

Engaging low skilled employees in workplace learning

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Foreword

The UK Commission for Employment and Skills is a social partnership, led by Commissioners from large and small employers, trade unions and the voluntary sector. Our mission is to raise skill levels to help drive enterprise, create more and better jobs and promote economic growth. Our strategic objectives are to:

- Provide outstanding labour market intelligence which helps businesses and people make the best choices for them;
- Work with businesses to develop the best market solutions which leverage greater investment in skills;
- Maximise the impact of employment and skills policies and employer behaviour to support jobs and growth and secure an internationally competitive skills base.

These strategic objectives are supported by a research programme that provides a robust evidence base for our insights and actions and which draws on good practice and the most innovative thinking. The research programme is underpinned by a number of core principles including the importance of: ensuring '**relevance**' to our most pressing strategic priorities; '**salience**' and effectively translating and sharing the key insights we find; **international benchmarking** and drawing insights from good practice abroad; **high quality** analysis which is leading edge, robust and action orientated; being **responsive** to immediate needs as well as taking a longer term perspective. We also work closely with key partners to ensure a **co-ordinated** approach to research.

This study, which was undertaken by the Employment Research Institute at Edinburgh Napier University, explores individual's motivators and barriers to workplace learning. Previous research (UKCES, 2009) highlighted the significant barriers to learning that are faced by a number of UK employees. This research improves our understanding of the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that influence low skilled employees participation in workplace learning. It highlights many positive features which employers, individuals and policy makers could build on in developing the skills of people in low skilled jobs, which is important in securing our competitive advantage in the longer term.

Sharing the findings of our research and engaging with our audience is important to further develop the evidence on which we base our work. Evidence Reports are our chief means of reporting our detailed analytical work. Each Evidence Report is accompanied by an executive summary. All of our outputs can be accessed on the UK Commission's website at www.ukces.org.uk

But these outputs are only the beginning of the process and we will be continually looking for mechanisms to share our findings, debate the issues they raise and extend their reach and impact.

We hope you find this report useful and informative. If you would like to provide any feedback or comments, or have any queries please e-mail info@ukces.org.uk, quoting the report title or series number.

Lesley Giles

Deputy Director

UK Commission for Employment and Skills

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Executive Summary

Introduction

This report sets out the findings of a study into the motivators and barriers to participation in workplace learning by low skilled employees. Low skilled in the UK is usually considered to be below NVQ level 2 qualifications. The study was carried out by the Employment Research Institute at Edinburgh Napier University on behalf of the UK Commission for Employment and Skills. The report presents the results of a survey of both employee and employer views on participation in workplace learning in the care sector in north east England and the hotel sector in Yorkshire and the Humber region. The hotels and catering sector has the highest relative and absolute skill gaps in low skilled occupations, with some 63 per cent of staff suffering skills gaps. In contrast, the care sector has an apparent strong training culture, with care staff expected to progress to NVQ level 3 and only five per cent of low skilled staff suffered a skills gap.

Evidence Review

The evidence review summarises selected research on the complex and interweaving barriers and motivations to workplace learning faced by low skilled employees. Johnson et al., (2009) highlighted the complex range of extrinsic (workplace, social and economic) and intrinsic (individual, motivational and attitudinal) factors that shape low skilled employees' engagement in workplace learning.¹ These include: limited information; insufficient advice and guidance; financial and time constraints; negative prior experiences; a lack of motivation; and a lack of peer support. Workplace culture and organisational structures; the delivery of training; employee characteristics; personal circumstances (e.g. childcare responsibilities); self-efficacy; and the financial returns from training may also act as barriers or motivators to learning. Previous research (McQuaid et al., 2010) highlighted an evidence gap: the quantification of workplace learning choices made by low skilled employees; and the identification of the potential returns of workplace learning against the participation costs. Studies (e.g. McIntosh and Garrett, 2009) highlight that some learners experience low or negative returns on gaining an NVQ level 2 qualification. The financial returns to developing skills to below NVQ level 3 are small or non-existent for many employees.

¹Intrinsic factors include those related to the individual's attitudes, beliefs, knowledge and motivation. Extrinsic factors include work and family commitments, workplace issues and employers' attitudes, and the affordability and accessibility of provision; which may be affected by factors such as the size of workplace, sector and union presence.

Methodology

In total 310 employees were interviewed between January and April 2011. Of these 205 worked in the care sector in north east England and 105 in the hotel sector in Yorkshire and Humberside. Nearly all of their employers (24) were interviewed face-to-face to provide qualitative and contextual evidence. Three interviews were also conducted with NVQ care sector training providers.

An important issue to address is how to disentangle the various factors influencing likely participation in training and how to provide a more realistic set of choices for employees that better reflects the actual decisions individuals make. It is difficult to arrive at a coherent 'ranking' and valuation of the different barriers and facilitators around individual's skills development, other than merely listing motivators and barriers. Hence, as well as a standard survey, this research also carried out a stated preference experiment whereby employees were given choices of combinations of factors that might affect their preference for, or against substantial training. These factors involved the employee making choices between three job related outcomes: job satisfaction, security and responsibility; pay increases of different levels; or when the training was carried out (in the employer's and/or employee's time). In other words the employee indicated or stated their preference for, or against participating in training by choosing between two potential sets of outcomes of this training (e.g. choosing between training that led to a job with the same pay, more job security and carried out in their own time versus a job with higher pay, more satisfaction and carried out in the employers time). This allows the effect of each particular factor to be estimated.

Findings: Employees in Low Skilled Jobs

Overall, the employees were keen to engage in training. The expectations of employees concerning the results of the last training they undertook (usually short term training) were concentrated around intrinsic factors. Respondents expected to: do their jobs better; be more satisfied with their work; learn skills to do their jobs better; and sometimes achieve qualifications from workplace learning. They did not generally expect to earn more money, or achieve a promotion or a better job. For 90 per cent of employees the expected outcomes of training actually happened. Employee attitudes towards the usefulness of learning are linked to their specific jobs requiring learning or allowing the use of their knowledge. Those who recognise their own lack of basic skills, also recognise that learning is important for a better job and that qualifications are important. So despite having low skills, employees still recognise the value and importance of workplace learning. Employees were found to consistently value training and prefer it to no training.

With regards to *demographic characteristics*, in the care sector, men prefer training more than women; otherwise there are no significant gender differences. In the care sector there is a significant difference by age, as all age groups prefer training more than those aged 16 to 24 year olds. The strongest preference for training is amongst older care workers aged 50 to 54 years old. For those in the hotel sector, the only age groups where there is a significantly higher preference for training is among employees aged 35 to 44 and 55 to 64 year olds. For employees with an NVQ level 3 or higher, those in the care sector expressed a significant preference for training but this did not apply in the hotel sector.

The main *reasons for not engaging in training* were: family commitments (for both men and women); illness; lack of suitable courses; possible costs; and lack of time. A lack of time was stated particularly by those in the hotel sector. The *main barriers* as to why employees would be unable or unwilling to undertake (further) work related training were extrinsic costs: cash fees for training (perceived to be a barrier for 54 per cent of all employees in both sectors), or time costs (24 per cent).

The stated preference exercise sought to ascertain if three main sets of factors might influence individuals' preferences to undertake significant training. This hypothetical training was a significant regular commitment for two years and resulted in a qualification. The factors are: job related outcomes (such as job satisfaction, security and responsibility); pay increases; or when the training is conducted. The conclusion is that preferences for training of this nature are increased mainly by pay rises (both small and substantial ones, but especially the latter). However, if training is conducted in one's own time then it is a significant barrier to training. Job attributes i.e. increased satisfaction, security or responsibility, are not strong influencers.

More precisely the relative importance of the factors show that pay dominates (58 per cent of the effect) dominates the motivations for training and followed somewhat behind by when training is offered (26 per cent), and then job attributes (15 per cent). These general results apply across the sectors, genders, ages and NVQ level. There are some differences between the hotel and care sectors, with stronger preferences for pay rises and responsibility in hotels, which are probably explained by the younger age profile of respondents.

Women show significantly less preference for training than men, particularly in the care sector. There are some differences with age groups, for example, those aged 50 to 54 are motivated by security and feel the need to learn new skills even if training was in their own time. Those with NVQ level 3 qualifications or higher are more motivated to undertake training than those with lower NVQ levels.

Findings: Employers

Based on qualitative interviews the majority of the employers (12 care providers and 12 hotels) provided non-compulsory work related training. The type of training undertaken varied depending on the interests of the staff, the needs of clients/customers and the level of service provided.

Employers identified that staff undertook non-compulsory work related training for reasons of personal development, creating a sense of self-value, increasing self-esteem and progression. A lack of self-confidence and self-value, age, time constraints, few opportunities to progress, fear of education and literacy and numeracy problems present barriers to training in the views of employers.

Employers use a variety of techniques to actively encourage their employees to undertake non-compulsory work related training: paying staff to train; providing time to train in work hours; and employing training managers. The evidence highlights some mismatches between individuals' expectations and their employers' perceptions. Individuals in all cases prefer training but employers (especially in the hotel sector) think that employees are not interested in training, although the importance of increased pay and training in work time correspond to the stated preference results for employees.

Conclusions

Encouragingly, low skilled employees value both training and qualifications in order to enhance their employment. Despite undertaking low skilled jobs, they are keen to be engaged in training and feel it will help them do a better job. Employees had realistic expectations of what could be achieved through their most recent training. Very few employees felt that the training would lead to a dramatic change such as, getting a new or better job or a pay rise or promotion. In the majority of cases the outcomes of the training matched individuals' expectations; this is a positive factor on which to build future participation in workplace learning. However, there seems to be some mismatch between employees and their employers' views. Unlike employees, employers have reservations about employees' commitment to training and learning.

The 'culture of learning' within the workplace also seems to play an important role. Employees' positive attitudes towards workplace learning are linked to jobs requiring learning or allowing the use of knowledge and skills. This is illustrated by the contrast between the care sector and the hotel sector. In general, the care sector has more of a culture of learning and training than the hotel sector, possibly linked to the types of jobs and industry expectation of care workers achieving higher NVQ levels.

The main barriers to future engagement in training were cash fees for training, or time costs. So a lack of demand to invest in training is more about extrinsic barriers than individual intrinsic factors such as, confidence and self-efficacy. Such extrinsic factors can be addressed more readily through targeted policy levers and interventions. Again in contrast, there is a mismatch between employee and employers view regarding the barriers to workplace learning. Employers felt employees' barriers to participating in training were mainly related to intrinsic factors (such as, a lack of self-confidence) rather than extrinsic factors. Whilst this was not borne out in this research, it suggests that: for low skilled employees this may not be as an important factor as has often been assumed by policy makers and employers; and that the positive reactions to job specific training could be built on for non-compulsory and longer term skill development.

The stated preference analysis illustrates the importance of various motivating factors that influence low skilled employees' participation in workplace learning. In particular pay is a significant motivator for employees training, yet previous research evidence indicates that financial returns for low skilled employees undertaking training are low. Even relatively modest linked pay rewards may motivate increased training or qualifications, which happen elsewhere, where relevant qualifications automatically translate into pay rises.

This research suggests many positive features which employers, individuals and policy makers could build on in developing the skills of people in low skilled jobs, which is important in securing our competitive advantage in the longer term:

- Low skilled employees are motivated to learn and intrinsic barriers may sometimes be less problematic than previously thought in suitable conditions;
- Increased skills development can be supported by a positive and supportive cultural environment for training within the workplace (perhaps including an industry wide expectation of higher qualifications, such as NVQ level 3 for care workers) with opportunities for progression through better job design and possibly collective arrangements within sectors;
- Meeting expectations through job specific, short term training, may encourage further training which could support progression to higher skilled roles and higher pay; and,
- Ensuring that training is valued by employers and that it is designed and delivered in partnership with employees so as to further enhance and increase the value of such training.

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

This report sets out the findings of a study into the motivators and barriers to participation in workplace learning by low skilled employees. The study was carried out by the Employment Research Institute (ERI) at Edinburgh Napier University on behalf of the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (the UK Commission). The report presents the results of a survey of both employee and employer views on participation in workplace learning in the care sector in north east England and the hotel sector of hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism, in Yorkshire and Humberside.

The importance of skills is at the cornerstone of much government policy and of the UK Commission's *Ambition 2020: World Class Skills and Jobs for the UK* (UKCES, 2009a). The coalition Government's strategy *Skills for Sustainable Growth* (BIS, 2010) has recognised that skills have potential in driving social mobility, enabling people to play a fuller part in society and giving the UK competitive advantage. The strategy stresses the importance of learners undertaking training and qualifications that are of value to businesses, and funding has been prioritised to those with the lowest levels of skills (BIS, 2010). *Ambition 2020*, also states that "we estimate we will not reach our world class skills ambition in respect of low and intermediate level skills: indeed, we will remain in the bottom half of OECD countries at these levels", hence there is a great need to understand the barriers to improving these skills levels.

The current study describes views from people in low skilled jobs themselves on their engagement in workplace learning in terms of the importance of extrinsic facilitators and barriers of workplace learning, especially: the importance of pay; the ability to carry it out fully or partly in work time; and its influence on factors such as job security and job satisfaction.

The OECD definition of 'low skilled', which is reflected in the UK Commission's *Ambition 2020* report, includes: those who lack basic literacy or numeracy skills; those with qualifications below upper secondary; and those with no qualifications². While low skilled in the UK is usually considered to be below NVQ³/SVQ⁴ level 2, in this report we also consider employees whose qualifications are at or below NVQ/SVQ 2 and 3. This is so as to also consider barriers to progression.

² E.g. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/49/49/2471965.pdf>

³ National Vocational Qualification

⁴ Scottish Vocational Qualification

1.2 Objectives

The aim of the research is to identify the barriers and drivers of engagement in workplace learning for lower skilled employees.

The objectives are to:

- Identify intrinsic and extrinsic factors that act as motivators and barriers to an individual's participation in workplace learning;
- Measure employees' levels and effects of self-efficacy and expectancy; and,
- Implement a stated preference/choice methodology to examine how individual internal preferences influence behaviour.

An innovative part of the study is the use of stated preference techniques to try to reflect more realistically the decisions faced by individuals when considering taking up skills development and the interaction between the motivators and barriers that influence them.

