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European Social Fund and Youth Employment Initiative 2021-2023 Leavers Survey Report

Research on behalf of Department for Work and
Pensions and European Commission

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Voluntary statement of compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics

The Code of Practice for Statistics (the Code) is built around 3 main concepts, or pillars, trustworthiness, quality and value:

- trustworthiness – is about having confidence in the people and organisations that publish statistics
- quality – is about using data and methods that produce assured statistics
- value – is about publishing statistics that support society’s needs for information

The following explains how we have applied the pillars of the Code in a proportionate way.

Trustworthiness

This survey, including fieldwork, analysis and reporting, was commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions to an independent research organisation, IFF Research Ltd. The procurement was made via competitive tendering through the online Dynamic Purchasing System Marketplace run by Crown Commercial Services.

Quality

Professionally badged DWP analysts have worked closely with IFF Research throughout the project to assure all stages of the project from design through to delivery. All materials, products and analysis have been quality assured using IFF Research internal quality checking processes and by DWP analysts. All published outputs have been approved at senior director level in both organisations.

Value

The report provides evidence of participant outcomes, experiences and satisfaction which is used to meet our ESF monitoring and evaluation requirements for the European Commission and to enhance our evidence base about what works to

support development of future domestic employment and skills programmes, particularly for groups who experience labour market disadvantages.

Executive summary

This report provides findings for the England European Social Fund (ESF) and Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) 2021-23 Leavers survey. The research was commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to explore the experiences of people who had recently left work-related courses/programmes funded through the 2014-2020 ESF programme in England. Specifically, the research sought to collect information about participants' situation on entry to and six months after they had left ESF provision (to determine long-term outcomes), and a participant views on the provision.

The research involved a large-scale quantitative survey with 11,592 participants who had left the provision between June 2021 and May 2023. It follows the previous leavers survey, which explored the experiences of leavers between 2016-19.

Some of the main findings from this research include:

- Overall, the ESF programme has continued to successfully support individuals to enter, stay in and develop within the labour market.
- The programme is reaching the intended participants, predominantly supporting individuals facing labour market disadvantages. Furthermore, the characteristics of participants under each Investment Priority aligned with their purpose.
- The proportion of participants facing labour market disadvantages has increased since the previous cohort, and, a greater proportion of participants in the 2021-23 cohort were inactive on entry to the programme.
- The distance from labour market was apparent in those facing disadvantages.
- Participant views of the programme remain very positive, indicating that any disruption from Covid-19 was not detrimental to participant experience.
- With the movement to online delivery (in light of Covid-19), unmet needs for digital support were fairly uncommon.
- It was rare for participants to receive support in relation to other potential needs, such as with childcare responsibilities, other caring responsibilities and health conditions. Participants who did receive this support were very satisfied with what was provided, and most thought they would have been unable to participate in the programme without it.
- There was a significant increase in the proportion of participants employed six months after programme completion, compared to on entry to provision. This doubled, from one in four (25%) on entry, to half (51%) at the six month stage. Employment outcomes were quite common across a range of participants, and in line with those achieved pre-Covid.

- The programme has been particularly beneficial for those in work on entry.
- Overall, the proportion of unemployed participants decreased and the proportion in employment increased six months post-provision. However, the proportion in precarious employment and/or under-employed had also increased, reflecting that, although more individuals are in work, the quality of this work could be improved.
- There was a small increase in the proportion of inactive participants, most commonly due to health reasons or individuals having moved into education or training.
- Fewer participants received benefits six months after provision, compared to on entry, indicating that the increase in employment among participants reduced their welfare needs.

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Author Details

A large team of researchers worked on the study and contributed to the report.

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Glossary of terms

Term	Definition
Basic skills	<p>Basic skills are defined as entry level, level 1 or level 2 in English, maths or English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL; where English is not the participant's 'mother tongue').</p>
Category of region	<p>The categorisation of regions as 'less developed regions', 'transition regions' or 'more developed regions':</p> <p>(a) less developed regions, whose GDP per capita is less than 75% of the average GDP of the EU-27;</p> <p>(b) transition regions, whose GDP per capita is between 75% and 90% of the average GDP of the EU-27;</p> <p>(c) more developed regions, whose GDP per capita is above 90% of the average GDP of the EU-27.</p> <p>The classification of regions under one of the three categories of regions was determined on the basis of how the GDP per capita of each region relates to the average GDP of the EU-27 for the same reference period (2007-2009).</p>
Co-Financing Organisations (CFOs)	<p>Public bodies which bring together ESF and domestic funding for employment and skills so that ESF complements national programmes. Provision for the 2014-2020 Operational Programme was delivered through four Co-Financing Organisations, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), DWP, National Lottery Community Fund (formerly Big Lottery Fund); His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS, formerly the National Offender Management Service or 'NOMS'), as well as intermediary and devolved bodies (Greater London Authority, Greater Manchester Combined Authority) and Direct Providers.</p>
Disadvantaged participants	<p>In line with the European Commission definition, these are participants who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lived in a 'jobless household';¹ • Were a single adult household with dependent children;

¹ See glossary for definition of 'jobless household'

- Had no formal qualifications;
- Lacked basic skills;²
- Had a disability;
- Were homeless/living in a hostel at start of provision;
- Were from an ethnic minority background; or
- Had drug or alcohol dependency at start of provision.

Disability or long-term health condition

A physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on a person’s ability to do normal daily activities.

- ‘substantial’ is more than minor or trivial - e.g. it takes much longer than it usually would to complete a daily task like getting dressed
- ‘long-term’ means 12 months or more

Economically Inactive

Those not working, and are either not looking for work, or not available for work. It includes the following groups:

- participants in full or part-time education;
- those not in employment because of sickness or disability;
- those looking after the family or home full time;
- those caring for an adult family member, relative or friend who has any long-standing illness, disability or infirmity;
- those in a voluntary, unpaid role or internship (not a family business); and
- those in prison.

This definition excludes survey respondents who said they were retired.

European Social Fund (ESF)

The European Social Fund (ESF) is the European Union’s main fund for supporting employment in the member states of the European Union as well as promoting economic and social cohesion.

² See glossary for definition of ‘basic skills’

ESF provider	Refers to any or all organisations delivering ESF funded provision, including CFOs, opt-in organisations, direct bid providers, and intermediary bodies or organisations contracted by them to offer provision.
Full-time work	Work for an employer in a paid role 30 hours or more per week.
Fully employed	Participants who were either working full time, or working part time and did not want to be working full time.
Improved labour market situation	Persons in an improved labour market situation are those who are employed when entering ESF support and who, following the support, transited from precarious to stable employment, and/or from under-employment to full employment, and/or have moved to a job requiring higher pay / competencies / skills / qualifications, entailing more responsibilities, and/or received a promotion six months after leaving the ESF operation.
Jobless household	Jobless households are households where no member is in employment, i.e. all members are either unemployed or inactive.
Long-term unemployed	The definition of long-term unemployed varies with age: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Youth long-term unemployed (<25 years of age) = more than six months continuous spell of unemployment• Adult long-term unemployed (25 years of age or more) = more than 12 months continuous spell of unemployment
Part-time work	Work for an employer in a paid role less than 30 hours per week.
Precarious employment	Temporary employment with an employer or a work contract of limited duration.
Stable employment	Work for an employer with a permanent or open-ended contract.
Under-employed	Where an individual is working part-time but wanting full-time work.
Wrap around support	A combination of mentoring and 1:1 support that is tailored to the individual's needs and aims. It aims to address the different barriers or disadvantages individuals face, by offering a flexible approach to

learning opportunities and connecting individuals to other forms of support.

Youth Employment Initiative (YEI)

The Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) is one of the main EU financial resources to support Youth Guarantee schemes.³ The initiative was launched to provide support living in regions where youth unemployment was higher than 25 per cent. It ensures that in parts of Europe where the challenges are most acute, young people can receive targeted support. In England the YEI was aimed at 15-29 year old NEETs (Not in Employment, Education or Training).

³ Under the Youth Guarantee, Member States should put in place measures to ensure that young people up to the age of 25 receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of leaving school or becoming unemployed.

Abbreviations

Acronym	Definition
CFO	Co-Financing Organisation
CSR	Country Specific Recommendations
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
ESF	European Social Fund (unless specified this refers to 2014-2020 ESF programme in England)
ESFA	Education and Skills Funding Agency
EU	European Union
HMPPS	His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service, formerly National Offender Management Service
IP	Investment Priority
LEPs	Local Enterprise Partnerships
MA	Managing Authority
MI	Management Information – refers to participant level information collected by ESF providers
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NLCF	National Lottery Community Fund
PA	Priority Axis
YEI	Youth Employment Initiative

Summary

Introduction

The European Social Fund (ESF) was set up to improve employment opportunities in the European Union (EU) and thereby raise standards of living. The Department for Work and Pensions is the Managing Authority (MA) of ESF funds in England.

The ESF 2014-20 Operational Programme - part of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) Growth Programme for England - aimed to deliver against priorities to increase labour market participation, promote social inclusion and develop the skills of the potential and existing workforce.⁴ As set out in the UK's Withdrawal Agreement with the EU, the ESF programme continued to invest in projects after the transition period for leaving the EU ended on 31 December 2020, but all funding needed to finish by the end of 2023.⁵

The programme is structured around five Priority Axes (PAs) based on the EU's Thematic Objectives. This evaluation focuses on three of these:

- PA1: Inclusive Labour Markets
- PA2: Skills for Growth
- PA4: Covid-19 response

PAs are sub-divided into Investment Priorities (IPs) relating to elements of the programme which Investment Priorities directly benefit individuals and form the basis for evaluation:

- IP 1.1: access to employment for jobseekers and inactive people
- IP 1.2: sustainable integration into the labour market of young people, through ESF funding
- IP 1.3: sustainable integration into the labour market of young people, through Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) funding
- IP 1.4: active inclusion
- IP 1.5: community-led local development strategies
- IP 2.1: increasing the skills of the current workforce, enhancing equal access to lifelong learning
- IP 4.1: addressing the digital divide, by providing access to information and services, through digital technologies

⁴ [European Social Fund Operational Programme: 2014 to 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/european-social-fund-operational-programme-2014-to-2020) at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/european-social-fund-operational-programme-2014-to-2020>

⁵ Separate operational programmes ran in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Provision for the 2014-2020 Operational Programme was delivered through four Co-Financing Organisations, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), DWP, National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF); His Majesty's Prison and Probation Services (HMPPS), Greater London Authority acting as an intermediary body with other organisations such as Greater Manchester Combined Authority having similar status as well as Direct Providers (i.e. projects which bid directly to the Managing Authority).

Research aims (Chapter 1)

The DWP commissioned IFF Research to conduct a study exploring the experiences of people in England who had recently left work-related training courses funded through the ESF, including the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI). Specifically, the research sought to collect information about participants' situation on entry to and six months after they had left ESF provision (to determine long-term outcomes), and participant views on the provision. This information is also needed to meet European Commission requirements to supply Long-Term Results Indicators as set out in the Operational Programme.

The research is part of a wider evaluation programme to provide robust evidence of the impact of the 2014-2020 ESF in England. It is the second survey exploring the characteristics, experiences and employment statuses of ESF and YEI leavers six months after leaving provision (the first survey covered the 2016-19 cohort of leavers).

Methodology (Chapter 1)

The research involved a large-scale quantitative survey with participants who left the ESF and YEI provision between June 2021 and May 2023. The survey took a census approach, contacting all participants whose details were provided. Leavers were contacted at least six months after leaving provision, with all fieldwork across the pilot and nine mainstage waves taking place between December 2021 and December 2023.

In total, 11,592 surveys were completed with programme leavers, with an average response rate of 15%. The majority of these were completed via telephone interview, a small proportion were completed online. The data was then weighted against the total ESF leavers population for the period concerned.

Summary of findings

A wide variety of provision types were offered by Co-Financing Organisations via the funding routes described above, from courses designed to reduce the risk of redundancy to those tackling the barriers to work specifically faced by current, or ex-offenders. With the study covering a wide degree of this provision, any comparisons of outcomes across different types of provision should be made in this context.

Key groups and demographics (Chapter 2)

Approximately 380,000 individuals completed ESF provision and 14,000 completed YEI provision between June 2021 and May 2023.

Investment Priorities (IPs) 1.4 (focused on active inclusion), 1.1 (focused on access to employment), and 2.1 (focused on lifelong learning) accounted for the greatest proportions of leavers: 32%, 28% and 26%, respectively.

The two most prominent types of delivery in the sample were the ESFA CFO accounting for 43% of participants and Direct Providers accounting for 35%.

Each CFO had a corresponding focus by IP(s). NLCF and HMPPS exclusively focused on IP 1.4.⁶ Three quarters (75%) of DWP leavers fell under IP 1.1, with the other quarter under IP 1.4. In contrast Direct Providers and the ESFA had a broader mix, although Direct Providers mostly delivered under IP 1.1 (40%) and ESFA under IP 2.1 (48%).

This relationship means that many of the findings by CFO are likely to be related to differences by IP and their target audiences.

Nearly three-quarters (72%) of participants were classified as having a labour market disadvantage, and half (50%) had a disability or long-term health condition.

Labour market status on entry (Chapter 2)

Nearly half (49%) of participants were unemployed and looking for work and a quarter (25%) were economically inactive on entry to the programme. The remaining quarter (25%) were in employment.

In line with the provision's focus on NEET individuals, just over a quarter (26%) of YEI participants were inactive on entry to their course/programme, and almost all others⁷ were unemployed (73%).

The profile of labour market status within IP and CFO aligned with the focus of each priority:

- Most IP 2.1 participants (94%) were employed on entry, in line with the priority's objective to address the basic skills and increase the skills levels of individuals *in work*; this group made up the majority of individuals employed. Employment rates across all other IPs were extremely low.
- Owing to the ESFA having a large proportion of participants under IP 2.1, this was the only CFO with a considerable proportion of participants employed on

⁶ 100% of NLCF leavers and 99% of HMPPS were IP 1.4. The remaining 1% of HMPPS records were recorded in MI data as IP 1.1, but this is likely a recording error, as all should have been IP 1.4.

⁷ 0.4% of YEI leavers stated that they were employed on provision entry. As unemployment was a criteria for YEI provision, this could indicate either individuals providing inaccurate information on entry to provision, finding work between referral and the start of provision, or human error within the survey.

entry (47%), NLCF participants were the most likely to be economically inactive on programme entry (57%).

Most (83%) participants who were employed on entry were working for an employer in a paid role. The vast majority (92%) of participants in work on entry were “fully employed” i.e. they were working full time or working part time and did not want to be working full time. Only 7% were “under-employed” i.e. they were working part time but wanted to be full time.

Four-fifths (80%) of participants working for an employer were in stable employment, i.e. they were on a permanent or open-ended contract. Almost one in ten (9%) were in ‘precarious employment’, i.e. temporary employment or that with a work contract of limited duration, (including 6% on a fixed-term contract) and 10% were in employment of unknown stability.

Likelihood of being fully employed and/or in stable employment was lower among participants from ethnic minority groups (85% and 61%, respectively), with a disability or long-term health conditions (88% and 74%) or classified as having a disadvantaged labour market situation (90% and 75%).

Half of unemployed participants (49%) had been out of paid employment and looking for work for *at least* six months when they started the programme, with over a third (36%) looking for at least a year. The majority (94%) of participants unemployed on entry cited barriers to work. These included having few jobs available where they lived (50%), lack of recent work experience (45%), disability/health issue/illness (41%) or not having the right qualifications or skills (41%).

Overall, 5% of participants were in training or education on entry to the programme.

Programme experience (Chapter 3)

Support needs and assistance

To ensure success in the context of Covid-19 and online delivery, some provision sought to support individuals with digital access. Two-fifths (40%) of participants had digital support needs; overall, 20% received digital support assistance, 12% would have liked this support but were not offered it, and 8% were offered but did not need this support.

Assistance for other support needs was less common:

- Around a third (34%) of participants had parental/guardianship responsibilities for children under 18. Only 3% of these participants received support/assistance with childcare responsibilities from their provider, the vast majority (91%) were not offered this kind of support.
- One in ten (11%) had caring responsibilities for a family member, relative or friend. As with childcare, only a small minority (7%) received support/assistance in this regard.

- Among those with a mental or physical health condition, or illness expected to last 12 months or more, around three in ten (29%) received support or assistance from their provider to help with these needs.

Regardless of the support need and related assistance, the vast majority (at least 90% across the four types) of participants were satisfied and just under three-quarters with digital needs (66%), childcare (73%) or other caring responsibilities (74%) said they would have had difficulty attending the course without it. A higher proportion (80%) with a disability or health condition said they would have not been able to attend otherwise.

Programme benefits and satisfaction

Most participants had received employment-related support while on the programme. The most common types of advice and support received were around what sorts of work or training they could do (68%), general advice about the world of work (62%), or training and advice in how to look for work (57%).

Views on the provision were broadly very positive:

- Around nine in ten were satisfied with information and guidance they received on what would be delivered through the programme (88%), feedback and guidance they received during the programmes (89%), and relevance of the programme to their specific needs (87%).
- Assessing all the support received from the programme and how they may have benefited since, around eight in ten (81%) expressed satisfaction, with nearly half (48%) saying were very satisfied.
- The majority of participants reported forms of soft skills development: self-confidence (70%), communication skills (66%), motivation to do more training (66%), and motivation to find a new job or seek a promotion (62%).

Employment at six months (Chapter 4)

Half (51%) of individuals were in employment six months after leaving the programme compared to a quarter (25%) at entry. This represents a 26 percentage point increase in employment. The proportion unemployed fell by 32 percentage points from half (49%) to 17%, whilst there was a small rise of 7 percentage points in the proportion who were economically inactive from 25% to 32%.

Employment among ESF-only participants increased by 26 percentage points, from 26% at entry to 52% six months after leaving the programme, while employment among YEI-only participants grew to 31% six months after leaving the programme.

Most commonly, growth in inactivity was due to individuals not working because of sickness or disability (12% of all leavers at six months) or moving into education or training (7%).

In terms of individual-level transitions, just under a quarter (23%) of participants had remained in employment and approaching three in ten (28%) had moved into

employment. Nearly half (46%) of all participants remained unemployed or inactive, and a residual 2% had moved out of employment. Broken down by provision type:

- For ESF participants, 24% had remained in employment, while a further 28% had moved into employment. Just under half (46%) remained unemployed or inactive.
- More than two-thirds (69%) of YEI participants remained unemployed or inactive at six months, while three in ten (31%) under YEI moved into employment.

The proportions of leavers working for an employer, self-employed or on an apprenticeship were largely unchanged compared to programme entry.

There was an increase in the proportion in precarious employment, from 9% to 19% at the six-month point. The proportion under-employed (i.e. wanting to work more hours) also increased from 7% to 10% by the six-month point.

In-work outcomes

Among all participants who were in employment at entry, over a quarter (27%) left with an improved labour market situation at six months. This was predominantly due to a movement from precarious to stable employment (25% of all in precarious employment on entry).

Among leavers that were employed on entry and at the six-month point, around two-fifths (38%) of participants reported being given more responsibility, a slightly lower proportion (33%) reported a requirement for higher skills or competencies in their role, and almost a fifth (19%) required a higher level of qualification.

Employed participants reported a range of other benefits or improvements to their job prospects compared to their situation on entering the programme. More than half of leavers had more opportunities for training (64%), more job satisfaction (60%), improved future pay and promotion prospects (57%). Just under half (49%) reported increased job security (49%) or received an hourly or annual pay rise over the six-month period (47%).

Individuals with improved labour market situations six months after leaving their course were more satisfied with their experience than those without (89% compared to 86%), although the vast majority of individuals without these improvements were still satisfied.

Benefit claimants

At programme entry, four-fifths (80%) of participants who received DWP provision were claiming any state benefits. Six months after leaving the programme, that proportion had reduced to half (50%).

Comparison to the 2016-19 cohort (Chapter 4)

Population and provision type

Compared to the previous cohort, the 2021-23 leavers had a lower proportion of YEI participants, 4% down from 11%, and a higher proportion of ESF participants. This is due to the “front-loaded” nature of YEI delivery within the programming period.

In terms of Investment Priority, the 2021-23 cohort saw a higher proportion of participants under 1.4 and 2.1, and lower proportions under IPs 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3.

A greater proportion of 2021-23 participants were from Direct Providers and the NLCF, whilst a smaller proportion were from the ESFA or the DWP. The proportion from HMPPS remained consistent.

The proportion of participants classed as having a labour market disadvantage rose between the two cohorts, from 65% among 2016-19 leavers to 72% among 2021-23 leavers. The proportion of participants with a disability or long-term health condition also increased between cohorts, from 37% among 2016-19 leavers to half (50%) of participants from 2021-23.

Labour market characteristics

Upon entry to the programme, fewer participants in 2021-23 were in employment (25%), or unemployed and looking for work (49%), compared to 2016-19 (29%; 56%). A greater proportion of 2021-23 participants - a quarter (25%) - were economically inactive, compared to just 15% in 2016-19. A greater proportion of participants in 2021-23 were not working due to sickness or disability (9%), compared to 2016-19 participants (3%).

Satisfaction

Those dissatisfied with the programme continued to be a small minority (7% for the 2021-23 cohort, 8% for 2016-19). Participant satisfaction with the relevance of the programme to their needs, and the feedback and guidance provided increased between 2016-19 and 2021-23. This was despite the Covid-19 pandemic posing challenges to delivery throughout 2021. Satisfaction with the guidance and information about what would be delivered in the programme remained consistent.

Employment growth

The growth in employment between participants beginning the programme and six months after programme completion remained consistent between the two surveys, with growth of 24 percentage points in 2016-19 and 26 percentage points in 2021-23.

The proportion of participants who had moved into employment at the six-month mark also remained consistent, at just over a quarter in both cohorts.

Conclusions (Chapter 6)

Some of the main conclusions that can be drawn from this research are that:

- Overall, the ESF programme continued to successfully support individuals to enter, stay in and develop within the labour market.

- The programme reached the intended participants, predominantly supporting individuals facing labour market disadvantages.
- Furthermore, the characteristics of participants under each Investment Priority aligned with their purpose.
- The proportion of participants facing labour market disadvantages had increased since the previous cohort. In addition, a greater proportion of participants in the 2021-23 cohort were inactive on entry to the programme.
- The distance from labour market was apparent in those facing disadvantages.
- Participant views of the programme remained very positive, indicating that any disruption from Covid-19 was not detrimental to participant experience.
- With the movement to online delivery (in light of Covid-19), unmet needs for digital support were fairly uncommon.
- It was rare for participants to have received support in relation to other potential needs, such as with childcare responsibilities, other caring responsibilities and health conditions. Participants who did receive this support were very satisfied with what was provided, and most thought they would have been unable to participate in the programme without it.
- Employment outcomes were quite common across a range of participants, and in line with those achieved pre-Covid.
- The programme has been particularly beneficial for those in work on entry.
- Overall, the proportion of unemployed participants decreased and the proportion in employment increased six months post-provision. However, the proportion in precarious employment and/or under-employed had increased, reflecting that, although more individuals are in work, the quality of this work could be improved.
- There was a small increase in the proportion of inactive participants, most commonly due to health reasons or individuals having moved into education or training.
- Fewer participants received benefits six months after provision, compared to on entry, indicating that the increase in employment among participants reduced their welfare needs.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The European Social Fund

The European Social Fund (ESF) was set up to improve employment opportunities in the European Union (EU) and thereby raise standards of living.

As part of the withdrawal agreement to leave the EU, the UK remained a member of the ESF until its conclusion in 2023, and needed to continue to meet the legal obligations of evaluation.

The European Social Fund (ESF) 2014-2020 Operational Programme is part of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) Growth Programme for England in 2014-2020. Its aim is to deliver the programme's priorities to increase labour market participation, promote social inclusion and develop the skills of the potential and existing workforce, helping individuals fulfil their potential. Through the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) it also contributes to improving youth employment in areas with higher rates of youth unemployment by providing support for harder to reach NEET (not in employment, education or training) young people.

One of the requirements to evaluate the ESF 2014-2020 programme, is to examine long-term outcomes for people who have left employment and skills provision funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) between 2021-2023.

Objectives of the fund

The ESF is intended to promote the Europe 2020 objectives for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, with a primary focus on the latter.⁸ Specifically, achievement targets related to employment, education and poverty reduction:

- **Employment:** 75% of the population aged 20-64 should be in employment. Aiming to raise to 75% the employment rate for women and men aged 20-64, through the greater participation of young people, older workers and low-skilled workers and the better integration of legal migrants.
- **Social inclusion:** 20 million less people across the EU should be at risk of poverty.
- **Education:** Improving education levels, in particular by aiming to reduce school drop-out rates to less than 10% and by increasing the share of 30-34 years old having completed tertiary or equivalent education to at least 40%.

⁸ European Social Fund England Operational Programme 2014-2020. At: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/750497/ESF_operational_programme_2014_2020.pdf

It also sought to contribute to the achievement of the relevant parts of the 2017 Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs) which are:

- Address skills mismatches, provide for skills progression, including continuing to strengthen the quality of apprenticeships and providing for other funded “Further Education” progression routes.

Investment Priorities

Underpinning the 2014-2020 ESF Programme are 5 ‘Priority Axes’, namely:

- **Priority Axis 1:** Inclusive Labour Markets, which combines activities to address employment and social inclusion issues
- **Priority Axis 2:** Skills for Growth
- **Priority Axis 3:** Technical Assistance
- Priority Axis 4: Covid-19 Response
- **Priority Axis 5:** Flexible Assistance for Territories - Cohesion’s Action for Refugees in Europe (FAST-CARE)

Priority Axis 1 and 4 address two ‘thematic objectives’:

- **Thematic Objective 8:** Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility
- **Thematic Objective 9:** Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination

While Priority Axis 2 addresses one thematic objective:

- **Thematic Objective 10:** Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and life-long learning

Below provides further detail on the Thematic Objectives and Investment Priorities chosen from the regulations which make up Priority Axis 1 and 2.

Within these priorities, certain audiences were identified for the Operational Programme to focus on; these are groups who face relative disadvantages in the labour market:

- people who were unemployed or economically inactive, especially disadvantaged groups such as people with disabilities, lone parents, older workers and ethnic minorities;
- women returners and other groups of women outside the labour market;
- young unemployed people, and especially those not in education, employment or training (NEET);
- people who lack basic skills, whether unemployed or already in the workforce.

Table 1.1 ESF Priority Axes and Investment Priorities

Priority Axis	Thematic Objective	Investment Priority
1	8	1.1 (8i): Access to employment for jobseekers and inactive people, including the long-term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility.
1	8	1.2 (8ii ESF): Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (ESF) in particular those not in employment, education or training (NEET), including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee.
1	8	1.3 (8ii YEI): Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (YEI) in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee.
1	9	1.4 (9i): Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability.
1	9	1.5 (9vi): Community-led local development strategies, which must be community led by Local Action Groups, and implemented through integrated area based Local Development Strategies.
2	10	2.1 (10iii): Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non-formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences.
4	9	4.1 The additional support from this Investment Priority will help digitally marginalised people to gain access to online services and information. It will also improve the capacity of people to engage in the digital society, including helping them to stay engaged throughout any further local, national restrictions due to Covid-19.

Youth Employment Initiative

The Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) is one of the main EU financial resources to support Youth Guarantee schemes.⁹ The initiative was launched to provide support living in regions where youth unemployment was higher than 25% at the outset of the 2014-2020 programme. It ensures that in parts of Europe where the challenges are most acute, young people can receive targeted support.

Participants in YEI provision had to be NEET (not in employment, education or training), aged 15 to 29 and reside in an area eligible for the initiative.

Through England's ESF Operational Programme (OP), flexibility to deliver YEI support to those aged up to 29 was provided to areas eligible for YEI funding. Eligible areas are determined at the level of Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics (NUTS) areas, NUTS being a standard developed and regulated by the EU in order to reference the sub-division of countries for statistical purposes. There are five NUTS2 regions in England eligible for YEI funding: Inner London, Merseyside, Tees Valley & Durham, and West Midlands. In addition, the following NUTS3 areas were classed by the MA as eligible under its 10% flexibility: Leicester, Nottingham, Kingston upon Hull, and Thurrock.

Typically, YEI support includes access to apprenticeships, traineeships, job placements and further education, amongst other employability assistance combined with wrap around¹⁰ support for participants.

Due to lower levels of sample and response from YEI leavers, some analysis undertaken in the 2016-19 report cannot be replicated for the 2021-23 report.

Co-Financing Organisations

The DWP has had overall responsibility for ESF funds in England 2007-2023, and manages the England ESF programme at a national level.

ESF funds are distributed through 'Co-Financing Organisations' (CFOs); public bodies which bring together ESF and domestic funding for employment and skills so that ESF complements national programmes.

Provision for the 2014-2020 Operational Programme was delivered through four Co-Financing Organisations, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), DWP, National Lottery Community Fund (formerly Big Lottery Fund); His Majesty's Prison and Probation Services (HMPPS, replacement of National Offender Management Service or 'NOMS'), as well as Greater London Authority as an intermediary body and other organisations such as Greater Manchester Combined Authority with similar status, as well as Direct Bids.

⁹ Under the Youth Guarantee, Member States should put in place measures to ensure that young people up to the age of 25 receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of leaving school or becoming unemployed.

¹⁰ See glossary for the definition of 'wrap around support'.

Types of provision

The provision on these courses/training programmes can vary considerably. Some participants completed a course or studied towards a certificate in something work-related. Some did courses in English, maths or computer skills or had had training in how to look for work. Others received mentoring, coaching or other personalised support in work-related activities.¹¹

Research objectives

As part of the ESF 2014-2020 Operational Programme, the DWP (as Managing Authority) was required to monitor and evaluate the programme. As part of meeting this requirement, the DWP commissioned IFF Research to conduct a study exploring the experiences of people in England who had recently left work-related training courses funded through the ESF, including the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI). This first study took place in 2017-2020, interviewing those who had left ESF programmes between 2016 and 2019.¹² The second study was conducted from November 2021 to December 2023, interviewing people who left ESF programmes between June 2021 and May 2023. This was to ensure the evaluation captured experiences from participants throughout the programme, as required in the guidance. This report details the findings of the second study.

The main research aims were to:

1. To collect information about participants' situation six months after they had left ESF provision; the six-month point is key because it is on activities at this point that the ESF long-term indicators are based¹³.
2. To measure the effectiveness of ESF and YEI for example through hard outcomes, such as employment situation, job progression etc., as well as participants' perception of their own development (skills learned etc.).
3. To produce data on the experience and effectiveness of ESF and YEI, including participants' perspectives. This will be used to inform ESF and YEI evaluations on effectiveness, efficiency and impact.

Due to the timing of the two studies, the second study also aimed to assess the effect of Covid-19 on ESF and YEI outcomes, as well as examining any differences in delivery and their impact.

In addition to meeting requirements to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the current ESF programme, the results will help the UK Government to decide which

¹¹ A detailed list of types of support across ESF can be found in the *European Social Fund impact evaluation: research design and scoping study* at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/european-social-fund-impact-evaluation-research-design-and-scoping-study>

¹² [European Social Fund and Youth Employment Initiative Leavers Survey Report 2016-2019 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/european-social-fund-and-youth-employment-initiative-leavers-survey-report-2016-2019) at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/european-social-fund-and-youth-employment-initiative-leavers-survey-report-2016-2019>

¹³ These long-term indicators are a European Commission requirement.

types of work-related training courses to fund in the future now we have left the European Union, and to improve the services they provide.

