ESF Leavers Survey 2002
Objective 3: England

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ies

Disclaimer

The empirical evidence presented in the report is as accurate as the restrictions of the scale and character of the research permit, but the selection of results for inclusion, and the interpretations placed on them, are the responsibility of the author. Although the Department for Work and Pensions commissioned the research, it cannot be assumed that Department officials necessarily share the views and conclusions presented in it. Therefore, the views in this report are the authors' own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Work and Pensions.

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Executive Summary

This report presents results of a survey of 3,431 individual beneficiaries who left projects supported under ESF Objective 3 in England during the latter part of 2002.

Targeting

There was considerable variety between different kinds and circumstances of beneficiary, but underpinned by fairly widespread experience of disadvantage across much of the cohort. In addition, participation had been strong among certain key groups, including women (constituting 60 per cent of beneficiaries), people at each end of the age spectrum (27 per cent were under 25 and 21 per cent aged 50 or more), people experiencing long-term unemployment or inactivity (27 per cent) and among people without qualifications (21 per cent).

There was great variation in individuals' entry status, with some 37 per cent already employed at that time, compared with 39 per cent inactive and 21 per cent unemployed. The intake of already-employed entrants varied greatly between different regions within England, broadly reflecting the local buoyancy of the labour market.

Job outcomes

Following their participation in the programme, there has been a substantial and continuing shift of status among respondents towards paid employment. Thus employment rates which had been falling before entry rose significantly on exit (from 37 to 47 per cent), and continued to rise subsequently (to 53 per cent at the time of the survey).

However, the programme does not seem to have been successful in reducing inactivity within the sample (falling from 39 per cent to only 38 over the same period). Despite this, there was evidence of improved qualifications and enhanced employability among these inactive beneficiaries.

Qualification outcomes

Among beneficiaries not working when they joined the projects, having no qualifications or skills, or having the wrong ones, was by far the most widely cited barrier to finding work (at 39 per cent). Two-thirds of all joiners expected to improve their qualifications. Projects and beneficiaries had been very successful in meeting this objective; by the time they had finished, just over a half (55 per cent) of all entrants had gained a full qualification, and a further nine per cent of those who did not gain a qualification had gained credits or units towards one.

'Soft' outcomes

Beneficial 'soft outcomes' were widely found among the 47 per cent not working at the time of the survey. Nearly three-quarters of them felt they had improved their skills; rather more felt that they were now more confident about their job prospects, and many reported a reduction in the problems they felt had held them back in the labour market.

Disproportionate gains among the disadvantaged

There is evidence of a positive bias towards the most poorly-placed beneficiaries acting across the programme as a whole. Looking at job outcomes, and taking into account the high proportion of entrants who were already working, there is evidence from these results that the programme has been disproportionately helpful and successful in helping the most disadvantaged beneficiaries find work. Similarly with qualification gains, the propensity to gain qualifications was highest among the most disadvantaged groups of beneficiary, declining among the least disadvantaged groups.

Bespoke provision

There is considerable evidence about the tailoring of support to match individual needs and circumstances. Thus, just under half of these respondents remembered agreeing a personalised plan when they joined the project. Consequently, we observed a high level of overlap between the various problems which beneficiaries said had held them back and the support they received through their courses. Finally, four out of five respondents thought that the project had been relevant to their needs, and three-quarters thought that the level of support had been appropriate for their abilities.

Customer satisfaction

Well over four out of every five beneficiaries declared themselves satisfied with the quality of the course overall. In line with this, the volume of early leavers was low, with just 16 per cent of beneficiaries reporting that they had left earlier than expected. Furthermore, much of this was a consequence of finding a job or finishing the course earlier than anticipated. Only about five per cent of beneficiaries left early for negative reasons, such as dissatisfaction, or inability to cope, with the course.

Part 1: Introduction

1. Introduction

The 2002 Leavers' Survey follows up individual beneficiaries of projects supported under the 2000-2006 ESF programme, who took part in the programme during 2002. For this research, separate surveys have been conducted in England, Wales, and Scotland, and they build on similar work conducted in earlier years.

This report presents the findings for **individual** beneficiaries, who left projects supported under **Objective 3** in **England** between June and November 2002. Although the research also covered projects supported under Objectives 1 and 2, the results are not incorporated in this report. Separate research considers corporate beneficiaries, and separate reports set out the results for individual beneficiaries in Wales and Scotland.

This chapter provides background information about the ESF programme 2000-2006. It sets out the research aims and methods, and provides guidance on interpretation of the data in the report. However, it begins by briefly outlining the structure and content of the report itself.

1.1 The structure of this report

After this introductory chapter, the report is divided into two sections.

- key messages from the research; and
- full findings from the research.

The second of these two sections comprises a full and comprehensive report of the survey, in which are presented the full results. Within it, separate chapters look in turn at:

- the characteristics of beneficiaries
- their experiences while taking part in the programme
- the subsequent outcomes from that participation, distinguishing between employment outcomes, qualification outcomes, and 'softer' outcomes (in terms of motivation, self-confidence, *etc.*); and
- beneficiaries, experiences and outcomes within each of the five different Policy Fields within Objective 3.
- beneficiaries, experiences and outcomes within each of the nine standard English regions.

However, before that, the report summarises the key practical and policy messages which have been derived from these findings. This is intended to be neither as complete nor as systematic as the much longer section which follows it, but rather to draw out and highlight findings in the light of the developing policy priorities for ESF within England in a short, accessible summary.

1.2 ESF programme 2000-2006

The European Social Fund is one of several structural funds through which the member states of the European Union (EU) redistribute part of their budget contributions to the most disadvantaged regions and social groups. In the current programming period, 2000 to 2006, the structural funds are designed to meet three broad objectives:

- To promote the development of the most economically disadvantaged regions of the EU.

- To support areas facing structural difficulties, *eg* those adjusting to change in the industrial or service sectors.
- To deliver support for employability and human resource development activities.

In the UK, programmes are currently running under each of these three objectives with the ESF contributing to each of them.

1.2.1 Targeted support for tackling unemployment

Since the previous programming period (1994-1999), the ESF has acquired a much clearer policy context at both European and member state levels, which has transformed what was essentially a training-based programme into a broader mechanism for tackling unemployment. The EU commitment to reduce regional disparities led, in 1997, to an explicit recognition by member states of the need to work together to create jobs and reduce unemployment.

Although, at its simplest, the policy problem that the ESF is designed to address is unemployment, it seeks to do so in different ways, both directly and indirectly. Specifically, it aims to improve the employability of individuals, the competitiveness of businesses and, ultimately, ensure the continued economic success of the EU and its member states. There is also a strong social inclusion element to the ESF, as it seeks to ensure that support is targeted to those who face the most difficulty in accessing and participating in the labour market or certain sectors of it.

1.2.2 The role of ESF in UK structural fund programmes

The European Employment Strategy provides the policy framework for employment issues across the European Union and defines the guidelines for policies in each member state. In line with this framework, the National Action Plan for Employment sets out the key priorities for employment policy in the UK as a whole, although it also discusses how these might apply in each of the individual home countries. It analyses the economic and employment context, and identifies the challenges the UK faces in delivering employment opportunity for all and meeting the long-term aim of having 75 per cent of the working age population in employment by 2010.

The National Action Plan for Employment sets out key policy measures to tackle the problems and challenges in the labour market. In common with the European Employment Strategy, these are structured under four pillars of:

- improving employability
- developing entrepreneurship
- encouraging adaptability of businesses and their employees, and
- strengthening equal opportunities for women and men.

In strengthening these pillars, the UK has a number of EU structural fund programmes, contributing alongside domestic programmes to these ends.

- Firstly, the strategic planning framework for the Objective 3 programme covers the whole of Great Britain except for Objective 1 areas, with separate operational programmes running in each of England, Wales, and Scotland.
- Additionally, there are Objective 1 programmes in Merseyside, South Yorkshire, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly, the Highlands and Islands, Northern Ireland, and West Wales and The Valleys.
- Finally, there is also an Objective 2 programme which covers numerous, sub-regional areas in Great Britain.

Approximately two-thirds of the ESF budget in the UK is devoted to the Objective 3 programme, while most of the rest goes to Objective 1 areas. Moreover, whereas projects running under Objectives 1 and 2 are supported by a number of structural funds, Objective 3 projects are funded solely by ESF. As noted above, the substantive parts of this report are concerned solely with Objective 3.

At the core of Objective 3 are a number of 'Policy Fields', which act to focus support. They help to identify the particular types of activity and beneficiary that the programme will prioritise for support, as follows.

Policy Field 1 — Active labour market policies

This Policy Field seeks to develop and promote active labour market policies to combat and prevent unemployment, to prevent both women and men from moving into long-term unemployment, to facilitate the reintegration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market, and to support the occupational integration of young people and of persons returning to the labour market after a period of absence.

Policy Field 2 — Equal opportunities for all and promoting social inclusion

This promotes equal opportunities for all in accessing the labour market, with particular emphasis on those exposed to social exclusion.

Policy Field 3 — Lifelong learning

Promoting and improving training, education and counselling as part of lifelong learning policy to facilitate and improve access to, and integration into, the labour market, improve and sustain employability, and promote job mobility.

Policy Field 4 — Adaptability and entrepreneurship

Promoting a skilled, trained and adaptable workforce, innovation and adaptability in work organisation, developing entrepreneurship and conditions facilitating job creation, and enhancing skills and boosting human potential in research, science and technology. Creating new employment opportunities to meet the challenges of international competitiveness and globalisation.

Policy Field 5 — Improving the participation of women in the labour market

This supports specific measures to improve women's access to, and participation in, the labour market, including their career development, access to new job opportunities and starting up of businesses, and to reduce vertical and horizontal segregation on the basis of sex in the labour market.

1.2.3 How the programme operates

Although the focus of ESF support is prescribed to some extent by the five Policy Fields, member states can choose to emphasise certain Policy Fields over others and, within each Policy Field, they have the discretion to develop measures which reflect their own particular policy priorities.

Furthermore, in practice, the programme is delivered on a regional basis through the Government Offices. By varying the funding allocated to each Policy Field and the priority groups targeted for support under each measure, each region has the scope to tailor ESF support in response to local economic and labour market conditions, as identified in the various Regional Development Plans. Regional priorities and key outcomes are discussed in Chapter 7.

In making a bid for support under a particular measure, applicants for ESF are required to demonstrate, amongst other things, that the proposed project is relevant to local, regional and national priorities and would not take place or would be less effective without ESF support. Project applicants are also required to find match funding, at least ten per cent of which must be provided by a public authority.

Thus, from the way in which it is designed, administered and allocated, ESF is thus expected to *align with* and *add value to* key domestic policies and programmes.

1.3 Research aims and methods

In this section we briefly set out the principal aims of the research as specified by the clients: The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), the National Assembly for Wales and the Scottish Executive. The broad approach followed was similar for all three surveys.

We also provide a brief outline of the research methodology and an overview of the target and achieved samples, so that the representativeness of the data can be assessed. We note that the methodology and associated sampling issues for all three surveys are discussed in full in a separate report prepared by MORI, who undertook the fieldwork.

1.3.1 Research aims

The main aim of the 2002 Leavers Survey is to evaluate the effectiveness of the training or advice provided through ESF projects to beneficiaries.

Following from this, the key research objectives of the study have been to:

- obtain information about the longer-term impact of the programme
- acquire more detailed information on beneficiaries, thus enabling insight into the various and sometimes cumulative disadvantages faced by beneficiaries; and
- obtain more detail about the kinds of support offered, and the views of the beneficiaries on the support they received.

1.3.2 Research methods

In the following sections, we outline the procedures adopted at each stage of the research, and discuss the results achieved.

A two-stage process was necessary to obtain a sample of beneficiaries to survey as there is no national database of those who have received suitable training or support.

The first stage involved selecting projects from the 2002 Applications Database held by The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Differing probabilities of selection were used for projects according to sub-division into sample strata reflecting regions and the number of expected beneficiaries. This ensured that an adequate number were selected in each region to allow separate analysis by region. It also allowed a larger proportion of the relatively few very large projects to be selected, thus reducing clustering effects which might distort the data, especially when analysing the results by size or organisation.

The second stage involved the compilation of a master list of beneficiaries (forming a ‘snapshot’ of those who had finished participation between June and November 2002) from the sampled projects. From the list, individuals were sampled, inversely proportionate to the selection probabilities at Stage 1, to be contacted for either a telephone interview, or to receive a self-completion questionnaire. Details are given in the following pages.

The sampling and fieldwork procedures proceeded in parallel for all objectives in England, Wales and Scotland, plus a companies survey. This report only covers individuals in Objective 3 in England, but full details are contained in a separate Technical Report.

1.3.3 Obtaining the sample

The broad sample design adopted was that developed following an extensive review for the 2001 Leavers Survey. The method was adapted to attempt to improve the reliability of the sample and to reduce clustering effects in large projects, particularly when analysing results by size of organisation.

Stage 1: Selecting the projects

The sample was drawn from ESF applications data. The data available included the project start and end date, the expected number of beneficiaries, the nature of the project, and the length of time (in weeks) that each beneficiary would participate. It must be noted that all these details were those anticipated at the time of application for funding, and were not subsequently updated.

For the purposes of calculating the number of projects and expected leavers within the reference period, some modelling of the applications data had to be conducted. This involved removing projects in Gibraltar, those with a purpose stated to not directly benefit individuals or companies, and those scheduled to start on or after 1 December 2002 or finish on or before 31 May 2002.

The project population for the leavers survey comprised 3,241 projects.

For each project, expected number of leavers during the survey reference period (June to November 2002) was calculated, based on the applications data. This totalled 400,000 expected leavers across all Objective 3 projects. Some projects had zero expected leavers because their start dates, plus average length of attendance, would be after the end of the survey reference period. However, these projects were still included because of potential early drop-out or attendance that is shorter than the expected average.

Projects were grouped into four size strata:

- Zero: projects with no expected leavers.
- Small/large: projects with one to 499 expected leavers.
- Large: projects with 500-1,499 expected leavers.
- Very large: projects with 1,500 or more leavers.

All projects were selected in the very large strata (22 projects), 60 per cent in the large strata (62), 40 per cent in the small/medium strata (1,138) and ten per cent of those with no expected leavers (28) – giving 1,250 projects selected.

Contacting the projects

All projects contained in the 2002 Applications Database were written to by the Department for Work and Pensions in November 2002 to advise them of the survey, and request their prompt assistance should their project be approached by MORI. The letter also requested that projects undertake efforts to clean their databases in advance as much as possible.

Selected projects were written to by MORI in early December 2002, giving full details of the survey and detailing the information required. Projects were requested to return electronic lists, or paper if necessary,

by early January, together with supporting details about the project. A programme of reminder calls was made to all non-responding projects throughout January and February 2003, with at least eight calls made to each non-responding project.

The following table summarises the response by the extended cut-off date of 31 March, both in terms of total response, and as a percentage of 'valid' projects (*ie* excluding those found to be outside the scope of this research).

Table 1.1: Overall summary of response from projects

		Number of projects	Total %	Valid %
Total		**1,250**		
Invalid	Advice and guidance only	59	5	
	No leavers in time period	86	7	
	Project finished early	29	2	
	Project delayed/did not run	124	10	
	Unable to trace organisation	55	4	
	Other invalid	27	2	
No final response	(includes non-contact, some likely to be invalid, and failed to supply samples by cut-off)	174	14	20
Refusal	Unwilling (including sensitive projects)	91	7	10
	Unable to pass on names due to promises made to individuals	32	3	4
	Unable (lack of resources/IT systems)	21	2	2
Sample provided		**552**	44	63

There was little variation in response by characteristics of the project, as the two following tables on sample strata and policy field demonstrate.

Table 1.2: Summary of response by sample strata

	Total %	Zero %	Small/medium %	Large %	Very large %
Number of projects	**1,250**	**28**	**1,136**	**64**	**22**
Invalid	30	36	29	45	36
No final response	14	4	15	5	5
Refusal	12	7	12	8	14
Sample provided	44	54	44	42	45

Table 1.3: Summary of response by project Policy Field

	Policy Field 1 %	Policy Field 2 %	Policy Field 3 %	Policy Field 4 %	Policy Field 5 %
Number of projects	**349**	**406**	**306**	**105**	**84**
Invalid	30	31	28	33	35
No final response	15	15	13	10	11
Refusal	9	15	9	13	10
Sample provided	46	39	49	43	45

Although there is little obvious bias in the nature of projects co-operating, the refusal and non-co-operation rate is clearly higher than would be desired. Many projects cited pure pressure of other tasks, especially as many projects were in the process of closing and had minimal staff available. Others claimed to have made an explicit promise to beneficiaries never to disclose their names even for research purposes.

Repeat surveys in future years would benefit from a re-examination of the control and management information processes available to funding bodies to ensure complete, or at least very high, participation rates.

Stage 2: Sampling individuals

All the returned lists from projects were combined into a master list for sampling individuals. Only 23 per cent of lists were returned electronically; the rest were entered from paper. A total of 33,278 leads were returned.

Leads were selected for telephone interview from all those with telephone numbers provided. A number of leads were selected from each region to aim to achieve 250 interviews in each (Eastern, East Midlands, London, North East, North West, South East, South West, West Midlands and Yorkshire and Humberside). Because of a higher than expected number of ineligible leads, additional names and addresses were sampled during fieldwork.

Individuals were selected with probability inversely proportionate to the sampling probability for each project at Stage 1, that is those from projects which had had a higher probability of selection because of their region or size were given a correspondingly lower probability of selection at this stage. This provided a virtually self-weighting sample (subject to sub-strata cell sizes) within each region, except where insufficient individuals details were available in any one region or sample strata; this was then corrected for by weighting the data at the analysis stage.

1.3.4 Fieldwork

Computer assisted telephone interviews were conducted by MORI Telephone Surveys between 14 April and 15 June 2003. All interviewers received a personal briefing about the background to the survey, the nature of the sample, and the questionnaire itself. Advance letters were sent to all the selected sample a week in advance of fieldwork giving details of the survey and contact details should there be any queries.

All leads were tried a minimum of ten times where no contact was made, on different days and times of the week over the fieldwork period. Where supplied telephone numbers were incorrect or unreachable, numbers were checked against the national Directory Enquiries database, and updated telephone numbers attempted where available. A relatively large proportion of leads turned out to be ineligible (either because the person had never attended the course or had received advice and guidance only), or telephone numbers were incorrect and were not updatable from the Directory Enquiries database. Further details of response rates are given below.

A total of 2,200 interviews were conducted by telephone for Objective 3.

A total of 1,111 leads with non-contact or untraceable numbers that had addresses associated with them were sent self-completion questionnaires; 111 of these were returned, completed, and added to the dataset.

Additionally, 7,274 Objective 3 leads were sent personalised self-completion questionnaires beginning in mid-May 2003. Questionnaires were accompanied by pre-paid return envelopes. All non-responders were sent a reminder in June 2003, but we continued processing questionnaires received up to and including 28 July.

A total of 1,120 completed questionnaires were returned, in addition to the 111 post-telephone questionnaires received.

1.3.5 Research instruments

The questionnaire was developed by IES, using the questionnaires from the 2000 and 2001 Leavers Surveys as the starting-point, and in consultation with the Department for Work and Pensions. The revised questionnaire was piloted by MORI Telephone Surveys in February 2003, with a personal briefing and debriefing of interviewers by IES and MORI staff. Following comments from the pilot, some slight revisions were made to the questionnaire to improve clarity and understanding.

The self-completion questionnaire was based on the telephone questionnaire, with appropriate changes of wording and instruction. The first mailed-out batch of 300 self-completion questionnaires was reviewed carefully on their return to ensure that there were no problems with completion. No changes were necessary.

1.3.6 Response rates

Response rates were poorer than expected, predominately because of lower than expected eligibility rates, and a high number of inaccurate details supplied by projects. The table below summarises the response to the telephone survey:

Table 1:4 Telephone response rate summary

	Number of leads	Total %	Valid %
Total	**7,360**		
Untraceable	1,828	25	
Ineligible	1,523	21	
No contact	485	7	12
Refusal	1,324	18	33
Interview	**2,200**	30	55

Although response rates were generally comparable across all sub-groups, there were some differences which suggest that women were more likely to respond. The following table shows the response rate by Policy Field; Policy Field 5 targets women, and this group shows a slightly lower non-contact or refusal rate than other groups. The impact of this is discussed below, under ‘Representativeness of the results’.

Table 1.5: Summary of response by project Policy Field

	Policy Field 1 %	Policy Field 2 %	Policy Field 3 %	Policy Field 4 %	Policy Field 5 %
Number of leads	**2,087**	**1,344**	**2,954**	**318**	**657**
Untraceable	29	30	20	25	23
Ineligible	17	16	26	19	21
No contact	6	8	7	5	3
Refusal	16	19	20	18	15
Interview	32	27	27	34	38

Although the response rate from eligible, traceable leads was high at 55 per cent for the telephone survey, it is much more difficult to obtain reliable figures for the postal survey. Even after the reminder mailing, just 15 per cent of questionnaires were returned. This likely reflects to some extent the fact that leads without telephone numbers were more likely to be inaccurate in other ways (just 14 per cent of these were returned, compared to 16 per cent for those with telephone numbers available).

Response rates were lowest in London (12 per cent) and highest in East Anglia (19 per cent).

1.3.7 Weighting

Data have been weighted according to the selection probabilities for each project and each individual beneficiary within the projects, that is those who had a lower chance of selection (over the two-stage sampling process) for inclusion in the survey receive higher prominence in the survey results. This ensures that all regions and sizes of projects should be represented according to their true proportions in the overall results, regardless of the probabilities used in selecting each individual to take part in the survey.

After careful consideration, no weighting to correct for differential response rates in different parts of the sample was applied. This was because of the lack of reliable profile data to set target weights. Applications data proved to be out-of-date, and project closure data supplied by the Department for Work and Pensions included less than half of the sampled projects, indicating that there may be a significant time-lag in the closure data should there be any shift in focus of projects over time.

1.4 Guidance for the interpretation of data in this report

The data have been weighted to correct for differential selection probabilities, as outlined above. As the differences between unweighted and weighted bases are small, only the unweighted bases are shown in tables. All results are based on weighted data.

Where percentages do not sum to 100, this is due to rounding, the exclusion of don't know or not answered categories, or multiple response.

1.4.1 Representativeness of the results

The data presented in this report are based on a sample of beneficiaries rather than the whole population, and for a 'snapshot' period June to November 2002. Results are, therefore, subject to certain sampling tolerances, which are outlined below under 'Confidence intervals'.

However, it should be noted that the sample interviewed may not be completely 'random'. Some level of bias may be introduced by the non-participation of certain types of project or beneficiary ('non-response' bias).

The way in which the data are weighted compensates for the disproportionate selection probabilities for beneficiaries from different projects and different regions and project size. Theoretically, assuming a perfect response, this should provide a perfect representative sample. However, there may be an element of bias in patterns of non-response to the survey. In many surveys we might seek to correct for these by weighting the demographic profile of the sample to a known source. For a general population survey the Census would be the obvious example.

However, for this survey, there is no single source of reliable profile data. For example, there are clearly quite severe limits to the reliability of the applications data (to which the 2001 data were weighted), which is evident in the poor match between the expected number of active projects and beneficiaries and the number of names actually obtained from the projects. Project closure data even if it was accurate

could not be regarded as fully comparable, given that it is historical rather than a current snapshot, and less than half of the projects included in this survey had closed by March 2003. Furthermore it is not always clear in these management datasets which projects, and, therefore, beneficiaries, would actually be valid for inclusion in the survey. Our problems with contacting projects based on applications data suggest that many more projects may provide such limited advice/guidance that their beneficiaries could not be included in the survey.

Therefore, it is difficult to weight the survey results to compensate for differential response between different demographic sub-groups. Surveys often record higher response rates with women and older people than with men and younger people. However, weighting the demographic profiles accordingly (for example using closure data) introduces extra design effects, reducing the effective sample sizes, even when a reliable profile is known. Although most variables would be affected in this survey, much of that would be within the sampling tolerances we would expect for a random survey and would not, therefore, make a considerable difference to the findings. For example, weighting by either sex or policy field back to closure data or applications data would lead to a change in the proportion gaining a full qualification changing from 54 per cent to 52 per cent, which is within the ±2 percentage point range described below for the confidence interval for this figure.

As an example of the discrepancies between applications data, closure data, and the number of leads obtained from projects for this survey (where the survey data may, in fact, be the most accurate for this snapshot survey), the following table shows, by policy field, the number of expected leavers, and the ratio of leads obtained, plus the ratio of closure data to applications data.

Table 1.6: Comparison of applications data and closure data

	Number of projects	Number of expected leavers June-Nov 2002	Number of leads	Ratio leads: expected leavers	Applications data total expected beneficiaries	Closure data total actual beneficiaries	Ration closure: applications
Policy 1	59	4,073	4,437	1.09	22,444	20,293	0.9
Policy 2	62	1,926	1,896	0.98	10,829	12,787	1.18
Policy 3	76	15,691	7,676	0.49	64,896	36,217	0.56
Policy 4	28	2,039	3,293	1.62	10,486	11,380	1.09
Policy 5	19	670	918	1.37	3,563	4,471	1.25
Total	**244**	**24,399**	**18,220**	**0.75**	**112,218**	**85,148**	**0.76**

Base: all projects providing sample, also included in closure data to March 2003

1.4.2 Confidence intervals

The sizes of the samples for the survey mean that differences in results for different sub-groups of a few percentage points or more are likely to be statistically significant. However, some bases are small and care should be taken when drawing comparisons if the shown unweighted base size is small.

The table below gives an indication of the confidence intervals to apply to different percentage results for different sample sizes in this report. These 95 per cent confidence intervals are the levels within which we can be 95 per cent confident (*ie* it will happen 19 times out of 20) that the true answer will lie.

These confidence intervals have been adjusted to make allowance for the effects of the weighting on overall reliability. This is particularly relevant to overall results as the 3,746 responses are not spread in their true proportions across the different regions, but almost equally in each region. Taken together with corrective weighting for differential sampling probabilities within sub-strata sampling cells, the overall design effect due to weighting is calculated as 2.0. In other words, the sample exhibits the same confidence intervals normally associated with a completely random (not stratified) sample that was half the size.

Table 1.7: Confidence intervals

		Approximate 95% confidence limits for percentage results around:		
Sample size:		10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
	300	±5	±7	±8
	700	±3	±5	±5
	1,000	±3	±4	±4
	2,000	±2	±3	±3
	3,500	±1	±2	±2

For example, for a percentage result of 70 per cent on a sample of 1,000, there is a 95 per cent chance that the true result will lie within ±4 percentage points, *ie* in a range of 66 per cent to 74 per cent.

Where results for two sub-groups are compared the difference between them which may be regarded as significant will be somewhere between the confidence limits for one of the results and the sum of the confidence intervals for both of them. For example, comparing two sub-groups of 700 each, with a percentage result around the 30 per cent level, there would have to be a ten percentage point difference between the results (from the table above, each sample would have a confidence interval of ±5) to be sure that the difference was not due to chance.

Part 2: Key Messages from the Research

2. Key Messages from the Research

Part 2 of the report draws on and summarises the more detailed findings presented in Part 3. It is intended to present the results of the study explicitly in the specific national policy context to which the programme contributes, and in the labour market context in which it has been operating.

The results are summarised in six sections, each focused on a different aspect of the programme, as follows:

- Intake and targeting issues:
  - is the programme reaching the appropriate beneficiaries?
  - is the programme reaching people with multiple disadvantages?
  - what factors have been holding beneficiaries back?
  - does it make sense to think of a single client group?
- Quality in delivery and participation:
  - was support tailored to meet different needs/circumstances?
  - how satisfactory were beneficiary perceptions of the programme?
  - does early leaving matter?
- Aggregate outcomes:
  - job outcomes
  - qualification outcomes
  - 'soft' outcomes
- Net outcomes among the disadvantaged:
  - disproportionate job gains among the disadvantaged
  - disproportionate qualification gains among the disadvantaged
- Outcomes from different starting points:
  - how far has the programme helped inactive entrants?
  - what happened to employed entrants?
- Programme convergence with public policy:
  - how far have projects aligned with, and added value to, national employment policy priorities?
  - how far has the programme reflected different local circumstances?

2.1 Targeting: is the programme reaching the appropriate beneficiaries?

There are two ways of looking at this question. Firstly, in very broad terms, has the programme been reaching people who are generally disadvantaged and facing difficulties in a competitive labour market? Secondly, in more precise terms, have the Policy Fields and measures been effective in guiding the different parts of the programme towards the groups of beneficiary which each aims to help? We discuss them in turn.

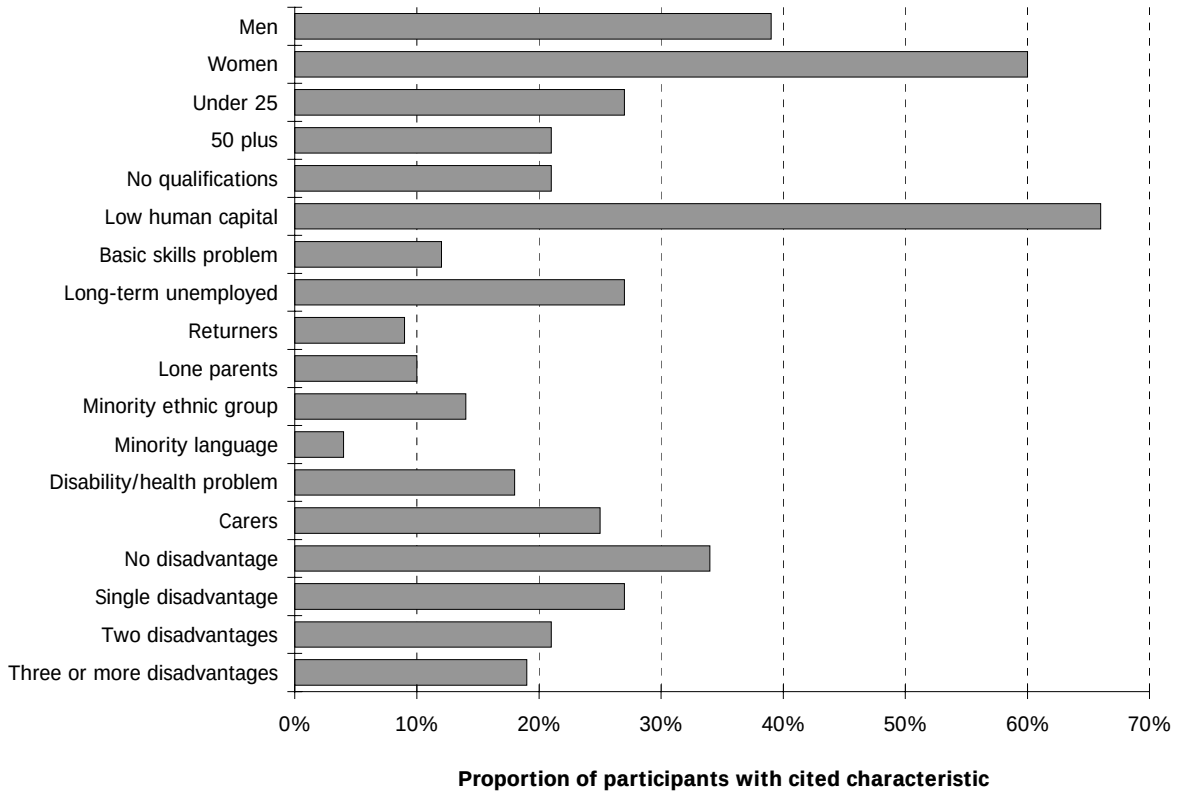
2.1.1 Broad targeting: is the programme reaching the disadvantaged?

This question is reviewed in Chapter 3, which looks at the broad characteristics of the beneficiaries. The analysis presented there points to a combination of considerable variety among beneficiaries, but underpinned by (1) fairly common and widespread experience of disadvantage across much of the beneficiary cohort, and (2) clusters (often large ones) of key groups of particularly disadvantaged beneficiaries within the sample.

Figure 2.1 summarises the key features and characteristics of the beneficiaries. The figure demonstrates some important common features which confirm the broad focus of the programme on those most disadvantaged in the labour market. This is captured best by the combined variable, 'low human capital', (which is defined in full in Section 3.14 below). Essentially, it takes in a range of factors (centred on lack of qualifications, lack of skills, and little work experience) to focus on an underlying lack of competitiveness in the labour market among beneficiaries. It shows that fully two-thirds of the sample were likely to be held back, and have their labour market opportunities constrained, by some combination of poor qualification, wrong or out-of-date skills, restricted work experience, *etc.* In addition, this is also demonstrated by a range of other factors which have (in their different ways) restricted individuals' ability to participate fully in the labour market. Thus, for example, the figure shows that a quarter of the sample have continuing caring responsibilities, that close to a fifth are constrained by illness or disability, and so on. It is factors like this that confirm the broad focus of the programme as a whole on the disadvantaged in society.

Looking more closely at the figure, it also shows evidence of clustering among the beneficiaries around several key factors well known to restrict and inhibit individuals' labour market opportunities through some combination of constraint and discrimination. Thus, participation has been strong among women (who constitute 60 per cent of beneficiaries), among those at each end of the age spectrum (27 per cent were under 25 and 21 per cent aged 50 or more), among people without work (some 60 per cent of beneficiaries), among people experiencing long-term unemployment or inactivity (27 per cent) and among people without qualifications (21 per cent).

Figure 2.1: Selected characteristics of the ESF Objective 3 beneficiaries



Source: 2002 Survey data. See Chapter 3 for details

It shows that the targeting has drawn in strong representation from various minority groups within the population. For example, those with health problems or disabilities (comprising 18 per cent of beneficiaries), those from ethnic minority groups (14 per cent), lone parents (ten per cent), people with basic skills problems (12 per cent), and people returning to the labour market after long periods doing something else (nine per cent).

Despite this general focus on the disadvantaged, it is clear that the programme has embraced a very wide range in the actual incidence of the disadvantages cited. This is perhaps most clearly demonstrated by variation in individuals' entry status, with some 37 per cent already employed at that time, compared with 39 per cent inactive and 21 per cent unemployed. The contrast could be extended further, for example from the 37 per cent already in work to the 27 per cent experiencing a spell of long-term unemployment or inactivity. To take another example, although a fifth of beneficiaries held no qualification when joining the programme, some were quite well qualified, with five per cent qualified to NVQ Level 5, and a further 17 per cent to Level 4. Finally, this 'internal' variety is demonstrated too by the incidence of multiple disadvantages within the sample. Although the range of disadvantages considered is somewhat *ad hoc*, the analysis nevertheless shows that a substantial minority (34 per cent) actually suffered from none of them, while at the other end of the spectrum, 19 per cent were held back by three or more disadvantages.

This combination of different intensities of disadvantage, different starting points, and different combinations of constraints, does not overwrite the conclusion of a generalised focus on those most disadvantaged in the labour market. However, it must have important consequences in assessing outcomes and the value-added of the programme.

2.1.2 Precise targeting: have the Policy Fields and measures reached their desired beneficiary groups?

The detailed composition of entrants and their varied experiences and outcomes in the different Policy Fields is discussed in Chapter 6. However, it is convenient here to summarise variation in entrants' characteristics, and to consider how far these reflect the overt aims and intentions of the different Policy Fields.

Table 2.1 takes each of the several analytical variables which we have used throughout the report (in the first column), and considers how far the projects in each Policy Field oriented towards beneficiaries with the specified characteristics. *Readers may observe that the cited percentages in this table, and indeed in most of the tables in this report, do not always sum to 100 per cent. This is because usually they do not show the proportion responding 'don't know' or 'can't remember'. Where this proportion is significant however, we do show it whenever possible; for the most part though, it amounts to only one or two per cent.*

First, we should note that the high proportion of women among beneficiaries is reflected in both the almost exclusive concentration on women by projects in Policy Field 5, but also by the fact that nowhere in the programme does the intake of women fall below half.

The age distribution of beneficiaries is much less even, however. In particular, we note that some 27 per cent of entrants were aged under 25, but that this rises to over half in Policy Field 1, and is correspondingly low in Policy Field 3 and very low in Policy Fields 4 and 5. It may be that the focus on returners and lone parents in Policy Field 5 inclines participation away from the very young, and in Policy Field 4, the age distribution is likely to reflect that found in the SMEs which it targets, however there seems no good reason why young people should be so modestly represented in Policy Field 3. In addition, the oldest beneficiaries are also more likely to be inactive on entry (23 per cent of them *cf* 16 per cent among those aged 25 to 34), and yet they are not unduly concentrated in Policy Fields 1 or 2. It may of course be that age is not one of the most important targeting criteria at the level of individual projects, and this might explain the apparent contradiction here.

Table 2.1: Varied beneficiary characteristics in projects in different Policy Fields

Proportions in each PF who were …	Total	PF 1: Active labour market policies	PF 2: EO for all, promoting social inclusion	PF 3: Improving training/education, promoting lifelong learning	PF 4: Adaptability and entrepreneur-ship	PF 5: Improving participation of women in labour market
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Male	39	49	37	39	44	1
Female	60	50	62	60	54	97
Aged < 18	8	15	16	3	–	*
Aged 18-24	19	36	13	12	8	8
Aged 25-34	19	19	19	18	24	23
Aged 35-49	31	20	30	37	41	44
Aged 50+	21	10	20	28	25	24
In work on entry	37	20	18	51	70	45
U/E on entry	21	35	22	11	16	12
Inactive on entry	39	40	55	35	12	42
No qualifications	21	17	37	21	8	21
Long-term U/I[1]	27	27	32	26	8	38
Returners	9	7	12	8	2	20
Lone parents	10	8	11	10	6	14
Min. ethnic group	14	21	19	8	10	4
Other language	4	6	6	3	3	2
Disability/health problems	18	17	29	17	9	16
Carers	25	18	26	26	22	44
Low human capital	66	71	79	60	51	63
Poor basic skills	*12*	*15*	*20*	*8*	*2*	*7*
No disadv.	34	36	15	38	53	28
Single disadv.	27	25	31	27	29	20
Two disadv.	*21*	*22*	*27*	*18*	*13*	*24*
Three+ disadv.	*19*	*17*	*27*	*17*	*5*	*28*
Base	*3,431*	*1,059*	*548*	*1,217*	*278*	*328*
Row %	*100*	*31*	*16*	*35*	*8*	*10*

[1] Long-term unemployed (*ie* those unemployed/inactive for six months or more among the under 25 age group, and those unemployed/inactive for a year or more among the rest.).

Base: All those who gave an answer

It is clear that there is a strong focus in Policy Fields 1 and 2 on recruiting beneficiaries without jobs, and correspondingly high proportions of employed entrants in Policy Fields 3 and 4. What is perhaps less clear is the still considerable volume of working entrants in Policy Fields 1 and 2, each of which with about a fifth of entrants in work when they joined. To some extent, these may be individuals 'at risk' in the labour market; certainly they were more likely to have temporary contracts than the average employed entrant, and they had shorter job tenures too. Nevertheless, it is not immediately obvious why projects mainly intended to promote active labour market policy and social inclusion should include such substantial proportions of entrants who were already both active and, insofar as they were working, socially included.

It is clear that all the Policy Fields have strong representations of beneficiaries with the different disadvantages which we have drawn out. Thus, it is encouraging to see that many of these groups have been attracted to participate strongly across all five Policy Fields (for example, lone parents, carers, disabled people, people with low human capital, *etc.*), and that in most Policy Fields there is a fair representation of most of our disadvantaged groups. For example, even in Policy Field 4, where as we might expect there are fairly substantial clusters of well-qualified, employed individuals, there is also good representation of the unemployed, carers, people from minority ethnic groups, *etc.*

However, in addition, we can also observe some distinct clustering of beneficiaries in line with the strategic aims of each PF, suggesting that they had been reasonably successful in attracting their individual key groups of entrant. Thus:

- in Policy Field 1, concentrating on delivering active labour market measures, over a third of entrants were without work but were actively looking for it
- in Policy Field 2, concentrating on overcoming social exclusion, a third of entrants had experienced long-term unemployment or inactivity, and over half were inactive on entry
- in Policy Field 3, promoting lifelong learning, a fifth of entrants had no qualifications
- in Policy Field 4, promoting adaptability and entrepreneurship, two-thirds of entrants were already working, 13 per cent of them as self-employed
- in Policy Field 5, promoting the participation of women in the labour market, over a third of the (almost) exclusively female entry cohort had experienced long-term unemployment or inactivity, and 39 per cent of them had domestic or family responsibilities which impeded their ability to undertake paid work.

There are some fairly 'light' cells in Table 2.1 too, however. For example, the representation of minority ethnic groups seems to be very low in Policy Field 5 and low in Policy Field 3. Similarly, the representation of people with basic skills problems seems unfortunately lower than average in PF 3, which is charged with improving skills and promoting lifelong learning; it may be of course that people with poor basic skills are more likely to engage with projects working under PF 1 or 2.

Although we have no data to show it, it should be kept in mind that a considerable proportion of PF 1 and 2 beneficiaries were likely to be on mandatory courses, while those in the other three PFs were not. This is a potentially important explanatory variable but unfortunately not one which we have been able to use.

2.2 Multiple disadvantage

The research, like the projects, embraces beneficiaries with many different disadvantages. In devising an index of multiple disadvantage we have not included them all because we have sought comparability with the way this variable has been constructed in previous years. Consequently, we have not included gender or age, but have focused the variable instead on:

- having no qualifications on entry to the project
- being long-term unemployed (or inactive) on entry
- being a returner to the labour market after an absence of at least a year
- being a lone parent
- belonging to a minority ethnic group
- not speaking English as the main language in the home
- having a disability or health problem, and
- being a carer.

The results show a widespread incidence of multiple disadvantage across the sample, with nearly a fifth (19 per cent) having experienced three or more of them, and another fifth (21 per cent) experiencing two.

They also show that multiple disadvantage is much more strongly marked among the women in the sample. Here, for example, we can see that nearly a quarter of the women (24 per cent) have experienced three or more of these disadvantages, in contrast to just ten per cent of the men.

Thirdly, there is some variation with age in the distribution of multiple disadvantage. Generally speaking, older beneficiaries are less likely to be experiencing any of them presently. However, some older beneficiaries are highly likely to have experienced multiple disadvantage, and this probably reflects the shifting incidence of the family/care based factors in middle age, and the sickness/disability ones in later life.

Finally, there is strong evidence from the data that these patterns of disadvantage are clearly associated with, and seem likely to have caused, significant variations in the employment status of individuals when they started the programme. Thus, the employment rate on entering the projects declines from nearly 60 per cent among those with none of these disadvantages to just seven per cent among those with three or more. Conversely, inactivity rises dramatically with the incidence of these disadvantages; from less than 20 per cent among those with none of these disadvantages to three-quarters of those with three or more.

2.3 What are the main barriers to entering/progressing within the labour market?

This was not a cohort for whom the jobs market had been problem free, and the constraints which they reported had held them back are set out in Table 2.2. We note that only five per cent of them said that they had not been troubled by *any* of the barriers which the questionnaire proffered them. Many had felt constrained by four or five of them, and this provides further confirmation of the broad focus of the programme, identified above, on the disadvantaged in society and the labour market.

Fully three-quarters of beneficiaries had been held back by their lack of qualifications, skills or training, or the up-to-date-ness of their skills. This is entirely consistent with our estimate elsewhere that two-thirds of the sample could be characterised as having low human capital, and it had affected beneficiaries fairly evenly whatever their circumstances on joining the programme.

Table 2.2: Problems previously encountered by beneficiaries in getting a job, or in getting a better one, if already employed

	All on entry %	Employed on entry %	U/E on entry %	Inactive on entry %
Wrong/no qualifications training or skills	39	33	54	38
Basic skills not good enough	12	7	16	13
Skills out of date	28	26	32	29
Age	26	19	36	28
No jobs available around here	26	19	43	23
No recent experience of working	28	12	38	37
Could not find childcare	12	7	9	17
Disability or health problems	16	4	15	29
Care of sick/disabled relative or friend	6	4	6	8
Problems with transport	15	8	24	18
English language not good enough	6	3	7	7
Yes; course was relevant to my needs	83	88	81	81
Base	*3,431*	*1,308*	*714*	*1,287*

A significant proportion was constrained by some other responsibility, restricting their availability for work in some way. We observed above that fully a quarter of beneficiaries were constrained by care responsibilities, and here we can see that 23 per cent had experienced problems in finding affordable childcare or had care responsibilities for family or friends.

Personal disability or health problems were widespread, reported by 16 per cent of entrants, and age was felt to be a constraint, mainly by beneficiaries at each end of the age spectrum. Both of these constraints were cited less often by those employed on entry.

Problems in the labour market, either a general paucity of vacancies or difficulties with transport in accessing them, were cited by two in five beneficiaries.

It is worth recording that despite this fairly widespread and diverse set of constraints, the proportions of beneficiaries who felt that the course had been relevant to their needs was both high, and fairly consistent across the different groups of entrant, as indicated in the final row of Table 2.2.

2.4 Different starting points: does it make sense to think of a single client group?

The programme as a whole is structured according to Policy Fields, Measures and eligible target groups. We do not undertake the analysis in this report at the level of Measures, but Chapter 6 looks at the separate Policy Fields. There is plenty of evidence from this survey to show that projects target their recruitment, and focus the support given, according to the different circumstances and needs of individual beneficiaries. However, when it comes to assessing the programme as a whole, whether for planning or evaluation purposes, this diversity needs to be accounted for. Typically this is done in either an *ad hoc* manner (*ie* focusing on particular sub-groups of respondent) or more systematically by the Policy Field under which beneficiaries are supported. The former is unwieldy, because there are so many different categories of beneficiary (we use 29 in this report alone). We review the latter in Chapter 6, but even so this may be too broad and does not take into account the high variety within, and not just between, the different Policy Fields (as shown in Table 2.1 above).

Furthermore neither really catches an important labour market dimension which this research shows to differentiate strongly between beneficiaries, in terms of both their starting point and the outcomes achieved through the programme. This is the employment circumstances of beneficiaries from which they join the programme. A crucial distinction should be made between:

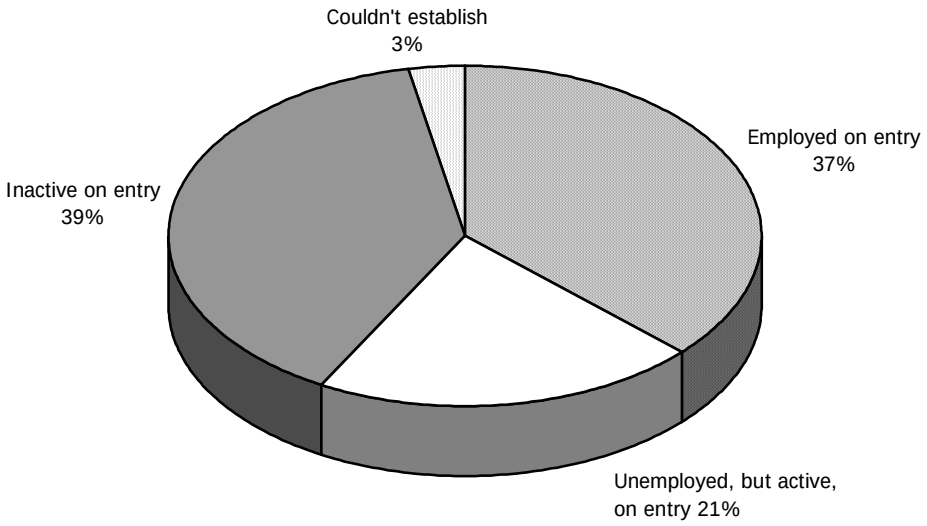
- those already in work (full time, part time or self employed) when joining
- those formally unemployed, *ie* not working, but available, and looking, for work; and
- those not economically active[1], *ie* those whose main activity or immediate intention before joining the programme was something other than work.

In our view, the breakdown between these three groups of entrant not only structures the overall, strategic character of the programme, but also explains much about the activities undertaken and the outcomes achieved.

Figure 2.2 sets out the former, and shows how far ESF Objective 3 projects in a relatively buoyant English labour market have oriented towards those already working.

[1] The 'economically inactive' is itself a very diverse group, including those in education as well as those on sickness/disability benefits and lone parents.

Figure 2.2: Beneficiary labour market status on joining the programme



Base: All entrants N = 3,431

We now move on to consider the different characteristics of beneficiaries between these three groups as they entered their projects from employment, from unemployment and from inactivity. The results are summarised for a variety of characteristics in the top part of Table 2.3 and for their situations at the time of the survey in the bottom part of the table. The three per cent for whom we could not attribute an entry status are not shown in Table 2.3, but they are included in the first column, 'all beneficiaries'.

Table 2.3: Diversity within the beneficiary group

	All beneficiaries	**Employed on entry**	**Unemployed on entry**	**Inactive on entry**
Input characteristics	Column %	Column %	Column %	Column %
% Female	60	63	44	68
% No qualifications	21	13	21	30
% Three+ disadvantages	19	3	15	36
% Long-term unemployed/inactive	27	*	33	50
% Low human capital	66	55	77	70
% Disability/health problems	18	7	17	29
Average age	*36*	*37*	*33*	*36*
Outcomes				
% In work at time of survey	53	88	45	24
% Gained a qualification	55	55	54	55
% Increased confidence that will get work (not in work now)	77	70	77	80
Index of satisfaction with course	123	133	110	125
% Agreeing course relevant to needs	83	88	81	81
% Improved vocational skills	88	90	88	88
% Improved 'soft' skills	87	84	89	91
% Received job search help	63	52	81	63
Base = 3,431				
Row %	*100*	*37*	*21*	*39*

Base: All those who gave an answer

2.4.1 Already employed on entry

Thirty-seven per cent of beneficiaries were already working when they joined the programme. This is actually a slight fall from the figure of 41 per cent last year. As Table 2.3 shows, they were slightly older than average, slightly more likely to be female, and much more likely already to hold a qualification. Far fewer of them suffer from multiple disadvantage; they were much less likely to have a disability or health problem, and in broad terms they had the advantage of higher levels of human capital.

Almost half of this group entered projects supported under Policy Field 3, and a quarter into those under Policy Field 4 and 5.

Their employment rate at the time of the survey was still far higher than those not previously working, but had actually fallen somewhat since they joined the programme. They were not significantly more likely to have gained a qualification through the programme. Their perceptions of the relevance of the programme were very high, and a high proportion felt that it had added to their vocational skills. Perhaps as a result, their overall satisfaction with the programme was somewhat higher than average.

Unemployed but actively seeking work on entry

Comprising a fifth of beneficiaries, this group had a far higher proportion of men than the other two, and was on average younger. In terms of disadvantages, it had a slightly higher proportion of individuals with low human capital, but was otherwise close to the average.

More than two-thirds of these beneficiaries entered projects supported under Policy Fields 1 and 2.

This group still had far lower employment rates than average by the time of the survey (*ie* 45 per cent *cf* 53), but had nevertheless gained employment at an impressive rate (*ie* to from zero to 45 per cent). Similarly, it showed a fairly average pattern of qualifications gains, 'soft' skill and vocational skill gains. It was less satisfied with the programme than the other two groups, however (albeit at quite high absolute levels of satisfaction).

2.4.2 The economically inactive

This group accounted for 39 per cent of entrants and demonstrated the highest incidence of disadvantage, particularly in terms of disability, duration since last worked, multiple disadvantage, and lack of qualification. It had a higher than average female membership, with slightly lower than average human capital.

More than half of these beneficiaries entered projects supported under Policy Fields 1 and 2, but also a third into those under Policy Field 3.

At the time of the survey, absolute employment rates were still very low at 24 per cent for the economically inactive, and had risen far less than the unemployed group. Qualification gains, 'soft' outcomes and overall satisfaction with the course were close to the average for beneficiaries as a whole.

2.5 Tailored support: was support tailored to meet different needs/ circumstances?

There is considerable evidence about the tailoring of support to match individual needs and circumstances.

2.5.1 Personal Training Plans

Just under half of these respondents remembered agreeing a personalised plan when they joined the project, and although there is a proportion who can't recall, there is a substantial minority (39 per cent) who said that they definitely were not given the opportunity to draw up their own plan.

Where such plans were drawn up, however, about three-quarters explicitly led towards the achievement of some form of qualification. Among those with no qualification when they joined the programme, the proportion of those whose PTP referred to getting one was slightly higher than the three quarters cited above.

2.5.2 Objective match between needs and provision

There is evidence here of a high level of overlap between the various problems which beneficiaries said had held them back and the support they received through their courses. Thus, for example, 59 per cent of those with basic skills problems received help with reading or writing skills, and, some 65 per cent of those for whom English was not the main language in the home, received help with their English-speaking skills. Fifty-three per cent of those with no qualifications acquired one through the course.

In addition, although some aspects of provision were very widespread, these too seem to have been quite carefully targeted. For example, in terms of the vocational focus of the training provided, some 61 per cent of beneficiaries said that they had been helped to improve their practical skills *related to a particular job*.

2.5.3 Subjective match between needs and provision

Four out of five respondents thought that the project had been relevant to their needs, and among none of our sub-groups did this fall below two-thirds. In some areas, for example projects supported under Policy Field 5, it rose as high as 90 per cent.

2.5.4 Meeting beneficiary expectations

Generally, beneficiary expectations were fully met, and this was particularly marked in some respects. Thus, for example, over 80 per cent of beneficiaries had their expectations met in terms of improving the skills they would need at work and improvement in their self-confidence (that is to say, among those expecting it, four out of five received it). The majority also had their expectations met about improving their qualifications, at 69 per cent, but this fell away somewhat with job search training to less than half of those expecting to get it.

2.5.5 Provision at the right level

Although this was on average a relatively poorly skilled and somewhat inexperienced cohort, there was considerable variety among beneficiaries, as discussed above. Nevertheless, three-quarters thought that the level of support had been appropriate for their abilities. While those who felt that provision had not been at the right level were in a small minority, far more of them felt that the content had been too basic (17 per cent in all) than felt that it had been too advanced (four per cent). This pattern was replicated in all the beneficiary sub-groups which we analysed.

2.6 Beneficiary perceptions of the programme

Most beneficiaries enter projects voluntarily. Consequently their perceptions about, and experiences of, provision are important, not just in building up their own labour market trajectory, but also because they

will pass on the message to the next cohort of entrants. It is therefore both reassuring, and consistent with the 'targeting' and 'tailoring' conclusions above, that the research indicated a high and widespread level of satisfaction with the projects and the support received through them.

2.6.1 Satisfaction

Looking back over the course, and taking into account the fact (see below) that some 47 per cent of them were without work when asked, well over four out of every five beneficiaries declared themselves satisfied with the quality of the course overall; most of them very satisfied. While there were some differences between different groups of respondent, they were mostly expressed as shifts between 'very' and 'fairly' satisfied; for no groups did the level of overt dissatisfaction rise above 15 per cent.

There was some interesting variety around this high average however, as follows:

- Satisfaction was generally higher among those with more problems when they joined the project, but this is not wholly consistent.
- Some particular groups of disadvantaged beneficiaries tended to have high satisfaction, notably 'returners', the long-term unemployed/inactive, those without qualifications on entry, and carers. Others were less satisfied than average, including those with poor basic skills, those with a disability or health problem.
- Satisfaction rises with age; with the two younger age groups both expressing satisfaction well below average.
- Those working when they joined the project also show scores well above average, those who were inactive, about average, and the unemployed, below average.
- Women tend to have above average satisfaction scores, while men tended to have below average levels of satisfaction with their projects.
- The highest level of satisfaction was expressed by beneficiaries in projects supported under Policy Field 5, with Policy Field 3 somewhat above average, Policy Field 4 about average, and Policy Field 1 and Policy Field 2 well below average. This may well reflect the fact that many PF 1 and 2 beneficiaries would be on mandatory courses.

2.6.2 Equal opportunity

If potential beneficiaries fear that projects may discriminate against them, or may not take their special needs or circumstances into account, then they may not participate at all, they may fall out early, or their participation may be undermined. For these reasons it is important that projects clearly explain to beneficiaries both that they have an equal opportunities policy, and how this will affect the individual in practice while they are on the course. Our results show that although there is a significant proportion who just cannot remember whether or not they were given this information, nevertheless, about two in three still clearly recall that the policy was explained to them. There is little variation between men and women in this respect.

Awareness that the project in which they had taken part had been partly funded by ESF was lower, with just over half saying that they knew. Here, however, the proportion that cannot remember is consequently rather lower, at one in ten, leaving a substantial minority (about a third), who were not aware of the ESF's role.

2.7 Early leaving: does it matter?

A reasonable answer to this question would be that it doesn't matter much. Firstly, the volume of early leavers is low, with just 16 per cent of beneficiaries reporting that they had left earlier than expected.

Secondly, only about a third of these quits were for negative reasons, mostly dissatisfaction with the course, the provider, *etc.*, and financial problems. Some 28 per cent were for positive reasons, mainly getting a job, getting a qualification earlier than expected or starting another course. The remainder were due to unanticipated changes in personal circumstances. In short, only about five per cent of beneficiaries left early for negative reasons.

Thirdly, and partly as a result of the reasons for leaving, employment rates among early leavers were virtually the same as the average for all beneficiaries at the time of the survey.

Despite this, there are two reasons for some concern. Firstly, more detailed analysis does show, however, that some categories of beneficiary were more inclined to leave early than others. For example, the younger they were, the more likely they were to leave early. There is some evidence, too, that early exits were more prevalent among people who were most disadvantaged (20 per cent among those with three or more disadvantages), and that it was more common for certain kinds of disadvantage (*eg* 22 per cent among people with basic skills problems, 22 per cent if they had a disability or health problem.

Secondly, the results show that those who left early for a negative reason were less likely than average to be in work at the time of the survey, with an employment rate of 46 per cent, compared to the 'all beneficiaries' average of 53 per cent.

2.8 Welfare to work: how far have the projects helped to move people into paid employment?

Table 2.4 shows conclusively that, following their participation in the programme, there has been a substantial and continuing shift of status among respondents towards paid employment. This is notwithstanding the fact that many of them were already in paid employment when they joined it, and it contrasts sharply with an employment rate which had been declining in the year before participation.

There are four important conclusions to be drawn from this table. Firstly, it shows that employment increased sharply among these respondents when they left their projects, increasing by a full ten percentage points over the situation when they joined. It does not seem unreasonable to attribute this increase directly to the effect of the programme, because:

- these two cross-sections were taken immediately before, and immediately after, participation in the projects; and
- employment rates had been falling before entry, and yet rose significantly on exit.

Secondly, Table 2.4 shows that gross employment rates went on to increase in the months after leaving the project, albeit not so strongly as they had done, but still by a significant amount (six percentage points overall; almost ten percent taking account of those who ceased working in this period). This suggests that there are important and positive ongoing effects of participation in the programme.

Table 2.4: Distribution of activity across four time periods (all respondents)

	12 months before project	On joining project	On leaving project	At time of survey
	%	%	%	%
In paid work	41	37	47	53
Unemployed	9	21	11	9
Inactive	49	38	42	38
Base	*3,431*	*3,431*	*3,431*	*3,431*

Base: All respondents who answered the questions

Thirdly, we can see that the rising level of unemployment among these respondents before they joined the project has been reversed; the unemployment rate virtually halved between joining and leaving the projects. Furthermore, it has continued to fall since beneficiaries left the project, further corroborating evidence of a continuing positive effect of participation.

Fourthly, we note that the programme does not seem to have been so successful in reducing inactivity within the sample. Inactivity had been falling sharply in the year prior to the programme, largely as future participants left education or training (although leading largely to an increase in unemployment, rather than to increased employment). Subsequently, the overall level of inactivity does not seem to have improved at all in the period that beneficiaries were actually taking part in the project, but it has reduced somewhat in the months since the projects ended. While we must allow for particular individuals making transitions between these groups in all directions, the aggregate result for inactivity remains disappointing. It suggests that the programme has had only very modest success in securing sizeable net movements of individuals into the labour market, who were previously outside it. This is discussed further below.

Finally, although it is not shown above, we should note that there were relatively high levels of job retention among the sample. In the (average) six months between leaving and taking part in the survey, eight out of ten of those in work had stayed in it.

2.9 Qualification gains

Among beneficiaries not working when they joined the projects, having no qualifications or skills, or having the wrong ones, was by far the most widely cited barrier to finding work (at 43 per cent). They seem to have been right, because fully a fifth of beneficiaries had entered these projects without any qualification, and among them, the proportion working at the time was way below average (at 22 per cent, *cf* 37). As a result, although gaining one was not the most widespread expectation of the course, two-thirds of all those joining expected to improve their qualifications through it.

Furthermore, gaining a qualification was also often an explicit aim of the projects themselves. About a third of those who had worked out a personal training plan when they joined the course had gaining a qualification as an explicit objective.

2.9.1 High levels of qualification gains

These results show that the projects and beneficiaries had been very successful in meeting this objective. By the time they had finished, just over a half (55 per cent) of all entrants had gained a full qualification, and a further nine per cent of those who did not gain a full qualification had gained credits or units towards one.

2.9.2 Qualifications and employment

The programme had been very successful in meeting this goal of improving the qualifications of participants. However, it does not unfortunately follow that this gain had greatly improved their chances of being in work. Thus, at the time of the survey 53 per cent of all beneficiaries were working, but there was virtually no difference between those gaining and not gaining a qualification through the programme (54 and 52 per cent respectively) in the likelihood of being in work at that time. It would seem that if there are employment gains to be made out of improving/acquiring qualifications of this (fairly modest) kind, they are neither immediate nor quantitative. This does not rule out the likelihood that they are longer term, and centred on the quality of employment, and it would seem safer to conclude that what is going on here is enhanced employability, rather than the more immediate employment gains discussed above.

2.10 'Soft' outcomes among those not working after taking part

Many beneficiaries were not working at the time of the survey; some (nine per cent of the whole sample) regarded themselves as unemployed and actively seeking work, while the rest (38 per cent) were inactive. Nevertheless, it is evident that large numbers of these individuals had both gained marketable attributes and improved their subjective assessment of their circumstances and aspirations.

Three areas of improvement are evident.

2.10.1 Improved skills

A very high proportion (69 per cent) of beneficiaries who were not working at the time of the survey, but who were nevertheless still looking for work, indicated that despite this, they felt that they were now better skilled than previously for the kind of job they were looking for.

