

THE TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT OF FE AND TRAINING: RESEARCH SUMMARY

This report presents a summary of the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) and the Society for Education and Training's (SET) research project: **The Transformative Impact of FE and Training**.

The aim of this research was to understand the impact that FE and Training has on learners and their families across the UK.

Below is a summary of methodology, as well as the survey highlights, key quotes and answers in more detail.

METHODOLOGY

Research was conducted online by [Opinium Research](#) between 14 – 17 February 2023 amongst a nationally representative sample of 2,000 UK adults aged 18+.

SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

Opinium conducted a comprehensive demographic analysis on the respondents so we can see a direct correlation to their answers and their age, gender, geographical location and job role.

The data below has been calculated based on a mean average of respondents per question.

Age

Of the respondents, we had:

- 28% aged between 18-34-years-old
- 34% aged between 35-54-years-old
- 38% aged 55-years-old and above

Location

Of the respondents, we had:

- 8% from Scotland
- 3% from Northern Ireland
- 4% from North East
- 11% from North West
- 8% from Yorkshire and Humberside
- 7% from East Midlands
- 9% from West Midlands
- 5% from Wales
- 9% from East of England
- 13% from London
- 14% from South East
- 9% from South West

Gender

Of the respondents, we had:

- 48% identify as male
- 52% identify as female

Employment status

When we asked our respondents what best described their current employment status, we found:

- 64% are either in full-time or part-time employment
- 50% are employed full-time
- 15% are employed part-time
- 2% are a full-time student
- 21% are retired
- 2% are unemployed
- 10% are not working (other)

Relationship with FE and Training

When we asked our respondents about their previous or current relationship with FE and Training:

- 43% said they have previously studied in FE and Training
- 7% said they are currently in FE and Training or are planning to study in future

KEY FINDINGS: HIGHLIGHTS

- **Almost 9 in 10 (88%)** of those with a friend, family member or colleague who's taken part in FE and training found it to be a positive step for that person in developing their career.
- **Two fifths (40%)** of adults have taken part in FE and Training
- **Over 4 in 5 adults (82%)** agree that FE and Training can be useful in advancing or finding a career or job

The research shows that **56%** of adults in the UK know someone who has taken part in FE and Training, and **75%** agree that FE and Training is an important part of society.

Furthermore, **60%** report that they are, have, or would, consider changing career path, and over two-thirds (**67%**) say it allows everyone to acquire new knowledge and skills. **60%** said it gave them the opportunity to retrain in another career or change career direction entirely.

The research has also shown that FE and Training becomes more important through the years, with **12% more people aged over 55** reporting to have taken part in FE or training (**44%**) compared to 16 to 34-year-olds (**32%**).

KEY QUOTES

In the survey, we included a number of open-ended questions. The following is a selection of key quotes from these:

Key quotes from Q5

In question 4, we asked if they knew a friend, colleague or family member who had taken part in FE and Training, and in question 5, we asked them how the experience in FE and Training impacted the person. They said:

- "It gave them an improved self-image after an abusive relationship."
- "It boosted confidence."
- "It gave them more confidence and life skills."

Key quotes from Q7

In question 7, we asked what reasons did they think FE and Training is important to society. They said:

- "A degree course does not suit everyone. FE is a viable option for some of these people as well as others who wish to enhance their knowledge in other ways."
- "It makes education available in later life. It provides access and opportunities that may not have previously been available."

Key quotes from Q8

In question 8, we asked what encouraged them to take part in any current training or studying within FE. They said:

- "To retrain as a teacher."
- "To help me retrain in a different career path."
- "To learn more about things that interested me, which I was not an expert in."

Key quotes from Q9

In question 9, we asked them to describe their experiences after studying in FE and Training. They said:

- "It developed me as a broader and better-informed person."
- "It enabled me to study subjects I didn't think I could do when I was younger."
- "It gave me self-confidence."

Key quotes from Q10

In question 10, we asked our respondents to describe why they were currently doing FE training or studying, or were planning to do so in future. They said:

- "I never went to school; I take every opportunity I can to improve on knowledge and hopefully be given more opportunity."
- "To get back in employment after being a stay-at-home mom for so many years. I want to change careers and do something more flexible now that I have kids."
- "To broaden and deepen my skills and knowledge for enhancing my career and personal development."

Key quotes from Q11

In question 11, we asked what would encourage them to teach in FE and Training. They said:

- “An environment where skills and abilities were encouraged, rewarded and valued.”
- “It’s an occupation that interests me, and is a new career path.”

KEY FINDINGS IN DETAIL

Below are the key findings of each survey question in further detail, including both the quantified data and a selection of the open-ended answers.

