

SFA's Employer Satisfaction Survey 2013-14: Key Extracts from National Results (May 2015)

Over 52,000 employers, representing 20% of 265,005 employers receiving training funded by the Skills Funding Agency, took part in the Agency's Employer Satisfaction Survey 2013 to 2014 and gave their views on the training their employees received¹. They were representative in terms of workplace size and industry sector, and provider type.

Employer Profile

A significant majority of employers taking part in the survey worked in small workplaces: 78% in workplaces with 1-49 employees, 16% in workplaces with 50-249 employees; and 6% in the largest workplaces (250+ employees).

Over three quarters of employers (77%) had between 1-4 learners; 10% had 5-9 learners and a similar proportion had 10+ learners.

The vast majority of employers (92%) were using providers to deliver apprenticeship training, compared with 4% who were delivering workplace learning. Overall 4% of employers were delivering both. Significantly fewer employers were using providers to deliver workplace learning compared with the previous survey (4% compared with 24% in the 2012 to 2013 survey).

Level 2 qualifications were most commonly offered for both apprenticeships and workplace learning. 32% of employers were offering Level 3 apprenticeships. 47% of them were offering adult apprenticeships while 36% provided places for 16 to 18 year olds.

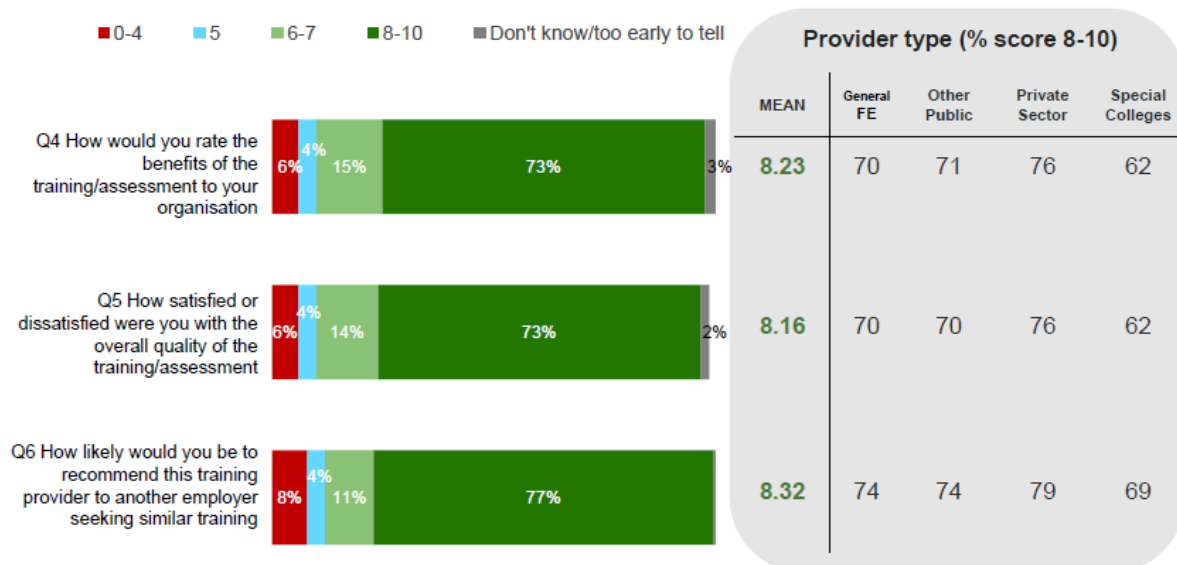
Overall Rating

As in the 2012-13 survey, employers were generally very positive about the training received by their employees.

Private sector providers consistently received the most positive ratings and this pattern was also observed in the 2012 to 2013 survey. Ratings for providers in other sectors (General FE, Other Public Sector providers and Special Colleges) were slightly lower though, on the whole, the majority of employers in these sectors remained positive.

Overall, almost three quarters of employers (73%) were positive about the **benefits of the training and assessment to their organisation** – giving a rating of 8-10 out of 10. Rating for this aspect had increased by two percentage points since 2012 to 2013.

¹ 'Employer satisfaction survey 2013 to 2014: national reporting', published by the Skills Funding Agency on 28 May 2015 (<http://bit.ly/1dAUYou>). Extracts and charts are reproduced here from the SFA's report.

