33% vs. 46%).
- Female non-completers (44%); fewer male apprentices reported any personal or domestic reason compared with 2021 (27% vs. 38%).

There were no notable differences in the proportions reporting that personal or domestic issues made it difficult for them to complete the apprenticeship when looking at whether or not non-completers had a learning difficulty and / or a disability or apprenticeship level. There were also no notable differences when looking at ethnicity, although there was an indication that non-completers from all other ethnic groups combined were slightly more likely to have had a personal or domestic issues compared with apprentices from a white background to (43% vs. 34%). Lower base sizes for individual sub-sample groups of non-completers can make it harder to be able to report on any differences between sub-groups with confidence.

The most common personal or domestic reason which influenced non-completion was caring responsibilities (11% of all non-completers), followed by mental health issues (8%), personal, family or relationship issues (7%) and non-COVID physical health issues (7%), as shown in Figure 9-4.



**Figure 9-4: Personal or domestic reasons for not completing their apprenticeship (unprompted)**



Base: All non-completers: 2023 (506); 2021 (541). Responses charted given by 1% or more of respondents. \* indicates where a result is significantly different from 2021.<sup>81</sup>

As described above, non-completers were also asked whether a number of apprenticeship-related reasons contributed to them not completing their course. Taking into account all reasons for leaving mentioned by non-completers (i.e. personal and domestic, apprenticeship-related and any other reasons), Figure 9-5 shows the most

<sup>81</sup> Note, there is no comparable figure for 2021 for 'career changing'. The 2021 survey included 'job or career change / better job offer' as a personal or domestic reason for not completing (D4), however, a change was made to the 2023 questionnaire to include 'you were offered another / better job before completing' at D1, where non-completers were asked whether specific factors were a key, partial, reason for not completing. Due to this change, 'you were offered another / better job offer' completing was not part of the code frame for personal and domestic factors in the 2023 survey. A small proportion were coded to 'changing career' where this was specifically mentioned.

common reasons for not completing an apprenticeship (mentioned by 11% of non-completers or more), with comparisons to 2021.

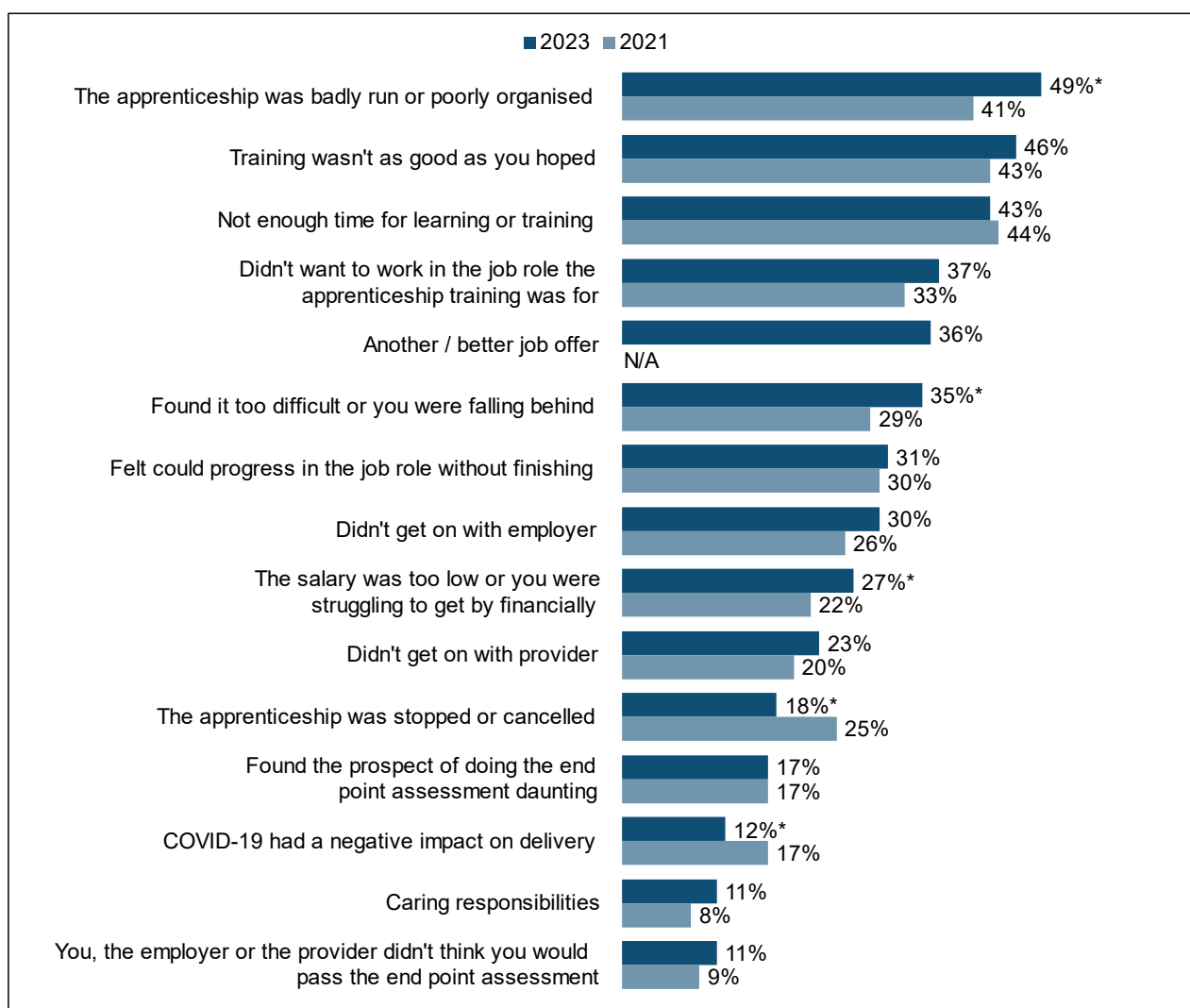
The most common reasons given for not completing apprenticeships were the apprenticeship being badly run or poorly organised (49%, up from 41% in 2021); the training not being as good as hoped (46%); and not having enough time for learning or training (43%). More than a third of non-completers mentioned no longer wanting to work in the job role the apprenticeship was training for (37%); receiving a better job offer (36%); or finding the apprenticeship too difficult or falling behind (35%, up from 29% in 2021).

There were some key differences in the most common contributing reasons for withdrawing from apprenticeships in comparison to 2021, as shown in Figure 9-5. In 2023 a greater proportion mentioned poor organisation of the apprenticeship, difficulties managing the course, and financial struggles (potentially linked to the rise in cost of living and inflation across 2022). In comparison, however, non-completers were less likely to say the apprenticeship was stopped or cancelled or that COVID-19 had a negative impact on delivery (the 2021 survey took place during the pandemic and when various lockdown measures were in place across the country).<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Among those whose apprenticeship was stopped or cancelled, there were mixed responses in terms of who had initiated this; 43% reported that this was done by the employer, 33% that it was done by the provider, while 10% said that both were responsible. This was similar to the reported situation in 2021.

**Figure 9-5: Contributing reasons why non-completers did not complete their apprenticeship**



Base: All non-completers: 2023 (506); 2021 (541). Responses cited by fewer than 11% in 2023 not shown.<sup>83</sup> \* indicates where a result is significantly different from 2021.<sup>84</sup>

There were some differences in the contributing reasons for non-completion by level and SSA:

- Those that had been on Level 2 apprenticeships were more likely than other groups to say they had struggled financially, or the salary was too low (38% vs. 27% overall). They were also more likely to have had issues getting on with their

<sup>83</sup> Other key reasons mentioned by fewer than 11% include not enjoying or wanting to study English or maths; EPA delays; mental health issues; personal, family or relationship issues; having been made redundant; physical health issues; being unable to continue due to COVID-19; needing to relocate; and having been fired. A full list of reasons can be found in the published data tables.

<sup>84</sup> As noted above, changes were made to the 2023 questionnaire so that respondents were prompted with 'You were offered another / better job before completing' at D1, to establish whether this was a key reason, partial reason, or not a reason for not completing. Previously this was combined with 'changing career' as a coded response at D4 (personal and domestic reasons) – i.e. it was not prompted. For this reason, 2021 comparisons are not made.

employer (36% vs. 30% overall). These two reasons were least common among Level 4 and 5 apprentices (11% mentioned having struggled financially and 21% had issues with their employer).

- Level 3 non-completers were most likely to decide that they no longer wanted to work in the role that the apprenticeship was for (44% vs. 37% overall). Again, this was least likely to be mentioned by Level 4 and 5 apprentices (24%).
- Those who undertook apprenticeships at Level 4 and above were more likely to mention finding their apprenticeship too difficult or were falling behind as a reason for leaving (vs. 32% of Level 2 / 3).
- Those who left Level 6 and above apprenticeships were more likely to have done so, at least in part, because they felt they could progress in their role without finishing the apprenticeship (42% vs. 31% overall). They were also more likely to mention finding the prospect of the end-point assessment (EPA) daunting as a reason for not completing (26% vs. 17% overall).

By subject, those who undertook Engineering apprenticeships were more likely than average to mention (as reasons for not completing) low salary or struggling financially (43% vs. 27% overall), the impact of COVID-19 on the way their apprenticeship was delivered (21% vs. 12% overall), not getting on with the employer (42% vs. 30% overall), and that they were fired (12% vs. 4% overall) or made redundant (16% vs. 7% overall). They were less likely than average to report finding the apprenticeship difficult (23% vs. 35% overall).

Non-completers that left Business apprenticeships were least likely to mention their salary being too low as a reason for not completing (19% vs. 27% overall), and less likely than average to report that they did not get on with the provider (17% vs. 23% overall). Those who undertook Health apprenticeships were less likely than average to say that they left, in part, because they felt they could progress in their role without completing the apprenticeship (22% vs. 31% overall), while those in Retail were more likely to report this (44%).

Age and level of apprenticeship were largely linked, with a higher proportion of under 19s on lower-level courses. Therefore, these apprentices were also more likely to report not wanting to work in the role the apprenticeship was for (49%, the same was seen for those aged 19 to 24); not getting on with the employer (48%); and struggling financially (47%). In contrast, those aged 25 or over were more likely to report finding it too difficult or falling behind (40%); this again links to this age group making up a greater proportion of Level 4 / 5 non-completers, who were more likely to give this reason.

Looking at apprentices by specific demographic groups, female non-completers were more likely than male non-completers to report not having enough time to learn or train

(47% vs. 38%) and finding it too difficult or falling behind (43% vs. 27%), while male non-completers were more likely to have received another job offer before completing their course (41% vs. 31% of female apprentices) as well as being fired (6% vs. 2%) or made redundant (10% vs. 5%). Respondents from all other ethnic groups combined were more likely than apprentices from a white background to report not getting on with their provider as a reason for not completing their course (32% vs. 21%).

Non-completers with learning difficulties and / or disabilities were more likely than those without to say their apprenticeship had been disrupted, including their apprenticeship having been stopped or cancelled (30% vs. 16% without), being unable to continue with their apprenticeship due to COVID-19 (10% vs. 3%), and being made redundant (15% vs. 5%). They were also more likely to have mentioned mental health issues as a reason for leaving (14% vs. 7% without).

Those living in the most deprived areas (in the first IMD quintile) were the most likely to mention the following as a reason for leaving:

- They found the apprenticeship difficult or were falling behind (45% vs. 35% overall).
- Found the prospect of the EPA daunting (24% vs. 17%).
- They, the employer or provider did not think they would pass the EPA (19% vs. 11%).
- Non-COVID-19 physical health issues (12% vs. 7%).
- They got COVID-19 (4% vs. 1%).

As well as the above differences by level, subject and demographic grouping of apprentices, there were other marked differences in reasons for withdrawing from the apprenticeship by different characteristics.

**New to their employer:** Non-completers new to their employer for the apprenticeship cited more contributing reasons for withdrawing compared with those who had been working with their employer before the apprenticeship, with reasons often centring on a poor experience of the apprenticeship:

- The apprenticeship was poorly run (57% vs. 45% with the employer before the apprenticeship).
- The training was not as good as hoped for (52% vs. 43%).
- Decided that they did not want to work in the job role (52% vs. 30%).
- Did not get on with employer (43% vs 23%).

- Salary was too low / struggling financially (45% vs 18%).
- Did not get on with provider (30% vs 19%).
- They were fired (7% vs 3%).

**Leaving more than half way through:** Non-completers that withdrew more than halfway through their apprenticeships were more likely to indicate that they did not need the apprenticeship in order to pursue their future plans:

- Offered another / better job (46% vs. 28% who left less than halfway through)
- Felt could progress well in job role without apprenticeship (39% vs 28%)

These non-completers were also more likely to mention concerns around the EPA or course delivery issues:

- Found the prospect of the EPA daunting (23% vs 13%)
- COVID-19 had a negative impact on the way the apprenticeship was delivered (18% vs 7%)
- The apprentice / employer / provider did not think the apprentice would pass the EPA (16% vs 7%)
- EPA was delayed (17% vs. 3%)<sup>85</sup>

**Stayed with their employer:** Non-completers who stayed working with the same employer after their apprenticeship were likewise more likely to say they did not specifically need the apprenticeship for their future and / or were concerned about the EPA, as well as several other aspects:

- Not given enough time to learn or train (52% vs. 37% of those that did not stay with the same employer).
- Finding it too difficult or falling behind (50% vs. 25%).
- Felt could progress well in job role without apprenticeship (42% vs. 24%).
- Found the prospect of doing the EPA daunting (25% vs. 11%).

Conversely, non-completers that stayed with their employer were less likely to mention other aspects:

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<sup>85</sup> Overall 8% said EPA delays were a contributing factor to not completing their apprenticeship (and fewer than 0.5% selected it as their single main reason for not completing). This is not shown in Figure 9-5 which shows reasons mentioned by 11% of non-completers or more.

- Deciding they did not want to work in the job role that the apprenticeship was (16% vs. 52% average).
- Offered another / better job before completing (16% vs. 50%).
- Salary was too low / struggling financially (13% vs. 37%).
- Did not get on with employer (11% vs. 42%).

**Apprentices with a higher proportion of online delivery:** Non-completers for whom all, or most, of their learning was delivered online were more likely to report that they found the apprenticeship too difficult or they were falling behind (41% vs 24% of those who had just some, or none, of it delivered online). In contrast, those that had just some, or none, of their apprenticeship delivered online were more likely to mention that the salary was too low or they were struggling to get by (40% vs. 21% of those all / mostly online) and that they were fired (10% vs. 2%).

Generally, non-completers were more likely to mention all contributory reasons if reporting that the apprenticeship had made their mental health worse. Exceptions to this included:

- Being offered another / better job, which was less likely to be mentioned by those whose mental health was made worse (27% vs. 36% overall).
- Being fired / made redundant, which was more likely to be cited by those whose mental health was helped by the apprenticeship (20% vs. 9% overall).
- Being unable to continue the apprenticeship due to COVID-19, which was more likely to be cited by those whose mental health was helped by the apprenticeship (12% vs. 4% overall).

