

*nfer*

**Evaluation of the second year of**

**training  
credits**

**David Sims  
Sheila Stoney**

# **Evaluation of the second year of TRAINING CREDITS**

**Final Report**

**David Sims  
Sheila Stoney**

Published in 1993  
by the National Foundation for Educational Research  
The Mere, Upton Park, Slough, Berkshire, SL1 2DQ

© National Foundation for Educational Research 1993  
Registered Charity No. 313392

ISBN 0 7005 1347 7

# CONTENTS

Abbreviations	
Acknowledgements	
Executive Summary	i
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Training Credits: The National Initiative	1
1.2 The Second-Year Evaluation	2
1.3 Evaluation Methods: An Overview	3
1.4 Structure and Content of the Report	4
<b>2. THE MANAGEMENT OF TRAINING CREDITS</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1 Socio-Economic Contexts	5
2.2 Training Credits Within the TECs	6
2.3 The Main Scheme Characteristics	7
2.4 Project Administration	9
2.5 Financial Management	10
2.6 Marketing	13
2.7 Monitoring, Evaluation and Quality Assurance	14
2.8 Managing the Training Credit Partnership	14
2.9 Evaluative Overview	16
<b>3. THE SCHOOLS</b>	<b>18</b>
3.1 Schools' Involvement in the Training Credits Pilot	18
3.2 Staff Awareness, Knowledge and Understanding of Training Credits	19
3.3 Teachers' Reactions to Training Credits	21
3.4 Briefing Students about Training Credits	23
3.5 Student Awareness and Understanding of Training Credits	25
3.6 Action Plans	31
3.7 Careers Education and Guidance	34
3.8 Disadvantaged Students	38
3.9 Evaluative Overview	40
<b>4. THE CAREERS SERVICE</b>	<b>42</b>
4.1 The Role of the Careers Service in the Training Credits Pilot	42
4.2 Empowerment and Entitlement: Support and Constraints	44
4.3 Action Planning	46
4.4 Special Training Needs	48
4.5 The Effects of the Pilots on the Careers Service	50
4.6 The Perceived Effectiveness of Careers Guidance from the Careers Service	50
4.7 Evaluative Overview	52



<b>5.</b>	<b>THE TRAINING PROVIDERS</b>	<b>54</b>
5.1	Participation in Training Credit Pilots	54
5.2	Marketing, Briefings and Awareness Levels	55
5.3	Administration and Resourcing Issues	56
5.4	Training Plans and Action Plans	58
5.5	Preparation of Young People for Training and Work	60
5.6	Special Training Needs	61
5.7	Impact of Training Credits	62
5.8	Evaluative Overview	64
<b>6.</b>	<b>THE EMPLOYERS</b>	<b>65</b>
6.1	Recruitment of Young People	65
6.2	Views on Careers Education and Guidance	67
6.3	Marketing, Awareness and Understanding of Training Credits	68
6.4	Impact of Training Credits	73
6.5	Benefits to Young People	76
6.6	Benefits to the Company	77
6.7	Evaluative Overview	78
<b>7.</b>	<b>YOUNG PEOPLE AND TRAINING CREDITS</b>	<b>80</b>
7.1	Young People's Knowledge and Understanding of Training Credits	80
7.2	Differences between TEC Areas and Student Groups	83
7.3	Take-up and Participation	85
7.4	Training Credit Users: A Profile	89
7.5	Using Training Credits	91
7.6	An Entitlement to Qualifications	92
7.7	Young People's Motivation to Train	93
7.8	Non-participation in Training Credits	95
7.9	Disadvantaged Young People	96
7.10	Equal Opportunities	98
7.11	Evaluative Overview	99
<b>8.</b>	<b>TRAINING CREDIT PILOTS: EMERGING MESSAGES</b>	<b>102</b>
8.1	Change and Progress	102
8.2	Training Credit Principles: Empowerment and Entitlement	104
8.3	Training Cultures: Motivation and Markets	105
8.4	Implications for Development	108
	<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>110</b>
	<b>METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX</b>	<b>111</b>
	<b>APPENDIX OF TABLES</b>	<b>115</b>

## ABBREVIATIONS

ATO/P	Approved Training Organisation/Provider
BTEC	Business and Technician Education Council
CGLI	City and Guilds of London Institute
CPVE	Certificate of Prevocational Education
DOVE	Diploma of Vocational Education
ED	Employment Department
FE	Further Education
HE	Higher Education
INSET	In-service Training
LEA	Local Education Authority
LEC	Local Enterprise Company
NFER	National Foundation for Educational Research
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
ORF	Output-related funding
RoA	Record of Achievement
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SIC	Standard Industrial Classification
SOC	Standard Occupational Classification
STN	Special Training Needs
TC	Training Credits
TEC	Training and Enterprise Council
TFS	The Field System
TIMS	Training Information Management System
YT	Youth Training

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to express their appreciation of the generous co-operation given to them during the evaluation by Employment Department and TEC colleagues, particularly Mr Gary Clarkson, in addition to LEA, Careers Service, school, college, training-provider and employer staff. We would also like to recognise the contribution made by young people themselves.

Appreciation must be expressed to our colleagues John Harland, Barbara Tomlins and Roy Twitchin who carried out the case-study research and wrote the local evaluation reports. Bob Stradling played a valuable role in editing both this and the local reports and made many useful comments and suggestions. We would also like to thank our project statistician, Ian Schagen, for his significant contribution to the analysis of data and preparation of tabulated findings.

In addition, the authors are especially grateful for the administrative and secretarial help given by Lynn Fardell and the additional research support provided by Paula Duffy. Thanks are also due to Marian Morris for checking the manuscript and to Mary Hargreaves and Tim Wright for the design of the document and Enver Carim for overseeing its publication.

This evaluation was funded by the Employment Department. However, the views expressed in this report are those of the researchers and do not necessarily represent those of the ED.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

**1. The Project.** This summary presents the main findings from the second-year evaluation of Training Credits,<sup>1</sup> carried out by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) between September 1992 and March 1993. The evaluation was commissioned by the Employment Department (ED) to assess the progress made by Training Credits in meeting national and local objectives, to examine the changes introduced as a result of the initial implementation experiences of Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) and to make practical recommendations to assist in the further development of the pilots.

**2. Evaluation Methods.** By adopting a case-study approach, the evaluation assessed the progress and impact of three distinctive Training Credit schemes, operating in different geographic, socio-economic and labour market contexts. Using common data-collection methods and standardised research instruments, the in-depth case studies collected a wide range of numerical and qualitative information from key participants on their experience and views of the schemes. The groups involved included TEC personnel, Careers Service staff, teachers, school students, young people using and not using credits, training providers and employers.

**3. Reporting.** A local report for each area and a national report, based on the aggregated findings of the case studies, were produced.

## THE IMPACT OF TRAINING CREDITS ON YOUNG PEOPLE

**4. Careers Education and Guidance.** Most participants welcomed the promotion of an entitlement for young people to enhanced careers education and guidance and felt that this was one of the major benefits of the schemes. School staff especially appreciated the additional resources provided through Training Credits to enhance careers provision. Young people, both those at school and those using a Training Credit, were largely positive about the information and guidance they had received at school to help them make their post-16 decisions. In contrast, the surveys of employers and training providers indicated that they did not always think that young people had been adequately prepared for working life, although some acknowledged that improvements were taking place.

**5. Action Planning.** Action plans were an integral part of the three Training Credit schemes. Most of the teachers interviewed, and just over half of the credit users, thought

---

<sup>1</sup> Since the evaluation began, Training Credits have been renamed 'Youth Credits', but the original name is retained throughout this report since it was the term used at the time of the study

that action planning was useful in helping young people to map out their post-16 objectives and to identify the actions needed to pursue these. Although the principles of action planning attracted widespread support, there was less consensus on the format and content of action plans and how they should be used. For example, whilst welcoming the introduction of action plans, careers officers recognised that school leavers were often hesitant about using them for interviews. The link between action plans and training plans was not always made; only about one-quarter of credit users with an action plan reported that it had been used in planning their training programme. Furthermore, a majority of the employers and training providers interviewed were unable to comment on the usefulness of action plans because they had not seen enough of these documents to make a judgement.

**6. Awareness of Training Credits.** During Autumn 1992, **student awareness** of Training Credits was reasonable, given that many were yet to be formally briefed about their local scheme. Just under half of those surveyed in Year 11, and just over half of those in Years 12/13, had heard of Training Credits. However, only about a third of credit users said that, when they left school, they had an adequate knowledge about either what credits were or how to get and use them. Levels of knowledge and understanding of Training Credits were more variable amongst young people with special educational needs than other groups of student. A small survey of young people who were not using a Training Credit revealed that they were fairly well informed about credits, although several wanted more information about how to obtain and use them.

**7. Entitlement and Empowerment.** There was a high awareness amongst credit users of the importance of qualifications and training. Whilst over 80 per cent of credit users indicated that they were more aware of their right to train because of the schemes, they were less sure about how much more bargaining power they actually had. TEC personnel, careers officers, teachers and training providers all supported the idea of empowering young people to exercise choice and become more discriminating in seeking out training of good quality which was suited to their needs. However, the prevailing view was that putting empowerment into practice was extremely difficult in the current economic climate. Moreover, many teachers and careers officers felt that, owing to social and maturational limitations, it was unrealistic to expect most 16-18 year olds to make full use of the empowerment potential offered to them by Training Credits.

**8. Young People with Special Educational and Training Needs.** The recession was said to be reducing the occupational opportunities available to all young people, but especially to those with special educational and training needs. Whilst TECs and Careers Services were making special efforts to involve young people with special needs in Training Credits, some of these students were sceptical about what the schemes could additionally offer them. Providers welcomed the application of Output-Related Funding (ORF) to Wordpower and Numberpower, but some suggested that the funding of training for this client group needed to be increased.

**9. Motivation to Train.** A majority (63 per cent) of credit users felt that the schemes had been an inducement to follow local training and employment routes. Training

Credits, it was claimed, had made them consider training more seriously and had also helped them to get the training they wanted. Whilst a majority of students initially intended to continue in full-time education, it is worth noting that fewer than five per cent said that they were now prepared to take up a job without training. However, employers and training providers were less convinced that Training Credits had, as yet, greatly increased young people's motivation to train. For example, less than 20 per cent of employers claimed that Training Credits had affected young people's attitudes positively and increased their motivation to take up training.

**10. The Take-Up of Credits.** Figures supplied to ED by the TECs indicated that the number of young people in training in the three areas increased from 3,650 to 6,970 between November 1991 and November 1992, and about one-third of these had employed status. The number of leavers from the schemes (about 2,300) accounted for about one-third of credit users in 1992. The term 'leavers', however, includes changers who are moving around the system in terms of seeking a better deal, follow-on training or a new job. The extent to which this movement of young people might be contributing to the development of a training market is an issue requiring further investigation.

## **THE IMPACT OF TRAINING CREDITS ON EMPLOYERS AND TRAINING PROVIDERS**

**11. Volume and Variety of Training.** The evaluation evidence from different sources indicated that Training Credits had not greatly affected the volume and variety of training provided for young people by either employers or training organisations, including colleges. The fact that National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) were not yet available for all training areas was occasionally said to be restricting the training opportunities available in some employment sectors, although this was expected to be a temporary constraint.

**12. Quality of Training.** Whilst a small majority of employers, and rather more training providers, considered that the quality of training which they provided had not been especially improved by Training Credits, quite a number of employers felt that training provision had become more systematic. For example, 68 per cent of participant employers reported that some or all of their credit users now had training plans which set out a training timetable, objectives and outcomes.

**13. Funding of Training.** Only 18 per cent of the employers surveyed reported that Training Credits had led them to increase spending on training, with the majority (64 per cent) reporting that no impact had occurred so far. This view was echoed by most of the training providers interviewed. There was some concern amongst approved training organisations that college-based training was unduly expensive, although they did not appear to be shopping around for the most cost-effective training from providers. At the same time, some college providers claimed to be experiencing financial difficulties which were linked with the introduction of Training Credits and related changes to the

payment of the Revenue Support Grant. Furthermore, there was felt to be a tendency for private-sector providers to 'cream' off the better trainees and/or be reluctant to take STN-endorsed youngsters, leaving the FE sector with a higher proportion of lower ability trainees who needed considerable support.

**14. Employer Attitudes.** Most providers did not believe that Training Credits had made employers' attitudes to training more positive and they observed that some employers were still guided by short-term company requirements rather than by a longer-term commitment to training. The survey of employers revealed that the schemes had thus far not had a substantial impact on employers' recruitment of young people (over 90 per cent of participating employers said that credits had not affected their recruitment decisions) or had encouraged them to invest more resources in training, although a quarter said that they had increased their spending on training as a result of credits.

**15. Benefits of Training Credits.** A high proportion of employers could identify some benefit to their company as a result of participating in the schemes and these were mainly of a financial nature. Help with payment for training, the opportunity to get a 'free' trainee and a better standard of, and more motivated, job applicants were some of the benefits cited. Employers considered that young people were the main beneficiaries of the schemes, rather than their own companies.

**16. Non-Participant Employers.** Half of the employers surveyed who were not involved in Training Credits were aware of the scheme running in their area. Employers' main reasons for non-involvement, apart from lack of information about credits, related to the recession and satisfaction with their own training arrangements, although it was evident, that with careful marketing, a proportion of these could be encouraged to join the schemes.

**17. Quality Assurance.** During the second year of Training Credits, the three TECs had given more attention to implementing quality assurance systems with their providers. Whilst providers generally welcomed TECs' quality audits, some pointed out that they already provided quality training and others mentioned that they had already developed their own review structures in order to assure the quality of their training provision.

**18. Training Market.** There was little concrete evidence that Training Credits had, as yet, created an efficient training market in terms of either widening young people's choice of training or increasing their ability to shop around the system for the best opportunities. The evaluation showed, however, that there were considerable movements of young people in, out and around the training and employment scene in the three areas. It was clear that the creation of a youth training market has been constrained by the dual forces of the recession and the decision of many young people to stay on in full-time education.

## **PROGRESS MADE IN MANAGING TRAINING CREDITS**

**19. Approaches Adopted.** The three TECs organised their Training Credit schemes in varied ways, which reflected differences in existing structures and management practices as well as differences in local needs. All three TECs operated universal credits models in that their schemes covered training in all industrial sectors. The main purposes of the 'credit', the form of which differed, were mainly for marketing and for giving trainees something tangible to show that they were credit users. The real value of the credit varied between areas and there was a range of weightings or supplements for local priorities and areas of special need. There were slight variations in eligibility criteria and the TECs had become more flexible in the second year of the pilot, in terms of age and residency requirements, partly in response to the lower than expected demand for credits.

**20. Administrative Procedures.** The evaluation found that the TECs had simplified their administrative procedures during the second year of operation and had reduced the amount of paperwork, largely in response to the demands of training providers. Constructing and utilising management information systems had proved to be problematic for all three TECs, each of which was using a different system. Although the effective administration of Training Credits is heavily dependent on sound databases, reliable and up-to-date information on young people and employers was often not readily available. TEC staff were aware of the limitations of their databases and were in the process of making modifications.

**21. Financial Management.** Training providers generally expressed satisfaction with the overall efficiency of the credits payment systems and the efforts made by the TECs to alleviate initial problems. The ORF element of Training Credits (as in other training programmes which have adopted this approach) was a major consideration for TECs and their providers. Time-lags in payments and the criteria adopted for activating the ORF element had caused some difficulty, although again the early problems were gradually being overcome.

**22. Marketing.** TECs had experienced variable success in marketing Training Credits with young people and employers. Whilst the main source of information on credits in schools was the Careers Service, most employers found out about the scheme from TEC publicity materials, training providers and young recruits. Although some improvements in marketing had taken place during the second year of the schemes, calls were still being made for better written information which clearly stated the aims and benefits of Training Credits and how to obtain and use them.

**23. Partnerships.** The evaluation confirmed that the implementation of Training Credit schemes was challenging because it involved changing the attitudes and established practices of several key groups. Some progress had been made during the second year in developing a partnership approach, by extending the infrastructure for consultation and liaison between the partners. However, many of the training providers and school staff interviewed did not feel fully part of a credits partnership and further efforts were needed to foster more collaborative working and effective information exchange within the schemes.



## **DEVELOPING TRAINING CREDITS: SOME POINTERS FROM THE EVALUATION**

**24. Areas for Review and Development.** The findings from the evaluation of three schemes suggest that there are a number of key areas which TECs need to consider in seeking to implement or further develop their Training Credit schemes:

- ◆ Careful and ongoing attention needs to be given to the creation, maintenance and extension of the credits partnership in order to engender the full commitment and involvement of all stakeholders.
- ◆ A prime requirement for the effective operation and monitoring of Training Credit schemes is the development of efficient, and not overtly complex, management information and administrative systems. Ways need to be found of keeping the administrative demands on training providers and employers within reasonable bounds.
- ◆ Sustained marketing is needed in order to support the introduction of the radical new approach to youth training which Training Credits represents. Employers (especially smaller companies), young people (particularly the less able and those with special needs), teachers and parents need clear, concise, information on the aims, benefits and usage of credits. The main messages presented in written materials need to be reinforced over time and by the use of face-to-face marketing strategies with the different groups.
- ◆ There is an ongoing need to organise briefing and feedback mechanisms for regularly updating participants on the developing schemes and for receiving their views on the progress made. School staff, training providers and employers would especially welcome this inter-active approach, which would not only improve information flow, but would also help to further the spirit of a Training Credits partnership.
- ◆ Action and training plans have a key role to play in Training Credits. The role of action plans, and the procedures by which they are developed, need to be clearly defined. There is also a need to make practical links between action plans, records of achievement and training plans and to show participants how these inter-relate.
- ◆ There is a continued need to review the adequacy of the resourcing and nature of training provision made available for young people with special needs and to find ways of helping them participate fully in the schemes.

**25. Conclusion.** The evaluation has shown that the three Training Credit schemes have made steady progress during the second year in meeting their aims and overcoming some of their early operational difficulties. It is clear that the recession, coupled with changing choice patterns by young people at age 16, has meant that some of the initial targets set for the schemes have proved to be difficult to realise in the short term. The experience of the Training Credits initiative to date, upon which other TECs will now be able to build, underlines the fact that the development of an employer-led training culture and youth training market in Britain needs to be seen as a long-term venture, which requires sustained effort and support from local and national participants.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Training Credits: The National Initiative

There is ample research evidence and an even greater amount of informed comment which reaches the conclusion that Britain has an inadequate skills base to its economy and lacks the strong training culture amongst its workforce and employers which is enjoyed by its main industrial competitors. Over recent years a series of government initiatives has focused on aspects of this problem. The result of an increasing national emphasis on education and training, coupled with labour market forces, has been that more young people are staying-on in full-time education after age 16 and there are increasing numbers of adults seeking out education, training and retraining opportunities. Arguably, the search for qualifications and qualified status is stronger than ever before.

While the overall skills and training profile of the British workforce may be changing (albeit too slowly in some people's view), several vulnerable groups remain. Amongst these are young people who leave school at 16, often with relatively modest qualifications, and enter the labour market or remain unemployed. In many sectors of industry, especially those without a tradition of apprenticeships and traineeships, young employees have entered jobs with little in-company or off-the-job training provision and few prospects of career and personal development. Youth Training (previously YTS) was launched in the early 1980s as a major attempt to provide young people, who choose not to stay on in education, with structured work and training experience.

Launched in 1991, the Training Credits<sup>1</sup> initiative has sought to build on the experience of YT and other youth programmes and also to tackle more directly some of the underlying factors which have continued to act as an impediment to the development of a strong training culture within Great Britain. In tackling these problems, Training Credits has sought to address and change both the demand and the supply side of training and employment. It has endeavoured to create a greater awareness amongst employers of the need for a well trained workforce and to help them play a direct role in this by supplying more training opportunities and demanding better trained employees. At the same time, it has sought to supply more trained young people to industry and commerce and to create a demand by them for quality training and training places.

The more specific national aims of the Training Credits initiative, as given in the Employment Department's 1992 progress report, are as follows:

- ◆ Motivating the individual to train and to train to higher standards;
- ◆ Encouraging employers to invest in training;
- ◆ Establishing an efficient market in training.

---

<sup>1</sup> Since the evaluation began, Training Credits have been renamed 'Youth Credits', but the original name is retained throughout this report since it was the term used at the time of the study

In April 1991, 11 pilot schemes were launched in Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) in Great Britain; nine in England, one in Wales and one in Scotland. At the same time, the Employment Department (ED) commissioned an external case-study evaluation of each pilot and Coopers and Lybrand Deloitte were contracted to provide national coordination of these 11 case studies and to prepare an evaluative overview of the early progress and outcomes of the first Training Credit schemes.

## 1.2 The Second-Year Evaluation

In Autumn 1992, the ED commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to undertake a second-year evaluation of three of the pilot schemes which agreed to take part in this further study.

The second-year evaluation was launched in order to:

- ◆ Assess the progress of Training Credits since the first year of operation towards meeting local and national objectives.
- ◆ Examine how much progress has been made in overcoming difficulties identified in the original case studies.
- ◆ Make practical recommendations to assist in the further development of the pilots.

Since this was an 'opt-in' evaluation, the three TEC schemes were not necessarily representative of the national Training Credits scene. Rather they presented three approaches, within varying contexts, by which the national aims and also the local objectives could be met.

As the evaluation examined some of the major issues central to Training Credits, the findings presented and discussed in this report will have relevance to the management and development of all schemes.

In addition to the national aims, the following more specific local aims were present among the three Training Credit pilot schemes:

- ◆ **To increase the level of training and young people's participation in training which leads to NVQ qualifications.** In one case, NVQ Levels 2 and 3 were specifically cited and, in another, there was an objective of 'increasing the level of training for young people who leave school with few or no qualifications'.
- ◆ **To encourage employers to invest in the training and development of staff.** One TEC framed this more broadly as 'to make training accepted as a part of working life' and 'to reduce the number of young people in jobs without approved training' and another hoped to 'encourage longer term traineeships with employers which would include higher levels of education and training'.

- ◆ **To tackle the problem of skill shortages**, with one TEC specifically saying that it sought to do this by 'giving support to 18 year-olds' and another aiming to 'target training to better meet the needs of the local economy, particularly in growth sectors'.

### **1.3 Evaluation Methods: An Overview**

The requirement for an evaluation which undertook an in-depth study of three distinctive Training Credit schemes, whilst also providing an overview of the progress made by them as an illustrative group of Training Credit pilots, posed a number of methodological challenges. Additionally, the evaluation needed to be completed within a limited timespan - from September, 1992 to March, 1993.

The evaluation model adopted to meet these particular needs can best be described as a multiple-perspective case-study approach, coordinated across the three areas. In implementing this, a similar set of research activities was conducted in each area, using the same research instruments. The use of semi-structured interview schedules and open-ended sections on questionnaires enabled participants to comment on issues of local concern, whilst maintaining a large body of information which was common to all. Another key methodological decision was to use the most cost- and time-efficient research approach to collect data from different groups of people. The evaluation, therefore, deployed the following strategies to gather information from key participants in local Training Credit schemes:

- ◆ Face-to-face interviews with, and collection of documentary evidence from, TEC, senior Careers Service and LEA personnel.
- ◆ Face-to-face interviews with key school managers and careers teachers in a sub-sample of schools, including two special schools, in each area.
- ◆ Postal questionnaires to students in Year 11 and Years 12/13 in the same sub-sample of schools, supplemented by face-to-face interviews with a selection of students with special needs.
- ◆ Postal survey of Training Credit users of different ages sent to their place of training or work.
- ◆ Small-scale survey of non-users of Training Credits.
- ◆ Telephone interviews with a representative sample of employers participating in the pilots and with a sample of non-participants, supplemented by strategic face-to-face interviews.
- ◆ Telephone and face-to-face interviews with FE colleges and other Approved Training Providers (ATPs).

A more detailed description of the methods used, the target and achieved samples and the analyses undertaken is given in the Methodological Appendix located at the end of this report.

## 1.4 Structure and Content of the Report

Following the collection of data, three distinct in-depth evaluation reports were written on each pilot for the Employment Department and the TEC. This report presents an overview of the findings from the three case studies. It seeks to describe and evaluate how the three schemes have sought to meet the national aims of Training Credits and respond to commonly shared challenges, whilst also addressing local concerns. It raises issues and implications which are likely to have currency across different TEC areas and, wherever feasible, highlights transferable good practice and makes recommendations for the future development of Training Credits.

The report is structured into eight chapters. Following this Introduction, **Chapter 2** describes the unique and shared features of the three Training Credit models and contexts and assesses how they have changed since the first year and how much progress they have made in certain key areas of operation. It does not seek, however, to provide an extended description of each model, since this was a key focus of the 1991 case studies.

The next five chapters examine the schemes in terms of the differing perspectives and roles of the key partners. Where appropriate, relevant information and views from other partners are used in order to provide a rounded picture of the contribution of each to the scheme.

In **Chapter 3**, the views of school staff and their role in informing young people about Training Credits and preparing them for their transition at 16 is discussed. This chapter also explores the views and experiences of students of Year 11 and Years 12/13 at school and how much help they have recruited in making their post-16 plans. In **Chapter 4**, the role and experience of the Careers Service, especially with regard to providing enhanced careers guidance, undertaking action planning and issuing Training Credits to young people, is explored. In **Chapter 5**, the focus turns to Training Providers and in **Chapter 6** the views of employers, both participating in and not involved with Training Credits are taken into account. **Chapter 7** focusses on the main beneficiaries of the schemes - the young people - and examines the views and experiences of Training Credit users and, to a lesser extent, the non-users. It cross-references these views with those of young people still at school. Wherever appropriate, the evidence for the impact of Training Credits on young people is highlighted and discussed.

While each chapter ends with a synopsis of the main findings and recommendations, the report in **Chapter 8** concludes with an evaluative overview of the research evidence and conclusions and draws out the main pointers for the future development of the Training Credit (TC) schemes.

## 2. THE MANAGEMENT OF TRAINING CREDITS

The Training Credits pilots are, in essence, local responses to identified needs to improve youth training and to promote a stronger training culture amongst both young people and employers within Britain. At the same time, they have been constructed to respond to local variations in context and training need within the national TC's overall aims, criteria and guidelines. This interplay of local and national factors, which is a continuing theme within the Training Credits pilots, features largely within our evaluation findings.

The three TECs which have participated in the second-year evaluation of Training Credits were not chosen to represent particular approaches. As noted in the opening chapter they opted in to the evaluation. They were not meant to represent the full set of 11 pilot schemes; rather, they are specific examples of practice and approach, within the national framework derived for TCs. This in itself makes the task of providing an overall view of the three models and their management rather difficult although, fortuitously, there is sufficient commonality between them to allow an attempt to be made.

This chapter examines, first of all, the contexts in which the TC pilots have been launched.

### 2.1 Socio-Economic Contexts

All the schemes are based in shire counties; one in South Central England, one in the East and one in the North. One common feature is that there is a strong rural element in the local economies and this has implications for the distribution of the population (which is generally uneven), access to education, training and work opportunities and travel-to-work costs. Other distinctive characteristics of the three areas are:

- ◆ There is a high proportion of small employers in each area, varying from 75 per cent in the South Central TEC to over 90 per cent in the Eastern TEC and probably even higher in the Northern. This factor has posed major challenges for all three TECS, in that identifying and contacting small employers has often been problematical, they often fall outside the training culture and they need proportionally greater effort to encourage them to participate in education and training programmes.
- ◆ The areas have had varying industrial pasts, although all have experienced an increase in the service sector, with a decline in manufacturing, particularly in the Northern TEC. Using broad Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) categories, the current ratios of service to manufacturing sector companies are 80:20 in the South Central, 65:35 in the Eastern, and 68:32 in the Northern TEC areas respectively. Service sector employment opportunities are now being eroded by the recession.

- ◆ All areas have seen rising unemployment. Against the average increase in Great Britain from September 1991 to 1992 of 18 per cent to 10.5 per cent, the South Central TEC has increased by over 31 per cent to 8.5 per cent, the Eastern by over 27 per cent to nearly seven per cent and the Northern by over 17 per cent to over 11 per cent (Employment Gazette, February, 1993).
- ◆ Following national trends, there has been a marked increase in young people staying on in full-time education, thus restricting the numbers available to take up TC places. In the South Central area, the staying-on rate in 1992 was 76 per cent, in the Eastern 65 per cent and in the Northern, 61 per cent. The national rate for 1991 was 66 per cent and for 1992 is expected to be around 70 per cent.
- ◆ The secondary educational systems of the three areas have similar characteristics, in that there is a high preponderance of schools with sixth forms, although the number of institutions with upper secondary age pupils differs in each area. The South Central area has a large number of comprehensive schools with sixth forms, the Eastern area has a smaller number of high schools with sixth forms and the Northern area has, by comparison, relatively few schools, again all high schools with sixth forms. School type has been shown by a number of studies (eg. Taylor *et al*, 1990 and Weston *et al*, 1993) to be a key determinant of careers education and guidance which young people receive; therefore, this is a factor which is of particular relevance to the present investigation.

Having set the context in which the three Training Credit pilots have been launched, the chapter moves on to reflect upon how the schemes have fitted into TEC management structures and practices.

## 2.2 Training Credits Within the TECs

The three TECs, not surprisingly, have organised their schemes in different ways.

In one TEC, TCs fall within the Youth Programmes Department, which combines the Education, Development and Operations branches, all of which have some involvement. There are four programme managers in the Operations Branch who are responsible for its management in each geographical area of the TEC and a Training Credits Database Officer. The Careers Service plays a central role in the implementation of the scheme. Training Credits account for most of the Youth Programmes budget, which comprises about 60 per cent of the total annual TEC budget of £23 million.

The second TEC does not maintain a discrete team in charge of TCs. This is seen as an important partnership activity between the TEC and the LEA, with the Careers Service again playing a major role. Management and operational responsibility for TCs within the TEC is shared between the sections of Education, Research and Regional Business Strategy. They in turn report to the Head of Strategy and Education. The overall TEC budget per annum is about £15 million and about two-thirds of this represents expenditure on TCs and Youth Training.

The TC pilot in the third TEC has undergone greater change in its overall organisation than the others. Initially, the TEC created a special unit, which was led by a Project Manager who reported via the Quality Manager to the TEC Chief Executive. As the pilot developed from the experimental to the operational phase, TC functions were gradually shifted from this unit to the operational divisions; this transition is not fully complete. The management of the pilot now resides in the Research and Development section of the Training Division, although all the others play some role. The Head of this division reports to the Head of Training. The TC pilot and other youth programmes account for about a quarter of an overall budget of over £16 million.

The organisational changes made in the third TEC raise the issue for other TECs of **when should such a large-scale project cease to be seen as experimental with special organisational arrangements and when should it become part of normal TEC operations?** The three pilots represent a gradation from the 'special unit' strategy, through the 'largely contained within one department' system, to the 'responsibility of all or most departments' philosophy.

The unit or department-based strategies may have clearer management and reporting lines, but may restrict the growth of shared responsibility, whilst the 'responsibility of all' concept may encourage partnership, but have diffuse accountability structures and the various TC functions will need careful delineation in order to avoid overlap and confusion. Obviously other TECs seeking to enter TCs will have to reflect upon these issues in determining their own structures and seek to find a match between the needs of TC provision and their own management structures and styles.

## **2.3 The Main Scheme Characteristics**

All the three TECs operate a 'universal' model of TCs, so far as the pilots cover all industrial sectors.

**Eligibility criteria** are applied to differing extents and these largely relate to age and status characteristics. All schemes are open to school leavers aged 16 and 17, because they belong to the government's guarantee group, and the three TECs have now opened them to 18 year olds and even older, with some restrictions. Undoubtedly, changes in the age criteria have been partly in response to the lower than expected numbers of young people coming forward for Training Credits since the pilots began. Age criteria are generally more flexible for students with Special Training Needs (STN). All the TECs are also quite flexible in the extent to which they will include young people who are resident outside their area, but working or training within TEC boundaries or are based in the TEC area and wish to use their TC elsewhere. All TECs have amended their eligibility criteria since the first year of operation and it is clear that as demand fluctuates this could be an area of continuing change.

The Training Credit as such is of variable **form**, but none of the TECs have used smartcards. In all instances its purposes appear to be largely concerned with marketing



and information, whilst also providing young people with something tangible to show that they are TC holders. In one area it is a plastic identity card, which is supplemented by a certificate with a unique TC number. In the second TEC it is represented by a small booklet, called a 'passport', which states the range of credit values, and in the third it is a plastic card with a notional face value of £1,500.

The **validity** of the Training Credit varies between areas in terms of the period since issue for which it can be used. In one area there is no timespan as such, but the TC training must be completed by age 25 and in the others it is valid from between three years and five years.

The **value of the TC** differs between areas with two of the TECs operating funding-band systems and one an individual weighting system. All take account of the relative costs of training young people in different occupational areas, with those entering engineering and technology being the most expensive and occupations such as clerical and retail being less costly. There is a range of supplements or weightings on offer which reflect training priorities. These include additional payments for:

- ◆ Training provided for small employers to encourage them to participate in the scheme.
- ◆ Training in defined skill shortage areas.
- ◆ Training provided for those with special training needs, who were endorsed by the local Careers Services.
- ◆ Bonuses, which can be used to buy further training for those achieving NVQs or are actual payments to TC-users who succeed.

One TEC also offers £50 for a completed training plan, £25 for every completed quarterly review and a substantial supplement for unemployed young persons. This is provided in order to offer such trainees 13 weeks of foundation training. There have been some moves in the TECs since year one to rationalise these supplements and make the pilots easier to manage financially (see Section 2.5).

There is a common pattern to **young people's entry and progression through the schemes**:

- ◆ Awareness-raising sessions take place in schools with Year 11 and sometimes Year 10 students. Although school careers staff and tutors have a role to play in this, an emphasis is placed on the information giving and advisory functions of the Careers Service.
- ◆ Students likely to take up TCs are given an individual interview with a careers officer and complete an Individual Action Plan.
- ◆ In two of the areas, the Careers Service is responsible for issuing young people with the TC and this is directly linked to completion of the action plan. The third TEC has uncoupled the action planning and card issue processes after one year because of organisational difficulties; in this case, the Careers Service now helps young people to complete the action plan but

the TEC issues the cards to school leavers. These cards are placed in young people's files in careers offices.

- ◆ The Careers Services are responsible for conducting the advisory and endorsement procedures for students with Special Training Needs. The outcome of these is a TC of enhanced value which enables training providers to give the extra support needed to disadvantaged young people.
- ◆ Normally, young people must use their TCs with an Approved Training Organisation but, in all three areas, there were arrangements for some employers to contract directly with the TEC. Usually, the ATO completes an Individual Training Plan with the entrant and submits this to the TEC. This action, or registration of the trainee by the ATO with the TEC, activates the payment system to the provider and ensures that the Training Credit user is registered on the TEC database.
- ◆ In two of the three TECs, Training Credit users usually receive periodic financial statements about how their TC funds are being spent and training providers and employers are reimbursed on the basis of trainee weeks claims or completion by trainees of agreed units of training.

