IFF Research

Destinations of Construction Learners in Further Education

CITB

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Contents

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Executive Summary

This report presents findings from a survey of learners in England on FE Construction and Built Environment courses in the 2015-2016 academic year who were due to finish their course between June and August 2016. A total of 1,729 learners were interviewed between April and May 2016 while still on their course (Wave 1). A second follow-up wave was conducted with these learners from January to March 2017 approximately six months after the intended completion date, and a total of 821 interviews were conducted with these learners exploring their destinations.

Prior situation, reasons for study, satisfaction with the course and desired destinations (Wave 1)

Although the core aim of the study was to investigate the destinations of learners and what influenced these, information was collected about learner's prior situation, their satisfaction with the course, and their desired destinations.

Most learners came to the construction course from other education or training (58%); most of these had been in full-time study (52% of all learners) and a minority were continuing from construction-specific courses (equivalent to 23% of all learners). Just over a quarter had been working immediately before their course (27%): a minority of these (representing 11% of all learners) had been working in construction immediately before their course. Overall 9% of learners had been unemployed and 5% had a range of other situations.

The sample was almost evenly split between those with any prior construction work or learning experience (52%) and those without (48%). Approximately equal proportions had worked in construction without having studied a construction-related course (17%), had previously studied a construction-related course but had not worked in the industry (18%) or had construction employment and learning experience (17%).

People chose their construction course for a variety of career and skill development reasons. The most common single main reason for studying was to help get their first construction job (29%). Around a fifth (22%) primarily undertook their course to set up their own business / go self-employed and around one in six (17%) mainly wanted to update their existing skills / knowledge. One in eight (12%) said the main reason for undertaking their course was to help them decide whether to work in construction or not.

Satisfaction with their construction course was high: four-fifths (81%) were satisfied and half (51%) were very satisfied overall, compared with just 6% dissatisfied. Similarly, relatively high proportions were satisfied with specific elements of the course, ranging from 73% satisfied with the quality of facilities and equipment to 81% satisfied with the quality of teaching. Relatively few were dissatisfied on each measure, though it was slightly higher than average for the quality of the facilities and equipment (9%). Across Level 4+ learners, dissatisfaction was consistently higher (e.g. 12% with the teaching hours / contact time with staff, 18% dissatisfied with the quality of teaching, 22% with the quality of facilities and equipment and with the feedback received).

Overall satisfaction fell the higher the level of the course (from 85% of Entry Level / Level 1 learners satisfied, to 80% of Level 2 learners, 76% of Level 3 learners and just 63% of Level 4+ learners. As many as 15% of Level 4+ learners were dissatisfied). It was also the case that apprentices were less likely to be very satisfied (38%) than non-apprentices (49%).

When interviewed at Wave 1 near the end of their course, around three-quarters (73%) hoped to be working in construction six months after completing, and just under half (46%) hoped to be doing another construction course (29% expected to be both studying and working in construction). In comparison, just under one in ten (9%) had already decided they wanted to be working in another sector and one in twenty (5%) hoped to be doing a non-construction course. One in ten (10%) hoped to be doing something else and a very small proportion (3%) did not know what they wanted to do six months after the end of their course. Overall nine in ten (89%) intended to have at least some involvement with the construction industry either through a job or another construction course.

Destinations (Wave 2)

When interviewed at Wave 2 approximately six months after their intended course completion date, the vast majority (94%) had completed their course. Most (66%) indicated that their *main* activity was construction-related:

- 25% had a construction job
- 16% were doing a construction apprenticeship
- 25% were doing another construction-related course.

Amongst the third whose main activity was not construction, 16% were working in another sector, 3% were doing a non-construction job, 12% were unemployed, and 3% were doing other things.

Note, figures here relate to what individuals chose as their main activity at the 6 months after completion point. While we have described how 41% selected a construction job or apprenticeship as their main activity, a slightly higher proportion had a construction job or apprenticeship (44%). Overall 71% of all learners had *at least some* involvement in construction six months after the end of their provision (i.e. they were doing a construction job or a construction course as their main or a partial activity).

It was much more common for certain types of learner to have construction jobs as their main activity six months after completing, in particular: higher level learners (74% of those that had been on Level 4+ course, compared with just 9% of those on Entry or Level 1 courses); apprentices (55%); and those that had a construction job while studying (52% compared with 12% among those that had not).

Among those with construction jobs, nearly all were working full-time (92%), most had permanent jobs with open-ended contracts (66%), and most were working for an employer (63% vs. 32% self-employed and 5% that had started their own business). The average salary of those with full time jobs was £21.6k average salary, over £4,000 higher than those with full-time positions in other sectors.

Results suggest that of the 104,000 learners on Construction courses in the 2015-2016 academic year who were due to finish their course between June and August 2016, six months later **29,150 had been added** to the Construction workforce (i.e. they had jobs or were doing a construction apprenticeship, and had not being doing a construction job during their course or had not been doing an apprenticeship).

Impact of learning on employment, careers and progression to further courses

The FE construction course was widely felt to have had positive impacts on employment, careers and learning *among those with successful outcomes / destinations*.

- Nearly all of those engaged in further construction-related studies at Wave 2 felt that their Wave 1 course had helped them get a place on their new course (94%): a third (33%) felt it had been vital and almost half (46%) felt it helped a lot.

- Nearly all those working in construction at Wave 2 felt that they had better career prospects (94%), more job satisfaction (91%), more responsibilities (83%) and better job security (73%) after finishing their Wave 1 course. For each of these benefits at least nine in ten attributed this to the course: with between 17% to 28% saying it was vital and 45% to 48% saying it helped a lot in each case.

- Well over half those working in construction had had a pay rise since the course (57%) and a third (35%) had been promoted. Again, in each case over nine in ten felt the course contributed to this outcome: around a quarter felt it had been vital (23% and 25% respectively) and a significant proportion felt it had helped a lot (37% and 46% respectively).

However, views were more mixed among all learners on the extent to which their FE course had prepared them for employment in construction or for further study. In each case around three-fifths thought the course had prepared them well (58% and 63% respectively) but around one in eight (13% in each case) thought it had prepared them poorly. Preparation for becoming self-employed or setting up their own business was far lower, and three in ten (30%) thought it had not prepared them well for this. This is a concern both because of the high prevalence of such working practices in construction, and the high proportion mentioning this as a motivation for undertaking their course.

What influences destinations

Fewer learners were working in construction jobs or apprenticeships six months after completion than expected (or hoped) to be while on their course. A number of reasons appear to contribute to this:

- Word of mouth and personal contacts continue to play a very important role in acquiring jobs in the sector, and are far more important in construction than other sectors. For example, those that had acquired a (new) construction job between Wave 1 and Wave 2 were by far more likely to say they had got this through personal contacts (39%) than by any other method. This has important implications:

    - It is not clear if learners are making enough use of the careers service and careers support available through their provider: 15% of those acquiring construction jobs got this via the provider's career service.

    - Some groups appear to have less access to personal contacts working in construction (for example non-White British learners), which makes it harder for them to work in the sector.

- Closely related to the above, this research (and indeed other research IFF has conducted for CITB, for example on Recruitment Barriers which explored the barriers and challenges that individuals face from the stage of being interested in working in the sector to this becoming a

reality), points to the fact that many jobs are not formally advertised and are acquired through informal means. Thus, for example, many say a lack of vacancies is the reason why, though successful, they described finding work difficult, or why they had not made any construction job applications. This means many interested in working in the sector do not see the full range of opportunities.

- Many cite a lack of work experience (though also a lack of skills and qualifications) as reasons why acquiring construction jobs was or continues to be difficult. Work experience opportunities have always been challenging for providers to offer in construction, typically because employers cite health and safety and insurance problems. However, it is clearly important that CITB works to encourage providers and employers to maximise the opportunities for these on construction courses since a lack of experience continues to be a key barrier preventing those wanting to work in the sector achieving their goal.

How CITB could best support further education provision

The research has highlighted a number of areas where providers are rated relatively poorly, or where there are barriers to achieving employment outcomes. In each area CITB has a potential role to play, in part using its network to inform providers of potential weaknesses across the sector, in part working to develop potential solutions. We feel these areas are:

- Encouraging providers to offer / promote on-going support to learners after they complete their course in relation to employment, careers and learning opportunities (satisfaction was relatively low for the support they received following completion, indeed a quarter of learners were dissatisfied, and a quarter were neither satisfied not dissatisfied);

- Improving the extent to which courses help develop skills related to self-employment and setting up their own business;

- Continuing to work with providers and employers to enhance the availability of work experience opportunities for learners. As well as improving employability skills, it will help learners develop networks and personal contacts in the industry, something that still remains a key route to gaining employment in the sector;

- In the medium-term, working with the sector to encourage wider advertising of sector vacancies, and less reliance on word of mouth and personal contacts, which would widen the talent pool on which employers can draw, enable providers to better understand the occupations and types of local vacancies in construction and promote these better to their learners, and enable learners better access to construction jobs.

- Dissatisfaction on a range of measures is consistently higher among Level 4+ learners (most of whom were doing HNCs/HNDs in the professional services area), and it feels as if work is required to understand better the needs of these learners.

1 Introduction

Research background

1.1 In 2014 CITB's Construction Skills Network forecasting predicted that employment in the construction sector would reach 2.74m in 2019, with 224,000 jobs being created throughout the UK between 2014 and 2019. This represented a predicted annual recruitment requirement (ARR) of around 44,500 for 2015-2019 (i.e. the level of recruitment required over and above the normal 'churn' rates). The ARR balance increases demand for employment based on anticipated levels of workload versus the supply-side 'churn' in the industry (i.e. those moving in and out of the industry). Currently, the supply-side flows do not take account of those entering the industry from training as the training data available is not sufficiently robust.

1.2 It was against this backdrop, and considering the growing importance of learner destination and outcome data from a policy perspective[1], that in April 2015 CITB commissioned IFF to undertake research to improve training data by providing information on the intended and actual destination of learners from FE Construction and Built Environment Courses in England. This research was commissioned to:

- Provide evidence about the learning experience of learners in FE;
- Provide detailed information of the destination of learners six months after completion of their courses which will enhance forecasting of the demand for employment and training in the industry by providing data on the flow into the construction labour force from those on training; and
- Investigate how the learning experience influences the outcome and planned future activities.

Research objectives

1.3 More specifically, the objectives of the research were to:

- Examine the intended / desired destinations of current learners, and then the actual destination of learners six months after the end of provision;
- Examine what influences desired and actual destinations;
- Assess the impact of learning on earnings, responsibility, promotion etc.;
- Assess how FE learning could better enhance learners' future activities; and,
- Consider how CITB could best support further education for CBE.

1 In 2014 the government's 'Skills Funding Statement 2013-2016' announced that it is considering how funding can be more strongly linked to outcomes in the future – "Government funding will be awarded to those providers with high quality world class offers aligned to the needs of employers and learners and proven outcomes'.

Overview of methodology

1.4 To meet the research objectives, IFF in close collaboration with CITB, designed the following two-wave research programme.

Sample

1.5 The audience covered by the research was learners in England who were undertaking FE Construction and Built Environment courses in the 2015-2016 academic year.

1.6 The sample was drawn from the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) of those who were on FE Construction and Built Environment courses in the 2015-2016 academic year who were due to finish their course between June and August 2016 and had indicated that they were willing to be contacted for research purposes.

1.7 A total of 40,698 individuals that met these criteria were invited to take part in the research in April 2016.

Wave 1

1.8 The Wave 1 survey encompassed 1,729 quantitative interviews with learners conducted between April and May 2016 (this amounted to 4% of the individuals who were invited to take part in the survey).

1.9 A total of 710 interviews were completed online and 1,019 by telephone. Interviews took an average of 10 minutes to complete.

1.10 The Wave 1 survey was conducted whilst learners were in-learning (i.e. they were still undertaking the construction course that we were asking them about at the time of the survey).

1.11 Key topics included:

- Learners' situations prior to and whilst studying;
- Reasons for studying a course in construction;
- Satisfaction with the course to date; and,
- Plans in terms of employment.

Wave 2

1.12 A total of 1,536 learners (89% of those who participated in the Wave 1 survey) agreed to be contacted to take part in the follow-up quantitative six months after their course was due to finish to explore their destinations.

1.13 A total of 821 follow-up interviews were conducted with these learners between January and March 2017 (47% of all Wave 1 participants and 53% of those willing to be re-contacted), of which 72 were completed online and 749 by telephone. These interviews took an average of 10 minutes to complete.

1.14 Key topics included:

- What learners were doing six months after the end of their course;
- Details of learners' employment;
- The experiences for those who were looking for employment;
- Details of further study undertaken; and
- Learner satisfaction.

Weighting

1.15 At the analysis stage, the data from the Wave 1 and the Wave 2 surveys of learners was weighted up to the overall population of learners by those doing apprenticeship and non-apprenticeship courses by level of study. The population figures used for weighting were taken from the ILR, and are presented in Appendix A. As a result of the weighting the Wave 1 and Wave 2 data is representative of the full population of learners on construction courses due to complete from June to August 2016.

About this report

1.16 This report draws on the findings from both waves of this research and is structured into seven separate chapters:

Chapters 2-4 are based on findings from the Wave 1 survey.

- **Chapter 2** discusses the profile of learners who participated in the research.
- **Chapter 3** explores what learners were doing immediately prior to starting their FE course, why they were initially attracted to construction and their motivations for learning.
- **Chapter 4** explores the in-learning experience of FE.

Chapters 5-6 are based on findings from the Wave 2 follow-up survey.

- **Chapter 5** explores the destinations of learners six months after the end of their provision and examines what factors may have influenced this; before providing employment details of those working in construction, outlining the experiences of those not working in construction and providing details about further study undertaken.
- **Chapter 6** explores learner satisfaction with their course and examines the extent to which learners felt that their course had prepared them for work and further study.
- **Chapter 7** provides conclusions and recommendations.

Reporting conventions

1.17 Comparisons between subgroups are only reported in the text if they are statistically significant, unless otherwise stated. Significance is measured at the 95% confidence level. Not all significant relationships are highlighted in the report and are generally outlined when they relate to relevant themes and contribute to key findings.

1.18 'Don't know' or 'prefer not to say' responses have not been included in some tables and figures for simplicity, as these proportions were typically negligible and did not add to the overall narrative. Consequently, not all figures will necessarily sum to a total of 100%. Figures may also not add to a total of 100% if the response was multi-coded. Where all responses have been included, figures may not sum to exactly 100% due to rounding.

2 Profile of learners

2.1 This chapter discusses the profile of learners who took part in the FE Destinations survey in terms of their demographics and the types of qualifications they were undertaking.

2.2 The survey covered learners in England who were on FE Construction and Built Environment courses in the 2015-2016 academic year who were due to finish their course between June and August 2016. The Individualised Learner Record shows there were 104,181 such learners (though less than half of these had consented to be contacted for survey purposes)

2.3 At Wave 1, 1,729 individuals participated in the survey. This data was grossed up to the full population of 104,000 learners on an interlocked level within apprenticeship vs. non-apprenticeship basis, to ensure the sample was representative on these criteria (see Annex A).

Level and type of learning

2.4 The vast majority of learners were doing non-apprenticeship courses (86%). Level 2 learning was the most common individual level of learning (undertaken by 42%, indeed three-quarters of apprentices (76%) were on Level 2 provision), followed by Entry Level or Level 1 learning (37%). Figures are presented in the following table. Note these are not 'findings' as results have been weighted to these profiles to match the ILR population data.

Table 2.1 Level and type of learning

Level	Apprenticeship	Non-apprenticeship	Total
0/1	-	37%	37%
2	11%	32%	42%
3	3%	16%	19%
4+	0	2%	2%
Total	14%	86%	100%

2.5 Level 4+ learners comprise a relatively small proportion of the overall cohort (2%). Most were doing professional services subject areas (55%), and were typically studying HNCs or HNDs (80%).

Demographics

2.6 The vast majority of learners were male (93%), just over half were under 19 (54%), and around four-fifths were White / White British (82%). As shown on the following table, our sample of apprentices was heavily skewed to males (98%) and White / White British (96%). Put another way, while 14% of our cohort of learners was undertaking an apprenticeship, among women this was just 4% and among non-White British respondents it was 2%.

Table 2.2 Gender, age and ethnicity of learners overall and by type of learning

Level	Apprenticeship	Non-apprenticeship	Total
	%	%	%
Male	98	92	93
Female	2	8	7
16-18	35	57	54
19-23	54	17	22
24-29	7	8	8
30-39	3	10	9
40+	1	9	8
White / White British	96	79	82
Asian / Asian / British	1	9	8
Black / Black British	1	7	6
Mixed	1	3	3
Other	0	1	1

Qualifications and subject of study

2.7 The five main qualification types being studied were:

- City and Guilds (31%)
- NVQ (18%)
- Apprenticeship (14%)
- BTEC (8%)
- Diplomas (6%)

Other qualification types were ONC/ONDs and HNCs, (each 2%), and Traineeships, Access to HE, Foundation Degrees and HNDs (each 1%) though as many as 14% were unsure what qualification type they were studying.

2.8 A wide range of subjects were being studied. Those mentioned by at least one in twenty learners were:

- Plumbing, heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) (21%)
- Wood trades (20%)
- Electrical trades and installation (19%)
- Bricklaying (12%)
- General Construction (7%)
- Painting and Decorating (6%).

2.9 Overall nine in ten were studying in traditional trade roles (90%), compared with 6% studying Professional Services roles (such as Surveying, Architecture, Building Technology, Construction Management and Civil and general Engineering). There were also a small number (3%) in other roles such as Health and Safety and Site Management.

2.10 Well over nine in ten of those studying at Entry Level or Level 1 (96%) or at Level 2 (94%) were studying traditional trade roles. This proportion fell to three-quarters of Level 3 learners (77%) and only three in ten (30%) studying at Level 4+.

Provider type

2.11 Most learners were attending a General FE college (89%), particularly those doing non-apprenticeship provision (95%). A slight majority of apprentices were studying at a general FE college (55%) but were also commonly learning at a private or voluntary sector provider (42%).

