

Women in Agriculture Practical Training Fund 2021-2022: Evaluation Report



AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND MARINE

Women in Agriculture

Practical Training Fund 2021-2022: Evaluation Report



Acknowledgements

The researchers would like to thank all of the women who took part in the survey and interviews during this evaluation for sharing their time and experience as well as Lantra Scotland and Ringlink for their cooperation.

Photo by Scottish Government

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List of Acronyms

- WIA Women in Agriculture
- PTF Practical Training Fund

Highlights

What is this report about?

In 2017, [Women in Agriculture Taskforce](#) took up the challenge to engage with gender inequality issues in Scottish agriculture. The Women in Agriculture Practical Training Fund was one of the practical solutions which arose. It aimed to increase personal development as well as to provide additional skills for career progress and new opportunities for women in Scottish agriculture. This current research aimed to evaluate the success of that fund.

What did we do?

A short online survey was sent to 986 women who applied to the fund asking about their experience of their training course, its impact and the importance of the fund to them. From the 200 respondents, in-depth follow-up interviews were then conducted with eight women as well as two organisers of a course for girls to assess the longer term impacts of the fund on women and girls.

What did we find out?

Research has shown that the Practical Training Fund aims have been met.

The research results showed that the majority of applicants experienced positive impacts and showed recipients of funding had developed skills and confidence to bring to their existing roles as well as the skills and broadened horizons to diversify their careers if desired.

The availability of funding itself was a motivator as it was often a tipping point and without it, some women would not have taken up any training opportunities.

The research suggests that childcare, work commitments and unavailability of courses in certain locations remain a persistent issue and raises a question around the potential number of women who do not have the time or resources to find training appropriate to them, or face additional barriers, and what can be done to support this group.

On-line courses offered a more flexible training format and allowed access to training for those who would not have been able to attend in person but online learning did not suit everyone.

Social and support networks developed through the training were invaluable to many of the women attending the training courses.

Consideration should be given as to whether knowledge of the funding is reaching more socially excluded women.

Most women recognised that traditional roles were changing and that support and access to training was an important tool to get more women into agricultural roles and in turn raise the visibility of women in the sector for future generations.

What are the next steps?

Based on research evidence, the report recommends continuing the provision of funding in a format which is simple and easy to apply to, supports a wide range of courses and gives women a high degree of control and flexibility in selecting courses that best meet their needs.

We recommend that the next steps are to develop the reach and impact of the Women in Agriculture Practical Training fund further. Greater consideration should be given to whether or not the fund is accessible to all women in agricultural roles in Scotland and if not, how best to reach them and provide additional support with their applications. There is a continued need to offer flexible learning options to extend reach.

Executive summary

What is this report about?

This report outlines the main findings of an evaluation of the Women in Agriculture Practical Training Fund. It was set up by Scottish Government via the Women in Agriculture Taskforce and it is administered by Lantra Scotland. Across the first two years of funding a total of 986 women have applied for funding with 759 being successful. The intended aims of the fund were: (i) to support the personal development of women and girls living or working in Scottish agriculture; (ii) provide them with additional skills to progress their careers and (iii) open up new employment opportunities in Scottish agriculture beyond their current role. These aims were evaluated through a survey and follow-up interviews with women who had applied for funding to undertake training. The research provides evidence of the short and longer-term impacts of the fund in addition to women's experience of applying to the fund and taking training. Their feedback will enable Scottish Government to evaluate the success of the fund and contribute to future policy plans.

What did we do?

To assess the short-term impact of the fund, a short online survey was sent to successful and unsuccessful applicants to the fund. The surveys were distributed by email to all applicants in the three funding rounds (986 in total) and achieved a 20% response rate overall. The surveys asked about motivations to apply for funding, experience of the training, and the impact of the training on attendees in terms of material skills, emotional development and access to new opportunities.

In-depth interviews were then conducted with a total of eight women at least 6 months after they had commenced their first training course. The interviews focused on the long-term impact of the fund and the training through a discussion of the women's experience of their course, its impact on their confidence and emotional well-being, the usefulness of the skills and support networks they developed (if any), and the role of the fund in helping them access the training.

What did we find out?

Overall, the research shows that the Practical Training Fund has facilitated access to training for a broad range of women in Scotland's agricultural sector, with the majority of applicants experiencing positive impacts as a result. This has been achieved primarily through the wide range and flexible nature of courses on offer. It has enabled the majority of women who applied to gain practical skills which they

have used in their current roles or intend to use in the future. It has also had less tangible outcomes, which are arguably just as or even more important, such as increasing confidence, motivation, self-worth and general well-being. Most importantly, the research has highlighted the importance of the availability of funding as a critical and often deciding factor in women's decisions to undertake training.

The evaluation has also provided some insights into areas where the Scottish Government and Lantra Scotland could look to develop the reach and impact of the Women in Agriculture Practical Training fund. Almost a quarter of applicants to the fund were unsuccessful and a large proportion of these applicants viewed the fund more negatively and were less likely to reapply on average than successful applicants. The research suggests that childcare, work commitments and unavailability of courses in certain locations remain a persistent issue and raises a question around the potential number of women who do not have the time or resources to find training appropriate to them, or face additional barriers, and what can be done to support this group.

What did the survey tell us?

The survey results were positive overall and showed recipients of funding had developed skills and confidence to bring to their existing roles as well as the skills and broadened horizons to diversify their careers if desired. Some of the key findings are summarised here:

- The survey reached a broad range of women across all age categories and with a fifth of responses coming from islanders.
- A quarter of respondents had taken more than one course.
- Respondents attended a wide variety of courses including:
 - Practical skills; in areas such as sheepdog training, animal care, animal breeding, vehicle and machinery operation, walling and fencing, pesticide use and hydroponics.
 - Business management skills; in areas such as financial management, business promotion and first aid.
- Almost a third of all courses were conducted online.
- The principal motivators for taking training were to learn specific practical skills for their existing role (73%) or continuing professional development (55%).
- Work/life commitments were manageable for three quarters of women.
- 93% of women felt the courses met their expectations.
- 74% of women felt the training had helped them develop practical skills and 67% said it helped their confidence.

- 83% felt better equipped for the future.
- 91% of successful applicants would reapply but only 64% of unsuccessful applicants.
- Two thirds of unsuccessful applicants received feedback as to why they did not receive funding and of these, approximately two thirds were not satisfied with the response they received.

Some survey questions also included space for open text responses. In general, where women were able to take time off work, arrange childcare or had other means of support, taking a course was seen as more straightforward, but for around a quarter of respondents these issues posed difficulties, particularly where the course did not offer flexible learning options. A third of courses were online, which may have been a result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. In many cases this offered a more flexible training format and allowed access to training for those who would not have been able to attend in person, but the text responses shows that online learning did not suit everyone. Other responses showed that the availability of funding was an important factor when deciding to take training. In feedback collected by Lantra in a smaller survey, separate to this research, half of women said they were unlikely to have applied for training without funding.

What did the interviews tell us?

The interview findings demonstrated the fund had a longer-term impact on interviewees.

The women interviewed had a number of differing motivations for accessing the training. Often this involved a clear practical goal. In many cases it was to meet the immediate needs of the business through skills development or gaining certification. For some the training offered an opportunity to grow the existing business and for others it fulfilled future requirements, often linked to succession. Improving confidence or gaining validation was also a pervasive reason. Although sometimes unintended, the courses have often offered career development in the future for the women. The availability of funding itself was a motivator as it was often a tipping point and without it, some women would not have taken up any training opportunities.

The training had various positive impacts on the women. Interviewees had consolidated old skills, gained new skills, established new career paths/future plans and in some cases fulfilled new roles to enable succession. Nearly all mentioned increased confidence and self-worth. The increased confidence gave women a drive and motivated them to succeed as well as a sense of achievement and well-being.

The importance of social and support networks developed through the training has been invaluable to the women attending the training courses. There was regret amongst the few women who did not develop a new support network as a result of

the training course. The mode of training in the main has not influenced whether or not a network resulted, and networks have resulted after on-line courses as well as face-to-face. For the future, it is recommended that all training courses ensure there are many opportunities for participants to interact with other people, giving course time for participants get to know each other and swap experiences.

For some, the funding availability for the courses has been a tipping point, but for many others it has been invaluable and they would not have completed the training without it. Employer-funded training has not been an option for most, and for others they lacked confidence to ask employers to pay for training. There are clear examples of where the provision of funding has impacted the trajectory of women's lives in agriculture.

The interviewees found the fund easy to apply to, but some acknowledged that finding out about and understanding the fund might not be clear for everyone, particularly if it is not through word of mouth. Interviewees were able to overcome obstacles to taking the course such as location, the need for childcare, other jobs and the impacts of Coronavirus (COVID-19). Many acknowledged this was because they had strong support networks that other women might not have access to, particularly in regards to childcare. Women on mixed gender courses did not find it to be problematic and some found it made them more competitive, but many considered a female-only training to be a more relaxed, open and enjoyable learning experience that might be more beneficial for women and girls.

Most interviewees would recommend the Practical Training Fund to others and some had used their experience to organize other courses, such as the tractor training for young women. This snowballing effect may help to increase the number of applicants to the fund but consideration should be given as to whether knowledge of the funding is reaching more socially excluded women.

Interviewees had a positive outlook on the future of women's roles in agriculture. Some still held more traditional views on the roles of men and women in agriculture. However, most recognised these roles were changing and that support and access to training was an important tool get more women into agricultural roles and in turn raise the visibility of women in the sector for future generations.

What are the next steps?

This research has evaluated the Practical Training Fund against the core aims of the Women in Agriculture Taskforce to (i) to support the personal development of women and girls living or working in Scottish agriculture; (ii) provide them with additional skills to progress their careers and (iii) open up new employment opportunities in Scottish agriculture beyond their current role. These aims have been met and the report recommends continuing the provision of funding a format which is simple and easy to apply to, supports a wide range of courses and gives

women a high degree of control and flexibility in selecting courses that best meet their needs.

The evaluation has also provided insight into areas where the Scottish Government and Lantra Scotland could look to develop the reach and impact of the Women in Agriculture Practical Training fund further. Greater consideration should be given to whether the fund is accessible to all women in agricultural roles in Scotland and if not, how best to reach them and provide additional support with their applications. This might be achieved through:

- Wider promotion by exploring new channels for publicity and relying less on word of mouth.
- Identifying hard to reach women and targeting promotion of the fund to these groups.
- A clearer application process.
- Reviewing and making the application process clearer, in particular, highlighting that women can put forward their own courses and apply for travel assistance.
- Providing greater support during the application process, including guidance on writing an application and providing clear and timely feedback to unsuccessful applicants.
- Research and promote more courses aimed specifically at women, for instance making clear where courses are, women-only or where the training is provided by a woman.
- Making it possible to apply retrospectively for funding to increase accessibility for women who could not find a course during the funding window.

1. Introduction

The aim of this research was to evaluate the short and longer-term impacts of the Women in Agriculture Practical Training Fund on the lives and businesses of women in agriculture. This project will evaluate the impact against the intended aims, which were: (i) to support the personal development of women and girls living or working in Scottish agriculture; (ii) provide them with additional skills to progress their careers and (iii) open up new employment opportunities in Scottish agriculture beyond their current role.

The Women in Agriculture programme

In 2017, the [Women in Farming and the Agriculture Sector report](#) highlighted that although women play a major role in Scottish Agriculture, they experience a variety of barriers to working in and gaining entry to the sector. The report recommended that practical, hands-on training programmes be developed and made accessible to women through flexible scheduling, childcare availability and online components. To address these issues, a Taskforce was set up. The resulting [2019 Women in Agriculture Taskforce report](#) made further recommendations to reduce inequality for women in Scottish agriculture across seven key themes. One core theme was training. The taskforce recommended making training more accessible and inclusive by addressing the current imbalance in how training is provided. There are practical and psychological barriers for women seeking training. The taskforce recommended training aimed specifically at women as well as other actions such as encouraging more women trainers to enter the industry.

