RESEARCH

European Social Fund Objective 3: Leavers Survey 1999

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1. Introduction and Summary of Main Findings

1.1 Introduction and background

This report presents the results of the 1999 leavers survey for the European Social Fund (ESF) Objective 3 programme. Essentially, it assesses the effect of ESF Objective 3 on getting people into work. Objective 3 was aimed at combating long-term unemployment and integrating young people into the jobs market, and in Great Britain it comprised a three-year programme, running from 1997-1999.

The ESF Objective 3 programme in Great Britain was designed to raise the skills level of the labour force and to tackle market failures which can lead to particular groups of people experiencing significant difficulties competing for jobs. Activity under Objective 3 was focused on improving the labour market prospects of those individuals most at risk of exclusion, by adding to their skills, providing advice and guidance, and direct help into work. The main aims of the Objective 3 programme were:

- to facilitate integration of unemployed people exposed to long-term unemployment
- to facilitate the integration into working life of young people
- to facilitate the integration into working life of people exposed to exclusion from the labour market, and
- to promote equal opportunities for men and women in the labour market.

Support under Objective 3 came under four main priorities, with an additional priority covering national projects. Each of these priorities aimed to enable people, or beneficiaries, to achieve a positive outcome into employment or further education and training, and/or to achieve a qualification. These priorities were:

Priority 1: pathways to employment for people aged 25 or over who had been out of work for a minimum of six months

Priority 2: pathways to a good start in working life for young people between 16 and 24 who were without work

Priority 3: pathways for equal opportunities between men and women to promote equal opportunities in the labour market, and

Priority 4: enhancing capacity for community development.

The 1997-1999 programme emphasised the provision of 'integrated' packages of support for beneficiaries to maximise their prospects of gaining employment. Projects were encouraged to offer advice and guidance, job search assistance, work experience, vocational training and (in some cases) direct wage subsidies to help the client group move towards greater labour market participation.

1.2 Aim of this research

The aim of this study was to assess the experiences of beneficiaries who have taken part in ESF Objective 3 projects to:

- explore their labour market difficulties
- identify their activities on the projects, and ultimately to
- look at their outcomes from the projects — has ESF Objective 3 made any difference to them?

This report is the third and final quantitative leavers survey for the Objective 3 programme, and covers England, Wales and Scotland. As with the previous two reports, we have based our analysis not only on the participant group as a whole, but also on the many sub-groups of 'disadvantaged' beneficiaries on Objective 3 projects:

- people with no relevant qualifications
- people who have been long-term unemployed (two years or more for those aged 25 or over, and one year for those aged between 16-24)
- returners to the labour market after one year or more of looking after the home or family
- lone parents
- people from minority ethnic groups
- people for whom English is a second language (ESOL)
- people with health problems and disabilities
- homeless people or those living in temporary accommodation
- people with literacy and/or numeracy problems.

We have also taken our analysis further to look at the incidence of multiple disadvantage, according to human capital shortcomings, life skill problems, circumstantial constraints and other potential discriminating factors, to assess the effect this has on beneficiaries' chances of moving into employment, or of gaining qualifications.

Importantly, we also identify the achievement of other 'soft' outcomes which may move beneficiaries closer to labour market participation in the shorter term.

Four new questions have been added to the 1999 leavers survey. These have sought to explore beneficiaries' perceptions of the barriers they faced when looking for work. We have also looked in greater detail at beneficiaries' expectations of the course and the gains they feel they have made as a result of participating. These have brought new insights into the ESF client group as a whole and bring a new dimension to the study.

1.3 Summary of main findings

Essentially, this quantitative study of leavers from ESF Objective 3 has identified the main beneficiaries of these projects and explored their experiences of, and outcomes from, the programme. The results presented in the report are fairly complex. Different clients fare better or worse on the Objective 3 programme, either in terms of the help they receive and/or the outcomes they achieve as a result of taking part and this is often due to the labour market disadvantages they suffered prior to coming on to the ESF course. We have pulled out the most striking differences in the main body of the report. However, this summary provides an overview of the findings as a whole. Crucially, the programme has been well received by most of its beneficiaries and many have moved into employment or further education and training following participation in an ESF course.

1.3.1 The beneficiary group

We have found that approximately half of all ESF beneficiaries are aged 24 and under, whilst the remainder are aged 25 and above. Male beneficiaries tend to be younger, whilst female beneficiaries are usually found in the older age groups. Almost two-thirds of ESF beneficiaries have worked before although almost half of them did not hold any qualifications prior to coming on to the course.

In terms of further labour market disadvantage, we observed that one-quarter of all ESF beneficiaries were classified as long-term unemployed before starting the course which includes those who were looking after the home or family on a full-time basis. Almost one-fifth of ESF beneficiaries were classified as returners to the labour market and these were predominantly women. One in ten beneficiaries was a lone parent and again, the majority of these beneficiaries were women. More than one-quarter of ESF beneficiaries were from minority ethnic groups, and 16 per cent reported that English was their second or other language. We also observed a fairly high incidence of ill health and disability, with almost one-fifth of all beneficiaries reporting that they had

problems of this nature which affected the kind of work they could do. A similar proportion of beneficiaries told us that they had literacy and/or numeracy problems whilst six per cent of the ESF cohort were homeless or living in temporary accommodation at the start of the course.

Not surprisingly, we found that many beneficiaries experience multiple labour market disadvantages and fall into more than one of the ESF target groups. Indeed, three-quarters of people in these groups face multiple disadvantages.

In addition to these characteristics, however, beneficiaries reported many other barriers to work. These included no recent work experience and a lack of suitable job opportunities. For the first time in a survey of this type, poor 'soft' skills were also recognised by many beneficiaries to act as barriers to labour market participation. These concerned inadequate social skills, low self-confidence and motivation, and a lack of independence.

1.3.2 Experience of the course

In general terms, we found that people had high expectations of their ESF course and many beneficiaries thought they would gain hard and soft skills as a result of taking part. Around three-quarters of all beneficiaries thought that the course would help them to achieve qualifications, build their self-confidence and allow them to meet new people. Approximately 70 per cent of beneficiaries also thought the course would provide a stepping stone into work and help in the development of their interpersonal skills.

We have observed that the majority of ESF beneficiaries had received some sort of vocational training whilst on the course and help with jobsearch. A significant proportion also received advice, guidance and support and half had undertaken work experience. There appears to have been a steady improvement in the help received by beneficiaries over the three years of the last Objective 3 programme. Having said this, the level of project integration seems to have fallen on the previous year with only two-thirds of beneficiaries reporting that they had received a package of integrated support compared to a higher proportion in 1998. This does not seem to have affected satisfaction with ESF Objective 3, which was very high. More than three-quarters of all beneficiaries reported that they were either fairly or very satisfied with their course and the help they had received.

Outcomes from the course

More than three-quarters of all beneficiaries completed their course and the main reason offered by beneficiaries who had left the course early was to take up a job, which is arguably a positive outcome in itself.

Forty-three per cent of beneficiaries were in work at the time of the survey, which is up slightly on the previous year and just over one-fifth of beneficiaries were in education and training. The incidence of unemployment after the course was down on the level recorded prior to the ESF intervention.

We also observed many 'soft' outcomes from the course. Almost three-quarters of beneficiaries had improved their self-confidence and motivation as a result of taking part and two-thirds also reported better team working skills, communication skills and personal or social skills. More than half of all beneficiaries told us that they had achieved some sort of qualification as a result of the course, which is an increase on the previous year.

When we looked at the impact of the course on the likelihood of achieving different types of outcomes from ESF, we found that the provision of advice and guidance, jobsearch help, work experience, vocational training and (to a lesser extent) support to move into self-employment was positively linked with gaining many soft outcomes, for example, improved personal and social skills. We also found that course provision of this sort was (in the main) correlated with the achievement of a qualification outcome. Unfortunately though, we found no clear relationship between taking part on an ESF course and gaining a job outcome, although jobsearch help seems to impact positively for those moving into self-employment. Having said this, the majority of beneficiaries who had moved into employment after the course reported that the course had been helpful in making this transition into work.

1.4 Structure of the report

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 identifies the characteristics of Objective 3 beneficiaries and assesses the incidence of disadvantage among this group. This chapter also looks at the activities that beneficiaries were engaged in prior to coming onto the programme, and explores the barriers they faced in securing employment.
- Chapter 3 discusses the kinds of support which were provided by projects under ESF Objective 3, and assesses the degree to which different beneficiaries received these types of support. This chapter also identifies beneficiary satisfaction with the course.
- Chapter 4 looks firstly at project completion and explores the extent of, and reasons for, any early leaving. It then goes on to identify the activities undertaken by beneficiaries leaving the projects.
- Chapter 5 looks more closely at beneficiary job outcomes, qualification outcomes and other intermediate or 'soft

outcomes' from ESF Objective 3 projects. It identifies which factors are most likely to influence these outcomes, and crucially, which types of client are most likely to achieve them.

- Chapter 6 concludes the study and summarises the most salient findings from the research.

There are three appendices attached to this report:

Appendix 1 contains the research methodology and sampling procedures used in this study. Appendix 2 provides a copy of the questionnaire used for the survey. Appendix 3 presents the results of the multivariate analysis undertaken on the survey data.

2. Clients and their Labour Market Difficulties

This chapter explores the main characteristics of the Objective 3 client group as represented in the survey. It looks at factors such as gender and age, project priority and sector in the first instance, and then goes on to build up a more detailed picture of beneficiaries in relation to the disadvantage groups identified in Chapter 1. For the first time, the leavers survey has sought to consider the impact of the New Deal on ESF Objective 3 provision and we include here an overview of the characteristics of beneficiaries who were (part) funded by this national programme.

We complete the chapter by looking at beneficiaries' activities before coming on to Objective 3 projects, and discuss the barriers they faced when looking for work.

2.1 Demographic profile of beneficiaries

2.1.1 Age and gender

The age profile of Objective 3 beneficiaries was fairly evenly divided between older and younger clients. We can see from Table 2.1 that 47 per cent of beneficiaries were aged 24 or under, while the remaining 53 per cent were aged 25 or more. However, when we look at the age and gender of beneficiaries together, we can see that men on the programme are more likely to be younger — that is, 24 and under (61 per cent of all male participants fell into this age group) — whilst women on the programme are more likely to be older (67 per cent of female beneficiaries are 25 and

Table 2.1: Age and gender of beneficiaries (per cent)

	Male	Female	Total
18 and under	31	14	23
19-24	30	19	24
25-49	31	59	45
50+	8	8	8
Total	*48*	*51*	*100*

Base: all respondents, N = 2,836 (weighted)

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

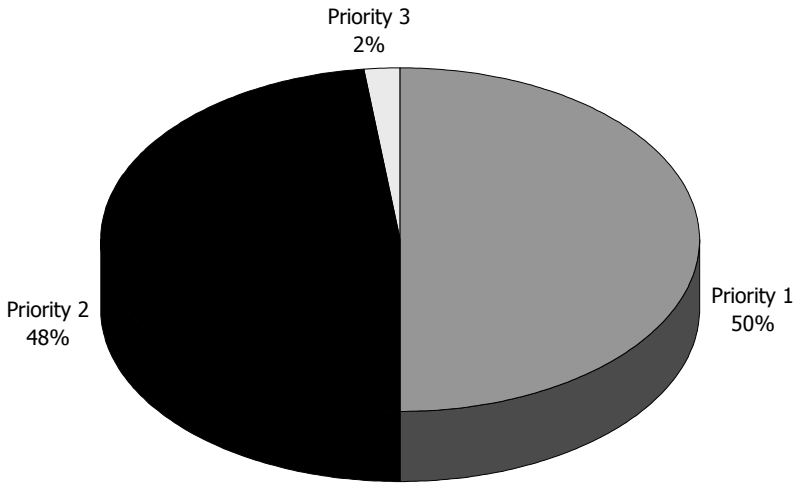
over)[1]. Only eight per cent of all beneficiaries, and male and female clients, were aged 50 or more.

In terms of prior experience of working, 62 per cent of all respondents had been in paid employment at some time before the course. However, just 57 per cent of men had worked before, compared to 68 per cent of women.

2.1.2 Priority and sector

The majority of people responding to the survey were participating in projects operating under Priorities 1 and 2 of the Objective 3 programme (see Figure 2.1). Indeed, half of all projects were under Priority 1 (pathways to employment for people aged 25 or over, who have been out of work for a minimum of six months) and almost half were supported under Priority 2 (pathways to a good start in working life for young people between 16 and 24, who are without work). Only a handful of projects were being funded under Priority 3 (pathways for equal opportunities between men and women to promote equal opportunities in the labour market).

Figure 2.1: Beneficiaries, by priority of project



Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

[1] Women made up 51 per cent of survey respondents and 48 per cent were men. One per cent of survey respondents did not answer this question.

However, if we look once again at the gender profile within the priority classification of projects (Table 2.2), we can see (not surprisingly given the age profile of beneficiaries), that women are much more likely to be represented under Priority 1 than men who were much more likely to have attended a Priority 2 project.

Table 2.2: Priority by gender (per cent)

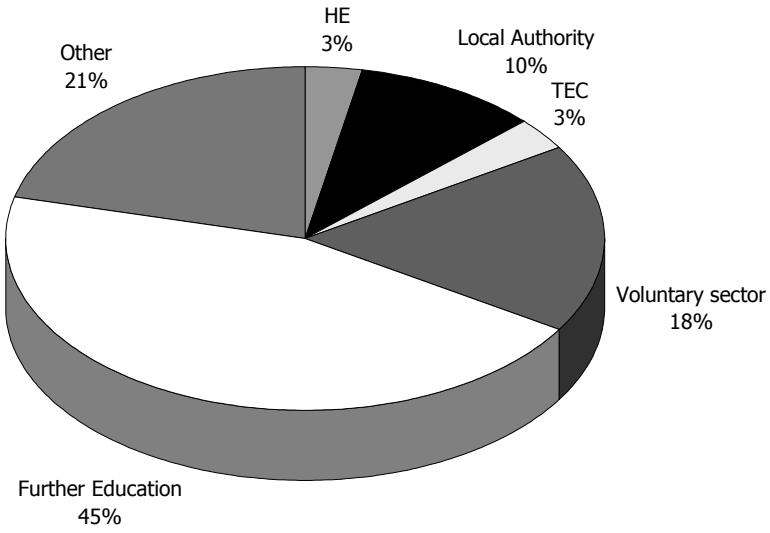
	Male	Female	Total
Priority 1	36	62	50
Priority 2	63	33	48
Priority 3	*	5	3

Base: all respondents for whom priority and gender is known, N = 2,807
* — Less than 1%

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

In relation to the sector in which beneficiaries were receiving help, most projects were being provided in the further education sector (45 per cent — see Figure 2.2). Almost one-fifth of Objective 3 projects were being run by the voluntary sector, and a similar proportion by organisations in 'other' sectors. Local authorities accounted for ten per cent of projects whilst Training and Enterprise Councils and the higher education sector ran just three per cent of projects respectively.

Figure 2.2: Beneficiaries, by sector



Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

2.2 Targeted disadvantaged groups

As in the previous leavers surveys, we have focused much of our analysis of ESF Objective 3 on the many targeted disadvantaged groups and we begin here, with an overview of their key characteristics. It becomes apparent as the chapter goes on, that many beneficiaries of ESF Objective 3 actually 'belong' to several

of these 'disadvantaged' groups which arguably serve together to worsen their labour market chances. We will look at the incidence of multiple disadvantage later in the chapter.

2.2.1 People with no relevant qualifications

Qualifications are clearly an attribute in the labour market. They infer application and ability in vocational and academic areas and basic skills, and can also carry with them elements of key skills, such as use of information technology, and various communication skills. Conversely, people who do not hold relevant (or indeed recent) qualifications are likely to suffer some form of disadvantage in the labour market. Among survey respondents, we have found that just over half (56 per cent) held some sort of qualification prior to coming on to the Objective 3 programme, whilst the remaining 44 per cent did not. Similar proportions of men and women held prior qualifications, as can be seen in Table 2.3 below.

Table 2.3: Qualifications held prior to taking part in the course (per cent)

		Gender		Age group			
	All	**Male**	**Female**	**18 and under**	**19-24**	**25-49**	**50+**
Qualifications held	56	56	57	50	66	56	48
No qualifications held	44	44	43	51	34	45	53

Base: all respondents, N = 2,836

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

Among beneficiaries of different ages, we can see that those people most likely to hold qualifications before going onto Objective 3 projects were aged between 19-24 (approximately two-thirds of beneficiaries in this age group had qualifications). Older people aged 50 and over were much less likely to hold qualifications before starting their course, as were younger people aged 18 and under.

When we look at the incidence of working among people with no qualifications, we find that only 55 per cent of them had been in employment before, compared to 68 per cent of people who had qualifications prior to coming on to the course.

2.2.2 People who have been long-term unemployed

Long-term unemployment is often a discriminating factor for those looking for work. Employers are less likely to want to 'take-on' people with a lengthy history of unemployment, and skills themselves arguably diminish and quickly become out-of-date as unemployment persists. Under ESF Objective 3, long-term unemployment is defined differently according to age and we have used this classification when looking at long-term

unemployment among respondents to the survey. For beneficiaries aged 25 or more, this includes people who have been unemployed for two years or more, and for those aged 16-24 unemployment must have lasted at least one year.

Using the ESF definition, it appears that 25 per cent of respondents to the survey were long-term unemployed prior to going on to the course. This included people who were claiming and not claiming unemployment-related benefits, and also those who were looking after the home or family full time. When we look more closely at the characteristics of beneficiaries who were long-term unemployed and those who were not (although many others had been unemployed for shorter periods of time), some interesting patterns emerge (see Table 2.4).

Table 2.4: Experience of long-term unemployment (per cent)

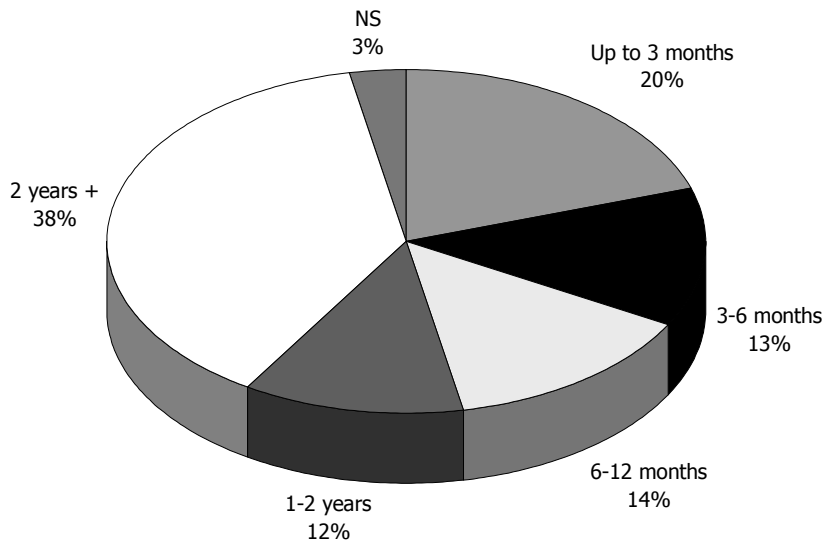
		Gender		Age group				Prior qualifications	
	All	Male	Female	18 and under	19-24	25-49	50+	Yes	No
Not LTU	74	82	67	96	83	61	68	77	72
LTU	26	18	33	4	17	39	32	24	28

Base: all respondents, N = 2,836

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

Women were more likely to have been long-term unemployed than men (33 per cent of women were classified as long-term unemployed compared to 18 per cent of men). This relatively high proportion of women runs counter to expectations. This is due primarily to the fact that returners to the labour market (who are mainly women) are also classified as long-term unemployed. People aged 25-49 were more likely to have been long-term

Figure 2.3: Duration of unemployment



Base: all unemployed beneficiaries

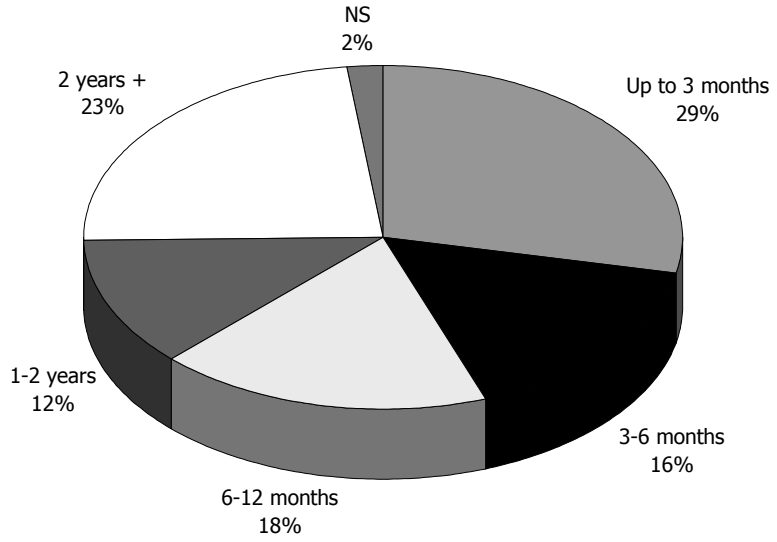
Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

unemployed (and to a lesser degree people aged over 50) than those people aged 24 and under. And people with no qualifications prior to coming on to the course were also slightly more likely to have suffered long-term unemployment in the year(s) before coming on to the course.

Of course, many more beneficiaries had been out of work *per se* before starting on the Objective 3 programme — in fact, 63 per cent of respondents told us they had been unemployed or looking after the home or family in all. Figure 2.3 illustrates the duration's of unemployment for these respondents as a whole while Figures 2.4 and 2.5 provide an analysis by gender.

These figures confirm our earlier findings that women were more

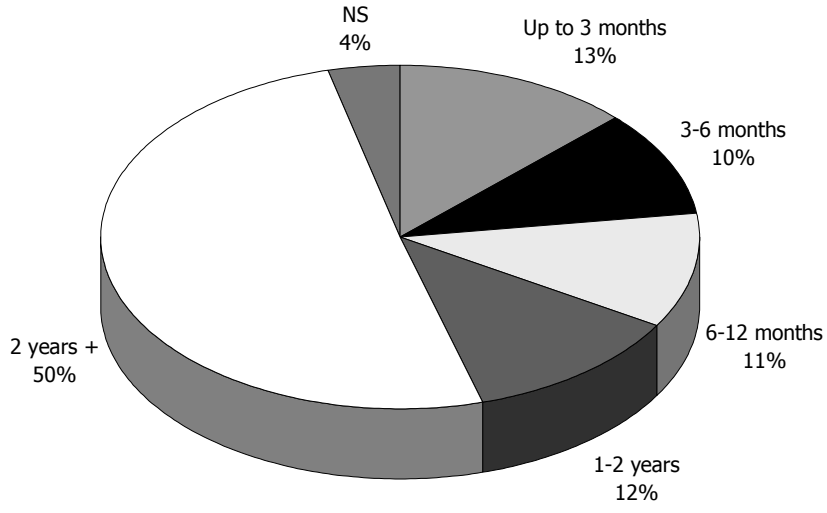
Figure 2.4: Duration of unemployment



Base: male unemployed beneficiaries

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

Figure 2.5: Duration of unemployment



Base: female unemployed beneficiaries

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

likely to have been longer-term unemployed – 51 per cent of unemployed women had been out of work for two years or more, compared to 38 per cent of men. This is because women (as the primary carers) are more likely to have been looking after the home and family for lengthy periods of time than their male counterparts.

Sixty-two per cent of people who had been long-term unemployed had been in paid work prior to coming on the course (compared to 63 per cent of those who had not).

2.2.3 Returners to the labour market

Another target group for ESF Objective 3 is people who want to return to the labour market after a period of looking after the home or family. We have already intimated that they make up a significant proportion of the long-term unemployed group, and when we look further at the survey data we can see that they make up 17 per cent of all respondents.

Ninety-five per cent of 'returners' were women and only five per cent were men. Not surprisingly, 32 per cent of all female respondents were classified as returners to the labour market compared to just two per cent of male respondents.

Returners to the labour market fall primarily in the 25-49 age range (85 per cent are found in this age group) with a further eight per cent aged 50 or over. Just six per cent of returners are aged 18 and under.

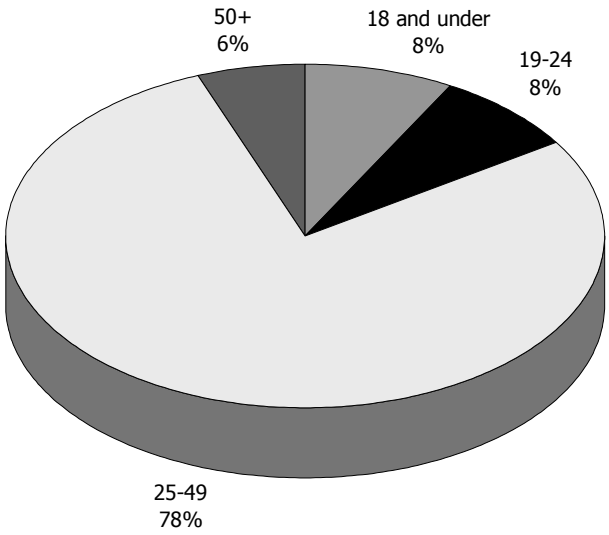
If we look at the qualifications held by returners and their experience of long-term unemployment, we can see that 45 per cent held no qualifications prior to coming on the course (which is about the average for the ESF cohort group as a whole) and that 65 per cent were classified as being long-term unemployed. This latter figure confirms a much higher incidence of long-term unemployment among returners (and thereby women) than for all survey respondents. Having said this, 73 per cent of returners had worked at some point before coming on to the ESF project.

2.2.4 Lone parents

Lone parents are another important ESF target group. We found that ten per cent of all respondents had sole responsibility for looking after dependent children and that the majority of these were women (86 per cent). In fact, 17 per cent of women beneficiaries were lone parents compared to just three per cent of men.

Figure 2.6 shows the age profile of lone parents, and once more we see a heavy concentration in the 25-49 age group (79 per cent

Figure 2.6: Lone parents, by age



Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

of lone parents were in this band). However, we also observe that 16 per cent of lone parents are aged 24 and under.

The proportion of lone parents who had a qualification before coming on to the course was 57 per cent, which is only slightly higher than for all respondents. Again though, we witness a much higher likelihood of long-term unemployment among this target group compared to other beneficiaries (44 per cent of lone parents were long-term unemployed compared to 25 per cent of all respondents).

Not surprisingly, 39 per cent of lone parents are also classified as being returners to the labour market. However, we have observed once more a much higher incidence of previous work experience among this group of beneficiaries — about three-quarters of all lone parents had worked at some point before they started their ESF course.

2.2.5 People from minority ethnic groups

Respondents to the survey were asked to classify themselves into different ethnic groups and the results are shown in Table 2.5 below.

We can see that the majority of beneficiaries were white (70 per cent) whilst 28 per cent came from a minority ethnic group. Two per cent of respondents did not record an ethnic group in the survey. Similar proportions of men and women are recorded in each ethnic group.

However, if we look at particular ethnic groups according to the age of respondents, we observe a more interesting variation within the groups (see Figure 2.7). The proportion of white

respondents increases with age, such that 87 per cent of people aged 50 or over who went onto an Objective 3 course were white compared to 63 per cent of those aged 18 and under.Similarly, the proportion of black and Asian beneficiaries is higher in the younger age groups than in the older age groups.

A slightly lower proportion of beneficiaries from minority ethnic

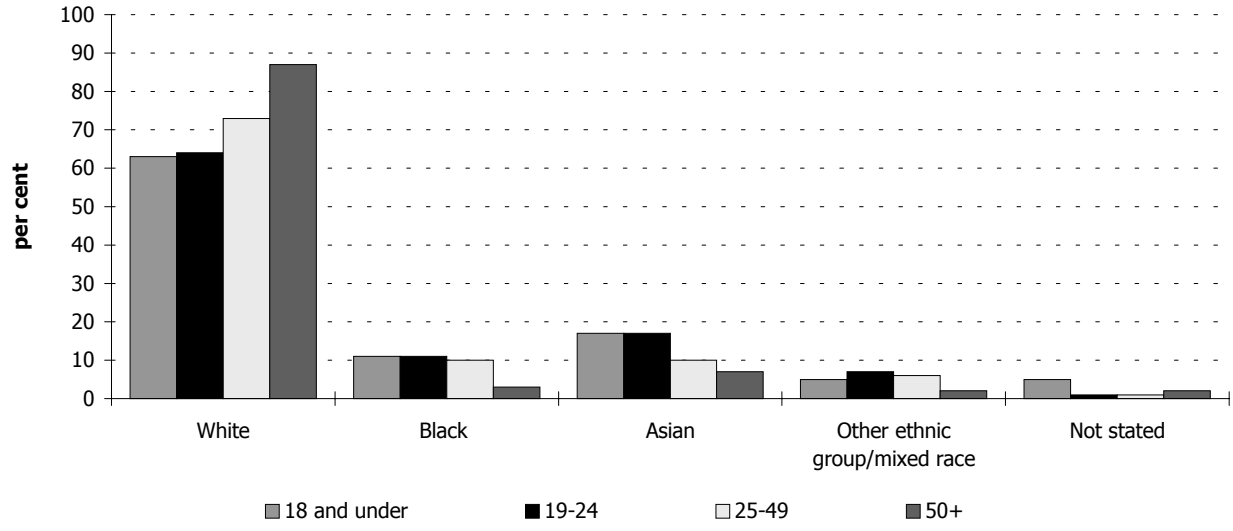
Table 2.5: Ethnicity of beneficiaries (per cent)

	All	Male	Female
White	70	69	71
Black Caribbean	4	4	3
Black African	4	4	5
Other Black	1	2	1
Indian	3	4	3
Pakistani	5	5	6
Bangladeshi	1	1	2
Chinese	1	*	1
Other Asian	2	2	2
Mixed race	3	4	2
Other ethnic group	3	3	3
Not stated	2	1	1

Base: all respondents, N = 2,835
* — Less than %

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

Figure 2.7: Ethnicity of beneficiaries, by age (per cent)



Base: All respondents (N=2,835 weighted)

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

groups had any sort of qualification before they went on to the course (53 per cent) compared to all respondents (58 per cent). However, what is more clear is the lower incidence of work experience prior to the course among people from minority ethnic groups. Less than half (46 per cent) of those people in this specific target group had worked before joining the course, compared to 62 per cent of respondents as a whole. Having said this, the likelihood of long-term unemployment for beneficiaries from minority ethnic groups was actually slightly lower, at 24 per cent, than it was for white beneficiaries, 26 per cent of whom had been long-term unemployed prior to coming on the course.

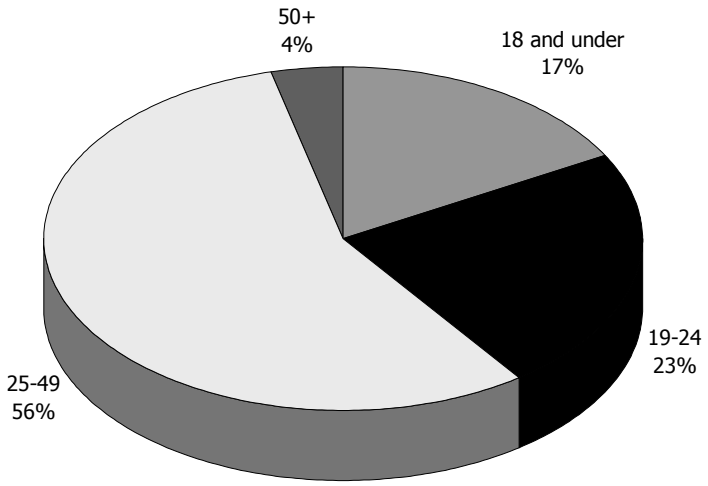
2.2.6 People for whom English is a second language

Another of the target groups for ESF Objective 3 is people for whom English is a second or other language (ESOL). The aim of training is to provide them with language skills to enable them to find work. Sixteen per cent of all respondents told us that they needed help with their English language skills, and similar proportions of men and women were recorded as doing so.

When we look at the age profile of beneficiaries highlighting the need for this type of help (see Figure 2.8) we observe that the majority fall into the 25-49 age group (56 per cent). A further 40 per cent of people with these difficulties were aged 24 and under.

Turning to qualifications before the course, 56 per cent of people requiring help with English had no qualifications compared to 42 per cent for whom English was their first language. Twenty-six per cent of beneficiaries for whom English was not their first language had experienced long-term unemployment prior to coming on the course which was only fractionally higher than for all respondents. Most worryingly, however, is the much smaller

Figure 2.8: ESOL beneficiaries, by age



Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

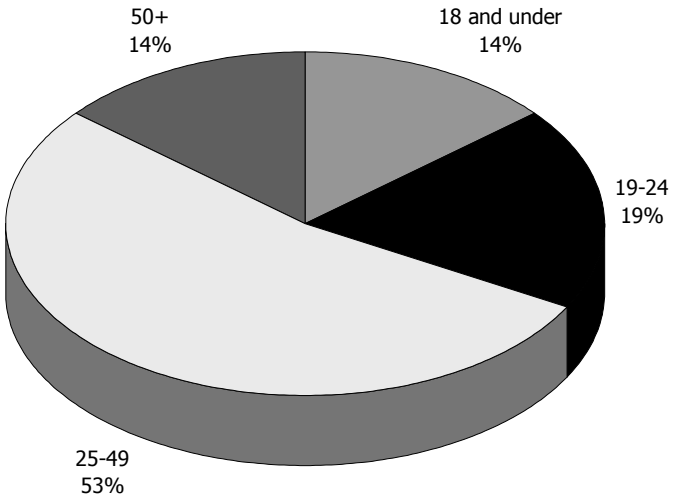
proportion of beneficiaries with English language needs who had worked before — just 39 per cent stated that they had been in paid employment at some time before starting the course compared to 67 per cent for whom English was their first language.