Table 2.3 Provider type

Level	Apprenticeship	Non-apprenticeship	Total
	%	%	%
General FE college	55	95	89
Private / voluntary sector providers	42	2	8
Specialist college	1	2	2
Other	2	1	1

3 Learners' situations prior to starting FE construction course

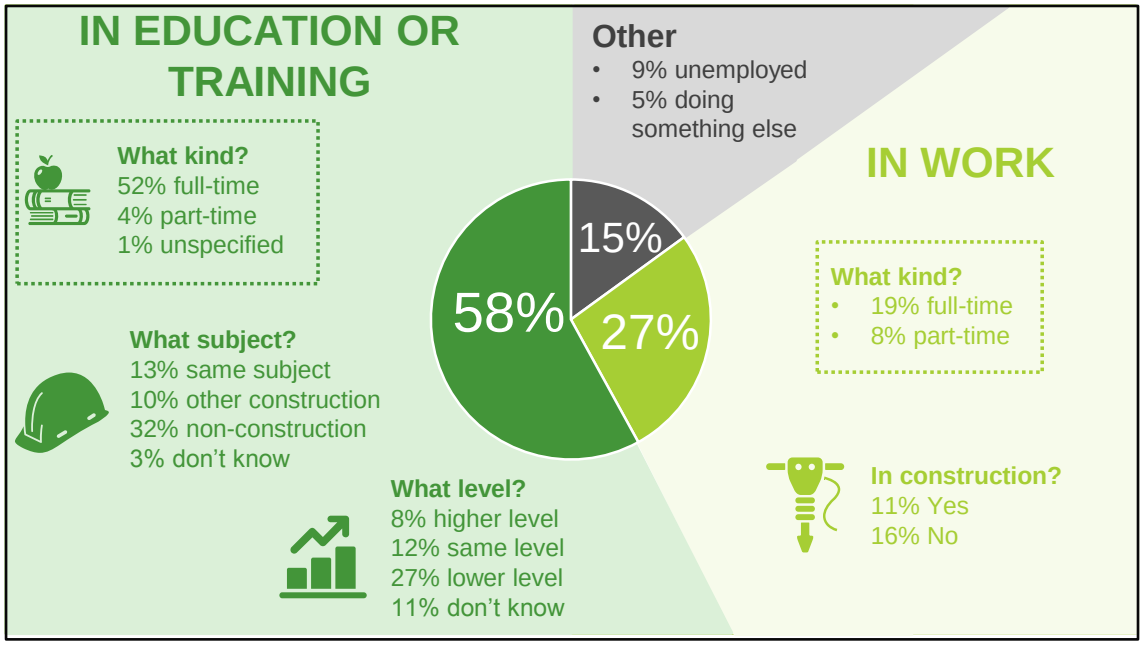
3.1 This chapter explores what learners were doing immediately prior to starting their course, what initially attracted them to the idea of working in the construction industry and what motivated them to study a FE construction course.

Learner activity prior to starting FE construction course

3.2 Almost three-fifths (58%) of learners were in education or training immediately prior to starting their FE construction course, just over a quarter (27%) were in work, around one in ten (9%) were unemployed, and 5% were doing something else.

3.3 Results are summarised in Figure 3.1, where all figures are based on all learners that participated in the Wave 1 survey.

Figure 3.1 Learner activity immediately prior to course



Unweighted base: All learners who participated in the W1 survey (1,729)

3.4 Over half of learners (52%) had been in full-time education or training immediately before starting their construction course, with relatively few (4%) studying part-time.

3.5 A slight majority of those that had been in learning had been studying a non-construction course (55%, equivalent to 32% of all participants). In comparison, a quarter of those that had been in education or training (24%, equivalent to 13% of all Wave 1 learners) had been studying the same subject as the one they were on in the 2015-2016 academic year and slightly fewer (17% or 10% of all) had been doing a course in a different construction subject.

3.6 Those on a Level 4+ FE construction course during the 2015-2016 academic year were most likely to have been on a construction course in the same subject immediately prior to this (41%).

On the other hand, those doing Entry Level / Level 1 courses were most likely to have been on non-construction courses (59%).

3.7 Predictably, those that had been studying immediately before their course were more likely to have been studying at a lower level (47%, equivalent to 27% of all participants) than the same level (21% or 12% of all) or a higher level (14% or 2% of all), though it was not uncommon for learners to be unsure of the comparative levels (equivalent 11% of all study participants).

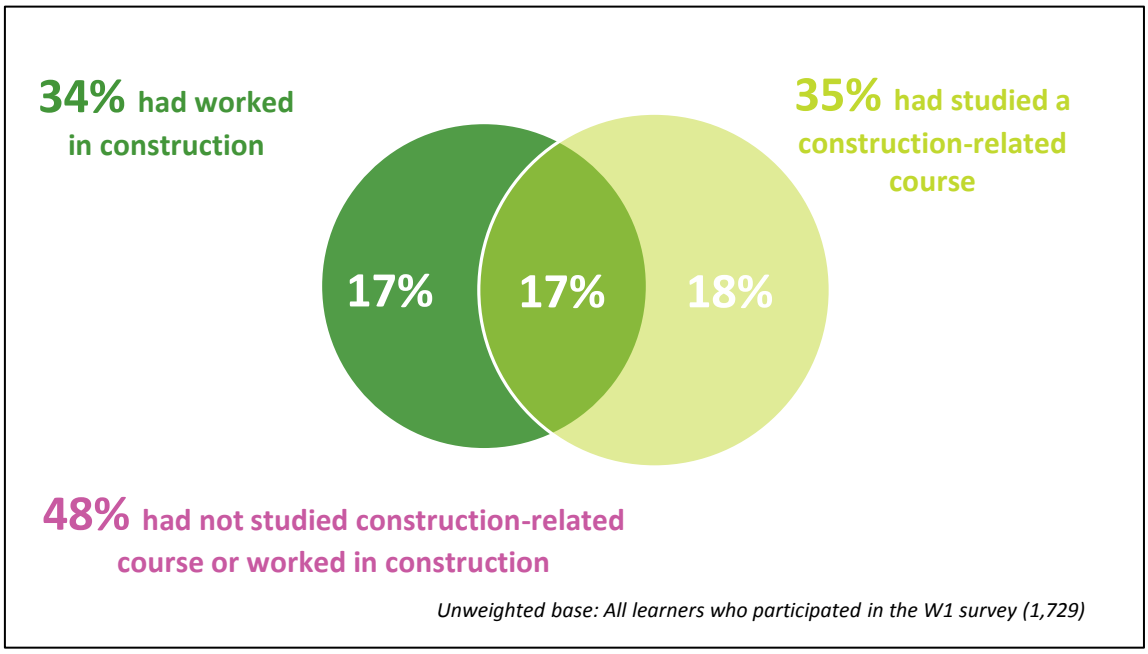
3.8 Among the quarter (27%) who were working immediately prior to starting their FE construction course, most had been working full-time (70%, equivalent to 19% of all participants).

3.9 A slight minority of those that had been in work had been working in construction roles (41%, equivalent to 11% of all participants). The proportion of those that had been working who had construction roles rose to half (51%) of those doing Level 3 courses and around four-fifths (79%) of those doing Level 4+ courses.

Construction experience prior to starting FE construction course

3.10 Around half (48%) of learners had no construction experience prior to starting their FE course (i.e. they had not studied any construction-related courses or worked in construction previously). Around a third (34%) had worked in construction and a similar proportion (35%) had studied a construction related course. As shown in Figure 3.2 roughly equal proportions had worked in construction without having studied a construction-related course (17%), had previously studied a construction-related course but had not worked in the industry (18%) or both worked and done a construction course (17%).

Figure 3.2 Summary of learners' construction experience prior to starting FE course



Unweighted base: All learners who participated in the W1 survey (1,729)

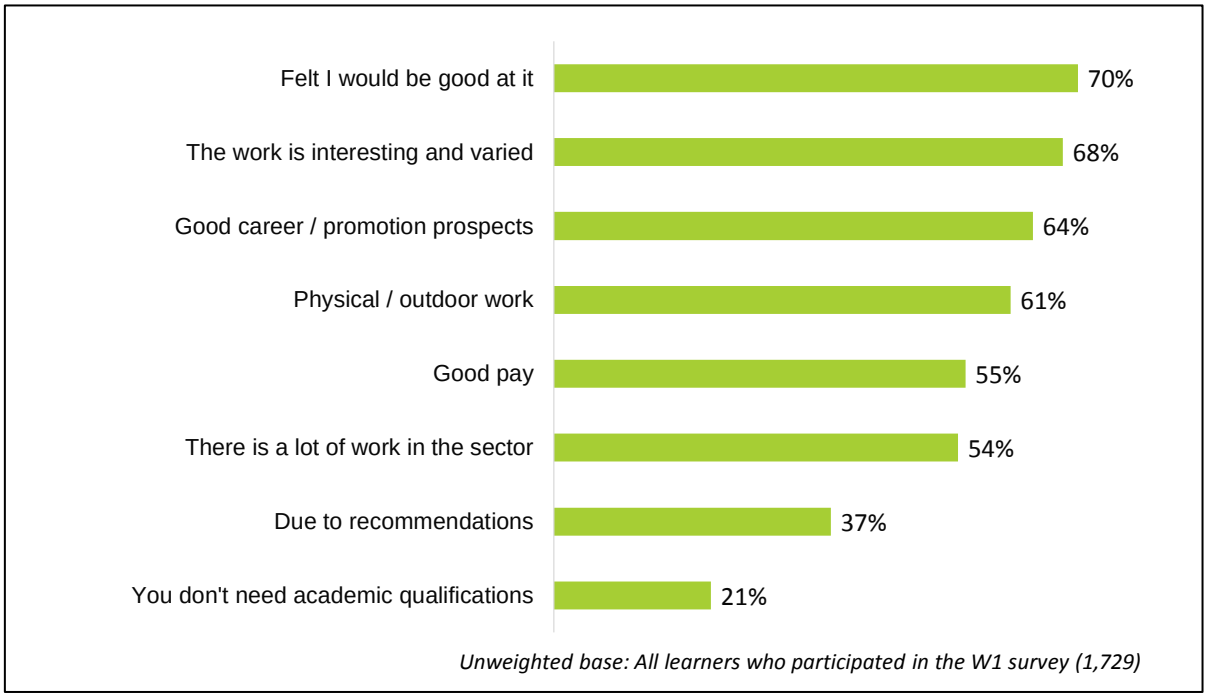
3.11 Level 4+ learners were particularly likely to have had prior construction experience (80%), though the figure did not vary significantly between Entry Level / Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 (for each around half had prior construction experience).

3.12 Seven in ten (70%) female learners had no construction-related experience prior to starting their FE course, much higher than found among male learners (47%).

Reasons for initial interest in construction

3.13 Learners who took part in the Wave 1 survey were asked why they initially became interested in the construction industry (this was a prompted question with respondents selecting from a list). As Figure 3.3 illustrates, a range of factors appealed to them, and encouragingly, most selected positive factors such as feeling they would be good at it (mentioned by 70%), the sector offering interesting and varied work (68%) and it offering good career / promotion prospects (64%). The physical / outdoor nature of the work appealed to three-fifths (61%) and good pay prospects was a factor for over half (55%).

Figure 3.3 Reasons for initial interest in the construction industry (prompted)



3.14 A significant minority (37%) initially got interested in construction because of recommendations. This was more likely to be mentioned by:

- Males (39% vs. 19% of females)
- Non-white British learners (43% vs. 36% of white British learners)

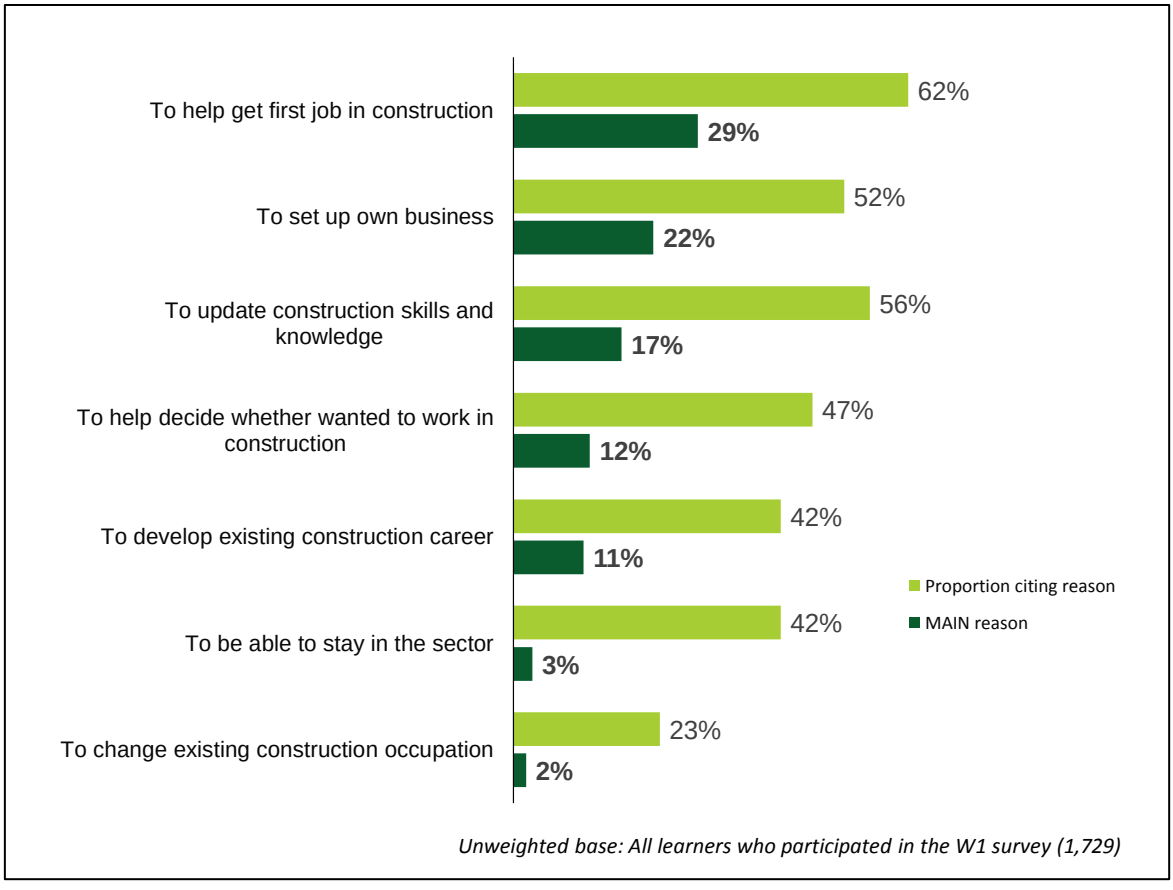
3.15 A fifth (21%) were initially interested in construction, at least in part, because they believed academic qualifications are not needed to work in the sector. This was more likely to be mentioned by males (21% vs. 11% of females) and those doing trades courses (22% vs. 12% among those doing courses in professional services subjects)

Motivations for starting an FE construction course

3.16 Learners had a range of motivations lying behind their decision to undertake their FE construction course. Just over three-fifths (62%) undertook their course to help them get their first construction job (62%), and just over half wanted to update their existing skills and knowledge (56%), or undertook their course to help them set up their own business or become self-employed (52%). Interestingly, around half (47%) undertook their course to help them decide whether they wanted to work in construction or not. Just under a quarter (23%) did their course at least in part to change their existing occupation within construction (rising to 33% of those who had worked in construction prior to their course and 34% of those who were working in construction whilst on their course).

3.17 Learners were also asked which of these factors was the main reason for undertaking their course. Results are shown on Figure 3.4.

Figure 3.4 Learner motivations to study construction course (prompted)



3.18 The most common main reason for studying was to get a first construction job (29%). Around a fifth (22%) primarily undertook their course to set up their own business / go self-employed and around one in six (17%) mainly wanted to update their existing skills / knowledge. One in eight (12%) mainly undertook their course to help them decide whether to work in construction or not.

3.19 Predictably, learners' main reasons for studying varied considerably by level. Learners studying at Level 4+ were significantly less likely than average to be undertaking their course to get their

first job in construction (13% compared with 26% of those at Level 3, 31% of those at Level 2 and 28% of those at Entry Level / Level 1), to help them decide whether they wanted to work in construction or not (whereas this was the main reason for 11% of those studying a Level 3 course, 9% of those studying at Level 2 and 17% of those studying an Entry Level / Level 1 course) or to set up their own business / go self-employed (4%; this was far more common among those studying Level 3 (18%), Level 2 (22%) and Entry Level / Level 1 courses (24%)).

3.20 On the other hand, learners at Level 4+ were far more likely to have started their FE construction course mainly to develop their existing careers in construction (46% compared with 16% of Level 3 learners, 11% of Level 2 learners and just 7% of those studying an Entry Level / Level 1 course).

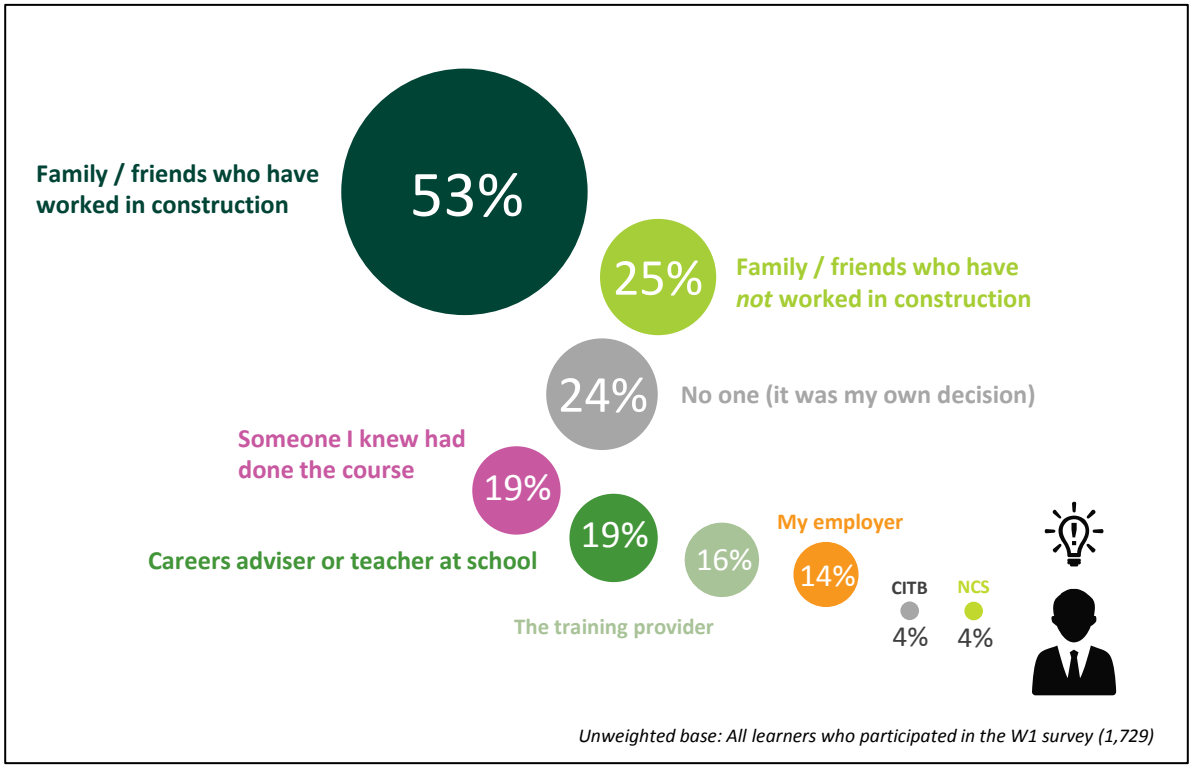
3.21 Predictably, those who had worked in construction prior to starting their course were more likely to be motivated by factors relating to developing their existing skills or knowledge. Almost three in ten (29%) of those who worked in construction prior to their course did the course so they could set up their own business or go self-employed and 17% wanted to develop their existing career in construction (e.g. to get a promotion or a pay rise).

