

The 2009 European Social Fund Leavers Survey

Final Report – Combined Wave 1 & 2

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Executive Summary

The 2009 European Social Fund Leavers Survey

- The aim of the 2009 European Social Fund Leavers' Survey is to assist in assessing the effectiveness of labour market interventions delivered under ESF. Telephone interviews were firstly conducted with 4,066 people who had participated in an ESF project conducted under Priorities 2 and 3 of the Convergence Programme during 2009. A further 2,521 interviews were conducted among these respondents approximately 6 months later. Not all projects were able to be included in the survey due to the availability of participant data at the time the sample was drawn.

Who are the participants?

- Approximately 42% of respondents were aged 16-24 at the time of the Wave 1 survey. This is compared with 18% among the wider population of working age.
- On entry to an ESF project, 30% of respondents had achieved levels of educational attainment that are equivalent to NQF level 3 or above. Levels of educational attainment are higher among respondents from Priority 3 projects, with 39% having achieved qualifications at NQF level 3 or above.
- Compared with the wider working age population in Wales, respondents to the survey have lower levels of educational attainment reflecting the provision of support to the most disadvantaged. However, respondents were less likely to suffer from a work limiting illness reflecting the relative 'closeness' to the labour market of those surveyed and the relatively young age profile of this group.

Participating in ESF

- The two main reasons given by respondents for participating in an ESF project were to develop a broader range of skills (22%) and to improve or widen their career options (21%).
- Rates of withdrawal from ESF projects are highest amongst those aged 16-18 at the time of the survey and among those with low levels of educational attainment. However, reasons for withdrawal from an ESF project are complex and can reflect positive events such as finding a job.

Career histories of ESF participants

- A majority of transitions out of unemployment and inactivity among Priority 2 respondents occur either during or immediately following their participation in an ESF project. There is considerable continuity in the career profiles of respondents to the survey following the completion of their ESF project.

- Priority 2 respondents under the age of 25 exhibit the largest transitions away from unemployment and inactivity during the 12 months following the completion of their ESF projects, moving evenly in to employment and education and training.
- Among Priority 2 respondents, the likelihood of being continuously employed during the 12 months following participation in an ESF project is positively associated with educational attainment prior to entry.

Current situation of participants

- Among Priority 2 respondents, 39% were in paid employment at the time of the Wave 2 survey: an increase in their rate of employment of 27 percentage points compared with that observed before their participation in an ESF project.
- Of this increase in employment among Priority 2 respondents, approximately 80% can be accounted for by people moving out of unemployment and in to paid work. This reflects both the profile of non-employed Priority 2 respondents (half of whom were unemployed prior to ESF) and the relative 'closeness' of the unemployed to the labour market who are, by definition, seeking employment.
- Whilst approximately 30% of Priority 2 respondents report a movement towards paid employment following their participation in an ESF project, 43% do not experience a change in their activity status between commencing their ESF project and the time of the Wave 2 survey. One in five were unemployed both prior to their participation and at the time of the survey.
- Among the unemployed, the most commonly cited reasons for being out of work prior to participation in ESF are: 1) a lack of appropriate jobs where they live (67%); 2) a lack of relevant work experience (52%) and 3) a lack of qualifications or skills (49%).
- Among those respondents who were both unemployed prior to their participation in an ESF project and at the time of the Wave 1 survey, factors related to skill deficiencies were less likely to be reported as reasons that are making it difficult for them to find work following their participation in an ESF project compared with the reasons that they retrospectively gave prior to participating in an ESF project. This suggests that ESF projects are increasing employability through addressing skill deficiencies.

Further Study and Training since ESF

- Forty one per cent of respondents to the survey report that they have undertaken further education and training since the completion of their ESF project. Approximately 28% went on to achieve further qualifications by the time of the Wave 2 survey.
- The main reason given by employed respondents for undertaking further education and training is to improve or widen their career options. The main reason given by the unemployed is to help them find a job, whilst the main reason given by the economically inactive is to learn something new out of personal interest.
- The attainment of further qualifications and participation in further education and training is higher among respondents aged 15-24.

The job satisfaction of ESF participants

- Half of employed respondents report that they are very satisfied with their jobs. Eleven per cent of Priority 3 respondents at Wave 1 indicate that improvements in their jobs can be directly attributed to their participation in an ESF project. Such improvements are more likely to be reported among those with lower levels of educational attainment prior to their participation in an ESF project.

The benefits of participation on an ESF project

- Almost three quarters of respondents to the survey report that they had attained a qualification as a result of participating in an ESF project. In terms of softer outcomes, approximately 90% report that they feel more confident in their own abilities and that they feel better about themselves generally.
- In terms of skills achieved during participation in an ESF project, most respondents report that they have gained communication skills, team working skills, organization skills and problem solving skills.
- One in four respondents who were in a different job at the time of the Wave 1 survey compared with that which they held prior to participation in ESF report that their course was vital to them in terms of getting their current jobs. This is also reported by 13% of respondents who gain a new job between Wave 1 and Wave 2.
- Respondents who achieve additional qualifications through ESF are more likely to report that the course resulted in a positive impact. This finding is observed across a variety of outcome measures and is particularly evident where the qualification achieved was at the same or higher level than qualifications held prior to participation in an ESF project.

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

1.1 ESF programmes and projects in Wales, 2007 - 2013

The two ESF Operational Programmes which are benefiting Wales for the Programming period 2007 – 2013 are together providing a little over £1.2 billion¹ of investment, with almost 90% of this channelled through for the West Wales and the Valleys Convergence Programme². In total, they are expected to provide support to almost 300,000 individual participants (formerly “*beneficiaries*”) – 267,500 under Convergence and 26,600 under Regional Competitiveness and Employment. The interventions which are supported by the Programme are wide-ranging, though all relate to the investment in human capital. They include:

- Measures to prevent young people from “*falling out*” of mainstream education and overcoming barriers between education and employment (Convergence Priority 1, Themes 1 and 2);
- Active labour market measures for the unemployed (Convergence Priority 2, Theme 1 and Competitiveness Priority 1);
- Support to develop the employability of the economically inactive (Convergence Priority 2, Theme 1 and Competitiveness Priority 1);
- Preventative measures to reduce the risk of those in employment but with poor health from losing their jobs (Convergence Priority 2, Theme 2);
- Improving the skills of those already in work – with a particular focus on those with low skills but extending also to the provision of higher level skills to support the knowledge economy (Convergence Priority 3, Theme 1, Competitiveness Priority 2);
- Improving systems to identify and anticipate skills needs (Convergence Priority 3, Theme 2, Competitiveness Priority 2).

¹ At current exchange rates. The Programme allocations are set in Euro. See Reports to PMC 24.09.10 – Papers PMC (10) 127 and PMC (10) 128.

² Convergence Programme - £1,079 million, Regional Competitiveness and Employment Programme - £132 million

- Measures to tackle the gender pay gap and to promote gender equality (Convergence Priority 3, Theme 3, Competitiveness Priority 2);
- Investment in human resources within the public sector to improve public services (Convergence Priority 4).

Given the scale of the investment, it is clearly essential to evaluate the impact of measures supported by the Programmes. The 2009 ESF Leavers' Survey provides some of that evidence.

1.2 Overview of the 2009 ESF Leavers' Survey Methods

The aim of the 2009 ESF Leavers' Survey is to assist in assessing the effectiveness of labour market interventions delivered under the ESF Convergence and Competitiveness Programmes. The over-arching objective of the survey is to understand the characteristics and outcomes of those participating in ESF projects. To achieve this, two surveys were conducted with participants. The first telephone survey was conducted during February and March 2010 among a group of people who were identified as having left an ESF project during 2009. Due to the timing of the enquiry, the survey only covers those participants who had completed their activity under projects in Priorities 2 and 3 of the ESF Convergence Programme during 2009. It should be noted that due to the availability of participant data under Priority 2 and 3, not all projects are covered by the survey.

WEFO provided a file containing the details of 10,201 leavers who left ESF projects during 2009. Following checks, 9,672 were found to have valid contact details and were loaded on to the system for inclusion in the survey. Interviews were achieved with 4,066 ESF participants. Expressed as a percentage of all records supplied to the research team, the response rate for the survey is 40%. Excluding those participants with no telephone numbers or where the number supplied was found to be incorrect or where it was not possible to contact the participant, the response rate increases to 54%. Excluding those who had no recall of participating in an ESF project or who were still on the project, the estimated response rate increases to 60%.

To assist in understanding the experiences and outcomes of participants on ESF projects; the survey collected information on the pre-entry characteristics of ESF participants; their motivations for participating in an ESF project; the skills acquired as a result of the intervention and details of the careers of respondents since completing the project, identifying both employment outcomes, 'softer' benefits from learning (such as increased confidence) and entry in to further learning. The interviews included questions to explore participants' perceptions regarding levels of satisfaction with their courses, their awareness of ESF and perceptions of additionality i.e. do participants feel that they would have gained the same employment impact without intervention.

To consider the sustainability of outcomes from ESF participation, a second wave of telephone interviews was conducted with respondents approximately six months after the completion of the Wave 1 interviews. Of those who responded to the Wave 1 survey, 3,816 individuals agreed to be re-contacted for inclusion in the Wave 2 survey (94%). The Wave 2 survey was based upon a condensed version of the Wave 1 questionnaire and largely focussed upon collecting follow-up data on the labour market circumstances of ESF participants so that the development of their careers could be considered over a longer time period. At the end of Wave 2 fieldwork, a total of 2,542 completed interviews had been achieved representing 67% of those respondents from the Wave 1 survey who had agreed to be followed up. A detailed overview of the survey methodology is provided in Annex 1.

It should be noted that the scope of the research did not allow for a control group so is partial in that we are describing the characteristics and outcomes of a sample of ESF participants. Whilst it may appear that certain characteristics are clearly associated with improved labour market outcomes following the completion of an ESF project, the absence of a control group limits the certainty with which we can say that participation in an ESF project contributes to improved labour market outcomes. Whilst respondents are asked to provide an assessment of the benefits that they had gained from participating in an ESF project, we are not able to provide an assessment of

what would have happened to this group in the absence of ESF. An important contribution of the material presented in the report is to identify what characteristics are associated with improved outcomes to help inform the future development and delivery of projects.

1.3 The economic context

The economic context, with the very sharp downturn in the economy since 2007, represents a radically different backdrop for the Leavers' Survey than in the previous programme period. UK output fell for six successive quarters between the second quarter of 2008 and the third quarter of 2009, the longest such period since records began. Figures for the fourth quarter of 2009 indicate positive (0.4%) growth in GDP, marking the official end of the recession³. GDP continued to increase by 0.2 per cent during the first quarter of 2010. The latest labour market data for Wales continues to show the relatively weak position of the Welsh labour market⁴. Estimates for July to September 2010 based on the Labour Force Survey reveal that the employment rate of people of working age in Wales was 67.1 per cent. The UK average was 70.8 per cent. The ILO unemployment rate in Wales was 8.1 per cent of the economically active. For the UK as a whole it was 7.7 per cent. In interpreting the results of the survey, prevailing economic conditions may contribute to seemingly poorer labour market outcomes compared with earlier surveys conducted during a period of sustained economic growth. Indeed, some ESF projects currently target those who are most vulnerable to the difficult economic climate. The efficacy of such projects cannot be considered by comparing the results of the present survey with previous surveys of ESF participants.

³ ONS latest data on GDP growth, available at the [Office for National Statistics](#) website.

⁴ Economic Statistics Monthly, Statistical Bulletin 96/2010 available from the [Welsh Assembly Government](#) website

CHAPTER 2: Who are the participants?

Chapter Summary

- Overall, 55% of respondents to the survey were female, with the proportion of female respondents being higher among Priority 3 respondents (60%) compared with Priority 2 respondents (49%).
- Approximately 42% of respondents to the survey were aged 16-24, with this group accounting for 47% of respondents from Priority 2 projects. This is compared with 18% among the wider population of working age.
- Upon entry to these courses, 30% of respondents have achieved levels of educational attainment that are equivalent to NQF level 3 or above. Levels of educational attainment are higher among respondents from Priority 3 projects, with 39% having achieved qualifications at NQF level 3 or above.
- Given the relative objectives and target populations for projects under the two Priorities, some 87% of Priority 3 respondents were employed prior to participating in ESF. In contrast, three quarters of Priority 2 respondents were either unemployed or economically inactive prior to their participation in ESF.
- Among those out of work, the most commonly cited reasons for being out of work prior to participation in ESF are: 1) a lack of appropriate jobs where they live (61%); 2) a lack of relevant work experience (48%) and 3) a lack of qualifications or skills (45%).
- Compared with the wider population in Wales, respondents to the ESF survey have relatively low levels of educational attainment prior to entry. Respondents are also less likely to suffer from long term illness. This can be attributed to the relatively young composition of the ESF sample.

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to map the demographic and educational characteristics of the sample of ESF participants. Primarily, it provides a profile of the sample of 2009 leavers from ESF Convergence Priority 2 and Priority 3 projects in Wales and their experiences prior to their participation in these projects; previous career status – whether or not they were in employment prior to ESF and, where relevant, their occupations, contractual

status and hours worked. Personal characteristics are also summarized and their prior educational qualifications. Using national statistics, comparisons are also made with the characteristics of those in the wider population. As we are reflecting upon the experiences of these ESF participants prior to their participation in ESF, the data are drawn exclusively from the Wave 1 survey.

2.2 Personal characteristics of participants

Table 2.1 presents an overview of the personal characteristics of respondents to the 2009 ESF Leavers Survey, distinguishing between those respondents who participated in ESF projects under Priorities 2 and 3. Overall, 55% of respondents to the survey were female, with the proportion of female respondents being higher among Priority 3 respondents (60%) compared with Priority 2 respondents (49%). Respondents from Priority 2 projects are younger, with over half (51%) of respondents from Priority 2 being aged 24 or under at the time they completed their project. Among Priority 3 respondents, approximately a third (34%) were aged 24 or under at the time of completion.

In terms of defining older workers, only 28 respondents to the survey were aged 65 or over, with a majority of these having participated in Priority 2 projects. In order to maintain the confidentiality of respondents to the survey throughout the remainder of the report, these 28 respondents are retained within the oldest age group category which is defined as those aged 55 and above. This approach is taken in preference to excluding these people entirely from the analysis. It should be noted that 90% (262) of this age group consists of older workers as defined by Annex 23 of the Commission regulation 1828/2006 (aged 55-64). A majority of the 28 respondents who were above the age of 64 were aged 65 to 67 and so the inclusion of these respondents would not be expected to bias the interpretation of results presented for this group.

Table 2.1: Personal characteristics of participants

	<i>per cent of respondents</i>		
	Priority 2	Priority 3	Total
Gender:			
Male	50.7	39.7	45.1
Female	49.3	60.3	54.9
Age: (at time of survey)			
16 -18 yrs	36.0	3.6	19.3
19 - 21 yrs	10.5	17.8	14.2
22 - 24 yrs	4.1	12.9	8.6
<i>16 - 24 yrs⁵</i>	<i>50.6</i>	<i>34.2</i>	<i>42.2</i>
25 - 30 yrs	8.4	14.6	11.6
31 - 40 yrs	12.7	18.0	15.4
41 - 54 yrs	19.2	27.8	23.6
55+ yrs	9.1	5.3	7.2
Ethnicity:			
White	98.8	98.7	98.7
Educational attainment prior to ESF			
None	19.1	11.0	14.9
NQF Level 1 or less	14.1	8.0	11.0
NQF Level 2	35.2	32.3	33.7
NQF Level 3	9.8	23.3	16.7
NQF Level 4 or above	5.9	11.8	8.9
Unspecified level ⁶	15.9	13.7	14.8
Long term limiting illness (at time of survey)			
Yes	24.3	12.0	18.0
No	75.7	88.0	82.0
Work limiting illness (at time of survey)			
Yes	15.6	2.2	8.7
No	84.4	97.8	91.3
Place of birth:			
Wales	81.3	80.4	80.9
Elsewhere in the UK	16.1	16.2	16.1
Outside UK	2.6	3.4	3.0
English as first language	94.0	88.6	91.2
Speak Welsh	22.9	31.6	27.4
Sample size	1973	2085	4058

⁵ The italicised age band 16-24 has been included to meet the reporting requirements of Annex 23 of the European Commission regulation 1828/2006. As this group forms a large part of the ESF sample, we have also retained more detailed categories for analytical purposes.

⁶ Unspecified level refers to respondents who report that they hold qualifications but do not provide sufficient detail for these qualifications to be classified to NQF equivalents. For example, respondents may have been unable to recall the level of qualification obtained.

In terms of other characteristics, levels of educational attainment prior to undertaking an ESF project were higher among Priority 3 respondents, with 35% having achieved a qualification equivalent to NQF Level 3 or above compared with 16% among Priority 2 respondents. Eighteen percent of respondents reported that they suffered from a long term illness, with the rate of long term illness being twice as high among Priority 2 respondents (24%) compared with those from Priority 3 interventions. The overall rate of work limiting illness was 9% with this rate being higher among Priority 2 respondents (16% compared with 2% for Priority 3 respondents). Only 1% of respondents are from a minority ethnic background, with 97% being born in the UK. Whilst over a quarter of respondents speak Welsh, over 90% report that English was their first language.

2.3 Labour market circumstances of project participants prior to ESF

Many of the differences observed in the personal characteristics of ESF participants by Priority reflect differences in the groups being targeted and the nature of the interventions. The labour market circumstances of ESF participants immediately prior to their interventions are presented in Table 2.2. The largest difference between the two groups of respondents is the large majority of Priority 3 respondents were in paid employment prior to participation in an ESF intervention (87%), reflecting the specific targeting of the employed by Priority 3 projects. In contrast, only 11% of Priority 2 respondents were in paid employment prior to their participation in a project. Among Priority 2 respondents, 56% were unemployed and 17% were economically inactive prior to their participation in an ESF project.

Table 2.2: Labour market characteristics of participants
per cent of respondents

	Priority 2	Priority 3	All
Paid employment	11.1	87.0	50.1
Unemployed	56.1	4.1	29.4
Education & training	15.1	8.3	11.6
Inactive	17.2	0.5	8.6
Not known	0.6	0.1	0.4
Total	100	100	100
Sample	1975	2085	4058

Table 2.3 presents information on the nature of employment held by respondents prior to ESF. Due to the relatively small number of respondents from Priority 2 projects who were employed immediately prior to the survey (n=218), we present details of jobs held by respondents from both Priorities. In terms of occupational composition⁷, differences in the jobs held by male and female respondents to the survey reflect segregation of occupational roles observed generally in the labour market. Compared to females, employment among males is relatively concentrated among Skilled Trades, Process Plant and Machine Operatives and Elementary Occupations. In contrast, females are relatively concentrated in Personal Service Occupations, Administrative and Secretarial Occupations and Sales and Customer Services Occupations. The shorter number of hours worked per week by women reflects the relative concentration of females in service sector occupations characterised by relatively high levels of part time work.

Table 2.3: Characteristics of paid employment

	<i>per cent of employed respondents</i>		
	Male	Female	Total
Occupation (SOC Major Groups):			
1. Managers & senior officials	10.9	11.8	11.4
2. Professional	2.1	1.9	2.0
3. Associate prof & tech	6.6	7.7	7.3
4. Admin and secretarial	4.9	16.6	12.2
5. Skilled trades	28.5	1.4	11.7
6. Personal service	11.5	37.4	27.6
7. Sales and customer service	6.6	11.7	9.8
8. Process, plant and machine	9.6	2.3	5.1
9. Elementary	12.8	6.0	8.6
Missing	6.5	3.3	4.5
Permanent contract	88.6	90.8	89.9
Hours worked per week:			
1-20 hours	4.5	18.4	13.2
21-30 hours	5.3	16.4	12.2
31-40 hours	67.6	55.8	60.3
41+ hours	20.7	7.9	12.8
Missing	1.8	1.5	1.6
Total	100	100	100
Sample size	772	1,259	2,031

⁷ Occupations held by respondents have been classified to one of the 9 Major Groups of the Standard Occupational Classification by coding the text of job titles. Occupation may be coded as 'missing' if the insufficient detail was supplied by respondents to accurately locate the occupation with SOC.

Twenty nine percent of respondents to the survey reported that they were unemployed immediately prior to commencing their ESF project, with a further 9% reporting that they were economically inactive (see Table 2.2). Table 2.4 presents information on the duration of non-employment and the reasons why respondents faced difficulties in finding work prior to their participation in an ESF project. In terms of the duration of worklessness, it can be seen that unemployed respondents have been out of paid employment for less time than those who are economically inactive. Among the unemployed, 58% have been out of paid employment for less than 12 months, compared with 16% of the economically inactive.

Table 2.4: Duration and reasons for non-employment

	<i>per cent of non-employed respondents</i>		
	Unemployed	Inactive	Total
Duration of non-employment			
Less than 12 months	57.6	15.7	48.1
1 - 3 years	22.6	18.0	21.5
3 - 10 years	15.1	46.3	22.2
10+ years	4.7	20.0	8.2
Reasons for non-employment:			
Lack of appropriate jobs where you live	67.0	34.6	60.6
Lack of relevant work experience	52.1	30.8	47.9
A lack of qualifications or skills	48.5	29.8	44.8
Transport difficulties and it being hard to get appropriate work	40.2	23.7	36.9
Having caring responsibilities	13.5	39.3	18.6
You only wanting to work part time	15.8	29.5	18.5
Believing you would not be better off financially in work	14.3	17.6	15.0
Lack of affordable childcare	11.6	23.4	13.9
Medical/health issues	4.9	15.9	7.1
Having a criminal record	4.4	3.7	4.3
My age (too old/young)	3.4	2.0	3.1
Alcohol or drug dependency	1.9	1.4	1.8
The recession/economic climate	1.5	0.0	1.2
Sample	1192	350	1542

Survey respondents were able to cite multiple reasons as to why they faced difficulties in finding work. The most important reasons cited by respondents for their difficulties in finding work were a perceived lack of appropriate jobs in the area where they lived (61%), their lack of relevant work experience (48%), their lack of qualifications (45%) and transport difficulties/barriers associated

with accessing appropriate work (37%). Whilst these four categories were also those most cited by those respondents who were unemployed prior to their participation in an ESF project, the reasons provided by respondents who were economically inactive prior to their participation in an ESF project were more varied. Having caring responsibilities (39%), only wanting to work part time (29%) and a lack of affordable childcare (23%) were also of relative importance to respondents who were economically inactive prior to their participation in an ESF project. These differences reflect the relative gender make up of unemployed and economically inactive respondents, with the share of female respondents being higher among the economically inactive than among the unemployed.

