Skills
Development
Scotland

Provider Sustainability Review

April 2024

Background

Achieving net-zero emissions by 2045 requires a rapid upskilling of Scotland's workforce across all sectors and occupations. SDS has a critical role to play in aligning the skills system with Scotland's green economic ambitions.

The skills system has a key role to play in responding to changing demand and supporting individuals to access emerging opportunities. Identified opportunities include:

- New and emerging jobs such as those that relate directly to the transition to net zero, e.g. hydrogen cell technicians & carbon monitoring technicians.
- Jobs affected by the transition to net zero that will need enhanced skills, e.g. architects and environmental consultants.
- Existing jobs that will be needed in greater numbers as a result of the transition to net zero, e.g. insulation installers, energy assessors and multi-skilled on-site operatives.

As part of supporting the green economy workstream, SDS has committed to:

- Influence the skills system to be responsive to the climate emergency.
- Help embed sustainability into learning provision.

In this context, SDS sought to establish what the current baseline of sustainable practice amongst Learning Providers existed. Learning Providers were asked to complete a survey with the aim of giving SDS an insight into the extent to which Sustainability already is a consideration in how Learning Providers both administer and deliver Modern Apprenticeships. For more information on Skills Development Scotland's Climate Change Strategy and our work on Sustainability please see HERE.

Methodology

Skills Investment Advisers within the National Training Programme Directorate carried out this survey with Learning Providers via Qualtrics. The survey consisted of 11 core questions plus supplementary questions where appropriate. Field work was carried out over the course of October and November 2023 when there were over 38,000 Apprentices in Training.

The Survey was completed on behalf of 206 Learning providers representing 94% of contracted Modern Apprenticeship providers.
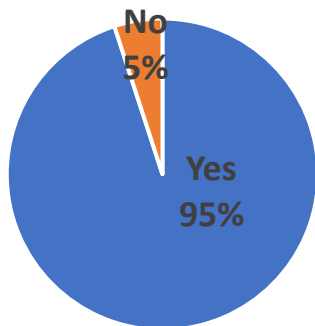
206 Providers

Contents

MA Administration Sustainability Practices

MA Administration Sustainability Practices

95% of Learning Providers are already incorporating sustainability practices into their Administration of the Modern Apprenticeship programme.

Percentage of Providers Who Integrate Sustainability Practices Currently

No 5%

Yes 95%

Ways in which Learning providers are currently integrating Sustainability practices into their administration of Modern Apprenticeships are outlined below.
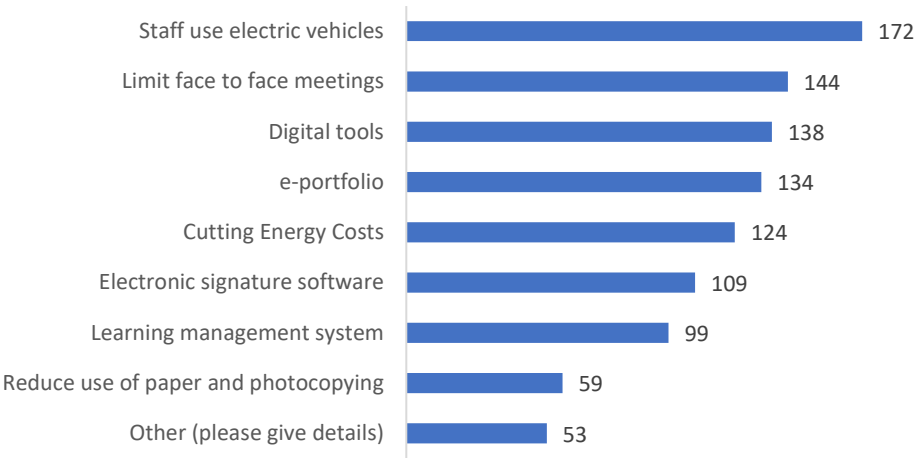
Responses show the vast majority of respondents are already incorporating sustainability practices into the way they administer MA delivery with only a small number indicating that they don't at this point in time.

Sustainability Practices: Number of Providers Adopting Each Practice.

Practice	Number
Staff use electric vehicles	172
Limit face to face meetings	144
Digital tools	138
e-portfolio	134
Cutting Energy Costs	124
Electronic signature software	109
Learning management system	99
Reduce use of paper and photocopying	59
Other (please give details)	53

Sustainability Targets

50.5% of respondents have already set Sustainability Targets whereas 49.5% have not.

"To become NetZero by 2035, Scope 1 & 2 NetZero, Scope 3 Emissions by 2050."

"Climate change Action Plan and race to zero action plan for College."

Provider were asked which Sustainability targets they had set. Themes from the responses included:

- Reduction of use of resources – e.g. paper, energy including electricity & fuel.
- Greater use of digital resources – e.g. limiting face to face meetings and also using digital technology such as e-portfolios and electronic signature software.
- Timescale based Net Zero Targets.
- Some Learning Providers who are part of a larger group, College or Local Authority fed back that they were working towards the goals set by the overall organisation.

Providers who stated that they were planning to set Sustainability targets in the future gave responses around the following themes:-

- Respondents who stated that they were already actively in the process of developing targets.
- Those that said in general they would consider setting sustainability targets in the future.
- Some were trying to operate in a more sustainable way but weren't working towards specific targets.
- Those who had plans relating to both costs and sustainability – e.g. Energy.