3.22 Over a fifth (22%) of those working in a construction job whilst on their course were mainly motivated to take-up their course to develop their existing construction career, the same proportion (22%) did the course to set up their own business or go self-employed and a slightly lower proportion (20%) said they mainly undertook the course to update their existing skills and knowledge.

Who gave learners advice / helped them to choose their FE construction course?

3.23 Those who took part in the Wave 1 survey were asked who, if anyone, had given them advice or helped them decide to choose their construction course. Results clearly show both that most (three-quarters) received some advice and guidance, and that informal networks such as friends and family play an influential role in learners' decision-making, as shown on Figure 3.5.

Figure 3.5 Key influencers for undertaking construction course (prompted)



3.24 Male learners were more likely than female learners to have been influenced by friends / family who worked in construction (53% vs. 41% respectively), careers advisers or teachers at school (20% vs. 9%) and someone they knew who had completed the course (19% vs. 9%).

3.25 White British learners were more likely to have had a family / friend who worked in the industry recommend their course than non-white British learners (54% compared with 46%). On the other hand, higher proportions of non-white British learners reported being advised to take their construction course by a careers adviser or teacher at school (27% - compared to 17% of white British learners) and by someone they knew who did the course (26% - compared to just 17% of white British learners).

4 Learners' experiences whilst undertaking FE course

4.1 This chapter examines the experience of those on construction courses in FE:

- The proportion that were working during their course
- Satisfaction with the course overall and with specific aspects
- It also looks at intended destinations following the course.

Whether working whilst doing FE course

4.2 The majority (57%) of learners were working whilst on their construction course. Around a third of all learners (32%) were working in a construction-related job and a quarter (25%) were working in jobs not related to construction. A significant minority (43%) were not working whilst studying.

4.3 The proportion of learners working in construction whilst on their course was higher among:

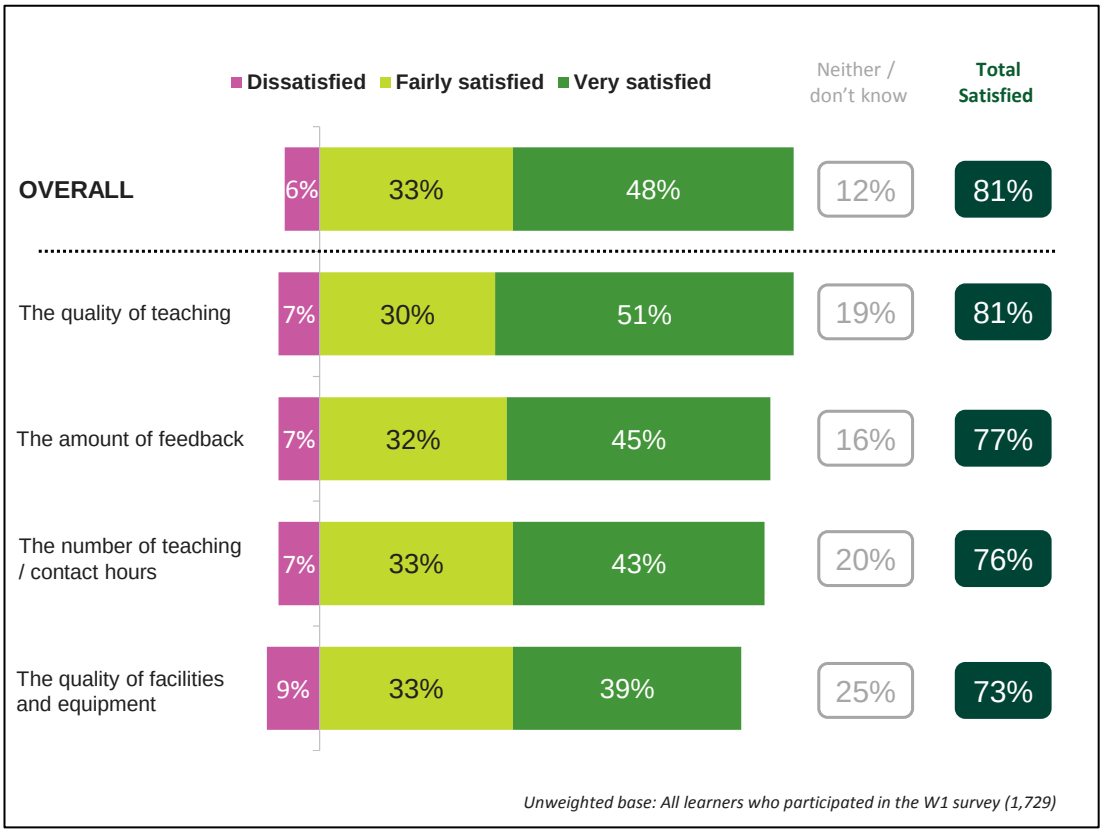
- Level 4+ learners (82% vs. 47% of Level 3 learners, 36% of Level 2 learners and 17% of Entry Level / Level 1 learners)
- Males (33% vs. 19% of females)
- White British learners (36% vs. 15% of non-White-British learners).

'In-learning' satisfaction with FE course

4.4 As Figure 4.1 illustrates, the majority of learners who took part in the Wave 1 survey were satisfied with their course whilst they were still in learning: four-fifths (81%) were satisfied and half (51%) were *very* satisfied with their course overall. In comparison, just 6% were dissatisfied.

4.5 Similarly, high proportions were satisfied with the individual elements of the course about which they were asked, ranging from 73% satisfied with the quality of facilities and equipment to 81% satisfied with the quality of teaching. Relatively few were dissatisfied on each measure, though it was slightly higher for the quality of the facilities and equipment (9%).

Figure 4.1 'In-learning' satisfaction with FE course



4.6 Levels of overall satisfaction declined the higher the level of study, falling from 85% of Entry Level / Level 1 learners, 80% of Level 2 learners, 76% of Level 3 learners to 63% of Level 4+ learners. As many as 15% of Level 4+ learners were dissatisfied compared with 5% of Entry Level / Level 1, 7% of Level 2 and 6% of Level 3 learners).

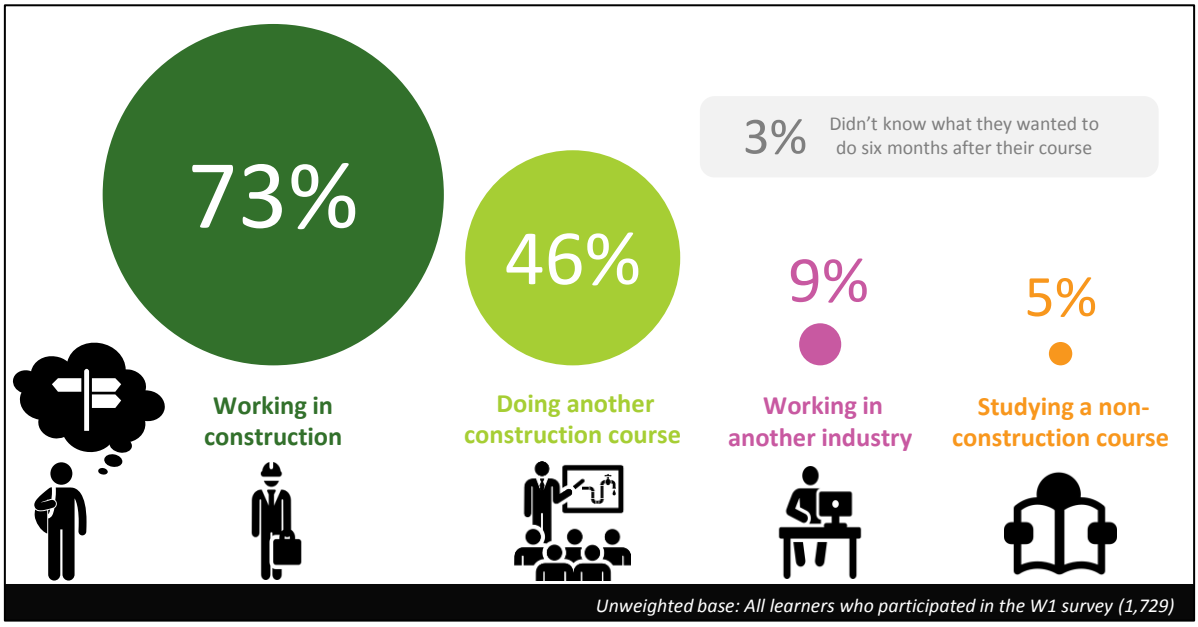
4.7 In addition, Level 4+ learners were far more dissatisfied with each specific aspect of provision: 12% were dissatisfied with the teaching hours / contact time with staff, 18% with the quality of teaching, and 22% with the quality of facilities and equipment and with the feedback received).

Intended destinations of learners whilst doing FE course

4.8 Learners who took part in the Wave 1 survey were asked a series of questions about what they hoped to be doing six months after completing their course. Nine in ten (89%) intended to have at least some involvement with the construction industry (i.e. they intended to work in construction *or* do another construction course).

4.9 Around three-quarters (73%) said they hoped to be working in construction and just under half (46%) hoped to be doing another construction course (29% expected to be doing both). Just under one in ten (9%) hoped to be working in another sector and one in twenty (5%) hoped to be doing a non-construction course. One in ten (10%) hoped to be doing something else and a very small proportion (3%) did not know what they wanted to do six months after the end of their course.

Figure 4.2 Learners' intended destinations six months after completion



Those intending to work in construction

4.10 Three-quarters (74%) of those who intended to work in construction wanted to work for an employer, 11% wanted to work on a self-employed basis and 14% did not mind.

4.11 Of those who were employed in the construction sector at the time of interview; most (65%) intended to work for the same employer, one in ten (9%) planned to work for a different employer and around a quarter (26%) reported that they were happy to work for any construction employer.

4.12 Over nine in ten (93%) of those who were working in construction at the time of their interview and hoped to be working in the sector six months after they finished their course hoped to have a permanent job, 88% intended to be working in an area directly related to their course, 87% intended to be doing a higher-level job (e.g. a more demanding job / one with more responsibility) and 83% wanted to be in the same occupation / job role as they were doing at the time.

Those intending to do another construction course

4.13 Of those who intended to do another construction course six months after the end of their current course (46% of all Wave 1 participants):

- 89% intended to study a higher-level course (vs. 8% who intended to study at the same level and 2% at a lower level)
- 86% intended to study the same broad subject (vs. 11% who intended to study in a different area within construction)
- 29% planned to work in construction (vs. 4% who planned to work in a non-construction job whilst studying another construction course)

5 Learning outcomes

5.1 This chapter outlines the destinations of learners six months after the end of their provision and explores the factors that may have influenced these destinations. It provides detailed employment information of those working in construction to assess the impact of learning, before exploring the experiences of those not working in construction and providing details about further study undertaken by learners. Findings are based on the responses from the 821 learners who participated in the Wave 2 survey.[2]

Course completion

5.2 Almost all (94%) learners who took part in the Wave 2 survey reported that they completed their course, leaving 6% who left their course early without completing it. Those who were more likely than average to have left their course early without completing it included:

- Learners aged 19-23 (9%)
- Non-White British learners (9%)
- Learners doing wood trades and interior fit-out courses (11%)
- Those who hoped to be working for a non-construction employer six months after the end of their course (15%)
- Those not working in construction whilst doing their course (7% vs 2% among those that did work in construction while studying).

5.3 Learners who left their course before completing it gave a range of spontaneous reasons for doing so. Just under a fifth cited issues with their training provider (18%), financial reasons (18%) or getting another job or started working (15%).[3] Around one in twelve (8% cited personal reasons), deciding to start a different course (7%), issues with other students (7%) or just deciding it wasn't for them (7%).

5.4 Some of the verbatim of reasons given for non-completion are shown below:

> *The course was not as described. It became evident that the large class size, poor quality materials and over emphasis placed on learning unrelated areas of the building trade meant I would not be suitably qualified to gain employment.*
>
> *The college was a shambles. I had 9 different teachers in 6 months, the teachers were never in on time, they were not bothered and had no interest in teaching.*
>
> *I was turning 19 and the council couldn't pay for it and I didn't have a job at the time so I just had to leave.*

2 Responses to the Wave 2 survey have been weighted to the overall population of learners.
3 Note: only 35 learners who took part in Wave 2 reported leaving their course early without completing it. The Construction Industry Early Leavers survey conducted by IFF on behalf of CITB offers more robust insight into reasons why individuals leave the construction sector early.

I didn't like it I was distracted a lot by students chatting in lessons and I realised after doing a lot of research that I was more interested in becoming an engineer.

Achievement of learning aim

5.5 Outcome data from the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) shows that 84% of learners that took part in the Wave 2 survey achieved their learning aim, 5% continued their studies, 1% obtained a partial achievement and 8% did not achieve.

5.6 Learners that were more likely than the 8% average to not achieve included: those whose CITB qualification purpose was preparation for employment (18%), those doing HNCs / HNDs (15%) and those in full-time education immediately prior to undertaking the course (10%).

Learners' six-month destinations (based on their main activity)

5.7 Two thirds (66%) of learners were involved in construction six months after the end of their course: a quarter (25%) were working in construction, 16% were undertaking construction apprenticeships and a quarter (25%) were studying another construction-related course as their main activity.

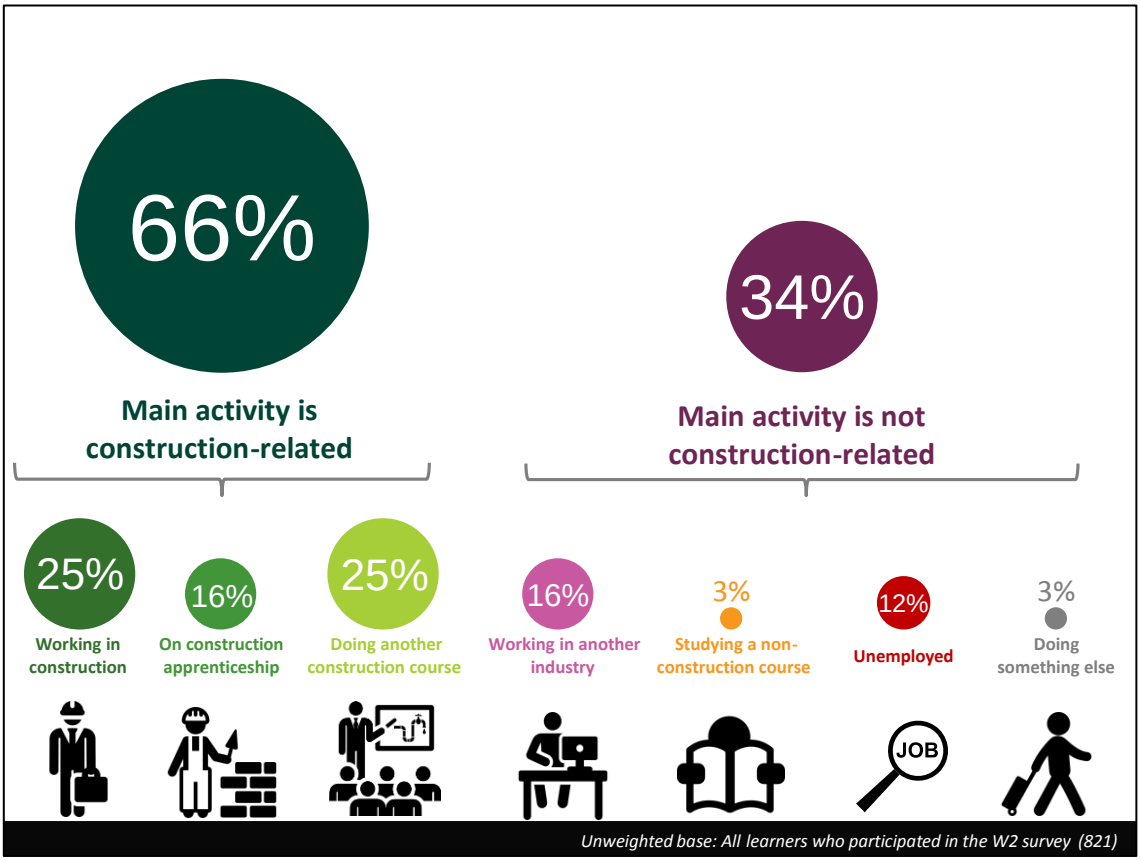
5.8 Of the remainder, 16% were working in other industries, one in eight (12%) were unemployed and a minority were studying a non-construction course (3%) or doing something else (3%).

5.9 Figure 5.1 summarises learners' main activities at the time of the Wave 2 survey.[4]

5.10 Learners' six-month destinations by key sub-groups are shown in Appendix B.

4 Note that learners self-defined what counted as working in construction and what counted as working non-construction during the surveys. 'Doing something else' includes other responses such as travelling, caring for family or joining the armed forces.

Figure 5.1 Learners' six month destinations (based on their main activity)



Which learners were more likely to be working in construction as their main activity?

5.11 The following types of learners were more likely to be working in construction jobs (excluding apprenticeships) six months after the end of their course:

- Learners that did a Level 4+ course (74% vs. 40% of Level 3 learners, 30% of Level 2 learners and 9% of Entry Level / Level 1 learners)
- Those who did an apprenticeship (55% vs. 20% of non-apprentices)
- Learners who studied qualifications designed to confirm occupational competence (61% vs. 45% of those whose qualification was not Ofqual regulated and 40% of those doing qualifications designed to prepare learners for employment)
- Those who worked in a construction job whilst studying (52% vs. 12% of those not working in construction)
- Males (26% vs. 11% females)
- White British learners (27% vs. 17% non-white-British learners).

5.12 Learners aged 16-18 were least likely to be working in construction jobs excluding apprenticeships six months after the end of their course (12%) compared to those aged 19-23

(37%), 24-29 (who were most likely to be working in construction – 51%), those aged 30-39 (40%) and those aged 40+ (37%).

Which learners were more likely to be doing construction apprenticeships as their main activity?

5.13 The following types of learners were more likely than the 16% average to be doing a construction apprenticeship six months after the end of their course:

- Level 2 learners (21%)
- Those who were studying an apprenticeship in Wave 1 (38% vs. 13% of non-apprentices)
- Those who had a construction job whilst studying (30% vs. 13% of those who had non-construction jobs and 8% who were not working at all whilst studying)
- Younger learners (19% of those aged 16-23 and 14% of those aged 24-29 vs. 3% of those aged 30-39 and 8% of those aged 40+)
- White-British learners (18% vs. 9% of non-white-British learners).

5.14 In terms of regional variation, learners who studied in the North West (8%) and the West Midlands (10%) were less likely than average to have gone on to do a construction apprenticeship.

Which learners were more likely to be doing another construction course as their main activity?