The research is part of a wider evaluation programme to provide robust evidence of the impact of the 2014-2020 ESF in England and generate evidence about what works and why, in helping disadvantaged groups and those furthest from the labour market to move closer to it, gain sustainable employment, attain skills and progress in-employment.¹⁴

Methodology

The research involved a large-scale quantitative survey with participants who had left the ESF and YEI provision between June 2021 and May 2023. Interviews were predominantly conducted by computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI), however an online survey option was offered to some participants where telephone numbers were not provided. This often included participants who completed their course during a prison sentence and would therefore not have ready access to telephones. The online option was also available to any participant with access needs.

This section provides an overview of key sample and methodology information, further detail can be found in the Technical Appendix (Appendix A).

Sampling

All ESF and YEI providers were required to record and routinely share individual participant contact details with the DWP to support monitoring and evaluation. Following a matching process, sample was then transferred from the DWP to IFF Research.

A total of ten sample batches were transferred to IFF, covering nine survey waves, and a separate batch of 'top-up' sample. This top-up sample, provided in February 2023, comprised records which matched the leave dates of the previous waves, but had not been supplied to DWP in time to be included previously. Whilst this would mean interviewing leavers at a slightly longer interval than intended, e.g. eight months after course completion rather than six, the decision was made to use this sample, due to low sample volumes so far. This first batch of top-up sample was monitored for any issues, such as poor participant recollection or differences in answer trends compared to those at the standard six-month interval. However, no issues were found, and as this boosted the numbers of completed interviews considerably, the two final batches of sample also included top-ups from the previous wave as well as the standard records for that wave.

Sample was cleaned and records removed if any of the following applied:

- No address (as unsuitable for mailout)

¹⁴ All ESF evaluation reports are available on GOV.UK as part of the DWP research series at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/research-reports>

- Records with no phone number nor email address
- Leaver name incomplete
- Leaver under 16 at the time of fieldwork
- Repeat leaver (i.e. included in a previous sample batch due to completion of earlier provision) or duplication within the same batch
- Leave date too early or too late (unless part of a top-up batch)

A census approach was taken across all waves in order to maximise completion rates. Further information on sample transfers and cleaning can be found in the Technical Appendix (Appendix A).

Table 1.2 Overview of sample received and starting sample, by wave

Wave	Sample supplied	Starting sample	% of sample supplied used
Wave 1	7,629	5,675	74%
Wave 2	7,801	4,880	63%
Wave 3	8,506	7,672	90%
Wave 4	7,667	6,895	90%
Wave 5	2,907	2,680	92%
Wave 6	6,586	6,056	92%
Wave 7	9,209	8,306	90%
Wave 8	13,353	11,404	85%
Wave 9	3,423	3,067	90%
Top-up 1	13,977	12,881	92%
Top-up 2	5,402	4,707	87%
Top-up 3	4,846	4,132	85%
Total	91,306	78,355	86%

All sample with a phone number was sent an introductory letter two weeks in advance of fieldwork starting to notify them of the research, its objectives, and giving them an opportunity to opt out via email or by leaving a voicemail message.

Records with no phone number that did have an email address were sent an email introducing the research and inviting them to take part online via a survey link.

Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was designed to address the research objectives and collect the necessary indicator data across the priorities. Table 1.3 provides an overview of questionnaire coverage, the full questionnaire is presented in Appendix B.

Table 1.3 Questionnaire summary

Section	Coverage of questions
Screener	Introducing the survey and confirming eligibility.

Section A: Status when started course	What the main activity of the participant was immediately before starting their provision. Details of employment, unemployment, qualification and skills, and benefits claimed (for DWP provision) were also collected.
Section B: Experience of the course	Participant support needs (child and other carer responsibilities, disability) and assistance, and digital support provided during the Covid-19 pandemic. Work-related skills and support gained, and satisfaction with the provision. For YEI leavers, details of traineeships.
Section C: Status six months after completing course	What participants were doing six months after completing their provision; details on employment, unemployment, qualification and skills, and benefits claimed (for DWP provision) were also collected.
Section D: YEI leavers	Job offers and opportunities in the six months following provision completion, among YEI leavers only.
Section E: Demographics information	Capturing information on protected characteristics including sex and gender, age, ethnicity, long-term limiting illness (LTLI), and sexual orientation, as well as living situation.
Section F: Recontact questions	Whether participants are willing for their responses to be linked to other DWP held administrative records.

Fieldwork

Mainstage fieldwork took place across nine waves between November 2021 and December 2023. In total, 11,592 interviews were completed with ESF and YEI leavers across the pilot and mainstage, with an average conversion rate of 15% across all interviews. Across telephone sample the conversion rate was 22%, whilst online sample was 2%.

Table 1.4 provides breakdown of the fieldwork dates, starting sample, number of completes and conversion rates for each wave.

Table 1.4 Fieldwork dates, volumes and conversation rates by wave

Wave	Fieldwork start dates	Starting sample	Number of completes	Conversion rate (%)
Wave 1	20/11/21	5,675	648	11%
Wave 2	14/03/22	4,880	955	20%
Wave 3	09/05/22	7,672	961	13%
Wave 4	08/08/22	6,895	1,059	15%
Wave 5	26/11/22	2,680	516	19%
Wave 6	14/02/23	6,056	857	14%

Wave 7	10/05/23	8,306	1,396	17%
Wave 8	12/08/23	11,404	1,771	16%
Wave 9	06/11/23	3,067	267	9%
Top-up 1	06/03/23	12,881	2,069	16%
Top-up 2	12/08/23	4,707	691	15%
Top-up 3	06/11/23	4,132	402	10%
Total		78,355	11,592	15%

Table 1.5 shows the breakdown of sample and interview volumes, conversion rates and proportions of all completes by key subgroups. Due to participant and sample volumes, the vast majority of interviews were with ESF leavers (YEI and ESF leavers had similar response rates).

IP 2.1 accounted for the largest proportion of survey completes, followed by IP 1.1.

By CFO, the ESFA account for almost half of completed surveys due to participant and sample volumes. As in the previous survey, HMPPS sample produced the lowest conversion rate; contact information was more likely to be invalid / out of date as many of these individuals had changed address etc. on leaving prison or their subsequent accommodation.

Table 1.5 Sample and interview volumes and response rates, by sample type, IP and CFO

	Starting sample (n)	Interviews achieved	Conversion rate (%)	% of all completes
Sample type				
YEI leavers	3,615	426	12%	4%
ESF leavers	74,740	11,166	15%	96%
Investment Priority				
1.1 (8i)	17,912	3,736	21%	32%
1.2 (8ii ESF)	10,142	910	9%	8%
1.3 (8ii YEI)	3,615	426	12%	4%
1.4 (9i)	12,037	2,323	19%	20%
1.5 (9vi)	220	67	30%	1%
2.1 (10iii)	34,429	4,130	12%	36%
CFO				
HMPPS	2,064	119	6%	1%
DWP	2,351	511	22%	4%
Direct Provider	24,619	4,198	17%	36%
NLCF	4,057	1,045	26%	9%

ESFA	45,264	5,719	13%	49%
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Structure of the report

The remaining report chapters are structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2** introduces the population profile, including the breakdown and interplay between sample type, demographics, Investment Priority and CFO. It also looks at the status of individuals on entry to provision in terms of demographics, employment, skills level and benefits claimed.
- **Chapter 3** looks at experiences of the provision, including assistance for those with support needs, work-related skills gained and support/guidance provided, and overall satisfaction with the provision. It also examines the digital support provided during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- **Chapter 4** looks at what leavers are doing at the six-month point and how this compares to what they were doing on entry to the programme. It identifies who had an improved labour market situation, as well as details of employment and training/education.
- **Chapter 5** compares the demographics, experiences and outcomes of the 2016-19 (previously surveyed) leavers to the current 2021-23 leavers.
- **Chapter 6** provides conclusions.
- **Appendix A** is the Technical Appendix.
- **Appendix B** contains the full questionnaire.

Reporting conventions

Unless otherwise stated, all differences commented on in this report are significant at the 95% confidence level, meaning that we can be 95% confident that a reported difference is a real one, as opposed to one resulting from the fact that we conducted a survey rather than a census of participants.

Data are not presented where unweighted base sizes are less than 50. In particular, this reduces the scope for YEI sub-group comparisons for some questions.

Differences by CFO have been highlighted throughout this report. However, any comparisons made in this way should be considered in the context of the varying nature of the provision delivered by the individual CFOs.

In the tables, the following conventions apply:

- Percentages are based on the weighted data, whilst bases provided are the unweighted total of participants who answered the question.
- '<1%' greater than zero but less than 0.5%.

- Asterisks (*) show results significantly above the average results for all other leavers.
- Occasionally percentages may sum to 99% or 101% due to rounding.

Chapter 2: Demographics and status upon entry to provision

This chapter describes the demographic profile of the population of leavers from the programme. This includes breakdowns by key sub-groups: Investment Priority (IP) and Co-Financing Organisations (CFO), demographics, and economic status upon entry to the programme. The interplay between different variables is also highlighted where relevant, to assist with interpretation of the survey findings.

Chapter summary

ESF leavers (rather than YEI leavers) make up the vast majority of the population. This is largely due to most of the YEI delivery being front-loaded within the programme and therefore a majority of YEI participants had already left by this wave.

Leavers were most likely to fall under Investment Priorities (IPs) 1.1, 1.4 or 2.1 and participating in provision from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) or Direct Providers. The ESFA and Direct Providers covered a range of different IPs, whereas the other CFOs each focused exclusively or mainly on one IP.

There were clear differences in demographics by IP. For example, IP 1.2 and 1.3 target younger people and all leavers were under 30 on entry, while participants from other IPs tended to be over 30. IP 2.1 had a notably lower proportion of participants who had a disability or long-term health problem, or who were disadvantaged, compared to other IPs. IP 1.5 had a higher proportion from transitional or less developed regions.

As with demographics, there were patterns by IP in relation to economic status on entry, largely in line with the target audiences for each. The vast majority of IP 2.1 participants were employed on entry, in line with the priority's objective to address the basic skills and increase the skills levels of individuals in work; this group make up the majority of individuals employed.

On entry, women were less likely to be employed than men, and those from ethnic minority groups less so than White British / White Irish participants.

Over seven in ten were classified as disadvantaged, and half had a disability or long-term health condition. Participants within these groups were much less likely to be employed than individuals without these characteristics.

The vast majority of participants in work on entry were "fully employed", i.e. they were working full time or were working part-time and did not want to be working full time. Work tended to be paid and for an employer. Around four-fifths of these individuals working for an employer were in stable employment. Around half of unemployed individuals met the criteria for long-term unemployment.

Over half of participants were receiving any state benefits immediately before starting the programme, rising to over six in ten among YEI participants.

Cohort 2021-2023 population

MI showed that nearly 370,000 individuals completed ESF provision and 14,000 completed YEI provision between June 2021 and May 2023, as shown in Table 2.1.

Overall, Investment Priorities (IPs) 1.1, 1.4 and 2.1 accounted for the greatest proportion of leavers. ESFA was the most prominent Co-Financing Organisation (CFO), accounting for over four in ten (43%) of the population, followed by Direct Providers who provided over a third (35%).

Table 2.1 Volume of leavers between June 2021 and May 2023, by IP and CFO

	Total numbers of leavers	Proportion of population
Total	381,912	100%
Sample type:		
ESF only	368,010	96%
YEI only	13,902	4%
Investment Priority:		
1.1 (8i)	105,163	28%
1.2 (8ii)	38,840	10%
1.3 (8ii YEI)	13,902	4%
1.4 (9i)	124,022	32%
1.5 (9vi)	2,287	1%
2.1 (10i)	97,698	26%
CFO:		
HMPPS	9,786	3%
DWP	18,028	5%
Direct Provider	133,735	35%
NLCF	54,301	14%
ESFA	166,063	43%

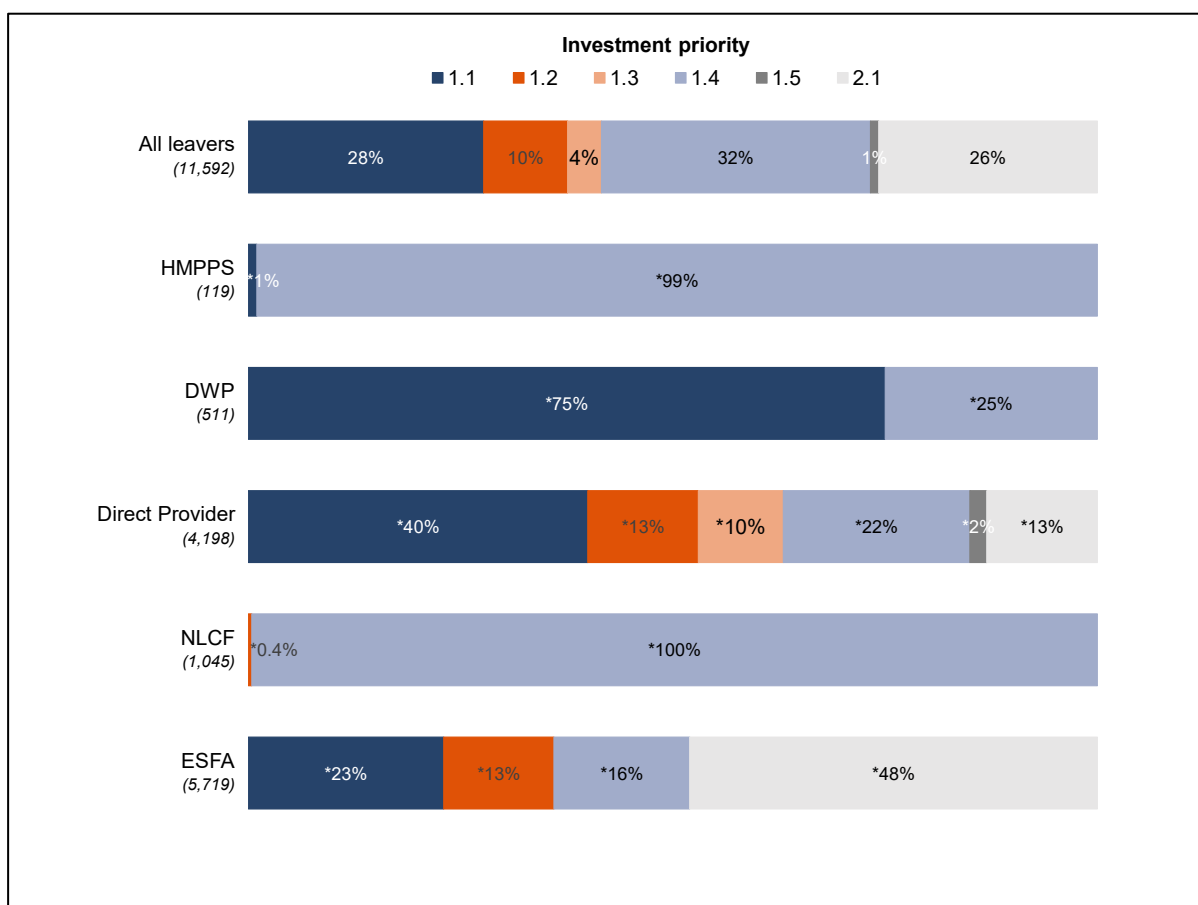
Column percentages. Data from programme monitoring information.

The vast majority of respondents were ESF participants (96%) with only 4% being YEI participants. Investment Priorities (IPs) 1.4 (focused on active inclusion), 1.1 (focused on access to employment), and 2.1 (focused on lifelong learning) accounted for the greatest proportions of leavers: 32%, 28% and 26%, respectively.

The two most prominent CFOs in the sample were the ESFA accounting for 43% of participants and Direct Providers accounting for 35%.

The interaction between IP and CFO is shown in Figure 2.1. Some CFOs are focused entirely on particular IPs. For example, NLCF are entirely focused on IP 1.4 (100%) and HMPPS almost exclusively so (99%). Three quarters (75%) of DWP leavers fall under IP 1.1, with the other quarter under IP 1.4. In contrast Direct Providers and the ESFA have a broader mix; Direct Providers being most often under IP 1.1 (40%) and ESFA being most often under IP 2.1 (48%). This means that many of the variations in findings by CFO are likely to be related to differences by IP and their target audiences (demographic breakdowns by IP are discussed in the next section of this chapter).

Figure 2.1 Investment Priority breakdown within CFO



Base: All leavers (11,592).

Asterisks show results significantly above the average results for all other leavers.

Participant demographics

The demographic profile of participants is presented in Table 2.2. Overall, three fifths (59%) of leavers were male and two fifths (41%) were female. Four fifths (79%) were White British / White Irish and one fifth (21%) were from ethnic minority groups.

These profiles were consistent for ESF and YEI leavers.

A qualifying criterion for a YEI funded course or programme participant is to be under age 30 so the age profile of YEI leavers was much younger, with the majority (63%) aged 18-24. The majority of ESF participants were aged 25-54 (65%).

It is worth noting that those from ethnic minority groups had a younger age profile than did white participants, with fewer aged 55+ (5% versus 12% respectively).

Table 2.2 Participant demographics, by sample type

Audience	All	ESF only	YEI only
<i>Base:</i>	(11,592)	(11,166)	(426)
Gender:			
Male	59%	59%	59%
Female	41%	41%	40%
Age:			
15-17	6%	5%	24%*
18-24	20%	19%	63%*
25-54	63%	65%*	13%
55+	11%	11%*	0%
Ethnicity:			
White British / White Irish	79%	79%	80%
Ethnic minority group	21%	21%	20%

Column percentages. Base: All leavers (11,592)

Asterisks show results significantly different to the average results for all other leavers.

Over seven in ten (72%) were classified as disadvantaged; this proportion was higher among YEI participants (77%) than among ESF participants (72%). Individuals were classified as disadvantaged participants¹⁵ if they:

- Lived in a 'jobless household';¹⁶
- Were a single adult household with dependent children;
- Had no formal qualifications;
- Lacked 'basic skills';¹⁷
- Were homeless/living in a hostel at start of provision;
- Were from an ethnic minority background; or

¹⁵ European Commission, *Output and result indicator definitions guidance for the European Social Fund*. At:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/746927/output_and_results_indicator_definitions.pdf

¹⁶ See glossary for definition of 'jobless household'

¹⁷ See glossary for definition of 'basic skills'

- Had drug or alcohol dependency at start of provision.

In terms of category of region, 70% of participants were from more developed regions, 28% from transitional regions and 2% from less developed regions.

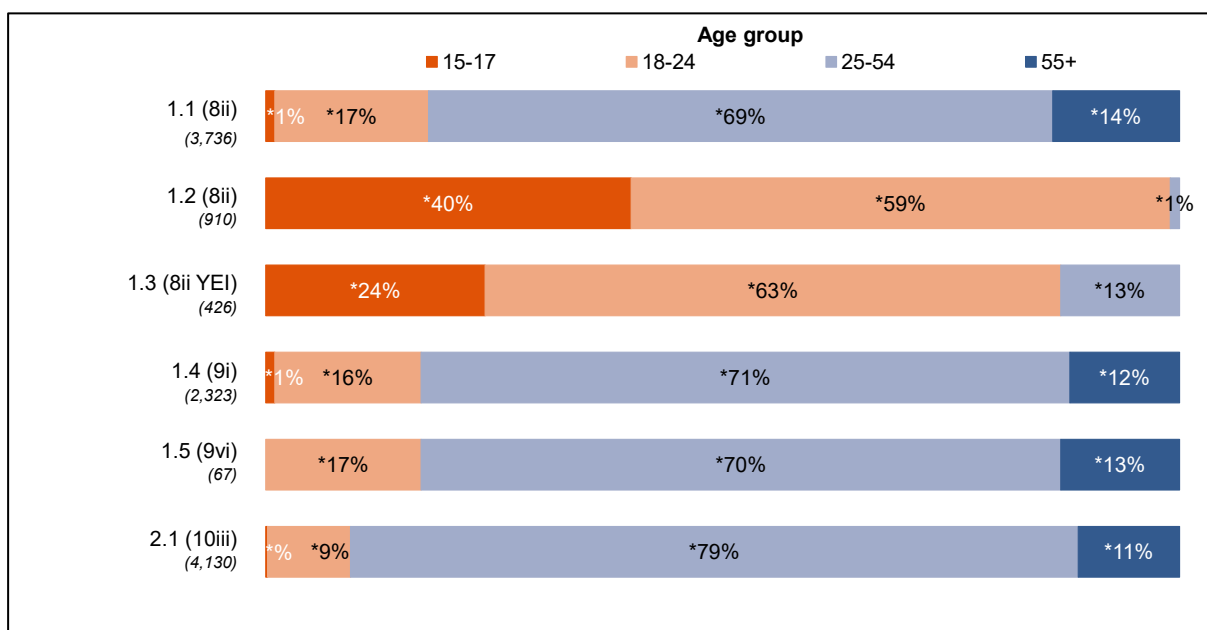
Half (50%) had a disability or long-term health condition and this was higher among YEI participants (58%) than among ESF participants (50%).

Demographics by IP

There were some notable demographic differences by IP, most markedly by age, disadvantage and disability. All demographic differences are explored below.

In line with their target audiences, leavers in IP 1.2 and 1.3 fell into the younger age groups on entry to the programme. The majority of participants in IPs 1.1, 1.4, 1.5 and 2.1 were aged over 25 years old.

Figure 2.2 Participants' age, by IP



Base: All leavers (11,592).

Asterisks show results significantly different to the average results for all other leavers.

Among all leavers, three fifths (59%) were male, but this proportion was higher under IP 1.4 (64%) and lower under IP 2.1 (52%). Among all leavers, a fifth (21%) were from minority ethnic groups, but this proportion was higher under IP 1.1 (27%) and 1.2 (24%) and much lower under IP 2.1 (13%) and 1.5 (4%).

Participants under IP 2.1 were much less likely than those in all other IPs to have a disability or long-term health condition, or to be disadvantaged (21% and 44% respectively). The highest proportion of disadvantaged participants was under IP 1.5 (93%).

The proportion of leavers from less developed regions was much higher in IP 1.5 (27%) than in all the other IPs. The proportion from transitional regions was much higher than average in IP 1.5 (65%) and IP 1.3 (59%).

A full breakdown of demographic characteristics within each IP can be found in Tables A.2.1- 2 in Appendix A.

Labour market characteristics

Half (49%) of participants were unemployed and looking for work and a quarter (25%) were economically inactive on entry to the programme. The remaining quarter (25%) were in employment.

However, in line with the provision's focus on NEET individuals, just over a quarter (26%) of YEI participants, were inactive on entry to their course/programme, and almost all others¹⁸ were unemployed (73%).

Economic inactivity was for a variety of reasons: 9% of all participants were not working because of sickness or disability, 5% were in education or training, 3% were looking after the family or home, 2% were caring for an adult family member, relative or friend, 1% were working in a voluntary unpaid role or internship, and less than 0.5% said they were retired. On entry, ESF participants were more likely than YEI participants to be not in employment because of sickness or disability (10% versus 6%) or in a voluntary role (1% versus 0.2%) and less likely to be in education or training (5% versus 8%) or caring for relative or friend (2% versus 4%).

Entry status varied across IP and CFO, which one might expect given the different target audiences, themes and intended support provided under each (Table 2.3).

Employment rates across all IPs were extremely low, apart from IP 2.1 participants of whom 94% were employed. This is consistent with this priority's objective to address basic skills and increase the skills levels of individuals *in work*; this group accounted for the vast majority of individuals who were employed.

Nearly half (48%) of ESFA participants were under IP 2.1 therefore it is not surprising that nearly half (47%) of ESFA participants were employed. Among Direct Provider participants 13% were employed, but for the other CFO categories 3% or fewer were employed. NLCF and HMPPS participants were the CFOs most likely to be economically inactive on programme entry (57% and 44% inactive respectively). DWP and Direct Provider participants had the highest proportion who were unemployed on programme entry (71% and 58% respectively).

Table 2.3 Employment status on programme entry, by sample type, IP and CFO

Audience	<i>Base</i>	Inactive	Unemployed	In employment
All leavers	(11,592)	25%	49%	25%

Sample type:

¹⁸ 0.4% of YEI leavers stated that they were employed on provision entry. As unemployment was a criteria for YEI provision, this could indicate either individuals providing inaccurate information on entry to provision, finding work between referral and the start of provision, or human error within the survey.

ESF only	(11,166)	25%	49%	26%*
YEI only	(426)	26%	73%*	<1%
Investment Priority:				
1.1 (8i)	(3,736)	19%	79%*	2%
1.2 (8ii)	(910)	34%	65%	1%
1.3 (8ii YEI)	(426)	26%	73%*	<1%
1.4 (9i)	(2,323)	45%*	54%	2%
1.5 (9vi)	(67)	47%*	48%	5%
2.1 (10i)	(4,130)	2%	3%	94%*
CFO:				
HMPPS	(119)	44%	53%	3%
DWP	(511)	27%	71%*	2%
Direct Provider	(4,198)	29%	58%	13%
NLCF	(1,045)	57%*	42%	1%
ESFA	(5,719)	11%	42%	47%*

Row percentages. Base: All leavers (11,592).

Asterisks show results significantly different to the average results for all other leavers.

At programme entry, men were more likely than women to be unemployed (53% versus 44%, respectively), whilst women were more likely than men to be in employment (29% versus 23% of men) or economically inactive (27% versus 24% of men).

As might be expected, 15–17-year-olds were much more likely than all other age groups to be economically inactive (60%). Those aged 18-24 were typically unemployed (68%); whilst those aged over 25 had a more mixed employment status but with the unemployed still being the largest category, accounting for close to half (44%) of participants. Participants from ethnic minorities were less likely than White British / White Irish participants to be employed at programme entry (17% versus 28%), and more likely to be unemployed (58% versus 47%).

Those with a long-term disability or health condition were slightly more likely than those without to be unemployed (52% versus 47%) but much more likely to be economically inactive (37% versus 14%), as a result only one in ten (11%) of disabled participants were employed on programme entry, compared with four in ten (40%) of the non-disabled.

Disadvantaged participants were far less likely than the non-disadvantaged to be employed on programme entry (16% versus 50%), with heightened proportions who were unemployed (54% versus 37%) or economically inactive (30% versus 13%).

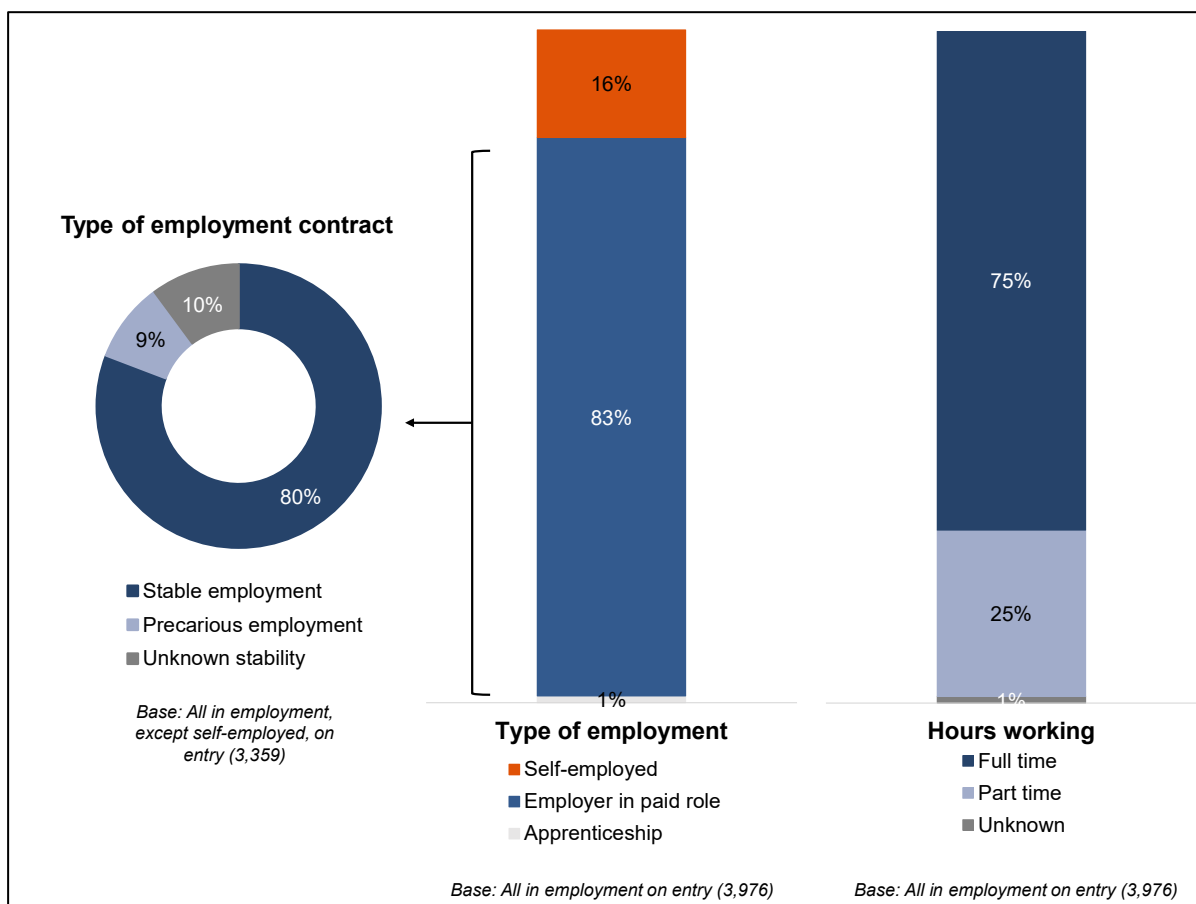
Those from more developed or transitional regions were more likely to be unemployed (51% and 46% respectively); whereas those from less developed regions were split evenly between inactive, unemployed and employed (34%, 33%, 34%, respectively).

A full breakdown of employment status on entry by demographic characteristics can be found in Tables A.2.3-4 in Appendix A.

In employment on entry

Participants who were in employment on entry to the programme were asked their type of employment, their type of contract and hours worked; (and if they were on furlough or the Self Employment Income Support Scheme at the time, they were to consider their contractual situation before they went on furlough). The results are summarised in Figure 2.3 and explored below.

Figure 2.3 Type of employment, hours worked and employment contracts, on entry



More than four-fifths (83%) of participants who were employed on entry were working for an employer in a paid role, whilst one in six (16%) were self-employed. Only 1% were employed as an apprentice.

Three quarters (75%) of all employed participants were working full time and a quarter were working part time (25%). Men were more likely than women to be working full time (87% versus 61%);

The vast majority (92%) of participants in work on entry were “fully employed” i.e. they were working full time or working part-time and did not want to be working full time. Only 7% were “under-employed” i.e. they were working part time but wanted to be full time; 1% were unsure.

Excluding those who were self-employed, the contract status of those employed on entry was 80% in ‘stable employment’ i.e. they were on a permanent or open-ended contract, 9% were in ‘precarious employment’ (including 6% on a fixed-term contract) and 10% were in employment of unknown stability.

Some participants were less likely to be either in stable employment of fully employed:

- Participants from ethnic minority groups were less likely than White British / White Irish participants to be in stable employment (61% versus 83%) or fully employed (85% versus 93%).
- Those with a disability or long-term health condition were less likely than those without to be in stable employment (74% compared to 82%), or to be fully employed (88% versus 93%).
- Disadvantaged participants were less likely than the non-disadvantaged to be in stable employment (75% versus 84%), or fully employed (90% versus 94%).

Unemployed but looking for work on entry

Half of unemployed participants (49%) had been out of paid employment and looking for work for *at least* six months when they started the programme, with over a third (36%) looking for at least a year; 7% had never had a job.

Overall, just under half (47%) of unemployed individuals were long-term unemployed, meaning they were either under the age of 25 and had been looking for work for at least six months or over the age of 25 and had been looking for work for 12 months.

Long-term unemployment was slightly more common among YEI only participants (58%) than ESF participants (46%).

