

# RESEARCH

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National Learner Satisfaction  
Survey: Apprentices Report

**FEBRUARY 2011**



Trinh Tu, Claire Lambert, Billie Lever Taylor, Claire Lister and Angela Klein managed this project at Ipsos MORI and would like to thank Tracy Mitchell and Charlotte Beckford and all colleagues at LSC who worked on the research for all their help and assistance; thanks are also due to all the survey respondents who gave up their time to take part.

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# Introduction

## Background

This report presents the findings for 4,979 learners undertaking Apprenticeships. These Apprentices were surveyed as part of the National Learner Satisfaction Survey (NLSS) 2009, which was conducted by Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute and commissioned by Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The LSC has now been superseded by the Skills Funding Agency and the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA), with the research function of the LSC transferring to the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

The NLSS is a large tracking survey of around 25,000 then LSC-funded learners aged 16 and over. The NLSS provides a wealth of data on learners' satisfaction with their learning experience over time, including detailed information on three key aspects of the learner journey: initial choice and information; support during learning; and benefits of participation. There have been six national surveys since 2001 (annually between 2001 and 2004, 2007 and 2009).

## Sampling

The NLSS covers learners in further education (FE), Apprenticeships, other LR<sup>1</sup>, non-accredited personal and community development learning (PCDL), Skills for Jobs (SFJ) and Employability Skills programme (ESP) learning.

Apprenticeship learners were sampled from the individualised learner record (ILR) and final data has been weighted using final ILR profiles for the 2007/08 academic year. Further details about the sampling and weighting approach are provided in the technical report.

## Sample profile

Table 1 shows the weighted demographic profile of the Apprentices interviewed. As can be seen, there is a broadly even gender split. Around one in four Apprentices are aged 16 to 18 and 7 per cent are from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups.

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<sup>1</sup> includes charities, HEIs, local authorities, business organisations, public or voluntary organisations

**Table 1: Sample demographic profile (weighted)**

<i>(Unweighted Base: all respondents)</i>	<i>(4,979) %</i>
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	54
Female	46
<b>Age</b>	
16–18	24
19+	76
Refused	0
<b>Ethnicity</b>	
White	93
BME	7
Refused	0
Not known	*
<b>Disability</b>	6
<b>Learning difficulty</b>	6

Table 2 shows the profile of Apprentices by course/framework. Construction and Engineering, Technology and Manufacturing Apprenticeships are dominated by male Apprentices, whilst Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy and Health, Social Care and Public Services Apprenticeships have an extremely high proportion of female Apprentices.

Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy has a much younger age profile than other Apprenticeship frameworks, whilst Retailing, Customer Services and Transportation Apprenticeships are dominated by Apprentices aged 19 and over.

English Languages and Communications and Information and Communication Technology have larger proportions of Apprentices from BME groups.

Retailing, Customer Services and Transportation is the framework with the highest proportion of Apprentices with disabilities, whilst Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy has the highest proportion of Apprentices with learning difficulties.

Table 2: Sample demographic profile by course/framework (weighted)

Course type/Framework group <sup>23</sup>	Science and Mathematics	Land based provision <sup>4</sup>	Construction	Engineering, Technology and Manufacturing	Business admin, Management and	Information and Communication, Technology	Retailing, Customer Service and Transportation	Hospitality, Sports and Leisure	Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy	Health, Social Care and Public Services	English Languages and Communication <sup>5</sup>
<i>(Unweighted Base)</i>	<i>(147)</i>	<i>(58)</i>	<i>(759)</i>	<i>(1,324)</i>	<i>(630)</i>	<i>(153)</i>	<i>(372)</i>	<i>(270)</i>	<i>(461)</i>	<i>(614)</i>	<i>(95)</i>
<b>Gender</b>											
Male	51	60	99	97	26	70	26	54	7	8	47
Female	49	40	1	3	74	30	74	46	93	92	53
<b>Age</b>											
16–18	22	29	32	26	15	22	8	25	58	15	23
19+	78	71	68	74	85	78	92	75	42	85	77
Refused	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

<sup>2</sup> All learners were asked the subject studied. It should therefore be noted that these breakdowns do not match up exactly to the ten main Apprenticeship framework categories.

<b>Ethnicity</b>											
White	89	100	98	97	87	86	87	95	94	88	83
BME	11	0	2	3	12	14	13	5	6	12	17
Refused	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not known	0	0	*	0	1	0	*	0	0	0	0
<b>Disability</b>	4	4	4	4	7	5	13	5	6	9	2
<b>Learning difficulty</b>	7	13	6	5	2	3	2	7	17	8	6

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<sup>3</sup> Courses types/framework groups with an unweighted base size of less than 30 Apprentices have been excluded from this table.

<sup>4</sup> Results are indicative only due to small base size

<sup>5</sup> Results are indicative only due to small base size



11 per cent of Apprentices are receiving learner support funding (Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) as well as other forms of learner support including Adult Learning Grant and Care to Learn funding). Note that the differences observed between EMA claimants and non claimants in this report may be related to the type of apprenticeships undertaken. Indeed, EMA claimants are on programme led apprenticeships, as Apprentices in employment are unable to claim EMA.

Apprentices receiving learner support have a younger age profile than Apprentices in general. They are also more likely to be from a BME group and start their Apprenticeship with Entry level/Level 1 qualifications as their highest prior qualification. Apprentices receiving an EMA specifically are also more likely to have a learning difficulty or a learning disability and a disability.

Eight per cent of Apprentices say they have a Skills Account or an Adult Learning Account. Male Apprentices are more likely to have a Skills Account than females. Adult Learner Account holders, on the other hand, are more likely to be women and also, as might be expected, aged 25 or over.

## Multivariate analysis

In addition to standard analysis of the data, multiple regression (also known as key driver analysis – KDA) was used to examine the relative importance of a range of factors in explaining overall satisfaction with the learning experience.

## Interpretation of data

It should be remembered that a sample and not the entire population of Apprentices has been interviewed. Consequently, all results are subject to sampling tolerances, which means that not all differences are statistically significant. **This report comments only on findings that are statistically significant.**

Where percentages do not sum to 100, this is due to computer rounding, the exclusion of 'don't know' categories, or multiple answers. An asterisk (\*) denotes values above zero but less than 0.5 per cent.

In this report, reference is made to 'combined scores'. This is where we combine 'extremely', 'very' and 'fairly', or 'strongly' and 'tend to' scores. The report also makes reference to 'net' figures. This represents the balance of opinion on attitudinal questions. In the case of a 'net satisfaction' figure, this represents the percentage satisfied with a particular issue, less the percentage dissatisfied. For example, if an aspect of learning records 40 per cent satisfied and 25 per cent dissatisfied, the 'net satisfaction' figure is +15 points.

Combined and net scores are calculated using the true value of the scores before they are rounded. This can result in a small discrepancy (usually one percentage point) between the combined score and the sum of the rounded scores it relates to.

This report also makes reference to mean scores for questions where learners were asked to rank an aspect of their course or provider on a scale of 1 to 10. The mean score is compiled by adding the scores provided by all learners and dividing it by the number of learners answering the question.

## Report structure

This report is organised into six main sections:

- Summary of key findings and implications;
- Overall satisfaction and advocacy;
- Key drivers of satisfaction and advocacy
- Performance on key drivers;
- Attitudes to learning and benefits of learning; and
- Early leavers

In addition to this report, separate reports are also available for FE learners, other LR and PCDL learners, learners on Skills for Jobs and ESP programmes, learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, young learners and adult learners. There is also an overall summary report, as well as a detailed technical report.

To protect the LSC successor organisations' interests in ensuring that the findings of this research are accurately reported, any such publications are therefore subject to the advance approval of Ipsos MORI. Such approval will only be refused on the grounds of inaccuracy or misrepresentation.

# Summary and Implications

## Summary

### Satisfaction with the learning experience remains very high

Apprentices express high levels of satisfaction with their learning experience, with 92 per cent reporting they are satisfied, similar to results observed in 2007 and to other learner groups. This is most likely to be because they enjoyed the course, rated the tutors highly or were able to get the help they needed.

Overall satisfaction levels have been high and relatively stable since 2001. However, between 2007 and 2009 there has been a fall in the proportion of Apprentices who are *extremely* satisfied (from 26 per cent to 9 per cent), reversing a gradual increase in previous years. This finding is not limited to Apprentices, however, with decreases in the proportions reporting they are *extremely* satisfied observed across all learner groups.

Just less than three-quarters of Apprentices would speak highly of their learning provider including just over a third who would do so without being asked. Overall advocacy (speaking highly of the provider) has increased slightly since 2007. Compared to other learning groups, Apprentices are more likely than FE learners to speak highly of their provider without being asked (35 per cent compared with 29 per cent).

Whilst Adult Apprentices (aged 25 or over) show slightly lower levels of overall satisfaction when compared to their younger counterparts, they are more likely to speak highly of their provider *without* being asked.

### Quality of teaching is a key driver of satisfaction

The key drivers of Apprentices' satisfaction with their learning experience are the quality of teaching, the ability of providers to listen and act on Apprentices' views as well as the impact of the course on their career.

Personal relationships with providers, and specifically with teaching staff, are by far the biggest driver of advocacy amongst Apprentices, with a particular emphasis on responsiveness.

### Providers' performance on key drivers of satisfaction is rated highly by learners

Nine in ten Apprentices are satisfied with the quality of teaching - this figure has remained at the same level since 2003/04, and is similar to ratings among other LR and FE learners (90 and 89 per cent respectively). Ratings for specific aspects (including setting clear targets to help the learner improve) are also high.