5.15 The following types of learners were more likely to be doing another construction course six months after the end of their Wave 1 course:

- Those who studied lower-level courses (37% of Entry Level / Level 1 learners, compared with 20% of Level 2 learners 15% of Level 3 learners and just 5% of Level 4+ learners)
- Learners aged 16-18 (36% vs. 14% of those aged 19-23, 6% of those aged 24-29, 19% of those aged 30-39 and 9% of those aged 40+) and related to this those who were not working during their studies (42%)
- Non-white-British learners (33% vs. 23% of white-British learners).

Which learners were more likely to be working in another industry as their main activity?

5.16 Just under a quarter (23%) of those who were working in other industries as their main activity were also undertaking another construction-related course at the time of the Wave 2 survey (equivalent to 4% of our full cohort of learners). A further 2% of those who were working in other industries as their main activity were also working part-time in construction jobs. Overall 12% of all participants were doing a non-construction job with no involvement in construction at all (i.e. they were not doing a construction course or a part-time job in construction whilst working in other sectors).

5.17 The following types of learners were more likely to be doing non-construction jobs as their main activity six months after the end of their course:

- Entry Level / Level 1 learners (20% vs. 10% of Level 4+ learners)
- Those who did non-construction jobs whilst studying (38% vs. 11% of those who did not work at all and 6% of those with construction jobs during their course)
- Those aged 24-29 (26% vs. 15% of those aged 19-23 and 14% of those aged 16-18)
- Females (32% vs. 15% of males)
- Learners who studied in London (26%).

Which learners were more likely to be unemployed?

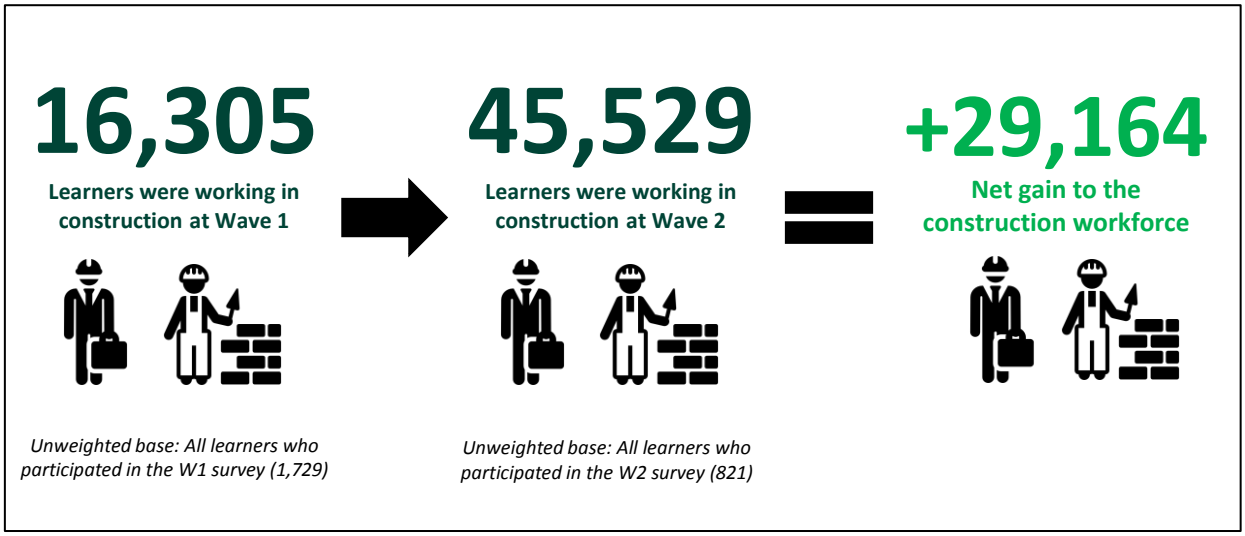
5.18 The following types of learners were more likely to be unemployed six months after the end of their course than the 12% average:

- Entry Level / Level 1 learners (14%; it was lowest at 4% for Level 4+ learners)
- Learners who did non-apprenticeship courses (14% vs. 3% of apprentices)
- Those who were not working whilst on their course (21% vs. 8% of those with non-construction and 4% of those with construction jobs)
- Those aged 30-39 (21%; it was lowest at 3% for those aged 24-29).

How did learners' six-month destinations compare with their in-learning situation?

5.19 To attempt to estimate the contribution of FE construction courses to the annual recruitment requirement (ARR), it is important to show the proportion of those working in construction six months after the end of the course who were new to the industry (i.e. they did not have a construction job whilst studying). This is shown in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2 The contribution of FE construction courses to the annual recruitment requirement (ARR)[5]



5 Based on those who said they were working in construction in any capacity (including apprentices) at either wave (i.e. based on any activity as opposed to main activity).

Details of employment

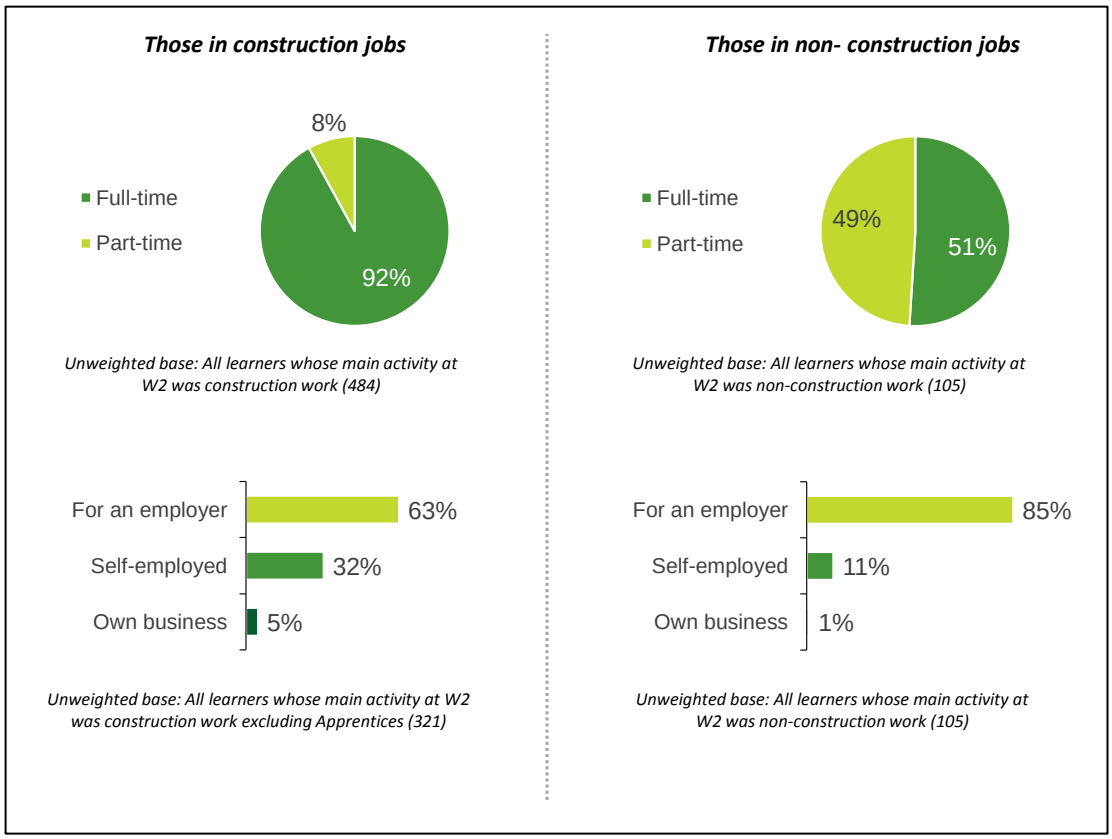
5.20 As discussed, two-fifths (41%) of learners were working in construction as their main activity six months after the end of their course (including those doing a construction apprenticeship). This section of the report provides details on the type of work undertaken by these learners (and compares it to the type of work undertaken by the 16% of learners who went on to work in non-construction roles) to assess the impact of the FE course they undertook.

Basis of employment

5.21 Over nine in ten (92%) of those working in construction as their main activity six months after completing their course were doing so on a full-time basis. This compares with around half (51%) of those with non-construction jobs.

5.22 Excluding apprentices, just under two thirds of those whose main activity was construction work were working for an employer (63%), around a third were self-employed (32%) and a small proportion (5%) had set up their own business (vs. 85%, 11% and 1% among those with non-construction jobs, respectively).

Figure 5.3 Basis of employment



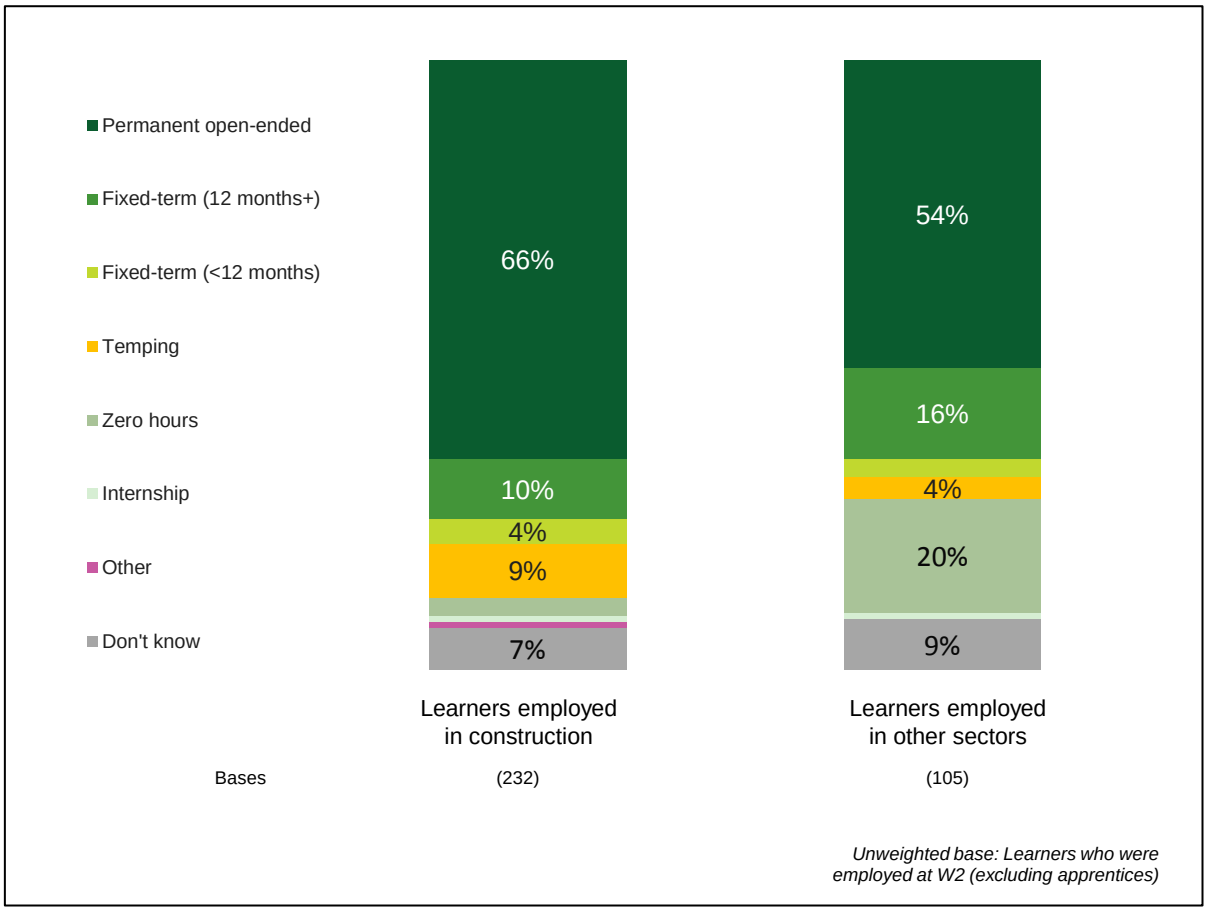
5.23 Learners that had studied Level 4+ courses were more likely to be working for an employer than those who studied Level 3 and Level 2 courses (88% compared to 61% and 65% respectively) and much less likely to be self-employed (9% vs. around a third of those who studied a Level 2 or Level 3 course (33% and 30% respectively).

Contract details of those employed

5.24 Three-quarters of those employed in construction were on a contract lasting 12 months or longer (76%). Some were on a fixed-term contract of 12 months or longer (10%) but it was more usual for them to be on an open-ended contract (66%).

5.25 Results are shown in Figure 5.4, which compares the contract details of those employed in construction with those employed in non-construction roles.

Figure 5.4 Contract details of those employed (excluding apprentices)[6]



5.26 Comparing the contract details of those employed in construction with those employed in other industries challenges the perception that construction employment can be unstable and short term. Two thirds (66%) of those employed in construction were on a permanent or open-ended contract, whereas this was the case for just over half (54%) of those employed in other industries. Just 3% of those employed in construction reported working on a zero hours' contract compared to one fifth (20%) of those employed in other industries. On the other hand, temping was more common (though not significantly so) among those employed in construction than it was for those working in other sectors (9% vs. 4% respectively).

5.27 Those that had studied Level 4+ courses were more likely to be employed on open-ended contracts than those who had studied at Level 3 or Level 2 (88% compared with 68% and 65% respectively).

6 Note: those who were working in construction on a self-employed basis are excluded.

Details of earnings

5.28 Comparing earnings of those working in construction with those working in other industries is similarly positive (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Median average salaries (per annum)[7]

	Full-time	Part-time	Apprentices
Those working in construction	£21,600	£14,300	£12,200
Those working in other sectors	£17,200	£8,000	N/A

5.29 The median average earning of those working in construction on a full-time basis six months after the end of their course was £21,600 (£12,200 for those on construction apprenticeships) and for those working on a part-time basis it was £14,300. The median average earning of those working in other industries was lower, at £17,200 for those working full-time and £8,000 for those working on a part-time basis.

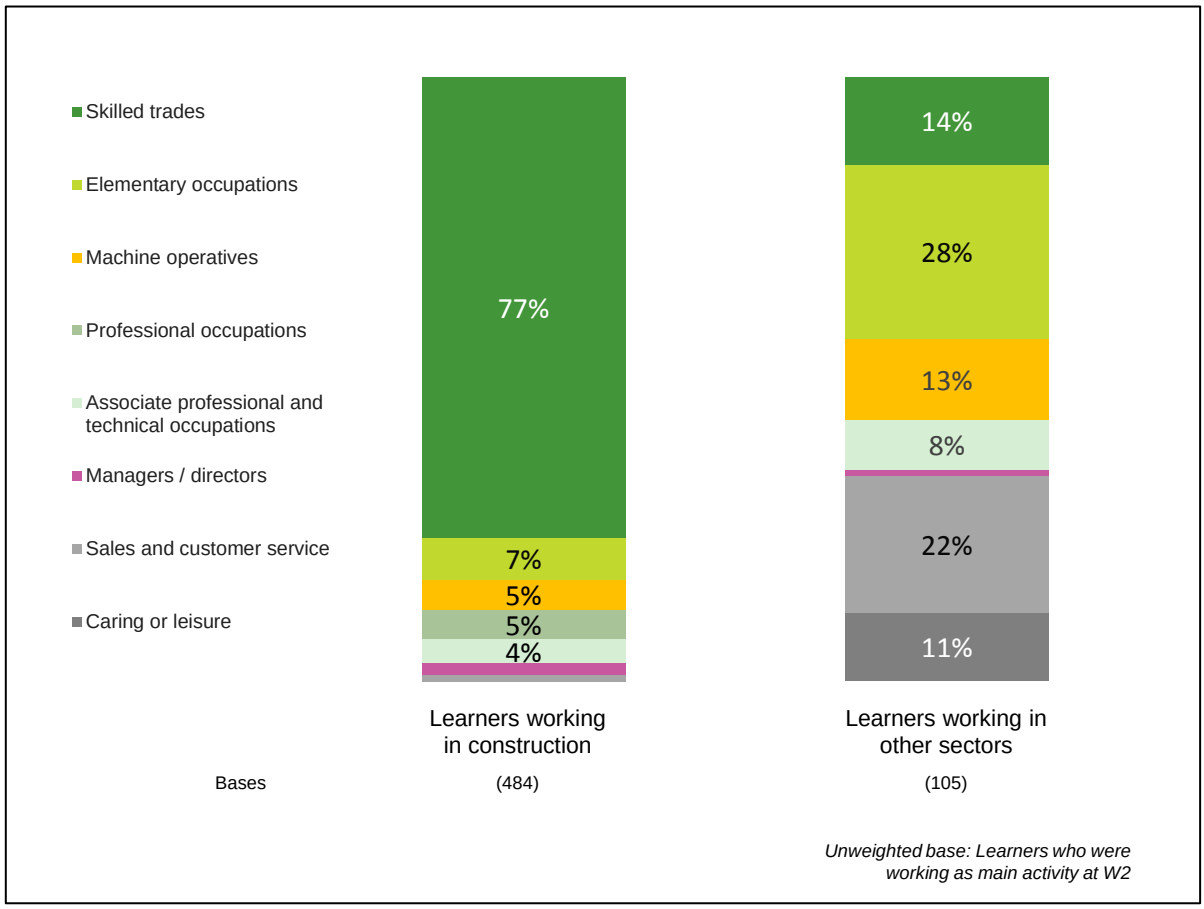
5.30 Earnings increased with level of study. Those who studied a Level 4+ course and were working in construction on a full-time basis at the time of the Wave 2 survey had median average earning of £28,900, those who studied a Level 3 course had an average earning of £24,800 and those who studied a Level 2 course had an average earning of £20,300.

7 Caution low base sizes - based on all those who were willing to give salary information for each: Those working f/t in construction (230), those working p/t in construction (12), construction apprentices (168). Those working f/t in other sectors (38), those working p/t in other sectors (42).

Occupational details

5.31 As shown in Figure 5.5, over three-quarters (77%) of those working in construction were employed in skilled trade occupations.[8] Elementary occupations (which covers such roles as general labourers and ground workers) were the next most common type of occupation undertaken (by 7%), followed by machine operative occupations (5%) and professional occupations (5%). In comparison, learners working in other sectors were most commonly working in elementary occupations (28%), in sales and customer service (22%) and machine operative occupations (13%).

Figure 5.5 Occupation types of those working



5.32 Those who studied a Level 2 course were more likely to be working in skilled trades in construction compared with those who studied a Level 3 and those who studied a Level 4+ course (86% compared with 72% and 14% respectively).

5.33 Looking at all Level 3 learners working in construction; 72% were in skilled trades occupations, 12% were in professional occupations, 7% were doing associate professional and technical occupations, 3% were in manager / director / senior official roles and 3% were doing elementary occupations.

8 This reflects the sample profile of those who took part in the research: 95% of WAVE 2 participants were undertaking trades-related courses.

5.34 Those who studied Level 4+ courses were more likely to be working in construction in managerial or professional occupations. Of those that studied a Level 4+ qualification and were working; 41% were working in professional occupations, 22% were working as managers / directors and 22% were working in associate professional / technical occupations.

5.35 Almost nine in ten (88%) of those who did apprenticeships and were working in construction as their main activity at Wave 2 were working in skilled trades occupations, higher than found among those who did non-apprenticeship courses (72%).

