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**Profiling employers involved in Apprenticeship  
Trailblazer groups**

**A report prepared for  
Gatsby Foundation  
By**

**Peter Dickinson and Emily Erickson**

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**Warwick Institute for Employment Research  
University of Warwick**

**Contact details**

Peter Dickinson  
Warwick Institute for Employment Research  
University of Warwick  
Coventry CV4 7AL  
T: 024 7652 4420  
E: [p.dickinson@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:p.dickinson@warwick.ac.uk)  
<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier>

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## Acronyms

AAT	Association of Accounting Technicians
APS	Annual Population Survey
CIMA	Chartered Institute of Management Accountants
CIOT	Chartered Institute of Taxation
EEF	Engineering Employers Federation
EPA	End Point Assessment
FSB	Federation of Small Businesses
ICAEW	Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales
IER	Institute for Employment Research
IfATE	Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education
RICS	Royal Chartered Institute of Chartered Surveyors
RoATP	Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers
SIC	Standard Industrial Classification
SOC	Standard Occupation Classification
SSA	Subject Sector Area

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Introduction

Warwick University Institute for Employment Research (IER) was commissioned by the Gatsby Foundation to undertake research into what types of employers are involved in apprenticeship Trailblazer groups (hereafter referred to as Trailblazers). These are groups of employers which come together to set the Standards at the heart of the apprenticeship system.

## 1.2. Background

In 2014, it was announced that apprenticeship Frameworks were to be replaced by Standards. Whilst Frameworks were developed by sector bodies, apprenticeship Standards were to be developed through groups of employers known as Trailblazers. They would develop and agree the occupational standards and End Point Assessment (EPA) plan.

The requirements of trailblazer groups was set out by the [Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education](#) (IfATE) and was, in short: "...a group of employers recognised by the Institute and reflective of those who employ people in the occupation, including small employers". IfATE sought to ensure that Trailblazer members were representative of employers who employed people in the Standards' occupations by analysing the size and sector of Trailblazer organisations.

To date 647 apprenticeship Standards have been approved for delivery by groups of employers which have also included other organisations such as, employer representative bodies (such as, the EEF [Engineering Employers Federation, now MakeUK]), sector representative bodies (for example, the British Beer & Pub Association), occupation representative bodies (such as the Royal Chartered Institute of Chartered Surveyors [RICS]), training providers, and skills organisations (e.g. Cogent Skills).

## 1.3. Research aims

IfATE requires that Trailblazers: "...as a collective represent the types of employers likely to use the apprenticeship". For example, sector, size, and geographical spread. Typically, this requires 10 to 20 employers". Whilst IfATE holds a list of employers involved in each Trailblazer, there is no data on the composition sector, size, and geographical spread of employers. No research has been undertaken into the types of employers involved in the Trailblazers.

This study seeks to fill this gap by initially identifying a sample of nine Trailblazers and finding out the characteristics of employers (size and sector), and how representative they are of employers in the sector. The study will also identify the types of other organisations involved in the Trailblazer groups.

The study focuses on apprenticeships in England.

## 1.4. Structure of the report

The remainder of the report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 provides information on the methodology;
- Section 3 analyses the sectoral and employment size representativeness of Trailblazer groups;
- Section 4 reports on the representation of single employers and other organisations;
- Section 5 provides the conclusions.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Introduction

The approach was to identify a cross-section of Standards across the three levels of apprenticeships (Intermediate, Advanced and Higher [including Degree Apprenticeships]), based on the number of starts in 2018/19 (i.e. the last full year before the pandemic).

### 2.2. Largest Standards by number of starts

Table 1 shows the Standards with the ten largest number of starts (2018/19) for the three categories of apprenticeships. The specific level of apprenticeship is provided in the Higher category.

**Table 1: Top 10 Standards by number of starts – 2018/19**

<b>Intermediate:</b>	
Adult Care Worker	14,820
Customer Service Practitioner	7,750
Hair Professional	6,700
Retailer	6,390
Hospitality Team Member	6,010
Healthcare Support Worker	2,390
Commis Chef	2,200
HM Forces Serviceperson (Public Services)	2,150
Carpentry and Joinery	2,080
Supply Chain Warehouse Operative	1,810
<b>Advanced:</b>	
<i>Team Leader / Supervisor</i>	22,840
Lead Adult Care Worker	14,170
Business Administrator	10,790
Installation Electrician / Maintenance Electrician	5,960
Assistant Accountant	4,630
Engineering Technician	4,310
Hospitality Supervisor	4,010
Public Service Operational Delivery Officer	3,700
Motor Vehicle Service and Maintenance Technician (Light Vehicle)	3,420
<i>Infrastructure Technician</i>	3,270
<b>Higher:</b>	
<i>Operations / Departmental Manager - Level 5</i>	10,470
Accountancy / Taxation Professional - Level 7	6,810
Leader in Adult Care - Level 5	6,570
Nursing Associate - Level 5	4,310
Senior Leader - Level 7	3,410
Associate Project Manager - Level 4	3,350
Professional Accounting / Taxation Technician - Level 4	3,050
Chartered Manager - Level 6	2,850
HR Consultant / Partner - Level 5	1,980
Business Administration - ?	1,930

Source: DfE Apprenticeships Data Pack- User Guide 2018/19 (Final Report) [PT2\_Nov\_19\_FINAL\_v2]

Note: Standards in italics have subsequently been withdrawn since 2018/19.

Within each category there is a good range of Standards covering different SOC (2010) groups of occupations, and sectors, including sector specific (e.g. hair professional) and generic (such as management).

Table 2 provides the agreed sample of nine Standards, three at each level. They were selected to represent a cross-section of SOC groups, sectors and sector specific/generic occupations. The number of employers/other organisations<sup>1</sup> involved in the Trailblazer developing the Standard is also shown. This averages 22 organisations per Standard, ranging from 8 to 47.

**Table 2: Apprenticeship Standards sample**

Level	Title	No. of starts	No. of Trailblazer organisations
Intermediate	Adult Care Worker	14,820	11
	Hair Professional	6,700	17
	Commis Chef	2,200	19
Advanced	Team Leader / Supervisor	22,840	28
	Business Administrator	10,790	45
	Installation Electrician / Maintenance Electrician	5,960	8
Higher	Accountancy / Taxation Professional - Level 7	6,810	27
	Nursing Associate - Level 5	4,310	17
	Associate Project Manager - Level 4	3,350	25

Source: Warwick IER

### 2.3. Employer information

The type of organisation was identified (e.g. employer, sector representative organisation etc.). For each employer the following information was collected:

- Employment size, using the following size bands: small (<50); medium (50-249); and large (250+);
- Sector, to 3-digit SIC (2007);
- Geographical coverage i.e. of sites, subregional; regional; multi-regional; national (England/UK); international.

