



Resources Board

Agenda

Wednesday, 12 July 2023
2.00 pm

Hybrid Meeting - Eaton-Cockell Room, 7th
Floor, 18 Smith Square and Online

There will be a meeting of the Resources Board at **2.00 pm on Wednesday, 12 July 2023** Hybrid Meeting - 18 Smith Square and Online.

LGA Hybrid Meetings

All of our meetings are available to join in person at [18 Smith Square](#) or remotely via videoconference as part of our hybrid approach. We will ask you to confirm in advance if you will be joining each meeting in person or remotely so we can plan accordingly, if you wish to attend the meeting in person, please also remember to confirm whether you have any dietary/accessibility requirements. 18 Smith Square is a Covid-19 secure venue and measures are in place to keep you safe when you attend a meeting or visit the building in person.

[Please see guidance for Members and Visitors to 18 Smith Square here](#)

Catering and Refreshments:

If the meeting is scheduled to take place at lunchtime, a sandwich lunch will be available.

Political Group meetings and pre-meetings for Lead Members:

Please contact your political group as outlined below for further details.

Apologies:

Please notify your political group office (see contact telephone numbers below) if you are unable to attend this meeting.

Conservative:	Group Office: 020 7664 3223	email: lgaconservatives@local.gov.uk
Labour:	Group Office: 020 7664 3263	email: labgp@lga.gov.uk
Independent:	Group Office: 020 7664 3224	email: independent.grouplga@local.gov.uk
Liberal Democrat:	Group Office: 020 7664 3235	email: libdem@local.gov.uk

Attendance:

Your attendance, whether it be in person or virtual, will be noted by the clerk at the meeting.

LGA Contact:

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Carers' Allowance

As part of the LGA Members' Allowances Scheme a Carer's Allowance of £9.00 per hour or £10.55 if receiving London living wage is available to cover the cost of dependants (i.e. children, elderly people or people with disabilities) incurred as a result of attending this meeting.

Resources Board – Membership

[Click here for accessible information on membership](#)

Councillor	Authority
Conservative (6)	
Cllr Richard Wenham (Vice Chairman)	Central Bedfordshire Council
Cllr David Leaf	Bexley Council
Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE	Gloucestershire County Council
Cllr Phillip King	Harborough District Council
Cllr Rory Love OBE	Kent County Council
Cllr Roger Phillips	Herefordshire Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Andrew Jamieson	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Steve Count	Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr Jonathan Smale	Derby City Council
Labour (7)	
Cllr Peter Marland (Chair)	Milton Keynes Council
Cllr James Lewis	Leeds City Council
Cllr Cathy Mitchell	Warrington Borough Council
Cllr Ed Turner	Oxford City Council
Cllr Peter Mason	Ealing Council
Cllr Shama Tatler	Brent Council
Cllr Terry Paul	Newham London Borough Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Abdul Jabbar MBE	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Stephanie Cryan	Southwark Council
Cllr Kate Groucutt	St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council
Liberal Democrat (2)	
Cllr Keith House (Deputy Chair)	Eastleigh Borough Council
Cllr Richard Kemp CBE	Liverpool City Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Michael Headley	Bedford Borough Council
Independent (1)	
Cllr Jason Zadrozny (Deputy Chair)	Ashfield District Council
Substitutes	
Cllr James Hakewill	North Northamptonshire Council
Cllr Zoe Nicholson	Lewes District Council
Cllr Nicola Dillon Jones	North Kesteven District Council

Agenda

Resources Board

Wednesday, 12 July 2023

2.00 pm

Hybrid Meeting - 18 Smith Square and Online

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Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday, 27 September 2023, 2.00 pm, Hybrid Meeting - 18 Smith Square and Online

Local Government Finance Update

Purpose of Report

For information.

Is this report confidential? No

Summary

This report provides a summary of the work by the LGA on funding and finance issues since the previous meeting of the Board on 10 May 2023. This includes updates on cost pressures, business rates, capital and investments, and local authority accounts and audit.

LGA Plan Theme: A sustainable financial future

Recommendation(s)

That the Board note this update. Officers will proceed with the delivery of the LGA's work on local government finance matters, keep members of the Resources Board updated on developments and seek the views of the Board where possible or Resources Board Lead Members.

Contact details

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Local Government Finance Update

Background

1. This report provides a summary of the work by the LGA on funding and finance issues since the last Board meeting on 10 May 2023, including cost pressures, business rates, capital and investments, and local authority accounts and audit.

LGA work on cost pressures / funding gap

2. For a number of years the LGA has produced an estimate of the cost pressures facing local government. This has, in most but not all years, been accompanied by an assessment of the income available to local government to produce a funding gap figure. The analysis is a cornerstone of LGA lobbying work and is used in key documents such as submissions to Spending Reviews and Chancellors' Budgets. It is also used regularly in LGA press work and other publications and in briefings to LGA members and parliamentarians.
3. The LGA tends to update this analysis once a year and publish usually in time for the LGA's annual conference. The analysis is based on uprating council spend data by a set of indicators / drivers which are considered to increase the demand for, and / or the cost of, providing services. This includes new data in relation to inflation, pay, energy costs and a range of demographic data and other proxies for demand. It was officially [published](#) by the LGA at the annual conference, alongside a detailed [technical annex](#).
4. The key findings from the update are:
 - Councils face £4.1 billion in additional cost and demand pressures, such as inflation and demographic growth, in 2023/24, and a further £2.4 billion in 2024/25.
 - The cost to councils of delivering their services at current levels will exceed their core funding by £2 billion in 2023/24 and £900 million in 2024/25.
 - If inflation fails to fall in line with the forecast at the March 2023 Budget, and instead is in line with more recent inflation projections from the Bank of England this would add £740 million in cost pressures in 2023/24 and £1.5 billion in 2024/25.
5. Our analysis of funding pressures relates solely to the funding needed to maintain services at their current levels. It does not include addressing existing underfunding in areas such as the adult social care provider market, children's social care and homelessness, nor does it include funding to improve or expand council services.

6. The LGA will explore opportunities for using the new funding gap analysis ahead of a 2023 Autumn Budget and the 2024/25 Local Government Finance Settlement.

Business Rates

7. [The Non-Domestic Rating Bill](#) had its second reading in the House of Lords on 19 June. As previously reported to your Committee this Bill legislates for three-yearly revaluations, measures for ratepayers to give information to the Valuation Office Agency (VOA), a new one-year improvement relief, changes to revaluation transitional relief, and a removal of the six months' time bar on discretionary relief after the end of the financial year to which it relates. The LGA issued a [briefing for the debate](#). The Lords Committee Stage was scheduled for 3 July and the LGA will be briefing on any amendments. Further information will be reported verbally to your meeting.
8. The Government is consulting on the [regulations governing the one-year improvement relief](#). This consultation closes on 28 August. It is recommended that the LGA response be signed off by lead members of your Board. It is likely to concentrate on ensuring that the respective roles of billing authorities and the VOA are defined in the regulations and that there is sufficient data for councils to be compensated for awarding the relief as the government has promised.
9. Lead members of your board signed off the [LGA response](#) to the consultation by the Valuation Office Agency on [providing ratepayers with more information on business rates valuation](#) which closed on 7 June 2023. The consultation examined how greater transparency on business rates valuations might work in practice, bearing in mind ratepayers' concerns about confidentiality of data. Our response makes the point that as information for use classes valued under national schemes, such as sports centres and libraries, won't be available through rating checks after 2026, it should be available from the VOA through the process discussed in the consultation.
10. The consultation promised in the Spring Budget on measures to combat business rates avoidance and evasion has not yet been issued. Officers are in touch with DLUHC officials and will update Resources Board members on any developments.

Reserves

11. In May DLUHC published a [time series analysis showing local authority reserves data](#) over the past five years, to 2021/22. This brought together previously published data on earmarked and unallocated reserves.
12. In addition, the Association of Local Authority Treasurer Societies (ALATS) has carried out a survey of its members, asking for details of levels of reserves held, why they are held and what plans there are for using them. It is anticipated that ALATS will publish the results of this survey shortly.

Local authority accounts and audit

13. Following [our submission of written evidence](#) to the Levelling up, Housing and Communities Select committee [inquiry into Financial Reporting and Audit in Local Authorities](#), Cllr Richard Wenham, Vice Chair of Resources Board, gave oral evidence to the inquiry alongside two other LGA members. This followed two earlier oral evidence sessions where witnesses from the National Audit Office (NAO), Financial Reporting Council (FRC), Chartered institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), Financial Reporting Advisory Board (FRAB) and others all stated that dealing with the audit backlog is the priority, and that work is underway on proposals to do that. A confidential briefing from Neil Harris, Director of Local Audit at the FRC has been arranged in part 2 of today's Board meeting.
14. The [Public Accounts Committee \(PAC\) published a report](#) following its [inquiry into the timeliness of local auditor reporting](#). The report finds that the unacceptably high backlog of audit opinions for local government bodies may get worse before it gets better. The LGA submitted [written evidence to the inquiry](#), approved by Resources Board Lead Members, back in March. We echoed the National Audit Office's call for the Government to set out a detailed timetable outlining the steps to be taken and when, and the time by which it expects to restore timely audited accounts, and this has now also been stressed by the PAC in its report.
15. The issue of accounting for infrastructure assets (such as roads) added significantly to audit delays and the current crisis in local audit. Members will be aware that a temporary solution to these problems was put in place in December when CIPFA published an [update to the accounting code](#) (supplemented by [CIPFA Bulletin 12](#)) and DLUHC made a [statutory override](#) to the Capital Finance and Accounting Regulations. This temporary solution will last until 2024/25. As mentioned at the last Board, CIPFA undertook a [survey](#) on the impact of using Depreciated Replacement Cost (DRC) as the long term solution to the problem of valuing and auditing infrastructure assets (such as roads) in local authority accounts. At its last meeting the Board was very strongly opposed to the adoption of DRC (a valuation that broadly requires an annual estimate

of the cost of replacing the asset less a deduction for wear and tear incurred) for valuing infrastructure assets and this was reflected in the [response](#) to the [HM Treasury's Thematic Review of Non-investment Asset Valuation for Financial Reporting Purposes](#). The Board's lead members have approved [a submission to CIPFA](#) highlighting our concerns and calling for a rethink, including consideration of a different and more practical valuation methodology.

16. Members will recall that following [consultation](#) earlier this year DLUHC moved the deadline for local authorities to publish their draft (unaudited) final accounts to 31 May. In our [response to the consultation](#), we had argued that the crisis in local audit is continuing and so the deadline should instead be extended to 30 June. We also warned that councils would find it difficult to meet the earlier deadline. Initial work [published](#) by the consultancy firm LG Improve found that only 37% of councils were able to meet the 31 May deadline, with most councils citing the ongoing problems with audit of previous years as being the reason. This is the first year that the majority of councils have not met the deadline for publishing draft unaudited accounts.
17. It was reported to the last meeting of the Board that the delay in finalising many councils 2021/22 accounts had triggered a new issue with pension valuations, potentially leading to further delays. The delay in finalising accounts meant that information from the March 2022 triennial valuations of pension funds became available before the audit of many accounts had been signed-off. This led some auditors to request that the accounts are re-done using this more up to date information. In response, in May the NAO and CIPFA both issued complementary guidance to auditors and accounts preparers (NAO [guidance note SGN 3](#) and [CIPFA Bulletin 14 Supplement](#)) that should have prevented the issue causing more delays. However, some member councils are reporting that some auditors are still insisting on accounts being restated. This is being followed up to seek a resolution.

Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill

18. The [Economic Activity of Public Bodies \(Overseas Matters\) Bill](#) was laid in Parliament on June 19th and is the Bill that was included in the Queen's Speech as the Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions Bill.
19. As expected, the Bill seeks to impose a ban on public bodies across the United Kingdom (including local authorities and local government pension funds) taking decisions on investments, procurements and purchasing or issuing statements that are deemed to be in conflict with UK foreign and defence policy.
20. The ban, once implemented, would be enforced by the relevant Secretary of State for the public body, and by the Pensions Regulator for the LGPS. There are specific

provisions in the Bill that will ensure the Government's existing policy around Russia and Belarus continues to apply.

21. The second reading is scheduled for July 3rd and an LGA briefing will be issued in due course.

Implications for Wales

22. We are in regular contact with the Welsh LGA and the other local government bodies in the devolved nations to exchange intelligence, ideas and consider joint work on local government finance.

Financial Implications

23. The work covered in this paper is included in the LGA's core budget.

Equalities implications

24. This paper outlines how the LGA is working on a range of initiatives on finance and funding issues. These issues affect councils and their residents as a whole and it is difficult to assess what individual impacts there are on people with protected characteristics. Improving the funding position of councils should help them to fund work that improves equalities. Working with the Government on improving guidance on finance should also help with enabling better outcomes.

Next steps

25. Members are asked to note this update.
26. Officers will proceed with the delivery of the LGA's work on local government finance matters, keep members of Resources Board updated on developments and seek the views of the Board where possible or of Resources Board Lead Members.

Local government workforce capacity update

Purpose of Report

For direction.

Summary

This report sets out the latest draft of a prioritised plan of LGA action in relation to local government workforce capacity, seen in light of the relevant issues for service areas experiencing the greatest challenges, latest progress and actions underway and planned by other bodies. Members are asked to comment on the draft plan and the approach to prioritised action in relation to activity which is currently unfunded.

LGA Plan Theme: Support to the LG Workforce

Recommendation

The Resources Board is asked to

- 1. Review and comment on the draft plan and approach to prioritised action set out in the report, considering the full range of actions by councils, other bodies and the LGA in the round.**
- 2. Agree the proposed additional content to be included in submissions for Autumn/ Spring statements/ budgets in relation to workforce resourcing, set out in para 9.32 of Appendix A.**

Contact details

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Local government workforce capacity update

Background

1. The February meeting of the Board considered a report setting out the workforce capacity challenges which are impacting councils across a wide range of professions and services. Following feedback from the Board and from Executive Advisory Board, officers have been identifying actions that the LGA can take, alongside activity already in train in councils and by professional bodies, to address these challenges.

Proposal

2. Both demand and supply pressures in many services mean there are insufficient resources to adequately fund staffing establishments. This paper sets out a proposed approach to prioritise activity in the context of limited resources both in councils and in the LGA.
3. The [Local Government Workforce Survey 2022](#) provides the most recent overview of workforce capacity challenges (including recruitment and retention difficulties) being experienced by the sector. Respondents stated their councils were experiencing the greatest difficulties in relation to the following occupations:

	Counties, districts and single tiers		Counties and single tiers		Districts and single tiers	
	Recruitment	Retention	Recruitment	Retention	Recruitment	Retention
Children's social workers			83%	72%		
Adult social workers			71%	57%		
Adult care workers			63%	52%		
Mental health social workers			60%	45%		
Planning officers	58%	36%				
Legal professionals	53%	29%				
Environmental health officers					45%	18%
ICT professionals	43%	29%				
Building control officers					43%	21%

These responses are consistent with other published research.

4. The plan which appears at Appendix A therefore focuses on activities to address the workforce capacity challenge in the following priority areas:
 - a) Children’s social workers
 - b) Adult and mental health social workers
 - c) Adult care workers
 - d) Planning officers
 - e) Legal professionals
 - f) Environmental health officers
 - g) ICT professionals
 - h) Building control officers

There are also activities to be taken on a system-wide basis.

5. In many instances, councils can – and do - themselves (either individually or working together) take action to address the workforce capacity challenge, some of which are consistent across all service areas and so are not repeated in each case (such as use of apprenticeships, continuing professional development and other retention good practice). The LGA can also provide support and share best practice to support councils to take appropriate action. In other cases, there are professional bodies and other stakeholders who are best placed to act, sometimes with the LGA in a supporting role. In a few cases, the LGA will lobby for change on behalf of the sector alongside ongoing lobbying to press for longer term funding that reflects current and future demand for services.
6. This plan identifies for each priority occupation:
 - the relevant issues leading to the capacity challenge
 - activity which has been identified as appropriate to address the issues:
 - what can councils do for themselves (individually and working together)
 - what can relevant bodies do
 - the LGA’s role:
 - providing support
 - lobbying for change
7. The plan also identifies actions the LGA will take on a sector-wide basis, to:
 - provide support
 - lobby for change.

These actions can be delivered within existing resources (through various sources of improvement grant funding).

8. Given the scale of the challenge, officers have considered any further actions which could be funded through alternative sources, for example:

- (i) testing with the sector the market for any support offers which could be provided on a commercial basis;
 - (ii) approaching other government departments for funding for support relevant to their remit;
 - (iii) use of LGA reserves to fund support offers;
 - (iv) a mixture of the above.
9. It is proposed that further, prioritised action will focus in the first instance on workforce capacity challenges related to children's social workers. Work is underway to develop costed proposals to resource the following actions:
- (i) commission research to identify local authorities' requirements for children's social workers into the medium term and quantify the current and projected gap;
 - (ii) conducting the Employer Healthcheck survey to improve children's social worker retention (discussions are underway with potential co-funders).
10. The LGA is also discussing plans for the promotion of children's social work as a career with Social Work England and other partners and will consider if any additional activity is required on this or any related joint projects. A verbal update will be given at the meeting.
11. Additionally, the LGA is being funded as part of the sector support programme to work with CIPFA to develop a workforce plan for finance teams within local authorities.

Implications for Wales

12. Wales faces very similar issues with workforce capacity as are evident in England. Through the LGA Workforce team's regular engagement the WLGA feeds into discussions and the sharing of good practice and experience. The working assumption used is that any steps to improve capacity in England would also be applicable in Wales, taking note of relevant responsibility devolution.

Financial Implications

13. LGA actions to address the workforce challenge listed in Appendix A are funded through existing improvement support grant funding. As set out in para 9 above, costed proposals for member consideration will be developed for prioritised

activity to support workforce issues: this may include commercial offers to councils and/or use of LGA reserves.

Equalities implications

14. Capacity gaps in councils' workforce have the potential to have negative impacts on people with protected characteristics: for example, an inability to meet demand for adult social care can impact older people and people with disabilities.
15. Job seekers are looking for diverse workplaces: addressing equalities considerations is a crucial part of work to maximise the potential pool of local government workers and aid retention: support to councils to consider equalities good practice is an important part of the workforce provided by the LGA. This is important in terms of culture and career aspirations, but also means consideration of flexible working and doing more to support the health and wellbeing of staff.
16. By working with councils and with relevant professional bodies, the LGA will target its policy and improvement work to address workforce capacity challenges towards those service areas where it is most needed, being mindful of equality, diversity and the impact on local communities.

Next steps

17. A report incorporating feedback from Resources Board will be brought to Executive Advisory Board on 20 July.

Appendix A - Local government workforce capacity plan

1. Children's social workers

What are the issues?

- 1.1 58 per cent of social workers say that their caseloads are unmanageable and are experiencing deteriorating mental health because of their roles. Some children's social workers are exposed to significant public criticism, including via social media, without right of reply. The top factors which influence social workers' desire to stay in roles are:
- (i) feeling positive/ able to cope with work most of the time;
 - (ii) satisfactory one to one supervision;
 - (iii) access to professional development and training.
- 1.2 Sufficiency of staffing levels both at social worker and supervisory levels are therefore an issue, as well as the resourcing of training and development. Newly qualified staff make up a greater proportion of posts in children's social care: since newly qualified staff require more oversight and support, this places additional work on managers and may introduce risk when expertise and practical experience is needed to make effective decisions about children and their families.
- 1.3 23 per cent of children's social workers leaving the profession in 2020/21 went to agency roles, which have been identified as offering competitive incentives as well as providing flexibility, which is valued. High use of agency workers comes at a financial cost to councils as well as impacting on stability of relationships for children and their families.
- 1.4 The number of looked after children has increased by 23 per cent in the last ten years, the number of assessments carried out because children are believed to be at risk of significant harm increased by 75 per cent and Ofsted has noted that the complexity of cases has increased since the pandemic began, meaning rising workloads even where the number of children on the caseloads has remained stable.

What can councils do?

- 1.5 Councils can:
- (i) provide flexible working options;
 - (ii) engage in regional/ sub-regional commitments to work cooperatively to manage the agency supply chain and regulate agency pay rates;
 - (iii) adhere to Employer Standards for social workers which support good

retention practices, including good quality and timely induction and ongoing professional and career development.

1.6 Subject to funding, councils can also:

- (i) increase the number of social workers entering and progressing through the profession via academies for newly qualified workers and CPD/ support for more experienced workers;
- (ii) increase their establishment to reduce caseloads;
- (iii) provide health and wellbeing support and ongoing career development
- (iv) Speed up development of new starters by structured training and support packages
- (v) work to reduce demand through early intervention/ prevention or involvement of other professions.

What can other bodies do?

1.7 The Department for Education (DfE) is consulting on draft national rules on the engagement of agency children's social workers. Its 'Stable Homes, built on Love' strategy includes a range of activities targeted towards social worker retention, including work with local authorities to identify sector-wide technical solutions to reduce time spent by social workers on case recording to maximise time available for practice. It has also announced proposals to establish an Early Career Framework. The programme of Families First Pathfinders will test the potential for a greater proportion of social work to be devolved to non-qualified social workers.

1.8 Social Work England (SWE) is working to address recruitment and retention issues in the sector in liaison with a wide range of bodies including the Joint University Council Social Work Education Committee (JUCSWEC) which supports liaison between social work and local authorities in response to employer need. The LGA will liaise with SWE and JUCSWEC to ensure that this activity addresses needs in all regions.

What will the LGA do to support councils?

1.9 The LGA will:

- (i) provide a package of guidance and best practice including actions to manage use of agency workers, workforce planning, health and wellbeing support, flexible working options and the 'London Pledge' approach, disseminated via regional networks;
- (ii) provide support and challenge through the Children's Improvement Programme to ensure the conditions for good social work are in place,

including quality supervision, manageable caseloads, effective support and continuing professional development;

- (iii) adapt, publish and promote guidance on flexible working prepared for adult social workers, for use in the children's social work context;
- (iv) identify current good practice in councils working with universities to develop a pipeline of children's social workers and promote through regional networks; review existing activity in the university sector to coordinate social work education and promote joint working via regional networks where appropriate;
- (v) review a toolkit on the establishment of Social Worker Career Academies for adult social care when produced (see 2.11 below) and consider its adaptation for the children's social worker context.

What will the LGA do to lobby for change?

1.10 The LGA's established policy lines call for:

- (i) a holistic 10-year workforce strategy for children and families;
- (ii) funding for administrative support, supervision capacity and training;
- (iii) Government-funded training programmes and bursaries to encourage retraining from other professions and the return of previously qualified social workers

2. Adult and mental health social workers

What are the issues?

2.1 58 per cent of social workers say that their caseloads are unmanageable. Two-thirds of adult social workers say they are experiencing deteriorating mental health because of their roles. The top factors which influence social workers' desire to stay in roles are:

- (i) feeling positive/ able to cope with work most of the time;
- (ii) satisfactory one to one supervision;
- (iii) access to professional development and training.

2.2 Sufficiency of staffing levels both at social worker and supervisory levels are therefore an issue, as well as the resourcing of training and development.

2.3 In 2021/22, employers relied on agencies for 7% of social worker roles.

- 2.4 The number of requests for adult social care from new working age clients has increased by 11 per cent, and 87 per cent of directors say that more people are seeking support for mental health issues.

What can councils do?

- 2.5 Councils can:

- (i) undertake workforce modelling and capacity planning;
- (ii) carry out targeted and/or values-based recruitment;
- (iii) adhere to Employer Standards for social workers which support good retention practices, including good quality and timely induction and ongoing professional and career development and flexible working options that aid wellbeing and retention;
- (iv) make full use of the apprenticeship levy to increase the supply of relevant professionals.

- 2.6 Subject to funding, councils can also:

- (i) provide pastoral care for overseas recruits;
- (ii) establish academies and/or other arrangements to support newly qualified social workers and CPD/ support for more experienced social workers;
- (iii) establish local 'entry into social work' initiatives, potentially piloting approaches to ascertain the most successful.

What can other bodies do?

- 2.7 The Department for Health and Social Care provides financial support to the costs of international recruitment which may be used to support the recruitment of social workers.

- 2.8 In 'Next steps to put people at the heart of care', the Government has announced that £250m (a reduction to the previous commitment) will be used to 'better recognise social care as a profession' and 'increase opportunities to develop skills and expertise and undertake learning and development'. This includes the 'Think Ahead' programme: a fast-track graduate programme to become a qualified social worker, with support through the Education Support Grant and Social Work Bursary.

- 2.9 Skills for Care, with ADASS and the LGA, has a workforce priority plan for adult social care for 2020 – 25, focused on the following themes:

- (i) strategic workforce planning, including a national workforce survey;
- (ii) growing and developing the workforce to meet future demand;

- (iii) enhancing the use of technology;
- (iv) enhancing the wellbeing of the workforce;
- (v) building and enhancing social justice in the workforce.

2.10 Skills for Care is the strategic workforce development body for adult social care, and their data set covers more than half of the people who work in social care. They propose to take a system leadership role to work with Government, local government, health partners, social care employers and people drawing on care and support to implement the Government's vision for the social care workforce, including the creation and implementation of a competency framework and career pathways, a workforce hub and investment in skills, learning and continuing professional development.

What will the LGA do to support councils?

2.11 The LGA will work with ADASS and Skills for Care to:

- (i) conduct a survey to understand the current extent of agency usage in adult social worker roles;
- (ii) work with ADASS and Skills for Care to support councils to deliver their workforce priorities;
- (iii) provide a package of guidance and best practice including actions to reduce use of agency workers and health and wellbeing support;
- (iv) conduct a national evaluation of local adult social care recruitment initiatives to identify and share 'what works', promoted via events in each region;
- (v) develop and pilot an adult social care workforce peer challenge;
- (vi) research use of digital and other technologies in social work and promote good practice to free up social worker capacity and achieve better outcomes for service users;
- (vii) provide support for the development and evaluation of Social Worker Career Academies involving providers, universities and other training providers and councils (with consideration of the business case and lessons learned), alongside the launch of an interactive toolkit with guidance on how to establish them. These products will be promoted strongly across the sector.

2.12 The LGA has already published [guidance](#) on integrated workforce planning in adult social care and resources, top tips and tools to support retention and flexible working.

What will the LGA do to lobby for change?

- 2.13 The LGA's established policy lines call for Government to help promote a positive image of social care as a rewarding and fulfilling career.
- 2.14 Once the products relating to Social Worker Career Academies are launched (see 2.11 (vii) above), the LGA may wish to consider strengthening further its encouragement to councils to establish such academies either individually or in partnership with others in the region.
- 2.15 Consider, in conjunction with relevant stakeholders, whether the current role and responsibilities of the social worker profession ensure the maximum effectiveness of the role

3. Adult care workers***What are the issues?***

- 3.1 The top reasons for domiciliary care workers leaving their roles are better pay outside the care sector, seeking better hours and/or conditions, and feeling burnt out and/or stressed. 95 per cent of the respondents to a Homecare Association Survey said that their staff had expressed anxiety about the rising cost of living and 21 per cent reported that staff were looking for work elsewhere because they cannot afford fuel and other costs.
- 3.2 There is a lack of parity of esteem compared with the NHS workforce. Around 93 per cent of the social care workforce are employed by independent providers rather than councils which limits' councils' ability to control the terms and conditions of the sector.
- 3.3 It has also been estimated that, due to demographic changes, an estimated 490,000 more people will need to be working across all providers of adult social care in England by 2035.

What can councils do?

- 3.4 Councils can work with providers and Integrated Care Boards to:
- (i) undertake workforce modelling and capacity planning;
 - (ii) carry out targeted and/or values-based recruitment;
 - (iii) offer more flexible working options that aid wellbeing and retention.
- 3.5 Subject to funding, councils can also work with providers to provide pastoral care for overseas recruits.

What can other bodies do?

- 3.6 The Department for Health and Social Care provides financial support to the costs of international recruitment of the adult social care workforce.
- 3.7 In ‘Next steps to put people at the heart of care’, the Government has announced that £250m (a reduction to the previous commitment) will be used to ‘better recognise social care as a profession’ and ‘increase opportunities to develop skills and expertise and undertake learning and development’. This includes:
- (i) launching a call for evidence for behaviours, knowledge, skills and experience pathways for frontline care workers;
 - (ii) providing a new training offer including funding for a new Care Certificate level 2 qualification, training courses and digital skills training;
 - (iii) a new website to provide access to support, information and advice on careers in adult social care.
- 3.8 Skills for Care, with ADASS and the LGA, has a workforce priority plan for adult social care for 2020 – 25, described at para 2.8 above, and proposals for system leadership to address workforce challenges, at para 2.10. Skills for Care is working with Government to identify improvements which may reduce delays to care worker recruitment arising from the DBS process.

What will the LGA do to support councils?

- 3.9 The LGA will work with ADASS and Skills for Care to:
- (i) support councils to work with their providers to deliver their workforce priorities;
 - (ii) conduct a national evaluation of local adult social care recruitment initiatives to identify and share ‘what works’;
 - (iii) develop and pilot an adult social care workforce peer challenge;
 - (iv) provide support for the development and evaluation of Social Care Academies.

- 3.10 The LGA (with Skills for Care and ADASS) has already published [guidance](#) on integrated workforce planning in adult social care and resources, top tips and tools to support retention and flexible working.

What will the LGA do to lobby for change?

- 3.11 The LGA’s established policy lines call for:
- (i) funding to enable improvement in pay, conditions and career development opportunities for the frontline care workforce;

- (ii) an independent review of care worker pay;
- (iii) Government to help promote a positive image of social care as a rewarding and fulfilling career;
- (iv) parity of esteem for adult social care workers and NHS workers;
- (v) the NHS workforce plan to include adult social care (and limit the potential for 'poaching' staff);
- (vi) implementation of the knowledge and skills framework for adult social care.

4. Planning officers

What are the issues?

- 4.1 Following the pandemic, planners have been reported to be taking early retirement or finding work in the private sector: more people are retiring than are entering the sector.
- 4.2 There is a perception that public sector planning is not valued or seen as an attractive career. Local authorities are directly competing with the private sector in a relatively small pool of professionals, in addition to other public sector agencies such as PINS and Homes England. In 2019, approximately 44% of planners worked primarily in the private sector, with 56% in the public sector, with an apparent trend towards a greater proportion of planners in the private sector in recent years.
- 4.3 Thirty-eight per cent of local planning authorities reported that they could not administer and deliver new 'No Net Loss/ Net Gain' and Biodiversity Offsetting policies and, of these, 62 per cent identified lack of staffing resource as the reason. A lack of in-house ecological expertise is cited as a major obstacle.
- 4.4 Some planners choose to work for agencies where they feel less personally visible in the context of politically charged decision-making: some planners are exposed to significant public criticism without right of reply. Some planning services have up to 80 per cent of their staff provided by agencies, with impacts on both cost and quality of service.

What can councils do?

- 4.5 Councils can:
 - (i) establish their own planners' academy (or join with other councils to do so): Birmingham and Central Bedfordshire are two examples;
 - (ii) provide ongoing training and development opportunities. Many councils fund or part-fund postgraduate qualifications with a contractual requirement to remain with the council for a set period following completion.

What can other bodies do?

- 4.6 The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has:
- (i) committed to deliver a comprehensive resources and skills strategy for the sector;
 - (ii) funded the [Public Practice Associates programme](#) to help public sector organisations recruit mid-career planners as an affordable alternative to agency recruitment;
 - (iii) launched consultation on increases to planning fees with the aim of increasing capacity in the local planning system;
 - (iv) funded pilot projects to improve digital solutions which will reduce officer time spent processing data;
 - (v) convened a capability and capacity group to identify solutions to the planning recruitment and retention challenge (on which the Planning Advisory Service is represented).
- 4.7 The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) has worked with Milton Keynes to develop their local planners' academy and is conducting a survey of planners' wellbeing.
- 4.8 Discussions involving RTPI, the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) and the Planning Officers Society (POS) (with LGA, DLUHC and University training provider attendance) have commenced to identify the root causes of and potential solutions to the recruitment challenge in the public sector. A proposed action plan is expected, to be discussed further in the early Autumn. TCPA is also planning research on the scale of the resourcing gap.

What will the LGA do to support councils?

- 4.9 The LGA will:
- (i) deliver a Pathways into Planning programme to attract new graduates into local authority planning careers, funded by DLUHC;
 - (ii) conduct a skills audit of the local authority planning workforce, funded by DLUHC and leading to a gap analysis in comparison with future needs.

What will the LGA do to lobby for change?

- 4.10 The LGA's established policy lines call for:
- (i) resources to deliver planning reforms and new policy commitments;

- (ii) councils to be closely involved in developing the resources and skills strategy;
- (iii) planning fees to cover the cost of processing applications;
- (iv) changes to the planning system to reduce its onerousness, for example discouraging speculative applications and easing the burden of the Local Plan process.

5. Legal professionals

What are the issues?

- 5.1 Anecdotally, a large cohort of experienced professionals are retiring or moving into more flexible interim roles or moving into the private sector for better pay for similar levels of work. A significant proportion of local government lawyers are nearing retirement in the next five to eight years, which, notwithstanding current work to bring new entrants to the profession, will lead to a loss in experience and additional roles to fill. While local government previously attracted lawyers due to opportunities for flexible working, in recent years this has also been offered by the private sector, in addition to more attractive remuneration.
- 5.2 A survey conducted in 2019 identified that recruitment and retention has become the biggest single issue facing local authority legal departments. 87 per cent of respondents to the survey described recruitment of qualified staff as 'difficult' and 39 per cent as 'very difficult'. 44 per cent expect recruitment to get harder still in the foreseeable future.
- 5.3 New work is tending to be more complex, and heads of legal services are therefore seeking to recruit more experienced senior lawyers.
- 5.4 Average local authority lawyers' pay is well behind their peers in private practice, and the relative difference between public and private sector pensions has decreased. Seven per cent of all roles advertised on the Public Law jobs website in 2022 attracted a market supplement.
- 5.5 The structure of most legal departments means that promotion – and higher pay – is only open to those prepared to take on management responsibility: there is little reward for developing technical expertise. In the more in-demand disciplines, experienced lawyers can earn significantly more by working as a locum (the imposition of IR35 has not dented the use of locums by local authorities, only made it more expensive).
- 5.6 Local authorities have cut back on training contracts in recent years: there were only 69 in 2021, for a pool of around 4,500 in-house solicitors in local government, and only ten trainee solicitor roles were advertised in councils in 2022. This supply is inadequate to compensate for those leaving or retiring. It also remains common for local authority trainees to have to find a role

elsewhere at the end of their training period. Legal apprenticeships are growing in number but do not address the problem of finding more experienced staff.

What can councils do?

- 5.7 Subject to funding, councils can provide training contracts with an associated career path.

What can other bodies do?

- 5.8 In 2019, Lawyers in Local Government (LLG) began work on a national campaign aimed at encouraging graduates to apply for training contracts. This will be supplemented by a single hub for graduate recruitment into local government legal services. LLG also run a 'National Work Experience week' to enable students to gain an insight into a career as a local government lawyer and are launching a leadership development programme for local government lawyers.

What will the LGA do to support councils?

- 5.9 The flagship recruitment campaign (see para 9.20 below) will support councils to market local government as an employer of choice, with a focus on values and wider benefits, with the aim of attracting those who may consider a move from the private sector.

What will the LGA do to lobby for change?

- 5.10 The LGA will continue to argue for the reduction in the legislative burden placed on councils.

6. Environmental health officers

What are the issues?

- 6.1 A cross-government task group has identified the following issues:
- (i) an ageing workforce. Post-COVID, environmental health officers are reported to be taking early retirement;
 - (ii) a loss of officers to other sectors and agencies, exacerbated by COVID;
 - (iii) a limited pool of professional capacity;
 - (iv) limited management time to mentor new officers;
 - (v) lack of funding for training posts: 52% of councils did not have a single apprentice or trainee in environmental health. This is thought to be partly because there is insufficient management capacity to supervise them and

partly because, in small teams, councils are prioritising posts at a more experienced level;

(vi) because councils are unable to carry specialist posts within their headcounts, and many officers are taking on generalist roles, there is a loss of specialist expertise.

- 6.2 These are compounded by the uncoordinated creation of new enforcement duties, creating additional capacity issues for already stretched services. In some places there is concern about the predominance of food work over other areas of regulation. It may be expected that work to review housing conditions (particularly in the private rented sector) will bring further pressures on environmental health.
- 6.3 There has also been a reduction in the number of environmental health university courses on offer, and in the number of students accessing them.
- 6.4 There is a discussion about the potential for one qualification for overlapping roles in regulatory services (there are a number of distinct specialisms within the fields of environmental health and trading standards). However, some councils no longer have roles/ officers focusing on distinct professional specialisms, with officers more likely to cover a range of specialisms within their profession (and, likely, significantly less work taking place in some specialisms). Research commissioned by the LGA nearly ten years ago explored the scope for a generic regulatory services officer role, concluding that although there may be scope for a generic food officer role, in many other regards the two professions were moving further apart in their work profiles.

What can councils do?

- 6.5 Councils can 'grow their own' through apprenticeships and other training.

What can other bodies do?

- 6.6 The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health has produced an [apprenticeship toolkit](#) to support employers to set up apprenticeships in the field of environmental health. It has also produced a toolkit of career information resources to support councils to raise awareness of the role of environmental health in schools and colleges and runs a leadership development programme to enable graduates to gain the qualifications to become a registered practitioner.
- 6.7 The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is conducting a review of resourcing in local environmental health and trading standards services.
- 6.8 The Chartered Trading Standards Institute is developing an apprenticeship for licensing roles.

What will the LGA do to support councils?

6.9 The LGA will:

- (i) continue to engage with senior regulatory services professionals to gain a deeper understanding of the nature and scale of the recruitment and retention challenges facing the sector;
- (ii) review the findings of FSA research when published;
- (iii) undertake basic modelling of how new cost recovery mechanisms in regulatory services could inject new resources into the sector;

What will the LGA do to lobby for change?

6.10 The LGA's established policy lines call for:

- (i) consideration of the cumulative impact of additional duties for regulatory services which taken on their own have not generated (sufficient) new burdens funding and of solutions to address the funding gap;
- (ii) measures to ensure that duties for regulatory services are appropriately funded, including measures for cost recovery;
- (iii) DLUHC to play a convening role in regulatory services, particularly on capacity issues, representing local government in cross-Government discussions as appropriate.
- (iv) reforms to the apprenticeship levy to enable councils to target resources at regulatory services.

6.11 In the absence of a cross-Government approach, DEFRA will be approached directly to raise awareness of the challenge and discuss potential solutions.

7 ICT professionals

What are the issues?

- 7.1 Anecdotally, a large cohort of experienced professionals are retiring or moving into more flexible interim roles. There is competition from the private sector for candidates and some councils pay market supplements to attract appropriate expertise.
- 7.2 Information management and technology professions are not codified or structured with clear professional pathways or qualifications, making it difficult for managers to identify their requirements or individuals to decide which qualifications to pursue.

What can councils do?

- 7.3 Councils can take up training and mentoring support for ICT officers provided by SOCITM to support retention rates.

What can other bodies do?

- 7.4 [SOCITM lead](#) aims to grow the pipeline of talent for public sector information management and technology.

What will the LGA do to support councils?

- 7.5 The LGA is currently developing a Capabilities Framework for the sector workforce. This will focus initially on 6 service areas (including adult social care, planning and corporate services), with the aim of supporting managers to identify the capabilities required. Once this work is completed (by September 2024) it will be possible to map career pathways and conduct gap analysis.
- 7.6 The LGA will also deliver a ‘Women in Tech’ event, followed by initiatives to promote the local government tech sector to women.
- 7.7 The flagship recruitment campaign (see para 9.20 below) will support councils to market local government as an employer of choice, with a focus on values and wider benefits, with the aim of appealing to those who may consider a move from the private sector.

What will the LGA do to lobby for change?

- 7.8 The LGA will consider whether any lobbying is required following completion of the Capabilities Framework.

8. Building control officers

What are the issues?

- 8.1 A significant proportion of the workforce may be expected to retire in the coming years (64% are aged 45+) and the need to obtain registration to practice under the Building Safety Act may add further challenges.
- 8.2 To some building control officers, local authority work is less engaging/ rewarding, since they cannot ‘cherry pick’ the work they undertake. The private sector recruits people trained in public sector with attractive terms and conditions.
- 8.3 There is difficulty in finding qualified/ competent surveyors for the salary offered, and particularly for team leadership roles.
- 8.4 Because very few council building control departments have a full complement of staff, councils regularly resort to agency staff.

What can councils do?

- 8.5 Councils can support staff to gain validation at the appropriate level to gain registration

What can other bodies do?

- 8.6 Local Authority Building Control has carried out workforce modelling and is now funded by DLUHC to recruit and train officers to fill the capacity gap and support legislative change. This programme is successfully attracting and training good quality recruits for the sector. It also conducts skills analysis of the existing workforce and validation assessments to meet new requirements.
- 8.7 The Building Safety Regulator is introducing a register of professionals and will carry out awareness raising of building control services and careers.

What will the LGA do to support councils?

- 8.8 The LGA can discuss with LABC later in 2023 whether any strategies are required to ensure officers remain within the local government sector following training, in light of experience.

What will the LGA do to lobby for change?

- 8.9 The LGA's established policy lines call for sustained investment in building control.

9. Sector-wide activity

Apprenticeships

What are the issues?

- 9.1 Due to the requirement that councils return levy underspends to government, often the 10 per cent top-up funding paid to councils sits unused for two years and is returned to government unspent (£3.25m per month). Being able to use this funding more flexibly to pay for the administration of programmes, cover salary or backfill costs, or help support underrepresented groups to break down barriers to apprenticeships would help the sector to create more opportunities in key areas of the workforce and ensure this funding is spent productively on apprenticeships.
- 9.2 The issue of people completing an apprenticeship and moving on is understood to be a risk for some councils, however, some councils have good retention rates, rates also vary by level of apprenticeship and in some cases people move from one council to another. Apprenticeship Levy funds belong to the Government and not to the council, and so any funds returned to the council by an apprentice if they left within a set period would have to be returned to the Government. Additionally, there would be costs to councils in administering any such arrangements.

What can councils do?

9.3 Councils can:

- (i) implement good practices in employee retention, including strategies for progression into other roles when apprenticeships are complete;
- (ii) have a policy for apprentices' pay and grading (88 per cent of councils already do);
- (iii) introduce and implement an apprenticeship strategy or action plan (66 per cent already do, a further 26 per cent are in the process of developing one). This should involve appropriate governance to support and account for delivery; plan the spending of the levy and assess the impact of the apprenticeship programme on the council's wider objectives.
- (iv) introduce mentoring schemes and network opportunities to apprentices and consider providing additional employability support for qualifying apprentices (eg 24 per cent of councils provide guaranteed interviews to support them into permanent roles).

What can other bodies do?

- 9.4 The Institute of Apprenticeships approves standards in development and oversees access to training providers. However, 33 per cent of councils reported they could not find a training provider for at least one standard: Pest Control Technician Level 2 and Town Planning Assistant Level 4 have been raised as a concern over several years. Faster approval of new standards would also assist councils to provide apprenticeships which meet their needs.

What will the LGA do to support councils?

9.5 The LGA will:

- (i) support up to 40 councils to make better use of apprenticeships at all levels, to map demand and develop new solutions (this number is predicated on the proposal for DLUHC funding, more councils could be supported if additional resources were identified through other routes);
- (ii) provide advice and guidance to councils on good retention practice;
- (iii) conduct an apprenticeship survey for the sector, to provide an overview of the sector's use of apprenticeships and to highlight key challenges and potential areas to lobby Government;
- (iv) promote the use of apprenticeships and T levels in the sector;
- (v) enable and facilitate employers to collaborate to create more apprenticeships.