5.36 Predictably, most of those who had studied a trades-related course and were working in construction were working in skilled trades roles (82%) - 7% had gone on to work in elementary positions, 5% were working in operative occupations; less than 3% had gone on to work in each of the other occupation types.

5.37 Of those who studied professional services courses and were working in construction, 43% were in professional occupations, 25% were in associate professional and technical occupations, 12% were in skilled trades and 8% were working in managerial positions.

5.38 In terms of CSN occupation, 44% of all learners who studied bricklaying, 42% of those who studied wood trades, 38% of those who studied plumbing and HVAC courses and 35% of those who studied electrical trades were working in skilled trade occupations in construction six months after the end of their provision.

5.39 Those working in construction were working across a broad range of sub-sectors. The most common of these were construction of buildings (18%), electrical installation (14%), other specialised construction activities (14%) and plumbing, heat and air-conditioning installation (13%).

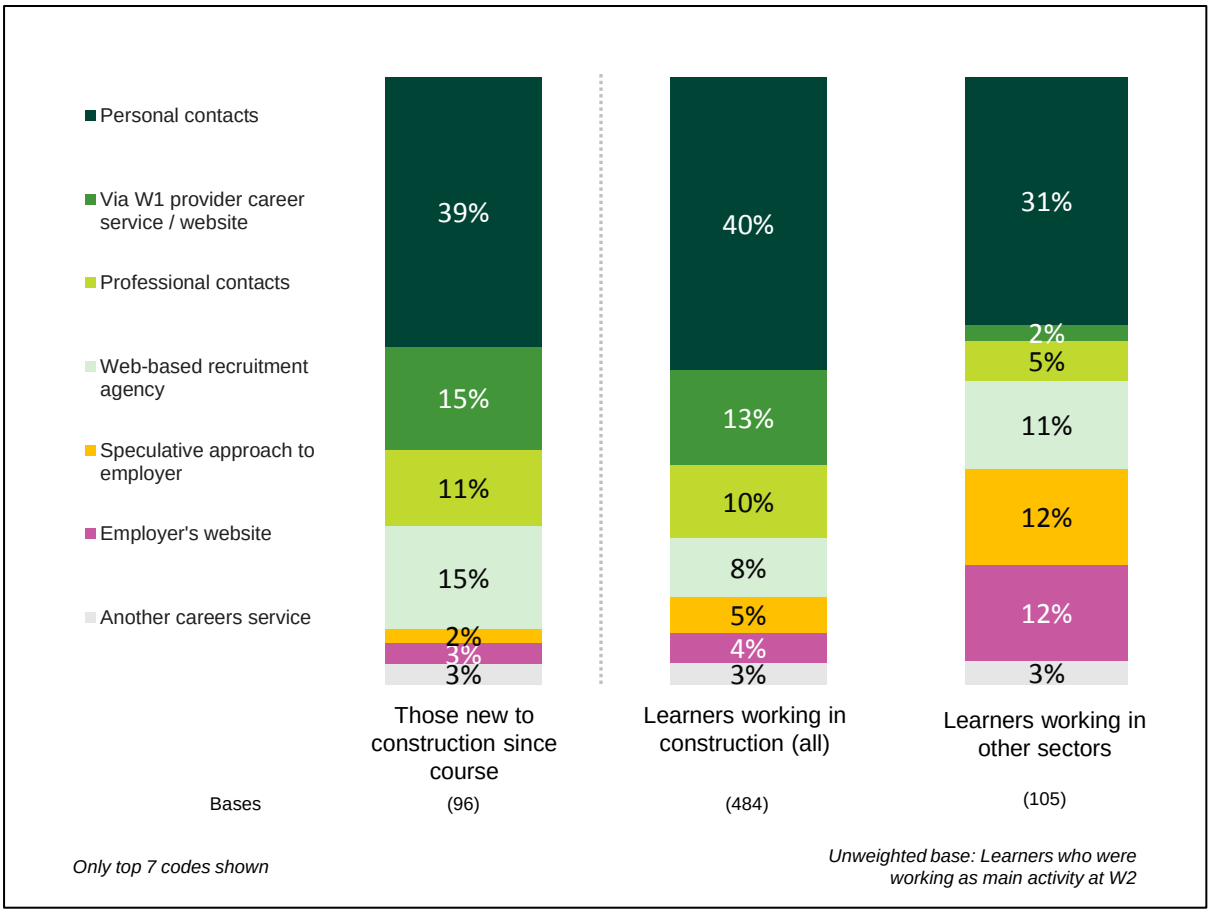
5.40 In terms of CSN occupation:

- Almost two thirds (63%) of those working who studied electrical trades and installation courses were working for companies specialising in electrical installation six months after the end of their provision and a further 11% were working for plumbing, heat and air-conditioning installation companies.
- Over half (53%) of those working who studied bricklaying courses were working for other specialised construction companies (a category which includes bricklaying) and 31% were working for general building companies.
- Two-fifths (41%) of those working who studied plumbing and HVAC courses were working for companies specialising in that area.
- Almost a third (32%) of those working who studied wood trades courses were working in joinery installation and around a quarter (23%) were working for general building companies.

Finding a job in construction after their course

5.41 Those who were new to construction jobs six months after the end of their provision had most commonly found out about their job through personal contacts (39%), via their provider's career service / website (15%) or through another web-based recruitment agency such as Monster, Indeed and Reed (15%). Results are shown in Figure 5.6.

Figure 5.6 How new entrants to construction found out about their job



5.42 Figure 5.6 also shows how all those working in construction at Wave 2 found out about their role and compares it with those working in other sectors. In other sectors, it was less common for people to have found out about their job through personal contacts or the provider's careers service, and more common for them to have found their jobs by speculatively approaching their employer or applying via the employer's website. These findings show the importance of informal recruitment practices in the construction industry and suggest that these are perhaps more prevalent than in other industries.

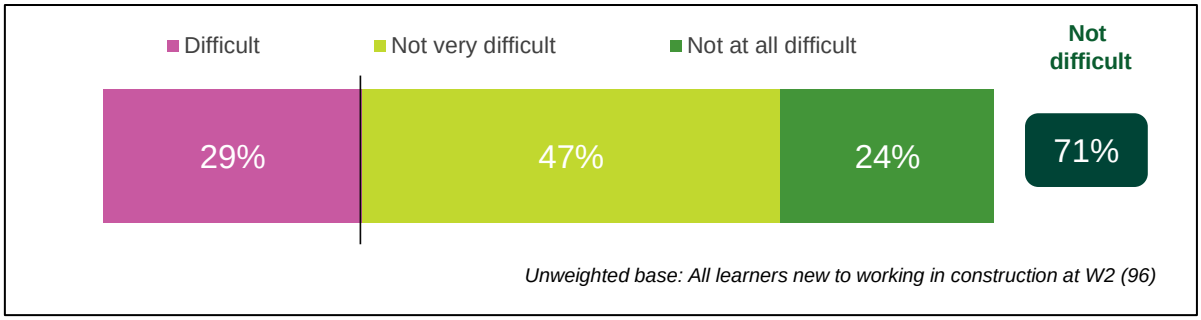
5.43 Over two-fifths (43%) of white British learners who were working in construction at the time of the Wave 2 survey had found out about their job through personal contacts, whereas this was the case for just 17% of non-white British learners. Non-white British learners were more likely than white British learners to have found their construction jobs via online / web-based

recruitment agencies (18% vs. 7% respectively) or via other careers services (13% vs. 2% respectively).[9]

Perceived ease of finding a job in construction after course

5.44 The majority (71%) of those working in construction six months after their course that had not been working in construction during their course (i.e. those acquiring construction jobs since the course) did not find it difficult to get their job, but a three in ten (29%) said it was difficult (see Figure 5.7).

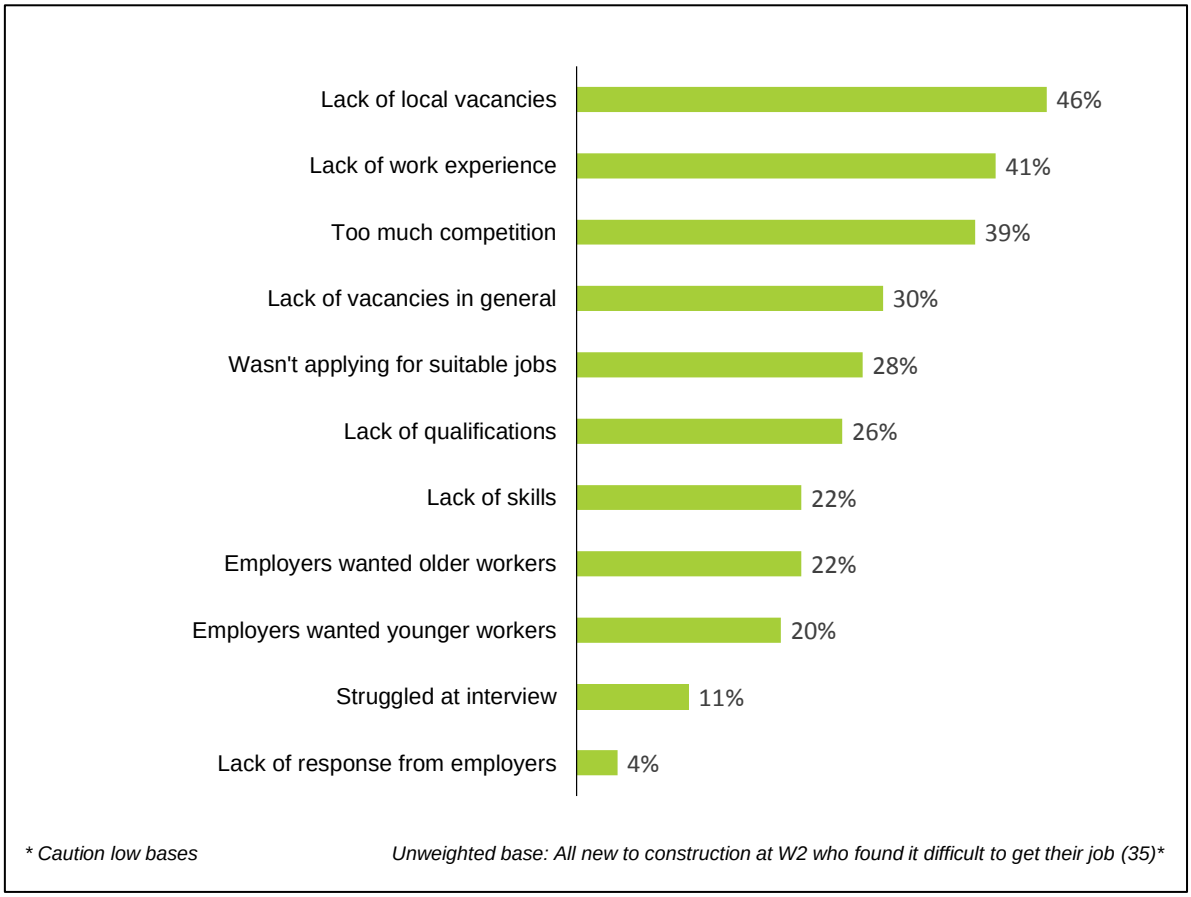
Figure 5.7 Perceived ease of finding a job in construction after course



5.45 As shown in Figure 5.8, those that had found getting their construction job difficult cited a range of challenges, most often difficulties related to a lack of local vacancies (mentioned by 46%), not having the necessary levels of work experience sought by employers (41%) and there being too much competition for roles available (39%). Some caution is needed with these results due to the low base size of 35 respondents.

9 Caution low bases – just 40 non-white British learners were employed in construction at Wave 2.

Figure 5.8 Difficulties faced when getting work in construction after course (prompted)



** Caution low bases*

*Unweighted base: All new to construction at W2 who found it difficult to get their job (35)**

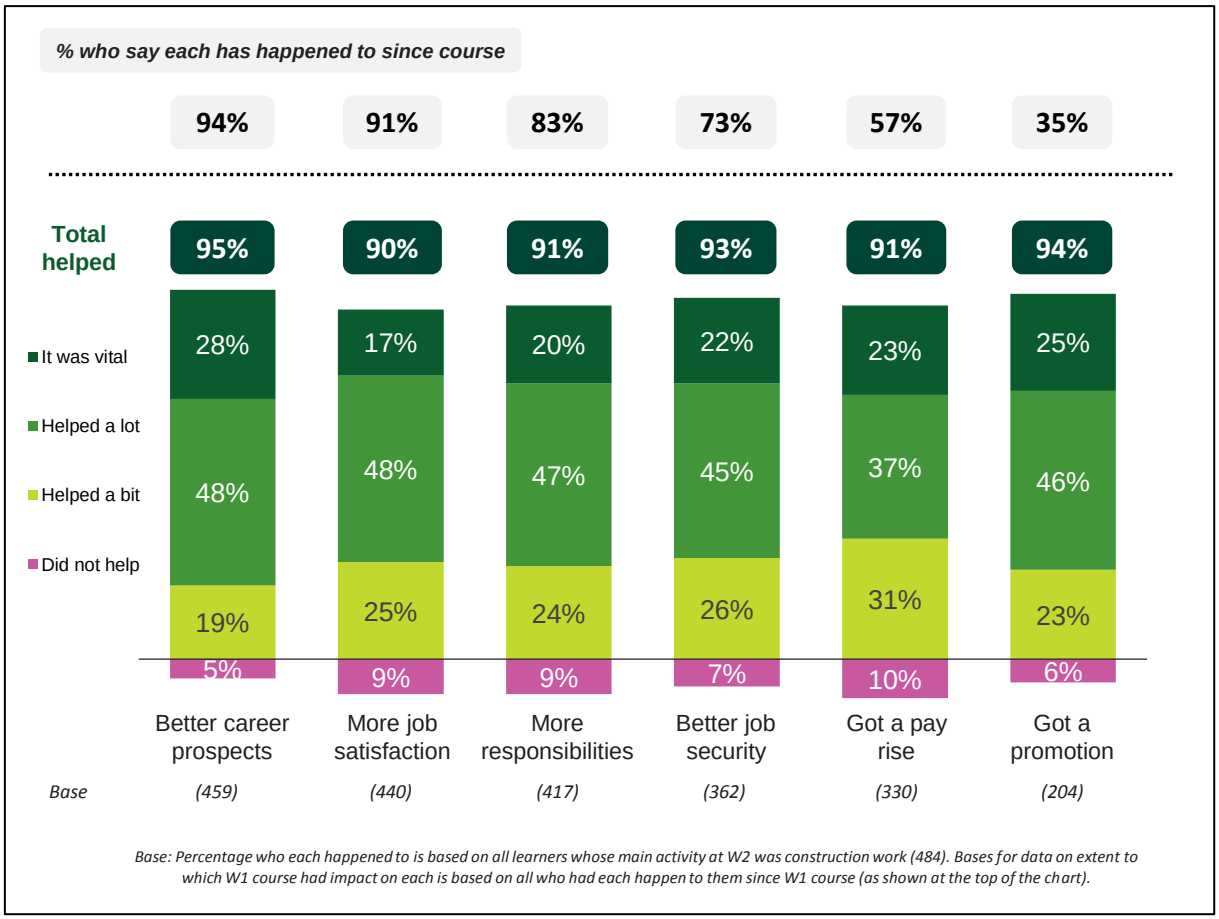
Impact of learning on employment

5.46 During the Wave 2 survey, learners who were working in construction were asked a series of questions to assess the impact of learning on their career progression.

5.47 The clear majority of those working in construction felt that they had better career prospects (94%), more job satisfaction (91%), more responsibilities (83%) and better job security (73%) after finishing their Wave 1 course. Relatively speaking, lower proportions reported receiving more tangible benefits such as getting a pay rise (57%) and getting a promotion (35%).

5.48 For each benefit learners reported happening to them at least nine in ten attributed this to their course, and at least three-fifths said the course was vital or helped a lot in bringing about each benefit, as shown in Figure 5.9.

Figure 5.9 Career progression among those working in construction following course and extent to which undertaking the course was perceived to help with this

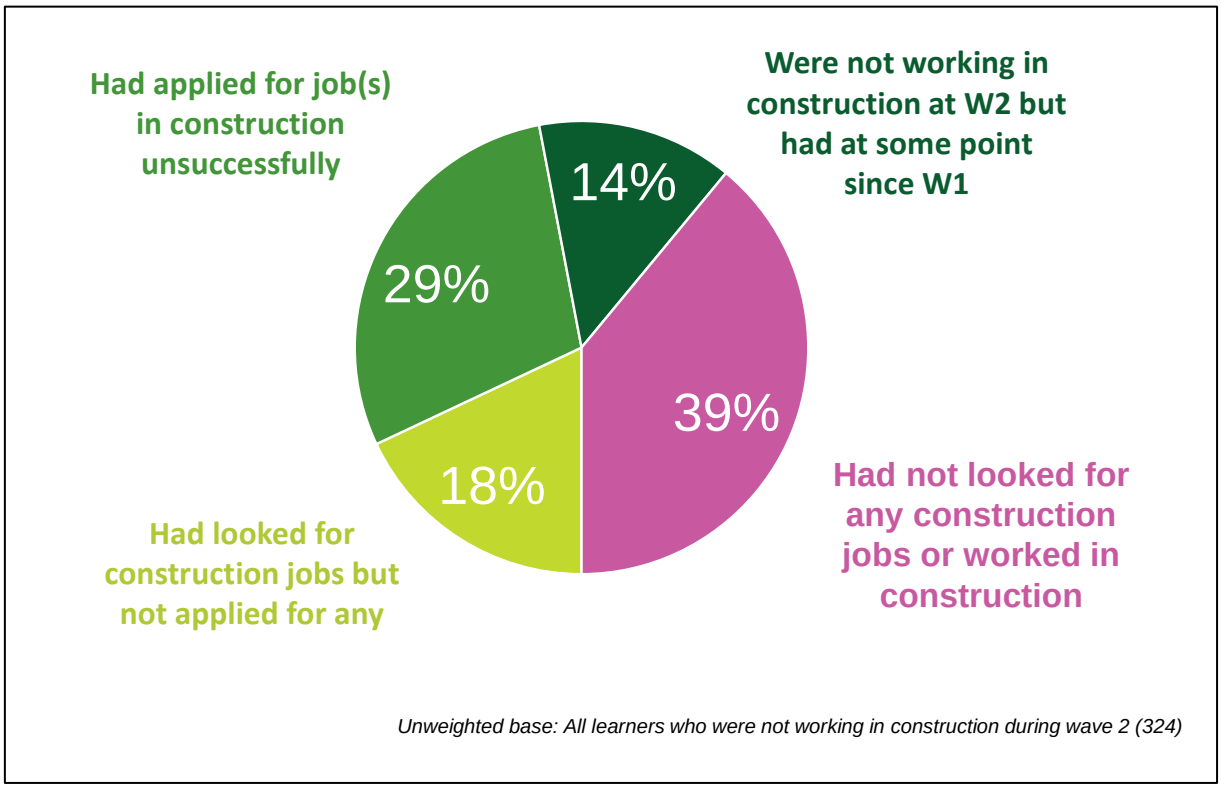


Base: Percentage who each happened to is based on all learners whose main activity at W2 was construction work (484). Bases for data on extent to which W1 course had impact on each is based on all who had each happen to them since W1 course (as shown at the top of the chart).

