

TRAINING NEEDS IN THE FURTHER EDUCATION SECTOR – MIDDLE MANAGERS

A report of survey-based research into the training needs of middle managers who work in post-16 education and training organisations in England

BMG RESEARCH



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KEY POINTS

Introduction

The specification for this study – an off-shoot of a major survey of the training needs of staff in the FE sector – asked:

- What is the quality of training received by middle managers in the sector?
- How satisfied were middle managers in the sector with their training?
- What is the scale of future training needs for middle managers in the sector?
- What types of future training are required?

This report includes a variety of information which bears directly or indirectly on these questions. Summary answers to each of them are set out below.

The quality of training received by middle managers

A high proportion of middle managers in the FE sector, 94%, received training in the last year, most frequently in leadership and management skills. However, some middle managers still perceive there are limits to the quality of training they received (though these limits are not more frequent for middle managers than for FE sector staff in general):

- 22% of middle managers did not receive all the training and development they wanted and needed.
- 32% said they were required to undertake some training and development which had little value to them.
- 36% said some or all of the training they undertook was ‘tick box’ training.
- Directly on the quality of training they received, 10% of middle managers said that most or all of the training they received was not of high quality (this dissatisfied proportion was a little lower than the average, 12%, for all FE sector staff).

Satisfaction with training

Survey respondents were not asked directly how satisfied they were with the training they received. As above, however, a number of indicators suggest some limits on their satisfaction. A further set of indicators, of middle managers’ views on their organisations as environments for training, also suggest some limitations in their satisfaction with their training (although, again, middle managers were actually a little more positive on these indicators than the average number of the FE sector workforce). Thus:

- 23% of middle managers do not believe their organisation has a training strategy which

is clear to them.

- 14% report that their organisation does not have a means of identifying their training needs.
- 13% report that their organisation does not have a clear route by which they can request training.
- 14% do not believe that their organisation has a supportive attitude to training.
- 27% report that their organisation does not allow employees to set aside time for training.

In a further analysis, middle managers revealed that their *most* valued forms of training were that in leadership and management skills, that related to Prevent, or that which enhanced their teaching competences or their skills in dealing with mental health issues. Their *least* valued forms of training included Prevent training (this being mentioned with relative frequency in rankings both of most and least valuable training) and training related to administrative matters or to Health and Safety.

Managers were more likely to rate training as 'most valuable' if it led to qualifications, was of longer average duration, and was externally delivered.

What is the scale of future training needs for middle managers in the sector?

- 78% of institutions anticipate that middle managers in their organisation will need training next year.
- 75% of middle managers said that training in the next year would be valuable to them.

What types of future training are required?

- 75% of institutions believe that training in leadership and management skills will be required in the next year (though this finding is a generality and does not imply that all or any specific proportion of such training would need to be directed to middle managers particularly).
- The 75% of middle managers who want training in the near future report however, that, though there is demand for a wide variety of training, demand is greatest for:
 - Leadership and management training (51% of those who want to train).
 - Training related to changes in public policy, procedures, and funding (28%).
 - Training in use of digital and other new technologies (25%).
 - Training in soft skills (21%).
 - Training related to well-being and mental health, in business and commercial skills, and that related to administrative procedures (each 20%).

Summary

There is a high level of participation in training by middle managers.

However, a minority of middle managers express some dissatisfaction with the volume, value, and quality of training supplied to them and reveal limitations in the training environment within their employing organisations. Middle managers' levels of dissatisfaction are, however, no greater and are on some measures, less than those of FE sector staff in general.

There is substantial demand both from institutions and from middle managers themselves, for further training of middle managers, with a key element being demand for training in leadership and management skills.

CHAPTER 1

Purposes of the study

A substantial survey-based research study undertaken on behalf of the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) has examined the training needs of managers and staff of the post-16 Further Education (FE) sector in England. This study involved 481 structured telephone interviews and 50 in-depth interviews with training providers, and an on-line survey of 2,366 individuals working in the FE sector. The study has been reported elsewhere.¹

However, as well as examining the training needs of the FE sector workforce in general, the research also allows a particular examination of the training needs of those staff in the sector who work in middle management roles in the sector. The results of this examination are set out in this report.

Method of the study

Basic statistical material for this examination of the training needs of middle managers is drawn from two sources.

Firstly, in the survey of individuals, 472 respondents identified themselves as ‘middle and junior managers’ rather than as ‘middle managers’ specifically. The responses of this group of respondents are used as a proxy for middle managers as ‘middle managers’ are not specifically identifiable within the ‘middle and junior manager’ group.

Secondly, in the survey of institutions, a number of questions concerned the delivery of leadership and management training and/or the training needs of, again, ‘middle and junior managers’ as a combined group. Responses to these questions contribute further intelligence to this report.

Some characteristics of middle and junior managers

Before considering the training needs of middle and junior managers, a number of descriptive characteristics which apply to them (derived from the survey of individuals) can be set out:

- 14% and 43% of middle and junior managers say that responsibilities for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) form respectively, a major or minor part of their role (compared with averages for all FE sector staff of 16% and 40%).
- Only 4% of middle and junior managers say that teaching learners directly comprises *all* of their job role (compared with an average of 32% for all FE sector staff) though a further 54% say that teaching is a smaller part of their role.

¹ Training needs in the Further Education sector, BMG Research for ETF, April 2018

- Nevertheless, 87% of middle and junior managers have a teaching qualification at level 5 or above (71% average for all FE sector staff).
- And 47% of middle and junior managers have the status of qualified Teacher in Learning and Skills (QTLS) (46% average for all FE sector staff).
- 75% of middle and junior managers have worked in the FE sector for 10 years or more (64% average for all FE sector staff).
- 47% of middle and junior managers are members of a professional body (49% average for all FE sector staff).

CHAPTER 2: CURRENT TRAINING OF MIDDLE MANAGERS

Employment and training of middle managers

Overall, 90% of institutions which were surveyed reported that they employed staff in a ‘middle and junior management’ group. This group was described to respondents as ‘managers of departments, divisions, units, teams, or functions but not the senior management team’.

The proportion of institutions which employed middle and junior managers varied according to the average size of institutions. Thus, 98% of Colleges and 91% of Local Authority training organisations employed middle and junior managers but only 67% of ITPs and 61% of charitable and voluntary training organisations did so.

As Table 1 (following) shows, a high proportion, 94%, of all organisations which employed middle and junior managers supplied training and development to them in the past year. This proportion was generally high for all types of organisation but was a little lower (at 82%) in the case of charitable and voluntary organisations. Table 1 also shows that middle and junior managers were a little more likely to receive training and development than were members of *senior* management teams.

Table 1: Groups of staff for which organisations provided training and development in the past year

	Total	Colleges	Local Authorities	ITPs Prime contractors	ITPs Sub-contractors	Charitable/ Voluntary
Members of the governance body of the organisation/ Non-employed governors or trustees/ Non-executive owners or board directors	86%	90%	65%	75%	70%	68%
Senior Management Team	91%	92%	88%	90%	85%	83%
Middle and junior managers	94%	94%	92%	96%	89%	82%
Advanced practitioners	93%	95%	93%	91%	90%	63%
Lecturers, teachers or tutors	94%	94%	95%	97%	96%	83%
Specialist assessors, verifiers, trainers or instructors	94%	95%	94%	98%	96%	84%
Careers guidance specialists	91%	93%	93%	91%	83%	61%
Specialist coaches, mentors and staff trainers	93%	94%	96%	96%	90%	76%
Teaching, learning, and classroom assistants	92%	92%	92%	98%	93%	88%

Sample base varies

Q18. Does your organisation have people who fit into each of the following categories? / Q19. And which of these groups have your organisation supported or provided training and development to in the past academic year?