What will the LGA do to lobby for change?

- 9.6 The LGA is calling for councils to be allowed to use apprenticeship levy funds more flexibly, particularly for things like apprentice salary subsidy, administration costs of programmes, pre-apprenticeship training or other apprenticeship support. These changes would help us to deliver more apprenticeship opportunities for care leavers and to target skills shortage areas within our sector, such as planning, housing, environmental health and social work. We estimate that local government (including our maintained schools) receives in the region of £14m per year in top-up funds.
- 9.7 If the funds were used to provide a salary subsidy of £2,800 per apprentice, we could create 5,000 more apprenticeship starts, supporting care leavers and addressing skills shortage areas in the sector. An additional 5,000 apprentices, targeting key skills shortage areas plus some entry-level apprenticeships for care leavers could also unlock almost £100m more apprenticeship levy spending in our sector, helping us to reduce losses and push our percentage spend up around 12 percentage points (44.5 per cent to 56.8 per cent).
- 9.8 The LGA has proposed to DfE and HMT that they create a pilot project allowing councils to use the 10 per cent top-up funding councils receive from government to their Levy Accounts more flexibly to create apprenticeship opportunities in key skills shortage areas, like regulatory services, where take up is low, and to provide more apprenticeship opportunities for care leavers.
- 9.9 If flexibilities were introduced to enable councils to spend top-up funds on administration, each of the 151 upper and single tier councils could, for example, hire two full-time apprenticeship leads, allowing for greater focus on promotion and delivery of their apprenticeships programme, including to maintained schools who currently lag behind when it comes to offering apprenticeships.
- 9.10 The possibility of increasing the cap that restricts employers to transferring a maximum of 25 per cent of their levy funds per year to 35 per cent was also raised with Government (66 per cent of upper and single tier councils support an increase in the levy transfer cap to at least 35 per cent, with 40 per cent supporting an increase to 40 per cent or more). These points were also raised with the Skills Minister on 25 April who agreed to further discussions.
- 9.11 The LGA will test the extent to which apprentices leaving their employing council within a short period of completing their training is an issue across the sector, through means of a survey of heads of priority occupations. This topic was also raised in the meeting with DfE and HMT.
- 9.12 Discussions between DfE and HMT are continuing on the potential for
- (i) increasing the transfer cap from 25 per cent to 35 per cent;
 - (ii) further long-term options on use of the 10% top-up funding.
- 9.13 A further meeting with Government will be scheduled for early Summer.

9.14 The LGA will also continue to press the DfE and Institute for Apprenticeships to speed up the approval of the standards that councils want and to ensure sufficient training providers are available.

9.15 Explore mechanisms for councils to recoup training costs (outside the Apprenticeship Levy) if a trainee leaves soon after securing a qualification.

Attracting candidates to work in priority occupations

What are the issues?

9.16 Work in some local government services is not always seen as an attractive career. Other sectors are perceived as providing more attractive career options by offering some better terms and conditions and the above factors. A perceived lack of appreciation and recognition, low public profile, negative perceptions arising from public criticism of individuals, financial challenges and service failures in the sector generally all add to the challenge of being able to recruit new entrants. This is despite the sector offering over 800 different career opportunities, offering interesting challenges, good flexible working and favourable terms and conditions. The National Graduate Development Programme demonstrates what can be achieved through a targeted marketing approach providing development opportunities, attracting around 4,500 applicants per year.

9.17 In comparison with significant recent Government investment in **recruitment campaigns** for professions such as [teaching](#) and [defence](#), there has been minimal investment in local government as a 'brand'.

What can councils do?

9.18 Councils can:

- (i) invest in and demonstrate their 'Employee Value Proposition';
- (ii) engage with local schools and colleges to promote careers at the local council;
- (iii) make clear in their recruitment advertising that they welcome applications from candidates of all ages and protected characteristics and will provide appropriate training and support.

What can other bodies do?

9.19 Many professional bodies run campaigns and/ or training opportunities to encourage people to consider their roles as career opportunities. Where these exist for priority occupations, these are listed above.

What will the LGA do to support councils?

9.20 The LGA will:

- (i) continue to deliver the National Graduate Development Programme;
- (ii) launch a new flagship recruitment campaign, co-produced with Solace and the sector, to attract new talent and increase capacity in the sector. This recruitment campaign will market local government as a career of choice, highlighting the infinite variety of roles that local government has to offer, opportunities for career development and the benefits beyond pay such as flexibility and pension. The campaign will have a number of distinct – but complementary- messages to ensure a wide audience is reached, including both new entrants and those already in the sector with the potential to fulfil new roles. This will be developed over two years: in year 1 the approach will be piloted in at least one region and options identified for ongoing delivery, for example shareable template resources for councils to run their own campaigns. There would then be the potential for individual professions and councils to ‘piggy back’ their own content, building on the wider campaign.

Research

What are the issues?

- 9.21 It was previously suggested that there may be regional variation in the nature of the workforce capacity challenge. The Research team has confirmed that there is no statistically significant difference in the reported scale of the recruitment and/or retention challenge between regions.
- 9.22 There is a lack of data on the age profile of the local government workforce (although some data is held in relation to individual professions, as noted above).
- 9.23 There is a need to maintain a current understanding of council use of agency, pay, capacity and other HR indicators to inform wider understanding and responses to capacity issues.

What can councils do?

- 9.24 Councils can respond to the LGA’s surveys and engage in research projects to demonstrate the scale and nature of the capacity challenge, to inform the identification of solutions

What will the LGA do to support councils?

- 9.25 The LGA conducts the following research on behalf of the sector, to inform councils’ workforce planning:
 - (i) agency usage;
 - (ii) pay data;
 - (iii) workforce capacity risks and plans;

(iv) HR benchmarking.

9.26 The 2020 LGPS valuation data, currently being prepared, will identify the age profile data for the LGPS active and deferred membership as at March 2020. This data will inform further workforce planning on behalf of the sector.

Advice and guidance on best practice

What are the issues?

9.27 Respondents to the 2022 workforce survey identified access to examples of best practice as an important source of support to address the workforce challenge.

What can councils do?

9.28 Councils can engage with other councils on a sub-regional and regional basis to collaborate, share learning and good practice.

What will the LGA do to support councils?

9.29 Officers will continue to monitor learning from organisations piloting flexible working policies, including the four day week trial which has recently been extended at South Cambridgeshire council, to identify learning for the sector.

9.30 The LGA will:

- (i) produce and disseminate best practice and guidance on recruitment, retention, workforce planning, apprenticeships and organisational design;
- (ii) conduct pay benchmarking and support to redesign the pay spine;
- (iii) provide bespoke support for councils with specific needs.

Addressing the financial challenge

What are the issues?

9.31 The LGA's lines relating to the need for financial sustainability for the sector overall are well-developed. These do not, at present, highlight the link between the financial challenges of the last decade and the workforce challenges now being experienced by the sector, or the risks to delivery of key priorities if the challenges are not addressed.

9.32 What has been highlighted is the need for additional funding to meet the rising National Living Wage cost, which placed more significant pressure on local government than other parts of the public sector (where the impact of the NLW affects the pay levels of far fewer employees). The additional funding made available from 2023/24 may assist in a small way with the challenge of meeting the NLW cost in 2023/4 but leaves the cumulative cost highlighted in 2022 unmet: it is therefore unlikely that this will provide much support for councils in meeting their workforce capacity challenges. While the 9.2 per cent increase in local government core spending power announced in the 2023/24 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement will help councils deal with inflationary

and other cost pressures, the LGA will continue to make the case for the underlying and existing pressures that remain. Many councils will also see much lower increases in Core Spending Power in the next financial year.

What can the LGA to do lobby for change?

- 9.33 The LGA's established policy lines include raising the profile of the National Living Wage challenge with Government and flag to all parties the costs to local government relating to policies on the NLW.
- 9.34 In addition to reflecting any implications arising from local government pay negotiations, future submissions for Autumn/ Spring statements/ budgets can include a focus on the need for:
- (i) medium-term financial settlements so that effective workforce planning can take place over the medium term, and a degree of certainty is provided for jobseekers considering a role in the sector;
 - (ii) sufficient funding for councils to enable:
 - HR capacity to undertake workforce planning, in collaboration with local skills providers as part of local planning for economic development;
 - organisational development, health and wellbeing support, training and development (including digital skills) and 'grow your own' activities;
 - adequate levels of management supervision;
 - the recruitment and retention of sufficient numbers of skilled and motivated staff;
 - the accommodation of government policy on the National Living Wage.

Support for low income households

Purpose of Report

For information.

Is this report confidential? No

Summary

To update Board members on progress against agreed priorities for the LGA's work on the role of councils in supporting people with the rising cost of living; promoting financial inclusion and resilience, and the design and delivery of the welfare system.

LGA Plan Theme: Stronger local economies, thriving local democracy

Recommendation

That the Board notes the progress and raises and queries or concerns about the LGA's work programme and / or the current pressures facing councils and communities

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Support for low-income households

1. The LGA has now commissioned Trueman Change to work with us to deliver the pilot **Debt Maturity Framework for local government**. They have put together a strong team, which includes people with extensive experience in both local and national government, and in the debt management sector. They will work with the LGA, councils, government and stakeholders to develop a tool that covers all the key aspects of councils' approach to debt recovery, including how the sector supports vulnerable debtors, and enables councils to more easily access advice on key practical considerations including IT commissioning, advice referrals and working with other creditors.
2. Colleagues in the LGA's Policy team and the LGA's Productivity team have been working closely with councils and the Department for Work and Pensions to resolve concerns related to the **Memorandum of Understanding for DWP data-sharing**. In response to a letter from the LGA the DWP clarified its communications and put back the deadline for councils to respond.
3. They have made it much clearer that councils do NOT need to be compliant with the MoU at this stage, and the proposal is for DWP to work with the sector over a period of time to ensure data is being used safely and effectively. The ultimate aspiration remains for councils to make better and wider use of DWP data e.g. for identifying and supporting financially vulnerable residents
4. Following a meeting between the local government associations and DWP on 28th June, the department have agreed to work closely with the LGA, councils and the other associations on the many aspects of this work that remain of key concern: these include (but are not limited to): integration of the DWP's approach with the wider DLUHC-led approach to the Cyber Assessment Framework; the role of the IT suppliers – and associated costs – in supporting compliance, and the need for greater clarity about councils' long-term role in the welfare system to facilitate investment decisions.
5. A full paper will be brought to the Board if required as these discussions develop.
6. The Department for Work and Pensions has begun to scope out its approach to moving HB-only cases on to Universal Credit and is identifying some councils that they will work with to pilot their approach. Mari Roberts-Wood, Chief Executive of Reigate and Banstead Council, represents the sector at the UC Programme Board, supported by Rose Doran from the LGA. Mari and Rose will continue to engage with DWP and councils, and will flag any concerns as those pilot sites are identified.
7. The next meeting of the LGA's cost of living member advisory group will take place on 27th July and will be chaired by Cllr David Leaf.

Implications for Wales

8. The LGA has engaged directly with colleagues in WLGA and COSLA in the discussions about the MoU, and we have aligned our lobbying positions where possible and appropriate.

Financial Implications

9. All work will be delivered within agreed and existing budgets.

Equalities implications

10. Increasing numbers of councils are voluntarily adopting the socioeconomic duty. Many councils are also addressing cost of living concerns and financial inclusion as part of wider strategies to reduce inequalities.
11. The impact of councils' approach to debt management on disadvantaged households, and those with other (intersectional) protected characteristics is a key component of the Debt Maturity Framework.
12. The households that will move on to Universal Credit as part of 'Move to UC' are, by definition, some of our most vulnerable residents who may, for example have long-term health conditions. How DWP and councils collaborate effectively to support these households is central to this work.

Resources Board – End of Year Report 2022/23

Purpose of Report

For information.

Is this report confidential? No

Summary

This report provides an overview of the work of the Resources Board in the period between September 2022 to August 2023. It also looks forward to consider the areas of focus for the Board in the coming year.

LGA Plan Theme: A sustainable financial future

Recommendation

That the Board notes and comments on achievements and forward look

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Resources Board - End of Year Report 2022-23

Background

1. The LGA's Resources Board shapes and develops the Association's policies and programmes in relation to Local Government Finance; Support for Low Income Households; Workforce and Pension issues.
2. Members are asked to consider the achievements of the Board over the last year against the priorities that were set at its meeting September 2022 and consider possible areas of work for 2023/24.

Achievements against priorities for 2022/23: Local Government Finance

Council Funding

3. We continued to lobby on the impacts of high levels of inflation on councils in the run up to the [2022 Autumn statement](#). LGA's lobbying included [a submission](#), [letter to the Chancellor](#), and [media](#) and parliamentary activity. We also published a series of explainers on [cost pressures](#), [reserves](#), and how [council funding is spent](#). The 2022 Autumn Budget contained several wins for local government as outlined in our [on-the-day briefing](#). Notable amongst these was a substantial increase in adult social care funding, and a higher than anticipated social rent cap.
4. The outcome of the Autumn Statement fed through into the Local Government Finance Settlement. The final settlement included an above inflation increase in Core Spending Power of 9.4%, the largest increase in spending power since the creation of this metric in 2011/12. We [welcomed](#) this but recognised it fell short of addressing the sector's underlying problems.
5. The LGA has long argued that councils need greater certainty on future funding. In recognition of this, prior to the provisional settlement the Government published a [local government finance policy statement](#) settlement which provided information on the 2023/24 settlement and provided certainty on a number of key elements of Core Spending Power for 2024/25. The LGA continues to push for certainty on other elements of the 2024/25 settlement including the New Homes Bonus.
6. The LGA hosted a successful [annual conference on local government finance](#) on 10 January. The sold-out in-person event, chaired by the Chair of Resource Board, was attended by senior politicians and officers and received positive feedback from delegates.

7. The Chairman and Group Leaders [wrote](#) to the Chancellor ahead of the [2023 Spring Budget](#). Given the substantial new funding provided in the Settlement it was not surprising that the Budget did not include any additional core funding for councils. However, as set out in our [on the day briefing](#), there were other finance wins on borrowing and business rates. There was also evidence in the Budget of the Government's growing recognition of the need for further financial certainty and devolution. This included the announcement of single, multi-year settlements for two combined authorities, and a commitment to expand the local retention of business rates to more areas in the next Parliament and to work closely with interested councils to achieve this.
8. The LGA [published its cost pressures work in June](#), and lobbying on this will continue in 2023/24 considering the continued high inflation environment and continuing pressures facing councils.

Local Taxation

9. Following a consultation in 2022, the government introduced the [Non-Domestic Rating Bill](#) on 29 March. This contains numerous provisions the LGA has called for, including more frequent revaluations and improved information sharing between councils and the Valuation Office Agency (VOA). The LGA issued a [briefing](#) ahead of the Bill's Second Reading in the House of Commons on 24 April and its [Second Reading in the House of Lords](#) on 19 June..
10. The [business rate revaluation](#) went ahead from 1 April 2023, with a transitional relief scheme funded by the Government. This was welcome as something in LGA had called for in its [consultation response](#).
11. The LGA responded to a number of consultations into ongoing elements of local taxation, including on [disclosure of business rate valuations](#), [digitalising business rates](#), and [council tax valuation of houses in multiple occupation](#) (HMOs).
12. The Government promised at the 2023 Spring Budget to consult on measures to reduce business rates avoidance and evasion, which is something the LGA has long pushed for. This consultation is expected shortly.

Capital and Audit

13. The LGA has continued discussions with DLUHC and CIPFA and has responded to consultations on changes to capital framework, including:
 - [Response to Future of the IFRS 9 statutory override: mitigating the impact of fair value movements of pooled investment funds](#). This resulted in an extension of the statutory override until 2025.

14. Local audit is a complex area. The continuing crisis in local audit is creating problems for councils and finding solutions to address audit delays remains a priority. There has been some progress – for example with a temporary solution being put in place to the problems of accounting for infrastructure assets, and the appointment of the Director of Local Audit at the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) as system leader. In April, following a proposal from the LGA, two roundtables took place hosted by the Local Government Minister. These discussed long-term solutions to the problems with local audit. There was broad agreement amongst attendees on the urgent need to address the audit backlog and following this the Director of Local Audit at the FRC has been working with stakeholders across the local audit system to develop proposals to address the current crisis in local audit, and particularly to address the current backlog.
15. The LGA has responded to numerous consultations around audit and accounts over the year, including:
- [Response to Public Audit Forum consultation on Practice Note 10 2022](#)
 - [Response to PSAA consultation on audit scale fees for 2022/23](#)
 - [Response to DLUHC consultation on statutory override for infrastructure assets accounting](#)
 - [Response to DLUHC request for views on deadline draft unaudited accounts](#)
 - [Response to HM Treasury review of non-investment asset valuations](#)
 - [Response to CIPFA Survey – “Impact of the Move to Improve the Reporting of Infrastructure Assets including a \(possible\) move to a Depreciated Replacement Cost Measurement Basis.](#)
16. The LGA has also provided written evidence to the [PAC inquiry on Timeliness of Local Auditor reporting on Local Government in England](#) and the [Levelling Up and Housing Committee enquiry into Financial Reporting and Audit in Local Authorities.](#) as well as providing oral evidence to the latter enquiry.

Pensions

17. We have continued to support councils in their role as LGPS administering authorities, including in relation to new statutory requirements on climate change risk and reporting. Legislation expected in 2022/23 to implement these requirements in the LGPS was not forthcoming from DLUHC, and we continue to work with them to ensure their proposals are workable.
18. We have continued to work with CIPFA and regulatory bodies as well as actuarial and audit firms to support councils in their role as LGPS administering authorities to find

ways to ease delays signing off full council accounts which impact on and delay the publication of otherwise finalised pension fund accounts.

Local Government Finance Priorities for 2023/24

Council Funding

19. Continue to work on modelling service cost pressures and press for funding that reflects current and future demand, particularly for housing, homelessness, adult social care and children's services, lobbying Government to provide sustainable funding to meet these needs.
20. Work with local and Central Government on a system of local government funding that supports long-term planning, and is evidence-based, simpler, with fewer pots and less bid-based funding and more transparent with appropriate transition mechanisms.

Local Taxation

21. Press for freedoms that lead to greater local financial autonomy with a view to achieving local control over both council tax and business rates.
22. Lobby for improvements to business rates to help tackle business rates avoidance and develop proposals to improve the system, including valuation and the appeals process.
23. Consider potential work on new local taxes, reform of existing local taxes and control over fees and changes to fully recover cost.

Capital and Audit

24. Further develop policy on capital financing and investing and contribute to national reviews in these areas so that they support and enable prudent investment and financial management.
25. Contribute to reviews of the accounting and financial regulatory framework for councils to ensure it is appropriate, not over restrictive and balanced with local freedom and accountability.
26. Continue to work with central and local government to support councils and to urgently address the current crisis in local audit, and in the longer-term work on simplifying local audit processes, including improving and developing an audit framework appropriate for the sector.

Pensions

27. We will work to ensure that the Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill (also known as the Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions Bill), now introduced, will

not interfere with the ability of administering authorities to make appropriate investment decisions in relation to their pension fund.

28. We will continue to work with DLUHC to try to implement separation of pension fund accounts from full council accounts. This would help to ease delays to the publication of otherwise finalised pension fund accounts.
29. We will also continue discussions with CIPFA, other regulatory bodies, scheme actuaries and auditors to ensure the audit process operates as smoothly as possible, acknowledging current systemic issues.

Achievements against priorities for 2022/23: Workforce

Collective Bargaining Issues

30. Pay negotiations for the local government workforces concluded in November 2022 when UNISON and GMB accepted the National Employers' pay offer of an increase of £1,925 on all NJC pay points, an increase of 4.04 per cent on all allowances (both effective from 1 April 2022), an increase of one day to all employees' annual leave entitlement and deletion of pay point 1 from the NJC pay spine (both effective from 1 April 2023).
31. Agreement was reached on 10 November 2022, backdated to 1 April 2022, for an increase of £1,925 on basic salary and 4.04 per cent on allowances for all local authority ('Red Book') Craftworkers.
32. Final offers made by the National Employers for a £1,925 increase on basic salary for both Chief Executives and Chief Officers, backdated to 1 April 2022, were accepted in November 2022.
33. Agreement was reached to deliver an increase for Youth and Community Workers of £1,925 on basic salary and 4.04 per cent on allowances (both with effect from 1 September 2022).
34. Agreement was reached within the Joint Negotiating Committee for Coroners that with effect from 1 April 2022, local salaries and day rates for individuals derived from the JNC arrangements will be increased by 1.56 per cent.
35. Agreement was reached within the NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services on a two-year pay deal covering uniformed employees from firefighter to middle managers. The agreement, which provided a 7 per cent increase backdated to July 2022 and a 5 per cent increase with effect from July 2023, also ensured that strike action would not take place.
36. In Schools, DfE published its response to the STRB's 32nd Report including a 5 per cent increase for most teachers and leaders, with bigger increases for early career teachers

(max 8.9 per cent outside London), which supports the government commitment to reaching a starting salary of £30k. the dispute over the 2022 award is ongoing. Despite the Government entering into negotiations with the unions outside of the established independent pay review process, their offer of an additional fully funded one off payment of £1000 (pro rata for part time teachers) for 2022, alongside an average pay increase of 4.5 per cent for teachers for 2023/24 including other non-pay elements was rejected by the unions. Industrial action followed. Discussions on teachers' pay for 2023-24 now continue through the independent pay review process (School Teachers' Review Body – STRB).

37. The National Employers on the Soulbury Committee remain in dispute with the Trade Unions on pay for 2022. A final offer of £1,925 was made in November 2022. The Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP) has decided to progress to a formal ballot for industrial action. The other unions (NEU and Prospect) on the Officers' Side will decide their next steps in furtherance of this dispute. The National Employers remain in engagement and discussion with the Trade Unions to seek a resolution.
38. Pay negotiation activity in local government bargaining groups started early in 2023. The National Employers made a full and final one-year (1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024) pay offer to the unions representing local government services 'Green Book' employees (UNISON, GMB and UNITE) on 23 February 2023, as follows:
 - *With effect from 1 April 2023, an increase of £1,925 (pro rata for part-time employees) to be paid as a consolidated, permanent addition on all NJC pay points 2 to 43 inclusive*
 - *With effect from 1 April 2023, an increase of 3.88 per cent on all pay points above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer (in accordance with Green Book Part 2 Para 5.4)*
 - *With effect from 1 April 2023, an increase of 3.88 per cent on all allowances (as listed in the 2022 NJC pay agreement circular dated 1 November 2022)*
39. The national committees of all three unions rejected the employers' final offer. All three unions are in the process of balloting for industrial action.
40. The National Employers also made full and final one-year (1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024) offers to the trade unions representing local authority chief officers and local authority chief executives. Both offers were for a 3.5 per cent increase on basic salary. The offer to chief officers was accepted on 5 May 2023, however, the staff side for chief executives responded to the National Employers in June 2023, describing the offer as 'not acceptable' and indicated that they '*will not accept any pay offer for April 2023 until the outcome for NJC staff is known*'.

41. We submitted written and oral evidence to the Low Pay Commission as part of both their 2023 and 2024 consultation processes on the level of the National Living Wage.

Workforce Improvement Support

42. We have provided targeted workforce transformation support and advice to councils, including specialist HR and employment law advice, mediation and investigation support as carried out as part of the Joint Negotiating Committee procedure.
43. We have also provided key workforce information, including FAQs, guides, and workforce bulletins delivering guidance and information. Learning and resources have also been developed and provided to support furthering equality, diversity and inclusion objectives and the application of equalities duties among councils through an expanded EDI hub, including case studies and guidance publications as well as action learning sets for councils around the co-design of policies and services.

Apprenticeships Programme

44. Our apprenticeships programme continued to provide councils with a support offer that was a mixture of encouragement, guidance and practical support designed to help councils increase their apprenticeship numbers and maximise their levy investment.
45. Across our apprenticeships programme in 2022-23, we have:
- Conducted our annual Apprenticeship Survey of the sector. A record 172 councils took part and will, for the first time, receive individual reports during June providing them with benchmarking and comparative data.
 - Conducted a separate Health and Wellbeing Survey of apprentices in our sector, attracting 3,229 responses from apprentices in councils across England
 - Delivered Apprenticeship MOT Health checks to councils and held online expert surgeries on request
 - Supported our apprenticeship network of practitioners across local government by issuing monthly apprenticeship newsletters and additional ad hoc updates on key issues
 - Held 8 webinars and one virtual online forum for councils on key topics of interest, reaching officers from 132 councils
 - Developed new tools for the sector, including the Apprenticeship A-Zs and Pathways for several key skills shortage areas like social work, digital and accountancy / finance
 - Revised and updated our Apprenticeships Maturity Model

- Delivered the 2023 Apprentice of the Year event with partners East of England LGA and South West Councils
- Directly led or supported policy colleagues and elected members in meetings with the Apprenticeships and Skills Minister, Officials at DfE, HMT, DLUHC and the Institute for Apprenticeships to highlight challenges, fix problems and discuss our proposals for reform of the Apprenticeship Levy.

Combined Authorities' HR Network

46. We supported Combined Authorities with an HR leads network, improving capacity and capability of Combined Authorities to deliver on their devolution deal objectives. A special report on hybrid working in the pandemic recovery phase has been commissioned for the group, with a particular emphasis on equalities issues and value for money.

Wellbeing, Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

47. LGA workforce have run a series of EDI round tables this year, bringing together practitioners in interactive workshops to do deeper dives into the [Diverse by Design](#) steps. Topics have included supporting inclusive leadership, encouraging diversity in recruitment, financial wellbeing, engaging staff in workforce equalities, how to talk about equality, measuring wellbeing and mental health after COVID-19.
48. We have worked with Solace leads to gather data on ethnic diversity at senior levels in local authorities and to develop a plan of joint work (including other relevant national partners and LGA colleagues) to support greater diversity.
49. We have worked with councils and partner organisations to continue to produce EDI and wellbeing focussed blogs and case studies, for example the London Borough of Camden sharing their anti-racist work as part of Black History Month.

Social Work Health Check

50. We completed our annual Social Work Health Check report on the national Standards for Employers of Social Workers, which supports councils with the effective delivery of social work. In total we received over 16,000 responses from 140 organisations and is now available [online](#). It compared the standards with the previous year's survey (2021) and summarised some key findings that have emerged from the responses.

Employment Law Advice

51. We continued to provide individual support to councils on a wide range of subjects dealing with all aspects of workforce transformation and improvement, including employment law support on contractual issues, advising on redundancy and reorganisations, hybrid working implications and workforce planning.

52. Our popular annual employment law conference took place on 25 April with over 200 delegates attending to hear the latest news on case law, legislation, local government pay and HR policy for local government.
53. Our employment law team have updated our [information](#) around industrial action ballots, FAQs, notice periods, and picketing. We have continued to provide specific updates on key employment law and case matters, including further updates regarding the BRAZEL consultation, a range of on-line webinars on employment law, support to councils going through LGR with advice on TUPE, various legal/policy advice direct to councils and specialist support to schools through our education employment law online events working with regional employers.

Supporting Early Careers

54. LGA Workforce Team provides a programme to help councils promote local government as a career destination. The work includes a 2-year project to provide support to councils to work with their local T level provider to provide **T level industry placements** to 16-19 years-olds. Launched in December 2021 we have supported over 50 councils to be early adopters and providers of T Level industry placements. The programme is supported by a joint partnership between Gatsby Charitable Foundation, Department of Education and the LGA.
55. The LGA is working in partnership with Youth Employment UK and provided careers information to promote the sector to schools and young people under 19. This includes virtual work experience and on-line materials. A beta site is currently in development.
56. Through our **Early Careers** work we have created information to support both councils and young people in understanding the landscape of [early careers routes into local government](#). The [early careers toolkit](#) includes guidance and resources to help engage with providers and young people.

Workforce Planning

57. The LGA provides support to councils to improve how they undertake workforce planning. We run a practitioners' network of over 100 workforce planners sharing approaches and using the LGA's workforce planning guidance and model. The programme delivers online workshops as well as direct support to councils.
58. In 2022-23 the LGA provided support to Adult Social Care teams in 9 councils helping them to better understand their workforce data so they could plan and take the most appropriate actions to address short- and long-term needs. The LGA is currently supporting a workforce planning pilot project across Essex to address acute town planning skill shortages.

Workforce Intelligence (workforce data and surveys)

59. The LGA Workforce Team continues to collect crucial workforce data from across councils in England to help inform policy and practice to enable effective representation of the sector back to central government.

The LGA published the latest Local Government Workforce Survey in January 2023. The report provides information on key elements of the workforce within local authorities in England and demonstrates the challenge across the workforce.

Pensions

60. We have continued to support councils with the implementation of the McCloud age discrimination remedy into public service pension schemes. This has involved publishing guidance as well as liaising with DLUHC on their regulatory proposals to ensure they are workable and deliverable for councils.
61. We have continued to provide specialist support, advice and training to councils to administering the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Workforce Priorities for 2023/24

Local government workforce capacity

62. We have analysed data from across the sector to better understand the scale and nature of the significant recruitment and retention challenges which are increasingly impacting local government. We continue to provide targeted support to councils to help with their workforce planning, disseminating good recruitment and retention practice through engagement with regional networks. We are additionally working with relevant bodies to develop and implement plans to address capacity challenges in councils' most affected service areas.

Workforce Research and Data

63. Workforce research and data projects, including quantitative and qualitative data on council use of agency staff, pay, capacity and HR indicators to inform wider understanding and responses to capacity issues. The LGA will work with regional employers to maximise the usefulness of this data.
64. Additional intelligence on workforce challenges, including draft metrics, will be shared with DLUHC by the end of March 2024.

Apprenticeship Support

65. Apprenticeship support to help councils respond to the capacity challenges by supporting councils to recruit school leavers and career changers enter the sector. This includes delivering a sector-wide Apprenticeship Health Check survey and providing individual reports to all participating councils to assess where each council is based on the Apprenticeship Improvement Tool (Maturity Model) by the end of March 2024.

66. We will also deliver at least 9 Apprenticeship Pathway support events by the end of March 2024.

Skills Shortages

67. This programme of work is targeted at skill shortage areas and provides additional capacity to help local authorities to work together in their place. This support brings local authorities together to work collaboratively rather than on an individual basis and assists councils with workforce planning. This work will deliver support to councils to establish skills initiatives such as skills hubs or skills academies, produce Skills Pathway plans and join up existing solutions.
68. Through this work we will support at least 45 local authorities across all regions to develop approaches to skill shortages. This will include creating five pilot areas (working with at least 6 councils per area) to help these authorities develop Skill Pathway plans with solutions identified and the majority started by the end of March 2024.

Targeted Workforce and Transformation Support

69. Provision of targeted workforce support, including transformation support to local authorities to address workforce challenges, based on individual need.
70. Targeted workforce support or advice provided to at least 40 councils, including support for councils with the most significant challenges – by end of March 2024

HR and Employment Law Support

71. Provision of HR and employment law support, including bespoke advice and updates and guidance shared through Employment Law Advisory Bulletins and Workforce Bulletins. This offer will also deliver support and facilitation of a HR network for Combined Authorities (CA), providing opportunities to share learning and good practice relating to capacity and other workforce challenges. Updates and guidance will be shared through 11 Employment Law Advisory Bulletins and 12 Workforce Bulletins by the end of March 2024
72. 6 Combined Authority network meetings will also be held with HR professionals, informing a thematic report for DLUHC by the end of March 2024

National Collective Bargaining

73. The pay and terms and conditions negotiations support offer provides successful leadership of national collective bargaining arrangements for all bargaining units relating to councils. This role involves provision of tools and resources to support effective industrial relations and pay benchmarking support to councils, delivered through the LGA's secretariat and officer function for National Employers.

74. This offer will also provide data to support the possible redesign of the local government pay spine, including the number of people at each point of the spine and types of roles at different points.

Pensions

75. We will continue to support councils with the implementation of the McCloud age discrimination remedy into public service pension schemes, as remedy becomes legally effective from 1 October 2023.
76. We will continue to engage with HM Treasury and DLUHC to ensure that any return of exit cap legislation provides the appropriate flexibility for employers in workforce reorganisations.

Achievements against priorities for 2022/23: Support for low-income households

77. Support collaboration across the LGA, Government, councils and the wider sector to help councils to deliver fair, efficient and effective support for households affected by the significant rise in the cost of living
78. The impact of the rising cost of living on local communities, and the support that councils provide to households, has been a significant priority for the sector throughout the year. Resources Board members identified the need to integrate their work – primarily focused on the welfare system and financial inclusion – with relevant work from other Boards. They also highlighted the need for colleagues across the LGA to take an integrated approach, and to support councils – and press Government – to do the same.
79. We set up a cross-cutting member advisory group, which has an informal role in joining up work across the Boards. We have also developed a comprehensive [Cost of Living Hub](#) that includes a wide range of up-to-date examples and case studies from across the sector. We have developed a sector-wide network, a monthly bulletin and monthly webinars, which are regularly attended by around 300 participants. This enables us to promote excellent real-time learning and information sharing across councils, and has also proved invaluable in informing government policy development and contributed to a wide range of research and policy proposals.
80. We regularly engage with a wide range of stakeholders, for example in the advice and financial services sectors. This has supported good, efficient working relationships and a better understanding between councils and the voluntary and community sector, for example on how to improve referrals to local financial support and advice. It has also enabled us to present a consistent view to Government when our views / objectives are aligned, for example on the benefits of taking a ‘cash first’ approach to local welfare provision or recognising the links between financial security and health.

81. The LGA helped to secure a further £1bn for Household Support Fund (HSF), for the full year 2023 – 2024, in the November 2022 Autumn Statement. This followed consistent, well-evidenced engagement from the LGA with DWP officers and ministers, as well as with a wide range of councils and partners. In April 2023 the DWP also implemented the LGA's recommended improvements to the HSF guidance. We continue to work closely with the department and the sector as we make the case for local welfare funding to be put on a sustainable footing, and for the emphasis to be shifted over time from crisis to prevention.
82. We continue to maintain and update our [financial hardship and economic vulnerability](#) report on LGInform. This resource brings together a wide range of relevant data to support councils in understanding the pressures on households in their area, and to help them to effectively target support.
83. We work closely with the DWP and councils on the day-to-day design and delivery of the benefits system, as well as policy decisions that impact on councils' revenues and benefits services, advice provision and wider support for low-income households. This includes ongoing work on Supported and Temporary accommodation and local discretionary support. We are currently working with the department to ensure that councils are appropriately supported to meet the requirements of the data-sharing MoU – which is intended to enable councils to use DWP data to support local services such as targeted financial support, advice and homelessness prevention, but which also places a number of additional requirements on councils which will take time and support to address.
84. We have commissioned Trueman Change to work with us to build a pilot 'debt maturity model' to enable councils to benchmark and identify areas for development, collaboration and improvement, with a particular emphasis on supporting households impacted by the pandemic and the rising cost of living

Support for low income households priorities for 2023/24

85. We hosted a successful workshop session at last year's annual conference on engaging people with lived experience of poverty to inform council decision-making and service design. We have also developed case studies and shared learning from councils who have used the approach to inform their cost of living (or similar) strategies locally. There is increasing interest in the sector in how to 'design out' poverty, as for example seen in recent research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and New Local, who worked with a range of councils and stakeholders – including the LGA – to explore how councils engage and integrate with their local communities to address severe hardship. This has also emphasised the importance of linking the LGA's work on community engagement and local democracy with our work on the cost of living. We will build on this in the coming year and – taking our lead from councils – continue to share learning across the sector as local approaches develop.
86. Ensure councils can collaborate effectively and share views with the Department for

Work and Pensions on the continued implementation of Universal Credit, in particular the move of housing benefit claimants via 'Move to UC', which will begin piloting with councils this year.

87. We will work with Trueman Change, councils and partners including the Money and Pensions Service, debt advice charities, government departments and the Enforcement Conduct Board to deliver a pilot Debt Maturity Model by March 2024. We will then aim to secure funding from partners to deliver a sustainable online tool that can be used by the sector to continue to benchmark and strengthen local approaches as we work towards wider integration of debt recovery and support across the public, private and voluntary sectors, and improve outcomes for low-income households.
88. We will continue to press for local welfare funding – currently delivered in the form of Household Support Fund and Discretionary Housing Payment – to be put on a permanent, sustainable footing with a greater emphasis on preventative services and the promotion of households' financial resilience. This will sit alongside work to strengthen the role of councils in promoting financial inclusion, for example through partnerships with the financial services sector, utilities companies and advice providers.
89. We will continue to work closely with councils, partners and the Money and Pensions Service on the development of the revised UK Strategy for Financial Wellbeing, which is currently due to be published in 2024. This will also include work on local debt advice commissioning.

Implications for Wales

90. We will continue to work with the Welsh LGA to share good practice and information.

Financial Implications

91. There are no immediate financial implications

Equalities implications

92. There are equalities issues arising from the policies and work presented in this paper. These are considered in more detail in the separate papers to Resources Board.

Next steps

93. A draft work programme for 2023/24 will be brought to Board in September and this will reflect any comments made by Members at the Board meeting.

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LGA APRENTICESHIPS
SURVEY 2022-23
PART 1: COUNCILS AND
MAINTAINED SCHOOLS

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Introduction

This report marks the fifth time the Local Government Association has carried out its annual apprenticeship survey. These surveys provide an excellent overview of how the sector is making use of apprenticeships as well as highlighting some of the key challenges and potential areas to lobby government. For the first time, this survey has been carried out in two parts. The first part, and the focus for this report is councils and their maintained schools, covering issues around the organization and implementation of apprenticeship programmes and responses to government policy decisions. The second part, and subject of a separate report, focuses on apprentices in local government, collecting key demographic information, key drivers and feedback on the quality of their experience working for councils and undertaking an apprenticeship in our sector.

As a result, this year's survey is more detailed than previous iterations, with 75 questions posed to councils to collect information on apprenticeship starts, levy spend, levy losses, levy transfers, apprentice pay, maintained schools, gaps in standards, operational matters and views on the LGAs own apprenticeship support offer. For the first time we have also asked a series of questions designed to allow us to make an assessment of where each council appears on the LGA's Apprenticeships Maturity Model, our self-assessment matrix designed to help councils understand where they are on their apprenticeship journey and how and where to improve.

In addition to this national report, regional reports are available for all nine regions in England, while each council that submitted a response to this survey will receive their own individual report, tailored to their responses and providing bespoke comparative benchmarking data to help each council understand how it performs on apprenticeships compared to its peers.

For this 2022/23 survey, councils have turned out at their highest rate ever, with 172 local authorities providing responses. This includes 116 upper or single tier councils (77 percent turnout) and 56 district councils (31 per cent turnout). While there is a good regional spread of responses, turnout among upper and single tier councils was highest in the East of England (91 per cent) and lowest in the East Midlands (50 per cent), while among district councils, turnout was also highest in the East of England (71 per cent) and lowest in the West Midlands (11 percent).

This data has also been supplemented by other sources where this was available to ensure we were using the fullest possible dataset to provide the best possible analysis in this report and reduce gaps. For example, if a council did not respond to our survey this year but had in a previous survey told us they had made a levy transfer or seen levy funds expire, then they were added to our overall figures when calculating the percentage of councils that had made a transfer or seen funds expire. The government's published public sector target data figures were also used for any council that had provided that data but not responded to our survey to enable us to more accurately calculate the overall number of apprenticeship starts in the sector nationally or in a particular region in 2021-22. As a result, there will be some questions where the dataset used covers more than just the 172 councils that responded, which we hope will provide as full and accurate a picture as possible for councils.

Executive Summary

The LGAs 2022/23 apprenticeships survey covered a significant amount of ground, with questions covering apprenticeships starts and the public sector target; apprenticeship levy spending, expired funds and use of transfers; receipt of Apprenticeship Incentive Payments; gaps in apprenticeship standards and provision; engagement with maintained schools; apprentices' pay; the LGA support programme; and organizational, operational and cultural issues designed to allow for an assessment against the LGAs Apprenticeships Maturity Model. Detailed commentary and charts can be found in the relevant sections of this report with the full list of questions and responses available in the appendix at the end of this report.

A summary of some of the key findings is below:

Section One: Apprenticeship Starts and the Public Sector Target

1) Local government created 13,728 apprenticeship starts in 2021/22, up from 12,918 starts created in 2020/21 – an increase of 6.3 per cent.

2) This represents a small return to growth for the sector after starts dropped by 21.6 per cent during the pandemic-affected year of 2020/21. It is also the fourth year out of five that councils have created more apprenticeship starts than in the previous year.

3) It did, however, represent a slightly below average performance, with the sector average over the five-year period from 2017 to 2022 standing at 13,833 starts.

4) Performance against the public sector target rose a little year-on-year to 1.3 per cent against the 2.3 per cent target, higher than the 1.2 per cent recorded the previous year.

5) Looking forward, despite the end of the public sector target, 58.2 per cent of councils indicated that they would set their own internal target for apprenticeship starts. Upper and single tier councils (67.6 per cent) were much more likely to report doing this than district councils (38.9 per cent).

6) In 2022/23, councils had created at least 7,410 apprenticeship starts by the end of Quarter 3 (December 2022). Analysis indicates that starts are currently at 71 per cent of 2021/22 levels, suggesting with a full quarter of the year to go that councils are on pace to match the 13,728 apprenticeship starts as they did last year.

7) Apprenticeship starts in maintained schools continue to account for around one-in-four of all apprenticeships created in local government. However, with schools accounting for 26.1 per cent of all starts in 2022/23 so far compared to 22.5 per cent in 2021/22 our analysis suggests that maintained schools may see a slight increase in apprenticeships this year compared to last.

Executive Summary

Section Two: Apprenticeship Levy spending, expired funds and use of transfers

8) Local government has paid in approximately £798m into the Apprenticeship Levy between April 2017 and December 2022.

9) In that time councils have spent approximately £358.7m, equivalent to 44.5 per cent of available funds. District councils were more likely to spend a higher proportion of the funds available to them (55.5 per cent) compared to upper and single tier councils (44.2 per cent).

10) The average spend per council of 44.5 per cent is 6.9 percentage points higher than the average spend reported in the LGAs 2021 survey (37.6 per cent) and is the fifth consecutive year this average has increased.

11) The number of councils reporting that they have seen at least some of their levy funds expire after being left unspent for 24 months has increased with 81.1 per cent of all councils reporting seeing at least some funds expire, up from 72.3 per cent in 2021. Losses are much more likely to occur in upper and single tier councils (90.6 per cent) than District councils (60.3 per cent), though the proportion of District councils reporting losing funds is now over 50 per cent for the first time.

12) Councils in England are estimated to have seen around £143m of their levy funds expire and return to the Treasury unspent, around 18 per cent of the total available. Again, this is more acute among upper and single tier councils (22.1 per cent) than among District councils (11 per cent).

13) The average amount returned unspent by the sector stands at £3.25m per month since funds first began to expire in May 2019. While this average figure is unchanged from our last survey in 2021, it does suggest the pace of losses has slowed and levelled off. Between May 2019 and March 2020 councils saw an average of £2.1m per month expire. This rose to £4m per month between April 2020 and July 2021, and has now fallen back to £3.24m per month between August 2021 and December 2022.

14) Councils are increasingly using levy transfers to other employers to stem the flow of funds expiring unused. 73.4 per cent of upper and single tier councils and 16.4 per cent of district councils have made at least one transfer, up from 59 per cent and 10 per cent respectively in 2021.

15) Around £30.4m has been committed by councils to levy transfers to create 5,396 apprenticeships.