2.10.2 Improved self confidence

Although it is probably true that the biggest fillip to an individual's self confidence in the labour market would be getting a job, we still observe very widespread increases in self confidence about working, even among those who had not been successful. Thus, three-quarters of them were more confident now that they would find work than they had been before the course. Those who were also not working when they entered the programme generally had above average increases in confidence, as did many of the sub-groups with particular constraints; *eg* lone parents (80 per cent), those without qualifications on entry (83 per cent), those from a minority ethnic group (86 per cent), and those with poor basic skills (85 per cent). Finally, the proportion recording an improvement in their confidence as a result of the programme increases (albeit only a little) consistently as the incidence of their disadvantages also rises. This is consistent with the positive bias in harder (job and qualifications) outcomes in favour of the more disadvantaged, which is discussed below.

2.10.3 Reduced constraints

Even though they had not yet found work, these beneficiaries demonstrated a very sharp fall in the perceived impact on their job prospects of problems which they had identified as holding them back before they entered the project.

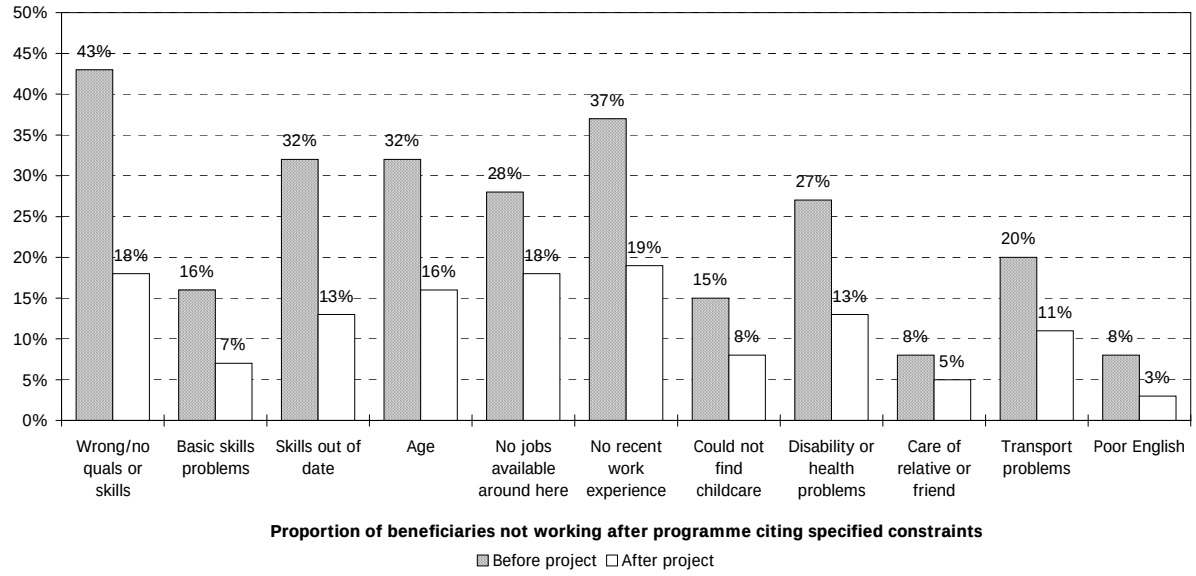
Figure 2.3 (overleaf) sets out a 'before and after' comparison of the extent to which this group of beneficiaries (*ie* those not working at the time of the survey) felt constrained by various labour market problems. It clearly shows that the reductions in the impact of the identified problems have been very widespread.

For example, we can see that 43 per cent of these beneficiaries had felt that their chances of finding work had been held back by having the wrong (or no) skills. After the programme, only 18 per cent of them report being disadvantaged in this way; a fall of some 58 per cent. Similarly, large reductions in perceived barriers to employment were recorded for obsolete skills, for poor basic skills, for poor command of English, and for lack of recent work experience.

The figure clearly indicates that the projects have been reducing the constraining effect of a wide range of problems which beneficiaries have previously faced in the labour market, even where they have not yet been successful in getting a job.

Taken together with the high proportions citing an increase in vocationally-relevant skills, and the widespread rise in self confidence about finding a job, this adds up to compelling evidence of significant 'soft' gains among beneficiaries who were not working by the time of the survey.

Figure 2.3: Beneficiaries' perceptions of their labour market problems before and after their course (those not working at time of survey only)



Base: Beneficiaries not working at the time of the survey; N = 1,632

2.11 Disproportionate job gains among the disadvantaged

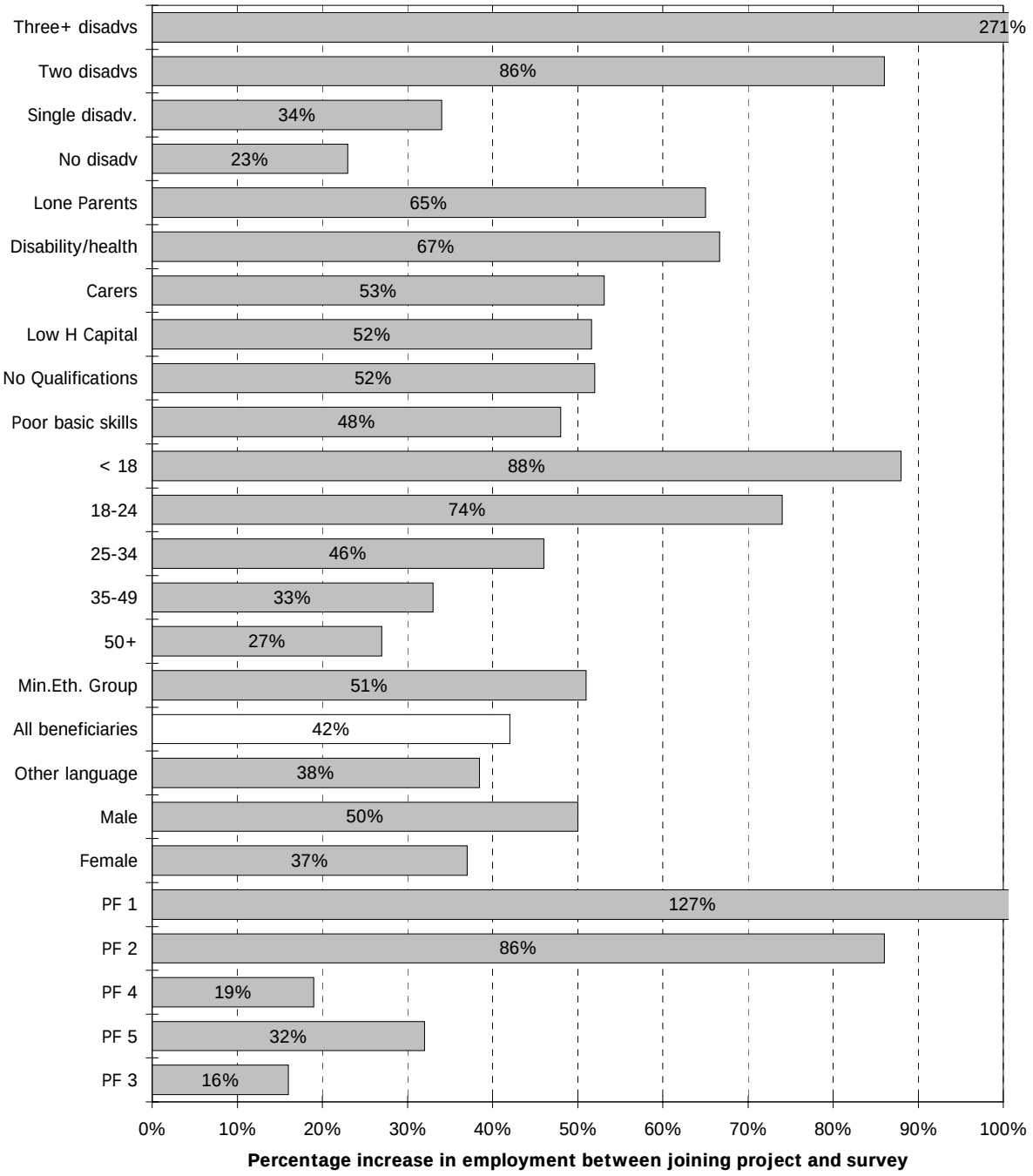
The absolute level of employment after the project was undoubtedly quite low for some groups of beneficiary, particularly for those such as the under 18s, those with a disability or health problem, those previously in long-term unemployment or inactivity. Their employment rates at the time of the survey, 22 per cent, 25 per cent and 24 per cent respectively, certainly compare unfavourably with the average (53 per cent). However, this is to overlook their extremely low employment rates at the outset. In effect, some groups had much further to travel to a job than others, and others had no distance at all. We need to take this into account in any assessment of how well different people are being helped to a job outcome from their different starting points.

Figure 2.4 (overleaf) sets out the *proportionate* increase in employment for (most of) the analytical sub-groups which have been used in the analysis between joining the programme and the time of the survey (*ie* the increase in employment expressed as a percentage of employment levels at the start of the programme). In effect, it clearly shows which groups have been helped into employment most effectively by the programme, taking account of their starting circumstances.

Firstly it clearly shows that the programme has been disproportionately helpful and successful in helping the most disadvantaged beneficiaries find work. Employment rates have risen by 271 per cent among those with three or more disadvantages, and nearly doubled among those with two. This compares with an average increase of 42 per cent.

It is of course extremely important in interpreting such results to keep in mind that the reason for such high proportionate increases in employment is the extremely low level of employment among some of these sub-groups when they entered the programme. For example, in the two cases cited above, the starting employment rates were only six per cent among those with three or more disadvantages, and 20 per cent for those with two; these rose to 24 and 38 per cent respectively. These low initial rates of employment explain the very high rates of increase secured by the time of the survey, but this should not obscure the fact that significant, and above average, increases in their employment rate were secured among many of the more disadvantaged groups taking part in these projects.

Figure 2.4: Proportionate increases in employment rates, by key groups of beneficiary



Base: Respondents in groups cited

Secondly, we can see that some key groups of beneficiary who face quite distinct barriers to employment have also benefited disproportionately in finding work through the programme. Lone parents and those with a disability or health problem (to a lesser extent, carers) are shown to have very high proportionate increases in their employment after taking part, although once again initial employment rates were low. We might also add 'returners' (people coming back to the labour market after an extended break from it) to this group, but their zero initial employment rate means that we cannot calculate a comparable rate of increase for them.

Thirdly, those individuals with some kind of skills deficiency have also done proportionately better than average in getting jobs as a result of the programme. Employment rates for those with low human capital in general have risen by 52 per cent, for those who had no qualifications at all, also by 52 per cent, and by 48 per cent for those with basic skills difficulties when they joined the programme.

A fourth area of relative success is among young people aged under 25. Here, employment rates have risen by three-quarters. However, this does not extend to the oldest age group, for whom proportionate increases in employment have been way below average, at only 27 per cent (on a base of 36 per cent in employment at the outset, which was about average for the sample as a whole).

Of course, as we have seen with the 'returners', some groups cannot be shown in this figure. If, by definition, none of their members were working when they joined the programme then their proportionate increase at the time of the survey would be infinity. We noted above that the absolute level of employment among the previously unemployed, the previously inactive and the long-term unemployed remained modest after completing the programme. Here, we should note that in relation to the non-existent employment base from which they started, these still look very significant gains.

Turning to the other proportionate outcomes, we note that there are huge differences between the different Policy Fields in these proportionate gains in employment. These seem to be due largely to differences in the circumstances of the cohorts joining them, rather than related to any differential effectiveness between the different Policy Fields. Policy Fields are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

The same seems to be the case for the rather better proportionate job outcomes for men. While absolute job rates were about the same for both genders, many more women were employed in the first place, and this has operated to suppress their proportionate gains.

Finally, it is worth noting that while both carers and people from minority ethnic groups have achieved proportionate job outcomes above the average, their gains do not compare to some of those groups mentioned above, who have generally done much better.

2.12 Disproportionate gains in qualifications for the disadvantaged

We noted above that the employment gains evident at the time of the survey had disproportionately favoured the weakest, most disadvantaged beneficiaries. There is also strong evidence in the qualification results to show this also to be the case for gains in qualifications held.

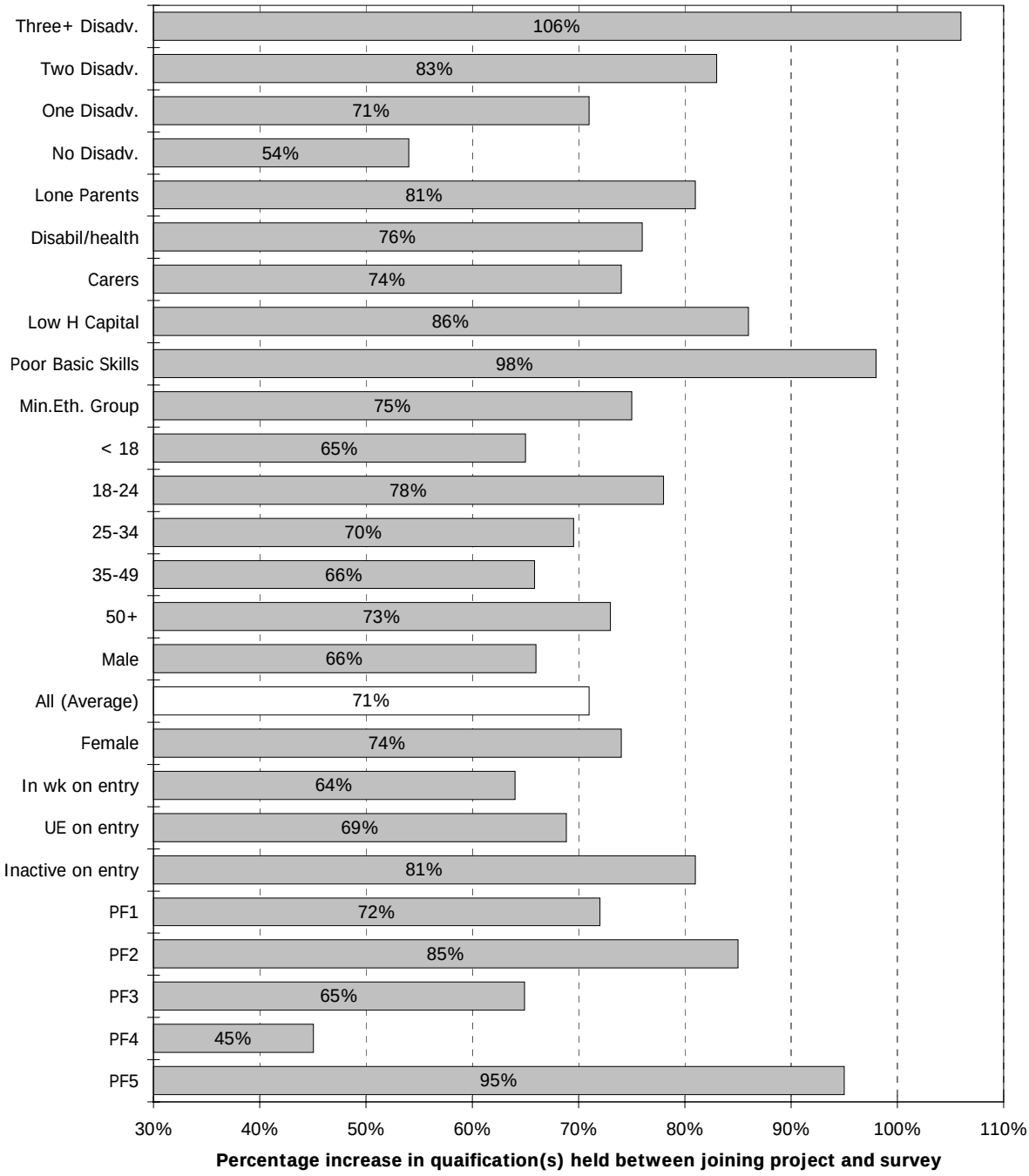
Thus, while there was not much difference between the different groups of beneficiary in their propensity to gain a qualification (about half for each of the different groups), we have to recognise that, as with jobs, they were coming from vastly different starting points in terms of already holding one/some.

Figure 2.5 is drawn up on the same basis as Figure 2.4 above. It shows those gaining a qualification through the course as a proportion of those already holding one/some when they joined it, for each of the different groups of beneficiary. NB: we are dealing here with full qualification gains; including partial gains makes the chart much more complicated but does not at all alter the story. It is important to note also that the group 'no qualifications on entry' cannot be shown in this figure, as the proportionate increase would be infinite on a base of zero. Some 55 per cent of them nevertheless gained a qualification through the programme.

We can see that, on average, the proportion of beneficiaries gaining qualifications, as a proportion of those holding them in the first place, rose by 71 per cent.

In contrast to this average, we can see that the propensity to gain their qualifications is highest among the most disadvantaged groups of beneficiary, and declines among the least disadvantaged groups. This seems to be further quite powerful evidence of a positive bias towards the most poorly placed beneficiaries acting across the programme as a whole. It is important to reiterate the point made above

Figure 2.5: Proportionate increases in qualification(s) held by key groups of beneficiary



Base: Beneficiaries in groups cited

(for Figure 2.4) that one reason for the very high proportionate increases in qualifications among the more disadvantaged sub groups is that they were far less likely to hold them when they entered their projects.

Thus, for example, among those with three or more disadvantages, only 55 per cent held a qualification when they joined, compared with over three quarters among the sample as a whole. By the time they had finished some 59 per cent of the former group had gained a qualification, which is only slightly better than the 54 per cent across the whole sample. It is the fact that these gains were secured from a group with below average propensity to have a qualification that makes the proportionate difference so wide. However, once again, it is not the scale of the difference that really matters here. It is that the

disadvantaged did at least as well as those more favourably placed when they joined, despite the fact that they were starting from a much lower base.

Secondly, we can see that this positive bias extends towards those not working when they joined the programme, with the gains in qualification enjoyed by (a below average) 64 per cent of those already working, through 69 per cent (about average) of those unemployed but looking for work, to 81 per cent among those who were inactive.

Thirdly, there is evidence of some encouraging targeting of these qualification gains. For example, we can see that among those with poor basic skills, the rise was well above average at 98 per cent, and similarly among those with low human capital when they joined the programme, 86 per cent. Other particularly disadvantaged beneficiaries making above average qualification gains include lone parents, those with a disability or health problem, those with care responsibilities, members of minority ethnic groups, and women.

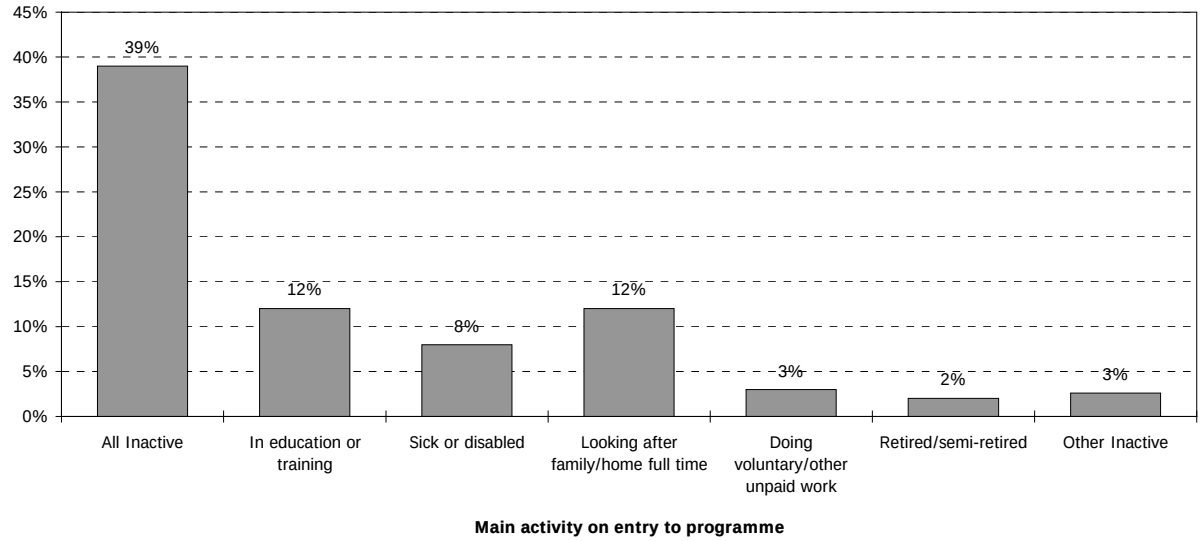
Finally, there are considerable differences between projects in the different Policy Fields. Policy Field 5 (and to a lesser extent Policy Field 2) seems to have been particularly successful in building up qualification levels in this way.

2.13 Inactivity: how far is the programme helping inactive groups?

As we have shown, the programme has been quite successful in drawing in people who were economically inactive. In fact, at 39 per cent of entrants, they constitute the largest entrant group. Furthermore, the programme has been successful in reaching substantial numbers of people who have been inactive for different reasons.

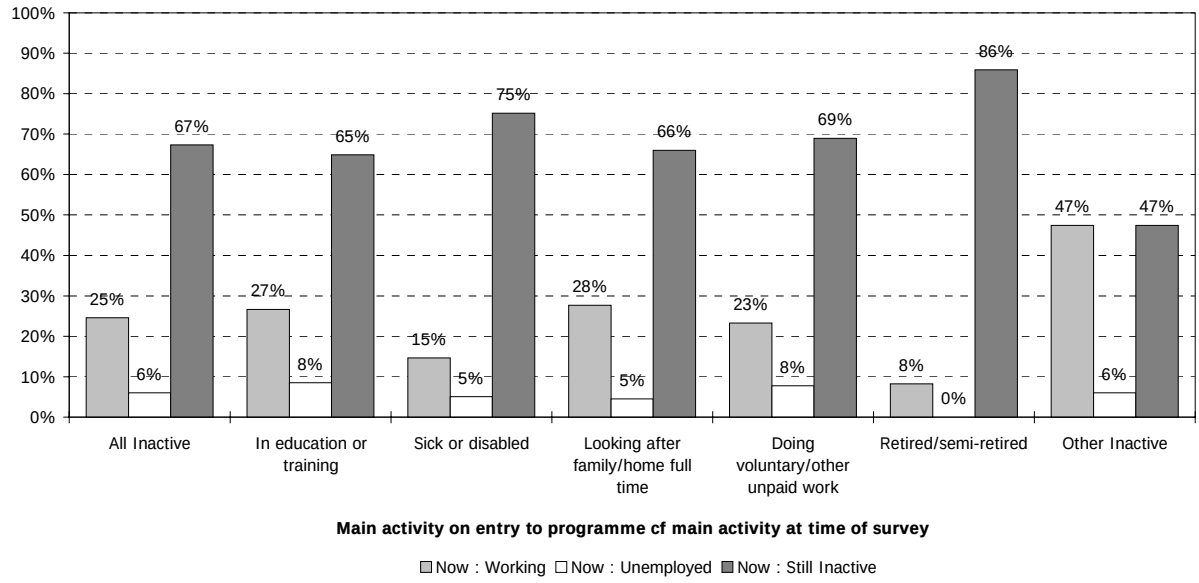
Both these facets of the programme are shown in part Figure 2.6a, which show first of all the representation of all inactive beneficiaries in the programme (39 per cent), and then breaks this down into different categories of inactivity. We can see that being in education or training, and having full time caring responsibilities, each account for 12 per cent of all entrants, while a further nine per cent of entrants were prevented from working through having a disability or health problem. These three groups between them account for 80 per cent of all the inactive entrants, so that other categories of inactivity each account for very small proportions of entrants overall.

Figure 2.6a: Economically inactive entrants: circumstances on entry to projects



Base: All respondents; N = 3,431

Figure 2.6b: Economically inactive entrants: at time of survey, by entry circumstance



Base: Those in each category when joining their project

2.13.1 Modest to poor volume of moves into work

The second part of the figure, Figure 2.6b, looks at what these inactive entrants were doing by the time of the survey. It indicates the split between the three main activity groupings at the time of the survey; *ie* in paid work, unemployed but actively seeking work, and inactive. Among the inactive entrants as a whole, we can see that just a quarter of them have moved into paid employment, and a further six per cent now regarded themselves as unemployed but looking for work. This leaves over two-thirds of them still inactive.

Among the sub-groups of inactive entrants, those who seem to be the most successful job-getters were those categorised as 'other inactive', although we should note that the actual numbers in this category were small. Still, almost half of them had moved into work by the time of the survey, and this probably has a lot to do with their semi-transitional entry status (*eg* on holiday, moving house, taking a break, *etc.*).

Among those with perhaps a more fixed reason for being economically inactive, far fewer had gained jobs, although about a quarter of each of the two biggest groups (education/training and looking after family/home) had successfully taken up work, as had roughly the same proportion of those previously doing voluntary work.

The programme had been less helpful in helping people with a disability or health problem into employment; only 15 per cent of them had taken jobs, and the vast majority (80 per cent) remained inactive, giving their disability/health condition as the reason for it. Among the small sub-group of people who had come to regard themselves as retired or semi-retired, the programme had had even worse job results; here only nine per cent had been encouraged to get back to work by the time of the survey.

2.13.2 Improved qualifications and enhanced employability

In terms of improved qualifications, although the inactive had fewer to start with, they were just as likely to gain them through the programme as any other sub-group. Similarly, they were equally likely to report that they had improved the skills they would need, and more likely to say that their self-confidence had developed.

In short, they gained as much, but no more, from these softer and non-job aspects of the programme, than did any other group of entrants. Although they were not quite so generally satisfied with the programme as the working entrants, they nevertheless reported very high levels of satisfaction with it, and were no more likely to have left it early than was the average beneficiary.

2.13.3 Distance travelled

In both respects, proximity to a job and general employability at the outset, this group of entrants was starting from a low base; certainly a lower one than the employed entrants whom we discuss next. If they were not particularly successful in absolute terms, we have already considered above how successful they were relative to those with more promising prospects when they joined the programme.

2.14 What has happened to employed entrants?

As we have seen, beneficiaries already in work when they entered the programme account for a substantial proportion (37 per cent) of entrants, rising to 51, 70 and 45 per cent respectively in Policy Fields 3, 4 and 5.

However, when they left the programme, employment rates had fallen (to 84 per cent), although by the time of the survey they had crept back up to 88 per cent. Of course, we should note that from 100 per cent at the time of entry, we could hardly have expected them to have risen.

Clearly, what these entrants are getting out of the programme is not entry to a job, so for them positive outcomes may be:

- better qualifications
- a more secure job
- a better paying job (in terms of full-time hours)
- a different, presumably better, job

It is worth looking to see exactly what they have been getting.

2.14.1 Qualification gains

This group held better-than-average qualifications before joining the programme; with only 13 per cent of them wholly unqualified, and a quarter of them qualified to NVQ4 or equivalent level.

More than half of them did gain a qualification through the course (55 per cent), but this was not significantly higher than any of the other groups of entrant, and was exactly average for all beneficiaries (55 per cent).

Neither was the level of qualification gained much higher than for the other groups; although we were only able to identify qualifications gained among about half of the respondents, 14 per cent of employed entrants gained qualification at NVQ or equivalent Level 1 or 2, compared with 15 per cent of all entrants.

2.14.2 More secure job

Eighty-seven per cent of employed entrants (excluding here the self employed) had been on permanent contracts of employment when they joined the programme. Long job tenures were the exception to the rule, however, with fewer than a third having held their (then) job for more than five years.

Among *this* group, we observed virtually no change in the likelihood of their having a permanent job by the time of the survey. Although we do not, of course, know whether the fact of their having taken part in the course would make employers more unwilling to lay them off, what we can say is that there is no evidence here to suggest that employed entrants had used the programme to move into more overtly secure jobs.

However, among those who had taken up work, the proportion with permanent jobs was much lower; only about half of them had got a permanent job.

2.14.3 More substantial jobs (part time to full time)

Moving to a full-time job could bring considerable further benefits to programme participants. In addition to the increased income, they might enjoy a wider choice of job types (because of the occupational skew of part-time jobs), they might have access to better promotion or training opportunities (because of employer discrimination in these respects against part-time workers), they would enjoy better legal protection at work, and so on.

Among those working when they started the course, exactly half were working on a full-time basis. a year before that, the proportion had been 47 per cent. By the time of the survey, and still focusing on those in work when they had entered, the proportion working full time was still 49 per cent.

This suggests that the course had helped working entrants to increase their hours and to move into full-time jobs when they had completed it.

It is interesting to note at the same time that among those unemployed on entry and working at the time of the survey, fully 59 per cent were working full time. Among those making the move from inactivity, this proportion was lower (at 36 per cent), but nevertheless, taking these two groups together, we note that the incidence of full-time working among them (at 47 per cent) was about as high as it had been among those working when they joined the programme. There is no sense then that job gains have been secured through angling previously non-working beneficiaries disproportionately towards part-time jobs.

2.14.4 Better jobs (occupational shift)

We did not collect data on earnings or pay rates in this survey due to time constraints in the questionnaire. Thus, our only indicator of ‘good’ in job terms is to look at the job types or occupations among those working, before and after the programme.

Those who had taken up jobs after the programme were well distributed across the different occupational groups. By contrast with those already in work there was an evident bias towards entry into elementary occupations, and away from professional and managerial ones, but this was not extreme and there was no strong sense from these results that new job entry was being achieved by allowing beneficiaries to aim or drift downmarket into significantly less skilled or demanding occupational groups than the employed-on-entry cohort had occupied.

Similarly, among those taking up jobs after the programme, there is a higher rate of temporary or casual employment than there had been among those who were employed before it. However, this may equally reflect their status as new entrants to the labour market as it does any predilection on the part of the projects to push them in this direction.

Turning to those already working when they joined the projects, the results do not show any marked improvement in their occupational status, although it may be that some small scale improvements have been made which simply do not show up at the level of aggregation which we have used in this report. However, this seems unlikely because job moves among the employed entrants had not been widespread. Thus, two-thirds of those who were working on entry and were still doing so at the time of the survey, were working in the same job with the same employer.

2.15 How far have projects aligned with, and added value to, national employment policy priorities?

At the broadest level, the key objectives of employment policy in the UK remain today what they were at the end of 2002, when our respondents were leaving their projects. They are to encourage a stronger, more stable economy, to promote a fairer society, through extending the opportunity to work, and to support those who cannot work more satisfactorily. Economic growth, rising productivity and expanding employment opportunities are the means to these ends.

This strategy was presented in the Green *Paper 'Towards Full Employment in a Modern Society'*, and in *'The Changing Welfare State: Employment Opportunity for All'*, which sets out action to help and support many of the, approximately, four million people of working age who were then not in the labour market but would like to work.

It is given more concrete form in the UK Employment Action Plan 2002, which comprises of a set of strategic goals for the short and medium term that direct and measure the action which is needed to achieve employment opportunities for all. These are:

To ensure by 2004:

- a reduction in the number of households with children and with no-one in work
- a continued reduction in the number of unemployed people over 18 years old, taking account of the economic cycle
- improved literacy and numeracy skills for 750,000, and
- the gap in employment rates is closed for the over 50s, ethnic minorities, disabled people and other disadvantaged groups and areas.

To ensure by 2010:

- a higher percentage of people in employment than ever before — taking account of the economic cycle, at least three-quarters of people of working age in work
- an increase to 70 per cent in the proportion of lone parents (95 per cent of whom are women) in work
- a majority of young people going on to university or further education, and
- a halving of child poverty, on the way to eradicating it within 20 years.

2.15.1 Policy priorities and ESF Objective 3

It would be wrong to expect projects supported by ESF to contribute across the entire spectrum of UK employment strategy. Nevertheless, it should certainly *align with* and *add value to* the key domestic policies and programmes which have the main task of taking it forward, and this is discussed below.

At the same time we should note that a survey of project leavers hardly amounts to a full assessment of what these projects, and the programme supporting them, have been up to. It can, however, throw some useful light on the contributions which seem to have been made.

Looking at the more directly employment- and skills-related aspects of the strategy, the contribution of these projects appears to have been mainly focused through three key agendas, which we discuss in turn, assessing in what ways our results can illustrate that contribution.

2.15.2 Contributing to the employment agenda

The supply side of the Government's strategy for high volume employment turns on continuing to move people from welfare to work, targeting extra support on people facing the most serious barriers to work, and making work pay. It has introduced a wide range of measures in each of these areas:

1. Welfare to work: reducing *generalised* structural unemployment through the New Deal programmes for the long-term *unemployed*. Additionally, launching Jobcentre Plus to extend an active, job-brokering service to all working age benefit recipients.
2. Addressing *specific* concentrations of *inactive* people through focussed programmes (*eg* for lone parents, disabled people, *etc.)*.

The research reported here suggests that ESF Objective 3 projects align with, and contribute to, this agenda in the following ways:

- **A numerical emphasis on non-working individuals**. Sixty per cent of the entrants to these projects were not working when they joined, and this rises to three-quarters in the two Policy Fields (1 and 2) most focused on unemployed entrants and social inclusion. These two Policy Fields together account for nearly half of all the leavers.
- **A focus on long-term absence from the labour market**. Fully 35 per cent of entrants had either never worked (14 per cent) or had not done so in the past two years (20 per cent).
- **Delivering activities relevant to finding work**. Nearly two-thirds of all entrants had received practical help in finding a job, and this increased to 81 per cent among the unemployed entrants. More broadly, about half of all entrants had received advice and guidance about their careers, job or training prospects.
- **Delivering activities perceived to be helpful in finding work.** Among those who had not been working when they entered the course and who were in work at the time of the survey, 55% said that the things they did on the course had been useful in getting their job.
- **Job outcomes show a substantial and continuing shift of status among respondents towards paid employment.** Employment increased sharply among beneficiaries when they left their projects, increasing by a full ten percentage points over the situation when they joined. Furthermore, they went on to increase in the months after leaving the project, so that the 37 per cent employment rate among entrants had risen to 53 per cent at the time of the survey.
- **Enhanced employability among those not working at the time of the survey.** Among those not working, both on joining the project and at the time of the survey, virtually four-fifths said that they were more confident now anyway about getting a job eventually.

2.15.3 Contributing to the skills and productivity agenda

A policy objective, parallel to the employment agenda, simultaneously aims to raise the *quality* of employment through increased productivity, improved skills among both the employed and entrants to the labour market, and more effective regulation.

The National Skills Strategy aims to maximise the contribution of skills to raising productivity, economic competitiveness and sustainable employment. Public policy emphasises the supply-side view that improved skills are critical to the aim of its becoming a high value-added knowledge-based economy. Thus, public initiatives have centred on three broad priorities: improving participation in education at all levels, promoting lifelong learning to extend these skill gains throughout life, improved responsiveness to the volume and quality of skill demand.

The research reported here suggests that ESF Objective 3 projects align with, and contribute to this agenda in the following ways:

- **General recruitment criteria have oriented the projects towards entrants with low human capital**. Two in three of the entrants had no or low skill (or qualification or work experience) assets, with which to compete effectively in the labour market.
- **Widespread provision of generic skills needed at the workplace**. Bearing in mind that 35 per cent of beneficiaries had either never been in work, or had not worked in the past two years, still overall 88 per cent said that they had been helped to improve the skills they would need at work.
- **Strong vocational-focus in training provided**. Sixty-one per cent of beneficiaries said that they had been helped to improve their practical skills related to a *particular job.*
- **Widespread qualification gains.** Fifty-five per cent of all the beneficiaries gained a full qualification of some sort. Among those who had no qualifications at the outset, still 53 per cent succeeded in gaining one through their course.
- **Targeting basic skills problems.** The projects had successfully targeted people with basic skills problems, with 12 per cent of entrants saying that their reading, writing or maths was not good enough. Over half of them gained a qualification through taking part in the programme.

2.15.4 Contributing to the equality agenda

Here the policy aim is to increase opportunities for disadvantaged groups in society, particularly in the labour market through improving both the quality and quantity of participation in work, and through reducing barriers to such participation.

Women, minority ethnic groups, disabled people and people effected by age discrimination are key groups of *individuals* prioritised here, while a complementary focus on particular *barriers to participation* has similarly centred on basic skills problems, childcare, constraints faced by lone parents, *etc.*

The research reported here suggests that ESF Objective 3 projects align with, and contribute to this agenda in the following ways:

- **Targeted entry criteria enabled projects to recruit successfully from specific disadvantaged groups**. In addition to the high proportions of unemployed/inactive and unqualified entrants mentioned above, there were high proportions of entrants from specific groups with high priority for public policy. For example, participation has been strong:

- among women (60 per cent of beneficiaries)
- among older people (21 per cent over 50) and the young (27 per cent under 25)
- among those with health problems or disabilities (comprising 18 per cent)
- among those from minority ethnic groups (14 per cent)
- among lone parents (ten per cent)
- among people with basic skills problems (12 per cent, as mentioned above), and
- among people returning to the labour market after long periods doing something else (nine per cent).

- **Clear and strong focus on multiple disadvantage.** Almost a fifth of entrants were held back by three or more specific labour market disadvantages.
- **Disproportionate employment gains among the disadvantaged.** Taking into account their low initial employment rates, the programme has been disproportionately successful in helping the most disadvantaged find work.
- **Disproportionate qualification gains among the disadvantaged.** Similarly, the programme has been most successful in increasing the spread of qualifications among the most disadvantaged groups among beneficiaries.

2.16 How far has the programme reflected different local circumstances?

A further way in which the programme has contributed to UK public employment policy is through being sensitive to different regional needs and conditions. There are considerable inter-regional differences in LFS unemployment rates, reflecting high and sustained differences in the buoyancy of regional labour markets. We might expect that ESF projects would reflect this in their orientation towards entrants who were without work. In effect, we might expect that where unemployment was highest we would find the programme leaning more heavily towards such jobless entrants, *and vice versa*.

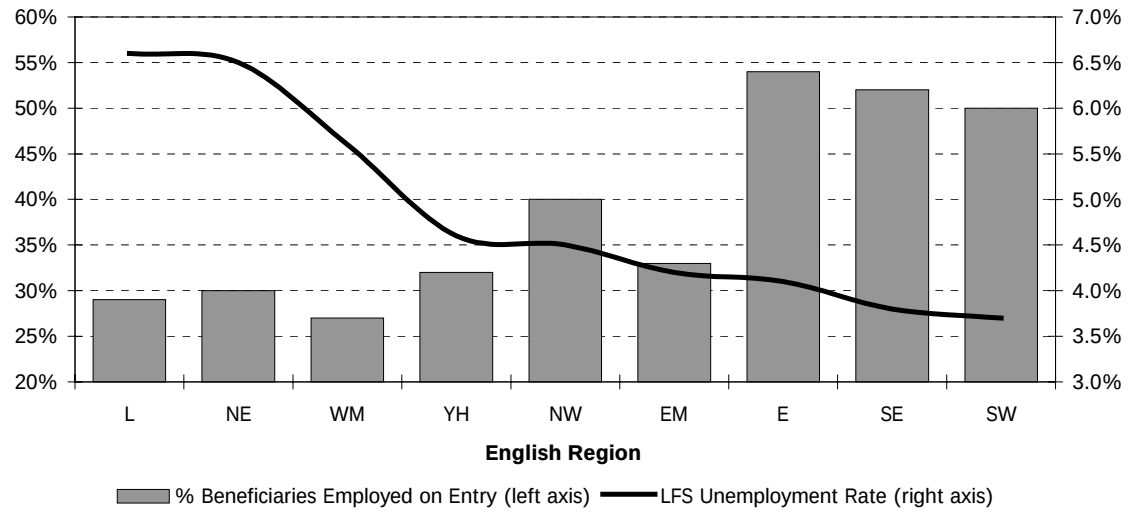
In Figure 2.7, we have sorted the regions by their LFS unemployment rates at the end of 2002, and then shown the proportion of project entrants in each region who said that they had been working when they joined up. As the unemployment line slopes *down* to the right, we might expect that the blocks showing entry status would slope *up* to the right, with less emphasis on non-working entrants where unemployment was less of a problem.

As the figure shows, this is broadly the case, indicating that the proportion of employed entrants is *generally* lowest where unemployment and inactivity are highest. This indicates that the broad strategic thrust of the programme is broadly in line with regional variation in the buoyancy of regional labour markets.

In addition, we can see that the focus on employed entrants is *much less* in those areas with the highest unemployment rates; this suggests that any 'natural selection' effect (*ie* there are more unemployed people around in region x, and so they would show up more often if entry was simply left to chance) is not a sufficient explanation for this variation. Rather, it suggests a positive and deliberate orientation towards those without jobs where unemployment and inactivity are worst, and *vice versa*.

The alignment between joblessness and entry characteristics is quite uneven, however. It would seem that some regions have a rather lower intake of employed entrants than their unemployment rate would suggest when compared to the others (*ie* the East Midlands), while in others (*ie* the Eastern Region) the reverse is the case, with a higher intake of employed people than the regional unemployment rate would suggest.

Figure 2.7: Employed entrants to projects, by regional unemployment rate



Source: LFS Nov. 2002-Jan.2003, seasonally adjusted, plus beneficiary data from survey

Part 3: Report of Survey

3. The Characteristics of Beneficiaries

This chapter explores the characteristics of the beneficiaries of projects supported by ESF in England. It looks in turn at a series of individual characteristics which are important both for assessing the targeting of ESF support, and for influencing provision and outcomes. It moves on to consider how such characteristics may overlap and give rise to multiple, perhaps cumulative, disadvantage. Finally, it sets out the various Policy Fields within which the projects in which they took part were supported by ESF.

3.1 Introduction

This chapter establishes a number of key characteristics of beneficiaries, and uses them to provide a picture of the kinds of people who have been taking part in ESF projects. It does so with two aims in mind. Firstly, it aims to consider the extent to which these projects have in fact been reaching ESF priority groups. These include people who are long-term unemployed, people with multiple barriers to labour market entry, adults who have difficulty with literacy and numeracy, and people with few or no marketable skills. In addition, in drawing individuals into projects, ESF programmes have important cross-cutting equal opportunity objectives, and the diversity reflected in the beneficiaries will show the extent to which these are being met.

Secondly, the extent and character of the difficulties faced by beneficiaries will influence, to a considerable extent, both the kind of support they receive and the subsequent labour market outcomes which they experience. Subsequent chapters will be looking at both these inputs and the associated outcomes, and how these differ between different groups of beneficiary. The analysis presented in this chapter will therefore begin to set the scene for these later chapters by setting out clearly the pattern of participation as it varies between these groups.

The principal characteristics considered in this chapter are:

- gender
- age
- employment status on entry to the project
- duration of prior unemployment
- lone parenthood
- having current family care responsibilities
- qualifications held
- returning to work after an absence from the labour market
- belonging to a minority ethnic group
- having a disability or health problem
- English not being the main language spoken in the home.

Of course, these categories are not mutually exclusive, and individual beneficiaries may find themselves disadvantaged in the labour market under a number of different characteristics. Therefore the chapter will go on to consider the extent of multiple disadvantage among the sample.

3.2 Gender and age

Although variations occur across the economic cycle, it is generally the case that the young and older people tend to have a higher risk of unemployment relative to those in the middle years of their working lives. Background research for the 1997-99 Objective 3 Regional Development Plan (RDP) indicated that rates could be anything up to 50 per cent higher for these groups depending on circumstances. There is also some indication that the rate of unemployment among the over 50s may be masked by individuals retiring early, withdrawing from the labour market due to a perceived lack of opportunity, or from being channelled into sickness-related benefit.

The constraints placed on individuals through gender stereotyping may impose a number of barriers to the promotion of economic inclusion and may serve to further entrench exclusion in certain circumstances. Attempts have been made over many years to encourage greater gender equality in the workforce and in the expansion of economic opportunity. It is evident, however, that there remains a significant distance to travel, and this is recognised within ESF, not only by the focusing of Policy Field 5 particularly on women, but also by the inclusion of a strong horizontal theme of equal opportunity across the whole programme.

Table 3.1 shows the composition of the weighted sample by age and gender.

Here we can see that women account for 60 per cent of all the leavers surveyed. This compares with a figure of 56 per cent among Objective 3 leavers in England in the previous, and with 51 per cent in the year before that (although this last percentage was for Objective 3 leavers in the UK as a whole, rather than just England). Furthermore, it is evident, although not shown in Table 3.1, that this representation of women within the projects extends across all five Policy Fields, and does not result just from the concentration on women of Policy Field 5. The participation of women within each Policy Field is considered further in Chapter 6, but for now we note that women comprise the majority of beneficiaries in four of the five fields, as follows:

- PF 1: 50 per cent
- PF 2: 62 per cent
- PF 3: 60 per cent
- PF 4: 54 per cent
- PF 5: 97 per cent

Table 3.1: Age group of beneficiaries, by gender

	Men Row %	**Women Row %**	**Total**
All	39	60	
By Age	**Column %**	**Column %**	**Column %**
< 18	10	7	8
18-24	23	16	19
25-34	18	20	19
35-49	27	35	31
50+	21	20	21
Base	*1,322*	*2,074*	*3,431*

Base: All beneficiaries who gave an answer

Before moving on, it is worth reiterating that for reasons of simplicity in presentation, we have not included any 'don't know' or 'declined to answer' categories in the tables in this report, unless the number involved was substantial. Almost invariably a few respondents fail to answer some questions. For example, in the Table above, some 46 respondents declined to give their age, and we were unable to establish their gender in 35 cases.

It seems that the strong representation of women among beneficiaries reflects a combination of both the strong cross-cutting equal opportunities theme in all the fields, plus the exclusive focus of Policy Field 5 on women. However, we must also take into account the tendency for women to respond more readily than men to this kind of survey, and the possible differences in the readiness to provide sample for the survey between projects in the different Policy Fields.

Table 3.1 also shows that the projects have attracted beneficiaries from across the age spectrum. Just under a quarter (23 per cent) were aged under 25 at the time of the survey, and fully a fifth were aged over 50. The average age among beneficiaries was 36, and it only fell significantly (to 29) in Policy Field 1, reflecting the age composition of the unemployed cohort on which this field concentrates.

It is evident that a small, but significant, proportion of leavers are aged under 18, and in view of the long-term consequences on individuals of their early labour market experiences (particularly where these involve extended periods of inactivity and unemployment), then this is strong evidence of the social inclusion objectives of the programme in operation. These very young beneficiaries were found to be almost exclusively in projects supported under Policy Fields 1 and 2.

Table 3.1 also shows that the age profile was broadly similar between male and female beneficiaries, although the male age profile was somewhat skewed towards younger beneficiaries. This probably reflects the focus of some projects towards women returners, often in their 30s and 40s, and the greater representation of males among the younger unemployed age groups.

3.3 Employment status before joining the project

Respondents were asked about what they had been doing before they joined the project, for two reasons. Firstly, the previous status of beneficiaries seems to be an important criterion, both in considering the kinds of courses/activities which they undertook while taking part in the programme, and in assessing outcomes. In this light, it will be seen in the chapters which follow that 'entry status' is used as a key variable in analysing the different experiences and trajectories of individual beneficiaries. However, secondly, as well as distinguishing between different kinds of beneficiary, previous status can also offer some insight into the different routes through which individuals joined their projects. To this end, respondents were asked what they had been doing, both a year before they joined the programme, and also in the week immediately before entry. In both cases, we asked simply for their main activity at that time, *ie* the one which took up most of their time.

The results are shown in Table 3.2, distinguishing between these two points in time, and within each, by gender. At the bottom of the table, summary categories are shown, which group together these different activities; 'in paid work' includes all forms of employment, including self employment. 'Unemployed' is taken narrowly to indicate those receiving JSA and actively seeking work, while 'inactive' includes all the other categories.

Table 3.2: Employment status one year and one week before joining the project, by gender

	One year before			One week before		
	Men %	**Women %**	**Total %**	**Men %**	**Women %**	**Total %**
Full-time paid work	34	19	25	23	16	18
Part-time paid work	5	16	12	7	18	14
Self employed	4	4	4	5	5	5
Unemployed actively seeking work	13	7	9	30	15	21
Education or training	26	23	24	13	11	12
Not working due to sickness or disability	9	6	7	9	7	8
Looking after home or family full time	2	17	11	2	18	12
Voluntary or other unpaid work, full or part time	2	3	3	3	3	3
Something else	4	4	4	8	6	6
In paid work	43	39	41	35	39	37
Unemployed	13	7	9	31	15	21
Inactive	43	53	49	31	43	38
Base	*1,322*	*2,074*	*3,431*	*1,322*	*2,074*	*3,431*

Base: All beneficiaries who gave an answer

3.3.1 Twelve months before entry

Looking first at the year before entry, we can see that only a small minority of the respondents had been formally unemployed (nine per cent), although this was somewhat higher among the men. Otherwise, they were split fairly evenly between work (41 per cent) and inactivity (49 per cent).

Full-time working was most common for those in work, although a substantial minority (12 per cent) had worked part time, and as we might expect, this had been most common among women (16 per cent). Self employment had been restricted to a small minority of four per cent.

With 41 per cent of beneficiaries having been in work a year before joining the programme, the second largest group, at 24 per cent, had been in education or training. Although not shown in Table 3.2, the results indicate that this group was predominantly made up of young people. Thus, as we might expect, almost all the under 18s had been in education or training a year before joining, but so too had 55 per cent of the 18 to 24 age group. Altogether, the under 25s account for three-quarters of those previously in education or training. There was little difference between men and women in this respect.

Among the remainder of those who had been inactive a year before entry, full-time domestic and caring commitments were most common, at 11 per cent, for the sample as a whole, and rising to 17 per cent among women, and to around the same level (not shown in table) for those aged 25 to 49.

We note that a substantial minority of beneficiaries (seven per cent) had not been working at that time due to sickness or disability. Among the four per cent who had been doing ‘something else’, there was a wide range of activities, but the most common was ‘retired/semi-retired’ among some two per cent of the sample, but accounting for fully a tenth of those aged over 50.

3.3.2 On entry

The composition of the sample had changed quite dramatically by the time they came to join the project. Most obviously, the proportion who were unemployed had more than doubled to 21 per cent, while the

proportion of those in work had fallen slightly. The proportion of those in inactivity had fallen more markedly to 38 per cent.

We consider the main transitions involved here below, but for the moment, looking at the composition of the sample as they joined the programme, we note that over a third (37 per cent) of beneficiaries had been working when they entered, with full-time and part-time working now accounting for about the same proportion (18 and 14 per cent respectively). The proportion in self employment remained low, at five per cent.

Taking all those working as a single group, the second largest group of entrants is now the unemployed (at 21 per cent), and among the men this accounts for fully 31 per cent of them.

The proportion in education and training has now shrunk considerably, to just 12 per cent, and this group remains predominantly made up of young people. with little difference between men and women in this respect.

Among the remainder of those who were inactive on entry, full-time domestic and caring commitments were still the most common, at 12 per cent for the sample as a whole, again rising to 18 per cent among women.

The substantial minority of beneficiaries who had not been working at that time due to sickness or disability remained unchanged, at eight per cent.

Finally, the proportion doing 'something else' had increased to around eight per cent, but this seems to represent a more detailed recall of the circumstances at that point, rather than a very different pattern of activity.

3.3.3 Transitions in the year before entry

Turning now to consider the transitions in the year before entry, Table 3.3 looks at the three main status groups 12 months before joining, and shows how each had changed by the time beneficiaries came to join the projects.

We can see that the unemployed group was the most stable, with fully 82 per cent of those unemployed a year earlier still unemployed on entry. Even worse, only seven per cent of them had actually entered work, the rest seem to have simply given up on job search and become inactive.

There are some positive moved to be noted, however. Looking at the previously inactive group, we can see that fully a quarter of them (26 per cent) had moved closer to the labour market, with 13 per cent of them starting to look for work, and a further 13 per cent actually finding it.

Among the previously employed, three-quarters had kept in work, but 25 per cent had left it; with 17 per cent becoming unemployed, and eight per cent becoming inactive.

Table 3.3: Comparison of employment status one year and one week before joining the project

	Employed on entry Row %	**Unemployed on entry Row %**	**Inactive on entry Row %**
In paid work a year previously	**74**	17	8
Unemployed a year previously	7	82	8
Inactive a year previously	13	13	71
Base	*1,275*	*714*	*1,322*

Base: All beneficiaries who gave an answer

3.4 Duration of prior unemployment

It is clear, then, that although a substantial minority of these beneficiaries (37 per cent) had been working when they had entered the programme, the threat or experience of unemployment and inactivity was a very real one for many of them. As we have seen, in addition to the 60 per cent who were not working when they joined the programme, another seven per cent had experienced worklessness in the year before joining. Even though we have observed a modest flow into employment among these individuals, it remains the case that for many of them, inability to find or to take work must have been a fairly long-term experience.

Table 3.4 looks at this 60 per cent who had not been working when they joined the programme, and considers how long it had been since they had worked.

Some 20 per cent of those not working when they joined the programme had done so within the previous six months, and a further seven per cent within the previous year. This tendency was more marked among men than women, however, and among the over 18 age group, it declined with age. Thus, while Table 3.4 confirms that there was a modest movement between worklessness and work within the sample, there remains a substantial number of beneficiaries who had not worked for considerable lengths of time before joining their project. A third (32 per cent) of those not working on entry had not worked for at least two years previously, and nearly a quarter had never done so.

As we might expect, the proportion of those who have never worked falls with age, as the opportunity to do so increases. Nevertheless, even among the prime age group (25 to 49) some 12 per cent of those not then working had never done so, and for a further 42 per cent it had been two years or more since they had worked.

In using this aspect of beneficiaries' characteristics to inform our further analysis, we have devised a single variable 'long-term unemployed/inactive' which denotes the beneficiaries' circumstances on entry to the programme. To align with previous research, this has been estimated to include those unemployed/inactive for six months or more among the under 25 age group, and those unemployed/inactive for a year or more among the rest. Some 27 per cent of the sample fall into this category, which is used in the rest of this report in discussion of duration of unemployment/inactivity.

Table 3.4: Length of time since last worked, by age and gender

	< 18 %	**18-24 %**	**25-34 %**	**35-49 %**	**50+ %**	**Men %**	**Women %**	**Total %**
Less than three months	15	18	15	14	9	16	13	14
At least three months but less than six months	5	6	5	8	8	8	5	6
At least six months but less than a year	3	8	11	7	7	10	6	7
At least a year but less than two years	1	10	10	10	12	11	9	9
Two years or more	1	6	35	47	54	23	39	32
Never worked	66	41	16	8	4	23	23	23
Don't know	3	2	1	*	*	2	1	1
Base	*252*	*453*	*399*	*571*	*452*	*858*	*1,274*	*2,156*

Base: All those not working when entered project, and who gave an answer (=<0.5%)*

3.5 Lone parenthood

Lone parenthood appears to be correlated with low participation rates, and severe barriers to re-entering the labour market. As a result, it correlates too with unemployment and the probability of becoming, and remaining, unemployed. As with many of the other disadvantaged groups, lone parents may therefore be associated with a multitude of other 'barriers' to employment.

Lone parents were identified by asking whether respondents lived with a wife, husband or partner, and whether or not they had any children for whose care and/or support they were responsible. Table 3.5 shows the results.

We can see that just over half our sample were not living with a spouse or partner, and that just over a third (again, of the whole sample) were responsible for the care or support of at least one child. For the most part, of course, these groups did not overlap; most of those responsible for the care of children were also living with a spouse or partner. Nevertheless, single parents accounted for one in ten of the full sample.

Table 3.5: Lone parents, by age and gender, compared with whole sample

	< 18 %	**18-24 %**	**25-34 %**	**35-49 %**	**50+ %**	**Men %**	**Women %**	**Total %**
Not living with wife, husband or partner	95	82	53	35	31	60	46	52
Responsible for care or support of child	2	13	46	65	16	22	45	36
Lone parent	1	6	15	15	3	4	13	10
Row %s	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
Lone parent	1	11	31	49	7	16	83	100
Whole sample	8	19	19	31	21	39	60	100
Base	*285*	*651*	*663*	*1,080*	*707*	*1,336*	*2,061*	*3,431*

Base: All those who gave an answer

As the row percentages at the bottom of Table 3.5 show, single parenthood was largely, but not exclusively, confined to the women beneficiaries, with 83 per cent of the single parents being female.

3.6 Having current care responsibilities

Whatever their family circumstances, all respondents were asked whether their daily activities or ability to work were limited by any caring responsibilities which they might have for children, family members, friends, neighbours or others.

Table 3.6 shows that a quarter of the sample had domestic or family responsibilities which impeded their ability to work; this applied to about a third of the women (35 per cent) and one in ten of the men. Furthermore, these caring responsibilities were most strongly concentrated among the mid-age beneficiaries, with just over a third of those aged between 25 and 49 reporting them.

This is entirely consistent with the age and gender characteristics of the carers themselves, shown at the bottom of Table 3.6. Here we can see that more than eight out of ten of them were women, and that nearly three-quarters of them were aged between 25 and 49.

Table 3.6: Caring responsibilities, by age and gender, compared with whole sample

	< 18 %	18-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50+ %	Men %	Women %	Total %
Carer (as % of sample)	7	13	32	38	17	10	35	25
Row %s	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
Carer characteristics	2	10	25	48	14	15	84	100
Whole sample	8	19	19	31	21	39	60	100
Base	*285*	*651*	*663*	*1,080*	*707*	*1,322*	*2,074*	*3,431*

Base: All those who gave an answer

3.7 Qualifications held

It is well known that people with the poorest education and training experience generally do much less well in the labour market than their counterparts with more, and more relevant, qualifications. This is true across all indicators of labour market success, from lifetime earnings levels through to having a job at all.

Importantly, there exists a relatively well-proven inverse relationship between unemployment and qualifications. Treasury research shows that the jobless rate for those with no qualifications is double that for those with five or more GCSEs. For most adults, it is precisely through having a job that they secure access to training and the acquisition of further skills, as well, perhaps, as the means to finance it. Partly as a result, those with minimum initial education are consistently under-represented in the population of adult learners.

Those from unskilled and partly skilled groups can be anything up to three or four times more likely to suffer unemployment than those from professional occupations.

In order to assess the extent and levels of qualifications held, respondents were first asked whether or not they held any qualifications; if they did, they were asked what those qualifications were. The second question was asked as a multiple response question, with respondents invited to identify all their qualifications, rather than just the highest.

Subsequently, we allocated qualifications mentioned into an NVQ/SVQ equivalent. This did not always prove possible on the basis of the information provided by the respondent, but as Table 3.7 shows, we were able to identify and allocate all but six per cent of the responses.

The table shows that 23 per cent of respondents had no qualifications, and that this lack was most evident among the youngest (with 42 per cent of the under-18s being without qualification) and the oldest (31 per cent of those aged 50 and over being similarly without a qualification).

About a third of the sample were qualified to at least NVQ Level 3 (or equivalent), though again, this was much less marked at both ends of the age spectrum. Higher qualifications were much less common, but were not entirely absent; with 17 per cent of the sample qualified to at least NVQ Level 4 (or equivalent), and five per cent to Level 5 (or equivalent).

Table 3.7: Qualifications held, by age and gender; multiple response

	< 18 %	18-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50+ %	Men %	Women %	Total %
No qualifications	42	17	18	18	31	25	21	23
NVQ/SVQ Level 1 or equivalent	32	50	39	36	23	33	38	36
NVQ/SVQ Level 2 or equivalent	28	49	39	38	24	35	37	36
NVQ/SVQ Level 3 or equivalent	2	23	28	26	16	23	21	22
NVQ/SVQ Level 4 or equivalent	1	9	23	22	20	18	17	17
NVQ/SVQ Level 5 or equivalent	0	2	6	5	7	6	4	5
Other qualification	3	3	5	6	9	5	6	6
Base	*285*	*651*	*663*	*1,080*	*707*	*1,322*	*2,074*	*3,431*

Base: All those who gave an answer

3.8 Returning to work after an absence from the labour market

Individuals who were returning to work after a period during which they had not been seeking to work because of their domestic commitments were identified among the respondents. We defined them as 'returners' if they said that they had been looking after their home or family full time both one year before entering the project *and* were doing so when they entered it. Of course, this leaves open the possibility that some had had substantial breaks of less than one year, or that others had finished their spell away from the labour market some time before they joined the project. Nevertheless, within the constraints of the data available, this seems to us to be a reasonable proxy for such individuals.

Table 3.8 shows firstly the distribution of these 'returners' within the sample, and then the age and gender characteristics of the 'returner' cohort itself. Looking at the top of the table, we can see that 'returners comprise nine per cent of the sample, and they are much more prevalent among the female beneficiaries and among the middle age groups. In any age or gender group, however, they only ever make up a relatively small proportion of the whole. This is consistent with the lower part of the table which shows that 94 per cent of the 'returners' are women, and half of them are aged between 35 and 49.

Table 3.8: Returners to the labour market, by age and gender, compared with whole sample

	< 18 %	18-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50+ %	Men %	Women %	Total %
Returners (as % of sample)	1	4	15	14	5	1	14	9
Row %s	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
Returners' characteristics	1	9	30	47	12	5	95	100
Whole sample	8	19	19	31	21	39	60	100
Base	*285*	*651*	*663*	*1,080*	*707*	*1,322*	*2,074*	*3,431*

Base: All those who gave an answer

3.9 Belonging to a minority ethnic group

There is a significant body of evidence which demonstrates that ethnic minority groups face particular difficulties in accessing employment opportunities. Evidence from the LFS suggests that the effect of the economic cycle on employment rates is more pronounced for ethnic minorities than for other groups. It is also clear that ethnic minority unemployment rates can be significantly higher than those for whites, even after standardising for a range of personal and qualification characteristics, and that there exists substantial variation between individual ethnic minority groups.

Table 3.9: Self-reported ethnicity; all respondents

Ethnic group	%		%
British	80	Asian or Asian British: Iranian	*
White Irish	1	Asian or Asian British: Iraqi	*
White European	1	Asian or Asian British: Sri Lankan	*
Any other White background	1	Any other Asian background	*
		Black or Black British: Caribbean	2
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	1	Black or Black British: African	2
Mixed White and Black African	*	Any other Black background	*
Mixed White and Asian	*	Chinese	*
Asian or Asian British: Indian	2	Any other mixed background	*
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	3	Any other ethnic group	1
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	1	Refused to answer	2

Base: All respondents, N = 3,431 ** = less than 0.5 per cent*

Respondents were asked '*What is your ethnic group?*' and their self-reported ethnicity is shown in Table 3.9. Only two per cent of the sample declined to answer this question. We can see from the table that 83 per cent of the sample characterised themselves as white (including British, White Irish, White European, White Welsh, White Cypriot, White Scottish, White American and any other White background). In addition, altogether some 14 per cent belonged to a minority ethnic group (although for several of the constituent categories shown in the table, there were too few respondents to estimate a percentage).