Women were slightly more likely than men to have been long-term unemployed on entry (49% versus 46%). The proportion who were long-term unemployed on entry decreased with increasing age: 57% of 15-17s, 52% of 18-24s, 44% of 25-54s and 44% of those aged 55+. White British / White Irish participants were more likely to be long-term unemployed than those from ethnic minority groups (49% versus 42%).

As well as showing lower rates of employment overall, among the unemployed group, disadvantaged individuals and those with a disability or long-term health condition were more likely to be long-term unemployed than individuals without these characteristics (49% versus 39%, and 56% versus 37% respectively), demonstrating the difficulties these participants face gaining employment.

Barriers to work

The vast majority (84%) of participants who were unemployed on entry cited at least one of the prospect- or logistic-related barriers to work shown in Table 2.4. The most common barriers, each cited by more than four in ten, were few jobs available where they lived (50%), lack of recent work experience (45%), disability/health issue/illness (41%) or not having the right qualifications or skills (41%).

Lack of recent work experience was the top barrier for YEI participants (65%) and they cited this more so than ESF participants (44%). YEI participants were also more likely to say they did not have the right qualifications or skills. ESF participants were more likely than YEI participants to cite the following barriers: Covid-19 restrictions, criminal convictions, issues with citizenship/visas, or alcohol dependency.

Table 2.4 Prospect- and logistical barrier to work for the unemployed, by sample type

Barrier	All	ESF only	YEI only
<i>Base:</i>	<i>(4,672)</i>	<i>(4,385)</i>	<i>(287)</i>
There were few jobs available where you lived	50%	50%	53%
You had a lack of recent experience of working	45%	44%	65%*
You had a disability/ health issue/ illness	41%	40%	44%
You did not have the right qualifications or skills	41%	40%	48%*
You had problems with transport or the cost of transport	36%	36%	38%
Lockdowns or other restrictions caused by Covid-19	34%	35%*	29%
You could not find suitable or affordable childcare	14%	14%	15%
You needed to take care of an elderly, ill or disabled friend or relative	12%	12%	10%
Any criminal convictions	7%	7%*	2%
There were issues with your citizenship/ visa status	3%	3%*	1%
Alcohol dependency	3%	3%*	1%
Drugs dependency	2%	2%	1%
None of the above	6%	6%	4%

Column percentages. Base: All unemployed on entry who completed survey by telephone (4,672)
Asterisks show results significantly different to the average results for all other leavers.

Inactive on entry

Those who were economically inactive at programme entry were asked whether they wanted a regular paid job, either full-time or part-time. Over six in ten (63%) said ‘yes’ they did, whilst three in ten (29%) said ‘no’; 6% were not sure.

The proportion who wanted a regular paid job varied slightly by demographics. It was *higher* among men than women (67% versus 59%), among participants from ethnic minorities than White British / White Irish participants (72% versus 61%), among the non-disabled than those with a disability or long-term health condition (74% versus 59%), and the non-disadvantaged than the disadvantaged (75% versus 61%).

Education status on entry

One in twenty (5%) participants were in education or training on entry to the programme. Those who were in education or training immediately before starting the programme were in a variety of settings, as Table 2.5 shows, although most often attending college (44%) – either full time (29%) or part time (15%). A quarter (25%) were in school.

Table 2.5 Types of education or training doing immediately before starting the course/ support programme

Type of training	Proportion of all in education or training
<i>Base:</i>	(498)
In college full time – 16 hours or more per week	29%
In school	25%
In college part time – less than 16 hours per week	15%
In university	15%
Online course	3%
On a course whilst in work	2%
On a traineeship	1%
Not in education or training	<1%
Other	5%
Don't know	4%

Column percentages. Base: All in education or training on entry to the programme (498)

Benefits claimed on entry

Over half (55%) were receiving any state benefits immediately before starting the support programme. YEI participants were more likely to be in receipt of benefits than ESF participants (63% versus 55%).

Receipt of any benefits varied considerably by IP category: highest under IP 1.5 (80%), and also above average under IP 1.4 (73%), IP 1.1 (73%) and IP 1.3 (63%), whilst below average under IP 1.2 (48%) and IP 2.1 (15%).

The proportion on any state benefits varied by other demographics as follows:

- those aged 18-24 or 25-54 were more likely to be on benefits (61% and 57% respectively) and those aged 15-17 less so (21%)
- White British / White Irish participants were more likely than those from ethnic minority groups (57% versus 50%)
- Those with a disability or long-term health condition were much more likely than those without (70% versus 41%)
- The disadvantaged were much more likely than the non-disadvantaged (62% versus 37%)

Among those receiving any state benefits, Universal Credit was the benefit they were most likely to be receiving (71%), with smaller proportions in receipt of Jobseekers' Allowance (11%), Employment Support Allowance (8%) or Personal Independence Payment (6%). The other benefits were each received by 2% or fewer (Table 2.6).

Table 2.6 Benefits claimed on entry

Type of benefit	Proportion of leavers
<i>Base:</i>	<i>(11,592)</i>
Receiving any state benefits	55%
<i>Base: All receiving any benefits</i>	<i>(5,835)</i>
Universal credit	71%
Jobseeker's Allowance	11%
Employment and Support Allowance	8%
Personal Independence Payment	6%
Tax Credit	2%
Income Support	2%
Carers Allowance	2%
Child Benefit	1%
Disability Living Allowance	1%

Incapacity Benefit	1%
Housing Benefit	1%
Council Tax Benefit	<1%
Other	<1%
Don't know	2%

Column percentages. Base: All leavers(11,592). All receiving any state benefits (5,835). Possible to select multiple options.

Asterisks show results significantly different to the average results for all other leavers.

DWP participants

Focusing just on participants who received DWP provision, 80% of them received any state benefits, 16% said they did not and 4% were unsure. The proportion of DWP participants receiving specific benefits is shown in Table 2.7¹⁹.

The benefit which DWP participants were more likely to be receiving on entry was Universal Credit (64%). This was followed by Jobseeker's Allowance (10%), Employment and Support Allowance (3%), Personal Independence Payment (2%) and Housing Benefit (1%). All other benefits were each received by fewer than 1% of DWP participants.

Table 2.7 Specific benefits claimed by DWP participants at programme entry

	Proportion of DWP leavers
<i>Base:</i>	<i>(511)</i>
Any benefits	80%
Universal Credit	64%
Jobseeker's Allowance	10%
Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)	3%
Personal Independence Payment (PIP)	2%
Housing Benefit	1%
Tax Credit	<1%
Income Support	<1%
Child Benefit	<1%
Council Tax Benefit	<1%
Incapacity benefit	<1%
Other	<1%
Don't know	1%

¹⁹ Note that these figures are expressed as a proportion of all DWP participants, not as a percentage of all DWP participants who were receiving any benefits.

Column percentages. Base: All DWP participants (511)

Chapter 3: Course/programme experience

This chapter reports on leavers' experiences and opinions of the course or programme they attended. First it reports on participants' views on the programme content and relevance. Then it explores the digital support provided during the Covid-19 pandemic, and other types of individual support needs i.e. for leavers who had childcare or other caring responsibilities, or a long-term health condition. The impact on work-related skills is then evaluated and participants' overall levels of satisfaction with the provision.

Chapter summary

Overall, leavers were very positive about the ESF and YEI provision and support they had received during participation; the majority (at least four in five) were satisfied with all aspects, such as guidance received before and during, the relevance of the programme, and how they have benefitted from the programme since.

Four in ten had digital support needs in order to help them access their programme during the Covid-19 pandemic; half of whom said they received digital support or assistance.

Looking at more general support needs, four in ten had a long-term physical or mental health condition, a third had childcare responsibilities, and one in ten had other caring responsibilities. Participants with parental or other caring responsibilities were rarely offered support or assistance in this regard through their provider. Offers and uptake of support were more common among those with a long-term health condition; three in ten received support.

Across all types of participation support provided, the majority said that they would have had difficulties attending without it, and the vast majority were satisfied with the support provided.

Leavers typically reported benefits to their soft skills, including self-confidence, communication skills, motivation to do more training and/or to find a new job or seek a promotion. Likewise, the majority always reported positive impacts on job prospects. Nine in ten of those who were in employment on entry to the provision thought that it had helped them in the work environment; whilst eight in ten of those who were unemployed or inactive on entry felt that it had helped move them into or nearer to employment.

Views on the programme

Course/programme design

Programme leavers were generally very satisfied with the guidance for and relevance of their provision. Nearly nine in ten were satisfied with each of: guidance and information about what would be delivered through the support programme (88%), the relevance of the programme to their needs (87%) and the feedback and guidance received during the programme (89%).

As shown in Table 3.1, ESF and YEI participants were aligned in their satisfaction levels. Leavers in IPs 1.5 and 2.1 were the most likely to be satisfied across all these measures (both groups had at least 90% satisfied in each). By CFO category, ESFA participants were the most satisfied across all measures (90%, 89% and 90% for each), and HMPPS participants were the least (74%, 76%, and 74%), although high proportions were satisfied.

Table 3.1 Proportion satisfied with programme aspects by sample type, IP and CFO

Audience	<i>Base</i>	Guidance/ information on what would be delivered	Relevance of the programme to your needs	Feedback/ guidance during the programme
All leavers completing survey by phone	<i>(10,215)</i>	88%	87%	89%
Sample type:				
ESF only	<i>(9,842)</i>	88%	87%	89%
YEI only	<i>(373)</i>	86%	87%	86%
Investment Priority:				
1.1 (8i)	<i>(3,373)</i>	86%	83%	87%
1.2 (8ii)	<i>(775)</i>	86%	85%	88%
1.3 (8ii YEI)	<i>(373)</i>	86%	87%	86%
1.4 (9i)	<i>(2,059)</i>	86%	84%	87%
1.5 (9vi)	<i>(62)</i>	92%	95%	94%
2.1 (10i)	<i>(3,573)</i>	93%*	93%*	93%*
CFO:				
HMPPS	<i>(118)</i>	74%	76%	74%
DWP	<i>(490)</i>	80%	75%	82%

Direct Provider	(3,621)	88%	87%	89%
NLCF	(935)	87%	84%	88%
ESFA	(5,051)	90%*	89%*	90%*

Row percentages. Base: All leavers completing survey via telephone (10,215).

Asterisks show results significantly different to the average results for all other leavers.

There were some variations by demographics:

Gender: Male participants were slightly less satisfied than female participants with their course relevance (86% versus 88%).

Age: 15-17-year-olds were slightly less satisfied than other age groups on guidance and information about what would be delivered (83%) and the relevance of the programme (81%).

Ethnicity: Participants from ethnic minority groups were also less satisfied than White British / White Irish participants on all three aspects: information about what would be delivered (85% versus 89%), relevance (84% versus 87%), and feedback and guidance during the programme (86% versus 89%).

Disability: Disabled participants were slightly less satisfied than those without a disability or long-term health condition on all three measures: information about what would be delivered (86% versus 91%), relevance (84% versus 90%), and feedback and guidance during the programme (87% versus 91%).

Disadvantage: The disadvantaged were slightly less satisfied than those who were not disadvantaged on guidance and information about what would be delivered (87% versus 90%), and the relevance of the programme (86% versus 89%).

Digital support provision

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Priority Axis 4.1 was introduced, with the objective of addressing the digital divide by providing access to information and services through digital technologies. Another of the aims was to improve people's capacity to engage in digital society including during local and national pandemic restrictions.²⁰

To explore how the Covid-19 pandemic affected their experience of the programme, participants were asked what situation best reflected any digital support provided to help them access the programme. This related to support with digital skills or technology provided, for example, help to go online or items such as laptops or tablets.

Nearly six in ten (57%) said they did not have any specific needs and 3% declined to answer. Therefore, four in ten (40%) had digital support needs; these comprised 20% who received digital support or assistance, 8% who were offered digital support or

²⁰ Full details of Priority Axis 4.1 can be found here: [European Social Fund England Operational Programme 2014-2020 \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/operational-programmes/european-social-fund-england-operational-programme-2014-2020)

assistance but did not take it up, and 12% who would have liked to received support but were not offered any (as shown in Figure 3.1).

The proportion who received digital support or assistance (20%) was higher among NLCF participants (23%) and lower among HMPPS participants (6%). It was above average among participants under IP 2.1 (21%) and below average among participants under IP 1.2 (16%).

The proportion who received digital support or assistance varied by certain demographics as follows:

Gender: Female participants were more likely to have received digital assistance (22%) than were male participants (18%).

Age: Participants aged over 55 were more likely to have received digital assistance (22%) and the youngest aged 15-17 were less likely (15%).

There were no significant differences by disadvantage, disability or ethnicity.

The proportion who would have liked to have received digital support or assistance during the pandemic but were not offered any (12%) – a measure of unmet need – varied by IP and CFO. Participants under IP 1.4 and 1.1 were slightly more likely to say they would have liked digital support but were not offered any (15% and 13% of them respectively). In contrast participants under IP 2.1 were less likely to say they would have liked support but were not offered any (6%). HMPPS participants were especially likely to say they would have liked digital support but were not offered any (23%), and Direct Provider participants were slightly more likely (14%). Conversely ESFA participants were less likely to express unmet need (9%).

There were also some variations in the proportion who would have liked support but were not offered any by key demographics:

Age: Participants aged 15-17 were more likely to say so (15%) than other age groups

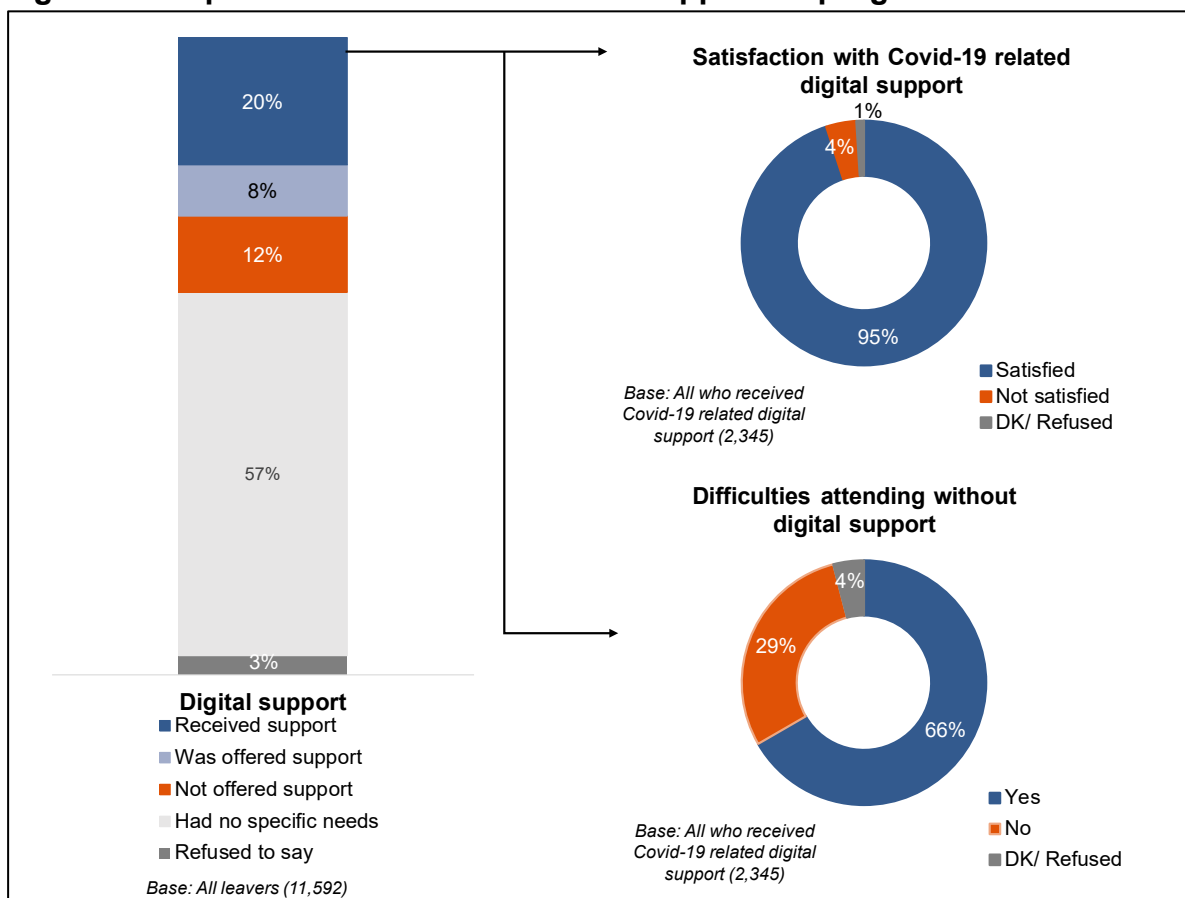
Ethnicity: Participants from ethnic minority groups (18%), rather than those from White British / White Irish groups (10%)

Disability: Disabled participants (15%), rather than those without a disability or long-term health condition (9%).

Disadvantage: Disadvantaged participants (14%), rather than those who were not disadvantaged (7%)

The fifth who did receive any digital support or assistance during the Covid-19 pandemic to help them access the course, were asked whether they would have faced difficulties attending the course without the assistance and how satisfied they were with the assistance received. Two thirds of them (66%) would have faced difficulties attending otherwise, and nearly all of them (95%) were satisfied with the support they received (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 Experience of Covid-19 related support on programme



Participants with support needs

A significant minority of participants entered the programme with additional parental or other caring responsibilities, or with long-term health problems:

- A third (34%) were parents/guardians with responsibilities for children under 18.
- One in ten (11%) had caring responsibilities for a family member, relative or friend with a limiting long-term illness, or health problem or disability.
- Four in ten (40%) had any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses expected to last 12 months or more.

As would be expected given the focus of YEI on young people, YEI participants (IP 1.3) were less likely than ESF participants to have parental responsibilities (15% versus 34%); however, they were more likely to have long-term physical or mental health problem or disability (47% versus 40%) or to have caring responsibilities for a relative or friend (15% versus 11%).

Participants under IP 2.1 were the most likely to have parental responsibilities (47% did so), and those under IP 1.1 were also above average in this regard (35%); whilst ESFA were more likely than average to have parental responsibilities (38%), whilst

Direct Provider, NLCF and DWP participants were less so (30%, 29% and 25% respectively).

Caring responsibilities for a family member, relative or friend, were slightly higher among participants under IP 1.3 (15%) or IP 1.4 (13%), and slightly lower among participants under IP 2.1 (8%). NLCF participants were more likely to be carers (16%) and ESFA and DWP participants less so (9%).

The prevalence of long-term physical or mental health conditions was much higher among participants under IP 1.5 (63%) and IP 1.4 (58%); conversely it was much lower among participants under IP 2.1 (16%). Associated with this, HMPPS and NLCF participants had a much higher proportion with long-term health problems (69% and 64% respectively). Health problems were also higher among DWP participants (52%), but lower among ESFA participants (30%).

The prevalence of parental and caring responsibilities and health problems, with their potential support needs, varied by gender, age and ethnicity. Parental responsibilities were more likely to be cited by women (45%), those in the 25-54 age group (48%) and those from ethnic minority groups (40%). Other caring responsibilities were also more likely among women (14%). Long-term physical or mental health conditions were more prevalent among 15-17 year olds (49%) and those aged 55+ (45%), and also among White British / White Irish participants (44%).

Participants who had a disability or long-term health problem themselves were less likely than average to have parental responsibilities (26%) but more likely than average to have other caring responsibilities (13%). The disadvantaged participants were slightly less likely to have parental responsibility (33%) and more likely to have other caring responsibilities (12%), and/or a long-term health problem (46%).

Full breakdowns of how these support needs varied by IP, CFO and demographics can be found in Tables A.3.1-3 in Appendix A.

Support provided

Figure 3.2 presents the findings on take-up and experience of childcare support by parents and guardians whilst on the programme. The vast majority (91%) of parents and guardians with childcare responsibilities said they were not offered any related support or assistance from their provider; 3% did receive some support and a further 3% were offered support but did not take it up.

Of those that received childcare support, over nine in ten (93%) were satisfied with it. Approaching three-quarters (73%) said that they would have faced difficulties attending the provision without the support they received for childcare. This proportion was substantially higher among women (80%) than men (59%).

Figure 3.2 Experience of childcare support whilst on the programme

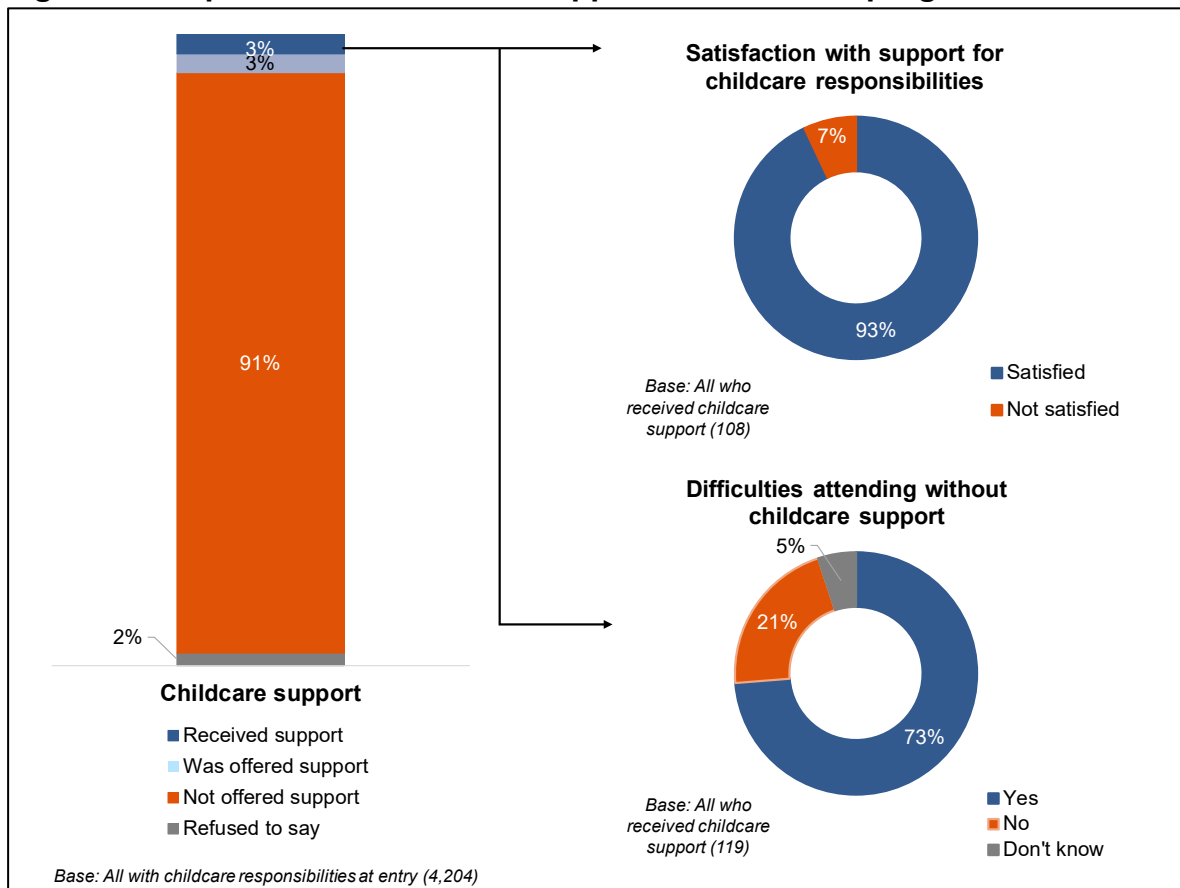
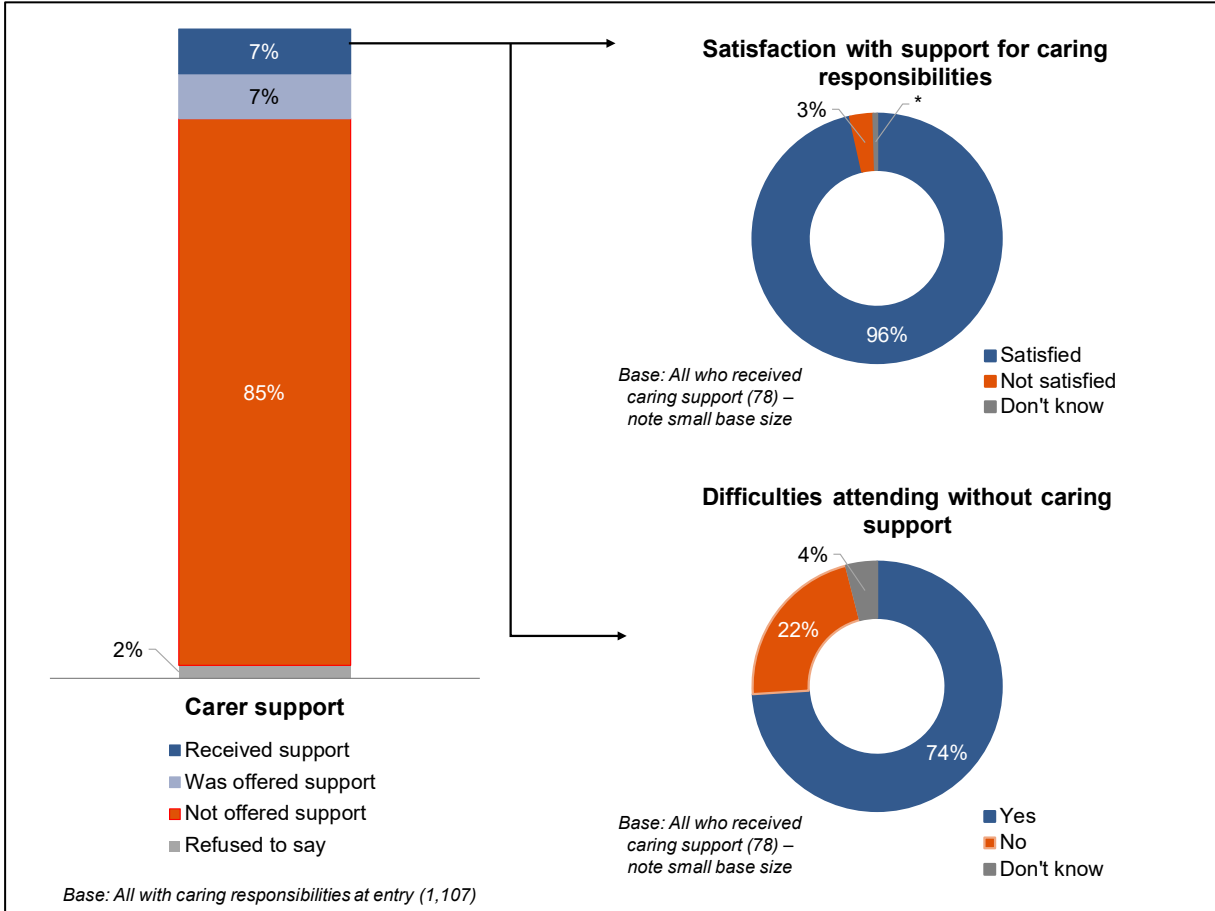


Figure 3.3 presents the findings on take-up and experience of carer support whilst on the programme by those with other caring responsibilities. The majority (85%) of carers were not offered any support but 7% did receive support for their caring responsibilities and a further 7% were offered support but didn't use it.

Of those who received support for their caring responsibilities, the vast majority (96%) were satisfied with it and three quarters (74%) said they could not have attended the programme without it.

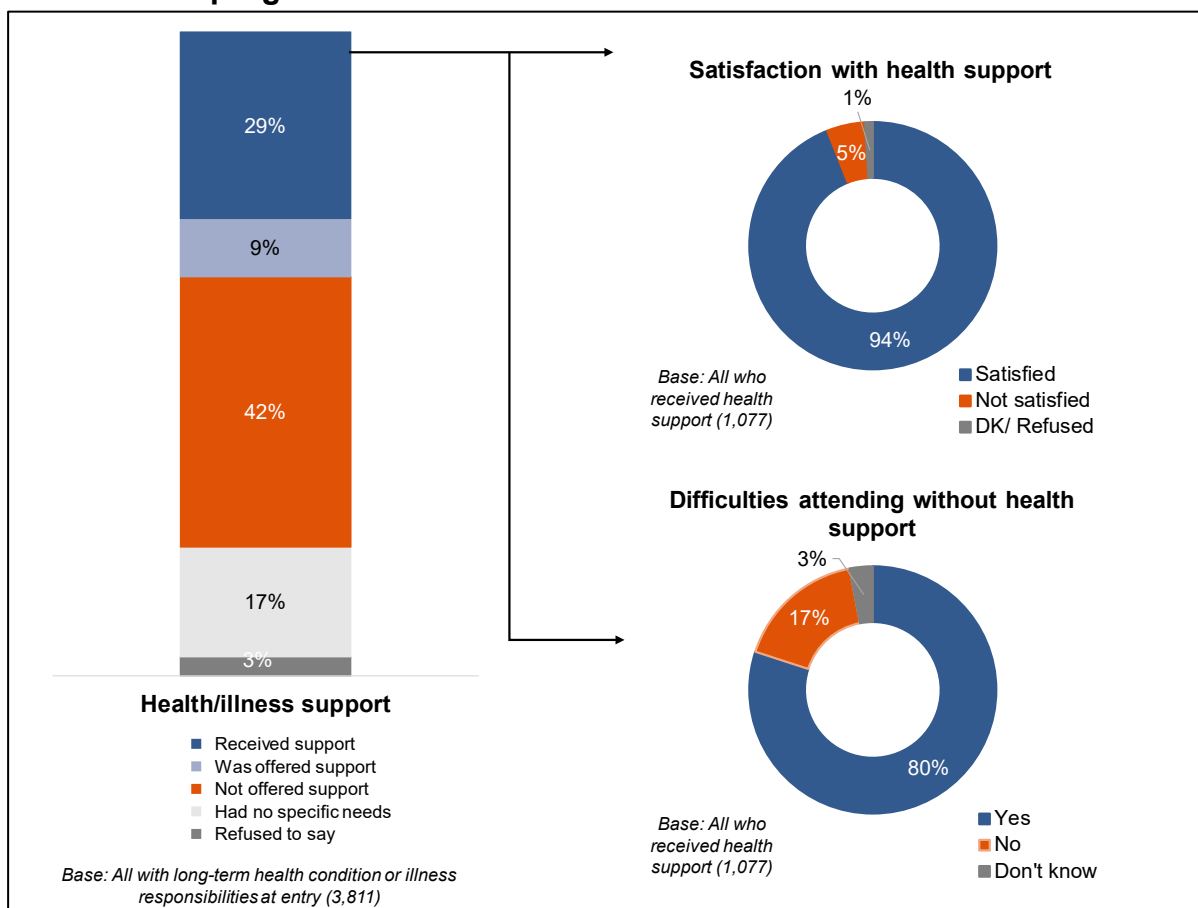
Figure 3.3 Experience of carer support whilst on the programme



In terms of take-up and experience of support among participants with any long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, three in ten (29%) received support and a further 9% were offered support that they did not take up (Figure 3.4).

Of those that received assistance for their long-term health problems 94% were satisfied with the support. Four-fifths (80%) of those with long-term health problems said that they would have faced difficulties attending the provision without the support they received for these.

Figure 3.4 Experience of support for long-term health condition or illness whilst on the programme



Impact on work-related skills

Job search skills and support

Participants received a variety of employment-related support and guidance whilst on the programme.

The most common types of advice and support received were around what sorts of work or training they could do (68%), general advice about the world of work (62%), or training and advice in how to look for work (57%). More than four in ten received information about suitable vacancies (48%), or contacts to help them look for a job (43%); whilst a fifth (20%) received work experience or a work placement. When prompted different types of support, one in six (16%) said they had not received (or did not know if they had received) any of the options presented.