The vast majority of Apprentices (90 per cent) also say their learning programme is meeting their needs. Most (68 per cent) also say their learning programme has at least met their expectations, with one third saying their course has exceeded their expectations. However, around a quarter of Apprentices said they did know what to expect and this rose to nearly a third for Apprentices receiving an Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA).

Around three-quarters of Apprentices rate the advice they have been given about what they can do after their learning programme as good. The vast majority of Apprentices (92 per cent) agree that their course will help them move forward in their career and make it easier to find the job they want.

Apprentices rate their tutors highly when it comes to relating to the Apprentice as a person, especially Adult Apprentices and those undertaking Level 2 Apprenticeships. Apprentices are also extremely positive about how good their learning provider is at listening to their views; particularly Apprentices aged 16 to 18. However, they are slightly less likely to say that providers are good at acting on views, although eight in ten still report that their provider is good at this.

### **Undertaking further learning is likely for the vast majority of Apprentices**

Just over half of Apprentices had positive feelings about education on leaving school but now 86 per cent say they are more positive about learning than when they started their Apprenticeship.

Just over three-quarters of Apprentices say they are likely to undertake further learning in the next three years – a similar level to 2007. However, the proportion saying they are *very* likely has increased slightly, possibly as a result of the recession.

### **The proportion of early leavers, and reasons for leaving early, have remained similar to previous years**

The main reasons given by Apprentices for leaving the course early is that it was the wrong choice of course or they changed jobs. These were also the most common reasons given in 2007. However, the proportion citing wrong choice of course has fallen, whilst a higher proportion of Apprentices said they left early because they changed jobs.

As would be expected, Apprentices who left their course early (4 per cent of Apprentices surveyed) are less likely than others to be dissatisfied with their overall learning experience.

## **Implications**

Apprentices' overall satisfaction with their provider remains very high although the proportion who is *extremely* satisfied has fallen, after a gradual increase in recent years. This finding is not limited just to Apprentices – it is observed across all groups of learners. Learners' overall assessment of their course, and their rating of individual aspects, remain very positive, so there are no clear reasons for this change. Instead, it may be linked to expectations:

many learners feel that the course has met (rather than exceeded) their expectations despite rating their learning experience highly and a significant minority say they did not know what to expect. Finding ways to manage – and where possible exceed - expectations may help to increase again the group of learners who are extremely satisfied.

Quality of teaching is an important driver of overall satisfaction and, therefore, it is very encouraging that Apprentices continue to rate their tutors highly on this. When examining the specific factors that are important (setting clear goals to help you learn or improve, understanding how you like to learn and managing the group of learners), learners on Advanced or Higher Apprenticeships consistently rate these aspects less positively than those undertaking Level 2 Apprenticeships (although they do still rate tutors fairly well on these factors). Given the government's commitment to expand the number of Advanced Apprenticeships, it will be important to understand why these differences exist and what, if anything, could be done to close this gap.

There has been a slight increase in advocacy amongst Apprentices since 2007 and our key driver analysis shows personal relationships (including relating to the learner as a person and listening and acting on their views) are by far the biggest driver of attitudes towards advocacy. Apprentices are the most likely of all the learner groups to report their provider is good at listening and acting on their views so there may be positive aspects about the Apprenticeship programmes that could be replicated to other types of learning provisions.

The impact of the course on their career was identified as a key driver of overall satisfaction for Apprentices uniquely (i.e. it was not identified as a key driver for FE learners) although this is not surprising given the vocational nature of Apprenticeships. However, it does demonstrate that this message would resonate with potential learners.

In terms of going onto further learning in the next three years, Level 2 Apprentices demonstrated a higher likelihood of further learning than those undertaking Advanced or Higher Apprenticeships. However, just less than three-quarters of Apprentices undertaking Advanced or higher Apprenticeships still said they were likely to go onto further learning, demonstrating a definite appetite for further opportunities. It will be interesting to see what effect developments in terms of progression routes for Apprentices into HE will have on this in the future.

Apprentices who leave their course early are less likely to cite wrong choice of course as the main reason than in 2007. In contrast, they are more likely to leave because they changed jobs and this may be linked to the economic recession. However, it could also point to a need to educate both employers and Apprentices further on the portability of Apprenticeships across jobs.

# Key Findings

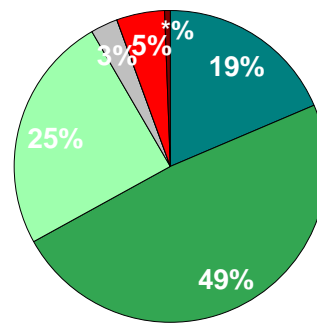
## Satisfaction with the learning experience and advocacy

The vast majority of Apprentices (92 per cent) are satisfied with their learning experience (Figure 1), in line with FE learners (91 per cent) and other LR learners (92 per cent).

**Figure 1: Satisfaction with the learning experience**

Q *And now taking all the issues we have discussed into account, how satisfied are you with your current learning experience at . . .(college/provider)?*

- % Extremely satisfied
- % Very satisfied
- % Fairly satisfied
- % Neither/nor
- % Extremely/very/fairly dissatisfied
- % Don't know

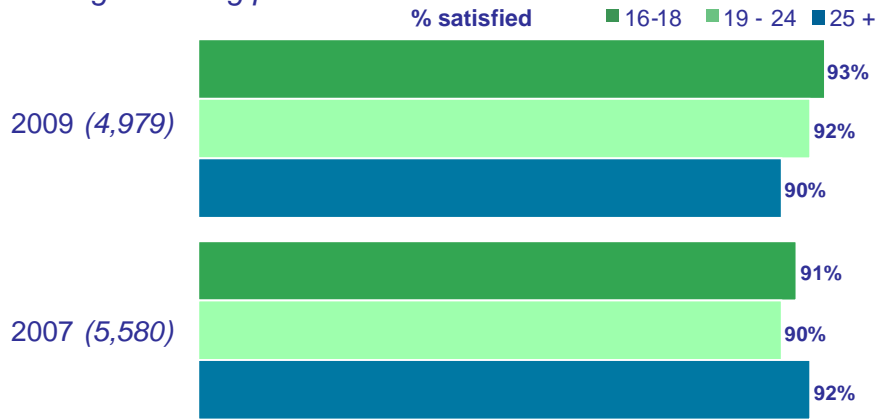


Base: 4,979 Apprentice learners aged 16+ for waves 15, 16 and 17, 2009

Satisfaction is high amongst all sub groups, although satisfaction appears to decrease slightly with age. For example, 90 per cent of Apprentices aged 25 or over report that they are satisfied with their learning experience (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Satisfaction with the learning experience, by age

Q And now taking all the issues we have discussed into account, how satisfied are you with your current learning experience at your college/ training provider?

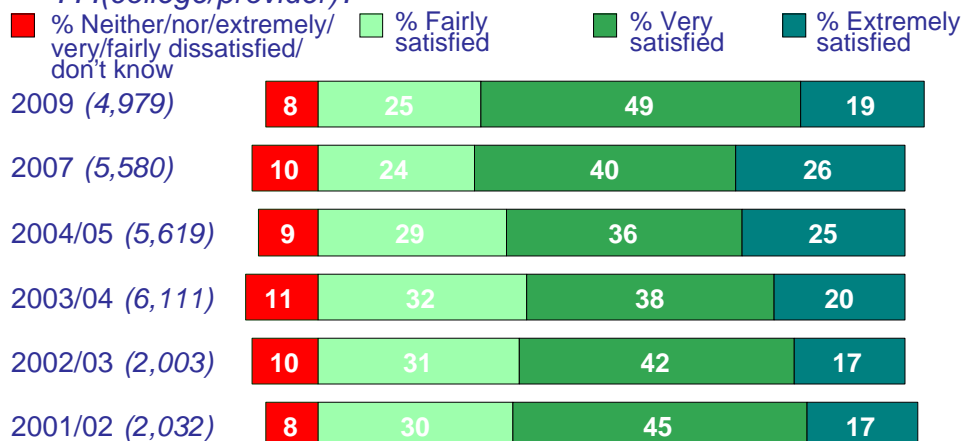


Bases in brackets: Apprentice learners aged 16+ for waves 12,13 and 14, 2007 and waves 15, 16 and 17, 2009

Overall, Apprentices' satisfaction levels are similar to those reported in the 2007 survey (Figure 3) and have increased by one percentage point. Examining longer-term trends, overall satisfaction levels have remained stable since the first NLSS in 2001 (although there have been changes in the proportion of learners who are *extremely* satisfied, as previously discussed).

Figure 3: Trends in satisfaction with the learning experience

Q And now taking all the issues we have discussed into account, how satisfied are you with your current learning experience at . . .(college/provider)?



Bases in brackets: Apprentice learners aged 16+

The main reasons why Apprentices say they were satisfied with their learning experience are summarised in Figure 4 and include enjoyment and appreciation of the course or training and having access to (teaching) staff who are good and helpful.

**Figure 4: Reasons for satisfaction with learning experience**

Q You said you were extremely/very/fairly satisfied, what is the main reason for this?



Base: 4,597 Apprentice learners aged 16+ who are satisfied with their learning experience for waves 15,16 and 17, 2009

Female Apprentices are more likely than average to report they are satisfied because of the tutors (37 per cent) (Table 3). This is also cited more frequently by those undertaking their training<sup>6</sup> at a college or training provider only (39 and 44 per cent respectively).