We observe that although the gender balance within the minority ethnic groups is very similar to that for the sample as a whole, the age distribution is a much younger one among minority ethnic group members, with two-thirds of them aged under 35, compared with just 47 per cent in the sample as a whole.

Table 3.10: Minority ethnic group members, by age and gender, compared with whole sample

	< 18	18-24	25-34	35-49	50+	Men	Women	Total
	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
Minority ethnic group members	11	30	28	25	6	42	58	100
Whole sample	8	19	19	31	21	39	60	100
Base	*285*	*651*	*663*	*1,080*	*707*	*1,322*	*2,074*	*3,431*

Base: All those who gave an answer

3.10 Having a disability or health problem

The likelihood of having a long-term health problem or disability shows a clear direct relationship with age and regional variation, and also increases with age. The economic activity rate for disabled persons of working age is generally no more than half that of non-disabled persons and tends to fall away at a much earlier age. Unemployment among disabled people can be up to twice that of non-disabled people.

In order to assess the prevalence of disability or health problems among beneficiaries we used a simple self-reporting approach, asking them whether they had any long-term illness, health problem or disability which limited their daily activities or the work which they could do, including problems due to old age.

As the top half of Table 3.11 shows, nearly a fifth (18 per cent) of beneficiaries said that they did have some health problem or disability which was affecting them in this way, and acting as a constraint. Furthermore, we can see that the constraint increases consistently with age, and that men are somewhat more affected than women (despite the slightly younger age profile of the male cohort).

Within this group of beneficiaries, we can see at the bottom of Table 3.11 that 70 per cent of them are aged over 35.

Table 3.11: Disabled people and those with a health problem, by age and gender, compared with whole sample

	< 18 %	**18-24 %**	**25-34 %**	**35-49 %**	**50+ %**	**Men %**	**Women %**	**Total %**
Disabled or with health problem as % of sample	5	9	15	20	32	21	17	18
Row %s	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
Characteristics of disabled or with health problem	3	9	16	35	36	44	55	100
Whole sample	8	19	19	31	21	39	60	100
Base	*285*	*651*	*663*	*1,080*	*707*	*1,322*	*2,074*	*3,431*

Base: All those who gave an answer

3.11 English not being the main language spoken in the home

Although people may speak one language at home and a different one outside it without encountering any difficulty, it may be that domestic use of a different language from that typically used in the workplace may restrict individuals' ability to secure, and to progress at, work. Indeed, as we will discuss in the next chapter, we found that fully a third of respondents who did not typically speak English in the home felt that their understanding or use of English was not good enough for them to succeed in the labour market as they wished to.

For this reason, we sought information on the language which beneficiaries generally spoke at home, and found, as Table 3.12 shows, that 93 per cent spoke English. Some two per cent declined or were unable to answer this question. However, Bengali, Gujarati, Punjabi, Punjabi and Urdu, French, and Urdu were the main alternatives cited, although each was spoken by only one per cent of respondents.

As Table 3.12 shows, in no age or gender cohort does this use of another language in the home rise very much. However, it is in the households of those from an ethnic minority background where the domestic use of a different language is most common; among this cohort within the sample of beneficiaries (not shown in Table 3.12) fully a quarter of respondents do not typically speak English at home.

Table 3.12: Beneficiaries in whose homes English was not the main language, by age and gender, compared with whole sample

	< 18 %	18-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50+ %	Men %	Women %	Total %
English not main domestic language as % of sample	5	6	8	3	2	4	5	4
Row %s	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Characteristics of those not speaking English at home	8	25	32	23	8	36	62	100
Whole sample	8	19	19	31	21	39	60	100
Base	*285*	*651*	*663*	*1,080*	*707*	*1,322*	*2,074*	*3,431*

Base: All those who gave an answer

3.12 Poor basic skills

It is estimated that approximately seven million adults in the UK have difficulties with basic literacy and numeracy (*Skills for Life; The National Strategy for Improving Adult Literacy and Numeracy Skills*, DfES, 2001) and that one fifth of the adult population are functionally illiterate. A key target for DfES in relation to adult learning is to reduce by 750,000 the number of adults who have basic skills problems, by 2004.

It is well known that deficiencies of this kind have a profound impact on individuals' labour market participation, and the Moser Report (*A Fresh Start*, Basic Skills Agency, 1999) has shown that people with poor basic skills may be up to five times more likely to be unemployed or out of the labour market as a result. Furthermore, there exists a broad range of social research which correlates poor basic skills with many of the factors that lead to exclusion: for example, limited access to training if at work, limited prospects of advancement at work, low pay and poor employment-related benefits, poor physical and mental health, and, a higher propensity for females to leave the labour market for childcare reasons.

Although it is not entirely satisfactory to use self definition as the basis for indicating shortcomings in reading, writing, maths or communication skills, it is nevertheless the only indicator which we were able to include in the questionnaire. Respondents were asked whether they had found it difficult to find work, or get a better job, because their 'reading, writing or maths were not good enough'.

Table 3.13 shows that 12 per cent of beneficiaries reported these shortcomings with their basic skills — a proportion which declined consistently with age, from 18 per cent among the under 18s to just six per cent among those aged 50 and over.

Table 3.13: Beneficiaries who said that their reading, writing or maths were not good enough, by age and gender, compared with whole sample

	< 18 %	18-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50+ %	Men %	Women %	Total %
Basic skills problems as % of sample	18	16	12	10	6	13	11	12
Row %s	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Characteristics of those with basic skills problems	13	26	21	27	11	44	56	100
Whole sample	8	19	19	31	21	39	60	100
Base	*285*	*651*	*663*	*1,080*	*707*	*1,322*	*2,074*	*3,431*

Base: All those who gave an answer

Some 60 per cent of those reporting basic skills difficulties were aged under 35, compared with just 47 per cent of the sample. There were no comparable differences between men and women in this respect.

3.13 Living, or having lived, rough

In previous leavers surveys, this group was not separately identified nor addressed. However, homeless people face significantly different and higher barriers to finding employment and progressing at work than would otherwise similar people with more stable home bases. For this reason, we included a question asking respondents whether, in the year before they started the course, they had ever been homeless, slept rough or lived in a hostel.

We found that some three per cent of beneficiaries had been homeless or lived rough during this time. This seems too small a group to use in subsequent chapters in the analysis of different beneficiary experiences, but we can provide some details of the characteristics of the group here.

Homelessness among these beneficiaries does not seem to be associated with any obvious other demographic factor — they were spread fairly evenly across the age groups, and divided equally between men and women. They were much less likely to have been employed on entry to the programme, however, but not much more likely to have been long-term unemployed. They were relatively low skilled, with low resources of human capital (see below) but were no more likely to be wholly without qualification than beneficiaries in general.

We will look at the kinds of outcomes experienced on leaving their projects by this group in subsequent chapters.

3.14 Low human capital

It is important to recall that the different types of disadvantage which we have identified above are not necessarily experienced discretely by respondents. They may, in fact, be constrained by more than one of them, and they may be combined in particularly pernicious ways which greatly limit their labour market potential.

In order to assess the prevalence of multiple disadvantage among beneficiaries, we devised two indicators of such combined disadvantage. The first of these looks at combinations of factors which collectively restrict the individual to relatively unskilled jobs by virtue of restricting the skills and other attributes which he or she can offer to a potential employer. Although a lack of skill or qualification is at the core of this disadvantage, we have not restricted it so tightly. Rather, we have adopted the concept of ‘low human capital’ used by economists, and allocated our respondents to this group if they:

- had no qualifications when joining the project; or
- did not have the right qualifications, training or skills; or
- had basic skills problems, as discussed above; or
- their skills were out of date; or
- they had no recent experience of working; or
- their understanding of the English language was not good enough.

The key issue highlighted by this variable is that it focuses on the objective lack of bargaining power by individuals in a competitive labour market. It is not about restricted availability for work, or about employer discrimination against certain groups. Instead, it seeks to address the intrinsic employability of the group.

Table 3.14 shows that two-thirds of the beneficiaries had low human capital on these criteria. Men seem to be slightly less well provided than women, but the difference is small. It is more marked, however, that having human capital varies directly with age, and, as we might expect, it is the young who are most likely to demonstrate few resources of this kind. We can see that over three-quarters of the under 18 group have low human capital, compared with 59 per cent among those aged 50 and over.

Table 3.14: Beneficiaries with low human capital

	< 18 %	18-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50+ %	Men %	Women %	Total %
Low human capital	77	71	68	63	60	68	65	66
Row %s	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
LHC characteristics	10	20	20	30	19	40	59	100
Whole sample	8	19	19	31	21	39	60	100
Base	*285*	*651*	*663*	*1,080*	*707*	*1,322*	*2,074*	*3,431*

Base: All those who gave an answer

3.15 Multiple disadvantage

Our second indicator of combined disadvantage is defined rather more widely than low human capital. It simply looks at the cumulative incidence of a range of different disadvantage, which might arise from shortcomings of individuals, or from employer discrimination, or from some other factor. We have not sought to include every possible disadvantage in this variable, because we have sought comparability with the way this variable has been constructed in previous years. Consequently, we have not included gender or age, but have focused the variable instead on:

- having no qualifications on entry to the project
- being long-term unemployed (or inactive) on entry
- being a returner to the labour market after an absence of at least a year
- being a lone parent
- belonging to a minority ethnic group
- not speaking English as the main language in the home
- having a disability or health problem, and
- being a carer.

Table 3.15 sets out separate disadvantages, then the rest of the section goes on to look at multiples.

Table 3.15: Incidence of discrete labour market disadvantages among entire sample

	No Quals %	LTU/I %	Returners %	Lone Parents %	Min. Eth. Group %	Other Lang. %	Disability/ Health %	Carers %
All respondents	21	27	9	10	14	4	18	25
Base: 3,431	*733*	*922*	*316*	*330*	*466*	*154*	*620*	*855*

Base: All respondents who answered questions

Table 3.16 goes on to show how the incidence of multiple disadvantage varied across different age and gender groups within the sample as a whole.

Table 3.16: Incidence of multiple labour market disadvantages, by age and gender

	< 18 %	18-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50+ %	Men %	Women %	Total %
None of the cited disadvantages	45	46	31	28	28	40	29	34
One	36	27	23	26	28	29	25	27
Two	15	16	21	21	28	21	21	21
Three or more	4	11	25	25	17	10	24	19
Base	*285*	*651*	*663*	*1,080*	*707*	*1,322*	*2,074*	*3,431*

Base: All those who gave an answer

The first thing that Table 3.16 shows is that there is a wide range in the incidence of multiple disadvantage across the sample. More than a third of beneficiaries have experienced none of these constraints, whereas nearly a fifth (19 per cent) have experienced three or more of them.

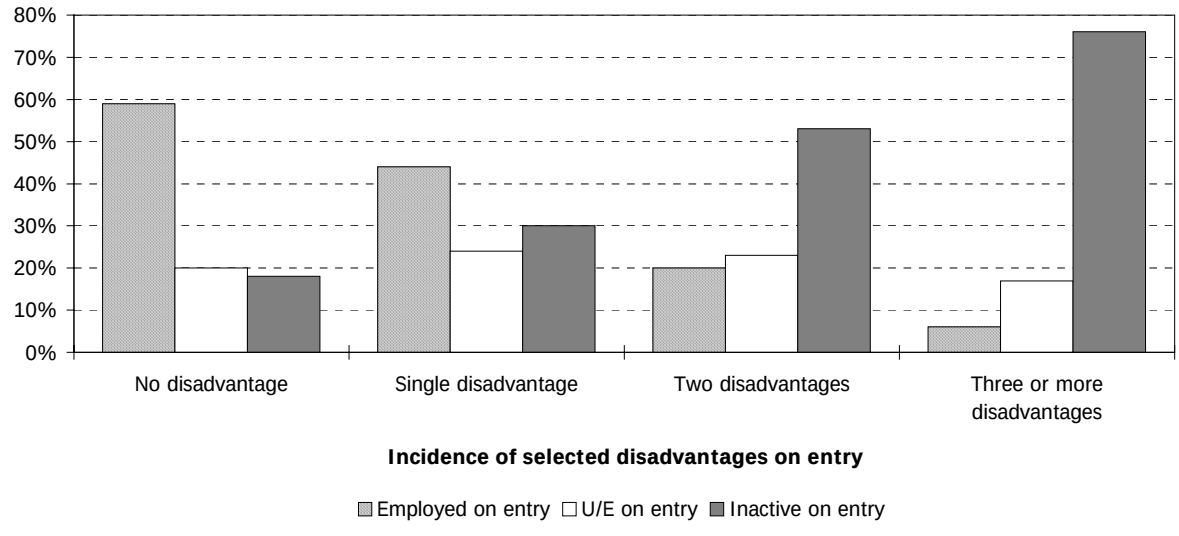
Secondly, the incidence of multiple disadvantage is much more strongly marked among the women in the sample, which is hardly surprising given what we have already shown about the gender distribution of lone parenthood, caring responsibilities, *etc.* Here, for example, we can see that nearly a quarter of the women (24 per cent) have experienced three or more of these disadvantages, in contrast to just ten per cent of the men. Conversely, 40 per cent of the men have experienced none of these disadvantages, compared with just 29 per cent of the women.

Thirdly, there is some variation with age in the distribution of multiple disadvantage. Generally speaking, older beneficiaries are more likely to have experienced none of them. However, some older beneficiaries are highly likely to have experienced multiple disadvantage, and this probably reflects the shifting incidence of the family/care based factors in middle age, and the sickness/disability ones in later life.

There is strong evidence from the data that these patterns of disadvantage are clearly associated with, and seem likely to have caused, significant variations in the employment status of individuals when they started the programme. Figure 3.1 shows this clearly.

We can see that the employment rate on entering the projects declines from nearly 60 per cent among those with none of these disadvantages to just seven per cent among those with three or more.

Figure 3.1: Beneficiaries' status on entry, by incidence of specified disadvantages



Source: 2002 Leavers Survey Data

Conversely, inactivity rises dramatically with the incidence of these disadvantages; from less than 20 per cent among those with none of these disadvantages to three-quarters of those with three or more.

3.16 Summary

Chapter 3 has reviewed the personal and other characteristics of the beneficiaries. It shows both a wide range and variety of different types of beneficiary, as well as some key factors which they have in common.

Firstly, the analysis shows how the programme has drawn in large numbers from the key groups of beneficiary in line with its targeting and focus, as expressed through the different Policy Fields and measures.

It shows that participation has been strong among women (who constitute 60 per cent of beneficiaries), among those at each end of the age spectrum (27 per cent were under 25 and 21 per cent aged 50 or more), among people without work (some 60 per cent of beneficiaries), among people experiencing long-term unemployment or inactivity (27 per cent), and among people without qualifications (21 per cent).

Moreover, it shows that more precise targeting has drawn in strong representation from various minority groups within the population. For example, those with health problems or disabilities (comprising 18 per cent of beneficiaries), those from ethnic minority groups (14 per cent), lone parents (ten per cent), people with basic skills problems (12 per cent), and people returning to the labour market after long periods doing something else (nine per cent).

Secondly, the analysis has shown that there is great variety within this group of beneficiaries. This is perhaps most clearly demonstrated by individuals' entry status, with some 37 per cent already employed at that time, compared with 39 per cent inactive and 21 per cent unemployed. Further, the difference between the circumstances (and consequently needs) of this 37 per cent in work and the 27 per cent (above) long-term unemployed/inactive, must be quite marked. In addition, although a fifth of beneficiaries held no qualification when joining the programme, some were quite well qualified, with five per cent qualified to NVQ Level 5, and a further 17 per cent to Level 4.

This variety is demonstrated too by the incidence of multiple disadvantages within the sample. Although the range of disadvantages considered is somewhat *ad hoc*, the chapter nevertheless shows that a substantial minority (34 per cent) actually suffered from none of them, while at the other end of the spectrum, 19 per cent were held back by three or more disadvantages.

Finally, and not withstanding these different circumstances and starting points within the sample, the analysis has demonstrated some important common features which confirm the broad focus of the programme on the needy and the disadvantaged. This is captured best by the combined variable, low human capital, which takes in a range of factors to focus on an underlying lack of competitiveness in the labour market among beneficiaries. The analysis shows that fully two-thirds of the sample were likely to be held back, and have their labour market opportunities constrained, by some combination of poor qualification, wrong or out-of-date skills, restricted work experience, *etc.* However, it is also demonstrated by a range of other factors which have (in their different ways) restricted individuals' ability to participate fully in the labour market. Thus, for example, the chapter has also shown that a quarter of the sample have continuing caring responsibilities, that close to a fifth are constrained by illness or disability, and so on. It is factors like this which lie behind the diversity within the sample, and which maintain the focus of the programme as a whole on the disadvantaged in society.

4. Experiences of ESF Support

This chapter considers beneficiaries' experiences while they took part in the ESF-supported project. It is important to remember that we are dealing here with retrospective assessments, and we might expect that responses would be somewhat eroded by time, and coloured by events which occurred subsequently. Nevertheless, with these caveats in mind, we consider in turn:

- the kind of projects which beneficiaries entered, in terms of the Policy Field under which they were funded
- beneficiary expectations about the project when they joined it
- their entry into the project, looking in turn at their daily journeys to join it, their appreciation that ESF was partly funding it, their understanding of the equal opportunities aspects of the project, and whether or not the project helped them to draw up a personal training plan
- the support and assistance received from the project. Here we look in turn at whether beneficiaries were helped in:
    - improving the skills they would need at work
    - building self-confidence and improving 'soft' skills at work; and
    - improving their job search skills and work experience.
- beneficiaries' retrospective evaluations of the project, in terms of:
    - how far provision had aligned with beneficiaries' expectations
    - whether provision had been pitched at the right level to help them participate; and
    - how satisfied they were with the overall quality of provision
- duration of participation in projects
- early leavers from projects.

4.1 What kind of projects did beneficiaries enter?

Our knowledge about the kind of project which beneficiaries entered is rather modest. Previous leavers' surveys have asked about the kinds of activities undertaken during the programme, but these have not generally been very successful, as beneficiaries rarely made very clear distinctions between the different modules which projects offered, and their recall was diminished of course by passing time. Partly for this reason, and partly because of space restrictions in the questionnaire, this was not an aspect of the research which we pursued this year, and as a result, the only information which we can offer about the kind of project entered is the Policy Field to which the project belonged.

Table 4.1 sets out the proportions of beneficiaries entering projects in the five different Policy Fields. These data come from the programme administrative database, and so are not filtered through survey participants' recall. They show that Policy Fields 1 and 3 are by far the largest, accounting between them for two thirds of beneficiaries, while Policy Fields 4 and 5, which focus on somewhat more specific client groups, were much smaller, each with less than ten per cent of entrants.

We do not discuss these results further at this point, as the different experiences in different Policy Fields are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6. However, Policy Fields are shown in the tables which follow in this chapter and the next, and for the moment it may be useful to keep in mind their relative share of the beneficiaries.

Table 4.1: Policy Fields under which beneficiaries' projects were supported

Policy Fields under which beneficiaries' projects were supported	Total N =	Total %
Policy Field 1: Active labour market policies	1,059	31
Policy Field 2: Equal opportunities for all and promoting social inclusion	548	16
Policy Field 3: Improving training and education and promoting lifelong learning	1,217	35
Policy Field 4: Adaptability and entrepreneurship	278	8
Policy Field 5: Improving the participation of women in the labour market	328	10
Base	*3,431*	

4.2 What beneficiaries expected

Accurate and/or realistic expectations on the part of beneficiaries is obviously an important facet of marketing and targeting provision. To the extent that entrants have expectations which are both accurate and appropriate to their own circumstances and perceived needs, then the higher is their commitment to the programme likely to be, the more likely are they to be satisfied with it, and, perhaps, the more likely are they to secure positive outcomes as a result.

To this end, it is important to know what beneficiaries expected to get out of the project when they joined it, and this is reviewed below.

4.2.1 Expectations about skills, training, job search and work

Respondents were asked about their expectations on joining the programme, and the results are shown in Table 4.2. It is worth noting here that this form of table is used throughout the report in the chapters which follow. Essentially, these tables present the results for the substantive question, first in summary (for all, all male, and all female respondents), then filtered in turn by each of the key variables outlined in the previous chapter (age, entry status, qualifications, *etc.*), and finally distinguishing between entrants to each of the five Policy Fields discussed immediately above. In each case, the table presents an overview of the data, and the subsequent discussion picks out what seem to be the most salient or interesting points.

Looking at Table 4.2, and remembering that these expectations on entry to the programme were being recalled perhaps up to a year after the event, we can see that, generally speaking, beneficiaries' expectations were both high and wide. That is to say that quite substantial proportions of the sample had expected that the programme would improve the skills they needed at work, improve their qualifications, or improve their self confidence about work (rather fewer expected that it would give them practical help to find a job). In addition, many of them replied positively for most (if not all) of these possible advantages offered by the programme.

Looking more closely at the table, we can see that the main reason why fewer respondents had expected that the programme would give them practical help to find a job, was that many were already employed on entering the programme — although even here still some 46 per cent of employed entrants expected that it would give them practical help in finding (presumably another) job.

For the most part, the most widespread expectation, and the one least likely to be denied by any sub-group, was that the programme would improve the skills they would need at work. This emphasis on job-relevant skills, and the acquisition of relevant skills and experience clearly underlines the vocational and instrumental perceptions of these beneficiaries about the programme; *ie* that it was intended to provide them with skills which would be directly useful in their work environment (or the one to which they aspired). There were quite high expectation about qualifications being improved too, but these were generally somewhat less widespread.

Table 4.2: Expectations before joining the project, by key beneficiary characteristics

Proportions expecting that the project would:	Total %	Male %	Female %	Aged < 18 %	Aged 18-24 %	Aged 25-34 %	Aged 35-49 %	Aged 50+ %
Improve the skills needed at work	77	79	77	78	84	83	79	66
Improve qualifications	68	65	70	66	80	69	68	57
Improve self confidence about work	70	67	72	80	78	73	68	60
Give practical help to find a job	56	61	53	70	75	59	48	42
Base	*3,431*	*1,336*	*2,061*	*285*	*651*	*663*	*1,080*	*688*

	In work on entry	U/E on entry	Inactive on entry	No Quals	LTU/I	Return-ers	Lone Parents	Min. Eth. Group
Improve the skills needed at work	81	84	72	72	73	74	83	83
Improve qualifications	67	71	68	71	69	75	76	76
Improve self confidence about work	65	76	72	75	71	79	76	77
Give practical help to find a job	46	73	56	60	57	57	56	69
Base	*1,275*	*714*	*1,322*	*733*	*922*	*316*	*330*	*466*

	Other Lang.	Disabil/ health	Carers	Low H. Capital	No disadv.	Single disadv.	Two disadv.	Three+ disadv.
Improve the skills needed at work	86	68	78	83	80	79	73	76
Improve qualifications	79	64	71	74	64	68	70	73
Improve self confidence about work	82	70	75	78	64	71	73	76
Give practical help to find a job	66	52	54	65	53	57	57	60
Base	*154*	*620*	*855*	*2,262*	*1,157*	*911*	*718*	*645*

	Poor B. Skills	PF 1	PF 2	PF 3	PF 4	PF 5
Improve the skills needed at work	84	81	77	77	82	68
Improve qualifications	75	71	69	66	51	76
Improve self confidence about work	85	77	75	64	56	74
Give practical help to find a job	74	71	63	45	35	54
Base	*420*	*1,059*	*548*	*1,217*	*278*	*328*

Base: All those who gave an answer

There are some groups of respondent among whom expectations were consistently lower than average. For example, those aged 50 and over appear to have had either lower or perhaps different expectations of the programme, and those with a health problem or disability tended in the same direction. It may be that this reflects a degree of caution about the usefulness of the programme in their particular circumstances. However, on the other hand, for three of the four cited expectations, those with the most disadvantages had generally more positive expectations than did those with fewer or none. It would seem that rather than reflecting a more general scepticism or apathy, these lower expectations had more to do with the programme addressing the specifics of these groups perceived problems, *ie* age discrimination and disability discrimination respectively.

Some groups of entrants seemed to have more widespread expectations that the programme would improve their confidence (for example, those with basic skills problems, those who typically did not use English in their homes, *etc.*). However, in other cases this alignment is not so evident. For example, we might have expected that those with no qualifications would have higher-than-average expectations that the programme would provide them with such an outcome. This is confirmed, but there is only a slight increase evident for their expectations about qualifications.

4.2.2 Other anticipated outcomes

Respondents were also asked whether they had thought that the programme would help them in any other way. About a quarter of them said that they had. These responses tended to fall into two groups. Firstly, a number of respondents mentioned various specific benefits which they believed the programme would offer. The most common here was 'building up computer skills/ confidence' (13 per cent of those offering any other expected outcome; three per cent of the whole sample). Secondly, rather more of these respondents who had cited other expected outcomes replied with fairly non-specific outcomes such as 'improve my job prospects' (ten per cent), 'career development' (four per cent), 'help me in my job' (four per cent), *etc*.

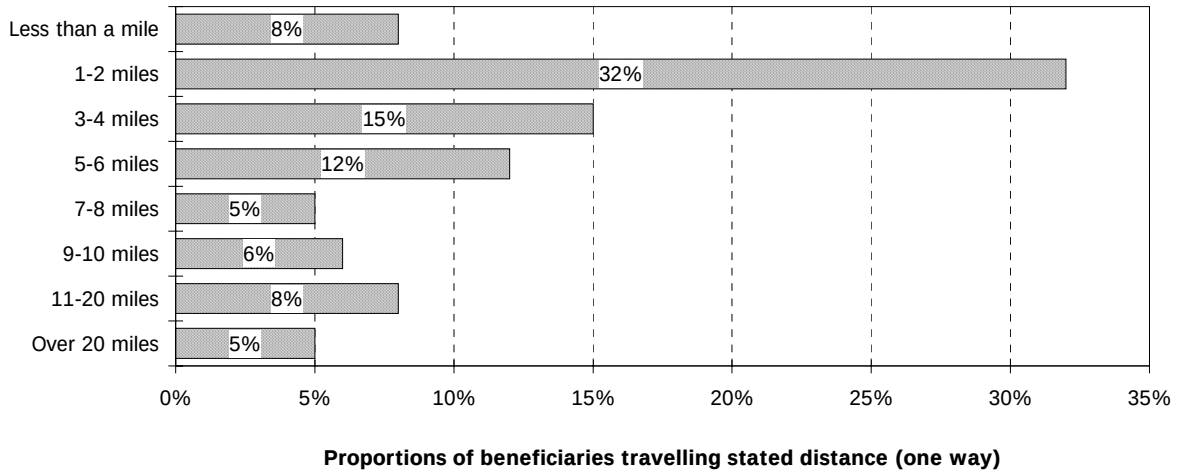
For the most part, these additional responses were each only cited by a handful of respondents, and so we do not analyse them further here, save to note that, in addition, they tended towards the vocationally-relevant outcomes discussed above. They were overwhelmingly instrumental, rather than outcomes whose benefit lay outside the labour market.

4.3 Joining the project

4.3.1 Travel to and from the course

In previous surveys, significant proportions of respondents have cited 'transport problems' among the constraints which had inhibited their job search in the past. It seems reasonable to infer that such problems might also constrain participation in public programmes like ESF, and for this reason we asked beneficiaries some questions about how far, and how, they typically travelled to and from the course. We note that this necessarily looks only at participants, not at those who might have been put off participating by transport problems, but this is unavoidable at the present time. These results therefore represent an initial review of a potentially important practical consideration influencing participation and retention on the courses, rather than any conclusive assessment, which might usefully be pursued in future surveys.

Figure 4.1: Distance travelled to course, one way; all respondents



Base: All respondents; N = 3,746; non-response = nine per cent

Looking first at the one way distance to the course, Figure 4.1 shows that 40 per cent of beneficiaries lived within a couple of miles of their course. This proportion hardly varied at all between the different types of beneficiary with whom we have been concerned, but we would anticipate that it would differ a lot between different types of project, most obviously urban and rural ones. This is not an aspect of the present research, however.

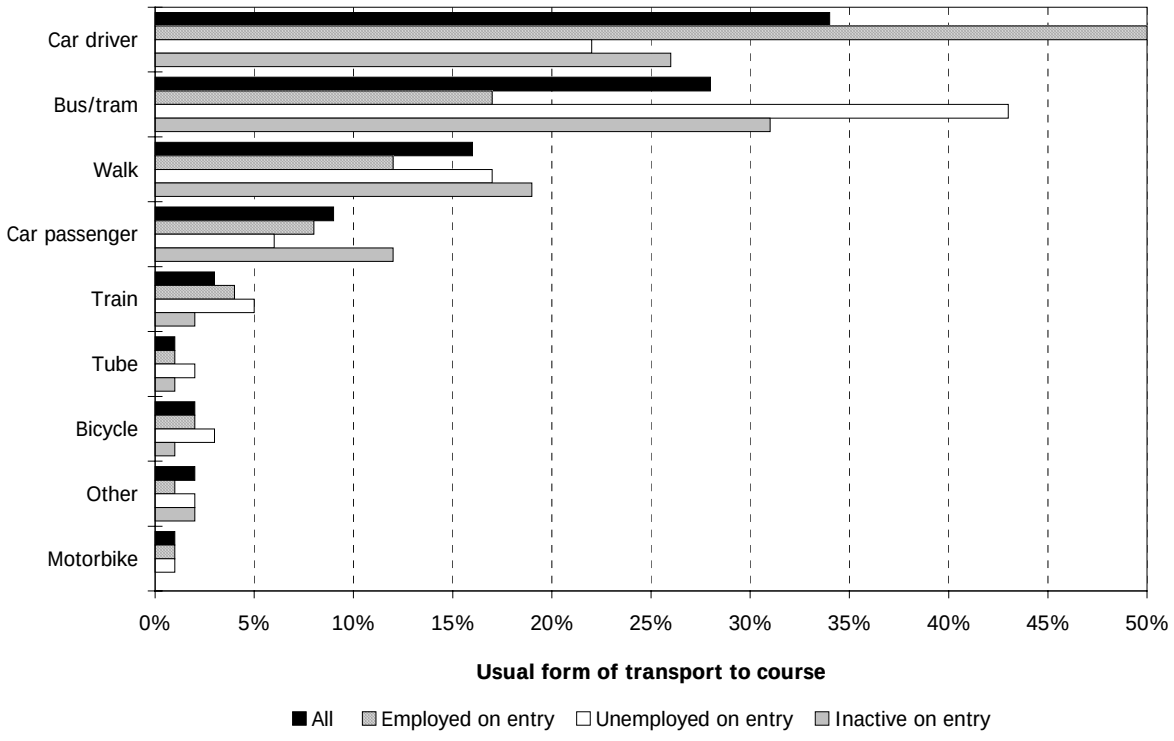
There are substantial proportions of beneficiaries who had travelled further, though usually not a lot further, with two-thirds of the whole sample travelling no more than six miles. Nevertheless, a few beneficiaries had much longer journeys, with five per cent travelling more than 20 miles each way to their course.

This has the effect of pushing up the average one way journey for the whole sample to 6.5 miles. In so far as there was any variation from this pattern across the sample as a whole, it suggests that:

- younger beneficiaries seem to travel slightly shorter distances (av. = five miles for the under 18s), perhaps reflecting their lack of resources
- employed entrants seem to have travelled slightly further (av. = eight miles *cf* five to six miles for those not working), perhaps reflecting their greater resources
- lone parents (four miles) and carers (five miles) had slightly shorter average journeys, perhaps reflecting their domestic circumstances
- at 6.7 miles, the average for disabled beneficiaries, and those with a health problem, was about the same as for beneficiaries as a whole.

These differences between different groups of beneficiaries become much more pronounced when we look at the ways in which they had travelled to their courses. Figure 4.2 shows that using a car, using a bus or tram and walking were by far the most widespread means of travel. Among those employed on entry, driving to the course was much more usual (at 50 per cent) than for the others (about a quarter), while correspondingly using the bus or tram was a lot more common among the unemployed and inactive entrants (43 and 31 per cent respectively) than among the employed entrants (17 per cent).

Figure 4.2: Usual form of transport to course



Base: All respondents; N = 3,431; non-response = 12 per cent

The differences seem most probably to derive from the different financial circumstances of these groups, and while they are reflected in the different travel distances, the effect on these travel-to-course distances is not that marked. For example, just 18 per cent of employed entrants usually travelled more than ten miles, and while this proportion falls to 12 and nine per cent respectively among unemployed and inactive entrants, it remains the case that only small minorities have been undertaking journeys of such distances whatever their circumstances.

4.3.2 Awareness of ESF and equal opportunities

Equality of opportunity is an important priority for ESF, across the entire programme, as well as through more overtly-focused Policy Fields. Although the attention paid to equal opportunities by different projects will be expressed in numerous different ways, they are expected to be explicit about this to beneficiaries at the point of entry. If potential beneficiaries fear that projects may discriminate against them, or may not take their special needs or circumstances into account, then they may not participate at all, they may fall out early, or their participation may be undermined. For these reasons, it is important that projects clearly explain to beneficiaries both that they have an equal opportunities policy, and how this will affect the individual in practice while they are on the course.

Table 4.3: Recollections of whether the course organisers explained their equal opportunities policy to beneficiaries, by key beneficiary groups

Proportions recalling that EO policy was explained	Total %	Male %	Female %	Aged < 18 %	Aged 18-24 %	Aged 25-34 %	Aged 35-49 %	Aged 50+ %
Yes	64	65	64	59	74	69	63	56
No	15	17	15	17	10	14	17	18
D/K, can't recall	19	17	21	23	16	17	20	23
Base	*3,431*	*1,322*	*2,074*	*285*	*651*	*663*	*1,080*	*707*

	In work on entry	U/E on entry	Inactive on entry	No Quals	LTU/I	Return-ers	Lone Parents	Min. Eth. group
Yes	62	74	62	63	68	63	69	70
No	17	12	15	15	14	14	16	15
D/K, can't recall	20	14	21	20	17	23	15	14
Base	*1,275*	*714*	*1,322*	*733*	*922*	*316*	*330*	*466*

	Other Lang.	Disabil/ health	Carers	Low H. Capital	No disadv.	Single disadv.	Two disadv.	Three+ disadv.
Yes	73	62	65	66	62	64	65	68
No	15	14	15	15	16	17	14	14
D/K, can't recall	11	22	20	18	21	18	20	18
Base	*154*	*620*	*855*	*2,262*	*1,157*	*911*	*718*	*645*

	Poor B. Skills	PF 1	PF 2	PF 3	PF 4	PF 5
Yes	67	71	66	60	49	70
No	17	13	13	18	22	12
D/K, can't recall	16	16	20	21	28	18
Base	*396*	*1,059*	*548*	*1,217*	*278*	*328*

Base: All those who gave an answer

Of course, we are reliant here on entrants' recollections of what was said to them perhaps about a year earlier, and as Table 4.3 shows, there is a significant proportion who just cannot remember whether or not they were given this information. Nevertheless, about two in three still clearly recall that the policy was explained to them. Nor does this figure vary greatly between the different categories of beneficiary and project which are set out in the table.

We observe that recall of this explanation is rather lower than average among participants in Policy Field 4 projects, but even here, this owes more to a higher than average level of 'don't knows' than of positive recollection that the advice was not given. Conversely, it is interesting to note that the proportion recalling this explanation rises as the degree of disadvantage experienced rises, and that it is relatively high in Policy Field 5 (although still about average in Policy Field 2, which also has more explicit equal opportunities objectives).

4.3.3 Awareness of ESF support for the project

Beneficiaries were also asked whether or not they were aware that the project in which they had taken part had been partly funded by ESF (Table 4.4). Here, the pattern of response is rather different from Table 4.3 above. We note that although there is a majority who were aware of ESF support, now there is a much larger proportion (about a third) who were not aware. The proportion who can't remember is consequently rather lower, at one in ten.

Table 4.4: Awareness that ESF had helped to pay for the course, by key beneficiary groups

Proportions aware of ESF support for project	**Total %**	**Male %**	**Female %**	**Aged < 18 %**	**Aged 18-24 %**	**Aged 25-34 %**	**Aged 35-49 %**	**Aged 50+ %**
Yes	56	52	59	28	44	63	62	64
No	33	39	30	61	43	28	28	26
D/K, can't recall	10	8	10	11	13	8	9	8
Base	*3,431*	*1,322*	*2,074*	*285*	*651*	*663*	*1,080*	*707*

	In work on entry	**U/E on entry**	**Inactive on entry**	**No Quals**	**LTU/I**	**Return-ers**	**Lone Parents**	**Min. Eth. Group**
Yes	60	57	52	49	60	64	61	52
No	31	35	35	38	30	26	29	38
D/K, can't recall	9	8	11	12	9	9	9	9
Base	*1,275*	*714*	*1,322*	*733*	*922*	*316*	*330*	*466*

	Other Lang.	**Disabil/ Health**	**Carers**	**Low H. Capital**	**No Disadv.**	**Single Disadv.**	**Two Disadv.**	**Three+ Disadv.**
Yes	51	50	64	54	56	53	54	61
No	34	35	27	35	34	35	35	29
D/K, can't recall	15	13	9	10	8	11	10	9
Base	*154*	*620*	*855*	*2,262*	*1,157*	*911*	*718*	*645*

	Poor B. Skills	**PF 1**	**PF 2**	**PF 3**	**PF 4**	**PF 5**
Yes	46	49	53	55	70	72
No	40	40	34	34	22	20
D/K, can't recall	13	10	11	10	7	7
Base	*396*	*1,059*	*548*	*1,217*	*278*	*328*

Base: All those who gave an answer

Interestingly, awareness of ESF support is higher in Policy Fields 4 and 5, but otherwise does not vary greatly between different groups of beneficiary.

4.3.4 Personal Training Plan

Finally, respondents were also asked whether they had worked out an agreed personal training plan (PTP) with their course organiser when they joined the programme. Clearly in view of the diverse range of individuals joining the programme, and the importance of customising provision so that it meets this variety, it is important both to recognise, and provide for, different personal wishes and needs during the course of the programme.

Table 4.5 shows that just under half our respondents remembered agreeing such a personalised plan, and although there is a proportion who can't recall, there is a substantial minority (39 per cent) who say that they definitely were not given the opportunity to draw up their own plan.

Once again, PTPs are much less evident in Policy Field 4, but now also in Policy Field 3. This is so, too, for the youngest beneficiaries, but there it seems to be more a problem of lack of recall (22 per cent can't remember) than lower opportunity for personalisation.

Table 4.5: Whether beneficiaries had an agreed Personal Training Plan, by key beneficiary groups

Proportions with an agreed PTP	Total %	Male %	Female %	Aged < 18 %	Aged 18-24 %	Aged 25-34 %	Aged 25-49 %	Aged 50+ %
Yes	47	48	46	35	48	49	48	47
No	39	41	39	41	35	40	39	41
D/K, can't recall	13	10	14	22	16	10	12	11
Base	*3,431*	*1,322*	*2,074*	*285*	*651*	*663*	*1,080*	*707*

	In work on entry	U/E on entry	Inactive on entry	No Quals	LTU/I	Returners	Lone Parents	Min. Eth. Group
Yes	45	56	45	45	53	44	49	47
No	44	32	39	36	36	44	34	38
D/K, can't recall	11	12	15	17	10	11	17	14
Base	*1,275*	*714*	*1,322*	*733*	*922*	*316*	*330*	*466*

	Other Lang.	Disabil/ Health	Carers	Low H. Capital	No Disadv.	Single Disadv.	Two Disadv.	Three+ Disadv.
Yes	47	51	47	50	42	51	48	48
No	35	32	39	36	44	36	38	37
D/K, can't recall	16	16	14	13	12	13	14	14
Base	*154*	*620*	*855*	*2,262*	*1,157*	*911*	*718*	*645*

	Poor B. Skills	PF 1	PF 2	PF 3	PF 4	PF 5
Yes	56	50	49	43	38	53
No	29	35	34	45	45	37
D/K, can't recall	14	14	15	11	16	9
Base	*396*	*1,059*	*548*	*1,217*	*278*	*328*

Base: All those who gave an answer

There are few substantial differences from the average result here, although the PTP offer seems to have been more frequently made to those who were unemployed on entry This may be because a high proportion of them were also supported under the New Deal, which encourages training more closely focused on getting a job.

Among those who did work out a PTP with their course organiser, almost three-quarters said that the plan referred to them working towards a qualification of some kind (this equates to about a third of the whole sample). This proportion seems to be particularly high among the youngest age group, lone parents and among those in Policy Field 5. It is reassuring also to note that among those with no qualification when they joined the programme, the proportion of those whose PTP referred to getting one was close to this average figure (at 75 per cent).

We will look more closely at those who actually gained a qualification on the course in Chapter 5.

Table 4.6: Whether beneficiaries' Personal Training Plans referred to their working towards a qualification of some kind, by key beneficiary groups

Proportions whose PTP led them towards a qualification	Total %	Male %	Female %	Aged < 18 %	Aged 18-24 %	Aged 25-34 %	Aged 35-49 %	Aged 50+ %
Yes	73	71	75	81	76	69	75	70
No	21	23	20	10	17	24	20	27
D/K, can't recall	4	5	4	7	6	6	3	2
Base	*1,605*	*634*	*957*	*101*	*314*	*325*	*516*	*331*

	In work on entry	U/E on entry	Inactive on entry	No Quals	LTU/I	Return-ers	Lone Parents	Min. Eth. Group
Yes	75	72	71	75	72	76	81	74
No	20	23	21	19	24	22	16	21
D/K, can't recall	4	3	5	6	3	2	2	5
Base	*568*	*398*	*588*	*331*	*490*	*138*	*161*	*218*

	Other Lang.	Disabil/ Health	Carers	Low H. Capital	No Disadv.	Single Disadv.	Two Disadv.	Three+ Disadv.
Yes	68	71	76	75	71	72	76	73
No	24	23	19	19	22	21	19	23
D/K, can't recall	8	5	3	5	5	5	3	3
Base	*73*	*314*	*402*	*1,128*	*489*	*461*	*345*	*310*

	Poor B. Skills	PF 1	PF 2	PF 3	PF 4	PF 5
Yes	70	76	70	71	59	83
No	19	18	22	24	37	13
D/K, can't recall	10	5	6	4	2	2
Base	*221*	*534*	*267*	*524*	*106*	*174*

Base: All those recalling having a PTP and who gave an answer

4.4 What support was received

In this part of the chapter we move on to consider the different kinds of help and support which was offered to, and taken up by, the beneficiaries, and how this pattern has varied between different groups of respondent.

We noted above that previous surveys have shown how vague respondents had been in reporting exactly in what activities they had taken part during their time on the project. To simplify things for them, we divided this part of the questionnaire into three broad areas of assistance, and then, if the respondent indicated that they had taken part in activities under one or other of these broad headings, we followed up with more detailed questions designed to explore what they had actually done.

This 'nesting' procedure will also be used to set out the results, and in each of the three following sections, we first set out the overall results for each of the three broad categories of support, and then go on to discuss different aspects of provision within each in more detail.

These broad categories of support, with their various sub-categories, are summarised as follows:

- **Improving the skills needed at work**, which included:
  - practical skills related to a particular job
  - improved computing/Information Technology (IT) skills
  - study skills (such as essay or report writing, using libraries)
  - improved reading and writing skills
  - improved maths and number skills
  - improved English speaking skills
  - training in wider job skills (such as admin or book-keeping)
  - training in management and/or leadership skills.
- **Improving self confidence about working**, which included:
  - expressing yourself and communicating with people
  - working with other people as part of a team
  - solving problems
  - motivation
  - ability to do things independently
  - ability to take responsibility.
- **Practical help in finding a job**, which included:
  - work experience or a work placement
  - general training about the world of work
  - advice or guidance about what sorts of work or training you could do
  - training in how to look for work
  - contacts to help you look for a job
  - job broking; leads for particular vacancies.

We now go on to discuss these in turn.

4.4.1 Training and help with skills: summary analysis

Looking first of all at the general area of improving the skills needed at work, we note the very strong focus of the support on skill acquisition and the vocational usefulness of the activities undertaken. Fully 88 per cent of respondents had received support in this area.

We can see from Table 4.7 that there has been very little variation from this very high figure, with at least 80 per cent of all the sub-groups reviewed saying that they had received support in this area. Further examination of the data among sub-groups (not shown in Table 4.7) confirms that this very high level of provision was found throughout the entire sample.

Table 4.7: Whether beneficiaries were helped to improve the skills they would need at work, by key beneficiary groups

Proportions helped to improve skills needed at work	Total %	Male %	Female %	Aged < 18 %	Aged 18-24 %	Aged 25-34 %	Aged 35-49 %	Aged 50+ %
Yes	88	87	89	83	92	88	89	86
No	10	12	10	14	8	11	10	11
D/K, can't recall	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Base	*3,431*	*1,322*	*2,074*	*285*	*651*	*663*	*1,080*	*707*

	In work on entry	U/E on entry	Inactive on entry	No Quals	LTU/I	Return-ers	Lone Parents	Min. Eth. Group
Yes	90	88	88	87	87	92	89	92
No	10	11	10	11	12	7	9	7
D/K, can't recall	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Base	*1,275*	*714*	*1,322*	*733*	*922*	*316*	*330*	*466*

	Other Lang.	Disabil/ Health	Carers	Low H. Capital	No Disadv.	Single Disadv.	Two Disadv.	Three+ Disadv.
Yes	94	84	90	90	86	90	88	88
No	5	14	8	9	12	8	11	11
D/K, can't recall	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Base	*154*	*620*	*855*	*2,262*	*1,157*	*911*	*718*	*645*

	Poor B. Skills	PF 1	PF 2	PF 3	PF 4	PF 5
Yes	90	88	85	89	88	90
No	9	11	12	10	10	10
D/K, can't recall	0	0	0	0	0	0
Base	*396*	*1,059*	*548*	*1,217*	*278*	*328*

Base: All those who gave an answer

4.4.2 Training and help with skills: analysis by skill/training received

Turning now to the actual help provided under this broad heading of help with skills needed at work, we can see that there was a very strong focus on particular job requirements (Table 4.8). Here we have kept the base for the table as 'all respondents', provided they answered the question, so that the incidence of these kinds of support across the whole sample can be readily assessed.

Table 4.8: Ways in which beneficiaries were helped to improve the skills they would need at work, by gender

	Men %	Women %	All %
Practical skills related to a particular job	61	61	61
Improved computing/Information Technology (IT) skills	53	56	55
Study skills (such as essay or report writing, using libraries)	37	38	38
Improved reading and writing skills	30	28	29
Improved maths and number skills	27	20	22
Improved English speaking skills	26	25	25
Training in wider job skills (such as admin or book-keeping)	31	29	29
Training in management and/or leadership skills	28	23	25
Base	*1,322*	*2,074*	*3,431*

Base: All those who gave an answer

Some 61 per cent of beneficiaries said that they had been helped to improve their practical skills related to a particular job. Although it is not shown in the table, for none of our sub-groups of beneficiary did this proportion fall below 50 per cent. It seems fair to conclude, then, that the programme has been delivering precisely focused vocational training and skill development across very high proportions of beneficiaries, whatever their starting circumstances or constraints.

Furthermore, and importantly in view of the cross-cutting emphasis within the programme on IT skills, the proportions gaining computing or IT skills was also impressively high (at 55 per cent of the whole sample). There was a tendency for those not working on entry to the programme, for returners, people from minority ethnic groups, and those with the most disadvantages, to be more likely to receive these kind of IT skills.

Rather fewer had received support to improve their study skills, and the incidence was rather low (at 28 per cent) among the oldest age group. Nevertheless, among those with no qualifications, some 38 per cent had received help to improve their study skills, rising to 46 per cent among those with basic skills difficulties, and 42 per cent among those with low human capital. Clearly, such means-to-an-end training support has been directed *inter alia* towards some of those groups who will particularly need it if they are to improve their formal qualifications and practical competencies at work.

Improved basic skills support was much less widely spread, but still reached a substantial minority of beneficiaries, at 29 per cent for literacy, 22 per cent for maths and 25 per cent for the English language. It is reassuring to note that among those with basic skills problems, these proportions rose to 59 per cent, 38 per cent respectively for literacy and maths. Among those for whom English was not the main language in the home, some 65 per cent had received help with their English-speaking skills, and this proportion was 44 per cent for people from minority ethnic groups in general. Again, this seems to provide strong evidence of positive targeting and delivery of support appropriate to people's perceived problems in the labour market.

Training in wider job skills (such as admin or book-keeping) and in management and/or leadership skills was also less widely spread, with some 29 per cent gaining the former and 25 per cent the latter. Training in management and/or leadership skills was received by 34 per cent of Policy Field 4 beneficiaries, but otherwise, in neither of these categories of support was there much obvious variation in the average.

4.4.3 Building self confidence and improving 'soft' skills at work: summary analysis

In addition to these substantive skill gains, we also sought information about gains in beneficiary self confidence. In view of the corrosive effect of unemployment and inactivity on people's self confidence,

and so on their ability to compete effectively in the labour market, this building up of beneficiaries' 'internal' resources seems likely to be of equal importance as any of the formal skills which they may also have acquired through the programme.

Once again, we look first at a summary distribution of these gains in self confidence and other 'soft' skills, and then go on to look at the particular forms which these gains took. In Table 4.9, we can see that such gains have been very widespread indeed, right across this sample of respondents. Fully 87 per cent of respondents reported that the programme had built up their self confidence or 'soft' skills in some way.

Furthermore, these gains have been spread widely across all the sub-groups at whom we have looked closely. For only one of these groups (participants in Policy Field 4 projects) does this proportion fall below 80 per cent. We note that these gains have been more widespread among beneficiaries with the most disadvantages, and several sub-groups report gains among more than 90 per cent of respondents (*eg* the under 25s, those who were inactive on entry, returners, people from minority ethnic groups or for whom English is not their main language, people with poor basic skills, and those in Policy Fields 1 and 5).

Table 4.9: Whether beneficiaries were helped in building their self confidence and improving their 'soft' skills at work, by key beneficiary groups

Proportions helped with self-confidence and 'soft' skills	**Total %**	**Male %**	**Female %**	**Aged < 18 %**	**Aged 18-24 %**	**Aged 25-34 %**	**Aged 35-49 %**	**Aged 50+ %**
Yes	87	86	89	97	94	90	84	82
No	11	13	10	3	5	9	16	16
D/K, can't recall	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Base	*3,431*	*1,322*	*2,074*	*285*	*651*	*663*	*1,080*	*707*

	In work on entry	**U/E on entry**	**Inactive on entry**	**No Quals**	**LTU/I**	**Returners**	**Lone Parents**	**Min. Eth. Group**
Yes	84	89	91	90	88	91	89	94
No	15	10	8	9	12	9	11	5
D/K, can't recall	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Base	*1,275*	*714*	*1,322*	*733*	*922*	*316*	*330*	*466*

	Other Lang.	**Disabil/ Health**	**Carers**	**Low H. Capital**	**No Disadv.**	**Single Disadv.**	**Two Disadv.**	**Three+ Disadv.**
Yes	97	88	89	91	85	87	89	91
No	2	10	10	8	13	12	10	8
D/K, can't recall	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Base	*154*	*620*	*855*	*2,262*	*1,157*	*935*	*718*	*645*

	Poor B. Skills	**PF 1**	**PF 2**	**PF 3**	**PF 4**	**PF 5**
Yes	93	92	89	83	78	92
No	5	7	9	15	21	6
D/K, can't recall	0	0	0	0	0	0
Base	*396*	*1,059*	*548*	*1,217*	*278*	*328*

Base: All those who gave an answer

4.4.4 Building self-confidence and improving 'soft' skills at work: analysis by help received

Turning to the particular ways in which these 'soft' skills have been secured, we note from Table 4.10 that women tended to identify these gains slightly more than men. Close to two-thirds of beneficiaries recognised that their 'soft' skills had been improved in one each of these different ways. Interestingly, the most widespread of these outcomes of the course has been an improved ability to do things independently (at 67 per cent of beneficiaries). Taken together with enhanced motivation (64 per cent), we might expect these gains to have a longer-term impact on individuals' ability to improve their circumstances after the end of the programme, particularly perhaps in terms of finding work.

Table 4.10: Ways in which beneficiaries were helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work, by gender

Proportions helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work through…	Men %	Women %	All %
Expressing yourself and communicating with people	62	66	64
Working with other people as part of a team	63	67	65
Solving problems	62	61	61
Motivation	63	66	64
Ability to do things independently	66	69	67
Ability to take responsibility	59	61	59
Base	*1,322*	*2,074*	*3,431*

Base: All those who gave an answer

There are also quite widespread gains in skills which will be useful within the workplace, such as communicating with people (64 per cent), working with other people as part of a team (65 per cent), and solving problems (61 per cent).

Although the ability to take responsibility was slightly less common, at 59 per cent, it was rather more widely reported from participants in Policy Field 5 projects (70 per cent).

4.4.5 Practical help in finding a job: summary analysis

Sixty per cent of these beneficiaries had not been working when they joined their project, and fully a third had not worked in the two years before they did so. Many had never worked. We might therefore envisage a fairly widespread need for help in the practical aspects of finding work.

As Table 4.11 shows, just under two-thirds of the sample had been given some kind of practical help in finding work. This was most common among the under 25 age group (who presumably had little experience in this regard), and among those unemployed, but looking for work when they joined the programme.

It is surprising that among significant proportions of respondents without a job, no training or support of this kind seems to have been given (or anyway, was not recalled by the supposed beneficiary). Thus, we note that among those who were inactive on entry, fully a third had not received it; among returners, slightly more at 38 per cent; among those who had not worked for an extended period, 38 per cent.

At the other end of the spectrum, among people who were already in work when they joined the programme, just over half had received this kind of help, as had roughly the same proportions of people in Policy Fields 3 and 4. It may also seem surprising that such high levels of this kind of support had been received among people who on the face of it had less need for it, or for whom job-getting was not the main aim of their project. However, as we will show below, this is because some of the help offered

Table 4.11: Whether beneficiaries were given practical help in finding a job, by key beneficiary groups

Proportions given practical help in finding a job	Total %	Male %	Female %	Aged < 18 %	Aged 18-24 %	Aged 25-34 %	Aged 35-49 %	Aged 50+ %
Yes	63	68	60	79	84	68	56	44
No	35	31	38	20	15	31	43	52
D/K, can't recall	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Base	*3,431*	*1,322*	*2,074*	*285*	*651*	*663*	*1,080*	*707*

	In work on entry	U/E on entry	Inactive on entry	No Quals	LTU/I	Return-ers	Lone Parents	Min. Eth. Group
Yes	52	81	63	62	61	60	67	77
No	46	19	34	36	38	38	31	22
D/K, can't recall	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Base	*1,275*	*714*	*1,322*	*733*	*922*	*316*	*330*	*466*

	Other Lang.	Disabil/ Health	Carers	Low H. Capital	No Disadv.	Single Disadv.	Two Disadv.	Three+ Disadv.
Yes	71	57	61	68	61	65	63	62
No	26	39	36	31	37	33	35	35
D/K, can't recall	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Base	*154*	*620*	*855*	*2,262*	*1,157*	*911*	*718*	*645*

	Poor B. Skills	PF 1	PF 2	PF 3	PF 4	PF 5
Yes	76	79	70	49	52	57
No	23	20	27	48	46	42
D/K, can't recall	0	0	0	0	0	0
Base	*396*	*1,059*	*548*	*1,217*	*278*	*328*

Base: All those who gave an answer

includes careers guidance, and advice about the kind of job training that individuals might do. Thus, the spread of provision among some groups whom it might have been thought did not need it is explicable, but the relatively high rates of omission among those without a job when they joined the programme seems much less so.

4.4.6 Practical help in finding a job: analysis by help received

Table 4.12 confirms that advice or guidance about the sorts of work or training that beneficiaries could do was the most widespread form of practical help in finding a job, with some 48 per cent of the whole sample receiving it, including some 41 per cent of those already working on entry.

General training about the world of work was also provided for a third of beneficiaries, including 40 per cent of the men, and again some 27 per cent of those already working on entry.

The more obviously 'job search' elements (training in how to look for work, contacts in doing so, and job-broking services), were less widespread at 30, 29 and 25 per cent of beneficiaries respectively, and here the focus was more closely on those without work when joining the programme. Thus, for example, among the unemployed these proportions rose to 46, 46 and 44 per cent respectively.

Table 4.12: Ways in which beneficiaries were given practical help in finding a job, by gender

Proportions helped with job search and work experience through…	Men %	Women %	All %
work experience or a work placement	25	19	21
general training about the world of work	40	30	34
advice or guidance about what sorts of work or training you could do	51	46	48
training in how to look for work	36	26	30
contacts to help you look for a job	36	25	29
job broking; leads for particular vacancies	33	21	25
Base	*1,322*	*2,074*	*3,431*

Base: All those who gave an answer

Nevertheless, there remains a significant proportion of individuals who were not working on entry to the programme, who do not seem to have received such job search support. Thus, for example, we found that about two-thirds of those who had been long-term unemployed/inactive on entry had *not* received training in how to look for work, contacts in doing so, or job-broking support.

Finally, work experience or a placement had only been experienced by 21 per cent of respondents. In part, this is due to the low incidence of work experience among those already holding a job on entry. We might presume that already being in a job, they had less need of such experience, and just 16 per cent of them got it. However, even among the unemployed and the inactive on entry, work experience was only provided for 32 per cent and21per cent respectively.

Overall, these forms of support were more likely to have been taken up by those without a job. However, even allowing for a fair level of uncertainty and lack of recognition among respondents about what they had received or not, and adding a reasonable allowance for poor recall, it nevertheless seems surprising that a significant proportion of those in employment appear to have received forms of support and assistance related to job search and the wider world of work, which might have been more appropriately targeted on those without work. At the same time, large numbers of those without work do not seem to have had the benefit of these kinds of support. In short, these forms of support seem to have leant in the right direction in their targeting, but not very far.

4.5 Evaluation of support received

In Chapter 5, we will set out the results of the survey in terms of the various outcomes achieved, and evaluate the programme on this basis. However, participants also make their own evaluations, and these are important, firstly because any significant collective dissatisfaction on their part would suggest that something is amiss somewhere within the programme. In addition, though an individual's dissatisfaction may also have negative personal consequences for that individual, through perhaps demotivating them, and would certainly represent a lost opportunity to move on in the labour market.

For these reasons, it is important to assess how our beneficiaries felt about the support and assistance they were given, and we do this below in three areas, as follows:

- Did they get what they expected?
- To what extent was provision obviously moulded to their individual needs or circumstances? and overall
- How satisfied were they with provision?

4.5.1 Were expectations met?

We have seen above that significant proportions of beneficiaries had explicit expectations about the sort of support they would receive. Specifically, 77 per cent thought that they would improve the skills they needed at work, 68 per cent thought that they would improve their qualifications, 70 per cent thought that the course would improve their self confidence about working, and 56 per cent expected to be given practical help to find work.

By and large these expectations were very fully met. The four substantive columns of Table 4.13 each focuses on the beneficiaries who held these expectations when they joined the course, and shows how far they actually received the support in question.

Table 4.13: Proportions of beneficiaries whose expectations were met

	Base = all those answering yes at Q12.1	**Base = all those answering yes at Q12.2**	**Base = all those answering yes at Q12.3**	**Base = all those answering yes at Q12.4**
Expected gains: thought that the project would…	**Improve the skills needed at work**	**Improve qualifications**	**Improve self confidence about work**	**Give practical help to find work**
% whose expectation was met	85	69	86	43
% whose expectation was not met	11	24	10	49
% uncertain, DK or no answer	4	0	0	*
Base	*2,659*	*2,325*	*2,405*	*1,919*

Base: All those who answered both questions

We can see that well over 80 per cent of beneficiaries had their expectations met for both the skills they would need at work and the improvement in their self confidence (that is to say among those expecting it, four out of five received it). Rather fewer had their expectations met about improving their qualifications, but at just over two-thirds of all those expecting to improve their qualifications, this still looks like a reasonable hit rate.

Expectations were not so satisfactorily met for job search skills, however. We saw above that fewer entrants actually expected this kind of support, and in fact less than half of the ones who did appear to have received it. We know from Table 4.11 above that just under two -thirds of beneficiaries actually received this kind of support, and this can only mean that many received it who were not expecting to, and *vice versa*. This does not necessarily mean that many who needed it, or might have benefited from it, did not receive it, but simply that provision does not seem to have lined up very well with anticipation in this area.

4.5.2 Was support tailored to the needs and to the right levels for different individuals?

Customisation entails matching the support delivered by projects to individuals' needs and abilities, and in Table 4.14 we can see that four out of five respondents thought that the project had been relevant to their needs, while three-quarters thought that it had been appropriate for their abilities.

Looking in more detail first at the relevance of the content of the projects, we can see that there is not much variation around the average of 83 per cent who felt that it had been relevant. Some projects were generally deemed to be slightly more relevant than others (notably those in Policy Fields 4 and 5), and although some groups of individuals perceived more relevance than others (thus, for example, perceived relevance broadly increased with age) for virtually no group did perceived relevance fall below 80 per cent of beneficiaries. Perceived relevance fell slightly among people with a disability or health problem, but still remained very high in absolute terms.