This information came from web searches (including LinkedIn) and Companies House.

Trailblazer employers were compared to organisations which employ those occupations most closely related to the Standard. The relevant occupations were identified from the Standard description, either from the typical job titles specified in the Standard (for example, see

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<sup>1</sup> This includes: employer representative organisations (e.g. the Federation of Small Businesses [FSB]); sector representative organisations (e.g. British Institute of Innkeeping); awarding bodies (e.g. Association of Accounting Technicians [AAT]); occupation organisations/chartered bodies (e.g. Chartered Institute of Management Accountants [CIMA]); training providers (e.g. People 1<sup>st</sup>);



[Associate Project Manager](#)) or from the occupational profile (e.g. [Business Administrator](#)). In some cases, there were no directly related occupations in the SOC classification. For example, there is no SOC for Commis Chef which occupies a position below Chef. In this case, occupations above and below the Commis Chef position ('5434 Chefs', '5435 Cooks' and '9272 Kitchen & catering assistants) were identified because sectors employing these occupations were also the most likely to be employing Commis Chefs.

Data on the occupation and the sectoral profile of employment came from the Annual Population Survey (APS). Relevant occupations were converted into their 4-digit SOC designation. Then each 4-digit SOC was analysed against the 3-digit SICs where they were employed, and by employment size.

The following provides an example of the analysis undertaken for the Accountancy / Taxation Professional - Level 7 apprenticeship. This was repeated for all nine Standards in the sample and is contained in the accompanying Excel spreadsheet.

As a first step, the 4-digit SOCs for the [Accountancy / Taxation Professional - Level 7](#) apprenticeship were derived from the job roles identified in the Standard. These included: Financial accountant, Management accountant, Tax accountant, Tax adviser, Tax specialist, External auditor, Internal auditor, Financial analyst, Management consultant, Forensic accountant and Business advisor.

The most relevant 4-digit SOCs were: '2421 Chartered and certified accountants'; '2423 Management consultants and business analysts'; and '3535 Taxation experts'.

The APS was analysed to identify the 3-digit SICs which employed these occupations. There were 140 3-digit SICs where accountants were employed. Table 3 shows the five largest sectors by size that employed the three SOCs combined (i.e. SOCs 2421, 2423 and 3535).

**Table 3: Largest employment sectors by size for Accountancy / Taxation Professional – Level 7 occupations**

Sector (3-digit SIC)	Small (<50 employees)	Medium (50-249 employees)	Large (250+ employees)	Total
69.2 Accounting and auditing activities	25621	14560	23144	63325
70.2 Management consultancy activities	23361	5597	18605	47562
84.1 State Admin & social/econ policy	2740	3868	23675	30282
62.0 Computer programming and consultancy	3564	6017	7641	17222
66.1 Activities auxiliary to financial services, except insurance and pension funding	2830	3139	7046	13014
<b>All sectors</b>	<b>96046</b>	<b>75427</b>	<b>151868</b>	<b>323340</b>

Source: Warwick IER analysis of APS data 2019

The characteristics of Trailblazer employers was identified and compared to the employment size and sector based on the APS.

Table 4 shows that there were 18 Trailblazer employers involved in setting the Accountancy / Taxation Professional – Level 7 apprenticeship Standard. Most of these employers (72% of Trailblazer employers) were in the SIC '69.2 Accounting and auditing activities sector'. The remaining five employers came from one sector each.

The percentage column for the APS data shows the proportion of people in relevant occupations employed the sectors, for example, '62.0 Computer programming and consultancy' accounted for 5% of employment of Accountancy / Taxation Professional – Level 7 occupations. The Trailblazer employers percentage column shows the proportion of employers from each sector<sup>2</sup>, for example, '62.0 Computer programming and consultancy' represents 6% of Trailblazer employers. This sector can be said to have a similar weighting in terms of its employment of relevant occupations for this Standard and employer representation on the Trailblazer group. Three sectors – '86.1 Hospital activities'; '56.3 Beverage serving activities'; and '42.1 Construction of roads and railways' – can be said to have an over representation relative to its employment of relevant occupations.

Two main sectors<sup>3</sup> which employed Accountancy / Taxation Professional – Level 7 occupations were not represented on the Trailblazer group. These were: '70.2 Management consultancy activities' (which employed 15% of the relevant occupations); and '66.1 Activities auxiliary to financial services, except insurance and pension funding' (which employed 4%).

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<sup>2</sup> This is a proportion of all employers, other organisations are not included in the calculation, for example, AAT.

<sup>3</sup> Main sector was defined as in the top five employment sectors for the relevant occupations or more than 4% of employment which ever provided the larger number of sectors. 4% was an arbitrary cut-off point in order to represent a sufficient, but not too great a, number of comparable sectors.

**Table 4: Comparison of the sector of Trailblazer employers for Accountancy / Taxation Professional – Level 7 occupations**

	APS Employment	Trailblazer employers	
		No.	%
69.2 Accounting and auditing activities	20%	13	72%
84.1 Administration of the State and the economic and social policy of the community	9%	1	6%
62.0 Computer programming and consultancy	5%	1	6%
86.1 Hospital activities	2%	1	6%
56.3 Beverage serving activities	-	1	6%
42.1 Construction of roads and railways	<1%	1	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Main APS employment sector(s) not included above</b>			
70.2 Management consultancy activities	15%	-	-
66.1 Activities auxiliary to financial services, except insurance and pension funding	4%	-	-

Source: Warwick IER

In a similar way, the employment size of employers was compared to those on the Trailblazer group. Again, using Accountancy / Taxation Professional – Level 7 as the example, Table 5 shows the proportion of employment by size of the relevant occupations, and the representation on the Trailblazer group.

