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## CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS

# Scottish Employer Perspectives Survey 2021

Technical report by IFF Research

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# Introduction

The Scottish Employer Perspectives Survey (EPS) 2021 is a large-scale telephone survey of employers in Scotland, which provides labour market information on how employers engage with the skills system in Scotland, including:

1. their recruitment of new staff;
2. their perceptions of new recruits (including young people and education leavers);
3. their engagement with training providers; and
4. their offering of work placements and apprenticeships.

The 2021 survey comprised 1,000 interviews with employers between November and December 2021. It is the first in the series to be undertaken since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and since the UK's formal departure from the European Union. The publication of the 2021 Scottish EPS is the second after a longstanding UK-wide EPS series which was conducted biennially from 2010 to 2016. The previous Scottish EPS was undertaken in 2019.

This technical report provides background information on the methodology used for carrying out the Scottish EPS. It is divided into six chapters, each considering a different area of survey design and methodology in detail:

1. **Sample design:** detailing the method by which employers were selected to take part in the research, including the setting of quota targets and sample volumes;
2. **Questionnaire design:** detailing the considerations taken into account in the design of the questionnaire, including changes to the previous wave of EPS;
3. **Fieldwork:** providing a detailed overview of how the interviews were carried out, quality control procedures, and the levels of response achieved;
4. **Data preparation:** outlining the process for editing data and coding verbatim responses collected in the survey;
5. **Weighting:** detailing how the survey responses were processed to ensure that the resulting dataset was representative of the population of businesses in Scotland; and
6. **Using the data:** considering the reliability and margins of statistical error of figures produced from the dataset.

# **Sampling**

## **Sampling population and survey sampling unit**

Establishments were used as the sampling unit for the survey, as opposed to an organisation-based approach. “Establishments” denote specific individual sites or premises; thus if an organisation has several sites, it is possible that more than one of these sites will have appeared in the sample. This approach has been chosen because it is at the establishment level where respondents are most likely to be able to provide a detailed and accurate picture of how employers go about meeting their skills needs. Decisions around training staff are often based on the training offer available in the local area, while recruitment also tends to occur at a more localised level. This approach has been used in the EPS series, and the Employer Skills Survey (ESS), since each series began.

The sampling population used for the Scottish EPS encompassed establishments across the full geographical spread of Scotland, in all sectors of the economy (across the commercial, public and charitable spheres). All Scotland establishments with two or more people working at them (including partners and working proprietors) were eligible for the survey – i.e. establishments with a single person on the payroll were excluded. This again mirrors the approach adopted in previous EPS and ESS surveys since 2012. The rationale for the inclusion of sites with two or more working proprietors is based on both practical and conceptual considerations.

From a conceptual viewpoint, the focus of the skills surveys is on the workforce, and as such any establishment covered logically needs to have staff (or the desire / potential to employ staff in the future). In this iteration of the survey, the survey covered employers’ approaches to recruiting (particularly young people and education leavers), their engagement with apprenticeships and their facilitation of training staff to Vocational Qualifications. Findings from the survey can then be used to enhance employers’ engagement with, and experience of, various recruitment and people development initiatives. Accordingly, the survey was aimed at those for whom such initiatives carry relevance (i.e. establishments with at least one employee).

On a more practical level, however, it tends to be much easier for survey respondents to think in terms of the overall ‘headcount’ for their site – including both working proprietors and employees – than to split out the two groups (particularly when the lines between the two are not clear-cut). For example, it is typically easier for employers to answer about recruitment channels for all managers / staff, rather than ‘only those managers who are not working proprietors’.

The survey also excluded the self-employed (with no employees), as the question approach / context for this group would need to be somewhat different, since they are by definition not “employers”. Additionally, there is an absence of robust population figures for this group, providing obstacles for robust and representative sampling and weighting.

The respondent sought at each establishment was the person who had most responsibility for staff issues such as training, recruitment or resourcing. For smaller establishments this was most often the general manager or owner, and for larger establishments this was most often the HR manager.<sup>1</sup>

## **Sampling considerations for the 2021 survey**

The key change to the 2021 survey was a reduction in the overall target sample size, from 2,650 interviews (in 2019) down to 1,000 interviews. This change has increased the margin of error to +/-3.1, compared with +1.9 in the 2019 survey.

In order to provide robust subgroup analysis (by minimising the margin of error), the usual 12 sector and 7-sizeband categories were collapsed for weighting and reporting purposes. The 7-sizeband breakdown was reduced to 6 sizebands by merging the 100-249 and 250+ sizebands into a single 100+ sizeband. To note, in previous EPS, the 100-249 and 250+ sizebands were weighted separately, but grouped into a 100+ sizeband for reporting purposes.

To collapse the sector groupings, a 6-sector grouping was created. Table 1 shows how the original 12-sector grouping maps to the 6-sector grouping. The 6-sector grouping has been used as an alternative sector breakdown in previous iterations of both ESS and EPS, however in the case of EPS, it should be noted that the ‘Communications’ subsector, which would have previously been sampled and weighted alongside the ‘Transport’ and ‘Storage’ sectors, ends up in a different category to these two subsectors under the new grouping.<sup>2</sup>

**Table 1: Mapping of 12-sector to 6-sector groupings**

<b>12 sector-grouping</b>	<b>6-sector grouping</b>
Primary Sector and Utilities (SIC 01-09, 35-39)	Primary Sector and Utilities (SIC 01-09)
Manufacturing (SIC 10-33)	Manufacturing (SIC 10-33)

<sup>1</sup> Note that the terms ‘establishment’, ‘employer’ and ‘business’ are used interchangeably throughout the report.

<sup>2</sup> This ‘splitting’ of the ‘Transport, Storage and Communications’ sector does not apply to ESS, which traditionally used a 13-sector grouping which separates this group into ‘Transport and Storage’ and ‘Information & Communications’ groupings.