Table 4.14: Whether support was tailored to the needs and to the right levels for different individuals, by key beneficiary groups

Proportions for whom project was…	Total %	Male %	Female %	Aged < 18 %	Aged 18-24 %	Aged 25-34 %	Aged 35-49 %	Aged 50+ %
Relevant to needs	83	81	85	69	82	85	87	84
Too basic	18	21	16	27	23	17	16	12
About right	76	72	79	62	71	77	78	81
Too advanced	4	5	3	5	3	4	3	4
Base	*3,431*	*1,322*	*2,074*	*285*	*651*	*663*	*1,080*	*707*

	In work on entry	U/E on entry	Inactive on entry	No Quals	LTU/I	Return-ers	Lone Parents	Min. Eth. Group
Relevant to needs	88	81	81	80	84	85	85	81
Too basic	15	22	17	14	17	15	19	23
About right	80	72	75	75	78	79	75	70
Too advanced	2	4	5	8	4	4	4	5
Base	*1,275*	*714*	*1,322*	*733*	*922*	*316*	*330*	*466*

	Other Lang.	Disabil/ Health	Carers	Low H. Capital	No Disadv.	Single Disadv.	Two Disadv.	Three+ Disadv.
Relevant to needs	83	78	87	83	83	84	83	82
Too basic	17	16	18	18	18	17	18	17
About right	70	74	77	75	76	76	74	76
Too advanced	9	6	3	5	2	4	4	6
Base	*154*	*620*	*855*	*2,262*	*1,157*	*911*	*718*	*645*

	Poor B. Skills	PF 1	PF 2	PF 3	PF 4	PF 5
Relevant to needs	81	80	81	84	88	90
Too basic	20	22	17	16	13	15
About right	67	71	72	78	82	82
Too advanced	9	3	6	4	3	2
Base	*396*	*1,059*	*548*	*1,217*	*278*	*328*

Base: All those who gave an answer

This table would suggest that even if there was something of a mismatch between expectations about job search skills and the provision of support in this area, as discussed above, it did not feed through to individuals' subsequent feeling that their needs were recognised and met.

Turning to the level at which projects were delivered, it seems to be the case that while most had delivered at about the right level for these beneficiaries, something close to a fifth felt that the level had been too low for them. This was more marked among the young, but there was not much variety about the average. Even among people with basic skills problems, and those without qualifications,20 and 14 per cent respectively felt that provision had been too basic for them.

For almost all groups of respondent, the proportion finding the course too advanced was much smaller than those finding it too basic. Only four per cent across the whole sample found provision too advanced, and nowhere did this rise into double figures.

Table 4.15: Degree of satisfaction expressed with project, by key beneficiary groups

Proportions who were…	Total %	Male %	Female %	Aged < 18 %	Aged 18-24 %	Aged 25-34 %	Aged 35-49 %	Aged 50+ %
Very satisfied	49	43	53	33	41	46	54	59
Fairly satisfied	35	38	33	44	39	39	32	29
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	7	9	6	10	10	6	6	5
Fairly dissatisfied	4	6	4	7	4	5	5	4
Very dissatisfied	3	4	2	4	3	3	3	2
Base	*3,431*	*1,322*	*2,074*	*285*	*651*	*663*	*1,080*	*707*

	In work on entry	U/E on entry	Inactive on entry	No Quals	LTU/I	Return-ers	Lone Parents	Min. Eth. Group
Very satisfied	51	43	51	52	57	58	54	42
Fairly satisfied	36	38	33	34	30	30	31	42
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	6	9	7	6	5	4	7	8
Fairly dissatisfied	4	6	4	4	4	5	4	4
Very dissatisfied	2	4	3	2	3	3	4	2
Base	*1,275*	*714*	*1,322*	*733*	*922*	*316*	*330*	*466*

	Other Lang.	Disabil/ Health	Carers	Low H. Capital	No Disadv.	Single Disadv.	Two Disadv.	Three+ Disadv.
Very satisfied	37	50	53	50	45	48	52	53
Fairly satisfied	49	30	34	34	36	37	32	33
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	8	8	5	7	9	6	5	7
Fairly dissatisfied	1	6	4	5	5	4	6	3
Very dissatisfied	2	5	3	3	3	2	4	3
Base	*154*	*620*	*855*	*2,262*	*1,157*	*911*	*718*	*645*

	Poor B. Skills	PF 1	PF 2	PF 3	PF 4	PF 5
Very satisfied	45	41	48	52	49	63
Fairly satisfied	35	39	33	34	35	29
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10	9	8	6	8	2
Fairly dissatisfied	5	5	4	4	5	4
Very dissatisfied	4	4	4	2	2	2
Base	*396*	*1,059*	*548*	*1,217*	*278*	*328*

Base: All those who gave an answer

4.5.3 Satisfaction with support received

Beneficiaries were asked how satisfied they had been with the quality of the course overall. We can see from Table 4.15 that about half the whole sample said that they were very satisfied and a further third that they were fairly satisfied. In short, well over four out of every five beneficiaries were satisfied, most of

them very much so. As there was also a proportion who were unable to say whether they were satisfied or not, the level of overt dissatisfaction was very low — about seven per cent in all.

What Table 4.15 also shows is that while there were some marked differences between different groups of respondent, these were mostly expressed as shifts between 'very' and 'fairly' satisfied; for no groups did the level of overt dissatisfaction rise above 15 per cent.

In order to see more easily the relative levels of satisfaction with courses between different groups of beneficiary, we have calculated an index from the above table as follows:

- Very satisfied = 2
- Fairly satisfied = 1
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied = 0
- Fairly dissatisfied = -1
- Very dissatisfied = -2

This is shown in Figure 4.3, in which the different categories are grouped by score (*ie* by satisfaction) within common groups of beneficiary.

Thus, working from the top of Figure 4.3, we can see that the highest level of satisfaction was expressed by beneficiaries in projects supported under Policy Field 5, with Policy Field 3 somewhat above average, Policy Field 4 and 2 about average, with Policy Field 1 well below average.

Satisfaction declines inversely with age; with the two younger age groups both expressing satisfaction well below average.

Those working when they joined the project also show scores well above average, those who were inactive, about average, and the unemployed, below average.

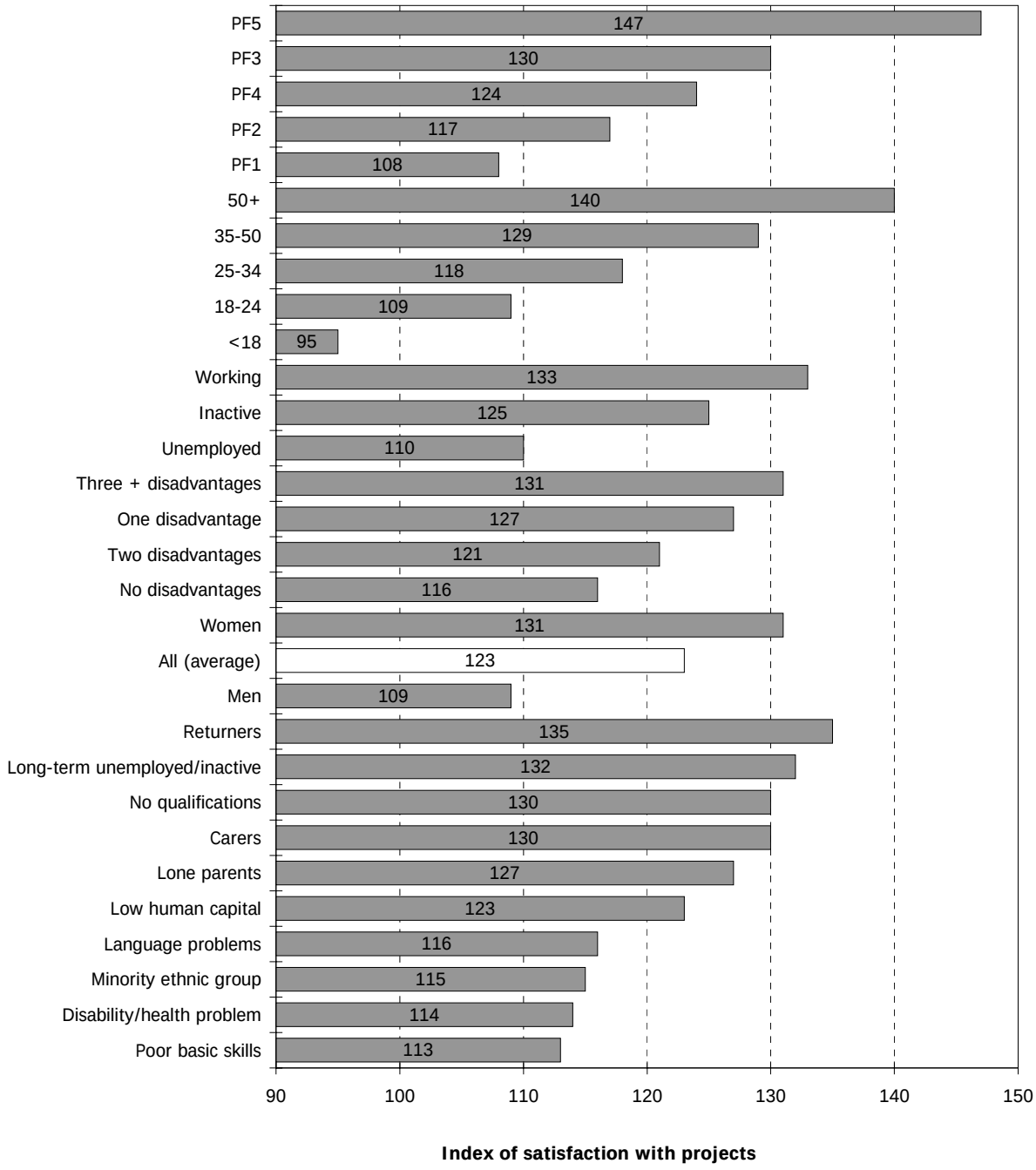
Looking at the level of disadvantage experienced by beneficiaries when they joined the project, we note that satisfaction is generally higher among those with more problems, but this is not wholly consistent.

Women tend to have above average satisfaction scores, while men tended to have below average levels of satisfaction with their projects.

Some particular groups of disadvantaged beneficiaries tended to have high satisfaction, notably 'returners', those who had been inactive or long-term unemployed before joining the project, those without qualifications on entry and carers. Others were less satisfied, including those with poor basic skills, those with a disability or health problem, those from a minority ethnic group and those for whom English was not the language used in the home.

Although they are broadly consistent with earlier surveys' results, and they align with the findings already presented above, it may still be that these correlations do not adequately 'explain' the post-project degree of satisfaction with it, and this may have more to do with the beneficiaries' motives in joining in the first place, the 'match' between them and what was provided (although we know that this seems to have been generally quite high), and the desirability of the outcome actually achieved.

Figure 4.3: Index of satisfaction with project, by key beneficiary groups



Base: All respondents who gave an answer

4.6 Duration of participation in projects

There was considerable variety in the length of time that beneficiaries had been on their courses. Fully 39 per cent of them had taken part in courses for ten weeks or less, and these were somewhat more common among the men, the employed entrants, and in projects supported under Policy Field 4. By contrast, a few respondents seem to have participated for much longer; some eight per cent said that they had taken part in their course for a year or more.

These smaller number of long spells have the effect of bumping up the average durations somewhat, and these are shown in Table 4.16. The table shows that the shorter spells were generally found in projects

Table 4.16: Mean durations of participation in projects in weeks, by key beneficiary groups

Mean durations on project (weeks)	Total	Male	Female	Aged < 18	Aged 18-24	Aged 25-34	Aged 35-49	Aged 50+
Weeks on project	21	20	21	16	30	20	19	17
Base	*3,431*	*1,322*	*2,074*	*285*	*651*	*663*	*1,080*	*707*

	In work on entry	U/E on entry	Inactive on entry	No Quals	LTU/I	Return-ers	Lone Parents	Min. Eth. Group
Weeks on project	21	19	22	22	20	21	22	20
Base	*1,275*	*714*	*1,322*	*733*	*922*	*316*	*330*	*466*

	Other Lang.	Disabil/ Health	Carers	Low H. Capital	No Disadv.	Single Disadv.	Two Disadv.	Three+ Disadv.
Weeks on project	24	22	21	22	21	20	21	21
Base	*154*	*620*	*855*	*2,262*	*1,157*	*911*	*718*	*645*

	Poor B. Skills	PF 1	PF 2	PF 3	PF 4	PF 5
Weeks on project	24	24	23	17	16	24
Base	*396*	*1,059*	*548*	*1,217*	*278*	*328*

Base: All those who gave an answer to both start date and finish date questions

supported under Policy Fields 3 and 4, and among the youngest participants, and the longer ones among those who were inactive on entry. However, there are no very marked variations from the average figure of 21 weeks.

4.7 Early leavers from projects

Early departure from a project is always likely to be problematic for the project's managers, their planning and scheduling *etc*., but it is not necessarily a bad thing from the individual's point of view. Certainly, some may leave through dissatisfaction with the course: they may find that it is not appropriate for their needs, they may not be able to cope with its demands (though on the evidence of Table 4.14, this is unlikely to be widespread), they may not 'get on' with the other participants, and so on. Most unfortunate of all, the project may have closed, or had problems delivering the course, and the beneficiaries' participation may have been unwillingly terminated.

However, they may also leave for 'good' reasons: most obviously, they may find a job and leave the programme to take it up while it remains open to them. As we have seen above, about a third of beneficiaries had been receiving help with various aspects of job search, and it is not unreasonable to expect that any positive outcomes should be taken up straight away, even if this means leaving the course prematurely. Similarly 'good' reasons could be a college place becoming available, another training programme starting, the individual gaining their qualification earlier than expected, *etc.*

In between these two poles, there is a third category where the beneficiary's personal circumstances change unexpectedly for reasons completely unconnected to the project. They may be taken ill, they may move away from the area, become pregnant, go on holiday, *etc.* There are myriad personal reasons why individuals may have to withdraw from the course before they had planned to (or at least before the project managers expected them to), and partly as a result, it is not entirely clear how far projects should be expected to take responsibility for some or any of them. At one extreme, if for example an individual moves out of the area, then the project could not reasonably be expected to respond and find a way of keeping them on the programme, and similarly, if say a beneficiary had to go into hospital. At the same time, if say their caring responsibilities changed somewhat, or if their disability got a bit worse, then it

might reasonably be expected that the course should be adaptable enough to allow the individual to continue. This intermediate category is rather a grey area; whether the project might have done something to stop the early exit depends very much on the micro-circumstances of each case.

For these reasons, we not only asked beneficiaries whether they had left early, but also why they had done so. The results are discussed below.

4.7.1 Extent of early leaving and character of early leavers

We can see from Table 4.17 that early leaving has been significant, but cannot be described as widespread, with just 16 per cent of beneficiaries reporting that they had left earlier than expected.

We can also see that some categories of beneficiary were more inclined to leave early than others; for example, the younger they were, the more likely to leave early. There is some evidence too that early exits were more prevalent among people who were most disadvantaged (20 per cent among those with three or more disadvantages), and that it was more common for certain kinds of disadvantage (*eg* 22 per cent among people with basic skills problems, 22 per cent if they had a disability or health problem. Finally, early exits were slightly more common among those whom we know to have been actively looking for work when they joined the programme (*eg* 25 per cent among those unemployed on entry). Finally, early exits seem to have been more common in projects in Policy Fields 1 and 2, and particularly low in Policy Fields 4 and 5.

Table 4.17: Whether beneficiaries left their project early or stayed until the end, by key beneficiary groups

Proportions leaving early and staying to end	Total %	Male %	Female %	Aged < 18 %	Aged 18-24 %	Aged 25-34 %	Aged 35-49 %	Aged 50+ %
Left early	16	19	15	22	21	16	15	13
Stayed to end	81	79	83	75	78	82	84	83
Base	*3,431*	*1,322*	*2,074*	*285*	*651*	*663*	*1,080*	*707*

	In work on entry	U/E on entry	Inactive on entry	No Quals	LTU/I	Returners	Lone Parents	Min. Eth. Group
Left early	11	25	17	20	19	13	18	16
Stayed to end	87	73	80	77	80	85	82	83
Base	*1,275*	*714*	*1,322*	*733*	*922*	*316*	*330*	*466*

	Other Lang.	Disabil/ Health	Carers	Low H. Capital	No Disadv.	Single Disadv.	Two Disadv.	Three+ Disadv.
Left early	17	22	17	19	13	18	16	20
Stayed to end	78	74	81	79	84	80	81	78
Base	*154*	*620*	*855*	*2,262*	*1,157*	*911*	*718*	*645*

	Poor B. Skills	PF 1	PF 2	PF 3	PF 4	PF 5
Left early	22	21	21	14	9	12
Stayed to end	75	77	76	84	89	87
Base	*396*	*1,059*	*548*	*1,217*	*278*	*328*

Base: All those who gave an answer

It is reassuring to note, however, that in no category do early exits account for more than a quarter of entrants. In other words, at worst, three-quarters of entrants seem to have completed their course in full and as planned.

4.7.2 Reason for leaving early

Beneficiaries who left the course early were asked why this had been. As Table 4.18 shows, most of them gave a reason (only three per cent declined to answer or didn't know), although the list of reasons was a long and detailed one, reflecting their varied circumstances at the time.

The main clusters are drawn out in the table, however, and here we can see that the dominant reason for leaving early was that the individual concerned had found a job. Although not shown in the summary table, this was most common (at 39 per cent of early leavers) among those who said they were unemployed and actively looking for work when they entered the programme.

As a reason for leaving, dissatisfaction with the course was less widespread, at 16 per cent of early leavers (*ie* just three per cent of the whole sample). There were no large concentrations of this dissatisfaction, either among particular groups of beneficiary or within different kinds of project. However, it may be worth noting that exits due to dissatisfaction were slightly higher among the youngest early leavers (24 per cent of all early exits among the under 18s), and among those who were employed on entering the programme (also 24 per cent). Probably as a result of the latter, this reason for leaving was slightly higher among projects in Policy Fields 3 and 4, with their higher proportions of employed entrants, at 20 and 26 per cent respectively.

Becoming ill, or having to cope with some change in the individual's personal or domestic situation, were together almost as important a reason for early exits as finding a new job, accounting between them for nearly a quarter of all early exits.

Other reasons for early exits were very varied, with none of the cited reasons being given by more than one per cent of early leavers, except for ' work commitments/pressurised to go back to work' which was given by two per cent of respondents (almost all of whom were employed on entry).

In order to contain the complexity of the analysis, and in view of the fairly small numbers in many of the categories of reason, we have grouped the 25 different reasons given by respondents into just three groups:

- **Positive reasons**, include getting a job, gaining the necessary qualification early, starting another course, *etc.*

Table 4.18: Reasons for leaving early — summary

	As % of all early leavers	As % of all beneficiaries
Not satisfied with course	16	3
Found a job or moved jobs	23	4
Started education/further training	4	1
Financial reasons	4	1
Caring responsibilities	4	1
Problems relating to disability	4	1
Ill-health	10	2
Domestic/personal reasons	14	2
Other reasons	19	3
Base	*562*	*3,431*

Base: All those leaving their course early and giving a reason

Table 4.19: Reason for leaving the project early, by key beneficiary groups

Proportions who were…	Total %	Male %	Female %	Aged < 18 %	Aged 18-24 %	Aged 25-34 %	Aged 35-49 %	Aged 50+ %
Positive reasons	28	30	27	27	35	28	24	25
Negative reasons	34	35	34	43	34	31	39	25
Circumstantial reasons	31	27	34	18	25	35	32	43
Base	*380*	*251*	*305*	*62*	*136*	*105*	*161*	*91*

	In work on entry	U/E on entry	Inactive on entry	No Quals	LTU/I	Returners	Lone Parents	Min. Eth. Group
Positive reasons	23	45	18	24	23	22	24	24
Negative reasons	35	25	41	39	37	42	46	29
Circumstantial reasons	35	21	36	34	36	33	28	36
Base	*144*	*175*	*222*	*145*	*172*	*42*	*59*	*74*

	Other Lang.	Disabil/ Health	Carers	Low H. Capital	No Disadv.	Single Disadv.	Two Disadv.	Three+ Disadv.
Positive reasons	18	22	23	29	29	35	30	15
Negative reasons	41	37	33	35	33	34	32	39
Circumstantial reasons	38	36	36	29	28	26	33	39
Base	*26*	*137*	*146*	*423*	*151*	*165*	*118*	*128*

	Poor B. Skills	PF 1	PF 2	PF 3	PF 4	PF 5
Positive reasons	36	36	27	18	30	27
Negative reasons	36	31	37	37	32	33
Circumstantial reasons	23	25	27	40	39	36
Base	*88*	*219*	*113*	*165*	*24*	*40*

Base: all those leaving their course early, who answered all questions

- **Negative reasons**, include dissatisfaction with the course (or any aspect of it, including a realisation that it was not an appropriate one for them), financial reasons, the course itself terminating unexpectedly, inability of the course to cope with known problems (*eg* disability, caring responsibilities), *etc.*
- **Circumstantial reasons,** including unforeseen and unpredictable changes like the onset of illness or pregnancy, holidays, transport arrangements changing, *etc.*

We can see that just a third of the early leavers (six per cent of all beneficiaries) left for negative reasons, most of which were some form of dissatisfaction with the course or financial difficulties. These negative reasons tend to be somewhat more marked among the more disadvantaged (rising to 39 per cent among those with three or more disadvantages), among some groups of beneficiary (lone parents, for example) and among the inactive in general. However, even at the worst, the proportion of all beneficiaries leaving early for negative reasons, does not reach one in ten (*eg* lone parents at eight per cent, the under 18s at nine).

It is a moot point how far we should expect projects to be responsive to changes in beneficiaries' circumstances, and our focus on issues they might reasonably have been expected to be aware of (like disability) and coped with is admittedly *ad hoc*. Nevertheless, focusing just on issues which the projects would probably not have been able to anticipate, another third of early leavers (again just five per cent of

all entrants) left for circumstantial reasons. This does not vary greatly between different groups of beneficiary, but again rises somewhat among the more disadvantaged.

It is with the positive reasons, chief among them 'getting a job', that we find the most variety. Accounting for 23 per cent of all reasons (just under four per cent of all beneficiaries), these 'good' reasons account for almost half of the early leavers who were unemployed on entry. It is less widespread among early leavers who were inactive on entry, however, reflecting their generally lower propensity to find work.

4.8 Summary

40 per cent of beneficiaries lived within a couple of miles of their course, with two-thirds of the whole sample travelling no more than six miles. Among those employed on entry, driving to the course was much more usual (at 50 per cent) than for the others (about a quarter), while correspondingly, using the bus or tram was a lot more common among the unemployed and inactive entrants.

Two in three still clearly recalled that the project's equal opportunities policy was explained to them when they joined it, and this rises to 70 per cent for those in Policy Field 5. Across the sample as a whole, there was a fairly high level of uncertainty and lack of recall about this, accounting for about a fifth of beneficiaries.

Fewer beneficiaries (56 per cent) were aware that ESF had supported their course, and a third said that they did not know this.

Just under half of these respondents remembered agreeing a personalised plan when they joined the project, and although there is a proportion who can't recall, there is a substantial minority (39 per cent) who said that they definitely were not given the opportunity to draw up their own plan. Where such plans were drawn up, however, about three-quarters explicitly led towards the achievement of some form of qualification.

There was considerable variety in the length of time that beneficiaries had been on their courses, around an average of 21 weeks. Fully 39 per cent of them had taken part in courses for ten weeks or less, and these were somewhat more common among the men, the employed entrants, and in projects supported under Policy Field 4.

Within the activities undertaken on the programme, beneficiaries reported a very strong focus on skill acquisition, and on the vocational usefulness of the activities undertaken. Fully 88 per cent of respondents had received support in this area.

There is evidence here too for targeted delivery of support. Thus, in terms of the vocational focus of the training provided, some 61 per cent of beneficiaries said that they had been helped to improve their practical skills related to a particular job. Similarly, delivery seems to have aligned well with the particular needs of differing sub-groups. Thus, for example, 59 per cent of those with basic skills problems received help with reading or writing skills, and some 65 per cent of those for whom English was not the main language in the home received help with their English-speaking skills.

This evidence of targeting is consistent with the finding that, by and large, beneficiary expectations were fully met. Over 80 per cent of beneficiaries had their expectations met for both the skills they would need at work and the improvement in their self confidence (that is to say, among those expecting it, four out of five received it). The majority also had their expectations met about improving their qualifications, at 69 per cent, but this fell away somewhat with job search training to less than half of those expecting to get it.

Beneficiaries' gains in self confidence and other 'soft' skills, have been very widespread indeed, right across this sample of respondents, with some 87 per cent indicating gains in this area.

Just under two-thirds of the sample had been given some kind of practical help in finding work. This was most common among the under 25 age group (who presumably had little experience in this regard), and among those who were unemployed, but looking for work, when they joined the programme. Overall, this kind of support was more likely to have been taken up by beneficiaries without a job on entry, but despite this, significant proportions of them had not received it. Among those who were inactive on entry fully a third had not received it; among returners, slightly more at 38 per cent; among those who had not worked for an extended period, 38 per cent.

Four out of five respondents thought that the project had been relevant to their needs, while three-quarters thought that it had been appropriate for their abilities. While those who felt that provision had not been at the right level were in a small minority, far more of them felt that content had been too basic (18 per cent in all) than felt that it had been too advanced (four per cent). This pattern was replicated in all the beneficiary sub-groups which we analysed.

Well over four out of every five beneficiaries were satisfied with the quality of the course overall; most of them very satisfied. While there were some differences between different groups of respondent, they were mostly expressed as shifts between 'very' and 'fairly' satisfied; for no groups did the level of overt dissatisfaction rise above 11 per cent.

Early leaving has been significant, but was not widespread, with just 16 per cent of beneficiaries reporting that they had left earlier than expected. The dominant reason for leaving early, accounting for nearly a quarter of all cases, was that the individual concerned had found a job. This was most common (at 39 per cent of early leavers) among those who said they were unemployed and actively looking for work when they entered the programme. As a reason for leaving, dissatisfaction with the course was less widespread, at 16 per cent of early leavers (*ie* just three per cent of the whole sample). Taking all the 'negative' reasons for leaving early into account, just six per cent of all entrants had left early for negative reasons; almost as many had done so for 'good' reasons, like getting a job or starting a different course.

5. Project Outcomes

This chapter looks at the outcomes which the beneficiaries reported after completing their participation in the projects. In some cases we are able to ascribe the outcome in question directly to the project, either because the beneficiary attests to the link, or because the outcome was secured as part of the project's activity (*eg* a qualification gained). In other cases, the causality is necessarily less overt – for example, moves into employment following previous spells of unemployment seem likely to draw heavily on the support provided by the project, but there may be other factors involved in individual cases, which are beyond the scope of the research. In these cases we rely on statistical inference rather than direct attribution.

Nevertheless, it is possible to identify several ways in which the projects have unarguably helped the beneficiaries involved, and we will look in turn at:

- employment outcomes
- qualification outcomes
- 'soft' outcomes among those not working.

5.1 Employment outcomes

Employment outcomes cover full-time and part-time working, paid employment and self employment, and anything less precisely specified by respondents but that involved them working for pay and not being on benefit. There were a handful who cited these 'employed-other' outcomes, but too few on whom to base any percentage calculations.

Strictly speaking, of course, some of these 'outcomes' were not outcomes at all, because the individuals had held the job in question before they entered the course. We distinguish between these different entry states in the analysis immediately below.

Furthermore, some employment-related outcomes might turn on improved employment opportunities, *ie* getting a job eventually if still without one at the time of the survey, or getting a better one due to, say, improved qualifications or self confidence. The former, employability gains, are discussed in Section 5.3, under 'soft outcomes'. The latter, qualitative gains are discussed below.

5.1.1 Employment and activity patterns and progression in the labour market

Respondents were asked what their main activity was immediately after they left the project, and again presently (*ie* at the time of the survey). We look in turn at progress in broad terms between the four time periods on which we have data, at the more detailed post-project activities, and then at these activities in terms of different starting points.

Progress since a year before the projects

In Table 5.1 below, we have grouped their different activities into three summary categories (in paid work, unemployed and inactive) and brought these together with data showing their status before, and immediately before, they entered their projects.

Table 5.1: Distribution of activity across four time periods; all respondents

	12 months before project %	On joining project %	On leaving project %	At time of survey %
In paid work	41	37	47	53
Unemployed	9	21	11	9
Inactive	49	39	42	38
Base	*3,431*	*3,431*	*3,431*	*3,431*

Base: All those answering the questions

We can see from Table 5.1 that following their participation in the programme, and notwithstanding the fact that many of them were already in paid employment when they joined it, there has been a substantial and continuing shift of status among respondents towards employment. This contrasts sharply with their falling employment rate in the year before participation.

Looking at these results more closely, we observe firstly that employment increased sharply among these respondents when they left their projects, increasing by a full ten percentage points over the situation when they joined. It does not seem unreasonable to attribute this increase directly to the effect of the programme, because:

- these two cross-sections were taken immediately before, and immediately after, participation in the projects; and
- employment rates had been falling before entry, and yet rose significantly on exit.

Secondly, Table 5.1 shows that employment rates went on to increase in the months after leaving the project, albeit not so strongly as they had done, but still by a significant amount (six percentage points). This suggests that there are important and positive ongoing effects of participation in the programme. Furthermore, these are *net* figures — *ie* they take account of ongoing outflows from employment. We will show below that although there were quite high levels of job retention among those working when they left the programme, some nine per cent of them (just under four per cent of the whole sample) had stopped working by the time of the survey. This suggests that the subsequent *gross* inflow into employment was considerably stronger than shown above; amounting to almost ten per cent of the whole sample.

Thirdly, we can see that the rising level of unemployment among these respondents before they joined the project has been reversed; the unemployment rate virtually halved between joining and leaving the projects. Furthermore, it has continued to fall since beneficiaries left the project, further corroborating evidence of a continuing positive effect of participation.

Fourthly, we note that the programme does not seem to have been so successful in reducing inactivity within the sample. We observed earlier (Chapter 3), that inactivity had been falling sharply in the year prior to the programme, largely as future participants left education or training (although leading largely to an increase in unemployment, rather than to increased employment). The overall level of inactivity does not seem to have improved at all in the period that beneficiaries were actually taking part in the project, but it has reduced somewhat in the months since the projects ended. While we must allow for particular individuals making transitions between these groups in all directions, (see Figure 5.1), the aggregate result for inactivity remains disappointing. It suggests that the programme has had only very modest success in securing sizeable net movements of individuals into the labour market, who were previously outside it.

Post-project activities in more detail

The post-project activities of beneficiaries may be seen in more detail in Table 5.2, which breaks down their subsequent activities into eight categories.

Table 5.2 Employment and activity patterns after the project; all respondents

	Status on leaving project %	Status at time of survey %
Employed		
In paid work – full time	25	28
In paid work – part time	15	17
Self employed	7	8
Unemployed		
Unemployed – actively seeking work	11	9
Inactive		
In education or training	19	17
Sick/disabled	6	6
Voluntary work	4	4
Other inactive	14	11
Base	*3,431*	*3,431*

Base: All those who answered the questions

We note that there are some small inconsistencies between the percentages cited here and those summarised in Table 5.1. These arise from cumulative rounding and from drawing the different categories of activity into just three. In addition, the final category in Table 5.2, contains a few respondents who were working, but who provided no further details about that work. These are included in the summary 'in paid work' category in Table 5.1.

The more detailed breakdown in Table 5.2 confirms the rise in employment rates after participation in the projects. We can see that by the time of the survey most of the working beneficiaries were in full-time employment, with 17 per cent working part time and a further eight per cent in self employment. Also, by that time, some 17 per cent of beneficiaries were in education or training. Positive outcome rates (employment, self-employment, education/training plus voluntary work) were high, at 74 per cent by the time of the survey. However, inactivity remained quite high (at 43 per cent on leaving the project, and 38 per cent at the time of the survey).

Different outcomes from different starting points

Tables 5.3 and 5.4 look in turn at the two time periods, immediately on leaving the project and at the time of the interview, and again they show the distribution of activities at these times (in the top row). However, they go on to break down the respondents according to their previous activities (in both cases, their grouped activities immediately before joining the project. We should note that in view of the rounding of the percentages cited, there are again a small number of inconsistencies in the percentages shown in Tables 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4. These only amount to one or two percentage points and may be ignored.

They show that most of the movement into employment took place immediately on leaving the projects. Thus, among those unemployed or inactive, employment rates rose immediately after the course, to 38 and 18 per cent respectively. They continued to rise thereafter, but nothing like so strongly; to 45 and 24 per cent respectively.

Among those employed on entry, about 15 per cent had left or lost their jobs by the time the project finished. This shift into unemployment or inactivity does not seem to have continued and, if anything, to have moved back somewhat (with the employment rate falling to 84 per cent, and subsequently recovering a little to 88 per cent).

Table 5.3: Immediate activity outcomes, compared with activity immediately before joining project

Activity on leaving project	All respondents %	In work on joining project %	Unemployed on joining project %	Inactive on joining project %
In paid work – full time	25	46	22	7
In paid work – part time	15	25	9	9
Self employed	7	13	6	2
Unemployed – actively seeking work	11	3	32	7
In education or training	19	8	19	30
Sick/disabled	6	1	3	12
Voluntary work	4	1	2	8
Other	14	4	6	25
Base	*3,431*	*1,275*	*714*	*1,322*

Base: All those who answered both the questions

Table 5.4: Current activity outcomes, compared with activity immediately before joining project

Activity at time of survey	All respondents %	In work on joining project %	Unemployed on joining project %	Inactive on joining project %
In paid work – full time	28	49	27	9
In paid work – part time	17	25	10	13
Self employed	8	13	9	2
Unemployed – actively seeking work	9	2	29	6
In education or training	17	6	16	28
Sick/disabled	6	1	5	14
Voluntary work	4	1	1	8
Other	11	3	5	21
Base	*3,431*	*1,275*	*714*	*1,322*

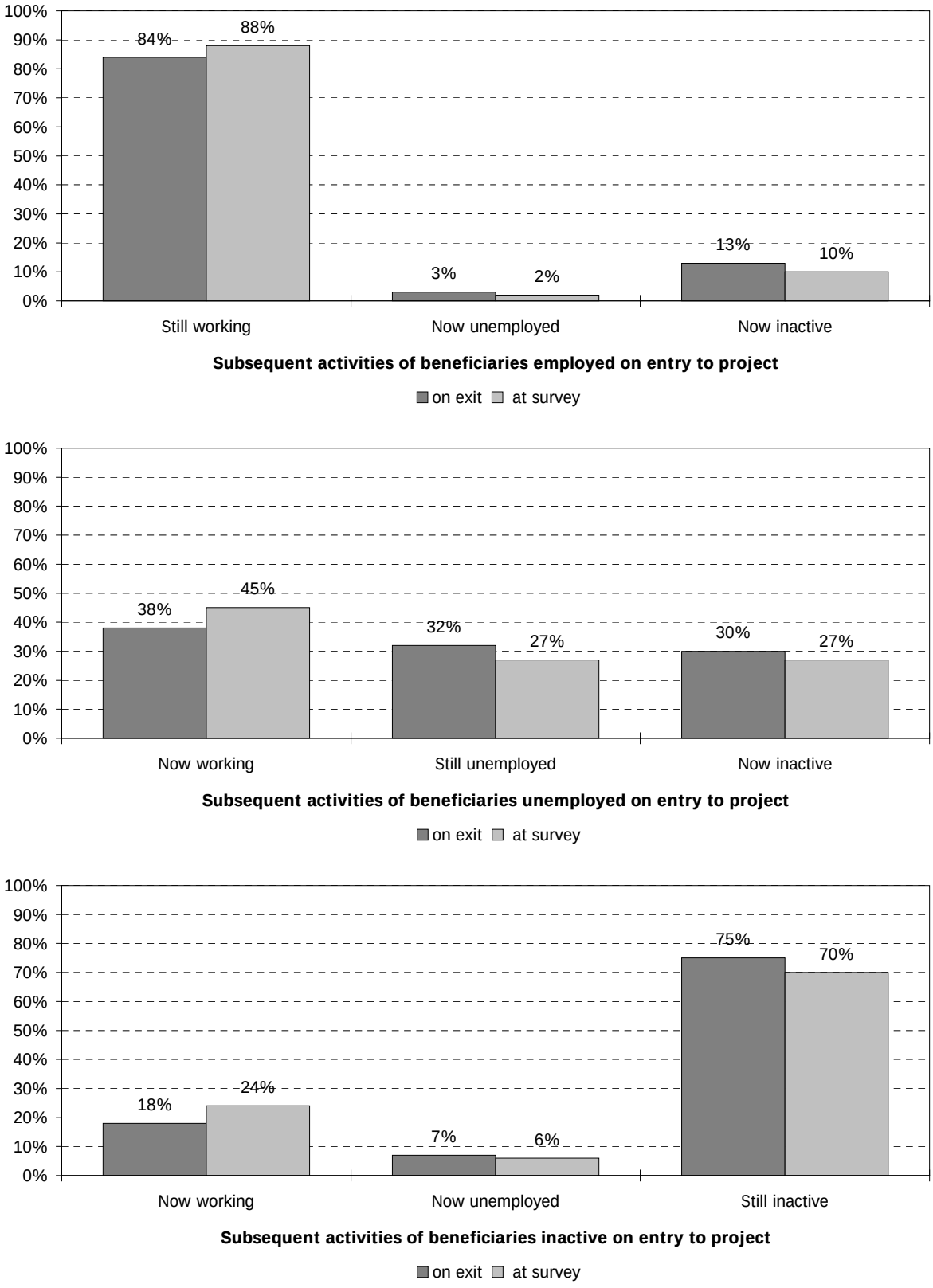
Base: All those who answered both the questions

Just under a fifth of beneficiaries had stayed in education or training after their project had finished, and this increases to over a quarter of those who joined their projects from inactivity. Although these proportions had declined by the time of the survey, the movement was very modest, and it would seem that a significant proportion of leavers (17 per cent overall by the time of the survey) were staying in education or training.

Moving on up: Individual movements towards employment over time

Another way of conceptualising the progressive impact of the projects on their participants' employment chances, while simultaneously recognising that they started from very different circumstances, is to look at the different entry groups in turn, and consider how their employment status changed after they took part. This is set out in the three charts comprising Figure 5.1. The first looks at entrants who were already in work, and shows how their employment status had changed on leaving the project, and later at the time of the survey. The second looks at entrants who were unemployed, and the third at entrants who were inactive.

Figure 5.1: Changing employment status over time by entry status



Base: All respondents; N = 3,431

The figures clearly show that most of the employed entrants had stayed in employment, with a few becoming unemployed, and rather more leaving the labour market altogether to become inactive, mainly in fact by staying in education or training. By contrast, the unemployed entrants show a much more diverse pattern. certainly there is a clear move into work, with 38 per cent and then 45 per cent taking up a job. Something under a third had remained unemployed, and a similar proportion had moved into inactivity, and this shift was less dominated by education/training activities. Finally, we observe that almost a quarter of the inactive entrants had moved into work, with a few more looking for a job without actually being in one at the time in question. A significant proportion remain inactive however.

5.1.2 Who is being helped? Employment and activity patterns by key beneficiary characteristics

As we have shown in Chapter 3, there was significant variety among beneficiaries who took part in the programme, in terms of both their then employment status, and the extent and character of the disadvantages they faced in moving into, or closer to, work. For this reason, we cannot properly assess job outcomes without taking account of these different starting points, but we can describe them, and this is done in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5: Beneficiary activities at the time of the survey, by key beneficiary groups

Proportions in each activity group	Total %	Male %	Female %	Aged < 18 %	Aged 18-24 %	Aged 25-34 %	Aged 35-49 %	Aged 50+ %
In paid work	53	53	53	22	53	58	63	46
Unemployed	9	14	6	12	13	10	7	7
Inactive	38	33	41	67	34	32	30	47
Base	*3,431*	*1,322*	*2,074*	*285*	*651*	*663*	*1,080*	*707*

	In work on entry	U/E on entry	Inactive on entry	No Quals	LTU/I	Return-ers	Lone Parents	Min. Eth. Group
In paid work	88	45	24	34	24	27	39	43
Unemployed	2	27	6	12	11	3	7	17
Inactive	10	27	70	55	65	70	53	40
Base	*1,275*	*714*	*1,322*	*755*		*316*	*330*	*466*

	Other Lang.	Disabil/ Health	Carers	Low H. Capital	No Disadv.	Single Disadv.	Two Disadv.	Three+ Disadv.
In paid work	36	25	49	47	72	59	39	24
Unemployed	16	7	6	12	7	12	10	9
Inactive	48	67	45	41	21	29	51	67
Base	*154*	*620*	*855*	*2,262*	*1,157*	*911*	*718*	*645*

	Poor B. Skills	PF 1	PF 2	PF 3	PF 4	PF 5
In paid work	33	46	34	59	84	58
Unemployed	16	14	12	6	7	2
Inactive	51	40	53	35	9	39
Base	*396*	*1,059*	*548*	*1,217*	*278*	*328*

Base: All those who gave an answer

Here, we can see that the employment rate achieved by the time of the survey varied greatly, around the 53 per cent average. It did not vary greatly between men and women, but otherwise there are considerable differences, from highs of 84 and 88 per cent among beneficiaries in Policy Field 4 and among those who were in work to start with, to lows of 22 per cent among the very youngest beneficiaries (under 18s), of 24 per cent among those previously in long-term unemployment or inactivity and among those facing multiple disadvantages (three or more), and of 25 per cent among those with a disability or health problem.

We can see from Table 5.5 that, as we might expect, the fewer disadvantages an individual has to overcome, the more likely are we to observe higher employment rates, and we can see also that employment rates tend to be higher among those in prime age groups, with much lower rates among the very young, and somewhat below average rates among those aged 50 or more.

Furthermore, employment rates at the time of the survey were below average among ethnic minorities, returners, lone parents and those without qualifications. However, in large part this is because they tended also to have far lower employment rates before they joined the programme.

5.1.3 Distance travelled to a job

In order to overcome this difficulty about different starting points, we need to take into account the different tendencies among our respondents to have been in work when they began the course. This is done in Figure 5.2 (overleaf), which looks in turn at each of the groups we have identified, and shows the proportions employed when they joined their projects, and the additional proportions in paid work at the time of the survey.

It is easy to overlook it, but we should first of all note that the employment rate has only fallen for one of our analytical groups — *ie* those who were defined as being in work when they entered the programme.

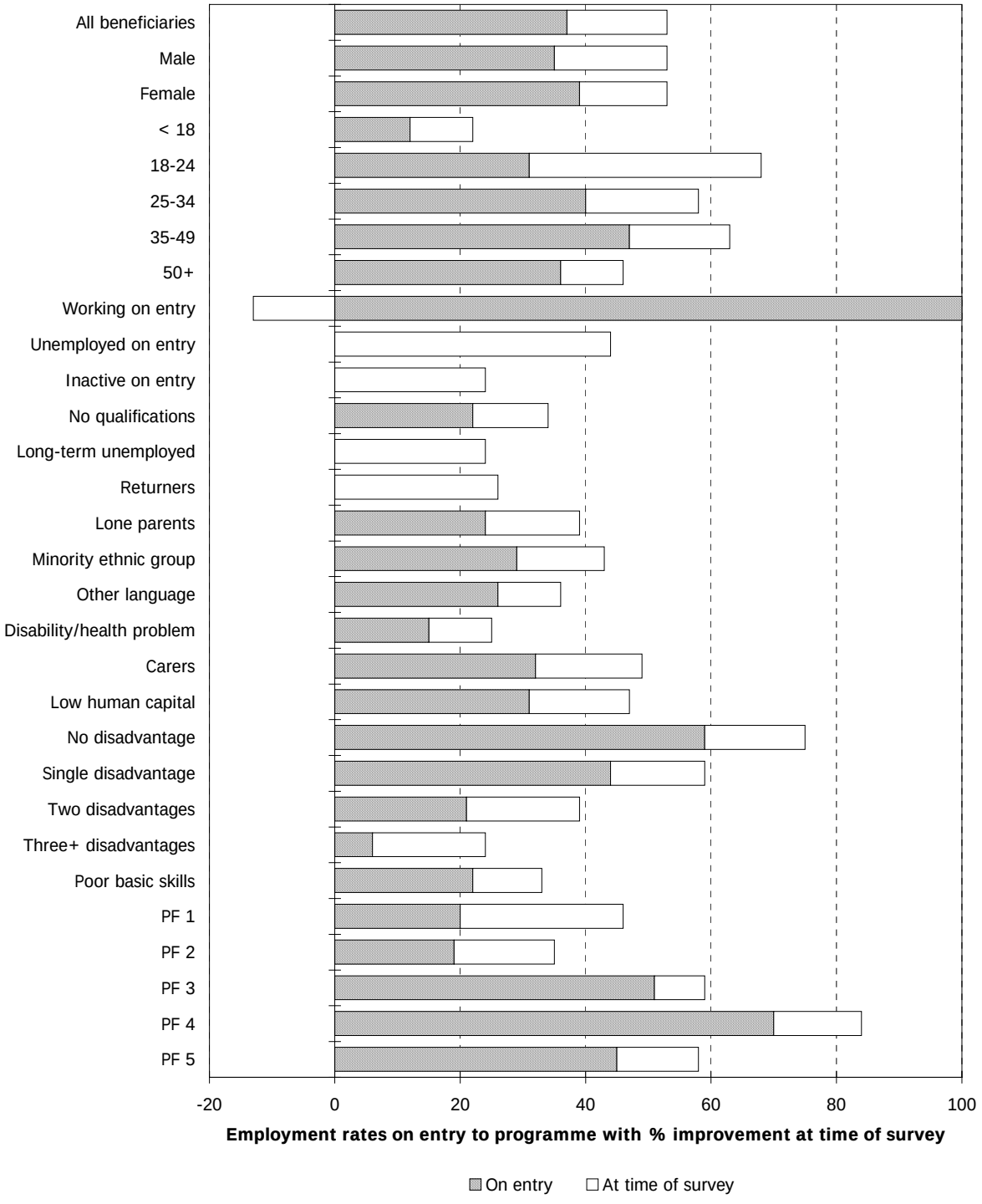
Obviously, their employment rate could hardly have gone up, and with any degree of labour market mobility, it would be expected to be somewhat lower. Furthermore, some 16 per cent of these employed entrants were in jobs which at that time they knew to be temporary ones. At 12 per cent, the proportionate reduction is in line with the ten per cent reduction in employment among employed beneficiaries in the year before they joined the programme.

Correspondingly, very strong employment growth is observed among those who were (by definition) not working when they joined the programme. Thus, among the previously unemployed, the previously inactive, returners to the labour market, and the long-term unemployed, we can see very substantial gains in the proportion employed.

Viewed in this light, we can see that the two youngest age groups have done very well, with job rates increasing by about three-quarters. Similarly, and again belying their modest absolute performance, lone parents, those with a disability or health problem, and carers have also benefited disproportionately from the programme, and increased their employment rates by 70, 67 and 53 per cent respectively.

By the same token, beneficiaries joining the programme with skill deficiencies have also done better than average. Employment rates among those with low human capital, those without qualifications and those with basic skills problems are seen to have improved by about half.

Figure 5.2: Employment rate changes between joining the programme and the time of the survey



Source: All respondents who answered both questions

5.1.4 Job types, before and after the project

As we have seen, 37 per cent of beneficiaries were already in employment when they joined their projects. The first column of Table 5.6 shows their occupational distribution. It is evident that there was a wide variety of job types, even at this level of aggregation. Thus, over a third of working beneficiaries were working in the three 'top' occupational groups, encompassing managerial, professional, and technical occupations. A further seven per cent were in skilled manual occupations.

Table 5.6: Occupational distribution of employment, on entry to project, and at time of survey — summary analysis

Occupational distribution Standard Occupational Classification	All respondents in paid work when they started the course		Not working on entry to the project
	On entry to the project %	At the time of the survey %	At the time of the survey %
Managers and senior officials	13	10	4
Professionals	8	8	6
Associate professional and technical	15	16	11
Administrative and secretarial	12	13	13
Skilled trades	7	7	6
Personal service	15	14	12
Sales and customer service	10	8	10
Process, plant & machine operatives	5	5	5
Elementary occupations	12	11	14
Not known	3	9	21
Base	*1,275*	*1,811*	*642*

Base: All those in work on entry to the project, or at the time of the survey who gave an answer

Other sizeable clusters were in administrative and secretarial occupations (12 per cent), personal service jobs (15 per cent), selling work (ten per cent) and unskilled elementary occupations (12 per cent).

By the time of the survey, the employment rate had risen to 53 per cent of beneficiaries, and as we can see from the final column in Table 5.6, these new entrants were also well distributed across the occupations. However, there were some obvious differences; thus, we can see that the proportion entering managerial or professional jobs, at ten per cent, was around half the rate among respondents in paid work at the start of the course as a whole. Further, the proportion entering elementary occupations was slightly higher than original concentration in these jobs, and far higher than the overall occupancy rate after taking part in the programme. We should note, of course, that some of this change may derive from the much higher proportion of 'not stated' for results after the programme.

Despite these differences, there is no strong sense from these results that new job entry was being achieved by allowing beneficiaries to aim or drift downmarket into significantly less skilled or demanding occupational groups than the employed-on-entry cohort had occupied.

5.1.5 Permanent work?

There is evidence from these results that job gains have involved a higher proportion of temporary and/or casual employment contracts than had been the case among those who had been working before the programme. Thus, before the programme, some 82 per cent of beneficiaries who were working on entry had open-ended or permanent employment contracts. By the time of the survey, among an expanded cohort of employed beneficiaries, this proportion had fallen to 71 per cent, as Table 5.7 (overleaf) shows. There were no significant differences between men and women in this respect.

This fall was the product of two opposite movements:

- Among those who had been employed on entry, and still were, the proportion with permanent contracts had remained more or less the same (in fact it had risen marginally, to 83 per cent); while

- Among those not previously working, the proportion who had now secured jobs with such permanent contracts was much lower; only about half of them had secured permanent jobs, albeit there was a high proportion who could not say for sure what kind of contract they had.

Does this mean that job gains among those previously not working had been achieved through encouraging them to take up temporary or casual jobs much more frequently than had been usual among beneficiaries as a whole, or indeed than is found among the employed population as a whole (*ie* less than ten per cent)? It would be premature to conclude this on the basis of these results, because the comparison made above is between one cohort already established in work and another wholly made up of new hires. In the wider labour market, the proportion of temporary contracts is far higher among people who are moving about in the labour market than it is among those who are settled in their jobs. It is precisely for this reason that some analysts believe that temporary employment forms a useful 'transmission belt' for people moving into work or between jobs. So, the higher-than-previous rate of temporary jobs among beneficiaries who had gained a job through (or anyway, after) their participation may reflect nothing more than their position close to an entry port into the labour market.

Table 5.7: Permanency of employment — summary analysis

Proportions with permanent or temporary contracts now	Total %	Male %	Female %	In work on entry %	U/E on entry %	Inactive on entry %
Permanent	71	71	71	83	53	52
Temporary, fixed term, seasonal, *etc.*	16	15	16	11	21	25
DK, not sure, not stated	13	14	13	6	26	23
Base	*1,811*	*698*	*1,098*	*1,118*	*324*	*318*

Base: All those in work at the time of the survey who gave an answer

5.1.6 Job mobility

An important feature of Objective 3 provision is to support flexibility and responsiveness to change in the labour market. It seeks to help people to adjust to, and take advantage of, changing labour markets, by supporting them in moving to new jobs, perhaps with different entry requirements and needing different skills and/or qualifications.

There are, of course, several different kinds of job move which might follow participation in one of these projects, and they are shown in Table 5.8, which distinguishes between:

- beneficiaries working at the time of the survey, but without work when they entered their project, and whom we may regard for this purpose as entering a new job
- beneficiaries who were working on entry but who have moved to a different job with a different employer. This includes any movement from employment to self employment or *vice versa*
- beneficiaries who were working on entry but who have now taken a different job, albeit without moving to a new employer. We might imagine that many of these moves will entail promotion, although some may well be 'defensive' job changes, particularly if entrants were among those 'threatened by redundancy or job loss'; and, by contrast
- beneficiaries who have not moved from the job or the employer with whom they were working when they joined the project.

There were few marked differences in these job/status moves according to the different kinds of disadvantage observed among beneficiaries, and so we do not show them in Table 5.8. Nevertheless, we can see that:

Table 5.8: Movement between new job and employers, current job, by key beneficiary groups

Proportions with job or employer change	Total %	Male %	Female %	Aged < 18 %	Aged 18-24 %	Aged 25-34 %	Aged 35-49 %	Aged 50+ %
Working now but not working on entry	35	41	34	60	52	40	29	29
New job, new employer	16	17	16	20	20	20	13	13
Different job, same employer	5	3	6	–	3	4	6	6
Same job same employer	41	38	43	19	24	34	50	52
Base	*1,811*	*698*	*1,098*	*62*	*345*	*385*	*678*	*324*

	In work on entry	U/E on entry	Inactive on entry	PF 1	PF 2	PF 3	PF 4	PF 5
Working now but not working on entry	–	97	92	63	53	21	20	27
New job, new employer	26	–	–	15	14	18	18	–
Different job, same employer	7	1	2	2	4	6	4	10
Same job same employer	64	–1	–6	16	27	54	55	51
Base	*1,118*	*324*	*318*	*483*	*188*	*715*	*233*	*192*

Base: All those in work at the time of the survey who gave an answer

- Nearly two-thirds of those who were working on entry and were still doing so at the time of the survey, were working in the same job with the same employer. This stability was particularly evident also among older beneficiaries and those in projects supported under Policy Fields 3, 4 and 5.
- Still, fully a quarter of these employed entrants had moved to a new job with a new employer by the time of the survey, and a further seven per cent had moved to a new job with their existing employer.
- There were few differences between men and women in this respect.

It seems fair to conclude that the impact of the projects in terms of job mobility among the already-employed were evident and had involved a significant minority of them (a third) in some kind of job change. However, it also seems likely that such moves may take longer to achieve than job entry from unemployment, since the individual in question may feel no strong urgency about the move, or at least not one so strong as the wish to move out of unemployment. We might therefore expect more movement in the longer term.

5.1.7 Job retention

Among those who had been working when they left the programme, job retention was relatively strong. 81 per cent of them were still working at the time of the survey, *ie* on average about six months later.

There were no major differences between different groups of beneficiary in this propensity to stay in employment after the programme.

5.2 Qualification outcomes

We observed in Chapter 4 (Table 4.2) that two-thirds of beneficiaries had joined their project expecting it to be a means of improving their qualifications. Among those who did not have any qualifications to start with, this proportion rose to71per cent. Thus it would seem certain that many beneficiaries looked to their participation in these projects as a means of improving their competitiveness in the labour market, through gaining or improving their qualifications. In this section of the report, we consider how well they succeeded in this direction.

5.2.1 Qualification gains

Table 5.9 shows the possession and gaining of qualifications before and during the course. We saw already in Chapter 3 that a fifth of beneficiaries entered these projects without any qualification, and this is repeated in the last column of Table 5.9.

Table 5.9: Qualifications held by beneficiaries before and after the project; all respondents

Whether or not held or gained any qualification(s) or units/credits	All beneficiaries %	Beneficiaries with a qualification at the start %	Beneficiaries with no qualification at the start %
Yes, gained qualification(s)	55	60	53
Yes, gained units or credits	4	4	5
No gain	34	37	35
Base	*3,431*	*2,646*	*733*

Base: All those answering each question

Just over a half (55 per cent) of all entrants had gained a full qualification by the time they left the project, and a further nine per cent of those who did not gain a full qualification had gained credits or units towards one.

Interestingly, the propensity to gain qualifications was almost identical between the group already holding one/some, and those who had none, with 53 per cent of those not holding any qualification on entry, gaining one through the project, and another five per cent gaining units or credits.

We noted earlier (in Chapter 4) that about a third of all respondents recalled that they had worked out a PTP when they joined the course which made reference to them working towards a qualification, and we note here that the proportion actually gaining one (or credits towards one) was almost twice that (at 63 per cent).

It is not obvious what this possible contradiction shows. It may, of course, show nothing more than that beneficiaries have poor memories about drawing up their plans when they joined the project. But leaving this aside, it suggests also that a PTP which focuses on a qualification gain, is far from necessary to actually gaining one. This, in turn, suggests that a qualification gain may be so obviously the aim or intention of the programme offered to entrants (or a by-product of that offer), that there is little or no need for any personal decision to go down this route. Conversely, it may be that a proportion of entrants were so enthused about getting a qualification, or improving their qualifications, that this had been their intention all along and no special individual plan was really needed to crystallise this decision.

From the data held here, we cannot tell much more about the role of personalisation of the programme, and the relationship between this and qualification gains. Nevertheless, this might be an interesting area to review in more detail in future leavers' surveys.

5.2.2 Qualification levels gained

Those beneficiaries who gained a full or partial qualification were asked to provide details of the qualification they had secured through their project. This produced a listing of qualifications some 36 cases long, and with 13 per cent not knowing exactly what qualification they had gained.

To simplify the analysis, we subsequently assessed these 36 different qualifications against the NVQ framework to provide a common basis for comparison and assessment. The results are shown in Table 5.10, which distinguished between full and part qualification gains.

Table 5.10: Qualifications gained through the project; by level and full/part

	Full qualification gained				Part qualification gained			
Qualifications gained by level	**All %**	**Men %**	**Women %**	**No Quals %**	**All %**	**Men %**	**Women %**	**No Quals %**
NVQ/SVQ Level 1 or equivalent	16	17	15	20	5	–	9	12
NVQ/SVQ Level 2 or equivalent	13	13	13	10	3	–	5	7
NVQ/SVQ Level 3 or equivalent	7	6	8	4	*	–	1	–
NVQ/SVQ Level 4 or equivalent	5	6	5	3	–	–	–	–
NVQ/SVQ Level 5 or equivalent	1	2	1	*	–	–	–	–
Other qualification	49	50	48	49	63	55	66	60
DK/NS	13	12	13	16	27	31	23	31
Base	*1,870*	*653*	*1,209*	*388*	*131*	*55*	*74*	*35*

Base: All those who gave an answer

Unfortunately, the level of detail given by beneficiaries was insufficient reliably to code about half of the qualifications into an NVQ equivalent. These are shown in the penultimate row (other qualification). However, among the ones for which we could reliably estimate an NVQ equivalent, we can see that:

- most full, and all the partial, qualifications gained were at NVQ Level 1 or 2
- small proportions of beneficiaries had successfully gained qualifications at higher NVQ equivalent levels
- there was no significant difference between men and women
- among those with no qualifications when they joined their course, the attainment level was only slightly lower, with 20 per cent of them for whom we could estimate an equivalent, gaining a qualification at NVQ Level 1, compared with 16 per cent in the sample as a whole.

5.3 'Soft' outcomes among beneficiaries not in employment

As we have seen earlier in this chapter (Table 5.4), nearly half our sample (47 per cent) were not working at the time of the survey. Nine per cent said that they were unemployed but actively seeking work, while the remaining 38 per cent were economically inactive, but engaged in quite a wide variety of activities, some of which seemed to be temporary ('*eg* 'took a break', 'travelling', 'moving house', *etc.*).

Furthermore, we also saw in Table 5.4, that employment rates had continued to creep up in the period between leaving the project and responding to the survey. This slower rise in employment rates had been

fed both by individuals who had said they had been inactive when they had left the project, as well as those who had been unemployed and looking for work at that time.

For this reason, it is sensible to consider to what extent there might be lasting and ongoing effects which would help beneficiaries to improve their circumstances in the labour market, even though they had not yet done so. We consider in turn whether they were continuing to look for work (*ie* activation outcomes) and whether they felt that their employability had been improved.

5.3.1 Activation

Even if project beneficiaries were not working at the time of the survey, a valuable outcome from their participation in the project may be an enhanced readiness to work, and greater efforts on their part to find it. Such a 'soft' outcome might well be entirely invisible, and not reflected in the individual's current status in the labour market (they remain 'not working').

Nevertheless, a key part of any movement from welfare to work must be the intention to find work, even if it has as yet not produced a job. Indeed, an important aim of projects in ESF Policy Field 1 is precisely to encourage a more active stance on the part of non-working individuals towards looking for, and finding, work, and most projects (either directly or indirectly) offer help and encouragement to beneficiaries to move in this direction.

To this end, our questionnaire simply asked respondents who were not working at the time of the survey, whether they were now looking for work.

Table 5.11 shows that a substantial minority of individuals who were not employed at the time of the survey (23 per cent) were nevertheless still looking for work. Just over a third said that they were not, and unfortunately another 41 per cent (not shown in table) declined to answer the question.

It was shown in Table 5.5 that 12 per cent of beneficiaries who had been working when they joined the programme had ceased to do so by the time they responded to the survey. These are shown in the second row of the table, and it is evident that only a minority of them were still actively looking for work. However, among those who had been unemployed immediately before joining their project, the intention to work was much higher (at 48 per cent).

Unfortunately, active job search was undertaken by only a small minority of those who had previously been inactive (just 15 per cent).

This would suggest that there remains some prospect for employment rates to increase further, as some non-working beneficiaries look for, and find, work over a more extended period. However, we would not expect this to amount to a significant net increase. The proportions looking for work now among those not working are far lower (24 per cent, *cf* 40 per cent) than they were before the courses started, and as we have seen, there is a modest but continuing fallout from employment to factor into the estimate as well.

Table 5.11: Active job search among those not working at time of survey, by status on joining project; all respondents not working at time of survey

	Looking for work Row %	Not looking for work Row %
All respondents not working at time of survey	24	37
Previously employed	24	43
Previously unemployed	48	23
Previously inactive	15	42

Base: 1,622

Base: All respondents not working at time of survey, who answered both questions

Nevertheless, it is clear that for some individuals, their hope and intention to find work has been increased and remains strong.

5.3.2 Enhanced employability

Employability is not just in the eye of the beholder. It is also the case that people who are more confident in themselves are likely to improve their chances of finding work, and that if they feel better placed to get work, for example through having enhanced their skills, then they will be more motivated to seek, and to find, work.

Thus, a second sort of 'soft outcome' relates to improved self-esteem, both in terms of belief about the chances of getting a job, and self-assessed skills brought to it. To this end, we asked those of our respondents who were not working at the time of the survey, but who were anyway still looking for work (392 respondents in all) whether, as a result of the course, they felt:

- more confident about getting a job; and
- more skilled to do the kind of work which they sought.

The results are shown in Table 5.12 overleaf. It should be noted that these results are based on just 392 individuals, and that as a result, some of the bases among the sub-groups are very small. This should be kept in mind when reviewing the results.

5.3.3 Enhanced confidence

Looking first at the confidence of these individuals, we can see that over three-quarters of them were more confident now that they would find work than they had been before the course. While there is not much difference between men and women in this respect, it is evident that this confidence boosting effect declines with age; falling from 87 per cent among the youngest to around 70 per cent for those over 25. This is not a huge decline, and in all cases a good majority of respondents were now more confident. Nevertheless, recalling that the over 50s had benefited least in terms of the proportionate increase in employment after the programme, it is disturbing to see that they also showed one of the lowest improvements in confidence.

