

INTRODUCTION

This report examines the training outcomes for people with disabilities who have left specialist training provision. Specialist training is located in 55 training centres nationally and over 1,962 places are involved. This training has as a key objective the occupational integration of people with disabilities. The rationale for this is stated in the Operational Programme for Employment and Human Resource Development 2000-2006 as follows: *“In terms of social exclusion, particularly access to the labour market, people with disabilities are one of the most disadvantaged groups in society.”* FÁS is committed to providing a more integrated and inclusive approach in vocational training and employment provision for people with disabilities. In part this includes the specialist training providers assisting FÁS in the provision of appropriate vocational training services.

The fieldwork for this follow-up survey of 2001 leavers was carried out in September – November 2002. Similar surveys which monitor training outcomes within specialist training have been conducted in previous years. On the recommendations of a report¹ produced by CAPITA for the CSF Evaluation Unit those participants who drop out of training prior to completion are included in the population frame this year. This survey examines training outcomes for people with disabilities who left or dropped out of training programmes between March and September 2001.

The survey fieldwork was undertaken by the ESRI. This year a response rate of 70% was achieved and it is the highest response rate achieved since 1997. In some instances the base totals (‘n’ amounts) are very small, this should be borne in mind when interpreting the survey findings.

The questionnaire used for this survey was similar to that used in the previous surveys, with some slight amendments made to some questions in order to comply with the CAPITA data template.

The main findings from the 2002 Follow-Up Survey of People with Disabilities are presented in the text to follow.

SURVEY FINDINGS

SECTION 1: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

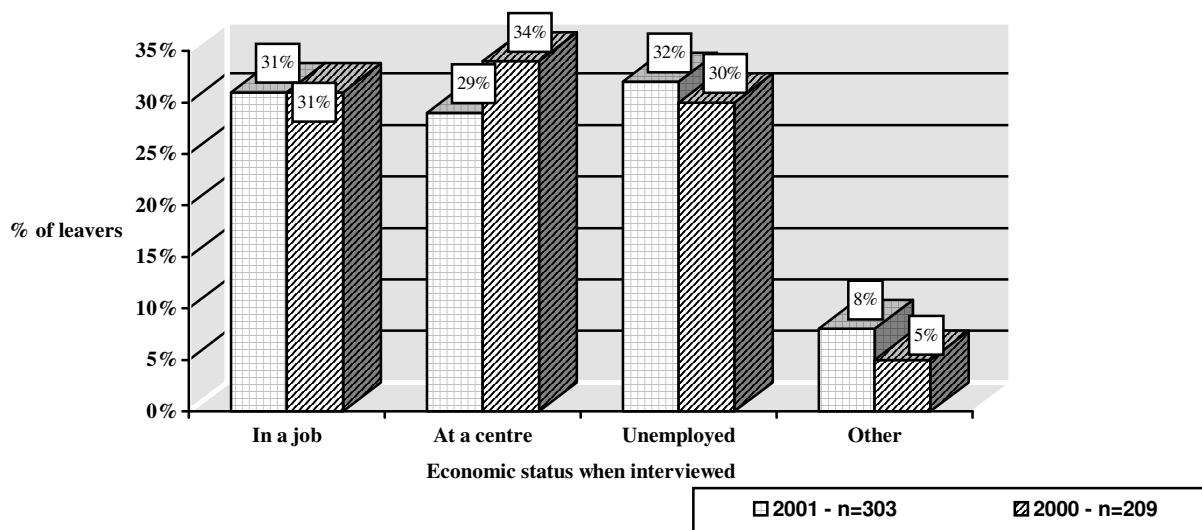
- The proportion of leavers who were in a job² at the time of the survey stood at 31%, males were more likely (32%) than their female counterparts (29%) to be in a job.
- One-third of leavers in a job were in unsubsidised employment. The proportion of leavers in a job includes 35% on Disability Allowance + disregard, 13% on Community Employment, 12% on Employment Support Schemes and 6% on some other scheme.
- Of those employed at the time of the survey 61% were employed in the South & East region and 39% in the Border Midland and West region.
- The rate of dropout for people with disabilities in specialist training is low. Overall 4% dropped out of training, this rises to 7% for unemployed leavers.
- The proportion of leavers at home/unemployed (32%) at the time of the survey was similar to the previous year.