Training Credit schemes have a number of quite distinct features and require the inputs from a wide range of people. This inevitably means that their administration is relatively complex and requires careful planning, a feature noted in the 1991 national evaluation report. This aspect of the pilots will be discussed further in the next section.

## 2.4 Project Administration

**After the experience of one year, it is noteworthy that all three TECs made a number of adjustments to their administrative procedures.** These were almost all concerned with simplifying and clarifying procedures, and this was often in response to the wishes of ATOs, many of whom commented at interview on the high administrative burden which TCs had placed on them. In one instance, the TEC had sub-contracted the running of the TC computerised operational system to another organisation, but this had added another organisational dimension to the procedures and had delayed the processes. In the second year the TEC had retaken responsibility for this.

Another change instituted related to the shortfall in TC-users which had been experienced in most pilot areas, not just the three that have taken part in this study. As seen above, eligibility criteria had in some cases been changed so that more young people could take part. In one area the supplement paid for providing training for credit users based with small employers had been increased in order to encourage greater participation by them and hence more TC users.

In two of the TECs (as in others amongst the 11 pilots), employers who were not themselves ATOs, participated in TCs by contracting with training providers for their employees' training. One of the TECs had tackled the small employer problem by providing a support system which alleviated a great deal of the administrative burden and

enabled such companies to contract directly with the TEC. This service was much appreciated and may suggest a way forward for other TECs joining the initiative.

The greatest degree of change has, however, taken place in the financial arrangements, the initial complexity of which caused difficulties in all the areas. This aspect is described in the next section.

## **2.5 Financial Management**

It has already been seen that the value of TCs varies for those training to different NVQ levels in different sectors, for different groups of young people and for those based with differently-sized employers. All this variation, including bandings and weightings, has to be managed and to do this effectively the TECs require good Management Information Systems (MIS) and databases. These need to contain information on credit users and their training programmes, ATOs and employers, payments to ATOs against delivery of elements of the training programmes and designated outcomes from the schemes.

**The evaluation found that constructing and utilising MI systems had proved to be a difficult task in all three areas**, each of which was using a different system. It is evident from this year's evaluation that the problems noted in the previous year's reports had been carried forward to the second year.

The team gained first-hand experience of the difficulties by trying to secure accurate and up-to-date lists of credit users and employers participating in the schemes as well as those not involved. The information from different participants in TCs was not always available in computerised form and was not always reliable or up to date. Moreover, the information on different participant and non-participant groups could not always be related together (eg. linking credit users with employers and participating employers with non-participant companies). The problems seem to have arisen because the databases and MI systems were sometimes managed by different agencies or departments, with different computer systems and access arrangements. These difficulties not only impeded the efficient management of certain financial aspects of the schemes, but also prevented the TEC from having valuable information for review and evaluation purposes.

The above findings suggest that TECs which are developing new TC schemes should give priority to MI and database development and seek to address the following issues: which and how many databases are required? What should they contain? How can they be inter-related? Who manages them? What access is required by whom, at what time(s) and for what purposes?

**The second financial issue of concern for both the TECs and their training providers was the payment system for reimbursing ATOs, and in turn TECs, for the training provided.** The TECs were all subject to an Output Related Funding (ORF) system, operated by the ED with respect to claims against the TC budgets. They all

implemented a similar system with their own providers, which gave staged payments to providers depending on the completion of agreed units or weeks of training by the trainee. The ORF element was paid on the acquisition of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) or other agreed accreditation by the young person. As seen above, the payment system was activated when a credit holder enrolled with a training provider and it was essential, therefore, that entrants were registered with the TEC and then placed on its TC database as soon as possible. Delays at each stage of this procedure were found to have not only led to inaccuracies in the participation information available on TCs, but had also slowed down the whole payment procedures.

**The TECs and their ATOs continued to experience difficulties with the ORF system.** In the first year, the ORF had comprised only about 10 per cent of TECs' TC budgets from the Employment Department but, in the second year, the proportion had been increased to about 25 per cent. Time-lags in payments, both to training providers from the TEC and to TECs from the ED proved to be a significant difficulty - a problem also experienced in YT and other programmes which operate an ORF system. The difficulty was more acute in the TEC which had initially operated a 100 per cent ORF system with its providers and had to pay the ORF element to providers when trainees gained their qualifications, which could be before or after the end of the training period. The TEC has since abandoned its ORF system and providers are now paid 75 per cent of costs on a four-weekly basis, with 25 per cent on achievement by the trainee of the target NVQ. This change was much welcomed by providers.

Payment by results in arrears, according to the providers contacted across the three areas, had led some to having cash-flow problems and not being able to pay staff on time, although other factors may have contributed to this difficulty. In two TECs, however, ATOs expressed considerable satisfaction with the smoothness and reliability of the payment system, and it was clear that ensuring that this element of the TC model operated effectively could engender goodwill between providers and the TEC which had positive spin-offs in other areas.

**Non-achievement of qualifications was a significant concern to ATOs** (particularly FE colleges) since it meant that, despite offering a full programme of training, if young people did not achieve the designated level or left the scheme before completion, a portion of income was denied to them.

It was alleged by TEC and Careers Service personnel and certain ATOs that one unfortunate outcome of local ORF systems was that non-FE providers were becoming more selective in their credit users; only choosing those capable of readily achieving the required NVQ/VQ levels. Some providers (from both the FE and private sector) maintained that the system was unfair since some of the less able young people, who were not endorsed, were unable to achieve NVQ Level 2 (or equivalent), or would take a long time to do this. In colleges within one area, according to college and TEC staff, between a third and a half of the TC users completed their courses without NVQs or other designated qualifications. The TEC responded to the problem by introducing a bonus

for any college which had 65 per cent or more of its trainees achieving their NVQs. ATOs in all areas suggested that it would be better if ORF payments were triggered by successful completion of units of work which contribute to vocational qualifications, not simply by acquisition of the final certificate.

According to college representatives in all three TEC areas, there had been a **substantial loss of revenue** by the FE sector because of the severity of the recession and the increased tendency for young people to stay on in education to gain qualifications. This had led to fewer than expected numbers of TC holders coming forward for training. Colleges in the pilot areas, it may be recalled, have received less of the Revenue Support Grant paid to LEAs, since part of this has been re-routed through the TEC in order to pay for training supplied to TC-users.

**There were variable views on the adequacy of TC supplements for STN students.** The additional payments for STN young people in one TEC were not felt to be sufficient for the extra amount of work involved, both in terms of administration and training. This had resulted in some non-FE providers refusing to take those with endorsements to their TC. In another TEC, however, there was apparently competition for STN trainees since it was felt that the funding was adequately matched to the amount of training needed. The proportion of young people who had a TC endorsement because of special needs in 1992 was in fact rather small; in one area it was less than 15 per cent and in another it was 18 per cent.

**The findings on the financial management of the TC pilots are indicative of systems that are still in the process of settling down and finding the most efficient ways of responding to local and national requirements.** It is also the case that financial management has been made more difficult by the current recession and by changing regulations. It is clear, however, that effective data collection and its management is an important key to the successful operation of complex TC schemes.

An effective data-collection system would be one which has the following characteristics:

- ◆ It can inter-relate information from employers, ATOs and TC-users.
- ◆ It can collate information from different sources, (e.g. TEC, Careers Service, ATOs) by the use of compatible data-collection categories, methods and time periods.
- ◆ It is as straight forward and cost- and time-efficient as possible to manage, up-date and access.
- ◆ It can hold reliable and up-to-date information and has a good checking system built in to its procedures.
- ◆ It can meet both local and national management information needs.

## 2.6 Marketing

In the early days of a major new initiative, effective marketing is a necessary priority and all TECs already have substantial marketing departments upon which to draw. The main audiences at which marketing strategies were aimed were Years 11-13 students in schools and colleges, employers and, to a lesser extent, teachers, parents and training providers. Each audience requires a different approach and there was much discussion amongst the partners, according to the interviews conducted, about the efficacy of TEC marketing strategies during both the first and second years of the pilot. In two of the areas there had been renewed efforts in the second year and, in response to feedback, new materials had been produced for students. In the third TEC, school staff in particular felt that there had been a fall-off in marketing activity, with the result that they were often unclear about the nature and benefits of TCs. There were calls here and elsewhere for:

- ◆ Briefing documents for teachers, which explained the philosophy behind Training Credits, as well as the procedures, included and case studies of young people's experiences.
- ◆ More written materials to be produced for students with Special Educational Needs (SEN), with low literacy levels, which set out the aims and procedures of TCs in clear, straightforward language.

TECs, because of their key roles with employers, spend a great deal of effort in awareness-raising activities with companies regarding their training programmes and other offerings. In the second year of TCs, there were further attempts often using a range of face-to-face and media contacts, to raise employers' awareness of the pilots and involve more companies in the schemes. As described in Chapter 6, however:

- ◆ Most employers who were involved with TCs did not have high levels of understanding of how the schemes actually operated.
- ◆ Understanding was lower amongst those employers who were not acting as ATOs and providing training for their young employees or work placement trainees.
- ◆ Awareness of TCs, not unexpectedly, remained most patchy amongst the non-participant group of companies and it is clear that continued efforts will need to be made here.

A significant difficulty in reaching non-participant employers was being able to identify them accurately on TEC employer databases, and it is evident that this problem will need to be sorted out before the TC schemes can fully cover all eligible companies. **There was a widespread feeling amongst both the ATO and employer partners within TCs, that there should be greater attempts to provide feedback information to them on the progress of the schemes.** Without systematic dissemination of outcomes to partners, it is likely that some will continue to be unsure how far their work has contributed to the success of the overall scheme.

## **2.7 Monitoring, Evaluation and Quality Assurance**

In addition to participating in the first year evaluations of their schemes, set up and sponsored by the Employment Department, all the TECs had commissioned, and been involved in, local evaluation and development projects targeted upon areas of particular concern. They had, therefore, been the subject of considerable external scrutiny and it was clear that, during 1992, they were focussing management attention on areas highlighted for further development by the first year studies. One of these was the TECs' own quality assurance procedures which, in most cases, had not been given a high priority during the early months of the schemes. In 1992 the three TECs established further local monitoring and quality assurance systems and, at the same time, became more adept at using the levers which are built into Training Credit models (ie. the designation of ATOs, the requirements of action and training plans and the 'payment by results' procedures) to ensure the quality of scheme outcomes.

One TEC, which had particular problems with its databases and employer information had both internal staff and sub-contractors working on the MI systems. It was yet to have a universal quality assurance system, although it was at the planning stage for this. The remaining two TECs had given more direct attention to quality management. The approach in one area was to extend its already comprehensive quality assurance procedures to the TC scheme and to involve all its providers in a process of self-auditing and overall monitoring. Whilst some did not welcome the additional paperwork and, in certain cases, an additional layer of quality monitoring on top of their own, there was a good deal of praise for the system and a feeling that it was helping to raise standards in training provision. Several noted that a key strategy for success was the training and ongoing support given in quality assurance procedures by the TEC, particularly for those without in-house systems.

The third TEC had tightened up its monitoring procedures in the second year and established a Quality Management Team and an annual Quality Audit. This was partly concerned with ensuring that all its ATOs operated an appropriate quality management system and that the contractual training plans and programmes were being operated to specification by the ATOs. Again, the TEC's emphasis on quality assurance was welcomed by a number of providers, although several emphasised that the increased commitment to quality was not solely due to TCs; NVQs and the providers' own monitoring structures were also key factors.

## **2.8 Managing the Training Credit Partnership**

Training Credits involve the contribution and goodwill of a range of partners - TEC personnel, the Careers Service, the LEA, schools, training providers, including local FE colleges, and employers. As will be seen in subsequent chapters, each has a unique role to play and differing perspectives to offer on the operation and importance to them of

TCs, which are impinging on their worlds to varying degrees. A key challenge for those managing the pilots, therefore, is to establish and maintain the partnership in order to support the project and to keep it operating as effectively and smoothly as possible. **It is clear from both the 1991 and 1992 evidence that the management of the TC partnership has proved to be a particular challenge, although the notion of partnership - shared goals and individual responsibilities within a coordinated framework - is gradually emerging.**

All the TECs had established quite complicated committee structures in order to coordinate, oversee and manage the pilots. There was relatively little evidence to suggest that there had been much rationalisation of these since the first year of the pilots. Two of the three pilots had overall steering groups, with senior representation from the partners, including the TEC. Meeting more frequently, there was usually a group which dealt with day-to-day policy and operational matters and included senior staff who directly managed different facets of the scheme. In addition, there was a number of working and liaison groups; important ones covered special needs, marketing, and evaluation, and others provided liaison and networking opportunities between the TEC and its training providers and employers.

It was evident during the first year of the schemes that relationships with training providers had not always been well managed. **During the second year, more regular meetings with ATOs were proving to be a vital link in the TC partnership and helping to sort out the wide range of administrative concerns which had arisen.** Some ATOs felt, however, that there should be further attempts to bring them into the Training Credit partnership and to explain TC policies and procedures. One outstanding challenge for TC managers is effective liaison with the many small employers who could participate in the scheme. Although this was high on the agenda for action, it was proving difficult and time-consuming to succeed in a time of recession.

While there was often good formal and informal contact between TEC managers and officers within the LEA, there were further attempts to strengthen these links in 1992. In all three case-study areas, **there seemed, however, to be insufficient liaison channels between the TEC and school staff below headteacher level.** As Chapter 3 will describe, school staff often felt themselves outside the partnership and ill-informed about the progress of those ex-students who were credit users. Another relationship which needed strengthening was that between school staff and ATOs, particularly those outside the FE sector. This especially related to the development of cooperation in developing the action and training plans so as to ensure effective continuity and progression of young people's learning experiences and personal development. As will be seen later in this report, these two key aspects of TC-enhanced provision were generally conducted as isolated processes. It was noteworthy that where such liaison had developed it was felt to be beneficial by both the schools and the ATOs and was leading to cooperation in other areas.



## 2.9 Evaluative Overview

The review of management strategies and developments over the last year in the three areas has indicated that TECs and their partners are continuing their attempts to make the pilot schemes work effectively, in often difficult circumstances. The schemes still have the feel of new programmes which have yet to be fully accepted and embedded in existing cultures and practices. The findings suggest that, while the schemes are all fully operational, they are still being refined, particularly with regard to their MI, financial management and administrative systems. The framework of TC regulations has produced three approaches which have many similarities, although the operational practices and ethos of each are different. All the TECs were still facing the challenge of building an effective partnership between disparate partners, and it is clear that further attention will need to be given to marketing the benefits of the schemes to these different players and improving the flow of information within the local areas.

The main findings with regard to the management of the Training Credit schemes are highlighted below:

### ◆ Management Structures

The three TECs represent a gradation in management approaches to TCs from the 'special unit' strategy, to the 'largely contained within one department' system, to the 'responsibility of all' approach. TECs coming into Training Credits will need to consider the best ways of matching the needs of TC provision to their own management structures and styles, providing a clear delineation of duties, whilst also enabling the developing TC schemes to become integrated into TEC processes and encouraging an effective partnership amongst the various stakeholders (Section 2.2).

### ◆ Eligibility Criteria

The TECs had become more flexible in their entry criteria for TCs over the last year with regard to age and residency requirements. In part, this has been a response to lower than expected demand for places amongst the guarantee group. (Section 2.3).

### ◆ The Training Credit

The main reasons for having a Training Credit card, or equivalent, related to marketing, providing information and giving young people something tangible to show that they were TC-users. (Section 2.3).

### ◆ Administration

The three TECs had all sought to simplify and clarify their administrative procedures after one year in operation, often in response to ATO demands. Effective administrative and financial management of TCs is

heavily dependent on effective computerised MI and operational systems and databases. All three TECs were still trying to develop these in the second year of the schemes and it is clear that their design and construction needs to be a top priority for TECs at the start of the schemes. Reliable and up-to-date information on employers and on young people who were TC-users or non-users was often lacking. (Sections 2.4 and 2.5).

#### ◆ **Financial Management**

All three TECs and their ATOs had experienced difficulties in operating the ORF systems, despite modifications made since year one of the schemes. (Section 2.5).

There was a substantial amount of non-completion of TC training programmes and non-achievement of qualifications so that providers were not able to activate the ORF payments. Part of the problem seems to lie in the numbers of TC-users who are not endorsed but, for various reasons, cannot readily achieve designated qualifications. This area warrants further investigation. (Section 2.5).

According to FE representatives in all three TEC areas colleges were experiencing a loss of revenue because of fewer than expected numbers of TC-users and transfer of part of the RSG from the educational sector to TECs to fund TC provision. (Section 2.5).

#### ◆ **Marketing Strategies**

There was variability in the success of TEC marketing strategies to date. School staff called for more briefing and feedback information for themselves and clear, straightforward information for less able students and those with SEN. Training providers and employers called for more feedback information on the progress of TC schemes and their contributions. (Section 2.6).

Basic awareness about TCs was low amongst non-participant employers, particularly small companies and these will need sustained and carefully targeted marketing efforts. (Sections 2.6 and 2.8).

#### ◆ **Quality Assurance**

The TECs were paying more attention to quality assurance in the second year, particularly with regard to the contributions made by the ATOs, where quality consciousness was said to be rising. (Section 2.7)

#### ◆ **Managing the Training Credit Partnership**

It is clear that the management of the TC partnership has proved to be an ongoing challenge for the three TECs and, although considerable progress has been made since Year One, there is still some way to go before this can be achieved. (Section 2.8).

### 3. THE SCHOOLS

This chapter examines the participation of schools in the TC pilots and assesses the effects of their involvement on students and teachers. Particular areas of enquiry are student and staff awareness and understanding of TCs, the perceived usefulness of action planning, the impact of the pilots on careers guidance and provision for disadvantaged students. Chapter 3 draws heavily on the data collected from visits to schools, especially interviews with teaching staff, and the findings yielded by both the student questionnaire surveys. Where appropriate, the views of TEC staff, careers officers, employers, training providers and TC-users are also represented.

#### 3.1 Schools' Involvement in the Training Credits Pilot

**According to the perceptions of the teachers interviewed, schools' involvement in the development of the TC models had been minimal.** The views expressed suggested that schools had not been comprehensively consulted about what form the TC models should take. Some headteachers and careers coordinators had attended meetings organised by the TEC to inform the school sector about the forthcoming TC initiative. In contrast to the initial role of schools, data collected from senior LEA and Careers Service staff revealed that they felt the TEC had consulted them adequately when drawing up the TC model. The evaluation found that, in general, schools played a less influential role than LEAs and Careers Services in the development of pilots.

The case studies ascertained that teachers perceived that schools were not, as yet, involved in a partnership with the TEC, and felt that liaison could be improved. Indeed, in one area some schools appeared to have no direct contact with TEC staff. In two areas, however, the TECs had appointed school liaison officers to facilitate the development of links. It is too early to determine what impact these appointments have had. None of the schools in any of the areas had designated posts of responsibility such as a Training Credits Coordinator. Instead, schools' careers coordinators played a pivotal role by:

- ◆ Liaising with the Careers Service on student briefings, action plans and individual career interviews.
- ◆ Implementing enhanced careers provision, including, in some instances, coordinating a team of personal development tutors or counsellors.
- ◆ Briefing colleagues and students about TCs.

Liaison with TECs was usually carried out by schools' senior managers such as heads or their deputies. The nature of the communication tended to focus on TC-related administration or finance. It is worth noting that, in two areas, some teachers made the point that liaison could be strengthened by the TEC or Careers Service providing them with information on the progression of their students who left school and used TCs. They thought that this information could be used in schools as case studies of TC experiences to raise students' awareness of their options.

Although schools' participation in shaping the structure of the pilots was limited and teachers perceived that a partnership with the TEC had not yet developed, schools' involvement in the TCs process was vital. As discussed later in this chapter and elsewhere in this report, schools played a potentially key role, not only in raising young people's awareness of TCs, but also in providing enhanced careers information, guidance and education to prepare students for post-16 destinations. Therefore, the contribution of schools in the pilots was largely focused on supporting the realisation of the two key concepts within TCs of **empowerment** and **entitlement**.

As far as empowerment was concerned, this involved helping students to take responsibility for, and control of, their own decision-making and career development. Schools were also seen by TECs and the Careers Service as helping the pilots to fulfil young people's entitlement to receiving information and guidance on training, employment and further educational opportunities.

In the remainder of this chapter, data and analysis are presented on the main outcomes of schools' activities in the pilots.

### **3.2. Staff Awareness, Knowledge and Understanding of Training Credits**

**A key finding common to all of the case studies was that awareness, knowledge and understanding of TCs varied considerably amongst school staff.** Awareness of TCs tended to be concentrated in a small group within each school. In most cases, it appeared that information and knowledge were disseminated to staff on a targeted 'need to know' basis. School careers coordinators usually took responsibility for this and informed Year 11 and sometimes Years 12/13 tutors. Senior management was also informed on a selective basis. Additional briefings were provided by careers officers and visiting TEC personnel and, in one area, through documentation especially designed to inform teachers.

When interviewed, teachers generally expressed the view that knowledge of TCs amongst colleagues was unlikely to be detailed. For example, interviewees in one area doubted whether staff outside the managing group and key participating tutors would have more than a superficial knowledge of TCs. They added that whilst teachers were generally aware that the school was receiving additional resources (for developing careers guidance and providing action planning), their actual understanding of the purpose and mechanics of TCs was fairly limited. In addition, this case study found that in the two special schools visited, knowledge of TCs was the exclusive province of senior management and the teachers of the leaving class, on the grounds that TCs were not the direct concern of teachers of younger students.

It was clear from another case study that schools within the same LEA varied in how they informed staff about the pilot. Here, for example, whilst one of the schools had distributed TC information packs to all of its staff, two of the other schools, which had

high rates of staying on into the sixth form, revealed that staff had little interest in the pilot and, not surprisingly, their level of understanding was very low. Another reason suggested by interviewees to explain the general lack of understanding of TCs was the pressure of work due to the implementation of the National Curriculum.

**The evaluation found little evidence that the TECs' marketing of TCs to teachers had improved in the second year of the pilot.** Indeed, in one case-study area, it was widely believed that the level of staff awareness of TCs had diminished since the first year when most schools had organised a briefing event of one kind or another for the whole staff, in some cases involving TEC officers. Other reasons given for the reduced awareness of TCs in this particular area were as follows:

- ◆ Lack of interest by teachers.
- ◆ Perceptions of TCs as peripheral to so many other initiatives and pressures which directly impinged on the daily routine of teachers.
- ◆ Staffing policies associated with Personal and Social Education (PSE) programmes and year tutor systems.

All the evidence collected from field visits to schools raised key questions which are outlined below:

- ◆ Do all secondary school teachers in each pilot area need to be informed about TCs?
- ◆ To what extent would increased teacher awareness, knowledge and understanding of TCs add to the success of pilots?
- ◆ Is there a case for TECs augmenting their TC marketing strategies by making more vigorous attempts to inform teachers about TCs?

Unfortunately, the evaluation did not gather unanimous responses to these questions. Rather, there were mixed messages, in that school staff in two of the case studies were reasonably content with the status quo, not least because National Curriculum-related work was a constraint, whilst interviewees in the other area considered that there was a need for teachers to be more aware of TCs. In their view, this would help to inform students more adequately about this particular post-16 option and would enable teachers to incorporate TCs, and their principles and procedures, within schools' guidance and personal development programmes. There is a strong argument for ensuring that all teachers have at least a basic awareness of TCs, and their related entitlements for young people, on the grounds that credits are an important post-16 route to skills training, nationally-recognised qualifications and experience of work. Teachers' general basic awareness should, of course, be supplemented by strategic staff, such as careers coordinators and Year 11 and 12 tutors, having a deeper working knowledge of the pilot so that students can be fully informed about getting and using TCs.

Whilst there was evidence that some headteachers and their staff were resistant to any increased marketing of TCs because they were committed to maintaining or expanding the size of their sixth forms for educational and, possibly, financial reasons, it would

appear to be in the interests of raising awareness of post-16 options in general for TECs to review their strategies for informing teachers about TCs. It would seem that renewed marketing strategies might benefit from using a combination of approaches including the following:

- ◆ TC information and advice stands at careers conventions.
- ◆ Teacher-specific briefing and updating materials explaining the purpose and processes of TCs.
- ◆ Increased liaison between TEC personnel (such as schools liaison officers and education managers) and schools in order to explain TC developments and any modifications to the pilot.
- ◆ Systematic feedback to schools on the progress of young people using TCs, so that teachers can understand the benefits of taking them up.

**The feedback issue is crucial because, when interviewed, most teachers did not feel informed enough to comment on the effectiveness of TCs and their outcomes for young people,** although they did acknowledge the constraints of the recession on the initiative. None of the schools, for example, appeared to have received the main findings of the early evaluation studies. Without adequate feedback, it is unlikely that schools can play a full role in any pilot. For example, feedback would help schools to modify careers education and guidance and action planning provision in the light of experience.

### **3.3 Teachers' Reactions to Training Credits**

**Teachers largely welcomed the additional careers resources which the TEC had invested in their schools as a result of the pilot.** Their resources were used to improve schools' careers information, education and guidance facilities by paying for new documentation, computerised careers systems such as Microdoors, more careers officer time or supply cover to free staff to be involved in additional careers guidance activities.

Many staff observed that the current economic climate was not conducive to the development and success of such an initiative because it reduced opportunities for young people to use TCs as intended. Conversely, they drew attention to the growing trend of students staying on in full-time education beyond 16 and pointed out that potential users of TCs formed a small minority of the 1992 Year 11 cohort. Interestingly, in one of the case studies, staff noted that the role of local employers was seen as being crucial to the perception of TCs held by students. The take-up of TCs was perceived by staff to be employer-driven in that school leavers responded to local companies' involvement in, and attitude towards, TCs.

**Whilst most of the teachers interviewed subscribed to the concepts of empowerment and entitlement as important educational principles, they acknowledged the difficulties of translating them into reality.** The reasons given in support of these observations were largely contextual, cultural or connected with young people's

maturity and ability. First, teachers made the point that students often had fewer options to use TCs, either because of the recession or because of limited rural opportunities. Second, some staff alluded to the pervasive effects of a cultural socialisation that does not encourage young people to develop self-reliance and independence. The vulnerability of those deeply socialised into a culture of dependency was clearly articulated by one of the teachers interviewed, as the following quotation indicates:

*Our youngsters are very amenable. They are not the strongest in terms of expressing an opinion and following it through. That's the kind of thing we work on with them .. but unlike certain areas of the county where they have the kind of background where that's part of the cultural scene, here, you would call our youngsters biddable youngsters. They tend to just accept what's put in front of them a lot of the time .....*

Such young people, whether they live in rural areas or inner cities, are unlikely to take the initiative and use a TC actively to obtain the type of training they want.

Third, maturation was another key factor which some teachers mentioned as a difficulty in making empowerment and entitlement a reality. For example, some young people aged 16 were said to lack the maturity that exercising choice to become a discriminating purchaser of training required. The point was also made that many youngsters experienced difficulties in searching for and evaluating information as part of a conscious integral process of making career decisions. As a result, they often felt insecure about entering the world of work and training. Interestingly, the survey responses from young people themselves did not wholly support this view. For example, as Appendix Tables A5, A15 and A56 indicate, over 70 per cent of Year 11 and Years 12/13 students and TC-users considered that they had a great deal or quite a lot of knowledge about how to find information about courses, training and jobs.

Limited ability was the fourth reason advanced for some young people having difficulty in exploiting the empowerment which TCs offered them. Teachers noted that potential TC-users were often the less able students who had difficulty understanding the TC system. This view was expressed by one teacher who said that these students found difficulty in grasping the TC concept: *'They did not understand how they would "spend" the voucher - not even how they would raise the subject at interview.'*

The findings suggest that whilst school staff were largely in agreement with the empowerment and entitlement aims of the pilots, they had reservations about TCs achieving these aims in practice. These issues will be discussed further in Chapter 4, which examines the role of the Careers Service in the pilots, and in Chapter 7, which focusses on young people as users of TCs.

### 3.4 Briefing Students about Training Credits

The evaluation found that students were informed about TCs in a variety of ways. Furthermore, it ascertained that the Careers Service was the main source of information - one to one interviews with careers officers were widely seen as the principal forum for explaining TCs - and that schools varied in the extent to which they actively involved themselves in the briefing of students.

The range of strategies used for briefing students included the following:

- ◆ Careers Service presentations either to all Year 11 students or to targeted groups.
- ◆ Careers interviews with careers officers or careers teachers.
- ◆ Targeted guidance and counselling sessions with small groups of prospective TC-users .
- ◆ Careers and Personal and Social Education lessons.
- ◆ Year 12 induction sessions.
- ◆ Year 11 group meetings.
- ◆ Work experience debriefing sessions.
- ◆ Displays of TC materials.
- ◆ Special careers exhibitions focused on training options.
- ◆ TC video shows.
- ◆ School - organised presentations by training providers.

It is worth noting that teachers claimed they supported the use of these strategies, not with the purpose of actively 'promoting' TCs, but with the aim of raising students' awareness of this post-16 option as a possible option for some students.

**A key question in briefing students about TCs was whether to include whole-year groups or to target those students most likely to take up this option.** The evaluation found that schools varied in the approaches adopted to this operational issue. It emerged that more 'academic' schools tended to be selective in the students they briefed because staff did not consider TCs relevant to the majority of their students, most of whom were going to stay on in full-time education beyond 16. In one of the case studies, the selective approach led in some instances to a significant proportion of entrants to the TC pilot starting training without the benefit of a detailed briefing because they were not chosen as likely TC-users. The same case study also discovered that schools which used an alternative 'blanket coverage' approach avoided many of these particular problems but often at the cost of alienating a substantial section of the student population. Two possible solutions were demonstrated by some of the schools visited:



- ◆ A broad outline of TCs was given to all Year 11 students with detailed briefings being made available for those who were interested;
- ◆ Differentiated presentations on training and TCs were given to three main groups (those likely to go into the sixth form, FE or use TCs).

The evaluation found that the Spring term of Year 11 - the key decision-making time for many students - was the period when schools were most involved in the process of TC briefings. A few schools carried out the briefings in Year 10 or in the Autumn term of Year 11.

The materials for marketing TCs to students were mainly documents designed by the Careers Service and, in two of the areas studied, included TC videos. Careers booklets which set out the options, including TCs, available to young people at age 16 and over were considered in two areas to be reasonably clear and cheerful publications. In the third area, general documentation on post-16 choices did not contain a readily accessible guide to TCs. It was felt that there was still a need to produce an up-to-date concise and readable leaflet on TCs. In some areas, schools had also produced their own leaflets which described in more detail how the particular credit scheme worked. Furthermore, schools in one area supplemented the TC video with quiz sheets which were aimed at assessing young people's knowledge and understanding of TCs.

The interviews with teachers revealed some useful messages about marketing TCs to students:

- ◆ The materials need to be written in clear, simple language. Piloting draft versions with groups of students may help to make sure materials are written and pitched at the right level.
- ◆ TC materials need to be updated when changes are made to the pilot.
- ◆ At a time of financial restraint, some teachers felt that the materials should be less glossy and costly and could do more to explain the benefits of TCs to young people.
- ◆ Materials need to reach schools on time so that effective use can be made of them.

Interestingly, in one area, the images conveyed by the term '*training*' to students were rather negative - '*.....something you do if you can't get a job*', as one teacher put it. Giving greater emphasis to phrases such as '*lifelong learning*' and '*getting skills for the future*' is worth considering in the marketing of TCs. Whilst in one of the three case-study areas, teachers felt that the TC marketing materials for students had improved in the second year of the pilot, school staff in all areas were of the opinion that the marketing to parents was neither vigorous nor effective. Most schools relied on **parents** seeing materials sent home with students or viewing TC displays at parents' evenings. A few schools sent letters to parents informing them about TCs. It should be noted that, in one area where special parents' evenings dedicated to TCs had been arranged, attendances were very

low. There is obviously a need for TECs, in collaboration with schools, to review how best to market training in general, and TCs in particular, to parents.

### 3.5 Student Awareness and Understanding of Training Credits

Two important sources of data were the questionnaire responses provided by 766 Year 11 students and 162 Year 12 and 13 students. Both samples covered the ability range and had a largely (89 per cent) white ethnic profile which was representative of the three TEC areas. As Appendix Table A1 indicates, a majority (85 per cent) of the Year 11 sample, which was divided evenly between males and females, were studying for eight or more GCSEs. The Years 12/13 sample, which was selected to include some young people who were likely to leave full-time education at 17, and who might decide to take up TCs, had the following key characteristics: 51 per cent of respondents were female and 49 per cent male, over three quarters (78 per cent) had at least one GCSE at grades A-C and students were studying for a mixture of academic and vocational qualifications. As Appendix Table A14 indicates, just over half (56 per cent) of the respondents were studying for A-levels, one-third were taking GCSEs, a quarter were studying for the CPVE, and nearly one-third (31 per cent) were working towards other vocational qualifications, such as RSA or City and Guilds.

The NFER postal survey of Year 11 and Years 12/13 students provided useful data on their awareness and understanding of TCs. Table 1 shows the number and proportion of the Year 11 sample who had heard about the TC pilot running in their area:

**Table 1: Year 11 Students: Whether they had heard of Training Credit pilot**

Response	Number	%
Yes	331	44
No	343	45
Not sure	85	11
Total	759	100

*A single - response question*

*Missing data = 7*

The table indicates that just under half of the respondents had heard about the TC pilot operating in their area, whilst the majority claimed that they had not heard or were not sure if they had heard about TCs. Given that the questionnaire was administered in the Autumn term (in 1992), before the main TC briefings took place in the Spring term, the findings suggest there was a reasonable level of awareness of TC pilots amongst those surveyed. However, there still remained a need for TECs, the Careers Service and schools to continue raising students' awareness of TCs. Interestingly, of those who had heard about TCs, nearly three-quarters (72 per cent) said that teachers or careers officers had talked to them about TCs at school.

Data analysis revealed that there was a significant relationship between awareness of TCs and gender. Whereas 47 per cent of the male Year 11 students surveyed had heard of TCs, the corresponding figure for females was 37 per cent. This may be partly explained by two other findings which suggest that more males may have been included or interested in TC briefing sessions: a larger proportion of female respondents (88 per cent) than male respondents (77 per cent) were taking between eight and ten GCSEs in 1993; and a larger proportion of female respondents (87 per cent) than male respondents (71 per cent) were planning to take a full-time course at school or college after Year 11 (further details on Year 11 students' post-16 plans are provided in Appendix Table A9). Overall, the data suggests that females have higher academic aims, are more likely to wish to remain in full-time education and, therefore, are less likely to be interested in TCs.