2.2.7 People with health problems and disabilities

Almost one-fifth of respondents (19 per cent) told us that they had a health problem or a disability which affected the kind of work they can do and this clearly represents a barrier to labour market participation. Men were more likely to have a health problem or disability (22 per cent) than women (16 per cent of whom reported they had these problems).

The age profile of people with health problems shows that just over half are aged between 25 and 49, and a further third are aged 24 and under (see Figure 2.9 below).

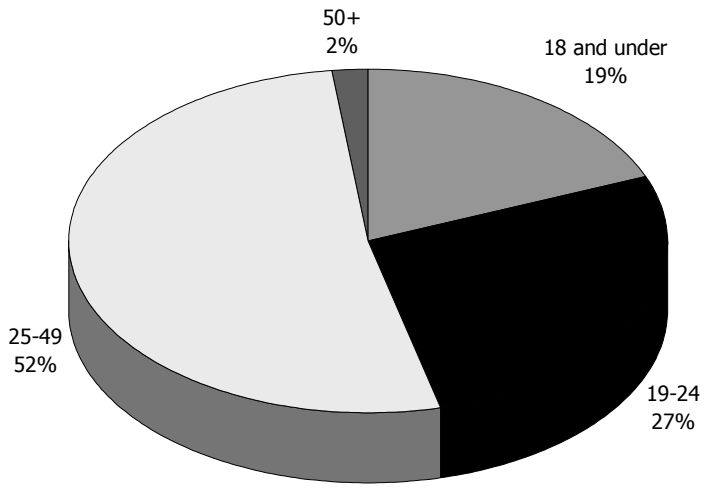
Figure 2.9: Disabled people, by age



Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

Beneficiaries with health problems or disabilities were much less likely to have qualifications prior to going on the ESF course than their non-disabled counterparts. Indeed, only 46 per cent of disabled beneficiaries reported that they had qualifications compared to 59 per cent of those without these problems. Furthermore, the chances of experiencing long-term unemployment were much higher for this group, at 33 per cent, than for respondents without health problems or a disability. Perhaps not surprisingly, beneficiaries falling in this target group were also less likely to have had prior work experience (59 per cent) than those for whom health or disability was not a barrier to employment (63 per cent of whom had worked before).

Figure 2.10: Homeless beneficiaries, and those living in temporary accommodation by age



Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

2.2.8 Homeless people or those living in temporary accommodation

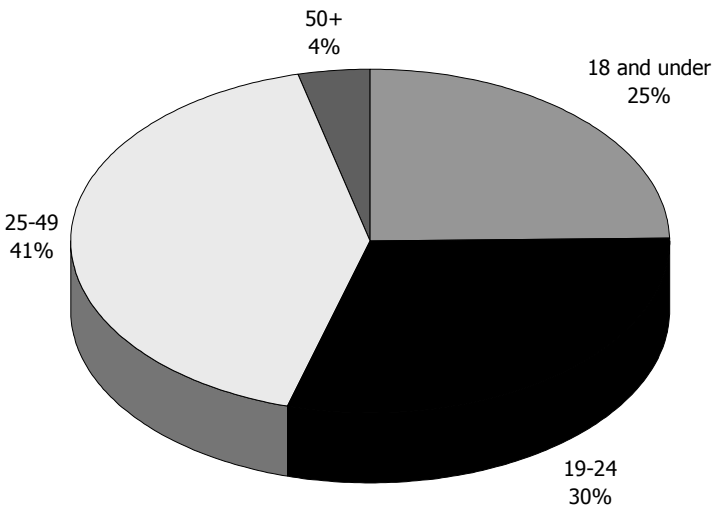
When we asked if respondents were homeless or living in temporary accommodation at the time of the survey, six per cent of beneficiaries responded that this was the case. Clearly, this represents a significant barrier to gaining employment. Men were more likely to be without a fixed abode than women (eight per cent and four per cent respectively).

Over half of all homeless beneficiaries (including those in temporary accommodation) were aged 24 and under as can be seen in Figure 2.10, whilst a further 42 per cent were aged between 25 and 49. Only four per cent of homeless beneficiaries were aged 50 or more.

Forty-eight per cent of those who were homeless or living in temporary accommodation had any sort of qualification prior to coming on the course, compared to 57 per cent of beneficiaries who were not homeless. Surprisingly, only 16 per cent of homeless beneficiaries were classified as long-term unemployed prior to coming onto the ESF course. However, a much lower proportion had been in work at any time before the course (44 per cent) compared to all other survey respondents[1].

[1] Throughout the report, references to homeless beneficiaries includes those living in temporary accommodation at the time they started their Objective 3 course.

Figure 2.11: Beneficiaries with literacy and numeracy problems, by age



Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

2.2.9 People with literacy and/or numeracy problems

The last target group of the 1999 ESF Objective 3 programme were people who had problems with literacy and numeracy, and these make up almost one-fifth of all survey respondents (19 per cent). Twenty-two per cent of men stated that their reading/writing or numeracy skills were 'not good enough' compared to 16 per cent of women reporting the same.

Again, we see a concentration of literacy and numeracy difficulties among younger beneficiaries, with 55 per cent of people saying they had these problems falling in the 25 and under age group (see Figure 2.11).

Not surprisingly, 59 per cent of beneficiaries with literacy and numeracy difficulties reported that they did not have any qualifications prior to coming on to the Objective 3 programme, compared to 40 per cent of beneficiaries who did not have these basic skill problems.

Having said this, we have observed that people with literacy and numeracy problems were no more likely to have experienced long-term unemployment than respondents for whom basic skills were not identified as a problem. In fact, 24 per cent of beneficiaries with literacy and numeracy problems had been long-term unemployed prior to coming on the course, compared to 26 per cent of those reporting no such problems.

People who have basic skills problems were, however, much less likely to have worked before starting their ESF course, and just 45 per cent reported that they had some paid work experience.

2.2.10 New Deal beneficiaries

For the first time in a leavers' survey of this type, we have been able to explore the characteristics of beneficiaries who have been on projects funded by ESF Objective 3 and the New Deal.[1] 11 per cent of beneficiaries responding to the survey were engaged in projects which had received (part) funding from the New Deal while 68 per cent had not. We do not know whether the remaining 21 per cent of beneficiaries had benefited from New Deal funding in any way, as the information was not available to us.

The New Deal beneficiary group are predominantly young and almost three-quarters are aged 24 and under (73 per cent). Approximately one-quarter are aged between 25 and 49 and just two per cent are aged 50 or more. Seventy per cent of New Deal beneficiaries are male. Just over half of all New Deal beneficiaries (56 per cent) had worked before coming on to their course which is slightly less than for ESF beneficiaries as a whole (62 per cent).

When we look at how the other characteristics of New Deal

Table 2.6: Characteristics of New Deal beneficiaries (per cent)

	New Deal beneficiaries	All beneficiaries
Up to 18	15	23
19-24	57	24
25-49	26	45
50+	2	8
Male	70	48
Female	30	51
No qualifications	52	44
Long-term unemployed	23	25
Returners	3	17
Lone parents	3	17
Minority ethnic groups	34	28
ESOL	14	16
Disabled/health problems	20	19
Homeless	5	5
Literacy/numeracy problems	23	19

Base: all New Deal respondents, N = 316

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

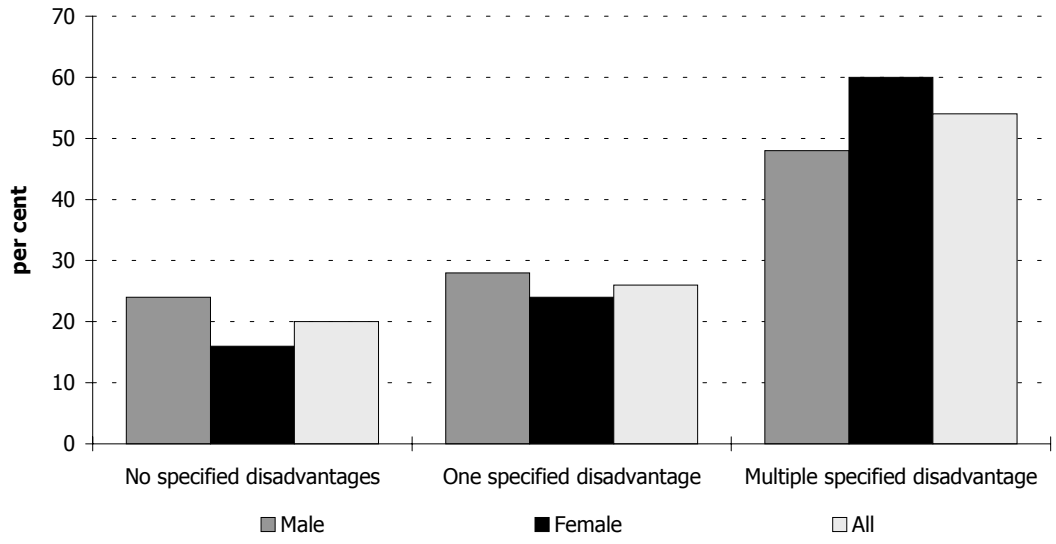
[1] The information on New Deal status came from administrative data from projects rather than survey respondents.

beneficiaries compare to ESF beneficiaries as a whole, we observe some interesting differences. New Deal beneficiaries are more likely to have no qualifications prior to starting their course, to come from minority ethnic groups and to have poor literacy and numeracy skills than ESF beneficiaries generally. Conversely, they are much less likely to be returners to the labour market or lone parents (which, as we have seen, is more closely associated with an older cohort). We found no significant differences in the incidence of long-term unemployment, homelessness or disability between New Deal beneficiaries and ESF beneficiaries as a whole.

2.3 Summary of disadvantages

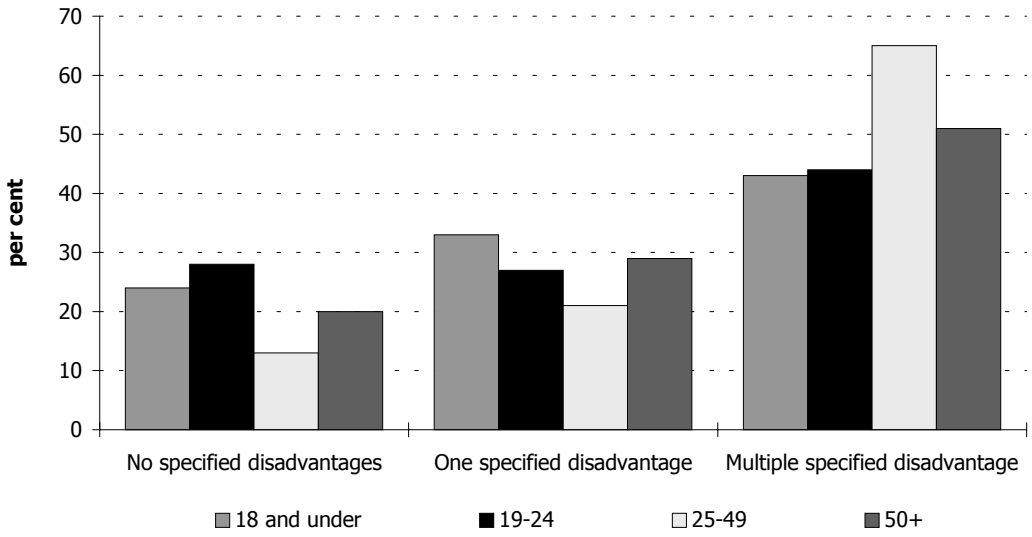
We have presented a fairly simple picture of the disadvantages faced by people in specific ESF target groups and have focused primarily on their experience of long-term unemployment, qualifications (or lack thereof), and work experience prior to going on to an Objective 3 project. However, the 'real' picture is much more complex. We have already shown that many people in these target groups have experience of long-term unemployment, have no qualifications *and* very poor work experience records. When we look more closely, we find that returners to the labour market are likely to be lone parents, people with English language needs are primarily from minority ethnic groups, and so on; many people have multiple disadvantages. If we reclassify beneficiaries according to whether they fall into any of the target groups, or indeed, whether they have one or more of the disadvantages we have highlighted, we can see more explicitly the extent of the barriers they face when looking for work. Figure 2.12 illustrates this well.

Figure 2.12: Level of disadvantage, by gender



Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

Figure 2.13: Level of disadvantage by gender



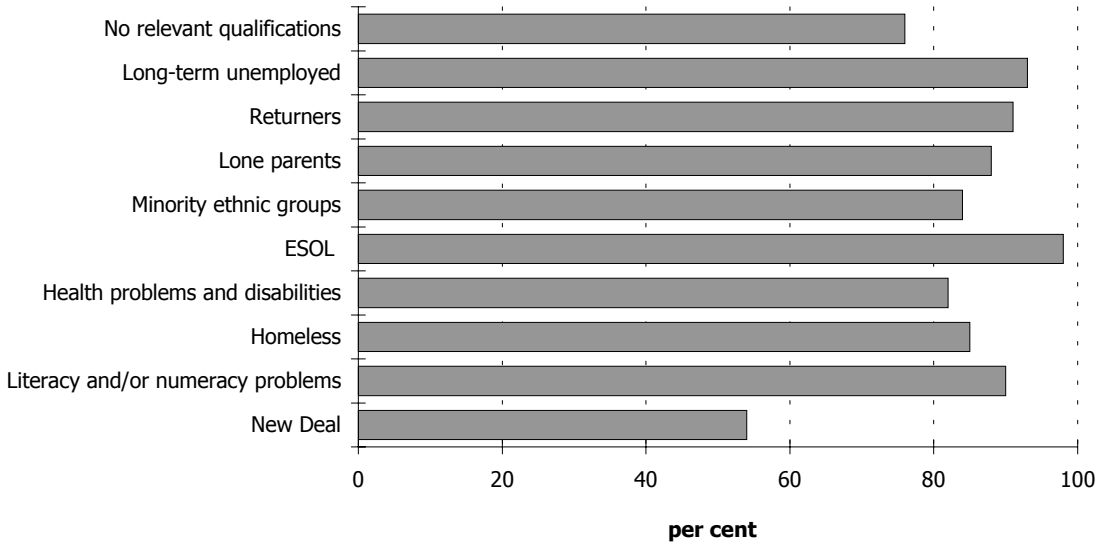
Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

Firstly, we can observe that women are more likely to have multiple disadvantages than men — indeed, 60 per cent of women have more than one disadvantage compared to 48 per cent of men. This is no doubt linked to their propensity to be returners to the labour market and lone parents. In all, just over half of all survey respondents have more than one of the specified disadvantages.

When we look at the incidence of multiple disadvantage according to age (see Figure 2.13) we can see that people aged between 25-49 are most likely to suffer multiple disadvantages compared to any of the other age groups — 65 per cent of these people have more than one disadvantage. Just over half of all people aged 50 and over have multiple disadvantages, whilst around 44 per cent of people aged 25 and under do so.

More usefully though, when we look at the level of disadvantage among the specific ESF target groups, we find that by far the majority of these people suffer multiple disadvantages. It would appear that they have many barriers to overcome when looking for work. Figure 2.14 shows that more than three-quarters of all people in the target groups face multiple disadvantages. Among those most affected are people for whom English is a second language (98 per cent have more than one disadvantage), long-term unemployed people (93 per cent have more than one disadvantage), returners to the labour market (91 per cent) and people with literacy and numeracy problems (90 per cent of whom face multiple disadvantages). Just over half of New Deal beneficiaries (54 per cent) suffer multiple disadvantages.

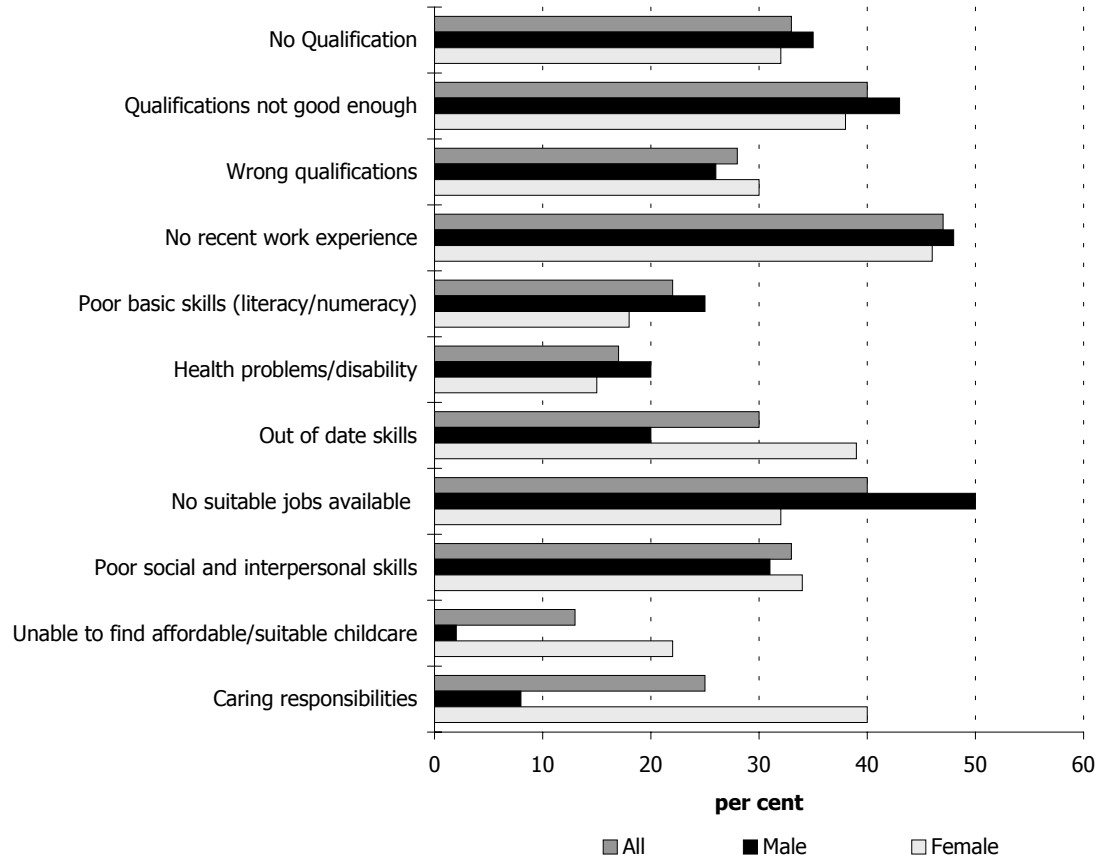
Figure 2.14: Experience of multiple disadvantage, by target groups



Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

The 1999 leavers survey also included a new question which asked beneficiaries to say what problems they felt they faced when looking for work. This has provided more depth to our analysis of the disadvantages and barriers experienced by ESF

Figure 2.15: Barriers to employment - All respondents



Base: all respondents N=2,836

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

beneficiaries when seeking employment. The results are presented in Figure 2.15.

We can see that the most often reported barriers to work were:

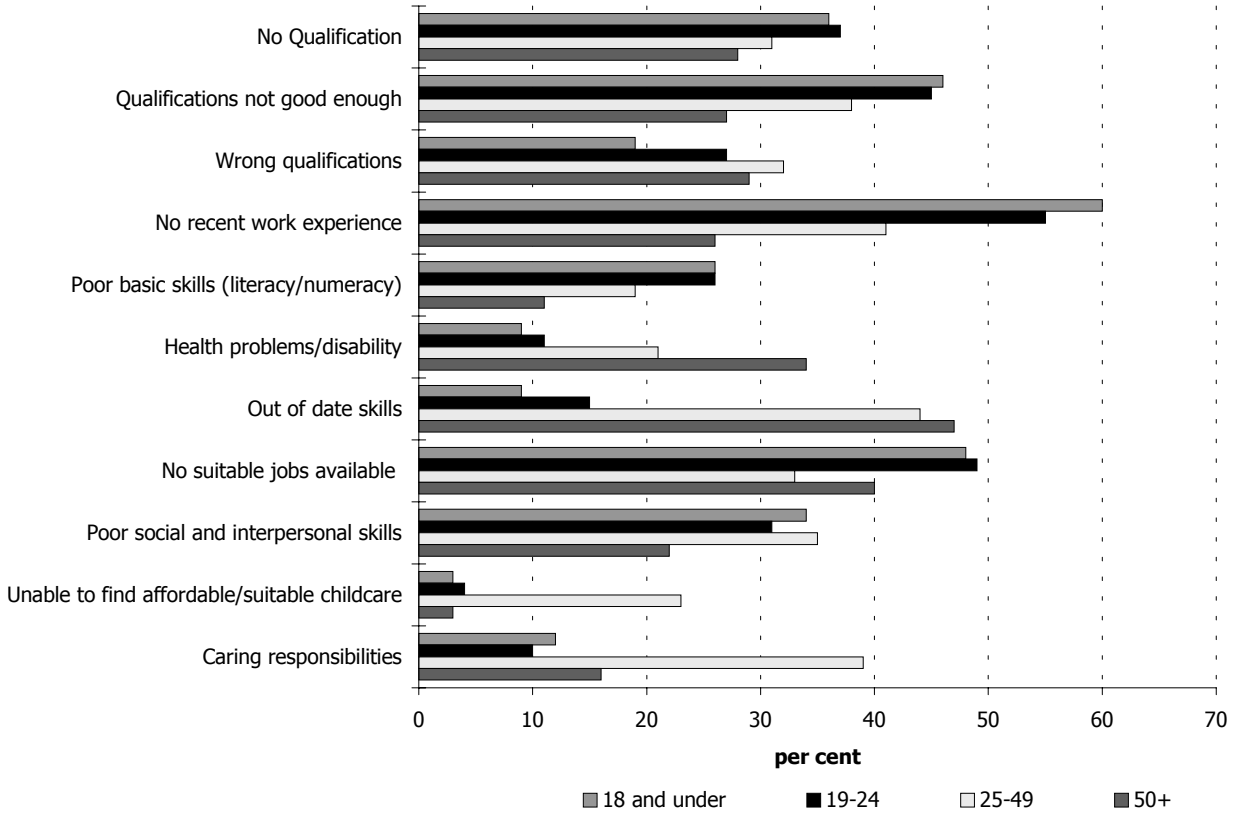
- no recent work experience (47 per cent)
- poor qualifications (40 per cent), and
- no suitable jobs available (40 per cent).

In addition (and for the first time in a survey of leavers), respondents highlighted that poor social and interpersonal skills, *ie* soft skills, acted as a barrier to employment — approximately one-third of beneficiaries stated this to be the case. Obsolete skills, childcare and health problems were also fairly prevalent barriers to finding work for a significant proportion of survey respondents.

Among male beneficiaries, the most commonly identified barriers to finding work were a lack of recent work experience and the fact that no suitable jobs were available. Women also stated that their lack of recent work experience was a barrier to finding work, as were out-of-date skills and their caring responsibilities.

We also observed that younger beneficiaries were more likely than older beneficiaries to report that the barriers they face in

Figure 2.16: Barriers to employment — all respondents (by age)



Base: all respondents N=2,836

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

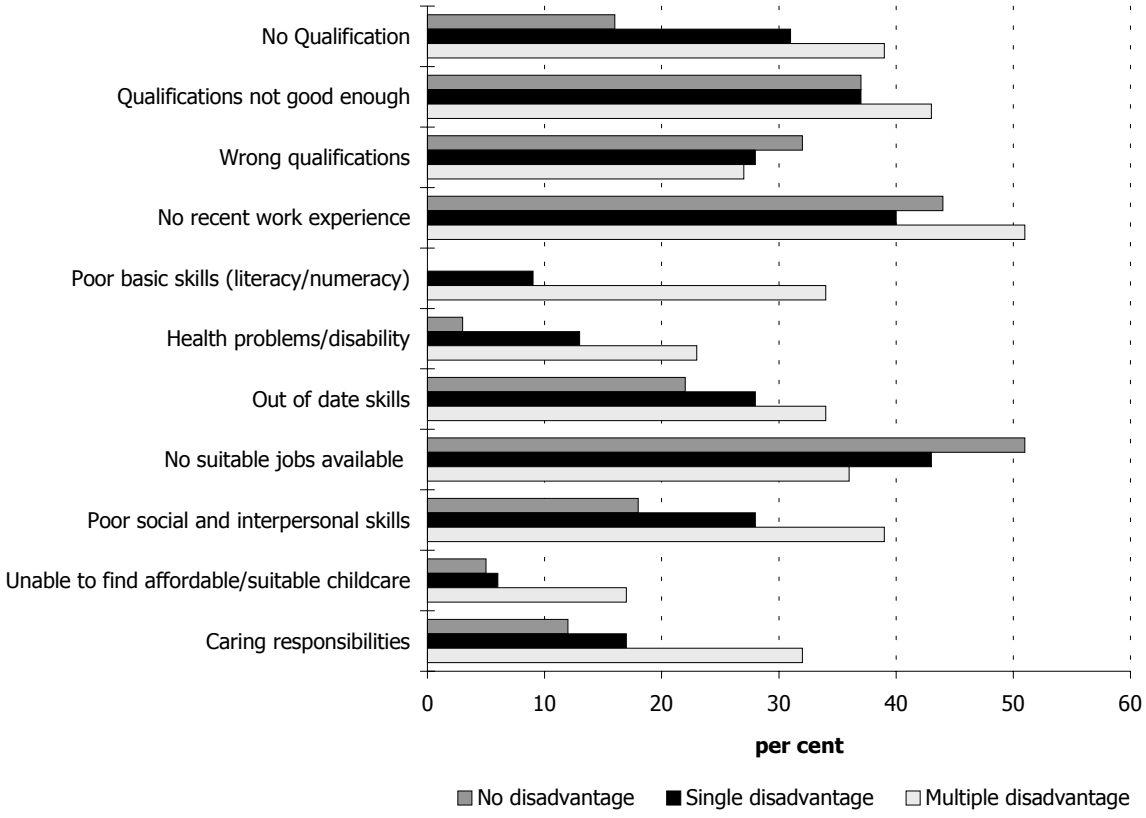
looking for work are concerned with their lack of qualifications, or the fact that their qualifications were not good enough (see Figure 2.16). They also more commonly cited a lack of recent work experience as a factor which worked against them in the jobs market, which was less marked among older beneficiaries.

Not surprisingly, beneficiaries who have multiple disadvantages were much more likely to identify with nearly all of these barriers to employment than those beneficiaries for whom no specified disadvantages are recorded (see Figure 2.17). Again though, the lack of recent work experience and poor qualifications were the factors recorded most frequently by people with multiple disadvantages.

We now have a much fuller picture of the barriers and disadvantages faced by the ESF Objective 3 cohort. It is important to use all of this information to help in our assessment of the impact of ESF Objective 3 when we come to look at the inputs and outcomes from the programme later in the report. In order to do this, we have devised a new typology of beneficiary disadvantage which groups people according to whether they experience:

- **human capital shortcomings** — that is, the actual and perceived effects of having low or no qualifications, poor basic skills, a lack of recent work experience and out-of-date skills

Figure 2.17: Barriers to employment (all respondents — level of disadvantage)



Base: all respondents N=2,836

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

- **life skills problems**, identified as homelessness, and poor social and interpersonal skills
- **potential discriminators**, incorporating, age (the over 50s), ethnicity, health problems and disability, gender and long-term unemployment, and
- **circumstantial constraints**, concerned with childcare responsibilities and lone parenthood.

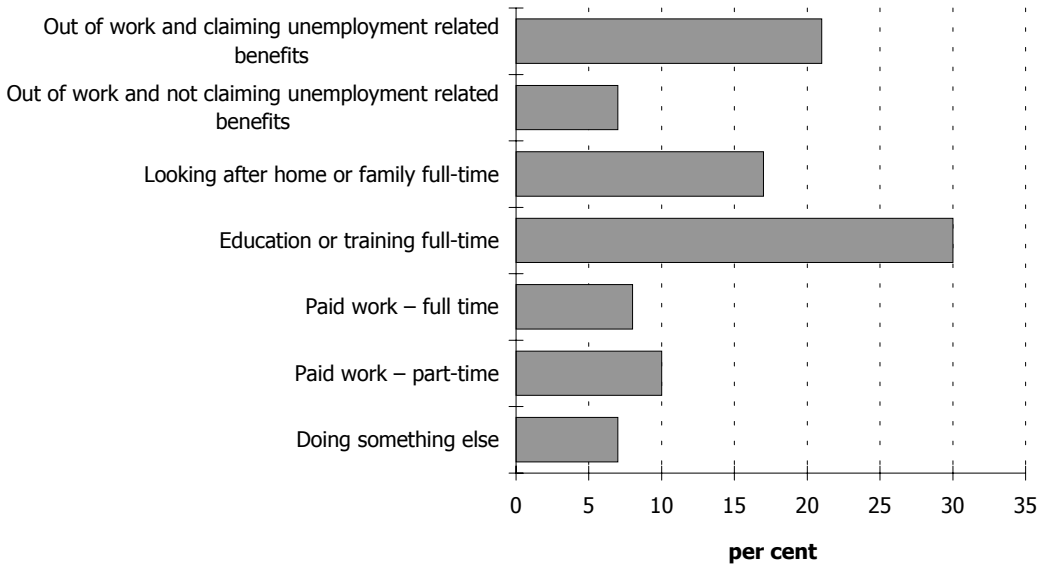
We will regroup beneficiaries according to whether they experience these difficulties and will use this classification later on in our multivariate analysis, most notably when we look at the types of support beneficiaries have received on their ESF courses, and thus their outcomes from this intervention.

2.4 Activities prior to starting an ESF Objective 3 course

It is instructive at this stage to look at what beneficiaries had been doing prior to going on to their Objective 3 projects and, as in previous years, we have looked at two reference points (12 months prior to the course and one week before) to gauge any changes in previous activity. Looking firstly at their activities 12 months before the ESF intervention (see Figure 2.18), we observe that almost one-third of all beneficiaries had been in full-time education and training. A similar proportion were out of work and either claiming or not claiming unemployment-related benefits, and just under one-fifth of respondents had been in full-time or part-time work.

When we look at the difference in activities between men and women (see Figure 2.19), we observe that male beneficiaries (39

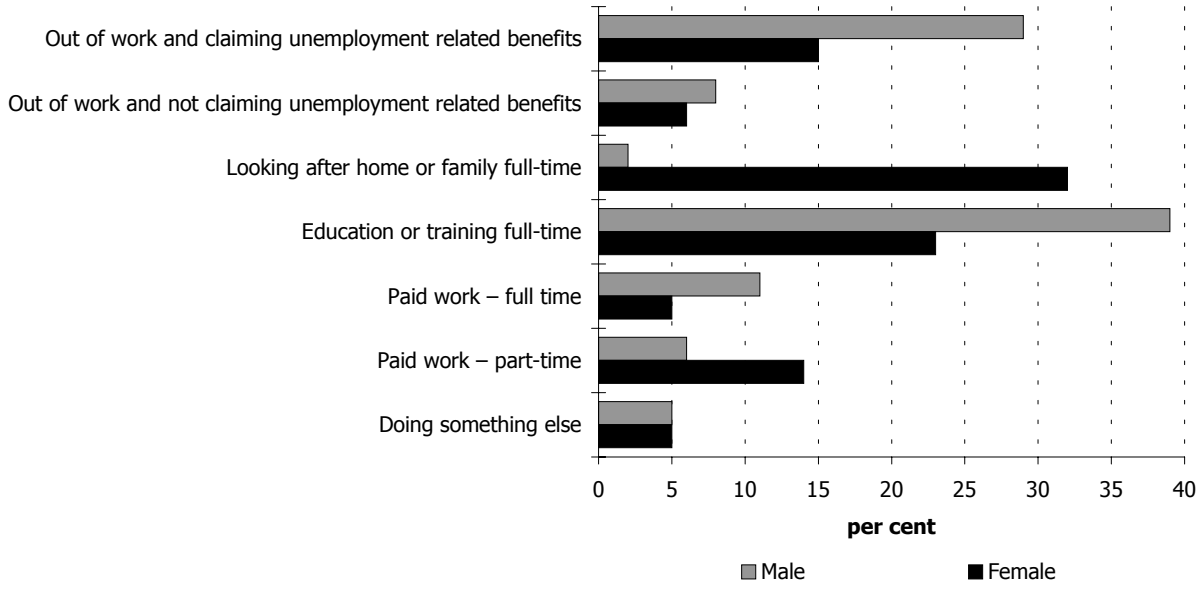
Figure 2.18: Activity 12 months prior to course



Base: all respondents N=2,835

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

Figure 2.19: Activity 12 months prior to course, by gender



Base: all respondents N=2.835

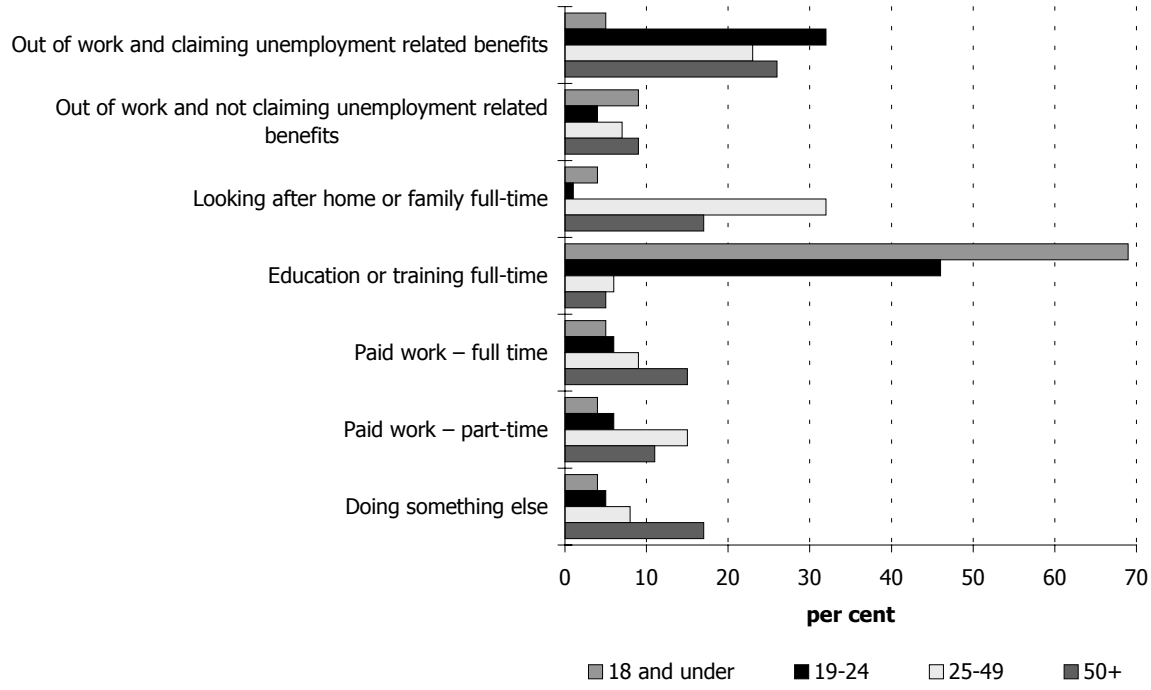
Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

per cent) were much more likely to have been in full-time education and training than female beneficiaries (23 per cent) 12 months prior to the course. This is explained by the fact that young men make up a significant proportion of all male beneficiaries, and that they in turn were most likely to have been in school or at college in the 12 months before the course. Thirty-seven per cent of all male beneficiaries had been out of work and either claiming or not claiming unemployment-related benefits compared to 21 per cent of women beneficiaries. Women were, not surprisingly, much more likely to have been looking after the home or family 12 months prior to going on the ESF course, and we observed that 32 per cent of women had been doing just that, compared to only two per cent of men. Similar proportions of men and women reported that they had been in work one year before going on to the course (17 per cent compared to 19 per cent) although men were much more likely to have been in full-time work whereas women were more likely to have been in part-time employment.

