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ESF Participant Survey 2015-2022

Analytical Report

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ESF Participant Survey 2015-2022: analytical report

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Views expressed in this report are those of the researchers and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government

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Table of contents

List of tables.....	2
List of figures.....	5
Glossary.....	6
1. Introduction	7
2. Methodology.....	15
3. Who are the participants?	29
4. Participating in an ESF Operation	35
5. ESF and the Accumulation of Skills	43
6. Improving Participation in the Labour Market.....	51
7. The Impact of ESF in Supporting Participation in Employment.....	73
8. Supporting Progression in Employment	99
9. Conclusions and Recommendations.....	117
10. References.....	126
Response Rates	128
Annex A: Data tables	134
Annex B: Full questionnaire used for second fieldwork window (2022-23)	168

List of tables

Table 1.1: Mapping of Thematic Objectives to Priority Axes and Specific Objectives	9
Table 1.2: ESF priorities and the Associated Changes Sought	10
Table 2.1: Sampling and Fieldwork Dates	16
Table 2.2: Questionnaire Summary	20
Table 2.3: Adjusted response rates for the first fieldwork window (2018-19).....	22
Table 2.4: Adjusted response rates for the second fieldwork period (2022-23)	23
Table 2.5: Weighting variables.....	24
Table 2.6: Description and Coverage of Specific Objectives	26
Table 3.1: Personal Characteristics of ESF Participants.....	30
Table 3.2: Economic Activity Status Prior to ESF	33
Table 4.1: Participating in an ESF Operation.....	36
Table 4.2: Where First Heard About ESF	39
Table 4.3: Welsh Speaking and Language of Provision by Local Authority.	41
Table 4.4 Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Provision	42
Table 5.1: Qualifications Gained from Participation in ESF	44
Table 5.2: Qualifications Levels Pre and Post ESF.....	46
Table 5.3: Skills Gained from ESF	50
Table 6.1: Time Since Last Job Held	52
Table 6.2: Difficulties with Finding Work	55
Table 6.3: Economic Activity Status 6 Months Following ESF	64
Table 6.4: Economic Activity at Time of Survey	65
Table 6.5: Characteristics of Current Employment.....	68
Table 6.6: The Continuing Difficulties with Finding Work.....	70
Table 6.7: The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Progression following ESF	71
Table 6.8: How the COVID-19 Pandemic Impacted the Search for Employment.....	72
Table 7.1: Course Helped with Gaining Employment.....	74
Table 7.2: Impact of Course and Qualification Gained.....	77
Table 7.3: Comparing Rates of Employment for those Assisted by Operations that Support the Employability of the Long Term Unemployed and Economically Inactive.....	79
Table 8.1: Employment Prior to ESF.....	100
Table 8.2: Employment Six Months Following ESF	102
Table 8.3: Improvements in Job Characteristics	107
Table 8.4: Improvements in Job Quality Since ESF.....	109

Table 8.5: Improvements in Job Quality and Qualification Gained	110
Table 8.6: Impact of ESF in Gaining Current Job.....	112
Table 8.7: The Effect of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Progression	115
Table 8.8: How the COVID-19 Pandemic Effected Employment Progression	116
Table R.1: Response rates by operation for the first fieldwork window (2018-19)	128
Table R.2: Response rates by operation for the second fieldwork period (2022-23)	131
Table A.1A: Participating in an ESF Operation: Population Subgroups	134
Table A.1B: Reasons for Undertaking ESF Operation: Operation Characteristics.....	135
Table A.2A: Qualifications Gained from Participation in ESF: Population Subgroups.....	136
Table A.2B: Qualifications Gained from Participation in ESF: Operation Characteristics ..	137
Table A.3A: Qualification Levels Pre and Post ESF: Population Subgroups	138
Table A.3B: Qualification Levels Pre and Post ESF: Operation Characteristics	139
Table A.4A: Time Since Last Job Held: Population Subgroups	140
Table A.4B: Time Since Last Job Held: Operation Characteristics	141
Table A.5A: Difficulties with Finding Work: Population Subgroups	142
Table A.5B: Difficulties with Finding Work: Operation Characteristics	143
Table A.6A: Economic Activity Status 6 Months Following ESF: Population Subgroups ...	144
Table A.6B: Economic Activity Status 6 Months Following ESF: Operation Characteristics	145
Table A.7A: Economic Activity Status at the Time of the Survey: Population Subgroups ..	146
Table A.7B: Economic Activity Status at the Time of the Survey: Operation Characteristics	147
Table A.8A: Characteristics of Current Employment: Population Subgroups.....	148
Table A.8B: Characteristics of Current Employment: Operation Characteristics	149
Table A.9A: The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Finding Employment: Population Subgroups.....	150
Table A.9B: The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Finding Employment: Operation Characteristics	150
Table A10A: Course Helped with Gaining Employment: Population Subgroups.....	151
Table A10B: Course Helped with Gaining Employment: Operation Characteristics	151
Table A.11: Hours Worked Among Those Entering Employment	152
Table A.12A: Propensity Score Matching Results.....	153
Table A.12B: Propensity Score Matching Results: Population Subgroups	155
Table A.13: Comparing Survey and Administrative Definitions of Prior Economic Activity	157

Table A.14A: Employment Prior to ESF: Population Subgroups.....	158
Table A.14B: Employment Prior to ESF: Operation Characteristics.....	159
Table A.15A: Employment Six Months Following ESF: Population Subgroups	160
Table A.15B: Employment Six Months Following ESF: Operation Characteristics	161
Table A.16A: Improvements in Job Characteristics Following ESF: Population Subgroups	162
Table A.16B: Improvements in Job Characteristics Following ESF: Operation Characteristics	163
Table A.17A: Improvements in Job Quality Since ESF: Population Subgroups	164
Table A.17B: Improvements in Job Quality Since ESF: Operation Characteristics.....	165
Table A.18A: Perceptions of Gaining Current Job Because of Course: Population Subgroups.....	166
Table A.18B: Perceptions of Gaining Current Job Because of Course: Operation Characteristics	166
Table A.19A: The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Progression in Employment: Population Subgroups	167
Table A.19B: The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Progression in Employment: Operation Characteristics.....	167

List of figures

Figure 5.1: Participation in ESF and Increasing Attainment.....	48
Figure 6.1: Difficulties with Finding Work	53
Figure 6.2: Transitions into Employment by Operation Objective	57
Figure 6.3: Transitions into Employment by Gender	58
Figure 6.4: Transitions into Employment by Work Limiting Health Condition.....	59
Figure 6.5: Transitions into Employment by Prior Educational Attainment.....	60
Figure 6.6: Transitions into Employment, Education and Training: by Gender	61
Figure 6.7: Transitions into Employment, Education and Training: by Prior Attainment.....	62
Figure 7.1: Perceived Impact of ESF on Employment by Qualification Gained During Course	75
Figure 7.2: Illustration of Counterfactual Impact Assessment Techniques.....	85
Figure 7.3: Impact of Operations Supporting the Employability of the Long Term Unemployed and Economically Inactive: Entry into Employment.....	87
Figure 7.4: Impact of Operations Supporting the Employability of those at Risk of Poverty: Entry into Employment	88
Figure 7.5: Impact of Operations Aimed at Reducing the Levels of NEET Among those Aged 16-24: Entry into Employment, Education or Training	90
Figure 7.6: Impact of ESF on Employment Outcomes by Gender	93
Figure 7.7: Impact of ESF on Employment Outcomes by Work Limiting Health Status	94
Figure 7.8: Impact of ESF on Employment Outcomes by Qualification Level	95
Figure 8.1: Impact of ESF in Gaining Current Job by Qualification Gained	113

Glossary

Acronym/Key word	Definition
ALMP	Active Labour Market Policies
APS	Annual Population Survey
CCT	Cross Cutting Theme
CIA	Counterfactual Impact Assessment
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
EW	East Wales
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LLFS	Local Labour Force Survey
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PA	Priority Axis
PSM	Propensity Score Matching
SO	Strategic Objective
WEFO	Welsh European Funding Office
WWV	West Wales and the Valleys

1. Introduction

- 1.1. European Structural Funds are financial tools that support the implementation of the regional policy of the European Union. These funds aim to reduce regional disparities in income, wealth, and opportunities, with Europe's poorer regions receiving higher levels of support. Within the Welsh Government, the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) is designated as the 'Managing Authority' for European Union (EU) Structural Funds Programmes in Wales. WEFO is responsible for the design, delivery, monitoring, and evaluation of initiatives supported by these funds.
- 1.2. In support of the delivery of these responsibilities, WEFO appointed IFF Research Limited to design and deliver a programme of surveys of citizens in Wales who had participated in programmes funded by the European Social Fund (ESF), part of the Structural Funds. This report presents the results of information collected from the ESF Participants Survey, covering the 2014-2020 Programme period.

European Structural Funds

- 1.3. European Structural Funds comprise of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF). In line with EU and Welsh Government strategies, the 2014-2020 Structural Funds Programmes aimed to help create an environment that would support and underpin economic growth and jobs, whilst at the same time embracing the Welsh Government's overall aim of sustainable development as set out in the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).
- 1.4. During the 2014-2020 round of Structural Funds Programmes, Wales received investment of approximately £2 billion. Combined with co-financing, the Structural Funds provided a total investment of approximately £4 billion. For the purposes of delivering this investment, Wales was split into two regions: West Wales and the Valleys, and East Wales. Each of these areas has separate ERDF and ESF programmes. The programmes were focused on research and innovation; helping businesses to start up and grow; supporting renewable energy and energy efficiency; strategic infrastructure; tackling poverty through sustainable employment; and increasing skills and youth employment.
- 1.5. Operational Programmes for each of these regions provided detailed plans as to how Structural Funds were to be spent, including how these programmes would address the [Thematic Objectives](#) that guide [EU cohesion policy](#) which seeks to reduce

economic, social and territorial disparities that exist across Europe. The four key Thematic Objectives that guide ESF investments are:

- 8) Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility.
- 9) Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination.
- 10) Investing in education and training for skills and lifelong learning.
- 11) Enhancing the capability of public authorities and efficient public administration.

1.6. ESF Programmes are structured around three Priority Axes (PAs).

PA1: Tackling Poverty through Sustainable Employment.

PA2: Skills for Growth.

PA3: Youth Employment and Attainment.

1.7. ESF Programmes are delivered through operations, which constitute either a single project or groups of projects which deliver activities that contribute to the objectives of one or more Priority Axes¹. Within Wales, actions to directly tackle poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion were primarily addressed through ESF Programmes via employment-related projects with specific actions expected to target unemployment, worklessness and barriers to accessing sustainable employment.

1.8. Each PA is constituted around a small number of Specific Objectives (SOs) which identify the socio-economic need and the specific changes to be achieved through Structural Funds investment. Table 1.1 shows how both the Thematic Objectives and Specific Objectives map to the Priority Axes².

¹ For the remainder of this report we will use the term 'operations' to refer to projects or groups of projects.

² The Thematic Objective "Enhancing the capability of public authorities and efficient public administration" is not included in this table as operations under a further Priority Axis "PA 5: Public Service Improvement through Regional Working" (not shown) do not fall within the scope of the ESF Participants Survey.

Table 1.1: Mapping of Thematic Objectives to Priority Axes and Specific Objectives

	PA1: Tackling Poverty through Sustainable Employment	PA2: Skills for Growth	PA3: Youth Employment and Attainment
Thematic objectives (Investment Priorities)	(9) Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination.	(8) Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility. (10) Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning.	(8) Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility. (10) Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning.
Specific Objectives	<p>West Wales and the Valleys SO1: To increase the employability of those closest to the labour market at most risk of poverty.</p> <p>SO2 West Wales and the Valleys / SO1 East Wales: To increase the employability of Economically Inactive and Long term Unemployed people aged 25 and over, who have complex barriers to employment.</p> <p>SO3 West Wales and the Valleys only: To reduce underemployment or absence rates for employed individuals with work limiting health conditions and/or other barriers to sustainable engagement with the labour market.</p>	<p>West Wales and the Valleys and East Wales SO1: To increase the skills levels, including work relevant skills, of those in the workforce with no or low skills.</p> <p>West Wales and the Valleys and East Wales SO2: To increase the number of people in the workforce with technical and job specific skills at an intermediate and higher level.</p> <p>West Wales and the Valleys only - SO3: To increase the number of people with graduate degrees or equivalent undertaking research and innovation activities with enterprise.</p> <p>West Wales and the Valleys SO4 / East Wales SO3 – To improve the position of women in the workforce.</p>	<p>West Wales and Valleys and East Wales SO1: To reduce the number of 16-24 year olds who are Not in Employment Education or Training (NEET).</p> <p>West Wales and Valleys and East Wales SO2: To reduce the number of those at risk of becoming NEET, amongst 11-24 year olds.</p> <p>West Wales and Valleys SO3: To increase the take up of and attainment levels in STEM subjects amongst 11-19 year olds.</p> <p>West Wales and Valleys SO4: To increase the skills of the Early Years and Childcare workforce.</p>

1.9. A summary of the improvements for participants that were sought for each of the three Priority Areas is provided in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2: ESF priorities and the Associated Changes Sought

Priority Axes	Changes Sought (Specific Objectives)
1) Tackling Poverty through Sustainable Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase the employability of those closest to the labour market at most risk of poverty • To increase the employability of Economically inactive and Long Term Unemployed people aged 25 and over, who have complex barriers to employment. • To reduce underemployment or absence rates for Employed individuals with work limiting health conditions and/or other barriers to sustainable engagement with the labour market
2) Skills for Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase the skill levels, including work relevant skills, of those in the workforce with no or low skills. • To increase the number of people in the workforce with technical and job specific skills at an intermediate and higher level. • To increase the number of people with graduate degrees or equivalent undertaking research and innovation activities with enterprise • To improve the position of women in the workforce.
3) Youth Employment and Attainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reduce the number of 16-24 year olds who are Not in Employment Education or Training (NEET). • To reduce the number of those at risk of becoming NEET, amongst 11-24 year olds. • To increase the take up of and attainment levels in STEM subjects amongst 11-19 year olds. • To increase the skills of the Early Years and Childcare workforce.

1.10. The General Regulations governing the Structural Fund Programmes also stipulate that all operations must integrate the [Cross Cutting Themes](#) (CCTs)³. The aim of the CCTs was to improve the quality and the legacy from each operation supported by the Structural Funds and to add value to the programmes. CCTs were to be

³ Cross Cutting Themes Matrix for ESF 2014-2020 can be found at: [Cross Cutting Themes Matrix for ESF 2014-2020](#)

embedded within the design and delivery of all operations. For the 2014-2020 programming period, CCTs were:

- Equal Opportunities and Gender Mainstreaming (including support for speakers of the Welsh language);
- Sustainable Development;
- Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion.

1.11. The first two of these CCTs are mandatory under EU regulations. Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion was included as an additional CCT in line with the key commitments of the Welsh Government set out within its Tackling Poverty Action Plan.

The ESF Participants Survey

- 1.12. Surveys of ESF participants have long formed the basis for monitoring the effectiveness of ESF Programmes in Wales. To monitor the effectiveness of the 2007-2013 ESF Programmes, WEFO agreed with the European Commission (EC) to undertake a series of annual surveys of ESF Participants: i.e. people who had taken part in an operation which received funding from the ESF.
- 1.13. WEFO commissioned a consortium led by Cardiff University (including IFF Ltd and Old Bell 3 Research Ltd) to undertake a series of five annual surveys of ESF 'Leavers' among successive cohorts of ESF Participants during the 2007-2013 Programme period. ESF 'Leavers' were defined as those participants who had left or completed their operations approximately 12 months previously. The first of these surveys covered the cohort of participants who left their projects in 2009 and the last survey covered a cohort of participants who left their operations) in 2013.
- 1.14. Results derived from these surveys were published in a series of analytical reports (see Davies et al. [2009](#), [2010](#), [2011](#), [2012](#) and [2013](#)). Over the course of those surveys, the fieldwork tools and methods remained consistent to allow the data collected to be combined across multiple survey years to enable more detailed subgroup analysis. This research programme culminated in the report "Combined Analysis of the 2009-2013 ESF Leavers Surveys" (see [Davies et al, 2016](#)). The results of this analysis are also summarised in [Davies, Munday and Roche \(2017\)](#).

- 1.15. In 2015, IFF and OB3 were awarded the contract to undertake the first part of the ESF Participants Surveys for the 2014-2020 Programme. Interviews were undertaken during 2018/19 with ESF participants who left their projects up to April 2018. The purpose of the survey was to provide timely, robust information on the effectiveness of approved ESF projects to fulfil reporting requirements of the European Commission (EC); to understand what types of interventions were most effective in supporting labour market progression and to provide data sets which could be used by operation level evaluators.
- 1.16. Compared to surveys conducted during the 2007-13 Programme period, an important development to the ESF Participants Survey was the EC requirement to report against “longer term results indicators”. This resulted in the inclusion of questions that captured the situation of participants at a point six months after they left their ESF operation. For those who were employed when they were first supported by ESF, this included new questions that captured whether participants experienced an improved labour market situation six months after leaving.
- 1.17. In 2022, IFF Research Ltd were awarded a further contract to survey ESF participants who had left their projects from April 2018 onwards, using the survey instrument that had been developed previously. This report presents the results of information collected from the ESF Participants Survey covering the 2014-2020 Programme period by combining data across two main fieldwork windows during 2018/19 and 2022/23 (further information is provided in the methodology section which follows).
- 1.18. The ESF Participants Survey, broadly speaking, distinguishes between those who were in work prior to being supported by ESF and those who were not.. Many questions were asked of all respondents, such as questions regarding personal characteristics, reasons for participation and skills gained by participants. These generic questions were then complemented by questions which were addressed specifically at those who were either in or out of work prior to their participation in an ESF project.
- Those who were out of work prior to ESF were therefore asked questions about the difficulties that they had in finding work prior to ESF and their assessment of

the impact that their participation in an ESF project had in terms of helping them gain in employment.

- Those who were in employment prior to ESF were asked questions about the jobs they previously held and whether their participation in ESF has resulted in subsequent improvements in the quality of their employment.

1.19. The structure of the report reflects the design of the survey and is organised as follows:

- Section two provides an overview of the methodology and surveys conducted with ESF participants.
- Section three provides an overview of the personal characteristics of ESF participants and the economic circumstances prior to participation in ESF.
- Section four examines the experiences of participants during their ESF-funded operation, including why they participated, how they found out about the course, course duration, language of provision and levels of awareness of ESF funding.
- Section five explores how ESF operations have contributed to the accumulation of human capital, both via the attainment of qualifications acquired during ESF and the nature of skills gained.
- Section six examines the role of ESF operations in supporting participation in the labour market among those who were previously out of work. The difficulties faced by participants in finding work are explored and the transitions made into employment, education and training following participation in ESF are presented.
- Section seven explores the contribution of ESF in supporting participation in employment. This includes both the perceptions of ESF participants on the impact of these schemes and the results of Counterfactual Impact Analysis (CIA) techniques that compare the transitions of ESF participants to those observed in the wider labour market.
- Section eight examines the effect of ESF operations in supporting progression in employment among those who were supported by operations aimed at

those in work. Improvements in job characteristics are examined and the perceptions of ESF participants on the impact of these schemes are explored.

- Section 9 draws the findings together to inform the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

2. Methodology

- 2.1 The ESF Participants Survey is conducted to provide timely and robust information on the outcomes and longer-term impacts of ESF-funded operations for participants across Wales in order to fulfil reporting requirements of the European Commission (EC). The surveys aim to increase understanding of what types of interventions are most effective in supporting labour market progression and are used to support operation and programme level evaluation.
- 2.2 The 2014-2020 ESF Participants Survey was conducted during two rounds of survey fieldwork:
- The first round of fieldwork relates to interviews conducted between January 2018 and July 2019. Referred to as the 2015/18 ESF Participants Survey, this study involved telephone interviews (CATI, or computer-assisted telephone interviewing) with people who had left their ESF course between January 2015 and April 2018.
 - The second round of fieldwork relates to interviews conducted between August 2022 and May 2023. The interviews primarily covered participants who had completed their ESF supported programme between April 2018 (and who were not sampled for the first survey) and May 2022.
- 2.3 Again, the primary mode of interview during the second wave of interviews was telephone interviews. However, these were also supplemented with online interviews, where possible, with participants who did not have a telephone number or preferred to do a shorter online survey. The online survey option is discussed further below.

Sampling

- 2.4 The breakdown for each fieldwork window is shown in Table 2.1 below. Administrative records submitted from participating operations was transferred securely to IFF Research by Welsh government via WEFO through Objective Connect. Each file submitted was a cumulative record of all participants, within each fieldwork window.
- 2.5 Records were drawn in waves across the fieldwork period, to ensure at least 12 months had elapsed since participants left their ESF course at the time participants were interviewed. Conducting interviews with individuals 12 months after leaving their interventions mirrors the approach from previous ESF participant surveys and enables

analysis of participant outcomes (including ‘softer’ benefits) beyond the longer-term result indicators, which are based on outcomes 6 months after participants leave their ESF course.

- 2.6 Targets were set at investment priority level, based on the distribution of background characteristics (Specific Objective, Disadvantage, Gender, Region, Age, and Employment), and calculated using the European Commission sampling matrix. Records for the survey were sampled proportionately to these targets.

Table 2.1: Sampling and Fieldwork Dates

Sampling period (i.e. date left course)	Fieldwork wave and dates	No. of records in the population	No. of records sampled	No. of interviews
Jan 2015 – Apr 2018	First fieldwork window January 2018 – July 2019	81,677	68,128	12,018
Apr 2018* - May 2022	Second fieldwork window July 2022 – May 2023	155,743	75,219	11,210

*Leavers who had finished the course in April 2018 but had not been interviewed in the first fieldwork window were considered as part of the population for the second fieldwork window.

- 2.7 IFF processed the sample to ensure it was in a suitable form for CATI (computer-assisted telephone interviewing), or online (only for the second fieldwork window in 2022-23). This involved:

- Filtering the file for leavers and ensuring they were in the correct sampling window.
- Deriving specific variables which are needed for the survey script or analysis purposes (e.g. deriving ‘disadvantaged’ participants).
- Removing leavers who had already completed the survey.
- Removing duplicate records.
- Excluding ineligible sample – it was agreed with Welsh Government that participant in specific ‘Young Persons’ programmes,’ as well as participants under 16 years of age, should not be interviewed in the main participants survey.

- 2.8 A key challenge faced during the sampling process was the lack of a reliable unique identifier within the sample for identifying individuals. While combining Case ID (i.e. the operation) and Participant ID was fairly accurate at establishing unique participants

within operations, inconsistencies between the sample files led to issues in identifying duplicate records (e.g. participant IDs differing for the same individuals across different files).

- 2.9 A further complication to the sampling process during the first fieldwork window was an error concerning the 'work limiting health condition' variable. The October 2017 file was identified as having incorrect data in this variable, which meant the proportion of individuals reported as having a work limiting health condition was significantly inflated.
- 2.10 IFF undertook a process of correcting the data by matching records against the February 2018 sample file. However, due to the lack of a reliable unique identifier (discussed above), it was not possible to achieve a 100 per cent match rate. Where it was not possible to match participants across files for corrective purposes, we agreed to assign an 'unknown' status to the work limiting health condition variable. Overall, IFF was able to match 98 per cent of the October 2017 files with correct information, leaving 2 per cent assigned an 'unknown' status.
- 2.11 For the second fieldwork window, a further complication was encountered due to the survey sample not including a marker indicating the degree of urbanisation of each participant's location. This marker was needed in order to identify 'disadvantaged' participants, a variable that was used for sampling. In the first fieldwork windows, the EU classification for this rural/urban marker were used, while in the second fieldwork window, because of a lack of updated information, a decision was made to use the ONS classification. This meant using contiguous built-up areas population numbers rather than the wider built-up areas population numbers. Still, the assumption was that numbers would have been generally consistent with the EU classification used previously.

Questionnaire design

- 2.12 The ESF Participants Survey questionnaire used for the first fieldwork window (2018-19) was built on the previous ESF Leavers Survey questionnaire (covering the 2007 to 2013 Programme), to allow potential comparability across the 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 data. The questionnaire also incorporated questions needed to report longer-term result indicators to the European Commission (indicators reflecting the situation of participants six months after leaving their ESF operation). The European Commission guidance stated that the longer-term indicators could be reported based

on a representative sample, rather than for every participant, so the decision was taken to collect the data via a survey rather than the WEFO monitoring system.

2.13 In the first fieldwork window, in addition to the core interviews, participating operations were offered the option of adding a module of questions tailored to their participants, lasting up to 5 minutes. These additional modules were only included in the first fieldwork window. Modules were included for participants in the following programmes:

- Apprenticeships
- Communities for Work
- Growing Workforces through Learning and Development (GLWAD)
- In-work support programmes
- Jobs Growth Wales
- Out-of-work support programmes
- Progress for Success
- ReAct
- Traineeships.

2.14 Reasons for not including modules in the second round of interviews included:

- Timings for the ESF Participant Survey did not always correspond with the timings for ESF project specific evaluations.
- ESF operations were expected to achieve better response rates and overcome issues such as respondent recall more easily by conducting their own evaluations, given that they will have had more contact with participants.
- Operations running their own evaluations increases their flexibility to tailor the evaluation methods to deliver data that is most useful to their operations.

2.15 The questionnaire used for the second fieldwork window was kept largely the same as the first fieldwork window so that data from the two surveys could be merged into a single combined dataset. The most notable additions were the introduction of questions about the impact of COVID-19 on the training or support received, and whether COVID-19 had any impact on their progression since the course. Table 2.2 summarises coverage of the final agreed questionnaires.

- 2.16 In both fieldwork windows, after initial questionnaire design was agreed between IFF and Welsh Government, the questionnaires were piloted with a small number of participants (50 in the first fieldwork window and 61 in the second fieldwork window), to assess whether the questions were suitable and flowed smoothly and logically from a respondent perspective. Following the completion of each of the pilot phases, a debrief session was held, where feedback was obtained from interviewers, and a pilot report was submitted to Welsh Government with recommendations for further refinements.
- 2.17 In both survey fieldwork windows, participants who confirmed themselves as the correct respondent when called, and who initially refused to participate in the survey, were asked if they would prefer to take a shorter version of the survey (intended to last no more than 5 minutes). In the first fieldwork window (2018-19) participants were only given the opportunity to complete the shorter version of the survey over the phone. However, in the second fieldwork window (2022-23), they were also offered the option of doing it online in their own time.
- 2.18 The online survey option was introduced in the second fieldwork window to increase participation of harder to reach individuals with the aim of improving response to the survey. The purpose of the shorter survey was solely to collect the data required for reporting longer-term result indicators to the European Commission. The online survey was also shared with those that only had a valid email address on their records but no valid phone number (again for the second fieldwork window only).

Table 2.2: Questionnaire Summary

Section	Coverage of questions
Screenener	Introducing the survey and gaining permission to interview; screening out ineligible participants.
Section A: The Course	Reasons for taking part in the course; where participants first heard about the course; whether any qualifications were gained; and the language the course was delivered in.
Section B: Situation immediately before the course	What main activity the participant was doing immediately before starting their provision; and details of employment, education/training, and unemployment (e.g. barriers or reasons for not looking for work).
Section C: Situation since the course (Overview)	What their current main activity is; and activities undertaken since leaving the course.
Section D: Status six months after completing the course	What their activity was six months after leaving; details of employment, education/training, and unemployment (reasons for not looking for work); and job improvements for those in work before and after the course.
Section E: Present situation and benefits of the course	Reasons for not looking for work currently and barriers to work; details of current job for those in employment; skills gained from being on the ESF course; impact of COVID-19 (only in the version used in 2022-23).
Section G: Modules	Operation-specific modules (lasting c.5 minutes) (only in the version used in 2018-19)
Section H: Demographics and closing questions	Capturing information on gender, age, ethnicity, long-term illness, health problem or disability, first language; awareness of ESF funding; and closing questions.

2.19 The last version of the full questionnaire used for the second fieldwork window is included in Annex B. Questions asked to those who agreed to do a shorter version of the survey have the routing instruction 'all formats'.

Fieldwork

2.20 All telephone interviews were conducted using computer-aided telephone interviewing (CATI). Interviewing was conducted by IFF Research's interviewers, mostly in the

evening and on weekends, although some day-time calling was undertaken if contacting people during these core times was unsuccessful.

- 2.21 In the first fieldwork window (2018-19), advance letters were introduced from Wave 2 onwards. These were sent to respondents a few weeks prior to each fieldwork wave to inform them about the research and the opportunity to opt out.
- 2.22 Similarly, in the second fieldwork window (2022-23), all participants with a valid phone number received an email or a physical letter (depending on the availability of email addresses) to inform them that they would be contacted in the following weeks, and to give some background information about the survey. After an initial window for them to receive the communication (and to opt out of the research, if preferred), they were contacted via telephone by the interviewers. As discussed above, those without a valid phone number were invited directly to complete the online version of the survey. No quotas were set for the interviewing.
- 2.23 Participants were offered the opportunity to complete the survey in Welsh. In the first fieldwork window (2018-19), 189 CATI interviews were completed in Welsh. In the second fieldwork window (2022-23) 252 CATI interviews and 7 online surveys were completed in Welsh.

Outcomes and response rates

First fieldwork window (2018-19)

- 2.24 12,012 interviews were achieved across five waves of fieldwork, equating to a response rate of 18 per cent among all sample called.
- 2.25 Overall, 10 per cent of outcomes were refusals or breakdowns – in 7 per cent of cases this occurred where contact was made with the respondent. A further 1 per cent refused at the privacy notice stage, either in terms of refusing to have the privacy notice read to them or refusing to take part after listening to the privacy notice.
- 2.26 A sizeable proportion of records were unusable because the telephone number supplied was incorrect. For 15 per cent of the sample loaded, calls did not connect at all, while for a further 6 per cent it was established on the call that the telephone number was incorrect. In 8 per cent of cases the named respondent said they did not recall doing their course, while a small proportion said they were still on their course or under 16, making them ineligible for the survey. Table 2.3 shows adjusted response rates, excluding this unusable sample.

Table 2.3: Adjusted response rates for the first fieldwork window (2018-19)

Sample base	Count (n)	Response rate
Loaded (tried) sample	68,128	18%
Sample with a correct telephone number (i.e. excluding unobtainable or wrong numbers)	54,015	22%
Sample with the correct telephone number and an eligible learner (i.e. excluding unobtainable/wrong numbers, no recall of learning, still on course and U16s)	48,155	25%

2.27 Table R.1 in the Response Rate Annex shows the number of respondents that were contacted to complete the survey in the first fieldwork window, how many completed it, and the relevant response rate, split by operation. This shows the variation in the volumes and in the rates of response across the different operations.

Second fieldwork window (2022-23)

2.28 11,210 interviews were completed across three waves of fieldwork. This includes 11,002 interviews achieved via CATI and 208 completed online. The response rate among all sample called was 15 per cent (including those respondents who were called but went on to complete the survey online). The lower response rate (in comparison to the first fieldwork period) was influenced by a number of factors, including the decision to introduce a maximum number of possible call attempts (9) midway through fieldwork (no cap was set in the first round of interviews) due to a respondent complaint during the first wave of fieldwork, and a decision to limit the number of calls to participants in specific operation (as they were identified as vulnerable). Overall, 53 per cent of contacts sampled for the second round of interviews had no final sample outcome (compared to 41 per cent in the first round of interviews). In part, this reflects the capping of calls for the second round. However, it also indicates that there were more difficulties getting hold of respondents in the 2022-23 survey fieldwork.

2.29 Overall, 529 ESF participants in the second fieldwork period not willing or able to do the full CATI interview requested a weblink to complete the online survey, of which 107 completed the survey online.

2.30 Provision of an online mode for undertaking the survey had a limited impact on improving response rates. The 208 online interviews represent only 2 per cent of all

completed interviews in the second round of fieldwork. Overall, 5 per cent of individuals who were offered the opportunity to do an online survey ended up completing the survey. Those who went through the online route after initially refusing to do the CATI survey had a far better response after receiving the survey link (20 per cent) than those who were offered the online survey to start with because they did not have a valid telephone number (3 per cent).

2.31 Overall, 7 per cent of records were outright refusals – in almost all these cases this occurred where contact was made with the respondent. A further 0.2 per cent refused at the privacy notice stage, either in terms of refusing to have the privacy notice read to them or refusing to take part after listening to the privacy notice.

2.32 In the second fieldwork window (like the first), a substantial proportion of records were unusable because it was not possible to reach respondents using the telephone numbers provided. For 12 per cent of the sample loaded, calls did not connect at all, while for a further 3 per cent it was established on the call that the telephone number was incorrect. In 8 per cent of cases the named respondent said they did not recall doing their course, and again, a small proportion said they were still on their course or under 16, making them ineligible for the survey. Table 2.4 shows adjusted response rates, excluding this unusable sample.

Table 2.4: Adjusted response rates for the second fieldwork period (2022-23)

Base definition	Count (n)	Response rate
Loaded sample*	75,219	15%
Sample with a correct telephone number (i.e. excluding unobtainable or wrong numbers)	63,556	17%
Sample with the correct telephone number and an eligible learner (i.e. excluding unobtainable/wrong numbers, no recall of learning, still on course and U16s)	57,091	19%

*For those sampled for CATI only

2.33 Table R.2 in the Response Rate Annex shows the number of respondents that were contacted to complete the survey in the second fieldwork window, how many completed it, and the relevant response rate, split by operation.

Weighting and Analysis

2.34 Results for each fieldwork window were weighted and shared with Welsh Government. For each fieldwork window a gross weight was created to be applied to the data. This

was calculated based on the distribution of the background characteristics listed in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5: Weighting variables

Variable	Values
Specific Objective	SO1.1, SO1.2, SO1.3, SO2.1, SO2.2, SO2.3, SO2.4, SO3.1, SO3.4
Disadvantage	Disadvantaged, Not Disadvantaged
Gender	Male, Female
Region	More developed region, Less developed region
Age	Above 54, Under 54
Employment	Employed, Not Employed

2.35 At the end of the second fieldwork window the data from both windows was collated and a new combined ‘programme weight’ was calculated, using the full population of ESF programmes’ participants, who had left the programmes between January 2015 and May 2022. It is this combined data set that forms the basis for the analysis contained within this report⁴.

Data for Counterfactual Impact Assessment

2.36 In Section 7 of this report, data from the Annual Population Survey (APS) is used to compare the labour market transitions of ESF participants who were out of work prior to receiving support from ESF with those exhibited by non-employed people in the wider labour market. The APS is available on an annual basis from 2004 and was developed to provide a boost to the number of observations contained within the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (LFS) so that more robust labour market information could be provided at the Local Authority level.

2.37 The APS combines data from four successive quarters of the LFS with data collected from a booster survey referred to as the Local Labour Force Survey (LLFS). Households can remain in the LFS for up to five quarters (referred to as Waves). Households can remain in the LLFS for up to 4 years. The APS therefore provides the

⁴ see IFF(2023) for details of the combined data set.

opportunity to track individuals in participating households at 12-month intervals, some of whom can be followed up for a period of up to four years⁵.

2.38 Data from the APS has been used to derive a longitudinal database containing detailed information on demographic characteristics and participation in the labour market. Records from the January-December versions of the annual APS from 2015 to 2021 inclusive have been pooled to provide a source of contemporaneous data on employment transitions measured over a period of 12 months against which the experiences of ESF participants can be compared.

Presentation of Results

2.39 The ESF programmes are structured around Specific Objectives (sitting within Investment Priorities) which provide the focus for investment. Each Specific Objective identifies the socio-economic need and the specific changes to be achieved through Structural Funds investment. The analysis in this report focuses upon the presentation of results at the level of Specific Objective.

2.40 For this report, the Specific Objectives are grouped under 2 broad themes. Specific Objectives that provide support to those who were out of work prior to ESF are grouped under the heading of Supporting Participation. Specific Objectives that provide support to those who were in employment prior to ESF are grouped under the heading of Supporting Progression. The descriptions of these Specific Objectives and their allocation to these 2 broad themes is described in Table 2.6.

⁵ See [LFS Userguide Volume 1 – LFS Background and Methodology](#) and [Annual population survey \(APS\) QMI - Office for National Statistics](#) for further details of the LFS and APS sampling structures.

Table 2.6: Description and Coverage of Specific Objectives

Acronym	Description	East Wales	West Wales and the Valleys
Supporting Participation			
Emp. of at risk of poverty	To increase the employability of those closest to the labour market at most risk of poverty	N.A.	SO1.1
Emp. of ltue'd & econ inact	To increase the employability of Economically Inactive and Long term Unemployed ⁶ people aged 25 and over, who have complex barriers to employment	SO1.1	SO1.2
Reduce NEET 16-24	To reduce the number of 16–24 year-olds who are Not in Employment Education or Training (NEET)	SO3.1	SO3.1
Supporting Progression			
Increase. engage.	To reduce underemployment or absence rates for employed individuals with work limiting health conditions and/or other barriers to sustainable engagement with the labour market.	N.A.	SO1.3
Address. low skills	To increase the skills levels, including work relevant skills, of those in the workforce with no or low skills	SO2.1	SO2.1
Increase. int/high skills	To increase the number of people in the workforce with technical and job specific skills at an intermediate and higher level	SO2.2	SO2.2
Graduate engage.	To increase the number of people with graduate degrees or equivalent undertaking research and innovation activities with enterprise	SO2.4	SO2.3
Women in the workforce	To improve the position of women in the workforce	SO2.3	SO2.4
Childcare workers	To increase the skills of the Early Years and Childcare workforce.	N/A	SO3.4

2.41 These broad themes do not align with Priority Axes. However, data at Priority Axis level is available within Data Annex tables towards the end of this report. These Annexes also provide analyses of responses to the survey broken down by selected personal characteristics (such as gender, age and the presence of work limiting health conditions) and operation characteristics (including Priority Axis, Wave and Area).

⁶ Meaning people unemployed for longer than 1 year.

Methodological Limitations

- 2.42 The ESF participants survey provides a robust evidence base for assessing participant progression and outcomes following their ESF course, however, as with any survey of this nature, there are some practical limitations to consider. Firstly, it was not possible to include participants from all ESF operations, due to some operations involving young people (people interviewed via telephone must be 16 and over), or particularly vulnerable groups of participants. These operations were excluded from the final survey population.
- 2.43 There are also limitations associated with the survey mode – for example, participation in both telephone and online surveys can be more challenging for harder-to-reach groups, such as those with learning disabilities (Bryer, 2019). It was therefore important, given that ESF provision is largely targeted towards disadvantaged groups, to ensure mitigations were in place to overcome potential non-response bias. These included, for example, allowing individuals to complete the CATI survey with a proxy, or relay services for those hard of hearing.
- 2.44 There were also various challenges concerning the quality of management data used to sample the survey. For example, a large proportion of records were unobtainable – i.e. calls did not connect (15 per cent of records in the first fieldwork window and 12 per cent in the second), had a wrong telephone number (6 per cent and 3 per cent respectively) or were ineligible due to issues with recall (8 per cent in both fieldwork windows).
- 2.45 While survey results were weighted to ensure they are representative of the wider participant population, these issues around mode and quality of sample can affect the range and diversity of people participating in the survey⁷.
- 2.46 Issues of recall are particularly important for the ESF Participants survey.
- Eligibility for inclusion into each of the surveys specified that participants should have exited their provision at least a year prior to interview. Combined with the time spent being supported by ESF, many participants are being asked to recall their circumstances 2-3 years prior to the date of their interview. For some, the duration is longer.

⁷ For budgetary reasons, non-response weighting was not part of the weighting strategy for this survey.

- Issues surrounding recall can be magnified if respondents were experiencing periods of transition in labour market status around the time that they received support from an ESF-funded operation.
- Respondents who have received support from multiple ESF programmes could be confused regarding which operation they were being interviewed about.

2.47 These recall errors pose challenges in terms of the presentation of results from the survey. The filtering of questions within the Participants Survey reflects the respondent's assessment of their prior activity status rather than rules based upon the eligibility criteria of the operations that the participants were recorded as being enrolled upon. This has implications for the presentation of results.

- Some respondents who participated in operations aimed at supporting those in employment have responded to sections of the Participants Survey that were aimed at those who were previously out of work. These can include, for example, questions about difficulties with finding work.
- Some respondents who participated in operations aimed at supporting participation in the labour market have responded to sections of the Participants Survey that were aimed at those who were previously in work. Such respondents have provided information about the jobs that they said they held prior to ESF.

2.48 Such issues produce results that appear to be contradictory to the eligibility criteria for some operations. In the chapters which follow, the responses of these participants are retained in the analysis but are distinguished from those who represent the intended focus of the Specific Objectives under examination.

3. Who are the participants?

Introduction

- 3.1 This section presents a profile of participants in ESF operations in Wales and their situation before being supported by these operations. The personal characteristics of ESF participants are firstly examined. Prior economic activity status is then explored based upon data from both the Participants Survey and administrative records.

Personal Characteristics of Participants

- 3.2 An overview of the personal characteristics of participants is provided in Table 3.1, distinguishing between those who participated in operations grouped under the headings of Supporting Participation and Supporting Progression. Within all analyses, sample weights have been applied so that the analysis is representative of the population of ESF participants.

Gender

- 3.3 Males accounted for just under half of ESF participants (47 per cent), although men accounted for over two thirds (68 per cent) of participants in operations that supported the employability of those at risk of poverty. Males also comprised over half (56 per cent) of those in operations that were aimed at reducing the level of NEET among 16-24 year-olds.

Age

- 3.4 The median age of ESF participants was estimated to be 32 years. The average age of those who participated in operations that supported participation (44 years) was higher than those that supported progression (33 years). Age varied according to the characteristics of the populations being targeted.
- 3.4.1 The average age of those who participated in operations that aimed to reduce levels of NEET among 16-24 year-olds was just 19 years.
- 3.4.2 Across operations aimed at supporting the employability of the long-term unemployed and economically inactive, the median age of participants was 41 years.

Table 3.1: Personal Characteristics of ESF Participants

	Supporting Participation				Supporting Progression						All	
	Emp. of ltue'd & econ inact	Emp. of at risk of poverty	Reduce NEET 16-24	Total	Increase. engage.	Address. low skills	Increase int/high skills	Graduate engage.	Women in the workforce	Childcare workers		Total
% Male	49.4	67.5	56.1	53.6	39.7	48.8	40.6	54.7	0.0	0.0	42.4	47.2
Age	41.3	45.4	18.7	30.5	43.9	30.5	32.6	27.5	36.5	38.3	32.7	31.8
% Disabled	52.1	22.5	29.1	39.4	36.5	16.4	14.5	10.0	18.5	21.7	16.9	26.4
% Work Limiting Health Condition	40.9	10.5	19.5	28.9	23.8	8.7	6.0	*	10.5	*	8.3	17.1
% White	92.5	99.0	95.2	94.2	98.3	96.2	97.1	*	95.9	*	96.8	95.7
% Single Households	44.9	17.7	11.7	27.5	17.8	4.9	3.8	*	25.7	*	5.8	15.0
% Dependents	41.0	36.7	8.6	25.3	33.4	15.1	15.9	9.0	43.3	52.3	17.7	20.9
% Carers	37.6	12.3	9.0	22.5	27.1	14.0	14.7	*	*	55.0	15.1	18.2
% First Language Welsh	4.3	6.3	4.3	4.4	16.3	6.3	8.4	*	5.9	*	8.2	6.6
Sample**	3,290	1,545	2,899	7,734	1,321	4,132	9,207	146	594	94	15,494	23,228

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: All participants

*Denotes figure suppressed due to sample sizes of less than 10.

**Refers to full sample sizes. Sample sizes for specific rows will vary slightly due to the exclusion of cases with incomplete information.

Long Term Illness, Health Problem or Disability

- 3.5 Twenty-six per cent of participants reported that they had a long-term illness, health problem or disability. This figure was lower among those in operations that supported progression (17 per cent) compared to those that supported participation (39 per cent).
- 3.6 There is considerable variation between Specific Objectives:
- Over half of participants (52 per cent) in operations that supported the employability of the long term unemployed and economically inactive reported that they had a long-term illness.
 - Despite their relatively young age, 29 per cent of those participating in operations aimed at reducing the level of NEET among 16–24 year-olds reported having a long term illness.
 - Almost 4 out of 10 participants (37 per cent) in operations aimed at increasing engagement reported that they have a long-term illness, health problem or disability. This reflects the targeting of these operations on those with work limiting health conditions and/or other barriers to sustainable engagement with the labour market.

Work Limiting Health Condition

- 3.7 The Participants Survey asked those who reported having a long-term illness whether this illness or disability affected the amount or type of work they could do. The overall rate of work limiting illness was 17 per cent. This figure was higher among those in operations that supported participation (29 per cent) compared to those observed across projects that supported progression (8 per cent). The rate of work limiting illness was highest among participants in operations that supported the employability of the long term unemployed and economically inactive (41 per cent).

Partnership Status

- 3.8 Overall, 15 per cent of participants were recorded within administrative records as living within single households. This figure was lower among those in operations that supported progression (6 per cent) compared to those that supported participation (28 per cent). This figure was highest among participants in operations that supported the employability of the long term unemployed and economically inactive (45 per cent).

Dependents and Carers

- 3.9 Participant data recorded 21 per cent of participants as having dependent children. This figure was higher among participants in operations that supported participation (25per cent) than those in operations that support progression (18 per cent). However, the presence of dependent children was highest among those participating in operations that supported the childcare workforce (52per cent) and women in the workforce (43per cent).
- 3.10 Just under 1 in 5 (18 per cent) participants were recorded as having caring responsibilities. This figure was higher among participants in operations that Supported participation (23 per cent) than those in operations that Support Progression (15 per cent). Those participants in operations aimed at supporting the employability of the long term unemployed and economically inactive were most likely to be recorded as having dependents (38 per cent).

Ethnicity

- 3.11 Ninety six per cent of participants reported that they were from a white background. This fell to 92 per cent among those participants in operations that were aimed at supporting the employability of the long term unemployed and economically inactive.

Welsh Language

- 3.12 Seven per cent of respondents reported that Welsh was their first language. This figure was relatively even across the different Specific Objectives except for participants in operations aimed at increasing engagement with the labour market, among whom 16 per cent reported that Welsh was their first language.