The Practical Training Fund

In response, the Women in Agriculture Practical Training Fund was set up in 2020 to support the training needs of women in Scottish Agriculture. It is administered by [Lantra Scotland](#)¹ and offers funding to women, and girls aged 13-16, who live or work in the Scottish agricultural sector to assist them in taking practical agricultural training courses they would otherwise not have access to. Funding is normally provided at 100% for courses costing £500 or less. Funding for courses over £500 is determined by a review panel. In the majority of cases, most courses costing over £500 are fully funded. The application page on Lantra's website links to a list of courses available on the [Skillseeder](#) website. Women and girls may either apply to Lantra for a course listed here or make a case for a course they have found elsewhere. The courses themselves are not necessarily aimed specifically at women; only the funding is. Applicants must explain how the training will support

¹ Lantra Scotland is supported by the Scottish Government. Through a network of approved training providers, Lantra Scotland offers certified training courses in a wide range of areas in the land-based, aquaculture and environmental sector.

their personal development, and/or their business or employment options. Lantra Scotland staff assess applications and assist individuals to find the right training for their needs. Women can apply for a maximum of one course a month and there is no limit to the number of applications one individual can make, although priority is given to new applicants.

How many people have applied to the fund?

The Practical Training Fund has awarded funding to applicants across two rounds:

- 4 January 2021 to 8 July 2021
- 30 December 2021 to 10 June 2022

Applicants for funding were not advised of a closing date. The round closed when available funding was exhausted.

In the first financial year, which included two tranches of funding, (received in December 2020 and March 2021), 585 women applied to the fund. There was a 79% success rate with 460 approved applications and 125 unsuccessful applicants.

In the second financial year, which comprised one round of funding (received in February 2022), 401 applications were received, with 16 women having applied more than once. There was a 75% success rate for those applying with 299 approved applications and 102 unsuccessful applications.

In total across the 2 years that the scheme has been running, there were 759 successful applications and 227 unsuccessful applications.

Of those who were unsuccessful, some were added to a waiting list to be considered in future rounds of funding. Some applications were not considered suitable for funding but were considered suitable for other funds including the [Women in Rural Economy Training](#) fund or [Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation training fund](#) – for example, women who were gamekeepers or worked in other non-agricultural rural businesses. For the former, Lantra would transfer the application automatically. For the latter they would need to reapply on Skillseeder.

2. Methods

This research was designed to have two stages:

1. A quantitative survey to assess the short-term impact of the fund.
2. Follow-up qualitative interviews to assess the long-term impact of the fund.

The survey

To assess the short-term impact of the fund, two short online surveys were developed in collaboration with Lantra Scotland. These surveys were designed to collect data from women who have applied for training through the Women in Agriculture Practical Training Fund.

One survey was designed for successful applicants who attended training, and the second was designed for unsuccessful applicants and those who were successful in applying but were subsequently unable to attend training.

The surveys consisted of 5-10 core questions with some questions allowing for open-text responses. The questions were designed to be suitable for different types of practical training and to include women who have received funding for more than one course.

The design of this survey was guided by an earlier survey conducted by Lantra Scotland. Women who received funding in Year 2 (Feb 2022 funding round) were asked by Lantra Scotland to complete a post-training survey immediately after the course. Of the 299 women who were asked, 68 women completed the survey, giving a 23% response rate. The Lantra survey used a smaller sample set and its' questions were more focused on women's satisfaction with Lantra as the administrator. Nevertheless, the Lantra survey results showed that directly after their training, women on the whole responded very positively to the application process, their experience on their chosen course, and their outlook for the future. The Lantra survey questions guided the development of more focused questions in this research, which were then put to a larger sample set. Where relevant, comparisons will be drawn between the Lantra survey and the two Scottish Government surveys in this report.

The two surveys were distributed by email to all applicants in the three funding rounds (986 in total) through a link administered by Lantra Scotland. The covering email asked women to choose the survey relevant to their circumstances. The surveys were developed using Questback survey software and were live from 17 October 2022 to 28 November 2022, a total of six weeks.

The survey for successful applications asked respondents:

- A screening question on age (only applicants aged 18 and over took part).
- If they live on an island (to find out if they requested assistance with travel).
- Date of application to the Practical Training Fund.
- How many courses they attended, what the training was and when they did it.
- The format of the course (online, face-to-face or both).
- Their motivation to apply for the training through the fund.
- To rate the course.
- How they managed work-life commitments.
- If the course met their expectations.
- What impact the training had on them.
- If the course provided them with new skills that would help them progress in a career in agriculture.
- If they would apply to the fund again.
- If they would be interested in taking part in follow up research.
- Other standard demographic questions, including their local authority area.
- Equalities questions to assist in sample selection for follow-up interviews.

The survey for unsuccessful applications, or those who did not attend training asked respondents:

- A screening question on age (only applicants aged 18 and over took part)
- If they had applied successfully or not.
- If successful, why they were unable to attend training.
- If unsuccessful, whether they applied for funding elsewhere.
- If they were given a reason as to why they were unsuccessful and if they were satisfied with this reason.
- If they would apply to the fund again.
- Standard demographic and equalities questions were also asked to assess the representativeness of the sample.

The interviews

A total of 8 follow-up interviews have been conducted with women who attended a training course between January 2021 and June 2022. Care was taken to ensure the sample of respondents included the full spectrum of age categories, a range of local authority areas including participants who live on islands, women who completed more than one course, a range of course types and respondents who

gave both positive and more critical responses to survey. The interviews were conducted by phone or online, lasted 30-45 minutes and were semi-structured with open questions.

The interviews with participants focused on four key themes:

1. Their experience of the course(s)
 - This included how they interacted with other women and men on the course, if they had shared or differing experiences with other women on the course, and the impact of practical aspects such as work-life balance and geographical barriers.
2. The impact of the course on their professional and personal life
 - This included impact on personal career options, on the wider business, on their current role, well-being and future plans.
3. The impact of the practical training fund
 - These questions were focused on the importance of funding in enabling women to take courses.
4. Support Networks
 - This included people they met during training as well as through the application process and afterwards.

Applicants were also asked more broadly about any difficulties they had experienced as a woman in the agricultural industry, whether the role of women is changing and how access to training might affect this.

Inclusion of Young Women

The Women in Agriculture Practical Training Fund was open to women and girls aged 13 and over, however for ethical reasons only women over 18 were surveyed. To consider the impact of the fund on younger participants, interviews were held with a parent farmer and a training coordinator who were instrumental in organising a tractor driving course for a group of girls. The course was provided by Ringlink for people aged 13-15 years old. A total of 10 girls attended the course having accessed funding through the Practical Training Fund. The aim of this interview was to gain insight into the experience of these young women. The interviewees were asked about:

- The breakdowns of boys and girls attending the course.
- If more young girls have been able to access the course as a result of the Women in Agriculture Practical Training Fund.

They were also asked about wider topics, including:

- The motivations for young women attending the course and if these motivations and training needs vary from those of young men.
- How young girls and young boys interacted with each other on the course.
- If young girls were enthusiastic about the course/agriculture in general.
- Any impact they think the course had on girls' personal development.

3. Survey results

This section presents the results from two online surveys developed to evaluate the impact of the Women in Agriculture Practical Training Fund:

1. A survey of successful applicants who attended training.
2. A survey for those who did not attend training, either due to their application being unsuccessful or for other reasons..

The questions were designed to measure the success of the fund against its intended aims (see page 5). Not all respondents answered each question.

How many people responded?

The overall response rate to both surveys was 20%. A total of 162 women responded to the survey for successful applicants who attended training. A total of 38 women responded to the survey for those who were unsuccessful or unable to attend training. Although women were able to choose which survey they completed, we know 759 women applied successfully to the fund and 227 were unsuccessful so we can estimate a 21% response rate and 17% response rate to each survey, respectfully. This estimate shows the response rate was similar for both surveys. It is important to note the low actual number of responses to the second survey for applicants who did not receive training.

Women who were successful in their applications could volunteer through the survey to take part in follow-up research, consisting of an interview with a Scottish Government social researcher, to provide a more in-depth qualitative element to the research. The responses provided in the surveys informed the interview schedule for this second stage of the evaluation.

3.1 Successful applicants who attended training

3.1.1 Demographics

After screening for under 18 year olds a total of 158 women participated in the survey. Of these, the highest response rate was in the 31-40 year old category (28%). Typically more responses came from people of working age (26-60) but responses were given by women across all age categories.

Responses were received from applicants from a wide range of local authorities across Scotland. The highest response rates were from Highland (18%) and Aberdeenshire (10%) and the lowest from more urban local authorities.

Participants were asked if they lived on an island. Of 121 people who answered, just under a fifth (17%) of respondents live on an Island. This group was asked if they had applied for additional funding to help with travel and accommodation. 85% of respondents had not. One third of all respondents did not know help was available. 10% applied for assistance with travel and only 5% for travel and accommodation. After the fund was opened it became apparent that there was a need to provide additional funding for travel and accommodation to some individuals. As a result, some applicants who applied early may have missed out on the opportunity to request this assistance. The wording on Lantra's website states:

'If the costs of travel and/or requirements for accommodation could prevent you from attending the training, please provide more information in the application form.'

Some applicants may have applied directly through Skillseeder's website. Once applicants accessed the form online they would find a section for support for travel and accommodation. One recommendation of this report is to make clear to all participants in future funding rounds that there is a limited amount of funding available for travel and accommodation at the outset.

3.1.2 Date of application

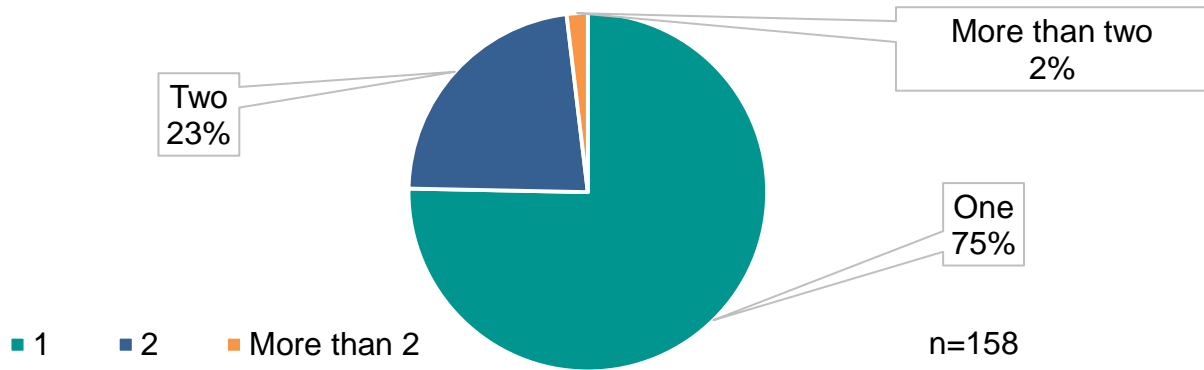
Respondents submitted applications across the three funding rounds between late 2020, when the fund first opened, and late 2022. Of those who applied for funding for more than one course, the majority did so with a gap of over 6 months between applications. A small number of applicants did successfully make applications in consecutive months.

3.1.3 Types of training attended

How many courses did each respondent attend?

Figure 1.1 (overleaf) shows that the majority (75%) of respondents attended one course through the Practical Training Fund. Almost a quarter (23%) attended two. Only 2% attended more than two courses.

Figure 1.1: How many courses have you attended through the Practical Training Fund?



What sort of courses were attended?

Respondents attended a wide variety of courses including:

- Practical skills; in areas such as sheepdog training, animal care, animal breeding, vehicle and machinery operation, walling and fencing, pesticide use and hydroponics.
- Business management skills; in areas such as financial management, business promotion and first aid.

Figure 1.2: Word cloud showing the wide range of courses attended



Figure 1.2 illustrates the wide range of courses taken. Women’s responses are grouped into course types. Words that appeared more frequently in responses to the survey are proportionately larger than those that were less frequent.