Executive Summary

- 16) A third of councils (33.7 per cent) have a levy transfer policy in place with a further 25.1 percent in the process of developing one.
- 17) 14 per cent of upper and single tier councils indicated they would use their full 25 per cent levy transfer allowance in 2022/23, up from just 6 per cent in 2021/22.
- 18) On average, councils that used the levy transfer function used 11.9 percent of their 25 per cent allowance, but 46 per cent of councils reported using more than half.
- 19) There is strong support among councils for lifting the cap on levy transfers with 66 per cent of upper and single tier councils favouring an increase from the current 25 per cent to at least 35 per cent, while 28 per cent would support increasing the cap above 40 per cent.

Section Three: Apprenticeship Incentive Payments

20) 90.7 per cent of local authorities accessed the apprenticeship incentive payments introduced by government to support the recovery of apprenticeship programmes in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

21) Local authorities will receive at least £9.4m in incentive payments once they have been full approved by government, helping to create 4,177 apprenticeship opportunities.

22) Delays in receiving incentive payments from government are common. A third of councils (32 per cent) reported they were still waiting to receive the first instalment of incentive payments for at least one of their claims, while one authority was waiting for the first instalment to be paid for all 81 of their claims.

23) There is some evidence that apprenticeship incentive payments boosted interest in apprenticeships among maintained schools. 38 percent of councils reported incentives had led to an increase in interest from schools in apprenticeships, while 45 percent indicated that incentive payments had led to the creation of apprenticeships in schools that wouldn't have happened otherwise.

Executive Summary

Section Four: Maintained Schools

24) Maintained schools have created around 17,500 apprenticeship starts in the last five years – equivalent to one in fifty five people in their workforce undertaking an apprenticeship.

25) There is considerable variation in the number of maintained schools councils are responsible for, which affects how much support each council can offer. One in nine councils is responsible for 10 schools or fewer, while one in five is responsible for more than 400 schools.

26) 55.2 per cent of councils described engagement levels from their maintained schools on apprenticeships as either 'moderate', 'high' or 'very high', down from 61.2 per cent in 2021, although 44.1 per cent indicated that there was some increase or a significant increase in engagement over the previous twelve months.

27) Councils continue to highlight barriers faced by schools that prevent them from delivering more apprenticeship starts. 20 per cent off the job training (69 per cent), lack of resources/time (65 per cent) and salary costs (44 per cent) continue to be cited as the biggest barriers, though the majority of the barriers listed were mentioned less frequently in December 2022 than when we first asked councils in March 2019.

Section Five: Apprentices' Pay

28) 88.4 per cent of councils have a policy in place for apprentices' pay and grading, rising to 92.2 per cent among upper and single tier councils.

29) There is an almost even split between the proportion of councils and their maintained schools that pay the apprentice rate of the national minimum wage (50.5 per cent) and those that pay a higher rate (49.5 per cent).

30) There is little consistent pattern among local authorities on what they pay apprentices, with many favouring a bespoke approach depending on the age, level and experience of an apprentice or whether they are an existing staff member or new starter. 40 per cent of upper and single tier councils favoured a salary based on the level of the apprenticeship, while a more bespoke approach was favoured by 41 per cent of District

Executive Summary

Section Six: Apprenticeship Standards and Provider Availability

31) The proportion of councils waiting for the Institute of Apprenticeships and Technical Education to approve an apprenticeship standard that is in development has fallen from 46 percent in 2021 to 30 percent in 2022. 43 different standards were listed, though many had low numbers of councils wanting to use them, suggesting they were covering more bespoke job roles.

32) 45 per cent of councils highlighted an area where they felt there was a gap in apprenticeship standards and where such a standard was not already in development. This was down from 56 percent in 2021 and is the second consecutive year that this number has fallen.

33) A third of councils (33 per cent) reported they could not find a training provider for at least one standard, almost unchanged from the proportion who did so last year (34 percent). There is little consistent pattern to the gaps, suggesting the issue may be as much down to councils desiring a wider choice of providers as much as it is an absence. However, as Pest Control Technician Level 2 and Town Planning Assistant Level 4 have been mentioned each time we've asked this question in previous surveys, there is likely a problem with accessing both standard, at least in some areas of the country.

Section Seven: Organisational, Operational and Cultural Issues

34) Support from apprenticeships from senior leaders in local government is relatively high, with 75 percent of councils describing the support in their authority as 'strong' or 'good'.

35) Two-third of councils (66 percent) have an apprenticeship strategy or action plan in place, while 26 percent report that one is in development.

36) However, governance of apprenticeship programmes is more patchy, with only a third of councils reporting they had a steering group overseeing their programme, while support from managers was also variable with 59 percent reporting that 'some managers and department heads fully support the principle of apprenticeships' suggesting work still needs to be done to ensure apprenticeships are properly embedded within local authorities.

37) 89 percent of councils now have at least one lead officer in place to manage their apprenticeships programme, with just over a third (36 percent) having more than one officer as part of a 'delivery team'.

Executive Summary

38) 70 percent of councils report having a firm procurement process in place, but only a quarter (23 percent) have a robust provider management process in place, with 45 per cent reporting they had only a basic process set up.

39) Just over half of councils (51 percent) have a variation of the Apprenticeships First policy in place, with a further 21 per cent currently considering adopting this. But only one in ten councils has fully mapped apprenticeship standards to job roles across the whole authority, and one in five councils have used apprenticeships in the development of talent and succession plans, suggesting there remains room for improvement on the use of apprenticeships within local authorities' workforce development processes.

40) More than half of councils (53 per cent) do not have an apprenticeships levy spending plan in place, while 49 per cent do not make any assessment of their apprenticeships programme's impact on the council's wider objectives.

41) 40 percent of councils provide a mentoring programme or buddy scheme to some or all of their apprentices, while just one in five councils has an apprenticeship network in place (though 29 percent are developing one and have an online platform in the meantime to help apprentices connect).

42) Providing employability support to apprentices remains popular among councils with 88 per cent offering at least basic support when an apprentice completes their qualification. Almost a quarter (24 percent) provide guaranteed interviews or enhanced status to apprentices to help support them into full time roles.

43) Support for managers of apprentices in the sector is more variable: 75 percent of councils provide managers with at least a basic handbook or guide to apprenticeships to consult, but just 18 per cent offer a fuller support package.

44) Feedback from apprentices and managers on things like the quality of training or their experience of their apprenticeship is sought by most authorities, at least in a basic form, but while 50 per cent of councils survey apprentices and managers on at least an annual basis, 50 percent collect minimal or not feedback.

45) Interactions on an operational level with maintained schools is a mixed picture, with 84 percent of councils allowing maintained schools to access as much levy funding as they want (even if it's more than they've paid in), but only 16 percent of councils has a dedicated schools apprenticeship lead in place, and just 7 per cent have a plan in place to increase schools apprenticeship starts.

Executive Summary

Section Eight: Apprenticeships Maturity Model

- 46) Upper and Single Tier Councils have seen an increase in their estimated ratings against the Maturity Model in four out of the six pillars, only falling back in one – maintained schools.
- 47) Upper and Single Tier Councils in Yorkshire and Humber, the North West and South East tend to perform a little above the median rating, while councils in the East of England and East Midlands perform a little below.
- 48) Similarly, county councils and metropolitan boroughs tend to have higher ratings than the national median, particularly when it comes to Leadership, Culture and Engagement and Maintained Schools, while Unitary authorities are slightly lower, mainly in the area of Procurement and Provider Management.
- 49) District councils tend to have a slightly lower median rating than their larger counterparts, reflecting the smaller scale of their programmes and thus reduced scope for activity.

Section Nine: LGA Apprenticeships Support Programme

- 50) There has been a year-on-year increase in engagement with the Local Government Apprentice of the Year event, which the LGA jointly administer with East of England LGA and South West Councils. 42 percent of councils reported at least one of their apprentices took part in either the 2021 or 2022 event, up from 23 per cent last year, while 28 per cent of councils who entered apprentices did so in both years.
- 51) Satisfaction with the LGA Apprenticeships Support Offer in 2022 was broadly the same as in 2021, with an average rating of 3.95 out of 5 given by councils, down fractionally from the 4.0 out of 5 average rating last year. Among upper and single tier councils, who much of the support is targeted at, the average rating remained unchanged year on year at 4.2 out of 5.

Section One: Apprenticeship Starts and the Public Sector Target

The Public Sector Apprenticeships Target

The Public Sector Target was introduced by government from 1 April 2017 and initially ran for four years. It was renewed for a further, separate one-year period for 2021-22 before being discontinued. The target required all public sector employers with 250 employees or more to create apprenticeship starts equivalent to 2.3% of their headcount during 2021-22. For example, if a public sector employer had a headcount of 1,000 employees, they would be required to create 23 apprenticeships between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022. The target is not based on the number of apprentices employed, but solely the number of apprentices that started their apprenticeship between 1 April and 31 March in the required year – including both new starters and existing members of staff that began an apprenticeship.

Local authorities are also considered the employer for any maintained schools within their boundaries, so councils were required to add schools' headcounts to their own when calculating their target and include schools' apprentices in their starts figures. While the 2017-21 period was treated as a single whole for the purposes of the target, the 2021/22 period was considered a standalone year.

Local government created 13,728 apprenticeship starts in 2021/22, up from 12,918 starts created in 20/21, a 6.3 per cent increase. This represented a return to growth for the sector, albeit a small amount, after starts dropped by 21.6 per cent during the pandemic affected year of 20/21. Despite the slight increase, the total does remain below pre-pandemic levels (Figure 1) and also slightly below the five-year average (13,833 starts). In total, since the introduction of the public sector target and apprenticeship levy, councils have created 70,565 apprenticeship starts (Figure 2)

Performance against the public sector target also rose a little to 1.3 per cent against the 2.3 per cent target. This was higher than 20/21's in-year performance and the four-year average of 2017-21, both of which stood at 1.2 per cent (Figure 3). Compared with other public sector bodies, the 1.3 per cent performance by local government in 2021/22 was the third lowest, only beating non-maintained schools (1.1%) and 'other' organisations (1.2%). The Armed Forces once again led the way (7.1%), followed by the Police (2.4%) and Fire Authorities (2.1%). The overall public sector average was 1.8%.

Overall, at least 44 councils and combined authorities met the 2.3 per cent target during 2021/22, up from just 29 in 2020/21 (see Figure 4 and 5). Figures 6-8 show that 23 per cent of councils overall met their public sector target in 2021/22, with District Councils (28.5 per cent) more likely to have met their target than upper and single tier councils (19.8 per cent).

Section One: Apprenticeship Starts and the Public Sector Target

Figure 1 Comparison of Local Government Apprenticeship Starts 2016/17 – 2021/22

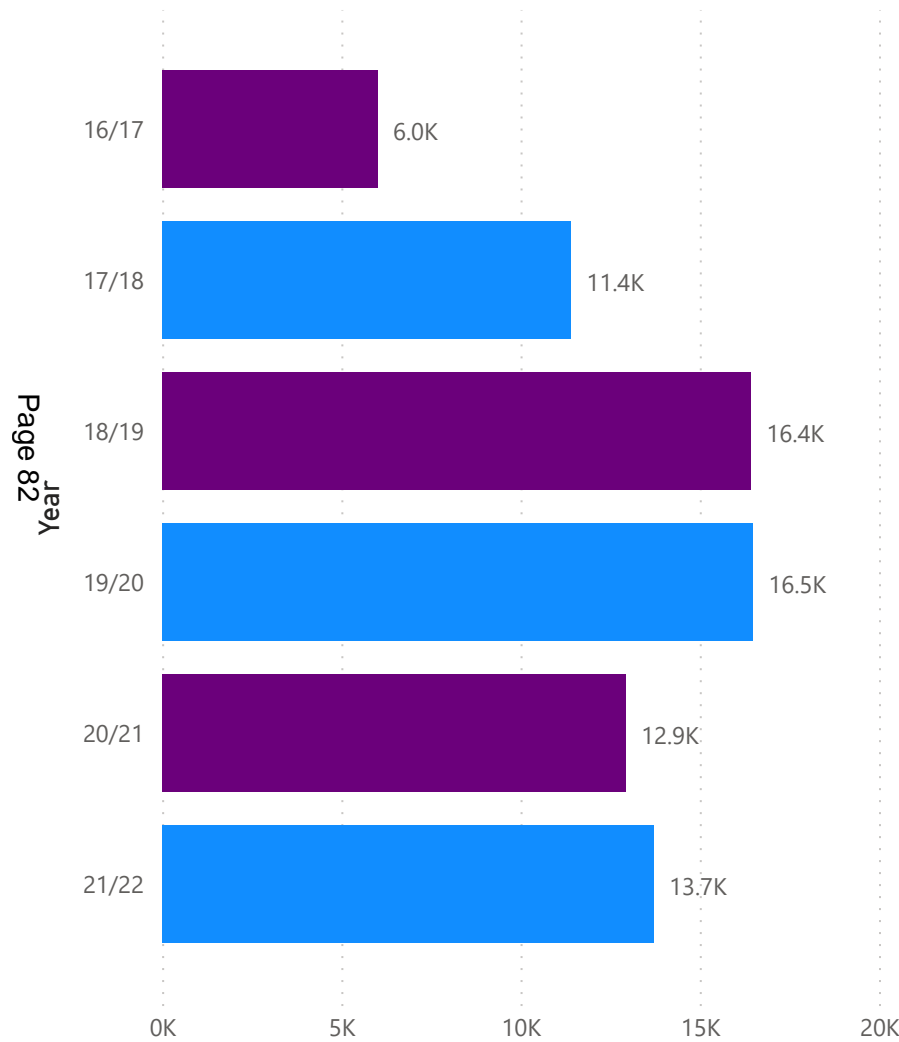


Figure 2: Total Apprenticeship Starts in Local Government (Cumulative) 2017/18 – 2021/22

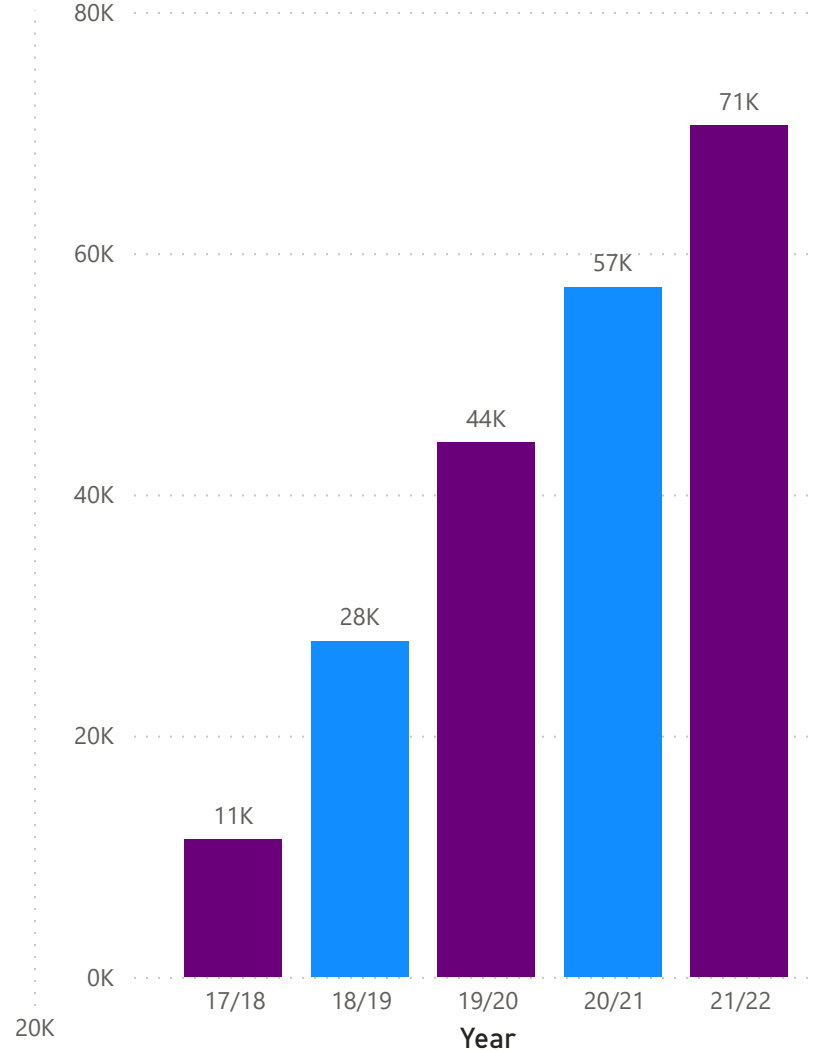
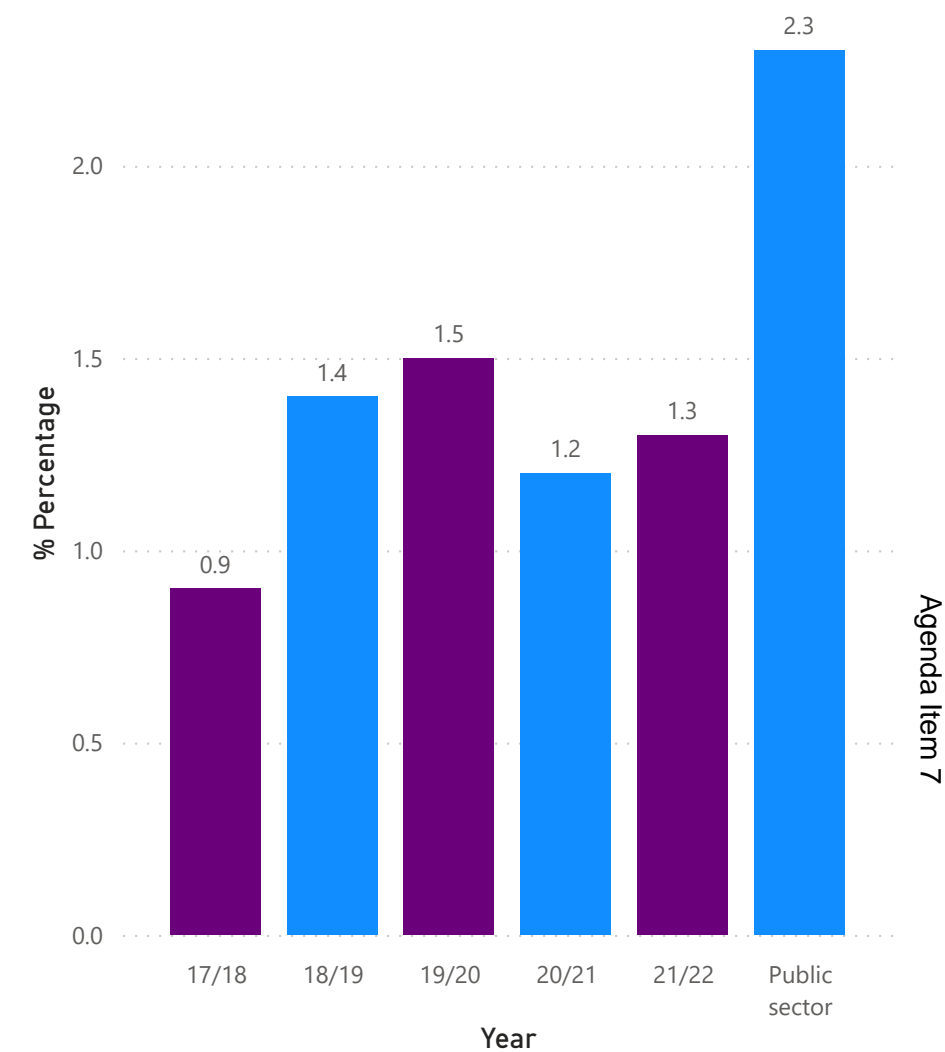


Figure 3: Local Government Sector Performance Against Public Sector Apprenticeships Target 2017/18 – 2021/22



Section One: Apprenticeship Starts and the Public Sector Target

Figure 4: Councils Meeting the Public Sector Target in 21/22

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council	Milton Keynes Council
Blackpool Council	North Hertfordshire District Council
Breckland District Council	North Tyneside Council
Chelmsford City Council	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
Cherwell District Council	Plymouth City Council
Colchester Borough Council	Redcar and Cleveland Council
Dover District Council	Redditch Borough Council
East Suffolk Council	Rutland County Council
Epping Forest District Council	Salford City Council
Isle of Wight Council	South Lakeland District Council
LB Richmond and LB Wandsworth Shared Staffing	South Norfolk District Council
London Borough of Barnet	South Staffordshire Council
London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham	Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
London Borough of Haringey	Stroud District Council
London Borough of Hounslow	Surrey County Council
London Borough of Lambeth	Tendring District Council
London Borough of Newham	Walsall Council
London Borough of Waltham Forest	West Berkshire District Council
Medway Council	West Northamptonshire Council
Middlesbrough Council	Westminster City Council

Figure 5: Combined Authorities Meeting the Public Sector Target in 21/22

Greater London Authority
 Greater Manchester Combined Authority
 West Midlands Combined Authority

Section One: Apprenticeship Starts and the Public Sector Target

Figure 6: Percentage of all councils that met their public sector apprenticeships target in 2021/22

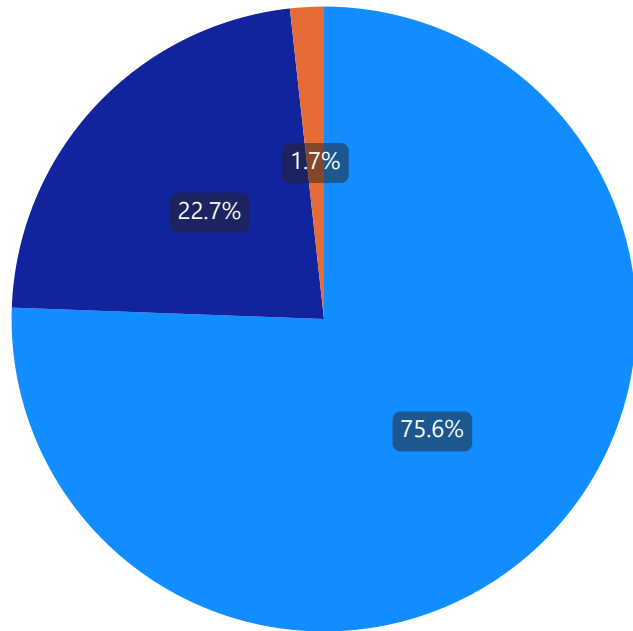


Figure 7: Percentage of District Councils that met their public sector apprenticeships target in 2021/22

Target Did Not Apply

- Missed Their Target
- Met Their Target
- Target Did Not Apply

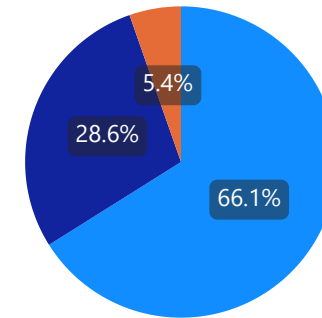
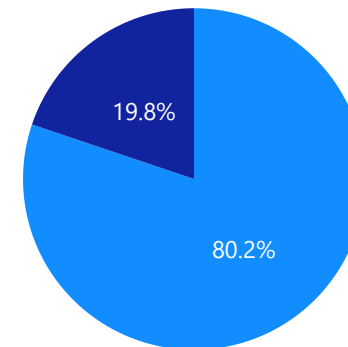


Figure 8: Percentage of Upper and Single Tier Councils that met their public sector apprenticeships target in 2021/22

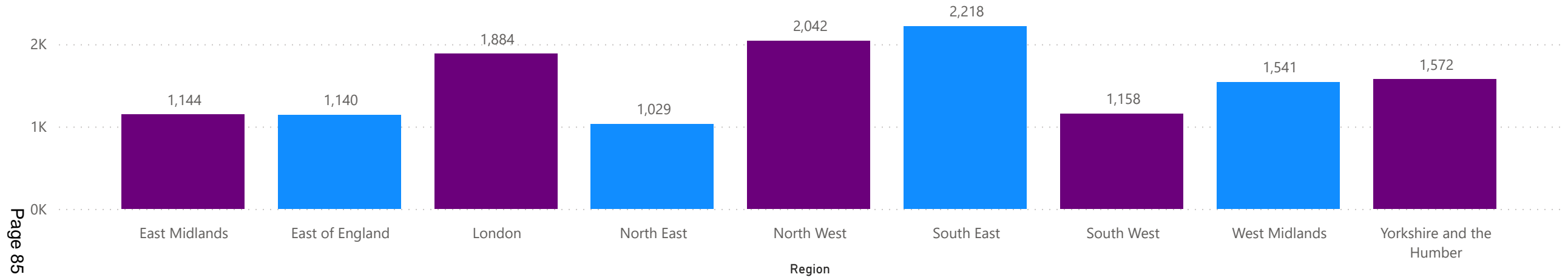
Target Did Not Apply

- Missed Their Target
- Met Their Target



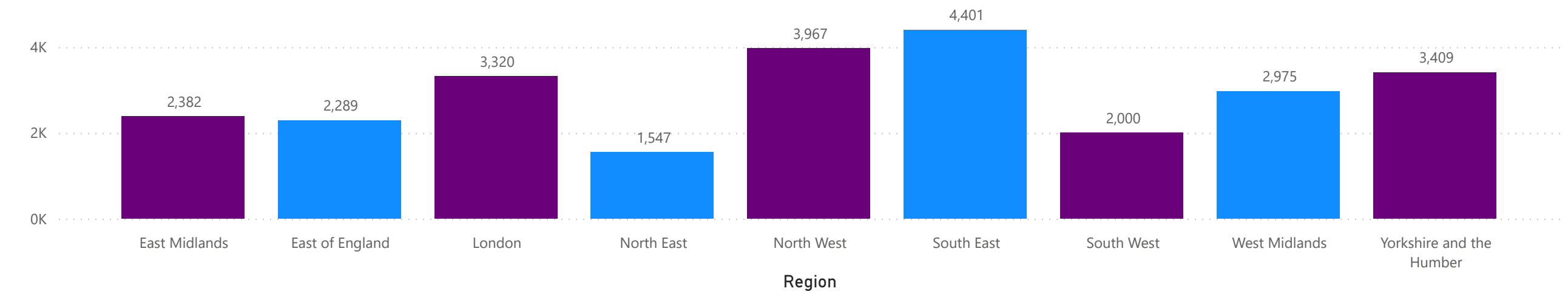
Section One: Apprenticeship Starts and the Public Sector Target

Figure 9: Apprenticeship Starts in Local Government, By Region, 2021-22



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Figure 10: Number of Apprentices on Programme in Local Government as at 31 March 2022, By Region



Agenda Item 7

Section One: Apprenticeship Starts and the Public Sector Target

Post Public Sector Target: 2022/23

Although councils will no longer be required to have regard to a public sector target for apprenticeship starts, they will still need to provide data annually to government showing the number of apprenticeship starts they created during a financial year, the number of apprentices they have on programme and their headcount for publication in a national league table. Councils will therefore still need to have regard to the number of apprenticeships they create.

We asked councils if, in light of this change, they would set an internal target for apprenticeship starts for their council moving forward. 58.7 per cent of councils indicated that they would set their own internal target for apprenticeship starts (see Figure 11). Upper and single tier councils (67.2 per cent) were much more likely to report doing this than district councils (41.1 per cent).

When looking at the performance of the sector in 2022/23, 7,410 apprenticeship starts were reported across 163 councils up to the end of Q3 (December 2022). In 2021/22 these councils had collectively created 10,428 apprenticeships across the full year, meaning 22/23 starts to date account for just over 71 per cent of last year's total. This suggests that, assuming the pattern of a slight increase in starts in the fourth quarter is repeated, councils are on pace to create a similar number of apprenticeships in 2022/23 as they did in 2021/22: c13,700.

Figure 11: Do councils plan to set an internal target for apprenticeship starts moving forward? (All Councils)



Section One: Apprenticeship Starts and the Public Sector Target

Figure 12: Do councils plan to set an internal target for apprenticeship starts moving forward? (Upper/Single Tier Only)

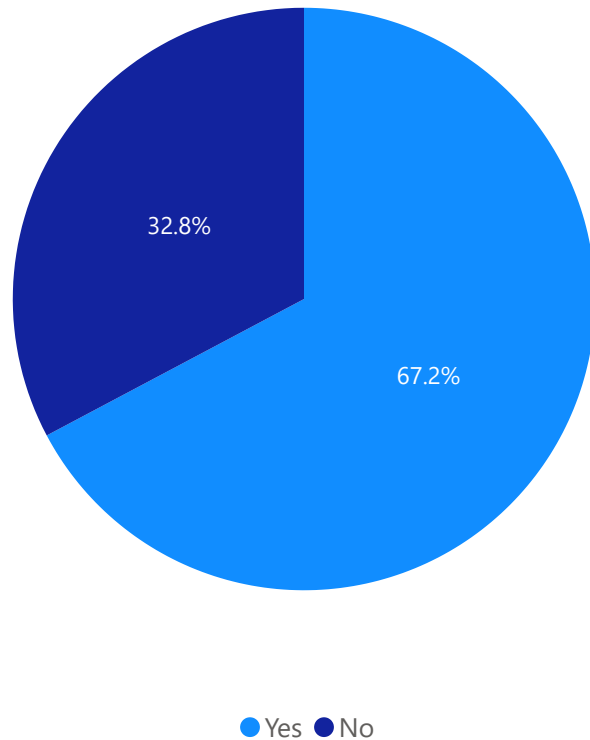
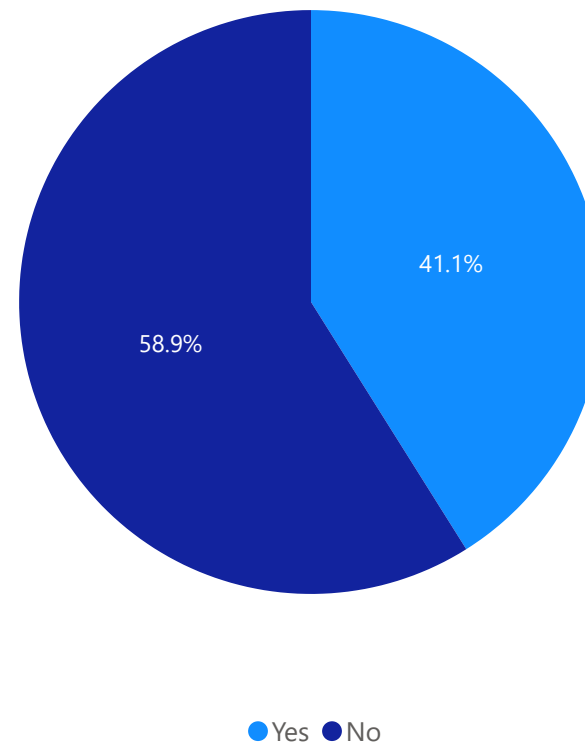


Figure 13: Do councils plan to set an internal target for apprenticeship starts moving forward? (Districts Only)



Section One: Apprenticeship Starts and the Public Sector Target

Maintained Schools Starts

Councils were asked where possible to provide breakdowns of their starts data between the council workforce and their maintained schools. This is data that is not currently separated out in the public sector target data returns and is therefore not available outside of this survey save as part of an overall estimate provided by the government each year, which is combined with non-maintained schools' data, which is reported separately (see Figure 14 below).

Figure 14: Apprenticeship Starts in Schools in England 2017/18 – 2021/22

Year	Non-Maintained Schools (Reported)	Maintained Schools (Estimate)	Total (Estimate)
2017/18	3,150*	3,150	6,300
2018/19	1,761	3,800	5,600
2019/20	2,425	3,775	6,200
2020/21	2,596	3,800	6,400
2021/22	4,110	3,000	7,110

** Estimated figure as non-maintained schools were not subject to the Public Sector Target during 2017/18 due to an error in drafting the legislation.*

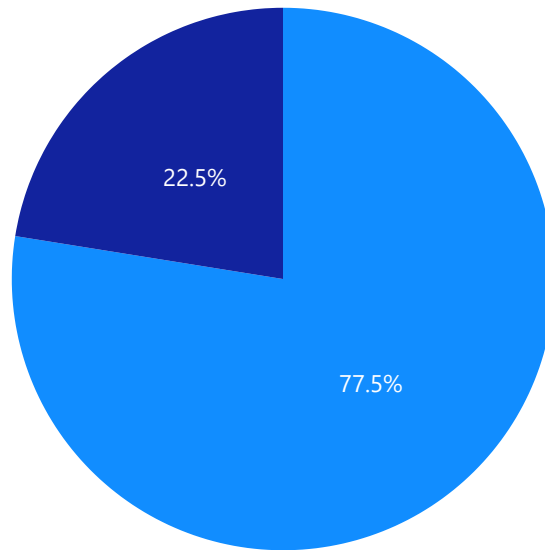
97 councils provided a breakdown between council and maintained school starts for 2021/22 and 2,109 apprenticeship starts in schools were identified. When this is scaled up across the whole sector to take account of the missing councils, it confirms the government's estimate of 3,000 apprenticeship starts in maintained schools is broadly accurate. This represents a drop of around 700 – 800 starts from the previous year.

Maintained schools continue to underperform compared to expectations on apprenticeships. Based on headcounts, maintained schools account for approximately 40 per cent of the combined local government / maintained schools public sector target (c. 9,450 starts in 2021/22 out of a combined target of 23,615). Rather than the expected ratio of three council apprenticeships to two in schools, schools account for just one in four of all apprenticeship starts in local government.

There are some signs of a small rebound in school starts for 2022/23, however. Analysis of those authorities that were able to provide a breakdown of apprenticeship starts between councils and maintained schools in 2022/23 shows a total of 1,658 starts already created by the end of December 2022. As a result, apprenticeship starts in schools account for 26.1 per cent of all apprenticeship starts in local government in 2022/23 compared to 22.5 per cent in 2021/22. Although only a small difference, if local government remains on course to match its overall apprenticeship starts total from 2021/22 in 22/23, then schools would see a modest increase in starts, to just under 3,500 apprenticeships by the end of March 2023.

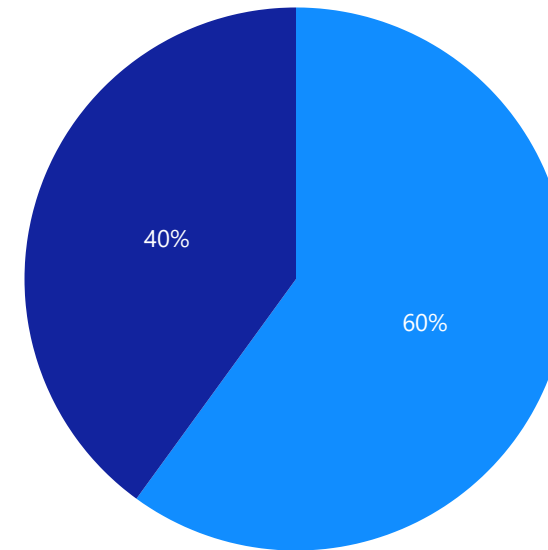
Section One: Apprenticeship Starts and the Public Sector Target

Figure 15: Share of Apprenticeship Starts in Councils vs Maintained Schools.



● Councils ● Schools

Figure 16: Share of Public Sector Target 2017-22 between Councils and Maintained Schools



● Councils ● Schools

Section Two: Apprenticeship Levy spending, expired funds and use of transfers

Paying into the Levy

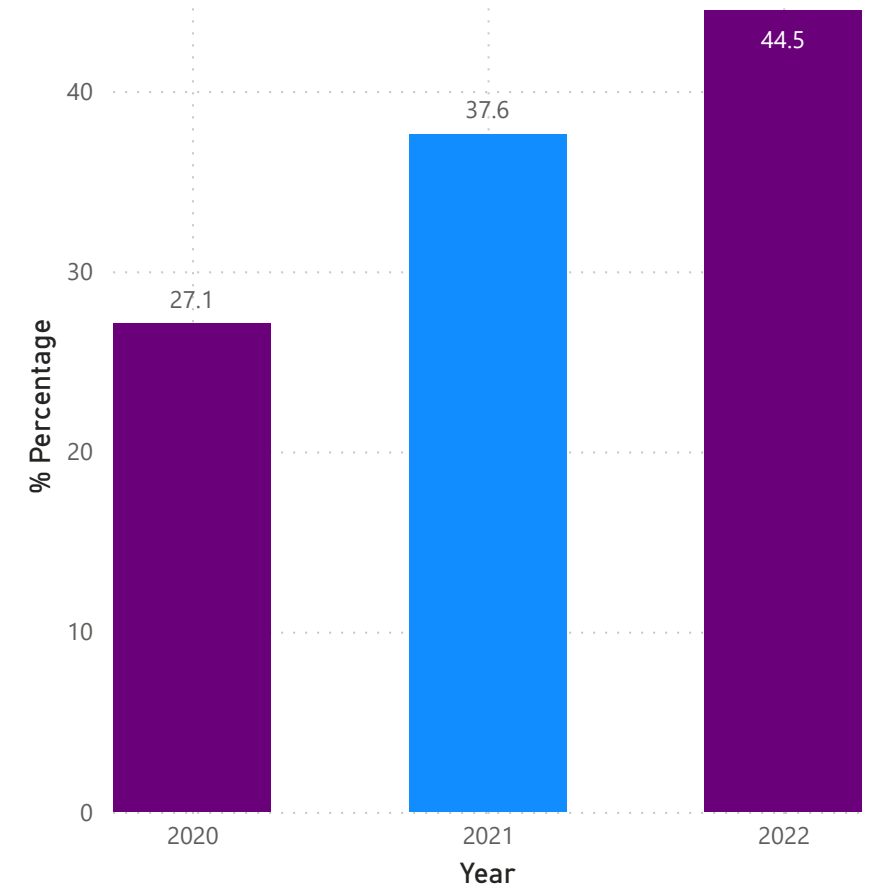
The Apprenticeship Levy was introduced by the government in April 2017 as part of their wider reforms of the apprenticeships system. The levy is a charge on all employers with a pay bill of £3m per annum or more. Employers are required to pay the equivalent of 0.5 per cent of their pay bill above this point to HMRC to pay for apprenticeship training. Levy paying employers then gain access to a levy pot which contains the money they have paid in, topped up by government by 10 percent. These funds can only be accessed to pay for apprenticeship training and expire if left unused after 24 months. The overwhelming majority of local authorities are levy payers.

In our 2022-23 survey, 157 councils provided some information on their levy spend. These councils had paid in £533m into the levy between April 2017 and December 2022 and spent £237m, equivalent to 44.5 per cent of available funds. This drops slightly to 44.2 per cent for upper and single tier councils, but rises to 55.5 per cent among district councils, which, due to their smaller pay bills pay less into the levy and find it easier to spend higher proportions of their funds as a result.

The proportion of the total levy funds spent across this group of councils – 44.5 per cent – represents an increase of 6.9 per centage points in levy spend compared with 2021 (37.6 percent), and 17.4 per cent increase on 2020 (27.1 per cent).

If we assume that spending patterns are similar across the whole sector then since April 2017 local authorities have paid in approximately £798m into the Apprenticeship Levy (up to December 2022) and spent around £355m.

Figure 17: How much of their total levy pot have councils spent?



Section Two: Apprenticeship Levy spending, expired funds and use of transfers

Expiry of unused levy funds

Employers pay into the Apprenticeship Levy on a monthly basis. From the moment an employer pays in its funds for a particular month, they have 24 months to spend those funds otherwise they will be returned to government for use in the wider apprenticeships budget (intended for use in paying for apprenticeship training for non-levy payers).

Since this process, often referred to as 'clawback', kicked in for the first time in May 2019, councils have seen significant sums of unused funds expire and be returned to government. The number of councils seeing funds expire has gradually increased over time. Our survey shows that by December 2022 81.1 per cent of councils reported having seen at least some funds expire, up from 72.3 per cent in August 2021 (Figure 19). Upper and single tier councils were much more likely to be affected with 90.6 per cent of those authorities seeing funds expire compared with 60.3 per cent of district councils. This is likely due to the much larger amounts upper and single tier councils pay into the levy stemming from their larger pay bills, which are harder to spend in full, compared with district councils' smaller levy pots that need much less activity to ensure spending stays ahead of 'clawback'. However, it should be noted that 'clawback' is happening more frequently to district councils this year than it has previously, with the 60.3 per cent figure in our survey representing a 15 percentage point increase on the proportion of districts experiencing clawback when we last surveyed (45 per cent in August 2021) and the highest figure reported yet.

Based on data provided by 157 councils in this survey, and historical data from a further 20, we can estimate the total losses across the local government sector. Councils in England are estimated to have seen around £143m of their unspent levy funds expire and be clawed-back by government since May 2019. This is around 18 per cent of the total amount available. Upper and single tier councils have proportionately returned twice as much (22.1 per cent) of their levy funds as district councils (11 per cent). Figure 20 illustrates how the cumulative losses have increased over time, while Figure 21 shows the total levy contributions by local government since 2017 and what has happened to them.

On average, local government has seen £3.25m per month of its levy funds returned to the government unspent since funds first started to expire in May 2019. While this average figure is unchanged from the one reported in our 2021 survey, it does indicate the pace of levy losses has slowed and levelled off after spiking during the pandemic. Between May 2019 and March 2020, councils saw an average of £2.1m per month expire. This rose to £4m per month between April 2020 and July 2021, before falling back a bit to £3.24m per month between August 2021 and December 2022.