2.4 Comparisons of survey respondents with the wider population

Finally in this chapter, we compare the characteristics of respondents with the wider population. This allows us to consider how representative ESF participants are in the context of the wider population. Comparison data for Wales are provided by the UK Labour Force Survey (LFS). Data from the LFS are restricted to the population of working age. Due to the relatively small sample size for Wales, it was necessary to merge data for the LFS covering the period 2007 to 2009. For the purpose of these comparisons, we distinguish between those who are in employment and those who are non-employed.

Among the employed, the sample of ESF participants contains a relatively high proportion of women (62%) compared with the employed population of working age (46%). However, among the non-employed, the sample of ESF participants contains a relatively low proportion of women (48%) compared with the population of working age (54%). Both the employed and non-employed sample of ESF participants exhibit lower levels of educational attainment compared with the wider working aged population. Only 26% of the ESF sample report holding a qualification at a level equivalent to NQF Level 3 or above. This is compared with 48% among the wider population of working age. The ESF sample contains a smaller proportion of people

suffering from illness compared with the general working age population. This is particularly evident in the relative incidence of those suffering from a work limiting illness. This is to be expected given the relatively young composition of the ESF sample and that participants in ESF projects will generally be seeking employment⁸. Finally, we observe that ESF respondents are more likely to be white and are more likely to have been born in Wales compared with those in the broader Welsh labour market.

Table 2.5: Comparing the survey sample with the general population of working age

	2007-2009 LFS - Wales			2009 ESF Respondents		
	Employed	Non Employed	All	Employed	Non Employed	All
<i>per cent of total</i>						
Gender:						
Male	54.3	46.4	52.1	38.2	52.5	45.3
Female	45.7	53.6	47.9	61.8	47.5	54.7
Age:						
16 -18 yrs	2.9	8.6	4.5	5.4	32.5	18.7
19 - 21 yrs	5.6	10.6	7	13.0	16.4	14.7
22 - 24 yrs	6.7	7.1	6.8	11.3	6.4	8.9
16 - 24 yrs	15.2	26.3	18.3	29.7	55.3	42.3
25 - 30 yrs	12.7	8.7	11.6	15.1	8.7	12.0
31 - 40 yrs	23.2	15.6	21.1	20.1	11.6	15.9
41 - 54 yrs	35.4	24.6	32.4	30.1	18.5	24.4
55+ yrs	13.5	24.7	16.6	5.0	5.9	5.5
Educational attainment:						
NQF level 3+	54.3	33.0	48.3	33.3	18.1	25.8
Long term limiting illness	22.1	51.7	30.4	12.2	23.5	17.8
Work limiting illness	7.6	43.2	17.6	2.8	14.9	8.7
Nationality:						
Wales	68.8	71.1	69.4	80.6	81.6	81.1
Rest of UK	25.8	22.3	24.8	15.9	15.9	15.9
Elsewhere	5.4	6.6	5.7	3.5	2.5	3.0
Ethnicity						
White	97.2	95.1	96.6	99.0	98.6	98.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

⁸ Those suffering from ill-health may be less likely to enrol in an ESF project if they perceive their condition to be too debilitating for them to participate in paid employment.

As noted above, the sample of ESF participants is relatively young compared with the wider working age population. This difference in age structure could potentially confound comparisons made between the two groups. To take account of this, Table 2.6 presents comparisons of the survey sample with the general population by age group, focussing upon those aged 16-24 and those aged 55 and over. These comparisons reveal similar patterns to those presented in Table 2.5, with both age groups from the ESF sample exhibiting relatively low levels of educational attainment and lower levels of ill-health. Among older ESF participants who are in employment, the proportion of males is relatively low compared with the wider population of working age.

Table 2.6: Comparing the survey sample with the general population of working age: by age group

	<i>per cent of total</i>					
	2007-2009 Labour Force Survey - Wales			2009 ESF Respondents		
	Employed	Non Employed	All	Employed	Non Employed	All
Age 16-24						
Gender:						
Male	53.1	48.2	51.1	50.9	57.0	54.8
Age:						
16 -18 yrs	18.8	32.8	24.5	18.0	58.8	44.3
19 - 21 yrs	36.9	40.4	38.3	43.8	29.7	34.7
22 - 24 yrs	44.2	26.8	37.2	38.1	11.5	21.0
Educational attainment:						
NQF level 3+	48.4	36.9	43.8	27.7	13.2	18.3
Work limiting illness	5.0	14.1	8.7	3.4	5.3	4.5
White	96.6	92.4	94.9	99.8	98.3	98.9
Age 55+						
Gender:						
Male	66.2	64.9	65.7	38.0	59.1	49.3
Educational attainment:						
NQF level 3+	56.1	41.2	49.9	26.0	23.5	24.7
Work limiting illness	12.1	64.9	34.1	7.0	38.3	23.7
White	98.6	99.0	98.7	98.0	100	99.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

To further examine the relative characteristics of respondents to the ESF survey compared with those from the wider working age population, LFS data was downloaded from the National Online Manpower Information Service (NOMIS) for the 15 Welsh Unitary authorities that fall under the Convergence area. Due to the pre-defined format of NOMIS data, it is not possible to provide comparisons across the detailed range of characteristics shown in Table 2.5. The comparisons based on NOMIS data are shown in Annex 2. As a large majority of the population in Wales reside in Unitary Authorities that are included in the definition of the Convergence area, the key messages derived from Table 2.5 remain unchanged.

It should be noted that such differences between the sample of respondents to the survey and the wider population represent the net effects of a variety of factors. These may include response bias to the survey (see Annex 1 for a further discussion), the target population for ESF projects and the relative willingness of particular groups to participate in ESF projects. Most significantly, it is noted that at the time the survey was conducted, participant data was only available for a sub-set of ESF funded projects. Participant data on projects that focussed on ethnic minorities and older age groups was not available. It is therefore not possible to accurately consider from this data whether ESF projects are effectively reaching out to their intended target audience. Participant data related to these projects should be available for future surveys when it will therefore be possible to provide a more accurate account as to how ESF projects are reaching target groups. Despite this however, the relatively low educational attainment of ESF participants would suggest that participants in ESF projects are those who are relatively disadvantaged in term of their labour market characteristics.

CHAPTER 3: Participating in an ESF project

Chapter Summary

- Approximately 60% of respondents were aware that the ESF had helped to pay for their participation in an ESF project.
- The two main reasons given by respondents for participating in an ESF project were to develop a broader range of skills (22%) and to improve or widen their career options (21%).
- Rates of withdrawal from ESF projects are highest amongst those aged 15-18 at the time of the survey and among those with lower levels of educational attainment.
- Reasons for withdrawal from an ESF project are complex and can reflect positive events such as finding a job.

3.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the process of undertaking an ESF intervention as described by survey respondents. Where and when respondents undertook these interventions are described. The discussion then considers the main reasons given by respondents for choosing to take up an ESF intervention. The chapter culminates in a description of the incidence of early withdrawal from ESF projects and the factors that influence participants' decisions to withdraw early from their ESF project.

3.2 Embarking on an ESF project

Chapter 2 described how differences in the characteristics of survey respondents between those who undertook projects under the two different ESF Priorities reflected differences in the groups that were being targeted. The different nature of these interventions is also reflected in the nature of their delivery. As noted in Chapter 2, a majority of Priority 3 respondents were in employment prior to their participation. As such, participation for two thirds of Priority 3 respondents took place at the workplace (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Characteristics of ESF Projects

	<i>per cent of respondents</i>		
	Priority 2	Priority 3	Total
Location of delivery:			
Workplace	7.9	66.1	37.8
Training centre	54.8	8.7	31.1
College	13.4	19.2	16.4
Community centre	18.9	1.2	9.8
Other	4.7	2.4	3.5
At home	0.4	2.5	1.5
Duration:			
Less than 1 month	25.5	5.0	15.0
1 to 6 months	42.2	16.9	29.2
6 to 12 months	19.6	30.7	25.3
12 to 18 months	1.8	16.8	9.5
18 to 24 months	2.9	15.0	9.1
24 to 98 months	0.6	8.9	4.8
Other	7.4	6.8	7.1
Mean duration (months)	5.1	14.9	10.2
When course took place:			
During the working week	95.7	93.5	94.6
Evenings/weekends	4.9	18.5	11.9
Aware that ESF helped pay?:			
Yes	55.8	62.2	59.1
No	40.6	35.6	38.0
Unsure	3.6	2.2	2.9
Sample	1973	2085	4058

Reflecting their increased work commitments, 19% of Priority 3 respondents also indicated that courses took place in the evenings or on weekends compared with just 5% of Priority 2 respondents. Finally, we observe that the duration of ESF interventions differs considerably between respondents from Priority 2 and Priority 3 projects. Among Priority 2 respondents, 68% of interventions were reported to have lasted less than 6 months. Among Priority 3 respondents, only 22% of respondents reported that their projects lasted less than 6 months. Among both groups of respondents, approximately 60% were aware that the project was being funded by ESF. In terms of their choice of course, 15% of respondents reported that they had considered alternative options to their ESF project. However, among these respondents, 76% reported that they felt that the ESF intervention was most suited to their

needs whilst 64% reported that the time or location of the course was more convenient than the other options that they had considered.

Respondents to the survey were asked to provide reasons why they embarked on an ESF project (Table 3.2). Reflecting the relative labour market positions of respondents from the different Priorities, the three main reasons provided by Priority 2 respondents for participation in an ESF funded project was to help them get a job (31%), to improve or widen their career options (19%) and to develop a broader range of skills (17%). Given the employment position of Priority 3 respondents, getting a job is of less relevance to this group (5%). However, Priority 3 respondents also emphasised the importance of improving their career options and developing a broader range of skills (24% and 26% respectively). Although not regarded as a main reason for participating in an ESF project, the importance of learning something new out of personal interest is expressed by respondents from projects within both Priorities.

Table 3.2: Reasons for undertaking an ESF project

	<i>per cent of respondents</i>					
	Priority 2		Priority 3		Total	
	All reasons	Main reason	All reasons	Main reason	All reasons	Main reason
Develop a broader range of skills	88.5	17.3	93.1	25.7	90.9	21.6
Improve or widen career options	87.4	18.9	90.8	23.8	89.1	21.4
Help get a job	83.8	31.2	45.4	5.1	64.1	17.8
Develop more specialist skills	75.7	5.7	84.7	12.2	80.3	9.0
Learn something new for personal interest	81.3	9.5	75.1	5.7	78.1	7.6
Help progress to another education, training or learning course	60.7	6.8	57.3	5.6	58.9	6.2
Employer requested or required it	17.1	1.8	46.7	9.8	32.3	5.9
Improve pay, promotion or other prospect	47.4	1.5	66.5	7.0	57.2	4.3
Sample	1973		2085		4058	

3.3 Withdrawing from an ESF project

Both the administrative records supplied by WEFO and the survey data set provide information on early withdrawal from ESF projects. Comparisons of completion status from these two sources suggested that there are some inconsistencies between the information held on respondents from

administrative records and the information supplied by participants in response to the survey. Of the 3,378 respondents to the survey who reported that they had completed their ESF project, 273 (8%) are actually recorded in the administrative data as having had withdrawn from their course early. Conversely, of the 679 respondents to the survey who said that they withdrew from the course early, 300 (44%) are recorded as having completed the course within the administrative data. It is therefore observed that there is an inconsistency between the information held on completion status from administrative records and that collected by the survey for 14% of respondents.

There are a number of reasons why administrative data may be inconsistent when compared with responses provided by individuals. For example, transferring to another course may result in ambiguities in both administrative records or in the responses provided by survey respondents. To overcome these problems, for the purpose of this analysis we define withdrawers from ESF projects as those people where both administrative records and the responses provided to the survey both indicate that an individual withdrew from an ESF project early. The estimated rate of withdrawal derived using this method at 9% will probably underestimate the actual rate of withdrawal⁹. This more tightly defined derivation of withdrawal rates should provide a more accurate measure of the relative rates of withdrawal among different groups of survey respondent.

Rates of withdrawal from ESF projects are presented in Table 3.3. It can be seen that across both Priorities, rates of withdrawal are higher among males (10% compared with 8% for females), the young (16% among those aged 16 to 18 years), those with low levels of prior educational attainment (12% among those with no qualifications) and among those with a work limiting illness (15%). At approximately 14% respectively, the unemployed and inactive are more likely to withdraw from an ESF project than those either in paid employment (6%) or in education or training (10%). This is reflected in the

⁹ The estimated rates of withdrawal based upon administrative records and survey data are both 16%

higher rates of withdrawal that are observed among participants in Priority 2 projects (13%) compared with Priority 3 projects (6%).

Table 3.3: Personal characteristics and withdrawal from ESF projects

	<i>per cent of respondents</i>		
	Priority 2	Priority 3	Total
Gender:			
Male	13.3	7.0	10.4
Female	12.2	5.5	8.4
Age:			
16 - 18 yrs	15.5	17.6	15.7
19 - 21 yrs	6.8	8.9	8.1
22 - 24 yrs	16.0	4.1	6.9
16 - 24 yrs	13.5	8.1	11.3
25 - 30 yrs	13.3	6.2	8.7
31 - 40 yrs	12.0	4.5	7.5
41 - 54 yrs	12.9	4.8	8.0
55+ yrs	7.8	5.4	6.9
Ethnicity:			
White	12.9	6.1	9.4
Non-white	8.3	3.6	5.8
Nationality:			
Born in UK	12.9	6.2	9.5
Born elsewhere	7.8	4.2	5.7
Educational attainment prior to ESF:			
None	15.2	7.0	12.1
NQF Level 1 or less	13.3	7.2	11.0
NQF Level 2	11.8	6.7	9.3
NQF Level 3	12.4	5.4	7.4
NQF Level 4 or above	13.8	4.5	7.5
Unspecified Level	11.5	5.9	8.8
Work limiting illness:			
Yes	17.8	3.7	15.0
No	11.8	6.2	8.7
Main activity before starting course:			
Paid employment	7.8	5.7	6.0
Education & training	11.4	7.0	9.8
Unemployed	13.7	12.8	13.7
Inactive	14.5	0.0	14.0
All withdrawals	12.8	6.1	9.4
Sample	1,972	2,085	4,058

Table 3.4 highlights the variety of complex reasons given by respondents for leaving an ESF project early. The most commonly cited reason among

Priority 2 respondents was having left to start a new job (18%), which highlights that withdrawal from an ESF project may reflect a successful outcome. Thirteen per cent of withdrawers from Priority 3 projects also gave this as a reason for withdrawing from an ESF project. However, among Priority 3 respondents, the most commonly cited reason for leaving early was having been dismissed, made redundant or having left their job (excluding those who left to start a new job). Withdrawal from an ESF project may therefore relate to a change of circumstances that are beyond the control of the participant. Family circumstances were an important reason for withdrawal among both Priority 2 (17%) and Priority 3 (18%) respondents. Among Priority 2 participants, ill health or disability (15%) and the course not meeting expectations (12%) were two further important reasons for having withdrawn from an ESF project early.

Table 3.4: Reasons for not completing an ESF project

	<i>per cent of withdrawers</i>		
	Priority 2	Priority 3	Total
Left to start a new job	21.0	12.6	18.2
Family/personal circumstances	17.1	18.1	17.4
Ill health/disability	15.1	4.7	11.6
Course did not meet expectations	12.7	7.9	11.1
Dismissed/made redundant/left job	0.8	26.0	9.2
Lack of time/too busy	5.6	11.8	7.7
Started another course	8.7	2.4	6.6
Did not like it	7.1	5.5	6.6
Lack of support/help	5.2	8.7	6.3
Problems accessing course	6.3	3.1	5.3
Course cancelled/closed down	2.8	5.5	3.7
Lost interest/got bored	4.4	2.4	3.7
Dismissed/dropped from course	2.4	3.1	2.6
Other	2.8	0.0	1.8
Sample	252	127	379

Among Priority 3 participants, a lack of time was also cited as a relatively important reason for withdrawal (12%). This is likely to reflect relative difficulties of this group associated with participating in an ESF project whilst also being in paid employment. Further analysis by gender also points to the relative importance of time constraints for withdrawal from ESF projects among women (11% compared with 5% among males). Related to this, women were also much more likely to report family or personal circumstances

as a reason to withdraw from an ESF project (23% compared with 12% among males), highlighting difficulties associated with balancing participation in an ESF project with family life.

CHAPTER 4: Career histories of project participants

Chapter Summary

- There is considerable continuity in the career profiles of respondents to the survey following the completion of their ESF project. This is particularly evident among respondents from Priority 3 projects who were generally employed prior to their participation in an ESF project.
- A majority of transitions out of unemployment and inactivity among Priority 2 respondents occur either during or immediately following their participation in an ESF project. During the 12 months following the completion of their ESF projects, Priority 2 respondents under the age of 25 exhibit the largest continuing transitions away from unemployment and inactivity.
- Among Priority 2 respondents, the likelihood of being continuously employed during the 12 months following participation in an ESF project is positively associated with educational attainment prior to entry. This relative advantage is particularly apparent among those who held qualifications prior to entry at NQF levels 3 and above.

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the chronological experiences of survey respondents following the completion of their intervention. A section of both waves of the ESF survey provides an historical account of the main activities that the respondent had been engaged in following the completion of their ESF intervention during 2009. The fieldwork for the first wave of the ESF survey was undertaken during February and March 2010. Respondents to this survey were asked to provide an account of their experiences in the labour market since they had completed their ESF project. As respondents to the Wave 1 survey completed their ESF interventions throughout 2009, the length of time covered by these career histories varied. However, approximately three quarters of respondents to the Wave 1 survey completed their ESF project during the first 6 months of 2009. Given that the fieldwork for the survey was undertaken in February and March 2010, this group of respondents were therefore all able to provide an account of their labour

market experiences that covered a period of at least 6 months following the completion of their interventions.

The fieldwork for the Wave 2 survey was conducted during August and September 2010. The Wave 2 survey asked respondents to provide an account of their labour market activity since they responded to the Wave 1 survey. Those who reported that they were in the same activity as that which they reported at Wave 1 were filtered past the work history questions. Those who were in a different activity were asked whether they went straight in to this activity from the activity previously recorded at Wave 1. If this was the case, such respondents were asked when this change in activity status occurred. Those who did not move straight in to their present activity from that recorded at Wave 1 were asked to provide a more detailed account of their time since the Wave 1 survey. Information from the Wave 2 survey therefore provides a further 5 or 6 months of career history data. By combining this information with the data collected at Wave 1, it is possible to provide a detailed account of the career histories of respondents to both waves of the ESF survey that cover a combined period of 12 months.

The analysis contained in this chapter concentrates on a group of respondents who are able to provide detailed work histories covering a combined period of 12 months. Whilst a small number of respondents provided 12 months worth of career history data at Wave 1, in a majority of cases career history data covering such a period will have been derived by combining data from the Wave 1 and Wave 2 surveys. Splicing together career history data in this way can sometimes result in 'seam effects', where problems associated with recall result in an increased prevalence of transitions occurring during the period where the two sources of data have been combined. Significant efforts were made during the design of the questionnaire and during fieldwork to encourage respondents to provide an accurate recollection of their activities. Although some career histories record the work experiences of respondents over a longer period (e.g. those respondents who completed their ESF project early in 2009, we limit the

analysis to a follow-up period of twelve months to ensure consistency of the sample.

4.2 Employment and non-employment following ESF projects

There is considerable continuity in the career profiles of Priority 3 respondents post intervention, with high rates of employment and only a negligible reduction in the proportion of unemployed or inactive respondents during the 12 month period following an ESF project (analysis not shown). This continuity reflects the targeting of these interventions among the employed population and that the objectives of these interventions are about progression in employment. Whilst these interventions may indirectly affect labour market status insofar as they improve the chances of participants remaining in employment, the effects of Priority 3 interventions on labour market status are expected to be much smaller than those observed among participants in Priority 2 projects. The remainder of this chapter therefore focuses on the career profiles of respondents from Priority 2 projects.

Figure 4.1 considers the situation of those respondents who were unemployed immediately prior to their participation. Fifty seven per cent of Priority 2 participants who were unemployed prior to their intervention were neither in employment, education or training upon the completion of their intervention (i.e. at zero months following ESF). The proportion who remain unemployed or inactive falls to 48% by the end of the 12 month follow-up period. This 9 percentage point decline in the proportion of unemployed or inactive respondents is largely accounted by an 8 percentage point increase (from x to y) in the proportion of respondents in employment (from 30% to 38%).

Figure 4.2 considers the situation of Priority 2 respondents who were economically inactive prior to their participation in an ESF project. Rates of employment are much lower among this group compared with those observed among those who were unemployed prior to their project. Upon completion of their interventions, 13% have gained employment and a further 13% have moved in to education and training immediately following their ESF project.

By the end of the follow-up period, 18% of respondents who were economically inactive prior to their participation in an ESF project are in employment and 11% are in education or training.