**There was also a significant relationship between whether Year 11 students had heard of TCs and their case-study area location.** Students' basic awareness of TCs varied from 58 per cent of respondents in one area, to 40 per cent in the second and only 29 per cent in the third. This pattern of responses may be partly explained by the fact that the area with the highest level of awareness of TCs amongst Year 11 students appeared to have the most vigorous marketing strategy which included a video with accompanying quiz sheets and school-produced leaflets on how the local pilot worked. Furthermore, it was found that in the area with the lowest awareness of TCs amongst Year 11 students, the TEC and Careers Service tended to promote TCs by continuing to use the nomenclature of 'Youth Training'. This had a reasonable level of credibility amongst young people but meant that their appreciation of TCs as a new and distinctive ladder of opportunity was fairly limited. Another explanation was that whereas only 31 per cent of respondents in this area who had heard of TCs claimed to have seen written information on them, the proportions of respondents in the other two areas were higher (53 per cent and 51 per cent). Overall, nearly half (47 per cent) of the sample who said that they had heard of TCs had also seen written information about them. Other factors which need to be taken into account in interpreting data on young people's awareness of TCs are academic achievement and post-16 plans.

**The survey revealed that there was a greater level of awareness of TCs amongst the Years 12/13 sample when compared with the Year 11 students.** Table 2 provides the Years 12/13 findings:

**Table 2: Years 12/13 Students: Whether they had heard of Training Credit pilot**

Response	Number	%
Yes	88	54
No	61	38
Not sure	13	8
Total	162	100

*A single - response question*

*No missing data*

The greater awareness of TCs amongst the Years 12/13 sample was probably largely explained by their exposure to briefings in Year 11 and, to a lesser degree, in Years 12 and 13.

The survey found that pre-sixth form/college TC briefings were the main source of information for those who had heard of TCs:

- ◆ A majority (85 per cent) said that teachers or careers officers had talked to them about TCs whilst at school in Year 11, but less than one-fifth (18 per cent) said they had talks on TCs whilst in the sixth form or at college.
- ◆ A majority (75 per cent) said that they had been shown written information about TCs whilst at school in Year 11 and a small minority (7 per cent) said that they had seen similar information whilst in the sixth form or at college.

No significant relationships were found between Years 12/13 students' awareness of TCs and area. However, it emerged that the same TEC area had the lowest level of TC awareness amongst both Year 11 and Years 12/13 students.

Table 3 presents the perceptions of Year 11 students who had heard about TCs on the usefulness of talks and/or information in explaining what they are and how to use them:

**Table 3: Year 11 Students: Views on clarity of explanations provided by talks and or information on Training Credits**

Statement	YES		NO	
	Number	%	Number	%
Explain clearly what they are	209	68	100	32
Explain clearly how to use them	159	52	148	48

*Two single-response questions.*

*312 students responded to at least one part of the question and 454 did not respond to either part.*

The table shows that a majority of the respondents to these particular questions gave a positive response in both cases. However, more felt that the talks and/or information received explained what TCs were rather than gave clear explanations of how to use them. A similar pattern of responses was given by Year 12 and 13 students. These findings are worthy of consideration by those personnel responsible for marketing TCs to students and raising their awareness of this post-16 option.

The evaluation revealed that just over one-third (37 per cent) of Year 11 students who were aware of TCs, had heard about them from somebody or somewhere outside school. Table 4 shows the main external sources of information. It indicates that, people close to the respondents, such as friends, parents and relatives, appear to be the main sources of information on TCs outside school. Friends were the main external source of information on TCs for the Years 12/13 sample. These findings suggest that any marketing strategy needs (a) to make sure that the right messages are conveyed to students who may pass on this information informally to other students, and (b) to include parents and guardians so that they give their children accurate information on TCs.

**Table 4: Year 11 Students: External sources of information on Training Credits**

Source	Number	%
Friends	69	45
Parents/relatives	64	42
TV, radio, newspapers	38	25
FE College or training organisations	30	20
Employer	14	9
Other, including TEC	19	12

*A multiple - response question*

*Total respondents = 153*

*Missing data = 613*

*Students could give more than one response, so percentages will not sum to 100 per cent*

Year 11 students who were aware of TCs were asked how much they felt they knew about them at this stage of the school year. Table 5 presents the findings:

**Table 5: Year 11 Students: Knowledge of Training Credits**

Response	Number	%
A great deal	11	3
Quite a lot	145	36
Not very much	195	48
Hardly anything	57	14
Total	408	100

*A single- response question*

*Missing data = 358*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages do not sum to 100%*

**Perhaps not unexpectedly at this early stage of Year 11, only 39 per cent of respondents who had heard of TCs felt that they knew ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ about TCs.** Interestingly, the corresponding figure for the Years 12/13 sample was only slightly larger at 43 per cent. This suggests that there was a considerable challenge still facing Careers Services, schools and colleges, in fully informing students about TCs.

It is worth pointing out that significant differences were found between Year 11 students’ knowledge of TCs in relation to their gender and geographical area though this was not true for Years 12/13 students. A larger proportion of male (5 per cent) than female (1 per cent) respondents claimed to know a great deal about TCs, whilst a larger proportion of females (17 per cent) than males (11 per cent) claimed to know hardly anything about TCs. As suggested earlier, students’ post-16 plans probably largely explain these findings. Perhaps not surprisingly, the greatest proportion of respondents (46 per cent) who said they knew ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ about TCs was found to be in the case-

study area with the highest awareness-rate of TCs. However, the lowest proportion of students giving these responses (29 per cent) was not in the area with the lowest awareness of TCs. This finding is difficult to explain, but may be connected to the fact that this area had the smallest proportion (37 per cent compared to 45 and 46 per cent in the other areas) of Year 11 students who had been involved in an individual interview with a careers officer or teacher about their post-16 choices and the smallest proportion of Year 11 students who said that they knew about local training schemes (17 per cent said 'quite a lot' compared to 29 and 32 per cent in the other areas). **These findings suggest the limitations of judging marketing solely by penetration rates: there is a need for systematic local monitoring to explore the level of understanding of the key TC messages by students.**

A more detailed assessment of Year 11 students' knowledge about TCs was carried out through a question which asked them to indicate whether each of six statements was true or false. The data presented in Appendix Table A6 reveal that **the majority of Year 11 students who had heard about TCs understood how they worked in several key respects.** For example, nearly three-quarters of the respondents knew that TCs did not give them cash in hand to buy training and an even greater proportion (86 per cent) were aware that TCs enabled them to discuss and get the training they wanted. The survey of Years 12/13 students yielded comparable findings. However, an important message for policy-makers and those responsible for marketing, is that **a majority of respondents (Year 11: 59 per cent and Years 12/13: 67 per cent) were not aware that TCs could only be used for approved training.**

When Year 11 students were asked whether learning about TCs had influenced their thinking or making decisions about future plans, their responses (as presented in Appendix Table A8) indicated that **TCs had made a majority of them:**

- ◆ Realise the importance of qualifications (78 per cent).
- ◆ Feel that they could have more control over training if they left school at 16 (60 per cent).
- ◆ Think more seriously about training (57 per cent). A significantly higher proportion of males (62 per cent) than females (50 per cent) gave a positive response.
- ◆ Think more about which jobs or career to choose (53 per cent).

In contrast to these positive responses, **a majority (71 per cent) indicated that learning about TCs had not made them keen to leave full-time education at 16 and get a job or training place.** Whilst it should be borne in mind that TCs were never devised with the express aim of encouraging young people to leave school at 16, these findings also suggest that students took a realistic view of the current economic constraints on the opportunities available for using a TC. Interestingly, a significantly higher proportion of male respondents (33 per cent) than females (21 per cent) indicated that learning about TCs had made them keen to leave full-time education, a finding which has resonances with their overall post-16 plans as outlined earlier in this chapter.

With regard to the impact of TCs on older students, the survey found that learning about TCs had influenced a majority of the Years 12/13 sample in only two ways: making them realise the importance of qualifications (66 per cent) and making them feel that they could have more control over the training available (61 per cent). It should be noted that learning about TCs had influenced a large minority of the Years 12/13 sample to think more seriously about training (43 per cent) and to think more about which job or career they should choose (35 per cent). This may be because their current main concerns are educational rather than being directly work related.

The evaluation found that less than one-fifth of each sample of students intended to make use of a TC. Table 6 presents the relevant statistics.

The table shows that a minority of students who had heard of TCs intended to use them. However, the percentage of Year 11 students intending to use a TC is, perhaps, better than expected given the current trend of high staying-on rates.

**Table 6: Year 11 and Years 12/13 Students: Intentions to use a Training Credit**

Response	Year 11 Students		Years 12/13 Students	
	Number	%	Number	%
Yes	76	18	17	18
No	115	28	31	33
Not sure	220	54	45	48
Total	411	100	93	100

*A single-response question.*

*Missing data = 355 (Year 11) and 69 (Years 12/13)*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages do not sum to 100%.*

Table 6 indicates that the majority were, as yet, undecided about whether to take up this option. These findings should be interpreted with the understanding that the process of making post-16 decisions for many young people is a complex and lengthy process during which they like to keep their options open for as long as possible. Further analysis revealed that, though not statistically significant, a slightly larger proportion of males than females intended to make use of a TC. The evaluation found that Year 11 students' intentions to use a TC were significantly related to case-study areas. Perhaps not unexpectedly, the lowest proportion of respondents (13 per cent) who intended to take up this option was found in the area whose Year 11 students had the lowest awareness of TCs and the least exposure to written information on them.

Overall, the survey results suggest that, taking into consideration the time of data collection (Autumn term), students were reasonably aware and had a fair understanding of TCs. There was, however, room for improvement and it is likely that, for instance, the proportion giving positive responses about level of knowledge would have increased in the Spring term. The evaluation also revealed some interesting gender and geographical differences in the awareness and understanding of TC pilots.

### 3.6 Action Plans

Action planning, sometimes referred to as personal career planning, is an integral part of each TC pilot in that it is usually expected that young people will have completed an action plan before being issued with a credit. The centrality of action planning is explained by its aim of helping to enhance young people's careers guidance provision. According to key personnel, the purpose of action plans was generally seen as preparing young people for the future by getting them to identify their future education, training and employment goals and to decide what action they need to take to achieve these goals. Action plans are usually drawn up by the student and a careers officer. The TECs support the action planning process by investment of resources in Careers Services which has resulted in the appointment of additional staff who help to carry out action planning. Furthermore, TECs' enhancement of schools' careers resourcing has enabled them to purchase more careers officer time. One of the TECs is planning to support the drawing up of action plans by providing schools with a cash sum of about £4 for each completed plan.

It should be noted that the case study which found that all the schools visited were involved in action planning activities, examined action planning in general and not only in relation to TCs. Teachers here tended to perceive the value of action planning as being an additional element in the tutorial support offered by schools and, as such, one way of providing for the empowerment and entitlement requirements of all students. This holistic approach was considered as more beneficial than viewing action planning as merely an adjunct of TCs. Nevertheless, many of the staff interviewed acknowledged the impetus of the pilot in introducing action planning and almost all thought that this was worthwhile.

Schools varied considerably in how they tackled action planning. Whilst most schools used action planning in Year 11, a few started the process in Year 10 or Year 9. There were also differences in the degree to which action plans were linked to the Record of Achievement (RoA) process. Other variations involved the targeting of action planning. In one of the case-study areas, school careers co-ordinators targeted certain groups of students, such as Easter leavers or those with special needs.

The general view expressed by the staff interviewed was that the process of sitting students down to think through career options was a valuable experience for young people. Several judged action planning to have had a significant effect on the careers guidance offered at school. The reported advantages of action planning included:

- ◆ It helps the tutor to know a student's aims and aspirations.
- ◆ It helps students focus their aspirations and make them more realistic.
- ◆ It increases motivation and puts students more in control of their own destiny.
- ◆ It puts the onus of assessing career aims, and identifying the steps needed to achieve them, on young people.



At the same time, most teachers felt that the advent of action planning had given tutors a greater careers education and guidance role. A few interviewees resented the imposition of these additional dimensions on their tutorial role.

**Table 7 shows that a sizeable minority (43 per cent) of Year 11 students were not sure if they had been involved in getting together an action plan at school.** Given that the data was collected in the Autumn term, 39 per cent is a fair proportion of the Year 11 sample to have been involved in action planning so early on in the school year. However, the large proportion who claimed that they were 'not sure' is worrying, though this may be explained by confusion or uncertainty in students' minds about the difference between general careers education activities, action planning and the RoA process. It is worth noting that approximately three-quarters (74 per cent) of the Years 12/13 sample indicated that they had drawn up an action plan during Year 11 at school and about one-quarter (24 per cent) had drawn one up whilst in the sixth form or at college.

**Table 7: Year 11 Students: Involvement in Action Planning**

Response	Number	%
Yes	297	39
No	138	18
Not sure	321	43
Total	756	100

*A single - response question*

*Missing data = 10*

A significant relationship was found between involvement in action planning and the gender of Year 11 students. A larger proportion of females (46 per cent) than males (33 per cent) indicated that they had drawn up an action plan and a greater proportion of males (49 per cent) than females (36 per cent) were not sure. These differences are not easy to explain. There is no convincing reason why more females than males had been included in the action planning process: could it be that Year 11 girls paid more attention to action planning and, therefore, had better recall of their involvement?

**Involvement in action planning was also positively related to the geographical location of students.** The level of Year 11 students' participation varied from 24 per cent in one area, to 36 per cent in the second area and to 56 per cent in the third where the TEC was offering cash incentives to schools for the completion of each action plan. In addition the lowest proportion of Year 11 and Years 12/13 students' participation was found to be in the area where the proportion of students' awareness of TC was lowest. There was also a significantly negative relationship between Year 11 students having produced an action plan and their intention to use a TC: 54 per cent of those intending to take up a TC had not produced an action plan. This finding is probably partly

accounted for by the fact that, though males accounted for the majority (61 per cent) of Year 11 respondents intending to take up TCs, just over two-thirds (67 per cent) of boys either had not produced an action plan or were not sure. Another point to bear in mind is that students were surveyed about their involvement in action planning in general and not specifically in TC-related action plans.

**Table 8 below shows that a majority of the students who had been involved in action planning thought that it would help them to sort out what to do after Year 11.** The large proportion (39 per cent) who were not sure of whether involvement in action planning would help them clarify future directions is probably largely explained by general uncertainty amongst Year 11 students in the first term, about what post-16 path to take (which is often the case) and should not necessarily be interpreted as a negative comment on action plans. It is worth noting that a majority (65 per cent) of the Years 12/13 sample who had drawn up action plans in the sixth form or in college were finding them useful to some degree in sorting out what to do next.

**Table 8: Year 11 Students: Help provided by Action Plans**

Response	Number	%
Yes	162	51
No	32	10
Not sure	125	39
Total	319	100

*A single - response question*

*Missing data = 447*

Overall, the reaction to action planning from both teachers and students involved in the process was largely positive, though there would appear to be a need to clarify its role within the counselling and guidance and employment and training seeking processes, and to convey this to young people. It is worth noting that the first year national evaluation report concluded that, although the principles of action planning were generally supported by staff and students, the form of the document and its actual use required further examination. Also, as Chapters 4, 5 and 6 will indicate, there were mixed messages about the usefulness of action plans from the other partners in the TC pilots. Whilst careers officers generally welcomed the introduction of action plans, some of them were aware of school leavers' uncertainty and scepticism about using them for interviews with employers and training providers. The evaluation found evidence to corroborate careers officers' impressions, in that a majority of the employers and training providers interviewed were unable to comment on the usefulness of action plans because they had not seen, or were not sure that they had seen, enough of these documents to make a judgement.

### 3.7 Careers Education and Guidance

The evaluation found evidence which suggested that the additional funding provided by TECs as part of the pilots to enhance careers information, education and guidance in schools, was having a positive impact. Interviews in schools revealed that these extra resources were being used in numerous ways, including:

- ◆ Supplementing the staffing and provision of reference materials in careers libraries.
- ◆ Purchasing computer hardware or software for careers information and guidance systems such as Microdoors and Ecctis.
- ◆ Installing additional careers information access points in schools.
- ◆ Purchasing more careers officer time.
- ◆ Improving staff development in careers education and guidance (e.g. teacher placements in industry).
- ◆ Reducing teachers' contact time (by purchasing cover) which enabled them to participate more in guidance activities.
- ◆ Enhancing work experience by developing materials or paying travel expenses.

Teachers welcomed these enhancements which they felt were helping them to make the provision of careers information, guidance and education more responsive to students' needs. It emerged that schools no longer relied exclusively on careers lessons, but used a range of strategies to help students make decisions about their future, including the following:

- ◆ Integration within PSE programmes either as a common theme or as a discrete careers module.
- ◆ Integration within other curriculum subjects.
- ◆ Form tutor discussions.
- ◆ One-to-one interviews with a teacher or careers officer.
- ◆ Work experience and related debriefing sessions.
- ◆ Computer-based careers choice and profiling programmes.
- ◆ Use of schools' careers libraries.
- ◆ Careers Service talks, videos and conventions.

It should be noted that such strategies were already being used before the advent of TECs and these had not increased, for example, cross-curricular approaches to careers education. In one of the case-study areas, however, the additional resources provided by the TEC were viewed as going some way to protecting the provision of careers education against the pressures of financial cut-backs in education and of competing demands for curriculum time, especially at Key Stage 4 of the National Curriculum. (Key Stage 4

covers school years 10 and 11 when pupils aged 15 and 16 are in their last two years of compulsory education, taking their GCSEs and facing important post-16 choices about further education, training and jobs.) Indeed, concerns were expressed that without such grants, careers education could quickly diminish in many schools.

**Most students responded positively concerning the overall careers guidance which they had received or were receiving during Year 11 at school** although, as Table 9 shows, the majority of Year 11 students had not yet had an individual interview with a careers officer or careers teacher about post-16 choices. This finding is not surprising given that the data were collected early in the school year.

**Table 9: Year 11 Students: Whether they had individual careers interviews**

Response	Number	%
Yes	325	43
No	421	55
Not sure	17	2
Total	763	100

*A single - response question*

*Missing data = 3*

The level of students' knowledge about post-16 options is one important indicator of the effectiveness of careers education and guidance. Appendix Table A5 shows that a majority of Year 11 students felt they knew a great deal or quite a lot about the following:

- ◆ How to find information about courses, training and jobs (73 per cent).
- ◆ How to discuss with adults the courses, training and jobs wanted (61 per cent).
- ◆ How to make applications and cope with interviews (60 per cent).

**These findings suggest that many Year 11 students not only felt equipped to get the information they needed and to deal with applications and interviews, but also felt that they knew how to engage in discussions to achieve their post-16 objectives.** Although this might appear to suggest that students could cope with the empowerment TCs offered, this finding needs to be balanced with the responses of Years 12/13 students, presented in Appendix Table A15, which show that a minority of this group were positive that they knew how to discuss their post-16 objectives with adults.

A minority of both year groups indicated that they knew a great deal or quite a lot about aspects of the local training and employment scene:

- ◆ Local training schemes (Year 11, 28 per cent; Years 12/13, 19 per cent).
- ◆ Local jobs and careers (Year 11, 45 per cent; Years 12/13, 44 per cent).
- ◆ Which jobs offered training (Year 11, 27 per cent; Years 12/13, 26 per cent).

These gaps in students' knowledge were contrasted with their awareness of post-16 courses and study which was higher in Years 12/13 (56 per cent said they knew 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot') than in Year 11 (32 per cent gave these responses).

**Despite the students' incomplete knowledge of post-16 options, especially jobs and training, the majority of them felt that schools had given them sufficient help in preparing for the future.** Table 10 shows how much help Year 11 students felt that they had received from schools in preparing for the future:

**Table 10: Year 11 Students: Help received from schools in preparing for the future**

Response	Number	%
A great deal	59	8
Quite a lot	436	57
Not very much	213	28
Hardly anything	54	7
Total	762	100

*A single - response question*

*Missing data = 4*

The table indicates that a majority of Year 11 students (65 per cent) considered that they had received at least quite a lot or a great deal of assistance in preparing for the future. A slight majority, however, (52 per cent) indicated that the school could give them further help in making their post-16 plans and choices. The most cited requirements were:

- ◆ More discussions or interviews about careers.
- ◆ More leaflets and booklets and more careers advice generally.
- ◆ More information on college courses.

By contrast, Appendix Table A 21 shows that the further help wanted by Years 12/13 students was less concentrated, with the following being the most cited requirements:

- ◆ More career advice generally.
- ◆ More information on college courses.
- ◆ More A-level information.

The findings presented above suggest that additional resources invested in careers information, guidance and education are needed, especially to reduce some of the gaps in students' knowledge of certain post-16 options such as training and employment. Whilst students were largely happy with the adequacy of careers-related help received in school, over half wanted additional information and advice. Similar messages emerged among young people using TCs (see Chapter 7).

Another important perspective on careers education and guidance is that of employers. Table 11 compares data from the telephone survey of employers on their perceptions of its adequacy in giving young people knowledge, understanding and skills in four key areas:

**Table 11: Employers' views on the adequacy of careers education and guidance**

Careers education and guidance gives young people:	TC Participants		Non-participants	
	YES		YES	
	Number	%	Number	%
General understanding of work	79	50	61	41
Knowledge of jobs in their sector	79	50	53	35
Understanding importance of training	87	55	88	59
Effective job seeking and interview skills	55	35	52	35

*A series of single-response questions.*

159 participant employers and 150 non-participant employers responded to at least one part of the question, and, in each sample, one employer made no response to any part. As data are provided only on employers' 'yes' answers, percentages do not sum to 100%. More data are provided in Appendix Tables A34 and A50.

**The table shows that, overall, employers did not view the adequacy of careers education and guidance very favourably, and that employers participating in TCs were more positive in their responses.** The latter finding may be partly explained by the involvement of young people using TCs in the action planning and awareness-raising processes which may have made them more aware of employment and jobs than other school-leavers. However, if this is true, it is difficult to explain why a similar proportion of employers outside TCs thought that careers education and guidance gave young people an understanding of the importance of training. A particular area of concern highlighted in Table 11, which will be of interest to schools, colleges and the Careers Service, is that only just over one-third of both employer samples felt that young people had effective job seeking and interview skills. From the above, it would seem that the gap between how young people are prepared for employment and employers' expectations of recruits, would appear to merit further research.

**The evaluation found that, in general, training providers thought that the TC pilots had had a negligible impact on careers education and guidance in schools.** Indeed, in one area, the 25 ATOs interviewed were 'overwhelmingly critical' of this aspect of young people's preparation for work, 20 interviewees reporting that provision was 'less than adequate or worse'. They felt that schools were out of touch with the realities of both service employment and the manufacturing industries. This criticism was echoed in the other two areas where, for example, some ATOs noted that careers guidance in schools was not yet related to NVQs. However, in these two areas, a minority of ATO staff interviewed did acknowledge and welcome the additional careers resourcing provided

through the pilots, and thought that, as a result, guidance had improved. The interviews revealed that some ATOs were aware of the current pressures in schools towards increasing the number of students staying on into the sixth form, and, in one area, it was considered to be undermining the impartiality of careers guidance being provided in some schools.

This last point was also made by some of the careers officers interviewed, though they observed that careers co-ordinators were generally more impartial than senior managers in schools. It is worth noting that in a recent report on the effectiveness and efficiency of full-time educational courses for 16 to 19s, the Audit Commission and OFSTED recommended better independent careers advice as one strategy to improve completion rates and enhance young people's achievement of post-16 qualifications (Education, 1993). Careers officers observed that a congested curriculum and recent multiple innovations in schools often left teachers with little time for careers education and guidance. However, they appreciated the additional TEC funding which they felt had usefully augmented careers libraries and, in one area, was said to have increased their contact with students and generally helped them to become more established in schools and colleges.

**Overall, then, perceptions of careers education and guidance in schools, and the impact of TCs on this, were mixed. Employers and ATOs were found to be less positive than Careers Service staff, teachers and young people.** When evaluating the effects of initiatives such as TCs, it is advisable to exercise caution against expecting positive results in the short-term. Reaping the benefits of changed attitudes and practices is a longer-term process which requires continuing commitment. In this case, the investments to improve careers education and guidance need to be built on and the outcomes assessed over time.

### **3.8 Disadvantaged Students**

An important focus of the evaluation was to examine the provision made in the TC pilots for young people who experience particular disadvantages, and who are likely therefore, to experience difficulties in getting skills, training, and employment. In each case-study area, a range of students with different special needs and their teachers were interviewed in both mainstream and two special schools. As the overall size of the sample was fairly small, the findings in this section should be treated with care and definitive judgements avoided. In total, 73 students (including eight doing post-16 courses) were interviewed. They included slow learners, students with moderate learning difficulties, poor attenders, students with language difficulties and some with emotional or behavioural problems. Thirteen of the sample were statemented. (NB: under the 1981 Education Act, LEAs can statement young people whose special educational needs cannot be met informally by normal resources and who, therefore, require special provision). Most of the students interviewed were studying for GCSEs and several were working towards non-GCSE qualifications such as City and Guilds diplomas and the Diploma of Vocational Education.

**The evaluation found that evidence on the impact of TCs on disadvantaged students was inconclusive.** For example, teachers tended to say that they did not have sufficient information to gauge the effects of TCs on the progress of this group. Staff in special schools remained unconvinced of the efficacy of the pilot for most of their students and could not perceive any direct benefits for them. It should be noted that staff in mainstream and special schools drew attention to the lack of post-school opportunities for the disadvantaged and, as yet, did not believe that the advent of TCs could alleviate this. Teachers commented that they had seen no noticeable improvement in the attitudes and practices of employers and trainers with regard to providing quality training for young people with special needs. Even where changes were taking place, such as the area where the TEC was piloting an award which provided additional accreditation opportunities outside NVQs for young people with special needs, they had not been fully explained to schools. Staff pointed out that students were generally more interested in courses available to them than they were in TCs per se because it mattered little to them whence the finance came.

**About three-quarters of the students interviewed had heard of TCs but indicated that they did not know very much about them.** Few had received any information about TCs and special school staff in one area noted that marketing materials were too wordy and complex for their students. Where students had completed an action plan, they said that they had found the process beneficial in that it helped them to think about their options. In one case study, almost all interviewees felt that TCs would put them in a stronger position to ask for training, although several said that qualifications, not TCs, would be what employers wanted.

Perhaps not unexpectedly, given that the interviews took place early on in the school year, most students were uncertain whether they would use a TC. In the area with the highest proportion of interviewees intending to make use of TCs, one-third said that they were going to take this option. Most interviewees realised the importance of continuing with some form of education and training after the age of 16 and the importance of further qualifications.

Overall, the evaluation revealed that despite the additional TC funding allocated to providing disadvantaged young people with training, both teachers and students considered that occupational prospects would remain fairly bleak for the foreseeable future. The general view was that TCs would have less influence than local economic circumstances on the opportunities available to young people with special needs. **There was some evidence that staff were not fully informed about the extent of provision and support within the pilots for the client group.** This suggests that TECs and Careers Services should ensure that relevant information, appropriate for young people with special needs, is conveyed not just to special schools, but also to mainstream schools. Without this, disadvantaged young people are not likely to be empowered by TCs.



### 3.9 Evaluative Overview

In summary, the main findings and emerging messages relating to the involvement of schools in the three TC pilot studies are as follows:

#### ◆ Partnership, Consultation and Liaison

Staff in the schools visited revealed that they had not been widely consulted about either the original design of the pilots or subsequent developments. Not surprisingly, teachers did not yet feel that they were fully part of a TC partnership. However, contact was said to have improved recently, especially where TECs had appointed and adequately resourced schools liaison officers. (Section 3.1)

#### ◆ Feedback and Dissemination

Teaching staff, especially careers co-ordinators, wanted better feedback about the progress of their leavers who had taken up the TC option. There was little evidence, for example, that schools had received key findings from the first-year pilot evaluation. It would seem advisable that TECs improve the dissemination of information on progress and achievements in order to keep teachers updated about TCs developments. Some of the information could be usefully presented as case studies for marketing purposes. It could also be used to inform teachers about the training experiences of young people in general. (Section 3.1)

#### ◆ Marketing and Briefings

Most schools had co-operated productively with their local Careers Service to inform students about TCs and some had developed strategies for providing differentiated briefings for all Year 11 students. Given that Years 12/13 students appeared to be less well catered for in terms of presentations and written information on TCs, there seems to be a marketing gap which requires examination. Teachers expressed a need for marketing materials for students to be written in clearer and simpler language. This point was particularly emphasised by staff responsible for special needs students. In future, it may be worthwhile incorporating more teachers in the preparation of marketing materials and piloting them with students to ensure their suitability. Furthermore, TECs may wish to review their materials and strategies for briefing teachers and parents whom the case studies found were not very well covered. (Sections 3.1, 3.3, 3.4)

#### ◆ **Awareness, Knowledge and Understanding of Training Credits**

In general, awareness, knowledge and understanding of TCs was limited in schools to a small operational group of staff, usually including careers co-ordinators and year tutors. The pressures on teachers' time, including National Curriculum commitments, were said to limit the penetration of TC marketing within schools. When the research took place in the Autumn term, less than half of the Year 11 students surveyed had heard of TCs, with males having a greater awareness than females more of whom intended to stay on in full-time education. The level of understanding amongst students was found to be fairly good, though they did not realise that TCs could be used only for approved training. (Sections 3.2, 3.3.)

#### ◆ **Preparation for Post-16 Decisions and Options**

School staff appreciated the additional resources provided by TECs to enhance careers education and guidance. Students were largely positive about the adequacy of the help they had received in school to make post-16 decisions, though just over half said that additional information and discussions would have been useful. Action planning was valued by both students and teachers who regarded it as a useful enhancement to tutorial and guidance support rather than as an instrument to obtain and use a TC. Data from the employer surveys indicated that, overall, they did not view the adequacy of careers education and guidance for young people very favourably, though employers participating in the pilots were more positive. In general, training providers were critical of the careers education and guidance provided, though a minority acknowledged that improvements were taking place. (Sections 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 3.7)

#### ◆ **Overall Impact**

Teachers felt that TCs were not currently benefiting young people a great deal because of economic constraints which had reduced employment, and ultimately training opportunities, for school leavers. Furthermore, staff responsible for special needs students noted that the advent of TCs had not yet improved the options for this disadvantaged client group. Although teachers subscribed to the concepts of empowerment and entitlement which are at the heart of the TC initiative, they remained unconvinced that they could be put into practice effectively given the recession and the attitudes and abilities of students most likely to leave school at 16 and use a TC. (Sections 3.2, 3.6)

## 4. THE CAREERS SERVICE

This chapter explores the role of the Careers Service in the three TC pilots. Drawing on data collected from 13 Careers Service staff (including senior managers and careers officers with 'frontline' responsibilities), in addition to other key stakeholders such as teachers, employers and training providers, the section examines a range of perceptions of the effectiveness of the Careers Service involvement in the working of the pilots. A discussion of the impact of the TC initiative on the Careers Service is also provided. Examples of good practice are highlighted where appropriate.

### 4.1 The Role of the Careers Service in the Training Credits Pilot

The evaluation found that in each case-study area the Careers Service played a pivotal role in the TC pilot. Not only did senior personnel participate in drawing up and designing the pilots, subsequently they and their staff also played the following key roles:

- ◆ Briefing teachers, students, parents, employers and training providers about TCs.
- ◆ Providing enhanced careers advice and guidance, including interviews for action planning.
- ◆ Endorsing young people with special training needs whose training received additional funding from the TECs.
- ◆ Setting up administration systems for TCs including issuing cards to eligible young people.
- ◆ Tracking school and college leavers and providing careers statistics, including records of TCs issued.

The Careers Service staff interviewed drew attention to their growing workload which had resulted from the advent of TCs. In each case study, the TC workload was being carried out by careers officers with generic responsibilities, who shared the additional tasks in preference to establishing a specialist TC team or unit. **The evaluation found that each TEC had provided the local Careers Service with substantial additional resources to enable it to undertake TC-related work.** For example, in one area, the TEC agreed to provide at least £100,000 per annum over the life of the pilot. In another, the Careers Service had received an initial investment of £30,000 to upgrade information technology systems, as well as funding for 4.5 additional careers officers, four employment assistants and 0.5 of an information officer.

Whilst staff welcomed the additional resourcing provided through the pilots, they pointed out that it had to be put in context. First, careers officers stressed that, although there had been additional TC-related staffing, no extra staffing had been provided to cope with the effects of the recession and that, as a result, they had found themselves hard-pressed to carry out all the tasks expected of them in the TC pilot. Second, cuts in the overall size of the Careers Service had been made owing to the financial constraints imposed by the LEAs. As far as the additional resourcing of careers education and guidance in schools was concerned, differences were found in the degree to which Careers Services influenced spending decisions. This varied from advising schools on the spending of TEC funding to having virtually no role in deciding how the money was spent. Researchers noted that there was, as yet, no systematic monitoring of how the additional resources were being spent and suggested that there was a likelihood that some institutions would use them more effectively than others.

**Most of the Careers Service staff interviewed felt that, as a result of the pilot, a partnership was developing with the local TEC.** In general, liaison was said to be effective. In one of the areas, for example, this had been sustained by the introduction of bi-monthly TEC/Careers Service officer meetings, augmented by the setting up of working groups as necessary to deal with particular tasks such as marketing. In another area, the TEC was in the process of consolidating the involvement of the Careers Service in the pilot by enabling it to play a key role in the coordination of initiatives overseen by the Education Business Partnership. It is worth pointing out that although liaison and consultation were generally quite good, front-line careers officers did not always feel adequately informed about the regulations and criteria governing the operation of the pilots, especially the changes made in the second year. In one case study area, for example, some officers considered that certain guidelines, such as whether or not 18 year olds with A-levels were eligible for TCs, had not been made clear or conveyed to them in a direct and systematic way. Given the experimental nature of pilots, where modifications often have to be made quickly to respond to unforeseen circumstances, these findings suggest that there is a need to ensure that communication systems are effective enough to keep Careers Service staff briefed about operational changes.

**At the operational level, the Careers Service in each area was found to maintain close links, both formal and informal, with the schools and colleges surveyed.** In keeping with the Careers Service's general approach to schools and colleges, their TC-related work was negotiated on an individual basis. As a result the input to schools was not uniform and varied according to how much careers officer time institutions could afford to buy. Schools varied for example, in whether they opted for blanket or targeted careers interviewing. In contrast, careers officers provided guidance to FE students, usually on a self-referral basis, within the existing college counselling structure. Each participating school and college had a designated careers officer and this was appreciated by staff in that it fostered a close working relationship. The range of tasks outlined below bears testimony to the instrumental role played by careers officers in the pilot:

- ◆ Liaising with careers co-ordinators, PSE and tutorial staff.
- ◆ Arranging for employers, trainers and other speakers to visit schools and colleges.
- ◆ Administering short questionnaires to Year 11 students to gain some initial impressions of their post-16 intentions which are then used to prioritise the order of careers interviews.
- ◆ Conducting individual careers interviews with students, in some cases supplementing them with group discussions.
- ◆ Giving careers talks.
- ◆ Carrying out one-to-one and/or group briefings to inform and explain TCs to students, teachers and parents.
- ◆ Negotiating action plans and personal career plans with students and providing follow-up interviews as required.
- ◆ Undertaking TC administration, including giving out and collecting application forms and issuing cards.
- ◆ Endorsing young people who have special training needs.
- ◆ Disseminating information on local training and employment opportunities, and advising and guiding young people through relevant application procedures.