There were specific differences by groups of apprentices when comparing all contributing reasons between years:

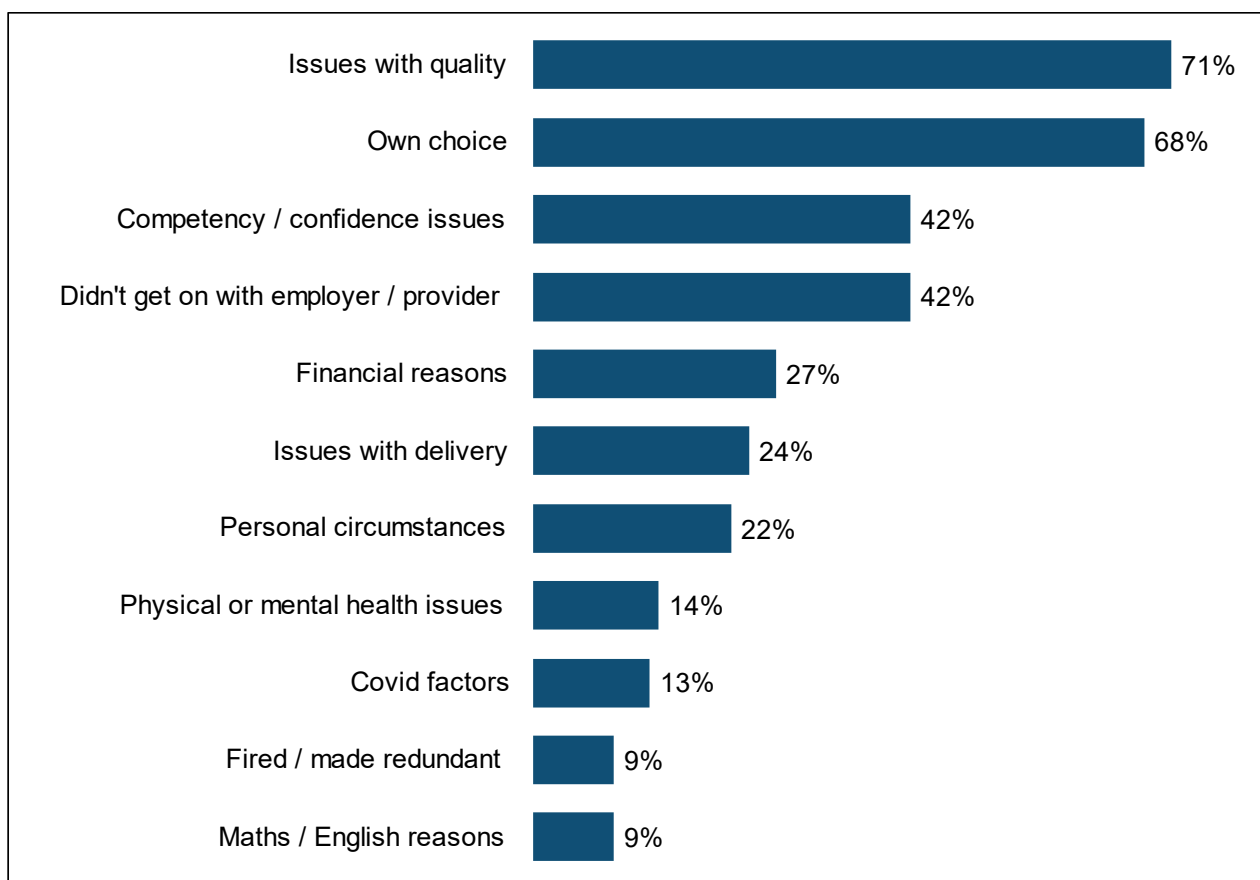
- The increase in non-completers reporting that the apprenticeship was badly run was, at least in part, driven by Level 2 non-completers (51% in 2023 vs. 40% in 2021), and those who undertook Health apprenticeships (48% vs. 31%).
- Though Level 4 and above non-completers were most likely to say they found their apprenticeship difficult, the increase between 2021 and 2023 was mostly driven by Level 2 non-completers (33% vs. 23%).
- Level 2 non-completers also played a role in driving the increase in those reporting that their salary was too low or they were struggling to get by financially (38% vs. 23%).

Focusing on changes across the past two years by apprenticeship demographic groups, female non-completers were more likely to say finding their apprenticeship too difficult was part of the reason they did not complete their apprenticeship (43% vs. 30% in 2021), and that their apprenticeship was badly run or poorly organised (48% vs. 39%). Male non-completers, however, were more likely to mention salary concerns in 2023 compared with 2021 (31% vs. 23%). Non-completers from ethnic minorities (excluding white minorities) were more likely to mention their apprenticeship being badly organised as a reason for leaving, compared with 2021 (52% vs. 31%).

### Grouped contributing reasons for not completing

Figure 9-6 shows the reasons that contributed to not completing into broader, grouped categories (as defined in [Appendix C](#)). The overarching drivers for withdrawing from an apprenticeship centred on issues to do with quality (71%) and / or a self-driven choice because they decided it was not necessary or they wanted to change career / education direction (68% reported that they left of their own choice). Other common issues centred on a lack of competence or confidence in completing their course and not getting on with their employer or provider (42% for both).

**Figure 9-6: Grouped contributing reasons why non-completers did not complete their apprenticeship**



Base: All non-completers (506).



Those whose reasons for starting an apprenticeship indicated it was not their personal choice (i.e. their employer said they had to, or COVID disrupted their education or career plans) were more likely to report issues with delivery as a reason for not completing (33%).

Non-completers that had undertaken higher apprenticeships were more likely to mention issues to do with competency and confidence; 54% of those at Level 4 and above mentioned this, compared with 38% at Levels 2 and 3. Level 2 non-completers were least likely to mention issues with quality as a contributing reason to their non-completion (64% vs. 71% overall).

As discussed earlier in this chapter, non-completers with learning difficulties and / or disabilities were more likely to mention disruption to their apprenticeship, falling under the broader category of issues with delivery (37% vs. 22% without), as well as physical or mental health issues (22% vs. 12%). Non-completers living in the most deprived areas (first IMD quintile) were most likely to report physical or mental health issues as a reason for leaving (22% vs. 14% overall).

Continuing to look at response by grouped reasons and comparing to 2021 results, non-completers were more likely to report that they left their apprenticeship of their own volition (68% vs. 57% in 2021). In contrast, they were less likely to report that there were issues with delivery (24% vs. 34%), any factors relating to COVID-19 (13% vs. 25%) and that they had been fired or made redundant (9% vs. 17%). Those who undertook lower-level apprenticeships were more likely to give reasons that suggested it was a personal choice to leave their apprenticeship in 2023 than 2021 (Level 2: 67% vs. 56%; Level 3: 71% vs. 59%), alongside those aged 25 or over (61% vs. 48%), and male non-completers (72% vs. 57%).

**Table 9-3: Grouped contributing reasons why non-completers did not complete their apprenticeship**

	<b>2021: Contributing reason</b>	<b>2023: Contributing reason</b>
Issues with quality	70%	71%
Own choice	57%	<b>68%*</b>
Competency / confidence issues	40%	42%
Did not get on with employer / provider	39%	42%
Financial reasons	22%	27%
Issues with delivery	34%	24%*
Personal circumstances	18%	22%
Physical or mental health issues	13%	14%
Covid factors	25%	13%*
Fired / made redundant <sup>86</sup>	17%	9%*
English / maths reasons <sup>87</sup>	N/A	9%

Base: All non-completers: 2021 (541); 2023 (506). \* indicates where a result is significantly different from 2021 (bold figures show results that are significantly higher than in 2021).

Table 15-1 and Table 15-2 in [Appendix E](#) give a breakdown of grouped contributing reasons by level, SSA, and demographics including age, gender, ethnicity and whether apprentices had learning difficulties and / or disabilities.

## Main reasons for not completing

After considering all the reasons for not completing their apprenticeship, non-completers were asked for the single main reason for withdrawing. Table 9-4 shows the main reasons given for non-completers withdrawing from their apprenticeship (mentioned by 3% of non-completers or more). The most common reasons given were being offered a better job (16%), not getting on with the employer (11%), feeling that they did not have

<sup>86</sup> In 2023, 'being fired' or 'being made redundant' were split out into two separate codes, in 2021 these appeared as one code 'being fired or made redundant'.

<sup>87</sup> More detail on non-completers' experiences of English / maths, and the impact of this on their decision to leave their apprenticeship can be found [here](#).

enough time for learning or training (10%) and that their apprenticeship was badly run / poorly organised (9%).

**Table 9-4: Reasons why non-completers did not complete their apprenticeship (main vs. contributing reasons)**

	2021: Main reason	2023: Main reason	2021: Contributing reason	2023: Contributing reason
Another / better job offer	N/A	16%	N/A	36%
Did not get on with employer	10%	11%	26%	30%
Not enough time for learning or training	9%	10%	44%	43%
The apprenticeship was badly run or poorly organised	6%	9%	41%	<b>49%*</b>
Training wasn't as good as you hoped	3%	6%	43%	46%
Did not want to work in the job role the apprenticeship training was for	7%	4%*	33%	37%
The apprenticeship was stopped or cancelled	7%	4%*	25%	18%*
Found it too difficult or you were falling behind	2%	4%	29%	<b>35%*</b>
The salary was too low or you were struggling to get by financially	4%	3%	22%	<b>27%*</b>
Physical health issues (non-COVID)	2%	3%	4%	<b>7%*</b>
Felt could progress in the job role without finishing	3%	3%	30%	31%
Mental health issues	4%	3%	9%	8%

Base: All non-completers: 2021 (541); 2023 (506). Main reasons cited by fewer than 3% of non-completers in 2023 not shown, \* indicates where a result is significantly different from 2021 (bold figures show results that are significantly higher than in 2021).

Some differences in the main reason for not completing their apprenticeship were evident by individual groups of apprentices. Of note, non-completers that undertook Level 6 and above apprenticeships were particularly likely to say they had received a better job offer (24%), as were those aged 19 to 24 (22%). Lower-level and younger non-completers were more likely to report not getting on with their employer (Level 2: 16%; under 19 and 19-24: 18% for both). Those who were on Business apprenticeships (18%), Level 4 / 5 apprenticeships (19%) and those aged 25 and over (14%) were more likely than others to

say they did not have enough time for learning or training. Those aged 25 or over were also more likely to say their apprenticeship had been badly run or poorly organised (12% vs. 6% among those aged under 25).

Specific apprentice characteristics such as whether or not apprentices were new to their employer, the point at which they left their apprenticeship, whether they continued working for their employer after leaving, and the proportion of apprenticeship learning received online, also influenced the main reasons for leaving (as was the case when discussing contributing factors earlier in this chapter).

- Those new to their employer were more likely to say not getting on with their employer was their main reason for leaving (19% vs. 7% who already worked for their employer), Conversely, they were less likely to say not being given enough time to learn or train was the main factor (5% vs. 13%).
- Those who left their apprenticeship more than halfway through were more likely than those leaving less than halfway through to mention being offered another / better job before completing (22% vs. 12%); that they, their provider, or employer did not think they would pass the EPA (4% vs. 1%); and finding the prospect of the EPA daunting (3% vs. fewer than 0.5%) as their main reason for leaving.
- Those who stayed working for the same employer following their apprenticeship were more likely than those who left their employer to cite finding the apprenticeship too difficult (8% vs. 1%); training not being as good as hoped (10% vs. 3%), apprenticeship training being badly run or poorly organised (13% vs. 6%); and not being given enough time to learn or train (19% vs. 4%) as their main reason for leaving. However, those staying with the same employer were less likely than their counterparts to say the main reason they did not complete was due to another / better job as their main reason for leaving (4% vs. 23%).
- Those who said all or most of their apprenticeship learning was delivered online were more likely to say their main reason for leaving was not being given enough time to learn or train (13% vs. 6% of those who did some or none of their apprenticeship learning online). Conversely, they were less likely to mention not getting on with their employer (9% vs. 17% who did some or no online learning), or deciding they did not want to work in the role the apprenticeship training was for (2% vs. 7%) as their main reason for leaving.

### **Grouped main reasons for not completing**

When grouping the main reasons together by theme, the most common reasons for leaving centred on issues to do with quality (25%), followed by a personal choice to leave the apprenticeship (23%), and not getting on with either the employer or training provider (13%). Issues with delivery (5% vs. 11%) and being fired or made redundant (4% vs.

11%) were both less likely to be mentioned than they were in 2021, and COVID-19 factors understandably reduced in influence (1% vs. 7% in 2021).

Level 4 and 5 non-completers were far more likely to cite quality issues as their main reason for leaving their apprenticeship (38% vs. 25% overall), despite being no more likely than average to give this as a contributing reason.

Other subgroup differences tended to mirror those found when considering all contributing reasons. For example:

- Non-completers that had undertaken higher apprenticeships were also more likely to mention issues to do with competency and confidence as their main reason for leaving (11% of those at Level 4 and above vs. 4% at Levels 2 and 3).
- Non-completers with learning difficulties and / or disabilities were also more likely to mention issues with delivery as their main reason for leaving (11% vs. 4%),
- Non-completers living in the most deprived areas (first IMD quintile) were also more likely to report physical or mental health issues as their main reason for leaving (9% vs. 5% overall).

**Table 9-5: Grouped reasons why non-completers did not complete their apprenticeship (main vs. contributing reasons)**

	2021: Main reason	2023: Main reason	2021: Contributing reason	2023: Contributing reason
Issues with quality	21%	25%	70%	71%
Own choice	20%	23%	57%	<b>68%*</b>
Did not get on with employer / provider	13%	13%	39%	42%
Personal circumstances	7%	9%	18%	22%
Competency / confidence issues	4%	6%	40%	42%
Physical or mental health issues	6%	5%	13%	14%
Issues with delivery	11%	5%*	34%	24%*
Financial reasons	4%	3%	22%	27%

	2021: Main reason	2023: Main reason	2021: Contributing reason	2023: Contributing reason
Fired / made redundant <sup>88</sup>	11%	4%*	17%	9%*
Covid factors	7%	1%*	25%	13%*
English / maths reasons <sup>89</sup>	N/A	1%	N/A	9%

Table 15-3 and Table 15-4 in [Appendix E](#) shows a breakdown of grouped main reasons by level, SSA, and demographics including age, gender, ethnicity and whether apprentices had learning difficulties and / or disabilities.

## Experiences of studying English / maths

New to the 2023 survey, non-completers were asked whether they studied for a English or maths qualification as part of their apprenticeship, and if so, their experiences of studying these subjects.

Overall, 36% of non-completers had either studied, or were due to study, English or maths as part of their apprenticeship; while the question wording is not directly comparable, only 23% of completers that had studied towards an English or maths qualification.<sup>90</sup> Three-in-ten (31%) non-completers reported that they had actually studied for these subjects, a higher proportion compared with the two-in-ten (21%) completers.

Those who were more likely to have studied, or were due to study, English or maths included:

- Level 2 non-completers (45%).
- Those on Health or Retail apprenticeships (49% for both).
- Respondents aged 25 or over (44%; lowest among those aged 19-24 at 24%).

<sup>88</sup> In 2023, 'being fired' or 'being made redundant' were split out into two separate codes, in 2021 these appeared as one code 'being fired or made redundant'.

<sup>89</sup> More detail on non-completers' experiences of English / maths, and the impact of this on their decision to leave their apprenticeship can be found [here](#).

<sup>90</sup> Note, the structure of the questions that collected information on whether learners studied towards English or maths differed between the Learner and Non-completer Surveys. The Learner Survey asked whether learners studied towards an English and / or maths qualification 'during their apprenticeship' (and both subjects were covered separately) and prompted with examples such as GCSE or functional skills. The Non-completer Survey asked about study of English and / or maths together and referred to study towards these 'as part of the apprenticeship', without prompting with examples.