<b>12 sector-grouping</b>	<b>6-sector grouping</b>
Construction (SIC 41-43)	Construction (SIC 41-43)
Wholesale and Retail (SIC 45-47)	Trade, Accommodation and Transport (SIC 45-56)
Hotels and Restaurants (SIC 55-56)	Trade, Accommodation and Transport (SIC 45-56)
Transport, Storage and Communications (SIC 49-53, 58-63*)	Trade Accommodation and Transport (SIC 45-56) *only the Transport and Storage subsectors; the 'Communications' subsectors (SIC 58-63) go into 'Business and Other Services'
Financial Services (SIC 64-66)	Business and Other Services (SIC 58-82, 90-96)
Business Services (SIC 68-82)	Business and Other Services (SIC 58-82, 90-96)
Arts and Other Services (SIC 90-96)	Business and Other Services (SIC 58-82, 90-96)
Public Administration (SIC 84)	Non-market Services (SIC 84-88)
Education (SIC 85)	Non-market Services (SIC 84-88)
Health and Social Work (SIC 90-96)	Non-market Services (SIC 84-88)

## **Sampling approach and setting quotas**

Although, as discussed above, 6-size and 6-sector groupings were used for weighting and reporting purposes, initial sampling calculations used the more granular ESS 13-sector by 7-sizeband breakdown of the IDBR population, and sample was ordered on this basis to maximise the representativeness of the sample. The ESS sector breakdown was used as it provided better alignment with the final 6-sector breakdown, by separating 'Transport and Storage' and 'Communications'.

Matching the previous iterations of the survey, the Scottish EPS 2021 adopted a disproportionate stratified random sampling strategy such that the quota targets set intentionally oversampled some groups and under sampled others, rather than setting targets in direct proportion to the business population. In practice this meant that some smaller sub-groups of employers (such as large establishments) were oversampled to ensure that a sufficiently large number of interviews were achieved to allow for robust sub-group analyses.

The process taken for Scottish EPS was as follows:

- Target interviews were stratified against a two-dimensional sector by size grid (13 sectors and seven sizebands) on an interlocking basis;
- The initial allocation of interviews was done according to employer sizebands, using a set of ratios that deliberately over-sampled larger employers;
- Interviews were then allocated to sector within each sizeband in proportion to their representation within the business population; and
- The starting sample was then drawn from the commercial data supplier, Market Location.

Population statistics used to stratify the business population were established through the March 2021 Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR), which was the latest available at the time. The IDBR is administered by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), it holds records of all businesses registered for VAT and all businesses operating a pay as you earn (PAYE) income tax scheme. The IDBR is widely regarded as being the most accurate and comprehensive ‘official’ source of business population data available, and was used for sampling and weighting in all previous editions of the EPS.

## Sizeband quotas

In line with the approach utilised in the Scottish EPS 2019 survey, quota targets based on establishment size were set within each region by distributing interviews in each sector into six sizebands (see Table 2). This was achieved by utilising a set of selected ratios that struck a balance between over-sampling larger employers (relative to the unit population) whilst not skewing the size profile too far away from smaller establishments.

Larger establishments were oversampled in order to maximise the proportion of the workforce covered by the survey and because interviews in the largest sizebands have historically proven more difficult to complete. This also ensured that a sufficiently large number of interviews were achieved to allow for robust sub-group analyses. This oversampling of larger establishments was corrected when weighting the survey results (as detailed later in this technical report).

**Table 2: Interview quotas by sizeband**

Sizeband (employees)	Quota	Proportion of the overall target	Sample loaded for interviewing	Ratio
2 to 4	270	27%	2,738	10:1
5 to 9	230	23%	1,746	8:1
10 to 24	220	22%	1,564	7:1
25 to 49	130	13%	975	8:1
50 to 99	60	6%	526	9:1
100+	90	9%	1,009	11:1

### Sector quotas

Sector quotas were defined after setting interview targets by sizeband. Interview targets within each sizeband were allocated by sector according to the proportion of the employer population within each sizeband.

Adopting such an approach ensured the maximum Standard Error associated with findings by sector were minimised, in order to report with a greater level of confidence in the results.

Critically, this also helped to ensure that within each broad sizeband and sector, key cuts of the data were associated with sufficiently robust base sizes.

Table 3 shows the final sectors by size targets.

**Table 3: Interview quotas by sector and sizeband**

Sector	2-4	5-9	10-24	25-49	50-99	100+	Total
<b>Primary Sector &amp; Utilities</b>	35	14	7	3	2	4	65
<b>Manufacturing</b>	11	9	11	8	5	9	53
<b>Construction</b>	30	19	13	6	3	4	75
<b>Trade, Accommodation and Transport</b>	71	94	92	46	15	20	338
<b>Business and Other Services</b>	108	69	55	29	15	23	299
<b>Non-market Services</b>	15	25	42	38	20	30	170
<b>Total</b>	270	230	220	130	60	90	1,000

## Regional targets

Mirroring the approach of previous EPS surveys, interviews were allowed to fall out ‘naturally’ by geography within Scotland. For the analysis and reporting Regional Outcome Agreement (ROA) areas have been used (how the ROAs are defined in terms of Local Authority is presented in Appendix C). The expected distribution by ROA is shown in Table 4. The ‘expected ‘fall out’ of interviews’ column is calculated by multiplying the ROA distribution within the population by the target overall sample size. While the reduction of the overall survey sample size limits the ability to analyse at regional level, this expected distribution was felt to provide relatively robust base sizes for several regions (and survey data was weighted to be representative by region). The final column shows the actual (unweighted) distribution of interviews by ROA region, which was reasonably close to the expected distribution.

**Table 4: Expected (and actual) interview distribution by ROA region<sup>3</sup>**

Region	Population	Proportional Distribution	Expected 'fall out' of interviews	Actual achieved interviews (unweighted)
Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire	17,100	11%	112	101
Ayrshire	9,060	6%	60	42
Borders	4,300	3%	28	21
Dumfries and Galloway	5,900	4%	39	47
Edinburgh and Lothians	20,300	13%	134	116
Fife	8,600	6%	57	45
Forth Valley	7,500	5%	49	65
Glasgow	21,300	14%	140	139
Highlands and Islands	19,200	13%	127	164
Lanarkshire	16,700	11%	110	92
Tayside	12,100	8%	80	93
West	9,500	6%	62	65
West Lothian	4,100	3%	27	38

Population data is taken from the 2020 Inter-Department Business Register (IDBR) - the latest available business population statistics published by ONS at the time of sampling. Population figures are rounded to the nearest 100. The 'expected fall out of interviews' sums to 1,002 due to rounding.

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<sup>3</sup> Note that the number of interviews sums to greater than 1,000 as ROA regions are defined by Local Authorities (LA), and some LAs are in more than one ROA. Also note that the population data are rounded to the nearest 100.