Figure 4.1: Career profiles of previously unemployed Priority 2 respondents

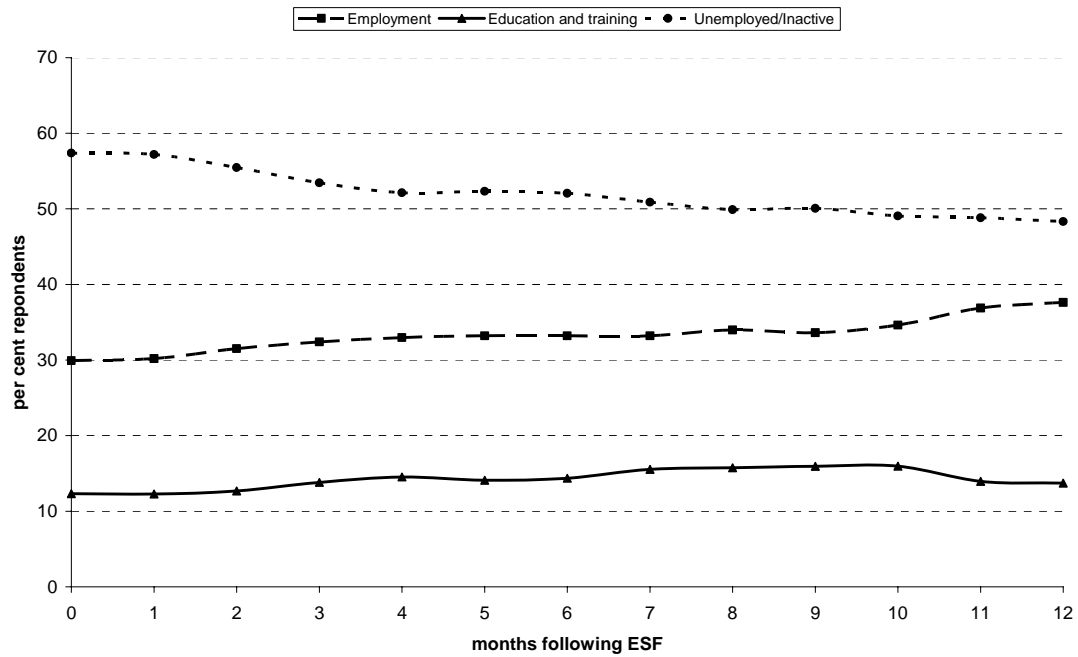
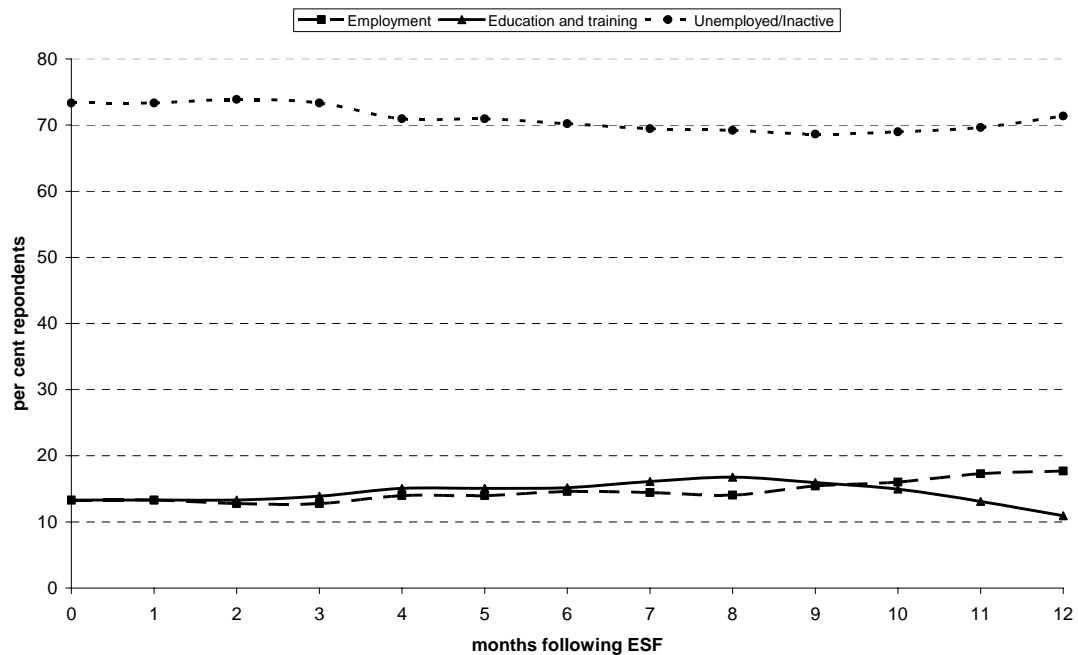


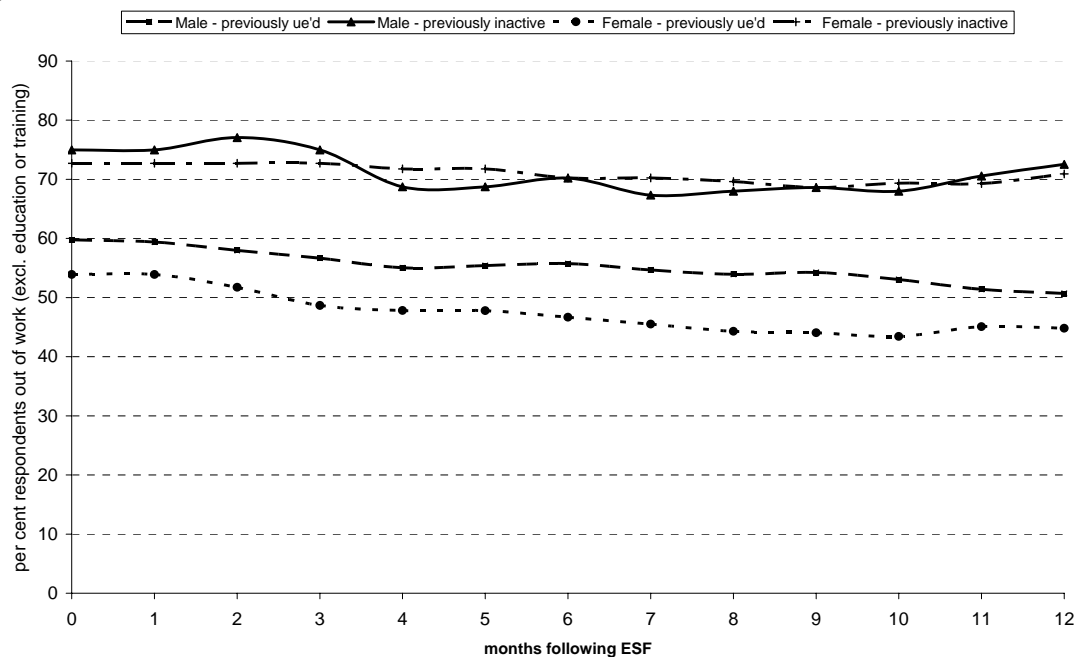
Figure 4.2: Career profiles of previously inactive Priority 2 respondents



Figures 4.1 to 4.2 clearly demonstrate the high levels of continuity that exist in the career profiles of Priority 2 respondents in terms of their overall economic activity status following the completion of their projects. The profiles point towards a continuing transition in to employment or education and training among those who were unemployed immediately prior to their participation in an ESF project. Given the labour market outcomes observed immediately following the completion of an ESF project, the career profiles suggest that a majority of transitions among these respondents either occur during the period when they are participating in an ESF project or immediately following the completion of their ESF project. Comparisons between current activity status and activity status prior to participation in an ESF project are considered in chapter 5. More detailed insight into the perceived benefits derived from participating in these projects as reported directly by participants is provided in chapters 7 and 8.

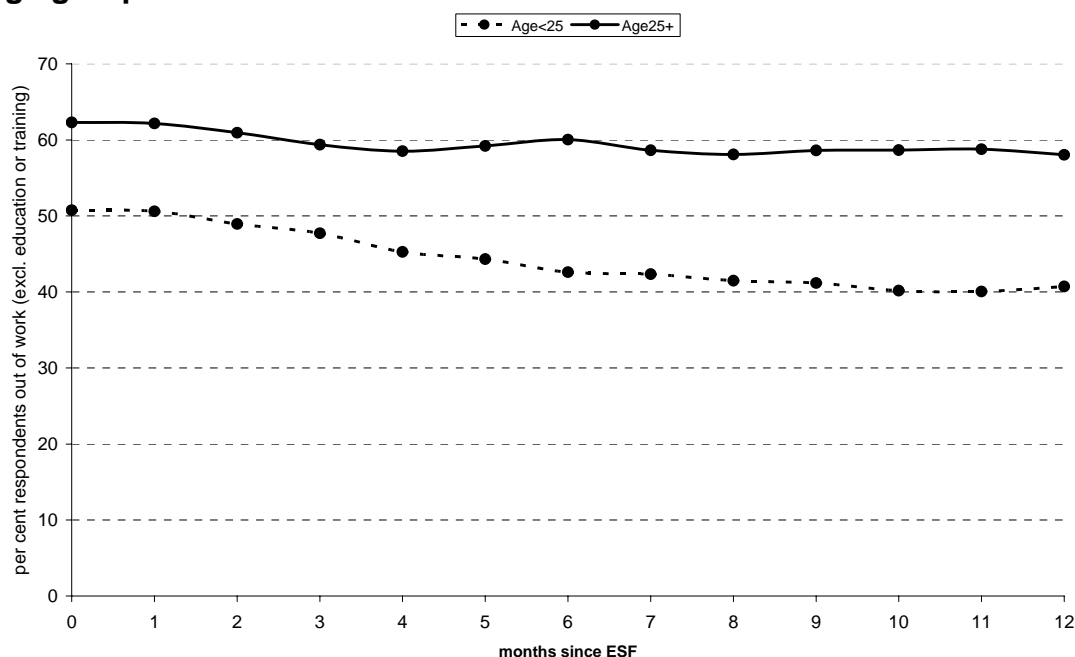
Figure 4.3 considers the career profiles of respondents from Priority 2 projects in further detail, distinguishing between those who were unemployed and economically inactive before their participation in an ESF project and by gender. It can be seen that among those who were economically inactive before their participation in an ESF project, the proportion who remain out of work following the completion of their ESF project is approximately 75% for both males and females, with both groups exhibiting a similar decline in 'worklessness' during the 12 month follow-up period. Among those who were previously unemployed, a higher proportion of males (60%) remain unemployed following the completion of their ESF project compared with females (54%). Both men and women who were unemployed prior to their participation in an ESF project experience a 10 percentage point decline (females to 44% and males to 50%) in 'worklessness' by the end of the 12 month follow-up period.

Figure 4.3: Career profiles of previously non-employed respondents: by gender



Finally, Figure 4.4 provides comparisons by age group of the career profiles of those who were either unemployed or inactive prior to their participation in an ESF project. Due to the relatively small number of young respondents who were economically inactive prior to their participation in an ESF project, no distinction is made between those who were either unemployed or economically inactive. It can be seen that younger respondents to the survey who were unemployed or inactive prior to their participation in an ESF project are less likely to remain workless following the completion of their ESF project (51% compared with 62%) and exhibit a larger decline in combined levels of unemployment and inactivity (10 percentage points) compared with those aged 25 or over (4 percentage points) over the 12 month follow-up period. With rates of employment being similar among both age groups throughout the 12 month follow-up period, differences in unemployment and inactivity between these two age groups can largely be accounted for by the higher proportion of those aged under 25 who are in education and training following the completion of ESF.

Figure 4.4: Career profiles of previously non-employed respondents: by age group



4.3 Who are continuously employed following an ESF project?

To gain a better understanding of the differences in the employment profiles described above, we undertook more detailed analysis to consider which characteristics were associated with a respondent reporting that they were employed continually during the 12 month follow-up period. Multivariate methods were used to simultaneously identify the separate and additional effect of a variety of personal and intervention related characteristics upon the likelihood that an individual will remain continually in employment for the twelve month period following the completion of their ESF intervention. Once again, the analysis is restricted to Priority 2 respondents as the emphasis of these projects is to improve the labour market status of project participants.

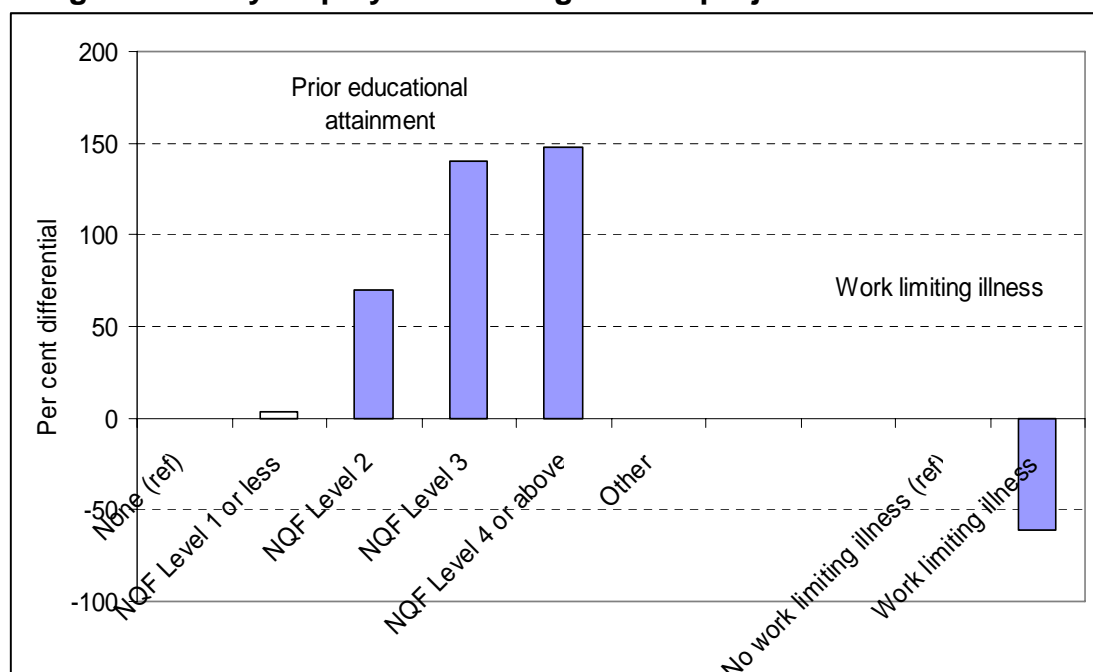
Full results of the statistical analysis are presented in Annex 3. The statistical model controls for a variety of characteristics including gender, age, pre-entry educational attainment, ethnicity, work limiting illness, family status and qualifications obtained whilst on the ESF project. The results for selected characteristics are shown in Figure 4.6. The factors are shown in sets of categories, with one category excluded in each set as the reference category. Where bars lie above the horizontal axis, the category has a higher probability

of being in employment than the reference category. Coloured bars indicate relationships that are estimated to be statistically significant effects.

The results of the analysis reveal that the likelihood of being continually employed following the completion of a Priority 2 ESF project is:

- higher among those with higher levels of pre-entry qualifications where those who had qualifications at NQF level 4 prior to participation in ESF are estimated to be 148% more likely to be continually employed than those with no qualifications;
- lower among those suffering from a work limiting illness who are estimated to be 61% less likely to be continually employed than those without such a condition.

Figure 4.6: The impact of personal characteristics on the likelihood of being continually employed following an ESF project



CHAPTER 5: The current situation of project participants

Chapter Summary

- At the time of the Wave 2 survey, 66% of respondents were in paid employment, with an additional 8% being in education and training.
- Rates of employment among Priority 3 respondents are high (91%) and are slightly above those observed among this group prior to their participation in ESF (87%).
- Among Priority 2 respondents, 39% were in paid employment at the time of the Wave 2 survey: an increase in their rate of employment of 27 percentage points compared with that observed before their participation in an ESF project. Of this increase in employment, 80% can be accounted for by people moving out of unemployment and in to paid work.
- There remains significant continuity in the economic activity of Priority 2 respondents when comparing their situation at the time of the Wave 2 survey with that prior to their participation in ESF. Approximately 40% of Priority 2 respondents do not experience a change in their activity status. One in five are unemployed both prior to their participation and at the time of the survey.
- Thirty eight per cent of respondents from Priority 2 projects experience a positive change in their economic activity by the Wave 1 survey, with this figure increasing to 42% by Wave 2. Half of these transitions are accounted for by a movement from unemployment in to paid employment. Those with low levels of educational attainment prior to participation in ESF, those aged 19-24 and those with a work limiting illness are relatively more likely to exhibit a negative change in their activity status. Younger age groups are most likely to make both positive and negative transitions, generally reflecting their movement either in to paid employment or unemployment.
- Among the unemployed, the most commonly cited reasons for being out of work at the time of the Wave 2 survey are: 1) a lack of appropriate jobs where they live (73%); 2) transport difficulties (49%); and 3) a lack of relevant work experience (40%).
- Of those who were unemployed both before and after their participation in an ESF project, reasons related to skills become less important as factors that make it difficult for respondents to find work. This points to the importance of skills gained whilst participating in ESF projects in terms of increasing the employability of participants.

5.1 Introduction

Respondents to both Waves 1 and 2 of the survey were asked to provide detailed information about their labour market status at the time of the survey. This chapter compares the labour market situation of participants at the time of the surveys with that held immediately before they participated in a project. We firstly consider the current economic activity of respondents. For those who are in employment, we go on to describe the nature of the employment these respondents hold in terms of their occupations, hours worked and contractual status. We compare changes in the quality of jobs held by participants, both before and after their participation in ESF and between the successive waves of the ESF survey. We finally consider the incidence of unemployment and economic inactivity among respondents at the time they were interviewed.

It is important to note that the time period that has elapsed between completing their ESF project and the interviews conducted at Wave 1 and Wave 2 will vary across individuals, although a majority of respondents to the survey either completed (or withdrew) from their ESF projects during the first six months of 2009 (see Annex 1). The situation of participants responding to each wave of the survey will therefore reflect the 'average' labour market position of respondents who have spent varying lengths of time in the labour market following the completion of their project.

5.2 Current economic activity of ESF participants

The main activity of respondents at the time of the Wave 1 and Wave 2 survey is outlined in Table 5.1. It can be seen that 66% of respondents to the Wave 2 survey were in employment, an increase of 4 percentage points compared with that observed at Wave 1. A further 8% were in education or training (a decline of 3 percentage points compared with Wave 1), 15% were unemployed (a decline of 3 percentage points) and 11% were economically inactive (an increase of 2 percentage points). Rates of employment at both Wave 1 and Wave 2 are significantly higher among respondents who had participated under Priority 3 (89% and 91% respectively), reflecting the higher

levels of employment among this group prior to commencing an ESF intervention and the workplace based nature of these projects (see Chapter 3). To put these figures in to context, data on the labour market status of the working age population in Wales derived from the Labour Force Survey is also presented. This data again underlines how the characteristics of ESF participants reflect the objectives of the Priorities. For example, rates of employment among Priority 3 participants are higher than those observed among the wider working age population in Wales (72%). Similarly, the rate of unemployment among Priority 2 (33% and 28% at Waves 1 and 2 respectively) respondents is approximately six times higher than that observed among the working age population (4%). Rates of economic inactivity among ESF respondents are similar to those observed among the wider population of working age (19%). However, it must be remembered that survey respondents in these projects are relatively concentrated among younger age groups (see Table 2.5).

Table 5.1: Current main economic activity

	<i>per cent of total</i>						
	Wave 1			Wave 2			2007-2009
	Priority 2	Priority 3	All	Priority 2	Priority 3	All	LFS- Wales
Paid employment	32.7	89.4	61.8	38.7	91.2	65.9	72.0
Education & training	17.8	3.8	10.6	14.3	1.9	7.9	4.3
Unemployed	32.6	4.5	18.1	28.0	3.6	15.4	5.0
Inactive	16.1	2.2	9.0	18.9	3.3	10.8	18.7
Missing	0.8	0.1	0.5	0.1	0.0	0.0	
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	1,973	2,085	4,058	1,217	1,304	2,521	1.74 million

Table 5.2 considers labour market transitions among survey respondents, contrasting their main labour market activity immediately before embarking on an ESF project with their situation as recorded at Wave 1 of the ESF Survey. Due to the circumstances surrounding participation in Priority 3 projects and the considerable continuity in the labour market positions of these respondents, these transitions are considered only for those respondents who participated in Priority 2 projects. There is a high degree of continuity in the labour market positions of respondents who participated in Priority 2 (Table 5.2). Prior to their participation in an ESF project, 11% of these respondents

were in employment. By the time of the survey, 33% of this group of respondents were in employment. This increase in employment of 22 percentage points is largely accounted for by a movement out of unemployment into paid work, with 17% of Priority 2 respondents making this transition. Of the 56% of Priority 2 respondents who were unemployed prior to their ESF project, 9% move in to education or training.

In terms of transitions surrounding economic inactivity, of the 17% of respondents who were economically inactive before their ESF project, 10% remained economically inactive at the time of the survey. Whilst there is a transition of respondents away from inactivity into employment (3%), education and training (2%) and unemployment (2%), these are offset to some degree by 4% of Priority 2 respondents moving from unemployment in to economic inactivity. However, the scale of these transitions is small compared with the main finding of a clear transition among Priority 2 respondents in terms of their movement away from unemployment in to paid employment or education and training.

Table 5.2: Wave 1 activity compared with main activity prior to ESF intervention: Priority 2 respondents

Main activity before attending course	Current main activity				Total
	Paid employment	Education and training	Unemployed	Economically inactive	
Paid employment	7.8	1.1	1.8	0.4	11.1
Education and training	5.1	6.0	2.9	0.8	15.1
Unemployed	17.0	8.5	25.9	4.3	56.1
Economically inactive	2.6	2.1	1.9	10.4	17.2
Total	32.7	17.8	32.6	16.1	100 (n=1973)

Note: For ease of exposition, respondents who replied don't know have been removed from this transition matrix

Table 5.3 goes on to consider labour market transitions among survey respondents, contrasting their main labour market activity immediately before embarking on an ESF project with their situation as recorded at Wave 2 of the survey. It is noted at the outset that Table 5.3 relates to those respondents who responded to the Wave 2 survey. As such, recorded levels of activity status prior to the ESF intervention are slightly different to those reported in

Table 5.2. However, it can be seen that the share of respondents in employment at Wave 2 increases further to 39% whilst the rate of unemployment declines further to 28%. In terms of transitions surrounding economic inactivity, this further increase in the share of participants finding employment can largely be accounted for by continuing movement out of unemployment. Between Waves 1 and Wave 2 of the survey, a further 5% of respondents are recorded as having had made a transition from unemployment in to paid work. It can be seen that both in Table 5.2 and 5.3, levels of economic inactivity are observed to have increased by approximately 4 percentage points among Priority 2 respondents between Wave 1 and Wave 2 of the survey. By comparing results from Table 5.2 and 5.3, this increase in inactivity can largely be accounted for by a small increase in the proportion of respondents recorded as having moved from unemployment to inactivity (an increase of 2 percentage points from 4.3% to 6.1%).

Table 5.3: Wave 2 activity compared with main activity prior to ESF intervention: Priority 2 respondents

per cent of Priority 2 respondents

Main activity before attending course	Current main activity				Total
	Paid employment	Education and training	Unemployed	Economically inactive	
Paid employment	8.3	1.5	1.1	0.6	11.4
Education and training	5.6	3.9	3.0	1.3	13.8
Unemployed	21.8	7.4	21.0	6.1	56.4
Economically inactive	2.8	1.5	2.6	10.7	17.5
Total	38.7	14.3	28.0	19.9	100 (n=1217)

Note: For ease of exposition, respondents who replied don't know have been removed from this transition matrix

Finally, Table 5.4 compares the activity of respondents between the Wave 1 and Wave 2 survey. It can be seen that 69% of respondents do not exhibit any change in their activity status during the 6 month period between the Wave 1 and Wave 2 surveys. The increased proportion of respondents who are in employment at Wave 2 is largely driven by continuing transitions from unemployment in to work, with 7% of respondents making such a transition. Therefore, approximately 23% of those who were unemployed at Wave 1 are in employment by Wave 2. However, these positive transitions are partially

offset by 4% of respondents who move from being in paid employment at Wave 1 to being unemployed at Wave 2. Expressed alternatively, 12% of those who were employed at Wave 1 were no longer employed at Wave 2. A further 4% of respondents reported that they moved from being in education and training at Wave 1 to being unemployed at Wave 2. Finally, it is observed that the rate of economic inactivity increases between Wave 1 and 2. This is largely attributable to a respondents moving into inactivity from unemployment (3%) and education or training (2%).

