

National Child Development Study
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* A F T E R S C H O O L *
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* THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING EXPERIENCES OF THE 1958 COHORT *
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by

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This Working Paper is one of a number, available from the National Child Development Study User Support Group, which report on the background to the Study and the research that has been based on the information collected over the years. Other Working Papers in the series are listed below.

No.	Title	Author(s)	Date
1	The National Child Development Study: an introduction to the origins of the Study and the methods of data collection	P. Shepherd	October 1985
2.	Publications arising from the National Child Development Study	NCDS User Support Group and Librarian, National Children's Bureau	October 1985
3.	After School: the education and training experiences of the 1958 cohort	K. Fogelman	October 1985

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1 In the second half of 1981, some 12,500 young people aged twenty-three patiently submitted to a long and detailed interview covering many aspects of their lives. They were participating in the fourth follow-up of the National Child Development Study, a long-term study of all the young people in this country who were born in one week (3rd-9th March) in 1958. They thus provide a large and nationally representative sample of young people in Great Britain.

2. The interview at twenty-three lasted an average of one and a half hours and covered: employment history; apprenticeships and training; education since school; marriage and cohabitation; children and their health; housing; income and savings; health status and history; and leisure activities. In this paper, commissioned by the Further Education Unit, we shall be presenting some aspects of the findings of particular relevance to their experience of further education and training.

3. Following a general description of their overall experiences in these areas, we examine in more detail different types of training and education, namely apprenticeships, other work-based training and educational courses to obtain qualifications. Of course, not all such courses were successfully completed, and chapter six is concerned with the characteristics of courses which were failed or abandoned before completion. We then turn to other courses which were neither work-based nor designed to achieve a qualification.

4. The next two chapters are concerned with two specific issues. The first looks at discontinuities between school and subsequent achievement, in particular the extent to which young people who did not do well at school succeeded subsequently in obtaining relatively high-level qualifications. The second examines how some aspects of post-school education and training are related to subsequent experiences in the labour market.

5. The final group of findings looks to the future and the plans expressed by these young people, at the age of twenty-three, for further education and training. The report concludes with a brief discussion of the implications of the major findings.

6. In all the above, we shall be drawing largely upon analyses already conducted for, and reported to, the sponsors of the fourth follow-up (Departments of Health and Social Security, Education and Science, Employment, and Environment, and the Manpower Services Commission), but also incorporating some analyses carried out specifically for this purpose, particularly those which examine regional differences.

7. Before the presentation of findings, the next section of this paper provides further background information about the National Child Development Study and the technicalities of the twenty-three year follow-up. Following the findings there is a brief discussion of some of their implications and consideration of further ways in which the study might contribute to our knowledge of education and training provision, either by further analysis of the data already held or by the collection of additional information on the subsequent experiences of the study's subjects

8. Two important points should be born in mind throughout this paper. Firstly, it provides only an account of preliminary analysis of some aspects of the education and training experiences of the people in the study. A comprehensive and definitive account would require more time and resources than were available for the preparation of this paper.

9. Secondly, the timing of the study should not be forgotten. Whilst the nature of the study is such that results can be taken to generalise, at least to the relevant year group, this cannot be taken too far. Members of NCDS left school and entered the labour market in the mid-seventies, since when there has been a dramatic increase in unemployment in general, and youth unemployment in particular. Traditional apprenticeship opportunities have reduced and there have been many other changes in training provision. Furthermore, the people described in this paper are generally too old to have experienced the now widespread Manpower Services Commission initiatives in this area. The Youth Opportunities Programme,

intended for young people between 16 and 19, was introduced in 1978, when they were aged 20. The Training Opportunities Programme appeared towards the end of the relevant period, but again was generally intended for a younger age-range (about 250 members of NCDS had been on a TOPS course by the time they were interviewed). YTS and other school, FE and employment-based initiatives had not been conceived. Thus, there is a number of ways in which the experiences of a cohort of young people passing through the same stage of their lives in the subsequent few years are likely to be different to those described in this paper.

The National Child Development Study (NCDS)

10. NCDS has its origins in the 1958 Perinatal Mortality Survey, carried out by the National Birthday Trust Fund. All babies born in England, Scotland and Wales in the week 3rd-9th March, 1958 were included in the study, and information was obtained through medical records, examinations and interviews with the mother, in order to investigate social and obstetric factors associated with stillbirth, death in early infancy and handicapping conditions (e.g. Butler and Bonham, 1963).

. Subsequently the National Children's Bureau has been responsible for four follow-ups of the entire cohort - at the ages of seven, eleven, sixteen and twenty-three.

12. At each of the follow-ups during the school years children who were new to the study, which usually meant they had come into this country since their birth, but whose birthday fell in the relevant week, were also included. Information on the children and their circumstances was obtained in a number of ways, including: medical examinations; interviews with the parents; questionnaires completed by schools; tests of attainment and ability administered by schools; and personal questionnaires completed by the young people themselves.

13. In addition to the above, schools and other educational institutions were contacted again in 1977/8, and details obtained of public examination entries and results.

14. The co-operation received from the subjects themselves, parents, teachers, health visitors, medical officers and local authority staff enabled approximately 90% of the cohort to be retraced and information obtained, at each of the above stages of the study.

15. The resultant work has led, to date, to the publication of twenty books and approaching 200 chapters, journal articles etc., describing the findings from these earlier phases of the study. The most comprehensive accounts are to be found in Davie et al. (1972) and Fogelman (1983).

The Twenty-three Year Follow-up

16. The fourth follow-up differed in a number of respects from earlier stages.

17. Firstly, no attempt was made to include any immigrants or other new cases. Thus the target sample at twenty-three comprised all those who had taken part in any earlier stage of the study, less those known to have emigrated or died or who had at some point indicated total refusal to take part in the study. This provided a potential sample of 16,028 individuals. The eventual response is described and considered in detail in the next section.