Section Two: Apprenticeship Levy spending, expired funds and use of transfers

Figure 19: Change in Proportion of local authorities reporting apprenticeship levy funds expiry 2021-2022

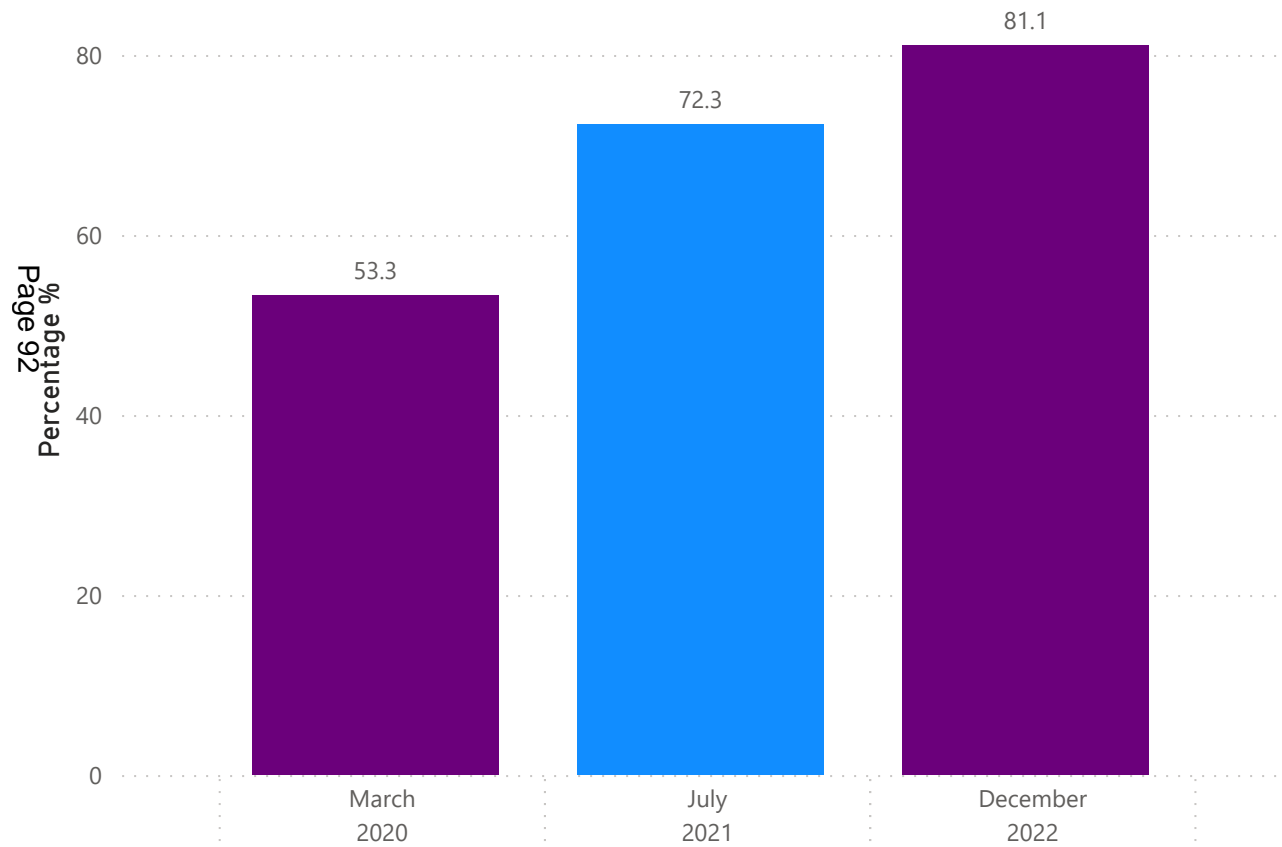
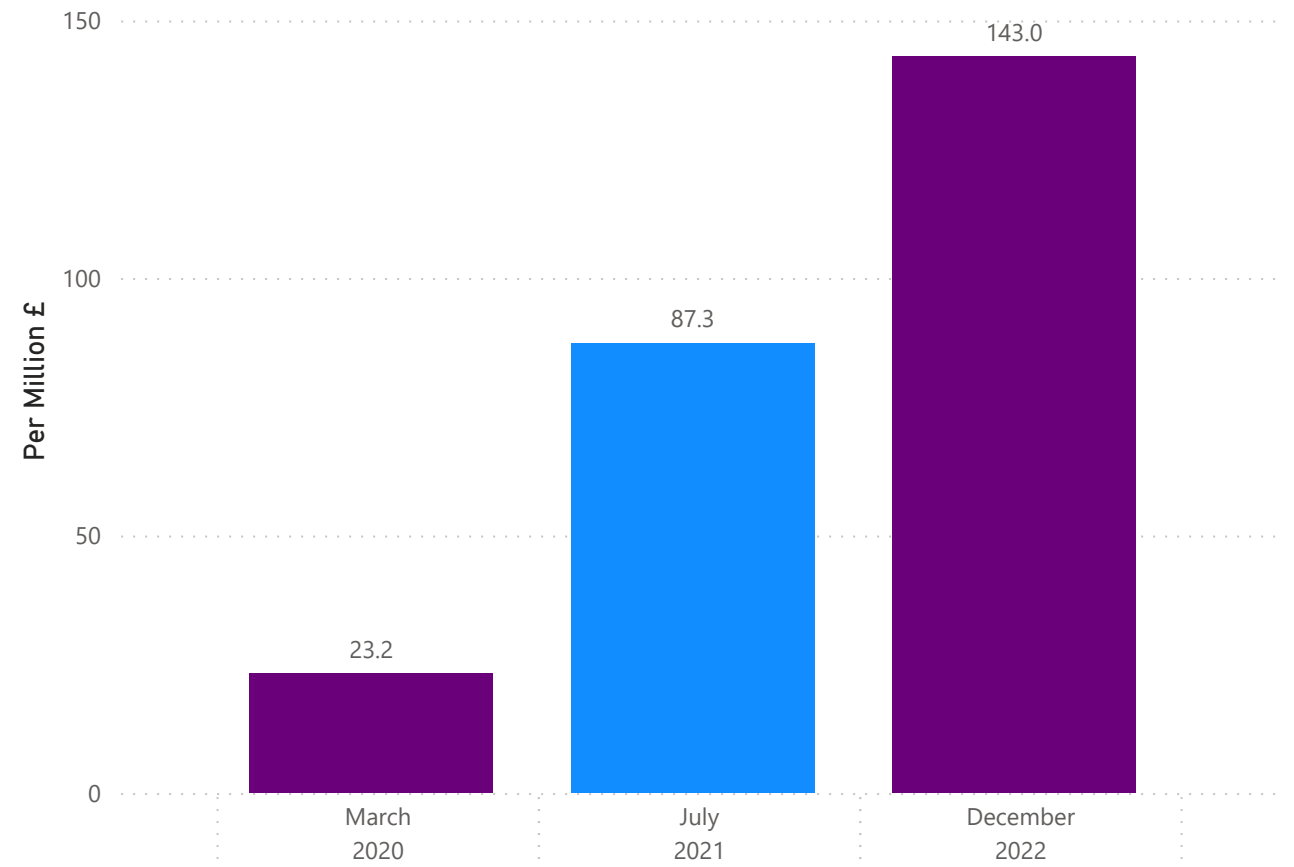
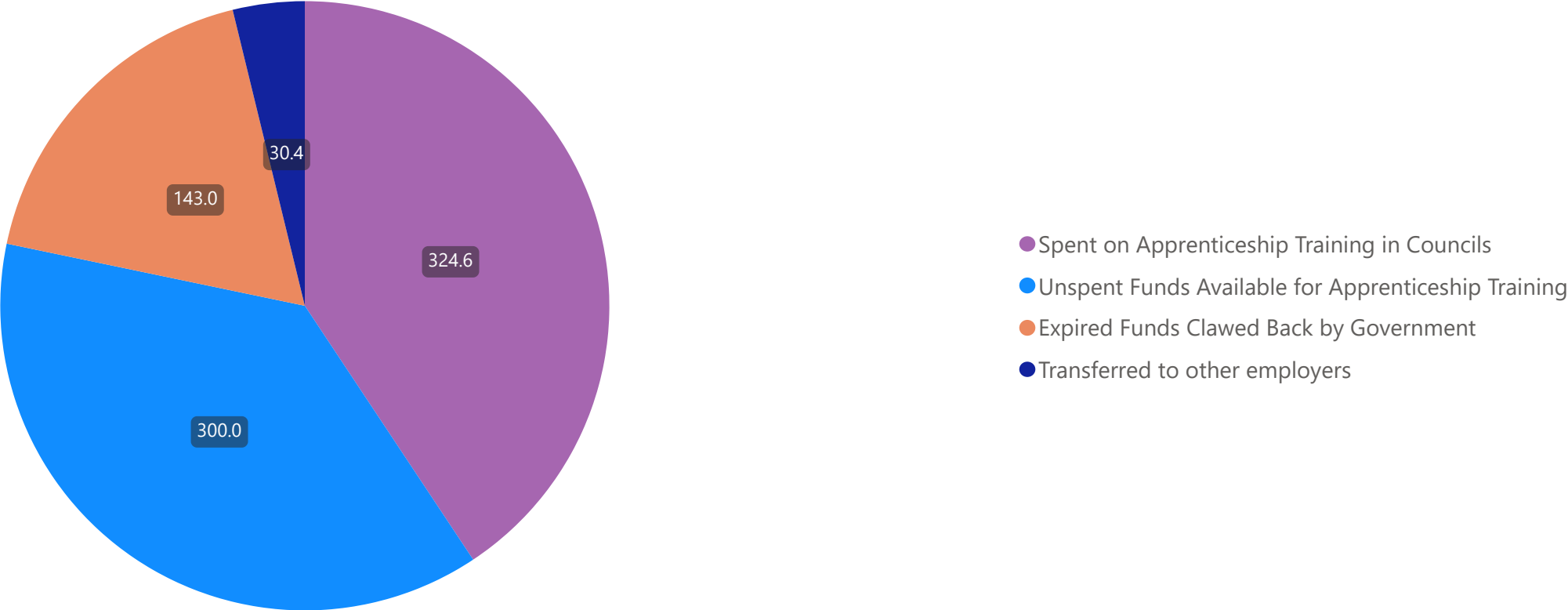


Figure 20: Cumulative Increase in Unspent Levy Funds Clawed Back by Government from Local Authorities 2019-2022



Section Two: Apprenticeship Levy spending, expired funds and use of transfers

Figure 21: Total Levy Funds Available to Local Government Between April 2017 and December 2022 (£ Millions)



Section Two: Apprenticeship Levy spending, expired funds and use of transfers

Stemming the tide of losses: Use of Levy Transfers

Local authorities are increasingly using the levy transfer function to help reduce the amount of levy funds going unspent. Levy transfers allow a levy-paying employer to transfer up to 25 per cent of their previous (financial) year's levy payments to other employers to pay for apprenticeship training. If a council uses this function, this gives them greater control over a portion of their otherwise unspent funds, giving them a say in where and how the funds get spent and ensuring they support apprenticeships in their local area rather than disappearing into a national pot.

Previous LGA apprenticeship surveys have found steadily rising support for the use of levy transfers and the 2022/23 survey was no different. 73.4 per cent of upper and single tier councils and 16.4 per cent of district councils reported making at least one transfer, up from 59 per cent and 10 per cent respectively in 2021. This is the third straight year we have recorded an increase in the use of levy transfers (Figures 22 and 23). Based on data from 189 local authorities, councils have committed at least £30.4m to levy transfers (3.8 per cent of the total funds paid into the levy since its inception) to create 5,396 apprenticeship starts, up from £14.8m and 3,068 respectively in 2022. Given the increasing popularity of transfers, the true numbers are likely to be higher still, particularly as we are seeing not only more councils use the transfer function, but those that have been using it for a while transferring larger amounts (Figures 24 and 25).

The average upper and single tier council, where the bulk of levy transfers take place, has committed £322.7k to transfers to create 57 apprenticeship starts.

The increased use of levy transfers does appear to correlate with councils looking to find new ways to spend their levy funds, concerned as many are by the increased amount going unspent and being returned to the Treasury. It also appears, in part, to be driven by the effects of the pandemic. In March 2020, just prior to the first COVID-19 lockdown, councils had only transferred around £2.5m to create 609 apprenticeships, and use of transfers was very much in its infancy. Councils found it difficult to recruit during this period and new apprenticeship starts during COVID tended to be upskilling opportunities for existing staff. Consequently, numbers fell, and losses increased, rising to an average of £4m per month between March 2020 and July 2021. Transfers have therefore offered councils a way to spend a greater proportion of their levy funds than they would otherwise be able to in their own workforce, create opportunities for their residents and support local businesses in their recovery. It has also helped to stem the tide of levy losses, with the increased use of transfers contributing to the average monthly loss of funds holding steady at £3.25m rather than continuing to rise at the rapid pace it had previously.

Section Two: Apprenticeship Levy spending, expired funds and use of transfers

Figure 22: Percentage of Councils to Complete at Least One Levy Transfer (Upper/Single Tier Councils only)

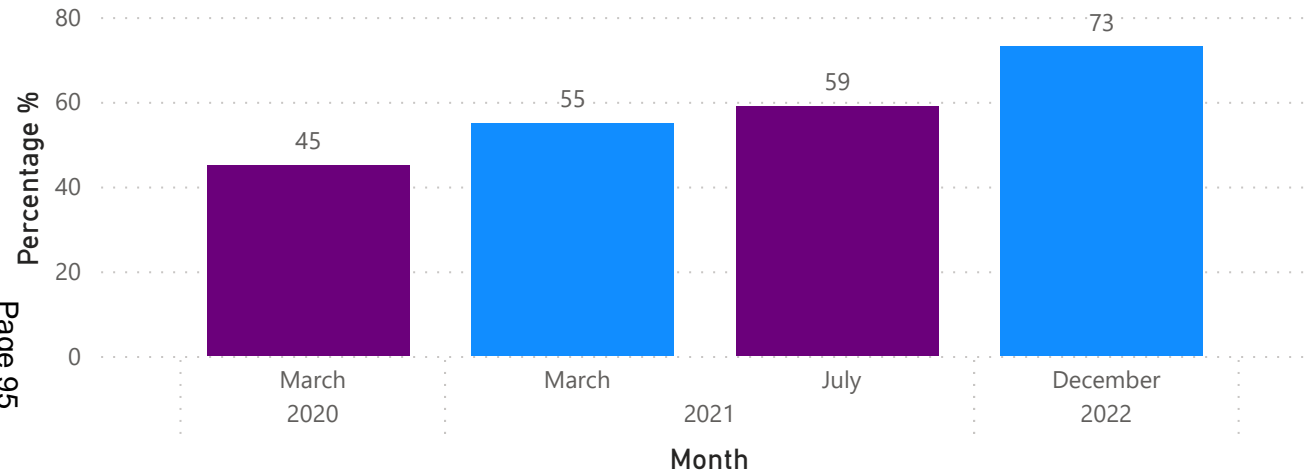


Figure 23: Percentage of Councils to Complete at Least One Levy Transfer (District Councils only)

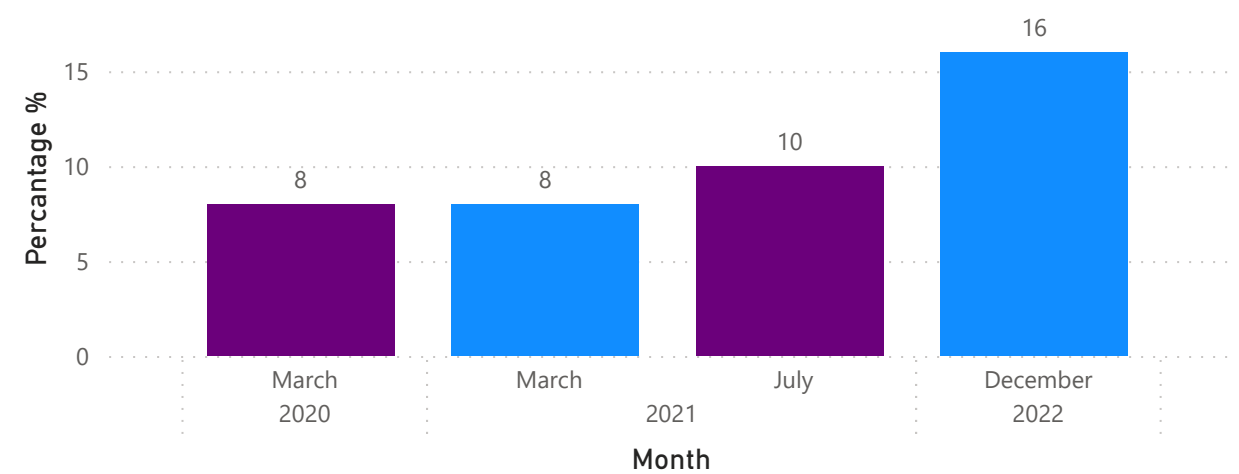


Figure 24: Total Amount Committed by Local Authorities to Levy Transfers 2020-2022

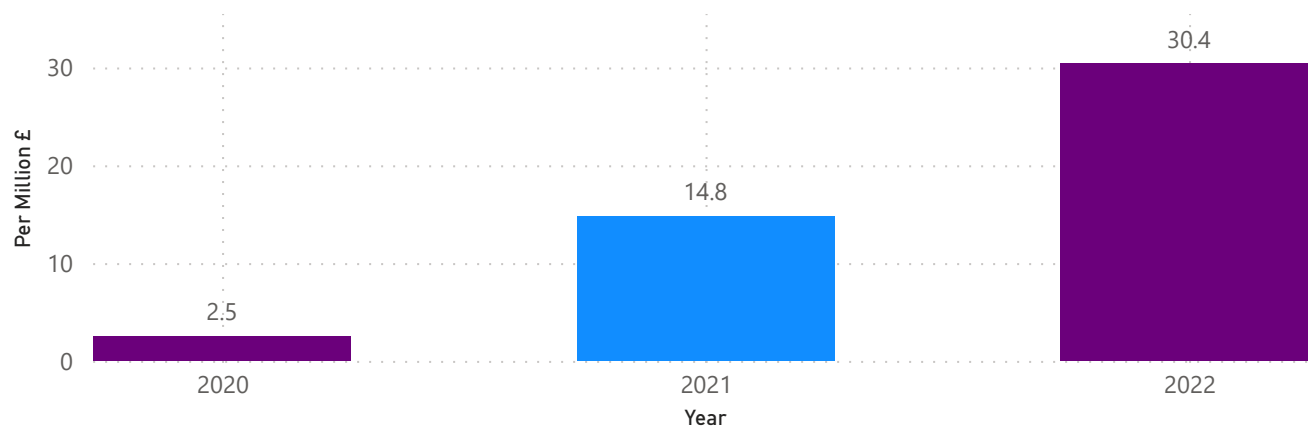
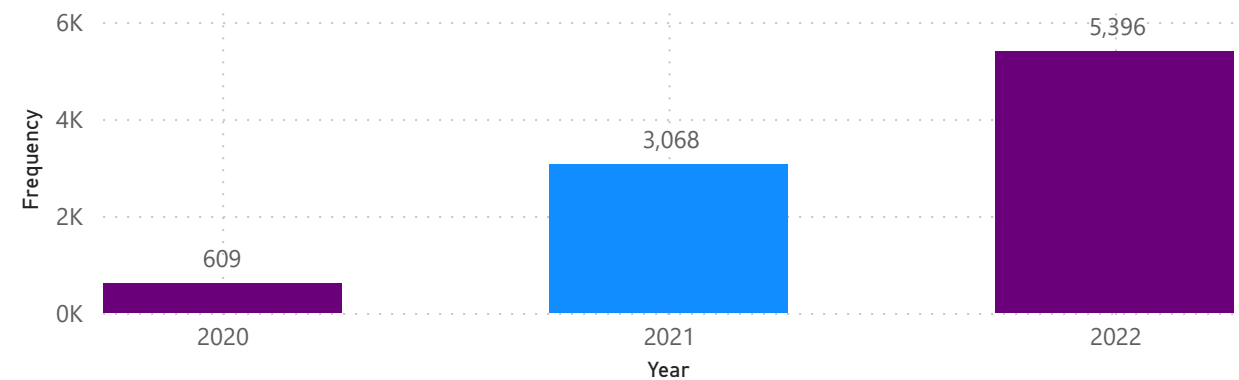


Figure 25: Total number of apprenticeship starts created by councils via levy transfers 2020-2022



Section Two: Apprenticeship Levy spending, expired funds and use of transfers

The majority of councils saw the value in putting a levy transfer policy in place to set out the parameters around which they would agree to transfer funds and the process other employers would need to go through in order to apply for these funds (Figure 26). 33.7 per cent of councils had such a policy in place, with 25.1 percent indicating they were in the process of developing one. Again, upper and single tier councils were more likely to have a policy in place (49.1 percent) or be in the process of developing one (30.2 per cent) than district councils (1.8 per cent and 14.3 per cent respectively).

As part of the survey, councils were asked if they had used the full 25 per cent levy allowance available to them in 2021-22. Just 9 councils indicated that they had, equivalent to 5.2 per cent of respondents. However, this increased to 10 percent of respondents when asked about their intention to spend the full allowance in 2022-23. The increase was more marked among upper and single tier councils, with the proportion seeking to spend their full allowance increasing from 6 per cent in 21/22 to 14 per cent in 22/23.

On average, councils that used the transfer function in 2021/22 used 11.86 per cent of their 25 per cent allowance, though 46 per cent of respondents had transferred more than half of the funds available to them. With the amounts councils are committing to transfers continuing to rise each year, the proportion of the transfer allowance councils are using is also likely to continue rising.

Councils also indicated that they are keen to see greater flexibility about how much of their levy pot they can transfer to other employers in their local communities (Figure 27). A majority of councils (59 per cent) support an increase in the current cap of 25 per cent, but authorities are split on what a new cap should be. 21 per cent support an increase in the cap to 35 per cent, 11 per cent support an increase to 40 per cent, while 27 per cent would support an increase in the cap to a level above 40 per cent. Support among upper and single tier councils, who are responsible for the bulk of the apprenticeship levy spend in the sector and are the most keen on transfers, is higher still, with 66 per cent of those councils favouring an increase in the cap (Figure 28). Again, they are also split on the right level to set it at, with 25 per cent supporting an increase to 35 percent, 12 per cent supporting an increase to 40 per cent, and 28 per cent wanting to see the cap raised to a level above 40 per cent.

Section Two: Apprenticeship Levy spending, expired funds and use of transfers

Figure 26: Proportion of councils with a levy transfer policy in place

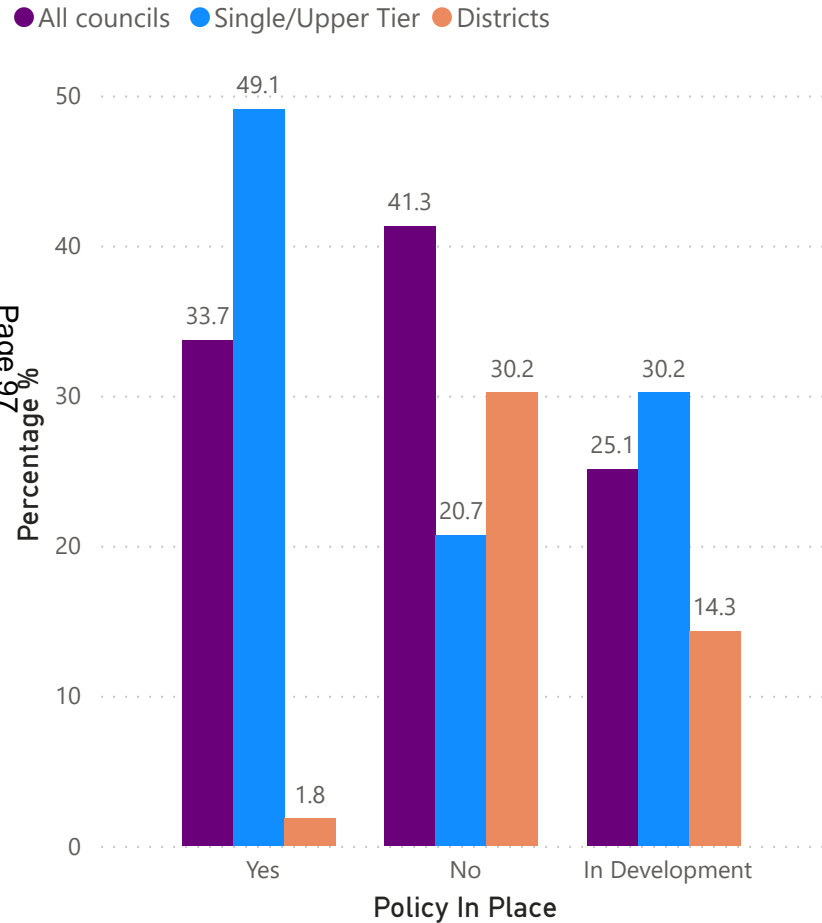


Figure 27: Support for Increasing the Levy Transfer Cap from 25% among councils in England

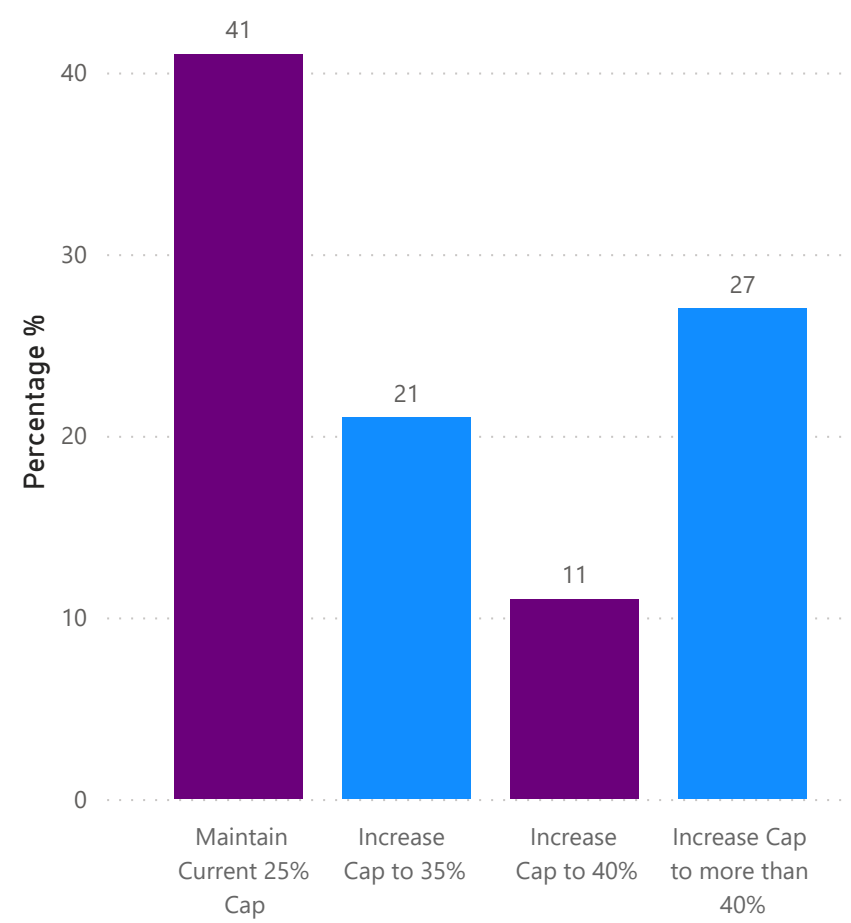
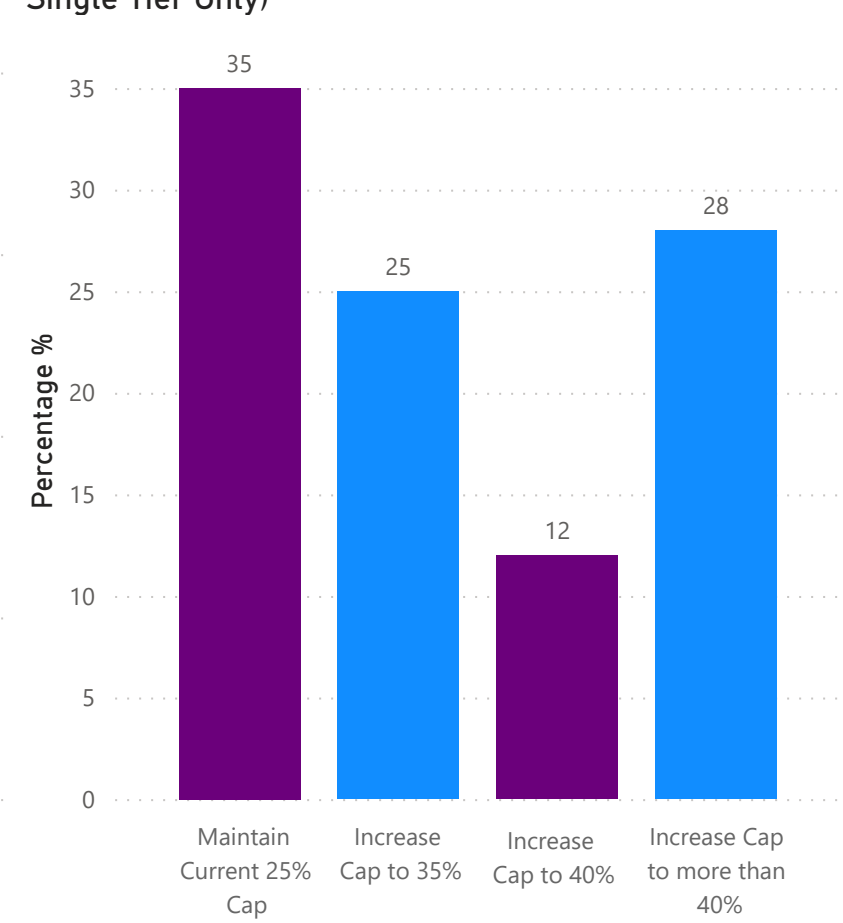


Figure 28: Support for Increasing the Levy Transfer Cap from 25% among councils in England (Upper and Single Tier Only)



Section Three: Apprenticeship Incentive Payments

Apprenticeship Incentive Payments

Between August 2020 and January 2022, the government introduced Apprenticeship Incentive payments to encourage employers to take on new apprentices in an attempt to see numbers rebound after the COVID-19 pandemic. Initially, the incentive payments were set at £1,500 per apprentice, payable in two instalments, though this was later increased to £3,000 for all new apprentices starting between 1 April 2021 and 31 January 2022. Employers had until 31 March 2022 to register their claims, however, over a year later many councils have reported to the LGA that they are yet to receive all, if any, of their incentive payments, some are having claims queried and others are facing extreme delays in resolving these issues.

Based on data from 188 local authorities in England, 90.7 per cent of councils accessed the apprenticeship incentive payments available between August 2020 and January 2022. This rose to 95.7 per cent among upper and single tier councils and dropped to 80.4 per cent among district councils, reflecting the difference in apprenticeship activity levels between these authority types.

In total, local government will receive at least £9.4m in incentive payments (likely higher) when they have been fully approved by central government. This sum helped councils to create at least 4,177 apprenticeship opportunities, helping local authorities and their maintained schools to deliver an increase in apprenticeship starts in 2021/22 after the 21.5 per cent drop reported in 2020/21 at the height of the pandemic.

Regionally (Figures 29 and 30), councils in the South East collectively received the most in incentive payments (£1.43m), while those in the East Midlands received the least (£588,250). Councils in the South East also created the most apprenticeship starts (646), with councils in the East Midlands creating the fewest (218).

Although unitary authorities collectively received the most in incentive payments (£3.22m) and created the most apprenticeship starts (1,359), county councils received the highest average incentive payments (£109,375) and created the highest average number of apprentices per council (61). Figure 31 illustrates the total and average sums received and apprenticeships created by council type.

Section Three: Apprenticeship Incentive Payments

Figure 29: Apprenticeship Incentive Payments Received by Local Government (December 2022), by Region'

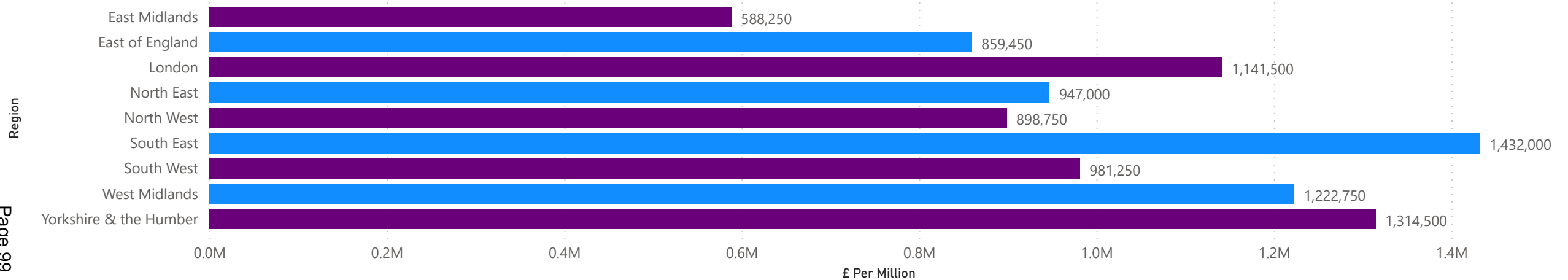
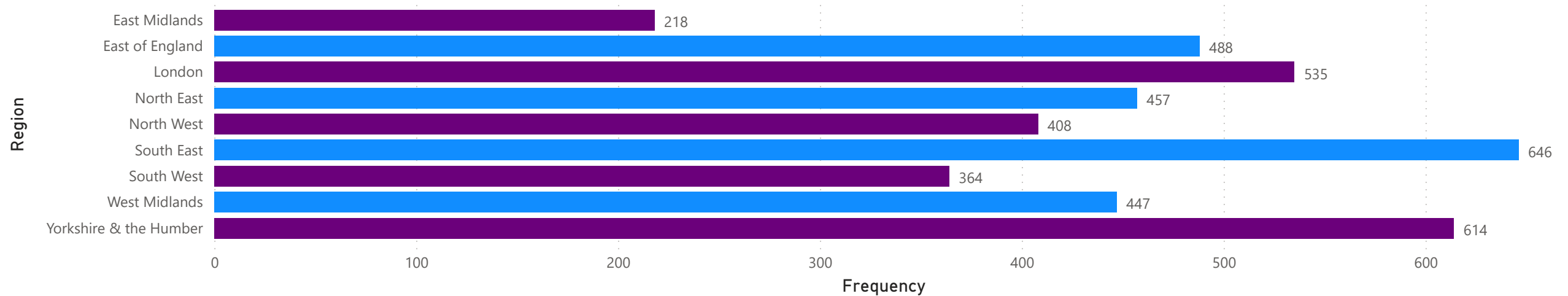


Figure 30: Number of Apprentices Councils Have Claimed Incentive Payments For (December 2022), by Region



Section Three: Apprenticeship Incentive Payments

Although the majority of councils reported receiving their incentive payments, 32 per cent of local authorities reported they were still waiting to receive the first instalment of incentive payments for at least one of their claims (Figure 32), while one authority responding to our survey told us that they were still waiting for the first instalment to be paid for each one of the 81 apprentices they had claimed for. Other councils reported having received the first instalment, but not having yet received subsequent instalments because of requests for further information from government or other blockages in the system. It is clear that over twelve months on from the final deadline for claiming incentive payments, there remain significant issues for councils in accessing these funds, with large amounts still yet to be received.

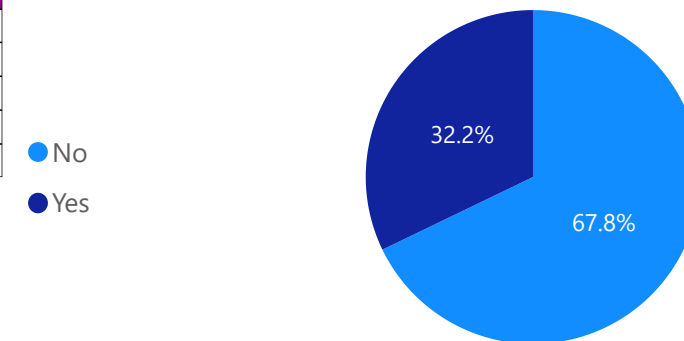
Lastly, there continues to be some evidence that apprenticeship incentive payments made a positive difference, at least in some areas, to apprenticeship starts in schools. 38 per cent of councils reported that maintained schools' interest in apprenticeships had increased (61 per cent reported no change), while, excluding don't knows, 45 per cent of councils agreed with the statement that *"The availability of Apprenticeship Incentive Payments led maintained schools in our area to create apprenticeship starts that they would not have done otherwise"*. We discuss these responses in more detail in the section on maintained schools later in the report.

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Figure 31: Incentive Payments Received and Apprenticeships Created (December 2022) by Council Type

Council Type	Total Incentive Payments Received	Total Apprentices Claimed For	Average Incentive Payments Received per Council	Average Apprentices Claimed For per Council
County	£2,187,500	970	£109,375	61
District	£428,450	183	£9,116	4
London Borough	£1,141,500	535	£42,278	23
Metropolitan	£2,405,500	1,130	£77,597	27
Unitary	£3,222,500	1,359	£67,135	36

Figure 32: Are Councils Still Waiting to Receive the First Instalment of Incentive Payments for Any Claims They Have Made?



Agenda Item 7

Section Four: Maintained Schools

Since the Apprenticeship Levy was introduced in April 2017, central government has considered local authorities to be the employer for maintained schools (in this case we are using this term as shorthand for community and voluntary-controlled schools) for the purposes of the apprenticeship levy and the public sector apprenticeships target.

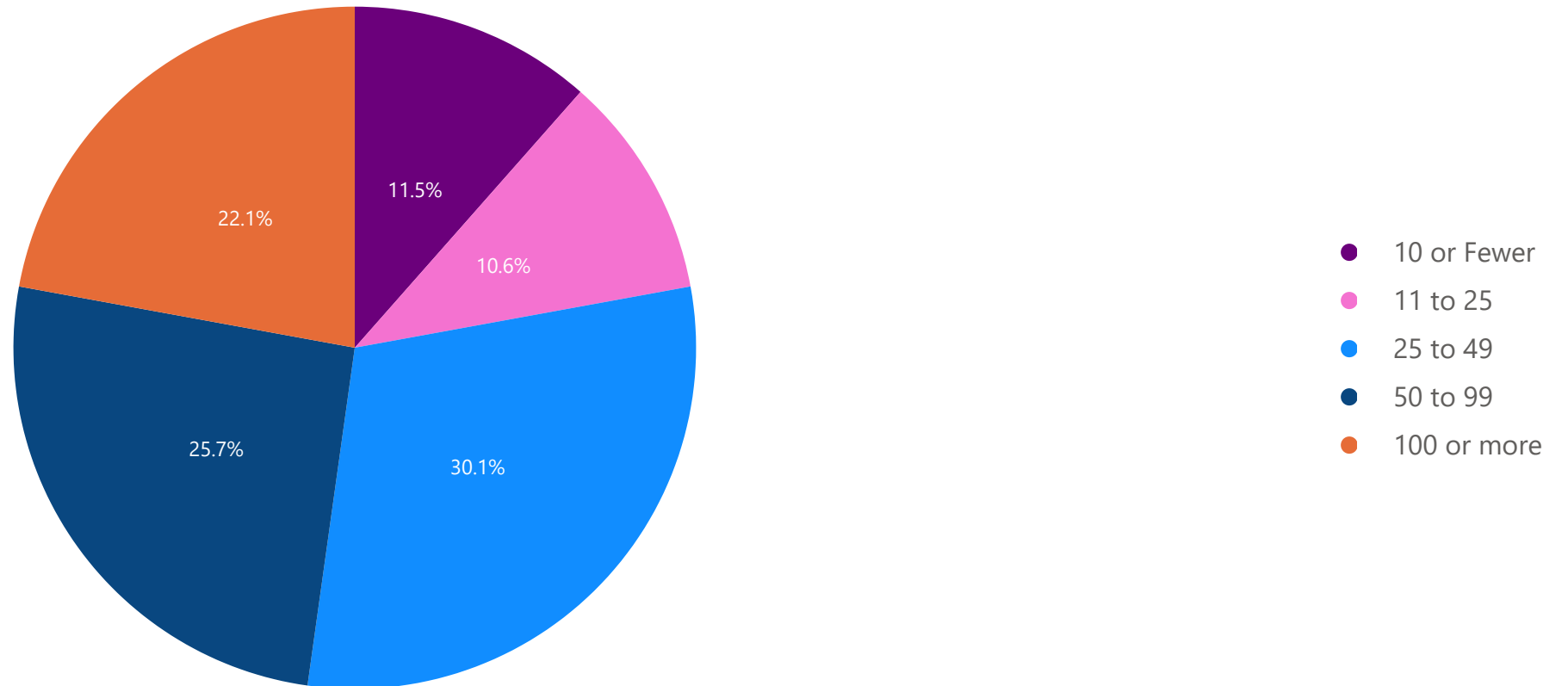
Previous LGA apprenticeships surveys have highlighted how schools have often found apprenticeships a challenging policy area. Multiple rival routes and pathways into the sector already exist, while the development of apprenticeship standards relevant to the schools sector has also proceeded at a relatively slow pace. There have also been specific challenges for maintained schools, many of whom are small primary schools, and have to contribute to the levy pot of their employer (the local authority) when a similar-sized non-maintained school that is not part of a Multi-Academy Trust does not. These small primaries often have limited resources making the cost of taking on a new apprentice, or back-filling the role of an existing member of staff undertaking an apprenticeship, seem like an impractical option. Local Authorities are limited in the role they can play in these cases as, although deemed to be the employer, in practical terms, they do not have any role to play in recruitment, retention and development of schools staff, so mainly play the role of facilitator and advocate for the benefits of apprenticeships.

Despite some positive signs in recent years, school apprenticeship numbers have broadly flatlined since the levy began, with the only meaningful changes being whether maintained or non-maintained schools delivered the greater numbers. Generally, maintained schools have underperformed on apprenticeship starts when compared with their share of the public sector target or their apprenticeship levy spend. As highlighted in Section One of this report, maintained schools have delivered one in four of all apprenticeship starts in the local government sector, despite being responsible for generating 40 per cent of the apprenticeship levy pot and being responsible for 40 per cent of the combined public sector target headcount (approximately 9,450 starts in 2021/22 out of a combined target of 23,615). While the cumulative total of around 17,500 apprenticeship starts over five years delivered by maintained schools may seem impressive, it is equivalent to only 1.8 per cent of the total workforce. It is clear that apprenticeships, though making an impression in some quarters, have yet to really take off in the schools sector.

One of the main challenges for councils in assisting schools in this endeavour is the uneven spread of maintained schools among local authority areas. Among upper and single tier councils, one in nine councils is responsible for 10 or fewer maintained schools, while one in five is responsible for more than 100 schools with a few larger councils, like Lancashire or Hampshire, having several hundred each (Figure 33). This makes it much more challenging for the councils with much larger bases of maintained schools to support them as much as they might want to without expending significant extra resource.

Section Four: Maintained Schools

Figure 33: How Many Maintained Schools are Councils Responsible for?



Section Four: Maintained Schools

Engagement Between Councils and Maintained Schools

Engagement levels between councils and maintained schools have stayed broadly similar since the Levy was introduced in April 2017. In our survey we ask two questions, one to establish how councils would describe the baseline level of engagement with schools and another to establish how that level of engagement has changed over the past twelve months. In this year's survey, the question asking councils to describe their current level of engagement with maintained schools saw 55.2 per cent of authorities describe engagement levels as either 'moderate', 'high' or 'very high' down from 61.2 per cent in 2021 (Figure 34). Conversely, when asked how engagement had changed over the previous twelve months, 45 per cent of councils indicated there had been no change, while 44.1 per cent of councils said there was some or a significant increase in engagement (Figure 35).

On the face of it, these two sets of figures do not seem reconcilable, though they owe much to the timing of the surveys. Our 2021 survey was carried out predominantly in July 2021, only a few months after maintained schools had delivered their joint highest number of annual apprenticeship starts since the introduction of the levy. It is to be expected that responses provided then would lean towards a more positive view of schools apprenticeship engagement. Conversely, our 2022 survey was carried out mainly in November and December 2022, several months after maintained schools had recorded their lowest number of apprenticeship starts since the levy was introduced. Again, you would expect that responses at that time would show a less positive picture of the baseline engagement position. However, data on apprenticeship starts for 2022/23 also shows that schools are responsible for 26.1 per cent of the apprenticeship starts created in local government by the end of December 2022, up from 22.5 per cent in 2021/22. With the sector currently on course to deliver a similar number of starts overall in 22/23 as in 21/22 (c.13,700), this suggests schools will deliver a modest increase in starts themselves. This therefore goes some way to explaining why, when baseline engagement levels clearly dipped between surveys, that councils are reporting stand-still or increased engagement with schools this year.