Almost half (47%) of the relevant occupations for this Standard worked for large employers, around one quarter (23%) for medium sized employers, and almost one third (30%) for small employers. However, just under three quarters (72%) of employers on the Trailblazer group were large employers, one in ten (11%) were medium sized employers and less than one in five (17%) were small employers. Therefore, large employers can said to be over represented on the Trailblazer group, and small and medium sized employers underrepresented.

**Table 5: Comparison of the employment size of Trailblazer employers for Accountancy / Taxation Professional – Level 7 occupations**

	APS Employment	Trailblazer employers	
		No.	%
Small (<50 employees)	30%	3	17%
Medium (50-249 employees)	23%	2	11%
Large (250+ employees)	47%	13	72%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Warwick IER

Involvement in Trailblazer groups can be time consuming as Standards can take several years to be developed<sup>4</sup>. This might be off putting to medium and smaller employers. It might be the case that non-large employers are represented by sector groups or other employer representative organisations. For each Standard, an analysis was undertaken of non-employer organisations on the Trailblazer group. For the Accountancy / Taxation Professional – Level 7 Trailblazer, ten other organisations were represented:

- Eight were professional or membership body organisations, such as, Chartered Institute of Taxation (CIOT) and the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW);
- One was an employer organisation i.e. NHS Employers; and
- One was a training provider: Health Education East of England.

Therefore, as far as non-large employers were concerned there were no sector or employer organisations representing them.

Information was also collected in the geographical spread of employment sites of Trailblazer employers. These were categorised as: subregional; regional; national; and international. However, the APS does not contain comparable information with which to compare the employment site spread of people working in the sectors of relevant occupations.

#### **2.4. Presentation of the data**

As was mentioned above, the analysis was undertaken for all of the nine apprenticeship Standards in the sample. All of the analysis is contained in the accompanying spreadsheets which show detailed employment data for each of the Standards by employment size and sector (2 and 3-digit), comparing APS data with a profile of Trailblazer employers. There is a summary sheet which condenses this information into a number of tables.

#### **2.5. Additional analyses**

Additional analyses were undertaken across all 646 Standards that have been approved for delivery on IfATE's website. This was to determine single employer representation across Trailblazer groups, and the nature of other organisation representation.

Individual employers were listed against each Standard and level. The data required a considerable amount of cleaning because the same organisations were listed under different names. For example, BAE was listed under nine different names including: BAE, BAE Systems, BAE Systems PLC and under its different divisions e.g. BAE Systems Maritime. In the case of private sector businesses the group name was used, so in the case of BAE, BAE Systems was used across all of the various titles.

The same public sector organisation could also be named differently, for example the London Borough of Westminster could also be listed as Westminster City Council. In such cases one name was used.

#### **2.6. Summary**

Nine Standards were selected from the apprenticeships with the largest number of starts. The sample covered all three apprenticeship levels, a cross-section of occupations and sectors, and generic and sector specific occupations.

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<sup>4</sup> Dickinson, P. (2020). Future-proofing apprenticeships. Co-op Group.

Information on employment size, 2- and 3-digit SIC, geographical spread of employment sites and organisation type for all organisations represented on these nine Trailblazers was collected. This information came from web searches (including LinkedIn) and Companies House.

The apprenticeship Standards identified relevant occupations. Information on the sectors employing these occupations (4-digit SOC) was collected from the APS.

The sector and employment size of employers was compared to analyse the representativeness of employers on the Trailblazer groups.

This report provides a summary analysis, full analysis and data is provided in a number of Excel spreadsheets.

Additional analyses were undertaken across all 646 Standards to determine single employer representation across Trailblazer groups, and the nature of other organisations involved.

## **3. Trailblazer representativeness**

### **3.1. Introduction**

This section provides an analysis of the sector end employment size representativeness of the nine sample Trailblazers. It compares the size and sectoral distribution of employment with that of Trailblazer employers.

### **3.2. Sector representation**

Table 6 shows the extent to which Trailblazer groups of the nine Standards represent the sectors (SIC 3-digit) of employment of relevant occupations. For example, the Adult Care Worker – Intermediate Trailblazer has employers from five different sectors. These sectors represent 49% of total employment for the relevant occupations covered by the Adult Care Worker – Intermediate Standard.

Table 6 also shows the number of sectors employing more than one percent of relevant occupations to indicate whether the occupations relevant to the Standard are generic or sector specific. This ranges from five 3-digit SIC sectors for Hair Professional occupations (although 97% are employed in just one i.e. '96.0 Other personal service activities') to 15 sectors employing Business Administrators relevant occupations.

The number of sectors represented by Trailblazer employers is also shown. This ranges from one for Hair Professionals to 21 for Business Administrators. The more generic (i.e. non-sector specific) Standards – Associate Project Manager, Business Administrator and Team Leader – have more sectors represented in the Trailblazers than the spread of employment by sector. Whilst the more sector specific Standards – e.g. Hair Professional, Installation Electrician and Nursing Associate – are represented by fewer sectors than the sectoral spread of employment. More generic occupations, such as those relevant to Associate Project Managers, do cover more sectors, but the differences are not too great compared to more sector specific Standard occupations such as Commis Chefs and Adult Care Workers.

Table 6 suggests that three of the Standards - Commis Chef Intermediate, Hair Professional Intermediate and Nursing Associate Level 5 – have appropriate sector representation (employing more than two thirds of people in the relevant occupations). However, Team Leader/Supervisor and Business Administrator represent less than 30% of the sectoral employment coverage of the relevant occupations.

**Table 6: Sector representation of Trailblazer groups (3-digit SIC)**

	No. of sectors employing >1% (APS)	No. of sectors in represented in Trailblazer	% employment in Trailblazer sectors
Accountancy/Taxation Professional - Level 7	10	6	36%
Adult Care Worker - Intermediate	9	5	49%
Associate Project Manager - Level 4	13	17	34%
Business Administrator - Advanced	15	21	29%
Commis Chef - Intermediate	10	7	70%
Hair Professional - Intermediate	1	1	97%
Installation Electrician / Maintenance Electrician - Advanced	7	4	37%
Nursing Associate - Level 5	7	4	69%
Team Leader / Supervisor - Advanced	11	17	26%

Source: Warwick IER

One problem with using 3-digit SIC as a measure of sector representativeness is, at this level, sector definitions are quite detailed. For example, SIC 86 Human health activities includes 86.1 Human health activities (which is represented in the Trailblazer) and 86.9 Other human health activities which is not. There may be a fine dividing line in classifying an employer to one classification rather than the other.