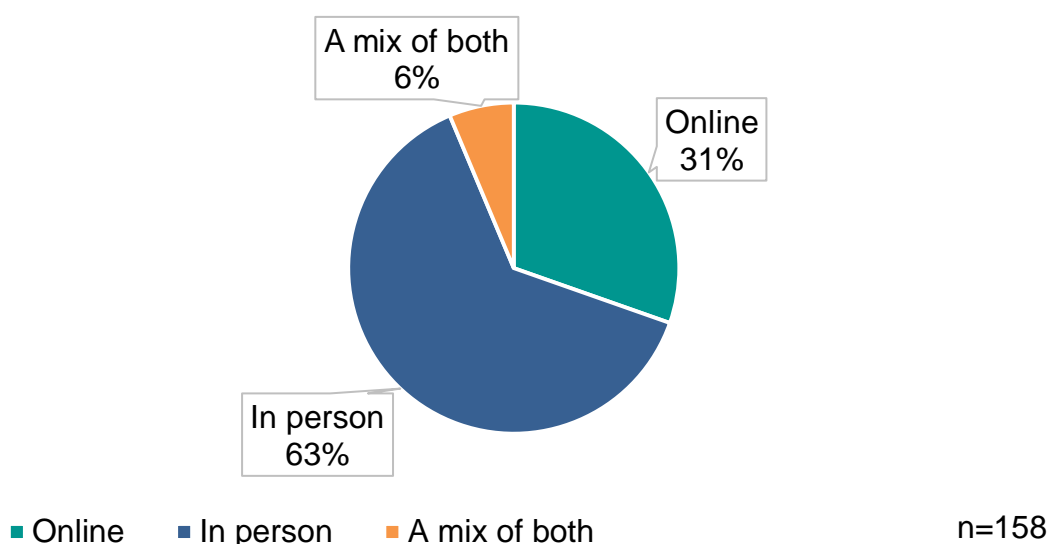
The diversity of courses that were chosen is an indication that women in the agricultural industry are interested in developing a wide variety of skills. It is not within the scope of this report to evaluate the individual courses provided by the fund, but it is clear that ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the suitability of these courses, in terms of how they deliver for women, is essential.

When were courses taken?

Respondents attended the courses throughout the year,² from early 2021 to late 2022. Given the wide range of courses on offer it is reasonable to assume certain courses are more suitable for different times of year. The survey results do not indicate a pattern in terms of women’s availability or preference in when to attend training. However, we know that there are busy points in the agricultural year, such as peak lambing and harvest times, which should be taken into account in training provision.

What format did the courses take?

Figure 1.3: For the course you attended most recently, did you attend the training online or in person?



Nearly two-thirds of respondents attended their most recent training course in person (63%), with just less than a third attending online (30%). Only 6% of

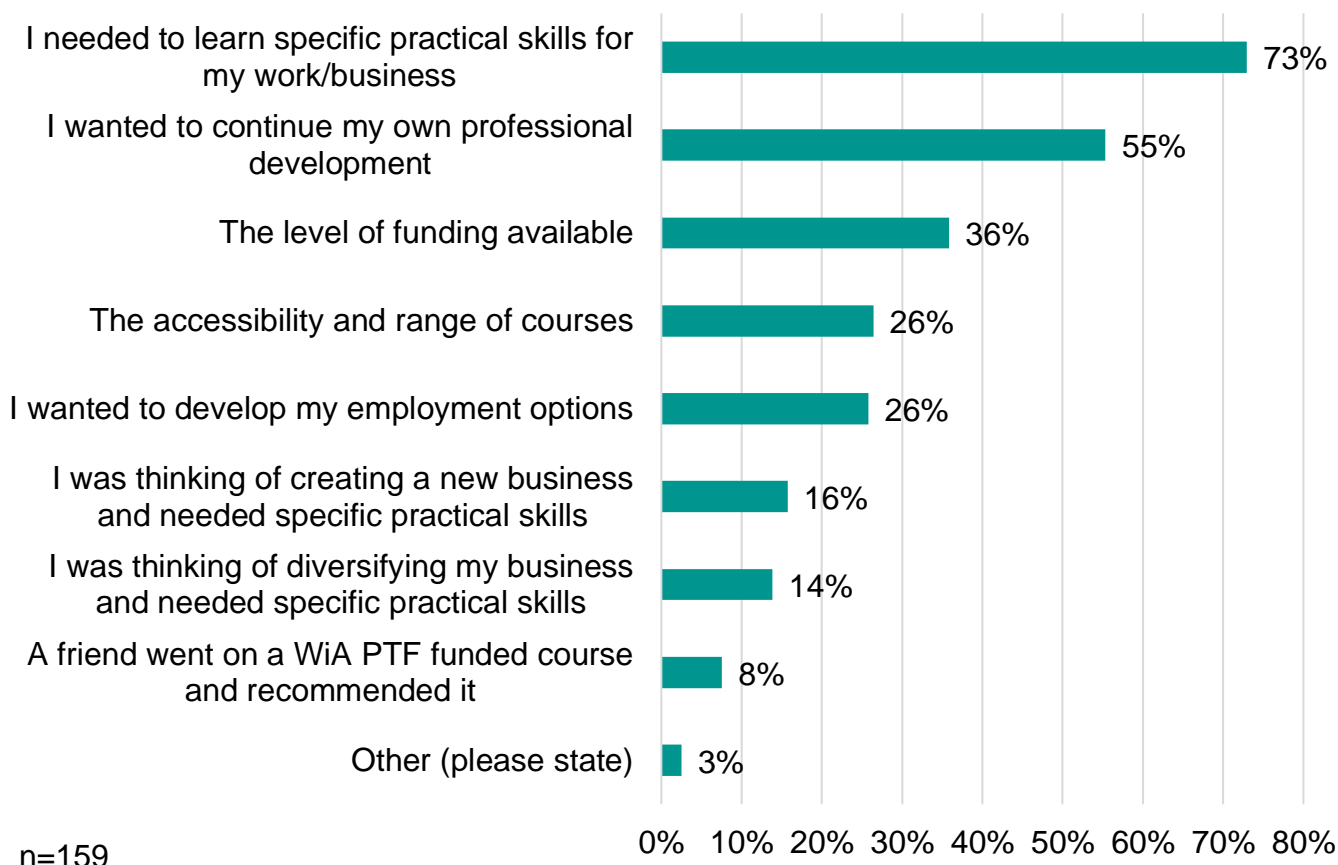
² No courses were attended during the month of December.

respondents attended through a mixture of both online and in person training. It is not surprising that the majority of courses were conducted face-to-face given the hands-on nature of many agricultural activities. It is perhaps more notable that almost a third were conducted online, including some more practical courses such as sheepdog training. This information should be considered in the wider context of making courses accessible to all women. There may be different reasons why an individual would choose one format over another including personal learning preferences, current life-work commitments, geographic location, and the availability of courses at a given moment in time. See also, section 3.1.4 on managing work-life commitments. The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic may also have had an impact on the numbers choosing to take courses online rather than face-to-face. There is some evidence of this from the survey and interview responses in this study.

3.1.4 Motivations for Applying, Impact and Expectations

Why did women apply to the fund?

Figure 1.4: What motivated you to apply for a course funded by the Women in Agriculture Practical Training Fund? (tick all that apply)



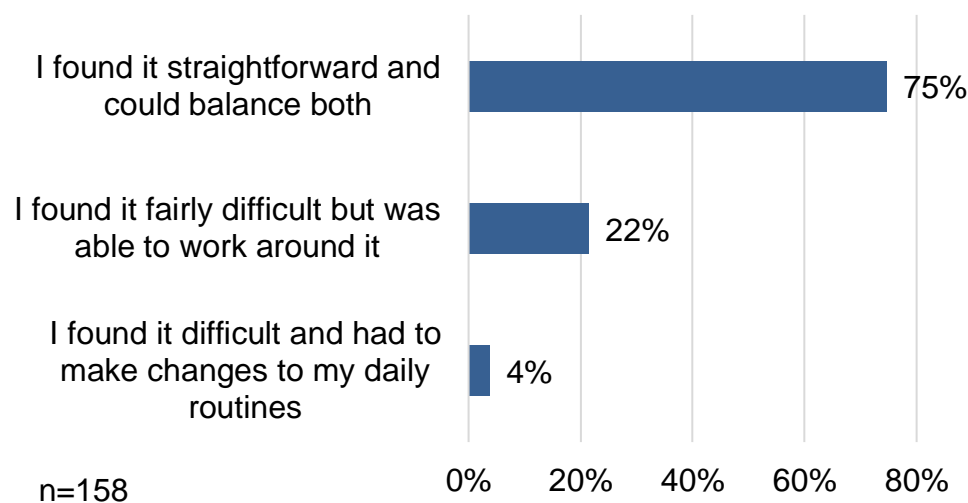
The most common reason respondents gave for applying for a course funded through the Practical Training Fund was to, 'learn specific practical skills' for their work or business (73%). Continuing professional development was the second most common reason (55%), followed by the level of funding available (36%). Over a quarter (26%) of respondents were motivated by the accessibility and range of courses, and to develop their employment options.

The least popular reasons for applying were needing specific practical skills to create a new business (16%) or diversify their business (14%) and the fund being recommended by a friend (8%).

Respondents who selected 'other' gave reasons including wanting to assist friends or family on their farms and needing specific skills to do so, needing qualifications to buy certain materials or wanting to refresh their skills.

Did the course impact other work and life commitments?

Figure 1.5: How did you manage attending the course and managing your work/life commitments?



Respondents were asked how they managed their work and life commitments while they attended the course. The majority (75%) stated that they found it straightforward and could balance both, whilst over a fifth (22%) had some difficulty but were able to work around their other commitments. A smaller number (4%) found it difficult to manage and had to make changes to their daily routine.

Respondents who found it straightforward gave the following reasons:

- They took time off from their regular job.
- They were able to get childcare.
- Their children were grown up enough to allow them time to take the course.

- The course /meetings were in the evening.
- The course was on the weekend.
- The course was short.
- The course was flexible.
- The course was done on their farm.
- The course was online.
- The course could be completed in their own time.
- They have a supportive partner / husband.
- The trainer worked around attendees' commitments.
- Advance planning.

Those who found it difficult but manageable gave the following reasons:

- They worked part-time or did shifts.
- Work commitments.
- Arranging childcare.
- Arranging days off from their regular job.
- The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, "presented me with some difficulties".
- Caring for other family members.
- Studying for other courses.

Those who found it very difficult gave the following reasons:

- The course was inflexible – it ran through the week while they were at work.
- The course location involved travel and accommodation expenses and finding help with childcare and farm work.
- The course was intensive and required additional time for coursework.
- A poorly designed course caused delays in its completion.

It is notable that, although often facing similar challenges, taking time off work, arranging childcare or generally fitting the course around other commitments was easier for some women than others, as indicated by the reasons given above. The format of the course was also suitable for some women but not others. For some, online courses were a practical solution:

“The sheepdog course was in the evening via zoom, so was easy for me to attend once my toddler was in bed.”

“The online content could be accessed at any time to fit my work commitments.”

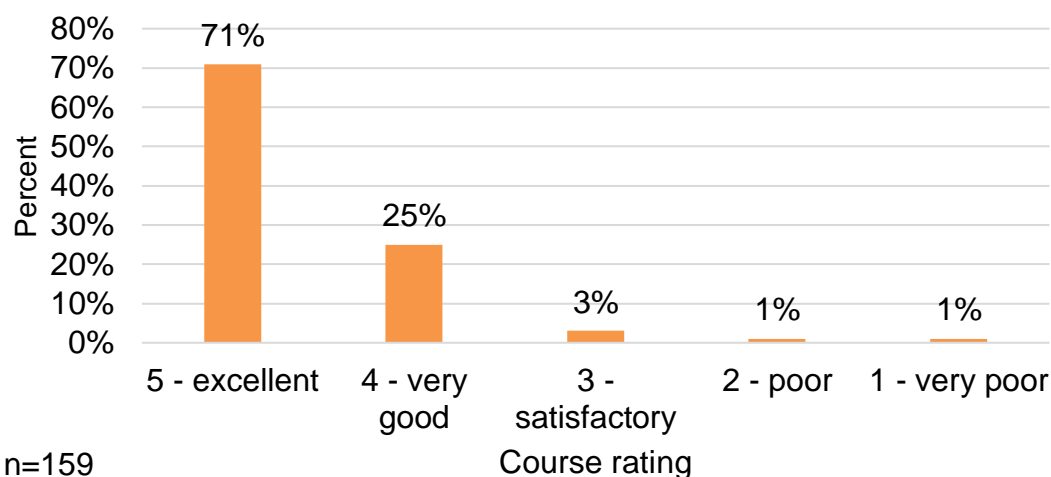
Others did not find online learning suitable for them:

“I feel face to face training rather than online would be more beneficial for me.”

Overall, this suggests that flexible course design and offering a range of learning options is key to improving the accessibility of training.

How did women rate the courses they attended?