"Sustainable approach is embedded in practice – looking to introduce a policy to consider specific targets or include existing practice."
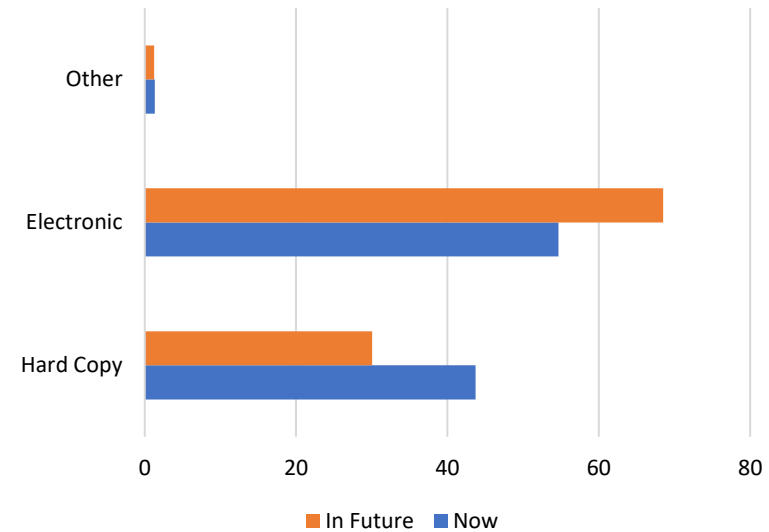
Signature Capture and Data Storage

Learning Providers' responses suggest a projected growth towards Electronic Data Storage and Electronic Software signature capture and a reduction in both Hard Copy Data Retention and Wet Signatures.

Signature Capture - Learning Providers (% Respondents)
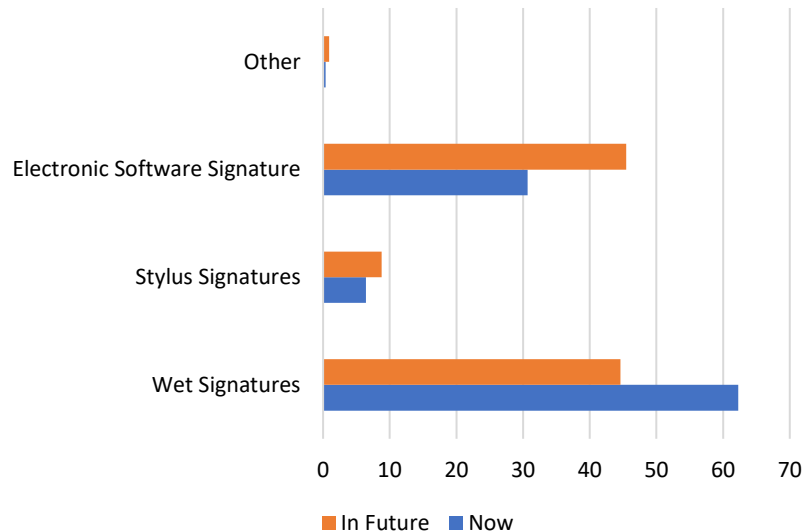
Data Retention - Learning Providers (% Respondents)
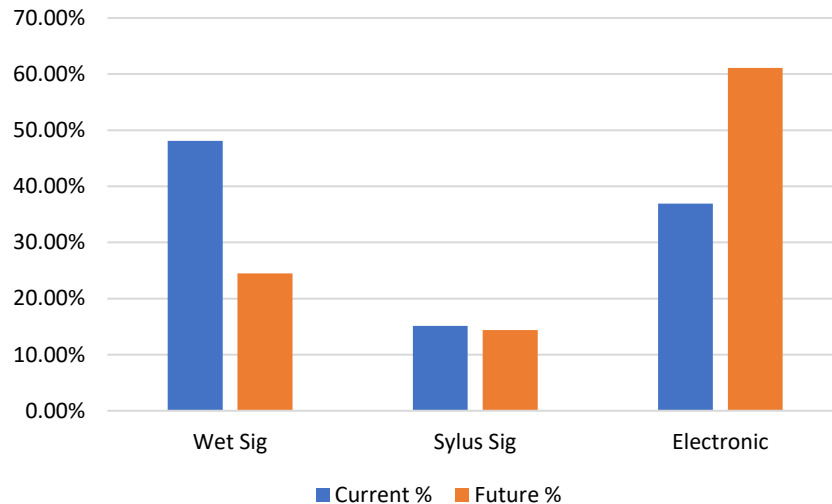
Signature Capture and Data Storage

> The projected growth of the use of Electronic signatures will be from 52% to over 75% of Apprentices.

> Those whose data will be held electronically is projected to grow from 67% to over 83% of Apprentices.

Projected change in use of Wet, Stylus & Electronic Signatures

Projected change in use from Hard Copy to Electronic Storage methods
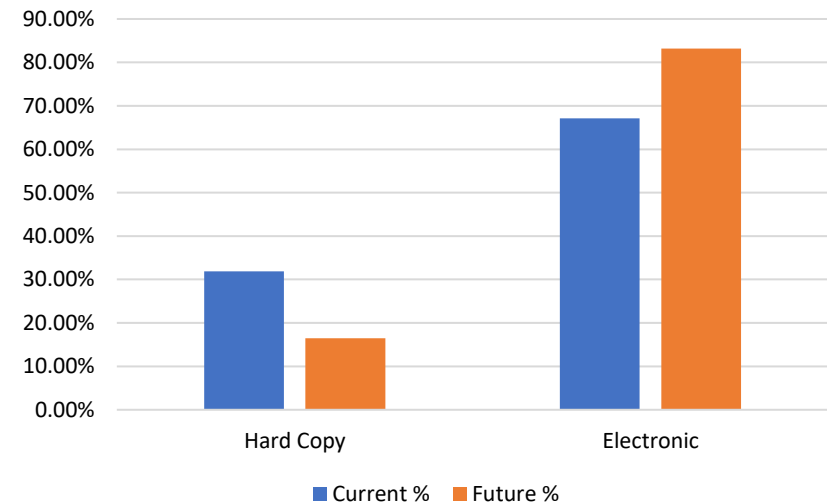
Administration Sustainability Practices - Recommendations

- Some Learning Providers fed back that they were unclear around the rules in relation to the use of Electronic/Stylus signatures. This could be clarified for Providers via the planned 2024/25 induction sessions covering MA Specification & Conditions.

