



Department  
for Education

# **Evaluation of Skills Bootcamps**

**2022–23 (Wave 3) Implementation Report**

**September 2024**

**Authors: CFE Research**

# Contents

List of figures	3
List of tables	4
Glossary	6
Executive Summary	9
Evaluation aims and objectives	9
Early self-reported impacts from Wave 3	14
Areas for consideration	14
Chapter 1: Introduction	15
Policy changes between Wave 2 and Wave 3	15
About the evaluation	17
Methodology	17
Chapter 2: Characteristics of Skills Bootcamp applicants and starts	20
Wave 3 Skills Bootcamp applicants and starts	20
Chapter 3: Characteristics of providers and employers engaged with Skills Bootcamps	37
Provider characteristics	37
Employer characteristics	40
Chapter 4: Motivations for engaging in Skills Bootcamps	46
Additional factors that motivated participants to apply for a Skills Bootcamp	52
Employer motivations for engaging with Skills Bootcamps	53
Provider engagement with Skills Bootcamps	59
Chapter 5: Factors influencing the design and implementation of Skills Bootcamps	63
Considerations for the design and delivery of Skills Bootcamps	63
Factors influencing participant satisfaction	70
Chapter 6: Relationship between Skills Bootcamp delivery and outcomes	74
Start rate	74
Participant attendance during Skills Bootcamp training	76
Guaranteed interviews	77
Pathway to Accelerated Apprenticeships	79
Meeting DfE contractual obligations	80

Meeting KPIs	82
Chapter 7: Early self-reported outcomes and impacts from Skills Bootcamps	88
Participant employment outcomes	88
Employers' recruitment through Skills Bootcamps	90
Barriers to achieving impact from Skills Bootcamps	93
Chapter 8: Conclusions	95
Engagement with Skills Bootcamps	95
Skills Bootcamp delivery	96
Early outcomes and impacts	97
Appendix 1: Detailed methodology	98
Management information held on Skills Bootcamps	98
Data processing	99
Calculating the number of Skills Bootcamp starts	103
Appending management information to survey data	103
Specific data collection instruments	103
Appendix 2: Types and combinations of Skills Bootcamps offered by lead providers	108
Appendix 3: Applicant and start demographics from management information	110

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.

## List of figures

Figure 1: Distribution of hours worked by survey respondents in their job prior to starting their Skills Bootcamp .....	31
Figure 2: Differences in responsibility level for job prior to starting a Skills Bootcamp between Wave 2 and Wave 3 survey respondents.....	32
Figure 3: Breakdown of satisfaction with work responsibilities in work prior to a Skills Bootcamp, by course category .....	33
Figure 4: Differences between Level 3 or lower and Level 4 and higher educational level for starts by Skills Bootcamp course type .....	36
Figure 5: Distribution of employers by geographical region .....	44
Figure 6: Survey response proportions regarding job satisfaction measures.....	47
Figure 7: Attractiveness of the guaranteed interview to respondents by Skills Bootcamp type .....	48
Figure 8: Attractiveness of the guaranteed interview to respondents by employment status at Wave 2 and Wave 3 .....	48
Figure 9: Respondent perceptions of how Skills Bootcamps would meet their skills development needs .....	50
Figure 10: Respondent perceptions of how Skills Bootcamps would enable them to learn new skills for a future job by course type .....	50
Figure 11: Perceptions that Skills Bootcamps would enable respondents to earn more money by Skills Bootcamp type .....	51
Figure 12: Proportion of survey respondents who considered that the offer of flexible training was an attractive part of Skills Bootcamps.....	52

## List of tables

Table 1: Breakdown of applicants and starts for Wave 3 and Wave 2 Skills Bootcamps.	21
Table 2: Gender of applicants, starts and survey responses .....	22
Table 3: Ethnicity of applicants, starts and survey respondents .....	23
Table 4: Ethnicity of Skills Bootcamp in Digital starts .....	24
Table 5: Applications and starts by Government Office Region.....	25
Table 6: Applications and starts by IMD decile .....	26
Table 7: Caring responsibilities for applicants, starts and survey respondents.....	27
Table 8: Employment status of applicants and starts prior to Skills Bootcamp .....	28
Table 9: Employment contract type by Skills Bootcamp category.....	30
Table 10: Mean and median working hours by pre-Skills Bootcamp employment status	30
Table 11: Occupation group (SOC 2020) for applicants, starts and survey respondents (most recent occupation for those who were not currently employed) .....	34
Table 12: Highest education level for applicants, starts and survey respondents.....	35
Table 13: Regional location of delivery providers in Wave 3.....	38
Table 14: Delivery of Skills Bootcamps by lead providers by funding method .....	39
Table 15: Type of Skills Bootcamp by delivery partner type .....	40
Table 16: Types of Skills Bootcamps employers engaged with in Wave 3 .....	41
Table 17: Size of employers (no. of employees) engaging with Skills Bootcamps.....	42
Table 18: Employers by Skills Bootcamp type and employer size .....	43
Table 19: Number of vacancies offered by Skills Bootcamps employers by size and Skills Bootcamp category .....	45
Table 20: Ratio of starts to applicants by Skills Bootcamp type.....	75
Table 21: Attendance rate of starts during their Skills Bootcamp course for Wave 2 and Wave 3.....	76

Table 22: Breakdown of survey responses by Skills Bootcamp category .....	104
Table 23: Participant interview characteristics .....	105
Table 24: Employer characteristics relating to employer sample .....	106
Table 25: Proportion of provider interviews relative to provider management information characteristics .....	107
Table 26: Number and combinations of Skills Bootcamps offered by lead providers.....	108
Table 27: Age of applicants by Skills Bootcamp type; age as of 31 March 2023 .....	110
Table 28: Age of starts by Skills Bootcamp type; age as of 31 March 2023 .....	110
Table 29: Gender of applicants by Skills Bootcamp type .....	110
Table 30: Gender of starts by Skill Bootcamp type .....	111
Table 31: Ethnicity of applicants by Skills Bootcamp type .....	111
Table 32: Ethnicity of starts by Skills Bootcamp type.....	112
Table 33: Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) decile of applicant by Skills Bootcamp type .....	112
Table 34: IMD decile of starts by Skills Bootcamp type .....	113
Table 35: Proportion of applicants and starts with a disability or long-term health condition .....	113
Table 36: Proportion of applicants and starts who claimed Universal Credit .....	113
Table 37: Employment status of applicants and starts.....	114
Table 38: Employment status of starts by Skills Bootcamp type.....	114

## Glossary

- **10% Flex:** All grant recipients could use up to 10% of their grant funding in FY22/23 to procure and deliver Skills Bootcamps in Health and Care, Creative Industries, Hospitality, Leadership & Management, and Professional Services (including finance), alongside the national priority sectors.
- **AEB: Adult Education Budget:** An additional funding stream which funds other types of education and learning for adults aged 19 or above. The AEB comprises devolved and non-devolved (ESFA-funded) delivery. Skills Bootcamps are funded separately from the AEB.
- **Applicant:** In the management information analysis, an 'applicant' covers people who applied but did not participate. One person can apply for more than one Skills Bootcamp.
- **Co-funded learner:** A learner whose employer contributed to the cost of the Skills Bootcamp to upskill their employee(s). For SMEs this contribution is 10% of the training cost, rising to 30% for larger employers.
- **Completion:** A learner who completed all required elements of the Skills Bootcamp. A record in the MI can only be counted as a completion if there is a start date present.
- **Contract-funded Skills Bootcamp:** A Skills Bootcamp funded by a contract model, whereby the DfE has agreed a contract with a training provider to deliver a Skills Bootcamp.
- **CV: Curriculum vitae:** Used in job applications to summarise skills and relevant experience.
- **DfE:** Department for Education.
- **Employer engagement:** Providers were required to engage with employers at all stages of Skills Bootcamps. Employer engagement includes offering vacancies and/or guaranteed interviews, co-funding their employees to participate in the Skills Bootcamp training, mentoring/coaching, delivering aspects of the training (e.g. guest speaking, setting challenges for learners), offering work experience placements, or providing equipment or a venue to support delivery.
- **GLH: Guided Learning Hours:** This is the time the learner spends being taught or instructed by, or otherwise participating in education or training under the immediate, real-time guidance or supervision of a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate supplier of education or training. It can include online, in-person or blended provision.
- **Grant-funded Skills Bootcamp:** A Skills Bootcamp funded through the awarding of a grant by DfE to a Mayoral Combined Authority or local authority.

- **Guaranteed interview:** On completion of the course, eligible participants have an offer of a guaranteed interview with an employer. There are separate requirements for self-employed or co-funded participants.
- **HGV:** Heavy goods vehicle.
- **ILR: Individualised Learner Record:** This is the primary data collection requested from learning providers for further education and work-based learning in England.
- **IMD:** Index of Multiple Deprivation.
- **Independent learner:** Individuals enrolled on a Skills Bootcamp who are not funded by their employer.
- **ITP:** Independent training provider.
- **KPI: Key performance indicator:** KPIs were set out in the contracts that DfE agrees with suppliers. The aim is for 100% completion of the attainment of new skills and offers of guaranteed interviews. For positive outcomes, 75% of those who complete the programme with an offer of a guaranteed interview should achieve a positive outcome, which in most cases is a new job, a substantial change in responsibilities, or the ability to strengthen or adapt their business if self-employed.
- **LEP:** Local Enterprise Partnership.
- **MCA:** Mayoral Combined Authority.
- **MI:** Management information.
- **ONS:** Office for National Statistics.
- **Outcome:** Participants engaged in Skills Bootcamps who achieve a positive outcome. A successful outcome of a Skills Bootcamp includes a new job, increased salary, increased responsibilities, or for self-employed participants, new opportunities and contracts for their business. A record in the MI can only be counted as an outcome if there is data indicating that the participant started and completed their training.
- **Participant:** Information supplied by providers on the individuals regarding their Skills Bootcamps, identified by the presence of data in the 'participant' section of the management information. The total number of participants was used to recruit for the participant survey.
- **Payment milestone:** Providers were required to submit relevant evidence for each payment milestone before they received payment. Providers did not receive payment if no evidence was submitted. The percentages for the agreed unit rate claimable against each milestone changed between Wave 2 and Wave 3. For the Milestone 2 payment (Completion – 35%), providers had to submit evidence that learners had completed their training and had been offered a guaranteed interview (where applicable). For the Milestone 3 payment (Outcomes – 20%), providers were required



to submit evidence that learners had secured a new job that utilised the skills gained on the Skills Bootcamp, gained increased responsibilities in the same job, or started new self-employed work.

- **PtAA: Pathways to Accelerated Apprenticeships:** An accelerated apprenticeship means the apprenticeship's planned duration is shorter by at least three months than the typical length of the standard apprenticeship, based on recognition of prior learning acquired during a Skills Bootcamp. Minimum apprenticeship requirements must still be met (12-month minimum duration and 20% off-the-job training).
- **Self-employed learner:** A person is self-employed if they run their business for themselves. Self-employed workers are not paid through PAYE and do not have the rights and responsibilities of an employee. Self-employed learners are fully funded by DfE for their Skills Bootcamp.
- **SIC:** Standard Industrial Classification of economic activities.
- **SME:** Small or medium-sized enterprise.
- **SOC:** Standard Occupational Classification.
- **Start:** A stricter version of a participant. Entries in the management information which are participants, plus other qualifying information (e.g. payment date) to verify as a valid start.
- **UC:** Universal Credit.
- **Wave 2:** Describes the second year of Skills Bootcamps delivered from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 (FY21/22).
- **Wave 3:** Describes the third year of Skills Bootcamps delivered from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 (FY22/23).

## Executive Summary

Skills Bootcamps were introduced to support adults to upskill and retrain in priority high growth sectors with skills shortages. Skills Bootcamps are free, flexible training courses that are co-designed with employers, lasting up to 16 weeks, for adults aged 19 or above in England. Most Skills Bootcamps are equivalent to level 3–5 qualifications in the Regulated Qualifications Framework.<sup>1</sup> Alongside the technical skills and wraparound support for learners, providers should offer a guaranteed job interview on completion of the course (where applicable).<sup>2</sup>

The primary aim of Skills Bootcamps is to support people to get better jobs, in order to improve productivity and fill identified skills shortages. A positive outcome is defined as a new job for those who are unemployed (including an apprenticeship); a new role or increased responsibilities for those in work; or for the self-employed, access to new contracts or opportunities. At Wave 3, Skills Bootcamps were delivered in Digital Skills, HGV Driving, and Green, Engineering, Construction, and Technical Skills.

The Department for Education (DfE) commissioned CFE Research to undertake a process evaluation of the government-funded Skills Bootcamps programme. Separate impact evaluation reports will be published at a later date. This report covers the implementation phase of Wave 3 Skills Bootcamps, delivered during the financial year of 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

## Evaluation aims and objectives

This process evaluation considers the effectiveness of Skills Bootcamps' delivery, the experiences of those involved in the training, and early perceptions of outcomes achieved through participation. The analysis explores what works, or otherwise, to support the delivery of Skills Bootcamps and its future continuous improvement activity.

Drawing on data from mixed methods fieldwork conducted in May to September 2023, the report presents evidence from participants, providers, and employers. Management information (MI) describing the characteristics of participants, providers and employers was analysed alongside additional data matching for employers. An implementation survey was administered to participants (2,184 usable responses). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants (n=16), providers (n=15), including three Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) interviews, and employers (n=14). Participant

---

<sup>1</sup> Wave 3 Skills Bootcamps in Construction and Green Skills could be delivered at Level 2 in exceptional cases where there were skills shortage vacancies at this level and Skills Bootcamps could lead to a job with higher earnings potential and productivity.

<sup>2</sup> An offer of a job interview was not a requirement for participants who were self-employed or undertaking a co-funded Skills Bootcamp through their current employer.

interviews were sampled by Skills Bootcamp 'type'<sup>3</sup> as well as employment status. Provider and employer interviews were prioritised from Skills Bootcamps in sectors other than Digital, concentrating on MCAs, providers that deliver courses aligned with the 10% Flex policy, and small to medium enterprise (SME) employers.

## Key Findings

### Characteristics of those engaged in Skills Bootcamps

#### Participants

The total number of Wave 3 starts across all Skills Bootcamps was 40,040, against the DfE's target of 36,000. Similar to Wave 2, twice as many starts were male (68%), compared to females (32%). The higher proportion of male starts may have been because many of the sectors served by Skills Bootcamps at Wave 3 have previously been more male-dominated (e.g. HGV Driving, Construction, Technical and Green Skills). However, female representation was higher in Skills Bootcamps in Digital (42%) compared with the national gender composition of the digital workforce (29%).<sup>4</sup> Wave 3 Skills Bootcamps were ethnically diverse, particularly in Digital Skills, where 23% of starts were black, black British, Caribbean, or African, compared with 18% of all starts. Those who applied for and started a Skills Bootcamp typically lived in more disadvantaged areas, as defined by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). One-quarter of starts (25%) received Universal Credit when they started a Skills Bootcamp.

#### Employers

MI showed that 3,360 individual employers engaged<sup>5</sup> with Skills Bootcamps at Wave 3, an increase from 2,648 at Wave 2. A higher proportion of Wave 3 starts were recorded as co-funded by an employer (11%) compared with Wave 2 (5%). Nearly half (46%) of all employers listed in the Wave 3 MI were engaged with Digital Skills courses. Skills Bootcamps in Hospitality, Rail, Business Administration, Logistics, and Creative Skills had the lowest level of employer engagement (all 1% of all employers in MI). More SMEs (businesses that employed up to 249 people) engaged with Skills Bootcamps at Wave 3 (76% of all employers in MI) compared with Wave 2 (65%); this is likely to reflect the lower financial contribution required from SMEs at Wave 3 (reduced from 30% to 10%).

---

<sup>3</sup> Throughout this report, Skills Bootcamp 'type' refers to the category of training offered, e.g. Digital, HGV, Green.

<sup>4</sup> Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (2022) DCMS Sector Economic Estimates: Employment Apr 2021 – Mar 2022. Estimate derived from Table 2 of the Digital sector workforce analysis spreadsheet. Accessed on 1 May 2024. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/dcms-sector-economic-estimates-employment-apr-2021-mar-2022>

<sup>5</sup> Employer engagement is a requirement for Skills Bootcamps. Employers can engage in a variety of ways, including offering guaranteed interviews, co-funding an employee to participate in the training, delivering aspects of the training, mentoring, offering work experience placements, or venue/equipment provision to support provider delivery.

Two thirds of employers who engaged with Skills Bootcamps (65%) offered vacancies to Skills Bootcamp participants.

## Providers

Skills Bootcamp providers were mainly independent training organisations (71%). Further education colleges (20%), higher education institutions (7%) and local authorities (2%) also provided Skills Bootcamps. Most providers offered Skills Bootcamps in one occupational sector (74%), whereas one-quarter (26%) offered training across multiple categories. MCAs and regional commissioning organisations all offered at least two types of Skills Bootcamps, and most (80%) offered more than five. The North West had the highest proportion of Skills Bootcamp providers (27% of all providers in MI), whereas the South East had the fewest (2%).

## Motivations for engaging with Skills Bootcamps

### Participants

Participants provided a variety of reasons why they had engaged with Skills Bootcamps. For nearly all respondents (92%), learning the skills required for a future job was a key motivating factor. This aligns with the Wave 2 findings. Other reasons for participants applying and taking part in a Skills Bootcamp included:

- **The offer of a guaranteed interview.** Nearly three-quarters (73%) of survey respondents thought that the offer of a guaranteed interview was attractive when they applied. Interview findings suggested that the offer of a guaranteed interview differentiated Skills Bootcamps from other training programmes.
- **To improve job prospects.** Through a Skills Bootcamp, two-thirds (67%) of survey respondents felt that they could earn more money; a view which was more common for Skills Bootcamps in Digital.
- **The offer of free training.** Most participants (95%) were attracted to the free training offer. Many participants could not independently afford training similar to that offered by Skills Bootcamps.
- **Flexible training.** Four in five respondents (80%) were attracted to the flexibility afforded by Skills Bootcamps, which allowed them to fit their training around other commitments.
- **To learn new skills.** Many interviewees were motivated to increase their knowledge or skills in a formal way via their Skills Bootcamp training.

## **Employers**

Employer MI highlighted that employers engaged with Skills Bootcamps in a variety of ways, including upskilling their own employees, supporting curriculum design, offering a guaranteed interview, or mentoring. SME interviewees particularly appreciated the reduced employer contribution rates at Wave 3. The interviewed employers valued the perceived quality of participants, and believed they would add value to their organisation and address skills shortages.

## **Providers**

Provider interviewees were motivated to deliver Skills Bootcamps to support the needs of their sector and grow local talent pipelines to attract new employees. They also appreciated the flexibility within Skills Bootcamps to create courses tailored to demand. The emphasis on employer engagement was an attractive element of Skills Bootcamps, and helped providers to establish strong employer relationships and enhance their reputation. MCA interviewees were motivated to engage in Skills Bootcamps in order to provide training services to their residents. They perceived that the 10% Flex model of Skills Bootcamps would help to effectively overcome regional skills shortages and facilitate local economic growth.

## **Delivery features of successful Skills Bootcamps**

### **Establishing and maintaining strong employer–provider relationships**

Evidence from Wave 3 interviews with employers and providers suggests that employer–provider relationships were more collaborative, and with a greater focus on how to achieve participant outcomes and impacts, compared with Wave 2, where the focus was predominantly on the delivery of Skills Bootcamps. Wave 3 evidence suggests that:

- Providers proactively engaged with employers, to ensure their Skills Bootcamps aligned with recruitment cycles and provided the skills/attributes employers were specifically looking for.
- Employers engaged in Skills Bootcamps delivered by providers with whom they had an existing relationship from other commercial contracts. This increased employers' perceptions of trust and confidence that the training would meet their needs, as well as those of their learners.
- Employers valued the opportunity to contribute to curriculum design and delivery. They perceived that this ensured the training was industry-relevant and aligned with their recruitment targets to fill skills gaps in their organisation.

## Positive experiences of Skills Bootcamp delivery

Participant interviews highlighted perceptions of high-quality content and good practice in the delivery of Skills Bootcamps. Wave 3 evidence elicited fewer examples of low-quality teaching and delivery compared with Wave 2:

- Participants appreciated pre-course introductory modules (where appropriate) because they helped them prepare for their course and supported providers in recruiting suitable learners.
- Participants valued engaging, experienced and organised facilitators who had industry experience.
- Participants welcomed activities which were aligned to 'real-life' employment situations, because this helped them to demonstrate their learning within a relevant industry context.
- Participants identified bespoke employability skills training as important for developing their confidence and employability.

## Skills Bootcamp delivery challenges

Despite the positive perceptions conveyed by most interviewees, participants, employers and providers experienced some challenges during Wave 3:

- Participants' experience of the guaranteed interview varied, similar to the Wave 2 findings. Some participants perceived that the guaranteed interview did not meet their expectations, and providers also highlighted the challenge of securing enough interviews for participants.
- Providers suggested that employers lacked awareness about Skills Bootcamps and how they could benefit their organisation. This negatively affected their ability to engage employers and secure sufficient interviews for their participants.
- The Pathway to Accelerated Apprenticeship scheme (PtAA) only applied to a small proportion of the Skills Bootcamps delivery introduced in Wave 3. However, awareness and uptake of PtAA was low among participants and employers, and some participants did not consider an apprenticeship as a desirable outcome from a Skills Bootcamp.
- In line with the Wave 2 findings, most providers viewed the key performance indicator (KPI) of 75% of learners achieving a positive outcome as unrealistic. As a result, some providers shifted their focus towards co-funded or self-employed participants, because it was perceived to be 'easier' to secure a positive outcome and associated payment.

## Early self-reported impacts from Wave 3

The main self-reported impact for participants was that Skills Bootcamps increased their confidence in their skills which they deemed would be important in their current or future work. Some participants emphasised that the employability skills sessions gave them the confidence that they could progress into a new job or perform well at interview. Self-employed participants stated that Skills Bootcamps had increased their confidence to make changes to their business, which they hoped would have positive outcomes, such as through earning more money or establishing new contracts.

As a result of working with mentors or industry coaches during their training, some participants identified feeling more confident to network and increase their contacts in their desired new profession. Many also perceived that their sense of belonging within their designated employment sector had increased, which they thought would help them overcome a sense of imposter syndrome when entering a new career.

## Areas for consideration

Provider and employer interviews suggested that the policy changes introduced for Wave 3 (see page 17 of the main report) have largely had a positive impact on the continued provision of high-quality, flexible skills training to address sectors with skills shortages. However, there were several areas for consideration, which include:

- Ensuring that a consistent approach for guaranteed interviews is provided to participants for appropriate jobs in relevant sectors, coupled with individualised employability support to help participants achieve positive employment outcomes.
- Implementing additional support to help providers collect and evidence successful outcomes for their final payment milestone, in order to increase the number of successful outcomes reported.
- Providing further information, advice and guidance (IAG) to increase participants' awareness of the Skills Bootcamps offer and the training requirements, prior to applying for a course. It is important to ensure participants enrol on the 'right' course for them, to manage expectations, and maximise the completion rate.
- Tailored IAG about the PtAA, to increase participants' and employers' awareness and understanding of how the PtAA could be an attractive career pathway, and to encourage employers to engage in the programme.
- Additional marketing and promotional activity targeted at employers, to help increase the number and diversity of employers engaged. This could be particularly beneficial for SMEs..

## Chapter 1: Introduction

Skills Bootcamps are free, flexible training courses that last up to 16 weeks, for adults aged 19 or above in England, who are either in work or unemployed. The aim of Skills Bootcamps is to give participants the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills and fast-track them to an interview with an employer so they can get better jobs and support economic growth.

The guaranteed interview is a core component of the Skills Bootcamp offer. Supplier contracts stipulate that learners should be offered a job interview with an employer, where relevant.<sup>6</sup> This interview must be for a role which aligns with the skills acquired through the successful completion of the Skills Bootcamp. Providers may have offered participants more than one interview. Evidence of the interview offer was required by the Department for Education (DfE). If evidence that a learner received an interview could not be provided, the provider did not receive their Milestone 2 payment (35% in FY22/23).

Skills Bootcamps at Wave 3 were funded through either grants or contracts. The grant model gave Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) or local authorities a grant to procure and deliver regionally relevant Skills Bootcamps. The grant model devolved some control and oversight to regional bodies in terms of the number and type of Skills Bootcamps that could be delivered, including using up to 10% of their grant funding to procure and deliver Skills Bootcamps outside of the national priority sectors, such as in Health and Care. In contrast, the contract model involved providers being contracted by the DfE to deliver a set number and type of Skills Bootcamps.

Waves refer to the periods of planned delivery. This report considers Wave 3 delivery of Skills Bootcamps, which covers the financial year of 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

### Policy changes between Wave 2 and Wave 3

In response to the Wave 2 evaluation, and in combination with feedback from participants, providers and employers, the DfE introduced a series of policy changes for Wave 3. These changes were designed to improve the programme, promote positive outcomes, and encourage greater employer engagement. Policy changes at Wave 3 include:<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Guaranteed interviews were not applicable for self-employed or co-funded participants, who had separate requirements for suppliers to be able to claim a successful completion and outcome.