1.3 Background Evidence

The tenet that formal qualifications and non-cognitive skills are a route to sustained employment and progression is a cornerstone of much UK government strategy. The need for individuals to increase their skills base is important in driving social mobility, enabling people to play a fuller part in society and strengthening the UK economy in the face of global competition (e.g. BIS, 2010; DWP/DIUS, 2007; Leitch, 2006). However, recent research (Johnson et al., 2009) highlighted the complex range of extrinsic (workplace, social and economic) and intrinsic (individual, motivational and attitudinal) factors that shape lower skilled employees' engagement in workplace learning⁵.

There are significant differences in individual experiences across geographies, sectors, occupations, levels of qualification and patterns of employment. Furthermore, employer and workplace factors are key to shaping individual attitudes towards, and opportunities to participate in, training. While research has identified a range of barriers and motivators that help to explain individuals' differing experiences of participation, the Johnson *et al.* (2009) research highlighted that there is limited evidence of how different extrinsic and intrinsic barriers and facilitators *interact* to impact on individuals' opportunities and behaviours. It also proved difficult to quantify and measure the importance of these different factors.

⁵ Intrinsic factors include those related to the individual's attitudes, beliefs, knowledge and motivation. Extrinsic factors include work and family commitments, workplace issues and employers' attitudes, and the affordability and accessibility of provision; which may be affected by factors such as the size of workplace, sector and union presence.

1.4 Skills Gaps

The National Employer Skills Survey 2009 (Shury *et al.*, 2010) defines a skills gap as existing when “the employer indicates that staff at the establishment are not fully proficient at their jobs”.

This survey found that, in England 19 per cent of employers are affected by skills gaps (down from 22 per cent in 2003, but up from 15 per cent in 2007) (Shury *et al.*, 2010). Where staff are described as not being fully proficient this is most commonly a temporary or interim problem, caused by a lack of experience or ‘time served’ (and/or related recruitment and staff turnover difficulties). These skills gaps would be expected to reduce with time (NESS, 2008: 67). The percentage of those lacking full proficiency has remained stable (7 per cent in 2009 and 6 per cent in 2003 and 2005) (Shury *et al.*, 2010).

“Skills gaps are more common in ‘lower level’ occupations both in absolute terms and in terms of the proportion of those occupations lacking proficiency. Nine per cent of elementary staff and 10 per cent of sales and customer service staff are described by their employers as lacking proficiency. By contrast, just six per cent of managers and professionals have skills gaps” (Shury *et al.*, 2010).

‘Lower level’ occupations (where demand for skill levels is theoretically lower) continue to be more likely to suffer proficiency problems in both volume and density terms. That is, a higher proportion of the workforce in sales (9 per cent), elementary (8 per cent), machine operative (6 per cent) and personal service occupations (6 per cent) lack proficiency than in the more senior occupations (managers 4 per cent and professional occupations 5 per cent).

Overall, more than a third of all staff described as lacking proficiency work in sales or elementary positions (36 per cent) despite those occupations accounting for just over a quarter (28 per cent) of employment. Where proficiency problems are reported a wide range of skills are lacking, spanning both ‘hard’ skills (technical and practical) and ‘soft’ skills (with customer handling, oral communication and team working skills at a particular premium).

Employers most commonly react to skills gaps by increasing the amount and/or the spend on training activity, yet almost one in ten employers with skills gaps had done nothing to attempt to resolve them (Shury *et al.*, 2010: 67). As in previous years, a lack of experience and staff having been recently recruited is by far the most common cause of skills gaps, with 71 per cent of all skills gaps being attributed, at least in part, to this cause. Two other factors relating to recruitment – high staff turnover and recruitment problems – are also quite common causes (explaining at least in part 13 per cent and 11 per cent of skills gaps respectively). In both cases the underlying implication is that experienced staff left and employers have had to fill these positions with people who do not have the requisite skills. Employers' failure to provide (adequate) training for their staff is reported to be a contributing factor in a quarter (25 per cent) of all skills gaps. However, as in previous years, employers were slightly more likely to attribute skills gaps to staff lacking motivation or interest in training and developing their skills (a contributory factor in 29 per cent of skills gaps). The current study sheds some light on these employee motivations.

1.5 Methodology

Interviews with employees and employers took place between January and April 2011. Following desk based research on existing literature, there were three aspects to data collection (see chapter 3 for details).

Questionnaires on experiences of workplace learning, including the motivators and barriers to participation in workplace learning were conducted with low skilled employees. In total 310 employees were interviewed face-to-face; 205 from the care sector in north east England and 105 in the hotel sector in Yorkshire and Humberside. The rationale for selecting these sectors is outlined in 1.6 below.

However, an important issue is how to disentangle the various factors influencing likely participation in training. There is a danger of simply listing motivators and barriers. So in order to better understand drivers for training amongst employees in the care sector and hotel sector (part of the wider hospitality sector) in addition to standard questions a stated preference approach was taken asking participants to consider nine hypothetical stated preference scenarios, in this case, participation in workplace learning activities.

The use of stated preference allows us to potentially gather useful evidence on people's preferences for workplace learning and the factors that influence this in a more realistic context. Stated preference presents scenarios to respondents. Initially the scenario is a choice between learning and no learning. Then individuals have to trade-off between various attributes of workplace learning. For example, if the training results in a large pay rise, it may not lead to any improvement in job satisfaction, or *vice versa*. If one simply asked for preferences to individual factors (e.g. increased pay), without considering the interplay of these other factors then one would simply get maximum scores on each factor and one would not be able to identify how much one factor is preferred by another. Hence this gives a more realistic choice for a person rather than asking about each issue separately.

Short, largely qualitative interviews were conducted with 24 managers at each of the care providers and hotels, as well as teaching staff running NVQ study days to examine their attitudes and experiences of workplace learning.

1.6 Sectors

This report focuses on the care sector in north east England and the hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism sector in Yorkshire and Humberside. These sectors both have very large numbers of employees therefore, only specific parts of each sector were examined: adult care providers and hotels.

These two sectors were chosen because of the high number of skills gaps in each of them: health and social work has 211,900 employees and hotels and catering have 164,700 employees who are not fully proficient and so have skills gaps (Shury, 2010: 102) (for further details see Technical Report Appendix 1). These are the industries with the third and fifth highest skills gaps of the Sector Skills Council (SSC) sectors. Hotels and catering has the highest relative and absolute skill gaps in Elementary occupations with some 63 per cent of such staff suffering skills gaps. The care sector is of interest as it has a strong emphasis on training, and care employees attaining NVQ level 2 and then 3, but there remain large skills gaps. In some respects the position is similar to a licence to practice situation, as until recently all carers were expected to attain NVQ level 3.

1.7 Report Structure

The report is set out as follows:

- Chapter 2 Evidence review;
- Chapter 3 Methodology;
- Chapter 4 Findings: low skilled employees;
- Chapter 5 Findings: employers;
- Chapter 6 Conclusions;
- Bibliography.

2 Evidence Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a brief review of the existing evidence concerning the barriers and motivations to workplace learning facing low skilled employees. Much of the general background literature in this area is available in other the UK Commission reports such as in Johnson *et al.* (2009), McQuaid *et al.* (2010) and Devins *et al.* (2011) and elsewhere (e.g. Keep and James, 2010) and is only briefly summarised here.

Johnson *et al.* (2009) 'Employee Demand for Skills: a Review of Evidence and Policy' examined the factors that influence the engagement of the individual in workplace learning. This research found that there were complex combinations of issues that affect lower skilled individuals' motivation to take-up training opportunities; and that individual experiences varied across geographies, peer groups, sectors, occupations, workplace/employer, levels of qualification, and patterns of employment. Key findings included:

- Low skilled people and people with few qualifications (as well as older workers, part-time employees and those working in small or non-unionised workplaces) are less likely to participate in workplace learning;
- Employers and the 'culture of learning' within the workplace are important in shaping demand for workplace learning;
- The financial returns of getting low level qualifications are poor;
- There is a lack of awareness of the benefits of workplace learning and poor access to training provision; and,
- Clear progression routes, accreditation and flexible provision can encourage employees to undertake workplace learning.

Johnson *et al.* (2009) also highlighted gaps in the current evidence base which this present study seeks to address. First, there is little evidence on how low skilled employees judge the potential returns (e.g. improvements in their pay and labour market position, obtaining an accredited qualification) of workplace learning opportunities against the participation costs (e.g. time, fees, travel).

A number of studies have focused on the links between self-efficacy (taken to be a person's belief in their capability to succeed or achieve their goals) and motivation to learn in the workplace (Chiaburu and Lindsay, 2008) and on a range of other psychological factors (for example, levels of 'expectancy' that training will result in benefits for the individual) that can shape attitudes (Noe and Wilk, 1993). However, many of these studies have focused on higher skilled workers, with less information available on the psychology of decisions to participate in skills upgrading among low-skilled employees (and on how extrinsic and intrinsic factors interact with motivation and attitudinal factors).

Second, few have quantified the workplace learning choices made by low skilled employees (Johnson *et al.*, 2009), and evidence suggests that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors appear to influence individuals' investment in workplace learning; however the existing evidence does not enable a clear ranking of these barriers, nor identify the links between them. The Stated Preference approach adopted in this study seeks to address this gap (see Chapter 3 for more details of the Stated Preference methodology).

This chapter now considers barriers and motivators to workplace learning in terms of: workplace culture and organisational structures; employee characteristics; self-efficacy; and the returns from training.

2.2 Workplace Culture and organisational structures

Workplace culture and organisational structures can be important in motivating low skill employees to take part in workplace learning. Employee attitudes towards their employer may also affect their willingness to learn. There are four main groups of constraints to learning in the workplace, which arise from the interaction between the two dimensions of supply–demand and facilitator–driver (Bates *et al.*, 2005):

- employer restrictors e.g. employer demand for high level skills;
- employee restrictors e.g. low employee incentive due to the poor returns of qualifications;
- employer and/or employment barriers e.g. lack of managerial support; and,
- employee general dispositional or resource barriers.

Organisational learning culture can affect organisational commitment (e.g. Joo and Lim, 2009) and those who are committed to their organisation are more motivated to do well on training courses and those who are involved with their jobs are more likely to perceive that the training offered to them to be of high quality (Orpen, 1999; Bulut and Culha, 2010). Research with a financial services organisation based in the north of England found that management, perceptions regarding its benefits, the transfer of training and positive attitudes towards personal development can be central in access to training (Santos and Stuart, 2003).

The training and other workplace learning opportunities that are available, and the rewards associated with them, vary by skill level. There are differences in attitude to, and support for, training; with those in higher level positions receiving more HR support and opportunities for progression (Ashton, 2004). Further, training and other workplace learning is instigated by the employer more often than by the workers, especially among low skilled jobs where employer initiative plays a much stronger role in training decisions (Felstead and Green, 2008). The delivery of this training can also result in potential barriers to the uptake of workplace learning and those in lower skilled positions may also be more dependent than others on the attitudes of supervisors. Time can be an important issue as low skilled employees may lack autonomy in their job roles and therefore not have the time to train (Bates and Aston, 2004). A potentially significant issue, which is also considered in the stated preference survey used in this study, is in whose time the workplace learning happens – in work time, the employee's time or a mixture.

Organisational support in training is crucial to bolstering commitment (Bulut and Culha, 2010). Rainbird *et al.* (2009) examined workforce management and development in the social care sector. Organisations which were most successful in developing workforce skills took a whole organisation approach dedicating resources to training needs. They did not rely solely on free training and meeting the demands of regulation. The policies were flexible and wider networks were drawn upon so that best practice could be shared. Finally, social networks can be very important in norm formation (Friedkin, 2001), such as attitudes to training, and it is possible that lower skilled employees may in general have networks that have less (positive) experience of workplace learning.

2.3 Employee Characteristics

As well as the organisational learning culture, the individual characteristics of an employee, their personal circumstances (such as childcare responsibilities) and external influences (such as employer attitudes) influence participation in workplace learning and hence suggest potential barriers.

The level of adult learning is relatively low for older employees, those with only low levels of qualifications and those in routine or semi-routine occupations. Training and other workplace learning opportunities are offered less often to older employees, as employers may perceive that they are not willing to take part or because of the low perceived return of the training to the employer (e.g. they are perceived to have limited remaining time before retirement). Older employees may be equally reluctant to take part in training (Smeaton and Vegeris, 2009; McNair *et al.*, 2007; Newton, 2006; Taylor and Unwin, 2001). However, older employees who have received training are more likely to stay in work for longer (Lissenburgh and Smeaton, 2003). Additionally, declines in productivity in older employees are often linked to a lack of training (EHRC and TAEN, 2009). Research on younger people's attitudes to learning shows that their school experiences can affect their perceptions (see below). Many younger people can associate education to a large extent as being something beyond their control and with systems, rules and regulations (Opinion Leader Research, 2002). Therefore, less skilled younger people may be less willing to seek to up-skill themselves.

Johnson *et al.* (2009) found that evidence on the relationship between workplace learning and gender was unclear. Women were found to be slightly more likely to take part in work place learning but those with child care responsibilities were less likely to access work place learning. Hence main childcare responsibilities may be a more important barrier than simply gender. The same evidence review identified a lack of consistent conclusions on the links between workplace learning and ethnicity. The evidence highlighted that there is a complex relationship between workplace learning and ethnicity with variations between age groups, gender and different minority ethnic groups.

2.4 Self-efficacy

An important intrinsic factor in workplace learning is a person's self-efficacy (taken in this report to be a person's belief in their capability to succeed or achieve their goals) it includes their beliefs about their capabilities to produce effects (Bandura, 1997) and may influence the outcomes of their behaviour (such as developing skills)⁶. Self-efficacy may be influenced by intrinsic and extrinsic factors such as their:

- previous (positive or negative) experiences in achieving something (mastery experience) and/or seeing other similar people succeed (or fail) (vicarious experience); and
- emotional state, such as stress, perceived disability or mood, but also by extrinsic factors such as verbal persuasion by others and having a supportive environment.

An employee's job involvement is also important in the development of self-efficacy prior to training (Tracey et al., 2001).