## Sample sources

As in 2019, Market Location was used as the principal sample source of the Scottish EPS 2021. The IDBR was not used as the sample source (nor any of the previous iterations of the Scotland-only survey) as the majority of records in the IDBR do not come with a telephone number.

Sample was ordered from Market Location at an average ratio of around 9:1 against target interviews required.

A total of 8,346 records were ordered from Market Location for fieldwork. This supplemented 299 records which were initially drawn for piloting purposes from the Scottish ESS 2020 survey (a sample of respondents that had given permission to be re-contacted). In total, 8,558 records were loaded for fieldwork. All sample records were postcode-validated to ensure that geographical regions had been correctly assigned. Checks were also undertaken in instances where duplicate telephone numbers existed within the sample. In certain sectors, such as Retail and Finance, it is common for different establishments to appear under the same centralised telephone number. Such establishments were marked up on the sample – with the address of the sampled establishment displayed on-screen – so that interviewers would be aware that the telephone number they were calling was a centralised switchboard and thus they would need to request to be transferred to a particular site.

# Questionnaire design

## Questionnaire development and changes from the 2019 survey

The vast majority of the questionnaire for 2021 was aligned with the questionnaire used for the 2019 survey to allow for time-series comparisons on key measures. The EPS 2019 questions that were not included in the 2021 survey are shown in Appendix D.

Some longstanding EPS questions had additional codes added or deleted to the read-out and non-read out lists. New codes added or deleted to the existing questionnaire (including those related to Brexit and COVID-19) are summarised in Table 5 below. Table 6 lists the only new question added in 2021.

**Table 5: New codes added or deleted to existing survey questions**

Question reference	Question text	Codes added or deleted
C2/3	Have you heard of any of the following services or initiatives? And has your establishment made use of the following to recruit staff over the past 12 months? (Prompted)	New codes <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Jobcentre Plus's Kickstart scheme</li><li>Fair Start Scotland</li><li>No One Left Behind</li><li>Young Person's Guarantee</li></ul> Deleted codes <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Youth Contract (work experience or sector-based work academies)</li><li>Work Able Scotland</li><li>Employer Recruitment Incentive</li></ul>
C4a	Over the last 12 months has your establishment done any of the following to fill vacancies...? (Prompted)	New codes <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Used apprenticeships.scot or My World of Work</li></ul>

Question reference	Question text	Codes added or deleted
C5	<p>I'd now like you to think about the factors your establishment looks for in candidates when looking to recruit new employees. For each factor that I read out, please say if it is critical, if it is a significant factor, if you place a small amount of value on it, or if it has no value for your establishment?</p> <p>(Prompted)</p>	<p>New iteration of question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Having meta-skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and leadership</li> </ul>
C10nw	<p>And still thinking about the role this young person was recruited to, did your establishment use any of the following to fill this role...?</p> <p>(Prompted)</p>	<p>New codes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Used apprenticeships.scot or My World of Work</li> </ul>
C10nwi	<p>Which government schemes or services did you use to fill this role?</p> <p>(Prompted)</p>	<p>New codes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jobcentre Plus's Kickstart scheme</li> <li>Fair Start Scotland</li> <li>No One Left Behind</li> <li>Young Person's Guarantee</li> </ul> <p>Deleted codes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth Contract (work experience or sector-based work academies)</li> <li>Work Able Scotland</li> </ul>

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C20	What are the main reasons you offer work experience placements or internships at this site? (Unprompted)	New codes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to Kickstart scheme</li> <li>• Signed up to the Young Person's Guarantee</li> <li>• To help with staff shortages caused by Brexit</li> </ul>
C23a	What are the main reasons why your establishment has engaged in these types of activities? (Unprompted)	New codes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Because we signed up to the Young Person's Guarantee</li> </ul>
C27	You mentioned that your site has not had any work placements or internships in the last 12 months, or engaged with educational institutions to provide other forms of work-related experience to their students. What would you say are the main reasons for not doing so? (Unprompted)	New codes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COVID-19 pressures / no work available due to COVID-19 / site closed because of COVID (most people working from home)</li> <li>• Brexit pressures / no time available due to Brexit pressures</li> </ul>
D2	Has anyone at this establishment received advice or help on skills and training related issues in the last 12 months from any of the following? (Prompted)	New codes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• South of Scotland Enterprise</li> <li>• The Federation of Small Businesses</li> </ul>

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Question reference	Question text	Codes added or deleted
D4	Which of the following schemes and initiatives have you heard of...? (Prompted)	<p>New codes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible Workforce Development Fund</li> <li>• Individual Training Accounts</li> <li>• National Transition Training Fund</li> </ul> <p>Deleted codes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible Training Opportunities</li> </ul>
D14	For which of the following reasons has your establishment NOT arranged training for your employees that was designed to lead towards the achievement of a vocational qualification? (Prompted)	<p>New codes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You were unable to fund training due to COVID-19</li> <li>• Training courses were not running due to COVID-19</li> </ul>
D27C	And why did you start offering apprenticeships? (Unprompted)	<p>New codes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to COVID-related government incentive schemes (e.g. Plans for Jobs incentive payments)</li> <li>• To help with staff shortages caused by Brexit</li> </ul>
D33	Why does your establishment not currently offer apprenticeships? (Unprompted)	<p>New codes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unable to fund due to COVID-19</li> <li>• Lack of time to train an apprentice due to COVID-19 pressures</li> <li>• COVID-19 has affected the availability of apprentices</li> <li>• Lack of time to train apprentices due to pressures caused by Brexit</li> </ul>

Question reference	Question text	Codes added
D34A	Is there any particular reason you do not plan to offer apprenticeships in the future? (Unprompted)	<p>New codes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of time to train apprentices due to COVID-19 pressures</li> <li>• COVID-19 has affected the availability of apprenticeships</li> <li>• Lack of time to train apprentices due to pressures caused by Brexit</li> <li>• Withdrawal of COVID-related government schemes (e.g. incentive payments)</li> </ul>

**Table 6. New question and respective codes added to the 2021 EPS**

Question reference	Question text	Codes
D27Ai	And how did you hear about apprenticeships? (Unprompted)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills Development Scotland (SDS) website</li> <li>• Media campaign (press, radio, adverts etc.)</li> <li>• Heard / read about the Young Person's Guarantee</li> <li>• Colleagues</li> <li>• A training provider</li> <li>• From groups representing employers (e.g. industry federations, chambers of commerce)</li> <li>• apprenticeships.scot</li> <li>• findbusinesssupport.gov.uk</li> <li>• Other (Specify)</li> </ul>

## Piloting the 2021 survey

Prior to the launch of the mainstage of the survey, a pilot was conducted. The main aims of the pilot were to establish the average length of the questionnaire, to ensure it worked well in terms of ‘flow’, and to assess respondents’ comprehension of any questionnaire changes.