Table 5.4: Wave 2 activity compared with main activity at Wave 1: Priority 2 respondents

per cent of Priority 2 respondents

Main activity at Wave 1	Main activity at Wave 2				Total
	Paid employment	Education and training	Unemployed	Economically inactive	
Paid employment	28.3	1.2	4.1	0.8	34.4
Education and training	2.2	9.9	4.4	2.0	18.6
Unemployed	7.1	2.7	18.2	3.1	31.1
Economically inactive	1.2	0.4	1.4	13.0	15.9
Total	38.7	14.3	28.0	18.9	100 (n=1217)

Note: For ease of exposition, respondents who replied don't know have been removed from this transition matrix

Table 5.5 considers the characteristics of survey respondents from Priority 2 projects that are associated with changes in their main economic activity. Transitions in economic activity between prior to an ESF project and at the time of the Wave 2 survey are summarised as negative, no change and positive. Respondents who have the same activity status at the time of the survey compared with immediately prior to their participation in an ESF project are classified as no change. For the purposes of defining positive and negative transitions in economic activity, we rank economic activity in the order of 1) employment, 2) education and training, 3) unemployment and 4) economic inactivity. Any transition down this list (e.g. from 1 to 3 or 2 to 4) is assumed to represent a negative transition¹⁰.

¹⁰ It is acknowledged that a movement from employment in to education/training or a movement from paid employment in to economic inactivity should not necessarily be regarded as negative (e.g. undertaking study to widen career options). This treatment however allows a range of complex transitions to be summarised within a single measure.

Table 5.5: Transitions by respondent characteristics

	<i>per cent of Priority 2 respondents</i>		
	Negative	No change	Positive
Gender:			
Male	14.5	42.9	42.6
Female	12.6	46.8	40.5
Age:			
16 -18 yrs	17.2	35.8	47.1
19 -21 yrs	16.5	38.5	45.0
22 -24 yrs	8.3	45.8	45.8
16 -24 yrs	16.1	37.1	46.8
25 -30 yrs	13.3	48.0	38.8
31 - 40 yrs	8.3	51.0	40.7
41 - 54 yrs	9.9	47.5	42.6
55+ yrs	14.7	65.1	20.2
Ethnicity:			
White	13.5	44.7	41.8
Non-white	15.4	53.9	30.8
Nationality:			
Born in UK	13.5	45.1	41.4
Born elsewhere	15.6	37.5	46.9
Educational attainment prior to ESF:			
None	16.5	47.8	35.7
NQF Level 1 or less	17.8	45.4	36.8
NQF Level 2	13.9	38.0	48.1
NQF Level 3	7.7	51.5	40.8
NQF Level 4 or above	3.7	58.5	37.8
Unspecified level	14.0	45.5	40.5
Work limiting illness:			
Yes	18.1	53.8	28.1
No	12.6	43.0	44.4
All Transitions at Wave 2	13.6	44.9	41.6
All Transitions at Wave 1	12.1	50.1	37.9

It can be seen that comparing information supplied at Wave 2 of the survey with that supplied at Wave 1, an increase in the amount of time that has elapsed since participation within an ESF project is accompanied by a 5 percentage point reduction in the proportion of respondents who are recorded as having made no transition in activity status (45% compared with 50% as recorded at Wave 1). Likewise, the proportion that is recorded as having made a positive transition increases from 38% to 42%. However, the greater

length of time also means that we are more likely to observe some respondents as having made a negative transition (14% compared with 12%). In terms of characteristics that are associated with a positive transition, respondents aged 15-24 are most likely to report that they make a positive transition whilst older respondents are most likely to remain in the same economic activity status. The least qualified are most likely to make a negative transition, reflecting the poor labour market outcomes of this group such as an increased chance of unemployment and inactivity following the completion of full-time education. Those with a work limiting illness are among the least likely to exhibit a positive transition in economic activity (28%), reflecting the particular difficulties faced by this group in gaining employment.

The survey asked respondents who were in employment both before participation in an ESF project and at the time of the survey, whether or not they were employed in the same position. Those who were not employed in the same job were then asked about their reasons for leaving their job. In Table 5.6 we compare the labour market positions of respondents who left their jobs for involuntary 'labour market related' reasons (e.g. redundancy, dismissal, temporary job that came to end) at Wave 1 with the position of respondents who left their jobs for voluntary labour market related reasons (e.g. to take up a better job or to enter education or training). We also consider respondents who left their jobs for personal reasons, such as their health, having to care for dependents or pregnancy¹¹. Table 5.6 demonstrates that there is relatively little difference in the reasons for changing jobs when comparing Priority 2 and Priority 3 respondents at the time of the Wave 1 interviews. Among each of these groups, voluntary reasons account for approximately half of the reasons given for leaving their previous employment.

¹¹ These reasons include both voluntary and involuntary decisions made as a result of personal circumstances.

Table 5.6: Reasons for leaving previous employment reported at Wave 1

per cent of respondents employed in a different job at Wave 1 compared to that held before ESF

	Priority 2	Priority 3	All
Voluntary labour market move	49.1	48.5	48.5
Involuntary labour market move	45.4	40.0	41.0
Change for personal reasons	9.1	8.6	8.7
Total	100	100	100
Sample	110	473	583

Table 5.7 demonstrates that 58% of respondents who left a job prior to participation in an ESF project for personal reasons remain out of employment, education or training at the time of the Wave 1 interviews. In terms of labour market transitions, those who left their pre-ESF employment for involuntary reasons are twice as likely as those who left their positions for voluntary reasons to be out of employment, education or training at the time of the Wave 1 survey (29% compared with 15%).

Table 5.7: Reasons for leaving previous employment by current activity

per cent of respondents employed in a different job at Wave 1 compared to that held before ESF

Current main activity	Voluntary labour market move	Involuntary labour market move	Change for personal reasons
Paid Employment	73.5	64.4	36.0
Education and training	11.3	6.4	4.0
Unemployed	11.7	23.7	18.0
Inactive	2.8	5.0	40.0
Total	100	100	100
Sample	283	219	50

5.3 Characteristics of employment

Table 5.8 presents information on the nature of employment held by respondents at the time of the Wave 1 and Wave 2 interviews. As described above, a number of respondents who participated in Priority 2 projects moved into employment following their participation in ESF. In contrast to the analysis of pre-participation employment in Chapter 2, the increased levels of employment among Priority 2 participants provide the opportunity to consider the nature of current employment by Priority. In terms of occupation, it can be seen that approximately 25% of respondents employed at the time of the

Wave 1 and Wave 2 interviews are employed within Personal Service Occupations. This share of employment reflects the participation of women within ESF projects, for whom these occupations account for over a third of employment. In terms of contractual status, respondents who participated under Priority 2 are more likely to be employed in non-permanent positions, such as temporary employment, casual positions or fixed term contracts. In terms of the length of the working week, it can be seen that Priority 2 respondents are more likely to work shorter hours, where 25% of such respondents at Wave 2 are employed in positions where they work less than 21 hours per week. This is compared with just 10% of those employed respondents who participated in Priority 3.

Finally, in Table 5.9 we consider changes in the occupational distribution of employment by comparing the occupations held by respondents with those previously held. As with analysis of transitions in economic activity presented in Tables 5.2 and 5.3, the two waves of the ESF survey mean that it is possible to consider occupational transitions with reference to a) the jobs held by respondents immediately before they participated in an ESF project and b) changes in jobs held between Wave 1 and Wave 2 of the survey. Due to the small number of respondents from Priority 2 who were employed prior to their participation in an ESF project and the explicit objective of Priority 3 projects in terms of progression in employment, the analysis is based upon respondents from Priority 3 projects only. Respondents who report that they hold a job that is located higher up the occupational classification than that which they held previously can be said to have exhibited upward occupational mobility. In contrast, those who hold jobs that are located lower down the occupational distribution can be said to have exhibited downward mobility. Upward occupational mobility would generally be expected to be associated with higher earnings and improved terms and conditions of employment.

Table 5.8: Nature of current employment

per cent of employed respondents

	Priority 2		Priority 3	
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 1	Wave 2
Occupation:				
Managers & senior officials	2.3	3.6	10.6	11.1
Professional	2.2	1.9	1.6	2.3
Associate prof & tech	7.1	6.6	7.8	7.9
Admin and secretarial	9.3	9.4	11.7	12.2
Skilled trades	12.1	10.9	13.8	12.2
Personal service	24.2	22.4	26.1	25.7
Sales and customer service	14.3	13.0	8.6	8.3
Process, plant and machine	9.2	7.9	5.3	5.1
Elementary	15.7	20.7	4.8	5.9
Missing	3.7	3.4	9.9	9.5
Contractual Status:				
Permanent	67.5	67.6	92.0	90.3
Hours worked per week:				
1-20 hours	29.0	25.7	8.3	10.2
21-30 hours	16.6	19.3	13.1	13.8
31-40 hours	39.5	37.8	61.6	59.8
41+ hours	10.7	12.7	15.0	15.1
Missing	4.2	4.5	1.9	1.2
Total	100	100	100	100
Sample	645	468	1864	1185

It can be seen from Table 5.9 that almost two thirds of Priority 3 participants who are in a different job before and after ESF (65%) have experienced no change in their occupational position at the time of the Wave 2 interviews compared with the positions they held prior to their participation in ESF. Twenty two percent were recorded as displaying upward occupational mobility compared with 14% who experienced downward occupational mobility. Relatively little occupational mobility is observed to occur between the Wave 1 and Wave 2 interviews. However, it should be noted that those who have changed jobs may not necessarily have experienced any occupational mobility. This could occur if, for example, an individual took up a similar job in another organisation. It is therefore important to note that occupation is only one measure of job quality or career progression and that change in earnings and levels of job satisfaction are also considered in Chapter 7.

Table 5.9: Occupational mobility between current employment and pre-project employment: Priority 3 respondents

percent of respondents employed in a different job before and after ESF

	Pre ESF – Wave 1	Wave 1 – Wave 2	Pre ESF – Wave 2
Upward occupational mobility	20.7	1.7	21.7
No change	67.2	96.4	64.9
Downward occupational mobility	12.1	2.0	13.5
Total	100	100	100
Sample	1,643	1,020	1,047

5.4 The experience of non-employment among ESF participants

Finally in this chapter, we consider the relative incidence of unemployment and economic inactivity among respondents to the Wave 2 survey. Within the survey, unemployment was defined as those individuals who were ‘unemployed and looking for work’. Across both Priorities, 15% of respondents were unemployed at the time of the survey (see Table 5.10). The rate of unemployment is higher among males (21%) and younger participants in ESF projects (27% among those aged 16-18 years old). The incidence of unemployment is highest among those with lower levels of educational attainment prior to their participation on an ESF project (22% among those with no qualifications compared with 9% among those qualified to NQF Level 4 or above). The rate of unemployment is higher among respondents with a work limiting illness (20%) compared with those with no such condition (15%).

As previously discussed in Section 5.1, the incidence of unemployment was much higher among Priority 2 participants where just over a quarter of respondents (28%) indicated that they were unemployed at the time of the Wave 2 interviews. This is compared with an unemployment rate of just 4% among Priority 3 respondents, reflecting the targeting of Priority 3 projects among employed participants. Whilst levels of unemployment are generally higher among Priority 2 respondents, similar patterns in the relative incidence of unemployment are shown to exist between these two groups. In terms of differences that emerge between these two groups, the incidence of unemployment is relatively low among those aged 55 or above who participated in Priority 2 projects (23% compared with an average of 28%).

This is likely to reflect the higher incidence of economic inactivity among older respondents in Priority 2 compared with participants in Priority 3.

Table 5.10 also considers the relative incidence of economic inactivity among survey respondents. Economic inactivity was defined as 'not looking for or in paid employment'. Taking both Priorities together, 11% of respondents were inactive at the time of the wave 2 survey. In contrast to unemployment, the rate of economic inactivity is higher among females (13%) and older participants in ESF projects (37% among those aged 55 years or above). The incidence of economic inactivity is highest among those with lower levels of educational attainment prior to their participation in an ESF project (16% among those with no qualifications prior to ESF). The rate of inactivity is higher among respondents with a work limiting illness (36%) compared with those with no such condition (8%).

Despite the higher levels of economic inactivity among Priority 2 respondents, similar patterns in the relative incidence of inactivity are shown to exist among respondents from both Priorities. Notable exceptions include the relatively high incidence of inactivity among the oldest age group of Priority 2 respondents, which may reflect the relative detachment of this group from the labour market. Secondly, the incidence of inactivity is relatively high among Priority 2 respondents with high levels of educational attainment (23% among respondents educated to NQF Level 4 or above). This will reflect the participation of young people in ESF who have recently completed full time education.

Table 5.10: Unemployment and inactivity among ESF participants at time of Wave 2 survey

	<i>per cent of respondents</i>					
	Priority 2		Priority 3		Total	
	Unemp'd	Inactive	Unemp'd	Inactive ¹²	Unemp'd	Inactive
Gender:						
Male	21.6	12.7	5.1	1.2	21.3	7.6
Female	34.3	25.2	2.7	4.6	10.8	13.4
Age:						
16-18 yrs	28.2	7.3	12.5	2.5	26.9	6.9
19-21 yrs	26.6	10.1	6.1	2.5	13.4	5.2
22-24 yrs	35.4	14.6	5.3	3.3	12.6	6.0
16-24 yrs	28.0	8.7	6.6	3.1	19.4	6.4
25-30 yrs	34.7	20.4	2.8	4.0	14.2	9.9
31-40 yrs	27.6	22.1	2.3	3.8	11.3	10.3
41-54 yrs	27.0	23.2	2.5	1.5	12.3	10.2
55+ yrs	23.3	52.7	1.2	11.0	14.7	36.5
Ethnicity:						
White	38.5	18.8	3.7	3.4	15.4	10.8
Non-white	27.9	23.1	0.0	0.0	15.2	9.1
Educational attainment prior to ESF:						
None	34.8	22.8	2.1	5.7	22.2	16.2
NQF Level 1 or less	33.7	19.0	6.1	3.1	23.4	13.0
NQF Level 2	25.4	11.7	5.3	2.9	15.4	7.3
NQF Level 3	23.1	23.8	3.1	3.5	9.4	9.9
NQF Level 4 or above	25.6	23.2	1.2	1.8	9.2	8.8
Unspecified level	25.5	24.5	2.6	3.6	14.1	14.1
Work limiting illness:						
Yes	26.2	43.8	3.4	10.2	21.2	36.4
No	28.4	13.7	3.6	3.0	14.7	7.8
Family status:						
Live alone	29.5	27.7	3.0	4.5	19.6	19.0
Joint household with children	18.2	39.2	1.2	3.2	7.4	16.3
Joint household no children	22.5	25.2	2.1	4.1	8.5	10.7
Single parent	38.1	27.8	5.1	4.1	23.7	17.4
Family home	30.3	7.8	6.6	1.9	21.1	5.5
Shared accommodation	25.6	17.9	8.1	2.7	17.1	10.5
Total	28.0	18.9	3.6	3.3	15.4	10.8
Sample	1217		1304		2521	

¹² It is possible for a small minority of Priority 3 participants to become inactive post ESF. Classification of inactivity depends upon the benefit claimed.

Finally, Table 5.11 considers the difficulties respondents report in finding work. Due to the relatively low levels of unemployment and inactivity among participants in Priority 3 and the emphasis within Priority 2 of improving the labour market status of project participants, results are presented for respondents from Priority 2 projects only. Table 5.11 compares the difficulties unemployed respondents have in finding work prior to participating in an ESF project with those reasons given by unemployed respondents at the time of the Wave 1 and Wave 2 interviews. As in the analysis of the reasons for unemployment prior to participation on an ESF project in Chapter 2, four main reasons are given by unemployed respondents who participated in Priority 2 projects for the difficulties they perceive that they have in finding work at the time of the Wave 1 interviews. These are 1) a lack of appropriate jobs where they live (77%); transport difficulties (45%); a lack of relevant work experience (45%) and a lack of qualifications or skills (45%).

It is interesting to note that by the time of the Wave 2 interview, the proportion that report issues related to a lack of relevant work experience declines by 5 percentage points (40%), whilst the proportion that report reasons related to a lack of qualifications or skills declines by 8 percentage points (37%).

Differences in such responses could point towards the effects of ESF funded projects in addressing skill deficiencies. However, these three groups of unemployed respondents will not necessarily comprise of the same people, with many of those who were unemployed prior to their ESF project having moved in to employment by the time of the survey. To aid comparisons before and after participation in an ESF project, we also compare the reasons given by respondents who were unemployed both before their participation in an ESF project and at the time of the Wave 1 survey. We refer to this smaller group of respondents as the 'matched unemployed' sample¹³. The Wave 1 survey is used in preference to the Wave 2 data to derive this matched sample of respondents due to its larger sample¹⁴.

¹³ It is noted that the matched unemployed sample have not necessarily been continually unemployed since commencing their ESF project.

¹⁴ Analysis based on Wave 2 data revealed similar findings.

Compared with the difficulties given for finding work among Priority 2 respondents who were unemployed prior to the survey, comparisons among the ‘matched unemployed sample’ highlight a lower incidence of unemployed respondents reporting that a lack of qualifications or skills (11 percentage points) or a lack of relevant work experience (10 percentage points) as factors that are making it difficult for them to find work. Whilst these respondents have not been able to find work by the time of the Wave 1 survey, they appear less likely to emphasise reasons related to skills deficiencies as factors that are making it difficult for them to find work. This could suggest the impact of ESF projects on addressing their skills needs or in contributing to improved perceptions among respondents as to the skills they possess. In terms of their current difficulties in finding work, the ‘matched unemployed’ sample of respondents place greater emphasis upon the lack of opportunities in the area where they live compared with the reasons given prior to undertaking an ESF project. This may indicate that whilst the ESF project may have addressed some of their own skills needs, the emphasis of difficulties associated with finding work switches to factors perceived as being beyond their control.

Table 5.11: Factors that make it difficult to find work

	<i>per cent of unemployed respondents</i>					
	All unemployed			Matched Unemployed		
	Before project	Wave 1	Wave 2	Before project	Wave 1	Difference
Lack of appropriate jobs where you live	68.2	76.8	73.0	71.0	78.2	7.3
Transport difficulties and it being hard to get appropriate work	41.0	44.9	48.7	46.1	45.3	-0.8
A lack of qualifications or skills	49.1	44.5	37.2	55.3	44.7	-10.6
Lack of relevant work experience	51.7	44.6	39.6	54.1	43.9	-10.2
You only wanting to work part time	16.2	13.8	17.3	15.5	13.7	-1.8
Believing you would not be better off financially in work	14.7	12.3	9.1	14.5	12.9	-1.6
Having caring responsibilities	13.7	11.8	9.1	14.7	12.2	-2.5
Lack of affordable childcare	11.9	8.2	7.9	12.4	8.4	-3.9
Having a criminal record	4.7	6.8	6.2	6.5	7.1	0.6
Medical/health issues	5.2	4.5	5.0	4.7	4.9	0.2
My age (too old/young)	3.4	2.8	1.8	3.3	3.1	-0.2
Alcohol or drug dependency	2.0	1.7	1.2	2.7	1.6	-1.2
The recession/economic climate	1.6	1.1	0.3	1.8	1.0	-0.8
Sample	1106	643	341	510	510	

CHAPTER 6: Further study and training since ESF

Chapter Summary

- Four out of ten respondents to the ESF survey report that they have undertaken further education and training since the completion of their ESF project. Approximately 28% go on to achieve further qualifications.
- The attainment of further qualifications and participation in further education and training is higher among respondents aged 15-24. Those in paid employment are more likely to undertake further education, training and qualifications compared with the unemployed and inactive, highlighting the importance of employment in the acquisition of further skills.
- The main reason given for undertaking further education and training by employed respondents is to improve or widen their career options. The main reason given by the unemployed is to help them find a job, whilst the main reason given by the economically inactive is to learn something new out of personal interest.
- Among Priority 3 respondents who are largely employed, the acquisition of further skills is higher among those who had achieved higher levels of educational attainment prior to their participation within ESF.
- These findings point to the cumulative nature of skill acquisition and the importance of ensuring that ESF projects concentrate on improving the labour market positions of the least advantaged.

This chapter presents information on the incidence of further study and training among survey respondents following the completion of their ESF intervention. The Survey asked respondents to provide details about their current main activity, including whether or not they were currently engaged in:

- full time education or training;
- on a government funded employment or training programme;
- or on a training course that was not government funded.

In total, 11% of respondents indicated that they were currently engaged in one of these three activities at the time of the Wave 1 interviews, with full time education or training being the largest of these three categories (7%). By the time of the Wave 2 interviews, 8% of respondents were engaged in one of these three training activities.

Both waves of the ESF survey also asked all respondents who were not currently engaged in education or training, whether or not they had started any more education or training courses since they had completed their ESF project (Wave 1 interviews) or since they had responded to the Wave 1 survey (Wave 2 interviews). By combining responses relating to their current main activity with information about other education or training previously undertaken, information from the survey can provide an accurate measure of the incidence of further education and training undertaken by respondents since completing their ESF project. Among all respondents to the survey, the incidence of further study and training at the time of the Wave 1 interviews is estimated to be 32%. This is approximately 3 times higher than that captured by the main activity of respondents recorded by the Wave 1 survey. This figure increases by a further 9 percentage points to 41% when taking in to account further education and training activities that had been undertaken by participants between Waves 1 and 2 of the ESF survey.

Information on the incidence of further study and training among ESF participants is provided in Table 6.1. Based upon combined responses from the Wave 1 and Wave 2 interviews, it is observed that the incidence of further education and training is higher among females (43%) than males (40%). The incidence of further training is highest among those respondents aged 16 to 18 years old (60%) and is lowest among those aged 55 years and above (35%). Finally, it can be seen that the incidence of further education and training is higher among respondents who participated in Priority 2 (48%) compared with Priority 3 (36%).