- SDS to republish the Provider Led Webinar on electronic signatures where they highlighted good practice and business benefits.
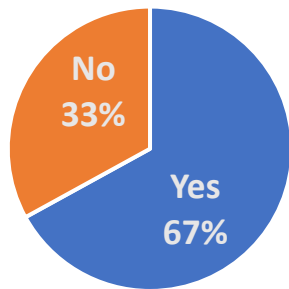

Supporting a Green Economy

Sustainability Learning Content

Currently 67% of respondents, representing 25,548 Apprentices, have Sustainability incorporated into their learning content. Of these, 71% have learning targeted at specific MA Frameworks.

No
33%

Yes
67%

Sustainability Learning Content - % of providers Currently Incorporating Sustainability into Learning Content.

No
29%

Yes
71%
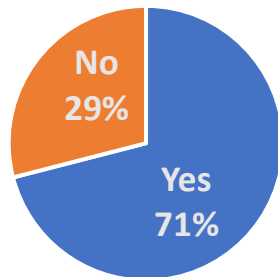
Learning Providers who currently incorporate Sustainability into Learning Content - % who Target a Specific MA Framework.

Which MAs are Sustainability Learning Content Targeted At? (Number of Providers)

MA Framework	Number of Providers
Animal Care, Land and Water Based	21
Automotive	20
Chemicals and Biotechnology Related	15
Construction and Related	14
Creative and Cultural Skills	13
Financial Services	12
Engineering and Energy Related	12
Other Manufacture	8
Management	8
Hospitality and Tourism	8
Food and Drink	8
Other Services	7
Retail and Customer Service	5
Personal Services	5
Transport and Logistics	0
Sport, Health and Social Care	0

Future Learning Content – Learning Provider Future Plans

59% of respondents plan to incorporate sustainability practices into their learning content of Modern Apprenticeships. 27% have no plans, and 14% are unsure.

Sustainability Learning Content - % of providers Planning to Incorporate Sustainability into Learning Content in the Future.
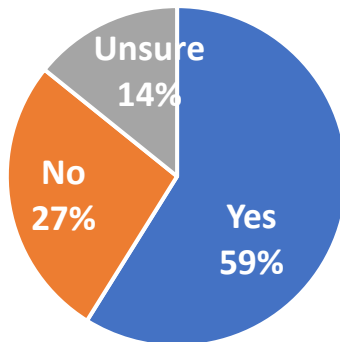
The proportion of Learning Providers that don't plan to include Sustainability content in future is 27%.

The proportion of Learning Providers that do plan to include Sustainability content in future has been returned as 59%.

14% of Learning Provider respondents stated that they were unsure as to whether they will include Sustainability content in future.

Given these responses, it is difficult to identify a specific trend at this point in time.

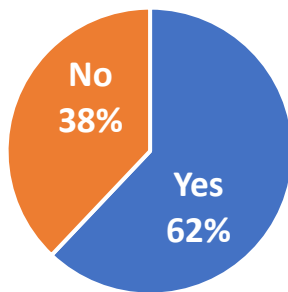# Future Learning Content – Will this be targeted at a Specific MA Framework?

The **59%** of the Learning Providers who plan to incorporate Sustainability practices into their content of Modern Apprenticeships were asked whether this is targeted at a specific MA Framework. The responses profile is outlined below along with the Occupational Groups identified by Providers:

Learning Providers Planning to Target content at a Specific MA Framework (%)

- No 38%
- Yes 62%

Future Learning Content: Which Occupational Groups Will be Targeted (Number of Providers)

Occupational Group	Number of Providers
Animal Care, Land and Water Based	1
Automotive	2
Creative and Cultural Skills	4
Engineering and Energy Related	4
Chemicals and Biotechnology Related	4
Construction and Related	4
Financial Services	5
Food and Drink	6
Hospitality and Tourism	7
Management	8
Other Manufacture	9
Other Services	10
Personal Services	11
Retail and Customer Service	12
Sport, Health and Social Care	15
Administration and Related	16
Transport and Logistics	16

Future Learning Content – Good Practice

Those who already incorporate Sustainability practices into their content of Modern Apprenticeships were asked for examples of good practice:

Some general themes within the responses received included:

- Instances where sustainability within MAs currently reflected the occupational grouping that the Learning Provider delivered. Some of these responses related to Engineering, Construction and Agriculture.

- Some more general responses related to units within MAs relating to sustainability.

- Some Apprentices were reported as undertaking specific projects relating to sustainability. This included both examples where this would count towards their MA and others that were more community focused.

- Many of the responses related to general delivery such as use of e-portfolios and online meetings/assessment.

Of those Learning Providers who plan to incorporate Sustainability into learning content in the future, the percentage of Modern Apprentices who will benefit from this is projected to rise from 83% to 92%.

Beach clean – MAs out tidying local beaches.

"One Apprentice is currently involved in the sustainability engineering project developing the 1st fully functioning demonstrator for radar technology."

"Sustainability content is delivered within the Agriculture MA and we mostly find ways to link it to animal welfare."

Future Learning Content – Unsure Responses

14% of Learning Providers were unsure if they would incorporate Sustainability practices into their delivery of Modern Apprenticeships in future and they responded with reasons based around the following themes:

- Some providers reflected that really this would be down to future content of the MA Frameworks. Although some pointed out that this was outwith their control- one referenced raising it through the SAAB group.

- Several respondents asked for greater information & training.

- There were some comments that stated they would liaise with other partners such as their employers to look at this going forward.

Will continue and review going forward.

"Unsure as Provider delivers across so many Frameworks."

"Unsure about what SDS rules permit... cost and changing to e-portfolio as a small provider."

"Possibly working with the employers around sustainability and learning content."

Future Learning Content – No Plans to Incorporate

27% of Learning Providers stated that they had no plans to incorporate Sustainability practices into their delivery of Modern Apprenticeships in future. Some of the themes of responses in relation to that include the following:

The largest response to this was that it wasn't either relevant or included within the Frameworks delivered.

