

i For information

>lsc

Leading learning and skills

Train to Gain Learner Evaluation: Wave 3 Research Report

March 2009

Of interest to everyone involved in
improving skills and learning opportunities
in the workforce across England

Contents

paragraph number

Executive Summary	–
Introduction	1
Background	1
The evaluation	3
Wave 3 quantitative research	6
Qualitative research	33
Reporting	39
Finding Out and Signing Up	42
Key findings	43
The Train to Gain brand	47
Work and training	53
Getting involved in Train to Gain	57
Attitudes to work and learning	77
Advice and Guidance	117
Key findings	118
Pre-entry discussion	123
Skills assessments	131
Relationship between pre-entry discussion and skills assessment	142
Learners who transferred to a different level of qualification	144
Learners who transferred to a different qualification subject	146
Information received prior to training	147
Experiences of Training	150
Key findings	151
Learning and assessment	160
Support	163
Time taken to complete learning	176
Influences on speed of completion	182

Ease of completion/studying	193
Problems experienced by completers	199
Early leavers	205
Satisfaction and Outcomes	210
Key findings	210
Potential and actual gains from training	221
Attitudes towards learning	229
Financial gains	231
New skills	232
Impacts	238
Future career intentions	242
Importance of training	243
Who benefits from the training	247
Further training	251
Satisfaction with the training or qualification	269
The determinants of satisfaction of completers	278
Satisfaction (qualitative research)	290
Conclusions	297
Annex A: Profile of Respondents	—
Employment	—
Training and qualifications	—
Personal characteristics	—

Executive Summary

This report documents the findings from the third wave of the learner evaluation of Train to Gain – a service managed by the Learning and Skills Council that is designed to help employers improve the skills of their workforce. The evaluation is taking place over two years and will conclude in 2009.

This wave, the third of four, comprised both qualitative and quantitative research. The main activity was a survey of learners carried out by telephone in May and June 2008. The survey invited the views of Train to Gain learners on Level 2 and Level 3 programmes. In total, 8,385 learners were interviewed including:

- a longitudinal cohort of 2,777 Level 2 learners who were also interviewed during Waves 1 and 2: this group provides insights into how learners' experiences have developed over time and the real impact of the training on their working lives. This group is referred to throughout the report as the 'longitudinal learners'; and
- a cohort of 4,724 Level 2 and 884 Level 3 learners. These learners had started their training more recently and had not previously taken part in the survey. This group provides a representative snapshot of learners to compare with those who were interviewed in Waves 1 and 2. This group is referred to throughout the report as the 'new entrants' group.

The research also had a qualitative element: 100 of the survey respondents (67 new entrants and 33 longitudinal) were followed up with in-depth, one-to-one interviews carried out either face to face or over the telephone. This qualitative component adds depth and richness to the quantitative data and builds a fuller picture of learners' experiences of Train to Gain.

Key messages

Satisfaction is very high

- 96 per cent of longitudinal learners and 94 per cent of new entrants said that they were satisfied with their training overall.

- 70 per cent of the longitudinal learners and 74 per cent of new entrants were **extremely** or **very** satisfied (the top two ratings available).

Awareness of Train to Gain continues to increase

- 76 per cent of new entrants at Wave 3 had heard of Train to Gain – an increase of 9 percentage points over Wave 2.

Train to Gain brings about real, tangible change

- 78 per cent of longitudinal learners said they had gained practical skills related to their job, and 58 per cent said they had gained general employability skills.
- 32 per cent had received a pay rise, which they attributed to their training.
- Overall, 44 per cent of learners in this group had experienced a positive outcome that they attributed to the training.

A more collaborative approach to training is evident

- 76 per cent of new entrants and 72 per cent of longitudinal learners felt that they and their employers had benefited equally from taking part in Train to Gain.
- 59 per cent of new entrants said the training had been jointly initiated by the learner and their employer, increasing from 42 per cent at Wave 2.
- Employer support, as well as support from tutors and assessors, was thought to be important, and most learners said they were well supported.

Learners are driven by the qualification

- Learners were strongly motivated to take part in training by the prospect of gaining a recognised qualification.

Benefits are in line with expectations

- The anticipated and actual benefits of learning are consistent across the longitudinal and the new entrants group, with three benefits dominating the list in both groups: gaining a qualification; skills that will help with current and future jobs and employers; and skills that will help the learner do a better job in the future.

Independent providers are becoming more prevalent

- 58 per cent of respondents were learning with an independent training provider; and
- 43 per cent were with a public provider.

Pre-entry assessment and discussions are valued and widespread

- 67 per cent of learners reported having spoken to someone about their job and the skills it required before starting their learning.
- As a result of their discussion, 72 per cent were advised which qualification would be the most suitable.
- Learners were largely happy with the amount of information they received.
- 63 per cent of new entrants reported that they had received a personal development plan or individual learning plan.
- 88 per cent of new entrants had had at least one form of pre-qualification assessment.

Information, advice and guidance could be more learner-focused

- Many learners felt that their pre-entry discussion was an information-giving session, rather than an opportunity for in-depth information, advice and guidance.
- Learners wanted to know more about the amount of time, both at work and at home, that they would need to commit to their training.

Support from the tutor/assessor is key

- Learners deemed the amount of time spent with the tutor or assessor and the amount of time spent doing the training at work to be the most important factors influencing the speed at which they complete.
- The type of support most frequently received was also rated as the most important.

- 20 per cent of longitudinal learners felt that they needed additional support, in particular more support from their assessor, tutor or manager/supervisor.

Learners are happy with the time taken to complete

- In the longitudinal group, the average time taken by learners to complete was 41 weeks.
- For 48 per cent of the longitudinal group, training had taken as long as they had expected.
- 16 per cent said it had taken less time than expected.

Training is challenging but rewarding

- Of those still learning, 63 per cent of longitudinal learners were finding their training challenging and 28 per cent were finding it easy.
- Of those that had completed their training, 58 per cent had found it challenging and 33 per cent had found it easy.
- Learners who found their training challenging were more satisfied than those who found it easy.

Participation builds confidence

- 87 per cent of learners agreed with the statement 'I feel more confident in my ability to learn'.
- 82 per cent agreed with the statement 'I feel more positive about learning than when I started this course'.
- Improved self-confidence was also one of the anticipated and achieved benefits.

Further learning is a key goal

- 24 per cent of longitudinal learners had already started a further qualification.

- Of those who had not, 51 per cent of longitudinal learners and 67 per cent of new entrants felt that they were likely to undertake higher-level training or qualifications.

Satisfaction is high

The high levels of satisfaction seen in the previous two waves were repeated in Wave 3.

- 96 per cent of longitudinal learners said that they were satisfied with their training overall, and 70 per cent were **extremely** or **very** satisfied.
- 94 per cent of new entrants said that they were satisfied with their training overall, and 74 per cent were **extremely** or **very** satisfied.

Satisfaction with specific aspects of the programme was also high; in particular, longitudinal learners were satisfied with:

- the quality of the teaching received (94 per cent);
- the information and advice prior to starting the training (91 per cent); and
- the length of time it took to do the training (90 per cent).

Awareness of Train to Gain continues to increase

Awareness of Train to Gain continues to rise, and has increased substantially since Wave 2. Around three-quarters (76 per cent) of new entrants had heard of Train to Gain, compared to 67 per cent in Wave 2. Furthermore, 19 per cent said they knew it 'very well' or knew a 'fair amount' about it, compared to 10 per cent at Wave 2. The proportion of learners who had never heard of Train to Gain fell from a third (33 per cent) in Wave 2 to around a quarter (24 per cent) in Wave 3. The employer or someone else at the workplace was still by far the most likely source of information about Train to Gain (58 per cent of respondents).

A more collaborative approach to training is evident

The quantitative and qualitative research uncovered evidence of a more collaborative approach to participation in training. Frequently, training is initially proposed by the employer, and then learners volunteer or agree to participate.

Most learners also felt that they had had a reasonable degree of control over whether or not they took part in the training, although the training was mandatory for some learners.

- 59 per cent of new entrants said the training had been jointly initiated by the learner and their employer; this compares with 42 per cent at Wave 2).
- 68 per cent said they had put themselves forward for training when they learned of the opportunity, and 67 per cent said their employer had asked if they were interested in taking part (54 per cent and 61 per cent, respectively, at Wave 2).
- 57 per cent felt they had had a **great deal** of say or a **fair amount** of say in whether or not to do the training (59 per cent at Wave 2).

The qualitative research revealed that employers had a positive attitude towards their staff training and a good culture of training and development, meaning that gaining access to training was relatively easy. Most learners reported that employers were, on the whole, supportive and flexible in allowing employees time during the working day to accommodate their training/qualification. Most learners also needed to invest their own time, in order to ensure that they could complete the qualification.

Learners are driven by the qualification

Attitudes to qualifications were broadly consistent with Wave 2.

- 84 per cent of new entrants agreed that you 'need qualifications to get anywhere these days', although 75 per cent agreed that the 'right experience is more important at work than qualifications'.

As in Wave 2, learners were strongly motivated to take part in training by the prospect of gaining a recognised qualification, which acknowledged, valued and developed their skills, and thereby improved their future employment prospects.

Benefits are in line with expectations

The benefits of learning were broadly consistent with previous waves, and were also consistent across the new entrant and the longitudinal groups.

Completers in the new entrants group said that the main outcomes of their training were:

- gaining a qualification (92 per cent of learners);
- skills that would help with current and future jobs and employers (89 per cent); and
- skills to help do a better job in the future (81 per cent).

The chance to learn something new was cited more often in Wave 3, rising to 79 per cent, compared to 72 per cent in Wave 2.

There was more change, albeit slight, among the longitudinal group, where the most frequently cited outcomes were:

- gaining skills that will look good to future employers (91 per cent Wave 3, 88 per cent Wave 2);
- skills to help do a better job in the future (88 per cent Wave 3, 85 per cent Wave 2); and
- gaining a certificate or qualification (86 per cent, with no comparable figure for Wave 2).

The percentage of completers who had experienced these benefits was slightly lower than (but closely aligned to) the anticipated outcomes of current learners and of those waiting to start their qualifications. Learners in both groups were least likely to expect and to gain better pay and promotion, and most likely to expect and to gain a qualification and improved job prospects.

Independent providers are becoming more prevalent

The Wave 3 survey showed a shift towards private-sector training provision. In Wave 3, 58 per cent of respondents were learning with an independent training provider, while 43 per cent were with a public provider. This almost reverses

the figures for Wave 2 (42 per cent private and 58 per cent public) and reflects the changes to the wider Train to Gain population.

Pre-entry assessment and discussions are valued and widespread

The most important determinant of overall satisfaction that can be influenced by providers is the use of assessments prior to training. However, regression analysis shows that the amount of variation that can be explained by this and other variables is actually very small.

Two new entrants in three (67 per cent) reported that they had spoken to someone about their job and the skills it required before starting their learning. Similar proportions said they had spoken to their employer, manager or supervisor (50 per cent) or to a training provider, tutor or assessor (47 per cent). This shows a slight shift towards employer consultation, compared to Wave 2, where the figures were 48 per cent and 54 per cent, respectively.

As a result of their discussion, 72 per cent were advised which qualification would be the most suitable. Learners were largely happy with the information they received: 83 per cent felt they had received enough (43 per cent) or more than enough (40 per cent) information about what their training would involve. Learners in the new entrants group also received a good level of information about:

- how they would be assessed (47 per cent enough and 39 per cent more than enough);
- how long the training would take to complete (46 per cent and 39 per cent); and
- the time commitment needed (46 per cent and 37 per cent).

Nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) of new entrants reported that they had received a personal development plan or individual learning plan, and the great majority (88 per cent) had had at least one form of pre-qualification assessment.

- 72 per cent were asked about their existing qualifications.

- 60 per cent were assessed against some or all of the requirements of the qualification.
- 59 per cent had an assessment of English, maths or language skills.

All of the above figures show a small increase compared to Wave 2. Similarly, the proportion of learners who had all three forms of assessment increased to 36 per cent (from 33 per cent at Wave 2). However, the proportion of learners who had both a pre-entry discussion and a skills gap assessment fell from 51 per cent in Wave 2 to 45 per cent in Wave 3.

Information, advice and guidance could be more learner-focused

The qualitative interviews revealed that many learners felt that their pre-entry discussion was an information-giving session, rather than an opportunity for in-depth information, advice and guidance. Most learners were informed about the practicalities of undertaking their training or qualification, what it would entail, what was expected of a learner and how long it would take, but did not receive any direct advice about which qualification to do.

In cases where information was lacking, the qualitative research also revealed that learners wanted to know more about the amount of time, both at work and at home, that they would need to commit to their training.

In most cases (68 per cent), the assessments confirmed that the learner would be trained and assessed for the whole qualification (as opposed to only being assessed for part of the qualification); 10 per cent felt that 'nothing' had happened as a result. On the surface of it, therefore, the assessments made little difference to their training, so learners may need more clarity about the purpose of the assessments. The qualitative research underlined the fact that learners were not always sure why the assessments were carried out.

Support from the tutor/assessor is key

As in previous waves, learners deemed the amount of time spent with the tutor or assessor and the amount of time spent doing the training at work to be the most important factors influencing the speed at which they complete. The

importance of having a supportive and flexible tutor or assessor was stressed by many learners in the qualitative research.

The type of support most frequently received was also rated as the most important.

- 88 per cent of longitudinal learners said they received support about how to use tasks from their work as evidence; this was rated as important by 97 per cent of learners.
- 87 per cent said they had regular discussions with their tutor/assessor; this was rated as important by 98 per cent of learners.

However, 20 per cent of longitudinal learners felt that they needed additional support, in particular more support from their assessor, tutor or manager/supervisor. Supportive and flexible tutors had helped learners overcome difficulties, typically with compiling their portfolio, understanding written questions or overcoming concerns about reading and writing. The influence of the assessor/tutor can be positive or negative, but is certainly strong.

Learners are happy with the time taken to complete

Most learners (85 per cent) in the longitudinal group had completed their training by the time of the survey – up from 72 per cent in Wave 2. The average time taken to complete was 41 weeks for this group. For around half (48 per cent) of the longitudinal group, training had taken as long as they had expected, while 16 per cent said it had taken less time than they had expected.

Nearly a third (30 per cent) of new entrants had completed their training, taking an average of 14 weeks.

Training is challenging but rewarding

The majority of learners found their training /qualification to be fairly challenging.

- Of those still learning, 63 per cent of longitudinal learners were finding it challenging and 28 per cent were finding it easy.

- Of those that had completed, 58 per cent had found it challenging and 33 per cent had found it easy.

However, learners who found their training challenging were more satisfied than those who found it easy. The mean satisfaction score was 5.9 for those longitudinal learners who found it challenging to complete their training (the maximum score was 7). This compares to 5.3 for those who found it easy.

Participation builds confidence

Attitudes towards learning among longitudinal learners (completers and current learners) were also very positive.

- 87 per cent agreed with the statement 'I feel more confident in my ability to learn'.
- 82 per cent agreed with the statement 'I feel more positive about learning than when I started this course'.

Improved self-confidence was also one of the anticipated and achieved benefits, and this emerged from the qualitative research as one of the main benefits of the training.

Further learning is a key goal for many

Train to Gain appears to be encouraging large numbers of people to continue their learning and to embark on higher-level qualifications in the future.

Many learners in both the qualitative and the quantitative research had been encouraged by their experience to consider further training or another qualification.

- 24 per cent of longitudinal learners had already started a further qualification.
- Of the others, 51 per cent of longitudinal learners and 67 per cent of new entrants felt that they were likely or very likely to undertake further training or qualifications at a higher level within the next three years.

Introduction

Background

- 1 The Train to Gain service, managed by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), provides impartial, independent advice on training to businesses through a network of skills brokers across England. The service aims to support employers in improving the skills of their workforce, as a means of enhancing their business performance. For employers, engaging with Train to Gain should mean a commitment to invest in training, jointly with the Government. The benefits to employers include quality-assured advice in identifying the range of skills-development needs within their businesses and help in commissioning high-quality training to ensure that those needs are met. The advice an employer receives results in a skills solution package that may include government training subsidies, alongside the employer's own investment.
- 2 This report presents the findings from the third wave of the Train to Gain learner evaluation, and is based on a telephone survey of 8,385 learners, plus qualitative interviews with 100 of those learners. The research involved a follow-up of learners who took part in the first and second waves of this study, and a survey using a new sample of learners who had registered for Train to Gain between December 2007 and April 2008.

The evaluation

- 3 The involvement of learners with Train to Gain is being evaluated by Ipsos MORI and the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) on behalf of the LSC, in accordance with an overall evaluation framework developed with the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) and other interested parties. Though there is more to Train to Gain than the part-funding and full-funding of learners, those are the aspects of training that are funded by government, and it is only those aspects (currently) that the evaluation reviews. Thus, the evaluation data reported here focuses on employees or learners participating in fully and part-funded training under Train to Gain, with the aims of:

- examining the key characteristics of the learners who have engaged with the service;
- identifying the main elements of the training process as experienced by learners and, in particular, the extent to which the Assess–Train–Assess approach is being followed;
- measuring learners’ satisfaction with all the key aspects of Train to Gain and the training provided through it;
- assessing the factors affecting qualification completion and drop-out; and
- examining the subsequent employment experiences of learners who have completed their training, and assessing their perceptions of the impact the training has had on them and their workplace.

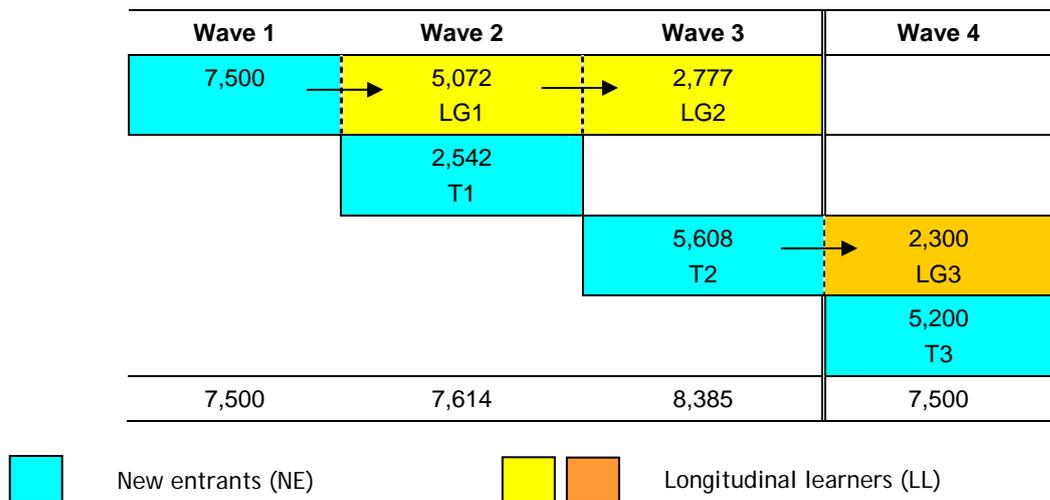
Evaluation design

- 4 The evaluation comprises four waves of research among learners, including telephone surveys at each wave plus qualitative interviews at Waves 1 and 3 only. There is a six-month gap between each survey wave.
- 5 The design and development of the learner evaluation began in the autumn of 2006.
 - Wave 1 fieldwork commenced in March 2007. This involved a telephone survey of 7,500 learners, plus face-to-face qualitative interviews with 100 learners.
 - Wave 2 fieldwork was undertaken six months later, between October and November 2007. This involved a telephone survey of 7,614 learners. Of these, 5,072 had been interviewed during Wave 1, while the remainder were new entrants to the survey – that is, those who had started their learning more recently than the follow-up group and who were not interviewed at Wave 1. There was no qualitative element to this wave.
 - Wave 3, which is reported here, took place between May and June 2008. This was a telephone survey of 8,385 learners, of whom 2,777 had been interviewed in Waves 1 and 2, while the remainder were new entrants. In

addition, 100 qualitative telephone and face-to-face interviews were carried out.

- Wave 4 took place in November and December 2008. This was a telephone survey of 7,500 learners, consisting of follow-up interviews with learners interviewed at Wave 3 (but not earlier), and a new entrants group. There is no qualitative element to Wave 4. Figure 1 shows the design for the quantitative element.

Figure 1: The survey sample design



Waves 1, 2 and 3 show actual numbers of learners in achieved sample; Wave 4 shows estimated numbers participating in each sample.

Source: Train to Gain employee survey Waves 1, 2 and 3 (spring 2007, autumn 2007, summer 2008)

Wave 3 quantitative research

- Ipsos MORI carried out a telephone survey with a longitudinal and new entrants component. The achieved sample comprised:
 - 2,777 Level 2 learners interviewed at Waves 1 and 2;
 - 4,724 Level 2 new entrant learners; and
 - 884 Level 3 new entrant learners.
- Two questionnaires were devised, one for use with the new entrant learners (at both Levels 2 and 3) and one for learners in the longitudinal group.

Sample size and structure

- 8 The target number of interviews for the Wave 3 survey of learners was 7,500. The objective was to interview as many of those Level 2 learners as possible who had taken part in both Wave 1 and Wave 2 (the longitudinal group), plus a top-up sample of new learners (new entrants) to reach the target number of interviews. The new entrants sample was, in effect, a census of all Level 2 learners who had started their courses between December 2007 and April 2008, and was drawn from the individualised learner record (ILR) database.
- 9 In addition, we also tried to contact all Level 3 learners (i.e. part-funded learners under the conditions of Train to Gain) who had begun their courses between September 2007 and April 2008.

Longitudinal sample (Wave 2 re-contacts)

- 10 The longitudinal population comprised 5,072 learners who had been interviewed during both the first and the second waves of this study. Of these, 4,756 (94 per cent) had agreed to be re-contacted. We attempted to contact all of these participants in the third wave, and carried out 2,777 interviews. Table 1 gives a breakdown of the survey response rate.

New entrants sample

- 11 The new entrants sample comprised Level 2 and Level 3 learners. The eligible population, which excluded those who did not wish to be contacted for research and those with inaccurate contact details, comprised 14,568 Level 2 and 1,889 Level 3 learners. Of these, 4,724 Level 2 and 884 Level 3 learners were interviewed.

Response rates

- 12 The overall response rate for the survey was 49 per cent, but the responses varied considerably for each sample.
- The valid response rate for the longitudinal sample was 62 per cent. A detailed breakdown of the response rate is presented in Table 1.
 - The valid response rate for the Level 2 new entrant survey was 43 per cent. A detailed breakdown of the response rate is presented in Table 2.

- The valid response rate for the sample of Level 3 learners was 54 per cent, compared to 39 per cent in Wave 2. A detailed breakdown of the response rate is presented in Table 3.

Table 1: Breakdown of leads provided – longitudinal sample

Final sample status	Total sample used (N)	Total sample used (%)	Valid sample (%)
Total sample issued	4,756	100	
Invalid sample			
Bad telephone numbers	200	4.21	
No longer at address	53	1.11	
Valid sample			4,503
Soft appointments	2	0.04	0.04
Respondent quit interview	34	0.71	0.76
Refusal	307	6.46	6.82
Not available during fieldwork	258	5.42	5.73
Leads tried a max. number of times	1,125	23.65	24.98
Achieved interviews	2,777	58.39	61.67
Response rate summary			
Unadjusted response rate		58.39	
Adjusted response rate			61.67

Source: Wave 3 Train to Gain employee survey – longitudinal sample (summer 2008)

Table 2: Breakdown of leads provided – new entrant sample (Level 2 learners)

Final sample status	Total sample used (N)	Total sample used (%)	Valid sample (%)
Total sample issued	14,568	100	
Invalid sample			
Bad telephone numbers	2,957	20.30	
No longer at address	153	1.05	
Other invalid	466	3.20	
Valid sample			10,992
Soft appointments	3	0.02	0.03
Hard appointments	1	0.01	0.01
Respondent quit interview	206	1.41	1.87
Refusal	2,117	14.53	19.26
Not available during fieldwork	1,504	10.32	13.68
Leads tried a max. number of times	2,437	16.73	22.17
Achieved interviews	4,724	32.43	42.98
Response rate summary			
Unadjusted response rate		32.43	
Adjusted response rate			42.98

Notes: Based on all Level 2 Train to Gain learners who started between December 2007 and April 2008. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Source: Wave 3 Train to Gain employee survey – new entrant sample (summer 2008)

Table 3: Breakdown of leads provided – Level 3 learners

Final sample status	Total sample used (N)	Total sample used (%)	Valid sample (%)
Total sample issued	1,877	100	
Invalid sample			
Bad telephone numbers	175	9.32	
No longer at address	11	0.59	
Other invalid	43	2.29	
Valid sample			1,648
Soft appointments	-	-	-
Hard appointments	-	-	-
Respondent quit interview	7	0.37	0.42
Refusal	141	7.51	8.56
Not available during fieldwork	137	7.30	8.31
Leads tried a max. number of times	479	25.52	29.07
Achieved interviews	884	47.10	53.64
Response rate summary			
Unadjusted response rate		47.10	
Adjusted response rate			53.64

Source: Wave 3 Train to Gain employee survey – Level 3 learners (summer 2008)

Comparison of the new entrant sample with the eligible learner population

- 13 Table 4 compares the achieved **Level 2 new entrant sample** profile with the sample from which it was drawn (i.e. learners who started Train to Gain Level 2 between December 2007 and April 2008).

Table 4: Comparison between achieved sample and eligible Level 2 population on individualised learner record

		ILR population* %	New entrants achieved sample %
Gender	Male	56	46
	Female	44	55
Age (31 Aug 2006)	18–25	15	11
	26–35	25	21
	36–45	30	33
	46–55	21	26
	56 plus	9	8
Disability/learning difficulty	Yes	6	6
	No	90	90
	Missing	5	4
Ethnicity	White	83	84
	Non-white/other	14	13
	Missing	3	3
Region	National	4	3
	East of England	9	10
	East Midlands	9	9
	London	14	11
	North East	7	6
	North West	16	19
	South East	12	13
	South West	7	10
	West Midlands	12	12
	Yorkshire and the Humber	10	6

*Based on all Level 2 Train to Gain learners who started between December 2007 and April 2008.
Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Source: ILR data, April 2008; Wave 3 survey, new entrant sample, summer 2008

- 14 Compared to the population of Level 2 Train to Gain learners who started their course between December 2007 and April 2008, the two main variations are that the achieved sample has a higher proportion of learners aged 36–55 and a lower proportion of learners aged under 36, plus a greater proportion of females than males. The strongest difference by region between the survey sample and the ILR population was in Yorkshire and the Humber. Learners in this region formed 6 per cent of the survey sample but 10 per cent of the ILR population.

- 15 **Weighting** was therefore applied to the Level 2 cohort to correct for these minor deviations by age, gender and region, and to bring the achieved sample into line with the population from which it was drawn.
- 16 Table 5 compares the achieved **Level 3 sample** profile with the sample from which it was drawn (i.e. learners who started Train to Gain Level 3 between September 2007 and April 2008).

Table 5: Comparison between achieved sample and eligible Level 3 population

		ILR population* %	Level 3 achieved sample %
Gender	Male	24	17
	Female	76	83
Age (31 Aug 2006)	18–25	11	10
	26–35	29	27
	36–45	33	35
	46–55	20	21
	56 plus	7	6
Disability/learning difficulty	Yes	3	3
	No	93	96
	Missing	3	1
Ethnicity	White	70	70
	Non-white/other	24	25
	Missing	5	5
Region	National	3	3
	East of England	7	6
	East Midlands	2	2
	London	43	44
	North East	2	1
	North West	10	10
	South East	10	10
	South West	5	6
	West Midlands	18	19
	Yorkshire and the Humber	1	0.3

* Based on Level 3 Train to Gain learners who started between September 2007 and April 2008.
 Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Source: ILR data, April 2008; Wave 3 survey, new entrant sample, summer 2008

- 17 The main variation is that the achieved sample has a greater proportion of females than does the population profile. **Weighting** was therefore applied to the Level 3 cohort to correct for age and gender only.

Profile of respondents

- 18 Detailed figures are included in Annex A; these describe the learners in the quantitative research according to their employment status, the sector in which they work and the qualifications they are working towards or have achieved through Train to Gain. The main points are summarised below.

Employment

- 19 In the Wave 3 longitudinal group survey, the majority (82 per cent) said they were still working for the employer with whom they had signed up for the training. Since the outset, 13 per cent had changed jobs to a new employer, 4 per cent were currently not working, and 2 per cent were self-employed.
- 20 The largest employment sector represented among respondents was the Health, Social Care, Education and Public Services sector, where 53 per cent of respondents worked (compared to 50 per cent in Wave 2). (This is a composite category, comprising 41 per cent in Health and Social Care Services and 12 per cent in Education, Public Administration and Defence Services. These subgroups were not used at the time of Wave 2.)
- 21 Four learners in 10 (41 per cent) reported that they had managerial or supervisory responsibilities in their current or most recent job.
- 22 The majority of new entrants (96 per cent) were also working, although they were not asked which sector they worked in. In terms of occupation, the largest single group was Personal Service occupations, which accounted for 28 per cent of those in employment (26 per cent in Caring Personal Service and 2 per cent in Leisure and Other Personal Service), followed by Skilled Trades occupations, with 16 per cent.
- 23 The great majority (87 per cent) of part-funded Level 3 learners worked in Personal Service occupations, Managers and Senior Officials, Professional occupations, Administrative and Secretarial, and Associate Professional and Technical occupations. Of the fully funded Level 2 learners, 45 per cent worked in these occupations, compared to 55 per cent in Skilled Trades, Sales and Customer Services, Elementary occupations, and as Process, Plant and Machine Operatives.

- 24 Just over one new entrant in five (21 per cent) reported that they had been in their current or most recent job for less than a year, compared to 14 per cent in Wave 2; most (59 per cent) had been with their employers for between one and seven years.

Training and qualifications

- 25 A national vocational qualification (NVQ) in Health and Social Care continued to be the most common qualification taken on Train to Gain programmes, although the proportion of learners in the new entrants group taking Health and Social Care was considerably smaller than in the longitudinal group (25 per cent, compared to 34 per cent). There was also variation within the new entrants group, where 23 per cent of Level 2 and 35 per cent of Level 3 learners were taking Health and Social Care.
- 26 Only 7 per cent of longitudinal learners were taking a Skills for Life qualification.
- 27 As might be expected, most of those in the longitudinal group were at a more advanced stage of their learning, with 85 per cent having already completed their learning. By comparison, 30 per cent of the new entrants group had completed their learning, while the majority were still in the process (58 per cent).
- 28 When comparing the status of learning across all three waves of the longitudinal survey, 4 per cent of the Wave 3 respondents could be described as **long-term learners**, i.e. they were in the process of studying at the time of each survey.