Figure 1.6: Course rating

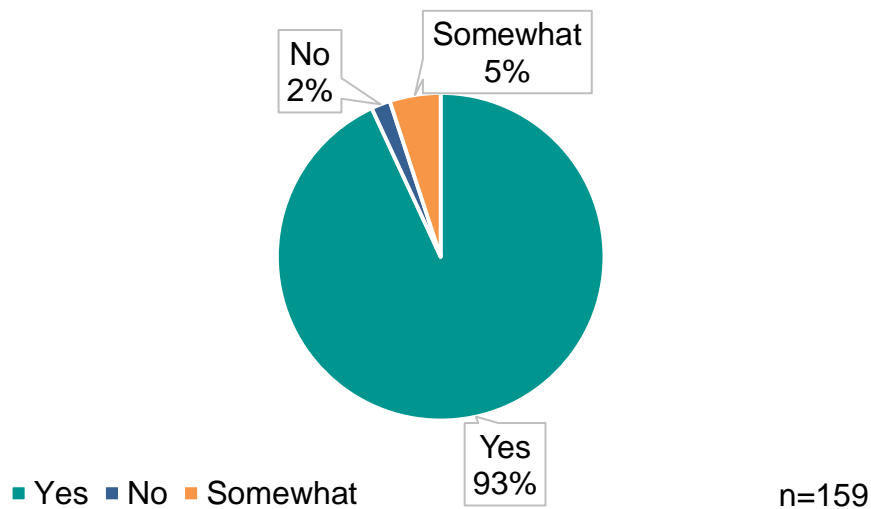


In total respondents gave ratings for 112 courses. (Where people took more than one course a separate rating was given for each course. As only 2% of respondents took 3 courses and 15% took two courses the results have been amalgamated for clarity).

The majority (71%) of respondents rated their course as ‘excellent’ and a quarter (25%) rated it as ‘very good’. A smaller number (3%) found the course ‘satisfactory’ and only 2% ‘poor or very poor’.

Did the courses meet expectations?

Figure 1.7: Did the most recent training meet your expectations?



The majority of respondents reported that their most recent training course met their expectations (93%), while 5% felt it did somewhat and 2% felt it did not.

Respondents were asked to explain their answer. Where expectations were met (93%) reasons included:

- It provided them with confidence.
- Respondents learned what they expected to or it exceeded expectations.
- It provided tailored training.
- The course provided practical skills that could be used in the business.
- The course was delivered well and to a high standard.
- The course allowed career diversification .
- Participants gained useful background knowledge.
- They learned IT skills that can be used in the business.
- Participants were able to achieve a qualification.
- The course provided skills for life.

Respondents who felt that the course had only partially or not met their expectations gave the following reasons:

- Poor quality, out of date training materials didn't include modern practices.

- The course did not run despite having been advertised.
- The course was advertised for beginners but required previous experience.
- The location of the course venue was not suitable.
- More practical time would have been beneficial.

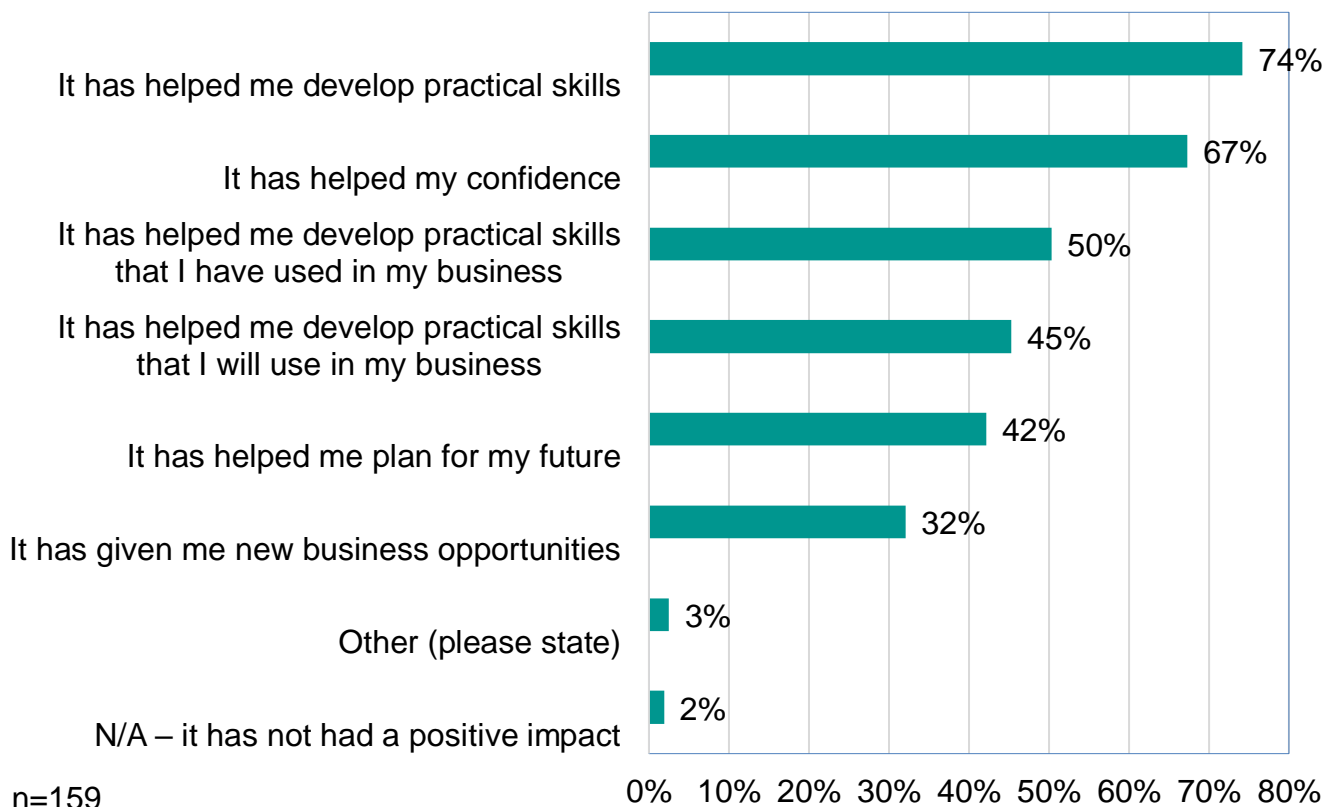
In some cases, respondents' dissatisfaction was due to several issues. One respondent reflected her course did not cover all the training it had promised to and was poorly suited to women participants:

“While we did the fencing part, we didn't do any gate installation. The male instructor was hard work, did not prioritise the females on the course, so the already more skilled male participant learnt even more.”

It is important to re-iterate that unsatisfactory views account for only 5% of total responses, the majority of which were overwhelmingly positive. It is also not the focus of this report to evaluate specific training courses. Some courses were offered by Lantra while others were sourced by the participating women themselves. Nevertheless these views are included so that they can be considered as part of future work to develop the programme.

What impact did the training have?

Figure 1.8: What impact has this training had on you? (tick all that apply)



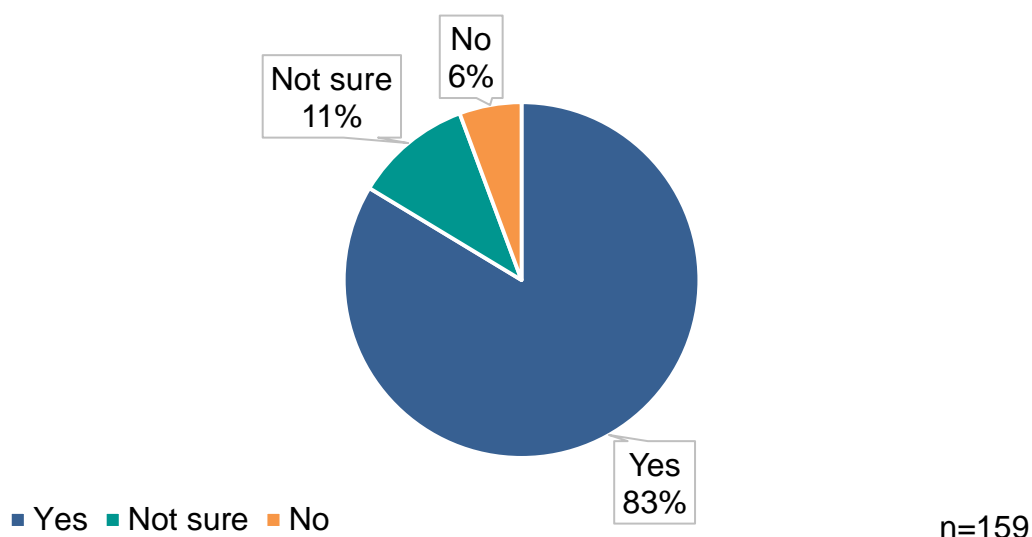
Respondents were asked about the impact the training had on them. They could choose multiple responses (each option shows the percentage of total respondents who chose that option). The majority (74%) of respondents felt the training they attended helped them to develop practical skills and around two thirds (67%) felt it helped their confidence. Half of respondents (50%) have already used the practical skills they developed in the training in their business and a similar number (45%) said they will use these skills in future. Around two fifths (42%) of respondents reported that the training has helped them plan for their future and around a third (32%) reported that it has given them new business opportunities. Only 2% felt that it did not have a positive impact.

A small number (3%) of respondents provided more detailed answers about the impact the training has had for them. These included making new friends and networking, complying with agricultural guidance and legislation, broadening their knowledge and increasing awareness of health and safety.

3.1.5 Skills for the Future

Has the fund better equipped women for their future in Agriculture?

Figure 1.9: Do you think the training has provided you with new skills that will help you progress in your career or take up further opportunities in agriculture?



Most respondents (84%) reported that the training they attended has provided them with new skills that will help them progress in their career or take up further opportunities in agriculture. Just over a tenth (11%) were unsure, and 6% said no.

Respondents were asked to explain their answer. Responses included:

- The experience has given them confidence and reduced worry.

- The course provided measurable skills that they have put into practice.
- The training provided skills to enable them to work independently.
- It has broadened their thinking about career progression.
- It has opened up new career opportunities.
- The course has strengthened positions within the family farm.
- Respondents have more skills to offer potential employers.
- A certificate was gained which can be shown to prospective employers.
- The course provided skills to promote their business.
- The course has generated new ideas and broadened their horizons.
- Respondents are planning new businesses and taking on new activities as a result of the training.
- It gave them a chance to brush up on old skills.
- It has helped secure more land from a land owner.
- It has cut costs by being able to do the work instead of contracting it out and this had increased business viability.
- One respondent mentioned plans to build, “a purpose built microgreen growing space,” following the training.

For respondents who were unsure, reasons included:

- Rethinking if that line of work is what they really want to do but the skills may still be useful.
- The training meets current business needs but they cannot see any opportunities to expand the business or build a new one due to other life commitments.

For respondents who felt it would not help them in future, reasons given included:

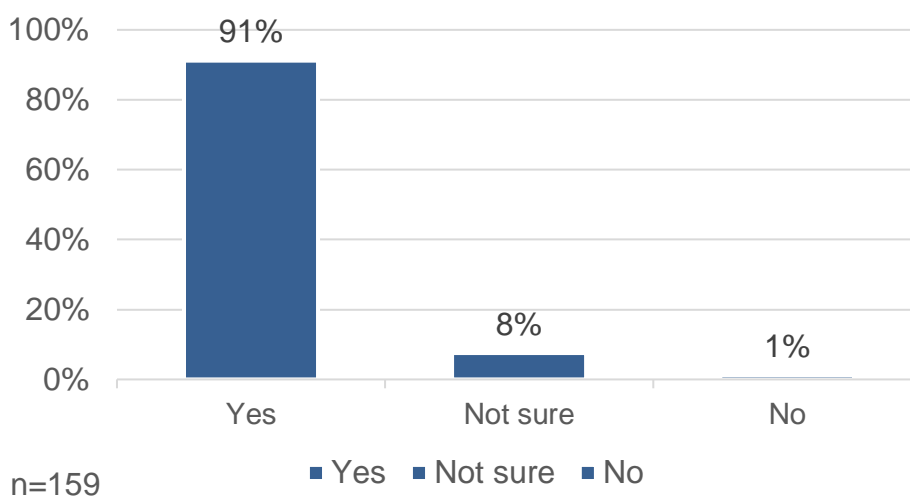
- The training has enabled them to be legally compliant in what they were already doing in the business.
- They were not looking to develop their career.

- They do not have the capital to invest in materials that will enable them to take things forward.
- They have not been able to secure a job and believe it is due to their age and gender.