The only other theme within responses was time/priority constraints.

Unless it is incorporated into the qualification structure – and the SQA mandate this, it will not be specifically included.

There are so many other things to do and it is not a priority.

Not relevant to Frameworks.

Future Learning Content - Recommendations

- SDS should consider ways to raise awareness of sustainability practices through Community of Practice events.

- SDS could also consider running focus groups with Learning Providers to consider which continuous professional development would be helpful as a means of responding to those seeking further training/support.

Summary

The vast majority of respondents (which is a large majority of our contracted learning providers) are already incorporating sustainability practices into the way they administer MA delivery with only a small number indicating that they don't at this point in time.

Slightly over half of respondents (101 Learning Providers representing 46% of contracted Providers) have set targets in relation to sustainability.

Of those who didn't, this ranged from those who were in the process of doing so to those had no plans to do so.

Only a minority of Learning Providers – slightly over 30% - are utilising electronic signatures, with a majority of around 60% still using wet signatures. This is anticipated to grow though, with a projected 45% planning to use electronic signatures. In terms of MA participants and including stylus signatures this will mean a growth from 19,760 to 28,627 individuals.

In terms of data storage, over half of respondents - 54% - are currently storing data electronically. This is anticipated to grow to nearly 70% in future.

The majority of Learning Providers currently deliver learning content to apprentices on the theme of Sustainability.

Of those who were unsure if they would deliver sustainability content in the future:

- Some providers reflected that this would be down to future content of the MA Frameworks. Although some pointed out that this was outwith their control- one referenced raising it through the SAAB group.

- Several respondents asked for greater information & training.

- There were some comments that stated they would liaise with other partners such as their employers to look at this going forward.

Of those who had no plans to deliver sustainability content in the future:

- The largest response to this was that it wasn't either relevant or included within the Frameworks delivered.

- The only other theme within responses was time/priority constraints.

Next Steps

- Continuous Professional Development session for NTP staff to share the report's findings.

- Report will be shared with Learning Providers.

- Implement recommendations as per above sections.

  - Clarify rules in relation to the use of Electronic/Stylus signatures via the planned 2024/25 induction sessions covering MA Spec & Conditions.
  - SDS should consider ways to raise awareness of sustainability practices through Community of Practice events.

  - SDS could also consider running Focus Groups with Learning Providers to consider which CPD would be helpful as a means of responding to those Learning Providers seeking further Training/Support.

- Feed findings into Skills Development Scotland's Climate Change Strategy.

- Conduct further Baseline Survey in Autumn 2025.

SDS's commitment:
across our work, we will support Scotland's ambitions for a green economy.

Appendices – Appendix 1

MA Frameworks by Occupational Grouping and Age

Occupational Grouping	16-24 Supported MA Frameworks All SCQF Levels 5 to 11	25 + Supported MA Frameworks
Administration and Related	Business and Administration Business Administration Technical Apprenticeship	Support is restricted to the **Business Administration SCQF Level 6 and Business Administration Technical Apprenticeship at SCQF Level 8** and to businesses operating within the following sectors only: • Automotive • Chemicals and Biotechnology • Construction and Related • Engineering and Energy • Financial Services • Food and Drink • Hospitality and Tourism • Public Sector
Animal Care, Land and Water Based	Equine Game & Wildlife Management Horticulture Rural Land Use and Management Technical Apprenticeship Rural Skills Trees and Timber Veterinary Nursing	
Automotive	Automotive	

Occupational Grouping	16-24 Supported MA Frameworks All SCQF Levels 5 to 11	25 + Supported MA Frameworks
Chemicals and Biotechnology Related	Life Sciences and Related Science Industries Life Sciences and Related Science Industries Technical Apprenticeship Scientific, Technical and Formulation Processing	
Construction and Related	Construction: Building Construction: Civil Engineering Construction Professional Apprenticeship Construction: Specialist Construction: Technical Construction Technical Apprenticeship Electrical Installation Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Minerals Extraction and Processing Plumbing and Heating Wood and Timber Industries	
Creative and Cultural Skills	Creative and Cultural Creative Media Design Fashion and Textiles Heritage Skills for Craft Businesses	

Occupational Grouping	16-24 Supported MA Frameworks All SCQF Levels 5 to 11	25 + Supported MA Frameworks
Engineering and Energy	Boat Building and Repair Electronic Security Systems Engineering Engineering & Digital Manufacturing Technical Apprenticeship Engineering Construction Gas Engineering Industrial Applications Land-based Engineering Power Distribution Process Manufacturing Radiation Protection Monitoring Rail Engineering Upstream Oil and Gas Production Water Industries Water Treatment Management	
Financial Services	Accounting Insurance Technical Apprenticeship Payroll Providing Financial Services	
Food and Drink	Agriculture Aquaculture Aquaculture Management Technical Apprenticeship Food and Drink Operations Maritime Occupations Spirits Operations	

Occupational Grouping	16-24 Supported MA Frameworks All SCQF Levels 5 to 11	25 + Supported MA Frameworks
Hospitality and Tourism	Hospitality Hospitality (Supervision and Leadership) Hospitality Management Skills Technical Apprenticeship Production Chef Senior Production Chef Professional Cookery Travel Services	
Management	Management Project Management Technical Apprenticeship	Management Project Management Technical Apprenticeship **All sectors excluding Retail** (For employers operating within the Retail Sector they must follow the Retail Modern Apprenticeship framework)
Other Manufacture	Glass Industry Occupations Print Industry Occupations Signmaking	Glass Industry Occupations Print Industry Occupations Signmaking **Glass Industry Occupations and Signmaking only in the following key sectors:** Automotive Construction

| Occupational Grouping	16-24 Supported MA Frameworks All SCQF Levels 5 to 11	25 + Supported MA Frameworks
Other Services	Career Development Career Development Technical Apprenticeship Court and Tribunal Operations Digital Applications Digital Marketing Digital Technology Digital Technology Technical Apprenticeship Facilities Services Facilities Management Firefighting Housing Occupational Health and Safety Practice Occupational Health and Safety Practice Technical Apprenticeship Paralegal Practice Policing Procurement Providing Security Officer Services Sustainable Resource Management	
Personal Services	Hairdressing and Barbering	Support not available for this Occupational Grouping
Retail and Customer Service	Customer Service *(not applicable for employers operating in Retail or Hospitality Sectors)* Retail	Customer Service (**SCQF Levels 5 and 6**) **All sectors excluding employers operating in Retail and Hospitality Sectors** Retail (**SCQF Level 6 - Retail Management pathway only)**