Provider type

- 29 Compared to previous waves, the Wave 3 survey showed a large shift towards private training provision.
- 58 per cent of respondents in the new entrants survey were learning with an independent training provider (42 per cent in Wave 2).
 - 43 per cent were learning with a public provider (58 per cent in Wave 2).

- 30 The population from which the respondents were drawn is split 50:50 (public–private), compared to 42:48 in previous waves (and the longitudinal group). Hence, although the sample is made up of proportionally more independent providers, the change is in the same direction as for the population.
- 31 There was some variation by region, with the proportion of independent training providers fluctuating from 50 per cent to 62 per cent, and the proportion of public training providers ranging from 38 per cent to 51 per cent. In the North East the change was more marked: the proportion of independent training providers rose to 82 per cent, and the proportion of public training providers fell correspondingly to 18 per cent.

School leaving age

- 32 The Wave 3 new entrants group had spent longer in school than had learners in previous waves. In total, 38 per cent of Wave 3 respondents had stayed in school beyond the age of 16, compared to 26 per cent in Wave 2. Among the Wave 3 respondents, the percentage staying in education beyond the age of 16 was 54 per cent for those who were currently studying for a Level 3 qualification, compared to 36 per cent of those studying at Level 2.

Qualitative research

- 33 In total, 100 learners, drawn from both the longitudinal and the new entrants groups, took part in one-to-one qualitative interviews. Of these, 50 were face to face and 50 were by telephone. All respondents had taken part in the Ipsos MORI telephone survey and had given their permission at that point to be re-contacted for the qualitative research. Separate topic guides were developed for new entrants and longitudinal learners, although each covered broadly similar areas.

Profile of the qualitative sample

- 34 Target ranges were set to help ensure that the characteristics of the qualitative sample were broadly similar to those of the quantitative sample. Table 6 shows the profile of learners in the qualitative research, along with comparative figures from the achieved quantitative sample.

Employment status and occupation

- 35 The vast majority of respondents in the qualitative sample were in employment, and in most cases were in full-time work. Respondents who were in part-time employment were typically women working in the Health and Social Care sector.
- 36 Respondents came from a range of occupational sectors, including Construction; Distribution, Transport and Logistics; Engineering and Manufacturing; Health and Social Care; Education and Public Services; and Hospitality, Leisure and Retail. As with the survey, the largest single group worked within the Caring Personal Service occupations.

Table 6: Profile of learners in the qualitative research

		Sample for survey %	Qualitative interviews (n=100)
Gender	Male	41	45
	Female	59	55
Age	18–25	8	12
	26–35	19	15
	36–45	35	25
	46–55	29	31
	56+	10	17
Disability/learning difficulty	Yes	7	10
	No	89	88
	Missing	4	2
Ethnicity	White	87	80
	Non-white/other	11	18
	Missing	2	2
Notional NVQ level	Below Level 2	0	1
	Level 2	89	77
	Level 3	11	21
	Missing	0	1
Region	East of England	8	10
	East Midlands	9	7
	London	11	14
	North East	7	10
	North West	21	15
	South East	13	9
	South West	10	8
	West Midlands	15	16
	Yorkshire and the Humber	6	11
Employment status	Full-time work	} 96	71
	Part-time work		18
	Self-employed		3
	Unemployed	4	4
	Missing		4
New/longitudinal	New entrants	67	67
	Longitudinal sample	33	33

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Source: ILR data, April 2008; Wave 2 survey, Level 1 trial learners (summer 2008)

Educational background

- 37 Around half the respondents from the qualitative sample had left school at 16; most of this group had gained GCSE or equivalent qualifications, although a significant minority had left school with no qualifications at all. Around a quarter of the sample had left school before the age of 16, in most cases without qualifications. Among this group of early leavers were many older learners, who would have been entitled to leave school at 15 years (or younger), before the statutory school leaving age was raised to 16. Some learners had stayed on in full-time education until 17 or 18 years or older, leaving with qualifications such as GCSEs, A-levels, NVQs and, in a few cases, degrees. A small group of learners had qualifications from overseas.

The interview process

- 38 The qualitative interviews aimed to obtain a fuller understanding of learner views and experiences of their training under Train to Gain. While there was a core set of questions for all respondents, separate topic guides were developed for new entrants and longitudinal learners, with additional questions for the latter group inviting a more retrospective consideration of their training experience. The topic guides covered the following areas:
- the learner's education and employment background;
 - the learner's attitude to learning;
 - the learner's previous experience of learning in the workplace;
 - the learner's motivation for taking part in Train to Gain;
 - the learner's experience of the Train to Gain process (including information, advice and guidance, assessment and support issues);
 - any difficulties encountered in completing the qualification;
 - satisfaction with the training and its impact in terms of performance at work and/or work-related benefits; and
 - any plans for, and potential barriers to, future workplace learning.

Reporting

- 39 The remainder of this report provides the findings from the research. It is organised thematically, and therefore, where the longitudinal and new entrant questionnaires overlapped, the findings are reported together. Wherever possible, responses from the qualitative research are also highlighted alongside related survey findings.
- 40 Comparisons are made between waves within each cohort, rather than between cohorts, so most tables present longitudinal and new entrant data separately. The main comparisons of interest are between Wave 2 and Wave 3 within each cohort.
- 41 The following terms are used throughout.
- Respondents in the longitudinal group are termed 'longitudinal learners', abbreviated to LL.
 - Respondents in the new entrant survey are termed 'new entrants', abbreviated to NE.

Finding Out and Signing Up

- 42 This chapter explores learners' experience of beginning their training and qualifications, including how they were introduced to Train to Gain, their own and their employer's attitudes towards learning, the experience of accessing training in the workplace and their motivation for taking part.

Key findings

- 43 Awareness of Train to Gain has continued to rise.
- Around three-quarters (76 per cent) of new entrants at Wave 3 had heard of Train to Gain, compared to 67 per cent in Wave 2.
 - 19 per cent at Wave 3 said they knew it 'very well' or knew a 'fair amount about it', compared to 10 per cent at Wave 2.
- 44 The quantitative and qualitative research showed evidence of a more collaborative approach to setting up training. There is a common pattern in evidence, of training initially being proposed by the employer, and then learners volunteering or agreeing to participate. Learners also showed that they had a reasonable degree of control over whether or not they took part in the training.
- 59 per cent of new entrants said the training had been jointly initiated by the learner and the employer (42 per cent at Wave 2).
 - 68 per cent said they had put themselves forward for training when they learned of the opportunity, and 67 per cent said their employer had asked if they were interested in taking part (54 per cent and 61 per cent, respectively, at Wave 2).
 - 57 per cent felt they had had a 'great deal' of say or a 'fair amount' of say in whether or not they would do the training (59 per cent at Wave 2).
- 45 Attitudes to qualifications were broadly consistent with Wave 2.
- 84 per cent of new entrants agreed that 'you need qualifications to get anywhere these days' (82 per cent in Wave 2), although 75 per cent

agreed that 'the right experience is more important at work than qualifications' (78 per cent in Wave 2).

- however, 61 per cent felt that 'employers seldom take notice of learners' achievements' (45 per cent in Wave 2).

46 As in Wave 2, learners were strongly motivated to take part in training by the prospect of gaining a recognised qualification. This qualification acknowledged, valued and developed their skills, thereby improving their future career prospects.

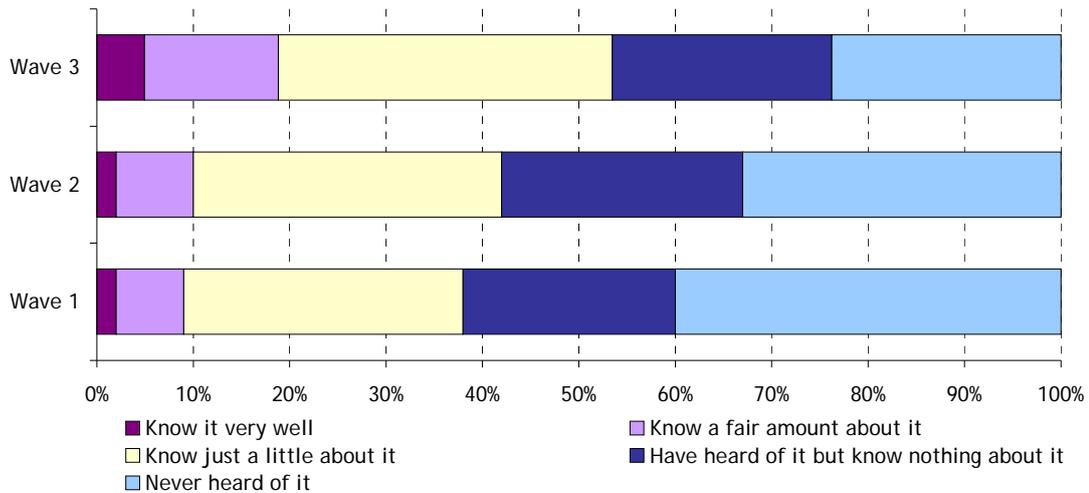
The Train to Gain brand

Awareness and knowledge of Train to Gain

47 All respondents in the Wave 3 new entrant survey were asked a series of questions to gauge the level of their awareness and their knowledge of Train to Gain. Figure 2 shows that the majority (76 per cent) had heard of Train to Gain, and comparison with the previous surveys suggests that both awareness and knowledge of Train to Gain has increased. Furthermore, 19 per cent said they knew it 'very well' or knew 'a fair amount about it', compared to 10 per cent in Wave 2. The proportion of learners who had never heard of Train to Gain fell from a third (33 per cent) in Wave 2 to around a quarter (24 per cent) in Wave 3.

48 When questioned, 68 per cent of respondents who had heard of Train to Gain were aware that the course they were on was funded by Train to Gain. This showed only very small variation according to the level of the training being undertaken: 68 per cent of Level 2 respondents said they were aware that they were being funded by Train to Gain, compared to 71 per cent of Level 3.

Figure 2: Awareness and knowledge of Train to Gain



Base = all learners: Wave 3 N = 5,608; Wave 2 N = 2,542; Wave 1 N = 7,500.

Source: *New entrants group Waves 1, 2 and 3 (spring 2007, autumn 2007, summer 2008)*

- 49 There was little variation in awareness of Train to Gain according to the personal characteristics of gender or disability, but awareness was lowest among the oldest age group of 56 plus (66 per cent, compared to 76–80 per cent for all other age groups). A similar difference was noted for ethnicity, where 78 per cent of white respondents were aware of Train to Gain, compared to 69 per cent of black or minority ethnic (BME) respondents. There was little variation in awareness according to provider type or subject, but some according to the occupational group of the learner. Awareness was highest for Administrative and Secretarial occupations (87 per cent) and among Managers and Senior Officials (84 per cent), and lowest among Elementary occupations (71 per cent) and Sales and Customer Services, Process Plant and Machine Operatives, and Skilled Trades (all 74 per cent).
- 50 The knowledge that the course was being funded by Train to Gain also showed some variation according to occupational group. Knowledge was highest for Administrative and Secretarial occupations (75 per cent), and Managers and Senior Officials, and Sales and Customer Services (both 74 per cent), and was lowest for Process, Plant and Machine Operatives (61 per cent) and Elementary occupations (64 per cent). There was also some variation by gender: knowledge was higher among women (72 per cent) than among men (65 per cent).

Source of information about the Train to Gain brand

- 51 Those who had some awareness of Train to Gain were asked about its origin. Table 7 shows that managers, supervisors and staff from the human resources (HR) or training department continue to be the most common source of information about Train to Gain.

Table 7: Source of information about the brand

	Wave 3		Wave 2	Wave 1
	Number	%	%	%
From a manager/supervisor/HR or training department	2,474	58	55	53
TV advertisement	385	9	9	6
From a colleague	329	8	9	13
From a training provider/college staff/assessor	198	5	7	12
From friends or relations	149	4	4	4
Union/union learning rep.	99	2	-	-
Trade body or association	81	2	-	-
Information pack through the post direct to home	80	2	-	-
Advert in local or national newspaper	78	2	3	3
Don't know	149	4	5	-

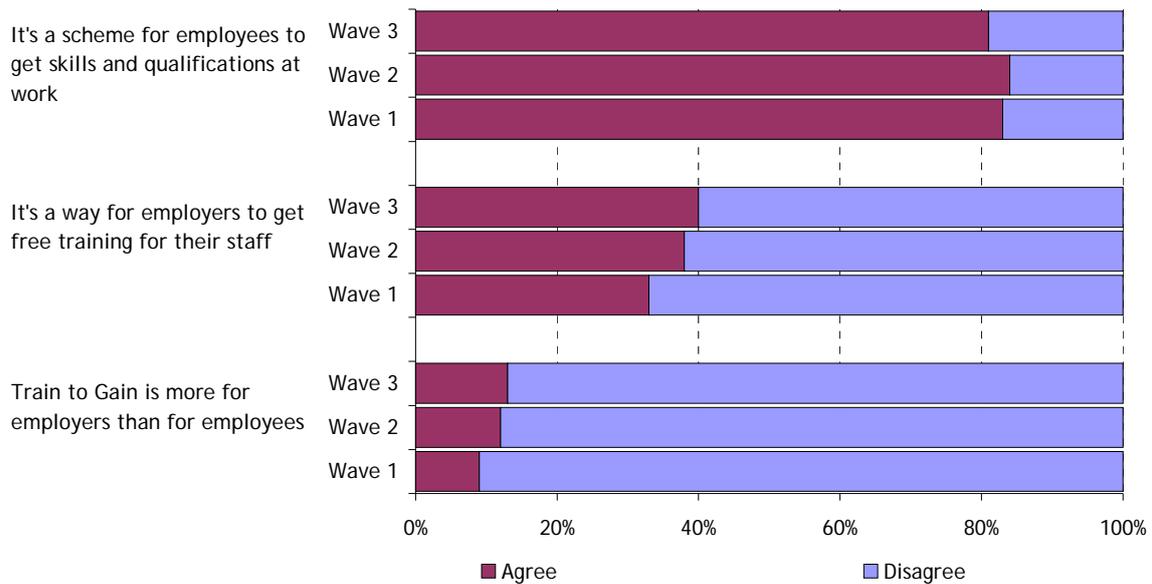
Base = aware of Train to Gain: Wave 3 N = 4,277; Wave 2 N = 4,470; Wave 1 N = 1,694.
Multiple responses given; only responses over 2 per cent shown.
- indicates not reported.

Source: New entrants group Waves 1, 2 and 3 (spring 2007, autumn 2007, summer 2008)

Understanding of Train to Gain

- 52 Figure 3 shows the responses to three statements about Train to Gain, intended to elicit respondents' understanding about how Train to Gain works. It shows that the majority of respondents (81 per cent) agree that it is a scheme for employees to get skills and qualifications at work, but disagree that it is a way for employers to get free training for their staff, and that it is more for employers than for employees.

Figure 3: Statements about Train to Gain



Base = heard of Train to Gain: Wave 3 N = 4,277; Wave 2 N = 2,542; Wave 1 N = 4,470.

Source: *New entrants group Waves 1, 2 and 3 (spring 2007, autumn 2007, summer 2008)*

Work and training

53 At the time of the survey, 96 per cent of those in the Wave 3 new entrants group were in employment – similar to the proportions noted in Wave 2 (97 per cent) and Wave 1 (98 per cent).

Access to training and qualifications at work

54 Almost half of new entrants (47 per cent) said they had done some training related to their job within the past year. Of these, 53 per cent said that the training had led to a qualification (up from 46 per cent in Wave 2), and 65 per cent said they had done the training because it was a legal requirement of the job.

55 More than half the respondents (55 per cent) said they could have done the current training at an earlier date if they had wanted to. The reasons given by this group for not doing the training sooner are shown in Table 8. As in the previous surveys, the most frequently given reason was that the chance to do the training had not been offered before.

Table 8: Reasons for not doing training earlier

	Wave 3		Wave 2	Wave 1
	Number	%	%	%
Was not offered before now	528	17	19	19
Did not know training/qualification existed	457	15	11	14
Did not need these skills before	395	13	16	17
Never thought of doing it	383	13	14	16
Did not have any time to train at work	289	10	11	15
Could not afford to pay for it myself	201	7	7	10
Not interested in it	185	6	7	9

Base = those who said they could have done the training earlier: Wave 3 N = 3,061; Wave 2 N = 1,320; Wave 1 N = 3,825.

Multiple responses given; responses above 5 per cent shown.

Source: New entrants group Waves 1, 2 and 3 (spring 2007, autumn 2007, summer 2008)

56 The group of learners who said they had not done the training before now because they had not needed the skills before was asked why this had been the case. Table 9 shows that, for 28 per cent, the training had not previously been a requirement of the job; and for 23 per cent, the training had not been needed as they had previously been working in a different industry. (This area was explored in the Wave 2 survey with slightly different response categories, and Table 9 shows the responses from Wave 2 that most closely match.)

Table 9: Reasons for not needing skills before

	Wave 3		Wave 2
	Number	%	%
The training had not previously been a requirement of the job	113	28	-
It was not necessary for the job	-	-	17
Training not previously required for the job	-	-	7
Legal requirements/rules and regulations have changed	-	-	6
Had previously worked in a different industry	94	23	-
Had previously worked in a different job or recently been promoted	43	11	-
Had previously worked in a different industry/job	-	-	34
Change of job role within the company			5
Already had the knowledge or experience	56	14	-
Already had the required skills, knowledge or experience	-	-	14

Base = learners who said that these skills had not been needed before now: Wave 3 N = 395; Wave 2 N = 211. Multiple responses given.

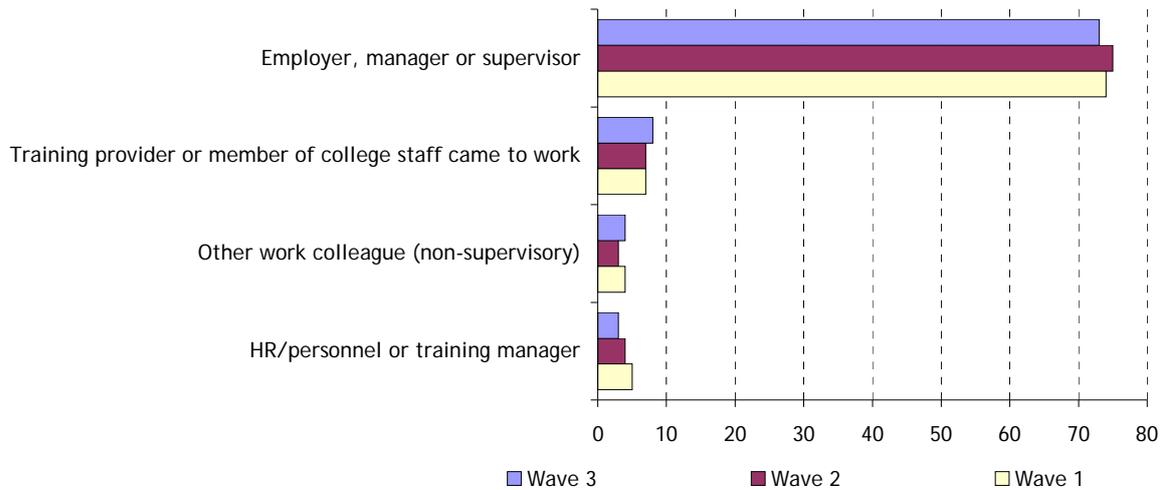
Source: *New entrants group Waves 2 and 3 (autumn 2007, summer 2008)*

Getting involved in Train to Gain

Finding out about the training

- 57 Figure 4 shows that almost three respondents in four (73 per cent) had first heard about the qualification via their employer, manager or supervisor. Far fewer individuals had been informed by the training provider or college staff (8 per cent), work colleagues (4 per cent), or HR/personnel or training managers (3 per cent).

Figure 4: Where learners first heard about their qualification



Base = all learners: Wave 3 N = 5,608; Wave 2 N = 2,542; Wave 1 N = 7,500.
Only responses over 3 per cent shown.

Source: *New entrants group Waves 1, 2 and 3 (spring 2007, autumn 2007, summer 2008)*

- 58 Although the employer, manager or supervisor was the most common source across all subgroups, it was particularly high among those on care-related courses, where it was named by 85 per cent. By contrast, employers were named by 69 per cent of those on non-care-related courses, who were more likely to say that the training provider had come to their workplace (9 per cent, compared to 3 per cent on care-related courses). There was some variation, too, by occupational group in the proportion naming their employer as the original source – from highs of 81 per cent among Personal Service occupations, and 77 per cent of Process, Plant and Machine Operatives, to lows of 57 per cent of Managers and Senior Officials, and 59 per cent in Sales and Customer Services. The occupational groups most likely to have been visited by the training provider were Sales and Customer Services (17 per cent) and Managers and Senior Officials (15 per cent).
- 59 A similar pattern to the results of the survey emerged from the qualitative interviews, with the majority of learners (both new entrants and longitudinal learners) first finding out about the training from their employer or manager.

It was made available by the employer. I wasn't aware of it until I was told about it and given the option to go on it.

NE, Level 2 Construction Operations

They introduced us to it at work, they asked at work if we wanted to take it, that the option was there...

LL Level 2, Performing Manufacturing Operations

The Head Office came down to each branch and said would you like to do this, and I just said yes.

LL, Level 2 Customer Service

- 60 In a small number of cases, it was reported that the employer or learner had been approached by a training provider with information about the training courses available through Train to Gain.

They popped into [company X] and asked them if they would like to send a couple of staff to do the training and then asked a couple of members of staff.

LL, Level 2 Retail Operations

- 61 Some respondents explained that they already knew about NVQ workplace training, either because they had done a previous qualification, or they were aware that it was increasingly becoming a requirement within their area of work.

Well, within this care work now, everybody has to have NVQs, there's NVQs that are pushed, because I'd already done my [Level] 2 – it was an opportunity to do my 3, sort of continue that if that's what I wish.

NE, Level 3 Health and Social Care

Yeah, you've got to do it – I think a certain percentage of the home has to have it, but now I'm team leader you have to do the [Level] 3 to prove you can do...the team leading.

LL, Level 3 Health and Social Care

Choosing to take part

Who initiated training?

- 62 All learners were asked how they had come to take part in the training. More than two respondents in three replied that they had put themselves forward when they found out about the opportunity (68 per cent). This has increased from 54 per cent in Wave 2. A similar proportion had been asked by their employer whether they were interested in taking part (67 per cent, compared to 61 per cent in Wave 2). Almost half of all respondents (49 per cent) said that their training was mandatory for their job (see Figure 5).
- 63 The overall number of responses given by individuals in Wave 3 increased slightly from Wave 2, leading to an increase in responses to each option shown below. On average, individuals gave between three and four responses (mean response was 3.4), with some individuals saying 'yes' to eight options. In Wave 2, the number of responses was lower, ranging from one to six, but with an average of 2.3.

Figure 5: How the learner came to take part in training



Base = all learners: Wave 3 N = 5,608; Wave 2 N = 2,542; Wave 1 N = 7,500.

Multiple responses given; responses over 1 per cent shown.

* this question was not asked in Waves 1 and 2.

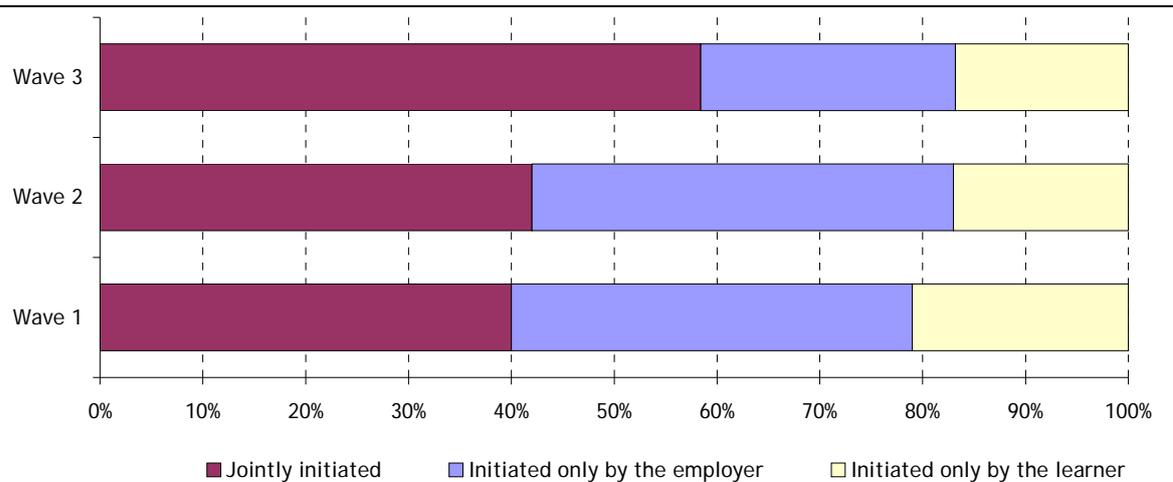
Source: *New entrants group Waves 1, 2 and 3 (spring 2007, autumn 2007, summer 2008)*

64 The responses in Figure 5 can be combined to give three distinct groups:

- those whose training had been **initiated jointly** by themselves and their employer (for instance, their employer had asked for volunteers and they had also put themselves forward);
- those whose training was **initiated by their employer only** (i.e. their employer had asked for volunteers, had asked if they were interested, or had told them they would do the training, while the learner had not also requested the training or put themselves forward); and
- those whose training was **self-initiated only** (i.e. they had put themselves forward for training or had requested it, while the employer had not also approached them).

65 Figure 6 shows that Wave 3 respondents were more likely than Wave 2 respondents to feel that their training had been jointly initiated (59 per cent, compared to 42 per cent). A quarter (25 per cent) felt that the training had been initiated by their employer only; and 17 per cent felt that they alone had initiated the training.

Figure 6: Who initiated the training?



Base = specified who initiated training: Wave 3 N = 5,366; Wave 2 N = 2,503; Wave 1 N = 7,405.

Source: *New entrants group survey Waves 1, 2 and 3 (spring 2007, autumn 2007, summer 2008)*

66 The three groups shown in Figure 6 all include those learners whose training was mandatory and who may, therefore, have different motivations. Indeed, it could be argued that this constitutes a wholly different category, so these learners are highlighted below.

- Of the **jointly initiated** (3,155 learners), 57 per cent also said the training was mandatory.
- Of the **employer initiated** (1,322 learners), 44 per cent also said the training was mandatory.
- Of the **self-initiated** (889 learners), 19 per cent also said the training was mandatory.

67 Learners undertaking a care-related subject were most likely to report that the training was mandatory for their job: they accounted for 66 per cent, compared to 44 per cent of those on other subjects. Consequently, the figure was particularly high in the Personal Service occupations (61 per cent) and lowest in the Administrative and Secretarial sector (25 per cent) and Sales and Customer Services (30 per cent).

68 The **employer-initiated only** group featured more prominently in some occupations than in others. It was more common among Process, Plant and Machine Operatives (35 per cent) and the Skilled Trades (31 per cent), and

was least common among Professional occupations (19 per cent), and Managers and Senior Officials and Personal Service occupations (both 20 per cent). By contrast, the proportion of those whose training was **self-initiated only** was lowest for the Elementary occupations (11 per cent), and Process, Plant and Machine Operatives (12 per cent), and was highest for Managers and Senior Officials (25 per cent) and Administrative and Secretarial occupations (23 per cent).

- 69 Jointly initiated training was also evident in the qualitative interviews, where a common pattern emerged of training being initially proposed by the employer and learners then either volunteering or agreeing to participate. There were numerous examples of this, where learners said they could see the potential benefits of the training in terms of improving their skills or progressing at work.

I think I must have been there two and a half years and then the manager approached me and said, 'would you like to do the Level 2 NVQ' and obviously I wanted to. I'm the youngest one there so I wanted a bit more experience in case anything else comes up...in case I move further up the ladder kind of thing.

NE, Level 2 Health and Social Care

Someone came in and spoke to us about it. It was our choice. I did it because there's a lot in it and it would look good on a CV.

NE, Level 3 Management

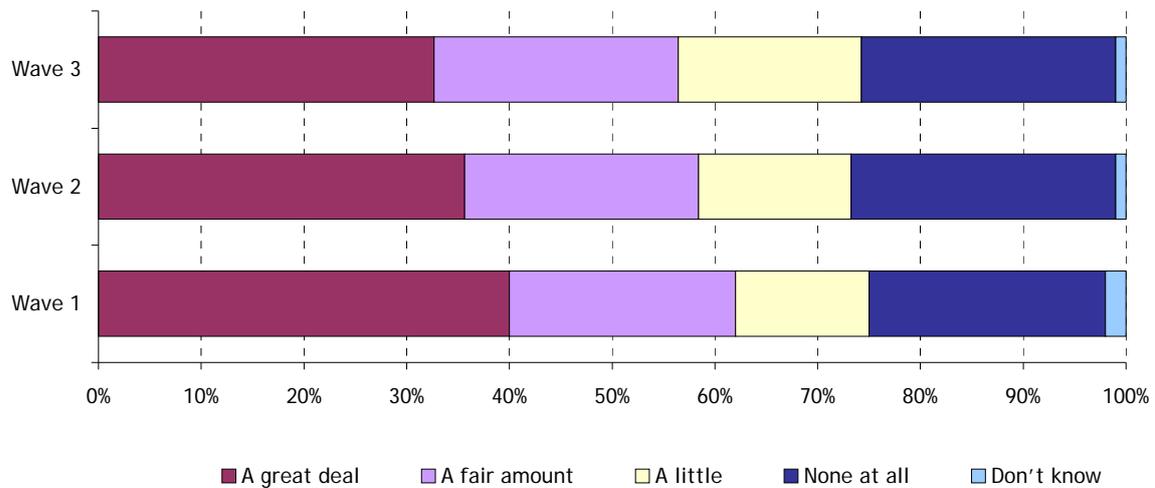
They said I could do it if I wanted to. I didn't have to but it's always best to do it because it's something else under your belt.

NE, Level 2 Plant Operations

Amount of choice

70 Those new entrants whose training was initiated only by their employer were asked to describe the amount of say they felt they had had in whether or not to participate in the training. Figure 7 shows that, despite their employer’s involvement in the decision, 33 per cent felt they had had ‘a great deal’ of say in whether or not to do the training, and a further 24 per cent felt they had had ‘a fair amount’ of say.

Figure 7: Amount of say in whether or not to do the training



Base = employer-initiated training only: Wave 3 N = 1,322; Wave 2 N = 1,020; Wave 1 N = 2,816.

Source: *New entrants group Waves 1, 2 and 3 (spring 2007, autumn 2007, summer 2008)*

71 The percentage of the **employer-initiated only** group who felt that they had had no choice at all in whether or not to take part in the learning showed some variation according to whether the training was mandatory and the occupational group of the learner.

- 40 per cent of those for whom the training was mandatory reported that they had had no say at all, compared to 13 per cent of those who were not obliged to do the training.
- those most likely to have had no say at all were found in Skilled Trades occupations (33 per cent), Elementary occupations (28 per cent), and among Process, Plant and Machine Operatives (also 28 per cent).

- Administrative and Secretarial occupations were the least likely to have had no say at all (11 per cent), followed by Sales and Customer Service occupations (16 per cent).

72 Respondents in the qualitative research were also asked about the degree of choice they felt they had been given about whether or not to participate in the training. Among those whose training had been primarily initiated by their employer, the majority felt they had been allowed some degree of choice and that there had been no pressure on them to undertake the training.

They said it was up to me whether I wanted to do it. I jumped at the chance. I like to try and better myself. A few of the lads declined.

NE, Level 2 Engineering Maintenance and Installation

I had a lot of choice whether I wanted to do it or not. I chose to do it because I thought it would benefit myself, for what I've got to do.

NE, Level 2 Team Leading

It was entirely up to ourselves – we were not told that we had to do it, it was totally voluntary. The opportunity was there if you wanted to do it.

LL, Level 2 Performing Manufacturing Operations

73 In a few cases (usually at Level 3), learners appeared to have a fairly high degree of control and autonomy – not only over whether to do the qualification, but also over the form their training should take. Learners and employers appeared to collaborate well in deciding what was the most suitable form of training.

Well I wanted to do something, either [a Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development qualification] or so on, and they do offer all those things at my work and it was literally deciding which one would be better for me...and we decided that the NVQ would be better...and my manager and I sat down and talked about it really.

NE, Level 3 Learning and Development

We were given the opportunity by our HR department to do the NVQ and then obviously I specialised in the pay-roll side of it and each of the homes were able to choose...the areas that they were most interested in and relevant to their jobs.

NE, Level 3 Business and Administration

- 74 In some cases, respondents reported that they had been given little or no choice by their employers about doing the training – for example, because it was a mandatory requirement for the job. For some of these learners, the lack of choice had not been a problem, as they felt the training would be of benefit to them, either personally or professionally.

I don't know that we signed up, we were more or less put forward...so you can't say you don't want to do it – well I suppose you could have but it's going to benefit you anyway. You're getting paid for it and having time out and doing something with your brain rather than just cleaning, so it was half and half.

NE, Level 2 Cleaning and Support Services

They said we would be going on it eventually – I was happy about that, I couldn't wait to start it...because it is a qualification at the end of the day and you have to do it, you have to learn new skills.

LL, Level 2 Health and Social Care

- 75 A small number of learners, however, were less happy with the level of choice they were given, and were not convinced that the training would be relevant to their ability to do the job. In a couple of cases, respondents thought they might risk losing their jobs if they did not comply with their employer's wishes.

They tell us what we are going on, yes...so we didn't get a choice... I thought it was a waste of time but I went... I have better things to do with my time than someone show me how to clean a home.

NE, Level 2, Cleaning and Support Services

He [the employer] said he was making plans for the company to put all the lads through it... They told us you had to have this NVQ to work for that company... [I was] not happy. I wanted to keep my job so I was willing to do it.

LL, Level 2 with Skills for Life, Highways Maintenance

I didn't really want to do it to be honest, but I had to. I could have left the job...but that's a bit of a shame because I love my work.

NE, Level 2 Health and Social Care

- 76 Such responses were rare, however, and most learners felt they had freedom over whether or not to take part, and did so for their own reasons.

It was mainly for me. I didn't do it because anyone was forcing me. I left school with nothing. My family are grown now, I can learn as much as I want... I can do it and progress.

LL, Level 2 Health and Social Care

Attitudes to work and learning

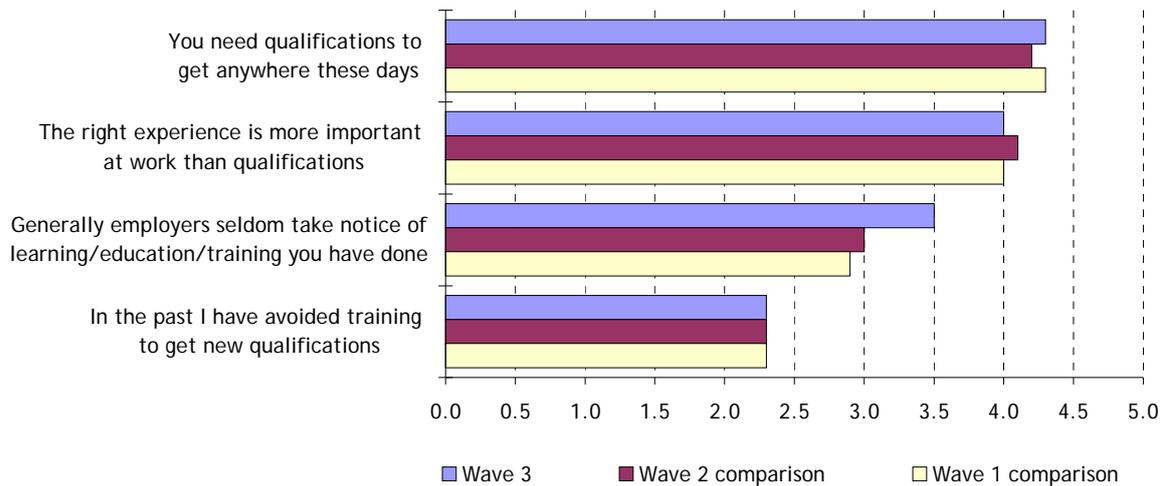
- 77 Both the new entrant survey and the longitudinal survey contained a section on attitudes to work and learning that was bigger than the section in Wave 2, and other questions were reintroduced from Wave 1.

Attitudes to learning in general

- 78 All respondents in the new entrant survey were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with four statements about the role of learning. Figure 8 shows the responses converted into an average or mean score. The mean score is based on the following figures: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = tend to disagree; 3 = neither agree nor disagree; 4 = tend to agree; 5 = strongly agree. A higher score indicates greater agreement.
- 79 The greatest agreement was noted for the statement that 'you need qualifications to get anywhere these days', with 84 per cent agreement and a score of 4.3 out of a maximum possible score of 5.0. Respondents also agreed that 'the right experience is more important at work than qualifications' (75 per cent, score 4.0) and 'generally employers seldom take

notice of the learning, education or training you have done’ (61 per cent, score 3.5 – in Wave 2 the figure was 45 per cent). However, with a score of 2.3 and an agreement percentage of just 29 per cent, respondents generally **disagreed** that ‘in the past I have avoided training to get new qualifications’.

Figure 8: Agreement with attitudes towards learning



Base = all learners: Wave 3 N = 5,608; Wave 2 N = 5,072; Wave 1 N = 7,500.

Source: *New entrants group Waves 1, 2 and 3 (spring 2007, autumn 2007, summer 2008)*

80 Variation in the mean scores according to the personal characteristics of the learners was minimal, with the exceptions of age and ethnicity, both of which showed a pattern for two of the statements.

- Younger learners were less likely than older learners to believe that ‘you need qualifications to get anywhere these days’. The mean score for the youngest age group of 18–25 was 4.1, and this rose consistently across the older age groups: ages 26–35 scored 4.2, ages 36–45 scored 4.3, ages 46–54 scored 4.4, and the oldest age group of 56 and above scored 4.4.
- Younger learners were more likely to feel that ‘employers seldom take notice of the learning, education or training you have done’. Here, the 18- to 25-year-olds scored 3.8, the highest score of all the age groups: ages 26–35 scored 3.6, ages 36–45 scored 3.3, ages 46–55 scored 3.4, and ages 56 and above also scored 3.4.

- The same two statements also showed a variation by ethnicity: BME learners were more likely than white learners to agree that ‘you need qualifications to get anywhere these days’, with a mean score of 4.5 (compared to 4.2 for their white counterparts). Learners from BME groups were also more likely than white learners to agree that ‘employers seldom take notice of the learning, education or training you have done’ (a mean score of 3.9, compared to 3.4).

Attitudes towards current skill levels and needs of the job

81 When asked to consider how their skill level compared with the requirements of their job, most respondents to the new entrant survey reported that their job suited them well (91 per cent agreement, and a mean score of 4.4). There was also overall agreement that respondents would be able to do a more challenging job than they currently did (73 per cent agreement, and a mean score of 3.9). Respondents disagreed, however, that at times their job was a bit of a struggle (28 per cent agreement, and a mean score of 2.3).

Table 10: Statements about suitability of job level

	Wave 3		Wave 1
	Mean score	% agree	Mean score
In terms of the skills and abilities I have, my job suits me well	4.4	91	4.5
I can do a more challenging job than the one I am doing	3.9	73	3.8
Sometimes I find my job a bit of a struggle	2.3	28	2.2

Base = all learners: Wave 3 N = 5,608; Wave 1 N = 7,500; not asked in Wave 2.

Source: *New entrants group Waves 1 and 3 (spring 2007, summer 2008)*

- 82 According to the personal characteristics of the learners, the suitability of the job showed the greatest variation with ethnicity.
- BME learners were more likely to feel that they struggled, but were also more likely to feel that they could do a more difficult job. More learners in this group agreed that ‘sometimes I find my job a bit of a struggle’ (where they scored 2.8, compared to 2.2 for white learners). BME learners were also more likely to agree that ‘I can do a more challenging job than the one I am doing’, where they scored 4.3 (compared to 3.8). Both groups of learners, however, scored equally in their agreement that ‘in terms of the skills and abilities I have, my job suits me well’ (4.4).

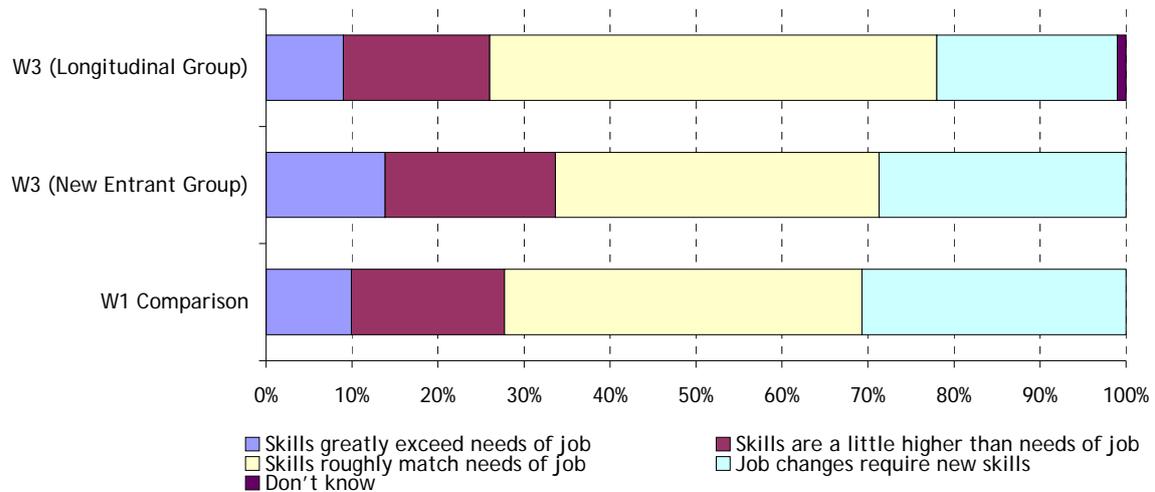
- Age also made a difference to the responses, and older people appear more confident in the job they are doing but less confident that they can do a more challenging job. Agreement with the statement ‘I can do a more challenging job than the one I am doing’ declined with age: those aged 18–25 and 26–35 both scored 4.0; those aged 36–45 scored 3.9; those aged 46–55 scored 3.8, and those aged 56 and above scored 3.6. The agreement with ‘sometimes I find my job a bit of a struggle’ also declined with age, from 2.5 and 2.4 for those aged 18–25 and 26–35 years, respectively, to 2.2 and 2.3 for those aged 36–45 and 46–55, to the lowest score of 2.1 for those aged 56 and above. However, agreement that ‘in terms of the skills and abilities I have, my job suits me well’ increased a little with age, from a score of 4.3 for the youngest age group, to scores of 4.4 for the middle three age groups, peaking at 4.5 for the oldest age group.
- Those with a disability or learning difficulties were a little more likely to agree that ‘sometimes I find my job a bit of a struggle’ (a score of 2.6, compared to 2.3 for other learners); this score was, however, still on the negative side, i.e. indicating disagreement.

83 Although there was some variation in the scores according to the occupational group of the respondents, there was no clear pattern, and most variation was quite moderate.

- Scores for the statement ‘in terms of the skills and abilities I have, my job suits me well’, varied from 4.3 for the Elementary occupations and Process Plant and Machine Operatives, to highs of 4.5 for Managers and Senior Officials, Skilled Trades, and Personal Service occupations.
- Agreement with ‘I can do a more challenging job than the one I am doing’ ranged from lows of 3.7 for Professional occupations to highs of 4.0 for Sales and Customer Services, Elementary occupations, and Process, Plant and Machine Operatives.
- All occupational groups disagreed that ‘sometimes I find my job a bit of a struggle’, with disagreement being the strongest for Sales and Customer Services at 2.1, up to a high of 2.5 for Personal Service occupations.

- 84 In both surveys, all learners who were working were then asked for their perspective on four statements describing the extent to which their current skills matched the demands of their current job (Figure 9). The highest agreement (52 per cent of the longitudinal group and 38 per cent of the new entrants group) was with the statement 'my skills roughly match the needs of my job', and 21 per cent and 29 per cent of the learners, respectively, said they had needed to develop new skills due to changes in their job.
- 85 However, the remaining respondents felt that they were overskilled for their job, with 17 per cent of the longitudinal group and 20 per cent of the new entrants group agreeing that 'my skills are a little higher than are needed for my job', and a further 9 per cent and 14 per cent, respectively, agreeing that 'my skills greatly exceed the needs of my job'.
- 86 Longitudinal learners appear to feel better skilled now in terms of the requirements of their job than did the Wave 1 cohort.

Figure 9: How current skills relate to current job



Base = in employment: N = 2,664 for longitudinal group and N = 5,362 for new entrants group. Wave 1 N = 7,500; not asked in Wave 2.

Source: *New entrants and longitudinal groups Waves 1 and 3 (spring 2007, summer 2008)*

Opportunity and employer attitudes

87 A series of statements related to learning and training in the workplace were asked of both survey groups, as shown in Table 11.

88 Responses were very similar across both survey groups: the most positive responses were evident for two statements: ‘I have had the same access to training and development as anyone else in my workplace’ (87 per cent agreement and a mean score of 4.3 out of a maximum possible 5.0 for both groups), and ‘I was encouraged by my employer, manager or supervisor to develop new skills’ (83–84 per cent, mean score of 4.2 for both groups). Positive responses were also noted for ‘it is always easy to get training at my workplace’, and ‘most of the skills I need I learn from my colleagues’.

89 For the remaining two statements, however, the general response was one of disagreement: ‘there is never any time to get any training at my workplace’ and ‘my employer is not keen on paying for training’, with both of which more than two-thirds of respondents from each survey disagreed (scores of 2.2 to 2.3).

Table 11: Attitudes towards learning and training

	Wave 3 (LL)		Wave 3 (NE)		Wave 1
	Mean score	% agree	Mean score	% agree	Mean score
I have the same access to training and development as anyone else in my workplace	4.3	87	4.3	87	4.4
I was encouraged by my employer, manager or supervisor to develop new skills	4.2	84	4.2	83	4.3
It is always easy to get training at my workplace	3.9	74	3.8	69	3.8
Most of the skills I need I learn from my colleagues	3.4	58	3.3	57	3.4
My employer is not keen on paying for training	2.3	27	2.3	26	2.0
There is never any time to get any training at my workplace	2.2	24	2.3	27	2.2

Base = all learners: Wave 3 N = 2,777 for longitudinal group and N = 5,608 for new entrants; Wave 1 N = 7,500; not asked in Wave 2.

Source: New entrants and longitudinal groups Waves 1 and 3 (spring 2007, summer 2008)

90 All statements showed some degree of variation according to the personal characteristics of the learners: those that were consistent across both the longitudinal and the new entrant survey were as follows.

- Women were more likely than men to agree that ‘I was encouraged by my employer, manager or supervisor to develop new skills’ (scores of 4.4 and 4.3, compared to scores of 4.1 for men in both surveys).
- The youngest learners were more likely than older learners to agree that ‘most of the skills I need I learn from my colleagues’. In both surveys, scores ranged from 3.7 for those aged 18–25, to 3.2 for the oldest age group of 56 and above.

91 All statements also showed some degree of variation according to the occupational group of the learners: again, those that were consistent across both the longitudinal and the new entrant survey are described below.

- Personal Service occupations were the most likely in both surveys to agree with the statement ‘I was encouraged by my employer, manager or supervisor to develop new skills’ (scores of 4.4 and 4.5). Process, Plant and Machine Operatives, and Skilled Trades occupations were the least likely to agree (scores of 3.9 to 4.1).

- 'It is always easy to get training at my workplace' was scored highest in both surveys by those in Personal Service occupations (a score of 4.1).
- Personal Service occupations were also the most likely to agree that 'I have had the same access to training and development as anyone else in my workplace' (score of 4.4).
- With scores of 2.5, Process, Plant and Machine Operatives were the most likely to agree that 'there is never any time to get any training at my workplace' (scores of 2.5 or less indicate a negative response, i.e. disagreement).
- With scores of 2.9, Managers and Senior Officials were the least likely to agree that 'most of the skills I need I learn from my colleagues'.
- Administrative and Secretarial occupations were the least likely to agree that 'my employer is not keen on paying for training', with scores of 2.0 and 2.1.

Access to training and employer attitudes (qualitative research)

92 The qualitative interviews explored the extent to which respondents had been able to access training in the workplace prior to their Train to Gain qualification. The interviews provided various examples of workplace training previously undertaken by learners. These included:

- short 'on the job' training courses (usually non-accredited and delivered in-house), such as first aid, health and safety, fire training, risk assessment, food hygiene, IT skills, customer care and diversity training;
- short certificated courses, providing evidence of the skills required for specific types of work, e.g. fork-lift truck training; heavy goods vehicle (HGV) training; construction skills certification scheme (CSCS) courses for construction workers; protection of vulnerable adults (POVA) training for care professionals; training for door supervisors and security guards; training for handling hazardous substances;

- longer vocational courses, such as NVQs, City and Guilds and Business and Technology Education Council courses (BTECs); and
- Apprenticeships.

93 The majority of learners believed that their employers had a positive attitude towards staff training, and reported that access to training at work had been relatively easy.

It's very good. We are encouraged. Any courses we may see ourselves they're quite happy to let us do them. If they see something that is of interest to whichever department, they will give us the details.

NE, Level 3 Business and Administration

They were very good, they considered it valuable. They tried to put everyone, whatever training they could think of, they would put workers on it.

LL, Level 2 Food and Drink Manufacturing

94 For some organisations, a commitment to staff training and development was clearly embedded within the organisational culture.

You can't fault them. You have training all the time, it is regular and every year they go over things like food hygiene and first aid...fire training, challenging behaviour training, and they encourage you if you want to do courses outside as well.

NE, Level 3 Health and Social Care

95 Some respondents confirmed that access to training had been more prevalent in recent years because of an increased emphasis on legal requirements and meeting safety standards.

In the past it's been nil [but this has changed recently] because of the bylaws for getting on sites.

NE, Level 2 Wood Occupations

Training is only coming on board properly in the last 2–3 years where they realise they need to train their staff up. We've been getting a lot of in-house training in the last couple of years and this is where the NVQ came about in the last 6 months.

NE, Level 3 Customer Service

- 96 Some learners felt that having a good training manager in the organisation was an important factor in the employer's approach to training. The following comments were from respondents in medium-sized organisations of between 50 and 250 employees.

It has not been very good over the past two to three years because we have had a lot of reorganisation and the HR department has been lacking really – but this last six months we have now got an actual training and development manager so I envisage it getting a lot better.

NE, Level 3 Business and Administration

We used to have a training officer to bring the company forward...but they got rid of that position...nobody is actually there that looks after the training side.

LL, Performing Manufacturing Operations

- 97 A few learners had accessed training through their trade unions or union learning representatives, and one example was given of the company and union working together to support workplace learning.

They set up a learning room at our place that has got computers in with the aid of the union and they invite people from different sites to use it.

LL, Skills for Life, Certificate in Adult Numeracy

- 98 The qualitative research also provided examples of difficulties that some learners had previously faced in gaining access to workplace training.

- 99 One respondent felt that, as an agency worker, he had less access to training than the 'regular' staff.

The lads on the council get all the training they need. Because we're agency we don't get nothing.

LL, Level 2 with Skills for Life, Highways Maintenance

- 100 For other learners, the main barrier to participating in training was having jobs with unsocial hours or involving a great deal of travel, making it difficult to find a convenient time for the training.

We had a couple of training courses but with me being on nights, it's quite difficult to get a time right for us...we get the same training as everybody else but we might be a bit behind on some training.

NE, Level 2 Health and Social Care

I'm never in one place.

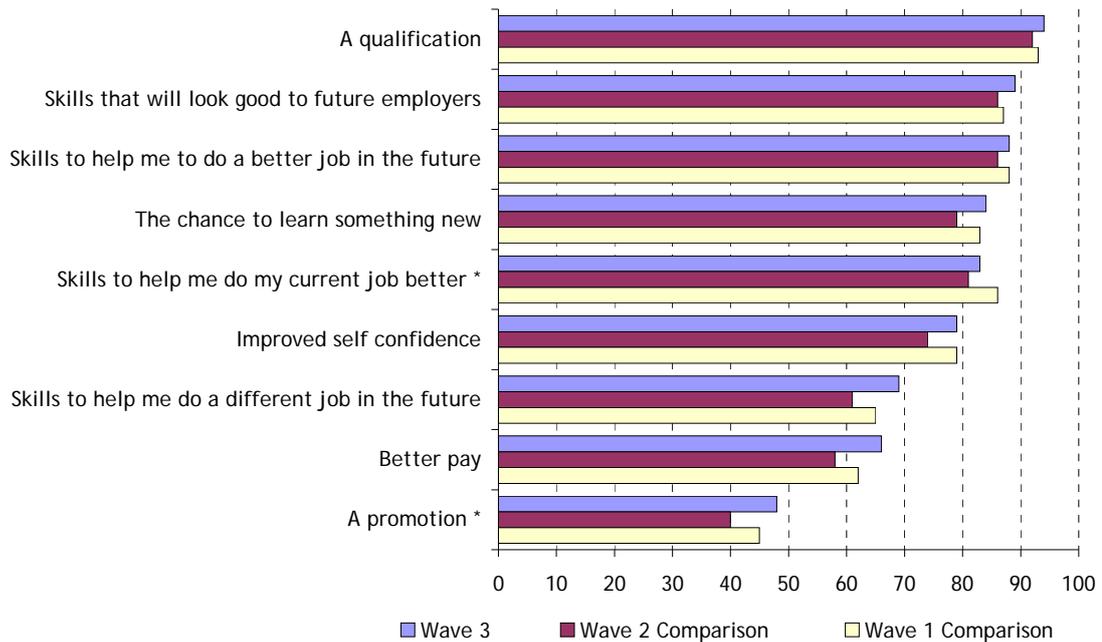
NE, Level 2 Wood Occupations

- 101 Other respondents reported difficulties arising from personal circumstances, such as ill-health or changing jobs.

Expectations and motivations

- 102 Current learners in the new entrant survey (i.e. those who had not completed or left their qualification) were asked what they expected to gain at the end of the training. Figure 10 shows that, as in previous waves, most expected to gain 'a qualification' (94 per cent). The next most popular responses were related to gaining skills that would help with current and future jobs and employers, and having the chance to learn something new (scores ranged from 83 per cent to 89 per cent). Improved confidence was an anticipated gain for 79 per cent of respondents. A later chapter shows that the outcomes that learners feel they have gained on completing their qualification correspond very strongly with these expected gains.

Figure 10: Anticipated outcomes of training



Base = currently learning/waiting to start: Wave 3 N = 3,726; Wave 2 N = 1,487; Wave 1 N = 5,672.

* = only asked of those in work for Waves 2 and 3, all asked in Wave 1.

Source: *New entrants group Waves 1, 2 and 3 (spring 2007, autumn 2007, summer 2008)*

103 Many respondents in the qualitative research said they had few or no expectations prior to learning, since they had not given it any thought. Some said they were not given any information in advance, and so were unable to say what they had expected to gain. However, other respondents in the qualitative research echoed the same motivations for learning brought out in the surveys.

104 The qualitative research particularly reiterated the importance to learners of gaining qualifications and improving job prospects. Many respondents wanted to gain a qualification for their own personal sense of achievement. This was especially the case for learners with few or no previous qualifications. A formal qualification could provide both a sense of achievement and something tangible to show future employers.

To get a qualification people recognised. It made it easier if anything happened, because of my age it will be hard to find a job, it would be easier for me to get one if I have a qualification which is recognised.

NE, Level 2 Amenity Horticulture

Well it's kind of what I was saying before about being able to broaden my skills and solidify what I know already and having a qualification that will help me in my career development be it there or somewhere else as well, really.

NE, Level 3 Learning and Development

I am a big believer in education and being equipped for the job that you do, so not having any education at all I thought it was only right that I should gain something.

NE, Level 3 Management

105 Getting a qualification was viewed by many respondents as useful for their CVs and for improving future job prospects, showing the relationship between the qualification in itself and how it could benefit the learner.

If I have to move on, it's just to say, well I have got that qualification.

NE, Level 2 Construction Operations

I wanted something that was solid, that proved what I am doing and that I have got knowledge in it...so it was all about improving my job opportunities at the end of the day.

NE, Level 3 Business and Administration

106 Some respondents placed value on the fact that an NVQ was a nationally recognised qualification and that achieving this would be a useful investment for the future.

Nowadays, most companies recognise NVQs and not City and Guilds. If anything happens that you lost your job, you've probably

got a better chance if you have an interview with a private company or public sector and say, I have an NVQ2.

NE, Level 2 Amenity Horticulture

- 107 Accredited training could also provide evidence and confirmation that the learner had the necessary skills to do the job.

Well, I wasn't really certificated in anything and now... I suppose this paperwork says that you can deal with people, you can deal with problems, you can round people up and get them motivated, you know what is involved from the start to the finish of producing a finished component and that is what it has done for me.

NE, Level 2 Performing Manufacturing Operations

- 108 Another reason given for participating in training was to refresh existing job skills and develop new ones.

I wanted to try and find out new ways...and new learning styles, so thought it was quite good to do something that would either solidify what I've already done or help me get new skills.

NE, Level 3 Learning and Development

- 109 Other respondents wanted to keep up to date with legislation, regulations and changing practices in the workplace.

Health and safety things change. A lot of things I was taught, working in the home, are now obsolete, you don't have them any more...moving and handling has all changed, they find different ways of doing it...

LL, Level 2 Health and Social Care

- 110 For some learners, a change in job direction or life circumstances had provided the motivation for training.

I had a career change – I used to be a cook. For me to go into childcare, which I wanted to do to get more money, you've got to do the training and qualifications.

LL, Level 3 Children's Care Learning and Development

It depends what you want to do, because I got trained as a driver...and I fancy working in an office now and the training that I have had, the numeracy and English, has helped me progress further from driving.

LL, Skills for Life, Certificate in Adult Numeracy

- 111 The qualitative research also illustrated how the training could provide opportunities for women returners to the labour market whose children had grown up, so that they could now focus on improving their skills for work.

Years ago my attitude was, well I'm quite happy with part-time, I wasn't going to work full-time and I had children to bring up, so it wasn't important. Whereas now they are older, they are teenagers...and I thought, well I can go out now and do it... I always thought that I would like to do something and get more qualifications...

LL, Level 2 Teaching Assistant

- 112 Other reasons for participating in training that were given in the qualitative research included improving literacy or numeracy skills, building confidence, and simply gaining stimulation from learning new things.

- 113 In terms of the learning process, there was evidence from the qualitative research that learners approached the programmes with some trepidation. Some of these concerns were related to learning, training or being assessed for the first time in years. For others, the written work, administration and workload were the most pressing issues.

But I was still apprehensive because it was an unknown quarter that I hadn't done, but more apprehensive about people watching you work and although you know you're doing the work fine it's still not nice... You don't want somebody on your back, that sort of thing.

NE, Level 2 Cleaning and Support Services

We were a bit worried we wouldn't have enough time. It says everybody goes at a different pace. Some can do it within 3–6 months. Some might take longer. We weren't given a deadline when we were to do it. We did it how we could do it. It's been really good.

NE, Level 3 Management

- 114 However, for those with supportive tutors and assessors, many of these concerns were addressed. And in most cases, as a later chapter shows, learners enjoyed their training and felt that they had benefited from it. One learner with dyslexia had previously hidden away from jobs and training that involved reading, so was very nervous about starting a qualification that involved any form of written assessment. However, the assessor was extremely understanding, and, for example, read the questions out so that the dyslexia was not a barrier to achievement.

I was a bit anxious at first because I didn't know what was actually involved but then when I started doing it I was okay. You didn't know what it involved really and you didn't know what was expected of you or anything like that but it was just like going to work every day.

LL, Level 2 Food and Drink Manufacturing Operations

Well actually I expected it to be harder than what it was... I did better than I thought. The assessor was so shocked, because I put myself down and I don't have confidence in myself. When she actually looked at my work she said 'there's nothing wrong with your work'... It boosted my confidence because once I started it I realised oh, I can do this and did.

LL, Level 3 Health and Social Care

- 115 Learners found it difficult to comment on what their employers' motivations had been for initiating or agreeing to the training. Very little seems to have been communicated to employees about what their employer expected of them. Some learners made general comments about employers wanting better-qualified staff, workers all following the same processes or improvements to systems and productivity.

They are hoping to improve the business if you know what I mean, to make it run smoother so that everybody gets the full understanding of how the process of the product flows through so that you get a smoother, faster run. Cut down time on waste and things like that, and get the process running properly, that is what they are looking for.

NE, Level 2 Business Improvement Techniques

- 116 Others felt that their employer's attitude was very 'hands off', although this was not viewed in a negative light. Only where there were mandatory or quality-assurance requirements was the employer's motivation clear. For example one learner in residential care described minimum requirements for the number of qualified staff on duty, and another simply said that 'It looks good for the nursery to have more qualified staff in it' (LL, Level 3 Children's Care Learning and Development).

Advice and Guidance

117 This chapter explores the discussions and assessments that learners had prior to embarking on their training/qualifications.

Key findings

118 Prior to embarking on their training or qualification, most learners were involved in discussions about what would be involved, and most had some form of pre-entry discussion.

- Two learners in three (67 per cent) reported that they had spoken to someone about their job and the skills it required before starting their training.
- As a result of their discussion, 72 per cent were advised which qualification would be the most suitable, although the qualitative research indicates that many such discussions may be used to give general information rather than to provide in-depth information, advice and guidance.
- The great majority of learners (88 per cent) had had at least one form of pre-qualification assessment.
 - 72 per cent of learners were asked about their existing qualifications.
 - 60 per cent were assessed against some or all of the requirements of the qualification.
 - 59 per cent had had an assessment of English, maths or language skills.
- The proportion of learners who had had both a pre-entry discussion and a skills gap assessment fell to 45 per cent in Wave 3 (from 51 per cent in Wave 2).

119 In most cases (68 per cent), the assessments confirmed that the learner would be trained and assessed for the whole qualification, and 10 per cent felt that 'nothing' happened as a result. This may lead to confusion among

learners as to the purpose of the assessments. However, there were clear outcomes for many.

- 16 per cent were told that they only needed to be assessed, rather than trained, for all or part of the qualification.
- 11 per cent were put on a different level of qualification.

120 The number of learners that had received a personal development plan or individual learning plan increased to 63 per cent (from 59 per cent at Wave 2).

121 Learners were largely happy with the information they received prior to their training/qualification: 43 per cent felt they had received enough (and a further 40 per cent more than enough) information about what their training would involve. Learners also received a good level of information about:

- how they would be assessed (47 per cent enough and 39 per cent more than enough);
- how long the training would take to complete (46 per cent and 39 per cent); and
- the time commitment needed (46 per cent and 37 per cent).

122 The qualitative research indicated that if learners did feel that they had not received enough information, it was in relation to the amount of time – both at work and at home – that they found they needed to commit to their training.

Pre-entry discussion

123 All respondents to the new entrant survey who were in work were asked about the extent of any information, advice or guidance they had received prior to starting the course. Two learners in three (67 per cent) reported that they had spoken to someone about their job and the skills it required before they had started their learning.

124 There was some variation by occupational group, with lows of 62 per cent for Professional occupations, Administrative and Secretarial occupations and Process Plant and Machine Operatives, to a high of 75 per cent for Personal Service occupations. A pre-entry discussion was more likely for those

studying a care-related subject (77 per cent) than for those on other subjects (64 per cent). There was minimal difference by provider type or level of training, and regional variation was small, ranging from 64 per cent in Yorkshire and the Humber, to 72 per cent in the North East.

125 Of those who had had a discussion, 50 per cent said they had been spoken to by their employer, manager or supervisor, and 47 per cent had been spoken to by their training provider, college staff or assessor. This latter figure is down from 54 per cent in Wave 2 (see Table 12).

Table 12: Who spoke to you about your current job and required skills prior to the training?

Source	Wave 3		Wave 2	Wave 1
	Number	%	%	%
Employer, manager or supervisor	1,873	50	48	49
Training provider or college staff/assessor	1,777	47	54	50
HR/personnel or training manager	219	6	4	6
Friends and/or family	33	1	-	-
Skills broker	28	1	*	1
Union learning rep/union staff member	24	1	*	1
Colleagues	23	1	-	-
Information, advice and guidance service (nextstep/learndirect)	12	*	-	-
Connexions	9	*	-	-
LSC/LSC representative	4	*	-	-
Local authority/council	2	*	-	-
Other	54	1	3	-

* indicates a figure <0.5 per cent; - indicates responses not reported; multiple responses given. Base = spoken to prior to the training: Wave 3 N = 3,776; Wave 2 N = 1,697; Wave 1 N = 4,897.

Source: *New entrants group Waves 1, 2 and 3 (spring 2007, autumn 2007, summer 2008)*

126 As a result of the discussion about their job and the skills it entailed, 72 per cent of learners reported that they had been advised which qualification would be the most suitable for their needs; 26 per cent had been spoken to but had not received such advice; and 1 per cent were unsure. (For comparison, 72 per cent of the Wave 2 new entrants group had been given some advice about the most suitable qualification, as had 68 per cent of the Wave 1 group.)

- 127 The proportions receiving advice about which qualification would be the most suitable showed a little regional variation. As with those who had had a pre-entry discussion (above), the highest proportion was found in the North East (78 per cent) and the lowest was noted in Yorkshire and the Humber (67 per cent). By occupational group, too, there was a little variation, with Personal Service occupations being the most likely to have received qualification advice (77 per cent) and Elementary occupations the least likely (62 per cent). Difference by provider type was minimal; and by subject, those on care-related courses were a little more likely to have received advice (76 per cent) than were those studying in other areas (71 per cent).
- 128 Findings from the qualitative interviews also indicate that learners most often spoke to their manager or the training provider about the suitability of the NVQ prior to starting. One example of thorough information, advice and guidance during a pre-entry discussion was given by a new entrant Level 3 learner. The pre-entry discussion helped the learner to decide whether the qualification was appropriate by comparing the qualification to her current job role to see whether she would be able to collect enough evidence.

We went through all the different units and what were the best units for me to do because naturally you've got to have evidence for your NVQ...and I chose the unit that I felt I wanted to do, but she said go away and think about it. Then we met up about a week later and we went through the units again and she was very good and very thorough.

NE, Level 3 Business and Administration

- 129 Yet many learners felt that their pre-entry discussion had been an information-giving session, rather than an opportunity to provide in-depth information, advice and guidance. They were informed about the practicalities of undertaking an NVQ, what it would entail, what was expected of a learner and how long it would take, but did not receive any direct advice about which qualification to tackle.

130 In some cases, the pre-entry discussion made no difference to the qualification that they were put forward for, since there were limited choices available to them through Train to Gain skills brokers. As one participant noted, the choice of qualification depended not only on what the skills broker was offering, but also on the funding that was available and the personal motivations of the learner. For some, the pre-entry discussion instead gave participants an idea of what further learning they would be capable of.

My assessor came in for an initial chat and consultation, looked at the kind of work that I do and agreed that maybe it was a bit too simple for me to do but she understood why I was doing it to support my colleagues and said really the Admin 4 would be more suitable. But they were not offering that at that moment for free because this one was offered for free.

NE, Level 3 Business and Administration

Skills assessments

131 All respondents to the new entrant survey were asked about any skills assessments they had received prior to embarking on their qualification. Three different types of assessment were examined:

- pre-existing qualifications;
- skills in relation to the requirements of the qualification (skills gap assessment); and
- skills in English, maths or language skills (Skills for Life assessment).

132 Some 72 per cent of learners reported that, before starting, they had been asked about any existing qualifications they held, and 60 per cent were assessed against some or all of the requirements of the qualification that they were signing up for. An assessment of English, maths or language skills was conducted for 59 per cent of the learners (see Table 13).

Table 13: Extent of assessment prior to starting the training

	Wave 3		Wave 2
	Number saying Yes	% saying Yes	% saying Yes
Did anyone ask you about any qualifications you already had?	4,030	72	70
Did anyone assess you against some or all of the requirements of the qualification you were signing up to?	3,376	60	56
Did anyone assess your English, maths or language skills?	3,319	59	56
<i>No assessments at all</i>	681	12	14

Base = all learners: Wave 3 N = 5,608; Wave 2 N = 2,542.

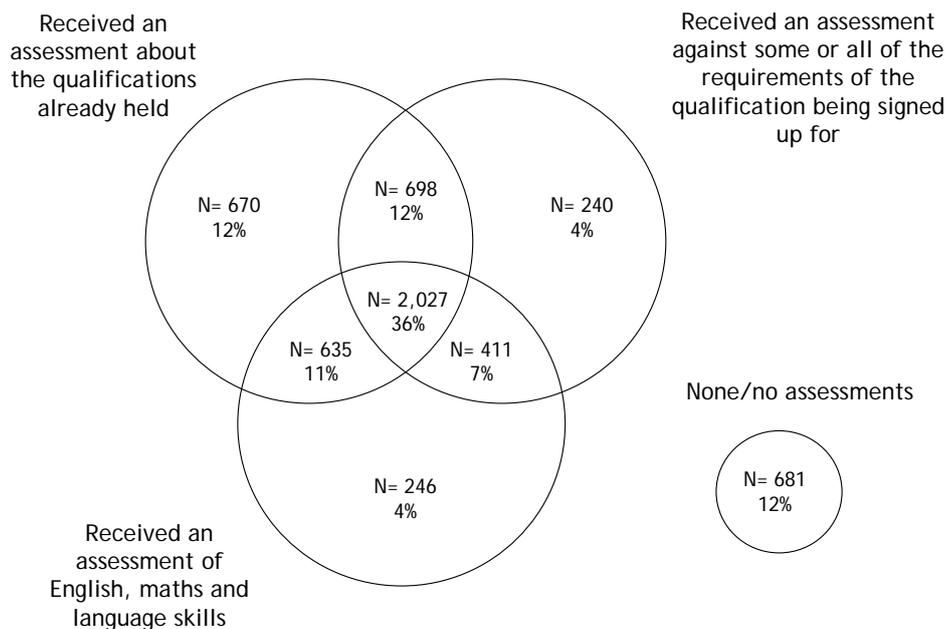
Source: *New entrants group Waves 2 and 3 (autumn 2007, summer 2008)*

133 If we combine these three different types of prior assessment, we see that 88 per cent had at least one of the possible assessments, compared to 86 per cent in Wave 2. This breaks down as follows (see Figure 11):

- 36 per cent had all three elements of assessment – an increase from 33 per cent in Wave 2. Receiving all three assessments was more common among independent training providers (38 per cent) than among public providers (33 per cent), and for those on care-related courses (45 per cent) rather than other subjects (33 per cent). By occupational group, the proportion receiving all three assessments rose to 43 per cent for both Administrative and Secretarial occupations and Personal Service occupations, and was lowest among Process, Plant and Machine Operatives (27 per cent). By region, the highest proportions were found in the East of England, where 40 per cent received all three assessments, and was lowest in the North West (31 per cent). The difference by level of training was minimal.
- 30 per cent had two of the three elements of assessment; the most common combination was an assessment of pre-existing qualifications and a skills gap assessment.
- 20 per cent had one of the three elements of assessment; the most likely thing was that they were asked about pre-existing qualifications held.
- 12 per cent had no assessment of any type – a small but significant change from 14 per cent in Wave 2. By occupational group, this rose to 19 per cent for Process, Plant and Machine Operatives, and 18 per cent

for Elementary occupations, while the lowest occupational groups were Personal Service occupations (7 per cent), and Managers and Senior Officials and Administrative and Secretarial occupations – both 8 per cent. The proportion not receiving any assessments rose to 14 per cent for learners on non-care-related courses (compared to 6 per cent for care-related courses). Variation by region was less marked, from a high of 15 per cent in the North West to a low of 10 per cent in London. Part-funded Level 3 learners were less likely than fully funded Level 2 learners to have no assessments (9 per cent, compared to 13 per cent), and those studying with a public provider were a little more likely to have no assessments (14 per cent) than were those studying with an independent provider (11 per cent).

Figure 11: Relationship between the three possible forms of assessment



Base = all learners: N = 5,608.

Source: *New entrants group Wave 3 (summer 2008)*

134 Table 14 shows that, for almost three respondents in four, the assessment (or, for those who had more than one assessment, at least one) was carried out by the training provider or college staff or assessor.

Table 14: Who carried out the assessment(s) of skills and qualifications

Source	Wave 3		Wave 2	Wave 1
	Number	%	%	%
Training provider or college staff/assessor	3,664	74	81	73
Employer, manager or supervisor	859	17	14	22
HR/personnel or training manager	282	6	3	6
Skills broker	60	1	1	1
Other	77	2	5	(not reported)

Base = all those having an assessment of any of the three possible types: Wave 3 N = 4,927; Wave 2 N = 2,194; Wave 1 N = 4,500. Multiple responses given; responses above 1 per cent shown.

Source: New entrants group Waves 1, 2 and 3 (spring 2007, autumn 2007, summer 2008)

- 135 Those who had had some form of initial assessment were asked what had happened as a result. Where respondents provided contradictory responses, these have been excluded from the analysis. (Any combination of the top three responses is regarded as contradictory. Wave 2 figures shown here differ from those published in the Wave 2 report, since contradictory responses were allowed in the previous analysis but have been excluded here.)
- 136 Table 15 shows that, as a consequence of the initial assessment, 68 per cent were told they would be trained and assessed for the whole qualification (a slight increase from Wave 2). Falling slightly from Wave 2 (from 13 per cent to 10 per cent) is the proportion of learners who were told they required no training and just needed to be assessed for the qualification. Some 11 per cent were put on a different level of qualification (compared to 8 per cent in Wave 2).

Table 15: Consequences of the skills and qualifications assessment

Action taken	Wave 3		Wave 2	Wave 1
	Number	%	%	%
I was told I would be trained and assessed for the whole qualification	2,596	68	65	68**
I was told I only needed to be trained and/or assessed in some parts of the qualification	248	7	8	18**
I was told I didn't require any training and would just need to be assessed for the qualification	375	10	13	12
I was put on a different level of the qualification	413	11	8	19
I was put on a different qualification subject	105	3	3	7*
Nothing	396	10	8	28

Base = all those having an assessment of any of the three possible types, excluding those giving contradictory responses: Wave 3 N = 3,804; Wave 2 N = 1,904; Wave 1 = 7,500.

* The Wave 1 result is based on the statement 'I was put on a different qualification altogether'.

** This information was gathered in two ways in Wave 1: 18 per cent of all learners **had training arranged** for only some parts of their qualification, and 68 per cent of all learners **had training arranged** for the whole of the qualification.

Source: *New entrants group Waves 1, 2 and 3 (spring 2007, autumn 2007, summer 2008)*

137 The qualitative interviews with new entrants also showed that there was variance in the types of pre-entry assessment that were carried out. Those who had been asked about their previous qualifications thought that this was being used as a test of eligibility. There was some confusion among learners about the impact other qualifications could have on their eligibility for Train to Gain, with some thinking that previous qualifications could exclude them from Train to Gain and others thinking that previous qualifications were a requirement.

They wanted to know if you had particular diplomas or degrees... if you've done A-Levels or you've got a good grade in the last 7 or 8 years you wouldn't be able to qualify for the course because you've already got that. Maybe you have got the equivalent of this NVQ so you wouldn't be [eligible].

NE, Level 3 Customer Service

She led me to believe...that you've [got to have] an NVQ3 before you can do another NVQ3 through Train to Gain.

NE, Level 3 Business and Administration

- 138 Some people were assessed against the requirements of the qualification, although only one learner in the qualitative interviews said they had been able to sign off parts of the qualification early.
- 139 The learners who reported that they had received a basic skills assessment offered various reasons for why this was so. Most thought that the test was carried out to gauge the level of support that they might require in completing the qualification. Most also reported that the test had been done in a very sensitive way, and they had been reassured that they were not going to pass or fail – it was merely to identify support that would be required during the training.

Yes, it was a bit of everything. English, Maths. They said there was no stigma if you failed. They wanted to know how much help each person would need in passing the training.

LL, Level 2 with Skills for Life, Highways Maintenance

- 140 Some thought that the assessment was used to put them in a group of learners of similar ability, although a few had no idea why they had to go through a literacy and numeracy assessment.
- 141 All new entrant survey respondents were asked whether they had received an individual learning plan (ILP) or a personal development plan (PDP) at the start of the training: 63 per cent reported that they had; 33 per cent had not; and the remaining 5 per cent did not know. (For comparison, in Wave 2, 59 per cent reported having received an ILP/PDP. At Wave 1, this question was asked only of the 60 per cent of learners who had been assessed; of those, 84 per cent had received an ILP.)
- By subject area, those studying on a care-related course were the most likely to have received an ILP/PDP (70 per cent), compared to 60 per cent of those on other courses.
 - By occupational group, ILPs/PDPs were more common for Managers and Senior Officials, Associate Professional and Technical occupations, Administrative and Secretarial occupations, and Personal Service occupations (69 per cent each), and were less common within the Skilled

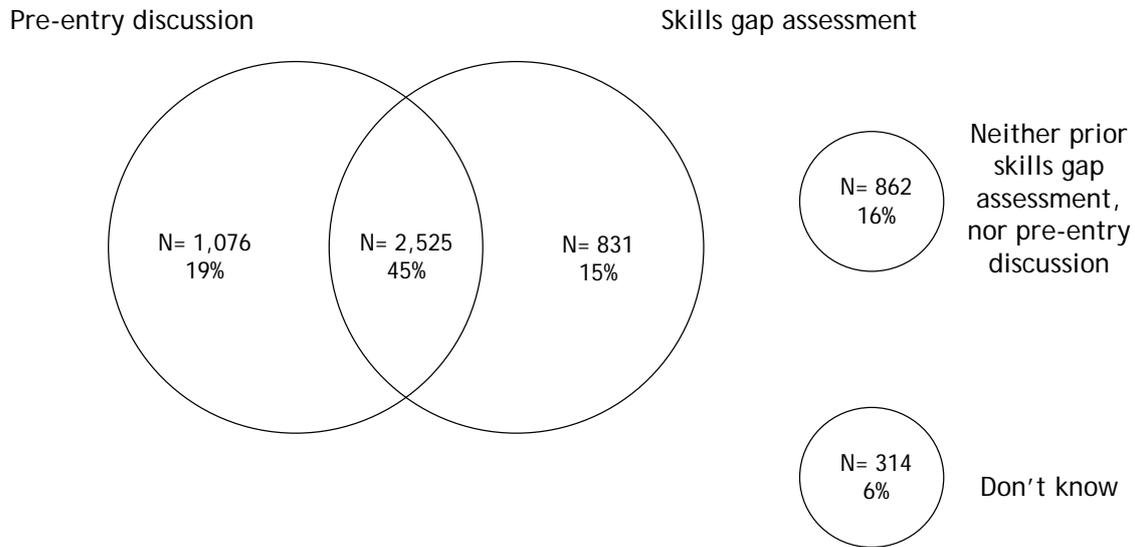
Trades (49 per cent) and Process, Plant and Machine Operatives (55 per cent).

- Regional variation ranged from lows of 59 per cent in the North West and the South East, to a high of 67 per cent in the North East.
- Providing an ILP/PDP was more common among independent training providers (65 per cent) than among public providers (59 per cent). Part-funded Level 3 learners were more likely than fully funded Level 2 learners to have received an ILP/PDP (69 per cent, compared to 62 per cent).

Relationship between pre-entry discussion and skills assessment

142 Figure 12 shows the relationship between having had a pre-entry discussion and a prior skills gap assessment (i.e. the learner had been assessed against some or all of the requirements of the qualification): 45 per cent of learners had both, compared to 51 per cent in Wave 2. The proportion of learners who had neither assessment has also risen slightly – from 13 per cent in Wave 2 to 16 per cent, although this is not statistically significant.

Figure 12: Relationship between pre-entry discussion and prior skills gap assessment



Base = all learners: N = 5,608.

Source: *New entrants group Wave 3 (summer 2008)*

143 Those on a care-related subject were more likely to have received both a pre-entry discussion and a skills gap assessment (57 per cent, compared to 45 per cent of those on other courses), although there was little difference according to the type of training provider or the level of training. By occupational group, those most likely to have had both were found in the Personal Service occupations (55 per cent), while those least likely were Process, Plant and Machine Operatives (42 per cent). By region, those most likely to have had both were based in the South West (52 per cent) and those least likely were in the North West (42 per cent).

Learners who transferred to a different level of qualification

144 The group of learners who reported that they had been transferred to a different level of qualification as a result of their skills assessment(s) (11 per cent of those who had an assessment of any type – see Table 15) were asked about the level of the new qualification in relation to the original one. Table 16 shows that 42 per cent had originally been on a higher-level qualification and were therefore moved to a lower level following their assessment, and 47 per cent had originally been on a lower-level qualification and had been moved up as a result of the assessment.

Table 16: Whether the qualification that was originally selected was at a higher or a lower level than the one being trained for now

Level of original qualification	Wave 3		Wave 2
	Number	%	%
Higher	172	42	45
Lower	195	47	41
Don't know	46	11	14
<i>Total</i>	<i>413</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>

Base = all who were put on a different level of qualification following the assessment:
Wave 3 N = 413; Wave 2 N = 233.

Source: New entrants group Waves 2 and 3 (autumn 2007, summer 2008)

145 Those who had been advised to change the level of their qualification were also asked the reason behind the decision. Tables 17 and 18 show the responses, according to whether respondents moved to a higher or a lower qualification. The most frequent responses for those moving to a higher level relate to the skill levels required for the job or to the level of skills/qualifications already held by respondents. For those moving to a lower level, the learner's role appeared to be more important. Unusually, 15 per cent of this group claimed already to have had a qualification at the higher level, although this response may have to do with them having completed particular qualifications, rather than specifically changing level.

Table 17: Reason for changing level (those changing from a higher qualification to a lower one)

Reason	Number	%
Due to the type of work being done at the time	61	35
I had already completed the original level	25	15
Original level was too high for my current skills and/or qualifications	16	9
Original level was too high for what I do in my job	18	10
To help improve my skills or qualifications	13	8
The training provider or tutor advised me to change level	3	2
Other	35	20
Don't know	2	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>172</i>	<i>100</i>

Base = moved from a higher to a lower-level qualification following the assessment: N = 172.

Source: New entrants group Wave 3 (summer 2008)

Table 18: Reason for changing level (those changing from a lower qualification to a higher one)

Reason	Number	%
Original level was too low for my current skills and/or qualifications	64	33
Original level was too low for what I do in my job	49	25
Due to the type of work being done at the time	35	18
I had already completed the original level	22	11
To help improve my skills or qualifications	2	1
Other	18	9
Don't know	5	3

Base = moved from a lower to a higher-level qualification following the assessment: N = 195.

Source: *New entrants group Wave 3 (summer 2008)*

Learners who transferred to a different qualification subject

146 The group of learners who transferred to a different qualification subject following their assessment(s) (3 per cent of those receiving an assessment of any type – see Table 15) were asked their reasons for doing so. Table 19 shows that 36 per cent felt that the qualification and subject that they had changed to was a better match for their job.

Table 19: Reason for changing subject

Reason	Wave 3		Wave 2
	Number	%	%
The recommended qualification was a better match for my job	38	36	45
The recommended qualification was a better match for my current skills	20	19	22
The recommended qualification was more appropriate to my future career	19	18	9
The original qualification was unavailable (e.g. there was no one available to train or assess the qualification)	1	1	1
Other	22	21	17
Don't know	6	5	6

Base = those who were put on a different qualification subject following the assessment: Wave 3 N = 105; Wave 2 N = 97.

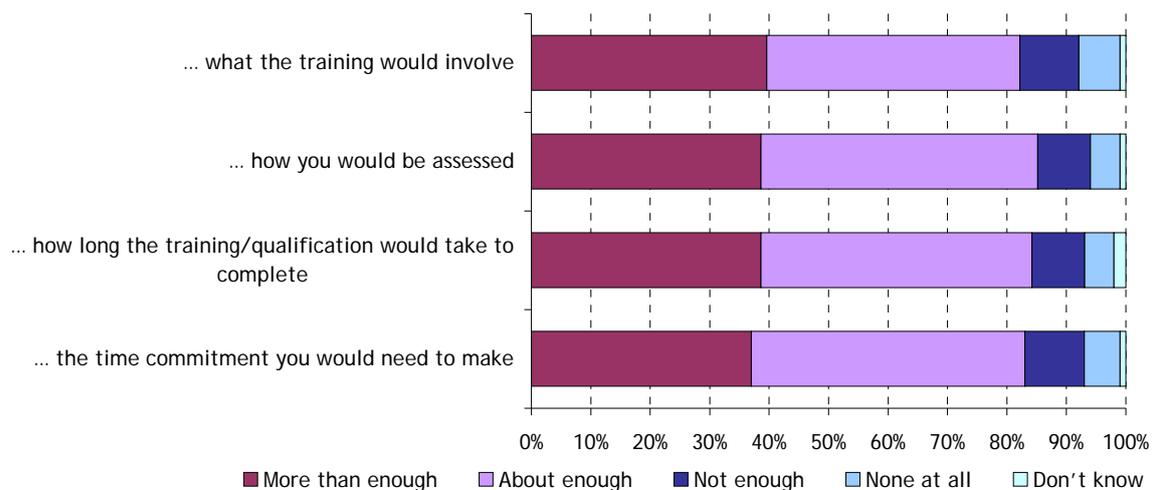
Source: *New entrants group Waves 2 and 3 (autumn 2007, summer 2008)*

Information received prior to training

147 All respondents to the new entrant survey were asked to consider the amount of information they had received in four areas, and the extent to which this had met their needs. Information levels were said to be high for all areas, and Figure 13 shows that more than 80 per cent of respondents said they had received enough or more than enough information on each of the four measures.

- 40 per cent said they had received more than enough information, and 43 per cent had received about the right amount of information on what the training would involve.
- 39 per cent had received more than enough information, and 47 per cent the right amount of information about how they would be assessed.
- 39 per cent had received more than enough information, and 46 per cent the right amount of information about how long the training would take to complete.
- 37 per cent had received more than enough information, and 46 per cent the right amount of information about the time commitment they needed to make.

Figure 13: Amount of information received prior to learning



Base = all learners: N = 5,608. Not asked in previous waves.

Source: New entrants group Wave 3 (summer 2008)

- 148 Respondents in the qualitative interviews also felt that they had been given useful information prior to starting their learning. One reason for this is that few people had prior experience of NVQs, and so appreciated being informed about how the process would work.

I thought it was useful, because otherwise we wouldn't have known what we had to do or what was happening.

NE, Level 2 Cleaning and Support Services

- 149 There was, however, a significant minority who felt that they did not get enough information before they started, particularly about the workload. Some were concerned about written work, others about fitting in their learning alongside their job. While most felt it was important to be given a realistic idea of what they could expect, some were aware that this could be off-putting if it was not presented carefully.

The information was there but perhaps it would have been nice to have just been told this isn't going to be an easy ride...although I think had they said how much work was involved I might not have actually done it.

NE, Level 3 Business and Administration

Experiences of Training

150 This chapter focuses on learners' experiences of Train to Gain, including the support they received, factors that influence completion time, and any difficulties they have experienced.

Key findings

- 151 Most learners (85 per cent) in the longitudinal group had completed their training at the time of the survey, up from 72 per cent in Wave 2.
- The average time to complete was 41 weeks for this group.
 - For around half (48 per cent) of this group, the training took as long as they had expected, while 16 per cent said it had taken less time than they had expected.
- 152 Nearly a third (30 per cent) of new entrants had completed their training, taking an average of 14 weeks.
- 153 As in previous waves, the amount of time spent with the tutor or assessor and the amount of time spent doing the training at work were deemed to be the most important factors in the speed at which learners complete. The importance of having a supportive and flexible tutor or assessor was underlined by many learners in the qualitative research.
- 154 The type of support rated as most important by learners was also the type of support most frequently received.
- 88 per cent said they received support on how to use tasks from their work as evidence; this was rated as important or very important by 97 per cent of learners.
 - 87 per cent had had regular discussions with their tutor/assessor; this was rated as important or very important by 98 per cent of learners.
- 155 However, 20 per cent of learners felt that they needed additional support.
- 32 per cent wanted more support from the assessor or tutor; this figure was up from 24 per cent at Wave 2.

- 22 per cent wanted more support from their manager/supervisor, and to have available time at work (30 per cent at Wave 2).
- 156 The majority of learners found their training/qualification to be fairly challenging.
- Of those still learning, 63 per cent were finding it challenging and 28 per cent were finding it easy.
 - Of those that had completed, 58 per cent had found it challenging and 33 per cent had found it easy.
- 157 Women and older learners found their training particularly challenging – in qualitative interviews some cited the difficulties of juggling home, work and training; for others it was an issue of confidence, having been out of learning for a long time. However, experience varied and these views were by no means universal.
- 158 A small number of learners had left their training before completing (5 per cent in the longitudinal and 4 per cent of new entrants). For most, this was because they had left the employer with whom they had signed up for the training; however, learners in the longitudinal group also cited problems with their assessor/tutor or a change in personal circumstances.
- 159 Learners in the qualitative research reported that employers were, on the whole, supportive and flexible in allowing employees time within the working day to accommodate their training/qualification. Most learners also needed to invest their own time to ensure that they could complete the qualification.

Learning and assessment

- 160 For most respondents in the qualitative interviews, the style of learning and assessment reflected typical NVQ practice: some combined input at college (or workplace classrooms with large employers) with work-based or simulated assessment, while others learned exclusively at work, with input from tutors and assessors. Assessments and portfolio content reflected a range of methods, including observations, diaries, photographs, short written or oral 'tests' and witness statements. Most felt that the assessments did not impinge greatly on their day-to-day work.

No, [the assessment] didn't interfere or anything like that, in fact I used to forget they were there!

LL, Level 2 Health and Social Care

161 Many respondents said they spent at least some of their own time gathering evidence or studying for their qualification. This was challenging for some, although overall most felt that the amount of time spent was not too onerous. Some respondents indicated that the process of compiling a portfolio was challenging.

I normally read for about 2 hours a night [twice a week]...so things sink in better. When you finally get to answer the questions you know what the definitions are of what you need to know.

LL, Level 2 Customer Service

Sometimes you're exhausted and you come home and you have to write it. But you get through it.

NE, Level 2 Health and Social Care

162 The level of autonomy and nature of the job had a strong influence on learners' ability to study. For example, one respondent said that their role as a manager gave them sufficient flexibility and more options than others.

I've also got a laptop and I can work at home. My own staff find it difficult...it's easier for me to fit it in.

NE, Level 3 Customer Service

Support

163 The longitudinal survey asked current and recent learners about the importance of four elements of support, and then asked about the extent to which these had been available during their training. Table 20 outlines the importance of each element of support, in the form of a mean score, where a higher score indicates greater importance. (Mean scores are based on the following: 1 = not at all important; 2 = not very important; 3 = neither/nor; 4 = fairly important; 5 = very important.)

164 The data shows that all four elements were rated highly by respondents, particularly the importance of ‘regular discussions with the tutor/assessor’ (76 per cent said it was very important and 22 per cent said it was fairly important) and ‘understanding how to use tasks from your work as evidence for your qualification’ (72 per cent said that it was very important and 25 per cent that it was fairly important), both of which scored 4.7 out of a maximum possible score of 5.0. These were also the two elements of support that respondents were most likely to say they had received (see Table 21): 88 per cent said they had received support on how to use tasks from their work as evidence, and 87 per cent had had regular discussions with their tutor/assessor.

Table 20: Importance of types of support (mean score)

Support	Wave 3 Mean score	Wave 2 Mean score
Regular discussions with the tutor/assessor	4.7	4.7
Understanding how to use tasks from your work as evidence for your qualification	4.7	4.8
Support from your manager/supervisor	4.5	4.4
Time for independent work on your training/qualification during work	4.4	4.4

Base = current and recent learners: Wave 3 N = 715; Wave 2 N = 4,971.

Source: Longitudinal group Waves 2 and 3 (autumn 2007, summer 2008)

Table 21: Whether support was received

Support	Wave 3		Wave 2
	Number saying Yes	% saying Yes	% saying Yes
Understanding how to use tasks from your work as evidence for your qualification	628	88	93
Regular discussions with the tutor/assessor	621	87	93
Support from your manager/supervisor	575	80	84
Time for independent work on your training/qualification during work	566	79	83

Base = current and recent learners: Wave 3 N = 715; Wave 2 N = 4,971.

Source: Longitudinal group Waves 2 and 3 (autumn 2007, summer 2008)

165 Combining all four forms of support shows that:

- two learners in three, 66 per cent, received all four forms of support;
- 16 per cent received three out of the four forms of support;
- 6 per cent received two forms of support;
- 8 per cent received one form of support; and
- 3 per cent received no support at all.

166 The percentages of learners receiving support showed some variation according to their occupational group.

- Receiving support about ‘how to use tasks from your work as evidence for your qualification’ showed only small variation, from 82 per cent of Associate Professional and Technical staff to 94 per cent of Elementary occupations.
- Greater variation was evident in the proportions that had ‘regular discussions with the tutor/assessor’, varying from 100 per cent of Sales and Customer Service occupations, and 92 per cent of Elementary occupations, to lows of 82 per cent in the Associate Professional and Technical group. Unlike the other elements of support, this also showed regional variation, from highs of 95 per cent in the North West to lows of 74 per cent in the East Midlands and 75 per cent in London.

- Receiving ‘support from your manager or supervisor’ varied from 72 per cent of Managers and Supervisors, and Process, Plant and Machine Operatives, to 89 per cent of Elementary occupations.
- Receiving ‘time for independent work on your training/qualification during work’ was lowest for Administrative and Secretarial occupations, with 72 per cent, and highest for Elementary occupations, with 88 per cent.

167 Current and recent learners (N=715) were then asked whether there was any additional support that they would have liked. One in five of this group (20 per cent) said that there was, and the most frequently named were having extra support from the assessor or tutor; support from the manager/supervisor; having available time at work, or having time off from work in order to do the training; and time with or access to the tutor.

Table 22: Additional type of support required

	Wave 3		Wave 2
	Number	%	%
Support from assessor/tutor	46	32	24
Support from manager	32	22	30
Time in/off work to do training	21	15	15
Time with/access to tutor	18	13	14
Support from the college/training provider	15	10	6
Information in advance about the type and amount of work involved	12	8	5
Support from colleagues	10	7	-
Tutor being there/available as scheduled	8	6	6

Base = current and recent learners who specified additional support that they needed: Wave 3 N = 144; Wave 2 N = 702. Multiple responses given; answers of 6 per cent and above shown. - indicates not reported.

Source: Longitudinal group Waves 2 and 3 (autumn 2007, summer 2008)

168 The qualitative interviews with new entrants and longitudinal learners also reflected the importance of discussions with the tutor, as well as support from managers and employers. Discussions with tutors and assessors were used to get information about how to gather evidence for the NVQ. The support given by the tutor was a key aspect for those learners in the qualitative study who said they had regular contact with the tutor and were able to talk through any concerns. This was important, not just to dispel fears at the beginning, but for the duration of the learning.

I did feel that I could talk to her, any concerns. When I said about the state of my writing she just took time to sit with me and said 'look it doesn't matter, we can see what you're trying to say'.

LL, Level 3 Health and Social Care

169 The learners also stated that support from their manager and employer was important, and often they made no distinction between the employer and their manager. The support they received ranged from having computer rooms set up for them to complete their work in and having cover arranged while they were with the tutors or working on their training, to being allowed time off to complete the work. Managers were often used as a source of information for learners who had to find out about health and safety policies and relevant legislation for their organisation.

She was very supportive. She was always asking us how we were getting on, even though she was getting feedback anyway from the assessors.

LL, Level 2 Food and Drink Manufacturing

My manager was brilliant, she helped me with anything.

NE, Level 2 Health and Social Care

170 As can be seen from Table 20, the other factor rated by learners as important was time to do work on the qualification during work, which also relied on the goodwill and support of colleagues and managers. Many learners benefited from flexible and supportive employers; some gave employees paid time for study or for compiling portfolios, while others accommodated the need by, for example, having a quiet area at work or allowing the learners to work flexibly.

She didn't mind how often the assessor came in to see us. She could've complained, she could've said no, I don't want you to see the assessor in my time, I want you to see her in your own time, she could've done all that but she didn't do.

NE, Level 3 Teaching Assistant

If you said to your supervisor 'look I got some IT stuff to do' they let you do it in work's time, they were really good... They might say can you do it at 6pm rather than now because we are a bit busy, then they are happy.

NE, Level 2 IT Users

171 Not all employers were so flexible, however.

No, you just did that all in your own time, I think they should give you a day's study or something like that I think they should. But that's not going to happen.

LL, Level 3 Health and Social Care

172 Longitudinal and new entrants in the qualitative research were also asked about the importance of support given by family. It was more frequent for learners who completed work at home to cite this as an important aspect of support; but it was not restricted to this group, nor was it gender specific.

173 As with the quantitative study, learners were asked what additional support they felt they could have benefited from. Findings from the qualitative interviews showed that some would have liked more support from their tutor, as well as more access to their tutor. Those who wanted more access to their tutor often understood that their tutor was also supporting many other learners, but were still frustrated by the length of time they had to wait between meetings.

I didn't understand what I was doing; I just got on with it, probably have more help from the assessor because she didn't realise what was going on.

LL, Level 2 Health and Social Care

The only thing that would have suited me was them to come around quicker.

LL, Level 2 Housekeeping

174 Some learners in the qualitative study also wanted additional support from their managers. This was reported by both longitudinal and new entrants, and by ongoing learners and completers. The managers often had very little input into the learning, sometimes only having to provide witness testimonies. A few learners felt that they would have liked more interest and recognition from their managers about their qualification.

Yes, it would have been good just for him to approach me and say 'how's it going and what are you doing? I want to understand what you are doing.'

NE, Level 3 Business and Administration

175 The other types of additional support mentioned in the quantitative study were time at work and time off work. For some of the learners, lack of time off at work was part of a wider lack of support by managers and colleagues. This may be influenced by the job role of the learner.

Nobody was helping and there was no support whatsoever. If you asked if you could nip and do something you were told we didn't have time and had to get something done.

LL, Level 2 Business Improvement Techniques

Time taken to complete learning

176 Those who had already completed their learning were asked how long they had taken to finish. For new entrants (N=1,688), the time taken ranged from one week to 11 months, with an average duration of 14 weeks.

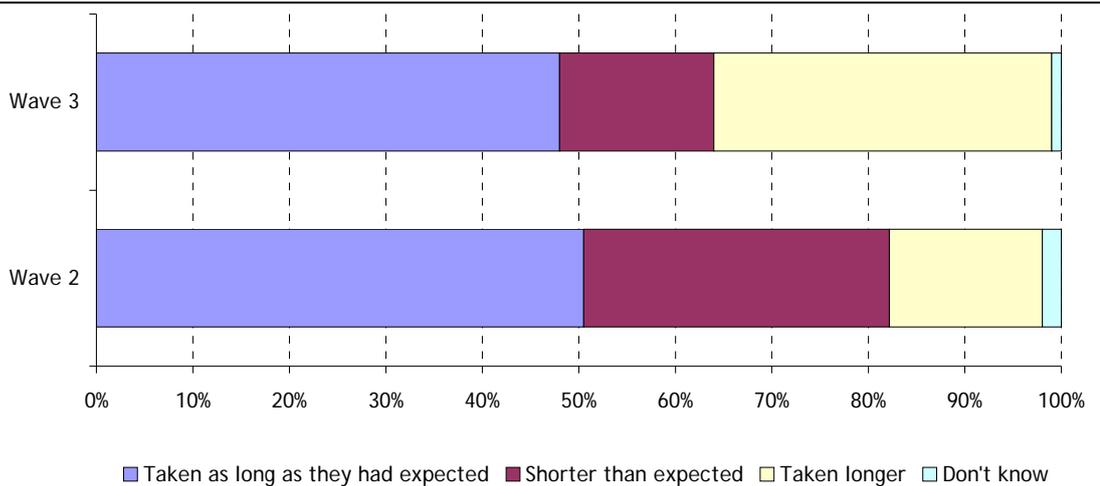
- For Level 2 learners, the longest completer took seven months and the average duration was 14 weeks.
- For Level 3 learners, the maximum time taken rose to 11 months, and the average duration went up to 21 weeks.

177 Completers in the longitudinal group took between one week and two years to complete their training, though the average duration was 41 weeks. Since this figure includes only those who completed between Waves 2 and 3

(N=468), and excluded those who had finished earlier, we would expect this longer time period.

178 The completers in the longitudinal group were asked about the amount of time they had taken to complete their learning. They were also asked to consider how this compared to what they had expected at the outset of the course. Almost half (48 per cent) reported that it had taken as long as they had expected; 35 per cent felt it had taken longer; and 16 per cent felt it had been shorter than expected. In Wave 2, only 16 per cent felt that the qualification had taken longer than expected. Again, in Wave 3, the question would have been asked of learners who had been learning for longer, which may explain this higher figure.

Figure 14: Time taken to complete learning



Base = completers only: Wave 3 N = 468; Wave 2 N = 3,633.

Source: Longitudinal group Waves 2 and 3 (autumn 2007, summer 2008)

179 This showed some variation by subject area, with those on care-related courses more likely than those on other courses to say that it had taken longer than expected (44 per cent, compared to 30 per cent). Different occupational groups also had different responses, with the proportion of those who found that their course had taken longer than expected ranging from highs of 55 per cent in the Associate Professional and Technical group, and 46 per cent of the Professional occupations, to lows of 21 per cent of the Administrative and Secretarial group and 27 per cent of the Elementary occupations.

- 180 Regional variation was also evident, with those saying that their course had taken longer than expected ranging from 44 per cent in the East of England and 43 per cent in the West Midlands, to 24 per cent in the East Midlands and 27 per cent in London. Variation by training provider was less evident, with 39 per cent of those studying with independent training providers taking longer than expected, compared to 32 per cent of those with public providers.
- 181 A similar question was asked in the longitudinal survey of those currently learning, some of whom had started in August 2006: 56 per cent reported that it was taking longer than they had expected to complete their course; 38 per cent felt it was as expected; and 5 per cent felt it was shorter than expected.
- A greater proportion of those studying with a public provider said that it was taking longer than expected (60 per cent) than of those studying with a private training provider (50 per cent).
 - Those studying a non-care-related subject area were more likely to say that it was taking longer than expected (59 per cent) than were those on care-related courses (50 per cent).
 - Variation in the proportion taking longer than expected was also evident within occupational groups, ranging from lows of 25 per cent of Sales and Customer Service occupations and 47 per cent of Personal Service occupations, to highs of 83 per cent of Administrative and Secretarial occupations and 81 per cent of Process, Plant and Machine Operatives. It should be noted, however, that many of the occupational subgroups have very small bases.
 - Some regional variation was also noticeable, ranging from lows of 29 per cent in the North East and 43 per cent in the North West, to highs of 73 per cent in the East of England and 71 per cent in the South West, though again the small base sizes for the regional subgroups should be noted.

Influences on speed of completion

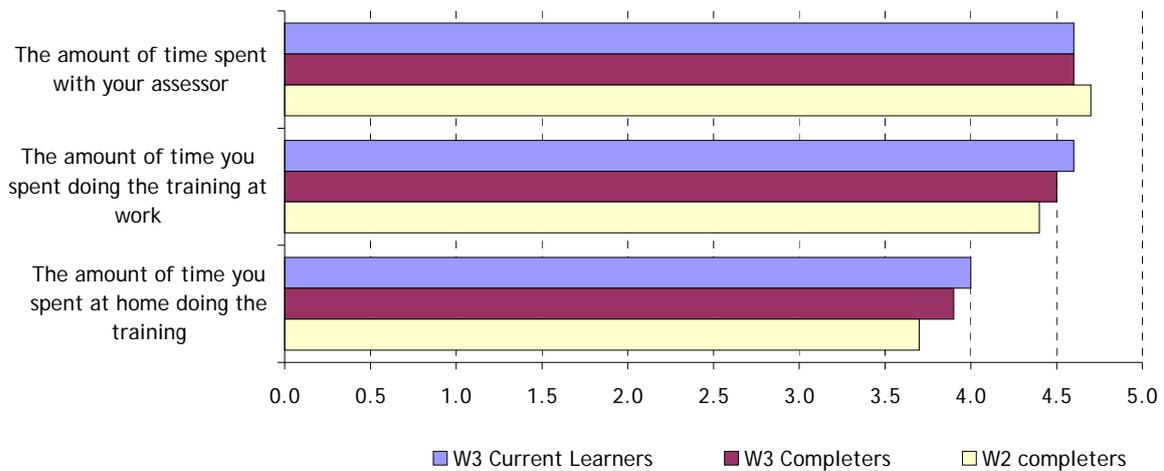
182 In the longitudinal survey, both the Wave 3 completer group and the Wave 3 current learners were asked about the importance of three factors that could potentially affect the speed at which they had completed (in the case of the completers) or were progressing through their course (in the case of the current learners). For both groups, importance levels were very high.

- **The amount of time spent with the assessor** was rated as important by 95 per cent of completers (72 per cent very important and 24 per cent fairly important) and 96 per cent of current learners (68 per cent very important and 28 per cent fairly important).
- **The amount of time spent doing the training at work** was rated just as highly, with 91 per cent of completers thinking it important (62 per cent very important and 29 per cent fairly important) and 96 per cent of current learners (68 per cent very important and 28 per cent fairly important).
- **The amount of time spent at home doing the training** was a little lower, but nevertheless very highly rated, with 73 per cent of completers thinking it important (45 per cent very important and 27 per cent fairly important) and 80 per cent of current learners (42 per cent very important and 39 per cent fairly important).

183 Comparable figures from Wave 2 exist only for the completer group, but these are within two or three percentage points of the Wave 3 completers (95 per cent, 89 per cent and 70 per cent for each statement, respectively).

184 The ratings are shown in Figure 15 as mean scores, where a higher score indicates greater importance. As can be seen, all three factors were rated positively by both completers and current learners, particularly **the amount of time spent with the assessor**, which received a mean score of 4.6 out of a maximum possible score of 5.0 for both groups. (Once again, mean scores are based on the following: 1 = not at all important; 2 = not very important; 3 = neither/nor; 4 = fairly important; 5 = very important.)

Figure 15: Importance of factors to speed of working through or completing



Base = Wave 3 completers N = 468; Wave 3 current learners N = 189; Wave 2 completers N = 3,633. Mean scores range from 1 (not at all important) to 5 (very important).

Source: Longitudinal group Waves 2 and 3 (autumn 2007, summer 2008)

185 Examining Figure 15 by the time taken to complete shows that completers who had finished in a shorter time than expected were a little more likely to recognise the importance of each factor.

- Those completing in a shorter time than expected rated the **amount of time spent with the assessor** at 4.7, compared to 4.6 for the other two groups (those completing in a longer time or as expected).
- Similarly, this group rated **the amount of time spent doing the training at work** as 4.7, compared to 4.4 for the other two groups.
- And the **amount of time spent at home doing the work** was rated at 4.1, compared to 3.9 for the other two groups.

186 There were also some differences in the importance of factors according to the personal characteristics of the completers.

- Women were more likely than men to recognise the importance of **time spent at home doing the work**, which they rated at 4.1, compared to the men's score of 3.6. Women were a little more likely to rate **the amount of time spent with the assessor** highly (4.7) than were men (4.5).

- BME learners rated all three factors higher than did white learners: **the amount of time spent at home doing the work** was rated as 4.5 (compared to 3.9 for white learners); **the amount of time spent with the assessor** was rated as 4.9 (compared to 4.6 for white learners); and the **amount of time spent doing the training at work** was rated as 4.8 (compared to 4.5).
- There was also some variation according to age groups, but no clear patterns were discernible. Differences according to disability were minimal.

- 187 Wave 3 completers were then asked whether any other factors had contributed to the speed at which they had finished, either in a positive or a negative way. More than one in three (36 per cent, or 166 learners), felt there had been additional positive or negative factors involved. For both groups, the top response was the presence (or absence) of a good, supportive or contactable assessor or tutor, although this represents only 20 respondents in total.
- 188 The qualitative interviews revealed that most respondents were happy with the pace at which they were moving through the qualification, even if it was taking a little longer than expected. Respondents felt that they were able to exert some control and speed up or slow down the pace, depending on when they were ready for assessment.
- 189 Many of the learners reported that the support of their tutor or assessor was key to their learning, either in a positive or a negative way. Of those who cited the support of the tutor/assessor as being a positive influence on their learning, this was by explaining the whole process of the NVQ, dispelling fears, and making the qualification seem achievable. A few of the learners reported that the flexibility of the tutor was important for them in their ability to continue with the qualification; this included such examples as tutors visiting learners at home if they were off work sick, or the facility to change appointments at short notice. There was frequent praise for tutors who were available to answer questions when the learners needed them. This commitment and flexibility was regarded highly by the learners.

I was very happy with the lady who was helping me and I think I would have struggled quite a lot if it weren't for her helping me. When I actually did my back she kept coming to the house so that I could carry on with the written side of things.

LL, Level 3 Health and Social Care

I was stuck on something. I can't remember what it was. I phoned her up at 9 at night... So I read it out to her and she told me straight away. She said, 'any time'.

NE, Level 2 Health and Social Care

190 Learners described how flexible assessors had invited contact by phone or email, so that assessments could be carried out as activities occurred naturally at work, or postponed if the visit was unlikely to be helpful.

Yes, we could ring her and say 'we've not completed it this week, can you come next Monday?' She was fine.

NE, Level 2 Customer Service

You go as slow or fast as you like. They set you X amount of work, when they come the following session... you can ring and ask for more work and they will come out.

LL, Level 3 Children's Care Learning and Development

191 Conversely, learners attributed the extra time that they had taken to complete their qualification to their tutors. Some learners felt that they did not see their tutor often enough, and there were learners who had changed tutors or assessors because previous ones had not been satisfactory, which often hampered progress.

It has been a struggle. We've just found out she's leaving as well. We don't know who is going to be the new assessor.

NE, Level 3 Oral Health

And the other one, he's all right but it's taken a very long time to do it. He's not coming very often.

NE, Level 2 Food Processing and Cooking

192 Occasionally, problems would occur that learners felt were outside their control. This was typically linked to a learner's absence, which meant that assessments were missed, or a change of assessor.

Probably a bit slow. [The assessor] would come in one week and then you would miss one week so when he came in again you would lose your feet again.

LL, Level 2 Storage and Warehousing

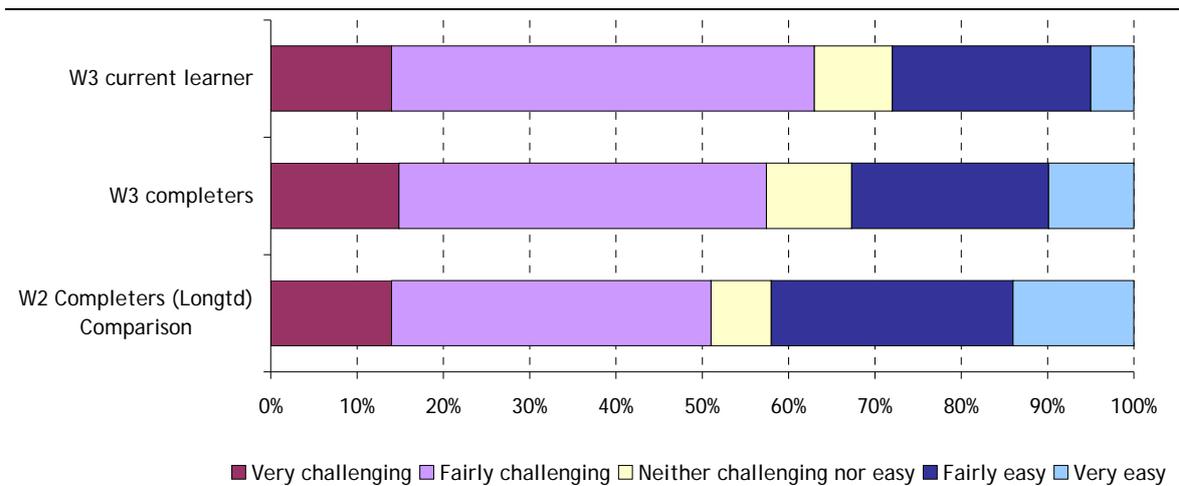
Ease of completion/studying

193 Current learners in the longitudinal survey – mostly those who had been learning across all waves of the survey – were asked how easy or challenging their studying was. Figure 16 shows that, while 28 per cent were finding it easy, the majority were finding the training challenging (63 per cent).

194 A similar question regarding the ease or difficulty of training was asked of Wave 3 completers, and Figure 16 shows that, while 33 per cent had found it easy, 58 per cent had found it challenging.

195 The chart indicates that those taking longer to complete found (or are finding) the training/qualification more challenging.

Figure 16: How easy or challenging the training is/was



Base = Wave 3 completers N = 468; Wave 3 current learners N = 189; Wave 2 completers N = 3,633.

Source: *Longitudinal group Waves 2 and 3 (autumn 2007, summer 2008)*

196 Though the base size did not allow any such analysis of current learners, the data for the completer group was examined in more detail according to personal characteristics and showed the following.

- Women were more likely than men to say they had found the course challenging (61 per cent, compared to 52 per cent).
- Those with a disability or learning difficulties were a little more likely to have found the course challenging (62 per cent, compared to 58 per cent of other learners).
- Older learners were more likely to have found the course challenging than were younger learners: 36 per cent of the age group 18–25 had found it challenging, compared to 53 to 66 per cent of all other (older) age groups.
- There was no difference in findings according to ethnicity.

197 Those who reported that they had found the qualification challenging were asked to expand on their reasons, as were those who had found it easy. The most common causes of difficulty with the training were due to the level of demand of the course and finding the necessary time. Having previous knowledge of the area and a good level of support from the tutor or assessor were the most commonly cited reasons for why the training had been easy.

198 Most respondents in the qualitative research did not complain about the level of difficulty. For some, the qualification was recognition of what they knew already, so they found it easy. For these and others, the most difficult part was compiling the portfolio. Some relished the challenge.

It was challenging but not in a difficult way, it was nice to have a bit of a challenge to do something.

LL, Level 3, Health and Social Care

Problems experienced by completers

199 All Wave 3 completers were asked whether they had experienced any difficulties during the qualification, and 19 per cent (90 respondents) said that they had. The numbers and percentages are not given here because of the small base sizes, but the types of difficulty experienced included:

- the poor quality of the teaching, training or assessment (noted by 16 of the 90 completers who had had difficulties);
- finding the questions or assignments hard to understand or ambiguous (13 responses);
- that the assessor or trainer had stopped coming to the workplace (12 responses); and
- lack of time at work to do the training (10 responses).

200 Of the 90 completers who had experienced difficulties, 77 said they had spoken to someone about it: the majority spoke to their tutor or assessor, and slightly fewer spoke to their employer.

201 Those in the qualitative research who found it hard were struggling to fit the work in around their home life or to adapt to a more independent way of learning. The independent work required by the NVQs meant that it was more important for learners to arrange their own time to complete the work. A few struggled with this, but most learners reported that they 'found a way'.

I did find it a little hard, to be honest, because it was so different from when I did my NVQ2...with the NVQ2 you have got more help but this one you have to do a lot on your own.

NE, Level 3 Health and Social Care

I have managed, but the housework has gone to pot, but that is only for 6 months... I think you have to be very disciplined and I have had to be.

NE, Level 2 Children's Care, Learning and Development

202 One respondent was dissatisfied because he was initially on the wrong course. He also felt that pressures both at work and at home made it difficult for him to give it his full attention, so the course had dragged on longer than he had hoped.

203 The importance of the quality of the tutors and assessors was further emphasised by those who were less satisfied with their experience, although these were isolated instances. A change of tutor or assessor part way through a programme caused difficulties for some learners, and one learner effectively had to start putting the portfolio together again, after the outgoing tutor took the folders away. Another was now finding out how much easier the qualification was with a good assessor.

To be honest, I did have a bit of an upheaval because I had two assessors and both of them were no good. So I spent about six months doing a lot of it on my own.

LL, Level 2, Health and Social Care

204 A small number of learners felt that the language used in some of the written assessments was confusing, or felt that it was difficult to compile a portfolio of evidence. However, these issues were easily resolved by those with supportive assessors and tutors.

The language that was in the book was a bit difficult but anyway everything was explained so it wasn't that difficult.

NE, Level 3 Customer Service

The only thing we didn't like was the [awarding body] questions, the way they were worded they were very hard to understand. One section of the book the temperatures were wrong. The questions weren't that good. It wasn't clear what we were supposed to do.

NE, Level 2 Food Processing and Cooking

Early leavers

- 205 Among the early leavers in the new entrant survey (N=194), learners had studied for between one week and eight months before leaving their course, with an average duration of seven weeks. In the longitudinal group, those who had dropped out of the training between Wave 2 and Wave 3 had studied for periods of between less than a month and around a year, with an average of around 5–6 months.
- 206 Reasons given by the early leavers for failing to complete their course are shown in Tables 23 and 24, which reveal that, for both survey groups, the main reasons for leaving were: the respondent left the employer with whom they had started the training; changes in personal circumstances; lack of time at work to do the training; and the assessor ceasing to come to the workplace. Only a handful of longitudinal learners gave up because they lost interest, lacked time or had a poor assessor. However, these issues were more pertinent for the new entrants group.
- 207 The respondents who had left their original employer and did not complete their qualification often stated that they regretted this, but as they were doing completely different jobs in their new roles, it wasn't possible to gather evidence for the NVQ.

And I wasn't working there so I had nowhere he could, you know, come to observe me.

LL, Level 2 Housekeeping

208 Another common reason cited by respondents in the qualitative survey was a change in personal circumstances, such as a health condition. Again, most of the learners expressed regret at not being able to go on to complete the qualification.

I did all the written work and there were only a few practicals that I had to do to complete it, but I just couldn't do the practical side of it, so I couldn't finish my training...because I had damaged my back and I just couldn't carry it on anymore.

LL, Level 3 Health and Social Care

Table 23: Reasons for leaving course early/not completing it (longitudinal groups)

	Wave 3 (note low base)		Wave 2	Wave 1
	Number	%	%	%
I left the employer I originally signed up for training with	12	21	23	44
The assessor/trainer stopped coming to my workplace	11*	19	9	-
My personal/domestic circumstances changed (e.g. moved house, illness, pregnancy, bereavement)	10	17	20	19
I was encouraged/forced to give up by my employer	6	10	-	-
I lost interest	3	5	3	5
I changed to a different course	3	5	3	-
I did not have enough time at work to do the training	2	3	13	17
The quality of teaching/training or assessment was poor	2	3	6	9

Base = early leavers: Wave 3 N = 58; Wave 2 N = 164, Wave 1 N = 725.

- indicates not reported. Multiple responses given; answers above 3 per cent shown.

* Among the 11 early leavers whose assessor stopped coming to their workplace, this occurred between six weeks and 14 months of starting the qualification.

Source: Longitudinal group Waves 1, 2 and 3 (spring 2007, autumn 2007, summer 2008)

Table 24: Reasons for leaving course early/not completing it (new entrants groups)

	Wave 3		Wave 2 (NE)	Wave 1
	Number	%	%	%
I left the employer I originally signed up for training with	64	33	32	44
I did not have enough time at work to do the training	23	12	15	17
My personal/domestic circumstances changed (e.g. moved house, illness, pregnancy, bereavement)	21	11	16	19
The quality of teaching/training or assessment was poor	15	8	8	9
I did not have enough time at home to do the training	15	8	14	8
The training/qualification was not relevant to my job	13	7	4	8
I lost interest	10	5	5	5
The assessor/trainer stopped coming to my workplace	8	4	3	-
I was encouraged/forced to give up by my employer	7	3	-	-
I wasn't learning anything new	5	3	4	-

Base = early leavers: Wave 3 N = 194; Wave 2 N = 113; Wave 1 N = 725.

- indicates not reported. Multiple responses given; answers above 3 per cent shown.

Source: New entrants group Waves 1, 2 and 3 (spring 2007, autumn 2007, summer 2008)

209 A number of the responses in Table 23 were expanded upon in the longitudinal survey, although it should be noted that the numbers of respondents were very low.

- Half the early leavers (29 out of 58) agreed that there was something that might have helped them to stay on the course. Common responses were: a better tutor; more time with the tutor; and being in a better position financially.
- Of those who were asked, half (8 out of 16) went on to speak to someone about the problem(s) they were experiencing.