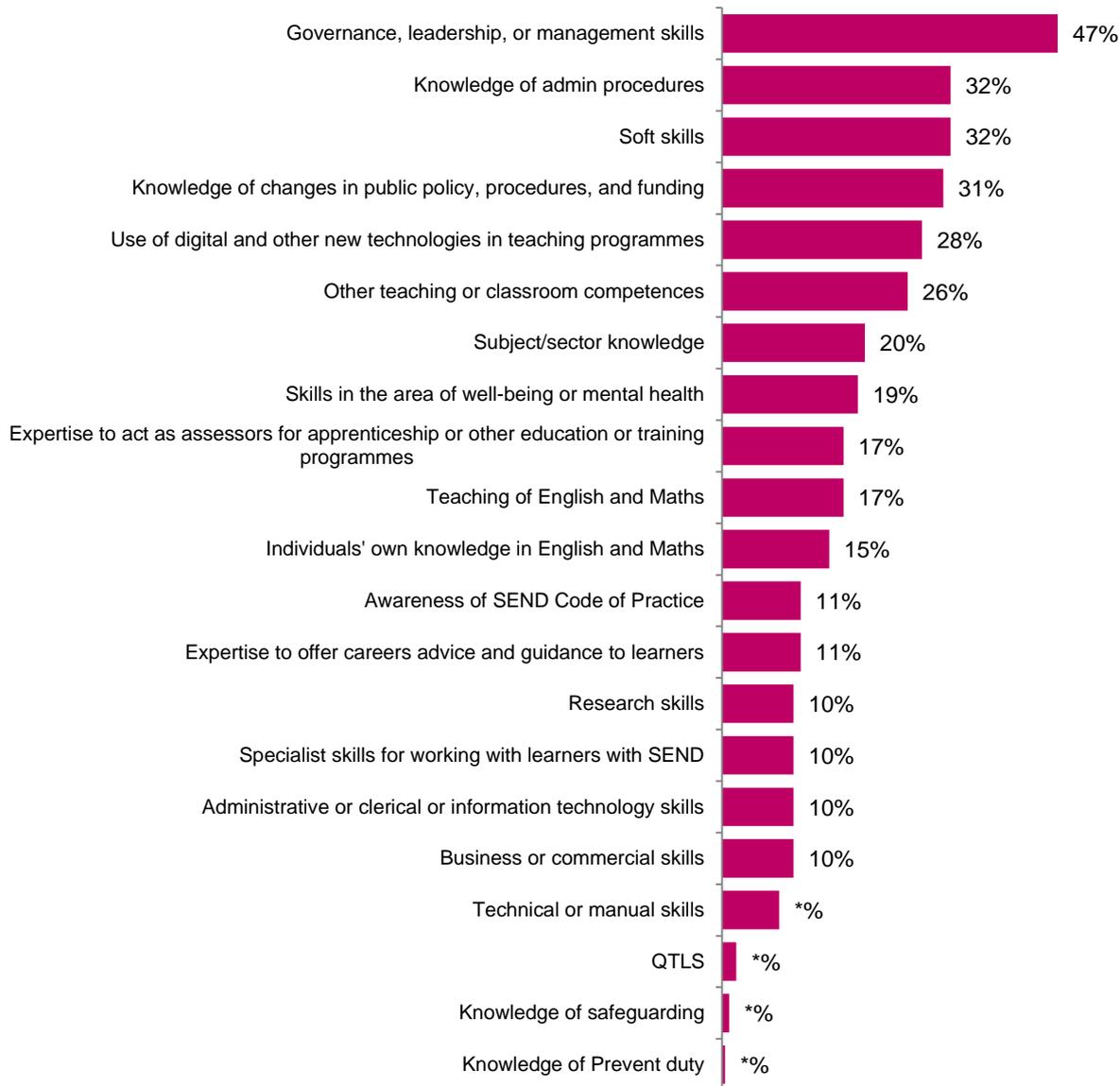
Types of training

The types of training which were undertaken by middle and junior managers are shown in Figure 1 (following).

Most of these types of training were broadly in line (in terms of the proportions of individuals which received them) with those received by other types of staff in the sector. However, some types were more frequently received by middle and junior managers than by the average member of the FE workforce.

As might be expected, training in governance, leadership or management skills was more frequent for middle managers. This type of training was received by 47% of those middle and junior managers who received any training but only by an average of 25% of all FE sector staff who received training. Some other comparisons are: training to improve knowledge of changes in public policy (31% of middle and junior managers, 25% average) and training to enhance soft skills (32% of middle and junior managers, 26% average).

Figure 1: Training and development undertaken by middle and junior managers in the past year



Sample base: Middle and junior managers (455)

Q14. Thinking about the training and development you have undertaken in the past academic year, did any of

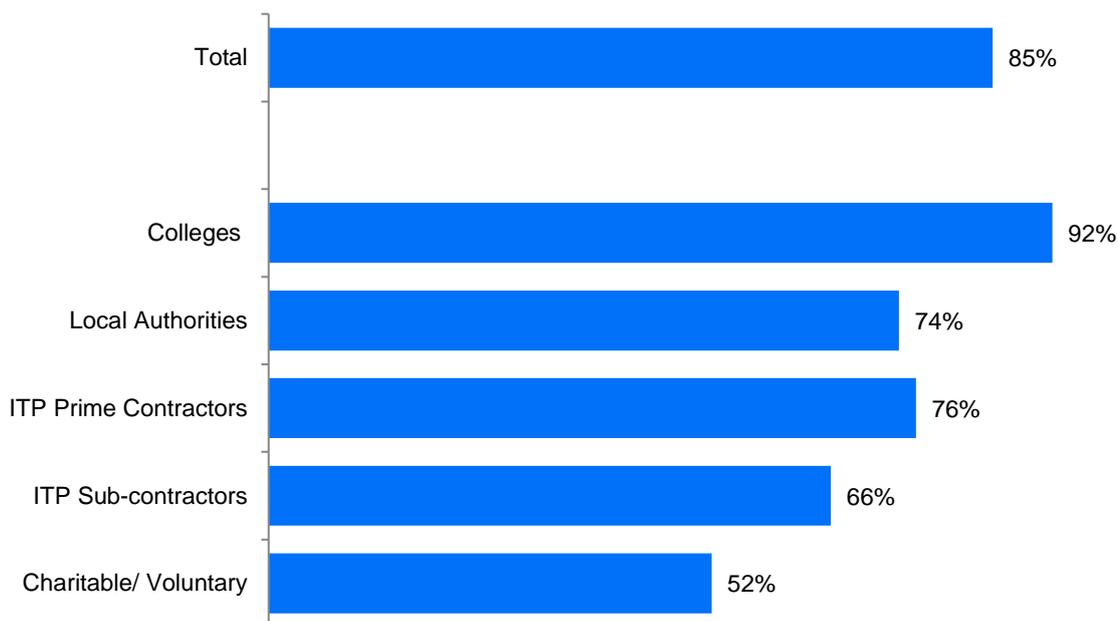
Sample base: Middle and junior managers (455)

Q14. Thinking about the training and development you have undertaken in the past academic year, did any of it have the following aims?

The development of leadership and management skills

The survey of institutions shows that 85% of them supplied training which sought to develop governance, leadership or management skills in the past year (see Figure 2 following) – more frequently in Colleges and Local Authority training organisations than in Independent Training Providers and charitable and voluntary organisations – though it should be noted that this training could apply to any staff group not specifically to middle and junior managers.

Figure 2: Institutions that have sought to enhance or develop governance, leadership or management skills in the past year

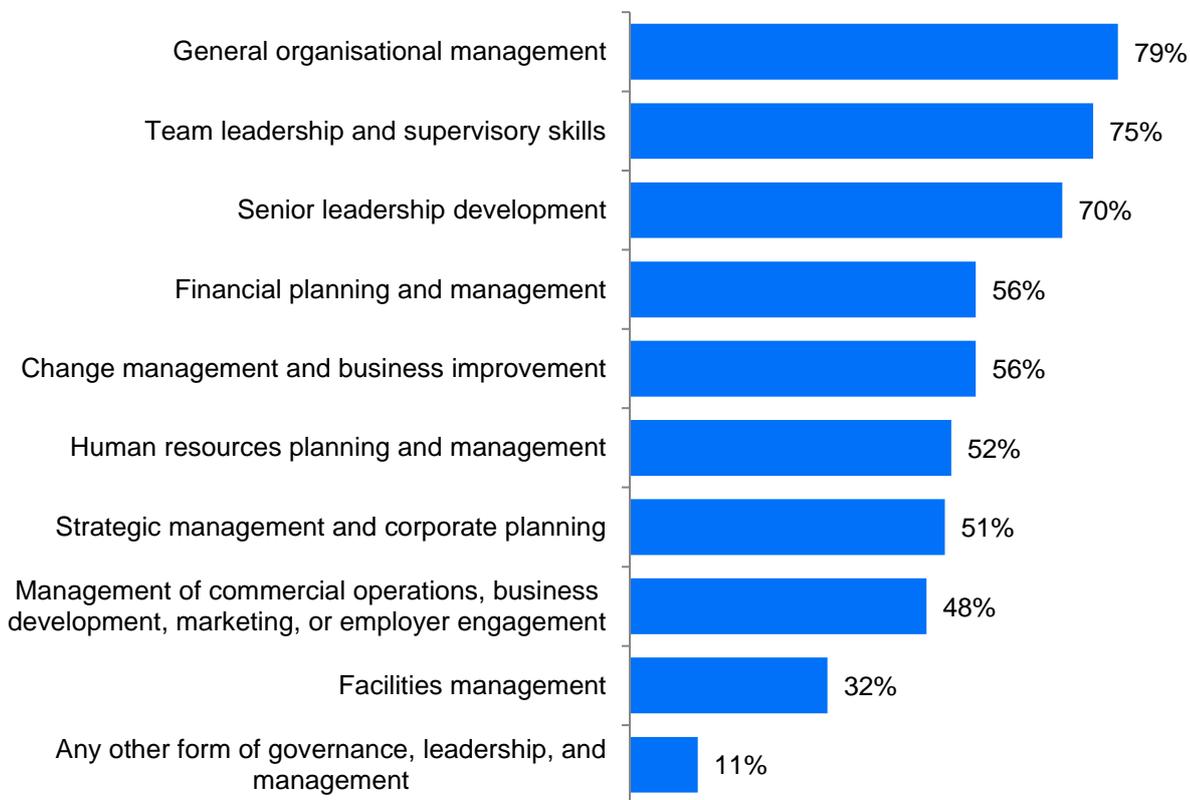


Sample base: Institutions (473)