If we look at age (Figure 2.20) we can see that older beneficiaries aged 50 and over were more likely to have been out of work than undertaking any other activity 12 months prior to the course (35 per cent). However, older people were more likely to have been in employment than younger beneficiaries — a further 26 per cent of those aged 50 and over reported that they had been in work one year before the ESF course, which was similarly the case for those aged 25-49.

When we look at the activity status of people with multiple disadvantages 12 months prior to the course, we find that they had a much greater propensity to be out of work or looking after the home or family than those beneficiaries with only a single

Figure 2.20: Activity 12 months prior to course, by age



Base: all respondents N=2,835

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

disadvantage or none at all, who were conversely much more likely to be in education or training or in any sort of employment.

Turning now to the activity of beneficiaries one week before the course, we observe that many more beneficiaries were out of work at this point (46 per cent) than 12 months previously. This is not surprising — indeed, most beneficiaries must be unemployed to be eligible to take part in the ESF programme. Having said this, 14 per cent of beneficiaries reported that they had in fact been in employment the week before starting their course, although the majority (11 per cent) had been working part-time. Seventeen per cent of respondents had been looking after the home or family on a full-time basis and a further 13 per cent were engaged in education or training.

Once again, we can see a gender differential in the activity of beneficiaries one week before starting their ESF course — men were more likely to have been unemployed whereas women were more likely to have been looking after the home or family. Having said this, for both men and women, we have observed greater shifts into unemployment during the 12 month period. Similar proportions of men and women had been in full-time employment one week before the course (three and four per cent respectively) with greater proportions of both sexes engaged in part-time employment (eight and 13 per cent).

When we look at beneficiary activities the week before the course according to age (see Table 2.8), we find a significantly greater shift into unemployment among younger people aged up to 24

Table 2.7: Activity 12 months and one week prior to starting course, by gender (per cent)

	All		Men		Women	
	12 months before	1 week before	12 months before	1 week before	12 months before	1 week before
Out of work and claiming unemployment related benefits	21	31	29	42	15	20
Out of work and not claiming unemployment related benefits	7	15	8	18	6	11
Looking after home or family full-time	17	17	2	2	32	31
Education or training full-time	30	13	39	16	23	11
Paid work – full time	8	3	11	4	5	3
Paid work – part-time	10	11	6	8	14	13
Doing something else	7	11	5	10	5	11

Base: all respondents, N = 2,835

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

compared to beneficiaries aged 25 or more. With the exception of beneficiaries aged 18 and under, the proportions of beneficiaries engaged in any type of employment the week before the course was either the same or had decreased over the previous 12 months regardless of age. The incidence of part-time work was also greater in the week before the start of the course vis-à-vis full-time work for beneficiaries of all ages.

Table 2.8: Activity 12 months and one week prior to starting course, by age (per cent)

	18 and under		19-24		25-49		50+	
	12 months before	1 week before	12 months before	1 week before	12 months before	1 week before	12 months before	1 week before
Out of work and claiming unemployment related benefits	5	10	32	47	23	31	26	34
Out of work and not claiming unemployment related benefits	9	28	4	11	7	10	9	14
Looking after home or family full-time	4	4	1	2	32	32	17	15
Education or training full-time	69	33	46	18	6	3	5	2
Paid work – full time	5	3	6	4	9	3	15	4
Paid work – part-time	4	10	6	8	15	12	11	10
Doing something else	4	12	5	10	8	9	17	21

Base: all respondents, N = 2,835

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

People with no disadvantages, or just one of those specified, were almost as likely to have been unemployed the week before starting the course as those beneficiaries with multiple disadvantages. However, they were more likely to have been in employment of any kind than those with multiple disadvantages, but most particularly part-time employment. Table 2.9 illustrates the changes in activity over the 12 months prior to the course, according to the level of disadvantage.

We will come back and compare the change in beneficiary activities before and after the course and assess 'distance travelled' in Chapter 4.

Table 2.9: Activity 12 months and one week prior to starting course, by level of disadvantage (per cent)

	No disadvantage		Single disadvantage		Multiple disadvantages	
	12 months before	1 week before	12 months before	1 week before	12 months before	1 week before
Out of work and claiming unemployment related benefits	13	23	21	31	25	34
Out of work and not claiming unemployment related benefits	4	19	7	15	8	13
Looking after home or family full-time	—	3	6	7	29	27
Education or training full-time	47	16	34	16	22	11
Paid work – full time	13	7	11	5	5	2
Paid work – part-time	17	21	13	15	6	4
Doing something else	6	11	8	11	5	91

Base: all respondents, N = 2,836

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

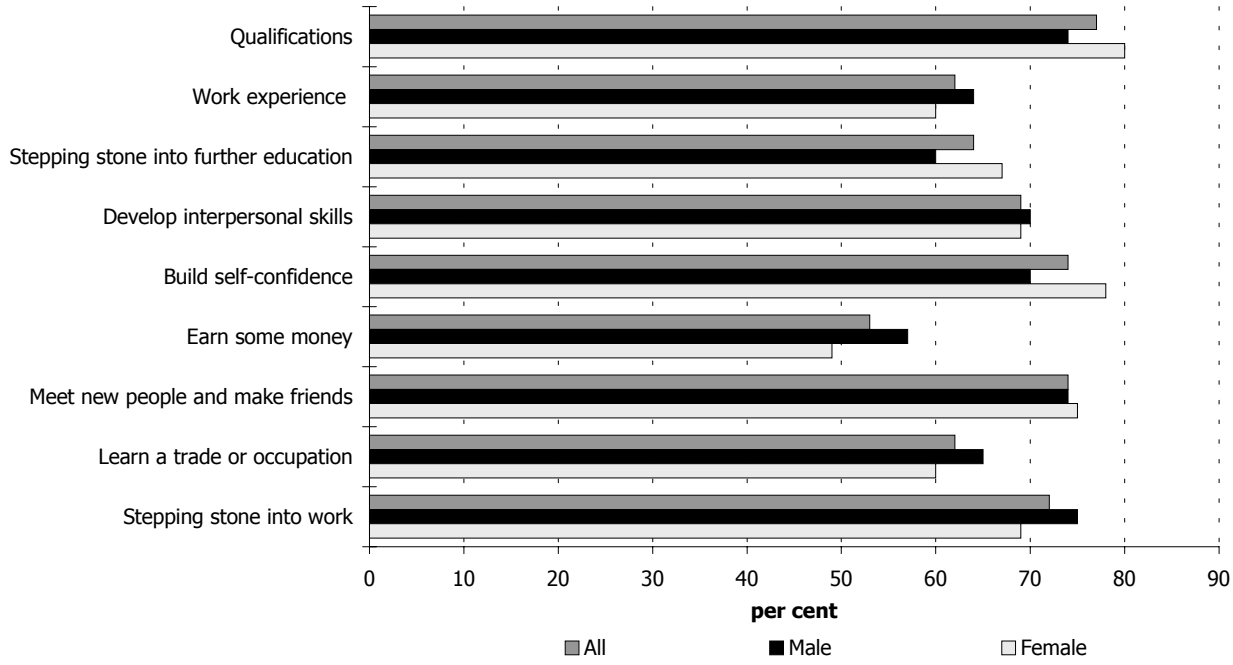
3. Support from Projects

In this chapter, we look at the type of help and support provided by ESF Objective 3 courses and identify the distribution of this help among the different types of beneficiary we have identified in Chapter 2. We begin with an assessment of beneficiaries' expectations of their ESF course, and go on to record their activities whilst participating.

3.1 Expectations prior to the ESF course

We included in the 1999 leavers survey, a question concerning people's expectations of their ESF course, which was a departure from previous years. We asked survey respondents to think back to the time before they started the course, and tell us what they expected to get from it. In particular, we were keen to explore what people wanted from their course, both in terms of hard and 'soft' skills development. Generally, people seem to have had high hopes from ESF. Figure 3.1 below provides an overview of beneficiaries' responses to this new question.

Figure 3.1: Expectations from the course, by gender



Base: all respondents N=2,836

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

We can see from the figure that around three-quarters of all beneficiaries expected that their course would help them to:

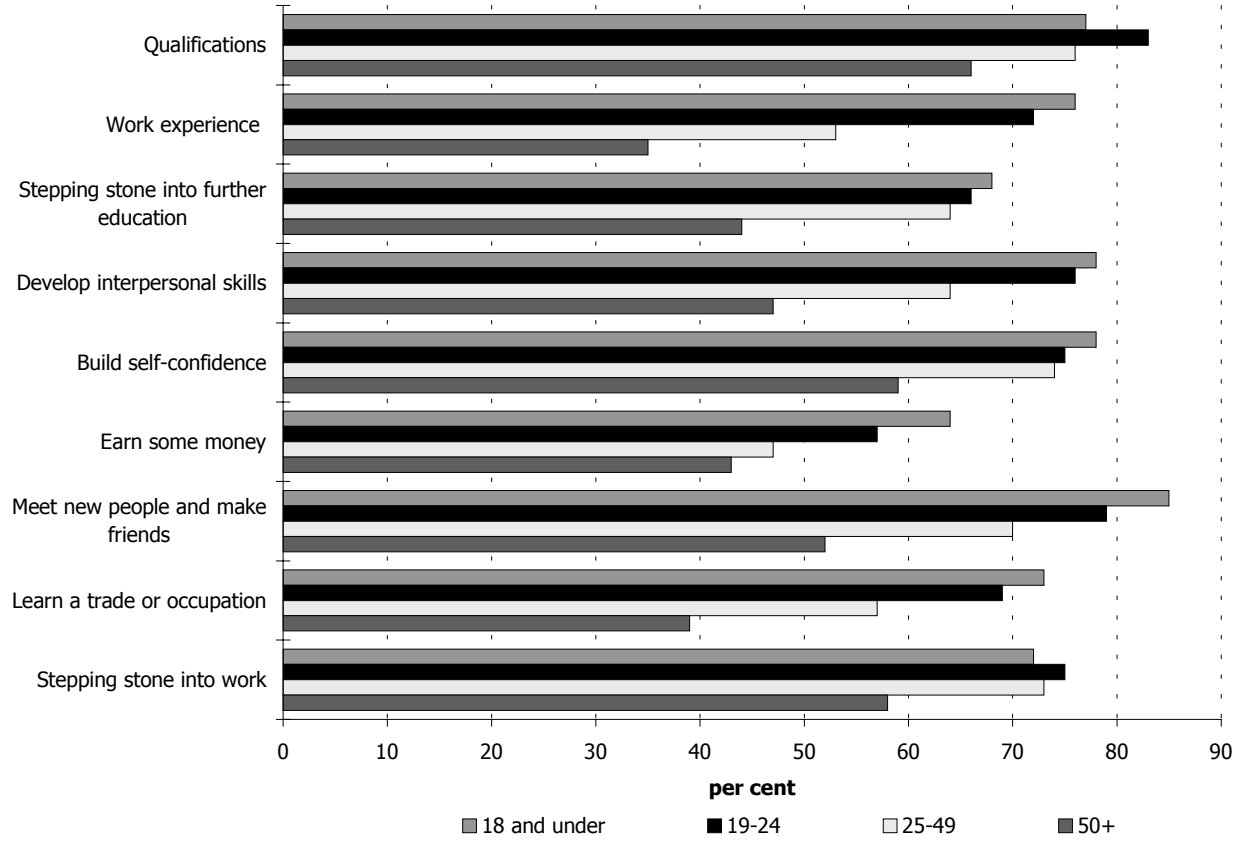
- achieve qualifications
- build self confidence, and
- meet new people.

Over 70 per cent of beneficiaries thought the course would be a stepping stone into work and a high proportion (69 per cent) also felt it would help them to develop their interpersonal skills. Many beneficiaries thought the course would lead to further education, provide them with work experience and help them to learn a trade or occupation. Just over half thought they would earn some money as a result of participating.

We found that male and female beneficiaries had similar expectations from the course, although relatively more women expected to gain qualifications, self-confidence and the chance to move into further education than men. Men, on the other hand were more likely to expect to earn some money as a result of being on the course than women.

When we looked at expectations according to age we found that relatively more young people expected to gain hard and soft skills from the course than older people (see Figure 3.2). These

Figure 3.2: Expectations from the course, by age



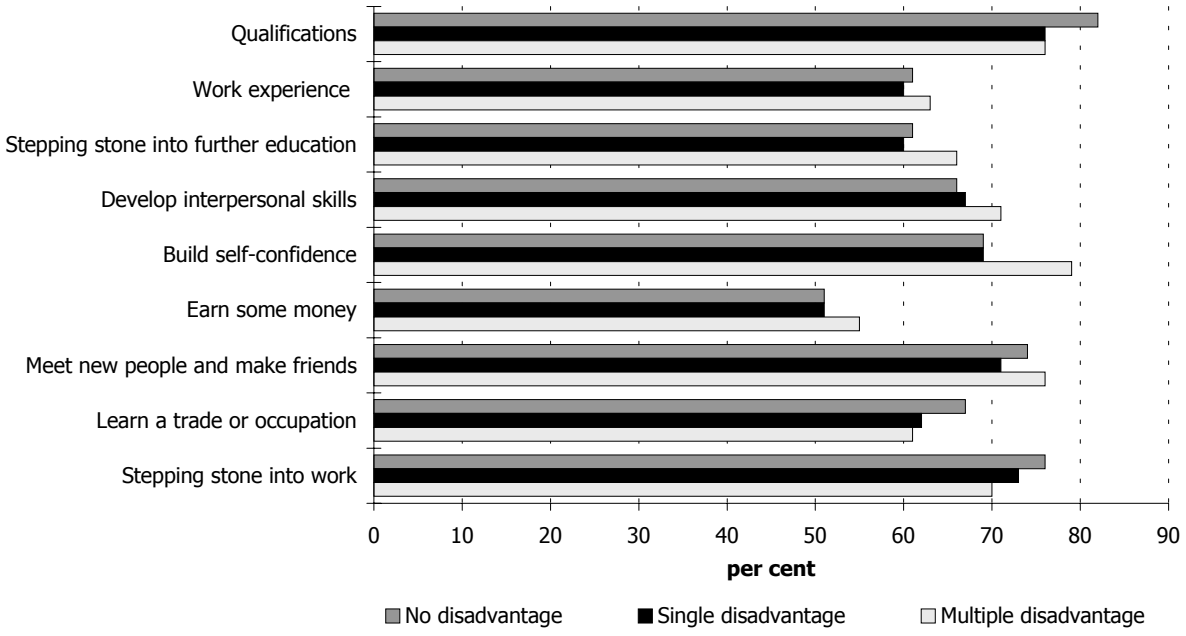
Base: all respondents N=2,836

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

differences were particularly marked with regards to work experience, learning a trade or occupation, and developing interpersonal skills, where young people were much more likely to expect to make gains than their older counterparts.

We found surprisingly few (or significant) differences in relation to expectations from the course between beneficiaries according to the level of disadvantage they faced (see Figure 3.3). Although we might have expected people with multiple disadvantages to expect less from the course, we found that they had slightly higher hopes for improvements to their interpersonal skills and self-confidence, and progression to further education than people with no disadvantages. Conversely though, people facing multiple disadvantages were (slightly) less likely to expect to gain qualifications, to learn a new trade or to move into work than those who were not disadvantaged.

Figure 3.3: Expectations from the course, by level of disadvantage



Base: all respondents N=2,836

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

When we look at the specific ESF target groups, we again observe few significant differences between them vis-à-vis their expectations from the course. However, expectations among disabled people were generally lower across the board than those reported for other beneficiaries whereas people with literacy and numeracy problems reported much greater hopes from the course with regard to both hard and soft skills than other beneficiaries generally. New Deal beneficiaries also appear to have had lower than average expectations from their course compared to many of the target groups and beneficiaries more generally.

3.2 Help gained from the course

Having established in new questions to the leavers survey, just what problems beneficiaries thought they faced when looking for work, and then determining what they hoped to get from the course, we went on to ask them what the course had actually done to help them. As in previous years, this question focused very much on the more tangible help and support projects could offer such as:

Table 3.1: Expectations from the course by beneficiary target groups(per cent)

	All	No qualific-ations	Long term unem-ployed	Retur -ners	Lone Par-ents	Minority ethnic groups	ESOL	Disab -led	Home -less	Lit/ num problems	New Deal
Qualifications	77	75	77	81	78	78	80	70	73	81	66
Work experience	62	64	61	54	55	65	67	56	67	69	67
Stepping stone into further education	64	64	63	73	72	66	69	59	72	76	49
Develop interpersonal skills	69	71	69	65	68	74	79	66	74	84	67
Build self-confidence	74	75	72	80	75	76	80	75	77	85	71
Earn some money	53	53	53	50	54	56	51	47	52	61	49
Meet new people and make friends	74	73	74	75	72	76	77	73	80	86	67
Learn a trade or occupation	62	61	63	59	58	64	59	53	64	68	56
Stepping stone into work	72	66	71	72	69	70	71	64	67	78	69

Base: all respondents in target group.

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

- the provision of advice and guidance regarding work and training
- undertaking work experience
- job search methods and activities
- work towards a qualification, and
- help with setting up in self employment.

We present an overview of the responses to this question in Table 3.2 overleaf. As we can see, the majority of beneficiaries (72 per cent) reported that they had worked towards a qualification

whilst they were on their course, and over 60 per cent of beneficiaries had received advice and help on suitable work options or training. A similar proportion of beneficiaries had received help to use computers. Just over half of survey respondents (56 per cent) told us that they had undertaken job-related training, whilst 50 per cent said they had done some work experience. Forty-two per cent of beneficiaries reported that they had received job search training whilst on their course. Not surprisingly, very few respondents reported that they had received wage supplements (just 14 per cent of all beneficiaries) and even fewer (11 per cent) had any help with setting up their own business. As this sort of help is very specialised and only focused on beneficiaries with these particular kinds of needs, we would not have expected these figures to have been any higher.

Table 3.2: Help gained from course (per cent)

	All	Male	Female
Advice and guidance about suitable work or training	62	65	60
A personal training plan	44	47	43
Ideas about suitable work options	65	67	63
Information on suitable jobs	54	58	50
Training about the world of work	48	51	45
Job search training	42	45	39
Contacts to help when looking for work	39	45	34
Work experience	50	53	47
Wage supplements	14	18	9
Work towards a qualification	72	69	75
Job-related training	56	59	53
Using computers	62	56	68
Help with setting up own business	11	12	9

Base: all respondents N=2,836

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

As we can see, many of these types of help and support overlap and it is instructive at this stage to group the types of support beneficiaries have received to help us further in our analysis. Following the leavers surveys of previous years, we have constructed five groups, namely:

- advice, guidance and support

- jobsearch help
- work experience and subsidised employment
- vocational training, and
- self employment support.

When we do this, we can see that the majority of beneficiaries have received some form of vocational training (89 per cent) and almost three-quarters had some help with jobsearch. Just over two-thirds of beneficiaries received advice, guidance and support (on work and training options) and half had undertaken some sort of work experience or subsidised employment (see Table 3.3). Importantly, when we compare these results to those of previous years, we can see a steady improvement in the help received by beneficiaries over time, and in all areas of support.

Table 3.3: Type of help received (per cent)

	1997	1998	1999
Advice, guidance and support	79	71	68
Jobsearch help	65	72	73
Work experience/subsidised employment	38	48	50
Vocational training	76	83	89
Self employment support	4	7	10

Base: all respondents N=2,836

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

If we look at the types of help received according to gender, we notice some differential patterns of support (see Table 3.4). Women were less likely to have received advice and guidance on work or training, jobsearch help, work experience or help with setting up their own business than men. Conversely, women were slightly more likely to have undertaken vocational training (and gained qualifications) than men.

As we observed with expectations for the course, younger people were more likely to report receiving most types of help than older beneficiaries (see Figure 3.4 overleaf), the exception being

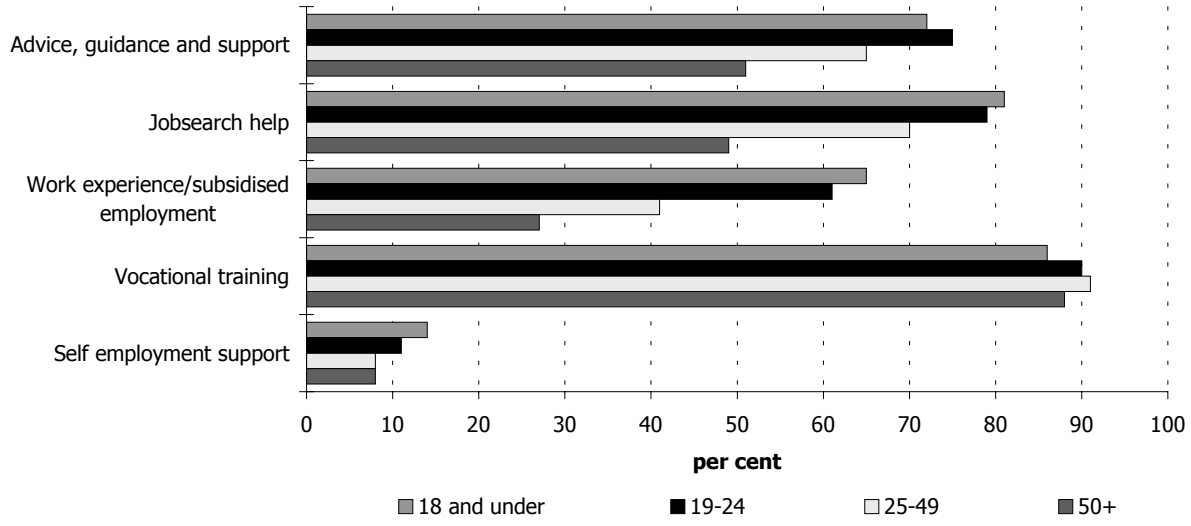
Table 3.4: Type of help received (per cent)

	Male	Female
Advice, guidance and support	70	66
Jobsearch help	77	70
Work experience/subsidised employment	55	47
Vocational training	89	91
Self employment support	12	9

Base: all respondents N=2,836

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

Figure 3.4: Help received on the course, by age



Base: all beneficiaries N=2,836

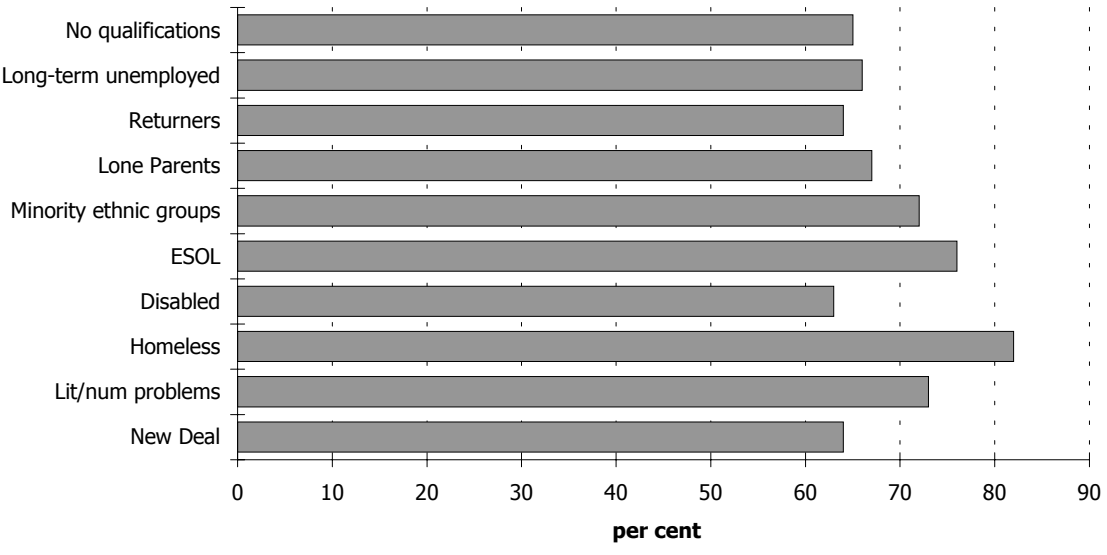
Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

vocational training where the likelihood of receiving this type of help increased with age (although it dropped slightly for beneficiaries aged 50 and over).

We found some very small differences in the help received for clients with multiple disadvantages over those with none. The extent of help received fell very slightly for those with more labour market disadvantages but this was only a couple of percentage points at most and did not vary significantly from the general average.

When we look at beneficiaries in the different target groups we observe some small variations in the types of help received. We will discuss each type of support individually. However, it is

Figure 3.5: Advice, guidance and support, by target groups



Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

worth noting that disabled respondents generally reported lower levels of all types of help from ESF Objective 3 courses than other beneficiaries received (which seems in-keeping with their expectations of the course). Conversely, we found generally that beneficiaries who had literacy and numeracy problems, ESOL needs, or were homeless or from minority ethnic groups, had more frequently received most (if not all) types of help from their course.

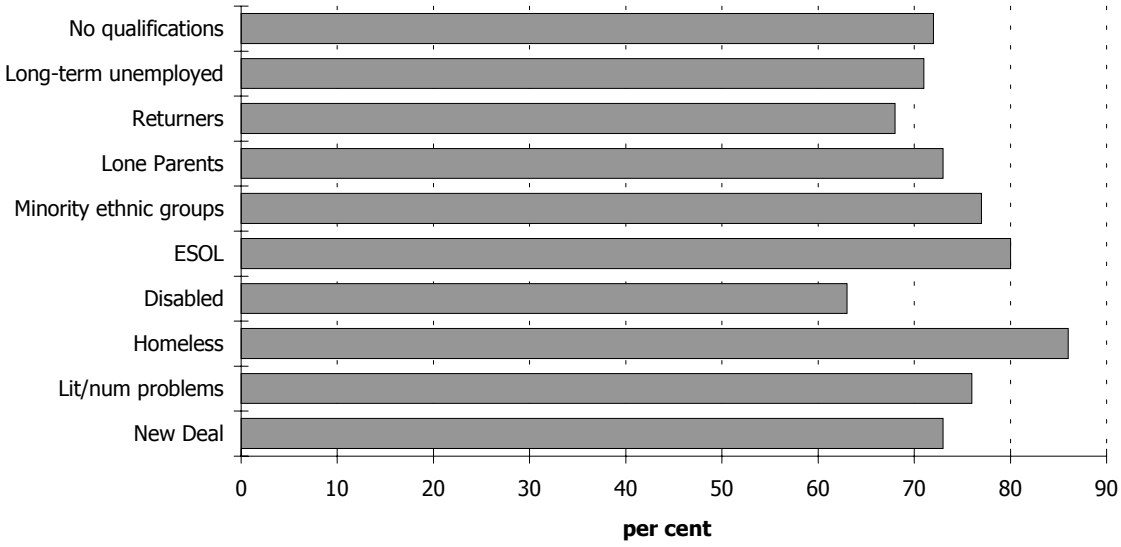
3.2.1 Advice, guidance and support

Starting with advice, guidance and support (Figure 3.5), we observe that homeless people were much more likely than any other target group to have received this type of help from the ESF course. Eighty-two per cent of homeless respondents stated they had received advice and guidance on work or training compared to 68 per cent of all beneficiaries generally. Disabled people, returners to the labour market, people with no qualifications, long-term unemployed people, lone parents and New Deal beneficiaries were less likely to have received advice and guidance when compared to ESF beneficiaries as a whole.

3.2.2 Jobsearch help

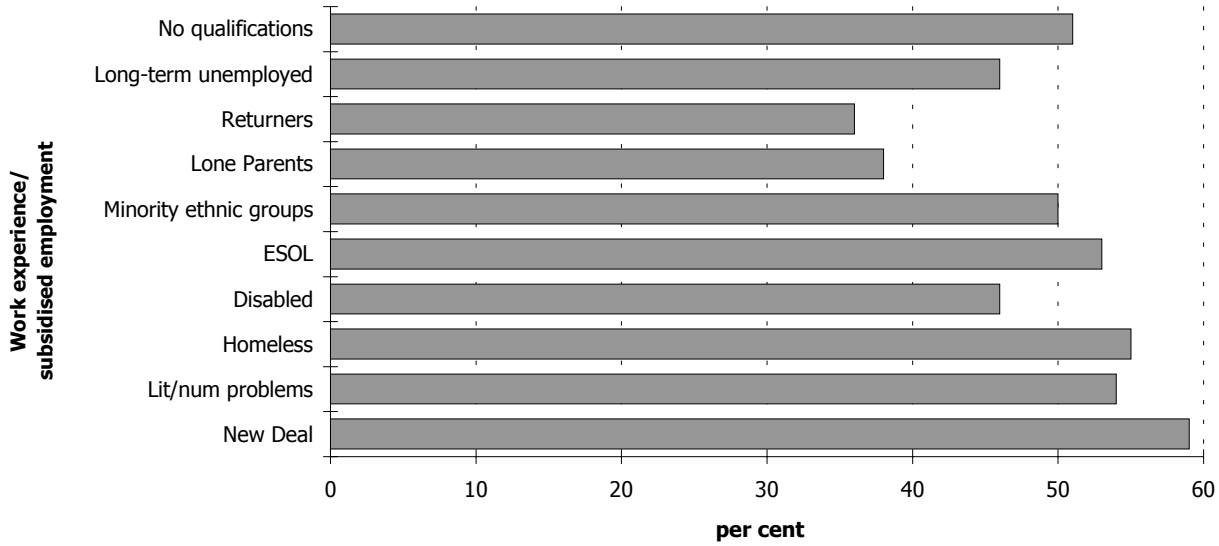
In terms of help with jobsearch (Figure 3.6), most target beneficiaries reported that they had received this type of help from projects, and some more often than the average. Once again though, we find that disabled people, returners to the labour market, people with no qualifications and long-term unemployed people cited lower incidences of help of this nature.