18. Secondly, tracing was more complex than in previous follow-ups. While the study members were still at school, most could be traced by writing to every school in the country which might contain children of the age concerned, requesting details of children on the register born in the relevant week. Obviously this was not appropriate at twenty-three. Instead, a first attempt to contact was made by post. Where this was not successful, other avenues pursued included local authority housing departments, family practitioner committees, national insurance records, armed forces records, media appeals and detective work by the interviewers.

19. Thirdly, rather than the variety of methods of data collection used previously, at twenty-three information was obtained by personal interview. Interviewing was carried out by the field forces

of two commercial companies: NOP Market Research Ltd and Social and Community Planning Research. These companies were also substantially involved in the preparation and piloting of the interview schedule, tracing and initial preparation and editing of the computerised data set.

20. Interviewing began in August, 1981 and continued until February, 1982.

Response

21. Reference has already been made to the fact that NCDS, by virtue of including everyone born in one week, provides a large and representative sample of young people of about that age in this country. Of course, whether this statement can be justified depends on the success achieved in actually interviewing a reasonable proportion, and on whether those interviewed are representative of the original cohort.

23. The full field sample of those who had taken part in previous stages of the study and believed to be still alive and in this country comprised a total of 16,028 individuals. Of these, 22 were discovered to have died since our last contact with them.

24. Of the remainder, 14.6 per cent could not be traced in the time available, 3.9 per cent refused to be interviewed, and 3.2 per cent were not interviewed for other reasons such as not being at home despite several visits.

25. Thus, a total of 12,538 interviews (78.3% of the field sample) was achieved.

26. In general this is an extremely satisfactory outcome, and compares well with other surveys. However, any less than perfect response rate introduces the possibility of bias in the responding sample.

27. More conventional surveys have either to take their representativeness on trust or, at best, are able to compare the characteristics of their respondents with those of other similar surveys. Longitudinal studies have a further and more powerful option, that is to compare respondents and non-respondents to the most recent stage in terms of the data obtained for them at earlier stages.

29. Of course this does in turn depend on the extent to which response to those earlier stages was representative of the original week's births. Extensive analyses on this question have been reported previously (Goldstein 1976) and are generally very reassuring. Respondents up to the age of 16 differ little from non-respondents in terms of major variables such as parents' occupation and education and physical measures of the subject. There is an indication of a slight under-representation of some disadvantaged groups such as the illegitimately born and those ascertained as in need of special education, but such discrepancies were small.

30. Response patterns at twenty-three show a continuation of the same trend. Table 2 presents distributions on a number of major variables from earlier stages of the study, comparing the target sample with those who were actually interviewed at twenty-three.

Table 1 Response Patterns

<u>Variable</u>		<u>Interviewed</u>	<u>Target</u>
Sex:	% male	50.1	51.5
Social Class at 16:	% non-manual	34.8	33.7
Reading score at 11:	% 'low'	18.1	20.0
	% 'high'	20.8	19.7
Family size 16:	% one child	7.1	6.9
	% 4 + children	37.9	39.2
Lone parent at 16:	% lone parents	13.1	14.3
Any child in the family receiving school meals (at 11):	% yes	9.2	10.4
Ascertained as Handicapped (at 11):	% yes	2.6	3.2

31. The pattern revealed in table 1 and throughout the response analyses which have been carried out is clear and consistent. Those who were interviewed at twenty-three tended to be slightly more often from middle-class backgrounds and to differ in other characteristics which could be predicted from that alone: their school attainment was higher; they came from smaller families; and they grew up in slightly

better housing circumstances. However, although such biases are certainly present (and all the contrasts in table 1 are statistically significant at the 0.1% level), they are small.

32. On the other hand, there is one respect in which under-representation at twenty-three is more troublesome, and that concerns ethnic minority groups. Three measures of immigrant status and ethnicity have been examined: mother's place of birth; father's place of birth; and a more subjective assessment of ethnic group made by the doctor in the course of the 16-year medical examination. Distributions for the main, very broadly categorised, minority groups on each of these measures are given in table 2.

Table 2 - Response patterns - parent's place of birth and ethnic group.

	<u>Interviewed</u>	<u>Target</u>
Mothers place of birth:		
% Ireland	3.1	
% India/Pakistan	0.6	
% Carribean	0.6	
Father's place of birth		
% Ireland	3.4	
% India/Parkistan	0.7	
% Carribean	0.7	1.1
Ethnic group (doctor's assessment):		
% Afro-Carribean	0.7	
% Indian/Pakistan	0.5	0.7

33. Although the absolute contrasts in table 2 may not appear large, they do show that young people of Carribean origin are under-represented at twenty-three by a factor of about one third, those from the Indian subcontinent by about one quarter, and those from Ireland by about one tenth.

34. That the findings described in this paper are based on a sample which departs from national representativeness in this one important respect should be borne in mind throughout.

35. Furthermore, the combination of small numbers and the probability of significant bias within these groups mean that analyses of the twenty-three year data designed to investigate specifically the experiences of ethnic minorities are unlikely to be of great value.

2. GENERAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING EXPERIENCES

36. The structure of the NCDS interview schedule results in information relevant to the subject's education and training experiences appearing in four separate sections of the questionnaire. The first obtained details of apprenticeships; the second of other work-related training; the third of educational courses which were aimed at a formal qualification; the fourth of other educational courses.

37. In subsequent sections of this report we shall examine each of the above separately and in more detail, but this section presents some indications of overall experience. Firstly, however, it will be helpful to clarify the above terms and the definitions adopted.

