

Building on the 4%: Is there a market for Apprenticeship Progression in Sussex?

Final Report produced by SCTP for
the Sussex Learning Network

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1. Background

1.1. The origins of this project lie in the positive working relationship that has developed between the Sussex Council of Training Providers (SCTP) and the Sussex Learning Network (SLN) and the common interest these two organisations have in developing progressions routes from Apprenticeships to Higher Education (HE).

1.2. This area of interest has been highlighted by the Government's *Skills For Growth* White Paper (DBIS: Nov 2009) as a major development area in order to up-skill the nation's workforce at technician level and stated:

'We will set a new overarching ambition for our higher education and skills system that three-quarters of people should participate in higher education or complete and advanced apprenticeship or equivalent technical level course by the age of 30'.

1.3. Furthermore the *Higher Ambitions* Consultation Paper (DBIS: Nov 2009) emphasised the importance of opening up access to HE stating:

'Widening access means building new and stronger ladders of opportunity from apprenticeships to advanced apprenticeships and new technician level qualifications into foundation degrees and other vocational higher education. There should be more bridges between further and higher education'.

1.4. It is also clear that the numbers of existing Apprentices progressing to HE are small. The Skills Commission's *Progression Through Apprenticeships* report published in March 2009 showed that in 2007-8 0% of apprentices progressed into Higher Education. A study carried out by the University Vocational Awards Council (UVAC) in 2005 was more optimistic stating the apprenticeship progression figure to be between 2% and 4%. In evidence provided to the Skills Commission UVAC stated that a further study to be published shortly showed the apprenticeship/HE progression rate to be no more than 4% - hence the title of this research project.

1.5. So, a broad consensus exists amongst policy makers that we need to have more apprentices and more of them progressing to HE, thus helping to drive economic recovery and prosperity in the UK. We also know that little progress has been made towards this aim. However, the question emerging from discussions between SLN and SCTP was whether employers and the apprentices had been consulted as to if HE progression was an aspiration they would recognise and 'buy into'? In other words was some market testing of the policy need? A scan of the existing published research on Advanced Apprenticeship progression to HE (see section 3) suggested that this area remained largely unexplored. As a result SLN and SCTP initiated this project.

2. Project Aims, Outline and Outcomes

2.1. Project Aims: To build on the network of apprenticeship and employer contacts established through the Work Based Learning (WBL) providers that are members of the Sussex Council of Training Providers (SCTP) to:

- Identify through interviews with current and past Advanced Apprentices (AAs), and their employers, if further work on reducing barriers for apprentice progression is likely to result in increased uptake of higher education opportunities by this group of learners. It was decided to focus on the Level 3 AAs rather than Level 2 Apprentices as AAs are more likely to progress to HE given their higher level of attainment.
- Establish if there is a desire, on the part of Learners, to progress onto further qualifications on completion of their current Advanced Apprenticeship programme and to ascertain if this aim would be encouraged and/or supported by their employers.

- Identify if there is a potentially underexploited market which is currently preventing Advanced Apprentices from progressing, or if the current rates of progression are fulfilling employee and employer expectations and ambitions?

2.2. Project Outline: The project involved a collection and analysis of data using the following methodology:

- Using the SCTP training provider network to establish contact with Advanced Apprentices, and their employers across Sussex. We are grateful to the ten providers that took part in the data collection namely Baldwin Training, BHTA, Central Sussex College, Chichester College, Collyers College, Employee Development Forum, Northbrook College, Partners For Business & Learning, Sussex Coast College Hastings, Sussex Downs College. This gave a mix of four private providers, one 6th Form College and five FE Colleges. In total the 10 providers were collectively responsible for the training of nearly 1172 Advanced Apprentices. This also gave access to an estimated 600 employers of AAs based on an assumed average of 2 AAs to every employer.
- Data gathering took place using electronic data collection through the use of Survey Monkey as well as paper-based data collection by provider field staff using a print out of the same survey used online. Separate surveys were used for Advanced Apprentices and employers. The Advanced Apprentice survey was designed to establish the attitudes of AAs towards progressing to higher level qualifications on completion of their programme. The employer survey was designed to establish employers' attitudes towards supporting their employees towards further qualifications on completing the apprenticeship. The survey content can be seen in the presentation of results in sections 4 and 5. The data collection period ran from 15th February to the 12th March 2010.
- Desk based research was also carried out to review related regional projects and ensure the integration of their findings, where appropriate, into the overall conclusions.

2.3. Project Outputs: Were agreed as follows:

- An overview and statistical analysis of the attitudes of Advanced Apprentices within Sussex towards progression to higher level study after completing their apprenticeship programme
- An overview and statistical analysis of the attitudes of employers currently supporting Advanced Apprentices within their workplace towards continued support for further study
- An overview report which is able to draw analytical conclusions from the above pieces of work, make recommendations with regard to the potential market for progression from apprenticeships and identify potential marketing strategies.

2.4. It was not anticipated that the project would provide a comprehensive coverage of AAs and their employers and that representative groups would be acceptable, however, it was important that data was gathered from apprentices across a range of sectors, different employers and a range of training providers. The validity of any samples chosen were to be justified and all efforts were made to gather data from as wide a sample as possible.

2.5. This final report summarises the data collected and draws conclusions with regard to the size and scope of the potential market. Where barriers to progression were identified as a consequence of this investigation (although this is not the main focus of the activity), then the report makes recommendations on how to overcome such barriers. Recommendations with regard to marketing and re-engagement strategies are also included where appropriate.

3. Overview of Existing Research

3.1. A combination of web-based research and discussions with key contacts within Lifelong Learning Networks (LLNs) and training providers unearthed a range of relevant research projects that could be separated into 3 different categories of focus.

3.1.1. Projects to Understand or Develop Curriculum Opportunities that Support HE Progression by Advanced Apprentices

- *'Features of Apprenticeship Programmes that Support Progression to Higher Education'* FDF July 2008.

This study identified possible models of progression and concluded that *'Apprentice progression to higher learning appears to be small in scale, little known, patchy in application and poorly supported by national policy'*. It was also concluded that progression works best where apprenticeship programmes contain FE and HE elements that provide a good grounding to acceptance and progression into HE.

Web link:

<http://www.fdf.ac.uk/downloads/123/20090812154836ApprenticeshipProgression.pdf>

- *'Pathways to Education – Apprenticeships'* – HEFCE, May 2009

This provided a listing of the attributes most likely to determine HE progression for apprentices in relation to the apprenticeship programme (level completed, industry sector, geographic region of the training provider) and the attributes of the apprentice themselves (proportionately more females, disabled & ethnic minority students and the propensity of the apprentice's local community to engage in HE).

Web link: http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2009/09_17/

- *'Finding Their Way – Advanced Apprenticeships as a Route To HE'* HILLN – Ongoing. Initial Project Specification April 2009

Project looking at the take up of AAs, the map of local HE provision against local AA provision and how those HE opportunities are promoted and accessed.

Web link: <http://www.hi-lln.co.uk/projects/projects.aspx>

- *'Apprentices Route to Higher Education'* - HILLN – Ongoing. Interim Report June 2009.

A project to develop a fast-track Access to Higher Education Diploma for apprentices.

Web link: <http://www.hi-lln.co.uk/projects/projects.aspx>

- *'Mind The Gap: Developing Apprenticeship Progression Routes to HE'*- HILLN – Ongoing. Interim Report June 2009.

A project to develop a transition/bridging course into Higher Education. Relevant findings of this work were that large companies were positive about encouraging participation of their apprentices into HE whereas SME's were comparatively reticent.

Web link: <http://www.hi-lln.co.uk/projects/projects.aspx>

- Kent & Medway LLN – 5 projects developing new vocational curricula at HE level, access courses and/or progression agreements. Covering the sectors of Care, Engineering & Manufacturing, Hospitality, Land Based and Sustainability & Regeneration. Web links: <http://www.gohigher.org.uk/development-projects/>

3.1.2. Projects to Evaluate the Experience of Advanced Apprentices that had Progressed Into HE

- Advance Project – South West LLN – *‘The Progression Experience of Advanced Apprentices and Other Work Based Learners Undertaking Higher Education Courses at the University of Plymouth Colleges’* May 2009

This project drew conclusions about the distinct nature of ex Advanced Apprentices in HE confirming that they were more likely to be working, older, be well motivated and confident as well as balancing a range of other life responsibilities. Formal careers guidance had played only a small part in their progression decisions with informal advice from family and friends playing a greater part. Employers were found to be generally supportive of the HE progression of their apprentices with over half providing some form of direct support. It was felt that more ex-apprentices were participating in HE than revealed by LSC exit data. Web link: Link now unavailable – report available on request.

3.1.3. Projects Looking at the Aspirations of Advanced Apprentices and their Employers

- Advance Project – South West LLN – *‘The Progression Aspirations of Advanced Apprentices and Other Work Based Learners’* May 2009

The study found low levels of AA progression to HE but higher than LSC exit data had shown (believed to be due to LSC data only measuring progression to full-time non-vocational HE). 33% of learners envisaged undertaking training at a higher level within 6 months and 45% after 3 years. These figures were higher where the training provider was a college rather than a private training provider.