- Non-completers from all other ethnic groups combined (48% vs. 34% of apprentices from a white background).
- Those with learning difficulties (48%).
- Those living in the most deprived areas (first IMD quintile) (44%).

Overall, a quarter (25%)<sup>91</sup> of non-completers who had studied, or were due to study, an English or maths qualification as part of their apprenticeship cited not enjoying, or not wanting to study these subjects as a reason for not completing their course, though only 1% cited this as their main reason. Among all non-completers, those who were aged 25 or over, and those from all other ethnic groups combined were more likely to report not enjoying, or not wanting to study English or maths, as an explanation for not completing their course (13% and 16% respectively).

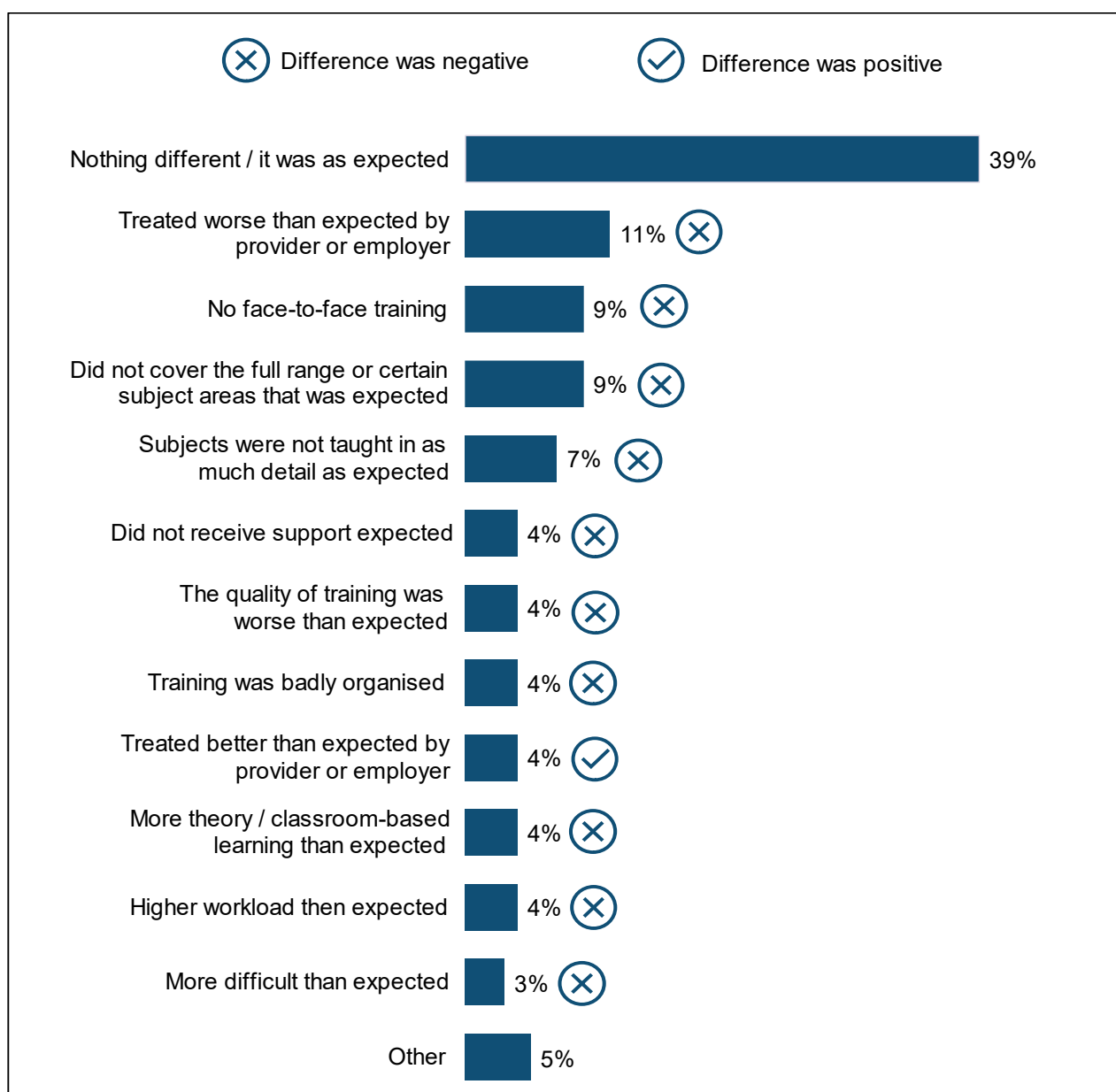
## Satisfaction levels

Respondents were asked how, if at all, their apprenticeship differed from their expectations. Four-in-ten (39%) non-completers felt that their apprenticeship was as expected, similar to in 2021 (43%). The most common way in which apprenticeships differed from expectations was being treated worse than expected by providers or employers (11%). This was followed by similar proportions reporting receiving no face-to-face training (9%, an increase from 1% in 2021), and training not covering the full range or SSAs that they expected it to (9%).

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<sup>91</sup> This amounted to 9% of all non-completers.

**Figure 9-7: How, if at all, the apprenticeship differed from expectations (unprompted)**



Base: All non-completers (506). Responses less than 3% not charted.

The ways in which the apprenticeship differed to expectations were generally the same for non-completers, regardless of whether they had learning difficulties and / or disabilities, or their ethnic background. There were two exceptions to this, with non-completers with a learning difficulty and / or a disability more likely to report that they were treated better than expected by their provider or employer (9% vs. 3% of those with neither), and non-completers from all other ethnic groups combined more likely to report that they did not receive the support they expected (9% vs. 3% of non-completers from a white background).



As with current and completer apprentices, non-completers were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with their apprenticeship, on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 was very dissatisfied and 10 was very satisfied (and 5 was neither satisfied nor dissatisfied). As shown in Figure 9-8, less than half (48%) of non-completers were satisfied with their apprenticeships (denoted by a score of between 6 and 10 on the 10-point scale). Although this did not represent a significant decrease from the 52% figure in 2021, there was an increase in the proportion reporting that they were very dissatisfied (17% gave a 0-2 rating vs. 10% in 2021). As seen in previous years, satisfaction levels amongst non-completers were markedly lower than satisfaction for completers (86% satisfied overall).

Considering differences by subgroup in overall satisfaction, non-completers with learning difficulties were more likely than average to be satisfied overall (66%). Level 2 non-completers and those aged 19 to 24 were more likely than average to be very satisfied (31% and 34% respectively gave a rating of 8-10), and female non-completers were more likely to be very satisfied compared with their male counterparts (28% vs. 21%).

Three-fifths (60%) of non-completers were satisfied overall with the quality of training they had received from their college of training provider (similar to 2021). They were, however, less likely to say they were very satisfied than in 2021 (36% vs. 45%). Non-completers aged under 19 had the lowest levels of satisfaction with the quality of training received (51% satisfied).

There was also no difference in satisfaction with the way individuals were assessed in the EPA compared with 2021 (67% for both years, with these results based on those to whom this question was applicable).<sup>92</sup>

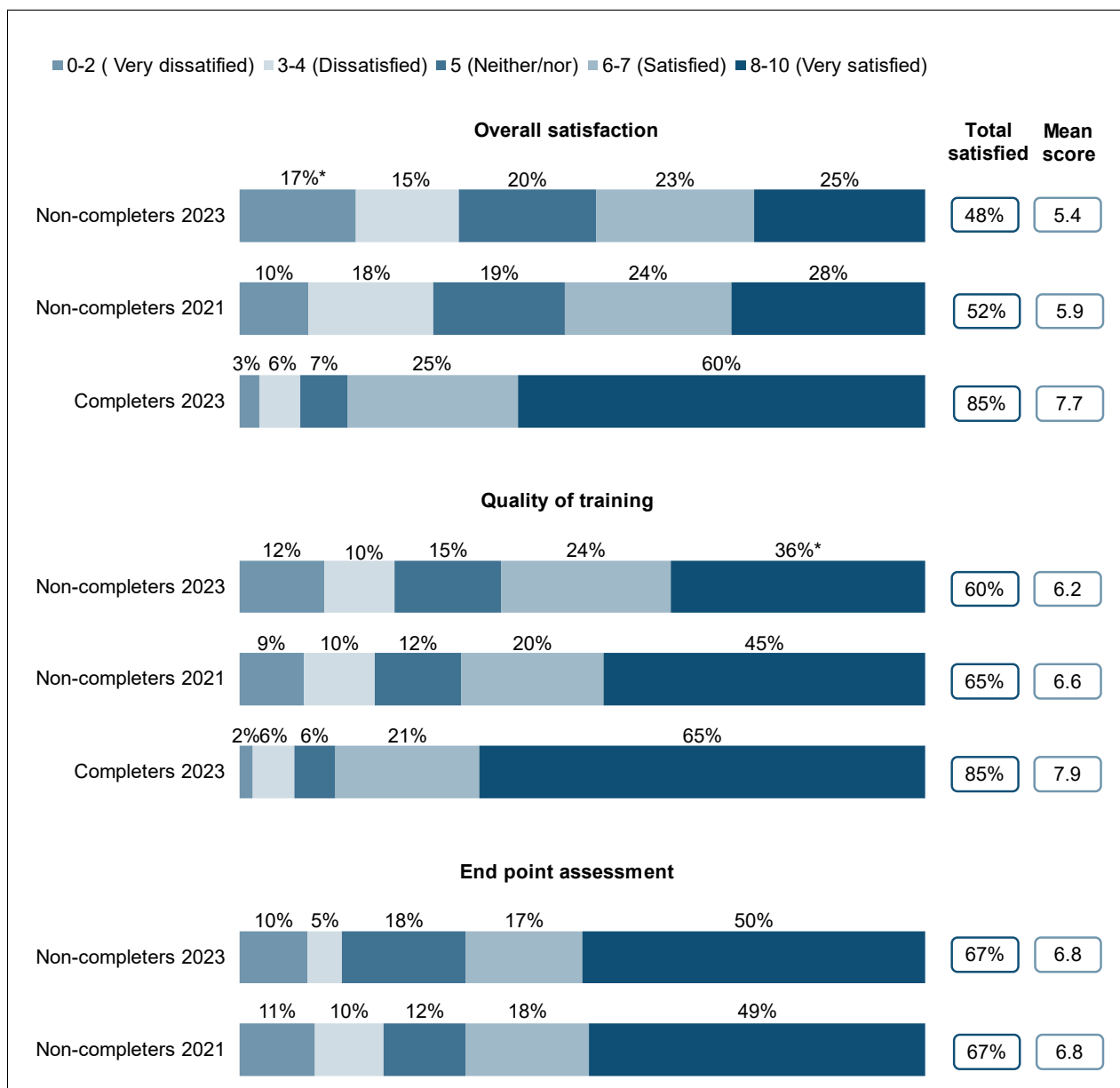
Non-completers who wanted less online learning or training were more likely to express dissatisfaction with their apprenticeship compared with those that were happy with the amount of online learning or training (37% vs. 25%).

There were some differences in satisfaction by reasons for leaving. Non-completers who had left due to personal circumstances were more likely to be very satisfied with their apprenticeship overall (34% vs. 25% very satisfied overall), while those citing issues with the quality or that they did not get on with their employer were less likely to feel this way (only 15% were very satisfied).

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<sup>92</sup> 18% (n=87) gave a rating of the EPA process.

**Figure 9-8: Overall satisfaction levels among non-completers and completers <sup>93</sup>**



Overall satisfaction & Quality of training: Non-completers: 2023 (506); 2021 (541); Completers 2023 (1,949). End-point assessment: Non-completers who gave a rating score: 2023 (87); 2021 (113). \* indicates where a result is significantly different from 2021.

## Reasons for dissatisfaction

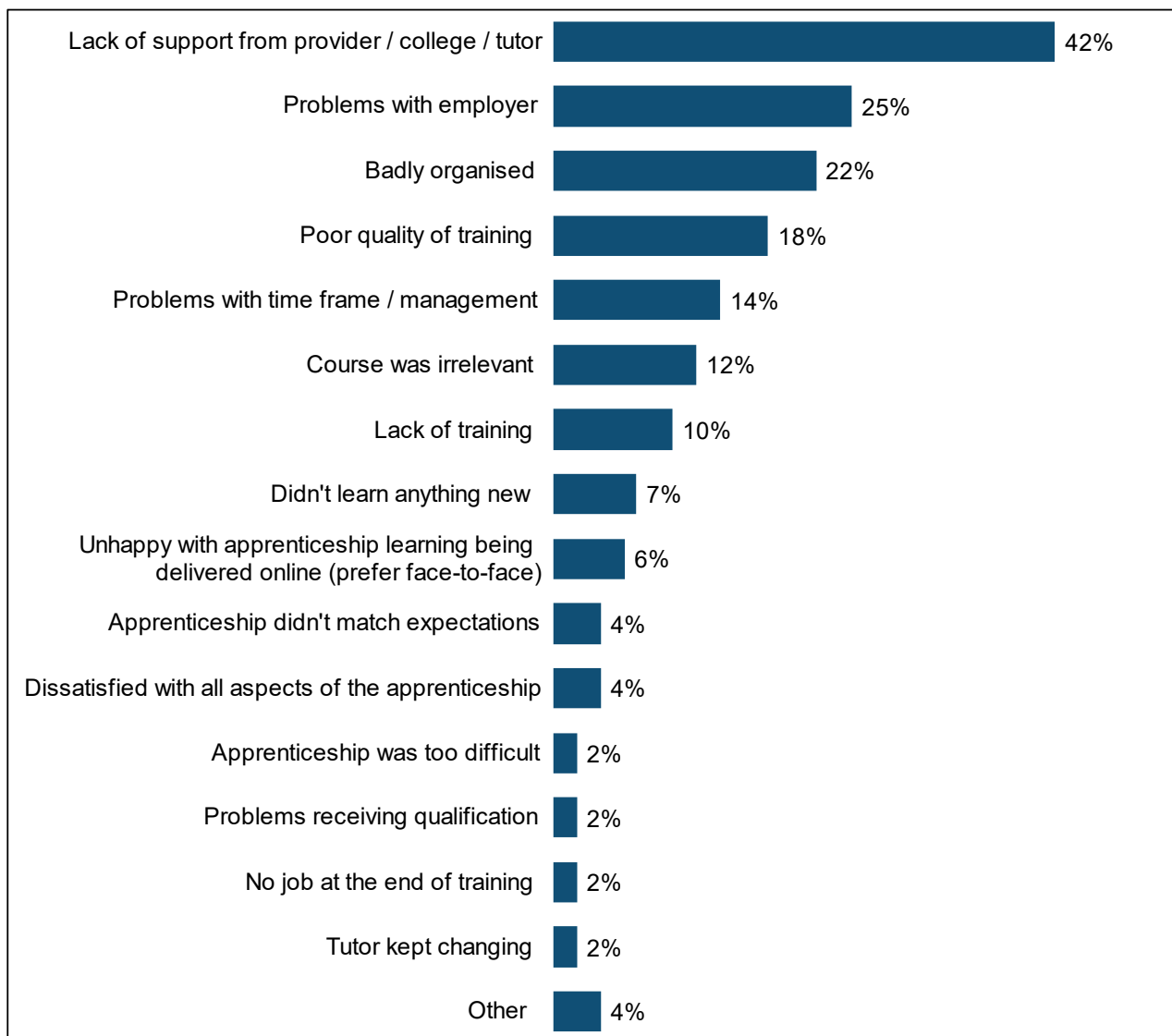
Overall, around a third (32%) of non-completers reported that they were dissatisfied with their apprenticeship. Non-completers on higher-level apprenticeships (38% of Level 4 or above) gave higher than average dissatisfaction ratings.