<sup>6</sup> 10s relates to the time spent training away from their day-to-day job as part of their apprenticeship.



**Table 3: Top three reasons for satisfaction with learning experience**

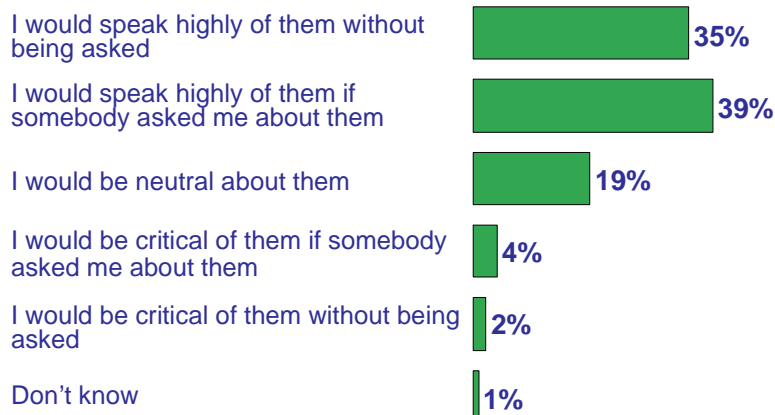
	<i>A good course/learnt a lot/enjoyed it/up to expectations</i>	<i>Tutors are good/they make it easy /interesting for us/help us</i>	<i>They were very helpful/always ready to help/get all the help I need</i>
<i>Base (unweighted): All respondents who are satisfied with their course (4,597)</i>			
<b>All Apprentices</b>	35	34	30
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	37	32	25
Female	33	37	36
<b>Age</b>			
16–18	37	34	28
19–24	33	34	30
25+	36	36	34
<b>Apprenticeship Placement</b>			
College	36	39	25
Training provider	32	44	32
Workplace	35	35	34
Both workplace and college/training provider	35	32	28
<b>Accounts held</b>			
Skills Account	39	26	30
Adult Learner Account	36	31	25
Neither	34	34	30

## Advocacy

Most Apprentices would speak highly of their provider, including around one in three who would do so without being asked (Figure 5). Just 6 per cent would be critical.

**Figure 5: Advocacy towards learning provider**

Q Which of these statements best describes the way you would speak of your workplace/ employer/ other training/college/ training provider?

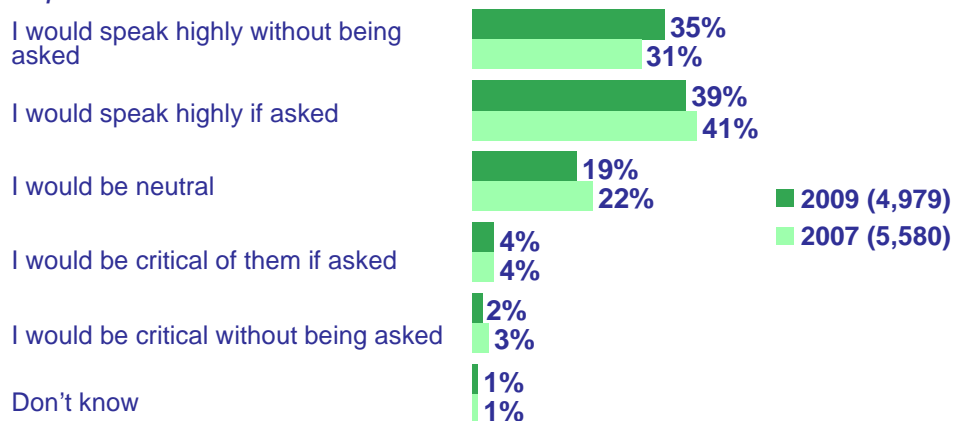


Base: 4,979 Apprentice learners aged 16+ for waves 15, 16 and 17, 2009

The proportion of Apprentices who would speak highly of their provider has increased by three percentage points since 2007. There is also an increase of four percentage points in the proportion of Apprentices who would speak highly of their provider *without* being asked (Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Trends in advocacy (speaking highly of provider)**

Q Which of these statements best describes the way you would speak of your workplace/ employer/ other training/college/ training provider?



Bases in brackets: Apprentice learners aged 16+ for waves 12,13 and 14, 2007 and waves 15, 16 and 17, 2009

Female Apprentices are significantly more likely to speak highly of their provider *without* being prompted than male Apprentices (39 per cent and 32 per cent respectively), although there is less of a difference between overall advocacy levels (Table 4). Adult Apprentices are also much more likely to be spontaneous advocates (45 per cent) than younger Apprentices.

Apprentices with learning difficulties are less likely to be advocates (68 per cent) than other groups of learners. However, this is because they are more likely than other learners to be neutral about their providers (25 per cent) rather than speak critically (6 per cent).

The results for Apprentices with a Skills Account are in line with those overall. However, Apprentices receiving an Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) are less likely to speak highly of their providers (68 per cent).

**Table 4: Advocacy**

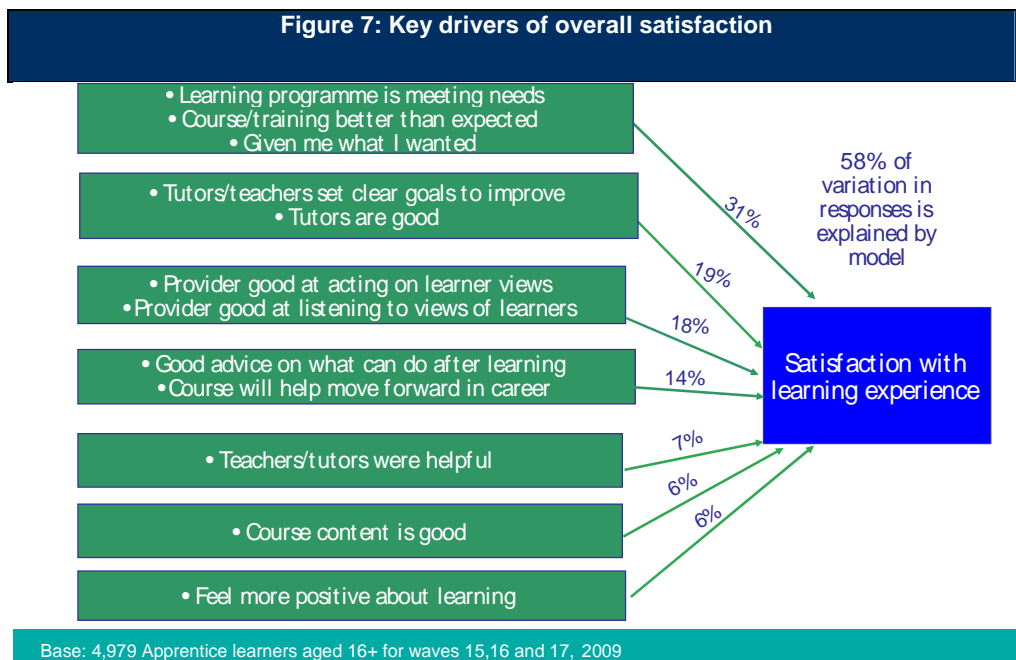
	<i>I would speak highly without being asked</i>	<i>Overall advocate</i>	<i>Overall neutral</i>	<i>Overall critic</i>	<i>Net advocate</i>
<i>Base (unweighted): All respondents (4,979)</i>					
<b>All Apprentices</b>	35	74	19	6	+68
<b>Gender</b>					
Male	32	73	20	6	+67
Female	39	75	18	6	+68
<b>Age</b>					
16–18	33	74	20	5	+70
19–24	32	72	20	7	+65
25+	45	77	15	6	+71

### Key drivers of satisfaction and advocacy

A key driver analysis (KDA) was conducted to determine the key drivers of satisfaction with the learning experience, and of advocacy towards providers. Figures 7 and 8 present the results of the multivariate analysis showing the relative importance of various aspects. The model for overall satisfaction demonstrates a 'fit' ( $R^2$  value) of 58 per cent – this is the percentage of

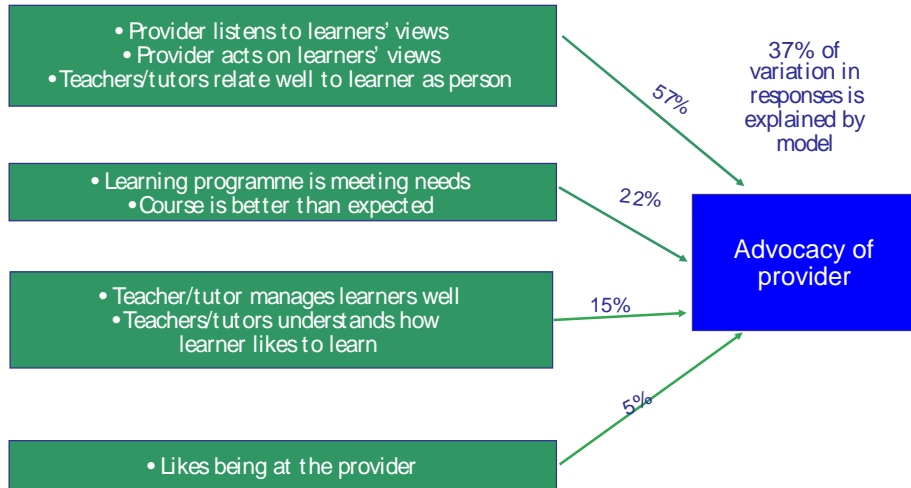
the variation in levels of satisfaction with the learning experience that can be ‘explained’ by the included factors. (It is not possible to identify **causal** relationships using this type of model, however, only correlations.) Statistically, this is seen to be a good ‘fit’ model. The ‘fit’ for advocacy is much lower (37 per cent), indicating that it is less easy to explain variations in attitudes towards advocacy than it is in overall satisfaction.