A total of 20 pilot interviews were completed on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021 among employers across a range of sizebands and sectors. Sample was drawn from respondents that agreed to be re-contacted during the 2020 Scottish Employer Skills Survey.

The pilot found that the questionnaire was running over length – averaging 25 minutes – which was above the budgeted 22 minutes. As a result, some questions that were added in the development phase had to be removed. Table 16 in Appendix D lists the new questions that were piloted but were not included in the final questionnaire. Mainstage fieldwork was launched on a ‘rolling pilot’ basis, meaning that the length of interview would be monitored as fieldwork progressed.

The average interview length was still running over time so it was agreed that D29 would also be removed part way through fieldwork.<sup>4</sup>

## Questionnaire timings

The average overall interview length was around 25 minutes and 30 seconds. This varied between different employers depending on the size of their establishment; smaller employers with 2-4 employees averaged 21 minutes while businesses with 100 or more employees averaged 32 minutes.

As shown in Table 7, interviews with larger establishments took longer on average given that they were more likely to have trained their staff and use more services or initiatives.

**Table 7: Average interview length by size of establishment**

Sizeband (employees)	Average length of interview
2 to 4	21 minutes
5 to 9	24 minutes
10 to 24	27 minutes
25 to 49	28 minutes
50 to 99	30 minutes
100+	32 minutes
Overall	25.5 minutes

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<sup>4</sup> D29: Have you heard of the following types of apprenticeships...? 1) Modern apprenticeships; 2) Graduate Apprenticeships

# Fieldwork

## Data collection and methodology

A total of 1,000 interviews were conducted by telephone using computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) by IFF Research.

Establishments were not pre-notified that they would be called for the survey, partly due to financial considerations and partly because it was felt that this could lead to a reduction in response rates if head offices potentially opted all the establishments in their organisation out of the survey.

Interviews were conducted with the most senior person at the site with responsibility for recruitment, human resources and workplace skills. Reassurances were provided to respondents prior to the survey, including confirmation that data would be reported in aggregate form and in a way that would not allow them or their organisation to be identifiable. If after the first contact the respondent or gatekeeper wanted more information about the survey a reassurance email was sent (see Appendix E for a copy of the reassurance email).

All interviewers received a briefing via video conference. Prior to the briefing, interviewers were provided with a set of briefing notes, advising them on the background and objectives of the study, how sample information had been sourced and guidance on specific questions. The video briefing included a detailed run-through of all survey questions by a senior researcher at IFF Research, to help guide interviewers through more complex questions. At least 5% of interviews were monitored for quality assurance.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many employers have continued with homeworking, creating further practical challenges around administering the survey. With many switchboards unable to transfer interviewers to the correct respondents, processes were introduced by IFF Research to collect email addresses for homeworking respondents. Once the email address was collected, invites were sent offering respondents the opportunity to leave their telephone number to arrange a call back.

Fieldwork took place from 29<sup>th</sup> November and 24<sup>th</sup> December 2021, meeting the timetable to complete fieldwork prior to the end of the year.

Table 8 below shows the final number of achieved interviews by size and sector.

**Table 8. Final number of achieved interviews by sizeband and sector**

Sector	2-4	5-9	10-24	25-49	50-99	100+	Total
<b>Primary Sector &amp; Utilities</b>	29	17	12	9	1	2	70
<b>Manufacturing</b>	9	14	12	8	5	13	61
<b>Construction</b>	19	13	17	6	6	4	65
<b>Trade, Accommodation and Transport</b>	55	93	106	55	24	24	357
<b>Business and Other Services</b>	93	83	44	34	14	13	281
<b>Non-market Services</b>	17	22	40	30	30	27	166
<b>Total</b>	222	242	231	142	80	83	1,000

## Response rate

The survey received an overall response rate of 34%, lower than the Scottish EPS response rate of 44% achieved in 2019.

The overall response rate was calculated as ‘achieved interviews’ as a proportion of all ‘complete contacts’, where a final outcome was reached with the establishment (this includes those respondents who completed the interview, refused to take part or quit during the interview).

Table 9 provides a detailed breakdown of survey outcomes.

**Table 9: Sample outcomes and response rate**

Outcome	Number of contacts	% of all sample	% of complete contacts
Total sample	8,558	100%	-
Ineligible establishments (e.g. just 1 working proprietor at site)	672	8%	-
Working from home	216	3%	-
'Live' / out of quota	3,835	45%	-
Unobtainable / invalid numbers	926	11%	-
Total complete contacts	2,909	34%	100%
Achieved interviews	1,000	12%	34%
Respondent refusal	1,888	22%	65%
Quits during interview	21	<1%	1%

The response rate is defined as the number of achieved interviews as a proportion of the total complete contacts.

Regular adjustments were made to the balance of establishments contacted to ensure an even distribution of interviews with employers from different sectors and sizebands throughout the fieldwork period. Sample was loaded into fieldwork in proportion to quota targets so that quota progression was as even as possible, and to ensure employers were called and re-called at suitable points without being over-contacted.

During fieldwork, when it became evident that a target quota within a particular cell had become unachievable (i.e. when the number of interviews required to reach the quota target was more than the remaining sample), targets were increased in other cells to compensate, using the following approach:

- In the first instance, targets were increased within the same sector in an adjacent size band.
- If adjacent size bands had also become unachievable then any remaining achievable size bands within the sector were used to compensate.

- In some cases it was preferable to make up the shortfall in a cell within the same sizeband from a different sector. This would be the case when there was a desire to maximise the number of interviews in that sizeband irrespective of other characteristics.

Though fieldwork ran smoothly overall, there were some challenges with achieving the 'Construction' quota. To maximise response in this sector, IFF trialled calls outside of conventional hours for this sub-group. This exercise ran from 15th - 20th December 2021 and focussed on the Construction sector sample only.