<sup>93</sup> Note, it was not possible to compare non-completers and completers in terms of rating given for 'the way they were assessed in the end-point assessment process'. This is because the Learner Survey asked a slightly different version to completers: 'Your experience of the end-point assessment process, including any time spent preparing for the end-point assessment'.

Figure 9-9 shows the reasons for dissatisfaction among non-completers who gave a low overall satisfaction rating (namely a score of 0-4). The most common reason was a lack of support from the training provider (42%), followed by problems with their employer (25%) and the apprenticeship being badly organised (22%). There were no changes in reasons for dissatisfaction in comparison with 2021.

As found in 2021, non-completers who had joined their employer for the apprenticeship were significantly more likely to report problems with their employer as a reason for dissatisfaction compared with those who had been working for their employer before the apprenticeship (51% vs. 9%). In contrast, those who were already working for their apprenticeship employer were more likely to report lack of support or contact from their training provider or tutor (52% vs. 25% recruited to an apprenticeship).

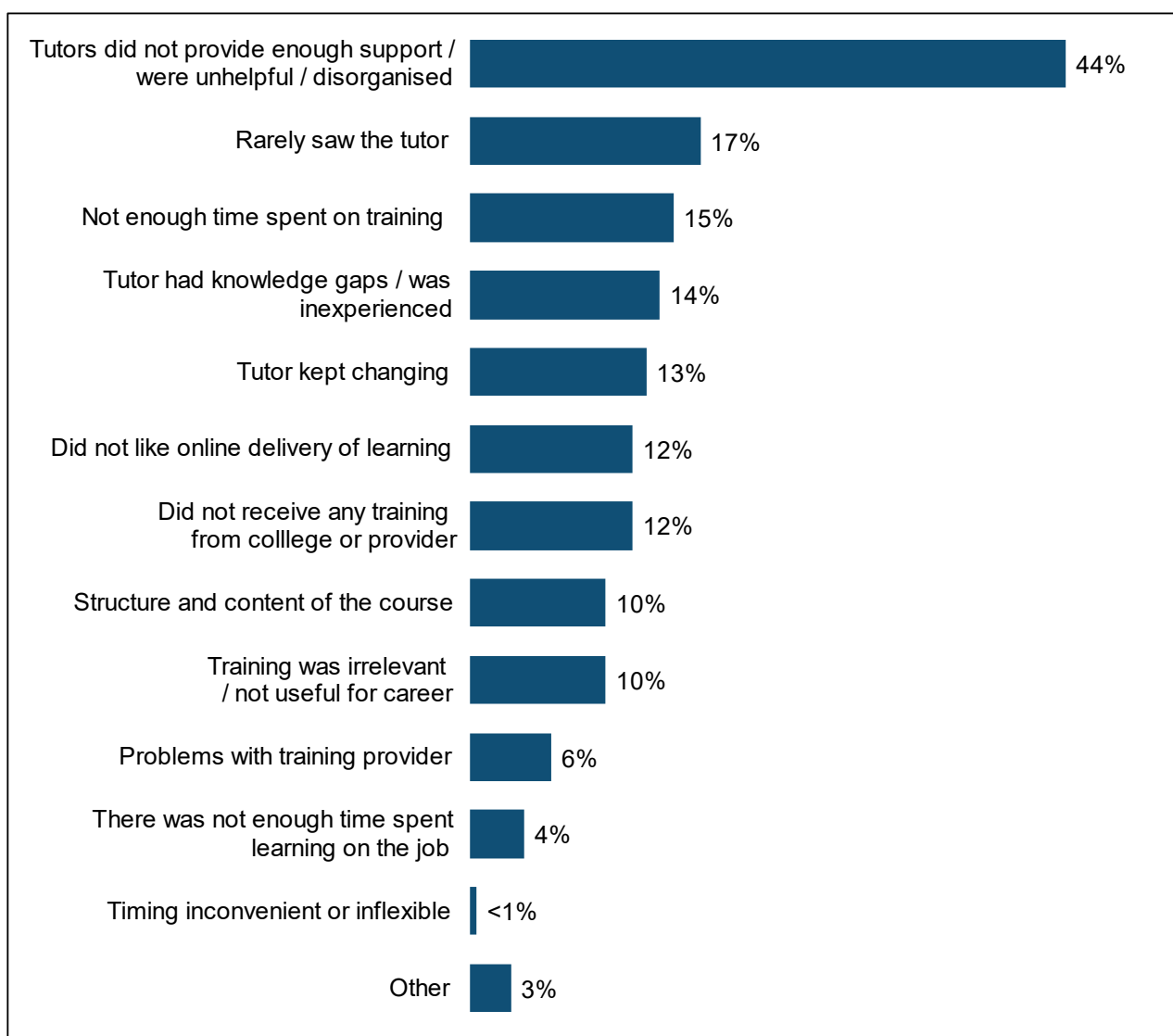
**Figure 9-9: Reasons for dissatisfaction with apprenticeship among non-completers (unprompted)**



Base: Non-completers who were dissatisfied overall with their apprenticeship (gave a score of 0-4 out of 10) (165). Responses charted given by 2% or more of respondents.

When asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the quality of training received from their college or training provider, a fifth (22%) of all non-completers reported being dissatisfied with the quality, with dissatisfaction higher for apprentices under 19s (31%), those living in the least deprived areas (fifth IMD quintile) (32%), and somewhat higher for male apprentices compared with female apprentices (26% vs. 18%). The most common reason for dissatisfaction with the quality of training received was tutors not providing enough support or being unhelpful / disorganised (44%), though this was a decrease from the corresponding 68% figure in 2021. Other reasons including rarely seeing the tutor (17%), and not having enough time being spend on training (15%). The full list of reasons is shown in Figure 9-10.

**Figure 9-10: Reasons for dissatisfaction with the quality of training received from training providers among non-completers (unprompted)**



Base: Non-completers who were dissatisfied with the quality of training from their training provider (gave a score of 0-4 out of 10) (111).

Non-completers dissatisfied with the end-point assessment were likewise asked why this was the case, although this question only applied to 14 respondents. Based on these responses, the main reasons related to a sense that it was unfair because they were asked about things they did not know about, the assessment was badly organised, or they were unsure by what method they would be assessed.

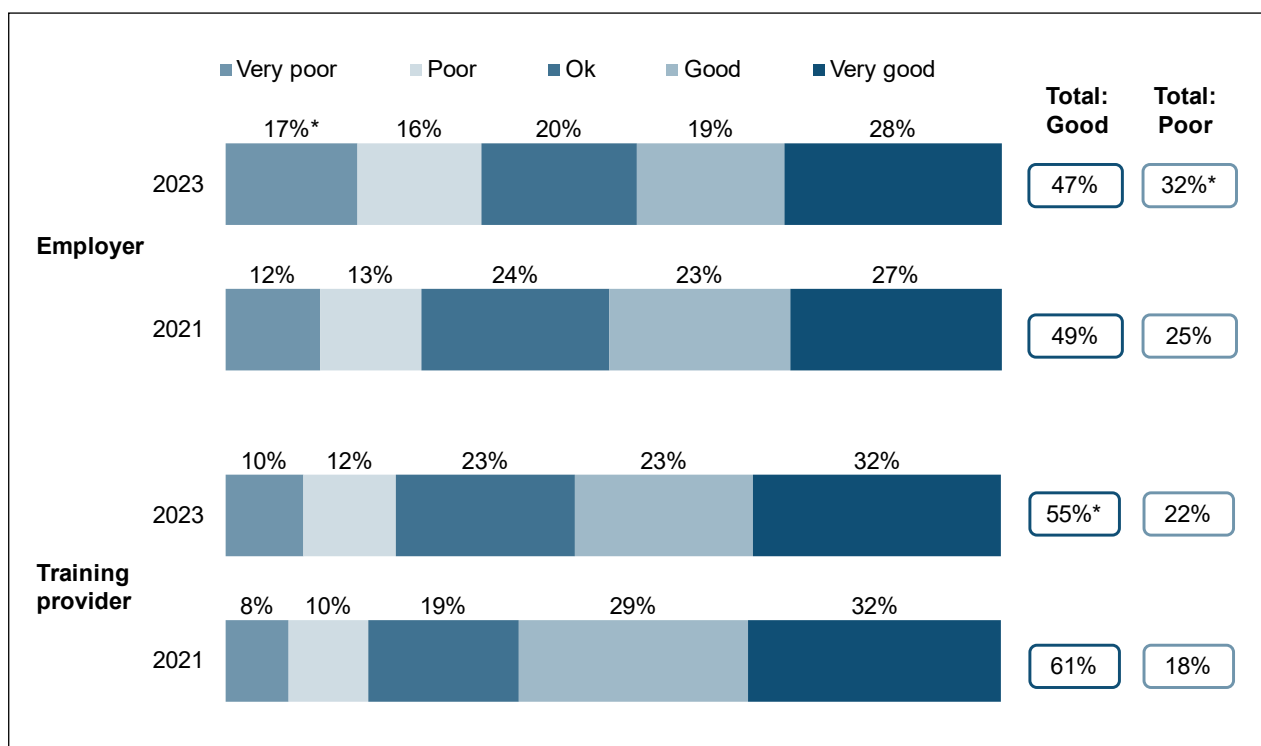
## Support received during apprenticeship

Just under half (47%) of non-completers rated the support that they received from their employer as good or very good, while just over half (55%) gave this rating for the support that they received from their training provider.

In comparison to 2021, the proportion of non-completers who rated the support received from their training provider as good overall decreased (55% vs. 61%), though there was no significant increase in the proportion reporting that it was poor overall (22% vs. 18%). In comparison, a third felt that the support received from their employer was poor or 'very poor' (32%, up from 25% in 2021), driven by an increase in those who felt that it was 'very poor' (17% vs. 12%), as shown in Figure 9-11.

In terms of support from their employer, female non-completers were particularly likely to rate it as poor or 'very poor' (36% vs. 28% of male non-completers), as were those who had not been with the employer before starting their apprenticeship (39% vs. 29% who had been). In terms of support from their training provider, those who had been on Engineering apprenticeships were more likely to rate the support as poor or 'very poor' (33% vs. 22% overall). There were no differences in rating for either employer or training provider support compared with the average among non-completers with learning difficulties and / or disabilities.

**Figure 9-11: How well non-completers rated the support they received from their employer / training provider during their apprenticeship**



Base: All non-completers: 2023 (506); 2021 (541). \* indicates where a result is significantly different from 2021.

More than a third (35%) of respondents reported that that there was support of some kind that might have helped them to remain on the apprenticeship, similar to 2021. Those aged 25 or over were more likely to affirm this (39% vs. 27% of under 19s), as were those living in the least deprived areas (fifth IMD quintile) (47% vs. 35% overall). Among those who felt that additional support would have helped them to remain on the apprenticeship, the support most commonly reported was the employer giving protected time to undertake learning or training (31%), and providers giving additional learning support when it was asked for (19%).

Four-in-ten non-completers (40%) reported that they were told about their provider’s complaints procedure, similar to 2021. This was higher among Level 6 and above respondents (55%) and those living in the least deprived areas (fifth IMD quintile) (51%). Non-completers aged under 19 were less likely to have been informed about this (29%, vs. 44% aged 19-24 and 43% aged 25 and over).

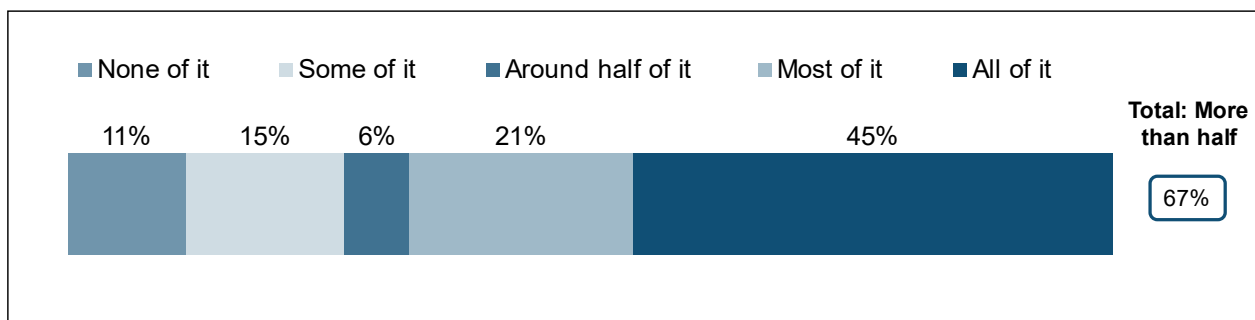
## Extent of and preference for online learning

Around two-thirds (67%) of non-completers who had received learning or training during their apprenticeship reported that more than half of their learning had been delivered online, with 45% reporting that all of their learning was delivered in this way (Figure 9-12). Non-completers more likely to report receiving all learning online included those on

Level 4 and 5 apprenticeships (70%), Business apprenticeships (65%), those aged 25 or over (55%) and female apprentices (53%).

One-in-ten (11%) reported that they received no online learning (but did receive training), which was higher among Level 2 apprenticeships (20%), Engineering apprenticeships (34%), those aged under 19 (22%), and male apprentices (15%).

**Figure 9-12: Proportion of the apprenticeship learning that was delivered online (non-completers)**



Base: All non-completers that received learning or training during their apprenticeship (502). Don't know not charted (2%).

Just over half (52%) of non-completers who had received any learning and (if any) of it had been online were happy with the amount of online training that they had received.<sup>94</sup> However, nearly four-in-ten (38%) said they wanted less online training. Non-completers that had done more than half of their training online were more likely to say they wanted to have done less online training than those who had done less than half of their training online (48% vs. 14%). Level 4 and 5 non-completers (48%), and those aged 25 or over (43%) who, as noted above, were more likely to have done a high proportion of their training online, were also more likely to say they wanted to do less online training during their apprenticeship.

Just under one-in-ten non-completers (8%) reported that they wanted more online training during their apprenticeship, rising to 29% among those who did not do any online training during their apprenticeship. Level 2 apprenticeships were slightly more likely than others to hold this view (13%), partly due to them being one of the most likely groups to report receiving no online learning.

## Broader personal impact of apprenticeship

New to the 2023 survey, non-completers were asked a series of questions relating to how the apprenticeship affected their mental health and their financial situation, as well

<sup>94</sup> This analysis excludes those who did not know how much of their apprenticeship was delivered online (10 non-completers).

as their work-life balance during the apprenticeship and the wellbeing support that was available to them at this time.