Individuals may over estimate their numeracy and literacy skills and they may be more comfortable admitting to problems with arithmetic rather than reading and writing (Bates and Aston, 2004). There is a need to understand people's mindsets and motivations as this will impact on engagement in workplace learning. Experience at school can affect people's view of the role of education and learning in their lives. Fear, for example, not being able to keep up with other learners or understanding the training material, can hold people back from participating in training (Bowman et al., 2000; Bates and Aston, 2004).

2.5 The returns of training

As well as the organisational learning culture, management practices and employees' perceptions of the work environment, the systems of reward are an important motivator for participation in, and the effectiveness of, workplace learning (Santos and Stuart, 2003). Employees generally do not place training as a high priority, considering it to be less important than job security, enjoyable work, friendly colleagues and good pay (Felstead and Green, 2008). However, the barriers and motivations of low skilled employees may differ from those of high skilled employees because of extrinsic and intrinsic factors.

⁶ There is a dispute in the literature as to whether or not self-efficacy can be casually influenced by the person's expected outcomes (Williams, 2010). Some argue that this is not possible but others argue that the expectancy of certain outcomes (eg of a training course) can affect self-efficacy.

Low skilled employees may not see the need for training as their jobs may not require higher skills and there may be little opportunity for progression (Keep and James, 2010). Earnings mobility is often limited and low paid entry level jobs do not always lead onto better paid ones (Kemp *et al.*, 2004). Additionally, those with lower skills and unemployed people are particularly prone to both persistent and recurrent poverty (perhaps leading to a greater priority on short term rather than long term income); although, those in skilled manual jobs and less-skilled white collar employees are also at risk (Tomlinson and Walker, 2010).

Studies highlight that there may be only low or even negative returns on gaining an NVQ level 2 qualifications and other qualifications such as City and Guilds. Those obtaining a NVQ level 2 may earn approximately 4 per cent more than individuals with no qualifications (McIntosh and Garrett, 2009). However, some level 2 vocational qualifications, such as BTECs or RSA Level 2, do provide a substantial wage return (Jenkins *et al.*, 2007; Page, 2007; McIntosh and Garrett, 2009). For Level 3, all vocational qualifications have a positive return with those obtaining a NVQ level 3 earning approximately 11 per cent more than individuals with no qualifications (McIntosh and Garrett, 2009). Modern Apprenticeships offer even higher wage returns. Data for 2004/2005 identified a wage return of 18 per cent at Level 3 and 16 per cent at Level 2. This may however, be the result of the ability of employers to choose the most able of prospective apprentices because supply exceeds demand (McIntosh, 2006). In reference to NVQs, the low wage return may be explained by employer attitudes that they do not develop the learner's knowledge (Page, 2007).

Keep and James (2010) argue that there is a mutually reinforcing matrix of reasons that cause low wages, some of which lie outside the area of skills. They highlight that the returns of training for low skill employees may be poor due to:

- Weak occupational identities and limited skill requirements;
- Narrow conceptualisations of vocational skill and learning and lack of general education;
- Competence-based vocational qualifications, qualifications on the lowest common denominator;
- Weak and limited labour market regulation, where licence to practice remains low and therefore so is investment in skills;
- Recruitment, selection and the wage effects of vocational qualifications, as at the low end qualifications are often not a requirement; and
- Limited opportunities for progression which are exacerbated by a downward cascade of graduate labour.

Employees respond better to training if they can clearly see its benefits or rewards, but often may not see these links (Orpen, 1999). UK research focusing on seven jobs (a call centre agent, hotel room attendant, food processing operative, check-out operative, sales assistant, hospital cleaner and healthcare assistant) found that employees in these jobs received little training and that they often did not need much more training to improve their job competency (Lloyd and Mayhew, 2010). So an important issue is that some training at low levels may not actually improve an employees' productivity (although this will be influenced by factors such as utilisation of the skills and wider organisational strategy).

Training is often only offered to employees if there were positions higher up that need to be filled. Often there are, however, few positions higher up. It may be seen as cheaper to fill higher positions with external candidates rather than train existing staff. It was also found that qualifications do not play a large role in the recruitment, retention and progression of low skilled employees (Lloyd and Mayhew, 2010).

There is a need for training to be accredited and to show individuals that training is relevant to them. Learners may lack progression routes and there may not be the financial incentive to undertake entry level vocational qualifications (Bates *et al.*, 2005). Employees often want short externally accredited training, whereas employers may only provide non-accredited in house training (Bates *et al.*, 2005; HE@Work, 2008). International research on those involved in skills training, in Australia, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, India, Malaysia, South Africa and the UK, shows that job-specific technical skills are in more demand than basic skills and that there are issues of people not being able to find work once they have completed their training. In the UK the esteem of vocational education and training is low (City and Guilds Centre for Skills Development, 2008).

In summary, the evidence highlights the complex and interweaving barriers and motivations to workplace learning faced by low skilled employees. However, evidence gaps and further questions remain:

- Do intrinsic or extrinsic factors motivate low skilled employees.
- How does organisational structure, including job design impact on low skilled employees.
- How do low skilled employees judge the returns of workplace learning?
- Is progression an important factor?

3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the methodology, describing the sample and the main methods used. It describes the stated preference approach in general terms and more detailed information is provided in the Technical Report Appendix 2.

3.2 The Sample

This study focuses on employees in low skilled jobs and as can be seen from the evidence review (chapter 2) much of the literature neglects this group. In order to address this issue this study focuses on employees in low skilled jobs to provide evidence of their engagement in workplace learning. The respondents are employed in the care sector in north east England and the hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism sector in Yorkshire and Humberside. These sectors both have very large numbers of employees and footprints and therefore, only specific parts of each sector were examined: i.e. adult care providers⁷ and hotels. NHS health care assistants studying for NVQ level 3 and carers on the 'Train to Gain' scheme who were studying for an NVQ level 2 also participated. As described in chapter 1 and the Technical Report Appendix 1 these sectors were selected because of the high number of skills gaps in each of them and the differing emphases on skills in each sector. In the care sector, in order to comply with the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2010 (Care Quality Commission, 2010) staff in health and adult social care should be appropriately qualified and have the skills and knowledge to support their clients. All adult social care providers complete the Common Induction Standards⁸ within 12 weeks of starting their job and it is expected that they will achieve a Level 2 Diploma within two years of appointment (Skills for Care, 2011).

Initially appropriate employers were recruited to the study and relevant employees at these organisations were identified. Recruitment of respondents took a five pronged approach and focused on employees working at, or below, the NVQ level 2. Approaches used to help identify potential participants included: care provider and hotel directories; existing contacts; People 1st and Skills for Care Sector Skills Councils; employer representatives; and snowballing with participating employers suggesting others within their care home group or hotel chain who would be interested in the project.

⁷ In the main these were residential and/or nursing care homes although one domiciliary care provider also participated.

⁸ There are eight common induction standards: role of the health and social care worker; personal development; communicate effectively; equality and inclusion; principles for implementing duty of care; principles of safeguarding in health and social care; person-centred support; and health and safety in an adult social care setting (Skills for Care, 2010).

Those interviewed included: a total of 147 people from 12 care homes in the north east of England were interviewed at their place of work; 58 NVQ students (either NHS health care assistants attending NVQ level 3 day release study days or carers on the 'Train to Gain' scheme who were studying for an NVQ level 2) in the north east of England were interviewed; and a further 105 people were interviewed in 12 hotels in Yorkshire and Humberside (including one in Co. Durham). In total there were 310 participants, 205 from the care sector and 105 in the hotel sector.

3.3 Employee Interviews

Interviews on motivators and barriers to participation in workplace learning were conducted with the respondents. The questionnaires were developed with reference to the issues identified in the literature (such as factors that influence employees to participate in workplace learning opportunities) and also drew on other surveys such as, the British Household Panel Survey for some of the questions to allow comparisons with national data (for questionnaire see Technical Report Appendix 3).

The questionnaires were designed to identify potential intrinsic and extrinsic factors that may act as motivators and barriers to participation in workplace learning by asking respondents about previous and current training experiences. The questionnaires explored individuals' rankings of the relevant importance of particular drivers and barriers and how these interact (i.e. we sought to identify more than simply that some individuals do not feel motivated to participate in learning). Second, the questionnaires sought to measure employees' levels of self-efficacy (an individual's beliefs about their capabilities to succeed or achieve their goals) and expectancy. Some semi-structured questions in the questionnaire allowed a number of factors to be explored in greater depth. An additional element in the questionnaire was a stated preference exercise, which is outlined below.

3.4 Stated Preference Method

An important issue is how to disentangle the various factors influencing likely participation in training and how to provide a more realistic set of choices for employees that better reflects the actual decisions they may need to make. It is difficult to arrive at coherent 'ranking' and valuation of different barriers and facilitators around an individual's skills development, rather than merely listing motivators and barriers (Johnson *et al.*, 2009).

In order to better understand drivers for training amongst employees in the care and hotel sectors a stated preference approach was used. However, it should be noted that the stated preference exercise was designed in conjunction with the questionnaire. A stated preference approach, when combined with other methods, can assist in understanding the value and importance of goods and services that are difficult to analyse through the investigation of markets and prices. It is argued here that stated preference methods can be useful to measure the preferences of people because they can also take account of some unobserved differences, or heterogeneity, among the respondents in terms of their attitudes towards different scenarios presented to them. Stated preference allows the respondent to choose between options and so gives a more 'realistic' set of choices to them and identifies the balance of weights given to different factors.

A stated preference approach gives people hypothetical choices about goods or services, in this case 'training' (as this is a better understood term by interviewees than 'workplace learning'), and then asks them to choose among the options presented. The person being questioned may state their preference by giving a monetary value and a score or by selecting or ranking one option over all other options, depending on how the question is framed. By examining how people respond to a range of choices it is possible to estimate their preference for a particular characteristic of the training (e.g. when it is carried out) by using choice modelling.

In other studies, O'Keefe *et al.* (2006) used stated preference (choice experiment) methods to identify the values affecting employees' decisions to participate in work-related training and in the Netherlands employee motives and learning preferences have also been analysed using stated preference models (OECD, 2005). Further details on the stated preference scenarios can be found in the Technical Report Appendix 4. Similar methodologies have been used to explore other aspects of employment relations, including employers' recruitment decisions (McQuaid and Bergman, 2008).

A useful guide to the approach is provided by Pearce and Ozdemiroglu (2002) and elaborated on by Bateman *et al.* (2004) who have produced a manual on how to apply stated preference and choice modelling for economic evaluation. The method is explained by Adamowicz *et al.* (1998) and Hensher *et al.* (2005). The stated preference approach has been applied to identify modal choice and behaviour in transport (Ben-Akiva and Lerman 1985, Bhat and Castelar, 2002; Rizzi and de Dois Ortúzar 2003; Loo 2008), optimal product configuration in marketing (Burton and Pearse, 2002), decision making in health services (Mark and Swait, 2004; Schwappach and Strasmann, 2006), personnel selection and in assessing training needs (de Wolf and van der Valden, 2001; de Graaf-Zijl, 2005). Further background is given in Technical Report Appendix 2.

3.5 Employer Interviews

Brief interviews were conducted with the managers in each workplace either face-to-face, or in a few cases over the telephone (24 in total, 12 in each sector). Staff running NVQ study days were also interviewed (see Technical Report Appendix 5 for the employer questionnaire). These interviews were conducted in order to provide background contextual for the findings from the employee questionnaires.

3.6 Piloting

The employee questionnaires, including the stated preference approach, were designed as part of the same questionnaire and piloted in December 2010 with six employees at a care home. Feedback from this pilot, which was fed into the final drafts of the research tools, was centred on the following issues:

- The length of the questionnaire;
- The realism of the situations described on the SP cards;
- The difficulty participants had in choosing between options on the SP cards;
- Participants basing choices in the SP to earlier choices in the exercise.

Changes were also made as a result of feedback from the interviewers to the SP and some very minor changes to the questionnaire after the first 24 interviews were conducted in January 2011. This accounted for in the analysis.

3.7 Analysis

Basic descriptive analysis was conducted on significant associations between extrinsic and intrinsic factors and participation in work-related training. The qualitative data emerging from the same interviews on key barriers and facilitators (and the interaction of various intrinsic and extrinsic factors) were thematically analysed. Full details of the stated preference analysis and details of the econometric models developed can be found in the Technical Report Appendix 2.

4 Findings: Employees in Low Skilled Jobs

Summary

- In all cases, employees are keen to engage in training.
- Low skilled employees value and recognise the importance of improving skills and obtaining qualifications. They preferred training to no training in all the scenarios.
- Employees had realistic expectations of the outcomes of their most recent training, which focused on intrinsic factors. They expected to do their jobs better, be more satisfied with their work but did not generally expect to earn more money or achieve a promotion. For over 90 per cent of employees the expected outcomes of training actually happened.
- Low skilled employees' motivations are focused on intrinsic factors such as, doing their job better and improving their skills. However, the main barriers to further training were extrinsic factors, such as financial costs or time,
- Attitudes towards and engagement in workplace learning are linked to the job requiring learning and the workplace training environment and culture (support and encouragement).
- The stated preference exercise found that pay is a stronger motivator of long-duration training than when the training was offered. However, job attributes relating to security, satisfaction, responsibility are not large motivating factors at all.
- Men significantly prefer training more than women particularly in the care sector. All other all age groups significantly prefer training to those aged 16 to 24 years old. Employees qualified to NVQ level 3 or higher significantly prefer training to less qualified employees.

In this chapter the findings from the employee survey and stated preference analysis are reported. First the characteristics of the sample of employees are described, followed by findings on their expectations of training and the degree to which these expectations are met. This is followed by an analysis of the motivations for training and then reasons for not engaging in training. The chapter concludes by reporting the findings from the stated preference analysis which focuses on the factors that motivate individuals to undertake more training (a significant commitment). Further results are set out in the Technical Report Technical Report Appendix 6.

4.1 Characteristics of the employees

The following tables provide an analysis of the sample characteristics, including age, educational background and previous training undertaken. There are important differences between employees in the two sectors, employees in the hotel sector are younger and tended to be lower qualified. In the care sector most of the employees interviewed were aged between 25-49 years old, with the largest group aged 33-44 years old (29 per cent of all care employees in the sample), as shown in Table 4.1.1. The hotel sector (Table 4.1.2) sample was younger with most being under 35 years old and the largest group being under 25 years old (34 per cent of all hotel employees). There were few differences between the age structures of each gender in the care sector but in the hotel sector there were more men aged between 35-44 years old (32% men compared to 16% women) and more women were aged between 25-34 years old (women 26%, men 20%) and 45-49 years old in the hotel sector (14% women, 8% men).