Q11. Which of the following types of improved competence or areas of knowledge has your training and development sought to enhance or develop in the past academic year? (Governance, leadership and management skills)

The types of this leadership and management training which were supplied are shown in Figure 3 (following). This Figure identifies that a broad spectrum of training related to different levels of leadership and management and of both a general and specific character was supplied.

Figure 3: Governance, leadership and management skills developed where training and development has taken place



Sample base: Institutions (354)

Q13. You said that your institution has facilitated training and development in governance, leadership and management skills. Could you say whether that was in any of the following areas?

However, the survey of *individuals* reveals more precise information on middle and junior managers' receipt of leadership and management training.

Thus, 97% of middle and junior managers received some form of training and development in the past year. Nearly half of these, 47% received training to enhance their leadership and management skills.

Of those who received this type of training, more than half (53%, or around a quarter of all middle and junior managers) received training in general organisational management while substantial proportions also received training in team leadership and supervisory skills, in change management and business improvement, and in strategic management and corporate planning (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Areas where governance, leadership and management training and development was undertaken – Middle and junior managers’ perspective



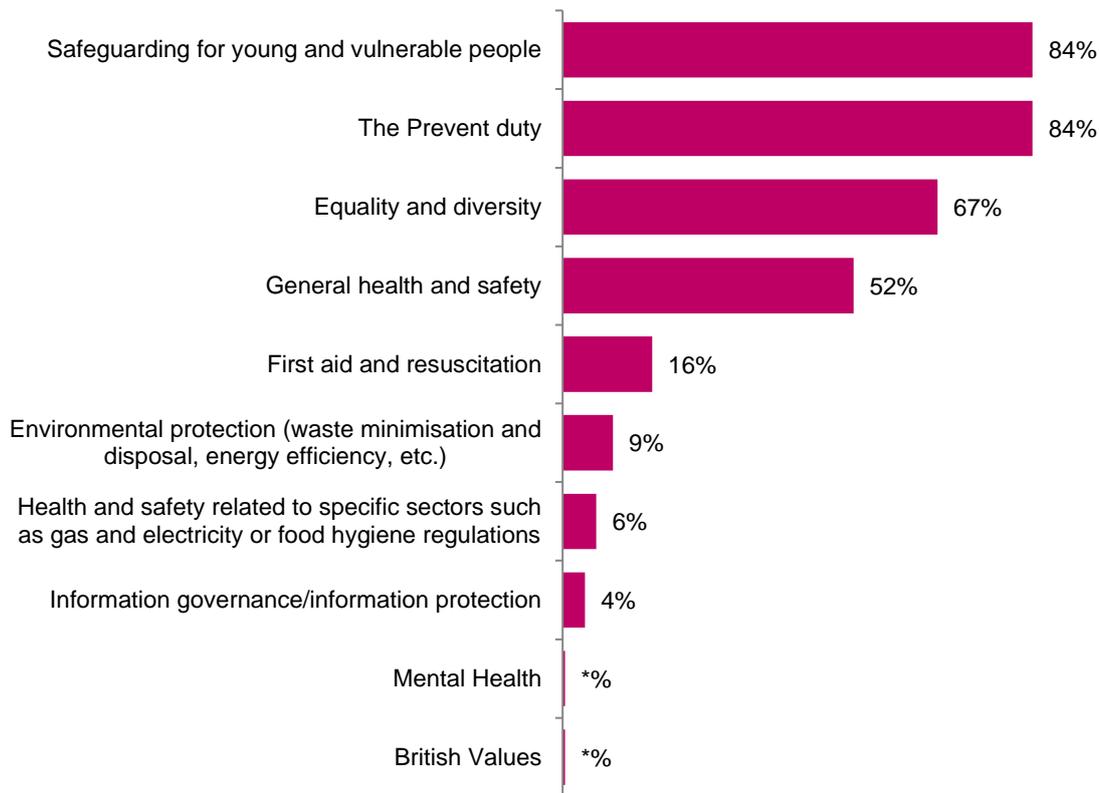
Sample base: Middle and junior managers (205)

Q16. In which areas of governance, leadership and management did you undertake training and development?

Mandatory training of middle and junior managers

A further figure, Figure 5, shows that middle and junior managers were also likely to undertake a variety of forms of mandatory training. This likelihood was slightly above-average for all staff in the FE sector. For example, 84%, 84%, 67%, and 52% of middle and junior managers received respectively, safeguarding, Prevent, equality and diversity, and health and safety training. The corresponding averages for all FE sector staff were 80%, 80%, 66%, and 47% - a little lower than for middle and junior managers in each case.

Figure 5: Mandatory training undertaken by middle and junior managers in the past year



Sample base: Middle and junior managers (455)

Q17. Could you also indicate which, if any, forms of mandatory training you undertook in the last academic year?

Volume of training of middle and junior managers

Middle and junior managers undertook averages of 51 training hours and 9.4 training episodes (with average hours and average number of training episodes being highest for middle and junior working for Independent Training Providers). (see Table 2 following). However, it should be noted that staff across all job roles for ITPs have a higher number of training hours and training episodes compared to their equivalent roles in other provider types.

These averages compare positively with those for all FE sector staff (44 training hours and 8.6 training episodes).

Table 1: Mean hours of training and number of episodes of training received in the past year – Middle and junior managers’ perspective

	All Middle Managers	Local Colleges	Local Authorities	ITPs Prime contractors	Charitable/Voluntary	Others	All staff
Mean hours of training in the last year	51	49	39	68	44	51	44
Sample base	472	206	139	46	21	23	2367
Mean number of separate episodes of training or development you undertook in the last year	9	10	9	11	6	10	9
Sample base	455	199	136	45	21	22	2184

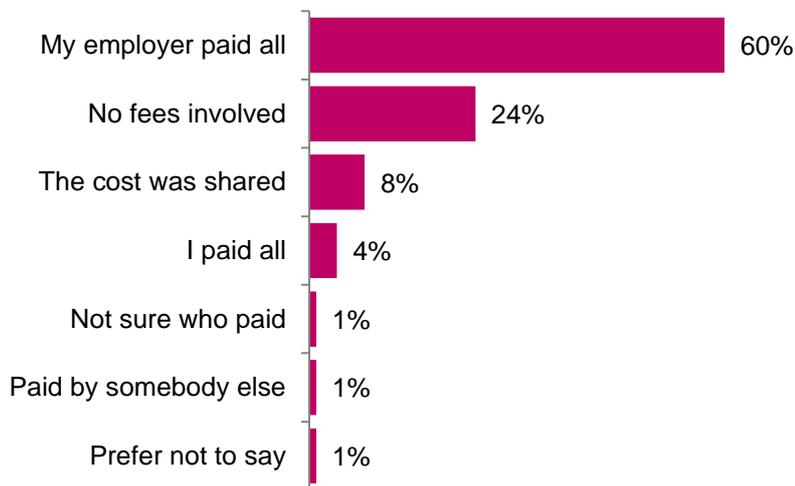
Q18. In total, how many hours of training and development would you estimate you received in the last academic year?

Q25. Could you say how many separate episodes of training or development you undertook in the last year?

Funding and initiating training

Figure 6 (following) shows who paid for the training received by middle and junior managers. Relatively little (4% compared with an average of 8% for all FE sector staff) was paid for by these managers themselves; and, while the proportion of all FE sector staff who said their employer paid all was 48%, a higher proportion, 60%, of these managers said their employer paid for all their training.