<sup>7</sup> Additional policy changes have been implemented in Wave 3; however, the data collection for this implementation report did not cover these areas. These policy changes include learner eligibility changes for the longer-term unemployed and ex-prisoners, the introduction of minimum Guided Learning Hours (GLH) for all non-HGV Wave 3 courses, tighter age eligibility criteria, and changes to eligibility requirements for DWP Restart participants.



- Changes to provider payment milestones: The percentages of the agreed unit rate claimable against each milestone changed between Wave 2 and Wave 3. Milestone 1, which equates to a learner enrolling and starting their Skills Bootcamp, increased from 30% at Wave 2 to 45% at Wave 3. Milestone 2 – for a successful completion of the Skills Bootcamp – reduced from 60% at Wave 2 to 35% at Wave 3. Milestone 3 relates to the payment for a successful learner outcome, which increased from 10% at Wave 2 to 20% at Wave 3. These changes were designed to put greater emphasis on Milestone 3 and the achievement of a positive outcome, as well as increasing the payments that providers received early in the Skills Bootcamp process, to offset provider costs.
- Employer contribution rates: At Wave 3, small to medium enterprises (SMEs) contributed 10% to the cost of a Skills Bootcamp for their employees, a reduction from 30% at Wave 2. For larger employers, contribution rates for Wave 3 remained unchanged at 30%. This change aimed to encourage SMEs' greater involvement, by removing the financial barriers that might limit their ability to engage in Skills Bootcamps.
- Introduction of the Pathway to Accelerated Apprenticeship (PtAA) programme:<sup>8</sup> This pathway was introduced to encourage participants to consider an apprenticeship, by recognising that prior learning gained on a Skills Bootcamp could be used to reduce the length of a subsequent apprenticeship.
- Specific funding for Green Skills: Wave 2 did not have an initial DfE funding allocation for Green Skills, which were only retrospectively identified. Wave 3 focused more heavily on Green Skills to recognise the increased interest in addressing these skills, including construction, engineering and manufacturing, and agriculture and land management.
- Introduction of 10% Flex: This flexibility allowed MCAs, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and local authorities to use 10% of their grant to deliver skills training outside the national priority sectors, to meet their local needs and skill priorities.
- Level 2 Skills Bootcamps in specific sectors: Most Wave 2 Skills Bootcamp delivery was at Levels 3–5, except for HGV Driving. At Wave 3, the opportunity for Level 2 delivery was extended to Green and Construction Skills, where there were identifiable skills shortages at that level, and there was the potential for job progression on successful completion beyond Level 2.

---

<sup>8</sup> 91% of PtAA Skills Bootcamps from the national procurement (contract) for Wave 3 were in Digital skills. The remaining 9% were offered in the Technical sector.

## About the evaluation

The Department for Education (DfE) commissioned CFE Research to deliver a process evaluation of Wave 3 of Skills Bootcamps. The process evaluation considered whether Skills Bootcamps effectively support people in accessing better jobs, increased wages, and improved productivity.

The evaluation used mixed methods to capture insights into the delivery and self-reported impact of Skills Bootcamps from the perspectives of participants, providers and employers. This allowed all stakeholders to share their experiences of Skills Bootcamps, and offered a holistic understanding of the policy's benefits, impacts, and potential areas for improvement.

This report focuses on the implementation of Skills Bootcamps delivered from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 (Wave 3). Whilst this report considers some of the immediate self-reported outcomes and impacts, the primary focus is on the design and delivery of Skills Bootcamps, and participants' experiences of their training and support. The analysis also identifies elements of a 'good' Skills Bootcamp, and provides participants' motivations for engaging with Skills Bootcamps, as well as a summary of the demographic characteristics of applicants compared with participants. The data also describes employers' and providers' perspectives on the implementation of Skills Bootcamps. The implementation phase of the fieldwork provides a snapshot of participant, employer and provider perspectives, both prior to and during the training.

Where appropriate, this report draws on the findings published as part of the Wave 2 Implementation Report, to illustrate where experiences are similar or divergent after the policy changes that were introduced in Wave 3.

## Methodology

This process evaluation used a variety of methods to explore experiences of the delivery of, and participation in, Skills Bootcamps. Primary research methods with participants, employers and providers were combined with an analysis of existing MI to understand who engaged with Skills Bootcamps, their motivations and the outcomes that resulted from their engagement. Details of the methods used for this process evaluation of Wave 3 are provided below:

### **Stage 1: Management information analysis, conducted June–September 2023**

- Analysis of MI regarding applicants and those who started a Skills Bootcamp in 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023.

- The analysis explored demographic differences among those starting a Skills Bootcamp, their prior education level, and their employment status.
- The analysis linked MI to Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) data, to conduct more detailed socio-economic analysis of Skills Bootcamp starts.

### **Stage 2: Participant implementation survey, conducted June–August 2023**

- An implementation survey was disseminated through a census sampling approach to a sample of 12,707 people listed in the MI. These individuals all had a valid Skills Bootcamp start date from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, and had given prior consent to participate in the research. In total, 2,184 usable responses were received, and 1,327 provided further consent for follow-up research (for example, taking part in a qualitative interview). The completion rate was 17%.<sup>9</sup>

### **Stage 3: Qualitative interviews, conducted May–August 2023**

- Using the sample of survey respondents who agreed to participate in follow-up research, 16 participant semi-structured interviews were conducted, which were sampled according to Skills Bootcamp type: Green Skills (n=3), Creative Industries (n=3), Leadership & Management (n=3), Digital (n=3), Technical Skills (n=2), PtAA<sup>10</sup> (n=2). Of the participants, seven were not employed when they started their Skills Bootcamp, six were employed, and three were self-employed.
- Interviews were conducted with 15 providers, including MCAs (n=3). Priority for sampling was given to Skills Bootcamp types that were not featured in Wave 2: Construction (n=4), Green (n=4), Technical (n=1), and providers that delivered Skills Bootcamps across more than one sector (n=3), including Digital, Construction, Green, and Technical Skills.
- 14 employer interviews were conducted. Employers were sampled according to their industry and type of Skills Bootcamp they primarily engaged with: Construction (n=4), Green (n=4), Technical (n=1), Engineering (n=1), Digital (n=4; of which one was Creative Industries as part of the 10% Flex).

---

<sup>9</sup> The participant survey data is unweighted. Proportions of survey respondents who were employed prior to their Skills Bootcamps were disproportionately higher than expected, based on the breakdown of employment status in the MI. This disparity was too great to weight the data meaningfully or with validity. Only survey differences by Skills Bootcamp type are reported.

<sup>10</sup> In the MI, there was no way of categorically knowing whether individuals were enrolled on PtAA programmes. Using their Skills Bootcamp course name and provider name allowed an assessment of whether the individual was likely to be on a PtAA programme. Not all individuals identified as PtAA were from this category, and so are otherwise categorised in the sampling quotas.

## Data analysis

In the analysis, this report presents differences in experience and MI between types of Skills Bootcamp and employment status.<sup>11</sup> Due to the increased number of starts in Wave 3, analysis of starts has been possible by Skills Bootcamp type – either Digital, HGV, Construction, Green, Engineering, Rail, 10% Flex, and Other (including Technical, Green Engineering and Logistics). In contrast, applicants or survey respondents have only been sub-analysed by three categories – Digital, HGV Driving, and Other – due to the low numbers of cases in some categories. This offers greater granularity of analysis for starts compared with Wave 2. Where possible, and when base numbers allowed, differences were tested for statistical significance and only those that are significant at the 5% level are reported. Where figure proportions do not equal 100%, this is due to rounding.

Wave 3 interviews produced a significant volume of qualitative data that was thematically coded using NVivo. Where appropriate, the relative strength of participants' views on topics is provided. Throughout the report, findings are informed by the MI data, survey data and interviews. In this report, differences between experiences on different types of Skills Bootcamps are highlighted (e.g. Digital, HGV Driving, Green, etc.). [Appendix 1](#) provides further details of the methodology adopted for this evaluation.

---

<sup>11</sup> Survey analysis provides cross-break analysis by Skills Bootcamp type only.

## Chapter 2: Characteristics of Skills Bootcamp applicants and starts

Drawing on MI analysis and the linked survey findings, this chapter presents the characteristics of Skills Bootcamp applicants and 'starts'. For the purposes of this report, MI analysis covers applicants and starts only. The sampling frame for the implementation survey used a census approach and was drawn from the MI. Individuals who had a recorded start date of 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023 and consented to participate in the research were contacted (n=12,707). The report calls participants 'respondents' when describing analysis of survey data (see [Appendix 1](#) for more detail on the steps taken to process the data and the descriptive tables).

### Wave 3 Skills Bootcamp applicants and starts

The subsequent sections describe the characteristics of Wave 3 Skills Bootcamp applicants and starts drawn from the MI and compares these profiles with the equivalent data collected in the Wave 3 implementation survey.

In total, the number of published starts across all Skills Bootcamps for Wave 3 was 40,040.<sup>12</sup> Starts data in the following sections does not total 40,040 because the official starts number was calculated using both Individualised Learner Record (ILR) data for participants and the templates completed by providers. This report uses the provider templates only for the purposes of the MI demographic analysis, because more detailed information about the Skills Bootcamps delivered is available in the provider templates than the ILR .

Table 1 shows that whilst the proportion of the overall starts for Skills Bootcamps in Digital has stayed the same between Waves 2 and 3, the proportion of HGV Driving has reduced, meaning that the proportion of other areas (e.g. Construction, Green Skills, Engineering) has increased at Wave 3. These increases reflect the change in policy priority at Wave 3, to expand the sectors served by Skills Bootcamps.

---

<sup>12</sup> Official Wave 3 Starts [Report](#)

**Table 1: Breakdown of applicants and starts for Wave 3 and Wave 2 Skills Bootcamps**

Course type	Wave 3 applicants and starts (all MI)	Wave 3 no of starts (%)	Wave 2 applicants and starts (all MI)	Wave 2 no of starts (%)
Digital	36,596	22,610 (61%)	20,354	9,874 (61%)
HGV	7,614	5,805 <sup>13</sup> (16%)	33,294	4,739 (29%)
Green	3,285	2,589 (7%)	710	710 (4%)
Construction	2,954	2,480 (7%)	359	359 (2%)
10% Flex	1,801	1,393 (4%)	-	-
Engineering	1,137	997 (3%)	218	218 (1%)
Rail	842	803 (2%)	- <sup>14</sup>	-
Other	367	305 (1%)	218	218 (1%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>54,596</b>	<b>36,982</b>	<b>55,153</b>	<b>16,118</b>

Source: Management information for Wave 3 and Wave 2

## Demographics

### Age and gender

Overall, Wave 3 Skills Bootcamp starts were slightly older (mean age = 36) than total applicants (mean age = 34). In particular, there were fewer Skills Bootcamp starts aged 19–24, compared with total applicants. At Wave 2, total applicants were older than starts. (See Table 27 and Table 28 for a more detailed breakdown of age.)

There were large gender differences. Similarly to Wave 2, more men than women applied for a Skills Bootcamp and started the training. Compared with women, twice as many men started a Skills Bootcamp. Women formed a smaller proportion of all starts than of total applicants; this suggests that they were less successful in their Skills Bootcamp application, compared with men (Table 2).

<sup>13</sup> The number of starts in the Wave 3 MI data is slightly higher than the published starts data which was due to challenges with the HGV data and accurately calculating starts. The starts release was a more conservative estimate of starts compared to the MI.

<sup>14</sup> At Wave 2, Rail was classified as part of Skills Bootcamps in Green Skills.

**Table 2: Gender of applicants, starts and survey responses**

Gender	Wave 3 applicants and starts (all MI)	Applicants only	Starts only	Survey only
Male	66%	60%	68%	64%
Female	34%	39%	31%	36%
Other	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>51,199</b>	<b>16,198</b>	<b>35,045</b>	<b>2,287</b>

Source: Management information, excluding no gender given / prefer not to say; Participant implementation survey

Across the various types of Skills Bootcamps, the proportion of male and female starts differed. A higher proportion of women started a Skills Bootcamp as part of the 10% Flex (63%), compared with men. In contrast, more men than women started a Skills Bootcamp in Rail (97%), Engineering (94%), Construction (92%), HGV Driving (92%) or Green Skills (86%). There was a more equal proportion of men (57%) and women (42%) who started Skills Bootcamps in Digital – a similar proportion to Wave 2 (44% women). The higher proportion of women starting a Skills Bootcamp as part of the 10% Flex provision may reflect the areas that are traditionally more aligned with female-dominated occupations, such as Health & Social Care, or Hospitality. Additionally, there was a higher proportion of female starts on Skills Bootcamps in Digital (42%) compared with the national gender composition of the digital workforce (29%), as reported by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport; this is similar to the data for Wave 2.<sup>15</sup> (Table 30 provides a more detailed breakdown by Skills Bootcamp type.)

### Disability

The proportion of Wave 3 applicants who had a disability or long-term health condition (11%) was the same as in Wave 3 starts (11%). At Wave 2, the proportions for applicants (8%) and starts (10%) were slightly lower (Table 35 provides a more detailed breakdown).

### Ethnicity

Proportionately fewer Wave 3 applicants (33%) identified themselves as white British compared with Wave 2 (50%). Just over two in five (42%) Wave 3 starts identified themselves as white British, which is lower than the proportion in Wave 2 (46%). At Wave 3, people who identified as Asian or Asian British, black, black British, Caribbean, or African formed a higher proportion of all applicants than of all starts (Table 3). This

<sup>15</sup> Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (2022) DCMS Sector Economic Estimates: Employment Apr 2021 – Mar 2022. Estimate derived from Table 2 of the Digital sector workforce analysis spreadsheet. Accessed on 1 May 2024. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/dcms-sector-economic-estimates-employment-apr-2021-mar-2022>

contrasts with the Wave 2 position, where there was a higher proportion of black, black British, Caribbean or African, and Asian British starts in comparison to applicants.

Table 3 highlights the ethnicity of the economically active UK population according to the 2021 UK Census. Against the Census data, Skills Bootcamps have been effective in recruiting people from all ethnic groups.

**Table 3: Ethnicity of applicants, starts and survey respondents**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Wave 3 applicants and starts (all MI)</b>	<b>Applicants only</b>	<b>Starts only</b>	<b>Survey only</b>	<b>Economically active UK population<sup>16</sup></b>
Asian or Asian British	15%	18%	13%	11%	9%
Black, black British, Caribbean, or African	20%	23%	18%	15%	4%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	4%	5%	4%	4%	2%
Other ethnic group	4%	4%	4%	5%	2%
White British	39%	33%	42%	44%	73%
Any other white background	12%	13%	12%	15%	10%
Prefer not to say	6%	4%	7%	6%	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>50,314</b>	<b>15,900</b>	<b>34,260</b>	<b>2,384</b>	

*Source: Management information, excluding unknown; Participant implementation survey; UK Census 2021.*

At Wave 3, Skills Bootcamps in Digital continued to attract individuals from a diverse range of backgrounds compared with the overall UK figures for ethnicity (Table 4). Just over one-quarter of Digital starts were classed as white British (27%), compared with two in five (42%) of all Wave 3 starts. Proportionally more starts in Digital were Asian or Asian British (18%) or black, black British, Caribbean or African (23%), compared with their proportions in overall starts (13% and 18% respectively). By comparison, starts in other Skills Bootcamps categories were less diverse. White British made up over three-quarters of starts on Skills Bootcamps in Engineering (77%) and Green Skills (75%), and approximately two-thirds on Skills Bootcamps in Construction Skills (68%) and HGV Driving (63%).

<sup>16</sup> Economically active includes the four categories in the UK Census 2021 – ‘economically active and in employment’, ‘economically active but unemployed and seeking work’, ‘economically active and full-time student in employment’, and ‘economically active and full-time student and seeking work’.



**Table 4: Ethnicity of Skills Bootcamp in Digital starts**

Ethnicity	Digital starts	Overall starts	Economically active UK population
Asian or Asian British	18%	13%	9%
Black, black British, Caribbean, or African	23%	18%	4%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	5%	4%	2%
Other ethnic group	5%	4%	2%
White British	27%	42%	73%
Any other white background	12%	12%	10%
Prefer not to say	11%	7%	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,577</b>	<b>34,260</b>	

Source: Participant implementation survey

### Region and disadvantage

At Wave 3, the highest proportion of starts lived in London (28%), followed by the North West (19%) (Table 5). By comparison, one-fifth (21%) of learners who started a Wave 2 Skills Bootcamp lived in London and one-fifth (20%) lived in the North West. Wave 3 applications and starts in both these regions, plus the West Midlands and the North East, are overrepresented compared to the regional distribution of the population. Although London had the highest proportion of starts, the proportion of participating employers and providers in London, compared with its population, was lower than for other regions. Online delivery of many Skills Bootcamp courses may mean that the distribution of individual learners and providers / employers does not necessarily align.

**Table 5: Applications and starts by Government Office Region**

Government Office Region	Wave 3 applicants and starts (all MI)	Applicants only	Starts only	English population aged 16 to 64
London	28%	29%	28%	17%
North West	18%	17%	19%	13%
West Midlands	13%	14%	13%	10%
North East	8%	7%	8%	5%
South West	8%	8%	8%	10%
South East	7%	9%	6%	16%
East of England	7%	7%	6%	11%
East Midlands	6%	7%	7%	9%
Yorkshire and the Humber	4%	4%	4%	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>51,760</b>	<b>16,172</b>	<b>35,436</b>	<b>35,600,300</b>

Sources: Management information, excluding unknowns; UK population estimates via Nomis – 2021

There were fewer Skills Bootcamp starts in the South East (a percentage point difference of 9%), Yorkshire and the Humber region (6%), the East of England (4%) and the East Midlands (4%) than would be expected based on the adult population living in these regions. At Wave 2, the regions with lowest proportions of applications and starts compared with the expected adult population living in that region were the South East (difference of 6%), East of England (difference of 4%), South West (difference of 3%) and Yorkshire and the Humber (difference of 2%). This suggests that more work is needed to ensure that the availability of Skills Bootcamps is distributed in alignment with geographical coverage.

As in Wave 2, those who applied for and started a Skills Bootcamp at Wave 3 typically lived in more disadvantaged areas, as measured by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD; Table 6). One in six applicants and starts (both 16%) lived in the most disadvantaged 10% of postcodes in England, compared to one in 20 from the least disadvantaged (5% for both applicants and starts). If recruitment were evenly distributed across England, 10% of starts and applicants would be found in each IMD decile.

**Table 6: Applications and starts by IMD decile**

IMD Decile	Wave 3 applicants and starts (all MI)	Applicants only	Starts only
1 – Most disadvantaged	16%	16%	16%
2	15%	16%	15%
3	14%	14%	14%
4	12%	12%	11%
5	10%	10%	10%
6	9%	9%	9%
7	7%	7%	7%
8	7%	7%	7%
9	6%	6%	6%
10 – Least disadvantaged	5%	5%	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>49,041</b>	<b>15,280</b>	<b>33,617</b>

Source: Management information, excluding unknown

There are differences between predictions based on IMD data and the types of Skills Bootcamps that learners started (see [Appendix 3](#); Table 34). The Skills Bootcamps with the greatest proportion of starts from IMD 1 (most disadvantaged) were Construction (25%), Engineering (21%), Rail (21%) and HGV Driving (19%), which were higher than the proportion of IMD 1 starts for Skills Bootcamps in Digital (14%). Conversely, for the least disadvantaged postcodes (IMD 10), the breakdown by Skills Bootcamp type was: Construction (2%), Rail (2%), Engineering (4%), HGV (4%) and Digital (5%). This trend is comparable with the Wave 2 position.

### Household characteristics

One-quarter of Skills Bootcamp starts (25%) claimed Universal Credit (UC), which was a higher proportion than for applicants only (22%), and less than Wave 2 (28% starts and applicants) (Table 36). Of the different Wave 3 course categories, there was a lower proportion of starts claiming UC for Skills Bootcamps in Green Skills (11%) than in Construction (38%), Rail (37%), 10% Flex courses (29%), HGV Driving (27%), and Digital (24%).

Approximately one-quarter of Wave 3 starts had caring responsibilities (23%), either for children or other adults. A higher proportion of applicants only (29%) had caring responsibilities, compared with that of starts (23%) (Table 7).

**Table 7: Caring responsibilities for applicants, starts and survey respondents**

Caring responsibilities	Wave 3 applicants and starts (all MI)	Applicants only	Starts only	Survey
Yes – caring for children	4%	3%	4%	6%
Yes – caring for adults	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Yes – for children and adults	<1%	<1%	<1%	1%
Yes – responsibility unspecified	21%	25%	18%	23%
No caring responsibilities	75%	72%	77%	71%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>51,295</b>	<b>16,071</b>	<b>35,073</b>	<b>2,392</b>

Sources: Management information, excluding unknown; Participant implementation survey

## Employment profile of Skills Bootcamp applicants and starts

The MI shows that approximately one-third of applicants only (35%) and starts (34%) were in full-time employment prior to applying for, or starting, their Skills Bootcamps (Table 8). These proportions are slightly lower than in Wave 2 (39% and 37% respectively). Approximately one-quarter of applicants (23%) and starts (25%) were unemployed for less than 12 months, which is slightly higher compared with Wave 2 (21% applicants and 23% starts).<sup>17</sup> (See Table 38 for a detailed breakdown of employment status by Skills Bootcamp type.)

<sup>17</sup> This difference is statistically significant, whereby a statistically higher proportion of starts were unemployed for less than 12 months, compared to applicants.

**Table 8: Employment status of applicants and starts prior to Skills Bootcamp**

Employment status	Applicants only	Starts only
Employed (unknown mode)	1%	1%
Full-time employment	35%	34%
Part-time employment	16%	14%
Self-employment	10%	12%
Training / Education	3%	2%
Unemployed (less than 12 months)	23%	25%
Unemployed (more than 12 months)	9%	11%
Unemployed (unknown how long)	1%	1%
Other (including long-term sickness, retired, parental leave)	2%	1%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>16,089</b>	<b>35,562</b>

Sources: Management information, excluding unknown

The highest proportions of starts not in employment at the start of their training were those enrolled on Skills Bootcamps in Rail (57%) and Digital (46%), whereas only one in six starts (16%) on Skills Bootcamps in Green Skills were not in employment. Twice as many starts on Skills Bootcamps in HGV Driving (62%) were employed at the start of their training, compared with starts on Construction courses (33%) (see Table 38 for a detailed breakdown).

Of the number of starts who were unemployed for less than 12 months, 46% were claiming UC.<sup>18</sup> Nearly two-thirds of starts (61%) who were unemployed for more than 12 months were in receipt of UC.

Some Wave 3 Skills Bootcamps were co-funded, which meant that the participant's employer paid a contribution to the cost of the training. The cost of the training varied depending on the size of the employer – larger employers contributed 30%, whereas the rate for SMEs at Wave 3 was reduced to 10%. In Wave 3, 4,102 starts were known to be co-funded, representing 11% of the total number of starts. This proportion is an increase from 5% at Wave 2.

<sup>18</sup> This cross-break analysis excludes all starts where no data for the receipt of UC was provided.

## Contract type prior to Skills Bootcamp

The majority (85%) of those surveyed were employed when they began their Skills Bootcamp. One in twenty (5%) were self-employed and 10% were not in employment. The survey sample therefore is strongly influenced by the views of those who were in employment, because proportionately more overall respondents were employed, compared with starts only (49%).<sup>19</sup>

Higher proportions of survey respondents on Skills Bootcamps in HGV Driving (92%) were in full- or part-time employment prior to starting their training, compared with Digital (83%) and 'Other' types (83%) of Skills Bootcamps. Due to the small survey sample sizes for the other employment status categories (self-employed and not in employment), further cross-break analysis was not possible.

The survey asked respondents, except for self-employed, for more details about their current or last employment contract.<sup>20</sup> Nearly three-quarters of survey respondents were employed in a permanent contract, either working the same hours each week (57%) or variable hours each week (15%). Just over one in ten respondents were working zero-hour contracts (11%). At Wave 3, a slightly higher proportion of survey respondents (60%) were employed in a permanent contract working the same hours each week than at Wave 2 (55%).

Table 9 shows the differences in employment contract type by Skills Bootcamp category – HGV survey respondents (24%) were more likely to be currently in 'permanent employment working variable hours each week', compared with Digital respondents (12%) and those categorised as 'Other' (14%). Additionally, HGV respondents (5%) were less likely to be employed on fixed-term contracts working the same hours per week than those on Skills Bootcamps in Digital Skills (14%) or Other (11%).

---

<sup>19</sup> In this instance, weighting of the dataset was deemed not appropriate given the extent to which weights would need to be applied, the validity of any weighted sample sizes would be questionable.

<sup>20</sup> Due to the relatively small numbers of survey respondents not in employment, only 37 provided information about their previous employment contract. Therefore, it is not possible to provide analysis by employment status.

**Table 9: Employment contract type by Skills Bootcamp category**

Employment contract type	Digital	HGV	Other	Total
Permanent employment working the same hours each week	59%	58%	62%	59%
Permanent employment working variable hours each week	12%	24%	14%	16%
Fixed term employment working the same hours each week	14%	5%	11%	11%
Fixed term employment working variable hours each week	4%	3%	2%	3%
Zero hours contract	11%	11%	12%	11%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>824</b>	<b>459</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>1,602</b>

Source: Participant implementation survey

### Working hours prior to Skills Bootcamp

The mean working hours for all respondents was 36.0, identical to that reported at Wave 2. Table 10 shows that, on average, survey respondents who were self-employed worked fewer hours in the last job they held, in comparison to those in contracted employment or those who were not currently employed prior to their Skills Bootcamp.<sup>21</sup> However, the relatively small numbers of self-employed respondents and those not in employment mean these results should be taken with caution. The employed cohort worked the same mean number of hours as all employed people in the UK, according to data collected by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) for August to October 2023.