Table 4.1.1 Age of Employees: Care Sector

Age	Men	Women	Total
	%	%	%
Under 25 years old	11	17	16
25 – 34 years old	19	17	18
35 – 44 years old	31	29	29
45 – 49 years old	14	16	15
50 – 54 years old	8	10	9
55 – 64 years old	14	10	10
Over 65 years	3	2	2
Total (numbers)	100% (36)	100% (167)	100% (203)

Source: Employee Survey

Base: All respondents. Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Table 4.1.2 Age of Employees: Hotel Sector

Age	Men	Women	Total
	%	%	%
Under 25 years old	36	33	34
25 – 34 years old	20	26	25
35 – 44 years old	32	16	20
45 – 49 years old	8	14	13
50 – 54 years old	4	5	5
55 – 64 years old	0	4	3
Over 65 years	0	1	1
Total (numbers)	100% (25)	100% (76)	100% (101)

Source: Employee Survey

Base: All respondents. Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

An eighth (12 per cent) of care employees and nearly a third (32 per cent) of hotel employees had no qualifications (see table 4.1.3). Over half (53 per cent) of care employees and nearly a quarter (24 per cent) of hotel sector employees had NVQ level 1 or 2 qualifications (23 per cent and 24 per cent respectively had NVQ level 3-4 qualifications or degree). As can be seen from table 4.1.3, not all the employees interviewed were low skilled in terms of their qualifications (overall 23% had an NVQ level 3 or above) but all the employees were employed in low skilled positions.

Table 4.1.3 Highest Qualification

Highest Qualification	Care	Hotels	Total
	%	%	%
None	12	32	18
NVQ 1	4	5	4
NVQ 2	49	19	39
NVQ 3	17	10	15
NVQ4	3	1	2
Degree	3	13	6
Other	13	19	15
Total (numbers)	100% (198)	100% (98)	100% (296)

Source: Employee Survey

Base: All respondents. Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Most of the respondents had left school early. The average age at which they had left school was 16 years old for care sector employees and 17 years old for hotel sector employees respectively. Respondents, especially care sector employees had been in their current job for some time (an average of 60 months for care and 33 months for hotel sector employees but with a large variation, especially in the care sector). Most worked nearly full-time (33 care and 36 hours per week hotel sector) and had recently engaged in training (3 weeks care sector and 6 weeks hotel sector since their last training). The type of training last undertaken reflected the sector with 24 per cent of care sector employees engaging in manual handling courses (4 per cent in hotels); 20 per cent (care) and 23 per cent (hotels) in fire awareness; and 33 per cent (care) and 41 per cent (hotels) in other training (see table 4.1.4 below).

Table 4.1.4 Most recent training undertaken

Type Training	Care	Hotels
	%	%
Manual Handling	24	4
Fire awareness	20	23
Health & Safety	14	8
Induction	5	14
Customer Care	1	7
Forklift training	1	3
Technical	0	1
Other	33	41
Total (numbers)	100% (219)	100% (74)

Source: Employee Survey

Base: All respondents. Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Over 90 per cent of respondents had only one job and a similar number were permanent employees. Most care sector employees owned their own home (58 per cent) compared to 39 per cent of hotel sector employees, which is partly due to the different age structures.

4.2 Expectations and the Outcomes of Training

Employees' expectations of the outcomes of their last training were concentrated around intrinsic factors (individual, motivational and attitudinal) that were related to the employee's current job. Expectations did not focus on longer term career ambitions, such as earning more money, promotion or getting a new job. Some 60 per cent of employees expect to "be able to do my job better" and to "learn new skills for the job I was doing at the time" (59 per cent), while 45 per cent expected to get "more satisfaction out of my work" (Table 4.2.1). The fourth relatively large expectation was to "get to a qualification/part of a qualification" (30 per cent). In the hotel sector only the first three were expected by relatively large numbers of employees, but at lower levels than in the care sector for each expectation with just over half (51 per cent in the hotel sector compared to 63 per cent in the care sector) expecting to learn skills for their current job; 56 per cent (compared to 61 per cent in care) to do their job better; and 38 per cent to get more job satisfaction (48 per cent in care). Expecting training to lead to qualifications was cited by only 10 per cent in the hotel sector compared to 40 per cent in the care sector. Immediately, this highlights further differences between the two sectors, where employees in the hotel sector tend to be more focused on the next job or promotion, whilst in the care sector employees are more focused on qualifications.

Table 4.2.1 Expectations of most recent training

Expectations	Care	Hotel	Total
	%	%	%
Would be able to do my job better	61	56	60
Would learned new skills for my job	63	51	59
Get more satisfaction out of work	48	38	45
Lead to a full or part qualification	40	10	30
Expected nothing to happen	13	18	15
Stay in my job – could have lost without training	17	10	15
Get a more permanent job	6	5	6
Changed to a different type of work	5	7	6
Get a new job	6	1	4
Earn more money	2	2	2
Get a promotion	0	3	1
Total	100% (205)	100% (105)	100% (310)

Source: Employee Survey

Base: All respondents. Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Employees were then asked whether training outcomes matched their expectations (although this will be influenced by the duration of training and hence the time to actually change things and also by ex-post rationalising of their expectations). In most cases what was expected from the training actually did happen (Table 4.2.2). In the care sector 46 per cent of employees did actually get more satisfaction out of their work, so some 95 per cent of those expecting it achieved this. While in the hotel sector 36 per cent actually got more job satisfaction, so 90 per cent achieved their expectations (see Technical Report Appendix 6 figures A6.1 – A6.5 for further details). In both sectors around 94 per cent of those expecting to learn new skills for the job they were doing at the time, did so and 95 per cent in care and 92 per cent in hotels matched their expectation of being able to do their job better. Very few thought that training would lead to a dramatic change such as get a new or better job, a pay rise or promotion. These observations point to the experiences of training being realistically focused on the current job, although this is unsurprising as often the most recent training was task or job specific.

Table 4.2.2 Outcomes of most recent training

Outcomes	Care	Hotel	Total
	%	%	%
Was able to do my job better	62	57	60
Learnt new skills for my job	63	49	58
Get more satisfaction out of work	46	36	43
Led to a full or part qualification	37	10	28
Nothing to happen	12	18	14
Stayed in my job – could have lost without training	16	9	13
Got a more permanent job	5	5	5
Changed to a different type of work	5	7	5
Got a new job	3	1	3
Earned more money	1	2	1
Got a promotion	*	3	1
Total (number)	100% (205)	100% (105)	100% (310)

Source: Employee Survey

Base: All respondents. Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

(* - less than 1%)

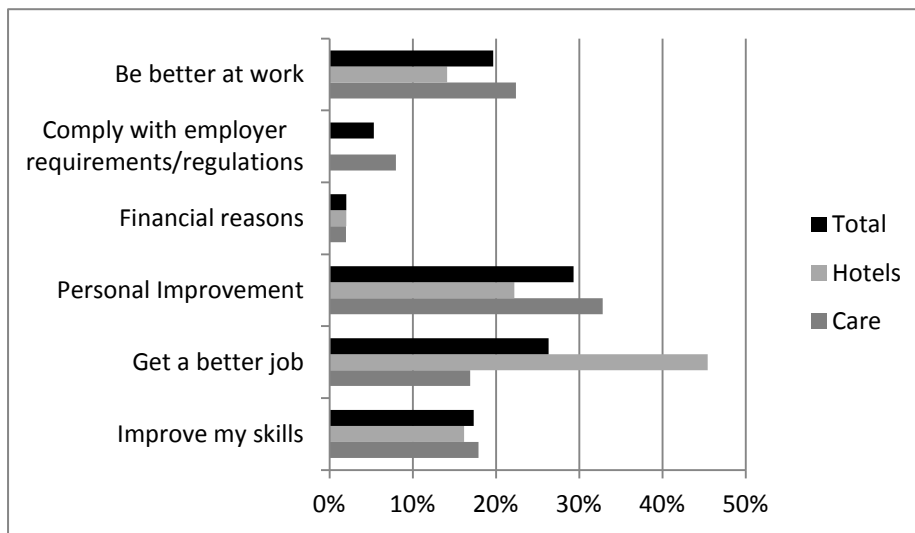
From Tables 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 it is apparent that there are some notable differences between employees in the care and the hotel sectors. Those in the hotel sector had lower expectations and lower realisation of those expectations than those in the care sector. This is especially in terms of training leading to a qualification where there is a difference of 30 percentage points in the expectations (nearly 40 per cent in care expected this compared to 10 per cent in hotels) and 27 percentage points in terms of their realisation. In the care sector 94 per cent of those expecting a qualification (or part of one) had received one (similar to hotels although the numbers are small). This relates both to the different employee characteristics and the different sector employment opportunities.

Differences in expectations and what happened are displayed graphically in Technical Report Appendix 6 Figures A6.1 – A6.5 for sector, gender, age and qualification level. In general the pattern remains the same across the various groups with respondents expecting training to equip them with skills to do their jobs better and to make their work more satisfying. Women consistently were slightly more likely to record that their expectations had been met. In the care sector those aged over 50 were very slightly more likely to have had their expectations met, while in hotels the small numbers of respondents aged over 50 means caution must be used but they generally were less likely to have met their expectations.

4.3 Motivations for Training

Following the establishment of individuals' expectations for training and the actual outcomes achieved, their motivations are explored. Given that low skilled employees expectations of training focus on the current job, it might be expected that their motivations also relate to their current job. The responses show differences between the sectors and the main motivators are shown in Figure 4.3.1 below. Personal improvement and to be better at work, are the main motivators for those in the care sector while those in the hotel sector are mainly motivated by the desire to get a better job and to a much lesser extent by a desire for personal improvement.

Figure 4.3.1 Motivations for training



Source: Employee Survey

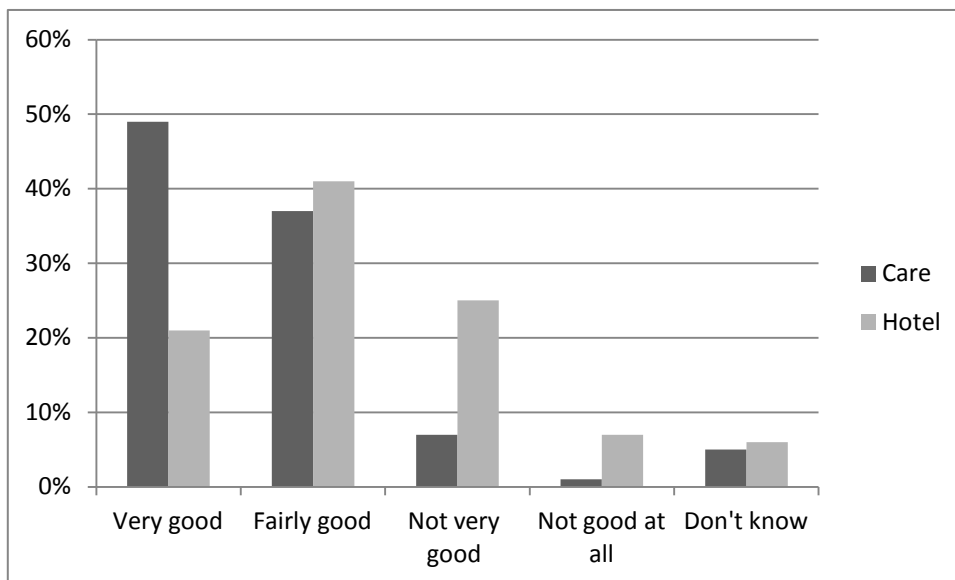
Base: All respondents

Variation in the motivations for training by gender, age and qualifications are presented in Technical Report Appendix 6 (Figures A6.6 – A6.8). Important extrinsic factors (workplace, social and economic) in influencing training include the support of employers and line managers and the training opportunities provided by the job.

4.4 Employee Attitudes: Work Environment

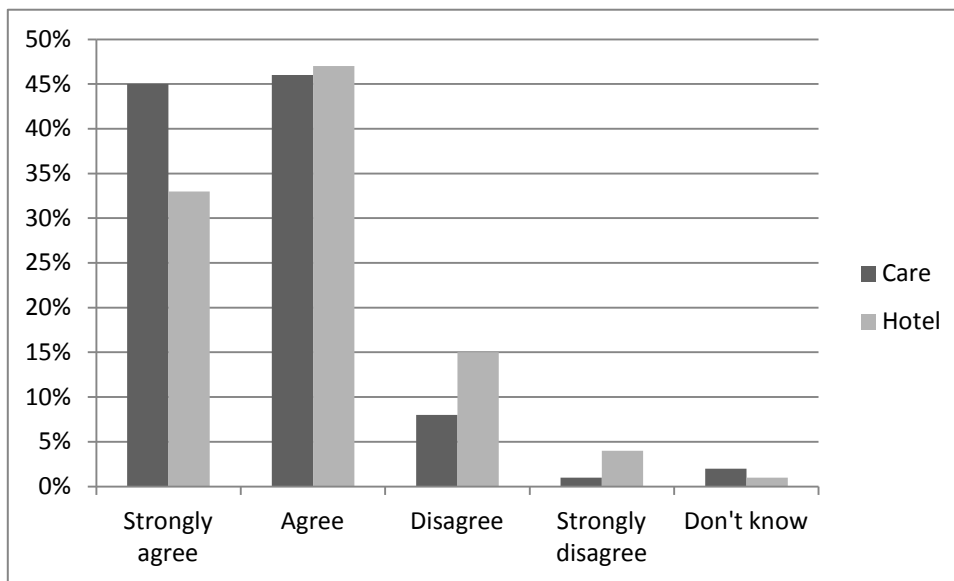
Employees were then asked about different aspects of their current work environment and how this impacted on their work place learning. Firstly, respondents were asked about the general availability of training opportunities in their workplace. The respondents were asked, on a four point scale, the degree to which their job gives good opportunities for training (where 1 equated to very good opportunities and 4 equated to opportunities are not good at all). Separately respondents were also asked if employer encouraged learning in the workplace (where 1 equated to strongly agree and 4 strongly disagree). The average scores were 1.79 for their job gives good opportunities for training and were 1.75 for their employer encouraging learning. As the scores for both questions were lower than 2 (a lower score is preferable and a score of 2 represents fairly good opportunities or agreeing that employer encourages learning) this indicates that most respondents considered that there were good opportunities for training in their current job and that their employer encouraged training. The care sector employees scored more highly than the hotels in both cases. This suggests that care sector employees feel their work environment supports and encourages more of a training culture. The results are presented in the below Figures 4.4.1 and 4.4.2.