Those who were not working when they entered the programme generally have above average increases in confidence, as do many of the sub-groups with particular constraints; *eg* lone parents (80 per cent, those without qualifications on entry (83 per cent), those from a minority ethnic group (86 per cent), and those with poor basic skills (85 per cent).

We noted above (Figure 5.2) that employment rates had risen disproportionately more among the more disadvantaged groups taking part in the programme. Interestingly, this effect is shown again in the improved confidence among those who were not working in these multiply-disadvantaged groups. Here, we can see that the proportion recording an improvement in their confidence as a result of the programme increases (albeit only a little) consistently as the incidence of their disadvantages also rises.

5.3.4 Improved skills

Turning to the issue of enhanced skills, again, a very high proportion (73 per cent) of these respondents who were not working at the time of the survey but who were nevertheless still looking for work, indicated that despite this, they felt that they were now better skilled than previously for the kind of job they were looking for. Here, we can see that women seem to have improved their skills slightly more than men, and although there is no consistent pattern with age, the oldest respondents record an above-average improvement in their skills.

Table 5.12: Improved confidence and skills among beneficiaries without a job who are looking for work, by key beneficiary groups

Proportions who were…	Total %	Male %	Female %	Aged < 18 %	Aged 18-24 %	Aged 25-34 %	Aged 35-49 %	Aged 50+ %
More confident now	77	76	79	87	80	83	69	73
No more confident now	22	23	21	13	20	17	29	25
DK	1	1	1	–	–	–	2	3
Better skilled now	73	70	75	67	76	72	70	76
No better skilled now	26	30	21	33	23	28	24	24
DK	2	–	3	–	1	–	5	–
Base	*392*	*195*	*204*	*47*	*93*	*91*	*113*	*48*

	In work on entry	U/E on entry	Inactive on entry	No Quals	LTU/I	Return-ers	Lone Parents	Min. Eth. Group
More confident now	70	77	80	83	83	72	80	86
No more confident now	30	22	20	16	16	27	20	14
DK	–	1	1	1	1	2	–	–
Better skilled now	72	69	75	73	78	69	72	69
No better skilled now	24	28	25	27	22	31	23	25
DK	4	3	–	–	1	–	6	5
Base	*38*	*189*	*148*	*96*	*147*	*41*	*55*	*104*

	Other Lang.	Disabil/ Health	Carers	Low H. Capital	No Disadv.	Single Disadv.	Two Disadv.	Three+ Disadv.
More confident now	80	80	73	83	69	79	80	81
No more confident now	20	20	26	19	29	20	20	18
DK	–	–	1	1	2	1	–	1
Better skilled now	69	79	66	74	72	74	70	73
No better skilled now	32	21	29	25	27	26	26	24
DK	8	–	5	1	1	–	3	3
Base	*38*	*59*	*95*	*324*	*91*	*97*	*92*	*112*

	Poor B. Skills	PF 1	PF 2	PF 3	PF 4	PF 5
More confident now	85	82	76	67	88	79
No more confident now	14	16	24	31	12	21
DK	1	1	–	1	–	–
Better skilled now	71	72	72	76	76	68
No better skilled now	27	27	26	21	24	32
DK	2	2	2	3	–	–
Base	*80*	*174*	*89*	*87*	*7*	*34*

Base: all those leaving their course early, who answered all questions

Otherwise, there seems to be little discernible pattern in the propensity to perceive an improvement in skills, although it should be said that for none of these sub-groups does the proportion who recognise such an improvement fall below two in three.

5.3.5 Difficulties perceived in finding work

At two points in the interview, beneficiaries were asked what barriers in finding work they experienced; firstly, all respondents were asked this about the time before they joined the project, and secondly those not working at the time of the survey were asked what difficulties they were faced with now. It is on this second group that we now focus. We know what difficulties they said they faced when they joined their projects, and we know how they perceived these subsequently at the time of the survey. By comparing responses given to both these questions by the group not working at the time of the interview, we can get a clear picture any changes in their perceptions of the things that were holding them back before and after their participation in the course.

The results are shown in Table 5.13. Here, we can see that there had been a very significant fall in the proportions of non-working beneficiaries who felt that they were now being held back in finding a job compared to their circumstances before they joined the programme. For most of the barriers which they had cited before joining the programme, these beneficiaries were only half as likely to cite them afterwards at the time of the survey. This seems to suggest that for most of the beneficiaries who had not managed to find a job after the programme, the perceived impact on them of the various factors that had stopped them finding work in the past had been greatly reduced, or indeed altogether removed.

Table 5.13: Constraints which make it difficult to find work, perceived by beneficiaries who were not working after the project — summary analysis

	Barriers to finding work as perceived…		
	before they joined the project %	**at the time of the survey %**	**% reduction**
Wrong/no qualifications training or skills	43	18	-58
Basic skills not good enough	16	7	-56
Skills out of date	32	12	-62
Age	32	15	-53
No jobs available around here	28	18	-36
No recent experience of working	37	19	-49
Could not find childcare	15	8	-47
Disability or health problems	27	13	-52
Care of relative or friend	8	5	-37
Problems with transport	20	12	-40
English language not good enough	8	3	-62
Base	*1,620*	*1,620*	

Base: All respondents not in work at the time of the survey

For example, we can see that 43 per cent of these beneficiaries had felt that their chances of finding work had been held back by having the wrong (or no) skills. After the programme, only 18 per cent of them report being disadvantaged in this way — a fall of some 58 per cent. Similarly, large reductions in perceived barriers to employment were recorded for obsolete skills, for poor basic skills, for poor command of English, and for lack of recent work experience.

It is not entirely clear what conclusion we may properly draw from this finding. Certainly, it seems to be the case that these non-working beneficiaries perceived fewer or lower barriers preventing them from

getting a job now that they had been on the programme. For some of the cited reductions, however, for example their age, the lack of jobs in the locality, or their disability or illness, the objective situation seems unlikely to have improved to this extent. Rather, the beneficiaries appear to be better able to cope with, or understand, these problems, so that even if there has been little actual improvement in their real circumstances, the impact on their job prospects has been significantly reduced. However, for some perceived constraints, those concerned with skills and work experience, there is no reason to suppose that there is not also an objective improvement in the beneficiaries' circumstances as a result of their participation in the programme.

Whether these lowered barriers are subjective or objective is not the key point here, however. The important point is that participation in the programme, even among those who have not gained employment as a result, has led to a significant fall in the incidence of a whole range of barriers which had previously been reported as stopping people from finding work.

5.4 Summary

Following their participation in the programme, and notwithstanding the fact that many of them were already in paid employment when they joined it, there has been a substantial and continuing rise in employment. This contrasts sharply with their falling employment rate in the year before participation.

Employment rates rose quickest (by ten percentage points) immediately beneficiaries left their projects, and went on to increase in the months after leaving the project, albeit not so strongly as they had done, but still by a significant amount (a further six percentage points), suggesting that there are important and positive ongoing effects of participation in the programme.

Although the unemployment rate virtually halved between joining and leaving the projects, the programme has been less successful in reducing the overall level of inactivity. This had fallen sharply among beneficiaries in the year before they joined the projects (as many left education for unemployment), but had fallen only modestly (by one percentage point) since then.

Individuals who were most disadvantaged both started and ended the projects with much lower employment rates than those with fewer disadvantages or none. Nevertheless, the degree of improvement achieved over their starting points was far higher among the disadvantaged groups (*ie* the proportionate rise in employment rates). Furthermore, the more disadvantaged they were, the better was this improvement. Thus, the programme has clearly been disproportionately helpful and successful in helping the most disadvantaged beneficiaries to find work.

Fully a fifth of beneficiaries entered these projects without any qualification, but by the time they left, well over half (55 per cent) had gained a full qualification, and a further four per cent had gained credits or units towards one. Those who started the course with no qualification were almost as likely to gain one (53 per cent) as those already holding one (60 per cent).

Among beneficiaries who were not working at the time of the survey, positive 'soft' outcomes were highly evident.

- Firstly, a substantial minority of them (24 per cent) were nevertheless still actively looking for work.
- Secondly, over three-quarters of them were more confident now that they would find work than they had been before the course.
- Thirdly, a very high proportion (73 per cent) of them, felt that they were now better skilled than previously for the kind of job they were looking for; and
- Finally, there has been a very significant fall in the proportions of non-working beneficiaries who felt that they were being held back from finding a job compared to their circumstances before they joined the programme.

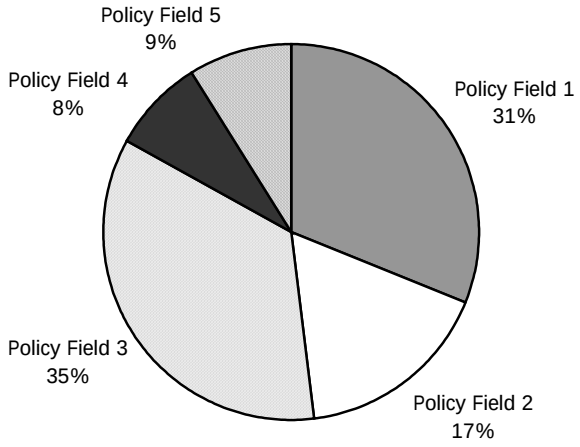
6. Policy Field Analysis

6.1 Introduction

As we showed in Chapter 1, at the core of Objective 3 are a number of 'Policy Fields', which act to focus support. They help to identify the particular types of activity and beneficiary that the programme will prioritise for support.

In this chapter we look systematically at the different targeting, activities and outcomes indicated for each of the five Policy Fields. Figure 6.1 shows that they differ considerably in their size, with Policy Fields 1 and 3 accounting for two-thirds of beneficiaries between them.

Figure 6.1: Distribution of respondents between the different Policy Fields



Base: All beneficiaries; N = 3,431

6.2 Policy Field 1 — Active labour market policies

6.2.1 The role of Policy Field 1

The English Objective 3 operational programme clearly sets out the main role of Policy Field 1 as:

- Developing and promoting active labour market policies to combat and prevent unemployment, achieved through:
  - preventing both women and men from moving into long-term unemployment
  - facilitating the reintegration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market
  - supporting the occupational integration of young people; and of
  - supporting the occupational integration of persons returning to the labour market after a period of absence.

There is a range of different activities identified as suitable for support under this priority although, on the basis of an evaluation of previous ESF-supported provision , job search activity, help finding contacts to look for a job, and wage subsidies are highlighted as particularly effective. Two areas particularly encouraged here have been:

- better targeting of integrated packages of support; and,
- more to support the needs of older workers and, in particular, the long-term unemployed.

6.2.2 Characteristics of beneficiaries

The broad target groups for measures aimed at labour market activation are:

- long-term unemployed people
- unemployed young people
- economically inactive people (*eg* lone parents, older men)
- people at risk of unemployment.

Within and across each of these groups, there is a particular focus on those people who lack appropriate skills to return to work, or have no or outdated qualifications.

Sex and age profile

Table 6.1 shows the composition of the weighted sample of beneficiaries in Policy Field 1 by age and gender.

It shows that Policy Field 1 projects have attracted beneficiaries from across the age spectrum, but with a particular concentration of relatively young entrants. However, reflecting the particular focus on young people, we can see that around half were aged under 25 at the time of the survey, compared with 27 per cent in the programme as a whole. Correspondingly, there were fewer older entrants here, with just ten per cent aged over 50, compared with twice this proportion in the programme as a whole.

The average age among beneficiaries as a whole was 35, but here in Policy Field 1 it falls to 29, reflecting the age composition of the unemployed cohort on which this field concentrates.

Table 6.1: Age group of PF 1 beneficiaries, by gender

	Male Row %	**Female Row %**	**All**
All	49	50	
	%	**%**	**%**
< 18	15	15	15
18-24	38	33	36
25-34	19	19	19
35-49	18	21	20
50+	10	10	10
Base	*483*	*500*	*1,059*

Base: All PF 1 beneficiaries who gave an answer

We have already seen (Table 3.1) that women account for 60 per cent of all the leavers surveyed, and that this representation of women within the projects extends across all five Policy Fields. Now we can see that they make up just half of the beneficiaries in Policy Field 1.

We note that there is not a great difference between the age distribution between men and women, albeit with slightly more younger men than women, and slightly more middle aged women than men.

Incidence of disadvantaged groups

It is clear that the entry cohort to Policy Field 1 was generally disadvantaged in ways, and to an extent, that broadly matched the intake as a whole. This is captured best by the combined variable 'low human capital', which shows that nearly three-quarters of Policy Field 1 entrants were likely to be held back, and have their labour market opportunities constrained, by some combination of poor qualification, wrong or out-of-date skills, restricted work experience, *etc.*

In addition, this is also demonstrated by a range of other factors, such as the proportion of disabled and 'returner' entrants, where intakes into Policy Field 1 projects were broadly comparable with the programme as a whole. Although not shown in the table, we find that 17 per cent of Policy Field 1 entrants had no qualifications when they joined the programme, compared with slightly more for the programme as a whole.

Table 6.2: Incidence of discrete LM disadvantages among beneficiaries in PF 1 projects

	LTU/I %	Returners %	Lone Parents %	Min. Eth. Group %	Other Lang. %	Disabil/ Health %	Carers %	Low H. Capital %
PF 1 beneficiaries	27	7	8	21	6	17	18	71
All	27	9	10	14	4	18	25	66
Base	*285*	*75*	*88*	*221*	*68*	*178*	*195*	*755*

Base: All PF 1 beneficiaries who gave an answer

Status on entry

A key target group for Policy Field 1 is people who are unemployed but actively seeking work, and we can see from Table 6.3 that just over a third of beneficiaries said that they were unemployed on joining the programme. This proportion rises to almost half among the men, and although it is correspondingly lower among the women, almost half of the women were economically inactive on entry.

It is hardly surprising that in view of these two concentrations, this Policy Field has a very low intake of individuals already in employment. At 20 per cent, this is not the lowest among the Policy Fields (Policy Field 2 has 18 per cent) but it is close to it.

Table 6.3: Employment status one week before joining the project, among beneficiaries in PF 1 projects, by gender

	Males %	Females %	All %
Employed	16	23	20
Unemployed	48	23	35
Inactive	31	50	40
Base	*483*	*500*	*1,059*

Base: All PF 1 beneficiaries who gave an answer

We might suppose that these employed entrants were people at risk of unemployment, and there is some evidence of this among the data collected in the survey. Thus:

- Two-thirds were in permanent jobs, and this is much less than the 82 per cent for all the employed entrants to the programme as a whole.
- More than half (57 per cent) of these entrants had been in their job for less than a year, compared with 30 per cent for employed entrants in the programme as a whole.

Of course, short job tenures and temporary contracts do not necessarily point to impending unemployment, but they must be regarded as high risk factors in this direction.

Duration of unemployment before entry to project

Although this Policy Field does focus on long-term unemployed people, the proportion of beneficiaries who had been out of work for long periods of time is generally lower in this Policy Field than in the programme as a whole. This is undoubtedly because other Policy Fields have focused more on inactive people, who may well not have worked for extremely long periods, if at all.

Nevertheless, as Table 6.4 shows, a fifth of Policy Field 1 beneficiaries had not worked for two years or more. This compares with a third for non-working entrants to the programme as a whole. By contrast, however, in Policy Field 1 we can see that 30 per cent of entrants had never had a job, and this compares with 23 per cent among non-working entrants to the programme as a whole.

Table 6.4: Length of time since last worked, among beneficiaries in PF 1 projects, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Less than three months	15	15	15
At least three months but less than six months	8	5	7
At least six months but less than a year	11	6	9
At least a year but less than two years	13	7	10
Two years or more	17	25	21
Never worked	25	34	30
Don't know	2	1	2
Base	*405*	*383*	*846*

Base: All those not working when entered a PF 1 project, and who gave an answer

6.2.3 Support received

As discussed above, there is a range of different activities identified as suitable for support under this priority, most prominent among them, job search activity, help in finding contacts to look for a job, and wage subsidies are highlighted as particularly effective. We look at these first, before moving on to consider skill acquisition and confidence building.

Job search

We noted above (Table 4.11) that 63 per cent of beneficiaries overall had received help of some kind to support them in job search. Reflecting the higher proportion of the intake who were already active job searchers, albeit mostly unsuccessful ones, Policy Field 1 projects had provided far more of their entrants with job search help, at 79 per cent of beneficiaries.

Table 6.5: Ways in which beneficiaries in PF 1 projects were helped with job search and work experience, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions given practical help in finding a job	82	76	79
Proportions given practical help in finding a job through….			
work experience or a work placement	40	33	36
general training about the world of work	55	44	49
advice or guidance about what sorts of work or training you could do	65	60	62
training in how to look for work	54	44	49
contacts to help you look for a job	51	39	44
job broking; leads for particular vacancies	47	31	39
Base	*483*	*500*	*1,059*

Base: All those in PF 1 projects who received help with job search and work experience and who gave an answer

Furthermore, in every category of support, Policy Field 1 projects were more likely to have provided this kind of help than did the programme as a whole. For example, we note above that just over a third of Policy Field 1 beneficiaries received a work experience placement, and this compares well with the figure of 21 per cent for the programme as a whole, and perhaps reflects the more 'job-ready' character of entrants to this Policy Field, or the more specialist set-up of providers, with better links directly to employers than in some of the other Policy Fields.

Training and skills

The proportion of Policy Field 1 beneficiaries who reported that the programme had improved the skills they would need at work was very high, at 88 per cent, and exactly in line with the average for the programme as a whole. This provision was particularly high for women in Policy Field 1 projects, at 91 per cent (*cf* 88 per cent for the programme as a whole).

Table 6.6: Ways in which beneficiaries in PF 1 projects were helped to improve the skills they would need at work, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped to improve skills	86	91	88
Proportions helped to improve skills through…			
practical skills related to a particular job	63	63	62
improved computing/information technology (it) skills	56	62	59
study skills (such as essay or report writing, using libraries)	44	49	46
improved reading and writing skills	35	40	37
improved maths and number skills	34	28	31
improved English speaking skills	33	37	35
training in wider job skills (such as admin or book-keeping)	30	30	30
training in management and/or leadership skills	31	24	28
Base	*483*	*500*	*1,059*

Base: All those in PF 1 projects who received help with skills/training and who gave an answer

Some 62 per cent of beneficiaries said that they had been helped to improve their practical skills related to a particular job. As with the programme as a whole, it seems fair to conclude then that PF 1 projects have also been delivering precisely focused vocational training and skill development across very high proportions of beneficiaries, whatever their starting circumstances or constraints.

The proportions gaining computing or IT skills was also impressively high (at 59 per cent of the whole sample).

Improved basic skills support was much less widely spread, but still reached a substantial minority of beneficiaries, at 37 per cent for literacy, 31 per cent for maths and 35 per cent for the English language. This suggests evidence of positive targeting and delivery of support appropriate to people's perceived problems in the labour market.

'Soft' skills

In addition to these gains, we can see from Table 6.7 that gains in self confidence and other 'soft' skills, have been very widespread indeed within Policy Field 1 projects. Fully 92 per cent of Policy Field 1 respondents reported that the programme had built up their self confidence or 'soft' skills in some way (*cf* 87 per cent for the programme as a whole). In common with the programme as a whole, we note that women tended to identify these gains slightly more than men.

Looking at the particular ways in which these 'soft' skills have been secured, close to three-quarters of beneficiaries recognised that their 'soft' skills had been improved in one or another of these different ways. In particular, there are also quite widespread gains in skills which will be useful within the workplace, such as communicating with people (71 per cent), working with other people as part of a team (76 per cent), and solving problems (70 per cent).

Table 6.7: Ways in which beneficiaries in PF 1 projects were helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work	91	95	92
Proportions helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work through….			
expressing yourself and communicating with people	70	75	72
working with other people as part of a team	74	78	76
solving problems	68	72	70
motivation	71	76	73
ability to do things independently	70	76	73
ability to take responsibility	69	72	70
Base	*483*	*500*	*1,059*

Base: All those in PF 1 projects who received help to build self-confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work and who gave an answer

Course completion/early leavers

For the programme as a whole, we showed above (Table 4.17) that early leaving had been significant, but could not be described as widespread, with just 16 per cent of beneficiaries reporting that they had left earlier than expected. In projects supported under Policy Field 1,early leaving had been slightly more widespread, at 21 per cent, as Table 6.8 shows.

Table 6.8: Whether beneficiaries left their PF 1 project early, or stayed until the end

Proportions leaving early and staying to end	Male %	Female %	All %
Stayed to end	73	81	77
Left early	24	17	21
Base	*483*	*500*	*1,059*

Base: All those in PF 1 projects who gave an answer; beneficiary evaluation

However, this might well be expected in view of the cluster of younger men in PF 1 projects, as the analysis in Chapter 4 suggested that this group was somewhat more prone to leave early than others.

Although we do not show it in the table, it is reassuring to note that among early leavers from Policy Field 1 projects, the proportion leaving for 'good' reasons was 36 per cent. This is somewhat higher than across the programme as a whole (28 per cent), and probably reflects the fact that for almost all of them (30 of the 36 per cent), the reason for going early was that they had found a job. This, too, is somewhat higher than for the programme as a whole (23 per cent).

Satisfaction with project

Participants in projects supported under Policy Field 1 reported very high levels of satisfaction with the programme, as Table 6.9 shows. We can see that 80 per cent of beneficiaries were either very or fairly satisfied with their project, although men tended to be somewhat less satisfied than women.

Table 6.9: Degree of satisfaction expressed with project, by beneficiaries in PF 1 projects

Proportions who were…	Male %	Female %	All %
Very satisfied	36	47	41
Fairly satisfied	40	37	39
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10	8	9
Fairly dissatisfied	*7*	*4*	*5*
Very dissatisfied	*6*	*2*	*4*
Base	*483*	*500*	*1,059*

Base: All those in PF 1 projects who gave an answer

We noted in Figure 4.1 above, that beneficiaries in Policy Field 1 had the lowest satisfaction index of any of the five Policy Fields, and somewhat below average for the programme as a whole. There is no obvious reason for this to emerge from the survey findings.

6.2.4 Outcomes

As with our analysis above of the programme as a whole, we identify several ways in which Policy Field 1 projects have unarguably helped the beneficiaries involved, and we look in turn at:

- employment outcomes
- qualification outcomes
- 'soft' outcomes among those not working.

Job outcomes

Table 6.10 shows the employment and 'other activity' outcomes for beneficiaries from Policy Field 1 projects, both immediately on completing their project, and at the time of the survey.

It shows that:

- employment rates of 38 per cent and then 46 per cent had been achieved, respectively straight after beneficiaries finished their projects, and at the time of the survey
- about a quarter of beneficiaries were in education or training
- positive outcome rates (employment, education/training plus voluntary work) were high, at 68 per cent, and then 73 per cent
- unemployment had fallen from 35 per cent on entry to just 14 per cent at the time of the survey.

Table 6.10: Employment and activity patterns after the project; all respondents from PF 1 projects

All respondents	Work FT	Work PT	Self Empl.	U/E	Education/ Training	Sick/ Disabled	Carer	Vol. Work	Other
	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
Status immediately on leaving project	22	12	4	18	26	4	0	4	9
Status at time of survey	26	15	5	14	24	5	0	3	7

Base: All those who from PF 1 projects answered the questions

The employment rates achieved here, were slightly lower than for the sample as a whole (46 per cent, *cf* 53 at the time of the survey). However, the proportion of people working when they joined Policy Field 1 projects was relatively low, as we have shown above, and consequently the *proportionate* increase in employment for Policy Field 1 beneficiaries (*ie* the percentage increase on the low starting base) was the highest for any of the Policy Fields.

Qualification gains and improvements

Almost a fifth of Policy Field 1 beneficiaries entered these projects without any qualification, and this is shown in the first column of Table 6.11.

Over a half (57 per cent) of all entrants had gained a full qualification by the time they left the project, and a further four per cent had gained credits or units towards one.

As we showed in Chapter 2, the proportionate improvement in qualifications for Policy Field 1 beneficiaries was exactly on average for the programme as a whole.

Table 6.11: Qualifications held by beneficiaries in PF 1 projects, before and after the project

Whether or not held or gained any qualification(s) or units/credits	Held qualification(s) before starting the project %	Gained qualification(s) through the project %	Gained unit(s) or credit(s) towards qualification(s) through the project %
Yes	81	58	5
No	17	37	31
Base	*1,059*	*1,059*	*1,059*

Base: All those in PF 1 projects answering each question

'Soft' outcomes

Table 6.10 above showed that there were continuing job gains after beneficiaries had ended their course. It is worthwhile, therefore, to consider to what extent there might be lasting and ongoing effects which would help beneficiaries to improve their circumstances in the labour market, even though they had not yet done so. We consider whether beneficiaries felt that their employability had been improved.

Table 6.12: Improved confidence and skills as a result of the project, among beneficiaries in PF 1 projects without a job

Proportions who were…	Male %	Female %	All %
More confident now	84	80	82
No more confident now	15	18	16
DK	1	1	1
Better skilled now	68	77	72
No better skilled now	*32*	*18*	*27*
DK	–	*5*	*2*
Base	*102*	*61*	*360*

Base: All those without a job in PF 1 projects who gave an answer

Enhanced confidence

Looking first at the confidence of these individuals, we can see that 82 per cent of them were more confident now that they would find work than they had been before the course. While there is not much difference between men and women in this respect, the men tended to be somewhat more confident in this respect.

Improved skills

Turning to the issue of enhanced skills, again, a very high proportion (72 per cent) of these respondents who were not working at the time of the survey but who were nevertheless still looking for work, indicated that despite this, they felt that they were now better skilled than previously for the kind of job they were looking for. Here, we can see that women seem to have improved their skills slightly more than men.

6.3 Policy Field 2 — Equal opportunities for all and promoting social inclusion

6.3.1 The role of Policy Field 2

The English Objective 3 operational programme sets out the main role of Policy Field 2 as:

> *'Promoting equal opportunities for all in accessing the labour market, with particular emphasis on those exposed to social exclusion.'*

The key target groups across the Objective 3 programme in Great Britain share low employment rates and high unemployment rates.

Features of ESF support seen to be of value in the light of existing provision for these groups are:

- integrated packages of support
- 'pathway' approaches to those facing the greatest labour market disadvantage, and
- activity to promote and enhance the capacity of local support services and community groups.

6.3.2 Characteristics of beneficiaries

The kinds of beneficiary targeted by Policy Field 2 are:

- disabled people
- people from minority ethnic groups
- older people
- returners to the labour market (including lone parents and those with caring responsibilities)
- people with basic skills needs (including people with learning disabilities).

This Policy Field is particularly concerned to support people facing multiple disadvantage.

Sex and age profile

Table 6.13 shows the composition of the weighted sample of beneficiaries in Policy Field 2 by age and gender.

It shows that Policy Field 2 projects have attracted beneficiaries from across the age spectrum, and without the particular concentration of entrants aged 18 to 24 observed in Policy Field 1 projects. Correspondingly, there were more older entrants here, with almost a fifth aged over 50, close to the average for the programme as a whole. Consequently, the average age of Policy Field 2 beneficiaries, at 35, is exactly in line with the whole sample.

Table 6.13: Age group of PF 2 beneficiaries, by gender

	Male	**Female**	**All**
	Row %	**Row %**	
All	37	61	
	%	**%**	**%**
< 18	23	12	16
18-24	14	13	13
25-34	15	22	19
35-49	25	33	30
50+	22	18	20
Base	*229*	*383*	548

Base: All PF 2 beneficiaries who gave an answer

We have already seen (Table 3.1) that women account for 60 per cent of all the leavers surveyed, and that this representation of women within the projects extends across all five Policy Fields. Here again, with women making up 61 per cent of beneficiaries, Policy Field 2 projects are exactly in line with Objective 3 projects as a whole.

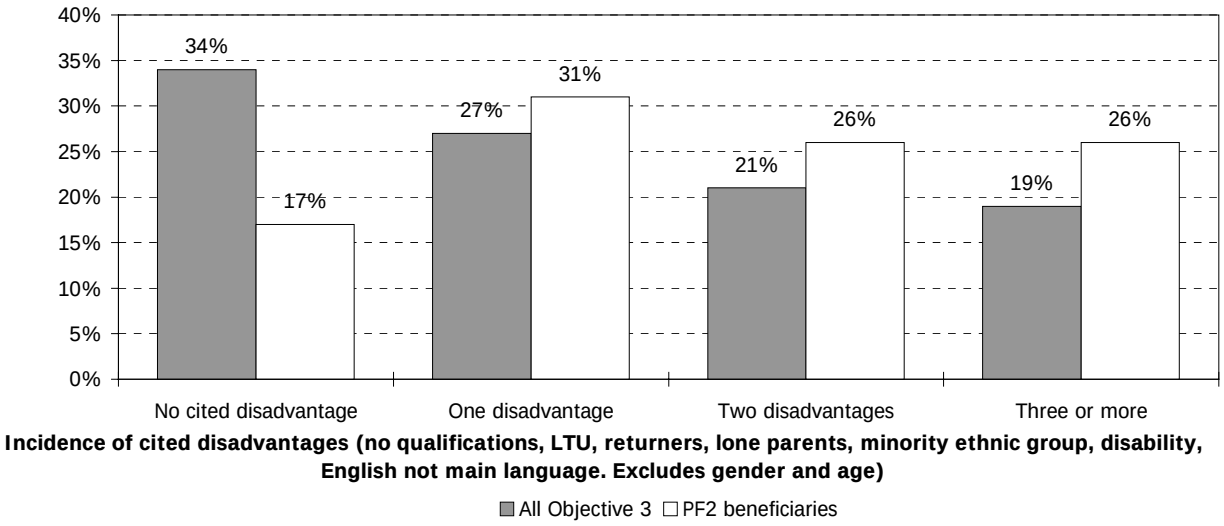
We note that there is not a great difference between the age distribution between men and women. However, the men tend to be rather more concentrated at each end of the age spectrum by comparison with the women. Thus, 40 per cent of the men were aged between 25 and 49, compared with 55 per cent of the women.

Incidence of disadvantaged groups

This Policy Field has a particular emphasis on disadvantaged groups. We can see from Figure 6.2 that the concentration of individuals with multiple disadvantages is much more marked than within the programme as a whole.

Although this indicator does not include age or gender (to be compatible with previous evaluations), we have already seen that Policy Field 2 projects have an average intake of older people and women. As regards the other disadvantages, which are included in this indicator, and in the targeting criteria for Policy Field 2 projects, we can see that Policy Field 2 beneficiaries are far less likely to have none of them, and at the extreme, are much more likely to have three or more (just over a quarter of Policy Field 2 beneficiaries) than those in the programme as a whole.

Figure 6.2: Incidence of multiple disadvantages; PF 2 projects, *cf* all Objective 3



Base: All respondents

Turning now to the kinds of disadvantage on which these projects seem to have focused, we can see from Table 6.14 that these beneficiaries generally had lower human capital resources than did beneficiaries as a whole. For example, over a third of them (see Table 6.23 below) had no qualifications when they joined the project. Furthermore, within these projects there are particularly marked concentrations of beneficiaries with a disability or health problem, and members of minority ethnic groups, as well as higher than average representation of long-term unemployed/inactive individuals, returners, and lone parents.

Table 6.14: Incidence of discrete LM disadvantages among beneficiaries in PF 2 projects

	LTU/I %	Returners %	Lone Parents %	Min. Eth. Group %	Three+ Disadv. %	Disabil/ Health %	Carers %	Low H. Capital %
PF 2 beneficiaries	32	12	12	19	27	29	26	79
All	27	9	10	15	19	18	25	66
Base	*205*	*68*	*62*	*102*	*146*	*161*	*140*	*434*

Base: All PF 2 beneficiaries who gave an answer

Although not shown in the table, we find that 20 per cent of Policy Field 2 entrants had poor basic skills, compared with 12 per cent for the projects as a whole.

Status on entry

A key target group for Policy Field 2 is people who are unemployed or inactive, and we can see from Table 6.15 that three-quarters of beneficiaries fell into these categories on joining the programme. This compares with 60 per cent for all beneficiaries. Both men and women were much more likely to be inactive, rather than unemployed and actively seeking work, when they joined the programme, but this bias was somewhat more evident among the women.

Policy Field 2 projects had the lowest proportion of employed entrants of any of the Policy Fields. As with Policy Field 1 projects, there is limited evidence that these were individuals under threat of unemployment, and again as with Policy Field 1 beneficiaries, they were more likely to have short job tenures or to have temporary contracts than were employed-entrant beneficiaries as a whole.

Table 6.15: Employment status one week before joining the project, among beneficiaries in PF 2 projects, by gender

	Males %	Females %	All %
Employed	16	19	18
Unemployed	27	19	22
Inactive	50	58	55
Base	*229*	*383*	542

Base: All PF 2 beneficiaries who gave an answer

Duration of unemployment before entry to project

We have already shown, in Table 6.14, that Policy Field 2 beneficiaries were more likely to be long-term unemployed or inactive than were beneficiaries as a whole, when they joined their project. Furthermore, we can see in Table 6.15 that over half of them were inactive (and this compares to 40 per cent in Policy Field 1 projects, and 39 per cent in the projects as a whole). It is no surprise, then, to note that entrants had frequently been out of work for extended periods before they joined Policy Field 2 projects, and that well over a quarter of them had never previously had a job.

Table 6.16: Length of time since last worked, among beneficiaries in PF 2 projects, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Less than three months	8	9	9
At least three months but less than six months	8	4	6
At least six months but less than a year	10	6	7
At least a year but less than two years	9	9	9
Two years or more	26	35	32
Never worked	29	31	30
Don’t know	2	2	2
Base	*191*	*308*	*447*

Base: All those not working when entered a PF 2 project, and who gave an answer

In Table 6.16, we can see that this problem of long-term exclusion from the labour market seems to have been much more evident among female entrants to Policy Field 2 projects, where three-quarters of them had not worked for a year or more, if at all. This contrasts with slightly under two-thirds for the men.

6.3.3 Support received

As discussed above, there is a range of different activities identified as suitable for support under this priority, most prominent among them integrated packages of support, and 'pathway' approaches to those facing the greatest labour market disadvantage.

Training and skills

In view of the high incidence of people with low human capital resources, it is satisfying to report (Table 6.17) that the proportion of Policy Field 2 beneficiaries who reported that the programme had improved the skills they would need at work was very high, at 85 per cent, virtually in line with the average for the programme as a whole. Unlike Policy Field 1 projects, there was no marked bias in favour of women on this activity.

Some 56 per cent of beneficiaries said that they had been helped to improve their practical skills related to a particular job. As with the programme as a whole, it seems that Policy Field 2 projects have also been delivering precisely focused vocational training and skill development to a majority of beneficiaries, whatever their starting circumstances or constraints.

The proportions gaining computing or IT skills was also impressively high (at 55 per cent of the whole sample).

This Policy Field had almost double the average incidence of people with basic skills problems when they joined the project (20 per cent, *cf* 12 for all beneficiaries). Although the incidence of provision of basic skills support is somewhat higher than for the whole programme, the difference is not particularly marked. What is marked, however, is the focus of this basic skills support; among those who entered Policy Field 2 with an acknowledged basic skill problem, fully 59 per cent received help with reading/ writing, 46 per cent with maths/number, and 48 per cent with language. This suggests evidence of positive targeting and delivery of support appropriate to people's perceived problems in the labour market.

Table 6.17: Ways in which beneficiaries in PF 2 projects were helped to improve the skills they would need at work, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped to improve skills (summary)	85	86	85
Proportions helped to improve skills through…			
practical skills related to a particular job	59	55	56
improved computing/Information Technology (IT) skills	58	54	55
study skills (such as essay or report writing, using libraries)	34	41	38
improved reading and writing skills	40	35	36
improved maths and number skills	34	26	29
improved English speaking skills	29	30	29
training in wider job skills (such as admin or book-keeping)	30	24	26
training in management and/or leadership skills	21	16	18
Base	*229*	*383*	548

Base: All those in PF 2 projects who received help with skills/training and who gave an answer

'Soft' skills

In addition to these gains, we can see from Table 6.18 that gains in self confidence and other 'soft' skills, have been very widespread indeed within Policy Field 2 projects. Fully 89 per cent of Policy Field 1 respondents reported that the programme had built up their self confidence or 'soft' skills in some way (slightly more than for the programme as a whole), and this was shared evenly between the men and women beneficiaries.

Looking at the particular ways in which these 'soft' skills have been secured, over two-thirds of beneficiaries recognised that their 'soft' skills had been improved in one or another of these different ways. In particular, there are also quite widespread gains in skills which will be useful within the workplace, such as communicating with people (71 per cent), and working with other people as part of a team (68 per cent). Motivation gains were also very widespread (at 65 per cent), as was the enhanced ability to act independently (69 per cent).

Table 6.18: Ways in which beneficiaries in PF 2 projects were helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped to build self-confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work (summary)	90	90	89
Proportions helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work through…			
expressing yourself and communicating with people	69	73	71
working with other people as part of a team	69	69	68
solving problems	64	58	60
motivation	67	65	65
ability to do things independently	72	69	69
ability to take responsibility	63	62	61
Base	*229*	*383*	548

Base: All those in PF 2 projects who received help to build self-confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work and who gave an answer

Job search

We showed above (Table 4.11 and 6.5) that 63 per cent of beneficiaries overall, and 79 per cent of them in Policy Field 1 projects had received help of some kind to support them in job search. With a high proportion of non-working beneficiaries, but a concentration of inactive ones within this, it is perhaps not surprising that Policy Field 2 projects seem to fall between these two positions, with 70 per cent of beneficiaries receiving some kind of job search help.

As with Policy Field 1 projects (but rather less so), we found that in every category of job search support, Policy Field 2 projects were also more likely to have provided this kind of help than did the programme as a whole. For example, we note above that 28 per cent of Policy Field 2 beneficiaries received a work experience placement, and this compares well with the figure of 21 per cent for the programme as a whole. The provision of advice and guidance, training in job search methods, and job broking help was also widely spread across this sub-sample.

Table 6.19: Ways in which beneficiaries in PF 2 projects were helped with job search and work experience, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions given practical help in finding a job (summary)	73	70	70
Proportions given practical help in finding a job through…			
work experience or a work placement	30	27	28
general training about the world of work	43	35	38
advice or guidance about what sorts of work or training you could do	55	53	53
training in how to look for work	40	33	35
contacts to help you look for a job	32	33	32
job broking; leads for particular vacancies	32	30	31
Base	*229*	*383*	548

Base: All those in PF 2 projects who received help with job search and work experience and who gave an answer

Course completion/early leavers

For the programme as a whole, we showed that just 16 per cent of beneficiaries reported that they had left earlier than expected. In projects supported under Policy Field 2, early leaving had been slightly more widespread, at 21 per cent, as Table 6.20 shows.

Table 6.20: Whether beneficiaries left their PF 2 project early, or stayed until the end

Proportions leaving early and staying to end	Male %	Female %	All %
Stayed to end	71	79	76
Left early	24	19	21
Base	*229*	*383*	548

Base: All those in PF 2 projects who gave an answer; beneficiary evaluation

As with Policy Field 1, and indeed the programme as a whole, the proportion leaving for 'good' reasons was 27 per cent, lower than the (probably) more job ready beneficiaries in Policy Field 1, but almost exactly in line with the programme as a whole (28 per cent).

The proportion leaving for negative reasons, mainly dissatisfaction with the course, is somewhat higher than average (at 37 per cent of early leavers), but this is estimated on a small base of only 128 Policy Field 2 early leavers, and so may simply reflect that. It also means that overall, only nine per cent of Policy Field 2 beneficiaries left early for such negative reasons.

Satisfaction with project

Participants in projects supported under Policy Field 2 reported very high levels of satisfaction with the programme, as Table 6.21 shows. We can see that 81 per cent of beneficiaries were either very or fairly satisfied with their project, although men tended to be somewhat less satisfied than women.

The low levels of dissatisfaction are entirely consistent with the low incidence of early leaving for negative reasons.

Table 6.21: Degree of satisfaction expressed with project, by beneficiaries in PF 2 projects

Proportions who were…	Male %	Female %	All %
Very satisfied	44	51	48
Fairly satisfied	34	33	33
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10	6	8
Fairly dissatisfied	6	3	4
Very dissatisfied	3	4	4
Base	*229*	*383*	548

Base: All those in PF 2 projects who gave an answer

6.3.4 Outcomes

As with our analysis above of the programme as a whole, we identify several ways in which Policy Field 2 projects have unarguably helped the beneficiaries involved, and we look in turn at:

- employment outcomes
- qualification outcomes
- 'soft' outcomes among those not working.

Job outcomes

Table 6.22 shows the employment and 'other activity' outcomes for beneficiaries from Policy Field 2 projects, both immediately on completing their project, and at the time of the survey.

Table 6.22: Employment and activity patterns after the project, all respondents from PF 2 projects

	Work FT Row %	Work PT Row %	Self Empl. Row %	U/E Row %	Education/ Training Row %	Sick/ Disabled Row %	Vol. Work Row %	Other Row %
All respondents								
Status immediately on leaving project	14	15	2	11	23	9	7	18
Status at time of survey	16	16	2	12	21	10	8	14

Base: All those who from PF 2 projects answered the questions

It shows that:

- employment rates of 31 per cent and then 34 per cent had been achieved, respectively straight after beneficiaries finished their projects, and at the time of the survey
- about a fifth of beneficiaries were in education or training
- positive outcome rates (employment, education/training plus voluntary work) stood at 61 per cent, and then63 per cent
- unemployment had fallen from 22 per cent on entry to just 12 per cent at the time of the survey.

The employment rates achieved here were lower than for the sample as a whole (34 per cent, *cf* 53 at the time of the survey). However, the proportion of people working when they joined Policy Field 2 projects was relatively low, as we have shown above. Nevertheless, Policy Field 2 projects succeeded in raising the

employment rate among beneficiaries (*ie* the *proportionate* increase in employment on the low starting base) by 86 per cent (see Figure 2.4) compared with 42 per cent for the programme as a whole.

Against this positive note, we should perhaps be concerned that inactive entrants, who made up the majority of Policy Field 2 entrants, were highly likely still to be inactive at the time of the survey; fully three-quarters of them were still neither in paid employment nor looking for it, at that point. This compares with the figure of two-thirds still inactive for the programme as a whole. Of course, this may simply reflect the more difficult problems faced by the entrants to Policy Field 2 projects, but it may nevertheless be a cause for some concern.

Qualification gains and improvements

Over a third of Policy Field 2 beneficiaries entered these projects without any qualification, and this is shown in the first column of Table 6.23.

Still, by the time they left it, half of all entrants had gained a full qualification, and a further three per cent had gained credits or units towards one.

As we showed in Chapter 2, the proportionate improvement in qualifications for Policy Field 2 beneficiaries was higher than the average for the programme as a whole, with 82 per cent of those holding qualifications on entry having gained a full qualification by the time they left.

Table 6.23: Qualifications held by beneficiaries in PF 2 projects, before and after the project

Whether or not held or gained any qualification(s) or units/credits	Held qualification(s) before starting the project %	Gained qualification(s) through the project %	Gained unit(s) or credit(s) towards qualification(s) through the project %
Yes	60	51	3
No	37	43	36
Base	*548*	*548*	548

Base: All those in PF 2 projects answering each question

'Soft' outcomes

Table 6.22 above showed that there were modest continuing job gains after beneficiaries had ended their course. We consider here whether beneficiaries felt that their employability had been improved, and so such job gains might continue (Table 6.24).

Table 6.24: Improved confidence and skills as a result of the project, among beneficiaries in PF 2 projects without a job

Proportions who were…	Male %	Female %	All %
More confident now	75	77	76
No more confident now	25	23	24
DK			0
Better skilled now	72	72	72
No better skilled now	28	24	26
DK	0	3	2
Base	*46*	*55*	89

Base: All those without a job in PF 2 projects who gave an answer

Enhanced confidence

Looking first at the confidence of these individuals, we can see that three-quarters of them were more confident now that they would find work than they had been before the course. While there is not much difference between men and women in this respect, the women tended to be somewhat more confident in this respect.

Improved skills

Turning to the issue of enhanced skills, again, a very high proportion (72 per cent) of these respondents who were not working at the time of the survey but who were nevertheless still looking for work, indicated that despite this, they felt that they were now better skilled than previously for the kind of job they were looking for. This result was evenly shared between men and women.

6.4 Policy Field 3 — Improving training and education and promoting lifelong learning

6.4.1 The role of Policy Field 3

Projects supported under Policy Field 3 aim to promote and improve training, education, and counselling as part of lifelong learning policy. It is intended that this will facilitate and improve access to, and integration into the labour market, improve and maintain employability, and promote job mobility.

Recent emphasis has been focused on the needs of those who traditionally play little or no part in lifelong learning, with better marketing of existing provision reaching out to people in this group.

6.4.2 Characteristics of beneficiaries

The key target groups for Policy Field 3 are:

- people without basic and key skills (either in or out of employment)
- people with low incomes, especially unskilled workers
- people who are less likely to benefit from in-work training, *eg* those in SMEs, young people, older people.

Sex and age profile

Table 6.25 shows the composition of the weighted sample of beneficiaries in Policy Field 3, by age and gender.

It shows that Policy Field 3 projects have not attracted beneficiaries from the younger end of the age spectrum, with only 15 per cent of beneficiaries (*cf* 27 per cent across the whole of Objective 3) aged under 25. There was more success among the more older entrants here, with 28 per cent aged over 50, above the 21 per cent average for the programme as a whole. Consequently, the average age of Policy Field 3 beneficiaries, at 40, is considerably older than for the whole sample.

We have already seen (Table 3.1) that women account for 60 per cent of all the leavers surveyed, and that this representation of women within the projects extends across all five Policy Fields. Here again, with women making up 60 per cent of beneficiaries, Policy Field 3 projects are exactly in line with Objective 3 projects as a whole.

Table 6.25: Age group of PF 3 beneficiaries, by gender

	Male Row %	Female Row %	All
All	39	60	
	%	**%**	**%**
< 18	3	3	3
18-24	15	11	12
25-34	18	19	18
35-49	33	40	37
50+	31	27	28
Base	*489*	*751*	*1,217*

Base: All PF 3 beneficiaries who gave an answer

As with Policy Field 2, there is not a great difference between the age distribution between men and women beneficiaries.

Incidence of disadvantaged groups

It is clear that the entry cohort to Policy Field 3 was generally disadvantaged in ways, and to an extent, that broadly matched the intake as a whole. Again, this is best shown by the combined variable 'low human capital', which indicates that 60 per cent of Policy Field 3 entrants were likely to be held back, and have their labour market opportunities constrained, by some combination of poor qualification, wrong or out-of-date skills, restricted work experience, *etc.*

Table 6.26: Incidence of discrete LM disadvantages among beneficiaries in PF 3 projects

	LTU/I %	Returners %	Poor Basic Skills %	Min. Eth. Group %	No Quals %	Disabil/ Health %	Carers %	Low H. Capital %
PF 3 beneficiaries	26	8	8	9	21	17	26	60
All	27	9	12	14	21	18	25	66
Base	*318*	*102*	*99*	*102*	*254*	*202*	*316*	*726*

Base: All PF 3 beneficiaries who gave an answer

The broad appeal of this programme to different disadvantaged groups has been significant, with substantial representation of individuals from the various disadvantaged groups on whom we have focused.

However, it is interesting to note that:

- Despite an explicit intention to focus on groups who had not traditionally participated in education or training, Policy Field 3 project leavers were no more likely to have been without qualifications when they joined the programme, than were beneficiaries as a whole. It may, of course, be counted a success to have engaged even an average proportion of such individuals in a Policy Field oriented around lifelong learning.
- Similarly, for people with extended spells of inactivity or unemployment, it is evident that Policy Field 3 projects seem to have attracted only an average component of people who had previously not worked for a long time.

- People with basic skills deficiencies made up only eight per cent of Policy Field 3 leavers, compared with an average of 12 per cent for Objective 3 projects as a whole, despite these too being an explicit target group for Policy Field 3 projects.

Status on entry

It may be that one of the reasons for this lack of focus on particularly disadvantaged people is the relatively high proportion (51 per cent) of employed entrants into Policy Field 3 projects, as they tend to demonstrate fewer basic skills or 'no qualification' problems, and are perhaps more *au fait* with a learning culture.

However, against this, it is evident from Table 6.27 that Policy Field 3 projects have an intake of people from inactivity which is exactly in line (at 35 per cent) with the projects as a whole. It is among the unemployed entrants that Policy Field 3 has a particularly low penetration, and this seems most probably because those who are already active job searchers may place less emphasis on gaining further skills or qualifications. In effect, this is likely to reflect low demand among this sub-group of potential beneficiaries, rather than any supply side deficiency.

Table 6.27: Employment status one week before joining the project, among beneficiaries in PF 3 projects, by gender

	Males %	Females %	All %
Employed	55	48	51
Unemployed	13	10	11
Inactive	29	38	35
Base	*489*	*751*	*1,217*

Base: All PF 3 beneficiaries who gave an answer

Duration of unemployment before entry to project

As indicated in Table 6.26, Policy Field 3 beneficiaries were just as likely to be long-term unemployed or inactive than were beneficiaries as a whole, when they joined their project. In addition, Table 6.27 shows that about a third of them were inactive. Consequently, although the intake of people with extended spells of inactivity was lower here than in the two previous Policy Fields, it nevertheless remains substantial, with nearly two-thirds of the non-working entrants (30 per cent of them all) having been out of work for at least two years (Table 6.28).

Table 6.28: Length of time since last worked, among beneficiaries in PF 3 projects, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Less than three months	19	12	14
At least three months but less than six months	6	5	6
At least six months but less than a year	7	5	6
At least a year but less than two years	8	7	7
Two years or more	35	52	45
Never worked	17	14	16
Don't know	–	1	*
Base	*219*	*388*	*447*

Base: All those not working when entered a PF 3 project, and who gave an answer

There is a particular clustering here of women with long spells out of work; comprising fully two-thirds of the non-working female entrants, compared with just over half of non-working men.

6.4.3 Support received

Participation in Policy Field 3 courses was somewhat shorter, at 17 weeks on average, than for the projects as a whole.

Training and skills

As shown in Table 6.29, the proportion of Policy Field 3 beneficiaries who reported that the programme had improved the skills they would need at work was almost exactly in line with the average for the programme as a whole, at 89 per cent.

Sixty per cent of beneficiaries said that they had been helped to improve their practical skills related to a particular job. Again, as with the programme as a whole, it seems fair to conclude that PF 3 projects have also been delivering precisely focused vocational training and skill development across high proportions of beneficiaries.

Table 6.29: Ways in which beneficiaries in PF 3 projects were helped to improve the skills they would need at work, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped to improve skills (summary)	89	89	89
Proportions helped to improve skills through…			
practical skills related to a particular job	62	59	60
improved computing/Information Technology (IT) skills	52	60	56
study skills (such as essay or report writing, using libraries)	35	29	31
improved reading and writing skills	24	21	22
improved maths and number skills	19	15	16
improved English speaking skills	20	21	21
training in wider job skills (such as admin or book-keeping)	32	29	30
training in management and/or leadership skills	25	21	23
Base	*489*	*751*	*1,217*

Base: All those in PF 3 projects who received help with skills/training and who gave an answer

The proportions gaining computing or IT skills was also high (at 56 per cent of the whole sample).

Improved basic skills support was much less widely spread, reaching just 22 per cent of beneficiaries for literacy, 16 per cent for maths and 21 per cent for the English language.

'Soft' skills

In common with the rest of the projects, Table 6.30 shows that gains in self confidence and other 'soft' skills have been widespread indeed within Policy Field 3 projects. Some 83 per cent of Policy Field 3 respondents reported that the programme had built up their self confidence or 'soft' skills in some way (*cf* 87 per cent for the programme as a whole). In common with the programme as a whole, we note that women tended to identify these gains slightly more than men.

Table 6.30: Ways in which beneficiaries in PF 3 projects were helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work (summary)	82	84	83
Proportions helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work through…			
expressing yourself and communicating with people	55	55	55
working with other people as part of a team	54	56	55
solving problems	58	53	55
motivation	55	57	56
ability to do things independently	63	63	63
ability to take responsibility	52	50	51
Base	*489*	*751*	*1,217*

Base: All those in PF 3 projects who received help to build self-confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work and who gave an answer

Looking more closely at the ways in which these 'soft' skills had been secured, there are quite widespread gains in skills which will be useful within the workplace, such as communicating with people, working with other people as part of a team, and solving problems (all at 55 per cent). The ability to do things independently was also widely recognised by 63 per cent of these beneficiaries as a gain from their project.

Job search

Reflecting the high proportion of employed entrants to PF 3 projects, we note that help with job search-related provision was generally less widespread than average here. We noted above (Table 4.11) that 63 per cent of beneficiaries overall had received help of some kind to support them in job search, and here it was exactly half.

Work experience, job-broking help and support with job search methods are not much in evidence here.

Table 6.31: Ways in which beneficiaries in PF 3 projects were helped with job search and work experience, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions given practical help in finding a job (summary)	55	46	49
Proportions given practical help in finding a job through …			
work experience or a work placement	13	10	11
general training about the world of work	28	20	23
advice or guidance about what sorts of work or training you could do	40	35	37
training in how to look for work	20	16	17
contacts to help you look for a job	26	17	20
job broking; leads for particular vacancies	21	14	17
Base	*489*	*751*	*1,217*

Base: All those in PF 3 projects who received help with job search and work experience and who gave an answer

Course completion/early leavers

Seventeen per cent of beneficiaries across the programme as a whole reported that they had left earlier than expected. In projects supported under PF 3, early leaving was even lower, at 14 per cent, as Table 6.32 shows.

Table 6.32: Whether beneficiaries left their PF 3 project early, or stayed until the end

Proportions leaving early and staying to end	Male %	Female %	All %
Stayed to end	85	85	84
Left early	14	13	14
Base	*489*	*751*	*1,217*

Base: All those in PF 3 projects who gave an answer; beneficiary evaluation

As with other Policy Fields across the programme as a whole, the proportion leaving for negative reasons was a minority of the early leavers; in this case, 37 per cent (or just five per cent of all PF 3 beneficiaries). However, reflecting the relatively high proportion here of employed-on-entry beneficiaries, the proportion leaving for 'good' reasons, (mainly finding a job), was rather lower here at 18 per cent of early leavers (*cf* 28 per cent of all early leavers).

The beneficiaries leaving for the various negative reasons, were not significantly different from beneficiaries as a whole, and the base number here is low (n = 165), but 'dissatisfaction with the course' was somewhat more often cited (by 20 per cent of Policy Field 3 early leavers, *cf* an Objective 3 average of 16 per cent), and 'domestic and other personal reasons' was also somewhat more frequently cited.

Satisfaction with project

Participants in projects supported under PF 3 reported very high levels of satisfaction with the programme, as Table 6.33 shows. We can see that 86 per cent of beneficiaries were either very or fairly satisfied with their project.

The low levels of dissatisfaction are entirely consistent with the low incidence of early leaving for negative reasons.

Table 6.33: Degree of satisfaction expressed with project, by beneficiaries in PF 3 projects

Proportions who were …	Male %	Female %	All %
Very satisfied	47	56	52
Fairly satisfied	38	32	34
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	7	6	6
Fairly dissatisfied	5	3	4
Very dissatisfied	2	2	2
Base	*489*	*751*	*1,217*

Base: All those in PF 3 projects who gave an answer

6.4.4 Outcomes

As with our analysis above of the programme as a whole, we reviewed several ways in which Policy Field 3 projects had helped the beneficiaries involved, and we look in turn at:

- employment outcomes
- qualification outcomes
- 'soft' outcomes among those not working.

Job outcomes

Table 6.34 shows the employment and 'other activity' outcomes for beneficiaries from Policy Field 3 projects, both immediately on completing their project, and at the time of the survey. In view of the high proportion of working entrants, we have also added an extra row to this table, showing their status on joining.

Table 6.34: Employment and activity patterns after the project; all respondents from PF 3 projects

All respondents	Work FT	Work PT	Self Empl.	U/E	Education/ Training	Sick/ Disabled	Vol. Work	Other
	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
Status on joining project	30	15	7	11	7	8	3	18
Status immediately on leaving project	31	14	9	7	13	7	4	15
Status at time of survey	33	16	9	6	12	7	3	14

Base: All those who from PF 3 projects answered the questions

The table shows that:

- employment rates had grown from 51 per cent on entry, to 54 per cent straight after beneficiaries finished their projects, and to 59 per cent at the time of the survey
- seven per cent of beneficiaries had started off in education or training, and the proportion remaining there after the course was somewhat higher, at 13 and then 12 per cent
- unemployment was low on entry, at 12 per cent, and had fallen significantly to just six per cent at the time of the survey
- inactivity had not declined, staying constant at 35 per cent from entry to the course to the time of the survey.

It might be thought that the gains in employment among Policy Field 3 beneficiaries were disappointing. Certainly, as we show in Figure 2.4, this Policy Field had the worst proportionate increase in employment rates (at only 16 per cent, well below the average for the whole Objective (42 per cent), and somewhat behind Policy Fields 4 and 5 which also had high intakes of the already-employed.

Qualification outcomes

Some 21 per cent of Policy Field 3 beneficiaries entered these projects without any qualification, and this is shown in the first column of Table 6.35.

Still, by the time they left it, half of all entrants had gained a full qualification, and a further four per cent had gained credits or units towards one.

This might be thought a worthy outcome, but it needs to be seen in the context of (a) an already better-than-averagely qualified intake (b) the intrinsic objectives of the projects in this Policy Field (c) the 66 per cent of Policy Field 3 entrants who said that they had expected to improve their qualifications thereby, and (d) the fact that 55 per cent of *all* entrants had gained a qualification. It may therefore come as no

Table 6.35: Qualifications held by beneficiaries in PF 3 projects, before and after the project

Whether or not held or gained any qualification(s) or units/credits	Held qualification(s) before starting the project %	Gained qualification(s) through the project %	Gained unit(s) or credit(s) towards qualification(s) through the project %
Yes	77	50	4
No	21	45	96
Base	*1,217*	*1,217*	*1,217*

Base: All those in PF 3 projects answering each question

surprise that in terms of *proportionate* qualification gains, (see Figure 2.5) this Policy Field did worse than the average for Objective 3 projects as a whole, and that only one Policy Field had a lower proportionate increase.

These results seem both disturbing and puzzling. Projects in this overtly learning-centred Policy Field appear to deliver no-better-than-average job or qualification outcomes, and taking into account the different employment and qualification circumstances at beneficiaries' starting points, it does worse than average in both respects.

'Soft' outcomes

Table 6.34 above showed that there were small continuing job gains after beneficiaries had ended their course. We consider here whether beneficiaries felt that their employability had been improved, and so such job gains might continue.

Enhanced confidence

Looking first at the confidence of these individuals, we can see that two-thirds of them were more confident now that they would find work than they had been before the course. The women tended to be much more confident in this respect than the men, but the base number on which Table 6.36 is based is quite small.

Table 6.36: Improved confidence and skills as a result of the project, among beneficiaries in PF 3 projects without a job

Proportions who were…	Male %	Female %	All %
More confident now	57	77	67
No more confident now	41	22	31
DK	1	1	1
Better skilled now	69	83	76
No better skilled now	31	12	21
DK	–	5	3
Base	*4,543*	*47*	*84*

Base: All those without a job in PF 3 projects who gave an answer

Improved skills

Turning to the issue of enhanced skills, again, a very high proportion (76 per cent) of these respondents who were not working at the time of the survey but who were nevertheless still looking for work,

indicated that despite this, they felt that they were now better skilled than previously for the kind of job they were looking for. This result is again somewhat more positively recorded among women beneficiaries than among the men (Table 6.36).

6.5 Policy Field 4 — Adaptability and entrepreneurship

6.5.1 The role of Policy Field 4

The English Objective 3 operational programme sets out the main role of Policy Field 4 as:

> *'Promoting a skilled, trained and adaptable workforce, innovation and adaptability in work organisation, developing entrepreneurship and conditions facilitating job creation, and enhancing skills and boosting human potential in research, science and technology.'*

6.5.2 Characteristics of beneficiaries

The key target groups across the Objective 3 programme in Great Britain are:

- SMEs wanting to upgrade their employees' skills
- potential entrepreneurs.

Sex and age profile

Table 6.37 shows the composition of the weighted sample of beneficiaries in Policy Field 4, by age and gender.

It shows that Policy Field 4 projects have attracted beneficiaries from a generally older cohort than the others; less than ten per cent of beneficiaries were aged under 25 compared with 38 per cent for the projects as a whole. The average age of Policy Field 4 beneficiaries was 39, and a quarter of them were aged 50 or over.

Participation in Policy Field 4 projects was more evenly spread between men and women than overall, although women were still in the majority of beneficiaries, with some 54 per cent of the respondents.

Table 6.37: Age group of PF 4 beneficiaries, by gender

	Male	**Female**	**All**
	Row %	**Row %**	
All	45	54	
	%	**%**	**%**
< 18	–	–	–
18-24	5	10	8
25-34	22	26	24
35-49	45	39	41
50+	27	23	24
Base	*124*	*150*	*278*

Base: All PF 4 beneficiaries who gave an answer

Incidence of disadvantaged groups

With just a half (51 per cent) of Policy Field 4 beneficiaries having low human capital, this was the cohort with the least skill-related problems, and it drew least heavily on people who had been out of work for a long period (eight per cent had been in long-term unemployment or inactivity on entry).

Although the entry cohort here tended to display fewer of the disadvantages which we had observed among entrants to projects in other Policy Fields, there was still nevertheless some focus on disadvantaged individuals. Whereas nearly a fifth of beneficiaries overall displayed three or more of the disadvantages with which we have been concerned, only five per cent of Policy Field 4 entrants did so, and over half of them were disadvantaged by none of them.

Table 6.38: Incidence of discrete LM disadvantages among beneficiaries in PF 4 projects

	LTU/I %	Returners %	Lone Parents %	Min. Eth. Group %	Other Lang. %	Disabil/ Health %	Carers %	Low H. Capital %
PF 4 beneficiaries	8	1	6	10	3	9	22	51
All	27	9	10	14	4	18	25	66
Base	*22*	*4*	*18*	*27*	*9*	*26*	*60*	*141*

Base: All PF 4 beneficiaries who gave an answer

Status on entry

Consistent with this, we observe that Policy Field 4 was the only Policy Field in which the majority of entrants were already working, with 70 per cent working when they joined their project. Although lower than the average for the programme as a whole, the proportion who were unemployed (at 16 per cent, *cf* 21 per cent) was not vastly different from the other Policy Fields. Rather, it was the inactive entrants which this Policy Field had largely avoided, with just 12 per cent entering it from inactivity, compared with nearly 40 per cent altogether.