**Table 10: Mean and median working hours by pre-Skills Bootcamp employment status**

Status before starting Skills Bootcamp	Base	Mean working hours per week	Median working hours per week
In employment	2,055	36.2	38
Self-employed	107	32.5	37
Not in employment	230	35.3	40
<b>All</b>	<b>2,392</b>	<b>36.0</b>	<b>38</b>

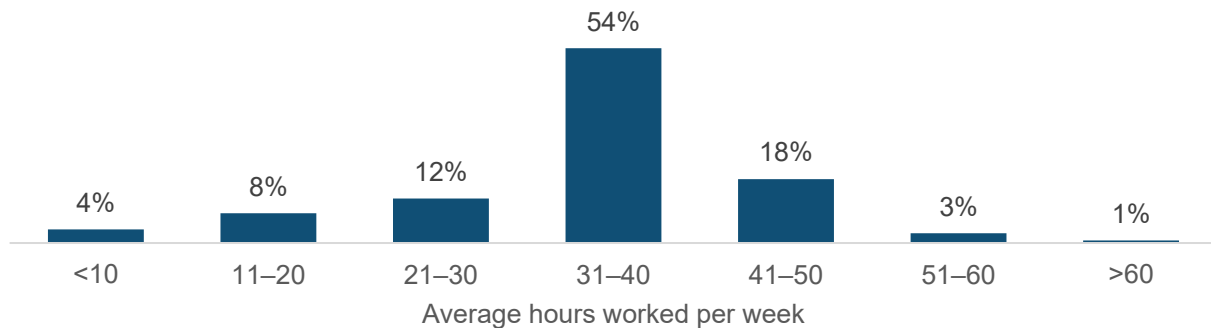
Source: Participant implementation survey

Three-quarters (75%) of survey respondents worked full-time hours (calculated as over 30 hours each week) in the job they last held prior to starting a Skills Bootcamp. Figure 1

<sup>21</sup> The difference between in employment (mean = 36.2) and self-employed (mean = 32.5) was statistically significant (p=0.024).

shows that over half of survey respondents (54%) worked 31–40 hours each week, and a further fifth (22%) worked more than 40 hours. One-quarter (24%) were part-time, working 30 hours or less in the job they held prior to starting their Skills Bootcamp.

**Figure 1: Distribution of hours worked by survey respondents in their job prior to starting their Skills Bootcamp<sup>22</sup>**



Source: Participant implementation survey (n=2,036)

### Responsibilities held by survey respondents in most recent employment

Prior to starting their Skills Bootcamp, Wave 3 survey respondents tended to hold general responsibilities, with higher-level management and leadership skills being less common, which aligns with the Wave 2 findings (Figure 2). The most reported responsibilities held by survey respondents at Wave 3 were ‘managing their own workload and prioritising tasks’ (66%), ‘identifying and solving problems’ (39%), ‘monitoring the quality of products and services’ (29%), and ‘training other employees’ (29%). Overall, respondents at Wave 3 reported a higher proportion of responsibilities in their job prior to starting their Skills Bootcamp, compared with Wave 2 respondents.

<sup>22</sup> This data is based on two types of survey respondents: those who were employed at the start of their Skills Bootcamps and answered about their current role; and those who were unemployed at the start of their training but provided data about their most recent employment. Those who have never been employed did not answer this question and are not included in the data.



**Figure 2: Differences in responsibility level for job prior to starting a Skills Bootcamp between Wave 2 and Wave 3 survey respondents**



Source: Wave 2 and Wave 3 participation implementation survey

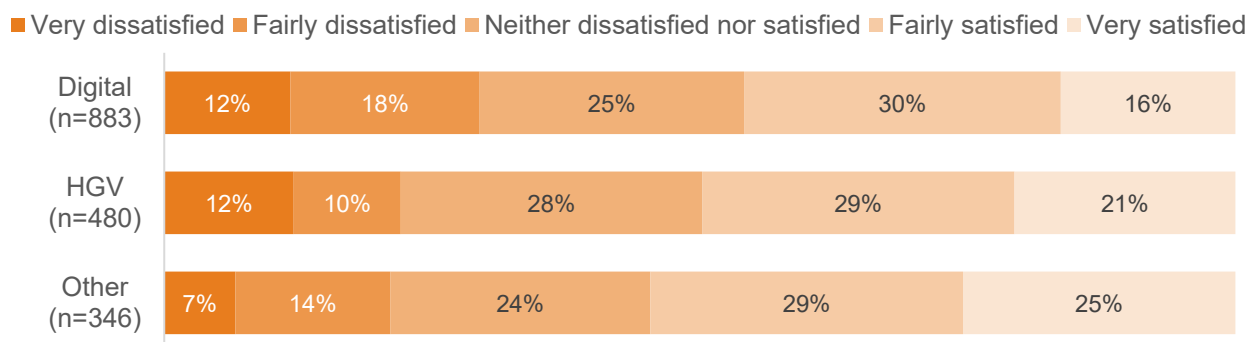
Survey respondents' satisfaction with their work responsibilities was varied. Almost half (49%) were satisfied with their level of responsibility at work, whereas just over one-quarter (26%) were dissatisfied;<sup>23</sup> these findings mirror those reported at Wave 2.

Perceptions of job satisfaction differed by Skills Bootcamp category (Figure 3). More than half of respondents (54%) on 'Other' Skills Bootcamps were satisfied with their work responsibilities prior to their training, compared with 46% of respondents on Skills Bootcamps in Digital. Additionally, a higher proportion of respondents on Skills Bootcamps in Digital were dissatisfied with their responsibilities (30%), compared with HGV Driving (22%) and Other (21%).<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Satisfaction represents the proportion choosing 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied', and dissatisfaction represents the proportion choosing 'very dissatisfied' or 'fairly dissatisfied'.

<sup>24</sup> Due to low numbers of survey respondents categorised as either self-employed or not in employment, a breakdown of job satisfaction by employment status is not possible.

**Figure 3: Breakdown of satisfaction with work responsibilities in work prior to a Skills Bootcamp, by course category**



Source: Participant implementation survey (total base n=1,709)

### Occupation characteristics

The largest occupation group (SOC 2020) for Wave 3 starts was ‘professional occupations’ (15%), while ‘associate professional and technical occupations’ (20%) comprised the largest occupation group for applicants only. A higher proportion of Wave 3 starts compared with applicants only were classed as ‘skilled trades occupations’ (14% for starts; 8% for applicants only), ‘process, plant and machine operatives’ (14% for starts; 10% for applicants only), or ‘managers, directors and senior officials’ (9% for starts; 7% for applicants only). In addition, a higher proportion of applicants only (20%) were classed as ‘associate professional and technical occupations’ than starts (13%) (see Table 11). This pattern of findings contrasts with the Wave 2 position, where there were broadly similar proportions of applicants and starts across the different occupation groups.

The highest proportion of Wave 3 survey respondents worked in ‘professional occupations’, ‘associated professional and technical occupations’, and as ‘process, plant and machine operatives’, while the lowest proportions of respondents worked in occupations associated with ‘managers, directors and senior officials’, ‘skills trades occupations’, and ‘sales and customer service occupations’ (Table 11).

**Table 11: Occupation group (SOC 2020) for applicants, starts and survey respondents (most recent occupation for those who were not currently employed)**

Occupation Group (SOC 2020)	Wave 3 applicants and starts (all MI)	Applicants only	Starts only	Survey only
Managers, directors and senior officials	9%	7%	9%	6%
Professional occupations	16%	18%	15%	18%
Associate professional and technical occupations	15%	20%	13%	19%
Administrative and secretarial occupations	9%	10%	8%	7%
Skilled trades occupations	12%	8%	14%	9%
Caring, leisure and other service occupations	6%	7%	5%	<b>6%</b>
Sales and customer service occupations	11%	11%	11%	6%
Process, plant and machine operatives	13%	10%	14%	18%
Elementary occupations	11%	11%	10%	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>42,076</b>	<b>12,716</b>	<b>29,207</b>	<b>1,390</b>

Sources: Management information and participant implementation survey, excluding unknown

### Highest level of education

The distribution of Wave 3 applicants and starts differed by education level, with a lower proportion of starts holding a level 4 or higher-level qualification than applicants only (starts: 54%; applicants only: 61%; Table 12). In the 2021 Census,<sup>25</sup> nearly half (49%) of the English population aged 20–64 held at least a level 4 qualification. By this measure, a slightly higher proportion of Skills Bootcamp starts held qualifications at level 4 or above, compared with the working-age population in England aged 20 to 64.

A higher proportion of starts than applicants held Level 2 qualifications (starts: 15%; applicants only: 13%) and Level 3 (starts: 22%; applicants only: 18%). In contrast, a lower proportion of starts than applicants held Level 6 (starts: 26%, applicants only: 30%) and Level 7 qualifications (starts: 15%; applicants only: 18%). This pattern of findings differs from the Wave 2 position and suggests that at Wave 3, a higher proportion of applicants with a lower education level successfully converted to become a Skills

---

<sup>25</sup> 2021 Census: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/educationandchildcare/bulletins/educationenglandandwales/census2021#highest-level-of-qualification>

Bootcamp start. This may reflect the more diverse Skills Bootcamps courses offered at Wave 3 (e.g. Rail, Construction), including courses pitched at Level 2, compared with the prioritisation of Digital Skills at Wave 2.

A higher proportion of overall survey respondents (60%) held higher-level qualifications at held Level 4 or above, compared with 54% of starts only.

**Table 12: Highest education level for applicants, starts and survey respondents**

Highest educational level	Wave 3 applicants and starts (all MI)	Applicants only	Starts only	Survey
Entry level	3%	3%	3%	3%
Level 1 – GCSE grades 1–3 or D–G equivalent	6%	6%	6%	6%
Level 2 – GCSE grades 4–8 or A*–C equivalent	15%	13%	15%	14%
Level 3 – AS/A Level, T Level equivalent	21%	18%	22%	18%
Level 4 – Higher National Certificate, higher apprenticeship equivalent	5%	5%	5%	5%
Level 5 – Higher National Diploma, foundation degree equivalent	7%	6%	7%	5%
Level 6 – Degree apprenticeship, honours degree equivalent	27%	30%	26%	30%
Level 7 – Master’s degree or postgraduate certificate equivalent	16%	18%	15%	18%
Level 8 – Doctorate or equivalent	1%	1%	1%	2%
Total Level 3 or lower	45%	40%	46%	41%
Total Level 4 or higher	56%	61%	54%	60%
<b>Total</b>	<b>46,773</b>	<b>14,943</b>	<b>31,721</b>	<b>2,170</b>

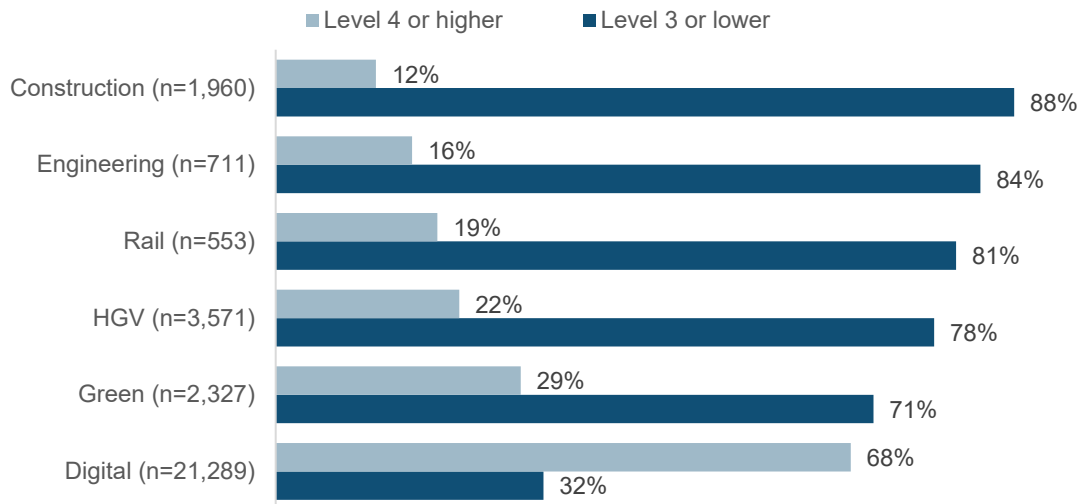
Sources: Management information, excluding unknown; Participant implementation survey

Respondents’ level of education also differed by Skills Bootcamp type (Figure 4).

Approximately two-thirds (68%) of starts on Skills Bootcamps in Digital held Level 4 or higher qualifications, and 32% had a Level 3 or lower qualification. This pattern is reversed for ‘Other’ Skills Bootcamp courses, where the majority (88%) of starts on Skills

Bootcamps in Construction Skills held Level 3 or lower qualifications. A higher proportion of starts in Skills Bootcamps in HGV Driving, Rail, and Engineering Skills also held lower-level qualifications than starts in Skills Bootcamps in Digital.

**Figure 4: Differences between Level 3 or lower and Level 4 and higher educational level for starts by Skills Bootcamp course type**



Source: Management information, excluding unknown (total base n=30,311)

## Chapter 3: Characteristics of providers and employers engaged with Skills Bootcamps

Drawing on MI data regarding providers and employers, this chapter presents the characteristics of providers and employers who have engaged with Skills Bootcamps in Wave 3.

### Provider characteristics

MI on provider type was available for 250 individual providers and a further 21 MCA or regional commissioning organisations. Of the 250 individual providers, nearly-three quarters (71%) were independent training providers, with the remainder comprising further education colleges (20%), higher education institutions (7%), and local authorities (2%). The highest proportion of providers were in the North West (27%), with the lowest in the South East (2%) and East of England (4%) (Table 13).

The type of Skills Bootcamp with the highest number of providers delivering courses was in Digital (n=114), followed by Construction (n=67) and Green Skills (n=49) which demonstrates the increased interest in these training areas in Wave 3 (Construction and Green Skills). For a more detailed breakdown of the combinations of Skills Bootcamps delivered by providers, see [Appendix 2](#).

Three-quarters of providers (74%, n=185) offered one type of Skills Bootcamp (e.g. Digital or HGV only), one in six (18%; n=46) offered two types, 5% (n=13) offered three types, and a small proportion (2%, n=6) offered four types of Skills Bootcamps. In contrast, the grant-funded combined authorities or regional commissioning organisations all offered at least two types of Skills Bootcamps, with over 80% (n=17) offering five or more types of Skills Bootcamps. The Wave 3 policy changes – to include more types of Skills Bootcamps, a regional model, and additional funding for Construction and Green courses – appears to have resulted in a larger number of providers offering a variety of courses than at Wave 2 (see [Appendix 2](#) for a more detailed breakdown of the different combinations of Skills Bootcamp types offered by training providers).

**Table 13: Regional location of delivery providers in Wave 3**

Region	Providers	Percentage (%)
East Midlands	14	7%
East of England	8	4%
London	29	14%
North East	26	12%
North West	57	27%
South East	4	2%
South West	16	7%
West Midlands	32	15%
Yorkshire & the Humber	28	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Provider management information, excluding 'postcode unknown' data

### Skills Bootcamp funding and providers

Most Wave 3 Skills Bootcamp providers (70%) were funded through a DfE grant award. A further 15% were funded through a national contract, and the remaining 15% of providers delivered Skills Bootcamps through a combination of grant- and contract-funded courses. A higher proportion of lead providers offering Skills Bootcamps in Digital, Rail, and Construction were contract-funded, compared with other Skills Bootcamp types (Table 14).

**Table 14: Delivery of Skills Bootcamps by lead providers by funding method**

Type of Skills Bootcamp	Contract-funded (%)	Grant-funded (%)	Total (no.)
Construction	19 (26%)	54 (74%)	73
Digital	48 (34%)	94 (66%)	142
Engineering	6 (18%)	28 (82%)	34
Green	9 (14%)	54 (86%)	63
HGV Driving	25 (69%)	11 (31%)	36
Logistics	0 (0%)	8 (100%)	8
Rail	5 (26%)	14 (74%)	19
Technical	2 (15%)	11 (85%)	13
10% Flex – Business & Professional	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
10% Flex – Creative	0 (0%)	8 (100%)	8
10 % Flex – Health & Social Care	1 (8%)	12 (92%)	13
10% Flex – Hospitality	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	3
10% Flex – Leadership & Management	1 (8%)	11 (92%)	12
10% Flex - Other	0 (0%)	4 (100%)	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>116 (27%)</b>	<b>314 (73%)</b>	<b>430</b>

Source: Provider management information

Nearly two-thirds (63%) of Skills Bootcamps were delivered by independent training providers (ITPs). This is a lower proportion than at Wave 2, where over three-quarters (76%) of courses were delivered by ITPs. A higher overall proportion of Wave 3 Skills Bootcamps were delivered by Further Education providers (25%) than at Wave 2 (16%). Further education colleges focused their delivery on Skills Bootcamps in Technical, Engineering, and Green Skills. A small number of Wave 3 Skills Bootcamps courses were delivered by local authority or regional organisations, and these courses typically were delivered in Logistics and Health & Social Care (Table 15).



**Table 15: Type of Skills Bootcamp provider by delivery partner type**

Type of Skills Bootcamp	Independent Training Provider (%)	Further Education Provider (%)	Higher Education Provider (%)	Local Authority or similar (%)	Total (no.)
Construction	50	19	1	3	73
Digital	102	21	15	4	142
Engineering	18	13	1	2	34
Green	25	24	10	4	63
HGV	29	7	–	–	36
Logistics	5	–	–	3	8
Rail	15	3	–	1	19
Technical	6	6	1	–	13
10% Flex – Business & Professional	2	–	–	–	2
10% Flex – Creative	6	2	–	–	8
10% Flex – Health & Social Care	6	3	2	2	13
10% Flex – Hospitality	1	1	1	–	3
10% Flex – Leadership & Management	7	3	1	1	12
10% Flex – Other	3	1	–	–	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>276 (64%)</b>	<b>103 (24%)</b>	<b>32 (7%)</b>	<b>20 (5%)</b>	<b>430</b>

Source: Provider management information

## Employer characteristics

Providers were asked to use a predefined list on their MI pro forma to record employer numbers. In total, 3,630 individual employers<sup>26</sup> were recorded as engaging in Wave 3 Skills Bootcamps.<sup>27</sup>

Most employers engaged with one type of Skills Bootcamps; however, 3% engaged with multiple types, of which the most common combinations were Digital with either Construction or HGV, or HGV with Logistics or Leadership & Management courses.

<sup>26</sup> Employer MI indicated 4,562 employers listed, which were categorised by the type of Skills Bootcamps they engaged with. This higher number included duplicates, where the same employer was engaged with more than one Skills Bootcamp. This analysis used the total count of individual employers: 3,630.

<sup>27</sup> Some larger employers were engaged with multiple Skills Bootcamps; however, they are only counted once in the analysis. The addition of new types of Skills Bootcamps adds more categories for analysis. Skills Bootcamps in Digital Skills continued to attract the most employers.

Nearly half of employers (46%) were involved in Skills Bootcamps in Digital (Table 16). Compared with Wave 2, the policy changes implemented in Wave 3 have diversified the types of Skills Bootcamps provided, and consequently increased the variety of employers that engaged with the programme. At Wave 2, more employers were involved with Skills Bootcamps in Digital (57%), and over a third (35%) with Skills Bootcamps in HGV Driving. At Wave 3, two-fifths of employers (40%) were engaged with Skills Bootcamps in types other than Digital or HGV Driving; an increase from 8% at Wave 2.

**Table 16: Types of Skills Bootcamps employers engaged with in Wave 3**

Type of Skills Bootcamp	Number of unique employers	Percentage
Business Administration	29	1%
Construction	402	11%
Creative	32	1%
Digital	1,687	46%
Engineering	330	9%
Green	274	8%
Health & Social Care	60	2%
HGV	505	14%
Hospitality	21	1%
Leadership & Management	69	2%
Logistics	33	1%
Rail	26	1%
Technical	60	2%
Combination of multiple Skills Bootcamp types	102	3%
<b>Base</b>	<b>3,630</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Employer management information

A higher proportion of micro and small to medium-sized employers, and a lower proportion of large businesses, engaged with Skills Bootcamps at Wave 3 than at Wave 2 (Table 17).<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> As in Wave 2, the MI and proforma that providers completed about employers did not use standard ONS size banding for employers. This means that comparisons between the existing MI and published data are not possible; however, comparisons can be made between Wave 2 and Wave 3.

**Table 17: Size of employers (no. of employees) engaging with Skills Bootcamps**

Size band	Category	Wave 2 no. (%)	Wave 3 no. (%)
1–9 employees	Microbusiness	330 (13%)	774 (22%)
10–149 employees	Small to medium-sized business	973 (38%)	1,618 (45%)
150–249 employees	Medium-sized business	357 (14%)	316 (9%)
250–749 employees	Large business	277 (11%)	303 (8%)
750+ employees	Large business	640 (25%)	588 (16%)
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,577</b>	<b>3,599<sup>29</sup></b>

Source: Employer management information

Employers that engaged with Skills Bootcamps in Digital (47%), HGV (49%) and Construction (48%) were most likely to be small to medium-sized businesses who had 10–149 employees (Table 18). In contrast, over half (55%) of employers who engaged with Skills Bootcamps in Engineering were micro-businesses with 1–9 employees. Employers engaged in Skills Bootcamps in Green were typically micro-businesses or small to medium-sized businesses. Of the 588 employers classified as large businesses with over 750 employees, over half (57%) were engaged with Skills Bootcamps in Digital. This partly reflects the fact that most delivery was in the Digital sector; however, the proportion of large employers with over 750 employees who engaged with Skills Bootcamps in Digital (57%) was higher than for any other employer categories (38% for microbusinesses, and 49% for SMEs).

<sup>29</sup> A small number of employers (n=31) could not be categorised by their size, due to missing data.

**Table 18: Employers by Skills Bootcamp type and employer size**

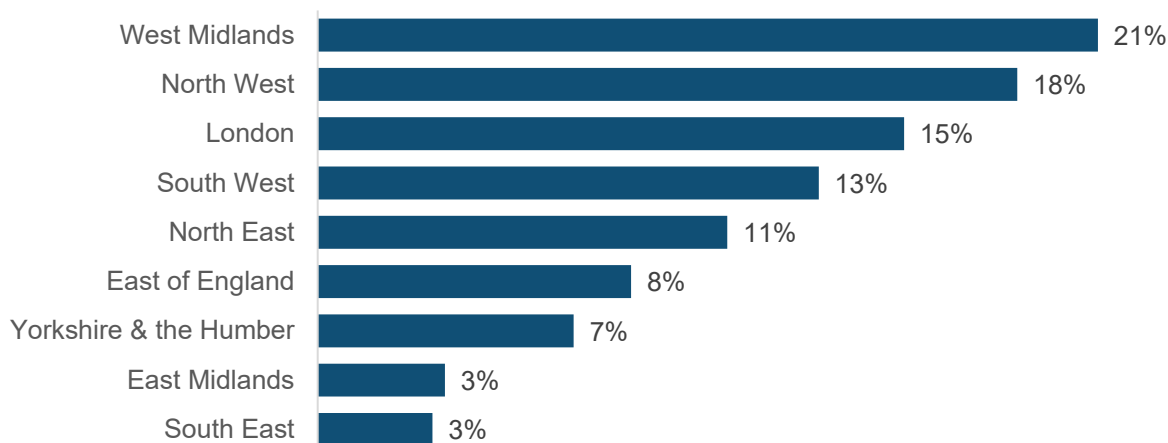
Number of employees	1–9 (Micro business)	10–149 (Small to medium)	150–249 (Medium)	250–749 (Large)	750+ (Large)	Total
Digital no. (%)	296 (18%)	788 (47%)	120 (7%)	142 (8%)	334 (20%)	1,680
HGV no. (%)	42 (9%)	243 (49%)	86 (17%)	44 (9%)	79 (16%)	494
Construction no. (%)	75 (19%)	190 (48%)	51 (13%)	48 (12%)	36 (9%)	400
Engineering no. (%)	181 (55%)	96 (29%)	19 (6%)	11 (3%)	20 (6%)	327
Green no. (%)	101 (38%)	106 (39%)	13 (5%)	13 (5%)	36 (13%)	269
Other no. (%)	79 (18%)	195 (45%)	27 (6%)	45 (10%)	83 (19%)	429
<b>Total no.</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>1,618</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>588</b>	<b>3,599</b>

Source: Employer management information

The highest proportion of employers engaged with Wave 3 Skills Bootcamps was in the West Midlands.<sup>30</sup> In contrast, the South East and East Midlands made up the lowest proportion of employers (Figure 5). This largely reflects the geographical location of providers (see Table 13), although there were more employers engaged with Skills Bootcamps in the West Midlands, compared with providers. The East Midlands and South East had the lowest proportions of both employers and providers engaged with Wave 3 Skills Bootcamps. The West Midlands and the North West both had large MCAs that were grant-funded to offer Skills Bootcamps. As highlighted in subsequent chapters, these MCAs considered themselves to have strong employer links, which would explain the higher proportion of employers engaged in these regions.