¹ CAPITA (March, 2002). *Review of Arrangements for the Design of Follow-Up Participants Surveys under the Employment and Human Resources Development OP*. Final Report

² Includes people in employment, on various schemes - e.g. ‘DA + disregard’, Employment Support Scheme, and a small proportion in voluntary jobs.

- Of the 40% of leavers who were at home or unemployed or studying at the time of interview 18% said they had a job since they finished training.
- The proportion of leavers in training, at a training centre was 29%.

Figure 1. Economic Status of Leavers.



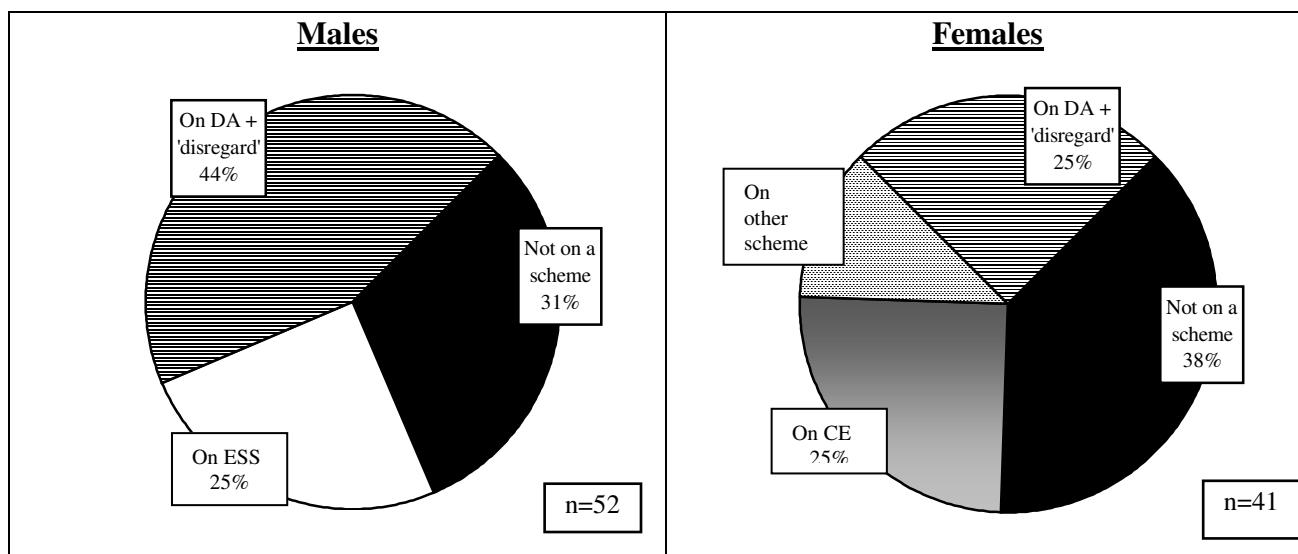
SECTION 2: LEAVERS IN A JOB

- Of those leavers in a job less than a half (47%) had a contract which they signed.
- A high proportion (81%) of leavers in a job were in their first job since leaving training.
- Nearly two-thirds (64%) of leavers in a job had started their first job within 3 months of leaving training.
- Thirty per cent of the leavers in a job got their jobs through the training centre they attended. One-fifth (20%) said that they got their jobs through FAS and one-fifth said they got their jobs through family and friends. A further 15% said they called to see their employer on their own initiative.
- Nearly 60% of leavers in a job told their employer about their disability before they started the job. A minority (10%) said that disclosure of their disability had a positive effect on the way they were treated, the rest said that it did not effect the way they were treated.