As shown in Table 3.2, YEI participants were more likely than ESF to have received each type of support.

Table 3.2: Advice and support provided on the programme, by sample type, IP and CFO Sample type

	All leavers	ESF only	YEI only
<i>Base:</i>	<i>(10,215)</i>	<i>(9,842)</i>	<i>(373)</i>
Advice about what sorts of work or training you could do	68%	68%	*78%
General advice about the world of work	62%	62%	*72%
Training and advice in how to look for work	57%	57%	*72%
Information about vacancies you could try to go for	48%	47%	*62%
Contacts to help you look for a job	43%	42%	*56%
Work experience or a work placement	20%	20%	*35%

Base: All leavers completing survey via telephone (10,215)

Asterisks show results significantly above the average results for all other leavers.

Differences by IP aligned with the purpose of each Investment Priority, with those participating under IPs 1.5 and 2.1 were less likely to have received each type and any support (32% and 28% had not received any types of support presented, respectively). Likewise, participants through HMPPS and ESFA were less likely than others to have received these types of support (34% and 20% had not received any, respectively).

Men were slightly more likely to report receiving each type of support than women. The 18–24 year old group were the age group most likely to report receiving each type of support and 15-17 year olds also reported heightened receipt of some types of support, notably work experience or a work placement (35%). Conversely those aged 25-54 were somewhat less likely to report receiving each type of support, and over 55s were even less likely. Participants from ethnic minority groups were more likely than White British / White Irish participants to have received all of the types of support.

A full breakdown of the types of support received by IP, CFO, gender, age and ethnicity can be found in Tables A.3.4-5, Appendix A.

There were significant differences in support by other key demographics:

Disability: Participants living with a disability or long-term health condition were more likely than non-disabled participants to report receiving several forms of support:

- training and advice in how to look for work (61% versus 53%)
- information about vacancies participants could try for (50% versus 45%)
- contacts to help participants look for a job (46% versus 39%).

Disadvantage: Disadvantaged participants were slightly more likely to report receiving all the forms of work-related advice than the non-disadvantaged, with the largest variations being:

- training and advice in how to look for work (61% versus 46%)
- information about vacancies participants could try for (51% versus 38%)
- contacts to help participants look for a job (46% versus 34%).

Category of region: Those in more developed regions were slightly more likely to report receiving each type of support and those in transitional regions slightly less so; the differences were relatively small but are consistent across all measures. On one aspect, training and advice in how to look for work those in less developed regions were significantly less likely to receive this (47%), than those in transitional (53%) or more developed (59%) regions.

Enhancing 'soft skills'

Leavers were asked whether the programme had helped them improve across four, key soft skills. At least three-fifths said their programme had helped to improve in each area: self-confidence (70%), communication skills (66%), motivation to do more training (66%), or motivation to find a new job or seek a promotion (62%). One in six (16%) participants felt they had not improved across any of the soft skills as a result of the programme.

Table 3.3 presents the differences in soft skill improvements for both ESF and YEI leavers. YEI leavers had higher proportion citing improvements in motivation (72% and 69% for training and job seeking / promotion, respectively).

Table 3.3 Whether the course helped improved any soft skills, by sample type

Sample type:	All leavers	ESF only	YEI only
<i>Base:</i>	(10,215)	(9,842)	(373)
Self-confidence about working	70%	70%	69%
Communication skills	66%	66%	70%
Motivation to do more training	66%	66%	72%*
Motivation to find a job or seek a promotion	62%	62%	69%*

Base: All leavers completing survey via telephone (10,215)

Asterisks show results significantly above the average results for all other leavers.

Participants under IP 1.2 were more likely than others to have improved their communication skills (73%). Participants under IP 1.3 or 2.1 were more likely than others to say they had improved their motivation to find a job or seek a promotion (72%). Participants under IP 1.2 and 1.3 were most likely to say they had improved their motivation to do more training (71% and 69%, respectively).

By CFO, HMPPS participants were much less likely than others to report improvement in each of these four soft skills: only 35% reported improved self-

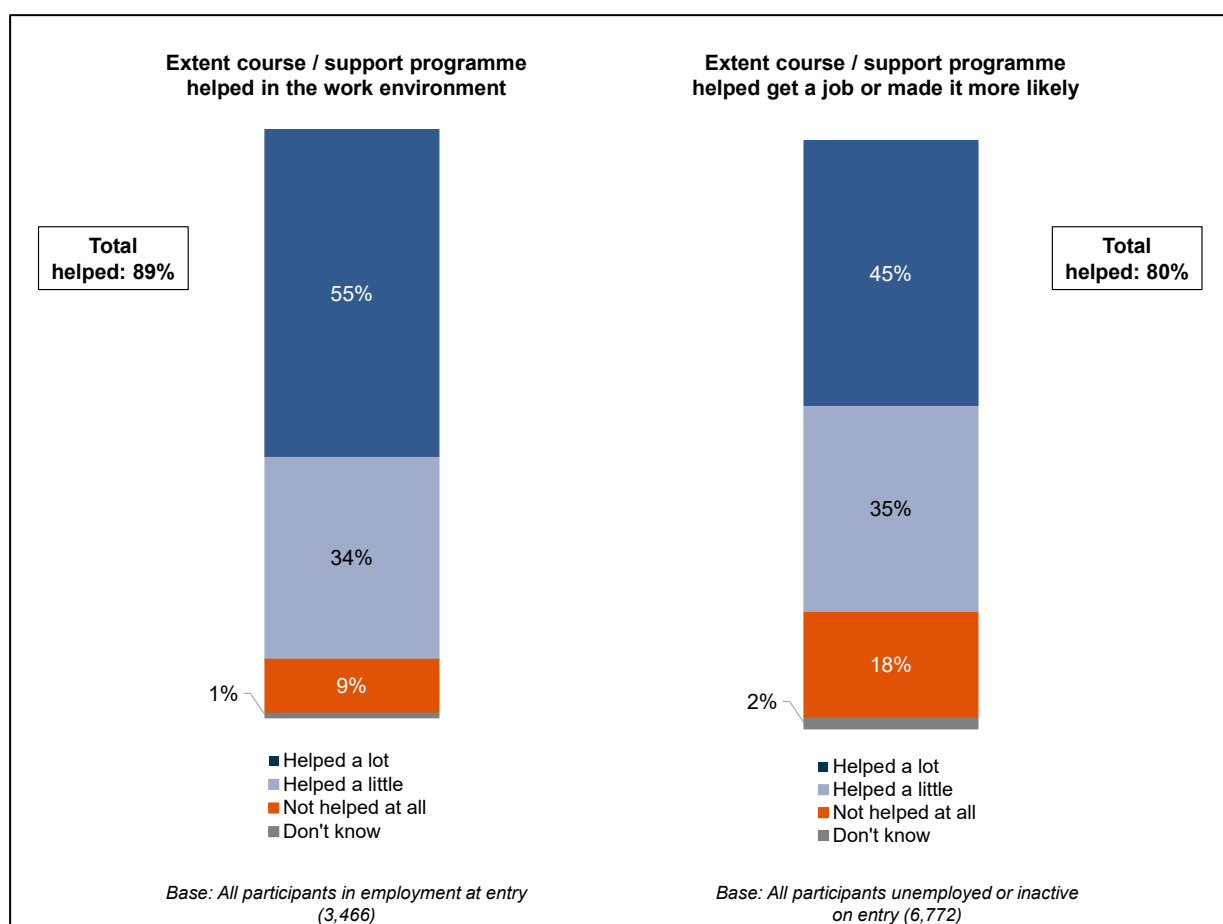
confidence, 42% improved communication skills, 45% improved motivation to find a job or seek a promotion and 38% improved motivation to do more training. In contrast, ESFA participants were slightly more likely than others to report improvement on three aspects: self-confidence about working (72%), communication skills (69%) and motivation to find a new job or seek a promotion (70%).

A full breakdown of differences by IP and CFO can be found in Table A.3.6 in Appendix A.

Helping in their work environment or in job search

Leavers were asked their perceptions as to how much the course had helped in their work environment or with job search. As shown in Figure 3.5, nine in ten (89%) of participants who were in employment at programme entry said that the course/programme had helped them in the work environment. While eight in ten (80%) of participants who were unemployed or inactive on programme entry reported that the course/programme had helped them to get a job or made it more likely they will find work. Around half said it had helped ‘a lot’ in each case.

Figure 3.5 Extent that programme helped participants in a work environment or to find work



The majority of participants who were in employment on entry were under IP 2.1, with a few under IP 1.4 and 1.1; the proportion who said their programme had helped them in their work environment was higher for IP 2.1 (91%), than for IP 1.4 (70%) or

IP 1.1 (59%). Related to this finding, ESFA participants were more likely than others to say it had helped them (90%).

Among those who were unemployed or inactive on programme entry, ESF participants were less likely than YEI participants to say it had helped them get a job or made it more likely they will get a job in future (80% versus 85%).

By IP category, participants under IP 1.3 or 1.2 were more likely than average to say it helped their job search (85% and 83% respectively), whilst those participating under IP 1.4 were less likely than average (78%). Those under IP 1.1 were significantly more likely than others to say it helped a lot (47%).

By CFO, HMPPS participants were much less likely than others to say it helped them in job search (58%) or helped them a lot (26%). DWP participants were also less likely than average to say it helped them (73%); whilst conversely Direct Provider participants were more likely than average to say it helped them (83%).

Overall satisfaction with provision

Thinking both about the training or support received and how they may have benefited from it since, eight in ten (81%) were satisfied with the programme: comprising just under half (48%) who were very satisfied and a third (33%) who were fairly satisfied. A small minority (7%) were dissatisfied.

As Table 3.4 shows, there was no significant difference in the proportion of ESF and YEI leavers who were satisfied (81% versus 78%), although ESF leavers were more likely than YEI leavers to be very satisfied (48% versus 42%).

Those participating under IP 1.5 or 2.1 were more likely than average to be satisfied (93% and 87% respectively), with those under IP 2.1 were the most likely to be very satisfied (56%). Participants under IP 1.2 were the least likely to be satisfied (75%).

By CFO, HMPPS and DWP leavers had below average satisfaction levels (69% and 74% respectively). In contrast ESFA leavers had above average satisfaction (83%) and a higher proportion who were very satisfied (49%).

Table 3.4 Participant satisfaction with the training or support received, by sample type, IP and CFO

Audience	Base	Very dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Neither / nor	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	TOTAL SATISFIED
All leavers	(11,592)	4%	3%	10%	33%	48%	81%
Sample type:							
ESF only	(11,166)	4%	3%	10%	33%	*48%	81%
YEI only	(426)	5%	5%	11%	37%	42%	78%
Investment Priority:							

1.1 (8i)	(3,736)	5%*	4%	11%	34%	45%	79%
1.2 (8ii)	(910)	4%	4%	15%*	40%*	36%	75%
1.3 (8ii YEI)	(426)	5%	5%	11%	37%	42%	78%
1.4 (9i)	(2,323)	4%	4%	11%	31%	48%	79%
1.5 (9vi)	(67)	1%	1%	5%	34%	59%	93%*
2.1 (10i)	(4,130)	2%	2%	7%	31%	56%*	87%*
CFO:							
HMPPS	(119)	10%*	7%*	13%	36%	34%	69%
DWP	(511)	9%	6%	11%	33%	42%	74%
Direct Provider	(4,198)	4%	3%	11%	34%	46%	81%
NLCF	(1,045)	4%	4%	10%	30%	50%	80%
ESFA	(5,719)	3%	3%	10%	33%	49%*	83%*

Row percentages. Base: All leavers (11,592).

1% answered 'don't know' and this answer option is not shown in the table.

Asterisks show results significantly different to the average results for all other leavers.

There were some differences in satisfaction levels across key demographics:

- Women were slightly more satisfied with their provision than men (82% versus 80%).
- Those aged 15-17 were less satisfied than others: 73% were satisfied, and 10% were dissatisfied. The age group most likely to be satisfied was 25-54s of whom 82% were satisfied.
- Participants from ethnic minority groups were slightly less satisfied than those from White British / White Irish groups (79% versus 81%).
- Participants with a disability or long-term health condition were less satisfied than those without health problems (77% versus 84%).
- Similarly, those who were disadvantaged were slightly less likely than the non-disadvantaged to be satisfied (80% versus 83%).

A full breakdown of satisfaction levels by gender, age, ethnicity, disability and disadvantaged status can be found in Tables A.3.7-8 in Appendix A.

Chapter 4: Status six months after course completion

This chapter presents the employment status of leavers six months after completing their course. It explores which groups are more or less likely to have an improved economic status (from moving into employment or progression within employment).

Chapter summary

Just over half the individuals were in employment six months after leaving provision, compared to a quarter at entry. While the proportion of individuals unemployed fell, there was a small rise in the proportion of economically inactive, though this does include those who moved into education.

In terms of individual transition between provision entry and six months after leaving, just over a quarter remained in employment, and a similar proportion had moved into employment. More than two-fifths of all participants remained unemployed or inactive, and a very small minority had moved out of employment into these groups.

Around one quarter of ESF participants had remained in employment at six months, a slightly higher proportion had moved into employment. Three in ten YEI participants had moved into employment at six months, while over two-thirds remained unemployed or inactive. For both ESF and YEI participants, very small minorities had moved out of employment.

Just over a quarter of participants who were employed on entry to the programme experienced an improvement in labour market situation – usually this was a movement from precarious to stable employment, or their job requiring a higher level of skills, competencies or qualifications.

Individuals with improved labour market situations six months after leaving their course were more satisfied with their experience than those without, the majority of individuals with less positive outcomes were still satisfied with the programme.

Among YEI participants, around two-fifths had received at least one job offer within six months of leaving provision, with around half of those who had received an offer perceiving it to be 'good' or 'very good'.

Employment status at six months

Half (51%) of individuals were in employment six months after leaving the programme compared to a quarter (25%) at entry. This represents a 26 percentage point increase in employment. The proportion of unemployed fell from half (49%) to 17%, whilst there was a small rise in the proportion who were economically inactive from 25% to 32%.

As shown in Table 4.1, employment among ESF-only participants increased by 26 percentage points, from 26% at entry to 52% six months after leaving the programme, while employment among YEI-only participants grew 31 percentage points, from less than 0.5% at entry to 31% six months after leaving the programme.

Table 4.1: Employment status on programme entry and six months after leaving programme, by sample type

Audience	<i>Base</i>	Inactive	Un-employed	In employment	<u>Employment growth</u>
All leavers – Entry	(11,592)	25%	49%	25%	
All leavers – Six months	(11,592)	32%	17%	51%	+26pp
Sample type:					
ESF – Entry	(11,166)	25%	49%	26%	
ESF – Six months	(11,166)	32%	16%	52%	+26pp
YEI – Entry	(426)	26%	73%	<1%	
YEI – Six months	(426)	44%	25%	31%	+31pp

Column percentages. Base: All leavers (11,592). Last column shows percentage change from entry to six months after for each sub-group.

For both ESF and YEI leavers, unemployment reduced while economic inactivity grew. Most commonly, growth in inactivity was due to individuals not working because of sickness or disability (12% of all leavers at six months), or moving into education or training (7%), or; other reasons included take up of a voluntary role (3%) or caring for a household (4%) or relative/friend (3%), or retirement (1%).

Six months after leaving, 12% of ESF leavers and 16% of YEI leavers were not in employment because of sickness or disability, up from 10% and 6% respectively before the programme; and, 7% of ESF leavers and 12% of YEI leavers were in education or training, up from 5% and 8% respectively before the programme.

As shown in Table 4.2, IPs 1.1-1.5 all saw employment rise from negligible proportions at entry to between a fifth and a half after six months. The largest change was for IP 1.1 where employment increased by 45 percentage points, from 2% on entry to 47% six months after leaving. For IP 2.1, where the majority were already employed at the outset, the proportion in employment had decreased by five percentage points, from 94% on entry to 89%, six months after leaving. All IPs recorded a reduction in unemployment after six months, yet all except IP 1.4 also had a growth in economic inactivity. The largest proportions of inactive individuals at six months were for IP 1.5 (61%) and IP 1.2 (48%). The main component of inactivity under IP 1.5 was not in work because of sickness or disability (24%), whilst for IP 1.2 it was in education or training (25%).

Table 4.2 Employment status on programme entry and six months after leaving programme, by Investment Priority

Audience	<i>Base</i>	Inactive	Un-employed	In employment	<u>Employment growth</u>
All leavers – Entry	(11,592)	25%	49%	25%	
All leavers – Six months	(11,592)	32%	17%	51%	+26pp
Investment Priority:					
1.1 (8i) – Entry	(3,736)	19%	79%	2%	
1.1 (8i) – Six months	(3,736)	31%	22%	47%	+45pp
1.2 (8ii) – Entry	(910)	34%	65%	1%	
1.2 (8ii) – Six months	(910)	48%	24%	28%	+27pp
1.3 (8ii YEI) – Entry	(426)	26%	73%	<1%	
1.3 (8ii YEI) – Six months	(426)	44%	25%	31%	+31pp
1.4 (9i) – Entry	(2,323)	45%	54%	2%	
1.4 (9i) – Six months	(2,323)	45%	20%	35%	+33pp
1.5 (9vi) – Entry	(67)	47%	48%	5%	
1.5 (9vi) – Six months	(67)	61%	13%	26%	+21pp
2.1 (10i) – Entry	(4,130)	2%	3%	94%	
2.1 (10i) – Six months	(4,130)	8%	3%	89%	-5pp

Base: All leavers (11,592). Last column shows percentage change from entry to six months after for each sub-group.

The proportion in employment six months after leaving was higher than on entry for all CFOs. The largest increase was among DWP participants from 2% in employment on entry to 54% six months after leaving, an increase of 52 percentage points. The smallest increase in employment was among ESFA participants, from 47% on entry, to 62% six months after leaving, an increase of 15 percentage points. The proportion who were unemployed decreased between entry and six months after leaving for all CFOs. The proportion who were economically inactive remained around the same for HMPPS and DWP participants, decreased for NLCF participants, and increased for Direct Provider (from 29% to 37%) and ESFA (from 11% to 24%) participants (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3 Employment status on programme entry and six months after leaving programme, by CFO

Audience	<i>Base</i>	Inactive	Un- employe d	In employ- ment	<u>Employ- ment growth</u>
All leavers – Entry	<i>(11,592)</i>	25%	49%	25%	
All leavers – Six months	<i>(11,592)</i>	32%	17%	51%	+26pp
CFO:					
HMPPS – Entry	<i>(119)</i>	44%	53%	3%	
HMPPS – Six months	<i>(119)</i>	46%	21%	33%	+30pp
DWP – Entry	<i>(511)</i>	27%	71%	2%	
DWP – Six months	<i>(511)</i>	28%	19%	54%	+52pp
Direct Provider – Entry	<i>(4,198)</i>	29%	58%	13%	
Direct Provider – Six months	<i>(4,198)</i>	37%	18%	45%	+32pp
NLCF – Entry	<i>(1,045)</i>	57%	42%	1%	
NLCF – Six months	<i>(1,045)</i>	46%	20%	34%	+33pp
ESFA – Entry	<i>(5,719)</i>	11%	42%	47%	
ESFA – Six months	<i>(5,719)</i>	24%	14%	62%	+15pp

Base: All leavers (11,592). Last column shows percentage change from entry to six months after for each sub-group.

Differences in employment status on entry and at six months, by key demographics, are summarised below.

Gender: Whereas on entry there was a higher proportion of women in employment than men, at six months there was no longer a difference between genders; 52% of women were employed with a similar proportion (51%) of men. Both outcomes represent a significant increase from employment at entry (+23 percentage points for women and slightly greater, +28 percentage points, for men). Six months after leaving, men remained more likely than women to be unemployed (20% versus 12% of women), while women were more likely than men to be inactive (36% versus 29% of men).

Age: There has been a growth in the proportion in employment six months after leaving across all age groups; the largest increase was seen among 18-24s (+33 percentage points) and the smallest increase among 15-17s (+14 percentage points). As could be expected, 15–17 year olds remain the age group least likely to be in employment six months after leaving (15%) and the most likely to be economically inactive (61%). The largest increases in inactivity were seen among 18-24s (from 21% to 33%) and the over 55s (from 24% to 35%).

Ethnicity: An increase in employment was slightly greater for those from ethnic minority groups (+29 percentage points) than for those from White British / White Irish groups (+24 percentage points). Nevertheless, ethnic minority participants remained slightly less likely than white participants to be in employment six months after leaving (46% versus 52%) since they were starting from a lower baseline employment.

Disability: Participants categorised as disabled or living with a long-term health condition experienced similar percentage point increases in employment compared to non-disabled participants (+25 percentage points and +26 percentage points, respectively). Therefore, at six months after leaving, the proportion of disabled participants who were in employment remained well behind that among those without any disability (36% versus 66% respectively).

Disadvantage: Those who were disadvantaged recorded a slightly larger growth in the proportion who were in employment (+27 percentage points) than did those who were not disadvantaged (+22 percentage points). However, the disadvantaged were still much less likely than the non-disadvantaged to be in employment six months after leaving (43% versus 72%) since the former were starting from a much lower baseline employment.

Category of region: The participants from more developed regions recorded the highest growth in the proportion who were in employment (+27 percentage points), followed by those in transitional regions (+23 percentage points), and then those from less developed regions (+19 percentage points). Around half were in employment in each category of region six months after leaving (53%, 53% and 50%, respectively).

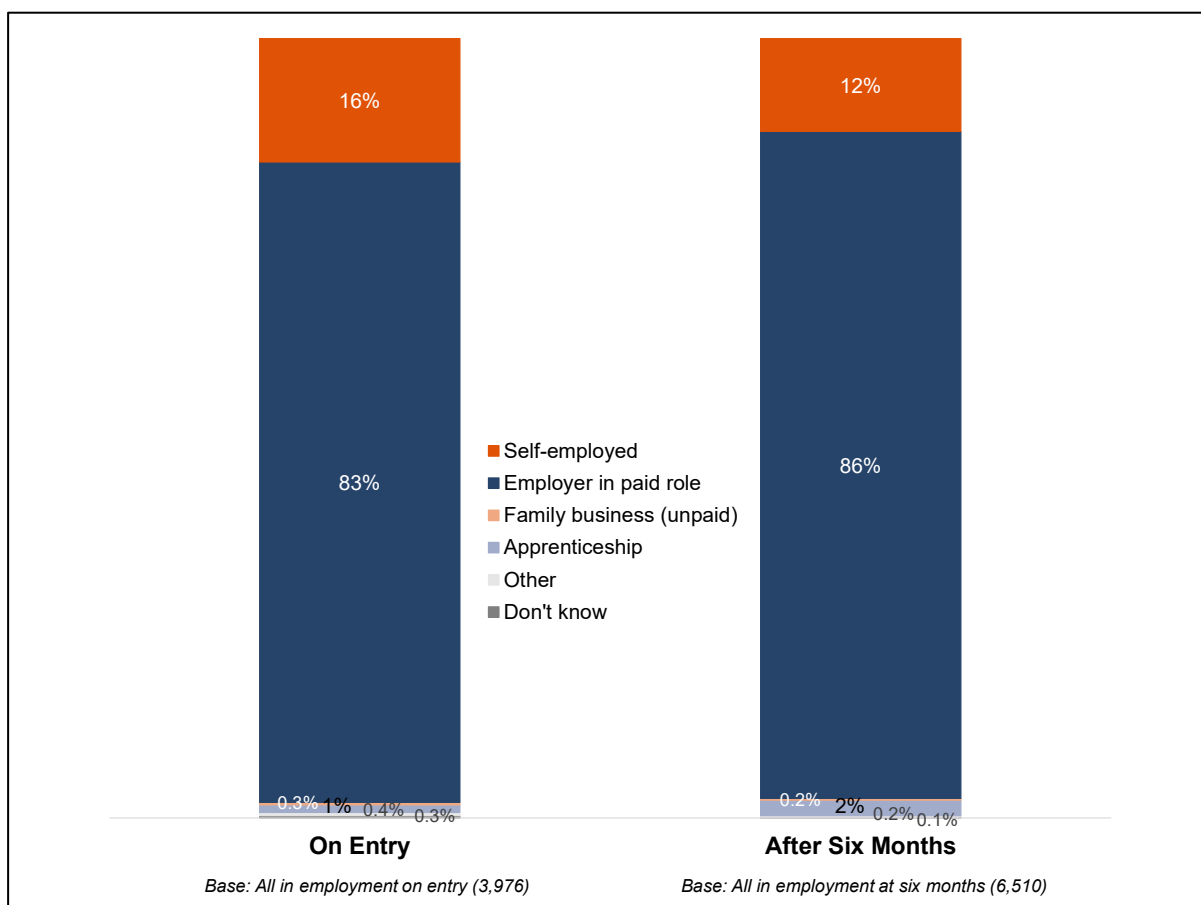
A full breakdown of employment status on entry compared to six months, by the demographics presented above, can be found in Tables A.4.1-6 in Appendix A.

In employment at six months

Type of employment

As shown in Figure 4.1, among those employed six months after leaving their course/programme, 86% were employed in a paid role for an employer, a three percentage point increase from the proportion at programme entry (83%). One in eight (12%) were self-employed six months after leaving, a four percentage point decrease from the one in six (16%) on programme entry. A very small proportion (2%) were on an apprenticeship at the six-month point; this compares to 1% on programme entry.

Figure 4.1 Type of employment at programme entry and six months after leaving



These proportions were broadly similar across ESF and YEI participants, with the exception of those on an apprenticeship, which was far more common for YEI participants (10% versus 1% of ESF participants).

Hours working

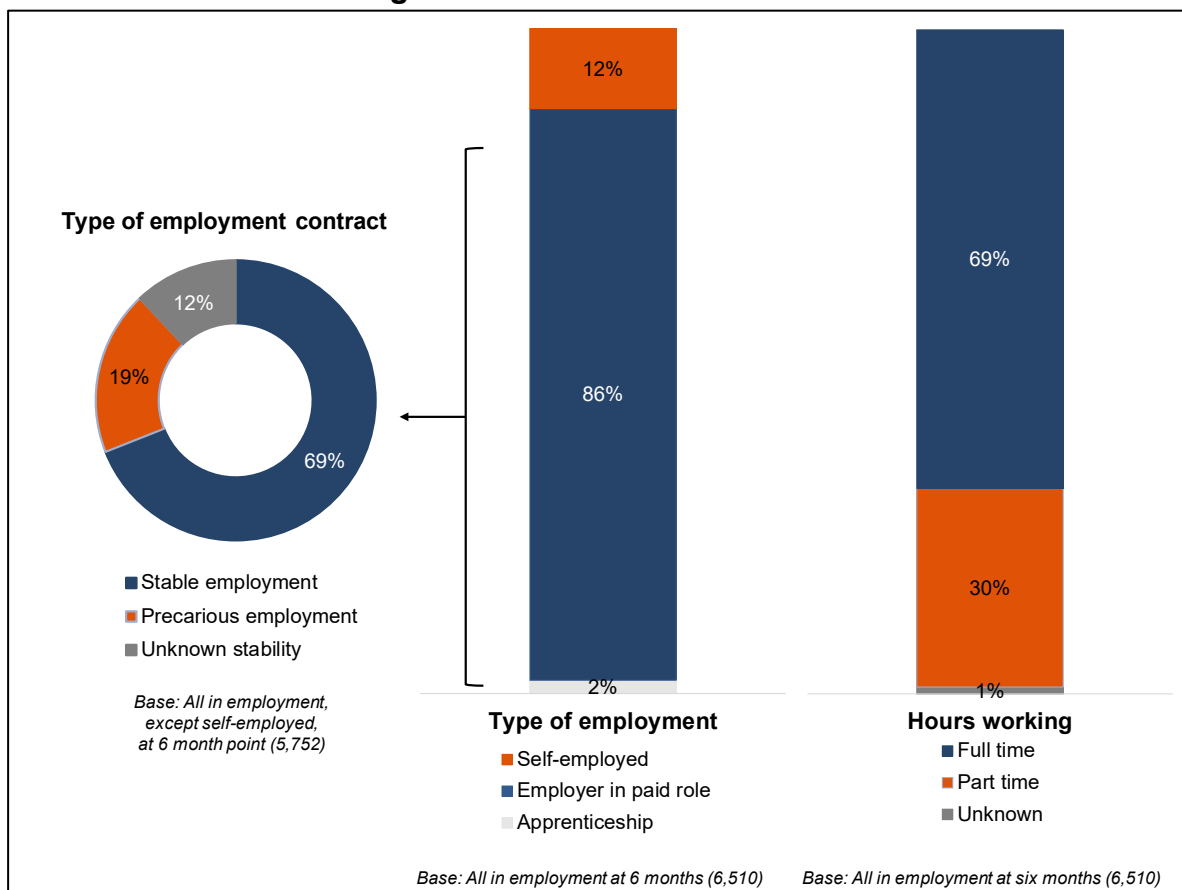
Nearly seven in ten (69%) of those employed six months after leaving were working full time and three in ten (30%) were working part-time (see Figure 4.2). Since

programme entry, there had been a small rise in part-time employment, since the equivalent proportions among those employed on entry were 75% employed full time and 25% part time.

Among those who were employed at six months, the proportion who were working full time was higher among ESF leavers (69%) than YEI leavers (60%). The proportion working full time was also higher under IP 2.1 (80%) and ESFA participants (77%).

The patterns by key demographics were similar to those observed at programme entry. Those aged 25-54 were more likely to be working full time (70%), men were more likely than women (78% versus 56%); and those from White British / White Irish groups compared to ethnic minority groups were also more likely (70% versus 65%). Those with a disability or long-term health condition were *less* likely to be working full-time than those without (60% versus 74%); as were the disadvantaged compared to the non-disadvantaged (64% versus 76%).

Figure 4.2 Type of employment, hours worked and employment contracts, at six months after leaving



Contract status

For those in employment at six months (excluding the self-employed), 69% were in stable employment, 19% in precarious employment – i.e. temporary employment or that with a work contract of limited duration – and 12% in employment of unknown

stability (Figure 4.2). Precarious employment was more common at the six month point than on entry (19% versus 9%), whilst stable employment was less common (69% versus 80%).

Among leavers who were employed at six months, those who had been unemployed or inactive on entry were far less likely to be in stable employment at six months (56% and 58% respectively, compared with 84% of those who were employed on entry). One quarter (25%) of leavers who began their programme in precarious employment, had progressed to stable employment by programme end. A very small minority of those in stable employment on entry to the programme had moved into precarious employment (3%).

Over two-thirds (69%) of ESF participants and just under half (47%) of YEI participants were in stable employment at six months.

Nine in ten (90%) of participants in work at six months after leaving the programme were “fully employed”; one in ten (10%) were “under-employed” and 1% were unsure. The equivalent proportion among those employed on entry were 92%, 7% and 1% so the proportion who were under-employed was slightly higher at the six month point, and the proportion who were fully employed had fallen slightly. Although these changes were small, they were statistically significant.

The proportion “under-employed” at six months was 9% among ESF participants and 16% among YEI participants.

These patterns of variation by other demographics were broadly similar to those observed among those in work upon entry.