The factors that are most positively linked to Apprentices’ overall satisfaction with their learning experience are the quality of tutors or teachers (specifically being good overall and in setting clear goals to help learners improve), and the extent to which the provider takes learners’ views into account (both listening to and acting on learners’ views). As might be expected, given the vocational nature of Apprenticeships, the impact of the course on their career (moving forward in their career as a result of being on the course, and getting advice on what to do after the course) is also linked positively with overall satisfaction.



As noted above, the Key Driver analysis model for advocacy has a weaker fit than the model for overall satisfaction. However, it is clear that personal relationships with provider staff are by far the biggest driver of attitudes towards advocacy, with an emphasis in particular on responsiveness (specifically the provider listening to and acting on their views, and tutors or teachers relating to them as a person). Figure 16 indicates that these factors only account for more than half of variations in advocacy among Apprentices.

Figure 8: Key drivers of advocacy



Base: 4,979 Apprentice learners aged 16+ for waves 15,16 and 17, 2009

# Performance on key drivers

This chapter examines providers' performance on the drivers of satisfaction which were highlighted in the previous chapter. Table 5 summarises Apprentices' ratings for the key drivers. The ratings are presented as either the percentage rating each item positively or the mean score out of 10 (a higher score indicating a more positive rating).

**Table 5: Performance on key drivers – summary**

*(Base varies by question)*

## **Tutors/teachers**

Satisfied with quality of teaching	90%
Understand learner(s) and how they like to learn (mean)	8.0
Tutors/teachers set clear goals to improve (mean)	8.1
Tutors manage the group well (mean)	8.0
Cite the place/the college/good working environment as one of the main reasons for being satisfied with their learning experience (unprompted)	6%

## **Needs and expectations**

Learning programme is meeting my needs	90%
Experience was better than expected	33%

## **Information, advice and support**

Say one of their main reasons for being satisfied is that their learning provider was helpful/always ready to help (unprompted)	30%
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## **Future Career**

Good advice on next steps	74%
Agree that course will help move forward in career	92%

## **Relationship**

Tutors relate to learner(s) as a person (mean)	8.5
Provider good at listening to views	85%
Provider good at acting on views	80%

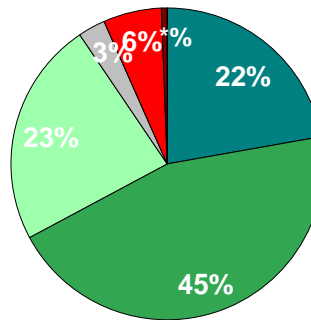
## Satisfaction with teaching and provider

Apprentices' satisfaction with the quality of teaching shows a similar pattern to the findings for overall satisfaction: 9 in 10 learners expressed satisfaction (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Satisfaction with the quality of teaching

Q Overall, how satisfied are you with the quality of the teaching/training at . . . ?

- % Extremely satisfied
- % Very satisfied
- % Fairly satisfied
- % Neither/nor
- % Extremely/very/fairly dissatisfied
- % Don't know

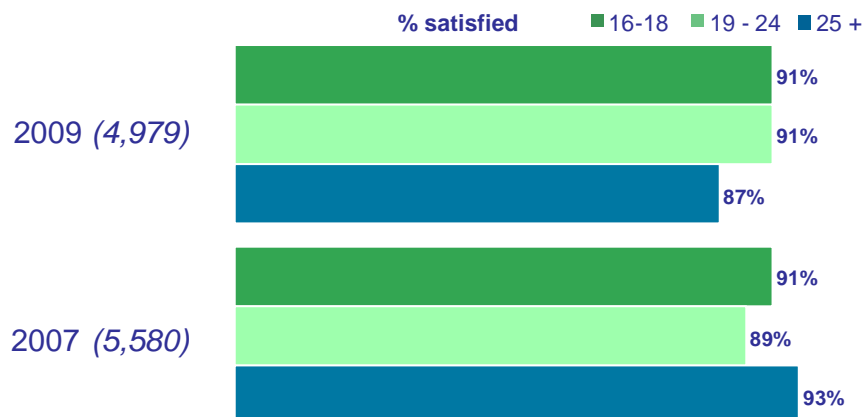


Base: 4,979 Apprentices learners aged 16+ for waves 15, 16 and 17, 2009

As with overall satisfaction, Adult Apprentices show *slightly* lower levels of satisfaction (87 per cent) with the quality of teaching when compared to their younger counterparts (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Satisfaction with the quality of teaching by age

Q Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the quality of the teaching/training at...?



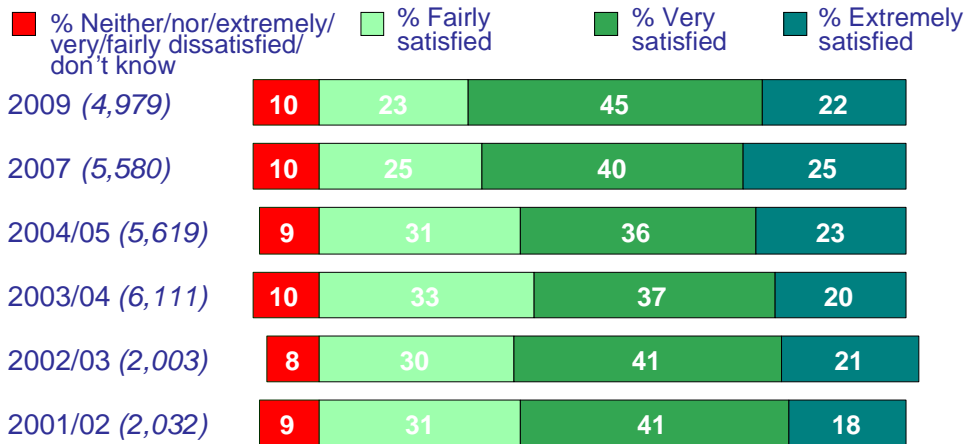
Bases in brackets: Apprentice learners aged 16+ for waves 12,13 and 14, 2007 and waves 15, 16 and 17, 2009

Those undertaking their training with a training provider only also show lower levels of satisfaction in this area (85 per cent) although it is important to bear in mind this is still a high figure.

Satisfaction with the quality of teaching has remained the same level since 2003/04, and trends since 2001 have been stable (Figure 11).

**Figure 11: Trends in satisfaction with the quality of teaching**

Q Overall, how satisfied are you with the quality of the teaching/training at . . . ?



Bases in brackets: Apprentices learners aged 16+

## Specific aspects of teaching

As previously noted, Apprentices express high levels of satisfaction with the quality of teaching on their course, and this is an important driver of overall satisfaction. Therefore, in this section we look at three specific aspects of teaching, which have also been identified as key drivers. Apprentices were asked to give the following a rating between 1 (very poor) and 10 (excellent):

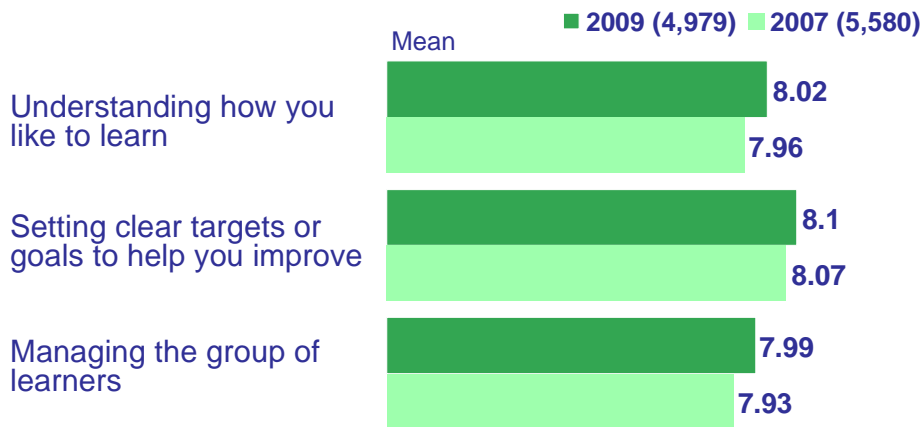
- Setting clear targets or goals to help you improve;
- Understanding how you like to learn; and
- Managing the group of learners.

All three areas were highly rated, with setting clear targets or goals to help you improve receiving the highest mean rating of 8.10 (Figure 12).



Figure 12: Trends in specific aspects of teaching

Q How would you rate the teachers or tutors/ assessor and trainers on...?



Bases in brackets: Apprentice learners aged 16+ for waves 12,13 and 14, 2007 and waves 15, 16 and 17, 2009

Differences in ratings between Apprentices are generally consistent across these three drivers (Table 6). Women consistently rate these aspects higher on average, as do Adult Apprentices. Those on Level 2 Apprenticeships also rate their teachers, tutors, assessors or trainers higher on these three factors than those undertaking Advanced or Higher Apprenticeships. Apprentices undertaking their training entirely in the workplace also consistently rate the tutors highly on these factors. However, it should be noted that Adult Apprentices are significantly more likely than average to be undertaking their training entirely within the workplace (67 per cent compared to 35 per cent overall).