These answers indicate the range of positive impacts, from personal development to skills for use in a current business, and skills women intend to use in new ventures within agriculture. They also point to potential wider impacts, for example, environmentally beneficial activities. However, the results also indicate that women continue to face barriers in the industry. Those who were unsure or felt there was no impact on being better equipped for their future represent just under a fifth of respondents, a significant number. For some, this included financial barriers and discrimination, and this highlights some of the challenges still faced if the practical training fund is to meet its aims in full.

Would women reapply to the fund?

Figure 1.10 If funding was to become available in the future, would you be interested in applying again?



Most respondents would apply to the fund again (91%), a small number (8%) were unsure and only 1% said no. Respondents explained their answers. Of those who said they would apply again, principle reasons included:

- Personal development – learning new skills.
- Interest in the variety of other courses on offer.
- To continue developing their business.
- To gain specific qualifications / certification.
- A good experience first time round with course design and work-life fit.

- If the funding was available - a significant number of answers mentioned only having been able to take previous courses due to the availability of funding.

For those who were unsure responses included:

- Only taking a course if it was essential.
- The delivery format - face-to-face vs online. Some felt they learned better through face-to-face training.

Many women mentioned that the fund was critical to them deciding to take a course. The Lantra post-training survey showed that half (50%) of women would not have taken the course without funding.

3.2 Unsuccessful applicants and those who were unable to attend training

Feedback was also sought from applicants to the Practical Training Fund who could not give feedback on the training course itself because they were either unsuccessful in applying to the fund or unable to take the course for other reasons. Their views are critical if we are to understand the barriers that some women face when trying to secure funding or to successfully complete training.

A total of 38 women who were unsuccessful in their applications responded to the survey, after screening for under 18 year olds. Because the sample size is so small we cannot make any meaningful comparisons with the group of successful applicants. The highest response rate for unsuccessful applications was in the 41-50 year old category (24%). Typically more responses came from people of working age (26-60) but responses were given by women across all age categories. Responses were received from applicants from a wide range of predominantly rural local authorities across Scotland. The highest response rates were from Highland (24%) and Aberdeenshire (22%).

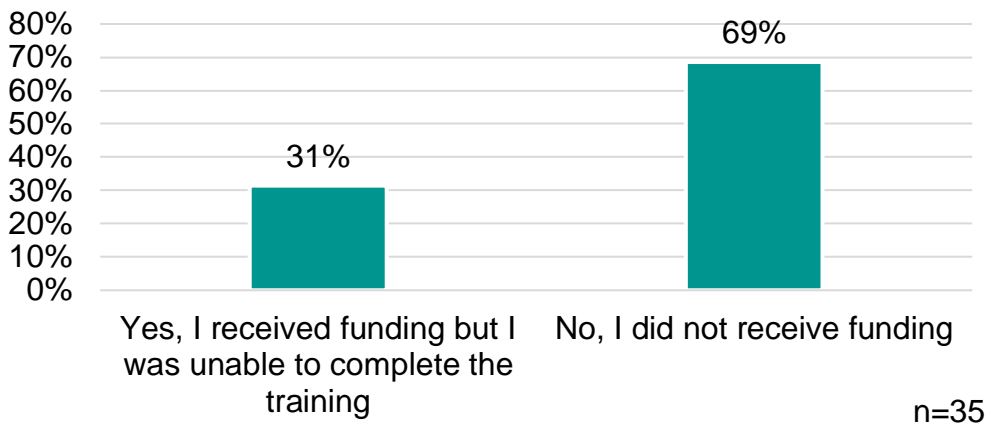
Participants were asked if they lived on an island. Of 27 people who answered the question, one tenth of respondents live on an Island. This group was asked if they had applied for funding to help with travel and accommodation. None had applied for assistance and one third did not know help was available.

3.2.1 Unsuccessful applications vs. inability to attend training

Figure 2.1 (overleaf) shows that just over two thirds (69%) of respondents were unsuccessful in their application and did not receive any funding, and just under

one third (31%) of respondents received funding but were unable to complete the training.

Figure 2.1: Were you successful in your application? (Note: Base 38 respondents)



3.2.2 Why were women unable to attend training?

Respondents were asked to explain why they were unable to undertake the training. Reasons included:

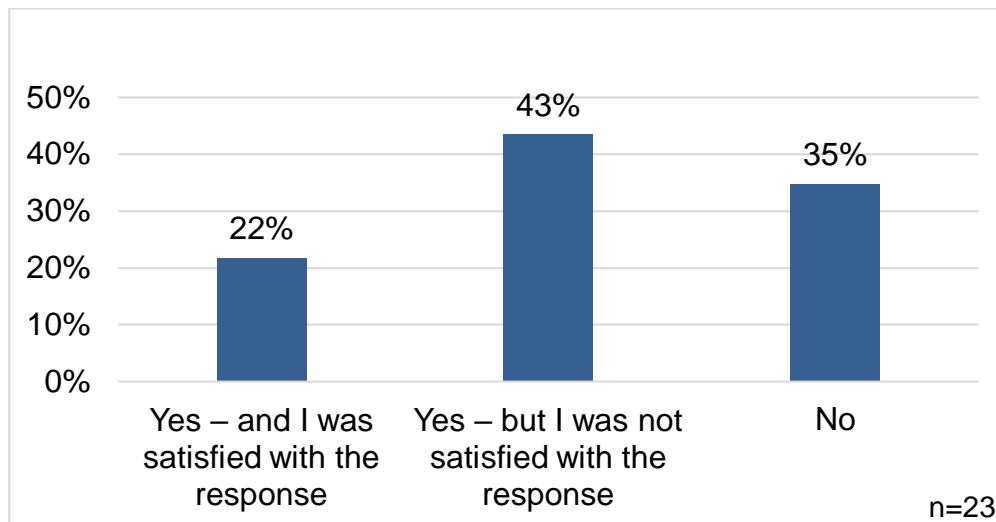
- The advertised course did not run.
- The participant was not told of the full course requirements in advance. (In one case respondents were asked to buy course materials and organise a training venue).
- Miscommunication over the time required to complete the training.
- Coronavirus (COVID-19) resulted in some face-to-face training being cancelled.
- Some respondents developed long Coronavirus (COVID-19) and could no longer participate in intense physical activity.
- Personal commitments affected ability to travel to the training venue.

3.2.3 Were unsuccessful applicants given appropriate feedback?

Figure 2.2 (overleaf), shows that around two thirds of respondents received a response from Lantra Scotland explaining why they did not receive funding (65%), but of these, approximately two thirds were not satisfied with the response they

received. 35% of respondents said they did not receive an explanation from Lantra. According to these results 78% of respondents received unsatisfactory feedback.

Figure 2.2: Did Lantra Scotland explain why you did not receive funding?



Around two thirds of respondents received a response from Lantra Scotland explaining why they did not receive funding (65%), but of these, approximately two thirds were not satisfied with the response they received. 35% of respondents said they did not receive an explanation from Lantra. According to these results 78% of respondents received unsatisfactory feedback.

Where women were satisfied with the response from Lantra, comments included:

- Funding had run out and the application window had closed.
- Respondents were sent to more appropriate funding sources
- The timing of funding application windows did not fit in with course dates. Some chose to begin courses without funding.

Where respondents were dissatisfied with the response comments included:

- Some respondents were told the employer / business should pay for the training but disagreed.
- One respondent felt office work courses were not being given the same value as practical training).
- Another argued all courses contribute to personal development.
- The course was not considered relevant to the agricultural industry.

- The respondent was told they'd missed application deadlines but had applied in time and attributed this to staffing issues and processing errors by the funding provider.
- The respondent was not able to apply retrospectively for funding.
- The timing of the application window did not coincide with the timing of course availability.

Where respondents said no explanation was given from Lantra, comments included:

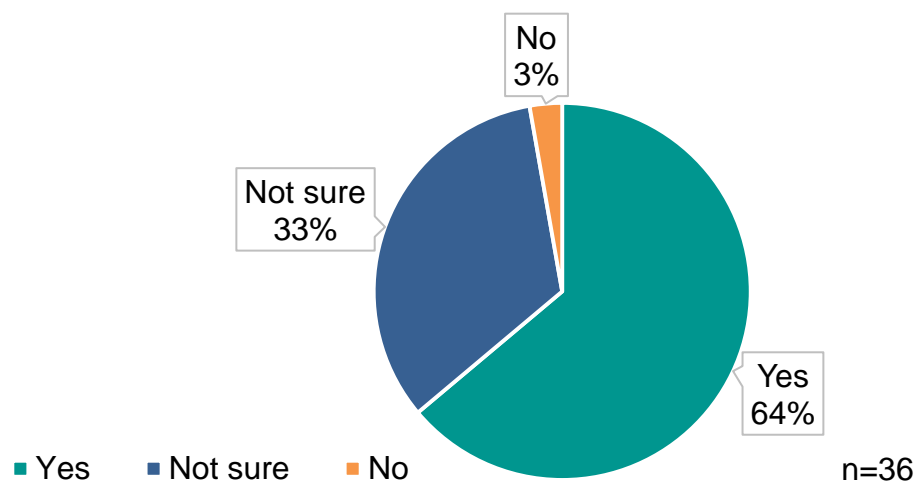
- Some respondents said they heard nothing until they received an e-mail request to participate in this evaluation survey.
- The respondent was not contacted in the first round of funding but offered funding in round 2 and then had their application rejected. This may have been due to them being placed on a waiting list but the overall experience was described as disappointing.

Other Sources of Funding

Only two candidates responded to a question asking if they were able to secure other sources of funding for their course. One was able to, and one was not.

3.2.3 Would women who did not receive training apply again?

Figure 2.3: If funding was to become available in the future, would you be interested in applying again?



Over half (64%) of respondents who were unsuccessful or unable to attend training would apply for the fund again. A third (33%) are unsure and only 3% of respondents would not apply for the fund again in the future. Figure 1.10 for women who were successful in applying showed that 91% would reapply, only 8% were unsure and 1% would not reapply. This comparison suggests being unsuccessful the first time round has a discouraging effect.

For those who said yes, reasons included:

- To apply for funding for different courses.
- To gain extra experience and skills.
- To help the business.
- Any help is appreciated.
- They would reapply if they received feedback.

For those who were unsure responses included:

- Dissatisfaction with the application process.
- Dissatisfaction with training providers.
- Believing they were not of the right age demographic.
- If it was possible to book a course and then apply for funding.
- They would apply to a different fund that Lantra directed them to.

Respondents were asked if they would be interested in taking part in follow-up interviews and 56% said yes. 40% of respondents would also be interested in being used as a case study.

3. Interview Findings

This section provides a more detailed summary of the key interview findings by topic.

3.1 Motivations for accessing training

Women had a number of differing motivations for accessing the training:

1. clear practical goals
2. immediate needs of the business
3. gaining certification
4. opportunity to grow the existing business
5. future requirements, often linked to succession
6. improving confidence

Although sometimes unintended, the courses have often offered career development in the future for the women. The availability of funding itself was often a tipping point and without it, some women would not have taken up any training opportunities.

When asked what motivated them to apply and what they hoped to get out of the training, the majority of interviewees had a clear practical goal in mind. These goals varied depending on their personal background and the type and size of the farm they worked on. For instance, one woman who recently bought a croft and was relatively new to farming took a hydroponics course to develop a small plot on her land. Another woman who was brought up on a farm and is married to a farmer took a spraying course and a forklift operation course to support the operation of her family's farm.

In most cases the funded course addressed the immediate needs of the business. For one woman this meant learning how to better manage the farms finances:

“I’ve got quite a logical head on me and I like to be efficient. My thoughts were if I did a course and learned about how the admin side of the business works then I hopefully could see where money’s hemorrhaging out and try and help tighten things up.”

Meeting these immediate needs was enough of a goal in itself for some. One woman who owned a croft was simply looking for the, “peace of mind” that gaining a certificate offered her while she continued to do what she’d, “already been doing for years.”

But for others the course represented an opportunity to grow the existing business. One woman described how she, “saw a gap,” in the quality of images of livestock

online and took a photography course so she could better promote her livestock. This led her to even consider this as a business in itself but at the outset she said:

“I wasn't thinking of it as something I could do as a business, I was more thinking of it about promotion here on the farm. The here and now, rather than into the future.”