Section Four: Maintained Schools

Figure 34: How Councils Describe Their Current Level of Engagement with Maintained Schools (December 2022)

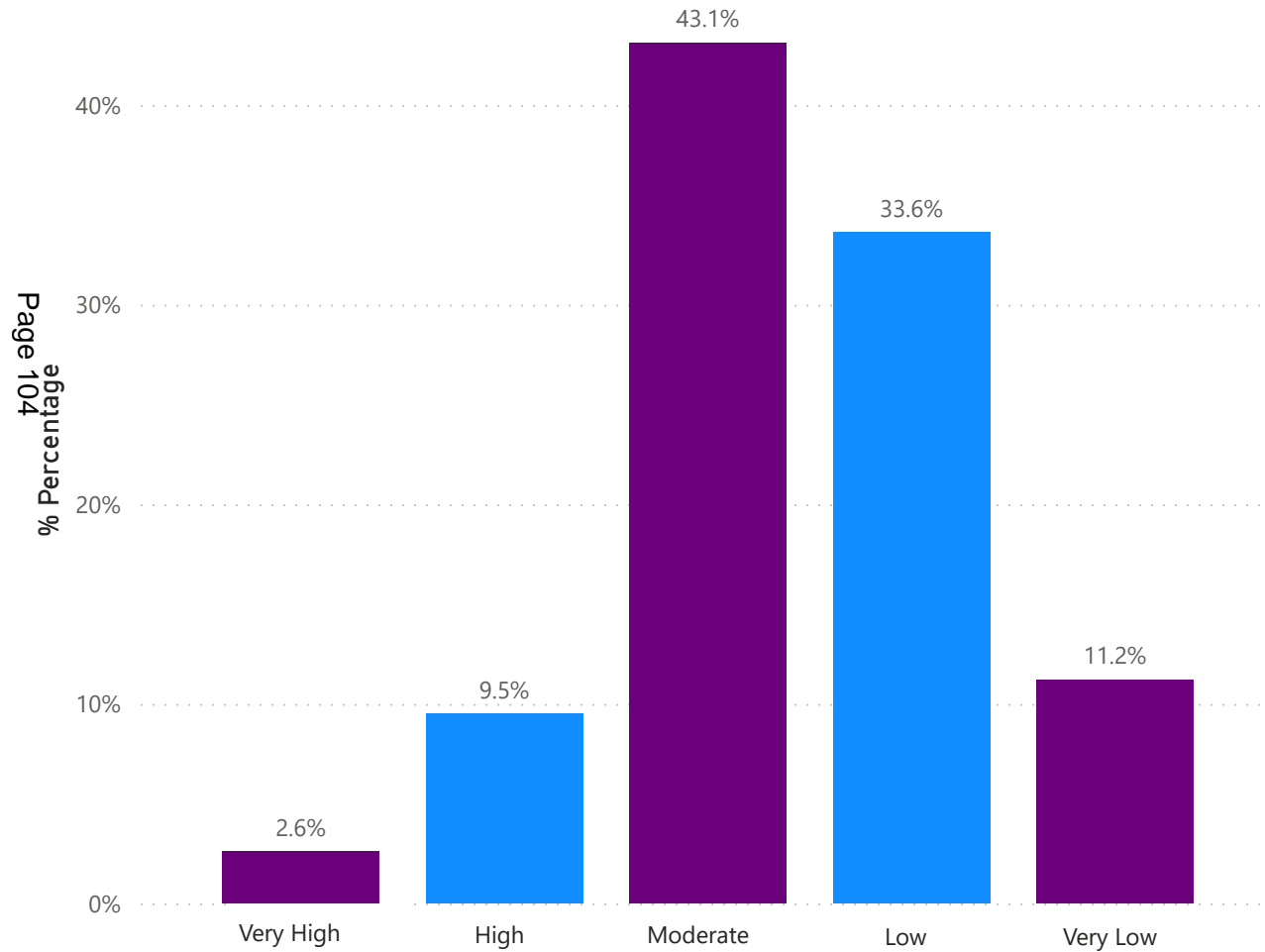
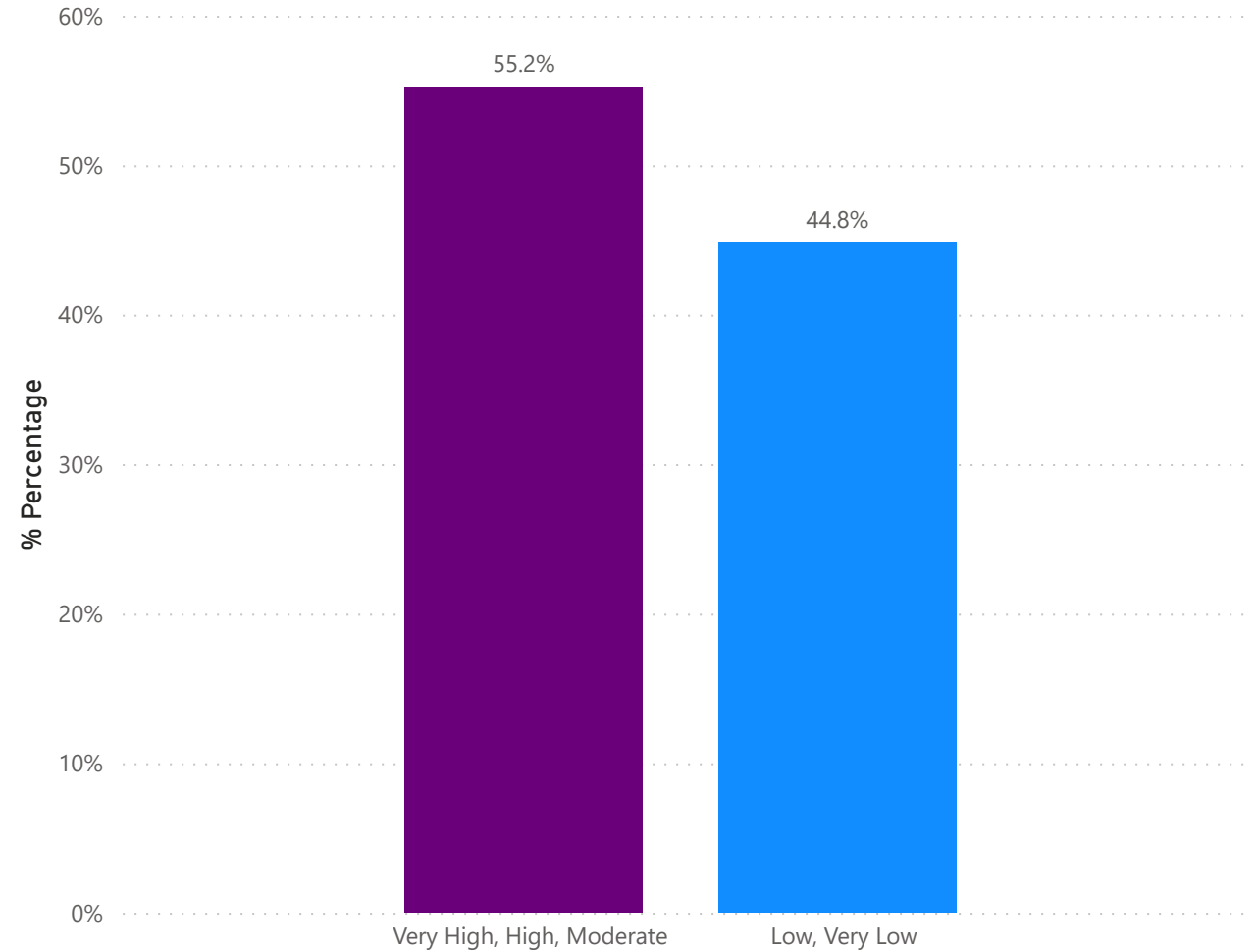
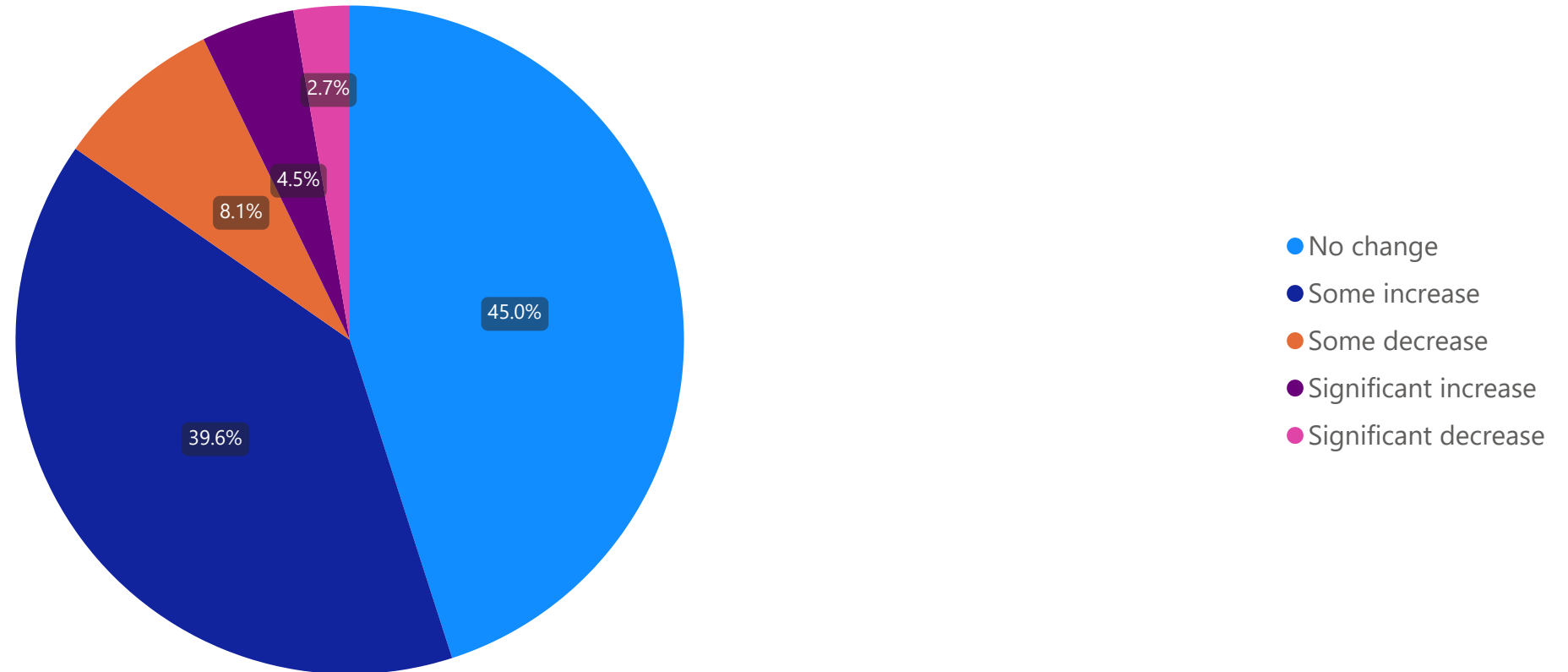


Figure 34: How Councils Describe Their Current Level of Engagement with Maintained Schools (December 2022) Combined



Section Four: Maintained Schools

Figure 35: How Engagement Levels Between Councils and Maintained Schools on Apprenticeships Have Changed Over the Last Twelve Months (December 2022)



Section Four: Maintained Schools

As explained in Section Three, there continues to be evidence that the apprenticeship incentive payments introduced by government made a positive difference, at least in some areas, to apprenticeship starts in schools (Figures 36 and 37). 38 per cent of councils reported that maintained schools' interest in apprenticeships had increased, while, excluding don't knows, 45 per cent of councils agreed with the statement that "The availability of Apprenticeship Incentive Payments led maintained schools in our area to create apprenticeship starts that they would not have done otherwise". Although incentives cannot be said to have had a transformative effect across the entire schools sector, they clearly made an important difference in some areas and were a good tool to stimulate conversations between councils and schools over how to access, use and spend the apprenticeship levy in productive ways. There remains a case for their reintroduction, alongside other reforms, to deliver a sustained boost in apprenticeship starts for the sector.

However, incentives alone would not be enough to create more apprenticeship opportunities in schools, as it is clear other barriers persist.

Figure 36: Did the introduction of Apprenticeship Incentives available between August 2020 and January 2022 make any difference to the amount of interest schools had in apprenticeships?

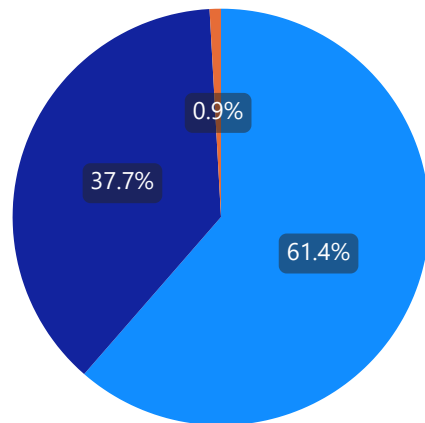
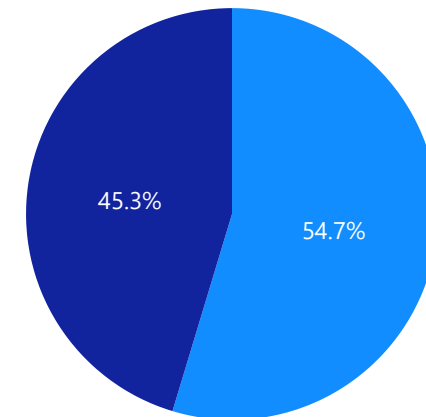


Figure 37: "The availability of Apprenticeship Incentive Payments led maintained schools in our area to create apprenticeship starts that they would not have done otherwise?"



● There was no change in interest ● Interest in Apprenticeships Increased ● Interest in Apprenticeships Decreased

● Disagree ● Agree

Section Four: Maintained Schools

Barriers to Maintained Schools Accessing Apprenticeships

In each of the last four surveys we have asked the same question of councils: “What are the main ongoing barriers that are preventing schools in your area from delivering more apprenticeship starts?”. Councils are presented with a list of ten possible barriers and can pick as many or as few as they like, as well as having the option to add their own. Figure 38 below shows the results of this question in each of the last four surveys.

Figure 38: Local Authorities’ View of the Main Ongoing Barriers Preventing Maintained Schools from Delivering More Apprenticeship Starts 2019-2022

Barrier	Mar-19	Jun-20	Jul-21	Dec-22
20% Off the Job Training	73%	83%	68%	69%
Lack of Resources/Time	61%	74%	60%	65%
Salary costs	34%	44%	32%	44%
Schools don’t understand system	49%	54%	47%	36%
Lack of council resources to support	44%	47%	38%	34%
Other pathways into teaching more attractive	38%	37%	24%	20%
Apprenticeships perceived as inferior to other training	29%	30%	22%	19%
Not enough relevant standards	40%	43%	22%	15%
Min. 12 month length of apprenticeship off putting	N/A	29%	13%	12%
Lack of providers	10%	21%	3%	4%
Other/None of the Above	20%	23%	30%	20%

As can be seen from the chart, the barriers to schools doing more on apprenticeships are plentiful, but have reduced, at least somewhat, in severity over time.

The requirement for off-the-job training to be delivered as part of the apprenticeship during work hours remains the biggest barrier, primarily due to the perception from many schools that this would be taking staff ‘out of the classroom’. With 69 per cent of councils reporting this as a barrier, it remains a significant hurdle to overcome, though has lessened in severity since June 2020 when 83 per cent of councils reported this was an issue.

Section Four: Maintained Schools

The fourteen-percentage point drop is typical of most of the barriers listed, with eight of the ten options dropping by between four and twenty-five percentage points since 2019. The two exceptions are 'Lack of Resources/Time' and 'Salary Costs', which covers both schools being unwilling or unable to comply with the local authority pay policy on apprenticeships and the unaffordability of apprentices' salaries more generally. It is unsurprising that both barriers have seen an increase in the number of councils highlighting them, given the additional pressure school resources are under due to the high levels of inflation throughout 2022 and 2023 to date and the consequent pressures this puts not only on prices, but also on staff pay and conditions.

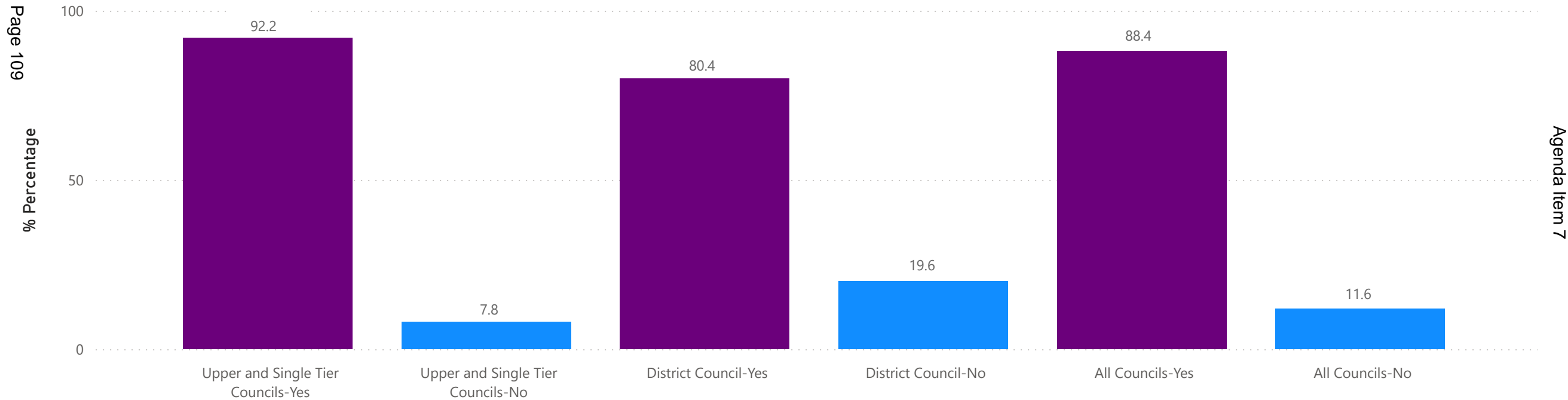
One overwhelming positive that can be inferred from these figures is the success of council's work communicating about the opportunities afforded by the apprenticeship levy to schools. Schools' lack of understanding of the way the system works has dropped by thirteen-percentage points in four years, while the perception that apprenticeships are inferior to other forms of training has dropped ten points. Both can likely be attributed to councils' efforts to ensure that schools have the information to access levy funds and better understand the opportunities. This is also likely part of the story behind the 25-percentage point drop in the proportion of councils saying schools don't believe there are enough relevant standards available. The number of relevant standards for schools has increased over the last five years, however, schools now also better understand how existing standards can be used to support their staff, particularly those working in back-office roles, facilities management, catering, finance and leadership. Council communications will be at least partially responsible for this improvement by increasing awareness of the options available, supported by improved engagement from providers.

Section Five: Apprentices' Pay

Apprentices' pay and conditions remains an area where there is considerable variation among councils. Apprentices must be paid at least the age-appropriate national minimum wage level in the second year of their apprenticeship but can be paid the apprentice rate during the first twelve months. Councils vary considerably on their approach, with examples of the apprentice rate, age-appropriate national minimum wage, National Living Wage (NLW), foundation living wage, and London Living Wage all being highlighted in our survey responses, as well as examples of apprentices being paid a percentage of the full salary rate for the job role, or even receiving the full rate from Day One of their apprenticeship.

One area where there was consistency was over the need to have a policy in place for apprentices' pay and grading. 88.4 per cent of local authorities have such a policy in place, rising to 92.2 per cent among upper and single tier authorities and dropping to 80.4 per cent among district councils (Figure 39).

Figure 39: Do councils have an agreed policy on pay and grading for apprentices?



Section Five: Apprentices' Pay

There was almost an even split between those that paid the apprentice national minimum wage rate (50.5 percent) and those that did not (49.5 per cent). District councils were less likely to use the apprentice rate (44.6 per cent) than upper and single tier councils (53.4 per cent), as were maintained schools (49.1 per cent). Figure 40 shows how this breaks down between the various parts of the local government sector.

Figure 40: Do you pay the apprentice minimum wage rate?

	Upper and Single Tier Councils	District Councils	Maintained Schools
Yes	53.4%	44.6%	49.1%
No	46.6%	55.4%	50.9%

When it comes to analysing what councils do pay, there is no consistent pattern – local authorities essentially all run their own policies, often with multiple different aspects. For example, a council may pay the apprentice rate of minimum wage to new starters to the organisation undertaking level 2 or 3 apprenticeships, but pay a higher rate, like the full National Living Wage rate to apprentices at higher levels. Apprentices recruited into specific job roles, particularly if they are in skills shortage areas, may receive a percentage of the salary they would get if they were fully qualified, rising to that full rate once they are, while existing staff members are unlikely to see their salary change as a result of their apprenticeship unless they are moving to a completely different occupational role within the council (e.g. moving from an admin role to a social care role) and their pay and conditions need to adjust to fit the scale already in operation for their new position.

Figure 41 shows this in detail: at least one in eight local authorities used every type of pay rate we offered as a response, while the high response rate for 'other' is reflective of councils that used a combination of the options, or an entirely bespoke approach. Paying a salary based on the level of the apprenticeship that is being undertaken remains the most popular option (36 per cent), followed by 'other' (32.6 per cent), reflecting a more bespoke approach or combination of approaches, then age-appropriate National Living Wage (25 per cent). Upper and single tier authorities were most likely to pay a salary based on the level of the apprenticeship (39.7 per cent) and were three-times more likely than district councils to pay a percentage of the salary the apprentice would receive when they became fully qualified. Districts were much more likely (41.1 per cent) to answer 'other', reflective of a bespoke approach to pay for apprentices.

Section Five: Apprentices' Pay

Figure 41: What Level of Pay do Councils Offer Apprentices?

Apprentice Pay Rate	All Councils	Upper and Single Tier	District
Apprentice National Minimum Wage Rate	18.2%	18.1%	17.9%
Age-Specific National Minimum Wage Rate	25.0%	25.9%	23.2%
Full National Living Wage Rate	11.0%	10.3%	12.5%
Foundation Living Wage	5.2%	6.9%	1.8%
Salary Based on Apprenticeship Level	36.0%	39.7%	28.6%
Apprentices receive a percentage of the rate they would receive if fully qualified	12.2%	15.5%	5.4%
London Living Wage	13.4%	19.8%	n/a
Other	32.6%	28.4%	41.1%

Section Six: Apprenticeship Standards and Provider Availability

The availability of apprenticeship standards has long been a concern of local authorities. In the early years of the apprenticeship levy, many councils struggled to spend their funds due to the old apprenticeship frameworks being switched off before replacement apprenticeship standards were approved for use. Our surveys have seen consistently high numbers of councils reporting that there were gaps in apprenticeship standards, either because no standard was in development, or one that is in development was taking too long to come on line. That picture does now appear to be improving.

In our 2021 survey, 46 per cent of councils reported that they were waiting for the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IFATE) to approve an apprenticeship standard that they wanted to use. By December 2022, this number had fallen to 30 per cent. In 2021, 48 different standards were listed. This has fallen to 43 standards in 2022, suggesting that a few of the more popular standards had now been approved and the majority of those that were left are somewhat more niche roles wanted by a smaller number of councils. Figure 42 shows the top nine most mentioned standards in development that councils want to use.

Figure 42: Most Popular Apprenticeship Standards in Development Among Local Authorities, December 2022

Standard	Number of Councils Waiting to Use It
SENCO	21
Business Administration Level 2	10
Safeguarding Officer Level 3	8
Senior Procurement and Supply Chain Professional	8
Domestic Violence and Abuse Advocate L4	5
Library Information and Knowledge Professional L7	5
Early Years Pedagogical Lead L6	4
Governance Officer L4	4
Playworker L2	4

Section Six: Apprenticeship Standards and Provider Availability

Another consistent theme of our apprenticeship surveys has been councils highlighting that there were gaps where apprenticeship standards were needed but were not yet in production. In March 2020, 70 per cent of councils indicated there were gaps of this kind. By July 2021 this had reduced to 53 per cent of councils and in December 2022, just 45 per cent of councils were highlighting gaps. While this is an encouraging trend, some standards that councils would like to see be developed have still not yet got off the ground, often years after they were first highlighted. In 2020, for example, councils highlighted gaps for Higher Level Teaching Assistants, Undergraduate Teachers, and Business Administration at both Levels 2 and 4. All four of these potential standards still feature in the list in 2022 (Figure 43) with only very limited progress having been made.

Figure 43: Most Popular Apprenticeship Standards Not in Development Among Local Authorities, December 2022

Standard	Number of Councils Requesting its Development
Business Administration Level 2	24
Higher Level Teaching Assistant	7
Business Administration Level 4	4
Undergraduate Teacher	4
Waste/Recycling Services	4
Commissioning	3
Crematorium Services	3
Electoral/Democratic Services Officer	3
Environmental Health Technician	3

Section Six: Apprenticeship Standards and Provider Availability

Even when apprenticeship standards have been approved, some councils find them to be functionally unusable due to a lack of available training providers. Although our 2021 survey showed that the proportion of councils unable to find a provider for at least one standard had come down, from 45 per cent in 2020 to 34 per cent in 2021, it has now flatlined at 33 per cent in 2022. In some cases, the lack of provision concerns the availability of locally based providers and the need to work with an increasingly limited number of national providers on some standards. While this can sometimes be council preference to not use a national provider rather than an absence of provision per se, sometimes it is due to a national provider that is located in another part of the country, that won't deliver in a council's local area and requires apprentices to attend some off-the-job training at the provider's site, which can involve significant travel and overnight stays. In other cases, there genuinely aren't any providers delivering particular standards, either in a region, or nationally and there is often also a period of delay between a standard being approved and a provider coming forward to deliver it.

One issue in tackling this problem is that there is not uniformity in where the gaps are. Many of them are more regional, and where there do appear to be national issues, there are often too few councils looking to use the standard, preventing an 'easy win' being secured by working to develop a national cohort. Figure 44 shows the top eight standards where councils reported there were gaps in provision across the country and in which regions the gaps were most acute. As can be seen, there are only small numbers of councils unable to find providers on even these standards, and in many cases, they are spread out across the country.

Even patterns that emerged in our 2021 survey no longer hold true. Pest Control Technician Level 2, for example, was previously just an issue for the Northern regions, with six councils across the North West, North East, and Yorkshire and the Humber registering issues with finding providers, suggesting a more localised geographical problem. This time, six councils have again highlighted this standard as difficult to find a provider for, but they are more spread out across the country and some of the authorities previously reporting problems are no longer doing so. Even as we see issues in accessing this standard highlighted in different regions than before, only one council in each of those regions is typically affected, making it difficult to draw firm conclusions as to whether it is a popular standard with a small number of councils unable to access a provider, or a more niche standard with a large proportion of those that need to use it unable to access a provider.

Section Six: Apprenticeship Standards and Provider Availability

What we can conclude is that there are no significant issues with any one standard affecting large numbers of councils across the country, but instead a series of more limited issues, affecting smaller numbers with no clear national or regional pattern. Given that a number of the standards mentioned most frequently in our 2021 survey no longer appear on the list, it is clear that one aspect of the problem is the delay that often occurs between a new standard being approved and providers being ready to deliver the training. If that continues to hold true, then you would expect problems accessing the Youth Worker standard, for example, to clear up in the next six months as that is a standard that was approved relatively recently. However, in Pest Control Technician and Town Planning Assistant, we have two examples of standards that, despite the pattern of the gaps changing, have appeared prominently in this list both in 2021 and 2022, suggesting there may be problems with provision of both standards that are worthy of further investigation.

Figure 44: Gaps in Apprenticeship Provision Highlighted by Local Authorities, December 2022

Standard	Number of Councils Claiming Gap in Provision (England)	Regions Affected
Pest Control Technician Level 2	6	London, East Mids, N West, YH
Town Planning Assistant Level 4	6	London, S West, S East, East, YH
Youth Worker (Degree) Level 6	5	S West, S East, YH
Transport and Planning Technician Level 3	4	S East, East
Arboriculturist Level 4	3	S East, West Mids
Housing Level 2/3	3	S East, East
Property Maintenance Operative Level 2	3	S West, West Mids
Waste Resource Operative Level 2	3	S West, East Mids, East

Section Seven: Organisational, Operational and Cultural Issues

For the first time, our 2022 Apprenticeships Survey asked a wide range of questions designed to examine councils' decision-making on a series of organisational, operational and cultural issues, including leadership, procurement, workforce development, implementation, apprenticeship and manager support and interaction with schools. These questions were primarily asked to enable us to make some basic assessments on council performance against the LGAs Apprenticeships Maturity Model, but also to provide some clarity on what approaches councils are taking when delivering their apprenticeship programme. The relationship with the Maturity Model is discussed in Section Eight of this report, but the following section will explore some of the key elements of apprenticeship programme delivery in council apprenticeship programmes and compare progress where we have asked similar questions in prior surveys, albeit some of this historical data is only comparable in certain contexts.

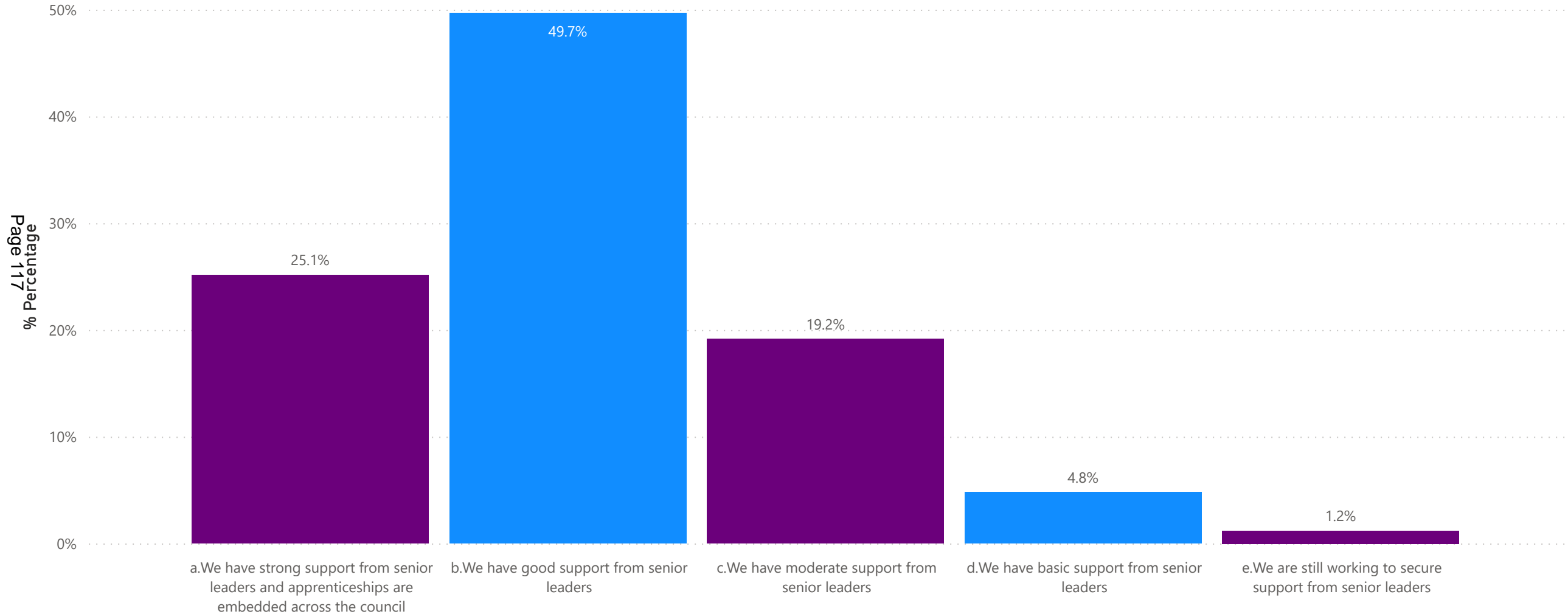
Leadership, Strategic Approach and Manager Support

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One of the key elements for any successful apprenticeships programme is support from senior leaders within a local authority, both at officer and political level. One of the positives in our survey responses is that when we asked council apprenticeship teams about the level of support they had from senior leaders for apprenticeships, 75 per cent described it as either 'strong' or 'good' with only 5 per cent describing the support they had as 'basic' and 1 per cent indicating they were still waiting to secure support from senior leaders (Figure 45). That can only be a positive for local authorities in making better use of apprenticeships within our workforce over the coming years.

Another positive is the prevalence of apprenticeship strategies among councils (Figure 46). 66 per cent of councils have a current strategy or plan in place, ranging from a multi-year strategy complete with KPIs and action plan to a more basic plan updated periodically. Although this may not seem to be a significant increase on when we first asked this question in our 2019 survey, when 60 per cent of councils reported having a strategy or plan, the key difference is among the 26 per cent of councils that have a plan or strategy in development. Many of these councils previously had a strategy or plan in place which has since expired and are in the process of renewing it or redeveloping it. Therefore the 'true' proportion of councils with apprenticeship strategies or plans is likely higher when these processes are taken into account.

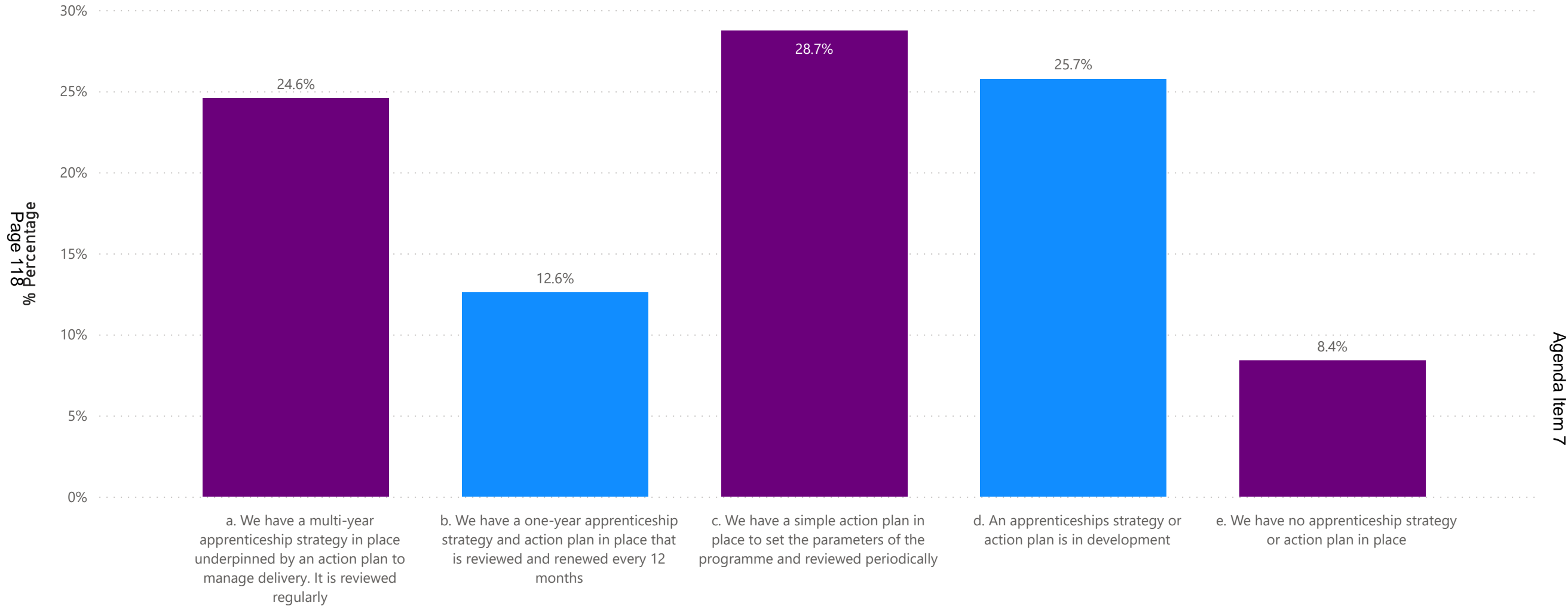
Section Seven: Organisational, Operational and Cultural Issues

Figure 45: How would you describe the level of support provided by senior leaders at the council for the apprenticeships programme?



Section Seven: Organisational, Operational and Cultural Issues

Figure 46: Do you have an apprenticeship strategy in place?



Section Seven: Organisational, Operational and Cultural Issues

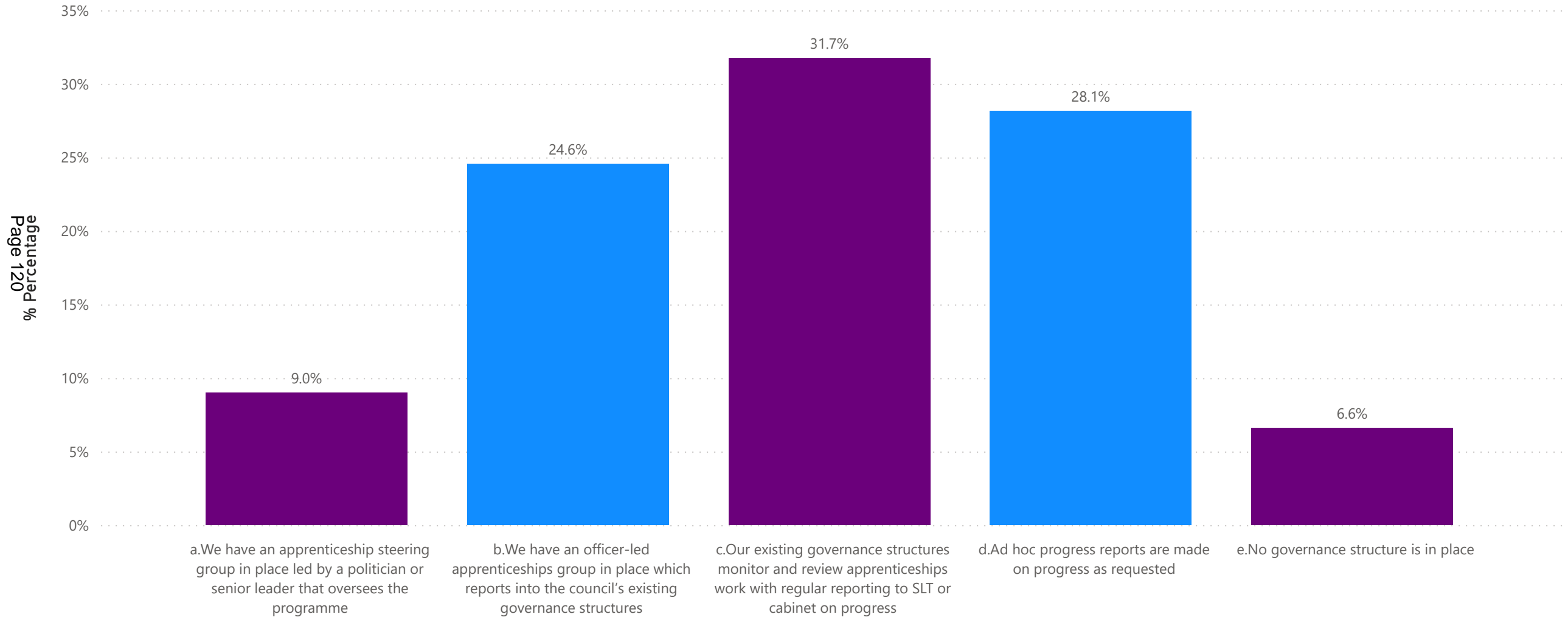
While both of these are clear positives, it is a more mixed picture on the governance of apprenticeship programmes. Putting in place a specific governance or steering group, overseen by senior officers is highlighted as best practice in the LGAs Maturity Model, but only just over a third of councils (34 per cent) have a specific steering group overseeing their apprenticeship programme. This falls into two categories: a steering group led by either a senior officer or politician (9 per cent) or an officer-led group reporting into existing governance structures within the council (25 per cent). Another third of councils (31 per cent) monitor their apprenticeship programme's progress purely through existing structures, while 29 per cent of councils only monitor progress through infrequent ad hoc reports. Six per cent have no governance structures at all (Figure 47). Putting in place a structure to oversee the governance of the apprenticeships programme helps to ensure its success, breaks down barriers and ensure that apprenticeships are used in a strategic way and their absence in large parts of the sector puts at risk the ability of a council to effectively implement an apprenticeship strategy, particularly if it is seeking to change the culture at the council.

This is particularly important due to the variable levels of support from middle managers across the sector (Figure 48). Just 15 per cent of councils agreed with the statement that "Apprenticeships are fully embedded throughout the council with ownership and buy-in from managers, department heads and staff" while a further 19 per cent agreed with the statement that "All managers and department heads fully support the principle of apprenticeships". Instead, 59 per cent of councils agreed with the statement that "Some managers and department heads fully support the principle of apprenticeships". One of the recurring themes within our sector over the last five years has been that many councils have needed to encourage a culture change among managers to bring them up to date with what apprenticeships are, what opportunities they present and how councils can use them effectively. However, as these figures show, while some councils have had considerable success, there is still work to do to deliver the culture change necessary to take full advantage of the opportunity apprenticeships present.

When it comes to resourcing councils' apprenticeship programmes, the majority of councils (89 per cent) now have at least one lead apprenticeships officer in place. 36 per cent of councils have a delivery team of some kind in place, although the amount of resources provided to support their work varies (Figure 49)

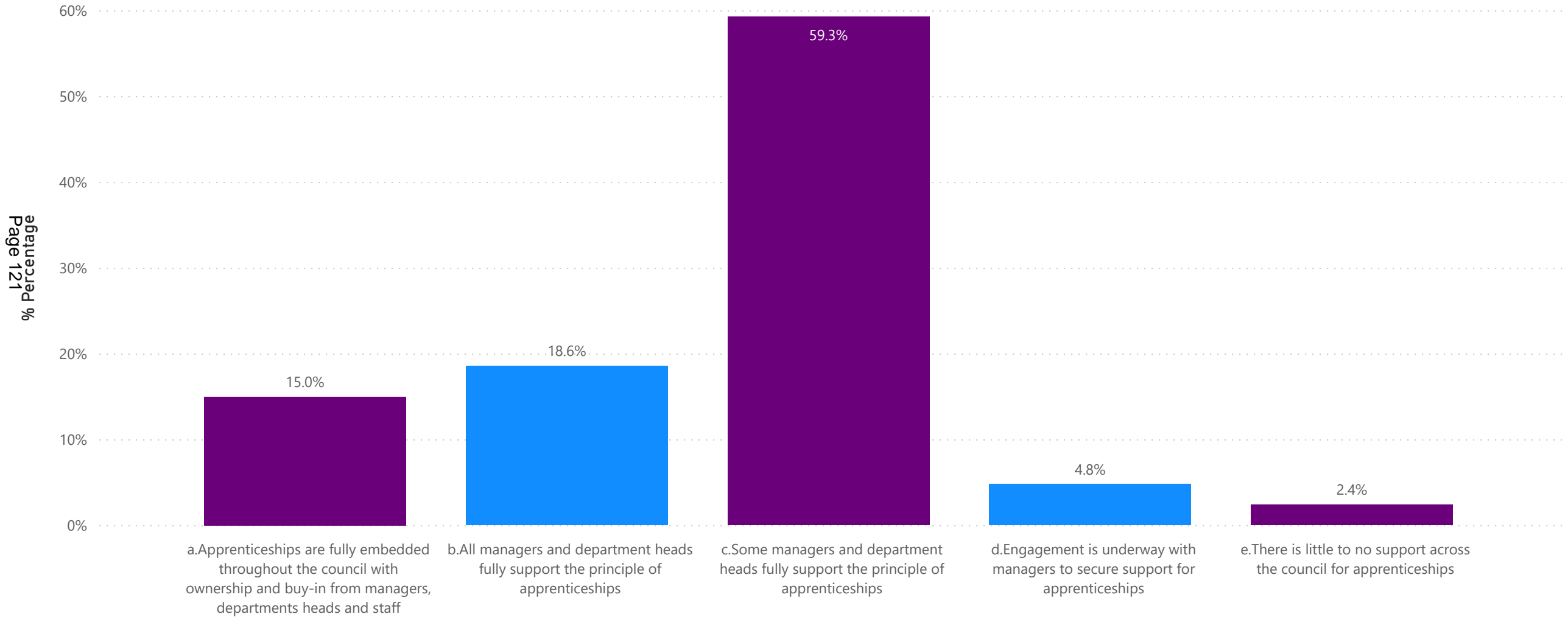
Section Seven: Organisational, Operational and Cultural Issues

Figure 47: How is your apprenticeship programme governed?