Figure 4.4.1 Training opportunities by sector (%)



Source: Employee Survey
 Base: All Respondents

Figure 4.4.2 Does the employer encourage training by sector (%)

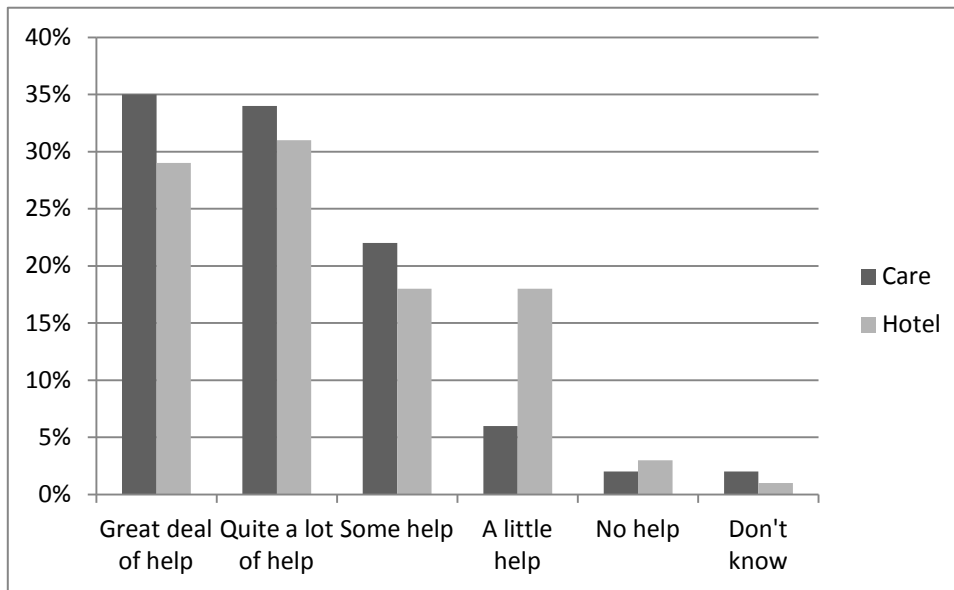


Source: Employee Survey
Base: All Respondents

Similarly, respondents were asked on a five point scale if they found supervisors or managers helpful in learning how to do their job better (1 equated to a great deal of help and 5 equated to no help at all) and also whether supervisors or managers encouraged training, (1 equated to a great deal of help and 5 equated to no help at all). The findings for encouragement by managers are shown in Figure 4.4.3 below. The average figure for 'supervisors/managers being helpful' was 2.16 and the average figure for 'supervisors/managers encouraging training' 2.57 (a lower figure is preferable). Both these figures are lower than 3 (the neutral score) so employees find supervisors/managers helpful and encouraging with regards learning and training. However, only 'supervisors/managers being helpful' was significantly different from the neutral score. This suggests that supervisors/managers were felt to help with training, which could include organising and paying for training but do not particularly encourage training, which relates more to the culture.

Respondents also felt there was less encouragement from supervisors or managers for employees to undertake non mandatory work related training. This is training not specified or required by standards or legislation. In the care sector 57 per cent of employees, and in hotels only a third (33 per cent) had received a great deal or quite a lot of help from their supervisor or manager to undertake non mandatory work related training. Indeed a fifth (20%) of those in hotels had received little or no encouragement at all to undertake non mandatory work related training. Overall, employees feel greater support for employee training in the care sector.

Figure 4.4.3 Employees views on the encouragement of their supervisor/manager (%)



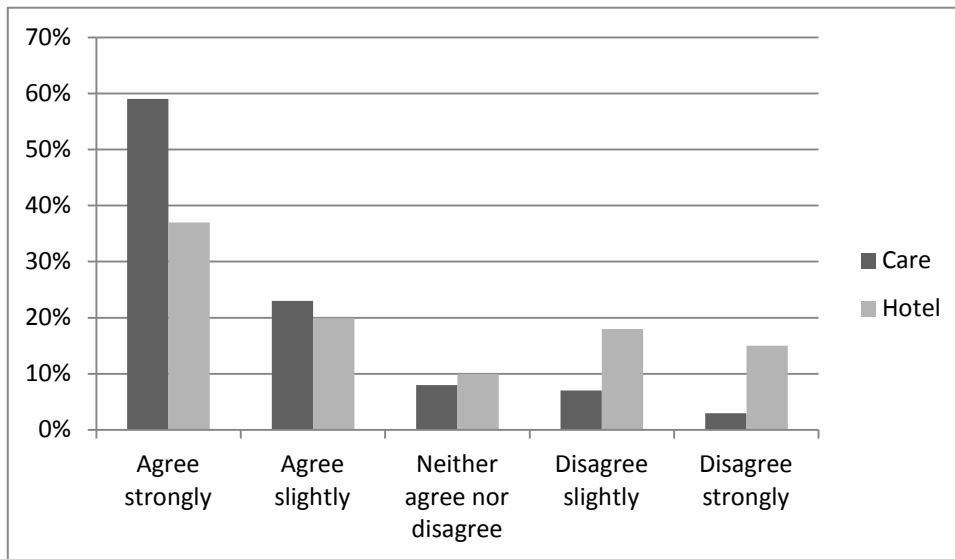
Source: Employee Survey
Base: All Respondents

The findings focused on work environment, show that care sector employees feel that their current work environment and culture encouraged and supported workplace training more than employees in the hotels sector.

4.5 Employee Attitudes: Value of workplace learning

Respondents were asked if they valued qualifications in order to enhance employment prospects and their views are illustrated in Figure 4.5.1. This illustrates that the majority of employees within the care and hotel sectors were in strong agreement that qualifications are required for employment. Respondents reported on a five point scale their level of agreement, (where 1 is strongly agree and 5 is strongly disagree). The average score was 1.74 as this is significantly lower than 3 (a lower score is preferable and 3 is the neutral level) this indicates that respondents value training. This is an important issue as it shows that employees value workplace learning and understand that it is beneficial for job prospects. There are no noticeable differences by sub-groups (see Technical Report Appendix 6, table A6.4 for further detail).

Figure 4.5.1 Qualifications are required to get anywhere these days

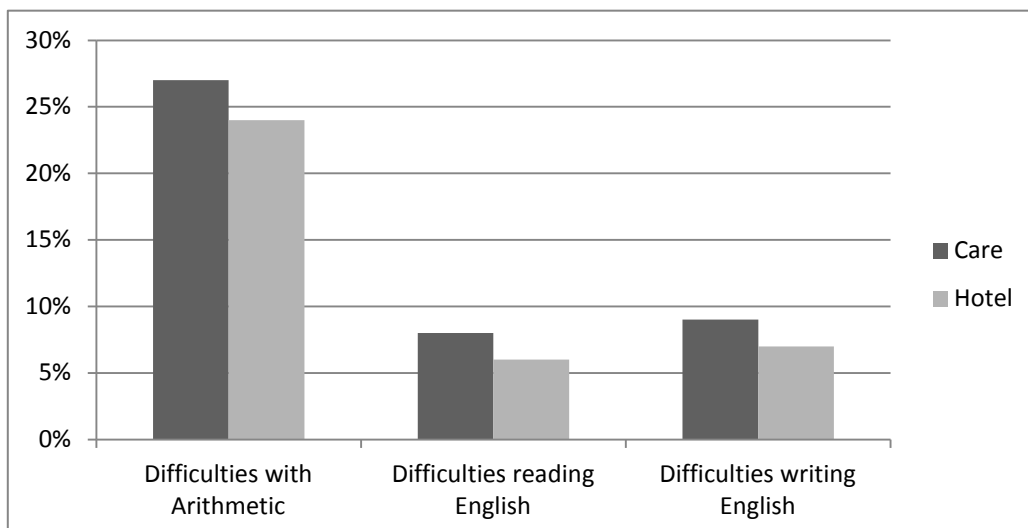


Source: Employee Survey
Base: All Respondents

4.6 Self-efficacy

Employees were asked about their self-awareness and self-efficacy which focused on their numeracy, literacy and writing skills. Figure 4.6.1 shows those expressing difficulties with arithmetic or in reading or writing English. Arithmetic presents a problem for just over a quarter (27%) of employees in the care sector and nearly a quarter (24%) of hotel sector employees. Less than 10 per cent in each sector stated that they had difficulties in reading or writing English. Overall, slightly more care sector employees have such numeracy or literacy difficulties, which may be related to the age profile of employees or different requirements of the job.

Figure 4.6.1 Difficulties with arithmetic and English by sector (%)



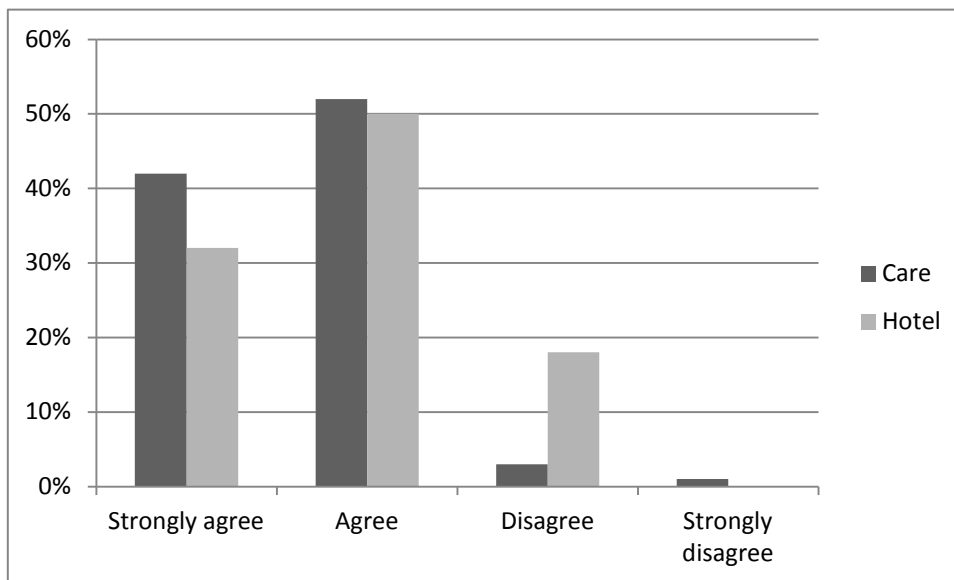
Source: Employee Survey
Base: All Respondents

Self-efficacy is defined as person’s estimate of their capacity to perform a specific task (Gist and Mitchell, 1992, p.183). In terms of self-awareness and self-efficacy, those who have difficulty with reading, writing or arithmetic appeared to believe that these limited skills would reduce their capacity to obtain a successful career. Such respondents are more likely to agree that “you need qualifications to get anywhere these days” (all highly statistically significant at 5 per cent⁹); although these results should be considered with caution given the small number of responses involved. Hence, there is some evidence that (a lack of) self-efficacy and self-awareness, in terms of an employee recognising their own lack of basic skills, is related to a feeling that learning is important for a better job or the need for qualifications¹⁰.

4.7 Employee Attitudes: Outcomes of Workplace Learning

Most respondents believed that work related training led to them learning new things as shown in figure 4.7.1 below. Most of the respondents considered that they had made use of the knowledge gained from training (92 per cent in the care sector and in 84 per cent the hotel sector). It should be noted that attitudes towards the usefulness of learning may be influenced by whether the jobs require learning or allows use of their knowledge but the findings suggest that the training was appropriate and useful to their current job.

Figure 4.7.1 Work related training leads to learning new things (%)



Source: Employee Survey
Base: All Respondents

⁹ p=.001, .008 and .036.

¹⁰ In the case of lack of skills in arithmetic there was no correlation with the question “employers hardly ever take notice of the learning, education or training you have done”.

Respondents in both sectors generally considered that their employers did take notice of training they had done and felt that training was more likely to lead to a better job. The summary responses are tabulated in Table 4.7.1 (in the first question note that strongly disagree means that they consider that employers do take notice of training¹¹).

Table 4.7.1 Views of employers and training can lead to a better job

Agree/Disagree	Employers hardly ever take notice of training you have completed		More likely to get a better job if do some training	
	Care	Hotel	Care	Hotel
Strongly agree	6%	11%	61%	54%
Agree	14%	21%	21%	29%
Neither agree not disagree	14%	14%	7%	4%
Disagree	23%	29%	9%	7%
Strongly disagree	43%	25%	2%	7%

Source: Employee Survey

Base: All respondents.

Further analysis indicated that there is also a significant correlation between agreeing that “my job requires that I keep learning new things” and “you are more likely to get a better job if you do some learning, training or education” (at the 10 per cent level¹²) and also disagreeing with “employers hardly ever take notice of the learning, education or training you have done”.¹³ Similarly, those stating “in my current job I have enough opportunity to use the knowledge and skills that I have already” disagreed that “employers hardly ever take notice of the learning, education or training you have done”.¹⁴ Hence, there are strong links between low skilled employees feeling that their job requires learning, that learning will lead to a better job and their current job gives opportunities to use their skills and knowledge and with their views that employers do take notice of learning, education or training (although it is not clear if one causes the other). It suggests that job design and ability to apply skills are important factors in relation to low skilled employees views and engagement in workplace learning.

¹¹ Some questions involved agreeing with a ‘positive’ factor and others with a ‘negative’ factor so as to ensure thoughtful completion of the responses.

¹² $p=.098$.

¹³ $p=.001$.

¹⁴ $p=.001$.