Across all sector and sizeband targets most quotas were met or close to being met. We were unable to meet the 2-4 sizeband and Construction quotas (as discussed above), but more than 80% of the target was achieved, which gave a sufficient sample size for analysis purposes. Targets were relaxed in the final week to ensure that fieldwork was completed before the end of the year.

# Data preparation

## Data edits

The EPS questionnaire involved the collection of data that respondents can occasionally struggle to answer. Moreover, despite stringent quality control, there is a chance that interviewers may enter typing errors, for example accidentally entering extra zeros on the end of numerical variables.

As a result, some data validation needed to occur after fieldwork had finished to ensure no errors were present in the final data. Guidelines for editing the survey data can be found in Appendix .

## Coding

Open ended responses to the survey were coded by IFF Research's internal coding team. To ensure consistency, a formal codeframe was developed and regularly reviewed during development by the research team. In addition, the application of the codeframe in practice was monitored through quality control checks, to ensure a high level of accuracy of codes assigned to verbatim responses.

Where respondents did not agree with the classification of their establishment, they were asked to give a description of the organisation's activities, using an approach developed by IFF over multiple surveys. The data was coded to 4-digit Standard Industrial Classification (2007), and subsequently grouped into the sector categories used for analysis and reporting.

The 2021 Scottish EPS used different sector definitions compared to the 2019 previous EPS. The previous EPS used 12 sectors for analysis, the 2021 iteration had 6. Table 12 in Appendix A shows the 6 sectors and their corresponding SIC 2007 definitions.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> [Standard industrial classification of economic activities \(SIC\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/standard-industrial-classification-sic)

# Weighting

Survey data were weighted and grossed up to the total population of establishments and total population of employees, according to the 2021 Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR) – the latest available business population statistics published by ONS at the time that weighting was carried out.

Weights were created in pairs: a ‘unit-based’ weight and an ‘employment-based’ weight. The unit-based weight was designed for analyses by the number or proportion of establishments. The employment-based weight was designed to produce ‘sum’ results for employment-based measures; for example the number of people on a specific type of placement and the total number of current apprentices. In some cases the employment-based measures were used in conjunction with the unit-based weighted number of employers to derive ‘average per establishment’ figures (for example, the average number of apprentices per establishment).

The following weighting strategy was used:

- Grossing weights were applied on a 6 broad Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) sector and six sizeband grid (i.e. 36 cells). The employment sizebands used were: 2-4, 5-9, 10-24, 25-49, 50-99, 100+.
- Overlaying these grids, RIM (random iterative method) weights were imposed for according to a combination of Regional Outcome Agreement (ROA) region and local authority (LA) in Scotland. It was not possible to group solely by ROA region for weighting purposes due to overlapping ROAs for some postcodes (i.e. it was possible for a sample record to have more than one ROA):
  - ‘Glasgow’ ROA was disaggregated into its component local authorities of East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire and Glasgow City.
  - ‘Lanarkshire’ ROA was disaggregated into its component local authorities of East Dunbartonshire, North Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire.
  - ‘West’ ROA was disaggregated into its component local authorities of East Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, Renfrewshire and West Dunbartonshire.
- The regional RIM weights ensured the survey population of each local geography matched the employer population without further correction for size and sector at this level. The RIM weights were calculated by the data processing software which used this method to find a ‘best fit’ between the data and the local level targets.

Cell merging was applied in only one instance where only a small number of interviews were achieved among the larger sizebands within Primary Sector & Utilities (one interview with an establishment with 50-99 employees and two interviews with establishments with 100 or more employees). These two sizebands were merged.

Data dictionary files were created listing each variable with notes and guidance on the correct weight to use.

# Using the survey for analysis

## Reporting

The headline results from the survey are available in an Official Statistics Publication on the Scottish Government website. Background data accompanying the Official Statistics Publication can also be found on the Scottish Government website. Accompanying ‘Background Tables’ include underlying data used in the report.

As this is the first EPS in the series to be undertaken since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, comparisons with previous waves should be done with this in mind.

## Sampling error and statistical confidence

Sampling errors for the survey results overall and for key sub-groups are presented in Table 10. Figures have been based on a survey result of 50% (the ‘worst’ case in terms of statistical reliability) and have used a 95% confidence level. Where the table indicates that a survey result based on all respondents has a sampling error of  $\pm 3.09\%$ , this should be interpreted as follows: ‘for a question asked of all respondents where the survey result is 50%, we are 95% confident that the true figure lies within the range 46.91% to 53.09%’.

As a note, the calculation of sampling error has taken into account the finite population correction factor to account for cases where we are measuring a significant portion of the population universe (i.e. even if two sample sizes are the same, the sampling error will be lower if in one case a far higher proportion of the population was covered).

These confidence intervals are based on the assumptions of random probability sampling and a normal distribution of responses.

**Table 10: Sampling error (at the 95% confidence level) associated with findings of 50%**

Survey group	Population	Number of interviews	(Maximum) Sampling Error
Overall	149,200	1,000	± 3.09
2 to 4	75,100	222	± 6.57
5 to 9	33,600	242	± 6.28
10 to 24	24,400	231	± 6.42
25 to 49	8,500	142	± 8.16
50 to 99	4,300	80	± 10.85
100+	3,300	83	± 10.62
Primary sector and utilities	13,200	70	± 11.68
Manufacturing	7,000	61	± 12.49
Construction	13,600	65	± 12.13
Trade, accommodation and transport	49,000	357	± 5.17
Business and other services	48,700	281	± 5.83
Non-market services	17,800	166	± 7.57

Survey group	Population	Number of interviews	(Maximum) Sampling Error
Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire	16,500	101	± 9.72
Ayrshire	8,900	42	± 15.09
Borders	4,300	21	± 21.34
Dumfries and Galloway	5,800	47	± 14.24
Edinburgh and Lothians	19,800	116	± 9.07
Fife	8,200	45	± 14.57
Forth Valley	7,400	65	± 12.10
Glasgow	21,100	139	± 8.29
Highlands and Islands	19,000	164	± 7.62
Lanarkshire	16,600	92	± 10.19
Tayside	12,000	93	± 10.12
West	9,400	65	± 12.11
West Lothian	4,000	38	± 15.82

Note: due to overlap between some ROAs, the sum of the number of interviews across the ROAs will exceed the total number of interviews. Population data is taken from the 2021 Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR) – the latest available business population statistics published by ONS at the time of reporting.