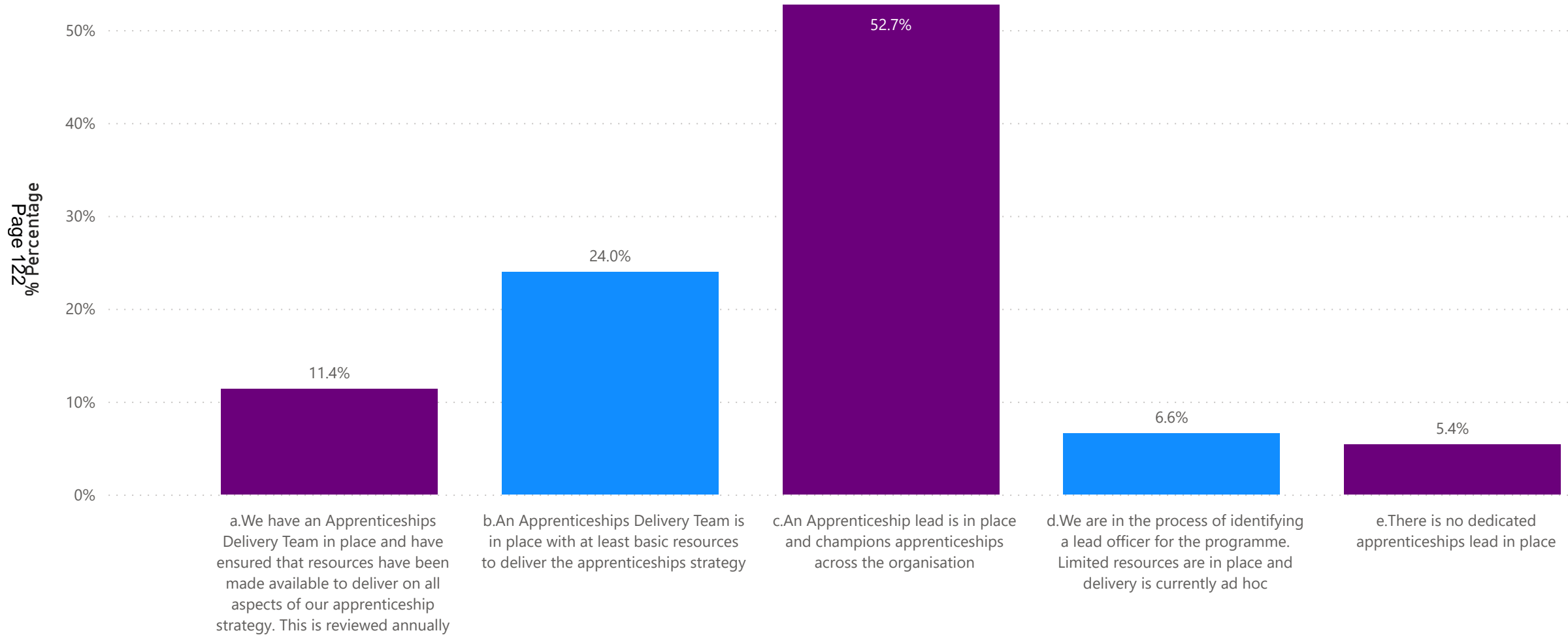
Section Seven: Organisational, Operational and Cultural Issues

Figure 48: How would you describe the level of support the apprenticeships programme has from managers in your council?



Section Seven: Organisational, Operational and Cultural Issues

Figure 49: How do you resource your apprenticeship programme?



Section Seven: Organisational, Operational and Cultural Issues

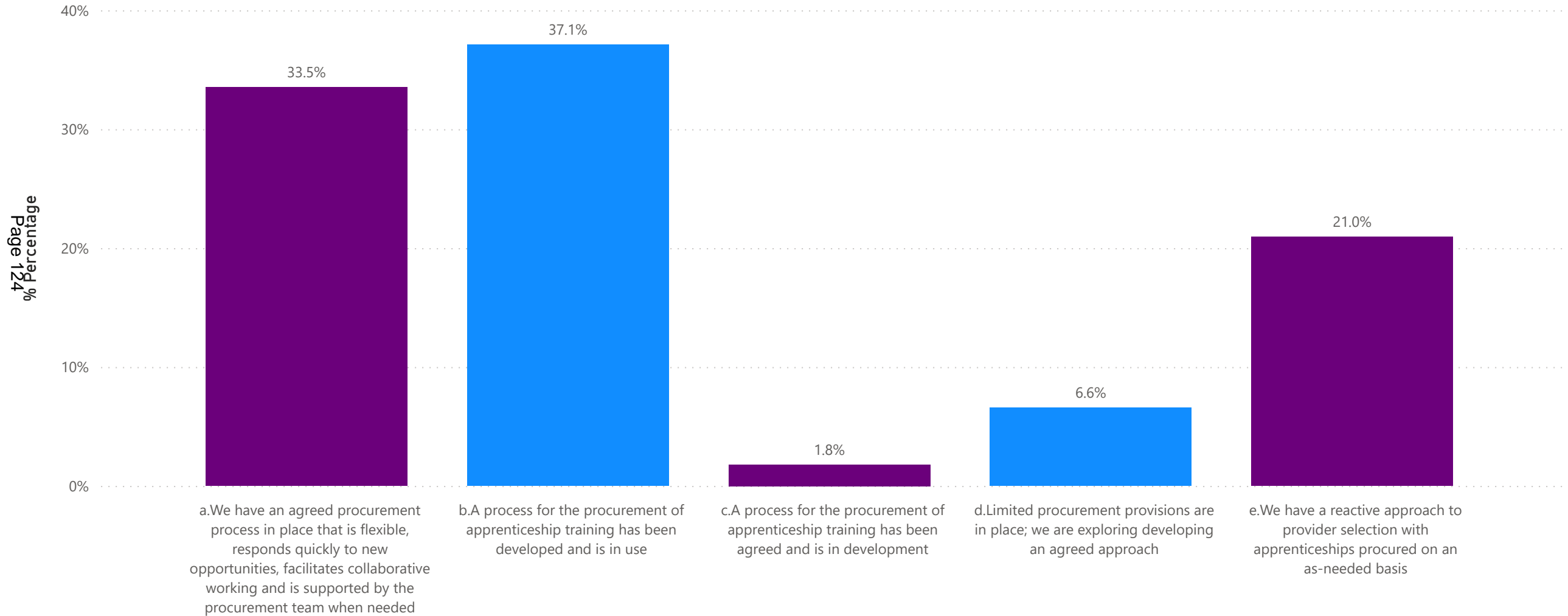
Managing Procurement and Providers

Procurement has often proved to be a tricky area for local authorities, with requirements that apprenticeships training is procured under public procurement regulations requiring councils to adopt processes which can be time consuming and stretch the resources of small teams. However, it is an area where councils seem to be more comfortable six years in than they were when the apprenticeship levy was first introduced (Figure 50). 70 per cent of local authorities report having a firm procurement process of some kind in place. 8 per cent had more limited provisions in place and were at some stage of the journey to develop something more permanent, while 22 per cent of councils, mainly district councils or smaller upper and single tier councils who were procuring apprenticeship training in much smaller numbers had a more reactive, ad hoc approach in place that leans more towards spot purchasing training when it is needed.

It is a more mixed picture when it comes to provider management, however (Figure 51). 23 per cent of councils have a full provider performance management process in place that includes a minimum level of regular reporting from the provider, and in some cases KPIs, detailed metrics and a clear process for resolution if the provider is under performing. 45 per cent of councils have a more basic provider management process in place with a regular schedule of feedback and reporting from the provider on apprentices' progress. 24 per cent take a more ad hoc approach, dealing with issues as they come up and are exploring whether to implement a more comprehensive approach, while 9 per cent of councils don't have any process in place at all. So while councils seem in a stronger position on the procurement of training, it is clear more could be done to ensure that they are getting full value for money out of their contracts, though this is often extremely dependent on the resources available to their apprenticeships team. As 53 per cent of councils only have one member of staff leading on apprenticeships in place, triage is often the order of the day when it comes to provider management to ensure they can effectively manage what can be a busy and challenging workload.

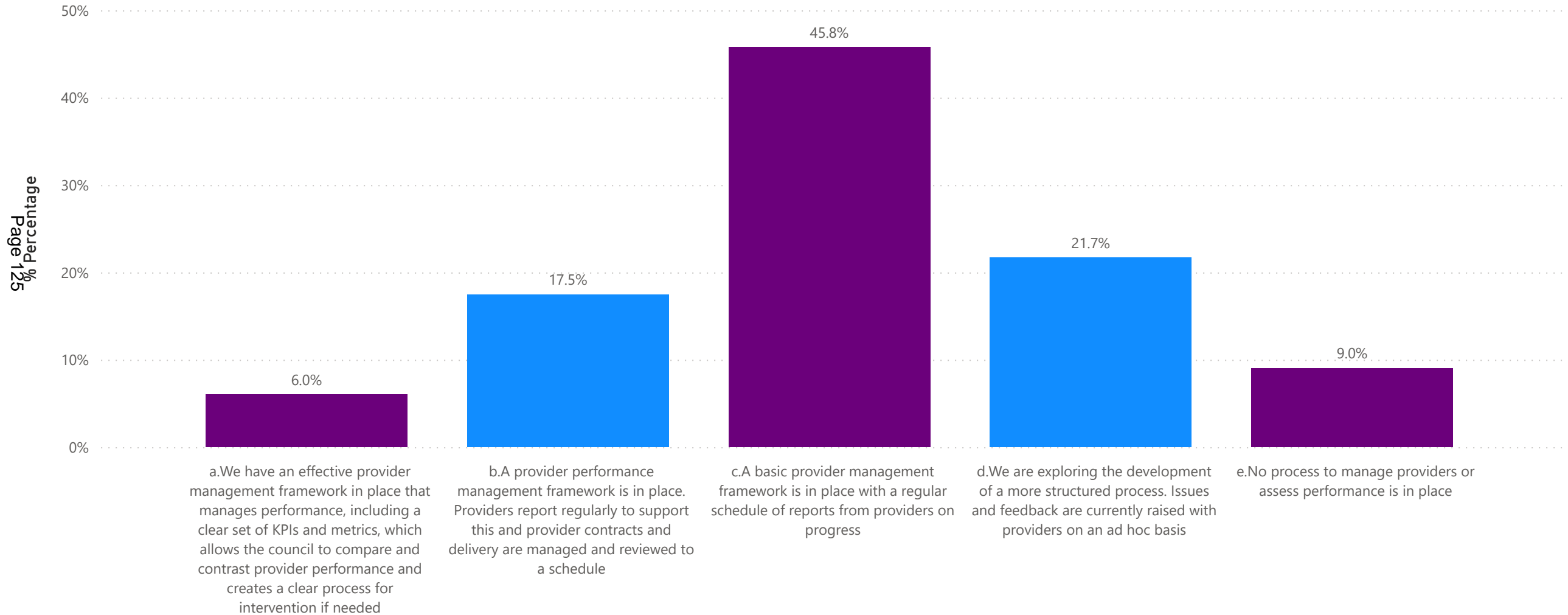
Section Seven: Organisational, Operational and Cultural Issues

Figure 50: How would you describe your council's approach to the procurement of apprenticeships?



Section Seven: Organisational, Operational and Cultural Issues

Figure 51: How would you describe your approach to provider management on apprenticeships?



Section Seven: Organisational, Operational and Cultural Issues

Using Apprenticeships to Develop the Workforce

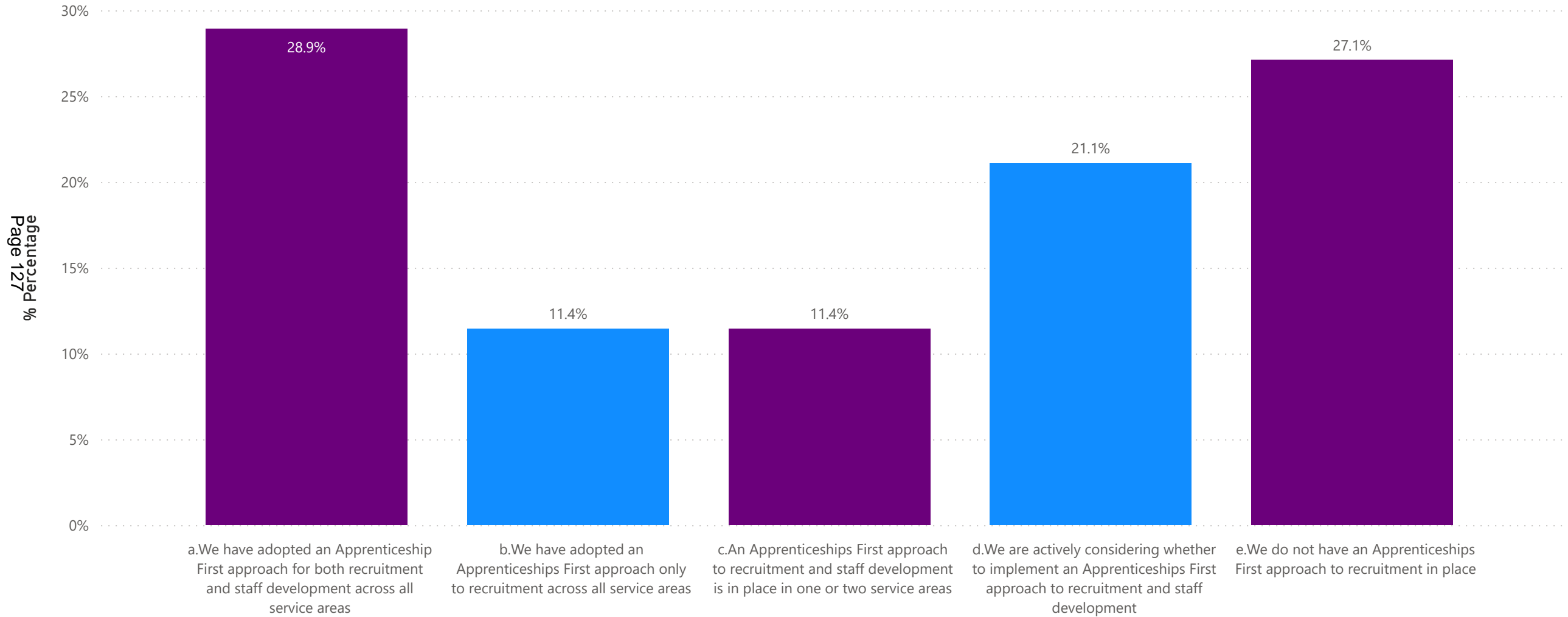
One of the key elements for the success of any apprenticeship programme is ensuring that no apprenticeship opportunities are missed and, particularly given the challenges for councils in spending all of their levy pot, that no non-apprenticeship training is authorised that may eat into another budget when appropriate training could be delivered using the apprenticeship levy. This is why one of the key principles in the LGAs Apprenticeships Maturity Model is the Apprenticeships First approach, under which a council would introduce an internal policy that any training for existing staff or potential council vacancy is examined for suitability for an apprenticeship before managers are allowed to hire or pay for staff training from another budget (Figure 52). This approach ensures that opportunities to spend levy funds are maximised and that the council is taking the most cost-effective approach. 51 per cent of councils have introduced a variation of this policy in at least some areas of the council, with 11 percent indicating they had introduced it in one or two departments within the council; 12 per cent indicating they had introduced the policy for new starters/vacancies; and 28 per cent indicating they had introduced the policy in full for both new and existing staff. A further 21 per cent are considering introducing this policy, so it is likely that these numbers will increase in the neat future. Of the 28 per cent of councils that do not employ an Apprenticeships First approach, a significant proportion (44 per cent) are district councils, many of whom have relatively small programmes for whom introducing a formal version of this policy may not be practical, even if the principles behind it are adhered to.

Another important element of the Maturity Model is for councils to map apprenticeship standards against job roles within their council. The LGA has a national mapping tool, which many councils use, though others choose to map their own workforce in full or focus on key skills shortage areas. We think councils developing their own bespoke mapping tool, whether using ours as a starting point or not, is the best way to ensure apprenticeships are integrated into the councils workforce structures and recruitment processes. As Figure 53 shows, 10 per cent of councils have mapped their full council workforce against apprenticeship standards and update the document regularly; 19 per cent have mapped standards to key roles and skills shortage areas in their workforce; 24 per cent are in the process of doing this across multiple service areas; 9 per cent are in the process of mapping one service area; but 38 per cent have not mapped any standards to job roles.

Succession planning is important in any workforce and apprenticeships can play an important role in this process. However, as Figure 54 shows, apprenticeships have not been fully utilised in developing talent and succession plans in councils. 20 percent of councils have used apprenticeships in the development of talent and succession plans in at least key skills shortage areas if not across the council, while another 35 per cent of councils are looking to develop talent and succession plans using apprenticeships in key skills shortage areas. However, 45 per cent either haven't used apprenticeships for anything other than limited development of career pathways in select areas or are not using apprenticeships in this space at all.

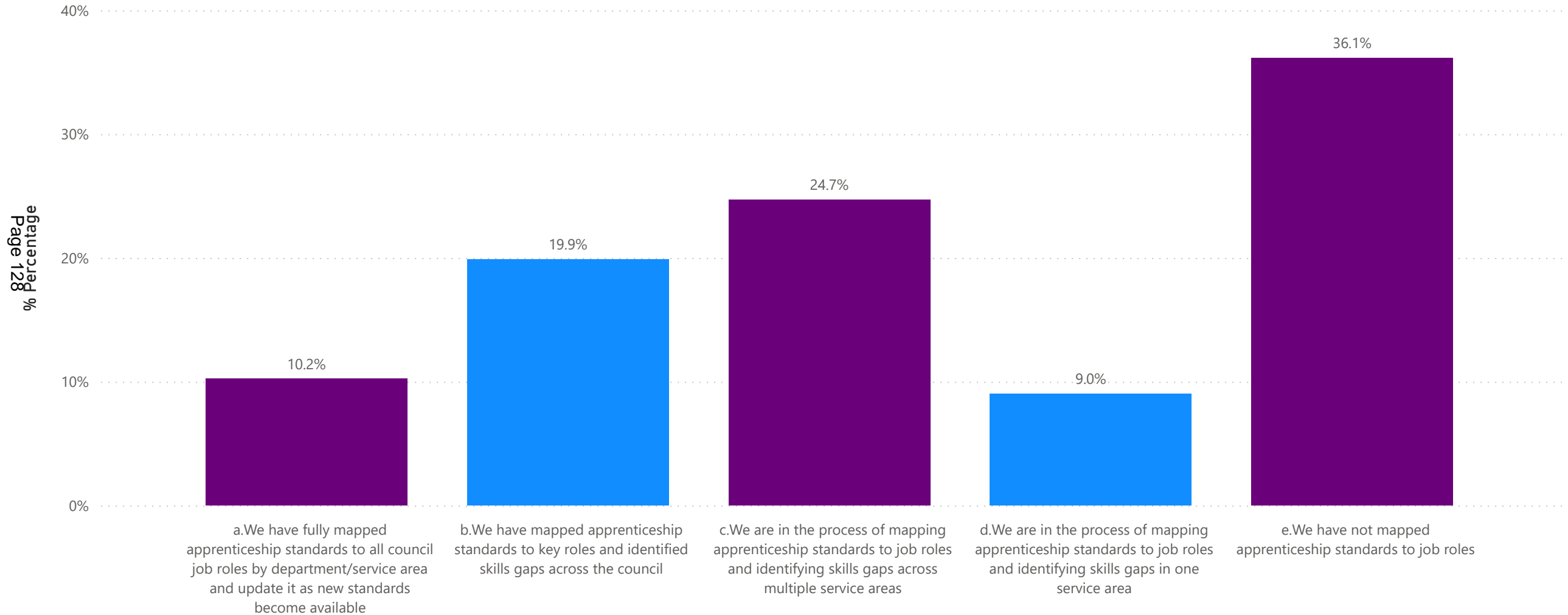
Section Seven: Organisational, Operational and Cultural Issues

Figure 52: Have you adopted an 'Apprenticeships First' approach to recruitment and training?



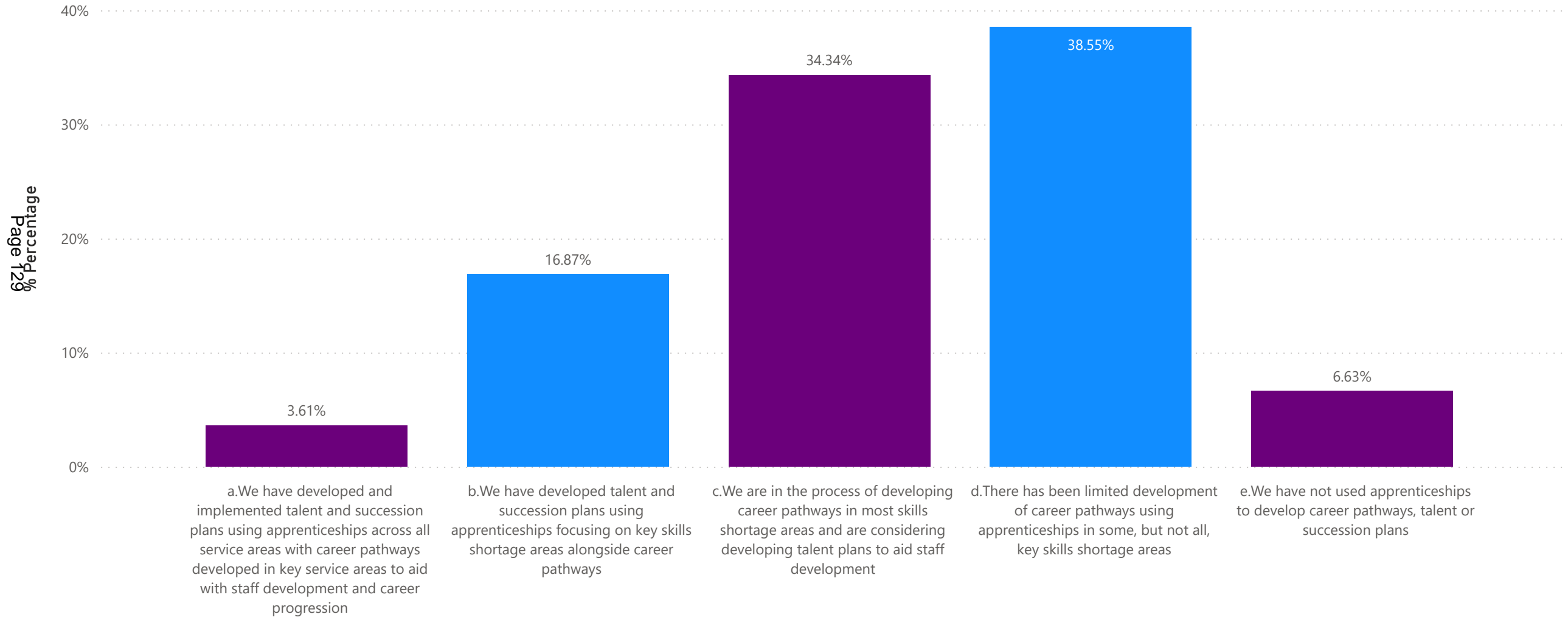
Section Seven: Organisational, Operational and Cultural Issues

Figure 53: Have you mapped Apprenticeship standards to council job roles?



Section Seven: Organisational, Operational and Cultural Issues

Figure 54: What approach have you taken to using apprenticeships to develop talent and succession plans?



Section Seven: Organisational, Operational and Cultural Issues

Implementing Apprenticeship Strategies

Earlier in this section we highlighted the importance of having an apprenticeship strategy in place, but in practice, how are councils implementing these strategies and measuring their success? One area that should be a key part of implementing any apprenticeships strategy is having a spending plan that helps a council map out its plans for apprenticeship training and monitor its spending to ensure both that use of the funding is maximised but that the council does not overextend and risk going into co-investment. However, as Figure 55 illustrates, 53 per cent of councils do not have a spending plan in place and only 18 per cent have a multi-year spending plan to track and forecast their spending effectively.

When it comes to measuring the impact of a council's apprenticeships programme on an authority's wider objectives, there is an even split between councils that do measure the impact and those that don't (Figure 56). 13 per cent of councils measure the impact of their programme against their strategic objectives annually and feed that into reports to senior leaders and politicians, while 38 per cent do a basic assessment of the impact of their programme on selected key metrics. However, 49 per cent of councils make no assessment of their apprenticeship programme's impact on council objective. So while it is positive that two-thirds of councils have an apprenticeship plan in place, the absence of spending plans in many councils and lack of assessment of the effectiveness of the programmes on councils' core aims do potentially undermine the effectiveness of strategy delivery.

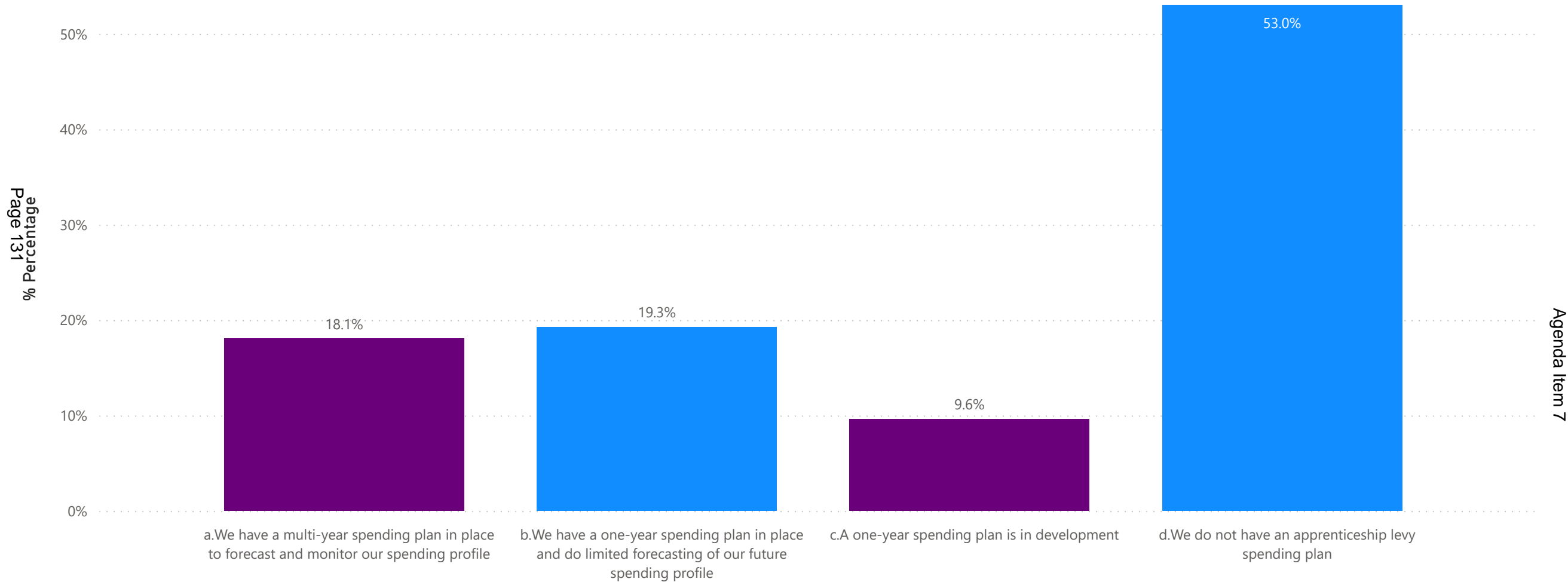
Supporting Apprentices and Managers

While much of this section focuses on the organisational and operational decisions councils are taking, it is also important to consider how apprentices themselves are being supported. We will go into this in more detail in the second part of this report that focuses on our first survey of apprentices in the local government sector, however, there are decisions councils are making around support to both apprentices and their managers that play an important role in the success of any apprenticeship.

Insuring apprentices are properly supported, can interact with other apprentices and their peers, and have someone to turn to for advice, ideally a mentor, is important in making sure an apprenticeship is successful, particularly for new starters, who are often young and making their first steps into the world of work. 24 per cent of councils provide mentors for all new starter apprentices, while 7 per cent go one step further and offer mentors for all apprentices, including existing staff, and offer a mentoring training programme (Figure 57). Another 9 per cent organise buddy schemes, however, 60 per cent of local authorities either use line managers as mentors or offer no mentoring programme whatsoever. Meanwhile only 20 per cent of councils have an in-person apprenticeship network in place, although 29 per cent are in the process of developing a basic network and have an online platform to help apprentices connect. 22 per cent arrange one-off events as needed, however almost a third (29 per cent) have no network in place (Figure 58).

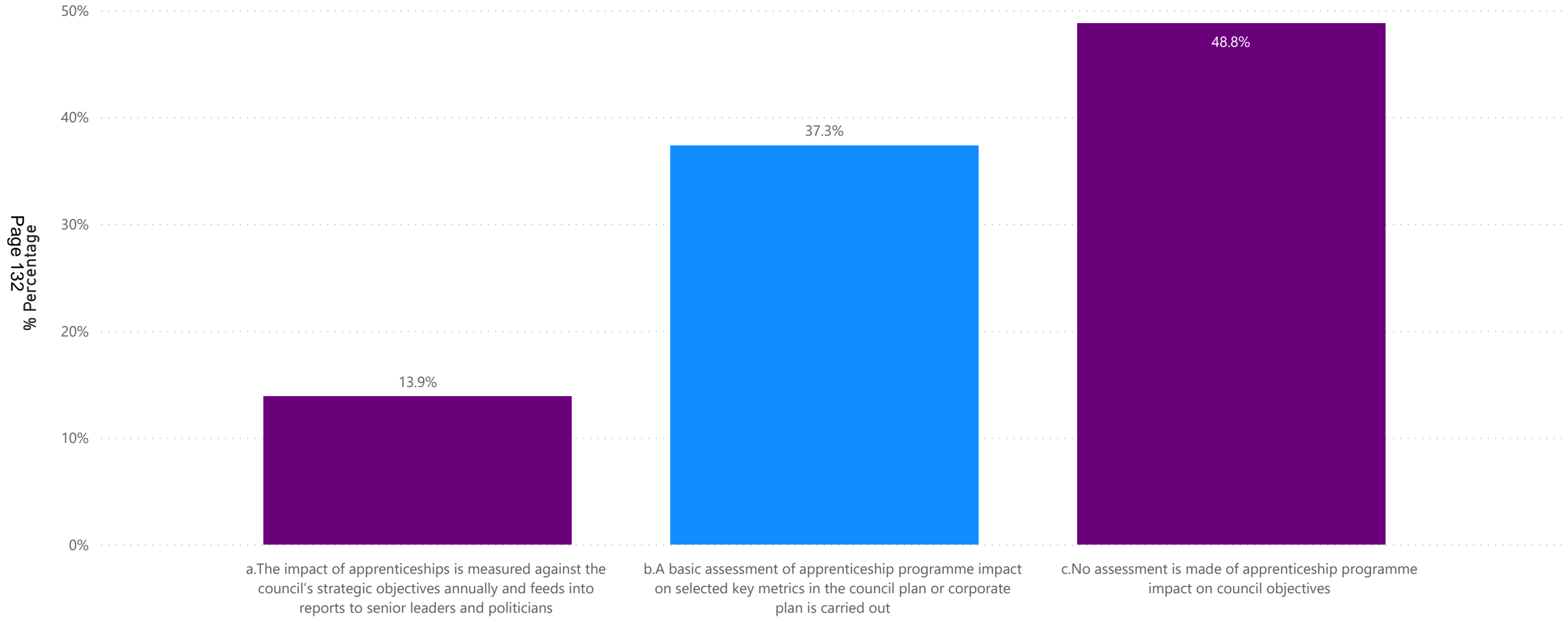
Section Seven: Organisational, Operational and Cultural Issues

Figure 55: Do you have an Apprenticeship Levy Spending Plan / Profile in place?



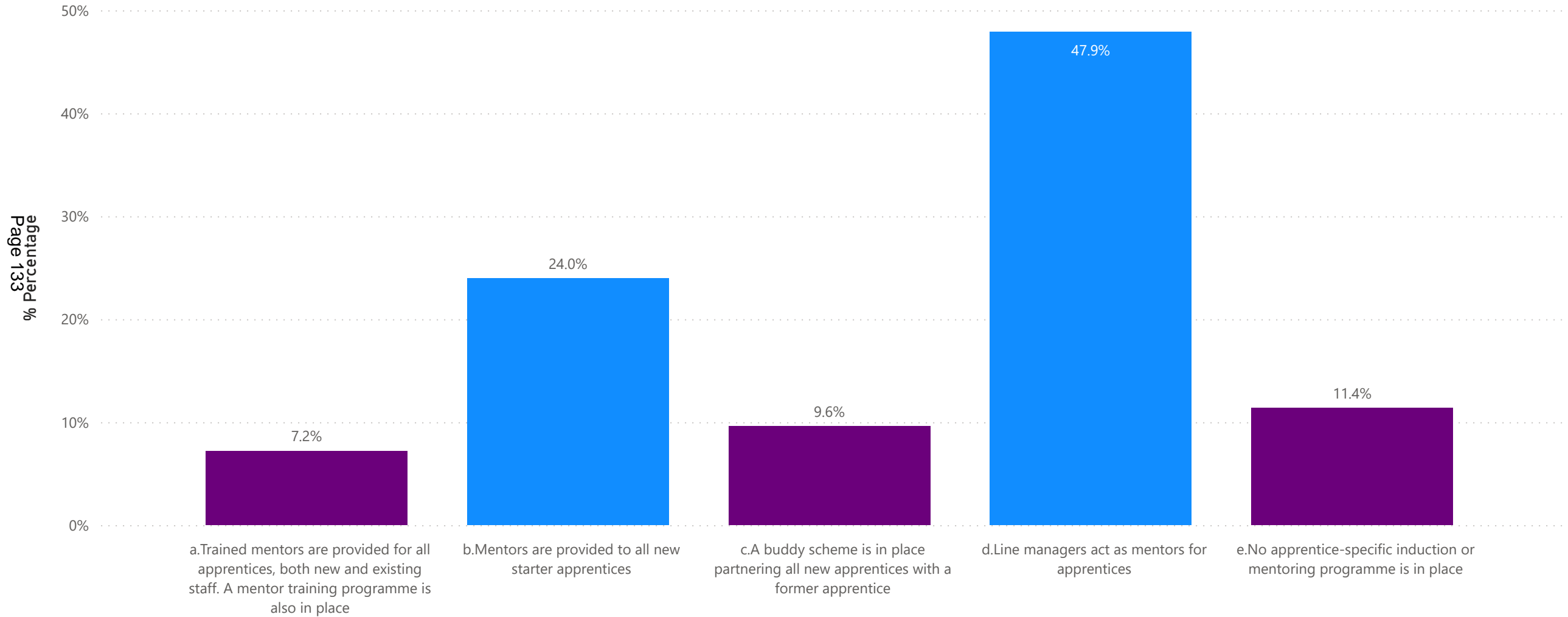
Section Seven: Organisational, Operational and Cultural Issues

Figure 56: Do you measure the impact of your apprenticeship programme on your council's objectives?



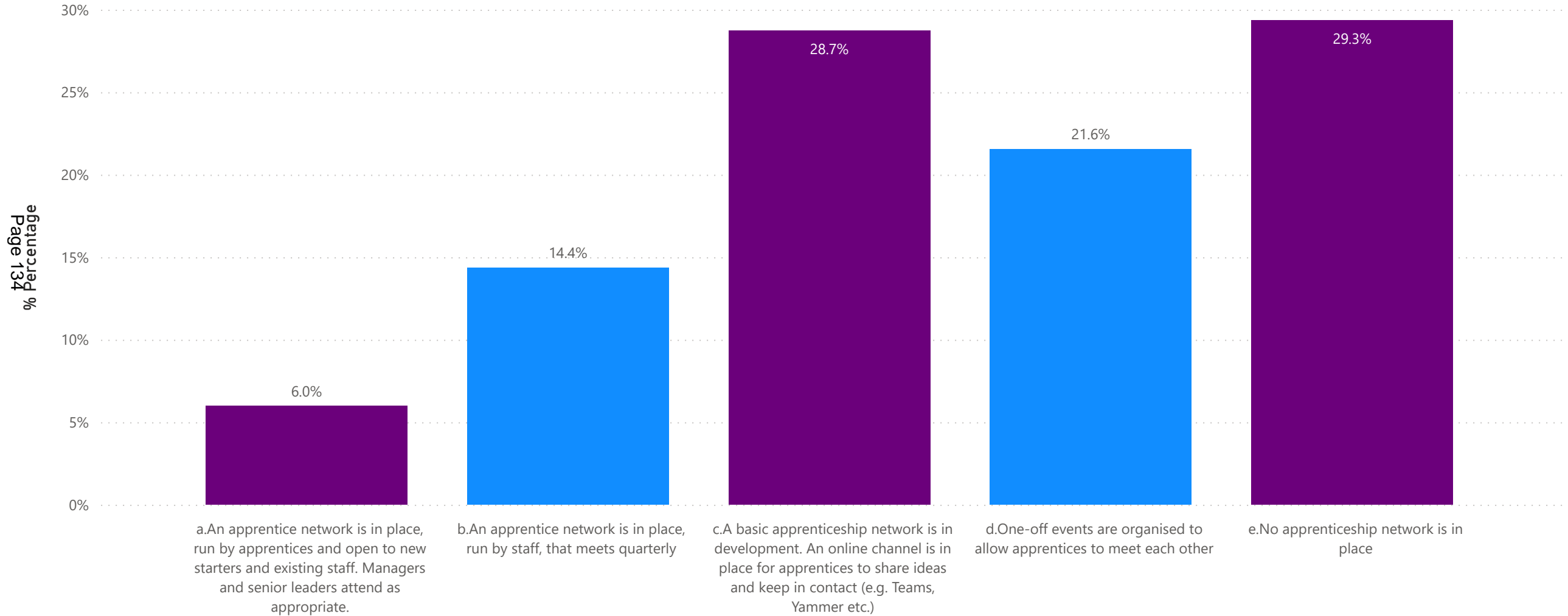
Section Seven: Organisational, Operational and Cultural Issues

Figure 57: Does your council provide mentors for your apprentices?



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Figure 58: Do you have an apprentice network in place at your council?

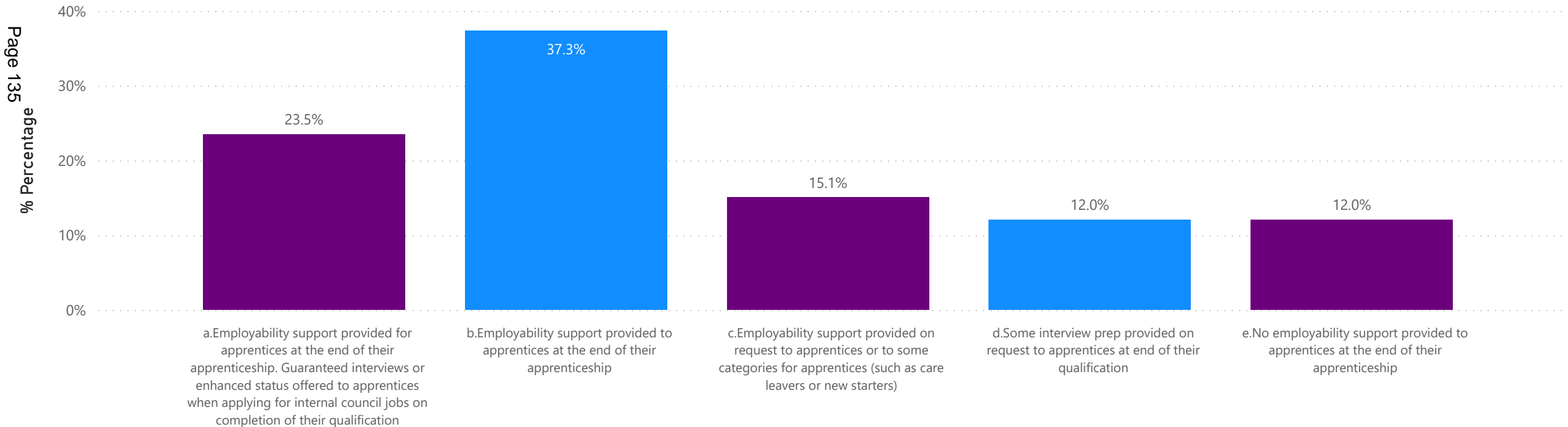


Section Seven: Organisational, Operational and Cultural Issues

Some level of employability support is offered by most councils to apprentices when they are coming to the end of their qualification (88 per cent), with guaranteed interviews or enhanced status given to apprentices to help support them into full time roles as they complete their qualification by almost a quarter of authorities (Figure 59).

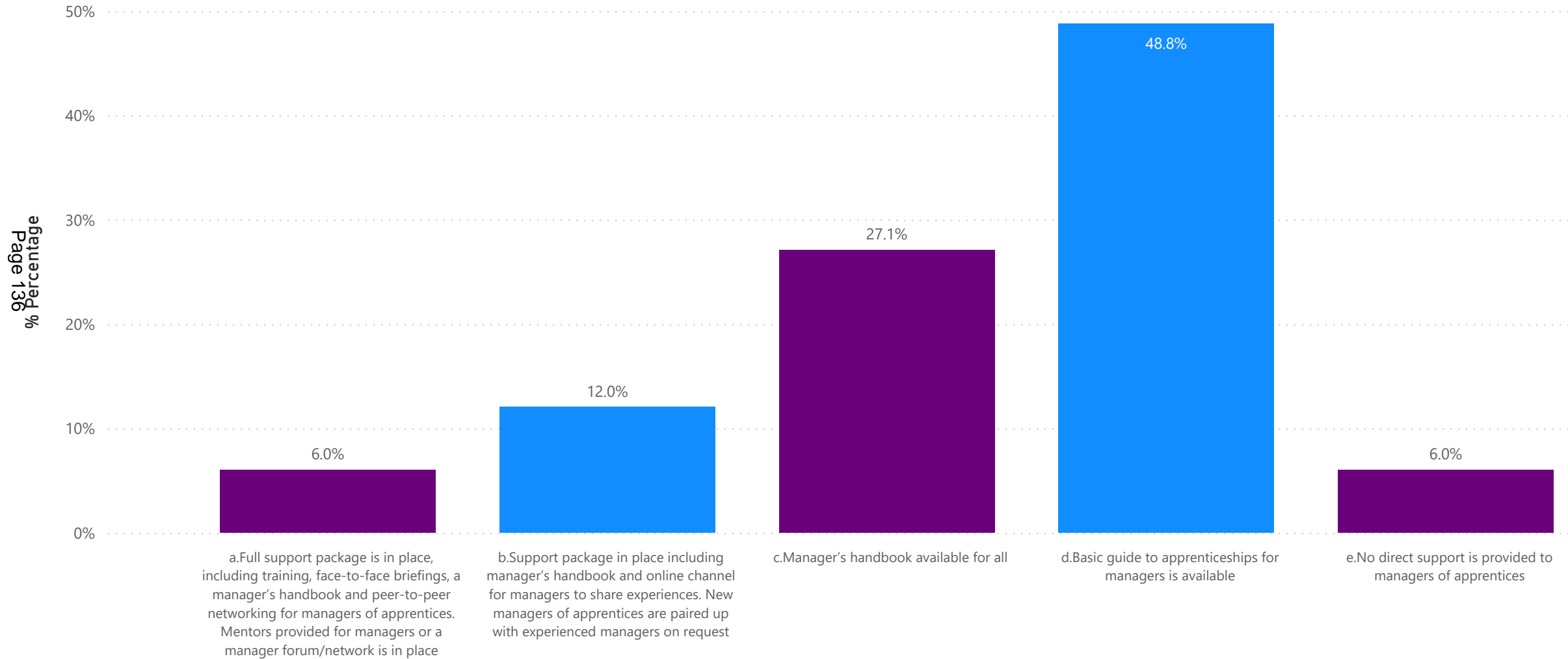
When it comes to offering support to managers, 18 per cent of councils have some kind of support package in place for managers of apprentices, while 75 per cent of councils have some kind of handbook or basic guide available for managers to consult (Figure 60). Figure 61 shows there is an even split between councils that survey their apprentices and managers throughout the length of the apprenticeship on their experience of the programme and the training provider, either annually, bi-annually or even more frequently (50%), and those that collect minimal or no feedback (50%).