To check whether this was the case, analysis was undertaken on the representation of employers at the 2-digit SIC level.

Table 7 provides an example of the effect on employer representativeness of using 2- and 3-digit SICs for the Accountancy/Taxation Professional Level 7 Standard. Using 3-digit SIC, Trailblazer employers cover six different sectors. Together, these six sectors account for 36% of employment in the associated occupations for the Accountancy/Taxation Professional Level 7 Standard. At a 2-digit level, Trailblazer employers also cover six sectors. Together, these account for 38% of employment in the associated occupations.

At both a 2- and 3-digit level, two main employment sectors are not represented in this Trailblazer group. Both sectors account for about 20% of the employment of associated occupations at the 2- and 3-digit levels.

The number of 3-digit sectors employing more than 1% of associate occupations is 10, whilst at a 2-digit level it is 12.

Therefore, in this example, using the 2- or 3-digit SIC does not greatly affect the degree of sector representativeness.

**Table 7: Comparing sector representation of the Accountancy/Taxation Professional Level 7 Trailblazer group using 2- and 3-digit SIC**

Sector of Trailblazer employers - 3-digit SIC	APS employment	Trailblazer employers	
		No.	%
69.2 Accounting and auditing activities	20%	13	72%
84.1 State Admin & social/econ policy	9%	1	6%
62.0 Computer progming and consultancy	5%	1	6%
86.1 Hospital activities	2%	1	6%
56.3 Beverage serving activities	-	1	6%
42.1 Construction of roads and railways	0%	1	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100%</b>
Main sectors not included in the Trailblazer – 3-digit SIC	APS employment		
70.2 Management consultancy activities	15%	-	-
66.1 Activities auxiliary to financial services, except insurance and pension funding	4%	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>No. of sectors employing &gt;1% (APS) = 10</b>			
Sector of Trailblazer employers - 2-digit SIC	APS employment	Trailblazer employers	
		No.	%
69 Legal and accounting activities	20%	13	72%
84 Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	10%	1	6%
62 Computer programming, consultancy and related activities	5%	1	6%
86 Human health activities	2%	1	6%
56 Food and beverage service activities	-	1	6%
42 Civil engineering	0%	1	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100%</b>
Main sectors not included in the Trailblazer – 2-digit SIC	APS employment		
70 Activities of head offices; management consultancy activities	15%	-	-
66 Activities auxiliary to financial services and insurance activities	5%	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>No. of sectors employing &gt;1% (APS) = 12</b>			

Source: Warwick IER



This comparative analysis was undertaken for all of the sample Standards.

Table 8 shows the same information as in Table 6 but for 2-digit SIC sectors. The representativeness of using a broader or narrower SIC definition varies between the Standards. But in general terms there is not much difference in using the 3- and 2-digit SIC sector measures as far as the representation of Trailblazer employers are concerned.

In terms of the employment spread across sectors, using 2-digit SIC covers a broader range of sectors for some Standards but narrower for others. For example, 2-digit SIC covers eight fewer sectors for Business Administrator relevant occupations, but seven more for Team Leader relevant occupations. On the 2-digit SIC measure, a generic Standard such as Business Administrator covers the same number of sectors as a more sector specific one such as Commis Chef.

There are no significant differences in the representativeness of Trailblazer employers for most Standards (i.e. what percentage of employment they cover). For seven Standards the difference is ten percentage points or less, and for all but one the difference is less than 20 percentage points. The main difference is for the Adult Care Standard where on the 3-digit definition the employment coverage of Trailblazer sectors increases from 49% (3-digit SIC) to 92% (2-digit SIC).

**Table 8: Sector representation of Trailblazer groups (2-digit SIC)**

	No. of sectors employing >1% (APS)	No. of sectors in represented in Trailblazer	% employment in Trailblazer sectors
Accountancy/Taxation Professional - Level 7	12	6	38%
Adult Care Worker - Intermediate	5	4	92%
Associate Project Manager - Level 4	19	16	44%
Business Administrator - Advanced	7	19	40%
Commis Chef - Intermediate	7	4	69%
Hair Professional - Intermediate	1	1	98%
Installation Electrician / Maintenance Electrician - Advanced	11	4	38%
Nursing Associate - Level 5	4	2	88%
Team Leader / Supervisor - Advanced	18	16	22%

Source: Warwick IER

Figure 1 shows the percentage employment in the main sectors not included in Trailblazer groups on 2- and 3-digit sector definitions. A main sector is one that employs five percent or more employment of relevant occupations or is in the top five employment sectors (whichever is the greater).

On the 3-digit measure, three Standards exclude main sectors employing more than one in five of relevant occupations: Adult Care Worker (45%); Installation Electrician (24%); and

Nursing Associate (21%). On the 2-digit measure there are also three: Installation Electrician (24%); Business Administrator (23%); and Accountancy/Taxation Professional (20%).