## Explaining variation between sub-groups in the report

Table 10 shows the total number of interviews achieved across the entire sample. However, a number of measures are based only on a subsection of the sample. For example, questions on the provision of training were only asked of establishments that had provided training for their staff in the last 12 months (817 unweighted establishments). Table 11 shows common subsample bases used in reporting and their respective base sizes, both at an overall level and split by sizeband. Lower sample sizes increase the maximum sampling error, as shown in Table 10.

**Table 11: Interviews achieved across key measures and by sizeband**

Base measure	Total	2 to 4	5 to 9	10 to 24	25 to 49	50 to 99	100+
All establishments	1,000	222	242	231	142	80	83
All establishments with vacancies	699	60	152	196	132	78	81
All establishments who recruited anybody in the last 12 months	644	49	127	184	127	77	80
All establishments who have taken on education leavers	458	48	84	118	87	54	67
All establishments offering work experience	339	39	67	92	52	41	48
All establishments providing training in the past 12 months	817	124	187	218	128	77	83

## Appendix A: Industry coding

The 2021 Scottish EPS used different sector definitions compared to the 2019 previous EPS. The previous EPS used 12 sectors for analysis, the 2021 iteration had 6. This was done to provide robust subgroup analysis within sector (by minimising the margin of error) as a result of the reduction in overall sample size compared to 2019.

Each establishment was allocated to one of 6 sectors, based on their Standard Industrial Classification (SIC). SIC 2007 was used to classify establishments using the following method: using the four-digit Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) supplied for each record from the Market Location database, a description of business activity was read out to each respondent. If they agreed that this description matched the main activity undertaken at the establishment, then the SIC on Market Location's database was assumed to be correct. If, however, the respondent felt the description did not correspond to their main business activity at the site, a verbatim response was collected of their main activity. At the analysis stage this was coded to a four-digit SIC which was then used as the basis for their classification into one of the 6 sectors.

Table 12 below shows the 6 sectors and their corresponding SIC 2007 definitions.<sup>6</sup>

**Table 12. Definitions of each sector**

Sector	SIC 2007
Primary sector and Utilities	A - Agriculture, forestry and fishing (01-03) Including farming, hunting and other related service activities, forestry and logging, fishing and aquaculture
	B - Mining and quarrying (05-09) Including mining of coal, metals, sand/stone/clay, and extraction of crude petroleum and natural gas
	D - Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (35) Including electric power generation, transmission and distribution, manufacture of gas and distribution of gaseous fuels, steam and air conditioning supply,

<sup>6</sup> [Standard industrial classification of economic activities \(SIC\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/standard-industrial-classification-sic)

Sector	SIC 2007
Primary sector and Utilities (continued)	<p>E - Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities (36-39)</p> <p>Including water collection, treatment and supply, sewerage and waste collection, treatment and disposal activities and materials recovery</p>
Manufacturing	<p>C - Manufacturing (10-33)</p> <p>Including manufacture of food and beverages, textiles, chemicals and chemical products, basic pharmaceutical products, other mineral products, manufacture of metals and metal products, machinery, computer and electronic products and equipment, motor vehicles and other transport equipment, furniture, and repair and installation of machinery and equipment</p>
Construction	<p>F - Construction (41-43)</p> <p>Including the construction of buildings, civil engineering (constructing roads, railways and other utility projects), demolition, and specialised activities such as electrical installation, roofing and scaffold erection</p>
Trade, Accommodation and Transport	<p>G - Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (45-47)</p> <p>Including sale, maintenance and repair of motor vehicles, parts and accessories, nonvehicle wholesale (for example agriculture, food, household goods), and the retail trade of all products whether in stores, stalls, markets, mail order or online</p> <p>H - Transport and storage (49-53)</p> <p>Including land, water and air transport (passenger and freight), warehousing and support activities for transportation, postal and courier activities.</p> <p>I - Accommodation and food service activities (55-56)</p> <p>Including hotels, campsites, youth hostels, holiday centres, villages and other short stay accommodation, restaurants and takeaways, event catering and licensed clubs, pubs and bars</p>

Sector	SIC 2007
Business and Other Services	J - Information and communication (58-63) including publishing (books, journals, newspapers etc. and software/computer games), television, film and music production, broadcasting, telecommunications, computer programming and consultancy, information service activities (e.g. data processing and hosting)
	K - Financial and insurance activities (64-66) Including banks and building societies, activities of holding companies, trusts, funds and similar financial entities, credit granting, pensions, insurance and reinsurance
	L - Real estate activities (68) Including the buying, selling and renting of real estate
	M - Professional, scientific and technical activities (69-75) Including legal activities, accounting, bookkeeping and auditing, management consultancy, architectural and engineering activities, scientific research and development, advertising and market research, specialist design, photographic activities,
	N - Administrative and support service activities (77-82) Including translation and interpretation, veterinary activities, renting and leasing of tangible goods (motors, household, machinery), employment agencies, travel agencies and tour operations, security and investigation activities, office administration and business support
	R - Arts, entertainment, and recreation (90-93) Including performing arts, libraries and museums, gambling and betting, sports facilities, amusement and recreation activities

Sector	SIC 2007
Business and Other Services (continued)	<p>S - Other service activities (94-96)</p> <p>Including activities of membership organisations (religious, political, trade union, professional), personal services (hairdressing, beauty, textile cleaning, well-being activities, funeral activities)</p>
Non-market Services	<p>O - Public administration and defence; compulsory social security (84)</p> <p>Including administration of the State and economic and social policy of the community, provision of services to the community as a whole such as defence activities, foreign affairs, justice and judicial activities, fire service and compulsory social security activities</p> <p>P - Education (85)</p> <p>Including pre-primary, primary, secondary and higher education, other education (such as sports, driving schools, cultural education), educational support activities</p> <p>Q - Human health and social work activities (86-88)</p> <p>Including Hospitals, medical and dental practices, residential care, social work activities</p>

## Appendix B: Occupational coding

The occupational data collected in the survey was collected to understand the role a young person was recruited to (question C8). This information was collected verbatim and then coded at the analysis stage, where possible to a four-digit level SOC. Table 13 below gives examples of the types of occupations included within occupational bandings.