<sup>30</sup> Employer MI included employer postcode, either for its branch or headquarters. Postcode data was used to derive the employer's geographical location.

**Figure 5: Distribution of employers by geographical region**



Source: *Employer management information (n=2,442)*

Employer MI included data on vacancies offered to Skills Bootcamps learners.<sup>31</sup> Of the total number of employers in the MI (3,630), 60% (n=2,165) were listed as having vacancies, offering a total of 30,626 vacancies. The mean number of vacancies offered was 14 and the median was 2, replicating the Wave 2 position. The number of vacancies offered was proportional to the size of employer, with the largest employers offering an average of 44 vacancies, compared with 3 from the smallest employers (Table 19).

Employers engaged with Skills Bootcamps in HGV Driving offered fewer vacancies at Wave 3 (mean = 15) compared with Wave 2 (mean = 27), whereas those engaged with Skills Bootcamps in Digital offered more (16, compared to 7 in Wave 2). There were some anomalies in the employer MI data; for example, the maximum number of vacancies for some bands of employer size exceeded the band size of the number of people currently employed. In these instances, the employers listed were typically recruitment organisations working on behalf of employers to fill vacancies.

---

<sup>31</sup> Where employers were engaged with multiple Skills Bootcamps, during the cleaning process to remove these 'duplicate' employers, vacancies were combined to produce a 'total' number of vacancies. For instance, an employer listed against four different Skills Bootcamps offered 20 vacancies to each. For this analysis, all vacancies were combined, so  $20 \times 4 = 80$ .

**Table 19: Number of vacancies offered by Skills Bootcamps employers by size and Skills Bootcamp category**

Employer characteristics	Mean vacancies	Median vacancies	Number of employers	Max. vacancies offered
0 – 9 employees	3.2	1	377	50
10–149 employees	7.0	2	1,010	818
150–249 employees	11.6	4	212	150
250–749 employees	15.6	4	185	395
750+ employees	44.8	5	381	2,031
Digital	15.8	2	1,067	2,031
HGV	14.5	2	433	1,000
Construction	7.7	4	192	100
Engineering	7.1	2	117	70
Green	4.3	2	66	159
Other	16.0	3	303	735

Source: Employer management information (n=2,165)

## Chapter 4: Motivations for engaging in Skills Bootcamps

This chapter draws on findings from primary fieldwork to present the main motivations for engaging in Skills Bootcamps, from the perspectives of participants, employers and providers. Where relevant, Wave 3 drivers and motivations are compared with the Wave 2 position, to highlight both similarities and differences.

### Respondent perceptions of their prior job and skill levels

Similarly to the Wave 2 survey, the participant implementation survey explored perceptions of their skill levels in their current or previous employment prior to starting their Skills Bootcamp. The future completion and outcome report will assess changes in respondents' skill-level perceptions, to demonstrate self-reported impact.

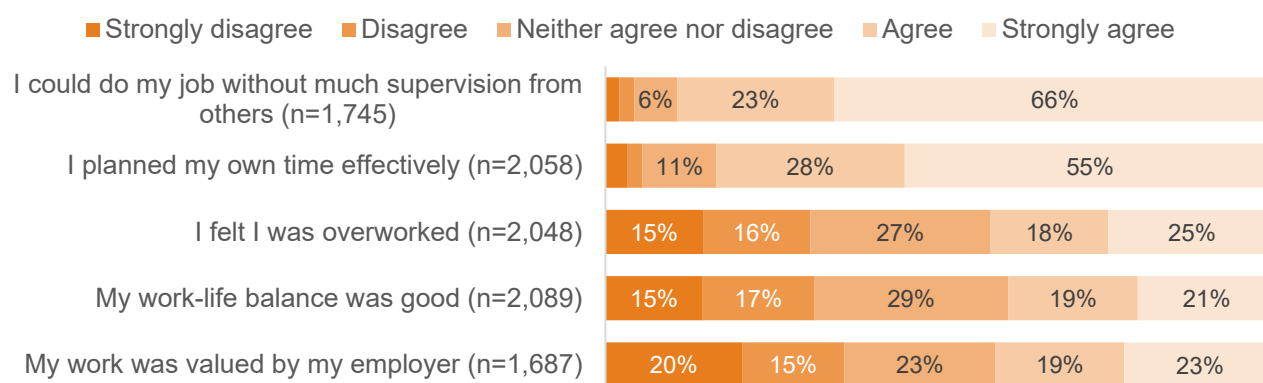
Over three-quarters (76%) of survey respondents stated that they had all the skills they needed to perform in their current or most recent job prior to starting their Skills Bootcamp. This is lower than for Wave 2 respondents, where 85% reported that they had all the skills they needed. Over four in five HGV Skills Bootcamp respondents (83%) stated that they had all the skills they needed compared with 74% of Digital Skills Bootcamp respondents.

Respondents' satisfaction with elements of their current or most recent job (Figure 6) was also explored in the implementation survey. Nearly nine in ten respondents (89%) agreed<sup>32</sup> that they could do their job without supervision from others, and over four in five (83%) agreed they could plan their time effectively. In relation to workload, only two in five respondents (40%) agreed that they had a good work–life balance, and a similar proportion of respondents felt overworked (43%). Less than half (43%) of respondents agreed that their work was valued by their employer. These findings align with respondents' perceptions at Wave 2.

---

<sup>32</sup> 'Agreed' represents a combination of 'Strongly agree' and 'Agree'.

**Figure 6: Survey response proportions regarding job satisfaction measures**



Source: Participant implementation survey (base variable = 1,687 – 2,089)

A small number of participant interviewees were motivated to complete a Skills Bootcamp to help them perform better in their current role, because it would enable them to develop skills to become more efficient, and to make more meaningful and impactful contributions to work discussions:

The Skills Bootcamp will just put me in a better position to do my projects and deliver on time. *Participant – Skills Bootcamp in Leadership & Management Skills*

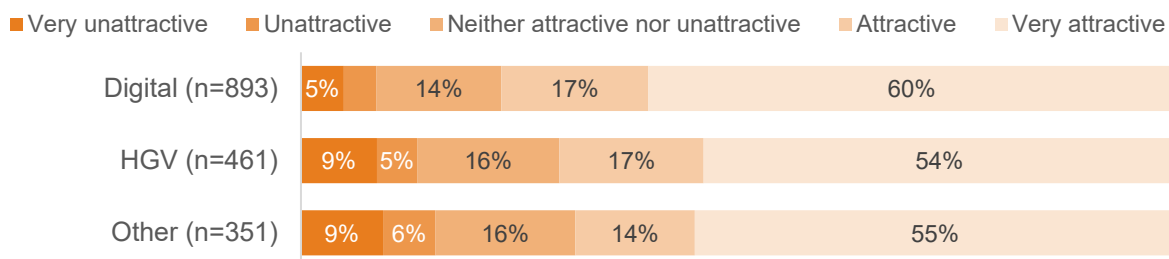
## Guaranteed interviews and securing a new job and/or career progression

A key element of the Skills Bootcamps programme is the offer of a guaranteed job interview with an employer at the end of the training period for eligible learners.<sup>33</sup> Nearly three-quarters (73%) of survey respondents identified that the guarantee of an interview was attractive or very attractive when they applied; only one in nine (11%) found this element of the Skills Bootcamps unattractive. A higher proportion of survey respondents who enrolled in a Skills Bootcamp in Digital found the guaranteed interview element to be attractive (77%) compared with those in HGV (71%) and ‘Other’ Skills Bootcamp categories (69%) (Figure 7). Employed respondents at Wave 3 (73%) were also less attracted by the guaranteed interview than those at Wave 2 (82%) (Figure 8).

<sup>33</sup> All learners, excluding self-employed and participants who are co-funded by their employer, are eligible for a guaranteed interview.

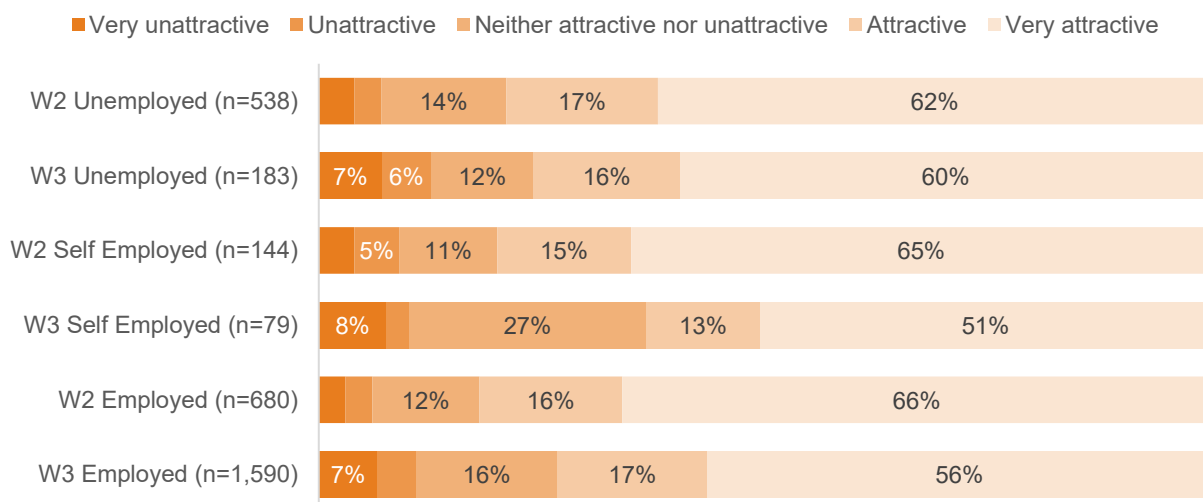


**Figure 7: Attractiveness of the guaranteed interview to respondents by Skills Bootcamp type**



Source: Participant implementation survey (total base = 1,705)

**Figure 8: Attractiveness of the guaranteed interview to respondents by employment status at Wave 2 and Wave 3**



Source: Participant implementation survey (Wave 2 total base = 1,362; Wave 3 total base = 1,852)

Participant interviewees also reflected that the guaranteed interview element was attractive because it differentiated Skills Bootcamps from other training opportunities. The guaranteed interview was particularly attractive for those whose main motivation was to get a job at the end of their training:

The guaranteed interview was very front and centre for why I wanted to do a Skills Bootcamp. It's why I applied. I came out of university and wanted to find a job in the industry, so getting a guaranteed interview on a Skills Bootcamp was like, 'I learn all this stuff, I get professional [employability] help and I get an interview at the end'. It was a no-brainer. *Participant – Skills Bootcamp in Digital Skills*

Nearly all survey respondents (92%) were motivated to apply for a Skills Bootcamp to help them to develop skills for a future job. In contrast, developing skills that would be useful in their current or most recent job (53%) and progressing or gaining a promotion (45% agreed) were less important incentives to engage in a Skills Bootcamp (Figure 9). This reflects the pattern of findings at Wave 2, and emphasises that the perceived importance of Skills Bootcamps in helping individuals train for a new job role continues to be the most important motivation. Survey respondents enrolled in 'Other' Skills Bootcamp categories (54%) were more likely to agree that the training would help them progress or gain a promotion in their existing job, compared with those enrolled in a Skills Bootcamp in Digital (44%) and HGV (43%). They were also more likely to agree (69%) that the training would help them to learn skills that would be useful for the job they had prior to starting their Skills Bootcamps, than respondents enrolled in a Skills Bootcamp in Digital (50%) and HGV (45%).

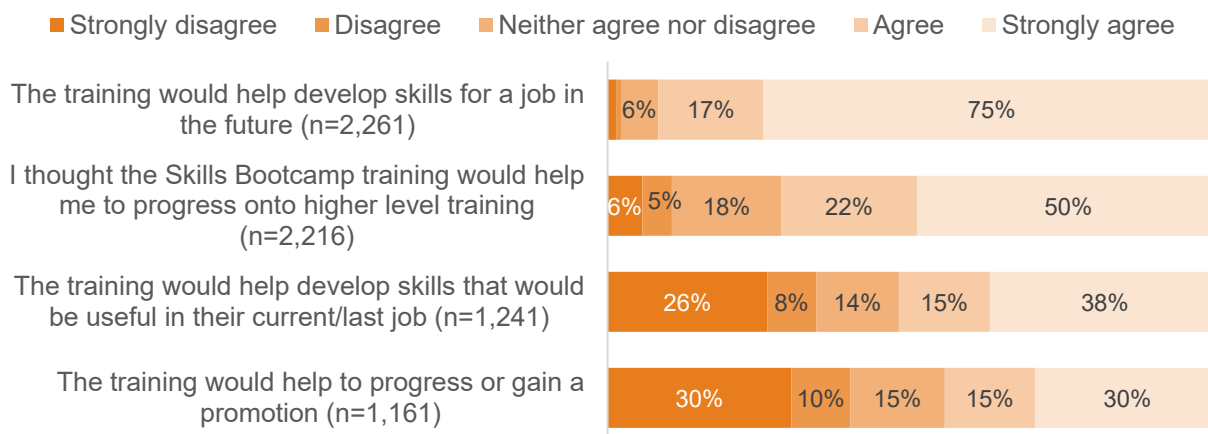
PtAA schemes were introduced at Wave 3 to recognise the skills participants had gained on their Skills Bootcamp, and to enable a reduction in the length of a subsequent apprenticeship. PtAA schemes have been recognised as a positive employment outcome. Two participant interviewees highlighted that the PtAA was not an attractive element of the Skills Bootcamps model. These participants identified that they would prefer to gain employment after their training rather than commit to an apprenticeship, which they considered to be a less positive outcome and not well paid:

I had heard about the [PtAA], but it wasn't what I was looking for.  
Mainly because the pay you would get would be too low. *Participant*  
– *Skills Bootcamp in Professional Services*

## Upskilling and gaining new knowledge

Nearly all respondents (92%) agreed that Skills Bootcamps would help them learn skills that would be useful for a job in the future (Figure 9). Almost three-quarters (72%) of survey respondents agreed that Skills Bootcamps would help them to progress to higher-level training.

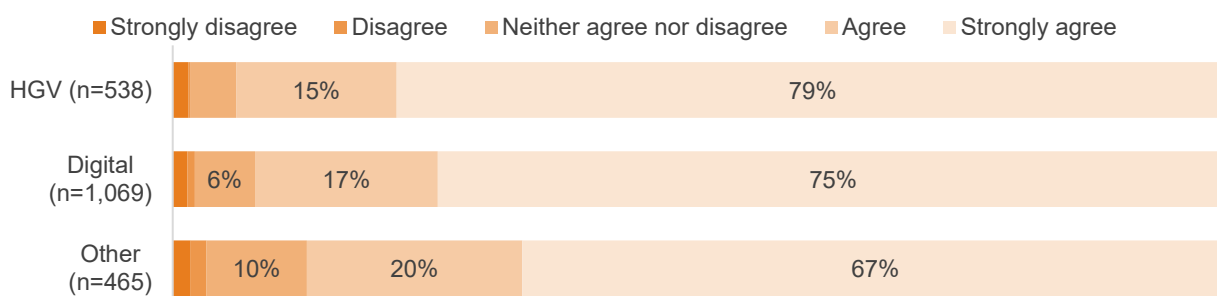
**Figure 9: Respondent perceptions of how Skills Bootcamps would meet their skills development needs**



Source: Participant implementation survey (bases variable = 1,161 – 2,261)

A higher proportion of HGV respondents (79%) agreed that the training would help them to develop skills for a job in the future, compared with Digital (75%) and Other (67%) Skills Bootcamp survey respondents (Figure 10).

**Figure 10: Respondent perceptions of how Skills Bootcamps would enable them to learn new skills for a future job by course type**



Source: Participant implementation survey (total base = 2,072)

Nearly all participant interviewees identified that they were motivated to engage in a Skills Bootcamp to learn new skills and gain knowledge in an area that interested them. Some mentioned not specifically looking for training and a particular job, but were attracted to the advertised content (either through email advertisements or social media targeted content):

It wasn't me looking for it. It landed in my inbox and was in an area I'd naturally developed an interest in. I thought it would be interesting to learn and see where it could take me. I looked at it as part of a journey that, 1) could benefit me in the future, and 2) would give me a better understanding and supplement the knowledge that I've already got. *Participant – Skills Bootcamps in Green Skills*

Participant interviewees on Skills Bootcamps in Digital typically identified having previously completed self-directed learning to acquire data skills in coding or programming, and were motivated to complete a more structured course to formally increase their skills:

I did some YouTube videos to learn about coding, and I got a book about Python and went through that pretty quickly. It was all logical and I enjoyed it. So, then I asked myself what the next step was, and that's where the Bootcamp came in to learn more and go into more depth. *Participant – Skills Bootcamp in Digital Skills*

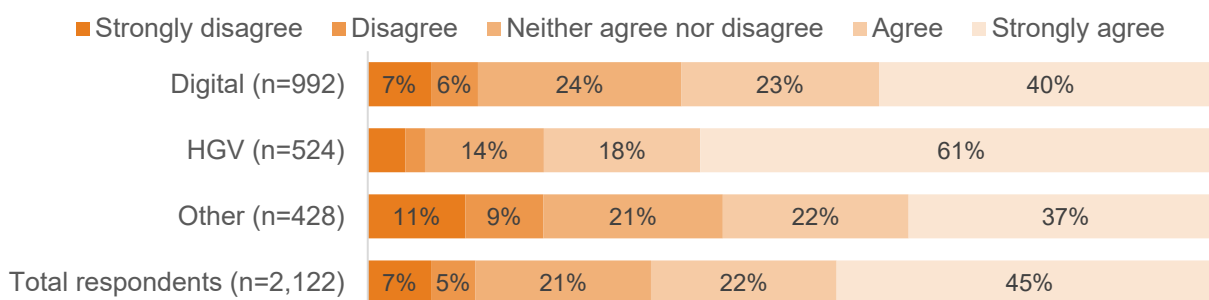
For many participant interviewees, the opportunity to learn skills in a new sector was appealing for gaining employment. For some, this would increase their pay and improve their work satisfaction and overall quality of life:

I broke my back a few years ago, and it made me think about life. I decided I wanted to change my career and find excitement in the work I did again. I wanted to do a Skills Bootcamp – something part-time where I could also continue to have an income. *Participant – Skills Bootcamp in Digital Skills*

## Securing higher income and financial benefits

Two-thirds of survey respondents (67%) agreed that completing their Skills Bootcamp would enable them to earn more money; a lower proportion than at Wave 2 (73%). This perception was more pronounced for respondents on Skills Bootcamps in HGV Driving, four in five of whom (79%) agreed, compared with approximately three in five respondents on Skills Bootcamps categorised as 'Other' (59%) and Digital (63%; Figure 11). A higher proportion of self-employed respondents (72%) agreed that the training would enable them to earn more money, compared with employed respondents (66%) and those not in employment (64%).

**Figure 11: Perceptions that Skills Bootcamps would enable respondents to earn more money by Skills Bootcamp type**



Source: Participant implementation survey (total base n= 2,122)

## Additional factors that motivated participants to apply for a Skills Bootcamp

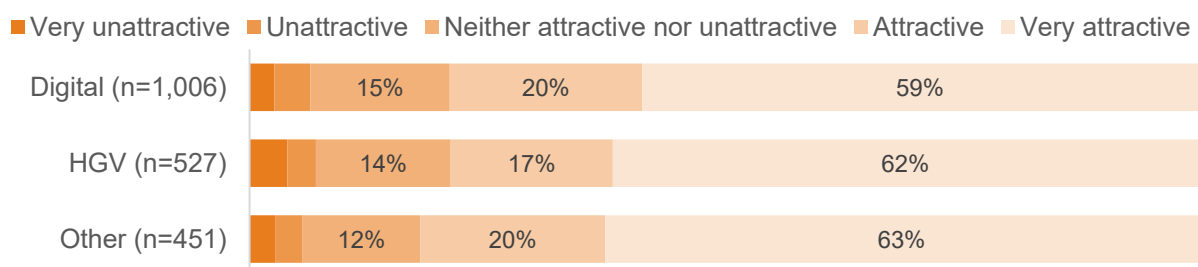
### Skills Bootcamps are ‘free’ and flexible

As in Wave 2, the offer of free training was a motivation for most Wave 3 survey respondents to apply to a Skills Bootcamp (95%). Some participant interviewees also identified that they were attracted by the free aspect of the training, the opportunity to gain knowledge about a new industry, and as a potential stepping-stone to further study, rather than solely being attracted by the prospect of employment:

I didn't particularly consider that there would be the possibility of employment at the end of the Skills Bootcamp, but it was free training in an interesting subject, and that was the initial attraction. *Participant – Skills Bootcamp in Engineering*

Eight in ten participant survey respondents (80%) were attracted to the flexibility afforded by Skills Bootcamps, which aligns with the Wave 2 position. ‘Other’ Skills Bootcamp survey respondents (83%) were more likely to be attracted to the flexible nature of the training, compared with Digital and HGV Driving respondents (both 79%) (Figure 12). Self-employed participant interviewees in particular were attracted by the flexible nature of Skills Bootcamps, as it allowed them to fit their skills training around other commitments.

**Figure 12: Proportion of survey respondents who considered that the offer of flexible training was an attractive part of Skills Bootcamps**



Source: Participant implementation survey (total base n=1,984)

### Respondents were advised to apply

One-third (34%) of respondents stated that they were advised to apply for a Skills Bootcamp. A higher proportion of respondents not in employment were advised to apply (34%), compared with those in employment (21%) and self-employed (16%). Respondents from HGV (38%) and ‘Other’ (42%) categories of Skills Bootcamps were more likely to state they were advised to apply, compared with Digital respondents

(30%). These figures follow the same trends as at Wave 2. A higher proportion of respondents claiming UC agreed that they were advised to apply for a Skills Bootcamp (41%), in comparison to non-UC respondents (32%); this also mirrors the Wave 2 findings.

## **How Skills Bootcamps compare with other training**

A consistent theme in both Wave 2 and 3 concerned how Skills Bootcamps compare with other training. Nearly two-thirds (65%) of Wave 3 survey respondents agreed that Skills Bootcamps sounded different to other training they could undertake, which was a key factor in their decision to apply. These findings were consistent across employment status and type of Skills Bootcamp. Participant interviewees identified that the bespoke and tailored nature of Skills Bootcamp courses provided a more interesting and engaging course compared with other training. Some participants valued the combination of technical and employment skills offered through Skills Bootcamps, which provided them with a holistic, positive experience:

The secondary part of the course is that they teach you soft skills and personal skills and how to get into the industry. Technical skills are required, but you also need to know where to look for jobs, how to get jobs, how to go for a tech interview, and they also teach you that.

*Participant – Skills Bootcamp in Creative Industries*

## **Employer motivations for engaging with Skills Bootcamps**

Employers engaged with Skills Bootcamps for a variety of reasons, including the desire to upskill their own employees, to inform curriculum design, to offer guaranteed interviews, and to provide mentoring support. Employers' motivations that emerged from the interviews are explored in the following section.

## **Type of employer engagement with Skills Bootcamps**

The co-investment model for Skills Bootcamps was designed to enable employers to engage in a variety of ways. To encourage greater involvement by SMEs in Wave 3, the DfE introduced differentiated employer contributions. Specifically, large employers who upskilled their existing staff were required to contribute 30% of the total cost for a Skills Bootcamp for their employees, and SMEs (organisations with less than 250 employees) contributed 10% of the cost. Other non-financial, co-investment methods included offering venues or equipment, guaranteed interviews, mentoring, work placements, and supporting the design and content of Skills Bootcamps.

As highlighted in Chapter 3, a greater number (and proportion) of employers who engaged with Skills Bootcamps at Wave 3 were small to medium-sized employers; this suggests that the policy change has been effective in encouraging smaller employers to participate. The interviewed SMEs appreciated the lower employer contribution rate, as this enabled them to engage with the training to upskill a greater number of their employees:

Having these courses at a discounted rate is excellent for SMEs like us because, for example, if I had to fork out £750 for three courses, I probably wouldn't do all three of them for a start. *Employer – Skills Bootcamps in Green Skills*

In Wave 3, providers were required to complete a data-validated drop-down list to show the different ways employers had co-invested in Skills Bootcamps.<sup>34</sup> Nearly two-fifths of employers (38%) offered 'time'. A lack of detail available due to the data validation options meant that it was not possible to conduct further analysis of what providers meant by 'time'.<sup>35</sup> One-quarter (26%) of employers sponsored their own employees through training and paid a contribution towards the training costs. In contrast, only 2% of employers provided a venue, and less than 1% provided equipment. One in ten employers (10%) offered 'other' forms of co-investment. Only a minority of employers (13%) did not sponsor their own employees, offer vacancies for Skills Bootcamp participants, or offer other forms of co-investment.<sup>36</sup>

One-quarter (26%) of employers sponsored their own employees through training and paid a reduced rate of co-investment. Employers were motivated to co-fund their employees to upskill because they perceived Skills Bootcamps to provide excellent value for money. Employers perceived that the quality of Skills Bootcamps training was of an equivalent high standard to commercial training, which would be more costly:

The quality of training is great. It's through [training provider name], who we use for most of our company's training, and that makes a difference as well because we know we're getting the quality of training that we expect. We know they're a good provider, we're

---

<sup>34</sup> Despite the data validation request in the spreadsheet, some providers overrode the data validation and entered free text describing how employers were engaged with their training. Where the free text aligned with the data validation options, they were additionally coded into these options, but otherwise coded as 'other'. At Wave 2, data about employer engagement was provided in a free-text cell, which allowed providers to give more details on how their employers were involved in Skills Bootcamps.