Table 6.1: Further training and qualifications since ESF

per cent of respondents

	Further education or training			Further qualifications		
	Priority 2	Priority 3	Total	Priority 2	Priority 3	Total
Gender:						
Male	46.0	32.0	39.8	30.7	29.1	30.0
Female	49.3	37.7	42.6	33.6	21.2	26.5
Age:						
16 -18 yrs	61.6	47.5	60.4	33.6	30.0	33.3
19 - 21 yrs	45.0	33.5	37.6	37.6	29.4	32.4
22 - 24 yrs	25.0	33.8	31.7	18.8	23.2	22.1
16 - 24 yrs	55.7	35.1	47.4	55.7	35.1	47.4
25 - 30 yrs	40.8	37.5	38.7	27.6	24.4	25.5
31 - 40 yrs	44.1	38.5	40.5	33.8	27.5	29.7
41 - 54 yrs	39.5	34.3	36.4	33.1	19.7	25.0
55+ yrs	38.0	29.3	34.6	27.1	22.0	25.1
Ethnicity:						
White	47.8	35.5	41.5	32.4	24.2	28.1
Non-white	30.8	35.0	33.3	7.7	30.0	21.2
Educational attainment prior to ESF:						
None	41.1	22.7	34.0	23.2	14.9	20.0
NQF Level 1 or less	51.5	21.4	40.2	30.1	20.4	26.4
NQF Level 2	55.0	32.1	43.6	37.8	26.1	32.0
NQF Level 3	43.8	48.3	46.9	31.5	29.7	30.3
NQF Level 4 or above	41.5	46.7	45.0	28.0	25.4	26.3
Unspecified level	41.5	30.6	36.1	34.0	19.9	27.0
Work limiting illness:						
Yes	42.9	25.4	39.0	29.0	20.3	27.1
No	48.7	36.0	41.7	32.8	24.4	28.2
Current main activity:						
Paid employment	38.2	34.7	35.7	31.8	24.6	26.6
Education & training	100	100	100	48.9	32.0	46.7
Unemployed	41.6	36.2	41.0	27.6	25.5	27.3
Inactive	36.1	20.9	33.7	26.5	9.3	23.8
All at Wave 2	47.7	35.5	41.4	32.1	24.2	28.0
Sample	1217	1304	2521	1217	1304	2521
All at Wave 1	36.5	27.9	32.1	15.8	13.7	14.7
Sample	1973	2085	4058	1973	2085	4058

In addition, the survey asked all respondents whether or not they had obtained any further qualifications since the completion of their ESF project. Almost 28% of respondents reported that they had attained more qualifications since completing their course. Once again, this rate was lower among older age groups (e.g. 25% among those aged 55 or over) reflecting

the different motivations that such groups have for undertaking further study. Those who had already achieved intermediate level qualifications prior to their participation in ESF (NQF levels 2 or 3) were more likely to report that they had obtained further qualifications than those with both higher and lower levels of educational attainment. As with further education and training, the incidence of respondents going on to obtain further qualifications is higher among respondents who participated in Priority 2 projects (32%) than those from Priority 3 projects (24%). Particularly among Priority 2 respondents, it can be seen that there has been a large increase in the proportion of respondents reporting that they had obtained further qualifications between Wave 2 and Wave 1 of the ESF survey (32% at Wave 2 compared with 16% at Wave 1).

The survey asked respondents why they had decided to undertake further education and training. It can be seen in Table 6.2 that the main reasons provided by respondents to the Wave 1 survey for undertaking further education and training (lower panel of Table 6.2) were to improve or widen career options (22%); to develop a broader range of skills (17%) and to help get a job (16%). It can be seen that there are clear differences in the nature of these responses according to the current labour market position of the respondent. Those who are unemployed are more likely to undertake further education or training to help get a job (34%) or to develop a broader range of skills (22%). Those who are economically inactive are also likely to undertake further education or training to develop a broader range of skills (22%). However, they are also much more likely to undertake further education and training to learn something new for personal interest (22%) compared with the wider population of survey respondents (10%). These questions were repeated within the Wave 2 survey. Reflecting the improved labour market status of respondents at Wave 2, less emphasis is placed upon finding a job as the main reason for undertaking further education or training (10% at Wave 2 compared with 15% at Wave 1), whilst more emphasis is given to reasons surrounding career options and the development of skills.

Table 6.2: Reasons for undertaking further study*per cent of respondents*

	Wave 1				All Wave 1	Wave 2
	Paid employment	Education & training	Unemployed	Economically inactive		
All reasons:						
Develop a broader range of skills	92.8	90.4	94.5	94.5	92.3	94.9
Improve or widen career options	89.4	93.5	95.1	72.6	90.5	87.8
Develop more specialist skills	86.1	87.4	81.9	73.0	85.3	87.7
Improve pay, promotion or other prospect	77.3	81.6	82.6	90.5	80.1	64.3
Help get a job	55.6	89.8	92.4	65.8	71.7	58.1
Learn something new for personal interest	61.4	69.6	65.7	63.5	64.7	83.2
Help progress to another education, training or learning course	69.8	60.6	43.8	21.6	61.1	67.0
Employer requested or required it	36.4	15.6	7.6	4.1	24.4	30.8
Main reason:						
Develop a broader range of skills	17.6	13.3	21.4	21.6	16.8	19.6
Improve or widen career options	22.3	24.7	16.6	10.8	21.8	25.6
Develop more specialist skills	17.6	9.3	4.1	4.1	12.6	16.5
Improve pay, promotion or other prospect	9.0	1.9	1.4	1.4	5.3	7.1
Help get a job	7.2	23.0	33.8	12.2	15.7	9.7
Learn something new for personal interest	8.1	9.1	10.3	21.6	9.5	7.7
Help progress to another education, training or learning course	6.2	15.1	6.9	8.1	9.4	5.7
Employer requested or required it	8.4	0.5	0.7	1.4	4.5	5.4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	2509	430	736	364	4039	352

CHAPTER 7: The job satisfaction and earnings of ESF participants

Chapter Summary

- Half of employed respondents report that they are very satisfied with their jobs. The average gross weekly earnings among all employed respondents surveyed at Wave 2 is estimated to be £271 per week.
- Levels of job satisfaction and earnings are related to the occupations held by respondents. Earnings are correlated with age, levels of educational attainment prior to participation within ESF and the levels of qualification achieved whilst on their ESF project.
- Eleven per cent of respondents indicate that improvements in their jobs reported at Wave 1 can be directly attributed to their participation in an ESF project. Such improvements are more likely to be reported among those with lower levels of educational attainment prior to their participation in an ESF project. Such improvements are also more likely to be reported by respondents who have undertaken further education and training since participating in ESF.

7.1 Introduction

This chapter examines in more detail the nature of the jobs held by respondents at the time of the survey (i.e. post ESF intervention). Two aspects of their current employment are of interest. First, we examine the *quality* of the employment. For this purpose we use an index of positive job characteristics based upon levels of satisfaction with their jobs reported by respondents. The second measure of job quality is based upon an analysis of the earnings of respondents to the survey. The analysis of earnings considers how earnings vary across different groups of respondents and how participation in an ESF intervention influences earnings. Finally, we describe how respondents feel that their conditions of employment have changed compared with the jobs that they held prior to undertaking an ESF intervention and whether they feel that any improvements could be attributed to their participation in an ESF project.

7.2 Satisfaction with current employment

In terms of overall levels of job satisfaction, 50% of respondents to the Wave 1 interviews report that, overall, they are ‘very satisfied’ with their current jobs. A further 41% indicate that they were ‘satisfied’ with their current job, suggesting that a very large majority of respondents were satisfied with the jobs currently held. Among respondents to the Wave 2 interviews, 47% of respondents report that they are ‘very satisfied’ with their current jobs. The survey also asked respondents to consider how satisfied they were with their jobs across a number of dimensions. These dimensions are listed in Table 7.1. Considering responses provided by respondents to the Wave 2 interviews, it can be seen that levels of job satisfaction are lower when respondents are asked to consider satisfaction with their jobs in relation to job security (30% report that they are ‘very satisfied’) and the number of hours that they worked (27% report that they are ‘very satisfied’). Levels of satisfaction are lowest when respondents are asked to rate their satisfaction with their overall levels of pay, where 14% report that they are ‘very satisfied’. As was the case with the overall measure of job satisfaction, a majority of respondents report that they are ‘very satisfied’ or ‘satisfied’ with their jobs when judged against a number of different criteria.

Table 7.1: Dimensions of job satisfaction

% of employed respondents who report that they are very satisfied.....	<i>per cent of respondents</i>	
	Wave 1	Wave 2
...that their work takes place in a safe and healthy environment	53.5	49.6
...with their supervisor or manager	49.5	46.5
...with the opportunity to use your own initiative	46.6	41.3
...with the actual work itself	43.6	37.6
...with their job security	31.9	29.8
...with the number of hours they work	29.7	27.0
...with their overall pay	17.1	14.2
Overall very satisfied with your present job	50.4	46.9

To summarise this information, an overall index of job satisfaction was constructed based upon aggregating responses to the job satisfaction questions. An index was constructed from these seven factors by assigning the value 'one' to each factor where a respondent reported that they were 'very satisfied' with their jobs and then summing across all seven dimensions. A respondent who reported that they were 'very satisfied' with their job across all seven dimensions would therefore be allocated a job satisfaction index of seven. Table 7.2 shows the distribution of this derived index constructed from responses to these questions recorded among those in employment at Wave 1 and Wave 2 of the survey. Considering results for Wave 2, it can be seen that women are generally more satisfied with their jobs than men. Job satisfaction is highest among young respondents aged 16-18 (2.7) and respondents aged over the age of 40 (2.5). Those respondents with a work limiting illness report lower levels of job satisfaction (2.4). In terms of occupations held by respondents, levels of job satisfaction are higher among Managerial (2.7) and Professional (2.6) occupations, reflecting the relatively higher quality of employment conditions that are associated with these occupations. Levels of job satisfaction are lowest among Operatives and Elementary occupations, reflecting the relatively poor employment relations that are associated with these occupations (e.g. low levels of task discretion or control over the pace of work). Contractual status does not appear to be associated with lower overall levels of job satisfaction. Among Wave 2 respondents, those working shorter hours appear to report higher levels of job satisfaction.

Table 7.2: Job satisfaction index and weekly earnings*employed respondents*

	Wave 1		Wave 2	
	Job satisfaction index	Gross weekly earnings (£/week)	Job satisfaction index	Gross weekly earnings (£/week)
Gender:				
Male	2.5	290	2.2	307
Female	2.9	245	2.6	245
Age:				
16 -18 yrs	2.9	149	2.7	172
19 - 21 yrs	2.9	220	2.4	225
22 - 24 yrs	2.4	274	2.3	284
16 - 24 yrs	2.8	217	2.5	227
25 - 30 yrs	2.5	281	2.3	286
31 - 40 yrs	2.7	306	2.4	311
41 - 54 yrs	2.7	293	2.5	293
55+ yrs	3	257	2.5	253
Ethnicity:				
White	2.7	263	2.4	270
Non-white	2.6	278	2.4	307
Nationality:				
Born in UK	2.7	263	2.4	270
Born elsewhere	2.6	264	2.4	280
Educational attainment prior to ESF:				
None	2.7	227	2.7	241
NQF Level 1 or less	2.8	217	2.3	218
NQF Level 2	2.7	242	2.5	245
NQF Level 3	2.8	292	2.4	298
NQF Level 4 or above	2.7	351	2.3	359
Unspecified level	2.6	264	2.3	276
Work limiting illness:				
Yes	2.7	264	2.4	274
No	2.3	236	2.6	206
Current occupation:				
Managers & senior officials	3.4	401	2.7	391
Professional	3.4	353	2.6	367
Associate professional	2.8	348	2.6	350
Admin and secretarial	2.6	258	2.5	263
Skilled trades	2.4	280	2.1	311
Personal service	3	213	2.8	212
Sales and customer service	2.5	192	1.9	210
Process, plant and machine	2.2	296	2.0	315
Elementary	2.1	181	2.2	186
Missing	2.7	323	2.3	340

Table 7.2 continued		Wave 1		Wave 2	
	Job satisfaction index	Gross weekly earnings (£/week)	Job satisfaction index	Gross weekly earnings (£/week)	
Current employment status:					
Non-permanent	2.7	203	2.3	224	
Permanent	2.7	274	2.5	280	
Hours worked per week					
1-20 hours	2.7	116	2.6	113	
21-30 hours	2.7	192	2.3	197	
31-40 hours	2.7	299	2.5	311	
41+ hours	2.7	339	2.1	360	
Missing	2.8	194	2.7	203	
Total	2.7	264	2.4	271	
Sample	2310	2070	1528	1436	

7.3 The earnings of ESF participants

The second dimension of job quality considered in Table 7.2 is the weekly earnings of respondents. The average gross weekly earnings among all employed respondents recorded at the time of the Wave 1 survey are estimated to be £264 per week. By the time of the Wave 2 survey, this figure has increased to approximately £271 per week. Again, it is noted that these respondents are not necessarily the same people and this increase in earnings will reflect a number of factors such as career progression and the general movement of wages in response to inflation within the economy.

Considering the variations in earnings among different groups of survey respondent, it can be seen that gross weekly earnings among respondents at Wave 2 are lower among women (£245) compared with those of men (£307). Analysis of earnings by age demonstrates that earnings generally increase with age, although begin to decline slightly as respondents approach retirement. A clear relationship emerges between earnings and educational achievement. Those respondents educated to NQF Level 1 earn £218 per week compared with those educated to NQF Level 4 or above who earn £359 per week. This finding is related to the higher levels of earnings received by those who hold Managerial and Professional occupations and the lower levels

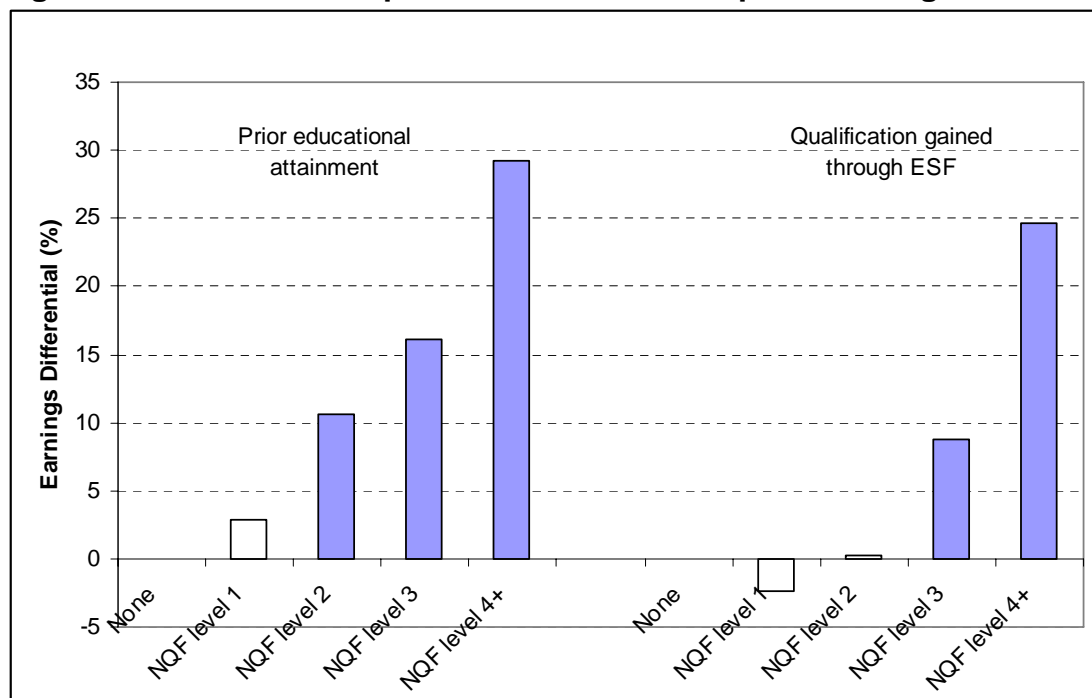
of earnings received by those employed in Elementary Occupations. Those in non-permanent forms of employment earn approximately 20% less than those in permanent posts. Earnings are approximately £70 per week lower among those with a work limiting illness compared with those with no such condition. Finally, those working shorter hours are shown to earn less than those employed in full time positions, reflecting both the reduced number of hours worked and the lower pay per hour received by part time workers.

To gain a better understanding of the differences in earnings revealed in Table 7.2, we undertook more detailed analysis using multivariate methods that allow us to simultaneously control for differences in earnings that are attributable to a variety of personal and job related characteristics, such as age, gender and levels of entry qualifications etc. Analysis revealed that male participants in ESF projects subsequently earn significantly more than females, with the gender differential in weekly earnings estimated to be 12%. Older respondents earn more than younger respondents, with those aged 31-40 years exhibiting the highest earnings. Similar results were derived from both the analysis of earnings data captured from both the Wave 1 and Wave 2 survey.

Figure 7.1 shows the impact of qualifications held on the earnings of respondents derived from data collected from the Wave 1 survey. Of most interest here is whether the qualifications achieved whilst participating in an ESF project are demonstrated to have a separate and additional effect on earnings compared with those participants who undertook ESF projects that did not result in an additional qualification. Those who gained a qualification at NQF Level 4 or above show a 25 percentage premium on their earnings. Similarly, it is estimated that attaining a qualification at NQF level 3 is associated with a 9 percentage premium in earnings. Qualifications achieved through ESF at NQF Levels 1 and 2 do not result in additional earnings compared with those participants who did not gain an additional qualification through their ESF project. Further statistical analysis (not presented) revealed that those who gained additional qualifications from their participation in an ESF project earned 10% more than those who gained no qualifications. The

attainment of qualifications at a similar or lower level than those already held prior to participation in ESF was not estimated to be associated with an earnings premium. It is interesting to note that the benefits of additional qualifications gained through ESF in terms of earnings at NQF levels 3 and above are comparable to the returns of qualifications previously held. Given the relatively short length of time between the completion of these qualifications and the time of the survey, this points to the significant benefits of achieving additional qualifications through ESF projects that are realised even within a relatively short space of time.

Figure 7.1: The effect of qualifications on subsequent earnings



7.4 Improvements in job characteristics

Respondents to the Wave 1 survey who were in employment both prior to participation in an ESF project and at the time of the survey were asked to consider whether changes had occurred in the nature of their employment and whether they felt that any of these changes happened because of their ESF participation. These questions were asked of both those who, at the time of the survey, were in a different job compared with the one they held prior to the ESF intervention and also to those who were in the same job. Similarly, those

respondents to the Wave 2 survey who were also employed at the time of the Wave 1 survey were asked if any changes had occurred in the nature of their employment since the Wave 1 survey and, again, whether this could be attributed to their participation in an ESF project. Given the emphasis upon the career progression of those in work and the relatively small number of respondents from Priority 2 projects who were employed prior to ESF, analysis of responses to these questions are presented for Priority 3 respondents only. Responses to these questions are summarised in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3: Improvements in current job among Priority 3 respondents

per cent employed respondents

	Those in same job at Wave 1		Those in a new job at Wave 1		Those in a new job at Wave 2
	Pre ESF to Wave 1	Between Wave 1 & 2	Pre ESF to Wave 1	Between Wave 1 & 2	Between Wave 1 & 2
More opportunities for training	67.6	58.7	70.6	68.9	71.2
More job satisfaction	62.5	39.8	78.1	56.3	88.1
Improved pay and promotion prospects	55.3	38.0	73.5	56.4	72.9
Better job security	50.0	34.2	72.3	45.9	70.7
Pay rate, salary or income increased	41.1	32.3	63.9	27.9	60.0
Promotion/new job is at a higher level	22.2	8.4	58.1	7.4	67.9
Improvements directly related to ESF	10.8	6.4	11.3	6.6	8.3
Sample	1344	795	309	136	60

Among those respondents employed at Wave 1 in the same jobs that they held prior to ESF, the most commonly reported improvements in job conditions related to having had more training opportunities (68%), getting more job satisfaction (63%) and improvements in future pay and promotion prospects (55%). In contrast, only 22% of respondents reported that they had had a promotion. Among those at Wave 1 who were in a different job compared with that which they held prior to participating in an ESF project, such respondents are more likely to report a variety of improvements in their jobs. Among this group, 78% report that they were getting more job satisfaction, 74% reported that their future pay and promotion prospects had

improved and 72% reported that they had better job security. Nearly sixty percent of those who had changed jobs also reported that their new job was at a higher level. It is also interesting to note that those in a new job at Wave 1 were also more likely to then report subsequent improvements in their jobs between Wave 1 and Wave 2. As would be expected, those people who are in a new job at Wave 2 compared with that which was held at Wave 1 were most likely to report improvements in their jobs between Waves 1 and 2.

Respondents to both waves of the survey were also asked whether they felt that these changes happened because of their participation in the intervention. Among Wave 1 respondents, approximately 11% reported that these changes were directly because of the intervention. This rate is the same among those who were in the same job at Wave 1 as that which they held prior to participation in ESF and those who were in a new job. In terms of reported improvements in jobs that had occurred between Wave 1 and Wave 2, approximately 6-7% of respondents report that these improvements were directly related to their participation in ESF. Once again, this rate is the same among both those who were in a new job at Wave 2 and among those who were in the same job as that held at Wave 1.

Finally, Table 7.4 considers what characteristics are associated with a respondent to the Wave 1 survey reporting that the improvements in their jobs, either within their same job or a new job, were directly related to their participation in an ESF project. Overall, 11% of respondents report that they had experienced an improvement in their jobs that could be attributed to their participation in an ESF project. It can be seen that the oldest (aged 55+) group of respondents were most likely to report that any improvements could be directly attributed to their ESF intervention, although no obvious relationship emerges among the other age groups. Interestingly, those with low levels of educational attainment prior to their participation in an ESF project were more likely to report that improvements in their jobs could be attributed to their ESF intervention. However, no clear relationship emerges in terms of the qualifications achieved through participation in an ESF project, with the noticeable exception that those gaining no qualifications

Table 7.4: Improvements in jobs *directly* related to participation in ESF among Priority 3 respondents

		<i>per cent employed respondents</i>
Characteristics of survey respondents		Per cent
Gender:		
Male		10.8
Female		11.0
Age:		
16 -18 yrs		6.1
19 - 21 yrs		10.8
22 - 24 yrs		13.1
16 -24 yrs		11.4
25 - 30 yrs		9.7
31 - 40 yrs		10.7
41 - 54 yrs		9.7
55+ yrs		18.9
Ethnicity:		
White		10.9
Non-white		11.8
Nationality:		
Born in UK		11.1
Born elsewhere		5.6
Work limiting illness:		
Yes		7.5
No		11.0
Pre ESF educational attainment:		
None		12.0
NQF Level 1		14.9
NQF Level 2		10.7
NQF Level 3		10.9
NQF Level 4+		9.9
Qualifications achieved through ESF:		
None		4.8
NQF Level 1		10.3
NQF Level 2		10.7
NQF Level 3		13.5
NQF Level 4+		19.5
Undertaken further education or training since ESF:		
Yes		13.1
No		10.1
Attained further qualifications since ESF:		
Yes		16.1
No		10.1
Total		10.9
Sample		1653

through their participation in an ESF project were least likely to report direct benefits of an ESF intervention on their job characteristics. Finally, we observe that those who have undertaken further training and have attained further qualifications are most likely to report that improvements in their jobs could be attributed to an ESF course. This finding could suggest the contribution of ESF interventions to a number of outcomes that could have complementary effects on career outcomes, such as the attainment of additional skills and qualifications.