Occupational Grouping	16-24 Supported MA Frameworks All SCQF Levels 5 to 11	25 + Supported MA Frameworks
Sport, Health and Social Care	Achieving Excellence in Sports Performance Active Leisure, Learning and Wellbeing Care Services Leadership and Management Childhood Practice Technical Apprenticeship Community Development Dental Nursing Healthcare Support Optical Practice Support Pharmacy Services Pharmacy Services Technical Apprenticeship Social Services (Children and Young People) Social Services (Children and Young People) Technical Apprenticeship Social Services and Healthcare Social Services and Healthcare Technical Apprenticeship Youth Work	Active Leisure, Learning and Wellbeing Care Services Leadership and Management Childhood Practice Technical Apprenticeship Community Development Dental Nursing Healthcare Support Optical Practice Support Pharmacy Services Pharmacy Services Technical Apprenticeship Social Services (Children and Young People) Social Services (Children and Young People) Technical Apprenticeship Social Services and Healthcare Social Services and Healthcare Technical Apprenticeship Youth Work **Only in the following key sectors:** Hospitality and Tourism Health and Social Care Public Sector
Transport and Logistics	Freight Logistics Supply Chain Management Supply Chain Management Technical Apprenticeship Supply Chain Management Professional Apprenticeship	

Appendices – Appendix 2

Response Breakdowns by Learning Provider Type

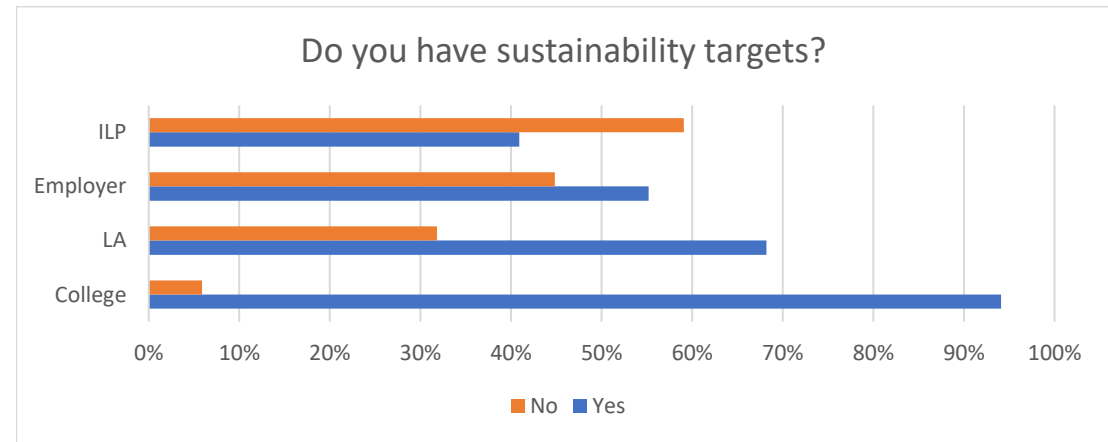Do you currently integrate sustainability practices into the way you administer your delivery of Modern Apprenticeships?

	College	LA	Employer	ILP
Yes	100%	95%	90%	95%
No	0%	5%	10%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Do you currently integrate sustainability practices into the way you administer your delivery of Modern Apprenticeships?
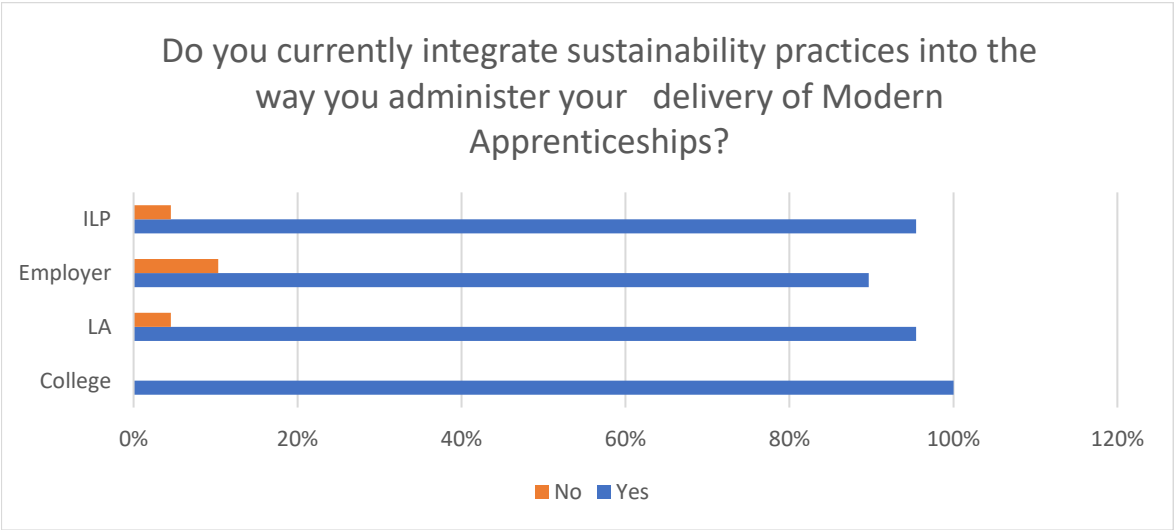
Do you have sustainability
targets?