**Table 13: Examples of occupations that were included within each occupational group**

Occupational group	Primary sectors (Agriculture, Manufacturing, Construction, etc.)	Service sectors (retail, business, finance, transport, etc.)	Public sectors (Public Admin, Health, Education, etc.)
Managers, Directors and Senior Officials	Site managers, Department Heads, Shift Managers (not supervisors)	Directors, Managers / Branch/site managers, shift managers (not supervisors)	Police inspectors and above, department heads, Head teachers, Senior Officials
Professionals	Professional engineers, software and IT professionals, accountants, chemists, scientific researchers	Solicitors, lawyers, accountants, IT professionals, economists, architects, actuaries	Doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers, social workers, librarians
Associate Professionals	Science and engineering technicians, lab technicians, IT technicians, accounting technicians	Insurance underwriters, finance/investment analysts and advisers, writers/journalists, buyers, estate agents	Junior police/fire/prison officers, therapists, paramedics, community workers, health and safety officers, housing officers

Occupational group	Primary sectors (Agriculture, Manufacturing, Construction, etc.)	Service sectors (retail, business, finance, transport, etc.)	Public sectors (Public Admin, Health, Education, etc.)
Administrative staff	Secretaries, receptionists, PAs, telephonists, bookkeepers	Secretaries, receptionists, PAs, communication operators, market research interviewers, clerks	Secretaries, receptionists, PAs, local government officers and assistants, office assistants, library and database assistants
Skilled Trades	Farmers, electricians, machine setters / tool makers, carpenters, plasterers	Motor mechanics, chefs, printers, TV engineers, butchers	Chefs, cooks
Caring, Leisure and Other Service Occupations	Care assistants, nursery nurses	Travel agents, travel assistants, hairdressers, housekeepers	Care assistants, home carers, nursery nurses, ambulance staff, pest control, dental nurses, caretakers
Sales and customer service occupations	Customer facing roles: sales staff and call centre agents	Sales assistants and retail cashiers, telesales, call centre agents	Customer care operations
Process, plant and machine operatives	Routine operatives, drivers, machine operators, sorters and assemblers	HGV, van, fork-lift, bus and taxi drivers	Drivers, vehicle inspectors
Elementary occupations	Labourers, packers, goods handling and storage staff	Bar staff, shelf fillers, catering assistants, waiters/waitresses, cleaners	Labourers, cleaners, road sweepers, traffic wardens, security guards

# Appendix C: ROA regions (and their constituent Local Authorities)

**Table 14: ROA regions (and their constituent Local Authorities)**

ROA Region	Local Authority (note some overlap)
Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire	Aberdeen City Aberdeenshire
Ayrshire	East Ayrshire North Ayrshire South Ayrshire
Borders	Scottish Borders
Dumfries and Galloway	Dumfries and Galloway
Edinburgh and Lothians	East Lothian Edinburgh Midlothian
Fife	Fife
Forth Valley	Clackmannanshire Falkirk Stirling
Glasgow	East Dunbartonshire East Renfrewshire Glasgow
Highlands and Islands	Argyll and Bute Eilean Siar Highland Moray Orkney Islands Shetland Islands
Lanarkshire	East Dunbartonshire North Lanarkshire; South Lanarkshire
Tayside	Angus Dundee Perth and Kinross
West	East Renfrewshire Inverclyde Renfrewshire West Dunbartonshire
West Lothian	West Lothian

# Appendix D: Scottish EPS 2021 questionnaire deletions

**Table 15: Questions asked in the 2019 Scottish EPS but removed for 2021**

Question reference	Stage removed	Question text
C6E	Pre-pilot	And has anyone you've recruited in the last 12 months been aged over 50?
D26	Post-pilot	Typically how long are the apprenticeships you offer intended to last from start to finish?
D27D	Pre-pilot	Since your site first started offering formal apprenticeships, has the number of apprentices that you have at this site increased, decreased or remained about the same?
D29	During mainstage fieldwork	Have you heard of the following types of apprenticeships...? (Technical Apprenticeships and Professional Apprenticeships codes deleted prior to the mainstage launching. Entire question deleted during mainstage fieldwork)
D27E	Post-pilot	And over the next 2 years, do you expect the number of apprentices you have at this site to increase, stay about the same, or decrease?
D27F	Post-pilot	Why do you expect the number of apprentices at this site to increase over the next 2 years?
D27G	Post-pilot	Why do you not expect the number of apprentices at this site to increase over the next 2 years?
D27H	Post-pilot	Why do you expect the number of apprentices at this site to decrease over the next 2 years?

Question reference	Stage removed	Question text
D34i	Post-pilot	In what timescale is your organisation planning to offer apprenticeships, is it...
D34ii	Post-pilot	What are the main reasons why your organisation is intending to start offering apprenticeships in the future?
D40	Pre-pilot	Would you have liked to have been involved in designing the content of the [SHOW TYPE(s) OF TRAINING WHERE D39=3]: Apprenticeships (and/or) Vocational Qualifications (and/or) External Training]?
D41	Pre-pilot	What prevented you from being involved in designing the content of the [SHOW TYPE(s) OF TRAINING WHERE D39=3]: Apprenticeships (and/or) Vocational Qualifications (and/or) External Training]?
F2	Post-pilot	Which of the following statements best applies to your outlook for the business over the next 12 months: You expect the business to...

**Table 16: New questions asked in the 2021 Scottish EPS pilot but removed before mainstage**

Question reference	Question text
F4	To what extent do you agree or disagree that your organisation/this establishment provides an environment where employee views are sought out, listened to and acted upon, and can make a difference?
F5	And to what extent do you agree or disagree that your organisation/this establishment is committed to an inclusive approach to talent management that is explicitly committed to ensuring no hidden barriers to progression?
F6	To what extent do you agree or disagree that your organisation/this establishment regularly monitors and evaluates the outcomes of your approach to talent management to ensure there are no hidden barriers to progression?
F7	Do you offer enhanced sick pay beyond the statutory minimum to any of your employees at this site?
F8	Approximately what proportion of employees at this site have enhanced sick pay?

# **Appendix E: Reassurance email**

REF: [KEY NUMBER]

## **Employer Perspectives Survey**

Thank you for considering participating in this important research.

The Employer Perspectives Survey is being conducted on behalf of the Scottish Government. The project is being conducted by IFF Research, an independent market research organisation.