Labour Market Circumstances of Participants Prior to ESF

- 3.13 The labour market circumstances of ESF participants immediately before their interventions are presented in detail in Table 3.2. The upper panel of Table 3.2 provides information in prior activity status as collected from the Participants Survey. The lower panel presents information on prior activity status as contained within the administrative records of participants.

Table 3.2: Economic Activity Status Prior to ESF

	Supporting Participation				Supporting Progression						All	
	Emp. of ltue'd & econ inact 25+†	Emp. at risk of poverty	Reduce NEET 16-24	Total	Increase. engage.	Address low skills	Increase int/high skills	Graduate engage.	Women in the workforce	Childcare workers		Total
Economic Activity – Survey Definitions												
Employed	6.6	19.1	9.8	8.9	94.5	80.4	89.4	47.4	(95+)**	(95+)**	86.6	53.6
Unemployed	68.2	76.0	60.7	65.1	3.6	8.3	3.6	10.5	*	*	5.2	30.7
Economically Inactive****	25.2	4.9	29.5	26.1	1.9	11.4	6.9	42.1	*	*	8.2	15.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Economic Activity – Participant Records												
Employed	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	(95+)**	(95+)**	46.1	100.0	100.0	99.4	57.0
Unemployed	35.7	100.0	84.5	62.7	0.0	*	*		0.0	0.0	0.3	26.9
Economically Inactive*****	64.3	0.0	15.5	37.3	0.0	*	*	53.9***	0.0	0.0	0.3	16.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	3,290	1,545	2,899	7,734	1,321	4,132	9,207	146	594	94	15,494	23,228

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: All participants

† To increase the employability of Economically Inactive and Long-term Unemployed people aged 25 and over, who have complex barriers to employment

*Denotes figure suppressed due to sample sizes of less than 10.

**Figures in brackets provide approximate values for the purposes of maintaining anonymity.

***Represents the combined total of unemployed and economically inactive.

****Includes those in education and training, those in voluntary or unpaid work and those who were out of work and not looking as defined by the survey.

*****Includes those in education and training,

- 3.14 Administrative records show that none of those engaged in operations aimed at supporting participation were in employment prior to being supported by these operations. Likewise, administrative records reveal that nearly all of those who participated in operations aimed at supporting progression (99 per cent) were in employment at the time that they first received support from ESF. These observations reflect the eligibility criteria for these operations.
- 3.15 The Participants Survey however shows that 9 per cent of those participating in operations aimed at supporting participation reported that they were in employment prior to receiving support from these operations. The survey also shows that 13 per cent of those participating in supporting progression operations were either unemployed (5 per cent) or economically inactive (8 per cent) prior to receiving support from these operations.
- 3.16 In most cases these observations derived from the Participants Survey would contravene eligibility requirements for receipt of support. As discussed in the previous section, these observations are likely to reflect the difficulties that some respondents may have in accurately recalling their circumstances at the time they were being supported by ESF or, among those who have been supported by more than one ESF operation, which intervention the Participants Survey is referring to.

4. Participating in an ESF Operation

Introduction

- 4.1 This section examines the experiences of participants during their ESF-funded operation. The analysis firstly explores the reasons given by participants as to why they participated in their ESF operation and how they found out about the course. The analysis then considers specific aspects about these operations, including course duration, language of provision, levels of awareness surrounding ESF funding and how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted upon the delivery of these operations.

Reasons for Undertaking an ESF Operation

- 4.2 Table 4.1 shows that the main reason provided by participants from operations aimed at supporting participation was to help them get a job (54 per cent), although almost a third (32 per cent) also said that they undertook the operation to develop their skills or knowledge. The main reason cited by those undertaking operations aimed at supporting progression was to develop their skills and knowledge (46 per cent).
- 4.3 One in five (20 per cent) of those participating in supporting progression operations reported that their employer had requested or required them to do so. While the primary focus of ESF interventions relates to the employability and progression of individuals, some operations do operate at the level of the workplace. In these circumstances, the impetus for training may come from the employer rather than the individual.
- 4.4 Annex A.1 further explores the reasons for undertaking an ESF operation for separate groups of survey respondents. The importance of undertaking these operations to get a job was emphasised more by men, those with work limiting health conditions, those with dependent children, carers, and those with lower-level qualifications.

Table 4.1: Participating in an ESF Operation

	Supporting Participation				Supporting Progression						All	
	Emp. of ltue'd & econ inact 25+†	Emp. of at risk of poverty	Reduce NEET 16-24	Total	Increase. engage.	Address. low skills	Increase int/high skills	Graduate engage.	Women in the workforce	Childcare workforce		Total
Reasons for Undertaking an ESF Operation**												
To develop your skills or knowledge	26.6	34.0	37.9	32.4	12.5	46.3	49.1	74.8	51.5	48.6	45.7	40.0
To help you get a job	59.3	51.0	48.3	53.5	11.1	14.3	8.5	*	2.1	*	10.6	28.9
Your employer asked you to do it	1.6	0.9	3.1	2.3	6.7	22.9	20.7	*	14.4	*	20.3	12.6
To improve your pay, promotion or other	4.6	7.9	4.1	4.5	4.4	12.8	18.9	*	29.1	*	15.8	11.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	2,925	1,362	2,641	6,928	1,123	3,698	8,302	136	530	81	13,870	20,798
Mean Duration (months) ***	9.4	2.1	7.5	8.1	3.7	14.3	16.9	30.8	22.1	13.9	15.2	12.2
Early Withdrawal	22.0	4.2	29.9	24.7	12.0	11.8	10.5	17.0	1.4	9.6	10.9	16.8
Aware ESF-funded	52.7	72.1	45.2	50.2	66.4	59.6	68.5	99.6	83.8	67.1	65.7	59.1
Sample****	3,290	1,545	2,899	7,734	1,321	4,132	9,207	146	594	94	15,494	23,228

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: All participants

† To increase the employability of Economically Inactive and Long-term Unemployed people aged 25 and over, who have complex barriers to employment

*Denotes figure suppressed due to sample sizes of less than 10.

**Full CATI only. Estimates based on sample that exclude those who responded, "Don't know".

***Restricted to cases with valid start and end dates.

****Refers to full sample sizes. Sample sizes for specific rows will vary slightly due to the exclusion of cases with incomplete information.

Duration of Support

- 4.5 The length of time that participants are supported by ESF operations was longer among those assisted by operations that supported progression (15 months) than those who were supported by operations that supported participation (8 months). However, there was also variation between operations within these themes.
- The average length of time spent by ESF Participants on operations that support the employability of those at risk of poverty was just 2 months.
 - Those assisted by graduate engagement operations spent 31 months being supported by these operations.
- 4.6 The average duration of support increased from 11 to 14 months between the Pre-COVID and Post-COVID rounds of the survey (see Annex 1.B).

Awareness of Funding

- 4.7 Considerable importance was attached by WEFO to ensuring that all ESF operations complied with the promotional requirements of the Programme to raise awareness of ESF (co)financing among both participants and the wider public. Measures taken to adhere to these requirements may have included displaying ESF logos or the acknowledgement of ESF on any literature provided to participants. Operations that did not comply with publicity requirements could have been subject to financial penalties.
- 4.8 The final row of Table 4.1 shows that 59 per cent of respondents were aware that their operation was funded by ESF, with levels of awareness being higher among participants from operations that supported progression (66 per cent) compared to those that supported participation (50 per cent).
- 4.9 Awareness of the role of ESF in helping to pay for the operations was highest among the participants supported under the graduate engagement objective, where essentially all participants appreciated that these operations were supported by ESF. The lowest levels of awareness were among those participants in operations aimed at reducing levels of NEET among 16-24 year olds, among whom only 45 per cent were aware that these operations were ESF-funded. Levels of awareness regarding ESF funding fell from 64 per cent prior to the COVID-19 pandemic to 54 per cent after (see Annex A1.B).

Early Withdrawal from ESF

- 4.10 As part of the screening process to assess the eligibility for the survey, potential interviewees were asked whether they had either completed the course, had left before its end or were still on the course. Completing the course was defined as attending most or all the course and staying on the course until it ended. Leaving a course early could have included those who left a course before its end to start a job, education, or training. Leaving the course before its end can therefore not be assumed to represent a poor outcome.
- 4.11 Table 4.1 shows that 17 per cent of participants were recorded as having left their course early. One in four participants in operations aimed at supporting participation are recorded as having left their course early. This figure increased further to 30 per cent among those supported by operations that were aimed at reducing the level of NEET among 16-24 year-olds.
- 4.12 Analysis by selected personal characteristics (Annex A1.A) shows that rates of withdrawal from these operations were highest among:
- those aged 16-24 years old (21 per cent);
 - those with work limiting health conditions (23 per cent);
 - and those with low levels of educational attainment⁸ prior to receiving support from ESF (20 per cent).
- 4.13 Rates of withdrawal did not vary greatly between the pre (17 per cent) and post-COVID rounds of the Participants Survey (16 per cent).

How Found Out About ESF

- 4.14 The Participants Surveys collected detailed information on where respondents first heard about their ESF-funded operations. These varied due to the unique contexts in which different operations operated and the role of different organisations in providing the main gateway to access these operations. Table 4.2 compares the routes through which participants first heard about their operations.
- Job Centre Plus was most frequently cited as the place through which those in Supporting Participation operations first heard about their course (39 per cent).

⁸ Low attainment which is defined as someone who has qualifications not exceeding Level 2 (equivalent to GCSEs at grades A*-C, Intermediate Apprenticeships and various Level 2 Diplomas, Awards and Certificates).

- Employers were most frequently cited as the mechanism through which participants in supporting progression operations first heard about their course (59 per cent).

Table 4.2: Where First Heard About ESF

	Supporting Participation		Supporting Progression		All	
1	Job Centre Plus	38.9	Employer	58.9	Employer	36.0
2	Family member or friend	12.8	Family member or friend	8.8	Job Centre Plus	17.3
3	Careers Wales Advisor	8.8	Schools / careers teacher	5.4	Family member or friend	10.5
4	Schools / careers teacher	7.5	College / university	4.4	Schools / careers teacher	6.3
5	Employer	5.1	Health or social services professional	3.8	Careers Wales Advisor	4.6
6	Can't remember	4.4	An apprenticeship provider	2.7	College / university	3.4
7	An employment support or training organisation	2.5	Online / internet search	2.5	Health or social services professional	3.2
8	Health or social services professional	2.5	Social media	2.0	Can't remember	3.0
9	Charity / not for profit organisation	2.4	Can't remember	1.9	Online / internet search	2.4
10	Other	2.3	An employment support or training organisation	1.8	Social media	2.2
Sample	6,959		13,895		20,854	

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey, Full CATI Only
Base: All participants

Language of Provision

4.15 The Participants Survey recorded information on the language of provision offered to participants and the language through which the course was delivered. Nearly all participants (98 per cent) were offered for their course to be delivered in English. However, 41 per cent also reported that their course was offered to them through the medium of Welsh (see Table 4.3). The offer of provision solely through the medium of Welsh was highest in:

- Gwynedd (55 per cent);
- the Isle of Anglesey (48 per cent);
- Carmarthenshire (47 per cent);

- the Vale of Glamorgan (47 per cent).

- 4.16 A further 19 per cent of participants reported that their course was offered to them through a combination of English and Welsh. Overall, therefore, 60 per cent of participants were provided with the opportunity to receive their ESF provision either wholly or partly through the medium of Welsh.
- 4.17 Very few participants reported that their course was actually delivered solely through the medium of Welsh. However, approximately 6 per cent of respondents reported that their course was delivered through the medium of Welsh or via a combination of English and Welsh. The proportion who received support where at least some of the delivery was through the medium of Welsh was highest among respondents in Gwynedd (30 per cent) Anglesey (19 per cent) and Ceredigion (16 per cent).
- 4.18 The previous section revealed that 7 per cent of participants reported that Welsh was their first language. Taken in the context of the 6 per cent of participants who received at least some of their provision through the medium of Welsh, these figures are consistent with the high proportion of participants (95 per cent) who report that their ESF operation was delivered through their preferred language⁹. There is little variation in this figure across Wales, suggesting that the delivery of these operations was able to respond to differences in the language preferences of participants across Wales.

⁹ Only 3 per cent of respondents to the Participants Survey (n=448) who chose to conduct the interview through the medium of Welsh (see paragraph 2.21), less than the rate of Welsh speaking.

Table 4.3: Welsh Speaking and Language of Provision by Local Authority.

	Language Offer		Language of Delivery	Delivered in Preferred Language	Sample
	Welsh Only	Combination of English and Welsh	Welsh or a Combination of English and Welsh		
Blaenau Gwent	39.5	61.8	1.7	92.7	547
Bridgend	37.7	53.7	3.6	96.0	1,022
Caerphilly	38.2	57.9	3.1	95.0	1,134
Cardiff	41.7	56.2	4.7	94.3	2,108
Carmarthenshire	46.7	67.6	8.4	94.9	1,212
Ceredigion	40.2	66.2	15.6	94.5	426
Conwy	40.7	62.1	5.3	95.7	908
Denbighshire	40.1	62.1	4.7	95.0	735
Flintshire	37.0	64.2	5.4	95.6	708
Gwynedd	55.0	72.9	30.2	93.7	897
Isle Of Anglesey	48.0	71.6	19.2	94.5	606
Merthyr Tydfil	39.7	59.1	3.0	95.6	508
Monmouthshire	39.5	56.1	2.9	96.1	405
Neath Port Talbot	35.6	57.2	2.9	94.7	1,187
Newport	39.6	56.6	4.7	95.8	881
Pembrokeshire	45.7	65.9	4.8	94.7	848
Powys	37.6	60.9	7.0	95.1	570
Rhondda Cynon Taf	33.7	53.0	2.3	96.4	741
Swansea	38.1	57.3	8.1	94.5	1,772
Torfaen	39.6	58.9	2.5	96.1	816
Vale Of Glamorgan	46.6	63.6	3.9	94.3	553
Wrexham	42.5	62.7	2.8	96.7	723
Outside Of Wales/Missing	41.8	64.3	6.4	95.5	892
Total	40.8	60.6	6.3	95.1	20,199*

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey, Full CATI Only

Base: All participants

*Excludes cases where Local Authority is missing within participant records.

The Impact of COVID

4.19 The second round of the Participants Survey (2022/23) asked respondents whether COVID-19 had any impact on the training or support that they had received. It is important to note that not all participants interviewed during this second wave of interviews will have received support from ESF operations during a time when lockdown or other restrictions would have been in place. Amongst this later cohort of respondents, Table 4.4 shows that approximately half (53 per cent) reported that the COVID-19 pandemic had no impact on the provision of their course.

4.20 Almost a third of participants (30 per cent) reported that there was less face-to-face contact in the delivery of their operation due to COVID, with some or all the course having been delivered remotely. A further 4 per cent of respondents reported that there had been restrictions on face-to-face learning. Nine per cent reported that their course took longer than planned, with a further 3 per cent reporting that the start of the course was delayed and another 3 per cent reporting that their course was either cancelled or cut short.

Table 4.4 Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Provision

	No Impact	53.2	Source: 202 2 ES F Part icip ant s Sur vey Bas e: All part icip ant s *An alys is excl ude s
1	Some / all / more of the course was remote / online (less face to face delivery)	30.4	
2	The course took longer than planned (e.g. the course was delayed or paused because of COVID)	9.0	
3	Restrictions on face-to-face learning	4.3	
4	The start of the course was delayed	2.9	
5	Course was cancelled / cut short	2.6	
6	Lack of support / poor communication from organisers	2.2	
7	Affected ability to work / last job e.g. furloughed	1.7	
8	The people delivering the course kept changing because they were off with COVID	1.7	
9	I was off / missed bits because I was ill with COVID (or had to care for people with COVID)	1.2	
10	Difficulties continuing training (other) e.g. traveling, childcare, confidence using technology	1.1	
	Sample	5,951*	

those who responded "Don't know"

5. ESF and the Accumulation of Skills

Introduction

- 5.1 This sections explores the contribution of ESF to the development of skills. Firstly, the analysis examines qualifications gained from participating in an ESF supported operation. By comparing these qualifications to levels held by participants prior to ESF, the contribution of these operations to increasing levels of attainment is assessed. Secondly, the types of skills that respondents report they have acquired through their ESF operation are highlighted.

Qualifications Gained

- 5.2 Table 5.1 examines the qualifications gained by participants through being supported by an ESF operation. The Participants Survey firstly asked respondents whether they had gained any qualifications or accredited certificates from being on their course. Those who said that they either did not or did not know if they had gained any further qualifications were then asked whether they had gained any units or credits towards any qualifications.
- 5.3 Almost three quarters of participants (72 per cent) said that they had either gained a qualification or had gained units/credits towards a qualification. The proportion reporting that they had gained a qualification was higher among participants from operations that Supported progression (84 per cent) compared to those that Supported participation (55 per cent).
- 5.4 In terms of differences between Specific Objectives, those supported by operations aimed at increasing engagement were least likely to report that their participation in ESF led to the attainment of additional qualifications (12 per cent). Under the theme of supporting participation, 86 per cent of those assisted by operations that supported the employability of those at risk of poverty reported that they had gained a qualification. This is despite the short duration with which participants were supported by these operations (2 months, see Table 4.1).

Table 5.1: Qualifications Gained from Participation in ESF

	Supporting Participation				Supporting Progression						All	
	Emp. of ltue'd & econ inact 25+†	Emp. of at risk of poverty	Reduce NEET 16-24	Total	Increase. engage.	Address. low skills	Increase int/high skills	Graduate engage.	Women in the workforce	Childcare workforce		Total
Qualifications Gained												
Yes	53.0	86.4	53.5	55.2	11.8	88.8	90.8	(80)**	92.5	(90)**	84.3	71.9
No	40.9	12.2	37.4	37.6	70.5	8.6	7.2	*	4.2	*	12.3	23.0
Don't know.	6.1	1.4	9.1	7.3	17.7	2.6	2.0	*	3.2	*	3.4	5.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	2,942	1,365	2,652	6,959	1,137	3,703	8,307	136	531	81	13,895	20,854
Level of Qualification Gained***												
Level 1 or below	17.4	9.9	36.5	25.6	11.5	3.6	0.9	*	2.2	*	2.0	9.7
Level 2	25.7	12.9	20.1	21.9	18.4	61.2	10.0	*	53.7	*	30.5	27.7
Level 3	8.5	13.6	6.0	7.8	15.2	15.6	45.0	*	10.8	(80)**	32.6	24.5
Level 4+	1.6	9.1	0.9	1.9	5.3	3.9	33.0	(100)**	6.7	*	21.2	14.9
Other, Don't Know	46.9	54.4	36.6	42.8	49.6	15.7	11.1	*	26.6	*	13.6	23.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	1,552	1,170	1,420	4,142	125	3,296	7,548	108	492	73	11,642	15,784

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey, Full CATI Only

Base: All participants

† To increase the employability of Economically Inactive and Long-term Unemployed people aged 25 and over, who have complex barriers to employment

*Denotes figure suppressed due to sample sizes of less than 10.

**Figures in brackets provide approximate values for the purposes of maintaining anonymity.

***Sample restricted to those who gained qualifications.

- 5.5 The lower panel of Table 5.1 examines the level of qualification gained through being supported by ESF. Almost a quarter (23 per cent) of participants who gained a qualification were unable to provide sufficient detail for these qualifications to be allocated to an NQF level. The inability to allocate qualifications gained to an NQF level is higher among operations that Supported participation (43 per cent) than those that supported progression (14 per cent). However, among participants in operations that increased engagement, a qualification level can only be allocated to half of those who gained a qualification.
- 5.6 Where qualification levels can be ascertained, qualifications gained by those on operations aimed at supporting participation were lower than those gained by through operations that supported progression. Where one in four (26 per cent) qualifications gained under the supporting participation theme were recorded as being at NQF Level 1 or below, this figure is just 2 per cent among those who participated in operations aimed at supporting progression.
- 5.7 In terms of qualifications gained by different groups of ESF participants, participants aged 55 and over and those with work limiting health conditions were both less likely to report that they have gained qualifications as a result of their participation in ESF and are less likely to know the level of the qualification gained (see Table A.2A)
- 5.8 In terms of course characteristics, those supported under Priority Axis 2 (Skills for Growth) were most likely to report that they had gained a qualification (90 per cent) and were most likely to know the level of qualification gained (see Table A.2B).

ESF and Increasing Levels of Attainment

- 5.9 How levels of attainment develop through participation in ESF is described in Table 5.2. The survey asked respondents about their level of educational attainment prior to their participation in ESF. Due to the complexities associated with collecting information on qualifications held, particularly among respondents who may have completed full time education several decades earlier, it is not possible to allocate the prior educational attainment of all respondents to an NQF category. As such, 11 per cent of respondents are recorded as having a qualification level classified as 'other or don't know'.

Table 5.2: Qualifications Levels Pre and Post ESF

	Supporting Participation				Supporting Progression						All	
	Emp. of ltue'd & econ inact 25+†	Emp. of at risk of poverty	Reduce NEET 16-24	Total	Increase. engage.	Address . low skills	Increase e int/high skills	Graduate engage.	Women in the workforc e	Childcare workforce		Total
Prior to ESF												
% Low Skilled	49.7	27.8	66.0	56.3	21.6	60.2	23.6	0.0	11.3	29.8	36.2	44.7
Highest Qualification												
Level 1 or below	24.4	11.0	22.4	22.7	8.9	18.0	3.5	*	3.2	29.8***	9.1	14.9
Level 2	25.3	16.8	43.6	33.6	12.7	42.2	20.2	*	8.1	29.8***	27.1	29.9
Level 3	16.3	19.8	17.0	16.9	18.0	18.9	33.3	*	17.8	(25)**	26.5	22.4
Level 4+	19.3	35.1	7.6	14.6	46.8	9.1	35.7	(90)**	63.9	(45)**	28.0	22.3
Other, DK	14.7	17.2	9.4	12.3	13.6	11.8	7.3	*	6.9	*	9.3	10.6
Post ESF												
% Low Skilled	47.3	24.3	64.1	54.0	21.2	50.1	6.5	0.0	9.4	8.8	23.2	36.4
Highest Qualification												
Level 1 or below	20.4	9.2	19.4	19.3	8.6	5.6	0.7	*	9.4***	8.8***	3.0	10.0
Level 2	26.9	15.1	44.7	34.7	12.6	44.5	5.8	*	9.4***	8.8***	20.2	26.4
Level 3	18.3	20.8	18.6	18.6	18.1	26.7	37.9	*	18.8	(40)**	31.8	26.2
Level 4+	19.7	37.6	7.9	15.1	47.1	11.5	48.3	(90)**	64.9	(50)**	35.6	26.9
Other, DK	14.7	17.2	9.4	12.3	13.6	11.8	7.3	*	6.9	*	9.3	10.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	2,941	1,365	2,652	6,958	1,136	3,703	8,307	136	531	81	13,894	20,852

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey, Full CATI Only

Base: All participants

†To increase the employability of Economically Inactive and Long-term Unemployed people aged 25 and over, who have complex barriers to employment

*Denotes figure suppressed due to sample sizes of less than 10.

**Figures in brackets provide approximate values for the purposes of maintaining anonymity.

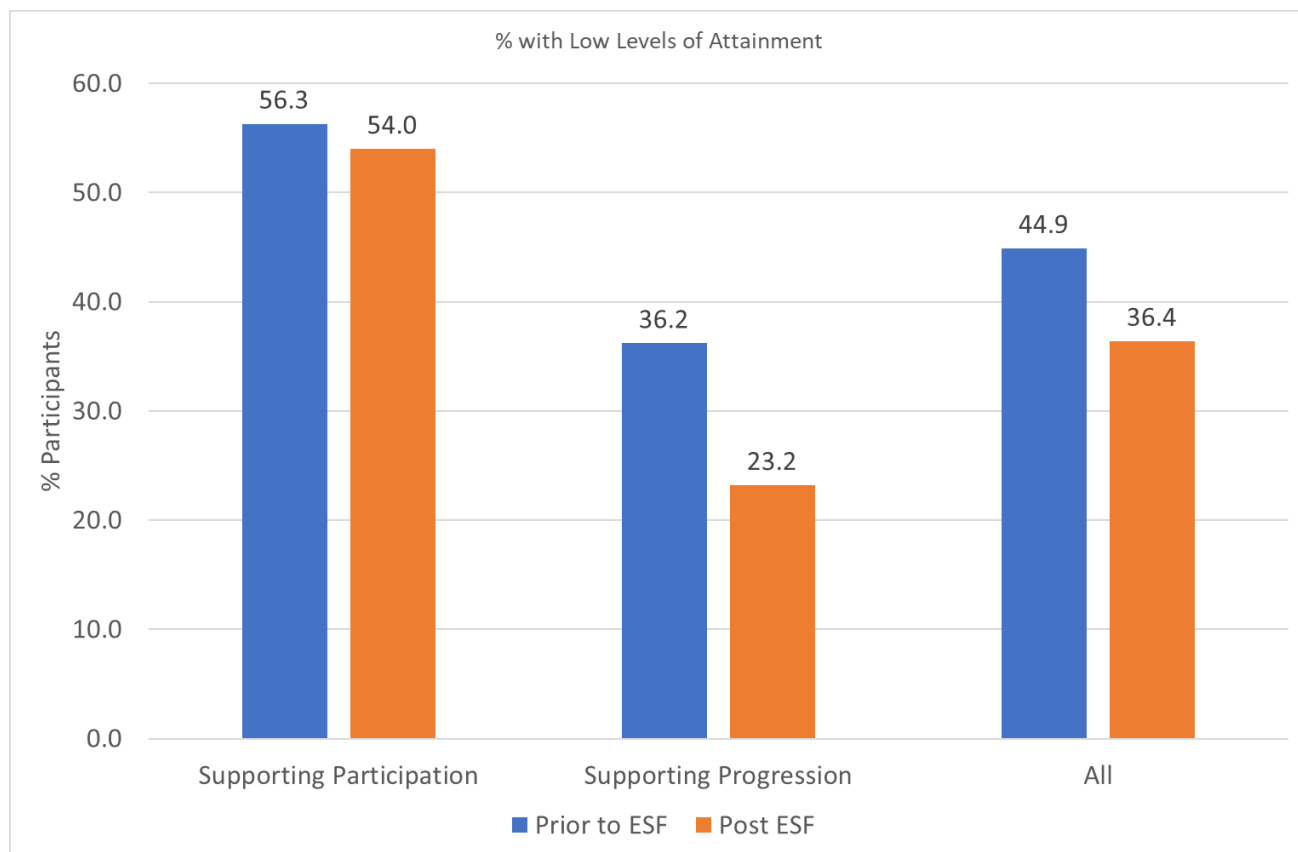
***Figures represent combined total for 'Level 1 or below' and 'Level 2' for the purposes of maintaining anonymity.

- 5.10 Approximately 45 per cent of participants reported that they did not possess either any qualifications or hold qualifications at NQF Level 2 or below prior to their participation in ESF. Among operations that Supported participation, this figure increased to 56 per cent. Looking across Specific Objectives, two thirds of those supported by operations aimed at reducing NEET among 16-24 year-olds possessed qualifications at NQF Level 2 or below.
- 5.11 Information on the qualifications held following participation in ESF is reported in the second panel of Table 5.2. The educational attainment of a respondent post ESF is based on information provided about the qualifications that they held before ESF and information about qualifications achieved through their ESF intervention. The highest level of educational attainment following ESF is recorded as the highest 'known' qualification for that individual¹⁰.
- 5.12 The effect of qualifications gained via ESF on raising attainment can be seen most clearly by focussing on the derived measure of low attainment¹¹. Figure 5.1 demonstrates that following participation in ESF, 36 per cent of participants were defined as having low levels of attainment, a decline of eight percentage points. It can therefore be seen that participation in ESF is associated with an increase in the levels of qualifications held by participants.
- This increase in the level of qualifications held was more apparent among operations that supported progression, where the proportion with low levels of attainment fell from 36 per cent to 23 per cent following participation in ESF.
 - Among respondents supported by operations under the supporting participation theme, the proportion with low levels of attainment fell marginally from 56 per cent to 54 per cent.

¹⁰ This level could relate to qualifications held either before ESF or as a result of ESF. If attainment levels prior to ESF are unknown, the effect of ESF raising attainment levels cannot be assessed.

¹¹ Defined as someone who held qualifications not exceeding Level 2 (equivalent to GCSEs at grades A*-C, Intermediate Apprenticeships and various Level 2 Diplomas, Awards and Certificates). This definition of low qualifications is largely driven by sample size considerations so that reliable comparisons can be made between different groups of respondents.

Figure 5.1: Participation in ESF and Increasing Attainment



Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey, Full CATI Only

Base: All participants

- 5.13 The largest reduction in the proportion of respondents defined as having low levels of attainment was observed among those participating in operations aimed at increasing intermediate and high-level skills. Among this group of participants, the proportion with low levels of attainment fell from 24 per cent to 7 per cent (see Table 5.2).
- 5.14 In terms of the increases observed among separate groups of ESF participants (see Table A.3A), reductions in the proportion of those with low levels of attainment were larger among younger compared to older participants. Those with work limiting health conditions experienced modest increases in their levels of attainment (4 percentage point reduction in the share who have low levels of attainment) compared to those with no such conditions (9 percentage point reduction).
- 5.15 In terms of course characteristics, those supported under Priority Axis 2 (Skills for Growth) recorded the largest reduction in the proportion of respondents defined as having low levels of attainment, falling from 37 per cent to 24 per cent (see Table A.3B).

Skills Gained from ESF

- 5.16 Respondents to the survey were asked to provide a list of skills that they had acquired during their ESF operation. Table 5.3 indicates that across both supporting participation operations and supporting progression operations, the most cited skills were:
- communication skills (74 per cent);
 - organisational skills (72 per cent);
 - team working skills (71 per cent);
 - problem solving skills (71 per cent);
 - and job specific skills related to a specific occupation (70 per cent).
- 5.17 Those who had been supported by operations aimed at supporting progression were more likely to report the acquisition of a variety of skills. One of the few exceptions to this was in relation to the acquisition of job search, CV writing, or interview skills where respondents from supporting participation operations were, unsurprisingly, more likely to report gaining such skills (25 per cent compared to 14 per cent).
- 5.18 In terms of differences between Specific Objectives, the acquisition of skills among those participating in operations aimed at increasing engagement was low compared to other operations under the supporting progression theme.

Table 5.3: Skills Gained from ESF

	Supporting Participation				Supporting Progression						All	
	Emp. of ltue'd & econ inact 25+†	Emp. of at risk of poverty	Reduce NEET 16-24	Total	Increase. Engage.	Address low skills	Increase int/high skills	Graduate engage.	Women in the Workforce	Childcare Workforce		Total
Communication	61.9	53.5	85.2	72.5	37.5	78.8	75.7	87.5	89.2	71.2	74.4	73.6
Organisational	59.4	63.9	77.6	68.3	32.7	78.7	77.2	85.2	67.4	70.9	74.3	71.7
Team working	60.1	50.3	81.5	69.8	29.4	77.9	73.1	71.1	88.8	57.2	72.0	71.0
Problem solving	57.2	60.7	78.0	67.4	35.5	77.4	75.8	87.5	76.2	67.6	73.5	70.9
Job-specific skills	52.9	80.8	70.4	62.9	25.6	80.2	80.0	83.8	58.2	77.1	75.6	70.2
Customer handling	39.0	36.3	59.3	48.6	22.6	63.7	55.1	24.7	43.5	40.3	55.3	52.4
Working with numbers	33.9	34.6	54.7	43.9	10.7	58.7	49.1	75.6	11.2	37.2	48.9	46.8
Computer literacy/ basic IT	36.9	33.2	49.3	42.6	13.1	49.4	51.4	68.0	17.7	58.5	47.2	45.2
English language	33.5	17.8	56.8	43.7	10.0	53.9	45.0	62.7	20.2	35.4	45.1	44.5
Leadership	20.9	30.0	39.3	30.2	15.7	46.7	59.9	54.3	88.6	36.4	52.6	43.0
Sales	18.2	12.6	39.2	27.9	7.2	29.5	20.4	*	13.2	*	22.4	24.8
Reading and writing	18.0	9.1	17.6	17.3	8.4	23.7	20.0	82.9	24.6	19.8	20.9	19.4
Job search CV writing or interview	27.6	7.5	24.6	25.0	11.5	14.9	13.3	46.2	36.0	12.6	14.4	19.0
Advanced or specialist IT	9.2	12.2	16.7	13.0	2.9	17.1	17.9	(60)**	4.1	(10)**	16.4	14.9
Welsh language	7.6	3.8	17.0	11.9	4.5	18.3	15.4	17.6	3.7	17.1	15.4	13.9
Have been able to use skills gained***	65.4	76.0	78.5	72.3	68.5	85.1	88.1	88.0	92.2	(90)**	85.8	80.1
Sample	2,942	1,365	2,652	6,959	1,137	3,703	8,307	136	531	81	13,895	20,854

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey, Full CATI Only

Base: All participants

†To increase the employability of Economically Inactive and Long-term Unemployed people aged 25 and over, who have complex barriers to employment

*Denotes figure suppressed due to sample sizes of less than 10.

**Figures in brackets provide approximate values for the purposes of maintaining anonymity.

***Those who reported that they had acquired not skills are excluded from these estimates.

6. Improving Participation in the Labour Market

Introduction

6.1 This section examines the role of ESF operations in supporting participation in the labour market among those who were previously out of work. Specifically, this section examines those who were either unemployed or economically inactive¹² prior to being assisted by ESF. The difficulties faced by participants in finding work prior to ESF are firstly explored¹³. The career history section of the Participants Survey is then used to explore transitions into employment, education and training following participation in ESF. A more detailed examination of the activity status of ESF participants at both six months following the completion of their ESF operation and at the time of the survey is then presented.

Unemployment and Inactivity Prior to ESF

6.2 Table 6.1 presents information on the duration of non-employment among ESF Participants who were either unemployed or economically inactive before being supported by their operations. Approximately 40 per cent of out of work participants assisted by operations under the supporting participation theme had been jobless for less than 12 months. However, separate analyses for Specific Objectives highlight the vastly different labour market backgrounds of those who are being supported by operations within this theme.

- Forty-five per cent of those assisted by operations that aimed to increase the employability of the long term unemployed and the economically inactive had been out of work for longer than 3 years.
- Ninety-six per cent of those assisted by operations that aimed to support the employability of those at risk of poverty had been out of work for less than 12 months. This reflects the dominance of the ReAct Redundancy Training within this Specific Objective.

¹² In this section, the economically inactive include those in voluntary unpaid work and those who were out of work and not looking for work. Those who were in education or training prior to their participation in ESF are not included.

¹³ In a majority of cases, these respondents have undertaken operations whose aim was to support participation in the labour market. However, as discussed in Section 3, out of approximately 7,300 previously non-employed respondents, almost a thousand were recorded by administrative records as having participated in operations aimed at supporting progression in employment (i.e., interventions aimed at those in work). For completeness, these respondents supporting progression operations are retained in the analyses that follow. However, due to the small sample sizes associated with this group, data at Specific Objective level is not presented.

- Among participants supported by operations that aimed to reduce the levels of NEET among those aged 16-24, whilst half reported that they had been out of employment for less than 12 months, over a quarter (26 per cent) reported that they had never had a job.

Table 6.1: Time Since Last Job Held

	Supporting Participation			Total	Supporting Progression	All
	Emp. of Itue'd & econ inact 25+†	Emp. of at risk of poverty	Reduce NEET 16-24			
Less than 3 months	6.7	60.6	20.6	15.6	34.2	17.4
3-6 months	6.5	26.9	16.3	11.7	17.8	12.4
6-12 months	9.6	8.3	13.1	11.0	13.2	11.2
1-2 years	13.9	1.8	9.6	11.4	7.3	11.0
2-3 years	11.5	0.2	5.6	8.4	3.6	7.9
3 years or more	44.9	0.2	5.8	26.0	6.2	24.0
Never had a job	3.5	0.0	26.2	12.9	15.7	13.2
Don't know	3.4	2.1	2.7	3.0	2.0	2.9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	3,011	1,241	2,055	6,307	960	7,267

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: Unemployed or economically inactive prior to ESF

† To increase the employability of Economically Inactive and Long-term Unemployed people aged 25 and over, who have complex barriers to employment

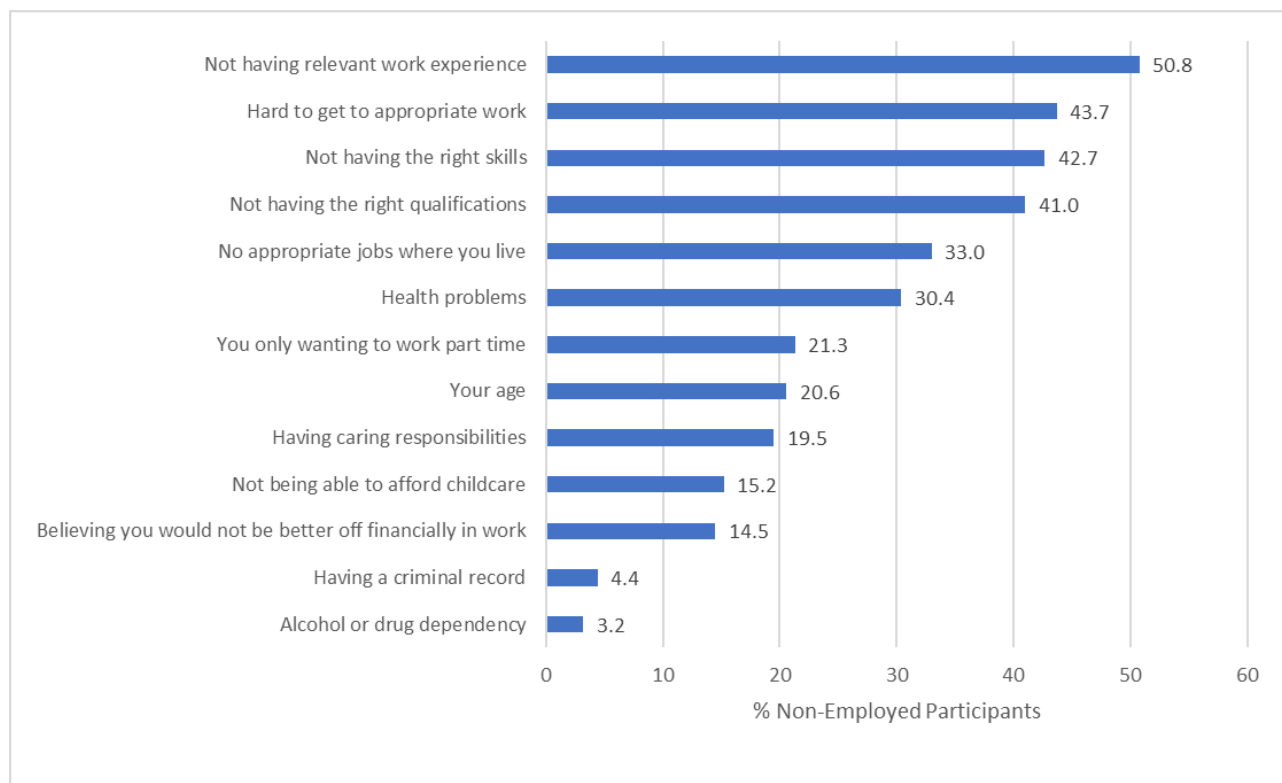
6.3 Analysis by selected personal characteristics (see Table A.4A) reveal that women, older participants, those with work limiting health conditions, those with dependent children and carers were more likely to have not held a job during the three years prior to the participation within an ESF operation.

6.4 In terms of course characteristics, over one in four (26 per cent) participants supported under Priority Axis 3 (Youth Employment and Attainment) reported that they have never held a job prior to their participation in ESF (see Table A.4B).

Difficulties in Finding Work

6.5 The reasons given by participants for the difficulties that they faced with finding work before their participation in an ESF operation are presented in Figure 6.1. The causes most frequently reported were their lack of relevant work experience (51 per cent); difficulties in getting appropriate work (44 per cent); not having the right skills (43 per cent) and not having the right qualifications (41 per cent).

Figure 6.1: Difficulties with Finding Work



Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey
 Base: Unemployed or economically inactive prior to ESF

6.6 Table 6.2 explores the difficulties experienced by different groups of ESF participants. Among those assisted by operations supporting the employability of the long term unemployed and economically inactive, health problems (41 per cent) having caring responsibilities (29 per cent), not being able to afford childcare (23 per cent), only wanting to work part time (28 per cent) and believing that they would not be better off financially in work (19 per cent) were all issues that were of relative importance to this group.

6.7 Among those assisted by operations that supported the employability of those at risk of poverty, not having the right qualifications (42 per cent) and not having the right skills (39 per cent) were the most cited difficulties. However, as this group are generally characterised as only having been out of work for a relatively brief time, fewer difficulties were cited.

6.8 Among those who participated in operations aimed at reducing levels of NEET among 16-24 year-olds, not having relevant work experience (64 per cent) came to the fore as being the most cited difficulty associated with finding work.

6.9 Analysis undertaken for different population subgroups (see Table A.5A) shows that:

- women, those with dependent children and carers were more likely to cite difficulties associated with only wanting to work part time, having caring responsibilities and not being able to afford childcare;
- the importance of not having relevant work experience declined with respect to age;
- almost half (46 per cent) of participants aged 55 and over cited their age as a difficulty associated with finding work;
- more than 7 out of 10 participants (71 per cent) with work limiting health conditions cited health conditions as a difficulty associated with finding work;
- those with lower levels of qualifications prior to their participation within an ESF operation were more likely to cite not having relevant work experience (53 per cent), not having the right skills (48 per cent), and not having the right qualifications (47 per cent) as difficulties associated with finding work.

Table 6.2: Difficulties with Finding Work

	Supporting Participation			Total	Supporting Progression	All
	Emp. Of Inactive & econ inact 25+†	Emp. Of at risk of poverty	Reduce NEET 16- 24			
Not having relevant work experience	41.9	29.6	64.1	50.5	52.8	50.8
Hard to get to appropriate work	44.7	31.8	47.1	45.0	32.3	43.7
Not having the right skills	42.1	38.7	44.2	42.8	41.7	42.7
Not having the right qualifications	41.7	42.3	40.8	41.3	37.7	41.0
No appropriate jobs where you live	34.3	32.1	33.5	33.8	25.8	33.0
Health problems	40.7	8.6	25.3	32.4	12.8	30.4
You only wanting to work part time	27.8	10.3	18.3	22.8	7.5	21.3
Your age	19.8	18.3	22.7	20.9	17.7	20.6
Having caring responsibilities	29.2	8.5	11.4	20.5	10.3	19.5
Not being able to afford childcare	23.4	4.1	8.7	16.1	7.0	15.2
Believing you would not be better off financially in work	18.9	6.0	11.6	15.1	8.4	14.5
Having a criminal record	6.9	1.3	2.5	4.7	1.2	4.4
Alcohol or drug dependency	5.2	*	*	*	*	3.2
Sample	2,680	1,108	1,826	5,614	865	6,479

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: Unemployed or economically inactive prior to ESF

† To increase the employability of Economically Inactive and Long-term Unemployed people aged 25 and over, who have complex barriers to employment.

*Denotes figure suppressed due to sample sizes of less than 10.

Transitions into Employment

- 6.10 Tracking the activities of respondents since they were first supported by ESF operations requires information on both the time spent by participants on these schemes and what happened to them after. This requires combining information on operation duration contained within administrative records with data from the Participants Surveys that ask respondents to provide a dated account¹⁴ of the main activities they had engaged in since they exited the support of their operations¹⁵.
- 6.11 Figure 6.2 shows how participation in employment for those assisted by operations aimed at supporting participation increased during the period since participants were first in receipt of support from their ESF operations (represented as 'Month 1'¹⁶). Across each of the Specific Objectives within this theme, participation in employment increased over time as participants exited these operations and entered employment.
- 6.12 The percentage of participants who entered employment was higher among those who were assisted by operations that supported the employability of those at risk of poverty (81 per cent at 18 months). The sharp increase in employment exhibited by this group, even within just a few months of having first received support from ESF, reflects the targeting of these interventions which were aimed at the short term unemployed and those who had recently been made redundant.
- 6.13 Levels of employment were lowest among those who were assisted by operations that supported the employability of the long term unemployed and the economically inactive. The increase in employment observed during the period that followed their participation in ESF is also more gradual. Among this group, 37 per cent of participants were in employment at a point 18 months since they were first supported by ESF.
- 6.14 Where sample sizes allow, it is possible to compare employment trajectories for different subgroups of ESF Participants. Such comparisons shed light on both differences in the levels of employment following the receipt of ESF support and the speed with which separate groups entered employment. Due to the small number of

¹⁴ Eligibility for inclusion in the survey samples specified that participants should have exited their provision at least a year prior to interview. This means that the employment histories of each respondent should cover a minimum period of 12 months, subject to respondents being able to recall the details of the activities that they had undertaken since exiting the support of ESF.