For a dairy farm worker who took a foot-trimming course for cattle, the course was taken to address an immediate problem but it also offered up an opportunity for career-development in the future:

“It was my own [idea]. I was dealing with the cows every day and seeing lameness in the herd. I obviously wanted to do something about it. It wasn't really my employer being like, “You're going to go away on this in March.” So it was me that thought this is really good because it's going to help me and help my job at the time.”

Some women took courses with an eye more firmly on the future. One woman took courses in accounting and dry-stone walling with a view to taking on those roles from her father-in-law.

“Because he's 79 he wanted a provision in place of someone who knew how to do it. [...] although I work part time off the farm it's obviously a succession thing so that I could do these jobs and expand my own knowledge. The enjoyment factor of it is well but it's mainly for planning for the future really.”

One woman mentioned improving her confidence as a motivating factor:

“I did have the ideas but I didn't have the confidence, and I didn't have anybody here to discuss it. [The] other farmers on the island are very traditional. And I just wanted to run my notions past some experts.”

Many women also found the availability of funding itself was a tipping point to them accessing training. Without the funding, although they had the desire for training, they would not have accessed it:

“I had been thinking about doing [the courses] for ages but probably hadn't prioritized doing, because dad can do the spraying. [...] It's the cost of things, I suppose. Courses are like £400-500 per course and I've just been busy. I also work as a physiotherapist. [...] So it was finding the time to prioritize doing a course rather than just going and getting other work and making money.”

“Having something available like the Women in Agriculture fund definitely tipped the balance for me to go, ‘Oh, yeah, this is actually quite a big factor to get some financial help. I will make the effort to go on this course because there's a bit of help here.’ As opposed to going, ‘Oh no, this is too difficult.’”

3.2 Training impacts

This section considers the impacts of the training on women.

The training had various positive impacts on the women. Nearly all mentioned increased confidence and self-worth. The increased confidence gave women a drive and motivated them to succeed.

Additionally, women have gained new skills, established new career paths/future plans and in some cases fulfilled new roles to enable succession.

Confidence, self-worth, motivation

Women were asked how confident they felt about the subject area of their course before and after the training. The majority stated it had a positive effect on their confidence:

“Before the course, I knew what my goals were, what I wanted to achieve [...], but I had no idea how to do it. [Now] I'm finding I know how to do it, what to achieve, so I'm much more confident now.”

“Confident as far as yes, I thought it was a good idea. I didn't understand it. Now I do and can see the potential and the possibilities of it working.”

For some this confidence was about being able to hold their own within the industry:

“I used to live on the south coast, coming up into a highly agricultural area, I feel more confident being able to speak to your local farmer about agricultural type things. And because I've got a slight specialism in something totally different that they might not have heard about.”

Many women reported positive impacts beyond simply having increased confidence. For instance, this newfound confidence was seen as motivational, contributing to self-worth and gave a sense of direction and focus:

“If you can get the course done and feel quite confident when you leave it does push you in the right direction.”

“It lifts you a bit if you get on well with it and can take what you've learned away, keep improving. It does boost you a bit. Especially because I was on the fence of not knowing what I was doing really.”

“It's given me something to focus on, concentrate on and develop new skills, which I didn't have before.”

“Just seeing other people doing what I would like to do fires you up a bit and puts some ambition back into the equation, which when you get a bit isolated if you work on your own a lot can sort of ebb away .[] I get a fear about making big decisions and it’s really good to see people who [are] practical and just learn by getting on with it.”

Another woman highlighted specifically how the validation the course gave her was good for her mental health and had alleviated self-doubt and anxiety:

“Having done the training has probably made me feel less anxious about getting things wrong. And by having a few more skills, it's made me feel that in other aspects, that actually I can do these things. I can go through tests, I can pass hem. [...] You're quite often just shown how to do something once and the sent off to do it. So it was definitely useful to have those courses for someone to formally validate, yes, you are correctly doing this task. And then it makes you think, oh, I'm actually not as bad as I thought I was, which improves your mental health, I suppose. Because you feel less anxious and you feel more important in your role.”

It also gave a sense of achievement and well-being:

“When you learn anything, it's good for you, isn't it? And you feel like you've achieved something, so that's always a good thing. And then when you're producing something that you love and it's making a difference to your business or your daily life, then yeah, absolutely. It’s just nice to have done something for myself, improving me.”

Skills

Many of the women spoke of the skills they had acquired from the course and had already begun using:

“I’ve already put [dry stone walling] into practice where a bull has been rubbing on one of the dykes and knocked the stones off the top and I’ve been able to repair that myself. The accounting course there’s absolutely no doubt it’s been beneficial because it's really helped my knowledge and [...] skills. I use it all the time basically.”

Putting these skills into practice offered some women greater independence:

“I've greatly improved my skills for working within that business and [the training has] given me more independence to take on tasks on my own [...], so when dad retires, I can do these jobs myself, [...] rather than get a contractor in to do it.”

Some women said the courses had been useful to hone existing skills. This typically boosted confidence by developing and validating their existing knowledge:

“It was a great skill to learn the complete proper way of doing it.”

“It was a confidence boosting course as well as being good for insurance and safety and things. But it was more like a guy coming out and saying, yeah, well you’re quite capable of using this thing. Whereas I was always like, oh, am I doing things right or am I doing things wrong?”

“If there’s something you want to brush up, [the course] is going to help you through your job.”

More often the course was useful in developing brand new skills, be it in business administration, sheepdog handling or hydroponics:

“I didn't know how to train a dog before, so it's given me different skills and different abilities in that area and I would be able to go gather the sheep myself and things, with my own dog, which I wasn't able to do before.”

One woman specifically highlighted that the skills she developed on her course could not have been self-taught because it was too specialised:

“There was things about angles and distances, technical things that you would probably never know unless you’re an expert.”

Impact on future plans

The impact on women’s future plans varied but were generally seen as positive. For one interviewee the course had given her the skills and motivation to set up her own business foot trimming and ultrasound scanning cattle. Another was exploring to turn her skills in marketing livestock into a business. Some women on the course did not change their plans for their future but the training was seen as empowering in that it offered them more options:

“I wouldn’t say they changed my plans for the future, but they’ve equipped me with more skills to deal with the future.”

“It’s made my job a lot more easy here on the farm [with] additional skills to go forward with, options to help here on the farm once the father in law is no longer around and skills if I was to get into [dry-stone walling] as another avenue of income.”

As in the case above, the question of succession was an important factor. The course equipped some women to take over roles from relatives once they retired. Another, and sometimes related, impact of this could be that some women who previously held jobs off the farm would work on the farm full-time:

“With the promotion, getting [the cattle] out there, getting sales, getting noticed, running shows. Ultimately, I will be here full-time.”

This was seen as a positive step forward although respondents who had other professions did mention some sadness at the prospect of leaving their old jobs and the associated social networks.

3.3 Connections to other women in agriculture – support networks

The importance of social and support networks developed through the training has been invaluable to the women attending the training courses. There was regret amongst the few women who did not develop a new support network as a result of the training course. The mode of training in the main has not influenced whether or not a network resulted, and networks have resulted after on-line courses as well as face-to-face. For the future, it is recommended that all training courses ensure there are many opportunities for participants to interact with other people, giving course time for participants get to know each other and swap experiences.

Interviewees were asked if they developed any social and support networks through the training. One interviewee mentioned that they had developed a good relationship with the course trainer:

“I have spoken to them since then for little bits advice, so I’ve sent pictures of a wall that I’ve had an issue with and said, how would you tackle this. [...]. I know I’ve got that contact there if I ever need advice.”

Most interviewees spoke of their experiences of interacting with other course members and this varied significantly being largely dependent on the course format. Some had face-to-face courses, some had one-to-one training, some took online courses where they interacted with other course members and others took courses where interaction did not happen. In all cases, aside from interactive sessions during the course, the organisation of social networks appears to have occurred organically as opposed to having been encouraged by the course organisers.

For those who did not interact with other course members one expressed that it is something they would have liked:

“No, there wasn’t an opportunity to network with the other people on the course. [...] I would have (liked that). But I didn’t get the impression the other people on the course wanted to stay any longer on the course.”

For those who did interact with other course members, some mentioned how the networks she developed provided continued support in her agricultural activities:

“On one of the courses, one of the women that I met has become our sort of farm advisor and has helped us with agri-environment applications and various other applications. And she's been absolutely brilliant and a real help and mentor for me”.

“I found on the courses everyone around you was really encouraging because they were all in the same boat, this is something you're learning. And the people are taking the courses, they've seen it all as well. And even after, I still have contact with them and if I've got problems or anything I know I can contact them for help or get advice. It's helped a lot.”

Many respondents spoke of the social confidence and well-being which social interaction the course provided:

“It's nice to go on a course or go to a meeting or do something where you're interacting with other people. So, all of that was a benefit for me.”

For some this was particularly important in the wake of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic:

“Anything that got me in contact with other people after all the social distancing requirements of the pandemic was good for me.”

Some mentioned how these types of social networks would not otherwise exist and how connections had lasted beyond the course:

“It was that was really nice to actually connect directly with female farmers because you don't tend to meet that many. [...] There was video chat and for a wee while after the group finished we would have a meet up on a Facebook video thing where we just chat.”

“We all have stayed in touch so it's actually quite good because there's people from the bottom of England to Ireland. And we've all got a WhatsApp group to stay in touch.”

3.4 The importance of the fund to women undertaking training

For some the funding availability for the courses has been a tipping point, but for many others it has been invaluable and they would not have completed the training without it. Employer-funded training has not been an option for most, and for others they lacked confidence to ask employers to pay for training. There are clear examples of where the provision of funding has impacted the trajectory of women's lives in agriculture.

The purpose of the Practical Training Fund is to get more women to undertake training in agricultural sector skills. Section 3.1 showed that the availability of funding was a motivating factor in itself, providing the additional 'push' needed to

make training a priority amidst a range of other competing priorities on their incomes or their time such as childcare. These considerations are different for each person, depending on their individual circumstances.

For one interviewee the funding of the course allowed them to offset the costs of buying the equipment required for the course. Without the course funding she, “wouldn't be able to do it all.”

One interviewee stated that they would have taken the course, even if they'd had to pay for it. However, they explained that in their economic situation this would have set back important work required to their craft. Another said the cost was off-putting and without the funding, she would have self-taught:

“I'd just try and do it myself, if you know what I mean? Just try and teach myself. So I think from that point of view it does give you an incentive. [...] I think having it for free does encourage things to be learned properly.”

For other interviewees, without the fund they simply would not have taken any training as they did not consider it affordable:

“I'm still paying off a massive student loan for an honours degree and [...] owe a lot of people a lot of money. I certainly wouldn't be going and paying for a course at this point, no.”

“I wouldn't have gone on the course cause we wouldn't have been able to afford it any other way.”

When asked if their employer might have paid for the funding one respondent admitted they would not have had the confidence to ask:

“I probably would have been really awkward about that. I don't think I could have gone. I would have been like could you pay £700 for me to go and learn how to trim. I probably wouldn't have done it.”

Finally, one interviewee reflected on how the funding had impacted the trajectory of their life in agriculture:

“Probably if I hadn't been accepted for the funding I probably would have not gone and done it and I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing now. [...] I just probably would have carried on working within the agricultural sector, which I have. I probably would have just been an employee.”

3.5 Women's feedback on their experience of the course

Participants in the interviews were asked about their experience of the course, including how they found it, how they found the application process and the

difficulties they encountered taking the course. This feedback is important to inform the development of the programme.

How people found out about it

The women interviewed came to the know about the availability of the funding in different ways, including word of mouth, social media and advertising through agricultural publications or organisations. While some were purposefully looking for a course and then became aware of the funding, most had been thinking about taking training and gaining awareness of the fund encouraged them to search more concretely.

“I think that was publicized locally, either on my local Facebook group or potentially through the SCF (Scottish Crofting Federation) website and.. what’s the other one I look at... Rural Payment possibly [...] I think there was two places where I saw it and looked further. [...] It was probably the idea that I wanted to do something first, supported by, oh, look, there’s a fund that can help me do it.”

In most cases they could not clearly recollect how they found out about it:

“I saw it advertised either in the Scottish Farmer or in a magazine, or online or something like that. [...] It might have actually been the lady that does the sheepdog training course shared something about it on Facebook, but it was in the press and things. So I had heard about it probably through a variety of different avenues.”

Whilst a couple of women mentioned publications and social media others came to the fund through word of mouth.

“I probably wouldn’t have come across that or accessed it if my friend hadn’t told me about it.”

“But if you’re not already in a loop, your chances of knowing about such courses, is very limited.”

Although the fund is widely advertised in agricultural circles some women acknowledged that the information may not be reaching everyone who might be interested and could be more widely publicised:

“A lot of people I speak to, they probably don’t know how easy it is to apply and they problem just aren’t aware of when funding is coming out and these sorts of things. So there’s definitely women locally here who would definitely benefit from courses But maybe didn’t realize it was available.”

Some women used their awareness of the fund to encourage friends others to apply which suggests positive experiences of the fund could have a snowballing effect.

How they found the process of applying

The majority of women interviewed had a positive experience of the application process which can be summarized as surprisingly straightforward, easy to organize and flexible. A particular strength is that finding and arranging training courses could be led by the individual themselves. One recommendation of this report is for the possibility to apply for courses not listed by Lantra to be more clearly highlighted and promoted.

Many positive experiences of application process were described, for example:

“I actually thought the application process would have been harder, so it was quite a nice surprise for it [to be] really straightforward. Because some of these things they want to basically preach why you should be allowed, whereas this one was really straightforward, straight to the point. And you either got the funding or you didn't. And it was quite fast I thought as well from submitting the application to finding out that you were accepted. [...] And the help in finding the course and a training provider was all really good as well.”

“It was easy to fill in the form, it was online. You didn't need to evidence that you needed to do it, which was good, because that can be difficult. You didn't need a letter from your employer saying, I want [...] to do this course. It was all just pretty straightforward and it was led by the individual themselves, rather than an employer deciding which courses they thought you should do.”

“If there wasn't a course available, a set course available, you could design your own course and get the funding for that. I think that was brilliant because it was flexible. There's not really been anything else that I've been on that was like it.”

Most of the women interviewed first contacted Lantra by e-mail to enquire about the fund before submitting their application. At this stage they had an idea of the course they wanted to take and could seek support from Lantra to organize it. One woman said that, having contacted Lantra, she identified a course and then organized a group of women in need of the training to apply individually in order to bring the course to fruition. Whilst flexible, this application process lends itself to people with a certain level of confidence and self-drive and might not have been as easy to use for all women. One woman reflected that the reason she was happy with the application process was because:

“I came from the perspective of spying the course and then realizing I could get it funded as opposed to looking at a list and thinking, oh, is there anything on there I could do.”

And thinking about the option to apply for courses not listed by Lantra another said:

“I don't think that was clear. It was something that I asked about [...] I don't think that's probably clear. You maybe just go on the website, look at the list of courses that are maybe not clear that you could tailor your own if there was enough people as well and enough interest.”

Difficulties taking the course

This section looks at barriers women may have considered when selecting a course or faced whilst on the course that may have prevented from accessing the training in an accessible way that would enable them to get the most out of it.

Course format, course location, childcare, Coronavirus (COVID-19) and other work/life commitments

Based on the findings from the survey, interviewees were asked about any difficulties they faced in taking the course, including the format, location, achieving a work/life balance, organizing childcare and the impacts of Coronavirus (COVID-19). The majority of the feedback was positive in that the women had managed to find a course that met a variety of these requirements. Very often issues with format, distance to travel and course timing were related - especially where women also had children.

One woman found her on-line course practical because it fitted in with work and childcare needs:

“It was at night-time and I think that had been specifically geared for women who probably had childcare. A lot of other women have other jobs off-farm, so that was quite good, because at night time, so once kids are in bed, it started at seven or something. So that was quite easy to attend. It was also on Zoom, so it was just at home. So that was fine.”

In some cases where women took face-to-face courses, the trainer travelled to the woman's home, but women also drove to the training sites. One woman said she was, “happy” to travel around Scotland but in cases where the women had children to care for the acceptable distance was far lower.

“I would say if it was anywhere it would be between 10 and 20 miles, but then I would have to question how often and how much would that have cost.”

“Probably within 30-40 miles marks it to the area that I would be willing to travel. And now my daughter's a bit older, she goes to a childminder so it's easier to sort her into childcare formally.”

For interviewees who had children, finding childcare was seen as a major barrier to taking training, even if it did not apply to them. One interviewee acknowledged she had the support of her parents and another was able to undertake training due to the support of family members but explained that other women face great difficulties:

“What is still massively lacking with getting women into agriculture is the childcare aspect, it’s what is the stumbling block for most women. [...] It just makes it unappealing for a lot of women if they don't have family childcare and things they can rely on. It's really difficult for women to stay, and I don't mean like a job as a sales rep or something that's 9-5, but in an active role working on a farm with the hours that are required at busy times of the year[...]. And I think that's something that's really been missed when all these incentives to promote women into agriculture have been pushed. They've tried to be equal and fair and say well men are not getting this, but it's totally different. And women in agriculture do tend to take on the bulk of the childcare, especially if your partner is also a farmer. [...] If that was an additional thing, that you could say you had to pay a childminder £6 an hour for eight hours, and they would just give you the reimbursement for that. I know that’s essentially greedy, I suppose, you've already got the training course free, so get on with it. [...] Maybe you've got £400 for the course, but then you've had to pay £70 for childcare for that day. Which maybe a male counterpart who doesn't have a childcare commitment, didn't have to take on that burden. [...] My husband is very good, he does look after our daughter. But he's also a full-time farmer, so he can't just take her for the day when I'm going on a course. So it's normally my stepfather or childminders.”

A couple of interviewees took courses which required travelling much further with an overnight stay. These were considerable undertakings and made possible through the support of other family members to help with childcare in one case, and in another from an employer:

“To be honest, my boss was very good at the time and let me take the time off. It wasn't too much of an issue. And both times the courses were held in the quieter time, so it wasn't like when we were lambing sheep or cowing cows. It just worked out quite well.”

One interviewee from Dumfries and Galloway found where she was located to be limiting both because tractor courses were not available locally and because many courses she found advertised were in England.

“There’s completely different laws and policies in Scotland and England when it comes to governing bodies and stuff for farming. I think it should have been Scottish courses and not English courses.”

The impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) on the women interviewed was mixed. One woman said:

“It was during Covid times and it was the first face-to-face thing we’d done in a while. So I think I did feel a bit nervous about doing that one in terms of ‘was the examiner guy going to give me Covid?’.”

In contrast, another respondent found the courses were well organised within the context of the pandemic and the restrictions imposed by the pandemic acted an incentive to take up training.

“It was during COVID, as in I couldn’t go anywhere, so I might as well learn something.”

Feedback on course content and delivery

In general, feedback on the courses that the women took was positive. This could partly be explained by the women having had a clear idea of what they wanted to get out of their respective courses and in some cases having played an active part in organizing them. Some women did provide criticism however. One woman struggled with the online learning content and in retrospect would have taken an in-person course, but she attributed her difficulties to her short concentration span. Another interviewee criticised her course for advertising a hands-on interactive element which subsequently did not run because of low course numbers. Finally, one woman found that her course content felt very dated:

“I could tell the course was old fashioned. And it kind of put me off a bit and I just thought this is not current, it’s not up to date.”

Some courses, whether online or face-to-face were mixed gender and others women only. Where the courses were mixed gender none of the interviewees had any issues with it. Views differed on whether women-only courses would be preferable, but as one interviewee put it a women-only course could be more enjoyable:

“The fact there was women only, I actually really enjoyed it because the sheepdog world is very male dominated. I did it over the winter and it was quite nice to just sit down and have a chat with other woman and there wasn’t... certainly in male farmers there is a certain degree of bravado, not wanting to lose face, and they definitely had these fights over who’s tractor is the biggest and things like that. And it’s quite nice to be in this sort of women-only scenario where that doesn’t matter and people are less embarrassed to ask questions and to show that their dog is useless and nobody’s... you don’t feel quite as judged.”

In contrast a different interviewee viewed the presence of men as being less inhibiting and a motivator to put more effort into the course.

“I think sometimes maybe if it had just been women only you might feel a bit more reserved, instead of trying to be like, I can do this as well as you can,

so it kind of pushes you on a bit. Maybe that's just being competitive. But you know sometimes men can be a bit like oh this is a man's thing. But you're like no, it's not."

One respondent suggested that courses for couples would be beneficial due to continuing imbalances of power between men and women in farming:

"The woman can help with things but women, they can't influence things. Some of them can't make the final decisions. [...] If they went on it together, then [the male farmer] would understand things and listen when the woman is trying to suggest new ideas and things that were learned on the course."

Finally, one older woman felt that as a woman she was well cared for by men, however she illustrated this by pointing out that during her one-to-one training the organiser had to assist her because he had not considered in advance how someone of smaller stature and strength could safely put on a backpack sprayer designed with males (or at least larger stronger people) in mind.

"There were certain expectations of the actual process that are male orientated, the quantity that you can put into a backpack sprayer is far more than I could physically lift. So, all the calculations were because you've got a quantitative spray, I had to divide things by two because I could only half fill the sprayer."

3.6 Women's views on their place in Scottish agriculture

The interviewees were asked for their views on women's roles in agriculture and whether this was changing. Some interviewees mentioned situations where they had experienced sexism in the industry. For instance, some women had experienced criticism from men and one interviewee changed her username on a farming message board to a male sounding name to avoid sexist comments. One woman pointed to the lack of visible female role models in agriculture as having been a barrier for her:

"There's more women now, but when I was younger there was no one [...] to identify that's similar to you. Because it's all middle-aged men but you're a teenage girl. You don't think that they're similar to you, or that you could do what they're doing."

Other women, particularly those who had supportive families and social networks, did not feel they had ever experienced any barriers to working in the industry.

The interviewees generally had a positive outlook for the future role of women saying they had noticed increasing numbers of women joining agricultural industries as workers, or taking on roles with greater responsibility and autonomy on farms. The profile of women in agricultural roles was also thought to have been raised in the media.

Some interviewees said that women were just as capable as men at doing the same tasks, particularly as machinery in the industry has evolved:

“I see it with the feet trimming because people think it’s a man’s job, but it’s not because everything’s moved on, machines moved on, the crush I use, it doesn’t take a huge lot of strength, whereas maybe back in the day it was just associated with men because it needed strength. We can do jobs as well if not better than some men. Especially with livestock because we’re more caring. [...]. Not letting this strange mindset that some men have affect them.”

“It’s probably more psychological than anything. I’ve had people openly criticize me [...] because in their mind, cows will have been associated with men, and you need a bit of brute strength sometimes to handle them. And they obviously don’t think I’m capable of it, which is not true.”

Others pointed to specific qualities that made women better suited to certain tasks:

“I think women make really good farmers as well because they definitely have a bit more attention to detail in a lot of cases. And somebody that does that makes a really good stock person I think.”

One interviewee, who acknowledged she felt very supported at home and in the business, compared her life to that of her older female relatives:

“If I look at my mother-in-law and great-granny, what I do in the farm is very different from what they do. I don’t know if that’s a holistic view of women in agriculture or personal [...] but I feel like my husband and I, compared to my mother-in-law and father-in-law, [my husband] comes in and does the cooking while I go outside to do the sheep. We take turns in different roles; we go outside and do things together. Definitely, it’s a lot more flexible.”

The suggestion that the roles of male farmers might also be changing was mooted by another respondent who felt men were increasingly taking on childcare responsibilities and that in this situation farm work could actually offer greater flexibility over a 9-5 office job.

Many women alluded to having children as one of the primary barriers to women working in agriculture but only if there was no support available from other people, whether a husband, other family members, other social networks or childcare services.

The comments of one interviewee suggest that a younger generation of women may now enter the industry with greater confidence:

“The general perception is that the role of a woman in agriculture is to cook the breakfast and fill in the forms, men do the real work. There is a degree of

surprise that I, at my age, want to do the real work . We need more young people going into farming, going into crofting. There are things in place that favour younger people.”

Training provision was identified as a contributor to this change:

“Things are changing. [...] There’s absolutely no reason... if women are on the right training... yeah that’s why the training has been so good isn’t it? They can do it without feeling intimidated”.

One woman was more cautious in her outlook, explaining that despite changes in the industry, many women still do not always recognise the inequalities in the industry and in society.

“Everything helps I think in terms of women's visibility and competence and confidence in the agricultural workplace. Like I was saying, the fact that even some women are saying to me this should be about merit and not women getting a leg up, the fact that they still don’t recognized that women are still confined in a lot of times to being the farm secretary or doing the smaller jobs and not in these leadership roles, that they don’t even recognize it. There still is quite a lot of work to do.”

3.7 Courses for 13-15 year olds

The Women in Agriculture Practical Training Fund was open to women and girls aged 13 and over. A smaller number of courses exist for under 16s. One reason is that there are often safety restrictions in place for under 16s for many agricultural courses. One course which is funded is a tractor driving course, coordinated by Ringlink, which is tailored to 13-15 year olds who are interested in going into agriculture. A training coordinator at Ringlink explained that before funding became available for girls, the tractor course was typically 90% boys. After funding came in the split is closer to 50/50.

The coordinator gave the view that attitudes toward training for both genders have evolved in recent years:

“A newer generation coming through are bringing in new ideas [...] when I started a lot of farmers didn't even want to do training, and that's only 15 years ago. So there's a lot more proactive farming folk out there now that are organizing training on a regular basis because they realize that's the right thing to do to make sure their staff have the knowledge to keep themselves safe.”

In respect to training for young people he mentioned that he has also seen numbers of girls on a pre-apprentice scheme for 16 years old have increased, although not as much as the 50-50 split for the funded tractor course for under 16s.

An interview was also held with a parent farmer who was instrumental in organising one of the aforementioned tractor driving courses for a group of ten girls. Having accessed training through the practical training fund herself, and having heard a friend of hers “rave” about a tractor course she had taken when she was 14, she saw the potential to organise a course for her daughter and other local girls.

“I’ve got a group of friends, all farmer’s wives, and encouraged any of them, if they had daughters, they would be able to take part in the driver training, encouraged them to apply, and a few tractor training courses on our farm here to encourage them to learn how to drive a tractor. [...] I got together a few girls and booked in the date and then encouraged them very strongly to apply for funding.”

The parent felt that the practical training fund had provided training to girls who otherwise wouldn’t have done it because parents typically put their sons, including her own sons, on tractor courses. She explained:

“Expense through the business would be part of it. And also, maybe the daughter hasn’t been every weekend sitting on her tractor with her dad doing the work or being exposed to that kind of thing. And yeah, there is very much a gender divide in agriculture. It’s very well written about in a lot of parts of agriculture. And tractor work is definitely seen as more male work. Part of that is because young lads have been jumping on to tractors and doing the work whereas quite often a young girl hasn’t had any training and really needs training and some more learning about it and the time taken sure how to do things. Whereby when they came on this course and they got shown all how to do all these things, it definitely was massively empowering to the girls, but also to the boys it has been, I would say, it has definitely added to their learning. [...] they’re just not given the same exposure and the same opportunities.”

The interviewee mentioned that girls might also feel it was a big financial burden on their parents to ask them to pay for a course. She was motivated to get more girls into training and hosted the training on her farm and was present during the training sessions. She hosted a number of courses which, for practical reasons, were on occasion girl-only groups and at other times mixed gender but expressed a preference for girl-only groups:

“I’m sorry that there is that gender thing, but I really feel sometimes that girls who need space without the intimidation of boys who know their stuff or even pretending that they know their stuff, even when they don’t.”

The parent was given positive feedback from the girls and other parents and discussed the knock-on effects:

“Some of them went on to apply for other courses as well. I know that and my one of my friends hosted a lambing course with a local vet. It encouraged

other people to realize that you didn't need a training provider, be the host and to organize it all, you could do it yourself.”

She viewed the practical training fund a critical role in enabling the tractor training courses to take place and felt that more funding should be aimed at young women in their teens when they might be considering their career in agriculture.

3.8 Concluding remarks from the interviews - Is there a typical fund applicant type?

The women who were interviewed were asked to summarise their view of the practical training fund:

“An excellent opportunity to expand skills without burden of cost.”

“Straight forward and a confidence booster.”

“It gives you the opportunity to access areas of agriculture that you wouldn't be able to otherwise.”

“A practical way to access courses that you're interested in the agricultural realm that you wouldn't have otherwise been able to had you not had this opportunity from the fund.”

They were also asked if they would recommend it to others:

“To be visible in the farming sector [...] you need confidence in your abilities and your experience. So the chance to do courses like this is a real boost to that [...] It, massively helped my confidence, so I'd really recommend it to everybody.”

“I would definitely recommend it simply because the funding was there it was nice and easy to apply. The courses give you skills that you want to do. I would describe it as if there's something you want to brush up or something you want to learn it's going to help you through your job. There's money there for that. So, I would definitely tell people to give the providers a phone first to suss out to what's available or that type of thing they're able to do.”

The women who took part in the interviewees had diverse backgrounds and life stories. They came from different age groups, geographical areas and many had other professional experience outside of agriculture in fields such as art, healthcare and media. The interviews have shown that their experiences in agriculture were not always the same. With that said, what they have in common is that they all possessed a degree of ambition, motivation and confidence to seek out and apply for the training in the first place. In the quote above the respondent suggests phoning Lantra to explore the options available. The interviewees were chosen

from a sampling group that was self-selecting in the sense that only women who took the survey and agreed to a follow-up interviewee could be chosen. In other words, people who had the confidence to be interviewed and give their views. Amongst the Interviewees, there were also those who acknowledged they had particularly strong support networks, such as the ability to arrange childcare with family members, social networks of friends and many had the resources to drive to training or host it on site. Some acknowledged that other women might not have access to the same resources. Many interviewees found the practical training fund beneficial and would recommend it to others. Some had come to the fund from recommendations from others. Some had organised courses and got their friends to apply to. This snowballing effect may help to increase the number of women taking agricultural training courses and raise the profile of women in the agricultural sector. More work may be required to ascertain the funds success in reaching women who are more socially excluded and have weaker support networks.

4. Conclusions

This report has discussed the findings of an evaluation of the Women in Agriculture Practical Training Fund. The aim of the research was to evaluate the fund against its intended aims, and the wider goals of the Women in Agriculture Taskforce. These were: (i) to support the personal development of women and girls living or working in Scottish agriculture; (ii) provide them with additional skills to progress their careers and (iii) open up new employment opportunities in Scottish agriculture beyond their current role. The evaluation included a post-course survey of women who applied for funding to undertake training and follow-up interviews at least 6 months after they had begun their first course.

The research provides evidence of the short and longer-term impacts of the fund in addition to women's experience of applying to the fund and taking training. Their feedback will enable Scottish Government to evaluate the success of the fund and contribute to future policy plans.

Overall, the research shows that the Practical Training Fund has facilitated access to training for a broad range of women in Scotland's agricultural sector, with the majority of applicants experiencing positive impacts as a result. This has been achieved primarily through the wide range and flexible nature of courses on offer. It has enabled the majority of women who applied to gain practical skills which they have used in their current roles or intend to use in the future. It has also had less tangible outcomes, but arguably as or even more important, such as increasing confidence, motivation, self-worth and general well-being.

The survey results showed recipients of funding had developed skills and confidence to bring to their existing roles as well as the skills and broadened horizons to diversify their careers if desired. Feedback on the courses themselves was very positive. Funding was critical in getting women into training with half of women unlikely to have applied without it. Those who got funding were more likely to re-apply than those that did not. Where women were able to take time off work, arrange childcare or had other means of support, taking a course was seen as straightforward. For around a quarter of respondents these issues posed difficulties. Almost a third of courses were online, which may have been a result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. In many cases this offered a more flexible training format and allowed access to training for those who would not have been able to attend in person but online learning did not suit everyone.

Building on this, the interview findings demonstrated the fund had a longer-term impact on interviewee's sense of confidence, motivation, self-worth, sense of achievement and well-being. Interviewees had developed skills, often to meet immediate needs but also develop new career paths and plan for a future involving greater responsibilities. Many interviewees developed social networks through the training which they found beneficial. The women reiterated the importance of the fund to getting them into training. For some it was crucial and for many it was the factor that "tipped the balance." The interviewees found the fund easy to apply to

but some acknowledged that finding out about it and understanding might not be clear for everyone, particularly if it is not through word of mouth. Interviewees were able to overcome obstacles to taking the course such as location, the need for childcare, other jobs and the impacts of Coronavirus (COVID-19). Many acknowledged this was because they had strong support networks that other women might not have access to, particularly in regards to childcare.

Most interviewees would recommend the Practical Training Fund to others and some had used their experience to organize other courses, such as the tractor training for young women. This snowballing effect may help to increase the number of applicants to the fund but consideration should be given as to whether knowledge of the funding is reaching more socially excluded women. The survey results suggest childcare, work commitments and unavailability of courses in certain locations remain a persistent issue. This raises a question around the potential number of women who do not have the time or resources to find training appropriate to them, or face additional barriers, and what can be done to support this group.

Interviewees had a positive outlook on the future of women's roles in agriculture. Some still held more traditional views on the roles of men and women in agriculture. However, most recognised these roles were changing and that support and access to training was an important tool get more women into agricultural roles and in turn raise the visibility of women in the sector for future generations.

5. Recommendations

This evaluation has provided insight into areas where the Scottish Government and Lantra Scotland could look to develop the reach and impact of the Women in Agriculture Practical Training fund.

What should the fund continue to do in the same way?

The Practical Training Fund is particularly well suited to women seeking financial assistance to fund a course that suits their learning needs and working life. It is simple to apply to and a very wide range of courses can be taken, which women have a degree of control in selecting to meet their needs. This should continue.

How could the fund improve?

The prerequisites of the fund are that you are aware of it, know what training you require, are able to find that training through Lantra or have time to source it elsewhere, and finally that you are able to make a case that meets the fund's eligibility requirements. A certain level of confidence, motivation and support may be necessary to achieve this and it is possible not all women have this. Therefore greater consideration should be given to whether or not the fund is accessible to all women in agricultural roles in Scotland and if not, how best to reach them and provide additional support with their applications

1. Wider promotion

The Lantra survey showed 45% of women heard about the fund through word of mouth. More resources could be devoted to advertising the fund through social media and publications relevant to the industry.

2. Targeting hard to reach women

Linked to the first point, steps should be taken to try and identify women who might not know about the course or require more encouragement to apply through

- Using different social media channels and groups within them.
- Encouraging women who have already accessed the fund to be ambassadors and promote it in their wider community.

3. A clearer application process

Whilst the process for applying to the fund is simple (send an e-mail), the criteria for applying should be set out more clearly. This should include:

- Making it clearer that women can look for and put forward their own courses and not simply select from a list.
- Making it clearer that funding can be applied for to cover travel costs

4. Better support throughout the process

- Providing guidance on how to submit a successful application
- Giving clear and timely feedback to unsuccessful applicants to avoid discouraging women from reapplying. Lantra have said feedback was given to all applicants and it is possible these e-mails went to junk mail or were not read by applicants. This should be addressed where possible and steps taken to mitigate this

5. Could the fund be extended in any way?

In order to better meet the goals of the Agricultural Taskforce the fund could:

- Research and promote more courses aimed specifically at women, for instance making clear where courses are:
 - Only open to women participants
 - The training is provided by a woman
- Making it possible to apply retrospectively for funding to increase accessibility for women who could not find a course during the funding window.
- Adding a discretionary means-tested fund (or extending the travel fund), for example, to support women who might otherwise struggle to pay for childcare, travel or who would be required to take unpaid leave from work.

Annex A: Key Findings from the Lantra Post-Training Survey

- The majority of women (46%) heard about the Practical Training Fund through word of mouth.
- 57% found the application process excellent and only 1% found it poor.
- 68% of respondents felt their experience with the training provider was excellent (from sourcing training course information and course costs, through to the process of being booked onto and attending the course). Only 2% felt it was poor.
- 74% of respondents reported that the training they attended was high quality and 1% found it very poor.
- The majority of respondents (97%), found that they could access the course materials and resources particular to their needs and situation.
- Half of respondents would not have undertaken the training without the fund.
- The majority of respondents (97%) felt they had more confidence and knowledge about the specific subject after attending the training.
- Most respondents (91%) felt encouraged to apply for further training to support their personal development.



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This document is also available from our website at www.gov.scot.
ISBN: 978-1-83521-029-1

The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Produced for
the Scottish Government
by APS Group Scotland
PPDAS1316062 (06/23)
Published by
the Scottish Government,
June 2023



Social Research series
ISSN 2045-6964
ISBN 978-1-83521-029-1

Web Publication
www.gov.scot/socialresearch

PPDAS1316062 (06/23)