Teachers regarded careers officers as the main source of information about the pilots. The evidence collected indicated that careers officers played a leading presentational and interface role in the marketing of TCs to educational institutions. Furthermore, they helped to market TCs to employers and training providers and dealt with enquiries from these two important groups.

## 4.2 Empowerment and Entitlement: Support and Constraints

In general, the Careers Service staff interviewed supported the key TC concepts of empowerment and entitlement. They stated, for example, that the TC aims of increasing young people's choice and their ability to put this into practice were coterminous with the aims of the Careers Service. Careers officers said that they aspired to give young people the power to choose training and qualifications which matched their needs and goals through the careers advice and guidance they provided. Notwithstanding these broad commitments, staff explained the cultural and economic constraints on empowerment and entitlement to quality training being fully realised.

In one of the case-study areas, Careers Service personnel observed that, owing to the recession, there was a general lack of work placements and a loss of training providers who had closed down. They added that, as a result of the scarcity of jobs, young people were not effectively empowered. This point was illustrated by one careers officer who said: '*....they cannot pick and choose jobs with training*'. Furthermore, staff noted that

there was a need to educate many employers about the benefits of training their young employees, but acknowledged the difficulties in attempting to do this during a time of economic restraint. In two of the areas, some young people resided in remote rural areas with poor transport facilities which limited their options to very localised jobs (where available) and training, thereby acting as a constraint on empowerment and entitlement. Whilst the Careers Services provided as much support as possible in these two cases, they acknowledged the difficulties of dealing with rural constraints.

Mixed messages emerged from the interviews with Careers Service staff on the question of whether young people fully understood the concept of empowerment. In one area, for example, careers officers claimed that young people understood that they had power to buy training but *'were not in a position to exercise it because of the economic situation'*. In contrast, in another area, careers officers' judgement was that young people found the concept of empowerment difficult to understand and they believed that it was unrealistic to expect some of the young people who took up TCs to use them in a discriminating way and to negotiate the training they wanted with employers or providers.

**The absence of significant choice was highlighted in all areas as the greatest constraint which undermined the realisation of the aim of empowerment.** For example, the shortage of placements in many key skill areas in one of the case studies, had practical implications for young people which were articulated by these two careers officers:

*If a young person decides that they're fed up with one scheme..... and wants to use the card to buy training elsewhere, where can they buy it?.....In reality, there is nothing for them to choose from. It's a contradiction.*

*In reality, they take the first (i.e. employer) who says 'we'll have you'. They haven't the confidence to do anything else.... They don't aim high - they're just pleased to get anything. They grab it. It's not choice: it's what's available.*

The realities outlined above also presented careers officers with a dilemma which gave them some cause for concern. Some interviewees called into question the value and ethics of raising young people's expectations about 'choice' and 'empowerment' knowing that, for the majority, such expectations could not be fulfilled in current economic circumstances.

Whilst Careers Service staff acknowledged the enhancements in schools and colleges as a result of TEC investments in careers information, education and guidance, they were less positive about the impartiality of the advice given in some schools. As a result of the increased competitiveness amongst schools, which under LMS (Local Management of Schools) benefited by increasing the numbers of students staying on into the sixth form, students were not always receiving neutral careers advice. For example, teachers failed to point out that a wide range of BTEC courses could be taken through institutions other than the school, restricted the display of employment vacancies, and excluded training providers from career conventions and exhibitions. These findings suggest that the

competitive market for sixth formers led, in some cases, to an undermining of the TC entitlement for young people. Yet, as the HMI report on the implementation of TCs (op. cit.) revealed: *'The initial fears of some schools that training credit schemes might reduce staying on rates in full-time education have not been realised'*. (DFE, 1992).

### 4.3 Action Planning

As stated in Chapter 3, staff in all of the schools visited were convinced of the benefits to their students from involvement in the action planning process. Qualitative research data indicated that the action plan was usually negotiated and devised by a student and a careers officer on a one-to-one basis, though group action planning sessions were occasionally organised for more able students. The purpose of the plan was to focus students' minds on what they are going to do after Year 11 and give them an opportunity to discuss their strengths, weaknesses and options before making a provisional decision and deciding on the most appropriate strategies to reach their goal. **Modifications had often been made to the action planning process in the second year of each of the pilots.** The most significant changes were where the action plans for Year 11 students had been replaced by a two-stage process involving the writing of a summary of guidance based on the careers officers' first individual contact with students in this year group, followed by the drawing up of personal career plans only for those young people who wanted to leave school and go into employment. This system was flexible to the extent that it enabled a young person to have several career plans which covered a range of occupations.

Elsewhere, careers officers pointed out that the completion of the career plan could not always be undertaken during one-to-one interviews, particularly if these interviews were conducted early in Year 11. In these cases the plans were often completed in small groups.

**Although schools and the Careers Services were aware of the potential for linking the processes and products of action planning and recording achievement, the case studies found that integration had not yet been achieved.** It is worth noting that HMI (op. cit.) also found that, *'approaches to action planning vary considerably, and are seldom linked to other similar initiatives such as records of achievement'* Now that action planning is firmly established in these pilots, it would seem advisable to initiate a joint review of the roles and purposes of both action plans and records of achievement to examine how they might be integrated. The teachers interviewed thought that action planning was a valuable addition to the guidance and tutorial support which they were able to offer. **According to the data collected, some young people found action plans useful, though not overwhelmingly so.** For example, whilst over half of both Year 11 students and TC-users who had experienced action planning considered it helpful in making decisions about their future, only 16 per cent of corresponding Years 12/13 students gave this response. This finding echoes points made by a few careers officers who observed that some young people were *'sceptical of the process'*, with action plans going into school bags *'never to be seen again'*.

The case studies revealed that because many young people did not know how to use their action plans, only a minority actually showed them to prospective employers and training providers. This finding is corroborated by the following data provided by the survey of those companies participating in TCs.

**Table 12: Participant employers: Views on usefulness of Action Plans**

Response	Number	%
Very useful	14	9
Fairly useful	23	14
Not very useful	13	8
Not at all useful	8	5
Don't know	53	35
Not applicable	48	30
Total	159	100

*A single - response question*

*Missing data = 1*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages do not sum to 100%*

Table 12 shows that whilst 23 per cent of the sample found action plans useful to some degree in deciding what training young recruits should receive, 65 per cent were unable to give a response either because they had not seen an action plan or did not know whether they were useful.

There was a similar level of confusion amongst the 75 training providers interviewed. When asked for their perceptions of the usefulness of TC-related action plans, a majority of the sample either confused them with training plans because they had seldom seen an action plan or they expressed reservations about them. They criticised action plans for being rather superficial, rigid, artificial and premature. The point was also made that the usefulness of action plans was largely dependent on the kind of culture or market in which they operated. Trainers observed that in a *'choice-based culture'* where the market offers a range of opportunities, action plans have an active role to play. However, they suggested that the purpose of the action plan is more uncertain when they are used in a more deterministic and passive culture where the norm is often accommodation to the limited opportunities available. **There was some measure of agreement that in the prevailing economic climate, action plans need to be flexible and offer young people strategies of adaptation rather than prematurely locking them into unrealistic and single-track career goals.**

On the whole, Careers Service staff were positive about the introduction of action planning through the pilots. They said that it had increased contact time with young people, thus enabling a more productive relationship to be established. In addition, they felt that it had led to a more focused and effective use of contact time and had raised the



profile of the Careers Service in schools. Nevertheless, given the level of uncertainty amongst young people, employers and training providers about the use and benefit of action plans, it would seem that both TECs and Careers Services face a challenge in clarifying the role of action plans and explaining this to all partners. Certainly, mixed messages emerged from this research in that, generally, participants were more positive about the action planning process than the product.

#### **4.4 Special Training Needs**

The evaluation found that, in each area, the Careers Service played a central role in assessing the special training needs (STN) of young people and helping them to find suitable employment and training. Careers officers' responsibilities for the client group had been developed over many years before the introduction of TCs, and their role was found to be particularly significant in the pilots which allocated additional funding for the training of young people with special needs. It is worth noting that, according to national statistics provided by the Employment Department, 20 per cent of TC starts in the first two quarters of 1992 (April to October) were accounted for by young people endorsed with special training needs.

Reflecting provision nationwide, Careers Service responsibilities for STN trainees in the three areas included the following:

- ◆ Identifying through an endorsement process the needs of STN young people and the type and level of additional training and support required.
- ◆ Informing the drawing up of training plans and signing the relevant section of the plan supporting the STN endorsement.
- ◆ Helping to identify funding levels for STN trainees.
- ◆ Providing information to training organisations to help them arrange a suitable training programme.
- ◆ Participating in the review process and signing progress reports at six-monthly intervals.

It should be noted that the Careers Service also provided continuing guidance and support for this client group during training, job-seeking and the transition into employment.

According to the interviews carried out, the process of endorsing young people as having STN usually began with a careers officer drawing up a list of likely candidates for endorsement, in liaison with careers co-ordinators in schools and special needs teachers. The students were interviewed and, as with all intending leavers, an action plan was drawn up. The potential trainees were allocated to one of three national special needs

endorsement categories A, B or C, or defined as having specific literacy and numeracy support needs. The A, B and C categories indicate that different levels of progress are likely and consequently that different levels of training and support are required. Category C, which covers those trainees requiring most support, generally attracts more TC funding than the other categories. **It should be noted that some STN trainees may find it difficult or impossible to achieve NVQ at any level.**

All three TECs allocated additional funding for the training of young people with special needs. For example, staff in one TEC revealed that, although 10 per cent of its TC client group was accounted for by STN trainees, almost 20 per cent of its TC budget was allocated to this group. In this area, employers and training providers were able to apply for TEC funding to make modifications to their premises and workshops in order to accommodate trainees with special needs. In the second year of the pilots, two of the three TECs had introduced output-related funding for Wordpower and Numberpower which careers officers and training providers considered a useful modification to the pilots, because it allowed young people to achieve qualifications even at a basic level below NVQ Level 1. **When interviewing the key partners in the three pilots, it became apparent that providing training for STN young people was a complex issue.** For example, interviewees in the Careers Service, TECs and some training organisations pointed to the necessity of treading a careful line between, on the one hand, providing enough funding for STN trainees to make them an attractive training proposition to training providers and employers, and, on the other hand, making that funding so substantial that endorsement was seen simply as a money-earning device. Some of the training providers still felt that provision for STN trainees was underfunded. Moreover, whilst TECs and Careers Service personnel aimed to encourage a range of providers to recruit STN trainees in order to avoid creating 'ghettos' in training provision, this remained a major challenge. In one area, for instance, it emerged that up to 80 per cent of STN trainees were placed with six specialist training providers.

Some of the careers officers interviewed questioned whether the three endorsement categories were appropriate. Although some felt the categories were too crude, they were also aware that a more responsive system of categorisation might result in administratively unmanageable TC pilots. Some careers officers and trainers also indicated that output-related funding (ORF) with respect to STN trainees might usefully be applied to achievements other than qualifications. They suggested that it might be worth considering ORF when STN trainees were successful in getting a job or work placement, or achieved units of competence rather than a whole NVQ qualification.

The three case studies revealed that the contribution of the Careers Service personnel in providing enhanced careers guidance, including action planning, and in helping STN young people get suitable training, was essential to the working of each pilot. It is worth noting that the Careers Service played a mediating role in that they attempted to meet the needs of young people whilst at the same time helping to meet the requirements of the TC pilot.

## 4.5 The Effects of the Pilots on the Careers Service

The evidence collected suggested that the TC pilots had largely positive effects on the Careers Service in each case-study area. Firstly, the additional resourcing provided by the TECs had helped Careers Service management in the recruitment or retention of staff. In one area, for example, seven additional careers officers had been recruited as a result of the pilot. Managers welcomed the extra staff at a time of constraints in LEA spending. Secondly, the advent of TCs was said to have enhanced the professionalism of the Careers Service in that careers officers, in response to the requirements of the pilots, had reviewed and modified their working practices. In particular, they had re-examined their involvement in schools and had expanded their guidance work through the action planning process. Thirdly, careers officers felt that the pilots had increased the profile of the Careers Service in schools and generally increased their contact with both teachers and students. Another positive effect was said to be the overall improvement of guidance work carried out by the Careers Service and some of the schools as a result of the availability of TC enhanced information and resources.

It is worth noting that published findings from an action project which included a case study investigation into stakeholder perceptions of the TC pilot being run elsewhere, also discovered that, *'most officers felt that the Training Credits pilot had raised the status of the Careers Service and brought additional resources. They felt more appreciated in schools and some reported increased demands for their services'*: (See Hodkinson *et al* 1992.)

Other key partners in the pilots, especially school personnel and training providers, also considered that the introduction of TCs had helped to improve the work of the Careers Service. They felt that, as a consequence, careers officers provided a more extensive guidance service to young people and had developed closer working relationships with trainers and employers.

## 4.6 The Perceived Effectiveness of Careers Guidance from the Careers Service

The evaluation revealed that staff in most of the schools visited considered that the careers guidance and support provided by the Careers Service was of a high quality. They were very positive about careers officers' professional expertise, including their commitment to students and their close involvement in schools. Several headteachers, for example, regarded the contribution of careers officers as integral to the work of their staff. In addition, staff in some schools noted improvements over the last two years in the continuity of contact with the same officer, a development which they valued highly. Interestingly, these improvements seemed to be closely related to the investment of funds and the deployment of staff made available through the TC pilot.

Although employers were surveyed on their perceptions of the effectiveness of careers education and guidance in general, and not exclusively on the contribution of the Careers

Service, the data provide useful insights which are worth reporting here. As Table 11 in Chapter 3 indicates, the survey found that employers participating in TCs were, in general, more positive than non-participants about the adequacy of careers education and guidance. The table shows that a majority of both samples of employers reported that provision was adequate in terms of giving young people an understanding of the importance of training, although non-participants were slightly more positive about this.

**The table also shows that a greater proportion of TCs employers thought that careers education and guidance was adequate in terms of giving young people a general understanding of work and, especially, a knowledge of jobs in their sector.** These findings may be partly explained by the additional careers provision, including action planning which young TC-users have experienced. By contrast, only just over one-third of each employer sample felt that careers education was adequate in terms of giving young people effective job seeking and interview skills. This finding suggests that improving young people's skills in these important areas remains a key challenge facing schools which have a lead role in this respect.

It is worth noting, as Table 13 reveals, that nearly one-third of participating employers considered that TCs had had quite a positive impact or better on careers education and guidance.

**Table 13: Participant employers: Views on the impact of Training Credits on careers education and guidance.**

Response	Number	%
A great deal	15	9
Quite a lot	37	23
Not very much	28	18
No impact	36	23
Don't know	41	26
Not applicable	2	1
Total	159	100

*A single - response question*

*Missing data = 1*

With any initiative, it takes time for change to take place, and for participants to notice these changes, so it is perhaps not surprising that, as Table 13 shows, approximately half of the respondents could either see no impact or did not know whether TCs had affected careers education and guidance.

The survey of young people using TCs provided other useful perceptions of the effectiveness of the guidance provided by the Careers Service. For example, 74 per cent of respondents said that individual career discussions had been of some help in assisting

them to make post-16 plans and decisions and careers officers played a key role in these career discussions. However, only 45 per cent of respondents said that negotiating action plans was helpful to them in making their post-16 plans and decisions. This suggests, as indicated earlier in this section, that an important challenge facing Careers Service personnel involved in the pilots is to make the action planning process more responsive to young people's needs.

The survey also revealed that a majority of TC-users knew a great deal or quite a lot about six out of eight careers-related topics and skills, including local training schemes and local jobs and careers (see Appendix Table A56). The two topics on which respondents had least knowledge were local post-16 courses and jobs which offer training. These findings suggest that the careers education and guidance received by TC-users, to which Careers Service staff make a significant contribution, was perceived as being largely effective. A challenge for the future will be to improve young people's knowledge of local courses and study opportunities as well as their awareness of which employment options provide training.

## 4.7 Evaluative Overview

All the evidence collected bears witness to the pivotal role played by Careers Service personnel in the three pilots. Key findings and messages emerging from the research are summarised below:

### ◆ **Careers Service Involvement in TC Pilots**

The involvement of the Careers Service in TC pilots was found to be both extensive and essential to their operation, and ultimately, to their success. This involvement was largely focused on providing enhanced careers guidance, including helping young people to draw up action plans. Careers Service personnel welcomed additional resourcing from TECs but emphasised that their workload had increased substantially as a result of the advent of TCs. Clearer and more up-to-date information on the guidelines and criteria governing the operation of TCs would have been appreciated. (Sections 4.1 and 4.5)

### ◆ **Quality Guidance**

Careers Service staff regarded the provision of impartial advice as the key to offering quality careers guidance to young people. Although they observed that their professionalism and working practices had been enhanced through growing partnership with the TECs, they maintained that their impartiality and 'honest broker' role had to be safeguarded. Careers officers regretted that the careers education and guidance provided by teachers in some schools was influenced more by vested interests in increasing the staying-on rate than in responding to students' individual needs. As a result, the TC entitlement to effective careers education and guidance was not always available in practice. (Sections 4.2 and 4.5)

#### ◆ **Empowerment**

Careers Service staff were committed to this central concept in TC pilots. However, they found it problematic for three main reasons. First, economic circumstances limited the opportunities for young people to exercise choice with their TC. Second, some young people who took up TCs were disinclined to exercise effective discriminating choices in the employment and training fields owing to cultural and background influences. Finally, careers officers were wary of artificially raising the expectations of young people which they considered unethical and ultimately detrimental to the future of this client group. (Section 4.2)

#### ◆ **Action Planning**

There was evidence that each Careers Service, in collaboration with its local TEC, had attempted to improve action planning in the second year of the pilots. Whilst the process of action planning was generally considered useful by participants, there was less consensus on the format, purpose and use of the end-product. This is an aspect of TCs which merits further research and development. (Section 4.3)

#### ◆ **Special Training Needs**

In identifying the special training needs of young people, helping to find them suitable post-16 opportunities and providing continuing support, careers officers were seen to play an instrumental role in the TC pilots which allocated additional funding for this client group. The experience of careers officers suggested that TC funding arrangements required flexibility to encourage the progress of these young people at their own pace and ensure that their needs were effectively met. TECs' responsiveness increased in the second year of the pilots when they began to provide output-related funding for sub-NVQ training such as Wordpower and Numberpower. (Section 4.4)

#### ◆ **Careers Service Effectiveness and Challenges**

The guidance and support provided by local careers officers was highly valued by most schools. Teachers generally felt that the advent of TCs had enhanced their working relationship with the Careers Service. Evidence collected from employers, training providers and young people using TCs indicated that there were outstanding challenges for the Careers Service (and other agencies), including improving young people's knowledge of local post-16 educational courses and which jobs offer training, in addition to improving their job seeking and interview skills. (Sections 3.2, 5.5, 6.1, 7.2)

## 5. THE TRAINING PROVIDERS

Chapter 5 examines the role of the training providers in the pilots and assesses the impact of TCs on their modus operandi and the training which they provide for young people. Training plans, and their actual link with action plans, are an important feature in this section. A sample of 25 approved training providers and organisations (ATOs) were interviewed in each area. Further details are provided in the Methodological Appendix.

### 5.1 Participation in Training Credit Pilots

The evaluation found that the training providers surveyed were playing a major role in the pilots, not only by providing training for young people but also by finding work placements for them, helping to inform employers about TCs and carrying out related administration for many of them. Accordingly, **providers occupied an influential position as the nexus of communication between trainees, employers and the TEC, whilst also liaising closely with the Careers Service.** It is worth noting the considerable contribution made by college-based ATOs, given that between one-third and two-thirds of providers in each area subcontracted all or part of their NVQ or VQ equivalent off-the-job training to them. FE-based provision for TC-users (as for residual YT) was largely integrated into the general education and training functions of the colleges, though TC administration was usually carried out separately.

As far as TCs were concerned, TECs contracted annually with individual ATOs to provide training for different types of trainees, including the guarantee group (aged 16-18), the non-guarantee group, young people with special training needs and own-time trainees. In most cases, trainees were referred to ATOs directly or indirectly by the Careers Service which tended to be the focus for young people's enquiries. Not surprisingly virtually all ATOs claimed to have good links with the Careers Service.

**A majority of the trainers surveyed in each area felt that a TC partnership had not yet emerged.** Nevertheless, a majority also considered their links with the TEC to be good. Although ATOs were aware that partnership took time to develop, some observed that they were informed rather than consulted about developments within the pilot. Generally, trainers felt that systems to foster regular liaison had improved and were largely adequate. College staff in one area, for example, welcomed '*an increase of channels available for suggestions or complaints*'. According to ATOs, good working relationships were developing through two main mechanisms: regular visits from TEC staff, such as business advisers or programme managers, in addition to ATO representation on TC committees.

Training providers' participation in the pilots was found to be essential to their operation, and ultimately, to their success. Whilst providers noted that communication and liaison

with the TECs had improved in the second year of the pilots, some felt that there was still room for improvement so that they were fully consulted about key TCs decisions and developments.

## 5.2 Marketing, Briefings and Awareness Levels

The majority of training providers interviewed said that despite the rapid innovation in the initial stages of the pilots they had been adequately briefed about the purpose, principles and practicalities of TCs. They were also of the opinion that they had been well informed about subsequent developments in the pilots. It was found that ATOs were briefed mainly by presentations made by TEC staff at meetings, seminars and workshops, rather than through marketing materials. ATO network meetings were another source of information on TCs. In addition to these mechanisms, TEC staff used one-to-one visits and recontracting meetings to update ATOs on TC developments. In some cases college staff were briefed by FE training managers cascading information received at TEC meetings, or by separate sessions with TEC personnel. As was the case in schools, interviewees felt that non-participating colleagues would only have a fairly general awareness of what was meant by 'TCs'.

Whilst levels of awareness among ATOs were generally high, a few revealed that they still felt unsure about the intricacies of the banding and bonus arrangements. Some interviewees, especially FE staff, expressed a need for more information about the pilot, including key evaluation findings.

Training providers considered that TC marketing strategies to schools and employers had been mainly effective. In one area, for example, staff believed that the initial marketing strategy which had been enthusiastically delivered, had since been further improved with imaginative use of different media, including radio advertising and newspaper features. However, two important messages emerged from the evaluation, regarding perceived deficiencies in marketing strategies:

- ◆ The level of awareness of TCs amongst some young people encountered by ATOs was not very high.
- ◆ Some of the information used to market TCs to employers was misleading.

It is worth noting that ATOs played a key role in marketing TCs to employers. Rather worryingly, it emerged that up to a third of the ATOs interviewed in two of the areas, pointed out that some employers had got the impression that TCs provided cash in hand for them to buy training for their young recruits. One of the case studies found that this problem had been exacerbated by a brochure for employers which had led them to believe that they would receive TEC money directly for training staff. As a result, several FE staff had taken telephone calls from employers demanding this money. Here there appeared to have been a lack of consultation and communication with ATOs on how best to market TCs to employers.



Another of the case studies found that colleges had developed their own materials for marketing TCs to employers in preference to using either national or TEC documentation for this purpose. Perhaps not surprisingly, the FE staff interviewed identified the provision of TC-sponsored off-the-job training for young people as a competitive market which required vigorous marketing on their behalf. This case study discovered that, as a result, each college tended to present TCs in a way that suited its own objectives. For example, acknowledging that there was no NVQ accreditation yet for some City and Guilds or RSA courses, the representative of one college described its TC marketing leaflet as 'designed to mask the significant range of courses still ineligible for TCs, as much as to promote the ones that were'. This finding suggests that where different organisations within a TC pilot decide to market their services unilaterally, there is a need for checks and balances to ensure that promotional materials include accurate messages.

Overall, the TECs' briefing of training providers was adequate and, as a consequence, the level of awareness of TCs was high. Echoing the perceptions of some careers officers, the major difficulties for training providers were confusions and uncertainties concerning some TC guidelines and criteria. The evaluation revealed that this whole issue of briefing employers, in which ATOs played a leading role, was problematic and required review.

### 5.3 Administration and Resourcing Issues

As recorded in Chapter 2, many ATOs (at least half of those interviewed) considered that their participation in the TC pilots involved a very demanding administrative workload. However, they pointed out that some administrative practices, relating to quality assurance and requests for statistics, for example, were not TC-specific. Furthermore, interviewees remarked that the workload had been reduced to some extent in the second year of the pilots. Another observation made by some ATOs was that TC-related administration was no better or worse than that required for YT.

The ATO staff who said that they found it difficult to cope with the TC administrative and data gathering requirements, wanted a further reduction in the paperwork involved, and in some cases requested that TECs introduce computerised systems to achieve this objective. They claimed that to meet the requirements they had either recruited more administrative staff or extended the hours of those already on the payroll. As the following comment indicates, some objected to administration invading trainer-trainee contact time:

*My staff are used to dealing with trainees closely - they resent having to complete forms all the time.*

Examples of TC administrative tasks facing ATO staff included:

- ◆ Completing individual trainee record forms.
- ◆ Filling in separate forms for trainees studying Wordpower and Numberpower.

- ◆ Obtaining trainees' signatures on vouchers required for the submission of claims to the TEC.
- ◆ Writing monthly reports for the TEC.
- ◆ Providing statistics including collecting information on trainees' attendance at work placement with employers.
- ◆ Writing and recording training plans for which ATOs in one area wanted more guidance on standardising layout.

It is worth noting that a few of the ATOs who dealt with more than one TEC, pointed out that there was a lack of conformity across pilots in terms of the administrative tasks providers were expected to carry out. They found that this made their TC-related workload more onerous than it needed to be and suggested that standardisation of forms would help to alleviate the situation.

The interviews carried out revealed that there was quite widespread satisfaction with TECs' processing of training providers' payment claims. ATOs emphasised that this was vital to their cash flow. However, there was a general perception amongst ATOs that overall funding for the training of young people, including funding through the TC mechanism, had diminished, though as the following quotation indicates this was not necessarily attributed to TECs' training strategies:

*TCs have created extra work and there is less money spent on youth training but that's not because of TCs. It's because the Government's training budget has not been enhanced over the last few years.*

ATOs mentioned that the expectation that employers would make significant financial contributions to the training of young people had largely not materialised. Training managers noted that, in the current recession, some employers were reluctant to contribute to on-the-job training costs and/or weekly allowances for work placement trainees. Another observation was that payments were not commensurate with the increased workload placed upon them. However, interviewees thought that the banding systems were largely acceptable and an improvement on YT.

**There were mixed reactions to output-related funding (ORF) which now accounted for about 25 per cent of providers' income.** It is worth noting that ORF is not TC-specific but also applies to YT. Whilst some ATOs drew attention to the centrality of ORF saying that it was essential to their survival and claiming that it 'was an incentive' to trainees to achieve results, others were uncomfortable with some of its ramifications. Firstly, ORF was perceived to make providers '*discriminatory and selective*', in that they were inclined to recruit young people who were likely to achieve NVQ Level 2 or above. Some interviewees were concerned that this was beginning to exclude STN young people and borderline cases. There were fears that ORF might not serve the interests of less able young people effectively. It should be noted, however, that the TECs had started

to introduce ORF for achievements below NVQ2. Secondly, some ATOs pointed out the financial consequences of trainees leaving particular schemes before completion of NVQ Level 2, as the following comment indicates: *'.....a trainee could leave our scheme three-quarters of the way through and go to someone else's, and they would get the full ORF and we would get nothing.'* Some ATOs called for **greater flexibility in the rules governing the awarding of ORF so that it could apply to units of work contributing to NVQs and not wholly to the complete qualification.**

**The college staff interviewed were unanimous that the introduction of TCs had resulted in a substantial loss of revenue.** They alluded to the severity of the recession which they said had reduced the income earned through the part-time training of young people. (Previously, colleges received a portion of the Revenue Support Grant directly from the LEA, now it was re-routed via TECs through the TCs pilots). It is worth noting here that as the Further Education Unit (1993) pointed out:

*...the take up of Training credits is subject to market conditions, not least the state of the national and local economy.... Training Credits represent a relatively 'high risk', unpredictable and unreliable source of funding for FE colleges. In a demand and achievement-led system, failure by an individual to attend, 'achieve', or 'complete', means non payment for the college.*

Interestingly, and possibly in consequence of this issue, a few of the non-FE ATOs claimed that colleges had increased the fees charged for training young people which they felt were now too high. Yet there was little evidence of these ATOs shopping around as colleges tended to charge about the same amount for training courses. Interviews with college staff revealed that the cost of some courses had been increased to cover additional fees resulting from NVQ registration and assessment.

**An important final observation made by ATOs was that planning for the future was difficult as a result of the system of payment in arrears and the uncertainties of income resulting from ORF.**

## **5.4 Training Plans and Action Plans**

As a result of their operating agreements with the ED, each of the TECs required the ATOs participating in the TC pilots to draw up a training plan with each trainee. The training plans which were produced in the first week of training and sent to the TEC recorded information on training courses being taken, the duration of training and the intended outcomes, including qualifications. ATOs explained that the content of training plans was defined more by NVQ objectives than TC specifications. ATOs were also expected to negotiate a more detailed training plan with each trainee during the first month's induction period of a course. It is worth noting that one TEC, in particular, provided incentive payments to ATOs to write and review training plans. **The evaluation found that most ATOs, both FE-based and non-FE, considered that if training plans were completed properly and reviewed regularly, they could make a useful**

contribution to the quality of training when incorporated into the learning review process. Training plans were said to be instrumental in focusing the trainers and trainees on the achievement of specific goals. It was pointed out that the training plan process could be very time-consuming and might lead sometimes to plans not being revised as frequently and vigorously as they could. However, some training managers admitted that, if a provider so decided, it was fairly easy to complete the plans without recourse to a great deal of individual negotiation, especially in courses for which a well codified and standard curriculum was already established.

It is worth noting that some ATOs had found it difficult to engage trainees' interest in negotiating their individual training needs, as the following quotation illustrates:

*We consult them and we describe all the course details but their concerns are 'do I get paid at the end of the week, can I have any days off and how long is my dinner break'.*

As Table 14 shows, half of the TC-users surveyed claimed to have drawn up a training plan with a training provider (training organisation, college or employer):

**Table 14: Training Credit users' responses on whether they had drawn up Training Plans**

Response	Number	%
Yes	358	50
No	246	34
Not sure	114	16
Total	718	100

*A single-response question  
Missing data = 13*

The large number of respondents who claimed that they had not drawn up a training plan, or were not sure, may be partly explained by an inability to recall whether they had completed one or not, unfamiliarity with the term 'training year' which some ATOs may not use specifically when dealing with trainees, or a feeling that it was the provider and not they who had actually drawn up the training plan. It is worth pointing out that a majority (68 per cent) of the participating employers surveyed stated that all or some of their young staff using TCs (either employed or on placement) had training plans.

Significantly, a majority (77 per cent) of those young people who had developed a training plan said that the training they were receiving fitted in with what was described in their training plan (seven per cent said 'no' and 16 per cent were 'not sure').

According to both the quantitative and qualitative data collected, there was little linkage between young people's action plans and their training plans. About half

of the ATOs interviewed had never seen an action plan. This corresponds to the finding in Chapter 4 which indicated that many young people tended not to show their action plans to employers or training providers. This finding was corroborated by a TC-user survey data as Table 15 indicates:

**Table 15: Training Credit users' responses on whether Action Plans were used to draw up Training Plans**

Response	Number	%
Yes	106	28
No	201	54
Don't remember having an action plan	65	18
Total	372	100

*A single-response question*

*Missing data = 359*

The table shows quite clearly that over half (54 per cent) of those trainees who had drawn up a training plan claimed not to have used their school action plan to help them develop their training plan. This is, perhaps, not surprising when the constraints on the usefulness of action plans articulated by ATOs are taken into account:

- ◆ Young people were reluctant to show training staff their action plans.
- ◆ Young people often did not appear to value their action plans or see their relevance.
- ◆ Some employer ATOs felt that there was not enough information about the young persons' achievements on the final document.
- ◆ Action plans were said to date very quickly.

There appeared to be confusion concerning how, if at all, training plans and action plans should be inter-related, about which several ATOs felt uneasy. The comment that, '*an action plan was what they thought they might do months ago - a training plan is more definite*', was generally representative of ATOs' views and uncertainties about linking the documents. As suggested in Chapter 4, there is a need for TECs and their partners to address this issue.

## **5.5 Preparation of Young People for Training and Work**

The case studies revealed a wide variation by area of ATOs' perceptions of the adequacy and effectiveness of careers information and guidance received by young people in school. Whilst just under half of those interviewed in two areas thought careers provision was adequate and effective, the corresponding figure in the other area was approximately two thirds. Whilst a majority of ATOs in each area did not believe that the pilots had substantially affected careers education and guidance, a significant

number were of the opinion that provision had improved over the last few years and was becoming more responsive to the needs of young people.

In addition, ATOs perceived that improvements were taking place in the general preparation of young people for training and work because:

- ◆ There were many more links between school and industry now.
- ◆ Trainers had more opportunities to visit schools and to offer presentations and advice.
- ◆ There was an increase in work experience.
- ◆ CPVE had improved young people's awareness of employment.

Interviewees thought that there was room for improvement in the careers guidance provided, such as relating guidance more to NVQs. A criticism voiced in one area was that school leavers were sometimes steered towards what appeared to be an appropriate training provider without sufficient attention being paid to their career objectives.

College staff said that additional resources provided by the TECs for enhancing careers information and guidance had been useful and reported good links with the Careers Service. College student support systems included individual counselling, assessment interviews for STN trainees, tutor groups and work visits. They pointed out that there was a need for young people who had left school, including TC-users, to receive continuing careers information and guidance to help them find out the best way to enter their chosen career and/or to identify alternative careers. Programme tutors, who assessed work and reviewed progress, were said to be a key source of information and guidance.

The fact that most ATOs did not perceive that TCs had, as yet, changed careers guidance for young people requires careful interpretation. It is worth bearing in mind that there is often a time-lag in the management of change between an initiative's inception and participants' perceptions of tangible and positive outcomes. Another point worth consideration is that all participants, including training providers, require updating on careers guidance resourcing and enhancements.

## **5.6 Special Training Needs**

**Most of the ATOs interviewed reported that the advent of TCs had not increased either the number of STN trainees taken on or the provision for STN trainees in their organisations.** It emerged that not all of the non-FE ATOs recruited STN trainees. Their reasons included 'our environment is not conducive', 'it is not in our contract' and the lack of financial incentive.

Some ATOs augmented Careers Service endorsements of STN young people with their own assessment of applicants' needs. This sometimes revealed basic literacy and

numeracy problems and some ATOs made extensive use of Wordpower and Numberpower which were a valued enhancement to provision introduced through the pilots. ATOs acknowledged the availability of ORF bonuses for the use of Wordpower and Numberpower and noted that additional funding for STN trainees was more closely related to the cost of training. However, they pointed out that it was still a struggle to meet the full training and support costs for this client group, especially if they could not easily find work placements and were mainly class-based students requiring tuition. As a result, some FE staff said that they had to be fairly selective and could not always afford to recruit young people with considerable special training needs.