38. In common usage the distinction between education and training is often unclear. Within the NCDS interview, and therefore in this paper, the following definitions were adopted:

Training was carried out within a job, either on or off the employer's premises, and did not have to be for any qualification. To be counted, a training course had to entail at least 100 hours or 14 days attendance at a college, training centre or skill centre. TOPS schemes were included even though they would not be in conjunction with employment

Education for a qualification was not carried out within a job.

In describing within this section the broad overall experiences of the cohort by twenty-three, the qualifications which they obtained and the routes which they followed, the information considered is restricted to the above. Other educational courses, which were not intended to lead to a formal qualification and which therefore included a wide range of informal and leisure courses, are discussed separately (in section 6)

Post-school education and Training Courses

39. By the age of twenty-three, 46% of respondents had undertaken some training, as defined above, and 38% had taken, since leaving school, an educational course intended for a qualification. However substantial numbers had done both, and table 3 shows the various combinations of experiences, by sex.

Table 3 Education and Training Since Leaving School

	Female	Male	Both sexes
	%	%	%
No education, training or apprenticeship	39	21	30
Apprenticeship only	4	25	14
Apprenticeship and other training	1	6	3
Apprenticeship and education	1	5	3
All three	0.2	1	1
Training (non-apprenticeship) only	16	14	15
Training and education	10	10	10
Education only	30	18	24

40. As can be seen, some 30% of the cohort had, by twenty-three, undertaken no education or training courses, by these definitions, since leaving school. However, this overall figure masks considerable differences between the sexes. The sex difference is largely explained by the proportions experiencing apprentice-based training: one in twenty of the women having done so compared with one in three of the men. Women, on the other hand, were more likely than men to have been on an educational course: two fifths had done so, compared to just over a third of the men. Regional differences are summarised in table 4.

Table 4 Education and training since leaving school, by region

	No ed train or appr. %	Appr only %	Appr & other train. %	Appr & ed %	All three %	Train. only %	Train. & ed %	Ed only %
North-West England	29	14	3	3	1	16	12	23
North	34	15	3	2	1	15	8	22
East & West Ridings	29	19	5	2	1	14	9	21
North Midlands	28	15	4	3	1	16	11	22
East	30	13	3	3	1	14	11	25
Lon. and South East	26	12	3	2	1	16	10	30
South	26	13	2	4	1	14	13	27
South West	31	13	2	2	1	13	11	28
Midlands	33	14	3	2	1	17	9	22
Wales	32	12	3	2	1	13	10	27
Scotland	28	19	6	3	1	14	7	22

41. In this and all subsequent tables, 'region' relates to the location of the school attended at the age of sixteen. It is categorised according to the Register General's standard classification (pre-1974 local government reorganisation). The numbers in each region can be seen in figure 1. They sum to less than the total at twenty-three because of incomplete school data at sixteen.

Figure 1. Regional distribution (grouped local authority of school attended at age 16).



42. The contrasts in table 4 are not large, but do suggest: that the absence of any post-school education or training was most common in the North of England and the Midlands; that somewhat more young people from Scotland and the old East and West Ridings of Yorkshire entered apprenticeships; and those from London and the Southern parts of England were more likely to take education courses.

Qualifications obtained

43. Of course the above, apart from the distinctions between apprenticeship, other training and education does not identify in any way the level or nature of the courses taken. All are included, provided they meet the criteria of duration (for training courses) and intended qualification (for educational courses). In later sections we shall be able to examine in some detail each of these three different aspects of training and education, but to add to the overall picture of the experiences of the cohort, table 5 gives the distribution of the highest qualification (using the General Household Survey classification) which they had achieved by the age of twenty-three. In order to provide a comprehensive account of their qualifications by this age, O and A levels (and their Scottish equivalents) are included, irrespective of whether these were obtained at school or on post-school courses.

Table 5 - Highest Educational or Training Qualification obtained by age 23, by sex.

	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Both sexes</u>
	%	%	%
Higher degree	0.2	0.3	0.3
Degree	9	11	10
Teaching qualification	1	0.1	0.6
HTEC, HNC, HND etc.	3	8	5
Nursing qualification	5	0.3	2
2 + A levels or equivalent	5	6	5
1 A level, ONC, TEC etc	6	16	11
5 + O levels, craft level C & G	12	16	14
1-4 O levels plus some other qualifications	5	1	3
1-4 O levels only	20	12	16
No O levels but some qualification	2	1	2
Completed an apprenticeship but no qualification	1	2	0.8
Other qualification	1	2	0.7
None or CSE, grades 2-5 only	30	26	28

44. The sex differences in table 5 largely reflect what we have already seen about the general experiences of training or education. The highest qualifications obtained by men appear more frequently in those categories which include technical qualifications such as Higher or Ordinary National or City and Guilds. Women are more likely to have GCE O-levels only; and are also slightly more likely to have obtained no further qualifications since leaving school.

Routes

45. We already begin to see an indication of the variety of experiences of the cohort. To explore this further a typology of routes through education and training has been developed (see Ives, 1984), defined and distributed as shown in table 6.

Table 6 - Routes through education and training, by sex

<u>Category</u>	<u>Men</u> %	<u>Women</u>	<u>Both sexes</u> %
At least five years of full-time, usually continuous, post-sixteen education	9	9	9
2. Entered employment, but subsequently left work to go back into full-time education	2	1	2
3. Took secretarial and office study courses	0.2	9	5
4. No full-time study after school, but embarked on non-apprenticeship training or employer-sponsored education course	20	19	19
5. Went straight from school into apprenticeship	34	5	19
6. Left school to work, but some part-time education	1	2	2
7. Left school at earliest opportunity, and no subsequent education or training	18	37	26
8. Never employed, and no education or training	0.4	1	
9. A residual group with degree-level qualifications, but do not fit into any of the above	5	4	4
10. A residual group who left school at 17	3	2	3
11. Others	8	12	10

46. For both sexes, the proportion following the conventional academic route, staying on at school and then continuing with some form of further or higher education full-time, is relatively small, less than one in ten. At the other extreme fewer than one in five of the men, but twice as many women, left school at 16 and had no further education or training by twenty-three. The sex difference is mainly due to the common experience for young men (just over one third) of going straight from school into apprenticeship, which is not offset by the number of young women taking secretarial and office study courses.