Figure 3.6: Jobsearch help, by target groups



Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

Figure 3.7: Work experience, by target groups



Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

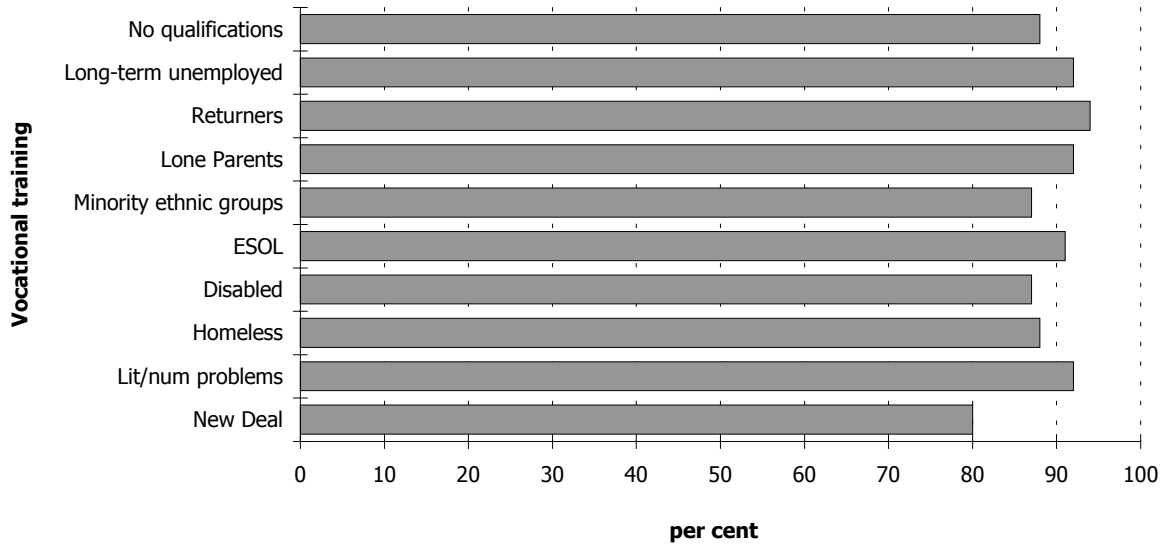
3.2.3 Work experience and subsidised employment

Work experience, and to a lesser extent, subsidised employment (Figure 3.7) was much less common among the ESF cohort generally (50 per cent of all beneficiaries received this type of help) but particularly so for lone parents, and returners to the labour market. However, this type of help seems to have been particularly prevalent for homeless people, those with literacy and numeracy problems and New Deal beneficiaries.

3.2.4 Vocational training

Vocational training was the most commonly mentioned of all the

Figure 3.8: Vocational training, by target groups



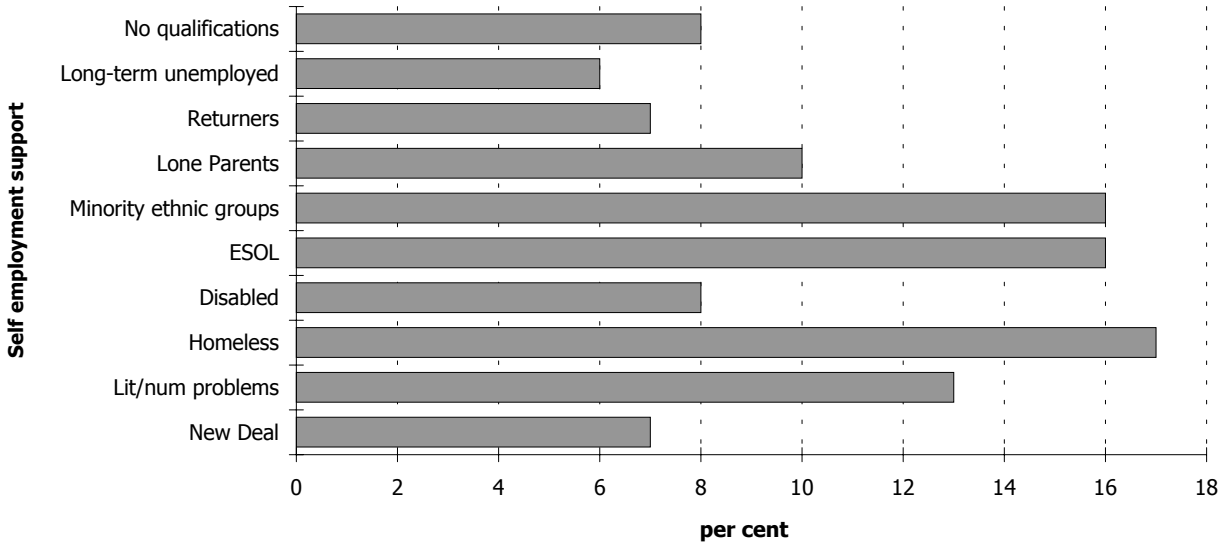
Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

different types of support for all beneficiaries of ESF Objective 3, at 89 per cent, and similarly high levels of this support were recorded by all the disadvantaged target groups (Figure 3.8). Of most note here is that 94 per cent of returners to the labour market undertook vocational training, and more than 90 per cent of lone parents, long-term unemployed people, people with ESOL needs and literacy and numeracy problems also benefited from this sort of help. However, a relatively lower incidence of vocational training was recorded for New Deal beneficiaries, 80 per cent of whom stated that they had undertaken this activity.

3.2.5 Self-employment support

The final type of support, and the least common form of help on ESF, is support to become self employed (Figure 3.9). It is here though that we observe the most salient differences among the beneficiary target groups. Among all beneficiaries, ten per cent of the cohort received this type of help. However, we find that homeless people, people with ESOL needs and those from minority ethnic groups were more likely to have received help with becoming self employed than other target beneficiaries. People who were long-term unemployed recorded the lowest incidence of this sort of help (six per cent).

Figure 3.9: Self-employment support, by target groups



Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

3.3 Integrated support

As in the last leavers survey, we have assessed how many different types of support beneficiaries received to arrive at an estimation of project integration under ESF Objective 3, and Table 3.5 below illustrates the results. We found that about one-third of all beneficiaries (34 per cent) had received two or less different types of support, which has previously been classified as

Table 3.5: Number of different types of support (per cent)

	1999
None	4
One	15
Two	15
Three	25
Four	35
Five	6

Base: all respondents N=2,836

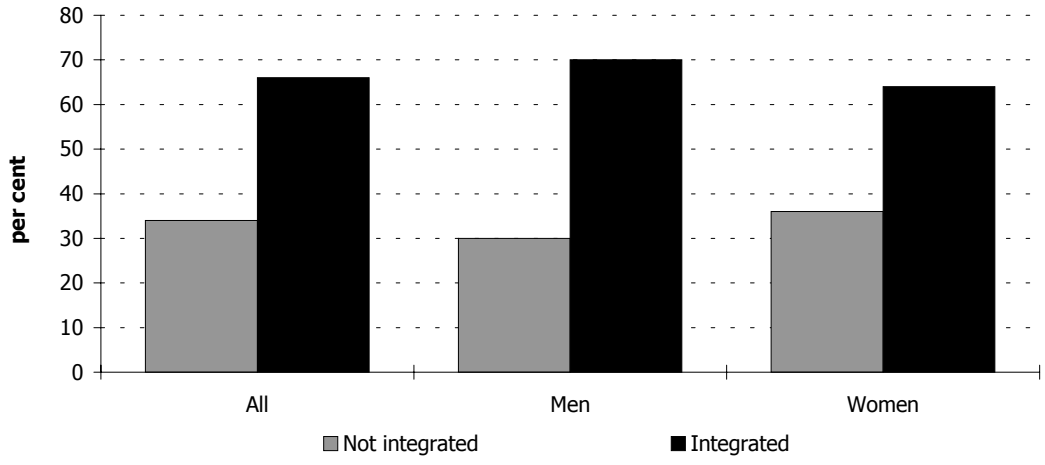
Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

'unintegrated' support. This is significantly higher than the figure recorded in the 1998 leavers survey (24 per cent) although the reasons for this are unclear.[1]

We have observed though, that two-thirds (66 per cent) of all beneficiaries received an integrated package of support on their projects — that is, they benefited from between three or more different types of support whilst under ESF Objective 3.

If we look at the level of project integration experienced by men and women (Figure 3.10), we find that men were more likely to have been on an integrated project than women (70 per cent of men were classified as having integrated support compared to 64

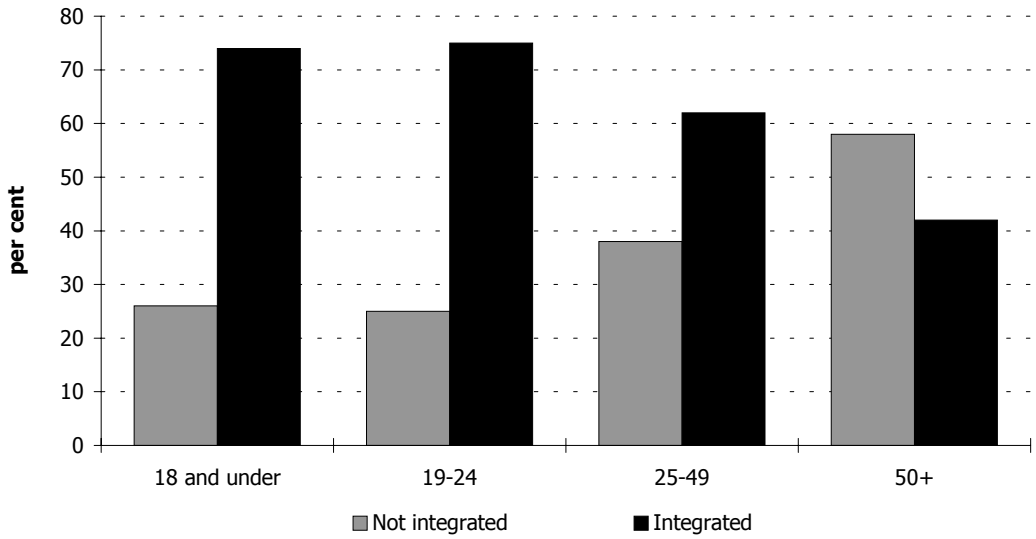
Figure 3.10: Level of project integration (all beneficiaries)



Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

[1] The 1998 leavers' survey included a sixth support type which was classified as help to build confidence. This question was omitted in the 1999 survey and the issue of building confidence has instead been treated as an outcome from projects in this survey. As such we have not assessed the level of integration *ie* moderately or highly integrated as in the 1998 report.

Figure 3.11: Level of project integration, by age

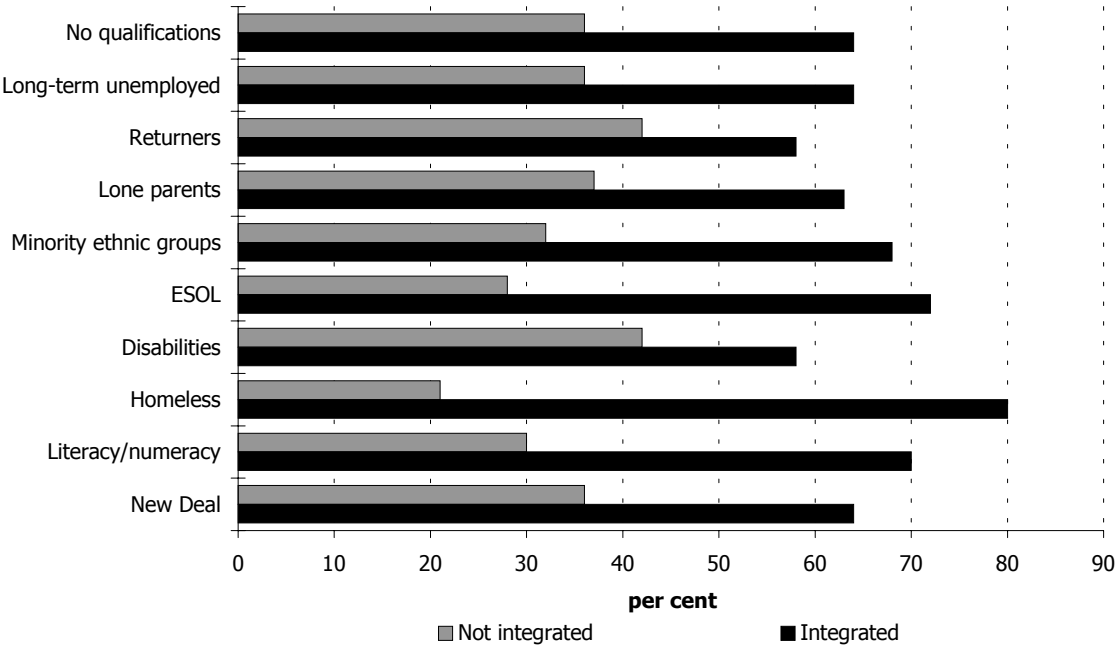


Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

per cent of women).

The differential in the likelihood of receiving integrated support is much greater when we dissagregate beneficiaries according to age (see Figure 3.11). Around three-quarters of younger people aged 24 and under were classified as being on integrated projects, whereas for people aged 25-49 we observed that 62 per cent had received integrated support. For people aged 50 and over, however, we found that well under half had received this type of support (43 per cent).

Figure 3.12: Level of project integration, by target groups



Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

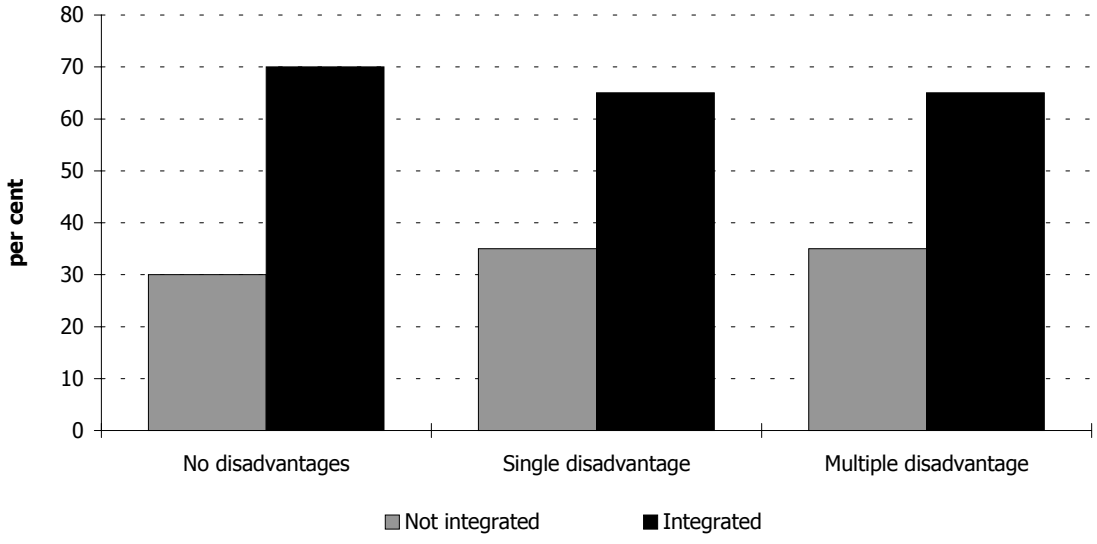
Among the target beneficiary groups (Figure 3.12), we again noted differences in the degree of project integration. Homeless people were much more likely to have received integrated support (80 per cent). People from minority ethnic groups, and those with ESOL needs and literacy and numeracy problems were also likely to receive higher levels of project integration. However, for all other target groups and New Deal beneficiaries we noted that the level of integrated support was below the average for the ESF Objective 3 cohort as a whole.

People who were recorded as having no (specified) disadvantages were more likely to have received integrated support, with three or more different types of help being provided (70 per cent). Sixty-five per cent of people with single or multiple disadvantages had benefited from an integrated package of support using this classification.

Looking now at priority and sector, we find that projects in Priority 2 (aimed at young people) enjoy a much greater degree of integration (75 per cent) which is in-keeping with the results we have observed for young people above. However those operating under Priority 1 (for people aged 25 and over) are much less likely to be of an integrated nature when using this classification (just 58 per cent were recorded as being integrated).

It is useful also to look at the level of integrated support according to project sector to get a firmer idea of where beneficiaries are most likely to receive this type of help. Projects provided by TECs, the voluntary sector and local authorities appear more likely to provide integrated packages of support to beneficiaries than the average; indeed more than 80 per cent of respondents on TEC projects were classified as having received this type of support. Projects provided by the HE sector, however, seem much less

Figure 3.13: Level of project integration, by level of disadvantage



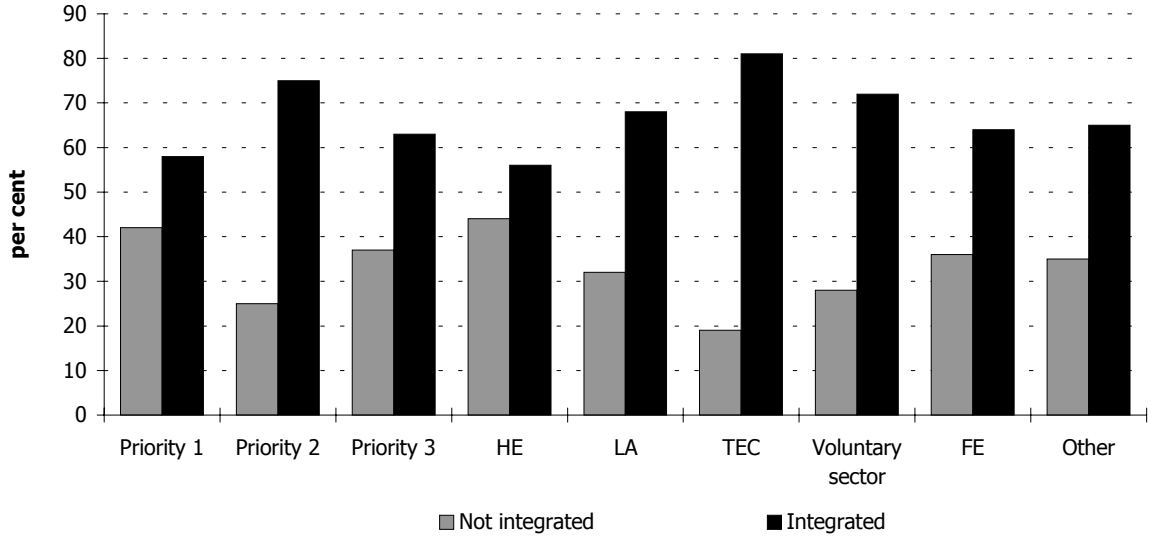
Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

likely to provide integrated packages of support to their ESF beneficiaries (just 58 per cent were recorded as doing so).

Figure 3.14 highlights these findings on integration.

We will come back to look at the different types of help and support later in the report when we assess the effect they have had on beneficiary outcomes.

Figure 3.14: Level of project integration by priority and sector



Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

3.4 Satisfaction with the course

When we asked beneficiaries to tell us how satisfied they were with the course overall, we found that more than three-quarters of all beneficiaries (regardless of gender, age or disadvantage) were either very or fairly satisfied with it (a total of 81 per cent of all beneficiaries reported this to be the case). Female beneficiaries were likely to report slightly higher levels of satisfaction compared to male beneficiaries (84 per cent compared to 78 per cent). Older beneficiaries were also observed to be more satisfied with the course than younger beneficiaries (84 per cent of respondents aged 50 or more were either very or fairly satisfied with the course, compared to 77 per cent of beneficiaries aged 24 and under). These figures confirm the findings of the previous leavers' surveys where similar proportions of beneficiaries reported high levels of satisfaction with their courses.

4. Project Completion, Early Leaving and Activity on Leaving

In this chapter, we look at whether beneficiaries completed their ESF course and explore any reasons for early leaving. We also identify beneficiaries' activities both immediately after the course, which was mostly during 1999, and at the time of completing the survey (Summer 2000).

4.1 Project completion and early leaving

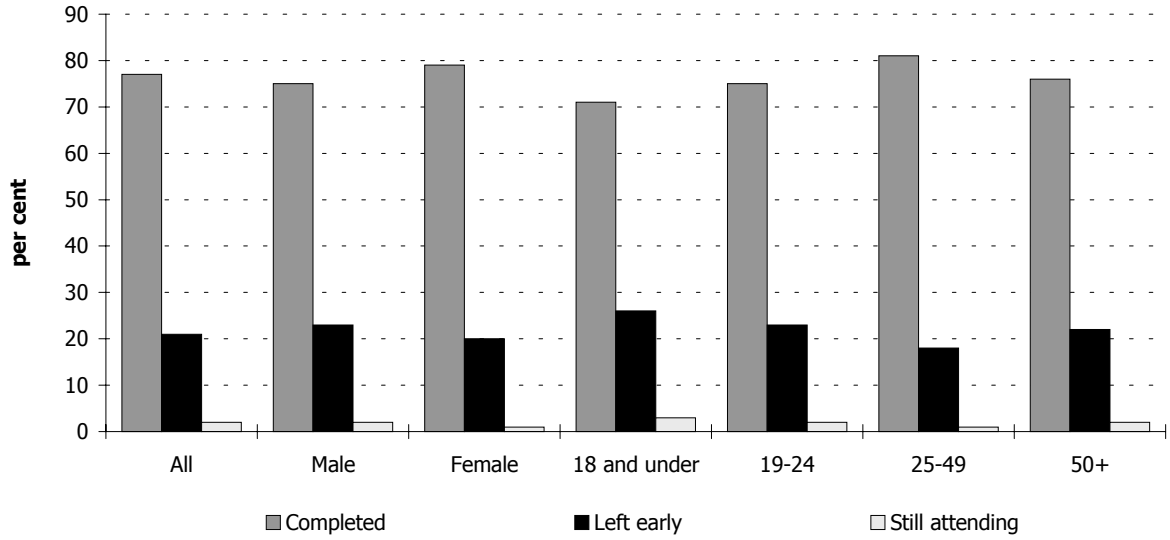
More than three-quarters of ESF beneficiaries (77 per cent) reported that they had completed their course whilst 21 per cent told us that they had left early. A further two per cent of beneficiaries maintained that they were still on their course.[1]

The proportion of early leavers from ESF courses appears to be falling year on year (earlier surveys recorded early leaving in 1997 to be 30 per cent of beneficiaries and in 1998 this figure had fallen to 26 per cent). Men seem more likely to leave their course early than women (23 per cent of men did so compared to 20 per cent of women). Younger people aged 18 and under were also much more likely to leave early although we have observed that people aged between 19-24 and 50 and over were also more likely to finish early compared to the ESF cohort as a whole. Figure 4.1 overleaf illustrates these findings.

People facing single or multiple disadvantages were recorded as slightly more likely to leave early (see Figure 4.2) as were many of the ESF target groups. In particular, we have noted that early leaving was much more prevalent among New Deal beneficiaries (36 per cent had left early), people who are homeless or in temporary accommodation (30 per cent had finished prematurely), disabled people (26 per cent) and those with no qualifications prior to the course (24 per cent). The group least likely to leave their course early were returners to the labour

[1] The survey approached people who were thought to have left their ESF course. It may be the case that these beneficiaries have continued on another training course but still consider it to be the ESF project.

Figure 4.1: Completion status, by gender and age



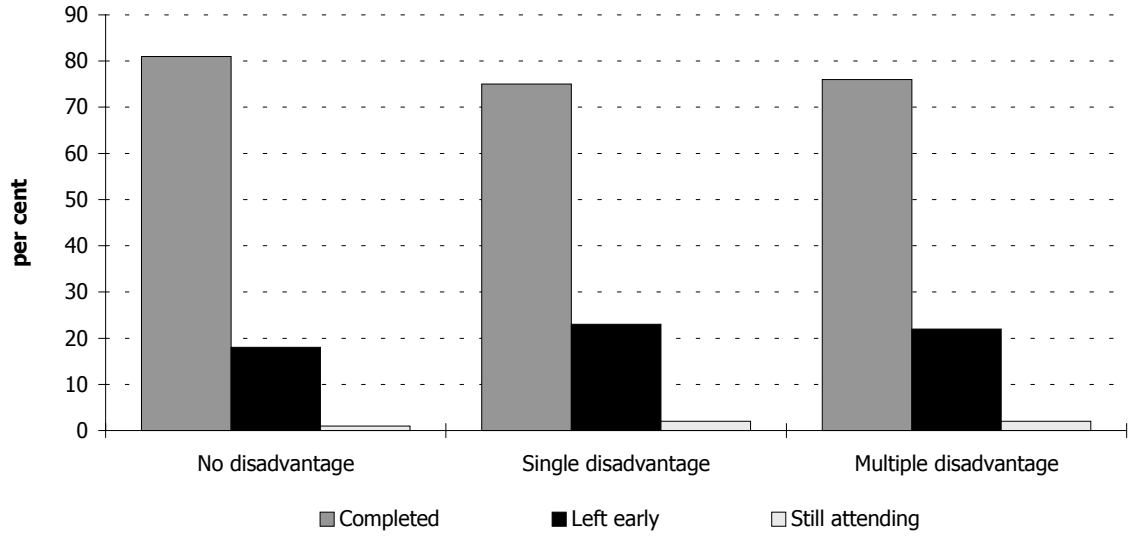
Base: all respondents N=2,836

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

market 17 per cent of whom had done so. Figure 4.3 summarises these findings.

When we asked why people had decided to leave the course early, we discovered that the main reason was to take up a job (22 per cent of beneficiaries had found employment). Another positive reason for leaving early was to take up further education or training, and eight per cent of beneficiaries said they had left to do so. Almost one-fifth of early leavers (19 per cent) told us that they were dissatisfied with the course which had prompted their decision to leave early, whilst 15 per cent had left due to domestic or personal reasons. Fourteen per cent of early leavers had

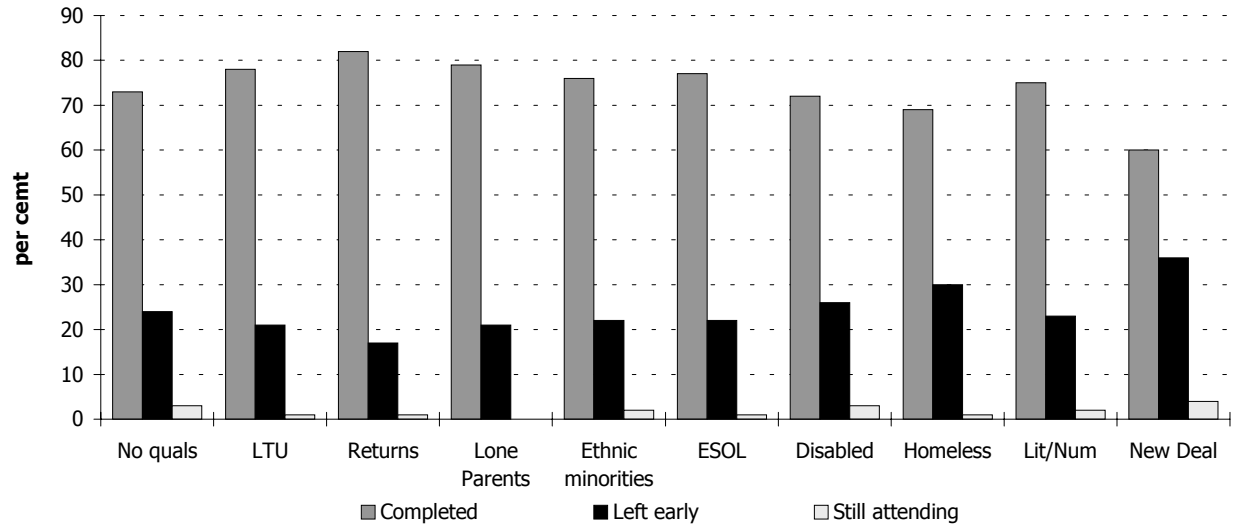
Figure 4.2: Completion status, by level of disadvantage



Base: all respondents N=2,836

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

Figure: 4.3: Completion status, by target groups



Base: all respondents N=2,836

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

experienced a problem with their health or disability which necessitated an early exit from their course.

Men were much more likely to feel that the course did not meet their expectations compared to women (24 per cent of men gave this as their reason for leaving compared to 15 per cent of women). Men were also more likely to leave to start work or commence further education and training than women. Conversely, it was more common to find that women left for domestic or personal reasons than men.

Younger early leavers aged 18 and under also showed higher levels of dissatisfaction with their course than older early leavers. They were also much more likely to have left their course, and started work and further education and training, than their older counterparts. Ill-health and problems with a disability were more

Table 4.1: Reasons for leaving early (per cent)

	All
Course did not meet expectations	19
Found a job	22
Started education/further training	8
Problems relating to disability	5
Ill-health	9
Financial reasons	5
Domestic/personal reasons	15
Other (not stated)	18

Base: all those leaving their course early, N = 608

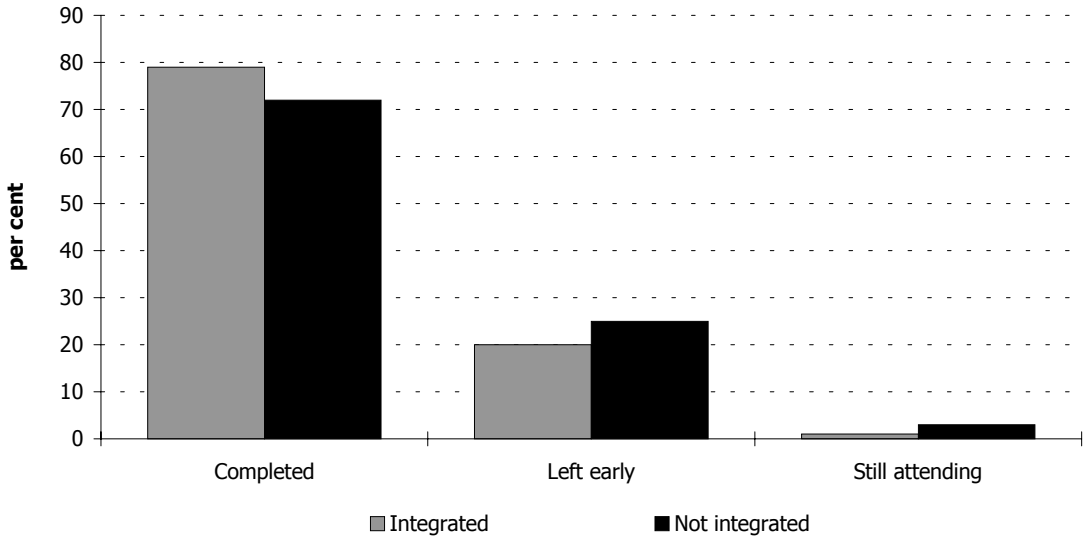
Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

prevalent reasons for leaving early among the older cohort aged 50 and over, whereas domestic reasons for leaving were most commonly offered by beneficiaries in the 25-49 age group.

When we look at the reasons for early leaving among the ESF target groups, we observe that those most likely to leave for positive reasons, that is, to take a job or start further education and training, were people who were homeless (32 per cent of whom left for these reasons) and people with literacy or numeracy problems (31 per cent). Not surprisingly, those more likely to leave for reasons concerning health or domestic circumstances were disabled people, returners to the labour market and lone parents. People from minority ethnic groups recorded the highest levels of dissatisfaction with the course and 23 per cent gave this as their reason for leaving early. New Deal beneficiaries were also more likely to leave their course because it did not meet their expectations (28 per cent of early leavers stated this to be the case).

If we look at the influence that project integration seems to have on the propensity to complete an ESF course or to leave early, we find that integrated support is likely to result in lower levels of drop out (see Figure 4.4). Indeed, we observe that 79 per cent of beneficiaries completed their integrated project compared to 72 per cent of those receiving unintegrated support. One-fifth of beneficiaries on integrated projects left early compared to one-quarter of beneficiaries on unintegrated projects.

Figure 4.4: Completion status, by level of project integration



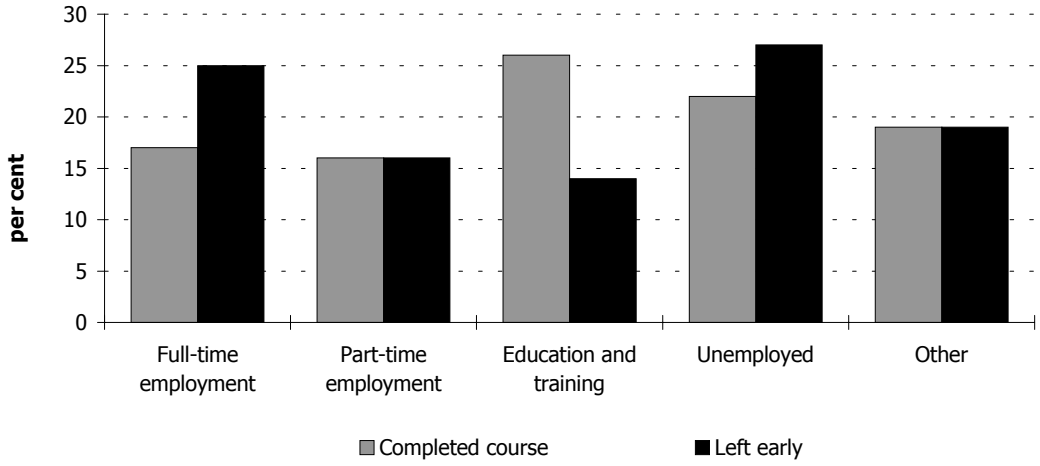
Base: all respondents N=2,836

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

4.2 Activity on leaving the course

Turning now to beneficiaries' activities immediately on leaving their course, not surprisingly we find that early leavers (25 per

Figure 4.5: Immediate activity on leaving the course, by completion status



Base: all respondents reporting they had left the course, N=2,630

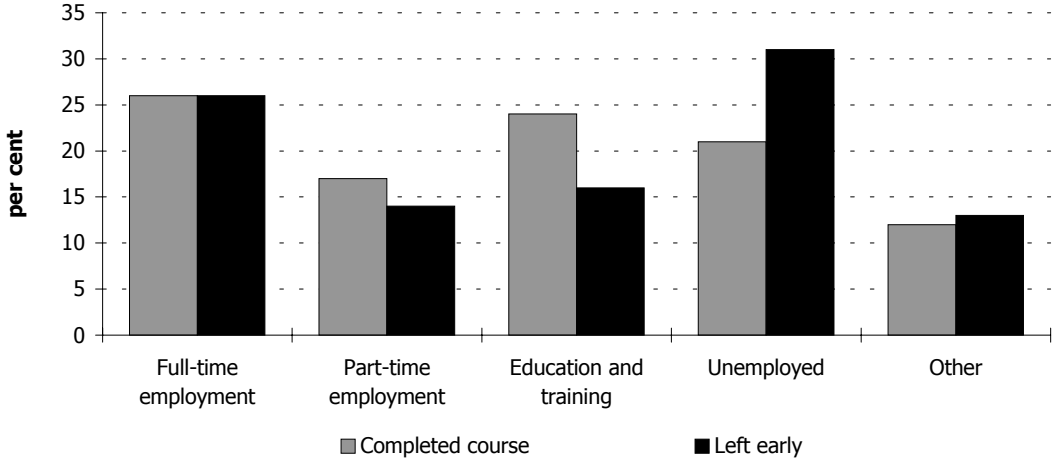
Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

cent) were more likely to go straight into full-time employment than beneficiaries who had completed their course (17 per cent) although similar proportions moved into part-time work (16 per cent). Figure 4.5 illustrates beneficiaries first activity on leaving the project.