## **5.7 Impact of Training Credits**

**The evidence collected revealed that TCs had, in general, only a marginal impact so far on the volume, variety, quality and structure of training provided by ATOs.** Indeed, several said that the volume (in terms of number of trainees trained) had decreased because of a lower demand resulting from the recession and increased staying-on rates in full-time education. In particular, ATOs found it increasingly difficult to obtain placements for their trainees. A few ATOs explained that they had curtailed the variety of training they offered because of increases in college fees. Furthermore, a minority of providers thought that certain adverse effects were partly attributable to TCs, including an emphasis on outcomes at the expense of the personal development of trainees.

**The point was made that it was sometimes difficult to differentiate the impact of TCs from that of the introduction of NVQs.** Some ATOs noted that TCs had highlighted the need for certification. However, certain FE staff, careers officers and LEA staff criticised the TCs-NVQ link because it constrained the range of training provision that could be offered. Some courses, for instance, did not yet have appropriate NVQ accreditation and sometimes there was no opportunity for progression due to the absence of NVQ courses at a higher level. Although some FE staff claimed that they had lost potential TC-users as a result, other colleges had recorded increased enrolments of TC-users in year two of the pilot.

Whilst half of the ATOs surveyed in one area said that TCs had provided added value to their training, in that they now offered a more clearly-defined training process, providers in the other two areas did not think that the pilots had changed the organisation, structure or system of their training approaches very much. **Generally, ATOs welcomed the introduction of TECs' quality audit systems. Though these were starting to have an impact, they had not yet enhanced the quality of provision greatly.** Several reasons were given for this: some were keen to stress that they already provided quality training and others identified the introduction of NVQs and the development of their own internal review structures as maintaining ATOs' commitment to monitoring quality.

As far as the impact of TCs on young people's motivation to train was concerned, in two areas there was little evidence of a positive effect whilst the third case study revealed that half of the ATOs surveyed considered that TCs had made some impact here. Three typical comments were: *'They seem keener'*, *'they were more aware of training opportunities'*, and *'TCs have enhanced a sense of ownership of training'*. TCs were also felt to be useful in reinforcing the motivation of those already looking for training. Overall, few providers thought that TCs had, as yet, increased young people's confidence to negotiate or to identify their needs. For example, most interviewees felt that it was unrealistic to expect 16 year-olds to bargain with employers. Training providers' perceptions that young people found it difficult to put into practice the empowerment offered by TCs were similar to those of careers officers reported in Chapter 4.

Whilst, according to ATOs' perceptions, one TEC registered both the greatest impact of TCs in terms of added value to training and young people's motivation to train, it is difficult to identify the reasons for this with any certainty.

**Most ATOs did not believe that TCs had changed employers' attitudes to training.** Interviewees remarked that employers often seemed bemused by the proliferation of innovations in the training field. They added that employers' interest in TCs had been blunted by a number of factors, including *'lack of interest in having staff trained as assessors'*, *'cuts to colleges which have resulted in knock-on increases in the price of training'* and the fact that the *'costs were more than with YT'*. Several providers were cynical about the attitude of some employers, claiming that *'they were looking to short-term company aims, rather than long-term individual training'*. They observed also that some *'were more interested in extra money than extra training'*. Interestingly, in one of the areas, a few ATOs considered that smaller employers were *'more willing to consider structured formal training than larger companies'*.

There was a general consensus amongst training providers that the recession had overshadowed the TCs pilot. They felt that, as a result, TCs had not been able to create a training market, though some acknowledged that a system for making provision more responsive to the training needs of young people and employers was gradually evolving. Suggestions for improving TCs pilots included the following:

- ◆ Better resourcing for the training of STN young people.
- ◆ Linking TCs and NVQ marketing to employers.
- ◆ Computerisation of TCs claims procedures.
- ◆ Inter-TEC coordination as TCs go national.



## 5.8 Evaluative Overview

The following key findings and messages emerged from the evaluation of the involvement of training providers in the TCs pilots:

### ◆ Participation and Partnership

Training providers were found to play a key role in the pilots by providing approved training and helping to market TCs to employers. Whilst providers felt adequately briefed on TCs and claimed to have good links with TECs, they did not yet feel that they were fully part of a TC partnership though they acknowledged that structures for liaison had improved. The unanimous view was that participation in the pilots involved a demanding administrative workload, though ATOs acknowledged TECs' efforts to reduce this aspect of their involvement. Some suggested that computerisation would reduce this further. (Section 5.1)

### ◆ Resourcing Issues

Training providers observed that the funding of young people's training had diminished but attributed this to national policies rather than individual TC pilots. Non-FE ATOs noted that college fees for training courses had increased. Whilst providers regarded output-related funding as essential to their income-generation, they were concerned that it might act as a disincentive to some ATOs recruiting young people with special training needs or others who might find it difficult to achieve NVQ Level 2. Trainers welcomed the application of output-related funding to Wordpower and Numberpower but still suggested that the funding of training for STN young people needed to be increased. (Section 5.3)

### ◆ Training Plans

ATOs considered that the training plan process could be beneficial to young people and inform the provision of training. The process was said to be valuable but time-consuming if conducted properly, for example including regular review sessions. There was some confusion about whether training plans could, or should, be linked to action plans. (Section 5.4)

### ◆ Impact of Training Credits

According to training providers, TCs had as yet only had a muted effect on careers guidance and the volume, variety, quality and structure of the training they provided. The introduction of quality assurance systems by TECs were generally welcomed and starting to have an impact. Overall TCs were not perceived by ATOs as having greatly increased young people's or employers' motivation to train, though they drew attention to the constraints imposed by the current recession. (Section 5.7)

## 6. THE EMPLOYERS

A central focus of this chapter is an examination of the participation of employers in the three TC pilots. This includes an investigation into the impact of this involvement on their training provision and practices with regard to young people. In addition, Chapter 6 presents findings from the survey of employers who have not yet joined the initiative, especially their awareness of TCs and their reasons for deciding not to participate in the pilots. Where they arise, significant differences in employers' responses according to size, industrial sector and geographical location are discussed.

Details are provided in the Methodological Appendix of both employer samples. These were stratified to include a two-thirds proportion of small employers (less than 25 employees) and one-third medium and large employers (25 employees or more), in order to make the sample as representative as possible of the population of employers both in each area and nationally. The achieved employer samples reflected the general predominance of services to manufacturing industries in the following ratios: participant employers 71 : 29 and non-participant employers 80 : 20. Although there are no comparable national statistics, it is worth noting that the most recent data available (Summer 1992) on the classification of employees in Great Britain indicates that 71 per cent work in service industries and 29 per cent work in manufacturing (Labour Market Quarterly Report, 1993)

### 6.1 Recruitment of Young People

The relationship between employers' recruitment of young people and the potential incentives offered by TCs (or any other initiative) is complex because of the influence and interaction of so many variables, including company requirements, the changing needs of different industries and sectors and local labour market conditions. Accordingly, when examining employers' recruitment levels, it is worth bearing in mind that increases do not necessarily suggest that TCs are having a positive effect and vice versa.

The survey found that in both samples approximately 80 per cent of employers had recruited four or fewer young people under 18 since Summer 1991. The survey also showed similar patterns of responses from both groups concerning their recruitment practices in 1992 compared with 1991. As Table 16 indicates, a majority of employers in each sample said that their recruitment of young people during this period had either stayed the same or gone down.

**Table 16: Employers' recruitment of young people under 18 in 1992 compared to 1991**

Response	Participants		Non-participants	
	Number	%	Number	%
Gone up	25	16	26	17
Stayed the same	77	48	65	43
Gone down	46	29	45	30
Not sure	7	4	14	9
Not applicable	5	3	-	-
Total	160	100	150	100

*A single-response question*

*Missing data = 1 (non-participant)*

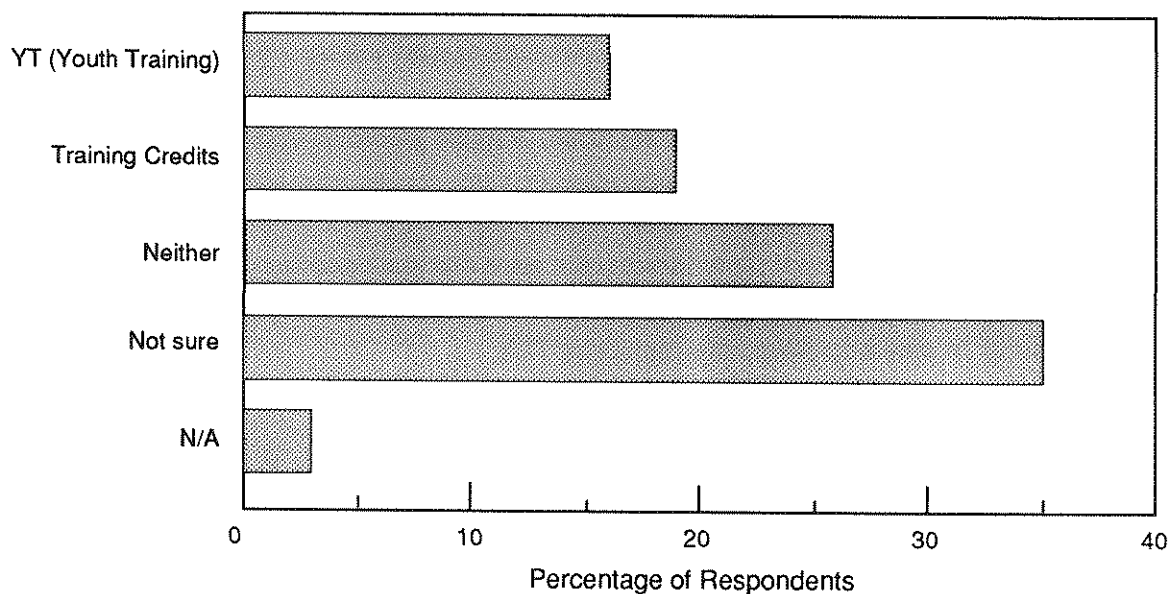
*Due to rounding errors, percentages do not sum to 100%*

**Not unexpectedly, comments from employers suggested that the recession and the survival imperative were the main reasons explaining their general reluctance to increase the recruitment of young people.** Data analysis revealed significant relationships between the recruitment practices (1991-92) and size amongst employers participating in TCs. A larger proportion (55 per cent) of small employers compared to medium/large employers (34 per cent) said that their recruitment of young people had stayed the same. Interview data suggested that this finding was probably explained by small employers' overwhelming concern to remain profitable in the face of financial constraints. This was also linked to their having fewer resources than larger firms to cope with contingencies.

The vast majority of participating employers (92 per cent) claimed that the introduction of TCs had not affected their recruitment decisions since Summer 1991. Again, this was probably largely explained by the overall economic situation rather than a reflection on the usefulness of TCs *per se*. The evaluation revealed that a greater proportion of this employer sample had employed-status TC-user young people (71 per cent) than had those doing a work placement (29 per cent).

Employers participating in TCs were asked whether they were more attracted to recruiting young people through YT, TCs or neither of these alternatives. **Figure 1 below shows that whilst employers regarded TCs as a slightly more attractive recruitment mechanism than YT, the majority (62 per cent) favoured neither alternative or were not sure:**

Figure 1. Participant employers: Preferences in the way they recruit young people



Number of Respondents = 159

The findings illustrated by Figure 1 suggest that, in the current economic climate, approximately one-third of respondents were not convinced of the relative advantages of YT and TCs. The issue of employers' awareness of TCs is addressed in Section 6.3.

## 6.2 Views on Careers Education and Guidance

An emerging message for TECs, Careers Service personnel and schools was that those employers in both samples who did not view the adequacy of careers education and guidance very favourably, were least satisfied with it in terms of giving young people effective job seeking and interview skills (see Appendix table A45). Interestingly, a significantly greater proportion of medium/large employers than of small employers felt that careers guidance was inadequate in this respect. The perceived lack of these skills may be partly explained by the tendency for the more able potential job seekers at 16 to stay on in full-time education; this has generally increased during the last three years.

**There were significant differences between manufacturing and service sector employers concerning the adequacy of careers education and guidance in terms of giving young people an understanding of the importance of training.** Service sector employers were more likely to consider that careers education and guidance was adequate in this respect. This difference in perception may be explained, to some extent, by a more widespread tradition of training in manufacturing (previously based on apprenticeships) which has raised employers' expectations.

As indicated in Appendix Table A35, just under one-third (32 per cent) of participating employers felt that TCs had affected careers education and guidance for young people 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot'. It is worth taking into consideration

two points when interpreting this finding: first, over one-quarter (26 per cent) of respondents were not sure what impact TCs had had in this respect and, second, it will take time for TEC investments designed to enhance careers education and guidance to change practices and behaviour. A significant difference emerged in the responses of small and medium/large employers on this issue. A much greater proportion of medium/large employers said that TCs had had no impact on careers education and guidance. This is difficult to explain, but may be partly accounted for by medium/large employers generally having greater exposure to careers education and guidance through involvement in careers conventions and careers presentations in schools and therefore having more opportunities in which to judge any impact of TCs.

### 6.3 Marketing, Awareness and Understanding of Training Credits

The case studies found that TECs used a range of mechanisms and media to market TCs to employers. TC marketing included direct mailings, radio and cinema advertising, poster campaigns, telemarketing, promotions, presentations and meetings. One TEC was in the process of setting up sector groups (where employers in individual sectors, such as printing, could get together) which staff felt could be a useful conduit for marketing materials. As Chapter 5 explained, training providers also played a role in informing employers about TCs. It should be noted that one of the TECs had tended to continue to use the name YT, which was locally well-regarded as a programme, as a vehicle to market TCs which led to confusion amongst a few employers when asked about TCs. In these cases, a not applicable response was recorded.

#### 6.3.1 Employers participating in Training Credits

Table 17 shows that TEC publicity materials, young people (recruits and trainees) and a range of other mechanisms were the main sources providing employers with information on TCs:

**Table 17: Sources of information about Training Credits identified by participant employers**

Response	Respondents	
	Number	%
TEC publicity materials	44	36
Young people, recruits and trainees	35	28
Oral presentations from TEC	9	7
Careers Service	8	7
Media coverage	7	6
Other	43	35
Total	123	

*A multiple - response question*

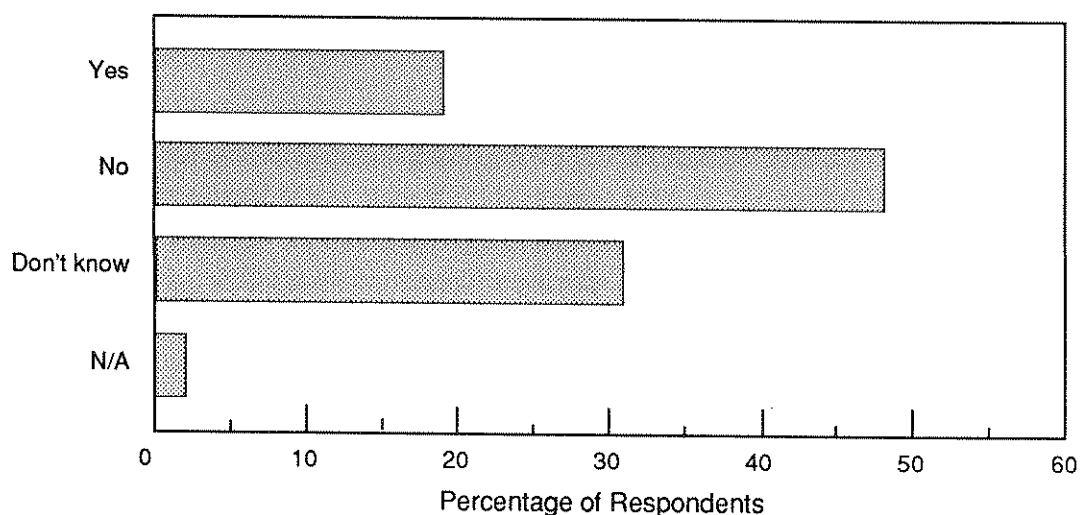
*Missing data = 37*

*Employers could give more than one response, so percentages will not sum to 100%.*

It is interesting to note the instrumental role played by young people themselves in raising employers' awareness of TCs. This suggests that some employers are informed about the pilot and how it works through the process of young people using their TCs as an employee or on placement. The most frequently cited sources of information in the 'other' category were local colleges and other training providers, including youth training coordinators.

As Figure 2 shows, less than one-fifth of the TC-user employer sample (19 per cent) had noticed any changes to the way TCs had been marketed to employers during the last 12 months:

**Figure 2: Participant employers: Any changes in the way Training Credits have been marketed to employers over last 12 months?**

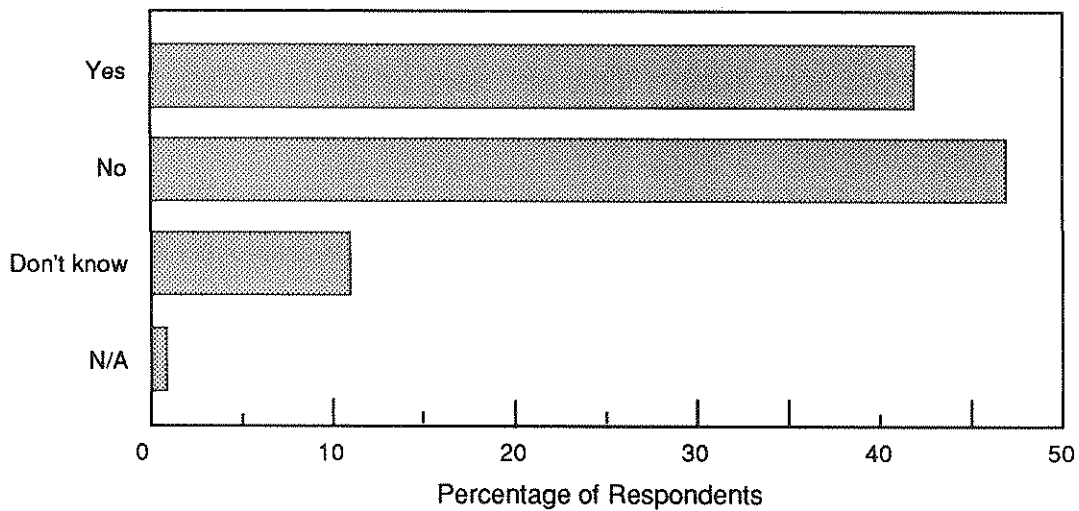


Number of Respondents = 160

The figure indicates that whilst just less than half (47 per cent) of the respondents claimed that there had been 'no changes', nearly one-third (32 per cent) said that they 'didn't know'. These responses are probably partially explained by a decline in the marketing of TCs after the initial vigorous attempts by TECs to promote the pilots. When those employers who had indicated that there had been changes made to the marketing of TCs (30 cases) were asked if these changes had enhanced the promotion of TCs, the most frequently made comment (30 per cent of respondents) was a neutral one: the changes had not made anything clearer. However, the other most frequently mentioned effects were a general increase in information on TCs (20 per cent), improved quality of information (17 per cent) and a perception that staff were now more informed about TCs (10 per cent).

**These findings suggest that there is still room for improvement in the marketing of TCs to employers.** This view is corroborated by evidence presented in Figure 3 which shows that the proportion of those participating in TCs who said that they did not fully understand how the current TC pilot operated was greater than the proportion who said that they did know:

**Figure 3. Participant employers: Understanding of how Training Credits operate with regard to employers**



Number of Respondents = 160

This suggests that there is a case for reviewing promotional activities for this client group and a case for finding out on what aspects of TCs they would like further clarification. When the survey asked about areas requiring clarification, the two most frequently mentioned requests were for more specific information about TCs and/or an overview of how their local TC operates.

Although the findings above point to a need to improve employers' understanding of TCs, a large majority (85 per cent) reported that the pilots' procedures were relatively easy to use as Table 18 indicates:

**Table 18: Employers' views on the ease of use of Training Credit procedures**

Response	Number	%
Very easy	83	53
Fairly easy	50	32
Not very easy	9	6
Not at all easy	12	8
Not applicable	3	2
Total	157	100

*A single - response question*

*Missing data = 3*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages do not sum to 100%*

These positive findings may be largely explained by two key factors: TECs' efforts to make TC procedures easy to follow and use; and the role played by training providers who, as Chapter 5 revealed, often undertook a lot of TC-related administration for employers. The most frequently mentioned reasons given by employers for TC

procedures being not very easy to use were problems with communication, such as no one to answer queries, not being told what is going on and too much paperwork or administration.

### 6.3.2 Non-participating Employers

The survey endeavoured to find out what, if anything, employers not involved in the schemes know about TCs. As Table 19 shows, half of the sample said that they were aware of the TC pilot being run by their local TEC:

**Table 19: Non-participant employers' awareness of local Training Credit pilots**

Response	Number	%
Yes	75	50
No	69	46
Don't know	7	5
Total	151	100

*A single - response question*

*Missing data = 0*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages do not sum to 100%.*

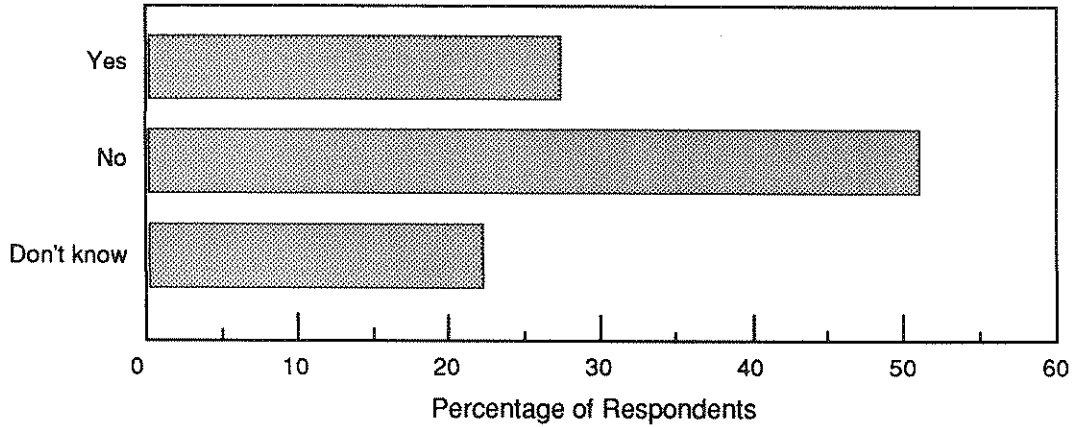
It is worth noting that the 1991 evaluation found that between 30 and 50 per cent of the employers interviewed in the first year of the 11 pilots were aware of TCs.

The figures presented in the table suggest that **whilst the penetration of marketing strategies had been reasonably successful, there was still a sizeable minority of employers who remained unaware of TC pilots.** Further data analysis revealed significant differences between the TC awareness of small and medium/large employers. Just over 60 per cent of medium/large employers were aware of TC pilots, compared with 44 per cent of small companies. As stated in Chapter 2, the difficulty of contacting and informing small firms was confirmed by TEC personnel and this would appear to be a key challenge in the future development of the pilots. It is worth noting here that employers' awareness of the TC pilot was significantly less (26 per cent) in the area where the marketing of TCs was subsumed under the promotion of YT, than in the other two areas (where 67 per cent and 56 per cent respectively were aware of TC pilots).

TEC publicity materials were the most frequently cited source of information on TCs by those employers who were aware of the TC pilot. Other identified sources were oral presentations by the TECs, media coverage, and young people (recruits and trainees) local employer groups and the Careers Service. Figure 4 shows that over half of the respondents did not fully understand how the local TC pilot operated.



**Figure 4. Whether non-participant employers understand how the Training Credits scheme operates with regard to employers**



Number of Respondents = 95

The pattern of responses suggested that although TECs face a continuing challenge in explaining to employers how pilots work, they can build on progress made (just over one-quarter said that they understood how the local pilot operated). When asked on which aspects of TCs, as they related to their establishment, employers wanted clarification, the main response was a blanket request for more information on all aspects.

Just over one-third (35 per cent) of the non-participant employers who were aware of the local TC pilot said that they fully understood how it operated with respect to employers. There were no significant differences in employers' understanding of TCs when cross-referenced with size, sector, or geographical location. The three most frequently cited reasons for employers not joining or getting involved in the TC pilots were as follows:

- ◆ The recession, financial constraints, no vacancies (22 per cent).
- ◆ Existing training procedures work well - no need to change (19 per cent).
- ◆ Employer runs own training scheme (12 per cent).

**This suggests that employers had not joined the pilots because they were critical of TCs, but rather, were reluctant to do so either because of satisfaction with current arrangements for training their young employees or because of recessionary constraints on recruitment. As Table 20 shows, over half of the employers who were aware of the local TC pilot were not sure if they were going to join it.**

**Table 20: Employers' intention to join Training Credit pilot**

Response	Number	%
Yes	24	26
No	20	21
Not sure	50	53
Total	94	100

*A single - response question*

*Missing data = 57*

The table indicates that with over one-quarter of respondents expressing an intention to join TC pilots, there is a base on which to launch further marketing strategies to explain the advantages of TCs to the large group of employers who are, as yet, undecided. There were no significant differences in employers' intentions to join TC pilots when cross-referenced with size, sector or geographical location.

When asked if there was anything which would attract their company or establishment to join or get involved in the local TC pilot, the most frequent responses given by those employers who were aware of TCs were as follows:

- ◆ Nothing at present (18 per cent).
- ◆ Greater flexibility and responsiveness to individual needs of employers (15 per cent).
- ◆ An improvement in the economic situation (14 per cent).
- ◆ Increased financial incentives (11 per cent).

The main message here for TEC policy-makers, including those staff responsible for marketing, is that some employers might be willing to become involved, providing they got reassurance that TC pilots would be flexible enough to meet their needs. Convincing employers that adopting TCs is in their long-term financial and staff development interests, which will help them respond to increased demand once the recession is over, is another key message for TECs.

## 6.4 Impact of Training Credits

The evaluation found considerable uncertainty about action plans and their usefulness in helping to decide what training young staff should receive among those employers involved in the pilots. As Table 21 indicates, whilst just under one-quarter of respondents thought action plans were 'very' or 'fairly useful', approximately one-third said that they did not know and a sizeable minority (30 per cent) were unable to give an answer because they had not seen or heard of action plans:

**Table 21: Participant employers' views on the usefulness of Action Plans in deciding young people's training.**

Response	Number	%
Very useful	14	9
Fairly useful	23	15
Not very useful	13	8
Not at all useful	8	5
Don't know	53	33
Not applicable (not seen action plans)	48	30
Total	159	100

*A single - response question*

*Missing data = 1*

The lack of employers' knowledge about action plans, which is illustrated in the table above, is largely explained by their lack of exposure to them since school leavers do not always use them in the workplace. As discussed in Chapter 3, the role of action plans requires clarification. **If partners in the pilots decide that action plans should be used to inform young people's training, then school-leavers will need further briefing on how to present their plans to employers and other training providers.**

**Employers' responses on training plans were much more positive.** As Table 22 indicates, a majority (68 per cent) reported that some or all young TC-users had a training plan which outlined the training which they were going to follow:

**Table 22: Participant employers' responses on whether young people have Training Plans.**

Response	Number	%
Yes, all TC-users do	100	63
Yes, some TC-users do	8	5
No	32	20
Not sure	18	11
Not applicable	1	1
Total	159	100

*A single - response question*

*Missing data = 1*

TECs are contractually obliged to ensure that all TC-users have training plans. The table shows that nearly one-third of respondents either said that their TC-users did not have training plans or were not sure. Although all TC-users should have training plans, it may be that some had not been involved in drawing one up as yet or that training providers had taken responsibility for safekeeping training plans.

**The majority of employers (64 per cent) reported that TCs had not had any impact on the amount of resources (including direct and indirect costs) spent by them on the training of staff under 18 between Summer 1991 and Summer 1992, whilst 25 per cent said that it had resulted in some change.** Table 23 presents the findings:

**Table 23: Participant employers: Perceptions of whether Training Credits have had an impact on training expenditure 1991-1992.**

Response	Number	%
Yes,	40	25
No	101	64
Don't know	15	9
Not applicable	3	2
Total	159	100

*A single - response question*

*Missing data = 1*

The muted impact of TCs on employers' training expenditure may be partly a result of the recession, which will tend to inhibit companies' spending on any particular activity. Interestingly, a majority (57 per cent) of those employers who indicated that TCs had made an impact on their training expenditure (but only 18 per cent of all respondents), said that it had encouraged them to spend more resources than usual. Approximately 10 per cent of this group, however, said that TCs had encouraged them to spend fewer resources than usual and a further 22 per cent reported that their overall funding of training had not changed. Presumably, in these last cases, some redistribution of funds may have taken place.

A minority (11 per cent) of employers reported that the type of training received by TC-users was different from that received by other young staff in their establishment or company. The most frequently mentioned differences were as follows:

- ◆ TC-users given a broad overview of the industry as well as specific training for the job (41 per cent).
- ◆ TC-users spend more time at college (24 per cent).
- ◆ The areas of training and study are different for TC-users (24 per cent).

The data collected indicated that the majority of employers (62 per cent) trained both TC-users and other staff under 18 for the same types of qualifications. City and Guilds and BTEC were the two main qualifications TC-users were expected to achieve at the end of their training. One-quarter of the sample also mentioned subjects or areas of training but were not able to identify the qualification.

**The evaluation found that TCs had not had a major impact in four key areas of employers' training activity.** A minority of employers revealed that TCs had to some degree increased or enhanced the following (see Appendix Table A40 for more details):

- ◆ Volume of training [i.e. the amount of training in terms of numbers of people trained or the time allocated to training] (27 per cent).
- ◆ Variety of training (21 per cent).
- ◆ Quality of training (31 per cent).
- ◆ Structure or system of training (41 per cent).

**The pattern of responses indicates that, although limited, the main impact of TCs was in making young people's training more structured or systematic and improving the quality of training.** This suggests that TECs' contracting and quality control mechanisms were beginning to bring about changes in the organisational aspects of training, but not in the volume or variety. The issue of **deadweight** - the extent to which the real impact of the pilots is reduced as a result of some young people and employers joining the pilots to gain funding for training which they would have undertaken anyway - is difficult to assess, particularly in the current economic climate. Whilst the evaluation did not yield sufficient evidence to enable definitive conclusions to be drawn on this issue, it is worth noting that (as Appendix Table A44 indicates) employers considered the main benefits to them of TCs to be financial rather than training-related.

The evaluation found that only one per cent of the TC-user employer sample had recruited more young people with special training needs as a result of the pilots. The majority said that there was no change, were not able to respond as they did not normally recruit young people with special training needs, or did not know. Of the minority (13 employers) who had young staff with special learning difficulties or training needs, only two employers felt that these staff would be more likely to get a job on completing their training as a result of TCs.

## 6.5 Benefits to Young People

As Appendix Table A41 shows, employers identified a wide range of benefits to young people, of which the most frequently mentioned were:

- ◆ A job with training (21 per cent).
- ◆ Increased job prospects (19 per cent).
- ◆ Personal development (10 per cent).
- ◆ Availability of training (9 per cent).
- ◆ Training leading to accredited qualifications (9 per cent).
- ◆ Improved motivation (8 per cent).
- ◆ Comprehensive training and education (8 per cent).

**It is interesting to note that employers thought young people would benefit not only in terms of jobs and training but also (to a lesser extent) through enhanced personal development and motivation.** Confidence is a key aspect of young people's development and this was explored further when employers were asked if, by comparing young staff with and without TCs, they thought TCs increased confidence to discuss with adults the kind of training they wanted. Employers' responses revealed an even split between those who did and did not believe that TCs boosted young people's confidence (35 per cent respectively), with the remainder not sure or not able to provide an answer. This suggests that, as with the teachers (see Chapter 3), **many employers remained unconvinced that young people had the confidence to exploit the empowerment TCs offered them to negotiate the training they wanted.**

Employers were also evenly split (40 per cent giving positive and negative answers respectively) on whether they thought that TCs increased young people's ability to identify the kind of training necessary to meet their needs. Likewise, this finding suggests that **employers were by no means wholly convinced that young people's empowerment was effective in terms of their identifying their own training needs.** Interestingly, a significantly larger proportion of small employers than medium/large

employers claimed that TCs increased ability to identify training needs, which may be explained by the fact that larger employers were more likely to have an infrastructure to help young people to decide what their training needs were.

**Employers' views on how, if at all, TCs had affected young people's attitudes to training and employment were mixed and rather complex.** As Appendix Table A43 shows, whilst the most frequently mentioned positive responses were increased motivation and recognition of the importance of training, employers also gave some negative responses, including the perception that young people were more cynical now about training and employment. These findings suggest that whilst some employers considered that TCs had increased young people's awareness of and their motivation to take up training, others had reservations about the impact of TCs on their attitudes. For example, a few felt that TCs might enhance young people's expectations, only for them to be dashed by recessionary constraints on the opportunities available to them.

## **6.6 Benefits to the Company**

Finally, employers identified a range of benefits gained by them from the TC pilots. The most frequently mentioned benefits by the 148 employers who gave an answer were as follows (see Appendix Table A44 for more details):

- ◆ Financial, including help with paying for training (25 per cent).
- ◆ Supply of young trainees on placement from ATOs to the company (14 per cent).
- ◆ Increased motivation of young people (7 per cent).
- ◆ Better standard of applicants for jobs (7 per cent).

**These responses show that employers perceived benefits for them to be mainly in terms of finance or an enhanced supply of young people.** This finding, and the failure to mention the potential for increasing the skills of their workforce and for improving the quality of their organisation, suggest that employers identified benefits in the short-term rather than the medium to long-term. It is also worth noting that about two-thirds of respondents identified benefits and the remainder either did not know or said that they received no benefits from their involvement in TC pilots. There would appear to be a need for TEC policy-makers, including marketing personnel, to identify the main benefits at the local level and explain these to the employer community.