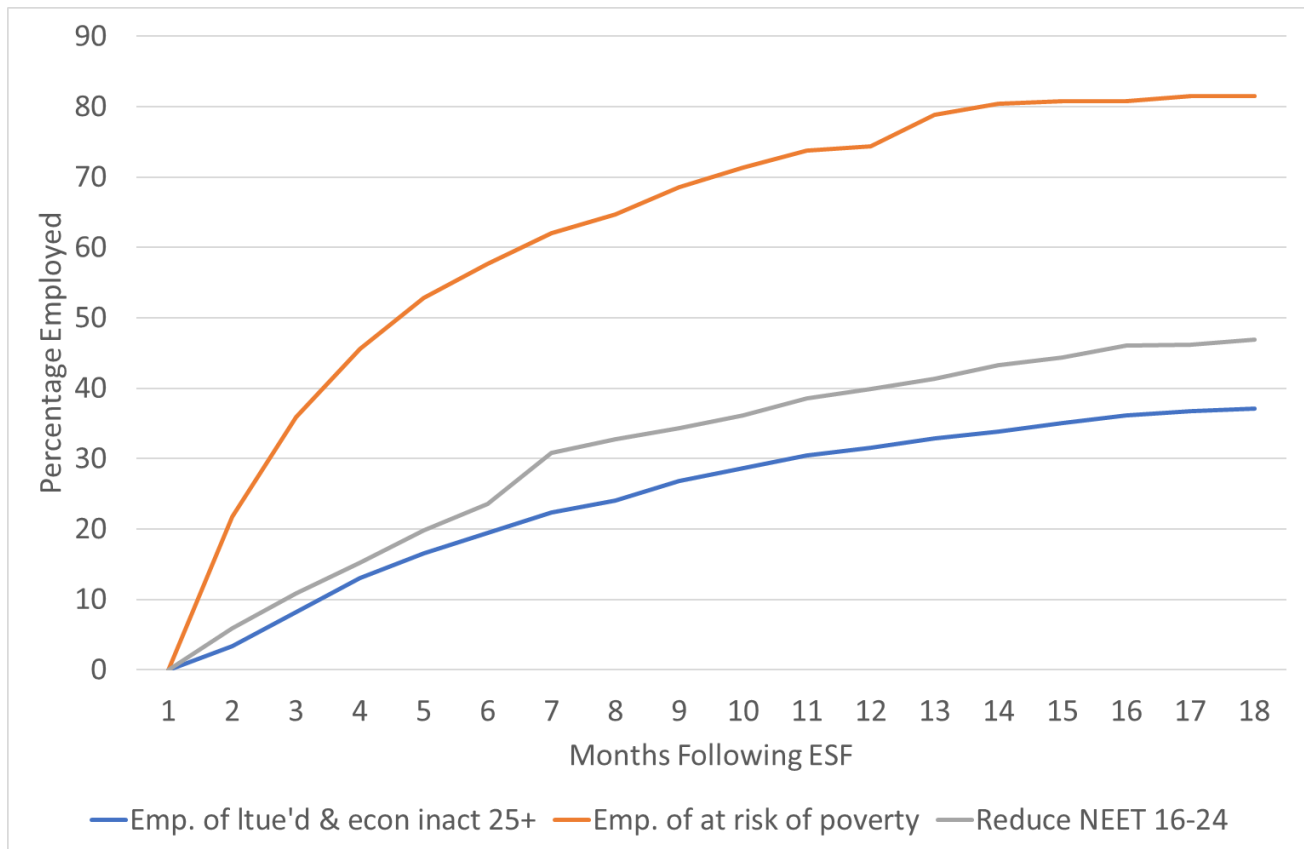
¹⁵ Across the two surveys, a complete dated account of activities undertaken by participants since they were first supported by ESF could be derived for 5,384 respondents.

¹⁶ At month 1 all participants are observed as being in receipt of support from ESF. Participants are first observed to exit ESF at month 2 if the duration of their support was just 1 month.

cases that are available for some groups of respondents, these analyses are based on data combined across all Specific Objectives.

6.15 Figure 6.3 shows the transitions into employment that were made by previously out of work ESF participants separately by gender. Among operations across all Specific Objectives, employment initially increased steeply, reaching 24 per cent within six months of first being supported by ESF. Participation in employment continued to grow thereafter, although at a diminishing rate. By 12 months following entry to ESF, the rate of employment had increased further to 40 per cent. By 18 months, almost half of ESF participants (48 per cent) were recorded as being in paid employment. The analysis shows that these patterns of entry into employment were similar for men and women.

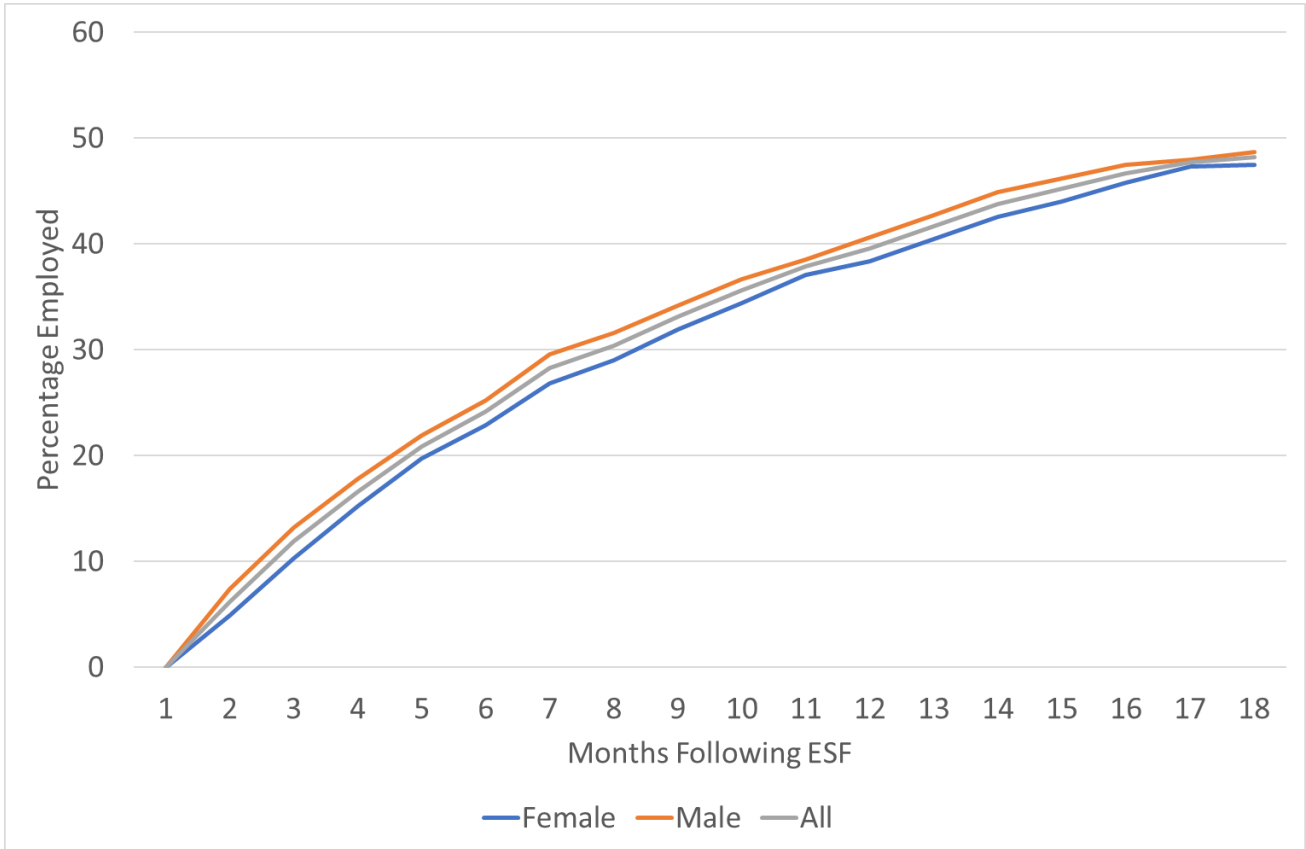
Figure 6.2: Transitions into Employment by Operation Objective



Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: Unemployed or economically inactive prior to ESF with complete work history data.

Figure 6.3: Transitions into Employment by Gender

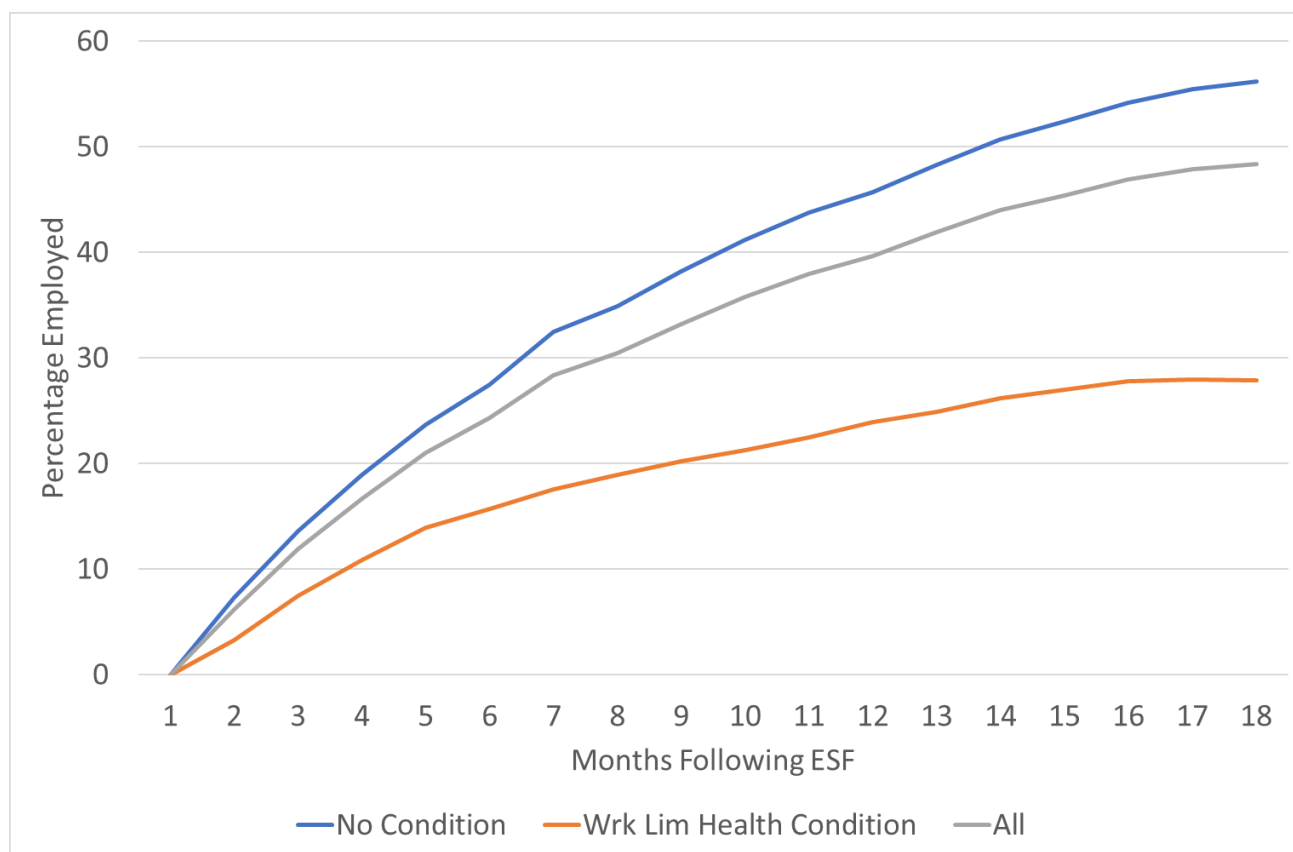


Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: Unemployed or economically inactive prior to ESF with complete work history data

6.16 Figure 6.4 shows the lower rates of transition into employment that were observed among those with work limiting health conditions. At 12 months following first receipt of support from ESF, participation in employment among those with a work limiting health condition was estimated to be 28 per cent. Among those with no such condition, this figure doubled to 56 per cent. These findings point to the significant impact that work limiting health conditions have on employment outcomes compared to other characteristics and the detrimental effect that societal barriers have in terms of enabling those with such conditions to enter employment.

Figure 6.4: Transitions into Employment by Work Limiting Health Condition



Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

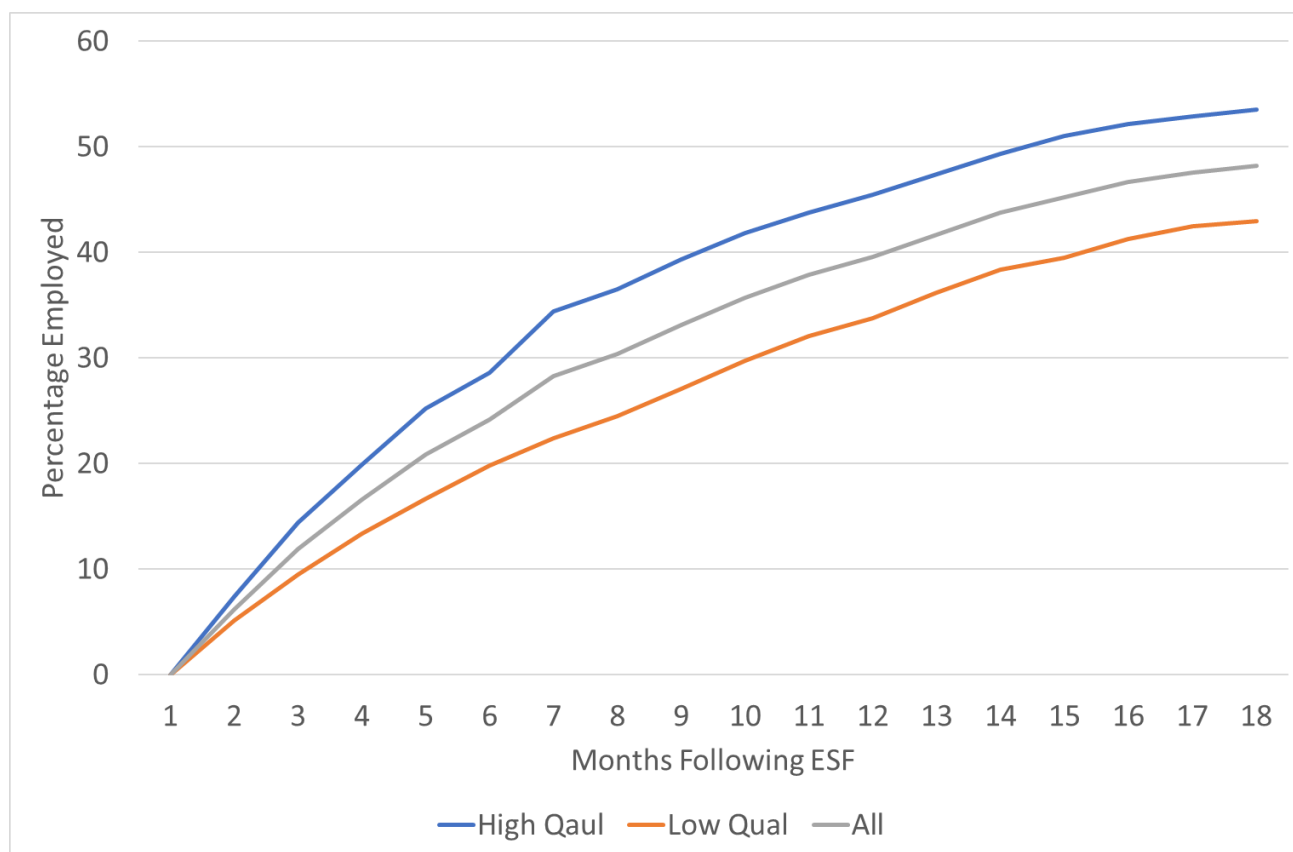
Base: Unemployed or economically inactive prior to ESF with complete work history data

6.17 Figure 6.5 examines the employment trajectories of ESF participants according to the levels of qualification that they possessed prior to being supported by ESF. We again define low levels of attainment as someone who has qualifications not exceeding Level 2¹⁷.

6.18 By six months following participation in ESF, employment among those with lower levels of attainment (20 per cent) was lower than that observed among those with higher levels of qualifications (29 per cent). Whilst employment among both groups continued to increase following the support of ESF, a 10-percentage point differential in the rate of employment persisted over the next 12 months.

¹⁷ Defined as someone who held qualifications not exceeding Level 2 (equivalent to GCSEs at grades A*-C, Intermediate Apprenticeships and various Level 2 Diplomas, Awards and Certificates). This definition of low qualifications is driven by sample size considerations so that reliable comparisons can be made between different groups of respondents.

Figure 6.5: Transitions into Employment by Prior Educational Attainment



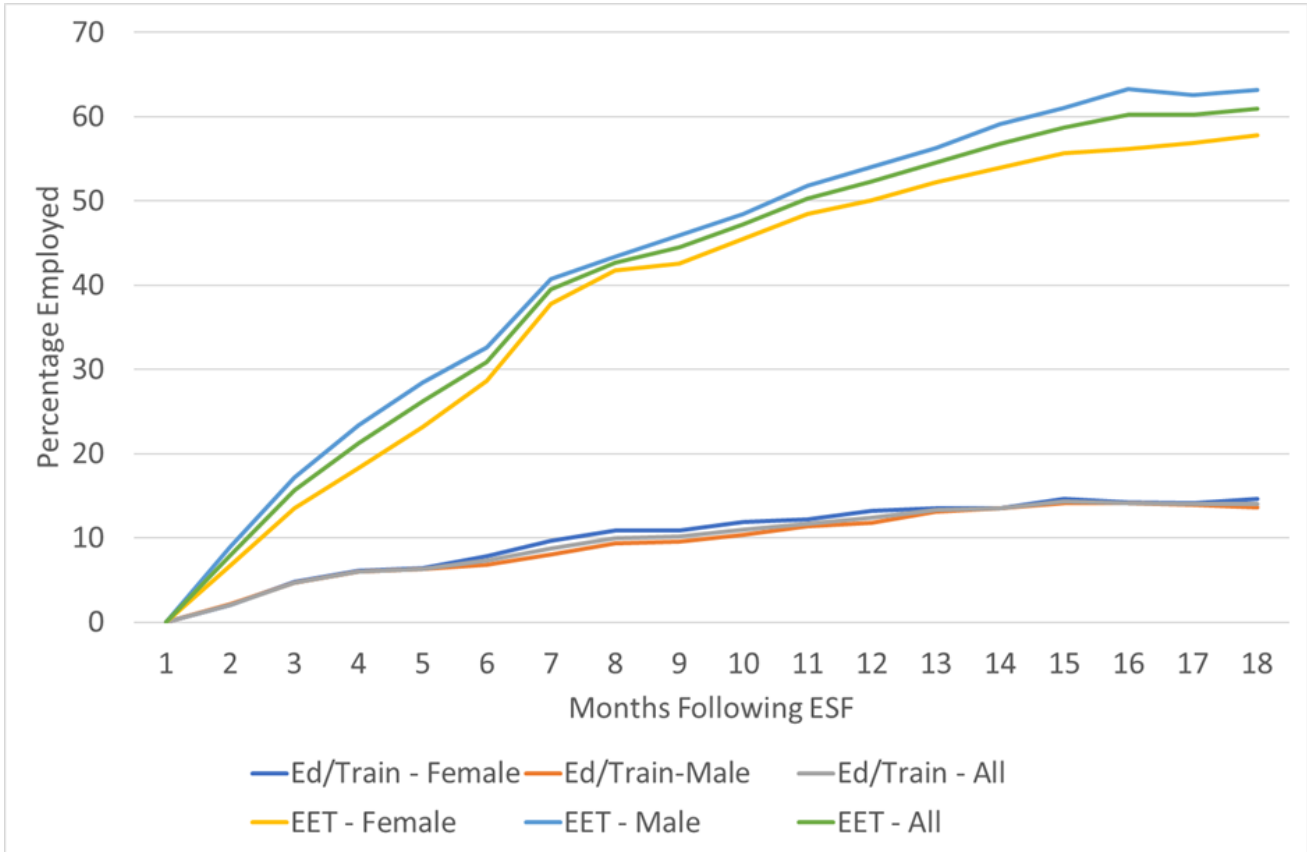
Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: Unemployed or economically inactive prior to ESF with complete work history data

6.19 The analyses so far have only examined employment outcomes. However, for operations associated with reducing levels of NEET among those aged 16-24, it is also important to consider subsequent entry into education and training. Figure 6.5 shows that at 12 months after having first received support from ESF, 12 per cent of participants supported under this Specific Objective had entered education or training. Combined with those who had entered employment (40 per cent), over half of this group had entered either employment, education, or training within 12 months of having first received support from ESF.

6.20 Entry into education and training is demonstrated to have followed a similar pattern as entry into employment. In terms of differences by gender within this Specific Objective, Figure 6.6 also shows that rates of entry into education and training were similar for men and women. However, men did exhibit higher rates of entry into employment. At 12 months after having first received support from ESF, 54 per cent males were in employment, education or training compared to 50 per cent of females.

Figure 6.6: Transitions into Employment, Education and Training: by Gender

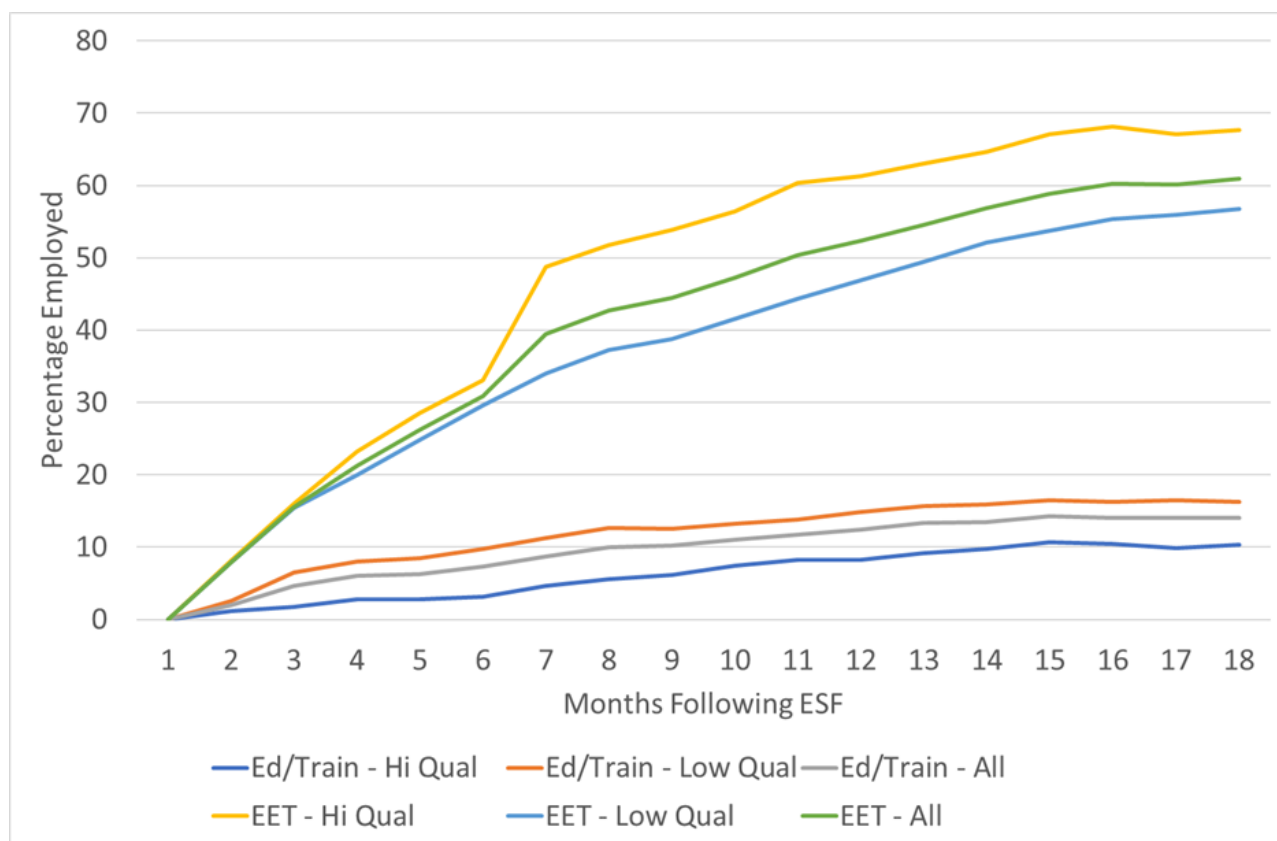


Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: Unemployed or economically inactive prior to ESF with complete work history data

6.21 In terms of prior levels of educational attainment, Figure 6.7 shows that whilst those with lower levels of educational attainment were less likely to be in employment, education or training following support from ESF, they were more likely to enter education or training. In terms of assisting participants to avoid becoming NEET, the poorer employment outcomes of those with lower levels of educational attainment were partially offset by the higher proportion of participants who entered education or training.

Figure 6.7: Transitions into Employment, Education and Training: by Prior Attainment



Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: Unemployed or economically inactive prior to ESF with complete work history data

Activity Status at 6 Months following ESF.

6.22 Amongst ESF performance measures, Long Term Results Indicators (LTRIs) aimed to identify changes in the situations of participants six months after leaving an operation¹⁸. Table 6.3 shows that, amongst those who were unemployed or economically inactive prior to being supported by ESF, just over half (52 per cent) were employed 6 months after they had left their operations. In line with the previous analysis of employment transitions, rates of employment were higher amongst those who had been assisted by operations that supported the employability of those at risk of poverty (79 per cent) compared to those that supported the employability of the long term unemployed and economically inactive (44 per cent).

6.23 Analysis for different population subgroups is presented in Table A.6A. Amongst those who were not in employment prior to their participation in ESF, subsequent

¹⁸ After respondents to the Participants Surveys complete the employment history section of the questionnaire, additional questions are asked to confirm the activity status of respondents at a point 6 months after they had exited the support of their ESF programme. It is therefore important to note that this point does not take account of time spent being supported by ESF.

participation in employment was lower amongst those aged 55 and over (40 per cent), those with work limiting health conditions (32 per cent) and those with lower levels of educational attainment (47 per cent). No difference was observed when comparing those who were supported by ESF before and since the COVID-19 pandemic (see Table A.6B).

Hours Worked at 6 Months Following ESF

- 6.24 Overall, a third (33 per cent) of those who were in employment at 6 months following ESF considered themselves as working on a part time basis. Part time employment was particularly prevalent among those who had been assisted by operations that supported the employability of the long term unemployed and economically inactive (46 per cent). These participants were among those most likely to state that the difficulties that they had with finding work prior to ESF related to them only wanting to work part time (see Table 6.2).
- 6.25 Across all participants who gained employment following ESF, 13 per cent indicated that they were working part-time but that they would have preferred to work on a full-time basis. Therefore, 39 per cent of those working part time 6 months after their participation in ESF would have preferred to have been working full time. The proportion of part time workers who were doing so on an involuntary basis was highest amongst those who were supported by operations aimed at reducing levels of NEET among those aged 16-24 (54 per cent).
- 6.26 Of those employed at 6 months following ESF, Table A.6A shows that the incidence of part time working was higher among women (47 per cent), those with dependent children (53 per cent) and those who were carers (57 per cent). Amongst those who worked part time, the share who stated that they would have rather worked full time was highest amongst males (59 per cent) and those under the age of 25 (55 per cent).

Table 6.3: Economic Activity Status 6 Months Following ESF

	Supporting Participation			Total	Supporting Progression	All
	Emp. Of Itue'd & econ inact 25+†	Emp. Of at risk of poverty	Reduce NEET 16-24			
Employed	40.1	64.4	47.8	44.8	79.8	48.3
Self Employed	4.2	14.4	1.7	3.7	5.3	3.9
Part Time Work	45.6	17.7	29.7	36.2	15.9	32.8
Involuntary Part Time	13.7	5.3	16.1	13.9	6.9	12.8
<i>As a % of Part Time</i>	<i>30.0</i>	<i>29.9</i>	<i>54.2</i>	<i>38.4</i>	<i>43.4</i>	<i>39.0</i>
Unemployed	30.9	14.6	26.5	28.1	7.7	26.0
Education and Training	3.0	1.4	16.1	8.5	3.9	8.0
Economically Inactive	21.8	5.2	7.9	15.0	3.3	13.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample*	2,897	1,209	1,997	6,103	944	7,047

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: Unemployed or economically inactive prior to ESF

† To increase the employability of Economically Inactive and Long-term Unemployed people aged 25 and over, who have complex barriers to employment.

*Excludes those who recorded their status as "Other" or "Don't Know".

6.27 In terms of operation characteristics (see Table A.6B), the incidence of part time employment was highest (41 per cent) among those participants who were engaged in operations aimed at tackling poverty through sustainable employment (Priority Axis 1). However, the share of involuntarily part time employment among this group was low (30 per cent).

Economic Activity at the Time of the Survey

6.28 By the time of the survey, rates of employment among those who were previously unemployed or economically prior to receiving support from ESF increased further. Table 6.4 shows that, amongst those who were not in employment prior to being supported by ESF, 58 per cent were employed at the time of the survey. Employment was highest among those participants in operations that supported the employability of those at risk of poverty (86 per cent) and lowest among those operations that supported the employability of the long term unemployed and economically inactive (49 per cent).

6.29 Analysis of activity status at the time of the survey for different population subgroups is presented in Table A.7A. Subsequent participation in employment at the time of the survey among those unemployed or economically inactive prior to ESF was relatively low amongst those aged 55 and over (39 per cent), those with work limiting health conditions (33 per cent) and those who had lower levels of educational attainment (53 per cent). There was a small decline in employment outcomes (a 2 percentage point reduction) when comparing those who were supported by ESF before and since the COVID-19 pandemic (see Table A.7B).

Table 6.4: Economic Activity at Time of Survey

	Supporting Participation			Total	Supporting Progression	All
	Emp. Of Itue'd & econ inact 25+†	Emp. Of at risk of poverty	Reduce NEET 16-24			
Employed	45.0	72.7	54.4	50.6	77.2	53.3
Self Employed	4.2	13.3	2.7	4.1	8.7	4.5
Unemployed	21.7	5.9	19.7	19.9	5.5	18.5
Education and Training	2.6	0.7	12.4	6.6	4.3	6.4
Economically Inactive	26.6	7.3	10.8	18.8	4.3	17.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample*	2,902	1,214	2,032	6,148	951	7,099

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: Unemployed or economically inactive prior to ESF

† To increase the employability of Economically Inactive and Long-term Unemployed people aged 25 and over, who have complex barriers to employment.

*Excludes those who recorded their status as "Other" or "Don't Know".

Employment at the Time of the Survey

6.30 Table 6.5 presents information on the characteristics of the jobs that were held by participants at the time of the survey who were out of work prior to their participation in ESF.

Occupations Held

6.31 Most participants of operations that were aimed at supporting participation gained jobs within lower skilled occupations¹⁹. This is apparent amongst those assisted by

¹⁹ The Office for National Statistics defines 'low skilled' occupations where entry to which is not commonly associated with Post Compulsory Education and Training. These occupations are represented by Major

operations that aimed to support both the employability of the long term unemployed and economically inactive and those that aimed to reduce levels of NEET among those aged 16-24, among whom more than 1 in 5 (22 per cent) were employed within Elementary Occupations (SOC Major Group 9).

- 6.32 Those assisted by operations that supported the employability of those at risk of poverty were more likely to gain employment in higher skilled occupations, including Professional (SOC Major Group 2) and Associate Professional (SOC Major Group 3) roles. These participants were also most likely to report having supervisory responsibilities in their roles (29 per cent).
- 6.33 Examination of occupations held by various personal characteristics (see Table A.8A) shows the gender segregation in the roles held by ESF participants. Almost a third of women (31%) were employed in Caring Leisure and Other Service Occupations (SOC Major Group 6). Only 6 per cent of men who were in employment at the time of the survey hold such roles. By contrast, men were more likely to work within:
- SOC Major Group 5: Skilled Trades Occupations (20 per cent compared to 3 per cent among women),
 - SOC Major Group 8: Process, Plant and Machine Operatives (15 per cent compared to 3 per cent)
 - SOC Major Group 9: Elementary Occupations (22 per cent compared to 16 per cent).
- 6.34 Those with dependent children and carers were also more likely to be employed within Caring, Leisure, and Other Service Occupations (29 per cent and 31 per cent respectively). Having a work limiting health condition did not appear to have a substantial impact on the types of jobs held.
- 6.35 Those with lower levels of educational attainment were more likely to be employed within lower skilled occupations. Almost one in four participants (24%) who held qualifications at Level 2 or below prior to their participation were employed within Elementary Occupations by the time of the survey.

6.36 In terms of operation characteristics, Table A.8B shows that participants of operations under Priority Axis 1 (Tackling Poverty through Sustainable Employment) and Priority Axis 3 (Youth Employment and Attainment) were more likely to gain jobs within lower skilled occupations²⁰. The occupational composition of employment among those who were supported by ESF since the COVID-19 pandemic was broadly comparable to the occupations held by those who were supported prior to the pandemic (see Table A.8B).

Contractual Status at Time of Survey

6.37 Of those who were out of work prior to their participation in ESF but were in employment at the time of the survey, 73 per cent were employed on permanent or open-ended contracts. This figure increased to 84 per cent among those who were on operations that supported the employability of those at risk of poverty. Otherwise, across a range of personal characteristics, relatively little variation in the contractual status of ESF Participants is observed (see Table A.8A).

6.38 In terms of operation characteristics, those supported by operations under Priority Axis 2 (Skills for Growth) were most likely to be employed on permanent or open-ended contracts (82 per cent, see Table A.8B).

Hours Worked at Time of Survey

6.39 Of those who were out of work prior to their participation in ESF but were in employment at the time of the survey, over a third (36 per cent) were employed on a part time basis. Part time work was relatively prevalent amongst those who were assisted by operations that aimed to support the employability of the long term unemployed and economically inactive, among whom almost half (49 per cent) were engaged in part time work.

²⁰ See footnote 9 for definition of low skilled occupations.

Table 6.5: Characteristics of Current Employment

	Supporting Participation				Supporting Progression	All
	Emp. Of Itue'd & econ inact 25+†	Emp. Of at risk of poverty	Reduce NEET 16-24	Total		
Occupation (SOC Major Groups)						
1. Managers, Directors, and Senior Officials	4.3	8.9	2.5	3.9	3.7	3.9
2. Professional Occupations	4.8	11.5	3.7	4.9	5.7	5.0
3. Associate Professional and Technical Occupations	7.5	17.0	9.9	9.4	12.8	9.9
4. Administrative and Secretarial	11.9	11.8	8.7	10.5	11.7	10.7
5. Skilled Trades Occupations	7.1	13.9	11.9	9.8	25.1	12.1
6. Caring, Leisure, and Other Service Occupations	20.6	5.8	16.7	17.5	17.5	17.5
7. Sales and Customer Service	11.6	3.6	16.4	13.0	8.4	12.3
8. Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	10.3	18.0	8.2	10.1	6.3	9.5
9. Elementary Occupations	21.9	9.4	22.1	20.9	8.8	19.1
Contractual Status**						
On a permanent or open-ended contract	73.1	83.5	68.9	72.0	81.2	73.4
A fixed term contract	10.2	10.0	12.5	11.2	10.6	11.2
On a temporary or casual basis	6.5	4.0	7.4	6.7	3.6	6.2
A zero hours contract	10.2	2.5	11.2	10.0	4.6	9.2
Supervisory Responsibilities	18.0	29.0	20.6	20.1	34.2	22.3
Part Time Work	49.4	18.6	33.2	39.4	18.5	36.2
Sample*	1,246	907	1,078	3,231	742	3,973

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey, Full CATI Only

Base: Unemployed or economically inactive prior to ESF and in employment at time of survey

† To increase the employability of Economically Inactive and Long-term Unemployed people aged 25 and over, who have complex barriers to employment.

*Samples for specific rows will vary due to the exclusion of cases who respond "Other" or "Don't Know".

**Contractual status is applicable to employees only.

6.40 Analysis by a range of personal characteristics shows (Table A.8A) that part time work was relatively prevalent among women (55 per cent), those aged 55 and over (49 per cent), those with work limiting health conditions (47 per cent), those with dependent children (58 per cent) and those who were carers (61 per cent).

6.41 In terms of operation characteristics (Table A.8B), part time employment was more prevalent (45 per cent) among those supported by operations under Priority Axis 1 (Tackling Poverty Through Sustainable Employment).

Continued Difficulties in Finding Work

6.42 Those who remained out of work at the time of the survey were asked about the difficulties that they were continuing to have with finding work. These can be compared with the difficulties that participants were having prior to having had received support from ESF.

6.43 Table 6.6 shows that the difficulties with finding work reported by participants prior to their participation in ESF were different to the reasons provided by participants who were out of work at the time of the survey. Issues related to not having the right qualifications, skills or work experience became less prevalent. However, the share of those who reported health problems as a reason for their difficulties in finding work increased from 30 per cent to 42 per cent.

6.44 The earlier analysis in this section demonstrated that those with work limiting health conditions were less likely to enter employment following participation in ESF (Figure 6.3). Those who remained out of work at the time of the survey would therefore have been more likely to suffer from a work limiting health condition. Restricting the sample to those respondents who were out of work both prior to ESF and at the time of the survey leads to a further increase in the proportion of participants who cited health problems as a difficulty with finding work (47 per cent).

Table 6.6: The Continuing Difficulties with Finding Work

	Pre-ESF	Post ESF	
		Pre & Post	All
Not having the right qualifications	41.0	33.9	32.6
Not having the right skills	42.7	33.2	31.1
Not having relevant work experience	50.6	37.9	36.2
Not being able to afford childcare	15.2	13.7	13.1
Having caring responsibilities	19.5	22.1	21.3
Health problems	30.4	47.0	41.6
Your age	20.6	17.2	16.0
Alcohol or drug dependency	3.2	3.5	3.2
Having a criminal record	4.4	5.6	4.7
No appropriate jobs where you live	33.1	29.9	29.1
Hard to get to appropriate work	43.7	40.7	37.5
You only wanting to work part time	21.2	24.6	24.0
Believing you would not be better off financially in work	14.5	14.4	14.1
Sample	6,479	2,430	3,664

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey, Full CATI Only

Base: Unemployed or economically inactive prior to ESF and/or out of work at time of survey

The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Finding Work

- 6.45 Respondents to the 2022 ESF Participants Survey were asked whether they thought that the COVID-19 pandemic had made a difference to their progress since they completed their ESF course. Amongst those who were unemployed or economically inactive prior to their participation in ESF, Table 6.7 shows that almost 6 out of 10 (58%) reported that the COVID-19 pandemic had not influenced their progression after participating in ESF. However, over a third (37%) said that the pandemic had made things harder. Only 5% indicated that things had become easier.
- 6.46 Looking across Specific Objectives, those who had been supported by operations aimed at supporting the employability of those at risk of poverty were least likely to report that the COVID-19 pandemic had made things harder (26%). Operations under this objective provided support to the short term unemployed or those who had recently been made redundant. Participants who were supported by operations under this objective would therefore have been expected to have exhibited relatively high levels of employability.

Table 6.7: The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Progression following ESF

	Supporting Participation				Supporting Progression	All
	Emp. of Itue'd & econ inact 25+†	Emp. of at risk of poverty	Reduce NEET 16-24	Total		
Made it easier	5.0	9.2	5.6	5.4	5.6	5.4
Made it harder	40.2	26.0	36.0	38.1	26.9	37.1
Not really made a difference*	54.8	64.8	58.4	56.5	67.4	57.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	1,672	435	845	2,952	414	3,366

Source: 2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: Unemployed or economically inactive prior to ESF

† To increase the employability of Economically Inactive and Long-term Unemployed people aged 25 and over, who have complex barriers to employment.

*Includes a small proportion of respondents who responded, "Not really sure".

6.47 Relatively little difference is observed when comparing participants across a range of personal characteristics (see Table A.9A). The exception to this is the situation of those with work limiting ill-health conditions, among whom 42% reported that things had become harder since the pandemic.

6.48 Those who reported that things had become harder or easier because of the pandemic were asked why this was the case. Table 6.8 shows that most common reasons cited by those who had said that things had become harder were that:

- there were fewer jobs around generally (33%);
- the industry that they had wanted to work in was badly affected by the pandemic (17%);
- their mental and/or physical health had been affected (15%).

6.49 Far fewer participants suggested that things had become easier because of the pandemic. Of those that did, the main reasons for this were that:

- the COVID-19 pandemic had led to additional vacancies (41%);
- the ability to work from home or remotely had provided them with more flexibility (27%);
- there were more COVID-19 related job opportunities (11%).

Table 6.8: How the COVID-19 Pandemic Impacted the Search for Employment**Why Have Things Become Harder Due to COVID?**

Fewer jobs around generally	33.0
The industry I want / wanted to work in was badly affected by the pandemic	16.5
Affected mental / physical health	14.8
Adapting to the changes caused by Covid-19	11.2
Affected ability to work / lost job incl. e.g. furloughed	9.0
Issues with remote style learning / interviews / working	8.7
Fewer training courses were available	6.5
I don't want to use / been reluctant to use public transport	5.4
Lack of support / communication	2.8
Childcare issues or other caring responsibilities	2.7
Sample	1,202

Why Have Things Become Easier Due to COVID?

COVID-19 had led to additional vacancies / job opportunities	41.4
The ability to work from home or remotely has provided me with more flexibility	26.5
Covid related temporary job opportunities/redeployment	11.0
Online training / job training has been more accessible	9.9
I have been able to apply for jobs further afield because homeworking is an option	8.1
Improved / developed new skills	7.6
Sample	193

Source: 2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: Unemployed or economically inactive prior to ESF and who report things became harder/easier due to COVID.

7. The Impact of ESF in Supporting Participation in Employment

Introduction

7.1 This section assesses the impact of ESF operations in supporting people who were unemployed or economically inactive²¹ prior to ESF to gain employment. Firstly, we examine the perceptions of ESF participants regarding the importance of their ESF operation in helping them to gain their current job. We then present the results of Counterfactual Impact Assessment (CIA) techniques, where the labour market experiences of ESF survey respondents are compared with the experiences of similar groups of people in the wider labour market so that an assessment of the potential impact of ESF on labour market participation can be made.

Respondents Assessment of Impact

7.2 Respondents who were in employment at the time of the survey were asked to what extent they thought that the course had helped them to get their current job. Table 7.1 reveals that among those who were out of work prior to ESF and were assisted by operations that supported participation in the labour market:

- approximately two thirds (66 per cent) of ESF participants reported either that the course helped them to get their current job (52 per cent) or that they got their current job directly because of the course (14 per cent);
- a third (34 per cent) reported that the course had 'made no difference'.

7.3 Perceptions of impact did not vary greatly between different groups of ESF participants (see Table A.10A). The share of participants who reported that they got their job directly because of the course was higher among men (17 per cent) and those aged 55 and over (18 per cent). Those with low levels of educational attainment prior to their participation in ESF were more likely to report that their course had made no difference (34 per cent).

7.4 Perceptions of the impact of these courses declined during the post-pandemic period. Among those supported by ESF since the pandemic, 35 per cent reported that their

²¹ As with previous chapter, the economically inactive include those in voluntary unpaid work and those who were out of work and not looking for work. Those who were in education or training prior to their participation in ESF are not included.

course had made no difference in terms of them finding their job – an increase of 5 percentage points compared to those supported before (see Table A.10B).

7.5 The most positive attitudes towards ESF were expressed by those who reported that they were not in employment prior to ESF but who, according to administrative records, were being assisted by operations that were aimed at supporting progression in employment. Among this group, over a quarter (26 per cent) said that they had got their current job directly because of the course. These results could reflect difficulties that these respondents may have had in recalling their circumstances around the time that they were being supported by ESF.

Table 7.1: Course Helped with Gaining Employment

	Supporting Participation				Supporting Progression	All
	Emp. Of Itue'd & econ inact 25+†	Emp. Of at risk of poverty	Reduce NEET 16-24	Total		
Directly because of the course	15.4	13.5	12.4	13.9	25.7	15.7
The course helped	49.6	55.3	53.5	51.8	50.8	51.7
Made no difference*	35	31.2	34.1	34.3	23.5	32.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	1,246	907	1,077	3,230	742	3,972

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey, Full CATI Only

Base: Unemployed or economically inactive prior to ESF and employed at time of survey.

†To increase the employability of Economically Inactive and Long-term Unemployed people aged 25 and over, who have complex barriers to employment

*Includes a small proportion of respondents who responded, "Not sure".

Qualifications Gained and Assessment of Impact

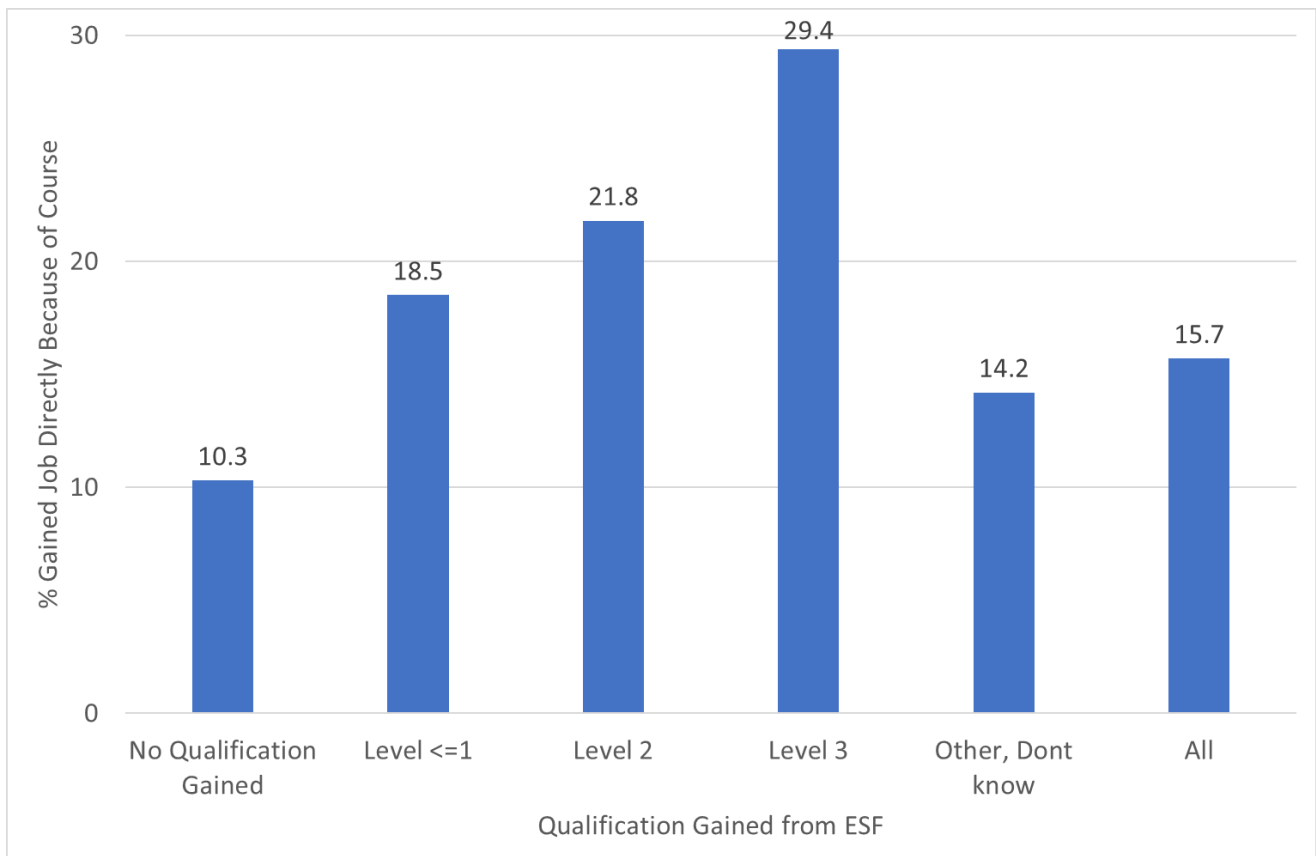
7.6 Figure 7.1 shows that across all participants who were out of work prior to their participation in ESF, the share who reported that they had got their job directly because of the course was lowest amongst those who had gained no qualifications from their participation in an ESF operation (10 per cent).