Employment schemes

- By their own assessment, 58% of the leavers in a job said that they were not employed under a scheme. Nearly two-thirds of this group were in the South and East region.
- There is a difference between gender among leavers in open employment (i.e. not on a scheme) with 31% of males in open employment compared to 38% of their female counterparts.
- Of those leavers in a job 23% in the South & East region were in receipt of Disability Allowance + ‘disregard’ compared to 32% in the Border Midland and West region.

Figure 2.1. ‘Were 2001 leavers in paid jobs on an employment scheme?’ by gender



Earnings

- The proportion of leavers whose basic pay before tax was €70 a week or less, (15%), is substantially higher than the 6% recorded in the last survey. Fifty-two per cent of leavers had a basic pay of €200 a week or more. A quarter of leavers’ basic pay was more than €300 per week.
- Overall the average gross weekly wage for leavers in a job was €217.

Basic Weekly Pay before Tax for Leavers in a Job	
	%
€60 or less	13
€61- €120	14
€121- €200	21
€201 - €300	27
€300 or more	25
Total	100

Nature of job

- Nearly a quarter (24%) of all leavers in a job worked in the wholesale and retail trade industry. A further 22% worked in the Education and Health Sector and 12% in Hotels and Restaurants. Nearly one-third of the leavers in a job were in jobs related to craft and trade. A further 30% were in clerical and secretarial positions.
- Sixty-one per cent of the leavers in a paid job were in permanent positions.
- The proportion of leavers in jobs who were in paid full-time jobs has increased to 57% from 43% the previous year. Part-time work decreased to 43% from 52% of jobs over the same period.

Job Description	
	%
Clerical & Secretarial	30
Craft, trade & related	32
Sales	13
Personal & protective Service	9
Managers & Administrators	5
Plant & machine operatives	6
Other	5
Total	100

Main Business of Company	
	%
Wholesale & Retail Trade	24
Education & Health	22
Hotels and Restaurants	12
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	6
Other production industries	10
Construction	5
Financial & other Business Services	7
Public Administration & Defence	9
Transport, storage & communication	5
Total	100

Usefulness of training

- Nearly 70% of leavers in a job said that they found it easier to get a job because they had attended a training centre.
- Two-thirds of leavers in a job said that they had the skills required when starting their jobs. One in five leavers said they had *some* of the skills required.
- Over half of the leavers in a job said that they used the skills learned at the training centre ‘a lot’ or ‘all of the time’ in the job.

SECTION 3: UNEMPLOYED LEAVERS

- Two-thirds of unemployed leavers said that they had not worked since leaving the training centre. This is lower than the 74% recorded in the previous years survey.
- There was an even distribution of age among leavers who were unemployed.
- More male (73%) than female (58%) unemployed leavers, had not worked since leaving training.
- The most commonly explored routes by which unemployed leavers who had had a job obtained their job were: through FÁS (30%), through answering an advertisement (15%), through an agency (10%), or through family and friends (10%).
- Of the unemployed leavers who had worked since leaving training, nearly two-thirds started within two months of leaving the training centre.

Usefulness of training

- Of the 21 leavers who had worked since leaving training, 78% said that they found it easier to get their most recent job because they had attended a training centre – this compared with over half of unemployed leavers in the previous survey. The main reason given for this was the skills learnt in the training centre (58%).

Reasons for leaving jobs

- Unemployed leavers who had worked since leaving training left their most recent jobs for similar reasons to those of previous leavers, including, the temporary nature of the job (33%), dissatisfaction with the type of work (17%), and low pay (28%).

Current and preferred activities

- Over a half (53%) of leavers who were unemployed when surveyed said that they spent their time carrying out general household activities, while 12% said that they watched TV, listened to music, read or enjoyed a sport or hobby.
- Less than half (44%) of unemployed leavers said that they would prefer to be in a job. More females (50%) than males (38%) wanted to be in employment. Of those who said they would prefer to be in a job they all said they had tried to get a job.
- Over half (54%) of the unemployed leavers who had not tried to get a job cited medical reasons as the main reason preventing them from doing so. A further 17% said that there were no jobs available.