Table 6.39: Employment status one week before joining the project, among beneficiaries in PF 4 projects, by gender

	Males %	Females %	All %
Employed	67	74	70
Unemployed	24	9	16
Inactive	8	16	12
Base	*121*	*147*	*278*

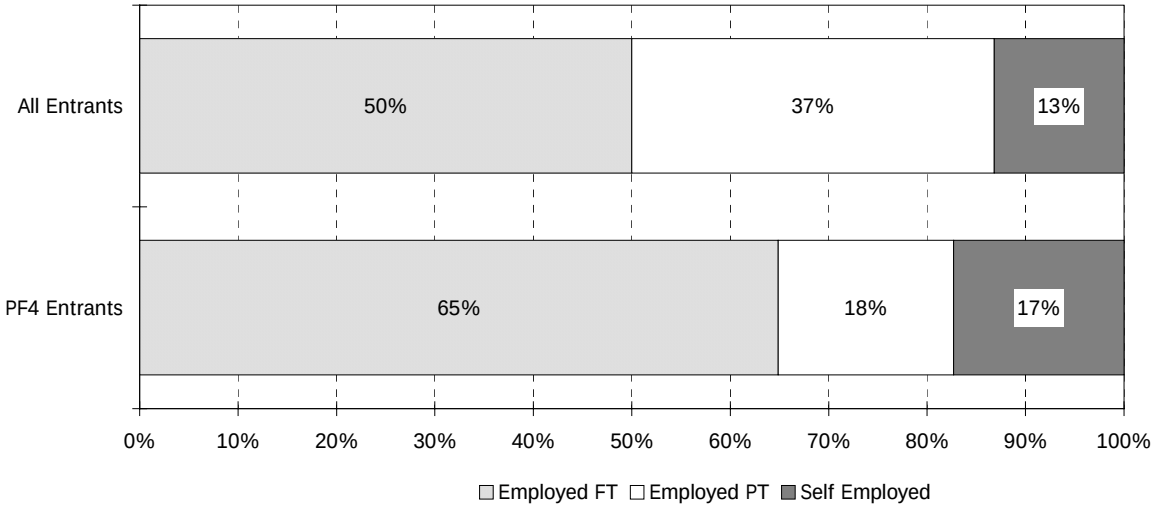
Base: All PF 4 beneficiaries who gave an answer

Composition of employed entry group

One of the aims of Policy Field 4 projects is to develop entrepreneurship. Among the employed entrants, we can see from Figure 6.3 that it had attracted a higher proportion of beneficiaries who were already self employed; albeit the difference is not that marked. Among these employed entrants to Policy Field 4, however, the self employed had constituted rather fewer of them a year previously (11 per cent), and it would appear that the projects have been quite successful in attracting 'new' self employed individuals.

However, the most striking difference here seems to be the significantly higher proportion of full-time employees joining Policy Field 4 projects, than is evident elsewhere in the programme.

Figure 6.3: Employment status of employed entrants; PF 4 compared with all entrants



Base: Employed entrants; N = 1,277 for all entrants, 122 for PF 4

Duration of unemployment before entry to project

With only 83 non-working entrants, we cannot say much very reliably about the characteristics of this minority entry group, but, as Table 6.40 shows, we can see that over half of them had worked at some point in the previous six months, and this contrasts with the 20 per cent who had done so among non-working entrants as a whole. Correspondingly, the proportion who had never worked, which reached almost a quarter overall, was just three per cent for Policy Field 4.

Table 6.40: Length of time since last worked, among beneficiaries in PF 4 projects, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Less than three months	42	30	35
At least three months but less than six months	20	18	18
At least six months but less than a year	7	12	11
At least a year but less than two years	11	11	11
Two years or more	7	21	14
Never worked	2	5	3
Don't know	–	–	–
Base	*40*	*39*	*83*

Base: All those not working when entered a PF 4 project, and who gave an answer

6.5.3 Support received

Training and skills

We noted above (Table 4.7) that 88 per cent of beneficiaries overall had received help of some kind to improve the skills they needed at work. Policy Field 4 projects seem to have shared equally in this focus on vocationally-relevant skill provision, with some 88 per cent of beneficiaries reporting that their project had helped them improve their skills in some way which was relevant to their actual or putative employment.

Table 6.41: Ways in which beneficiaries in PF 4 projects were helped to improve the skills they would need at work, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped to improve skills (summary)	92	85	88
Proportions helped to improve skills through …			
practical skills related to a particular job	56	56	56
improved computing/Information Technology (IT) skills	38	44	40
study skills (such as essay or report writing, using libraries)	23	24	23
improved reading and writing skills	16	14	15
improved maths and number skills	14	10	12
improved English speaking skills	11	11	11
training in wider job skills (such as admin or book-keeping)	32	32	32
training in management and/or leadership skills	37	32	34
Base	*121*	*147*	*278*

Base: All those in PF 4 projects who received help with skills/training and who gave an answer

Looking in more detail at the kinds of skill which were improved, we can see that Policy Field 4 provision has been very much in line with the programme as a whole, with strong emphasis on particular jobs and on IT skills, with less widespread (and targeted) provision of basic skill training. Where this Policy Field is somewhat different is in the provision of wider job skills (32 per cent, *cf* 29 per cent overall) and management/leadership skills (at 34 per cent *cf* 25 per cent overall).

'Soft' skills

In addition to these substantive skill gains, we also sought information about gains in beneficiary self confidence. Although fewer of these individuals had been out of work on entry, this building up of beneficiaries' 'internal' resources still seems likely to be of considerable importance, particularly perhaps among those experiencing, or thinking about, self employment for the first time.

Table 6.42: Ways in which beneficiaries in PF 4 projects were helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work (summary)	78	79	78
Proportions helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work through…			
expressing yourself and communicating with people	42	48	45
working with other people as part of a team	46	46	47
solving problems	53	51	52
motivation	51	57	55
ability to do things independently	55	55	55
ability to take responsibility	42	47	45
Base	*121*	*147*	*278*

Base: All those in PF 4 projects who received help to build self-confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work and who gave an answer

In Table 6.42, we can see that such gains have been very widespread indeed, right across this sample of respondents. Fully 78 per cent of respondents reported that the programme had built up their self confidence or 'soft' skills in some way. This compares with 87 per cent of respondents among the projects as a whole, suggesting a slightly lower emphasis on this kind of 'soft' skills among Policy Field 4 projects.

The distribution of 'soft' skill gains among Policy Field 4 beneficiaries is quite similar to the one shown for all beneficiaries in Table 4.10 above, albeit at a lower level.

Job search

As Table 6.43 shows, half of the sample had been given some kind of practical help in finding work. Although not shown in the table, this was most common among those who were unemployed, but looking for work when they joined the programme, and among the inactive entrants.

The provision of work experience places is rather uncommon, and no doubt this reflects the high intake here of people who were already working. In fact, although not shown in the table, it was largely provided for the unemployed and inactive entrants.

Table 6.43: Ways in which beneficiaries in PF 4 projects were helped with job search and work experience, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions given practical help in finding a job (summary)	51	52	52
Proportions given practical help in finding a job through….			
work experience or a work placement	5	9	7
general training about the world of work	28	28	28
advice or guidance about what sorts of work or training you could do	32	32	32
training in how to look for work	17	14	15
contacts to help you look for a job	20	14	17
job broking; leads for particular vacancies	15	9	12
Base	*121*	*147*	*278*

Base: All those in PF 4 projects who received help with job search and work experience and who gave an answer

Course completion/early leavers

Policy Field 4 projects had the lowest proportion of early leavers at nine per cent, and one of the lowest proportions leaving because of dissatisfaction with the course or other negative reasons (at 25 per cent of them, or just two per cent of entrants).

Table 6.44: Whether beneficiaries left their PF 4 project early, or stayed until the end

Proportions leaving early and staying to end	Male %	Female %	All %
Stayed to end	93	87	89
Left early	7	11	9
Base	*121*	*147*	*278*

Base: All those in PF 4 projects who gave an answer; beneficiary evaluation

Satisfaction with project

Participants in projects supported under Policy Field 4 reported very high levels of satisfaction with the programme, as Table 6.45 shows. We can see that 84 per cent of beneficiaries were either very or fairly satisfied with their project, which is about average for the projects as a whole.

Unlike the programme as a whole, in Policy Field 4, the men tended to be somewhat more satisfied with provision than did the women.

Table 6.45: Degree of satisfaction expressed with project, by beneficiaries in PF 4 projects

Proportions who were…	Male %	Female %	All %
Very satisfied	53	46	49
Fairly satisfied	32	38	35
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	11	6	8
Fairly dissatisfied	4	6	5
Very dissatisfied	1	3	2
Base	*121*	*147*	*278*

Base: All those in PF 4 projects who gave an answer

6.5.4 Outcomes

As with our analysis of the other Policy Fields above, we identify several ways in which Policy Field 4 projects have helped the beneficiaries involved, looking in turn at:

- employment outcomes
- qualification outcomes
- 'soft' outcomes among those not working.

Job outcomes

Table 6.46 shows the employment and 'other activity' outcomes for beneficiaries from Policy Field 4 projects, both immediately on completing their project, and at the time of the survey.

It shows that employment rates of 76 per cent and then 84 per cent had been achieved, respectively straight after beneficiaries finished their projects, and at the time of the survey. These employment rates achieved were far higher than for the sample as a whole (47 per cent, *cf* 53 at the time of the survey), reflecting the high proportion of employed entrants in Policy Field 4.

Table 6.46: Employment and activity patterns after the project; all respondents from PF 4 projects

All respondents	Work FT	Work PT	Self Empl.	U/E	Education/ Training	Sick/ Disabled	Vol. Work	Other
	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
Status on joining project	46	12	13	16	2	3	2	9
Status immediately on leaving project	45	10	20	11	4	1	2	6
Status at time of survey	49	13	22	7	3	1	2	4

Base: All those from PF 4 projects who answered the questions

Despite this bias towards employed entrants, the projects, nevertheless, did increase the employment rate from that entry point, albeit with a below average *proportionate* increase. Furthermore, the employment rate has continued to improve in the period after the beneficiaries had completed their courses.

Within this modest improvement, however, we can see that the rate of self employment had almost doubled (from 13 to 20 per cent of beneficiaries) between joining the project and completing the survey.

In addition we note that:

- very few beneficiaries were in education or training to start with, and only a few had moved there afterwards
- positive outcome rates (employment, education/training plus voluntary work) were high, at 81 per cent, and then 88 per cent
- unemployment had fallen from 16 per cent on entry to just seven per cent at the time of the survey
- although relatively few Policy Field 4 entrants had been inactive, inactivity had nevertheless fallen slightly from 12 to 9 per cent by the time of the survey.

Qualification outcomes

As we have seen, far fewer of Policy Field 4 entrants were without qualifications when they entered the projects. Although, by the time they left them, 41 per cent had gained a full qualification, and a further four per cent had gained credits or units towards one, this represents the lowest absolute and *proportionate* gain in qualifications in any of the Policy Fields.

Table 6.47: Qualifications held by beneficiaries in PF 4 projects, before and after the project

Whether or not held or gained any qualification(s) or units/credits	Held qualification(s) before starting the project %	Gained qualification(s) through the project %	Gained unit(s) or credit(s) towards qualification(s) through the project %
Yes	91	41	4
No	8	54	96
Base	*278*	*278*	*278*

Base: All those in PF 4 projects answering each question

'Soft' outcomes

There were only seven Policy Field 4 beneficiaries who were both not working and yet looking for a job at the time of the survey. Although they nearly all said that both their confidence about getting work, and the skills they would need to do it, had been improved during their course, there is little point in showing this in a table, as we have done with the other Policy Fields, as it would have no statistical force at all.

6.6 Policy Field 5 — Improving the participation of women in the labour market

6.6.1 The role of Policy Field 5

The English Objective 3 operational programme sets out the main role of Policy Field 5 as:

'Specific measures to improve women's access to and participation in the labour market, including their career development, their access to new job opportunities and to starting up of businesses, and to reduce vertical and horizontal segregation on the basis of sex in the labour market.'

6.6.2 Characteristics of beneficiaries

In a bid to target resources more effectively, these programmes will focus on specific groups of women who face the greatest labour market disadvantage:

- lone parents
- women with no qualifications, and
- returners.

Two specific barriers are highlighted: a lack of affordable and reliable childcare, and a lack of flexibility on projects.

Our analysis of the other four Policy Fields has distinguished between men and women beneficiaries on account of Objective 3's cross-cutting emphasis on equality of opportunity. In Policy Field 5, however, all bar four of the 328 beneficiaries were women, and as a result we do not look at gender here, but rather focus on:

- the three target groups above (lone parents, women with no qualifications and returners
- a comparison between all Objective 3 beneficiaries, all female beneficiaries and all PF 5 beneficiaries.

Age profile

Table 6.48 shows the age profile of the weighted sample of beneficiaries in Policy Field 5 compared with all, and all female, beneficiaries.

It shows that Policy Field 5 projects have attracted beneficiaries from a generally older cohort than the programme as a whole, with 68 per cent aged 35 or over. The average age of Policy Field 5 beneficiaries was 41. This compares with 37 for women as a whole.

Table 6.48: Age group of PF 5 beneficiaries

	All %	All women %	All PF 5 %
< 18	8	7	*
18-24	19	16	9
25-34	19	20	23
35-49	31	35	44
50+	21	20	24
Base	*3,431*	*2,074*	*328*

Base: All PF 5 beneficiaries who gave an answer

Incidence of disadvantaged groups

As with Objective 3 beneficiaries as a whole, and indeed with women entrants as a whole, Policy Field 5 projects took in a fairly high proportion of people with low human capital, in terms of their skills, qualifications, work experience, *etc.* They also took in a good proportion of disabled people or those with health problems, certainly comparable with the other Policy Fields.

These projects had been focused less on entrants with poor basic skills, and had a relatively low intake of people from minority ethnic groups, both in comparison with Objective 3 projects as a whole and female entrants in general.

However, in one out of the three specific target groups, these projects had been extremely successful. We can see from Table 6.49, that 44 per cent of entrants were carers (*ie* their daily activities or ability to work were limited by caring responsibilities for children, family members, friends, neighbours or others). This is in contrast to just a quarter of all beneficiaries and about a third of all women beneficiaries.

Policy Field 5 projects had been less successful, at least in relation to other Objective 3 projects, in attracting lone parents and women with no qualifications, the two other specific target groups. We can see from Table 6.49 that so far as the latter was concerned, Policy Field 5 projects were hardly any different from projects as a whole, although they had been slightly more successful in targeting lone parents.

Table 6.49: Incidence of discrete LM disadvantages among beneficiaries in PF 5 projects

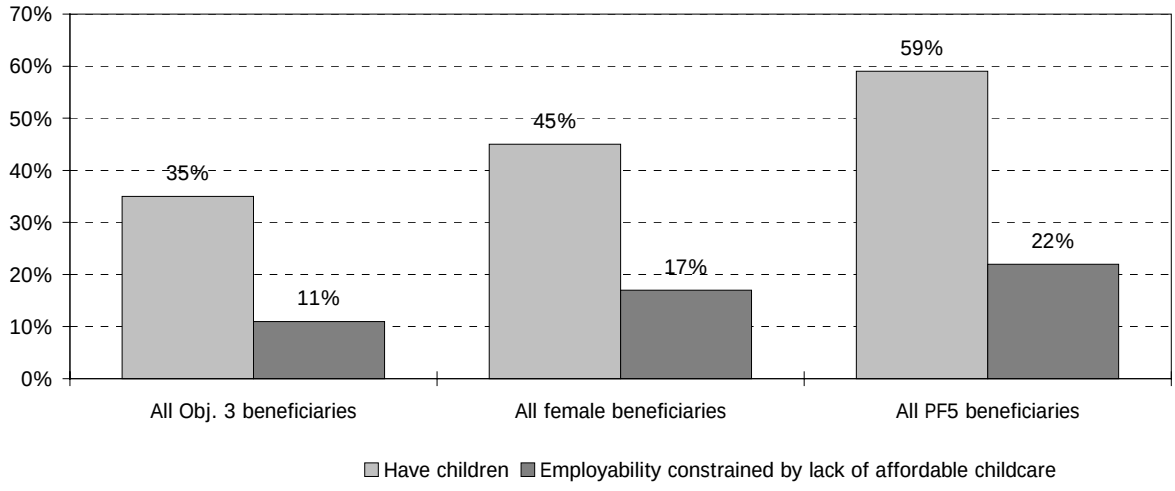
	LTU/I %	Returners %	Lone Parent %	M. Eth. Group %	Low Basic Skills %	Disabil/ Health %	Carers %	No Quals %	Low H. Capital %
PF 5 beneficiaries	38	20	14	4	7	16	44	21	63
All women	29	14	13	13	11	17	35	20	65
All	27	9	10	14	12	18	25	21	66
Base	*124*	*67*	*45*	*13*	*22*	*53*	*144*	*68*	*207*

Base: All PF 5 beneficiaries who gave an answer

Childcare

We observed above in Table 6.49 that approaching half of Policy Field 5 beneficiaries had some sort of care responsibilities which restricted their ability to work. Looking at this more closely, we find that 59 per cent of Policy Field 5 beneficiaries had children for whose care or support they were responsible. As Figure 6.4 shows, this is a significantly higher proportion than was evident among women in general among all the projects, and much higher again than among beneficiaries in general.

Figure 6.4: Beneficiaries with children and childcare constraints; all, all female and all PF 4 beneficiaries



Base: All respondents in relevant groups, N = 3,746, 2,255 and 298 respectively

While it is evident that only a minority of those with children had experienced the lack of affordable childcare for them as a constraint which had made it difficult for them to find work or get a better job, nevertheless, we can see that Policy Field 5 projects had been relatively successful in targeting those who had been constrained in this way, with 22 per cent of their beneficiaries citing this as a constraint.

Status on entry

It is evident from Table 6.50 that Policy Field 5 entrants tended to cluster at both ends of the spectrum; a higher than average proportion of them were employed on entry than were both entrants in general and female entrants in particular, while at the same time, they were somewhat more likely to be inactive than were Objective 3 entrants in general. Consequently, Policy Field 5 projects had a relatively small proportion of entrants who were unemployed but actively seeking work.

Table 6.50: Employment status one week before joining the project, among beneficiaries in PF 5 projects, by gender

	All %	All Women %	All PF 5 %
Employed	37	39	45
Unemployed	21	15	13
Inactive	38	43	42
Base	*3,431*	*2,074*	*328*

Base: All PF 5 beneficiaries who gave an answer

Duration of unemployment before entry to project

We have already shown, in Table 6.50, that one cluster of Policy Field 5 beneficiaries were more likely to be long-term unemployed or inactive than were beneficiaries as a whole, when they joined their project. Furthermore, we have seen that 20 per cent of them were 'returners', who had by definition been looking after their home or family full time both one year before entering the project *and* were doing so when they entered it.

Looking more closely at these 182 non-working Policy Field 5 entrants, we can see from Table 6.51 that although many of them (56 per cent) had not worked for at least two years before joining, very few of them had never worked. This probably reflects the strong focus in Policy Field 5 projects on 'returners' and the paucity of young people in these projects.

Table 6.51: Length of time since last worked, among beneficiaries in PF 5 projects, by gender

	All %	All Women %	All PF 5 %
Less than three months	14	13	11
At least three months but less than six months	6	5	5
At least six months but less than a year	7	6	6
At least a year but less than two years	9	9	12
Two years or more	32	39	56
Never worked	23	23	4
Don't know	1	1	–
Base	*2,156*	*1,274*	*182*

Base: All those not working when entered a PF 5 project, and who gave an answer

6.6.3 Support received

Training and skills

The proportion of Policy Field 5 beneficiaries who reported that the programme had improved the skills they would need at work was slightly higher than the average for the programme as a whole, at 90 per cent, *cf* 88 per cent (Table 6.52).

Sixty-nine per cent of beneficiaries said that they had been helped to improve their practical skills related to a particular job. Rather more so than the programme as a whole, or among women within projects in general, this suggests that Policy Field 5 projects have been delivering relatively high levels of focused vocational training and skill development across high proportions of beneficiaries.

The proportions gaining computing or IT skills was relatively high (at 47 per cent), but somewhat lower than women elsewhere in the programme were receiving.

Improved basic skills support was slightly less widely spread, than elsewhere, reaching just 24 per cent of beneficiaries for literacy, 13 per cent for maths and 16 per cent for the English language. The latter may reflect the relatively low participation of people from ethnic minorities in these projects, and indeed, we observed above that people with basic skills problems in general were somewhat under-represented here.

Table 6.52: Ways in which beneficiaries in PF 5 projects were helped to improve the skills they would need at work, by gender

	All %	All women %	All PF 5 %
Proportions helped to improve skills (summary)	88	89	90
Proportions helped to improve skills through…			
practical skills related to a particular job	61	61	69
improved computing/Information Technology (IT) skills	55	56	47
study skills (such as essay or report writing, using libraries)	38	38	45
improved reading and writing skills	29	28	24
improved maths and number skills	22	20	13
improved English speaking skills	25	25	16
training in wider job skills (such as admin or book-keeping)	29	29	28
training in management and/or leadership skills	25	23	25
Base	*3,431*	*2,074*	*328*

Base: All those in PF 5 projects who received help with skills/training and who gave an answer

'Soft' skills

Beneficiaries from Policy Field 5 projects reported an extremely high incidence of success in activities broadly designed to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work, as Table 6.53 shows.

We can see that nine out of ten of them indicate that they had been helped in general terms with their confidence or 'soft' skills, and this higher-than-average proportion is repeated for every category of activity with which we have been concerned.

Table 6.53: Ways in which beneficiaries in PF 5 projects were helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work, by gender

	All %	All women %	All PF 5 %
Proportions helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work (summary)	87	89	92
Proportions helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work through…			
expressing yourself and communicating with people	64	66	75
working with other people as part of a team	65	67	79
solving problems	61	61	69
motivation	64	66	75
ability to do things independently	67	69	76
ability to take responsibility	60	61	70
Base	*3,431*	*2,074*	*328*

Base: All those in PF 5 projects who received help to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work and who gave an answer

Job search

By contrast, support with job search was less widely provided, and this probably reflects the relatively high proportions of entrants who were either already working (and so perhaps less in need of it) and those who had been inactive (and so were perhaps less in need of it just yet).

Although the overall incidence of job search support in PF 5 projects is only a little below average, we can see from Table 6.54 that work experience opportunities were quite rarely provided, and similarly with job broking assistance.

Table 6.54: Ways in which beneficiaries in PF 5 projects were helped with job search and work experience, by gender

	All %	All women %	All PF 5 %
Proportions given practical help in finding a job (summary)	63	60	57
Proportions given practical help in finding a job through …			
work experience or a work placement	21	19	13
general training about the world of work	34	30	23
advice or guidance about what sorts of work or training you could do	48	46	46
training in how to look for work	30	26	21
contacts to help you look for a job	29	25	20
job broking; leads for particular vacancies	25	21	16
Base	*3,431*	*2,074*	*328*

Base: All those in PF 5 projects who received help with job search and work experience and who gave an answer

Course completion/early leavers

Early leaving from Policy Field 5 projects, at 12 per cent of joiners, was relatively low, and lower than average for the projects as a whole.

Table 6.55: Whether beneficiaries left their PF 5 project early, or stayed until the end

Proportions leaving early and staying to end	All %	All women %	All PF 5 %
Stayed to end	81	83	87
Left early	16	15	12
Base	*3,431*	*2,074*	*328*

Base: All those in PF 5 projects who gave an answer; beneficiary evaluation

As with beneficiaries as a whole, about a quarter of early quits were due to beneficiaries finding a job, or starting another course. Negative reasons accounted for a third of early losses, in line with the programme as a whole.

Satisfaction with project

As Figure 4.1 has shown, beneficiaries in Policy Field 5 projects were the most satisfied with their projects, and this result is evident again in Table 6.56. Here, we can see that, although women beneficiaries tended also to give more favourable assessments than did the men, those women in Policy Field 5 projects were more satisfied still. The result is not just a reflection of the gender composition of beneficiaries, but must say something too about the 'fit' between individual circumstances and needs, and the provision laid on by these projects.

Table 6.56: Degree of satisfaction expressed with project, by beneficiaries in PF 5 projects

Proportions who were…	All %	All women %	All PF 5 %
Very satisfied	49	53	63
Fairly satisfied	35	33	29
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	7	6	2
Fairly dissatisfied	4	4	4
Very dissatisfied	3	2	2
Base	*3,431*	*2,074*	*328*

Base: All those in PF 5 projects who gave an answer

6.6.4 Outcomes

As with our analysis above of the programme as a whole, we identify several ways in which Policy Field 5 projects helped the beneficiaries involved, and looking in turn at:

- employment outcomes
- qualification outcomes
- 'soft' outcomes among those not working.

Job outcomes

Table 6.57 shows the employment and 'other activity' outcomes for beneficiaries from Policy Field 5 projects, both immediately on completing their project, and at the time of the survey.

Table 6.57: Employment and activity patterns after the project; all respondents from PF 5 projects

All respondents	Work FT	Work PT	Self Empl.	U/E	Education/ Training	Sick/ Disabled	Vol. Work	Other
	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
Status on entry	15	22	7	12	5	6	4	29
Status immediately on leaving project	19	25	6	3	20	4	4	19
Status at time of survey	20	31	7	2	15	5	5	15

Base: All those who from PF 5 projects answered the questions

It shows that:

- employment rates of 50 per cent and then 58 per cent had been achieved, respectively straight after beneficiaries finished their projects, and at the time of the survey
- the proportion of beneficiaries in education or training had been increased significantly, albeit from a low base of only five per cent, to 15 per cent
- positive outcome rates (employment, education/training plus voluntary work) stood at 74 per cent, and then 78 per cent
- unemployment had fallen dramatically from 12 per cent on entry to two per cent at the time of the survey.

The employment rates achieved here were higher than for the sample as a whole (58 per cent, *cf* 53 at the time of the survey). However, the proportion of people working when they joined Policy Field 5 projects was relatively high, as we have shown above. As a result, these projects had not achieved great success in raising the employment rate among beneficiaries (*ie* the *proportionate* increase in employment on the high starting base); it had risen by 32 per cent (see Figure 2.4) compared with 42 per cent for the programme as a whole.

Qualification outcomes

It is in this area that these projects had been more successful. In fact, as we have shown in Figure 2.5, Policy Field 5 projects had been the most successful of all in increasing the qualifications base of their beneficiaries.

Women without qualifications are a key target group for Policy Field 5 projects, and we have already seen that 21 per cent of Policy Field 5 beneficiaries entered these projects without one. This is shown again in the first column of Table 6.58.

By the time they left it, more than three-quarters of all entrants had gained a full qualification, and a further three per cent had gained credits or units towards one.

Table 6.58: Qualifications held by beneficiaries in PF 5 projects, before and after the project

Whether or not held or gained any qualification(s) or units/credits	Held qualification(s) before starting the project %	Gained qualification(s) through the project %	Gained unit(s) or credit(s) towards qualification(s) through the project %
Yes	79	76	3
No	21	22	97
Base	*328*	*328*	*328*

Base: All those in PF 5 projects answering each question

Among those with no qualifications on entry, some 82 per cent managed to gain a full one, and a further eight per cent had secured credits or units towards one.

'Soft' outcomes

Some 137 of the Policy Field 5 beneficiaries were not working at the time of the survey. Among them, most were not looking for work, and so Table 6.59 below is based on just 34 Policy Field 5 beneficiaries.

Taking due account of this small base, though, it shows that these projects had been very successful in raising these beneficiaries' self confidence about getting a job, and slightly less so about the utility of their new skills.

Table 6.59: Improved confidence and skills as a result of the project, among beneficiaries in PF 5 projects without a job

Proportions who were…	All %	All Women %	All PF 5 %
More confident now	77	79	79
No more confident now	22	21	21
DK	1	1	–
Better skilled now	73	75	68
No better skilled now	26	21	32
DK	2	3	–
Base	*392*	*197*	*34*

Base: All those without a job in PF 5 projects who gave an answer

6.7 Summary

The key findings of Chapter 6 are summarised in Table 6.60 (overleaf).

From it we can see that:

- Policy Fields 1 and 3 together accounted for two-thirds of the beneficiaries
- Women made up at least half the entrants in all the Policy Fields.
- Younger entrants (under the age of 25) made up half the intake of Policy Field 1.
- The proportion of beneficiaries who were employed on entry varied greatly, from over two-thirds in Policy Field 4, to 18 per cent in Policy Field 2.
- While each Policy Field had a high proportion of relatively disadvantaged entrants (see low human capital variable), they had been reasonably successful in attracting their individual key groups of entrant:
  - In Policy Field 1, concentrating on delivering active labour market measures, over a third of entrants were without work but actively looking for it.
  - In Policy Field 2, concentrating on overcoming social exclusion, almost a third of entrants had experienced long-term unemployment or inactivity, and over half were inactive on entry.
  - In Policy Field 3, promoting lifelong learning, a fifth of entrants had no qualifications.
  - In Policy Field 4, promoting adaptability and entrepreneurship, two-thirds of entrants were already working, 13 per cent of them as self-employed.

Table 6.60: Policy Fields inputs and outputs — summary table

Proportions in each PF who were …	Total %	PF 1 %	PF 2 %	PF 3 %	PF 4 %	PF 5 %
Inputs						
Female	60	50	62	60	54	97
Aged < 25	27	51	29	15	8	9
Aged 50+	21	10	20	28	25	24
In work on entry	37	20	18	51	70	45
U/E on entry	21	35	22	11	16	12
Inactive on entry	39	40	55	35	12	42
No qualifications	21	17	37	21	8	21
Long-term unemployed/inactive	27	27	32	26	8	38
Returners	9	7	12	8	2	20
Lone parents	10	8	11	10	6	14
Min. ethnic group	14	21	19	8	10	4
Disability/health problem	18	17	29	17	9	16
Carers	25	18	25	26	22	44
Low human capital	66	71	79	60	51	63
Poor Basic Skills	12	15	20	8	2	7
Three+ Disadvantages	*19*	*17*	*27*	*17*	*5*	*28*
Outputs	%	%	%	%	%	%
In work	53	46	34	59	84	58
Unemployed	9	14	12	6	7	2
Inactive	38	40	53	35	9	39
Increase in empl. %	16	26	16	8	11	13
% increase in empl.	43	130	89	16	20	29
Increase in quals %	54	57	50	50	41	76
Base	*3,431*	*1,059*	*548*	*1,217*	*278*	*328*
Row %	*100*	*31*	*16*	*35*	*8*	*10*

  - In Policy Field 5, promoting the participation of women in the labour market, over a third of the (almost) exclusively female entry cohort had experienced long-term unemployment or inactivity, and 44 per cent of them had domestic or family responsibilities which impeded their ability to work.

- No Policy Field had high levels of early leaving and all of them recorded extremely high levels of satisfaction with provision among beneficiaries.
- All the Policy Fields had increased the proportion of beneficiaries in employment by the time of the survey, although their success rate in so doing varied dramatically on account of their differing aims and the varied proportions of employed entrants.
- All the Policy Fields demonstrated high levels of qualification gains among beneficiaries, in some cases (*eg* Policy Field 5) very high.

7. Regional Analysis

This chapter of the report looks in turn at each of the nine English regions, and systematically reviews the key findings from the survey in that region in the light both of the labour market conditions there at the time, and of the analysis, prescriptions and priorities of the Government Office there, as set out in the ESF Objective 3 Regional Development Plan.

For each region, we follow the same procedure, looking in turn at:

- characteristics of beneficiaries
- support received
- satisfaction with the programme
- outcomes, in terms of:
    - job outcomes
    - qualification outcomes
    - 'soft' outcomes.

The data sets for each region are relatively small, with only 300 to 400 beneficiaries in each region. For this reason alone, we would expect these data to be less accurate than those for the survey as a whole, and so we do not provide the full breakdown of results by the different categories of beneficiary, sticking instead mainly to a simple male/female comparison. However, in addition, as a result of the procedures necessarily adopted for sampling, the spread of these beneficiaries between the five policy fields *within each region* sometimes varies greatly from the national average, and from the pattern of regional expenditure on each Policy Field which is usually set out in the RDP. For this reason, we begin our analysis of the results for each region with precisely this breakdown between the five Policy Fields, and the pattern shown here should be kept in mind in interpreting the results subsequently presented.

7.1 North East

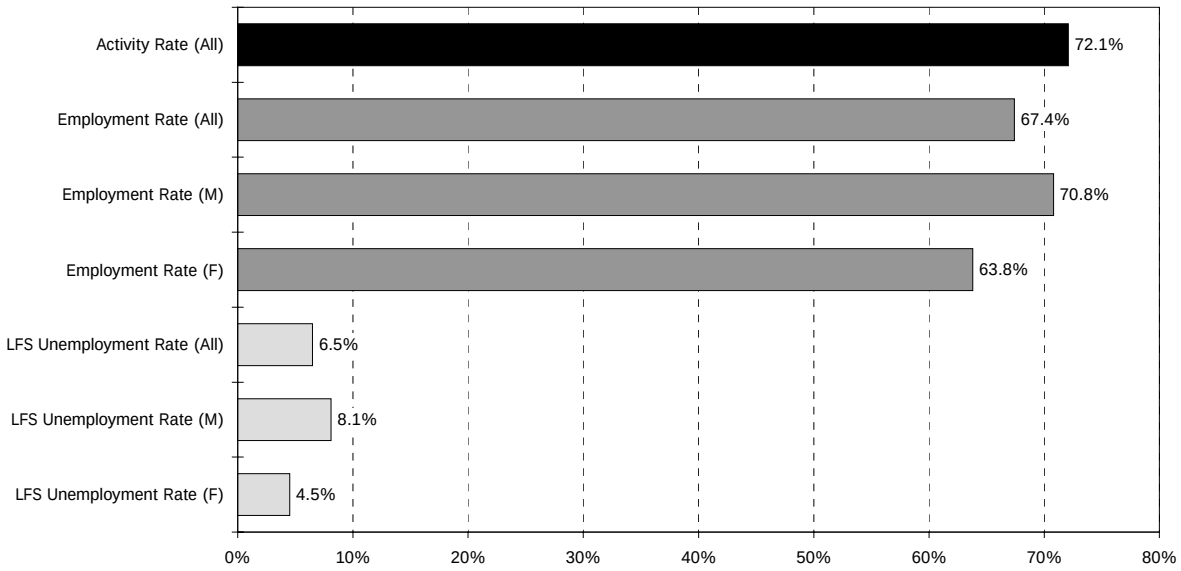
The key indicators of labour market conditions in the North East, as the last of the beneficiaries were leaving their projects, are shown in Figure 7.1.

The ESF Regional Development Plan for the North East shows that the region has the highest level of economic inactivity of any English region. Furthermore, it suggests that the region has benefited relatively little from high rates of economic growth and buoyant employment outside it. Overall, levels of employment have grown slowly, and unemployment has fallen by more than half over the past five years, short-term unemployment now dominates the claimant unemployed figures.

Notwithstanding these positive trends, the overall unemployment rate remains, significantly above the national average.

Poor employment prospects are accompanied by a significant skills deficit in the region. Educational attainment by those currently in school remains well behind national levels. A third of the region's wards are in the worst 20 per cent in England in terms of educational performance, and 70 per cent are in the worst 50 per cent in England. The numbers of people with weak basic skills in the North East is above the national average.

Figure 7.1: The labour market in the North East, at the end of 2002



Source: LFS Nov. 2002-Jan.2003, seasonally adjusted

In terms of vocational skills, the region's major deficits with the national averages are in the number of people with no qualification. Educational and skills development are particularly weak among the unemployed. Half of the unemployed either have no qualifications or are qualified only to NVQ1. By contrast, some 70 per cent of employers report that the skill levels required in the average employee are increasing, and that entry level requirements are, on average, moving from NVQ2 to NVQ3.

The North East has a significant shortfall in the number of micro SMEs where the majority of employment growth has been concentrated in recent years. The average business in the North East employs 3.3 more people (almost 30 per cent more) than at national level. Employment is concentrated in larger units in manufacturing, utilities and in public services.

Without economic growth that results in a net increase in the demand for labour, the prospects for tackling inactivity, under-employment and social and economic exclusion are poor. Thus, while acknowledging the role of assistance to the unemployed and those who are detached from the labour market, the highest priority is given to labour market interventions that will create and sustain employment.

Accordingly, the highest priority is given to actions that will reinforce business competitiveness, that encourage enterprise and the creation of employment:

- Workforce development.
- Addressing skills shortages.
- Increasing the availability and use of higher level skills.
- Encouraging and supporting self employment.
- Encouraging enhanced productivity.
- Overcome weakness in basic skills among the employed and unemployed workforce.
- Enhance low levels of skills attainment generally, but particularly among the unemployed.
- Improve the relatively low level of skills development among women.
- Support for the training of entrepreneurs once they have commenced trading.

7.1.1 What kind of projects did beneficiaries enter?

Table 7.1 shows the breakdown of the weighted sample of beneficiaries between the five Policy Fields in the North East, and compares them with that for England as a whole.

It shows that:

- beneficiaries from projects in Policy Field 5 comprise a much higher proportion of respondents than they have done for England as whole, at 32 per cent
- Policy Fields 1 and 3 both make up substantial proportions of the respondents, as they do for England as a whole; but
- there are very few Policy Field 4 beneficiaries in the North East sample.

Table 7.1: Policy Fields under which beneficiaries' projects in the North East were supported

Policy Fields under which beneficiaries' projects were supported	North East %	All England %
Policy Field 1: Active labour market policies	26	31
Policy Field 2: Equal opportunities for all and promoting social inclusion	17	16
Policy Field 3: Improving training and education and promoting lifelong learning	25	35
Policy Field 4: Adaptability and entrepreneurship	1	8
Policy Field 5: Improving the participation of women in the labour market	32	10
Base	*405*	*3,431*

Base: All respondents

7.1.2 Characteristics of beneficiaries

In this section, we look in turn at the key personal and labour market characteristics of beneficiaries, including their status on entry and the prevalence of certain kinds of disadvantage within the sample.

Sex and age profile

Table 7.2 shows the composition of the weighted sample of beneficiaries in the North East by age and gender.

Table 7.2: Age group of beneficiaries in the North East, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
< 18	38	13	18
18-24	18	17	17
25-34	10	15	14
35-49	16	33	29
50+	18	22	21
Base	*88*	*310*	*405*

Base: All the North East beneficiaries who gave an answer

It shows that:

- as we might imagine, in view of the large proportion of Policy Field 5 beneficiaries, just over three-quarters of beneficiaries in the North East sample were women
- among the men, there is a very high proportion (38 per cent) of very young beneficiaries
- the proportion of older individuals (*ie* 50 plus) is comparable with the distribution for England as a whole.

Incidence of disadvantaged groups

The entry cohort to projects in the North East appears to have been slightly more disadvantaged than that for England as a whole (Table 7.3). This is best shown by the combined variable, 'low human capital', which indicates that 70 per cent of project entrants in the North East were likely to be held back, and have their labour market opportunities constrained, by some combination of poor qualification, wrong or out-of-date skills, restricted work experience, *etc.* This compares with 66 per cent for England as a whole.

In some other ways, however, the cohort demonstrated some differences. For example, the intake of people from minority ethnic groups in the North East was lower than for England as a whole, at just three per cent.

Table 7.3: Incidence of discrete LM disadvantages among beneficiaries in the North East

	LTU/I %	Return-ers %	Lone Parents %	Min. Eth. Group %	Other Lang. %	Disabil/ Health %	Carers %	Low H. Capital %
North East beneficiaries	29	12	7	3	1	18	26	70
All	27	9	10	14	4	18	25	66
Base	*118*	*49*	*28*	*10*	*6*	*75*	*107*	*283*

Base: All the North East beneficiaries who gave an answer

Status on entry

Table 7.4 shows the circumstances of the beneficiaries when they joined the projects. It shows that:

- the proportion of employed entrants was relatively low (at 30 per cent, *cf* 37 per cent for England as a whole)
- the proportion of inactive entrants, at 50 per cent, was similarly much higher than across England as a whole.

Table 7.4: Employment status one week before joining the project, among beneficiaries in the North East, by gender

	Males %	Females %	All %
In paid employment	20	33	30
Unemployed	25	15	17
Inactive	54	49	50
Base	*88*	*310*	*418*

Base: All the North East beneficiaries who gave an answer

Duration of unemployment before entry to project

Table 7.5 looks at the 68 per cent of beneficiaries who had not been working when they joined their project.

It shows that among them, nearly two-thirds had either never worked or had not done so in the past two years. This is much higher than in England as a whole (55 per cent), suggesting that the North East sample as a whole contained a much higher proportion of people with a considerable distance still to travel before finding work.

Table 7.5: Length of time since last worked, among beneficiaries in the North East, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Less than three months	13	12	13
At least three months but less than six months	6	4	4
At least six months but less than a year	5	6	5
At least a year but less than two years	6	9	8
Two years or more	15	40	33
Never worked	45	25	30
Don't know/not stated	10	4	6
Base	*70*	*207*	*283*

Base: All those not working when entered a the North East project, and who gave an answer

7.1.3 Support received

In this section, we look at the support which beneficiaries had received, looking in turn at skill improvements, confidence building and job search.

Training and skills

Table 7.6 shows that nine out of ten of the North East beneficiaries had been helped to improve the skills they would need at work, in some way or other. The most widespread gain here had been in the practical skills related to a particular job (61 per cent of all beneficiaries) but this was somewhat less common among the men.

By contrast, basic skills provision had been more widespread among the male beneficiaries, with, for example, a third of them helped to improve their number skills, compared with less than a fifth of the women.

IT skills had been provided for just over half of these beneficiaries, men and women alike.

Table 7.6: Ways in which beneficiaries in the North East were helped to improve the skills they would need at work, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped to improve skills needed at work (all)	89	90	90
Proportions helped to improve skills through…			
practical skills related to a particular job	53	64	61
improved computing/Information Technology (IT) skills	53	55	55
study skills (such as essay or report writing, using libraries)	45	48	47
improved reading and writing skills	36	30	32
improved maths and number skills	33	18	21
improved English speaking skills	35	22	25
training in wider job skills (such as admin or book-keeping)	26	27	27
training in management and/or leadership skills	36	22	25
Base	*88*	*310*	*405*

Base: All those in the North East projects who received help with skills/training and who gave an answer

'Soft' skills

Table 7.7 shows that 92 per cent of the North East beneficiaries had been helped in building their self confidence and/or improving their 'soft' skills in some way or other. In this respect, there was little difference between the men and the women.

Working with other people as part of a team, communication skills and motivation-building seem to have been the most widespread of these activities, although all of them were undertaken by at least half of the beneficiaries.

Table 7.7: Ways in which beneficiaries in the North East were helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work (all)	**89**	**93**	**92**
Proportions helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work through…			
expressing yourself and communicating with people	73	75	74
working with other people as part of a team	77	81	80
solving problems	71	69	69
motivation	72	75	74
ability to do things independently	69	77	75
ability to take responsibility	62	69	67
Base	*88*	*310*	*405*

Base: All those in the North East projects who received help to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work and who gave an answer

Job search

Table 7.8 shows that just under two-thirds of the North East beneficiaries had been helped with their job search skills or activities in some way or other. In this respect, the men were more likely to have participated than were the women, and this extends to each of the separate activities reviewed as well.

Advice or guidance about what sorts of work or training that beneficiaries could do was the most widespread activity, with half of them receiving this form of help. Work experience or a work placement had been provided for just under a quarter of beneficiaries.

The more direct job-getting activities, such as job-broking and job search itself, had tended to be provided for the men more often than the women, and this may reflect the higher proportion of younger, unemployed men in this sample.

Table 7.8: Ways in which beneficiaries in the North East were helped with job search and work experience, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped with job search and work experience (all)	73	60	63
Proportions helped to with job search and work experience through…			
Work experience or a work placement	29	21	23
General training about the world of work	49	30	34
Advice or guidance about what sorts of work or training you could do	54	50	50
Training in how to look for work	41	27	30
Contacts to help you look for a job	35	21	24
Job broking; leads for particular vacancies	29	19	21
Base	*88*	*310*	*405*

Base: All those in the North East projects who received help with job search and work experience and who gave an answer

Course completion/early leavers

For the programme as a whole, we showed above (Table 4.17) that early leaving had been significant, but not widespread, with just 17 per cent of beneficiaries reporting that they had left earlier than expected. In the North East, early leaving had been slightly less widespread, at 14 per cent, as Table 7.9 shows.

Early leaving seems to have been more prevalent among the men than the women, although once again, the dominant reasons for leaving (not shown in table) are either ‘good’ ones, such as finding work, or were due to circumstantial changes. Only a small minority left for reasons of dissatisfaction with the course.

Table 7.9: Whether beneficiaries in the North East left their project early, or stayed until the end

Proportions leaving early and staying to end	Male %	Female %	All %
Left early	20	12	14
Stayed to end	80	87	85
Base	*88*	*310*	*418*

Base: All those in the North East projects who gave an answer

Satisfaction with project

This low level of dissatisfied quits is entirely consistent with the high levels of satisfaction about the course shown in Table 7.10.

Here, we can see that some 84 per cent of beneficiaries were either very satisfied or fairly satisfied, with the women tending to be more satisfied than the men.

Table 7.10: Degree of satisfaction expressed with project, by beneficiaries in the North East

Proportions who were…	Male %	Female %	All %
Very satisfied	37	55	51
Fairly satisfied	40	31	33
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	11	6	7
Fairly dissatisfied	*9*	*3*	*4*
Very dissatisfied	*4*	*1*	*2*
Base	*88*	*310*	*405*

Base: All those in the North East projects who gave an answer

7.1.4 Outcomes

As with our analysis of the programme as a whole, we identify several ways in which projects in the North East have helped the beneficiaries involved, and we look in turn at:

- employment outcomes
- qualification outcomes
- 'soft' outcomes among those not working.

Job outcomes

From an employment rate of 30 per cent when beneficiaries entered the programme, some 36 per cent of beneficiaries in the North East were working by the time they left, and by a further seven per cent by the time of the survey.

The 18 per cent unemployment rate had similarly fallen over this period, from 18 per cent to eight, and subsequently to six per cent at the time of the survey.

By contrast, the inactivity rate had remained fairly fixed, at 50 per cent at the time of entering the projects and 51 per cent at the time of the survey.

Table 7.11 shows the employment and 'other activity' outcomes for beneficiaries from projects in the North East, both immediately on completing their project, and at the time of the survey. Note that as a handful of the beneficiaries coded as 'other' were in paid work of some, undisclosed, type, the data in this table are slightly inconsistent with those cited immediately above.

Table 7.11: Employment and activity patterns after the project; all respondents from projects in the North East

All respondents	Work FT	Work PT	Self Empl.	U/E	Education/ Training	Sick/ Disabled	Vol. Work	Other
	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
Status immediately on leaving project	16	16	4	8	30	6	3	16
Status at time of survey	19	19	5	6	28	8	3	11

Base: All those who from the North East projects answered the questions

Qualification outcomes

Over a quarter of beneficiaries in the North East had entered these projects without any qualification, and this is shown in the first column of Table 7.12.

Over a half (61 per cent) of all entrants had gained a full qualification by the time they left the project, and a further three per cent had gained credits or units towards one.

Table 7.12: Qualifications held by beneficiaries in the North East, before and after the project

Whether or not held or gained any qualification(s) or units/credits	Held qualification(s) before starting the project %	Gained qualification(s) through the project %	Gained unit(s) or credit(s) towards qualification(s) through the project %
Yes	73	61	3
No	26	35	97
Base	*405*	*405*	*405*

Base: All those in the North East projects answering each question

'Soft' outcomes

Table 7.11 above, showed that there were very modest continuing job gains after beneficiaries had ended their course. It is worthwhile, therefore, to consider to what extent there might be lasting and on-going effects which would help beneficiaries to improve their circumstances in the labour market, even though they had not yet done so.

Table 7.13: Improved confidence and skills as a result of the project, among beneficiaries in the North East without a job

Proportions who were…	Male %	Female %	All %
More confident now	89	76	80
No more confident now	11	24	20
Better skilled now	67	90	82
No better skilled now	33	10	18
Base	*15*	*30*	*45*

Base: All those without a job in the North East projects who gave an answer

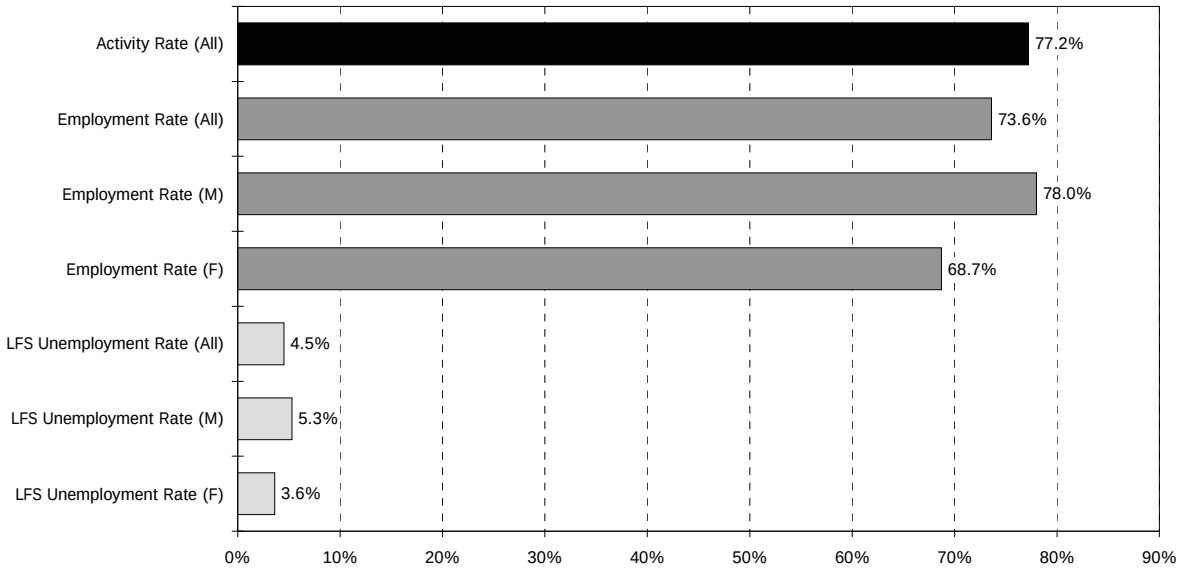
Table 7.13, shows that among the (very few, N = 45) beneficiaries who were not working at the time of the survey, but were nevertheless still looking for it, almost all felt both more confident about finding work and better skilled to do it, than they had when they first entered the project.

7.2 North West

The key indicators of labour market conditions in the North West as the last of the beneficiaries were leaving their projects are shown in Figure 7.2.

The North West has relatively low employment and activity rates in comparison with England as a whole, and more particularly with the Midlands and South of the country. The RDP points out that 'evidence collected by the NWRA at ward level indicates that 13 of the 38 local shares authority areas in the Programme area have very long-term rates in excess of the area average'. Furthermore, in terms of the skill base of the population, the North West lags marginally behind the England average for higher level qualifications (NVQ4+), is broadly comparable at the intermediate level, but has a significantly poorer profile in terms of the proportions with no qualifications. With the third lowest regional literacy and numeracy levels, the scale of such differences indicates a serious deficiency in the competitive position of the North West workforce. In addition, there are severe spatial concentrations of disadvantage in the region; it is estimated that the area contains ten of the most deprived local authority areas in England.

Figure 7.2: The labour market in the North West, at the end of 2002



Source: LFS Nov. 2002-Jan.2003, seasonally adjusted

The RDP recognises that effective labour market strategies require that attention be paid to the excluded as well as the included. It identifies key target groups and the types of action which could be used to support them. All these target groups are identified as being at a disadvantage within the UK's main planning documents for ES, and are at particular risk of exclusion. They include:

- the long term unemployed and inactive
- those with few, low or no skills
- those with poor basic skills
- the young and the older age groups
- ethnic minority groups

- lone parents
- those with a disability
- women.

The rationale for the regional strategy is provided by a number of specific market failures that Objective 3 seeks to address, namely:

- structural unemployment resulting from the process of industrial change and its impact on short- and long-term unemployment
- rigidities in the labour market restricting responsiveness to economic change
- market dynamics working against disadvantaged groups
- the perceived risk and uncertainty associated with recruitment of disadvantaged groups
- structural inertia inhibiting workforce and employee skill progression
- lack of awareness and understanding of future skill needs and requirements as they relate to competitiveness, and
- underestimating the relevance of training and lifelong learning to employability.

As a result, the overall strategic aims of the 2000-2006 North West Objective 3 Regional Strategy are to:

- facilitate the effective access of unemployed people in the region, and particularly those most disadvantaged, into the labour market
- provide a learning environment which supports employers to develop a highly competent workforce and individuals to pursue skills development; and
- enhance the adaptability of workers in the region to the process of change, with particular focus on those likely to find difficulty in transition or in acquiring appropriate skills.

7.2.1 What kind of projects did beneficiaries enter?

Table 7.14 shows the breakdown of the weighted sample of beneficiaries between the five Policy Fields in the North West, and compares them with that for England as a whole.

It shows that:

- beneficiaries from projects in Policy Field 3 comprise a much higher proportion of respondents than they have done for England as whole, at 59 per cent. This aligns with the RDP's emphasis on providing learning opportunities to support skills development.
- Policy Fields 1 and 2 together make up 31 per cent of the respondents, which is considerably lower than for England as a whole, but which nevertheless reflects the RDP's commitment to facilitating the access of unemployed people into the labour market
- There are very few Policy Field 5 beneficiaries in the NW sample.

Table 7.14: Policy Fields under which beneficiaries' projects in the North West were supported

Policy Fields under which beneficiaries' projects were supported	The North West %	All England %
Policy Field 1: Active labour market policies	22	31
Policy Field 2: Equal opportunities for all & promoting social inclusion	9	16
Policy Field 3: Improving training and education and promoting lifelong learning	59	35
Policy Field 4: Adaptability and entrepreneurship	6	8
Policy Field 5: Improving the participation of women in the labour market	3	10
Base	*357*	*3,431*

Base: all respondents

7.2.2 Characteristics of beneficiaries

In this section, we look in turn at the key personal and labour market characteristics of beneficiaries, including their status on entry and the prevalence of certain kinds of disadvantage within the sample.

Sex and age profile

Table 7.15 shows the composition of the weighted sample of beneficiaries in the North West, by age and gender. It shows that:

- women make up half the sample
- the age composition of the sample is very much in line with that of England as a whole, with about half aged 35 or more, and about a fifth aged under 25.

Table 7.15: Age group of beneficiaries in the North West, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
< 18	2	1	1
18-24	23	16	20
25-34	24	22	23
35-49	27	34	30
50+	23	26	24
Base	*180*	*172*	*357*

Base: All the North West beneficiaries who gave an answer

Incidence of disadvantaged groups

Similarly, the entry cohort to projects in the North West is very similar to the all-England one, and it has significant representation from the groups cited in the RDP. Thus, for example, the long-term unemployed and inactive make up 29 per cent of entrants; those with few or no skills (*ie* our 'low human capital' group), 62 per cent; minority ethnic group members, 13 per cent; and people with a disability, 19 per cent (Table 7.16).

People with poor basic skills, although not shown in the table, make up a further eight per cent of the sample.

Table 7.16: Incidence of discrete LM disadvantages among beneficiaries in the North West

	LTU/I %	Return-ers %	Lone Parents %	Min. Eth. Group %	Other Lang. %	Disabil/ Health %	Carers %	Low H. Capital %
North West beneficiaries	28	6	9	12	4	18	21	62
All	27	9	10	14	4	18	25	66
Base	*99*	*23*	*34*	*42*	*13*	*66*	*75*	*221*

Base: All the North West beneficiaries who gave an answer

Status on entry

Table 7.17 shows the circumstances of the beneficiaries when they joined the projects. It shows that:

- the proportion of employed entrants was slightly higher than for England as a whole, at 40 per cent
- correspondingly, slightly fewer (35 per cent) were inactive on entering the programme.

Table 7.17: Employment status one week before joining the project, among beneficiaries in the North West, by gender

	Males %	Females %	All %
In paid employment	41	38	41
Unemployed	26	18	22
Inactive	29	39	34
Base	*180*	*172*	*357*

Base: All the North West beneficiaries who gave an answer

Duration of unemployment before entry to project

Table 7.18 looks at the 56 per cent of beneficiaries who had not been working when they joined their project.

Table 7.18: Length of time since last worked, among beneficiaries in the North West, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Less than three months	16	18	17
At least three months but less than six months	10	5	8
At least six months but less than a year	9	5	7
At least a year but less than two years	13	10	11
Two years or more	28	38	33
Never worked	14	15	14
Don't know/Not stated	10	10	10
Base	*103*	*107*	*212*

Base: All those not working when entered a the North West project, and who gave an answer

It shows that among them, about half had either never worked or had not done so in the past two years. This is consistent with the RDP's emphasis on structural unemployment resulting from the process of industrial change, and on reaching out to inactive groups of entrant. Once again, the pattern shown here is very similar to that found for England as a whole.

7.2.3 Support received

In this section, we look at the support which beneficiaries had received, looking in turn at skill improvements, confidence building and job search.

Training and skills

Table 7.19 shows that 88 per cent of beneficiaries in the North West had been helped to improve the skills they would need at work in some way or other. The most widespread gains here had been in the practical skills related to a particular job, and IT skills, each benefiting 62 per cent of the participants.

Basic skills support had been provided for about a quarter of beneficiaries. Although not shown in the table, the extent of this provision doubles among those who said that they had basic skills problems. Among this sub-group it rises to 48 per cent for reading and writing skills, 33 per cent for number skills, and 48 per cent for language and communications skills.

Table 7.19: Ways in which beneficiaries in the North West were helped to improve the skills they would need at work, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped to improve skills (all)	88	89	88
Proportions helped to improve skills through…			
practical skills related to a particular job	64	61	62
improved computing/Information Technology (IT) skills	56	65	60
study skills (such as essay or report writing, using libraries)	40	32	36
improved reading and writing skills	25	24	24
improved maths and number skills	22	16	19
improved English speaking skills	21	26	23
training in wider job skills (such as admin or book-keeping)	30	27	28
training in management and/or leadership skills	31	16	23
Base	*180*	*172*	*357*

Base: All those in the North West projects who received help with skills/training and who gave an answer

'Soft' skills

Table 7.20 shows that almost nine out of ten beneficiaries in the North West had been helped in building their self confidence and/or improving their 'soft' skills in some way or other. There was little difference between the men and the women.

Working with other people as part of a team, communication skills and motivation-building seem to have been the most widespread of these activities, each reaching about 60 per cent of participants, although, as in the North East, all of these activities were undertaken by at least half of the beneficiaries.

Table 7.20: Ways in which beneficiaries in the North West were helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work (all)	87	87	86
Proportions helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work through….			
expressing yourself and communicating with people	62	60	60
working with other people as part of a team	63	62	62
solving problems	70	57	63
motivation	64	61	62
ability to do things independently	66	65	65
ability to take responsibility	57	56	56
Base	*180*	*172*	*357*

Base: All those in the North West projects who received help to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work and who gave an answer

Job search

Table 7.21 shows that 59 per cent of the beneficiaries in the North West had been helped with their job search skills or activities in some way or other. In this respect, the men were more likely to have participated than were the women, and this extends to each of the separate activities reviewed as well.

Advice or guidance about what sorts of work or training that beneficiaries could do was the most widespread activity, with almost half of them receiving this form of help. Work experience or a work placement had been provided for just 19 per cent of beneficiaries.

More formal job search activities, such as job-broking and job search itself, had tended to be provided for the men more often than the women, with about a third of the men and a quarter of the women receiving it.

Table 7.21: Ways in which beneficiaries in the North West were helped with job search and work experience, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped with job search and work experience (all)	63	57	59
Proportions helped to with job search and work experience through…			
work experience or a work placement	25	13	19
general training about the world of work	40	28	34
advice or guidance about what sorts of work or training you could do	50	43	46
training in how to look for work	32	24	28
contacts to help you look for a job	34	23	28
job broking; leads for particular vacancies	31	20	25
Base	*180*	*172*	*357*

Base: All those in the North West projects who received help with job search and work experience and who gave an answer

Course completion/early leavers

In the North West, early leaving was not widespread with only 16 per cent of beneficiaries leaving before their course finished, as Table 7.22 shows. This is exactly in line with the proportion of early leavers for the programme as a whole.

Early leaving seems to have been slightly more prevalent among the men than the women. As with the programme for England as a whole, the dominant reasons for leaving (not shown in table) were either 'good' ones, such as finding work, or were due to circumstantial changes. Only a small minority left for reasons of dissatisfaction with the course.

Table 7.22: Whether beneficiaries in the North West left their project early or stayed until the end

Proportions leaving early and staying to end	Male %	Female %	All %
Left early	17	15	16
Stayed to end	81	84	82
Base	*180*	*172*	*357*

Base: All those in the North West projects who gave an answer

Satisfaction with project

This low level of dissatisfied quits is entirely consistent with the high levels of satisfaction about the course shown in Table 7.23.

Here, we can see that some 85per cent of beneficiaries were either very satisfied or fairly satisfied, with the women tending to be more satisfied than the men.

Table 7.23: Degree of satisfaction expressed with project by beneficiaries in the North West

Proportions who were…	Male %	Female %	All %
Very satisfied	45	50	47
Fairly satisfied	38	37	37
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10	9	9
Fairly dissatisfied	6	2	4
Very dissatisfied	1	2	1
Base	*180*	*172*	*357*

Base: All those in the North West projects who gave an answer

7.2.4 Outcomes

As with our analysis of the programme as a whole, we identify several ways in which projects in the North West have helped the beneficiaries involved, and we look in turn at:

- employment outcomes
- qualification outcomes
- 'soft' outcomes among those not working.

Job outcomes

From an employment rate of 41 per cent when beneficiaries entered the programme, some 49 per cent of beneficiaries in the North West were working by the time they left, and by a further nine per cent by the time of the survey.