We can also see, however, that completers were much more likely to go straight into education and training than early leavers (26 per cent compared to 14 per cent), and were less likely to be unemployed when they left their ESF course (22 per cent of completers compared to 27 per cent of early leavers).

When we look at the activities of completers and early leavers at the time of the survey (in some cases this will be more than one year later) we can identify some shifts in behaviour (see Figure 4.6). More completers have moved into full-time employment and

Figure 4.6: Activity at time of survey, by completion status



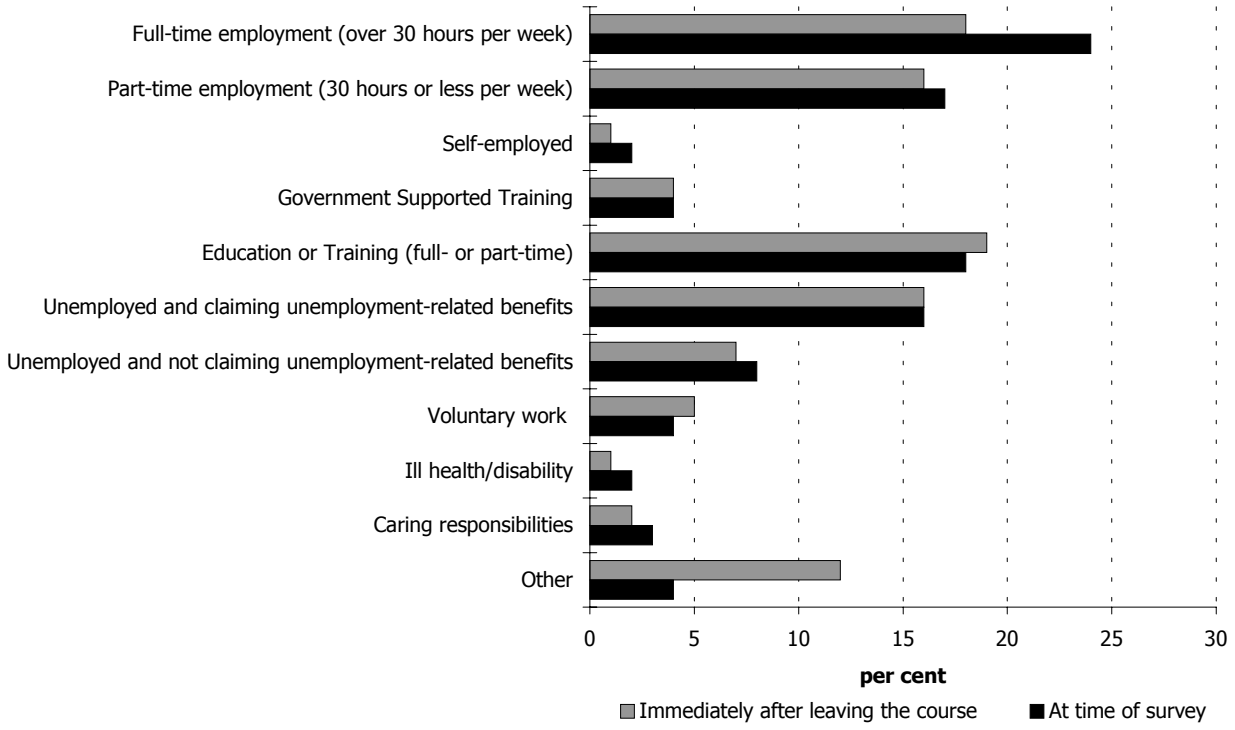
Base: all respondents reporting they had left the course, for whom a current destination is known, N=2,461

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

we see equal proportions of these beneficiaries and early leavers now in this activity (26 per cent). We also observe that completers were more likely to be in part-time work at the time of the survey than early leavers. There appears to be little change in the proportions of completers and early leavers in education and training although the proportion of early leavers who had moved into unemployment over time has increased.

If we look more closely at the activities of all beneficiaries from the time they left their ESF project to the time of the survey, we can see overall that economic activity increases with time. Employment (including full-time, part-time and self-employment) increased by eight per cent, such that 43 per cent of all beneficiaries recorded as having left their course were in work at the time of the survey. Unemployment increased over this time frame by only one per cent and 24 per cent of all beneficiaries who had left the course registered as unemployed when they took part in the survey. We also observe a one per cent decrease in beneficiaries in education and training since leaving the course, and find that 22 per cent of all beneficiaries were in training or education of some sort at the time of the survey. Slightly fewer beneficiaries were involved in voluntary work at the time of the survey than immediately after the course, and the proportion recording that they had caring responsibilities or a health problem had increased by one percentage point respectively. Figure 4.7 summarises these shifts in activity among the ESF cohort.

Figure 4.7: Activity immediately after leaving the course and at time of survey



Base: all respondents who had left

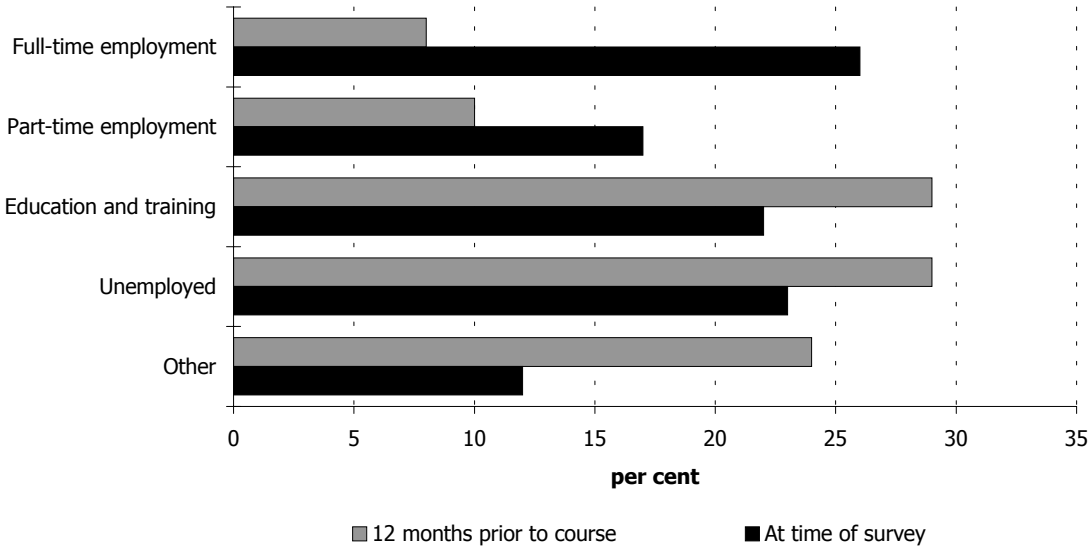
Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

4.3 Distance travelled

To get a better idea of the actual 'distance travelled' by ESF beneficiaries, it is instructive to look at changes in their economic activity 12 months before the course and at the time of the survey. In this way, we can get a clearer indication of the possible impact of the ESF intervention (we will look more closely at the impact of the support they received and the outcomes they achieved in the next chapter).

Figure 4.8 highlights the main changes in all activities for the ESF cohort group as a whole. We note that the main changes have been in the proportion of beneficiaries in full-time employment (including self-employment) which has increased from eight per cent 12 months before the course to 26 per cent at the time of the survey. Although lower increases are observed in the proportion of beneficiaries in part-time employment, it remains that more people are now engaged in this activity after the course (17 per cent) than in the 12 months prior (ten per cent). The proportion of beneficiaries in education and training has fallen by seven percentage points to stand at 22 per cent of the ESF cohort at the time of the survey. We should remember that the number of people in education in the 12 months before the survey was particular high among the younger age group, no doubt because many of them were in compulsory education or post-16 further education at that time. Encouragingly, we see decreases in the number of people who are unemployed at the time of the survey compared to 12 months previously (down by six per cent to 23 per cent), and similarly for people engaged in other activities, for example, caring, voluntary work or suffering ill-health, which is down by 12 percentage points to rest at 12 per cent at the time of the survey.

Figure 4.8: Activity 12 months prior to course, by current activity



Base: all respondents who had left

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

When we come to look more closely at the activity changes for men and women, people of different ages and the ESF target groups, we have focused on changes in employment, and participation in education and training. Table 4.2 below highlights these changes over the broader time period.

In this table, we have included full- and part-time employment and self employment under the 'employment' category. Similarly, government and non-government supported training is included in the 'education and training' category.

Table 4.2: Summary of activity 12 months before the course and at the time of the survey (per cent)

	Employment		Education and training		
	12 months before course	Time of survey	12 months before course	Time of survey	Base
Total	*18*	*43*	*29*	*22*	*2,517*
Men	17	42	36	23	1,186
Women	20	43	22	21	1,313
18 and under	9	38	69	34	525
19-24	14	48	45	22	625
25-49	24	43	6	18	1,167
50+	26	35	5	11	200
No qualifications	18	35	25	23	1,078
Lone parent	17	32	10	25	276
Returners	—	36	—	16	439
Long-term unemployed	1	30	7	17	652
ESOL	17	31	22	27	370
Minority ethnic groups	11	31	34	30	694
Disabled	13	22	20	25	449
Homeless	16	26	21	21	136
Lit/numeracy	18	26	29	32	442
New Deal	14	39	16	17	316
No disadvantages	31	64	46	18	506
Single disadvantage	26	49	32	21	672
Multiple disadvantage	11	32	21	24	1,338

Base: all beneficiaries engaged in employment or education and training at time of survey, N = 2,517

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

4.3.1 Shifts in employment

We can see from this information that the gains in employment (25 per cent overall) are most prominent among men. At the time of the survey 42 per cent of men were engaged in some form of work, representing a 25 per cent increase since the twelve months before taking part in the ESF course. Women's employment had increased by a slightly smaller percentage (23 per cent) over this time frame although 43 per cent of all women beneficiaries who had left the course were in work at the time of the survey.

More beneficiaries of all ages were in employment at the time of the survey compared to 12 months before the course, and this was particularly the case for beneficiaries aged 19-24 who had the greatest increase in employment status of 34 per cent over the time period. Almost half of people in this age group were in work at the time of the survey.

Among the ESF target groups, we can see that the greatest employment gains have been among returners to the labour market, 36 per cent of whom were in work at the time of the survey. People who were classified as being long-term unemployed had also experienced greater shifts into employment since the 12 months before the course, such that 30 per cent of them were in work at the time of the survey. Employment gains of over ten percentage points are also observed among people from minority ethnic groups (20 per cent increase since the 12 months before the course), people with no qualifications (employment up by 17 per cent), lone parents (employment increased by 15 per cent) and people with English as a second or other language, the proportion of whom were in employment had increased by 14 per cent. Employment amongst New Deal beneficiaries had also increased significantly from 14 per cent 12 months prior to starting course, to 39 per cent at the time of the survey.

When we look at employment gains according to the level of disadvantage experienced by beneficiaries, we note that the greatest shifts into employment since the twelve months before the course are those who have no specified disadvantages. Sixty-four per cent of this group of beneficiaries were in employment at the time of the survey, representing an increase of 33 per cent over the time period. The observed employment gains decrease as the number of disadvantages increases. However, it remains that those with multiple disadvantages still saw an overall increase in their level of employment of 21 per cent since the 12 months before the course.

4.3.2 Shifts in education and training

Turning now to education and training, we have already seen that the proportion of beneficiaries engaged in this activity has fallen since the 12 months before the start of the course. However, this

overall figure masks some interesting shifts in the pattern of consumption of education and training at the time of the survey. Whilst participation in learning has decreased significantly among male beneficiaries (down by 13 per cent) it has decreased almost imperceptibly among women (by only one percentage point).

We observe great shifts away from education and training for younger beneficiaries, most notably those aged 18 and over, but shifts towards more participation in education and training for older beneficiaries, particularly those aged 25-49.

Among the target groups, we also note differential moves into education and training. The proportion engaged in this type of activity has increased for returners to the labour market, lone parents, long-term unemployed people, people who have English as a second or other language, and disabled people. People from minority ethnic groups and those with no qualifications are actually less likely to be in education or training at the time of the survey than they were at 12 months before the beginning of the course. There was no change in the proportion of homeless people who were engaged in education and training over the time period concerned. Having observed these changes among the target groups, it remains that 20 per cent or more of these beneficiaries were engaged in learning activities at the time the survey was carried out, which is higher than that observed for the ESF cohort as a whole. New Deal beneficiaries were only very slightly more likely to be in education and training at the time of the survey compared to 12 months prior to starting their course.

Beneficiaries with no recorded disadvantages were much less likely to be in education and training at the time of the survey compared to the 12 months before the course, as were those with single disadvantages, albeit to a lesser extent. However, participation in education and training had increased slightly by beneficiaries with multiple disadvantages since the 12 months before the course.

4.3.3 Overall gains

It is important to establish just what the gains in positive outcomes have been for ESF beneficiaries as a whole. Whilst we have noted above whether more people have moved into employment or education and training individually, when we look at these outcomes together, we observe a different picture. Many of the individual shifts into employment or more widespread participation in learning have been to the detriment of positive outcomes overall. When we look at employment and education and training outcomes together we see that the overall net gain at the time of the survey was 18 per cent into positive outcomes. For women, this gain was more pronounced than men (22 per cent and 12 per cent respectively). Among younger aged beneficiaries, however, although the shifts into employment have

been significant, they have occurred at the same time as participation in education and training has decreased. Thus, the net gain in terms of positive outcomes is much greater among older beneficiaries than it has been for their younger counterparts.

When we look at beneficiaries within the different target groups, we find without exception, that there have been net gains in the proportion moving into positive outcomes following their ESF course. This is particularly marked for returners to the labour market (with a net gain into employment and education and training of 52 per cent), people who were long-term unemployed (net gain of 39 per cent) and lone parents (39 per cent more of whom went into a positive outcome following their course).

We see a similarly encouraging picture when we look at the net gains into positive outcomes for people experiencing single and multiple disadvantages. This was particularly the case for those people with multiple disadvantages, who saw a net gain of 24 per cent into employment or education and training outcomes.

5. Outcomes

In this chapter we look in more detail at the positive outcomes from ESF Objective 3. We begin with an overall assessment of outcomes from the programme, including:

- intermediate and soft outcomes, such as improved life skills and key skills
- qualification outcomes, and
- job outcomes.

In the next chapter, we will establish which factors are most likely to influence particular outcomes and for which types of client.

5.1 Outcomes from ESF Objective 3

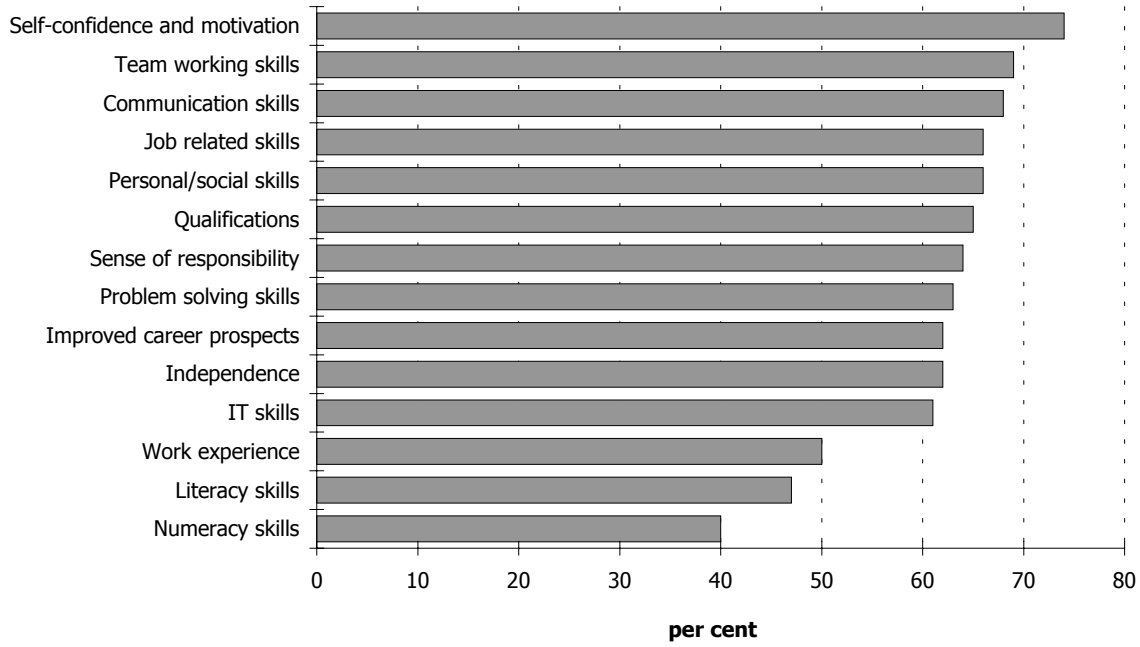
The third new question in the 1999 Leavers Survey asked beneficiaries to list the skills they had gained from participating in the course. For the first time in a survey of this type, we have been able to capture information on a number of 'soft' skills as well as the more regular information on job outcomes and qualifications. Figure 5.1 below highlights the skills beneficiaries have reported they gained from taking part in ESF Objective 3.

It is clear that a significant proportion of beneficiaries have increased their skills as a result of their course. It is particularly interesting to note that those skills most frequently reported relate to 'soft' skills and key skills:

- Almost three-quarters of beneficiaries have improved their self-confidence and motivation as a result of taking part in an ESF course.
- About two-thirds of beneficiaries report better team working skills, communication skills and personal/social skills.

Similar proportions of beneficiaries have told us that they have gained job related skills and qualifications following participation in the course. More than 60 per cent of beneficiaries also stated that they had a greater sense of responsibility, improved problem solving skills, better career prospects, and more independence. A significant proportion had also improved their IT skills as a result

Figure 5.1: Gains from participating in ESF Objective 3



Base: all respondents N=2,713

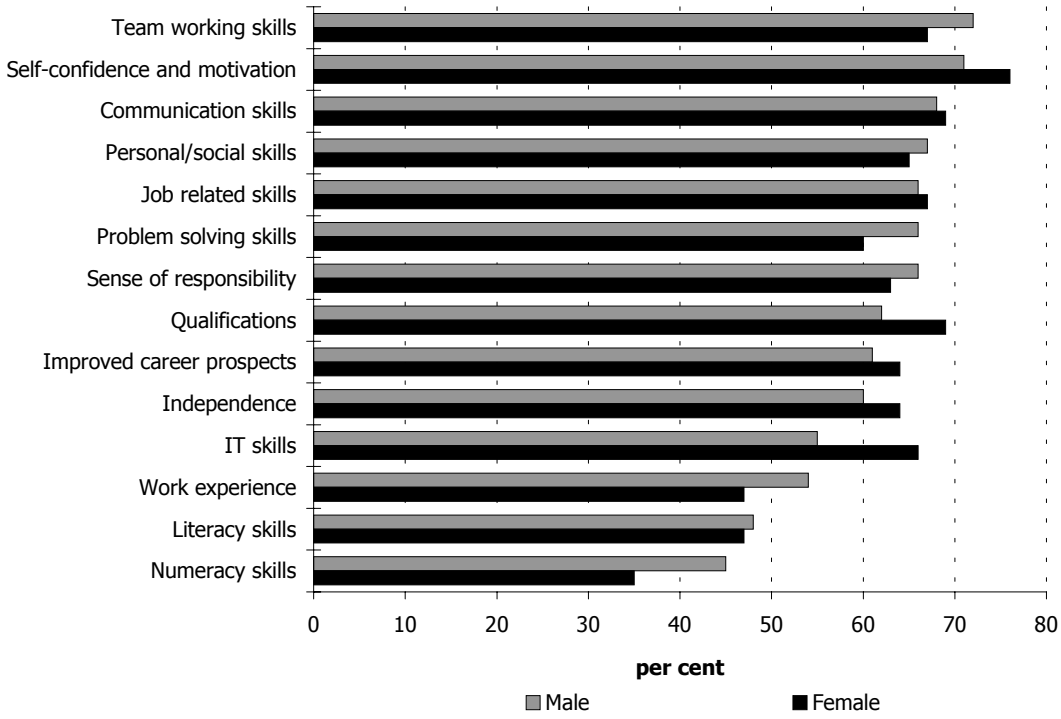
Source: NOP/IES Survey, 2000

of the course. One half of all respondents told us that they had received work experience on the course whilst a smaller proportion had improved their literacy and numeracy skills.

We observed some small differences in the skills gained by men and women. The most noteworthy are that men are more likely to have improved their numeracy skills and gained work experience as a result of taking part in the course than women. Conversely, women are more likely to have improved their IT skills and gained qualifications than men. Figure 5.2 illustrates the gains made by men and women on Objective 3.

When we look at the skills beneficiaries have gained from taking part in ESF courses according to the different age groups (see Figure 5.3), we note that younger people generally report much greater gains than older people across most skill areas. Eighty per cent or more young people aged 18 and under report that they have better team working skills, and improved self confidence and motivation as a result of taking part in their course. However, when we look at people aged 50 and over we observe that only 40 per cent believe they have improved their team working skills, whilst 58 per cent believe they have greater self-confidence and motivation as a result of attending a course. It appears that gains from the course generally diminish with age.

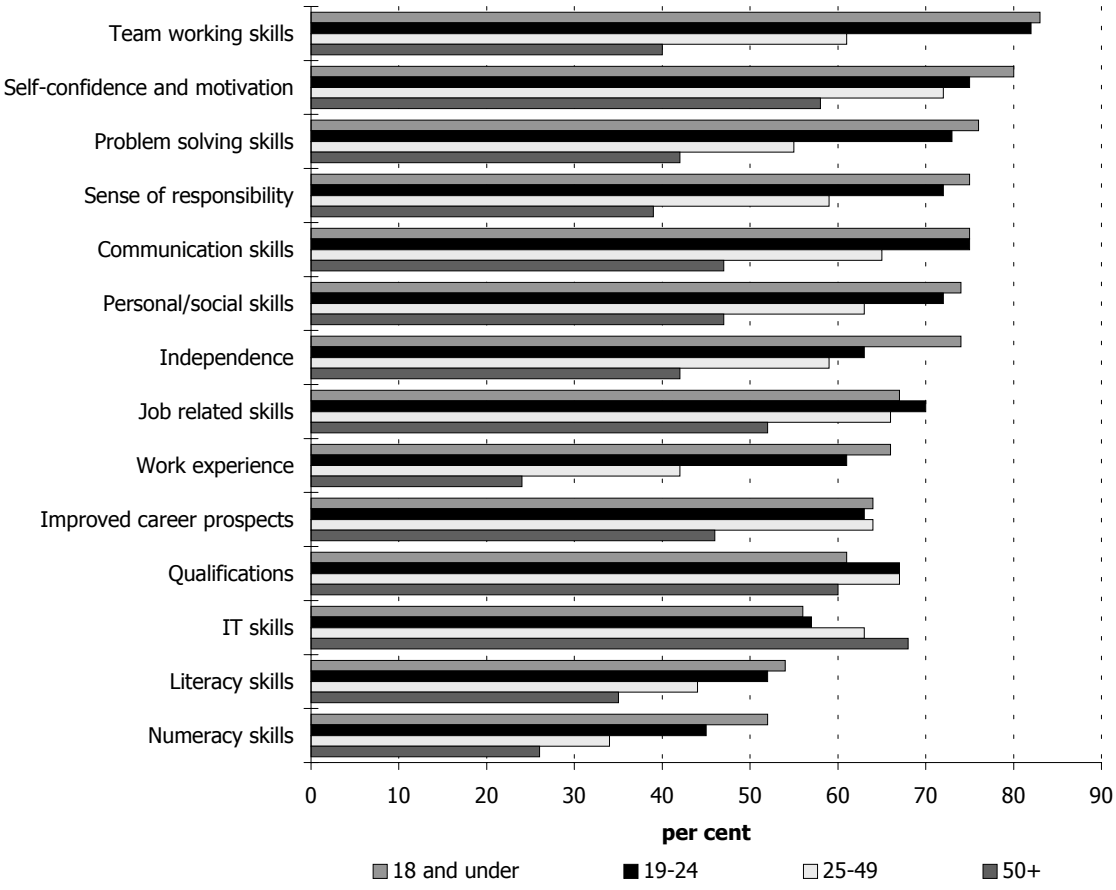
Figure 5.2: Gains from participating in ESF Objective 3, by gender



Base: all respondents N=2,713

Source: NOP/IES Survey, 2000

Figure 5.3: Gains from participating in ESF Objective 3 by age

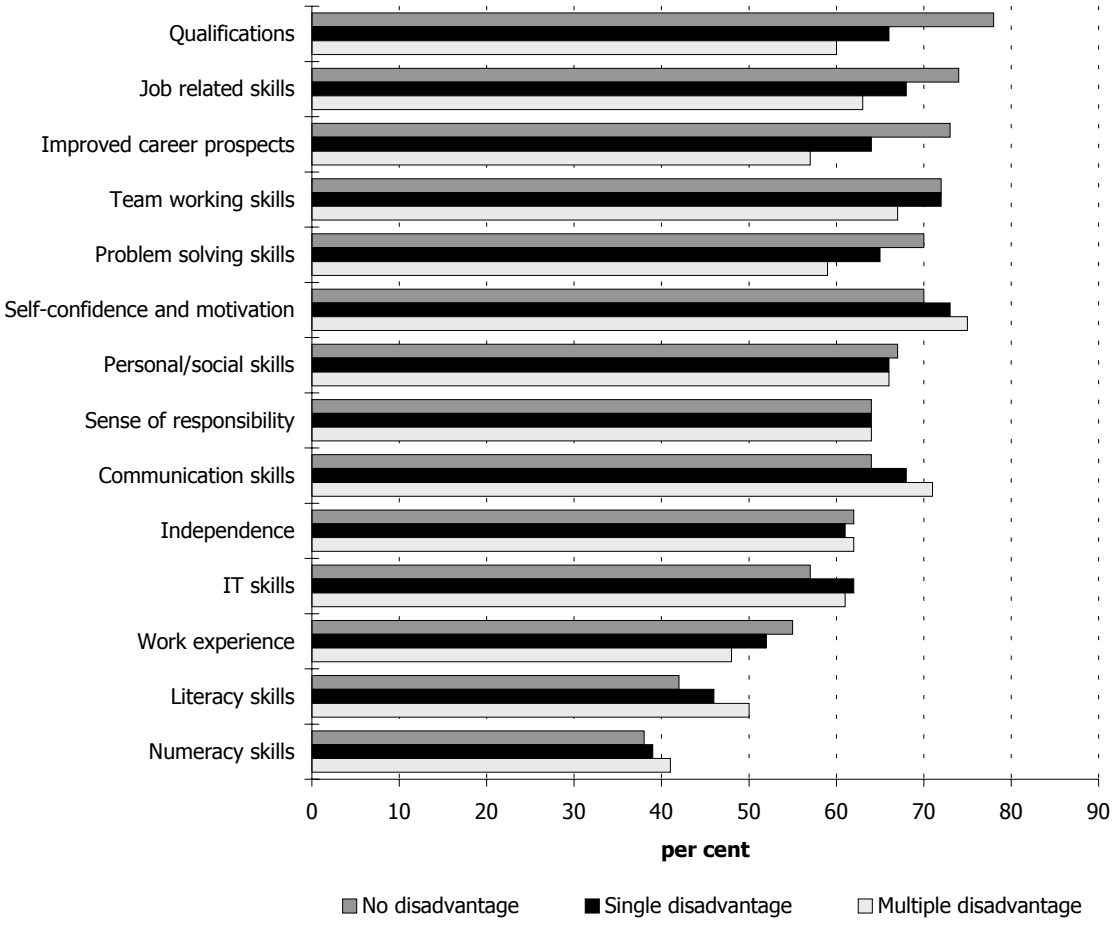


Base: all respondents N=2,713

Source: NOP/IES Survey, 2000

We noticed similar disparities in the skills gained by beneficiaries when we dissagregated according to the level of disadvantage experienced. Once again those with no specified disadvantages generally reported greater gains from the course than those with multiple disadvantages. Having said this, we observe that those with arguably the greatest distance to travel, *ie* the most disadvantaged beneficiaries, more frequently reported that they had improved their self-confidence and motivation, communication skills, and literacy skills than those with no disadvantages. Figure 5.4 summarises these findings.

Figure 5.4: Gains from participating in ESF Objective 3, by level of disadvantage



Base: all respondents N=2,713

Source: NOP/IES Survey, 2000

It is clear that participating on an ESF course increases self-confidence and motivation for the majority of people in all the target groups with more than 70 per cent of beneficiaries within the groups reporting gains in this area. More than half of beneficiaries without qualifications at the beginning of the course reported gains in their qualifications as a result of taking part. Similarly, more than half of those people who stated that they had problems with literacy and numeracy had made gains in these areas. Fewer New Deal beneficiaries reported making gains as a result of their course compared to most of the ESF target groups.

However, they were more likely to report improvements in their work experience than other beneficiaries. Table 5.1 below illustrates the gains made by beneficiaries in the target groups.

5.2 Qualification outcomes

The leavers' survey has tried for many years to get an accurate picture of the qualifications achieved by particular ESF beneficiaries as a result of taking part in a course. Inevitably, this is difficult as it relies on beneficiaries having a clear understanding and recollection of the type of qualification they have achieved *ie* full or part, or indeed the level of qualification they have gained. Beneficiaries often do not fully know what qualifications they have acquired. In the 1999 leavers survey we offered respondents a list of qualifications, grouped by their equivalent NVQ level and asked them to tell us which was the highest they held before the course and importantly, to state what qualifications they had achieved on leaving, if any. This allowed us to assess the net qualification gain over time.

5.2.1 Achievement of qualification and type

We can see from Figure 5.5 below that 57 per cent of beneficiaries

Table 5.1: Gains from the course by ESF target groups(per cent)

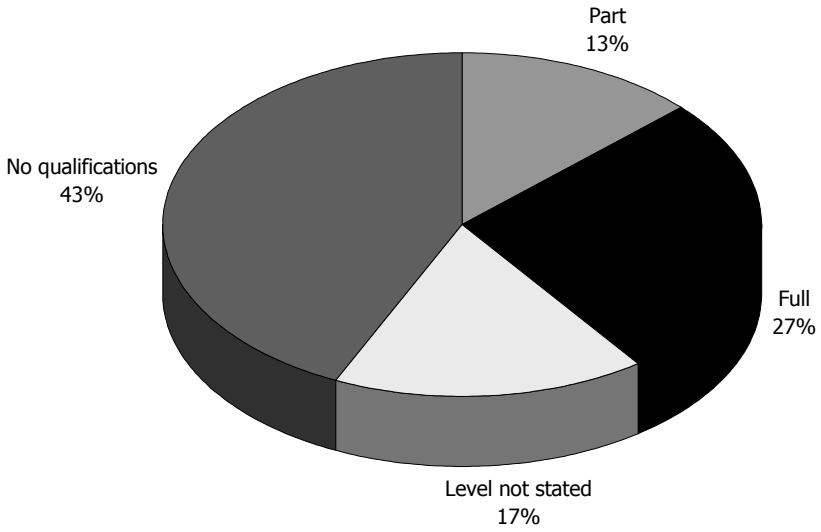
	No quali-fications	Long-term unemployed	Return-ers	Lone parents	Minority ethnic groups	ESOL	Dis-abled	Home-less	Lit/Num problems	New Deal
Self-confidence and motivation	74	76	76	75	74	75	72	76	81	65
Communication skills	68	69	66	69	71	72	66	76	80	59
Team working skills	67	67	59	64	72	69	63	73	76	68
Sense of responsibility	63	63	59	62	69	68	60	73	73	58
Personal/social skills	62	65	64	63	68	67	64	76	76	54
Independence	62	63	64	62	60	59	60	60	69	49
Job related skills	60	66	65	63	61	65	57	65	63	62
IT skills	59	65	69	64	62	65	56	54	66	40
Qualifications	57	65	69	64	58	65	53	63	61	47
Problem solving skills	57	58	55	59	61	55	57	64	68	53
Improved career prospects	53	61	67	60	58	60	50	60	61	47
Work experience	50	47	37	37	48	52	45	50	54	59
Literacy skills	50	47	44	46	53	55	46	52	66	31
Numeracy skills	40	36	34	40	42	43	37	43	56	26

Base: all respondents in beneficiary target groups, N = 2,517

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

achieved some sort of qualification following their course. Twenty-seven per cent of respondents achieved a full qualification whilst 13 per cent had achieved a part qualification. A further 17 per cent of respondents stated that they had gained a qualification but were not able to tell us if it was full or part. 43 per cent of beneficiaries did not achieve any qualifications. These figures tell us that the overall proportion of beneficiaries achieving qualification outcomes seems to have increased on the 1998 ESF cohort (41 per cent of whom reported that they had achieved a qualification outcome) but unfortunately, we do not have enough reported detail about the level of these qualifications to ascertain where the actual gains have been made.