	College	LA	Employer	ILP
Yes	94%	68%	55%	41%
No	6%	32%	45%	59%

Do you have sustainability targets?

Do you currently deliver learning content to
your apprentices on the theme of
Sustainability?

	College	LA	Employer	ILP
Yes	76%	47%	72%	67%
No	24%	53%	28%	33%
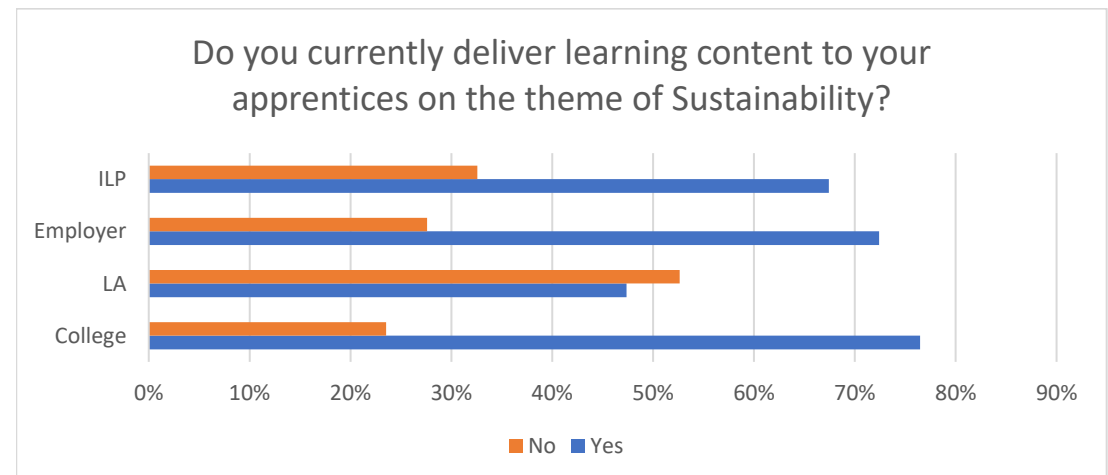
Do you currently deliver learning content to your apprentices on the theme of Sustainability?

Is the sustainability learning content you provide targeted at a specific MA framework?

	College	LA	Employer	ILP
Yes	76%	47%	72%	67%
No	24%	53%	28%	33%

Is the sustainability learning content you provide targeted at a specific MA framework?
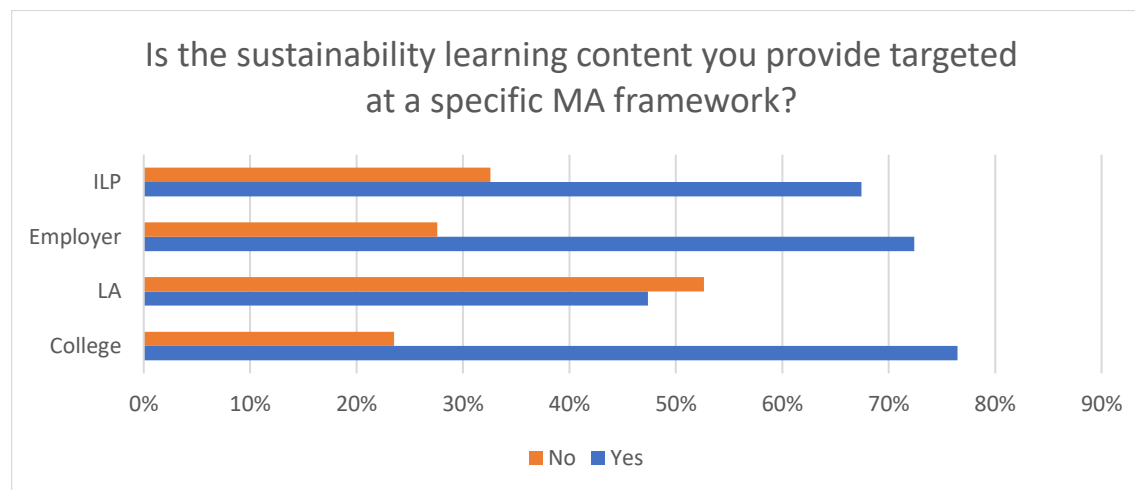
Do you plan to deliver any learning content to your apprentices on the theme of sustainability in the future?

	College	LA	Employer	ILP
Yes	71%	40%	62%	60%
Not sure	24%	35%	24%	27%
No, don't plan to deliver	6%	25%	14%	14%
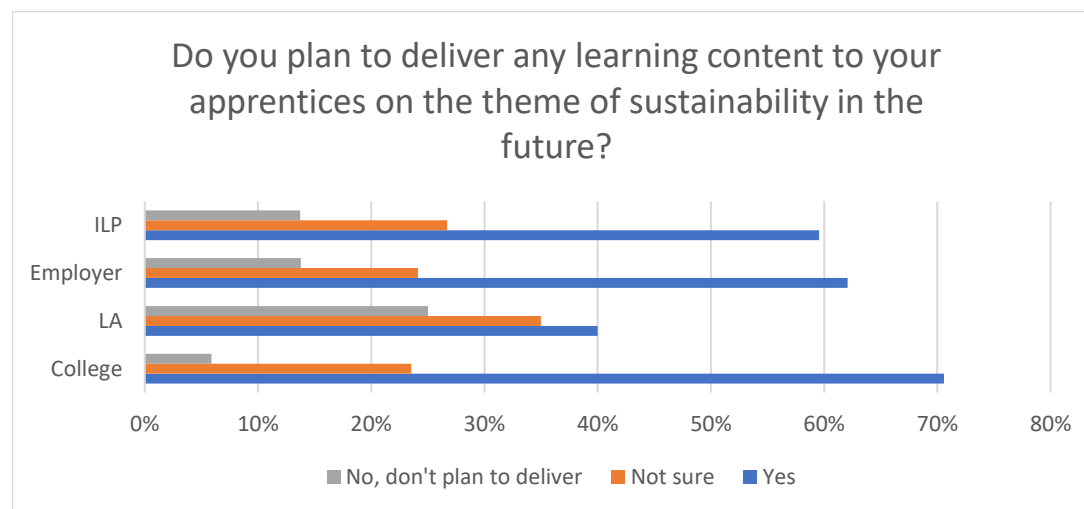
Do you plan to deliver any learning content to your apprentices on the theme of sustainability in the future?