<sup>35</sup> Due to the different methods of collecting data about employer engagement between Wave 2 and Wave 3, further comparison between waves is not possible, because the data does not align sufficiently for this level of analysis.

<sup>36</sup> The analysis of employer MI should be interpreted with caution. Whilst the total coverage of MI was more extensive than Wave 2, with additional information provided about each employer (size, postcode of main site), less detail was included about the type of co-investment.

getting high-quality training, but not paying the same price [as we would commercially]. *Employer – Skills Bootcamps in Construction*

## Upskilling current employees

Employer interviewees who were using Skills Bootcamps to upskill their employees wanted to capitalise on the funding available for training that they were already planning for their employees. The short, 12–16-week time frame of Skills Bootcamps meant they could upskill employees more quickly, compared with other programmes:

We would usually have to pay full price for training, which means we are often dependent on budget. So, we took serious advantage of the funding for Skills Bootcamps. Without Skills Bootcamps we might have to stagger training over two years due to budget restraints, but this isn't the case now. *Employer – Skills Bootcamps in Construction*

The duration of Skills Bootcamps training was regularly identified by employer interviewees as beneficial for increasing the skills of their workforce to the required standard in a short time. For some employers, Skills Bootcamps were advantageous over other forms of training, such as apprenticeships:

Apprentices are a great resource pool, but the shorter length of Skills Bootcamps means we can get our staff through a quick programme to get them up to a standard where we can get them onto a site to get them into one of our facilities, to train them up and to give them more training. *Employer – Skills Bootcamps in Construction*

The short length of the Skills Bootcamp training was particularly important for participants in the construction and rail industries. Being able to mobilise upskilled employees on-site quickly enabled them to secure and deliver more contracts.

Some employers sent employees on Skills Bootcamp courses to acquire new knowledge and skills that could be disseminated and shared with colleagues. This is a further example of how employers sought to upskill their employees:

We had an employee with a real keen interest in electric vehicles. So, what we've done with this individual is, he's been on the Bootcamp, taken the information and the training, and he's disseminating this out to the rest of the team as well. So, rather than having to extract people from our workshops to go onto training courses, we can do this in-house. *Employer – Skills Bootcamps in Green Skills*



The introduction at Wave 3 of additional funding for Skills Bootcamps in Green Skills offered participants and employers the opportunity to upskill and access training in new technologies. Participant interviewees on these courses were motivated by the combination of mandatory elements with training in innovative technology, such as heat pump installation, which included water regulations and unvented cylinder installation. For these employers, the training offered an ideal mix of prerequisite and industry-relevant knowledge in emerging technologies, which they perceived would help to secure future employment opportunities:

All my engineers are gas qualified, but we never had the green initiative until the Skills Bootcamps. I want to get the most out of my labour so that we can really be at the forefront in our field. So, the fact that the Skills Bootcamp courses included air source heat pump installation, water regulation test, unvented cylinder systems, that was a really good combination for what we needed. *Employer – Skills Bootcamps in Green Skills*

## Diversifying the workforce

Employer interviews highlighted that diversifying the workforce was an important motivation for engaging in Skills Bootcamps. In particular, employers from new sectors in Wave 3 (e.g. Creative Industries, through the grant-funded 10% Flex provision), conveyed that the Skills Bootcamp training has enabled them to diversify their talent base and provide more opportunities for under-represented groups:

There's a lot of under-represented individuals and backgrounds in our industry, so personally and professionally, I'm keen to support things like Skills Bootcamps so we can grow the talent base and give people opportunities. The creative industry feels quite elitist if you're on the outside. We want to dispel that. *Employer – Skills Bootcamps in Creative Industries*

Some of the interviewed Construction employers emphasised that Skills Bootcamps have supported them to fulfil their social value targets, including meeting widening participation objectives through offering volunteering or work placements to improve sector diversity. Some larger employers noted that through Skills Bootcamps, they could enact principles they valued, such as supporting local communities and/or giving back to their communities (through outreach or volunteering initiatives). These employers valued using Skills Bootcamps to upskill local people, thereby ensuring that skills could remain within their region to reduce local skills shortages. These perceptions were not conveyed in the Wave 2 interviews, which suggests that Wave 3 Skills Bootcamps have further

diversified. Employers embedded a social value commitment when working with contractors:

I'm trying to push social value commitments as part of a tender package. So, if they want to work with us, they have to provide an apprentice position, or give work experience to people from Skills Bootcamps, or give volunteering hours to the training. A company our size should be helping, or at least guiding, the kind of courses like Skills Bootcamps, because they benefit everyone. *Employer – Skills Bootcamps in Construction*

## Addressing skills shortages to increase the talent pipeline

Skills Bootcamps were designed to address skills shortages in key sectors of the UK economy, and the expansion of Skills Bootcamp sectors in Wave 3 further supports this programme aim. Filling skills shortages helps employers to work more efficiently and at greater capacity. Wave 3 Skills Bootcamps have continued to support employers to increase their talent pipelines. Employers interviewed, particularly from Construction and Green sectors, highlighted occupational shortages and the need for additional workforce. They emphasised that Skills Bootcamps have helped to increase the talent pipeline by upskilling more people and increasing the total number of people who are capable and qualified to work in their sector. These manual sectors require skills standards to be adhered to, and employers valued the quality of Skills Bootcamps delivery in meeting their needs:

What was great, was the actual knowledge that they picked up in the three or four days of the Skills Bootcamp; that was a vast knowledge and experience that means they would be capable of going out and doing the job. *Employer – Skills Bootcamps in Construction*

Some larger-employer interviewees mentioned using a combination of Skills Bootcamps in Digital to support their recruitment needs. Employers reported knowing the skills needs within their organisation, and then working out what type of applicant they would need for these roles. Through discussions with providers, they have created different entry routes into their business, to reflect the skillset of Skills Bootcamp participants. Employers strategically considered the skills offered by Skills Bootcamp participants and how they could best meet the needs of their business to increase their talent pipeline:

We use our providers differently. With [Provider 1] they do a 16-week Bootcamp, and at the end we run an event with them and do a micro interview. Following that, we hold final interviews, and off that we bring them straight into our company as junior talent. For [Provider 2] we bring them in off the Bootcamp and put them through more

specialised training and then they're into the business. [Provider 1] gives us that higher level of candidates where they have the softer skills; some of the work ethic skills we're looking for, that [Provider 2's] participants, because they tend to be younger, don't have yet.

*Employer – Skills Bootcamps in Digital Skills*

As well as addressing recruitment gaps, some of the interviewed employers perceived that Skills Bootcamps have helped them to effectively support retention within their organisation. Some employers expressed that Skills Bootcamps represented a more sustainable recruitment strategy, perceiving that the retention of recruits through Skills Bootcamps may be stronger than other recruitment methods:

What we're also finding is that if we are using Skills Bootcamps, people are more committed and more likely to stay with us as a company once they've completed their training. *Employer – Skills Bootcamps in Construction*

This was also highlighted by some Digital employers in Wave 2; therefore, the expansion of this sentiment across different sectors suggests the value of Skills Bootcamps in creating sustainable recruitment practices.

## **Increasing the visibility and reputation of employers**

For some larger employers who were interviewed, Skills Bootcamps have supported them to increase their visibility and reputation in their sector through networking opportunities. This could suggest a divergence from the findings of Wave 2, in which few employers perceived that Skills Bootcamps facilitated networking opportunities, and instead thought that their involvement was limited to their own conversations with a provider:

Skills Bootcamps also serves as a business development opportunity because it helps you to expand your network. *Employer – Skills Bootcamps in Digital*

Improving the skillset of their employees has allowed some organisations to improve their reputation and increase their revenue. For an employer who had engaged with Skills Bootcamps for developing solar and heat pump-related skills, the increased qualifications they held as an organisation improved their standing in their field and brought them more work and contracts:

Doing the Skills Bootcamps with my employees has given us more work. Being able to go out to the market and say we're now fully

qualified in heat pumps, and it's like anything else within the trade, if your name gets around about how much of a good job you do and how you're qualified, work then just follows. *Employer – Skills Bootcamps in Green Skills*

Some larger employers also identified how their involvement in Skills Bootcamps has enabled them to support local communities by recruiting local individuals to address employment issues in their region, which simultaneously helps them to increase their social responsibility:

We are also examining how we can use Skills Bootcamps to support communities. Our company is a very prominent employer in the town, but we want to support the community. We're looking at working with the LEP or providers to run a Bootcamp to help support the local community. We can use Skills Bootcamps to be much more multi-faceted and support the community to achieve wider socio-economic benefit, so we are seen as an employer who cares and who supports the community. That recognition is really important to us. *Employer – Skills Bootcamps in Digital Skills*

## Provider engagement with Skills Bootcamps

As described in Chapter 3, the characteristics of providers that engaged in Wave 3 Skills Bootcamps delivery varied. Nonetheless, similar themes emerged from the provider interviews about their motivations for engaging in the delivery of the training. For provider interviewees who were new to delivery at Wave 3, one of the key drivers for their engagement was the reputation of Skills Bootcamps, because they perceived it to be a successful programme in getting people into jobs, and that it was underpinned by financial support and regulation.

The additional funding allocation in Wave 3 to deliver different types of Skills Bootcamps has enabled some providers to diversify and expand their training offer. Many provider interviewees offered Skills Bootcamps in more than one sector (e.g. Green and Engineering); this has benefited them because they perceive themselves to be more visible to potential clients, and can expand their business offer and reach.

A large part of our provision is plumbing, gas, electrical, carpentry – that's what we specialise in. So, Skills Bootcamps ticked all the boxes and we're looking at future opportunities to widen our scope within the green technologies space with Skills Bootcamps. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Green and Technical Skills*

## Supporting sector need to address skills gaps

Similarly to the Wave 2 findings, most of the interviewed Wave 3 providers emphasised that the key driver for their engagement in Skills Bootcamps was to address sector skills gaps and grow local talent pipelines:

We originally got into the Skills Bootcamp space because we saw it as a way to support our industry and support those skill gaps and sectors where there's an ageing workforce, but also where there's a vacancy demand for new people coming through. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Engineering*

Wave 2 delivery focused on Levels 3–5, although some HGV courses were allowed, by exception, to be delivered at Level 2. A key change for Wave 3 delivery was to extend Level 2 delivery for Green Skills by exception, provided that there was evidence of skills shortage vacancies at this level, and that Skills Bootcamps could lead to a job with higher earnings potential. Provider interviewees in Green Skills conveyed that this change has made the Skills Bootcamp model more viable for them, and it is more aligned with the sector's need to address particular skills gaps:

Our Smart Metering Installation course is Level 2. We already do a lot in the Smart Metering world with different clients, so we knew it would be attractive to them if we could get government funding for it. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Green Skills*

Interviewed providers of Skills Bootcamps in Construction emphasised the importance of programmes to address skills gaps as a result of COVID-19 and Brexit. For these providers, the extension of Skills Bootcamps training to Construction courses which could also be pitched at Level 2 to address the more manual labour roles, was an attractive element of Wave 3:

We've lost a lot of the foreign workforce in our sector, as a result of COVID, Brexit before that, and we've got a massive skills gap – the gap is boots on the ground, labouring, those sort of roles. Waves 1 and 2 were mainly focused on other sectors, particularly Digital Skills, and obviously we kept an eye on it and who was delivering Construction. But there weren't that many. Then Wave 3 came along, and the amount of funding available to Construction courses was very attractive. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Construction*

Aligning with perceptions of Wave 2, Wave 3 provider interviewees appreciated the flexibility that Skills Bootcamps offered, which enabled them to develop more tailored and unique training programmes to meet needs in their sector:

Some of our other programmes are quite structured in what we deliver, and they're often more qualification-based. But Skills Bootcamps allows more flexibility, and the ability to deliver some aspects that wouldn't be funded normally, but is what employers are requiring. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Digital Skills*

For larger providers, being able to increase and expand their offer into different Skills Bootcamp types in Wave 3 was an attractive element. For example, one provider of Digital and Engineering Skills Bootcamps felt they provided 'an opportunity to try something different that employers were asking for'. The ability to support multiple Skills Bootcamp types meant that larger providers were able to benefit from additional streams for their organisation. The increase in the number of providers who offered Skills Bootcamps across multiple categories at Wave 3 further emphasises the perceived attractiveness of Skills Bootcamps for providers.

The interviewed providers identified that the emphasis on employer engagement in Skills Bootcamps was a unique and beneficial aspect of the training, because it enabled them to be more responsive to employer and sector needs. Some providers have switched from delivering Adult Education Budget (AEB) programmes to Skills Bootcamps for this reason:

Previously we used to deliver AEB programmes, and there was no flexibility – it had to be qualification-led, which didn't give us the flexibility to give what the employers wanted. Bootcamps are tailored to the employers' need. The employers tell us what they want, help to design and develop, and then we deliver. So, for me that is key. We switched off our AEB because Skills Bootcamps service employers demand better than the AEB. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Technical skills*

Wave 3 provider interviewees continued to be motivated to engage in Skills Bootcamps to diversify certain sectors, by increasing opportunities to upskill for under-represented groups and those with financial constraints. For example, providers who delivered Skills Bootcamps in Rail and Construction Skills have focused on attracting ethnic minority individuals and those with learning difficulties to Skills Bootcamps:

We wanted to do funded training to support individuals who have financial constraints and can't afford to pay for their own training, or have barriers, such as learning difficulties, which we come across a lot in Construction – particularly dyslexia or dyspraxia. And then, there are low numbers of people from ethnic minority groups, so we're interested in supporting those candidates into the industry. We

see Skills Bootcamps as a way to open up provision to people who need it but can't afford it, or have barriers or need more support.

*Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Construction*

## Addressing local and regional skills gaps

Provider interviewees welcomed the Wave 3 changes that offered 10% Flex for MCAs and Local Authorities to deliver training tailored to the specific needs of their region. MCAs achieved this by commissioning delivery providers to offer regional training. MCA interviewees perceived that the impact of Skills Bootcamps was felt more strongly at a local level, compared with nationally funded Skills Bootcamps:

The Skills Bootcamps Flex model has allowed us to be really responsive to our regional specific needs, rather than having to do a national thing. With the national model, if you need it then great, but if you don't, it doesn't work. The Flex model is one of the real beauties of Skills Bootcamps. *Provider – MCA*

MCA interviewees also suggested that the Wave 3 grant funding offered more flexibility to create a unique training offer than Wave 2 contract funding, which was perceived to be more restrictive:

In Wave 2, the DfE gave us contract awards... so it was very defined. In Wave 3, they went back to grant funding, where we were told, 'here's your award, now take responsibility for yourselves to identify where the requirements are, where the opportunities are'. So that increased flexibility is a real benefit of Wave 3. *Provider – MCA*

MCA interviewees felt that their ability to organise and develop a network of Skills Bootcamps was a key benefit that informed their tailored training offer. They perceived that their established provider–employer relationships and expert understanding of the regional labour markets enabled them to make informed decisions about local training needs. MCAs interviewees believed that this ensured high-quality delivery and positive outcomes for their region:

For us, it's about having a set of delivery partners who are representative of our region, of our place, of our people and our businesses. *Provider – MCA*

## Chapter 5: Factors influencing the design and implementation of Skills Bootcamps

High-quality Skills Bootcamp design and delivery is integral to the participant experience, in order to achieve positive outcomes and impacts, and to facilitate collaborative employer engagement. This chapter explores the different factors, from the perspectives of participants, employers and providers, that can affect the quality of Skills Bootcamps design and delivery, and how these factors can influence the participant experience and employer engagement.

### Considerations for the design and delivery of Skills Bootcamps

#### Awareness of regional and national skills gaps

Skills Bootcamps have targeted both national and regional skills gaps. The introduction of the 10% Flex model at Wave 3 has enabled MCAs and local authorities to deliver Skills Bootcamps beyond national priority sectors to address particular skills gaps in their region. This has promoted collaborative working to share expert knowledge about regional skills needs, which has increased efficiencies and ensured joined-up thinking in the provision of training opportunities:

As a combined authority covering the region, we are in the best position to identify where those links are between different sectors and priorities. We know where the investment is going, and we can tie it into all the bigger picture around investment zones, transport infrastructure, green and retrofitting agendas. We can make those links a lot easier. *Provider – MCA*

Two MCA interviewees spoke about tensions between the Skills Bootcamps they have procured through their grant allocation, and Skills Bootcamps being delivered in their region through national contracts. For these MCAs, removing instances where national and grant-funded providers are operating in the same area would be preferred, so that there is a coordinated approach to what provision is available in each area. MCA interviewees considered their grant-funded model to be effective because they had built strong relationships with local employers to develop training that addressed sector skills shortages. Additionally, they perceived that their expert knowledge about local recruitment challenges and geographical conditions was advantageous for delivery:

If the Skills Bootcamps is being commissioned nationally, and nationally, they commission provision back into our region, then there



are providers who are commissioned who don't know us, and don't work with us in our region where our employers are. They will never have the success that providers who work with our employers do.

*Provider – MCA*

MCA interviewees have welcomed the increase in the Flex model to 30% for Wave 4, but suggested that this could still go further:

The 30% flexibility that's being granted in Wave 4 is really welcome, but we don't feel that it goes far enough still. We know what we want to deliver in this region, and we know what our needs are, and 30% doesn't go as far as we would like it to go. *Provider – MCA*

## **Awareness of Skills Bootcamps**

Providers are required to engage employers in all stages of the design and delivery of Skills Bootcamps. A lack of employer awareness about the Skills Bootcamps offer can prevent them from securing employers' financial and non-financial co-investment in their training:

Finding and engaging employers was one of our biggest challenges. I don't think there was that much awareness around Skills Bootcamps, especially initially. I would say that we've had to do that ourselves. We've had to educate employers. I don't think there's been enough come through the government space in making employers aware that these were available. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Technical Skills*

Some provider interviewees highlighted that low levels of employer awareness negatively impacted their ability to engage with SMEs. A policy aim at Wave 3 was to increase the number of SMEs involved with Skills Bootcamps, and the MI suggests this has been achieved. Nevertheless, engaging smaller employers was identified as being particularly challenging for some Skills Bootcamp categories, including Construction, Engineering, and Technical Skills:

The challenge with SMEs is that Joe Bloggs' garage isn't on the internet or LinkedIn, so you need to know how to reach them to let them know that this type of training is happening. A colleague must have phoned about 350 local garages in the Yellow Pages. They don't engage with traditional marketing; they're used to word of mouth. For us it was really challenging to get the numbers of SMEs in. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Technical, Construction, and Digital Skills*

## Establishing employer–provider relationships

The Wave 2 implementation report highlighted that sustainable and trusted employer–provider relationships provided the foundations for high-quality Skills Bootcamps delivery. The strongest partnerships tended to be those that pre-dated Skills Bootcamps, where a high level of trust had been established. This was a strong sentiment that also emerged from the Wave 3 employer and provider interviews, which highlighted that strong employer–provider relationships are the cornerstone in enabling the Skills Bootcamps training to be designed and pitched at the right level to meet sector needs:

We're matching what the labour needs are. There's no point in us designing a Skills Bootcamp that isn't what employers want, because when we get them to the point of a job offer, they won't have learnt the skills that that the employers need as the entry point. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Engineering*

Employer interviewees at Wave 3 continued to frequently offer non-financial assistance by supporting curriculum design. This ensured the content was industry-relevant, leading to Skills Bootcamps graduates having the required skills and knowledge for employment in their sector. Equally, contributing to the curriculum design phase was an opportunity for employers to identify what should and should not be included in the training:

Being able to do a bit around shaping the Skills Bootcamp curriculum, means that we know when they come into our recruitment pipeline, that they're going to be able to pass our application process. When we're able to shape the curriculum and put the types of things that they're going to have to do to get through our coding test, then they're able to fly through our recruitment process. *Employer – Skills Bootcamps in Digital Skills*

Some provider interviewees outlined that they had adapted their Wave 3 delivery to be more employer-led, based on learning from Wave 2:

We design our Skills Bootcamps around the employer now. In Wave 2 we were probably a bit naïve in the fact that we packaged up our popular courses to try and offer it to all our employers. But we had some employers that wanted a certain element but not all of it. So, now we're designing it much more with the employer. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Technical Skills*

Provider and employer interviewees identified using different strategies to successfully establish and sustain strong partnerships. These included board meetings to bring together different employer types, to explore a common topic; and supply chain

breakfasts with guest speakers, for one employer. These worked as an informal space to promote the local offer and associated employer demand:

Another thing that's working well is our supply chain breakfast events. So, when we've got an agenda and we've got a partnership, we'll bring in our partners and we have a host guest speaker. When we have employers on board, we'll bring in the training providers, local colleges, so the employer knows what that local offer is. It's a two-way conversation, as opposed to, 'You will do this for us.' And what we find is we tend to get a lot more buy-in from the employers.  
*Employer – Skills Bootcamps in Construction*

### **Provider reputation**

For employer interviewees, the reputation of the provider in their sector was a key factor that informed their decision-making about whether to engage with Skills Bootcamps; this aligns with the Wave 2 position. Wave 3 employer interviewees identified using their prior experience through commercial contracts to inform their judgements about the quality of providers. This practice mainly benefited established and larger training providers:

Because the training is through [provider], who we use for most of our training, that makes a difference for us because we know we're getting the quality of the training that we're giving to the rest of our staff. *Employer – Skills Bootcamps in Engineering*

The perceived reputation of a provider increased perceptions of trust amongst employers, which in turn helped to increase employers' confidence that the training would meet their needs:

In the past we used lots of organisations, which has now led us to use a smaller number of providers that we know we can work with, who we know we can trust. And that's key, because we know they can deliver what we want because they have done so in the past for us, and we have that co-authoring ability with them to create courses we know will work and are needed. *Employer – Skills Bootcamps in Digital Skills*

### **Employer size**

Despite the employer MI and interview findings suggesting that providers engaged with more SMEs in Wave 3 than in Wave 2, some provider interviewees suggested that the design of Skills Bootcamp courses was led by larger employers' requirements. In these instances, larger employers were perceived to be more influential:

The course content had been written by the larger employers working with us. So, it's been written from a main dealer point of view. The outcomes have been positive, but there wasn't a group of SMEs that sat with us and told us what they wanted in it. We took what the larger employers wanted and used that to form the basis of the bootcamp. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Engineering, Green, and Digital Skills*

### **Dedicated employer-engagement role**

Most provider interviewees reported that they had created a dedicated employer-engagement position for Wave 3 delivery. The employers interviewed valued this provision and identified that it helped to promote strong communication, which led to higher quality Skills Bootcamp training and more positive outcomes:

We have a good relationship because I have regular check-ins with [our contact at the provider], to see what types of talent they're getting, and when they're getting it. A good partnership is being able to have those open honest conversations and saying that you're really quiet at the moment, but to be able to let the provider know when things will be picking up. We've spent time with our contact at the provider, talking him through our application process, what we're looking for. It works really well. *Employer – Skills Bootcamps in Digital Skills*

However, some providers who chose to create a dedicated employer-engagement role identified that this role was required because the employer engagement expectations of Skills Bootcamps was higher compared with other skills programmes. One provider also emphasised that recruiting the right employer relationship manager was challenging because they needed to have existing links with employers.

Some providers also highlighted the importance of being selective with the employers that they work with on Skills Bootcamps. For these providers, they wanted to ensure that the employers they brought into their Skills Bootcamp portfolio would be the most likely to result in positive employment opportunities for their learners, as well as aligning with their ethos:

We have lengthy discussions before we bring employers in with us. We have a team member who goes out and meets with employers, gets a feel for the company. We choose people who best fit our brand and follow our passion for quality, for safety. We have quite a vigorous vetting process. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Construction*

## Accreditation

Some provider interviewees, particularly those who delivered on behalf of MCAs, alluded to tensions between Skills Bootcamps that do not require formal specification and/or accreditation, and other funding streams that do require accreditation. In some circumstances, this negatively impacted on employer relationships, and providers found it challenging to meet employers' expectations:

There's still a tension between regulated and unregulated, and the combined authority seem to be quite obsessed with unregulated. There's just a bit of tension between what MCAs think we can do, and the realities of what we can do. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Green Skills*

## Employability skills

Alongside teaching technical content, the interviewed providers also offered employability skills training to help participants become work-ready, and to successfully secure a new job or career at the end of their training. As in Wave 2, provider interviewees offered a variety of employability skills training, including career coaches or mentors who provided tailored employment support to participants, support in developing CVs, cover letters and LinkedIn profiles, and signposting to information and resources. Participant interviewees highly valued tailored employability support that was aligned to their current situation and experience – a sentiment that was also conveyed at Wave 2:

Over the 16 weeks, there were four or five sessions of employability support, so mentoring sessions to prepare you for interviewing and job searching. You did an online skills questionnaire at the start that gave you your strengths and weaknesses. So, in those individual sessions we focused on those and there would be a theme each week. Towards the end, one of the really important things for me, which sounds simple, was how to effectively set up and use a LinkedIn profile. *Participant – Skills Bootcamp in Digital Skills*

At Wave 2, the interviewed providers found it challenging to pitch the employability sessions at the right level. Wave 3 evidence suggests that providers have adapted their employability skills training offer to cater for participants' previous employment experiences. This has helped participants to apply for jobs with more confidence. Participants who were unemployed or pursuing a career change reported having less experience of the recruitment requirements for a new job. Hence, they found the employability skills sessions tailored to their circumstances particularly beneficial. Long-term unemployed participants found the support to set up a new LinkedIn account and to

develop a CV helpful, and valued the advice and guidance they received about career options to assist them with future employment:

Immediately after the Skills Bootcamp, we could access career development. I was paired with a career development person who I could email and schedule a meeting with, and talk to her about an interview I'm having, or to check my new CV or to check my LinkedIn. So, she is so accessible. They've been helpful with career development. *Participant – Skills Bootcamp in Digital Skills (unemployed)*

Some Wave 3 participants on Skills Bootcamps in Digital Skills identified that they were linked with an industry mentor who offered insight into the demands of the industry. Some mentors sent learners extra materials to help them develop their employability skills; they also offered knowledge of market trends to support their job applications. These examples demonstrate the value that participants attached to feeling part of something 'bigger' than their course, and they emphasised the importance of industry links to close the gap between training and employment.