## 6.7 Evaluative Overview

The following key findings and messages emerged from the evaluation of the involvement of employers in the TC pilots:

### ◆ Recruitment

Less than one-fifth of the employers interviewed had increased their recruitment of young people under 18 between 1991 and 1992. The advent of TCs had made virtually no impact on employers' decisions to recruit young people, which instead were influenced largely by the recession. Not surprisingly, employers said that an economic upturn would be the main encouragement to increased recruitment. Whilst the majority of employers participating in TCs said that they were not using either TCs or YT as a recruitment mechanism, a slightly larger proportion favoured TCs. (Section 6.1)

### ◆ Marketing, Awareness and Understanding of Training Credits

TEC publicity materials and young recruits and trainees were found to be the main sources of information about TCs, though training providers also played an important role in the marketing process. Only about one-fifth of participant employers had noticed any changes in the marketing of TCs in the second year of the pilots. Whilst changes were said to have increased the amount and quality of materials, this had not led to enhanced clarity of information on TCs. Only two-fifths of participant employers said that they fully understood how their local pilot scheme operated with regard to employers, though over four-fifths reported that TC procedures were 'very' or 'fairly easy' to use. Half of the non-participant sample were aware of TC pilots and nearly 30 per cent of these employers intended to join the initiative. The recession (no vacancies) and satisfaction with present training provision were the main reasons for not wanting to join. The findings suggest that there is a need for TECs to continue to enhance their marketing of TCs, especially to small companies, whose awareness of pilots was less extensive than medium and large establishments. (Section 6.3)

### ◆ **Training Resources, Provision and Practices**

All the evidence collected indicated that the introduction of TCs had not yet had a major impact on employers' resourcing and provision of training for young people between 1991 and 1992. The impact of TCs was not found to be significantly related to the size, sector or geographical location of employers. Firstly, about 18 per cent of participant employers said that TCs had encouraged them to spend more resources than usual on the training of young people. Secondly, most employers reported that there was no difference in the type of training received by young people with or without TCs. Thirdly, TCs had not greatly affected the volume and variety of training provided by employers, though there was some indication that they were beginning to bring about changes, albeit limited, in the quality and structure of the training provided. It is worth noting here that 68 per cent of participant employers reported that some or all of their young people with TCs had training plans. The evaluation found that TCs had not encouraged employers to recruit more people with special training needs. When interpreting the overall rather muted impact of TCs on the training of young people to date, it is important to bear in mind the considerable constraints of the current severe economic recession and to realise that though the pilots are fully operational, TECs are still developing and fine-tuning them. (Section 6.4)

### ◆ **Benefits of Training Credits**

Employers identified a wide range of benefits which they felt TCs offered young people. They thought that users would benefit mainly in terms of gaining greater access to jobs and training but also, to a lesser extent, through enhanced personal development and motivation. Just over one-third (35 per cent) of employers perceived that TCs had increased young people's confidence to discuss with adults the kind of training they wanted or their ability to identify the type of training that would meet their needs. This suggests that the majority of employers still remained to some extent unconvinced that TCs were effectively empowering young people. Employers were also uncertain as to how, if at all, TCs were affecting young people's attitudes to employment and training, although some felt, for example, that young people were becoming more aware of the importance of training.

Employers identified several advantages resulting from their involvement in TC pilots, including financial benefits, and, to a lesser extent, a better standard of, and more motivated, job applicants. It would seem advisable that TEC policy-makers, including marketing personnel, review the benefits accruing to employers from their participation in the pilots and make these more explicit in promotional strategies and materials. (Sections 6.5 and 6.6).



## 7. YOUNG PEOPLE AND TRAINING CREDITS

The previous chapters in this report have focused on the structures and processes involved in implementing three different TC models, as well as on the roles and experiences of the various partners. In this chapter we turn our attention directly to those for whom the TC schemes were developed - the young people - and review the research evidence which has been collected on their knowledge about TCs, their take-up of credits and participation in the schemes and their views and experiences as TC-users. In addition, the chapter will consider the impact of TCs on young people and how far the pilots have empowered them, enhanced their entitlement to training, changed their post-16 plans and, by these means, helped to create a market place for training.

The main data source on which this chapter is based is the survey results from TC-users (731 questionnaires). Their responses are set in the context of those from young people still in full-time education who are in Year 11 (766 completed questionnaires) and Years 12/13 (162 questionnaires). An analysis of variance technique was used in order to assess whether there were any significantly different responses received from different groups of young people in the three TEC areas. If this was consistently so, attempts were made to see whether these differences could be explained in terms of variations in local policy and practice. The quantitative information is supplemented with interview data gathered from 73 young people with special needs and information from a small number of eligible young people who were not TC-users. This last group was very difficult to contact and the information is illuminative, rather than representative.

### 7.1 Young People's Knowledge and Understanding of Training Credits

As we have seen earlier, an awareness that TCs exist and an understanding of what they are, what their benefits will be and how to access them, are key pre-requisites before they can be taken up and used effectively by the young people for whom they have been designed. The findings from school students relating their knowledge and understanding of TCs has already been discussed in Chapter 3. These findings are briefly revisited in order to provide a comparison with the knowledge and experience of TC-users.

An analysis of the student data from those in Years 11, 12 and 13 at school suggested that, **during the first half of the academic year, awareness and knowledge levels about TCs amongst school students were moderate.** It was clear that even if students had a general awareness about credits, they lacked a deeper knowledge of how to use them. It must be presumed that many schools were leaving their main awareness-raising and guidance activities until at least the Spring term. The findings also indicated that young

people were very dependent on the schools for the information they were receiving about TCs, since the schemes had not yet become sufficiently established for information to be circulating around the community.

**It also emerged that some of the main messages of TCs - that they can entitle and empower young people to obtain training after age 16 - were being absorbed by the majority of students who had heard about the schemes, even though they might not have a very clear idea of what these ideas might mean. Some of the more complex messages, for example about quality training only being available through approved training provision, had not yet been fully understood.**

**Training Credit users** who had, of course, completed the full cycle of careers education and guidance provided during Years 11 and, for some, Years 12/13, were asked to reflect back on the help which they had received at school with their post-16 planning. The findings showed that **a high proportion of TC-users (78 per cent) were very or partly satisfied with the overall level of careers help provided by schools.** As a strategy for helping them make their post-16 choices, individual careers discussions with careers staff or other teachers were felt by the majority to have been, at least partly, beneficial in this process and rather more so than action planning, which is a central part of Training Credits (see Appendix Table A57).

As Appendix Table A58 shows, **the majority of TC-users, like students still in full-time education, had heard about the credits from a careers officer (74 per cent) and/or teacher (43 per cent),** with rather fewer (21 per cent) hearing about them from a college or training organisation. Other sources were all relatively unimportant, thus emphasising the need to market the schemes effectively in schools and to give careers officers and teachers adequate materials with which to inform students.

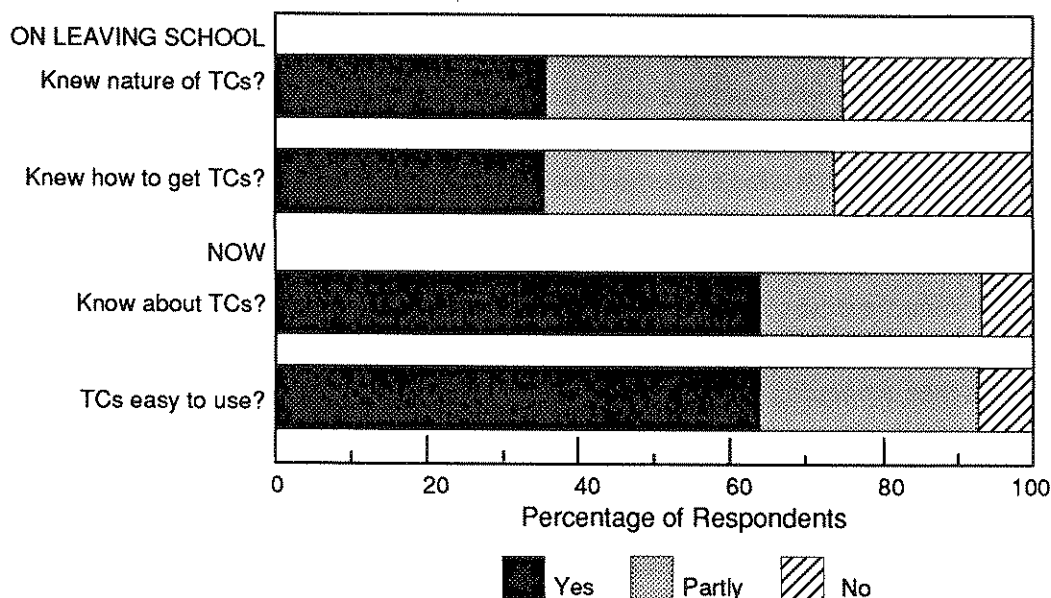
It was also interesting to find, as the first part of Figure 5 overleaf shows, that **only about a third of TC-users knew enough about either what TCs were when they left school or college, or how to get and use them.** Whilst, not unexpectedly, the users' knowledge and understanding of TCs was better than amongst students of Years 11, 12 or 13, there were still about 40 per cent who were only partly informed by the time they left school and about a quarter who were very ill-equipped to take the next step.

The second part of the figure reveals that, while the knowledge levels were higher after having a degree of direct experience of the pilots, there were still some young people who had gaps in their knowledge about TCs and scheme procedures. Most were of the opinion, however, that the schemes were quite easy to gain access to and the credits easy to use.

**As stated before, the information from both students and credit users indicates that TEC marketing departments, schools and Careers Services still have some way to go in informing young people adequately about the schemes.** It is noteworthy that

students with the highest knowledge base about TCs tended to be the ones that had received talks and/or written information on TCs from careers officers and teachers. Interviews with teachers in the three areas emphasised the need for information to be clear, up-to-date and not overtly glossy so as to engender cynicism amongst students and teachers. Several teachers mentioned that they would like more information which explained the philosophy behind TCs and gave case studies of young people's experiences of using their credits. One or two also mentioned the need for material which could be given to, or used with, parents.

**Figure 5. Training Credit users' knowledge about Training Credits**



727 TC Users responded to at least one part of this question.

The second part of the figure reveals that, while the knowledge levels were higher after having a degree of direct experience of the pilots, there were still some young people who had gaps in their knowledge about TCs and scheme procedures. Most were of the opinion, however, that the schemes were quite easy to gain access to and the credits easy to use.

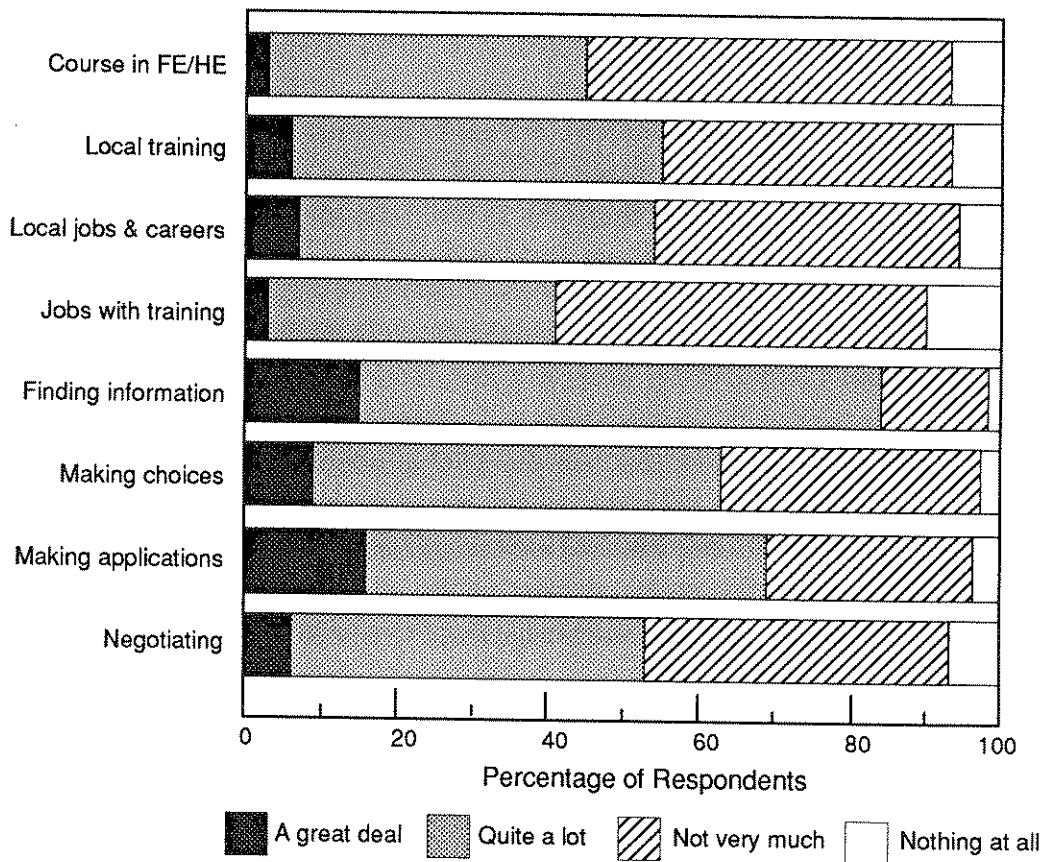
**As stated before, the information from both students and credit users indicates that TEC marketing departments, schools and Careers Services still have some way to go in informing young people adequately about the schemes.** It is noteworthy that students with the highest knowledge base about TCs tended to be the ones that had received talks and/or written information on TCs from careers officers and teachers. Interviews with teachers in the three areas emphasised the need for information to be clear, up-to-date and not overtly glossy so as to engender cynicism amongst students and teachers. Several teachers mentioned that they would like more information which explained the philosophy behind TCs and gave case studies of young people's experiences of using their credits. One or two also mentioned the need for material which could be given to, or used with, parents.

## 7.2 Differences Between TEC Areas and Student Groups

The analyses showed that there were often significant differences in the knowledge and understanding of young people about TCs in the different areas. There were some indications that these differences were, at least in part, associated with differences in local practice since young people were often quite consistent, across a series of related questions, in their judgements about themselves and the schemes. There were, however, also differences between the knowledge and reactions of the various groups of young people surveyed (Year 11 students, Years 12/13 students and TC-users). This suggests that, whilst differences in perception may be due to differing experiences of TCs, they may also be due to differences in the composition of each group and/or to changes in the schemes since they began. All these are likely.

Some of the key similarities and differences between the different groups of students and TEC areas are highlighted below. **Young people in all of the three groups surveyed showed a similar pattern of response to a series of questions about their knowledge of local opportunities and how they made their post-16 choices** (see Appendix Tables A5, A15 and A56). Years 12/13 students and TC-users, not surprisingly, had a better overall knowledge than the younger students. The knowledge levels of TC-users on a number of criteria are depicted in Figure 6 and are described below:

Figure 6. Training Credit users' knowledge about career options



727 TC Users responded to at least one part of this question.

- ◆ In comparison with Years 12/13 students, who were of a comparable age group, **TC-users were much better informed about:**
  - **which jobs do and do not offer training** (41 per cent of TC-users said they knew quite a lot or a great deal, as compared with 26 per cent of the Years 12/13 group),
  - **local training schemes** (55 per cent of TC-users, compared with 19 per cent of Years 12/13,)
  - **local jobs and careers** (54 per cent of TC-users, compared with 44 per cent of Years 12/13).
  - **how to negotiate about the courses, training and jobs wanted** (53 per cent of TC-users, compared with 45 per cent of Years 12/13).
- ◆ **Years 12/13 students were better informed than TC-users about study opportunities in further and higher education.**
- ◆ There were no consistently significant differences between case-study areas in the proportions of young people who knew how to choose, find out about and secure post-16 options. This suggests that schools were reasonably uniform in the amount of attention given to these aspects. **Inter-TEC differences did occur in young people's knowledge of local post-16 options, suggesting that there were variations in the dissemination of information.**

One TEC did consistently well in terms of the knowledge of Year 11 students and TC-users about post-16 options and, in their view, of the amount of assistance given to them by schools with career planning and in learning about TCs. It also did significantly better than the others in the proportions of Year 11 students who had heard about TCs, had a good level of knowledge about TCs and, crucially, the proportions who were intending to use them. However, this same TEC did significantly worse than the others in the level of knowledge of its Years 12/13 students about TCs.

A second TEC did significantly worse than the others in the information given to Year 11 students about TCs and rather worse in terms of the talks provided. Its schools also did a little worse in providing explanations and information about what TCs are and how to use them. As stated above, this was the TEC in which school staff felt that TEC marketing of TCs had fallen off in the second year of the scheme and, interestingly, the Years 12/13 students (the ones who had been recipients of information on TCs when in Year 11) gave a more favourable account of the information provided. This TEC performed averagely on the other knowledge and TC-related questions answered by its students and TC-users.

Interestingly, both Year 11 students and TC-users in the third TEC had a significantly poorer knowledge about post-16 opportunities in their area and felt that they had not received as much careers help from their schools as those in other areas. The TEC also did significantly worse in the proportions of credit-users who felt that they lacked knowledge now and when they left school about TCs and how to use them. Years 12/13 students in this TEC area, however, were often significantly more positive in their local careers knowledge and responded on a par with the others on other items about their knowledge about TCs and their intention to use them.

Whilst some of the inter-TEC and inter-group differences are hard to explain and must be the inter-action of a range of variables, **the above findings do suggest a link between being generally well informed about local opportunities, being knowledgeable about Training Credits and wanting to take part in the schemes.** They also suggest that relative to other groups, TC-users had a better knowledge and understanding of local training opportunities and how to negotiate them and that this may be a real outcome of the enhanced guidance and counselling which they may have received.

In the next section, the analysis moves on to explore the complex area of young people's take-up and participation in the three TC pilots. The analysis of this crucial area was impeded because of discrepancies between information provided by the TECs, the local Careers Services and the ED's own statistics. Problems of differing data collection criteria, methods and data-collection periods seem to lie behind these discrepancies.

### 7.3 Take-up and Participation

It has already been seen that TCs are issued when young people complete an action plan with a careers officer or an application is made to the TEC. Young people take up a credit when they register with an approved training provider and complete a training plan. Comparable information on issue and take-up rates by young people in Training Credits for 1991 and 1992 across the three TECs is available from the Employment Department's ongoing collection of management information from all participating TECs. Some summary figures are given in Table 24 for the three case-study areas and nationally for the 11 pilots. They cover the period April to November, 1991 and 1992 (not a full year), since this is the only timespan for which comparable figures are available. The table shows that by November, 1991, there were 12,520 TC-users in training in England and Wales and by November, 1992, the numbers had grown to 26,120 in England alone.

**Table 24: Participation by young people in Training Credits**

AREA	Number Issued	Number Started	Number Leavers	Total Number in Training
First TEC	890 (6,540)	1,060 (1,615)	880	2,440 (1,110)
Second TEC	1,175 (3,995)	1,605 (1,875)	675	2,590 (1,300)
Third TEC	865 (2,395)	1,550 (2,205)	750	1,940 (1,245)
National (11 pilots)	19,080 (26,180)	18,860 (14,660)	10,040	26,120 (12,520)

Source: Employment Department, based on TEC returns.

Rounded numbers of issues, starts and leavers between April and November for both 1991 and 1992 and total numbers as of November 1991 and 1992. (All the figures given are provisional): 1991 figures are in brackets and are for England and Wales; 1992 figures are for England only.

'Starts' includes those refusing their credit for a second or subsequent period and 'leavers' includes those leaving one provider.

**It is clear from the statistics given in the table that there were generally many more cards issued in 1991, than there were starts.** Whilst the data provided by individual TECs and the ED differed in the extent of this gap (and ED figures for one TEC area are unusually high and do not match the magnitude suggested by local data), all the figures showed the same pattern. In part the differences can probably be explained by initial differences in issuing policies and over-estimates of need, with young people changing their minds about their post-16 destinations after being issued with a credit. The differences can, however, also be explained by the fact, corroborated by both local interview information and the ED's 1992 statistics, that **many cards issued in 1991 were not taken up until 1992.**

One explanation may be that late TC entrants have either been on one-year full-time education courses, been in jobs without training which have ceased or with which they have been dissatisfied, or they have not actively been seeking training and work. There has also been some suggestion that the discrepancy may also be due to the fact that TEC databases are still being sorted out and are sometimes several months out of date in recording and ratifying the data on issues and take-up.

The 1992 data from the ED (and TEC/Careers Service information; not shown), suggests that **there are fewer TCs being issued in 1992 and there is a smaller margin between the issue and take-up of TCs in the current year.** The lower issue numbers may be due to increased staying-on rates or the fact that there is a better match between anticipated and actual need. A third factor put forward in one TEC report was that, when TCs were launched, there was an initial 'sweeping up' of young people who had been awaiting the availability of appropriate provision. While the reduced margin between issues and starts is undoubtedly due, in part, to lower demand and delayed starts from last year, the pattern of issues and starts since April 1992 indicates that young people may be more eager in this second year to take up their credits without much delay. There could be several reasons why more young people are doing this:

- ◆ They may have clearer intentions and higher motivation towards using TCs, which may be an outcome of better marketing or information and/or more effective careers counselling and action planning.
- ◆ The recession and lack of alternatives to taking up TC places. The proportions of non-employed TC trainees to employed status TC-users is higher in 1992 than in the previous year.
- ◆ More effective administration of the scheme and recording of throughput information by the TECs in 1992 may also be a factor.

**Another interesting feature of the data is that there appears to have been a significant number of leavers from each TC scheme.** In fact in one TEC this amounted to over 80 per cent of the 1992 starts and was 42 and 48 per cent in the other TECs. Nationally, there have been no less than 10,040 leavers, although the term 'leavers', as

seen before, also includes changers who are moving around the system in terms of seeking a better deal, follow-on training or a new job.

One possible explanation would be that many young people have been on one-year training courses or programmes and have achieved their qualifications and the data bear this out to a certain extent. The TEC area with the highest proportion of leavers also had the largest number of qualifications, with 281 qualifications at Level 2 and above being gained. Interestingly, this was the TC pilot that had a particular aim of increasing achievement by young people of NVQs in general and NVQ Level 2 and above, in particular. Compared with the qualifications gained in this area, 89 were achieved in the second TEC and 62 in the third. Nationally, the figures show that by November 1992, there were 973 NVQ Level 2 qualifications gained, 252 Level 3 and 67 Level 4 and above, with just 56 young people who achieved Number or WordPower and 45 who achieved Level 1. These qualifications are only those notified by TECs to the ED (others may have been gained) and many of these will have been achieved through residual Youth Training. The number of qualifications gained through TCs is expected to rise substantially in 1993 when many TC-users will have completed two-year courses.

These results, even if it could be assumed that one qualification was gained by one person (which it cannot) account for no more than 420 people. A further explanation may be that the so-called leavers are, in fact, residual YT trainees who have completed their courses. The remaining possible explanations have already been described in Section 1. There would appear to be a need for further investigation into the extent of drop-out and non-achievement of end-qualifications in TC-funded programmes.

The figures given in Table 24 show that **proportionally more TC-users were in training in 1992 by November than was the case at the same point in 1991**. From the ED figures, one TEC is considerably up on last year, one TEC is almost the same and the third TEC is substantially down. The local data (from TECs and/or Careers Services) vary quite considerably from the ED in terms of actual numbers and tend to show a greater variability between years in the number of starts and the numbers in training.

**The national figures for the total number of TC-users in Autumn, 1992, showed that 36 per cent had employed status and 64 per cent were non-employed.** A comparison between the status of TC-users in the three areas showed that in the TEC area with the highest recorded unemployment rates (according to Employment Gazette statistics), over 85 per cent had non-employed status and, in the area with the lowest official unemployment record, the non-employed group accounted for just 33 per cent of the total (local TEC statistics placed this at 43 per cent). According to local data the remaining TEC fell between these two extremes. Information from the three TECs suggested that there had been an increase in the numbers of TC-users with non-employed status since 1991.



Local information also indicated that in 1992 proportionally more older students of ages 17+ and 18+ were entering TCs, relative to the previous year. Recent data acquired from one TEC showed the following proportions:

	1991/92	1992/93
16+	57%	21%
17+	43%	52%
18+	-	27%

This finding may reflect two factors:

- ◆ The change in eligibility criteria between 1991 and 1992, which has opened up the schemes to the older age groups.
- ◆ Delays by young people in using their Training Credit who were aged 16 and 17 in 1991, and related to this the increased staying-on rate in full-time education amongst 16 year-olds.

**The information on participation rates suggests that there are considerable flows in, out and around the TC marketplace.** The NFER's survey of TC-users was also able to throw some light on the degree of change existing in the three TC systems. When asked what they were planning to do in the near future, about two-thirds of users were expecting to remain with their present employer or organisation, while a quarter were thinking of changing work or training places or entering a full-time course and others were still deciding what to do (see Appendix Table A61). In some ways these flows may be consonant with the TC market philosophy, in which the buyers (the young people) can move between providers in order to get the best quality training or the deal which best meets their needs. However, it is clear that there are other forces at work on both the supply and demand side of TCs, which are being affected unequally by the recession.

One such force is the numbers of eligible young people. Due to declining birth rates, numbers of 16 and 17 year olds are falling and many of these are being attracted to full-time courses in schools and colleges. In response to this, the TECs are becoming more flexible in their entry criteria. Another force is the exercise of choice by both TC-users (the young people) and the suppliers (the various training providers). TC-users may be seeking the best training available, but as yet not all areas are covered by NVQs. This may lead them to choose other training routes that enable TCs to be used or to seek training and employment outside the schemes, although there is a lack of evidence on the extent to which this is a factor. Whilst full-time jobs are currently hard to come by, they have an inevitable attraction and some people will be tempted to move outside the scheme by a job without training. At the same time, there is some evidence from Careers Officers and ATOs that certain providers, especially the non-FE providers, are being more selective about their trainees and are especially seeking those who can readily activate the ORF payments and/or attract useful supplements.

The end result of these forces appears to be a high degree of flux in the TC training systems, which means that there is changing supply and demand. This, in turn, both makes planning difficult and the numbers in any category difficult to identify definitively.

From considering what ED and local TEC or local Careers Service statistics have to tell us about TC-users and their movements around local education, training and labour markets, the next section focusses on the experiences of those credit users who responded to the NFER questionnaire.

## 7.4 Training Credit Users: A Profile

The 731 credit users who participated in the 1992 NFER survey had the following characteristics:

- ◆ **51 per cent were male and 49 per cent were female.** National statistics (only available for 1992 starts) suggests that this is an underestimate of the number of males in the 11 pilots, which accounted for 57 per cent. The difference in participation rates by gender may be related to the fact that more boys tend to leave school at 16, while more girls tend to stay on in education. Having a higher number of older students than the national average (see below), the NFER sample would be also likely to have proportionally more girls.
- ◆ **The sample was made up of 27 per cent TC-users of age 16 and 42 per cent of age 17 (making 69 per cent in the guarantee group), with 31 per cent aged 18+.** Forty six per cent left school in 1992 and the rest before that. Nationally, there are no comparable figures, since only 1992 start data is available.
- ◆ **There were very few users from the ethnic minorities; three per cent only. This was the same percentage as existed nationally,** according to ED figures for Autumn, 1992.
- ◆ **The TC-users were rather less well qualified as a group than 16 year-olds nationally in 1991.** Seventy nine per cent said that they had achieved at least one GCSE, 56 per cent said that they had at least one A-C grade and 15 per cent had five or more GCSEs at grades A-C. About a third had other types of qualification.

The TC-users were asked where they were currently based and, as Appendix Table A62 indicates, 60 per cent were based with an ATO (a training organisation or FE college) and had non-employed status and 37 per cent were employees, of which two per cent were employed part-time. There was considerable variation across the three TECs, with the TEC in the area of highest unemployment having 78 per cent of its TC-users based with an ATO and the TEC area with the best employment situation having 49 per cent based with a training organisation. These differences undoubtedly reflect regional patterns of unemployment.

As stated earlier, national figures suggest that in Autumn, 1992, the proportions across the 11 pilots were 64 per cent non-employed status TC-users and 36 per cent employed status. The sample proportions were, therefore, largely representative of the other pilots. There was a significant difference in the locations of TC-users of different age groups, with those younger users, who left school in 1992, being much more likely to be based with an ATO than with an employer. Whilst the 1991 school leavers had a longer time in an employed status position, this difference may also be an outcome of the deepening recession in 1992 and the restrictions on job opportunities for 16 year-olds.

TC-users were asked about the type of job or job-related training they were experiencing and, overall, the most commonly occurring job categories reflected national distributions with the most frequent categories being:

- engineering
- clerical
- secretarial
- health and childcare
- legal, business and social welfare
- construction
- vehicle trades
- craft industries.

Not unexpectedly, there were differences between areas, with one area having much larger proportions in the skilled engineering and construction areas, another having proportionally more in the service sector and the third area having more professional science, computing and engineering places, as well as rather more opportunities in vehicle trades, craft industries and catering and leisure. These regional differences in the youth labour market were reflected in the distribution of TC-users across the Employment Department's three overarching SOC categories, which are based on the cost of training.

**Table 25: Location of TC-users in occupational categories based on the cost of training**

Categories	Males	Females	All Students
SOC 1	156 40%	235 60%	391 100%
SOC 2	48 50%	47 50%	95 100%
SOC 3	139 76%	44 24%	183 100%
All Categories	343 51%	326 49%	669 100%

*Missing data = 62*

*SOC 1 includes clerical, secretarial, child-care and agricultural occupations*

*SOC 2 includes metal-work, craft and vehicle trade occupations*

*SOC 3 includes scientific, construction and engineering occupations.*

Not only were there significant area differences but, as Table 25 shows, there was a differential spread by gender. Young women were concentrated in the less expensive training categories, which are more traditional to their gender, and young men in the construction and engineering areas. Thus, as yet, there was no evidence that TCs were effectively addressing equal opportunity issues.

In the next section, data is presented on how those with TCs used their credits to buy training, how they perceived various aspects of the schemes and what impact they had on them.

## 7.5 Using Training Credits

As seen earlier, quite a large majority of TC-users (64 per cent) agreed that since they began participating in the schemes they had become well informed about credits and 29 per cent felt that they remained only partly informed. About two-thirds also agreed that TCs were easy to use and a further 28 per cent said that this was partly so.

Credit users were asked a number of questions about the nature of the training they were experiencing. Most users (61 per cent) recognised that they were receiving training in the workplace and, for some of them, this was while they were out on placement. Forty-two per cent were training at college and a further 37 per cent were with some other training organisation. In quite a few cases TC-users were receiving training in more than one location as befits a training model which often combines on and off-the-job experiences.

A key starting point for young people's training is the production of a training plan when they are first located with a provider. In at least two of the areas, the submission of the training plan activated the payment system for the provider. It was interesting, therefore, to find that half of the sample recalled drawing up such a plan and 16 per cent were not sure whether they had or not (see Appendix Table A60). Moreover, this finding was quite consistent across all three TECs and suggests that **training plans were not such a focus for the training provided within the TC schemes as national policy would expect.** It may be that some providers drew up the training plan with little assistance from the trainee or that young people engaged in informal discussions with their providers about the programme, but either did not recognise this as a planning session and/or did not have actual sight of the plan.

**Approximately three-quarters of those respondents who remembered drawing up a training plan considered that their training largely reflected the training programme which TC-users and providers had been agreed,** indicating that the planning procedure provided a valuable focus for the training being provided. However, as seen before, less than a third of TC-users who had drawn up a training plan stated that

their school action plan had been used in this process (see Table Appendix A60). This suggests that leavers are not seeing the potential of their action plans in a training context or are not being asked to produce them by providers. It may be that school leavers perceive them as being part of school and not part of the adult world of work which they are seeking to enter.

## 7.6 An Entitlement to Qualifications

An important area of investigation was the outcomes of training, since TCs are seen as a key national strategy in helping National Education and Training Targets to be met and in improving the quality of the work-related training provided. Training opportunities available within the pilots are only those which lead to nationally accepted qualifications that fall within, or are designated equivalent to, the NVQ framework. There is a requirement that, apart from those with special training needs, all TC-users should be aiming for NVQ level 2 or above. As seen in Section 7.4, credit users tended to be rather less qualified than young people nationally, thus underlining the important work which the TC credits are seeking to do in terms of raising qualification levels amongst those entering training and employment after school.

A number of questions were put to the credit users (and also to Year 11 and Years 12/13 students) in order to assess how far young people were aware of the importance of qualifications within the TC schemes and which ones they hoped to achieve.

**It was clear that the qualifications message had been absorbed by large numbers of credit users.** Over 93 per cent were aware that their TC-funded training would lead to a qualification and 85 per cent knew that it would lead specifically to an NVQ. Of the qualifications being sought, just over a fifth in each case were seeking CGLI and BTEC qualifications and one in ten an RSA award. There was, however, an array of other qualifications being taken and these were a mixture of academic and vocational accreditation.

In a range of items that dealt with affective changes which TCs might have made to young people's motivation and thinking, **one key question asked if TCs had made young people realise the importance of qualifications and 72 per cent affirmed that this was the case** (see Appendix Table A59). Students in Years 11 and 12/13 were asked the same question in the context of whether hearing about TCs had made them clearer about the importance of qualifications (see Appendix Tables A8 and A18) and 78 per cent of Year 11 said that it had, while a lower proportion, 66 per cent of Years 12/13, felt that this was the case. Since these were the ones who already had good qualifications and were aiming for accredited outcomes, it was not surprising that the TC schemes had rather less of an impact.

Whilst many training providers interviewed attested to the fact that there was a rising awareness amongst young people about the importance of qualifications, they were not always convinced that this was solely due to TCs. While these could be a contributory factor, there was thought to be a general cultural shift taking place.

Part of an entitlement to qualifications must be an entitlement to feasible and appropriate qualifications which not only match young people's career goals, but also their abilities and aptitudes. As seen earlier, in the second year of the TC schemes, the issue of users' non-completion of courses and qualifications had arisen and was causing considerable concern amongst providers. Some felt that many young people entering TCs were not of high ability and there were many with some disadvantage, even if they did not have their credit formally endorsed. These groups would not always be able to attain the required NVQ level. **The extent to which a mismatch exists between some young people's needs and abilities and accreditation requirements within TCs is unknown, but it is likely to be a contributory factor in determining the high numbers of leavers and changers within TC schemes.**

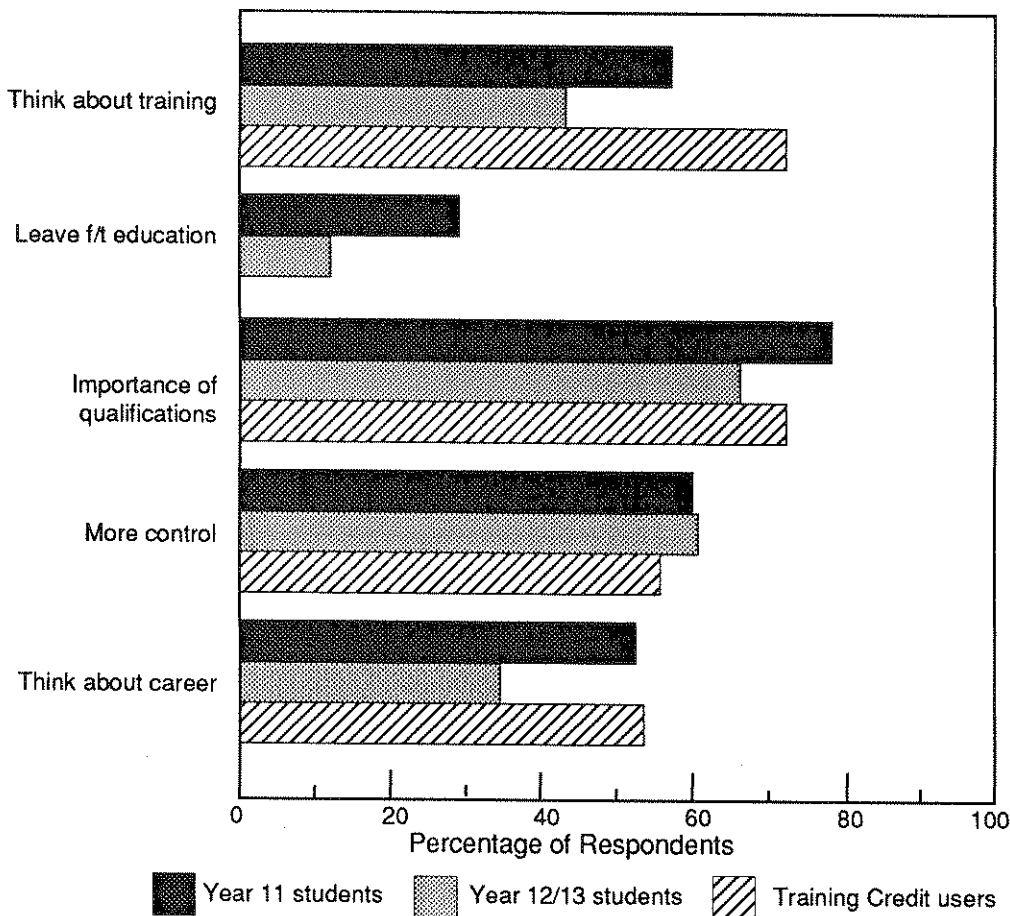
## 7.7 Young People's Motivation to Train

All three groups of young people surveyed were asked about the impact of TCs and what they have to offer on their thinking about and motivation towards training, qualifications and careers choices. The findings from these questions are shown in Figure 7 and given in Appendix Tables A8, A18 and A59.