Figure 6: Payment of training and development fees – Middle and junior managers’ perspective

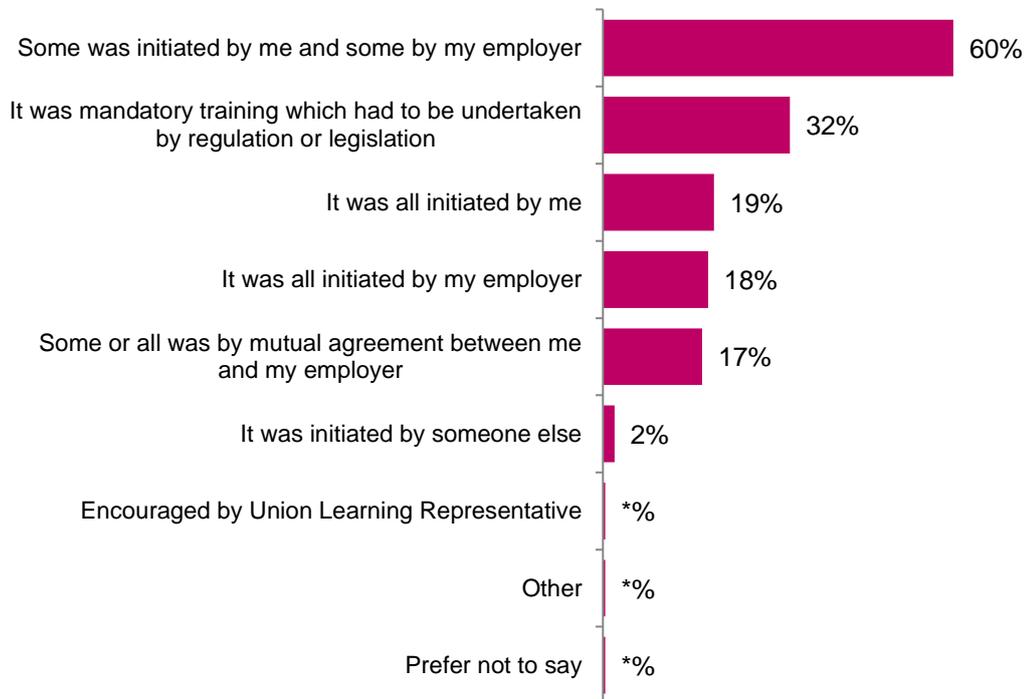


Sample base: Middle and junior managers (455)

Q19. If any of your training and development involved payment of fees to training and development supplier(s) outside your organisation, who paid these fees?

While middle and junior managers were less likely to pay for their training, they were also less likely to say that their employer initiated it (18% against an all-sector staff average of 28%) and were more likely to say that some or all of it involved their own decision to train. (77% combined said ‘some was initiated by me and some by my employer’ or ‘some or all was by mutual agreement between me and my employer’ whereas the combined average for all FE sector staff saying one of these things was 60%).

Figure 7: Initiation of training – Middle and junior managers' perspective



Sample base: Middle and junior managers (455)

Q21. Considering all the training and development you undertook, could you indicate who initiated it?

The purposes of training

Figure 8 (following) shows middle and junior managers' reasons for undertaking training. These reasons are very similar to those which were typical of all staff in the FE sector. Middle and junior managers were a little more likely to say that they wanted to improve their performance at work (65% compared with an average of 60%) and to say that they were interested in training and development for its own sake (39% compared with 35%).

Figure 8: Reasons for undertaking training and development in the past year – Middle and junior managers’ perspective



Sample base: Middle and junior managers (455)

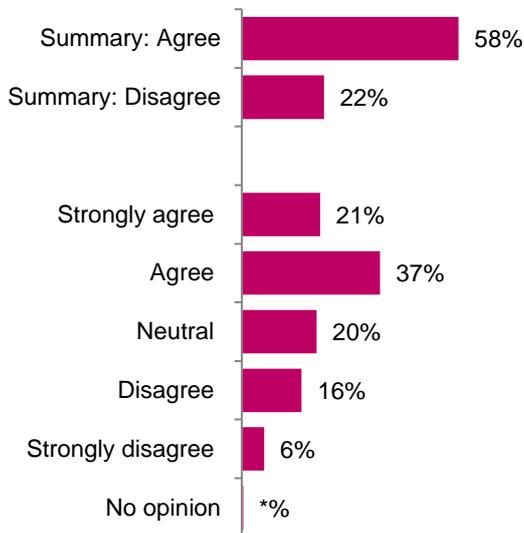
Q23. Were any of the following reasons for undertaking training and development in the last academic year?

Perspectives on training undertaken by middle and junior managers

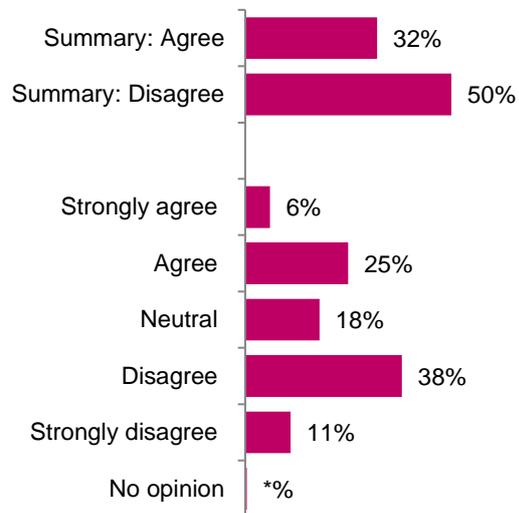
Figure 9 (following) shows middle and junior managers’ views on their training from a number of different perspectives. On balance, these managers were positive about their training on each aspect. Their level of positivity was equal to the average for all workers in the sector except in their judgements on the quality of their training. In this respect, middle and junior managers (69% positive) were a little *more* positive than average (65% positive).

Figure 9: Middle and junior managers' views on the training and development that they undertook last year

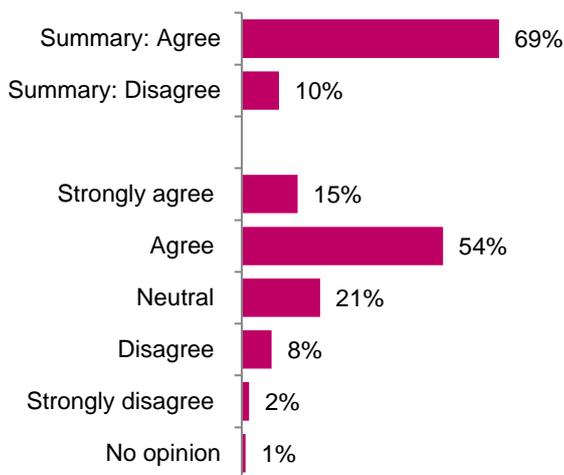
I undertook all the training and development I wanted and needed



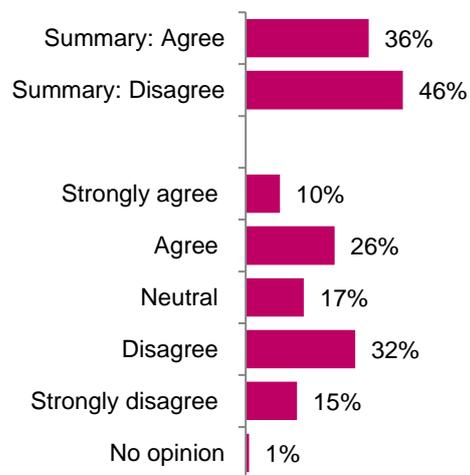
I was required to undertake some training and development which had little value to me



Most or all of the training and development I undertook was of high quality (even if some of it was not of particular value to you)



Some or all of the training and development I undertook was just a 'tick box' exercise for my organisation