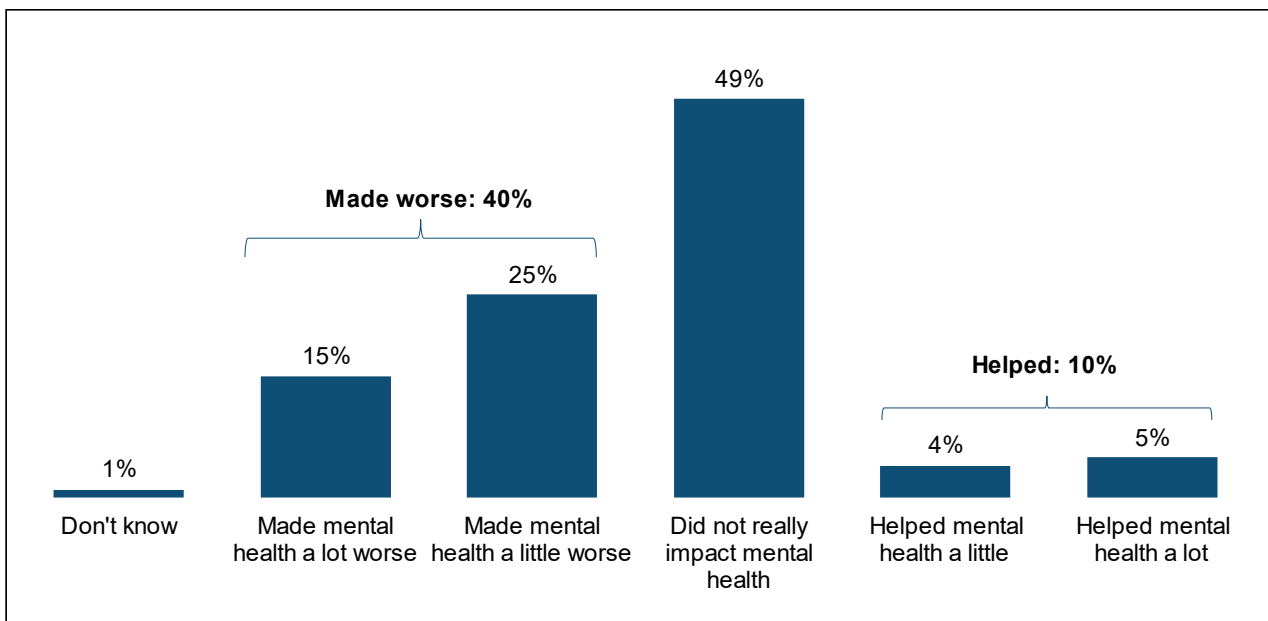
## Wellbeing

Around half (49%) of non-completers felt that the apprenticeship did not really impact their mental health in any way, however 40% reported that it made their mental health worse. A quarter (25%) felt that it had made their mental health a little worse, while 15% felt that it had made their mental health a lot worse, as shown in Figure 9-13. One-in-ten (10%) felt that the apprenticeship had helped their mental health.

Non-completers that were more likely to report that the apprenticeship made their mental health a lot worse included those on Level 6 and above apprenticeships (27%), Engineering apprenticeships (25%), female non-completers (19% vs. 11% of male) and those that were not with their employer prior to the apprenticeship (20% vs. 13% already working for their employer).

In comparison, respondents with learning difficulties were more likely to report that the apprenticeship had helped their mental health a lot (11%).

**Figure 9-13: Impact of the apprenticeship on mental health of non-completers**



Base: All non-completers (506).

Half of non-completers (50%) reported that their employer had discussed the support that was available for their mental health and wellbeing during their apprenticeship, while a near equal proportion (47%) said that they had not, and 3% were unsure. Those who reported the apprenticeship had helped their mental health were more likely to say their employer discussed the support available (63% vs. 50% average). The same was true of



those saying their work-life balance during the apprenticeship was good (64%) and those saying the impact of the apprenticeship on their financial situation was positive (65%).

The proportion of non-completers reporting that their employer had discussed this support with them increased with level of the apprenticeship, ranging from 39% of Level 2 non-completers to 65% of Level 6 and above non-completers.

## Financial situation

Most non-completers (69%) felt their apprenticeship had no impact on their financial situation. Of the remainder, views were divided with 16% reporting that it had improved their financial situation, and a near equal proportion (14%) reporting that it had made their financial situation worse. Those more likely to feel that their apprenticeship had improved their financial situation included:

- Those in the least deprived areas (fifth IMD quintile) (24%).
- Non-completers on Business apprenticeships (22%).
- Male non-completers (22%).
- Those who had been in education / training prior to the apprenticeship (50%).

In comparison, those who felt that their apprenticeship worsened their financial situation included:

- Non-completers on Engineering apprenticeships (24%).
- Level 2 non-completers (21%).
- Those whose apprenticeships were planned to take 36 months or longer (29%).

By age, older non-completers (25 and over years) were more likely to say the apprenticeship had no impact on their financial situation (84%), while their younger counterparts were less likely to say it had no impact (48% of those aged under 19 and 59% aged 19-24). Views were particularly polarised amongst those aged under 19 with 29% claiming the apprenticeship had improved their financial situation but 24% saying it made it worse.

## Work-life balance

Non-completers had mixed opinions regarding their work-life balance during their apprenticeship, split almost evenly into thirds: 34% felt it was poor, 37% felt it was reasonable, and 27% felt it was good.

There was a strong correlation between level of the apprenticeship and views on the work life balance, with only 25% previously on Level 2 apprenticeships saying the work life balance was poor rising to 55% of those on a Level 6 and above apprenticeship. Female apprentices (43% vs. 25% male), those aged 25 or over (41% vs. 25% of under 19s) and those without a learning difficulty or disability (37% vs. 19% of those with either) were also among the groups most likely to say their work-life balance was poor.

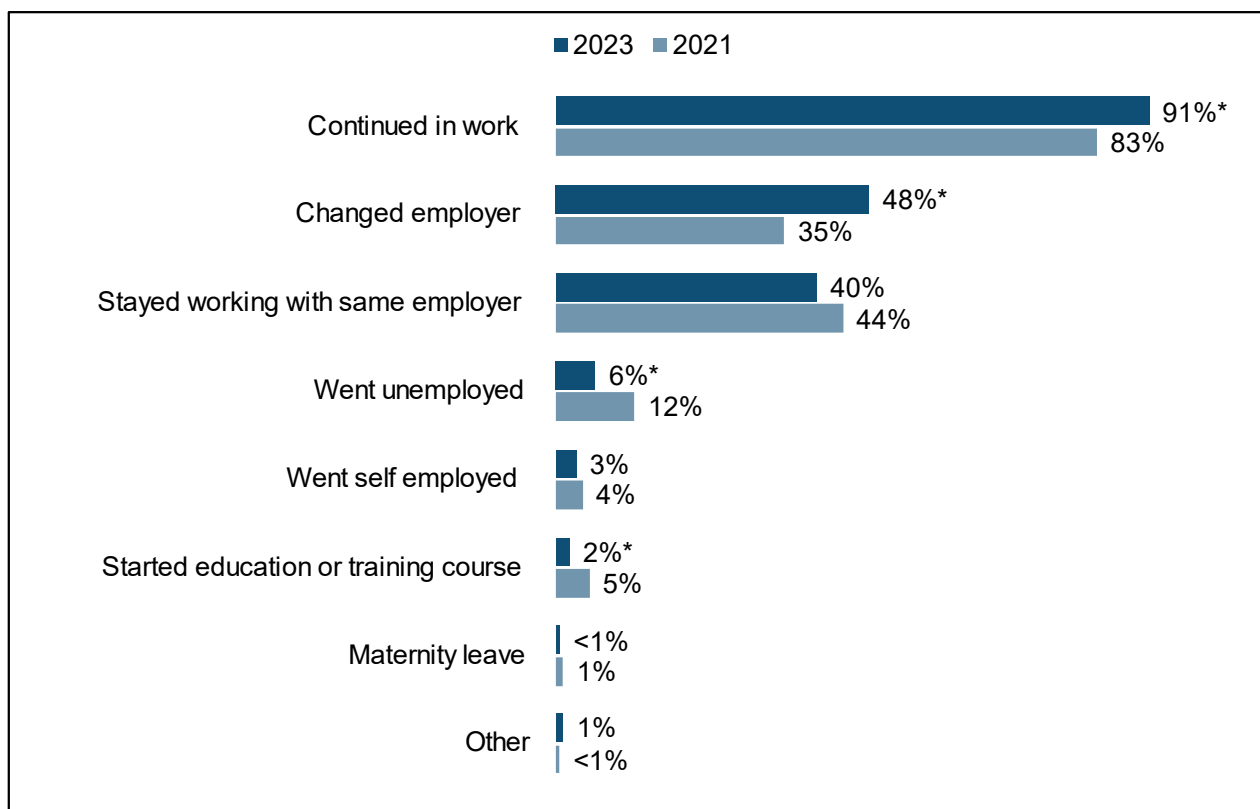
Those more likely to say they had a good work-life balance during the apprenticeship were Engineering apprentices (40% vs. 27% overall), male apprentices (36%), Level 2 apprentices (33%) and those living in the least deprived areas (fifth IMD quintile) (36%).

## **Activity since leaving apprenticeship**

Non-completers were asked what they did immediately after they left their apprenticeship, with responses shown in Figure 9-14.

Over nine-in-ten (91%) continued in work, an increase from the 83% figure seen in 2021. This was driven by more non-completers reporting that they changed employer in 2023 (48% vs. 35%), as well as fewer reporting that they became unemployed (6% vs. 12%). As more had continued in work, there was a consequent small fall in the proportion of non-completers starting an education or training course after withdrawing from their apprenticeship in 2023 compared with 2021 (2% vs. 5%).

**Figure 9-14: What non-completers did immediately after leaving their apprenticeship**



Base: All non-completers 2023: (506); 2021 (541). \* indicates where a result is significantly different from 2021.

Non-completers at Level 4 and above were more likely to have continued in work than those at Level 2 and 3 (96% vs. 89%), and linked to this, older apprentices were also more likely to have done so than their younger counterparts (94% of those aged 25 and over and 92% aged 19-24, compared with 81% aged under 19). Those who had left Business apprenticeships were also more likely to have continued in work (95%). Looking at demographics, male non-completers were more likely to have continued in work than female non-completers (94% vs. 88%). There were no differences in the proportion continuing in work by ethnicity or among those with learning difficulties and / or disabilities compared with those without.

The same proportion of non-completers reported being in work at the time of the survey as reported that they continued in work immediately after leaving their apprenticeship (91%), though fewer were still working with the same employer that they had done their apprenticeship with (28%). In comparison to 2021, more non-completers were in work at the time of the survey (91% vs. 87%), and fewer were in education (1% vs. 4%). However, while differences were seen by ethnic group in 2021, there were no such differences seen in the 2023 survey.

The proportion of non-completers in work at the time of the survey was lower than their completer counterparts, among whom 95% were in work and 68% were still employed by the same organisation with whom they completed their apprenticeship.

Many of the subgroup differences mentioned above in relation to non-completers' immediate activities after non-completion also applied to their current work status. Non-completers at Level 4 and above were more likely to be in work than those at Level 2 and 3 (97% vs. 88%), and again linked to this, those aged 25 and over were more likely to be in work at the time of survey (94% vs. 83% of those aged under 19). In comparison, those aged under 19 were more likely to report being unemployed (12% vs. 7% overall), or in education (4% vs. 1% overall). There were however no longer statistically significant differences between the proportion of male non-completers in work compared with female non-completers at the time of survey.

## **Whether still interested in the same line of work**

In comparison to when they started their apprenticeship, almost half (46%) of non-completers reported that there was no change either way in respect of their interest in the line of work that their apprenticeship was centred on. In terms of the rest, slightly more were now less interested than they had been (30%) compared with the proportion who said they were more interested (22%). These findings were comparable to the 2021 responses.

Those on Level 2 apprenticeships and Level 6 and above apprenticeships were more likely to report that they were more interested in the line of work that their apprenticeship was in (32% for both vs. 22% overall), while Level 3 non-completers were more likely to report that they were less interested (35% vs. 30% overall).

Respondents who were aged under 19 tended to be less interested in their line of work than they had been (43% vs. 23% of those aged 25 or over), while those aged 25 or over tended to feel there had been no change in their level of interest (53% vs. 46% overall).

## 10. Conclusions

This report presents the findings from a large-scale survey of apprentices conducted between July and September 2023. It comprised interviews with 2,970 apprentices registered as current on the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) in January 2023 and still undertaking their apprenticeship at the time of fieldwork ('current apprentices'), 991 with those completing an apprenticeship between March and December 2022 ('recent completers'), 958 with those completing between July 2021 and February 2022 ('longer-term completers') and 506 interviews with those who withdrew from their apprenticeship (standards only) between September 2021 and December 2022 ('non-completers').

### Apprenticeship satisfaction and outcomes

The 2023 results indicate:

- Overall satisfaction levels remained high, showing an upward trend for current apprentices both against 2021 (which was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic) and 2018-19. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, can be seen on completers, who were less satisfied with their experience and also recorded fewer positive outcomes from the apprenticeship compared with 2021 completers. Satisfaction also remained high across the various elements of the apprenticeship, particularly in respect of the apprenticeship enabling better job performance and the quality of learning and feedback received on progress.
- It is worth noting that a range of factors influence levels of satisfaction with apprenticeship. This includes learner demographics such as age, gender, deprivation status, ethnicity and whether or not learners had learning difficulties and / or disabilities; and the type of apprenticeship being undertaken, including factors such as apprenticeship level and subject area of the apprenticeship. Often, there is interplay between learner characteristics and course-related factors due to the different profiles of specific courses and apprenticeship levels. Unsurprisingly, negative experiences of apprenticeships also contribute to lower levels of satisfaction; for example, apprentices were much more likely to be satisfied if they felt their employer and training provider worked well together.
- Apprentices who reported receiving compliant levels of off-the-job training (OTJT) were also more satisfied with their apprenticeship experience and were also more likely to cite other positive benefits, such as being better at their job and having improved career prospects.
- A greater proportion of apprentices reported undertaking the required number of off-the-training hours compared with 2021, albeit that the rules have since been adjusted to cap the requirement at 6 hours, with 21% of working hours now spent

on OTJT (19% in 2021). The proportion of apprentices that reported receiving training or learning by their employer or by their training provider within normal working hours increased compared with 2021.

- Among current apprentices there was also an uplift in outcome measures, with higher proportions saying that they were better at their job, career prospects had improved, they were given / had taken more responsibility and were more satisfied with their job. These outcomes for current apprentices were also higher than in both 2018-19 (before the impact of COVID-19) and 2015 (the first point of measure). The uplifts in these outcomes compared with 2021 were evident for both lower and higher-level apprentices. There was also an increase in the proportion of completers who mentioned receiving a pay rise or promotion due to their apprenticeship.
- Awareness that courses or training learners undertake are part of an apprenticeship increased over time. There was also an increase in the proportion of apprentices who said undertaking an apprenticeship was their preferred choice, with a small increase in those saying their main reason for undertaking the apprenticeship was to enter or progress in a specific career or because they wanted to be paid whilst training. There was also a small increase in the number recruited in new to their employer, rather than having previously worked for their employer.
- Among apprentices that were dissatisfied (7% of all apprentices), the main reasons continue to be a lack of support or contact from the training provider, the apprenticeship being badly organised, and the poor quality of training received.

## The experiences of non-completers

The Government has set out its ambition for an apprenticeship achievement rate of 67% by 2025 for apprenticeship standards (the achievement rate for the 2021-22 academic year was 51%).<sup>95</sup> This reaffirms the need to understand what drives individuals to leave their apprenticeships before completing, which is the key focus of the Non-completers survey.