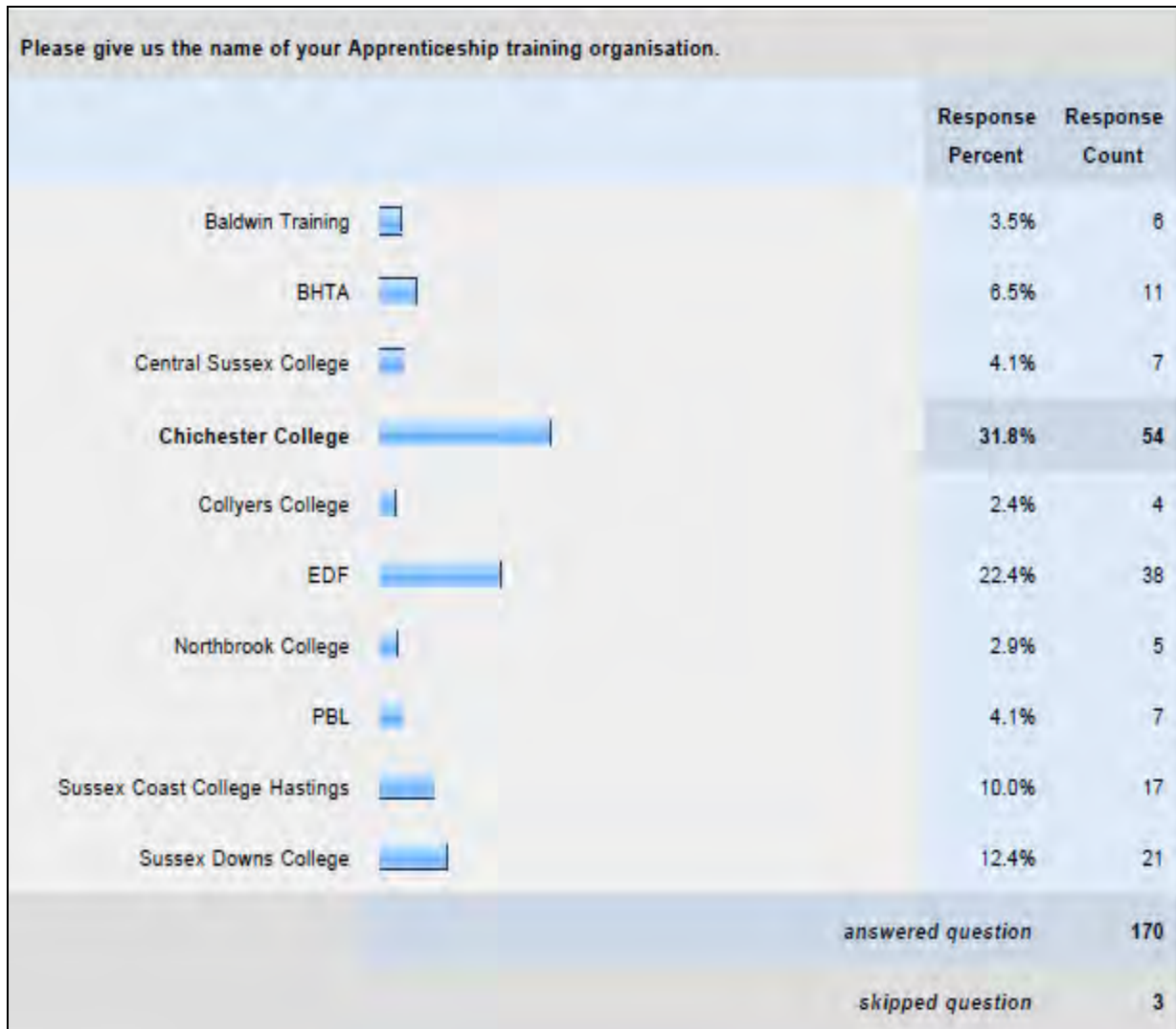
Web link: <http://www.swlln.ac.uk/welcome-to-swlln/publications/reports/1104-the-progression-aspirations-of-advanced-apprentices-and-other.htm>

3.2. As can be seen from 3.1 above the majority of the work has focussed on developing new provision at HE level to attract new learners and to open up the progression routes to new or existing provision. Only the Advance projects (3.1.2 and 3.1.3) in the South West have looked at the characteristics of Advanced Apprentices that have progressed or, as with this project, looked at the aspirations of apprentices and employers. It is hoped that this survey will make a significant contribution to the data available in this area.

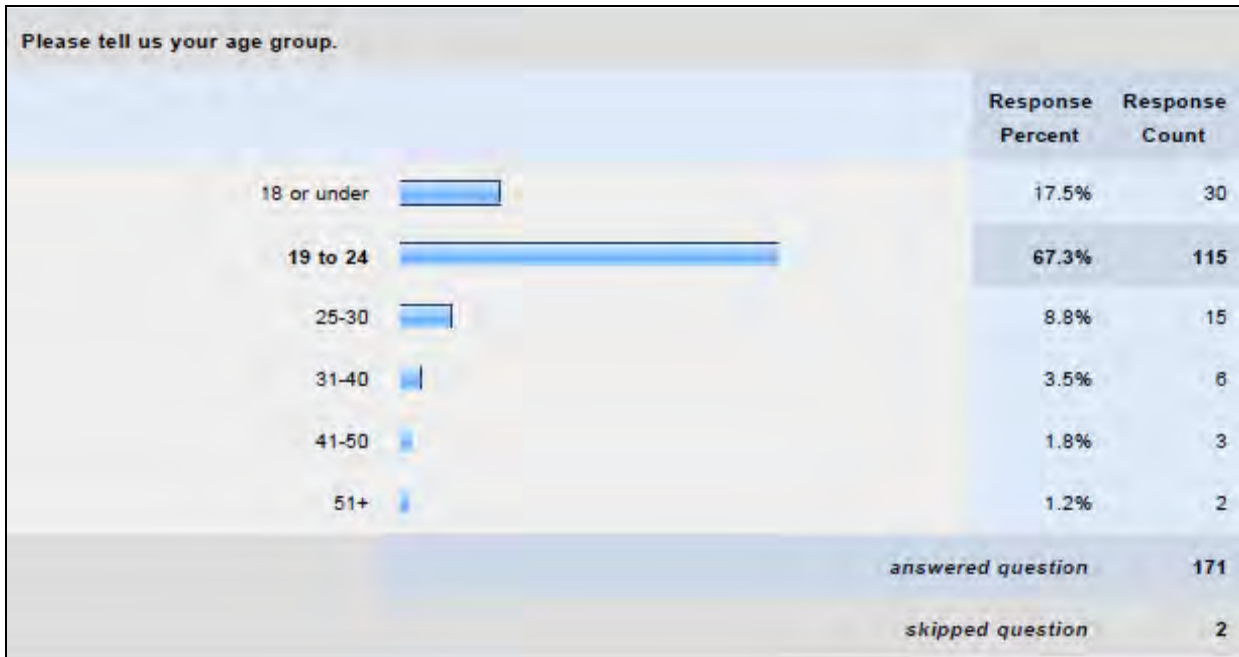
4. Survey Results: Advanced Apprentices

4.1. 173 AA surveys were collected either on line via Survey Monkey or on paper and input manually into Survey Monkey.

4.2. The table below shows how many AA responses were received from each training provider. Some providers only had a small number of apprentices to draw on while some of the larger colleges had a much more substantial pool of AAs. The results show a spread of responses across providers giving a good college/private provider mix and representative geographic and sector coverage. The high number of AA responses from the EDF, a specialist engineering provider has skewed the sector responses slightly – see 4.6.