Obviously, students in Years 11 and 12/13 could only respond on the basis of the information and feedback they had received about the schemes, whilst the TC-users could comment from first-hand experience. The results are summarised below:

- ◆ All three groups were asked whether knowledge about TCs had encouraged them to leave school and find training and employment. **The results showed that the vast majority of students still in full-time education were not being especially encouraged to enter local job and training opportunities at the expense of continuing in full-time education.** However, their views may change by the end of the academic year or their courses, when the alternatives before them become that much clearer.
- ◆ **Many TC-users (63 per cent), by contrast, felt that the schemes had been an inducement to follow local training and employment routes,** although this may be the result of rationalising about their choices after the event.
- ◆ A further question about possible TC influences on young people's choice of careers indicated that **whilst over half of the Year 11 students and TC-users felt that the schemes had made some effect on their career thinking, fewer Years 12/13 students (35 per cent) acknowledged an influence.**

Figure 7. Influence of Training Credits on Future Plans



392 Year 11 students, 91 Year 12/13 students and 727 TC Users responded to at least one part of this question.

- ◆ A more general question asked respondents whether TCs had made them think more seriously about training. There was a distinction between the two student groups, with Year 12 students, who had already chosen an educational route in preference to training, being less certain about this. The majority of Year 11 students, however, acknowledged that TCs had made them realise the importance of being trained.
- ◆ Not surprisingly, TC-users were the most positive of all, with many trainees saying not only that TCs had made them consider training more seriously, but also that they had helped them to get the training they wanted.
- ◆ Further items explored how far the aims of TC schemes were making them feel more confident and empowered about seeking out and negotiating training opportunities. A large majority (81 per cent) of credit users did believe that they had been made more aware of their right to train, but only a small majority of them considered that the scheme gave them more control and bargaining power over the training or made them feel more valued by employers. Interestingly, more Year 11 and 12 students who had yet to experience the schemes in operation, felt that TCs would improve their bargaining situation.

These findings confirm earlier evidence that some of the messages about TCs are being absorbed by young people, even before they have had actual experience of the schemes. TC-users were, in the main, quite positive about the effects of the schemes on their confidence and position and obviously realised that, within limitations they could have greater influence in the training market.

## 7.8 Non-Participation in Training Credits

Several efforts were made in each of the three areas to contact groups of young people not participating in TCs, in order to find out how much they knew about the schemes and why they were not taking advantage of the new training opportunities. As mentioned earlier, these groups proved to be elusive and difficult to identify. In the event, small numbers were contacted in each area and an attempt was made, in a qualitative sense, to find out what different characteristics and attitudes they had compared with other young people. The attempts to contact non-participants in each TEC initially met with the same problem of identifying which young people were credit users and which were not. Quite a number of the short questionnaires sent or given to alleged non-participants were returned by people who had been issued with TCs.

It was clear from the small amount of information received that most of the the non-participants contacted fell into two categories:

- ◆ **The first group might be termed ‘floaters’ who were either between school, jobs and training places or were in the process of seeking such opportunities.** For such young people, it would seem important that they are encouraged to keep in contact with Careers Services and training providers are given concrete help to move them into an educational, training or job opportunity, so that they do not remain as floaters or fall through the training net.
- ◆ **The second group were in jobs, which either had no formal training included, had training which led to a low level of qualification that did not meet TC requirements or were working for companies that had not been brought within the auspices of TCs.** It would seem here that the focus needs to be on the employer rather than the young person in order to encourage their companies to provide properly managed and accredited training.

The non-participant group did not appear to be markedly less well informed about TCs than, for instance, Year 12 students who had completed their statutory education. Most had received adequate careers guidance, completed action plans and been formally told in some way about TCs, although several called for more information about the scheme.



## 7.9 Disadvantaged Young People

This chapter has so far only considered the information and views of young people, who are in the mainstream of education and training. The study included in its remit those young people who are at some disadvantage and are likely to present special training needs. Included in this group is a wide diversity of needs, including those who have learning difficulties, those with behavioural problems, those who are physically disabled and those who have a combination of problems. As stated earlier, discussions were held with a variety of such young people in special schools and in mainstream establishments in order to discover how far they were able to participate in the schemes and what views they held about them. Some of these young people would be able to have their TCs endorsed because of the extent of their special training needs and the Employment Department's statistics reveal that approximately 20 per cent of TC starts by Autumn 1992 were by endorsed trainees. This percentage, according to a mixture of ED and local data, appeared to vary from below 10 per cent in one of the case-study areas to 18 per cent in another.

As mentioned before, other young people with a certain level of difficulty or disadvantage could participate in TCs in the same way as other students. This group was often a major concern to school teachers, Careers Service personnel and training providers for the following reasons:

- ◆ **There was concern that some young people with moderate learning or behavioural difficulties were slipping through the net of the endorsement system.** In fact, in one area, some training providers mentioned that young people who registered with them were sent back to the Careers Service to have their situation reassessed.
- ◆ **Some young people, because of qualification requirements related to TCs, it was claimed, were being entered for accreditation that they would struggle to achieve,** thus increasing the probability of non-completion of courses and non-attainment at examinations.

The TECs were tackling these difficulties in different ways. In one area a special project had been launched to review the range of needs being presented and to draw up a framework of provision and action. Elsewhere, a TEC was tackling the problem of qualifications, by developing a special award scheme which would complement trainees' progress towards achieving NVQ Levels 1 and 2. This consisted of a process through which goals were identified within NVQs, nationally recognised qualifications such as Wordpower, Numberpower and RSA Profile Schemes and personal effectiveness measures. Thus the young person would be able to develop a portfolio of accreditation which would qualify them for the special TEC award. Although in the process of being evaluated, the main challenges of this innovative approach were how to synchronise the accreditation procedures and how to link the processes of the award with the endorsement and ORF procedures.

**Whilst training providers were often concerned about the financial and resourcing aspects of disadvantage, the young people themselves were more concerned about being able to progress to worthwhile opportunities.** Both they and their teachers were, therefore, assessing the TC schemes on the basis of how far they could help them to do this, over and above what would be available anyway.

**The interviews showed that there was a wide variation in the level of knowledge about TCs which young people with special needs had.** This not only related to school processes and the time of year when schools gave their briefing about TCs, but also to the information specifically targetted on students with SEN. Quite a number of teachers were concerned that some of the underlying principles of TCs - namely the entitlement and empowerment aspects - would be too difficult for such students to comprehend. They also often commented that there was insufficient briefing material specifically available for SEN youngsters and their teachers in both special and mainstream schools. This needed to cover, in straightforward language, both the special procedures involved in entering and taking advantage of TCs and what benefits these young people could gain from their participation.

It was clear that all the TECs had made special efforts to bring disadvantaged young people into the schemes and the Careers Service had a key role to play in both informing these young people and enrolling them in the schemes, with or without endorsed TCs. There appeared to be an emphasis on providing information through face-to-face contact later on in Year 11, rather than via written material, and this may explain some of the above comments. Considerable attention has always been placed on reviewing and recording the progress of SEN students and making clear, staged plans for their futures. Indeed special schools have often led the way in introducing profiling and records of achievements. Action planning was, therefore, seen by school staff as a natural extension of these processes and the action plans themselves were perceived to have a wider applicability than the TC schemes.

**It was clear from the interviews that many of the students with special needs viewed the schemes in a similar way to other students.** Of those who had heard about TCs, the main messages which had been retained related to the emphasis given to qualifications and continuing with training. These students were often sceptical about whether the local pilots would be able to give them a better chance in the employment market, and most saw their immediate paths as being in full-time education or training with an ATO rather than with an employer. Both they and their teachers talked about the positive benefits of work and training placements, which most had experienced, but also of the problems of 'converting these into real jobs'. There was also concern about the range of training opportunities to which SEN young people had access. In at least two of the areas the number of ATOs which would take students with SEN was limited and did not cover all occupational areas.

From the above evidence, it seems that young people with a range of needs had a similar view of TCs; while they welcomed some aspects of the schemes and were keen to participate as fully as possible in training, they were as yet uncertain about what additional benefits TCs had to offer them. **There was a considerable body of feeling amongst providers and school staff that TC and endorsement systems should be made more flexible and more directly needs-led rather than cash-led.** The comment was made in one of the local evaluation reports that, ‘this would entail recognition that for some people, the experience or process of training was far more important than the expectation of achieved outcomes’.

## 7.10 Equal Opportunities

The questionnaire responses from Year 11 and Years 12/13 students and TC-users were analysed by gender and by ethnic minority background. Unfortunately there were so few students from ethnic minorities in any of the groups that the results are not sufficiently robust to be reported. There were, however, some significant gender differences, which were stable over several questions dealing with different aspects of the schemes. Broadly speaking these gender differences were common to both Year 11 and Years 12/13 students, although there were considerably more significant variations in the Year 11 data, which is reported first.

The **Year 11** gender differences largely reflected well-known patterns in boys’ and girls’ reactions to education and jobs, with significantly more girls wishing to stay on in education after age 16 and more boys wishing to find jobs and enter training schemes. This factor appeared to be related to their responses to the range of questions that dealt with training issues and the well-established phenomenon of people seeming to know most about those opportunities to which they are strongly motivated seemed to be very much in evidence here. The main differences are as follows:

- ◆ **Boys in Year 11 appeared to be best informed about local job and training opportunities.**
- ◆ There were no gender differences, however, in the knowledge which young people had about how to choose post-16 options, how to find out about them and how to get them. There was also no difference in the amount of help given by schools in finding out about and making these choices.
- ◆ **More boys had heard about Training Credits than girls** and had a deeper knowledge about them, but there was no clear pattern of difference between boys and girls’ knowledge of particular aspects of TCs. When asked, however, what effect hearing about TCs had had on their motivation to train, more boys said that they had been further encouraged to think seriously about training and keener to leave school and take up training opportunities. Girls were more likely to say that they were now keener to obtain qualifications and to see the importance of these.

**At this stage of their education, one of the main effects of TCs appeared to be reflecting and perhaps even reinforcing traditional gender differences in young people’s motivation towards education, training and jobs.**

Whilst Years 12/13 students showed a similar pattern of gender difference, there were fewer significant variations and this may be partly explained by the smaller number of data for this group. The traditional gender differences relating to staying on in education after the sixth form or seeking local job and training opportunities were still the strongest distinctions. There were, with one exception, no significant differences in students' knowledge and understanding of TCs, although boys generally maintained an edge in their knowledge base about the schemes. The one exception was that more sixth-form girls than boys were aware of the fact that TCs would give them a guarantee of training.

The conclusion which can be drawn from these findings (based on limited data) is that whilst there were fewer gender differences regarding knowledge of TCs in the Years 12/13 sample compared with the Year 11 sample, male/female differences in terms of education, training and employment plans persisted.

The gender differences for TC-users gave further weight to this argument, since these young people now had direct experience on which to base their judgements. **Most of the gender differences apparent in students had either disappeared or been overturned**, apart from the fact that more young men recalled that they had adequate knowledge and understanding about TCs when they left school - a finding which confirmed the evidence from the students. Young women using credits were, over a series of items, significantly more likely to say that TCs had improved their knowledge of and motivation towards training and had helped them to get the training which they wanted. They also said more frequently that it had reorientated their thinking about their career choices. There were no significant gender differences in what TC-users planned to do in the near future, although the classification of what kinds of jobs and training young men and women were currently in showed a typically gender stereotypic distribution.

**The analysis of gender differences underlines the importance of young people in all groups receiving impartial and effective careers guidance and advice. It also indicates that direct experience is a powerful force in helping to remove or overturn traditionally held information, views and motivations, if not yet actions.**

## **7.11 Evaluative Overview**

The evidence presented in this chapter has shown that young people are making their education, training and employment decisions in response to a range of personal and external influences. It is clear that local job markets are in considerable flux and there are several forces which are pulling students both towards and away from Training Credits. At such a time notions of entitling and empowering young people to train need to be underpinned by a strong infrastructure which lays the foundations for young people to make informed choices, provides the essential information and advice about post-16 opportunities in order to help them make decisions which are suited to their needs and ensures that all the links and support mechanisms are in place in order to facilitate their effective progression along their chosen route.

After 18 months of operation, most of the structures and linkages in the Training Credits models appear to be present, although they are still, according to the evidence from TC-users and students, not yet fully developed. Young people are finding their way onto the TC schemes without necessarily acquiring a full knowledge of what is on offer and the procedures which are involved, but with a reasonably good understanding of some of the main principles of TCs. The majority of those who have used their credits have found these to be helpful in a number of ways, not least in augmenting their standing with employers and helping them understand the importance of qualifications and training. The data suggests that there is considerable mobility by young people around local education, training and employment markets. Whilst it is not wholly clear why such frequent movements are happening, it is evident that there are a range of forces at work and young people are feeling able to move in search of better or more appropriate opportunities or as an initial option ceases or becomes non-viable and that Training Credits are playing some part in the creation of this new market place.

The more specific evaluation findings for TC-users and other young people are highlighted below:

#### ◆ **Knowledge and Understanding of Training Credits**

It was clear that careers officers and teachers, at this early stage of TC schemes have a vital role to play in informing potential users about the scheme and that outside sources are still relatively unimportant. (Section 7.1).

While TC-users had a reasonable knowledge and understanding about credits, rather better than existing students, there were still some gaps in their information, particularly on the 'how to use them' front. (Section 7.1).

TC-users had a higher awareness of training issues and local job and training opportunities than other young people. There were significant differences between the knowledge and awareness of local opportunities and TCs of users and students in different TEC areas and, these variations could, in part, be related to distinctions in local policy and practice. (Section 7.2).

#### ◆ **Training Credit Issues, Starts and Leavers**

While there was generally a wide discrepancy between the numbers of credits issued and actual TC starts in 1991, this margin was much reduced in 1992. Part of the reason was young people delaying usage of their TC. (Section 7.3).

There appears to be a large number of leavers and changers within TC schemes. The reasons for this are not fully known, although it is likely that they relate in part to both course completions and drop-outs and young people responding to personal motivations and external market forces. (Section 7.3).

Relative to 1991, the composition of TC-users has higher proportions of older leavers and those of non-employed status. There continues to be rather more males than females taking up TC places and traditional gender stereotypes amongst training places still persist. (Section 7.4).

#### ◆ **Action and Training Plans**

School action plans had a lower profile in helping young people and providers produce a training plan than might be expected, although where used, these plans were providing a valuable focus for the training undertaken. (Section 7.5).

#### ◆ **Motivation To Train and Gain Qualifications**

There was generally a high awareness amongst TC-users of the importance of qualifications and training, rather more so than in other groups. Whilst many TC-users claimed to be more aware of their right to train because of TCs, they were not so sure about how much more bargaining power they had. (Sections 7.6 and 7.7).

#### ◆ **Non-Participants in Training Credits**

Non-participants, according to the rather limited evidence fell into two groups; 'floaters', who were between courses and job/training places or on the margins of the training market and those in jobs without training or training to TC standards. They were not noticeably disadvantaged in terms of information about TCs relative to other groups. (Section 7.8).

#### ◆ **Young people with Special Educational Needs**

Knowledge and understanding levels about TCs were more variable amongst young people with special educational needs than other groups. Whilst TECs and local Careers Services were making special efforts to involve SEN young people in TCs, some of these students were sceptical about what the schemes could especially offer them. There were calls by providers and teachers for more flexibility in endorsement and other TC systems so that SEN youngsters could be properly catered for within the schemes. (Section 7.9).

#### ◆ **Equal Opportunities**

Whilst traditional gender differences were apparent in students' relative knowledge of, and motivation towards, different education and training opportunities, there were suggestions that experience of TCs was helping to overturn previously held stereotypic ideas, although TC-users' occupational distributions, in the main, still showed traditional patterns. (Section 7.10).

## 8. TRAINING CREDIT PILOTS: EMERGING MESSAGES

Drawing on the considerable range and analysis of evidence collected for this evaluation, the report concludes by reviewing the main areas of progress across the three TC pilots studied. Chapter 8 examines how far national and local objectives have been met and compares the implementation and outcomes of the pilots in the second year with the first year of operation. In addition to identifying achievements, this chapter presents key messages and practical recommendations which may help to inform the future development of TC pilots in general.

### 8.1 Change and Progress

**This evaluation has confirmed that managing the implementation and continued development of TC pilots is both complicated and challenging**, because it involves changing the attitudes and established practices of several key groups, including Careers Service staff, employers, training providers, teachers and the young people themselves. As has been emphasised throughout this report, it is essential for any review of the impact of TCs to take into consideration the difficult economic context in which all pilots have had to operate. The depth and severity of the current recession has proved to be a general impediment to change and has presented TECs with serious constraints in attempting to meet their pilot objectives. Partly as a consequence of this prohibitive and unaccommodating climate of operation, and partly as a result of the initial short lead-in time, the TECs have made modifications to the pilots to deal with 'teething' problems and address emerging needs as they have arisen.

**There was evidence that the TECs had made some progress in developing a partnership approach by extending the infrastructure for consultation and liaison with partners.** Regular meetings with Careers Service staff, for example, in addition to the resourcing and deployment of TEC advisers and school liaison officers, were found to be facilitating contact and enhancing working relationships within the pilots. However, the case studies revealed that **many of the training providers and school staff interviewed did not yet feel fully part of the TC partnership, though they acknowledged that efforts were being made to improve liaison mechanisms.** Whilst the perception of LEA, ATO and Careers Service staff (as noted in the 1991 national evaluation report) that their experience was not fully drawn upon by TECs is now less widespread, there is still a feeling in these quarters that genuine consultation, prior to decisions being made, could be improved. There appears to be a need, therefore, for TECs to build on the structures developed so far, perhaps by using focus groups, to incorporate further partners' views and expertise in TC decision-making processes.

**The evaluation found that the TECs had made important changes to the administration and operation of TC pilots during the second year of the initiative.**

It is worth noting here that the 1991 national evaluation report made the observation that TC pilots were administratively complex. The three case studies ascertained that each of the three TECs had taken steps to simplify the administration of TCs and reduce the paperwork required for training providers to complete. In one area, for example, action planning had been uncoupled from the process of issuing TC cards to reduce administrative blockages. These modifications were welcomed by training providers, though some were still critical of the amount of TC-related administration and others suggested that electronic systems could be used for data transfer.

Whilst partners perceived that TC procedures were becoming easier to use, **TECs' management information systems and databases were found to be relatively under-developed and were not always able to yield information on client groups participating in the pilots.** It was evident that some of the database problems highlighted in the first year evaluation reports had continued in the second year of operation, though one of the TECs had taken back control of its TC information systems which had initially been subcontracted to another company. Given that accurate information is vital to the monitoring, evaluation and development of all programmes, including TCs, it would appear advisable that TECs and their partners review database requirements and develop compatible systems to manage the considerable range of data relevant to pilots.

**Amendments to TC eligibility criteria were another modification to the pilots made during the second year of operation.** The result of these changes was an increase in access to TCs, especially for young people aged 18 and above. It is likely that amendments to eligibility criteria were made in response to the demand for TCs being lower than originally expected. The criteria for disadvantaged young people, including those with special training needs, continue to be more flexible.

**The main change in TC funding mechanisms in the second year of the pilots was introduced by the ED which altered the output-related funding element in TECs' TC budgets from 10 per cent to 25 per cent.** Whilst this change was generally welcomed by training providers, some maintained that payments still did not fully cover the real cost of providing training and some had experienced cash flow problems through the payment in arrears system. College-based ATOs claimed to have lost income because of the re-routing of Revenue Support Grant money via TECs linked to the decrease in demand for part-time training courses. Overall, TECs were found to run efficient financial systems which ensured that payments to training providers were made on a regular basis. Where TECs had introduced incentives and supplements, such as those targeted at small employers or at specific skill shortages areas, these were either increased or made clearer and more explicit for participants.

**The evaluation received mixed messages from participants on the effectiveness of the marketing of TCs.** Whilst in one area, for example, ATOs noted that the TEC had made a more imaginative use of marketing materials in year two of the pilot, participants in another area had reported an absence of significant new marketing strategies. Few of



the teachers and employers interviewed had noticed any major changes to the promotion of TCs. Some teachers expressed a need for marketing materials for students to be written in clearer and simpler language. This point was emphasised by staff responsible for special needs students. In future, it may be worthwhile incorporating more teachers in the preparation of marketing materials and piloting them with students to ensure their suitability.

The evaluation also found a gap in marketing coverage in that Years 12/13 students appeared to be less well catered for than Year 11 students in terms of having access to presentations and written information on TCs and there appears to be a need to review marketing strategies and materials. Other reasons for developing and strengthening the marketing of TCs are the fact that only a minority of participating employers claimed to understand how the pilots operated with regard to them and the finding that marketing to parents was generally patchy. TECs may wish to give further thought to developing a range of marketing strategies to target employers of different sizes and within different sectors.

**TECs' systems for quality assurance appeared to have had some success in improving the quality of the training provided for young people.** Nearly one-third of TC-user employers surveyed said that TCs had enhanced their quality of training as a result of the TECs' contracting mechanisms which included checks on quality. In addition, just over two-fifths of this sample reported that TCs had improved the structure or system of training, partly because of the introduction of training plans for young people. There was no evidence, however, of TECs integrating quality assurance into broader monitoring, evaluation and review strategies.

## **8.2 Training Credit Principles: Empowerment and Entitlement**

**The evaluation found that participants generally supported the TC principles of empowerment and entitlement.** Interviewees welcomed the TC pilots' promotion of an entitlement for young people to enhanced careers education and guidance and to high quality training leading to qualifications. Similarly, there was support for empowering young people to exercise choice effectively and become more discriminating in seeking out courses to suit their needs. Whilst TEC personnel, careers officers, teachers and training providers subscribed to these fundamental principles, the prevailing view expressed was that putting empowerment into practice was extremely difficult in the current economic climate.

**The recession was reducing the opportunities, and therefore choice, of young people.** Most of the employers interviewed had reduced or maintained the same level of recruitment of young people between 1991 and 1992 and, not surprisingly, training providers reported increasing difficulties in finding sufficient placements for young trainees. Furthermore, in two of the case studies, the remote, rural location of some young people, coupled to the lack of adequate transport facilities, restricted them to

extremely localised employment and training opportunities. Another observation was that some of the young people who wanted to leave full-time education at 16 were the least able and articulate, and therefore unlikely to be able to use a TC to negotiate with employers and training providers to get training to meet their needs. There was little evidence of young people using their TCs to shop around for training or jobs, even though they were reasonably aware of the empowerment that TCs offered. It seems unlikely that a comprehensive analysis of the empowerment aspect of TCs can be carried out until there is a more buoyant economy in which they can be used.

**In contrast, the pilots had made some progress in terms of enhancing young people's entitlement to careers guidance and quality training.** Schools and Career Services welcomed the increased resources which were said to have improved the provision of careers information, education and guidance. A majority of both students and TC-users considered that they had received adequate help in making their post-16 decisions and choices. Likewise, a majority felt that involvement in action planning helped them to sort out what to do in the future. As explained earlier, there was some evidence that TCs were beginning to improve quality standards in the training provided for young people, though there was still room for further development in this respect.

**The evaluation found that the main messages about entitlement have been absorbed by young people.** For example, over 90 per cent of the TC users realised that their training led to qualifications and over 80 per cent of this group said that they were more aware of the right to train as a result of TCs. Empowerment was a more difficult concept to convey to young people, especially those with special training needs.

### **8.3 Training Cultures: Motivation and Markets**

As summarised in the ED's *Progress Report* (June 1992) the national aims of TCs are to expand and improve the training of young people by:

- ◆ Motivating the individual to train and to train to higher standards.
- ◆ Encouraging employers to invest in training.
- ◆ Establishing an efficient market in training.

**There was little evidence to suggest that the availability of TCs has stimulated those young people, who might benefit from taking education and training routes outside school, to do so.** A minority of employers and some ATOs perceived that TCs were reinforcing young people's motivation to train. The staying-on in full-time education rates in each of the three case study areas have continued to increase over the last three years. **Nevertheless, young people's awareness of the importance of training leading to qualifications is fairly high.** The evaluation is not able to ascertain for certain whether young people are training to higher standards because TC-users' attainments in the second year of the pilots are not yet available. It would appear, however, that the introduction of training plans and the greater availability of NVQs are likely to increase training standards.

The impact of the pilots on employers' provision of training was found to be muted. About one-third of the surveyed participant employers said that the pilots had increased the volume or variety of training which they provided. A small minority of this sample revealed that TCs had encouraged them to spend more on training young people. The training providers interviewed were of the opinion that the pilots had had little effect on employers who were still interested in short-term company aims rather than longer-term staff development. Overall, then, the evidence suggests that TCs have not encouraged the majority of employers to invest in training. The general economic situation was found to be more influential on employers' training decisions.

There is also scant evidence, as yet, to suggest that an efficient training market has been established. Any market involves the interplay of demand and supply. The expectation that the demand side of the market would be activated by young people using their TCs to get the training they wanted has not been realised. Instead, young people have largely preferred to stay on in full-time education, so the impact of TCs has been rather muted and they have not greatly affected providers' provision or practices. It is worth noting that, however, there appears to be considerable movement of eligible young people in and out of the TC schemes. As yet it is uncertain what the impact of this is on local training provision and more research is required here. Furthermore, little evidence was found of providers shopping around to find sub-contractors who offered cheaper training, even though some complained of the rise in the cost of college courses.

Changing training cultures is a medium to long-term process and it is unrealistic to expect the TC pilots, or any other initiative, to achieve instant results. Regrettably, the work of the pilots has been severely constrained by the recession and the progress made, though steady and encouraging given the circumstances, has not brought about a major change in training cultures or created an efficient training market.

The **local objectives** of the TC pilots (aggregated below) augmented the national aims of the initiative and included the following:

- ◆ To increase the number of young people in employment with appropriate levels of structured training.
- ◆ To target training through TCs to meet the needs of the local economy, particularly growth sectors or skill shortages.
- ◆ To increase the level of training for those young people who leave school with few or no qualifications.
- ◆ To encourage longer term traineeships with employers which include higher levels of education and training.
- ◆ To get as many young people into vocational training as possible.
- ◆ To get as many employers as possible to train their young employees.
- ◆ To help reach the National Targets for Education and Training.
- ◆ To make training which is relevant to employer needs a normal part of working life.

- ◆ To increase training in small companies.
- ◆ To create more work-based opportunities for those with special needs.

The case studies found that it was too soon to assess whether young people, including those with few or no qualifications, would attain higher standards of qualification as a result of TCs. Recent trends indicate a fall in the proportion of young people achieving employed status as a result of the recession. Although there was some evidence to suggest that pilots were targeting growth sectors or skill shortfall areas in local economies, it was too early to gauge how effective these measures were. There were encouraging signs that longer term traineeships might be emerging. Providers reported a keenness on the part of some trainees to progress to NVQ Level 3. Whilst the bonuses on the achievement of Level 2 should act as an incentive, some providers in this area wondered whether sufficient funding for Level 3 programmes would be available in 1993-4 when many of the current trainees would become eligible to continue. Recessionary effects were an obstacle to encouraging employers to train and to encouraging young people to embark on vocational training so these local objectives had also been thwarted to date. Furthermore, pilots were struggling to achieve both local and national targets such as 'TCs in use' and 'NVQs achieved'.

**There was no evidence of marked progress in making training relevant to employer needs, and small employers were not found to have greatly increased training opportunities for young people.** Whilst the evaluation did not find that more work-based opportunities had been created for young people with special needs as a result of the pilot, there was evidence of a continuing commitment to training provision for this client group, assisted by TEC's adoption of a system of funding Wordpower and Numberpower attainment. Training providers regretted that many young people with special needs often found it difficult to get work-based training opportunities because competition had increased for the dwindling number of jobs and placements available.

**The evaluation findings suggest that there is some way to go before the national and local objectives of the TC pilots are fully achieved. Nevertheless, the case-study pilots appear to have laid down firm foundations and infrastructures necessary to facilitate some of the cultural changes in training to which they are committed.** The issue of deadweight – the extent to which the real impact of the pilots is reduced on account of some young people and employers joining the pilots to gain funding for training which they would have undertaken anyway – is difficult to analyse with any clarity because it embraces the uncertainties of cause and effect on participants' intentions, motivations and actions. The difficulties of separating intentions and action from hindsight are considerable. Moreover, the recession is a complicating factor which overshadows participants' decision-making processes. Whilst the evaluation did not yield sufficient evidence to enable definitive conclusions to be drawn on the extent of deadweight, it is worth noting that, as outlined in Chapter 6, employers considered the main benefits to them of TCs to be financial rather than training-related. It would seem that the whole issue of deadweight requires further exploration for which a longitudinal study would be particularly appropriate.

## 8.4 Implications for Development

Several of the findings have implications for the future development of TC pilots. **Administration** is an important part of the pilots which would benefit from further development. The evaluation revealed that many participants, especially training providers, would welcome the continued reduction in paperwork so that time spent on training is maximised. It might be worth TECs investigating the feasibility of introducing or enhancing computer systems which might further alleviate paperwork tasks and speed up providers' data returns and claims. There is also a pressing need for TECs to review their management information systems with respect to TCs to ensure that database records of TC client groups, including employers and other training providers are regularly and accurately updated.

**Marketing** is another area which would benefit from development. Whilst considerable progress has been made, marketing could be strengthened further by TECs reviewing the success and suitability of strategies and materials in collaboration with key partners. This process might be informed by evaluation to find out what the main gaps are in people's knowledge and understanding of TCs. For example, some young people were unsure how to use credits. Gaining teachers' views on the design and wording of future materials for students would help to ensure that they are accessible for this important client group and convey clear messages. Further marketing to parents and small employers also appears to be needed within TC pilots.

Setting in place **mechanisms for regularly briefing and updating partners** on changes in, and outcomes from, the pilots would not only improve information flow but would help to develop further the spirit of partnership which is vital to the success of TCs at the local level. For example, some of the frontline careers officers and school careers coordinators reported that they were not always adequately informed about changes to the regulations and criteria governing the operation of pilots. Where fully operational initiatives such as TCs are still being developed to meet changing need, it is important that briefing and updating mechanisms are built in and adequately resourced. These mechanisms should also be linked to a **dissemination and feedback** strategy which aims to inform partners of the key outcomes and achievements of the pilots. This will help to engender commitment and can provide useful information for marketing purposes. Some school staff, for example, expressed a need to have feedback on the TC progress of their former students so that they could find out more about training opportunities which would help to inform the careers information, education and guidance process. The case studies found that TECs had not disseminated the outcomes of the first year evaluations very widely, yet studies of this sort may be a useful source of independent advice.

**Action planning** is another area worthy of consideration. Whilst changes were made to improve the action planning process, evidence was collected which suggested that the role of action plans needs to be more clearly defined. Students were not always sure what the purpose and use of the action plans were when they had left school. There appeared to be some confusion about whether school leavers should show their action plans to

employers and other training providers. Not surprisingly, some training managers had not seen many action plans and were not able to comment on their usefulness. Also there needs to be a review of the actual and potential linkages between action plans, records of achievement and training plans. There was still uncertainty in the pilots about whether and how these processes and documents should be linked.

It is worth mentioning that whilst output-related funding was considered a reasonable policy, there was a feeling that the criteria for allocation could be more flexible especially in relation to young people with **special training needs**. The pilots might benefit from further monitoring of the resourcing and provision for this client group.

Finally, despite the recession the pilots have made encouraging progress to date. This could be enhanced further by targeted action in the areas outlined above in addition to the continuing development of effective monitoring and evaluation strategies. Such strategies would help policy-makers and practitioners to review future progress and inform decision-making processes. TECs would be well advised to give further consideration to how effective monitoring and evaluation strategies could help them to deal with the challenges that lie ahead in the management and development of their TC pilots.

## REFERENCES

COOPERS and LYBRAND DELOITTE (1992). *Training Credits Evaluation: National Coordinator's Report of the 11 Case Studies Final Report*. Sheffield: Employment Department

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION: HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE (1992). *The implementation of the pilot Training Credit scheme in England and Wales 1990 - 1992* (HMI Report 194/92). London: HMSO

EDUCATION (1993). *The Price of Failure*. 12th February.

EMPLOYMENT DEPARTMENT (1992). *Training Credits: A Report on the First Twelve Months*. Sheffield: Employment Department

EMPLOYMENT DEPARTMENT (1993). *Labour Market Quarterly*. February.

EMPLOYMENT GAZETTE (1993). 101, 2, February.

FURTHER EDUCATION UNIT (1993). *Training Credits: The Implications for Colleges*. London: FEU

HODKINSON, P., SPARKES, A. and HODKINSON, H. (1992). *Careers Officers and Training Credits (Training Credits in Action Project: Working Paper No.1)*. Crewe: Crewe and Alsager College of Higher Education.

TAYLOR, M., WESTON, P. and STONEY, S. (1990). *Attitudes of Young People in Surrey to Post - Age 16 Options*. Slough: National Foundation for Educational Research.

UK HEADS OF CAREERS SERVICES (1992). *School Leaver Destinations. Destinations of Year 11 Pupils Leaving Secondary Schools in 1991*. London: Association of County Councils Publications.

WESTON, P and DICKSON, P with HUTCHISON, D. (1992). *Experiencing TVEI Extension 14-16. Overview Report*. Sheffield: Employment Department.

# METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

The evaluation strategy was agreed with ED staff and the TECs. The selection of schools and sampling of TC-users, non-users, employers and ATOs was discussed and negotiated with the TECs and LEAs, where appropriate. These initial meetings also provided opportunities to obtain background and contextual information, key contact names and to identify other local data requirements of the evaluation. Local evaluation reports and other documentation, including the Coopers and Lybrand Deloitte report on the first year of operation of the pilots, were analysed.