4.8 Barriers to Training

The main *barriers* explaining why low skilled employees would be unable or unwilling to undertake (further) work related training were largely extrinsic ones (i.e. out of the control of the employee). The main barrier to engagement in workplace learning for low skilled employees is the fees for training. Fees (cash) are a barrier for 54 per cent of all employees in both sectors. Time costs are a barrier for 24 per cent of care employees and 42 per cent of hotel employees, with them perceiving it to be a barrier if training needed to be done in their own time, unpaid. The lack of time to do training during the workday is a barrier for around third of employees in each sector (33 per cent care sector and 35 per cent hotel sector). Nine percent of the respondents cite that their employer was not supportive of training as a barrier. Interestingly, intrinsic factors are less of a barrier for low skilled employees, with the main ones being people not feeling a need for training. Where, 16 per cent of care and 19 per cent of hotel sector employees felt they could already do their job well with the skills they have. Details on the reasons for not engaging in training are displayed in Table 4.8.1 below.

Table 4.8.1 Barriers to employees undertaking (further) work related training

Barriers	Care	Hotel	Total
	%	%	%
Fees of the training	54%	54%	54%
Not enough time in the working day to undertake training	33%	35%	34%
If it needed to be done in my own time, unpaid	24%	42%	30%
I already do my job well with the skills I have	16%	19%	17%
Care giving responsibilities	15%	10%	13%
It wouldn't help change the type of work I do	8%	16%	11%
It wouldn't lead to a rise in my earnings	7%	15%	10%
My employer is not supportive	10%	7%	9%
Health problems/disability	8%	9%	8%
It wouldn't lead to promotion	4%	14%	7%
Other	5%	5%	5%
I do not feel confident enough to undertake training	4%	3%	4%
Total (Number)	100% (205)	100% (105)	100% (310)

Source: Employee Survey
Base: All Respondents

Care giving responsibilities (mainly for children and grandchildren) are a barrier for 15 per cent of those in the care sector and 10 per cent of those in hotels. Surprisingly, family commitments are equally high regardless of gender. Interesting points are that a lack of time is cited much more and family commitments and illness less for the hotel sector employees compared to those in the care sector. However, this may be a reflection of the younger age profile of those in the hotel sector.

Those with qualifications lower than NVQ level 3 cite illness as a barrier much more than those with higher qualifications, whereas those with a higher qualification cite irrelevancy of available training much more than those with lower qualifications. Limited benefits of training in terms of changing their type of work, not leading to promotion and not leading to a rise in earnings were important barriers for 14 to 16 per cent of hotel employees but less so for care sector employees (only 4 to 8 per cent). Further highlights the difference between the two sectors.

There are some variations in barriers to engagement in training by different characteristics. These differences by sector, gender, age and qualifications are shown in Technical Report Appendix 6.3 figure A6.9 to A6.12. This shows that those aged over 50 years old generally had greater numbers of barriers to training in both sectors than younger employees. Men also had greater numbers of barriers in the care sector than women, but this was less clear for hotels.

The extrinsic factor of 'opportunities to do training' does not appear to be a major barrier, especially in the care sector. This is further reinforced by the finding that 86 per cent of care sector employees feel that their job gives them very or fairly good opportunities for training, although only 62 per cent in hotels agree with this. Only 8 per cent of care sector employees and 32 per cent of hotel employees state that opportunities for training are not very good or not good at all (with the remainder not being able to say). So the training culture of the care sector appears to be stronger than the hotel sector. In general, the care sector provides good opportunities for training for the majority of low skilled employees. This is less applicable to the hotel sector and those aged over 50 years old in the hotel sector are particularly likely to state that there are few training opportunities. It is noticeable that women are marginally more positive about training opportunities in the hotel sector and men in the care sector. One explanation of the differences in barriers between hotel and care sectors is that employees in the hotel sector are considerably younger than those in the care sector.

Conversely the main reasons for wanting to do training are largely intrinsic. In the care sector, personal improvement is cited by 33 per cent but in hotels this is only 22 per cent. Meanwhile 17 per cent of care sector employees and 46 per cent of those in the hotel sector cite that they would want to do training to get a better job. Some 22 per cent of care and 14 per cent of hotel sector employees stated to be better at work as the main reason for wanting to do training.

It is interesting that for low skilled employees extrinsic factors are more of a barrier to workplace learning than intrinsic factors. Such extrinsic factors, such as cost and time are easier to address through policy levers and initiatives in the short term than more complex intrinsic factors.

4.9 Stated Preference Exercise

4.9.1 Introduction

As part of the survey of low skilled employees a stated preference exercise was conducted. This is the first time such a methodology has been used with this group of employees and the aim was to provide a more realistic situation, where employees expressed a preference (made a choice) between the different characteristics or attributes of workplace training. Through this methodology employees choose between the different scenarios they prefer. The scenarios focused on what would motivate or induce low skilled employees to be engaged in (more) training. It is important to note that the stated preference scenarios were developed simultaneously with the questionnaire, so the scenarios developed were not influenced by the findings from the survey but by evidence from the review in chapter 2. It should also be noted that in the stated preference exercise training refers to a **two year course with a regular time commitment each week that leads to a qualification**. Whereas, the training in the survey referred to an individuals' most recent training which was mainly job specific, less of a commitment and rarely lead to a qualification, so we are looking at a very different type of training.

The stated preference approach allows individuals to make a hypothetical choice between different scenarios. Employees are asked how likely they are to undertake training compared to **not doing any training** for a given scenario. Where, scenarios vary according to potential outcomes of training. The object of this choice model is to determine the relative strength of preference by low skilled employees for training by three sets of potential outcomes after training: changes in job satisfaction, security and responsibility; changes in pay; and when the training is carried out. Details of the approach and methodology are discussed in the Technical Report Appendix 2. Each scenario (factor) was composed of three levels as shown in Table 4.9.1.

Table 4.9.1 Factors and Levels used in the Stated Preference/Choice Experiment

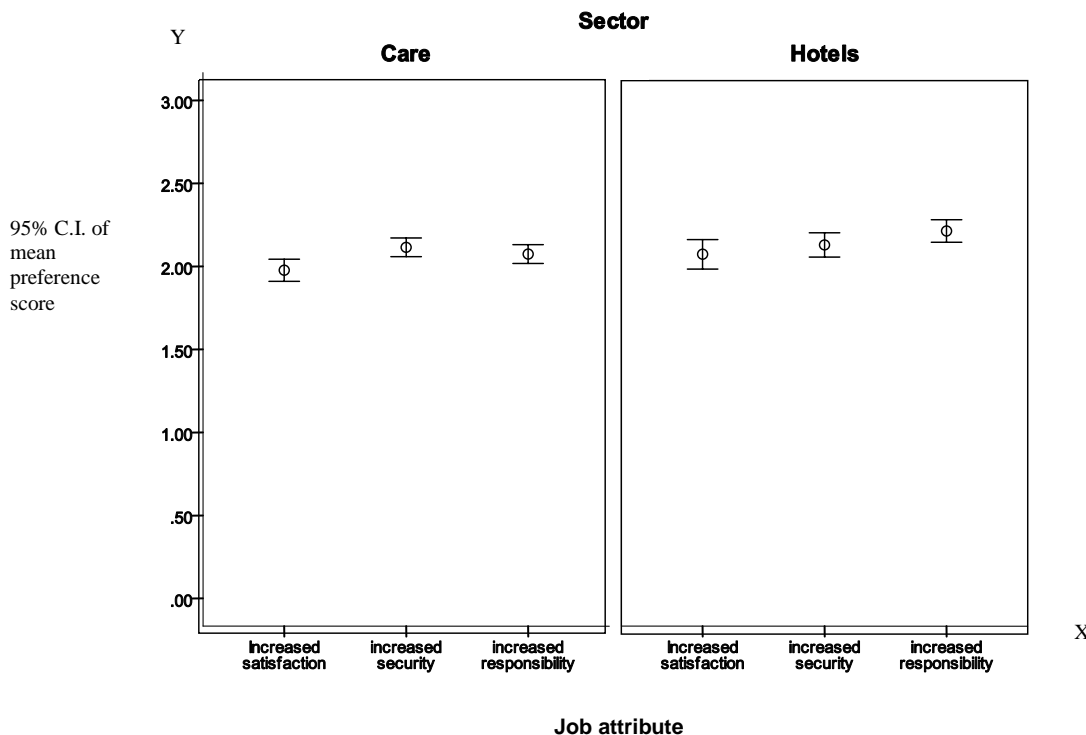
Factor	Level
Job Outcome	Increased Satisfaction Increased Security Increased Responsibility
Pay Outcome	No pay rise Small pay rise Substantial pay rise
Time when training is conducted	In own time In work time Half in own time, half in work time

The respondents could choose no training or choose one of the training outcome options as: slightly preferred; preferred; or very much preferred.

4.9.2 Findings

Using choice modelling to analyse the data collected by stated preference allows the preferred combination of the above factors and levels to be identified while controlling for respondent characteristics such as the sector they are working in, gender, age and qualifications. Preferences scores are calculated and summaries of the preference scores for all respondents are presented in Figures 4.9.1 to 4.9.3. The preference scores are shown on the y axis (vertical) and they range from 0 (would rather not do any training) at the bottom of the y axis to 3 (very much preferred to do training) at the top of the y axis. As shown, all the preference scores are above the midpoint of these scales¹⁵ which, means that employees in both the care and hotel sectors have a strong preference for undertaking training. So regardless of the outcomes of training or the timing of training low skilled employees prefer to engage in long-duration training than not engage in any training. This is supported by earlier findings from the survey which show that low skilled employees value qualifications and understand the importance of workplace learning (see 4.5).

Figure 4.9.1 Preferences by job attribute outcome



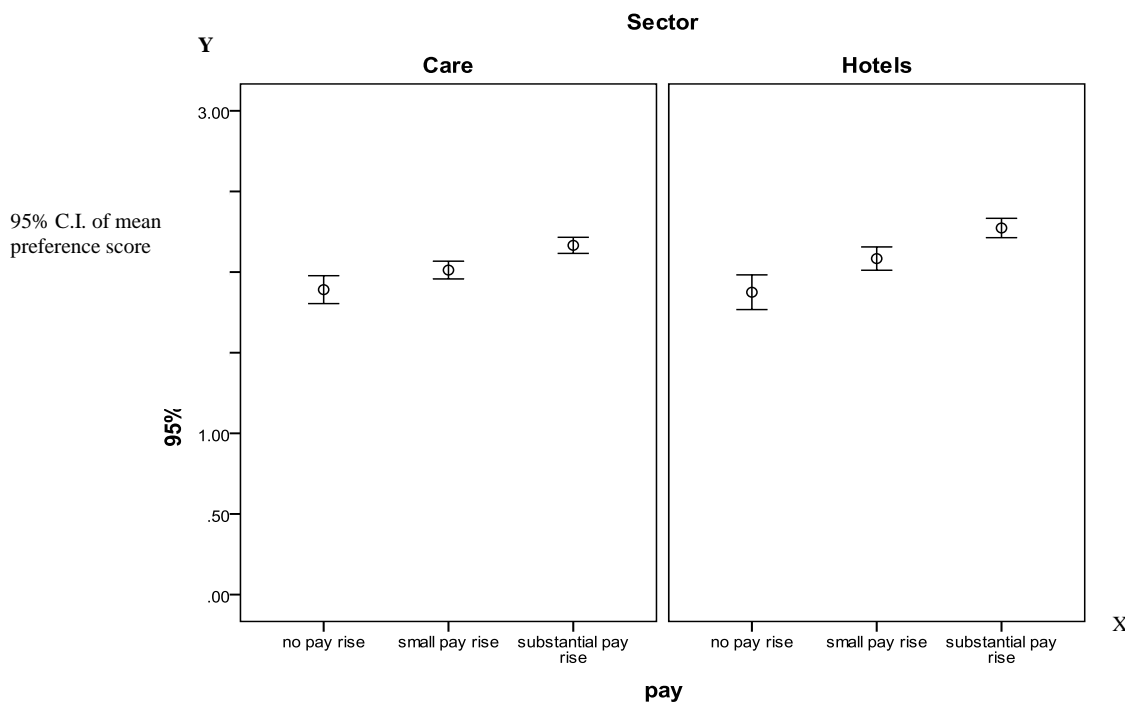
Source: Employee Survey
Base: All Respondents

¹⁵ The midpoint is shown as a small circle with the 95% confidence limits being the top and bottom bars. This means that we are 95% confident that the 'true' score lies between the bars.

Figure 4.9.1 illustrates preferences for job attribute outcomes for employees in the care and hotel sectors. The level of preference is illustrated on the y axis, with the top of the axis illustrating a strong preference for each specific job attribute indicated on the x axis. (The bottom of the y axis is low preference for the specific job attribute, e.g. a score of 1 means they do not prefer this option and 0 means a preference for no training). As stated earlier, employees prefer to engage in training than no training. However, Figure 4.9.1 also shows that care sector employees prefer increased security as an outcome to increased responsibility and satisfaction. While employees in the hotel sector prefer increased responsibility preferred to increased security and increased satisfaction as outcomes. This may be related to employees in the hotel sector being younger than employees in the care sector.

In Figure 4.9.2 the preferences for pay outcomes for employees in the care and hotel sectors are displayed. The level of preference is illustrated on the y axis with the top of the axis illustrating 'very much prefer training with this outcome' (the bottom of the axis demonstrates prefer no training).