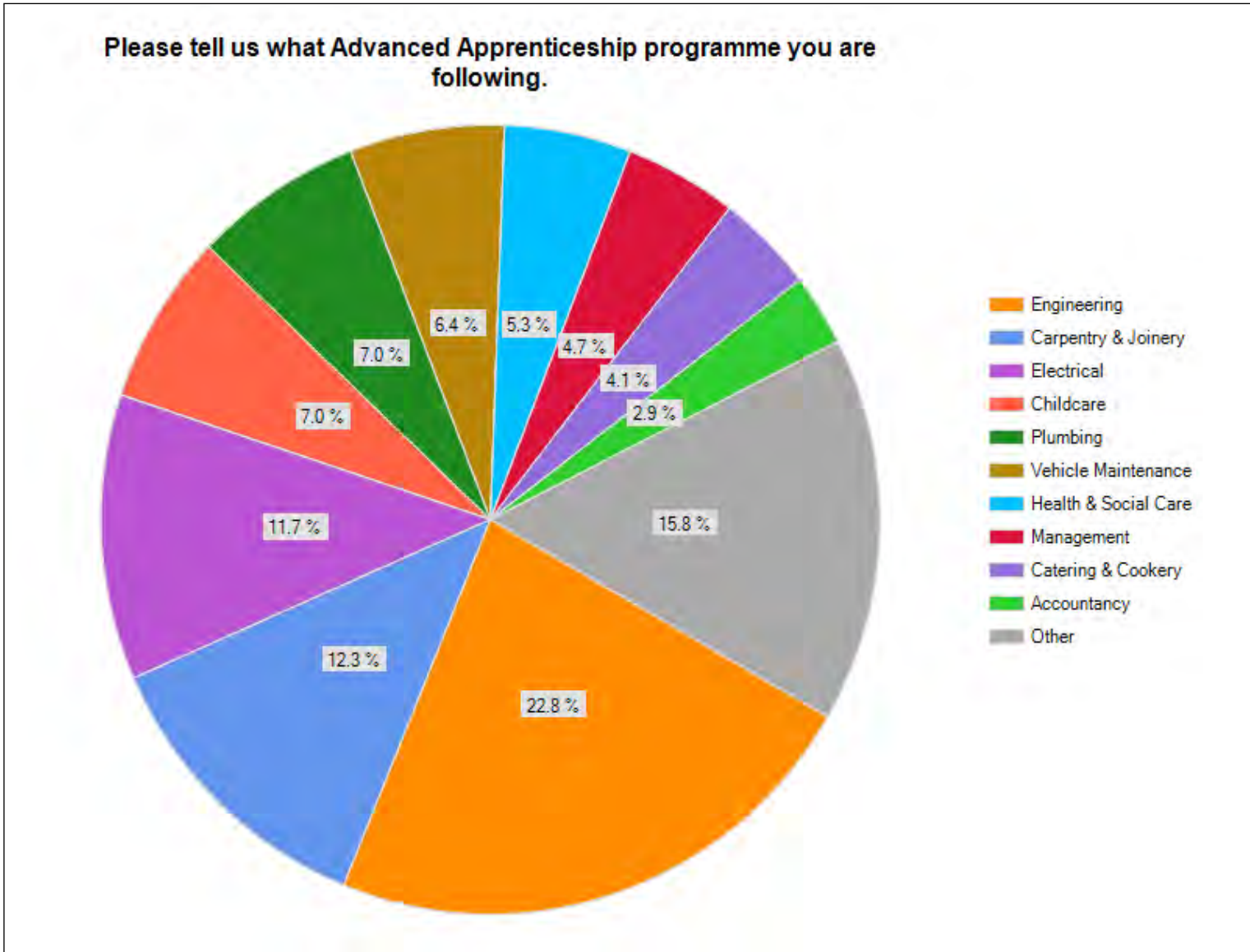
4.3. The table below shows the age split of the AAs that responded to the survey. It is not surprising that two-thirds fall into the 19-24 age band as AAs are normally slightly older than Level 2 apprentices (who typically start their training aged 16-18) and are part of the under 25 age group where funding for apprenticeships has traditionally been focussed.



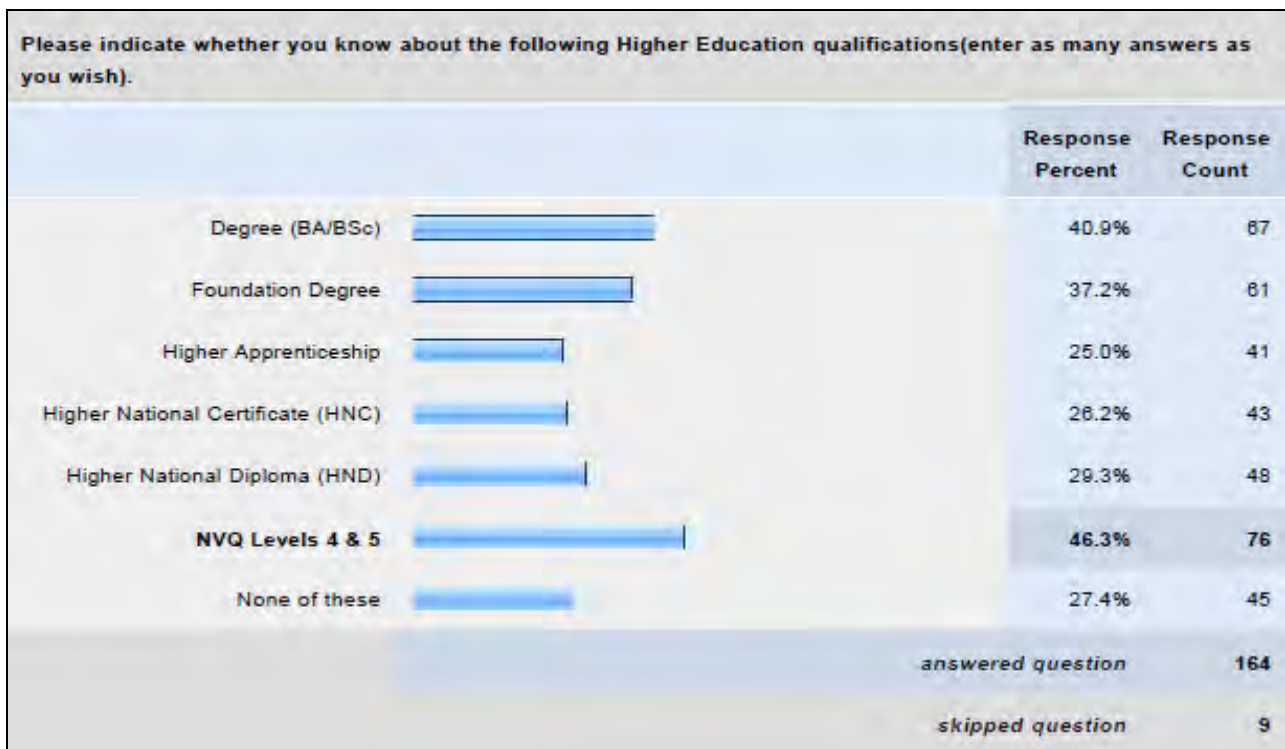
4.4. The table below shows AA responses in terms of expected completion timescales. This shows a fairly even spread across the time bands reflecting the fact that the survey has covered AAs across a range of experience from those AAs that have just started their AA to those who are near completion.



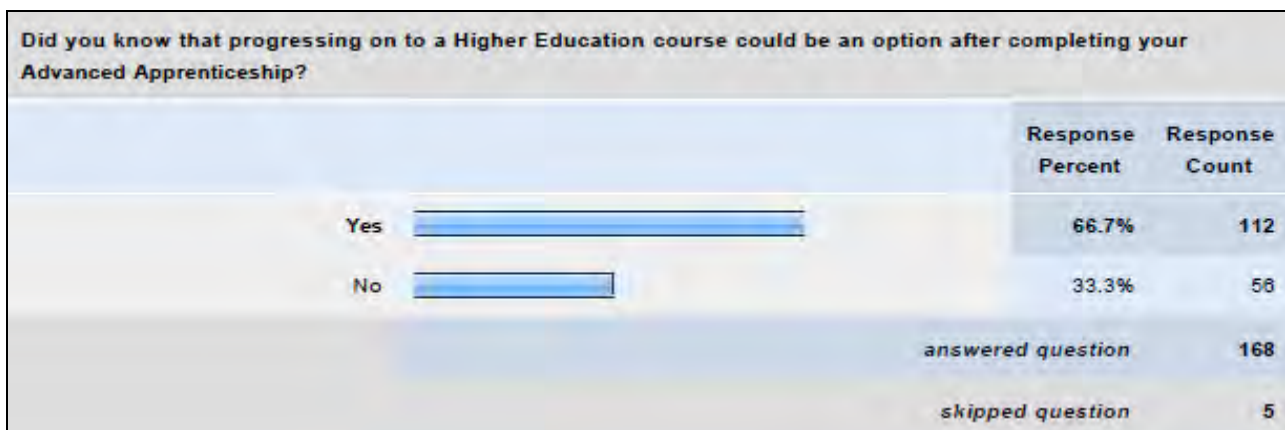
4.5. The chart below shows the split of AAs responses regarding occupational sector based on the nature of the AA framework being followed. There is a fairly even spread with engineering dominating as would be expected given the strong tradition of level 3 training in this sector and the high level of surveys being returned from specialist engineering provider, the EDF. The major sectors named in the chart below broadly reflect the main sectors represented in the sample group with any variances likely to be accounted for by the variations in provider success in inspiring their AAs to respond.