**Table 6: Specific aspects of teaching and how they are rated (mean score)**

	<i>Setting clear targets or goals to help you improve</i>	<i>Understanding how you like to learn</i>	<i>Managing the group of learners</i>
<i>Base (unweighted): All except those who said 'don't know' or 'not applicable'</i>	(4,954)	(4,963)	(4,786)
<b>All Apprentices</b>	8.10	8.02	7.99
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	7.91	7.75	7.80
Female	8.33	8.34	8.23
<b>Age</b>			
16–18	8.10	7.91	7.96
19–24	8.06	7.95	7.91
25+	8.23	8.32	8.25
<b>Current level of study</b>			
Level 2 or below	8.23	8.16	8.10
Level 3 or above	7.96	7.86	7.88
<b>Apprenticeship Placement</b>			
College	7.92	7.71	7.84
Training provider	7.84	7.95	7.98
Workplace	8.43	8.46	8.30
Both workplace and college/training provider	7.94	7.78	7.83

## Decline in the proportion extremely satisfied overall and with the quality of teaching

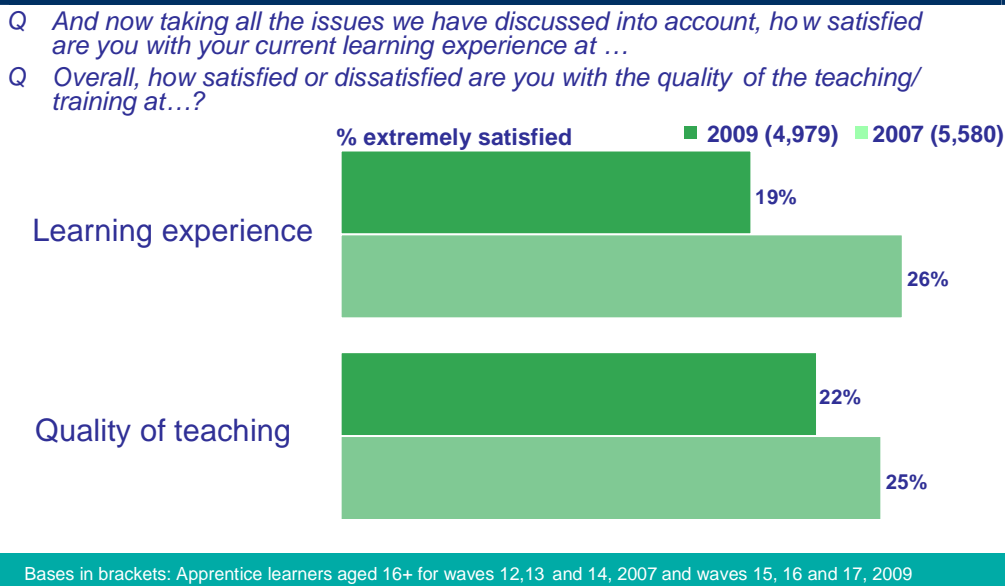
While overall satisfaction with the learning experience and quality of teaching are unchanged from 2007, there has been a decline in the proportion of Apprentices who are *extremely* satisfied. This is particularly pronounced in relation to overall satisfaction with the learning experience, where the proportions extremely satisfied have fallen by seven percentage points

(Figure 13).

There has also been a decrease in the proportion extremely satisfied with the quality of teaching, but this is much smaller at three percentage points.

This trend, however, is not just limited to Apprentices, but has been observed across all groups of learners. In fact Apprentices show the lowest drop across the four main learner groups<sup>7</sup> in terms of the proportion who are *extremely* satisfied with their overall learning experience.

**Figure 13: Percentages of Apprentices extremely satisfied with the learning experience and quality of teaching**



Longer-term trends indicate that the proportions extremely satisfied with the overall learning experience and with the quality of teaching increased steadily between 2001 and 2007 from 17 per cent in 2001 to 26 per cent in 2007. The 2009 figures, therefore, represent a reversing of this trend and a return to the levels of previous years.

These findings also need to be seen in the context of the high levels of satisfaction overall, and in the stable trends in overall satisfaction.

## Needs and expectations

A new question was asked in the 2009 survey about meeting learners' expectations. Overall, most Apprentices feel that their expectations have at least been met, with one third saying the course has exceeded their expectations. However, just over a quarter of Apprentices did not know what to expect (Figure 14).

Six per cent of Apprentices report that their training was worse than expected. Adult apprentices and those from BME background are more likely to express this view.

<sup>7</sup> FE, Apprenticeship, PCDL and Other LR

Male Apprentices are slightly less likely to say the course exceeded their expectations (31 per cent), whilst younger Apprentices (aged 16 to 18) are more likely to report it exceeded their expectations (35 per cent), perhaps because they have been less exposed previously to vocational training and are, therefore, less able to benchmark their experience. Just under half of Apprentices with an Adult Learning Account (46 per cent) also report that their course was better than they expected.

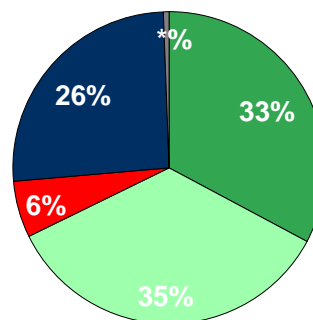
In terms of course type, those undertaking Hospitality, Sports, Leisure and Travel Apprenticeships are most likely to report that their course has exceeded their expectations (40 per cent). It is also worth noting that around a third of Apprentices doing Apprenticeships in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Business Administration, Management and Professional frameworks did not know what to expect from the course (37 and 31 per cent respectively). This was also the case for 32 per cent of learners receiving an Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA).

As might be expected, Apprentices who report their course was worse than expected tend to be much more negative in general about their experiences. For example, only 35 per cent of Apprentices who say their course was worse than expected were satisfied with their learning experience overall, compared to 99 per cent of Apprentices who report their expectations were exceeded and 96 per cent of Apprentices who say the course was similar to their expectations.

Figure 14: Meeting expectations

Q Overall, would you say that your experience with your course/training is better than you expected, similar to what you expected, worse than expected, or did you not know what to expect?

- % Better than I expected
- % Similar to what I expected
- % Worse than I expected
- % I didn't know what to expect
- % Don't know



Base: 4,979 Apprentice learners aged 16+ for waves 15, 16 and 17, 2009

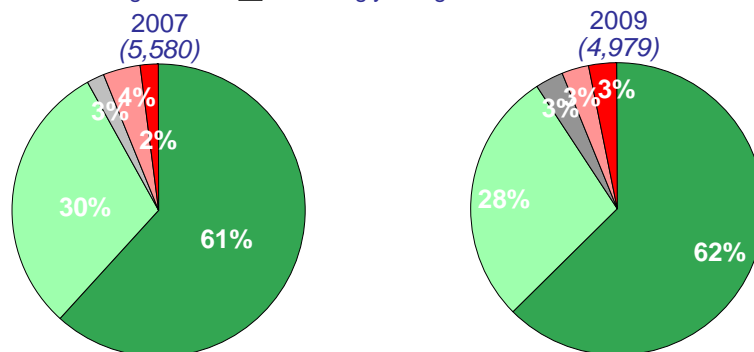
The vast majority of Apprentices (nine in ten) say that their learning programme is meeting their needs. This figure is unchanged from 2007, although the proportion reporting they *strongly* agree has increased by two percentage points (Figure 15).

Adult Apprentices (aged 25 or over) are slightly less likely to feel the learning programme is meeting their needs (87 per cent). This is also the case for those individuals undertaking their training with a training provider only and Apprentices receiving EMA (83 and 86 per cent respectively). There are no significant differences in terms of whether Apprentices have a Skills Account or not.

**Figure 15: Meeting learners' needs**

Q Can you tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statement: *my learning programme is meeting my needs.*

■ % Strongly agree      ■ % Tend to agree      ■ % Neither/nor/don't know  
■ % Tend to disagree      ■ % Strongly disagree



Bases in brackets: Apprentice learners aged 16+ for waves 12,13 and 14, 2007 and waves 15, 16 and 17, 2009

## Information, advice and support

As discussed in paragraph 44, three in ten Apprentices say they are satisfied with their overall learning experience because their learning provider was very helpful, always ready to help or gave them all the help they needed. Below we examine any problems or issues Apprentices have experienced while learning, how well Apprentices feel providers support learners and the provision of information about courses.

## Problems experienced while learning

Apprentices are less likely to report they have experienced problems in specific areas than in 2007 (Figure 16). However, managing to fit course commitments in with other commitments at work and maintaining personal motivation remain the most common problems for Apprentices (affecting 11 per cent and 10 per cent respectively).

Fitting learning in around both work and home commitments is more of an issue for Adult Apprentices and, to a slightly lesser extent, female Apprentices.

Apprentices receiving EMA are more likely than average to experience problems because extra help they were promised was not provided (11 per cent).

**Figure 16: Problems experienced**

Q *Since you started the course have you had any problems with any of the following?*



Bases in brackets: Apprentice learners aged 16+ for wave 13, 2007 and wave 16, 2009

### Supporting learners

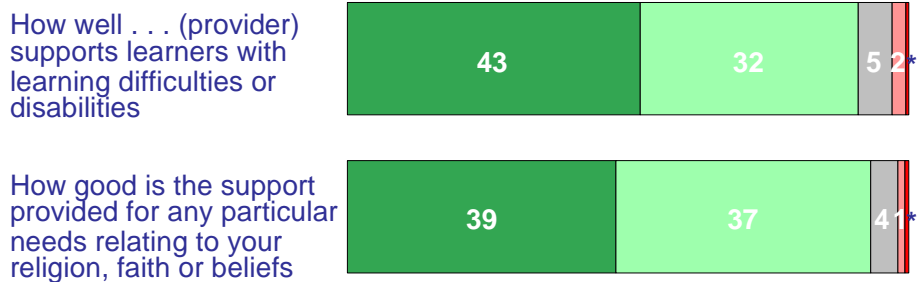
Three-quarters of Apprentices feel that their learning provider supports learners with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) well, with only two per cent reporting their provider is not good at supporting LDD learners (Figure 17).