Is the sustainability learning content you plan to provide targeted at a specific MA framework?

	College	LA	Employer	ILP
Yes	33%	25%	67%	69%
No	67%	75%	33%	31%

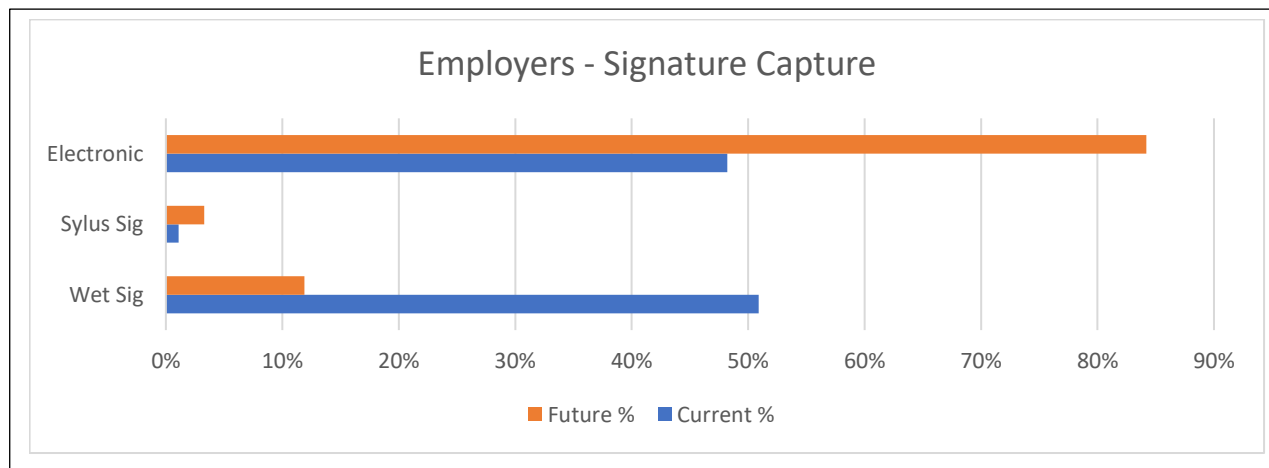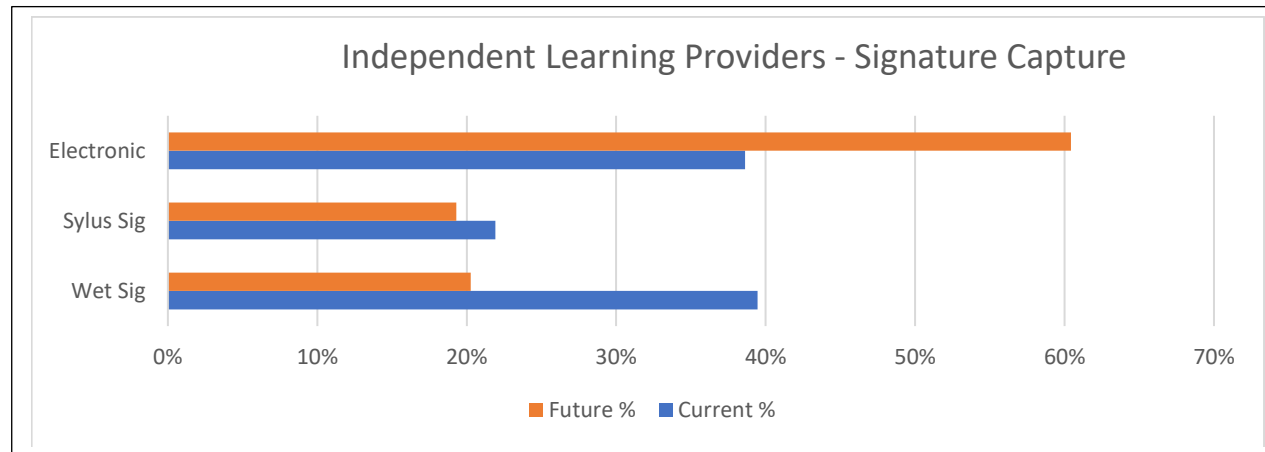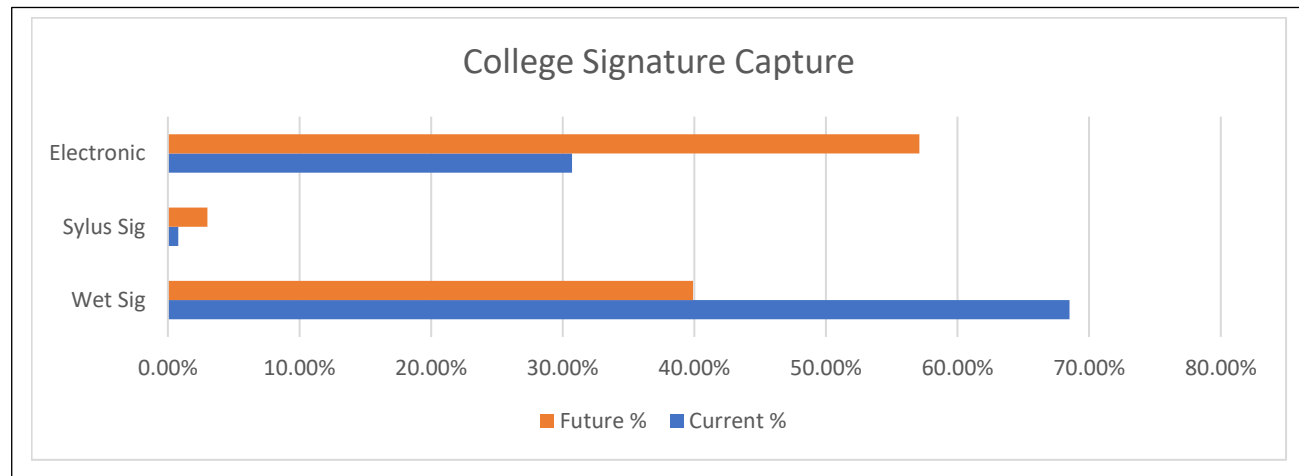