47. In addition there are substantial numbers whose routes were more complex, who left school, worked, and then returned to education or who combined work with part-time education or training. Many followed paths which were too complicated even to fit any of these broadly-defined categories.

3. APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

48. A total of 2660 members of the cohort (21%) reported that they had started an apprenticeship at some time. As would be expected, men predominated and represent 87% of this group. Women's apprenticeships were largely in the personal services (especially hairdressing). For men a wider range of trades and industries was covered, but with engineering predominant.

49. Within the NCDS questionnaire apprenticeship was self-defined and therefore covers a multitude of training relationships. Individuals as diverse as school leavers taken on by a garage with no formal arrangements for training and graduates who were completing Solicitor's articles will be included in the above figure. However, 87% were aged less than eighteen when they started their apprenticeships, and 80% were in their first job.

50. Two-thirds of those who started an apprenticeship completed it without interruption (but fewer of the women, 54% did so). Most of the remainder abandoned their apprenticeship completely, although one fifth (7% of all apprentices) subsequently completed by starting again or transferring to a new employer and/or trade

51. As has been mentioned, not all apprenticeships included arrangements for formal, off-the-job training. In fact 88% entailed a day release or block release course, as is shown in more detail in table 7.

Table 7 Type of apprenticeship training, by sex

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Both sexes</u>
	%	%	%
Day Release	52	56	52
Block Release	21	9	20
	18	3	17
Neither	9	32	12

52. Women were more likely to have received no formal training in the course of their apprenticeship, and where they did so it was more frequently by day release, whereas men were more likely to have experienced block release or a combination of the two methods.

53. The great majority of day or block release courses were taken at a college, as can be seen in table 8, but again this was slightly more common for men than women.

Table 8 - Place of day or block release, by sex

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Both sexes</u>
	%	%	%
A college	93	87	92
Employer's training centre	2	7	3
Industry training centre	1	0	1
Elsewhere	1	5	1
combination of above	3	0	3

54. A total of 1625 people (13% of the entire cohort) had obtained a formal qualification in the courses of an apprenticeship. Two thirds of these were in City and Guilds, divided approximately equally between Craft and Advanced level. Further detail can be seen in table 9.

Table 9 - Qualifications obtained in course of apprenticeships

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Both sexes</u>
	%	%	%
City and Guilds - Operative	2	11	3
Craft	31	35	31
Advanced	38	11	35
FTC	7	(N=1)	7
CGIA	(N=3)	-	-
JIB NJC	4	-	3
ONC/OND	3	(N=4)	3
HNC/HND	2	(N=2)	2
TEC/BEC CERT/DIP	2	-	2
Higher TEC/BEC	1	-	1
All other qualifications	10	41	13

Even among the very small number of women who had followed an apprenticeship and obtained a qualification, their qualifications tended to be at a lower level than the mens'. The 'other qualifications' group into which two-fifths of those obtained by women fall, does contain a small number with degrees and professional qualifications, but largely consists of qualifications which are less likely to be nationally validated and recognised

Regional Differences

Some indication of regional variation was seen in table 4. This can be seen more clearly in table 10, which confirms that the greatest

proportions of young people who entered apprenticeships were from Scotland and fewest from London and Southern England. The same table summarises regional variation in whether the apprenticeship entailed day or block release, and the place at which such courses were taken.

Table 10 - Apprenticeships, day or block release, and place of course, by region.

<u>Region</u>	% entered an app. %	of which:				of those with day or block release:				
		day rel. %	block rel. %	both %	neither %	at coll. %	employer t.c. %	industry t.c. %	else where %	comb. %
North-West	21	54	12	16	17	93	3	1	1	2
North	22	50	15	23	12	92	3	0	0	5
East & West Ridings	27	51	20	20	9	95	2	2	0	1
North Midlands	23	52	21	18	10	92	3	2	0	3
East	20	49	30	10	11	93	3	1	0	4
London SE	18	48	25	18	10	91	3	1	0	5
South	20	56	22	14	9	95	1	0	2	2
South West	19	54	29	13	5	90	4	0	1	5
Midlands	20	56	16	25	4	92	1	2	2	3
Wales	19	70	9	9	12	97	1	0	0	1
Scotland	30	43	24	12	21	91	3	3	1	2

57. There appears to have been quite substantial regional variation in the style of apprenticeship training. In part, the high proportion of apprentices in Scotland is offset by a large number of these receiving no off-the-job training. On the other hand the North-West of England is notable for having a relatively small proportion of apprentices of whom a high proportion experienced neither day nor block release.

58. Although there is a slight suggestion of greater use of Industry Training Centres for apprenticeship training in Scotland, the numbers attending courses anywhere other than a college, in all regions, are extremely small.

4. NON-APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

59. On completion, where appropriate, of the section of the NCDS interview on apprenticeships, all respondents were asked whether they had been on any other training courses 'during any of their jobs'. They were reminded that, to be counted, a course should have involved at least 14 days or 100 hours attendance at a college, training centre or skill centre, but that all TOPs courses should be included. Twenty-nine per cent (26% of women; 32 % of men) indicated that they had been on such a course.