A similar proportion also believe that any particular needs relating to learners' religion, faith or beliefs are well supported (76 per cent) with only 1 per cent believing this is not the case.

**Figure 17: Support for LDD learners and particular needs relating to religion, faith or beliefs**

Q *And for each of the following aspects of your learning experience, please tell me how good or bad each of them is.*

■ % Very good   ■ % Good   ■ % Not good but not bad   ■ % Bad   ■ % Very Bad



Base: 1,667 Apprentice learners aged 16+ for wave 16, 2009

Just over one in ten Apprentices report that there was support that would have helped with their course that they did not receive. This was more relevant to Adult Apprentices aged 25 or over (14 per cent) than younger counterparts aged 16 to 18 (8 per cent).

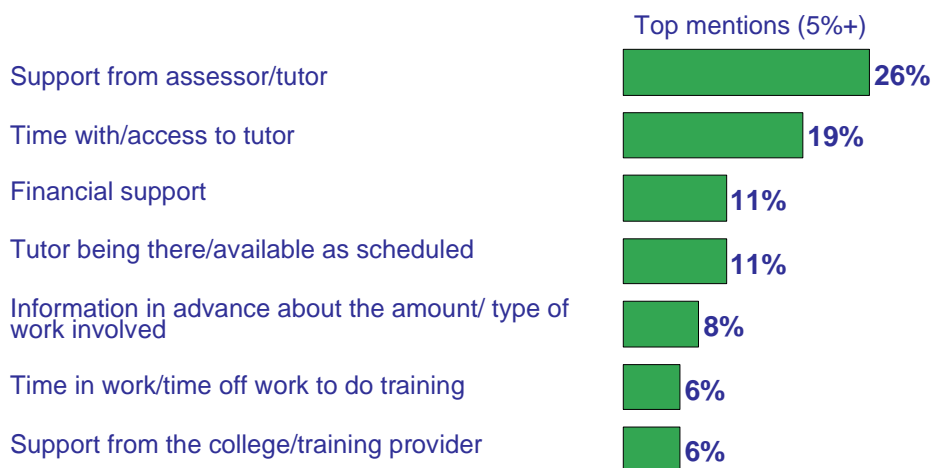
Positively, Apprentices with disabilities are significantly less likely to report that pre-existing support that would have helped them were not provided (5 per cent).

There are no significant differences between Apprentices receiving learner support and those not. This is also the case for Apprentices with a Skills Account and those without.

More support or time from tutors/assessors was most commonly cited by Apprentices as the support they needed on their course that they did not receive (Figure 17).

**Figure 17: Support that would have helped**

Q *What support would help/have helped you?*

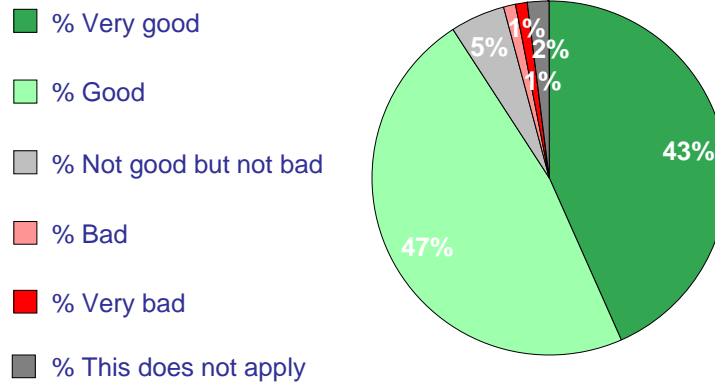


Base: 462 Apprentice learners aged 16+ who say more support would have helped them on their course (except early leavers) for waves 15, 16 and 17, 2009

Nine in ten Apprentices feel that they were given good information when they were choosing their course (Figure 18). Figures for Apprentices receiving learner support or with a Skills Account are consistent with this overall figure.

Figure 18: Information provided when choosing course

Q How good was the information you were given when you were choosing your course/learning/training programme?



Base: 1,667 Apprentice learners aged 16+ for wave 15, 2009

Respondents were also asked how informed they felt on various aspects of their course *at the time they signed up for it*. The vast majority of Apprentices report they were well informed on most aspects (Figure 19) especially the content of the course, how the course will help them to gain skills to use in a job and the standard of work expected of them. Adults Apprentices generally feel slightly less informed on the majority of these factors than younger Apprentices.

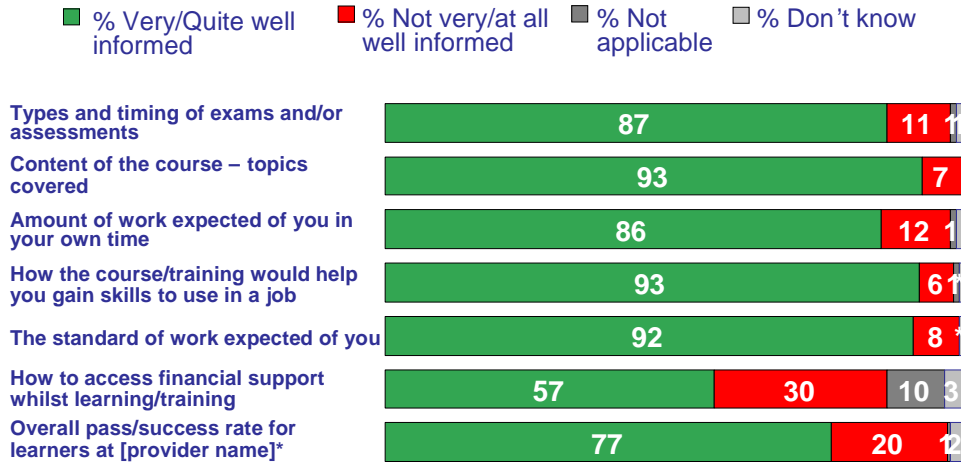
Three in ten Apprentices report that they do not feel well informed about how to access financial support while learning or training. However, as might be expected, the figure was much lower for those receiving EMA or any other learner support funding (22 per cent and 16 per cent respectively).

Apprentices with Skills Accounts are more likely, on balance, to report they were well informed (i.e. demonstrated a significantly higher *net well informed* score) than Apprentices in general on the following aspects of their course: content of the course, amount of work that is expected of them in their own time, how the course would help them to gain skills to use in a job and how to access financial support whilst learning.



**Figure 19: How informed Apprentices feel they are**

Q *How informed were you about...?*



Base: 1,667 Apprentice learners aged 16+ for wave 15, 2009. \*Base: 768 Apprentices aged 16+ not based in the workplace for wave 15, 2009

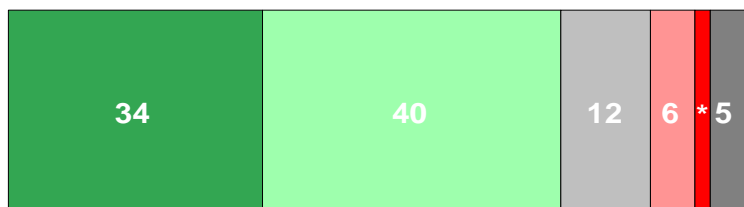
## Future Career

The impact of the course on their career is an important key driver of overall satisfaction amongst Apprentices and 73 per cent of Apprentices rate the advice they have been given about what they can do after their learning programme as good (Figure 20). Younger Apprentices, as well as those starting the course with Entry level or Level 1 qualifications, are more likely to rate this advice as good than Apprentices overall (78 per cent for both).

**Figure 20: Quality of advice given about what to do after course**

Q *How good is the advice you have been given about what you can do after this course/learning programme/training programme?*

Legend: % Very good (dark green), % Good (light green), % Not good but not bad (grey), % Bad (red), % Very Bad (dark red)



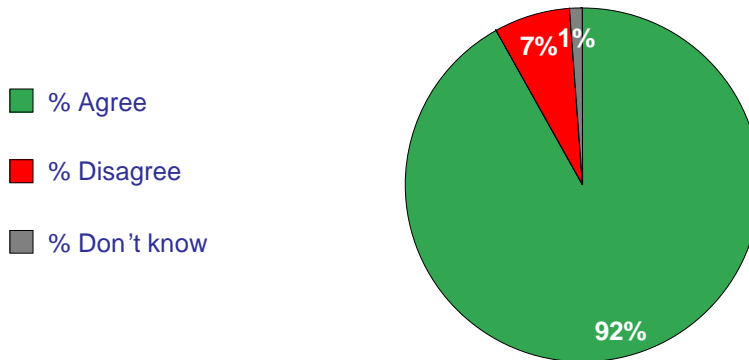
Base: 1,645 Apprentice learners aged 16+ for wave 17, 2009

The vast majority of Apprentices agree that their course will help them move forward in their career and will make it easier to find the type of job they want (Figure 21). Whilst this figure

is overwhelmingly positive, it is possibly to be expected given the vocational nature of the learning programme.