However, as in Wave 2, some employed participants – particularly those with a significant career history and workplace experience – felt that aspects of the employability skills training were not relevant to their situation. Other participants described completing an online employability skills needs assessment at the start of their training, which helped focus and personalise their future support. This further indicates the value of a bespoke and individualised employability offer.

Wave 2 highlighted that employer interviewees often looked for soft skills in candidates, rather than technical skills that they could teach and develop within their organisation. Some Wave 3 participants reported that they had employability sessions which focused on these soft skills, and encouraged participants to develop their communication skills and teamwork in order to stand out during the interview and selection process:

The second part of my Skills Bootcamp was that they taught us soft skills and personal skills and what we'd need to get into the industry – not just the actual technical skills. They created an environment where they stimulated a work situation where you could develop your own character and your own way you'd work in the industry. *Participant – Skills Bootcamp in Digital Skills*

## **Skills Bootcamps contract timescales**

Many Wave 2 provider interviewees experienced challenges with the contracting timelines, which impaired their ability to deliver Skills Bootcamps within the allotted Wave

2 financial year. To overcome this, the DfE offered Wave 2 Contract Extensions, to enable providers who had started delivery in Wave 2 to continue into Wave 3. The majority of provider and MCA interviewees perceived that although things have improved, contract timescales are still challenging, which hindered the establishment of strong employer–provider partnerships and the achievement of successful participant employment outcomes:

For Wave 2, by the time the contracts were finished, we were six months into the delivery period. By Wave 3, we had confirmation of the contract in January before delivery in April. But that was also at the same time of trying to get everything in place for Wave 4. It's been getting better, and for future waves, the communication about planning is better. The more notice you have, the more time you've got to put things in place and get the outcomes we and the Department want. *Provider – MCA*

Some Wave 3 provider interviewees also expressed concerns about the impact of short-term contracting periods and the sustainability of the Skills Bootcamps model. Longer funding contracts would enable providers to implement sustainable processes, to further increase the quality of delivery and create more financial certainty for providers. This would also help to generate more engagement from employers:

My biggest frustration is the timelines in which we've been given our contract allocations ... but if you want to build robust, sustainable delivery, the conditions you pass on play out. If you are continually passing on short-term, one-year contracts, you can't expect providers to invest in sustainable structures. Give people three-year contracts, give people certainty and give them the conditions they can pass on. Otherwise, it just looks like it's a pilot programme. *Provider – MCA*

## **Factors influencing participant satisfaction**

### **Application process**

Wave 3 participant interviewees highlighted that the application process had been efficient. Notably, participants in Wave 3 were more positive than in Wave 2, where many participants reported experiencing challenges with their application, including a lack of communication from the provider, or late notification of successful applications, which gave them insufficient time to prepare for the start of their training.

A small number of Wave 3 participant interviewees expressed concerns about the quality of information that was made available to them prior to choosing a Skills Bootcamp. Some participants identified feeling overwhelmed by the number of Skills Bootcamps listed on the DfE website, and others felt there was insufficient information to distinguish between the different courses:

I chose my Skills Bootcamp just by random. All the courses seemed the same, there were so many organisations running similar Bootcamps. It was difficult to know which one to choose. As far as I remember, there was nothing to differentiate them from one another.  
*Participant – Skills Bootcamp in Leadership & Management*

Some Wave 3 digital courses required participants to complete a pre-course introductory module as part of their application process. Participant interviewees valued these modules, as they helped them to feel more prepared for their course:

I had to do a pre-course course, which took perhaps five or six hours and once I'd done that, they could accept me onto the course. By the time I'd done the pre-course course, I knew most of what was going to be on the course, it was like a really good introduction to agile project management.  
*Participant – Skills Bootcamp in Leadership & Management (10% Flex)*

Providers also suggested that pre-course assessments and introductory modules were beneficial, as they helped them to select and recruit the participants that would go on to successfully complete the course and progress into employment.

A small number of participant interviewees identified that information about the training, such as the recommended amount of guided learning hours, was inaccurate – a sentiment also highlighted at Wave 2. This issue was identified by some Wave 3 participants as particularly problematic for employed, self-employed learners, or those with caring responsibilities who needed to fit their Skills Bootcamp engagement around other commitments:

The pre-information was quite good except for the information that said the training would be 10 hours a week. It was a lot more than 10 hours a week, even for me with data analysis skills already in the bag. Even when you looked through the programme, it told you the number of hours you should be dedicating to the different modules; if you added it up, it was sometimes 25 hours a week, not the 10 they advertised.  
*Participant – Skills Bootcamp in Digital Skills*



## Quality of facilitation

Wave 3 participant interviewees valued engaging, experienced and organised facilitators, which aligns with the Wave 2 findings. Only a minority of participants interviewed were critical of their Wave 3 delivery; this differs from the Wave 2 perspective, where more participants conveyed dissatisfaction. Participants valued facilitators with industry experience because they could embed this insight into the training, to offer relevant and high-quality careers guidance:

My teacher was highly skilled, we learnt so much from him. He was in the industry and actually doing the job, he was living the life and understood the problems I was having so could give that support. My mentor was instrumental for my development through the process. He was so flexible and helpful. *Participant – Skills Bootcamp in Digital Skills*

Other participants emphasised that having employers deliver some of the training sessions added a fidelity to Skills Bootcamps and helped learners to gain insight into what the industry might look like:

Local managers of companies or owners delivered sections of our Skills Bootcamp on different aspects of the electronics industry. So, it gave you an idea of what the industry was like and who worked in it, what they expected, and what were the upcoming challenges. *Participant – Skills Bootcamp in Technical Skills*

Provider interviewees reflected that as their Skills Bootcamp programme has matured, they have been able to offer more experienced facilitators who can provide tailored and individualised feedback, which translates into a positive participant experience:

The provider picked the right people to deliver the course. It was absolutely the right delivery team because they were industry professionals, they weren't just going through the motions. They were obviously so passionate about it, and you always get more out of something if you've got a tutor who is really into the subject matter. It never felt like they didn't have time for you. They had all this wealth of experience, but they were just excited to share it with you. *Participant – Skills Bootcamp in Leadership & Management*

None of the Wave 3 participant interviewees had made a complaint about the quality of their Skills Bootcamp providers. However, a small number suggested that the facilitation was of a lower quality than they were expecting. In these instances, they identified that

their facilitator was knowledgeable about the sector and industry, but lacked the teaching experience to communicate their knowledge effectively.

## Chapter 6: Relationship between Skills Bootcamp delivery and outcomes

A primary aim of Skills Bootcamps is to secure positive employment outcomes for participants. This chapter explores some of the contextual factors that influence the achievement of outcomes.

### Start rate

MI data illustrates that the combined number of applicant and start records at Wave 2 and 3 were similar (Wave 2 = 55,481; Wave 3 = 55,132). This suggests that the increased number of Wave 3 starts only (37,338) compared with Wave 2 starts only (16,118) is a result of increased provider capacity to offer additional places on courses, rather than from more people applying. Additional starts increase the potential for Skills Bootcamps to have positive outcomes for more people.

MI analysis indicated that the ratio of starts to all records is broadly similar for all Skills Bootcamp categories (Table 20). In most instances, applicants converted into starts. The Skills Bootcamp type with the lowest conversion of total MI records to starts was for Skills Bootcamps in Digital, which were the most over-subscribed of all types of courses offered at Wave 3. Just under two-thirds (63%) of all MI records for Skills Bootcamps in Digital were categorised as a valid start (ratio of starts to applicants of 1:1.6). In contrast, nearly all individuals who applied for a Skills Bootcamp in Rail were converted into a start (95%; ratio of 1:1.0). Skills Bootcamp courses with a higher ratio of starts to all applicants (e.g. Digital and 10% Flex courses) can be more selective about whom they accept onto their courses, which may increase the number of completions and outcomes.

**Table 20: Ratio of starts to applicants by Skills Bootcamp type**

Skills Bootcamp category	Wave 3 applicants and starts (all MI)	Starts only	Ratio of starts: all applicants and starts	% starts of total MI (all applicants and starts)
Digital Skills	36,153	22,610	1:1.6	63%
10% Flex categories	1,801	1,393	1:1.3	77%
Green Skills	3,285	2,589	1:1.3	79%
HGV Driving	7,237	5,805	1:1.2	80%
Construction	2,954	2,480	1:1.2	84%
Engineering	1,117	977	1:1.1	87%
Rail	842	803	1:1.0	95%
<b>Total</b>	<b>53,389</b>	<b>36,657</b>	<b>1:1.5</b>	<b>69%</b>

Source: Management information, excluding cases where Skills Bootcamps type was unknown

## Number of applications

The central aim of Skills Bootcamps is to fill skills gaps across a range of sectors. For some Skills Bootcamp categories, including Engineering, Construction, and some Green Skills (e.g. heat pump installation), initial interest from employers to upskill employees did not translate into participant applications and uptake onto the courses. Lower applicant and participant rates may have led to fewer starts, and ultimately a smaller number of successful completions and outcomes for courses in these sectors. This trend mirrors providers' experiences at Wave 2. Provider interviewees explained that these manual sectors had to prioritise delivering work for clients, which was perceived to be the main barrier to engaging with additional training. To boost application rates to certain courses, and to ensure the viability of delivery, some providers adapted their marketing activities – such as reaching out directly to industry-specific trade magazines, or cold-calling employers:

What we had to do was cold-call employers, which is not a strategy we use very often. We had to pull resource to do that. What we learned is that the nature of individuals we were wanting to recruit weren't going to be using LinkedIn or responding to a well-drafted email, so we had to adapt how we tried to recruit. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Green Skills*

Some provider interviewees suggested that greater flexibility to allocate applicants to alternative courses, when courses were oversubscribed, would help to boost under-

recruitment on less popular courses; it would ensure more people could complete a Skills Bootcamp and achieve a positive outcome:

I'd say providers need an overall allocation of participant numbers, and then how it's split within that allocation is up to the provider. Purely because it's tricky to predict the future in terms of where your learners are going to come from. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Green Skills*

## Participant attendance during Skills Bootcamp training

Analysis of the available Wave 3 data suggests that attendance rates were lower than those at Wave 2 (Table 21). Just under half (47%) of all starts either fully attended or attended over 75% of their training. At Wave 2, nearly half of all starts (49%) had full attendance, a rate that dropped to one quarter (25%) at Wave 3. However, it should be noted that a higher proportion of starts at Wave 3 (17%) compared with Wave 2 (1%) do not have any attendance data, and this data should be treated with caution. The updated attendance data will be included in the subsequent completions and outcomes report.

**Table 21: Attendance rate of starts during their Skills Bootcamp course for Wave 2 and Wave 3**

Attendance rate	Wave 2 Starts	Wave 3 Starts
No attendance	1%	17%
Attendance less than 25%	6%	19%
Attendance between 25 and 49%	8%	9%
Attendance between 50 and 74%	10%	8%
Attendance between 75 and 99%	27%	22%
Full attendance	49%	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,482</b>	<b>31,292</b>

Source: Management information, excluding unknown

Similarly to Wave 2, provider and employer interviewees perceived the majority of participants to be engaged, keen to learn, and they brought prior knowledge and experience to their training. Providers and employers observed that participants who wanted a career change were particularly invested in their training.

The interviewed providers described facing challenges in retaining some participants on their Skills Bootcamps. In particular, unemployed learners and those claiming UC were more likely to drop out. For these learners, providers identified that the intensity of a

Skills Bootcamp could be too much for those who have been out of work or training for long periods:

With the UC system, as long as they're applying for jobs or training, it's all fine. Frequently, they'll put in an application that they want to do a Skills Bootcamp without knowing the ins and outs of it. We think there's a mismatch between unemployed people and what we're asking them to complete. Given that they might have been unemployed for two years, the Skills Bootcamp takes them from 0 to 100 mph, and it's too much and we've seen some dropouts. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Engineering*

## Guaranteed interviews

It is expected that all eligible participants have an offer of a guaranteed interview with an employer and this is an essential element of Skills Bootcamps.<sup>37</sup> At Wave 2, participants' experience of the guaranteed interview process varied, and this continued at Wave 3. Some Wave 3 participant interviewees expressed disappointment when the offer of a guaranteed interview did not meet their expectations. For some interviewees, their guaranteed interview was not for a genuine vacancy, although they were led to believe it was. Others suggested that their interview was more akin to a chat with an employer about possible opportunities, rather than an actual vacancy; or a mock interview with no job prospect at the end. This led some participant interviewees likening the guaranteed interview to a 'box-ticking' exercise:

I found the job interview aspect really odd. It was like you're introducing yourself and showing your portfolio to an employer, but then the employer didn't have a role in mind because they don't have anything available to you. *Participant – Skills Bootcamp in Digital Skills*

One explanation for these findings is the timing of this implementation report. A small number of participants interviewed had not completed their training. Employers can offer multiple interviews to participants; hence, some interviewees may have received further interview opportunities after the fieldwork. However, most of the interviewed Wave 3 participants had completed their courses and could talk about the guaranteed interview process.

An offer of a job in an unsuitable geographical location was a barrier that participant interviewees continued to highlight at Wave 3. For some employers, geography was

---

<sup>37</sup> An offer of a guaranteed interview does not apply for self-employed or co-funded participants, for whom there are separate requirements.

equally problematic, because they could not attract potential employees to vacancies. In these instances, the national approach to Skills Bootcamps did not fill specific local gaps:

We have engaged with Skills Bootcamps, but the reason we haven't taken on any trainees is because of the geographical locations of where their trainees are, compared to where our sites are. We can't have someone travelling two hours to get to our site. *Employer – Skills Bootcamps in Engineering and Construction*

A small number of Wave 3 participant interviewees mentioned wanting part-time employment to fit around their other commitments, such as caring responsibilities. These participants stated that there were no part-time employment opportunities offered to them as part of the Skills Bootcamps guaranteed interview process:

At the end of the course, they gave me an interview for full-time work, but I told them I could only do part time. So, I had to decline the interview. The provider did get in touch with me a few times to see if I would be interested in other roles, but they were all full-time roles. *Participant – Skills Bootcamp in Digital Skills*

## Provider and employer challenges

Provider interviewees at Wave 3 emphasised the challenges associated with securing enough interviews to offer to participants, including being able to offer interviews for roles relevant to the Skills Bootcamp content. This placed an additional burden on providers to source relevant interviews, which could be particularly challenging for smaller providers:

You must have somebody who is banging the door constantly with these employers about Skills Bootcamp learners who are now ready and have completed and are ready for a job outcome. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Engineering*

Providers expressed that many employers were only able to offer a small number of vacancies, which meant that they had to deploy extra resources to secure interviews with a range of employers simultaneously:

A large employer agreed to offer 20 interviews, but then they pulled all 20 roles. We've got some conversations with other employers for these participants, but it's more piecemeal now. One employer has three vacancies, so we'll put all candidates forward for those three. We've got another employer offering one position. When it's like this it becomes harder to offer all the learners an interview. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Digital Skills and Engineering*

Some of these challenges in securing guaranteed interviews were for specific Skills Bootcamps. Wave 3 providers of Skills Bootcamps in HGV emphasised that despite the need for drivers, many employers were reluctant to recruit, and required participants to have a minimum of six months' driving experience. Some providers of Skills Bootcamps in Digital also felt that employers were unwilling to offer as many vacancies as in Wave 2, due to a perceived slowing of recruitment in the sector.

Employer interviewees at Wave 3 expressed that there was sometimes a mismatch between the guaranteed offer and the candidate who was put forward for the position. For example, some employers who engaged with Skills Bootcamps in Digital felt that the candidates offered to them at interview did not have the requisite skills:

It's quite difficult for the provider to account for all the different nuances of a developer, so they choose a course that is more generalist. But when we're a specialist organisation, that doesn't work for what we need. *Employer – Skills Bootcamps in Digital Skills*

Several participants at Wave 2 were offered interviews for jobs with a lower salary than they had expected before starting the Skills Bootcamp. This was also the case at Wave 3. In these instances, participants were offered an apprenticeship where the pay was too low, and an apprenticeship was not a route that they wished to pursue:

We received vacancies at different companies as well. But a lot of them were for apprenticeships and that isn't something I'm able to do, because the pay was too low. *Participant – Skills Bootcamps in Professional Services (10% Flex)*

More work may need to be done to promote the value of apprenticeships, to ensure participants are aware of the possible benefits, and can thus make a fully informed decision about whether they are the right route for them. Clearer signposting and promotion may help to align participants' expectations with the roles offered by employers, and ensure the suitability of an interview linked to an apprenticeship.

## **Pathway to Accelerated Apprenticeships**

Provider interviewees who offered PtAA at Wave 3 found aspects of the scheme difficult to understand, in terms of what it entailed and how to deliver it. This could be attributed to PtAA being a new initiative introduced in Wave 3. However, the perceived uncertainty negatively impacted on recruitment and participant uptake for the scheme:

We really struggled with the guidance with the pathway to apprenticeships. There was no benchmarking, we constantly had to



go to our contract manager and ask for information, which took so long. And all that affected the recruitment of learners and the information we could give to employers. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Technical Skills*

In addition to some participants interviewees not viewing apprenticeships as a viable option after their Skills Bootcamp, some interviewed employers were reluctant to accept Skills Bootcamp learners onto PtAA because it reduced the amount of money they could draw down from the apprenticeship levy. When employers withdrew their apprenticeship offer, providers emphasised that this affected the possible outcomes for these courses, and the validity of recruiting participants onto courses without the buy-in of employers. PtAA advice and guidance for both providers and employers could have been better to overcome any confusion and increase the uptake of this option.

## Meeting DfE contractual obligations

Providers are paid for delivery at predetermined milestones.<sup>38</sup> The DfE introduced changes in the Wave 3 payment milestones in response to providers' feedback at Wave 2. These changes included increasing Payment 1 for successfully onboarding participants, and increasing Payment 3 for the successful evidencing of a positive outcome for a participant (e.g. new job, apprenticeship, or increased responsibilities).

At Wave 2, some provider interviewees felt the delay between the payments for Milestones 1 and 2 meant they were delivering the content for free. Most provider interviewees at Wave 3 accepted the payment milestones were a 'fair' way to run the programme; however, some would have preferred a higher proportion of the overall payment in Milestone 1, to improve their financial position:

You'd rather have it all [the training payment], then you know what you have in terms of resources. We'd rather have as much upfront as possible because of cash flow. Sometimes with new product and new income streams, resources can be a bit tight. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Green Skills*

Some Wave 3 provider interviewees expressed that the increase to the final payment milestone (based on learner outcomes) from 10% to 20% was challenging for smaller providers because of high initial costs:

Some smaller providers would struggle with the new payment milestones, from a cash flow perspective. Because the model is

---

<sup>38</sup> Wave 3 schedule: Payment 1 (start) = 45%; Payment 2 = 35% (completion); Payment 3 = 20% (outcome).

asking a lot of costs to be laid out upfront in terms of delivery before you're guaranteed the money back. The funding works retrospectively, which isn't a huge problem for us because we're a fairly large training organisation. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Green Skills*

Some smaller providers argued that there was too much weighting on the final payment milestone (20%), which reduced their confidence about the financial attractiveness of Skills Bootcamps. Low levels of participant engagement in providing evidence of their new job or additional responsibilities was one of the main concerns raised about the final payment milestone, which depends on evidence of a successful outcome for participants. Provider interviewees suggested that once learners have secured a new job, there is no obvious benefit to them sharing details about their employment with the provider:

We definitely have huge concerns over the final payment (Milestone 3) because there's no real participant incentive; we need the cooperation of the learner in terms of providing evidence of a contract, but from their perspective, there's no obligation or incentive to do that. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Construction*

The interviewed MCAs reported that they could adjust their own payment schedules and providers perceived it to be financially attractive:

There's a Skills Bootcamp that has come out recently which is MCA-led and has a much better funding structure. With that one, you'd get most of the funding for doing the teaching. Whereas at the moment with the national Skills Bootcamps, you get significantly less for them completing the learning. It's interesting that the devolved authorities have changed the funding stream because I think they recognise that for the providers, all the hard work is done in the training. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Engineering*

Additionally, some provider interviewees of Skills Bootcamps in Construction and Green Skills suggested that the pressure of having to show successful employment outcomes was too heavily placed on them, which led to financial losses. As a result, some lead providers have decided to discontinue delivery in Wave 4:

We're not bidding again for Skills Bootcamps, ever. This is the one and only time. The funding is just not worth it at all. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Engineering*

## Meeting KPIs

The DfE has set a range of key performance indicators (KPIs) for Skills Bootcamps, including 100% of eligible learners being offered an interview,<sup>39</sup> and 75% of participants who complete their Skills Bootcamp achieving a positive employment outcome. These KPIs remained the same between Waves 2 and 3, and the interviewed providers continued to perceive the targets as unrealistic, both in absolute terms and for the types of learners who are intended to benefit from Skills Bootcamps:

75% is a really high KPI. If you're very niche or working with employed co-funded learners you're pretty much guaranteed an outcome, otherwise it's very challenging when you're working with unemployed learners. Our average job outcome across all our programmes is around 40%, which is in line with the national picture for getting people into employment. So, having a KPI of 75% is very high when you think about the types of learners we're working with.

*Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Digital and Engineering*

Provider interviewees of Skills Bootcamps in Digital argued that it was harder than in other Skills Bootcamp categories to achieve positive outcomes and meet their KPIs in Wave 3, compared with Wave 2. They attributed this to some employers' continued lack of knowledge about Skills Bootcamps and how they could be involved, as well as a slowing job market. As in Wave 2, providers suggested that this could be improved by increased marketing and promotion of Skills Bootcamps by the DfE and larger providers.

Some providers who delivered training for MCAs perceived there to be unrealistic expectations about what was possible in relation to the KPIs, from short 16-week courses such as Skills Bootcamps. These providers suggested that some sectors, such as health and social care, as well as more complex digital skills, need longer training than a 16-week course. This highlights that not all sectors may be best served by the Skills Bootcamp model and the stipulated KPIs:

I love the combined authorities driving for us to do more, but sometimes their expectations are so demanding around volume – they're saying they need coders, they need cyber scientists. And with due respect, you're not, off the back of a short Skills Bootcamp, going to turn into a cyber scientist. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Digital Skills*

---

<sup>39</sup> An offer of a job interview was not a requirement for participants who were self-employed or undertaking a co-funded Skills Bootcamp through their current employer.

Provider and MCA interviewees described how they have applied their learning from Wave 2 to Wave 3 through placing greater emphasis on co-funded programmes and self-employed learners, because the outcomes are perceived to be easier to evidence. This highlights a potential tension between one of the principles of Skills Bootcamps, to promote social mobility and offer training to unemployed learners, versus providers selecting learners based on perceptions of likely outcomes:

Obviously, for providers, and for us, the advantage of having employer co-funded and self-employed participants is that you're guaranteed your outcomes. *Mayoral Combined Authority*

Some providers also alluded to prioritising co-funded participants at Wave 3 because of the increased payment for the outcomes milestone, from 10% to 20%, which doubled the risk involved in being able to successfully achieve the payment:

You're not going to get a job having done the amount of coding completed during a Skills Bootcamp. The pace of the sector has changed and we've reflected on that and decided to leave that part of the model alone. We'll look at how we move people who are already in employment into the next job, or one with more responsibility. There's more risk on the job outcome this time than in Wave 2, it's 20%, so it's twice as much money. We need to make sure we're doing what we can to secure those outcomes. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Digital and Green Skills*

Evidence from provider interviews identified that in some instances they have moved away from training unemployed or participants who sought to change careers, due to perceptions that these learners are less likely to achieve a successful outcome:

We're now thinking about switching our Skills Bootcamp offer to being an employee-led programme, purely to try and improve the outcome rate. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Digital and Engineering*

At Wave 2, some provider interviewees used selection criteria to attempt to maximise the number of successful participant completions and outcomes. For instance, some Skills Bootcamps in Digital held technical interviews at the application stage, to gauge the skill level of the applicant, and whether they would be able to cope with the level of the Skills Bootcamp. At Wave 3, provider interviewees also emphasised the importance of creating processes to recruit learners who were most likely to achieve a successful outcome, which showed the same trend as Wave 2:

We've been really selective with our Project Management course. We could have sold it 20 times over – there's a lot of people who just

want the project management experience but don't want to do anything with it. Our recruitment is about making sure people are actually going to move forward as a result and have something in mind to go for as a positive outcome. We want to make sure we're going to achieve those. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Leadership & Management*

## Collecting and providing evidence of outcomes

Similarly to Wave 2, provider interviewees at Wave 3 emphasised the challenges of collecting and processing the evidence required to meet payment milestones and programme KPIs. Providers continued to describe the high level of resources needed to populate data collection templates. Whilst most of the interviewed providers accepted that the level of data required was typical of government-funded programmes, many had to recruit additional administrative staff to meet the requirements, which added to their cost base:

You need a strong admin base behind you, you need a fair bit of resource put into the things like those spreadsheets. It's having that resource and that structure to sit underneath to be able to cope with the demands of Skills Bootcamps, that are slightly different to all other funding streams. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Green Skills*

In addition to the changes in milestones, the DfE and its contract managers have more closely aligned with ESFA-funded provision regarding acceptable forms of evidence. This is to ensure greater consistency within the wider skills system and address supplier perceptions that it was overly stringent in previous Waves. At Wave 2, official headed letter of job contract (or similar) was required, whereas at Wave 3, a broader array of acceptable evidence was permitted, including emails from employers, learner declarations or, in exceptional instances, LinkedIn profiles. Providers reflected that their relationships with contract managers have been positive in ensuring more positive outcomes from the programme were captured:

During Wave 3, you could start using a LinkedIn profile to help evidence an outcome. There has been an acknowledgement from DfE that whilst there's a gold standard of the employment letter, that isn't always available, so there has been some alleviation in the requirement which has been helpful. *Provider – MCA*

Some providers have introduced processes during Wave 3 to improve the amount and quality of outcomes evidence. For example, career coaches have helped to build

sustainable relationships with learners, which has increased the likelihood of learners providing their outcomes evidence.