7.7 Amongst those who said that they had gained a qualification, the share who reported that they got their jobs directly because of their participation in an ESF operation increased steadily with respect to the level of qualification that was gained.

- Nineteen per cent who gained a qualification at Level 1 or below reported that they had got their jobs directly because of their participation in ESF.

- Twenty two per cent who gained a qualification at Level 2 reported that they had got their jobs directly because of their participation in ESF.
- Twenty nine per cent who gained a qualification at Level 3 or above reported that they had got their jobs directly because of their participation in ESF.

Figure 7.1: Perceived Impact of ESF on Employment by Qualification Gained During Course



Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey, Full CATI Only

Base: Unemployed or economically inactive prior to ESF and employed at time of survey.

7.8 Table 7.2 further shows that the importance of acquiring qualifications to the perceived impact of ESF varied across Specific Objectives.

- Among operations that aimed to support the employability of the long term unemployed and economically inactive and those that sought to reduce levels of NEET among those aged 16-24, the share of participants who reported that they got their job directly because of their participation in ESF increased with the level of qualification gained.
- Among those who were supported by operations that supported the employability of those at risk of poverty, perceptions that the course had a direct

impact on gaining their current job were more dependent on the attainment of any qualification as opposed to the level of qualification obtained.

- Across all objectives, the share of participants who reported that their course had made no difference to them gaining their current job consistently fell with respect to the level of qualification gained, although the most important factor was whether any qualification was gained via participation in ESF.

Comparisons with the Wider Labour Market

7.9 In this section, the labour market transitions of ESF participants who were out of work prior to their participation in ESF are compared to those who were similarly jobless within the wider labour market. Data from the Annual Population Survey (APS) conducted by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) allows individuals in participating households to be followed-up at 12-month intervals. APS data covering the period 2015-2021 has been used to construct a longitudinal database of individuals so that the labour market transitions of ESF participants measured over a period of 12 months can be compared to those exhibited by non-employed people within the wider population. Separate analyses are conducted for participants from the three Specific Objectives under the theme of supporting participation in employment.

Table 7.2: Impact of Course and Qualification Gained

	Supporting Participation			Total	Supporting Progression	All
	Emp. of Itue'd & econ inact 25+†	Emp. of at risk of poverty	Reduce NEET 16-24			
No Qualification Gained						
Directly because of the course	11.6	4.7	9.1	10.2	12.2	10.3
The course helped	44.8	38.0	48.8	46.6	34.9	46.0
Made no difference	43.6	57.3	42.0	43.2	52.9	43.7
Level <=1						
Directly because of the course	24.4	14.5	15.1	18.2	26.5	18.5
The course helped	52.6	54.0	51.5	52.1	45.4	51.8
Made no difference	22.9	31.5	33.4	29.7	28.1	29.7
Level 2						
Directly because of the course	23.5	15.3	15.3	19.8	26.4	21.8
The course helped	52.2	53.1	55.5	53.5	52.0	53.0
Made no difference	24.3	31.6	29.3	26.7	21.7	25.2
Level 3						
Directly because of the course	28.3	17.3	26.1	24.6	34.0	29.4
The course helped	54.8	61.9	50.3	55.5	53.7	54.6
Made no difference	16.9	20.8	23.6	19.9	12.3	16.0
Other, Don't know						
Directly because of the course	12.2	13.6	16.7	14.1	15.2	14.2
The course helped	53.3	57.1	59.3	56.2	57.9	56.3
Made no difference	34.5	29.3	24.0	29.8	26.8	29.5
All						
Directly because of the course	15.4	13.5	12.4	13.9	25.7	15.7
The course helped	49.6	55.3	53.5	51.8	50.8	51.7
Made no difference	35.0	31.2	34.1	34.3	23.5	32.6
	1,246	907	1,077	3,230	742	3,972

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey, Full CATI Only

Base: Unemployed or economically inactive prior to ESF and employed at time of survey.

† To increase the employability of Economically Inactive and Long-term Unemployed people aged 25 and over, who have complex barriers to employment

Supporting the Employability of the Long Term Unemployed and Economically Inactive

- 7.10 For operations that supported the employability of the long term unemployed and economically inactive aged 25 and over, the analysis focuses upon the employment status of previously out of work ESF participants at a point 12 months after they were first supported by ESF.
- 7.11 These transitions into employment, measured over a period of 12 months, are compared to those made by out of work people in the APS, also over a period of a

year. The APS sample is similarly restricted to those aged 25 and over who were long term unemployed or those in the non-student population who were economically inactive but stated that they would like to work.

- 7.12 Table 7.3 shows that, overall, 32 per cent of ESF participants who were supported by this Specific Objective were employed 12 months after they first received support from ESF. Among respondents to the APS, it is estimated that only 24 per cent of non-employed people entered employment over a period of 12 months.
- 7.13 The lower rates of entry into employment among APS respondents compared to those derived for ESF participants persist when making more detailed comparisons by gender, prior levels of educational attainment and status with respect to work limiting health conditions.
- 7.14 A problem with these comparisons however is that the ESF and APS samples differ in one key respect. The economically inactive represent approximately 60 per cent of the non-employed sample derived from APS. Among ESF participants helped by operations that supported the employability of the long term unemployed and economically inactive, only 28 per cent were recorded as being economically inactive by the Participant Survey²². If the economically inactive have lower levels of attachment to the labour market, this would be expected to contribute to the lower rates of entry into employment observed among the non-employed APS sample.
- 7.15 To take account of this difference, Table 7.3 also compares rates of entry to employment separately for the unemployed and the economically inactive. Rates of entry into employment among previously unemployed ESF participants (36 per cent) were lower than those observed among unemployed people within the APS (42 per cent). By contrast, rates of entry into employment among economically inactive ESF participants (21 per cent) were much higher than those observed among economically inactive within the APS (12 per cent).
- 7.16 Such differentials suggest that people within the ESF and APS samples may not be comparable in terms of their levels of attachment to the labour market. This is particularly the case for the economically inactive, where rates of entry into

²² This figure relates to respondents to the Participants Survey from this Specific Objective who are contributing to this analysis of employment transitions. Table 3.2 shows that, overall, 25% of those assisted by this operation were recorded by the Participants Survey as being economically inactive prior to the receiving support. Participant records put this figure at 64%, much closer to the figure derived from the APS.

employment among ESF participants were almost twice that observed among respondents to the APS.

Table 7.3: Comparing Rates of Employment for those Assisted by Operations that Support the Employability of the Long Term Unemployed and Economically Inactive

	12 Month Transition into Employment			
	Unemployed and Economically Inactive		Unemployed Only	
	APS	ESF	APS	ESF
Gender				
Female	23.2	32.8	42.5	37.5
Male	24.5	30.3	40.5	34.3
Highest Qualification				
<=Level 1	15.7	26.4	29.4	29.4
Level 2	23.7	28.8	42.7	33.1
Level 3	24.9	35.0	44.8	41.3
Level 4+	33.1	38.9	52.2	45.2
Don't know, Other	20.4	32.0	33.6	35.0
Work Limiting Health Condition				
No	34.0	41.2	47.1	45.3
Yes	11.4	19.2	27.5	21.8
Economic Activity				
Economically Inactive	11.6	20.5		
Unemployed	41.5	35.9		
Total	23.8	31.6	41.5	35.9

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey, Annual Population Survey
 Base: Long term unemployed or economically inactive aged 25 and over.

7.17 To abstract from the potential difficulties of making 'like for like' comparisons among the economically inactive the right-hand side of Table 7.3 compares rates of entry into employment among those who were previously unemployed (i.e. the analysis excludes both ESF participants and APS respondents who were economically inactive). The lower rates of employment among unemployed ESF participants compared to unemployed respondents to the APS can be seen to persist among most groups. The lower rates of transition into employment among unemployed ESF participants can therefore not be accounted for by simple observable compositional differences between the ESF and APS samples.

- 7.18 Even after taking account of differences in the characteristics of unemployed people within the ESF and APS surveys, after a period of 12 months ESF participants appear consistently less likely to be in work. However, inconsistencies remain in terms of how unemployment is defined by the APS and ESF Participants Surveys.
- 7.19 Within the ESF Participant Surveys, unemployment is simply defined as those who state that they are 'unemployed and looking for work.'
- 7.20 The APS uses an ILO definition of unemployment that encompasses both recent job search activity and an availability to start work as additional eligibility criteria for being defined as unemployed; specifically, the availability to start work in the next two weeks and that job search activity took place during the previous four weeks.
- 7.21 As a result, some ESF participants who are classified as unemployed by participant surveys may not meet the more restrictive criteria used in the ILO definition of unemployment. Therefore, those who are defined as unemployed by the APS could be more employable than those who are classified as unemployed by the ESF Participants Survey, contributing to the higher employment rates observed in Table 7.3.

Supporting the Employability of those at Risk of Poverty

- 7.22 This objective was dominated by ESF Participants who were supported by the ReAct operation which helped those who had recently been made redundant or who were under notice of redundancy. A large majority of ESF Participants who were supported by this objective were classified as unemployed as opposed to economically inactive. The comparison sample derived from the APS is therefore also restricted to those who were unemployed and who were recorded as having been made redundant during the previous 3 months.
- 7.23 Table 7.4 shows that, overall, 75 per cent of unemployed ESF participants who were supported by this Specific Objective were employed 12 months after they first received support from ESF. Within the APS, it is estimated that 72 per cent of unemployed people who had been made redundant during the previous 3 months were in employment 12 months later.
- 7.24 The sample sizes available within the ESF participants survey for this Specific Objective were relatively small compared to the other Specific Objectives under the theme of supporting participation. The specificity of the comparison group derived

from the APS (i.e. focussing on those who have been made redundant in the previous 3 months) also contributes to small sample sizes being only available from that source of data. This makes it more difficult to assess whether 3 percentage point differential in employment outcomes between ESF participants and APS respondents persists across population subgroups presented in Table 7.4, as exemplified by the comparisons that are made by prior levels of educational attainment.

Table 7.4: Comparing Rates of Employment for those Assisted by Operations that Support the Employability of those at Risk of Poverty

	12 Month Transition into Employment	
	APS	ESF
Gender		
Female	71.7	70.6
Male	71.8	77.6
Highest Qualification		
<=Level 1	54.8	70.0
Level 2	77.6	74.0
Level 3	69.5	79.4
Level 4+	80.2	72.2
Don't know, Other	68.2	77.5
Work Limiting Health Condition		
No	75.2	77.2
Yes	50.0	58.2
Total	71.7	74.5

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey, Annual Population Survey
 Base: Short term unemployed and recently made redundant.

Reducing Levels of NEET Among those Aged 16-24

7.25 Finally, for the analysis of support to reduce levels of NEET among those aged 16-24, we focus upon the transitions made into either employment, education, or training by this group of ESF participants. These transitions are compared to those made by young people in the APS where entry into employment, education or training can also be observed. The APS sample is restricted to those who were unemployed or those in the non-student population who were economically inactive but wanted to work.

7.26 Table 7.5 shows that, overall, 52 per cent of ESF participants who were supported by this Specific Objective were either in employment, education, or training at a point 12 months since they first received support from ESF. Within the APS, 46 per cent of

similarly non-employed young people were observed to enter employment, education, or training over a period of 12 months.

Table 7.5: Comparing Rates of Entry into Employment, Education or Training for those Assisted by Operations that Reduce Levels of NEET Among those Aged 16-24

	12 Month Transition into Employment, Education or Training			
	Unemployed and Economically Inactive		Unemployed Only	
	APS	ESF	APS	ESF
Gender				
Female	45.1	50.1	56.0	49.7
Male	47.4	54.0	52.3	56.0
Highest Qualification				
<=Level 1	32.2	37.8	39.9	38.0
Level 2	44.9	51.3	52.4	52.3
Level 3	53.0	64.9	59.2	65.2
Level 4+	69.8	70.8	72.2	70.8
Don't know, Other	34.2	43.3	42.6	44.6
Work Limiting Health Condition				
No	53.7	56.2	57.3	56.9
Yes	27.8	36.9	42.2	37.7
Economic Activity				
Economically Inactive	27.5	46.2		
Unemployed	53.7	53.4		
Total	46.4	52.3	53.7	53.4

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey, Annual Population Survey
Base: Unemployed or economically inactive aged 16-24

7.27 The lower rates of entry into employment, education and training employment among APS respondents persist by gender, educational attainment, and status with respect to work limiting health condition. These differences could be driven by differences in the activity status of the ESF and APS samples. The base of Table 7.5 compares rates of entry into employment, education, and training separately for the unemployed and economically inactive.

7.28 Comparisons by prior activity status reveal that among those who were previously economically inactive, rates of transition into employment, education or training were relatively high among the sample of ESF participants (46 per cent compared to 28 per cent). Amongst those who were previously unemployed, the rate of transition into employment, education, or training among ESF participants (53 per cent) was almost identical to that observed among APS respondents (54 per cent).

- 7.29 Such differentials again suggest that economically inactive ESF participants supported by this Specific Objective may not be representative of the wider population of economically inactive 16-24 year olds.
- 7.30 To abstract from the difficulties of making 'like for like' comparisons among the economically inactive, the right-hand side of Table 7.5 compares rates of entry into employment among those who were previously unemployed (i.e. the analysis excludes both ESF participants and APS respondents who were economically inactive). Among unemployed ESF participants, both women and those with work limiting health conditions appear to have exhibited lower rates of entry into employment, education, or training than their APS counterparts.

Developing Like for Like Comparisons

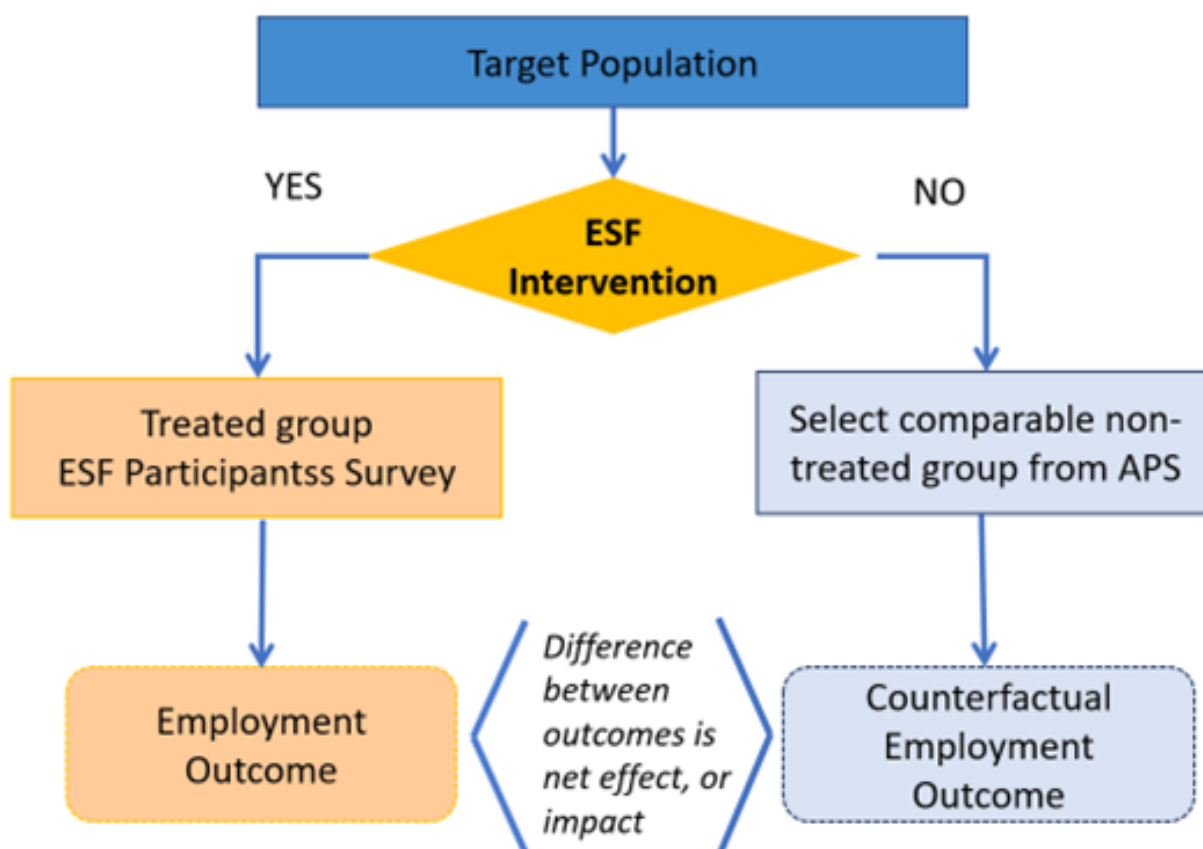
- 7.31 Simple comparisons of transition rates into employment (or into employment, education, or training) between data collected from ESF participants and APS respondents can be confounded by differences in the composition of the ESF and APS samples. These can be addressed to a degree by making comparisons for different population subgroups, such as by gender or qualification level. However, these comparisons are limited insofar that they can only account for one characteristic at a time.
- 7.32 To overcome these difficulties, this section presents the results of 'like for like' comparisons derived from statistical matching techniques which can simultaneously account for a variety of differences that may emerge between the ESF and APS samples. Using Propensity Score Matching (PSM) techniques, respondents to the ESF participants survey are matched on their combined characteristics with respondents to the APS. PSM techniques support the development of control groups where sample sizes preclude exact matching based on multiple characteristics²³.
- 7.33 By extracting those people from the APS who share similar characteristics to ESF participants, the transitions into work (or into employment, education, or training) that were made by ESF participants can be compared with those made by otherwise

²³ For example, exact matching on gender (2 categories), age group (3 categories), ethnicity (2 categories), qualification (5 categories), work limiting health condition (2 groups), prior activity status (2 categories), parental status (2 categories) and duration of non-employment (8 categories) would require sufficient data to populate a table 3,840 unique categories among both the intervention and control groups. This is not feasible with most data sets and far exceeds the sample sizes available from the surveys of ESF Participants. This problem is commonly referred to as the 'curse of dimensionality'.

comparable people identified in the APS. These matched APS respondents act as a counterfactual control group so that an assessment of the potential impact of ESF interventions on outcomes can be made (see Figure 7.2).

- 7.34 The statistical matching models include individual level controls for gender, ethnicity, age, highest qualification, work limiting health condition, length of time out of paid employment, parental status, and prior activity status. The year in which ESF participants were first supported by these schemes is also included as a matching variable to account for the significant changes that have occurred within the labour market during the period covered by the analysis.
- 7.35 To account for geographical differences in labour market conditions, the Local Authority rate of non-employment (unemployment plus economic inactivity) among the non-student population of working age is also included as a matching variable. This is derived using APS data covering the period 2015-2021. The inclusion of this measure should assist in matching ESF participants to people who reside in areas where labour market conditions are similar.

Figure 7.2: Illustration of Counterfactual Impact Assessment Techniques



7.36 PSM techniques should ensure that those ESF participants who face multiple barriers to employment will be matched to APS respondents who face similar difficulties, as far as these barriers can be captured by the observable characteristics included within APS and ESF Participants Survey.

Adjusting for the underreporting of part time work

7.37 A further source of inconsistency between the APS and the ESF Participants Survey relates to the different definitions of employment used. The LFS/APS defines employment as working for just an hour per week or longer. Within the ESF Participants Surveys, respondents are asked about their main activity, with no reference to how long they should be engaged in that activity. ESF participants who work short hours may therefore not regard these jobs as constituting their main activity and could underreport employment compared to APS respondents.

7.38 The importance of part time work varies between Specific Objectives. Amongst ESF participants who were assisted by operations that supported the employability of

those at risk of poverty, 19 per cent of those who enter employment were recorded as working part time. However, this figure is 33 per cent amongst those who were supported by operations that aimed to reduce levels of NEET among 16-24 year-olds and 49 per cent amongst those supported by operations that support the employability of the long term unemployed and economically inactive.

- 7.39 Comparisons of the hours worked by those who entered employment confirm that ESF participants were less likely to report that they worked for less than 15 hours per week (see Table A.11), suggesting that jobs with short hours were being underreported by ESF respondents. This would have the effect of underestimating the transitions into employment made by ESF participants compared to those observed among respondents to the APS.
- 7.40 To make consistent comparisons, an adjustment is made to the rate of employment exhibited among ESF participants to correct for the underreporting of employment among those working 15 hours or less. The uprated employment figure ensures that those ESF participants who gain employment and work for more than 15 hours per week end up representing the same share of those entering employment as derived from the APS data. Adjustment factors are derived separately for a) all those previously out of work and b) the unemployed only (i.e. excluding the economically inactive). These adjustment factors are applied following the estimation of results derived from the application of CIA techniques as shown in Annex A.12A.

Results

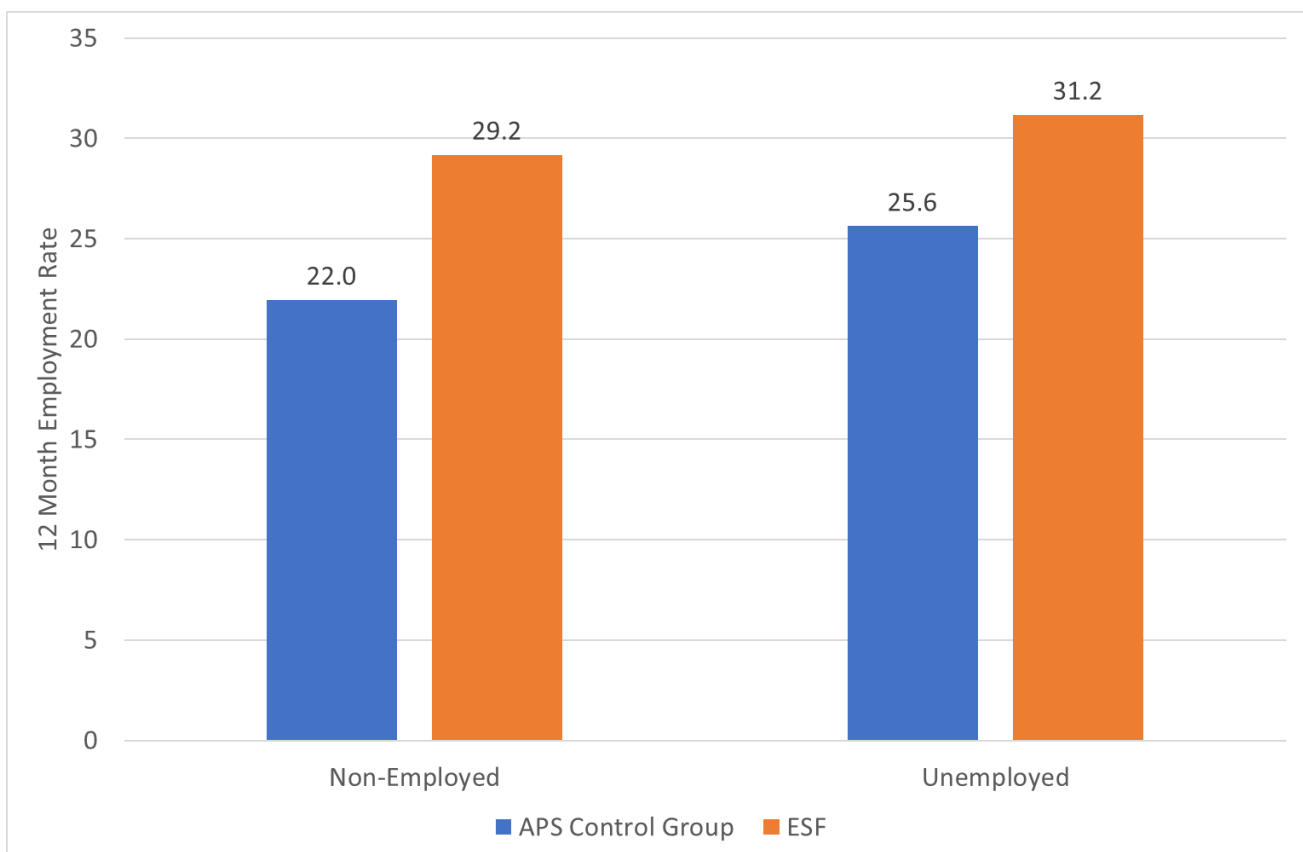
Supporting the Employability of the Long Term Unemployed and Economically Inactive

- 7.41 Figure 7.3 firstly examines the employment outcomes associated with participation in operations that supported the employability of the long term unemployed and economically inactive.
- Among ESF participants supported by these operations, 29 per cent were estimated to be employed at 12 months following participation in these operations.
 - Among a comparable group of non-employed people extracted from the APS, 22 per cent were estimated to enter employment over a period of 12 months.

7.42 The analysis therefore demonstrates that across the entire non-employed sample (i.e., the unemployed and economically inactive combined), participation in operations within this Specific Objective are associated with an average improvement in employment outcomes of 7 percentage points.

7.43 Examining the unemployed separately, participation in ESF was associated with an improvement in employment outcomes of six percentage points, with 31 per cent of ESF participants being in employment at 12 months compared to 26 per cent among a matched sample drawn from the APS.

Figure 7.3: Impact of Operations Supporting the Employability of the Long Term Unemployed and Economically Inactive: Entry into Employment

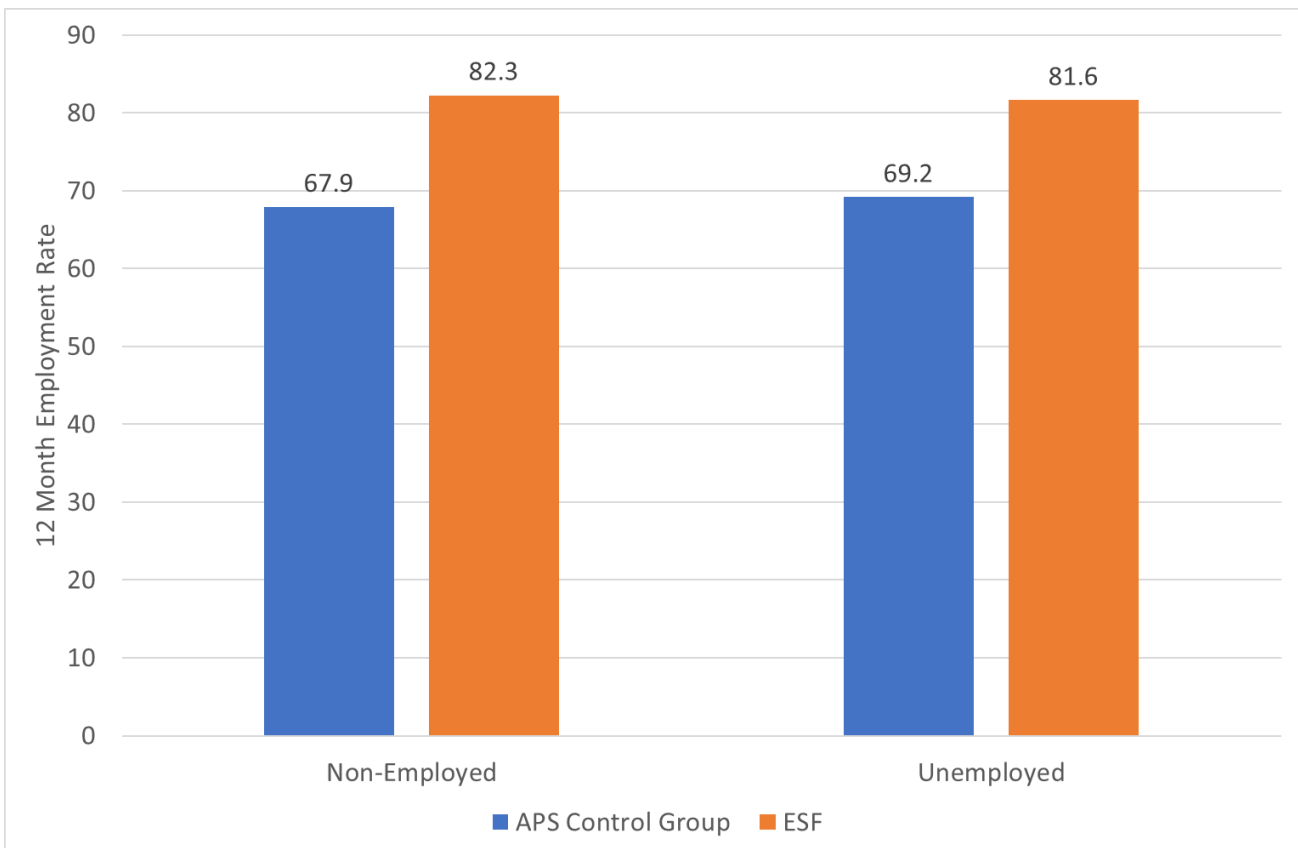


Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey, Annual Population Survey
Base: Long term unemployed or economically inactive aged 25 and over

Supporting the Employability of those at Risk of Poverty

7.44 Figure 7.4 examines the employment outcomes associated with participation in operations that supported the employability of those at risk of poverty. These interventions were targeted at those who have recently been made redundant. Results are presented for all those who were out of work prior to participating in ESF and for those who were classified as unemployed.

Figure 7.4: Impact of Operations Supporting the Employability of those at Risk of Poverty: Entry into Employment



Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey, Annual Population Survey
Base: Short term unemployed and recently made redundant.

7.45 Given the focus of operations under this objective, the analysis that is restricted to the unemployed is arguably more applicable for this objective.

7.46 Among previously unemployed ESF participants supported by these operations, 82 per cent were estimated to be employed at 12 months following their participation.

7.47 Among a comparable group of unemployed people from APS who have been made redundant during the previous 3 months, 69 per cent were estimated to enter employment over a period of 12 months.

7.48 Participation of the unemployed within operations associated with this Specific Objective were therefore associated with an average improvement in employment outcomes of 13 percentage points.

Reducing Levels of NEET Among those Aged 16-24

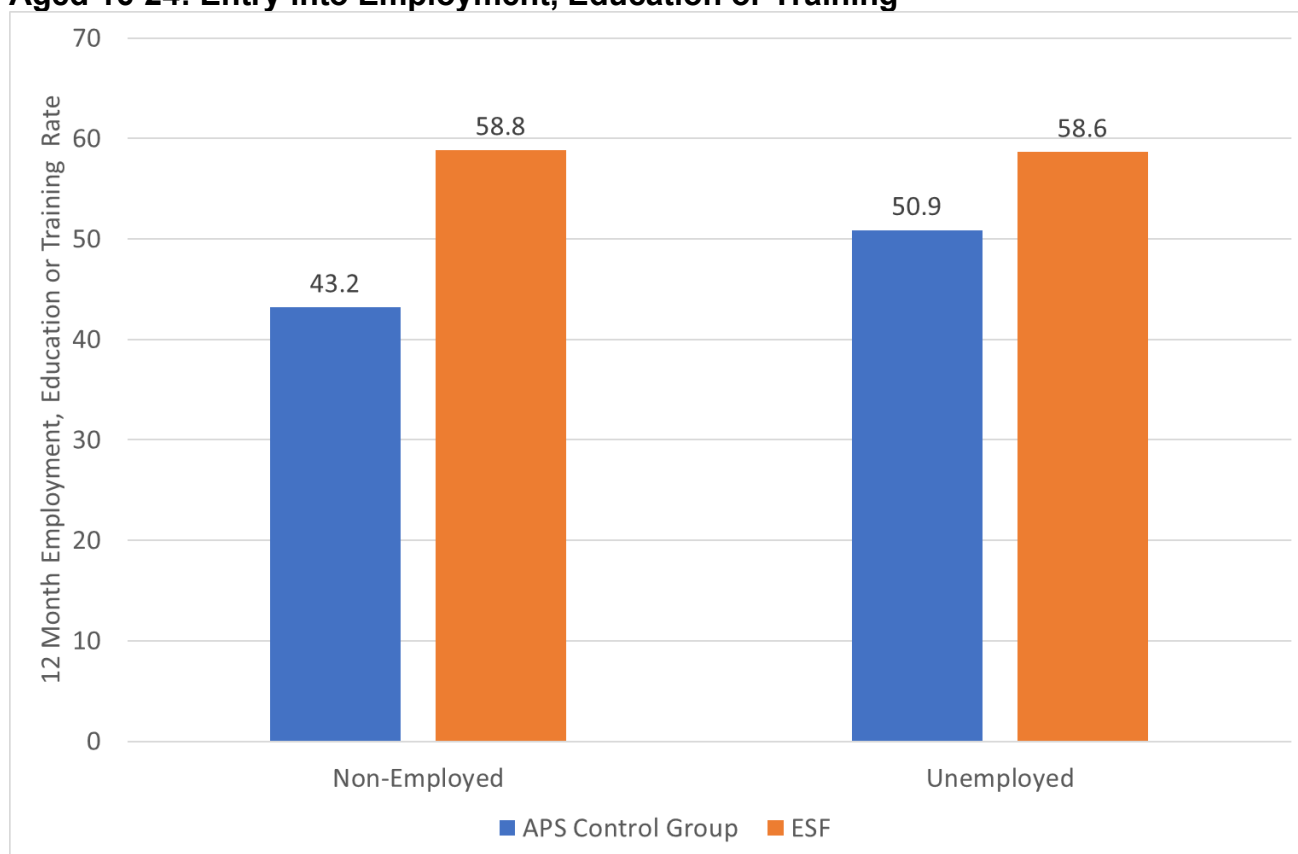
7.49 Figure 7.5 examines the employment outcomes associated with participation in operations that seek to reduce levels of NEET among those aged 16-24. These interventions supported participants to enter education, training, or employment. As such, the impact of these operations in ESF participants is evaluated with respect to rates of entry into employment, education or training observed among comparable matched samples of APS respondents.

- Among ESF participants, 59 per cent were estimated to be either in education, training or employment 12 months following their participation in these operations.
- Among a comparable group of non-employed people extracted from the APS, 43 per cent were estimated to enter employment over a period of 12 months.

7.50 The analysis therefore demonstrates that across the entire non-employed sample (i.e., the unemployed and economically inactive combined) participation within operations within this Specific Objective are associated with an average improvement in outcomes of 16 percentage points.

7.51 Restricting the analysis to the unemployed, participation in ESF is associated with an improvement in participant outcomes of 8 percentage points, with 59 per cent of supported participants being either in employment, education or training at 12 months following ESF compared to 51 per cent among a matched sample drawn from the APS.

Figure 7.5: Impact of Operations Aimed at Reducing the Levels of NEET Among those Aged 16-24: Entry into Employment, Education or Training



Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey, Annual Population Survey
 Base: Unemployed or economically inactive aged 16-24

Understanding Differences in the Results for the Non-Employed and the Unemployed

- 7.52 During each stage of the analysis, the effects estimated for previously non-employed population, which combine data for the unemployed and economically inactive, were larger than those derived for the unemployed alone. This suggests that the effects of participation in these operations is larger for economically inactive participants than the unemployed.
- 7.53 This finding is consistent with previous research on the effect of ESF operations. For example, Ainsworth and Marlow (2011) estimated that participation within an ESF supported operation in England increased the 12-month employment rate among Job Seekers Allowance claimants (the unemployed) by five percentage points compared to 11 percentage points among Incapacity and Employment and Support Allowance claimants (the economically inactive).
- 7.54 However, our results may also call into question the comparability of the matches that are generated for the economically inactive, the concern being that the economically

inactive ESF participants are more employable than those from the APS who they have been matched against.

- Over a third (34 per cent) of economically inactive ESF participants as defined by the survey were classified as ILO unemployed within the participant records (see Table A.13). This could result in the impact of these schemes being over-estimated among the economically inactive if some of this group were more employable than that suggested by the Participants Survey.
- Twenty-seven per cent of unemployed ESF participants as defined by the survey were recorded as economically inactive within the participant records. This could have the effect of underestimating the impact of these schemes among the unemployed if some were less employable than that suggested by the survey.

Population Subgroups

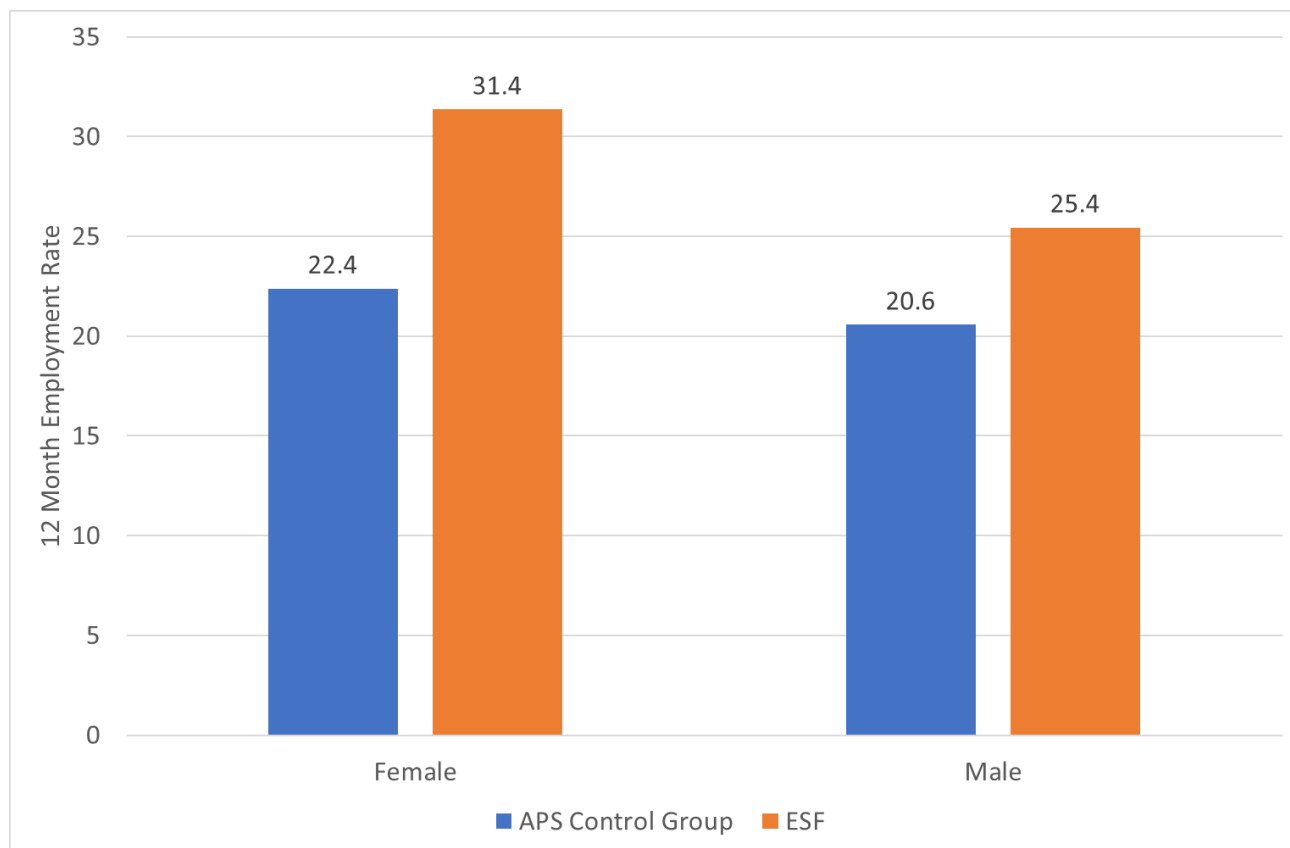
- 7.55 A limitation of the estimates presented above is that they represent the average estimated increase in employment outcomes across all population subgroups. However, it is conceivable that the impact of these operations is not the same across all groups of ESF participants.
- 7.56 To investigate this, this section presents results of CIA techniques that are run separately for different population subgroups. The analysis is restricted to those who participated in operations that aimed to support the employability of the long term unemployed and economically inactive. This is because of:
- the relatively large sample sizes associated with operations under this Specific Objective within the Participants Survey.
 - the broader spectrum of people with varying characteristics who are supported by operations under this Specific Objective.
- 7.57 Separate analyses are produced by gender, work limiting health status and qualification level prior to receiving support from ESF. Due to the small sample sizes associated with some of these population subgroups and for the economically inactive (as defined by the survey) more generally, these subgroup analyses are undertaken for the entire non-employed sample (i.e., the unemployed and economically inactive combined).

7.58 Adjustments are again made for the underreporting of short hours working among ESF participants via the uniform application of the uprating factor described above. A limitation of this approach is that it may be those ESF participants who face the greatest barriers to employment, such as women or those with work limiting health conditions, who rely most on part time employment as a route into work. However, due to the small sample sizes associated with population subgroups, it is not possible to produce group specific adjustment factors for short hours working.

7.59 Full results of these analysis are presented Annex A.12B. In terms of gender, Figure 7.6 demonstrates that participation in operations that aimed to support the employability of the long term unemployed and economically inactive was associated with a greater impact on the employment outcomes of women compared to men.

- Among female participants, 31 per cent were estimated to be employed at 12 months following participation in these operations. Among a comparable group of out of work women extracted from the APS, 22 per cent were estimated to enter employment after a period of 12 months. Participation in ESF was therefore associated with an increase in employment of 9 percentage points.
- Among male ESF participants, 25 per cent were estimated to be employed at 12 months following participation in these operations. This figure is just three percentage points higher than that observed among the comparable group of male non-employed people extracted from the APS.

Figure 7.6: Impact of ESF on Employment Outcomes by Gender

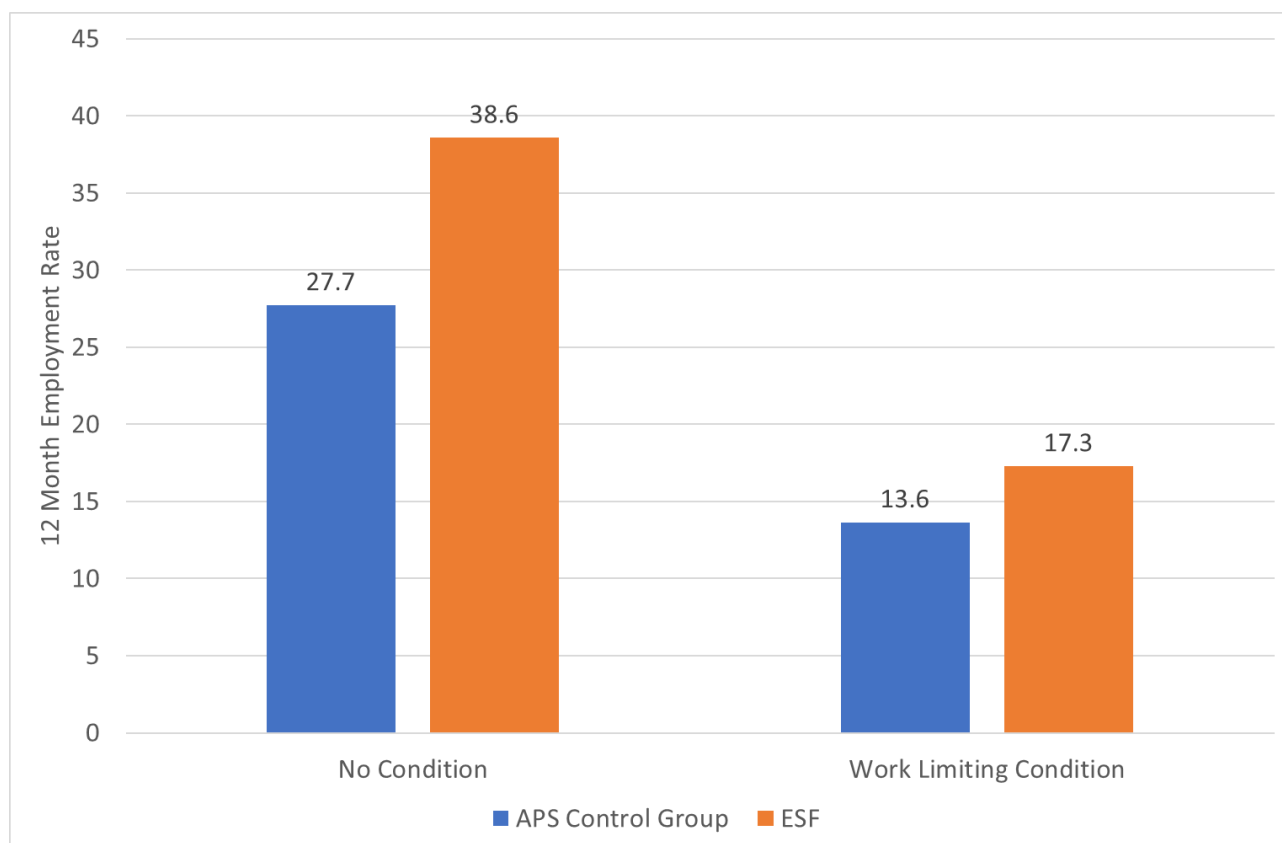


Source: ESF Participants Surveys, Annual Population Survey
Base: Long term unemployed or economically inactive aged 25 and over

7.60 Figure 7.7 demonstrates that participation in operations that support the employability of the long term unemployed and economically inactive was associated with a differential impact on employment outcomes according to work limiting health status.

- Among those with a work limiting health condition, 17 per cent were estimated to be in work at 12 months following participation in ESF. Among a comparable group of people extracted from the APS, 14 per cent were estimated to have entered employment after a period of 12 months.
- Among those with no such health conditions, 39 per cent of participants were estimated to be employed at 12 months following the support of ESF. Among APS respondents, 28 per cent were in work after a period of 12 months.
- ESF participants who reported having a work limiting health condition therefore exhibited an increase in employment of three percentage points. Among those with no such conditions, the increase in employment was 11 percentage points.

Figure 7.7: Impact of ESF on Employment Outcomes by Work Limiting Health Status



Source: ESF Participants Surveys, Annual Population Survey
 Base: Long term unemployed or economically inactive aged 25 and over

7.61 It is important to note that the improvements in employment exhibited by those with work limiting health conditions are starting from a lower base. In comparable terms, among those with work limiting health conditions, the relative increase in employment share was estimated to be 21 per cent. Among those with no such conditions, the increase in employment share was estimated to be 39 per cent. Whilst the differential improvement in employment outcomes is less stark, it remains the case that in both absolute and relative terms, the differential in employment outcomes by work limiting health status was larger following participation in these operations than it was before.