SECTION 4: LEAVERS AT A CENTRE

- For those leavers who were at a centre at the time of interview 59% said that they started attending the centre to train for a job, 41% said that they attended due to a disability or for rehabilitation and over a quarter said they attended because they were sent or to pass the time.
- Eighty-seven per cent said that a staff member of the training centre talks to them about how they are getting on with their training. In the majority of cases (72%) the staff member was the Trainer/Supervisor. A half of those at a centre said that they talk at least once a week, a further 38% said they talk once or more a month, for the remainder it was twice a year or less. This level of contact was satisfactory for over four-fifths of those at a centre.
- Sixty per cent of those attending a centre were in receipt of disability allowance, 15% were in receipt of disability benefit, 9% were in receipt of invalidity pension and 16% said they were receiving some other benefit – the type of benefit was not specified.

SECTION 5: VIEWS ON TRAINING RECEIVED³Reason for attending training

- In the case of leavers in a job and unemployed leavers, 70% and 55% respectively said that they started attending a training centre in order to train for a job/trade.
- A high proportion of leavers in a job (93%) and unemployed leavers (87%) felt that they would get something out of attending training. Over a half (53%) of leavers in a job said that they expected to get a job or learn a trade as a result of attending. Over two-thirds felt they would gain new job skills and over a half also felt it would improve their confidence.
- Thirty-six per cent of unemployed leavers said that they expected to get a job or learn a trade. Unemployed leavers also expected to make friends (46%) and improve their general well-being.
- Unemployed leavers were more likely (50%) than leavers in a job (36%) to have disliked something about attending the training centre.

³ This section focuses on people who were in a job or at home/unemployed at the time of the survey and who gave their views on the training they had received. It does not refer to those leavers who were back in a training centre when they were interviewed.

Learning of skills

- Ninety-one per cent of leavers in a job and unemployed leavers said that they learnt some skills while attending the centre.
- Over two-thirds of leavers in a job and unemployed leavers who said that they had learnt skills while attending training felt that these skills had been of use to them since leaving the centre.

Certification

- Leavers in a job were more likely (70%) than unemployed leavers (51%) to have received a certificate for the training they attended.
- Twenty per cent of leavers in a job and unemployed leavers received a National Skills Certificate, 18% received a Specific Skills Certificate and a further 19% received an Introductory Vocational Skills Certificate. Over 40% of leavers in a job and unemployed leavers received some other certificate (e.g. an attendance certificate).
- More unemployed leavers (55%) than leavers in a job (31%) received attendance certificates.

Reasons for leaving training

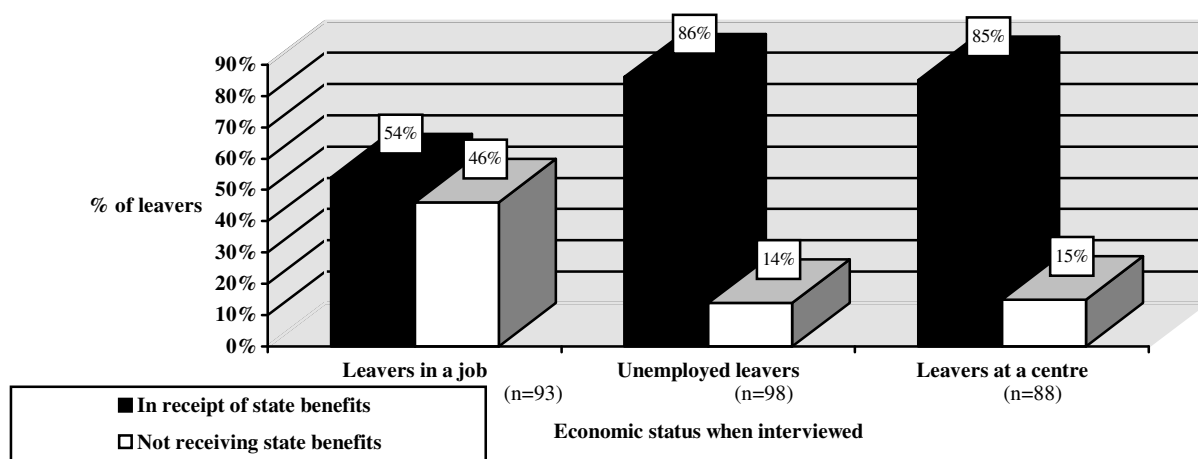
- A quarter of leavers in a job said that they left training to start a job. Males (54%) were more likely than their female counterparts (46%) to have left training for this reason.
- Unemployed leavers were much more likely (20%) than those in a job (1%) to have left training because of medical reasons. Unemployed leavers were also more likely than those in a job to have left because they were bored or did not like the centre.
- Among the unemployed leavers, males (27%) were more likely than females (21%) to have left training for medical reasons. Males (13%) were also more likely than females (2%) to leave because they got bored or did not like the centre.