The survey aims to help the Scottish Government and other organisations to help employers like you, by better understanding your needs in terms of skills, training and employment. Your co-operation will ensure that the views expressed are representative of all employers in your sector.

Participation in the survey will involve a telephone interview with an IFF interviewer lasting around 20 minutes at a time that is convenient for you and we hope very much that you are able to take part.

For further information regarding the survey, please see the Scottish Government's website: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-employer-perspectives-survey-2021>

If you have any queries concerning the format or content of the interview, please contact Malina Cojocaru or Aminul Hassan at IFF Research via e-mail: ScottishEPS2021@iffresearch.com. If you would like to speak to somebody at the Scottish Government for more information on the aims and objectives of the survey, you can contact Gillian Dalrymple on Gillian.Dalrymple@gov.scot.

Your responses to the survey will be treated in the strictest confidence under the Code of Conduct of the Market Research Society. Responses will not be linked to individual companies or respondents without their prior consent.

The information you provide for this study will be used for research purposes only. Under data protection law you will have the right to a copy of your data, change your data, or withdraw from the research at any point. For more information, please see the IFF research website, at <http://www.iffresearch.com/gdpr/>.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely,  
IFF Research

## Appendix F: Response rates by subgroups for the survey

**Table 17: Interviews achieved and response rate by size and sector<sup>7</sup>**

Survey group	Interviews achieved	Response rates
Overall	1,000	34%
2 to 4	227	29%
5 to 9	253	37%
10 to 24	210	33%
25 to 49	146	41%
50 to 99	59	37%
100+	105	38%
Primary sector and utilities	71	39%
Manufacturing	54	26%
Construction	62	25%
Trade, accommodation and transport	359	35%
Business and other services	292	33%
Non-market services	162	47%

*Response rate is calculated as ‘achieved interviews’ as a proportion of all ‘complete contacts’, as explained in the Response Rate section of the main body of the technical report.*

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<sup>7</sup> Sector and size groups are based on pre-survey establishment information. As such, the ‘interviews achieved’ numbers will not match the figures found in Tables 8 and 10, which show the achieved interviews based on the size and sector information provided during the survey.

## Appendix G: Edit specification

**Table 18: Specification of edits applied to the data**

Edit number	Objective of edit	Condition	Force/actions
1	Check how sectors given at A8 correspond to sample sector	If A7 = 2 and sector6 different to samvars_sector6	Explore patterns of high frequencies of discrepancies between coded and sectors on sample.
2	To check that public sector ('local or central government financed body') definition given at A5 is consistent with SIC code	"If A5 is '3' or '4' and SIC2 is not '84', '85' or '86'	To check that public sector ('local or central government financed body') definition given at A5 is consistent with SIC code
3	To check legitimacy of high numbers of employment	If A1 is greater than 1500	Each record to be judged on an individual basis, using internet searches where necessary. Call-backs may be necessary if number of employees seems excessively high for business activity.

Edit number	Objective of edit	Condition	Force/actions
4	To check how A1 answers match to Sample size	If A1 is more than 20 times samvars_emps if A1<10 OR If A1 is more than 15 times greater or less than samvars_emps if A1 IS BETWEEN 10 AND 99 OR If A1 is more than 10 times greater or less than samvars_emps if A1 ≥ 100	To check how A1 answers match to Sample size
5	To check plausibility of history / numbers of employment	If A1 ≥ 50 and F1=1	Each record to be judged on an individual basis, using internet searches where necessary. Consider appropriate action if discrepancies are inexplicable.
6	Check that all SICs given at A8 are valid SIC07 codes	If A7 = 2	Any records where A7=2 will need to have the SIC at A8 validated. Recode where possible, recontact if necessary.
7	To ensure that all SOC codes are valid at C8	If SOC at C8 is not in full SOC file provided	Recode where possible, recontact if necessary.

Edit number	Objective of edit	Condition	Force/actions
8	To check high numbers on particular work experience placements	If C18_1-11 is (combined) more than 5 times greater than A1 if A1<5 OR If C18_1-11 is (combined) more than 2 times greater than A1 if A1 IS BETWEEN 5 AND 49 OR If C18_1-11 is (combined) greater than A1 if A1 ≥ 50 OR If any C18_1-11 value greater than 100	Each record to be judged on an individual basis.
9	To check high numbers of apprentices	If D22a is more than 5 times greater than A1 if A1<5 OR If D22a is more than 2 times greater than A1 if A1 IS BETWEEN 5 AND 49 OR If D22a is greater than A1 if A1 ≥ 50 OR If D22a is greater than 100	Each record to be judged on an individual basis.
10	To check that extensive use of initiatives is plausible	If count of number of initiatives/schemes used across C3, D2 and D5 is >10	Assess responses to other questions for engagement with the external training landscape. Consider appropriate action if amount feels unreasonable.
11	To check contradictory responses on how long establishment has been operating and when offered Apprenticeships	If F1=1 and D23i=1 (offered Apps in last 3 years)	Review on an individual basis. Consider data edits at D23i or A6 if contradictions are present.

Edit number	Objective of edit	Condition	Force/actions
12	Check legitimate use of the "Head Office" code	If establishment is a single site (A2=1) and has used one of the various 'Head Office Decision' codes at C27, D27c, D27ai, D33, D34a.	Remove use of the Head Office code if establishment is a single site.
13	Check for excessive use of 'Don't know' code at key measures	If answered "Don't know" at C1, C6A, D6A, D6B, D13 and D22.	Each case to be reviewed and act as a sense check that numbers that fail this check are low. (To be 'DK' across so many key measures would be indicative of possibly having not interviewed the most appropriate respondent).

## An Official Statistics publication for Scotland

Official and National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Both undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs and are produced free from any political interference.

### Correspondence and enquiries

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e-mail: [statistics.enquiries@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:statistics.enquiries@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

### How to access background or source data

The data collected for this statistical publication:

- are available in more detail through <https://statistics.gov.scot>
- are available via the official statistics results report and background tables published on the Scottish Government website.
- may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. The Scottish EPS 2021 questionnaire is available on request. Please contact [FHEstatistics@gov.scot](mailto:FHEstatistics@gov.scot) for further information.
- cannot be made available by Scottish Government for further analysis as Scottish Government is not the data controller.

### Complaints and suggestions

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