YEI leaver job opportunities

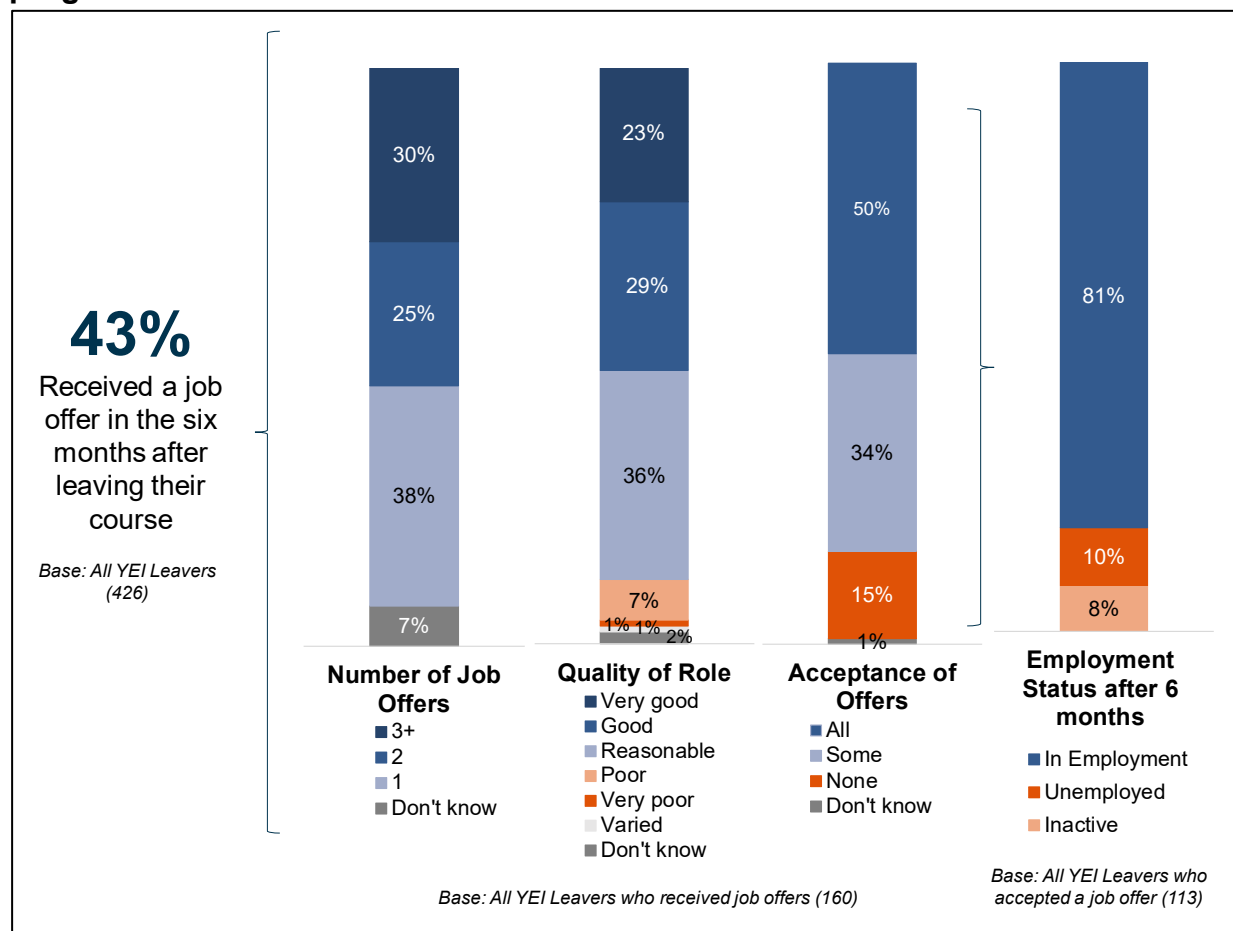
Just over four in ten (43%) YEI leavers had received at least one job offer within six months of leaving provision. Those who were aged 15-17 on entry were less likely to have received any job offers (28%) and those aged 18-24 more likely (50%).

Consistent with the likelihood of being in employment at six months, the following sub-groups of YEI leavers were also less likely to have been offered a job since leaving:

- disadvantaged leavers (38% versus 60% of non-disadvantaged)
- leavers with a disability or long-term health problem (35% versus 55% of those without).

Nearly four in ten (38%) of YEI leavers who had received any job offers within six months of leaving the programme has received one job offer, a quarter (25%) had received two offers, and three in ten (30%) had received three or more offers.

Figure 4.3 Job offers made to YEI leavers within six months after leaving the programme



Around half (52%) of YEI leavers who were offered job(s) thought that the quality of job(s) offered were ‘good’ or ‘very good’, with 23% rating them as ‘very good’. A further 36% rated them as ‘reasonable’, meaning that the vast majority (88%) rated the job offer(s) as very good, good or reasonable. Only 8% described the job offer(s) as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’.

Women were more likely than men to rate their job offer(s) as either ‘good’ or ‘very good’ (69% versus 43%). Men were more likely to only rate their offer(s) as ‘reasonable’ (46% versus 19% of women).

A substantial majority (84%) of YEI leavers who received any job offers had accepted them: 50% had accepted all offers and 34% some offers. Only 15% had not accepted any of the offers received. 18–24-year-olds were slightly more likely to say they had accepted all offers (54%).

Education status at six months

The proportion of participants who were in education or training six months after leaving the programme was 7%, a slight increase from 5% on entry to the programme.

These proportions mirrored those of ESF only participants, while YEI leavers saw a four percentage points increase (from 8% on entry, to 12% six months after leaving).

The proportion in education or training had increased slightly under each Investment Priority (by between +1 to +4 percentage points) and in each CFO category, except HMPPS (by between +1 and +3 percentage points). For HMPPS, the percentage in education or training remained at 1%.

The proportion in education or training had decreased for 15-17s, from 40% on entry, to 36% six months after leaving (-4 percentage points). Among 18-24s and 25-54s this proportion increased (by +5 and +2 percentage points, respectively). Among over 55s it had also increased slightly from just above zero on entry, to 2% at six months after leaving. (+2 percentage points).

Other subgroups across gender, ethnicity, disability, and disadvantage tended to mirror the overall trend of slight increases in the proportion of participants in education or training (ranging between +2 to +5 percentage points), with the exception of non-disadvantaged participants, who remained at 0%.

Those who were in education or training immediately before starting the programme were in a variety of settings, although most often attending college (50%) – either full time (31%) or part time (19%). These proportions had increased slightly from the equivalent proportions on entry: 44% at college, 29% full time and 15% part time.

As shown in Table 4.4, one in seven (14%) were at university which was similar to the proportion on entry, but the proportion who were in school was much lower (4% compared to 25% on entry). The proportions who were on an online course (6%), on a course/programme in work (5%), or on a traineeship (4%), or 'other' training/education (14%), had all increased since programme entry.

Table 4.4 Education or training status at programme entry and at six months after leaving

All in education or training:	On entry	Six months
<i>Base:</i>	<i>(498)</i>	<i>(773)</i>
In college full time – 16 hours or more per week	29%	31%
In school	25%	4%
In college part time – less than 16 hours per week	15%	19%
In university	15%	14%
Online course	3%	6%
On a course whilst in work	2%	5%
On a traineeship	1%	4%
Not in education or training	<1%	<1%
Other	5%	14%
Don't know	4%	4%

Row percentages. Base: All in education or training on entry to the programme (498) and at six months after leaving the programme (773)

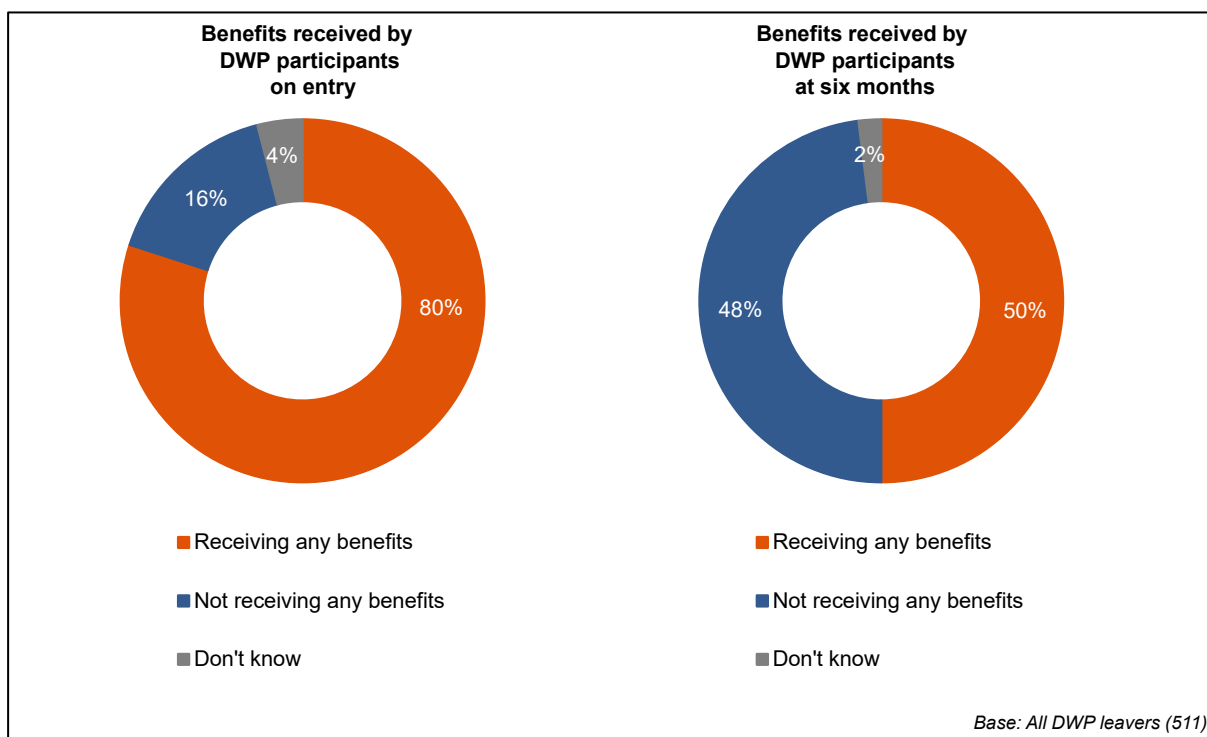
Proportion in each type of education or training were broadly aligned between ESF and YEI participants, with the exception of traineeships, which 11% of YEI and 1% of ESF participants were undertaking.

The YEI leavers who were in education or training at the six month point were asked whether the education or training they were doing six months after leaving the operation was intended to lead to a nationally recognised qualification. Over three quarters (79%) said that ‘yes’ it was and only 12% said ‘no’; the remaining 10% were not sure.²¹

Benefit status at six months

At programme entry, four-fifths (80%) of participants who received DWP provision were claiming any state benefits. Six months after leaving the programme, that proportion had reduced to half (50%).

Figure 4.4 Benefit status for DWP participants at programme entry and at six months after leaving



Among DWP leavers, benefit receipt at six months after leaving the programme was more common among:

- Women (62% versus 44% of men)
- Those aged 25-54 (54%)

²¹ Percentages sum to 101 due to rounding.

- Those from ethnic minority groups (65% versus 47% of those from White British / White Irish groups)
- Those with a disability or long-term health condition (59% versus 39% without)
- Disadvantaged participants (61% versus 23% of non-disadvantaged participants)

Table 4.5 shows the proportion of DWP leavers reporting receipt of each specific benefit on entry to the programme and six months after leaving. The proportion claiming Universal Credit had fallen from 64% on entry to 44% at six months. The proportion receiving Jobseeker’s Allowance had fallen from 10% to 2% and Employment and Support Allowance from 3% to 1%. The proportion claiming Personal Independence Payment had increased marginally from 2% to 3%.

Table 4.5 Specific benefits claimed by DWP participants at programme entry and six months after leaving

All DWP participants receiving any benefits:	On entry	Six months
<i>Base:</i>	<i>(511)</i>	<i>(511)</i>
Any benefits	80%	50%
Universal Credit	64%	44%
Jobseeker’s Allowance	10%	2%
Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)	3%	1%
Personal Independence Payment (PIP)	2%	3%
Housing Benefit	1%	<1%
Tax Credit	<1%	<1%
Income Support	<1%	0%
Child Benefit	<1%	1%
Council Tax Benefit	<1%	0%
Incapacity benefit	<1%	0%
Other	<1%	<1%
Don’t know	1%	<1%

Column percentages. Base: All DWP provision leavers (511)

Transition from entry to six-month status

This section explores leavers' transition in employment status between starting their provision and six months after leaving it. Figure 4.5 provides an overview of individual movements over this period. It shows that the vast majority of participants employed upon entry remained so at six months, whilst just under half of those unemployed upon entry gained employment by the six month mark. The remainder of those unemployed upon entry were split fairly evenly between remaining unemployed or becoming inactive at six months. Around two thirds of inactive participants upon entry remained so at six months, while a few gained employment, and a smaller number became unemployed.

Figure 4.5 Overview of movements in employment status between entry and six months

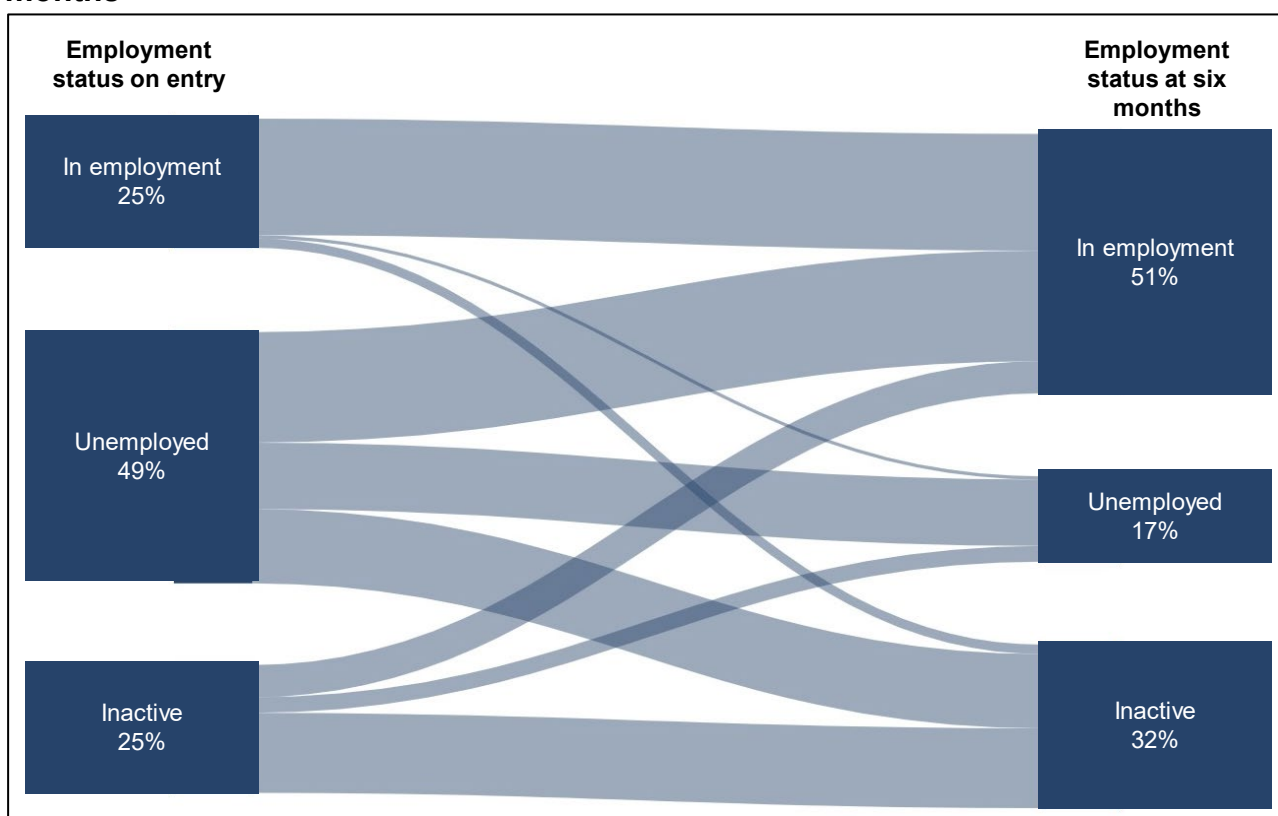


Table 4.6 shows the transition patterns by sample type, IP and CFO.

Six months after leaving the programme, just under a quarter (23%) of participants had remained in employment, and approaching three in ten (28%) had moved into employment. Nearly half (46%) of all participants remained unemployed or inactive, and a residual 2% had moved out of employment.

For ESF participants, 24% had remained in employment, while a further 28% had moved into employment. Just under half (46%) remained unemployed or inactive, and 3% had moved out of employment to become unemployed or inactive.

Seven in ten (69%) YEI participants remained unemployed or inactive at six months, while three in ten (31%) under YEI moved into employment.

Reflecting its focus of skills levels of individuals in work, IP 2.1 was very different to the other IPs in terms of status transitions. The vast majority under IP 2.1 remained in work, with 8% moving out of employment, 3% remaining inactive and only 3% moving into employment. The IP that recorded the greatest proportion moving into employment was IP 1.1 with 45%, followed by IP 1.4 with 33% - both of these were above average. The other IPs were in line with the average, with 31% under IP 1.3 moving into employment, 28% under IP 1.2 and 24% under IP 1.5.

DWP participants recorded the highest proportion moving into employment (52%), and Direct Providers and the NLCF were also above average in this respect (34% and 33% respectively). HMPPS and NLCF participants were those who were most likely to remain unemployed or inactive (67% and 66% respectively) and Direct Providers were also above average in this regard. The ESFA had a different pattern from the other CFOs, with 43% remaining in employment (much higher than other CFOs), 19% moving into employment (much lower than other CFOs), 34% remaining unemployed or inactive and 4% moving out of employment.

Table 4.6 Employment status transitions between entry to and six months after leaving the programme, by sample type, IP and CFO

Audience	<i>Base</i>	Moved out of employment	Remained unemployed/inactive	Moved into employment	Remained employed
All leavers	(11,592)	2%	46%	28%	23%
Sample type:					
ESF only	(11,166)	3%	46%	28%	24%
YEI only	(426)	<1%	69%*	31%	<1%*
Investment Priority:					
1.1 (8i)	(3,736)	<1%	52%	45%*	2%
1.2 (8ii)	(910)	<1%	71%*	28%	1%
1.3 (8ii YEI)	(426)	<1%	69%	31%	<1%
1.4 (9i)	(2,323)	<1%	65%	33%*	1%
1.5 (9vi)	(67)	3%	71%*	24%	2%
2.1 (10i)	(4,130)	8%*	3%	3%	86%*
CFO:					
HMPPS	(119)	1%	67%*	31%	2%
DWP	(511)	<1%	46%	52%*	2%

Direct Provider	(4,198)	1%	53%	34%	11%
NLCF	(1,045)	<1%	66%*	33%	<1%
ESFA	(5,719)	4%*	34%	19%	43%*

Row percentages. Base: All leavers (11,592)

Asterisks show results significantly different to the average results for all other leavers.

Some differences by demographic were found:

Gender: Men were slightly more likely than women to move into employment after six months (30% versus 25%), while a slightly greater proportion of women than men remained in employment (27% versus 20%); these findings largely reflect the higher employment rate in women on entry.

Age: 18-24 year olds were the age group who were more likely to have moved into employment (35%); whilst over 55s and 15-17s were less likely than average to have done so (24% and 14% respectively). As might be expected, 15-17s were the age group most likely to remain unemployed or economically inactive (84%) and 25-54s were more likely than others to remain as employed (29%).

Ethnicity: Participants from ethnic minority groups were slightly more likely to transition into work (32%) than White British / White Irish participants (27%). Yet those from ethnic minority groups were less likely than white participants to have begun the programme in work and maintained employment (14% versus 25%) and more likely to have remained unemployed or inactive (51% versus 45%).

Disability: The proportion of participants living with a disability or long-term health condition making a transition into employment was slightly lower than among those without a disability (26% versus 30%). Disabled participants were far more likely than the non-disabled to remain unemployed or economically inactive (63% versus 30%). In contrast those without a disability were more likely than the disabled to have been employed at the outset of the programme and remained so (36% versus 9%).

Disadvantage: The proportion of disadvantaged participants moving into employment was slightly higher than among the non-disadvantaged (29% versus 26%). Nevertheless, reflecting their differential employment statuses at entry, disadvantaged participants were much more likely than the non-disadvantaged to remain unemployed or inactive at six months (55% versus 24%), and much less likely to remain employed (14% versus 46%).

Category of region: The proportion who made the transition into employment after six months was slightly above average in more developed regions (29%), and slightly below average in transitional regions (26%); the equivalent proportion was 25% in less developed regions which was not significantly below average due to a small base size.

A full breakdown of employment transitions by the demographics outlined above can be found in Tables A.4.7-8 in Appendix A.

In-work outcomes

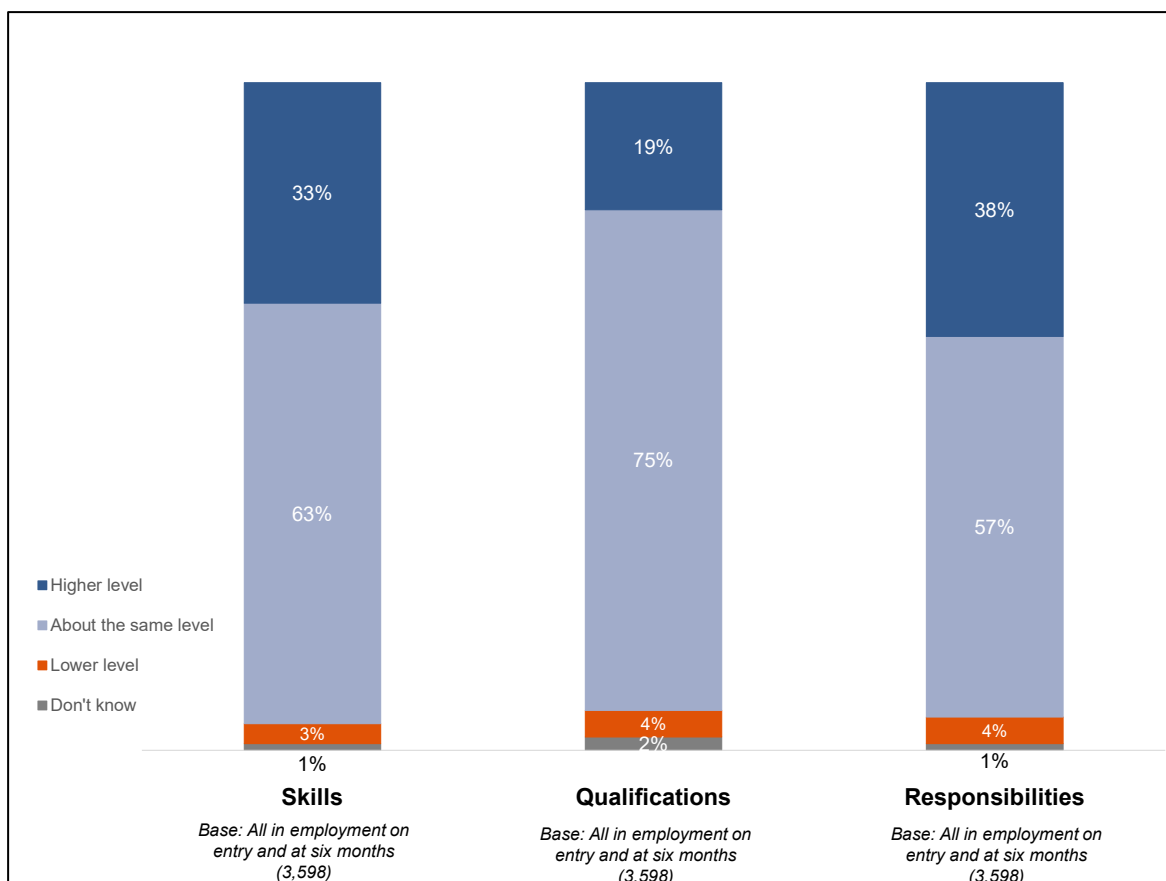
This section explores outcomes for those who were in employment both on entry to provision and six months after leaving the course/programme. It covers changes in skills, qualifications and responsibilities, and perceived improvements to working conditions and prospects. It culminates in summarising the extent to which participants who were in employment on entry had an improved labour market positions six months after leaving the programme.

Outcomes for those who were in work on entry and at six months

Due to the relative proportions in employment on entry to the provision, leavers from ESFA accounted for the vast majority (82%) of individuals who were in work on entry to the programme and remained so six months afterwards. Direct Provider participants accounted for 17% of this group who remained in work. DWP, NLCF and HMPPS participants each accounted for fewer than 0.5% of this group.

Figure 4.6 shows, for those participants who were employed on entry and at six months afterwards, whether the level of skills, qualifications and responsibilities required for their role at the six-month point was higher, lower or the same as those required for their role when they entered the programme.

Figure 4.6 Changes in skills, qualifications and responsibilities required in employment role six months after leaving the programme, compared to their employment role at entry



A third (33%) of participants employed throughout the duration of the programme reported a requirement for higher skills or competencies in their role after six months. Approaching two-fifths (38%) reported being given more responsibility over the same period and nearly one in five (19%) required a higher level of qualification. Three quarters (75%) said the qualification level for their role remained unchanged, with around six in ten reporting unchanged requirements in skills (63%) and responsibilities (57%).

Due to the substantially varied volume of participants in employment by sample type, IP and CFO and resulting small base sizes within some of these groups, we cannot report on these subgroups.

Full breakdowns in change over time in job requirements by demographics can be found in Tables A.4.9-10 in Appendix A.

Those who were employed both on entry and at six months after leaving the programme reported a range of benefits or improvements to their working conditions or job prospects at the six-month point, compared to their situation on entering the programme. Nine in ten reported at least one of the six positive improvements shown in Table 4.7; only 10% reported none of them or were not sure. These participants were most likely to report receiving opportunities for training (64%), increased job satisfaction (60%) or improvement to their future pay and promotion prospects (57%). Just under half reported better job security (49%), or having received an hourly rate or annual salary pay rise over the six month period (47%). Less than one in six (15%) received a promotion over the same time period.

Table 4.7 Changes in work for those in employment on entry and at six months

Types of change	Six months
<i>Base:</i>	<i>(3,598)</i>
Any change	90%
More opportunities for training in your job	64%
More job satisfaction	60%
Future pay and promotion prospects improved	57%
Better job security	49%
Hourly rate or annual salary increased	47%
Had a promotion	18%
None / Don't know	10%

Row percentages. Base: All in employment on entry and at six month point (3598); 'Had a promotion' excludes self-employed (3,013)

Full breakdowns in change overtime in job requirements by demographics can be found in Tables A.4.11-12 in Appendix A.

Improvements to labour market situation among those in employment on entry

Among all participants who were in employment on entry, over a quarter (27%) left with an improved labour market situation at six months either because:

- They moved from precarious to stable employment (25%)
- They moved from under-employment to full employment (3%)
- Their job required higher skills, competencies, qualifications or entailed more responsibility (20%)
- They received a promotion (18%)

Among those who were in employment on entry, likelihood of experiencing an improved labour market position was higher among:

- Participants under Direct Provider provision (31%)
- Those under IP 1.1 (41%)
- 18-24-year-olds (38%)
- Ethnic minority participants (33%)

There were no significant differences in the proportion with an improved labour market situation by gender, disability, disadvantage or category of region.

Impact of job outcomes on satisfaction

Individuals with improved labour market situations six months after leaving their course/programme were slightly more satisfied with their experience than those without (89% versus 86%), and more likely to be 'very' satisfied (61% versus 54%).

The level of overall satisfaction with the course/programme also varied by change in employment status, as might be expected – with those achieving more positive outcomes being more satisfied. However, the majority of individuals with less positive outcomes were still satisfied with the programme nonetheless:

- 88% of those who remained in employment were satisfied, with 57% 'very' satisfied
- 85% of those who moved into employment were satisfied, with 53% 'very' satisfied
- 76% of those who moved out of employment were satisfied, with 42% 'very' satisfied
- 75% of those who remained unemployed or inactive were satisfied, with 40% 'very' satisfied.

Chapter 5: Comparisons to previous survey

This chapter explores the similarities and differences between the two cohorts of ESF and YEI leavers evaluation – those who left between 2016 and 2019 (and were previously evaluated)²², and those included in the current evaluation, who left ESF programmes between June 2021 and May 2023. It presents any key differences in characteristics, the course experience, and working status at six months.

Chapter summary

Relative to the 2016-19 cohort, the proportion of all leavers that were under ESF-funded provision has increased in the 2021-23 cohort, as has the proportion under Investment Priorities (IPs) 1.4 and 2.1, and those under provision through Direct Providers and the National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF).

Overall, the demographics within each cohort were broadly similar, although the 2021-23 cohort were more likely to be classified as disadvantaged, and to have a disability or long-term health condition.

Both at entry to the programme and six-months after leaving, a greater proportion of the 2021-23 leavers were inactive. In both instances, this was largely owing to an increase in the proportion not working due to stress or sickness.

That said, the growth in employment between participants beginning the programme and six months after programme completion remained consistent between the two cohorts.

YEI leavers in the 2021-23 cohort were less likely than 2016-19 counterparts to have received a job offer within six months of leaving the programme.

²² The published report can be found on GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esf-action-notes-2014-to-2020-programme/07622-publication-of-england-2014-2020-european-social-fund-esf-programme-national-evaluation-reports>

Demographics & status upon entry

Population

There were several differences in the populations of each cohort. Compared to the previous cohort, the 2021-23 leavers had a lower proportion of YEI participants, 4% down from 11%, and a higher proportion of ESF participants.

In terms of Investment Priority, the 2021-23 cohort saw a higher proportion of participants under 1.4 and 2.1, and lower proportions under IPs 1.1 and 1.2.

Compared to the 2016-19 cohort, a greater proportion of 2021-23 participants were from Direct Providers and the National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF), whilst a smaller proportion were from the ESFA or the DWP. The proportion from HMPPS remained consistent.

Table 5.1 Participant profiles of 2016-19 and 2021-23 leavers, by IP and CFO

	2016-19 (n)	2016-19 (%)	2021-23 (n)	2021-23 (%)
Total	19,769		11,592	-
Sample type:				
ESF only	17,556	89%	11,166	96%
YEI only	2,213	11%	426	4%
Investment Priority:				
1.1 (8i)	7,387	37%	3,736	32%
1.2 (8ii)	2,177	11%	910	8%
1.3 (8ii YEI)	2,213	11%	426	4%
1.4 (9i)	2,048	10%	2,323	20%
1.5 (9vi) ²³	-		67	1%
2.1 (10i)	5,944	30%	4,130	36%
CFO:				
HMPPS	286	1%	119	1%
DWP	1,712	9%	511	4%
Direct Provider	3,151	16%	4,198	36%
NLCF	399	2%	1,045	9%
ESFA	14,221	72%	5,719	49%

²³ No sample was provided for this Investment Priority for the 2016-19 survey.

Column percentages. Base: All leavers 2016-19 (19,769), 2021-23 (11,592)

Participant demographics

As shown in Table 5.2, the gender and ethnicity distribution remained very similar between the two cohorts. There was a slightly higher proportion of respondents aged 15-17 and 18-24 among 2016-19 leavers, compared to 2021-23 leavers, where there were more participants aged 25-54 and 55+.

Table 5.2 Participant demographics, by cohort

Audience	2016-19	2021-23
<i>Base:</i>	<i>(19,769)</i>	<i>(11,592)</i>
Gender:		
Male	58%	59%
Female	42%	41%
Age:		
15-17	8%	6%
18-24	26%	20%
25-54	56%	63%
55+	10%	11%
Ethnicity:		
White British / White Irish	78%	79%
Ethnic minority	22%	21%

Column percentages. Base: All leavers 2016-19 (19,769), 2021-23 (11,592). Asterisks show figures significantly higher than in the other cohort.

Disadvantaged: The proportion of participants classed as disadvantaged rose between the two cohorts, from 65% among 2016-19 leavers to 72% among 2021-23 leavers.