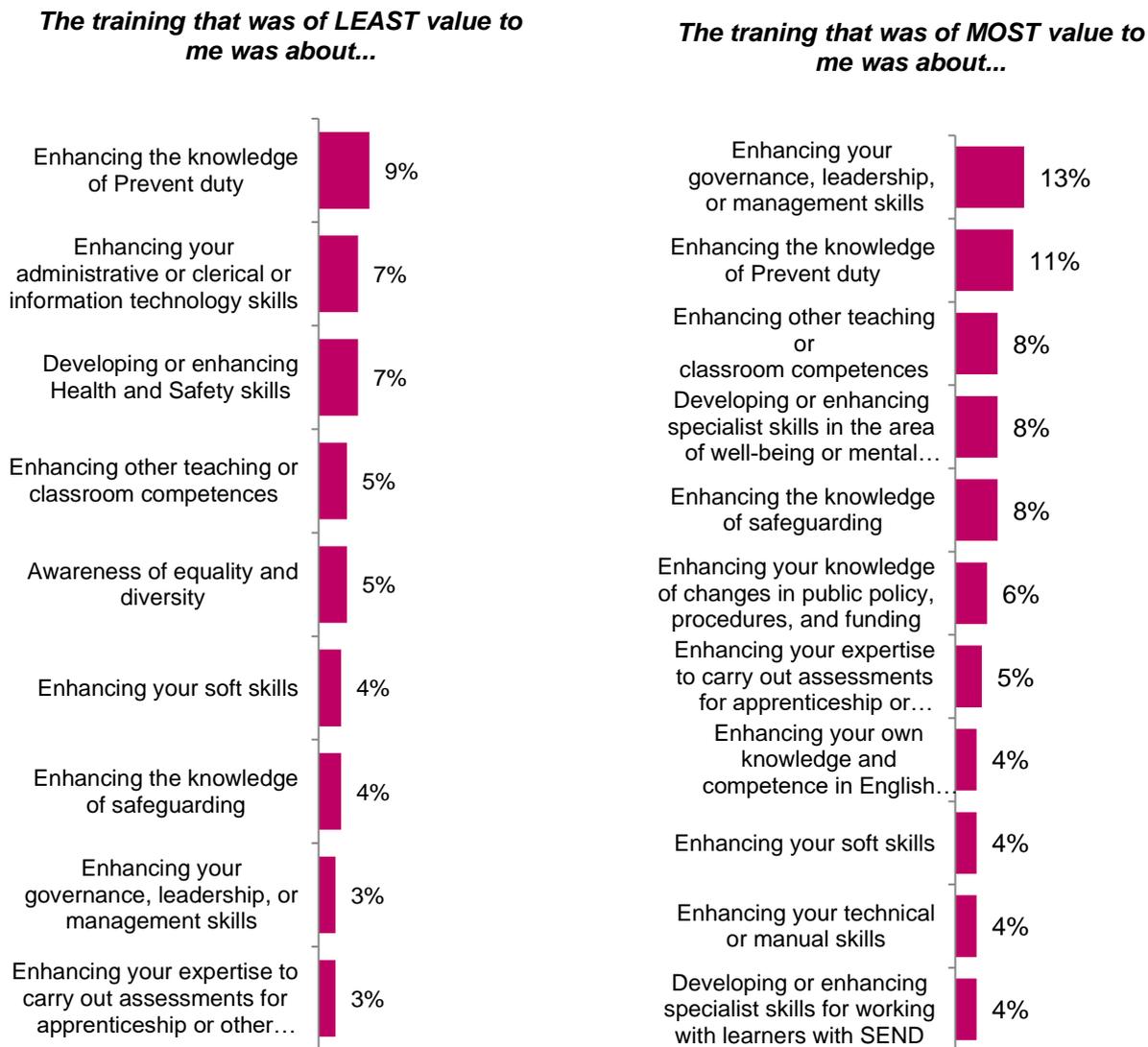


Sample base: Middle and junior managers (455)

Q24. Thinking about all the training and development you have undertaken in the last academic year, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statements below?

The following figure (Figure 10) shows the subject matter of most and least valuable training episodes. The percentages for 'most valuable' episodes are generally a little higher because some respondents did not identify any 'least valuable' episodes. It can be seen that leadership and management training heads the 'most valuable' list. It can also be seen that some forms of training, Prevent training particularly, ranked relatively highly in both most and least valuable ratings.

Figure 10: Subject matter of Middle and Junior Manager’s most and least valuable episodes of training



Sample base: Middle and junior managers (452)

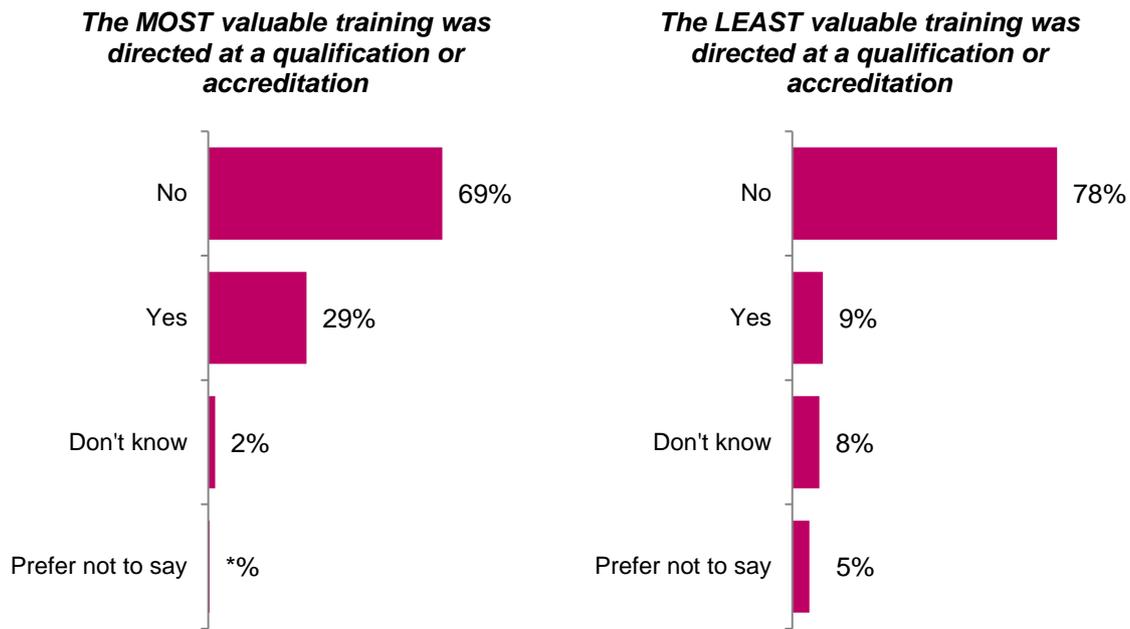
Q26a. Could you describe the episode of training which was of MOST value to you? What was the theme or subject of the training or development?

Sample base: Middle and junior managers (355)

Q27a. Could you describe the episode of training which was of LEAST value to you? What was the theme or subject of the training or development?

A further figure (Figure 11) shows that 29% of ‘most valuable’ episodes, compared with only 9% of ‘least valuable’ training, were directed at a qualification.

Figure 11: Whether Middle and Junior Manager’s most and least valuable episodes of training were directed at a qualification



Sample base: Middle and junior managers (452)

Q26b. Was the training or development directed at a qualification or accreditation of some kind?

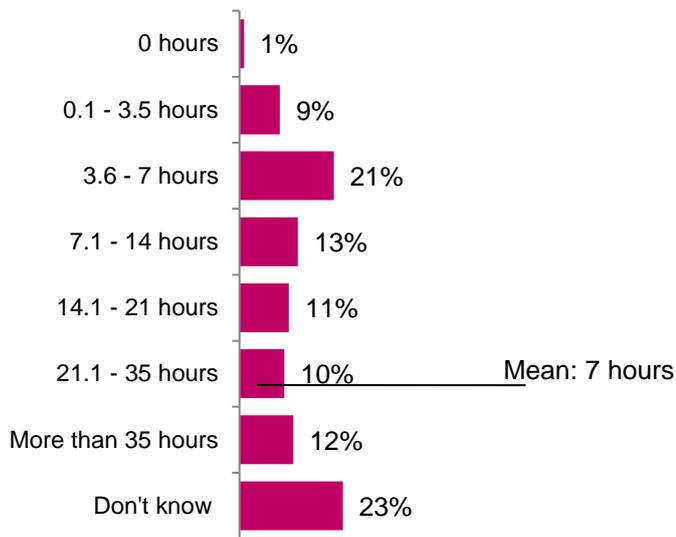
Sample base: Middle and junior managers (355)

Q27b. Was the training or development directed at a qualification or accreditation of some kind?

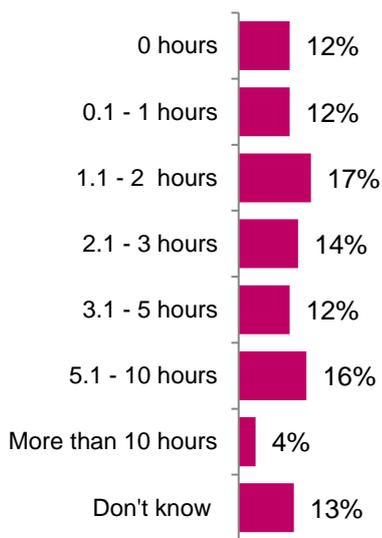
Correspondingly, the average duration of ‘most valuable’ training (20 hours) was nearly three times that of ‘least valuable’ training (see Figure 12).