As noted, the perception that apprenticeships were badly organised was a driver of dissatisfaction among those in the Learner Survey who were dissatisfied overall with their apprenticeship (albeit these represented a minority of apprenticeships overall). The apprenticeship being badly organised was also the most common contributing factor behind not completing the apprenticeship for non-completers (mentioned by around half of those who withdrew from their apprenticeship). Other apprenticeship-related reasons for withdrawing centred on the training not being as good as hoped for and not having

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<sup>95</sup> [Policy Paper, Apprenticeship Standards achievement rate ambition, March 2023](#)

sufficient time for learning or training. Compared with the 2021 survey there were increases in mentions of the poor organisation of the apprenticeship, difficulties managing the course and financial struggles (and a fall in mentions of the impact of COVID-19 on the apprenticeship).

A range of personal or domestic factors also impacted the decision for some apprentices to withdraw from the scheme. Just over one-in-three said personal or domestic factors were contributing reasons, with caring responsibilities; mental health issues; personal, family or relationship issues; and physical health issues (not COVID-19 related) most commonly mentioned. The magnitude of these issues were similar to that reported in 2021. It is worth noting however that reasons for not completing apprenticeships varied by particular subgroups; for example Level 2 apprentices were more likely to mention financial struggles or issues getting on with their employer, whereas those at Level 6 and above were more likely to mention feeling they could progress in their role without completing their apprenticeship or finding the prospect of their EPA daunting.

Taken altogether, the most common single main reasons that apprentices gave for withdrawing were receiving a better job offer, not getting on with the employer and not having enough time for the learning and training. Most non-completers surveyed continued in work immediately after leaving their apprenticeship; 6% became unemployed, although this was less common than in 2021.

More felt their apprenticeship had either improved or had had no impact on their mental health and financial situation, than had had a negative impact on these aspects. That said, a sizeable proportion of non-completers (40%) still felt it had had a negative impact on their mental health, and one-in-seven (14%) felt it had had a negative impact on their financial situation.

## **Impact of apprenticeship reforms on apprenticeship quality**

Significant reforms have been introduced to apprenticeships over the course of the Apprenticeship Evaluation Survey series aimed at improving their quality.

Apprenticeships have moved across to a Standards model, with an end-point assessment, and virtually all current apprentices and most completer apprentices in the 2023 survey were on these types of apprenticeships. It should be noted that these reforms are now more embedded than they were previously with virtually all current apprenticeships undertaking apprenticeship standards rather than frameworks. Other recent reforms have included a mandated 12 month minimum apprenticeship duration, an update to the minimum amount of OTJT that an apprentice should complete, an increased emphasis on English and maths (together with flexibility to allow apprentices to study Level 1 if they are not ready for Level 2), and an increased emphasis on higher and degree-level apprenticeships. The 2023 survey is therefore a crucial data source in evidencing the longer-term impacts of the 2017 reforms, particularly given the challenges

in assessing these impacts in the 2021 survey which reflected the apprenticeship landscape at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2023 survey found several areas of reform-related improvements:

**Apprenticeship duration:** The average intended duration of apprenticeships was reported as just under two years (23 months among all apprentices; 26 among current apprentices) and shows a continuation of the trend towards longer apprenticeships over recent years and the shift towards higher level apprenticeships. Among current apprentices, the 2023 average duration of apprenticeships increased by 4 months compared to 2018-19 and 7 months compared with 2015. Most apprentices felt the duration of their apprenticeship was about right.

**Minimum off-the-job training (OTJT) requirement:** While needing to bear in mind the potential difficulty for respondents to accurately recall their exact learning hours, the mean average hours reportedly spent on OTJT was 21% of hours worked compared with 19% in 2021. Many apprentices, but certainly not all, reported compliant OTJT hours (60% reported compliant hours). A further 9% of apprentices reported doing 'close' to compliant OTJT hours. Although the proportion of apprentices who reported receiving compliant off-the-job hours increased compared with 2021, the rules have been altered and with the requirement capped at 6 hours for those working 30 or more hours. Education, Health and Retail were the subjects least likely to report being compliant. Most apprentices, but again not all, reported that they are aware of the off-the-job requirement rules.

**End-point assessment (EPA):** Knowledge and understanding of EPAs improved compared with 2021, with most of those on apprenticeship standards rating their understanding as good or reasonable. Most heard about EPAs from their training provider, and generally most were made aware of EPAs during the first month of their apprenticeship (though this was less commonly the case for longer apprenticeships). Apprentices are receiving support from their training providers and employers to help them prepare for the EPA, with evidence that the level of support increased compared with 2021. Where support was provided it was generally viewed positively (though apprentices with disabilities were slightly less likely to receive the support or to consider it helpful) and the majority of completers aware of EPAs are generally satisfied with the EPA process. There was some evidence of EPAs getting delayed, with around a third of completer apprentices (who knew about EPAs) experiencing this and one-in-six saying their EPA was delayed by three months or longer.

**Quality of teaching and training:** £7.5 million has been invested in the Apprenticeship Workforce Development (AWD) programme (launched in 2021), which supports teachers and trainers of apprentices to address existing issues concerning quality of teaching and supports them to implement best practice in apprenticeship delivery. Though there was little change in terms of overall satisfaction with the quality of training received from colleges and training providers, fewer dissatisfied apprentices cited poor quality of



training as a reason for their dissatisfaction, compared to 2021. That being said, issues around quality, including problems with delivery and dissatisfaction with the training delivered, continue to be the main cause of apprenticeship withdrawals and around two-fifths of non-completers (38%) mention wanting to have done less online training during their apprenticeship. Given these results, it is important that quality of teaching and training continue to be monitored by the DfE.

**English and maths study:** At an overall level and compared to 2021 there was no change in the proportion of apprentices studying for an English or maths qualification. That said, the incidence of studying towards these qualifications for Level 2 apprentices increased. Among this group, around a quarter (24%) had / were studying for an English qualification, and just slightly more (29%) had / were studying for a maths qualification. Views were mixed in terms of how apprentices felt about this study, with just a small net difference towards not liking it rather than liking it (7% net difference). Female apprentices, older apprentices and apprentices with a learning difficulty and / or a disability tended to be less keen on studying these qualifications. A dislike of studying English or maths primarily tended to arise from a situation of finding it difficult in general, and a lack of perceived relevance to the job or apprenticeship role, though other issues emerged such as a lack of interest in the subject(s), a lack of time for the study, already holding the qualifications but not being able to provide evidence after losing certificates, and issues with the quality of the teaching/support. Among non-completers, 11% cited their dislike of maths or English study as a contributing reason for leaving their apprenticeship.

## The cost-of-living crisis

While the 2023 Apprenticeship Evaluation Surveys did not explicitly cover impacts of the cost-of-living crisis, non-completers were asked about the impact of the apprenticeship on their financial situation. Most felt there was no impact either way, with the remainder split between saying their financial situation had improved or worsened. Overall one-in-seven non-completers felt their apprenticeship had had a negative impact on their finances. Financial issues were also a common reason for leaving apprenticeships, being a contributing factor for around a quarter of non-completers and with a 5 percentage point increase in mentions compared 2021. Financial issues, however, were only the single main reason for around 3% of non-completers. Apprenticeship pay does not appear to be a key factor in driving dissatisfaction among current apprentices or apprenticeship completers.

## Differences in apprentice experience

Throughout the report, findings have varied by types of apprenticeship and learner demographics. In particular those with learning difficulties and / or disabilities had a

poorer apprenticeship experience. Their satisfaction levels were lower; they were less likely to report compliant levels of off-the-job training; experienced fewer positive outcomes (e.g. promotions); and relatively low levels of these learners enjoyed English and Maths study (though they were more likely than average to undertake this study). Learners with learning difficulties and / or disabilities were also less positive about their training providers and employers and the level of support they received during their apprenticeship. Fewer current apprentices with learning difficulties and / or disabilities reported that they expect to complete their apprenticeship. Supporting learners with learning difficulties and / or disabilities remains a priority for the DfE and there are a range of flexibilities, for example, around English and maths requirements and support with EPAs, to reduce barriers to participation.

Younger apprentices are also a priority for the DfE. Recently, it was announced that young people will soon be able to use the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) to search and apply for apprenticeships, alongside degrees.<sup>96</sup> Overall, the survey results for young apprentices were largely positive – compared with their older counterparts (aged 25 and over), they had higher levels of satisfaction; were more likely to report receiving compliant levels of off-the-job training and more likely to have gained skills.

Throughout the report, we have seen how findings on their experience and views of the apprenticeship, and the outcomes achieved following completion, often differ quite widely between apprentice groups, both by type of apprenticeship (e.g., level and subject area), and also by demographics (particularly age, whether they had a learning difficulty and / or disability, and ethnicity). The survey provides a rich dataset to explore further the factors driving these differences, and the interplay between factors such as level, subject area, age and their situation immediately prior to starting.

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<sup>96</sup> [How we are putting apprenticeships on an equal footing with degrees](https://www.blog.gov.uk/2016/06/21/how-we-are-putting-apprenticeships-on-an-equal-footing-with-degrees/) - The Education Hub (blog.gov.uk)

## **11. Appendix A: Glossary**

DfE – Department for Education

EPA – End-point assessment

EPAO – End-point assessment organisation

ICT – Information and Communication Technology

ILR – Individualised Learner Record

IfATE – Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education

IMD – Index of Multiple Deprivation

LLDD – Learners with learning difficulties and / or disabilities

OTJT – Off-the-job training

SSA – Sector Subject Area

## 12. Appendix B: Detailed profile of apprentices

Appendix B considers the detailed profile of the three groups that are covered in the core Learner Survey: current apprentices, recent completers, and longer-term completers. The profile of non-completers interviewed via the Non-completer Survey can be found at the start of [Chapter 9](#).

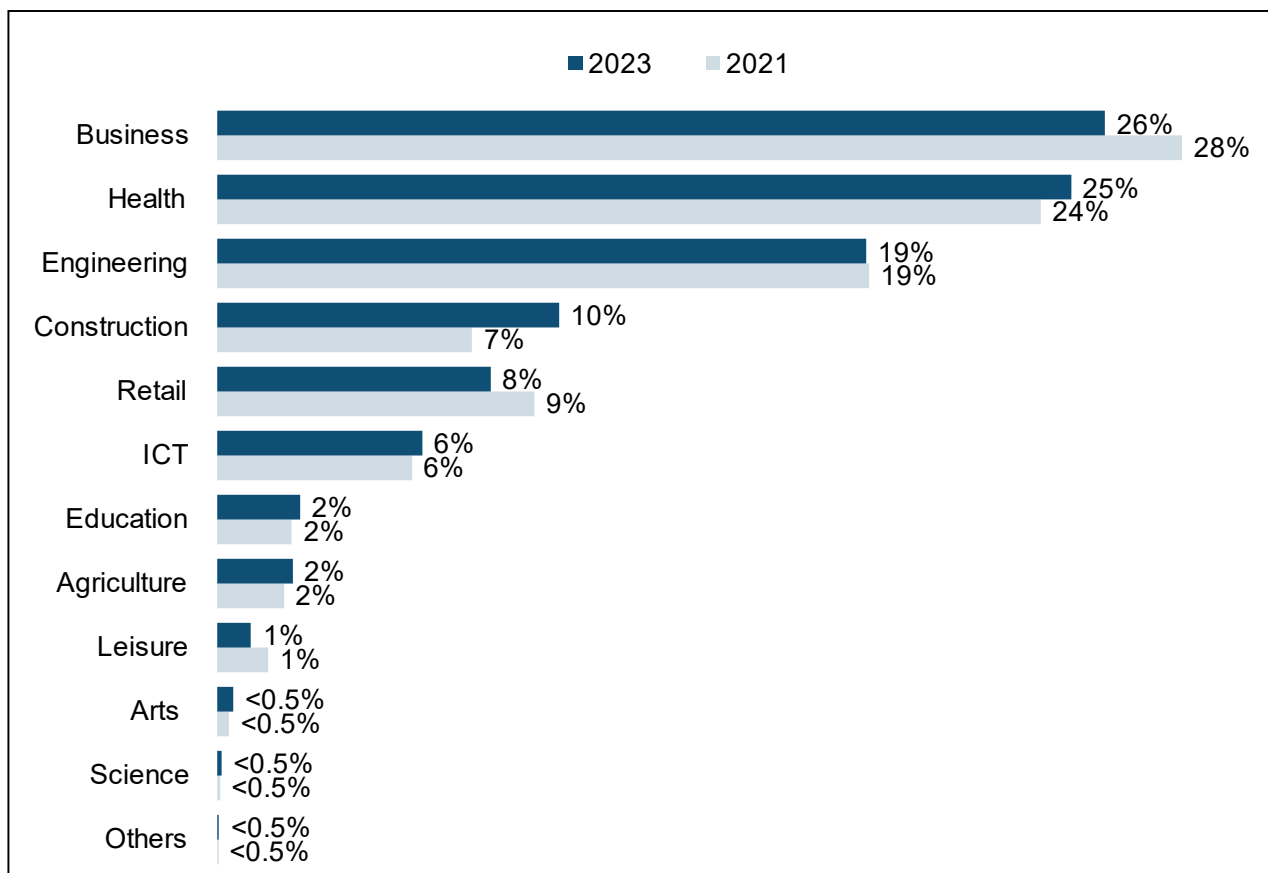
### Completion status

Based on the Individualised Learner Record (ILR), the population of current apprentices, recent completers and longer-term completers comprised 541,670 learners split 336,227 current apprentices (62%), 114,343 recent completers (21%) and 91,100 longer-term completers (17%).

### Apprenticeship subject area

Figure 12-1 shows the full population of apprentices by Sector Subject Area (SSA). The three largest SSAs were Business (26%), Health (25%) and Engineering (19%), as was the case in 2021. Arts and Science each made up fewer than 1% of all apprenticeships.

**Figure 12-1: Profile of apprentices by apprenticeship SSA (ILR data)**



Source: Individualised Learner Record. Base: All apprentices: 2023 (541,670); 2021 (713,228).

There were relatively few differences in terms of the profile of SSAs among the three survey groups (and the overall profile largely reflects the profile of current apprentices given they are the largest of the three groups). As shown in Table 12-1, recent completers were made up of a higher proportion of Business apprentices than average (31%), and a lower proportion of Engineering apprentices (15%). There was a reduction in the proportion of Business apprenticeships among current apprentices compared with 2021 (24% vs. 28%). Current apprentices were made up of a higher proportion of Construction apprentices compared with the other groups (13% vs. 7% of longer-term completers and 5% of recent completers) and a higher proportion than in 2021 (when 8% of current apprentices were on Construction apprenticeships). The proportion undertaking Retail apprenticeships decreased among both current apprentices (6% vs. 8% in 2021) and longer-term completers (10% vs. 13% in 2021).