Interviewees' responses suggested that strong employer–provider relationships resulted in increased collaborative working to provide KPI evidence. Evidence was also easier to obtain when employment outcomes were achieved following guaranteed interviews. When employers did not fully understand the Skills Bootcamp funding model, they sometimes acted in ways that negatively impacted the providers' ability to claim for successful outcomes:

What's happened a few times, is some of the young people on a Skills Bootcamp would leave the course to work for us, because we pay quite good money for a young person. Obviously, we didn't realise the problem that would cause the provider. We understand now that, if they don't complete the course, the provider doesn't get paid. Now, we have the agreement with the provider that we won't take anybody off their courses, we will only deal with them when they complete the course. *Employer – Skills Bootcamps in Construction*

Other interviewed providers described how the evidence required to prove successful outcomes tested some employer–provider relationships, because it placed too much burden on employers. Providers were concerned that this could make the employer reluctant to be involved in the future and offer guaranteed interviews and/or vacancies:

Sometimes, the ask for evidence tints the relationship you've got with the employer because it's putting an extra burden on them when we're asking for more things from them. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Digital Skills*

The guaranteed interview is integral to providers being able to evidence outcomes. Interviewed providers identified that it was more challenging to evidence outcomes for participants who had independently achieved their outcome:

Evidencing outcomes is not so bad where the provider is creating the opportunity by getting a participant an interview and they get the job, because the provider has that relationship directly with the employer. It's easy for them to go back and say, 'Give us the evidence because we need this to make out claim to carry on working on with you.' It's where a learner self-achieves the outcome, that it's hard to get the evidence you need. *Provider – MCA*

Creating a culture based on trust, strong relationships and high-quality content is critical to ensure participants provide the required evidence. Provider interviewees identified that a positive Skills Bootcamps experience makes participants want to share their outcomes:

If you drive the right behaviours throughout the programme, the evidence will be naturally occurring. It won't be difficult. If people are having genuinely amazing experiences with really good training, with good employer links and they get a job, why would they not tell their provider? *Provider – MCA*

The fact that Skills Bootcamps are free may mean that learners feel less obliged to share evidence. To overcome this perception, some of the interviewed providers have introduced learner contracts that stipulate the expectations and evidence required at the start of the training.

When you deliver a Skills Bootcamp, it is free for the learner. They're getting something for free, there's no incentive once they've completed to carry on engaging with you to allow you to get the evidence to meet Milestone 3. The risk is all on the provider, the learner has no risk. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Construction and Engineering*

Providers have six months to evidence successful outcomes from Skills Bootcamps. Some interviewees suggested that this does not provide enough time to evidence outcomes, particularly for long-term unemployed participants who may need additional support because their progression into employment may be more challenging. Other providers argued that it may take participants longer than six months to assume greater responsibilities in a role, which can contribute as evidence:

It's harder when you're upskilling learners and your outcome has to be that they've got a better job on a higher salary. That's harder because it takes months sometimes for an employer to get to a point when they can promote someone. Destination capturing is always very hard because sometimes it takes more than six months for someone to actually progress as a result of your training. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Green Skills*

Wave 3 required some providers to record participants' progress and outcomes using the Individual Learner Record (ILR). These providers were required to submit both the original spreadsheets and the ILR. They perceived this as creating additional workload:

The ILR addition, whilst I understand it being necessary, it has added some extra layers of bureaucracy. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Digital and Green Skills*



## Chapter 7: Early self-reported outcomes and impacts from Skills Bootcamps

Participant, employer and provider interviews elicited some early evidence of positive outcomes and impacts of Skills Bootcamps; these are similar to the Wave 2 findings. This chapter includes only findings from participants who had completed their Skills Bootcamp at the time of interview (n=13). The future completion and outcome reports will examine the outcomes and impacts of Skills Bootcamps in greater detail.

### Participant employment outcomes

The aim of Skills Bootcamps is for participants to achieve a successful employment outcome within six months of completing their training. These outcomes include securing the offer of a new job, a new role/responsibilities, or work/contracts for self-employment, which utilise the skills participants have gained through their training.

The offer of a guaranteed interview was a key mechanism through which participants could obtain a successful employment outcome.<sup>40</sup> As previous chapters have explored, the quality and relevance of the guaranteed interview varied for participants, and was not the only method through which participants secured a positive outcome. Only two Wave 3 participant interviewees had successfully secured a new job at the point of interview. However, employers and providers referred to higher number of participants who had secured positive outcomes:<sup>41</sup>

I'm super appreciative of the opportunity. It's been fantastic and it's springboarded me into a position I was only dreaming of 18 months ago. I'm super stoked with the Skills Bootcamps, to be honest.

*Participant – Skills Bootcamps in Digital Skills*

Several provider and employer interviews emphasised the impact of Skills Bootcamps in transforming participants' lives and opening up new employment opportunities, particularly for those who were unemployed before they started their training:

We've had outcomes that have changed people's lives. They've gone from being unemployed and not earning to now earning a wage.

Even if it's only put 10 people into work, these Skills Bootcamps have made a difference. It's absolutely changing people's lives, so it's a

---

<sup>40</sup> Guaranteed interviews are not applicable for self-employed or employer co-funded learners.

<sup>41</sup> Given the small number of participants interviewed during the different phases of fieldwork, this should be interpreted with caution. The completion and outcomes-reporting phase and MI will enable a more detailed analysis of the success of Skills Bootcamps in securing employment for participants. It should also be noted that a positive outcome can include a new job, a new role/responsibilities within an existing job, work/contracts for self-employment, increased salary, and accelerated apprenticeship.

great programme. *Provider – Skills Bootcamps in Construction and Green Skills*

## Increased confidence

One of the main outcomes that participants identified was increased confidence that they could get back into the workplace as a result of completing their Skills Bootcamp:

I think the biggest thing I've taken away is the confidence. That feeling of, 'actually, yes, I can do this'. The Skills Bootcamp has given me the confidence I can get back into the workplace and do a good job. *Participant – Skills Bootcamp in Digital Skills*

All participants interviewed expressed their satisfaction with learning new technical skills from their Skills Bootcamps, and the potential to apply these skills to their current or future work. Some participant interviewees also highlighted that the employability and soft skills training they received has equally contributed to their increased confidence and ability to progress into a new job after their training.

## Further training or education

For participants who wanted to change their job or career, many perceived their Skills Bootcamp training had provided the necessary knowledge to enable them to progress to further training or education:

The Skills Bootcamp gave me what I wanted at the time, which was a good foundation, but now, I want to do some full-time training and get even deeper into it and do some really technical stuff. *Participant – Skills Bootcamp in Digital Skills*

Participant interviewees on Skills Bootcamps in Digital Skills or Leadership & Management courses reported being motivated to pursue further training or education, in contrast to those who had completed Skills Bootcamps in Green Skills (e.g. heat pumps) or Construction Skills, who typically considered their training as an opportunity for employment.

## Future employment opportunities

As a result of working with mentors or industry coaches, participants on Skills Bootcamps in Digital identified that their networks had expanded, and that they had a stronger sense of belonging to the sector that would support them with future employment opportunities. Additionally, through feeling more established and credible in their sector, participants

perceived that they had overcome anxieties of imposter syndrome, which was affecting their confidence to transition to a new sector and career:

Through the Skills Bootcamp and working with my mentor, I've broadened my network of contacts professionally. And now I have the confidence that I have enough knowledge and skills to deserve the position I'm going for – like my imposter syndrome definitely isn't as bad. *Participant – Skills Bootcamp in Digital Skills*

Some participants identified that the employability skills training had enabled them to be more proactive with their LinkedIn profiles, to ensure they were more visible to potential employers for future job opportunities:

I've been a lot more proactive using my LinkedIn profile, being more visible. I've been very careful to post just the best projects on there, and I can see by comparing to my archived projects the difference in quality. Someone in the industry would notice the difference, and that's a main benefit. *Participant – Skills Bootcamp in Digital Skills*

At the time of the interviews, most participants had not yet secured a new job, but they articulated that the range of technical skills and employability skills that their training has provided will help them with future job interviews:

They've given me a set of tools I can use, and I'm constantly thinking about them and trying to memorise certain things that might be useful which I can apply to an interview scenario in the future. There's this one acronym, STAR that they kept talking about: Situation, Task, Action and Result. So, it's all about using that methodology in interviews. In abstract, they've given me the tools, but I can't prove it yet. *Participant – Skills Bootcamp in Digital Skills*

## **Employers' recruitment through Skills Bootcamps**

Employer interviewees were motivated to engage in Skills Bootcamps to fill recruitment gaps and bolster their workforce, and/or to upskill their current employees. Employer interviewees described how they have experienced a range of positive outcomes, including increased recruitment, changing how and where they recruit, increased productivity, and a more diverse workforce.

Aligning with Wave 2, employer interviewees at Wave 3 reported that Skills Bootcamps have helped them to meet their recruitment needs by offering a new pipeline to access talent:

Skills Bootcamps have got us to think differently about how we access talent and what talent looks like. The next shift will be that we work with our employer partners or work internally to shift the mindset that the only 'good' candidate is a computer science graduate from a top Russell Group university. Because we're getting more people into our pipeline and we're seeing the benefits of that as a team, it's made us realise that there are other ways that we can find talent. Skills Bootcamps has given us a more diverse talent pool, talent pipeline.

*Employer – Skills Bootcamps in Digital Skills*

A further advantage of Skills Bootcamps that employer interviewees identified is the high calibre of candidate that is being put forward for positions and successfully gaining a new job in their organisation. Candidates could frequently draw on previous experience that was valuable for the non-technical skills, such as project management, communication skills, problem solving and time management. These benefits were predominantly voiced by employers from the digital and tech sectors, for whom problem solving and teamwork are important skills to ensure they fulfil client services:

Skills Bootcamp learners have professional experience, they know how to handle themselves in a professional environment. They're able to talk about how they work in teams and how they work to client deadlines, and they understand all that stuff. Sometimes you get really talented people straight out of university, but they haven't really got a clue. It's not about the technical skills, it's about those soft skills and professional experience of how you fulfil your ability, which we're able to get from Skills Bootcamp learners.

*Employer – Skills Bootcamps in Digital Skills*

In contrast, employer interviewees from more manual-labour oriented sectors (e.g. Green, Rail, Construction, Technical) considered the increased pipeline of candidates in absolute terms as a result of Skills Bootcamps, rather than learners bringing previous experience to the workplace. This is because further on-the-job training is provided in these sectors. For these sectors, employers were less insistent that candidates had relevant previous experience.

### **Increased contracts and work opportunities**

For employers interviewed in manual sectors, engagement with Skills Bootcamps has enabled them to bid for larger contracts and/or to expand the types of services that they can offer to clients, which has in turn increased their revenue. For employer interviewees engaged with Skills Bootcamps in Green Skills, they perceived that the training has

enabled them to be at the cutting edge of their industry; this has created new contracting opportunities, particularly for those businesses related to heat pumps:

Doing the Skills Bootcamp has given us more work. Now we can go out to the market to say we're now fully conversant and qualified in Verso heat pumps. Now we have that qualification, we can use it to get our feet on the ladder. Like anything else within the trade, if your name gets around of how much of a good job you do, more work just follows suit. So now we're qualified in heat pumps and solar panels, it helps when you're tendering contracts. *Employer – Skills Bootcamps in Green Skills*

## Employee productivity

At this early stage of Wave 3 Skills Bootcamps, most of the interviewed employers had not yet noticed improved productivity within their organisation. However, employers in the manual sectors emphasised the importance of Skills Bootcamps being seen as part of a longer-term training solution, because the initial outlay reduced productivity. Nonetheless, these employers are beginning to see how the increased skillset from individuals who have completed a Skills Bootcamp is enabling individuals to perform their job more efficiently, which over time will improve productivity:

What you need to weigh up in relation to Skills Bootcamp is the knowledge the person will get. So, even though you will have the initial outlay of that person not being able to work whilst they do the training, in turn, their knowledge will speed up their processes in the future. We're very keen for Skills Bootcamp training to occur because you get that longer-term benefit from it. *Employer – Skills Bootcamps in Green Skills*

## Employee diversity and social mobility

Participants believed that the Skills Bootcamps programme will improve workforce diversity and make sectors more inclusive. Employer interviewees described how Skills Bootcamps helped them to recruit individuals from different backgrounds that they have historically found challenging. Diversifying their workforce had offered different perspectives and solutions to problem solving, which helped to meet clients' needs. This was particularly emphasised by Digital employers at Wave 3:

Skills Bootcamps fits the bill perfectly in terms of that diverse population, and we know that it's not just a good social thing to do, it's actually a competitive advantage. If you've got people who've got different viewpoints on a particular topic, you're going to get to the

right answer, because you've got that diversity. *Employer – Skills Bootcamps in Digital Skills*

Some employers from the Construction, Rail and Engineering sectors identified that Skills Bootcamps being free has promoted social mobility by offering 'people a chance' to secure a new job who might otherwise be overlooked. Wave 3 opened up eligibility to prisoners due to be released within six months of their Skills Bootcamps completion, and those on temporary release. Employers emphasised the contribution of Skills Bootcamps in offering ex-offenders and the long-term unemployed the opportunity to progress or enter a new job, which otherwise would not have been possible.

## **Barriers to achieving impact from Skills Bootcamps**

All employer and provider interviewees were positive about the principles of Skills Bootcamps to help address skills shortages. However, some employers and providers identified elements that could be improved, to maximise the outcomes and impact that can be achieved from the programme.

Some providers offering Skills Bootcamps in Digital Skills suggested that it had been more challenging to achieve successful outcomes at Wave 3 than at Wave 2; this was frequently attributed to a slowing down in the market for some sectors. Because they found it harder to achieve outcomes, some providers had applied stricter recruitment criteria to ensure they recruited the 'right' individuals onto the training:

Some people who went on the courses, they didn't even know what a weld was, let alone its importance and how to test and all the rest of it. The course is quite maths-heavy; a lot of people haven't done any maths since school. And if that's the case, you will not pass the course. They don't have time to teach you the maths. You need to have a basic understanding of algebra, trigonometry. So, it might be worth trying to implement something beforehand, like a pre-screening. *Employer – Skills Bootcamps in Engineering*

To overcome this barrier, some providers have introduced pre-screening tests at the recruitment phase, to ensure applicants had a realistic chance of achieving a successful outcome, and that providers could minimise their non-completion rates. However, this had a negative impact on promoting social mobility, in terms of offering opportunities to individuals who might otherwise be unable to access the training. This included the long-term unemployed and/or those with a lower educational level.

Related to recruiting the right calibre of learners was the need to ensure that those who completed their training were 'work-ready'. This was particularly the case for unemployed

learners, for whom entering employment represented a significant step up, in terms of both work skills and general employability skills. This required a significant mindset shift, and some employers perceived the employability skills training as a gap in the delivery of Skills Bootcamps:

More needs to be done to help people with the mindset to be work-ready, not just skills work-ready. It's about understanding your pay is going to change, and when you get paid other stuff is going to change, like benefits. The big question is whether the person is mentally prepared and ready for the transition? That's where the downfall is. When they're offered an interview on a Skills Bootcamp, they've done all the work, they've been given an opportunity, but they're not sure whether they'll be better or worse off. *Employer – Skills Bootcamps in Construction Skills*

The interviewed providers identified that there were fewer interviews available for learners in Wave 3 than in Wave 2. This resulted in some learners being offered an interview that was not relevant to them. A mismatch between participants' skills level and the advertised job increased both learner and employer dissatisfaction, and some employers felt that they might not wish to engage in future waves of the programme:

When we work with some providers, their role is to find this person a job. So, they push people onto me that don't fit my criteria. I've had to stop them and say, 'There's no point me trying this person.' *Employer – Skills Bootcamps in Construction Skills*

Skills Bootcamp courses not having to meet accreditation standards was perceived to be advantageous by both participants and providers, as it offered more flexibility. However, for some participants, Skills Bootcamps not being accredited or certified was a barrier to achieving a successful job outcome:

When I look for jobs, lots of employers are looking for experience of what we did on our course – so, trial balances or making an income-expenditure spreadsheet. The Skills Bootcamp was useful to show me the different aspects of accounting, but if you really want to get into it, you need to have the proper certification. That's what job requirements state, and I don't have it. *Participant – Skills Bootcamp in Professional Services*

## Chapter 8: Conclusions

Across Wave 3, from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, there were 55,130 applications to Skills Bootcamps across all categories, resulting in 40,040 starts, against a target of 36,000. Participants predominantly engaged with Skills Bootcamps in Digital, HGV, Green Skills, and Construction. The introduction of a specific funding allocation for Skills Bootcamps in Green Skills at Wave 3 has increased interest among sectors such as Construction, Engineering and Manufacturing, to address their particular needs.

### Engagement with Skills Bootcamps

Wave 3 Skills Bootcamps successfully reached a diverse range of people, in order to address under-representation in some sectors and occupations. This included recruiting participants who were black, black British, Caribbean, or African; women; those from disadvantaged areas; those with a caring responsibility; and those with lower educational levels. The introduction of the Skills Bootcamps as part of the 10% Flex policy, offering training in Health & Social Care, Hospitality, and Leadership & Management, engaged more women than men. Skills Bootcamps in Digital continued to successfully engage women and people from a range of ethnic groups, while Skills Bootcamps in Other and HGV were less diverse. Overall, this suggests that the training is reaching a range of different individuals, to address specific skills shortages.

Providers offering Skills Bootcamps continued to be predominantly located in the North West, with less training available in the South East and East of England. Policy changes at Wave 3 have diversified the categories of Skills Bootcamps offered by providers. Many providers were motivated to engage with Skills Bootcamps to support the needs of their sectors and grow talent pipelines. The opportunity to engage employers in the training offer also attracted providers. The scaling-up of grant funding for MCAs for Wave 3 has attracted MCAs to engage with the training, in order to effectively overcome regional skills shortages and promote economic growth.

More employers co-funded employees to take part in Skills Bootcamps at Wave 3 than during Wave 2. There were also indications that the reduced employer contribution for SMEs attracted more SMEs to engage with the training at Wave 3 than at Wave 2. Most employers perceived Skills Bootcamps to offer high-quality training; they valued the opportunity to engage with the programme, as a way of filling skills shortages and vacancies in their organisation.

The offer of a guaranteed interview continued to be a key motivation for participants to engage in their Skills Bootcamp training. Improving job prospects, the offer of free and flexible training, and learning new skills were other important drivers for participants undertaking the training. However, the introduction of the PtAA at Wave 3 did not



generate much interest from participants. Many of the interviewed participants and employers were unaware of the scheme, and most participants who did know about PtAA wanted to progress to a higher-paid job than an apprenticeship could offer. The lack of awareness across the interviews with participants and employers could partially be explained by PtAA's newness in Wave 3, and the reduced time for awareness to be generated.

## Skills Bootcamp delivery

The Skills Bootcamps programme has matured between Wave 2 and Wave 3, to ensure learners have a positive experience that leads to successful outcomes. Participant interviewees were largely positive about their Skills Bootcamp experience, and were effusive about the high-quality content and facilitation from individuals with industry-relevant experience. Providers have integrated learning from Wave 2 delivery to enhance the Wave 3 learner experience. This includes the introduction of pre-course introductory modules to ensure learners are fully prepared for their training; tailored employability skills training; and practical, project-based sessions to embed learning.

However, a small number of the interviewed learners expressed some dissatisfaction with their Skills Bootcamp delivery. Similarly to Wave 2, some participants on Skills Bootcamps in Digital found the training too complex and the timescales too short to learn the required skills and knowledge. The shortage of driving tests, which delayed the delivery of Skills Bootcamps in HGV Driving throughout Wave 2, seems to have been overcome during Wave 3, which has increased learner satisfaction.

Attendance rates at Wave 3 were lower than at Wave 2, with just under half of all starts either fully attending or attending three-quarters of their training. Retaining unemployed learners and those claiming UC was challenging in some instances.

Establishing and maintaining strong employer–provider relationships built on trust formed the cornerstone of high-quality Skills Bootcamp delivery. Employer–provider partnerships were more collaborative during Wave 3 than in Wave 2. Implementing employer 'boards' has helped to develop effective employer–provider engagement, and informed the design of tailored curriculum content, to ensure the training was industry-relevant. Providers employing dedicated employer-engagement leads helped to establish and maintain effective employer–provider partnerships.

Many providers viewed the successful outcome KPI as unrealistic. To overcome this, some providers have adapted their recruitment processes to focus more on co-funded and self-employed individuals, to maximise their ability to evidence successful outcomes. This runs the risk of making unemployed learners, who are most in need of the training, unable to access it in some cases. Providing evidence of successful outcomes continued

to be a challenge for some providers in Wave 3, and additional resources were frequently required to support these tasks. However, interviewed providers welcomed the increased flexibility regarding the range of accepted evidence for successful outcomes, which was implemented at Wave 3.

## Early outcomes and impacts

Many of the interviewed providers, employers and participants agreed that the Skills Bootcamps model could successfully address national and regional skills shortages via providing new jobs, new roles/responsibilities, and work/contracts for self-employment. In many instances, the training was transformative for participants, particularly those who were unemployed before they started their Skills Bootcamp.

The offer of a guaranteed interview continued to be a primary mechanism through which participants gained a successful outcome. However, the quality and relevance of the guaranteed interview at Wave 3 did not always meet learners' expectations, similarly to the Wave 2 position. In some instances, the interview was not relevant to the sector that learners wanted to progress to, or was not an interview for a direct employment opportunity.

At this initial stage of the Wave 3 evaluation, few participants had secured a successful outcome. However, many participants felt more confident in their technical and employability skills after the course, and believed this would make it easier for them to secure a new job. Learners who wanted to pursue further training or education after their Skills Bootcamp thought that the training had provided the foundations for this.

Engagement with careers coaches or mentors was beneficial for many learners, and supported them in expanding their networks for future employment opportunities. The employability skills training also enabled learners to be more proactive in preparing their CVs and undertaking interviews to secure future employment.

Employer participants continued to view Skills Bootcamps as an effective model to address specific skills shortages. Employer participants, particularly those from more manual-labour oriented sectors, were beginning to see that recruits from Skills Bootcamps could perform their job efficiently, which would increase productivity over time.

Extending Wave 3 delivery of Green Skills and Construction Skills Bootcamps was beneficial for employers, through increasing the absolute numbers of learners available to fill vacancies in these sectors. Improving workforce diversity to make these sectors more inclusive was a further benefit that employers witnessed as a result of Skills Bootcamps.

## Appendix 1: Detailed methodology

Our mixed-methods approach used secondary and primary research methods. We cleaned and analysed management information collected by providers regarding Skills Bootcamps applicants, starts and engaged employers. The primary research comprised surveys and interviews, to collect data directly from participants, employers and providers. Fieldwork was conducted between May and July 2023.

### Management information held on Skills Bootcamps

Skills Bootcamp providers are required complete management information (MI), which describes those who apply for and participate in a Skills Bootcamp, and the details of employers with whom they engage. The analysis of MI includes individuals added by providers and processed by DfE that were part of the Wave 3 delivery of Skills Bootcamps (from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023).

As in Wave 2, the DfE required training providers to complete an Excel workbook (the data template), designed for recording MI, for each Skills Bootcamp. Additionally at Wave 3, some providers were required to input learner data into the Individual Learner Record (ILR).

The workbook records four broad categories of data:

1. Data about the provider and the Skills Bootcamp itself (metadata)
2. Individual records of those who apply for the Skills Bootcamp (applicants)
3. Individual records of those who participate in the Skills Bootcamp (starts)
4. Organisation records of the employers whom providers engage in a Skills Bootcamp (employers)

Individual records contain sensitive data such as an applicant's National Insurance number (NINO).