Satisfaction and Outcomes

Key findings

- 210 Satisfaction with the training or qualifications in this wave was again very high: 96 per cent of longitudinal and 94 per cent of new entrants said that they were satisfied with their training overall. Both figures show increases from Wave 2 (94 per cent and 90 per cent, respectively). Furthermore, 70 per cent of the longitudinal learners and 74 per cent of new entrants were **extremely** or **very** satisfied, increases of three and four percentage points, respectively, over Wave 2.
- 211 Satisfaction levels on the individual components were also high, in particular:
- the quality of the teaching received (93–94 per cent);
 - the information and advice prior to starting the training (91 per cent);
 - the length of time it took to do the training (90 per cent).
- 212 According to regression analysis, the most important determinant of overall satisfaction that can be influenced by the management of the Train to Gain programme is the use of assessments prior to training. However, the amount of variation that can be attributed to any single factor, or combination of factors, is very small.
- 213 The achieved benefits of learning were broadly consistent with previous waves, and was also consistent across the new entrant and longitudinal groups. Completers in the new entrants group said that the main outcomes were:
- gaining a qualification (unchanged from Wave 2, with 92 per cent of learners);
 - skills that would help with current and future jobs and employers (89 per cent Wave 3, 87 per cent Wave 2);
 - skills to help do a better job in the future (81 per cent Wave 3, 80 per cent Wave 2).

- 214 The chance to learn something new was cited more often in Wave 3 than in Wave 2 (79 per cent, compared to 72 per cent).
- 215 There was more change, albeit slight, within the longitudinal group, where the most frequently cited outcomes were:
- gaining skills that will look good to future employers (91 per cent Wave 3, 88 per cent Wave 2);
 - skills to help do a better job in the future (88 per cent Wave 3, 85 per cent Wave 2);
 - gaining a certificate or qualification (86 per cent Wave 3 but no comparable figure for Wave 2).
- 216 Attitudes towards learning among longitudinal learners (completers and current learners) were also very positive.
- 87 per cent agreed with the statement 'I feel more confident in my ability to learn'.
 - 82 per cent agreed that 'I feel more positive about learning than when I started this course'.
- 217 Improved self-confidence was also a feature of the benefits cited, and emerged from the qualitative research as one of the main benefits of the training.
- 218 Longitudinal learners also described changes since the beginning of their training.
- 78 per cent of learners said they had gained practical skills related to their job, and 58 per cent said they had gained general employability skills.
 - 32 per cent of learners had had a pay rise, while 29 per cent had taken on more responsibility without better pay.
 - Overall, 44 per cent of learners had experienced a positive outcome that they attributed to the training.
- 219 Most learners who had completed said that they and their employer had benefited equally from the training:

- 76 per cent of the new entrants group; and
- 72 per cent of the longitudinal group.

220 The qualitative research showed that many learners had been encouraged by their experience to consider further training or another qualification, and the quantitative research bore this out.

- 24 per cent of longitudinal learners had already started a further qualification.
- 51 per cent of longitudinal learners and 67 per cent of new entrants felt that they were likely to do further training or qualifications at a higher level within the next three years.
- 43 per cent of longitudinal and 41 per cent of new entrant learners said they had been spoken to about further training options, usually by their employer.

Potential and actual gains from training

New entrants

221 We discussed above the anticipated benefits of training. Learners who had completed were also asked what they had **actually** gained as a result of their training. Figure 17 shows the responses of those new entrants who had already completed. As with the anticipated benefits, the results are highly consistent with previous waves. Agreement is high with most of the outcomes, and the most frequently cited benefit is with regard to gaining a qualification (92 per cent of respondents). The next most popular responses were related to gaining skills that would help with current and future jobs and employers, improving self-confidence, and having the chance to learn something new (scores ranged from 75 per cent to 89 per cent).

222 The highest response for anticipated and achieved gains was 'a qualification', rating over 90 per cent on both measures consistently over the three waves. On the surface of it, saying that a learner has achieved 'a qualification' appears not to tell us a great deal. However, the qualitative interviews supported the survey evidence and showed that learners felt there was real value in achieving a qualification. The certificate or award was recognition of

their achievements, knowledge and skills, and was said to be very important. Respondents spoke with great pride about what they had gained – for many, a first qualification – and described how it gave them confidence, credibility and real gains in terms of their current job and future career. Thus, achieving ‘a qualification’ spanned the most frequently cited other benefits of the Train to Gain programme.

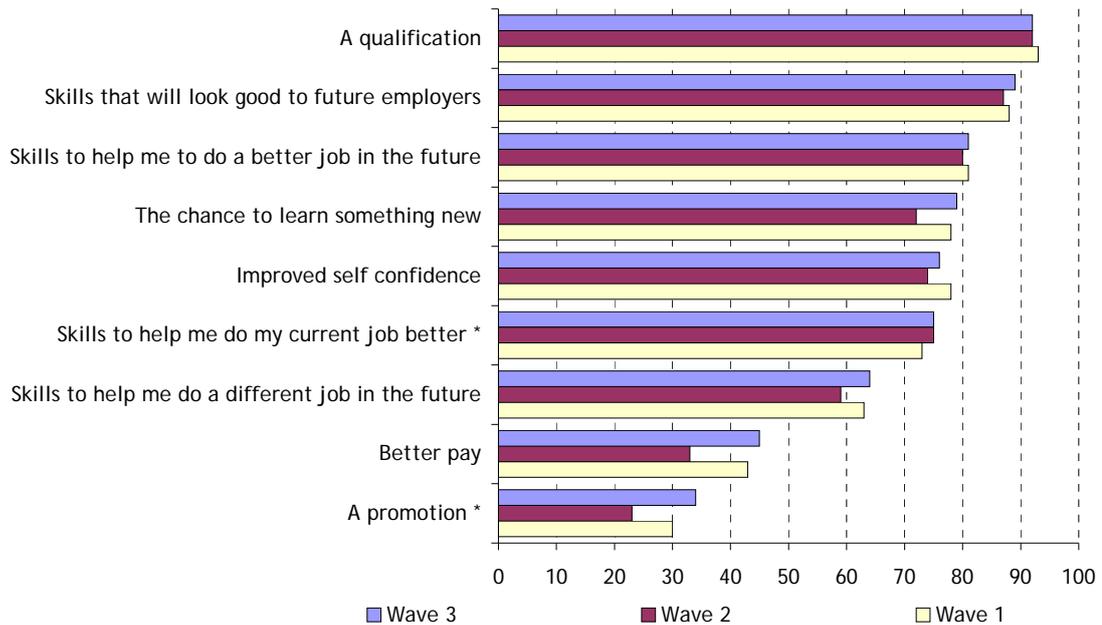
Reassurance that I am of value. And probably the ability to tell people ‘I can do that’ because, although I have been doing [it], now there is something that says I can... I have never had a certificate to prove it.

NE, Level 2 Performing Manufacturing Operations

Because these days you can’t walk into a job without a qualification. There’s so many people looking for jobs, and so many people looking for jobs like ours, that if you’ve got the qualification then you’re going to get the job.

NE, Level 3 Teaching Assistant

Figure 17: Actual outcomes of training



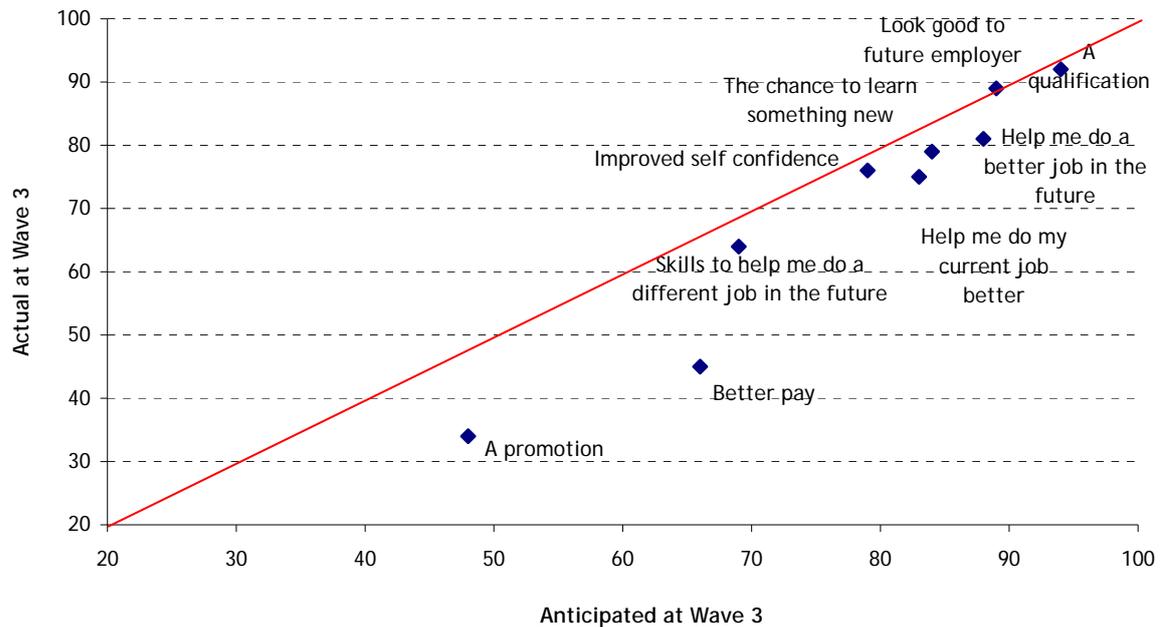
Base = all completers: Wave 3: N = 1,688; Wave 2: N = 939; Wave 1: N = 1,642.

* = only asked of those in work for Waves 2 and 3.

Source: *New entrants group survey Waves 1, 2 and 3 (spring 2007, autumn 2007, summer 2008)*

223 There is a very close match between the benefits that are anticipated by current learners and those that learners who have completed feel they have actually gained. Figure 18 plots the anticipated gains against those achieved. The central line shows what a perfect match would look like (for example, 50 per cent anticipating a benefit and 50 per cent achieving that benefit) and highlights how little deviation there is from that perfect match (although for actual outcomes the scores fall a little short of the anticipated outcomes). Interestingly, pay and promotion fall furthest from the line, indicating that the financial benefits hoped for are least likely to materialise.

Figure 18: Anticipated versus actual outcomes of training



Line is drawn at 45 degrees to indicate a 'perfect match' between anticipated and actual outcomes.

Source: Wave 3 new entrants group survey (summer 2008)

224 The likelihood of each of the outcomes showed some degree of variation according to the personal characteristics of the learners.

- Older learners had lower expectations from learning, as well as lower actual gains. The oldest age group of 56 and above scored lower than any other age group on every outcome and for both learner groups. The largest differences were evident for those outcomes related to future jobs and employers, as well as better pay and promotion prospects.
- Women scored higher than men for all outcomes across both groups of learners, with the exception of one outcome (a promotion) within the 'anticipated' group, for which the scores of men and women were the same. The largest gender difference across both groups of learners was found with the outcome of improved **self-confidence**, where female completers scored 85 per cent, compared to the male completers' score of 70 per cent, while female current learners scored 84 per cent, compared to the male current learners' score of 74 per cent.
- BME learners had consistently higher expectations and actual gains than did white learners, scoring higher on all but one of the anticipated

outcomes, and on all but one of the actual gains. Some of the largest differences were noted for the outcomes of better pay and a promotion. For **better pay**, BME completers scored 65 per cent, compared to their white counterparts' score of 41 per cent, and BME current learners scored 79 per cent, compared to the score for white current learners of 63 per cent. Similarly, with regard to expecting or achieving a **promotion**, BME completers scored 52 per cent, compared to the white completers' score of 32 per cent, and BME current learners scored 62 per cent, compared to the white current learners' score of 45 per cent.

- Those with a disability or learning difficulties scored all the anticipated outcomes higher than other learners, as well as all but two of the actual gains.

Longitudinal group

225 Those in the longitudinal group who had already started their training were also asked what they had gained from their training (note that the same question was asked of those still training and of those who had completed or left their training). As with the new entrants group above, the top responses referred to the gaining of skills that were related to future employers (91 per cent) and future jobs (88 per cent), and the gaining of a qualification (86 per cent), although the rank order of these was different. Gaining 'a qualification' was the third most frequently given response among the longitudinal group, rather than first among the new entrants.

Table 25: Outcome of training

Outcome/what gained	Wave 3		Wave 2
	Number	%	%
Skills that will look good to future employers	2,455	91	88
Skills to help me do a better job in the future	2,372	88	85
A certificate/qualification	2,311	86	7**
Improved self-confidence	2,138	79	76
Skills to help me do my current job better *	1,977	73	72
Improved motivation at work	1,900	70	68
Increased responsibility at work *	1,365	51	47
Increased promotion prospects	1,291	48	44
An award from my employer *	643	24	23
None of these/nothing	40	2	3

Base = all learners except those yet to start: Wave 3 N = 2,701; Wave 2 N = 4,971.

Multiple responses given. * only asked of those in work. **this was not asked explicitly in Wave 2, but was mentioned spontaneously by some as an 'other' response.

Source: Longitudinal group Waves 2 and 3 (autumn 2007, summer 2008)

226 Table 26 separates the responses for learners at different stages and shows, as we would expect, that the outcomes for those who have completed are greater than for those who left early. There is less difference between the completer group and those still learning, with the exception of the receipt of a certificate; in fact, the current learners appear to have achieved many of the benefits to a greater extent than the completers.

Table 26: Outcome of training by learning status

Outcome/what gained	Early leaver	Completers	Still learning
	%	%	%
Skills that will look good to future employers	58	93	91
Skills to help me do a better job in the future	66	89	91
A certificate/qualification	21	92	57
Improved self-confidence	59	80	79
Skills to help me do my current job better *	36	75	82
Improved motivation at work	51	71	75
Increased responsibility at work *	33	50	66
Increased promotion prospects	23	49	56
An award from my employer *	11	24	30
None of these/nothing	21	<0.5	2

Base = all learners except those yet to start: early leaver N = 140; completers N = 2,372; still learning N = 189. Multiple responses given. * only asked of those in work.

Source: Longitudinal group Wave 3 (summer 2008)

227 Table 27 below isolates the responses from the longitudinal surveys of those who were in the process of studying at Wave 2, and who had completed by the time of Wave 3. It shows, therefore, for a group of 440 learners, the differences between what they anticipated they would gain from their learning (as measured at Wave 2) and what they actually gained (as measured at Wave 3). For most outcomes, the differences were within one or two percentage points, showing a close relationship between anticipated and actual outcomes. There were two exceptions.

- 53 per cent anticipated that their training would lead to increased responsibility at work, but only 45 per cent reported that this had come about by the time of Wave 3.
- 25 per cent anticipated that they would gain an award from their employer, but only 19 per cent reported that this had occurred.

Table 27: Outcomes of training – differences between what was anticipated at Wave 2 and what was actual at Wave 3

Outcome	What was anticipated at Wave 2		What was actual at Wave 3		Percentage difference
	Number	%	Number	%	%
Skills that will look good to future employers	393	89	401	91	+2
Skills to help me to do a better job in the future	382	87	382	87	0
Skills to help me do my current job better *	348	79	338	77	-2
Improved self-confidence	330	75	333	76	+1
Improved motivation at work	298	68	302	69	+1
Increased promotion prospects	220	50	211	48	-2
Increased responsibility at work *	235	53	197	45	-8
An award from my employer *	109	25	85	19	-6

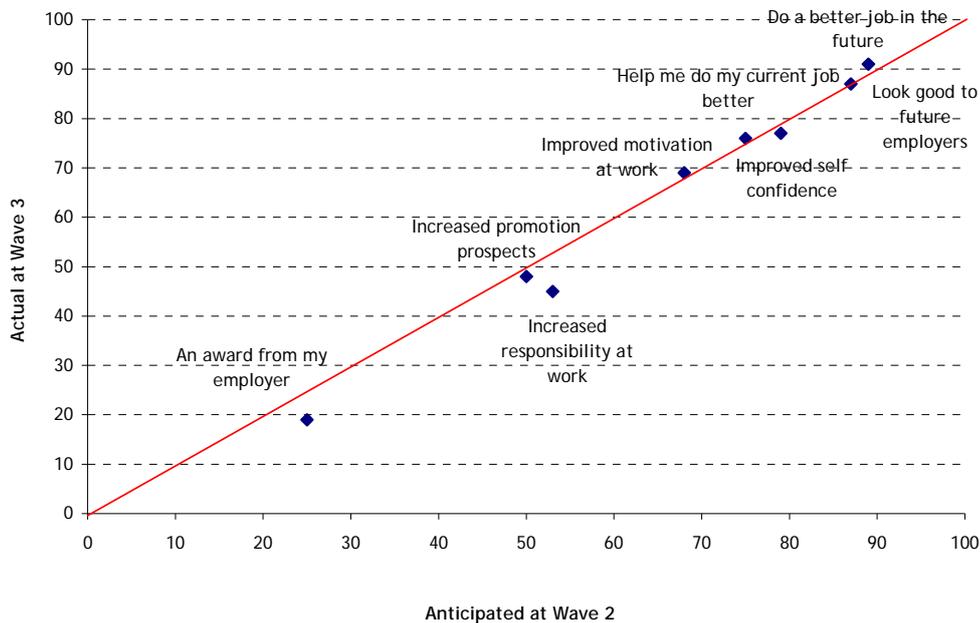
Base = completers at Wave 3, who were current learners at Wave 2: N = 440.

* = only asked of those in work.

Source: Longitudinal group Waves 2 and 3 (autumn 2007, summer 2008)

228 Figure 19 shows the same information graphically. The line indicates a 'perfect match' between anticipated and actual outcomes, and is not intended to be a best-fit correlation line.

Figure 19: Outcomes of training – anticipated at Wave 2 versus actual at Wave 3



Line is drawn at 45 degrees to indicate a 'perfect match' between anticipated and actual outcomes. Base = completers at Wave 3, who were current learners at Wave 2: N = 440.

Source: Longitudinal group Wave 3 (summer 2008)

Attitudes towards learning

229 The longitudinal survey asked respondents to rate their agreement with a different set of statements about learning (see Table 28) on a five-point scale. Agreement was positive for two statements: 'I feel more confident in my ability to learn', which scored 4.3 out of a maximum possible score of 5.0, and drew 87 per cent agreement, and 'I feel more positive about learning than when I started this course', which scored 4.2 and had 82 per cent agreement. Furthermore, two-thirds (67 per cent) disagreed with the statement 'I have not got everything out of the learning that I wanted', with only 27 per cent saying they agreed; a mean score of just 2.3 reflects this disagreement.

Table 28: Agreement with attitudes towards learning (mean score and per cent)

	Mean score	% agreeing
I feel more confident in my ability to learn	4.3	87
I feel more positive about learning than when I started this course	4.2	82
I have not got everything out of the learning that I wanted	2.4	27

Base = all learners except those yet to start: N = 2,701. Question was not asked in previous waves. Mean scores range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Source: Longitudinal group survey Wave 3 (summer 2008)

230 The personal characteristics of the learners had some effect on their responses.

- Women were more likely than men to agree that ‘I feel more positive about learning than when I started this course’ (score of 4.3, compared to 4.0 for men), and ‘I feel more confident in my ability to learn’ (4.4, compared to 4.1).
- BME respondents were more likely than white respondents to agree that ‘I feel more confident in my ability to learn’ (4.6, compared to 4.3) but less likely to agree that ‘I have not got everything out of the learning that I wanted’ (score of 2.7, compared to 2.3 for white learners).

Financial gains

231 Outcomes of learning in terms of financial benefits were measured at all three waves of the longitudinal surveys (though the wording changed between Wave 1 and Waves 2 and 3). When responses are combined across each wave, 30 per cent of completers in the Wave 3 survey had achieved a financial outcome by the time of the Wave 3 survey.

- At Wave 1, 43 per cent of completers said they had received a pay increase, and 30 per cent a promotion, from doing their training.
- At Wave 2, 22 per cent of those completing at Wave 1 or Wave 2 reported that they had achieved a bonus, promotion or pay increase as a direct result of completing their qualification.

- At Wave 3, again 22 per cent of those completing by Wave 3 reported that they had received a financial bonus, a promotion or an increase to their pay as a direct result of qualifying.

New skills

- 232 All respondents in the longitudinal survey, with the exception of those yet to start their training, were asked about new skills that they may have learned (see Table 29). Overall, 90 per cent said that they had learned new skills. More than three respondents in four (78 per cent) said they had learned practical skills related to their job, and more than half (58 per cent) said they had learned skills related to improving their general employability.
- 233 The great majority (87 per cent) said they had used these new skills in their current job. The usage of new skills was lowest among Process, Plant and Machine Operatives and those in Elementary occupations (both 82 per cent), and was highest in Personal Service occupations (91 per cent).

Table 29: Skills learned

New skills	Number	%
Practical skills related to your job	2,114	78
Skills related to general employability (e.g. problem solving, time management)	1,563	58
New literacy skills	816	30
New numeracy skills	582	22
New IT skills	574	21
<i>None of these/nothing</i>	269	10

Base = all learners except those yet to start: N = 2,701.
Multiple responses given. Question was not asked in previous waves.

Source: Longitudinal group Wave 3 (summer 2008)

- 234 Respondents in the qualitative research also said they had gained specific skills directly related to their job, typically mentioning health and safety or food handling. Some felt they had learned different ways of doing things, or that they now understood procedures better and so could follow them more closely. Raising awareness and having reminders of the 'right' way of doing things also helped improve working practice.

It makes me think about why I'm doing it, not just that I have to do it. I understand why I should be doing it... [I'm] more interested in what's going on because I understand more.

LL, Level 3 Oral Health

It has actually made a difference to the way I think about doing my job, a lot of difference...rather than jumping in and trying to sort it out hands on straightaway it is just making me step back and think before I jump in, and think about how I can improve it without costing any money to the firm.

NE, Level 2 Business Improvement Techniques

235 Others felt they now related better to customers and to colleagues, showing that the improved skills included both 'soft' personal skills and 'harder' practical skills. One respondent neatly encapsulated this, referring to arguments between care-home residents. The learner said she was now more likely and more able to recognise and address situations and act before the situation escalated.

236 Learners were keen to describe the personal benefits, in terms of increased confidence, improved ability to do their current job and the additional value to them in looking for jobs in the future. All of these factors were interconnected. Gaining the qualification gave them confidence; gaining confidence made them better at their job; and being better at their job meant they had greater appeal to future employers. Respondents felt more confident in making changes to systems and structures, and thus in improving their own and their colleagues' productivity.

I think I've got more confidence because I came out of school with absolutely nothing and that makes you, I think, not very confident.

LL, Level 3 Business and Administration

I am more confident. Now I know the thing I am doing is right because of the course.

LL, Level 2 Multi-Skilled Hospitality Services

237 Overall, respondents in the qualitative research described improvements to their personal skills more often than directly job-related skills. Some felt that little had changed. However, even those who played down the impact of the training went on to describe positives, such as in the exchange below.

Interviewer: has it made any difference to the way you do your job?

Learner: No. Some of it makes you think there might be another way of doing it. You talk about your different ideas to people from other schools.

Has it helped you develop any new skills you didn't have before?

Probably another way of doing them.

Has it made any difference to your level of motivation to work?

I'm a bit more determined with some things. I'll have a go.

NE, Level 3 Teaching Assistant

Impacts

238 The longitudinal survey asked all those who had started their learning whether any changes to their working situation had occurred since the start of their training. Table 30 shows that almost one in three had received better pay (32 per cent), and 29 per cent had taken on further responsibility with the same employer without additional pay or promotion.

Table 30: Changes since the start of the training

	Number saying yes	% saying yes
Got better pay	853	32
Have taken on further responsibility with same employer without additional pay or promotion	782	29
Got a better job with the same employer	422	16
Changed to a different role with the same employer (same level)	415	15
Got a better job with a new employer	283	11
Changed job (same level job)	252	9
Been made redundant	77	3
Became self-employed	66	2

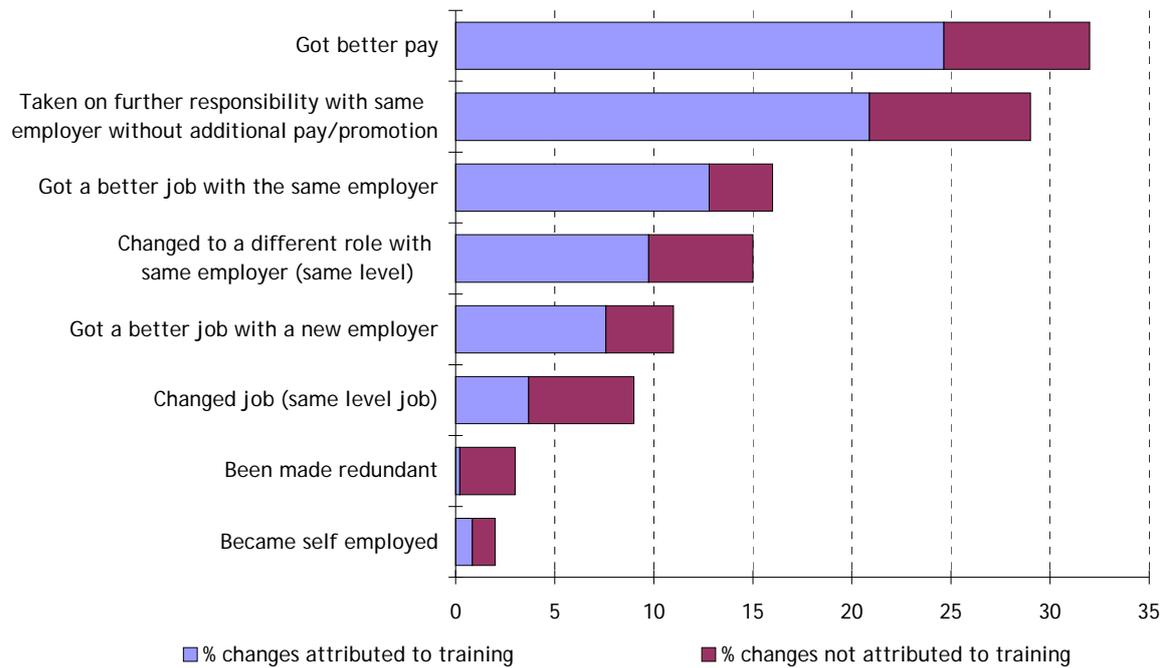
Base = all learners except those yet to start: N = 2,701.

Multiple responses given. Question was not asked in previous surveys.

Source: Longitudinal group Wave 3 (summer 2008)

- 239 The survey went on to ask all those who reported a change whether or not they could attribute this to the training being undertaken. The responses are illustrated in Figure 20, which shows, for example, that although only 16 per cent said they had got a better job with the same employer (at Table 30), 80 per cent of those people attributed that to the training being undertaken.
- 240 More than three-quarters of respondents (77 per cent) who had received better pay attributed that to the training undertaken, as did 72 per cent of those who had taken on further responsibility with the same employer without additional pay or promotion. Other changes attributed to the training were moving to a better job with a new employer (69 per cent of those who had made such a move attributed it to the training) or to a different role at the same level with the same employer (65 per cent). Less attributable to the training were becoming self-employed (42 per cent), changing job at the same level (41 per cent) and being made redundant (7 per cent).

Figure 20: Proportion saying changes were attributable to the training



Bases vary = all learners except those yet to start who have experienced change: N = 66 to 853 (see Table 30). Question was not asked in previous surveys.

Source: Longitudinal group Wave 3 (summer 2008)

241 Combining some of the above responses, 57 per cent of respondents had experienced positive change or improvements as a result of their training (i.e. said they had got a better job with the same employer, got better pay, taken on further responsibility with same employer without additional pay or promotion, or got a better job with a new employer). Overall, respondents who experienced one or more of these changes, and attributed it to the training, accounted for 44 per cent of those questioned (N=2,071 – all learners except those yet to start).

Future career intentions

242 Both the longitudinal survey and the new entrant survey asked learners about their future career intentions. As Table 31 shows, responses for both groups were very similar, with 66 per cent of the longitudinal group and 61 per cent of the new entrants group planning to stay with their current employer for the foreseeable future, and 14 per cent and 17 per cent, respectively, planning to stay for at least another year. For both groups, 9 per cent planned to leave

their employer as soon as the opportunity arose, and 7 per cent planned to leave within the next year.

Table 31: Future career intentions

Career intentions	Wave 3 (LL)		Wave 3 (NE)		Wave 2 (LL)	Wave 1
	Number	%	Number	%	%	%
I plan to stay with my current employer for the foreseeable future	1,694	66	3,251	61	68	69
I am likely to stay with my current employer for at least another year	364	14	908	17	14	14
I plan to leave my current employer as soon as the opportunity arises	222	9	499	9	7	6
I am likely to leave my current employer within the next year	165	7	384	7	6	6
I expect to have to leave my current employer within the next year due to redundancy or relocation	54	2	215	4	2	3
I expect to have to leave my current employer when my contract ends	35	1	0	0	1	(not asked)
Don't know	19	1	105	2	1	2
<i>Total/base</i>	<i>2,553</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>5,362</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>4,826</i>	<i>7,311</i>

Base = all those in employment, N shown in table.

Source: Longitudinal and new entrants Waves 1, 2 and 3 (spring 2007, autumn 2007, summer 2008)

Importance of training

243 Completers in the longitudinal survey were asked to gauge the importance of doing their qualification, both to themselves and to their employer (see Table 32). The importance was rated very highly, and there were no significant differences from Wave 2.

- Most completers felt it was very important to them personally to have achieved the qualification (68 per cent), with a further 24 per cent saying it was fairly important.
- The importance of the qualification to their employer was a little lower, with 57 per cent thinking it was very important and 26 per cent thinking it was fairly important to their employer.

Table 32: Importance of achieving qualification (completers)

	Personal importance		Importance to employers		Wave 2 (Personal)	Wave 2 (To employers)
	Number	%	Number	%	%	%
Very important	317	68	266	57	72	59
Fairly important	112	24	120	26	21	24
Neither important nor unimportant	10	2	25	5	2	4
Not very important	19	4	27	6	4	5
Not at all important	10	2	12	3	2	4
Don't know	-	-	-	-	*	4

Base = completers only: Wave 3 N = 468; Wave 2 N = 3,633.