Experiences of those not working in construction

5.49 Those who were not working in construction six months after the end of their course were asked about what engagement they had, if any, with the industry since the end of their course. Just over three-fifths (61%) had some sort of interaction with construction: just under a fifth (18%) had looked for construction jobs without applying for any, three in ten (29%) had applied for construction jobs unsuccessfully and 14% had worked in construction between the end of their course and the six-month point but were not at the time of the survey (see Figure 5.10).

Figure 5.10 Summary of interaction with construction following FE construction course



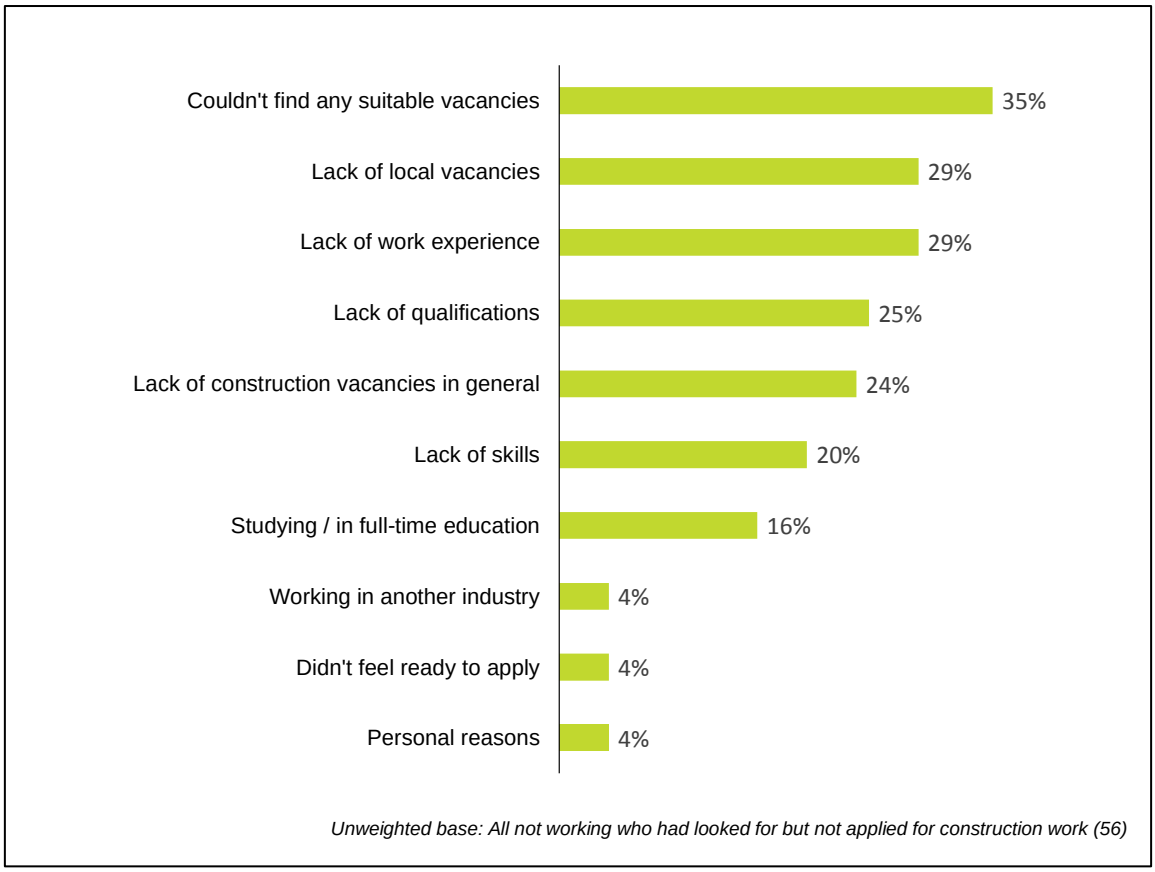
Unweighted base: All learners who were not working in construction during wave 2 (324)

5.50 The experiences of each of the above groups of learners is discussed below:

Experiences of those who had looked for construction jobs but not applied for any

5.51 Learners who had looked for construction jobs but not applied for any gave several reasons for this. Those most commonly cited included: not being able to find suitable vacancies or local vacancies (35% & 29% respectively), and not having the work experience (29%), qualifications (25%) or skills (20%) that employers were asking for, and a general lack of construction vacancies (24%) - see Figure 5.11.

Figure 5.11 Reasons why those not working in construction had looked but not applied for construction jobs following their course (prompted)

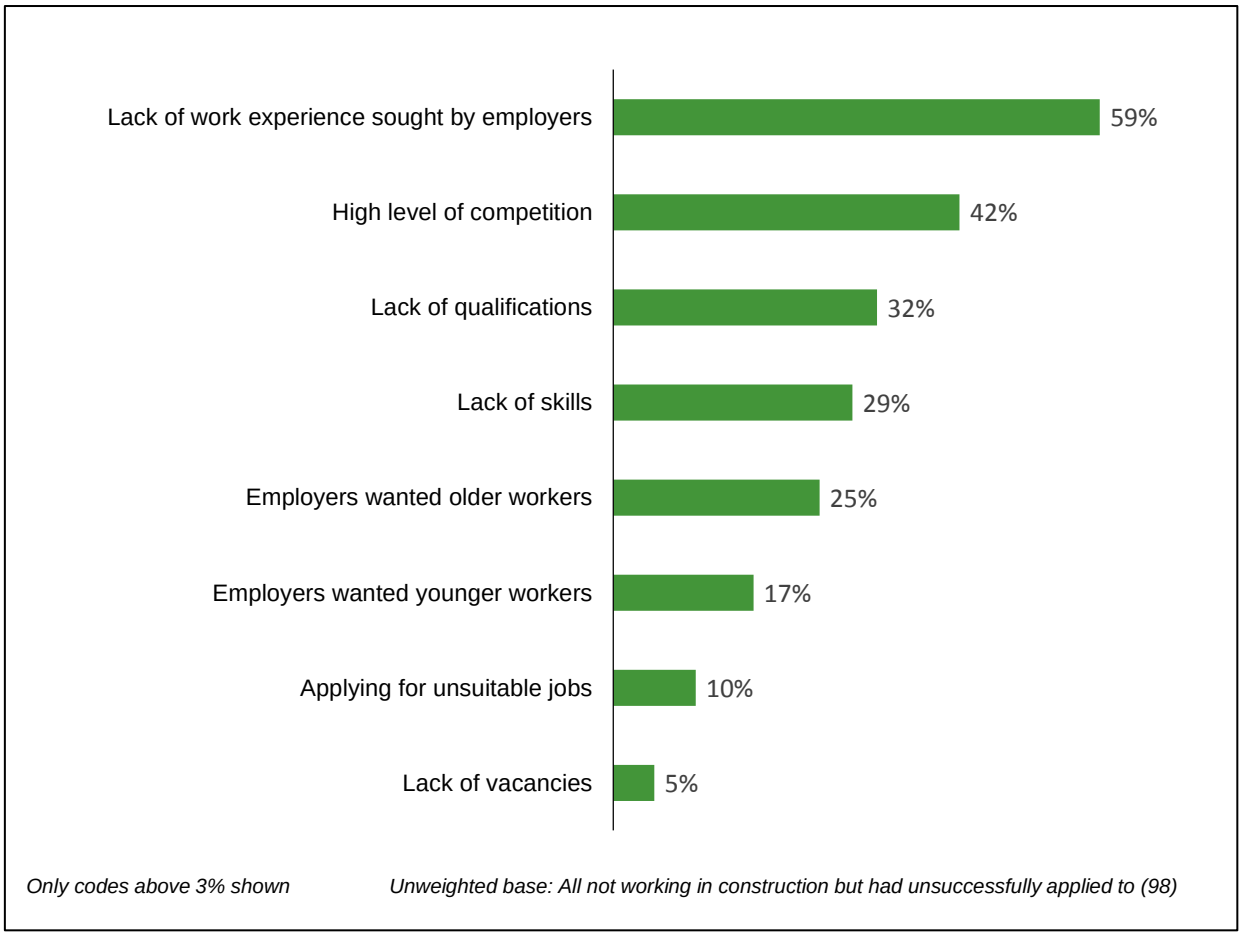


Unweighted base: All not working who had looked for but not applied for construction work (56)

Experiences of those who had applied for jobs in construction unsuccessfully

5.52 Three-fifths (59%) of those who had unsuccessfully applied for a construction job / jobs in the six months since their course felt that this was because they did not have the work experience that employers wanted, two-fifths (42%) felt there was too much competition and around three in ten felt they did not have the qualifications (32%) or the skills (29%) that employers were looking for. Results are summarised in Figure 5.12.

Figure 5.12 Reasons why those not working in construction had applied for jobs in construction without being successful (prompted)



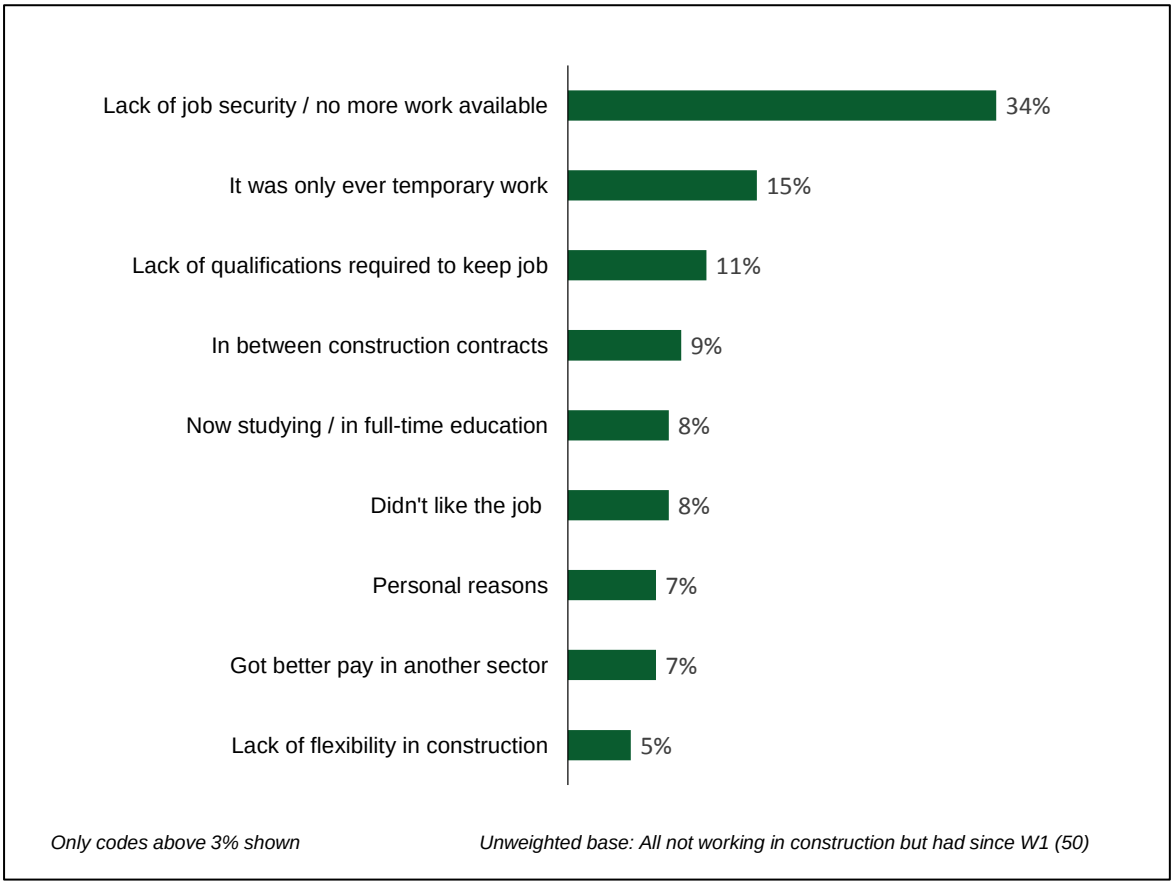
Only codes above 3% shown

Unweighted base: All not working in construction but had unsuccessfully applied to (98)

Experiences of those who worked in construction since their course but were not at the six-month point

5.53 Those who were not working in construction at Wave 2 despite having a construction job at some point after completing their course felt this was usually because there was a lack of job security in the job they were doing / the work they were doing was no longer available (34%), that it had been a temporary job (15%) and that they did not have the qualifications needed to stay on in the job (11%). A fairly long list of other reasons were given as shown in Figure 5.13.

Figure 5.13 Reasons why those who had worked in construction since their course but were not at Wave 2 (unprompted)



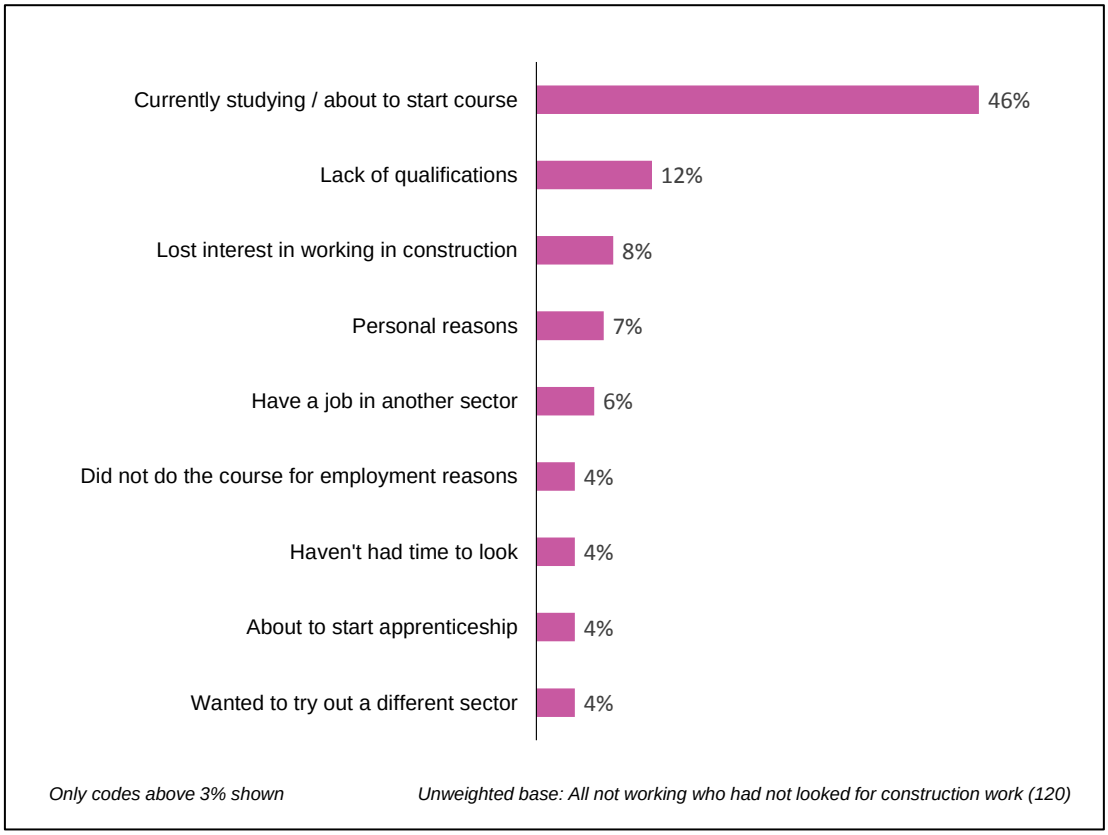
Only codes above 3% shown

Unweighted base: All not working in construction but had since W1 (50)

Experiences of those who had not looked for jobs or worked in construction

5.54 Almost half (46%) of those who had not looked for construction work said this because they were studying / about to start a course instead, one in eight (12%) felt they didn't have the necessary qualifications, and one in twelve (8%) said they had lost interest in construction altogether – see Figure 5.14.

Figure 5.14 Reasons why learners not working in construction had not looked for construction jobs (unprompted)



Details of further study

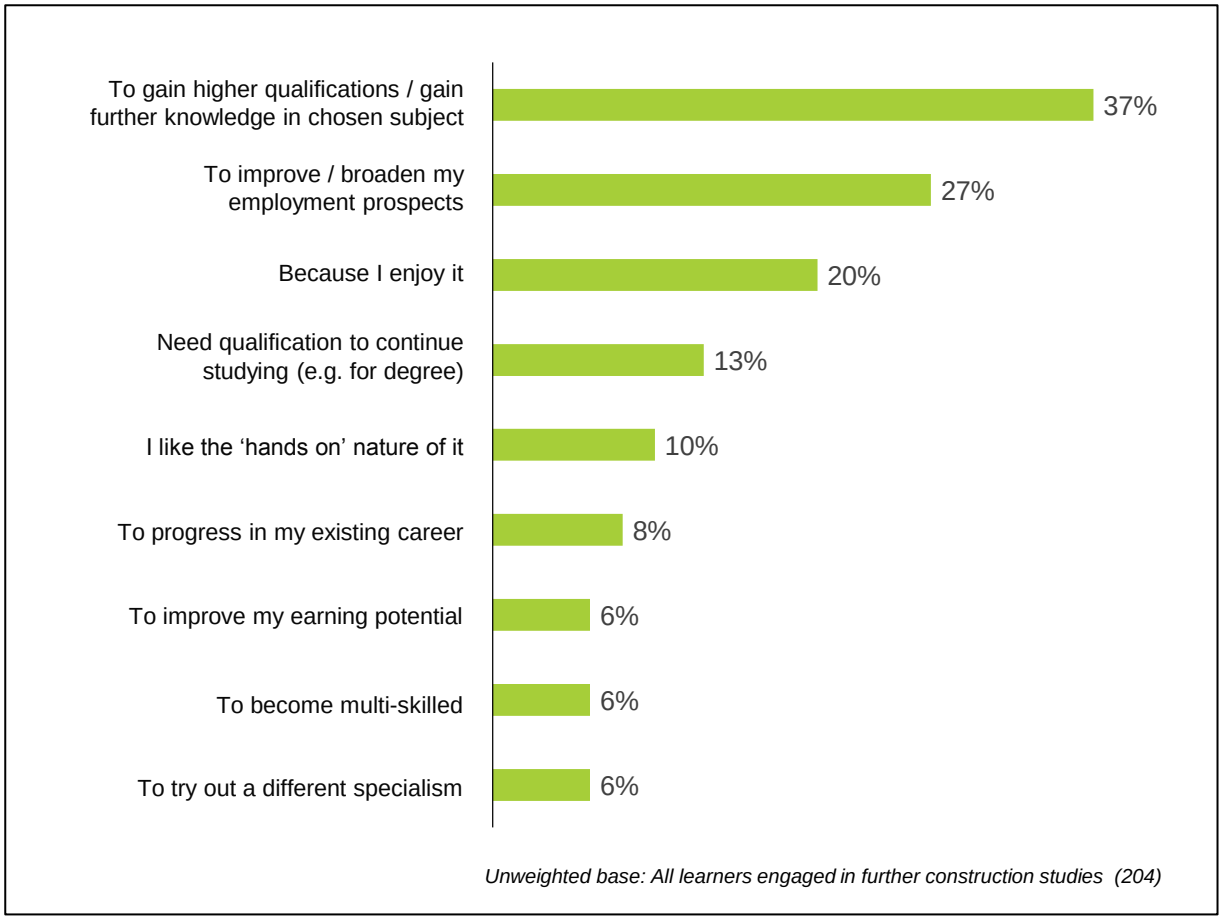
5.55 Over a third (37%) of all learners were engaged in further study at the time of the Wave 2 study. Of these, nine in ten (90%) were on construction-related courses including construction apprenticeships.