The unemployment rate had similarly fallen over this period, from 22 per cent on entry, to 13 per cent on leaving the course, and to nine per cent at the time of the survey.

However, the inactivity rate had only been reduced slightly, from 34 per cent at the time of entering the projects, to 33 per cent at the time of the survey.

Table 7.24 shows the employment and 'other activity' outcomes for beneficiaries from projects in the North West, both immediately on completing their project, and at the time of the survey. As with the results for the North East above, because a handful of the beneficiaries coded as 'other' in this table were in paid work of some, undisclosed, type, the data in this table are slightly inconsistent with those cited in the paragraphs immediately above.

Table 7.24: Employment and activity patterns after the project; all respondents from projects in the North West

All respondents	Work FT	Work PT	Self Empl.	U/E	Education/ Training	Sick/ Disabled	Vol. Work	Other
	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
Status immediately on leaving project	29	14	5	13	14	6	6	12
Status at time of survey	33	18	7	9	12	7	5	9

Base: All those who from the North West projects answered the questions

Qualification outcomes

The RDP for the North West had emphasised the targeting of people with few or no skills, and we can see from the first column of Table 7.25 that nearly a fifth of beneficiaries here had entered these projects without any qualification.

Table 7.25: Qualifications held by beneficiaries in the North West, before and after the project

Whether or not held or gained any qualification(s) or units/credits	Held qualification(s) before starting the project %	Gained qualification(s) through the project %	Gained unit(s) or credit(s) towards qualification(s) through the project %
Yes	80	55	4
No	17	38	96
Base	*357*	*357*	*357*

Base: All those in the North West projects answering each question

Just over a half (55 per cent) of all entrants had gained a full qualification by the time they left the project, and a further four per cent had gained credits or units towards one.

'Soft' outcomes

Table 7.24 above, showed that the employment rate had improved by nine percentage points after beneficiaries had ended their course. It is worthwhile, therefore, to consider to what extent there might be lasting and on-going effects which would help beneficiaries to improve their circumstances in the labour market, even though they had not yet done so.

Table 7.26 shows that among the (very few, N = 37) beneficiaries who were not working at the time of the survey, but were nevertheless still looking for it, about three-quarters felt both more confident about finding work and better skilled to do it, than they had when they first entered the project.

Table 7.26: Improved confidence and skills as a result of the project, among beneficiaries in the North West without a job

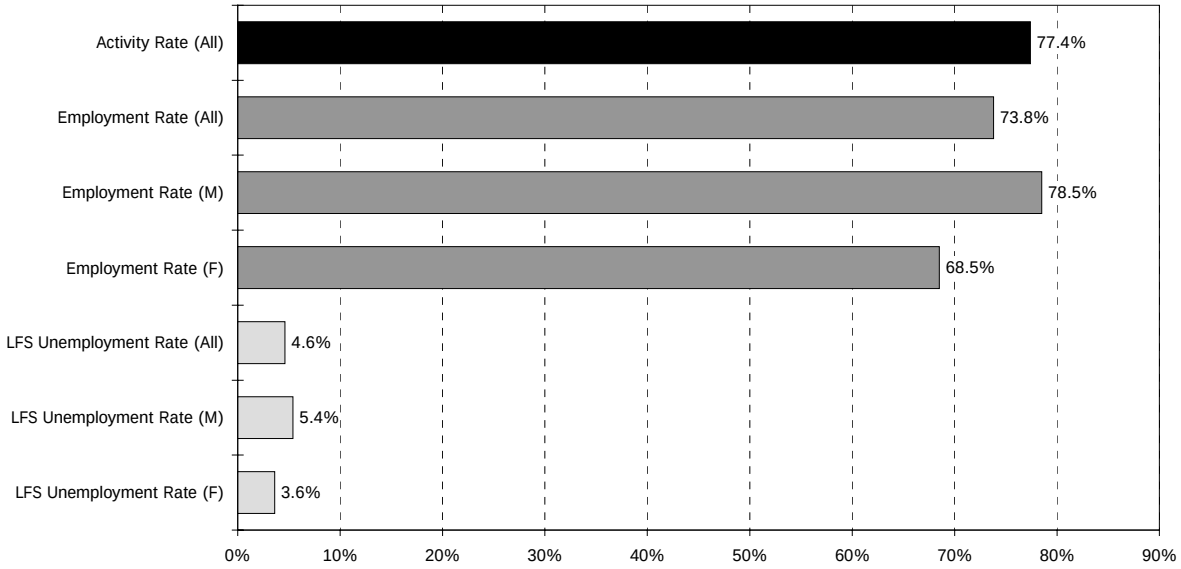
Proportions who were…	Male %	Female %	All %
More confident now	65	81	72
No more confident now	31	19	26
DK	4	–	3
Better skilled now	70	94	80
No better skilled now	30	–	18
DK	–	6	3
Base	*22*	*15*	*37*

Base: All those without a job in the North West projects who gave an answer

7.3 Yorkshire and Humberside

The key indicators of labour market conditions in Yorkshire and Humberside as the last of the beneficiaries were leaving their projects are shown in Figure 7.3.

Figure 7.3: The labour market in Yorkshire and Humberside, at the end of 2002



Source: LFS Nov. 2002-Jan.2003, seasonally adjusted

The Yorkshire and the Humberside region is particularly diverse. Economic success and thriving industry and commerce exist alongside major areas of serious disadvantage.

The region's GDP remains below the EU average. South Yorkshire's GDP is significantly below the rest of the region, the ripple effects from which affect the rest of the region and regional statistics. However, the Objective 3 programme covers the sub-regions of West Yorkshire, North Yorkshire and the Humber. In South Yorkshire, all ESF activity is delivered through the Objective 1 programme, and so is not covered in these results.

Key problems for the Yorkshire and Humberside economy include:

- low levels of manufacturing investment, allied to low employment in high technology sectors
- low investment in research and development, with poor small firm formation and survival rates
- consequently, the region has a high representation of employment in vulnerable and low-output sectors, leading to low household incomes and high levels of deprivation
- below average levels of qualifications across the working population
- low economic activity rates and falling population due to net outward migration, particularly amongst young people. In fact, high levels of economic inactivity amongst males, both young and old are of significant concern.

The ESF Regional Development Plan for Yorkshire and Humberside recognises that the occupational structure is skewed away from knowledge-based, higher order and more stable occupations. It indicates that continued growth in service sector employment will require well-motivated individuals with a range of transferable skills, including good literacy and numeracy, and competence in a range of interpersonal skills.

It recognises that in the more urban and industrialised areas, there remain large, concentrated minorities of disadvantaged people and communities. These economies and their labour market need to adjust to further change whilst dealing with the effect of past restructuring. In rural and former coalfield areas, primary and extractive industries, which once provided significant sources of jobs, now face severe difficulties which impact on the labour markets they once served. Although in large areas of North Yorkshire, East Riding and parts of West Yorkshire, local economies have sustained jobs and provided access to further opportunities, there remain here too groups of highly disadvantaged individuals.

7.3.1 What kind of projects did beneficiaries enter?

Table 7.27 shows the breakdown of the weighted sample of beneficiaries between the five Policy Fields in Yorkshire and Humberside, and compares them with that for England as a whole.

It shows that:

- beneficiaries from projects in Policy Field 1 comprise the majority (59 per cent) of the sample of beneficiaries in Y&H. This constitutes a much higher proportion of respondents than in England as whole, at 31 per cent.
- Policy Field 2 is consequently rather under-represented in the sample, compared with England as a whole;
- Policy Fields 4 and 5 both make up small proportions of the respondents, as they do for England as a whole; and
- Policy Field 3 is strongly represented, at 26 per cent of beneficiaries, albeit somewhat less strongly than in England as a whole.

Table 7.27: Policy Fields under which beneficiaries' projects in Yorkshire and Humberside were supported

Policy Fields under which beneficiaries' projects were supported	Yorkshire & Humberside %	All England %
Policy Field 1: Active labour market policies	59	31
Policy Field 2: Equal opportunities for all & promoting social inclusion	6	16
Policy Field 3: Improving training and education and promoting lifelong learning	26	35
Policy Field 4: Adaptability and entrepreneurship	5	8
Policy Field 5: Improving the participation of women in the labour market	4	10
Base	*423*	*3,431*

Base: all respondents

7.3.2 Characteristics of beneficiaries

In this section, we look in turn at the key personal and labour market characteristics of beneficiaries, including their status on entry and the prevalence of certain kinds of disadvantage within the sample.

Sex and age profile

Table 7.28 shows the composition of the weighted sample of beneficiaries in Yorkshire and Humberside, by age and gender.

It shows that:

- women make up nearly two-thirds of the sample
- nearly a third of the sample were aged under 25, compared with just over a quarter in England as a whole. This emphasis was most marked among the men, of whom 40 per cent were under 25
- about half the women, by contrast, were aged between 25 and 49
- otherwise, the age composition of the sample was much in line with that of England as a whole, although the proportion of over 50s was somewhat lower in Yorkshire and Humberside.

Table 7.28: Age group of beneficiaries in Yorkshire and Humberside, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
< 18	10	6	7
18-24	31	22	25
25-34	13	19	17
35-49	27	34	32
50+	19	18	18
Base	*147*	*274*	*423*

Base: All Yorkshire and Humberside beneficiaries who gave an answer

Incidence of disadvantaged groups

The entry cohort to projects in the Yorkshire and Humberside is very similar to the all-England one, and it has significant representation from the various disadvantaged groups. We can see from Table 7.29 that

there is a high proportion of people with few or no skills; some two-thirds falling into our 'low human capital' group. Minority ethnic group members make up 15 per cent, and people with a disability, 19 per cent.

People with poor basic skills, although not shown in the table, make up a further 13 per cent of the sample.

Table 7.29: Incidence of discrete LM disadvantages among beneficiaries in Yorkshire and Humberside

	LTU/I %	Returners %	Lone Parents %	Min. Eth. Group %	Other Lang. %	Disabil/ Health %	Carers %	Low H. Capital %
Y&H beneficiaries	32	12	11	15	5	19	30	67
All	27	9	10	15	4	18	25	66
Base	*134*	*52*	*48*	*62*	*22*	*81*	*128*	*284*

Base: All Yorkshire and Humberside beneficiaries who gave an answer

Status on entry

Table 7.30 shows the circumstances of the beneficiaries when they joined the projects. It shows that:

- the proportion of working entrants was lower than for England as a whole, at 32 per cent (*cf* 37 per cent)
- correspondingly, a higher proportion were inactive on entering the programme. (46 per cent, *cf* 39)
- the intake of unemployed (but actively seeking work) beneficiaries was slightly lower in Yorkshire and Humberside than in England as a whole (18 per cent *cf* 21); and
- among the male beneficiaries the proportion of unemployed entrants was considerably higher than among the women entrants.

Table 7.30: Employment status one week before joining the project, among beneficiaries in Yorkshire and Humberside, by gender

	Males %	Females %	All %
In paid work	26	35	32
Unemployed	31	11	18
Inactive	38	51	46
Base	*147*	*274*	*423*

Base: All Yorkshire and Humberside beneficiaries who gave an answer

Duration of unemployment before entry to project

Table 7.31 looks at the two in three beneficiaries who had not been working when they joined their project.

It shows that among them, 58 per cent had either never worked or had not done so in the past two years, and this rises to almost two-thirds among the non-working women entrants. The incidence of long-term non-participation in the sample is somewhat higher in the Yorkshire and Humberside sample (at 32 per cent overall) than it is in the all-England sample (27 per cent).

Table 7.31: Length of time since last worked, among beneficiaries in Yorkshire and Humberside, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Less than three months	15	10	12
At least three months but less than six months	8	6	7
At least six months but less than a year	6	7	7
At least a year but less than two years	10	9	9
Two years or more	27	41	36
Never worked	23	23	23
Don't know	10	4	6
Base	*109*	*179*	*289*

Base: All those not working when entered a Yorkshire and Humberside project, and who gave an answer

7.3.3 Support received

In this section, we look at the support which beneficiaries had received, looking in turn at skill improvements, confidence building and job search.

Training and skills

Table 7.32 shows that 89 per cent of beneficiaries in Yorkshire and Humberside had been helped to improve the skills they would need at work in some way or other. The most widespread gains here had been in the practical skills related to a particular job, and IT skills, each benefiting about 60 per cent of the participants.

Basic skills support had been provided for about a third of beneficiaries, and was more widespread among the men. Although not shown in the table, the extent of this provision doubles among those who said that they had basic skills problems; among this sub-group it rises to 63 per cent for reading and writing skills, 32 per cent for number skills, and 49 per cent for language and communications skills.

Table 7.32: Ways in which beneficiaries in Yorkshire and Humberside were helped to improve the skills they would need at work, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped to improve skills (all)	87	90	89
Proportions helped to improve skills through…			
practical skills related to a particular job	65	61	62
improved computing/Information Technology (IT) skills	61	61	60
study skills (such as essay or report writing, using libraries)	44	42	42
improved reading and writing skills	40	34	36
improved maths and number skills	41	26	31
improved English speaking skills	38	30	32
training in wider job skills (such as admin or book-keeping)	35	30	31
training in management and/or leadership skills	29	26	26
Base	*147*	*274*	*423*

Base: All those in Yorkshire and Humberside projects who received help with skills/training and who gave an answer

'Soft' skills

Table 7.33 shows that nine out of ten beneficiaries in the Yorkshire and Humberside had been helped in building their self confidence and/or improving their 'soft' skills in some way or other. There was little difference between the men and the women.

As for the different forms of provision here, none of them reached less than about two-thirds of beneficiaries. Working with other people as part of a team, communication skills and motivation-building seem to have been the most widespread of these activities, each reaching about two-thirds of participants. The ability to do things independently was particularly widespread among this sample, reaching 71 per cent of them.

Table 7.33: Ways in which beneficiaries in Yorkshire and Humberside were helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work (all)	87	92	90
Proportions helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work through…			
expressing yourself and communicating with people	65	67	66
working with other people as part of a team	70	64	66
solving problems	66	64	65
motivation	65	68	66
ability to do things independently	70	72	71
ability to take responsibility	67	64	65
Base	*147*	*274*	*423*

Base: All those in Yorkshire and Humberside projects who received help to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work and who gave an answer

Job search

Table 7.34 shows that 65 per cent of the beneficiaries in Yorkshire and Humberside had been helped with their job search skills or activities in some way or other. The men were more likely to have participated than were the women, and this extends to each of the separate activities reviewed as well.

Advice or guidance about what sorts of work or training that beneficiaries could do was the most widespread activity, with 51 per cent of them receiving this form of help. Work experience or a work placement had been provided for 26 per cent of beneficiaries, and this again was more widespread among the men, at 31 per cent.

More formal job search activities, such as job-broking and job search itself, had also tended to be provided for the men more often than the women, with about 40 per cent of the men and under a third of the women receiving it.

Table 7.34 Ways in which beneficiaries in Yorkshire and Humberside were helped with job search and work experience, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped with job search and work experience (all)	72	61	65
Proportions helped with job search and work experience through…			
work experience or a work placement	31	24	26
general training about the world of work	46	30	35
advice or guidance about what sorts of work or training you could do	58	48	51
training in how to look for work	41	27	31
contacts to help you look for a job	36	29	31
job broking; leads for particular vacancies	37	22	27
Base	*147*	*274*	*423*

Base: All those in Yorkshire and Humberside projects who received help with job search and work experience and who gave an answer

Course completion/early leavers

In Yorkshire and Humberside, early leaving was not widespread with only 17 per cent of beneficiaries leaving early, as Table 7.35 shows. This is exactly in line with the proportion of early leavers for the programme as a whole.

Early leaving seems to have been slightly more prevalent among the men than the women. As with the programme for England as a whole, the dominant reasons for leaving (not shown in table) were either 'good' ones, such as finding work, or were due to circumstantial changes. Only a small minority left for reasons of dissatisfaction with the course.

Table 7.35: Whether beneficiaries in Yorkshire and Humberside left their project early or stayed until the end

Proportions leaving early and staying to end	Male %	Female %	All %
Left early	19	16	17
Stayed to end	78	81	80
Base	*147*	*274*	*423*

Base: All those in Yorkshire and Humberside projects who gave an answer

Satisfaction with project

This low level of dissatisfied quits is entirely consistent with the high levels of satisfaction about the course shown in Table 7.36.

Here, we can see that some 85 per cent of beneficiaries were either very satisfied or fairly satisfied, with the women tending to be more satisfied than the men.

Table 7.36: Degree of satisfaction expressed with project, by beneficiaries in Yorkshire and Humberside

Proportions who were…	Male %	Female %	All %
Very satisfied	44	55	51
Fairly satisfied	35	33	34
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	8	5	6
Fairly dissatisfied	7	3	4
Very dissatisfied	5	3	4
Base	*147*	*274*	*423*

Base: All those in Yorkshire and Humberside projects who gave an answer

7.3.4 Outcomes

As with our analysis of the programme as a whole, we identify several ways in which projects in Yorkshire and Humberside have helped the beneficiaries involved, and we look in turn at:

- employment outcomes
- qualification outcomes
- 'soft' outcomes among those not working.

Job outcomes

From an employment rate of 32 per cent when beneficiaries entered the programme, some 42 per cent of beneficiaries in Yorkshire and Humberside were working by the time they left, and by a further eight per cent by the time of the survey.

The unemployment rate had similarly fallen over this period from 19 per cent on entry, to nine per cent on leaving the course, and to seven per cent at the time of the survey.

However, the high inactivity rate had only been reduced slightly, from 46 per cent at the time of entering the projects, to 43 per cent at the time of the survey.

Table 7.37 shows the employment and 'other activity' outcomes for beneficiaries from projects in Yorkshire and Humberside, both immediately on completing their project, and at the time of the survey. We note that a handful of the beneficiaries coded as 'other' in this table were in paid work of some, undisclosed, type, and consequently the data in this table are slightly inconsistent with those cited in the paragraphs immediately above.

Table 7.37: Employment and activity patterns after the project; all respondents from projects in Yorkshire and Humberside

All respondents	Work FT Row %	Work PT Row %	Self Empl. Row %	U/E Row %	Education/ Training Row %	Sick/ Disabled Row %	Vol. Work Row %	Other Row %
Status immediately on leaving project	20	17	5	9	24	6	4	15
Status at time of survey	23	21	6	7	19	7	4	13

Base: All those who from Yorkshire and Humberside projects answered the questions

Qualification outcomes

One in five beneficiaries here had entered these projects without any qualification.

Despite this, and the slightly lower-than-average representation of Policy Field 3 projects in the sample, fully two-thirds of all entrants had gained a full qualification by the time they left the project, and a further four per cent had gained credits or units towards one (Table 7.38).

Table 7.38: Qualifications held by beneficiaries in Yorkshire and Humberside, before and after the project

Whether or not held or gained any qualification(s) or units/credits	Held qualification(s) before starting the project %	Gained qualification(s) through the project %	Gained unit(s) or credit(s) towards qualification(s) through the project %
Yes	78	66	4
No	20	29	96
Base	*423*	*423*	*423*

Base: All those in Yorkshire and Humberside projects answering each question

'Soft' outcomes

Table 7.37 above showed that the employment rate had improved by eight percentage points after beneficiaries had ended their course. It is worthwhile, therefore, to consider to what extent there might be lasting and on-going effects which would help beneficiaries to improve their circumstances in the labour market, even though they had not yet done so.

Table 7.39 shows that among the (very few, N = 36) beneficiaries who were not working at the time of the survey, but were nevertheless still looking for it, about three-quarters felt more confident about finding work than they had when they first entered the project. Similarly, 61 per cent of them felt that they were better skilled to do so once they had finished their course.

Table 7.39: Improved confidence and skills as a result of the project, among beneficiaries in Yorkshire and Humberside without a job

Proportions who were…	Male %	Female %	All %
More confident now	75	75	75
No more confident now	25	25	25
Better skilled now	75	50	61
No better skilled now	25	40	33
DK	–	10	6
Base	*16*	*20*	*36*

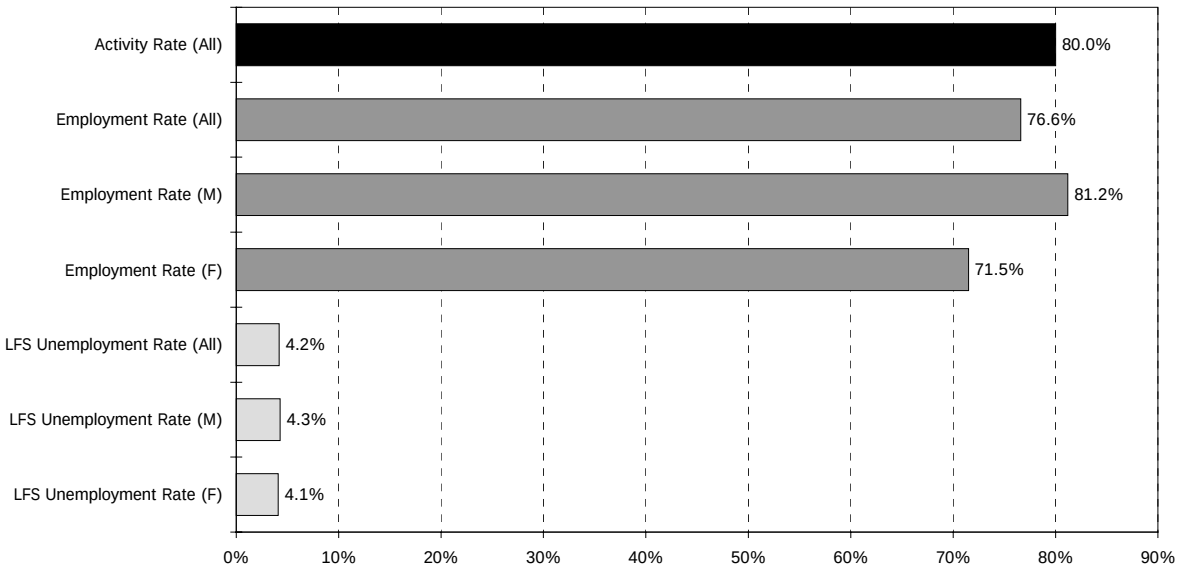
Base: All those without a job in Yorkshire and Humberside projects who gave an answer

7.4 East Midlands

The key indicators of labour market conditions in the East Midlands as the last of the beneficiaries were leaving their projects are shown in Figure 7.4.

The ESF Regional Development Plan for the East Midlands sets out six key factors which structure the relevance of the programme to the region, as follows:

Figure 7.4: The labour market in the East Midlands, at the end of 2002



Source: LFS Nov. 2002-Jan.2003, seasonally adjusted

- **Strong economic performance.** On the basis of most indicators of economic performance, the region has performed at or close to the national average. Employment growth on the other hand has been below the national average.
- **Diversity and disparities.** There is considerable economic, social and environmental diversity in the region. The region's cities, despite being key drivers of wealth creation in the East Midlands, are also the focus of much poverty and social exclusion, yet at the same time, peripherality, accessibility and sustainability continue to be key issues in the region's rural areas, although the crisis in the agricultural industry is one of the most fundamental issues for the future. A key challenge is therefore to secure greater economic and social cohesion within the region.
- **Unemployment, underemployment and economic exclusion.** Whilst the rate of unemployment for the region is comparatively low, this masks fundamental weaknesses in the labour market. There is persistent, severe structural unemployment that is concentrated amongst certain groups and in certain localities, such as the coalfields and urban centres, as well as the issue of under employment that is common in rural areas.
- **Entrepreneurship.** Larger enterprises have historically been a major source of employment and wealth creation within the region. Partly as a consequence of this, there has not been a strong tradition of entrepreneurship in parts of the region. Thus, the region's ability to encourage entrepreneurship and business expansion in higher value added sectors of the economy is key to future growth.
- **The skills base.** The region persists in its poor performance on various measures of its skill base. It has far fewer employees in higher occupational groups or who are qualified to NVQ Level 3 or above. This continues to be exacerbated by inadequate basic skills and low levels of participation in continuing education and training amongst young people.
- **Skill needs.** There is strong evidence of current skills gaps in the region, which are both generic and sector/occupation specific. The expansion in the service sector implies an expansion in demand for both higher level skills and lower skilled workers.

With these considerations in mind the RDP sets out a number of detailed policy priorities for Objective 3 in the region as follows:

- Given the improved employment situation of the region over the last five years, support under this measure should be targeted at those localities and those groups within the community that continue to suffer high concentrations of unemployment. This implies preventing long-term unemployment by

targeting the short-term unemployed, young people entering the labour market, returners to the labour market, and Year 10 and 11 pupils, as well as combating long-term unemployment by providing for the long-term unemployed and the economically inactive.

- Designing projects to address the specific disadvantage, barriers and needs of particular communities or groups of beneficiaries that share problems, combinations of circumstances or disadvantage, including very long-term unemployed, single parents, disabled, ethnic minorities, ex-offenders, the homeless, people in care, those in disadvantaged or isolated urban and rural communities, the elderly, and those with poor basic skills.
- Making concerted effort to promote the benefits of learning throughout the region, targeted upon both individuals and employers. Individuals should be informed and persuaded of the benefits of learning, as well as encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and personal development. Likewise, employers should be persuaded not only of the benefits of learning and the need to reward skills, but should also be encouraged to adopt a more systematic and planned approach to the career and skills development of the workforce.
- To raise the skill levels of the workforce in order to meet the current and emerging needs of employers and to enhance the adaptability of the business base and the competitiveness of the region. This entails addressing a number of important skills issues, including, for example, a low skills base, existing skill shortages in particular sectors and occupations, a shortage of higher level skills, insufficient managerial and leadership skills, and promoting the capacity to adapt to significant sectoral change in the region over the next decade, as the employment structure of the region comes more in line with the UK as a whole.
- Addressing barriers to women accessing employment, particularly those returning to work after undertaking caring duties and those 'discouraged' from entering the labour market, while simultaneously improving the development of women already in work, and removing barriers to women accessing higher occupations.

7.4.1 What kind of projects did beneficiaries enter?

Table 7.40 shows the breakdown of the weighted sample of beneficiaries between the five Policy Fields in the East Midlands, and compares them with that for England as a whole. It shows that:

- beneficiaries from projects in Policy Field 3 comprise a higher proportion of respondents than they have done for England as a whole, at 44 per cent. This aligns with the RDP's emphasis on effort to promoting the benefits of learning throughout the region.
- Policy Fields 1 and 2 together make up almost half the respondents, which is in line with England as a whole, and which nevertheless reflects the RDP's commitment to preventing long-term unemployment
- there are no Policy Field 5 beneficiaries in the East Midlands sample.

Table 7.40: Policy Fields under which beneficiaries' projects in the East Midlands were supported

Policy Fields under which beneficiaries' projects were supported	East Midlands %	All England %
Policy Field 1: Active labour market policies	32	31
Policy Field 2: Equal opportunities for all & promoting social inclusion	15	16
Policy Field 3: Improving training and education and promoting lifelong learning	44	35
Policy Field 4: Adaptability and entrepreneurship	9	8
Policy Field 5: Improving the participation of women in the labour market	–	10
Base	*409*	*3,431*

Base: All respondents

7.4.2 Characteristics of beneficiaries

In this section, we look in turn at the key personal and labour market characteristics of beneficiaries, including their status on entry and the prevalence of certain kinds of disadvantage within the sample.

Sex and age profile

Table 7.41 shows the composition of the weighted sample of beneficiaries in the West Midlands, by age and gender.

It shows that:

- women make up 58 per cent the sample, despite the fact that there are no Policy Field 5 beneficiaries in this sample.
- the age composition of the sample is very much in line with that of England as a whole, with half aged 35 or more, and about a quarter aged under 25.

Table 7.41: Age group of beneficiaries in the East Midlands, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
< 18	3	1	2
18-24	24	20	22
25-34	21	27	25
35-49	28	35	32
50+	24	14	18
Base	*169*	*238*	*409*

Base: All the East Midlands beneficiaries who gave an answer

Incidence of disadvantaged groups

The entry cohort to projects in the East Midlands demonstrates a high proportion of people with few or no skills, with some 72 per cent falling into our 'low human capital' group. The projects seem to have been successful in targeting the specific kinds of disadvantage cited in the RDP, including minority ethnic group members (13 per cent), people with a disability (25 per cent), the elderly (18 per cent aged 50+ in Table 7.41), the long-term unemployed (33 per cent), and lone parents (11 per cent).

People with poor basic skills, although not shown in the table, make up a further 17 per cent of the sample.

Table 7.42: Incidence of discrete LM disadvantages among beneficiaries in the East Midlands

	LTU/I %	Return-ers %	Lone Parents %	Min. Eth. Group %	Other Lang. %	Disabil/ Health %	Carers %	Low H. Capital %
E. Midlands beneficiaries	33	8	11	13	4	25	25	72
All	27	9	10	14	4	18	25	66
Base	*133*	*32*	*45*	*51*	*17*	*104*	*102*	*294*

Base: All the East Midlands beneficiaries who gave an answer

Status on entry

Table 7.43 shows the circumstances of the beneficiaries when they joined the projects. It shows that:

- the proportion of working entrants was slightly lower than for England as a whole (32 per cent, *cf* 37 per cent)
- in addition, a slightly lower proportion were inactive on entering the programme (34 per cent, *cf* 39)
- correspondingly, the intake of unemployed (but actively seeking work) beneficiaries was higher in the East Midlands than in England as a whole (31 per cent, *cf* 21); and
- among the male beneficiaries the proportion of unemployed entrants (at 47 per cent) was considerably higher than among the women entrants.

Table 7.43: Employment status one week before joining the project, among beneficiaries in the East Midlands, by gender

	Males %	Females %	All %
In paid work	26	36	32
Unemployed	47	20	31
Inactive	23	42	34
Base	*169*	*238*	*409*

Base: All the East Midlands beneficiaries who gave an answer

Duration of unemployment before entry to project

Table 7.44 looks at the 65 per cent of beneficiaries who had not been working when they joined their project.

Table 7.44: Length of time since last worked, among beneficiaries in the East Midlands, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Less than three months	10	9	10
At least three months but less than six months	11	6	8
At least six months but less than a year	15	8	11
At least a year but less than two years	13	7	10
Two years or more	29	43	37
Never worked	16	21	19
Don't know	6	5	5
Base	*125*	*152*	*277*

Base: All those not working when entered an East Midlands project, and who gave an answer

7.4.3 Support received

In this section, we look at the support which beneficiaries had received, looking in turn at skill improvements, confidence building and job search.

Training and skills

Table 7.45 shows that 83 per cent of beneficiaries in the East Midlands had been helped to improve the skills they would need at work in some way or other. The most widespread gains here had been in the practical skills related to a particular job, and IT skills, benefiting 52 and 56 per cent of the participants respectively.

Basic skills support had been provided for between a quarter and a third of beneficiaries. Although not shown in the table, the extent of this provision doubles among those who said that they had basic skills problems; among this sub-group it rises to 60 per cent for reading and writing skills, 44 per cent for number skills, and 48 per cent for language and communications skills.

Table 7.45: Ways in which beneficiaries in the East Midlands were helped to improve the skills they would need at work, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped to improve skills (all)	75	89	83
Proportions helped to improve skills through…			
practical skills related to a particular job	45	57	52
improved computing/Information Technology (IT) skills	46	62	56
study skills (such as essay or report writing, using libraries)	32	38	36
improved reading and writing skills	26	33	30
improved maths and number skills	22	22	22
improved English speaking skills	23	28	26
training in wider job skills (such as admin or book-keeping)	22	25	24
training in management and/or leadership skills	24	23	24
Base	*169*	*238*	*409*

Base: All those in East Midlands projects who received help with skills/training and who gave an answer

'Soft' skills

Table 7.46 shows that 84 per cent of beneficiaries in the East Midlands had been helped in building their self confidence and/or improving their 'soft' skills in some way or other. The women were somewhat more likely to have been helped in this way than were the men.

Looking at the different forms of provision here, most of them had reached about 60 per cent of beneficiaries. Working with other people as part of a team, communication skills and motivation-building seem to have been the most widespread of these activities. However, the ability to do things independently was particularly widespread among this sample, reaching 66 per cent of them.

Table 7.46: Ways in which beneficiaries in the East Midlands were helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped to improve skills (all)	80	87	84
Proportions helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work through…			
expressing yourself and communicating with people	62	65	63
working with other people as part of a team	62	65	64
solving problems	57	58	57
motivation	60	64	62
ability to do things independently	60	71	66
ability to take responsibility	55	59	57
Base	*169*	*238*	*409*

Base: All those in East Midlands projects who received help to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work and who gave an answer

Job search

Table 7.47 shows that 64 per cent of the beneficiaries in the East Midlands had been helped with their job search skills or activities in some way or other. The men were more likely to have participated than were the women, and this extends to most of the separate activities reviewed as well.

Advice or guidance about what sorts of work or training that beneficiaries could do was the most widespread activity, with 50 per cent of them receiving this form of help. Work experience or a work placement had been provided for 21 per cent of beneficiaries, and fairly even provision between men and women.

More formal job search activities, such as job-broking and job search itself, had also tended to be provided for the men more often than the women, with about 40 per cent of the men and just under a third of the women receiving it.

Table 7.47: Ways in which beneficiaries in the East Midlands were helped with job search and work experience, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped with job search and work experience (all)	69	61	64
Proportions helped to with job search and work experience through…			
work experience or a work placement	20	21	21
general training about the world of work	37	29	32
advice or guidance about what sorts of work or training you could do	52	48	50
training in how to look for work	44	32	37
contacts to help you look for a job	42	28	34
job broking; leads for particular vacancies	40	28	33
Base	*169*	*238*	*409*

Base: All those in East Midlands projects who received help with job search and work experience and who gave an answer

Course completion/early leavers

In the East Midlands, early leaving was not widespread, with only 20 per cent of beneficiaries leaving early, as Table 7.48 shows. This is slightly higher than the proportion of early leavers for the programme as a whole (17 per cent).

Table 7.48: Whether beneficiaries in the East Midlands left their project early, or stayed until the end

Proportions leaving early and staying to end	Male %	Female %	All %
Left early	23	18	20
Stayed to end	75	80	78
Base	*169*	*238*	*409*

Base: All those in East Midlands projects who gave an answer

Early leaving seems to have been slightly more prevalent among the men than the women. As with the programme for England as a whole, the dominant reasons for leaving (not shown in table) were either 'good' ones, such as finding work, or were due to circumstantial changes. Only a small minority left for reasons of dissatisfaction with the course.

Satisfaction with project

This low level of dissatisfied quits is entirely consistent with the high levels of satisfaction about the course shown in Table 7.49.

Here, we can see that some 79 per cent of beneficiaries were either very satisfied or fairly satisfied, with the women tending to be more satisfied than the men. This is broadly in line with the level of satisfaction (84 per cent very satisfied or fairly satisfied) in England as a whole.

Table 7.49: Degree of satisfaction expressed with project, by beneficiaries in the East Midlands

Proportions who were…	Male %	Female %	All %
Very satisfied	45	49	47
Fairly satisfied	30	33	32
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10	7	8
Fairly dissatisfied	*6*	*6*	*6*
Very dissatisfied	*8*	*3*	*5*
Base	*169*	*238*	*409*

Base: All those in East Midlands projects who gave an answer

7.4.4 Outcomes

As with our analysis of the programme as a whole, we identify several ways in which projects in the East Midlands have helped the beneficiaries involved, and we look in turn at:

- employment outcomes
- qualification outcomes
- 'soft' outcomes among those not working.

Job outcomes

From an employment rate of 32 per cent when beneficiaries entered the programme, some 45 per cent of beneficiaries in the East Midlands were working by the time they left, and by a further three per cent by the time of the survey.

The unemployment rate had similarly fallen over this period, from the very high base of 31 per cent on entry, to 16 per cent on leaving the course, and to 15 per cent at the time of the survey.

However, the inactivity rate had actually increased in the East Midlands, from 34 per cent at the time of entering the projects, to 36 per cent at the time of the survey.

Table 7.50 shows the employment and 'other activity' outcomes for beneficiaries from projects in the East Midlands, both immediately on completing their project, and at the time of the survey. We note that a handful of the beneficiaries coded as 'other' in this table were in paid work of some, undisclosed, type, and consequently the data in this table are slightly inconsistent with those cited in the paragraphs immediately above.

Table 7.50: Employment and activity patterns after the project, all respondents from projects in the East Midlands

All respondents	Work FT	Work PT	Self Empl.	U/E	Education/ Training	Sick/ Disabled	Vol. Work	Other
	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
Status immediately on leaving project	31	12	3	16	17	6	5	11
Status at time of survey	31	14	4	15	17	7	4	8

Base: All those who from East Midlands projects answered the questions

Qualification outcomes

One in five beneficiaries here had entered these projects without any qualification.

Despite this, 55 per cent of all entrants had gained a full qualification by the time they left the project, and a further four per cent had gained credits or units towards one.

Table 7.51: Qualifications held by beneficiaries in the East Midlands, before and after the project

Whether or not held or gained any qualification(s) or units/credits	Held qualification(s) before starting the project %	Gained qualification(s) through the project %	Gained unit(s) or credit(s) towards qualification(s) through the project %
Yes	77	55	4
No	21	41	96
Base	*409*	*409*	*409*

Base: All those in East Midlands projects answering each question

'Soft' outcomes

Table 7.50 above showed that the employment rate had improved by three percentage points after beneficiaries had ended their course. It is worthwhile, therefore, to consider to what extent there might be lasting and on-going effects which would help beneficiaries to improve their circumstances in the labour market, even though they had not yet done so.

Table 7.52 shows that among the (very few, N = 54) beneficiaries who were not working at the time of the survey, but were nevertheless still looking for it, about three-quarters felt more confident about finding work than they had when they first entered the project. Similarly, 60 per cent of them felt that they were better skilled to do so once they had finished their course.

Table 7.52: Improved confidence and skills as a result of the project, among beneficiaries in the East Midlands without a job

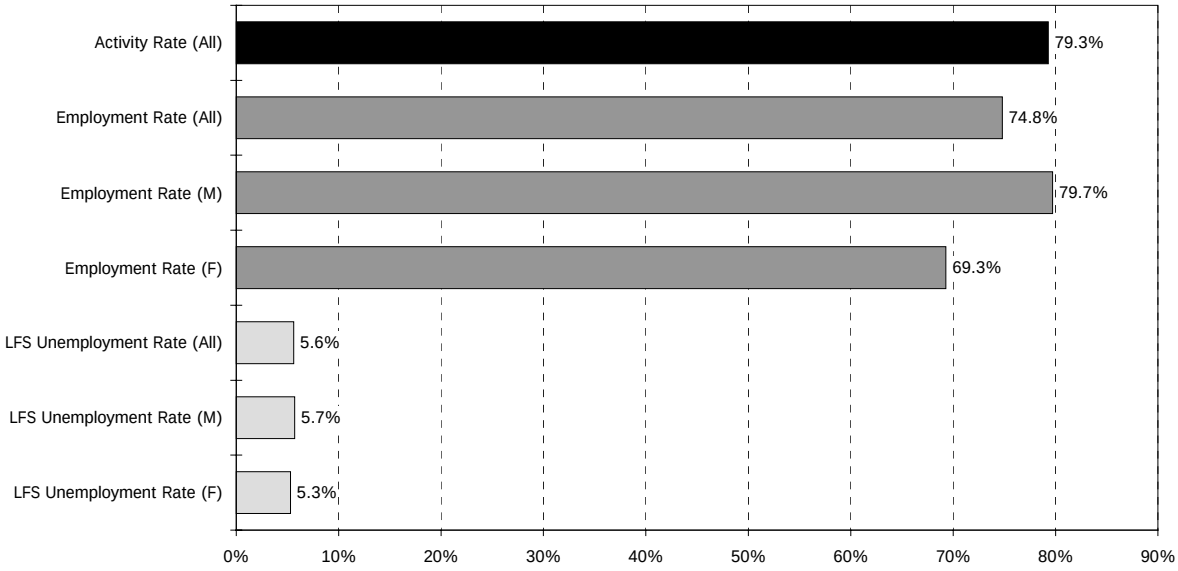
Proportions who were…	Male %	Female %	All %
More confident now	75	71	74
No more confident now	25	25	25
DK	–	5	2
Better skilled now	50	75	60
No better skilled now	50	25	40
DK	–	–	–
Base	*32*	*20*	*52*

Base: All those without a job in East Midlands projects who gave an answer

7.5 West Midlands

The key indicators of labour market conditions in the West Midlands as the last of the beneficiaries were leaving their projects are shown in Figure 7.5.

Figure 7.5: The labour market in the West Midlands, at the end of 2002



Source: LFS Nov. 2002-Jan.2003, seasonally adjusted

7.5.1 Background

The West Midlands is home to nine per cent of the UK's total population — some 2.6 million men and 2.7 million women, of whom around 3.25 million are of working age. Almost 1.5 million men and 1.2 million women are economically active, of whom nearly 120,000 are out of work and claiming benefit; 77

per cent of which are male, and 23 per cent are female. Between 25 per cent and 26 per cent have been unemployed for at least a year; of whom 84 per cent are male and 16 per cent are female.

The West Midlands contributes 8.5 per cent of total UK GDP and in GDP per head terms it is in the middle of the range of UK regions (7th out of 12) with a level 93.5 per cent of the national average in 1996. It has experienced improvements in overall economic performance on a par with those of the UK generally.

Manufacturing is the key employment sector in the region — approximately 27 per cent of all employees work in the manufacturing sector compared with only 18 per cent nationally.

The Strategic Aim of the West Midlands Regional Development Plan is:

> *'To assist unemployed and disadvantaged people, employees, companies and businesses in the West Midlands region to gain skills, develop qualities and improve business performance and competitiveness, by promoting equality of opportunity, to enable them to participate in an increasingly competitive and demanding world economy, thereby contributing to the economic prosperity of the region.'*

The RDP sets out extensive list of potential beneficiaries, among whom the key ones appear to be:

- young people at risk of disaffection
- people of any age without relevant work experience
- people of any age who without guidance, counselling and training will remain unemployed
- people who are long-term unemployed
- those people subject to multi-disadvantage and deprivation, including homeless people, ex-offenders, people with drug and alcohol problems
- those people with a pervasive disadvantage or disability
- people from ethnic minority groups
- lone parents and women returners
- women and older workers
- those wishing to acquire business skills essential for self employment
- those traditionally excluded from basic and other levels of education
- unskilled and semi-skilled people with low or no levels of training
- those wishing to upgrade limited, inappropriate or outdated skills
- those with no qualifications
- those without previous experience of learning beyond compulsory education.

7.5.2 What kind of projects did beneficiaries enter?

Table 7.53 shows the breakdown of the weighted sample of beneficiaries between the five Policy Fields in the West Midlands, and compares them with that for England as a whole.

Table 7.53: Policy Fields under which beneficiaries' projects in the West Midlands were supported

Policy Fields under which beneficiaries' projects were supported	The West Midlands %	All England %
Policy Field 1: Active labour market policies	31	31
Policy Field 2: Equal opportunities for all & promoting social inclusion	26	16
Policy Field 3: Improving training and education and promoting lifelong learning	40	35
Policy Field 4: Adaptability and entrepreneurship	2	8
Policy Field 5: Improving the participation of women in the labour market	2	10
Base	*384*	*3,431*

Base: all respondents

It shows that:

- beneficiaries from projects in Policy Field 2 comprise a higher proportion of respondents than they have done for England as a whole, at 26 per cent, while the proportion in Policy Field 1 is in line with the all-England results. This aligns with the RDP's focus on multiple and pervasive disadvantage, deprivation and long term unemployment.
- beneficiaries from projects in Policy Field 3 make up 40 per cent of the respondents, which is rather more than in England as a whole, but which reflects the RDP's commitment to beneficiaries with few or no skills, and those wishing to upgrade limited, inappropriate or outdated skills
- there are relatively few Policy Fields 4 and 5 beneficiaries in the West Midlands sample.

7.5.3 Characteristics of beneficiaries

In this section, we look in turn at the key personal and labour market characteristics of beneficiaries, including their status on entry and the prevalence of certain kinds of disadvantage within the sample.

Sex and age profile

Table 7.54 shows the composition of the weighted sample of beneficiaries in the West Midlands, by age and gender.

Table 7.54: Age group of beneficiaries in the West Midlands, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
< 18	35	21	26
18-24	30	17	22
25-34	6	14	11
35-49	9	27	20
50+	20	20	20
Base	*141*	*241*	*384*

Base: All the West Midlands beneficiaries who gave an answer

It shows that:

- women make up nearly two-thirds of the sample, despite the fact that there are so few Policy Field 5 beneficiaries in it
- the age composition of the sample is much younger than that of England as a whole, with 59 per cent aged under 35, and nearly half aged under 25
- among the men, this emphasis on youth is even more pronounced; nearly two-thirds of them were aged under 25, whereas nearly half the women were aged 35 and over.

Incidence of disadvantaged groups

The RDP places considerable stress on drawing in people with multiple disadvantages. Although it is not shown in Table 7.55, far fewer of the West Midlands beneficiaries had none of the disadvantages on which we have focused in this report (see Section 3.15), and rather more (58 per cent, *cf* 47 per cent in England as a whole) had one or two of them. However, the proportion with multiple (three or more) of these disadvantages was actually slightly lower here than in England as a whole.

Table 7.55: Incidence of discrete LM disadvantages among beneficiaries in the West Midlands

	LTU/I %	Return-ers %	Lone Parents %	Min. Eth. Group %	Other Lang. %	Disabil/ Health %	Carers %	Low H. Capital %
West Midlands beneficiaries	23	10	9	22	7	12	21	71
All	27	9	10	14	4	18	25	66
Base	*89*	*37*	*35*	*82*	*25*	*47*	*82*	*273*

Base: All the West Midlands beneficiaries who gave an answer

The entry cohort to projects in the West Midlands does, however, demonstrate a high proportion of people with few or no skills, with some 71 per cent falling into our 'low human capital' group. The projects seem to have been successful in targeting the specific kinds of disadvantage cited in the RDP, including minority ethnic group members (21 per cent), people with a disability (12 per cent), the elderly (20 per cent aged 50+ in Table 7.54 above), the long-term unemployed (23 per cent), and lone parents (nine per cent).

People with poor basic skills, although not shown in the table, make up a further 15 per cent of the sample.

Status on entry

Table 7.56 shows the circumstances of the beneficiaries when they joined the projects.

Table 7.56: Employment status one week before joining the project, among beneficiaries in the West Midlands, by gender

	Males %	Females %	All %
In paid work	17	32	27
Unemployed	37	13	22
Inactive	38	51	46
Base	*141*	*241*	*384*

Base: All the West Midlands beneficiaries who gave an answer

It shows that:

- the proportion of working entrants was lower than for England as a whole (at 27 per cent, *cf* 37 per cent)
- however, the proportion of the intake who were unemployed, but actively seeking work, was about the same (at 22 per cent, *cf* 21 per cent)
- consequently, a much larger proportion of West Midlands beneficiaries were inactive on entering the programme (46 per cent, *cf* 39)
- among the women entrants, this inactive status rose to half (51 per cent) and there was another significant cluster of women among the employed entrants
- by contrast, the men were less likely to be in work or inactive, with a substantial minority of them unemployed (37 per cent).

Duration of unemployment before entry to project

Table 7.57 looks at the 69 per cent of beneficiaries who had not been working when they joined their project. It shows that 58 per cent of them were women.

Table 7.57: Length of time since last worked, among beneficiaries in the West Midlands, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Less than three months	15	15	15
At least three months but less than six months	12	3	7
At least six months but less than a year	11	2	6
At least a year but less than two years	5	4	5
Two years or more	13	36	26
Never worked	31	33	32
Don't know/Not stated	12	7	9
Base	*117*	*163*	*281*

Base: All those not working when entered a West Midlands project, and who gave an answer

Among all these beneficiaries, a third (32 per cent) had never worked, and a quarter (26 per cent) had not done so in the past two years; among the women fully 69 per cent had either never worked or not done so in the past two years.

The incidence of long term non-participation in the sample is rather lower in the West Midlands sample (at 23 per cent overall, see Table 7.55) than it is in the all-England sample (27 per cent). This is reflected in Table 7.57, with some 38 per cent of the men had been out of work for less than a year.

7.5.4 Support received

In this section, we look at the support which beneficiaries had received, looking in turn at skill improvements, confidence-building and job search

Training and skills

Table 7.58 shows that 91 per cent of beneficiaries in the West Midlands had been helped to improve the skills they would need at work in some way or other. The most widespread gains here had been in the practical skills related to a particular job, and IT skills — benefiting 61 and 57 per cent of the participants respectively.

Basic skills support had been provided for between a quarter and a third of beneficiaries. Although not shown in the table, the extent of this provision doubles among those who said that they had basic skills problems; among this sub-group it rises to 63 per cent for reading and writing skills, 34 per cent for number skills, and 55 per cent for language and communications skills.

Among the beneficiaries from minority ethnic groups, the proportion receiving support with their English speaking skills rises to 47 per cent, and to 68 per cent among those for whom English was not the main language spoken at home.

Table 7.58: Ways in which beneficiaries in the West Midlands were helped to improve the skills they would need at work, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped to improve skills (all)	92	90	91
Proportions helped to improve skills through…			
practical skills related to a particular job	65	59	61
improved computing/Information Technology (IT) skills	57	57	57
study skills (such as essay or report writing, using libraries)	40	35	37
improved reading and writing skills	36	27	30
improved maths and number skills	28	19	22
improved English speaking skills	29	29	29
training in wider job skills (such as admin or book-keeping)	26	28	27
training in management and/or leadership skills	27	19	22
Base	*141*	*241*	*384*

Base: All those in the West Midlands projects who received help with skills/training and who gave an answer

'Soft' skills

Table 7.59 shows that 89 per cent of beneficiaries in the West Midlands had been helped in building their self confidence and/or improving their 'soft' skills in some way or other. There were no differences between the men and the women in this respect, although there was some variation in the provision of separate aspects of this support.

Looking at the different forms of provision here, most of them had reached 60 to 70 per cent of beneficiaries. Working with other people as part of a team, the ability to do things independently, communication skills and motivation-building seem to have been the most widespread of these activities.

Table 7.59: Ways in which beneficiaries in the West Midlands were helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work (all)	89	89	89
Proportions helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work through…			
expressing yourself and communicating with people	70	68	68
working with other people as part of a team	76	71	72
solving problems	68	60	63
motivation	70	66	67
ability to do things independently	74	72	72
ability to take responsibility	67	62	64
Base	*141*	*241*	*384*

Base: All those in West Midlands projects who received help to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work and who gave an answer

Job search

Table 7.60 shows that 65 per cent of the beneficiaries in the West Midlands had been helped with their job search skills or activities in some way or other. The men were more likely to have participated than were the women, and this extends to all the separate activities reviewed as well.

Advice or guidance about what sorts of work or training that beneficiaries could do was the most widespread activity, with 51 per cent of them receiving this form of help. Work experience or a work placement had been provided for 21 per cent of beneficiaries, and fairly even provision between men and women.

More formal job search activities, such as job-broking and job search itself, had also tended to be provided for the men more often than the women, with about 40 per cent of the men and about a quarter of the women receiving it. This difference may reflect the higher levels of unemployment among the men and of inactivity among the women on joining the programme.

Table 7.60: Ways in which beneficiaries in the West Midlands were helped with job search and work experience, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped to with job search and work experience (all)	72	61	65
Proportions helped to with job search and work experience through…			
work experience or a work placement	22	21	21
general training about the world of work	45	30	36
advice or guidance about what sorts of work or training you could do	57	48	51
training in how to look for work	42	27	32
contacts to help you look for a job	40	25	31
job broking; leads for particular vacancies	40	19	27
Base	*141*	*241*	*384*

Base: All those in West Midlands projects who received help with job search and work experience and who gave an answer

Course completion/early leavers

In the West Midlands, early leaving was not widespread, with 20 per cent of beneficiaries leaving early, as Table 7.61 shows. This is slightly higher than the proportion of early leavers for the programme as a whole (16 per cent).

However, while the early quit rate among the women (16 per cent) is very much in line with the all-England results, the 27 per cent rate for men is much higher than the 19 per cent average for all nine regions.

As with the programme for England as a whole, the dominant reasons for leaving (not shown in table) were either 'good' ones, such as finding work, or were due to circumstantial changes. However, some 40 per cent of the early leavers (eight per cent of all participants) left for 'negative' reasons, mainly dissatisfaction with some aspect of the course. Furthermore, among the men this proportion rose to half. Taken as a proportion of all the male beneficiaries, this indicates that 13 per cent of all the male beneficiaries withdrew early from the programme, because they were dissatisfied with it.

It is important to recall here that the absolute numbers involved are quite small (just 19 dissatisfied male early leavers), and so we should interpret this result with some care.

Table 7.61: Whether beneficiaries in the West Midlands left their project early, or stayed until the end

Proportions leaving early and staying to end	Male %	Female %	All %
Left early	27	16	20
Stayed to end	68	82	77
Base	*141*	*241*	*384*

Base: All those in West Midlands projects who gave an answer

Satisfaction with project

The overall low level of dissatisfied early quits (eight per cent) is entirely consistent with the high levels of satisfaction about the course shown in Table 7.62.

Here, we can see that some 84 per cent of beneficiaries were either very satisfied or fairly satisfied, with the women tending to be more satisfied than the men. This is exactly in line with the level of satisfaction (84 per cent very satisfied or fairly satisfied) in England as a whole.

Table 7.62: Degree of satisfaction expressed with project by beneficiaries in the West Midlands

Proportions who were…	Male %	Female %	All %
Very satisfied	43	56	51
Fairly satisfied	36	32	33
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	9	6	7
Fairly dissatisfied	8	4	5
Very dissatisfied	2	1	2
Base	*141*	*241*	*384*

Base: All those in West Midlands projects who gave an answer

7.5.5 Outcomes

As with our analysis of the programme as a whole, we identify several ways in which projects in the West Midlands have helped the beneficiaries involved, and we look in turn at:

- employment outcomes
- qualification outcomes
- 'soft' outcomes among those not working.

Job outcomes

From an employment rate of 27 per cent when beneficiaries entered the programme, some 38 per cent of beneficiaries in the West Midlands were working by the time they left, and by a further three per cent by the time of the survey.

The unemployment rate had similarly fallen over this period, from 22 per cent on entry, to 11 per cent on leaving the course, where it stayed until the time of the survey.

However, the inactivity rate was virtually unchanged. In fact it had actually increased (as in the East Midlands), from 46 per cent at the time of entering the projects, to 48 per cent at the time of the survey.

Table 7.63 shows the employment and 'other activity' outcomes for beneficiaries from projects in the West Midlands, both immediately on completing their project, and at the time of the survey. We note that a handful of the beneficiaries coded as 'other' in this table were in paid work of some, undisclosed, type, and consequently the data in this table are slightly inconsistent with those cited in the paragraphs immediately above.

Table 7.63: Employment and activity patterns after the project; all respondents from projects in the West Midlands

All Respondents	Work FT	Work PT	Self Empl.	U/E	Education/ Training	Sick/ Disabled	Vol. Work	Other
	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
Status immediately on leaving project	22	12	4	11	28	3	3	16
Status at time of survey	24	13	4	11	25	3	3	16

Base: All those who from West Midlands projects answered the questions

Qualification outcomes

Nearly a third of beneficiaries here had entered these projects without any qualification, and this was relatively high compared with the all-England average of 21 per cent.

Despite this, 53 per cent of all entrants had gained a full qualification by the time they left the project, and a further five per cent had gained credits or units towards one.

Table 7.64: Qualifications held by beneficiaries in the West Midlands, before and after the project

Whether or not held or gained any qualification(s) or units/credits	Held qualification(s) before starting the project %	Gained qualification(s) through the project %	Gained unit(s) or credit(s) towards qualification(s) through the project %
Yes	67	53	5
No	30	41	95
Base	*384*	*384*	*384*

Base: All those in West Midlands projects answering each question

'Soft' outcomes

Table 7.63 above showed that the employment rate had improved by five percentage points after beneficiaries had ended their course. It is worthwhile therefore to consider to what extent there might be lasting and on-going effects which would help beneficiaries to improve their circumstances in the labour market, even though they had not yet done so.

Table 7.65 shows that among the (very few, N = 51) beneficiaries who were not working at the time of the survey, but were nevertheless still looking for it, eight out of ten felt more confident about finding work than they had when they first entered the project. Similarly, 69 per cent of them felt that they were better skilled to do so once they had finished their course.

Table 7.65: Improved confidence and skills as a result of the project, among beneficiaries in the West Midlands without a job

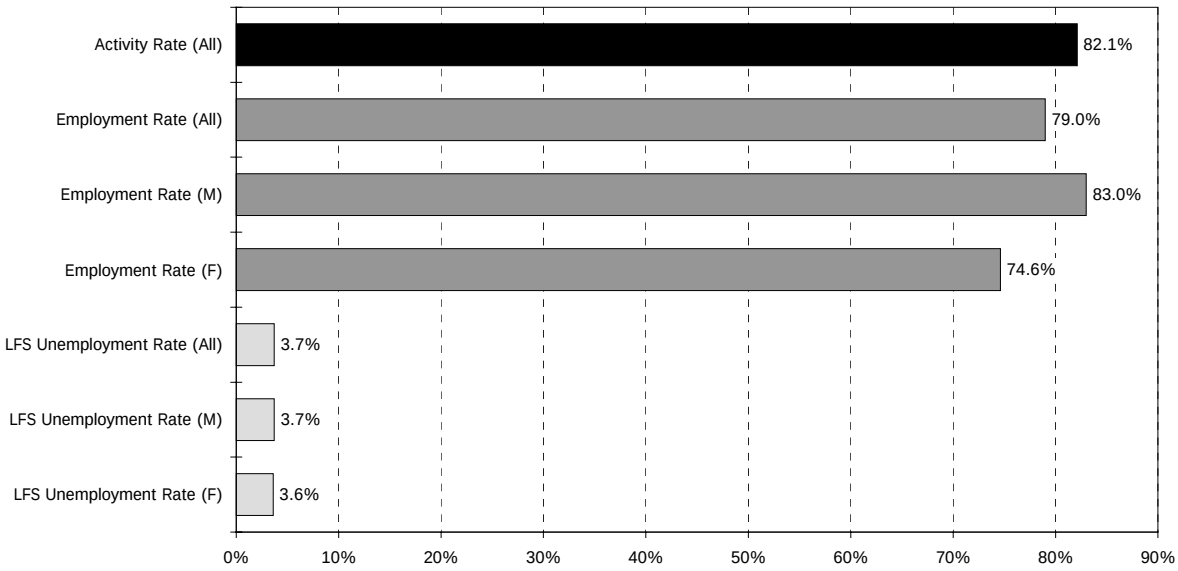
Proportions who were…	Male %	Female %	All %
More confident now	89	74	82
No more confident now	11	26	18
Better skilled now	71	65	69
No better skilled now	29	35	31
Base	*28*	*23*	*51*

Base: All those without a job after West Midlands projects who gave an answer

7.6 South West

The key indicators of labour market conditions in the South West as the last of the beneficiaries were leaving their projects are shown in Figure 7.6.

Figure 7.6: The labour market in the South West, at the end of 2002



Source: LFS Nov. 2002-Jan.2003, seasonally adjusted

7.6.1 Background

Although the economy and the labour market in the South West are relatively buoyant compared with England as a whole, there remain many geographic areas with deep problems; for example in:

- the west of the region — where unemployment, seasonal and part-time employment are higher than the rest of the region and earnings are significantly lower
- disadvantaged urban communities — notably in Bristol, Torbay and Plymouth
- less accessible rural areas — where the continuing decline in employment in agriculture and tourism has reduced employment opportunities.

The Objective 3 RDP in the South West identifies three strategic objectives:

- to increase prosperity by improving business competitiveness (including supporting key industrial sectors that will underpin a strong regional economy and developing a learning culture in people and business)
- to address social and economic imbalances (reduce the barriers to employment and training, sustain regeneration programmes, improve linkage between urban and rural areas and investment to benefit areas of greatest need); and
- to improve regional coherence.

Key features of the South West's Objective 3 Regional Programme include:

- striking a balance between the needs of individuals and organisations in the key urban areas with the increasingly difficult problems faced by people living in the dispersed rural areas of the region.
- support for activities which raise the aspirations, achievements and capabilities of the region's workforce
- support for activities, which seek to prepare individuals for re-entry to the labour market

- action which gives the young people of the region access to the best opportunities and ensures that the long-term unemployed, and other excluded groups, are able to re-enter the labour market in a way which reflects their true potential
- support for activities that seek to provide permanent employment in those parts of the region where there are high levels of seasonal unemployment.

7.6.2 What kind of projects did beneficiaries enter?

Table 7.66 shows the breakdown of the weighted sample of beneficiaries between the five Policy Fields in the South West, and compares them with that for England as a whole.

It shows that:

- beneficiaries from projects in Policy Field 5 comprise a much higher proportion of respondents than they have done for England as whole, at 43 per cent, compared with ten per cent
- each of the remaining Policy Fields consequently has a lower proportion of the entrants than in England as a whole, although as in England, Policy Fields 1 and 3 constitute two significant blocks of entrants, with 24 and 22 per cent respectively
- there are very few Policy Field 4 beneficiaries in the sample.

Table 7.66: Policy Fields under which beneficiaries' projects in the South West were supported

Policy Fields under which beneficiaries' projects were supported	The South West %	All England %
Policy Field 1: Active labour market policies	24	31
Policy Field 2: Equal opportunities for all & promoting social inclusion	9	16
Policy Field 3: Improving training and education and promoting lifelong learning	22	35
Policy Field 4: Adaptability and entrepreneurship	2	8
Policy Field 5: Improving the participation of women in the labour market	43	10
Base	*281*	*3,431*

Base: all respondents

7.6.3 Characteristics of beneficiaries

In this section, we look in turn at the key personal and labour market characteristics of beneficiaries, including their status on entry and the prevalence of certain kinds of disadvantage within the sample.

Sex and age profile

Table 7.67 shows the composition of the weighted sample of beneficiaries in the South West, by age and gender.

It shows that:

- women make up two-thirds of the sample, reflecting both the cross-cutting importance of equal opportunities, and probably more so, the numerical dominance of Policy Field 5 in the South West sample
- the age composition of the sample is very much in line with that of England as a whole, with exactly half aged 35 or more, and 30 per cent aged under 25.