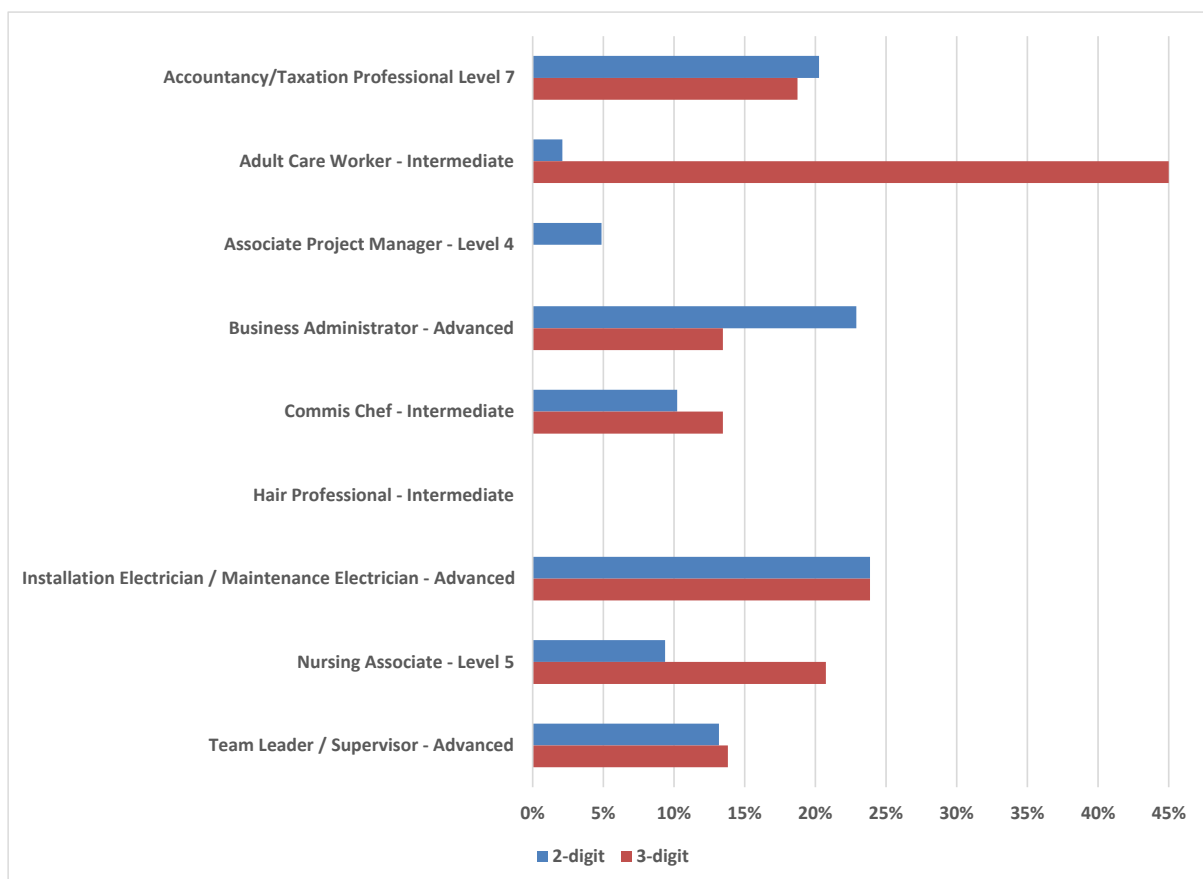
On the 3-digit definition of main sectors, two Standards include all of the main employment sectors: Associate Project Manager and Hair Professional<sup>5</sup>. Three Standards do not include one or two main sectors: Accountancy/Taxation Professional; Commis Chef; and Nursing Associate. Four Standards do not include three or four main sectors: Adult Care Worker; Business Administrator; Installation Electrician; and Team Leader.

On the 2-digit definition the number of excluded main sectors are quite similar. The only difference is that there is one fewer Standard where all main sectors are included, and one more Standard where one or two main sectors are excluded.

For most Standards (six), there is less than ten percentage point difference between the 2- and 3-digit measures. The main difference is Adult Care Workers. On the 2-digit measure the employment proportion of main sectors not included falls from 45% (3-digit) to 2%.

This suggests that neither a 2-digit or 3-digit SIC approach is necessarily the best option, as one could be a better representation for some Standards but not for others.

**Figure 1: Percentage employment in the main sectors not included in Trailblazer groups (2- and 3-digit SIC)**



Source: Warwick IER

<sup>5</sup> One sector employs 97% of Hair Professional relevant occupations. None of the other sectors employs more than 1% of relevant occupations. Therefore to include the other four sectors does not seem appropriate.

### 3.3. Employment size representation

Table 9 shows the representation of employers of different sizes in Trailblazer groups. It shows the proportion of small (<employers), medium (50-249) and large (250+) organisations employing the Standard relevant occupations compared to the employment size of employers on the Trailblazer group. A negative figure shows that the size group is under represented, and a positive figure means that it is over represented. For example, 35% of organisations employing Associate Project Manager relevant occupations are small employers whereas 12% of employers on the Trailblazer group are small employers. This gives a figure of -23% suggesting that small employers are under represented.

Employment size is a key dimension of apprenticeships as research has shown that the involvement of smaller employers in apprenticeships is declining. But small employers are more likely to recruit young people, especially as Intermediate apprentices, as a first step into the labour market.<sup>6</sup>

Small employers are under represented on all of the Trailblazer groups whilst large employers are over represented. Medium size employers are under represented on seven Standard groups and over represented on two.

The over representation of large employers is greatest for: Commis Chef (+92%); Nursing Associate (+67%); Adult Care Workers (+52%) and Team Leaders (+51%). These are also the Trailblazer groups where the under representation of small employers is greatest.

The level of under representation of medium size employers is similar across the seven Standards. Medium employers are over represented in the Hair Professional and Installation Electrician Trailblazer groups.

**Table 9: Employment size representation of Trailblazer groups**

	Small	Medium	Large
Accountancy/Taxation Professional - Level 7	-13%	-12%	25%
Adult Care Worker - Intermediate	-40%	-12%	52%
Associate Project Manager - Level 4	-23%	-13%	36%
Business Administrator - Advanced	-27%	-16%	44%
Commis Chef - Intermediate	-74%	-18%	92%
Hair Professional - Intermediate	-39%	13%	26%
Installation Electrician / Maintenance Electrician - Advanced	-23%	8%	15%
Nursing Associate - Level 5	-52%	-15%	67%
Team Leader / Supervisor - Advanced	-41%	-10%	51%

Source: Warwick IER

<sup>6</sup> Dickinson, P. and Hogarth, T. (2021). Apprenticeships with the benefit of hindsight. Edge Foundation and Gatsby Foundation.

### 3.4. Other organisations represented on sample Trailblazer groups

A number of Trailblazer organisations are not employers. Across the sample Standards, these include: employer organisations; training providers; professional/membership bodies; sector organisations; and awarding bodies.

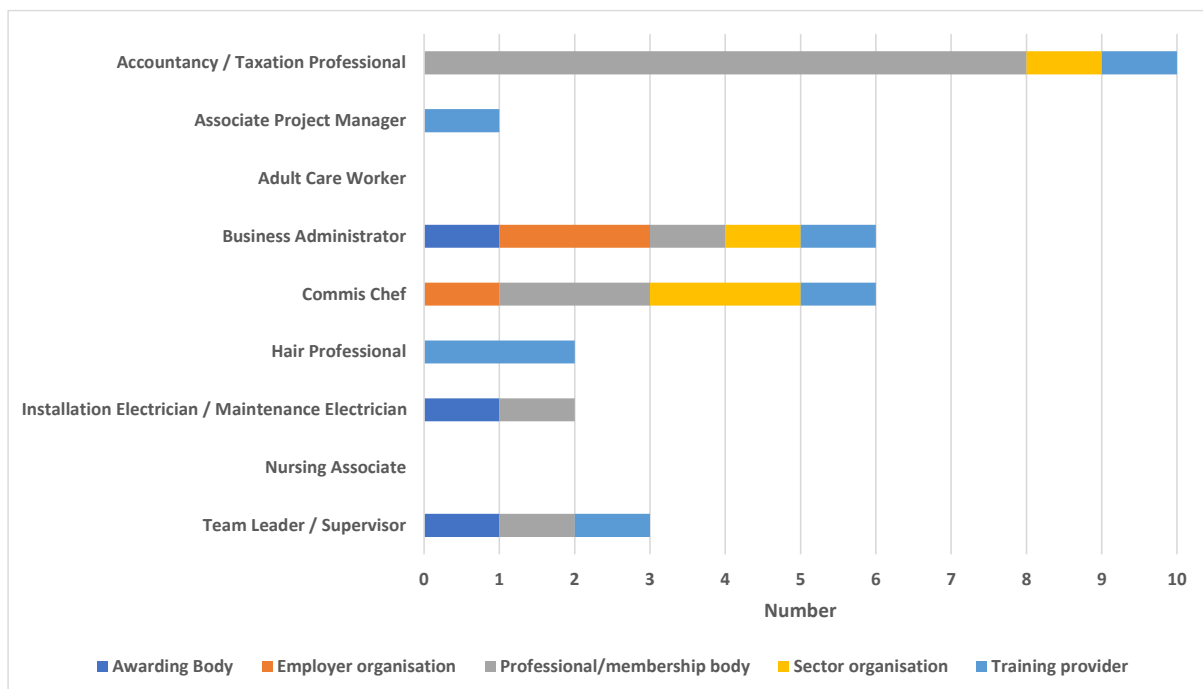
Across the nine sample Standards there were 30 non-employer organisations. The numbers ranged from zero (Adult Care Worker and Nursing Associate) to ten (Accountant/Taxation Professional).

Figure 2 shows the type of organisations represented on the sample Trailblazer groups. The Accountant/Taxation Professional Standard has the largest number, and most of these are professional bodies such as chartered institutes. The other two organisations are representatives of the health sector – NHS England (an employer organisation) and Health Education East of England (a training provider). This shows how sectors can be represented in addition to employers.

This could be a means of smaller organisations being represented on Trailblazer groups. As was mentioned above, participation in Trailblazers can be resource intensive with smaller and medium organisations less able to fund this. However, employer or sector organisations are only represented on two other Standards: Business Administrator and Commis Chef.

Training providers (six Standards) and professional/membership bodies (five) have the greatest representation across the sample Standards.

**Figure 2: Type of other organisations represented on sample Trailblazer groups**



Source: Warwick IER

### 3.5. Summary

The number of organisations represented on the nine Standards ranged from 12 to 46; and the number of employers from zero to 40.

As far as sectors are concerned, some Standards cover a narrower range than others. For example, Hair Professional occupations covered five 3-digit SIC sectors (employing more than 1% of the relevant occupations) whilst 15 sectors employed Business Administrators relevant occupations.

The number of sectors represented by Trailblazer employers ranged from one for Hair Professionals to 21 for Business Administrators. The more generic Standards unsurprisingly tend to have broader sector representation.

At a 3-digit SIC level, three Standards appear to have appropriate sector representation whilst two do not.

Analysing representation at a 2-digit level does not produce different results, there is no significant differences for most Standards. The main difference is for the Adult Care Standard where sector representation increases from 49% (3-digit SIC) to 92% (2-digit SIC).

Some Trailblazer groups exclude key sectors. Only two Standards include all of the main employment sectors (on the 3-digit measure). Using the 2-digit definition the number of excluded main sectors are similar.

Trailblazer groups do not represent employers of different sizes. Small employers are under represented on all, and medium sized employers on most, of the Trailblazer groups. Large employers are over represented.

Non-employer organisations also sit on Trailblazer groups. Across the nine sample Standards there were 30 non-employer organisations ranging from zero to ten. Potentially, employer or sector groups might represent smaller and medium sized employers. However, these organisations are only represented on two Standards. The greatest representation is from training providers and professional/membership bodies.

## 4. Employer and other organisations across all Trailblazers

### 4.1. Introduction

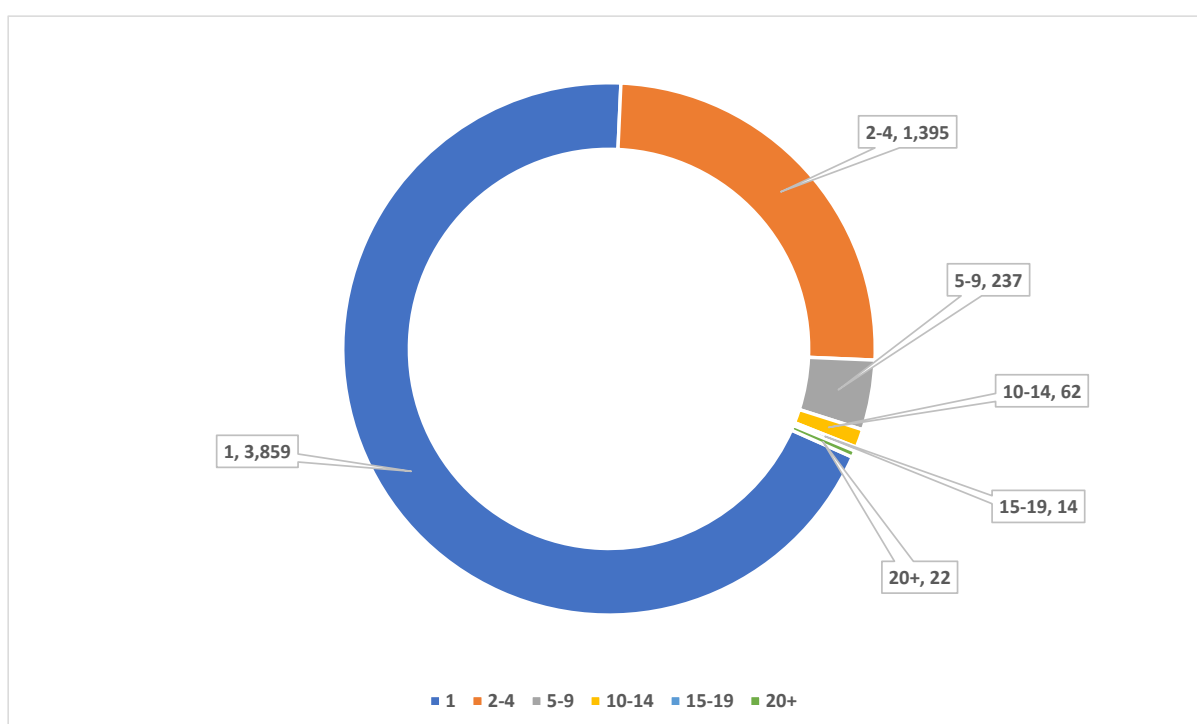
This section looks at employer and other organisation representation across all (646) of the Trailblazer groups.