60 Of these, two thirds had taken just one such course, but, in all, the 3627 individuals concerned had attended a total of 5876 courses, an average of 1.6 courses per trainee. In addition to being more likely to have been on a course at all, men tended to have attended more courses - 1.8 on average compared with 1.4 for the women.

61. Where relevant, details were obtained of the first three training courses taken. For simplicity's sake we shall concentrate in this paper on the first course taken. In general, the characteristics described in this chapter did not differ between first courses and subsequent ones, apart from a slight indication that later courses were more likely to be full-time.

62 As table 11 shows, half of first courses were full-time, with men being slightly more likely to have taken a course which was full-time.

Table 11 - Type of first training course, by sex

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Both Sexes</u>
	%	%	%
Full-time	54	51	52
Block release	6	7	7
Day release	30	31	31
Mixture	3	4	3
Other	6	7	7

63. Two in five of these courses were taken at a college, and a similar proportion at an employer's training centre. The latter was slightly less common for men, who were more likely to have attended an Industry Training Centre or a Government Skill Centre (see table 12)

Table 12 - Place of first training course, by sex

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Both Sexes</u>
	%	%	%
College	42	42	42
Employer's training centre	40	44	42
Industry training centre	4	1	2
Government skill centre	5	1	3
Elsewhere	9	12	10
Mixture	1	1	1

64. Differences between the sexes in the subjects studied on these courses were marked and fairly predictable (table 13).

Table 13 - Subject of first training course, by sex

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Both sexes</u>
	%	%	%
Education	1	1	1
Health	3	27	14
Engineering	24	1	13
Technology	13	3	9
Agriculture	3	0.2	2
Science	3	2	3
Soc., Admin and Business	34	53	43
Miscell. Vocational and Prof.	18	10	14
Languages	0.2	1	0.4
Other Arts	0.6	0.4	0.5

65. For both sexes the most common subjects of study fell in the social, administration and business studies category. Indeed, for women, four fifths of the courses were in either this subject category or that of health. For men, substantial proportions studied subjects in the categories of engineering, technology or vocational and professional studies (the main subject areas in this last category are: architecture; catering and institutional management; home economics; nautical studies; transport; wholesale and retail trades; hairdressing; journalism; and librarianship).

66. Just over half these training courses (56% for the men; 48% for the women) did not result in a qualification. Those that did, lead to a great

variety of qualifications with no one appearing in very large numbers, except for nursing qualifications which accounted for 17% of the courses taken by women.

67. The other most common qualifications were , for men, ONC/OND (6%) and and Guilds Craft level (4%); and, for women, RSA (Stage 1, 4%, Stage 3%, Stage III, 3%) and ONC/OND (3%).

Regional Differences

68. Contrasts between the different regions of the country in the proportions reporting having taken a training course were not very large ranging from 29% in Northern England and Wales to 36% in the North West and North Midlands. Greater differences did appear, however, in the nature of the first course, as can be seen in table 14

Table 14 - Type of first training course, by region

	Full-time %	Block release %	Day release %	Mixture %	other %
North-West England	46	8	32	4	9
North	58	6	26	5	3
East and West Ridings	47	5	36	5	7
North Midlands	49	6	34	3	7
East	47	8	36	3	6
London and SE	51	7	31	3	7
South	56	4	33	1	5
South-West	57	6	29	2	6
Midlands	47	8	33	5	7
Wales	57	10	23	3	5
Scotland	63	8	21	3	5

69. The major part of the variation in table 14 is in the balance between full-time and day release courses. Scotland, for example, has the highest proportion of full-time training courses and the lowest proportion of day release. North-West England, East and West Ridings, Midlands and Eastern England each have fewer full-time courses and relatively high day-release provision.

70. This pattern does appear to be related to variation in the place in which training was provided (table 15). Those parts of the country with the lowest proportions of full-time courses were also where training was more likely to be college-based, rather than at an employer's centre. The pattern is not totally consistent in that Wales has a particularly low proportion of college-based courses. In all regions the number of courses taken at an Industry training Centre or Government Skill Centre was relatively small.

Table 15 - Place of first training course, by region.

	College %	Employer's T.C. %	Industry T.C. %	Government skill centre %	Elsewhere %	Mixture. %
North-West	46	38	2	2	10	1
North	37	48	2	5	7	
East and West						
Ridings	46	41	3	2	8	0.4
North Midlands	45	41	2	2	9	0.4
East	48	36	2	2	11	
London and SE	39	44	3	2	10	1
South	37	48	2	2	10	1
South West	41	38	3	5	12	1
Midlands	46	37	1	2	10	3
Wales	32	56	2	5	5	0
Scotland	35	45	2	4	11	2

71. Regional variation in the subjects studied on training courses was not substantial, and a table is not given. The most notable contrast was proportions whose training course was in 'health', which accounted for 20% of courses in both Northern England and Scotland but only 9% in London and the South East. As the latter region had the highest proportions with courses in Social, administration and business studies and vocational and professional studies, the difference may reflect local traditions in women's occupations and training in particular (it should be remembered that the 'region' referred to here is that of origin, and is not necessarily where the training took place).

72. Numbers become too small to present with any confidence regional distributions of the qualifications obtained on the first training course, largely, as we have seen, because of the substantial proportion whose training did not lead to any qualification. This proportion does, however, differ by region, as is seen in table 16.

Table 16 - Proportion whose training course did not lead to a qualification, by region.