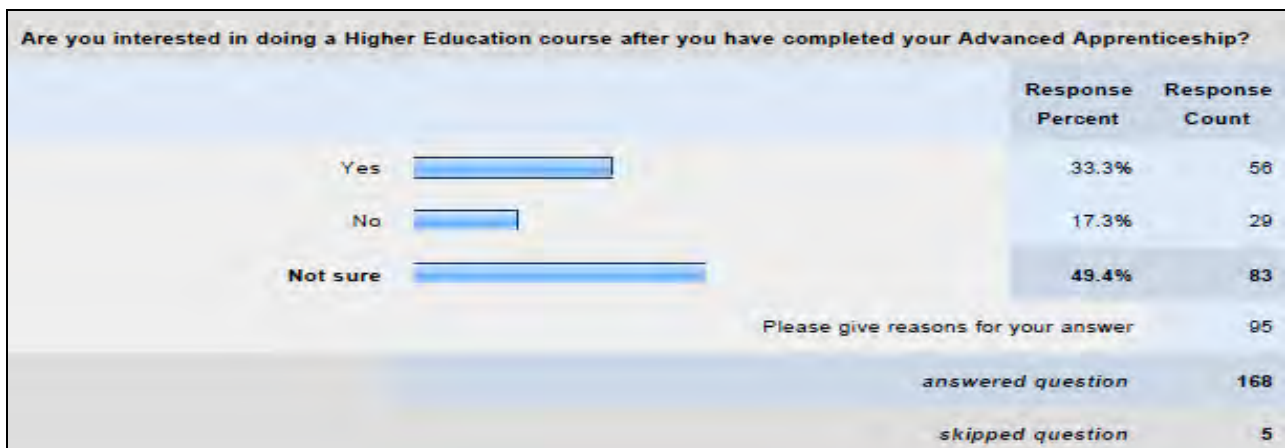
4.6. The table on the next page shows that the awareness of AA respondents of the main types of HE programmes is poor and it is particularly surprising that only 40% of respondents said that they knew about degrees. A quarter said that they hadn't heard of any of the HE programme options. There was a higher awareness of NVQs (46%) perhaps as a result of these qualifications being work based but this is surprisingly low when considering that all AAs will be undergoing an NVQ at Level 3 as part of their AA.



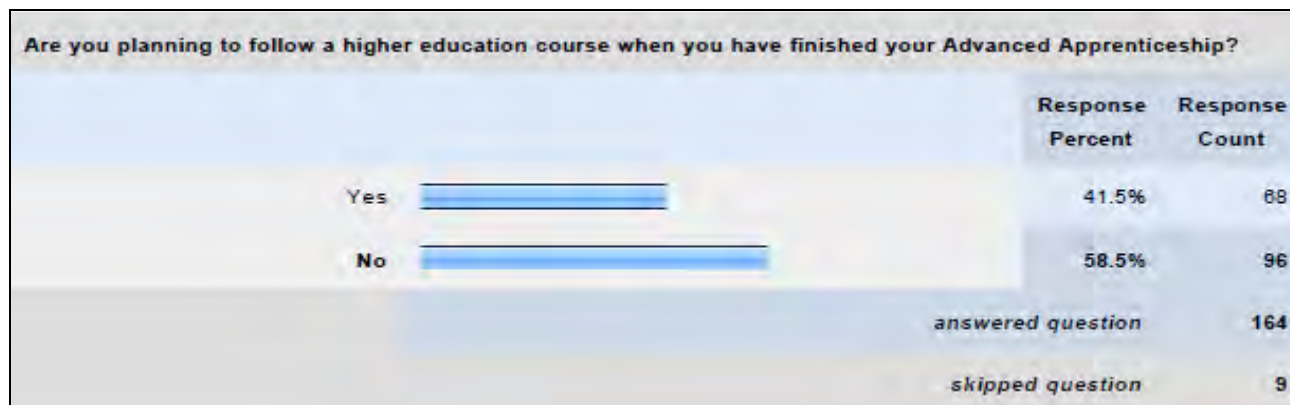
4.7. The table below shows how many AA respondents knew that they could progress from an AA to HE. Two thirds were aware of this.



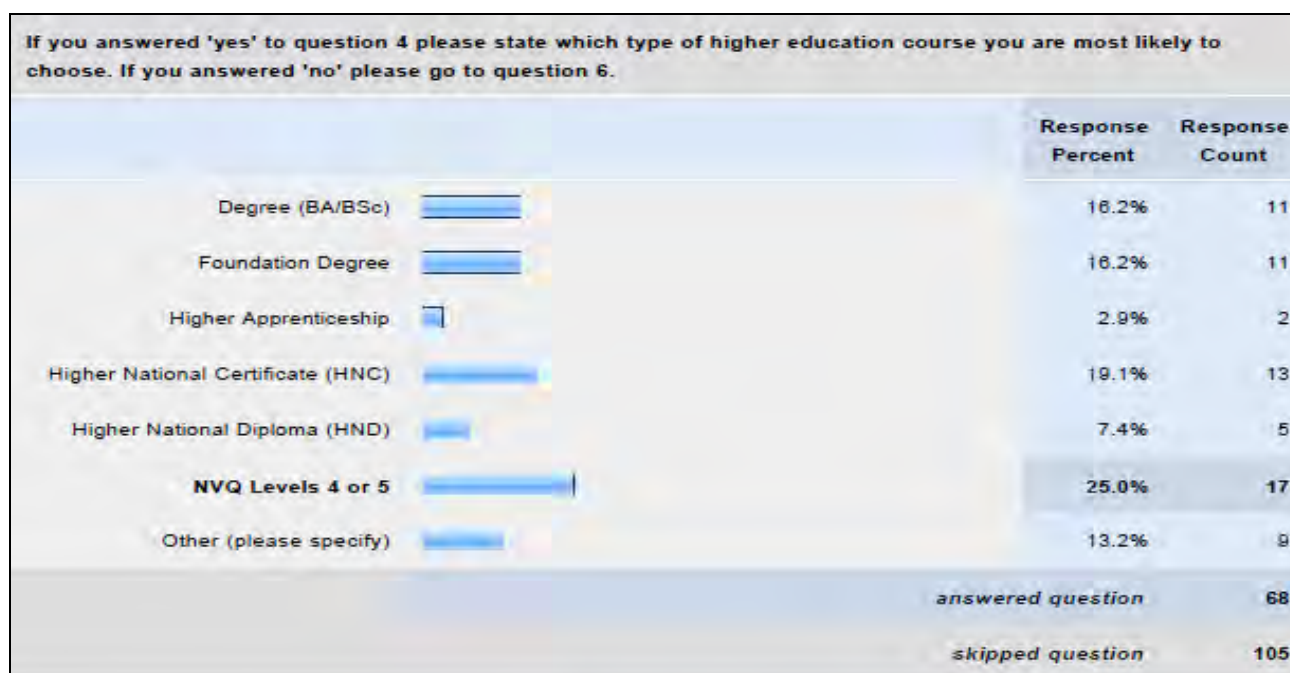
4.8. This table shows the level of interest among AA respondents in doing a HE course. A third are definitely interested, 17% are not interested and half are not sure. This sends a strong message that HE options are not being effectively promoted and explained to AAs.



4.9. This question changes the emphasis from ‘are you interested in HE?’ to ‘are you planning to enter HE?’ and removes the ‘not sure’ option thus polarising the results. The results show 41.5% planning to enter HE and 58.5% not planning to do so.

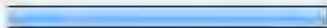



4.10. Of those AA respondents that said that they were planning to enter HE, the table below shows their preferred option. NVQs prove most popular at 25% with HNCs at 19%. We have additional information for those that answered ‘other’ which highlights how confused some of the respondents were in relation to their HE options.



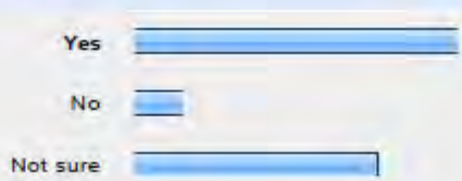
Other (please specify)		
1	ACCA, IS THIS NVQ 4 OR 5 ?	Feb 22, 2010 2:06 PM
2	CIMA	Feb 23, 2010 3:44 PM
3	NON	Feb 26, 2010 3:52 PM
4	a levels	Feb 27, 2010 12:37 PM
5	not sure on the name of the course	Mar 2, 2010 4:48 PM
6	Not quite sure	Mar 10, 2010 3:45 PM
7	PTLLS Course	Mar 11, 2010 1:59 PM
8	17th Edition test and inspect	Mar 15, 2010 10:20 AM
9	Hygienist	Mar 15, 2010 10:41 AM

4.11. The table on the next page shows how many AA respondents felt that they knew enough about HE options to make a decision about HE progression. 53% thought they had enough information while a significant 47% did not. This 47% were asked what they needed – the 43 answers give us a clear picture as to the range of information, advice and guidance needed.