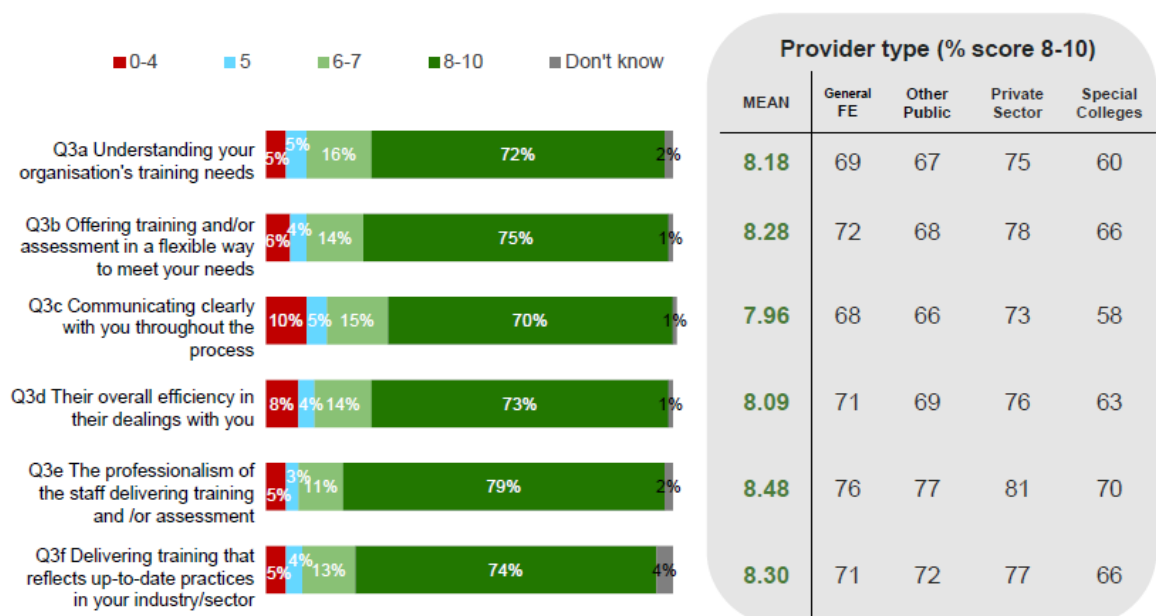


The majority would be advocates of the training provider: 77% gave a score of 8-10 for **likelihood to recommend** their training provider, representing a 1% increase since 2012-13.

A minority of employers (around one in ten) gave an overall rating of 0-5, with only very slight differences across the three measures.

Key Aspects

Employers were equally positive in their ratings on key aspects of the training, with the majority (seven in ten or more) giving a rating of 8-10 across all key aspects that were measured.



As in the 2012 to 2013 survey, employers were especially positive about the **professionalism of the staff delivering the training** (79% gave a rating of 8-10), the **flexibility of the training** (75% gave a rating of 8-10), and the use of **up-to-date industry practices** (74% gave a rating of 8-10).

Rating (of 8-10 out of 10) on staff professionalism had increased by two percentage points since 2012 to 2013, whilst ratings for flexibility and use of up-to-date industry practices were unchanged.

Employers delivering multiple qualification levels consistently gave the highest ratings and this applies to both those offering apprenticeships and those offering workplace learning.

Employers delivering apprenticeships to 16-18 year olds only scored slightly lower. By contrast, those with both young and adult apprentices were significantly more positive.

There was some variation in employer views according to the LEP area in which they were based. However, the differences highlighted throughout this report are slight. The majority were positive about their experience and willing to act as advocates for their provider.

Employer Financial Contributions

Almost a quarter of employers (23%) had made a financial contribution to the cost of the training. Medium (50-249 employees) and large (250+ employees) workplaces were more likely than small workplaces to have contributed to the cost of the training: 31% and 45% respectively, compared with 20% of workplaces with 1-49 employees.

AELP Comment

The SFA survey results follow the annual CBI/Pearson employer skills surveys² and the BIS apprentice employers survey of December 2014³ which have shown similar high satisfaction ratings with the quality of the training and assessment delivered by training providers. In these surveys, employers were also very satisfied with the flexible way that the training was offered by their training provider.

This provides significant evidence that training companies can provide the drive for growing the apprenticeship programme. It is clearly a myth that providers are not flexible when it comes to delivery and it is providers who will engage more employers in this very successful programme.

Reforms of the skills system should take this evidence into account and AELP is now encouraged that the next stage of the apprenticeship reform process includes providers as fully engaged partners in the consultations. If we can increase the investment in apprenticeships, make longer term commitments to employers and providers in terms of budgets and improve the funding and contracting system by building on what works, then we can grow the programme and maintain the quality of delivery.

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² AELP Press Release – 7 July 2014: ‘Training providers score 93% satisfaction rating from employer customers in CBI skills survey’ (<http://bit.ly/1r2BOVP>)

³ AELP Briefing Paper No 16 on BIS Apprentice Employers Survey, December 2014 (<http://bit.ly/1FAtwSL>)