DfE completed some initial data processing to turn templates into two datasets:

1. **All applicants and starts.** All starts were an applicant at one point; however, not all applicants became a start. DfE provided a single record for all applicants, including data about participation where relevant. Four main datasets were provided by DfE:
  - a. One for all Wave 3 Skills Bootcamps in HGV Driving applicants and starts (called **HGV W3**); and
  - b. One for all applicants and starts from contract-funded Skills Bootcamps (**Wave 3 Contracts**).

- c. One for all applicants and starts from grant-funded Skills Bootcamps (**Wave 3 Grants**).
- d. One for data from Wave 2 Extension Skills Bootcamps. These are Skills Bootcamps where the provider delivered training during Wave 2, but their contract was extended to allow delivery into Wave 3 (**Wave 2 Ext**).

2. **Employers.** The employer data submitted by providers was processed by DfE and transferred for analysis in another dataset.

All data processed by DfE was encrypted and transferred securely to CFE Research for further processing and analysis. The data was provided by DfE in comma-separated values (.csv) format and stored as string variables.

## Data processing

Further data processing was necessary because of the data entry methods used by providers. The original data template included data validation text for many variables. However, providers could overwrite cell data validation and input their own values.

All the validated variables in templates were overwritten by some providers.

This section summarises the subsequent data processing that CFE Research completed on the Skills Bootcamp datasets transferred by DfE.

## Key transformations

Four main types of transformations were undertaken. The common element was turning string variables into either date, numerical, ordinal, or categorical variables. Sometimes this involved processing coded text strings to match the validation in the data template. Date and numerical variables were transformed to create variables that were consistent for analysis. We summarise the main transformations undertaken here.

### Dates

Several date variables were central to analysis, including date of birth (from which age was derived), and the date when an individual started a Skills Bootcamp.

The DfE provided dates in mixed formats such as Excel five-digit format,<sup>42</sup> long and short standard date formats, American date formats, and a range of different separators e.g. DD/MM/YYY, MM.DD.YY, YYYY-MM-DD.

All dates were turned into SPSS's default format (SDATE10) using a mix of Excel formulae, SPSS syntax and manual coding.

---

<sup>42</sup> This format records the number of days since 01/01/1900

## Numeric data

The template included variables such as income prior to starting a Skills Bootcamp,<sup>43</sup> attendance rate,<sup>44</sup> and hours of attendance.<sup>45</sup> Providers entered a range of different values and text, which required recoding into consistent variables.

In the case of income, DfE provided a key for whether the data was presented as a weekly, monthly or annual figure. Data was then processed to multiply the income data to produce a uniformed annual figure.

- All data with additional text characters were manually transformed into a number. For example, “18k” → 18,000; “£20,000” → 20,000, etc.,
- Any other record (data in ranges, numbers lower than 10,000 without any text, data in foreign currencies) was classed as unknown.

Other numeric variables will become more important for the forthcoming completion and outcomes report. Providers used two methods of listing an attendance rate: a decimal (e.g. 0.75) or a percentage (e.g. 75%, or just 75). We cleaned all data to use a consistent method, namely a numeric value between 1 and 100 to represent the percentage.

## Categorical and derived variables

As noted above, some providers overwrote the validated response lists in the data template. CFE used SPSS Syntax to code providers’ responses back into the original validated lists, via a three-stage process:

1. Run a frequency to identify all strings listed for each variable.
2. Manually back-code all text items into the pre-existing template code list.
3. Create an SPSS syntax that creates a new categorical or ordinal variable based on the original template codes from providers’ text strings.

Some cleaned data was further transformed to create new analysis variables. These include:

1. Deriving age on 31 March 2023 based on an applicant’s (and hence a start’s) date of birth. Calculated ages below 18 or above 65 were classed as unknown.
2. Placing numeric data such as age and income into bands for sub-group analysis.
3. Combining data to estimate important metrics. See ‘Calculating the number of Skills Bootcamp starts’ later as an example of one such transformation.
4. Name of Skills Bootcamp and Provider. The variable ‘source name’ provided the name of the Excel spreadsheet submitted to DfE by providers. Most included the

---

<sup>43</sup> A variable named:

“what.is.your.wage.if.you.are.currently.employed.or.your.most.recent.wage.if..not.currently.employed..input.  
total.yearly.earnings.before.tax.”

<sup>44</sup> “attendance.rate.of.total.course....”

<sup>45</sup> “average.number.of.hours.learner.has.engaged.in.additional.activity...support.weekly”

name of the provider and text that summarised the type of Skills Bootcamp. This was manually converted into two additional variables: the name of the Skills Bootcamp, and the name of the provider. This information was important to feed into the Wave 3 implementation survey, to minimise the burden on participants.

5. 'Type of Skills Bootcamp' – there was not a variable in the datasheets that provided a top-level categorisation of the Skills Bootcamp (e.g. Digital, Green, Construction). Using the name of the Skills Bootcamp, this was manually coded into the appropriate Skills Bootcamp category, using DfE documentation where appropriate to support decisions made.

All such transformations were undertaken using SPSS Syntax.

### Identifying duplicate records

CFE checked to ensure that there were no duplicate source template spreadsheets from providers (source copies) which had previously occurred during cleaning of the Wave 2 implementation data. There were no instances of source copies.

There were duplicate individuals listed as applying for or starting a single Skills Bootcamp (duplicate people). Additionally, one person could apply to (and start) more than one Skills Bootcamp – these cases are not duplicates, as the analysis of starts records the number of individual applications to Skills Bootcamps, not the number of people who applied to a Skills Bootcamp.

CFE do not have access to the original data collated by DfE because it contains sensitive information such as an applicant's NINO. Without access to the original data, CFE made decisions according to whether cases were a valid start or a valid applicant, based on a series of fuzzy matching criteria, and identifying where variables were identical or divergent (e.g. postcode, date of birth). Two new variables were created – Valid Start, and Valid Applicant – to conduct analysis comparing applicants to starts.

A subsequent survey, administered to Wave 3 Applicants only (launched in February 2024), explored the impacts and outcomes achieved by non-Skills Bootcamp starts; specifically, to assess what applicants have done in the absence of a Skills Bootcamp. During this process, DfE shared with CFE the names and email addresses of applicants. This extra personal data highlighted a small number of cases (approximately 600 out of ~16,000 applicants who had agreed to be recontacted) where applicants were in fact duplicate records. These duplicates only became apparent as a result of receiving additional information from DfE – information that was not available at the time of Wave 3 implementation analysis, nor at Wave 2 when the methodology for identifying duplicates and valid starts was determined. The new information highlighted that the logic and decision-making process for identifying duplicates was robust, given the information available at the time; and to keep the methodology consistent between waves, the cleaned and processed datasets were left unchanged.

## Coverage of management information

Providers collated MI for each Skills Bootcamp through data templates. The totality of the MI comprises data from multiple combined datasets of templates:

1. Wave 3 datasets included three main datasets: Wave 3 Contracts, Wave 3 Grants, and Wave 3 HGV. Additional information was provided through linked ILR datasets.
2. Wave 2 extension data (W2 Ext). These are Skills Bootcamps that were an extension of Wave 2. In these instances, the contract with the provider was extended so that delivery ran into the Wave 3 financial year.

Changes in processing between Wave 2 and Wave 3 meant that the data templates used by providers were more regulated. Contract managers were responsible for ensuring the data supplied on the templates was correctly formatted and complete. This improved the quality of the data received. This report contains data submitted to DfE up to July 2023, regarding starts between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023.

The two Skills Bootcamp recipient types derived from the MI are as follows:

- **Applicants** – Individuals who applied for a Skills Bootcamp. The data was cleaned with the aim of achieving a final dataset where an individual applicant was only present once for each Skills Bootcamp. However, one person could apply for multiple Skills Bootcamps. No date of application is included in the data templates returned by providers. The applicant metric is a count of applications, not individuals. Not all applicants were successful in becoming a 'start'.
- **Starts** – A valid start includes individual records with a date recorded against any payment milestone. Payment dates refer to when providers are paid for their delivery milestone, and only participants can be used to claim against these. Individuals can enrol onto more than one Skills Bootcamp.

## Analysing management information

The process evaluation includes analysis of this data, including:

- Applicant and start data describe their demographics, prior education level and employment status prior to starting a Skills Bootcamp. The MI also includes tracking data on individuals as they progress through their Skills Bootcamp. The main analysis within this report considers the number of starts in the data provided. This emphasis is important because the actual number of starts is higher than reported here. The process evaluation analyses data on Wave 3 from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, in addition to data from Wave 2 Extension Skills Bootcamps.

- DfE provided more extensive employer data at Wave 3. As a result, this report includes some descriptive analysis of the type and scale of employer involvement. Coverage of postcode for employers was much more comprehensive than was provided at Wave 2. Additional analysis of region was therefore possible at Wave 3, and is included in this report.

The report offers a baseline analysis of applications, starts and employer engagement. Later completions and outcomes reports will explore final completion data in more detail. Applicant MI has been linked to other datasets, such as the Indices for Multiple Deprivation, via the postcode given on application. This data matching enhances the demographic application and start data analysis. However, not all MI records supplied accurate postcode data; thus, there are some gaps in the matched data.

## Calculating the number of Skills Bootcamp starts

There are a variety of variables that could indicate a start in the MI. These include:

1. Start date from the metadata about a Skills Bootcamp.
2. Start date on the participant record section of the provider data template.
3. Date of payment (30%). Providers receive payment when participants attend a determined proportion of their course.

The presence of a date of payment was deemed the criteria for establishing a valid start at Wave 3.

## Appending management information to survey data

A Wave 3 implementation survey was administered to all Wave 3 participants who consented to follow-up research and to be recontacted. Unique IDs were piped into the background data of the survey, so that data could be subsequently linked to the MI.

## Specific data collection instruments

### Participants

#### Implementation survey

Individuals participating in a Skills Bootcamp completed a short, five-minute implementation survey, administered online in May–July 2023. The survey supplemented the MI data and included questions relating to:

- The nature of an individual's employment status prior to starting a Skills Bootcamp



- The level of responsibility held in their most recent/current job
- Perception of skill level related to the required skill level for their job
- Overall job satisfaction
- Motivations to apply for a Skills Bootcamp
- Factors that attracted them to Skills Bootcamps

The survey also included a recall question to request permission to recontact participants about further Skills Bootcamps research. In total, 3,317 individuals responded to the survey, of which 2,164 responses were usable,<sup>46</sup> and 1,327 provided consent for recontact. The survey was sent to 12,707 individuals in the MI data who consented to contact, resulting in a completion rate of 17%. Table 22 shows the survey response rate for the different Skills Bootcamps types. Compared to the proportion of different Skills Bootcamp types for starts in the MI, the survey responses have a higher proportion of Digital, but this is a smaller proportion than in the wider MI. HVG Driving and Logistics Skills Bootcamps are over-represented in the survey, whereas most other types of Skills Bootcamps are similar to the proportion in the MI.

**Table 22: Breakdown of survey responses by Skills Bootcamp category**

Skills Bootcamp category	Number of usable responses	Proportion of usable responses	Proportion of starts in MI
Construction	96	4%	7%
Digital	1,378	58%	61%
HGV and Logistics	605	25%	16%
Engineering	30	1%	3%
Green Skills	128	5%	7%
Technical	25	1%	1%
Rail	3	<1%	2%
10% Flex	123	5%	4%
Unknown <sup>47</sup>	4	<1%	<1%
Total	2,392	100%	36,962

Source: Participant implementation survey

<sup>46</sup> 'Usable' in this instance refers to respondents providing sufficient answers to a series of questions in the survey without answering all questions.

<sup>47</sup> Participants were asked to complete or modify data available in the MI about their Skills Bootcamp category in the implementation survey. Instances of 'unknown' occurred when this question was not answered or left blank, and MI also did not include information pertaining to Skills Bootcamp type.

## Participant interviews

We conducted 17 interviews with participants from different Skills Bootcamp categories between May and August 2023 (Table 23). From the sample who consented to be recontacted, interviewees were selected based on their Skills Bootcamp category as well as their responses to survey questions, to obtain a varied sample in terms of successful outcome and experience of their course. Participants were also sampled based on their employment status prior to their training (employed, not employed, or self-employed).

Interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes, and topic guides were designed to address a common set of topics, whilst being sensitive to the different expectations and experiences of the different participants. The themes covered during the interviews were:

- Participants' perceptions of the quality of training, including facilitation, methods of delivery, mode of delivery
- Participants' motivations for applying to do a Skills Bootcamp
- Perceptions about the short-term outcomes and impacts that could be attributed to taking part in a Skills Bootcamp.

**Table 23: Participant interview characteristics**

Bootcamp category	Number of participant interviews
Digital	5 (including 1 PtAA)
Green Skills	3
Technical	2
10% Flex	7
Employment status	Number of participant interviews
Employed	6
Self-employed	2
Not in employment	8

Source: Participant interview attendance data

## Employers

### Interviews

14 employer interviews to explore their perceptions regarding the benefits of Skills Bootcamps to their organisation or industry were conducted. Interviews also covered mechanisms of employer-provider engagement and employers' perceptions of what constitutes a quality Skills Bootcamp. Employers were recruited using MI provided by the

DfE, which consisted of employers who had agreed to be contactable for further research.

**Table 24: Employer characteristics relating to employer sample**

<b>Bootcamp category</b>	<b>No. of interviews</b>	<b>% of interviews</b>	<b>No. of employers in sample</b>	<b>% of employers in sample</b>
Digital	4	29%	434	51%
HGV	0	0%	254	30%
Construction	4	29%	66	8%
Green Skills	3	21%	69	8%
Engineering	1	7%	23	3%
Technical	2	14%	12	1%
<b>Size of business</b>	<b>No. of interviews</b>	<b>% of interviews</b>	<b>No. of employers in sample</b>	<b>% of employers in sample</b>
SME	8	57%	559	68%
Large employer	6	43%	261	32%

Source: Employer interview data and employer management information (MI) sample

Table 24 indicates that the employer interviews targeted an over-recruitment of Construction and Green Skills employers, as requested by DfE policy, to explore changes at Wave 3 that affected these Skills Bootcamp categories. No employers who were engaged with HGV courses were recruited, which was likely because Wave 2 focused heavily on HGV Driving and priority was given to other categories of Skills Bootcamps for qualitative interviews at Wave 3.

## Providers

### Interviews

Twelve in-depth interviews with providers and three with MCAs explored their experiences of designing and delivering the Skills Bootcamps. Providers and MCAs were selected to be interviewed dependent on their Skills Bootcamp sector, so that the interview sample could be representative of the breakdown of providers across the Skills Bootcamp system.

As highlighted in the main sections of the report, providers at Wave 3 often offered Skills Bootcamps in more than one sector. For the purpose of interview recruitment, the sector in which they delivered the most (or were mostly known for) was used as their primary sector. Insights were gained from a range of sectors, including Digital, Construction, Engineering, Rail, and Technical.

Interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes; they covered questions that explored a provider’s perspectives on the following issues relating to the design and delivery of the training:

- Strengths and limitations of delivery
- Design principles and processes of design
- Examples of good practice in delivery
- Impact and benefits of employer relationships during delivery
- Initial perceptions of impact arising from the Skills Bootcamps programmes

As Table 25 shows, proportionately more interviews were conducted with providers who delivered Skills Bootcamps in Construction and Green Skills, compared to the total provider sample. This aligns with policy emphasis at Wave 3, and was specifically chosen to address gaps in knowledge about different sectors that were not covered at Wave 2.

**Table 25: Proportion of provider interviews relative to provider management information characteristics**

Sector	Number of interviews	Proportion of interviews	Number of providers in MI sample	Proportion of providers in MI sample
Digital	1	8%	142	35%
Construction	5	42%	74	18%
Green Skills	4	33%	63	15%
Engineering	1	8%	34	8%
Technical	1	8%	11	3%

Source: Provider interview attendance information

## Appendix 2: Types and combinations of Skills Bootcamps offered by lead providers

Table 26 lists the combinations of Skills Bootcamps offered by lead providers listed in the Skills Bootcamps MI (based on data provided in December 2023).

**Table 26: Number and combinations of Skills Bootcamps offered by lead providers**

Skills Bootcamp type	Number of Skills Bootcamps	Proportion
10% Flex – Creative	7	3%
10% Flex – Health & Social Care	8	3%
10% Flex – Hospitality	1	0%
10% Flex – Leadership & Management	2	1%
10% Flex – Business & Professional	1	0%
10% Flex Other	1	0%
Construction	35	14%
Digital	79	32%
Engineering	14	6%
Green Skills	19	8%
HGV Driving	4	2%
Logistics	3	1%
Rail	7	3%
Technical	4	2%
10% Flex Other / Construction / Health & Social Care	1	0%
10% Flex Other / Engineering	1	0%
Construction / Engineering	4	2%
Construction / Engineering / Rail	1	0%
Construction / Engineering / Technical	1	0%
Construction / Green	4	2%
Construction / HGV	2	1%
Construction / Hospitality	1	0%
Construction / Rail	3	1%
Digital / Construction	5	2%
Digital / Construction / Engineering	2	1%

Skills Bootcamp type	Number	Proportion
Digital / Construction / Engineering / Green	1	0%
Digital / Construction / Engineering / Green / Rail	1	0%
Digital / Construction / Green	3	1%
Digital / Construction / Green / HGV	1	0%
Digital / Construction / Hospitality / Technical	1	0%
Digital / Creative	2	1%
Digital / Engineering	2	1%
Digital / Engineering / Green	3	1%
Digital / Green	7	3%
Digital / Green / Health & Social Care / Leadership & Management	1	0%
Digital / Green / Rail	1	0%
Digital / Health & Social Care	2	1%
Digital / HGV	1	0%
Digital / Leadership & Management / Rail	1	0%
Digital / Technical	1	0%
Engineering / Leadership & Management	1	0%
Engineering / Technical	1	0%
Green / Construction / Engineering / HGV	1	0%
Green / Engineering	4	2%
Green / Health & Social Care	1	0%
Green / Leadership & Management	2	1%
HGV / Logistics	2	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>250</b>	

Source: Provider management information

## Appendix 3: Applicant and start demographics from management information

**Table 27: Age of applicants by Skills Bootcamp type; age as of 31 March 2023**

Age band	Digital	HGV	Other	Total
19 to 24	19%	6%	15%	18%
25 to 34	42%	24%	37%	40%
35 to 44	26%	32%	29%	27%
45 to 54	10%	27%	15%	11%
55 to 67	4%	11%	5%	4%
68 plus	0%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,029</b>	<b>1,014</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>12,583</b>

Source: Management information, excluding no date of birth given

**Table 28: Age of starts by Skills Bootcamp type; age as of 31 March 2023**

Age band	Digital	HGV	Green	Construction	Engineering	Rail	10% Flex	Total
19 to 24	16%	4%	6%	18%	13%	15%	13%	13%
25 to 34	43%	26%	27%	33%	49%	38%	38%	38%
35 to 44	27%	35%	36%	28%	24%	26%	30%	29%
45 to 54	11%	24%	22%	16%	15%	17%	15%	14%
55 to 67	4%	11%	8%	5%	0%	5%	5%	5%
68 plus	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,464</b>	<b>4,724</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>865</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>22,675</b>

Source: Management information, excluding no date of birth given

**Table 29: Gender of applicants by Skills Bootcamp type**

Gender	Digital	HGV	Other	Total
Male	55%	94%	75%	60%
Female	45%	6%	25%	40%
Other	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,201</b>	<b>1,244</b>	<b>1,750</b>	<b>16,195</b>

Source: Management information, excluding no gender given

**Table 30: Gender of starts by Skill Bootcamp type**

Gender	Digital	HGV	Green	Construction	Engineering	Rail	10% Flex	Total
Male	57%	92%	86%	92%	94%	97%	37%	68%
Female	42%	8%	14%	8%	6%	3%	63%	31%
Other	<1%	<1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	<1%	<1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,364</b>	<b>5,189</b>	<b>2,550</b>	<b>2,465</b>	<b>966</b>	<b>797</b>	<b>1,390</b>	<b>35,022</b>

Source: Management information, excluding no gender given

**Table 31: Ethnicity of applicants by Skills Bootcamp type**

Ethnicity	Digital	HGV	Other	Total
White British	25%	68%	65%	33%
Any other white background	14%	9%	9%	13%
Asian or Asian British	21%	7%	8%	18%
Black, black British, Caribbean, or African	26%	9%	12%	23%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	5%	2%	3%	5%
Other ethnic group	5%	3%	3%	4%
Prefer not to say	5%	3%	1%	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,916</b>	<b>1,235</b>	<b>1,746</b>	<b>15,897</b>

Source: Management information, excluding no ethnicity given



**Table 32: Ethnicity of starts by Skills Bootcamp type**

Ethnicity	Digital	HGV	Green	Construction	Engineering	Rail	10% Flex	Total
White British	27%	63%	75%	68%	77%	50%	51%	42%
Any other white background	12%	14%	4%	14%	6%	5%	12%	12%
Asian or Asian British	18%	6%	7%	4%	7%	10%	8%	13%
Black, black British, Caribbean, or African	23%	8%	8%	9%	4%	25%	21%	18%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	5%	3%	1%	2%	1%	5%	3%	4%
Other ethnic group	5%	4%	3%	2%	4%	4%	3%	4%
Prefer not to say	11%	2%	2%	1%	1%	<1%	1%	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,577</b>	<b>5,182</b>	<b>2,551</b>	<b>2,466</b>	<b>966</b>	<b>797</b>	<b>1,393</b>	<b>33,932</b>

Source: Management information, excluding no ethnicity given

**Table 33: Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) decile of applicant by Skills Bootcamp type**

IMD Decile	Digital	HGV	Other	Total
1 – Most disadvantaged	15%	16%	22%	16%
2	16%	14%	16%	16%
3	14%	13%	12%	14%
4	12%	11%	11%	12%
5	10%	12%	10%	10%
6	9%	9%	8%	9%
7	7%	7%	6%	7%
8	6%	8%	6%	7%
9	6%	6%	5%	6%
10 – Least disadvantaged	5%	4%	4%	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,300</b>	<b>1,277</b>	<b>1,700</b>	<b>15,277</b>

Source: Management Information, excluding no postcode / incorrect postcode given

**Table 34: IMD decile of starts by Skills Bootcamp type**

IMD	Digital	HGV	Green	Construction	Engineering	Rail	10% Flex	Total
1 – Most disadvantaged	14%	19%	18%	25%	21%	21%	12%	16%
2	15%	15%	14%	17%	15%	19%	15%	15%
3	15%	13%	12%	14%	10%	18%	13%	14%
4	12%	12%	10%	11%	10%	11%	13%	11%
5	10%	9%	9%	8%	10%	7%	10%	10%
6	9%	9%	9%	8%	9%	6%	10%	9%
7	7%	7%	7%	5%	9%	5%	7%	7%
8	7%	6%	8%	5%	6%	5%	7%	7%
9	6%	6%	8%	4%	6%	4%	8%	6%
10 – Least disadvantaged	5%	4%	6%	2%	4%	2%	4%	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,701</b>	<b>4,940</b>	<b>2,375</b>	<b>2,321</b>	<b>898</b>	<b>740</b>	<b>1,323</b>	<b>33,298</b>

Source: Management Information, excluding no postcode / incorrect postcode given

**Table 35: Proportion of applicants and starts with a disability or long-term health condition**

Disability	Applicants and starts (all MI)	Applicants only	Starts only
Yes	11%	11%	11%
No	85%	86%	85%
Prefer not to say	4%	4%	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48,972</b>	<b>15,851</b>	<b>33,121</b>

Source: Management information, excluding unknown

**Table 36: Proportion of applicants and starts who claimed Universal Credit**

Universal Credit	Applicants and starts (all MI)	Applicants only	Starts only
Yes	24%	22%	25%
No	76%	78%	75%
<b>Total</b>	<b>51,055</b>	<b>15,425</b>	<b>31,589</b>

Source: Management information, excluding unknown

**Table 37: Employment status of applicants and starts**

Employment status	Applicants and starts (all MI)	Applicants only	Starts only
Full-time employment	34%	35%	34%
Part-time employment	14%	16%	13%
Training / education	2%	3%	2%
Long-term sickness	1%	1%	1%
Parental leave / other caring responsibilities	1%	1%	1%
Retired	<1%	<1%	<1%
Self-employed	12%	9%	12%
Unemployed for less than 12 months	25%	23%	25%
Unemployed for more than 12 months	10%	9%	11%
Unemployed – unknown how long	1%	1%	1%
Employed – unknown mode	1%	1%	1%
Other	0%	0%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>51,651</b>	<b>16,089</b>	<b>35,562</b>

Source: Management information main Wave 2 files only, excluding unknown

**Table 38: Employment status of starts by Skills Bootcamp type**

Skills Bootcamp type	Employed	Self-Employed	Not in employment
Digital	45%	9%	46%
HGV	62%	12%	26%
Green Skills	54%	30%	16%
Construction	33%	27%	41%
Engineering	51%	23%	26%
Rail	36%	6%	57%
10% Flex	60%	6%	34%
Other	54%	6%	40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,012</b>	<b>4,429</b>	<b>14,251</b>

Source: Management information, excluding unknown



Department  
for Education

© Department for Education copyright 2024

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit [nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3).

Where we have identified any third-party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

**Reference:** RR1455

**ISBN:** 978-1-83870-579-4

For any enquiries regarding this publication, contact us at:  
[www.education.gov.uk/contactus](https://www.education.gov.uk/contactus)

This document is available for download at [www.gov.uk/government/publications](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications)