

The 2011 European Social Fund Leavers Survey

Rhys Davies
Wales Institute of Economic and Social Research,
Data and Methods,
Cardiff University

Gerry Makepeace
Cardiff Business School,
Cardiff University

Max Munday
Welsh Economy Research Unit,
Cardiff Business School,
Cardiff University

Gareth Williams
Old Bell 3 Ltd

Mark Winterbotham
IFF Research Ltd

March 2013

Corresponding author:

Rhys Davies
Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods (WISERD)

Cardiff University
46 Park Place
Cardiff
CF10 3BB

Email: DaviesOR@cardiff.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0)29 208 70328

Highlights of the Survey

The majority of participants who took part in ESF projects developed essential skills in organization, communication, team working skills and problem solving skills. Most feel more confident in their own abilities.

Almost three quarters of respondents gained a qualification as a result of their participation in ESF training. As in earlier surveys participants are more likely to report positive outcomes, and attribute these positive outcomes to their participation in an ESF project, if they have gained qualifications through ESF (particularly qualifications at a higher level than previously held).

For priorities aimed at the unemployed and economically inactive:

- Within 12 months of finishing their training, almost half of previously unemployed respondents and 30% of previously economically inactive respondents are in employment.
- Comparisons with the wider population suggest that unemployed participants were about 20% more likely to find a job than unemployed individuals who have not attended ESF training.

For priorities aimed at those in work:

- The majority of participants reported improvements in job satisfaction, future pay and promotion prospects and opportunities for training, following their participation in an ESF project, although only a minority indicated that this could be directly attributed to their participation in an ESF project.
- Approximately 1 in 5 respondents who were employed in a different job from that held prior to their participation in an ESF project report that their ESF project was vital to them gaining their current employment.

about their abilities (86%), feeling better about themselves generally (83%) and feeling that they have improved their career prospects (80%).

- Approximately 75% of respondents report that they gained some form of qualification through ESF.

Improving Participation in the Labour Market

- Data for the non-employed population suggest that levels of occupational training among the unemployed and economically inactive population in Wales are comparable to those observed in other parts of the UK.
- Among respondents from Priorities aimed at improving participation in the labour market, 66% were in paid employment at the time of the survey: an increase in their rate of employment of 52 percentage points compared with that observed before their participation in an ESF project.
- Over a fifth of those who were in a job at the time of the survey that was not held prior to their participation in ESF, report that their ESF project was vital to them gaining their current employment. Among those who remained out of work at the time of the survey, approximately 1 in 4 (24%) report that they felt that they had more chance of finding a job in the future as a result of their participation in ESF.
- Participation in non Redundancy Training projects is associated with an average increase in the rate of transition into employment of 6 percentage points among the previously unemployed (42% among ESF participants compared with 36% among non ESF participants).
- Participation in Redundancy Training projects is associated with an average increase in the rate of transition into employment of 12 percentage points among the previously unemployed (76% among ESF participants compared with 64%). There is also evidence to suggest that participants in Redundancy Training are less likely to enter low paid occupations.

Supporting Progression in Employment

- Approximately 7% of respondents report experiencing an improvement in their jobs (whether they be in the same job or in a new job) that could be directly attributed to their participation in ESF.
- Approximately 1 in 5 respondents who were employed in a different job to that held prior to ESF report that their ESF project was vital to them gaining their current employment.

Overall, 43% of respondents to the survey were female. However, women accounted for over half of respondents (52%) from interventions aimed at supporting progression in employment, with the proportion being highest among the respondents from Priority 3 under the Convergence Programme (54%).

Respondents from Priority 3 projects under the Convergence Programme are youngest, with approximately 1 in 4 aged 24 or under at the time they completed their project. The age distribution of respondents to the 2011 Survey is considerably older than the 2010 Survey. It can be seen that whilst 19% of respondents to the 2011 Survey are aged 16-24, this group accounted for approximately a third of respondents to the 2010 survey. By contrast, 35% of respondents to the 2011 survey are aged 41-54, approximately 9 percentage points higher than that observed among respondents to the 2010 survey.

Levels of educational attainment prior to undertaking an ESF project were higher among respondents within the two Priorities where interventions are aimed at supporting progression in employment. Among these Priorities, approximately 70% respondents had achieved a qualification equivalent to NQF Level 3 or above. This figure is twice the proportion of respondents from interventions aimed at supporting participation. Across all Priorities, levels of educational attainment among respondents to the 2011 Survey are higher than those observed among respondents to the 2010 Survey.

Eighteen per cent of respondents reported that they suffered from a long term illness. The overall rate of work limiting illness was 10%. Rates of ill-health are higher among those Priorities where interventions are primarily aimed at those out of work. Among respondents from projects aimed at supporting participation, 14% report that they suffer from a work-related ill-health condition. This is compared to just 4% of respondents from projects aimed at supporting progression in employment. It is interesting to note that despite the older age distribution of respondents to the 2011 Survey compared with the 2010 Survey, levels of work related ill-health are broadly comparable. Only 4% of respondents are from a minority ethnic background. Approximately one in four respondents report that they are able to speak Welsh although nine out of ten report that English is their first language.

survey withdrew from ESF; a withdrawal rate of 6.7%. Based upon the survey, the estimated rate of withdrawal is slightly higher at 8.4%, with 508 respondents reporting that they had withdrawn from ESF early. However, only 151 respondents (2.5%) are consistently recorded as having withdrawn from ESF based upon both their responses to the survey data and their administrative records.

Table 3.3: Withdrawal from ESF projects
per cent of respondents

	Administrative Data		
	Completed	Withdrew	Total
Survey Data			
Completed	5,206	249	5,455
Withdrew	357	151	508
Don't know	47	6	53
Total	5,610	406	6,016

Respondents to the survey were asked about their reasons for leaving an ESF project early (presented in Table 3.4). The most commonly cited reason was having left to start a new job (41%). This finding illustrates the difficulty in accurately measuring rates of withdrawal and highlights that may reflect a positive outcome. Rates of withdrawal derived from administrative data may therefore overestimate the 'true' incidence of withdrawal from ESF projects.

The second column of Table 3.4 considers the reasons for early withdrawal (as recorded by the survey) for those respondents where both their survey responses and their administrative records indicate that that individual had withdrawn early. The proportion who report that they had withdrawn to start a job falls, which highlights starting a job as a key reason for the apparent inconsistency between the two sets of data. Nonetheless, 1 in 4 respondents still report that they withdrew early in order to start a job. This finding suggests that administrative records may overestimate rates of withdrawal (in the sense of an unsuccessful non-completion of provision) by 25%. Taking account of this in the 2011 administrative data would yield a rate of withdrawal of approximately 5%.

Table 3.4: Reasons for not completing an ESF project

	<i>per cent of withdrawers</i>	
	<u>Source of Data Where Respondent is Identified as an Early Withdrawer</u>	
	Survey Data	Survey and Admin Data
Withdrawal Rate	8.4	
Left to start a job	40.9	25.2
Family / personal circumstances	11.4	15.2
Lack of time / too busy	9.1	11.3
Ill health / disability	8.9	10.6
Course did not meet expectations	8.1	11.3
Lack of support / help	7.3	7.9
Changed job or made redundant	4.7	7.3
Problems accessing course e.g. travel problems	4.1	6.6
Course cancelled / closed down	3.1	4.6
Course too advanced / too hard	3.0	2.6
Course too easy	2.2	2.6
Sample	508	151

Finally, rates of withdrawal segmented according to a variety of personal characteristics are presented in Table 3.5. The analysis is derived from the administrative data as the lower rates of withdrawal are believed to provide a more accurate measure. It can be seen that rates of withdrawal are higher in interventions aimed at supporting participation in the labour market (9%) compared with interventions aimed at supporting progression in employment (4%). Across both types of intervention, withdrawal from ESF is most prevalent among the young (13% among those aged 16 to 18 years) and among those with a work limiting illness (13%). Women are also more likely to withdraw from ESF (8%) than men (6%), with this differential widening to approximately 4 percentage points in interventions aimed at improving participation in the labour market. Further examination of reasons for withdrawal (not presented) reveals that women are more than twice as likely than men to report that they withdrew due to family/personal reasons (17% compared to 7% using the survey based definition of withdrawal). Women were also more likely to report that they were too busy or had a lack of time compared with men, indicating the importance of domestic and caring responsibilities among this group.

Table 3.5: Personal characteristics and withdrawal from ESF projects*per cent of respondents*

	Supporting Participation	Supporting Progression	Total
Gender:			
Male	7.7	3.1	6.1
Female	11.5	3.6	7.6
Age:			
16 - 18 yrs	16.4	4.2	12.7
19 - 21 yrs	11.1	8.7	10.0
22 - 24 yrs	10.4	5.3	7.4
16 - 24 yrs	11.4	6.7	9.0
25 - 30 yrs	10.2	3.2	7.1
31 - 40 yrs	8.0	2.9	5.8
41 - 54 yrs	8.4	1.6	5.8
55+ yrs	9.2	2.9	7.6
Ethnicity:			
White	9.1	3.3	6.8
Non-white	8.4	4.0	6.1
Nationality:			
Born in UK	9.2	3.4	6.8
Born elsewhere	7.6	2.4	5.1
Educational attainment prior to ESF:			
None	9.4	2.2	8.1
NQF Level 1 or less	13.3	3.3	9.9
NQF Level 2	10.9	4.0	8.7
NQF Level 3	8.9	5.7	7.4
NQF Level 4 or above	6.3	2.1	3.8
Unspecified Level	8.6	3.6	7.0
Work limiting illness:			
Yes	14.6	6.4	13.1
No	8.2	3.2	6.0
All withdrawals	9.1	3.4	6.7
Sample	3,544	2,472	6016

Figure 5.1: Career profiles of previously unemployed respondents (Con P2/Comp P1)

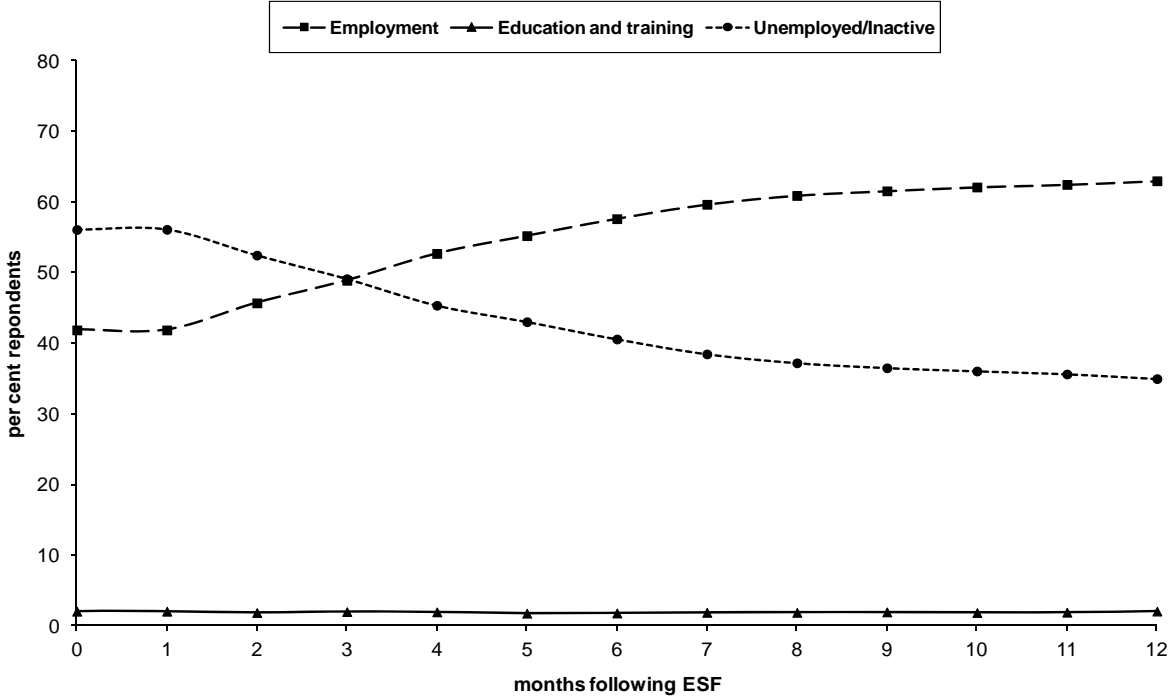


Figure 5.2 considers the situation of respondents who were economically inactive prior to their participation in an ESF project. Rates of employment are much lower among this group compared with those who were unemployed prior to their project. Immediately following their interventions, 25% have gained employment and a further 7% have moved into education and training. There is relatively little in the way of continued improvement in employment levels during the remainder of the follow-up period. By the end of the follow-up period, 30% of respondents who were economically inactive prior to their participation are in employment. It is noted that this level of participation in employment among the economically inactive is considerably higher than that observed in the 2010 Survey. However, the proportion of respondents to the 2011 Survey who are economically inactive is smaller than in the previous study. Among Convergence Priority 2 respondents, the proportion who are economically inactive has declined from 16% to 9%. Among Competitiveness Priority 1 respondents, the proportion who are economically inactive has declined from 21% to 4%, reflecting the high levels of participation in Redundancy Training among this group in 2011. The report of the combined analysis of the 2009 and 2010 Surveys provides a detailed discussion of issues surrounding the employment transitions of the economically inactive population.

For both Priorities, approximately three quarters of respondents who find work are employed in permanent positions and three quarters work more than 30 hours per week. Participants from Priority 2 of the Convergence Programme earn approximately £40/week less than respondents from Priority 1 of the Competitiveness Programme, irrespective of gender. Given the higher prevalence Redundancy Training respondents from projects under Priority 1 of the Competitiveness Programme, the higher levels of earnings will reflect the relatively high skills and labour market experience of those who have recently been made redundant. However, despite the lower earnings and the relatively low skilled nature of jobs held by those respondents who participated in Priority 2 of the Convergence Programme, among both groups approximately 85% indicate that overall they are either satisfied or highly satisfied with their jobs.

Table 5.2: Nature of current employment

	<i>per cent of employed respondents</i>		
	Con P2	Comp P1	Total
Occupation:			
Managers & senior officials	8.6	14.6	10.1
Professional	4.6	9.7	5.9
Associate prof & tech	10.8	15.1	11.9
Admin and secretarial	8.9	15.5	10.5
Skilled trades	15.8	9.2	14.1
Personal service	10.9	6.1	9.7
Sales and customer service	7.4	6.3	7.1
Process, plant and machine	14.2	11.0	13.4
Elementary	15.0	8.9	13.5
Missing	3.8	3.7	3.8
Contractual Status:			
Permanent	74.4	72.7	74.0
Hours worked per week:			
Less than 16 hours	10.5	7.7	9.8
16-29 hours	13.7	15.6	14.2
30+ hours	75.1	76.1	75.4
Missing	0.7	0.5	0.7
Earnings (Gross Weekly Earnings)			
Male	345	384	354
Female	221	286	239
All	303	342	313
Overall satisfied/very satisfied with your present job	86.6	84.2	86.0
Sample	1731	570	2301

Table 5.3: Perceived Benefits of ESF

per cent employed respondents

	Vital in gaining current job	More chance of finding job in the future	Would do the course again
	All those in a job that was not held prior to participation in ESF	All those not in work at the time of the survey	All
Lower Level	21.4	23.2	78.9
No qualification	13.5	15.8	66.8
Same Level	24.8	28.4	81.7
Higher Level	30.7	34.3	78.1
Not determined	23.9	27.3	78.2
Total	21.5	24.0	75.4
Sample	2,132	1181	3,544

Table 6.2: Comparing Employment Transition Rates Among the Non-Employed Population

	<i>per cent respondents</i>					
	Unemployed				Economically Inactive	
	Non Redundancy Training	Redundancy Training	All ESF	APS	ESF	APS
Gender:						
Male	43.0	77.3	54.5	37.5	16.4	9.3
Female	41.7	71.9	48.7	38.8	17.1	12.4
Age:						
18-20 yrs	34.8	60.0	35.1	36.5	12.5	22.7
21-25 yrs	44.4	85.4	49.0	42.2	40.0	15.1
26-35 yrs	43.6	73.0	52.7	37.0	21.7	14.9
36-45 yrs	47.1	81.0	58.7	41.4	18.2	13.6
46-55 yrs	47.0	77.9	60.0	39.4	20.7	9.1
56-65 yrs	29.9	63.3	43.7	28.0	5.0	6.0
Work Limiting Illness:						
No	46.9	77.3	56.7	41.1	22.6	18.7
Yes	19.9	53.7	24.5	25.4	9.5	4.7
Educational Attainment:						
NQF Level 4+	57.3	78.3	68.2	51.1	17.4	20.9
NQF Level 3	44.8	72.2	54.0	43.6	27.7	14.6
NQF Level 2	43.3	77.5	51.1	39.4	19.8	13.1
NQF < Level 2	35.1	77.8	41.5	34.0	19.0	9.8
None	37.4	66.7	42.5	21.8	10.1	5.6
Other	42.9	73.9	56.5	36.9	27.3	10.3
Local area employment levels:						
q1 <0.707	42.0	76.6	49.6	32.5	14.3	8.3
q2 0.707-0.744	39.9	80.3	51.9	36.1	19.0	8.8
q3 0.744-0.766	52.4	70.7	62.0	38.8	39.4	12.0
q4 0.766-0.795	37.5	69.0	64.0	41.7		11.8
q5 0.795>	58.8	77.6	72.7	44.1		16.6
Duration of non-employment:						
<1 year -	54.2	76.8	63.9	47.9	33.3	21.6
1-3 years -	32.4	47.8	33.0	30.5	21.0	14.4
3 years+ -	24.0	33.3	24.0	19.9	12.6	6.1
Total	42.5	75.8	52.4	38.0	16.9	11.2

paid jobs. However, this lower incidence of employment in low paid jobs is being driven by the particularly low rates of low paid work exhibited by participants in Redundancy Training. Only 9% of those among this group who gain work are employed in a low paid occupation at the time of the survey. Excluding those who participated in Redundancy Training, 39% of ESF participants who gain work are employed in low paid occupations at the time of the survey, broadly comparable with estimates for the wider population derived from the APS.

Table 6.4: Entry in to Low Paid Jobs Among the Previously Unemployed
per cent respondents

	Non Redundancy Training	Redundancy Training	All ESF	APS
Gender:				
Male	25.2	6.6	16.6	21.8
Female	59.9	14.8	46.1	51.1
Age:				
18-20 yrs	54.4	16.7	53.7	53.8
21-25 yrs	42.4	6.5	35.4	34.6
26-35 yrs	35.9	9.3	24.4	35.6
36-45 yrs	33.9	6.4	20.9	33.4
46-55 yrs	33.6	9.8	21.2	27.6
56-65 yrs	31.5	9.8	19.3	27.8
Work Limiting Illness:				
No	39.1	8.6	26.4	33.8
Yes	33.1	8.9	25.8	41.1
Educational Attainment:				
NQF Level 4+	24.4	3.8	12.1	20.5
NQF Level 3	42.6	10.5	28.7	37.1
NQF Level 2	45.6	11.4	34.8	40.1
NQF < Level 2	44.3	14.9	35.8	45.0
None	39.8	8.2	30.9	49.8
Other	22.6	6.0	13.3	32.2
Duration of non-employment:				
<1 year out of work	34.7	8.4	21.4	31.7
1-3 years out of work	42.0	15.0	40.6	36.7
3 years+ out of work	54.6	-	54.0	51.5
All	38.7	8.6	26.4	34.8
Sample	1,761	1,245	3,006	2,851

As with the analysis of employment transitions, statistical matching techniques have been used to examine how the incidence of previously unemployed participants entering low paid work following ESF compares with occupations typically gained by comparable unemployed from the wider population. The full results of this analysis are presented in Annex 2. An important change in the design of the 2012 survey was the collection of information related to the last occupation held by those respondents who were not in work prior to their participation in ESF. Occupations previously held are likely to be an important factor in governing what job an individual will find following ESF. This will be of particular importance among participants in Redundancy Training who have, by definition, recently held paid employment. Results for Redundancy Training are only based upon 2012 data so that previous occupation can be included as a matching variable. The control group for Redundancy Training is again restricted to those who are unemployed and have been made redundant in the last 3 months.

No statistically significant results were estimated for participants in non Redundancy Training interventions. However, participants in Redundancy Training are estimated to be significantly less likely to enter low paid occupations following their participation compared with comparable people in the wider population. The scale of this differential varies depending upon the estimation technique that is chosen, although it is generally in the order of 9-13 percentage points. The average differential derived from the 8 separate specifications is 10 percentage points (9% among ESF participants compared with 19% among APS respondents). As with the analysis of employment transitions, the positive effects associated with participation in Redundancy Training could simply reflect the relative employability of those who select on to the scheme. Nonetheless, Redundancy Training includes training to help respondents gain particular types of jobs and as such a reduced level of employment in low paid occupations could reflect outcomes from the scheme.

Respondents who, at the time of the survey, were employed in a different job from that held prior to ESF were asked to what extent they thought that the course helped them get their current job. Table 7.4 shows that approximately 1 in 5 (20%) report that their ESF project was vital to them gaining their current employment. Also, approximately 8 out of 10 of all employed respondents (81%) who participated in projects aimed at supporting progression in employment report that, with the value of hindsight, they would do the course again. As discussed above in relation to Table 7.2, approximately 7% reported that an improvement in their jobs (whether in the same job or in a new job) could be directly attributed to their participation in ESF. These perceptions are comparable to those reported by respondents to the 2009 and 2010 ESF Leavers Surveys.

Table 7.4 also demonstrates how these assessments vary between different sub-groups of ESF participants. Among those who were in a different job from that held prior to ESF, men, younger participants, those with low levels of educational attainment prior to ESF and those who acquired qualifications through ESF at NQF level 3 or above were more likely to report that participation in ESF had been vital to them in gaining their current job. Younger participants, those with a work limiting illness and those who had acquired qualifications at an equivalent to NQF level 3 or above were more likely to report that they had experienced an improvement in their job that could be directly attributable to their participation. Finally, those who had acquired qualifications at an equivalent to NQF level 3 or above or at an unspecified level were most likely to indicate that, with the value of hindsight, they would do the course again. Those who reported suffering from a work related ill-health condition were less likely to indicate that they would do the course again. This is despite the fact that this group are more likely to report that they had experienced improvements in their jobs that could be directly attributable to their participation in ESF. A consistent finding that emerges across each of the three measures of perceived benefits is the importance attached by respondents to achieving higher level qualifications.

Chapter 8: Conclusions and Recommendations

The results of the 2011 ESF Leavers Survey build on the evidence base developed through the earlier 2009 and 2010 surveys, though allowance must clearly be made for the different composition of the sample. In this Survey, we have been able to draw on the records of a larger number and wider range of the 'live' ESF projects, though in the case of Priority 2 of the Competitiveness Programme, the respondents were overwhelmingly drawn from one redundancy training project.

As in previous years, the Survey highlights some very positive findings about:

- the strong satisfaction of ESF participants with the support which they have received, with three quarters saying they would do the same course again
- the conviction of participants that the provision has enhanced a wide range of skills (above all, job-specific occupational skills – with 72% reporting these effects)
- the impact of ESF interventions on confidence (with 86% reporting that it had impacted positively in this way), feelings about oneself (83%), enthusiasm for learning (74%) and softer skills.