**Table 12-1: Sector subject area (SSA) by apprentice type (ILR data)**

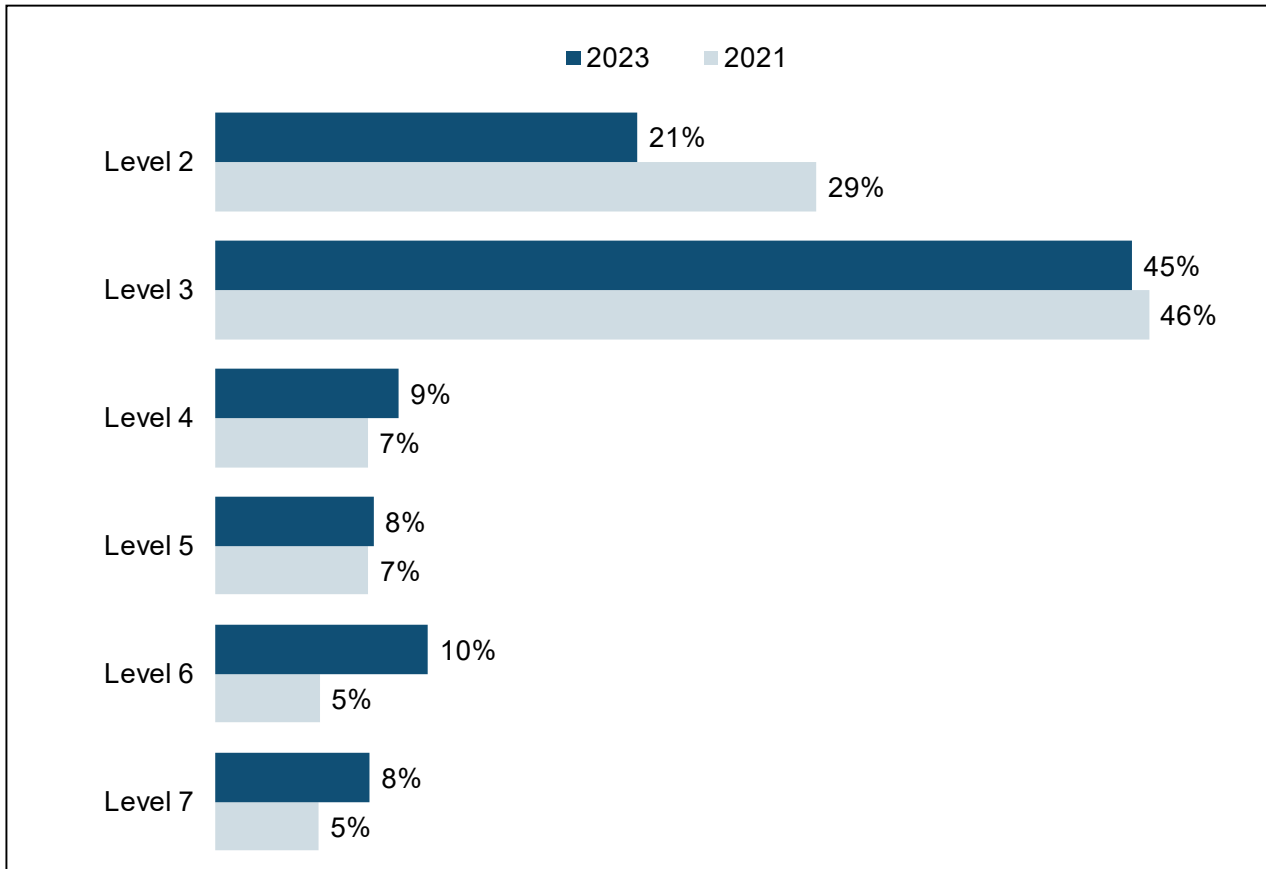
<i>Column percentages</i>	<b>2023: Current</b>	<b>2023: Recent completers</b>	<b>2023: Longer-term completers</b>	<b>2021: Current</b>	<b>2021: Recent completers</b>	<b>2021: Longer-term completers</b>
Agriculture	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Arts	<0.5%	1%	<0.5%	<0.5%	<0.5%	<0.5%
Business	24%	31%	29%	28%	30%	28%
Construction	13%	5%	7%	8%	6%	6%
Education	2%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%
Engineering	20%	15%	18%	20%	15%	19%
Health	25%	25%	24%	24%	26%	22%
ICT	6%	7%	6%	5%	7%	5%
Leisure	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%
Retail	6%	10%	10%	8%	10%	13%
Science	<0.5%	<0.5%	<0.5%	<0.5%	<0.5%	<0.5%

Base: All apprentices (541,670). Source: Individualised Learner Record

## Level of apprenticeship

Level 3 apprenticeships were the most common type undertaken in 2023 (45%), followed by Level 2 (21%). Around one-in-six (17%) were doing a higher-level apprenticeship at Level 4 (9%) and Level 5 (8%). Around a fifth (18%) were doing Level 6 (10%) or Level 7 (8%) apprenticeships. The proportion of Level 2 apprentices decreased from 29% in 2021 to 21% in 2023, while the Level 6 profile increased (10% vs. 5% in 2021).

**Figure 12-2: Profile of apprentices by apprenticeship level (ILR data)**



Source: Individualised Learner Record. Base: All apprentices: 2023 (541,670); 2021 (713,228).

As Table 12-2 shows, the reduction in Level 2 was the most notable change for all groups, but most pronounced for the completer groups (25% vs. 36% in 2021 for recent completers; 27% vs. 44% for longer-term completers). The proportion undertaking Level 3 apprenticeships remained relatively consistent all groups. For current apprentices and recent completers, the largest increase was seen for Level 6 apprentices (14% vs. 7% 2021). Recent completers saw a 4 percentage point increase for both Level 6 (5% vs. 1% in 2021) and Level 7 (6% vs. 2%) apprentices. For longer-term completers there were equally large increases in the profile of Level 4, Level 5 and Level 7 apprentices (each up 4 percentage points).

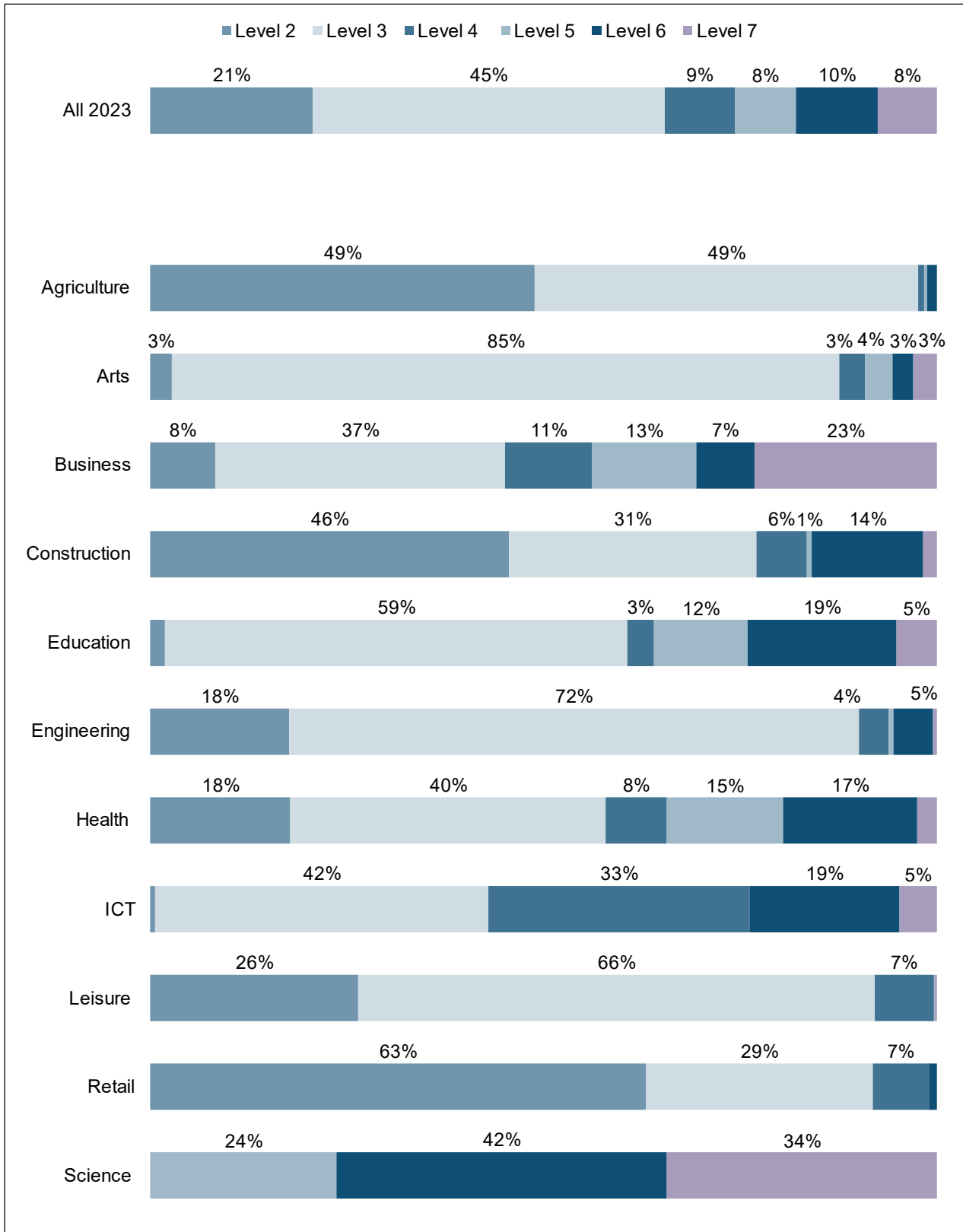
**Table 12-2: Apprenticeship level by survey group (ILR data)**

<i>Column percentages</i>	<b>2023: Current</b>	<b>2023: Recent completers</b>	<b>2023: Longer-term completers</b>	<b>2021: Current</b>	<b>2021: Recent completers</b>	<b>2021: Longer-term completers</b>
Level 2	17%	25%	27%	24%	36%	44%
Level 3	43%	47%	48%	45%	47%	45%
Level 4	9%	9%	9%	8%	7%	5%
Level 5	8%	8%	8%	8%	7%	4%
Level 6	14%	5%	3%	7%	1%	1%
Level 7	9%	6%	5%	7%	2%	1%

Base: All apprentices (541,670). Source: Individualised Learner Record.

Just under two-thirds of all apprenticeships in Retail (63%), and around half of apprenticeships in Agriculture (49%) and Construction (46%), were undertaken at Level 2. Meanwhile, the majority of apprentices undertaking an apprenticeship in Arts (85%), Engineering (72%), Leisure (66%), and Education (59%) were undertaken at Level 3. Level 4 apprenticeships were particularly common in ICT (33%) and Business (11%). Science apprenticeships had the largest proportion of Level 5, Level 6 and Level 7 apprentices (24%, 42% and 34% respectively).

**Figure 12-3: Level of apprentices by SSA (ILR data)**



Source: Individualised Learner Record. Base: All apprentices in 2021 (713,228); All apprentices in 2023 (541,670); Agriculture (11,937); Arts (2,562); Business (143,366); Construction (53,855); Education (13,145); Engineering (101,032); Health (134,090); ICT (33,876); Leisure (6,072); Retail (40,654); Science (748). Note: Data labels <3% removed.



## Apprenticeships standards vs. frameworks

Across the three apprentice types surveyed, the majority (96%) were on apprenticeship standards and only 4% were on apprenticeship frameworks. This was a marked increase when compared with 2021 (76%). Unsurprisingly with the gradual phasing out of apprenticeship frameworks, longer-term completers were most likely to have undertaken apprenticeship frameworks in 2023 (18%), compared with recent completers (5%).<sup>97</sup> In 2021, more than half (54%) of longer-term completers and 44% of recent completers were on apprenticeship frameworks.

Among longer-term completers the proportion undertaking apprenticeship standards increased with level; from 78% of Level 2 apprentices to all (100%) apprentices at Level 6 and above.

## Age of apprentices

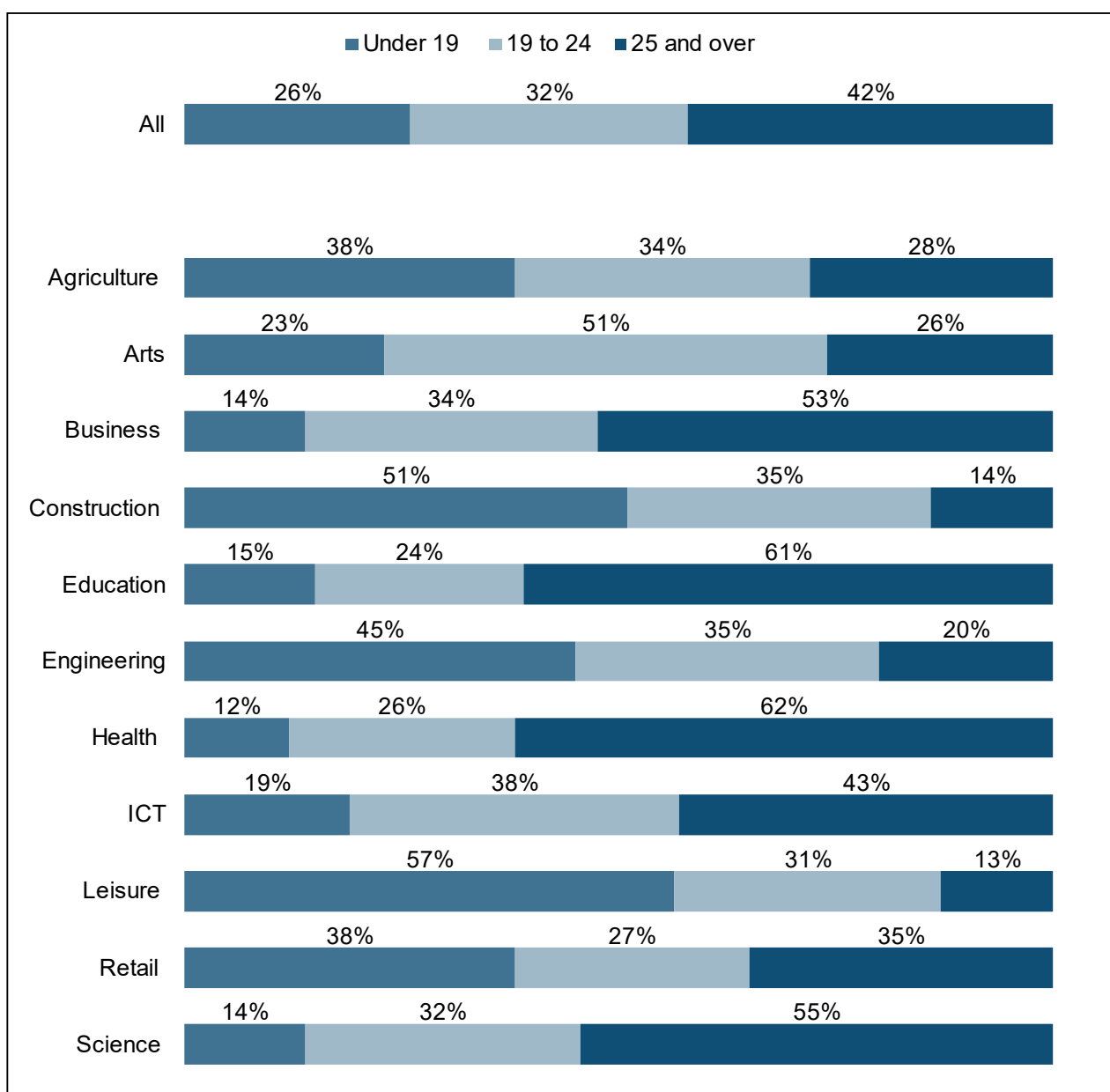
As shown in Figure 12-4, 42% of apprentices were aged 25 and over at the start of their apprenticeship, around three-in-ten (32%) were aged between 19 and 24 years old and just under a quarter (26%) were aged under 19. This was similar to the profile in 2021 (44% 25 and over, 31% 19-24 and 26% under 19).