CHAPTER 8: The benefits of participation in an ESF project

Chapter Summary

- Almost three quarters of respondents to the ESF survey report that they had attained a qualification as a result of participating in an ESF project. In terms of softer outcomes, approximately 90% report that they feel more confident in their own abilities and that they feel better about themselves generally.
- In terms of skills achieved during ESF, most respondents report that they have gained communication skills, team working skills, organisation skills and problem solving skills. Respondents from Priority 3 projects are generally more likely to report that they have gained additional skills.
- One in four respondents who were in a different job at the time of the Wave 1 survey compared with that which they held prior to participation in ESF report that their course was vital to them in terms of getting their current jobs. Respondents with lower levels of educational attainment are more likely to report this. This was also reported by one in eight respondents who held different jobs between Waves 1 and 2.
- Three quarters of respondents report that they would be willing to do the course again. This perception is higher among those with higher level pre-entry qualifications and those who gained higher levels of qualifications during their ESF project.
- Respondents who achieve additional qualifications through ESF are more likely to report that the intervention resulted in a positive impact. This finding is observed across a variety of outcome measures and is particularly evident where the qualification achieved was at the same or higher level than qualifications held prior to participation in an ESF project.

8.1 Introduction

Earlier chapters have discussed the impact of participation in ESF projects on the careers of participants. The effects of participation have been considered in terms of the effects of the interventions upon employment outcomes and earnings, which are key considerations for assessing the value of participation in ESF projects. However, focusing solely on earnings and employment outcomes misses at least part of the picture. Participants may have a wide variety of views about what they want from the experience. This chapter

considers wider evidence from the survey regarding the outcomes that respondents felt that they gained from their participation. We firstly consider the perceptions of respondents regarding outcomes achieved from the project, including qualifications gained, wider benefits of the course including 'soft' outcomes such as increased levels of confidence and the nature of skills gained. We then consider whether respondents report that attendance on an ESF project helped them get their current jobs or, for those out of work, whether they feel that the course has increased their chance of finding work. Finally, we consider whether ESF participants would, with hindsight, make the same choices again.

8.2 Outcomes from ESF projects

Table 8.1 considers three dimensions of outcomes reported by respondents during the Wave 1¹⁵ survey related to their participation in an ESF project. These outcomes are considered under three broad headings: the qualifications achieved; the benefits of the course; and improvements in skill levels resulting from participation in an ESF project. A clear distinction can be made between the two Priorities in terms of the qualifications that are achieved through the interventions. It can be seen that 35% of Priority 2 respondents do not achieve a qualification through their ESF project. This is compared with 16% of respondents who participated in Priority 3 projects. It is estimated that 43% of Priority 3 respondents achieved a qualification equivalent to NQF level 2, compared with 14% of Priority 2 respondents. Priority 2 respondents were most likely to achieve a qualification at NQF level 1 or below (33%). The lower levels of qualifications achieved among Priority 2 respondents reflects the relative objectives of these two Priorities, with a greater emphasis on key skills within Priority 2 projects.

In terms of wider outcomes from the intervention, the benefits most commonly cited by respondents were that respondents felt more confident about their capabilities (91%) and that they were feeling better about themselves

¹⁵ These questions were not repeated at Wave 2 as they refer to benefits achieved directly from participating in an ESF project.

generally (88%). The largest differences across the two Priorities are observed in terms of the higher proportions of Priority 2 respondents who said that they had made new friends (78% compared with 61% among Priority 3 respondents), that they feel more healthy (65% compared with 59% among Priority 3 respondents) and that they have taken part in more voluntary and community activities (36% compared with 28% among Priority 3 respondents).

Table 8.1: Outcomes from ESF projects

	<i>per cent of respondents</i>		
	Priority 2	Priority 3	Total
Qualifications gained on course:			
None	35.2	15.6	25.1
NQF Level 1 or below	32.9	10.0	21.1
NQF Level 2	13.5	43.4	28.8
NQF Level 3	2.4	18.3	10.6
NQF Level 4-5	0.1	4.9	2.6
Unspecified level	15.9	7.8	11.7
Benefits of attending the course:			
More confident about your abilities	89.3	91.6	90.5
Feeling better about yourself generally	87.4	88.2	87.8
Clearer about the range of opportunities open to you	81.1	84.5	82.9
More enthusiastic about learning	83.6	81.4	82.5
Feeling you have improved employment or career prospects	78.1	86.3	82.3
Clearer about what you want to do in your life	73.1	75.4	74.3
Have you made new friends as a result of the course	77.9	60.8	69.1
Feeling more healthy	65.2	58.6	61.8
Taking part in more voluntary or community activities	36.0	27.8	31.8
Thinking about setting up your own business or working self-employed	22.4	18.7	20.5
As a result of the course have you taken up new hobbies or interests	16.3	9.9	13.0
Skills gained by attending the course:			
Communication skills	80.5	84.8	82.7
Team working skills	77.5	83.1	80.4
Organizational skills	71.4	82.2	77.0
Problem solving skills	71.4	78.9	75.2
Job-specific skills related to a specific occupation	62.2	78.9	70.8
Literacy skills	63.1	64.3	63.7
Numeracy skills	61.2	64.3	62.8
IT skills	60.7	55.1	57.8
Job search skills	61.7	46.7	54.0
CV writing or interview skills	58.6	45.1	51.7
English language skills	42.0	38.2	40.0
Sample	1973	2085	4058

The survey also asked respondents about the nature of skills they acquired whilst participating. The most commonly cited skills were key skills including communication skills (83% of respondents), team working skills (80%), organizational skills (77%) and problem solving skills (75%). In terms of differences between Priority 2 and Priority 3 respondents, given the emphasis of Priority 3 projects in terms of achieving progression in employment, such respondents are more likely to report that they had accumulated job specific skills (79% compared with 62% among Priority 2 respondents). Given the higher level of respondents in Priority 2 projects who are not in work and the emphasis of such projects in terms of improving the labour market status of participants, respondents on these projects are more likely to report improvements in job search skills (62% compared with 47% among Priority 3 respondents) and CV writing or interview skills (59% compared with 45% among Priority 3 respondents).

8.3 ESF projects and finding employment

Respondents who were employed at the time of the survey and who were either not in employment prior to participating in an ESF project or employed in a different job were asked to what extent they thought that the course helped them get their current job. Table 8.2 shows that almost a quarter of respondents to Wave 1 of the ESF survey report that their ESF project was vital to them gaining their current employment. Among respondents participating in Priority 3 projects, it can be seen that those with low levels of educational attainment prior to participation in ESF are more likely to report that their course was vital in terms of them gaining their current job (31% among those educated to NQF level 1, compared with 16% among those with qualifications at NQF level 4 or above), although those with no qualifications were relatively less likely to consider their courses as being vital to them gaining their current job (20%). Data presented for responses to the Wave 2 survey point towards the benefits of ESF over the longer term. Thirteen percent of those who gained a job between Wave 1 and Wave 2 of the survey, having either been out of work at Wave 1 or having changed jobs between

Wave 1 and 2, reported that their participation in ESF was vital to them gaining this job.

Table 8.2: Importance of intervention in gaining employment

	<i>per cent of respondents</i>			More chance of finding a job in the future – Priority 2
	Vital in gaining current job			
	Priority 2	Priority 3	All	
Gender:				
Male	23.4	28.3	25.8	22.6
Female	23.9	19.1	21.4	22.9
Age:				
15 - 18 yrs	17.4	16.1	17.2	27.8
19 - 21 yrs	27.5	28.3	28.0	25.9
22 - 24 yrs	18.8	36.7	32.0	14.9
15 -24 yrs	20.8	30.1	25.4	26.3
25 - 30 yrs	28.3	18.2	22.3	21.4
31 - 40 yrs	32.4	19.1	25.7	19.6
41 - 54 yrs	25.2	12.4	19.3	19.9
55+ yrs	20.8	23.1	21.6	13.8
Educational attainment prior to ESF:				
None	22.9	19.6	21.5	20.5
NQF level 1	24.6	31.4	27.2	24.8
NQF level 2	24.4	27.6	26.0	25.0
NQF level 3	15.5	23.4	20.3	15.7
NQF level 4+	25.6	15.7	19.5	21.7
Unspecified	27.7	16.7	23.4	23.1
Ethnicity:				
White	23.7	23.5	23.6	22.8
Non-white	22.2	23.1	22.7	16.7
Nationality:				
Born in UK	23.9	23.8	23.8	22.5
Born elsewhere	16.7	19.0	17.9	26.9
Work limiting illness:				
Yes	28.6	20.0	26.3	18.6
No	23.2	23.6	23.4	23.4
Total Wave 1	23.6	23.5	23.6	22.6
Wave 2	9.6	16.3	12.5	24.8

Finally, those respondents who were not employed at the time of the Wave 1 and Wave 2 survey were also asked whether they felt that because of their participation in an ESF project, they now had more chance of finding a job in

the future. The percentage of such respondents who reported that they felt they had significantly more chance of finding work as a result of their ESF project is shown in the final column of Table 8.2. It can be seen that of respondents to the Wave 1 survey, 23% of non-employed respondents felt that they had significantly more chance of finding work in the future. In terms of differences between groups, it is observed that younger respondents are more likely to report that they feel that they have significantly more chance of finding work. Finally, it is observed that even among those who were not employed at the time of the Wave 2 survey, approximately one in four maintain that their participation in ESF will help them find a job in the future. This figure is similar to that provided by non-employed respondents to the Wave 1 survey.

8.4 Was it worth it?

In this section, we specifically consider the contribution of ESF projects to improving levels of educational attainment and how it affects the perceptions of respondents regarding the impacts of these projects. As noted in Table 8.1, about a quarter of respondents indicated that their ESF project did not result in a qualification. A further 16% of respondents undertake ESF projects that result in a qualification at the same level to that which they held prior to the intervention. Eighteen per cent of respondents undertake an ESF project that results in a higher level qualification. However, 21% of respondents undertake a qualification that is at a lower level (as classified by the National Qualification Framework) than that which they held prior to their participation in an ESF project. It should be recognised that the objectives and skills provided by these courses will have a different emphasis than prior qualifications often achieved during their full time education. The attainment of lower level qualifications than those previously held may still represent a broadening of a respondent's skills base and should not necessarily be regarded as inappropriate to the needs of participants. However, given the importance attributed to the additionality of ESF in terms of outcomes, the additional qualifications that were achieved from participation in ESF provide a useful dimension against which to assess the outcomes achieved from these interventions.

In Table 8.3 we consider differences in the perceptions of survey respondents regarding the impact of their ESF projects according to the changes in the levels of qualifications held that resulted from their participation in an ESF project. We distinguish between respondents according to whether their ESF project resulted in: 1) an additional qualification at a lower level than that already held; 2) no additional qualification; 3) an additional qualification at the same level as that already held; and 4) an additional qualification at a higher level than that already held.

The effects of additional qualifications gained from ESF upon a range of impact measures from the survey are considered. It can be seen that ESF projects that do not result in an additional qualification are least likely to be regarded as a) being vital to respondents in getting their current jobs, b) increasing the chance of finding a job in the future and, c) directly resulting in improvements in job characteristics. It is also generally observed that getting a qualification through ESF at the same or higher level than that previously held is also associated with greater perceived benefits than those who gained qualifications at lower levels than those previously held.

Finally, respondents were asked whether, with the value of hindsight, if they were starting out again, they would: choose to do the same course at the same place; the same course but at a different place; a different course; or to not do a course at all. Responses to these questions derived from both the Wave 1 and Wave 2 surveys are provided in Table 8.4. Among respondents to the Wave 1 survey, 76% report that with hindsight, they would choose to do the same course again. This figure is slightly lower among Priority 2 respondents at 73% and higher among Priority 3 respondents at 79%. Similar results are derived from the Wave 2 survey, where 75% of respondents report that they would do the course again. Qualifications achieved through ESF that were of an equivalent or higher level than those already held are most likely to be considered by respondents as resulting in a positive impact and are associated with higher perceptions regarding whether respondents would do the course again.

Table 8.3: Changes in qualifications and perceived impacts of course

Question Coverage	<i>per cent of respondents</i>						
	Vital in gaining current job			More chance of finding job in the future		Improvements in jobs directly related to ESF	
	All those in a job that was not held prior to participation in ESF			All those not in work at the time of the survey		Those employed at time of survey	
	Wave 1			Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 1	Wave 2
Priority	Priority 2	Priority 3	All	Priority 2	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 3
Qualification from ESF:							
Lower Level	23.4	20.0	21.9	27.2	28.1	8.7	6.9
No qualification	11.0	8.4	10.0	16.8	19.9	4.8	2.6
Same Level	32.5	34.0	33.5	28.0	34.7	13.0	9.3
Higher Level	26.6	25.8	26.0	31.0	25.8	14.6	8.6
Total	20.8	23.1	21.9	22.7	24.8	10.9	7.2
Sample	669	614	1283	1328	713	1668	1080

Perceptions regarding the value of participating on an ESF course are related to subsequent outcomes. In the top half of Table 8.4, it can be seen that at both Wave 1 and Wave 2, those who remain unemployed are least likely to indicate that they would do the course again. However, those who are economically inactive exhibit levels of satisfaction with participation in ESF that are comparable to that reported by those who are in employment at the time of the ESF survey. The lower half of Table 8.4 once again demonstrates that participation in ESF projects that resulted in qualifications that were of an equivalent or higher level than those already held are most likely to be considered by respondents as resulting in a positive impact and are associated with higher perceptions regarding whether respondents would do the course again. However, it is also noted that the achievement of a qualification at a lower level than that already held is also associated with higher perceptions regarding whether respondents would do the course again. Therefore, whilst improvements in the level of educational attainment that result from ESF are important in terms of the perceived value gained from the course, the achievement of any additional qualification is associated with higher perceived benefits.

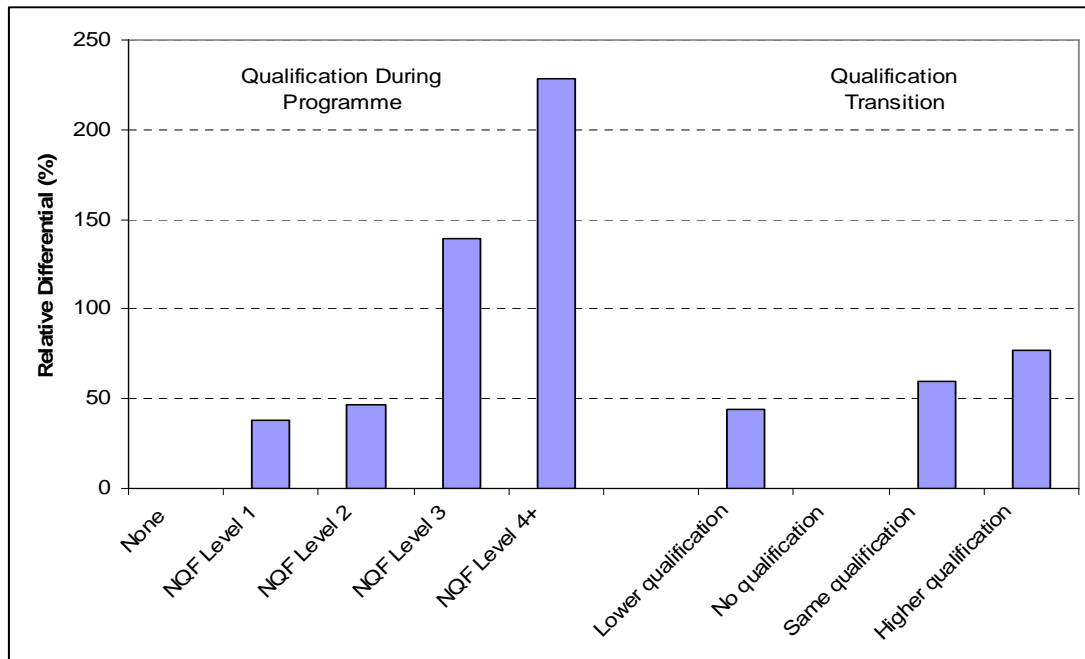
Table 8.4: In hindsight would the respondent choose to do the same course again

per cent of respondents

	Respondent would do the course again					
	Wave 1			Wave 2		
	Priority 2	Priority 3	Total	Priority 2	Priority 3	Total
Current labour market status:						
Paid employment	76.1	79.6	78.7	72.8	78.7	77.0
Education	72.4	78.5	73.5	79.9	76.0	79.4
Unemployed	67.2	72.0	67.8	63.3	70.2	64.2
Inactive	79.2	84.8	79.9	74.3	76.7	74.7
Qualification from ESF:						
Lower Level	76.5	80.0	78.4	74.4	77.7	76.1
No qualification	65.5	69.5	66.8	64.3	63.3	64.0
Same Level	76.2	82.2	80.3	77.3	83.5	81.5
Higher Level	78.0	84.5	82.6	73.7	82.2	79.6
Total	73.1	79.3	76.3	71.4	78.3	75.0

To gain a better understanding of how satisfaction with participation in an ESF project varies between different groups of respondent, we undertook more detailed analysis to consider which characteristics were associated with a respondent reporting that, with hindsight, they would choose to do the same course again. As with the analysis of employment conducted in Chapter 4, a logistic regression was used in order to simultaneously identify the separate and additional effect of a variety of personal and project related characteristics upon the likelihood that an individual would report that they would do the course again. Full results of the logistic regression are presented in Annex 3. Figure 8.1 shows how the attainment of higher levels of qualifications during the ESF project is associated with an increased likelihood of respondents reporting that they would do the course again as reported at Wave 1. Respondents who achieved a qualification equivalent to NQF Level 4 or above are more than three times as likely to report that they would do the course again compared with those who achieved no qualification. Given that pre-entry qualification levels are also controlled for in the analysis, the analysis identifies the effects of gaining higher level qualifications from ESF in terms of satisfaction with the course. The analysis again confirms that satisfaction with an ESF course is lowest among those who do not acquire further qualifications through that course. The achievement of qualifications at the same or higher level than those already held is associated with higher levels of satisfaction than the achievement of lower level qualifications, although this difference is not large. Repeating the analysis based upon Wave 2 data provides similar results.

Figure 8.1: The effect of qualifications from ESF on respondents reporting that they would do the course again (Wave 1)



CHAPTER 9: Conclusions and recommendations

9.1 Introduction

The 2009 ESF Leavers survey provides reasonably robust evidence concerning the characteristics, experiences and shorter-term outcomes of the participants in ESF-funded activities in the early part of the ESF Convergence Programme for West Wales and the Valleys. The response rate achieved in the first wave of the survey was 54% of those individuals in the sample with a correct telephone number (40% of all names supplied), with no major variations (with the exception of an over-representation of older workers) between the known characteristics of those successfully interviewed and the sample for whom data was available¹⁶. The high response reflects the fact that the administrative data held by WEFO is of considerably higher quality than in the past. More importantly, it means that there is relatively little respondent bias and that the findings provide an accurate picture of the views and experience of the broader cohort. Moreover, the survey has for the first time for ESF evaluation in Wales involved a longitudinal element, with follow up interviews conducted six months after the initial wave. Wave 2 also achieved a high response rate of 67% of those from Wave 1 who agreed to be re-interviewed (63% of all those interviewed in Wave 1).

At the same time, there were some limitations in terms of the data available. Firstly, data was only available for projects within two of the four Priorities within the ESF Convergence Programme; Priority 2 and Priority 3. While these are by some way the largest of the four Priorities in financial terms – and while no Priority 4 projects had been approved at the time the survey started – this nevertheless does mean that the survey does not present a comprehensive overview of the activity which is *currently* being funded. Moreover, Priority 2 projects focus on developing the employability of the economically inactive and the unemployed, whilst Priority 3 projects are intended to support up skilling of those already in work. These differences mean that, to a very real extent, the Leavers' Survey could be regarded as

¹⁶ The survey was based on the entire population of participants for whom administrative data was available at the time of the sampling.

two surveys of these two different groups of participants. For this reason, analysis throughout this report has either distinguished between these two groups or has focussed on one or the other of these groups.

More significantly, the participant data was taken from only a very small number of projects in each of the two Priorities: seven projects in all provided data, with two projects accounting for 75% of all those in the sample. While the Convergence Programme is characterised by “fewer, larger projects” compared with previous ESF Programmes in Wales, this does mean that the data will be heavily influenced by the experience of participants of this potentially unrepresentative sample of projects. It will therefore be important to compare and contrast the results from this Survey with future ESF Leavers’ Surveys which will be able to draw data from a wider range of projects.

While comparisons with previous and future Leavers’ Surveys is important, it is also important to appreciate that, in terms of the broader context in which the 2009 Survey has been undertaken, meaningful comparisons may be hard to achieve. After almost two decades of improving labour market conditions, those participants leaving ESF provision in 2009 were faced by significantly increased barriers in terms of a contracting labour market, with strong competition for vacancies from individuals with a strong personal history of labour market engagement. The effect of this on those with poor employability and patchy employment histories should not be underestimated.

9.2 Is ESF reaching the right groups?

Having made these contextual points, we can first consider whether ESF is reaching the groups targeted by the ESF Convergence Programme. Projects are engaging participants with relatively poor prior qualifications. Respondents to the survey were less well qualified than the Welsh population as a whole and this was particularly true of Priority 2 respondents where 68% were qualified at NQF Level 2 or below (the equivalent figure for Priority 3 interviewees being 51%). This is clearly in line with the aims and ambitions of the Programme to focus on those with low skills and qualifications, given the very strong correlation between those with low (and especially no) formal

qualifications and economic inactivity and the evidence that market failure in terms of up-skilling the employed population is greatest in terms of the low skilled. At the same time, and recognising that Priority 3 does make explicit provision for supporting higher level skills, the proportion of Priority 3 participants with prior qualifications at Level 3 and above (35%) is relatively high.