### 4.2. Major employer representation

In total 5,589 organisations were represented on the 646 Standards.

Figure 3 shows that 3,859 organisations were represented on one Trailblazer group and 1,395 on 2-4. Twenty two organisations were represented on 20 or more Trailblazer groups, with the largest being 39.

**Figure 3: Organisation representation by number of Standards**



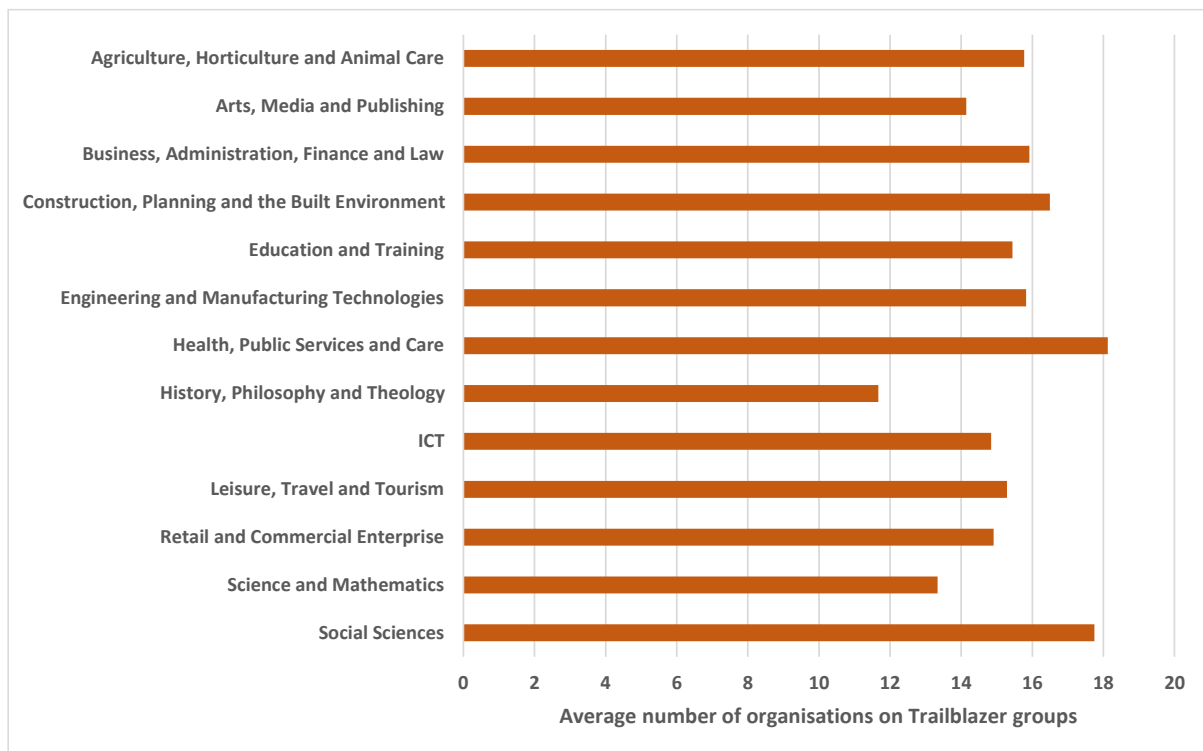
Source: Warwick IER

The average number of organisations was similar across the level of apprenticeship Standards. Intermediate Standards averaged 15 organisations on their Trailblazer groups as did Advanced Standards. Higher level Standards averaged 17.

Figure 4 shows the average number of organisations on Sector Subject Area (SSA) Trailblazer Groups. The number ranges from 12 on History, Philosophy and Theology groups to 18 on Health, Public Services and Care, and Social Sciences Trailblazers.

On the five largest apprenticeship SSAs (by number of starts) - Business, Administration, Finance and Law; Construction, Planning and the Built Environment; Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies; Health, Public Services and Care; and Retail and Commercial Enterprise – the numbers are very similar ranging from an average of 15 to 18.

**Figure 4: Organisation representation by Sector Subject Area**



Source: Warwick IER

Table 10 shows the single organisations that have most representation on Trailblazer groups. Those employers on 20 or more Trailblazers are shown.

BAE Systems leads the way as it is represented on 39 Trailblazer Groups, followed by BAM Construction (36), BT (34), Rolls Royce (33) and the Ministry of Defence (32).

Table 10 also shows the number of SSAs the organisations are represented on. All of the organisations are represented on at least three different SSAs. The widest spread is eight: BT, Ministry of Defence and ARUP. Glaxo Smith Kline is represented on seven.

These organisations are more likely to be represented on Trailblazers for higher level apprenticeships. Across all organisations, 49% sit on Higher level Trailblazer groups, 31% Advanced, and 20% Intermediate. However, the organisations in Table 9 are more likely to be on Higher level groups (57%) and less likely to be on Advanced (27%) and Intermediate (16%) Trailblazers.