**Figure 21: Moving forward in career**

Q Could you tell me whether you agree or disagree with ....  
*“Taking part in this course will help me move forward in my career  
 and make it easier for me to find the type of job that I want”*



Base: 1,645 Apprentice learners aged 16+ for wave 17, 2009

Male Apprentices are more likely than females to feel the course will help with their future career (Table 7). Apprentices in their very late teens or early twenties are also highly positive with 19 in 20 feeling the course will help them move forward, whilst their older counterparts (aged 25 or over) show higher levels of disagreement than Apprentices overall. This may be related to Apprenticeship framework: Adult Apprentices are more likely to be undertaking Business Administration, Hospitality and Health frameworks whilst younger Apprentices are more likely to undertake Construction and Engineering frameworks.

Again, there are no significant differences between Apprentices with a Skills Account and those without.

**Table 7: Whether 'Taking part in this course will help me more forward in my career and make it easier for me to find the kind of job that I want' (%)**

*Base (unweighted): All respondents for wave 17 (1,645)*

	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<b>All Apprentices</b>	92	7	1
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	94	5	*
Female	89	10	1
<b>Age</b>			
16–18	92	7	1
19–24	95	4	1
25+	84	15	1

### Personalisation, learner involvement and provider responsiveness

Personal relationships are by far the biggest driver of attitudes towards advocacy amongst Apprentices. It is, therefore, reassuring that they rate their tutors highly on how they relate to the Apprentice as a person (a rating of 8.45 out of 10) and that this figure is almost unchanged from 2007 (a rating of 8.46).

Female Apprentices give, on average, a higher rating than male Apprentices (Table 8). Adult Apprentices also rate their tutors higher, on average, on how well they relate to the Apprentice as a person. Interestingly, however, Level 2 Apprentices are more likely than those working towards an Advanced or Higher Apprenticeship to give a higher rating on this factor. Apprentices undertaking their training solely in the workplace also rate this factor higher, on average, than other Apprentices, although it is important to note that these Apprentices are also more likely to be older.

**Table 8: How well tutors relate to the Apprentice as a person (mean score where 1 is very poor and 10 is excellent)***Base (unweighted): All Apprentices except those who say 'don't know' or 'not applicable' (4,969)*

<b>All Apprentices</b>	8.45
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	8.26
Female	8.67
<b>Age</b>	
16–18	8.38
19–24	8.34
25+	8.79
<b>Current level of study</b>	
Level 2 or below	8.52
Level 3 or above	8.37
<b>Apprenticeship Placement</b>	
College	8.23
Training provider	8.35
Workplace	8.79
Both workplace and college/training provider	8.26

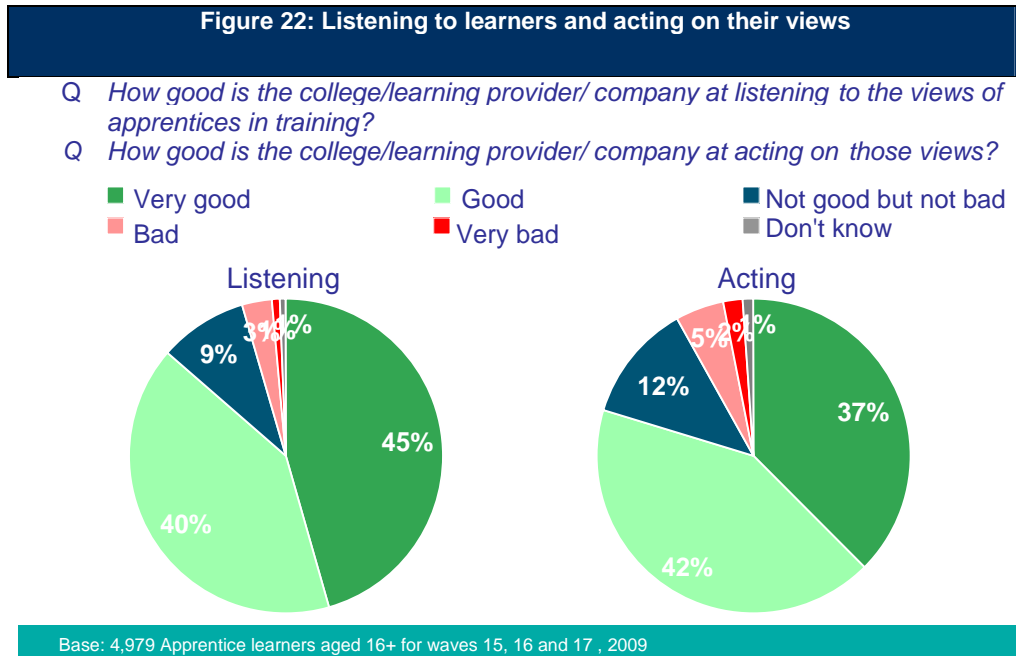
Apprentices are extremely positive about how good their learning provider is at listening to their views (Figure 23). In contrast to above, however, Apprentices aged 16 to 18 are more likely than older Apprentices to say their provider is good at listening to their views. Apprentices undertaking their learning at colleges only are also more likely than average to report their voices are well heard.

Apprentices with disabilities are less likely to feel their learning provider is good at listening to their views, although 79 per cent still rate this as good. However, they are no more likely to rate this as bad than other Apprentices, but instead are more likely to be neutral in their views (Table 9).

Table 9: Listening to learner views; provider is:

	<i>Good</i>	<i>Not good but not bad</i>	<i>Bad</i>	<i>This does not apply</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Base (unweighted): All respondents (4,979)</i>					
<b>All Apprentices</b>	85	9	5	1	*
<b>Gender</b>					
Male	85	9	5	*	*
Female	86	8	5	1	1
<b>Age</b>					
16–18	89	7	4	*	*
19–24	85	9	5	*	*
25+	83	9	5	2	2
<b>Disabilities/Learning Difficulties</b>					
None	86	8	5	1	*
Both	**	**	**	**	**
Learning or other disability	84	10	5	1	1
Only disabilities	79	14	4	1	1
Only learning difficulties	86	7	7	1	-
<b>Apprenticeship Placement</b>					
College	90	7	3	-	*
Training provider	87	5	7	1	*
Workplace	85	8	5	1	1
Both workplace and college/training provider	85	9	5	1	*

Overall, Apprentices are less likely to say that providers are good at acting on learners' views than listening to them, and in particular they are less likely to say they are *very good* (37 per cent compared with 45 per cent). However, 85 per cent do still rate their learning providers as good at this.



Again, younger Apprentices are slightly more likely to feel their learning provider is acting on their views (84 per cent of 16 to 18 year olds say this is good) although there is little difference in many of the other sub groups.

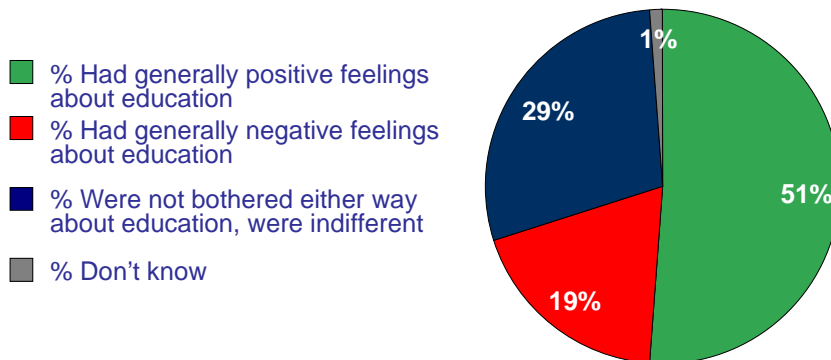
# Attitudes to learning and benefits of learning

In this chapter, we examine Apprentices' attitudes towards education and learning. Overall, there has been a positive shift in views over time.

Just over half had positive feelings about education upon leaving school, with 19 per cent reporting they had negative feelings (Figure 23). Female Apprentices tended to be more positive than male Apprentices (55 per cent and 48 per cent respectively); there are no significant differences by age. It is also perhaps not surprising that those starting their Apprenticeships with Entry level/Level 1 qualifications are more likely to have had negative views on education upon leaving school (25 per cent).

Figure 23: Feelings about education upon leaving school

Q Thinking back to when you left school would you say that you . . . ?



Base: 1,645 Apprentice learners aged 16+ for wave 17, 2009

The large majority of Apprentices (86 per cent) now report that they are more positive about learning than when they started their Apprenticeship (Figure 24). As might be expected, this is especially true for younger learners (aged 16 to 18) and those starting the course with Entry Level/Level 1 qualifications.

The vast majority of Apprentices also say that it has given them skills they can use in a job, given them more confidence in their ability to learn and as discussed earlier, helped them move forward in their career and find the job they want.

Figure 24: Effects of the course on Apprentices

Q *I am going to read out a few statements about what effect the course may have had on you personally. Could you tell me whether you agree or disagree with each?*



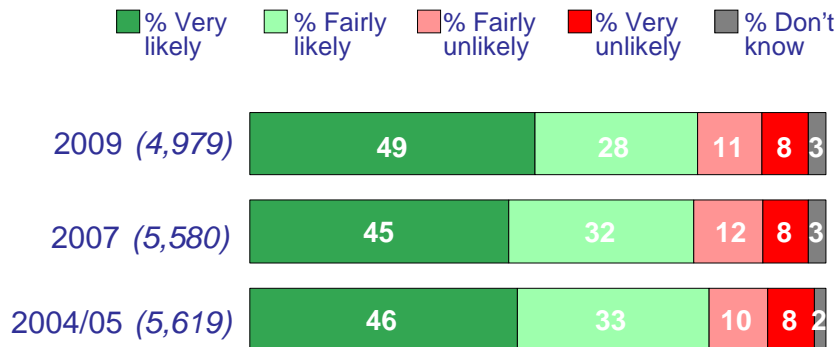
Base: 1,645 Apprentice learners aged 16+ for wave 17, 2009. 'Don't know' and 'not applicable' responses are not shown on the chart, hence some figures do not add up to 100 per cent.