Figure 59: Do you provide any employability support for your apprentices during or at the end of their qualification?



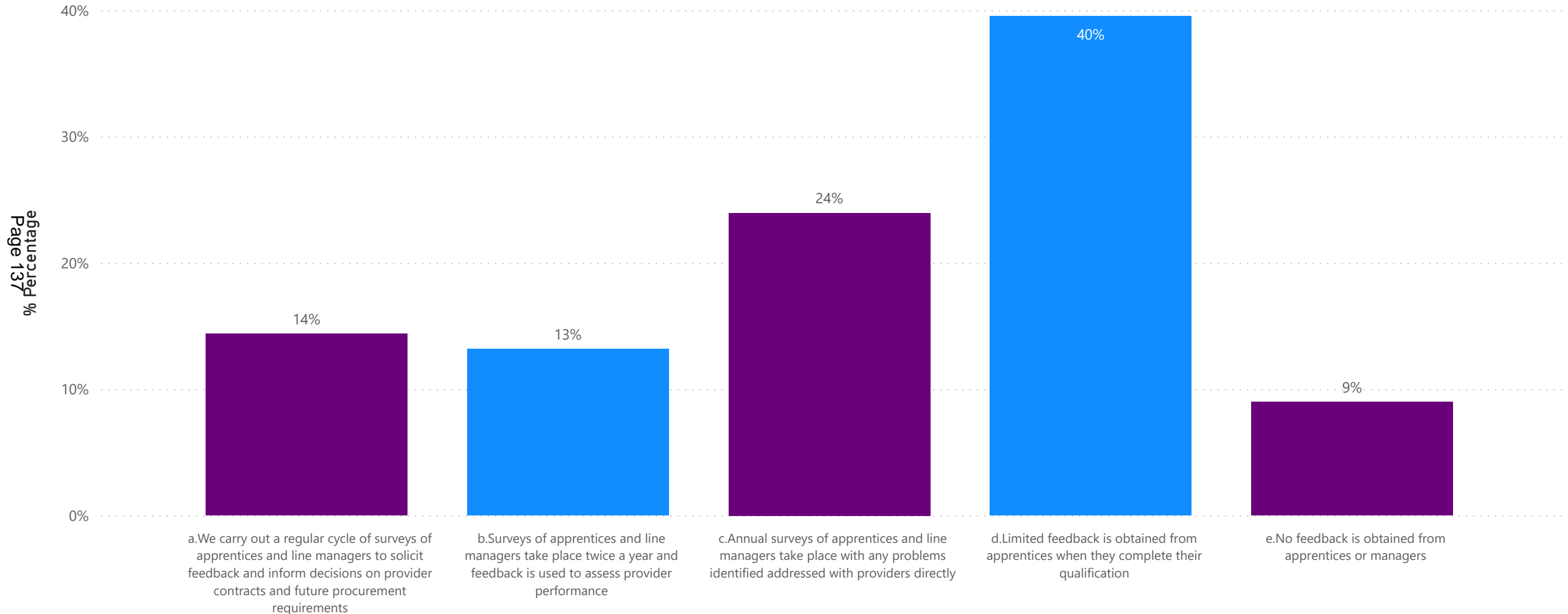
Section Seven: Organisational, Operational and Cultural Issues

Figure 60: What support do you provide for managers of apprentices?



Section Seven: Organisational, Operational and Cultural Issues

Figure 61: What approach do you take to surveying apprentices and managers on provider performance?



Section Seven: Organisational, Operational and Cultural Issues

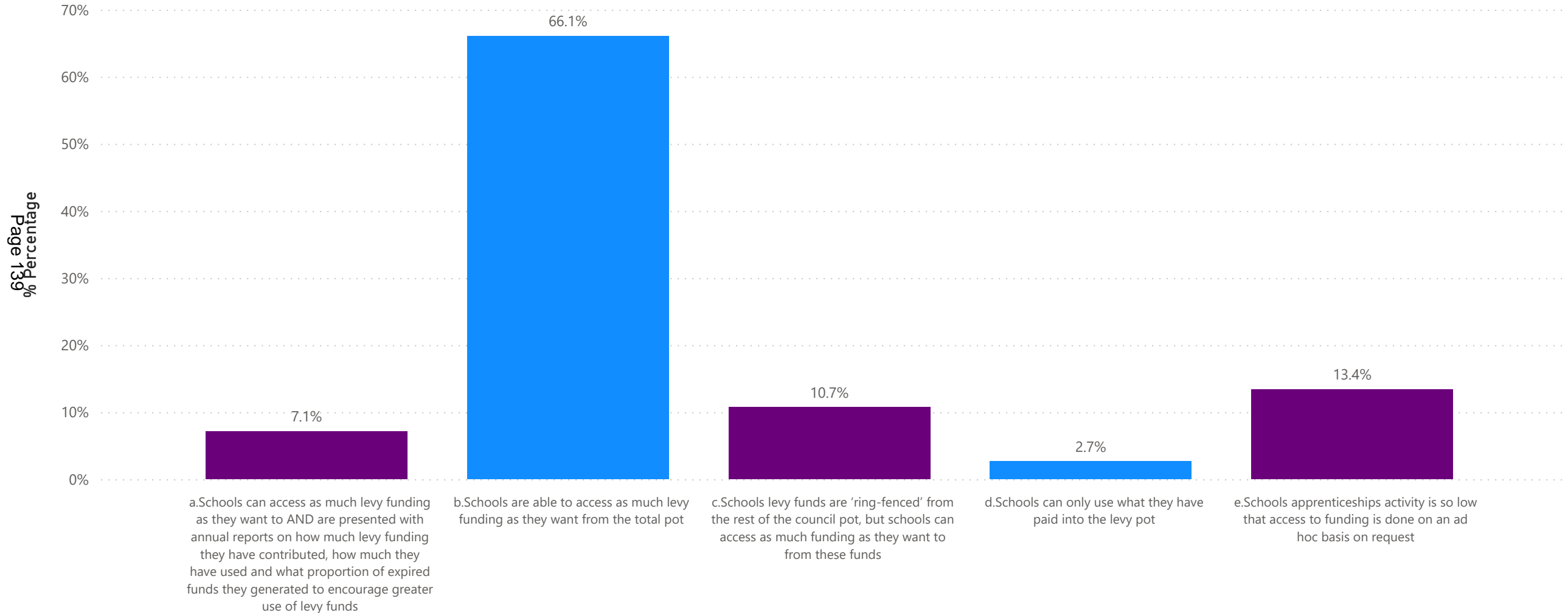
Working with Maintained Schools

There is also a mixed picture when it comes to councils' interactions with and support for maintained schools. 84 per cent of councils have some kind of policy in place to allow maintained schools to access as much of the total levy pot as they want to rather than restrict them only to what they paid in (Figure 62), but only 16 per cent of councils have a dedicated schools apprenticeship lead in place, with the majority (54 per cent) asking their council apprenticeships lead to also handle schools requests (Figure 63).

The majority of councils are engaging with their maintained schools, but don't necessarily have a plan in place setting out how they do this (76 per cent). Only seven per cent of councils have a plan in place to increase schools apprenticeships either as a standalone document or as part of their main apprenticeship strategy (Figure 64). Assisting schools in more detail with their workforce planning is also not something that councils have been able to do in substantial numbers with just 16 per cent completing individual apprenticeship plans with at least a handful of schools in their locality, although a further 13 per cent have a process to do this in development (Figure 65).

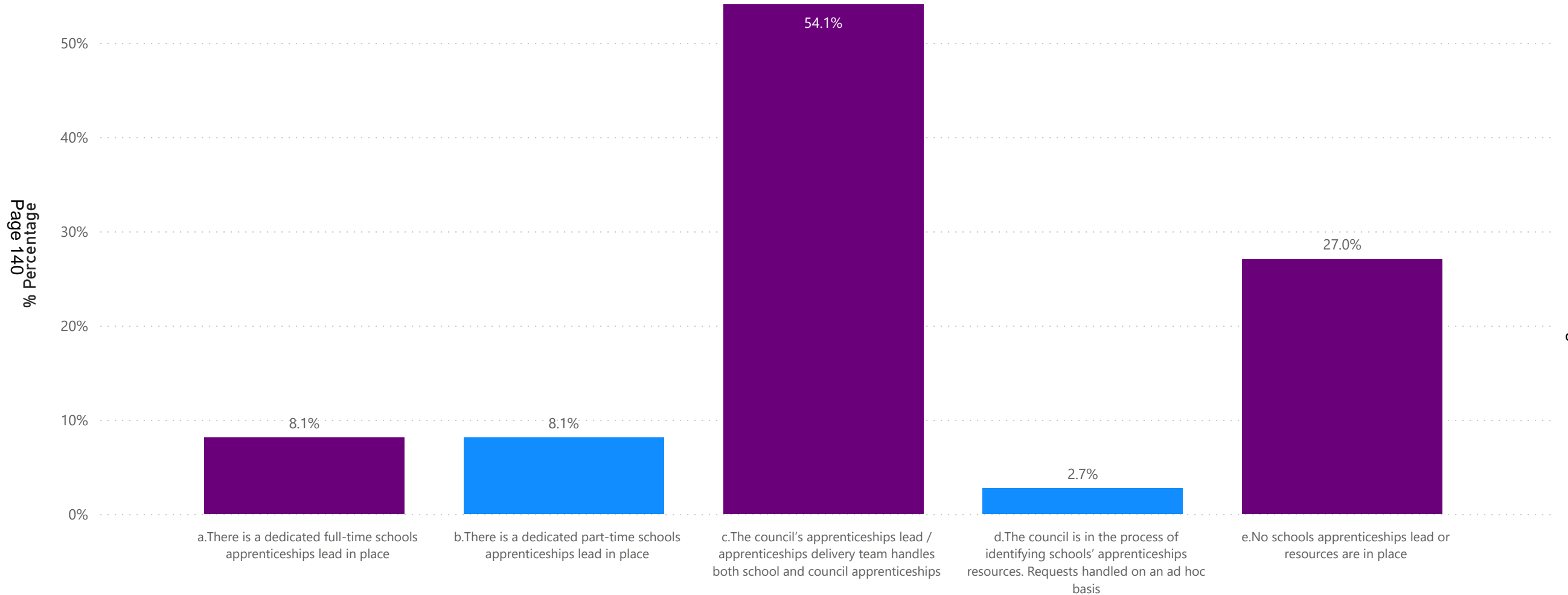
Section Seven: Organisational, Operational and Cultural Issues

Figure 62: How are schools able to access levy funding?



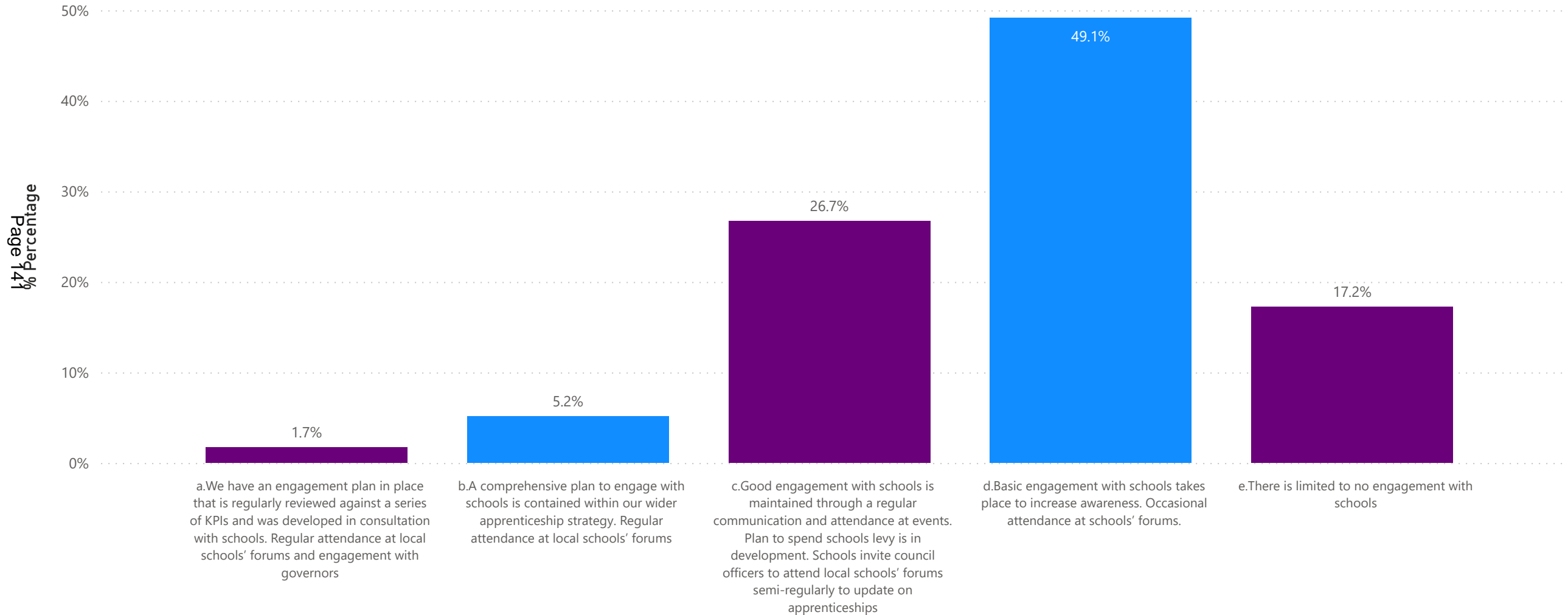
Section Seven: Organisational, Operational and Cultural Issues

Figure 63: Do you have a dedicated schools' apprenticeships lead in place?



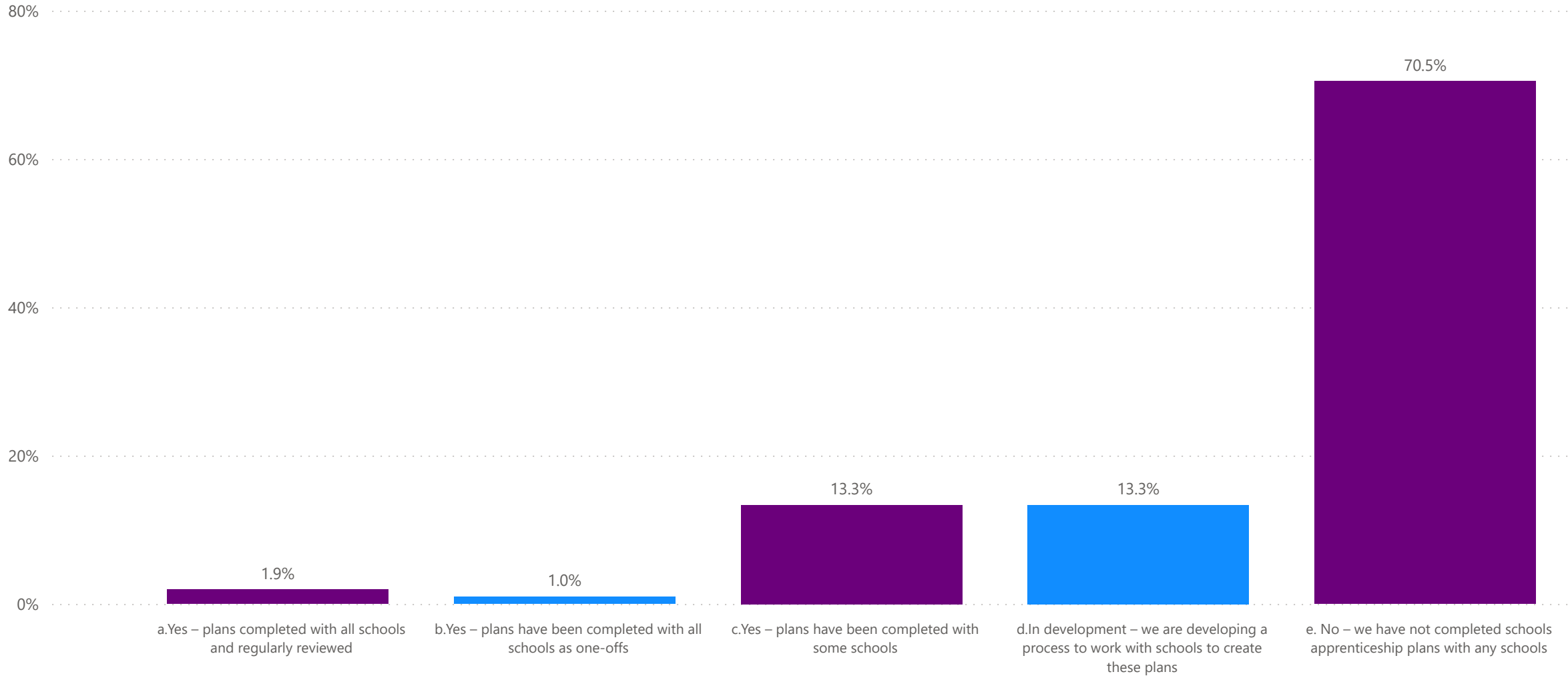
Section Seven: Organisational, Operational and Cultural Issues

Figure 64: Do you have a plan in place to engage schools to increase apprenticeships take up?



Section Seven: Organisational, Operational and Cultural Issues

Figure 65: Has your council developed and completed any individual schools apprenticeships plans with schools?



Section Eight: Apprenticeships Maturity Model

First created by the LGA in December 2017, the Apprenticeships Maturity Model provides a framework for local authorities to develop and grow their apprenticeship programme and offers best practice ideas from around the sector to help councils put their programme on a sustainable footing.

The Maturity Model has proved to be one of the LGAs most popular tools and has been used by councils across England to assess and review their performance on apprenticeships. The tool has also been adapted by other areas of the public sector, like the NHS, to help them benchmark and develop their own programmes.

Using the Maturity Model is a simple process. It is formed of six pillars, each covering a different element of a successful apprenticeships programme. These include:

1. Leadership, Culture and Engagement
2. Procurement and Provider Management
3. Workforce Development
4. Implementation
5. The Apprentice Experience
6. Maintained Schools (Upper and Single Tier Councils only)

It employs a simple method of assessment, with each strand containing five stages – Early, Developing, Maturing, Mature and Sustainable to highlight key outcomes and milestones as an apprenticeship programme progresses. For a council to secure a particular rating they must have completed all of the elements listed under that rating.

Section Eight: Apprenticeships Maturity Model

We introduced intermediate ratings at the last revision of the Maturity Model, which were denoted by a plus sign after a rating to show the council was part-way between that rating and the next (e.g. 'Developing +' would denote a council that has completed everything listed under 'Developing' and some of the elements listed under higher levels 'Maturing' and 'Mature', though not enough to rate at those levels). However, this wasn't always clear on how much progress a council had made and treated a council that had perhaps only done one or two elements of a higher rating the same as one that just needed one more to complete that higher rating.

That's why we are introducing a new scoring system for this version of the model, which we hope will be clearer and better reflect progress made. The new scoring system is displayed in the chart below.

Figure 66: Rating Levels, LGA Maturity Model, April 2022

Level	Rating
Sustainable	Sustainable 'A': Achieves all criteria listed under Sustainable
	Sustainable 'A-': Achieves all criteria listed under Mature AND 50% or more of the criteria listed under Sustainable
Mature	Mature 'B+': Achieves all criteria listed under Mature AND less than 50% of the criteria listed under Sustainable
	Mature 'B': Achieves all criteria listed under Mature
	Mature 'B-': Achieves all criteria listed under Maturing AND 50% or more of the criteria listed under Mature
Maturing	Maturing 'C+': Achieves all criteria listed under Maturing AND less than 50% of the criteria listed under Mature
	Maturing 'C': Achieves all criteria listed under Maturing
	Maturing 'C-': Achieves all criteria listed under Developing AND 50% or more of the criteria listed under Maturing
Developing	Developing 'D+': Achieves all criteria listed under Developing AND less than 50% of the criteria listed under Maturing
	Developing 'D': Achieves all criteria listed under Developing
	Developing 'D-': Achieves all criteria listed under Early AND 50% or more of the criteria listed under Developing
Early	Early 'E+': Achieves all criteria listed under Early AND less than 50% of the criteria listed under Developing
	Early 'E': Achieves all criteria listed under Early

Section Eight: Apprenticeships Maturity Model

Although the LGA has been tracking council performance against the Maturity Model for some time, we have relied on councils self-assessing against the matrix and then letting us know the outcome. While this was boosted in the past by elements of our support offer that required councils to use the model as part of the support, such as the Apprenticeship Accelerator programme and the Apprenticeship MOT Health Checks, we did not have a comprehensive process for collecting this data or making assessments ourselves.

In our 2022 survey, we are asking a series of questions for the first time to enable us to provide each council that took part in the survey with the LGAs assessment of where they are placed on the Maturity Model. These individual ratings will form part of these councils' individual reports, alongside other benchmarking information that can be drawn from the data.

The remainder of this section looks at how councils have performed against the model on a national, regional and council type basis.

Upper and single tier councils were the main audience for the development of the original Maturity Model and are the group of councils we have the most data on prior to this survey. Figure 67 shows some of this progress, with the median ratings of 80 councils who had self-assessed against the Maturity Model in the eighteen months prior analysed to determine the median rating for the sector. These ratings were made using the previous iterations of the Maturity Model, which had fewer (and differently constituted) pillars and a slightly broader scoring system. While they are not directly comparable to the new scale, they are still useful in benchmarking council progress over recent years. As can be seen, the ratings stayed remarkably consistent over the period, with the most progress in the Leadership and Culture strand, where median council performance improved from "Developing +" to "Maturing".

Figure 67: Comparison of Upper and Single Tier Councils' Median Ratings Against the Apprenticeships Maturity Model (Second iteration) May 2020 – September 2021

Category	Rating (May 2020)	Rating (September 2021)
Leadership and Culture	Developing +	Maturing
Procurement and Provider Management	Developing +	Developing +
Workforce Development	Developing +	Developing +
Planning, Delivery Structures and Processes	Developing +	Developing +
Engagement	Maturing	Maturing

Section Eight: Apprenticeships Maturity Model

These scores reflected a council base that had improved from the very early days of the levy where many programmes were having to begin from a standing start, to one that had established apprenticeship programmes in place, that were growing, but in many cases were not yet reaching the levels of best practice identified across the sector.

Since these ratings are not directly comparable to those made under the new version of the Maturity Model, we reassessed a smaller group of 30 local authorities for whom we had enough data to make a reassessment under the parameters for the new ratings and reflecting the addition of an extra pillar and revisions to the existing ones. Figure 68 shows this baseline median from 2021/22 compared with the assessments we were able to make for the 113 upper and single tier authorities that provided enough data through our survey to make an assessment.

Figure 68: Comparison of Median Scores Against the Maturity Model (third iteration) Upper and Single Tier Councils 2021/22 –2022/23

Pillar	Old Rating (2021-22)	New Rating (2022/23)
Leadership, Culture and Engagement	Maturing C	Maturing 'C+'
Procurement and Provider Management	Developing D+	Maturing 'C+'
Workforce Development	Developing D+	Maturing 'C-'
Implementation	Developing D+	Maturing 'C-'
Apprentice Experience	Maturing 'C-'	Maturing 'C-'
Maintained Schools	Maturing C-	Developing 'D+'

While these comparisons have to be treated with a degree of caution since the 'old rating' is based on only 30 councils compared to the 113 councils that were assessed for the 'new rating' the chart does seem to suggest that upper and single tier authorities continue to make progress against most elements of the Maturity Model. Ratings are up in four of the six pillars, with the most progress being made in the Procurement and Provider Management Pillar, which improved by a full band. Two areas didn't see progress: the Apprentice Experience, which stayed the same, and Maintained Schools, which saw a dip from "Maturing C-" to "Developing D+". As was highlighted in both Sections One and Four, 2021-22 saw maintained schools numbers fall back, and many councils continue to report schools highlighting significant barriers to engaging with apprenticeships, even if these barriers are starting to reduce with time. Both of those factors go some way to explaining why the rating may have dipped in this pillar, while it is also possible that the group of 30 councils we analysed to arrive at the revised median rating were among the councils more active and successful at engaging with schools, whereas the group of councils responding to this survey, greater in number, may be more reflective of the challenges faced across the sector in this regard.

Section Eight: Apprenticeships Maturity Model

Figure 69 shows how the median ratings differ by region. Upper and single tier councils in the Yorkshire and Humber region outperform the national median the most, with their regional ratings exceeding the national median in four pillars and matching it in the remaining two. The median ratings in the North West and South East also exceed the national median in at least one pillar, while matching it in the others, while the North East, West Midlands and South West each have at least one pillar where their median score exceeds the national rating and at least one where their median rating is lower. Councils in the East Midlands and East of England have median scores that either match or are below the national rating in each pillar. The median council in London is identical to the median council in the country, with the same ratings for each of the six pillars.

Figure 70 shows the median ratings by council type, including for District councils. For upper and single tier councils, there tends to be little variation by council type, with County Councils tending to have slightly higher median ratings in Leadership, Procurement, the Apprentice Experience and Maintained schools, while Mets also have higher ratings in three pillars than the national median. Unitary authorities tend to do a little worse, with the median Unitary having a lower rating on procurement than the national median.

Page 147 District councils tend to have slightly lower median ratings on all five of the pillars that apply to them, however, with the exception of the Implementation pillar, their median ratings only tend to be slightly lower than their larger counterparts, and their median rating on the Apprentice Experience matches the national rating for all upper and single tier councils. Districts, due to their smaller size, have smaller apprenticeship levy pots to draw on, smaller workforces, and consequently smaller programmes. Some of the higher rated elements of the Maturity Model, while good practice for all council types to consider, may not be as relevant to Districts if they have an apprenticeship programme that is managing only a handful of apprentices rather than the scores or hundreds in upper and single tier councils. That is particularly the case in the Implementation pillar, given its focus on putting your apprenticeship strategy into practice, monitoring spending, aligning your programme with the council's wider priorities and looking for options to use the levy transfer function. A district with 3-5 apprentices on programme, with limited funds is unlikely to need to implement a full scale strategy and will very likely not have much unspent levy available to transfer. As a result, the median ratings for Districts tell a better story than they may seem – many key principles of the Maturity Model are still considered and put into practice where possible and desirable and many District councils are close to moving up another rating or even a full grade with only a few further improvements.

Section Eight: Apprenticeships Maturity Model

Figure 69: Median Maturity Model Ratings, Upper and Single Tier Councils, By Region (2022/23)

Region	Leadership, Culture and Engagement	Procurement and Provider Management	Workforce Development	Implementation	Apprentice Experience	Maintained Schools
North East	Maturing 'C+'	Maturing 'C'	Maturing 'C-'	Maturing 'C'	Mature 'B-'	Developing 'D-'
North West	Maturing 'C+'	Maturing 'C+'	Maturing 'C+'	Maturing 'C-'	Maturing 'C-'	Developing 'D+'
Yorks & Humber	Mature 'B-'	Mature 'B-'	Maturing 'C+'	Maturing 'C-'	Maturing 'C-'	Maturing 'C-'
West Midlands	Maturing 'C+'	Maturing 'C+'	Maturing 'C-'	Maturing 'C+'	Maturing 'C-'	Developing 'D+'
East Midlands	Maturing 'C'	Maturing 'C'	Developing 'D+'	Developing 'D-'	Maturing 'C-'	Developing 'D-'
East	Maturing 'C+'	Maturing 'C-'	Maturing 'C-'	Developing 'D+'	Maturing 'C-'	Developing 'D'
London	Maturing 'C+'	Maturing 'C+'	Maturing 'C-'	Maturing 'C-'	Maturing 'C-'	Developing 'D+'
South East	Maturing 'C+'	Maturing 'C+'	Maturing 'C-'	Maturing 'C+'	Maturing 'C+'	Maturing 'C'
South West	Maturing 'C+'	Mature 'B-'	Maturing 'C-'	Maturing 'C-'	Maturing 'C+'	Developing 'D-'
All Upper & Single Tier	Maturing 'C+'	Maturing 'C+'	Maturing 'C-'	Maturing 'C-'	Maturing 'C-'	Developing 'D+'

Section Eight: Apprenticeships Maturity Model

Figure 70: Median Maturity Model Ratings by Council Type (2022/23)

Council Type	Leadership, Culture and Engagement	Procurement and Provider Management	Workforce Development	Implementation	Apprentice Experience	Maintained Schools
All Upper & Single Tier	Maturing 'C+'	Maturing 'C+'	Maturing 'C-'	Maturing 'C-'	Maturing 'C-'	Developing 'D+'
- County	Mature 'B-'	Mature 'B-'	Maturing 'C-'	Maturing 'C-'	Maturing 'C+'	Maturing 'C-'
- London Borough	Maturing 'C+'	Maturing 'C+'	Maturing 'C-'	Maturing 'C-'	Maturing 'C-'	Developing 'D+'
- Metropolitan Borough	Mature 'B-'	Maturing 'C+'	Maturing 'C+'	Maturing 'C-'	Maturing 'C-'	Maturing 'C-'
- Unitary	Maturing 'C+'	Maturing 'C-'	Maturing 'C-'	Maturing 'C-'	Maturing 'C-'	Developing 'D+'
All Districts	Maturing 'C-'	Developing 'D+'	Developing 'D+'	Developing 'D-'	Maturing 'C-'	

Section Eight: Apprenticeships Maturity Model

Pillar by Pillar: What Proportion of Councils Achieved What Rating in Each Element of the Maturity Model?

The remainder of this section shows the proportion of councils falling into the five broad grades of the Maturity Model – Early, Developing, Maturing, Mature and Sustainable – for each of the different elements contained within each pillar. Whereas the median rating highlights the middle council in each category examined above, these graphics are designed to provide a visualisation of the distribution of local authorities' action in each element to illustrate whether the majority of authorities are clustered around the median rating, are more spread out, or whether there are high concentrations at either extreme. Charts will first show the distribution for upper and single tier councils in each of the six pillars, followed by separate charts for District councils in the five pillars of the model that are relevant to them.

As can be seen in the graphics over the next eleven pages, the distribution of local authority ratings in each element varies substantially. Some median scores also reflect where the majority of councils are located, while others do not, with clustering at either extreme or a more even spread throughout the full spectrum of ratings.

In the Leadership, Culture and Engagement pillar, upper and single tier councils tend to have moderate to high ratings in each of the elements, with very few providing answers that were assessed as 'Early' against the Maturity Model. Given the Maturing C+ Median rating in this pillar, you would tend to expect this since this rating is reflective of councils that are in the middle of the Maturity Model and moving towards the upper levels. However, the median rating in the Procurement and Provider Management pillar was also Maturing C+, yet 31.3 per cent of councils rated either 'Early' or 'Developing' when it comes to collaborative procurement with partners, while 41.7 per cent rated 'Mature' or 'Sustainable', showing a wide variation in approaches. There were also wide distribution ranges among upper and single tier councils when it came to Apprenticeships First, Apprenticeships Mapping, Best Practice Sharing and Apprenticeship Networks.

Other areas, though showed councils clustering in a similar position, which was particularly evident in the Maintained Schools pillar, where Promotion and Advocacy and Capacity and Resources (Maturing), Engagement Plan (Developing) and Programme Governance (Early) all saw the majority of councils clustering at one rating.

Section Eight: Apprenticeships Maturity Model

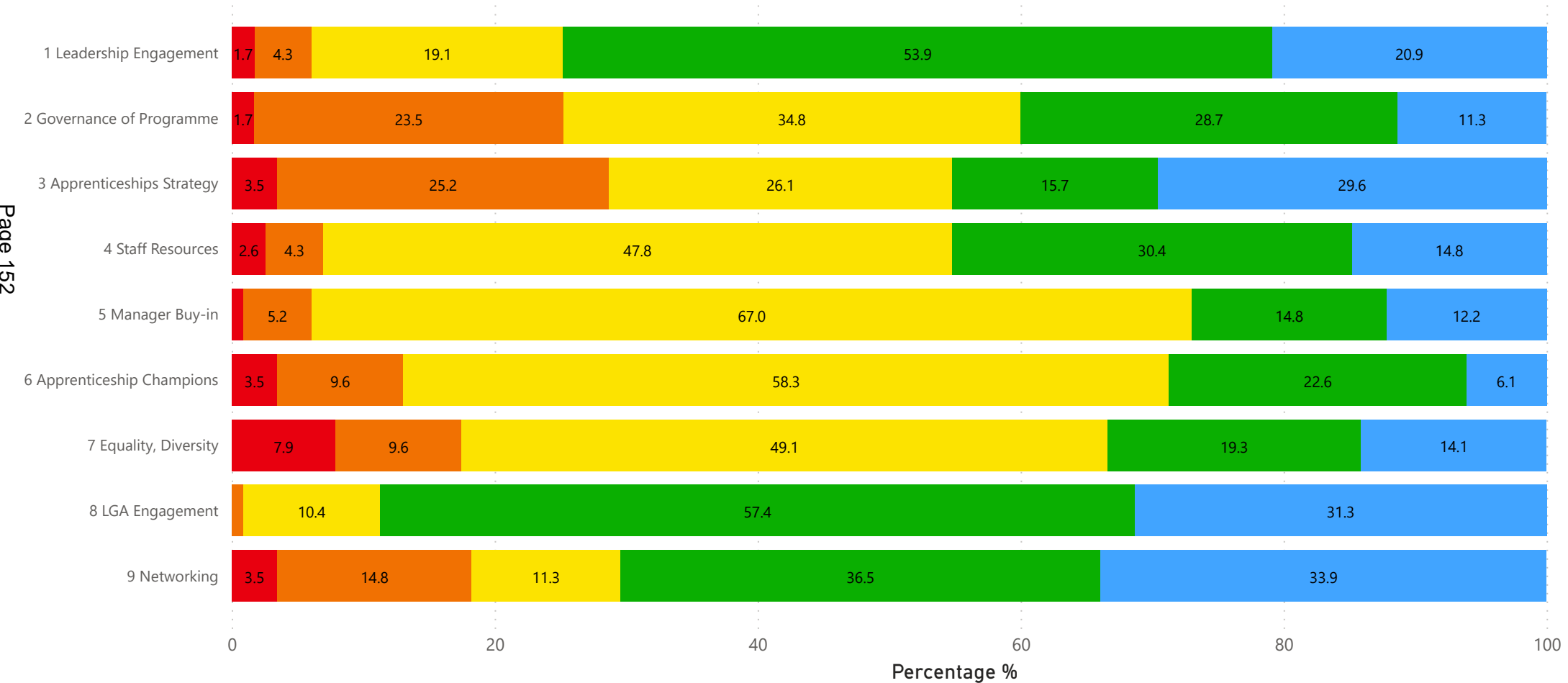
Elements that were particularly positive stand outs for upper and single tier councils include Leadership Engagement, LGA Engagement, Networking, Procurement Process, Recruitment and Retention, Levy Transfers, Progress Reviews, Tackling Underperformance, Employability Support and Availability and Awareness of Apprenticeship Funding for Schools, all of which saw more than 50 per cent of councils rated as Mature or Sustainable. Areas where upper and single tier councils should focus on improving if they want to make progress against the Maturity Model include Workforce Data Analysis, Apprenticeships First, Spending Plan, Mentoring, Apprentice Network, Engagement Plan (Maintained Schools Pillar), Programme Governance (Maintained Schools Pillar) and Workforce Development (Maintained Schools Pillar), all of which saw 45 per cent or more of councils rated as Early or Developing.

For districts, they tended to cluster more towards the middle and lower ends of the Maturity Model ratings in each element, reflecting the smaller scale of their programmes which don't always have the same scope for expansion and growth that upper and single tier councils do. However, Leadership Engagement, Procurement Process, Recruitment and Retention, Progress Reviews, Tackling Underperformance and Employability Support all stand out as having 50 per cent or more of district councils rated as Mature or Sustainable in these elements. If districts do want to see improvements in their Maturity Model ratings, however, then the areas to focus on improving include Governance of Programme, Equality, Diversity and Promotion of Apprenticeships to underrepresented groups, Networking, Provider Management Process, Surveying and Feedback, Apprenticeships Mapping, Workforce Data Analysis, Measuring Impact, and Spending Plan, among others, all of which saw more than 50 per cent of districts rated as Early or Developing.

Section Eight: Apprenticeships Maturity Model Upper and Single Tier

Pillar 1: Leadership, Culture & Engagement

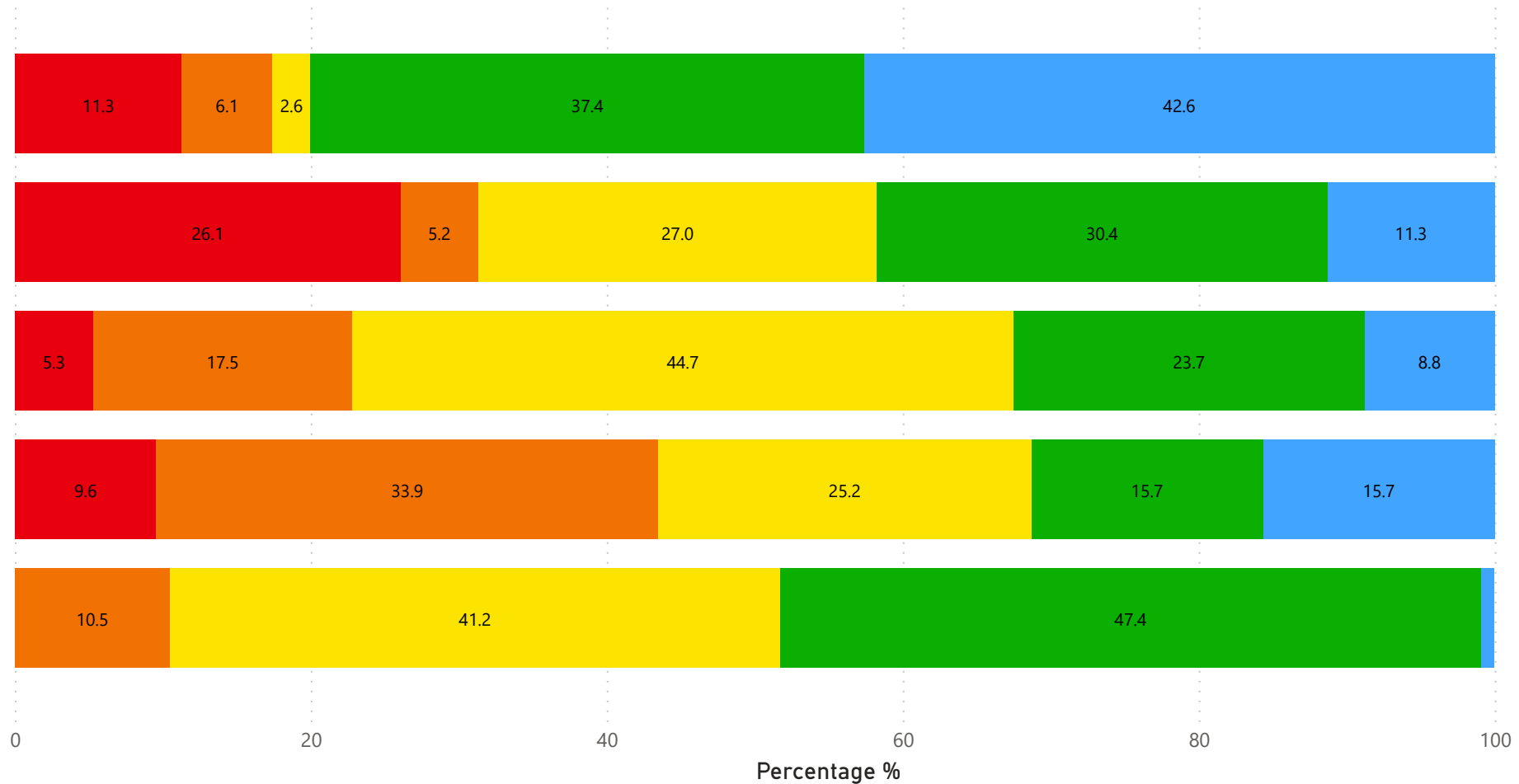
● Early ● Developing ● Maturing ● Mature ● Sustainable



Section Eight: Apprenticeships Maturity Model Upper and Single Tier

Pillar 2: Procurement & Provider Management

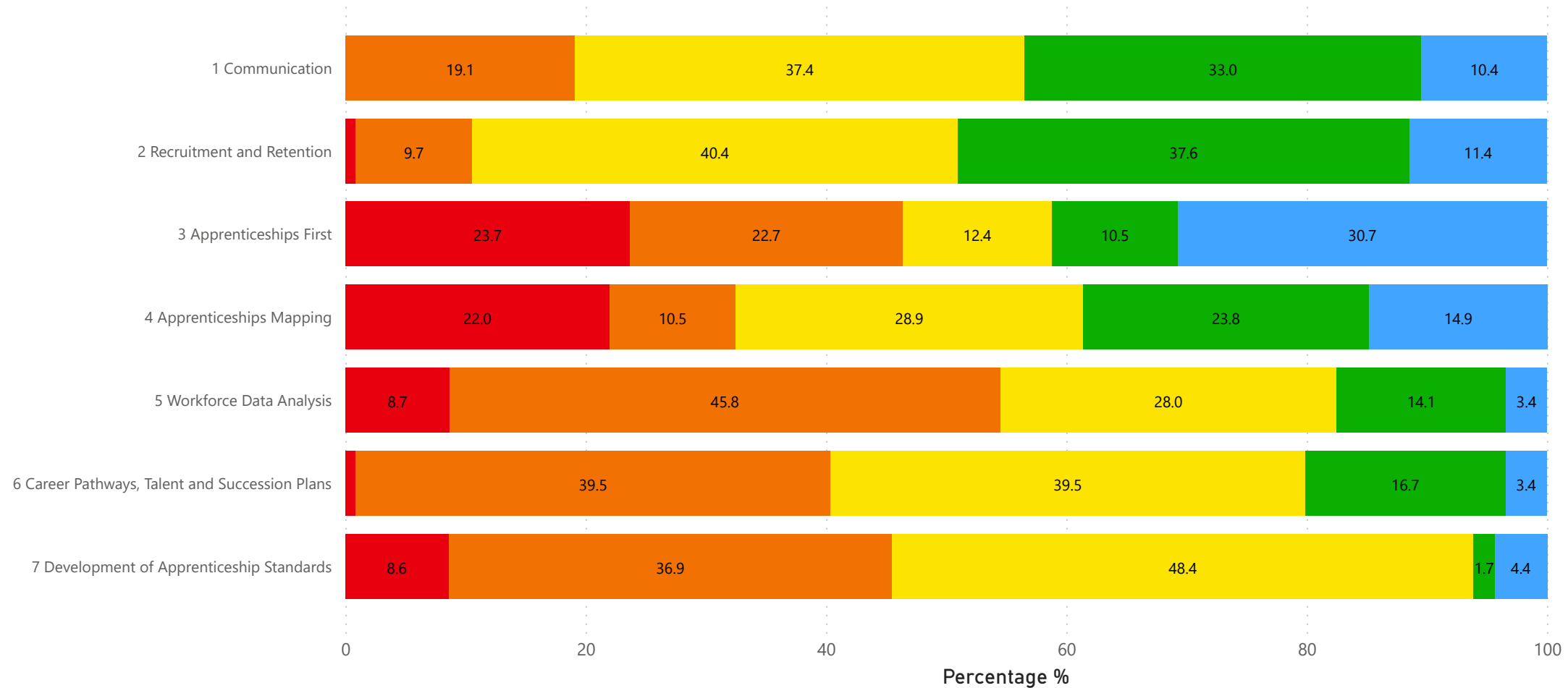
● Early ● Developing ● Maturing ● Mature ● Sustainable