It remains the case that respondents to the survey display a relatively strong engagement with the labour market. Fifty six per cent of Priority 2 participants interviewed for the Wave 1 Survey (and 29% of the total sample) were unemployed, with only 17% (and 9% of the total sample) being economically inactive. Moreover, the majority of those who were unemployed had been unemployed for less than 12 months: this group accounted for 32% of all Priority 2 participants (56% of all unemployed participants). This reflects the changes made to the Operational Programmes in late 2009. In terms of age, as already noted, there was a very strong presence of young people in the survey (42% aged 16 - 24). Related to the relatively young composition of respondents to the survey, a smaller proportion of the sample (9%) suffered from a work-limiting illness than is true of the Welsh adult population as a whole (18%). Even among the non-employed, the proportion of ESF participants suffering from a work limiting ill-health condition (15%) is considerably lower than the non-employed population in Wales (43%).

These observations undoubtedly reflect the limited range of projects for which participant data was available at the time of sampling. The most recent Programme Monitoring Report produced by WEFO reports that in terms of claims submitted to the end of October 2010, 62% of participants in Priority 2 projects were economically inactive¹⁷. The monitoring report however also indicates that the proportion of these participants who are out of work who suffer from a work related ill-health condition (26%) and who are from the older key intervention group (6%) remain under-represented compared to

¹⁷ ESF Convergence 2007-2013 West Wales and the Valleys Programme Monitoring Report December 2010 (PMC(10)138)

both the wider population in Wales (see Tables 2.5 and 2.6) and stated targets. There is a continuing need for careful monitoring to ensure that these interventions are being targeted at those who face the greatest difficulties in the labour market.

9.3 The ESF experience

Overall, the Leavers' survey suggests that participants are very positive about the experience offered to them. Crucially, a large majority (over three quarters) would make the same choices again, which is an impressive result. Withdrawal rates were generally quite low, with the administrative and survey data both suggesting that 16% of respondents left their courses early (although there was some inconsistencies between these two sources when attempting to identify who had left). Rates of withdrawal were higher for young people, those with low qualifications or a work limiting illness. However, 18% of the "early leavers" from Priority 2 were the result of entry into employment. Moreover, many interventions, particularly under Priority 3, are clearly relatively intense, with just under half (49%) of all interventions lasting 6 months or more. Despite this overall positive assessment, it is interesting that awareness of the ESF contribution remains far from universal. Thirty-eight percent were not aware of the intervention having been funded by ESF. This may be partially explained in instances where ESF is used to support mainstream national programmes where individuals may be less likely to identify ESF as the exact funding source. Perhaps more worryingly, 500 of the population (5% of the loaded sample) who were contacted by the Survey could not recall having received any support at all. This may reflect the timing, length and intensity of the intervention or the time that had passed since they had received support from ESF at the time of the survey.

9.4 Outcomes

The most important evidence from ESF Leavers' Surveys relates to outcomes. The 2009 Leavers' Survey has much that is positive to say, particularly given the very difficult labour market circumstances. Turning first to Priority 2, 33% of those responding to the Survey were at the time of the Wave 1 questionnaire in paid employment – a net increase of 22% compared

with the situation immediately before participation in the ESF intervention. This share of employment increases further to 39% by the time of the Wave 2 survey. A quarter of employed respondents to the Wave 1 survey who either did not have a job prior to ESF or who were in a different job reported that ESF support was “vital” in getting their job. This seems a very strong result, even if it does need to be qualified somewhat by findings that:

- Transitions in to employment were much less common for those who had previously been economically inactive, with only 3% of all Priority 2 respondents (or 15% of those who were economically inactive before the intervention) making the transition from economic inactivity to paid employment by the time of the Wave 1 survey. This is compared with 17% of all Priority 2 respondents (or 30% of those who were unemployed before the intervention) who moved from being unemployed to paid employment.
- Younger people were more likely to move into employment which might indicate higher levels of deadweight than at first apparent, given the general pattern of transition from learning to work. However, with rapidly increasing youth unemployment this effect should not be exaggerated
- Many of the jobs accessed were temporary. Only 67% of Priority 2 participants who were employed at Wave 1 were in permanent employment, with this figure remaining similar for Wave 2. Similarly, many Priority 2 respondents were working part-time at Wave 1 (35% of men and 55% of women working less than 30 hours a week); a significant contrast with the Priority 3 participants (where the equivalent figures were 7% for men and 31% of women)
- In total, 36% of the Priority 2 respondents were unemployed or inactive both before ESF and at the time of the Wave 1 survey. This figure declines to 32% by the time of the Wave 2 survey

An interesting finding, in view of previous research which suggests that entries into employment tend to peak only several months after the end of an intervention, was that for the ESF Leavers most transitions took place during

or immediately at the end of provision. Whilst the share of previously unemployed Priority 2 respondents gaining employment during the 12 months following participation in ESF increases by 8 percentage points, 30% gain employment immediately upon completion of their programme.

Another positive outcome, in terms of both Priority 2 and Priority 3 participants was the propensity of participants to undertake further learning with 41% undertaking further study and 28% gaining a further qualification between the end of the ESF intervention and the time of the Wave 2 interview.

Overall, 75% of participants gained a qualification from their ESF intervention. The proportion of these qualifications which were at the same, or a lower, level than the individual's highest prior qualification was, however, surprisingly high at around two-thirds of all participants who gained a qualification. Interestingly, in this context, positive views of ESF were strongly correlated with courses which involved acquiring qualifications, particularly where those qualifications were at least at the same or a higher level than those previously held.

Evidence of the impact of Priority 3 interventions on progression in work is also impressive given the macro-economic climate. One in five Priority 3 respondents experienced upward occupational mobility between prior to ESF and the Wave 2 survey. Amongst those remaining within the same job, 21% reported a promotion at Wave 1 but significantly larger proportions reported better job security (50%) and improved pay, salary or income (42%). The fact that those with lower prior qualifications were more likely to attribute positive changes to ESF intervention should encourage reflection on the balance between interventions focused on these workers and those supporting higher level skills.

In terms of softer outcomes, the findings of the 2009 Leavers' Survey also show high levels of participants reporting increasing confidence in capabilities, and feeling better about themselves generally. The most commonly cited skills developed as a result of provision were key skills including communication

skills, team working skills, organizational skills and problem solving skills. Outcomes also reflected the development of new social networks, and health related outcomes. The acquisition of these types of skills and the welfare related outcomes are also important to sustained progression in the labour market.

The Leavers' Survey suggests that ESF interventions have helped diminish the extent to which poor skills are perceived as a barrier to progression. However, for those respondents still outside the labour market a number of barriers remain. While lack of available jobs was the most commonly cited barrier, lack of or poor transport was also seen as a barrier by around 45% of those still unemployed. This was significantly greater than, for example, lack of affordable childcare.

9.5 Recommendations

Targeting of Interventions

Recommendation 1: WEFO should consider as a matter of urgency whether the generally low numbers of older participants found within the Priority 2 sample is representative of all Priority 2 projects currently underway and, if so, what measures are needed to bring this Priority into line with the intention of targeting older groups and those with work limiting illnesses, since there appears to be a risk that projects may be working with less disadvantaged groups.

Recommendation 2: While the focus on young people may be appropriate, given sharply rising youth unemployment, WEFO should consider whether the distinction between Priority 1 and Priority 2 is clear enough and is being reflected in practice.

Recommendation 3: WEFO needs to ensure that project sponsors delivering Priority 3 projects are making every effort to support part-time workers who are less likely to benefit from training provided by employers.

Recommendation 4: The 2009 Leavers Survey, as in previous rounds, highlighted a range of beneficiary outcomes other than just transition in economic opportunity. For example, in terms of softer outcomes, approximately 90% of respondents to the survey reported that they felt more

confident in their own abilities and that they feel better about themselves generally. Particularly important here were outcomes based on life experience, health and networking. It is recommended that in promoting ESF provision to potential beneficiaries that wider reference be made to the full range of outcomes that reflect on personal welfare and economic progression.

Implementation of Interventions

Recommendation 5: While recognising that participants may be uninterested in the source of the funding for a particular intervention, WEFO needs to work with project sponsors to raise awareness of ESF amongst participants.

Recommendation 6: While recognising that additional qualifications even at lower levels to qualifications already held by individual participants can be of value, WEFO should reflect on the evidence that participants gaining qualifications at an equivalent or higher level than prior qualifications are more likely to attribute positive outcomes to ESF intervention.

Recommendation 7: WEFO should highlight more widely within WAG the view of unemployed participants that transport represents a very significant barrier to entering employment.

Further Research and Future Leavers' Surveys

Recommendation 8: While the 2009 survey has provided indicators of ESF additionality in terms of improvements in economic circumstances, and progression from inactivity to training and employment, it is still difficult to provide robust conclusions without understanding what participants would have done in the absence of ESF. The feasibility of using other sources of data such as the Labour Force Survey to provide such control groups should be investigated in order to maximise the value of the ESF survey data in informing public debate.

Recommendation 9: For future surveys, WEFO should consider whether there is value in having two waves of data collection within a relatively short time period. A majority of transitions appear to be made upon the completion of these interventions. It may therefore be worth considering whether the first wave of data collection should cover the experiences of participants

immediately following their courses, with a second wave of data collection taking place after a longer period of time has elapsed.

Recommendation 10: WEFO needs to ensure that participant data from all ESF projects is available for future ESF Leavers' Surveys.

Recommendation 11: Within the analysis of the report there was limited scope to examine spatial variation in outcomes across the Convergence area. There is a strong expectation that trends in progression and access to opportunity will vary across the area. We believe that the large number of respondents contacted during the 1st and 2nd wave of the survey would permit further analysis of spatial variation. A better understanding of the spatial variations in progression would permit an improved targeting of ESF resources and it is recommended that WEFO should consider further structured spatial econometric analysis.

Annex 1: Survey methodology

A1.1 Defining the sample population

A file containing the details of 10,201 learners who left ESF funded courses or learning during 2009 was provided to the research team by WEFO. This file contained the contact details of project participants, details of the course undertaken, the labour market position of project participants and information related to a variety of personal characteristics, including age, gender, educational attainment, disability, ethnicity, migrant status,

Two records were found to be duplicates with other entries based on learner name and address. This gave a starting sample of 10,199 records. Of these, 579 records did not have a valid telephone number (either no number or an incorrect number of digits). UK Changes' tele-matching service was used to look-up new telephone numbers for these records and in total numbers were found for 52, leaving 527 of the original sample that were not used due to having no valid telephone number. The total number of records used after these look-ups were performed was 9,672

A1.2 Survey methodology

The ESF Leavers Survey was conducted via telephone interview. Questionnaire design was a collaborative process between the research consortium and WEFO, and took into account the questionnaires used for previous ESF surveys conducted in the UK. The survey was conducted in 2 waves. The first wave of data collection aimed to collect information about the circumstances of ESF participants prior to their project, their reasons for undertaking an ESF project, their current circumstances at the time of the Wave 1 survey and their perceptions regarding the benefits gained from undertaking the ESF project. Despite the availability of administrative data, information about the personal characteristics of ESF participants was also collected. This was to ensure data quality and to enable consistent comparisons to be made with other external sources of relevant survey data such as the Labour Force Survey.

The Wave 2 survey was to be conducted approximately 6 months after the Wave 1 interviews. This survey was based upon a 'cut down' version of the Wave 1 questionnaire and largely focussed upon collecting follow-up data on the labour market circumstances of ESF participants so that the development of their careers could be considered over a longer time period. Whilst the second wave of data collection did not repeat questions related to direct outcomes, respondents were again asked about whether subsequent changes in their careers (e.g. promotions, new jobs, further training) could be attributed in some way to their participation in ESF. Demographic information was collected where personal circumstances may have changed (e.g. family status, illness).

The Wave 1 questionnaire was piloted on Friday 12th and Monday 15th February 2010: 400 records were used, 260 of which were called, and a total of 50 interviews were undertaken. As a result of the pilot exercise, some questions were removed in order to reduce the length of the questionnaire and some minor amendments to the wording of the questionnaire were incorporated. As the changes consisted of cuts and changes in the wording of the introduction, pilot interviews have been included in the final analysis.

All respondents were offered the opportunity to be interviewed in Welsh. Those marked on the sample file as having Welsh as their preferred language were contacted in Welsh. In total 23 Wave 1 interviews were conducted in Welsh. All interviewers working on the study received a face-to-face briefing, and were provided with accompanying interviewer notes. A member of the WEFO team participated in the briefing on the first evening of interviewing. The main stage of the Wave 1 fieldwork ran from the evening of 17th February to the evening of 31st March 2010, and involved a total of 31 weekday daytime (9am – 4.30pm) and 45 evening and weekend shifts (5pm-9pm weeknights; 10am-6pm Saturdays; 11am-6pm Sundays). For the Wave 2 Survey, the first evening's fieldwork on 5th August served as a "rolling pilot" with close monitoring and a small number of interviews. Some minor changes were made as a result of this. The Wave 2 fieldwork ran from the evening of 5th August to the evening of 9th September 2010 and involved a total of 24

weekday daytime shifts and 35 evening and weekend shifts. All fieldwork took place from IFF's telephone centre in London. No quotas were set on the achieved interviews due to the study's nature as a census. The primary focus was to maximise response rates.

A1.3 Survey outcomes and response rates

At the end of the Wave 1 fieldwork, a total of 4,066 completed interviews had been achieved. The average interview length was just under 19 minutes. The complete breakdown of sample outcomes is shown in Table A1.1. In total 731 people refused or were unwilling to participate. A further 500 did not recall their course or learning (of these, 135 had the name of the course included in the sample and 365 did not) while 205 said they were still on the ESF intervention. There is no single objective estimate of response rates, estimates of which will vary depending upon chosen population base. Expressed as a percentage of all records supplied to the research team, the response rate for the survey is estimated to be 40%. Excluding those participants with no telephone numbers or where the number supplied was found to be incorrect or where it was not possible to contact the participant, the response rate increases to 54%. Excluding those who had no recall of participating in the project or who were still on the project, the estimated response rate increases to 60%. In terms of consent for data linking 3,535 were happy for their data to be linked to other data sets (87%).

In total 3,816 individuals agreed to be re-contacted in the summer for further research (94%). At the end of Wave 2 fieldwork, a total of 2,542 completed interviews had been achieved. The average interview length was slightly over 10 minutes. The complete breakdown of sample outcomes is shown in the lower half of Table A1.1. In total 256 people refused or were unwilling to participate (6.7%), while 253 numbers were incorrect or a dead line (6.6%) by the time of this follow-up survey. Overall, a good response rate was achieved. The response rate was as high as 71% for records with a working telephone number. Alternative measures of response rates are provided at the base of Table A1.1.

Table A1.1: Developing a sample of leavers from ESF projects

Initial starting sample	10,199
Sample without a valid telephone number (Not used)	527
Sample used	9,672
Wave 1 Survey	
Unobtainable / wrong number	2,201
Called 9 or more times and no definite outcome	1,969
Refusals	731
No recall of learning	500
Still on course / don't know if completed or left early	205
Completed Wave 1 interviews	4,066
Wave 1 Response rates (population base in parentheses)	
All sample supplied (10,199)	40%
Sample loaded i.e. with an initial telephone number (9,672)	42%
Sample with a correct telephone number - i.e. excluding unobtainable numbers or wrong numbers (7,471)	54%
Sample with the correct telephone number and an eligible learner i.e. excluding 'unobtainable / wrong numbers', 'no recall of learning' and 'still on course / don't know if completed or left early' (6,766)	60%
Wave 2 Survey	
Sample loaded	3,815
Unobtainable / wrong number	253
Called 9 or more times and no definite outcome	764
Refusals	256
Completed Wave 2 interviews	2,542
Wave 2 Response rates (population base in parentheses)	
Initial starting sample (10,199)	25%
All respondents to Wave 1 (4,066)	62%
All sample loaded for Wave 2 (3,815)	67%
Sample with a working telephone number (i.e. excluding unobtainable numbers) (3,562)	71%

A1.4 Survey data and response bias

'Response bias' is the term used to describe the fact that people who display a certain characteristic (e.g. age, gender) may be more or less likely to respond to the survey. If this characteristic is also related to the factors we are studying in the survey, this creates potential bias in our interpretation of the survey results. For example, if women are more likely to respond than men, and if women have different reasons to men for participating in ESF

training, then analysis of the reasons for participation will be biased by the fact that the gender structure of the survey results will be skewed towards women. An obvious solution in this instance is to present separate results for men and women.

Table A1.2 shows response rates to the Wave 1 survey presented by selected characteristics for which information was available within the administrative records supplied to the research team. Response rates are presented as a percentage of the total number of records supplied to the research team. This is because both (a) the ability of the interviewers to establish contact with a project participant and (b) the propensity of the contacted participant to agree to participate in the survey may be expected to vary between different groups.

The descriptive analysis of Table A1.2 reveals that response rates to the Wave 1 survey are lower among males, those in their mid to late twenties, lone parents, the disabled, those with lower levels of educational attainment, those who were identified as not completing their ESF intervention and those for whom a greater time had elapsed between completing their ESF project and participating in the study. Table A1.3 shows response rates to the Wave 2 survey. Response rates are presented as a percentage of (a) the total number of records supplied to the research team and (b) the total number of people who gave their consent to be contacted for the Wave 2 survey. Once again, response rates are estimated to be lower among ESF participants who are younger, less well educated, who withdrew from the ESF project early and who completed their projects during the early months of 2009.

It is acknowledged that the reasons for non-response among different groups cannot be determined. For example, the lower rates of response among those who did not complete their ESF project may reflect a lower willingness to participate in voluntary activities generally. Alternatively, non-completion may be related to other factors that also reduce their likelihood of responding to the survey, such as moving home. Differences in response rates between different groups of project participants may themselves also reflect other differences in the characteristics of different groups. For example, lower rates

of response among lone parents may reflect lower levels of educational attainment among this group rather than lone parenthood per se.

Table A1.2: Wave 1 Response rates

	Population			Response rates (%)		
	Priority 2	Priority 3	All	Priority 2	Priority 3	All
Gender:						
Female	2331	3064	5395	41.7	41.3	41.4
Male	2661	2145	4806	37.7	38.2	37.9
Age:						
16-18 yrs	1866	173	2039	38.1	42.8	38.5
19-22 yrs	666	1232	1898	35.3	37.8	36.9
23-30 yrs	679	1442	2121	32.3	33.1	32.9
31-40 yrs	656	935	1591	38.1	40.2	39.3
41 - 54 yrs	803	1211	2014	47.2	47.9	47.6
55+ yrs	322	216	538	55.6	51.4	53.9
Family status:						
Single/Couple	4528	4986	9514	40.1	40.1	40.1
Lone Parents	464	223	687	34.3	38.1	35.5
Disability:						
Non-disabled	4190	5067	9257	40.7	40.1	40.4
Disabled	802	142	944	33.4	35.9	33.8
Educational attainment:						
NQF Level 1	767	864	1631	37.4	35.9	36.6
NQF Level 2	1630	2188	3818	41.0	39.9	40.3
NGF Level 3	407	847	1254	42.0	45.7	44.5
NQF Level 4+	196	369	565	53.1	49.1	50.4
Unknown, Other, None	1992	941	2933	37.3	35.6	36.8
Completion status:						
Completer	3583	4472	8055	43.2	41.5	42.3
Early Leaver	1406	737	2143	30.1	31.1	30.4
Completion date:						
Jan-March	912	1742	2654	35.9	38.9	37.9
April-June	2235	2057	4292	40.4	38.3	39.4
July-Sept	1656	1356	3012	42.3	42.8	42.5
Oct-Dec	189	54	243	21.7	74.1	33.3
Total	4989	5209	10198	39.5	40.0	39.8

Table A1.3: Wave 2 Response rates

	As a % of population supplied			As a % of those who gave consent to be followed up		
	Priority 2	Priority 3	All	Priority 2	Priority 3	All
Gender:						
Female	23.1	22.9	23.0	61.4	59.9	60.7
Male	25.8	26.5	26.2	62.0	64.3	63.3
Age:						
16-18 yrs	22.8	23.1	22.8	59.8	54.1	59.2
19-22 yrs	19.7	19.9	19.8	55.7	52.6	53.6
23-30 yrs	18.3	19.3	19.0	56.6	58.4	57.8
31-40 yrs	22.1	28.0	25.6	58.0	69.7	65.0
41 - 54 yrs	32.8	32.7	32.7	69.4	68.3	68.7
55+ yrs	40.1	38.0	39.2	72.1	73.9	72.8
Family status:						
Single/Couple	24.8	25.1	24.9	61.8	62.6	62.2
Lone Parents	20.7	23.8	21.7	60.4	62.4	61.1
Disability:						
Non-disabled	25.0	25.0	25.0	61.3	62.3	61.9
Disabled	21.3	25.4	21.9	63.8	70.6	64.9
Educational attainment:						
NQF Level 1	21.9	20.7	21.3	58.5	57.7	58.1
NQF Level 2	25.8	24.7	25.1	62.9	61.9	62.3
NGF Level 3	26.3	28.2	27.6	62.6	61.8	62.0
NQF Level 4+	36.7	35.8	36.1	69.2	72.9	71.6
Unknown, Other, None	22.6	22.7	22.6	60.6	63.9	61.6
Completion status:						
Completer	27.9	26.4	27.1	64.5	63.6	64.0
Early Leaver	15.4	16.7	15.9	51.3	53.7	52.1
Completion date:						
Jan-March	21.1	24.4	23.2	58.7	62.7	61.4
April-June	25.1	23.8	24.5	62.1	62.1	62.1
July-Sept	26.3	26.7	26.5	62.2	62.4	62.3
Oct-Dec	14.8	51.9	23.0	68.3	70.0	69.1
Total	24.4	25.0	24.7	61.7	62.5	62.1

To assess further the factors influencing survey response, we undertook a multivariate analysis of the response record for each potential respondent using logistic regression. This allowed us to measure the separate statistical significance of a variety of factors that could affect response. Separate analyses were undertaken for response to the Wave 1 survey (Annex 3, Table

A3.7) and for response to the Wave 2 survey (Annex 3, Table A3.8). The analysis revealed that the associations between response rates and the personal characteristics described above are strong, separate and statistically significant effects. Across both waves, it is estimated that the young, those suffering from illness, the less educated, lone parents and those who withdrew early from an ESF project are less likely to respond to the survey. However, it is estimated that, after controlling for other factors, men are less likely to respond to the survey. Additionally, the analysis revealed that participants in projects under Priority 2 were less likely to respond than Priority 3 participants.