Figure 5.5: Type of qualification achieved



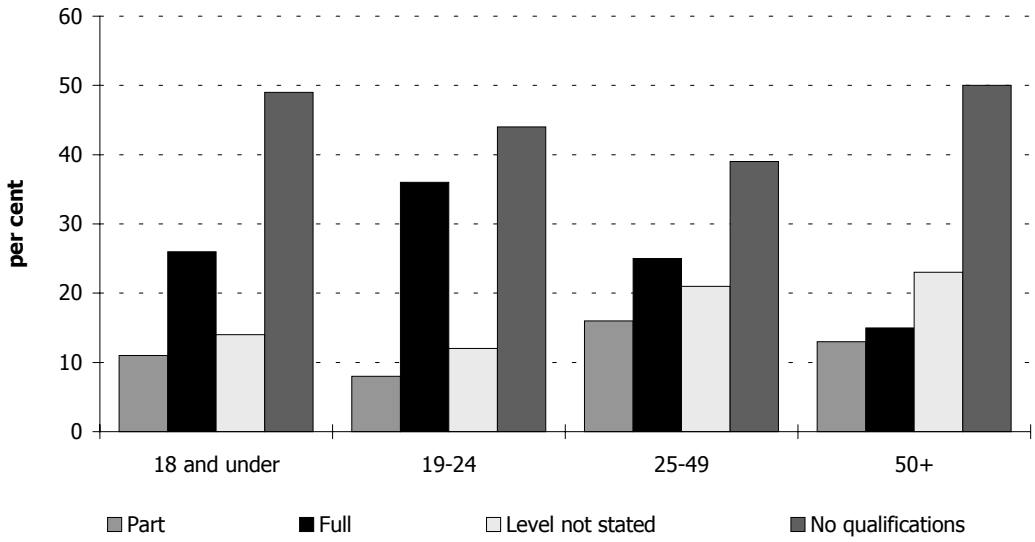
Base: all respondents N=2,836

Source: NOP/IES Survey, 2000

As we found earlier in the report, more women than men have reported that they gained a qualification as a result of participating in Objective 3 (61 per cent compared to 53 per cent). Women (28 per cent) were also slightly more likely to have achieved a full qualification than men (26 per cent) although the difference between the sexes is not significant.

When we look at qualification gains according to age we note that around 50 per cent of people aged 18 and under, and those aged 50 or more achieved some sort of qualification, whereas those aged 19-24 made slightly higher gains (56 per cent reported they had achieved a qualification). As women make up a significant proportion of the 25-49 age group it is not surprising that more people in this age range reported higher qualification gains than any other age group (61 per cent). Having said this, it appears that people aged 19-24 were more likely to achieve full qualifications than in any other age group (over one-third of this group reported full qualifications compared to 26 per cent or less in the other age groups). Figure 5.6 illustrates these findings.

Figure 5.6: Qualifications gained from the course, by age

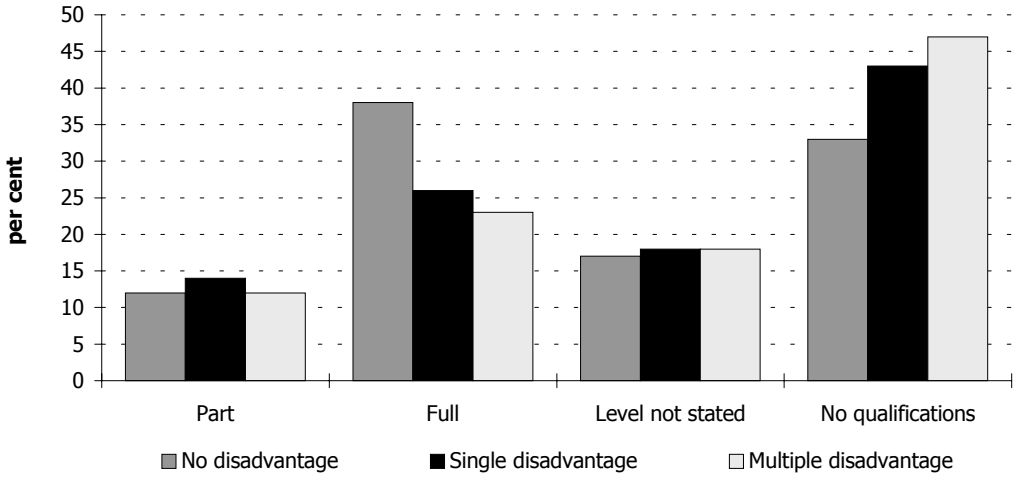


Base: all respondents N=2,836

Source: NOP/IES Survey, 2000

It is perhaps not surprising that people with no specified labour market disadvantages were also more likely to achieve qualifications than those experiencing single or multiple disadvantage. Indeed the likelihood of achieving a qualification outcome appears to decrease as the level of disadvantage increases (see Figure 5.7). Approximately one-third of respondents with no disadvantages failed to achieve a qualification compared to almost half of those with multiple disadvantages. Furthermore, people with no specified disadvantages appear much more likely to achieve a full qualification as a result of the course (38 per cent) than other disadvantaged beneficiaries.

Figure 5.7: Qualifications gained from the course by level of disadvantage



Base: all respondents N=2,836

Source: NOP/IES Survey, 2000

Table 5.2: Qualifications gained from the course by target beneficiary groups Base: all respondents N=2,836

	No quali-fications	Long-term unemployed	Return-ers	Lone parents	Minority ethnic groups	ESOL	Dis-abled	Homeless	Lit/Num problems	New Deal
Part	11	14	15	14	11	10	11	18	12	7
Full	20	36	25	29	24	26	17	20	21	10
Level not stated	18	17	23	19	17	20	16	20	15	19
No qualifications	51	42	37	38	48	44	56	42	52	63

Base: all respondents, N = 2,836

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

Among the beneficiary target groups, lone parents and returners to the labour market were the most likely to achieve qualifications (just over 60 per cent of beneficiaries within these target groups reported qualification gains). The beneficiaries least likely to achieve qualifications as a result of being on the course were disabled people, those with literacy and numeracy problems, those who had no qualifications at the beginning of the ESF intervention and New Deal beneficiaries, in fact less than half of these respondents gained any sort of qualification outcome. Around one-quarter or more of long-term unemployed people, lone parents, returners to the labour market, people from minority ethnic groups and those with ESOL needs achieved a full qualification as a result of being on the course. Table 5.2 highlights the qualification gains of people within the target groups.

5.2.2 Level of qualification

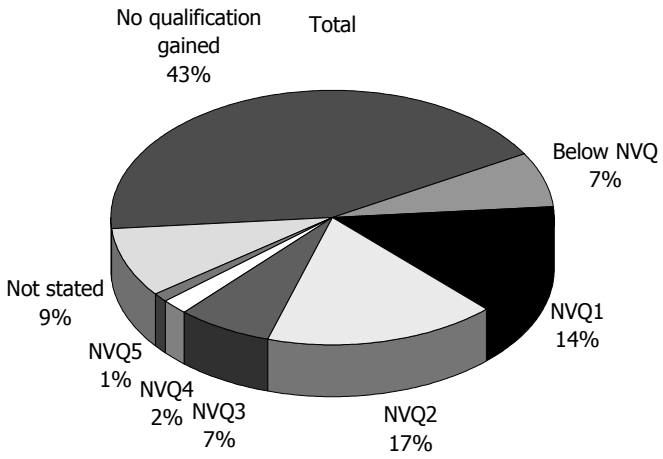
Figure 5.8 illustrates how many beneficiaries achieved particular levels of qualifications as a result of taking part in an ESF Objective 3 course. Most of these qualifications were at NVQ Level 2 or equivalent (17 per cent) and NVQ Level 1 or equivalent (14 per cent). Only three per cent of respondents achieved Level 4 or Level 5 qualifications.

When we regroup these qualifications according to whether they were:

- basic (Level 1 or below)
- medium (Levels 2 and 3) or
- high (Level 4 and 5)

we can get a much clearer idea of the distribution of qualifications over the ESF cohort as a whole. Generally, it appears that most people who gained full qualifications did so at the medium level (59 per cent of all qualification gains).

Figure 5.8: Qualifications gained from the course



Base: all respondents N=2,836

Source: NOP/IES Survey, 2000

Table 5.3: Level of qualifications gained (per cent)

	Level of qualification gained			
	Basic	**Medium**	**High**	**Level not stated**
All beneficiaries	28	59	8	5
Men	28	58	10	5
Women	27	60	7	6
18 and under	42	49	1	8
19-24	20	60	17	4
25-49	25	65	6	4
50+	39	46	3	12
No disadvantage	20	59	19	2
Single disadvantage	30	57	8	6
Multiple disadvantage	30	60	3	7
No qualifications	35	48	5	12
Long-term unemployed	27	66	2	4
Returners	23	64	6	7
Lone parents	33	56	2	8
Minority ethnic groups	24	67	3	5
ESOL	30	64	2	4
Disabled people	33	56	5	7
Homeless	29	65	3	3
Literacy/numeracy problems	41	50	2	7
New Deal	21	47	1	32

Base: all those gaining full qualifications N=761

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

Twenty-eight per cent of beneficiaries gaining full qualifications achieved them at a basic level whilst eight per cent got high level

qualifications (we do not know the level of qualification gained for the remaining five per cent of beneficiaries). This broad distribution pattern was similar for men and women, and across all age bands, level of disadvantage and indeed all the beneficiary target groups. Among those who have gained full qualifications, those most likely to achieve them at the highest level were beneficiaries aged 19-24 (17 per cent) and those with no specified disadvantages (19 per cent). Table 5.3 summarises the level of qualifications gained for all beneficiaries and sub-groups.

It is important when looking at the qualifications achieved as a result of ESF Objective 3, to ascertain the net gains in qualifications for those who have achieved these outcomes. Essentially, we want to know whether people have improved the level of their qualifications as a result of taking part in a course. Having said this however, we should remember that many beneficiaries of Objective 3 have been out of the labour market for some time and any qualification outcome is a gain, and not only those which are higher than qualifications already held. Similarly, it is important to acknowledge that gains may be made by beneficiaries in different 'subject' areas although these may be at lower levels than other qualifications held. We should also note again, that 43 per cent of all beneficiaries responding to the survey did not achieve any qualifications at all. Table 5.4 overleaf presents the changes in qualification levels for all beneficiaries achieving such an outcome (a full qualification).

We observe from Table 5.4 that 38 per cent of beneficiaries achieving a full qualification as a result of ESF have made a net qualification gain. We also note that this figure is slightly higher for male beneficiaries (42 per cent) and much greater for people with no specified disadvantages (62 per cent of whom have improved their stock of qualifications as a result of taking part in an Objective 3 course). 15 per cent of beneficiaries achieving a full qualification have not improved the level of their qualifications *per se* whilst 11 per cent have achieved a qualification at a lower level to that previously held. These figures are somewhat disappointing when compared to the results of the 1998 leavers' survey which found that 64 per cent of beneficiaries gaining a full qualification did so at a higher level than their previous qualifications, 14 per cent had made no gain and just seven per cent had achieved a qualification at a lower level. However, we should note that a much higher proportion of 1999 leavers did not state the level of qualification gained from the course which has inhibited this analysis. We can draw no firm conclusion that qualification gains have actually fallen over time because of this high incidence of non-reporting.

Table 5.4: Level of qualification gained from the course compared to previous qualifications held (per cent)

	Level of qualification gained compared to prior qualification(s)			
	Higher level than previously held	Same level as previously held	Lower level than previously held	Level not known
All beneficiaries	38	15	11	35
Men	42	17	9	32
Women	35	13	13	39
No disadvantage	62	21	13	4
Single disadvantage	30	15	13	42
Multiple disadvantage	27	11	10	52

Base: all respondents achieving a full qualification, N=761

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

5.3 Job outcomes from ESF Objective 3

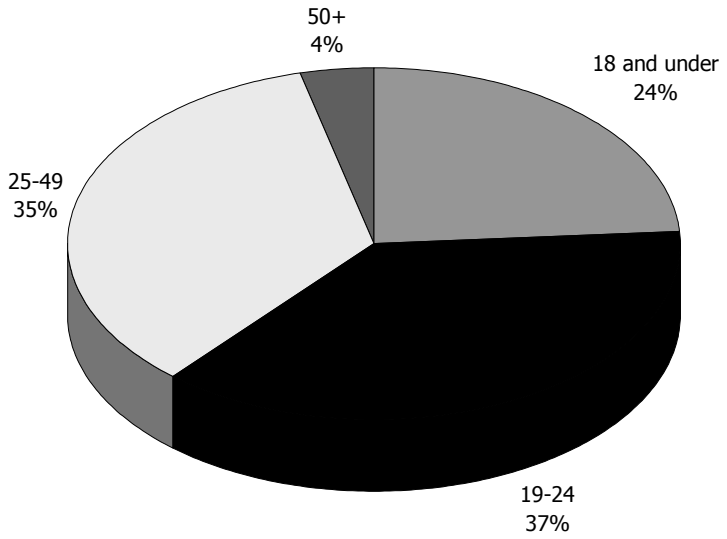
In this section, we turn our attention to those beneficiaries who had left their ESF course and moved into work. We are concerned here with people who were in work at the time of the survey, namely those in full-time employment (24 per cent), part-time employment (17 per cent) and self employment (two per cent). Importantly, we observe that job outcomes at the time of the 1999 survey were up on the previous year of ESF which recorded that a total of 38 per cent of beneficiaries were in these types of employment.

We will begin here by providing a brief overview of each employment 'type', looking specifically at occupational structure, remuneration received and work status. We will then conclude the chapter with an assessment of the impact of the course on job outcomes.

5.3.1 Full-time employment

Almost one-quarter of people who had left their ESF course were in full-time work of more than 30 hours per week when the survey was carried out, the majority of whom were men (63 per cent). Three-quarters of all the beneficiaries in full-time work were employed on permanent contracts whilst just under one-fifth were employed on a temporary basis. When we look at the age distribution of full-time workers, we observe that approximately one-quarter are aged 18 and under, and just over one-third are aged 19-24 or 25-49. Very few full-time employees were aged 50 or more (four per cent). Figure 5.9 illustrates beneficiaries in full-time work according to age.

Figure 5.9: Full-time employees, by age



Base: all those in full-time employment at time of survey N=595

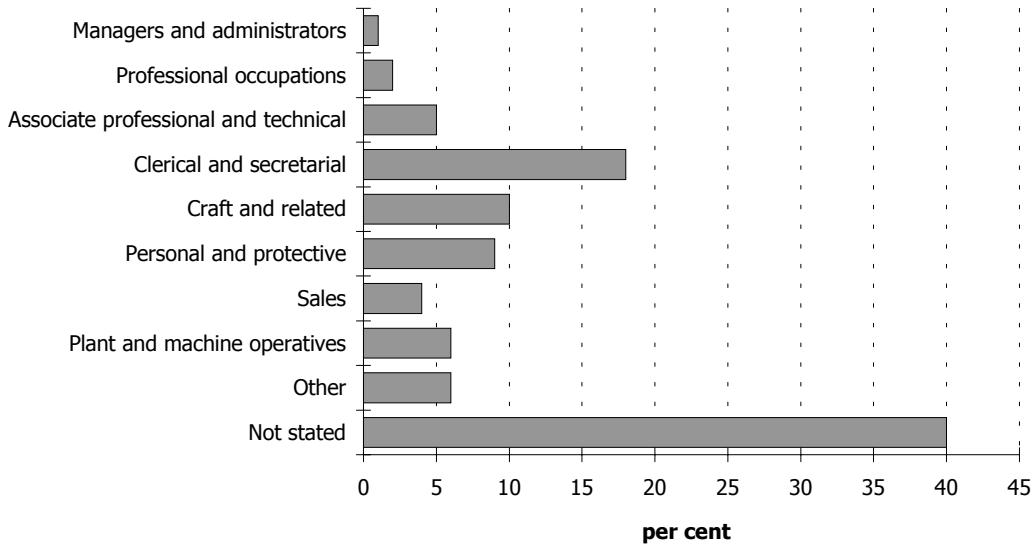
Source: NOP/IES Survey, 2000

When we look at the distribution of full-time work according to the level of disadvantage faced by beneficiaries, we note surprisingly few differences: 33 per cent of those in full-time employment have no specified disadvantages; 32 per cent have a single disadvantage and 35 per cent have multiple disadvantages.

Although 40 per cent of beneficiaries did not tell us what sort of work they were doing, we have observed that many beneficiaries in full-time employment are to be found in:

- clerical and secretarial occupations (18 per cent)
- craft and related occupations (ten per cent), and

Figure 5.10: Full-time employment, by Standard Occupational Classification



Base: all those in full-time employment at time of survey N=595

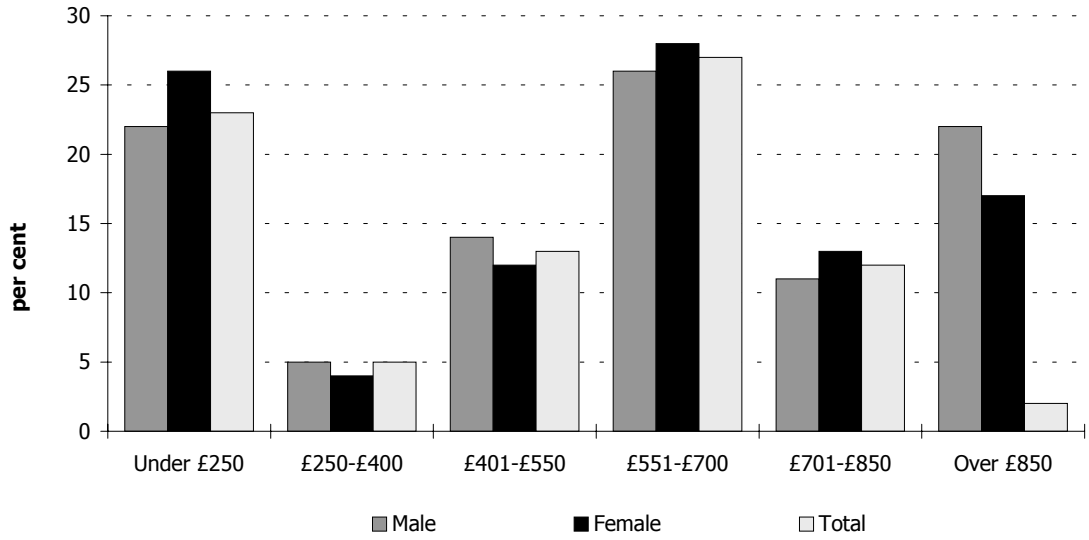
Source: NOP/IES Survey, 2000

- personal and protective services (nine per cent).

Less than three per cent of beneficiaries were working in managerial or professional level employment (see Figure 5.10).

The reported earnings for people in full-time employment are presented in Figure 5.11 below. We can see that although they are in full-time work, almost one-quarter of beneficiaries received less than £250 per month for this work. Just over one-quarter of beneficiaries received between £551-£700 per month whilst one-fifth earned more than £850. We have also observed that women are slightly more likely to receive earnings at the lower end of the scale than men (26 per cent of women earned less than £250 per month compared to 22 per cent of men).

Figure 5.11: Monthly pay



Base: all those in full-time employment at time of survey, N=595

Source: NOP/IES Survey, 2000

We observed some fairly predictable patterns when we looked at earnings according to age for people in full-time employment. Younger people were more likely to receive earnings in the low to mid ranges of the salary bands whilst older workers were more likely to receive wages of £500 or more per month. Table 5.5 highlights these wage differentials according to age.

Surprisingly, we found no significant differences in monthly pay according to the level of disadvantage experienced by beneficiaries.

Table 5.5: Monthly pay by age (full-time) (per cent)

	18 and under	19-24	25-49	50+
Under £250	23	27	20	20
£250-£400	9	4	3	—
£401-£550	24	15	5	4
£551-£700	28	28	24	28
£701-£850	6	9	19	12
Over £850	11	17	28	36

Base: all beneficiaries in full-time employment at the time of the survey, N = 595

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

5.3.2 Part-time employment

If we turn our attention to those beneficiaries in part-time employment of 30 hours per week or less, we note (unsurprisingly) that the majority are women (76 per cent). Once again, we find that the majority of these beneficiaries have been retained on a permanent basis (67 per cent) whilst just over one-quarter were working on temporary contracts.

Part-time work is particularly prevalent for beneficiaries aged 25-49 and 63 per cent of all part-timers are found in this age group. 13 per cent of all part-time employees are aged under 19 whilst 16 per cent are aged 19-24. Figure 5.12 illustrates the incidence of part-time work according to age.

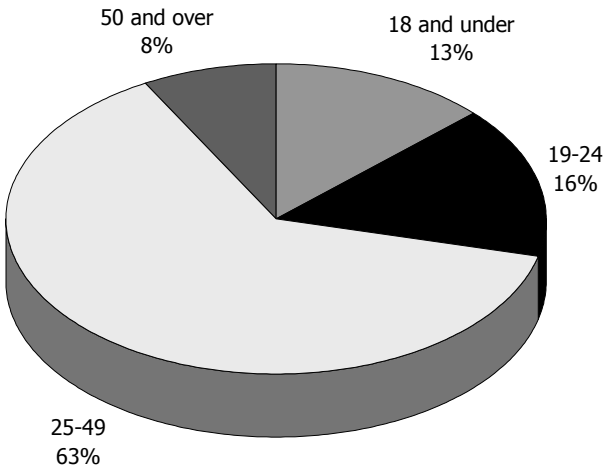
In addition to seeing a different age distribution amongst part-time workers vis-à-vis full-time workers, we also notice that more part-time employees are likely to experience multiple disadvantages than their full-time counterparts. We have found that 26 per cent of those in part-time work have no specified disadvantages whilst 30 per cent have a single disadvantage and 43 per cent have multiple disadvantages. This is most likely connected to the disproportionate number of women in part-time work, a significant number of whom are returners to the labour market and lone parents.

The occupational structure of part-time work is fairly similar to that for full-time work and we find that most beneficiaries are employed in:

- clerical and secretarial occupations (20 per cent)
- personal and protective services (17 per cent) and
- sales (13 per cent).

We note here though that sales occupations are much more prevalent amongst part-timers than full-timers more of whom are likely to be in craft related occupations. Again, this is due to the

Figure 5.12: Part-time employees, by age

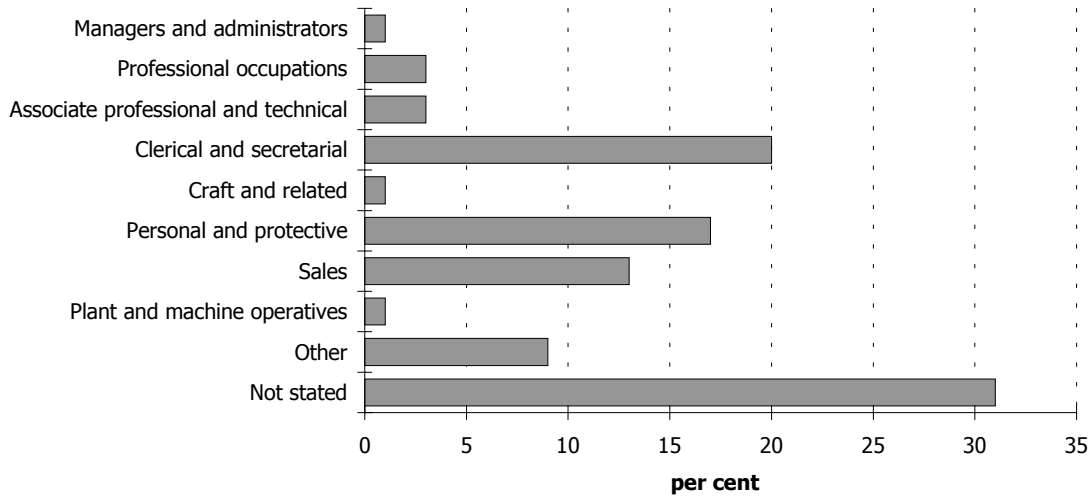


Base: all those in part-time employment at time of survey N=413

Source: NOP/IES Survey, 2000

gender distribution of full-time and part-time work more generally. Only four per cent of part-time employees are engaged in managerial or professional occupations. Figure 5.13 shows the occupational structure of beneficiaries in part-time employment.

Figure 5.13: Part-time employment, by Standard Occupational Classification

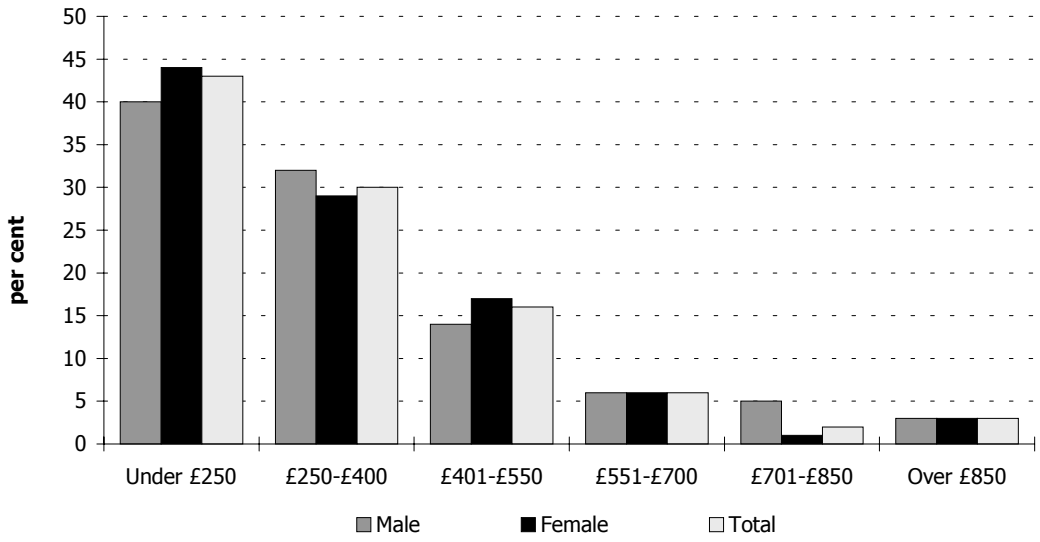


Base: all those in part-time employment at time of survey N=413

Source: NOP/IES Survey, 2000

When we look at the earnings of part-time workers we observe of course that they are markedly lower than the remuneration from full-time work (see Figure 5.14). Almost three-quarters of all part-time workers earn £400 per month or less and few differences are noted according to gender.

Figure 5.14: Monthly pay



Base: all those in part-time employment at time of survey N=413

Source: NOP/IES Survey, 2000

As with earnings generally, it appears that part-time remuneration increases with age. We observe that a significantly higher proportion of younger part-time workers aged 18 and under earn £400 or less per month compared to their older counterparts. Table 5.6 illustrates the key differences in earnings by age.

We have observed few differences in monthly pay according to the level of disadvantage experienced by part-time workers. However, it appears that those with no observed disadvantages are slightly more likely to have earnings of over £700 per month than those with multiple disadvantages (ten per cent compared to three per cent).

Table 5.6: Monthly pay by age (part-time) Base: all beneficiaries in part-time employment at the time of the survey N=413

	18 and under	19-24	25-49	50+
Under £250	54	31	45	46
£250-£400	33	40	27	24
£401-£550	6	10	19	18
£551-£700	2	9	6	6
£701-£850	—	6	2	3
Over £850	6	4	2	3

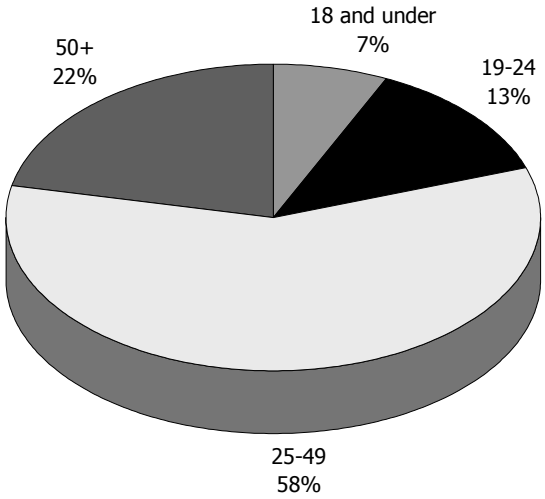
Base: all beneficiaries in part-time employment at the time of the survey, N = 413

Source: NOP/IES survey, 2000

5.3.3 Self employment

Very few of the job outcomes from ESF Objective 3 have been of a self-employed nature, indeed, we have found that only two per cent of beneficiaries have started this type of work. Because of this, we must treat with caution the information presented in this section. However, we have observed that a slightly higher proportion of the self-employed are women (56 per cent) compared to men. We have also found that a significant number are aged 50 or over (22 per cent of all self-employed beneficiaries). Figure 5.15 presents an overview of the age of all self-employed beneficiaries.

Figure 5.15: Self-employed beneficiaries by age



Base: all those in self employment at time of survey N=413

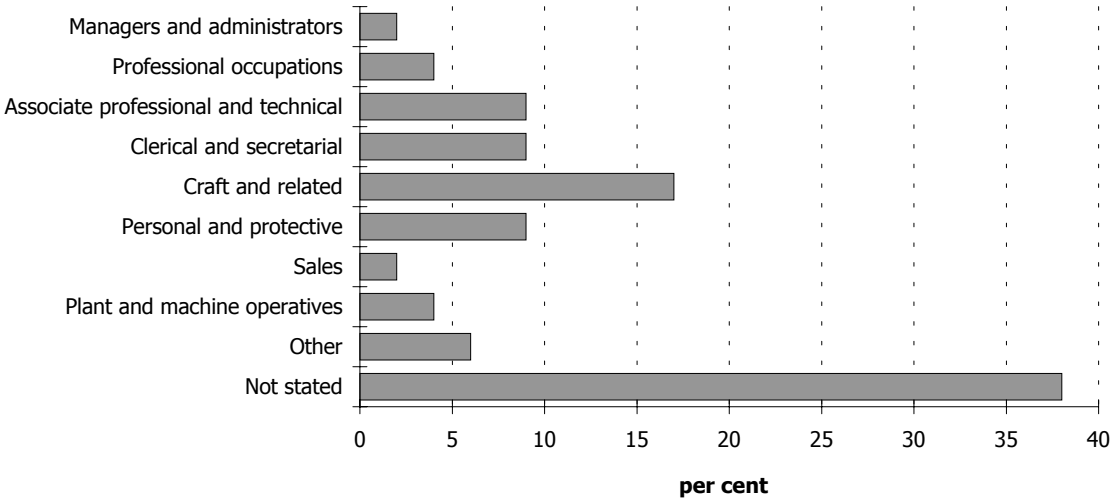
Source: NOP/IES Survey, 2000

Another striking feature of the self-employed beneficiary group is the proportion who face multiple disadvantages (52 per cent of the self-employed group have multiple disadvantages). This compares to 30 per cent of the self-employed who have no specified disadvantages and 17 per cent who are recorded as having a single disadvantage.

Once again, we do not know the occupational classification for a significant proportion of the self employed (38 per cent did not state the job that they did), however, we have found that the self-employed are most likely to be found in:

- craft and related occupations (17 per cent)
- associated professional and technical occupations (nine per cent)
- clerical and secretarial (nine per cent) and
- personal and protective services (nine per cent).

Figure 5.16: Self-employment, by Standard Occupational Classification



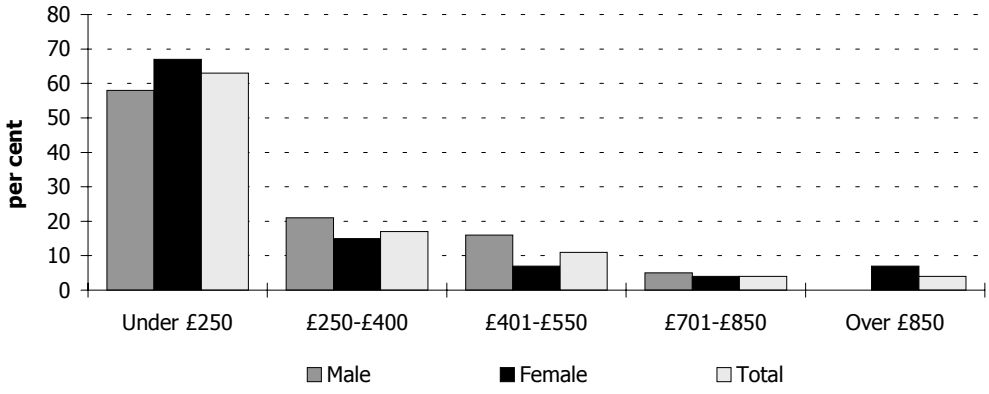
Base : all those in self employment at time of survey N=46

Source: NOP/IES Survey, 2000

A further six per cent of self-employed beneficiaries told us that they were involved in professional or managerial level positions. Figure 5.16 illustrates the distribution of the self-employed according to occupation.