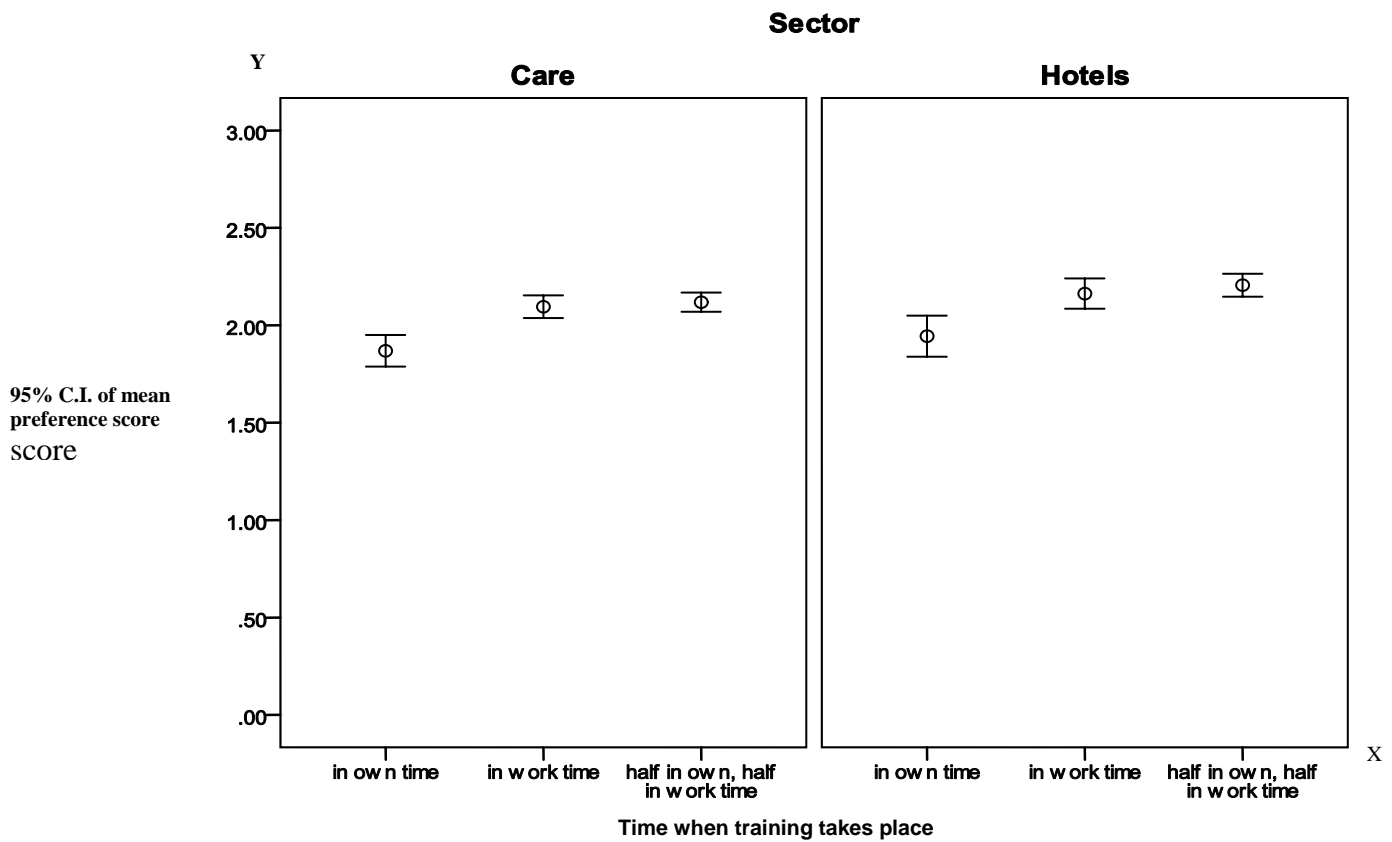
Figure 4.9.2 Preferences if training results in pay increase



Source: Employee Survey
 Base: All Respondents

Figure 4.9.2 indicates that the majority of care and hotel sector employees prefer to undertake training when the outcome is a substantial pay increase. Employees working in the hotel sector seem to slightly prefer a substantial pay increase than those working in the care sector. The respondents were asked what in financial terms, they considered a small and substantial pay rise to be. The average small increase in pay was reported to be £0.77 per hour and the average substantial increase was reported to be £2.25 per hour.¹⁶ This indicates that low skilled employees are more motivated by the outcome of a pay increase of approximately £2.25.

Figure 4.9.3 Preferences by time when training is conducted



Source: Employee Survey
 Base: All Respondents

¹⁶ If we assume that low skilled employees are on average paid the minimum wage of £6.08 per hour (21 years old+ October 2011) a small increase of £0.77 is equivalent to 12% and a substantial pay increase of £2.25 is equivalent to 37%.

Figure 4.9.3 illustrates preferences for time when training is conducted by employees in the care and hotel sectors. The level of preference is illustrated on the y axis, with the top of the axis illustrating employees who 'very much prefer training within the time frame indicated on the x axis (the bottom of the axis demonstrates low levels of preference for training within the assigned time frame) compared to undertaking no training. Preferences are similar for both sectors, where employees prefer to undertake training regardless of the specific timing to no training. It also shows that employees prefer training that is not exclusively in one's own time. In both sectors there is a strong preference for training that is partially in work time and partially in an employees' own time.

Overall, figures 4.9.1 to 4.9.3 show that employees' preferences are consistently to undertake training in comparison to no training. However, preferences in relation to specific scenarios are slight. So that increased responsibility in the hotels and increased security in the care sector are preferred but in both sectors a substantial pay rise (£2.25) is preferred and that undertaking training exclusively on one's own time is not preferred.

4.9.3 Logistic Regression

The previous figures and analysis show that there are only slight variations preference scores, however, when tested some of these differences are *statistically significant*¹⁷. Although the variations in the preference scores are slight, analysis of variance shows that some of the variations are significant at the 1 per cent level (so we are very confident that there is a real difference between the preferences). Therefore, the results are unlikely to have occurred by chance. This level of significance allows the fitting of a multinomial logistic regression model to explain this variation and the model derived from the sample as a whole is presented in Table 4.9.2.

In Table 4.9.2 below, the coefficients of the model shown in the first column displays the strength of preference. Positive values indicate a preference for workplace training whilst negative figures indicate that no training is preferred. In all cases, except for women and the outcome of increased responsibility training is preferred to no training. This analysis confirms earlier findings and shows that this is a statistically valid finding and has not occurred randomly. It should be noted that the goodness of fit statistics indicated that this model is slightly over dispersed (ideally figures should be closer to 1) but generally fitted the variation in preference scores well.

¹⁷ P=1%

In summary, the model results shown in Table 4.9.2 confirms earlier findings and indicates that there is a preference for substantial pay raises, increased security as outcomes and training to be conducted in work time. However, attributes of the job (satisfaction or responsibility) have no significant effect, which may be a reflection of low skilled work undertaken which yields limited intrinsic satisfaction. As shown in table 4.9.2, all levels of pay rise, significantly enhance the desire for training. It also shows that training is only significantly preferred to no training when conducted in work time.

As previously stated women employees significantly prefer training less than men and all age groups significantly prefer training to those aged 16 to 24 years old. Employees who were aged 50 to 54 year old prefer training the most. People in the hotel sector significantly prefer training to those in the care sector. Those who have NVQ level 3 qualifications significantly prefer training to those who are lower qualified.

Table 4.9.2 Coefficients and significances of the general model

		Coefficient	P value
Threshold	Preference 1 to 2	-0.336	0.071
	Preference > 2	2.261	<.0.001**
Job (compared to increased job satisfaction)			
	increased responsibility	-0.096	0.419
	Increased security	0.108	0.327
	Pay (no pay rise)		
	Substantial pay rise	0.776	<0.001**
	Small pay rise	0.387	0.006**
	Time (fully in own time)		
	Half own time half work time	0.254	0.089
	Work time	0.349	0.014*
	Gender (male)		
	Female	-0.44	<0.001**
	Age (16-24 years old)		
	65 yrs	2.018	0.015*
	55-64 yrs	0.473	0.012*
	50-54 yrs	1.553	<0.001**
	45-49 yrs	0.691	<0.001**
	35-44 yrs	0.868	<0.001**
	25-34 yrs	0.528	<0.001*
	Sector (care sector)		
	Hotels	0.331	<0.001*
	NVQ (NVQ under 3)		
	NVQ 3+	0.333	<0.001*

(* = significant at the 5 per cent level; ** = significant at the 1 per cent level)

Source: Employee Survey – stated preference exercise

The next stage is to consider the relative importance of the statistically significant findings (motivational factors) in the model shown in table 4.9.2 and identify which motivational factors are most important. The most significant motivational factors are displayed in Table 4.9.3 below. The analysis of relative importance shows that pay is the dominating motivation for long duration training (58 per cent of the effect) and is followed by when training is offered (26 per cent of the effect) and much greater than job attributes (15 per cent of the effect).

Table 4.9.3 Relative importance of motivational factors

Factor	Level	Effect	Importance
Job	Increased security	0.204	15%
Pay	Substantial Increase	0.776	58%
Time	Work Time	0.349	26%
	Total	1.330	

Source: *Employee Survey – stated preference exercise*

4.9.4 Logistic Regression sub-models: gender, age and qualifications

The logistic regression analysis was also carried out for different demographic subgroups and qualifications levels. The results from the sub-models are presented in Technical Report Appendix 2. The results of the sub-models confirm the findings derived from the overall general model presented in Table 4.9.2 above, which is a preference for a substantial pay rise, increased security and training conducted in work time. In summary, the analysis by sub-models shows that:

- In the hotel sector there are no significant differences between men and women, with both preferring more responsibility, a substantial pay rise and not to do training in their own time.
- In the care sector, men exhibit stronger preferences than women for greater job security and responsibility, although there are no significant difference between men and women in terms of preferences for job satisfaction. Substantial pay rises are especially preferred by men and both men and women would rather not train in their own time.
- For the different age groups a broadly similar pattern exists between the care and hotel sectors. Differences are that in the care sector preferences for training increase for those aged between 25 to 44 years old and for those aged between 50 to 54 years old. Also in the care sector amongst those aged 50 to 54 years old training in their own time is preferred, but not at all preferable to their counterparts

in the hotel sector. In the care sector those aged 50 to 54 years old prefer to undertake training even if it will not lead to a pay rise.

- When comparing those with lower than NVQ level 3 qualifications to those with NVQ level 3 or higher qualifications, the pattern between the sectors is similar. Those who have NVQ level 3 qualifications or higher exhibit slightly greater preferences for training than their counterparts with qualifications lower than NVQ level 3. Overall the attributes of the job seem not to matter greatly to either qualifications sub-group, but the preference for training increases as the prospects for a pay rise becomes higher. Overall, training in one's own time is not preferred.

In summary, the modelling analysis shows that pay is the most important motivator and in all cases the preference is for substantial pay rise. It should be noted that a small pay rise is a motivator for those in the hotel sector but not those in the care sector. Time of training is the next important motivator after pay but this is much less important than pay. Training in work time is only a significant motivator for employees in the care sector.

Job attributes (satisfaction, security, responsibility) are not significant motivators for employees in either sector. Attributes of the job are only motivators for training for those employees in the care sector with an NVQ level 3 qualification or higher, where the preference is for increased security.

When considering specific factors and characteristics, gender is only a significant characteristic in the care sector, where women prefer training less than men. With regards age, in the care sector there is a significant preference for training for all age groups when compared to those aged 16 to 24 year olds. But the strongest preference is amongst those employees aged 50 to 54 year old in the care sector. For those in the hotel sector the only age groups where there is a significant preference for training are those aged 35 to 44 and those aged 55 to 64 years old.

When considering those employees with NVQ level 3 qualifications and higher, it is only in the care sector where such employees show a significant preference for training.

5 Findings: Employers

Summary

- Most of the employers provided workplace training but there is more of a culture of workplace learning in the care sector.
- Employers did not feel all staff are willing to undertake workplace learning. The main barriers were felt to be extrinsic factors such as, time and other responsibilities. However, concerns were also expressed about employees' aspirations (intrinsic factors).
- A lack of opportunities for employees to progress limited to amount of training available. So despite undertaking training many staff remained low skilled.
- Employers in the care sector took a more proactive approach to encouraging engagement in training than employers in the hotel sector.

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents qualitative information collected from the interviews with the managers at twenty four participating care providers and hotels. It also includes interviews with three training providers for NVQ students in the care sector. It seeks to identify and explore the employers' perspectives on barriers and motivations for workplace learning by their staff, but is not a representative view of the sectors. Emerging themes from the discussions in each sector are explored before common themes across the sectors are highlighted. This chapter provides further context for the employee questionnaires.

Twelve care providers participated in the project: eleven care homes and one domiciliary care provider. All but two of the care homes provided nursing care, and all were privately owned. The number of residents/service users ranged from 26 to 100, and the number of employees from 36 to 200. Twelve hotels participated in the research. They varied in size with between 25 and 151 bedrooms and 17 to 275 employees¹⁸. They had a range of facilities, e.g. gyms, banqueting suites etc. Employers A-L (below) are from the care sector, M-X are from hotels and Y-AA are NVQ trainers.

¹⁸ Note that some also hotels take on additional staff in busy periods.

5.2 Non-compulsory work related training

Staff in the care sector participated in a wide range of non-compulsory work related training. The type of training undertaken varied between the care homes as a result of the different care needs of individual clients or the individual interests of the staff.

The majority of managers estimated that about half of their staff took part in non-compulsory work related training. Non-compulsory work related training courses mentioned by the managers included a mixture of specialist technical skills (tracheotomy care, end of life training, reflexology, and dementia care); and wider employment skills (customer service and equality and diversity). Courses were supplied in house or by a range of providers and were often free. As well as these non-compulsory work related training courses, staff also undertook NVQs. Employer K required that all their staff should undertake an NVQ in health and social care after they had completed a 12 week probationary period.

The staff tended to attend non-compulsory work related training courses in their own time unless there was sufficient staffing to allow their release during work time. Staff were paid to attend the training and some care homes helped with transport costs, especially if a group of staff were attending the same course.

Non-compulsory work related training such as barista training and wine training were available to hotel staff. One hotel was part of a large group which ran its own apprenticeship scheme and a training scheme for high performing staff members. The availability of training in some instances was limited by funding.

“there is a very, very small pot of money available within the company to pay for extra training and extra qualifications. If it’s funded for free then there’s not problem whatsoever.” (Employer R)

The NVQs were provided externally by private providers and local colleges. Other non-compulsory work related training was provided by qualified members of staff within the hotel or was sourced externally. One employer allowed staff to use the computers to complete course work during quiet time, while another when encouraging staff to undertake an NVQ stressed that the work involved was based on what they did day-to-day in their job role:

“Obviously they’re gaining a qualification and it’s communicated that it’s very little work that they have to do because obviously an NVQ qualification takes an example from their everyday work”. (Employer M)

5.3 Reasons for undertaking non-compulsory work related training

The majority of care sector managers felt that staff undertook the training as they wanted to be better at their jobs, understand the specific needs individual clients and improve the standard of care that they provide, including reinforcing professional norms:

“Because it helps them do their job better” (Employer E)

“Just to improve their knowledge and improve the quality of care that they deliver” (Employer H)

“It improves their own standards...it gives them a better overview of what is expected and what’s not expected” (Employer K).