Figure 12: Time spent by Middle and Junior Managers on the most and least valuable episodes of training

Hours spent on the MOST valuable training in the past year



Hours spent on the LEAST valuable training in the past year



Sample base: Middle and junior managers (452)

Q26c. How many hours did you spend on this training or development in the past year?

Sample base: Middle and junior managers (331)

Q27c. How many hours did you spend on this training or development in the past year?

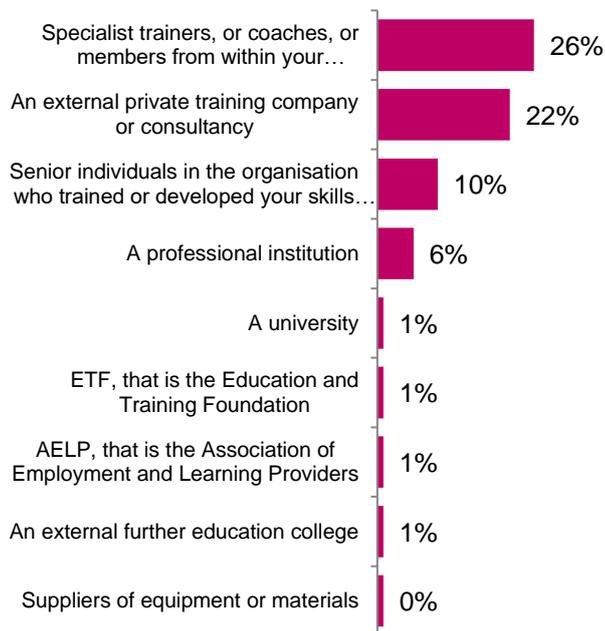
Again, correspondingly with managers' preferences for training leading to qualifications, 'most valuable' training was more likely to be delivered by an external source (private training organisations, professional institutions, universities, and ETF) and less likely to be delivered by specialist training resources within their organisations (see Figure 13).

Figure 13: Who delivered Middle and Junior Manager’s most and least valuable episodes of training

The MOST valuable training was delivered by...



The LEAST valuable training was delivered by...



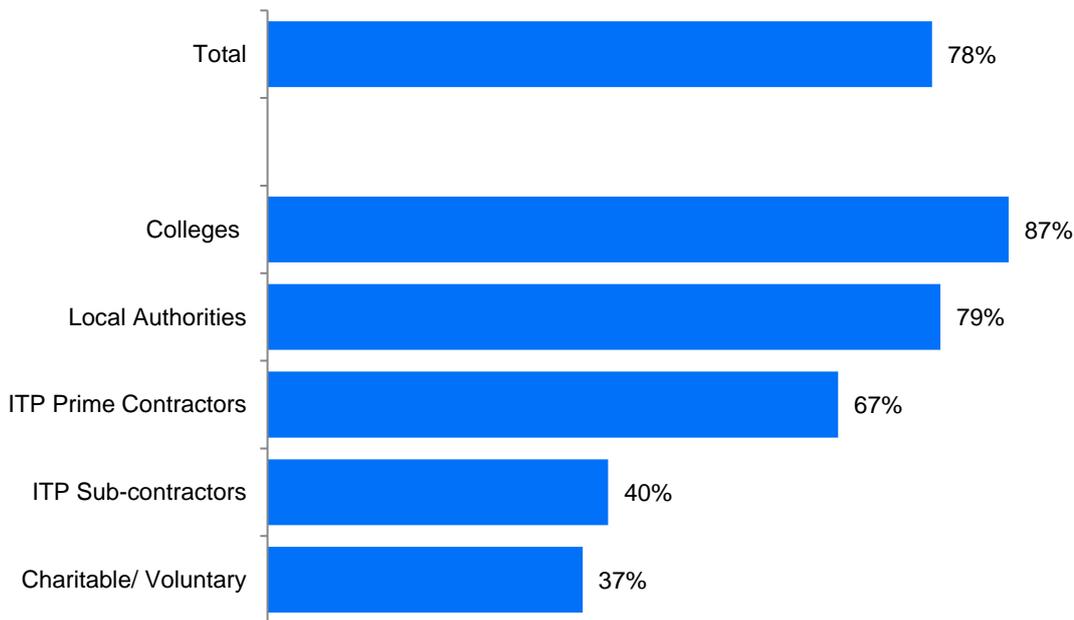
Sample base: Middle and junior managers (452)
 Q26d. Who delivered the training or development?
 Sample base: Middle and junior managers (355)
 Q27d. Who delivered the training or development?

CHAPTER 3: FUTURE TRAINING NEEDS

Demand for future training

Looking to the future, four out of five institutions (78%), and a higher proportion of Colleges, saw a need for the training of middle and junior managers (see Figure 10). This overall proportion (78%) was equal to that for senior management (79%) and a little below that for lecturers and teachers (85%) but was otherwise higher than for all other groups of staff.

Figure 10: Institutions anticipating that middle and junior managers will need training next year – per type of institution



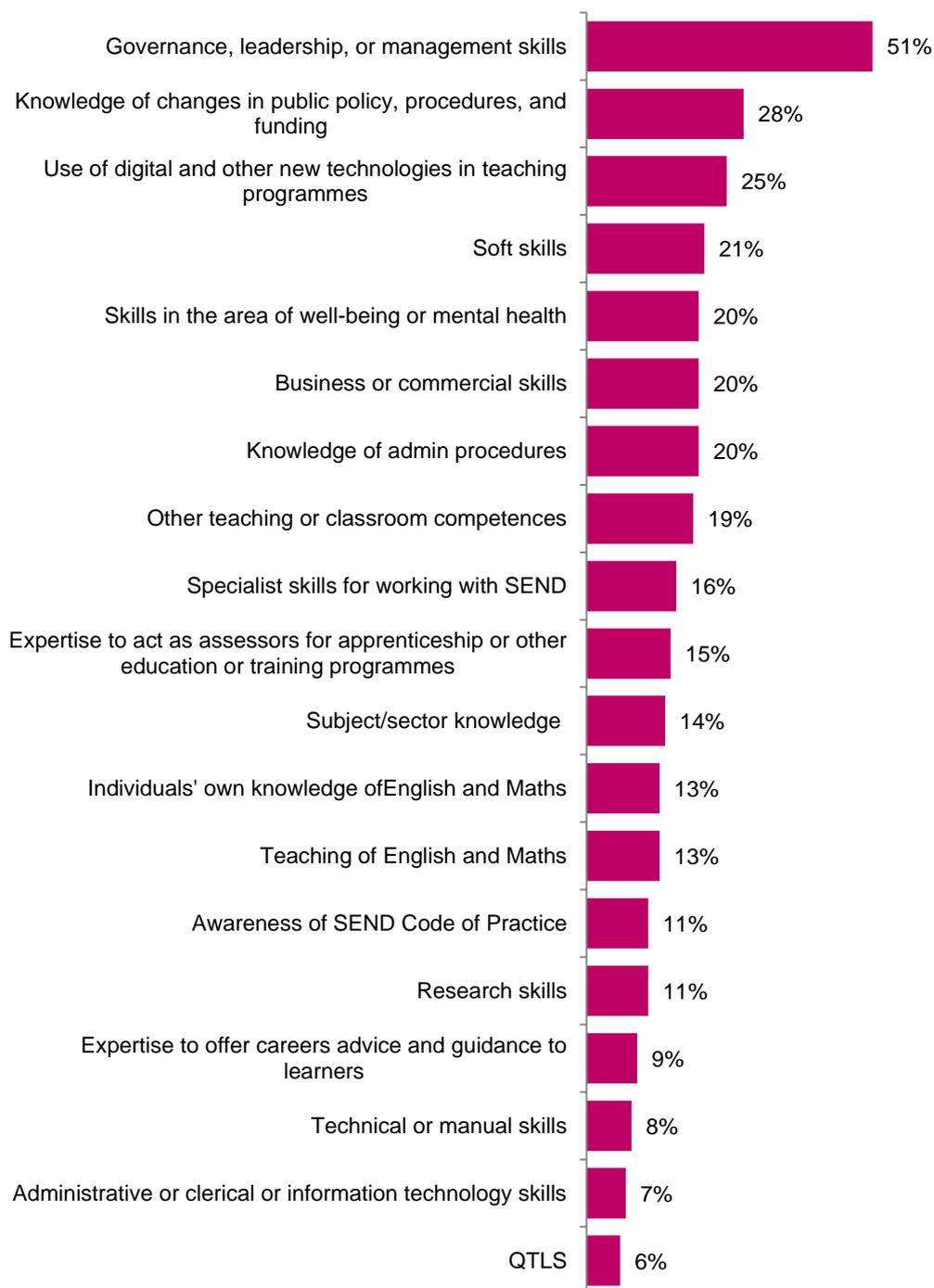
Sample base: Institutions (473)

Q39. Which of the following people do you anticipate will need training and development in the next year or so?