When we look at monthly earnings amongst the self-employed, we note that the majority of it is low paid – about four-fifths of the self employed earn £400 per month or less[1]. Having said this (and although we should treat the findings with caution due to the low base figures), it appears that a slightly greater proportion of women who are self-employed earn higher salaries than their male counterparts. Figure 5.17 presents earnings for the self-employed according to gender.

Figure 5.17: Monthly pay



Base: all those in self employment at the time of the survey N=46

Source: NOP/IES Survey, 2000

[1] One explanation for the relatively high incidence of low pay among the self employed may be that earnings are forgone and financial surplus reinvested in the business/venture.

Self-employed earnings are particularly low for young people aged 18 and under, and all of these beneficiaries report that they earn under £250 per month for the work that they do. Earnings seem to increase slightly for beneficiaries as they get older although with such small base numbers, we have been unable to observe any clear pattern. However, it appears that beneficiaries who are self employed and with no specified disadvantages or only a single disadvantage are more likely to earn higher salaries from this type of work than those beneficiaries with multiple disadvantages. 14 per cent of those with no disadvantages and 33 per cent of beneficiaries who face a single disadvantage earn more than £700 per month on a self-employed basis compared to none of those beneficiaries with multiple disadvantages.

5.4 Impact of ESF on beneficiaries and positive outcomes

As in previous leavers' surveys, we asked respondents to summarise the help they had received from their ESF course and importantly, to gauge the utility of this help. We found that 60 per cent of beneficiaries felt that their course had helped them to get a qualification or a part qualification whilst 36 per cent thought it had helped them to move into further education or training. 28 per cent of beneficiaries reported that taking part had helped them to get a job related to the course whilst a further 14 per cent thought it had helped them to get a job which was unrelated to the course they had attended. We will come back to qualifications and job outcomes shortly, but we start our assessment of the impact of ESF by looking at what features of ESF Objective 3 were the most important for gaining 'soft' and intermediate outcomes. Before we do so though, it is useful to review the groups of beneficiaries we are most concerned with, and the types of support they may have received.

Throughout the report we have focused our analysis primarily on the nine beneficiary target groups of ESF Objective 3. And as in previous years of the leavers' survey, we have looked at how many of these groups beneficiaries fell into in order to arrive at a simplistic measure of the extent of disadvantage they experienced. This has been useful as it assesses how well ESF Objective 3 has reached those people towards whom it is aimed. However, in Chapter 2, we introduced the idea of a further typology of beneficiaries which classified individuals if they were experiencing (or likely to experience):

- Human capital shortcomings. By this we mean people with low or no qualifications, poor basic skills, a lack of recent work experience and out of date skills.
- Life skills problems, that is, people reporting that they have poor social and interpersonal skills, and who were homeless.
- Potential discriminators. Within this, we have identified those most likely to suffer discrimination as being people aged over

50, from a minority ethnic group, disabled or suffering ill-health, female, and long-term unemployed.

- Circumstantial constraints, including people with childcare responsibilities, and lone parents.

This typology extends the scope for a more detailed analysis of the impact of the ESF programme on beneficiaries who experience similar *types* of disadvantage, rather than focusing on individual disadvantages or the number of disadvantages people face (Appendix 3 discusses this typology more fully). We will use this typology below to help us ascertain what works for people facing similar labour market disadvantages and what appears to have little effect. In so doing, we will assess the impact of the different types of support that beneficiaries have received, namely:

- advice, guidance and support
- jobsearch help
- work experience and subsidised employment
- vocational training, and
- self employment.

We saw in Chapter 3 that certain beneficiaries had received more or less of these different types of support, and some in a more integrated way than others. In the following section we will identify what types of support from ESF Objective 3 courses have resulted in positive outcomes for the four groups of beneficiaries we have discussed above. We will look firstly at the impact of ESF support on soft and intermediate outcomes, then move on to qualification outcomes before concluding with job outcomes. In essence, we are asking what works and for whom.

5.4.1 Impact of the course on soft and intermediate outcomes

When we look at 'soft' outcomes or intermediate outcomes from the Objective 3 programme, we are looking specifically at:

- job-related skills, such as work experience and perceived improvements to career prospects
- social skills, including, interpersonal and social skills, team working skills, and problem solving skills
- personal skills, for example, self confidence and motivation, independence and a sense of responsibility, and
- basic or key skills, incorporating literacy and numeracy skills, IT skills, and communication skills.

Using multivariate techniques (see Appendix 3 for more information on this), we can assess firstly whether particular types

of beneficiary are likely to gain any of these specific skills as a result of taking part on an ESF course.

If we take each soft or intermediate outcome in turn, we find that:

- Participation on an ESF course is (statistically) likely to result in achieving **job-related skills** but only for beneficiaries who experience circumstantial constraints in the labour market *ie* lone parents and those with caring responsibilities. None of the other beneficiary types outlined above are likely to achieve job related skills as a direct result of taking part in an Objective 3 course.
- Achieving **social skills** is a (statistically) likely outcome of taking part in an Objective 3 course for beneficiaries who have human capital shortcomings (that is, low or no qualifications or out-of-date skills) and those with life skills problems.
- Achieving positive outcomes and improvements in **personal skills** and **basic and key skills** is (statistically) likely as a result of participation on an ESF course for beneficiaries with human capital shortcomings (relating to basic skills deficiencies), life skills problems, potential discriminating factors and circumstantial constraints. These types of beneficiary are most likely to make gains in this area as a result of taking part.

If we turn our attention to the different types of support in order to assess the effect they have on achieving soft and intermediate outcomes, we find that the provision of:

- Advice, guidance and support on ESF Objective 3 is (statistically) linked with achieving job-related skills, social skills, personal skills, and basic or key skills.
- Jobsearch help is also (statistically) linked to gains in job-related skills, social skills, personal skills, and basic or key skills.
- Work experience or subsidised employment on an ESF course is (statistically) linked to achieving improvements in job-related skills, social skills, and personal skills.
- Vocational training is (statistically) linked to achieving job-related skills, social skills, personal skills, and basic or key skills.
- Self employment support is (statistically) linked to gaining positive outcomes in the area of personal skills.

Essentially, we have found that taking part in an ESF Objective 3 course is likely to result in the achievement of soft and intermediate outcomes for some beneficiaries but certainly not all of them. In addition (and perhaps most importantly), we have found that the different types of support provided under

Objective 3 are likely to result in gains in almost every soft and intermediate skills area.

5.4.2 Impact of the course on qualification outcomes

Turning now to qualification outcomes, we have extended our analysis to identify firstly what type of beneficiary is (statistically) most likely to gain an NVQ as a result of taking part in a course, and then secondly, to go on to ascertain what forms of support provided by Objective 3 are (statistically) linked to the achievement of such an NVQ outcome.

From our multivariate analysis, we have found that participation on an ESF course is (statistically) likely to result in the achievement of an NVQ outcome but only for beneficiaries with circumstantial constraints *ie* those with caring responsibilities and lone parents. This is not surprising given the relatively high proportion of these beneficiaries reporting such a gain over and above other beneficiaries in the ESF target groups.

When we look at the types of support available under ESF Objective 3 and the effect these have on achieving NVQ outcomes, we find that the provision of a) advice, guidance and support b) work experience and subsidised employment and c) vocational training is (statistically) linked with achieving qualification outcomes. Jobsearch help and self employment support do not seem to have any significant impact on the achievement of qualification outcomes following participation on an Objective 3 course.

5.4.3 Impact of the course on job outcomes

Turning finally to job outcomes, we have found no (statistical) evidence to suggest that participation on an ESF Objective 3 course results in an employment outcome for any of the beneficiary groups we have discussed above. In fact, beneficiaries who have human capital shortcomings, life skills problems and potential discriminating factors are much less likely (statistically) to find work following their course. Essentially, having these labour market disadvantages is negatively associated with finding work as they have a much greater distance to travel before employment is attainable.

It is also the case that most forms of help offered by ESF courses do not (statistically) influence the chances of finding work. Importantly though, we have found that receiving help with jobsearch is (statistically) linked to finding a job or moving into self-employment.

Whilst the findings of the multivariate analysis in relation to job outcomes are somewhat disappointing, it remains that the majority of beneficiaries who move into work have found the

course to be helpful in making this transition. Overall, we found that almost three-quarters of beneficiaries who went into full-time employment and self-employment, and two-thirds of part-time workers, found the course to be either very useful or fairly useful in doing so. Similarly, three-quarters or more of those who went into work after the course found all the different types of help and support they had received to be very useful or fairly useful.

6. Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

The 1999 Leavers Survey has been carried out to explore the labour market difficulties faced by project beneficiaries, to identify their experiences of the ESF Objective 3 programme and to ascertain their outcomes from it.

As in previous years, the 1999 programme has been targeted towards a number of disadvantaged groups, including people with no qualifications, people from minority ethnic groups and those who are long-term unemployed. Many beneficiaries are returners to the labour market or lone parents and a significant number suffer health problems or disabilities which affect their day-to-day lives. Literacy and numeracy problems are fairly prevalent among the Objective 3 cohort as are ESOL difficulties. The programme has also reached a number of homeless people. In addition, a sizeable proportion of beneficiaries did not have work experience and had never been in paid employment before.

We have found that beneficiaries generally had fairly high expectations of their ESF course prior to starting, the most common of which were:

- to gain qualifications and work experience
- to provide a stepping stone to work
- to develop interpersonal skills, build self-confidence and meet new people.

We have noted in this leavers survey that beneficiaries have placed as much importance on gaining 'soft' skills as they have on the more tangible skills and outcomes *ie* jobs and qualifications.

Activities on ESF Objective 3 courses have tended to centre on:

- advice, guidance and support
- jobsearch help
- work experience/subsidised employment
- vocational training, and

- self employment support.

The majority of beneficiaries had received some sort of vocational training as part of their course, in addition to advice and guidance and help with jobsearch. Indeed, two-thirds of beneficiaries had received an integrated package of support from their course, that is they had three or more of the different types of support illustrated above.

When we explored what people felt they had achieved as a result of taking part on an Objective 3 course we found that many of their expectations had been met. Beneficiaries reported that they had gained:

- qualifications, job related skills and improved career prospects
- key skills, such as, team working problem solving and communication skills
- personal and social skills, and
- improved self-confidence, motivation and a greater sense of independence.

Essentially, we have found that projects running under ESF Objective 3 have succeeded in providing many disadvantaged clients with the opportunity to improve their labour market chances by boosting both soft and hard skills.

In terms of tangible outcomes from ESF Objective 3, we have noted improvements in the overall proportion of clients achieving qualifications and moving into jobs over previous years. It appears that better results are being achieved by Objective 3 projects as time goes on. More than half of all beneficiaries achieved some sort of qualification at the end of their course and over 40 per cent were in work at the time of the Leavers' Survey. We can conclude from these findings that ESF Objective 3 is moving a significant number of people from disadvantaged groups into, and towards, greater labour market participation.

However, it is clear that some beneficiaries fare better than others under ESF Objective 3. We have observed that beneficiaries experience differential types and levels of support from ESF Objective 3, and achieve differential outcomes according to gender, age, and the disadvantage experienced, or perhaps, more accurately, the number or type of disadvantage experienced. Quite clearly, some beneficiaries have a greater 'distance to travel' before they can move into jobs or attain qualifications as a result of an ESF intervention.

Our analysis of the impact of ESF Objective 3 on outcomes, in terms of job, qualification and soft outcomes, has confirmed that only some beneficiaries are (statistically) likely to achieve outcomes as a result of taking part on a course, and certainly not

all. We have found no evidence to suggest that participation on an ESF Objective 3 course, per se, leads to an employment outcome for any of the disadvantaged groups we have observed. Qualification outcomes are (statistically) linked to participation on ESF but only for returners to the labour market and lone parents. Having said this, we have found that the majority of beneficiaries are very satisfied with the help they have received on their ESF courses and many have found this help to be useful in gaining work and qualifications, or moving into further education and training.

Where ESF Objective 3 appears to work best is to improve the less tangible skills of its beneficiaries. We found, with few exceptions, that the provision of advice and guidance, jobsearch, work experience and vocational training as part of an ESF course was linked to gaining job-related skills, social and personal skills, and basic/key skills. This is a key finding for the study and a major success for the Objective 3 programme as a whole.

Appendix 1: Research Methodology and Sampling Procedures

1. THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.1 Summary of the methodology

The basis of the methodology for the 1999 research was that used on the 1997 and 1998 studies, i.e. a postal survey of people identified as being leavers from ESF Objective 3 funded projects. However, there was a key change of method to include a telephone stage of data collection targeted at those people who had not returned a paper copy of the questionnaire. The sampling method was also amended from earlier work to directly produce a representative sample of leavers via sampling projects with a probability proportional to the expected number of leavers.

1.2 Pilot and methodological test

The 1997 and 1998 surveys of leavers were undertaken using solely a self-completion postal methodology and achieved credible response rates of between 40% and 45%. While these levels of contact are reasonable for postal surveys – especially considering the relatively disadvantaged and young age profile of ESF leavers - there was concern that there could have been some degree of non-response bias. The survey weighting may not necessarily have dealt with this issue. In particular certain groups (such as those with low literary skills) were thought likely to be under-represented in the final sample.

It was therefore decided to undertake a Pilot to test an amended methodology in order to ascertain whether the response rate could be improved without incurring the large extra cost of carrying out a face-to-face survey of leavers. Any sample of ESF leavers would be effectively unclustered and large-scale face-to-face fieldwork would be time-consuming and expensive.

1.2.1 Pilot overview

There were three separate parts to the Pilot.

i. Obtaining information on leavers from applicant organisations. This involved sampling a group of applicant organisations and obtaining from them details of all leavers in a specified timeframe. This information was included in a database for the purposes of running the survey.

ii. Undertaking, where possible, postal self-completion interviews with individuals who had attended an ESF Objective 3 funded project

iii. Conducting telephone interviews with individuals who had attended an ESF-funded project but who had failed to respond to the postal questionnaire

Each of these sections is dealt with in more detail below.

1.2.2 Selection of applicant organisation sample

A full list of the 2003 Objective 3 applicant organisations was provided to NOP by DfEE in SPSS format. Based on the expected number of beneficiaries per project, and allowing for a response from projects of around 70%, it was calculated that 30 projects should be sampled for this Pilot stage of the research. The expectation was that the sampled projects should have a total of

about 800 leavers in the selected quarter, giving some scope, if needed, for sub-sampling individuals in the second stage of the Pilot process.

For the Pilot, it was agreed that the sample did not have to be representative of all projects but rather had to include examples of all types of project. In addition, projects with more than 500 expected leavers were left out of the Pilot as the sample for the main stage could be biased if these projects were excluded at that point.

The sample frame was stratified by region and, within region, by sector classification, priority level and, finally, the expected number of beneficiaries. Once the sample had been so stratified, every n^{th} entry was selected. The sample of 30 projects therefore included a spread across all key features.

Subsequently it became evident that the required number of leavers would not be obtained from the first 30 projects contacted and it was therefore decided to contact a further 20; this second group was selected on the same criteria as the first group. Any surplus sample generated from the Pilot topping–up exercise would go into the database of leavers for the main stage of the project.

The structure of the Pilot sample was as follows:

		Number of projects		
		1st Selection	2nd Selection	TOTAL
Size bands	Small (<25 beneficiaries)	10	8	18
	Medium (25-99)	10	6	16
	Large (100-500)	10	6	16
Priority	Priority 1	14	10	24
	Priority 2	13	8	21
	Priority 3	3	2	5
Sector	Further education	5	6	11
	Voluntary sector	5	4	9
	Local authority	4	3	7
	Higher education	3	2	5
	Other	13	5	18

1.2.3 Mailing to projects

Each of the selected projects received a letter from the (then) Department for Education and Employment or (for Scottish projects) the Scottish Executive detailing the purpose of the study and requesting their co-operation. Projects were asked to provide details (names, addresses and, where available, telephone numbers) of all individuals who had participated and then left the project between June and September 1999. The mailing included a pro-forma on which leavers' details could be entered along with a reply-paid envelope to return the necessary details to NOP.

It was intended that projects not responding should be sent a postcard reminder followed by a second version of the questionnaire/pro-forma with follow-up telephone calls to those who had still not responded. In the event, the project timetable meant that the initial mailing was sent out just two weeks before Christmas 1999 and it was therefore decided to skip the reminder mail-outs and move on directly to telephone reminders. Of the 50 projects sampled, only 14 had returned responses within two weeks of the mailing and did not need to be called.

1.2.4 Telephone contact

The telephone calls to projects indicated a number of problems with the original database, exacerbated by the fact that it did not include the names of project managers. For half of the projects contacted, the appropriate person had not received the original documents and a second mailing was needed. The problem with regard to the absence of contact names was, however, corrected for the main stage of the 1999 leaver survey.

As returns from the projects were received, it became evident that the number of leavers was falling significantly below that anticipated on the basis of the applicant organisation database, perhaps because most of the sampled projects had been extended into 2000 and therefore fewer than expected beneficiaries had left in the required time window. It is worth noting that some projects included only "early leavers" in the sample they provided.

Up to four telephone calls were made to non-responding projects and responses of one kind or another were received from 45 of the 50 sampled organisations.

1.2.5 Summary of response from the projects

The summary breakdown of the response is shown below:

Overall sample	N = 50	%
Project cancelled/never began/vocational guidance only*	9	18
No leavers in period*	5	10
Leaver details provided in time	28	56
Refused	3	6
No response to written communication or telephone calls	5	10

After removing the ineligible categories (*) from the figures, leaver details were received from 28 out of 36 providers (i.e. 78% of the maximum possible total).

1.2.6 Database of leavers

The leaver details including name, address, telephone number and project identifier were inserted into a database for the purpose of carrying out the postal survey of leavers. Information on a total of 620 leavers was eventually received from the projects but because of growing time pressures, only the details of the first 524 individuals were entered onto the Pilot database. The process of constructing the sample had proved to be lengthy and it was necessary to start the postal survey as soon as there were details of at least 500 leavers on the system.

1.2.7 The postal survey

The sample of 524 leavers was sent a copy of the self-completion questionnaire along with a personalised covering letter. A fortnight after this mailing, a reminder postcard was despatched to non-respondents, followed two weeks later by a selective questionnaire reminder.

The response from the postal survey was very modest, lower than the figure recorded at the main stage of either the 1997 or 1998 surveys. A total of 66 responses were received before the postcard reminder and a further 22 before mailing the second reminder and additional questionnaire. By the cut-off date, only 141 completed questionnaires had been returned along with 7 envelopes marked "not known at address".

The methodological Pilot involved a telephone follow-up, where possible, for those leavers who had not returned the postal questionnaire or provided some other definite outcome (e.g. moved abroad or died). Projects gave telephone numbers for 70% of the Pilot sample (365 out of 524 cases).

1.2.8 Telephone follow-up survey

Of the 376 eligible individuals put forward for the telephone element of the Pilot work, telephone numbers were available (either from project returns or from a subsequent directory look-up) for 238 people, i.e. 63% of the total. These figures indicate that those with telephone numbers on the database were more likely to have completed the postal questionnaire than those for whom no numbers were traced.

The questionnaire used on the postal survey was converted into telephone format for use under the CATI system (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) – the sample was filed into a management system to allow for programmed calls and appointments. In total, 83 interviews were achieved over the telephone, taking the overall number of completed questionnaires to 224 – an unadjusted response rate of 42%. Some telephone interviews were carried out by tracing housing moves made by respondents.

1.2.9 Pilot survey response rate

The full contact details are given below:

Initial sample	N = 524	%
Completed questionnaires	141	27
Returned as unknown at address	7	1
Maximum sample for telephone survey	376	72
No number provided (or traced)	138	26
Telephone numbers provided (or traced)	238	45
Successful interviews	83	16
Refusals	6	1
Not available after 4+ calls	6	1
Moved/died/wrong number/not in use	140	26

The response rate from the Pilot sample, after removing definite "dead-wood" (e.g. died and moved abroad) was 45%, a figure virtually the same as that recorded on the exclusively postal surveys carried out in 1997 and 1998.

1.2.10 Conclusions

At first glance, it would appear that the telephone element has not produced a higher response than the previous method. However, without the new stage of data collection, the response rate from the survey would have been below 30% - much lower than in previous years. The modest response to the postal element of the research programme raises questions about the nature of the sample used in the 1999 Pilot work.

The broad methodology employed in the postal phase of the work mirrored that used in previous ESF research, i.e. to set up a database from information supplied by the projects and send out a

self-completion questionnaire followed by two selective reminders, one in the form of a postcard and the other in the shape of a further copy of the questionnaire. However, the response rate to the 1999 postal element was only two-thirds of that achieved in the past.

There are some minor factors that might have adversely affected the response rate (e.g. the fairly tight cut-off date for return of postal questionnaires) but we think that there may be a more fundamental difference between the sample used on the Pilot and that used, for example, on the 1998 research. As noted above, more than half of the projects sampled for the Pilot (and indeed most of those on the original DfEE database) had their end-dates extended from late 1999 through to the Spring or Summer of 2000. This process seems to have had an impact on the volume and profile of leavers during the Summer of 1999, i.e. there were fewer leavers in absolute terms than expected and a higher proportion of these will have been early leavers. It seems quite possible that the different sample profile has had an adverse effect on response rate, at least to the postal phase of the research.

There is no direct evidence available from the methodological Pilot to show that the issued sample had lower literacy skills than had been the case in previous samples of ESF leavers, although this must be a real possibility. It might also be the case that the 1999 sample, including perhaps a greater proportion of early leavers, was simply less motivated than average to take the time to complete the questionnaire.

The telephone phase of the Pilot was successful in significantly boosting the overall achieved sample for the test exercise. The low response to the postal phase meant that the final contact rate on the 1999 methodological work was only on a par with that achieved on the postal surveys in 1998 and 1999. However, it was

apparent that the use of the telephone follow-up would provide a significant boost to the response rate from any postal-based survey of ESF leavers.

Given the apparent problem with sample composition in 1999, telephone interviewing seems likely to make the difference between a low response rate and a figure that is at least as credible as that achieved in previous years. Finally, it is worth stating that the quality of the data from a telephone survey is almost always superior to that collected from self-completion questionnaires – for example, there are fewer missing or implausible values and there is more scope for probing respondents at open-ended questions.

1.3 The main survey process

This section describes the main stage of the 1999 survey of ESF leavers. Where possible we have tried to avoid repeating the information included in the previous section but in practice there is some overlap in coverage. The Pilot exercise had demonstrated the likely value of using the postal/telephone methodology and this survey process was therefore adopted for the main stage of the project.

1.3.1 Selection of applicant organisations

The 1999 survey was intended to produce a representative sample of leavers with as little weighting as possible, especially in terms of project selection – previous ESF studies had necessarily used quite complex weighting procedures.

Firstly, all projects that were sampled in the Pilot were removed from the database, along with projects controlled by one particular organisation which informed us during the Pilot work that all of their projects had been withdrawn. In addition, one project that had an exceptionally high number of beneficiaries

(more than 30,000) was removed from the listing in agreement with DfEE because it provided vocational guidance only.

The sample was then stratified, first according to region, then within region by priority, then by sector and finally size, i.e. the number of expected beneficiaries of the project. Where projects had no beneficiaries, the value for the expected number of leavers was used instead. Projects shown to have neither beneficiaries nor leavers were taken out of the sample frame – in total there were only 11 such projects.

Projects were then sampled with probability proportional to size by NOP's Statistical Services Department to produce a list of 611 projects for the main sample. This process involved dividing the total number of beneficiaries/leavers by 611 to give a sampling fraction then applying this to a cumulative listing of all projects. Once a project had been selected, it was removed from the listing and the process was repeated until all 611 projects had been sampled.

The sample of 611 actually provided a good representation of the original database by region, priority and sector although the sampling method necessarily worked in favour of the selection of larger projects. The tables below gives details of the database compared with the sampled projects.

	Applicant database	**Sample (n = 611)**
REGION	%	%
East Anglia	4.1	4.5
East Midlands	7.0	7.2
ES	2.4	2.5
London	12.7	13.3
North East	8.3	7.2

	Database	Sample
	%	%
North West	8.5	8.5
South East	9.3	9.7
Scotland	18.1	14.5
South West	5.5	6.7
West Midlands	7.9	10.7
Wales	9.8	9.0
Yorkshire/Humberside	6.2	6.3
PRIORITY		
1	49.4	51.0
2	42.2	43.2
3	8.4	5.8
NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES		
<25	48.4	17.3
25-99	36.9	40.3
100-500	13.1	37.3
>500	1.5	5.0
SECTOR		
1 Business Links	0.1	0.2
2 Chambers of Commerce	0.1	0.2
3 Employment Service	0.1	0
4 English TECs	3.9	7.3
5 Further education	25.3	28.7
6 Higher education	8.2	5.7
7 ICOM	0.3	0.2
8 Local authorities	17.0	16.7

	Database	Sample
	%	%
9 LECs	1.2	2.0
10 NCTO	3.8	2.7
11 NHS Trusts	0.2	0
12 Other government departments	0.2	0.3
13 Private companies	0.9	1.3
14 SCVO	3.4	2.3
15 Scottish Enterprise	0.2	0.2
16 Scottish FE	5	4.2
17 Scottish government	0	0
18 Scottish HE	0.3	0.3
19 Scottish Industry	0	0
20 Scottish local authority	1.4	0.7
21 Scottish voluntary	0.5	0.7
22 Small/medium size	0.1	0.2
23 Technical assistance	0	0
24 Training enterprise	0	0
25 -	-	-
26 Voluntary sector	23.0	21.3
27 Welsh FE	3.1	3.0
28 Welsh Training	0.6	1.2
29 Women's training network	0.8	0.8

1.3.2 Mailing to projects

The initial approach from the Pilot survey was used on the main stage of the exercise, i.e. a first mailing with covering letter from the DfEE/Scottish Executive to explain the nature and extent of the information required. Projects were asked to give details of leavers from a particular quarter of 1999 - the survey aimed to provide coverage of the final three-quarters of the calendar year. The first quarter was omitted because the resulting sample of leavers would have left their projects well over six months before we could make contact with them. The Pilot timetable had meant that the postal reminder process was abandoned in favour of the immediate use of telephone calls. However, the main stage of the project used the intended process of two written reminders – one postcard and a further letter and pro-forma.

1.3.3 Telephone contact

In order to boost the contact rate among projects, telephone calls were made as extra reminders. In practice up to four calls were made to establish contact and extra supplies of pro-formas were sent by post, fax and email.

1.3.4 Summary of response from projects

Some of the same problems encountered on the Pilot work were found again on the main stage of the survey. Certain projects had no leavers in the specified period (9%) while others responded neither to the mailings nor to the follow-up telephone calls (34%). Just under half of the original sample provided details of actual leavers, although some of these arrived too late to be used on the survey.

Overall sample	N = 611	%
Project cancelled/never began/vocational guidance only*	49	8
No leavers in period*	57	9
Leaver details provided in time	268	44
Arrived too late to use	17	3
Refused	13	2
No response to written communication or telephone calls	207	34

After removing the ineligible categories (*), details were received in time from 53% of the maximum number of eligible providers.

1.3.5 Database of leavers

Information on leavers was received in a wide variety of formats including electronic and paper copies, computer printouts and hand-written information. The leaver information was used in the creation of a main sample electronic database covering some 8752 records from 268 projects. Information that arrived (from 17 projects) after the cut-off date was not included in the survey database.

1.3.6 The postal survey

The process again involved an initial mailing with personalised covering letter and a pre-serialised copy of the questionnaire. The first (selective) reminder was in the form of a postcard while a second questionnaire reminder was sent to those leavers who had not returned a completed questionnaire or been identified as some type of non-contact.

1.3.7 Telephone follow-up

Again, this phase followed along the same lines as the Pilot work. All non-responders were identified and those without telephone numbers on the database were checked against a computerised directory using name and address. The resulting final sample of leavers with telephone numbers was set-up on the computer system. Fieldwork was conducted from one of NOP's in-house interviewing centres using a team briefed personally by one the executives running the project – all interviewing was to the criteria of the Market Research Society's Interviewer Quality Control Scheme. At least four calls were made on each valid number before it was designated as a non-contact. The same questionnaire prepared by IES for the postal survey was adapted for use over the telephone - the average interview length was 15 minutes.

1.3.8 Overall response rate

A total of 2077 satisfactorily questionnaires were returned from the postal survey and a further 759 people were interviewed on the follow-up telephone survey, giving a combined sample size of 2,836 people. Details of the breakdown of response from both phases of the survey are given below and overleaf.

Postal Survey	**N**	**%**
Issued sample	7616	100
Sent a postcard reminder	6863	90.1
Sent a further reminder	6397	84.0
Completed questionnaire received	2077	27.3
Incomplete questionnaire (rejected)	7	0.1
Claimed not to have done course	101	1.3
Moved/not known at address	445	5.8
Died	29	0.4

	N	%
Requested telephone interview	28	0.4
Refused	69	0.9
Other non-contact	4	0.1
No reply	4856	63.8
Telephone survey		
Eligible but no number provided (or traced)	1654	-
Telephone numbers provided (or traced)	3202	100
Completed interviews	759	23.7
Not available after 4+ calls	353	11.0
Contact made but no interview	100	3.1
Refusals	174	5.4
Respondent moved (could not be followed)	202	6.3
Wrong numbers	339	10.6
Number not in use	684	21.4
Away/on holiday during survey period	40	1.2
Died	9	0.3
Claimed not to have done course	453	14.1
Began interview but refused to finish	50	1.6
Residual (duplicates and ex-directory)	39	1.2

The overall unadjusted response rate was 37.2%. After taking out certain movers from the two phases of the survey along with those who had died, the adjusted figure is 40.9%, although it seems probable that there were many other movers contained, for example, within the categories of wrong and non-existent numbers from the telephone survey. There is a significant

category of people (554 in total), mainly identified at the telephone stage, who claimed not to have done the course in question. This can be seen as further evidence about the number of early leavers in the sample. Removing this group from the valid sample increases the response rate to 44.4%.

1.3.9 Data entry and editing

Completed postal questionnaires were checked-in at NOP's data-centre and coding was carried out using code frames prepared from listings of verbatim responses. The coded questionnaire responses were entered onto the computer system via a scanning process used regularly on NOP's major postal surveys. The self-completion data was then checked against a tailored edit programme to isolate errors, omissions and inconsistencies. Where necessary, records were checked against the original questionnaires.

A small number of questionnaires were rejected at this point on grounds of poor completion. Some unusual figures were recorded for income and hours worked but after discussions with IES and DfEE, this data was left in the file provided that it reflected what was on the questionnaire. The postal data was merged with the data from the telephone element of the study – the quality of the latter was much higher than the former, e.g. in terms of the level of missing values.

1.3.10 Analysis and weighting

A standard run of tabulation analysis was prepared by NOP to provide the first set of full data for DfEE – this output has been reproduced in a separate volume. The tables were rim-weighted using variables collated from the 1999 Final Claims data files provided by the Department. An external delay in producing this information allowed us to test the analysis by preparing interim weights based on the average figures for the 1997 and 1998 Final

Claims data. This provisional analysis was given a limited circulation.

The 1999 Final Claims data was matched against the sample file for the survey of leavers – there were inevitably matching failures because of the number of projects that never got off the ground and because no data was provided for Scotland. The matched cases were used to produce the profile weights shown in the table below. No weights were applied at a project level as the sampling process was designed to give an equal chance of selection to all leavers. The table overleaf also shows the unweighted sample profile. The impact of the weights is most marked on men and young people.

	% unweighted	**% weighted**
Sex:		
Male	35.8	48.2
Female	63.2	50.1
Missing	1	1
Age:		
18 and under	11	20.8
19-24	23	24.3
25-49	48	45.1
50+	2	2
Missing	2	2
Disability:		
Yes	21.9	18.6
No	75.9	79.4
Missing	2.2	2
Ethnic group:		
White	82	69.7

Non-white	16	22.3
Other	2	6
Missing	2	2
Qualifications:		
High – NVQ 4-5	11	7.5
Medium – NVQ 2-3	16	13.5
Basic – NVQ 1, level 0 and non-NVQ	15	29.2
None	36	39.8
Missing	29	10

1.4 Overall methodological conclusions

The use of the telephone survey to supplement the main postal self-completion exercise had a considerable impact on the raw sample profile of the combined data. The weighting profiles shown above indicate significant factors for variables such as sex and age because the raw data was particularly light on men and younger people. Without the telephone stage, the impact would have been even more marked. For example, more than half of those interviewed over the telephone were male compared with only a third of the postal sample. The telephone stage also provided a significant boost to the numbers of under-25s in the final sample. Evidence of the overall impact of the additional survey is shown in the average 1.13 up-weighting of the telephone respondents compared with the average 0.95 down-weighting of those completing postal questionnaires.

The quality of the survey data was also improved by using Computer Assisted Interviewing for the telephone stage of the project. For example, only 1 person out of 759 respondents on the telephone survey failed to supply their age – this variable was left blank by 2.6% of those returning the postal questionnaire. The

situation was very similar with regard to disability and was even more marked on some non-demographic questions such as activities in the week before beginning the course – nearly one-in-ten respondents failed to answer the self-completion version of this question.

The Department will need to consider the cost-effectiveness of the use of telephone interviewing to boost the response rates on surveys of ESF leavers. However, in purely methodological terms, the use of the telephone element provided a substantial boost to the sample size, improved the overall data quality and cut the impact of the weights on the final data. If the funding is available, we would recommend continuing with the broad methodology used on the 1999 survey.