Disability: The proportion of participants with a disability or long-term health condition also increased between cohorts, from 37% among 2016-19 leavers to half (50%) of participants from 2021-23. This increase was seen in both YEI (from 33% to 58%) and ESF (37% to 50%) leavers.

Category of region remained broadly similar across both cohorts.

Labour market characteristics

Upon entry to the programme, fewer participants in the 2021-23 cohort were in employment (25%), or unemployed and looking for work (49%), compared to 2016-19 participants (29%; 56%). A greater proportion of 2021-23 participants – a quarter (25%) – were economically inactive, compared to just 15% in 2016-19.

Table 5.3 Employment status on programme entry, by cohort

Audience	2016-19	2021-23
<i>Base:</i>	<i>(19,769)</i>	<i>(11,592)</i>
In employment	29%*	25%
Unemployed and looking for work	56%*	49%
Economically inactive	15%	25%*

Column percentages. Base: All leavers 2016-19 (19,769), 2021-23 (11,592). Asterisks show figures significantly higher than in the other cohort.

Inactivity on entry

A greater proportion of the 2021-23 cohort were not working due to sickness or disability (9% versus 3% of the 2016-19 cohort). As shown in Table 5.4, there were also slight increases in the proportion of participants in education or training, looking after the family or home full time, and caring for an adult family member, relative or friend, between the surveys. The proportion working in an unpaid or voluntary role, or internship and retired remained consistent.

Table 5.4 Reasons for economic activity, by cohort

Audience	2016-19	2021-23
<i>Base:</i>	<i>(19,769)</i>	<i>(11,592)</i>
Not working because of sickness or disability	3%	9%*
In education or training	4%	5%*
Looking after the family or home full time	2%	3%*
Caring for an adult family member, relative or friend	1%	2%*
Working in a voluntary or unpaid role, or internship	1%	1%
Retired	<1%	<1%

Column percentages. Base: All leavers 2016-19 (19,769), 2021-23 (11,592). Asterisks show figures significantly higher than in the other cohort.

Benefits claimed on entry

There was an increase in the proportion of participants receiving any state benefits on entry between the two cohorts, from 51% to 55%. This increase was due to an increase in ESF participants receiving benefits, from 50% for 2016-19 leavers to 55% for 2021-23 leavers.

In 2021-23 a greater proportion of participants under IP 1.2 received benefits (48%), compared to in 2016-19 (26%). A smaller but significant proportion under IP 1.1 received benefits in 2021-23 (73%) compared to the previous survey (75%).

There were significant changes in the types of benefits received between the 2016-19 and 2021-23 surveys, however this is likely attributable to changes in the benefits system over this period, notably the move to Universal Credit.

Course/programme experience

Overall satisfaction with provision

When thinking about the training or support received and how they may have benefitted from it since, a slightly lower proportion were satisfied with the programme within the 2021-23 cohort (81%) compared to the 2016-19 cohort (82%). However, this was due to an increase in neutral responses between the cohorts, from 9% to 10%, rather than any increase in dissatisfaction. In fact, a slightly lower proportion expressed dissatisfaction in 2021-23 (7%) compared to the previous cohort (8%).

As shown in Table 5.5, satisfaction reduced across both ESF and YEI respondents between the two surveys. Participants from Investment Priorities 1.2 and 1.3 had lower satisfaction in 2021-23 compared to 2016-19. The only CFO to see a statistically significant decrease in participant satisfaction between 2016-19 (84%) and 2021-23 (81%) were Direct Providers.

Table 5.5 Satisfaction with course/programme within IP and CFO, by cohort

Audience	2016-19	2021-23
<i>Base:</i>	<i>(19,769)</i>	<i>(11,592)</i>
Sample type:		
ESF only	82%*	81%
YEI only	85%*	78%
Investment Priority:		
1.1 (8i)	80%	79%
1.2 (8ii)	84%*	75%
1.3 (8ii YEI)	85%*	78%
1.4 (9i)	78%	79%
1.5 (9vi) ²⁴	-	93%
2.1 (10i)	86%	87%
CFO:		
HMPPS	77%	69%
DWP	77%	74%

²⁴ No sample was provided for this Investment Priority for the 2016-19 survey.

Direct Provider	84%*	81%
NLCF	82%	80%
ESFA	83%	83%

Column percentages. Base: All leavers 2016-19 (19,769), 2021-23 (11,592). Asterisks show figures significantly higher than in the other cohort.

Course/programme design

Participant satisfaction with the relevance of the programme to their needs, and the feedback and guidance provided increased between 2016-19 and 2021-23 cohorts, from 86% to 87% and 87% to 89%, respectively. This is despite the Covid-19 pandemic posing challenges to delivery throughout 2021. Satisfaction with the guidance and information about what would be delivered in the programme remained consistent (88% for both cohorts).

Participants with support needs

The proportion of participants with support needs was greater among the 2021-23 cohort across all three categories:

- Childcare responsibilities (27% for 2016-19 cohort, versus 34% for 2021-23 cohort)
- Disability or long-term health condition (26% to 40%)
- Other caring responsibilities (8% versus 11%)

Among those with potential support needs, fewer received childcare assistance or support in 2021-23 (3%) compared to 2016-19 (4%), and fewer received support or assistance for their disability or long-term health condition in 2021-23 (29%) compared to 2016-19 (31%).

A consistent proportion received support for their caring responsibilities in 2016-19 (6%) and 2021-23 (7%). A higher proportion reported being offered support but deciding not to take it up in 2021-23 (7%) compared to the previous cohort (5%). Together this indicates that more support for caring responsibilities was offered overall in 2021-23.

Enhancing 'soft' skills

Self-reported improvements to soft skills were also lower in the 2021-23 survey compared to 2016-19. This included reductions in the following:

- Improved self-confidence about working, from 73% to 70%
- Improved communication skills, from 71% to 66%
- Improved motivation to find a job or seek a promotion, from 66% to 62%
- Improved motivation to do more training, from 70% to 66%

It is possible that the greater proportion of economically inactive participants and participants with support needs in the 2021-23 survey meant participants were more likely to face challenges in this area.

Status six months after course completion

In both cohorts, just over half of participants were in employment six months after the completion of their course or programme. There was a decrease in participants in employment or unemployed and looking for work at the six month point in the 2021-23 cohort, as shown in Table 5.6. This was driven by an increase in the proportion of participants who were economically inactive, from 26% in 2016-19 to 32% in 2021-23.

Table 5.6 Employment status six months after course completion, by cohort

Audience	2016-19	2021-23
<i>Base:</i>	(19,769)	(11,592)
In employment	53%*	51%
Unemployed and looking for work	20%*	17%
Economically inactive	26%	32%*

Column percentages. Base: All leavers 2016-19 (19,769), 2021-23 (11,592). Asterisks show figures significantly higher than in the other cohort.

Employment growth

As shown in Table 5.7, the growth in employment between participants beginning the programme and six months after programme completion remained consistent between the two surveys, with growth of 24 percentage points in 2016-19 and 26 percentage points in 2021-23. Despite a slightly smaller proportion of 2021-23 participants being in employment at the six-month point, there had been greater employment growth, as they started with a smaller proportion being employed, compared to 2016-19.

Employment growth amongst ESF only participants was slightly higher in 2021-23 compared to 2016-19, but was lower amongst YEI participants.

Table 5.7 Change in employment between programme entry and six months after leaving programme

Audience	Base	In employment (start)	In employment (6 months)	Employment growth
All leavers				
2016-19	19,769	29%	53%	+24pp

2021-23	11,592	25%	51%	+26pp
ESF only				
2016-19	17,556	32%	54%	+22pp
2021-23	11,166	26%	52%	+26pp
YEI only				
2016-19	2,213	1%	45%	+44pp
2021-23	426	<1%	31%	+31pp

Column percentages. Base: All leavers 2016-19 (19,769), 2021-23 (11,592). Asterisks show figures significantly higher than in the other cohort.

Inactivity was higher at the six month stage in the 2021-23 cohort compared to the 2016-19 cohort. This was largely driven by a greater proportion of participants not working because of sickness or disability in 2021-23 (12%) compared to 2016-19 (5%). Conversely, there were fewer participants in education or training at the six months stage in 2021-23 (7%), compared to the previous survey (9%).

In both the 2016-19 and 2021-23 surveys, inactivity grew between the start of the programme and six months after course completion. This growth was smaller in the 2021-23 survey, but did begin from a higher starting point, as shown in Table 5.8. When looking specifically at YEI sample however, the growth in inactivity was larger in 2021-23 compared to 2016-19.

Table 5.8 Change in inactivity between programme entry and six months after leaving programme

Audience	Base	Inactive (start)	Inactive (6 months)	Change
All leavers				
2016-19	19,769	15%	26%	+11pp
2021-23	11,592	25%	32%	+7pp
ESF only				
2016-19	17,556	14%	26%	+12pp
2021-23	11,166	25%	32%	+7pp
YEI only				
2016-19	2,213	21%	30%	+9pp
2021-23	426	26%	44%	+18pp

Column percentages. Base: All leavers 2016-19 (19,769), 2021-23 (11,592).

Transition from entry to six-month status

Across both cohorts, the proportion of participants who had moved into employment at the six-month mark remained consistent, at just over a quarter, as shown in Table

5.9. In 2021-23, slightly more participants remained unemployed or inactive, and slightly fewer remained employed or moved out of employment, compared to the previous cohort.

Table 5.9 Transition from entry to six-month status, by survey

Audience	2016-19	2021-23
All leavers		
<i>Base:</i>	(19,769)	(11,592)
Moved out of employment	4%*	2%
Remained unemployed / inactive	43%	46%*
Moved into employment	27%	28%
Remained employed	26%*	23%
ESF only		
<i>Base:</i>	(17,556)	(11,166)
Moved out of employment	4%*	3%
Remained unemployed / inactive	42%	46%*
Moved into employment	26%	28%*
Remained employed	28%*	24%
YEI only		
<i>Base:</i>	(2,213)	(426)
Remained unemployed / inactive	55%	69%*
Moved into employment	44%*	31%
Remained employed	1%	<1%

Column percentages. Base: All leavers 2016-19 (19,769), 2021-23 (11,592). Asterisks show figures significantly higher than in the other cohort.

Despite the overall proportion of those moving into employment being consistent between the two surveys, there were differences when this was broken down into YEI and ESF participants. As shown in Table 5.9, ESF participants were more likely to have moved into employment in the 2021-23 cohort compared to 2016-19, whilst YEI participants were less likely to have done so, due to a greater proportion of them remaining unemployed or inactive.

Participants in IP 1.1 were more likely to have moved into employment in 2021-23 compared to the previous survey (see Table 5.10). However, participants in IPs 1.3, 1.4 and 2.1 were less likely to have moved into employment in the 2021-23 cohort, compared to the 2016-19 cohort. When comparing by CFO, DWP participants were more likely to have moved into employment in the 2021-23 cohort, compared to 2016-19, whilst HMPPS, Direct Provider, NLCF and ESFA participants were less likely to have done so.

Table 5.10 Proportion of participants moving into employment, by IP and CFO

	2016-19	2021-23
Base:	<i>(19,769)</i>	<i>(11,592)</i>
Investment Priority:		
1.1 (8i)	38%	45%*
1.2 (8ii)	27%	28%
1.3 (8ii YEI)	44%*	31%
1.4 (9i)	37%*	33%
1.5 (9vi) ²⁵	-	24%
2.1 (10i)	4%*	3%
CFO:		
HMPPS	44%*	31%
DWP	36%	52%*
Direct Provider	40%*	34%
NLCF	41%*	33%
ESFA	23%*	19%

Column percentages. Base: All leavers 2016-19 (19,769), 2021-23 (11,592). Asterisks show figures significantly higher than in the other cohort.

YEI leaver job opportunities

YEI leavers were asked whether they had received any job offers between starting their course and six months after leaving. Compared to 2016-19, when almost six in 10 (58%) had received a job offer, fewer had received an offer in 2021-23, at just over four in 10 (43%).

²⁵ No sample was provided for this Investment Priority for the 2016-19 survey.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

Overall, the ESF programme continued to successfully support individuals to enter, stay in and develop within the labour market. Although participants were facing greater challenges on entry (the context of Covid-19, a greater proportion facing labour market challenges, a greater proportion with long-term health conditions and disabilities, and a greater proportion inactive), the experiences of participants and positive changes in employment following participation remained consistent.

The programme reached the intended participants, predominantly supporting individuals facing labour market disadvantages. On entry, the majority (72%) of 2021-23 leavers were classified as 'disadvantaged' (that is, were in a jobless household, were a single parent household with dependent children, had no formal qualifications, lacked basic skills, were homeless, were from an ethnic minority background or had drug or alcohol dependency), and half (50%) had a disability or long-term health condition. **Furthermore, the characteristics of participants under each Investment Priority aligned with their purpose.** For example, those under Investment Priorities (IPs) 2.1 were mostly (94%) in employment, while those under IPs 1.2 and 1.3 were under 30 on entry.

The proportion of participants facing labour market disadvantages increased since the previous cohort. The above proportions compare to 65% associated with a labour market disadvantage, and 37% with a disability or long-term health condition in the cohort of 2016-19 leavers, increases of seven and 13 percentage points, respectively. **In addition, a greater proportion of participants in the 2021-23 cohort were inactive on entry to the programme** (25% compared to 15% in 2016-19 leavers), and a greater proportion of participants attributed this to sickness or disability (9% versus 3%).

The distance from the labour market was apparent in those facing disadvantages. These individuals were much more likely to be unemployed on entry (54% compared to 37% of non-disadvantaged participants) or economically inactive (30% versus 13%). Similar patterns were seen for those with a disability or long-term health condition compared to those without (52% compared to 47%, and 37% compared to 14%). Furthermore, for those who were employed on entry, likelihood of being fully employed and/or in stable employment was lower.

Participant views of the programme remain very positive, indicating that any disruption from Covid-19 was not detrimental to participant experience. The vast majority (around 90%) were satisfied with information, guidance and relevance of the programme. When reflecting on the programme and how they had benefited since, just over four-fifths (81%) were satisfied, with nearly half (48%) very satisfied. These findings are largely in line with the experiences from the 2016-19 cohort.

With the movement to online delivery (in light of Covid-19), unmet needs for digital support were fairly uncommon. Only 12% of participants would have liked to be provided with digital support to help access their course but were not.

It was rare for participants to receive support in relation to other potential needs, such as with childcare responsibilities, other caring responsibilities and health conditions. Support or assistance with a disability or health conditions was most common, received by 29% of those with physical and mental health condition, a decrease from the previous cohort (31%). Support with childcare responsibilities or with other caring responsibilities was only provided to a small minority of participants with these responsibilities (3% and 7%, respectively). Highlighting the value of support where it had been provided, across all types of support need, **participants were very satisfied with what was provided, and most thought they would have been unable to participate in the programme without it.**

Employment outcomes were quite common across a range of participants, and in line with those achieved pre-Covid. The proportion of participants in employment increased from 25% on entry to 51% six months after leaving (a 26 percentage point increase). For YEI participants this was 31% six months after leaving. These increases were in line with the previous cohort.

The programme was particularly beneficial for those in work on entry. The vast majority remained employed (90%) and felt that the programme had helped them in their work environment (89%). More than a quarter (27%) had experienced an improved labour market situation within six months of leaving; usually this was due to a movement from precarious to stable employment. Additional in-work improvements were experienced by the majority, for example more opportunities for training in their job (64%; addressing the aim of improved access to lifelong learning), more job satisfaction (60%) and improved future pay and promotion prospects (57%). Those who had remained in work were the most likely to be satisfied with the provision (88% compared to 81% of all participants).

The proportion of individuals in precarious employment and/or under-employed had increased six months post-provision. This could reflect that, while employment rates have increased, there is still progress to be made for individuals in terms of the quality of the employment individuals have moved into.

Positive employment outcomes should decrease welfare claimants. Of those on DWP ESF provision, four-fifths (80%) were in receipt of benefits at the point of entry onto ESF provision. However, this proportion fell to 50% at the six month point. This decrease (30 percentage points) is greater than that seen for the 2016-19 cohort (which decreased from 82% to 61%, 21 percentage points).

There was a small increase in the proportion of inactive participants. This proportion increased from 25% of participants on entry, to 32% at six months. Most commonly, participants attributed this to their health (12%), but, more positively, some had also moved into education or training in this time (7%).

A: Supplementary data tables

A.2: Demographics & status upon entry to provision

In the tables, the following conventions apply:

- Percentages are based on the weighted data, whilst bases provided are the unweighted total of participants who answered the question.
- '<1%' greater than zero but less than 0.5%
- Asterisks (*) show results significantly above the average results for all other leavers.
- Occasionally percentages may sum to 99% or 101% due to rounding.

Gender categories do not sum to 11,592 due to a small number selecting 'other' or choosing not to provide this information. These categories have not been included in reporting as each is under 50 people. Ethnicity categories do not sum to 11,592 due to a small number choosing not to provide this information. This category has not been included in reporting as it is under 50 people.

Table A.2.1 Participants' gender and ethnicity, by IP

Audience	All leavers	1.1 (8i)	1.2 (8ii)	1.3 (8ii YEI)	1.4 (9i)	1.5 (9vi)	2.1 (10iii)
<i>Base:</i>	(11,592)	(3,736)	(910)	(426)	(2,323)	(67)	(4,130)
Gender:							
Male	59%	58%	60%	59%	*64%	49%	*52%
Female	41%	42%	40%	40%	35%	50%	48%
Ethnicity:							
White British / White Irish	79%	*73%	*76%	80%	79%	*96%	*87%
Ethnic minority	21%	27%	24%	20%	21%	4%	13%

Row percentages. Base: All leavers (11,592)

Asterisks show results significantly different to the average results for all other leavers.

Table A.2.2 Participants' disability, disadvantage and category of region, by sample type

Audience	All leavers	1.1 (8i)	1.2 (8ii)	1.3 (8ii YEI)	1.4 (9i)	1.5 (9vi)	2.1 (10iii)
<i>Base:</i>	(11,592)	(3,736)	(910)	(426)	(2,323)	(67)	(4,130)
Disability or long-term health condition:							
Yes	50%	50%	*62%	*58%	*68%	*66%	21%
No	50%	50%	38%	42%	32%	34%	*79%
Disadvantage:							
Yes	72%	*82%	*83%	*77%	*82%	*93%	44%
No	28%	18%	17%	23%	18%	7%	*56%
Region:							
Less developed	2%	1%	3%	0%	2%	27%	3%
Transitional	28%	20%	26%	*59%	28%	*65%	34%
More developed	70%	*79%	72%	41%	70%	7%	*63%

Row percentages. Base: All leavers (11,592)

Asterisks show results significantly different to the average results for all other leavers.

Table A.2.3 Employment status on programme entry, by gender, age and ethnicity

Row percentages				
Audience	Un-weighted base	Inactive	Unemployed	In employment
All leavers	(11,592)	25%	49%	25%
Gender:				
Male	(5,797)	24%	*53%	23%
Female	(5,768)	*27%	44%	*29%
Age:				
15-17	(548)	*60%	*39%	*1%
18-24	(2,053)	*21%	*68%	*11%
25-54	(7,319)	*23%	*44%	*32%
55+	(1,672)	24%	49%	27%
Ethnicity:				

White British / White Irish	(9,146)	25%	*47%	*28%
Ethnic minority	(2,438)	26%	*58%	*17%

Row percentages. Base: All leavers (11,592).

Asterisks show results significantly different to the average results for all other leavers.

Table A.2.4 Employment status on programme entry, by disability, disadvantage and category of region

Row percentages				
Audience	Un-weighted base	Inactive	Unemployed	In employment
All leavers	(11,592)	25%	49%	25%
Disability or long-term health condition:				
Yes	(5,300)	*37%	*52%	11%
No	(6,292)	14%	47%	*40%
Disadvantage:				
Yes	(8,489)	*30%	*54%	16%
No	(3,103)	13%	37%	*50%
Region:				
Less developed	(156)	*34%	33%	*34%
Transitional	(4,092)	24%	46%	30%
More developed	(7,344)	25%	*51%	23%

Row percentages. Base: All leavers (11,592).

Asterisks show results significantly different to the average results for all other leavers.

A.3: Course/programme experience

Table A.3.1 Proportion of participants with childcare or caring responsibilities outside work or a long-term health condition, by sample type, IP and CFO

Audience	Base	Childcare responsibilities (parent or guardian)	Long-term health condition	Base	Caring responsibilities (for relative/ friend)
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All leavers	(11,592)	34%	40%	(10,215)	11%
Sample type:					
ESF only	(11,166)	*34%	40%	(9,842)	11%
YEI only	(426)	15%	*47%	(373)	*15%
Investment Priority:					
1.1 (8i)	(3,736)	35%	40%	(3,373)	11%
1.2 (8ii)	(910)	7%	43%	(775)	11%
1.3 (8ii YEI)	(426)	15%	47%	(373)	*15%
1.4 (9i)	(2,323)	32%	58%	(2,059)	13%
1.5 (9vi)	(67)	38%	*63%	(62)	16%
2.1 (10i)	(4,130)	*47%	16%	(3,573)	8%
CFO:					
HMPPS	(119)	38%	*69%	(118)	11%
DWP	(511)	25%	*52%	(490)	9%
Direct Provider	(4,198)	30%	41%	(3,621)	12%
NLCF	(1,045)	29%	*64%	(935)	*16%
ESFA	(5,719)	*38%	30%	(5,051)	9%

Row percentages. Base for childcare responsibilities and health problems: All leavers (11,592).

Base for caring responsibilities: All leavers completing survey via telephone (10,215)

Asterisks show results significantly different to the average results for all other leavers.

Table A.3.2 Proportion of participants with childcare or caring responsibilities outside work or a long-term health condition, by gender, age and ethnicity

Audience	Base	Childcare responsibilities (parent or guardian)	Long-term health condition	Base	Caring responsibilities (for relative/ friend)
All leavers / All leavers interviewed by phone	(11,592)	34%	40%	(10,215)	11%
Gender:					
Male	(5,797)	26%	41%	(5,163)	10%
Female	(5,768)	*45%	40%	(5,026)	*14%
Age:					
15-17	(548)	3%	*49%	(458)	12%

18-24	(2,053)	11%	41%	(1,773)	*10%
25-54	(7,319)	*48%	39%	(6,506)	11%
55+	(1,672)	9%	*45%	(1,478)	14%
Ethnicity:					
White British / White Irish	(9,146)	32%	*44%	(8,075)	11%
Ethnic minority	(2,438)	*40%	25%	(2,133)	10%

Row percentages. Base for childcare responsibilities and health problems: All leavers (11,592).

Base for caring responsibilities: All leavers completing survey via telephone (10,215)

Asterisks show results significantly different to the average results for all other leavers.

Table A.3.3 Proportion of participants with childcare or caring responsibilities outside work or a long-term health condition, by disability and disadvantage

Audience	Base	Childcare responsibilities (parent or guardian)	Long-term health condition	Base	Caring responsibilities (for relative/ friend)
All leavers / All leavers interviewed by phone	(11,592)	34%	40%	(10,215)	11%
Disability or long-term health condition:					
Yes	(5,300)	26%	*81%	(4,796)	13%*
No	(6,292)	*41%	0%	(5,419)	9%
Disadvantage:					
Yes	(8,489)	33%	*46%	(7,564)	12%*
No	(3,103)	*35%	25%	(2,651)	9%

Row percentages. Base for childcare responsibilities and health problems: All leavers (11,592).

Base for caring responsibilities: All leavers completing survey via telephone (10,215)

Asterisks show results significantly different to the average results for all other leavers.

Table A.3.4 Advice and support provided on the programme, by sample type, IP and CFO

Audience	Base	Advice about what sorts of work or training you could do	General advice about the world of work	Training and advice in how to look for work	Information about vacancies you could try to go for	Contacts to help you look for a job	Work experience or a work placement
All leavers interviewed by phone	<i>(10,215)</i>	68%	62%	57%	48%	43%	20%
Sample type:							
ESF only	<i>(9,842)</i>	68%	62%	57%	47%	42%	20%
YEI only	<i>(373)</i>	*78%	*72%	*72%	*62%	*56%	*35%
Investment Priority:							
1.1 (8i)	<i>(3,373)</i>	71%	69%	71%	*63%	*56%	21%
1.2 (8ii)	<i>(775)</i>	*76%	*72%	*72%	54%	48%	*35%
1.3 (8ii YEI)	<i>(373)</i>	*78%	*72%	*72%	*62%	*56%	*35%
1.4 (9i)	<i>(2,059)</i>	69%	65%	64%	55%	50%	22%
1.5 (9vi)	<i>(62)</i>	64%	60%	53%	44%	44%	18%
2.1 (10i)	<i>(3,573)</i>	58%	45%	25%	17%	14%	9%
CFO:							
HMPPS	<i>(118)</i>	51%	37%	47%	36%	38%	14%
DWP	<i>(490)</i>	*73%	*70%	*77%	*74%	*64%	21%
Direct Provider	<i>(3,621)</i>	*71%	66%	65%	57%	50%	*23%
NLCF	<i>(935)</i>	70%	66%	66%	55%	49%	22%
ESFA	<i>(5,051)</i>	65%	58%	46%	35%	33%	18%

Base: All leavers completing survey via telephone (10,215)

Asterisks show results significantly different to the average results for all other leavers.

Table A.3.5 Advice and support provided on the programme, by gender, age and ethnicity

Audience	Un-weighted base	Advice about what sorts of work or training you could do	General advice about the world of work	Training and advice in how to look for work	Information about vacancies you could try to go for	Contacts to help you look for a job	Work experience or a work placement
All leavers interviewed by phone	(10,215)	68%	62%	57%	48%	43%	20%
Gender:							
Male	(5,163)	*69%	*64%	*59%	*50%	*45%	*22%
Female	(5,026)	*66%	*59%	*55%	*44%	*40%	*18%
Age:							
15-17	(458)	71%	70%	67%	42%	37%	*35%
18-24	(1,773)	*78%	*74%	*72%	*61%	*53%	31%
25-54	(6,506)	66%	59%	53%	45%	40%	17%
55+	(1,478)	58%	52%	51%	45%	42%	13%
Ethnicity:							
White British / White Irish	(8,075)	68%	61%	55%	46%	41%	19%
Ethnic minority	(2,133)	69%	*67%	*65%	*55%	*49%	*26%

Row percentages. Base: All leavers completing survey via telephone (10,215)

Asterisks show results significantly different to the average results for all other leavers.

Table A.3.6 Whether the course helped improved any soft skills, by sample type, IP and CFO

Audience	Un-weighted base	Self-confidence about working	Communication skills	Motivation to do more training	Motivation to find a job or seek a promotion
All leavers interviewed by phone	(10,215)	70%	66%	66%	62%
Sample type:					
ESF only	(9,842)	70%	66%	*66%	*62%
YEI only	(373)	69%	70%	*72%	*69%

Investment Priority:

1.1 (8i)	(3,373)	68%	*64%	*63%	*65%
1.2 (8ii)	(775)	72%	*73%	68%	*71%
1.3 (8ii YEI)	(373)	69%	70%	*72%	*69%
1.4 (9i)	(2,059)	*67%	65%	*63%	62%
1.5 (9vi)	(62)	63%	67%	66%	58%
2.1 (10i)	(3,573)	*73%	68%	*72%	*54%

CFO:

HMPPS	(118)	*35%	*42%	*45%	*38%
DWP	(490)	*61%	*53%	*52%	62%
Direct Provider	(3,621)	70%	*68%	67%	*66%
NLCF	(935)	69%	64%	*61%	61%
ESFA	(5,051)	*72%	*69%	*70%	*61%

Row percentages. Base: All leavers completing survey via telephone (10,215)

Asterisks show results significantly different to the average results for all other leavers.

Table A.3.7 Participant satisfaction with the training or support received, by gender, age and ethnicity

Audience	Un-weighted base						TOTAL SATISFIED
		Very dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	
All leavers	(11,592)	4%	3%	10%	33%	48%	81%
Gender:							
Male	(5,797)	4%	4%	*11%	*35%	*45%	*80%
Female	(5,768)	4%	3%	*10%	*31%	*51%	*82%
Age:							
15-17	(548)	*5%	*5%	*15%	*44%	29%	73%
18-24	(2,053)	4%	3%	11%	39%	41%	80%
25-54	(7,319)	4%	3%	10%	30%	*51%	*82%
55+	(1,672)	4%	3%	11%	33%	48%	81%

Ethnicity:							
White British / White Irish	(9,146)	4%	3%	11%	32%	*49%	81%
Ethnic minority	(2,438)	3%	*4%	10%	*37%	42%	*79%

Row percentages. Base: All leavers (11,592).

1% answered 'don't know' and this answer option is not shown in the table.

Asterisks show results significantly different to the average results for all other leavers.

Table A.3.8 Participant satisfaction with the training or support received, by disability, disadvantage and category of region

Row percentages							
Audience	Un-weighted base						TOTAL SATISFIED
		Very dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	
All leavers	(11,592)	4%	3%	10%	33%	48%	81%
Disability or long-term health condition:							
Yes	(5,300)	*5%	*4%	*12%	33%	44%	77%
No	(6,292)	3%	2%	9%	33%	*51%	*84%
Disadvantage:							
Yes	(8,489)	4%	4%	*11%	*34%	46%	80%
No	(3,103)	3%	3%	10%	31%	*52%	*83%
Region:							
Less developed	(156)	4%	6%	7%	31%	51%	82%
Transitional	(4,092)	4%	3%	10%	33%	48%	81%
More developed	(7,344)	4%	3%	11%	33%	47%	81%

Row percentages. Base: All leavers (11,592).

1% answered 'don't know' and this answer option is not shown in the table.

Asterisks show results significantly different to the average results for all other leavers.

A.4: Status six months after course completion

Table A.4.1 Employment status on programme entry and six months after leaving programme, by gender

Audience	Un-weighted base	Inactive	Un-employed	In employment	<u>Employment growth</u>
All leavers – Entry	(11,592)	25%	49%	25%	
All leavers – Six months	(11,592)	32%	17%	51%	+26%
Gender:					
Male – Entry	(5,797)	24%	*53%	23%	
Male – Six months	(5,797)	29%	*20%	51%	+28%
Female – Entry	(5,768)	*27%	44%	*29%	
Female – Six months	(5,768)	*36%	12%	52%	+23%

Row percentages. Base: All leavers (11,592). Last column shows percentage change from entry to six months after for each sub-group.

Asterisks show results significantly different to the average results for all other leavers at each time point.

Table A.4.2 Employment status on programme entry and six months after leaving programme, by age

Audience	Un-weighted base	Inactive	Un-employed	In employment	<u>Employment growth</u>
All leavers – Entry	(11,592)	25%	49%	25%	
All leavers – Six months	(11,592)	32%	17%	51%	+26%
Age:					
15-17s – Entry	(548)	*60%	39%	1%	
15-17s – Six months	(548)	*61%	*24%	*15%	+14%
18-24s – Entry	(2,053)	21%	*68%	11%	
18-24s – Six months	(2,053)	33%	*23%	44%	+33%
25-54s – Entry	(7,319)	23%	44%	*32%	

25-54s – Six months	(7,319)	29%	14%	*57%	+25%
55+ – Entry	(1,672)	24%	49%	27%	
55+ – Six months	(1,672)	35%	17%	*48%	+21%

Row percentages. Base: All leavers (11,592). Last column shows percentage change from entry to six months after for each sub-group.

Asterisks show results significantly different to the average results for all other leavers at each time point.