SECTION 6⁴: BENEFITS AND ALLOWANCES

- Over a half (52%) of leavers were in receipt of Disability Allowance (DA), 11% were in receipt of Disability Benefit and 10% Invalidity Pension.
- Of the 75 leavers who were not in receipt of any state benefits, 57% were in a job.
- At the time of the survey over four-fifths of unemployed leavers (86%) and leavers who were at a centre (85%) were in receipt of state benefits. Over half (54%) of leavers in a job were receiving state benefits (Figure 5.1); of these 82% were receiving DA + 'disregard', 10% Unemployment Benefit/Assistance, 6% Invalidity Pension and 2% Disability Benefit.
- The 54% of leavers in a job who were receiving state benefits compares with 68% of leavers in a job in the previous survey who were in receipt of state benefits.
- Seventy-eight per cent of leavers said they held a medical card, and 72% had a travel pass.

⁴ Reference to 'state benefits' in this section does not include secondary benefits such as a medical card or travel pass.

Figure 5.1. Economic status by receipt of state benefits (2001)



SECTION 7: CONCLUDING COMMENTS

- Thirty-one per cent of leavers were in a job when interviewed six to twelve months after leaving training. The proportion of leavers at a training centre was 29%. The proportion of leavers at home/unemployed at the time of the survey was 32%, and 8% of leavers were engaged in other activities.
- The rate of dropout for people with disabilities in specialist training is low. Overall 4% dropped out of training, this rises to 7% for unemployed leavers.
- Of those leavers employed at the time of the survey 61% were employed in the South and East Region and 39% in the Border Midland and West region.
- Of those leavers in a job less than half (47%) had a contract which they signed.
- One-third of leavers in a job were in unsubsidised employment. The proportion of leavers in a job includes 35% on Disability Allowance + disregard, 13% on Community Employment, 12% on Employment Support Schemes and 6% on some other scheme.
- Fifty-two per cent of leavers had a basic pay of €200 a week or more.
- The proportion of leavers in jobs who were in paid full-time jobs has increased to 57% from 43% the previous year. Part-time work decreased to 43% from 52% of jobs over the same period.
- As with the previous surveys, the training received while attending a centre was viewed in a positive light, with the majority of leavers in a job and unemployed leavers alike noting that they had learnt some skills. Consistent with other years a higher proportion of leavers in a job, compared to unemployed leavers, found the skills learnt useful.
- Less than half of unemployed leavers said that they would prefer to be in a job. This client group will require specific attention in the future. The challenge will be to ensure more accurate

assessment of this group's suitability to the labour market and following from this to facilitate the achievement of positive outcomes for this group.

- Twenty per cent of leavers in a job and unemployed leavers received a National Skills Certificate, 18% received a Specific Skills Certificate and a further 19% received an Introductory Vocational Skills Certificate.
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