Do you feel that you know enough about the available Higher Education options to make a decision as to whether Higher Education might be for you?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes 	53.3%	89
No 	46.7%	78
If 'No' please tell us what you need		43
<i>answered question</i>		167
<i>skipped question</i>		6

If 'No' please tell us what you need		
1	information on the qualifications needed to get in	Feb 18, 2010 10:43 PM
2	Any information at all maybe sent to me by e-mail?	Feb 20, 2010 12:49 AM
3	Information about options of courses	Feb 20, 2010 10:20 AM
4	Maybe by the end of next of the aat course they may start talking about it	Feb 22, 2010 2:06 PM
5	I would need more info on details such as cost of the course and subjects.	Feb 22, 2010 2:28 PM
6	i am thinking about becoming a primary school teacher for ages 5-9 and not sure about which route to take	Feb 22, 2010 6:29 PM
7	Available options	Feb 25, 2010 11:43 AM
8	i am in the electrical trade. i have an idea as to exams i need to take but would be nice to have info regarding funding.	Feb 26, 2010 9:29 PM
9	more information	Feb 26, 2010 10:05 PM
10	A general overview of what they would involve and information about how to look into the possibility of doing further education etc.	Feb 27, 2010 7:09 PM
11	Further information for teaching assistants on other courses that can help them in school environment. Any details for HLTA.	Mar 1, 2010 8:24 PM
12	Details of what I can do next.	Mar 2, 2010 10:49 AM
13	Unsure of courses available. Would be good to have a look at them	Mar 2, 2010 3:37 PM
14	I would like to know what options are available to me, where I could study and how it would benefit me in the future.	Mar 3, 2010 9:32 AM
15	Information on course availability and funding	Mar 3, 2010 10:46 AM
16	Unsure of qualifications available.	Mar 3, 2010 2:08 PM
17	dont really know if any courses would be beifical in the long run.	Mar 3, 2010 4:54 PM
18	information on how long the different options will take, where they will take place and if it would interfere with work.	Mar 4, 2010 8:35 AM
19	I dont no much about my next stage of decisions.	Mar 5, 2010 9:51 AM
20	More Inforamtion	Mar 5, 2010 12:55 PM
21	will need more information about them	Mar 6, 2010 2:48 PM
22	Im not really sure how my HND electrical engineering progresses. Im not sure if a degree is the next stage and how much time and money i need to complete it.	Mar 7, 2010 8:11 PM
23	what courses would be relevent to me and how to apply and what it takes to be able to start the course. also a list of different course titles and info about each and what you would gain from them.	Mar 10, 2010 1:23 PM
24	Would like some further information on the courses	Mar 10, 2010 2:28 PM
25	But I would be happy to look into it - Just further details of what they would entail.	Mar 10, 2010 2:31 PM
26	Information	Mar 10, 2010 5:21 PM
27	Everything	Mar 10, 2010 5:25 PM
28	Not sure whats available	Mar 10, 2010 5:28 PM
29	Some more information	Mar 10, 2010 5:29 PM
30	what it will give me	Mar 10, 2010 5:30 PM
31	Information on how beneficial it would be	Mar 10, 2010 5:32 PM
32	To know what other options I have	Mar 10, 2010 5:35 PM
33	Leaflets to say what to do afer course	Mar 10, 2010 5:36 PM
34	To know what is available	Mar 11, 2010 10:04 AM
35	General info on my options	Mar 15, 2010 9:52 AM
36	Haven't heard anything about it	Mar 15, 2010 10:04 AM
37	More available info	Mar 15, 2010 10:17 AM
38	Not sure what it is	Mar 15, 2010 10:18 AM
39	More information	Mar 15, 2010 10:20 AM
40	Have not heard about it	Mar 15, 2010 10:32 AM
41	Leaflets	Mar 15, 2010 10:41 AM
42	Information booklet	Mar 15, 2010 10:50 AM
43	Information on all higher education options	Mar 15, 2010 10:59 AM

4.12. The table below shows that only 7.5% of AAs thought that their employer wouldn't support their progression onto HE with 53% sure that the employer would offer support and nearly 40% not sure. This is encouraging and supports the findings of the Advance research at 3.1.2 above. The 47 comments shown below reflect the reasons for the AA's answers and show support for HE progression where this relates to business benefits and underpin the generally positive AA perceptions of their employers. However, there are also concerns about costs, logistics and the impact on work roles.

If you wanted to do a Higher Education Course after you completed your Advanced Apprenticeship do you think that your employer would support this?		
		Response Percent Response Count
Yes		53.0% 87
No		7.3% 12
Not sure		39.6% 85
Please give reasons for your answer		47
answered question		164
skipped question		9
Please give reasons for your answer		
1	Definitely, very supportive	Feb 18, 2010 7:12 AM
2	they encourage education to create a strong team	Feb 18, 2010 8:05 PM
3	my manager is very supportive	Feb 22, 2010 6:29 PM
4	money	Feb 24, 2010 1:57 PM
5	I don't know whether this is an option due to the fact we have recently been taken over and have not been informed if this is available.	Feb 25, 2010 3:40 PM
6	I have been told by my employer that if i progress well and complete my advanced apprenticeship i will be supported on to higher education.	Feb 26, 2010 7:38 AM
7	but i dont want to	Feb 26, 2010 3:52 PM
8	he has employed me to work and gain money for him, but if it meant i gained valuable knowledge i doubt he would have a problem	Feb 26, 2010 9:29 PM
9	They are very supportive in that area, gaining more qualifications is beneficial to them to.	Feb 27, 2010 9:35 AM
10	because hes such a nice bloke	Feb 27, 2010 7:09 PM
11	Because the company may feel used and may think im uncommitted.	Feb 28, 2010 10:43 PM
12	Because they are supporting us at the moment on present course and have supported me before on my cache level 3 course.	Mar 1, 2010 8:24 PM
13	because they have done so far and when i asked them if they would support me in going on to the next course they said yes.	Mar 2, 2010 10:15 AM
14	honestly i don't know	Mar 2, 2010 10:25 AM
15	i am unsure they will allow me to continue to have a day at college when they are not paying me a shit wage	Mar 2, 2010 10:46 AM
16	My company wants the best for their apprentices. If the higher education course offers the necessary and fundamental training that is related to the job, then it will most probably be a worthwhile decision. However, factors of expenditure and time will have to be considered before any decision is made.	Mar 2, 2010 12:37 PM
17	I think it may depend on time and the type of course	Mar 2, 2010 3:37 PM

18	I have not yet put the question forward. I think if it was a course which would give me a better understanding at work they would.	Mar 3, 2010 9:32 AM
19	Not sure if budget is available.	Mar 3, 2010 10:46 AM
20	I have asked them about the possibility and they seemed quite interested.	Mar 3, 2010 3:14 PM
21	The company i work for are very supportive in my studies and are willing to help me continue my learning.	Mar 3, 2010 3:32 PM
22	If it would benefit my employer then im sure they would support it but not knowing anything about it im not sure if they would.	Mar 4, 2010 8:35 AM
23	I believe they would support me but finding the right course and University that would keep me at work for 3 days of the week is more difficult than it seems.	Mar 4, 2010 9:04 AM
24	I'm not sure it would be in the budgets of the company, but i would be very interested in funding it myself	Mar 5, 2010 9:48 AM
25	I hope so.	Mar 5, 2010 9:51 AM
26	Employers pays for courses	Mar 5, 2010 2:18 PM
27	I think they do to some extent but I already find it hard to find the time to complete my current study and work not because its too difficult but because of the lack of time. I would find it almost impossible with a higher level of education and less available time.	Mar 7, 2010 8:11 PM
28	Depending on my job role at the time	Mar 8, 2010 1:23 PM
29	It would depend on funding against needs	Mar 9, 2010 9:02 AM
30	Because of training budgets	Mar 10, 2010 3:45 PM
31	Because no one else has done it	Mar 10, 2010 5:25 PM
32	They are very supportive	Mar 10, 2010 5:26 PM
33	He would support me whatever I choose	Mar 10, 2010 5:30 PM
34	He is keen to help me develop	Mar 11, 2010 9:53 AM
35	Because they were very active in steering me to do this course	Mar 11, 2010 9:58 AM
36	Better for them	Mar 11, 2010 10:04 AM
37	I have spoken to my manager about it	Mar 11, 2010 10:07 AM
38	I have discussed this yet	Mar 11, 2010 10:08 AM
39	not the degree but certainly a more relevant course relating to the industry	Mar 11, 2010 3:42 PM
40	No one at my company have ever been offered the option	Mar 15, 2010 9:52 AM
41	I'm self employed working for a company	Mar 15, 2010 10:18 AM
42	Maybe, but it takes time of working	Mar 15, 2010 10:32 AM
43	As big corporate company and hygienist is normally private	Mar 15, 2010 10:41 AM
44	Self Employed	Mar 15, 2010 10:47 AM
45	Self Employed	Mar 15, 2010 10:50 AM
46	(My employer is) very at helping staff to progress and I feel very lucky to feel comfortable in asking about extra qualifications.	Mar 17, 2010 3:54 PM
47	(My employer is) very supportive in training and development	Mar 17, 2010 3:58 PM

4.13. Respondents were asked if they wanted to add additional comments, 14 did so.

1	nope	Feb 26, 2010 3:52 PM
2	.	Feb 26, 2010 9:29 PM
3	none as of now	Mar 2, 2010 10:25 AM
4	question 3 & 4 on this page are the same.	Mar 2, 2010 10:46 AM
5	Thank you, that is all. Hope the provided information supports your queries!	Mar 2, 2010 12:37 PM
6	Top up BSc courses need to be more readily available and advertised to students doing HNC/D.	Mar 4, 2010 9:04 AM
7	i would like to know why i was put on the btec in bulging services course rather than doing my 2nd year electrical following from the first year electrical i had done? i do not want this to effect my chances of following on this 2nd year btec course with the hnc and hnd , but have been told i still have to do the 2nd year electrical, id like to do both but can this be possible to start the hnc and 2nd year electrical in sept 2010?	Mar 4, 2010 1:56 PM
8	No	Mar 8, 2010 1:23 PM
9	NO	Mar 9, 2010 4:00 PM
10	i would like to have more information on higher education course and options for after i have completed my apprenticeship.	Mar 10, 2010 1:23 PM
11	The only issue I would have with any further learning is the time impact as my role is very busy. I also think I may want a break before I dive into anything else!	Mar 10, 2010 2:31 PM
12	How would I find out when I have no internet	Mar 11, 2010 10:03 AM
13	N/A	Mar 11, 2010 1:59 PM
14	You need more teachers to do bigger courses	Mar 15, 2010 9:55 AM

5. Survey Results: Employers of Advanced Apprentices

5.1. 68 employer surveys were collected either on line via Survey Monkey or on paper and input manually into Survey Monkey.