Section Eight: Apprenticeships Maturity Model Upper and Single Tier

Pillar 3: Workforce Development

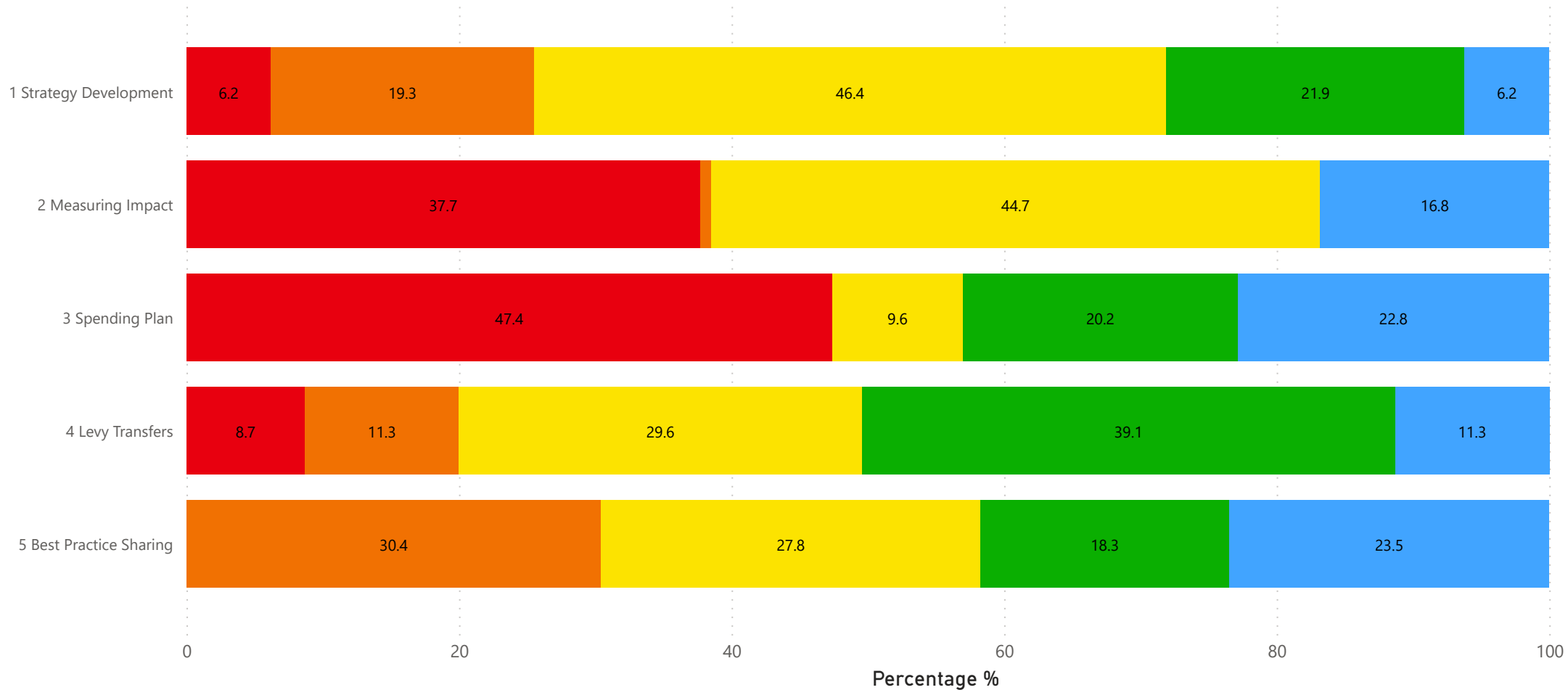
● Early ● Developing ● Maturing ● Mature ● Sustainable



Section Eight: Apprenticeships Maturity Model Upper and Single Tier

Pillar 4: Implementation

● Early ● Developing ● Maturing ● Mature ● Sustainable

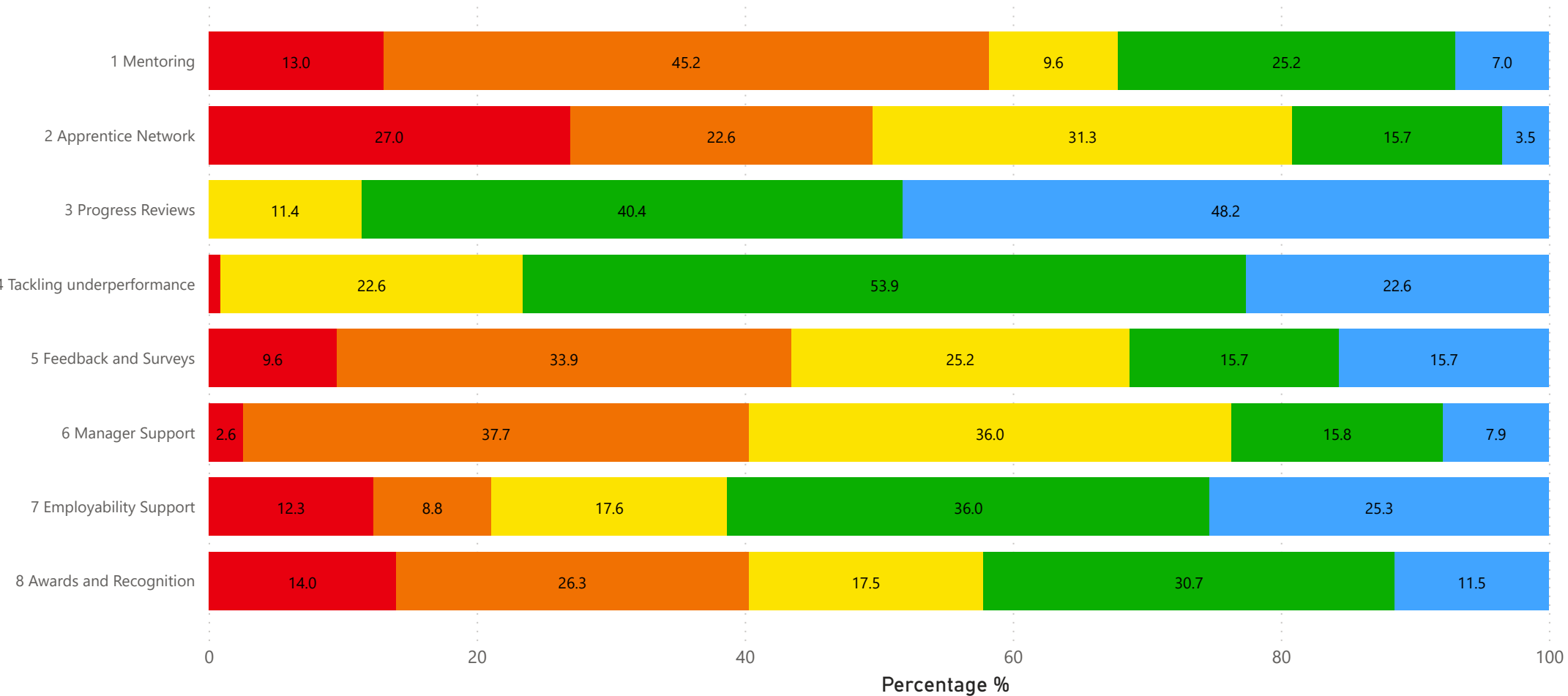


Section Eight: Apprenticeships Maturity Model Upper and Single Tier

Pillar 5: The Apprentice Experience

● Early ● Developing ● Maturing ● Mature ● Sustainable

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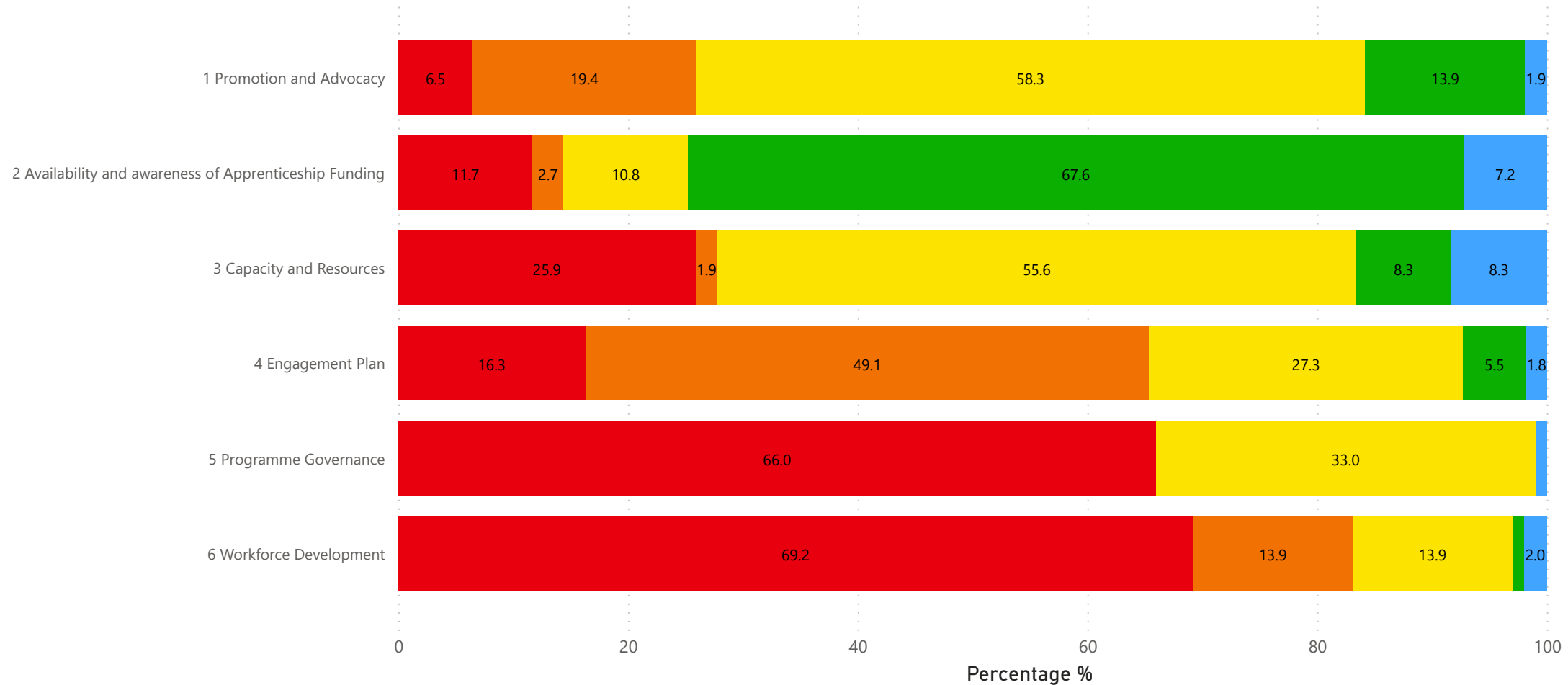


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Section Eight: Apprenticeships Maturity Model Upper and Single Tier

Pillar 6: Maintained Schools

● Early ● Developing ● Maturing ● Mature ● Sustainable

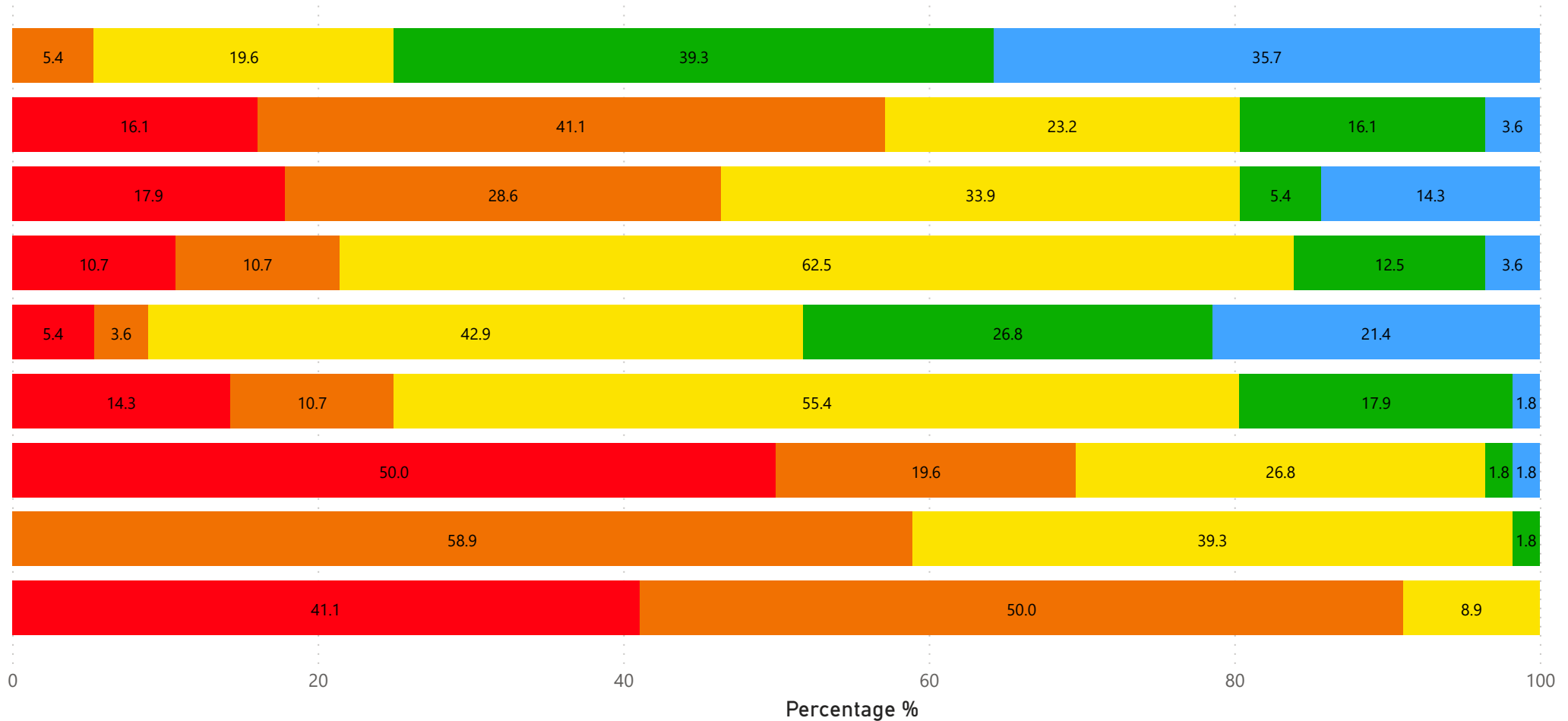


Section Eight: Apprenticeships Maturity Model District Councils

Pillar 1: Leadership, Culture & Engagement

● Early ● Developing ● Maturing ● Mature ● Sustainable

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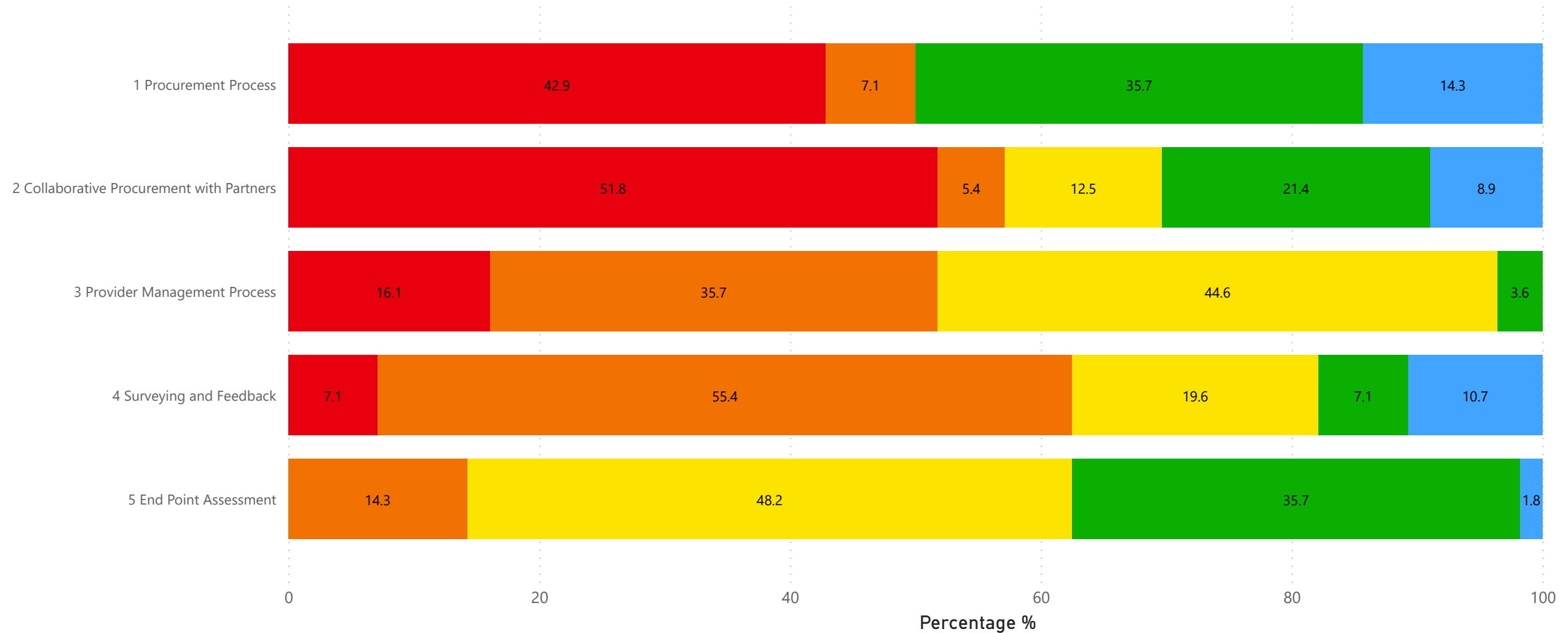


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Section Eight: Apprenticeships Maturity Model District Councils

Pillar 2: Procurement & Provider Management

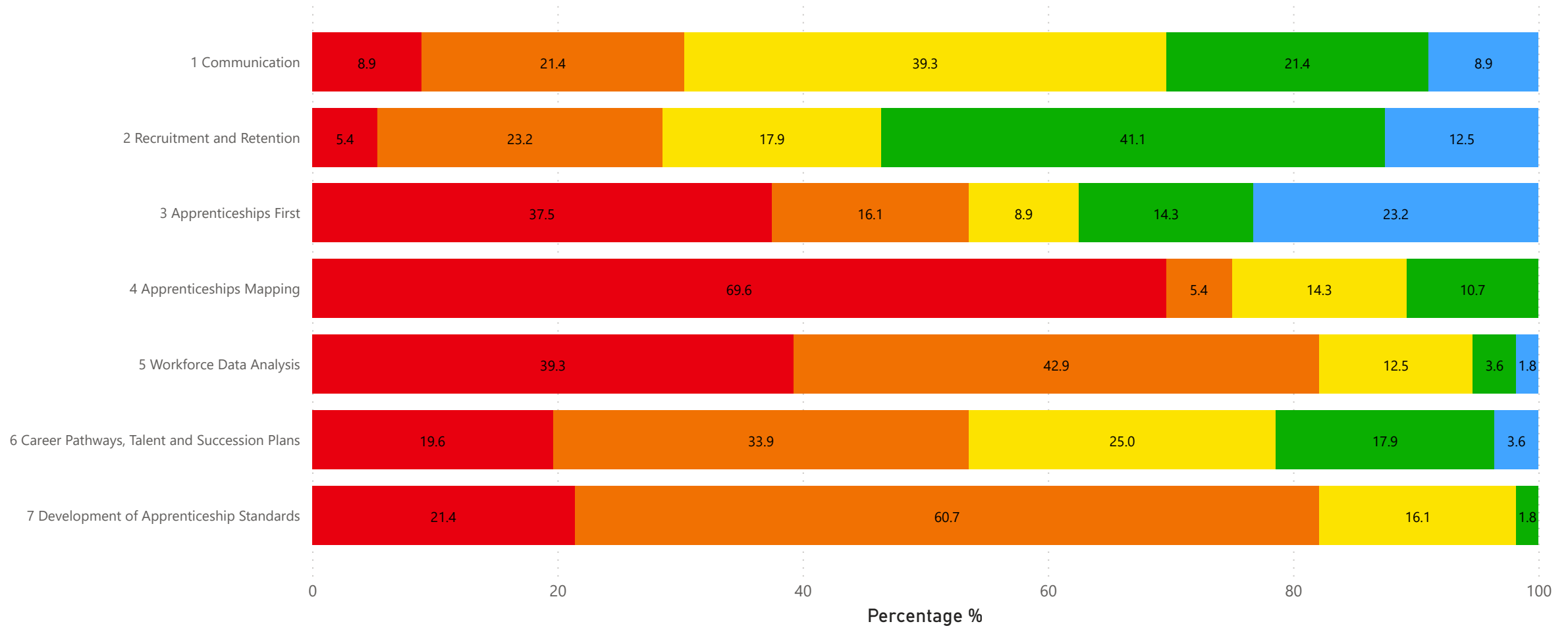
● Early ● Developing ● Maturing ● Mature ● Sum of Sustainable



Section Eight: Apprenticeships Maturity Model District Councils

Pillar 3: Workforce Development

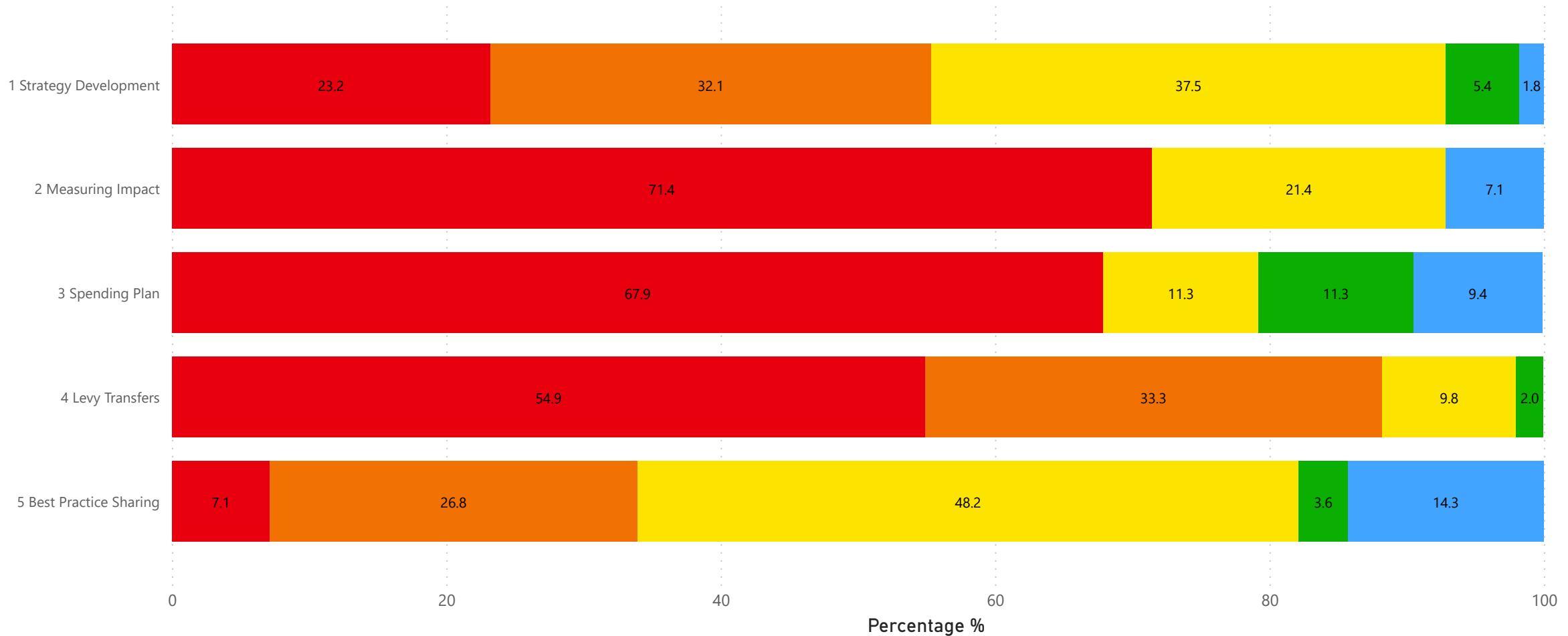
● Early ● Developing ● Maturing ● Mature ● Sustainable



Section Eight: Apprenticeships Maturity Model District Councils

Pillar 4: Implementation

● Early ● Developing ● Maturing ● Mature ● Sustainable

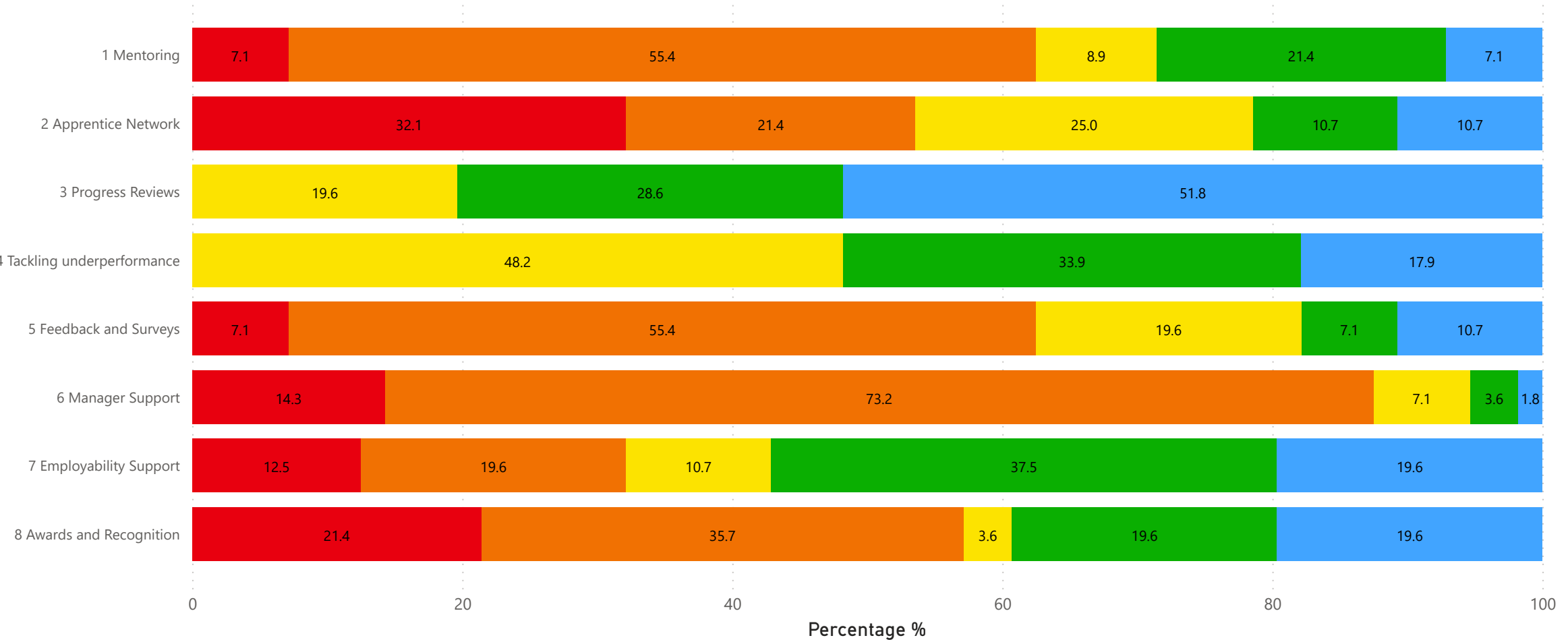


Section Eight: Apprenticeships Maturity Model District Councils

Pillar 5: The Apprentice Experience

● Early ● Developing ● Maturing ● Mature ● Sustainable

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Section Nine: The LGA Support Programme

In each of the last three surveys we have carried out we have asked councils for feedback on the LGAs support programme, asking them about which elements they've accessed, valued and want to see more of.

Local Government Apprentice of the Year

Since 2021 the LGA has partnered with the East of England LGA and South West Councils to deliver the Local Government Apprentice of the Year – a local government challenge style event for Level 2 and 3 apprentices that allows them to compete, both as individuals and as teams, for the prize of Local Government Apprentice of the Year. The event is held online to maximise opportunities to attend all over the country and gives apprentices a platform to showcase their talents and abilities while putting them through their paces in a series of challenges designed to simulate real-life decisions that councils have to make. Previous winners included Karla Overington, Business Administration Apprentice at West Sussex County Council (2021) and Chantelle Holt from North Norfolk District Council (2022). Prizes have also been awarded to runners up and winning team members from councils all over the country, including Dudley MBC, Derbyshire County Council, London Borough of Camden, Essex County Council, Portsmouth City Council, Sefton MBC, South Cambridgeshire District Council, Torridge District Council and Warwickshire County Council.

In each of the last two years we have asked councils about their awareness of the event, whether they took part, whether they chose not to enter and if so why, to enable us to have a better understanding of how effective promotion of the event has been and how useful and rewarding councils and apprentices have found it. In 2021 23 per cent of local authorities were aware of the event and had at least one apprentice who took part, while 62 per cent indicated they were aware of the event but chose not to take part. 15 per cent were not aware of the event. Our current survey shows that awareness and participation in the event has improved year-on-year with 42 per cent of councils now having at least one apprentice taking part in either the 2021 or 2022 event (or both), an increase of 19 percentage points. The proportion of councils who were aware of the event but chose not to enter an apprentice has reduced by 15.5 percentage points to 46.5 per cent, while the proportion of councils who were unaware of the event also dropped to 11.6 per cent. 28 per cent of councils who entered apprentices did so in both years.

These figures are encouraging and are further supported by the positive post-event feedback we have had from participants at both events held to date. For those councils who did not choose to take part, we wanted to understand why. Responses varied considerably, but the most mentioned were councils not having the time and resources to engage, not having apprentices who were interested in competing, not having apprentices they felt were ready to compete, and the cost of the entry fee. These are all areas for us to consider further in the future to try to expand access to the event.

Section Nine: The LGA Support Programme

LGA Support Offer: Current Views and Future Content

The LGA has run an apprenticeships support programme since the Apprenticeship Levy was introduced in 2017. The programme has covered a wide range of support from assistance with developing levy transfer policies, to MOT Health Checks on council programmes, action learning, best practice toolkits, webinars and government-funded programmes to support the development of apprenticeship strategies and support better workforce development using apprenticeships.

While surveys for individual elements of our support offer were carried out at the time to get instant feedback, we have consistently sought further feedback from councils through our annual survey. Feedback on our support offer has been consistently positive, both for individual elements and the programme as a whole. As Figure 71 shows, when councils are asked to rate our programme out of five (with five being the highest and one the lowest) the programme has broadly been rated 4 out of 5 in each of the last two years. Most of our support offer has been targeted at upper and single tier councils, who are responsible for 90 per cent of both the total local government contributions to the apprenticeship levy and 90 per cent of the government's public sector apprenticeships target. When just looking at this group of councils, who are the most likely to engage with the support, the ratings rose to 4.2 out of 5 in both years. 70 per cent of all councils in both years rated the support programme at 4 out of 5 or higher.

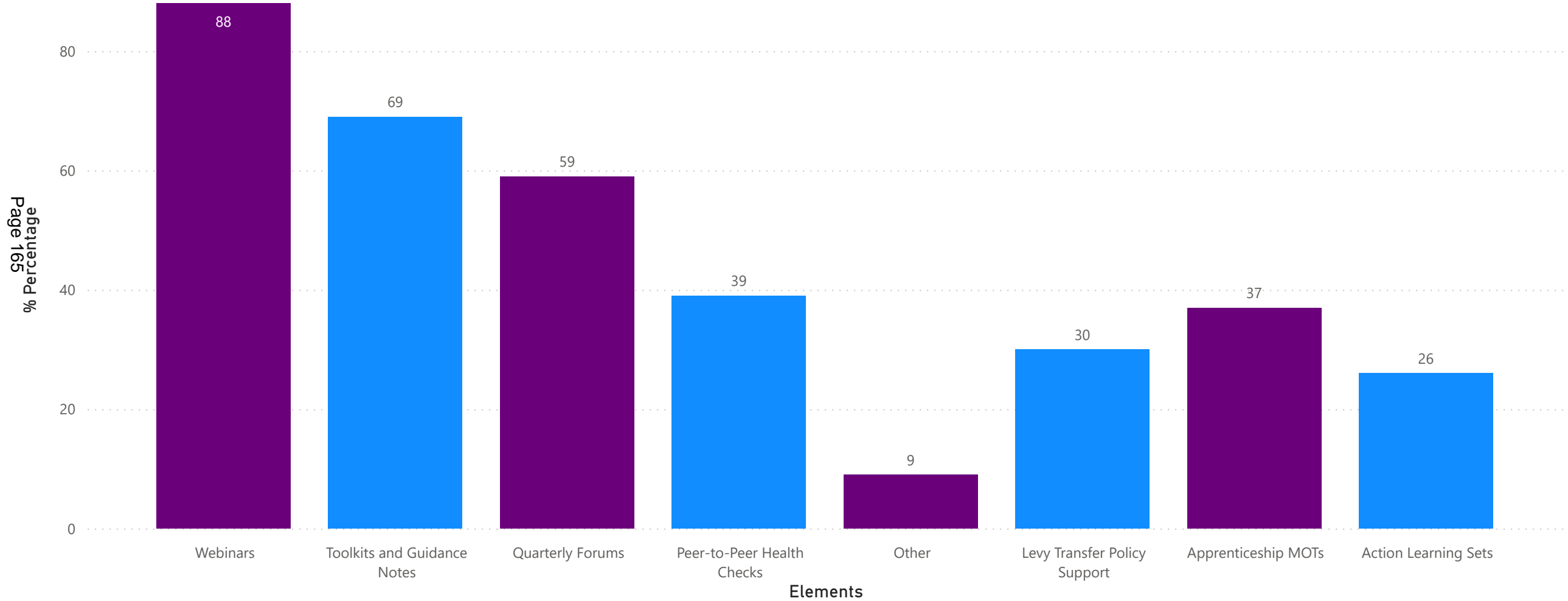
Figure 71: Average Rating of LGA Support Offer by Local Authorities

Year	Average Rating (All Councils)	Average Rating (Upper/Single Tier Councils)
Jul-21	4.00	4.20
Dec-22	3.95	4.20

Feedback provided by councils indicates that the most valued elements of the support offer are the webinars, best practice toolkits and templates and policy explainers. This is also borne out by the responses to what councils want to see as part of our support offer moving forward (Figure 72). Webinars proved the most popular element and the one that councils most want to see more of (88 per cent), followed by toolkits and guidance (59 per cent), quarterly forums (39 per cent) and peer-to-peer health checks (39 per cent). This suggests that the focus of any future support offer, whatever form it takes, should take into account this desire for information on national policies, best practice sharing and engagement with other local authorities to share and reflect on common experiences.

Section Nine: The LGA Support Programme

Figure 72: What elements would local authorities like to see included in the LGA's apprenticeships support offer in 2023/24?



Acknowledgements

The LGA in particular want to thank Dr Martin Reddington and his team at Kinetiq for their support in conducting the survey and the work they have carried out with us to produce this report.

We also want to thank the officers at the 172 local authorities who took the time to take part in this year's survey and without whom this report and the analysis it contains would not have been possible. This includes officers from the following councils:

Adur and Worthing Councils	Bradford Metropolitan Borough Council	Cambridgeshire County Council	Darlington Borough Council
Ashford Borough Council	Braintree District Council	Carlisle City Council	Derby City Council
Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils	Breckland District Council	Central Bedfordshire Council	Derbyshire County Council
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council	Brighton and Hove City Council	Cheshire East council	Devon County Council
Bassetlaw District Council	Bristol City Council	Cheshire West and Chester Council	Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council
Bedford Borough Council	Broxtowe Borough Council	City of London	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	Buckinghamshire County Council	City of York Council	Durham County Council
Blackpool Borough Council	Burnley Borough Council	Colchester Borough Council	East Cambridgeshire District Council
Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council	Bury Metropolitan Borough Council	Cornwall Council	East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council	Coventry City Council	East Staffordshire Borough Council
Bracknell Forest Council	Cambridge City Council	Dacorum Council	East Suffolk Council

Acknowledgements

East Sussex County Council	Ipswich Borough Council	London Borough of Haringey	Liverpool City Council
Eastbourne Borough Council	Isle of Wight Council	London Borough of Havering	Luton Borough Council
Epping Forest District Council	Kent County Council	London Borough of Hillingdon	Manchester City Council
Essex County Council	Kings Lynn and West Norfolk	London Borough of Islington	Medway Council
Folkstone and Hythe District Council	Kirklees Council	London Borough of Lambeth	Mid Devon District Council
Great Yarmouth Borough Council	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council	London Borough of Lewisham	New Forest District Council
Halton Borough Council	London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	London Borough of Newham	Newark and Sherwood District Council
Hambleton District Council	London Borough of Barnet	London Borough of Redbridge	Newcastle City Council
Hampshire County Council	London Borough of Brent	London Borough of Richmond and Wandsworth	North Devon Council
Harrogate Borough Council	London Borough of Camden	London Borough of Sutton	North East Lincolnshire Council
Herefordshire Council	London Borough of Ealing	London Borough of Tower Hamlets	North Hertfordshire District Council
Hertfordshire County Council	London Borough of Enfield	London Borough of Waltham Forest	North Lincolnshire District Council
Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council	London Borough of Hackney	Leeds City Council	North Norfolk District Council
Huntingdonshire District Council	London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham	Lincolnshire County Council	North Somerset Council

Acknowledgements

North Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council	Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames	South Tyneside Council	Tewkesbury Borough Council
Northumberland Council	Rushmoor Borough Council	Southampton City Council	Three Rivers District Council
Norwich City Council	Rutland County Council	Southend-on-Sea Borough Council	Thurrock Council
Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council	Salford City Council	St Albans City and District Council	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Oxfordshire County Council	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council	St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council	Uttlesford District Council
Peterborough City Council	Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council	Staffordshire Borough Council	Wakefield Metropolitan Borough Council
Plymouth City Council	Sheffield City Council	Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council	Warwickshire County Council
Preston City Council	Shropshire Council	Stroud District Council	Watford Borough Council
Reading Borough Council	Slough Borough Council	Suffolk County Council	Waverley Borough Council
Redcar & Cleveland Council	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council	Surrey County Council	Wealden District Council
Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council	Somerset County Council	Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council	Welwyn Hatfield Council
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	South Cambridgeshire District Council	Teignbridge District Council	West Berkshire Council
Royal Borough of Greenwich	South Norfolk and Broadland Councils	Telford & Wrekin Council	West Lancashire Borough Council
Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea	South Staffordshire Council	Tendring District Council	West Suffolk Council

Acknowledgements

West Sussex County Council

Westminster City Council

Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council

Wiltshire Council

Winchester City Council

Wirral Council

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Woking Borough Council

Wokingham Borough Council

Wolverhampton City Council

Worcestershire County Council

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Minutes of last Resources Board meeting

Resources Board

Wednesday, 10 May 2023

Hybrid Meeting - 18 Smith Square and Online

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as **Appendix A**

Item	Decisions and actions
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1 Welcome, Apologies and Substitutes, Declarations of Interest

The Chair welcomed members to the Resources Board meeting.

Following local election results the previous week, the Chair expressed thanks to Nick Jones and Phelim Mac Mcafferty for their work as previous board members.

Cllr Jonathan Smale was in attendance as a substitute.

No declarations of interest were made.

2 Local government finance update

The Chair invited Nicola Morton, Head of Local Government Finance to present the report which provides a summary of the work by the LGA on funding and finance issues since the last Board meeting on 28 February 2023 including the Chancellor's Spring Budget, updates on business rates, council tax, local authority accounts and audit and capital and investments.

The Chair invited Jo Donnelly to give an update on pensions. HM Treasury had announced that the Superannuation Contributions Adjusted for Past Experience (SCAPE) discount rate had been reduced to CPI plus 1.7 per cent from 2.4 per cent. This would have an impact on the employer contribution rate in the unfunded public sector pension schemes, including the Teachers' Pension Scheme. The impact was not yet known as the 2020 scheme valuation results are still not available, but the indication is that funding towards the increase for teachers employed in maintained schools will continue via the same arrangements set up in 2019 for the financial year 2024/25. Future years are for discussion at SR.

Members welcomed the push on the audit deadline as set out in the evidence given to the Public Accounts Committee.

The Chair reported that he gave evidence at the Work and Pensions Select Committee on the Household Support Fund in his capacity as Leader of Milton Keynes City Council.

Decision:

Members **noted** the report.

3 Consultation response: HMT Thematic Review of Non-investment Asset Valuation For Financial Reporting Purposes

The Chair invited Bevis Ingram, Senior Adviser, to present the report which outlined a draft response to a consultation from HM Treasury following the thematic review of non-investment assets for financial reporting purposes, to be cleared by the Board.

The response suggested improvements that could be made to the proposals for valuing infrastructure assets and broadly supported the proposals for other types of assets.

Members made the following comments:

- Members raised strong concerns that the proposals for valuing infrastructure assets. If implemented these will cause significant problems and additional costs for councils and will further contribute to audit delays. Members asked that the response reflected these concerns more strongly.
- Members supported the rest of the proposed response.

Decision:

Members **approved** the draft response to the consultation as set out in the appendix, subject to it being strengthened in the light of the above comments; and

The final version of the consultation response to be cleared by Resources Lead Members.

4 Local authority reserves

Please refer to the confidential minutes document.

5 Workforce Update

Please refer to the confidential minutes document.

6 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 February 2023

Members agreed the minutes of the previous meeting as an accurate record.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Peter Marland	Milton Keynes Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Richard Wenham	Central Bedfordshire Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Keith House	Eastleigh Borough Council
	Cllr Jason Zadrozny	Ashfield District Council
Members	Cllr David Leaf	Bexley Council
	Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE	Gloucestershire County Council
	Cllr Phillip King	Harborough District Council
	Cllr Rory Love OBE	Kent County Council
	Cllr Roger Phillips	Herefordshire Council
	Cllr Jonathan Smale	Derby City Council
	Cllr James Lewis	Leeds City Council
	Cllr Cathy Mitchell	Warrington Borough Council
	Cllr Ed Turner	Oxford City Council
	Cllr Peter Mason	Ealing Council
	Cllr Shama Tatler	Brent Council
	Cllr Terry Paul	Newham London Borough Council
	Cllr Richard Kemp CBE	Liverpool City Council
Cllr James Hakewill	North Northamptonshire Council	
In Attendance	Kwame Boakye	Local Government Chronicle
LGA Officers	Alex Burfitt	
	Jo Donnelly	
	Bevis Ingram	
	Megan Kidd	
	Nicola Morton	
	Arian Nemati	
	Emilia Peters	
	Jamie Saddler	
Sam Swift		
Sarah Ward		

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