All research instruments - interview schedules and questionnaires - were designed in collaboration with ED and TEC staff.

A synopsis of the groups covered by the evaluation, the numbers and research methods used is presented below.

## MANAGERS AND OPERATIONAL PEOPLE

**Persons Involved:** TEC personnel, LEA staff, including officers and advisers and Careers Officers.

**Strategy:** Face-to face interviews lasting up to two hours using semi-structured schedules and a strategy of progressive contacts; i.e. starting with key contacts and moving outwards to others who are identified as being useful in the course of the earlier interviews. Follow-up interviews and opportunities to return for further information or to attend relevant meetings were taken up as necessary.

**Numbers Involved:** Total sample of 50.

**Timing:** On-going throughout the life of the project, but particularly in the early autumn and at the close of the fieldwork period in early December.

### Research topics included:

- ◆ management, operation and co-ordination of the scheme and changes made over the last year (key roles and priorities);
- ◆ the progress made with financial control and management information and database systems;
- ◆ the cost effectiveness of the management and administrative strategies and methods of resource allocation;
- ◆ quality assurance, evaluation and monitoring procedures and the performance indicators/success criteria being used;
- ◆ previous and new operational hurdles and how these were being overcome;



- ♦ overall views on progress and outcomes to date and needed/planned developments.

## **SCHOOLS**

**Persons Involved:** Senior managers, such as heads and deputy heads, and careers coordinators.

**Strategy:** Face-to-face interviews lasting approximately one hour with staff in 10 schools in two TEC areas and eight schools in the other TEC area, which were the focus for the school-based research and student surveys. The schools were selected to reflect the school population in each area. In addition, staff in two special schools in each area were interviewed.

**Numbers:** Total sample of 40.

**Timing:** October, November and December 1992.

### **Research topics included:**

- ♦ marketing of TCs to schools and briefing procedures;
- ♦ awareness and understanding of TCs amongst staff and students;
- ♦ careers information, education and guidance, and involvement in action
- ♦ planning;
- ♦ school involvement in the management of the scheme and with other partners;
- ♦ perceptions of the effectiveness of the scheme, the changes made, the barriers to effective operation and anticipated developments.

## **STUDENTS**

**Persons Involved:** Year 11 students.

**Strategy:** Short self-completion questionnaires.

**Numbers:** Total samples of 766 Year 11 students and 162 Years 12/13 students.

**Timing:** Administered in schools in November and December 1992.

### **Research topics included:**

- ♦ student awareness and understanding of TCs;
- ♦ reactions to TCs, their willingness to use them and their perceptions of the impact of the Credits on young people's intended actions at the end of statutory schooling;

- ◆ involvement in, and reactions to, the guidance, action planning and recording procedures in schools;
- ◆ qualifications they are working towards, and any perceived impact of the TC scheme on these.

## **YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL / TRAINING NEEDS**

**Persons Involved:** Years 11, 12 and 13 students in mainstream and special schools and colleges.

**Strategy:** Mostly face-to-face interviews (occasionally in pairs) on an opportunity basis, during visits to schools and colleges.

**Numbers:** Total sample of 73

**Timing:** October, November and December 1992.

### **Research topics included:**

- ◆ this group's need, experience, knowledge and perception of TCs;
- ◆ progress made by TECs and other partners in providing for these groups and encouraging them to participate in TC schemes;
- ◆ outstanding needs and anticipated developments in provision and approach.

## **YOUNG PEOPLE: THE USERS AND NON-USERS**

**Persons Involved:** There were several categories of both user and non-user, who needed to be included in the research. The **credit users** included those in training (ie trainee status YT) and those in employment (with or without YT training). They also included those who first began using their Credits in 1991 and 1992. The **non-users** of particular interest for this study included those in employment (and, to a minimal extent residual YT, if any) and those who are unemployed and not in a training scheme.

**Strategy:** Different strategies were deployed to secure the views of the different groups in each area. Postal questionnaires were sent to **credit users** through the good offices of ATOs. Shorter postal questionnaires were sent to **non-users** via the Careers Service and employers. Those who were in training/employment were identified via employers and TEC and Careers Service mailing lists; the unemployed were identified via the Careers Services. The samples were selected to represent broadly the local occupational distribution of credit-users and non-users in each of the case-study areas.

**Numbers:** Total samples of 731 TC-users and 47 non-users.

**Timing:** November and December 1992 and January 1993.

**Research topics included:**

- ◆ young people's experience of using or not using TCs and reflections on the information, support and careers guidance given them for this at different stages in the transition process;
- ◆ impact of TCs on young people's actions and motivations, particularly with regard to the issues of empowerment, improvements in action planning, decision-making and other coping skills; their career orientations; the training received and the post-16 qualifications being pursued;
- ◆ reasons for not joining TC schemes.

## **EMPLOYERS AND TRAINING ORGANISATIONS**

**Persons Involved:** Recruitment training and personnel staff in private and public sector companies who employ young people aged 16-18, with and without TCs, as well as the key Approved Training Organisations including colleges in each TEC area.

**Strategy:** The ATO samples were identified through TEC databases. Employer samples were drawn from TEC databases and local directors. The samples were selected to represent a cross-section of ATOs and the broad local distribution of employers across SIC categories. The employer samples were stratified to include two-thirds small employers (less than 25 employees) and one-third medium and large employers (25 or more employees).

The main strategy was telephone interviews, using an interview schedule and lasting up to 30 minutes. Selected face-to-face interviews were carried out with up to six employers, TC-users and ATOs in each area.

**Numbers:** Total samples of 75 ATOs (including nine FE-based providers) 160 TC-user employers and 151 non-TC user employers.

**Timing:** October, November and December 1992 and January 1993.

**Research topics included:**

- ◆ awareness and understanding of TCs and their views on the marketing strategies employed by the TEC;
- ◆ views on changes in administrative procedures for TCs;
- ◆ the impact of TCs on their recruitment and training practices and provision and their perceptions of the benefits of the scheme;
- ◆ variations in the above by sector and size of organisation;
- ◆ reasons for employers not joining TC schemes.

## APPENDIX OF TABLES

**Table A1: Year 11 Students: Number of GCSEs studying this year**

	Number	%
1	2	0
2	3	0
3	7	1
4	12	2
5	8	1
6	13	2
7	65	9
8	185	25
9	336	45
10	88	12
11	20	3
12	2	0
Total	741	100

*A single-response question*

*Missing data = 25*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100%*

**Table A2: Year 11 Students: Any other qualifications, certificates or awards this year?**

	Number	%
Yes	131	18
No	596	82
Total	727	100

*A single-response question*

*Missing data = 39*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100%*

**Table A3: Year 11 Students: Sufficient help received from schools in preparing for future**

	Number	%
A great deal	59	8
Quite a lot	436	57
Not very much	213	28
Hardly anything	54	7
Total	762	100

*A single-response question*

*Missing data = 4*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100%*

**Table A4: Year 11 Students: Further help wanted from schools in making post-16 plans and choices**

	Number	%
Yes	378	52
No	348	48
Total	726	100

*A single-response question*

*Missing data = 40*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100%*

**Table A5: Year 11 Students: Knowledge about post-16 options**

	A great deal	Quite a lot	Not very much	Hardly anything	Total Respondents
Local post-16 courses & study opportunities	15 2%	230 30%	349 46%	168 22%	762 100%
Local training schemes (e.g. Youth Training & apprenticeships)	15 2%	198 26%	397 52%	149 20%	759 100%
Local jobs & careers	44 6%	294 39%	358 47%	61 8%	757 100%
Which jobs offer training	18 2%	187 25%	387 51%	162 21%	754 100%
Finding information about courses, training & jobs	100 13%	452 59%	182 24%	26 3%	760 100%
Making choices & decisions about post-16 opportunities	32 4%	284 38%	315 42%	126 17%	757 100%
Making applications & coping with interviews	71 9%	386 51%	248 33%	54 7%	759 100%
Discussing with adults the courses, training & jobs wanted	78 10%	384 51%	250 33%	45 6%	757 100%

*A series of single-response questions*

*762 students responded to at least one part of the question*

*4 students made no response to any part*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100% across each row*

**Table A6: Year 11 Students: Opinions on the nature of Training Credits**

	True	False	Total Respondents
A Training Credit guarantees you a job when you leave school	23 6%	385 94%	408 100%
A Training Credit guarantees you training when you leave school	301 75%	103 25%	404 100%
A Training Credit gives you cash in your pocket to buy training	110 27%	293 73%	403 100%
A Training Credit enables you to discuss & get the training you want	347 86%	56 14%	403 100%
A Training Credit can be used for any sort of training or course	279 70%	121 30%	400 100%
A Training Credit can only be used for some approved training	162 41%	235 59%	397 100%

*A series of single-response questions*

*409 students responded to at least one part of the question*

*357 students made no response to any part*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100% across each row*

**Table A7: Year 11 Students: Knowledge of Training Credits**

	Number	%
A great deal	11	3
Quite a lot	145	36
Not very much	195	48
Hardly anything	57	14
Total	408	100

*A single-response question*

*Missing data = 358*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100%*

**Table A8: Year 11 Students: Influence of Training Credits on future plans**

	Yes	No	Total Respondents
Make you think more seriously about training?	218 57%	167 43%	385 100%
Make you keen to leave f/t education at 16?	110 29%	272 71%	382 100%
Make you realise the importance of qualifications?	304 78%	84 22%	388 100%
Make you feel able to have more control over your training?	228 60%	150 40%	378 100%
Make you think more about which job or career to choose?	202 53%	179 47%	381 100%

*A series of single-response questions*

*392 students responded to at least one part of the question*

*374 students made no response to any part*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100% across each row*

**Table A9: Year 11 Students: Post-16 plans**

	Number	%
F/t course	546	74
Job + training	80	11
Job no training	27	4
Training scheme	28	4
Something else	7	1
Still undecided	51	7
Total	739	100

*A single-response question*

*Missing data = 27*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100%*



**Table A10: Year 11 Students: Importance of post-16 education, training and qualifications**

	Very important	Quite important	Not very important	Not at all important	Total Respondents
Continue with education or training after age 16	461 63%	237 32%	31 4%	7 1%	736 100%
Get further qualifications after age 16	429 58%	259 35%	36 5%	11 1%	735 100%

*A pair of single-response questions*

*744 students responded to at least one part of the question*

*22 students made no response to any part*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100% across each row*

**Table A11: Years 12/13 Students: Number of GCSEs, Grades A-C**

	Number	%
1	22	17
2	5	4
3	14	11
4	6	5
5	6	5
6	8	6
7	9	7
8	20	16
9	32	25
10	5	4
Total	127	100

*A single-response question*

*Missing data = 35*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100%*

**Table A12: Years 12/13 Students: Number of other GCSEs**

	Number	%
1	19	16
2	10	8
3	10	8
4	9	8
5	8	7
6	15	13
7	20	17
8	13	11
9	12	10
10	2	2
Total	118	100

*A single-response question*

*Missing data = 44*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100%*

**Table A13: Years 12/13 Students: Any other qualifications, certificates or awards at school?**

	Number	%
Yes	29	20
No	119	80
Total	148	100

*A single-response question*

*Missing data = 14*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100%*

**Table A14: Years 12/13 Students: Subjects studying this year**

	Respondents	
	Number	%
A levels	91	56
A/S levels	4	2
BTEC	8	5
CPVE	40	25
GCSEs	54	33
Other Vocational	50	31
Total	162	100

*A multiple-response question*

*Missing data = 137*

*Students could give more than one response, so percentages will not sum to 100%*

**Table A15: Years 12/13 Students: Knowledge about post-16 options**

	A great deal	Quite a lot	Not very much	Hardly anything	Total Respondents
Courses & study opportunities in further & higher education	6 4%	85 52%	63 39%	8 5%	162 100%
Local training schemes (e.g. Youth Training & apprenticeships)	2 1%	29 18%	72 44%	59 36%	162 100%
Local jobs & careers	6 4%	64 40%	70 43%	22 14%	162 100%
Which jobs offer training	5 3%	37 23%	71 44%	49 30%	162 100%
Finding information about courses, training & jobs	25 15%	98 60%	34 21%	5 3%	162 100%
Making choices & decisions about post-16 opportunities	16 10%	94 58%	42 26%	10 6%	162 100%
Making applications & coping with interviews	19 12%	95 59%	42 26%	6 4%	162 100%
Discussing with adults the courses, training & jobs wanted	9 6%	63 39%	78 48%	12 7%	162 100%

*A series of single-response questions*

*All 162 students responded to at least one part of the question*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100% across each row*

**Table A16: Years 12/13 Students: Opinions on the nature of Training Credits**

	<b>True</b>	<b>False</b>	<b>Total Respondents</b>
A Training Credit guarantees you a job when you leave school	1 1%	90 99%	91 100%
A Training Credit guarantees you training when you leave school	71 77%	21 23%	92 100%
A Training Credit gives you cash in your pocket to buy training	27 30%	62 70%	89 100%
A Training Credit enables you to discuss & get the training you want	80 88%	11 12%	91 100%
A Training Credit can be used for any sort of training or course	63 69%	28 31%	91 100%
A Training Credit can only be used for some approved training	30 33%	61 67%	91 100%

*A series of single-response questions*

*92 students responded to at least one part of the question*

*70 students made no response to any part*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100% across each row*

**Table A17: Years 12/13 Students: Knowledge of Training Credits**

	Number	%
A great deal	1	1
Quite a lot	39	42
Not very much	45	49
Hardly anything	7	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>100</b>

*A single-response question*

*Missing data = 70*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100%*

**Table A18: Years 12/13 Students: Influence of Training Credits on future plans**

	Yes	No	Total Respondents
Make you think more seriously about training?	39 43%	52 57%	91 100%
Make you keen to leave f/t education at 16?	11 12%	80 88%	91 100%
Make you realise the importance of qualifications?	60 66%	31 34%	91 100%
Make you feel able to have more control over your training?	54 61%	35 39%	89 100%
Make you think more about which job or career to choose?	32 35%	59 65%	91 100%

*A series of single-response questions*

*91 students responded to at least one part of the question*

*71 students made no response to any part*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100% across each row*

**Table A19: Years 12/13 Students: Post-16 plans**

	Number	%
F/t course	94	59
Job + training	31	20
Job no training	4	3
Training scheme	2	1
Something else	2	1
Still undecided	25	16
Total	158	100

*A single-response question*

*Missing data = 4*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100%*

**Table A20: Years 12/13 Students: Sufficient help received from schools in preparing for future**

	Number	%
Yes	89	56
No	21	13
Partly	50	31
Total	160	100

*A single-response question*

*Missing data = 2*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100%*

**Table A21: Years 12/13 Students: Further help needed**

	Respondents	
	Number	%
More information on college course	9	16
More information on jobs	3	5
More information on other youth training	1	2
More discussion/interviews	4	7
More A level information	8	14
More career advice generally	12	21
What to do if fail exams	1	2
Other relevant	12	21
Irrelevant	13	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>100</b>

*A multiple-response question*

*Missing data = 104*

*Students could give more than one response, so percentages will not sum to 100%*

**Table A22: Years 12/13 Students: Sources of information**

	Respondents	
	Number	%
Parents/relatives	4	16
Friends	18	72
TV, radio, papers	4	16
Employer	2	8
FE college etc.	4	16
Other source	4	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

*A multiple-response question*

*Missing data = 137*

*Students could give more than one response, so percentages will not sum to 100%*

**Table A23: Employers Surveyed - Distribution by SIC**

	TC Users		Non-TC Users	
	Number	%	Number	%
Agriculture	6	4	4	3
Energy/water	2	1		
Extractive	2	1		
Metal goods/vehicles	17	11	12	8
Other manufacturing	13	8	12	8
Construction	8	5	1	1
Distribution	53	33	58	39
Transport	7	4	4	3
Financial	21	13	29	20
Other services	30	19	28	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>100</b>

*A single-response question*

*Missing data = 4*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100%*

**Table A24: Employers (TC Users): Number of employees**

	Number	%
1 to 25	109	68
26 to 50	14	9
51 to 100	13	8
101 to 200	8	5
201 to 500	8	5
More than 500	8	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100</b>

*A single-response question*

*Missing data = 0*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100%*



**Table A25: Employers (TC Users): SIC Classification**

	Number	%
Agriculture	6	4
Energy/water	2	1
Extractive	2	1
Metal goods/vehicles	17	11
Other manufacturing	13	8
Construction	8	5
Distribution	53	33
Transport	7	4
Financial	21	13
Other services	30	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>100</b>

*A single-response question*

*Missing data = 1*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100%*

**Table A26: Employers (TC Users): Sources of information about Training Credits scheme**

	Respondents	
	Number	%
Publicity materials from TEC	44	36
Media coverage	7	6
Oral presentations by TEC	9	7
Young people	35	28
Careers service	8	7
Local employer group	4	3
Other	43	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>100</b>

*A multiple-response question*

*Missing data = 37*

*Employers could give more than one response, so percentages will not sum to 100%*

**Table A27: Employers (TC Users): Changes in marketing Training Credits**

	Number	%
Yes	30	19
No	76	48
Don't know	50	31
N/A	3	2
Total	159	100

*A single-response question*

*Missing data = 1*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100%*

**Table A28: Employers (TC Users): Fully understand how Training Credits operates?**

	Number	%
Yes	67	42
No	75	47
Don't know	17	11
N/A	1	1
Total	160	100

*A single-response question*

*Missing data = 0*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100%*

**Table A29: Employers (TC Users): Aspects of Training Credits scheme on which further clarification wanted**

	Respondents	
	Number	%
More details or specific information	27	30
Information on how TCs can be used	5	6
Information on what the scheme hopes to achieve	2	2
Information on financial implications of TC scheme	10	11
Information on dealing with administrative implications	5	6
Information on benefits of the scheme for employers	2	2
General overview of the scheme	25	28
Not heard of TCs, so needs to know everything	4	4
Don't know	3	3
Other valid response	29	33
Invalid response	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>100</b>

*A multiple-response question*

*Missing data = 71*

*Employers could give more than one response, so percentages will not sum to 100%*

**Table A30: Employers (TC Users): Ease of use of Training Credits procedures**

	Number	%
Very easy	83	53
Fairly easy	50	32
Not very easy	9	6
Not at all easy	12	8
N/A	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>100</b>

*A single-response question*

*Missing data = 3*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100%*

**Table A31: Employers (TC Users): Impact of Training Credits on recruitment decisions since Summer 1991**

	Respondents	
	Number	%
General positive comment	6	4
Financial contribution to tuition improved recruitment	14	9
N/A - new business	1	1
N/A - not heard of TCs	3	2
Other valid response	6	4
No impact	120	75
Not sure	10	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>100</b>

*A multiple-response question*

*Missing data = 1*

*Employers could give more than one response, so percentages will not sum to 100%*

**Table A32: Employers (TC Users): Occupations and jobs done by young people on Training Credits**

	Respondents	
	Number	%
Professional Occupations	2	1
Science/Engineering/Computing	16	10
Health Professionals	1	1
Legal/Business/Social Welfare	10	6
Literature/Sport/Arts	2	1
Clerical	28	18
Secretarial	13	8
Skilled Construction	5	3
Skilled Engineering/Metal/Electrical	17	11
Metal Forming/Welding	5	3
Vehicle Trades	24	15
Printing/Woodworking/Food Preparation	14	9
Catering/Travel/Leisure & Recreation	16	10
Health/Childcare Related	7	4
Hair/Beauty/Domestic	9	6
Buyers/Sales Reps.	1	1
Sales Assistants/Checkout Operators	17	11
Ind. Plant Machine Operatives/Assembly	1	1
Transport Operatives/Assembly	1	1
Agriculture/Forestry	7	4
Other Elementary Occupations	9	6
Other valid response	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100</b>

*A multiple-response question*

*Missing data = 0*

*Employers could give more than one response, so percentages will not sum to 100%*

**Table A33: Employers (TC Users): Most attractive way of recruiting young people**

	Number	%
YT	26	16
TC	30	19
Neither	42	26
Not sure	56	35
N/A	5	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>100</b>

*A single-response question*

*Missing data = 1*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100%*

**Table A34: Employers (TC Users): Adequacy of careers education and guidance for giving young people:**

	Yes	No	Don't Know	Total Respondents
General understanding of work	79 50%	43 27%	37 23%	159 100%
Knowledge of jobs in sector	79 50%	49 31%	30 19%	158 100%
Understanding of importance of training	87 55%	36 23%	35 22%	158 100%
Effective job seeking and interview skills	55 35%	59 37%	44 28%	158 100%

*A series of single-response questions*

*159 employers responded to at least one part of the question*

*One employer made no response to any part*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100% across each row*

**Table A35: Employers (TC Users): Impact of Training Credits on careers education and guidance**

	Number	%
A great deal	15	9
Quite a lot	37	23
Not very much	28	18
No impact	36	23
Don't know	41	26
N/A	2	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>100</b>

*A single-response question*

*Missing data = 1*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100%*

**Table A36: Employers (TC Users): Usefulness of Action Plans**

	Number	%
Very useful	14	9
Fairly useful	23	14
Not very useful	13	8
Not at all useful	8	5
Don't know	53	33
N/A	48	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>100</b>

*A single-response question*

*Missing data = 1*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100%*

**Table A37: Employers (TC Users): Different training for Training Credit holders?**

	Number	%
Yes	17	11
No	105	67
Don't know	12	8
N/A	22	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>100</b>

*A single-response question*

*Missing data = 4*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100%*

**Table A38: Employers (TC Users): Formal qualifications obtained by Training Credit holders**

	Respondents	
	Number	%
BTEC	34	22
CGLI (City and Guilds)	46	30
RSA	5	3
ONC	3	2
HNC	6	4
HND	1	1
Professional qualifications	9	6
NVQs	13	8
Subject mentioned but no qualifications	38	25
None	4	3
Don't know	19	12
Other valid response	5	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>100</b>

*A multiple-response question*

*Missing data = 7*

*Employers could give more than one response, so percentages will not sum to 100%*

**Table A39: Employers (TC Users): Formal qualifications obtained by young people without Training Credits**

	Respondents	
	Number	%
BTEC	4	31
CGLI (City and Guilds)	1	8
ONC	1	8
HNC	1	8
NVQs	1	8
Subject mentioned but no qualifications	5	38
Don't know	2	15
Other valid response	2	15
Uncodable	1	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100</b>

*A multiple-response question*

*Missing data = 147*

*Employers could give more than one response, so percentages will not sum to 100%*



**Table A40: Employers (TC Users): Effects of Training Credits on training**

	Yes	Partly	No	Don't Know	N/A	Total Respondents
Increased volume of training	37 23%	7 4%	98 62%	14 9%	3 2%	159 100%
Increased variety of training	28 18%	5 3%	110 69%	13 8%	3 2%	159 100%
Improved quality of training	41 26%	8 5%	93 58%	14 9%	3 2%	159 100%
Made training more structured or systematic	53 33%	12 8%	78 49%	13 8%	3 2%	159 100%

*A series of single-response questions*

*159 employers responded to at least one part of the question*

*One employer made no response to any part*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100% across each row*

**Table A41: Employers (TC Users): Benefits gained by young people from Training Credits**

	Respondents	
	Number	%
Availability of training	14	9
More choice of options on training	7	5
Increased job prospects	28	19
Benefits of a job with training	32	21
Comprehensive training and education	12	8
Young people have more control	5	3
Improved motivation	12	8
Personal development	15	10
Encourages employers to take on young people	3	2
Training leads to accredited qualifications	14	9
Financial incentive	6	4
None/very few	21	14
Don't know	13	9
TC holders treated the same as other employees	6	4
Benefits fewer than for YT	1	1
Other valid response	25	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>100</b>

*A multiple-response question*

*Missing data = 9*

*Employers could give more than one response, so percentages will not sum to 100%*

**Table A42: Employers (TC Users): Do Training Credits increase young people's confidence in discussing the training they want?**

	Number	%
Yes	55	35
No	55	35
Don't know	27	17
N/A	19	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>100</b>

*A single-response question*

*Missing data = 4*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100%*

**Table A43: Employers (TC Users): How Training Credits have affected young people's attitudes to training and employment**

	Respondents	
	Number	%
Recognise the importance of training	15	10
Increased motivation	25	17
Increased awareness opportunities	7	5
Other positive response	18	12
Young people more cynical now	4	3
Other negative response	63	43
Other valid response	24	17
Invalid response	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>100</b>

*A multiple-response question*

*Missing data = 15*

*Employers could give more than one response, so percentages will not sum to 100%*

**Table A44: Employers (TC Users): Benefits gained by company from Training Credits**

	Respondents	
	Number	%
Increased motivation of young people	10	7
Better standard of applicants for jobs	11	7
Access to young trainee without payment	20	14
Fully trained employee after 2 years	7	5
Improved relationship between employees and company	2	1
Improved relationship between employees and local colleges	8	5
Opportunity to recruit young person with qualifications	1	1
Financial	37	25
No benefits	39	26
Don't know	10	7
Other valid response	23	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>100</b>

*A multiple-response question*

*Missing data = 9*

*Employers could give more than one response, so percentages will not sum to 100%*

**Table A45: Employers' views on the adequacy of careers education and guidance for giving young people**

	Yes		No		Not Sure	
	TC-Users	Non-Users	TC-Users	Non-Users	TC-Users	Non-Users
General understanding of work	79 50%	61 41%	43 27%	50 33%	37 23%	39 26%
Knowledge of jobs in sector	79 50%	53 35%	49 31%	70 47%	30 19%	27 18%
Understanding of importance of training	87 55%	88 59%	36 23%	28 19%	35 22%	33 22%
Effective job seeking and interview skills	55 35%	52 35%	59 37%	49 33%	44 28%	48 32%

*A series of single-response questions*

*159 TC-user employers responded to at least one part of the question*

*150 Non-TC user employers responded to at least one part of the question*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100% across each row, for each type of employer*

**Table A46: Employers (Non-TC Users): Number of employees**

	Number	%
1 to 25	102	68
26 to 50	13	9
51 to 100	14	9
101 to 200	7	5
201 to 500	12	8
More than 500	3	2
Total	151	100

*A single-response question*

*Missing data = 0*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100%*

**Table A47: Employers (Non-TC Users): SIC classification**

	Number	%
Agriculture	4	3
Metal goods/vehicles	12	8
Other manufacturing	12	8
Construction	1	1
Distribution	58	39
Transport	4	3
Financial	29	20
Other services	28	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>100</b>

*A single-response question*

*Missing data = 3*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100%*

**Table A48: Employers (Non-TC Users): Recruitment of young people in 1992 compared with 1991**

	Number	%
Gone up	26	17
Same	65	43
Gone down	45	30
Not sure	14	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100</b>

*A single-response question*

*Missing data = 1*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100%*

**Table A49: Employers (Non-TC Users): Effectiveness of careers education and guidance**

	Number	%
Very effective	21	14
Fairly effective	47	31
Not very effective	29	19
Not at all effective	17	11
Don't know	36	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100</b>

*A single-response question*

*Missing data = 1*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100%*

**Table A50: Employers (Non-TC Users): Adequacy of careers education and guidance for giving young people**

	Yes	No	Don't Know	Total Respondents
General understanding of work	61 41%	50 33%	39 26%	150 100%
Knowledge of jobs in sector	53 35%	70 47%	27 18%	150 100%
Understanding of importance of training	88 59%	28 19%	33 22%	149 100%
Effective job seeking and interview skills	52 35%	49 33%	48 32%	149 100%

*A series of single-response questions*

*150 employers responded to at least one part of the question*

*One employer made no response to any part*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100% across each row*

**Table A51: Employers (Non-TC Users): Formal qualifications obtained by young people**

	Respondents	
	Number	%
BTEC	7	9
CGLI (City and Guilds)	26	36
RSA	6	7
ONC	2	2
HNC	3	4
HND	2	2
Professional qualifications	16	20
NVQs	4	5
Subject mentioned but no qualifications	8	10
None	4	5
Don't know	11	14
Other valid response	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100</b>

*A multiple-response question*

*Missing data = 70*

*Employers could give more than one response, so percentages will not sum to 100%*

**Table A52: Employers (Non-TC Users): Fully understand how Training Credits operates?**

	Number	%
Yes	26	27
No	48	51
Don't know	21	22
Total	95	100

*A single-response question*

*Missing data = 56*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100%*

**Table A53: Employers (Non-TC Users): Why not joined Training Credits?**

	Respondents	
	Number	%
Existing training works well	19	20
Company runs own scheme	17	18
Current trainees already in other scheme	4	4
Not relevant to company's needs	7	7
Prefer freedom of choice, no interference	2	2
Recession, no vacancies, financial constraints	17	18
Shortage of suitable young people	4	4
Don't know enough about scheme	10	11
Scheme too complicated	4	4
College courses not appropriate	5	5
Scheme run for benefit of colleges	1	1
Other negative response	7	7
Don't know	7	7
Company currently investigating scheme	6	6
Other valid response	5	5
Total	95	100

*A multiple-response question*

*Missing data = 56*

*Employers could give more than one response, so percentages will not sum to 100%*



**Table A54: Employers (Non-TC Users): What difference would Training Credits make to training and recruitment?**

	Respondents	
	Number	%
Might encourage to take on young people	5	23
Might help recruit suitable young people	3	14
Would affect current training procedures	2	9
Might lead to using different training providers	1	5
Training easier because of outside oversight	1	5
No difference	4	18
Don't know	4	18
Other valid response	2	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100</b>

*A multiple-response question*

*Missing data = 129*

*Employers could give more than one response, so percentages will not sum to 100%*

**Table A55: Employers (Non-TC Users): Possible Incentives to join Training Credits?**

	Respondents	
	Number	%
Increased financial incentives	8	9
More help for small employers	1	1
Scheme simpler to administer	1	1
Greater flexibility	10	11
Face-to-face contact	5	5
More information	13	14
More potential trainees	3	3
Improvement in economic situation	10	11
Negative response - not at present	15	16
Know nothing about TCs	14	15
Don't know	13	14
Other valid response	5	5
Invalid response	4	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>100</b>

*A multiple-response question*

*Missing data = 58*

*Employers could give more than one response, so percentages will not sum to 100%*

**Table A56: TC Users: Knowledge about career options**

	A great deal	Quite a lot	Not very much	Hardly anything	Total Respondents
Courses & study opportunities in further & higher education	24 3%	300 41%	350 48%	49 7%	723 100%
Local training schemes (e.g. Youth Training & apprenticeships)	46 6%	357 49%	275 38%	46 6%	724 100%
Local jobs & careers	49 7%	339 47%	296 41%	41 6%	725 100%
Which jobs offer training	21 3%	269 38%	354 50%	69 10%	713 100%
Finding information about courses, training & jobs	105 15%	429 60%	174 24%	13 2%	721 100%
Making choices & decisions	61 8%	389 54%	245 34%	25 3%	720 100%
Making applications & coping with interviews	118 16%	384 53%	194 27%	27 4%	723 100%
Negotiating about the courses, training & jobs wanted	44 6%	338 47%	289 40%	48 7%	719 100%

*A series of single-response questions*

*727 TC users responded to at least one part of the question*

*4 TC users made no response to any part*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100% across each row*

**Table A57: TC Users: What helped to make post-16 plans and choices?**

	Yes	Partly	No	N/A	Total Respondents
Action Planning	105 18%	217 37%	192 33%	69 12%	583 100%
Individual Career Discussion	187 30%	278 44%	148 23%	19 3%	632 100%

*A pair of single-response questions*

*665 TC users responded to at least one part of the question*

*66 TC users made no response to either part of the question*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100% across each row*

**Table A58: TC Users: How did you hear about Training Credits?**

	Respondents	
	Number	%
Careers officer	535	74
Teacher/tutor	309	43
Friend	64	9
College/training organisation	149	21
Employer	65	9
Written information/video	59	8
Media	41	6
Other	23	3
Total	721	100

*A multiple-response question*

*Missing data = 10*

*TC users could give more than one response, so percentages will not sum to 100%*

**Table A59: TC Users: Influence of Training Credits**

	Yes	No	Total Respondents
Made you keen to find training and employment	437 63%	253 37%	690 100%
Made you think more seriously about training	496 72%	194 28%	690 100%
Made you realise the importance of qualifications	501 72%	192 28%	693 100%
Helped you get the training you wanted	575 81%	131 19%	706 100%
Made you aware that training should be provided for you	561 81%	128 19%	689 100%
Made you feel able to have more control over your training	382 56%	299 44%	681 100%
Made you think about which job or career to choose	371 54%	314 46%	685 100%
Made you feel valued by employer or training provider	373 55%	306 45%	679 100%

*A series of single-response questions*

*722 TC users responded to at least one part of the question*

*9 TC users made no response to any part*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100% across each row*

**Table A60: TC Users: Questions about Training Plans**

	Yes	No	Not Sure	Total Respondents
Drawn up Training Plan?	358 50%	246 34%	114 6%	718 100%
Used school Action Plan	106 28%	201 54%	65 17%	372 100%
Training fit with Training Plan?	299 77%	28 7%	59 15%	386 100%

*A series of single-response questions*

*721 TC users responded to at least one part of the question*

*10 TC users made no response to any part*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100% across each row*

**Table A61: TC Users: Future Plans**

	Number	%
Continue as present	455	65
Move to another same	49	7
Leave for another	71	10
F/t course	29	4
Other	24	3
Not sure	77	11
Total	705	100

*A single-response question*

*Missing data = 26*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100%*

**Table A62: TC Users: Status**

	Number	%
Based with training organisation or college	435	60
Full-time employee with a company	254	35
Part-time employee with a company	13	2
Other	20	3
Total	722	100

*A single-response question*

*Missing data = 9*

*Due to rounding errors, percentages may not sum to 100%*



## Evaluation of the second year of Training Credits

---

Training Credits is one of the major initiatives introduced by the Government to improve training opportunities for young people in the 1990s. Crucial though this policy promises to be, in the way that it entitles and empowers young people to purchase high-quality training, it faces a number of challenges. Attitudes to training have to be changed and the whole culture of skills development needs to be transformed. The new market approach is likely to have a major impact on the content and delivery of post-16 education and training provision, including attainment of the National Education and Training Targets.

This report examines the development and operation of Training Credit schemes in their second year of implementation by assessing the progress and outcome of three of the pilots. It focuses on management of the schemes, including administration, finance and marketing, and devotes chapters to the role and reactions of each of the main stakeholders in Training Credits: young people, employers, training providers, the careers service, and schools. Each chapter ends with an evaluative overview.

The value of this report is that, in the run-up to nationwide implementation of the scheme in 1996, it reviews the progress made so far and considers the impact on employers' and young people's motivation to become involved in training. The authors draw out practical implications for the management and future development of the schemes and the evolution of Training Credits partnerships. Careers education and guidance, action planning and provision for special needs are also discussed.

This publication provides research-based information for policy makers and practitioners in national education and training agencies as well as for TECs, LECs, EBPs, LEAs and the Careers Service who are responsible for meeting the education and training needs of young people.

---

ISBN 07005 1347 7

£8.50