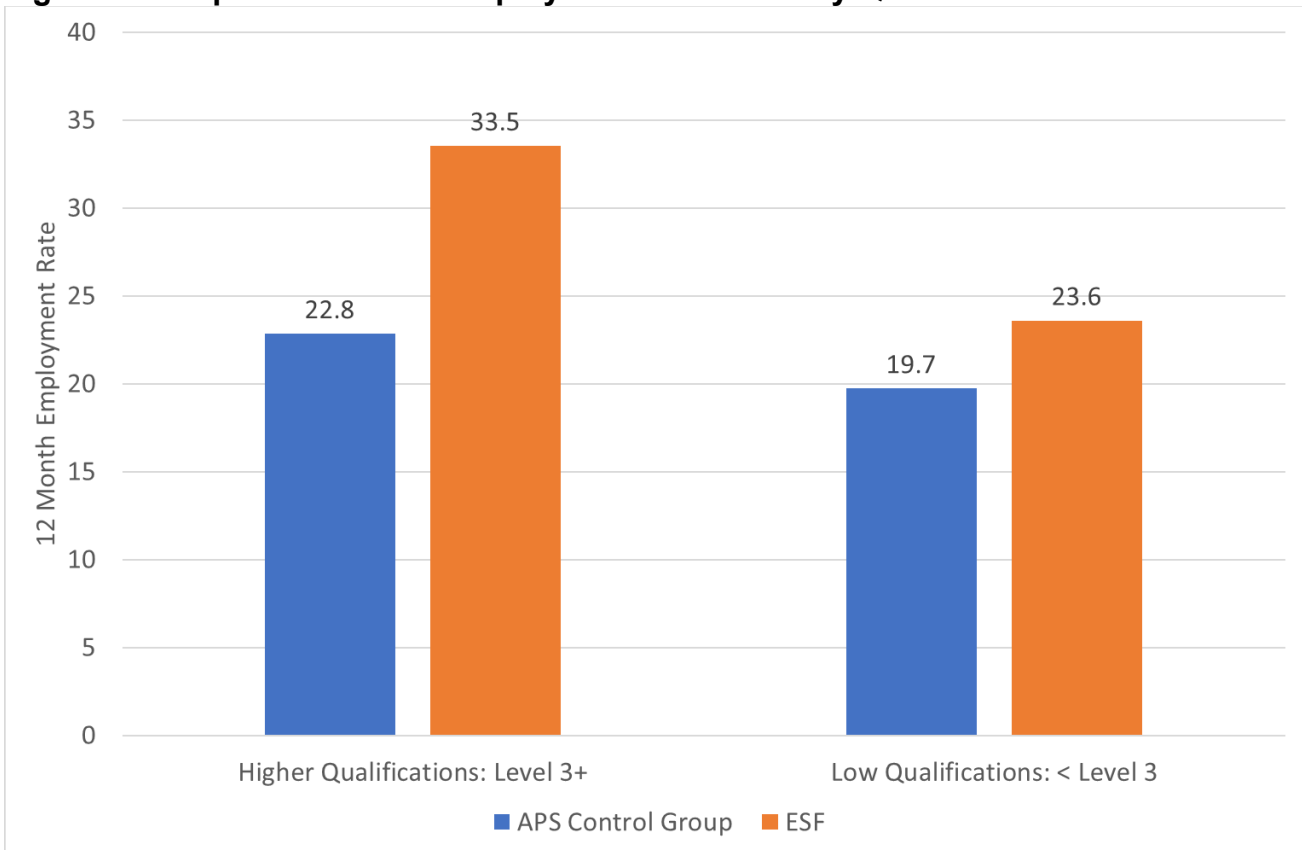
7.62 Finally, Figure 7.8 demonstrates that the impact of participation in these operations was estimated to be greater among those with higher levels of qualifications.

- Among participants who previously held qualifications at Level 2 or below, 24 per cent were estimated to be employed at 12 months. This is compared to 19 per cent among a comparable group of people extracted from the APS.
- Among those with qualifications at Level 3 or higher, 34 per cent of ESF participants were estimated to be employed at 12 months following participation in

these operations. This is compared to 23 per cent among a comparably qualified group of people from the APS.

- Those with higher qualifications therefore exhibited a larger absolute increase in employment (11 percentage points compared to 5 percentage points) compared to those with lower levels of educational attainment prior to ESF.

Figure 7.8: Impact of ESF on Employment Outcomes by Qualification Level



Source: ESF Participants Surveys, Annual Population Survey
Base: Long term unemployed or economically inactive aged 25 and over

Limitations of the Counterfactual Impact Analysis

The ESF Participants Survey does not collect the same quality of information as the APS.

7.63 Whilst the ESF Participants Surveys have been designed to collect data in a way that is broadly consistent with the APS, it must be acknowledged that these relatively short telephone surveys were not able to collect information from respondents that is of the same quality as that collected by the APS. Issues surrounding the ability to accurately identify unemployed versus economically inactive respondents have been discussed (see paragraphs 7.14-7.17).

7.64 Within the ESF Participant Surveys, economic activity status prior to participation was established through a single question. In the APS, economic activity status is itself derived from 20 other variables. The APS similarly collects extensive information on qualifications held by people to accurately identify their highest qualification. Such levels of detail were beyond the resources of the ESF Participants Survey.

Limited demographic information in the ESF Participants Survey.

7.65 From the perspective of statistical matching, the demographic information included in the ESF Participants Surveys was limited. No information was collected on household composition, the number of dependent children and the age of dependent children. In the absence of these variables, the analysis of employment outcomes associated with ESF has been supported by information on family and partnership status contained within participant records. However, participant records on family status neither identify the age or number of any dependent children.

7.66 The absence of this richer information will have had a detrimental effect on the quality of the statistical matching, although the impact of this on estimated employment outcomes is indeterminate. More accurate matches could produce larger or smaller estimates of employment effects depending how this additional information is related to participation in ESF operations and how these characteristics are associated with employment outcomes.

Statistical matching does not account for characteristics which are not captured by surveys.

7.67 Related to the omission of information, it is not possible for statistical matching techniques to control for otherwise unobserved effects associated with the selection/referral of participants onto these schemes. If complex barriers are not captured by questions that are included in both the surveys of ESF participants and the APS, then they also cannot be accounted for within statistical matching.

7.68 Examples are many, varied and could include factors such as social class background, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), having a criminal record or suffering issues with addiction. The act of participating in an ESF Operation could also indicate that those supported by these schemes are more motivated to gain employment.

7.69 It is therefore possible that the barriers to work being faced by respondents to the ESF surveys were different from those experienced by the people from the APS against which they are matched. As such, the employment outcomes associated with participating in these schemes could be being over or under-estimated.

Comparison of the effect of intervention is limited to a single point 12 months following participation.

7.70 In terms of measuring employment outcomes, the estimation of employment effects is also limited to comparisons being made at a point 12 months following participation in ESF. It is conceivable that participation within ESF could accelerate the speed at which people enter sustained employment rather than increasing the employment share at 12 months. It is not possible to investigate these issues using the APS data.

The comparison group may also have accessed employment support.

7.71 It is not possible to identify whether non-employed respondents in the APS have themselves received support in relation to searching for employment in the previous 12 months. The estimated effect of ESF is therefore being evaluated in comparison to a group of otherwise comparable people from the wider population who may themselves have received some other form of support that may have assisted them to find employment.

7.72 An extreme example of this is that some respondents to the APS living in Wales may themselves have received support via an ESF supported operation. However, more broadly, APS respondents living across the UK may have benefitted from other interventions, possibly funded by ESF, that represent above baseline levels of support provided by Jobcentre Plus.

7.73 There are no variables included within the APS data that support the identification and exclusion of people who have received support from other labour market programmes. This again could reduce the estimated effect on employment outcomes associated with participation in ESF, although it should be noted that ESF participants may themselves have also participated in other interventions.

The effects of different elements of the operations cannot be identified.

7.74 Finally, it should be acknowledged that participation in ESF operations may encompass a range of elements, including basic skills training, confidence building, vocational training, careers advice, support with CV writing etc. Some elements may have stronger effects on employment outcomes than others. The separate effects of

these measures will be 'averaged out' by the estimate of an overall effect associated with participation in these operations.

8. Supporting Progression in Employment

Introduction

- 8.1 This section analyses the labour market experiences and job characteristics of ESF participants who were in employment prior to receiving support from ESF and who participated in interventions that were primarily aimed at supporting progression in employment²⁴. Firstly, the nature of the jobs held by these participants prior to their participation in ESF is outlined, including their employment status, hours worked, contractual status, and whether they had supervisory responsibilities. The characteristics of jobs held at 6 months following participation in ESF is then examined. Consideration is then given to the perceptions of participants regarding any improvements that they had experienced in their jobs since they were supported by ESF and whether these improvements could be attributed directly to ESF.

Characteristics of Employment Prior to ESF

- 8.2 Table 8.1 presents information on the nature of jobs held by participants who were in employment prior to receiving support from ESF. Overall, 95 per cent of those assisted by operations under the broad theme of supporting progression were working as employees. On average, those previously employed worked 37 hours per week. However, almost a fifth (19 per cent) reported that they worked part time. Seven per cent reported that they were working part time despite wanting to work full time. Therefore, about a third of part time workers were doing so on an involuntary basis.
- 8.3 Of those working as employees prior to ESF, 83 per cent were employed on a permanent basis or on an open-ended contract. The share of non-permanent employment was highest among those who subsequently participated in operations that were aimed at addressing low skills (21 per cent), supporting graduate engagement (30 per cent), and supporting the childcare workforce (29 per cent).

²⁴ In a majority of cases, these respondents have undertaken operations whose aim was to support progression in employment. However, as discussed in Section 3, out of approximately 14,300 respondents who reported that they were employed (including apprenticeships) prior to ESF, around 800 were recorded by administrative records as having participated in projects aimed at supporting participation in employment (i.e., interventions aimed at those out of work). For completeness, these respondents from supporting participation operations are retained in the analyses that follow. However, due to the small sample sizes associated with this group, data at Specific Objective level is not presented.

Table 8.1: Employment Prior to ESF

	Supporting Progression							Supporting Participation	All
	Increase. Engage.	Address. low skills	Increase int/high skills	Graduate engage.	Women in the Workforce	Childcare Workforce	Total		
Employed	87.9	94.7	96.3	*	96.0	(80)	95.0	89.1	94.6
Self Employed	12.1	5.3	3.7	*	4.0	(20)	5.0	10.9	5.4
<i>Of which</i>									
Part Time Employment	24.3	23.6	14.6	*	18.2	(30)	18.6	46.0	20.5
Involuntary Part Time	4.7	9.9	5.7	*	2.7	*	6.9	23.3	8.1
<i>As a % of Total Part Time Employment</i>	19.3	41.9	39.0	*	14.8	*	37.1	50.7	39.5
Hours (Median)	37.0	37.0	37.0	37.0	37.0	30.0	37.0	25.0	37.0
Contractual Status***									
On a permanent or open-ended contract	86.4	78.5	84.2	69.9	90.9	71.3	82.6	48.1	80.5
A fixed term contract	7.0	6.5	9.0		7.1		8.0	13.5	8.4
On a temporary or casual basis	3.0	4.8	2.7	30.1**	0.8	28.7**	3.3	18.6	4.3
A zero hours contract	3.6	10.3	4.1		1.2		6.0	19.7	6.9
Supervisory Responsibilities****	43.2	29.5	48.3	34.6	40.7	24.4	41.3	24.0	40.1
Sample*****	1,250	3,325	8,234	55	589	89	13,542	793	14,335

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: All in employment prior to ESF

*Figures suppressed due to sample sizes of less than 10.

**Figures merged across the non-permanent categories to maintain anonymity.

***Refers to employees only.

****Full CATI Only

*****Samples for specific rows will vary slightly due to the omission of cases who respond "Other" or "Don't Know".

- 8.4 Among those who were in employment prior to receiving support from ESF, the proportion of participants with supervisory responsibilities was lowest among those who subsequently participated in operations aimed at supporting the childcare workforce (24 per cent) and addressing low skills (30 per cent).
- 8.5 Examination of the characteristics of employment prior to participation in ESF across a range of personal characteristics (Table A.14A) shows that the incidence of part time work was relatively high amongst women (26 per cent); those aged 55 and over (27 per cent); those with a work limiting health condition (28 per cent); those with dependent children (29 per cent); and those with caring responsibilities (31 per cent).
- 8.6 Those aged 16-24 were most likely to be employed in positions that were not permanent in some way (33 per cent). The proportion of participants with supervisory responsibilities was lowest amongst those under the age of 25 (22 per cent) and with lower levels of educational attainment prior to ESF (29 per cent).

Employment 6 Months Following ESF

- 8.7 Table 8.2 presents information on the nature of employment held by ESF participants who were employed prior to being supported by ESF and at a point 6 months after they had left the support of ESF. Overall, 94 per cent of those in employment were working as employees as opposed to self-employed.
- 8.8 Approximately one in seven (14 per cent) reported that they were working part time. Among this group, a quarter (23 per cent) said that they were doing so on an involuntary basis. It can therefore be seen that, at a point 6 months after they had left the support of ESF, both the share of ESF participants working part time and the proportion who report that they did so on an involuntary basis were lower than that observed prior to them having received support from an ESF operation.
- 8.9 The share of those who were employed on a permanent or open-ended contract was estimated to have increased slightly to 88 per cent. Non-permanent employment was highest among those who participated in operations aimed at supporting graduate engagement (32 per cent) and supporting the childcare workforce (26 per cent).

Table 8.2: Employment Six Months Following ESF

	Supporting Progression						Total	Supporting Participation	All
	Increase Engage.	Address. low skills	Increase int/high skills	Graduate engage.	Women in the Workforce	Childcare Workforce			
Employed	87.3	93.1	95.7	(90)	96.1	(80)	94.1	88.0	93.8
Self Employed	12.7	6.9	4.3	(10)	3.9	(20)	5.9	12.0	6.2
<i>Of which</i>									
Part Time Employment	23.1	17.0	10.9	*	17.5	*	14.1	31.5	15.1
Involuntary Part Time Employment	2.8	4.3	2.7	*	2.5	*	3.2	15.1	3.9
As a % of Total Part Time Employment	12.1	25.3	24.8	*	14.3	*	22.7	47.9	25.8
Contractual Status***									
On a permanent or open-ended contract	88.2	85.6	88.7	68.2	91.9	73.9	87.7	61.4	86.4
A fixed term contract	7.7	5.4	7.1	31.8**	8.1**	26.1**	6.7	12.5	6.9
On a temporary or casual basis	2.3	2.1	1.6	31.8**	8.1**	26.1**	1.8	12.8	2.4
A zero hours contract	1.7	6.9	2.5	31.8**	8.1**	26.1**	3.8	13.2	4.3
Change of Role	25.0	35.8	41.6	66.3	52.6	22.4	38.7	52.1	39.5
Change of Employer	19.9	27.5	24.1	67.7	25.8	12.4	25.0	57.2	26.6
Sample****	1,156	3,143	7,945	45	571	84	12,946	624	13,570

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: All in employment prior to ESF and at 6 months following ESF

*Cells suppressed to maintain anonymity.

**Figures merged across the non-permanent categories.

***Refers to employees only.

****Samples for specific rows will vary slightly due to the exclusion of cases who respond "Other" or "Don't Know".

- 8.10 A quarter of those participating in operations under the broad theme of supporting progression reported that they were working for a different employer at 6 months following participation in ESF compared to who they were working for prior to ESF. Almost 4 out of 10 (39 per cent) were employed in a different role compared to that held prior to ESF.
- 8.11 Examination of the characteristics of employment at 6 months following participation in ESF operation (see Table A.15A) shows that the incidence of part time work remained relatively high amongst: women (21 per cent); those aged 55 and over (26 per cent); those with a work limiting health condition (25 per cent); those with dependent children (25 per cent); and those with caring responsibilities (27 per cent).

Improvements in Job Characteristics

Skills and Competencies

- 8.12 Those participants who were employed both before their ESF operation and at a point 6 months following their participation in ESF were asked to consider how the levels of skills and competencies required for the performance of their day-to-day tasks had changed compared to what they were doing in their job immediately before they started their course.
- 8.13 Overall, over a third (36 per cent) who participated in operations under the theme of supporting progression indicated that the jobs that they held at 6 months following the completion of ESF required a higher level of skill and competency to what they were expected to do in their job immediately before they started their course (see Table 8.3). This figure was highest amongst those participating in operations aimed at supporting women in the workforce (44 per cent) and increasing intermediate/high level skills (40 per cent).
- 8.14 Relatively little variation was observed in changes in the levels of skills and competences across different groups of ESF participants (see Table A.16A). The one exception was the higher levels of skills and competencies reported among younger participants. Among those aged 16-24, 45 per cent report that levels of skills and competencies had increased since participating in ESF. This figure declined to 33 per cent among those aged 25-54 and to 22 per cent among those aged 55 and above.
- 8.15 In terms of operation characteristics, those supported by operations within the West Wales and the Valleys area were more likely to report that levels of skills and competencies had increased since participating in ESF (see Table A.16B).

Qualification Requirements

- 8.16 Those participants who were employed both before their ESF operation and at a point 6 months following their participation in ESF were asked how qualifications required for the performance of their day-to-day tasks had changed compared to what were required for their job immediately before they started their course. Overall, approximately a quarter (26 per cent) who participated in operations under the theme of supporting progression indicated that the jobs that they held at 6 months following the completion of ESF required a higher level of qualification compared to their job immediately before they started their course. However, a majority (71 per cent) report no change in qualification requirements.
- 8.17 Those supported by operations aimed at increasing engagement were most likely to report that the qualifications associated with their work tasks had remained unchanged (89 per cent).
- 8.18 Relatively little variation was observed in changes in qualification requirements across different groups of ESF participants (see Table A.16A), although once again it was younger groups of ESF participants who reported that the qualification requirements of their jobs had increased. Among those aged 16-24, 30 per cent reported that qualification requirements had increased since participating in ESF. This figure declined to 24 per cent among those aged 25-54 and to 17 per cent among those aged 55 and above.
- 8.19 In terms of operation characteristics, those supported by operations within the West Wales and the Valleys area were more likely to report that qualification requirements had increased since participating in ESF (see Table A.16B).

Levels of Responsibility

- 8.20 Finally, participants were asked to consider how their levels of responsibility compared to what they were before they started their course. Overall, 41 per cent who participated in operations under the theme of supporting progression indicated their levels of responsibility had increased. Those supported by operations aimed at increasing engagement were most likely to report that their levels of responsibility had remained unchanged (75 per cent).

- 8.21 Compared to other measures of job quality, changes in levels of responsibility show greater variation across different groups of ESF participants (see Table A16.A). Increased levels of responsibility were more commonly reported among:
- males (45 per cent compared to 38 per cent among women);
 - those who did not have work limiting health conditions (41 per cent compared to 34 per cent among those who did);
 - those who did not have dependent children (42 per cent compared to 35 per cent among those who did);
 - and those who had no caring responsibilities (42 per cent compared to 35 per cent among those who did).
- 8.22 Once again, younger groups of ESF participants were more likely to report that they had gained increased levels of responsibility. Among those aged 16-24, 54 per cent report that they had more responsibility since participating in ESF. This fell to 37 per cent among those aged 25-54 and to 24 per cent among those aged 55 and above.
- 8.23 In terms of operation characteristics, those supported by operations within the West Wales and the Valleys area were more likely to report that they had increased levels of responsibility since participating in ESF (see Table A.16B).

Changes in Job Quality

- 8.24 Respondents to the survey who were in employment both before and after²⁵ their participation in ESF were asked whether changes had occurred in the quality of their jobs. Table 8.4 shows that the most commonly occurring improvements in job quality were getting more job satisfaction (71 per cent); having had a pay rise (70 per cent) and having improved pay and promotion prospects (70 per cent).
- 8.25 Those participating in operations that support women in the workforce were most likely to report improvements in job quality across various dimensions, with 85 per cent of this group indicating that they had had a pay rise. Those supported by operations aimed at increasing engagement were least likely to report improvements in job quality.

²⁵ After could mean either at 6 months following their participation in ESF and/or at the time of the survey.

Table 8.3: Improvements in Job Characteristics

	Supporting Progression						Total	Supporting Participation	All
	Increase. Engage.	Address. low skills	Increase int/high skills	Graduate engage.	Women in the workforce	Childcare workforce			
Skills or competencies									
Higher level required	12.4	34.6	39.7	62.5	44.0	23.5	36.0	40.1	36.2
Same level required	84.8	61.8	57.7	37.5*	54.1	76.5*	61.1	49.9	60.5
Lower level required	2.8	3.6	2.6	37.5*	1.9	76.5*	2.9	10.0	3.3
Qualification requirements									
Higher level required	7.4	25.3	28.2	44.2	20.0	25.8	25.4	25.3	25.4
Same level required	89.0	70.4	68.2	55.8*	77.3	74.3*	70.8	63.5	70.4
Lower level required	3.6	4.3	3.6	55.8*	2.6	74.3*	3.8	11.2	4.2
Level of responsibility									
More responsibility	17.9	39.6	44.0	69.9	49.3	28.2	40.6	41.8	40.7
Same responsibility	75.6	55.4	51.4	30.1*	47.2	71.8*	54.5	46.3	54.1
Less responsibility	6.6	5.1	4.6	30.1*	3.5	71.8*	4.9	11.9	5.2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample**	1,156	3,144	7,945	46	571	84	12,946	624	13,570

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: All participants who were employed both prior to ESF and 6 months after it.

*Figures merged across the categories due to small sample sizes.

**These figures represent the potential full sample. Samples for specific rows will vary slightly due to the exclusion of cases who responded, "Don't Know".

- 8.26 In terms of how changes in job quality varied among different groups of workers who have been supported by ESF (see Table A.17A), improvements in job quality were less likely to be reported among women; older workers; those with work limiting health conditions; carers and those with dependent children.
- 8.27 Analysis by operation characteristics (see Table A.17B) shows that those supported by ESF after the COVID-19 pandemic were more likely to indicate that they had had a promotion, or a pay rise compared to those who had participated before the pandemic.
- 8.28 Respondents to the survey were then asked whether these improvements in job quality could be attributed to their participation within an ESF operation. Responses to this question are presented at the base of Table 8.4. Approximately three quarters of respondents who were assisted by operations aimed at supporting progression indicated that these improvements in job quality were either directly because of the course (12 per cent) or that the course helped (62 per cent). The remaining 26 per cent of participants reported that the course 'made no difference' in terms of contributing to the improvements in job quality that they had experienced since participating in ESF.
- 8.29 Women supported by operations under the theme of women in the workforce were least likely to report that they course made no difference (21 per cent). Those supported by operations aimed at increasing engagement were most likely to report that their operation had made no difference in contribution to improvements in job quality (37 per cent).
- 8.30 In terms of variations observed among different groups of ESF participants, a clear relationship emerges again between perceptions regarding the contribution of the course and the age of participants (see Table A17.A). Among those aged 16-24, 23 per cent reported that the course did not contribute to improvements in job quality. This figure increased to 27 per cent among those aged 25-54 and to 34 per cent among those aged 55 and above.
- 8.31 Those with work limiting health conditions were more likely to report that the course had not contributed to improvements in job quality (32 per cent) than those who had no such conditions (26 per cent).

Table 8.4: Improvements in Job Quality Since ESF

	Supporting Progression						Total	Supporting Participation	All
	Increasing Engagement	Addressing low skills	Increase int/high skills	Graduate engagement	Women in the Workforce	Childcare Workforce			
Improvements in Job Quality									
Getting more job satisfaction	57.8	72.6	72.0	64.4	76.7	56.0	71.2	77.5	71.5
Had a pay rise	57.8	69.6	71.9	79.9	85.0	56.3	70.4	66.6	70.2
Pay and promotion prospects improved	41.7	70.5	73.4	70.1	76.8	53.9	70.0	71.6	70.1
More opportunities for training	44.8	72.3	68.0	56.9	62.3	59.6	67.5	73.3	67.8
Better job security	41.2	67.7	59.7	49.2	54.5	53.9	60.7	74.1	61.5
Had a promotion	15.5	29.2	39.8	45.2	55.4	14.2	34.8	23.5	34.2
None of these	16.4	6.5	6.3	*	3.1	*	7.1	7.7	7.1
Sample	1,156	3,205	8,059	46	571	84	13,121	624	13,745
Did the course help?*									
Directly because of the course	8.5	11.3	12.9	24.2	8.7	9.8	12.0	11.9	11.9
The course helped	54.9	62.3	62.3	48.9	70.2	52.4	61.9	60.4	60.4
Made no difference	36.6	26.3	24.8	26.9	21.0	37.8	26.1	27.6	27.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	819	2,647	6,768	41	492	67	10,834	492	11,326

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: All participants who were employed both before and after ESF.

*Figures suppressed due to small sample sizes.

**Only asked of those who recorded an improvement in job quality. Full CATI only.

Qualifications Gained and Job Quality

8.32 Table 8.5 shows that among participants who were in work both before and after their participation in ESF, those who reported that they had gained a qualification as a result of being supported by ESF were more likely to report that they had experienced improvements in job quality than those who did not gain a qualification.

8.33 In terms of participants reporting that their pay and promotion prospects had improved or that they had actually had a promotion, the level of qualification attained was also observed to be important. Those who had gained qualifications at higher levels were increasingly more likely to report that they had experienced these improvements in job quality. However, across other areas, the attainment of any qualification through ESF was observed to be a more important predictor of improvements in job quality rather than the level of qualification that was gained.

Table 8.5: Improvements in Job Quality and Qualification Gained

	Qualification Gained					All
	None	Level <=1	Level 2	Level 3+	Other, Don't know	
Getting more job satisfaction	59.3	73.8	75.5	75.3	69.8	72.4
Pay and promotion prospects improved	49.8	70.1	73.8	78.0	66.7	71.5
Had a pay rise	59.0	72.7	72.9	73.8	70.2	71.1
More opportunities for training	52.1	71.3	75.0	70.8	67.5	68.9
Better job security	48.4	69.3	70.6	63.2	59.7	62.7
Had a promotion	20.4	28.4	32.5	42.3	29.3	34.9
None of these	16.3	7.8	5.6	4.5	6.8	6.7
Sample	1,651	240	2,544	5,924	1,495	11,854
Did it the course help?*						
Directly because of the course	4.9	9.6	13.0	16.1	8.9	12.9
The course helped	41.9	63.2	66.3	66.4	60.9	62.8
Made no difference	53.2	27.2	20.7	17.5	30.2	24.3
Sample	1,357	216	2,386	5,630	1,380	10,969

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: All participants who were employed both before and after ESF.

*Only asked of those who recorded an improvement in job quality. Full CATI only.

8.34 Participants were also more likely to attribute improvements in job quality to the support they had received if they had attained a qualification as a result of their participation in an ESF operation. The base of Table 8.5 demonstrates that this strength of attribution among participants increased steadily with respect to the level of qualification gained.

- Among those who experienced improvements in job quality but who did not gain a qualification through their participation in ESF, approximately half (47 per cent) indicated that these improvements in job quality were either directly because of the course (5 per cent) or that the course helped (42 per cent).
- Among those who experienced improvements in job quality and who gained a qualification at Level 3 or above, 82 per cent indicated that these improvements in job quality were either directly because of the course (16 per cent) or that the course helped (66 per cent).

Respondents Assessment of Impact

- 8.35 All respondents who were in employment at the time of the survey were asked to what extent they thought that the course helped them get their current job. Table 8.6 provides the responses to this question among those who were in work prior to their participation in ESF. Among those who participated in operations under the theme of supporting progression, over half (54 per cent) of ESF participants report either that the course helped them to get their current job (45 per cent) or that they got their current job directly because of the course (9 per cent). The remaining 46 per cent of ESF Participants reported that the course 'made no difference'.
- 8.36 Those supported by operations with the aim of increasing engagement were most likely to suggest that their ESF operation had made no difference (67 per cent). This could relate to the aim of these operations in terms of addressing issues of underemployment or absence among those with work limiting health conditions rather than necessarily supporting these people to gain a new job.
- 8.37 Analysis by a range of personal characteristics shows that perceptions of impact did not vary greatly between different groups of respondents (see Table A.18A). The one exception in this respect is in relation to age. Among those aged 16-24, 37% reported that their course made no difference in terms of helping them to gain their current job. This increased to 49% among those age 25-54 years and to 61% among those aged 55 and over.

Table 8.6: Impact of ESF in Gaining Current Job

	Supporting Progression							Supporting Participation	All
	Increasing Engagement	Addressing low skills	Increase int/high skills	Graduate engagement	Women in the Workforce	Childcare Workforce	Total		
Directly because of the course	2.0	8.3	9.3	29.1	3.6	13.4	8.4	10.9	8.5
The course helped	31.2	44.9	46.4	40.2	57.4	31.5	45.1	51.4	45.4
Made no difference	66.8	46.8	44.3	30.6	39.1	55.1	46.5	37.7	46.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	839	2,600	6,774	45	495	57	10,810	521	11,331

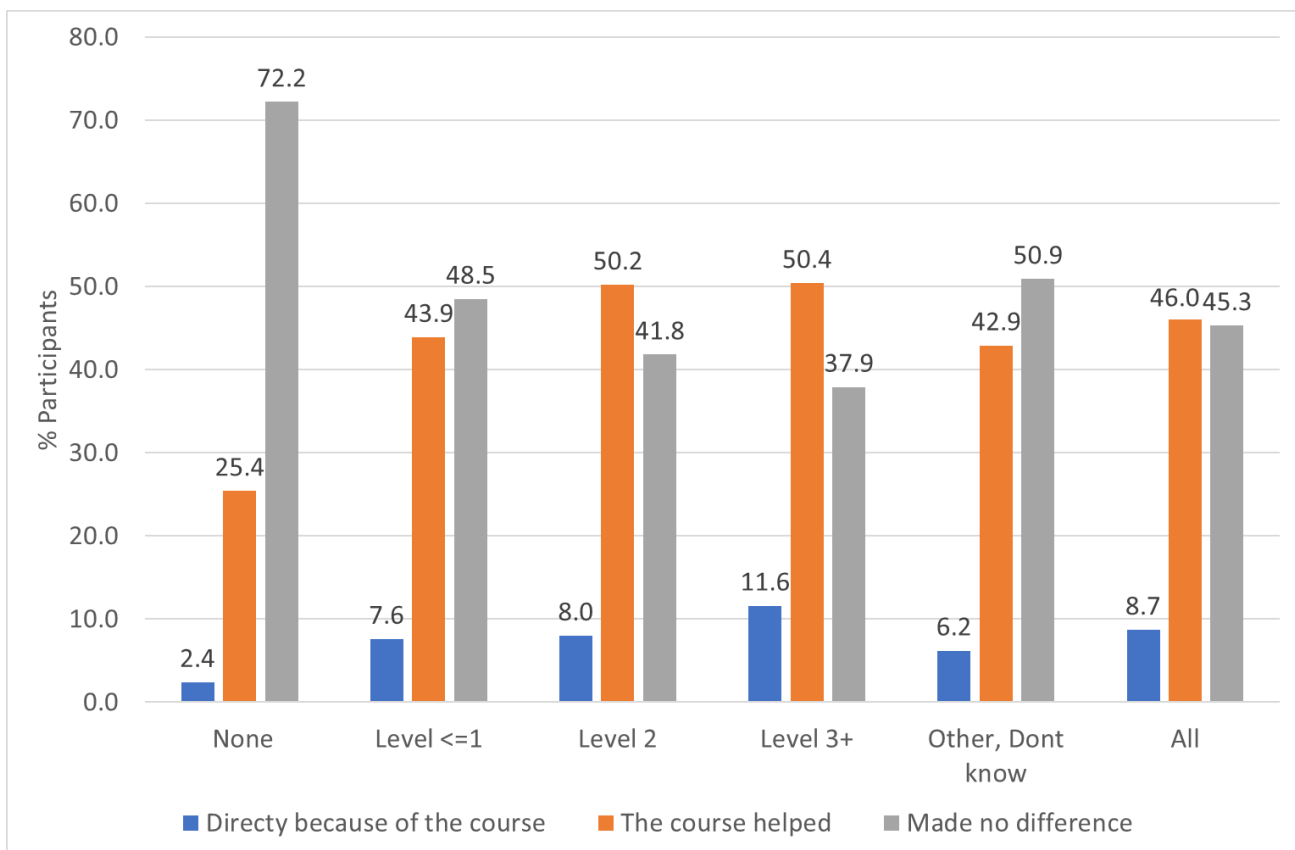
Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey, Full CATI Only

Base: All participants who were employed both before ESF and at the time of the survey.

8.38 Elsewhere, those with work limiting health conditions were more likely to report that the course made no difference to them gaining their current job (52 per cent) than those with no such conditions (46 per cent). This in part will reflect the higher proportion of those with work limiting health conditions who are supported by operations aimed at reducing underemployment and absence rates.

8.39 Figure 8.1 shows how perceptions of the impact of ESF among participants varied with respect to the level of qualification gained from ESF. The share who reported that their course had made no difference to them having gained their current job was highest amongst those who had gained no qualifications from their participation in an ESF operation (72 per cent). Amongst those who said that they had gained a qualification at Level 3 or above, only 38 per cent reported that their course had made no difference.

Figure 8.1: Impact of ESF in Gaining Current Job by Qualification Gained



Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey, Full CATI Only

Base: All participants who were employed both before ESF and at the time of the survey

Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic

- 8.40 Respondents to the 2022 ESF Participants Survey were asked whether they thought that the COVID-19 pandemic had made a difference to their progress since they completed their ESF course. Amongst those who were in employment both prior to their participation in ESF and at the time of the survey, Table 8.7 shows that over 7 out of 10 (71 per cent) of those assisted by projects that supported progression reported that the COVID-19 pandemic had not influenced their progression subsequent to participating in ESF. However, over a fifth (21 per cent) said that the pandemic had made things harder. Only 8 per cent indicated that things had become easier.
- 8.41 Those who had been supported by operations aimed at supporting women in the workforce were most likely to report that the COVID-19 pandemic had made things easier (14 per cent). Responses to this question are otherwise relatively uniform across different operation areas.
- 8.42 Little difference is also observed when comparing participants across a range of personal characteristics (see Table A.19A). The exception to this are those with work limiting health conditions, among whom 31 per cent reported that things had become harder since the pandemic compared to just 20 per cent among those with no such conditions.
- 8.43 Those who reported that things had become harder or easier because of the pandemic were asked why this was the case. Table 8.8 shows that the most common reasons cited by those who had said that things had become harder were that the industry that they wanted to work in was badly affected by the pandemic (24%) and that there were fewer jobs around generally (22%).
- 8.44 Far fewer participants said that things had become easier because of the pandemic. Of those that did, the main reasons for this were that the ability to work from home or remotely had provided them with more flexibility (33%), the COVID-19 pandemic had led to additional vacancies (33%), and that online training had become more accessible (20%).

Table 8.7: The Effect of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Progression

	Supporting Progression							Supporting Participation	All
	Increasing Engagement	Addressing low skills	Increase int/high skills	Graduate engagement	Women in the Workforce	Childcare Workforce	Total		
Made it easier	8.0	6.4	8.1	78.4*	13.7	76.7*	7.8	7.7	7.8
Not really made a difference**	71.2	70.2	73.0		65.0		71.4	57.9	70.5
Made it harder	20.9	23.4	19.0	21.6	21.3	23.3	20.8	34.4	21.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	774	1,618	3,789	53	589	48	6,871	361	7,232

Source: 2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: All participants who were employed prior to ESF.

*Figures for “Made it easier” and “Not really made a difference” merged.

**Includes a small proportion of respondents who responded, “Not really sure”.

Table 8.8: How the COVID-19 Pandemic Effected Employment Progression

How have things become harder?	
The industry I want / wanted to work in was badly affected by the pandemic	24.3
Fewer jobs around generally	21.6
Issues with remote style learning / interviews / working	14.3
Fewer training courses were available	13.3
Affected ability to work / lost job incl. e.g. furloughed	11.3
Sample	1,544
How have things become easier?	
The ability to work from home or remotely has provided me with more flexibility	33.2
COVID-19 had led to additional vacancies / job opportunities	33.0
Online training / job training has been more accessible	20.2
I have been able to apply for jobs further afield because homeworking is an option	7.4
Improved / developed new skills	6.3
Sample	589

Source: 2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: All participants who were employed prior to ESF and reported that the pandemic had made things harder/easier.

9. Conclusions and Recommendations

9.1 This analysis of combined ESF Participant survey data has sought to provide a detailed insight into the characteristics, experience, and outcomes of ESF participants who left their provision between 2015-2022 across different categories of operation.

Who are the participants?

9.2 The analysis has provided evidence to suggest that ESF interventions often engage and support a diverse range of people, particularly in relation to characteristics such as age, gender, disability, and work-related ill-health. The ESF Participants Survey highlights the difficulties faced by these groups. For example, among those who were previously out of work prior to their participation in ESF, analysis shows that women, older participants, those with work limiting health conditions, those with dependent children and carers were more likely to have not held a job during the three years prior to the participation within an ESF operation.

9.3 In such respects, the operations supported by ESF contributed to tackling poverty and social exclusion and promoted equal opportunities, thereby addressing both the CCTs that guided the operation of Structural Fund Programmes and the goal for “a more equal Wales” as stipulated in the Welsh Government’s Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

ESF and the Welsh Language

9.4 There were also areas where it is arguable that ESF programmes did not have the opportunity to provide support to the degree that might have been expected. Key in this respect was the Welsh language. Estimates from the 2021 Census suggest that 17 per cent of those over the age of 16 in Wales could speak Welsh, although research suggests that those with lower levels of educational attainment and those who are unemployed are less likely to speak Welsh in their daily lives²⁶. Among ESF Participants:

- Only 7 per cent of ESF participants reported that Welsh was their first language.

²⁶ [Speaking Welsh \(National Survey for Wales\): April 2018 to March 2019](#)

- Only 6 per cent of ESF participants reported that their operation was delivered either wholly through the medium of Welsh or through a combination of Welsh and English.

9.5 Nonetheless, the offer of provision through the medium of Welsh reflected local needs, with approximately half of participants in Gwynedd (55%), Anglesey (48%) and Carmarthenshire (47%) having been provided the opportunity to have received their support in Welsh.

9.6 As a result, a large majority of ESF participants (95 per cent) reported that their operation was delivered through their preferred language – a figure that was relatively uniform across Wales. Holtom et al (2024) note that such findings are consistent with research (see WCVA, 2022) that identifies a general reluctance to access services through the medium of Welsh, particularly when the services' default language is English.

Withdrawal from ESF

9.7 Whilst ESF Programmes have clearly been targeted at those groups who face some of the greatest disadvantages in the labour market, the survey does provide evidence that alludes to the challenges of supporting these groups and that these programmes have perhaps succeeded less well in supporting some of those who are most vulnerable.

9.8 For example, 17 per cent of participants are recorded as having left their course early. Non-completion cannot be taken as evidence of failure as some participants may have left early to take up employment. However, concerningly, rates of withdrawal were relatively high among those aged 16-24 (21 per cent), those with work limiting health conditions (23 per cent) and those with low levels of educational attainment (20 per cent), suggesting on balance that early withdrawal from ESF provision was higher amongst those who are most disadvantaged. Future research in this area should collect more information regarding why people withdrew from their courses early.

Gaining Qualifications and Skills

- 9.10 The analysis shows that almost three quarters of participants (72 per cent) reported that they had either gained a qualification or had gained units/credits towards a qualification. The proportion reporting that they had gained a qualification was higher among those who had participated in operations that Supported Progression in employment (84 per cent) compared to those who undertook operations that aimed to Support Participation in the labour market (55 per cent). The level of qualifications gained by those on operations aimed at supporting progression were also generally higher.
- 9.11 Participation in ESF was also associated with an increase in the levels of qualifications held by participants. This increase in the level of qualifications held was more apparent among those supported by operations within the supporting progression theme, where the proportion with low levels of attainment fell from 36 per cent to 23 per cent following participation in ESF.
- 9.12 Across the board, ESF participants also reported gaining a wide range of skills because of their participation, most notably softer skills such as communication skills, team working skills and organisational skills.
- 9.13 The labour market operations supported by ESF have therefore been demonstrated to directly address the EU Thematic Objective of “Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning” and Priority Axes that seek to improve attainment, skill levels and employability.
- 9.14 ESF-funded operations therefore support the goal of the Welsh Government’s Wellbeing of Future Generations Act for a more prosperous and resilient Wales through the development of a more skilled and educated population. The goal of resilience was also addressed through supporting participants to secure employment by re-skilling and adapting to changing skills needs within the labour market.

Barriers to Finding Employment

- 9.15 The ESF Participants Surveys provide important evidence regarding the barriers faced by many participants in finding work. The most often cited barrier to finding employment relates to a lack of relevant work experience. However, the survey provides a rich picture of the complexity of barriers faced by certain groups. Women, carers, and those with dependent children were each more likely to cite difficulties

associated with only wanting to work part time, having caring responsibilities and not being able to afford childcare as barriers to employment (see Table A.5A).

9.16 It is however important to note that not all barriers cited by participants related to personal factors. ESF participants provided a strong sense that labour market problems in the areas where they live contributed to a lack of opportunity, with participants reporting there it was hard to get appropriate work (44 per cent) and that there were no appropriate jobs where they lived (33 per cent). Whilst ESF Programmes can help to improve the capability of participants to secure employment, the opportunities provided by local labour markets are often perceived to be limited.

Employment Outcomes

9.17 In terms of outcomes relating to economic activity, just over half of participants in operations aimed at increasing employment were observed to have been in employment 6 months after they left their operations. This figure was notably higher amongst those who have been assisted by operations that support the employability of those at risk of poverty, among whom approximately 8 out of 10 were in employment 6 months after they left their operations.

9.18 Participation in employment was lower amongst those aged over 55 (40 per cent), those with work limiting health conditions (32 per cent) and those with lower levels of educational attainment (47 per cent). Participation in ESF-funded operations were not able to address all the complex personal and societal barriers that some groups face to entering employment.

Impact on Participation

Perceptions of Participants

9.19 Approximately two thirds (66 per cent) of ESF participants who were out of work prior to ESF but who were in employment by the time of the survey report either that the course helped them to get their current job (52 per cent) or that they got their current job directly because of the course (14 per cent). One third of ESF Participants (34 per cent) reported that the course 'made no difference'.

9.20 Analysis shows that perceptions of impact did not vary greatly between different groups of participants. The exception to this is that perceptions of impact are higher among those who have gained a qualification via participation in ESF, and these

perceptions increase with respect to the level of qualification gained, confirming the importance of increasing attainment levels.

Estimated Impact on Employment Outcomes

- 9.21 The impact of these schemes in supporting participation in employment was however found to be far more modest based upon the results of the counterfactual impact evaluation.
- 9.22 Participation in operations that supported the employability of the long term unemployed and economically inactive were estimated to be associated with a 7-percentage point increase in employment outcomes (29 per cent compared to 22 per cent).
- 9.23 Among a more employable group of ESF beneficiaries who had recently been unemployed and/or redundant, participation in operations under the Specific Objective of supporting the employability of those at risk of poverty were estimated to be associated with a 13-percentage point increase in employment outcomes (82 per cent compared to 69 per cent).
- 9.24 Participation of in operations that sought to reduce levels of unemployment and economic inactivity among 16-24 year olds were associated with a 16-percentage point increase in the proportion of those in employment, education, or training (59 per cent compared to 43 per cent).
- 9.25 The results are broadly consistent with those typically derived from the evaluation of such programmes. In a recent review of evidence of the effectiveness of schemes that support participation in employment for young people, Newton et al (2020) conclude that changes in net employment outcomes are rarely estimated to be higher than 10 percentage points and are often less.
- 9.26 Employment outcomes associated with ESF participation were however not evenly distributed across the population. The effects of participating in ESF operations aimed at supporting the employability of the long term unemployed and economically inactive were estimated to be lower for men, those with lower levels of qualifications and those with work limiting health conditions. In the case of the latter two groups, employment gains were estimated to be smaller among those who are regarded as facing the greatest barriers to participation in the labour market.

Impact Among the Unemployed vs the Economically Inactive

9.27 Analyses revealed the impact of ESF operations on the employment outcomes of the economically inactive was greater than that for the unemployed. This is consistent with previous evidence (Ainsworth and Marlow, 2011). However, there are concerns regarding the ability to make truly 'like for like' comparisons among economically inactive participants. The voluntary nature of these schemes could indicate that economically inactive ESF participants may be located at the 'work ready' end of the economic inactivity spectrum.

9.28 Important in this respect is the concept of the potential labour force (ILO, 2019). Taken as a whole, the economically inactive vary considerably in terms of their degree of attachment to the labour market. However, among the economically inactive, some groups will have stronger attachments to the labour market. Referred to as the 'potential labour force', these groups include potential job seekers and unavailable job seekers.

9.29 The estimated effect of these operations for economically inactive participants may therefore be upwardly inflated if their employment outcomes are compared to the wider economically inactive population. More detailed information on the circumstances of the economically inactive population being supported by these operations would be required to gain a better understanding of the circumstances of those being supported.

Impact on Progression

9.30 The research casts less light on outcomes for those already in employment at the start of their participation in ESF due to the inability to undertake any counterfactual impact evaluation among this group. Nonetheless, the ESF Participant Surveys still provide rich information on the perceptions of participants regarding the changing facets of their jobs and the role played by ESF in this.

9.31 Approximately 4 out of 10 (39 per cent) of those assisted by operations that supported progression were employed in a different role compared to that held prior to ESF. A quarter were working for a different employer compared to before their participation in ESF.

9.32 Over half (53 per cent) of ESF participants reported either that the course helped them to get their current job (45 per cent) or that they got their current job directly because of the course (9 per cent). These perceptions were again higher among

those who had gained a qualification from their participation in ESF and increased with respect to the level of qualification gained.

- 9.33 Many participants reported experiencing some form of improvement in their jobs.
- 9.34 The share of ESF participants employed on non-permanent contracts, working part time and, furthermore, working part time on an involuntary basis were lower following support from ESF.
- 9.35 Many participants reported that the characteristics of their jobs had improved compared to before. Over a third (36 per cent) reported that their jobs required higher levels of skill and competency, a quarter were in a role that required a higher level of qualification and over 41 per cent reported that their levels of responsibility had increased.
- 9.36 Most participants supported by operations aimed at those in employment reported that the quality of their jobs had improved. The most reported improvements in job quality were getting more job satisfaction (71 per cent), having a pay rise (70 per cent) and improved pay and promotion prospects (70 per cent). Those who had gained qualifications from participating in ESF were more likely to report that they had experienced these improvements in job quality.
- 9.37 Almost three quarters (74 per cent) of participants indicated that these improvements in job quality were either directly because of the course (12 per cent) or that the course helped (62 per cent). Participants were again more likely to attribute improvements to in job quality to the support of ESF if they had attained a qualification as a result of their participation.

Impact of COVID-19

- 9.38 The COVID-19 pandemic represented a huge disruption to the delivery of many ESF interventions which necessitated fundamental and rapid changes in operation practice. The Participants Surveys provide valuable insights as to how the delivery of these operations were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Almost a third of participants (30 per cent) reported that there was less face-to-face contact in the delivery of their operation due to COVID, with some or all their course being delivered remotely.
- 9.39 Amongst those who were not in employment prior to their participation in ESF and were assisted by operations aimed at supporting participation, almost 6 out of 10 (57

per cent) reported that the COVID-19 pandemic had not made a difference to their subsequent progression. However, 38 per cent said that the pandemic had made things harder. Approximately half of this group attributed their response to more difficult conditions in the labour market.

9.40 Amongst those who were in employment both prior to their participation in ESF and were assisted by operations aimed at supporting progression, over 7 out of 10 (71 per cent) reported that the COVID-19 pandemic had not influenced their progression after participating in ESF. Among the fifth (21 per cent) who said that the pandemic had made things harder, once again approximately half attributed their response to more difficult conditions in the labour market.

9.41 The most common reasons cited by those who had said that things had become harder were that the industry that they wanted to work in was badly affected by the pandemic (24 per cent) and that there were fewer jobs around generally (22 per cent).

Future Evaluations of Labour Market Programmes

9.42 The ESF Participant survey provides a detailed insight into the characteristics, experiences, and outcomes of ESF participants who left their provision between 2015-2022. However, the limitations of conducting surveys with ESF Participants has been acknowledged. Participation in telephone surveys can be more challenging for harder-to-reach groups (Bryer, 2019).

9.43 Issues of recall are particularly important for the ESF Participants survey, where many respondents were being asked to recall their circumstances 2-3 years prior to the date of their interview. The information provided by some respondents appeared contradict to the eligibility criteria of the operations that were the intended subject of the interviews.

9.44 To facilitate the Counterfactual Impact Assessment of labour market interventions supported by ESF, the Participants Survey has been designed to broadly align with data collected from the Annual Population Survey. The application of CIA techniques was also supported by the incorporation of an employment history section that can be particularly challenging for participants in terms of recall and difficult for interviewers to administer via telephone.

9.45 Combining data from the APS and the ESF Participants Survey is also problematic in terms of inconsistencies in questionnaire design and mode effects. These difficulties

may be further compounded by changes that are currently being made by ONS in the development of its Transformed Labour Force Survey in response to declining survey response rates, particularly following the pandemic. Moving forward, the CIA techniques used in this report may no longer be feasible.

9.46 Future evaluations of labour market programmes will therefore have to place greater reliance upon the use of administrative data. To support this, the Department for Work and Pensions have developed an Employment Data Lab, a service that provides impact assessments of employment programmes based upon analyses of benefits data. Alternatively, these data could be made accessible via Administrative Data Research – Wales, which provides mechanisms through which individual level administrative data can be linked and made accessible for the purposes of research. It is important that future evaluations of labour market interventions keep abreast of developments in this space.

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Response Rates

Table R.1: Response rates by operation for the first fieldwork window (2018-19)²⁷

Op. ID	Operation Name	Programme	Count (n)	Completed surveys	% tried sample
80719	Apprenticeships	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	14,190	2,621	18%
80720	Apprenticeships	East Wales ESF	8,797	1,823	21%
80721	ReACT III	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	2,342	991	42%
80722	Traineeships	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	6,653	751	11%
80723	Traineeships	East Wales ESF	3,181	432	14%
80727	Active Inclusion Wales	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	856	139	16%
80728	Active Inclusion Wales	East Wales ESF	80	13	16%
80731	Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE)	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	828	103	12%
80732	Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE)	East Wales ESF	249	39	16%
80733	Communities4Work	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	3,503	507	14%
80734	Communities4Work	East Wales ESF	1,048	153	15%
80735	Bridges2Work	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	724	171	24%
80736	Healthy Working Wales - In Work Support	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	2,304	491	21%
80737	Healthy Working Wales - Out of Work Service	East Wales ESF	402	37	9%
80738	Healthy Working Wales - Out of Work Service	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	856	70	8%
80743	Active Inclusion Youth	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	70	10	14%
80745	Jobs Growth Wales II	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	644	139	22%
80746	Jobs Growth Wales II	East Wales ESF	449	109	24%
80748	Working Skills for Adults II	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	646	123	19%
80749	Progress for Success (PfS)	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	197	43	22%
80815	KESS II	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	23	2	9%
80816	Materials and Manufacturing Academy	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	17	6	35%
80817	Apprenticeships Skills Enhancement Programme I	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	8,590	1,080	13%
80818	Apprenticeships Skills	East Wales ESF	4,706	744	16%

²⁷ Participants taking part in Healthy Working Wales Out of Work Service, West Wales, and the Valleys, 16-24 (operation ID=80941) were not included in our fieldwork sample, due to initial instructions that this was a Young Persons' Programme. Participants in the Active Inclusion and Adtrac programmes were excluded from fieldwork from Year 3 onwards due to the vulnerability of the groups involved.

Enhancement Programme I					
80819	Skills for Employers and Employees - SO1	East Wales ESF	51	18	35%
80820	Skills for Employers and Employees - SO2	East Wales ESF	128	38	30%
80821	Skills for Employers and Employees - SO1	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	68	26	38%
80822	Skills for Employers and Employees - SO2	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	197	65	33%
80830	Inspire 2 Work	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	157	22	14%
80831	Skills for Industry 2 SO1	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	699	186	27%
80832	Skills for Industry 2 SO 2	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	780	268	34%
80834	Cam Nesa	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	57	5	9%
80852	Leading Business Growth	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	35	10	29%
80853	Leading Business Growth	East Wales ESF	28	8	29%
80855	Welsh Financial Services Graduate Programme	East Wales ESF	38	19	50%
80858	Communities for Work (P3)	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	1,972	216	11%
80859	Communities for Work (P3)	East Wales ESF	415	45	11%
80889	Upskilling At Work SO1	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	34	7	21%
80890	Upskilling At Work SO2	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	29	12	41%
80896	Workways II	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	669	152	23%
80897	Upskilling At Work SO2	East Wales ESF	49	19	39%
80905	METAL 2	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	338	138	41%
80911	Growing Workforces Through Learning and Development (GWLAD)	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	63	18	29%
80921	Upskilling at Work SO1	East Wales ESF	86	24	28%
80922	North Wales Business Academy Project (NWBA)	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	42	10	24%
80923	North Wales Business Academy (NWBA)	East Wales ESF	6	1	17%
80925	Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE) P3	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	311	34	11%
80926	Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE) P3	East Wales ESF	63	8	13%
80927	Inspire2Work	East Wales ESF	48	8	17%
80930	Sova - Achieving Change through Employment -ACE	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	44	7	16%
80931	OPUS	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	72	16	22%

80941	Healthy Working Wales - Out of Work Services - 16-24	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	127	17	13%
81067	Sova EW ACE-CNC	East Wales ESF	48	6	13%
81117	Healthy Working Wales - Out of Work Services - 16 - 24	East Wales ESF	89	6	7%
81160	Workways Plus Powys	East Wales ESF	28	12	43%
81172	Journey 2 Work	East Wales ESF	2	0	0%

Table R.2: Response rates by operation for the second fieldwork period (2022-23)

Op. ID	Operation Name	Programme	Count (n)	Completed survey	% tried sample
80719	Apprenticeships	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	12237	2101	17%
80720	Apprenticeships	East Wales ESF	5238	1064	20%
80721	ReACT III	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	1348	492	36%
80722	Traineeships	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	1427	136	10%
80723	Traineeships	East Wales ESF	1521	128	8%
80731	Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE)	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	1290	142	11%
80732	Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE)	East Wales ESF	846	93	11%
80733	Communities4Work	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	3352	369	11%
80734	Communities4Work	East Wales ESF	2332	244	10%
80735	Bridges2Work	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	1307	210	16%
80736	Healthy Working Wales - In Work Support	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	3467	672	19%
80737	Healthy Working Wales - Out of Work Service	East Wales ESF	2663	143	5%
80738	Healthy Working Wales - Out of Work Service	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	3430	208	6%
80739	Agile Nation 2	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	1548	390	25%
80740	Agile Nation 2	East Wales ESF	476	137	29%
80746	Jobs Growth Wales II	East Wales ESF	99	16	16%
80748	Working Skills for Adults II	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	1326	136	10%
80749	Progress for Success (PFS)	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	220	51	23%
80815	KESS II	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	364	83	23%
80816	Materials and Manufacturing Academy	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	87	31	36%
80817	Apprenticeships Skills Enhancement Programme I	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	6344	832	13%
80818	Apprenticeships Skills Enhancement Programme I	East Wales ESF	3445	501	15%
80819	Skills for Employers and Employees - SO1	East Wales ESF	207	38	18%
80820	Skills for Employers and Employees - SO2	East Wales ESF	693	163	24%
80821	Skills for Employers and Employees - SO1	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	205	31	15%
80822	Skills for Employers and Employees - SO2	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	640	158	25%
80830	Inspire 2 Work	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	1142	148	13%
80831	Skills for Industry 2 SO1	West Wales and	909	165	18%

		the Valleys ESF			
80832	Skills for Industry 2 SO 2	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	869	194	22%
80834	Cam Nesa	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	7	0	0%
80852	Leading Business Growth	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	330	88	27%
80853	Leading Business Growth	East Wales ESF	161	38	24%
80855	Welsh Financial Services Graduate Programme	East Wales ESF	76	22	29%
80858	Communities for Work (P3)	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	2730	251	9%
80859	Communities for Work (P3)	East Wales ESF	1574	108	7%
80889	Upskilling At Work SO1	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	373	74	20%
80890	Upskilling At Work SO2	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	334	67	20%
80896	Workways II	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	1512	197	13%
80897	Upskilling At Work SO2	East Wales ESF	424	117	28%
80901	Skills@Work	East Wales ESF	432	61	14%
80905	METAL 2	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	178	46	26%
80911	Growing Workforces Through Learning and Development (GWLAD)	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	15	4	27%
80921	Upskilling at Work SO1	East Wales ESF	368	72	20%
80922	North Wales Business Academy Operation (NWBA)	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	170	40	24%
80923	North Wales Business Academy (NWBA)	East Wales ESF	14	1	7%
80925	Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE) P3	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	340	30	9%
80926	Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE) P3	East Wales ESF	229	17	7%
80927	Inspire2Work	East Wales ESF	1053	103	10%
80931	OPUS	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	387	52	13%
80941	Healthy Working Wales - Out of Work Services - 16-24	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	1009	80	8%
81117	Healthy Working Wales - Out of Work Services - 16 - 24	East Wales ESF	760	48	6%
81160	Workways Plus Powys	East Wales ESF	274	60	22%
81172	Journey 2 Work	East Wales ESF	933	108	12%
81392	Better Jobs Better Futures for the Underemployed	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	36	7	19%
81543	Better Jobs, Better Futures ... for Women in Employment	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	52	3	6%
81562	Better Jobs Better Futures for Young People	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	91	12	13%
81568	Better Jobs Better Futures... for the	West Wales and	59	5	8%

	over 25s	the Valleys ESF			
81575	Industry 4.0 Upskilling for Industry	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	18	6	33%
81576	Bioinnovation Wales	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	26	10	38%
81577	International Innovation Masters	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	6	1	17%
81585	Jobsense	East Wales ESF	63	20	32%
81595	Nurture Equip Thrive (NET)	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	692	73	11%
81741	Limitless	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	315	50	16%
81818	Develop, Invest and Grow in RCT (Building Resilience)	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	241	27	11%
81820	Tackling in work poverty Pembrokeshire	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	56	8	14%
81821	Expanding Mon's Horizons	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	255	42	16%
81839	Swansea Working - Short Term Unemployed	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	145	16	11%
81976	Industry 4.0 Upskilling for Industry	East Wales ESF	3	0	0%
82130	METAL 2	East Wales ESF	90	21	23%
82158	Workways Plus Short Term Unemployed Over 25s	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	329	38	12%
82169	Welsh Bioinnovation	East Wales ESF	6	2	33%
82196	KESS2	East Wales ESF	27	6	22%
82203	Advanced Media Production	West Wales and the Valleys ESF	7	2	29%

Note: Figure relate to those sampled for CATI only.

Annex A: Data tables

Table A.1A: Participating in an ESF Operation: Population Subgroups

	Gender		Age Group (years)			Work Limiting Ill-Health		Dependent Children		Carer		Low Qualifications		All
	Female	Male	16-24	25-54	55+	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	
Reasons for Undertaking an ESF Operation*														
To help you get a job	24.4	33.9	33.8	24.1	31.5	26.8	38.5	27.5	34.2	27.5	35.1	24.2	34.6	28.9
To improve your pay, promotion or other	11.6	10.4	8.4	13.9	6.6	11.9	6.9	11.0	11.2	11.1	10.8	13.0	8.6	11.0
To develop your skills or knowledge	42.1	37.8	42.5	39.2	32.1	41.2	34.6	41.2	35.7	41.0	35.7	40.2	39.8	40.0
Your employer asked you to do it	14.6	10.3	10.2	14.6	14.0	13.7	7.3	13.1	10.6	13.0	10.8	14.4	10.4	12.6
There was another main reason	7.3	7.7	5.1	8.2	15.8	6.3	12.8	7.2	8.4	7.4	7.6	8.2	6.5	7.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	11,216	9,582	7,305	10,955	1,887	17,613	3,034	16,367	4,408	17,135	3,641	12,736	8,060	20,798
Duration of Course**														
Aware ESF-funded	12.9	11.4	12.1	12.6	9.4	12.6	10.4	12.5	11.1	12.3	11.6	12.7	11.7	12.2
Early Withdrawal	60.1	57.9	52.8	63.8	64.7	60.9	51.2	59.0	59.3	59.5	57.4	63.9	53.5	59.1
Sample	15.7	18	20.8	13.4	15.4	15.5	23	17.1	15.5	16.7	17.3	14.3	19.6	16.8
Sample	12,518	10,710	8,015	12,321	2,133	19,649	3,392	18,183	5,015	19,087	4,119	12,769	8,083	23,228

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: All participants

* Full CATI only. Estimates based on sample that exclude those who responded, "Don't know".

** Restricted to cases with valid start and end dates.

Table A.1B: Reasons for Undertaking ESF Operation: Operation Characteristics

	Priority Axis			Area		Wave		All
	1. Tackling Poverty	2. Skills for Growth	3. Youth Employment and Attainment	East Wales	West Wales and Valleys	Pre COVID	Post COVID	
Reasons for Undertaking an ESF Operation*								
To help you get a job	50.9	10.6	47.8	30.1	25.7	27.5	30.4	28.9
To improve your pay, promotion or other	4.9	16.7	4.1	10.4	12.8	10.8	11.2	11.0
To develop your skills or knowledge	25.0	48.2	38.0	38.9	43.1	41.5	38.3	40.0
Your employer asked you to do it	2.3	21.3	3.3	12.1	13.9	10.7	14.7	12.6
There was another main reason	16.8	3.1	6.7	8.5	4.6	9.3	5.3	7.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample								
Duration of Course**	7.8	16.1	7.6	11.8	13.3	10.9	13.6	12.2
Aware ESF-funded	56.6	65.6	45.4	59.7	57.5	63.5	54.0	59.1
Early Withdrawal	18.7	10.8	29.7	16.9	16.6	17.3	16.2	16.8
Sample	6,156	14,079	2,993	16,320	6,908	12,018	11,210	23,228

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: All participants

* Full CATI only. Estimates based on sample that exclude those who responded, "Don't know".

** Restricted to cases with valid start and end dates.

Table A.2A: Qualifications Gained from Participation in ESF: Population Subgroups

	Gender		Age Group (years)			Work Limiting Ill-Health		Dependent Children		Carer		Low Qualifications		All
	Female	Male	16-24	25-54	55+	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	
Qualifications Gained														
Yes	72.8	70.9	72.2	73.7	59.6	75.1	57.1	73.2	67.1	73.4	65.1	71.9	71.9	71.9
No	22.4	23.8	22.2	21.9	34	20.6	34.6	21.7	28.2	21.6	29.8	23.3	22.7	23.0
Don't know/ Not applicable	4.8	5.3	5.6	4.4	6.4	4.3	8.4	5.1	4.8	5.0	5.1	4.8	5.4	5.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	11,246	9,608	7,323	10,983	1,892	17,654	3,048	16,410	4,420	17,181	3,651	12,769	8,083	20,854
Level Gained*														
Level 1 or below	7.7	12.0	14.6	5.9	9.5	9.0	14.3	10.1	8.1	10.1	7.7	5.2	15.3	9.7
Level 2	28.6	26.6	31.6	24.5	26.0	27.9	26.6	27.9	26.9	28.0	26.1	22.0	34.8	27.7
Level 3	25.8	23.0	25.5	24.8	17.0	26.2	14.2	24.8	23.5	24.5	24.4	26.3	22.3	24.5
Level 4+	18.0	11.3	7.2	21.6	10.2	16.3	6.4	14.9	15.1	14.7	16.1	24.0	3.7	14.9
Other, Don't Know	19.8	27.0	21.2	23.2	37.4	20.7	38.5	22.3	26.5	22.7	25.6	22.5	23.9	23.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	8,586	7,198	5,653	8,486	1,202	13,884	1,804	12,592	3,185	13,219	2,546	9,691	6,092	15,784

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey, Full CATI Only

Base: All participants

* Sample restricted to those gaining qualifications.

Table A.2B: Qualifications Gained from Participation in ESF: Operation Characteristics

	Priority Axis			Area		Wave		All
	1. Tackling Poverty	2. Skills for Growth	3. Youth Employment and Attainment	East Wales	West Wales and Valleys	Pre COVID	Post COVID	
Qualifications Gained								
Yes	49.6	90.0	53.9	70.2	76.3	73.5	70.1	71.9
No	42.9	7.7	37.0	24.5	19.3	22.6	23.5	23.0
Don't know/Not applicable	7.5	2.3	9.1	5.3	4.5	3.9	6.3	5.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	5,444	12,677	2,733	14,658	6,196	10,813	10,041	20,854
Level Gained*								
Level 1 or below	16.0	1.9	35.8	10.4	8.1	12.2	6.8	9.7
Level 2	23.3	30.7	19.8	27.5	28.2	28.1	27.2	27.7
Level 3	9.6	32.6	7.3	23.2	27.6	24.1	25	24.5
Level 4+	2.9	21.5	1.0	14.1	16.9	15.1	14.8	14.9
Other, Don't Know	48.2	13.2	36.1	24.8	19.2	20.5	26.2	23.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	2,847	11,444	1,493	10,852	4,932	8,343	7,441	15,784

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey, Full CATI Only

Base: All participants

* Sample restricted to those gaining qualifications.

Table A.3A: Qualification Levels Pre and Post ESF: Population Subgroups

	Gender		Age Group (years)			Work Limiting III-Health		Dependent Children		Carer		All
	Female	Male	16-24	25-54	55+	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	
Prior to ESF												
% Low Skilled	41.1	48.8	56.5	36.0	37.8	43.8	49.1	45.6	41.2	45.3	42.4	44.7
Highest Qualification												
Level 1 or below	12.9	17.1	15.3	13.8	19.4	13.5	21.2	15.0	14.3	15.0	14.5	14.9
Level 2	28.2	31.7	41.2	22.2	18.4	30.3	27.9	30.6	26.9	30.3	27.9	29.9
Level 3	23.7	20.9	25.4	20.8	15.0	23.1	18.9	22.6	21.4	22.5	21.8	22.4
Level 4	25.7	18.5	10.1	31.7	27.2	23.1	18.5	21.0	27.1	21.5	25.8	22.3
Other, DK	9.5	11.8	7.8	11.6	20.1	10.0	13.4	10.7	10.3	10.7	10.1	10.6
Post ESF												
% Low Skilled	32.5	40.6	46.8	28.0	32.9	34.4	45.4	37.0	33.9	36.7	34.7	36.4
Highest Qualification												
Level 1 or below	7.8	12.2	10.6	8.6	13.8	8.3	17.1	10.0	9.5	10.0	9.5	10.0
Level 2	24.7	28.4	36.2	19.4	19.1	26.1	28.3	27.0	24.4	26.7	25.2	26.4
Level 3	26.6	25.7	32.1	22.6	17.6	27.4	20.8	26.6	24.6	26.5	24.9	26.2
Level 4	31.3	21.9	13.3	37.8	29.5	28.2	20.4	25.8	31.2	26.1	30.4	26.9
Other, DK	9.5	11.8	7.8	11.6	20	9.9	13.3	10.6	10.3	10.7	10.1	10.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	11,244	9,608	7,323	10,983	1,891	17,652	3,048	16,408	4,420	17,179	3,651	20,852

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey, Full CATI Only

Base: All Participants.

Table A.3B: Qualification Levels Pre and Post ESF: Operation Characteristics

	Priority Axis			Area		Wave		All
	1. Tackling Poverty	2. Skills for Growth	3. Youth Employment and Attainment	East Wales	West Wales and Valleys	Pre COVID	Post COVID	
Prior to ESF								
% Low Skilled	43.3	37.4	65.7	44.8	44.8	47.5	41.6	44.7
Highest Qualification								
Level 1 or below	20.7	9.1	22.3	15.2	14.2	15.7	13.9	14.9
Level 2	22.6	28.3	43.4	29.6	30.6	31.8	27.7	29.9
Level 3	16.9	27.1	17.1	22.5	22.1	22.7	22.0	22.4
Level 4	25.1	26.5	7.9	22.2	22.6	19.0	26.0	22.3
Other, DK	14.8	9.0	9.3	10.6	10.5	10.8	10.4	10.6
Post ESF								
% Low Skilled	41.0	23.5	63.6	36.9	35.0	38.9	33.5	36.4
Highest Qualification								
Level 1 or below	17.4	2.6	19.1	10.3	8.9	10.7	9.0	10.0
Level 2	23.6	20.9	44.5	26.6	26.1	28.2	24.5	26.4
Level 3	18.6	32.8	18.9	26.0	26.7	26.7	25.7	26.2
Level 4	25.7	34.7	8.3	26.5	27.9	23.8	30.5	26.9
Other, DK	14.8	9.0	9.2	10.6	10.5	10.7	10.4	10.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	5,442	12,677	2,733	14,656	6,196	10,812	10,040	20,852

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey, Full CATI Only

Base: All participants

Table A.4A: Time Since Last Job Held: Population Subgroups

	Gender		Age Group (years)			Work Limiting III-Health		Dependent Children		Carer		Low Qualifications		All
	Female	Male	16-24	25-54	55+	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	
Less than 3 months	14.8	19.6	23.7	12.6	12.1	21.2	8.2	19.6	11.2	20.3	7.9	19.4	15.3	17.4
3-6 months	10.7	13.7	16.8	8.5	11.3	14.6	7.1	14.1	7.4	13.7	7.7	14.3	10.8	12.4
6-12 months	9.5	12.6	12.9	9.6	11.6	12.1	9.3	12.2	8.3	12.1	8.1	11.8	11.0	11.2
1-2 years	10.8	11.1	9.0	12.2	14.4	10.5	11.8	10.4	12.8	10.3	13.4	12.2	10.1	11.0
2-3 years	8.0	7.8	4.9	10.7	7.4	6.6	10.9	6.7	11.5	6.8	11.8	8.2	7.8	7.9
3 years or more	29.5	19.4	4.9	39.6	39.0	18.8	36.7	18.5	40.0	18.6	42.1	23.2	24.8	24.0
Never had a job	13.6	12.8	25.3	3.5	0.9	13.6	11.9	15.7	6.1	15.2	6.4	8.1	17.8	13.2
Don't know	3.1	2.8	2.5	3.2	3.3	2.4	4.1	3.0	2.8	3.0	2.7	2.8	2.4	2.9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	3,294	3,973	2,699	3,220	1,034	5,257	1,927	5,394	1,846	5,761	1,500	3,295	3,246	7,267

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey
 Base: Unemployed or economically inactive prior to ESF

Table A.4B: Time Since Last Job Held: Operation Characteristics

	Priority Axis			Area		Wave		All
	1. Tackling Poverty	2. Skills for Growth	3. Youth Employment and Attainment	East Wales	West Wales and Valleys	Pre COVID	Post COVID	
Duration of Non-Employment								
Less than 3 months	12.2	34.0	20.6	17.7	16.6	20.9	13.4	17.4
Between 3 months but less than 6 months	8.6	17.5	16.3	13.0	10.3	14.0	10.5	12.4
Between 6 months but less than 12 months	9.6	13.0	13.0	11.2	11.4	10.1	12.4	11.2
Between 12 months but less than 2 years	12.6	7.5	9.6	10.8	11.7	9.5	12.8	11.0
Between 2 years but less than 3 years	10.3	3.6	5.6	7.9	7.8	7.0	8.9	7.9
3 years or more	40.3	6.0	5.8	24.4	22.9	22.0	26.3	24.0
Never had a job	3.2	16.5	26.2	12.0	16.8	14.6	11.5	13.2
Don't know	3.3	2.0	2.7	3.0	2.6	1.8	4.2	2.9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	4,312	895	2,060	5,403	1,864	3,901	3,366	7,267

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: Unemployed or economically inactive prior to ESF

Table A.5A: Difficulties with Finding Work: Population Subgroups

	Gender		Age Group (years)			Work Limiting Ill-Health		Dependent Children		Carer		Low Qualifications		All
	Female	Male	16-24	25-54	55+	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	
Not having the right qualifications	39.4	42.3	39.8	42.8	34.5	40.3	42.3	41.0	41.1	41.2	40.3	34.6	47.3	41.0
Not having the right skills	41.2	43.9	43.7	42.5	38.1	42.3	44.0	43.6	40.0	43.5	40.0	39.0	47.6	42.7
Not having relevant work experience	49.8	51.5	62.9	42.1	29.5	52.0	47.9	53.6	42.6	52.8	43.7	49.1	53.3	50.8
Not being able to afford childcare	26.8	5.9	7.7	23.6	2.8	16.3	12.9	3.8	49.1	4.3	52.3	14.5	16.3	15.2
Having caring responsibilities	29.3	11.6	10.2	28.4	15.0	18.2	23.0	9.8	48.2	10.1	51.5	18.9	19.7	19.5
Health problems	31.3	29.7	22.7	37.1	38.1	13.5	71.3	32.0	25.6	31.8	25.5	29.8	30.4	30.4
Your age	19.1	21.8	22.2	14.6	46.1	18.8	24.7	24.0	10.4	23.5	10.7	18.7	22.8	20.6
Having a criminal record	1.7	4.4	1.6	4.7	3.6	1.9	6.5	3.6	2.0	3.7	1.6	2.8	3.4	3.2
No appropriate jobs where you live	2.1	6.3	2.3	6.9	2.3	2.9	7.7	4.7	3.5	4.8	2.9	3.4	5.0	4.4
Hard to get to appropriate work	30.6	35.0	32.1	33.4	32.0	32.0	35.3	33.9	30.3	34.2	29.1	35.6	31.4	33.0
You only wanting to work part time	41.7	45.3	44.5	43.1	41.1	41.4	49.3	44.6	40.9	44.6	40.8	44.2	44.0	43.7
Believing you would not be better off financially in work	31.7	12.9	15.8	25.3	24.1	19.4	26.1	15.3	38.9	15.1	42.3	19.6	22.8	21.3
Total	2,898	3,581	2,408	2,870	945	4,697	1,709	4,847	1,605	5,156	1,317	3,122	3,011	6,479

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: Unemployed or economically inactive prior to ESF

Table A.5B: Difficulties with Finding Work: Operation Characteristics

	Priority Axis			Area		Wave		All
	1. Tackling Poverty	2. Skills for Growth	3. Youth Employment and Attainment	East Wales	West Wales and Valleys	Pre COVID	Post COVID	
Not having the right qualifications	41.7	37.8	40.8	40.8	41.6	46.1	36.3	41.0
Not having the right skills	41.7	41.7	44.3	42.4	43.6	48.6	37.3	42.7
Not having relevant work experience	40.6	53.9	64.1	49.5	54.6	56.7	45.3	50.8
Not being able to afford childcare	21.4	6.8	8.7	15.2	15.3	14.7	15.6	15.2
Having caring responsibilities	27.0	9.8	11.4	19.8	18.4	17.4	21.4	19.5
Health problems	37.5	11.3	25.3	30.5	30.2	24.3	36.0	30.4
Your age	19.5	18.1	22.7	20.4	21.1	23.9	17.6	20.6
Alcohol or drug dependency	4.7	*	1.8	3.2	3.2	2.7	3.6	3.2
Having a criminal record	6.3	1.3	2.5	4.3	4.6	4.4	4.3	4.4
No appropriate jobs where you live	34.1	25.6	33.5	34.5	28.5	36.7	29.7	33.0
Hard to get to appropriate work	43.3	32.3	47.1	44.8	40.1	47.8	40.0	43.7
You only wanting to work part time	26.0	6.9	18.3	20.9	22.2	21.7	20.9	21.3
Believing you would not be better off financially in work	17.6	8.2	11.6	14.5	14.4	15.1	13.9	14.5
Total	3,843	806	1,830	4,802	1,677	3,113	3,366	6,479

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: Unemployed or economically inactive prior to ESF

Table A.6A: Economic Activity Status 6 Months Following ESF: Population Subgroups

	Gender		Age Group (years)			Work Limiting Ill-Health		Dependent Children		Carer		Low Qualifications		All
	Female	Male	16-24	25-54	55+	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	
Employed	49.1	47.6	54.0	45.1	35.4	55.9	29.9	48.1	48.9	47.9	49.7	54.0	44.7	48.3
Self Employed	2.8	4.8	2.2	5.2	4.2	4.5	2.3	3.2	5.8	3.6	4.8	5.1	2.6	3.9
Part Time Work	47.4	20.8	24.6	39.6	39.8	31.3	39.3	25.4	52.9	25.2	57.1	31.5	34.6	32.8
Involuntary Part Time	13.5	12.2	13.4	12.8	6.7	12.5	13.5	12.7	13.0	12.6	13.2	11.5	14.5	12.8
Unemployed	23.1	28.5	23.1	28.3	29.3	23.5	32.1	26.6	24.3	26.8	23.5	21.8	29.3	26.0
Education and Training	8.7	7.4	14.1	3.2	0.9	9.1	5.4	9.0	5.2	8.7	5.7	5.6	10.3	8.0
Economically Inactive	16.4	11.7	6.7	18.2	30.2	7.0	30.4	13.1	15.9	13.1	16.3	13.6	13.1	13.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample*	3,203	3,844	2,636	3,115	989	5,140	1,831	5,239	1,783	5,591	1,450	3,213	3,154	7,047

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: Unemployed or economically inactive prior to ESF

*Excludes those who recorded their status as "Other" or "Don't Know".

Table A.6B: Economic Activity Status 6 Months Following ESF: Operation Characteristics

	Priority Axis			Area		Wave		All
	1. Tackling Poverty	2. Skills for Growth	3. Youth Employment and Attainment	East Wales	West Wales and Valleys	Pre COVID	Post COVID	
Employed	42.7	80.8	47.8	48.0	49.3	48.4	48.2	48.3
Self Employed	5.2	5.3	1.7	4.1	3.0	4.2	3.5	3.9
<i>Of which</i>								
Part Time	41.2	14.4	29.7	32.5	33.8	32.0	33.8	32.8
Involuntary Part Time	12.4	6.4	16.1	12.9	12.4	13.5	11.9	12.8
Unemployed	29.1	7.2	26.5	26.1	25.6	25.9	26.1	26.0
Education and Training	2.8	4.0	16.1	7.4	9.9	10.5	5.1	8.0
Economically Inactive	20.1	2.7	7.9	14.3	12.2	10.9	17.2	13.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample*	4,163	882	2,002	5,234	1,813	3,797	3,250	7,047

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: Unemployed or economically inactive prior to ESF

*Excludes those who recorded their status as "Other" or "Don't Know".

Table A.7A: Economic Activity Status at the Time of the Survey: Population Subgroups

	Gender		Age Group (years)			Work Limiting Ill-Health		Dependent Children		Carer		Low Qualifications		All
	Female	Male	16-24	25-54	55+	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	
Employed	54.9	51.9	59.0	50.7	35.0	62.8	30.2	52.3	56.1	52.5	56.0	56.3	49.7	53.3
Self Employed	3.1	5.7	3.6	5.4	3.5	5.3	2.6	4.1	5.8	4.4	5.0	6.4	3.7	4.5
Unemployed	14.6	21.7	17.2	19.5	20.0	16.2	23.7	19.9	14.3	19.8	14.2	15.9	21.1	18.5
Education and Training	7.2	5.7	11.2	2.6	41.5	7.2	4.5	7.2	4.1	7.0	4.4	4.6	8.2	6.4
Economically Inactive	20.1	15.0	9.0	21.8		8.5	39.0	16.5	19.6	16.4	20.4	16.8	17.3	17.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample*	3,219	3,880	2,673	3,136	982	5,189	1,840	5,268	1,804	5,625	1,469	3,242	3,176	7,099

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: Unemployed or economically inactive prior to ESF

*Excludes those who recorded their status as "Other" or "Don't Know".

Table A.7B: Economic Activity Status at the Time of the Survey: Operation Characteristics

	Priority Axis			Area		Wave		All
	1. Tackling Poverty	2. Skills for Growth	3. Youth Employment and Attainment	East Wales	West Wales and Valleys	Pre COVID	Post COVID	
Employed	47.9	77.9	54.4	53.1	53.9	53.7	52.8	53.3
Self Employed	5.1	8.7	2.7	4.5	4.5	4.9	4.1	4.5
Unemployed	20.0	5.5	19.7	18.5	18.4	20.0	16.7	18.5
Education and Training	2.4	4.5	12.4	5.9	7.9	8.5	3.9	6.4
Economically Inactive	24.7	3.4	10.8	18.0	15.3	12.9	22.4	17.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample*	4,176	886	2,037	5,272	1,827	3,816	3,283	7,099

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: Unemployed or economically inactive prior to ESF

*Excludes those who recorded their status as "Other" or "Don't Know".

Table A.8A: Characteristics of Current Employment: Population Subgroups

	Gender		Age Group (years)			Work Limiting Ill-Health		Dependent Children		Carer		Low Qualifications		All
	Female	Male	16-24	25-54	55+	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	
Occupation														
1. Managers, Directors, and Senior Officials	3.6	4.1	2.7	5.0	4.8	3.5	6.0	3.3	5.4	3.6	4.7	5.6	2.2	3.9
2. Professional Occupations	4.9	5.1	4.0	6.0	4.2	5.3	3.3	4.8	5.5	5.1	4.7	8.9	1.1	5.0
3. Associate Professional and Technical Occupations	10.3	9.6	10.7	9.1	7.8	10.0	9.4	10.3	8.9	10.3	8.7	14.0	5.8	9.9
4. Administrative and Secretarial	15.4	6.7	9.5	11.8	13.8	10.0	13.8	11.2	9.1	10.9	9.9	14.1	7.2	10.7
5. Skilled Trades Occupations	2.7	20.2	16.2	8.5	7.6	13.3	6.4	13.9	7.5	14.3	5.6	9.6	14.7	12.1
6. Caring, Leisure, and Other Service Occupations	30.8	6.3	16.4	19.0	13.4	17.5	17.1	13.3	28.5	13.0	31.4	15.6	19.5	17.5
7. Sales and Customer Service	14.3	10.6	14.5	9.8	9.4	12.3	12.6	13.5	9.3	12.9	10.4	10.3	14.4	12.3
8. Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	2.6	15.3	7.5	11.4	16.1	9.8	8.0	10.7	6.2	11.0	5.0	8.0	11.0	9.5
9. Elementary Occupations	15.5	22.1	18.5	19.4	22.9	18.3	23.4	18.9	19.6	18.9	19.6	14.0	24.1	19.1
Contractual Status*														
Permanent/open-ended contract	72.5	74.2	72.0	74.5	77.6	74.3	69.3	72.3	76.2	73.0	74.5	74.4	72.5	73.4
Fixed term contract	11.2	11.1	12.0	10.5	9.9	10.5	14.0	12.0	9.0	11.6	9.7	12.7	9.6	11.2
Temporary or casual	6.4	6.0	6.2	6.3	5.5	6.3	6.0	6.6	5.2	6.4	5.7	5.3	7.2	6.2
A zero hours contract	9.9	8.6	9.7	8.8	7.0	8.9	10.7	9.1	9.6	8.9	10.2	7.6	10.8	9.2
Supervisory Responsibilities	19.5	24.6	24.2	20.8	16.8	22.8	19.3	22.3	22.1	22.8	20.6	23.8	20.7	22.3
Part Time Work	54.4	20.8	28.8	42.5	48.9	34.1	47.3	27.9	58.0	28.2	61.1	34.2	38.3	36.2
Sample**	1,790	2,183	1,611	1,777	411	3,380	573	2,877	1,083	3,124	844	2,179	1,793	3,973

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey, Full CATI Only

Base: Unemployed or economically inactive prior to ESF and in employment at time of survey

*Contractual status is applicable to employees only employees only.

**All estimates exclude those who respond "Other" or "Don't Know".

Table A.8B: Characteristics of Current Employment: Operation Characteristics

	Priority Axis			Area		Wave		All
	1. Tackling Poverty	2. Skills for Growth	3. Youth Employment and Attainment	East Wales	West Wales and Valleys	Pre COVID	Post COVID	
Occupation								
1. Managers, Directors, and Senior Officials	5.1	3.5	2.5	3.9	3.8	3.6	4.2	3.9
2. Professional Occupations	5.8	5.8	3.7	5.0	5.0	4.3	5.8	5.0
3. Associate Professional and Technical Occupations	9.0	12.9	9.9	9.6	10.6	10.2	9.4	9.9
4. Administrative and Secretarial	11.9	11.7	8.7	10.5	10.7	10.0	11.3	10.7
5. Skilled Trades Occupations	8.1	26.2	11.9	12.2	11.5	13.7	10.1	12.1
6. Caring, Leisure, and Other Service Occupations	18.1	17.9	16.7	17.3	17.6	18.4	16.2	17.5
7. Sales and Customer Service	10.4	8.0	16.4	12.1	12.5	12.6	11.8	12.3
8. Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	11.7	5.7	8.2	10.7	5.6	9.3	9.6	9.5
9. Elementary Occupations	19.9	8.3	22.1	18.0	21.9	17.5	20.6	19.1
Contractual Status*								
On a permanent or open-ended contract	74.5	81.8	69.0	72.7	75.4	71.8	75.2	73.4
A fixed term contract	10.4	10.1	12.5	11.3	10.7	11.4	10.8	11.2
On a temporary or casual basis	6.1	3.7	7.3	6.5	5.5	7.4	4.8	6.2
A zero hours contract	9.0	4.5	11.2	9.5	8.4	9.3	9.1	9.2
Supervisory Responsibilities	19.7	35.2	20.6	22.0	23.0	22.7	21.7	22.3
Part Time Work	44.6	16.5	33.2	35.2	39.5	36.2	36.3	36.2
Sample**	2,194	698	1,081	2,964	1,009	2,206	1,767	3,973

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey, Full CATI Only

Base: Unemployed or economically inactive prior to ESF and in employment at time of survey

*Contractual status is applicable to employees only employees only.

**All estimates exclude those who respond "Other" or "Don't Know".

Table A.9A: The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Finding Employment: Population Subgroups

	Gender		Age Group (years)			Work Limiting Ill-Health		Dependent Children		Carer		Low Qualifications		All
	Female	Male	16-24	25-54	55+	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	
Made it easier	5.0	5.7	5.4	5.5	4.3	5.9	4.6	5.6	4.8	5.5	5.1	5.9	4.8	5.4
Made it harder	35.5	38.4	34.5	39.3	36.8	33.7	42.4	37.6	35.8	37.7	35.5	37.1	38.1	37.1
Not really made a difference*	59.5	55.8	60.2	55.2	58.9	60.4	53.0	56.8	59.4	56.8	59.4	57.0	57.1	57.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	1,559	1,807	1,100	1,608	625	2,177	1,148	2,445	894	2,566	800	1,601	1,420	3,366

Source: 2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: Unemployed or economically inactive prior to ESF

*Includes a small proportion of respondents who responded, "Not really sure".

Table A.9B: The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Finding Employment: Operation Characteristics

	Priority Axis			Area		Wave		All
	1. Tackling Poverty	2. Skills for Growth	3. Youth Employment and Attainment	East Wales	West Wales and Valleys	Pre COVID	Post COVID	
Made it easier	5.2	5.7	5.6	5.3	5.6		5.4	5.4
Made it harder	39.1	26.8	36.0	35.7	40.6		37.1	37.1
Not really made a difference*	55.7	67.5	58.4	59.0	53.7		57.5	57.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100		100	100
Sample	2,155	363	848	2,331	1,035		3,366	3,366

Source: 2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: Unemployed or economically inactive prior to ESF

*Includes a small proportion of respondents who responded, "Not really sure".

Table A10A: Course Helped with Gaining Employment: Population Subgroups

	Gender		Age Group			Work Limiting Ill-Health		Dependent Children		Carer		Low Qualifications		All
	Female	Male	16-24	25-54	55+	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	
Directly because of the course	14.6	16.6	15.9	15.6	17.9	16.2	12.9	15.9	15.1	15.7	15.6	15.8	15.6	15.7
The course helped	52.7	50.8	52.8	50.8	50.2	51.4	53.2	51.5	52.2	51.7	51.5	53.1	50.2	51.7
Made no difference*	32.6	32.6	31.3	33.6	31.9	32.4	33.8	32.6	32.7	32.6	32.9	31.1	34.1	32.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	1,790	2,182	1,610	1,777	411	3,380	573	2,876	1,083	3,123	844	2,178	1,793	3,972

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey, Full CATI Only

Base: Unemployed or economically inactive prior to ESF and employed at time of survey.

**Includes a small proportion of respondents who responded, "Not sure".

Table A10B: Course Helped with Gaining Employment: Operation Characteristics

	Priority Axis			Area		Wave		All
	1. Tackling Poverty	2. Skills for Growth	3. Youth Employment and Attainment	East Wales	West Wales and Valleys	Pre COVID	Post COVID	
Directly because of the course	15.1	26.4	12.4	16.2	14.2	17.4	13.7	15.7
The course helped	50.4	51.0	53.5	51.2	53.0	52.3	50.9	51.7
Made no difference*	34.5	22.7	34.1	32.6	32.8	30.3	35.4	32.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	2,194	698	1,080	2,963	1,009	2,205	1,767	3,972

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey, Full CATI Only

Base: Unemployed or economically inactive prior to ESF and employed at time of survey.

*Includes a small proportion of respondents who responded, "Not sure".

Table A.11: Hours Worked Among Those Entering Employment

	All Non-Employed			Unemployed Only		
	APS	ESF	Total	APS	ESF	Total
Hours Worked						
0-10 hrs	10.78	3.71	8.63	8.09	3.61	6.59
10--15 hrs	7.37	4.72	6.56	5.87	4.55	5.43
15-20 hrs	14.88	15.62	15.11	14.02	14.75	14.26
20-25 hrs	9.03	8.68	8.92	8.81	8.11	8.58
25-30 hrs	7.33	9.40	7.96	7.59	8.73	7.97
30-35 hrs	7.48	9.00	7.94	8.05	9.16	8.42
35-40 hrs	28.00	34.83	30.08	31.35	36.01	32.91
45+ hrs	15.13	14.04	14.8	16.21	15.09	15.84
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	5,658	2,478	8,136	4,188	2,108	6,296
ESF Under-reporting Adjustment						
Percentage						
Working 15+ hrs	81.85	91.57		86.03	91.85	
Uprating Factor						
(=ESF/APS)		1.12			1.07	

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey, Annual Population Survey

Table A.12A: Propensity Score Matching Results

	Previously Non-Employed					Previously Unemployed			
	Caliper	Baseline	Difference	N	T-stat	Baseline	Difference	N	T-stat
Emp. of Itue'd & econ inact 25+†									
	None	0.214	0.048	1,779	3.35	0.257	0.035	1,168	1.90
Nearest Neighbour	0.01	0.213	0.045	1,715	3.14	0.259	0.031	1,091	1.63
No Replacement	0.005	0.212	0.047	1,696	3.24	0.259	0.036	1,080	1.88
	None	0.225	0.037	1,779	2.22	0.253	0.039	1,168	1.73
With Replacement	0.01	0.225	0.037	1,776	2.22	0.254	0.038	1,162	1.67
	0.005	0.225	0.037	1,772	2.23	0.254	0.038	1,162	1.67
Radius	0.01	0.220	0.041	1,776	3.37	0.258	0.034	1,162	1.93
	0.005	0.222	0.039	1,772	3.15	0.256	0.035	1,162	1.99
Average Effect		0.220	0.041			0.256	0.036		
Uprated Effect*			0.292				0.312		
	Caliper	Baseline	Difference	N	T-stat	Baseline	Difference	N	T-stat
Emp. of at risk of poverty									
	None	0.681	0.053	474	1.79	0.724	0.015	391	0.48
Nearest Neighbour	0.01	0.650	0.040	177	0.79	0.693	0.053	150	1.03
No Replacement	0.005	0.663	0.024	166	0.47	0.691	0.081	136	1.51
									1.33
	None	0.702	0.054	610	0.81	0.681	0.090	567	1.43
With Replacement	0.01	0.694	0.066	591	1.03	0.677	0.095	561	1.55
	0.005	0.673	0.075	520	1.28	0.677	0.095	496	
									0.99
Radius	0.01	0.685	0.075	591	1.33	0.711	0.061	561	1.61
	0.005	0.685	0.063	520	1.20	0.679	0.093	496	0.48
Average Effect		0.679	0.056			0.692	0.073		
Uprated Effect*			0.823				0.816		

† To increase the employability of Economically Inactive and Long-term Unemployed people aged 25 and over, who have complex barriers to employment.