Table A.4.3 Employment status on programme entry and six months after leaving programme, by ethnicity

Audience	Un-weighted base	Inactive	Un-employed	In employment	<u>Employment growth</u>
All leavers – Entry	(11,592)	25%	49%	25%	
All leavers – Six months	(11,592)	32%	17%	51%	+26%
Ethnicity:					
White British / White Irish – Entry	(9,146)	25%	*47%	*28%	
White British / White Irish – Six months	(9,146)	32%	*16%	*52%	+24%
Ethnic minority group – Entry	(2,438)	26%	*58%	*17%	
Ethnic minority group – Six months	(2,438)	33%	*21%	*46%	+29%

Row percentages. Base: All leavers (11,592). Last column shows percentage change from entry to six months after for each sub-group.

Asterisks show results significantly different to the average results for all other leavers at each time point.

Table A.4.4 Employment status on programme entry and six months after leaving programme, by disability or long-term health condition

Row percentages					
Audience	Un-weighted base	Inactive	Un-employed	In employment	<u>Employment growth</u>
All leavers – Entry	(11,592)	25%	49%	25%	

All leavers – Six months	(11,592)	32%	17%	51%	+26%
Disability or long-term health condition:					
Yes – Entry	(5,300)	*37%	*52%	*11%	
Yes – Six months	(5,300)	*46%	*19%	*36%	+25%
No – Entry	(6,292)	*14%	*47%	*40%	
No – Six months	(6,292)	*19%	*15%	*66%	+26%

Row percentages. Base: All leavers (11,592). Last column shows percentage change from entry to six months after for each sub-group.

Asterisks show results significantly different to the average results for all other leavers at each time point.

Table A.4.5 Employment status on programme entry and six months after leaving programme, by disadvantage

Audience	Un-weighted base	Inactive	Un-employed	In employment	<u>Employment growth</u>
All leavers – Entry	(11,592)	25%	49%	25%	
All leavers – Six months	(11,592)	32%	17%	51%	+26%
Disadvantage:					
Yes – Entry	(8,489)	*30%	*54%	*16%	
Yes – Six months	(8,489)	*38%	*19%	*43%	+27%
No – Entry	(3,103)	*13%	*37%	*50%	
No – Six months	(3,103)	*16%	*12%	*72%	+22%

Row percentages. Base: All leavers (11,592). Last column shows percentage change from entry to six months after for each sub-group.

Asterisks show results significantly different to the average results for all other leavers at each time point.

Table A.4.6 Employment status on programme entry and six months after leaving programme, by category of region

Audience	Un-weighted base	Inactive	Un-employed	In employment	<u>Employment growth</u>
All leavers – Entry	(11,592)	25%	49%	25%	

All leavers – Six months	(11,592)	32%	17%	51%	+26%
Region:					
Less developed – Entry	(156)	*34%	*33%	*34%	
Less developed – Six months	(156)	39%	*7%	53%	+19%
Transitional – Entry	(4,092)	24%	*46%	*30%	
Transitional – Six months	(4,092)	32%	*15%	*53%	+23%
More developed – Entry	(7,344)	25%	*51%	*23%	
More developed – Six months	(7,344)	32%	*18%	*50%	+27%

Row percentages. Base: All leavers (11,592). Last column shows percentage change from entry to six months after for each sub-group.

Asterisks show results significantly different to the average results for all other leavers at each time point.

Table A.4.7 Employment status transitions between entry to and six months after leaving the programme, by gender, age and ethnicity

Audience	Un-weighted base	Moved out of employment	Remained unemployed/inactive	Moved into employment	Remained employed
All leavers	(11,592)	2%	46%	28%	23%
Gender:					
Male	(5,797)	2%	47%	*30%	*20%
Female	(5,768)	3%	46%	*25%	*27%
Age:					
15-17	(548)	<1%	*84%	*14%	*1%
18-24	(2,053)	2%	*54%	*35%	*9%
25-54	(7,319)	*3%	*40%	28%	*29%
55+	(1,672)	3%	*49%	*24%	24%
Ethnicity:					
White British / White Irish	(9,146)	2%	*45%	*27%	*25%
Ethnic minority	(2,438)	3%	*51%	*32%	*14%

Row percentages. Base: All leavers (11,592)

Asterisks show results significantly different to the average results for all other leavers.

Table A.4.8 Employment status transitions between entry to and six months after leaving the programme, by disability, disadvantage and region

Audience	Un-weighted base	Moved out of employment	Remained unemployed/inactive	Moved into employment	Remained employed
All leavers	(11,592)	2%	46%	28%	23%
Disability or long-term health condition:					
Yes	(5,300)	*2%	*63%	*26%	*9%
No	(6,292)	*3%	*30%	*30%	*36%
Disadvantage:					
Yes	(8,489)	*2%	*55%	*29%	*14%
No	(3,103)	*4%	*24%	*26%	*46%
Region:					
Less developed	(156)	*5%	41%	25%	28%
Transitional	(4,092)	2%	*45%	*26%	*27%
More developed	(7,344)	2%	*47%	*29%	*21%

Row percentages. Base: All leavers (11,592)

Asterisks show results significantly different to the average results for all other leavers.

Table A.4.9 Changes in skills, qualifications and responsibilities required in employment role six months after leaving the programme, compared to their employment role at entry - by gender, age and ethnicity

Audience	Un-weighted base	Higher level skills/competencies	Higher level of qualification	More responsibility
All leavers in employment on entry and at six months	(3,598)	33%	19%	38%
Gender:				
Male	(1,660)	34%	*22%	39%
Female	(1,938)	33%	*16%	37%

Age²⁶:

18-24	(261)	*43%	*27%	*54%
25-54	(2,845)	33%	*18%	38%
55+	(485)	*26%	19%	*26%

Ethnicity:

White British / White Irish	(3,108)	*32%	*17%	*36%
Ethnic minority	(489)	*44%	*28%	*48%

Row percentages. Base: All in employment on entry and six months after leaving (3,598)

Asterisks show results significantly different to the average results for all other leavers.

Table A.4.10 Changes in skills, qualifications and responsibilities required in employment role six months after leaving the programme, compared to their employment role at entry, by disability, disadvantage and category of region

Audience	Un-weighted base	Higher level skills/competencies	Higher level of qualification	More responsibility
All leavers in employment on entry and at six months	(3,598)	33%	19%	38%
Disability or long-term health condition:				
Yes	(799)	33%	18%	39%
No	(2,799)	33%	19%	38%
Disadvantage:				
Yes	(1,865)	33%	20%	39%
No	(1,733)	34%	18%	37%
Region²⁷:				
Transitional	(1,606)	33%	*15%	36%
More developed	(1,973)	32%	*20%	38%

Row percentages. Base: All in employment on entry and six months after leaving (3,598)

Asterisks show results significantly different to the average results for all other leavers.

²⁶ Age 15-17 is not reported here as the base is under 50.

²⁷ Less developed regions are not reported here as the base is under 50.

Table A.4.11 Improvements in working conditions and job prospects at six months, by gender, age and ethnicity

Audience	Un-weighted base	More opportunities for training in your job	More job satisfaction	Future pay and promotion prospects improved	Better job security	Hourly rate or annual salary increased	Had a promotion
All leavers in employment on entry and at six months	(3,598)	64%	60%	57%	49%	47%	15%
Gender:							
Male	(1,660)	62%	60%	*61%	*53%	47%	*12%
Female	(1,938)	65%	61%	*54%	*45%	47%	*17%
Age²⁸:							
18-24	(261)	*78%	*74%	*70%	*71%	*59%	*21%
25-54	(2,845)	63%	61%	*59%	49%	47%	15%
55+	(485)	*54%	*49%	*39%	*38%	*43%	*9%
Ethnicity:							
White British / White Irish	(3,108)	*63%	*59%	57%	*47%	47%	15%
Ethnic minority	(489)	*70%	*72%	59%	*64%	46%	12%

Row percentages. Base: All in employment on entry and six months after leaving (3,598)

Asterisks show results significantly different to the average results for all other leavers.

Table A.4.12 Improvements in working conditions and job prospects at six months, by disability, disadvantage and category of region

²⁸ Age 15-17 is not reported here as the base is under 50.

Audience	Un-weighted base	More opportunities for training in your job	More job satisfaction	Future pay and promotion prospects improved	Better job security	Hourly rate or annual salary increased	Had a promotion
All leavers in employment on entry and at six months	(3,598)	64%	60%	57%	49%	47%	15%
Disability or long-term health condition:							
Yes	(799)	*58%	*56%	*52%	48%	47%	16%
No	(2,799)	*65%	*62%	*59%	50%	47%	14%
Disadvantage:							
Yes	(1,865)	63%	60%	56%	*52%	46%	*12%
No	(1,733)	64%	60%	59%	*47%	48%	*17%
Region²⁹:							
Transitional	(1,606)	62%	*58%	*55%	*47%	48%	15%
More developed	(1,973)	64%	61%	58%	50%	*46%	14%

Row percentages. Base: All in employment on entry and six months after leaving (3,598)
Asterisks show results significantly different to the average results for all other leavers.

²⁹ Less developed regions are not reported here as the base is under 50.

B: Technical appendix

Wider Evaluation

The requirement for monitoring and evaluation was stipulated by the European Commission (EC) with the relevant guidance outlining that MAs should ensure that evaluations, including evaluations to assess effectiveness, efficiency and impact, were carried out for each ESF programme.³⁰ The evaluation has been part funded by ESF Technical Assistance. All published reports are available in the DWP research series on.³¹

The **ESF and YEI Leavers Survey** provided quantitative metrics required for EC reporting on long term results indicators which are published in the Annual Implementation Reports submitted by the MA to the EC. This research adds to the body of evidence collected/due to be collected about the operation of the ESF Programme across a number of other strands:

- Process and impact evaluations of the Youth Employment Initiative
- Leavers Survey covering the period 2016-2019
- **Scoping study** for impact evaluation, undertaken to outline the best possible approach to assessing impact
- **Impact evaluation:**
 - *Counterfactual Impact Evaluation* using ESF data linked to administrative data to quantify the impacts that the Programme has achieved set against a counterfactual – i.e. what outcomes would have been achieved without ESF. As recommended in the scoping study, this analysis uses a Propensity Score Matching method which matches ESF participants with statistically similar non-participants and compares their employment and benefits outcomes tracked for up to three years after ESF participation. This is being done initially at programme level.
 - *Qualitative case studies* to provide insight into ‘how’ and ‘why’ outcomes are achieved and also allow some exploration of outcomes that can be harder to pick up through quantitative analysis e.g. where they are ‘softer’ outcomes that represent steps on a journey towards employment or higher-level employment. This used a theory-based approach outlined in the scoping study for the impact evaluation.

Cost Benefit Analysis using the results from the impact analysis and the DWP Social Cost-Benefit Model to assess the fiscal and societal return on investment of the programme.³²

³⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/2014/working/wd_2014_en.pdf

³¹ At: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/research-reports>

³² At: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-dwp-social-cost-benefit-analysis-framework-wp86>

Sampling

Sample source

The ESF and YEI Leavers survey sought to speak to individuals who had completed and left provision **at least six months prior**, and **since November 2021**.

All ESF and YEI providers (or Grant Recipients) were required to record and routinely share individual participant contact details with the DWP to support the monitoring and evaluation. Grant Recipients were asked to supply the following information for each participant:

- i. Participant unique identifier
- ii. Title
- iii. Forename
- iv. Surname
- v. Address
- vi. Postcode
- vii. Home phone number
- viii. Mobile number
- ix. Email address
- x. Project ID - Unique project identifier provided by the Managing Authority
- xi. Project Title - As defined by the applicant (to help them identify which provision is being referred to)
- xii. Project delivery location - LEP area the project is delivered in
- xiii. Project delivery partner name - Partner organisation involved in the project
- xiv. Date participant leaves provision

All Grant Recipients / providers were asked to quality assure and validate all data prior to sharing with the DWP.³³ Grant Recipients / providers were expected to supply all the details required, however, if the data is not available for a particular field, the field was left blank.

In the early part of the programme Grant Recipients were asked to submit the participant contact details - via PGP encrypted email - to the DWP quarterly, including contact details data for all participants **who had left provision in the preceding quarter**.³⁴ However some organisations sent details in batches covering several quarters meaning that a proportion of details were not available in time to be included in the quarterly survey samples. This enabled the later use of top-up

³³ Data quality is the responsibility of Grant Recipients.

³⁴ That is those participants who have a 'leave date' in the MI participant data schema (PDS) data submitted for that quarter. We do not require contact details for all participants on provision every quarter.

samples using records which matched the leave dates of the previous waves, but had not been supplied to DWP in time to be included previously.

From 2020 a new secure online uploading system was introduced on GOV.UK to replace the use of PGP encrypted emails. This included additional data validation checks to assure the quality of the data.

Once received by DWP:

- A quarterly census of participant records was drawn from the ESF Eclaims Management Information database via the Participant Data Schema (PDS) and matched to the participant contact detail records submitted to DWP by all Grant Recipients;
- PDS MI data was matched to the contact details separately using the participant unique ID;
- Matched MI and contacts data were then matched to DWP administrative records to remove participants who had previously been sampled in other recent DWP research, in addition to deceased participants.
- Participant contact details and matched fields were shared with IFF Research for the purposes of the survey.

Sample cleaning and counts

A total of ten sample batches were transferred to IFF Research, covering the nine survey waves, and one separate batch of 'top-up' sample. This top-up sample comprised records which matched leave dates of the previous waves but had not been supplied to DWP in time to be included previously. Whilst this meant interviewing leavers at a slightly longer interval than intended, e.g. eight months after course completion rather than six, this sample was used as volumes had been low. This sample was monitored for any issues, such as poor participant recollection or differences in answer trends compared to those at the standard six month interval. However, as no issues were found, and as this boosted the numbers of completed interviews considerably, additional top-up records were provided alongside the standard records for the final two waves.

Sample was cleaned and records removed if any of the following applied:

- No address (as unsuitable for mailout)
- 'Unsuitable' addresses, such as prisons, temporary accommodation, Jobcentre Plus
- Leaver name incomplete
- Leaver would be under 16 at the time of fieldwork
- No / invalid phone number – where this was the case, their postal address would be used to look up the correct number using a telephone matching service. Where this did not produce a match (i.e. if a record still had no phone number) and had no email address, the record was removed. Those without phone

numbers but with email addresses were sent an email introducing the survey and inviting them to take part via an online link.

- The same phone number was provided for *more than* two records (these were likely to be a school, college, Jobcentre Plus, etc.)
- Repeat leaver from previous batch (i.e. included in a previous sample batch due to completion of earlier provision) – this was to avoid respondent fatigue
- Repeated leaver within the same batch
 - Leave date too early (pre- June 2021)
 - Leave month too late (i.e. they had not reached their six-month point), unless they were part of top-up sample

Table B.1 shows the overall proportions of sample supplied that were lost through cleaning for each wave. Sample volumes supplied fluctuated each wave due to patterns of sample delivery from providers to DWP. Useable sample does not equate to starting sample due to pre-fieldwork opt outs across all waves.

Table B.1 Overview of sample received and starting sample, by wave

Wave	Sample supplied	Starting sample	% of sample supplied used
Wave 1	7,629	5,675	74%
Wave 2	7,801	4,880	63%
Wave 3	8,506	7,672	90%
Wave 4	7,667	6,895	90%
Wave 5	2,907	2,680	92%
Wave 6	6,586	6,056	92%
Wave 7	9,209	8,306	90%
Wave 8	13,353	11,404	85%
Wave 9	3,423	3,067	90%
Top-up 1	13,977	12,881	92%
Top-up 2	5,402	4,707	87%
Top-up 3	4,846	4,132	85%
Total	91,306	78,355	86%

Opt out process

All useable sample with a phone number was sent an introductory letter two weeks in advance of fieldwork starting to notify them of the research, its objectives, and giving them an opportunity to opt out via email or by leaving a voicemail message. Any sample without a phone number but with a useable email address was sent an email outlining the research and inviting them to take part via an online link. This email also let them know they could opt out by email or voicemail.

In total, 1.4% of individuals who were contacted opted out of the research before fieldwork started. Table B.2 shows opt outs broken down by wave.

Table B.2 Proportion of sample opting out each wave

Wave	Useable / selected sample	Opt outs	% opted out	Starting sample
Wave 1	5,797	122	2.1%	5,675
Wave 2	5,021	141	2.8%	4,880
Wave 3	7,743	71	0.9%	7,672
Wave 4	6,955	60	0.9%	6,895
Wave 5	2,724	44	1.6%	2,680
Wave 6	6,123	67	1.1%	6,056
Wave 7	8,412	106	1.3%	8,306
Wave 8	11,572	168	1.5%	11,404
Wave 9	3,093	26	0.8%	3,067
Top-up 1	13,067	186	1.4%	12,881
Top-up 2	4,767	60	1.3%	4,707
Top-up 3	4,190	58	1.4%	4,132
Total	79,464	1,109	1.4%	78,355

Questionnaire coverage

The questionnaire was designed to address the research objectives and collect the necessary indicator data across the priorities. Table B.3 provides an overview of questionnaire coverage, the full questionnaire is presented in Appendix C.

Table B.3 Questionnaire summary

Section	Coverage of questions
 Screener	Introducing the survey and confirming eligibility.
Section A: Status when started course	What the main activity of the participant was immediately before starting their provision. Details of employment, unemployment, qualification and skills, and benefits claimed (for DWP provision) were also collected.
Section B: Experience of the course	Participant support needs (child and other carer responsibilities, disability) and assistance, and digital support provided during the Covid-19 pandemic. Work-related skills and support gained, and satisfaction with the provision. For YEI leavers, details of traineeships.
Section C: Status six months after completing course	What participants were doing six months after completing their provision; details on employment, unemployment, qualification and skills, and benefits claimed (for DWP provision) were also collected.
Section D: YEI leavers	Job offers and opportunities in the six months following provision completion, among YEI leavers only.

Section E: Demographics information	Capturing information on living situation, sex and gender, age, ethnicity, long-term limiting illness (LTLI), and sexual orientation.
Section F: Recontact questions	Whether participants are willing for their responses to be linked to other DWP held administrative records.

Status on entry to provision was provided in the sample and checked in the survey. Most survey respondents agreed with their MI status (92%).

Fieldwork

Mainstage fieldwork took place across nine waves between November 2021 and December 2023. The average telephone survey length was 18 minutes and the average online survey length was 12 minutes.³⁵

In total, 11,592 interviews were completed with ESF and YEI leavers across the pilot and mainstage, with an average conversion rate of 15%. The first interview took place on 20th November 2021, and the final interview took place on 18th December 2023.

Table B.4 provides breakdown of the fieldwork dates, starting sample, number of completes and conversion rates for each wave, while Tables B.5 and B.6 show this broken down by CFO and IP.

Table B.4 Fieldwork dates and conversion rates for each wave

Wave	Fieldwork start dates	Starting sample	Number of completes	Conversion rate (%)
Wave 1	20/11/21	5,675	648	11%
Wave 2	14/03/22	4,880	955	20%
Wave 3	09/05/22	7,672	961	13%
Wave 4	08/08/22	6,895	1,059	15%
Wave 5	26/11/22	2,680	516	19%
Wave 6	14/02/23	6,056	857	14%
Wave 7	10/05/23	8,306	1,396	17%
Wave 8	12/08/23	11,404	1,771	16%
Wave 9	06/11/23	3,067	267	9%
Top-up 1	06/03/23	12,881	2,069	16%
Top-up 2	12/08/23	4,707	691	15%
Top-up 3	06/11/23	4,132	402	10%
Total		78,355	11,592	15%

³⁵ Surveys that took place across more than one call, or more than one day where completed online, were excluded from this average.

Table B.5 Response rates each wave, by CFO type

	HMPPS			DWP			Direct Provider			ESFA			NLCF		
	Starting sample	Completed Interviews	Conversion Rate (%)	Starting sample	Completed Interviews	Conversion Rate (%)	Starting sample	Completed Interviews	Conversion Rate (%)	Starting sample	Completed Interviews	Conversion Rate (%)	Starting sample	Completed Interviews	Conversion Rate (%)
Wave 1	130	4	3%	-	-	-	1,243	164	13%	-	-	-	4,302	480	11%
Wave 2	170	15	9%	1,644	367	22%	1,336	275	21%	-	-	-	1,730	298	17%
Wave 3	161	10	6%	-	-	-	2,460	341	14%	-	-	-	5,051	610	12%
Wave 4	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,401	226	16%	-	-	-	5,494	833	15%
Wave 5	224	15	7%	692	143	21%	1,764	358	20%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wave 6	200	16	8%	1	-	0%	2,794	487	17%	-	-	-	3,061	354	12%
Wave 7	194	16	8%	1	-	0%	3,176	675	21%	-	-	-	4,935	705	14%
Wave 8	206	15	7%	-	-	-	3,974	838	21%	-	-	-	7,224	918	13%
Wave 9	750	26	3%	-	-	-	2,317	241	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Top-up 1	19	2	11%	13	1	8%	1,700	228	13%	4,056	1,044	26%	7,093	794	11%
Top-up 2	6	-	0%	-	-	-	1,601	242	15%	1	1	100%	3,099	448	14%
Top-up 3	4	-	0%	-	-	-	853	123	14%	-	-	-	3,275	279	9%
Total	2,064	119	6%	2,351	511	22%	24,619	4,198	17%	4,057	1,045	26%	45,264	5,719	13%

Table B.6 Response rates each wave, by Investment Priority

	1.1			1.2			1.3 (YEI)			1.4		
	Starting sample	Completed Interviews	Conversion Rate (%)	Starting sample	Completed Interviews	Conversion Rate (%)	Starting sample	Completed Interviews	Conversion Rate (%)	Starting sample	Completed Interviews	Conversion Rate (%)
Wave 1	1,213	184	15%	832	67	8%	301	24	8%	701	85	12%
Wave 2	2,272	522	23%	408	57	14%	376	61	16%	470	97	21%
Wave 3	2,040	364	18%	603	32	5%	1,042	121	12%	641	104	16%
Wave 4	1,266	267	21%	681	57	8%	208	17	8%	815	153	19%
Wave 5	1,296	294	23%	163	16	10%	155	17	11%	555	71	13%
Wave 6	1,262	284	23%	867	75	9%	320	30	9%	700	128	18%
Wave 7	2,116	521	25%	1,178	132	11%	291	51	18%	991	178	18%
Wave 8	2,630	622	24%	1,753	167	10%	165	29	18%	796	150	19%
Wave 9	993	123	12%	249	31	12%	213	21	10%	832	34	4%
Top-up 1	1,582	295	19%	1,320	104	8%	377	32	8%	4,638	1,154	25%
Top-up 2	782	180	23%	1,193	117	10%	70	13	19%	511	107	21%
Top-up 3	460	80	17%	895	55	6%	97	10	10%	387	62	16%
Total	17,912	3,736	21%	10,142	910	9%	3,615	426	12%	12,037	2,323	19%

	1.5			2.1		
	Starting sample	Completed Interviews	Conversion Rate (%)	Starting sample	Completed Interviews	Conversion Rate (%)
Wave 1	-	-	-	2,628	288	11%
Wave 2	3	-	0%	1,351	218	16%
Wave 3	28	8	29%	3,318	332	10%
Wave 4	-	-	-	3,925	565	14%
Wave 5	1	-	-	510	118	23%
Wave 6	1	-	-	2,906	340	12%
Wave 7	12	3	25%	3,718	511	14%
Wave 8	-	-	-	6,052	800	13%
Wave 9	-	-	-	780	58	7%
Top-up 1	3	1	33%	4,961	483	10%
Top-up 2	84	27	32%	2,067	247	12%
Top-up 3	80	25	31%	2,213	170	8%

Total	212	64	30%	34,429	4,130	12%
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Weighting

Weighting was determined by comparing completes to population counts across 1,296 strata cells (as displayed in Table B8). These strata cells were based on targets set within Investment Priority for 48 separate groups which are defined through combinations of the following variables:

- Whether or not they meet a disadvantaged definition (2 categories – yes or no)
- Age (2 categories - under or over 54)
- Region (3 categories – less developed, more developed and transition)
- Gender (2 categories – male or female)
- Employment status (3 categories – employed, not employed or inactive)

A 49th group, for records where one of the above strata could not be determined was created and weighted in the same way. Records included in this ‘unassignable’ category in both the MI population and the survey completes were usually those with another gender expression or who had chosen not to provide their gender or age. There were some cells where no interviews were achieved but there was a population; this meant the final weighted total was lower than the overall target population count.

YEI sample was further stratified by age, into under 25s and 25 or older. Population was determined by MI data provided for the period covered by the survey.

Table B.7 shows the final weighting targets and proportions by Investment Priority.

Table B.7 Weighting targets by Investment Priority

IP	MI population	% of total MI population
1.1	106,785	27%
1.2	38,881	10%
1.3 (YEI)	13,932	4%
1.4	128,547	33%
1.5	4,561	1%
2.1	99,819	25%
Total	392,525	100%

Table B.8 Grid for weighting targets

Region	Gender	Age	Employment status (at point of starting provision)	Meet dis - advantaged criteria?	IP 1.1 Access to employment	IP 1.2 Sustainable integration of young people	IP 1.3 (YEI) Sustainable integration of young people (YEI)	IP 1.4 Active inclusion	IP 1.5 Community -led local development strategies	IP 2.1 Access to lifelong learning
Less developed	Men	Under 25	Inactive	Y						
				N						
			Unemployed	Y						
				N						
			Employed	Y						
				N						
		25-54	Inactive	Y						
				N						
			Unemployed	Y						
				N						
			Employed	Y						
				N						
	55+	Inactive	Y							
			N							
		Unemployed	Y							
			N							
		Employed	Y							
			N							
	Women	Under 25	Inactive	Y						
				N						
			Unemployed	Y						
				N						
			Employed	Y						
				N						
			Y							
			N							

Transition		25-54	Inactive	Y							
				N							
			Unemployed	Y							
				N							
		Employed	Y								
			N								
		55+	Inactive	Y							
				N							
	Unemployed		Y								
			N								
	Employed	Y									
		N									
	Transition	Men	Under 25	Inactive	Y						
					N						
				Unemployed	Y						
					N						
Employed			Y								
			N								
25-54			Inactive	Y							
				N							
		Unemployed	Y								
			N								
Employed		Y									
		N									
55+		Inactive	Y								
			N								
		Unemployed	Y								
			N								
Employed	Y										
	N										
Women	Under 25	Inactive	Y								
			N								

		25-54	Unemployed	Y											
				N											
			Employed	Y											
				N											
			Inactive	Y											
				N											
		Unemployed	Y												
			N												
		Employed	Y												
			N												
		55+	Inactive	Y											
				N											
			Unemployed	Y											
				N											
			Employed	Y											
				N											
More developed	Men	Under 25	Inactive	Y											
				N											
			Unemployed	Y											
		N													
		Employed	Y												
			N												
		25-54	Inactive	Y											
				N											
			Unemployed	Y											
		N													
		Employed	Y												
			N												
55+	Inactive	Y													
		N													
	Unemployed	Y													
N															

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	Women	Under 25	Employed	Y						
				N						
			Inactive	Y						
				N						
			Unemployed	Y						
				N						
		Employed	Y							
			N							
		25-54	Inactive	Y						
				N						
			Unemployed	Y						
				N						
			Employed	Y						
				N						
		55+	Inactive	Y						
				N						
			Unemployed	Y						
				N						
			Employed	Y						
				N						

Note: Greyed out cells indicate where the sub-group is ineligible for that Investment Priority, for example employed participants are not eligible for IP 1.1 Access to Employment.

Appendix C: Questionnaire

This version of the questionnaire has been adapted for publication and excludes screener questions, information provided to the participant about consent and data protection.

Survey respondents will not answer all listed questions as routing is used to remove questions that are not relevant to that participant, for example some questions are only asked to YEI participants. Similarly, any answer categories that are not relevant will not be read out by the interviewer.

A shorter online survey was made available for the 2021-2023 survey.

Some changes were made to this questionnaire from the 2016-2019 survey.³⁶ These have been noted below. No changes were made to questions required for calculating Long Term Results Indicators.

The Survey Index table below lists the modes in which questions were asked and any changes.

Where <COURSE> is used in a question, the interviewer will refer to the specific ESF or YEI funded support or project that the participant has received or been on.

Section A: Status when started course

ASK ALL

A1: Before I talk to you about the <COURSE>, I would like to confirm a few details about your situation immediately before you began.

According to our records, you were “unemployed and actively looking for work”/ “neither working nor actively looking for work. This may have included being in prison, in education or training, or not being able to work through illness or looking after the home, etc]. Is that correct?

If you were on furlough or the Self Employment Income Support Scheme, this counts as being in employment.

1. Yes, that’s correct
2. No, that doesn’t sound right
3. Not sure

ASK ALL

³⁶ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/european-social-fund-and-youth-employment-initiative-leavers-survey-report-2016-2019>

A2: Can you tell me what your main activity was immediately prior to starting the <COURSE>? If you were doing more than one activity, please just tell me about the activity you consider to have been your main activity. Were you...

1. Employed, including by a family member
2. Unemployed and looking for work
3. In education or training
4. Not in employment because of sickness or disability
5. Working in a voluntary, unpaid role or internship
6. Employed but on furlough/ on the Self Employment Income Support Scheme
7. Looking after the home or family full time
8. Caring for an adult family member, relative or friend who has any long standing illness, disability or infirmity
9. Retired and/or claiming a pension / pension credit
10. In prison
11. Other, please specify
12. Don't know

ASK ALL FROM DWP SAMPLE

A3: Were you receiving any benefits immediately before starting the <COURSE>?
[DWP CFO only]

Please do not include any furlough or Self Employment Income Support you might have received when we ask about benefits.

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

ASK ALL DWP WHO WERE CLAIMING BENEFITS

A4: Which type of benefits were you receiving immediately before starting the <COURSE>. Were you receiving...?

1. Universal Credit
2. Jobseeker's Allowance
3. Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
4. Incapacity Benefit
5. Income Support
6. Other (write in)
7. Don't know

ASK ALL NON DWP SAMPLE

A4a: Were you receiving any benefits immediately before starting the <COURSE>?
[Non-DWP CFO only]

Please do not include any furlough or Self Employment Income Support you might have received when we ask about benefits.

1. Yes
2. No

3. Don't know

ASK ALL NON DWP WHO WERE CLAIMING BENEFITS

A4b: Which type of benefits were you receiving immediately before starting the <COURSE>. Were you receiving...?

1. Universal Credit
2. Jobseeker's Allowance
3. Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
4. Incapacity Benefit
5. Income Support
6. Other (write in)
7. Don't know

ASK ALL DWP WHO WERE CLAIMING UNIVERSAL CREDIT

A5: Which type of Universal Credit were you receiving immediately before starting the <COURSE>. Were you receiving...?

1. Universal Credit - no work-related requirements group [ADD IF NECESSARY: you didn't have to do any activities to prepare or look for work.]
2. Universal Credit - work-focused interview group [ADD IF NECESSARY: you had to go to regular interviews with your work coach at the Jobcentre to get support with preparing for work in the future. You didn't have to look for work, be available for work or prepare for work at that time.]
3. Universal Credit - work preparation group [ADD IF NECESSARY: you had to do activities to prepare for work, eg attend training, do work experience, write a CV, go to interviews with your work coach at the Jobcentre to help you find or stay in work. You didn't have to actually search for work or be available for work.]
4. Universal Credit - all work-related requirements group [ADD IF NECESSARY: you had to do all you could to find a job or a higher paid job. This included looking for jobs, applying for jobs, going to interviews, etc. You had to be ready and available to take up work straight away.]
5. Don't know

ASK ALL IN EDUCATION OR TRAINING

A6: Which of the following types of education or training were you doing immediately before starting the <COURSE>? Were you...