	No qualification
	%
North West	55
North	54
East and West Ridings	44
North Midlands	51
East	49
London and SE	55
South	44
South West	53
Midlands	48
Wales	64
Scotland	53

5. POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION FOR QUALIFICATIONS

73. We now turn to those courses which were not taken as part of a job and which could potentially lead to a qualification. Nearly two-fifths of respondents (41% of the women; 34% of men) had, by the time of interview at twenty-three, undertaken a full or part-time post-school education course for a qualification. Eighteen percent had taken more than one such course. As would be expected, not all courses were successfully completed. One in ten of the cohort had experienced an 'unsuccessful' course, and these are discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

74. In this chapter we shall concentrate on the educational course taken which led to the highest qualification obtained by the age of twenty-three. (In fact, the questionnaire was so structured that courses currently being taken are included with the highest qualification course. Thus, the figures in this chapter include a small number whose current course was not the highest-level course which they had taken). Table 17 shows the distribution of the types of courses taken.

Table 17 - Type of highest post-school education course, by sex

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Both sexes</u>
	%	%	%
Full-time	59	71	65
Sandwich	8	3	5
Open University	0.3	0.4	
Correspondence	4	2	3
Evening	13	17	15
Part-time or weekend	8	5	6
Other	7	2	4

75. The above includes all courses, irrespective of their level. Full-time courses, in particular, will include university and other higher education courses. A better indication of courses which fell in the further education sector can be seen in table 19, which shows who organised the education courses under consideration

Table 18 - Institution of highest post-school education course, by sex

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Both sexes</u>
	%	%	%
FE or Technical college	34	48	41
College of Education	3	7	5
Institute of Higher Education	2	3	3
Polytechnic	15	7	11
University	28	18	23
School or Sixth-form college	1		
Adult Education Centre	2	3	3
Private or Commercial College	4	6	5
Other	11	5	8

76. Given that women were more likely to take an education course at all, we see in table 18 that they were particularly likely to make use of the FE sector, whereas men's courses were more often at a university or polytechnic. We should therefore expect to find substantial differences between the sexes in the qualifications obtained on these courses, which is indeed the case (table 19). The differences in that table are largely predictable, in that men's qualifications were more frequently not only of

degree level, but also in Ordinary and Higher National Certificates and Diplomas. Women outnumber men in RSA qualifications and the miscellaneous group of 'other' qualifications.

Table 19 - Qualification from highest post-school education course, by sex

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Both sexes</u> %
O-level/0-grade	12	12	12
A-level/H-grade	8	5	7
RSA - Stage I	0.4	7	4
Stage II	0.2	7	4
Stage III	0.1	4	2
C & G - Operative	0.3	0.4	0.4
Craft	4	3	3
Advanced	3	1	2
FTC	1	0.1	
JIB/NJC	0.4	(N=1)	0.2
ONC/OND	6	3	4
HNC/HND	5	2	3
TEC/BEC CERT/DIP	1	1	1
Higher TEC/BEC	1	(N=1)	0.4
Professional (including Nursing)	5	9	7
Polytechnic or University Cert/Diploma	3	5	4
Degree	41	28	33
Other	9	13	11

77. The same pattern is reflected in the subjects of study, as shown in table 20. For over two-fifths of women who took courses the subject of their highest course was in the category of social, administration or business studies, and one in ten were studying each of education and health. Courses in the category of social, administration and business studies were also the most common for men, but comprised only one quarter of their courses, and many more men studied engineering, technology or science subjects.

Table 20 - Subject of highest post-school qualification, by sex

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Both Sexes</u>
	%	%	%
Education	4	11	8
Health	4	10	8
Engineering	16	0.4	7
Technology	6	0.4	3
Agriculture	3	1	2
Science	16	6	10
Social, Admin, Business	26	42	35
Misc. vocational and professional	8	10	9
Languages	6	9	8
Arts	7	7	7
O-levels in more than one subject	6	4	5

78. As table 20 includes subjects of courses which were taken in higher education, table 21 gives the subjects of study of courses taken for qualifications normally within the FE sector.

Table 21 Subject by type of highest post-school qualification

	GCE/SCE	RSA	C & G	ONC/HNC/TEC/BEC
	%	%	%	%
Education	0	0	0	0
Health	7	0	1	0
Engineering	1	0	27	14
Technology	1	0	12	5
Agriculture	0	0	3	8
Science	19	0	1	6
Social, Admin, Business	18	98	3	50
Misc. vocational, professional	2	0	51	15
Languages	21	2	0	0
	6	0	1	
O-levels in more than one subject	25			

Regional differences

Tables 22 and 23 present the regional distribution of, respectively the type of educational course and the institution responsible for the highest post-school educational course.

Table 22 - Type of highest post-school education course, by region

	Full-time	Sandwich	OU and corres.	Evening	Part-time weekend	other
	%	%	%	%	%	%
North West	70	3	4	15	4	4
North	62	5	4	16	9	4
East and West						
Ridings	59	7	3	19	8	4
North Midlands	63	6	3	18	5	4
East	63	8	5	14	6	4
London and SE	68	5	3	14	6	4
South	63	6	2	17	8	4
South West	64	5	3	18	5	5
Midlands	63	4	3	16	9	4
Wales	67	5	3	9	8	9
Scotland	67	5	3	14	5	5

80. Differences between the regions in the types of courses taken are not substantial, although there is some suggestion of fewer full-time courses in Yorkshire and that evening courses were less common in Wales than elsewhere.