Source: Longitudinal group Waves 2 and 3 (autumn 2007, summer 2008)

244 The personal importance of completing the qualification showed little variation according to personal characteristics once the scores of **very important** and **fairly important** were combined. However, for some groups, the variation in the percentages for the **very important** alone was marked.

- Women were more likely than men to say that it was very important to them personally to have achieved the qualification (72 per cent, compared to 60 per cent of men).
- And learners from BME groups were more likely than white learners to say it was very important to them personally (86 per cent, compared to 67 per cent).

245 Similarly, by occupational group, the proportions saying that achieving the qualification was very important to their employer showed great variation.

- The greatest importance to the employer was noted for those in Personal Service occupations, of whom 72 per cent felt it was very important. This far exceeded the importance in other occupational groups: the second highest percentage was found within Elementary occupations, at 64 per cent.
- Achieving the qualification was deemed of least value to the employer in the Administrative and Secretarial occupations, where 30 per cent felt it was very important, followed by 38 per cent of Managers and Senior Officials.

246 The importance of learning was also asked of those in the longitudinal group who were still learning at the time of the survey (see Table 33). Their figures were similar to those of the completers above, with personal importance exceeding the importance to employers.

- Most current learners felt it was very important to them personally to have achieved the qualification (76 per cent), with a further 19 per cent saying it was fairly important.
- 60 per cent thought it was very important to their employer, and 24 per cent thought it was fairly important.

Table 33: Importance of achieving qualification (current learners)

	Personal		To employers	
	Number	%	Number	%
Very important	143	76	113	60
Fairly important	35	19	45	24
Neither important nor unimportant	3	2	8	4
Not very important	6	3	13	7
Not at all important	2	1	8	4
<i>Don't know</i>	-	-	2	1

Base = current learners: Wave 3 N = 189.

Source: Longitudinal group Wave 3 (summer 2008)

Who benefits from the training

247 Both the longitudinal group and the new entrants group surveys examined the extent to which learners and/or their employers benefited from the training.

248 Tables 34 and 35 show the responses from the new entrants group survey and the longitudinal survey, respectively. For the new entrant survey, two sets of responses are shown: first, an anticipated response of who would benefit from the training, as reported by those who were currently learning or waiting to start, and then an actual response of who had benefited, as recorded by learners who had completed their course. In both sets of responses, more than three learners in four felt that both they and their employer had benefited equally from the training (76 per cent actual and 81 per cent anticipated). The response from the longitudinal group was a little

lower, but nevertheless 72 per cent felt that both they and their employer had benefited equally from the training.

Table 34: Who benefits most from the training (NE current and completers)

	Wave 3		Wave 2		Wave 1			
	Anticipated		Actual		Anticipated		Actual	
	Number	%	Number	%	%	%	%	%
You only	494	14	237	14	12	12	13	18
Your employer only	105	3	94	6	4	6	2	4
Both you and your employer equally	2,914	81	1,289	76	82	78	83	74
Neither you nor your employer	70	2	62	4	2	3	2	4
Too early to say/Don't know	8	*	7	*	1	*	1	1
<i>Total/base</i>	<i>3,590</i>		<i>1,688</i>		<i>1,448</i>	<i>942</i>	<i>5,586</i>	<i>4,642</i>

Note 'anticipated' and 'actual' columns refer to different respondent groups: 'Anticipated' – those currently in learning or those waiting to start, and who are currently in work; 'Actual' – all completers. Base = completers and those in learning, N shown in table.

Source: New entrants group Waves 1, 2 and 3 (spring 2007, autumn 2007, summer 2008)

Table 35: Who benefited most from the training (LL completers)

	Wave 3		Wave 2
	Number	%	%
You only	89	19	19
Your employer only	19	4	3
Both you and your employer equally	339	72	75
Neither you nor your employer	19	4	3
Too early to say/Don't know	2	*	1

Base = completers only: Wave 3 N = 468; Wave 2 N = 3,633.

Source: Longitudinal group Waves 2 and 3 (autumn 2007, summer 2008)

249 While very few respondents felt that only their employer benefited from providing the training, many in the qualitative research emphasised the value that employers gave to the training. A small number of respondents felt that their employers had a fairly hands-off approach to the training, although this was not a criticism, but rather an expression of the freedom the learners felt they had.

250 There was no evidence of any strongly negative attitudes from employers towards the learners' training, but rather there were many examples where

their achievements were actively encouraged and celebrated. The very fact that the employer was providing or facilitating the training was also recognised by learners, even if it might not benefit the employer in the long term.

After we'd completed the training we were handed certificates, given a club tie with steward on it. We were presented with that at an evening where we could take our partners. They put on a buffet.

LL, Level 2 Spectator Safety

You feel that your employer is actually investing something in you so yes, it does make you feel a bit better about things and that you are not just this lowly admin person...but it's a way out, now I have got that under my belt at the end of the day it's going to look good on that CV or that application form.

NE, Level 3 Business and Administration

Further training

Current/subsequent training

251 Those in the longitudinal group whose training had finished were asked whether they had subsequently started any additional training, and, of the 2,372 completers, 578 (24 per cent) reported that they had, compared to 17 per cent in Wave 2. Table 36 shows the training that this group was undertaking and reveals that the single most popular qualification was an NVQ, of which most were being taken at Level 3 or Level 2. Respondents who specified a subject area rather than a qualification type are also shown in the table.

Table 36: Further training being done

	Wave 3		Wave 2
	Number	%	%
NVQ	200	35	32
(Entry Level)	(1)	(1)	(2)
(Level 1)	(9)	(5)	(2)
(Level 2)	(65)	(33)	(31)
(Level 3)	(112)	(56)	(62)
(Level 4)	(3)	(2)	(1)
(Level 5 or 6)	(2)	(1)	-
(Not known)	(8)	(4)	(2)
Dementia, mental health, learning difficulty course	32	6	(not reported)
Life skills/Entry to Employment preparatory learning	25	4	2
First aid	23	4	(not reported)
Health and safety	22	4	(not reported)
GCSE/GCSE vocational	16	3	3
Moving and handling course/manual handling	15	3	1
Professional qualification	14	2	2
Food hygiene	12	2	(not reported)
Diploma in higher education	11	2	2

Base = completers who have started a subsequent course: Wave 3 N = 578; Wave 2 N = 598.
Multiple responses given; only responses of 2 per cent or greater shown.

Source: Longitudinal group Waves 2 and 3 (autumn 2007, summer 2008)

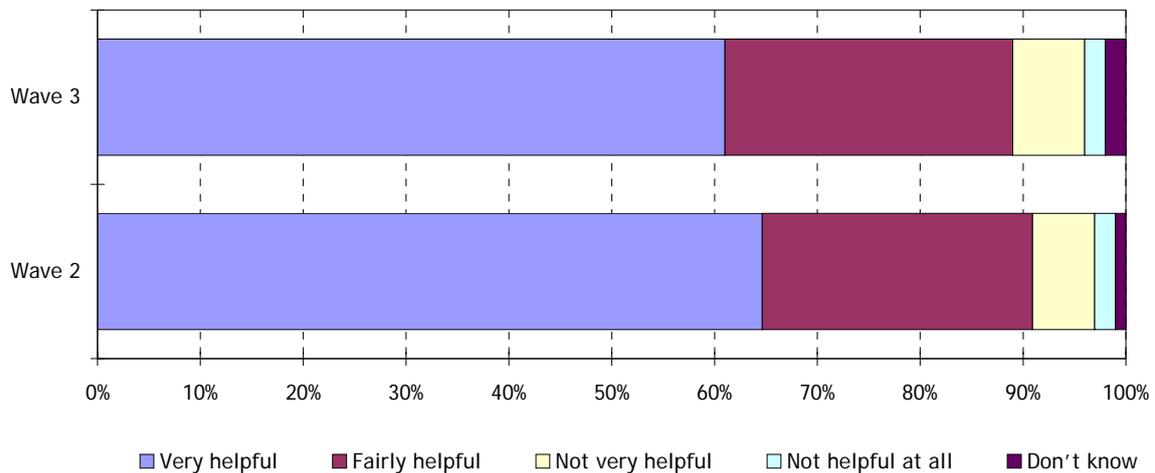
Discussions about further learning

- 252 Both the Wave 2 longitudinal group survey and the Wave 2 new entrants group survey asked completers whether or not anyone had talked to them about further training options since they had finished their learning.
- 253 In the new entrant survey, 41 per cent reported that they had been spoken to about further training options, and 59 per cent that they had not. In Wave 2, the proportion of learners who had spoken to someone was 39 per cent.
- 254 Similarly, 43 per cent of the longitudinal group of Wave 3 completers (N=201 from a base size of 468) had been spoken to, and 57 per cent had not. In Wave 2, 46 per cent of learners had spoken to someone.
- 255 When asked who had spoken to them, learners in the longitudinal group reported the following.

- 59 per cent had been spoken to by their employer, manager or supervisor.
- 40 per cent had been spoken to by their tutor or assessor.
- 4 per cent had been spoken to by the careers service.
- 4 per cent had been spoken to by a union or learning representative.

256 Those who had been spoken to were asked how helpful this had been. As Figure 21 shows, 61 felt it had been **very helpful** and a further 28 per cent had found it **fairly helpful**.

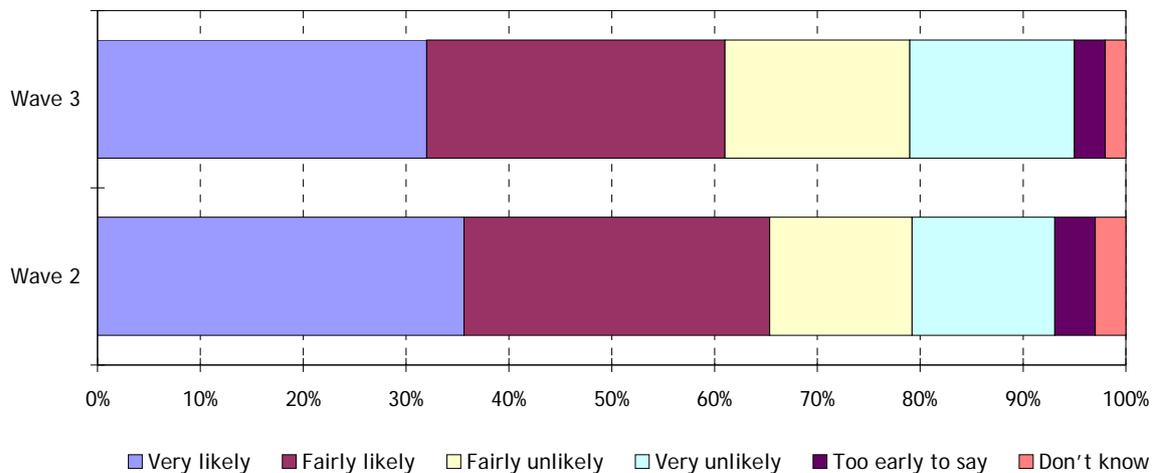
Figure 21: How helpful it was to have been spoken to about further training options



Base = completers who had been spoken to about further training options: Wave 1 N = 201; Wave 2 N = 1,668.

Source: Longitudinal group Waves 2 and 3 (autumn 2007, summer 2008)

257 Those in the longitudinal group who had not yet started any further training (1,794, out of a base size of 2,372 completers) were asked about their intentions in this area. Figure 22 shows that the majority of completers thought they were likely to do another qualification in the next three years, with 32 per cent saying that it was very likely and 29 per cent that it was fairly likely.

Figure 22: Likelihood of doing another qualification in the next three years

Base = completers who have not started a subsequent course: Wave 3 N = 1,794; Wave 2 N = 3,035.

Source: Longitudinal group Waves 2 and 3 (autumn 2007, summer 2008)

258 Both this group and completers in the new entrants group were asked about the likelihood of undertaking further training at a higher level. Responses were highest among the new entrants group, where two out of three felt this was likely within the next three years – either very likely (40 per cent) or fairly likely (27 per cent) (see Table 37). In the longitudinal group, the proportion intending to do higher-level learning has fallen wave on wave (see Table 38).

259 The different responses do not necessarily indicate a fall in the desire for training among this cohort. The longitudinal group may be more realistic about their future intentions than are the new entrants (and the longitudinal responses in past waves), whose enthusiasm may be bolstered by a more recent positive experience. Furthermore, large numbers of longitudinal learners have started training since Wave 2. It is reasonable to assume that those learners who have started training were those with a stronger inclination towards future learning, which means that the remaining sample contains a larger concentration of those less inclined to take more training in the future.

260 Within the longitudinal group, half the respondents felt that higher-level training was likely within the next three years – either very likely (26 per cent) or fairly likely (25 per cent) (see Table 38). Of those who said they were likely to take another qualification in the coming years, 80 per cent said that this

would be at a higher level. (No equivalent figure can be produced for the new entrants group, since the more general question about further training was not asked.)

Table 37: Likelihood of doing a higher-level qualification in the next three years (new entrant surveys)

	Wave 3		Wave 2	Wave 1
	Number	%	%	%
Very likely	679	40	34	40
Fairly likely	463	27	27	29
Fairly unlikely	240	14	14	14
Very unlikely	248	15	19	13
Too early to say	34	2	3	3
Don't know	23	1	3	2

Base = learners who had completed: Wave 3 N = 1,688; Wave 2 N = 942; Wave 1 N = 1,642.

Source: *New entrants group Waves 1, 2 and 3 (spring 2007, autumn 2007, summer 2008)*

Table 38: Likelihood of doing a higher-level qualification in the next three years (longitudinal surveys)

	Wave 3		Wave 2	Wave 1
	Number	%	%	%
Very likely	467	26	29	40
Fairly likely	450	25	28	29
Fairly unlikely	380	21	17	14
Very unlikely	421	24	21	13
Too early to say	43	2	3	3
Don't know	33	2	3	2

Base = completers not yet started subsequent course: Wave 3 N = 1,794; Wave 2 N = 3,035; Wave 1 N = 1,642.

Source: *Longitudinal group Waves 1, 2 and 3 (spring 2007, autumn 2007, summer 2008)*

261 As would be expected, those who had been spoken to about further training options were more likely to consider doing a higher-level qualification in the next three years, as Table 39 confirms. Most notably, in the longitudinal survey, the proportion being **very unlikely** to consider higher training was half that of those who had **not** been spoken to (14 per cent, as against 28 per cent). Similarly, in the new entrant survey, the proportion that was **very unlikely** to consider higher training fell from 18 per cent among those who had had no such conversation to 11 per cent among those who had.

Table 39: Likelihood of doing higher-level qualification in the next three years

	Wave 3 (LL)		Wave 3 (NE)	
	Whether been spoken to about further training options		Whether been spoken to about further training options	
	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %
Very likely	39	22	51	33
Fairly likely	28	27	27	28
Fairly unlikely	16	18	9	18
Very unlikely	14	28	11	18
Too early to say	3	3	2	2
Don't know	1	3	*	2

Base = Wave 3 completers who had not yet started a subsequent course: longitudinal group N = 385; new entrants group N = 1,688.

Source: Wave 3 longitudinal group (summer 2008); Wave 3 new entrants group (summer 2008)

Early leavers

262 Early leavers in the new entrant survey were also asked their thoughts on future training. Four early leavers in ten (40 per cent) felt that it was very likely that they would sign up for training in the future, and a further 32 per cent thought it was fairly likely.

Table 40: Likelihood of signing up for future training

	Wave 3		Wave 2	Wave 1
	Number	%	%	%
Very likely	78	40	30	42
Fairly likely	62	32	21	19
Fairly unlikely	24	13	12	13
Very unlikely	22	11	30	22
Too early to say	4	2	4	3
Don't know	3	2	3	2
Total/base	194	100	113	186

Base = all those who left the training without completing it.

Source: New entrant group Waves 1, 2 and 3 (spring 2007, autumn 2007, summer 2008)

263 The enthusiasm of many respondents for future learning came through strongly in the qualitative interviews. It seemed that the Train to Gain programme had provided them with a way back into learning. Often the respondents' positive experience of their recent training was in sharp contrast

to a poor and unproductive time at school. Their success under Train to Gain certainly gave them a taste for more learning.

- 264 However, few had either embarked upon or had any firm plans to start further training. Some wanted a break from their studies, others wanted to consider their options. Most spoke optimistically about learning 'in the future'.

I can go higher and go on to more training like an NVQ3 if I want, which is a good thing, because if I didn't have the NVQ I wouldn't be able to go on to do an NVQ3. I can always think about that in the future...

LL, Level 2 Food and Drink Manufacturing

Barriers to further learning

- 265 Those who had not yet started any further learning were asked to consider possible barriers they might face, and 65 per cent reported that they could not identify any barriers in their path (the comparable figure for Wave 2 was 59 per cent). Table 41 shows the barriers identified by the remaining 35 per cent, and reveals that the greatest barriers were lack of funding or money (named by 30 per cent), lack of time (19 per cent) and personal barriers (15 per cent).

Table 41: Barriers to taking up further learning.

	Wave 3		Wave 2
	Number	%	%
Lack of funding/money	188	30	29
Lack of time	120	19	17
Personal barriers (e.g. changed domestic circumstances)	92	15	10
Employer would not support it	55	9	7
Age/soon to retire	54	9	13
Motivation, not interested, attitude to learning	35	6	7
Childcare costs/lack of childcare	31	5	3
Job insecurity	17	3	4
Course not available	12	2	2
Family commitments	8	1	7
Work commitments	6	1	2

Base = completers not started a subsequent course and noted that there were barriers to further learning: Wave 3 N = 622; Wave 2 N = 1,255. Multiple responses given; answers above 1 per cent only.

Source: *New entrant group Waves 2 and 3 (autumn 2007, summer 2008)*

266 The qualitative research also found a range of issues preventing learners from continuing their studies. Many respondents would be happy to take another qualification, provided someone else paid for it. Time was also a key factor, both in relation to having the time at work and fitting the demands of the qualification around their home life.

I would like to get the degree which is another 5 years if I could fund it myself, but I would have to fund it myself and I'd need the time to do it. I have thought about it but not in today's sort of climate.

LL, Level 2 Decorative Finishing and Industrial Painting Occupations

Well they did ask me if I would like to do Level 3, but our work is not prepared to support us in that, and, you know, that would be quite difficult.

NE, Level 2 Health and Social Care

267 Age was also a key factor, in relation both to their own views and to how they felt their employer might respond.

Probably unlikely, because I've only got 6 or 7 years at work and I'm happy as I am.

NE, Level 2 Performing Manufacturing Operations

That depends on [my employer]. NVQ3 is more on the management side and I'd have to think whether I wanted to get that far. I've only 8.5 years before I retire. I'd have to go through it with the lecturer... You have to weigh up your age and whether it would enhance you at work, which I don't think Level 3, management, will. They've taken on a couple of managers and they want younger people so they can do 20 years.

NE, Level 2 Amenity Horticulture

268 Other reasons given by learners for not pursuing further training included wanting a break from learning or concern that their maths ability would hold them back.

Satisfaction with the training or qualification

269 Both the longitudinal survey and the new entrant survey sought to gauge respondents' satisfaction with their training or qualification, both overall and for more specific measures. Table 42 presents the results in the form of a mean score, which can range from a low score of 1.0 (indicating extreme dissatisfaction) to a top score of 7.0 (indicating extreme satisfaction). A middling score of 4.0 indicates a neutral response (neither satisfied nor dissatisfied).

270 As with previous surveys, the satisfaction in Wave 3 remains very high, particularly for **the quality of the teaching received** (which scored 5.9 in both Wave 3 surveys) and for **the training/qualification overall** (which scored 5.9 for the new entrants group and 5.8 for the longitudinal group). In both surveys, the question was asked only of completers.

271 The figures show a small increase from Wave 2; indeed, over the three waves of the survey to date, the findings tell a fairly consistent and positive story. In all, 96 per cent of longitudinal respondents and 94 per cent of new entrants were satisfied with their training/qualification overall, and only 3 per cent and 4 per cent, respectively, said they were dissatisfied. Ratings were also very high for quality of teaching, with which 94 per cent of longitudinal and 93 per cent of new entrants said they were satisfied.

- 272 The LSC uses a combination of **extremely** and **very** satisfied to give ongoing measures of satisfaction with its provision. In Wave 3, this measure for overall satisfaction increased by four percentage points – to 70 per cent for the longitudinal group. The corresponding figure for the new entrant group was higher, at 74 per cent – an increase of three percentage points over Wave 2. These levels are consistent with those in the further education (FE) sector more generally, where the measure is 70 per cent (source: *National Learner Satisfaction Survey 2007: Further Education*, LSC, 2008).
- 273 The same measure for satisfaction with the quality of teaching received was 72 per cent for the longitudinal group and 75 per cent for new entrants (Wave 2 figures were 74 per cent and 71 per cent, respectively) compared to 69 per cent across the FE sector.
- 274 The respondents to the longitudinal survey were also satisfied with the information, advice and guidance (IAG) offered (91 per cent), the length of time the training took (90 per cent) and the support they received from their employer (88 per cent). All of these ratings show an increase, albeit small, from Wave 2.
- 275 A new element in the Wave 3 longitudinal survey was the inclusion of **satisfaction with the length of time it took/is taking to receive your certificate**. Although it scores lower than the other satisfaction measures (4.8), this still indicates a generally positive response. This rating is affected by whether or not the respondent had received their certificate at the time of the survey.
- 85 per cent reported that they had already received their certificate, and for this group, the satisfaction rating rose to 5.2. The average waiting time to receive the certificate was around two months.
 - For the 15 per cent who had not yet received their certificate, the satisfaction rating fell to 3.0. This group had (to date) waited an average of around five months.

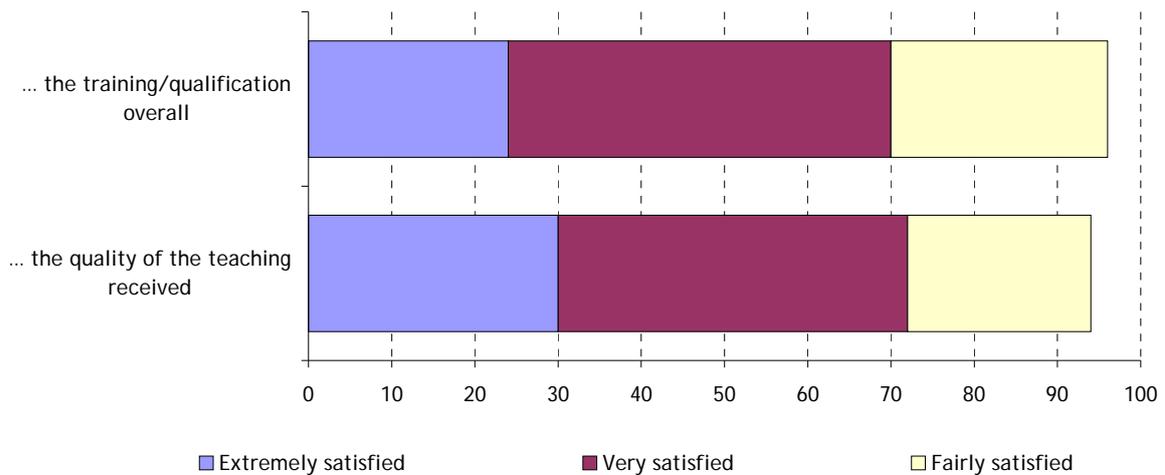
Table 42: Satisfaction with different aspects of the training/qualification (mean score)

Satisfaction with ...	Wave 3 (LL)	Wave 3 (NE)	Wave 2 (LL)	Wave 2 (NE)	Wave 1
... the training/qualification overall	5.8	5.9	5.7	5.7	6.0
... the quality of the teaching received	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.7	-
... the information and advice prior to starting the training	5.5	-	5.4	-	-
... the length of time it took to do the training	5.6	-	5.4	-	-
... the support from your employer	5.5	-	5.4	-	-
... the amount of time it took/is taking to receive your certificate	4.8	-	-	-	-

Base = completers only: Wave 3 LL N = 2,372; Wave 3 NE N = 1,688.
 - indicates question not asked.

Source: Longitudinal and new entrants Waves 1, 2 and 3 (spring 2007, autumn 2007, summer 2008)

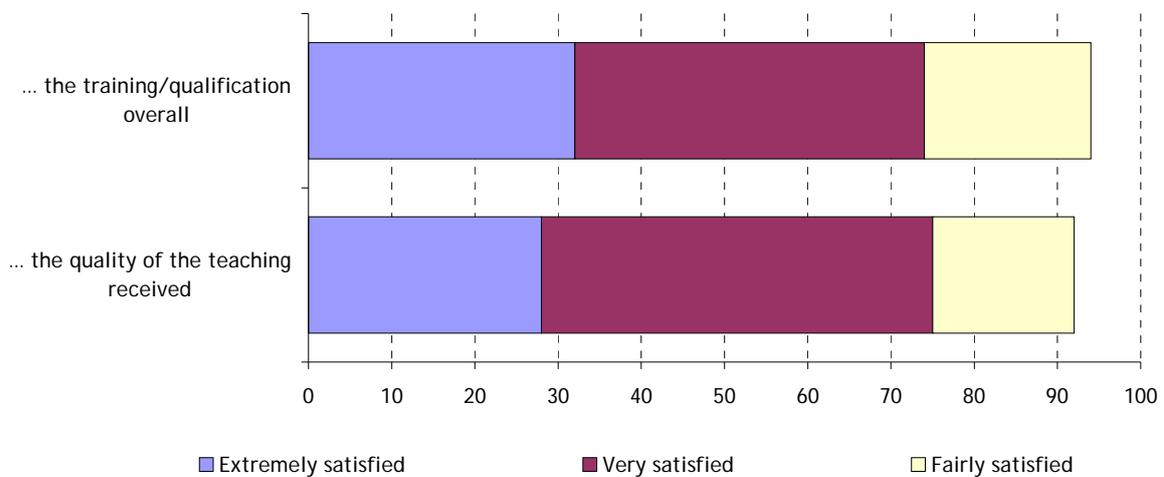
Figure 23: Satisfaction with different aspects of the training/qualification (LL)



Base = completers only: N = 2,372.

Source: Longitudinal group Wave 3 (summer 2008)

Figure 24: Satisfaction with different aspects of the training/qualification (NE)



Base = completers only N = 1,688.

Source: *New entrants group Wave 3 (summer 2008)*

276 Given the longitudinal nature of the surveys, it is possible to compare changes in satisfaction across the survey waves, for those who had a valid response at each wave (see Table 43). The table shows that around three-quarters of respondents either increased their satisfaction rating from Wave 2 or did not change it.

Table 43: Changes in overall satisfaction with training between waves

	Change between Wave 2 and Wave 3	Change between Wave 1 and Wave 2*	Change between Wave 1 and Wave 3
	%	%	%
Satisfaction same between waves	45	40	41
Satisfaction increased	29	20	24
Satisfaction decreased	26	41	35

Base = completers only, at each wave.

*= for those followed up in Wave 3.

Source: *Longitudinal group Waves 1, 2 and 3 (summer 2007, autumn 2007, summer 2008)*

277 Table 44 shows the overall satisfaction according to various subgroups of respondents. It indicates that satisfaction levels vary slightly for different groups. Highlighting those differences of more than 0.3 (the largest difference was 0.6) indicates that learners tend to be more satisfied when the training is well planned, is well designed, when the learner is involved in decisions,

when the training is challenging rather than easy, and when learners complete sooner than expected.

- New entrants and longitudinal learners who had had a degree of say in whether to do their training were more satisfied than were those who had had none (6.1 and 5.9, compared to 5.5 and 5.6).
- New entrants and longitudinal learners who had had one or both forms of pre-entry assessment were more satisfied than were those who had had neither test (6.1 and 5.9, compared to 5.5 and 5.6).
- Longitudinal learners who found their training challenging were more satisfied than those who found it easy (5.9, compared to 5.3).
- Longitudinal learners who completed their training sooner than they had expected were more satisfied than those who took longer than they had expected (5.9, compared to 5.5).
- New entrants whose training was jointly initiated were more satisfied than those whose training had been employer initiated (6.1, compared to 5.7).
- New entrants who received a PDP or ILP were more satisfied than were those who did not (6.0, compared to 5.7).

Table 44: Satisfaction with the training/qualification overall (mean scores) by subgroup

		Wave 3 (LL) Mean score	Wave 3 (NE) Mean score
Training provider	Independent	5.9	5.9
	Public	5.8	6.0
Who initiated the learning	Self-initiated	5.9	6.0
	Employer-initiated	5.8	5.7
	Jointly initiated	5.9	6.1
Subject area	Care-related	5.9	6.0
	Other	5.8	5.9
Amount of pre-entry discussion or assessment	Discussion only	5.8	5.9
	Skills gap assessment only	5.9	5.9
	Both assessments	5.9	6.1
	Neither	5.6	5.5
Amount of say over whether to do the training	A great deal	5.9	6.1
	A fair amount	5.7	5.8
	A little	5.6	5.8
	None at all	5.6	5.5
Time taken to complete	Longer than expected	5.5	<i>(not asked)</i>
	Shorter than expected	5.9	<i>(not asked)</i>
	About expected	5.7	<i>(not asked)</i>
Received ILP or PDP	Yes	<i>(not asked)</i>	6.0
	No	<i>(not asked)</i>	5.7
How easy or challenging was it to complete the training	Challenging	5.9	<i>(not asked)</i>
	Neither	5.6	<i>(not asked)</i>
	Easy	5.3	<i>(not asked)</i>
Received a financial outcome	Yes	6.0	<i>(not asked)</i>
	No	5.8	<i>(not asked)</i>

Base = completers only: N = 2,372 for longitudinal group and 1,688 for Wave 3 new entrants group. Mean scores range from 1 (extremely dissatisfied) to 7 (extremely satisfied).

Source: Longitudinal group Wave 3 (summer 2008); new entrants group Wave 3 (summer 2008)

The determinants of satisfaction of completers

278 Table 44 points to a number of factors that at first sight seem to influence learners' levels of satisfaction. The determinants of satisfaction were explored in more depth through regression analysis, which provides rigorous statistical evidence for the degree of influence different factors may have.

279 The most influential factor was shown to be assessment prior to training; however, the analysis showed that very little variance in the satisfaction

levels can be explained by any single factor or combination of factors. This is, in part, due to the high levels of satisfaction recorded in the survey – because most respondents gave very positive responses there is a very strong, positive skew to the data.