**Table 10: Top 20 organisations with representation on Trailblazer groups**

Name of organisations	No. of Trailblazer groups	No. of SSAs
BAE Systems	39	4
BAM Construction	36	3
BT	34	8
Rolls Royce	33	3
Ministry of Defence	32	8
Siemens	31	3
Balfour Beatty	28	6
Lloyds Bank	26	3
Skanska	24	5
Carillion	24	4
Costain	24	5
Arup	24	8
Royal Air Force	23	4
Jaguar Land Rover	22	4
Glaxo Smith Kline	22	7
British Army	22	5
Boots UK Ltd	22	4
Transport for London	21	6
Amey	21	3
Sainsbury's	20	6
Kier Group PLC	20	4
Barclays	20	3

Source: Warwick IER

### 4.3. Other groups

Some preliminary analysis was undertaken of other groups across all 646 Trailblazer groups. The analysis identified:

- sector, employer, membership and professional bodies, by searching for organisations with the following in their titles: association, British, charter\*, England / Ireland / Scotland / Wales / Kingdom / UK, English / Irish / Scottish / Welsh / British / GB, industr\*, institute\*, national, royal, sector. In addition, organisations identified through the sample Trailblazer analysis, and other well known organisations (e.g. the ILM) were identified. Some of these organisations were identified as employers (such as the Bank of England) and not included.
- Training providers were also identified by the previous search. There was an additional search of those organisations with the following terms in their title: apprentice\*, college, education, provider, skill\*, train\*, and university. Unfortunately, there is not a list of the top apprenticeship providers by number of starts to identify the largest training



providers. The Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP) contains the names of over 1,200 main providers which was too many to search on. Instead, the TES Top 50 apprenticeship providers list was used, albeit a list of provider ratings. Also, those training providers identified in the Trailblazer sample analysis were also included.

This approach identified 240 sector/employer/membership/professional (hereafter referred to as representative organisations) organisations and 227 training providers. Of course, organisations can be more than one thing. A sector organisation might also be a training provider, as well as an employer of apprentices, sitting on Trailblazers as one or more of these.

Based on the approach adopted, Table 11 shows the greatest training provider representation on Trailblazer groups. Babcock sits on the largest number of Trailblazer groups (17), however, it is also a large employer of apprentices and will sit on these groups in more than one capacity. People 1<sup>st</sup>, Interserve and Birmingham City University sit on ten or more Trailblazers. There are six universities in Table 10 and one FE college.

Across all Trailblazer groups, 68 universities and 33 FE colleges are represented. There are also a number of former sector skills councils (such as Cogent Skills) and national skills academy (e.g. the National Skills Academy for Railway Engineering). Most providers are represented on a small number of Standards.

**Table 11: Top 20 training providers with representation on Trailblazer groups**

Name of organisations	No. of Trailblazer groups
Babcock	17
People 1st	14
Interserve	13
Birmingham City University	10
National Skills Academy for Nuclear	9
GTA England	9
Leeds College of Building	8
Skills for Health	8
National Skills Academy for Food & Drink	7
Armonia Health and Beauty	6
Creative Skillset	6
University of Cambridge	6
University of Salford	6
University of Derby	5
University of Manchester	5
University of the West of England	5
National Skills Academy for Railway Engineering	4
Activate Apprenticeships	4
CC Skills	4
Cogent Skills	4

Source: Warwick IER

Table 12 shows the top of representative organisations. This includes a range of organisations including chartered institutions, employer and sector representatives, and membership bodies. The main sectors represented are hospitality (five organisations), construction (5), health (4), and engineering (2), plus management (2).

**Table 12: Top 20 representative organisations sitting on Trailblazer groups**

Name of organisations	No. of Trailblazer groups
Health Education England	18
Institute of Engineering And Technology	15
NHS England	10
Institute of Mechanical Engineers	9
Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors	9
ILM	7
Institute of Hospitality	7
British Beer & Pub Association	6
British Institute of Innkeeping	6
Chartered Institute of Building	6
Hospitality SME consortium led by the Lancaster London	6
Royal Academy of Culinary Arts	6
British Institute of Non Destructive Testing	5
Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists	5
Chartered Management Institute	5
Institute of Civil Engineers	5
Royal College of Nursing	5
Civil Engineering Contractors Association	5
Highway Electrical Association	5
Public Health England	5

Source: Warwick IER

#### 4.4. Summary

Across all of the 646 Standards, 5,589 organisations were represented. Twenty two organisations were represented on 20 or more Trailblazer groups, with the largest being 39.

Twenty employers are represented on 20 or more Trailblazers. BAE Systems leads the way followed by BAM Construction, BT, Rolls Royce and the Ministry of Defence.

In terms of SSA spread, BT, Ministry of Defence and ARUP are represented on eight different SSAs.

The analysis identified 240 representative organisations and 227 training providers. But other organisations can be training providers and employers of apprentices as well as sitting on a Trailblazer as a representative organisation.

## 5. Conclusions

This study is, we believe, the first to analyse the representativeness of apprenticeship Standards Trailblazer groups. Trailblazers set the occupational profile, knowledge, skills and behaviours, and EPAs within apprenticeships. Standards take a long time to develop and representation on them requires a significant organisational commitment.

Whilst the remit of Trailblazers is to represent employers likely to use the apprenticeship, this study has shown that not all Trailblazer groups do. Some Trailblazers have very good sectoral representation and include all of the main sectors that employ the Standard related occupations. Some do not and exclude key sectors some of which employ up to one quarter of related occupations.

However, the main limitation of Trailblazer groups is their over representation of large employers, and their under representation of medium and small employers. This happens on all (for small employers) or most (for medium employers) groups.

It is not the case that small and medium sized employers are represented through other organisations. Very few of these organisations are sector or employer representative organisations. Most are training providers or professional/membership bodies.

A large number of organisations are represented across all of the Trailblazers, 5,589 across the 646 Standards. We estimate that around one in ten are other organisations. Most of these are representative organisations but a similar number are training providers.

This study has also shown that a number of employer and other organisations sit on a large number and wide range of Trailblazers. This in itself is not an issue. It can demonstrate the commitment of employers and other organisations to apprenticeships and workforce development. However, this needs to be monitored to ensure that Standards are representative across employers that are likely to use them.

Undertaking the analysis for this study has been challenging because the data on Trailblazer representation is not organised in any way. There is no information on the sector, employment size, type and geographical spread of organisations. Nor is there any information on the sectoral and size spread of Standard related occupations that could be used to make an assessment of the representativeness of the organisations which sit on the Trailblazers.

Such information should be collected as the norm for all organisations that are represented on Trailblazers. In order to assist future analysis, there should be agreement on a basic set of standardised information to be collected about organisations, so their representativeness can be assessed, along with an analysis of the employment profile of Standard related occupations.