*Estimated as (Baseline + Difference) x Uprating Factor

	Caliper	Previously Non-Employed				Previously Unemployed			
		Baseline	Difference	N	T-stat	Baseline	Difference	N	T-stat
Reduce NEET 16-24									
Nearest	None	0.486	0.055	1,406	2.95	0.540	0.013	1,183	0.62
Neighbour	0.01	0.468	0.000	344	0.00	0.565	-0.038	262	-0.88
No Replacement	0.005	0.464	0.024	336	0.62	0.565	-0.044	253	-0.98
With Replacement	None	0.340	0.201	1,406	1.41	0.415	0.138	1,183	0.99
	0.01	0.396	0.143	1,207	1.48	0.474	0.082	1,030	0.82
	0.005	0.417	0.129	1,079	1.64	0.499	0.066	928	0.80
Radius	0.01	0.438	0.101	1,207	1.10	0.503	0.052	1,030	0.59
	0.005	0.446	0.100	1,079	1.32	0.508	0.056	928	0.71
Average Effect		0.432	0.094			0.509	0.041		
Uprated Effect*			0.589				0.586		

*Estimated as (Baseline + Difference) x Uprating Factor. Uprating factor derived in Table A.11.

- The analyses utilise different Propensity Score Matching techniques to consider the sensitivity of results, including nearest neighbour and radius matching techniques. The nearest neighbour technique takes one individual from the comparison group that is closest in terms of their propensity score to act as a matching partner. Radius matching compares the outcome for the treated observation with the average outcome from a group of untreated observations that have propensity scores within a specified range of the propensity score of the treated observation.
- Results have been tested for their sensitivity with respect to assumptions regarding replacement (replacement allows each control to be potentially matched to more than one treated observation) and the sizes of callipers imposed (a calliper specifies a maximum acceptable difference between the two propensity scores).
- Based on these variations, eight specifications of matching models are estimated for each stage of the analysis. The results derived from the different methods are similar. The figures presented in the main body of the report therefore simply present the average effect derived from eight specifications estimated for each stage of the analysis.

Table A.12B: Propensity Score Matching Results: Population Subgroups

Gender	Caliper	Female				Male			
		Baseline	Difference	N	T-stat	Baseline	Difference	N	T-stat
Nearest	None	0.231	0.049	953	2.47	0.200	0.041	826	2.02
Neighbour	0.01	0.227	0.055	921	2.73	0.198	0.032	747	1.51
No Replacement	0.005	0.221	0.062	905	3.04	0.199	0.035	739	1.64
With Replacement	None	0.215	0.065	953	2.86	0.212	0.029	826	1.20
	0.01	0.215	0.065	950	2.88	0.211	0.030	821	1.27
	0.005	0.215	0.064	944	2.80	0.211	0.029	807	1.20
Radius	0.01	0.232	0.048	950	2.80	0.204	0.037	821	1.97
	0.005	0.235	0.044	944	2.58	0.211	0.028	807	1.49
Average Effect		0.224	0.057			0.206	0.033		
Uprated Effect*			0.314				0.254		
Work Limiting Health Condition	Caliper	No Condition				Work Limiting Health Condition			
		Baseline	Difference	N	T-stat	Baseline	Difference	N	T-stat
Nearest	None	0.267	0.077	972	3.70	0.143	0.020	807	1.11
Neighbour	0.01	0.270	0.074	931	3.48	0.140	0.022	757	1.22
No Replacement	0.005	0.269	0.075	914	3.51	0.137	0.024	743	1.31
With Replacement	None	0.293	0.051	972	2.06	0.129	0.033	807	1.65
	0.01	0.292	0.053	966	2.13	0.129	0.032	806	1.59
	0.005	0.291	0.054	961	2.18	0.119	0.043	792	2.14
Radius	0.01	0.269	0.076	966	4.09	0.152	0.010	806	0.63
	0.005	0.265	0.080	961	4.29	0.143	0.019	792	1.23
Average Effect		0.277	0.068			0.136	0.025		
Uprated Effect*			0.386				0.173		

Qualification Levels	Caliper	Higher Qualifications				Lower Qualifications			
		Baseline	Difference	N	T-stat	Baseline	Difference	N	T-stat
Nearest	None	0.234	0.067	877	3.19	0.198	0.025	902	1.33
Neighbour	0.01	0.232	0.066	822	3.02	0.198	0.022	865	1.12
No Replacement	0.005	0.234	0.064	809	2.93	0.193	0.026	848	1.32
With Replacement	None	0.218	0.083	877	3.41	0.197	0.027	902	1.17
	0.01	0.217	0.084	870	3.46	0.200	0.020	890	0.92
	0.005	0.218	0.081	863	3.34	0.199	0.021	889	0.98
Radius	0.01	0.237	0.064	870	3.45	0.195	0.025	890	1.56
	0.005	0.238	0.061	863	3.26	0.197	0.023	889	1.42
Average Effect		0.228	0.071			0.197	0.023		
Upated Effect*			0.335				0.236		

*Estimated as (Baseline + Difference) x Uprating Factor. Uprating factor derived in Table A.11.

Table A.13: Comparing Survey and Administrative Definitions of Prior Economic Activity

	Participant Records							
	Employed		Unemployed		Inactive		Total	
	col %	row %	col %	row %	col %	row %	col %	row %
Survey Data								
Employed	88.1	94.1	11.8	4.3	8.5	1.6	62.0	100
<i>Of whom under notice of redundancy</i>	1.8		36.1		4.7		3.1	100
Unemployed	4.7	12.3	68.6	60.9	60.1	27.0	25.3	100
Inactivity	7.2	37.2	19.6	34.4	31.4	27.9	12.8	100
Total	100	66.2	100	22.4	100	11.4	100	100
Sample	15,317		5,194		2,628		23,139	

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Table A.14A: Employment Prior to ESF: Population Subgroups

	Gender		Age Group (years)			Work Limiting Ill-Health		Dependent Children		Carer		Low Qualifications		All
	Female	Male	16-24	25-54	55+	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	
Employed	96.2	92.2	98.2	93.6	87.1	94.8	93.2	95.5	90.9	95.0	92.8	94.7	95.0	94.6
Self Employed	3.8	7.8	1.8	6.4	12.9	5.2	6.8	4.5	9.1	5.0	7.2	5.3	5.0	5.4
Part Time Work	25.5	12.8	24.5	17.7	26.7	19.7	27.7	18.3	28.9	18.2	31.2	17.0	26.2	20.5
Involuntary Part Time	8.3	7.8	14.5	5.3	3.8	8.1	8.2	8.2	7.8	7.9	8.7	6.3	11.7	8.1
Hours (Median)	36.0	39.0	37.0	37.0	37.0	37.0	36.0	37.0	37.0	37.0	36.0	37.0	37.0	37.0
Contractual Status*														
On a permanent or open-ended contract	80.9	79.8	67.2	86.7	85.7	80.7	77.9	79.6	83.9	79.9	83.1	83.1	74.2	80.5
A fixed term contract	8.6	8.1	11.7	6.9	6.5	8.3	8.9	8.7	7.2	8.6	7.0	8.9	8.0	8.4
On a temporary or casual basis	3.5	5.5	8.8	2.1	3.0	4.1	6.4	4.6	2.9	4.5	3.4	3.0	7.1	4.3
A zero hours contract	7.1	6.6	12.3	4.3	4.8	6.9	6.8	7.1	6.0	7.0	6.5	5.0	10.7	6.9
Supervisory Responsibilities**	39.1	41.6	22.4	48.4	43.1	40.4	37.1	39.0	44.7	39.2	44.6	45.9	28.9	40.1
Sample***	8,613	5,722	3,845	8,999	1,083	12,947	1,297	11,216	3,116	11,750	2,570	8,923	3,886	14,335

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: All in employment prior to ESF

*Refers to employees only.

**Full CATI Only

***Samples for specific rows will vary slightly due to the omission of cases who respond "Other" or "Don't Know".

Table A.14B: Employment Prior to ESF: Operation Characteristics

	Priority Axis			Area		Wave		All
	1. Tackling Poverty	2. Skills for Growth	3. Youth Employment and Attainment	East Wales	West Wales and Valleys	Pre COVID	Post COVID	
Employed	85.6	95.7	94.9	93.7	96.6	95.1	94.0	94.6
Self Employed	14.4	4.3	5.1	6.3	3.4	4.9	6.0	5.4
Part Time Work	27.8	18.0	52.7	20.3	20.9	21.1	19.7	20.5
Involuntary Part Time	8.2	7.1	27.2	8.3	7.6	9.3	6.8	8.1
Hours (Median)	37	37	21	37	37	37	37	37
Contractual Status*								
On a permanent/open-ended contract	80.3	82.3	38.4	80.0	81.6	78.1	82.9	80.5
A fixed term contract	7.9	8.1	16.4	8.6	7.9	9.5	7.2	8.4
On a temporary or casual basis	5.5	3.4	22.1	4.5	3.8	4.9	3.7	4.3
A zero hours contract	6.3	6.2	23.1	6.9	6.7	7.5	6.2	6.9
Supervisory Responsibilities**	39.8	41.2	18.2	40.2	39.8	41.1	39.0	40.1
Sample***	1,752	12,203	380	9872	4463	7103	7232	14,335

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: All in employment prior to ESF

*Refers to employees only.

**Full CATI Only

***Samples for specific rows will vary slightly due to the omission of cases who respond "Other" or "Don't Know".

Table A.15A: Employment Six Months Following ESF: Population Subgroups

	Gender		Age Group (years)			Work Limiting Ill-Health		Dependent Children		Carer		Low Qualifications		All
	Female	Male	16-24	25-54	55+	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	
Employed	96.0	90.5	96.2	93.4	86.5	93.8	93.8	94.6	90.8	94.0	92.7	94.3	93.3	93.8
Self Employed	4.0	9.5	3.8	6.6	13.5	6.2	6.2	5.4	9.2	6.0	7.3	5.7	6.7	6.2
Part Time Work	21.3	5.6	11.0	15.7	26.2	14.2	25.3	12.5	25.0	12.5	27.4	12.9	18.0	15.1
Involuntary	4.8	2.6	5.0	3.4	3.1	3.7	6.4	3.6	4.9	3.5	5.6	3.0	5.7	3.9
Contractual Status														
On a permanent or open-ended contract	85.7	87.7	81.4	88.8	89.4	86.7	83.1	86.4	86.5	86.7	85.2	87.3	84.0	86.4
A fixed term contract	7.2	6.6	8.8	6.1	5.6	6.9	7.5	7.0	6.6	7.0	6.8	7.6	6.3	6.9
On a temporary or casual basis	2.2	2.6	3.5	1.8	2.3	2.2	4.0	2.3	2.5	2.2	3.0	2.1	3.0	2.4
A zero hours contract	5.0	3.1	6.4	3.3	2.7	4.2	5.4	4.3	4.4	4.1	5.1	3.0	6.8	4.3
Change of Role	40.2	38.4	48.0	37.1	21.1	39.7	37.0	40.2	36.7	40.1	36.4	40.6	37.5	39.5
Change of Employer	26.0	27.6	37.3	22.3	15.1	26.5	27.3	27.0	24.8	26.9	25.0	25.3	28.9	26.6
Sample	8,142	5,428	3,570	8,667	959	12,378	1,110	10,582	2,985	11,110	2,446	8,499	3,628	13,568

Participants Survey

Base: All participants who were employed both prior to ESF and 6 months after it.

Table A.15B: Employment Six Months Following ESF: Operation Characteristics

	Priority Axis			Area		Wave		All
	1. Tackling Poverty	2. Skills for Growth	3. Youth Employment and Attainment	East Wales	West Wales and Valleys	Pre COVID	Post COVID	
Employed	85.3	94.8	93.6	92.9	95.9	94.2	93.4	93.8
Self Employed	14.7	5.2	6.4	7.1	4.1	5.8	6.6	6.2
Part Time Work	26.6	13.3	27.1	15.3	14.4	15.3	14.8	15.1
Involuntary	5.7	3.2	15.8	4.2	3.3	4.7	3.0	3.9
Contractual Status								
On a permanent or open-ended contract	83.1	87.7	59.5	85.8	87.7	84.7	88.2	86.4
A fixed term contract	8.0	6.5	15.5	7.3	6.2	7.6	6.2	6.9
On a temporary or casual basis	4.9	1.8	11.8	2.5	1.9	2.5	2.2	2.4
A zero hours contract	4.0	4.0	13.4	4.3	4.2	5.1	3.4	4.3
Change of Role	30.9	40.0	53.3	38.1	42.7	38.1	40.9	39.5
Change of Employer	29.0	25.5	51.1	26.2	27.4	25.2	28.0	26.6
Sample	1569	11706	295	9334	4236	6703	6867	13,570

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: All participants who were employed both prior to ESF and 6 months after it

Table A.16A: Improvements in Job Characteristics Following ESF: Population Subgroups

	Gender		Age Group (years)			Work Limiting Ill-Health		Dependent Children		Carer		Low Qualifications		All
	Female	Male	16-24	25-54	55+	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	
Skills or competencies														
Higher level required	34.2	39.5	45.2	33.4	22.4	36.8	31.0	37.1	33.0	36.9	33.5	36.3	36.6	36.3
Same level required	62.7	56.9	50.2	63.8	75.3	60.0	64.4	59.5	63.8	59.8	63.2	60.7	59.3	60.4
Lower level required	3.1	3.6	4.5	2.9	2.3	3.2	4.7	3.4	3.1	3.3	3.3	3.0	4.1	3.3
Qualification requirements														
Higher level required	24.4	27.1	29.8	24.0	16.8	25.8	20.8	25.8	24.3	25.5	25.2	24.5	26.8	25.5
Same level required	71.9	68.1	64.3	72.5	79.9	70.2	73.3	69.9	72.3	70.2	71.2	71.5	68.6	70.4
Lower level required	3.7	4.8	5.9	3.5	3.3	4.0	5.9	4.4	3.4	4.3	3.5	4.0	4.6	4.2
Level of responsibility														
More responsibility	38.3	44.6	53.7	36.7	24.0	41.4	34.3	42.4	34.6	42.1	34.5	40.3	42.1	40.8
Same responsibility	56.4	50.3	40.4	58.3	72.4	53.6	58.2	52.5	59.8	52.8	59.7	54.4	52.6	54.0
Less responsibility	5.3	5.1	5.9	5.0	3.6	5.0	7.5	5.1	5.6	5.1	5.8	5.3	5.3	5.2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	8,142	5,428	3,570	8,667	959	12,378	1,110	10,582	2,985	11,110	2,446	8,499	3,628	13,570

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: All participants who were employed both prior to ESF and 6 months after it.

Table A.16B: Improvements in Job Characteristics Following ESF: Operation Characteristics

	Priority Axis			Area		Wave		All
	1. Tackling Poverty	2. Skills for Growth	3. Youth Employment and Attainment	East Wales	West Wales and Valleys	Pre COVID	Post COVID	
Skills or competencies								
Higher level required	19.9	38.1	38.2	34.7	40.0	35.2	37.4	36.2
Same level required	75.4	58.9	52.4	61.9	56.9	61.4	59.3	60.5
Lower level required	4.7	2.9	9.3	3.4	3.1	3.4	3.2	3.3
Qualification requirements								
Higher level required	13.1	27.0	22.7	24.6	27.4	25.2	25.7	25.4
Same level required	81.4	69.2	66.6	71.1	68.6	70.4	70.3	70.4
Lower level required	5.5	3.8	10.7	4.3	4.0	4.3	4.0	4.2
Level of responsibility								
More responsibility	22.7	42.7	45.7	39.5	43.8	40.2	41.4	40.7
Same responsibility	68.5	52.6	45.8	55.1	51.3	54.6	53.3	54.1
Less responsibility	8.8	4.7	8.5	5.4	4.9	5.3	5.2	5.2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	1,569	11,706	295	9,334	4,236	6,703	6,867	13,570

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: All participants who were employed both prior to ESF and 6 months after it.

Table A.17A: Improvements in Job Quality Since ESF: Population Subgroups

	Gender		Age Group (years)			Work Limiting Ill-Health		Dependent Children		Carer		Low Qualifications		All
	Female	Male	16-24	25-54	55+	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	
Improvements in Job Quality														
Had a promotion	33.6	35.1	42.5	32.5	11.5	35.2	23.6	35.0	30.9	34.9	30.6	36.0	31.3	34.2
Had a pay rise	67.2	74.7	80.3	67.2	52.4	71.0	61.4	71.1	66.6	71.1	65.9	70.4	71.4	70.2
Getting more job satisfaction	70.3	73.4	82.9	67.8	55.9	72.6	60.4	72.2	68.7	72.0	69.3	70.8	74.5	71.5
Better job security	58.8	65.5	78.7	55.2	43.4	62.3	52.6	62.7	56.7	62.3	57.6	58.1	70.5	61.5
Prospects improved	67.5	74.2	83.3	66.9	40.9	71.4	56.9	71.0	66.5	70.9	66.7	70.1	72.2	70.1
More opportunities for training	66.8	69.3	80.2	63.6	51.5	68.7	58.7	68.6	64.3	68.3	65.4	66.1	72.7	67.8
None of these	7.9	5.9	2.8	8.2	15.3	6.6	12.1	6.9	8.1	7.0	7.5	7.3	6.3	7.1
Sample	8,257	5,488	3,648	8,746	968	12,529	1,134	10,735	3,007	11,260	2,470	8,598	3,680	13,745
Did the Course Help?*														
Directly because of	11.0	13.4	12.3	12.0	10.6	12.1	10.6	11.9	12.4	11.9	12.5	11.4	13.0	11.9
The course helped	62.0	61.7	64.9	61.0	55.6	62.3	57.1	61.9	61.5	62.0	61.4	61.1	63.3	60.4
Made no difference	27.0	24.8	22.8	27.0	33.8	25.6	32.3	26.2	26.0	26.1	26.2	27.4	23.7	27.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	6,750	4,576	3,220	7,115	729	10,378	891	8,916	2,407	9,334	1,980	7,912	3,414	11,326

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: All participants who were employed both before and after ESF.

*Only asked of those who recorded an improvement in job quality. Full CATI only.

Table A.17B: Improvements in Job Quality Since ESF: Operation Characteristics

	Priority Axis			Area		Wave		All
	1. Tackling Poverty	2. Skills for Growth	3. Youth Employment and Attainment	East Wales	West Wales and Valleys	Pre COVID	Post COVID	
Improvements in Job Quality								
Had a promotion	15.6	36.5	28.9	32.5	38.0	32.0	36.5	34.2
Had a pay rise	57.2	71.5	74.8	68.9	73.2	65.6	74.9	70.2
Getting more job satisfaction	61.3	72.3	80.6	70.7	73.3	72.4	70.6	71.5
Better job security	47.3	62.4	80.5	60.8	63.0	61.7	61.3	61.5
Pay and promotion prospects improved	47.0	72.5	78.0	68.6	73.8	70.1	70.1	70.1
More opportunities for training	49.2	69.4	82.0	67.1	69.4	67.6	68.0	67.8
None of these	15.3	6.3	3.6	7.7	5.8	7.8	6.4	7.1
Sample	1,569	11,881	295	9,439	4,306	6,802	6,943	13,745
Did the Course Help?								
Directly because of course	10.7	12.3	8.2	12.0	12.0	12.5	11.5	11.9
The course helped	55.8	62.5	60.9	61.6	62.4	62.5	61.2	60.4
Made no difference	33.5	25.2	30.8	26.4	25.7	25.1	27.2	27.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	1,128	9,948	250	7,741	3,585	5,538	5,788	11,326

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: All participants who were employed both before and after ESF.

**Only asked of those who recorded an improvement in job quality. Full CATI only.

Table A.18A: Perceptions of Gaining Current Job Because of Course: Population Subgroups

	Gender		Age Group (years)			Work Limiting Ill-Health		Dependent Children		Carer		Low Qualifications		All
	Female	Male	16-24	25-54	55+	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	
	Directly because of the course	7.2	10.5	12.6	6.8	5.3	8.7	6.3	8.5	8.7	8.4	9.4	7.7	
The course helped	45.7	45	50.1	44.4	33.8	45.8	41.8	45.9	43.4	46.1	41.9	44.6	47.1	45.4
Made no difference	47.1	44.5	37.3	48.8	60.9	45.5	51.9	45.6	47.9	45.5	48.8	47.7	42.7	46.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	6,855	4,476	3,129	7,237	684	10,417	857	8,913	2,417	9,299	2,017	7,953	3,377	11,331

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey, Full CATI Only

Base: All participants who were employed both before ESF and at the time of the survey.

Table A.18B: Perceptions of Gaining Current Job Because of Course: Operation Characteristics

	Priority Axis			Area		WAVE		All
	1. Tackling Poverty	2. Skills for Growth	3. Youth Employment and Attainment	East Wales	West Wales and Valleys	Pre COVID	Post COVID	
	Directly because of the course	5.4	8.8	8.4	8.4	8.7	8.2	
The course helped	35.4	46.2	52.0	44.8	46.9	45.7	45.2	45.4
Made no difference	59.2	45.0	39.5	46.8	44.4	46.1	46.0	46.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	1,154	9,914	263	7,729	3,602	5,606	5,725	11,331

Source: 2015-2022 ESF Participants Survey, Full CATI Only

Base: All participants who were employed both before ESF and at the time of the survey.

Table A.19A: The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Progression in Employment: Population Subgroups

	Gender		Age Group (years)			Work Limiting Ill-Health		Dependent Children		Carer		Low Qualifications		All
	Female	Male	16-24	25-54	55+	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	
	Made it easier	7.8	7.9	6.4	8.5	5.3	8.0	6.3	7.6	8.7	7.7	8.3	8.7	
Made it harder	70.5	70.5	70.8	70.6	69.2	71.6	62.6	70.8	69.4	70.8	69.1	70.9	70.4	70.5
Not really made a difference*	21.8	21.5	22.9	21.0	25.5	20.4	31.1	21.6	21.9	21.5	22.6	20.4	24.2	21.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	4,272	2,960	1,561	4,949	640	6,358	819	5,354	1,875	5,727	1,505	4,554	1,914	7,232

Source: 2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: All participants who were employed prior to ESF.

*Includes a small proportion of respondents who responded, 'Not really sure'.

Table A.19B: The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Progression in Employment: Operation Characteristics

	Priority Axis			Area		WAVE		All
	1. Tackling Poverty	2. Skills for Growth	3. Youth Employment and Attainment	East Wales	West Wales and Valleys	Pre COVID	Post COVID	
	Made it easier	8.1	7.9	6.0	7.4	8.9		
Made it harder	65.9	71.4	65.9	70.9	69.5		70.5	70.5
Not really made a difference	26.0	20.7	28.1	21.7	21.6		21.7	21.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100		100	100
Sample	1,035	6,049	148	5,125	2,107		7,232	7,232

Source: 2022 ESF Participants Survey

Base: All participants who were employed prior to ESF.

*Includes a small proportion of respondents who responded, 'Not really sure'.

Annex B: Full questionnaire used for second fieldwork window (2022-23)

Welsh ESF Participants Survey

J11860

Telephone/Online

Note: for brevity, only CATI versions of question instructions are shown throughout. Below shows some examples of how CATI instructions would be adapted in practice for online interviews.

CATI	WEB
MULTICODE.	Please select all that apply
SINGLECODE.	Please select one option only
READ OUT.	(blanks text)
DO NOT READ OUT.	(blanks text)
ADD IF NECESSARY:	(blanks text)
PROMPT IF NECESSARY	(blanks text)
WRITE IN.	("Please type in" text appears within input box)
OTHER (SPECIFY)	Other (please specify)
PROBE AS NECESSARY:	(blanks text)
PROBE FULLY	(blanks text)
SINGLE CODE FOR EACH.	Please select one option only for each
MULTI CODE FOR EACH.	Please select all that apply for each

Screener

ASK ALL (CATI ONLY)

May I speak to <NAME FROM SAMPLE>?

Yes – named person speaking	1	CONTINUE
Yes – transferred	2	

Definite appointment	3	RECORD TIME AND DATE TO CALL BACK
Soft appointment	4	DESTINATION: APPOINTMENT OUTCOMES AND QUEUE
Wrong number (respondent no longer lives / not known at address)	5	CONTINUE
New number provided for respondent		TAKE NUMBER AND CALL
Not available in deadline	6	SCRIPT: THANK AND CLOSE DESTINATION: GO TO CALL OUTCOME 'NADF' AND QUEUE 'DEAD'
Refused	7	SCRIPT: THANK AND CLOSE DESTINATION: GO TO 'REFUSED' OUTCOME AND QUEUE
No answer	8	DESTINATION: GO TO THE 'NO ANSWER' OUTCOME AND 'RECALL' QUEUE
Answer phone	9	SCRIPT: <i>"Hi, I'm calling from IFF Research regarding a study we are conducting for Welsh Government. You should have received a letter or email about the research from us. I</i>

		<p><i>or a colleague will call another time to invite you to take part in a telephone interview. If you have any questions about the study please call this number 0800 652 0436. Thanks."</i></p> <p>DESTINATION: GO TO THE 'ANSWER PHONE OUTCOME AND 'RECALL' QUEUE</p>
Business number	10	<p>DESTINATION: CLOSE WITH 'BUSINESS NUMBER OUTCOME'</p>
Email reassurances	11	TAKE EMAIL
Needs reassurances	12	SHOW REASSURANCES ON SCREEN
Terminate interview	13	<p>SCRIPT: THANK AND CLOSE</p> <p>DESTINATION: GO TO THE 'BREAKDOWN' OUTCOME AND 'TERMINATED / BREAKDOWN' QUEUE.</p>
Requires assistance to complete interview (e.g. hearing impairment)	14	

IF WRONG NUMBER – CATI ONLY (S1=5 AND CATI ONLY)

Is there a new number I can call to get hold of <NAME FROM SAMPLE>?

ADD IF NECESSARY: it's just in relation to a study we are conducting among people who recently went on courses [PROJID=80736: or received support] to see what they thought of the course [PROJID=80736: or support programme] and to see what they've done since. It's for the Welsh Government and the European Social Fund.

<p>Yes (RECORD NEW NUMBER)</p>		<p>SCRIPT: ONCE FILLED IN THE SCRIPT WILL GO BACK TO S1 TO ALLOW THE NEW NUMBER TO BE CALL IMMEDIATELY IF DESIRED. IF IMMEDIATE CALL NOT NEEDED THEN APPOINTMENTS TO BE MADE USING THE OPTIONS ON THE LEFT HAND SIDE OF THE SCREEN.</p> <p>REFERRAL NUMBER WILL BE WRITTEN TO SAMPLE VARIABLE 'REFERRAL' AND WILL AUTOMATICALLY OVERWRITE THE NUMBER IN 'PHONENUMBER'.</p> <p>DESTINATION: DEPENDS EITHER A) WHEREVER IT ENDS UP AFTER GOING BACK TO S1 OR B) APPOINTMENT QUEUE.</p>
<p>No</p>		<p>SCRIPT: THANK AND CLOSE</p> <p>DESTINATION: GOES TO FAILCODE 'X'</p>
<p>Respondent wants reassurances</p>		<p>SCRIPT: GO TO REASSURANCES</p>

WHEN SPEAKING TO NAMED PERSON (CATI ONLY)

S3A Good morning / afternoon, my name is <XXX> calling from IFF Research. We are conducting a survey about courses [PROJID=80736: and support programmes] which were partly paid for by the European Social Fund, on behalf of the Welsh Government. Our records indicate that you took part in a [HAS COURSETITLE ON SAMPLE: <COURSE TITLE> course [PROJID=80736: or support programme][DOES NOT HAVE COURSETITLE ON SAMPLE: <COURSE>] run through <PROJ> [that you started on <START DATE 1> [IF HAS ENDDATE ON SAMPLE: and finished on <END DATE 1>]. The survey is looking at how useful you found the course [PROJID=80736: or

support programme] and what you have done since then. The interview should only take around 20 minutes. Would you be happy to do this now or at a more convenient time for you?

ADD IF NECESSARY:

According to our records, you took part in a [IF HAVE LEVEL: <LEVEL OF QUALIFICATION>] course [PROJID=80736: or support programme] that you started on <START DATE 1> [IF HAS ENDDATE ON SAMPLE]: and finished on <END DATE 1>]. It was part of the < NAME OF PROJECT> scheme.

ADD IF NECESSARY:

- The European Social Fund helps finance courses and provision that aim to improve work-related skills. This can include training in or out of the classroom; work experience; and personal and social development.
- You may have been on a course without realising that it was funded through the European Social Fund.
- All information collected will be treated in the strictest confidence. Any results from this survey will be published in an anonymised format.
- We work strictly within the Market Research Society Code of Conduct
- Contacts at IFF Research are Guido Miani and Sam Selner if they would like to find out more about the survey (0800 652 0436)
- The contact number for the Welsh European Funding Office – WEFO) is 0845 010 3355
- Respondent details were supplied to us by the Welsh Government.
- Participation in the study is completely voluntary, though we very much hope you will take part.
- You should have recently received a letter or email about the survey.
- More details about how your data will be handled (the Privacy Notice) can be found at <https://gov.wales/esfsurveyprivacy> (Welsh: <https://llyw.cymru/preifatrwydddarolwgqce>).

Continue	1	CONTINUE
No recall of courses	2	
Refusal / not interested	3	SCRIPT: THANK AND CLOSE DESTINATION: GO TO 'REFUSED' OUTCOME AND QUEUE
Requires assistance to complete	4	

interview (e.g. hearing impairment)		
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ASK IF RESPONDENT IS UNABLE TO TAKE PART DUE TO LEARNING DIFFICULTIES, HEARING OR SPEECH IMPAIRMENT, OR OTHER DISABILITY (S1=14 OR S3A=4)

S3 Is there someone who would be able to help you to take part by telephone?

IF RESPONDENT SAYS NO: Would you be happy to take part using the Relay UK service?

IF RESPONDENT SAYS NO: Would you prefer to be sent a link to a shorter, online version of the survey instead?

DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Yes – arrange to call back when someone is available to help	1	MAKE APPOINTMENT
Yes – proceed with interview with proxy	2	CONTINUE
Yes – happy to conduct interview using Relay UK	3	MAKE APPOINTMENT @ SAY WE WILL BE ARRANGING A CALL BACK USING A RELAY ASSISTANT
Request to send link to online survey	4	COLLECT EMAIL AND SEND WEBLINK
No	5	THANK AND

		CLOSE
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IF REFUSED TO PARTICIPATE – CATI ONLY (S3A=3 AND CATI ONLY)

S3B **Thank you for taking the time to speak to me anyway. We do have a much shorter list of key questions which should take under five minutes to complete. Would you be willing to answer these quickly now over the phone, or we can email a link to the online survey**

Yes (now over the phone)	1	CONTINUE
Yes (email the online questionnaire)	2	COLLECT EMAIL ADDRESS @ THEN THANK AND CLOSE
No	3	THANK AND CLOSE

Blank

ASK ALL (ALL FORMATS)

CATI: **Can I just check, do you remember taking part in a [HAS COURSETITLE ON SAMPLE: <COURSE TITLE> course [PROJID=80736: or support programme][DOES NOT HAVE COURSETITLE ON SAMPLE: <COURSE>] run through <PROJ> that you started on <START DATE 1> [IF HAS ENDDATE ON SAMPLE: and finished on <END DATE 1>]**

INTERVIEWER NOTE: IF REMEMBER ONE KEY ELEMENT CODE AS A YES E.G. DOING A COURSE IN THAT MONTH OR DOING A COURSE WITH THAT TITLE.

ONLINE: **Thank you for choosing to take part in this important survey about courses [PROJID=80736: and support programmes] which were partly paid for by the European Social Fund. The survey should only take around 10 minutes.**

Can I just check, Do you remember taking part in a [HAS COURSETITLE ON SAMPLE: <COURSE TITLE> course [PROJID=80736: or support programme][DOES NOT HAVE COURSETITLE ON SAMPLE: <COURSE>] run through <PROJ> that you started on <START DATE 1> [IF HAS ENDDATE ON SAMPLE: and finished on <END DATE 1>]

Yes	1	CONTINUE
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No	2	CONTINUE
[CATI ONLY: DO NOT READ OUT:] Don't know	3	

IF STILL DOES NOT RECALL COURSE – ALL FORMATS (S4=2/3)

According to our records, you took part in a [IF HAVE LEVEL: <LEVEL OF QUALIFICATION>] course [PROJID=80736: or support programme] that you started on <START DATE 1> [IF HAS ENDDATE ON SAMPLE]: and finished on <END DATE 1>]. It was part of the < NAME OF PROJECT> scheme.

<ADD DESCRIPTION FROM SAMPLE>

Do you recall this?

CATI ONLY: INTERVIEWER NOTE: IF REMEMBER ONE KEY ELEMENT CODE AS A YES E.G. DOING A COURSE IN THAT MONTH OR DOING A COURSE WITH THAT TITLE.

Yes	1	CONTINUE
No	2	SCRIPT: THANK AND CLOSE DESTINATION: FAIL CODE 'X'
[CATI ONLY: DO NOT READ OUT:] Don't know	3	

ASK ALL (CATI ONLY)

S5A **Just before we start I need to read out some information about data protection. At the end I will ask if you are happy to carry on. Can I read out the information now?**

Yes	1	CONTINUE
No	2	THANK AND CLOSE

ASK ALL – ALL FORMATS

S5B **We were given your name and contact information by the Welsh Government to conduct the survey on their behalf, as part of their public task in carrying out research. You have the right to a copy of your data, change your data or withdraw from the research at any point. [CATI: ONLY: In order to guarantee this, and as part of our quality control procedures, all interviews are recorded]. For more information on how your data is used please visit**

<https://gov.wales/esfsurveyprivacy> (Welsh: <https://llyw.cymru/preifatrwyddarolwgce>. Are you happy to take part [CATI ONLY: based on what I've just said]?

Yes	1	CONTINUE
No	2	THANK AND CLOSE
[CATI: Respondent wants reassurances] [ONLINE: Would like some further information about the survey]	3	SCRIPT: GO TO REASSURANCES

ASK ALL

Thank you, and can I just check, did you complete the [IF HAS COURSE TITLE=1: COURSE TITLE] course [PROJID=80736: or support programme], did you leave before the end or are you still on the course? [PROJID=80736: or support programme]

ADD IF NECESSARY: By 'completed' – we mean attending most or all of the course [PROJID=80736: or support programme] and staying on the course [IF PROJID=80736: or support programme] until it ended. By 'left early', we also mean having left a course [PROJID=80736: or support programme] before its end in order to start a job or education and training.

Completed	1	CONTINUE
Left early	2	
Still on the course	3	THANK AND CLOSE
Never started	5	THANK AND CLOSE
[CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] Don't know	4	THANK AND CLOSE

ASK ALL

S6A According to our records, you [S6=1: completed] [S6=2: left] this course [PROJID=80736: or support programme] 12 months or longer ago?

Yes	1	CONTINUE
No	2	THANK AND CLOSE
Don't know	3	THANK AND CLOSE

ASK ALL

S8 **Can I just check that you are aged 16 or over?**

Yes	1	CONTINUE
No	2	SCRIPT: THANK AND CLOSE

There is no S9
 There is no S10
 There is no S11
 There is no S12
 There is no S13

ASK ALL STILL ELIGIBLE

[PREFERRED LANGUAGE OF COMMUNICATION=1 or 2: **Our records show that you have told the Welsh Government you would like to be contacted in <LANGUAGE OF INTERVIEW>. Before I start with the main interview, can I just check, would you prefer [CATI: to be interviewed] [ONLINE: to do the survey in Welsh or English?]** [PREFERRED LANGUAGE OF COMMUNICATION=3: **Before I start with the main interview, can I just check, would you prefer CATI: to be interviewed] [ONLINE:to do the survey] in Welsh or English?**]

Prefer Welsh	1	CATI: CONTINUE IN WELSH VERSION OR SAY WILL BE CALLED BACK TO ARRANGE A CONVENIENT TIME BY ONE OF OUR WELSH SPEAKING INTERVIEWERS ONLINE: SHOW WELSH VERSION
Prefer English	2	CONTINUE IN ENGLISH VERSION
Prefer other language	3	CONTINUE

IF PREFER OTHER LANGUAGE (S14=3)

Which language would you prefer to use for the interview?

WRITE IN		
Prefer not to say	1	THANK AND CLOSE

READ OUT TO S14=3: We will try our best to arrange for someone to call you who can speak your preferred language and help you complete the survey. One of our interviewers will be in touch in the next few weeks.

CATI: READ OUT TO ALL: Please note, this call may be recorded for quality or training purposes. From now on I shall refer to the support you received or course you undertook as your <COURSE>.

A The course (FULL CATI ONLY)

THROUGHOUT THE REMAINDER OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE, THE TEXT USED IN PLACE OF <COURSE> WILL VARY DEPENDING ON SPECIFICATIONS FROM THE PROJECTS

DS: DRAW FROM 'COURSE' ON SAMPLE

READ OUT: I'd now like to ask some questions about your reasons for doing the <COURSE>.

ASK ALL

QUESTION DELETED

ASK ALL

A1A **Were any of the following the main reason that you did the <COURSE>?**

READ OUT FULL LIST BEFORE CODING

DS – ROTATE LIST

To help you get a job	1
To improve your pay, promotion or other prospects at work	2
To develop your skills or knowledge	3
Your employer asked you to do it	4
Or was there another main reason (Specify)	5
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	6

There is no A2.

ASK ALL

Where did you hear about the <COURSE>?

DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.

Employer	1
Job Centre Plus (including Work Programme)	2
Family member or friend	3
Schools / careers teacher	4
Careers Wales advisor	5
The Skills Gateway helpline	6
The Skills Gateway website	7
Television, radio or newspapers	8
Social media	9
IF CFW: An employment support or training organisation	10
IF CFW: Health or social services professionals	11
IF CFW: Landlord	12
IF CFW: I found it myself after seeing marketing materials	13
IF APPREN: Schools/careers teacher	14
IF APPREN=1: An Apprenticeship provider	15
IF TRAINEE=1: A teacher	16
IF TRAINEE=1: A Traineeship provider	17
Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	18
Can't remember	19

THERE IS NO A4.
 THERE IS NO A5.
 THERE IS NO A6.

ASK ALL

Did you...

READ OUT. CODE ONE PER ROW.

	Yes	No	Don't know	Not applicable
a) Get any qualifications or accredited certificates from being on the <COURSE>?	1	2	3	4
IF NO OR DON'T KNOW (A7a=2/3)				4
b) Get any units or credits towards any qualifications while you were on the <COURSE>	1	2	3	

ASK IF GOT A QUALIFICATION OR UNITS/CREDITS (A7A OR A7B=1)

What (IF A7a=1: qualification or accredited certificates did you get?) (IF A7B=1: were these?)

NOTE TO INTERVIEWER, PLEASE ENTER DETAIL FOR EACH QUALIFICATION IN SEPARATE BOXES (UP TO THREE QUALIFICATIONS)

- What type of qualification was this? What level? What grade?
- If Degree: Was this a foundation degree, an undergraduate, a master's or a doctoral degree?
- If NVQS/GNVQs probe what level?
- If GCSEs: What grade did you get?
- A Levels / AS Levels or equivalent: What grade did you get?

WRITE IN QUALIFICATION 1		
Don't know	1	

WRITE IN QUALIFICATION 2		
Don't know	1	

WRITE IN QUALIFICATION 3		
Don't know	1	

ASK IF GOT A QUALIFICATION OR UNITS/CREDITS (A7A OR A7B=1)

A8loop **Just to check, what was the level of the following qualification?**

[INSERT VERBATIM FROM A8, IN ORDER ENTERED]

DS – LOOP FOR UP TO THREE QUALIFICATIONS ENTERED

INTERVIEWER TO NOTE:

- *GCSEs at grades 3,2,1 or grades D,E,F,G should be considered Level 1*
- *GCSEs at grades 9,8,7,6,5,4 or A*, A, B, C should be considered Level 2*
- *A levels and AS levels should be considered Level 3*
- *Higher National Certificates (HNC) should be considered Level 4*
- *Higher National Diplomas (HND) should be considered Level 5*
- *Degrees (excluding foundation and master's) should be considered Level 6*
- *Foundation degrees are Level 5*
- *Master's degrees are Level 7*
- *Doctorates are Level 8*

Entry Level	1	
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Level 1	2
Level 2	3
Level 3	4
Level 4	5
Level 5	6
Level 6	7
Level 7	8
Level 8	9
Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	10
Don't know	11

ASK IF RECEIVED PROVISION IN WELSH ON SAMPLE=BLANK

Was the <COURSE> delivered in Welsh only, in English only or in a combination of Welsh and English?

SINGLE CODE.

Welsh only	1
English only	2
Combination of Welsh and English	3
DO NOT READ OUT: Can't Remember / Don't know	4

ASK ALL

A10 **Before starting the <COURSE> were you offered a choice for it to be provided in...?**

READ OUT. CODE ONE PER ROW.

	Y e s	N o	Don't know
--	----------------------	----------------	-----------------------

IF A9#1 AND RECEIVED PROVISION IN WELSH #1: Welsh only	1	2	3
IF A9#2 AND RECEIVED PROVISION IN WELSH #3: English only	1	2	3
IF A9#3 RECEIVED PROVISION IN WELSH #2: A combination of Welsh and English	1	2	3

ASK IF A10_1=2/3 OR A10_2=2/3 OR A10_3=2/3

And how would you have preferred the <COURSE> to be provided, in...?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

A10_1=2/3 AND COURSELANG#1 AND A9#1: Welsh only	1
A10_2=2/3 AND COURSELANG#3 A9#2: English only	2
A10_3=2/3 AND COURSELANG#2 AND A9#3 : A combination of Welsh and English	3
Or was it delivered in your preferred language?	5
DO NOT READ OUT: Can't Remember / Don't know	4

B Situation immediately before the course

IF CATI READ OUT: I'd now like to ask some questions about what you were doing when you started the <COURSE>. IF ONLINE: The next few questions ask about what you were doing when you started the <COURSE>.

ASK ALL – ALL FORMATS

Which one of the following best describes what you were MAINLY doing in the week before starting the <COURSE>...Were you...?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

CATI:

[IF EMPSTAT1 NOT BLANK: INTERVIEWER NOTE: OUR RECORDS INDICATE THE INDIVIDUAL'S EMPLOYMENT STATUS WAS:]

[IF EMPSTAT1=3/4: EMPLOYED, INCLUDING BY A FAMILY MEMBER, SELF EMPLOYED, OR ON AN APPRENTICESHIP]

[IF EMPSTAT1=2/5: UNEMPLOYED AND LOOKING FOR WORK]

[IF EMPSTAT1=6: IN EDUCATION OR TRAINING]

[IF EMPSTAT1=1: ECONOMICALLY INACTIVE – THIS MAY INCLUDE BEING IN VOLUNTARY WORK OR NOT IN OR NOT LOOKING FOR PAID WORK] CHECK WITH RESPONDENT IF THEIR RESPONSE DOESN'T MATCH OUR RECORDS

IF ON MATERNITY/PATERNITY LEAVE, SELF-EMPLOYED, SETTING UP A BUSINESS, WAITING TO START A NEW JOB, SELECT 'IN EMPLOYMENT'.

IF WAITING FOR A TRAINING COURSE TO START OR ON A TRAINEESHIP, SELECT 'IN EDUCATION OR TRAINING'.

INTERVIEWER NOTE: PLEASE ENSURE CODES ARE ALL READ OUT BEFORE TAKING RESPONSE

ONLINE:

IF ON MATERNITY/PATERNITY LEAVE, SELF-EMPLOYED, SETTING UP A BUSINESS, WAITING TO START A NEW JOB, SELECT 'IN EMPLOYMENT'.

IF WAITING FOR A TRAINING COURSE TO START OR ON A TRAINEESHIP, SELECT 'IN EDUCATION OR TRAINING'.

Employed, including by a family member, self-employed or on an apprenticeship	1
Unemployed and looking for work	2

In education or training	3
Working in a voluntary, unpaid role or internship	4
Not in or looking for paid work (for example looking after children or relatives, retired)	5
[CATI TEXT SUB: DO NOT READ OUT:] Can't remember	6

EMPDUM DUMMY VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK		
In employment	1	B1=1
Unemployed	2	B1=2
Inactive	3	B1=3-6

THERE IS NO B2.

ALL SITUATIONS

ASK ALL (FULL CATI ONLY)

And before you started the <COURSE>, what was the highest qualification that you had achieved?

PROBE FULLY:

- **What type of qualification was this? What level? What grade?**
- **If Degree: Was this a foundation degree, an undergraduate, a master's or a doctoral degree?**
- **If NVQS / GNVQs: probe what level?**
- **If GCSEs: what grade?**
- **If O-levels: what grade?**
- **If A Levels / AS Levels or equivalent: what grade?**

WRITE IN

No qualifications	1	
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ASK IF HAD A QUALIFICATION- FULL CATI ONLY (B3 NOT CODE 1)

B3A Just to check, what was the level of this qualification?

INTERVIEWER TO NOTE: THIS INFORMATION WILL BE AVAILABLE ON A CRIB SHEET, BUT PLEASE NOTE:

- *GCSEs at grades 3,2,1 or grades D,E,F,G should be considered Level 1*
- *GCSEs at grades 9,8,7,6,5,4 or A*, A, B, C should be considered Level 2*
- *O Levels at grades A,B and C are considered Level 2*
- *A levels and AS levels should be considered Level 3*
- *Higher National Certificates (HNC) should be considered Level 4*
- *Higher National Diplomas (HND) should be considered Level 5*
- *Degrees (excluding foundation and master's) should be considered Level 6*
- *Foundation degrees are Level 5*
- *Master's degrees are Level 7*
- *Doctorates are Level 8*

Entry Level	1
Level 1	2
Level 2	3
Level 3	4
Level 4	5
Level 5	6
Level 6	7
Level 7	8
Level 8	9
Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	10

Don't know	11
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NOT IN WORK

IF NOT IN OR LOOKING FOR WORK IMMEDIATELY BEFORE COURSE – ALL FORMATS (B1=5)

Were you not looking for work for any of the following reasons.....