There was substantial variation by SSA. In Health (62%), Education (61%), Science (55%), and Business (53%), the majority of apprentices were aged 25 and over. In contrast, apprentices tended to be younger in Leisure (57% aged under 19), Construction (51%), Engineering (45%), Agriculture and Retail (both 38%).

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<sup>97</sup> The proportion of current apprentices on apprenticeship frameworks in 2023 was 0.001%.

**Figure 12-4: Age of apprentices (ILR data)**



Source: Individualised Learner Record. Base: All apprentices (541,670). Agriculture (11,937); Arts (2,562); Business (143,366); Construction (53,855); Education (13,145); Engineering (101,032); Health (134,090); ICT (33,876); Leisure (6,072); Retail (40,654); Science (748).

## Gender distribution

Among survey respondents, there was a roughly equal split of male and female apprentices (52% and 48% respectively), similar to 2021. Male learners made up a larger majority among current apprentices (55% vs. 45% female); this was a larger gap than in 2021 (52% vs. 48%). Female learners made up a slight majority of recent completers (55% vs. 45% male), compared with a 50/50 split in 2021. Among longer-term completers 49% were male and 51% female (51% male vs. 49% female in 2021).

The gender distribution by level was generally similar, although female apprentices comprised the majority of Level 5 apprenticeships (74% vs. 26% male); likely driven by Health apprenticeships being mostly Level 5 (48%) and taken by female apprentices (80%). Female apprentices also made up a slight majority of Level 4 apprenticeships (53% vs. 47% male). There was substantial variation by SSA, with male apprentices making up the majority of apprentices in:

- Engineering (94%).
- Construction (91%).
- Leisure (67%).
- ICT (62%).

Female apprentices, on the other hand, made up the majority in:

- Health (80%).
- Education (76%).
- Science (71%).
- Retail (62%).
- Business (57%).
- Arts (56%).
- Agriculture (53%).

## **Ethnicity of apprentices**

According to the survey data, a large majority of apprentices were from a white ethnic background (86%). The next most common ethnic group were those from an Asian or Asian British background (6%), followed by those from a black, black British, Caribbean or African background (3%), people from mixed or multiple ethnic groups (3%), and those from all other ethnic groups (1%). This was a similar profile to the 2021 survey.

By way of comparison, the most recent quarter (April to June 2023) of the Labour Force Survey showed that 85% of those aged 16 and over and in employment were from a white ethnic background, 6% were from an Asian or Asian British background, 3% were

from black, black British, Caribbean or African background, 2% were from mixed or multiple ethnic groups, and 3% were from all other ethnic groups.<sup>98</sup>

By apprenticeship level, those from an Asian or Asian British background made up a larger proportion of Level 7 apprenticeships (11%) than any other apprenticeship level, with the proportion lowest among Level 2 apprentices (4%). black, black British, Caribbean or African apprentices similarly made up a larger proportion of Level 7 apprenticeships (5%) than any other apprenticeship level, while the proportion of those from mixed or multiple ethnic groups was highest among Level 6 apprentices (5%).

## NEET status

One-in-twenty-five (4%) apprentices aged under 25 were not in employment, education or training (NEET) in the period before starting their apprenticeship.<sup>99</sup> This equates to 2% of all apprentices.

## Disabilities and learning difficulties

Overall, 5% of apprentices self-identified as having a disability while 7% self-identified as having a learning difficulty (9% self-identified as having either).<sup>100</sup> Among current apprentices, the proportion that had a learning difficulty and / or a disability was similar to 2021 (10% vs. 8% in 2021). The proportion of those that had a learning difficulty and / or a disability was highest among Level 2 apprentices and Level 6 apprentices (both 11%, though for the latter, this was not significantly different from the average). By SSA, the proportion of those who had a learning difficulty and / or a disability was highest among those undertaking apprenticeships in Arts (16%), Agriculture, Education, and Retail (14% each).

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<sup>98</sup> [ONS data](#)

<sup>99</sup> NEET is defined as those aged 16-24 and not in employment, education or training for a period of at least three months immediately before starting their apprenticeship.

<sup>100</sup> Data on [apprenticeship starts](#) from 2022/23 show that 15.3% of apprentices were identified as having a learning difficulty and / or a disability. Additionally, this survey only asked apprentices if they had a learning difficulty or a disability if this was already recorded on the ILR sample file (accurate as of 01/01/2023).

## 13. Appendix C: Definitions for reasons for not completing apprenticeships

Appendix C provides definitions of the grouped categories of reasons for not completing apprenticeships (see [Chapter 9](#)). Each grouped reason is broken down below into individual specific codes according to responses given when asked what their reasons were for not completing, including apprenticeship-related reasons, and personal reasons.

### Issues with quality

- Training wasn't as good as you hoped.
- Apprenticeship badly run or poorly organised.
- Not enough time for learning or training.
- The negative impact COVID-19 had on the way the apprenticeship was delivered.

### Own choice

- Thought that they could progress or do well in the job role of the apprenticeship without actually finishing the apprenticeship.
- Decided that they did not want to work in the job role the apprenticeship was for.
- Another / better job offer.
- Decided to pursue other form of education.
- Changing career

### Did not get on with employer / provider

- Did not get on with the employer.
- Did not get on with the provider.

### Competency / confidence issues

- Finding it too difficult or falling behind.
- Found the prospect of doing the end-point assessment daunting.
- Apprentice, employer, or provider did not think they would pass the end-point assessment.

### **Financial reasons**

- Salary too low or struggling to get by financially.
- Financial issues or difficulties.

### **Issues with delivery**

- The apprenticeship stopped or was cancelled.
- The end-point assessment was delayed.
- Unable to continue apprenticeship due to COVID-19.
- Issues with travelling.

### **Personal circumstances**

- Caring responsibilities.
- Got pregnant.
- Respondent (or family) wanted or needed to move area.
- Personal or family or relationship issues.

### **Physical or mental health issues**

- Respondent got COVID-19
- Physical health issues (non-COVID) or health got worse.
- Mental health issues (including depression, job-related stress, etc.)

### **Covid factors**

- The negative-impact COVID-19 had on the way the apprenticeship was delivered.
- Unable to continue apprenticeship due to COVID-19.
- Respondent got COVID-19.

### **Fired / made redundant**

- Being fired.
- Being made redundant.

## **English / maths reasons**

- Did not enjoy or want to study English or maths as part of apprenticeship.

## 14. Appendix D: Changes to apprenticeships over time

**Table 14-1: Reforms to apprenticeships over time**

	Revision
2015	Apprenticeship reform programme established in May 2015
2015	Introduction of degree apprenticeships
2017	Introduction of Apprenticeship standards
2017	Introduction of Apprenticeship Levy, payable at 0.5% of the annual pay bill of UK employers where this exceeded £3m
2017	Introduction of end-point assessments (EPAs)
2017	Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) established to oversee quality, determine funding bands and approve apprenticeship standards
2017	Apprenticeship target for public sector bodies (statutory obligation to employ their fair share of apprentices)
2017	Introduction of additional funding for employers and training providers for apprentices aged 16-24 with an education health and care plan or who are a care leaver.
2017	The Apprenticeship Service was introduced in England in 2017 as an online service for levy-paying employers.
2018	Levy transfers introduced, allowing levy-paying employers to transfer 10% of their annual funds to other employers
2018	£1,000 bursary for apprentices aged 16-24 who are care leavers introduced.
2019	Reduced rate of co-investment from 10% to 5% so smaller employers have greater financial support accessing apprenticeships
2019	Increased amount levy-paying employer can transfer from 10% to 25% (greater flexibility for businesses to spend their funds & support smaller employers in supply chain)
2020	Apprenticeship starts on frameworks officially removed; all new apprentices start on apprenticeship standards from August 2020
2020	Opening the Apprenticeship service to employers who do not pay the levy (completed March 2021)
2020	COVID-19 flexibilities and employer incentives introduced
2021	Revisions to allow levy-paying employers to transfer some of their funds to other employers to support their supply chains and local areas



	Revision
2021	All new apprentice starts to be funded via the apprenticeship service
2021	Ofsted becomes responsible for inspecting the quality of apprenticeship training at Level 6 and 7
2022	Level 2 Apprentices without a Level 1 English and maths qualification can take the Level 1 English and maths qualification if not yet ready for a Level 2
2022	Minimum threshold for off-the-job training updated (Apprentices working 30 or more hours per week must spend an average of 6 or more hours per week on OTJT; if working less, 20% of working hours on training)
2022	COVID-19 flexibilities guidance withdrawn on 1 April 2022
2022	Introduction of ambition to reach a 67% achievement rate for apprenticeship standards by 2025
2022	Updated rules for initial assessment and recognition of prior learning, reducing the price of the apprenticeship and unnecessary training through robust assessment of prior learning
2022	Apprentices recruited on the new flexi-job apprenticeships, flexible training modules with 'front-loading' blocks of training, accelerated apprenticeships
2023	From August 2023, the Government increased the bursary that it pays to apprentices aged 16-24 who are care leavers from £1,000 to £3,000

## 15. Appendix E: Grouped reasons for non-completion – subgroup analysis

Table 15-1: Contributing (grouped) reasons for not completing the apprenticeship, by level and SSA

	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4 / 5	Level 6+	Business	Engineering	Health	Retail
Base	(146)	(163)	(110)	(87)	(183)	(51)	(133)	(59)
Issues with quality	64%*	74%	72%	75%	72%	70%	67%	70%
Own choice	67%	71%	62%	71%	67%	77%	57%*	<b>82%*</b>
Competency / confidence issues	38%	38%	<b>53%*</b>	<b>55%*</b>	48%	33%	45%	41%
Did not get on with employer / provider	45%	40%	44%	37%	36%	<b>55%*</b>	44%	40%
Financial reasons	<b>38%*</b>	28%	11%*	24%	19%*	<b>43%*</b>	28%	24%
Issues with delivery	25%	27%	17%*	20%	22%	29%	28%	24%
Personal circumstances	21%	20%	23%	30%	19%	11%*	<b>30%*</b>	20%
Physical or mental health issues	13%	16%	11%	12%	10%	12%	<b>21%*</b>	8%
Covid factors	14%	14%	11%	12%	12%	21%	13%	13%
Fired / made redundant	<b>14%*</b>	9%	5%	4%	8%	<b>21%*</b>	4%*	6%
English / maths reasons	11%	9%	10%	3%*	8%	6%	13%	12%

Base: All non-completers (506). Construction (29), ICT (24), and All other SSAs (27) are not included due to a low base size. \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the average (bold figures show results that are significantly higher than the average).

**Table 15-2: Contributing (grouped) reasons for not completing the apprenticeship, by age, gender, ethnicity and whether had a learning difficulty and / or a disability (LLDD)**

	Under 19	19 to 24	25 and over	Male	Female	White	All other ethnic groups combined	LLDD	Not LLDD
Base	(91)	(115)	(300)	(264)	(242)	(423)	(82)	(64)	(441)
Issues with quality	71%	69%	72%	74%	68%	71%	74%	68%	72%
Own choice	<b>78%*</b>	75%	61%*	72%	65%	69%	66%	63%	69%
Competency / confidence issues	42%	35%	<b>47%*</b>	37%*	<b>47%*</b>	41%	50%	36%	44%
Did not get on with employer / provider	<b>57%*</b>	44%	35%*	43%	42%	42%	46%	40%	43%
Financial reasons	<b>47%*</b>	31%	17%*	31%	23%	26%	31%	23%	28%
Issues with delivery	30%	24%	22%	24%	24%	23%	30%	<b>37%*</b>	22%*
Personal circumstances	9%*	23%	<b>26%*</b>	16%*	<b>28%*</b>	21%	25%	17%	23%
Physical or mental health issues	14%	12%	14%	11%	16%	14%	15%	<b>22%*</b>	12%*
Covid factors	<b>21%*</b>	10%	12%	14%	12%	14%	12%	18%	13%
Fired / made redundant	<b>17%*</b>	9%	6%*	<b>12%*</b>	6%*	10%	7%	15%	8%*
English / maths reasons	8%	4%*	<b>13%*</b>	8%	10%	8%*	<b>16%*</b>	11%	9%

Base: All non-completers (506). \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the average (bold figures show results that are significantly higher than the average).

**Table 15-3: Main (grouped) reason for not completing the apprenticeship, by level and SSA**

	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4 / 5	Level 6+	Business	Engineering	Health	Retail
Base	(146)	(163)	(110)	(87)	(183)	(51)	(133)	(59)
Issues with quality	14%*	27%	<b>38%*</b>	25%	<b>37%*</b>	25%	14%*	17%
Own choice	23%	23%	20%	<b>34%*</b>	21%	23%	20%	28%
Competency / confidence issues	5%	3%	<b>10%*</b>	<b>12%*</b>	7%	2%	8%	3%
Did not get on with employer / provider	17%	14%	7%*	12%	12%	20%	10%	<b>23%*</b>
Financial reasons	4%	4%	2%	3%	1%	4%	4%	6%
Issues with delivery	5%	6%	4%	2%	3%	7%	<b>10%*</b>	3%
Personal circumstances	12%	8%	7%	6%	7%	2%	<b>13%*</b>	9%
Physical or mental health issues	6%	5%	6%	3%	5%	2%	<b>9%*</b>	1%
Covid factors	0%	<b>2%*</b>	0%	0%	0%	3%	1%	2%
Fired / made redundant	6%	4%	3%	0%	3%	<b>10%*</b>	2%	3%
English / maths reasons	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%

Base: All non-completers (506). Construction (29), ICT (24), and All other SSAs (27) are not included due to a low base size. \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the average (bold figures show results that are significantly higher than the average).

**Table 15-4: Main (grouped) reason for not completing the apprenticeship, by age, gender, ethnicity and whether had a learning difficulty and / or a disability (LLDD)**

	Under 19	19 to 24	25 and over	Male	Female	White	All other ethnic groups combined	LLDD	Not LLDD
Base	(91)	(115)	(300)	(264)	(242)	(423)	(82)	(64)	(441)
Issues with quality	16%*	16%*	<b>34%*</b>	29%	22%	26%	23%	17%	27%
Own choice	23%	29%	20%	<b>27%*</b>	19%*	22%	27%	21%	23%
Competency / confidence issues	3%	5%	7%	4%	8%	5%*	<b>11%*</b>	7%	6%
Did not get on with employer / provider	<b>22%*</b>	<b>19%*</b>	7%*	11%	15%	14%	10%	9%	14%
Financial reasons	<b>7%*</b>	4%	1%*	4%	3%	4%	1%	6%	3%
Issues with delivery	6%	5%	4%	4%	5%	5%	3%	<b>11%*</b>	4%*
Personal circumstances	4%	8%	11%	6%*	11%*	8%	11%	7%	9%
Physical or mental health issues	6%	2%*	7%	*3%	<b>*7%</b>	5%	6%	9%	5%
Covid factors	0%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	2%	1%
Fired / made redundant	<b>8%*</b>	4%	2%*	5%	3%	4%	1%	5%	3%
English / maths reasons	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	<1%	0%	1%

Base: All non-completers (506). \* indicates where a result is significantly different from the average (bold figures show results that are significantly higher than the average).



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