In addition, an increased proportion of respondents this year (69%) recognised that ESF had funded the intervention.

At the same time, the proportion of the population selected for interviewing who did not recall the training (12%) was significantly higher than in previous years, which does not appear to be strongly related to the fact that the Survey was carried out later in the year, after more time had elapsed from the completion of participation. Relatively low rates of recall may well reflect the fact that many interventions are of relatively short duration (with almost 50% of those participating in interventions targeting the out of work participating for less than a month). Even for those not in work, interventions are often quite 'light touch'. The extent to which low rates of recall are associated with specific interventions might merit further investigation, as this might inform judgements on the value for money of these projects. It would also seem appropriate to agree on the preferred date for commencing the ESF fieldwork and to maintain consistency in the timing of the fieldwork across successive surveys.

Recommendation 6: WEFO should investigate further whether there is a clear link between certain types of intervention and low rates of recall of ESF-funded training, and consider whether this can and should inform judgements of the success and value for money of different interventions.

Recommendation 7: WEFO should consider what research can be commissioned to explore further the differential impact of ESF interventions on participants with different types of labour market history and how existing sources of secondary data could contribute to this programme.

Recommendation 8: WEFO should consider how the employer perspective on the impact of ESF interventions supporting the employed workforce can be brought together with the participant perspective captured by the Leavers Survey. This would most likely involve working with project-level evaluations with an employer survey dimension.

Annex 1: Survey methodology

A1.1 Defining the sample population

A file containing the details of 28,029 individuals who left ESF funded courses or learning during 2011 was provided to the research team by WEFO. This file contained the contact details of project participants, details of the course undertaken, the labour market position of project participants and information related to a variety of personal characteristics, including age, gender, educational attainment, disability, ethnicity, migrant status. The initial sample covered 38 ESF projects. Following guidance from WEFO, four projects were withdrawn from the sample file prior to the fieldwork commencing. Checks were undertaken on the database to remove records that did not have a valid telephone number. A small number of records from one project were also excluded as there was found to be an overlap with a concurrent evaluation survey being undertaken by IFF research. A further two projects were withdrawn during the very early stages of the fieldwork due to issues surrounding the nature of contact details that were provided. The total number of records loaded for the main stage of fieldwork was 21,580. The aim of the survey was to achieve interviews with 6,500 participants, whilst at the same time ensuring that the quality of the data was maintained through the achievement of a response rate of 50%.

A1.2 Survey methodology

The ESF Leavers Survey was conducted via telephone interview. The design of the survey instrument for 2011 remained largely unchanged from that used for the 2010 study, although additional questions were included to improve the quality of the data in certain areas including more detailed response categories for the duration of non-employment and the last occupation held among those respondents who were not in work prior to ESF. Telephone interviews were conducted over a period of approximately eight weeks. The fieldwork ran from the 27th September to 21st November 2012. All respondents were offered the opportunity to be interviewed in Welsh. All interviewers working on the study received a face-to-face briefing, and were provided with accompanying interviewer notes. A member of the WEFO team participated in the briefing on the first evening of interviewing. All fieldwork took place from IFF's telephone centre in London.