Details of further construction-related study

5.56 Of those doing any further construction-related study (33% of all Wave 2 participants), 83% were studying the same subject that they were studying at the time of the Wave 1. Learners that had changed subject had most commonly started general construction, electrical trade, bricklaying and wood trade courses.

5.57 Those who were doing further construction-related studies were motivated by a range of reasons. Most commonly a desire to gain higher qualifications in their chosen subject (37%), a desire to improve employment prospects (27%) and enjoyment (20%) – see Figure 5.15.

Figure 5.15 Reasons for doing further construction-related study (unprompted)



Unweighted base: All learners engaged in further construction studies (204)

Learner progression

5.58 Of those doing further construction studies at the time of the Wave 2 survey; one in ten (10%) were studying at Level 1, almost half (46%) were studying at Level 2, three in ten (31%) were studying at Level 3 and one in eight (12%) were studying a Level 4+ course. A small minority (1%) did not know what level they were studying at.

5.59 As Table 5.2 shows, most those who were studying construction courses at the time of the Wave 2 survey were studying at a higher level. Four fifths (81%) of Entry Level / Level 1 learners were studying a Level 1 qualification at Wave 2. A similar proportion (83%) of those who studied an Entry Level / Level 1 course at Wave 1 were studying a Level 2 course at Wave 2. Three-quarters (73%) of those who studied a Level 2 qualification at Wave 2 were studying a Level 3 qualification at Wave 2 and the same proportion (73%) of those who studied a Level 3 qualification at Wave 1 were studying a Level 4+ qualification at Wave 2.

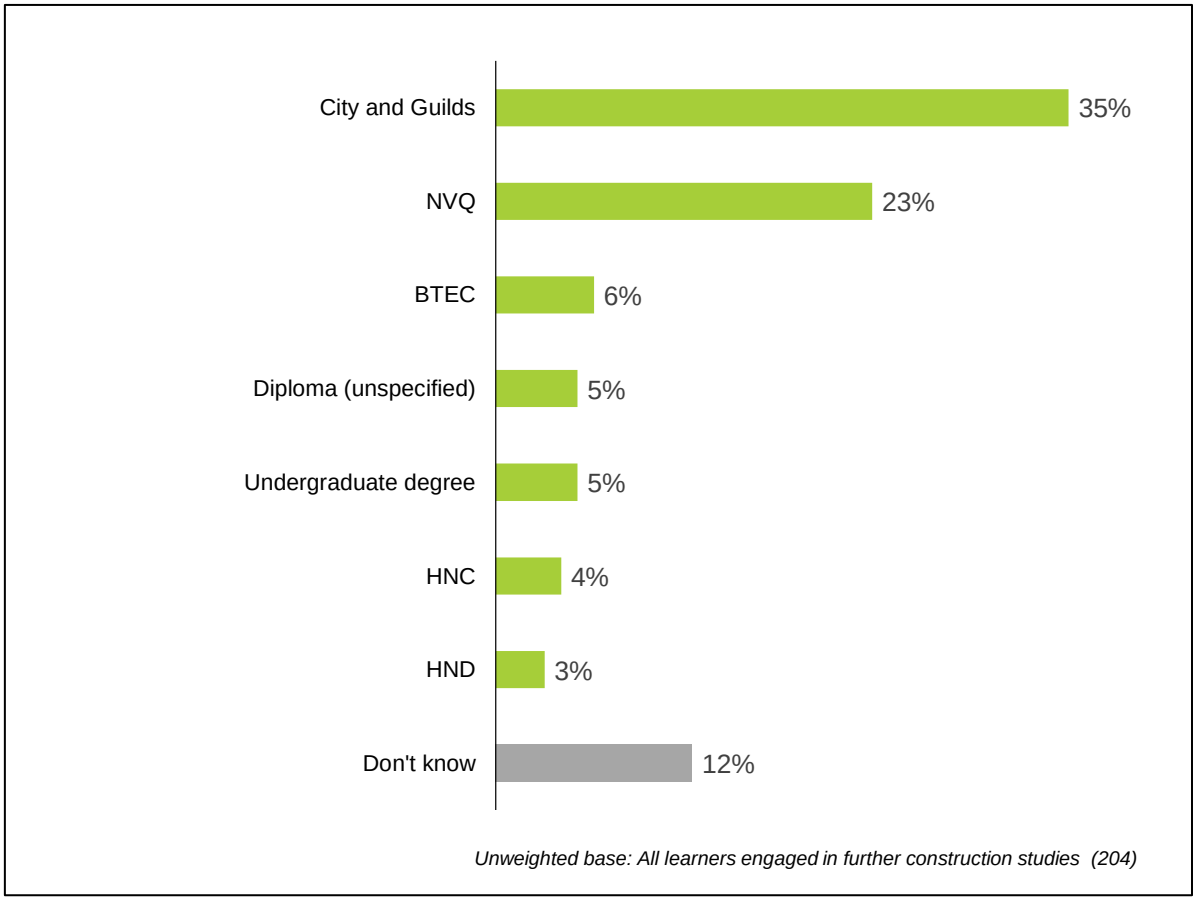
Table 5.2 A comparison of levels qualification levels undertaken at Wave 1 and Wave 2

Wave 2 Level	Wave 1 Level: 0/1	2	3	4+
1	81%	16%	3%	-
2	83%	16%	1%	-
3	16%	73%	11%	-
4+	-	14%	73%	14%

Type of qualification

5.60 Those engaged in further construction-related studies at the time of the Wave 2 survey were working towards a range of types of qualifications, with the most common being City & Guilds qualifications (35%), NVQs (23%) and BTECs (6%). One in eight (12%) did not know what type of qualification they were studying towards (see Figure 5.16).

Figure 5.16 What type of qualification does your Wave 2 course lead to?

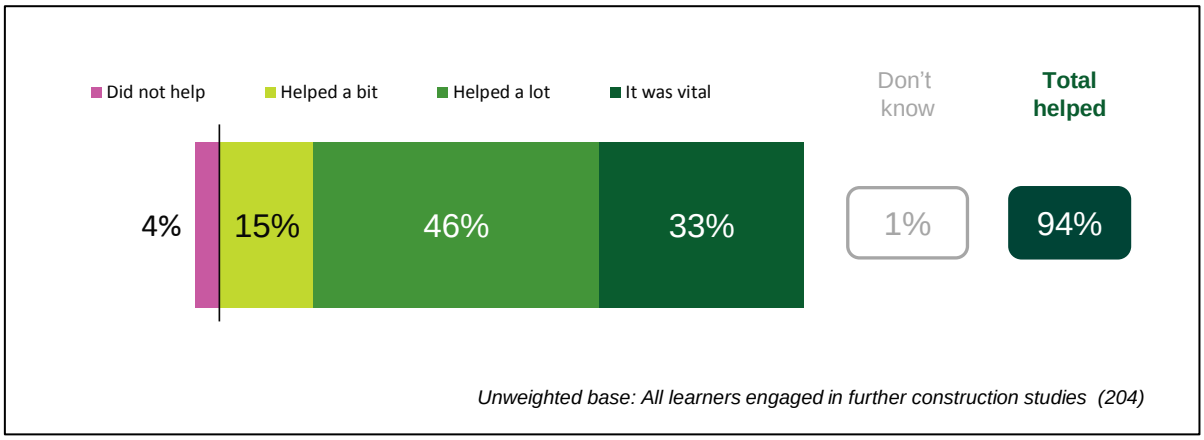


Unweighted base: All learners engaged in further construction studies (204)

Impact of course on further study

5.61 The majority (94%) of those engaged in further construction-related studies felt that their Wave 1 course had helped them get a place on their Wave 2 course, and a third felt it had been vital (33%, rising to 54% of those on Level 4+ courses).

Figure 5.17 Extent to which Wave 1 was perceived to help learner get onto Wave 2 course



Unweighted base: All learners engaged in further construction studies (204)

Details of further study not related to construction

5.62 One in ten (10%) of those engaged in further study at the time of the Wave 2 survey were on courses that were not construction-related (equivalent to 3% of all Wave 2 participants). These learners were doing courses in a wide range of subjects including: sports science, computer science, drama, software design, automotive engineering, hospitality, Spanish, Maths and Music.

6 Learner satisfaction

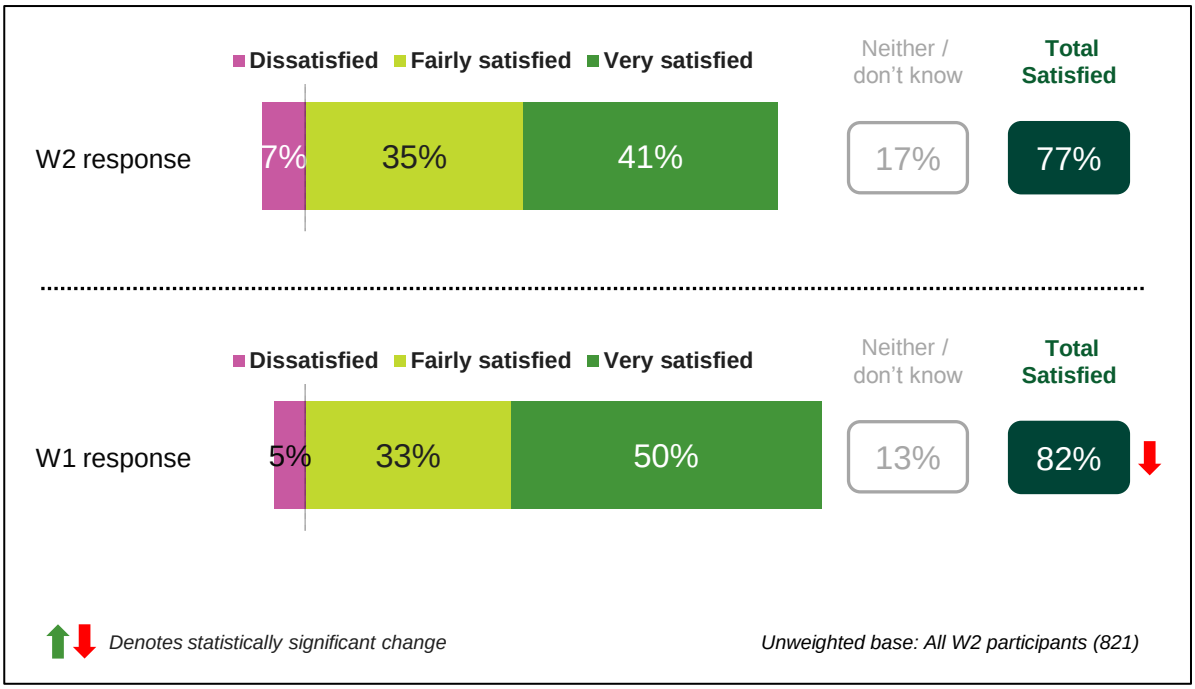
6.1 This chapter explores learner satisfaction with their course, both at an overall level and with specific elements of it, before examining the extent to which learners felt that their course had prepared them for work and further study.

Overall satisfaction with FE course

6.2 Overall levels of satisfaction were high among learners around six months after completing their course: over three-quarters (77%) were satisfied and two-fifths (41%) *very* satisfied with their FE course overall at the time of the Wave 2 survey.

6.3 Figure 6.1 shows overall levels of satisfaction among learners who participated in the Wave 2 survey and compares it with the overall satisfaction scores these same learners gave when they took part in the Wave 1 survey. While clearly still largely positive, satisfaction had fallen six months after completing their learning (from 82% satisfied to 77%). This could mirror the fact that learners were least likely to be satisfied with the support they received after they finished their course (see Figure 6.2).

Figure 6.1 Overall satisfaction with FE course



6.4 Levels of overall satisfaction were higher six months after completion among:

- Lower level learners. Whilst four-fifths (81%) of Level 1 learners were satisfied with their course overall six months after completing, this was the case for just 76% of Level 2 learners, 71% of Level 3 learners and 62% of Level 4+ learners.
- Non-apprentices: 78% were satisfied and 43% *very* satisfied (vs. 70% of apprentices satisfied and 32% *very* satisfied).

- Learners who undertook trades-related courses (78% satisfied vs. 64% of those doing professional services courses. By CSN occupation, levels of satisfaction were particularly high among bricklayers (84%), those doing wood trades (77%) and those doing electrical trades (76%) but were comparatively lower among those doing plumbing and HVAC (71%).

- Females: even though women were less likely than males to be engaged in construction-related activities at the time of the Wave 2 survey, they were more likely to be satisfied with their course overall (84% compared with 76% of males).

- Learners involved in construction-related activities at the time of the Wave 2 survey: 87% of those doing further studies in construction, 76% of those working in construction and 76% of those doing a construction apprenticeship compared with just 61% of those working in other industries.

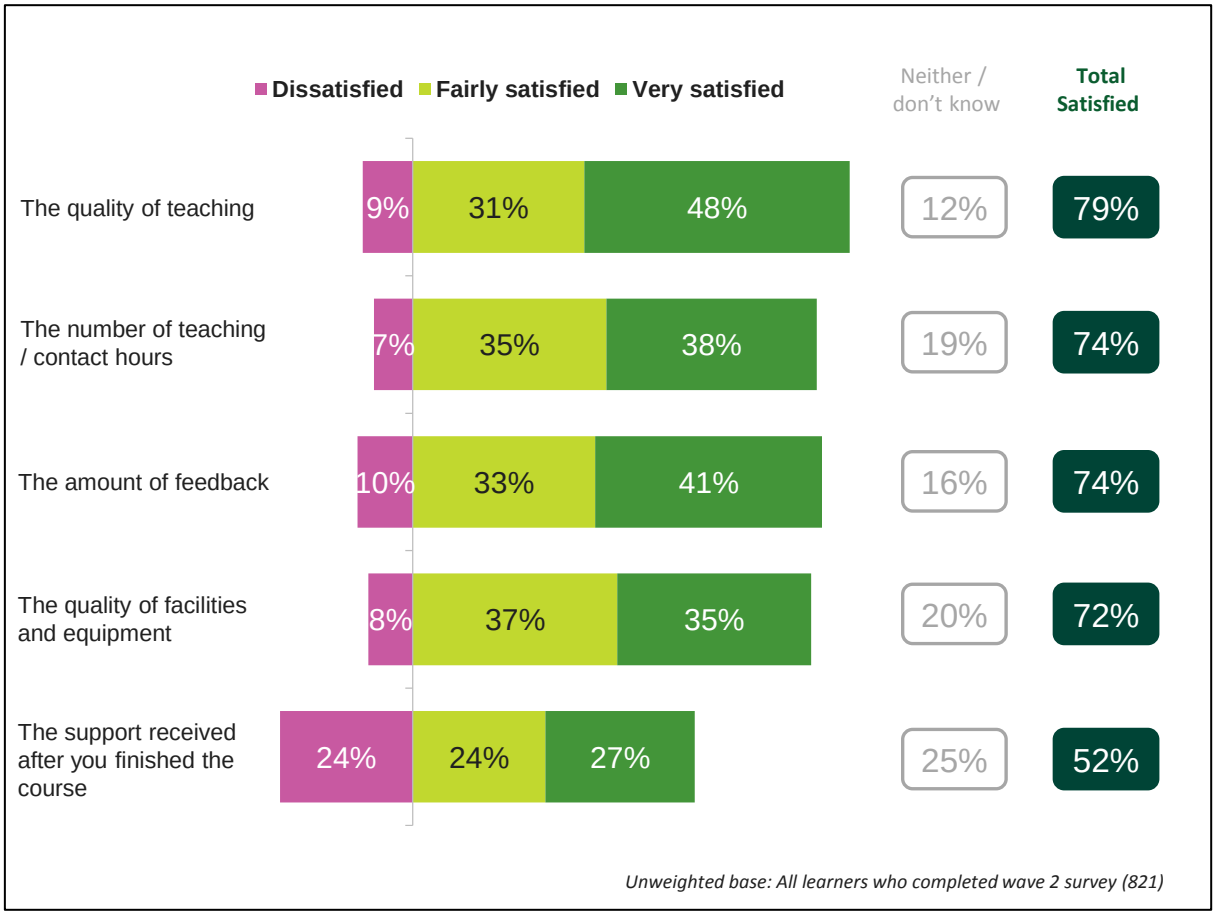
6.5 The following types of learners were more likely to be dissatisfied than the average of 7% at the time of the Wave 2 survey:

- Level 4+ learners (13%);
- Those that did apprenticeships (12%);
- Those aged 19-23 (11%) and those aged 40+ (11%); and,
- Those working in construction (excluding apprentices) six months after the end of their course (11%).

Satisfaction with specific elements of FE course

6.6 Mirroring high levels of overall satisfaction, most learners were satisfied with several specific elements of their FE course that they were asked to provide feedback on during the Wave 2 survey (see Figure 6.2).

Figure 6.2 Satisfaction with specific elements of FE course at the Wave 2 survey



6.7 As Figure 6.2 illustrates, learners were significantly *less* likely to be satisfied (52%) and significantly *more* likely to be dissatisfied (24%) with the support they received after the end of their course than they were with the other specific elements of their course they were asked about.

6.8 The following types of learners were more likely than average to be dissatisfied with this aspect of their course, which largely suggests it depends on (though may also contribute to) learner outcomes:

- Those who did their studies in London (39%).
- Those now working in non-construction roles (38%)
- Those who were unemployed at the time of the wave 2 survey (36%).