Table 23 - Institution of highest post - school education course, by region

	FE or Tech. coll. %	Coll. of Ed. %	Inst of HE %	Polytech. %
North-West	44	6	1	9
North	46	4	2	16
East & West				
Ridings	36	9	4	12
North Midlands	46	5	2	13
East	41	5	5	11
London and SE	37	5	2	10
South	34	3	5	10
South West	41	5	2	12
Midlands	34	6	3	17
Wales	34	6	5	10
Scotland	41	8	2	4

Table 23 Continued

	Univ.	School or 6th form coll.	Adult Ed.	Private College	Other
North-West	25	1	2	4	7
North	19	1	1	5	5
East and West					
Ridings	24	0.4	4	4	7
North Midlands	16	0.4	3	4	9
East	19	1	1	9	7
London and SE	30	1	3	5	6
South	24	3	7	5	8
South West	25	2	1	5	7
Midlands	14	0.4	2	4	9
Wales	26	1	1	6	9
Scotland	28	1	1	7	8

The most notable contrasts in table 23 are in the proportions of those taking courses going to university, which appear to be broadly, though not entirely, in the same direction as the socio-economic gradient across the regions. The high proportion of Scots attending university is offset to some extent by the lower proportions in Central Institutes - the Scottish equivalent of the polytechnic

81. Cell sizes become rather small when we examine by region the qualifications obtained on these courses. Therefore, table 24 includes only selected courses where numbers were more substantial, and combines the different levels of RSA and City and Guilds.

Table 24 Main groups of qualifications obtained on highest post-school education course, by region.

	O-level O-grade %	A-level H-grade %	RSA %	C&G %	ONC/ OND %	HNC/ HND %	Prof. & Nurs. %	Degree %
North-West	14	7	8	8	3	2	8	33
North	13	3	13	7	4	2	7	28
East & West Ridings	10	6	14	5	2	6	5	31
North Midlands	12	8	15	4	5	4	7	22
East	14	4	11	6	5	4	7	28
London & SE	10	9	9	7	3	3	4	37
South	14	7	9	7	5	2	7	34
South West	12	7	11	5	4	1	6	33
Midlands	13	6	12	9	2	5	8	28
Wales	10	4	7	6	9	3	10	32
Scotland	8	5	6	3	5	5	9	32

82. The differences in the proportions of young people in different parts of the country obtaining a degree among those with any post-school education, confirm what was seen in the previous table. Also noteworthy is the contrast in the proportions studying A-levels since leaving school three times as many for those people from London and the South East as for those from the Northern region - and the relatively high proportion from Wales, and to a slightly lesser extent Scotland, who obtained Ordinary or Higher Nationals.

83. The relatively high level of 'professional and nursing' qualifications in Wales and Scotland is largely a reflection of the strong nursing tradition in those areas. This can be seen more clearly in table 25, where the two countries have the highest proportion whose subject of study was in the health category. Young people from the more affluent parts of Southern England were more likely to be taking courses in science, languages or arts

Table 25 - Subject of highest post-school qualification, by region.

	Education %	Health %	Engineering %	Technology %	Agriculture %
North West	9	8	6	2	1
North	12	8	8	1	3
East & West Ridings	10	9	5	6	2
North Midlands	7	9	7	1	2
East	8	6	10	2	1
London & SE	8	6	9	2	1
South	6	3	8	2	3
South West	9	6	6	4	2
Midlands	9	5	7	2	4
Wales	9	9	4	4	3
Scotland	10	12	6	3	3

Table 25 Cont

	Science %	Soc., Admin & Business %	Misc. Voc. & Prof. %	Languages %	Art %	O-levels in more than one category %
North West	11	33	10	9	8	5
North	9	33	11	7	5	4
East & West Ridings	12	36	7	6	6	
North Midlands	7	42	8	7	5	7
East	7	39	7	10	5	6
London and SE	13	35	6	9	8	4
South	12	37	9	8	8	4
South West	11	35	8	8	8	4
Midlands	10	33	13	9	2	6
Wales	9	38	8	4	7	3
Scotland	10	32	10	6	5	3

6. UNSUCCESSFUL COURSES

84. By definition, the previous section was about the 3788 people (30% of the total cohort) who had successfully completed a post-school education course and obtained a qualification. However as many as ten percent of the cohort had taken at least one education course which should have led to a qualification, but they did not complete it successfully. Of these just over a third had also successfully completed a course, and are therefore included in the above figure. Thus, 6% of the cohort, and 17% of those who had taken an education course, had experienced only a course which they did not complete successfully. Clearly any picture of the educational experience of the cohort would not be complete without taking them into account.

85. Differences between the sexes were extremely small. Slightly more women altogether had experienced an unsuccessful course, but it will be remembered that women were somewhat more likely to have been on any educational course. Of those who had taken any course, 25% of women and 28% of men had been unsuccessful in at least one.

86. The table which follows summarises the characteristics of courses which were not successfully completed and compares them with the highest qualification course.

Table 26 - Qualifications aimed for on unsuccessful courses, and highest qualification courses.

	Unsuccessful courses	Highest qualifications courses
	%	%
Degree	17	33
HTEC/BEC HNC/D	6	4
ONC/D, TEC. BEC	8	5
City and Guilds	5	6
RSA	9	10
A-levels, H-grades	16	7
O-levels, O-grades	18	12
Professional qualifications	7	7
Other	14	15

87. It is known that non-completion rates on degree courses are lower than for many other courses, so it is not surprising that they are under-represented among the unsuccessful courses. Most striking in table 26 is the high proportion of GCE O and A level courses among the unsuccessful, accounting as they do for more than one third.

88. Compared with the highest qualification courses, unsuccessful courses were less likely to be full-time and more likely to be evening courses (table 27), and they were particularly likely to be taken at a further education or technical college (Table 28) Both Open University and adult education courses are also over-represented among the unsuccessful courses, though in both cases the numbers involved are small.

Table 27 - Type of unsuccessful courses and highest qualification courses.

	Unsuccessful courses	Highest qualification courses
	%	%
Full-time	54	65
Sandwich	2	5
OU	6	0.4
Correspondence	3	3
Evening	29	15
Part-time/weekend	9	6
Other	3	4

Table 28 - Institution of unsuccessful courses and highest qualification courses.