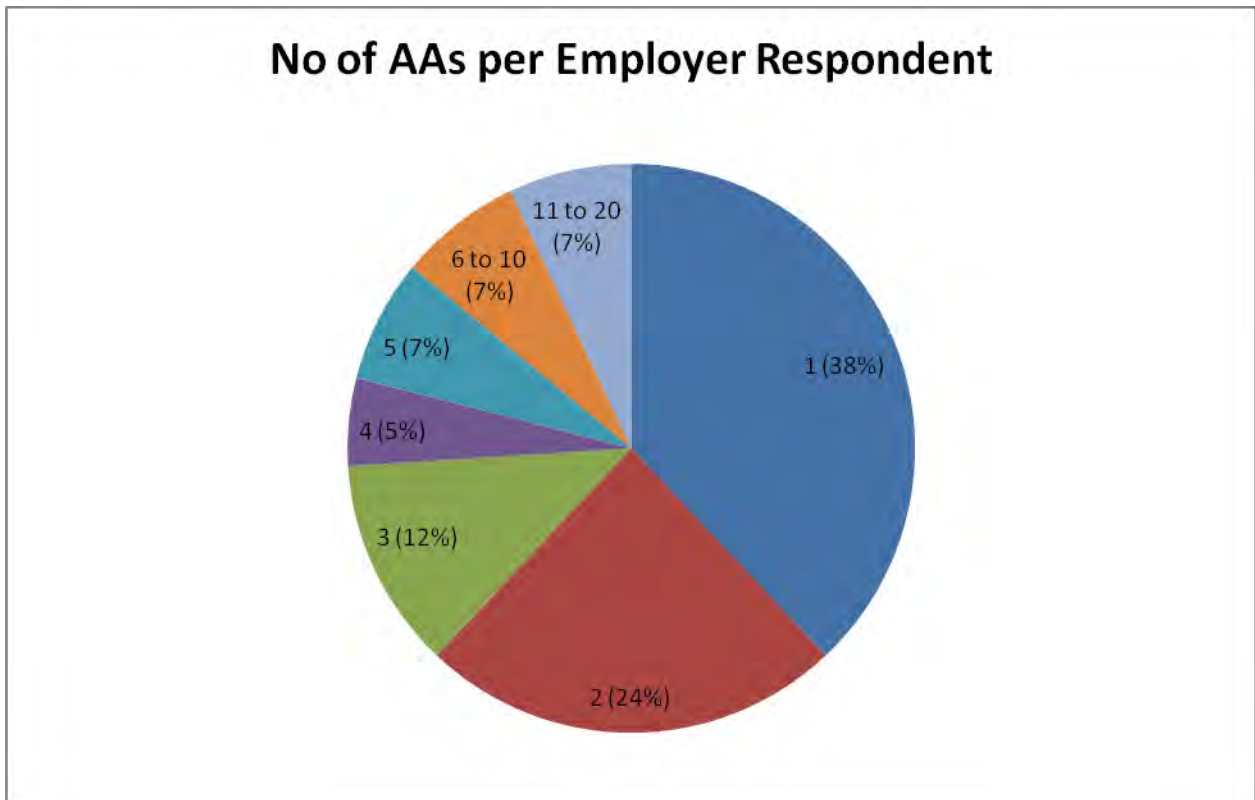
5.2. The table below shows the spread of training providers used by the employers who responded to the survey. All providers have contributed giving a reasonable spread of provider type, geography and sectors.



5.3. The table below shows the size of organisation responding to the survey by number of employees. All employee ranges are represented with a surprisingly good showing from companies with more than 250 employees (15%) – although this may be due to training providers targeting larger employers to maximise AA survey returns. The majority of employers (64%) have less than 50 employees representing the domination of small businesses in Sussex.



5.4. Survey returns showed that over a third of employers responding to the survey had only 1 AA, with 24% having 2 AAs. 21% had 5 or more AAs with the highest number for one employer being 15. The average number of AAs per employer respondent was 3.3. This was higher than the figure of 2 AAs per employer expected and perhaps reflects the higher than expected responses from large companies.

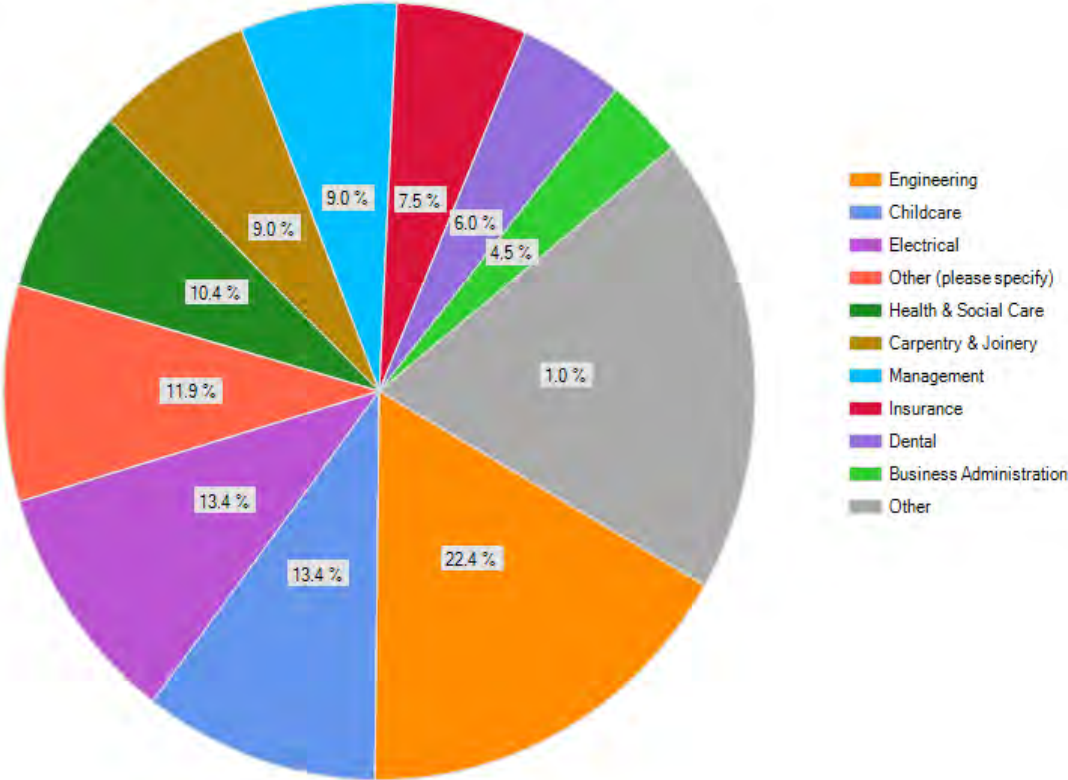


5.5. The chart below shows that 25% of the employers responding to the survey have been involved in training AAs for more than 5 years leaving the majority fairly new to the programme, with 56% involved for less than 3 years. This spread brings a broad range of experience to the survey data.



5.6. The chart below shows the spread of occupational sectors used by the employer respondents for AA training. This broadly in line with the occupational spread of the survey sample.

What Advanced Apprenticeship programmes do you use? (Please enter as many answers as are relevant)

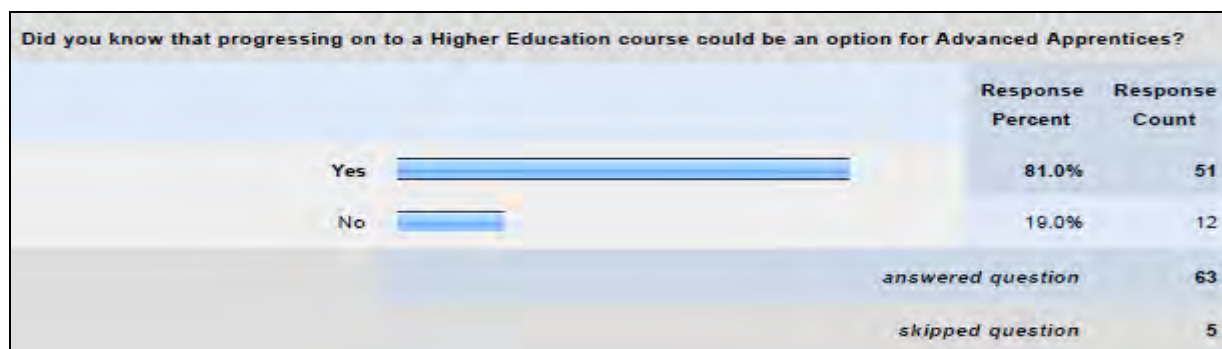


5.7. The table below shows that employer awareness of HE options is higher than that of their AAs but shows that there is still work to do in educating employers especially about Foundation Degrees (43% awareness) and Higher Apprenticeships (30%) awareness. 13% of employers said that they did not know about any of the HE options listed.