READ OUT. MULTICODE.

Looking after the family, home or caring for dependents	1
Temporary health problems or injury (including physical and mental health problems)	2
Long-term health problems or disabled (including physical and mental health problems)	3
Retired	4
Doing unpaid voluntary work	5
Not needing or wanting employment	6
Not looking for work as there were no jobs available	7
Alcohol or drug dependency	10
Or was there some other reason you were not looking for a job (PLEASE SPECIFY)	8
[CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] Can't remember	9

IF UNEMPLOYED IN VOLUNTARY WORK, OR NOT IN OR LOOKING FOR PAID WORK – ALL FORMATS (B1=2,4-5)

Thinking about before you started the <COURSE>, did any of the following things make it difficult for you to find [B1=2: work] [B1=4-5: paid work]...

READ OUT. MULTICODE.

Not having the right qualifications	1
Not having the right skills	2
Not having relevant work experience	3
Not being able to afford childcare	4
Having caring responsibilities	5
Health problems (including physical and mental health problems)	6
Your age	7
Alcohol or drug dependency	8
Having a criminal record	9
No appropriate jobs where you live	10
Hard to get to appropriate work	11
You only wanting to work part time	12
Believing you would not be better off financially in work	13
Were there any other reasons why it was difficult for you to find work (PLEASE SPECIFY)	14
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	15
DO NOT READ OUT: None of these	16

THERE IS NO B6.

IF UNEMPLOYED, IN VOLUNTARY UNPAID WORK, OR NOT IN OR LOOKING FOR PAID WORK – ALL FORMATS (B1=2,4-5)

At the time you started the <COURSE>, how long had you been out of [B1=2: work] [B1=4-5: paid work]?

PROMPT IF NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE.

Less than 3 months	1
Between 3 months but less than 6 months	2
Between 6 months but less than 12 months	3
Between 12 months but less than 2 years	4
Between 2 years but less than 3 years	5
3 years or more	6
Never had a job	7
Don't know	8

THERE IS NO B8.

THERE IS NO B9.

B6DUM_DUMMY VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK		
Long term unemployed	1	<p>IF UNDER 25 YEARS OF AGE (FROM SAMPLE) AND B7=3-7</p> <p>OR</p> <p>IF 25 OR ABOVE (FROM SAMPLE) AND B7=4-7</p> <p>DS – NEED TO APPLY OVERALL FILTER OF UNEMPLOYED (B1=2) TO THIS</p>

EMPLOYED

READ OUT TO ALL IN EMPLOYMENT (B1=1): I'd like to get an understanding of the type of work you were doing before you started your <COURSE>. So....

ASK ALL IN EMPLOYMENT – ALL FORMATS (B1=1)

Which of the following types of employment were you in immediately before starting the <COURSE>? Were you...

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Working for an employer (including family employer) in a paid role	1
Working in a family business without being paid	2
Self employed	3
On an apprenticeship	4
Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	5
[CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] Don't know	6

THERE IS NO B11.

IF WORKING IMMEDIATELY BEFORE THE COURSE OR EVER WORKED – FULL CATI ONLY
(B1=1 OR B7≠7) AND FULL CATI ONLY)

[IF B1=1: And in this job] [IF B7≠7 In the last job you had] before taking the <COURSE>, did you have formal responsibility for supervising the work of other employees?

Yes	1
No	2
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	3

ASK ALL IN EMPLOYED BUT NOT SELF-EMPLOYED – ALL FORMATS (B1=1 AND B10#2 OR 3)

Thinking about this job, was it...

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Permanent or open-ended contract	1
A fixed term contract lasting 12 months or longer	2
A fixed term contract lasting less than 12 months	3
On a temporary or casual basis	4
A zero hours contract	5
[CATI: DON'T READ OUT:] On an open ended contract but of limited duration (i.e. covering the absence of a colleague or covering completion of a fixed task)	6
On some other basis (PLEASE SPECIFY)	7
[CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] Don't know	8
[CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] Prefer not to say	9

B13DUM DUMMY VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK		
In stable employment	1	B13=1
In precarious employment	2	B13=2-4/6
Unknown	3	B13=5/7-9

ASK ALL IN EMPLOYMENT – ALL FORMATS (B1=1)

And how many hours a week were you usually working before you started the <COURSE> – on average, not counting meal breaks but including any paid overtime?

PROBE FOR BEST ESTIMATE

EXACT ANSWER _____	
Don't know	1
IF DON'T KNOW ASK: Was it...READ OUT	
40 hours or more per week	1
16 to 39 hours per week	2
Under 16 hours per week	3
[CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] Don't know	4

ASK ALL IN EMPLOYMENT – ALL FORMATS (B1=1)

And did you consider yourself to be working...

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Full time	1
Or part time	2
[CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] Don't know	3
[CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] Prefer not to say	4

B15DUM DUMMY VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK

Full time	1	B15=1 OR (B15=3/4 AND B14=40+ OR B14RAN=CODE 1)
Part time	2	B15=2 OR (B15=3/4 AND B14<16 OR B14RAN= 3)
Unknown	3	(B15=3 OR 4) AND (B14=16-39 OR B14RAN=2/4/5)

IF WORKING PART TIME – ALL FORMATS (B15DUM=2)

You said you were working part-time immediately before you started on the <COURSE>. At that time, did you want to be working on a full-time basis?

Yes	1
No	2
[CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] Don't know	3

B16DUM DUMMY VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK

Fully employed (full time, or did not want to be full time)	1	B15DUM=1 OR B16=2
Underemployed (part time but wanted to be full time)	2	B16=1
Unknown	3	B15DUM=3 OR B16=3

ASK THOSE IN WORK AS EMPLOYEE BEFORE THE COURSE – FULL CATI ONLY (B10=1 AND FULL CATI ONLY)

Were you under formal notice of redundancy at the time you began your <COURSE>?

Yes	1
No	2
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know / not sure	3

THERE IS NO B18.
THERE IS NO B19.
THERE IS NO B20.

EDUCATION OR TRAINING

ASK ALL IN EDUCATION OR TRAINING – ALL FORMATS (B1=3)

Which of the following types of education or training were you doing immediately before starting the <COURSE>? Were you...

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

In school	1
In college full time – 16 hours or more a week	2
In college part time – less than 16 hours a week	3
On a course whilst in work	4
On a traineeship [CATI: ADD IF NECESSARY:] These generally involve individuals spending at least a few weeks with businesses or other organisations in order to gain practical work experience ahead of taking up regular employment	5
[CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] In university	6
Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	7
[CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] Don't know	8

INACTIVE

ASK ALL INACTIVE, EXCLUDING RETIRED – ALL FORMATS (EMPDUM=3 UNLESS B4=4)

At the time immediately before you started on the <COURSE>, did you want a regular paid job either full-time or part-time?

Yes	1
No	2
[CATI DO NOT READ OUT:] Don't know	3
[CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] I already had a job	4

Situation since the course: Overview

ASK ALL - ALL FORMATS

I would like to get a few details about what you are doing at the moment. Which of the following do you think of as your main activity...

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

IF ON MATERNITY/PATERNITY LEAVE, SELF-EMPLOYED, SETTING UP A BUSINESS, WAITING TO START A NEW JOB, SELECT 'IN EMPLOYMENT'

IF WAITING FOR A TRAINING COURSE TO START OR ON A TRAINEESHIP CODE SELECT 'IN EDUCATION OR TRAINING'

CATI ONLY: INTERVIEWER NOTE: PLEASE ENSURE ALL CODES ARE ALL READ OUT BEFORE TAKING RESPONSE

Employed, including by a family member, self-employed or on an apprenticeship	1
Unemployed and looking for work	2
In education or training	3
Working in a voluntary, unpaid role or internship	4
Not in or looking for paid work (for example looking after children or relatives, retired)	5
[CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	6
[CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] Don't know	7

ASK ALL IN EMPLOYMENT – FULL CATI ONLY (C1=1 AND FULL CATI ONLY)

C1a And which of the following types of employment are you in?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE

Working for an employer (including family employer) in a paid role	1
Working in a family business without being paid	2
Self employed	3
On an apprenticeship	4
Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	5
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	6

ASK ALL IN EDUCATION OR TRAINING – FULL CATI ONLY (C1=3 AND FULL CATI ONLY)

Which of the following types of education or training are you currently doing... Are you...?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

In school	1
In college full time – 16 hours or more a week	2
In college part time – less than 16 hours a week	3
On a course whilst in work	4
On a traineeship ADD IF NECESSARY: These generally involve individuals spending at least a few weeks with businesses or other organisations in order to gain practical work experience ahead of taking up regular employment	5
DO NOT READ OUT: In university	6
Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	7
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	8

ASK ALL EXCEPT 'DON'T KNOW' AT C1 – FULL CATI ONLY (ALL EXCEPT C1=7 AND FULL CATI ONLY).

Can I just check since [IF EARLY LEAVER: leaving] / [OTHERS: finishing] the <COURSE> have you been [INSERT C1 ANSWER] the whole time, or have you had periods doing other things such as [IF C1=NOT 1: 'paid work,'] [C1=NOT 3: undertaking education or training] [C1=NOT 2: 'being unemployed and looking for work'] [C1=NOT 5: 'or being unemployed and not looking for work for any reason'].

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Just the one thing the whole time	1
Had periods doing other things	2
DO NOT READ OUT: Can't remember	3

ALL THOSE EITHER CURRENTLY IN EMPLOYMENT OR THOSE IN FULL TIME EDUCATION OR TRAINING AND WHO SAY THEY HAVE DONE ONE THING THE WHOLE TIME – FULL CATI ONLY ((C1=1 OR 3) & (C3=1) AND FULL CATI ONLY)

In your current [IF C1 = 1 job] [IF C1=3: education or training activity], can I check which one of the following applies...

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

You started doing this [C1=1: job] [C1=3: activity] immediately upon leaving/completing your <COURSE> - by this, we mean up to 4 weeks after leaving/completing	1
You started this [C1=1: job] [C1=3: activity] before the end of your <COURSE>	2
You started doing this [C1=1: job] [C1=3: activity] some time after the <COURSE>, e.g. after a short spell of unemployment – by this, we mean more than 4 weeks after leaving/completing	3

ASK ALL – ALL FORMATS

According to our records you [IF EARLY LEAVER (S6=2): left] / [OTHERS (S6=NOT 2): finished] the <COURSE> in [INSERT MONTH AND YEAR FROM SAMPLE]. Is this correct?

Yes	1
No	2
[CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] Don't know	3

IF DISAGREE WITH LEAVE DATE – ALL FORMATS (C5=2)

What month and year did you [IF EARLY LEAVER (S6=2): leave] / [OTHERS (S6=NOT 2): finish] the <COURSE>?

CATI: PROBE FOR BEST ESTIMATE OF MONTH AND YEAR.

Jan 18	Feb 18	Mar 18	Apr 18	May 18	Jun 18	Jul 18	Aug 18	Sep 18	Oct 18	Nov 18	Dec 18
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Jan 19	Feb 19	Mar 19	Apr 19	May 19	Jun 19	Jul 19	Aug 19	Sep 19	Oct 19	Nov 19	Dec 19
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Jan 20	Feb 20	Mar 20	Apr 20	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Apr 21	May 21	Jun 21	Jul 21	Aug 21	Sep 21	Oct 21	Nov 21	Dec 21
37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
Jan 22	Feb 22	Mar 22	Apr 22	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22
49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23						2017 or earlier	Don't know
61	62	63	64	65						V	X

6MNTHDUM: DUMMY VARIABLE DO NOT ASK

DS CALCULATE 6 MONTH POINT USING BELOW RULES:

- IF C5=YES OR C5=DON'T KNOW OR C6=DON'T KNOW THEN 6 MONTHS = 6 MONTHS DATE IN SAMPLE
- IF C5=NO AND C6≠DON'T KNOW THEN 6 MONTHS= +6 MONTHS FROM DATE TAKEN AT C6

ASK IF C3=2 OR C4=3 (FULL CATI ONLY)

So straight after the <COURSE> was your main activity paid work, education or training, being unemployed and looking for work, or none of these?

SINGLE CODE.

Paid work	1	ASK NEXT QUESTION
Education or training	2	
Unemployed and looking for work	3	
None of these	4	
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	5	SKIP TO SECTION D

ASK IF ((C3=2 OR C4=3) AND C7#5) (FULL CATI ONLY)

And when did this last until?

PROBE FOR BEST ESTIMATE OF MONTH AND YEAR. IF ACTIVITY IS ONGOING, PLEASE SELECT CURRENT DATE.

DS: JUST SHOW MONTHS DATES AFTER AND INCLUDING ANSWER AT C7.

Jan 18	Feb 18	Mar 18	Apr 18	May 18	Jun 18	Jul 18	Aug 18	Sep 18	Oct 18	Nov 18	Dec 18
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Jan 19	Feb 19	Mar 19	Apr 19	May 19	Jun 19	Jul 19	Aug 19	Sep 19	Oct 19	Nov 19	Dec 19
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Jan 20	Feb 20	Mar 20	Apr 20	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Apr 21	May 21	Jun 21	Jul 21	Aug 21	Sep 21	Oct 21	Nov 21	Dec 21
37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
Jan 22	Feb 22	Mar 22	Apr 22	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22
49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23							Don't know
61	62	63	64	65							X

THOSE WHO ANSWERED C8 BUT WHO DID NOT SAY MONTH OF INTERVIEW OR DK (C8= NOT MONTH OF INTERVIEW OR DON'T KNOW) (FULL CATI ONLY)

So after [DATE AT C8], was your next main activity paid work, education or training, being unemployed and looking for work, or none of these?

SINGLE CODE.

Paid work	1	ASK NEXT QUESTION
------------------	---	-------------------

Education or training	2	
Unemployed and looking for work	3	
None	4	
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	5	SKIP TO SECTION D

THOSE WHO ANSWERED C9 BUT WHO DID NOT SAY DK (FULL CATI ONLY)

And when did this last until?

PROBE FOR BEST ESTIMATE OF MONTH AND YEAR. IF ACTIVITY IS ONGOING, PLEASE SELECT CURRENT DATE.

DS: JUST SHOW MONTHS DATES AFTER AND INCLUDING ANSWER AT C8.

Jan 18	Feb 18	Mar 18	Apr 18	May 18	Jun 18	Jul 18	Aug 18	Sep 18	Oct 18	Nov 18	Dec 18
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Jan 19	Feb 19	Mar 19	Apr 19	May 19	Jun 19	Jul 19	Aug 19	Sep 19	Oct 19	Nov 19	Dec 19
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Jan 20	Feb 20	Mar 20	Apr 20	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Apr 21	May 21	Jun 21	Jul 21	Aug 21	Sep 21	Oct 21	Nov 21	Dec 21
37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
Jan 22	Feb 22	Mar 22	Apr 22	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22
49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23							Don't know
61	62	63	64	65							X

THOSE WHO ANSWERED C10 BUT WHO DID NOT SAY MONTH OF INTERVIEW OR DK (C10= NOT MONTH OF INTERVIEW OR DON'T KNOW) (FULL CATI ONLY)

So after [DATE AT C10], was your next main activity paid work, education or training, being unemployed and looking for work, or none of these?

SINGLE CODE.

Paid work	1	ASK NEXT QUESTION
Education or training	2	

Unemployed and looking for work	3	
None of these	4	
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	5	SKIP TO SECTION D

THOSE WHO ANSWERED C11 BUT WHO DID NOT SAY DK (FULL CATI ONLY)

And when did this last until?

PROBE FOR BEST ESTIMATE OF MONTH AND YEAR. IF ACTIVITY IS ONGOING, PLEASE SELECT CURRENT DATE.

DS: JUST SHOW MONTHS DATES AFTER AND INCLUDING ANSWER AT C10.

Jan 18	Feb 18	Mar 18	Apr 18	May 18	Jun 18	Jul 18	Aug 18	Sep 18	Oct 18	Nov 18	Dec 18
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Jan 19	Feb 19	Mar 19	Apr 19	May 19	Jun 19	Jul 19	Aug 19	Sep 19	Oct 19	Nov 19	Dec 19
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Jan 20	Feb 20	Mar 20	Apr 20	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Apr 21	May 21	Jun 21	Jul 21	Aug 21	Sep 21	Oct 21	Nov 21	Dec 21
37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
Jan 22	Feb 22	Mar 22	Apr 22	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22
49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23	Apr 23	May 23							Don't know
61	62	63	64	65							X

THOSE WHO ANSWERED C12 BUT WHO DID NOT SAY MONTH OF INTERVIEW OR DK (C12= NOT MONTH OF INTERVIEW OR DON'T KNOW) (FULL CATI ONLY)

So after [DATE AT C12], was your next main activity paid work, education or training, being unemployed and looking for work, or none of these?

SINGLE CODE.

Paid work	1	ASK NEXT QUESTION
Education or training	2	

Unemployed and looking for work	3	
None of these	4	
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	5	SKIP TO SECTION D

THOSE WHO ANSWERED C13 BUT WHO DID NOT SAY DK (FULL CATI ONLY)

And when did this last until?

PROBE FOR BEST ESTIMATE OF MONTH AND YEAR. IF ACTIVITY IS ONGOING, PLEASE SELECT CURRENT DATE.

JUST SHOW MONTHS DATES AFTER AND INCLUDING ANSWER AT C13.

SIX ACT 1 DUMMY VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK		
Paid work	1	[C8=date at 6_MNTH_DUM or later] & [C7=1]
Education or	2	[C8=date at 6_MNTH_DUM or later] &
Unemp &	3	[C8=date at 6_MNTH_DUM or later] &
None of these	4	[C8=date at 6_MNTH_DUM or later] &

SIX ACT 2 DUMMY VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK		
Paid work	1	SIX_ACT_1≠1-4 & [C10= date at 6_MNTH_DUM or later] & [C9=1] & C8≠DK
Education or training	2	SIX_ACT_1≠1-4 & [C10= date at 6_MNTH_DUM or later] & [C9=2] &
Unemp & looking	3	SIX_ACT_1≠1-4 & [C10= date at 6_MNTH_DUM or later] & [C9=3] & C8≠DK
None of these	4	SIX_ACT_1≠1-4 & [C10= date at 6_MNTH_DUM or later] & [C9=4] &

SIX ACT 4 DUMMY VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK

Paid work	1	SIX_ACT_1≠1-4 & SIX_ACT_2≠1-4 & SIX_ACT_3≠1-4 & [C14= date at 6_MNTH_DUM or later] & [C13=1] & C8≠DK & C10≠DK & C12≠DK
Education or training	2	SIX_ACT_1≠1-4 & SIX_ACT_2≠1-4 & SIX_ACT_3≠1-4 & [C14= date at 6_MNTH_DUM or later] & [C13=2] & C8≠DK & C10≠DK & C12≠DK
Unemp & looking	3	SIX_ACT_1≠1-4 & SIX_ACT_2≠1-4 & SIX_ACT_3≠1-4 & [C14= date at 6_MNTH_DUM or later] & [C13=3] & C8≠DK & C10≠DK & C12≠DK
None of these	4	SIX_ACT_1≠1-4 & SIX_ACT_2≠1-4 & SIX_ACT_3≠1-4 & [C14= date at 6_MNTH_DUM or later] & [C13=4] & C8≠DK & C10≠DK & C12≠DK

SIX ACT 3 DUMMY VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK

Paid work	1	SIX_ACT_1≠1-4 & SIX_ACT_2≠1-4 & [C12= date at 6_MNTH_DUM or later] & [C11=1] & C8≠DK & C10≠DK
Education or training	2	[SIX_ACT_1≠1-4 & SIX_ACT_2≠1-4 & [C12= date at 6_MNTH_DUM or later] & [C11=2] & C8≠DK & C10≠DK
Unemp & looking	3	SIX_ACT_1≠1-4 & SIX_ACT_2≠1-4 & [C12= date at 6_MNTH_DUM or later] & [C11=3] & C8≠DK & C10≠DK
None of these	4	SIX_ACT_1≠1-4 & SIX_ACT_2≠1-4 & [C12= date at 6_MNTH_DUM or later] & [C11=4] & C8≠DK & & C10≠DK

SIX ACT SUM DUMMY VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK

In paid work	1	SIX_ACT_1/2/3/4=1
In education or	2	SIX_ACT_1/2/3/4=2
Unemployed and	3	SIX_ACT_1/2/3/4=3
Not in paid work, education or training nor unemployed & looking for work	4	SIX_ACT_1/2/3/4=4

Status six months after completing course

IF SIX_ACT_SUM=1/2/3 OR C4=1-2 OR (C1=2,4-5 AND C3=1) – FULL CATI ONLY

[IF SIX_ACT_SUM:1-3: **Thank you for going through that.**] **Just to confirm then, six months after leaving the <COURSE> you were** [IF SIX_ACT_SUM=1-3: **[INSERT SIX_ACT_SUM ANSWER]**] [IF C4=1-2: **[INSERT C1 ANSWER]**] [IF C1=2,4-5 AND C3=1: **[INSERT C1 ANSWER]**]. **Is this correct?**

Yes	1	CONTINUE TO D3 IF EMPLOYED (SIX_ACT_SUM=1) OR D12 IF IN EDUCATION OR TRAINING (SIX_ACT_SUM=2) OR SECTION E IF UNEMPLOYED (SIX_ACT_SUM=3) OR D2 IF NOT IN PAID WORK, EDUCATION OR TRAINING NOR UNEMPLOYED & LOOKING FOR WORK (SIX_ACT_SUM=4)
No	2	ASK D2
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	3	

ASK ALL EXCEPT THOSE ALREADY KNOWN – ALL FORMATS (ALL EXCEPT D1=1)

The next few questions ask about what you were doing on [6_MNTH_DUM].

So, what was your main activity on [6_MNTH_DUM]? If you were doing more than one activity, please just tell me about the activity you consider to have been your main activity.

Were you...

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

IF ON MATERNITY/PATERNITY LEAVE, SELF-EMPLOYED, SETTING UP A BUSINESS, WAITING TO START A NEW JOB, SELECT 'IN EMPLOYMENT'

IF WAITING FOR A TRAINING COURSE TO START OR ON A TRAINEESHIP SELECT 'IN EDUCATION OR TRAINING'

CATI ONLY: INTERVIEWER: PLEASE ENSURE ALL CODES ARE READ OUT BEFORE TAKING RESPONSE

Employed, including by a family member, self-employed or on an apprenticeship	1
Unemployed and looking for work	2
In education or training	3

Working in a voluntary, unpaid role or internship	4	
Not in or looking for paid work (for example looking after children or relatives, retired)	5	
Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	6	
[CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] Can't remember	7	
6_ACT_ALL DUMMY VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK		
Employed	1	(SIX_ACT_SUM=1 AND D1=1) OR D2=1 OR (C4=1-2 AND C1=1 AND D1=1)
Unemployed and looking for work	2	(SIX_ACT_SUM=3 AND D1=1) OR D2=2 OR (C1=2 AND C3=1 AND D1=1)
In education or training	3	(SIX_ACT_SUM=2 AND D1=1) OR D2=3 OR (C4=1=2 AND C1=3 AND D1=1)
Working in a voluntary, unpaid role or internship	4	D2=4 OR (C1=4 AND C3=1 AND D1=1)
Not in or looking for paid work (for example looking after children or relatives, retired)	5	D2=5 OR (C1=5 AND C3=1 AND D1=1)
Other / Don't know	6	D2=6/7

6_ACT_ALL_SUM DUMMY VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK

In employment	1	6_ACT_ALL=1
Unemployed	2	6_ACT_ALL=2
Inactive	3	6_ACT_ALL=3- 6

EMPLOYED AT 6 MONTHS

ASK ALL IN EMPLOYMENT AT 6 MONTH POINT – ALL FORMATS (6_ACT_ALL=1)

In which of the following types of employment were you in, in [6_MNTH_DUM]?

Were you...

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Working for an employer (including family employer) in a paid role	1
Working in a family business without being paid	2
Self employed	3
On an apprenticeship	4
Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	5
{CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] Don't know	6

D3DUM DUMMY VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK		
In employment before and at 6 months	1	B1=1 AND 6_ACT_ALL=1
In employment before and at 6 months excl. self-employed	2	D3DUM=1 AND D3≠2 OR 3 AND B10≠2-3

IF EMPLOYED BOTH BEFORE COURSE AND AT 6 MONTH POINT – ALL FORMATS (D3DUM=1)
Thinking about your employment immediately before starting the <COURSE> compared to in [6_MNTH_DUM], have you changed job role?

Yes	1
No	2
[CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] Don't know	3

IF EMPLOYED BOTH BEFORE COURSE AND AT 6 MONTH POINT, EXCLUDING SELF-EMPLOYED
 – ALL FORMATS (D3DUM=2)

Thinking about your employment immediately before starting the <COURSE> compared to in [6_MNTH_DUM], did you change employer?

Yes	1
No	2
[CATI DO NOT READ OUT:] Don't know	3

ASK ALL IN EMPLOYMENT BUT NOT SELF-EMPLOYED AT 6 MONTH POINT – ALL FORMATS (D3DUM=2)

Thinking about this job that you had in [6_MNTH_DUM], was it...

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

On a permanent or open-ended contract	1
On a fixed-term contract lasting 12 months or longer	2
On a fixed-term contract lasting less than 12 months	3
On a temporary or casual basis	4
On a zero hours' contract	5
[CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] On an open ended contract but of limited duration (i.e. covering the absence of a colleague or covering completion of a fixed task)	6
On some other basis (PLEASE SPECIFY)	7
[CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] Don't know	8
[CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] Prefer not to say	9

D6DUM DUMMY VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK		
ESF participants moved from precarious to stable employment	1	B13DUM=2 AND D6=1

ASK ALL IN EMPLOYMENT AT 6 MONTH POINT – ALL FORMATS (6_ACT_ALL=1)

[IF SELF EMPLOYED (D3=2 OR 3): Thinking about this job that you had in [6_MNTH_DUM], [ALL: did you consider yourself to be working...]

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Full time	1
Or part time	2
[CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] Don't know	3
[CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] Prefer not to say	4

ASK ALL UNSURE OR GAVE NO ANSWER – ALL FORMATS (D7=3/4)

How many hours on average did you work per week in this job in [6_MNTH_DUM]? Did you work...

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Less than 16 hours a week	1
Between 16 and 39 hours a week	2
Or 40 or more hours a week	3
[CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] Don't Know	4
[CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] Prefer not to say	5

D8DUM DUMMY VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK

Full time	1	D7=1 OR D8=3
Part time	2	D7=2 OR D8=1
Unknown	3	D8=2/4/5

IF WORKING PART TIME – ALL FORMATS (D8DUM=2)

You said you were working part-time in [6_MNTH_DUM]. At that time, did you want to be working on a full-time basis?

Yes	1	
No	2	
[CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] Don't know	3	

D9DUM DUMMY VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK		
ESF Participants moved from underemployment to full employment	1	B16DUM=2 AND ((D8DUM=1) or (D8DUM=2 and D9=2))

IF EMPLOYED BOTH BEFORE THE COURSE AND AT 6 MONTH POINT – ALL FORMATS (D3DUM=1)

Thinking about the day to day tasks that you were [IF EMPLOYEE (D3=1/4-6): expected to carry out/ IF SELF EMPLOYED (D3=2 OR 3): carrying out] in your job in [6MONTH TEXT SUB], did they require...

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

A higher level of skills or competencies compared to what you [IF EMPLOYEE (B10=1/4-6): were expected to do / IF SELF EMPLOYED (B10=2 OR 3): were doing] in your job immediately before starting the <COURSE>	1
About the same level of skills or competencies	2
Or a lower level of skills or competencies	3
[CATI; DO NOT READ OUT:] Don't know	4

IF EMPLOYED BOTH BEFORE THE COURSE AND AT 6 MONTH POINT – ALL FORMATS
(D3DUM=1)

Thinking about the day to day tasks that you were [IF EMPLOYEE (D3=1/4-6): expected to carry out/ IF SELF EMPLOYED (D10=2 OR 3): carrying out] in your job in [6MONTH TEXT SUB], did they require...

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

A higher level of qualification compared to what you [IF EMPLOYEE (B10=1/4-6): were expected to do / IF SELF EMPLOYED (B10=2 OR 3): were doing] in your job immediately before starting the <COURSE>	1
About the same level of qualification	2
Or a lower level of qualification	3
[CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] Don't know	4

IF EMPLOYED BOTH BEFORE THE COURSE AND AT 6 MONTH POINT – ALL FORMATS
(D3DUM=1)

D11a Thinking about the day to day tasks that you were [IF EMPLOYEE (D3=1/4-6): expected to carry out/ IF SELF EMPLOYED (B10=2 OR 3): carrying out] in your job in [6MONTH TEXT SUB], compared to what you [IF EMPLOYEE (B10=1/4-6): were expected to do / IF SELF EMPLOYED (B10=2 OR 3): were doing] in your job immediately before starting the course [PROJID=80736: or support programme], did you have...

SINGLE CODE. READ OUT.

More responsibility	1
About the same level of responsibility	2
Less responsibility	3
[CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] Don't know	4

EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT 6 MONTHS

ASK ALL IN EDUCATION OR TRAINING – ALL FORMATS (6_ACT_ALL=3)

B12 Which of the following types of education or training were you doing [6_MNTH_DUM]? Were you...

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

In college full time – 16 hours or more a week	1
In college part time – less than 16 hours a week	2
On a course whilst in work	3
On a traineeship [CATI: ADD IF NECESSARY:] These generally involve individuals spending at least a few weeks with businesses or other organisations in order to gain practical work experience ahead of taking up regular employment	4
[CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] In university	5
In school	6
Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	7
[CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] Don't know	8

NOT IN WORK AT 6 MONTHS

IF NOT IN OR LOOKING FOR PAID WORK – ALL FORMATS (6_ACT_ALL=5)

Were you not looking for work for any of the following reasons.....

READ OUT. MULTICODE.

Looking after the family, home or caring for dependents	8
Temporary health problems or injury (including physical and mental health problems)	9
Long term-health problem or disabled (including physical and mental health problems)	1
Retired	2
Doing unpaid voluntary work	3
Not needing or wanting employment	4

Not looking for work as there were no jobs available	5
Alcohol or drug dependency	10
Or are there some other reason you are not looking for a job (PLEASE SPECIFY)	6
{CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:} Can't remember	7

TRACKING EC IMPROVEMENTS AT 6 MONTHS AND GENERALLY

IF EMPLOYED BEFORE THE COURSE AT 6 MONTH POINT AND NOW, OR APPRENTICE – ALL FORMATS ((D3DUM=1 AND C1=1) OR (APP=1 AND C1=1))

And thinking generally, since the course [IF PROJID=80736: or support programme] [APP=1: started]...

READ OUT. CODE ONE PER ROW.

	Y e s	N o	D K
EXCLUDE SELF-EMPLOYED (D3#2 OR 3) have you had a promotion?	1	2	3
ALL ANSWERING THIS QUESTION Has your hourly pay rate or annual salary increased? ADD [CATI: IF NECESSARY:] [ONLINE: IF UNSURE:] Please think about how, if at all, your hourly rate has changed.	1	2	3
Are you getting more job satisfaction?	1	2	3
Do you have better job security?	1	2	3
Have your future pay and promotion prospects improved?	1	2	3
Do you have more opportunities for training in your job?	1	2	3

QUESTION DELETED

IF IMPROVEMENT SEEN AT ANY D14_X=1 (ALL FORMATS)

D15A And which, if any, of these job improvements occurred within six months of leaving the <COURSE>, so between [ENDDATE] AND [6_MNTH_DUM]?

DS – ONLY SHOW THOSE WHERE D14_X=1

READ OUT. CODE ONE PER ROW.

	Ye s	N o	D K
(D14_1=1) Your promotion	1	2	3
(D14_2=1) The increase in your hourly pay rate or annual salary	1	2	3
(D14_3=1) Your increased job satisfaction	1	2	3
(D14_4=1) Your increased job security	1	2	3
(D14_5=1) The improvement in your future pay and promotion prospects	1	2	3
(D14_6=1) The opportunities for training in your job	1	2	3

IF EMPLOYED BOTH BEFORE THE COURSE AND 6 MONTHS BUT NOT NOW OR APPRENTICE AND EMPLOYED AT 6 MONTHS BUT NOT NOW – ALL FORMATS ((D3DUM=1 AND C1#1) OR (APP=1 AND 6_ACT_ALL=1 AND C1#1))

Compared with the work you were doing immediately before the <COURSE>, did any of the following apply regarding the work you were doing in <6_MNTH_DUM>?

READ OUT. CODE ONE PER ROW.

	Ye s	N o	D K
EXCLUDE SELF-EMPLOYED (D3#2 OR 3) Had you had a promotion?	1	2	3
ALL ANSWERING THIS QUESTION Had your hourly pay rate or annual salary increased? [CATI: ADD IF NECESSARY:] Please think about how, if at all, your hourly rate has changed.	1	2	3
Were you getting more job satisfaction?	1	2	3
Did you have better job security?	1	2	3
Had your future pay and promotion prospects improved?	1	2	3
Did you have more opportunities for training in your job?	1	2	3

D16DUMMY VARIABLE, DO NOT ASK

<p>ESF Participants with improved labour market situation</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Moved from precarious to stable employment D6DUM=1, OR Underemployment to full employment D9DUM=1, OR Moved to a job requiring higher competencies/skills/qualifications, or entailing more responsibilities (D4=1 OR D5=1) AND (D10=1 OR D11=1 OR D11a=1), OR Received a promotion ((D14_1=1 and D15_1=1) or D16_1=1)</p>
<p>ESF Employed females gaining improved labour market status (subset of code 1)</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>FEMALE (FROM SAMPLE) AND D16DUM=1</p>

IF ANY IMPROVEMENTS MENTIONED AS “YES” – FULL CATI ONLY ((D14 A-F = 1 OR D16 A-F=1)
AND FULL CATI ONLY)

**Do you think [IF ONE YES AT D14 OR D16: this improvement was] [IF MORE THAN ONE YES AT D14
OR D16: these improvements were] directly because of your <COURSE>, do you think doing the
<COURSE> helped, or do you think the <COURSE> made no difference?**

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

DS INSTRUCTION: SHOW THOSE ANSWERED YES AT D15 OR D16.

<p>Directly because of the course [IF PROJID=80736: or support programme]</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>The course [IF PROJID=80736: or support programme] helped</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>Made no difference</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>DO NOT READ OUT: Not sure</p>	<p>4</p>

Present situation and benefits of the course

READ OUT TO ALL: I'd now like you to think about the present. So...

NOT IN WORK AT PRESENT

IF NOT IN OR LOOKING FOR PAID WORK – FULL CATI ONLY (C1 = 5 AND FULL CATI ONLY)

You mentioned earlier that you are not looking for work currently. Are you not looking for work for any of the following reasons.....

READ OUT. MULTICODE.

Looking after the family, home or caring for dependents	1
Temporary health problems or injury (including physical and mental health problems)	2
Long term-health problems or disabled (including physical and mental health problems)	3
Retired	4
Doing unpaid voluntary work	5
Not needing or wanting employment	6
Not looking for work as there are no jobs available	7
Alcohol or drug dependency	10
Or are there some other reasons you are not looking for a job (PLEASE SPECIFY)	8
DO NOT READ OUT: Can't remember	9

ASK IF NOT CURRENTLY WORKING AND NOT RETIRED – FULL CATI ONLY (C1≠1 AND E1=NOT 4 AND FULL CATI ONLY)

Which, if any, of the following things [IF DOING VOLUNTARY WORK OR NOT IN OR LOOKING FOR PAID WORK (C1= 4/5) ADD: would] make it difficult currently for you to find work...

READ OUT. MULTICODE.

Not having the right qualifications	1
Not having the right skills	2
Not having relevant work experience	3
Not able to afford childcare	4
Having caring responsibilities	5
Health problems (including physical and mental health problems)	6
Your age	7
Alcohol or drug dependency	8
Having a criminal record	9
No appropriate jobs where you live	10
Hard to get to appropriate work	11
You only wanting to work part time	12
Believing you would not be better off financially in work	13
Were there any other reasons why it was difficult for you to find work (PLEASE SPECIFY)	14
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	15
DO NOT READ OUT: None of these	16

EMPLOYED AT PRESENT

ASK ALL CURRENTLY WORKING – FULL CATI ONLY (C1=1 AND FULL CATI ONLY)

You told us earlier that you are currently employed. What is your job title and what are your main duties or responsibilities?

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION; PROBE FOR FULL DETAILS. FOR EXAMPLE, IF ‘SUPERVISOR’ WHO ARE THEY SUPERVISING? IF ‘MANAGER’, WHAT SORT OF MANAGER? PROBE FULLY. RECORD VERBATIM

INTERVIEWER NOTE: IF RESPONDENT HAS MORE THAN ONE JOB, ASK THEM TO TELL US ABOUT THE JOB THEY CONSIDER TO BE THEIR MAIN JOB. THIS MAY BE THE JOB THAT EARNS THEM THE MOST INCOME OR TAKES UP THE MOST AMOUNT OF TIME ETC.

WRITE IN		
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	1	
DO NOT READ OUT: Prefer not to say	2	

IF CURRENTLY WORKING – FULL CATI ONLY (C1 = 1 AND FULL CATI ONLY)

In your job now, do you have formal responsibility for supervising the work of other employees?

Yes	1
No	2
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	3

ASK ALL CURRENTLY WORKING AS AN EMPLOYEE – FULL CATI ONLY (C1 = 1 & C1A#2/ 3 AND FULL CATI ONLY)

Is this job...?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

On a permanent or open-ended contract	1
A fixed term contract lasting 12 months or longer	2
A fixed term contract lasting less than 12 months	3
on a temporary or casual basis	4
A zero hours contract	5
DO NOT READ OUT: On an open ended contract but of limited duration (i.e. covering the absence of a colleague or covering completion of a fixed task)	6
On some other basis (PLEASE SPECIFY)	7
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	8
DO NOT READ OUT: Prefer not to say	9

ASK ALL CURRENTLY WORKING – FULL CATI ONLY (C1=1 AND FULL CATI ONLY)

How many hours a week do you usually work – on average, not counting meal breaks but including any paid overtime?

PROBE FOR BEST ESTIMATE

EXACT ANSWER _____	
Don't know	1
IF DON'T KNOW ASK: Is it... READ OUT	
40 hours or more per week	2
16 to 39 hours per week	3
Under 16 hours per week	4
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	5

THERE IS NO E7.

ALL

ASK ALL (FULL CATI ONLY)

I now want you to think again about the <COURSE> you participated in – the <COURSE TITLE>. Which, if any, of the following skills do you feel you have gained or improved from doing the <COURSE>?

READ OUT. CODE ONE PER ROW.

DS: PLEASE ROTATE LIST.

	Yes	No	DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know
Job-specific skills related to a particular type of job	1	2	3
Problem solving skills	1	2	3
Team working skills	1	2	3
Organisational skills	1	2	3
DELETED	1	2	3
DELETED	1	2	3
Reading and writing	1	2	3
Working with numbers	1	2	3
Computer literacy / basic IT skills, such as basic skills in PowerPoint or Excel	1	2	3
Advanced or specialist IT skills, such as software design or programming	1	2	3
Communication skills	1	2	3

Customer handling skills	1	2	3
Sales skills	1	2	3
Leadership and/or strategic management skills	1	2	3
DELETED	1	2	3
DELETED	1	2	3
Job search, CV writing, or interview skills	1	2	3
English language skills	1	2	3
Welsh language skills	1	2	3
Are there other skills that have improved because of the <COURSE> (TYPE ANSWER ON NEXT PAGE)	1	2	3

ASK IF OTHER SKILLS – FULL CATI ONLY (E8_18=1 AND FULL CATI ONLY)

E8A What other skills have improved because of the <COURSE>?

WRITE IN		
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	1	
DO NOT READ OUT: Prefer not to say	2	

ASK ALL (FULL CATI ONLY)

Have you been able to use what you learnt on the <COURSE> [IF C1=1: in your work]?

Yes	1
No / not yet	2
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know / not sure	3
Not applicable	4

ALL CURRENTLY WORKING AS AN EMPLOYEE – FULL CATI ONLY (C1=1 AND C1A≠2/ 3 AND FULL CATI ONLY)

Do you think you got your current job directly because of your <COURSE>, do you think doing the <COURSE> helped, or do you think the <COURSE> made no difference?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Directly because of the <COURSE>	1
The <COURSE> helped	2
Made no difference	3
DO NOT READ OUT: Not sure	4

IF SELF-EMPLOYED NOW OR AT 6 MONTHS AND WAS NOT SELF-EMPLOYED BEFORE – FULL CATI ONLY ((C1A=2/3 OR D3=2/3) AND B10≠2/3 AND FULL CATI ONLY)

Do you think you were able to set up on a self-employed basis directly because of your <COURSE>, do you think doing the <COURSE> helped, or do you think the <COURSE> made no difference?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Directly because of the <COURSE>	1
The <COURSE> helped	2
Made no difference	3
DO NOT READ OUT: Not sure	4

ASK IF COMPLETED COURSE IN 2020 ONWARDS (ALL FORMATS) (IF C6 ANSWERED AND C6 MONTH IS 2019 OR EARLIER, OR IF C6 NOT ANSWERED AND PROJENDDATE IN SAMPLE IS 2019 OR EARLIER)

Did COVID-19 have any impact on when or how the training or support you received was delivered on the <COURSE> ?

SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1
No	2
Not sure	3

IF YES – ALL FORMATS (E12=1)

What impact did COVID-19 have?

DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.

The start of the course was delayed	1
The course took longer than planned (e.g. the course was delayed or paused because of COVID)	2
Some / all / more of the course was remote / online (less face to face delivery)	3
I was off / missed bits because I was ill with COVID (or had to care for people with COVID)	4
The people delivering the course kept changing because they were off with COVID	5
I saved time travelling to the provider / to the training	6
Other (please specify)	6
Not sure / can't remember	7

ASK ALL (ALL FORMATS)

Do you think the COVID-19 pandemic has made it easier, harder or not made a difference for you to progress since leaving the <COURSE>, for example finding work, getting a promotion or getting onto a new course,

SINGLE CODE.

Made it easier	1
Made it harder	2
Not really made a difference	3
Not sure	4

IF HARDER AT E14 – ALL FORMATS (E14=2)

Why do you say that? DO NOT READ OUT.]

DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.

Fewer jobs around generally	1
I don't want to use / been reluctant to use public transport	2
I've had to care for ill relatives	3
The industry I want / wanted to work in was badly affected by the pandemic	4

Fewer training courses were available	5
Other (please specify)	6
Not sure / can't remember	7

IF EASIER AT E14 – ALL FORMATS (E14=1)

Why do you say that?

DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.

Online training / job training has been more accessible	1
I have been able to apply for jobs further afield because homeworking is an option	2
Covid related temporary job opportunities/redeployment	3
The ability to work from home or remotely has provided me with more flexibility	4
COVID-19 had led to additional vacancies / job opportunities	7
Other (please specify)	5
Not sure / can't remember	6

THERE IS NO SECTION F.

Modules – section G removed

H Demographics

READ OUT: **Finally, I now just have a few questions about yourself. These are just to help us analyse the results.**

SHOW IF 'GENDER' IS BLANK (ALL FORMATS)
QUESTION DELETED

ASK IF AGE NOT SHOWN IN SAMPLE (ALL FORMATS)
Can you please tell me your current age?

SINGLE CODE.

EXACT AGE IN YEARS _____

ASK IF ETHNICITY NOT SHOWN IN SAMPLE – ALL FORMATS (IF 'ETHNICITY' = 99)
Which of the following best describes your ethnic group?

INTERVIEWER NOTE: READ OUT BOLD CATEGORIES THEN RELEVANT MORE DETAILED CATEGORIES.

SINGLE CODE.

White		
Welsh	1	
Other British	2	
Irish	3	
Any other white background (PLEASE SPECIFY)	4	
Mixed		
White and Black Caribbean	5	
White and Black African	6	
White and Asian	7	

Any other mixed background (PLEASE SPECIFY)	8	
Asian or Asian British		
Indian	9	
Pakistani	10	
Bangladeshi	11	
Chinese	12	
Any other Asian background (PLEASE SPECIFY)	13	
Black or Black British		
Caribbean	14	
African	15	
Any other Black background (PLEASE SPECIFY)	16	
Other ethnic group		
Arab	17	
Gypsy / Romany / Irish Traveller	18	
Any other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	19	
Prefer not to say	20	

THERE IS NO H4.

ASK ALL (ALL FORMATS)

What is your first language?

DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

CATI ONLY: NOTE FOR INTERVIEWER: IF INTERVIEW IS BEING CONDUCTED IN ENGLISH, ASK "ENGLISH" FIRST. IF INTERVIEW IS BEING CONDUCTED IN WELSH, ASK "WELSH" FIRST.

Welsh	1
English	2
Other language (including bilingual) (PLEASE SPECIFY)	3
[CATI; DO NOT READ OUT:] Don't know	4
[CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] Prefer not to say	5

ASK ALL (ALL FORMATS)

Do you have any long-term illness, health problem or disability - by long-term, we mean that it can be expected to last for more than one year.

Yes	1	ASK H7
No	2	
[CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] Don't know	3	

IF YES- ALL FORMATS (H6=1)

Does this illness or disability affect the amount or type of work you can do?

Yes	1
No	2
[CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] Don't know	3

THERE IS NO H8.

ASK ALL (ALL FORMATS)

Were you aware that the European Social Fund (or ESF) helped to pay for the <COURSE>?

Yes	1
No	2
[CATI: DO NOT READ OUT:] Don't know/ not sure	3

ASK ALL – ALL FORMATS

H10A Thank you. The answers you give may be combined with other information about you held by the Welsh Government and other organisations, for example DWP, education and health records, or other research data sets. Your answers will be treated in the strictest confidence and only used for research purposes. [IF ONLINE: Are you happy for your data to be used in this way?

IF CATI:

DO NOT PROMPT. INTERVIEW TO CODE. CONTINUE IF NO SPONTANEOUS OBJECTIONS.

CONTINUE - No objections raised	1
Doesn't want data linked	2

IF ONLINE

Yes	1
No	2

ASK ALL (ALL FORMATS)

H12A It is occasionally necessary to call people back to clarify information; may we please call you back if required?

Yes	1
No	2

THANK RESPONDENT AND CLOSE INTERVIEW

Finally I would just like to confirm that this survey has been carried out under IFF instructions and within the rules of the MRS Code of Conduct. Thank you very much for your help today.