Satisfaction with specific elements of FE course (Wave 1 vs. Wave 2 response)

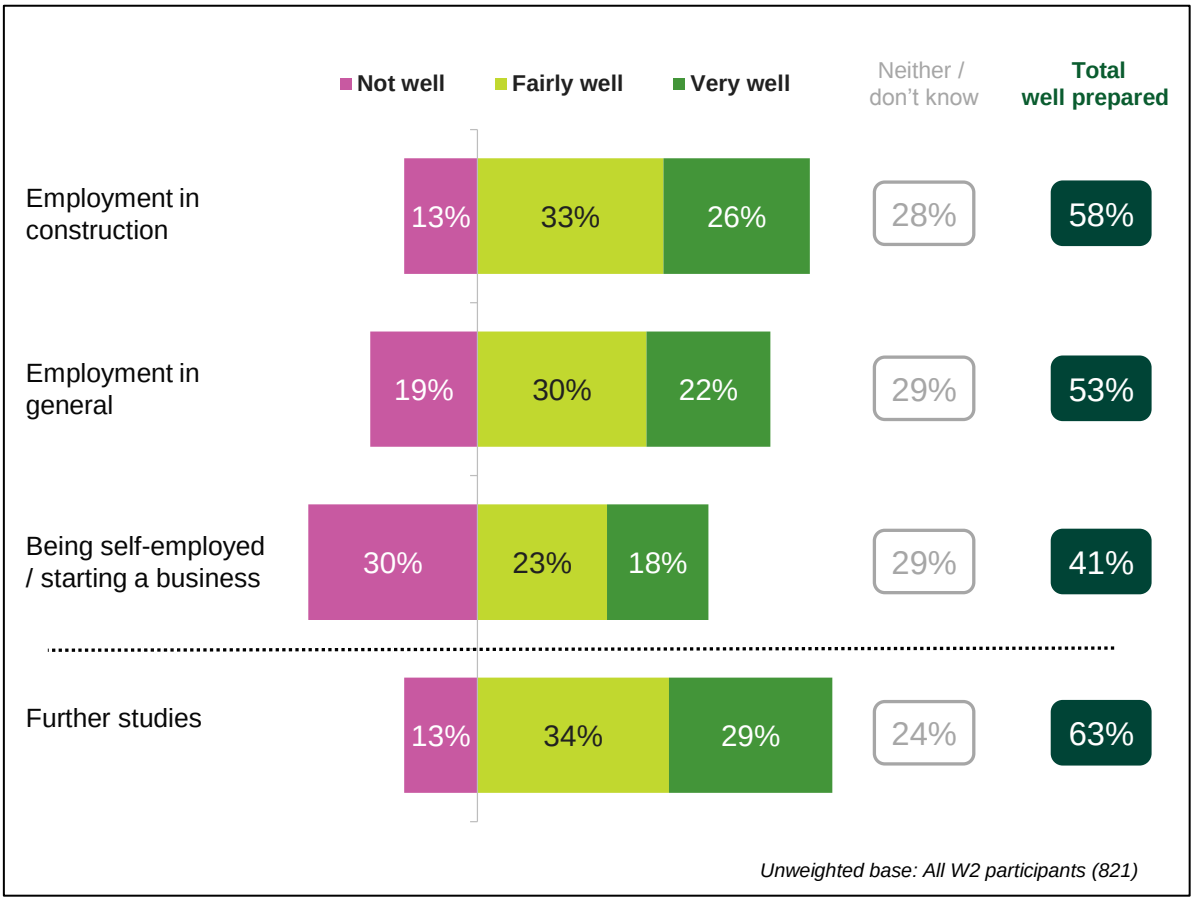
6.9 As discussed above (and shown in Figure 6.1), levels of overall satisfaction were five percentage points lower at the time of the Wave 2 survey than they were at the time of the Wave 1 survey among the same participants. There was a similar pattern in terms of how satisfied these learners were with the specific elements of the course that they were asked about:

- 79% of learners were satisfied with the quality of teaching at the time of the Wave 2 survey (compared to 84% at the time of the Wave 1 survey)
- 74% of learners were satisfied with the number of contact hours (compared to 79% at the time of the Wave 1 survey)
- 74% were satisfied with the amount of feedback they received (compared to 78% at the time of the Wave 1 survey)
- 72% were satisfied with the quality of facilities and equipment (compared to 74% at the time of the Wave 1 survey).

Whether FE course was perceived to have prepared learners for work / further study

6.10 Whilst the proportion of learners who were satisfied with their course overall was high, the proportion of learners who felt that their course had prepared them for work and / or further study was slightly lower (see Figure 6.3).

Figure 6.3 Extent to which FE course was perceived to have prepared learners for employment / further study



Employment

6.11 Less than three-fifths (58%) of learners felt well-prepared for employment *in the construction industry* following their course. This was the case for 63% of those undertaking apprenticeships and 65% of all those working in construction (including apprentices) at the time of the Wave 2 survey.

6.12 Learners that had done qualifications that were not Ofqual regulated were more likely than those whose qualification purpose was preparation for employment and those whose purpose was confirmation of occupational competence to feel prepared for construction employment (78% compared with 63% and 61% respectively).

6.13 In terms of CSN occupation: 61% of those that had done bricklaying courses, 57% of those that had done wood trades, 55% of those that had done electrical trades and 51% of those that had done plumbing and HVAC felt their course had prepared them well for construction employment.

6.14 Just over half (53%) of learners felt well-prepared for employment *in general* following their course, however, just two-fifths (41%) of those working in other industries at the time of the Wave 2 survey felt this to be the case. Those that had done an apprenticeship felt better prepared for employment in general than non-apprentices (67% vs. 50% respectively).

6.15 Two-fifths (41%) of learners felt their course had prepared them for *being self-employed or starting their own business* (rising to 48% among those who were working on a self-employed basis or had started their own business at the time of the Wave 2 survey).

6.16 In terms of CSN occupation: 49% of those that had done bricklaying, 41% of those that had done wood trades' 40% of those that had done plumbing and HVAC and 35% of those doing electrical trades felt well-prepared for *being self-employed or starting their own business*. As many as 30% felt the course had not prepared them well for this.

6.17 Learners who attended private / voluntary training providers were more positive about how prepared they felt for the three types of employment they were asked about. Just under three quarters (72%) felt well-prepared for employment in construction, a similar proportion (71%) felt-prepared for employment in general and over half (54%) felt well-prepared for being self-employed / starting a business. The proportions of learners who attended general FE colleges and felt well-prepared for each was comparatively lower at 65%, 52% and 41% respectively.

Further study

6.18 Around two thirds (63%) of learners felt that undertaking their course meant that they were well-prepared for further studies. This rose to over three-quarters (77%) of those who were doing further studies in construction at the time of the Wave 2 survey.

6.19 As with perceptions about how well-prepared learners were for construction employment, differences by level of course were not statistically significant (62% of Level 1 learners, 61% of Level 2 learners, 66% of Level 3 learners and 71% of Level 4+ learners felt well-prepared for further studies).

6.20 Interestingly, learners aged 16-18 were less likely than those aged 19-23 to state that their course had prepared them well for further study (59% compared with 67% respectively).

7 Conclusions and recommendations

7.1 Satisfaction with FE courses is reasonably high, though there are some issues with equipment and facilities (9% were dissatisfied), and across a range of measures Level 4+ learners are particularly dissatisfied (most level 4+ learners were doing HNCs / HNDs and in professional service subject areas). We feel further work is required to understand the needs of this group, and the shortcomings of existing provision.

7.2 There are positive indications that FE construction courses maintain and promote interest in the sector: six months after completion of their course two-thirds reported that their main activity was construction-related: 25% had a construction job, 16% were doing a construction apprenticeship and 25% had progressed to another construction-related course. Others, such as those unemployed, were still interested in working in the sector.

7.3 Overall 71% of learners were working or studying in the sector six months after the end of their provision, whether as their main activity (66%) or as a secondary activity (5%).

7.4 Where learners were working in construction as their main activity, evidence points to these jobs being secure: 92% were full-time positions, 66% were permanent contracts, and 77% were in skilled trades roles. Pay levels were reasonably high too, with a median average £21,600 annual salary for those in full-time roles. These findings challenge common misconceptions about construction work being unstable and poorly-paid, and can clearly be used to help promote the sector to potential entrants.

7.5 A significant proportion of those in work were self-employed (32%) or owned their own business (5%). This appears to be an area where FE courses should be doing more, indeed 30% of all learners felt their course had not prepared them well for self-employment or running their own business (vs. 41% positive on this measure). Given the importance of self-employment in the sector, CITB should consider how it can work with providers to better integrate this within FE provision.

7.6 There is still heavy reliance on personal contacts and word of mouth for gaining jobs in construction (in comparison, for example, relatively few acquired new construction jobs through the careers / employment service at their provider). A lack of local vacancies was the most common difficulty faced by those that actually found work in construction, and by those that had looked but not applied for any construction vacancies since completing their course; it is likely that widespread use of word of mouth and personal contacts for recruitment in the sector contributes to this apparent lack of vacancies. The research also suggests that some groups (such as non-White British learners) have less access to these networks and personal contacts in the industry.

7.7 While clearly a challenging area to tackle (word of mouth is cheap and typically effective in filling positions), it is important for learners to be made aware of the reality of the job market and the importance of building networks and contacts. Related to this, the research also highlights a lack of work experience as a common barrier to obtaining work in the sector. Work experience opportunities have always been challenging for providers to offer in construction, typically because employers cite health and safety and insurance problems. However, it is clearly important that CITB works to encourage providers and employers to maximise the opportunities for these on FE construction courses, since this will enhance employability both directly through acquiring skills and indirectly through building contacts and networks for learners.

7.8 On-going support from providers after courses have finished is another area of weakness highlighted by the research. Almost a quarter of learners were dissatisfied with this, and predictably this was higher among those unemployed (36%) or working in non-construction jobs (38%). More work is needed to understand if this relates to a lack of support or its quality, but either way CITB needs to ensure as much high quality on-going support is available as possible to minimise the chance that young people lose interest in the sector. This may need to be a mix of that delivered directly by providers but also information available through CITB, for example Go Construct. Currently it appears as if relatively few learners use or are influenced by Go Construct when deciding to undertake an FE course, with friends and family by far the main influencers. Continued promotion of Go Construct to potential learners directly and via FE providers is clearly needed.

Potential longer term evaluation of learner activity and destinations

7.9 This research has investigated the experiences and views of just over 821 FE learners six months after their course finished. While many were in quite settled situations (e.g. permanent construction jobs) others had moved to other construction courses, or were unemployed and looking for work. Clearly it is of interest how many remain or move in to construction roles longer term, and it would be possible to track these learners further in time potentially at the 18-month point. If so we would expect interviews with around 400 to be achievable.

7.10 This research also provides the potential for qualitative follow-up to explore specific types of response or type of learner in more depth. We have highlighted some of these in this chapter (such as post-completion support needs and issues for Level 4+ learners).

Appendix A – Weighting

The survey data each wave was grossed up to the population of learners on FE Construction and Built Environment courses in the 2015-2016 academic year who were due to finish their course between June and August 2016, a total of just over 104,000 learners. The grossing up as done on a level within type of learning (apprenticeship vs. non-apprenticeship basis), as follows:

Level	Apprentices	Non-Apprentices	Total
0/1	-	38,131	**38,131**
2	11,025	33,012	**44,037**
3	3,447	16,619	**20,066**
4+	-	1,947	**1,947**
Total	**14,472**	**89,709**	**104,181**

Appendix B – Learners' six-month destinations by key sub-groups (main activity)

By Level

	Working in construction	Construction App.	Doing another construction course	SUMMARY Main activity is construction related	Working in another industry	Studying non-construction course	Unemployed	Doing something else	SUMMARY Main activity is not construction-related	No involvement with construction at all
0/1 (Base=132)	9%	12%	37%	58%	20%	5%	14%	2%	42%	34%
2 (Base=345)	30%	21%	20%	71%	13%	3%	12%	-	29%	27%
3 (Base=267)	40%	14%	15%	70%	18%	1%	10%	1%	30%	28%
4+ (Base=77)	74%	8%	5%	87%	10%	-	3%	-	13%	10%

Apprentices vs. non-apprentices

	Working in construction	Construction App.	Doing another construction course	SUMMARY Main activity is construction related	Working in another industry	Studying non-construction course	Unemployed	Doing something else	SUMMARY Main activity is not construction-related	No involvement with construction at all
Apprentices (Base=266)	55%	38%	*	93%	3%	-	3%	-	7%	7%
Non-apprentices (Base = 555)	20%	13%	29%	62%	18%	3%	14%	2%	38%	33%

By CITB CSN[1]

	Working in construction	Construction App.	Doing another construction course	SUMMARY Main activity is construction related	Working in another industry	Studying non-construction course	Unemployed	Doing something else	SUMMARY Main activity is not construction-related	No involvement with construction at all
Bricklaying *(Base = 59)*	36%	22%	22%	80%	5%	2%	10%	1%	20%	20%
Electrical trades and installation *(Base = 143)*	24%	16%	32%	73%	17%	5%	5%	-	27%	27%
Plumbing and HVAC *(Base = 150)*	30%	16%	17%	64%	23%	3%	9%	-	36%	29%
Wood trades and interior fit-out *(Base = 143)*	24%	22%	17%	64%	19%	-	15%	*	36%	29%

1 Where bases allow for sub-group comparisons

By CITB qualification purpose[2]

	Working in construction	Construction App.	Doing another construction course	SUMMARY Main activity is construction related	Working in another industry	Studying non-construction course	Unemployed	Doing something else	SUMMARY Main activity is not construction-related	No involvement with construction at all
Prepare for employment *(Base = 70)*	40%	10%	11%	62%	28%	9%	2%	-	38%	29%
Confirm occupational competence *(Base = 169)*	61%	33%	*%	95%	3%	-	2%	-	5%	5%
Not Ofqual regulated *(Base = 50)*	45%	32%	16%	94%	4%	-	3%	-	6%	3%

2 Where bases allow for sub-group comparisons

By experience prior to course

	Working in construction	Construction App.	Doing another construction course	SUMMARY Main activity is construction related	Working in another industry	Studying non-construction course	Unemployed	Doing something else	SUMMARY Main activity is not construction-related	No involvement with construction at all
Worked in construction (Base=133)	43%	7%	27%	77%	15%	3%	5%	-	23%	20%
Studied construction course (Base=147)	13%	21%	21%	54%	16%	5%	21%	2%	46%	39%
Both worked in construction and studied construction course (Base=154)	39%	19%	13%	71%	11%	1%	14%	1%	29%	27%
Did neither (Base=387)	19%	17%	30%	66%	18%	3%	11%	1%	34%	30%

Those working in construction vs. those not working in construction whilst on course

	Working in construction	Construction App.	Doing another construction course	SUMMARY Main activity is construction related	Working in another industry	Studying non-construction course	Unemployed	Doing something else	SUMMARY Main activity is not construction-related	No involvement with construction at all
Working in construction (Base = 432)	52%	30%	5%	87%	6%	2%	4%	*	13%	12%
Working in other industries (Base=157)	12%	13%	24%	50%	38%	2%	8%	1%	50%	40%
Not working (Base = 230)	12%	8%	42%	61%	11%	5%	21%	1%	39%	36%

By intended destination cited at Wave 1

	Working in construction	Construction App.	Doing another construction course	SUMMARY Main activity is construction related	Working in another industry	Studying non-construction course	Unemployed	Doing something else	SUMMARY Main activity is not construction-related	No involvement with construction at all
Working in construction (Base=676)	30%	20%	20%	69%	14%	2%	12%	1%	31%	28%

By Course outcomes (from ILR)[3]

	Working in construction	Construction App.	Doing another construction course	SUMMARY Main activity is construction related	Working in another industry	Studying non-construction course	Unemployed	Doing something else	SUMMARY Main activity is not construction-related	No involvement with construction at all
Achieved (Base=647)	25%	16%	26%	67%	16%	3%	12%	1%	33%	29%
No achievement (Base=59)	20%	15%	20%	55%	21%	6%	16%	-	45%	45%
Study continuing (Base=90)	51%	33%	8%	92%	6%	-	2%	-	8%	8%

3 Learners whose outcome not known and those with partial achievement excluded from table due to insufficient base sizes.

By age

	Working in construction	Construction App.	Doing another construction course	SUMMARY Main activity is construction related	Working in another industry	Studying non-construction course	Unemployed	Doing something else	SUMMARY Main activity is not construction-related	No involvement with construction at all
16-18	12%	19%	36%	67%	14%	5%	11%	1%	33%	29%
19-23	37%	19%	14%	71%	15%	2%	12%	*	29%	29%
24-29	51%	14%	6%	71%	26%	-	3%	-	29%	16%
30-39	40%	3%	19%	61%	16%	2%	21%	-	39%	34%
40+	37%	8%	9%	54%	26%	-	15%	4%	46%	43%

By gender

	Working in construction	Construction App.	Doing another construction course	SUMMARY Main activity is construction related	Working in another industry	Studying non-construction course	Unemployed	Doing something else	SUMMARY Main activity is not construction-related	No involvement with construction at all
Male (Base=775)	26%	16%	25%	68%	15%	3%	12%	1%	32%	29%
Female (Base=46)	11%	14%	25%	50%	32%	3%	13%	1%	50%	36%

By ethnicity

	Working in construction	Construction App.	Doing another construction course	SUMMARY Main activity is construction related	Working in another industry	Studying non-construction course	Unemployed	Doing something else	SUMMARY Main activity is not construction-related	No involvement with construction at all
White British (Base=681)	27%	18%	23%	68%	16%	2%	11%	1%	32%	27%
Non-white-British (Base=132)	17%	9%	33%	59%	18%	8%	15%	-	41%	41%

By region

	Working in construction	Construction App.	Doing another construction course	Main activity is construction related	Working in another industry	Studying non-construction course	Unemployed	Doing something else	Main activity is not construction-related	No involvement with construction at all
North East (Base=81)	27%	26%	29%	81%	9%	-	9%	-	19%	18%
North West (Base=102)	29%	8%	24%	61%	20%	7%	11%	1%	39%	34%
Yorkshire & the Humber (Base=87)	27%	20%	25%	72%	11%	1%	12%	1%	28%	24%
East Midlands (Base=66)	18%	13%	34%	65%	18%	2%	12%	-	35%	29%
West Midlands (Base=99)	21%	10%	31%	62%	14%	6%	17%	-	38%	37%
East of England	26%	25%	27%	79%	7%	7%	7%	-	21%	21%

(Base=30)										
London (Base=94)	27%	17%	18%	62%	26%	1%	10%	2%	38%	32%
South East (Base=150)	30%	17%	22%	69%	13%	1%	12%	2%	31%	26%
South West (Base=112)	23%	21%	21%	64%	20%	3%	13%	-	36%	31%

“

IFF Research illuminates the world for organisations businesses and individuals helping them to make better-informed decisions.”

Our Values:

1. Impartiality and independence:

IFF is a research-led organisation which believes in letting the evidence do the talking. We don’t undertake projects with a preconception of what “the answer” is, and we don’t hide from the truths that research reveals. We are independent, in the research we conduct, of political flavour or dogma. We are open-minded, imaginative and intellectually rigorous.

2. Being human first:

Whether employer or employee, client or collaborator, we are all humans first and foremost. Recognising this essential humanity is central to how we conduct our business, and how we lead our lives. We respect and accommodate each individual’s way of thinking, working and communicating, mindful of the fact that each has their own story and means of telling it.

3. Making a difference:

At IFF, we want to make a difference to the clients we work with, and we work with clients who share our ambition for positive change. We expect all IFF staff to take personal responsibility for everything they do at work, which should always be the best they can deliver.

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