Seventy-five percent of middle and junior managers said (in the survey of individuals) that training in the next year would be valuable to them (compared with an all-staff average of 68% who said this).

The main forms of training they wanted (see Figure 11 following) were for leadership and management training (51% compared with all-staff average of 33%), training related to public policy change (28% compared with an all-staff average of 22%), and training in digital skills (25% compared with an all-staff average of 26%).

Figure 11: Areas of training and development that middle and junior managers think would be of value for them or their organisations next year



Sample base: Middle and junior managers (346)
 Q29. What forms of training or development would that be?

Table 3 (following) shows this demand broken down by the types of organisation in which middle managers are employed. It can be seen that there is little consistent variation between these types. However, the level of demand for some main forms of training (such as that in leadership and management or that related to public policy) tends to be high for middle and junior managers working in all types of institution.

And there are some particular variations. For example:

- Middle managers in Independent Training Providers are particularly likely to value training to increase their own competence in English and Maths.
- These managers (in ITPs) are also more likely to value other forms of training – in administrative procedures, apprenticeship assessment, public policy matters, and business skills.
- Middle managers working in Local Authorities would value leadership and management training more frequently than those working in any other type of organisation.
- And those working in the voluntary and charitable sector comprise the group which would most value training related to mental health.

Table 2: Forms of training and development that would be of value to middle and junior managers in the next year

	Total	Colleges	Local Authorities	ITPs Prime contractors	Charitable/Voluntary	Others
Teaching English and Maths	13%	13%	10%	16%	6%	12%
Digital and new technologies in a teaching or classroom setting	25%	25%	23%	22%	6%	35%
Other teaching or classroom competencies	19%	21%	16%	18%	12%	12%
QTLS status	6%	7%	5%	10%	6%	6%
Own knowledge and competence of English and Maths	13%	12%	7%	21%	12%	8%
Subject knowledge	14%	16%	10%	8%	0%	22%
Soft skills	21%	16%	18%	30%	18%	35%
Governance, leadership or management	51%	51%	60%	51%	41%	59%
Administrative procedures	20%	18%	16%	33%	12%	12%
Assessments for apprenticeship or other education or training programmes	15%	12%	10%	21%	12%	24%
Careers advice and guidance for learners	9%	6%	7%	14%	6%	18%
Public policy, procedures and funding	28%	27%	37%	41%	24%	18%
Business or commercial skills	20%	15%	16%	32%	24%	31%
Administrative, clerical or IT	7%	8%	7%	8%	6%	6%
Technical or manual skills	8%	8%	7%	11%	6%	12%
Skills for working with learners with SEND	16%	19%	16%	14%	12%	0%
Well-being or mental health	20%	18%	25%	11%	29%	22%
Research skills	11%	11%	18%	11%	12%	6%
Awareness of SEND Code of Practice	11%	8%	6%	16%	18%	0%
Sample base	346	159	97	37	17	18

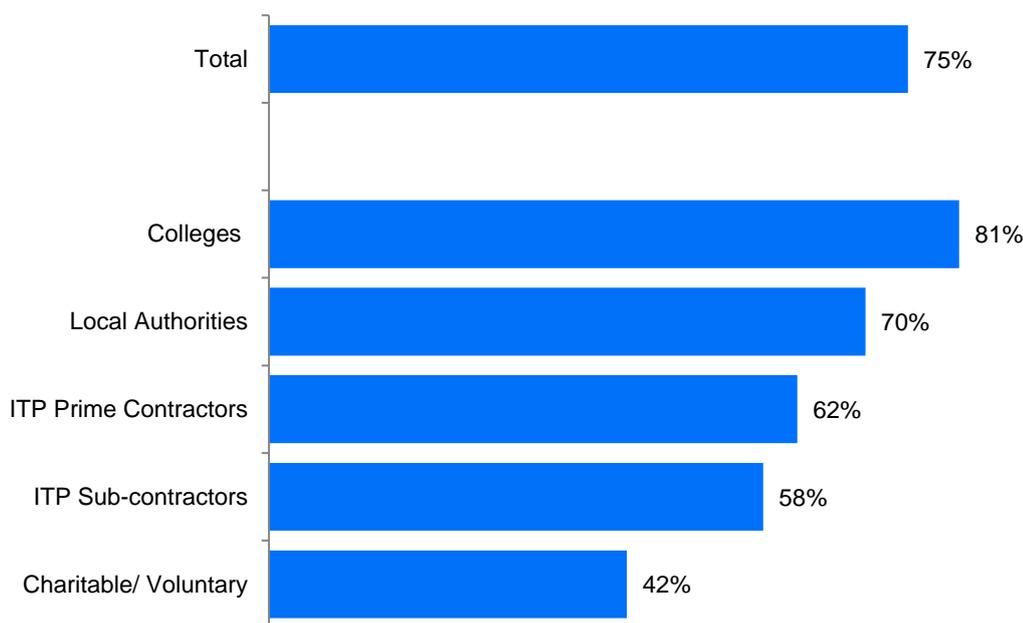
Q29. What forms of training or development would that be?

Figure 11 (above) showed that individual demand from middle and junior managers for leadership and management was the highest for any sort of training.

The survey of institutions also showed (see Figure 12 following) a high degree of need for future leadership and management training (note: in this case, this is a general institutional requirement not necessarily the requirement for leadership and management training of middle and junior managers specifically).

Demand was particularly high in 'public' institutions (Colleges and Local Authorities) which tend to be larger and, hence, have more substantial management structures.

Figure 12: Institutions where training and development in governance, leadership and management skills will be required in the next year or so – institutions perspective



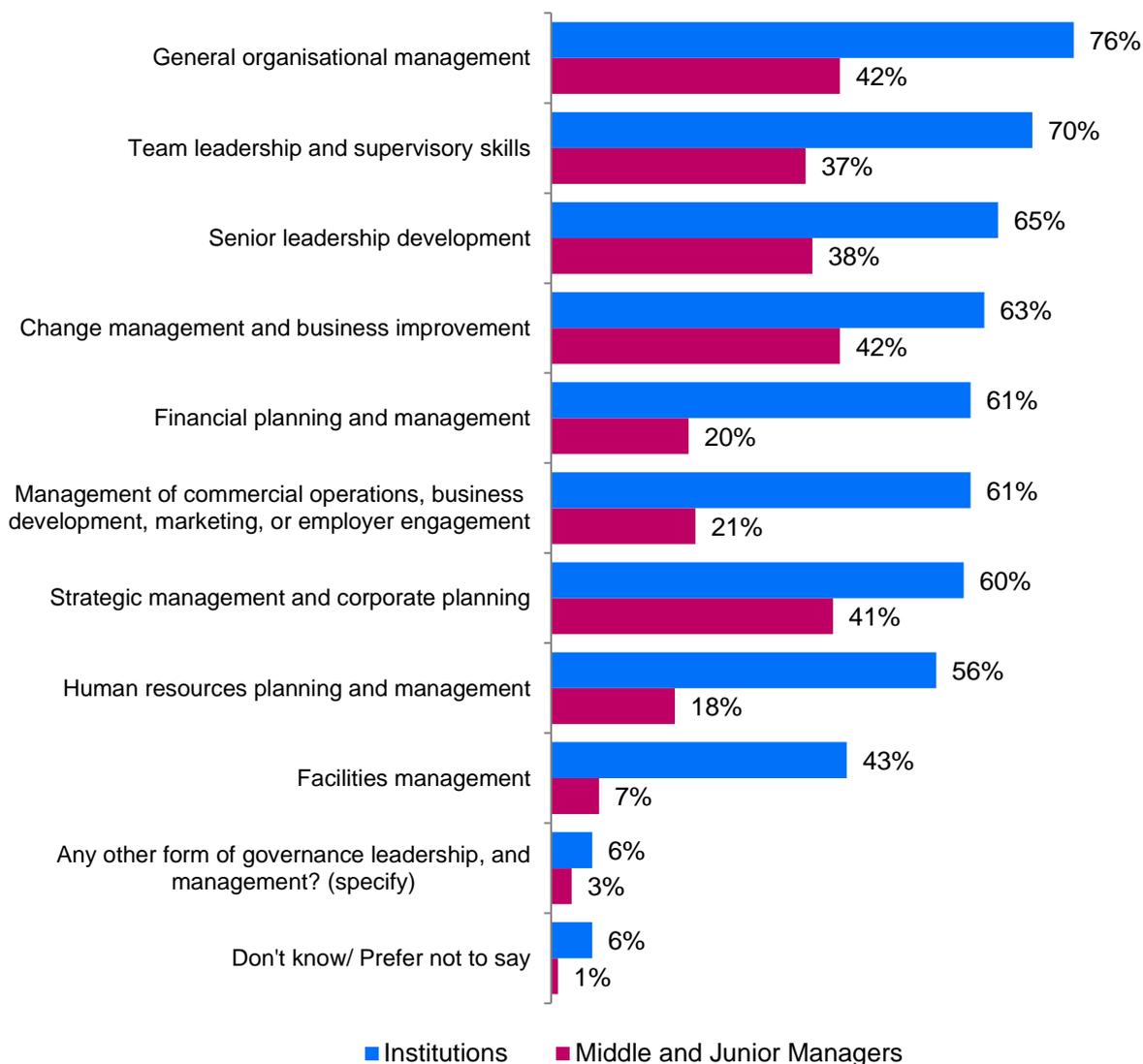
Sample base: Institutions (473)