Please indicate whether you know about the following Higher Education qualifications (enter as many answers as you wish).

Qualification	Response Percent	Response Count
Degree (BA/BSc)	60.3%	38
Foundation Degree	42.9%	27
Higher Apprenticeship	30.2%	19
Higher National Certificate (HNC)	57.1%	36
Higher National Diploma (HND)	57.1%	36
NVQ Levels 4 & 5	71.4%	45
None of these	12.7%	8
<i>answered question</i>		63
<i>skipped question</i>		5

5.8. The table shows that there was a relatively high awareness that HE progression is an option for AAs. It is still a concern that nearly a fifth of employers didn't know this.



5.9. Although 81% of employers are aware of the HE progression options for AAs this table shows that only 43% are interested in their AAs taking advantage of this with 46% unsure and 11% not interested. The reasons for this are listed by the respondents and covers issues such as HE progression not being relevant to the job role, lack of knowledge as to what is involved, funding, cost, work commitments and many employers leaving the choice to their AA – emphasising the need to make sure that AAs receive appropriate information, advice and guidance.

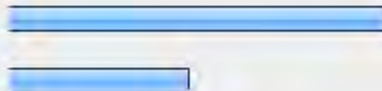


Please give reasons for your answer

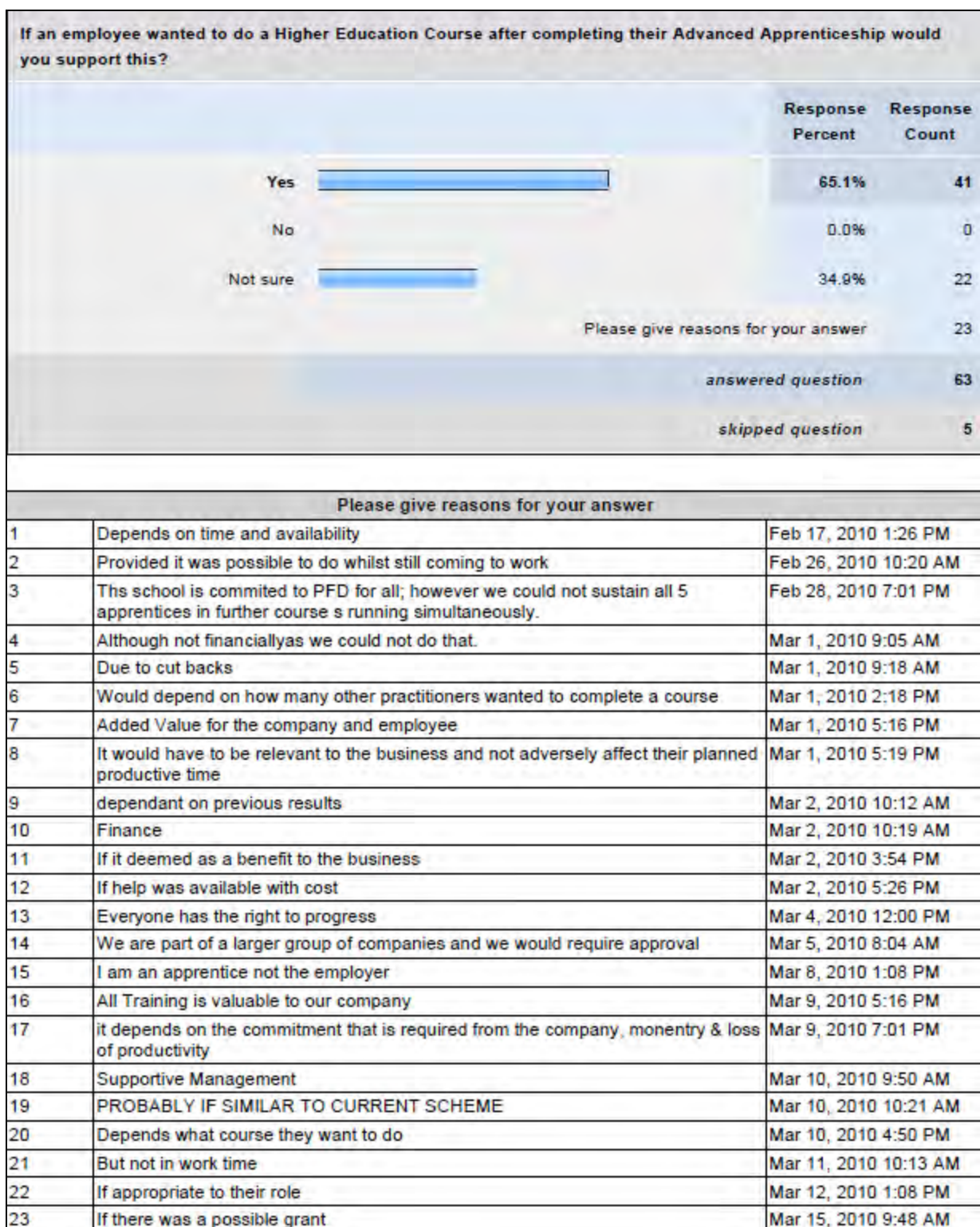
Response	Response Percent	Response Count
1	Current work / college commitments need to be discussed	Feb 17, 2010 1:26 PM
2	Depending if they would like to gain further qualifications.	Feb 19, 2010 8:41 AM
3	dont think its needed	Feb 24, 2010 4:25 PM
4	Would be up to the individual	Feb 26, 2010 10:20 AM
5	I am aware that for 2 of the apprentices the current training is regarded as a foundation and preliminary to further training.	Feb 28, 2010 7:01 PM
6	I would like all my staff to be interested in their own professional development.	Mar 1, 2010 9:03 AM
7	We already have several people who have completed NVQ4 and I encourage others to do the same!	Mar 1, 2010 9:05 AM
8	It depends on what is involved the course	Mar 1, 2010 9:18 AM
9	Not at the moment - I already have people on higher ed. programmes	Mar 1, 2010 10:40 AM
10	Further learning beyond current course not relevant / necessary for the roles undertaken by the employees concerned.	Mar 1, 2010 12:48 PM
11	Continued Professional Development	Mar 1, 2010 2:18 PM
12	Too early to say. Only just started on the course of employing apprentices.	Mar 1, 2010 5:16 PM
13	We believe they will benefit from 2 years field work before they consider further education	Mar 1, 2010 5:19 PM
14	dependant of their previous results	Mar 2, 2010 10:12 AM
15	Enhanced knowledge base and capabilities.	Mar 2, 2010 10:19 AM
16	This will depend upon the individual apprentice and their attitude towards higher education and the additional studying time!	Mar 5, 2010 8:04 AM
17	Depends upon the individual	Mar 5, 2010 11:24 AM
18	It would need to complement the bms training	Mar 5, 2010 4:58 PM
19	i do not feel the student needs to progress pass level 3 if he/her wants to learn a trade, but if he/she wants to progress further in their career then yes	Mar 9, 2010 7:01 PM
20	Due to Funding and time	Mar 10, 2010 9:50 AM
21	DEPENDS ON WHATS INVOLVED	Mar 10, 2010 10:21 AM

22	It would depend on whether or not they wanted to carry on.	Mar 10, 2010 2:40 PM
23	He is not sure if he wants to be a technician	Mar 10, 2010 4:46 PM
24	Will mean more time out of work	Mar 10, 2010 4:50 PM
25	Not sure what their plans are	Mar 10, 2010 4:57 PM
26	Already hold degrees	Mar 10, 2010 5:17 PM
27	Not financially viable for the company	Mar 11, 2010 10:13 AM
28	Not currently a requirement for their job rold	Mar 12, 2010 1:08 PM
29	It would be up to them to decide	Mar 15, 2010 10:42 AM
30	This has proved to be a beneficial pathway to EYP status via EY Foundation Degree	Mar 15, 2010 11:02 AM
31	Not essential for current employment	Mar 15, 2010 11:04 AM
32	Not necessary for us	Mar 15, 2010 11:05 AM

5.10. The table below shows two thirds on employer respondents feeling they have enough information and one third requiring more. The comments providing more detail about what employers need emphasise the need for timely, detailed information relevant to their businesses.