A1.5 Development of sample weights

As noted above, the presence of response bias in the sample of respondents to the ESF survey could bias our interpretation of responses from the survey. To consider the extent of these problems, sample weights were derived from the logistic regression model described above. In short, the regression model was used to estimate the predicted probability with which an individual in the survey population actually responded to the questionnaire. Sample weights were derived based upon the inverse of this predicted probability. For example, if an individual is estimated to have a 20% chance of responding to the survey, the response for that individual is weighted by a factor of five. The benefit of this approach is that the derivation of weights can simultaneously take in to account the separate and additional effect of a variety of characteristics upon the likelihood of response. Exploratory analysis of the data revealed that the utilisation of weights did not have a significant effect on the results of descriptive analysis contained in the report. Whilst the survey weights have been retained on the data set, they have not been used for the purpose of this report.

Given that a subset of respondents to the Wave 1 survey were followed up at Wave 2, it is important to compare the characteristics of people responding to the two waves of the survey. If the composition of the Wave 1 and Wave 2 samples differ significantly, then it would be difficult to make comparisons between these 2 groups. For example, if respondents to the Wave 2 survey

are on average more highly educated, then simple comparisons in the outcomes reported by Wave 1 and Wave 2 respondents could be confounded by differences in educational attainment. For this particular example, the problem can be overcome by comparing outcomes for these 2 groups that are presented separately for different levels of educational attainment. However, it is not possible in practice to provide comparisons between Wave 1 and Wave 2 respondents across a variety of detailed characteristics. To assess whether such issues are likely to prove problematic in the interpretation of results from this report, Table A1.4 compares the characteristics of Wave 1 and Wave 2 respondents. It can be seen that across a variety of dimensions, the characteristics of respondents to the 2 waves of the ESF survey are very similar and therefore comparisons made between the 2 groups should not be confounded by other differences in the characteristics of respondent to the 2 waves of the survey.

Table A1.4: Comparing the personal characteristics of respondents Wave 1 and Wave 2 survey respondents

	Wave 1	Wave 2
Gender:		
Male	45.1	44.0
Female	54.9	56.0
Age:		
16 -18 yrs	19.3	18.5
19 - 21 yrs	14.2	12.1
22 - 24 yrs	8.6	7.9
16 - 24 yrs	42.2	38.8
25 - 30 yrs	11.6	10.9
31 - 40 yrs	15.4	16.1
41 - 54 yrs	23.6	26.1
55+ yrs	7.2	8.4
Ethnicity:		
White	98.7	98.7
Educational attainment prior to ESF:		
None	14.9	14.5
NQF level 1 or less	11.0	10.4
NQF level 2	33.7	33.0
NQF level 3	16.7	16.5
NQF level 4 or above	8.9	10.0
Unspecified	14.8	15.7
Long term limiting illness		
Yes	18.0	19.5
No	82.0	80.5
Work limiting illness		
Yes	8.7	10.7
No	91.3	89.3
Place of birth:		
Wales	80.9	80.3
Elsewhere UK	16.1	16.4
Elsewhere world	3.0	3.3
English as first language	91.2	92.3
Speak Welsh	27.4	27.0
Sample size	4058	2521

Annex 2: Comparing the Characteristics of ESF Respondents with Labour Force Survey Data for Wales

NOMIS										
	Convergence Area			All Wales			2009 ESF Respondents			
	Employed	Non employed	All	Employed	Non employed	All	Employed	Non employed	All	
Gender:										
Male	53.4	50.0	52.3	53.4	49.4	52.2	38.0	52.1	45.1	
Female	46.6	50.0	47.7	46.6	50.6	47.8	62.0	47.9	55.0	
Age:										
16 - 19 yrs	4.7	17.9	9.0	4.7	18.5	9.0	9.1	40.6	24.8	
20 - 24 yrs	10.3	13.1	11.2	10.5	14.1	11.6	20.4	14.4	17.4	
25 - 34 yrs	19.9	14.2	18.0	20.4	14.4	18.6	22.9	12.2	17.6	
16 - 24 yrs	14.9	31.0	20.2	15.2	32.6	20.6	52.4	67.2	59.8	
34 - 49 yrs	39.6	23.4	34.2	39.2	23.0	34.2	34.0	19.3	26.7	
50 yrs - retirement	25.6	31.5	27.5	25.1	30.0	26.6	13.7	13.5	13.6	
*Educational attainment:										
NQF less than level 2	21.9	~	29.7	20.4	~	27.3	19.7	32.0	25.8	
NQF level 2	17.8	~	17.7	17.7	~	17.6	32.0	35.8	33.9	
NQF level 3	23.2	~	21.4	22.4	~	21.4	21.6	12.2	17.0	
NQF 4+	29.3	~	23.7	32.1	~	26.5	11.6	5.9	8.8	
Other	7.8	~	7.6	7.3	~	7.3	15.0	14.1	14.6	
White	98.0	97.4	97.8	96.7	95.0	96.2	98.9	98.5	98.7	
Employment Rate			65.1			67.3			65.9	
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	

Source: Data from October 2008 – September 2009 Labour Force Survey, NOMIS

* - Educational attainment data is not available between October 2008 and September 2009. Therefore data from January 2008 – December 2009 has been used. Cells marked (~) refer to data that is not able to be derived from NOMIS system.

Annex 3: Detailed regression results

Table A3.1: Modelling the probability of a respondent being continuously employed for 12 months following their ESF project

Logistic regression	Odds ratio	Std. Err.	z	P>z
Dependent Variable: 0/1 (1=continuously employed)				
Gender:				
Female	ref			
Male	0.89	0.14	-0.70	0.48
Age:				
15 - 18 yrs	ref			
19 - 21 yrs	1.77	0.44	2.29	0.02
22 - 24 yrs	1.66	0.49	1.69	0.09
25 - 30 yrs	2.06	0.67	2.23	0.03
31 - 40 yrs	3.11	0.95	3.72	0.00
41 - 54 yrs	0.66	0.27	-1.01	0.31
Qualification before course:				
None	ref			
NQF Level 1 or less	1.05	0.32	0.17	0.87
NQF Level 2	1.96	0.48	2.75	0.01
NQF Level 3	2.21	0.66	2.66	0.01
NQF Level 4 or above	1.82	0.67	1.63	0.10
Unspecified	2.25	0.61	2.97	0.00
Work limiting illness:				
No work limiting illness	ref			
Work limiting illness	0.35	0.09	-4.01	0.00
Ethnicity:				
White	ref			
Non white	2.69	1.76	1.51	0.13
Family status:				
Live alone	1.24	0.46	0.56	0.57
Joint household with children	1.55	0.53	1.28	0.20
Joint household no children	1.63	0.49	1.63	0.10
Single parent	ref			
Family home	1.66	0.52	1.61	0.11
Shared accommodation	1.10	0.57	0.19	0.85
Qualification during course:				
None	ref			
NQF Level 1 or less	1.11	0.21	0.54	0.59
NQF Level 2	1.55	0.37	1.85	0.06
NQF Level 3	1.07	0.44	0.15	0.88
NQF Level 4 or above	1.06	2.12	0.03	0.98
Unspecified	0.96	0.26	-0.14	0.89

Activity:

Not employed prior to ESF	ref				
Employed prior to ESF		7.07	1.59	8.69	0.00

Diagnostic statistics:

n = 1072

Pseudo R² = 0.15

Table A3.2: Modelling the determinants of gross weekly earnings as observed at Wave 1

OLS regression	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t
Dependent variable: natural logarithm of gross weekly earnings				
Gender:				
Female	ref			
Male	0.12	0.02	5.70	0.00
Age:				
15 -18 yrs	ref			
19 - 21 yrs	0.26	0.04	7.23	0.00
22 - 24 yrs	0.36	0.04	8.88	0.00
25 - 30 yrs	0.38	0.04	9.21	0.00
31 - 40 yrs	0.46	0.04	10.79	0.00
41 - 54 yrs	0.44	0.04	10.72	0.00
55+ yrs	0.36	0.05	6.58	0.00
Qualification before course:				
None	ref			
NQF level 1	0.03	0.04	0.74	0.46
NQF level 2	0.11	0.03	3.46	0.00
NQF level 3	0.16	0.03	4.75	0.00
NQF level 4+	0.29	0.04	7.61	0.00
Unspecified	0.11	0.03	3.17	0.00
Work limiting illness:				
No work limiting illness	ref			
Work limiting illness	-0.08	0.05	-1.73	0.08
Ethnicity:				
White	ref			
Non White	0.05	0.08	0.59	0.55
Nationality:				
Born in the UK	ref			
Born elsewhere	-0.06	0.05	-1.23	0.22
Family status:				
Live alone	0.12	0.04	2.63	0.01
Joint household with children	0.13	0.03	4.15	0.00
Joint household no children	0.07	0.03	2.27	0.02
Single parent	0.07	0.04	1.80	0.07
Family home	ref			
Shared accommodation	0.13	0.06	2.22	0.03
Qualification during course:				
None	ref			
NQF level 1	-0.02	0.03	-0.77	0.44
NQF level 2	0.00	0.03	0.11	0.91
NQF level 3	0.09	0.03	2.74	0.01
NQF level 4+	0.25	0.05	4.85	0.00
Unspecified	0.03	0.04	0.85	0.39

Don't know		0.00	0.06	-0.04	0.97
Activity:					
Not employed prior to ESF	ref				
Employed prior to ESF		0.12	0.02	5.28	0.00
Hours worked per week:					
1-20 hours	ref				
21-30 hours		0.50	0.03	15.29	0.00
31-40 hours		0.86	0.03	30.47	0.00
41-49 hours		1.00	0.04	28.44	0.00
Missing		0.60	0.08	7.59	0.00
Contract type:					
Non-permanent	ref				
Permanent		0.09	0.03	3.40	0.00
Industry of employment:					
Primary		0.03	0.06	0.49	0.63
Manufacturing		0.18	0.03	5.56	0.00
Construction		0.04	0.04	0.96	0.34
Retail distribution	ref				
Finance		0.13	0.03	3.68	0.00
Public		0.08	0.03	3.26	0.00
Other		-0.03	0.04	-0.88	0.38
Missing		0.08	0.05	1.70	0.09
Further education or training:					
No	ref				
Yes		0.01	0.02	0.30	0.76
Further qualifications:					
No	ref				
Yes		0.01	0.03	0.33	0.74
Constant		3.94	0.07	53.77	0.00
Diagnostic statistics:					
n = 2065					
Adjusted R ² = 0.57					

Table A3.3: Modelling the probability that respondents would do the same course again: Wave 1 - qualification levels

Logistic regression	Odds ratio	Std. Err.	z	P>z
Dependent variable: 0/1 (1=would do course again)				
Gender:				
Female	ref			
Male	0.91	0.07	-1.11	0.27
Age:				
15 -18 yrs	ref			
19 - 21 yrs	1.11	0.15	0.83	0.41
22 - 24 yrs	1.43	0.24	2.12	0.03
25 - 30 yrs	1.16	0.18	0.92	0.36
31 - 40 yrs	1.38	0.23	1.96	0.05
41 - 54 yrs	1.63	0.26	3.05	0.00
55+ yrs	2.89	0.66	4.63	0.00
Qualification before course:				
None	ref			
NQF < level 1	0.90	0.13	-0.75	0.45
NQF level 2	0.99	0.12	-0.08	0.94
NQF level 3	1.12	0.16	0.76	0.45
NQF level 4-5	1.22	0.22	1.09	0.28
Unspecified	0.90	0.13	-0.75	0.45
Work limiting illness:				
No work limiting illness	ref			
Work limiting illness	0.76	0.10	-2.02	0.04
Ethnicity:				
White	ref			
Non White	0.90	0.31	-0.32	0.75
Nationality:				
Born in the UK	ref			
Born elsewhere	0.75	0.17	-1.23	0.22
Family status:				
Live alone	ref			
Joint household with children	1.21	0.21	1.08	0.28
Joint household no children	1.29	0.21	1.57	0.12
Single parent	1.53	0.30	2.15	0.03
Family home	1.16	0.19	0.91	0.37
Shared accommodation	1.25	0.30	0.95	0.34
Qualification during course:				
None	ref			
NQF Level 1	1.40	0.17	2.80	0.01
NQF Level 2	1.42	0.17	2.90	0.00
NQF Level 3	2.30	0.40	4.80	0.00
NQF Level 4+	3.15	1.16	3.11	0.00

Other		1.33	0.21	1.82	0.07
Don't know		1.00	0.23	0.00	1.00
Course completion status:					
Complete	ref				
Withdraw		0.68	0.10	-2.74	0.01
Current activity:					
Employed		1.26	0.13	2.20	0.03
Education or training		1.53	0.22	2.95	0.00
Unemployed	ref				
Inactive		1.58	0.26	2.76	0.01
Don't know		2.30	1.48	1.30	0.19
Diagnostic statistics:					
n = 4048					
Pseudo R ² = 0.04					

Table A3.4: Modelling the probability that respondents would do the same course again: Wave 1 - changes in qualifications

Logistic regression	Odds ratio	Std. Err.	z	P>z
Dependent variable: 0/1 (1=would do course again)				
Gender:				
Female	ref			
Male	0.90	0.07	-1.30	0.19
Age:				
15 -18 yrs	ref			
19 - 21 yrs	1.15	0.15	1.10	0.27
22 - 24 yrs	1.60	0.26	2.85	0.00
25 - 30 yrs	1.27	0.20	1.56	0.12
31 - 40 yrs	1.52	0.24	2.60	0.01
41 - 54 yrs	1.76	0.28	3.62	0.00
55+ yrs	3.05	0.69	4.96	0.00
Work limiting illness:				
No work limiting illness	ref			
Work limiting illness	0.75	0.10	-2.14	0.03
Ethnicity:				
White	ref			
Non White	0.91	0.31	-0.27	0.79
Nationality:				
Born in the UK	ref			
Born elsewhere	0.79	0.18	-1.06	0.29
Family status:				
Live alone	ref			
Joint household with children	1.24	0.21	1.25	0.21
Joint household no children	1.29	0.21	1.57	0.12
Single parent	1.48	0.29	1.99	0.05
Family home	1.15	0.19	0.86	0.39
Shared accommodation	1.29	0.31	1.08	0.28
Course completion status:				
Complete	ref			
Withdraw	0.68	0.09	-2.76	0.01
Current activity:				
Employed	1.33	0.14	2.78	0.01
Education or training	1.59	0.23	3.25	0.00
Unemployed	ref			
Inactive	1.58	0.26	2.75	0.01
Don't know	2.30	1.48	1.30	0.19
Qualification transitions:				
Lower qualification	1.44	0.18	2.89	0.00
No qualification	ref			

Same qualification	1.59	0.22	3.39	0.00
Higher qualification	1.72	0.23	4.01	0.00
Missing/don't know	1.22	0.15	1.58	0.12

Diagnostic statistics:

n = 4048

Pseudo R² = 0.04

Table A3.5: Modelling the probability that respondents would do the same course again: Wave 2 - qualification levels

Logistic regression	Odds ratio	Std. Err.	z	P>z
Dependent variable: 0/1 (1=would do course again)				
Gender:				
Female	ref			
Male	1.04	0.11	0.38	0.71
Age:				
15 -18 yrs	ref			
19 - 21 yrs	1.05	0.18	0.27	0.79
22 - 24 yrs	1.67	0.38	2.25	0.02
25 - 30 yrs	1.08	0.22	0.39	0.70
31 - 40 yrs	1.45	0.31	1.72	0.09
41 - 54 yrs	1.70	0.35	2.61	0.01
55+ yrs	1.82	0.46	2.35	0.02
Qualification before course:				
None	ref			
NQF < level 1	1.31	0.25	1.41	0.16
NQF level 2	1.14	0.17	0.88	0.38
NQF level 3	1.58	0.29	2.50	0.01
NQF level 4-5	1.21	0.25	0.92	0.36
Unspecified	1.13	0.19	0.72	0.47
Work limiting illness:				
No work limiting illness	ref			
Work limiting illness	1.01	0.17	0.08	0.93
Ethnicity:				
White	ref			
Non White	0.55	0.21	-1.53	0.13
Nationality:				
Born in the UK	ref			
Born elsewhere	1.06	0.30	0.22	0.83
Family status:				
Live alone	ref			
Joint household with children	1.42	0.30	1.66	0.10
Joint household no children	1.45	0.29	1.88	0.06
Single parent	1.39	0.33	1.39	0.17
Family home	1.38	0.30	1.48	0.14
Shared accommodation	1.13	0.35	0.39	0.69
Qualification during course:				
None	ref			
NQF Level 1	1.58	0.23	3.08	0.00
NQF Level 2	1.91	0.29	4.28	0.00
NQF Level 3	2.05	0.41	3.62	0.00
NQF Level 4+	2.87	1.16	2.61	0.01

Unspecified		1.34	0.25	1.57	0.12
Don't know		1.84	0.58	1.93	0.05
Course completion status:					
Complete	ref				
Withdraw		0.90	0.17	-0.55	0.58
Current activity:					
Employed		1.39	0.19	2.45	0.01
Education or training		2.57	0.55	4.38	0.00
Unemployed	ref				
Inactive		1.41	0.27	1.81	0.07
Don't know		Omitted			
Diagnostic statistics:					
n = 2515					
Pseudo R ² = 0.04					

Table A3.6: Modelling the probability that respondents would do the same course again: Wave 2 - changes in qualifications

Logistic regression	Odds ratio	Std. Err.	z	P>z
Dependent variable: 0/1 (1=would do course again)				
Gender:				
Female	ref			
Male	1.01	0.10	0.08	0.93
Age:				
15 -18 yrs	ref			
19 - 21 yrs	1.14	0.20	0.76	0.45
22 - 24 yrs	1.93	0.42	3.00	0.00
25 - 30 yrs	1.22	0.24	1.01	0.31
31 - 40 yrs	1.63	0.34	2.33	0.02
41 - 54 yrs	1.82	0.36	3.02	0.00
55+ yrs	1.90	0.47	2.57	0.01
Work limiting illness:				
No work limiting illness	ref			
Work limiting illness	1.01	0.16	0.03	0.98
Ethnicity:				
White	ref			
Non White	0.53	0.21	-1.62	0.11
Nationality:				
Born in the UK	ref			
Born elsewhere	1.09	0.31	0.29	0.77
Family status:				
Live alone	ref			
Joint household with children	1.47	0.31	1.81	0.07
Joint household no children	1.47	0.29	1.98	0.05
Single parent	1.34	0.32	1.25	0.21
Family home	1.39	0.30	1.51	0.13
Shared accommodation	1.14	0.36	0.42	0.67
Course completion status:				
Complete	ref			
Withdraw	0.91	0.17	-0.50	0.62
Current activity:				
Employed	1.45	0.19	2.83	0.01
Education or training	2.62	0.56	4.48	0.00
Unemployed	ref			
Inactive	1.39	0.26	1.75	0.08
Don't know	1.45	0.19	2.83	0.01
Qualification transitions:				
Lower qualification	1.59	0.24	3.08	0.00

No qualification	ref			
Same qualification	2.16	0.37	4.45	0.00
Higher qualification	1.83	0.30	3.68	0.00
Missing/don't know	1.56	0.24	2.95	0.00

Diagnostic statistics:

n = 2515

Pseudo R² = 0.04

Table A3.7: Modelling the probability of responding to Wave 1 of the 2009 ESF leavers survey

	Odds Ratio	Std. Err.	z	P>z
Sex:				
Female	ref			
Male	0.93	0.04	-1.72	0.09
Age:				
16 - 18 yrs	ref			
19 - 22 yrs	0.89	0.06	-1.58	0.12
23 - 30 yrs	0.74	0.05	-4.16	0.00
31 - 40 yrs	0.98	0.07	-0.27	0.79
41 - 54 yrs	1.42	0.10	4.91	0.00
55+ yrs	1.80	0.18	5.74	0.00
Single/couple				
Lone parent	ref			
	0.83	0.07	-2.19	0.03
Non-disabled				
Disabled	ref			
	0.74	0.06	-4.03	0.00
Educational attainment:				
NQF < level 2	ref			
NQF level 2	1.15	0.07	2.21	0.03
NQF level 3	1.37	0.11	4.00	0.00
NQF level 4+	1.66	0.17	4.90	0.00
Other	0.90	0.06	-1.52	0.13
Completer				
Withdrawer	ref			
	0.62	0.03	-8.78	0.00
Priority 2 project				
Priority 3 project	ref			
	0.88	0.04	-2.57	0.01
Course end date:				
Jan-March 2009	ref			
April-June 2009	1.06	0.06	1.16	0.25
July-Sept 2009	1.15	0.06	2.44	0.01
Oct-Dec 2009	0.77	0.11	-1.80	0.07

Table A3.8: Modelling the probability of responding to Wave 2 of the 2009 ESF leavers survey

	Odds Ratio	Std. Err.	z	P>z
Sex:				
Female	ref			
Male	0.92	0.05	-1.63	0.10
Age:				
16 - 18 yrs	ref			
19 - 22 yrs	0.78	0.07	-2.95	0.00
23 - 30 yrs	0.73	0.06	-3.72	0.00
31 - 40 yrs	1.06	0.09	0.72	0.47
41 - 54 yrs	1.56	0.13	5.49	0.00
55+ yrs	2.01	0.22	6.47	0.00
Single/couple	ref			
Lone parent	0.82	0.08	-2.01	0.04
Non-disabled	ref			
Disabled	0.82	0.07	-2.21	0.03
Educational attainment:				
NQF < level 2	ref			
NQF level 2	1.18	0.09	2.23	0.03
NQF level 3	1.33	0.12	3.17	0.00
NQF level 4+	1.81	0.20	5.29	0.00
Other	0.92	0.07	-1.09	0.27
Completer	ref			
Withdrawer	0.52	0.03	-9.73	0.00
Priority 2 project	ref			
Priority 3 project	0.90	0.05	-1.94	0.05
Course end date:				
Jan-March 2009	ref			
April-June 2009	1.08	0.06	1.23	0.22
July-Sept 2009	1.12	0.07	1.71	0.09
Oct-Dec 2009	0.88	0.15	-0.74	0.46