Q40. Which of the following types of training and development will be required?

The next figure (Figure 13) shows the types of leadership and management skills training which institutions will require. This is contrasted with individual middle managers' demand for training of each type. Since institutions are reporting their *total* demand relating to their whole workforces, it would be expected, as the figure shows, that the figures for institutions would be higher. However, it can be seen that the broad *order* of demand for different types of training is similar.

A notable exception, however, concerns training in strategic management and corporate planning. Demand for this form of training is relatively high amongst individuals but, though a substantial proportion of institutions (60%) require this type of training, that proportion is not high in the institutional ranking of types of management training.

Figure 13: Leadership skills where training and development is needed in the next year or so – institutions and middle and junior managers’ perspective



Sample base: Institutions (302)

Q43. You said you will need to improve the organisation’s governance, leadership, and management skills. Are these skills in any of the following areas?

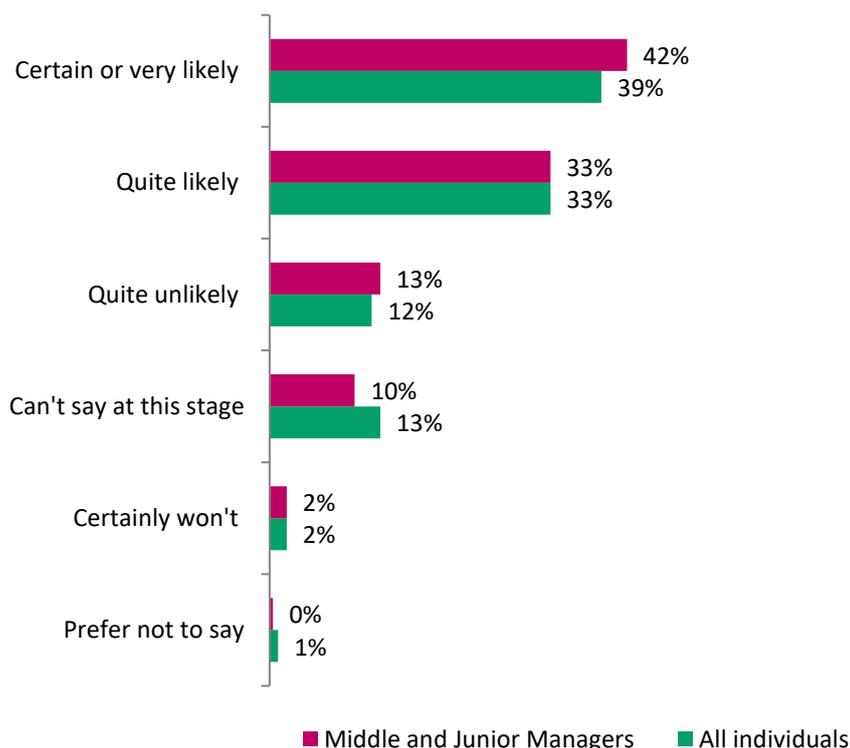
Sample base: Middle and junior managers (184)

Q34. In which areas of governance, leadership, and management would you value training and development?

The likelihood of future training

Three-quarters (75%) of middle and junior managers thought it quite or very likely that they would undertake training in the next year (compared with all-staff average of 72%) (see Figure 14 following).

Figure 14: Middle and junior managers' likelihood of undertaking new training and development in the next year



Sample base: Middle and junior managers (472); All individuals (2367)

Q36. How likely is it that you will undertake new training or development in the next year?

This expectation was particularly high amongst middle and junior managers who worked in Independent Training Providers and a little lower in Colleges and Local Authority training organisations (see Table 3).

Table 3: Middle and junior managers' likelihood of undertaking new training and development in the next year

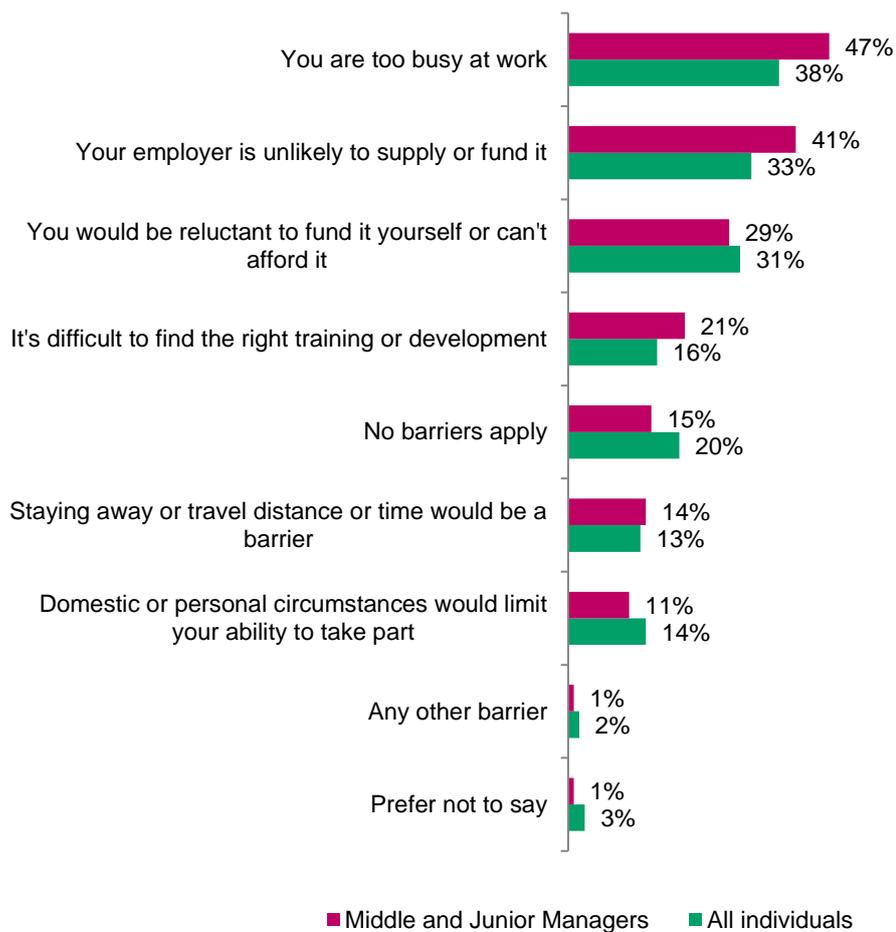
	Total	Colleges	Local Authorities	ITPs Prime contractors	Charitable/Voluntary	Others	All staff
Likely	75%	71%	72%	86%	76%	81%	72%
Unlikely	14%	19%	13%	6%	19%	8%	14%
Sample base	472	206	139	46	21	23	2367

Q36. How likely is it that you will undertake new training or development in the next year?

Barriers to future training

However, middle and junior managers were also more likely than average to see some barriers to their future training – particularly, being too busy at work (47% of middle and junior managers compared with an all-staff average of 38%), the unwillingness of employers to fund their training (41% compared with an average of 33%), and difficulty in finding the right training (21% compared with an average of 16%), (see Figure 15).

Figure 15: Barriers to training or development – Middle and junior managers' perspective



Sample base: Middle and junior managers (472): All individuals (2367)

Q37. Do any of the following present barriers to your training or development at present or in the next year?