Appendix 2: Survey Questionnaire

TRAINING COURSE SURVEY

We understand that you have taken part in a training course in the last twelve months. We are carrying out some research about the time you spent on the course and what you have been doing since then and we hope you will take some time to answer the questions in this booklet.

The name shown on the label above is the official name of the course. Please amend the label if you knew the course by another name or if any of the other details are incorrect.

You will see from the booklet that most questions can be answered easily by ticking the most relevant box or boxes. In a few questions, we ask you to write your answer in the space provided.

If anything is unclear, or you need more information, you can call our freephone number 0171 890 9107 and someone will be pleased to help you.

Please use a black or blue pen to complete the form and return it in the envelope provided.

Thank you very much for taking part in this important research.

Before you started the course

1. Before you started on the course shown on the front of this questionnaire, had you ever been in paid work (full-time, part-time or self-employed), even if only for a short while?

Yes 1 No 2 (11)

2. Thinking about 12 months before you started the course, what were you mainly doing then?
(*Tick one box only)* (12)

Out of work and claiming unemployment related benefit	1
Out of work but not claiming unemployment related benefit	2
Looking after the home or family full-time	3
Education or training - full-time	4
Paid work - full-time (over 30 hours per week)	5
Paid work - part-time (30 hours per week or less)	6
Doing something else (*please write in below)*	7

.....

3. Thinking about the week before you started the course, what were you mainly doing then?
(*Tick one box only)* (13)

Out of work and claiming unemployment related benefit	1	(go to Q4)
Out of work but not claiming unemployment related benefit	2	(go to Q4)
Out of paid work and looking after the home or family full-time	3	(go to Q4)
Education or training – full-time	4	(go to Q5)
Paid work - full-time (over 30 hours per week)	5	(go to Q5)
Paid work - part-time (30 hours per week or less)	6	(go to Q5)
Doing something else (*please write in below)*	7	(go to Q5)

.....

4. If you were out of work: For how long had you been continuously out of work when you started on the course? (*Tick one box only)* (14)

Up to three months	1
Over three months, up to six months	2
Over six months up to twelve months	3
Over twelve months, up to two years	4
Over two years	5

5. **Before you started the course, what would you say were the main problems you faced when looking for work? What was causing you a problem?** *(Please tick yes or no for each)* (15)

I had no qualifications	1
My qualifications were not good enough	2
My qualifications were the wrong ones	3
I had no recent experience of working	4
My reading/writing or numeracy skills were not good enough	5
I had a problem relating to my health/disability	6
My skills were out of date	7
There were no suitable jobs available in my local area	8
I was not confident that my social or interpersonal skills were good enough	9
I could not find suitable and/or affordable childcare	0
My caring responsibilities took priority over finding a job	X
Something else *(please write in below)*	Y

.....

Your Experience of the Course

6. **Thinking back to when you started the course, what did you expect to get from it? Did you think it would:** *(Please tick yes or no for each)* (16)

Get you some qualifications?	1
Give you some work experience?	2
Be a stepping stone into further education/training?	3
Develop your skills to work with other people?	4
Build your self-confidence?	5
Allow you to earn some money?	6
Help you to meet new people and make new friends?	7
Allow you to learn a trade or occupation?	8
Be a stepping-stone into work?	9
Other *(please write in below)*	0

.....

7. **Or, did you have no expectations of the course?** **(17)**
If not, can you say why you had no expectations of the course? *(please write in below)* (18)

(19)

.....

8. Thinking back, what did the course do to help you?
Did it: *(Please tick yes or no for each)* (20)

Give you a personal training plan?	1
Give you advice or guidance about what sorts of work or training you could do?	2
Provide training in how to do a particular kind of job?	3
Pay part or all of your wages so you could work for an employer?	4
Give you work experience?	5
Give you general training about the world of work?	6
Give you ideas about the sorts of work you could look for?	7
Tell you about jobs you could try to go for?	8
Provide you with contacts to help you look for a job?	9
Provide training in how to look for work?	0
Train you in using computers?	X
Allow you to work towards a qualification?	Y
Give you help with setting up your own business?	1 (21)

9. Looking back, what do you think you have actually gained from taking part in the course?
(Please tick yes or no for each) (22)

Job-related skills	1
Qualifications	2
Work experience	3
Improved career prospects	4
Personal/Social skills	5
Team working skills	6
Problem solving skills	7
Self-confidence and motivation	8
Independence	9
Sense of responsibility	0
Literacy skills/Wordpower	X
Numeracy skills/Numberpower	Y
IT skills	1 (23)
Communications skills (for example, helping you to meet and talk to new people)	2
Other skills, *please say what else you have gained*	3

.....

10. Or, do you think that you gained very little or nothing from the course? (24)
If not, *please say why not* (25)

(26)

.....

11. What other help and support could the course have provided to get you into work or further education or training? ..... (27) (28) (29)

Please state .....

12. Has the course helped you in any of the following ways?
Has it helped you: *(Please tick yes or no for each)* (30)

To get a job related to your course	1
To get a job not related to your course	2
To get a qualification or part qualification	3
To get on a college course or some other form of further training or education	4

13. Overall, how satisfied were you with the quality of the course? (*Tick one box only)*

Very satisfied	1	(31)
Fairly satisfied	2	
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3	
Fairly dissatisfied	4	
Very dissatisfied	5	

14. Did you stay on the course until the end or did you leave early? (*Tick one box only)*

Stayed to the end	1	(32)	(go to Q 16)
Left early	2		(go to Q15)

15. Which statement best describes your main reason for leaving the course early?
(Tick one box only) (33)

The course did not meet my expectations	1
I found a job	2
I started a course at a college or training centre	3
I had problems related to my disability	4
I became ill	5
Financial reasons	6
Domestic/personal reasons	7
Another reason *(please write in)*	8

.....

Your Qualifications and the Course

16. We want to explore your qualifications in this question.Please use the table below to find the NVQ level of your qualifications (if you do not already know).

(a) **Please indicate in the box below the NVQ level of your highest qualification before you started the course.** *For example, if your highest qualification before the course was an A-level, then you have the equivalent of a Level 3 NVQ so you should write '3'. Level 5 is the highest level you can have. If you have no qualifications please indicate in the box provided.*

☐ NVQ Level No qualifications 8 (34)

(b) **Please indicate the NVQ level of the qualification you gained from the course (or the highest level qualification you gained if more than one).** *For example, if you gained a CLAIT certificate you have a non-NVQ level qualification so you should write '0'. If you gained a City and Guilds – Higher Operative qualification, then you gained a Level 2 NVQ and you should write '2'. Please indicate if this was a full or part qualification. If you did not gain any qualifications from the course please indicate in the box provided.*

☐ NVQ Level Part 6 Full 7 No qualifications 8 (35)

NVQ Level	Academic Qualification Name	Vocational Qualification Name
Non-NVQ Level 0	RSA Word Power RSA Number Power CLAIT	
Level 1	GCSE/SCE/O-level Grades below C CSE Grades below 1	BTEC/SCOTBTEC/SQA — First Certificate BEC/SCOTBTEC — General Certificate/Diploma City & Guilds — Operative Awards CPVE — Year 1 (Technician) LCCI/RSA/PEI — Elementary/First Level RSA — Vocational Certificate Foundation GNVQ/GSVQ NVQ/SVQ Level 1
Level 2	GCSE/SCE/O-level Grades at A-C CSE Grade 1	BTEC/SCOTBTEC/SQA — First Diploma BEC/SCOTBTEC/BTEC/SCOTVEC/SQA — General Certificate/Diploma with credit City & Guilds — Higher Operative/Craft LCCI — Certificate/Second Level PEI — Stage 2 Pitmans — Intermediate Level 2 Diploma Certificate RSA — Diploma Intermediate GNVQ/GSVQ NVQ/SVQ Level 2
Level 3	A-level passes	BEC/SCOTBEC

	AS Levels	BTEC/SCOTVEC/SQA — National OND/ONC TEC/SCOTEC — Certificate/Diploma City & Guilds — Advanced Craft LCCI — Third Level Diploma Pitmans — Level 3 Advanced Higher Certificate RSA — Stage 3 Advanced Diploma Advanced GNVQ/GSVQ Access to Higher Education Courses Advanced awards in ESOL and foreign languages NVQ/SVQ Level 3
Level 4	Teaching Qualifications (including PGCE) First Degree	BEC/SCOTBEC BTEC/SCOTVEC/SQA — HND/HNC TEC/SCOTEC — Higher Certificate/Diploma LCCI — Advanced level RSA — Advanced Certificate/Higher Diploma Diploma in Higher Education Nursing (SRN) Certificate in Higher Education NVQ/SVQ Level 4
Level 5	Higher Degree Graduate Membership of Professional Institute	Continuing Education Diploma Other high level professional qualification (*eg* NVQ level 5 in management)

What did you do when you left the Course?

17. When did you leave the course? Please write in the month and year

Month ☐☐ (36-37) Year ☐☐ (38-39)

If you are still on the same course please tick (40) (go to Q26)

18. Thinking about immediately after the course, please say what you went on to do next. (*Tick one box only)* (41)

Paid work - full-time (over 30 hours per week) 1

Paid work - part-time (30 hours or less per week) 2

Self-employed 3

Government Supported Training 4
(such as, Youth Training , New Deal, Training for Work, Work-Based Learning for Adults *etc*.)

Education or training (full-time or part-time)	5
Unemployed and claiming unemployment related benefit	6
Unemployed and not claiming unemployment related benefit	7
Voluntary work (full-time or part-time)	8
Doing something else *(please specify)*	9

.....

What are you doing now?

19. Thinking about the present time, please show what you are mainly doing now?
(Tick one box only) (42)

Paid work – full-time (over 30 hours per week)	1
Paid work – part-time (30 hours or less per week)	2
Self-employed	3
Government Supported Training (such as, Youth Training , New Deal, Training for work, Work-Based Learning for Adults *etc*.)	4
Education or training (full-time or part-time)	5
Unemployed and claiming unemployment related benefit	6
Unemployed and not claiming unemployment related benefit	7
Voluntary work (full-time or part-time)	8
Doing something else (please specify)	9

.....

If you currently have a full-time or part-time paid job, either as an employee or as a self-employed worker, please answer questions 20-25 about this job, otherwise go to question 26.

20. If you have more than one job, your answers should be about the job with the most hours.

What is the name or title of your current job? *(Please write in.)* (43) (44) (45)

.....

21. What kind of work do you do? (46) (47) (48) (49)

Please write in .....

22. Have you been taken on permanently, or is the job temporary? *(Tick one box only)*

Permanent	1	(50)
Temporary (including fixed-term contract)	2	
Not sure	3	
Self-employed	4	

23. Looking back, how useful were the things you did on the course in getting this job, for example, your work experience, or the skills and/or qualification you gained? *(Tick one box only)*

Very useful	1	(51)
Fairly useful	2	
Not very useful	3	
Not at all useful	4	

24. How much money do you usually take home each week or each month from this job after deductions but including bonuses or overtime? *(Please write in amount)*

Each hour	£	:	p	or	(52-55)
Each week	£	:	p	or	(56-60)
Each month	£	:	p		(61-66)

25. How many hours do you usually work each week in this job (excluding meal breaks)? *(Please write in number of hours)*

Hours per week ..... (67-68)

Some information about you

26. How old were you on your last birthday? Years: ☐☐ (69-70)

27. Are you male or female? Male 1 Female 2 (71)

28 Which of the following best describes you? (Tick one box)

Married	1	Divorced	4	(72)
Living with partner	2	Separated	5	
Single	3	Widowed	6	

Other *(please specify).....* 7

29. Are you a parent or guardian with children living with you? (73)

Yes	1	(go to Q30)
No	2	(go to Q31)

30. How old are your children? (*Tick all that apply)*

0-4 years old	1	11-15 years old	3	(74)
5-10 years old	2	16 or older	4	

31. **Which of the following groups do you belong to? (Tick one box)**
Your answer will help us to know how well equal opportunities are working.

White	1	(75)
Black		
Caribbean	2	
African	3	
Other black	4	
Asian		
Indian	5	
Pakistani	6	
Bangladeshi	7	
Chinese	8	
Other Asian	9	
Mixed Race	0	
Any other ethnic group *(*Please *specify)*.....	X	

32. What is your first language?

English 1 Welsh 2 Other 3 (76)

33. Do you have any long-term health problem or disability which affects the kind of work you can do?

Yes 1 No 2 (77)

34. When you started the course, were you homeless or living in temporary accommodation (*eg*. bed and breakfast, sleeping rough or hostel)?

Yes 1 No 2 (78)

If there is anything else you would like to tell us about your course or what you have done since leaving it, please write in the space below.

We shall be very interested to read what you have to say.
Thank you.

Now please return the questionnaire in the envelope provided.
No stamp is needed.

Appendix 3: Logistic Regression

Variables used

Independent variables

These are the variables that we think will influence the type of outcomes participants will have as a result of their course. The independent variables in this study fall into two categories; (1) individual characteristics of the respondents (2) types of support that these respondents receive.

1) Individual characteristics

- ***Human Capital Shortcomings (HCS):*** This category involves those who say 'yes' to any of the following items in the questionnaire:
  - I had no qualifications.
  - My qualifications were not good enough.
  - My qualifications were the wrong ones.
  - My skills were out of date.
  - *My reading/writing or numeracy skills were not good enough.

The HCS category was also split into two sub-groups as HCS1 and HCS2. HCS1 included the first four items and HCS2 had only the last item referring to basic skills (*).

- ***Life Skills Problems (LSP):*** This category involves those who say 'yes' to any of the following items in the questionnaire:
  - I was not confident that my social or interpersonal skills were good enough.
  - When I started the course, I was homeless or living in temporary accommodation (*eg*, B&B, sleeping rough or hostel).
- ***Potential Discrimination Indicators (PDI):*** This category involves those who say 'yes' to any of the following items in the questionnaire:
  - I had a problem relating to my health/disability.

- I have a long-term health problem/disability that affects the kind of work I can do.
- My age was 50 or over on my last birthday.
- I am female.
- I belong to an ethnic group which is not white.
- I am aged 16 to 24 and unemployed for one year or more.
- I am aged 25 or over and unemployed for two years.

- ***Circumstantial Constraints (CC):*** This category involves those who say 'yes' to any of the following items in the questionnaire:
  - Single
  - Divorced
  - Separated
  - Widowed AND
  - A parent or guardian with children living with you.
  - I could not find suitable and/or affordable childcare.
  - My caring responsibilities took priority over finding a job.

2) Support types

- ***Support 1 (advice/guidance/support):*** Those who receive this kind of support provided by the projects would say 'yes' to the following two items:
  - Give you a personal training plan.
  - Give you advice or guidance about what sorts of work or training you could do.
- ***Support 2 (jobsearch help):*** Those who receive this support type would say 'yes' to the following items:
  - Give you ideas about the sorts of work you could look for.
  - Tell you about jobs you could try to go for.
  - Provide you with contacts to help you look for a job.
  - Provide training in how to look for work.
- ***Support 3 (work experience/subsidised employment):*** Those who receive support three would say 'yes' to the following items:
  - Pay part or all of your wages so you could work for an employer.
  - Give you work experience.
- ***Support 4 (Vocational training):*** Those who are in this category would say 'yes' to the following items:
  - Provide training in how to do a particular kind of job.

- Give you general training about the world of work.
- Train you in using computers.
- Allow you to work towards a qualification.

- ***Support 5 (Self employment support):*** Those who would say 'yes' to the following item:
  - Give you help with setting up your own business.

Dependent variables

Our dependent variables in this study are the actual outcomes from the courses. We looked into three types of outcomes:

- ***Job or Self Employment Outcome:*** If respondents said 'yes' to any of the following items, they are classified as having this outcome:
  - Paid work/full-time (over 30 hours per week)
  - Paid work/part-time (30 hours or less per week)
  - Self-employed
- ***Qualification Outcomes:*** Those who gained NVQs ranging from Levels 1 to Level 5 would be in this category.
- ***Intermediate Outcomes:*** These kind of outcomes, *eg* improved self-confidence, enhanced personal skills, etc are considered to be more of a soft outcome. Soft outcomes are important in terms of laying the basis for non-job outcomes, and longer term success in the labour market. They, therefore, have both inherent and consequential interest. We used four soft outcomes in the analysis:

a) *Skills/Qualifications:* If respondents' answer was 'yes' to any of the following items, they are in this outcome category:

- Job-related skills
- Qualifications
- Work experience
- Improved career prospects

b) *Social Skills:* If any of the following items are answered 'yes', those respondents will be in this outcome category:

- Personal/social skills
- Team working skills
- Problem solving skills

c) *Personal Skills:* If respondents said 'yes' to any of the following items, they will be in this category:

- Self-confidence and motivation

- Independence
- Sense of responsibility

d) *Basic/Key Skills:* If they said 'yes' to any of the following items, they then will be in this soft outcome category:

- Literacy skills/wordpower
- Numeracy skills/numberpower
- IT skills
- Communication skills (*eg*, helping you to meet and talk to new people)

The Logistic Regression models and their results

Model 1: Job/SE outcome

We first looked at the 'Job/SE Outcome'. In this model, we are trying to find out which of the independent variables, *ie*, hcs, lsp, pdi, cc, and the five different support types, would help us predict respondents' likelihood of having an employment outcome. For this, we defined the 'job/self-employment', which is our dependent variable, as having the value of 1 if respondents have a job/self-employment as a result of the course or having zero if they did not have this outcome.

The results from this model are shown in Table 1. They suggest that the model is moderately successful which means that the independent variables can only explain a modest amount of the variance in job outcome. This is expected considering that those who had an employment outcome as a result of the course constituted only 35 per cent of the overall population.

In Table 1, we give the coefficient (Coefficient: Exp(B)) for each of the independent variables with their reference categories. Having an Exp (B) value which is less than 1 means that that particular independent variable *reduces* the likelihood of the observed outcome. Having an Exp (B) value which is greater than 1, on the other hand, indicates that that variable *increases* the likelihood of the observed outcome. We also show the significance level (labelled sig.). Using a significance level of 0.05 (*ie* 95 per cent) we are able to establish whether the coefficient is significantly different from zero. Thus, if sig. is lower than .05 the results are deemed statistically significant, and we can be 95 per cent sure that the independent variable is having the observed effect. Results which are statistically significant are marked thus **.

Variables for which the odds of having a Job/SE outcome are *reduced* (*ie* Exp(B) is *less* than 1)

- Being in the category of Human Capital Shortcomings (HCS) significantly reduces one's odds of having a job/self-employment outcome. Both HCS1 and HCS2 have the same effect as they both reduce one's odds.
- Having Life Skills Problems (LSP) also significantly reduces one's odds of having a job outcome.
- Having Potential Discrimination Indicators (PDI) is another significant factor in predicting a reduced odds of being in the category of job/self-employment outcome.

Variables for which the odds of having a Job/SE outcome are *increased* (*ie* Exp(B) is *more* than 1)

- Having Support 2, which is the type of support provided on jobsearch, significantly increases one's odds of ending up with a job/self-employment outcome.
- Support 3 (work experience/subsidised employment) is not statistically significant but has a strong tendency indicating that having this type of support also increases respondents' odds of being in the job outcome category.
- Support 5 (self employment support) is also a very relevant variable here. One would expect that it would positively contribute to the model. However, the numbers who said "yes" to this type of support were very low indeed. As a result, this support type was not a statistically significant contributor to the model.

Table 1: Logistic regression estimates of the odds of having an employment outcome

Variable	Sig.	Coefficient Exp (B)
HSC1 (reference category is no/not good enough/out of date or wrong qualifications)	.018(*)	.799
HSC2 (reference category is lacking basic skills)	.001(**)	.461
LSP (reference category is lacking social/interpersonal skills or being homeless)	.001(**)	.686
PDI (reference category is being from older age/non-white/female or disable category)	.001(**)	.644
CC (reference category is being single with child care responsibilities)	.341	1.096
SUPP1 (reference category is having advice/guidance support)	.861	.982
SUPP2 (reference category is having jobsearch help support)	.003(**)	1.400
SUPP3 (reference category is having work experience/subsidised employment support)	.103	1.159
SUPP4 (reference category is having vocational training support)	.854	1.028
SUPP5 (reference category is having self employment support)	.452	.899

Note: * indicates significance at the 95 per cent level, ** indicates significance at the 99 per cent level

Source: Survey Data

Model 2: Qualification outcome

For this model, the target or dependent variable is the NVQs (ranging from Level 1 to Level 5) that were gained by respondents as a result of the course. The model looked to see what types of clients and what types of support would help us predict respondents' likelihood of gaining an NVQ as a course outcome. Again, we defined our dependent variable, NVQ gained, as having the value of 1 if respondents gained an NVQ (ranging from Level 1 to Level 5) or having zero if they did not gain any.

The results from this model are shown in Table 2. This model is slightly better than the Model 1. It accounts for a higher percentage of the variance explained by the independent variables. The model predicts 72 per cent of those who are in 'gain' position and 56 per cent of those who are in 'no gain', amounting to 64 per cent of cases overall.

Variables for which the odds of gaining NVQs are *reduced* (*ie* Exp(B) is *less* than 1)

- Being in the category of Human Capital Shortcomings (HCS) significantly reduces one's odds of gaining an NVQ as a result of the course. Both HCS1 and HCS2 have the same effect as they both reduce one's odds.
- Having Potential Discrimination Indicators (PDI) is another significant factor in predicting a reduced odds of gaining NVQs as a course outcome.

- Having support type 5 (self-employment support) also significantly reduces one's odds of gaining NVQs as a result of the course

Variables for which the odds of gaining NVQs are *increased* (*ie* Exp(B) is *more* than 1)

- Having circumstantial constraints (those who are single and have caring responsibilities) seems to significantly increase one's odds of gaining NVQs ranging from Level 1 to Level 5 as an outcome.
- Having Support 1, which is the type of support that provides advice and guidance to respondents, significantly increases one's odds of gaining an NVQ from the course.
- Having Support 3 (work experience/subsidised employment) also significantly increases one's odds of achieving an NVQ as a course outcome.
- Support 4 (vocational training) is also a significant contributor to the model in terms of increasing one's odds of gaining NVQs from the course.

Model 3: Intermediate (soft) outcomes

As mentioned earlier, these intermediate outcomes are important in terms of laying the basis for non-job outcomes, and longer term success in the labour market. They, therefore, have both inherent

Table 2: Logistic regression estimates of the odds of gaining NVQs ranging from Level 1 to Level 5 as a result of the course

Variable	Sig.	Coefficient: Exp (B)
HSC1 (reference category is no/not good enough/out of date or wrong qualifications)	.002(**)	.724
HSC2 (reference category is lacking basic skills)	.001(**)	.670
LSP (reference category is lacking social/interpersonal skills or being homeless)	.800	.974
PDI (reference category is being from older age/non-white/female or disable category)	.001(**)	.669
CC (reference category is being single with child care responsibilities)	.001(**)	1.416
SUPP1 (reference category is having advice/guidance support)	.004(**)	1.394
SUPP2 (reference category is having jobsearch help support)	.086	1.236
SUPP3 (reference category is having work experience/subsidised employment support)	.001(**)	1.674
SUPP4 (reference category is having vocational training support)	.001(**)	4.887
SUPP5 (reference category is having self employment support)	.024(*)	.722

Note: * indicates significance at the 95 per cent level, ** indicates significance at the 99 per cent level

Source: Survey Data

and consequential interest. There are four of these soft outcomes that we looked into in the third regression model, *ie*, there are four sub-categories of the third regression model:

3a) skills/qualifications outcome: This is the first sub-category which includes those who gain any job-related skills/ qualifications/work experience or improved career prospects. Again, those who were in the category of skills/qualifications were defined as having the value of 1, those who did not fall into this category was defined as having zero.

The results from this model are shown in Table 3a. The model is more successful than the other two. It accounts for 41 per cent of the variance explained by the independent variables. In statistical terms, this is a high percentage for this type of analysis. The model predicts only 38 per cent of those who are in 'no gain' position and 97 per cent of those who are in 'gain', amounting to 88 per cent of cases overall.

Variables for which the odds of gaining job-related skills/qualifications are *reduced* (*ie* Exp(B) is *less* than 1)

- The only independent variable that seems to have a negative effect on this outcome is PDI (potential discrimination indicators). However, this is almost significant ($p < .075$). The results suggest that having Potential Discrimination Indicators (PDI) tends to contribute to a reduced odds of gaining job related skills/qualifications as a course outcome.

Variables for which the odds of gaining job-related skills/qualifications are *increased* (*ie* Exp(B) is *more* than 1)

- Having circumstantial constraints (those who are single and have caring responsibilities) significantly increases one's odds of gaining job-related skill/qualifications as a result of the course.
- Having Support 1, which is the type of support that provides advice and guidance to respondents, also significantly increases one's odds.
- Support 2 (jobsearch help) also has a positive effect on this type of soft outcome.
- Having Support 3 (work experience/subsidised employment) also significantly increases one's odds of gaining job-related skill/qualifications.
- Support 4 (vocational training) is also a significant contributor to the model in terms of increasing one's odds of gaining this soft outcome as a result of the course.

Table 3a: Logistic regression estimates of the odds of gaining job-related skills/ qualifications as a result of the course

Variable	Sig.	Coefficient: Exp (B)
HSC1 (reference category is no/not good enough/out of date or wrong qualifications)	.106	.778
HSC2 (reference category is lacking basic skills)	.144	.761
LSP (reference category is lacking social/interpersonal skills or being homeless)	.604	.916
PDI (reference category is being from older age/non-white/female or disable category)	.075	.669
CC (reference category is being single with child care responsibilities)	.004(**)	1.601
SUPP1 (reference category is having advice/guidance support)	.001(**)	2.047
SUPP2 (reference category is having jobsearch help support)	.001(**)	1.852
SUPP3 (reference category is having work experience/subsidised employment support)	.001(**)	8.452
SUPP4 (reference category is having vocational training support)	.001(**)	8.874
SUPP5 (reference category is having self employment support)	.127	.680

Note: * indicates significance at the 95 per cent level, ** indicates significance at the 99 per cent level

Source: Survey Data

3b) social skills outcome: The second sub-category of intermediate outcomes includes those who gain any of personal/social skills, team working skills or problem solving skills. We defined this sub-category as having the value of 1 if respondents gained any of these social skills or having zero if they did not gain them.

Table 3b shows the results of this model. The model accounts for 36 per cent of the variance explained by the independent variables. The model predicts only 49 per cent of those who are in 'no gain' position and 93 per cent of those who are in 'gain', amounting to 83 per cent of cases overall.

Variables for which the odds of gaining social skills are *reduced* (*ie* Exp(B) is *less* than 1)

- Having Potential Discrimination Indicators (PDI) is another significant factor in predicting a reduced odds of gaining a social skills outcome.
- Having HCS1 reduces one's odds of gaining social skills as a result of the course.

Variables for which the odds of gaining social skills are *increased* (*ie* Exp(B) is *more* than 1)

- Having HSC2, on the other hand, increases one's odds of gaining social skills. Those who say they have problems with their basic skills only have significantly higher odds of gaining these social skills.
- Having Life Skills Problems is another factor which contributes positively to this soft outcome. Those who are in this category also have significantly higher odds of gaining social skills.
- Having Support 1 (advice/guidance) significantly increases one's odds of gaining social skills.
- Support 2 (jobsearch help) also has a positive effect on this type of soft outcome.
- Having Support 3 (work experience/subsidised employment) also significantly increases one's odds of gaining these social skills.
- Support 4 (vocational training) is also a significant contributor to the model in terms of increasing one's odds of gaining this soft outcome as a result of the course.

Table 3b: Logistic regression estimates of the odds of gaining social skills as a result of the course

Variable	Sig.	Coefficient: Exp (B)
HSC1 (reference category is no/not good enough/out of date or wrong qualifications)	.001(**)	.663
HSC2 (reference category is lacking basic skills)	.004(**)	1.578
LSP (reference category is lacking social/interpersonal skills or being homeless)	.002(**)	1.521
PDI (reference category is being from older age/non-white/female or disable category)	.002(**)	.632
CC (reference category is being single with child care responsibilities)	.156	.840
SUPP1 (reference category is having advice/guidance support)	.001(**)	2.880
SUPP2 (reference category is having jobsearch help support)	.001(**)	2.666
SUPP3 (reference category is having work experience/subsidised employment support)	.001(**)	2.804
SUPP4 (reference category is having vocational training support)	.001(**)	3.313
SUPP5 (reference category is having self employment support)	.310	1.239

Note: * indicates significance at the 95 per cent level, ** indicates significance at the 99 per cent level

Source: Survey Data

3c) personal skills outcome: In this sub-category, there are those who said yes to gaining any of the personal skills that involve self-confidence and motivation, independence or sense of responsibility as a result of the course. We defined this sub-category as having the value of 1 if respondents were in 'gain' position or having zero if they were in 'no gain' position.

Table 3c reveals the results of this model. The model accounts for 37 per cent of the variance explained by the independent variables. The model predicts only 50 per cent of those who are in 'no gain' position and 93 per cent of those who are in 'gain', amounting to 83 per cent of cases overall.

Variables for which the odds of gaining personal skills are *reduced* (*ie* Exp(B) is *less* than 1)

- HCS1 is the only factor that makes a negative contribution to the model, *ie*, having HCS1 reduces one's odds of gaining personal skills as a result of the course.

Variables for which the odds of gaining personal skills are *increased* (*ie* Exp(B) is *more* than 1)

- Having HCS2, on the other hand, seems to have a positive effect on this soft outcome. Although it is not statistically significant, those who have problems with basic skills only tend to have higher odds of gaining personal skills as a result of the course.
- Having Life Skills Problems significantly increases one's odds of gaining personal skills.
- Having PDI also has a positive contribution to the model but it is not statistically significant. Same goes for CC which also seems to have a positive effect but not statistically significant either.
- All five support types have positive effect on the outcome. Those who said yes to having these kinds of support have higher odds of gaining personal skills as a result.

3d) basic/key skills outcome: : This is the last sub-category which includes those who said yes to gaining any of the basic/key skills that involve literacy and numeracy skills, IT skills or communication skills. Again, we defined this sub-category as having the value of 1 if respondents were in 'gain' position or having zero if they were in 'no gain' position.

The results from this model are shown in Table 3d. They reveal that the model accounts for 29 per cent of the variance explained by the independent variables. The model predicts only 32 per cent of those who are in 'no gain' position and 96 per cent of those who are in 'gain', amounting to 86 per cent of cases overall.

Table 3c: Logistic regression estimates of the odds of gaining personal skills as a result of the course

Variable	Sig.	Coefficient: Exp (B)
HSC1 (reference category is no/not good enough/out of date or wrong qualifications)	.036(*)	.776
HSC2 (reference category is lacking basic skills)	.243	1.200
LSP (reference category is lacking social/interpersonal skills or being homeless)	.001(**)	1.865
PDI (reference category is being from older age/non-white/female or disable category)	.089	1.262
CC (reference category is being single with child care responsibilities)	.079	1.255
SUPP1 (reference category is having advice/guidance support)	.001(**)	3.104
SUPP2 (reference category is having jobsearch help support)	.001(**)	2.684
SUPP3 (reference category is having work experience/subsidised employment support)	.001(**)	2.706
SUPP4 (reference category is having vocational training support)	.001(**)	2.943
SUPP5 (reference category is having self employment support)	.001(**	2.840

Note: * indicates significance at the 95 per cent level, ** indicates significance at the 99 per cent level

Source: Survey Data

Variables for which the odds of gaining basic/key skills are *reduced* (*ie* Exp(B) is *less* than 1)

- HCS1 is the only factor that seems to make a negative contribution to the model, *ie*, having HCS1 tends to reduce one's odds of gaining basic/key skills as a result of the course. However, this is not statistically significant.

Variables for which the odds of gaining basic/key skills are *increased* (*ie* Exp(B) is *more* than 1)

- Having HCS2, on the other hand, has a significant positive effect on predicting this soft outcome. Those who have problems with basic skills only have increased odds of gaining basic/key skills as a result of the course.
- LSP is another factor which significantly increases one's odds of gaining basic/key skills as a course outcome.
- Similarly, PDI also significantly increases one's odds of gaining this soft outcome.
- Being single with caring responsibilities (CC) also increases one's odds of gaining basic/key skills as a result of the course.
- Having Support1 (advice/guidance support) significantly increases one's odds of gaining this soft outcome.

- Support 2 (jobsearch help) also increases one's odds of gaining these skills.
- Finally, having Support 4 (vocational training) is also a significant contributor to the model in terms of increasing one's odds of gaining this soft outcome as a result of the course.

Table 3d: Logistic regression estimates of the odds of gaining basic/key skills as a result of the course

Variable	Sig.	Coefficient: Exp (B)
HSC1 (reference category is no/not good enough/out of date or wrong qualifications)	.157	.834
HSC2 (reference category is lacking basic skills)	.036(*)	1.435
LSP (reference category is lacking social/interpersonal skills or being homeless)	.004(**)	1.515
PDI (reference category is being from older age/non-white/female or disable category)	.002(**)	1.534
CC (reference category is being single with child care responsibilities)	.022(*)	1.395
SUPP1 (reference category is having advice/guidance support)	.001(**)	2.171
SUPP2 (reference category is having jobsearch help support)	.001(**)	1.933
SUPP3 (reference category is having work experience/subsidised employment support)	.134	1.212
SUPP4 (reference category is having vocational training support)	.001(**)	7.590
SUPP5 (reference category is having self employment support)	.494	1.164

Note: * indicates significance at the 95 per cent level, ** indicates significance at the 99 per cent level

Source: Survey Data