Table A1.2: Response rates and survey population

	Response Rates					Sample Size				
	Con P2	Con P3	Comp P1	Comp P2	Total	Con P2	Con P3	Comp P1	Comp P2	Total
Gender:										
Female	21.5	34.7	39.6	35.0	28.5	968	1097	305	184	2554
Male	23.3	34.4	35.9	33.0	27.4	1825	914	446	277	3462
Age:										
16-18 yrs	13.7	28.8	8.0	18.8	15.7	53	23	2	3	81
19-21 yrs	15.2	31.6	17.0	24.2	20.0	250	221	29	8	508
22-24 yrs	14.8	33.3	22.2	38.5	22.7	187	278	34	25	524
25-30 yrs	17.0	31.0	30.9	26.1	22.3	371	320	81	50	822
31-40 yrs	23.5	34.9	32.8	35.8	28.4	572	426	143	127	1268
41-54 yrs	30.2	38.7	47.5	32.9	34.6	983	629	326	188	2126
55+ yrs	33.0	36.1	48.9	45.7	36.7	376	114	136	59	685
Family Status:										
Single/Couple	23.3	34.8	38.1	34.1	28.6	2524	1916	705	452	5597
Lone Parents	18.0	30.3	28.6	24.3	20.9	269	95	46	9	419
Disability:										
Non-disabled	23.1	34.7	38.0	33.9	28.5	2485	1965	735	457	5642
Disabled	19.5	31.5	20.3	28.6	20.5	308	46	16	4	374
Educational Attainment:										
NQF < 2	20.9	35.2	36.7	35.4	24.4	350	77	91	39	557
NQF 2	21.8	29.3	33.3	35.1	25.6	666	448	170	97	1381
NQF 3	27.6	35.1	39.2	29.8	31.6	439	445	135	86	1105
NQF 4-8	24.0	38.9	39.1	34.6	31.3	879	950	350	237	2416
Don't Know	19.7	24.6	33.3	100.0	20.4	459	91	5	2	557
Completion Status:										
Completer	23.8	35.4	38.9	33.8	29.1	2548	1929	673	460	5610
Early Leaver	15.0	22.2	27.8	33.3	17.7	245	82	78	1	406
Month of Completion:										
January	20.1	34.7	30.2	33.3	25.4	253	206	38	38	535
February	19.9	30.7	34.6	30.0	24.7	206	178	47	19	450
March	22.3	28.0	31.9	34.5	25.7	230	194	60	39	523
April	25.4	28.5	42.2	32.9	28.4	249	152	78	25	504
May	26.9	33.3	34.8	35.2	30.3	239	202	72	31	544
June	24.0	31.1	38.9	30.5	28.6	213	259	65	40	577
July	24.1	35.1	34.7	33.0	29.4	201	202	61	37	501
August	23.9	42.7	42.6	20.4	30.4	171	125	63	11	370
September	23.2	49.0	44.1	31.3	31.5	198	154	67	37	456
October	21.2	38.6	36.9	40.1	25.2	396	102	52	66	616
November	20.2	45.5	40.2	38.5	29.0	198	133	70	87	488
December	24.0	42.0	36.6	30.7	29.1	239	104	78	31	452
Total	22.7	34.6	37.3	33.8	27.9	2793	2011	751	461	6016

To assess further the factors influencing survey response, we undertook a multivariate analysis of the response record for each potential respondent using logistic regression. This allowed us to measure the separate statistical significance of a variety of factors that could affect response. The analysis revealed that the associations between response rates and the personal characteristics described above are strong, separate and statistically significant effects. It was estimated that the young, the less educated, lone parents and those who withdrew early from an ESF project are less likely to respond to the survey. Additionally, the analysis revealed that participants in projects from Priority 2 of the Convergence Programme were least likely to respond than participants from other Priorities. This is likely to reflect a number of factors, such as the current economic activity of the respondents (more likely to be unemployed both prior to ESF and at the time of the survey) and the nature of interventions that these groups undertake. No consistent findings emerge in terms of the relationship between month of completion and response. Those who completed their interventions in August or September were most likely to respond to the survey, indicating some possible increased propensity to respond among those participants who completed their interventions at the end of an academic year.

A1.5 Development of sample weights

As noted above, the presence of response bias in the sample of respondents to the ESF survey could bias our interpretation of responses from the survey. To consider the extent of these problems, sample weights were derived from the logistic regression model based upon the inverse of the estimated predicted probability of response. Analysis of the data revealed that the utilisation of weights did not have a significant effect on the results of the descriptive analysis contained in the report. Much of the analysis in the report presents estimates for different groups of respondents which in itself will counteract the effects of response bias if these groups have different response characteristics. Whilst the survey weights have been retained on the data set, they have not been used for the purpose of this report