Just over three-quarters of Apprentices say they are likely to undertake further learning in the next three years, exactly as recorded in the 2007 survey (Figure 25). However, more say they are *very likely* to undertake further training in the next three years (an increased of four percentage points). This may, in part, be due to the recession and individuals wanting to stay competitive in the labour market.



Figure 25: Trends in likelihood of undertaking further learning

Q How likely will you be to undertake further learning in the next 3 years?



Bases in brackets: Apprentices learners aged 16+

In line with findings from 2007, the likelihood of undertaking further learning is higher amongst female Apprentices. As might be expected, Apprentices undertaking Level 2 Apprenticeships are also more likely than those doing Advanced or Higher Apprenticeships to be likely to undertake further learning in the next three years (Table 10). Very positively, those who had no qualifications upon starting their Apprenticeships are also more likely than average to say they are likely to undertake further learning (85 per cent).

Apprentices receiving EMA, as well as those with an Adult Learning Account are more likely, on balance (i.e. those with a significantly higher *net likely* score) more likely to report that they are likely to undertake further learning.

In terms of Apprenticeship frameworks, those taking Business administration, Management and Professional Apprenticeships are most to be report they are likely to go onto further learning (83 per cent), whilst those undertaking Construction Apprenticeships are least likely (64 per cent).

**Table 10: Likelihood of undertaking further learning in the next three years (%)***Base (unweighted): All respondents (4,979)*

	<i>Likely</i>	<i>Unlikely</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<b>All Apprentices</b>	76	19	3
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	74	23	3
Female	82	15	4
<b>Age</b>			
16–18	81	16	3
19–24	76	21	3
25+	78	18	4
<b>Highest Prior Level</b>			
No qualification	85	14	1
Entry level/Level 1	78	19	3
Level 2	75	21	4
Level 3	80	12	4
Level 4	**	**	**
<b>Current level of study</b>			
Level 2 or below	81	16	3
Level 3 or above	73	23	4

# Early leavers

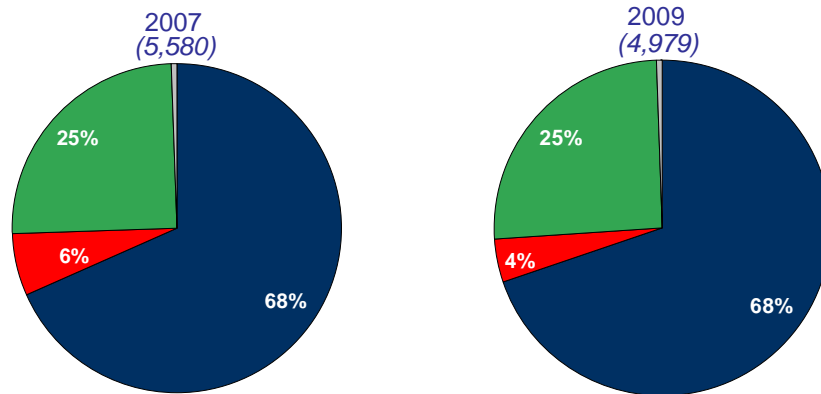
## Who left early

Four per cent of Apprentices interviewed reported that they had left their Apprenticeship. Most respondents were still on the course at the time of the interview. It should be noted that this figure should not be used to derive completion rates as the survey is not designed for this purpose.

Figure 26: Early leavers

Q I would like to start by finding out where you are at with your course/training. Are you still doing your course/training?

■ Still learning ■ Left early ■ Successfully completed course ■ Failed/not successful



Base: 4,979 Apprentice learners aged 16+ for waves 15, 16 and 17, 2009; 5,580 in 2007 .

Table 11 examines the profile of early leavers in more detail. The profiles are broadly similar to those of the total samples, indicating that the proportion of early leavers is mainly consistent across demographic sub-groups. The one difference is by age: early leavers have a younger age profile than the sample as a whole. Early leavers are also more likely to be in receipt of EMA than Apprentices in general, although this could simply be related to age. As mentioned earlier, this difference may be related to the type of apprenticeships undertaken by claimants (who are all on programmes led apprenticeships) compared with non claimants.

Table 11: Demographic profile of early leavers (weighted)

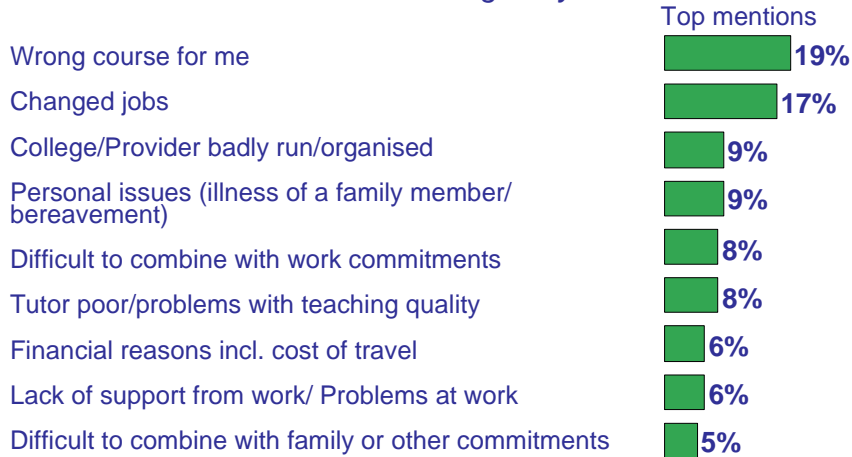
	Early leavers	All Apprentices
<i>(Unweighted base in brackets: early leavers and all respondents)</i>	<i>(230)</i> %	<i>(4,979)</i> %
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	47	54
Female	53	46
<b>Age</b>		
16–18	35	24
19+	65	76
Refused	0	0
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
White	93	93
BME	7	7
Refused	0	0
Not known	0	*
<b>Disability</b>	7	6
<b>Learning difficulty</b>	7	6

## Reasons for leaving early

One of the most common reasons given by Apprentices for leaving early is that it was the wrong choice of course. This suggests that a greater emphasis needs to be placed on pre-entry advice and guidance to help learners make the right course choice. That said, the majority of early leavers rate the information they received when choosing a new course as good (78 per cent), although this is lower than the figure for Apprentices as a whole (90 per cent). The second most common reason people give is that they changed jobs (Figure 27).

Figure 27: Reasons for leaving early

Q You said that you have left the course early. What do you consider were the main reasons for leaving early?



Base: 230 Apprentice learners aged 16+ who left early for waves 15, 16 and 17, 2009

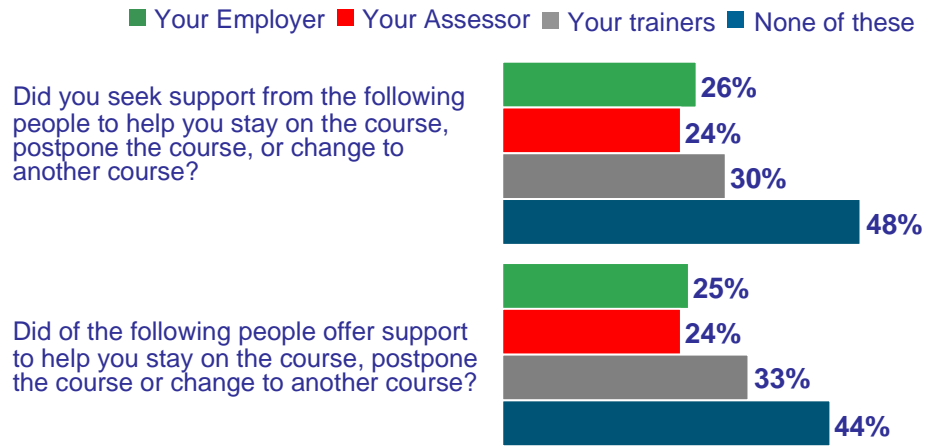
Although these were also the most common reasons given in 2007, the proportion citing the wrong choice of course has decreased by 11 percentage points and the proportion citing changed jobs has risen by 5 percentage points.

Three in ten Apprentices who left their Apprenticeship early *sought* support from their trainers to help them stay on/postpone or change their course, whilst around a quarter sought help from their employer or their assessor. However, approaching half of early leavers did not seek help from any of these individuals (Figure 28).

One in three early leavers were also *offered* support from their trainers. However, 44 per cent were not offered support from their trainers, assessors or employer.

Figure 28: Sought or offered support

Q And when you were thinking about leaving the course...



Base: 230 Apprentice learners aged 16+ who left early for waves 15, 16 and 17, 2009

Finally, in general, early leavers tend to be more critical of their course than other learners; for example, 29 per cent of early leavers are dissatisfied with the learning experience, compared with four per cent of Apprentices who had completed their Apprenticeship. They are also much more likely to speak critically of their learning provider (25 per cent for early leavers compared with only five per cent who have completed their Apprenticeship).

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