Is the sustainability learning content you plan to provide targeted at a specific MA framework?
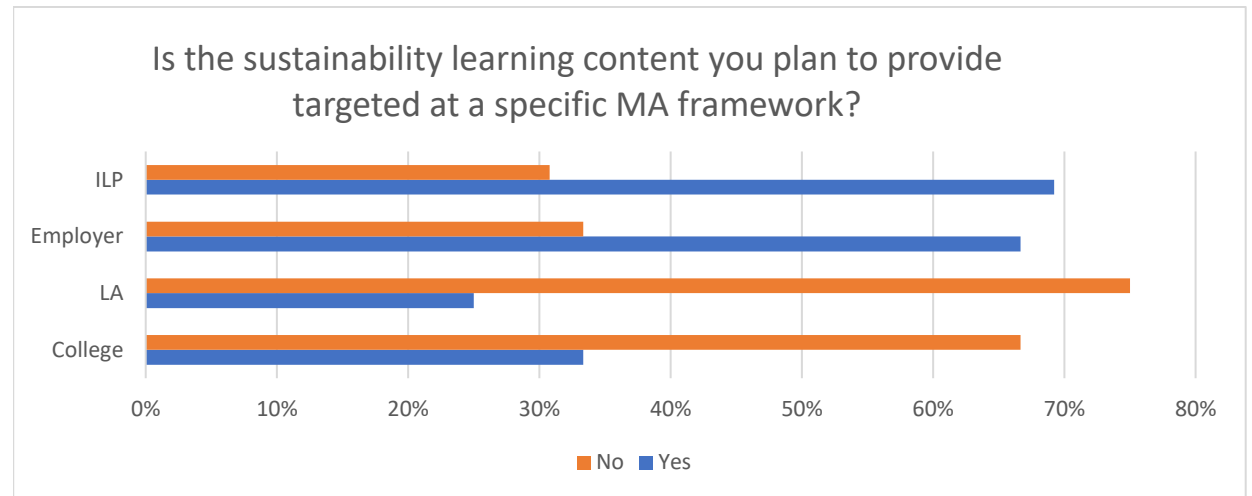
Learning providers were asked which approximate percentage of their Apprentices had signatures captured by Wet Signatures, Stylus Signatues and Electronic Signatures and what percentage this was likely to be in the future. Responses broken down by provider Type are as follows:-

Independent Learning Providers - Signature Capture

Employers - Signature Capture

Local Authority Signature Capture

	Future %	Current %
Electronic	40.00%	19.00%
Sylus Sig	26.00%	18.00%
Wet Sig	33.00%	62.00%

College Signature Capture

	Future %	Current %
Electronic	57.00%	30.00%
Sylus Sig	3.00%	1.00%
Wet Sig	40.00%	68.00%
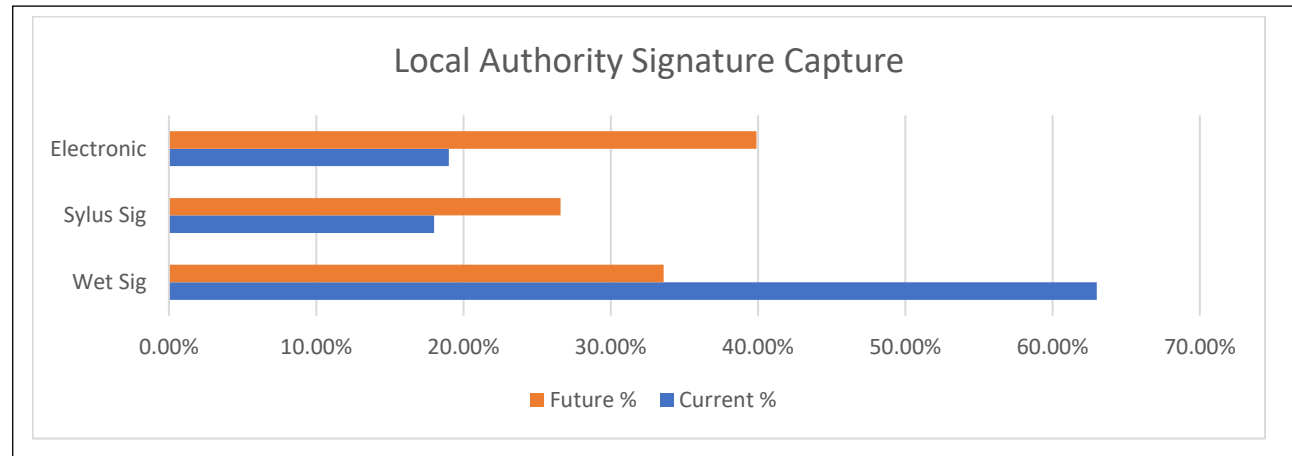
Learning providers were also asked what the approximate percentage of their Apprentice Data Storage was and what percentage this was likely to be in the future. Responses broken down by provider Type are as follows:-

Independent Learning Providers - Data Storage

Category	Future %	Current %
Electronic	~88%	~75%
Hard Copy	~12%	~25%

Legend: ■ Future % ■ Current %

Employers - Data Storage

Category	Future %	Current %
Electronic	~91%	~65%
Hard Copy	~9%	~35%

Legend: ■ Future % ■ Current %

Local AUthority Data Storage

Future % Current %

College Data Storage

Future % Current %