1. In school
2. In college full time – 16 hours or more a week
3. In college part time – less than 16 hours a week
4. On a course whilst in work
5. On a traineeship [ADD IF NECESSARY: These generally involve individuals spending at least a few weeks with businesses or other organisations in order to gain practical work experience ahead of taking up regular employment]
6. (DO NOT READ OUT) In university
7. Other (please specify)
8. (DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know

ASK ALL INACTIVE, EXCLUDING RETIRED

A7: At the time immediately before you started on the <COURSE>, did you want a regular paid job either full-time or part-time?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know
4. I already had a job

ASK ALL IN EMPLOYMENT

A8: Which of the following types of employment were you in immediately before starting the <COURSE>? Were you...

1. Working for an employer (including family employer) in a paid role
2. Working in a family business without being paid
3. Self employed
4. On an apprenticeship
5. Other, please specify
6. Don't know

ASK ALL IN EMPLOYMENT BUT NOT SELF-EMPLOYED

A9: Thinking about this job, was it ...

If you were on furlough / the Self Employment Income Support Scheme at the time, please consider your contractual situation before you went on furlough.

1. On a permanent or open-ended contract
2. On a fixed-term contract lasting 12 months or longer
3. On a fixed-term contract lasting less than 12 months
4. On a temporary or casual basis
5. A zero hours' contract
6. (DON'T READ OUT) On an open ended contract but of limited duration (i.e. covering the absence of a colleague or covering completion of a fixed task)
7. On some other basis (PLEASE SPECIFY)
8. (DON'T READ OUT) Don't know
9. (DON'T READ OUT) Refused

ASK ALL EMPLOYED INCLUDING SELF-EMPLOYED

A10: And did you consider yourself to be working ...

1. Full time
2. Or part time
3. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't Know
4. DO NOT READ OUT: Refused

ASK ALL UNSURE OR GAVE NO ANSWER

A11: How many hours on average did you work per week in this job? Did you work...

ADD IF NECESSARY: If you were on furlough / the Self Employment Income Support Scheme at the time, please consider your contractual situation before you went on furlough

1. Less than 16 hours a week
2. Between 16 and 39 hours a week
3. Or 40 or more hours a week
4. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't Know
5. DO NOT READ OUT: Refused

ASK IF WORKING PART TIME

A12: You said you were working part-time immediately before you started on the <COURSE>. At that time, did you want to be working on a full-time basis?

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

ASK IF UNEMPLOYED

A13 At the time you started the <COURSE>, how long had you been out of paid employment and looking for work? ADD IF NECESSARY: An approximation is fine.

1. Less than 3 months
2. Between 3 and less than 6 months
3. Between 6 and less than 12 months
4. Between 12 months and less than 2 years
5. 2 years or more
6. Never had a job
7. IF DWP: Not applicable
8. Don't know

ASK IF UNEMPLOYED

A14: In the period immediately before you started the <COURSE>, would you say that any of the following problems were making it difficult for you to find work?

1. You did not have the right qualifications or skills
2. There were few jobs available where you lived
3. You had a lack of recent experience of working
4. You could not find suitable or affordable childcare
5. You had problems with transport or the cost of transport
6. You needed to take care of an elderly, ill or disabled friend or relative
7. There were issues with your citizenship/visa status
8. Lockdowns or other restrictions caused by Covid-19
9. You had a disability/ health issue/ illness
10. Any criminal convictions
11. Alcohol dependency
12. Drugs dependency
13. (DO NOT READ OUT) Not applicable
14. (DO NOT READ OUT) None of the above

15. (DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know / Refused

A15 removed from previous survey

ASK ALL

A16: And BEFORE you started on the <COURSE>, did you have any qualifications?

1. Yes
2. No – no previous qualifications
3. Don't know

ASK IF HAD QUALIFICATIONS

A17: Qualifications are often classified by their level. Were any of the qualifications that you had at the following levels? Were any at...?

To be answered Yes / No / Don't know

A: LEVEL 2 which includes GCSEs Grades A*-C or 9-4, GCEs O Level A-C, CSEs Grade 1, NVQ Level 2, Level 2 VQs, Key Skills Level 2, Skills for Life, Higher Diploma, BTEC awards, certificates and diplomas at level 2, Functional Skills level 2, and music grades 4-5

B: LEVEL 5 or above which covers HNDs, Postgraduate certificates and diplomas, BTEC Professional Diplomas, Certificates and Awards, BTEC advanced professional awards, certificates and diplomas, Fellowships and fellowship diplomas

C: LEVEL 4 which covers NVQs at level 4, Certificates of higher education, higher apprenticeships, BTEC Professional Diplomas, Certificates and Awards

D: LEVEL 3 which includes A levels, AS levels, Advanced Extension Awards, advanced apprenticeships, International Baccalaureate diploma, NVQs, diplomas and certificates at level 3, BTEC awards, BTEC Nationals, OCR Nationals, and music grades 6-8

E: LEVEL 1 qualifications, for example GCSEs graded D-G, or 3-1, NVQs at level 1, Key Skills level, Skills for Life, Foundation Diploma, BTEC awards, certificates and diplomas at level 1, Functional Skills level 1, OCR Nationals, Foundation Learning Tier pathways, and music grades 1-3

F: Entry level qualification, for example Entry level certificates, Skills for Life at Entry level, Entry level awards, certificates and diplomas, Foundation Learning Tier pathways, Functional Skills at Entry level

ASK ALL

A18: Did you gain any qualifications AS A RESULT of the <COURSE>?

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

If gained any qualifications ask:

ASK IF GAINED QUALIFICATIONS

A19: Qualifications are often classified by their level. Were any of the qualifications that you gained as a result of the <COURSE> at the following levels? Were any at...?

To be answered Yes / No / Don't know

A: LEVEL 2 which includes GCSEs Grades A*-C or 9-4, GCEs O Level A-C, CSEs Grade 1, NVQ Level 2, Level 2 VQs, Key Skills Level 2, Skills for Life, Higher Diploma, BTEC awards, certificates and diplomas at level 2, Functional Skills level 2, and music grades 4-5

B: LEVEL 5 or above which covers HNDs, Postgraduate certificates and diplomas, BTEC Professional Diplomas, Certificates and Awards, BTEC advanced professional awards, certificates and diplomas, Fellowships and fellowship diplomas

C: LEVEL 4 which covers NVQs at level 4, Certificates of higher education, higher apprenticeships, BTEC Professional Diplomas, Certificates and Awards

D: LEVEL 3 which includes A levels, AS levels, Advanced Extension Awards, advanced apprenticeships, International Baccalaureate diploma, NVQs, diplomas and certificates at level 3, BTEC awards, BTEC Nationals, OCR Nationals, and music grades 6-8

E: LEVEL 1 qualifications, for example GCSEs graded D-G, or 3-1, NVQs at level 1, Key Skills level, Skills for Life, Foundation Diploma, BTEC awards, certificates and diplomas at level 1, Functional Skills level 1, OCR Nationals, Foundation Learning Tier pathways, and music grades 1-3

F: Entry level qualification, for example Entry level certificates, Skills for Life at Entry level, Entry level awards, certificates and diplomas, Foundation Learning Tier pathways, Functional Skills at Entry level

Section B: Experience of the course

ASK ALL

B1: At the time you started the <COURSE>, were you the parent or guardian of any children aged under 18?

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

ASK IF HAD CHILDCARE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR UNDER 18s

B2: Thinking about the children aged under 18 for whom you were the parent or guardian, which of the following apply?

1. You received childcare support or assistance from <PROVNAME>? [ADD IF NECESSARY: This might have been an on-site crèche, other childcare facilities, or financial support.]

2. You were offered childcare support from <PROVNAME> but decided not to take this up
3. None of the above
4. DO NOT READ OUT: Refused

IF RECEIVED SUPPORT WITH CHILDCARE

B3: Do you think that without the support you received with your childcare from <PROVNAME>, you would have faced difficulties attending the <COURSE>?

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

ASK IF RECEIVED SUPPORT WITH CHILDCARE

B4: Overall, were you satisfied with the support provided for childcare responsibilities while you were attending the <COURSE> (e.g. crèche, financial)?

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

ASK ALL

B5: At the time you started the <COURSE> did you have any caring responsibilities for either a member of your family, a close relative or a friend suffering from any long term illness, health problem or disability which limited YOUR daily activities or the work YOU could do?

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

ASK IF HAD CARING RESPONSIBILITIES

B6: Thinking about these caring responsibilities, which of the following apply?

1. You received support or assistance for your caring responsibilities from <PROVNAME>?
2. You were offered support for your caring responsibilities from <PROVNAME> but decided not to take this up
3. None of the above
4. DO NOT READ OUT: Refused

ASK IF RECEIVED SUPPORT WITH CARING RESPONSIBILITIES

B7: Do you think that without the support you received with your caring responsibilities from <PROVNAME>, you would have faced difficulties attending the <COURSE>?

1. Yes

2. No
3. Don't know
4. Refused

B8: Overall, were you satisfied with the support provided for caring responsibilities while you were attending the <COURSE>?

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

ASK ALL

B9: And still thinking about your situation immediately before starting the <COURSE>, did you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more?

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

ASK IF HAD PHYSICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION OR ILLNESS

B10: Thinking about these health conditions and illnesses, which of the following best reflects your experience on the <COURSE>?

1. You received support or assistance from <PROVNAME> to help with these needs?
2. You were offered support or assistance from <PROVNAME> to help with these needs but decided not to take this up
3. You did not have any specific needs
4. None of the above
5. DO NOT READ OUT: Refused

ASK IF RECEIVED SUPPORT FOR HEALTHCARE NEEDS

B11: Do you think that without the support you received for these needs from <PROVNAME>, you would have faced difficulties attending the <COURSE>?

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

B12: Overall, were you satisfied with the support provided for these needs while you were attending the <COURSE>?

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

ASK ALL

B12a: We'd like to explore how the Covid-19 pandemic affected your experience of the <COURSE>. Which of the following best reflects any digital support provided by <PROVNAME> to help you access the <COURSE>?

This question specifically relates to support with digital skills or technology provided. For example, help to go online or items such as laptops or tablets.

1. You received digital support or assistance from <PROVNAME> to help you access the <COURSE>
2. You were offered digital support or assistance from <PROVNAME> to help you access the <COURSE> but decided not to take this up
3. You would have liked to receive digital support but were not offered any
4. None of the above (you did not have any specific needs)
5. DO NOT READ OUT: Refused

ASK IF RECEIVED COVID-19 RELATED DIGITAL SUPPORT

B12b: Do you think that without the digital support you received from <PROVNAME>, you would have faced difficulties attending the <COURSE>?

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

B12c: Overall, were you satisfied with the support provided for these needs while you were attending the <COURSE>?

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

B12d: And what digital support did you receive to help with Covid-19 related impacts?

1. Digital skills and training (e.g. receiving training or guidance on accessing online learning)
2. Internet connectivity support (e.g. using WiFi, acquiring router, dongle etc.)
3. Other digital hardware such as a tablet or laptop to help access online training
4. Working from home/ office furniture/ accessories provided (e.g. office chair, keyboard, or monitor)
5. Changes to the course so you could do it online during lockdowns
6. Other (Please specify)
7. Don't know

ASK ALL

B13: I'd now like to move onto some other questions about your experience of the <COURSE>. First of all, on the whole were you satisfied with the following aspects of the <COURSE>?

1. The guidance and information about what would be delivered in the <COURSE>
2. The relevance of the <COURSE> to your needs
3. The feedback and guidance you received during the <COURSE>

B14 and B15 removed from previous survey

ASK ALL

B16: Did the <COURSE> provide any of the following?

Answer Yes / No / Don't know

1. Work experience or a work placement
2. General advice about the world of work
3. Advice or guidance about what sorts of work or training you could do
4. Training and advice in how to look for work
5. Contacts to help you look for a job
6. Information about vacancies that you could try to go for

ASK ALL

B17: Has the <COURSE> helped you improve any of the following...?

Answer Yes / No / Don't know

1. Your self-confidence about working
2. Your communication skills
3. Your motivation to find a job or seek a promotion
4. Your motivation to do more training

ASK ALL

B18: Thinking both about the training or support you received and how you may have benefited from it since, overall, how satisfied are you with the <COURSE>?

1. Very satisfied
2. Fairly satisfied
3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
4. Fairly dissatisfied
5. Very dissatisfied
6. [DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know

ASK IF IN EMPLOYMENT ON ENTRY

B19: Would you say that what you learnt on the <COURSE> has helped you in the work environment? Would you say it...?

1. Helped a lot
2. Helped a little
3. Not helped at all
4. (DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know

B20: Would you say that what you learnt on the <COURSE> has helped you to get a job or made it more likely you will get a job in the future? Would you say it...?

1. Helped a lot
2. Helped a little
3. Not helped at all
4. (DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know

Ask Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) participants only:

B21: As part of the <COURSE> did you do a traineeship? [ADD IF NECESSARY: These generally involve individuals spending at least a few weeks with businesses or other organisations in order to gain practical work experience ahead of taking up regular employment.]

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

Questions B22 to B25 removed from previous survey

Section C: Status six months after completing course

ASK ALL

C1: The next few questions ask about what you were doing six months after leaving the <COURSE>. What was your main activity on (INSERT EXACT DATE SIX MONTHS AFTER LEAVING)? If you were doing more than one activity, please just tell me about the activity you consider to have been your main activity.

Were you...

1. Employed, including by a family member
2. Employed, but on furlough/ Self Employment Income Support Scheme
3. Unemployed and looking for work
4. In education or training
5. Not in employment because of sickness or disability
6. Working in a voluntary, unpaid role or internship
7. Looking after the home or family full time
8. Caring for an adult family member, relative or friend who has any long standing illness, disability or infirmity
9. Retired and/or claiming a pension / pension credit
10. DO NOT READ OUT: In prison
11. DO NOT READ OUT: Other, please specify
12. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know
13. DO NOT READ OUT: Can't remember my activity on that particular date

ASK THOSE WHO CAN'T RECALL OR ARE UNSURE

C2: Are you able to tell me what your main activity was during (INSERT MONTH SIX MONTHS AFTER LEAVING)? If you were doing more than one activity, please just tell me about the activity you consider to have been your main activity.

Were you...

1. Employed, including by a family member
2. Employed, but on furlough/ Self Employment Income Support Scheme
3. Unemployed and looking for work
4. In education or training
5. Not in employment because of sickness or disability
6. Working in a voluntary, unpaid role or internship
7. Looking after the home or family full time
8. Caring for an adult family member, relative or friend who has any long standing illness, disability or infirmity
9. Retired and/or claiming a pension / pension credit
10. DO NOT READ OUT: In prison
11. DO NOT READ OUT: Other, please specify
12. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know

ASK ALL DWP SAMPLE

C3: Were you receiving any benefits?

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

ASK ALL DWP WHO WERE CLAIMING BENEFITS

C4: Which type of benefits were you receiving?

1. Universal Credit
2. Jobseeker's Allowance
3. Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
4. Incapacity Benefit
5. Income Support
6. Other (write in)
7. Don't know

ASK ALL DWP WHO WERE CLAIMING UNIVERSAL CREDIT

C5: Which type of Universal Credit were you receiving?

1. Universal Credit - no work-related requirements group [ADD IF NECESSARY: you didn't have to do any activities to prepare or look for work.]
2. Universal Credit - work-focused interview group [ADD IF NECESSARY: you had to go to regular interviews with your work coach at the Jobcentre to get support with preparing for work in the future. You didn't have to look for work, be available for work or prepare for work at that time.]
3. Universal Credit- work preparation group [ADD IF NECESSARY: you had to do activities to prepare for work, eg attend training, do work experience, write a CV, go to interviews with your work coach at the Jobcentre to help you find or stay in work. You didn't have to actually search for work or be available for work.]

4. Universal Credit - all work-related requirements group [ADD IF NECESSARY: you had to do all you could to find a job or a higher paid job. This included looking for jobs, applying for jobs, going to interviews, etc. You had to be ready and available to take up work straight away.]
5. Don't know

ASK ALL IN EMPLOYMENT AT 6 MONTH POINT

C6: In which of the following types of employment were you?

- Working for an employer (including family employer) in a paid role
- Working in a family business without being paid
- Self employed
- On an apprenticeship
- Other (please specify)
- [DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know

ASK ALL IN EDUCATION OR TRAINING

C7: Which of the following types of education or training were you doing?

1. In college full time – 16 hours or more a week
2. In college part time – less than 16 hours a week
3. On a course whilst in work
4. On a traineeship [ADD IF NECESSARY: These generally involve individuals spending at least a few weeks with businesses or other organisations in order to gain practical work experience ahead of taking up regular employment]
5. In university
6. In school
7. Other (please specify)
8. [DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know

ASK YEI LEAVERS IN EDUCATION OR TRAINING

C8: And thinking about the education or training you were doing in <MONTH>, is or was it intended to lead to a nationally recognised qualification? This may include a vocational qualification.

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

ASK IF EMPLOYED BOTH BEFORE COURSE AND AT 6 MONTH POINT

C9: Thinking about your employment immediately before starting the <COURSE>, have you changed job role?

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

ASK IF EMPLOYED BOTH BEFORE COURSE AND AT 6 MONTH POINT, EXCLUDING SELF-EMPLOYED

C10: Thinking about your employment immediately before starting the <COURSE>, have you changed employer?

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

ASK ALL IN EMPLOYMENT BUT NOT SELF-EMPLOYED AT 6 MONTH POINT

C11: Thinking about this job that you had, was it...

[IF ON FURLOUGH: ADD IF NECESSARY: If you were on furlough/ on the Self Employment Income Support Scheme at the time, please consider your main contract rather than any adaptations made for furlough.]

1. On a permanent or open-ended contract
2. On a fixed-term contract lasting 12 months or longer
3. On a fixed-term contract lasting less than 12 months
4. On a temporary or casual basis
5. On a zero hours' contract
6. On an open ended contract but of limited duration (i.e. covering the absence of a colleague or covering completion of a fixed task)
7. On some other basis (PLEASE SPECIFY)
8. [DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know
9. [DO NOT READ OUT] Refused

ASK ALL EMPLOYED INCLUDING SELF-EMPLOYED

C12: [IF SELF EMPLOYED] Thinking about this job that you had did you consider yourself to be working...

[IF ON FURLOUGH ADD IF NECESSARY: If you were on furlough/ on the Self Employment Income Support Scheme at the time, please consider your main contract rather than any adaptations made for furlough.]

1. Full time
2. Part time
3. [DO NOT READ OUT] Don't Know
4. [DO NOT READ OUT] Refused

ASK ALL UNSURE OR GAVE NO ANSWER

C13: How many hours on average did you work per week in this job? Did you work...

1. Less than 16 hours a week
2. Between 16 and 39 hours a week
3. Or 40 or more hours a week
4. [DO NOT READ OUT] Don't Know
5. [DO NOT READ OUT] Refused

ASK IF WORKING PART TIME

C14: You said you were working part-time. At that time, did you want to be working on a full-time basis?

[IF ON FURLOUGH ADD IF NECESSARY: If you were on furlough/ on the Self Employment Income Support Scheme at the time, please consider your main contract rather than any adaptations made for furlough.]

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

ASK IF EMPLOYED BOTH BEFORE THE COURSE AND AT 6 MONTH POINT

C15: Thinking about the day to day tasks that you were expected to carry out compared to what you were expected to do immediately before starting the <COURSE>, did they require...

1. Higher level skills or competencies
2. About the same level of skill or competencies
3. Fewer skills or competencies
4. [DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know

ASK IF EMPLOYED BOTH BEFORE THE COURSE AND AT 6 MONTH POINT

C16: Thinking about the day to day tasks that you were expected to carry out compared to what you were expected to do immediately before starting the <COURSE>, did they require...

1. A higher level of qualification
2. About the same level of qualification
3. A lower level of qualification
4. [DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know

ASK IF EMPLOYED BOTH BEFORE AND AFTER THE COURSE

C16A: Thinking about the day to day tasks that you were expected to carry out compared to what you were expected to do immediately before starting the <COURSE>, did they require...

1. More responsibility
2. About the same level of responsibility
3. Less responsibility
4. [DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know

C17: Compared with the work you were doing immediately before the <COURSE>, did any of the following apply regarding the work you were doing in <MONTH>?

- a. Had you had a promotion?
- b. Had your hourly pay rate or annual salary increased? ADD IF NECESSARY: Please think about how, if at all, your hourly rate has changed.
- c. Were you getting more job satisfaction?
- d. Did you have better job security?
- e. Had your future pay and promotion prospects improved?
- f. Did you have more opportunities for training in your job?

Code Yes / No / Don't know for each

Section D: YEI Leavers

Questions D1-D4 removed from previous survey

ASK ALL YEI UNLESS NOT IN EMPLOYMENT BEFORE COURSE AND NOW IN EMPLOYMENT FOR AN EMPLOYER

D5: Did you receive any job offers between starting the <COURSE> and 6 months after leaving?

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

ASK THOSE WHO RECEIVED JOB OFFERS

D6: Including the job offer you would have received for the employment you were in 6 months after leaving, how many job offers did you receive between starting the <COURSE> and 6 months after leaving?

1. 1
2. 2
3. 3 or more
4. Don't know

ASK THOSE WHO DID RECEIVE JOB OFFERS

D7: How would you rate the job offer(s) you received in terms of the quality of those job(s)?

1. Very good
2. Good
3. Reasonable
4. Poor
5. Very poor
6. [DO NOT READ OUT] Varied
7. [DO NOT READ OUT] Don't know

ASK THOSE WHO RECEIVED MULTIPLE JOB OFFERS

D8: Including the job offer you would have received for the employment you were in 6 months after leaving did you accept all or just some of the job offers you received?

1. All
2. Some
3. None
4. Don't know

ASK THOSE WHO RECEIVED ONE JOB OFFER OR DIDN'T KNOW HOW MANY UNLESS NOT IN EMPLOYMENT BEFORE COURSE AND NOW IN EMPLOYMENT FOR AN EMPLOYER

D9: Did you accept any job offer(s)?

1. Yes

2. No
3. Don't know

ASK THOSE NOT IN EMPLOYMENT AT 6 MONTH POINT WHO ACCEPTED A JOB OFFER/S

D10: Why did you leave the last job you had?

Do not read out; code all that apply

1. It was a short term / temporary contract
2. It was a part time job but I was looking for a full time job
3. The work I was required to do required a lower level of qualification than I had
4. There was insufficient training given
5. The pay was too low
6. It was difficult to travel to
7. I didn't get on with the other staff
8. I was dismissed
9. Medical reasons
10. To pursue further education
11. Other, please specify
12. Don't know
13. Lockdowns or other restrictions caused by Covid-19
14. Redundancy

ASK THOSE NOT IN EMPLOYMENT AT 6 MONTH POINT WHO RECEIVED JOB OFFERS

D11: Thinking about that job offer you received / this job / the best job offer out of those you received, was it for a position with...

1. A permanent or open-ended contract
2. A fixed-term contract lasting 12 months or longer
3. A fixed-term contract lasting less than 12 months
4. A temporary or casual basis
5. A zero hours' contract
6. On some other basis (PLEASE SPECIFY)
7. (DON'T READ OUT) Don't know
8. (DON'T READ OUT) Refused

D12: And was it for:

1. Full time position
2. Or a part time position
3. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't Know
4. DO NOT READ OUT: Refused

ASK IF OFFERED A PART TIME POSITION:

D13: At that time, did you want to be working on a full-time basis?

1. Yes
2. No

3. Don't know

ASK THOSE NOT IN EMPLOYMENT AT 6 MONTH POINT WHO RECEIVED JOB OFFERS

D14: Still thinking about that job offer you received, would it have required ...

1. A higher level of qualification than you had
2. About the same level of qualification
3. Or a lower level of qualification than you had
4. (DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know

D15: And did it require or would it have required ...

1. More professional experience than you had
2. About the same level of professional experience
3. Or less professional experience than you had
4. (DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know

D16: Still thinking about that job offer you received / this job / the best job offer out of those you received, were you satisfied with the following ...

- a. The pay
- b. The availability of training/skills development possibilities
- c. Working conditions

Code Yes [1] / No [2] / Don't know for each [3]

Section E: Demographic information

ASK ALL UNLESS IN PRISON

E1: What was your housing situation immediately before starting the <COURSE>?

1. Renting privately
2. Social tenant
3. Living in own home
4. Staying with friends or family
5. Homeless
6. In prison
7. Living in a hostel
8. Other, please specify
9. Refused

ASK IF POSSIBLE TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION AND AT COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY BEFORE STARTING COURSE

E2: And did you consider this to be your permanent home or was it temporary accommodation while you completed your studies?

1. Permanent home
2. Temporary accommodation
3. Don't know

4. Refused

IF HOMEDWELLER

E3: I'd like you to answer the next questions based on what you would consider your permanent home immediately before starting the <COURSE>.

When you started the <COURSE>, how many people living in your household were aged 18 and over?

RECORD NUMBER (ALLOW 0-99) or code:

1. Don't know
2. Refused

ASK ALL ADULT HOMEDWELLERS

E4: And when you started the <COURSE>, was anybody living in your household...?

- a. E4_1 Aged 17 or younger
- b. E4_2 Aged 18-24 years who were not in employment or seeking work and lived with a parent

Code Yes [1], No [2], Don't know [3], Refused [4] for each

IF UNEMPLOYED OR INACTIVE HOMEDWELLER

E5: And before starting the <COURSE>, was anybody else living in your household employed at that time?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Refused

ASK ALL

E6: Which of the following best describes your legal marital or same-sex civil partnership status immediately before starting the <COURSE>?

1. Single
2. Married
3. Separated, but still legally married
4. Divorced
5. Widowed
6. In a registered same-sex civil partnership
7. DO NOT READ OUT: Other
8. DO NOT READ OUT: Refused

ASK ALL

E7: At the time of starting the <COURSE>, did you have...?

1. ALL EXCEPT NOMS: Any criminal convictions
2. Alcohol dependency
3. Drugs dependency
4. (DO NOT READ OUT) None of the above

5. (DO NOT READ OUT) Don't know / Refused

ASK WHERE ETHNICITY NOT ON SAMPLE

E8: Which of the following best describes your ethnic background?

1. WHITE English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British
2. WHITE Irish
3. WHITE Gypsy, Irish Traveller or Roma
4. WHITE Other background, please specify
5. MIXED White and Black Caribbean
6. MIXED White and Black African
7. MIXED White and Asian
8. MIXED Other mixed background, please specify
9. BLACK/ AFRICAN/ CARIBBEAN OR BLACK BRITISH Caribbean
10. BLACK/ AFRICAN/ CARIBBEAN OR BLACK BRITISH African
11. BLACK/ AFRICAN/ CARIBBEAN OR BLACK BRITISH Other background, please specify
12. ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH Indian
13. ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH Pakistani
14. ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH Bangladeshi
15. ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH Chinese
16. ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH Other background, please specify
17. OTHER ETHNIC BACKGROUND Arab
18. OTHER ETHNIC BACKGROUND Other background, please specify
19. DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know / Refused

ASK ALL

E9: What is your religion or belief?

1. No religion or belief
2. Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)
3. Buddhist
4. Hindu
5. Jewish
6. Muslim
7. Sikh
8. Any other religion or belief, please describe
9. Refused

ASK ALL

E10: At birth were you described as...?

1. Male
2. Female
3. Intersex
4. Prefer not to say

ASK ALL

E11: And immediately before starting the <COURSE> which of the following describes how you thought of yourself?

1. Male
2. Female
3. In another way (Please specify)
4. Prefer not to say

ASK FEMALE PARTICIPANTS AGED 16 AND OVER

E12: At any stage during the time on your <COURSE> were you pregnant or on maternity leave?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Prefer not to say

ASK ALL AGED 16 AND OVER

E13: I will now read out a list of terms people sometimes use to describe how they think of themselves. Which of the following best describes you?

1. Heterosexual or Straight
2. Gay or Lesbian
3. Bisexual
4. Other
5. Don't know
6. Refused

Survey questions index

The following table lists all questions and the mode in which they were asked and describes any changes from the 2016-2019 survey.

Question number	Mode asked	Unchanged / Changed / Added / Removed (from previous 2016-2019 survey)
A1	Telephone and online	Unchanged
A2	Telephone and online	Changed - option added for being on furlough or Self Employment Income Support Scheme
A3	Telephone and online	Unchanged
A4A	Telephone and online	Unchanged
A4B	Telephone and online	Unchanged

A5	Telephone and online	Unchanged
A6	Telephone and online	Unchanged
A7	Telephone and online	Unchanged
A8	Telephone and online	Unchanged
A9	Telephone and online	Unchanged
A10	Telephone and online	Unchanged
A11	Telephone and online	Unchanged
A12	Telephone and online	Unchanged
A13	Telephone and online	Unchanged
A14	Telephone only	Changed - addition of options for Covid lockdown restrictions and Disability/health issue/illness
A15	Removed - question on problems / barriers making it difficult to find work	
A16	Telephone only	Unchanged
A17	Telephone only	Added – highest qualification level on joining
A18	Telephone only	Added – qualifications gained from course
A19	Telephone only	Added – highest level of qualifications gained from course
B1	Telephone and online	Unchanged
B2	Telephone and online	Unchanged
B3	Telephone and online	Unchanged
B4	Telephone only	Unchanged
B5	Telephone only	Unchanged

B6	Telephone only	Unchanged
B7	Telephone only	Unchanged
B8	Telephone only	Unchanged
B9	Telephone and online	Unchanged
B10	Telephone only	Unchanged
B11	Telephone only	Unchanged
B12	Telephone only	Unchanged
B12a – B12d	Telephone and online	Added – questions about PA4 funded digital support to support participants during the Covid-19 pandemic
	Telephone and online	
	Telephone and online	
	Telephone and online	
B13	Telephone only	Unchanged
B14	Removed – Question on difficulty of course	
B15	Removed – Question on amount of time spent on course	
B16	Telephone only	Unchanged
B17	Telephone only	<p>Changed - options removed for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your ability to work with other people in a team • your problem solving skills • your ability to do things independently
B18	Telephone and online	Unchanged
B19	Telephone only	Unchanged
B20	Telephone only	Unchanged
B21-B25	Removed – questions about traineeships (YEI only)	
C1	Telephone and online	Unchanged
C2	Telephone and online	Unchanged
C3	Telephone and online	Unchanged

C4	Telephone and online	Unchanged
C5	Telephone and online	Unchanged
C6	Telephone and online	Unchanged
C7	Telephone and online	Unchanged
C8	Telephone and online	Unchanged
C9	Telephone and online	Unchanged
C10	Telephone and online	Unchanged
C11	Telephone and online	Unchanged
C12	Telephone and online	Unchanged
C13	Telephone and online	Unchanged
C14	Telephone and online	Unchanged
C15	Telephone and online	Unchanged
C16	Telephone and online	Unchanged
C16a	Telephone and online	Unchanged
C17	Telephone and online	Unchanged
D1-D4	Removed – questions on traineeships (YEI only)	
D5	Telephone and online	Unchanged
D6	Telephone only	Unchanged
D7	Telephone only	Unchanged
D8	Telephone only	Unchanged

D9	Telephone only	Unchanged
D10	Telephone only	Changed - options added for Lockdown restrictions and redundancy
D11	Telephone only	Unchanged
D12	Telephone only	Unchanged
D13	Telephone only	Unchanged
D14	Telephone only	Unchanged
D15	Telephone only	Unchanged
D16	Telephone only	Changed – option added for working conditions
E1	Telephone and online	Unchanged
E2	Telephone only	Unchanged
E3	Telephone only	Unchanged
E4	Telephone only	Unchanged
E5	Telephone only	Unchanged
E6	Telephone only	Unchanged
E7	Telephone and online	Unchanged
E8	Telephone and online	Unchanged
E9	Telephone and online	Unchanged
E10	Telephone and online	Unchanged
E11	Telephone and online	Unchanged
E12	Telephone and online	Unchanged
E13	Telephone and online	Unchanged