Aggregate satisfaction scale

280 In order to examine the determinants of the levels of satisfaction, the first stage was to create a single aggregate satisfaction scale. This allows a greater spread of responses than if we just use the overall satisfaction scale alone, and increases the strength of the analysis. The new scale was created simply by adding together the satisfaction scores from those questions that measured learners' satisfaction with:

- the training/qualification overall;
- the information and advice received prior to starting the training;
- the length of time it took to do the training; and
- the quality of the teaching.

281 To ensure that this new scale measured a meaningful underlying overall satisfaction, various statistical tests were undertaken. The most useful in this situation was to calculate the Cronbach's alpha for the scale. In this case, we found a Cronbach's alpha of 0.772, which indicates that the underlying questions are aligned. Importantly, this meant that the new aggregate scale was meaningful and allows the use of multiple regression to examine the interaction of a range of determinants.

Regression analysis

282 A range of multiple regressions were run to try to identify the best explanation for why completers were or were not satisfied with their experience. Overall, the regression generated an adjusted R-Square of 0.034, which would usually be considered a poor result, as it indicates that virtually all the variation in the aggregate satisfaction score is unexplained.

283 The next stage was to look at the significance of the individual variables. The demographic variables tested and found to be not significant, given the other variables, were: age, gender, ethnicity, disability, size of employer, sector of

employment (care versus other sectors), type of provider, relationship with assessor or trainer and perception of difficulty of the training.

284 Table 45 shows that the most important determinant of overall satisfaction that can be influenced by the management of the Train to Gain programme is the use of assessments prior to training. The relative importance is shown by the standardised coefficients in column 2, and the independence of the four factors is shown by the relatively low Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) in the last column of the table.

Table 45: Regression of determinants of aggregate satisfaction of completers

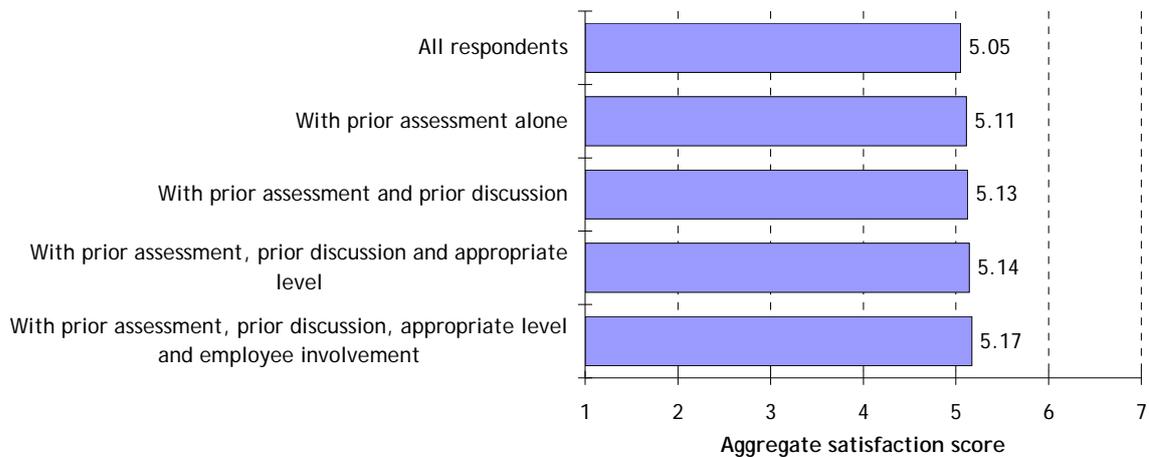
	Standard Errors	Standardised Coefficients	Significance	VIF
(Constant)	.350		.000	
Assessment prior to training	.157	-.123	.000	1.080
Discussion prior to training	.160	-.086	.000	1.073
At or below current level	.325	-.078	.000	1.002
Involvement in decision to train	.151	-.038	.080	1.008

Source: *Train to Gain employee survey Wave 3 (summer 2008)*

285 Another way of looking at the impact of getting these aspects of the Train to Gain experience right can be seen by examining their impact on the average aggregate satisfaction scores. The aggregate satisfaction is highly clustered around 5 on the seven-point scale. This clustering means that, although we can increase satisfaction by getting these factors right, statistically significant differences to the mean scores are little changed.

286 Figure 25 shows that the mean changes from 5.05 for all respondents to 5.11 when prior assessment takes place, and to 5.17 when prior assessment, prior discussion, training at an appropriate level and employee involvement all occur. The concept of Assess–Train–Assess (ATA) and its importance have received previous attention (see, for example, *Good Practice in ATA Approaches to Workforce Development*, an IES report written for the Department for Education and Skills in 2004 by L. Miller, N. Stratton, J. Hillage, N. Jagger and M. Silverman). However, this analysis suggests that it is important in terms of satisfaction levels as well.

Figure 25: Impact on average aggregate satisfaction scores of the various factors



Source: Train to Gain employee survey Wave 3 (summer 2008)

- 287 The second most important factor was that the training should have been discussed with the potential trainee before it started. This again has received previous attention in terms of IAG, but it is useful to see its importance reiterated in the context of Train to Gain.
- 288 The third most important determinant of aggregate satisfaction was whether or not the training offered was at or below the trainee’s current highest level of education, or whether it was above that level. Given the way the scales work, this means that training above their current level drives greater satisfaction. This shows the importance of providing training that extends existing levels of knowledge and challenges learners.
- 289 Finally, the fourth factor (which was slightly less significant) was whether the trainee had been involved in the decision to train, or whether it had been imposed by the employer. This appears to be similar to the ATA and IAG issues in reflecting best practice, and emerged independently from the analysis.

Satisfaction (qualitative research)

- 290 Satisfaction levels among respondents in the qualitative interviews were also extremely high. Respondents enthused about having gained a qualification and the benefits it brought in terms of their job, future career and self-esteem.

I think it is a brilliant qualification to have and I think these days it is so important to be qualified. I think it is a wonderful way for people to be educated and move on and progress.

NE, Level 3 Business and Administration

Brilliant... Everything. I'm pleased I've done it. To be given an opportunity to train at 50+, you think no one's going to bother with you, but they do.

LL, Level 2 Health and Social Care

- 291 Few cited any specific difficulties. Some had problems fitting the assessment (or managing the portfolio) into the working day, or personal time at the end of the day. The level of qualification was generally well within learners' abilities. Some specific problems were experienced in terms of written work or the language that was used in assessments – assessors sometimes needed to translate questions into plain English.

- 292 The value of a supportive, personable, knowledgeable and flexible tutor was stressed time and again.

The fact that they were quite flexible and happy to come out and see you at any point if you were struggling about anything; they were always contactable and also it didn't always have to be in a work setting – they were happy to come out to people's homes.

NE, Level 2 Health and Social Care

Yes they were patient and willing to explain things so it didn't make you feel stupid if you didn't understand what the question meant.

NE, Housekeeping

The tutoring was fantastic it was really, really good. The gentleman who took it he also works at the college that I used to go to and his level of teaching is brilliant.

NE, Level 2 Spectator Safety

293 The nature of the qualifications and the mode of study were also strong features of Train to Gain's appeal. Learners valued the chance to work at their own pace and the flexibility in assessment. And the fact that they could fit the qualification around the working day, combined with the relevance to their job and continuing to be paid, made for an attractive package.

Some of the people who were interested were previously doing an NVQ at college and thought to get an NVQ certificate they had to spend a whole year to get it but here you can get it in 6 months and work as well... If they go college they are losing out on earning money so this way they are thinking they are earning money, it is not on their time it is on the company's time, and they are getting their NVQ as well.

NE, Level 2 Team Leading

294 Many commented that they were 'just doing their regular job' and the qualification fitted well around that. If the qualification related to the learner's day-to-day activity, and if assessments were carried out without too much intrusion or disturbance, then learners had no problems and many said it was easy.

Fairly easy because it is the job I am doing. Most of the work required the job I am doing. Not very easy but the next one up.

NE, Level 3 Construction Site Supervision

295 The down side of this is that a work-based qualification requires employer support. Those that did not receive such support found the qualification problematic.

I found it quite difficult. For me to just get on with it I have to take myself out of that office... Generally I'm in there trying to do my

homework and answer the phone at the same time and the boss is saying can you organise this meeting? Sometimes I felt it wasn't working and I took it all home a few times. It's supposed to be work based. I'm supposed to have found time, it wasn't always practical.

NE, Level 3 Business and Administration

296 Any other problems described by learners tended to focus on the impact on their home life and the limited free time they had to invest in their qualification outside of the workplace. However, while this made the qualification challenging, most respondents rose to this challenge.

It was difficult because when you are running a home and doing full-time work it is tough but you just have to set yourself time and I was having to leave things at home and set them aside and set a certain 2 days to do a unit for that month. You have to be organised. To be honest, you have got to really set yourself time.

NE, Level 3 Health and Social Care

Conclusions

- 297 The third wave of the Train to Gain evaluation shows very positive results, as it has for the past three waves. Learners rate their experience highly, are enthusiastic about their achievements, and many now have plans to continue learning.
- 298 The qualification is the main motivator and main achievement, according to learners. It represents a great personal achievement for many, and learners feel that it has improved their level of skills and their future employment prospects. Furthermore, the process of embarking upon and completing training, while holding down a job and a life outside work, has boosted their confidence and self-esteem. Pay, promotion and additional responsibilities at work are less evident, possibly indicating that these are longer-term benefits; but most of those learners who have seen such improvements attribute them to their training.
- 299 The outcomes of the training match closely with what learners expected to happen at the outset, perhaps indicating that learners have realistic expectations – although the effect may be self-fulfilling to some extent. Either way, it is clear that employees feel they benefit personally and professionally from their training.
- 300 Employers, too, appear to see the benefits of facilitating training for their staff, and this third wave of research shows increasing evidence of a collaborative approach to setting up the training: more learners than in previous waves said that the training had been jointly initiated. Any difficulties with the learning tended to arise from personal circumstances or difficulties with a tutor, rather than the employers, and most described their employers as supportive, co-operative and accommodating.
- 301 Awareness and knowledge of Train to Gain is growing. Employers are increasingly the main source of information about Train to Gain, so it is important that they receive clear messages about provision, benefits and requirements. Employers are clearly supportive of Train to Gain, but it may be desirable for messages to reach employees by a wider range of routes, to

ensure that the training is a genuine collaboration of employee and employer needs and wants.

302 The findings from the third wave are highly consistent with previous waves.

- Satisfaction continues to be high across the Train to Gain cohort, and there appear to be no issues raised consistently by any particular group of learners.
- The value of a good tutor/assessor is again shown to be paramount, and the impact of a poor or absent one can be harmful. The best are accessible, flexible and highly supportive of learners, ensuring that the learners receive tailored support, assessments when they are ready and time alone when they are not.
- Train to Gain is reaching a diverse population of learners, but is less well balanced by sector, and Health and Social Care continues to dominate. Further analysis would be needed to explore whether this is desirable or not: it may reflect an established learning culture in this sector, the availability of suitable qualifications, or a previous lack of support or funding that makes Train to Gain particularly attractive to employers and/or employees.

303 This wave sees a noticeable shift in the balance between public sector and independent training provision among the new entrants to the survey (reflected in both sample and population). This may be a seasonal trend (most of these learners began their training between December and April, whereas the bulk of FE programmes would start in September) or it may be evidence that independent-sector provision is becoming more dominant. Further monitoring of this trend, and exploration of the reasons for it, may be of interest.

304 There is a great deal of variation in the length of time taken to complete the training or qualification, but 85 per cent of longitudinal learners have now completed their programmes. The flexibility of the qualification is important for learners, but communicating expectations of the time taken to complete, and the amount of input both at work and at home, may help to improve the experience for learners.

- 305 Support from tutors, assessors and employers for those learners who are taking a long time to complete may also be of value. These learners are at risk of not completing their qualification at all, and may need help in compiling portfolios. Pre-entry assessments may also ensure that learners find a suitable course in the first place. Completion appears to be driven by the quality of assessors and the time learners can spend with their assessors. Employers also have an important role to play in making time available for their employees to work on their training/qualification.
- 306 Good-quality assessors and tutors, supportive employers, and good communication prior to the start of the programme should ensure that the Train to Gain experience continues to be valuable to, and valued by, the great majority of learners.

Annex A: Profile of Respondents

Employment

Longitudinal group

Table A1: Industry of employer (current or most recent occupation)

	Wave 3		Wave 2
	Number	%	%
Agriculture	13	1	1
Construction	153	6	7
Engineering and manufacturing	338	12	12
Distribution, transport and logistics	154	6	6
Hospitality, leisure, sport and travel	185	7	7
Retail	243	9	9
Health, social care, education and public services	1,471	53	50
<i>Health, social care services *</i>	1,148	41	-
<i>Education, public administration and defence services*</i>	323	12	-
Finance and business services	58	2	2
Electricity, gas or water supply	16	1	1
Community, social or personal service activities	122	4	4
Other/not known	24	1	2

Base = all learners (N = 2,777). Wave 2 N = 5,072. Not asked in new entrants survey or in Wave 1.

* These categories were not used in Wave 2, so comparison is made on combined figure only.

Source: Train to Gain employee survey Waves 2 and 3 (autumn 2007, summer 2008)

Table A2: Size of employer/number of employees (current or most recent occupation)

	Wave 3		Wave 2
	Number	%	%
1–10	269	10	10
11–49	809	29	27
50–99	363	13	25*
100–249	372	13	25*
250 +	918	33	35
Don't know	46	2	3
<i>Total/base</i>	<i>2,777</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>5,072</i>

Base = all learners (N = 2,777). Wave 2 N = 5,072. * Wave 2 data = 25% for size 50–249. Not asked in new entrants survey or in Wave 1.

Source: Train to Gain employee survey Waves 2 and 3 (autumn 2007, summer 2008)

Table A3: Occupational group (longitudinal groups)

	Wave 3		Wave 2	Wave 1
	Number	%	%	%
Managers and senior officials	156	6	5	6
Professional occupations	96	4	3	3
Associate professional and technical	158	6	6	6
Administrative and secretarial	201	7	8	7
Skilled trades occupations	297	11	11	12
Personal service occupations	1,030	37	36	35
Sales and customer service occupations	227	8	9	9
Process, plant and machine operatives	292	11	11	11
Elementary occupations	291	11	11	11
Other/not known/unemployed	29	1	1	1

Base = all learners; Wave 3 N = 2,777; Wave 2 N = 5,072; Wave 1 N = 7,500.

Source: Train to Gain employee survey Waves 1, 2 and 3 (spring 2007, autumn 2007, summer 2008)

New entrants group

Table A4 shows the occupational group of respondents to the new entrants survey, and shows that the largest single group was Personal Service occupations, which accounted for 28 per cent, followed by Skilled Trades occupations, with 16 per cent. Personal Service occupations can be split into two subgroups, of which the predominant occupations were Caring Personal Service occupations (which accounted for 26 per cent of the total), and Leisure Personal Service occupations (2 per cent of the total).

Table A4: Occupational group (new entrants groups)

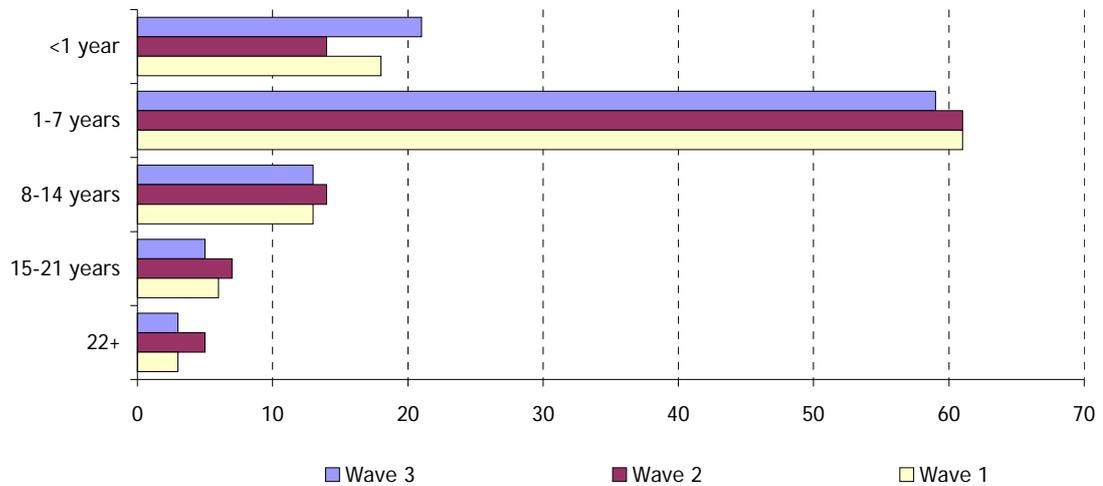
	Wave 3		Wave 2 (NE)	Wave 1
	Number	%	%	%
Managers and senior officials	423	8	7	6
Professional occupations	270	5	2	3
Associate professional and technical	265	5	6	6
Administrative and secretarial	350	6	7	7
Skilled trades occupations	900	16	16	12
Personal service occupations	1,590	28	26	35
Sales and customer service occupations	423	8	6	9
Process, plant and machine operatives	720	13	17	11
Elementary occupations	604	11	12	11
Other/not known/unemployed	64	1	1	1

Base = all learners: Wave 3 N = 5,608; Wave 2 N = 2,542; Wave 1 N = 7,500.

Source: Train to Gain employee survey Waves 1, 2 and 3 (spring 2007, autumn 2007, summer 2008)

Length of time in job

Figure A1: Length of time in job



Base = all learners: Wave 3 N = 5,608; Wave 2 N = 2,542; Wave 1 N = 7,500.

Source: *Train to Gain employee survey Waves 1, 2 and 3 (spring 2007, autumn 2007, summer 2008)*

Of those who had been in their current or most recent job for less than one year, 45 per cent had previously been working for a different employer doing a different job, and 33 per cent had been working for a different employer but doing much the same sort of job. Previously being in full-time training or learning accounted for 5 per cent; 2 per cent had been short-term unemployed or not working (i.e. less than six months), and 11 per cent had been long-term unemployed or not working (i.e. six months or longer). The previous circumstances of the remaining 4 per cent are not known.

Training and qualifications

Table A5: Occupational group by whether fully or part funded

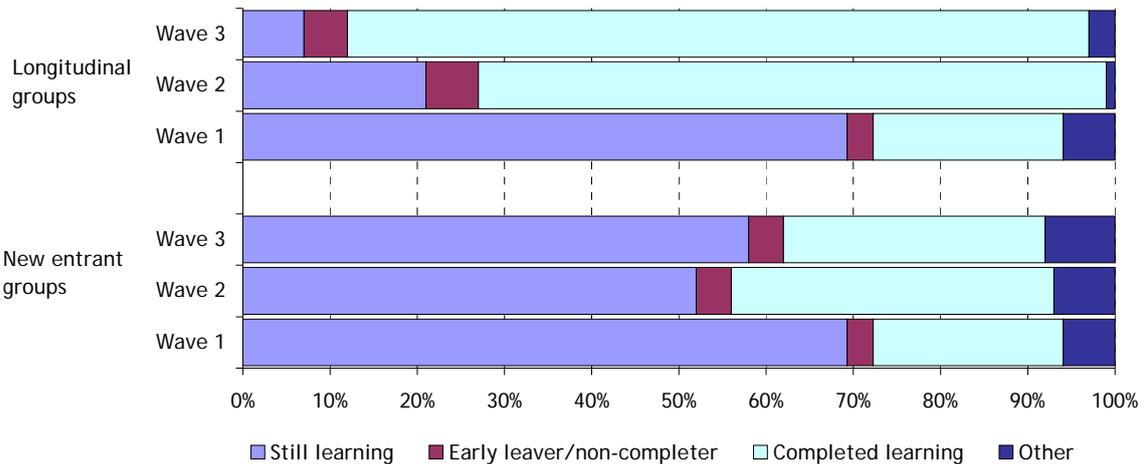
	Level 2		Level 3		Total NE	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Managers and senior officials	280	6	143	16	423	8
Professional occupations	191	4	79	9	270	5
Associate professional and technical	194	4	70	8	265	5
Administrative and secretarial	259	6	90	10	350	6
Skilled trades occupations	841	18	59	7	900	16
Personal service occupations	1,199	25	391	44	1,590	28
Sales and customer service occupations	407	9	16	2	423	8
Process, plant and machine operatives	699	15	21	2	720	13
Elementary occupations	592	13	11	1	604	11
Other/not known/unemployed	62	1	4	*	64	1
<i>Total/base</i>	<i>4,724</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>884</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>5,608</i>	<i>100</i>

Base = all learners.

Source: *New entrants group survey Wave 3 (summer 2008)*

Learning status

Figure A2: Learning status



Base = Wave 3: longitudinal group learners N = 2,777; new entrants group learners (N = 5,608).
 Wave 2: longitudinal N = 5,072; new entrant N = 2,542. Wave 1 N = 7,500.

Source: *Train to Gain employee survey Waves 1, 2 and 3 (spring 2007, autumn 2007, summer 2008)*

Subject area**Table A6: Subject area by whether fully or part funded (New entrants)**

	Level 2		Level 3		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Health and Social Care	1,070	23	305	35	1,376	25
Customer Service	413	9	20	2	433	8
Plant Operations	223	5	0	0	223	4
Business and Administration	151	3	63	7	214	4
Children's Care, Learning and Development	91	2	117	13	209	4
Cleaning and Support Services	171	4	0	0	171	3
Other subject areas	2,605	55	378	43	2,983	53
<i>Total/base</i>	<i>4,724</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>884</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>5,608</i>	<i>100</i>

Base = all learners: N = 5,608. Subjects over 3 per cent shown.

Source: *New entrants group survey Wave 3 (summer 2008)*

Qualifications**Table A7: 'Top ten' qualifications taken by different groups of learners**

	Wave 3 (LL)		Wave 3 (NE)		Wave 2 LL	Wave 2NE
	Number	%	Number	%	%	%
NVQ in Health and Social Care	939	34	1,376	25	32	25
NVQ in Customer Service	203	7	433	8	8	7
NVQ in Teaching Assistants	122	4	63	1	3	
NVQ in Business and Administration	111	4	214	4	4	4
NQV in Team Leading	108	4	161	3	4	4
NVQ for IT Users	94	3	143	3	4	5
NVQ in Performing Manufacturing Operations	76	3	107	2	3	4
NVQ in Cleaning and Support Services	75	3	171	3	2	4
NVQ in Children's Care, Learning and Development	75	3	209	4	2	2
NVQ in Retail Skills	67	2	114	2	3	2

Top ten qualifications for longitudinal group shown, plus corresponding data for new entrants and Wave 2 comparison.

Base = all learners: Wave 3 N = 2,777 for longitudinal group and N = 5,608 for new entrants. Wave 2 N = 5,702 LL and 2,542 NE.

Source: *Wave 3 survey (summer 2008); Wave 2 survey (autumn 2007)*

Table A8: Take-up of Skills for Life qualifications

	Wave 3 (LL)		Wave 2 (LL)
	Number	%	%
NVQ or equivalent only	2,570	93	93
NVQ or equivalent and Skills for Life	169	6	5
Skills for Life only	38	1	1
<i>Total/base</i>	<i>2,777</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>5,072</i>

Base = all learners: Wave 3 N = 2,777; Wave 2 N = 5,072.

Source: Longitudinal group survey Wave 3 (summer 2008)

Personal characteristics

This section shows the personal characteristics of respondents to both survey groups, starting with the age they left school, followed by their gender, ethnic origin, disability, age and region.

Age of leaving education

The Wave 3 new entrants group had spent longer in school than had learners in previous waves. In total, 38 per cent of Wave 3 respondents had stayed at school beyond 16, compared to 26 per cent in Wave 2.

In Wave 3:

- 17 per cent reported that they had left full-time education before the age of 16;
- 45 per cent had left aged 16;
- 11 per cent had left at the age of 17;
- 10 per cent had left at 18; and
- 17 per cent had stayed in full-time education beyond the age of 18.

A similar proportion of respondents in the qualitative interviews (including both new entrants and longitudinal learners) had left school at 16 years; most of this group had gained GCSE or equivalent qualifications, although a significant minority had left school with no qualifications at all. Around a quarter of the sample had left school before the age of 16, in most cases without

qualifications. Among this group of early leavers were many older learners, who would have been entitled to leave school at 15 years or younger (in the UK the school leaving age was raised to 16 in 1973). Some learners had stayed on in full-time education until 17 or 18 years or older, leaving with qualifications such as GCSEs, A-levels, NVQs and, in a few cases, degrees. A small group of learners had qualifications from overseas, but there was no information about whether or not these were recognised in the UK.

Gender

Table A9: Gender (longitudinal groups)

	Wave 3		Wave 2 (LL)	Wave 1
	Number	%	%	%
Male	864	31	33	35
Female	1,913	69	67	65
<i>Total/base</i>	<i>2,777</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>5,072</i>	<i>7,500</i>

Base = all learners: Wave 3 N = 2,777; Wave 2 N = 5,072; Wave 1 N = 7,500.

Source: Longitudinal group survey Wave 3 (summer 2008)

Table A10: Gender (new entrants groups)

	Wave 3		Wave 2 (NE)	Wave 1
	Number	%	%	%
Male	2,845	51	52	35
Female	2,763	49	48	65
<i>Total/base</i>	<i>5,608</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>2,542</i>	<i>7,500</i>

Base = all learners: Wave 3 N = 5,608; Wave 2 N = 2,542; Wave 1 N = 7,500.

Source: New entrants group survey Wave 3 (summer 2008)

Ethnicity

Table A11: Ethnicity (longitudinal groups)

	Wave 3		Wave 2	Wave 1
	Number	%	%	%
White	2,582	93	92	91
Asian/Asian British	56	2	3	3
Black/Black British	57	2	2	3
Chinese or other ethnicity	18	1	1	1
Mixed heritage	20	1	1	1
Not recorded	44	2	2	2
<i>Total/base</i>	<i>2,777</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>5,072</i>	<i>7,500</i>

Base = all learners: Wave 3 N = 2,777; Wave 2 N = 5,072; Wave 1 N = 7,500.

Source: Longitudinal group survey Wave 3 (summer 2008)

Table A12: Ethnicity (new entrants groups)

	Number	%	Wave 2	Wave 1
			%	%
White	4,572	82	87	91
Asian/Asian British	316	6	5	3
Black/Black British	390	7	4	3
Chinese or other ethnicity	90	2	1	1
Mixed heritage	72	1	1	1
Not recorded	168	3	3	2
<i>Total/base</i>	<i>5,608</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>2,542</i>	<i>7,500</i>

Base = all learners: Wave 3 N = 5,608; Wave 2 N = 2,542; Wave 1 N = 7,500.

Source: New entrants group survey Wave 3 (summer 2008)

Disability

Table A13: Whether learners have a disability, learning difficulty or health problem (longitudinal)

	Wave 3		Wave 2	Wave 1
	Number	%	%	%
Yes	225	8	7	7
No	2,450	88	89	89
Not recorded	102	4	4	4
<i>Total/base</i>	<i>2,777</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>5,072</i>	<i>7,500</i>

Base = all learners: Wave 3 N = 2,777; Wave 2 N = 5,072; Wave 1 N = 7,500.

Source: Longitudinal group survey Wave 3 (summer 2008)

Table A14: Whether learners have a disability, learning difficulty or health problem (new entrants groups)

	Wave 3		Wave 2	Wave 1
	Number	%	%	%
Yes	307	6	6	7
No	5,097	91	88	89
Not recorded	203	4	6	4
<i>Total/base</i>	<i>5,608</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>2,542</i>	<i>7,500</i>

Base = all learners: Wave 3 N = 5,608; Wave 2 N = 2,542; Wave 1 N = 7,500.

Source: New entrants group survey Wave 3 (summer 2008)

Age

Table A15: Age (longitudinal groups)

	Wave 3		Wave 2	Wave 1
	Number	%	%	%
18–25	127	5	6	8
26–35	415	15	16	18
36–45	1,014	37	36	36
46–55	896	32	30	28
56 and above	324	12	12	11
<i>Total/base</i>	<i>2,777</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>5,072</i>	<i>7,500</i>

Base = all learners: Wave 3 N = 2,777; Wave 2 N = 5,072; Wave 1 N = 7,500. Wave 3 and Wave 2 longitudinal groups show the age as recorded at Wave 1.

Source: Longitudinal group survey Wave 3 (summer 2008)

Table A16: Age (new entrants groups)

	Wave 3		Wave 2	Wave 1
	Number	%	%	%
18–25	846	15	11	8
26–35	1,230	22	18	18
36–45	1,780	32	32	36
46–55	1,329	24	27	28
56 and above	423	8	12	11
<i>Total/base</i>	<i>5,608</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>2,542</i>	<i>7,500</i>

Base = all learners: Wave 3 N = 5,608; Wave 2 N = 2,542; Wave 1 N = 7,500. Wave 3 and Wave 2 longitudinal groups show the age as recorded at Wave 1.

Source: New entrants group survey Wave 3 (summer 2008)

Region

Table A17: Region (longitudinal groups)

	Wave 3		Wave 2	Wave 1
	Number	%	%	%
East of England	178	6	7	7
East Midlands	258	9	6	6
London	106	4	3	3
North East	243	9	8	7
North West	643	23	21	21
South East	347	13	12	12
South West	312	11	9	9
West Midlands	482	17	20	20
Yorkshire and the Humber	155	6	8	9
National/not known	53	2	6	7
<i>Total</i>	<i>2,777</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>

Base = all learners: Wave 3 N = 2,777; Wave 2 N = 5,072; Wave 1 N = 7,500.

Source: Longitudinal group survey Wave 3 (summer 2008)

Table A18: Region (new entrants groups)

	Wave 3		Wave 2	Wave 1
	Number	%	%	%
East of England	507	9	11	7
East Midlands	418	8	8	6
London	930	17	7	3
North East	292	5	6	7
North West	994	18	16	21
South East	696	12	9	12
South West	527	9	11	9
West Midlands	753	13	15	20
Yorkshire and the Humber	307	6	13	9
National/not known	184	3	4	7
<i>Total</i>	<i>5,608</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>

Base = all learners: Wave 3 N = 5,608; Wave 2 N = 2,542; Wave 1 N = 7,500.

Source: New entrants group survey Wave 3 (summer 2008)