Table 7.67: Age group of beneficiaries in the South West, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
< 18	14	6	9
18-24	21	20	21
25-34	23	19	20
35-49	20	38	32
50+	22	16	18
Base	*90*	*189*	*281*

Base: All the South West beneficiaries who gave an answer

Incidence of disadvantaged groups

In some respects, the entry cohort to projects in the South West is very similar to the all-England one, and it has significant representation from many of the groups cited in the RDP. Thus for example, carers make up 27 per cent of the sample, those with few or no skills (*ie* our 'low human capital' group), 64 per cent; and people with a disability, 13 per cent. People with poor basic skills, although not shown in the table, make up a further ten per cent of the sample.

There are some differences, however, most noticeably among minority ethnic group members, who comprise only one per cent of the sample in the South West, compared with several times that level in England as a whole. Similarly, the participation of people who have been in long-term unemployment or inactivity is relatively low (at 20 per cent), and interestingly (in view of the high proportion of women in the sample, so is the representation of lone parents, at six per cent, *cf* ten per cent for England as a whole.

Table 7.68: Incidence of discrete LM disadvantages among beneficiaries in the South West

	LTU/I %	Return-ers %	Lone Parents %	Min. Eth. Group %	Other Lang. %	Disabil/ Health %	Carers %	Low H. Capital %
South West beneficiaries	20	8	6	1	0	13	27	64
All	27	9	10	15	4	18	25	66
Base	*57*	*23*	*18*	*3*	*0*	*37*	*76*	*180*

Base: All the South West beneficiaries who gave an answer

Status on entry

Table 7.69 shows the circumstances of the beneficiaries when they joined the projects. It shows that:

- the proportion of employed entrants was considerably higher than for England as a whole, at 53 per cent
- correspondingly, fewer (27 per cent, *cf* 39) were inactive on entering the programme, or in unemployment, but actively seeking work (14 per cent, *cf* 21).

Table 7.69: Employment status one week before joining the project, among beneficiaries in the South West, by gender

	Males %	Females %	All %
In paid work	47	57	53
Unemployed	21	11	14
Inactive	24	29	27
Base	*90*	*189*	*281*

Base: All the South West beneficiaries who gave an answer

Duration of unemployment before entry to project

Table 7.70 looks at the 47 per cent of beneficiaries who had not been working when they joined their project.

It shows that among them, about half had either never worked or had not done so in the past two years. Once again, the pattern shown here is very similar to that found for England as a whole.

Table 7.70: Length of time since last worked, among beneficiaries in the South West, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Less than three months	6	11	9
At least three months but less than six months	6	5	6
At least six months but less than a year	17	8	11
At least a year but less than two years	4	13	10
Two years or more	17	36	28
Never worked	33	16	22
Don't know/Not stated	17	12	14
Base	*47*	*83*	*132*

Base: All those not working when entered a the South West project, and who gave an answer

7.6.4 Support received

In this section, we look at the support which beneficiaries had received, looking in turn at skill improvements, confidence-building and job search.

Training and skills

Table 7.71 shows that 87 per cent of beneficiaries in the South West had been helped to improve the skills they would need at work in some way or other. The most widespread gains here had been in the practical skills related to a particular job, benefiting 64 per cent of the participants. Curiously, improved computer and IT skills was much less widespread in this sample (39 per cent) than for England as a whole (55 per cent).

Basic skills support had been provided for about a quarter of beneficiaries. Although not shown in the table, the extent of this provision doubles among those who said that they had basic skills problems; among this sub-group it rises to 57 per cent for reading and writing skills, 29 per cent for both number skills, and language and communications skills.

Table 7.71: Ways in which beneficiaries in the South West were helped to improve the skills they would need at work, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped to improve skills (all)	87	88	87
Proportions helped to improve skills through…			
practical skills related to a particular job	62	66	64
improved computing/Information Technology (IT) skills	53	34	39
study skills (such as essay or report writing, using libraries)	27	41	36
improved reading and writing skills	28	24	25
improved maths and number skills	21	12	15
improved English speaking skills	16	18	18
training in wider job skills (such as admin or book-keeping)	33	24	27
training in management and/or leadership skills	31	32	31
Base	*90*	*189*	*281*

Base: All those in South West projects who received help with skills/training and who gave an answer

'Soft' skills

Table 7.72 shows that almost nine out of ten beneficiaries in the South West had been helped in building their self confidence and/or improving their 'soft' skills in some way or other. Provision here has been more prevalent among men than women beneficiaries.

As in other regions, all of these activities were widely undertaken, by about two in three beneficiaries, rising to 72 per cent for working with other people as part of a team.

Table 7.72: Ways in which beneficiaries in the South West were helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work (all)	81	92	88
Proportions helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work through…			
expressing yourself and communicating with people	56	68	63
working with other people as part of a team	67	75	72
solving problems	60	71	67
motivation	58	68	64
ability to do things independently	57	68	64
ability to take responsibility	55	71	65
Base	*90*	*189*	*281*

Base: All those in South West projects who received help to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work and who gave an answer

Job search

Table 7.73 shows that two-thirds of the beneficiaries in the South West had been helped with their job search skills or activities in some way or other. In this respect, the men were only slightly less likely to have participated than were the women, and this does not extend (as in many other regions) to each of the separate activities reviewed as well. We note that advice or guidance about what sorts of work or training that beneficiaries could do was the most widespread activity, with almost half of them receiving this form of help, and more widespread among the women beneficiaries.

Table 7.73: Ways in which beneficiaries in the South West were helped with job search and work experience, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped with job search and work experience (all)	63	68	66
Proportions helped with job search and work experience through…			
work experience or a work placement	24	24	24
general training about the world of work	34	28	30
advice or guidance about what sorts of work or training you could do	44	53	50
training in how to look for work	31	21	25
contacts to help you look for a job	31	30	31
job broking; leads for particular vacancies	31	20	24
Base	*90*	*189*	*281*

Base: All those in South West projects who received help with job search and work experience and who gave an answer

Work experience or a work placement had been provided for just a quarter of beneficiaries.

More formal job search activities, such as job-broking and job search itself, had tended to be provided for the men more often than the women, with about a third of the men receiving it.

Course completion/early leavers

In the South West, early leaving was not widespread, with 20 per cent of beneficiaries leaving before their course finished, as Table 7.74 shows. This is slightly higher than the proportion of early leavers for the programme as a whole (17 per cent).

Early leaving seems to have been slightly more prevalent among the men than the women. As with the programme for England as a whole, the dominant reasons for leaving (not shown in table) were either ‘good’ ones, such as finding work, or were due to circumstantial changes. Only a small minority left for reasons of dissatisfaction with the course.

Table 7.74: Whether beneficiaries in the South West left their project early, or stayed until the end

Proportions leaving early and staying to end	Male %	Female %	All %
Left early	20	15	17
Stayed to end	78	83	81
Base	*90*	*189*	*281,357*

Base: All those in South West projects who gave an answer

Satisfaction with project

This low level of dissatisfied quits is entirely consistent with the high levels of satisfaction about the course shown in Table 7.75. Here, we can see that some 85 per cent of beneficiaries were either very satisfied or fairly satisfied, with the women tending to be more satisfied than the men.

Table 7.75: Degree of satisfaction expressed with project, by beneficiaries in the South West

Proportions who were…	Male %	Female %	All %
Very satisfied	42	53	50
Fairly satisfied	35	35	35
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10	3	5
Fairly dissatisfied	3	6	5
Very dissatisfied	8	1	4
Base	*90*	*189*	*281*

Base: All those in South West projects who gave an answer

7.6.5 Outcomes

As with our analysis of the programme as a whole, we identify several ways in which projects in the South West have helped the beneficiaries involved, and we look in turn at:

- employment outcomes
- qualification outcomes
- 'soft' outcomes among those not working.

Job outcomes

From an employment rate of 53 per cent when beneficiaries entered the programme, some 64 per cent of beneficiaries in the South West were working by the time they left, and by a further one per cent by the time of the survey.

The unemployment rate had similarly fallen over this period, from 14 per cent on entry, to seven per cent on leaving the course, and to six per cent at the time of the survey.

However, the inactivity rate awas at 27 per cent when beneficiaries entered the programme, and remained at 29 per cent both on exit and at the time of the survey.

Table 7.76 shows the employment and 'other activity' outcomes for beneficiaries from projects in the South West, both immediately on completing their project, and at the time of the survey. As with the results for the other regions, because a handful of the beneficiaries coded as 'other' in this table were in paid work of some, undisclosed, type, the data in this table are slightly inconsistent with those cited in the paragraphs immediately above.

Table 7.76: Employment and activity patterns after the project; all respondents from projects in the South West

All respondents	Work FT	Work PT	Self Empl.	U/E	Education/ Training	Sick/ Disabled	Vol. Work	Other
	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
Status immediately on leaving project	25	26	13	7	11	3	2	14
Status at time of survey	31	23	11	6	11	4	2	12

Base: All those who from South West projects answered the questions

Qualification outcomes

The RDP for the South West had emphasised the targeting of people with few or no skills, and we can see from the first column of Table 7.77 that 17 per cent of beneficiaries here had entered these projects without any qualification.

Just over a half (55 per cent) of all entrants had gained a full qualification by the time they left the project, and a further one per cent had gained credits or units towards one.

Table 7.77: Qualifications held by beneficiaries in the South West, before and after the project

Whether or not held or gained any qualification(s) or units/credits	Held qualification(s) before starting the project %	Gained qualification(s) through the project %	Gained unit(s) or credit(s) towards qualification(s) through the project %
Yes	17	55	1
No	83	42	99
Base	*281*	*281*	*281*

Base: All those in South West projects answering each question

'Soft' outcomes

Table 7.76 above showed that the employment rate had improved slightly after beneficiaries had ended their course. It is worthwhile, therefore, to consider to what extent there might be lasting and on-going effects which would help beneficiaries to improve their circumstances in the labour market, even though they had not yet done so.

Table 7.78 shows that among the (very few, N = 26) beneficiaries who were not working at the time of the survey, but were nevertheless still looking for it, nine out of ten of them (and all the women) felt more confident about finding work than they had when they first entered the project. Additionally, three-quarters of them (and nine out of ten men) felt better skilled to do it.

Table 7.78: Improved confidence and skills as a result of the project, among beneficiaries in the South West without a job

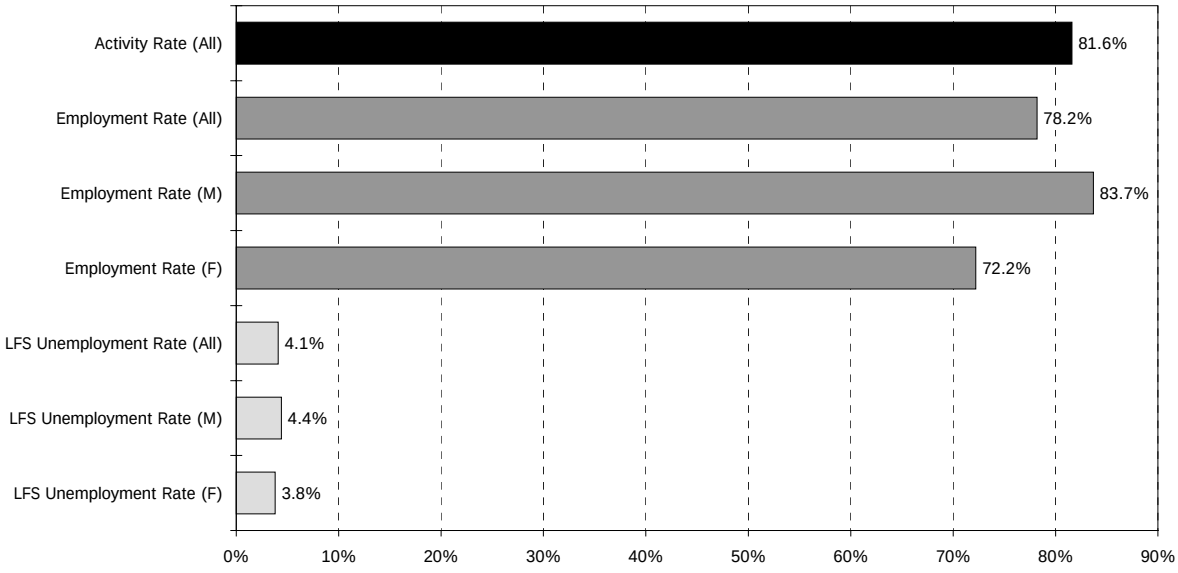
Proportions who were…	Male %	Female %	All %
More confident now	85	100	92
No more confident now	8	0	4
Don't know	8	0	4
Better skilled now	92	54	73
No better skilled now	*8*	*46*	*27*
Base	*13*	*13*	*26*

Base: All those without a job in South West projects who gave an answer

7.7 Eastern

The key indicators of labour market conditions in the Eastern Region as the last of the beneficiaries were leaving their projects are shown in Figure 7.7.

Figure 7.7: The labour market in the Eastern Region, at the end of 2002



Source: LFS Nov. 2002-Jan.2003, seasonally adjusted

7.7.1 Background

Both unemployment levels and economic inactivity rates in the Eastern Region are very low, reflecting the buoyancy of the labour market. Long-term unemployment (over one year) is lower than in the UK as a whole. Nevertheless, there are some black spots, and the RDP points out that Southend and Norfolk have the highest rates of long-term unemployment in the East of England.

Although economic activity rates are above the national rate for both men and women in the East of England, the gap between male and female economic activity rates is actually wider in the East of England than in the country as a whole.

Only 16 of the 48 local authorities in the East of England are amongst the 50 per cent most deprived in England. However, three wards in the region are among the 100 most deprived wards in the country: Great Yarmouth Regent, Great Yarmouth Nelson and Peterborough Central.

Key target groups identified in the RDP include:

- individuals in both short- and long-term unemployment
- economically inactive in receipt of benefits
- disadvantaged young people
- employed members of the workforce, especially:
  - those at risk of losing their jobs or are in 'seasonal' employment
  - disabled people requiring support to maintain their employability
  - the low skilled (qualified to NVQ Level 2 or below).
- women encountering disadvantage.

7.7.2 What kind of projects did beneficiaries enter?

Table 7.79 shows the breakdown of the weighted sample of beneficiaries between the five Policy Fields in the Eastern Region and compares them with that for England as a whole.

It shows that:

- beneficiaries from projects in Policy Field 3 comprise a very much higher proportion of respondents than they have done for England as whole, at 66 per cent, *cf* 35
- all the other policy fields are consequently relatively under-represented, and indeed there are no Policy Field 4 beneficiaries at all in the sample
- Policy Fields 1 and 2 both make up less than one-third of beneficiaries, compared with about half in England as a whole; and in the Eastern Region, Policy Field 2 beneficiaries are more widespread than those in Policy Field 1, which is again quite the reverse for England as a whole.

Table 7.79: Policy Fields under which beneficiaries' projects in the Eastern Region were supported

Policy Fields under which beneficiaries' projects were supported	The Eastern Region %	All England %
Policy Field 1: Active labour market policies	6	31
Policy Field 2: Equal opportunities for all & promoting social inclusion	24	16
Policy Field 3: Improving training and education and promoting lifelong learning	66	35
Policy Field 4: Adaptability and entrepreneurship	0	8
Policy Field 5: Improving the participation of women in the labour market	4	10
Base	*418*	*3,431*

Base: All respondents

7.7.3 Characteristics of beneficiaries

In this section, we look in turn at the key personal and labour market characteristics of beneficiaries, including their status on entry and the prevalence of certain kinds of disadvantage within the sample.

Sex and age profile

Table 7.80 shows the composition of the weighted sample of beneficiaries in the Eastern Region, by age and gender.

It shows that:

- as we might imagine, in view of the large proportion of Policy Field 3 beneficiaries, the average age of beneficiaries is higher in the Eastern Region (40 *cf* 35), with just ten per cent of beneficiaries aged under 25, *cf* 27 in England as a whole
- 51 per cent of beneficiaries are women, and here the average age is still higher, at 43
- the proportion of older individuals (*ie* 50 plus) is somewhat higher than for England as a whole.

Table 7.80: Age group of beneficiaries in the Eastern Region, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
< 18	1	1	1
18-24	8	10	9
25-34	21	15	17
35-49	43	45	44
50+	26	29	27
Base	*197*	*212*	*418*

Base: All the Eastern Region beneficiaries who gave an answer

Incidence of disadvantaged groups

The entry cohort to projects in the Eastern Region appears on average to have been slightly less disadvantaged than that for England as a whole. This is best shown by the combined variable, 'low human capital', which indicates that 60 per cent of project entrants here were likely to be held back, and have their labour market opportunities constrained, by some combination of poor qualification, wrong or out-of-date skills, restricted work experience, *etc.* This compares with 66 per cent for England as a whole. Similarly, the proportion of beneficiaries with multiple disadvantages (three or more) is slightly lower in the Eastern Region, at 14 per cent, than for England in general (19 per cent).

This small difference is replicated for just about all the facets of disadvantage which we have looked at. Disabled people are close to the all-England average however, as are carers, while returners are represented to the same extent as in England as a whole.

No doubt the relatively low long-term unemployment rates and the lower-than-average share of minority ethnic groups in the Eastern Region account for their relatively low representation here.

Table 7.81: Incidence of discrete LM disadvantages among beneficiaries in the Eastern Region

	LTU/I %	Return-ers %	Lone Parents %	Min. Eth. Group %	Other Lang. %	Disabil/ Health %	Carers %	Low H. Capital %
Eastern Region beneficiaries	20	9	7	6	2	15	24	60
All	27	9	10	14	4	18	25	66
Base	*82*	*37*	*28*	*24*	*7*	*62*	*101*	*251*

Base: All the Eastern Region beneficiaries who gave an answer

Status on entry

Table 7.82 shows the circumstances of the beneficiaries when they joined the projects. It shows that:

- the proportion of employed entrants was very high, at 54 per cent, *cf* 37 per cent for England as a whole
- the proportion of inactive entrants, at 31 per cent, was similarly lower than across England as a whole (39 per cent)
- similarly, the proportion of unemployed entrants was almost half the all-England rate, at 11 per cent
- the proportion of women who were inactive on entry was in line with the all-England average, at 43 per cent of female entrants.

Table 7.82: Employment status one week before joining the project, among beneficiaries in the Eastern Region, by gender

	Males %	Females %	All %
In paid work	66	44	54
Unemployed	14	9	11
Inactive	18	43	31
Base	*197*	*212*	*418*

Base: All the Eastern Region beneficiaries who gave an answer

Duration of unemployment before entry to project

Table 7.83 looks at the 46 per cent of beneficiaries who had not been working when they joined their project.

It shows that among them, exactly in line with England as a whole, 55 per cent had either never worked or had not done so in the past two years.

Non-working female entrants show the highest concentrations of long-term unemployment or inactivity, with fully two-thirds of them not having worked for at least two years. By contrast, only 39 per cent of the men fell into this category and 29 per cent of them had only been out of work for three months at the most.

Table 7.83: Length of time since last worked, among beneficiaries in the Eastern Region, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Less than three months	29	9	16
At least three months but less than six months	8	4	5
At least six months but less than a year	5	4	4
At least a year but less than two years	11	9	9
Two years or more	17	45	34
Never worked	23	21	21
Don’t know	9	8	10
Base	*67*	*118*	*192*

Base: All those not working when entered a the Eastern Region project, and who gave an answer

7.7.4 Support received

In this section, we look at the support which beneficiaries had received, looking in turn at skill improvements, confidence building and job search.

Training and skills

Table 7.84 shows that nearly nine out of ten of these beneficiaries had been helped to improve the skills they would need at work in some way or other. The most widespread gain here had been in the practical skills related to a particular job (61 per cent of all beneficiaries) and improved IT skills was not much less widespread, at 41 per cent.

Basic skills provision had been taken up less widely among beneficiaries, with for example 15 per cent of them helped to improve their literacy skills, and 17 per cent for number skills.

IT skills had been provided for just over half of the female beneficiaries, and less than a third of the men.

Table 7.84: Ways in which beneficiaries in the Eastern Region were helped to improve the skills they would need at work, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped to improve skills (all)	87	89	87
Proportions helped to improve skills through…			
practical skills related to a particular job	62	62	61
improved computing/Information Technology (IT) skills	31	52	41
study skills (such as essay or report writing, using libraries)	20	24	22
improved reading and writing skills	12	17	15
improved maths and number skills	17	17	17
improved English speaking skills	11	15	13
training in wider job skills (such as admin or book-keeping)	36	34	34
training in management and/or leadership skills	22	23	22
Base	*197*	*212*	*418*

Base: All those in Eastern Region projects who received help with skills/training and who gave an answer

'Soft' skills

Table 7.85 shows that 81 per cent of these beneficiaries had been helped in building their self confidence and/or improving their 'soft' skills in some way or other. In this respect, there was little difference between the men and the women, albeit with the women slightly more likely to have taken up any facets of this provision.

Support for developing an ability to do things independently seem to have been the most widespread of these activities, although there was not much difference between the popularity of the different elements, with each of them being taken up by about half the beneficiaries.

Table 7.85: Ways in which beneficiaries in the Eastern Region were helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work (all)	81	84	81
Proportions helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work through…			
expressing yourself and communicating with people	49	59	53
working with other people as part of a team	43	55	49
solving problems	45	50	46
motivation	52	60	55
ability to do things independently	58	61	59
ability to take responsibility	50	48	48
Base	*197*	*212*	*418*

Base: All those in Eastern Region projects who received help to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work and who gave an answer

Job search

Table 7.86 shows that 57 per cent of these beneficiaries had been helped with their job search skills or activities in some way or other. In this respect, the men were more likely to have participated than were the women, and this extends to all but one of the separate activities reviewed as well.

Advice or guidance about what sorts of work or training that beneficiaries could do was the most widespread activity, with 40 per cent of them receiving this form of help. Work experience or a work placement had been provided for just 14 per cent of beneficiaries.

The more direct job-getting activities, such as job-broking and job search itself, had tended to be provided for the men more often than the women, and this may reflect the higher proportion of unemployed men in this sample.

Table 7.86: Ways in which beneficiaries in the Eastern Region were helped with job search and work experience, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped with job search and work experience (all)	65	51	57
Proportions helped with job search and work experience through….			
work experience or a work placement	19	10	14
general training about the world of work	32	26	28
advice or guidance about what sorts of work or training you could do	47	35	40
training in how to look for work	21	21	20
contacts to help you look for a job	34	16	24
job broking; leads for particular vacancies	20	14	17
Base	*197*	*212*	*418*

Base: All those in Eastern Region projects who received help with job search and work experience and who gave an answer

Course completion/early leavers

For the programme as a whole, we showed above (Table 4.17) that early leaving had been significant, but not widespread, with just 16 per cent of beneficiaries reporting that they had left earlier than expected. In the Eastern Region, early leaving had been even less widespread, at ten per cent, as Table 7.87 shows.

Unlike the other regions, early leaving seems to have been more prevalent among the women than the men, although once again, the dominant reasons for leaving (not shown in table) are either 'good' ones, such as finding work, or were due to circumstantial changes. Only a small minority left for reasons of dissatisfaction with the course.

Table 7.87: Whether beneficiaries in the Eastern Region left their project early or stayed until the end

Proportions leaving early and staying to end	Male %	Female %	All %
Left early	7	14	10
Stayed to end	90	82	85
Base	*197*	*212*	*418*

Base: All those in Eastern Region projects who gave an answer

Satisfaction with project

This low level of dissatisfied quits is entirely consistent with the high levels of satisfaction about the course shown in Table 7.88.

Here, we can see that some 88 per cent of beneficiaries were either very satisfied or fairly satisfied, with the women and men tending to be almost equally well satisfied with their provision.

Table 7.88: Degree of satisfaction expressed with project, by beneficiaries in the Eastern Region

Proportions who were…	Male %	Female %	All %
Very satisfied	52	58	54
Fairly satisfied	37	32	34
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4	4	4
Fairly dissatisfied	4	3	3
Very dissatisfied	2	2	2
Base	*197*	*212*	*418*

Base: All those in Eastern Region projects who gave an answer

7.7.5 Outcomes

As with our analysis of the programme as a whole, we identify several ways in which projects in the Eastern Region have helped the beneficiaries involved, and we look in turn at:

- employment outcomes
- qualification outcomes
- 'soft' outcomes among those not working.

Job outcomes

From an employment rate of 54 per cent when beneficiaries entered the programme, some 62 per cent of beneficiaries in the Eastern Region were working by the time they left, and by a further two per cent by the time of the survey.

The 11 per cent unemployment rate had similarly fallen over this period to six, and subsequently to four per cent, at the time of the survey.

The inactivity rate had remained fairly constant, at 31 per cent on entry and at the time of the survey.

Table 7.89 shows the employment and 'other activity' outcomes for beneficiaries from projects in the Eastern Region, both immediately on completing their project, and at the time of the survey. Note that as a handful of the beneficiaries coded as 'other' were in paid work of some, undisclosed, type, the data in this table are slightly inconsistent with those cited immediately above.

Table 7.89: Employment and activity patterns after the project; all respondents from projects in the Eastern Region

All respondents	Work FT	Work PT	Self Empl.	U/E	Education/ Training	Sick/ Disabled	Carer	Vol. Work	Other
	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
Status immediately on leaving project	33	10	19	6	7	6	–	7	13
Status at time of survey	36	10	18	4	7	6	–	7	12

Base: All those who from Eastern Region projects answered the questions

Qualification outcomes

The entry cohort in the Eastern Region was not less well qualified than the England average, with 26 per cent of them entering these projects without any qualification, as shown in the first column of Table 7.90, and compared with 21 per cent for England as a whole.

Table 7.90: Qualifications held by beneficiaries in the Eastern Region, before and after the project

Whether or not held or gained any qualification(s) or units/credits	Held qualification(s) before starting the project %	Gained qualification(s) through the project %	Gained unit(s) or credit(s) towards qualification(s) through the project %
Yes	72	40	2
No	26	55	98
Base	*418*	*418*	*418*

Base: All those in Eastern Region projects answering each question

However, 40 per cent of all entrants had gained a full qualification by the time they left the project, and a further two per cent had gained credits or units towards one.

'Soft' outcomes

Table 7.89 above showed that there were modest continuing job gains after beneficiaries had ended their course. It is worthwhile, therefore, to consider to what extent there might be lasting and on-going effects which would help beneficiaries to improve their circumstances in the labour market, even though they had not yet done so.

Table 7.91, shows that among the (very few, N = 33) beneficiaries who were not working at the time of the survey, but were nevertheless still looking for it, three-quarters of them felt more confident about finding work than they had when they first entered the project, and this was most pronounced among the women. In addition, 69 per cent of them felt better skilled to do it, with again more of the women reporting this positive gain.

Table 7.91: Improved confidence and skills as a result of the project, among beneficiaries in the Eastern Region without a job

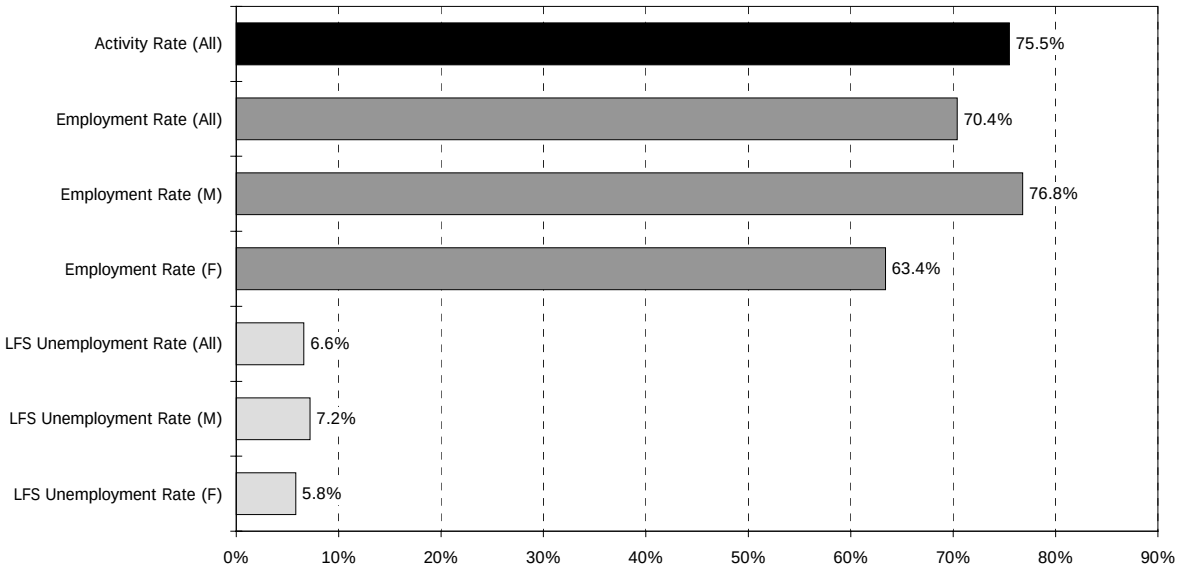
Proportions who were…	Male %	Female %	All %
More confident now	60	84	76
No more confident now	40	16	24
Better skilled now	50	78	69
No better skilled now	50	18	28
Don't know	0	4	3
Base	*10*	*23*	*33*

Base: All those without a job in Eastern Region projects who gave an answer

7.8 London

The key indicators of labour market conditions in London as the last of the beneficiaries were leaving their projects are shown in Figure 7.8.

Figure 7.8: The labour market in London, at the end of 2002



Source: LFS Nov. 2002-Jan.2003; seasonally adjusted

7.8.1 Background

London is of central importance to the UK economy. It contributes over a fifth of the UK's GDP. Greater London per capita GDP is £21,263, 42 per cent above the UK average, and inner London is the richest area in the EU, with GDP per capita of over £34,000 (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2001). Since the

1980s and the growth of the financial and business services sector, demand for skills in higher-level occupations has led to a concentration of well-paid and highly-skilled professionals in the capital.

Although London is a huge labour market, with some 3.73 million economically active adults, activity rates are lower than across the country as a whole (76.6 per cent compared with 79.1 per cent). Furthermore, commuters account for a significant proportion of employment in London, particularly in high-skilled occupations, and as a result many residents are increasingly vulnerable to unemployment and social exclusion. The unemployment rate in London is significantly high compared to the national average, and there are some two million economically inactive adults. In addition, a significant proportion of the population has low numeracy and literacy levels, which makes it difficult for them to secure entry into the more buoyant parts of the labour market.

The key challenges identified in the ESF Objective 3 Regional Development Plan for London are:

- to promote social inclusion; and
- to ensure that those who are currently inactive are not denied access to employment opportunities.

Certain groups, such as refugees and asylum seekers, lone parents, older people (50+) and those belonging to ethnic minorities, are identified as suffering multiple barriers to participation in the labour market. In particular, discrimination in employment is recognised as an important problem for women and those belonging to ethnic minorities.

In addition, London has a higher proportion of lone parents and a higher proportion of lone parents who are Income Support claimants than the national average. While unemployment among people aged 18 to 24 is less prevalent than nationally, there remains a core of disadvantaged young people at risk of being excluded from the labour market. Young people aged 13 to 17 who play truant, whose levels of academic attainment are low, who come from deprived backgrounds, or who have been permanently excluded, are a particular concern in London.

Those belonging to ethnic minorities experience relatively high levels of unemployment, particularly those from a Bangladeshi/ Pakistani or Black Caribbean background. Groups of people in London for whom unemployment is a particularly acute problem include disabled people, ex-offenders and offenders, and refugees and asylum seekers. Other issues in London concern the homeless, who suffer serious multiple barriers to participation in the labour market.

Although London has a high proportion of employment in managerial or professional and associate professional occupations compared to the GB average, there is still high demand in semi-skilled or unskilled occupations, and they account for nearly 50 per cent of overall employment. Unfilled vacancies tend to be concentrated in these lower-skilled occupations. Many London employers report that vacancies remain unfilled because of skills shortages, and this is true for both higher-level occupations, and general skills gaps in technical and practical job-related skills, customer handling, and computer literacy.

The RDP sets out eight priorities for ESF Objective 3 in London between 2002 and 2006, as follows:

- Secure the reintegration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market.
- Prevent long-term unemployment among adults and young people.
- Tackle the problem of labour market exclusion experienced by specific groups in society.
- Ensure that young people are adequately equipped for the world of work.
- Promote a commitment to workforce development and lifelong learning among employers and employees.
- Sustain and enhance employability among employed people and improve the competitiveness of SMEs.
- Promote gender equality within the workplace and in the labour market.
- Create the infrastructure for the effective delivery of the Objective 3 programme.

7.8.2 What kind of projects did beneficiaries enter?

Table 7.92 shows the breakdown of the weighted sample of beneficiaries between the five Policy Fields in London, and compares them with that for England as a whole.

It shows that:

- beneficiaries from projects in Policy Fields 1 and 2 comprise over three-quarters of the sample of beneficiaries in London. This constitutes a much higher proportion of respondents than in England as whole, at 47 per cent.
- it is in Policy Field 2 that the contrast is most marked, with Policy Field 2 beneficiaries making up fully 40 per cent of London entrants, compared with16 per cent in England as a whole
- Policy Field 3 is extremely under-represented in the sample, at only five per cent, compared with 35 for England as a whole.
- Policy Fields 4 and 5 both make up small proportions of the respondents, as they do for England as a whole; however
- Policy Field 4 is somewhat over-represented, and Policy Field 5 similarly under-represented, by contrast with England as a whole.

Table 7.92: Policy Fields under which beneficiaries' projects in London were supported

Policy Fields under which beneficiaries' projects were supported	London %	All England %
Policy Field 1: Active labour market policies	38	31
Policy Field 2: Equal opportunities for all & promoting social inclusion	40	16
Policy Field 3: Improving training and education and promoting lifelong learning	5	35
Policy Field 4: Adaptability and entrepreneurship	14	8
Policy Field 5: Improving the participation of women in the labour market	3	10
Base	*363*	*3,431*

Base: all respondents

7.8.3 Characteristics of beneficiaries

In this section, we look in turn at the key personal and labour market characteristics of beneficiaries, including their status on entry and the prevalence of certain kinds of disadvantage within the sample.

Sex and age profile

Table 7.93 shows the composition of the weighted sample of beneficiaries in London by age and gender.

Table 7.93: Age group of beneficiaries in London, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
< 18	8	7	8
18-24	26	14	20
25-34	24	33	29
35-49	30	35	32
50+	12	10	11
Base	*170*	*190*	*363*

Base: All London beneficiaries who gave an answer

It shows that:

- women make up about half of the sample
- just over a quarter of the sample were aged under 25, and this is in line with England as a whole
- otherwise, the age composition of the sample was much in line with that of England as a whole, although the proportion of over 50s was somewhat lower in London
- the women tend to be concentrated in the 25 to 49 age groups, whereas the men are somewhat more evenly spread across the sample.

Incidence of disadvantaged groups

The entry cohort to projects in the London is similar to the all-England one, except in two respects:

- There is a very high proportion of people from an ethnic minority background, who make up just under half of all the London beneficiaries. Consequently, there is a higher than average proportion of beneficiaries for whom English is not the main language spoken in the home.
- There is a high proportion of people with few or no skills; some three-quarters falling into our 'low human capital' group, which is somewhat higher than for England as a whole.

The sample has significant representation from the various disadvantaged groups. We can see from Table 7.94 that people with a disability make up 21 per cent of entrants; lone parents, 15 per cent; and people who have been long-term unemployed or inactive, 26 per cent.

People with poor basic skills, although not shown in the table, make up a further 20 per cent of the sample.

Table 7.94: Incidence of discrete LM disadvantages among beneficiaries in London

	LTU/I %	Return-ers %	Lone Parents %	Min. Eth. Group %	Other Lang. %	Disabil/ Health %	Carers %	Low H. Capital %
London beneficiaries	26	8	15	49	16	21	23	75
All	27	9	10	14	4	18	25	66
Base	*95*	*28*	*53*	*177*	*58*	*75*	*82*	*272*

Base: All London beneficiaries who gave an answer

Status on entry

Table 7.95 shows the circumstances of the beneficiaries when they joined the projects. It shows that:

- the proportion of working entrants was lower than for England as a whole, at 29 per cent (*cf* 37 per cent)
- similarly, a slightly lower proportion were inactive on entering the programme (34 per cent, *cf* 39 per cent)
- consequently, the intake of unemployed (but actively seeking work) beneficiaries was much higher in London than in England as a whole (32 per cent *cf* 21 per cent), and
- among the male beneficiaries the proportion of unemployed entrants was somewhat higher than among the women entrants.

Table 7.95: Employment status one week before joining the project, among beneficiaries in London, by gender

	Males %	Females %	All %
In paid work	28	30	29
Unemployed	37	28	32
Inactive	31	37	34
Base	*170*	*190*	*363*

Base: All London beneficiaries who gave an answer

Duration of unemployment before entry to project

Table 7.96 looks at the two in three beneficiaries who had not been working when they joined their project.

It shows that among them, 55 per cent had either never worked or had not done so in the past two years, and this rises to almost two-thirds among the non-working women entrants. The incidence of long-term non-participation in the sample is about the same in the London sample (at 26 per cent overall, see Table 7.94) as it is in the all-England sample (27 per cent).

Table 7.96: Length of time since last worked, among beneficiaries in London, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Less than three months	16	14	15
At least three months but less than six months	5	7	6
At least six months but less than a year	10	6	8
At least a year but less than two years	15	5	10
Two years or more	23	28	26
Never worked	24	34	29
Don’t know	7	6	7
Base	*123*	*133*	*258*

Base: All those not working when entered a London project, and who gave an answer

7.8.4 Support received

In this section, we look at the support which beneficiaries had received, looking in turn at skill improvements, confidence-building and job search.

Training and skills

Table 7.97 shows that 93 per cent of beneficiaries in London had been helped to improve the skills they would need at work in some way or other. The most widespread gains here had been in the practical skills related to a particular job, and IT skills — each benefiting more than 60 per cent of the participants.

Basic skills support had been provided for about a third of the men. Among the women, support for language and reading skills was more widespread than this. Although not shown in the table, the extent of this provision almost doubles among those who said that they had basic skills problems. Among this sub-group it rises to 73 per cent for reading and writing skills, to 48 per cent for number skills, and to 64 per cent for language and communications skills.

Table 7.97: Ways in which beneficiaries in London were helped to improve the skills they would need at work, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped to improve skills (all)	92	94	93
Proportions helped to improve skills through…			
practical skills related to a particular job	68	61	64
improved computing/Information Technology (IT) skills	68	68	68
study skills (such as essay or report writing, using libraries)	36	49	43
improved reading and writing skills	37	48	42
improved maths and number skills	30	36	33
improved English speaking skills	34	43	38
training in wider job skills (such as admin or book-keeping)	28	33	30
training in management and/or leadership skills	21	17	19
Base	*170*	*190*	*363*

Base: All those in London projects who received help with skills/training and who gave an answer

Similarly, among the beneficiaries from a minority ethnic group, support with reading and writing skills rises to 50 per cent for, to 42 per cent for number skills, and to 49 per cent for language and communications skills.

'Soft' skills

Table 7.98 shows that nine out of ten beneficiaries in the London Region had been helped in building their self confidence and/or improving their 'soft' skills in some way or other. There was little difference between the men and the women.

As for the different forms of provision here, most of them reached fewer than about two-thirds of beneficiaries. Working with other people as part of a team, communication skills and motivation-building seem to have been the most widespread of these activities, each reaching about two-thirds of participants. The ability to do things independently was particularly widespread among this sample, reaching 71 per cent of them.

Table 7.98: Ways in which beneficiaries in London were helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work (all)	91	89	89
Proportions helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work through…			
expressing yourself and communicating with people	62	74	68
working with other people as part of a team	66	76	71
solving problems	55	64	60
motivation	61	68	64
ability to do things independently	69	74	71
ability to take responsibility	60	68	64
Base	*170*	*190*	*363*

Base: All those in London projects who received help to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work and who gave an answer

Job search

Table 7.99 shows that 71 per cent of the beneficiaries in London had been helped with their job search skills or activities in some way or other. The men were more likely to have participated than were the women, and this extends to some of the separate activities reviewed as well; for example, a third of the men received a work placement compared with a quarter of the women.

Advice or guidance about what sorts of work or training that beneficiaries could do was the most widespread activity, with 52 per cent of them receiving this form of help.

More formal job search activities, such as job-broking and job search itself, which in other regions had tended to be provided for the men more often than the women, was more evenly divided in London, with about 40 per cent of both men and women receiving it.

Table 7.99: Ways in which beneficiaries in London were helped with job search and work experience, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped with job search and work experience (all)	76	68	71
Proportions helped with job search and work experience through…			
work experience or a work placement	32	25	28
general training about the world of work	36	38	37
advice or guidance about what sorts of work or training you could do	51	53	52
training in how to look for work	45	45	45
contacts to help you look for a job	39	39	39
job broking; leads for particular vacancies	38	41	39
Base	*170*	*190*	*363*

Base: All those in London projects who received help with job search and work experience and who gave an answer

Course completion/early leavers

In London, early leaving was not widespread with 19 per cent of beneficiaries leaving early, as Table 7.100 shows. This is a slightly higher proportion than for the programme as a whole (16 per cent).

Early leaving seems to have been slightly more prevalent among the men than the women. As with the programme for England as a whole, the dominant reasons for leaving (not shown in table) were either 'good' ones, such as finding work, or were due to circumstantial changes. Only a small minority left for reasons of dissatisfaction with the course.

Table 7.100: Whether beneficiaries in London left their project early, or stayed until the end

Proportions leaving early and staying to end	Male %	Female %	All %
Left early	21	18	19
Stayed to end	77	81	79
Base	*170*	*190*	*363*

Base: All those in London projects who gave an answer

Satisfaction with project

This low level of dissatisfied quits is entirely consistent with the high levels of satisfaction about the course shown in Table 7.101.

Here, we can see that some 82 per cent of beneficiaries were either very satisfied or fairly satisfied, with the women tending to be more satisfied than the men.

Table 7.101: Degree of satisfaction expressed with project, by beneficiaries in London

Proportions who were…	Male %	Female %	All %
Very satisfied	34	46	40
Fairly satisfied	44	39	42
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	12	6	9
Fairly dissatisfied	2	3	3
Very dissatisfied	7	3	5
Base	*170*	*190*	*363*

Base: All those in London projects who gave an answer

7.8.5 Outcomes

As with our analysis of the programme as a whole, we identify several ways in which projects in London have helped the beneficiaries involved, and we look in turn at:

- employment outcomes
- qualification outcomes
- 'soft' outcomes among those not working.

Job outcomes

From an employment rate of 29 per cent when beneficiaries entered the programme, some 43 per cent of beneficiaries in London were working by the time they left, although it had not subsequently risen (falling in fact back to 41 per cent at the time of the survey).

Unfortunately, the inactivity rate had increased during this period, from34 per cent at the time of entering the projects, to 40 per cent at the time of the survey. In some part, this may be due to a higher than average proportion of beneficiaries remaining in education or training — 19 per cent here compared with 17 per cent for England as a whole.

Table 7.102 shows the employment and 'other activity' outcomes for beneficiaries from projects in London, both immediately on completing their project, and at the time of the survey. We note that a handful of the beneficiaries coded as 'other' in this table were in paid work of some, undisclosed, type, and consequently the data in this table are slightly inconsistent with those cited in the paragraphs immediately above.

Table 7.102: Employment and activity patterns after the project; all respondents from projects in London

All respondents	Work FT	Work PT	Self Empl.	U/E	Education/ Training	Sick/ Disabled	Vol. Work	Other
	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
Status immediately on leaving project	27	11	5	18	19	8	3	9
Status at time of survey	25	11	4	19	20	8	3	9

Base: All those who from London projects answered the questions

Qualification outcomes

A quarter beneficiaries here had entered these projects without any qualification (Table 7.103).

Despite this, and the much lower-than-average representation of Policy Field 3 projects in the sample, over half of all entrants had gained a full qualification by the time they left the project, and a further five per cent had gained credits or units towards one.

Table 7.103: Qualifications held by beneficiaries in London, before and after the project

Whether or not held or gained any qualification(s) or units/credits	Held qualification(s) before starting the project %	Gained qualification(s) through the project %	Gained unit(s) or credit(s) towards qualification(s) through the project %
Yes	72	52	5
No	26	45	95
Base	363	363	363

Base: All those in London projects answering each question

'Soft' outcomes

Although Table 7.102 above showed that the employment rate had not improved after beneficiaries had ended their course, it is still worthwhile therefore to consider to what extent there might be lasting and on-going effects which would help beneficiaries to improve their circumstances in the labour market, even though they had not yet done so.

Table 7.104 shows that among the (very few, N = 92) beneficiaries who were not working at the time of the survey, but were nevertheless still looking for it, 80 per cent felt more confident about finding work than they had when they first entered the project. Similarly, three-quarters of them felt that they were better skilled to do so once they had finished their course.

Table 7.104: Improved confidence and skills as a result of the project, among beneficiaries in London without a job

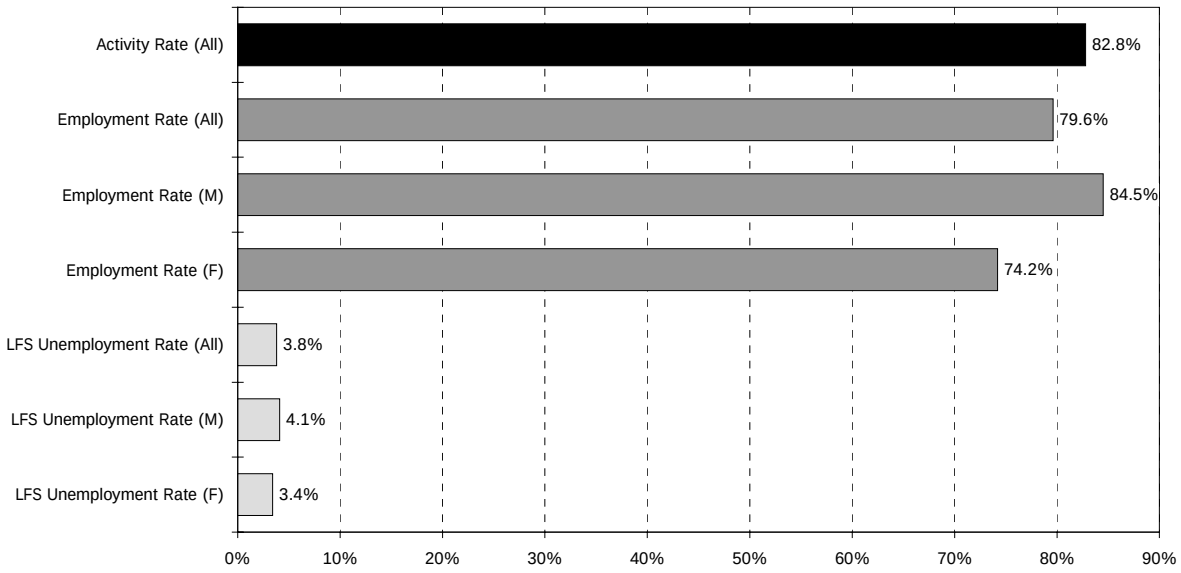
Proportions who were…	Male %	Female %	All %
More confident now	81	80	80
No more confident now	19	18	18
DK	–	2	1
Better skilled now	74	77	75
No better skilled now	26	20	23
DK	–	4	2
Base	*44*	*48*	*92*

Base: All those without a job in London projects who gave an answer

7.9 South East

The key indicators of labour market conditions in the South East as the last of the beneficiaries were leaving their projects are shown in Figure 7.9.

Figure 7.9: The labour market in the South East, at the end of 2002



Source: LFS Nov. 2002-Jan.2003, seasonally adjusted

7.9.1 Background

On many of the headline economic and labour market indicators, the South East outperforms most of the other regions in England. There is evidence of a rapidly developing knowledge-based economy, particularly, in sectors and clusters such as ICT, financial and business services, software/computer

services and web design, precision engineering, motor sport, bio-technology, pharmaceuticals, and the media and creative industries. The region's workforce is large and, in general, better educated, skilled and qualified than those of other regions. A larger proportion of the workforce are employed in jobs at the top end of the skills and knowledge spectrum.

However, the headline indicators hide the extent of intra-region variation, and the existence of a two speed regional economy not necessarily confined to discrete geographical areas. One is the 'knowledge-based economy' region which employs a highly skilled and well-paid workforce in the growth industries of the future. The other is the region which is in danger of being left behind, reliant on traditional or declining industries where individuals are in low-paid, low-skilled work and live in areas where economic opportunities are often severely limited. It includes deprived communities in certain urban, coastal and rural areas who are denied access to opportunity and whose skills and qualifications place them at an increasing disadvantage in the labour market.

The ESF Regional Development Plan for the South East recognises that many of these areas are in danger of reaching a low skills equilibrium, where higher level skills are in short supply and where the demand for them from businesses in predominantly low value-added sectors is weak. It argues that simply increasing the supply of skills will not work, and aims instead to link areas of decline such as these to areas and sectors of growth and opportunity.

To this end, the Plan identifies four overarching objectives for the ESF Objective 3 programme in the region:

- Linking deprivation to local economic opportunity to promote equality of opportunity and help those in target groups to participate fully in the success of the region; linking strategies for regeneration to strategies for wider economic development and environmentally sustainable growth.
- Developing our own skills in the region through the creation of 'ladders of learning' to enhance and improve the skills base, in particular to promote equal opportunities by helping those in target groups with outdated, low or no skills to get on to the ladder, and progress to acquire the skills needed by the region's economy to contribute to sustainable growth.
- Growing our own businesses in all sectors — stimulating entrepreneurship and equality of opportunity, adaptability and business growth to provide sustainable development in terms of prosperity, employment and the environment.
- Accelerating the application and use of technology as exemplified in the vision of the 'wired region', promoting the effective use of ICT by all individuals and business, especially those in target groups, to support environmentally excellent development.

The results discussed below are reviewed with these strategic considerations in mind.

7.9.2 What kind of projects did beneficiaries enter?

Table 7.105 shows the breakdown of the weighted sample of beneficiaries between the five Policy Fields in the South East, and compares them with that for England as a whole.

It shows that:

- beneficiaries from projects in Policy Field 4 comprise a very much higher proportion of respondents than they have done for England as whole, at 35 per cent, *cf* only eight
- Policy Fields 1 and 2 both make up less than a third of beneficiaries compared with about half in England as a whole
- both Policy Fields 3 and 5 are in line with the all-England averages, albeit both slightly smaller in the South East.

Table 7.105: Policy Fields under which beneficiaries' projects in the South East were supported

Policy Fields under which beneficiaries' projects were supported	The South East %	All England %
Policy Field 1: Active labour market policies	15	31
Policy Field 2: Equal opportunities for all & promoting social inclusion	14	16
Policy Field 3: Improving training and education and promoting lifelong learning	29	35
Policy Field 4: Adaptability and entrepreneurship	35	8
Policy Field 5: Improving the participation of women in the labour market	7	10
Base	*381*	*3,431*

Base: all respondents

7.9.3 Characteristics of beneficiaries

In this section, we look in turn at the key personal and labour market characteristics of beneficiaries, including their status on entry and the prevalence of certain kinds of disadvantage within the sample.

Sex and age profile

Table 7.106 shows the composition of the weighted sample of beneficiaries in the South East by age and gender. It shows that:

- as we might imagine, in view of the large proportion of Policy Field 4 beneficiaries, the average age of beneficiaries is higher in the South East (40 *cf* 35), with just 14 per cent of beneficiaries aged under 25, *cf* 27 in England as a whole
- 61 per cent of beneficiaries are women
- the proportion of older individuals (*ie* 50 plus) is somewhat higher than for England as a whole.

Table 7.106: Age group of beneficiaries in the South East, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
< 18	2	2	2
18-24	18	8	12
25-34	15	25	21
35-49	36	39	37
50+	27	25	25
Base	*146*	*232*	*381*

Base: All the South East beneficiaries who gave an answer

Incidence of disadvantaged groups

The entry cohort to projects in the South East appears on average to have been somewhat less disadvantaged than that for England as a whole. This is best shown by the combined variable, 'low human capital', which indicates that only just over half of project entrants in the South East were likely to be held back, and have their labour market opportunities constrained, by some combination of poor qualification, wrong or out-of-date skills, restricted work experience, *etc.* This compares with 66 per cent for England as a whole.

In some other ways, however, the cohort demonstrated some comparable levels of disadvantage. For example, the intake of people with a disability or health problem in the South East was in line with than for England as a whole, at 18 per cent, as was the proportion of carers. Although lower than in England as a whole, the proportion of people who had been in long-term unemployment or inactivity was still substantial, at 22 per cent of entrants.

Table 7.107: Incidence of discrete LM disadvantages among beneficiaries in the South East

	LTU/I %	Return-ers %	Lone Parents %	Min. Eth. Group %	Other Lang. %	Disabil/ Health %	Carers %	Low H. Capital %
The South East beneficiaries	22	8	10	5	1	18	25	53
All	27	9	10	14	4	18	25	66
Base	84	29	37	18	2	69	95	202

Base: All the South East beneficiaries who gave an answer

Status on entry

Table 7.108 shows the circumstances of the beneficiaries when they joined the projects. It shows that:

- the proportion of employed entrants was very high, at 52 per cent, *cf* 37 per cent for England as a whole
- the proportion of inactive entrants, at 27 per cent, was similarly lower than across England as a whole, 39 per cent
- however, the proportion of unemployed entrants was almost the same, at 20 per cent
- although lower than for England as a whole, the proportion of women who were inactive on entry was still quite substantial, at close to a third of female entrants.

Table 7.108: Employment status one week before joining the project, among beneficiaries in the South East, by gender

	Males %	Females %	All %
In paid work	45	56	52
Unemployed	33	12	20
Inactive	21	31	27
Base	*146*	*232*	*381*

Base: All the South East beneficiaries who gave an answer

Duration of unemployment before entry to project

Table 7.109 looks at the 47 per cent of beneficiaries who had not been working when they joined their project.

It shows that among them, just under half had either never worked or had not done so in the past two years. This is only slightly lower than in England as a whole (55 per cent).

As implied above, it was among the non-working female entrants that the highest concentrations of long-term unemployment or inactivity were concentrated, with over half of them not having worked for at least

two years. By contrast, only a third of the men fell into this category, and more than a quarter of them had only been out of work for three months at the most.

Table 7.109: Length of time since last worked, among beneficiaries in the South East, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Less than three months	27	14	20
At least three months but less than six months	4	7	6
At least six months but less than a year	13	9	11
At least a year but less than two years	14	11	12
Two years or more	23	45	35
Never worked	9	9	9
Don't know	1	–	*
Base	*81*	*101*	*184*

Base: All those not working when entered a the South East project, and who gave an answer

7.9.4 Support received

In this section, we look at the support which beneficiaries had received, looking in turn at skill improvements, confidence building and job search.

Training and skills

Table 7.110 shows that eight out of ten of these beneficiaries had been helped to improve the skills they would need at work in some way or other. The most widespread gain here had been in the practical skills related to a particular job (55 per cent of all beneficiaries), and improved IT skills was not much less widespread, at 40 per cent.

Table 7.110: Ways in which beneficiaries in the South East were helped to improve the skills they would need at work, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped to improve skills (all)	86	80	82
Proportions helped to improve skills through…			
practical skills related to a particular job	55	55	55
improved computing/Information Technology (IT) skills	44	37	40
study skills (such as essay or report writing, using libraries)	34	25	28
improved reading and writing skills	22	12	16
improved maths and number skills	15	8	11
improved English speaking skills	16	11	13
training in wider job skills (such as admin or book-keeping)	37	28	32
training in management and/or leadership skills	32	29	31
Base	*146*	*232*	*381*

Base: All those in South East projects who received help with skills/training and who gave an answer

Basic skills provision had been more widespread among the male beneficiaries with, for example, 22 per cent of them helped to improve their literacy skills, compared with 12 per cent of the women.

IT skills had been provided for just over half of these beneficiaries, men and women alike.

Reflecting the high intake into Policy Field 4 here, we observe that nearly a third of beneficiaries had received training in management and/or leadership skills, and this contrasts with a quarter for England as a whole (see Table 4.8).

'Soft' skills

Table 7.111 shows that 81 per cent of the South East beneficiaries had been helped in building their self confidence and/or improving their 'soft' skills in some way or other. In this respect, there was little difference between the men and the women.

Motivation-building seem to have been the most widespread of these activities, although there was not much difference between the popularity of the different elements, with each of them being taken up by about half the beneficiaries.

Table 7.111: Ways in which beneficiaries in the South East were helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work (all)	83	80	81
Proportions helped to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work through…			
expressing yourself and communicating with people	54	51	52
working with other people as part of a team	46	48	48
solving problems	58	52	54
motivation	57	57	57
ability to do things independently	62	50	55
ability to take responsibility	53	44	48
Base	*146*	*232*	*381*

Base: All those in South East projects who received help to build self confidence and improve 'soft' skills at work and who gave an answer

Job search

Table 7.112 shows that just over half of the South East beneficiaries had been helped with their job search skills or activities in some way or other. In this respect, the men were more likely to have participated than were the women, and this extends to each of the separate activities reviewed as well.

Advice or guidance about what sorts of work or training that beneficiaries could do was the most widespread activity, with 38 per cent of them receiving this form of help. Work experience or a work placement had been provided for just 13 per cent of beneficiaries.

The more direct job-getting activities, such as job-broking and job search itself, had tended to be provided for the men more often than the women, and this may reflect the higher proportion of younger and unemployed men in this sample.

Table 7.112: Ways in which beneficiaries in the South East were helped with job search and work experience, by gender

	Male %	Female %	All %
Proportions helped with job search and work experience (all)	61	51	55
Proportions helped with job search and work experience through…			
work experience or a work placement	18	10	13
general training about the world of work	37	28	32
advice or guidance about what sorts of work or training you could do	43	34	38
training in how to look for work	26	15	19
contacts to help you look for a job	30	19	24
job broking; leads for particular vacancies	24	12	17
Base	*146*	*232*	*381*

Base: All those in South East projects who received help with job search and work experience and who gave an answer

Course completion/early leavers

For the programme as a whole, we showed above (Table 4.17) that early leaving had been significant, but not widespread, with just 16 per cent of beneficiaries reporting that they had left earlier than expected. In the South East, early leaving had been slightly less widespread, at 14 per cent, as Table 7.113 shows.

Early leaving seems to have been more prevalent among the men than the women, although once again, the dominant reasons for leaving (not shown in table) are either 'good' ones, such as finding work, or were due to circumstantial changes. Only a small minority left for reasons of dissatisfaction with the course.

Table 7.113: Whether beneficiaries in the South East left their project early, or stayed until the end

Proportions leaving early and staying to end	Male %	Female %	All %
Left early	20	10	14
Stayed to end	78	87	83
Base	*146*	*232*	*381*

Base: All those in South East projects who gave an answer

Satisfaction with project

This low level of dissatisfied quits is entirely consistent with the high levels of satisfaction about the course is shown in Table 7.114.

Here, we can see that some 82 per cent of beneficiaries were either very satisfied or fairly satisfied, with the women tending to be slightly more satisfied than the men.

Table 7.114: Degree of satisfaction expressed with project, by beneficiaries in the South East

Proportions who were…	Male %	Female %	All %
Very satisfied	43	51	48
Fairly satisfied	38	31	34
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	8	5	6
Fairly dissatisfied	7	6	7
Very dissatisfied	4	5	4
Base	*146*	*232*	*381*

Base: All those in South East projects who gave an answer

7.9.5 Outcomes

As with our analysis of the programme as a whole, we identify several ways in which projects in the South East have helped the beneficiaries involved, and we look in turn at:

- employment outcomes
- qualification outcomes
- 'soft' outcomes among those not working.

Job outcomes

From an employment rate of 52 per cent when beneficiaries entered the programme, some 63 per cent of beneficiaries in the South East were working by the time they left, and by a further eight per cent by the time of the survey.

The 20 per cent unemployment rate had similarly fallen over this period to ten, and subsequently to nine per cent at the time of the survey.

The inactivity rate had also been reduced somewhat, from 27 per cent at the time of entering the projects, to 20 per cent at the time of the survey.

Table 7.115 shows the employment and 'other activity' outcomes for beneficiaries from projects in the South East, both immediately on completing their project, and at the time of the survey. Note that as a handful of the beneficiaries coded as 'other' were in paid work of some, undisclosed, type, the data in this table are slightly inconsistent with those cited immediately above.

Table 7.115: Employment and activity patterns after the project; all respondents from projects in the South East

All respondents	Work FT Row %	Work PT Row %	Self Empl. Row %	U/E Row %	Education/ Training Row %	Sick/ Disabled Row %	Vol. Work Row %	Other Row %
Status immediately on leaving project	32	16	15	10	8	4	3	12
Status at time of survey	37	18	16	9	5	3	3	9

Base: All those who from South East projects answered the questions

Qualification outcomes

The entry cohort in the South East was a well qualified one, with only 11 per cent of them entering these projects without any qualification, as shown in the first column of Table 7.116.

Over a third (37 per cent) of all entrants had gained a full qualification by the time they left the project, and a further four per cent had gained credits or units towards one.

Table 7.116: Qualifications held by beneficiaries in the South East, before and after the project

Whether or not held or gained any qualification(s) or units/credits	Held qualification(s) before starting the project %	Gained qualification(s) through the project %	Gained unit(s) or credit(s) towards qualification(s) through the project %
Yes	88	37	4
No	11	59	96
Base	*381*	*381*	*381*

Base: All those in South East projects answering each question

'Soft' outcomes

Table 7.115 above showed that there were significant continuing job gains after beneficiaries had ended their course. It is worthwhile, therefore, to consider to what extent there might be lasting and on-going effects which would help beneficiaries to improve their circumstances in the labour market, even though they had not yet done so.

Table 7.117: Improved confidence and skills as a result of the project, among beneficiaries in the South East without a job

Proportions who were…	Male %	Female %	All %
More confident now	55	83	66
No more confident now	45	17	34
Better skilled now	67	75	70
No better skilled now	*33*	*25*	*30*
Base	*17*	*10*	*27*

Base: All those without a job in South East projects who gave an answer

Table 7.117 shows that among the (very few, N = 27) beneficiaries who were not working at the time of the survey, but were nevertheless still looking for it, almost two-thirds felt more confident about finding work than they had when they first entered the project, while 70 per cent felt better skilled to do it.