Given what has been stated above, it must be remembered that these are relatively unskilled occupations and employers need to consider ways of effectively promoting skills development (including transparent pay rewards). However, an emerging theme in the interviews was of an attitude that care staff could never undertake ‘too much’ training and there was always something to learn in terms of refreshing existing skills and being aware of changes in legislation and procedure¹⁹:

“You can’t ever have enough training in the care sector I don’t think...I don’t know if they think they’re getting too much at times but you know it all helps” (Employer F)

Managers also identified personal, intrinsic development drivers for staff participation in non-compulsory work related training:

“...the staff are committed so they take an interest in, they want to learn some of them to develop themselves” (Employer G)

“It gives them self-esteem, more confidence in their job roles and the staff here enjoy doing their training” (Employer I)

The managers thought that it was important that their employees undertook non-compulsory work related training for a variety of reasons. For one manager training was an important way to develop a sense of self value and develop the capabilities of the care staff, with learning arguably improving their self-efficacy, including those staff from more disadvantaged backgrounds:

“For myself, it’s actually about promoting an awareness of people to be actually involved in education which enhances what they do in their role - giving them a sense of value and purpose as well. Because sadly they don’t recognise that themselves...because a lot of people come from backgrounds which are quite dysfunctional in some respects which actually reflects on their ability to want to learn and develop because they have never ever had some encouragement as well” (Employer C)

¹⁹ This theme also emerged in informal discussions with the care staff that completed the employee questionnaires.

The managers working in the hotel sector felt that their employees undertook non-compulsory work related training to develop their careers and learn more about the hotel business:

“It’s because they wish to learn the trade” (Employer X);

“I would imagine to learn and to hopefully develop their career at a later stage” (Employer N);

“Maybe for the future if they want to move on they get certificates and obviously a lot of other companies require certain certificates” (Employer T).

5.4 Barriers to non-compulsory work related training

However, managers felt that not all staff were willing to undertake non-compulsory work related training. The *long hours and child care commitments outside work* meant that some staff did not have the time to undertake training outside of work hours. There was not always the staff cover available to release individuals for training during working hours, which might reflect partly on the employer commitment to such training. However, Employer E described a culture of reluctance to undertake training outside of working hours and another manager described how some staff were reluctant to train because of their attitude towards their job:

“...some - they’re not motivated: to them they’re coming in to do a job and they’re going home” (Employer A)

Self-efficacy arose again as certain managers identified that some of their staff had literacy and numeracy problems and therefore were not confident enough to undertake non-compulsory work related training. However, they also supported the staff, for example, by making available different assessment methods for NVQ candidates.

One manager identified that age made his staff reluctant to train. For other employees, although they wanted to progress, a lack of funding or of higher skill positions acted as a barrier:

“I mean I do have a couple of staff who are NVQ level 3 who are wanting to do their level 4 but there’s no funding available. ” (Employer K);

“I know that once they’ve reached level 3 because of their job roles they can’t go and do level 4, because they need to be in management positions” (Employer I).

The entry criteria for nursing or other health related courses is now generally degree level, so this may be an important route for people lacking formal academic qualifications to progress to higher, management level posts via vocational qualifications. This situation, of lack of opportunities to get relevant experience limiting of progression, suggests a possible barrier to progression from low skilled to significantly higher skilled posts.

Not all employees were encouraged to train. One employer in the catering sector only tended to encourage younger employees because there was a potentially greater return to the training:

“Whereas the younger ones that haven’t stayed on in school I would push them because you know they’re a long time in employment” (Employer M)

“...because of their age or haven’t got the time, other commitments...numerous reasons” (Employer W)

Conversely age could also be a barrier for younger employees and one employer felt that younger employees often did not yet know what they wanted to do in their careers and whether they needed to train:

“...they can be quite young and because they don't know what they want to do either, so you know they don't know really if they want to take on you know a lot of training in a particular area or anything” (Employer Q)

One manager had offered NVQ training the past for their housekeeping and reception staff but no one had been interested in taking part. However, at the time of the interview there were a couple of staff members interested/undertaking NVQs.

“They said they didn't have the time commitment even though we give them it in working hours...they just weren't bothered at the time” (Employer W)

Employers also identified that they faced more barriers with certain groups of employees than with others. Those working in housekeeping did not see the need for training:

“Housekeeping is one of the worse areas to get them to do training...I think they think I'm only a housekeeper, why do I need an NVQ. And a lot of people are housewives, family and things like that...they think it's going to be time consuming” (Employer O)

Reasons given as to why employees could not progress to even higher level qualifications in the future included the lack of financial support available, the aspirations of the individual and the paper work associated with training. Some staff did not want to progress and therefore did not see the need to undertake any additional training as it would be of no benefit to them in their current job. Also the employers might not be willing to fund the training, and the structure of the hotel could make it hard for some employees to progress simply because there were not many positions for them to move into (i.e. a lack of demand for greater skill levels):

“Obviously if they can’t see the benefit in it...most people are interested in things that are going to have a direct effect on them...so if they can’t see the ...they might not see that there is any reason for them to take on additional training” (Employer S)

One employer had had to become selective in who was put forward to undertake non-compulsory work related training because of the drop-out rates. It was seen as a waste of resources if the employee did not really want to train and therefore did not complete the course:

“We’ve become quite selective about who we ask to do the training because we want them to complete it...it just becomes a waste of time for everybody concerned...you know if they say they’re going to do something we really want them to complete it” (Employer U)

Although there were opportunities to progress, the long hours and poor levels of pay compared to other sectors make some reluctant to consider the hospitality sector as a long term career option. Some of those working in hotels only did so to help fund themselves through college or university and were only employed as casual labour. The comparatively low pay for those in high skill positions or those with high levels of responsibility was identified as a recruitment challenge:

“...we’re not especially the best payers...and when you look at the hours and responsibility we put on some of our staff, as I am saying it’s not sexy. Why should we work late at night, weekends, bank holidays, be in charge of 400 people who are staying here...I think it’s only people with a certain pride and passion that would be able to work” (Employer N)

One manager noted that in the UK hotels often had to take on untrained entry level staff. This was compared to the situation in some other European countries where the manager felt it to be more common for staff to have training:

“In the UK most hotels have to take their entry staff untrained. It’s not an unusual situation to be in regardless of where you are in the country, even what type of hotel you run.... There’s a huge pride in their jobs [on the continent] and massive technical knowledge as they have work and college experience, and commitment because they have spent 3-years doing the apprenticeship (Employer U)

While managers received a large volume of applications for vacancies some found it difficult to find staff who would stay with them for the long term, and who had the right attitude and personality. Employer X outlined that nearly half their staff were sixth form college or university students employed on a casual basis. These employees were perceived as 'passing through'.

The skills gaps identified by the managers also centred round attitudes to the work and customer service. These were often skills taught on the job and not through qualifications:

"...I think there are gaps in attitude...once again the skills will come if you've got the right attitude" (Employer N)

"Customer service skills - the basic things, the please, thank you, politeness, that seems to be lacking. And we've done a lot of etiquette training" (Employer O)

"They tend to be professional skills and they wouldn't necessarily be solved by a professional qualification as such" (Employer R).

5.5 Encouraging more non-compulsory work related training

The managers used a variety of techniques to actively encourage their employees to undertake non-compulsory work related training: match training to staff aspirations and interests; giving out certificates; paying staff to attend training on their days off; and including the need to train in terms of employment.

In the care sector, managers identified that the training received by their employees could be the stepping stone for progression to a nursing qualification:

"Somebody will come in to me with no GCSEs... they've no chance of nurse training....if they stay with us 5 or 6 years until they're 23, 24 and during that time they do all the mandatory training, they're a bit more mature, they've done the NVQ level 2, and they've done the NVQ level 3 then they will have a fighting chance to go and apply for nurse training" (Employer A)

In the main the managers could not identify any reasons why their employees would be unable to progress to even higher level qualifications in the future. However, they acknowledged that some individuals did not have the ambition to progress or could face personal barriers.

Employer V took the stance that it was important to multi-skill their staff. The staff had the chance to work in the different operations in the hotel, and were offered the opportunity to undertake NVQs. This multi-skilling might involve progression or being able to move up (temporarily) to a higher level of job so as to always try to have someone ready to 'step-up' to the next position, in the event of absence, etc., as well as for career development and progression. Employers Q and S, however, did not provide non-compulsory training. This type of training was not seen as necessary and their staff only took part in training if there was a legal requirement for them to do so.

Catering staff were encouraged to undertake non-compulsory training through a variety of ways for example: training champions and training managers. Other employers did not actively encourage all staff to undertake non-compulsory work related training. In some instances pushing staff to train was seen as counterproductive:

"We don't push people because otherwise they'd dig their heels in....they know it's there if they want it". (Employer O)

Training was also an important way in which to broaden the horizons of the hotel staff. Some employees worked in only one hotel for many years and the managers felt it was important that they were able to reflect on their work practices by realising that there were different ways to complete certain tasks and there was always something new to learn.

5.6 Overall themes

All of the care homes provided non-compulsory work related training but two of the hotels did not. The type of training undertaken varied between businesses depending on the interests of the staff, the needs of clients/customers and, in the hotels, the level of service provided to customers. Managers valued non-compulsory training in both sectors as it was seen to provide staff with a greater understanding of the jobs.

In the care sector there was an attitude that care staff could never undertake 'too much' training and there was always something to learn in terms of refreshing existing skills and being aware of changes in legislation and procedure. This may have been influenced by the expectation in the sector to continually update skills and the nature of constantly changing standards in the sector. In both sectors managers identified that staff undertook non-compulsory work related training for reasons of personal development, creating a sense of self value, increasing self-esteem and progressing. However, many staff remained relatively low skilled.

Self-efficacy issues, including a lack of self-confidence and self-value, age, time constraints and a fear of education, present barriers across the care and hospitality sectors. A lack of opportunities to progress meant that staff could not always undertake the training they wanted to do. The hotels faced problems with turnover and employees did not always consider the sector as a long term career option. Some hotels were selective in who was encouraged to train, while conversely in others, training had been offered but staff did not wish to participate. Hotels placed more emphasis on the personality and attitudes of staff than on their qualifications.

The employers used a variety of techniques to actively encourage their employees to undertake non-compulsory work related training. Some managers led by example and used their experiences to show their staff that training could allow them to develop their careers. In the main the managers could not identify any reasons why their employees could not progress to even higher level qualifications in the future.

For the hotel sector training is important so that they are competitive in terms of attracting customers and recruiting and retaining staff. However, in the main employees were not pushed to do non-compulsory work related training, rather they are expected to approach their employer if they want to train.

6 Conclusions

Building on earlier studies (Employee Demand for Skills, 2009), this research helps to further understand the factors that affect the willingness of low skilled employees to invest in their own skills development. Encouragingly, low skilled employees value both training and qualifications in order to enhance their employment. Despite undertaking low skilled jobs, they are keen to be engaged in training and feel it will help them do a better job. Coupled with such positive views of workplace learning, employees had realistic expectations of what could be achieved through training they had recently received. These were focused on intrinsic factors (ability to do their job better, learn new skills and motivations). Very few employees felt that the training would lead to a dramatic change such as, getting a new or better job, a pay rise or promotion. Such realistic expectations were related to the job and type of training undertaken which mainly focused on the current job and is in general at an elementary level. In the majority of cases the outcomes of the training matched individuals expectations, which is a positive factor on which to build future participation in workplace learning.

However, there seems to be a mismatch between employees and their employers' views. In contrast employers have reservations about employees commitment to training and learning. However, it is unclear whether this is an actual mismatch of views or whether it is a mismatch between employee's attitudes and employees taking action to participate in training or even whether the type of training considered is a factor. The stated preference exercise illustrates the importance of various motivating factors that influence low skilled employees participation in workplace learning. In particular, pay is a significant motivator for employees training, yet previous research evidence indicates that financial returns for low skilled employees undertaking training are low. Even relatively modest linked pay returns may motivate increased training or qualifications, which happen elsewhere (e.g. in United States Healthcare) where relevant qualifications automatically translate into pay rises.

The 'culture of learning' within the workplace also seems to play an important role. Employees positive attitudes towards workplace learning are linked to jobs requiring learning or allowing the use of knowledge and skills. This is illustrated by the contrast between the care sector and the hotel sector. This study found the care sector has more of a culture of learning and training than the hotel sector. Both care sector employers and employees exhibit positive attitudes and have stronger (job focused) expectations of workplace training.

These differences in work place learning between the sectors are enlightening and are driven by the individual employers and associated sectoral extrinsic factors, such as: the culture of training; the nature of the work; the length of time staff expected to remain in the sector; and the attractions of each sector.

The main barriers to training for the employees were mainly cash fees for training, or time costs. A lack of time to do training in the workday is also an important barrier. So a lack of demand to invest in training is more about extrinsic barriers than individual intrinsic factors such as, confidence and self-efficacy. Such extrinsic factors can be addressed more readily through targeted policy levers and interventions. Again in contrast, there is a mismatch between employees and employers views with regards the barriers to workplace learning. Employers felt employees' barriers to participating in training were mainly related to intrinsic factors (such as, a lack of self-confidence) rather than extrinsic factors. Whilst this was not borne out in this research, it suggests that: for low skilled employees this is not as an important factor as has often been assumed by policy makers and employers; and that the positive reactions to job specific training could be built on for non-compulsory and longer term skill development.

This research suggests many positive features which employers, individuals and policy makers could build on in developing the skills of people in low skilled jobs, which is important in securing our competitive advantage in the longer term:

- Low skilled employees are motivated to learn and intrinsic barriers may sometimes be less problematic than previously thought in suitable conditions;
- Increased skills development can be supported by a positive and supportive cultural environment for training within the workplace (perhaps including an industry wide expectation for higher qualifications such as NVQ level 3 for care workers) with opportunities for progression through better job design and possibly collective arrangements within sectors;
- Meeting expectations through job specific, short term training, may encourage further training which could support progression to higher skilled roles (and higher pay); and,
- Ensuring that training is valued by employers and that it is designed and delivered in partnership with employees so as to further enhance and increase the value of such training.

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