Q1

For question 1, we asked if the respondents had ever thought about changing their career path to do something different. Of the responses to Q1:

- Over half (51%) of the nation has, or would, consider changing their career path
- 32% of people said it’s something they have previously considered
- Almost 20% (19%) said it’s something they would consider in the future
- 40% said it’s not something they have thought about

Q2

For question 2, we asked to what extent did they agree or disagree with the statement: ‘I would consider undertaking a Further Education course to help boost my skillset’. Of the responses to Q2:

- 68% of people agree
- 28% strongly agree
- Only 1 in 10 (10%) disagree
- 7% more 35–54-year-olds (72%) than 18–34-year-olds (65%) would consider undertaking a FE and Training course to help boost their skillset
- Almost 70% (68%) of people who are already working would consider undertaking a FE and Training course to help boost their skillset, with 67% of these people working over 30 hours a week/full time

Q3

For question 3, we asked if they have ever taken part in any training or studying that would be classified as FE and Training? Of the responses to Q3:

- 34% previously and 6% currently
- 12% more 55+ year olds (44%), than 18–34-year-olds (32%) have taken part in training or studying that would be classified as FE and Training
- 37% of respondents who are working have taken part in training or studying that would be classified as FE and Training

Q4

For question 4, we asked if they know anyone, i.e., a friend, colleague or family member, who has taken part in any training or studying that would be classified as FE and Training. Of the responses to Q4:

- Over one third (37%) of people have a family member who has taken part in training or studying that would be classified as FE and Training

Q5

For question 5, we followed up Q4 by asking how the experience in FE and Training had impacted their friend, colleague or family member. Of the responses to Q5:

- Almost a third (30%) said it gave them the opportunity to retrain in another career or change direction
- 41% said it gave them confidence in developing their knowledge and skills
- Nearly one in five (17%) said it had enabled them to get back into employment
- Overall, almost 9 in 10 (88%) found it to be a positive step for that person in developing their career

Q6

For question 6, we asked to what extent did they agree with two statements; 'Further Education training can be useful in advancing/finding an individual's career or a job', and the second statement, 'FE and Training is an important part of society'. Of the responses to the first statement of Q6:

- Almost half of respondents (44%) strongly agree this is the case
- Only 2% of respondents disagree that FE and Training can be useful in advancing or finding a career or job
- Almost all (94%) those who have previously studied in FE and Training think it is useful in advancing or finding a career or job

Of the responses to the second statement of Q6:

- Only 4% of people disagree that FE and Training is an important part of society
- 15% more people over the age of 55 (81%) think that FE and Training is an important part of society than 18- to 34-year-olds (66%)

Q7

For question 7, we asked what reasons do they think Further Education is important to society. Of the responses to Q7:

- Almost 7 out of 10 people (67%) say it gives everyone a chance to acquire new knowledge and skills
- 62% say FE helps you develop in your career or opens further learning opportunities

Q8

For question 8, we asked if any of the following statements encouraged them to take part in any current training or studying within FE:

- *To help progress my career*
- *There was a course locally that interested me*
- *To develop my interests/ retrain following retirement*
- *To enhance my skillset after a career break*
- *I was advised to by a parent or teacher*
- *To return to work after a time out of unemployment*
- *To enhance my skillset after maternity/ paternity/ parental leave*
- *Other, please specify*

- *I don't know*

Of the responses to Q8:

- 5 in 10 (50%) people said to help me progress my career
- 3 in 10 (30%) said because there was a course offered locally

Open-ended answers from Q8:

- "It widened my skills and knowledge."
- "To change career."

Q9

For question 9, we asked if any of the following statements best describes their experiences after studying in FE and Training:

- *It was a positive step in helping me develop my career*
- *It gave me confidence in developing my knowledge and skills*
- *It gave me the opportunity to retrain in another career, or change direction*
- *It enabled me to get back into employment*
- *Other, please specify*
- *None of the above*
- *Don't know*

Of the responses to Q9:

- Almost half (48%) of respondents say that their experience in FE was a positive step in helping develop a career
- Similarly, 46% say it gave them confidence in developing knowledge and skills
- 26% of people say that their experiences in FE gave them the opportunity to retrain in another career or change direction

Open-ended answers from Q9:

- "It allowed me to develop a new skill."

Q10

In question 10, we asked our respondents to describe why they were currently doing FE training or studying, or were planning to do so in future. For this question, only open-ended answers were accepted.

Open-ended answers from Q10:

- "After having children, I went back to university, did a master's degree and teachers training."
- "Approaching maternity leave and want to think about a different career afterwards"
- "Because education is a lifelong pursuit that everyone should have access to."
- "Better qualifications can be beneficial in progressing your career and opening new doors."
- "Complete career change."
- "FE provides essential courses for different industry sectors to assist promotion of new skills."

- "I needed to find a new path after a long period of illness. Things had moved on swiftly in my career and I hadn't kept up."
- "I suffered an industrial accident and consequently lost my job. FE enabled me to retrain."
- "I wanted to change the type of career I had so needed to acquire new skills and qualifications in a different field."
- "Increased my confidence, opportunity to meet people it diversified my interests."
- "To retrain in a different sector and role after a career break."

Q11

In question 11, we asked if any of the following statements would encourage them to teach in FE:

- *Boosting my own skillset*
- *Trying something entirely different*
- *Share my professional expertise to teach/ mentor others*
- *Transforming students' lives and helping them excel*
- *Working with like-minded, passionate individuals*
- *Joining a dedicated workforce of FE and Training professionals*
- *Other (please specify)*
- *None of the above*

Of the responses to Q11:

- 19% of people said they would teach in FE to boost their own skillset
- 18% of people would teach in FE to try something entirely different
- 17% said to share their professional expertise to teach / mentor others
- 15% said to work with like-minded, passionate individuals
- 15% said to transform student's lives and help them excel

Further research

To stay in touch about latest developments on research findings and our future work, please sign up to our ETF newsletter to receive monthly updates at <http://www.etffoundation.co.uk/newsletters>