Do you feel that you know enough about the available Higher Education options to make a decision as to whether Higher Education might be an appropriate progression route for your Advanced Apprentices?		
		Response Percent Response Count
Yes		68.3% 43
No		31.7% 20
If 'No' please tell us what you need		12
		<i>answered question</i> 63
		<i>skipped question</i> 5
If 'No' please tell us what you need		
1	More detail!	Feb 17, 2010 1:26 PM
2	Need to understand more detail	Feb 25, 2010 1:44 PM
3	Dails on NVQ 4+5 :HLTA; foundation degree.	Feb 28, 2010 7:01 PM
4	Information relating to this at the right time!	Mar 1, 2010 5:16 PM
5	INFO	Mar 2, 2010 9:52 AM
6	more information	Mar 2, 2010 10:12 AM
7	All information available	Mar 2, 2010 5:26 PM
8	An understanding what is available in our bussiness sector and time periods and cost	Mar 5, 2010 8:04 AM
9	Have not had the option explained to us just know from previous apprentices that the option is available.	Mar 8, 2010 1:08 PM
10	COURSE PROSPECTUS, TIME & MONEY DETAILS	Mar 10, 2010 10:21 AM
11	Time frames, amount of work involved, cost	Mar 10, 2010 2:40 PM
12	The benefits of Higher Education over apprenticeships and how they link to NVQs and accreditation bodies	Mar 15, 2010 10:01 AM

5.11. The table below shows that no employer respondent would refuse to support their AAs if they wished to progress. 65% would support this with 35% not sure. The reasons given by employers for their answers related to the need for business benefits and the need for HE participation to avoid conflict with business needs while some were clear that they could not contribute financially. This shows that there is clear employer support for AA progression to HE but that employers need more information, advice and guidance.



5.12. The table on the next page summarises the types of support that employers said they might be able to offer to their AAs if they progressed into HE. Mentoring was the most popular answer at 78%, with as many as 52% offering unpaid time off for study. This falls to 23% if the time off is paid. 45% offered support with course fees. The answers relating to other support offered related more to the conditions of support e.g. need for business benefits than listing other ways of supporting AAs into HE.

If you would support Advanced Apprentices to progress into Higher Education what sort of support you would be prepared to offer?			Response Percent	Response Count
Mentoring in the workplace			78.2%	43
Unpaid time off to study			52.7%	29
Paid time off to study			23.8%	13
Financial support with course costs			45.5%	25
Other (please specify)			18.2%	10
<i>answered question</i>				55
<i>skipped question</i>				13
Other (please specify)				
1	a contribution towards cost			Feb 26, 2010 10:20 AM
2	all must be balanced against business requirements			Mar 1, 2010 5:19 PM
3	time off to study will be dependant on other factors			Mar 2, 2010 10:12 AM
4	It would be dependant upon the student, the course and the benefit to the nursery			Mar 5, 2010 11:24 AM
5	not the employer			Mar 8, 2010 1:08 PM
6	Financial matters would depend on the serive situation and what funds were available for further learning - we do not have enough staff to cover work time study at present			Mar 10, 2010 2:40 PM
7	Not up to me			Mar 10, 2010 4:57 PM
8	unable to comment			Mar 12, 2010 3:41 PM
9	Review each individual situation for its benefits to them and the organisation			Mar 15, 2010 10:01 AM
10	Depends what is available from (the employing organisation)			Mar 17, 2010 4:02 PM

5.13. The table below contains any other comments that employers wished to add. These comments mostly relate to potential issues relating to the employer's involvement in HE progression e.g. economic climate, availability of apprenticeship and HE pathways etc

1	Students need to understand where their study stops and work starts. Yes there is on the job training and skills which are transferable but within working hours the individuals work commitments come first. Students must also realise that other employees are there to work and not just provide answers to the apprentices work.	Feb 17, 2010 1:26 PM
2	-	Feb 25, 2010 9:43 AM
3	with the present economic situation it is difficult to plan that far ahead unless we had a crystal ball!	Feb 28, 2010 10:06 AM
4	There are many apprentices we feel we could offer a wonderful opportunity to observe good practice, if the funding was available we would extend this possibility to others who would progress into great practitioners.	Mar 4, 2010 3:47 PM
5	IMPROVED FUNDING STREAMS WOULD HELP FOR HE PROGRESSION	Mar 8, 2010 9:44 AM
6	There are many changes occurring both in this service and the Trust as a whole so palhning too far ahead is not an option at the moment	Mar 10, 2010 2:40 PM
7	There is no further qualification beyond dental nurse status for general dental practice.	Mar 15, 2010 11:04 AM
8	I have been impressed by the systems and level of support offered by (the college) to the apprentice ships which has included personal support; The exchange of views on content and presentations of the content of the course were well addressed between school and college.	Mar 17, 2010 4:05 PM
9	Two of our apprentices currently attending (training location) studying National Cert in Buidling Services have not had continuaty with lecturers and feel that in some of the subjects they have not had a lecturer that is fully able to teach the subject.	Mar 17, 2010 4:06 PM
10	Although we currently employ three apprentices these were taken on via a scheme started by a manufacterer and as we operate in a specialist field (BMS controls) the apprenticeship scheme relies on either an electrical or mechanical qualification there is currently no apprenticeship scheme for a HVAC controls engineer.	Mar 17, 2010 4:07 PM

6. Survey Results: Summary

Advanced Apprentices

6.1. AAs had a low awareness of all HE progression options with no HE option in the survey receiving more than 50% positive responses in terms of AA knowledge. The highest rating was NVQs with 46% of AAs saying they knew about them. 27% said they didn't know about any of the HE options listed. (See 4.6.)

6.2. Two-thirds of AAs knew that they could progress to HE. One-third did not. (See 4.7.)

6.3. One-third of AAs said that they were interested in HE, 17% were not interested and half were not sure. (See 4.8.)

6.4. When asked to state 'yes' or 'no' to whether they were planning to progress to HE 41.5% said they were and 58.5% said they were not. (See 4.9.)

6.5. Of those AAs planning to enter HE the most frequent choice was NVQs (25%) thus matching AA awareness results and the least frequent response was for Higher Apprenticeships (3%). (See 4.10.)

6.6. 53% of AAs said that they had enough information on which to base their decision to progress to HE. 47% did not. When asked what they needed the response was clear that more information advice and guidance was needed on a range of issues such as impact on their work and costs and funding. (See 4.11.)

6.7. Only 7.5% of AAs said that they thought their employer wouldn't support their HE progression with 53% sure that support would be forthcoming and 40% not sure. (See 4.12.)

Employers

6.8. Employers showed a greater awareness of AA progression options to HE than AAs. 71% of employers said they knew about NVQs, the highest result compared to 43% knowing about Foundation Degrees, to the lowest result of 30% for Higher Apprenticeships. 13% of employers didn't know about any of the HE options listed. (See 5.7.)

6.9. 81% of employers knew that HE was an option for their AAs, 19% were unaware of this. (See 5.8)

6.10. 43% of employers said that they were interested in their AAs progressing to HE. 46% were unsure and 11% were not interested. Issues related to the benefit of HE options to the job role, lack of information, funding and cost and a significant number said they would leave the progression decision to their AA. (See 5.9.)

6.11. 68% of employers said that they felt they had enough information regarding HE progression options, 32% wanted more information. (See 5.10.)

6.12. 65% of employers said that they would support AAs with progression to HE with 35% not sure. No employer said that they wouldn't support their AA. (See 5.11.)

6.13. Of the types of support that might be offered 78% said that they would offer mentoring, 52% unpaid time off, 45% support with course fees and 23% would offer paid time off. (See 5.12.)

7. Conclusions

7.1. It is clear that there is an underexploited market for HE progression in that:

7.1.1. Two-thirds of AAs were aware that HE is a possible progression route for them but with far fewer AAs planning to take this path and many more requiring further information advice and guidance, it is clear that progression numbers can be improved.

7.1.2. There is an opportunity and need to raise AAs' awareness of the availability and nature of HE progression options so that more informed progression choices can be made.

7.1.3. Although some AAs are confident that their employers would support their HE aspirations, many are not sure of their employer's views and would be more likely to consider HE if this uncertainty was resolved.

7.1.4. Employers have a strong awareness of and significant interest in, HE progression options for AAs but there is a need for improved information, advice and guidance to turn employers' interest and uncertainty into clear progression opportunities and unequivocal support for their AAs to progress.

7.1.5. AAs and employers most frequently commented that more information and support is needed regarding the business benefits of HE progression, the likely impact on work roles and work patterns, commitments required and costs and funding. If this barrier could be removed the path to progression would be open.

8. Recommendations

8.1. In order to maximise the opportunities to increase apprenticeship progression, it is recommended that HE delivery institutions ensure that:

8.1.1 Information on the current HE offer is available and presented in a way that is accessible to employers and their AAs by developing such materials in dialogue with the target group.

8.1.2. Make greater use of www.learning-opportunities.org.uk as an existing vocational IAG HE tool and test that it is fit for purpose for AAs and their employers.

8.1.3. Work is carried out with employers and AAs to evaluate the HE offer to ensure that the benefits of participation are clear and that the barriers to access are minimised by providing flexible access around work commitments, information on business benefits, costs and funding.

8.1.4. Work is carried out through training providers, using their existing relationships with AAs and their employers and in collaboration with the National Apprenticeship Service to deliver the information, support and guidance required by employers and AAs.

8.1.5. Work is carried out to develop collaborative delivery between apprenticeship training providers and HE providers to design, promote and deliver seamless vocational progression routes from level 2 to level 6 that appeal to vocational learners and their employers thus presenting a co-ordinated and easily accessible ladder of provision.

This report was compiled by Paul Mitchell, Executive Director, Sussex Council of Training Providers paulmitchell@sctp.org.uk, www.sctp.org.uk

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