	Unsuccessful courses	Highest qualifications courses.
	%	%
FE or technical college	56	41
Inst of HE/Coll of Ed/Tertiary	5	8
Polytechnic	8	11
University	12	23
School or 6th form college	3	
Adult education	5	3
Other	11	13

All those who experienced an unsuccessful course were asked why they had left the course before the end. As can be seen in table 29, the most common reasons offered were related to the course and its content. Women were also particularly liked to mention personal and family reasons. Although only one in ten gave failure in examinations as the reason for not completing the course, when asked directly if they had failed any examinations, 44% reported that they had failed some or all of their examinations, 5% were on courses which did not have formal examinations, and the remaining 51% left prior to taking any examinations.

Table 29 - Reason given for not completing unsuccessful course, by sex.

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Both sexes</u>
	%	%	%
Financial	5	6	6
Personal and family	11	22	17
Job-related	18	11	15
Failed exams	16	5	10
Course-related	26	30	29
Other	23	25	24

Just one in five of those who had had an unsuccessful course had subsequently gone on to take and successfully complete a further course. The majority of these achieved a qualification as good as or better than the one they had aimed for on their unsuccessful course.

7 NON-QUALIFICATION EDUCATION COURSES

91. All NCDS respondents were asked at twenty-three whether they had done any classes or courses since leaving school which did not lead to formal educational qualifications. They were asked to include 'any courses you have done in evening classes, courses you have followed on television, courses organised by a Trade Union and so on'.

92. The first two kinds of course or class asked about were those designed to give help with reading and writing or figures and arithmetic. Some 14% of the cohort had reported having problems in these areas (see Simonite, 1983). Despite this, courses for this purpose were rare, as can be seen in table 31. Much more frequent were classes related to physical fitness or sport or to a hobby.

Table 30 - Non-qualification courses, by sex

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Both Sexes</u>
Courses or classes:	%	%	%
To get better at reading or writing	1.5	0.6	1
To get better at figures or arithmetic	1.3	0.6	1
To help you do your job or get a better job	12	12	12
To develop physical fitness or skill in sport	24	26	25
To help you learn more about a hobby or handicraft	11	17	14
Any other course	7	10	9

Table 31 - Non qualification courses by region.

	Proportion having taken a course for:					
	Reading/writing	Arithmetic	Job-related	Sport	Hobby	Other
North-West	0.9	1.0	9	24	13	8
North	0.8	0.7	10	23	10	6
East and West						
Ridings	1.0	1.1	12	24	12	8
North Midlands	1.5	0.8	11	26	15	9
East	1.6	0.8	11	28	16	9
London and SE	1.1	1.3	16	28	16	14
South	1.7	0.8	14	24	14	12
South West	0.6	2.0	14	23	16	9
Midlands	0.9	0.9	12	27	15	7
Wales	0.7	1.2	13	24	14	7
Scotland	0.4	0.7	8	23	10	6

93. Regional differences in this respect were small, but there does seem a slight tendency for young people from Scotland and Northern England to have taken fewer non-qualification courses of any kind.

8. DISCONTINUITIES BETWEEN SCHOOL AND SUBSEQUENT ACHIEVEMENT

94. Hitherto we have been considering the education and training experiences of the entire cohort. In this section we look in more depth at one relatively small subgroup which analysis revealed to be of particular interest. This group is composed of those people whose educational attainment was consistently poor whilst they were at school, but who achieved a relatively high qualification level subsequently.

Consistently poor performance at school was defined in terms of scores on tests taken in the course of the study follow-ups at ages seven, eleven and sixteen. To meet the criterion scores had to be in the bottom 40 per cent at all three ages on one of either the reading or mathematics and in the bottom 50 per cent on the other test. Nineteen per cent of the total cohort achieved as consistently poorly as this, so they can be broadly conceived as that bottom fifth of school pupils who could be expected to leave school with few, if any, examinations passes at any level. In general, one would predict that they would leave school at the earliest opportunity and probably enter relatively low-level, 'dead-end' jobs with little opportunity to progress.

In fact, however, as many as one in six of these people had, by the time they were interviewed at the age of twenty-three, succeeded in obtaining five or more O-levels or an equivalent level of qualifications. In other words, although they had been in the bottom fifth at school, by twenty-three they had reached a qualification level attained by less than half of the total cohort. These 'unexpected successes' amount to 3% of

the total cohort, not a large figure, but one which would represent some 20,000 people in each year group.

It might be suspected that this group is merely a statistical artefact reflecting the fact that NCDS tests, like any other, are not perfect measures of educational achievement. That this is not the case is demonstrated by their performance in school examinations at 16+. They were entered for more examinations at this age than others whose tested attainment had been consistently poor, but these were almost entirely CSE's. Four-fifths did not obtain any O-level at grade C or better or CSE grade 1, and only two individuals reached that level in as many as three subjects. None obtained an O-level grade A in any subject, just 3% obtained a C-grade O-level or CSE grade 1 in English; and none at all obtained such a result in Mathematics. Certainly their subsequent success could not be said to be apparent at this stage. How then did they achieve they did by the age of twenty-three?

98. Firstly, they did not stay on at school: 88% left at the age of sixteen. Only a small number transferred at that age to a full-time course at some other educational establishment: 82% completed continuous full-time education at sixteen.

99. Table 32 summarises the post-school education and training experiences of this group. Immediately striking is the high proportion who pursued apprenticeships and, to a lesser extent, a mixture of education, apprenticeships and other training. It is not therefore

surprising to discover that the overwhelming majority (78%) of the unexpected successes are male.

Table 32 Post-school education and training experiences of the unexpectedly successful

	%
No education or training	4
Education course only	10
Apprenticeship only	50
Other training only	15
Apprenticeship and other training	10
Education and apprenticeship and/or other training	2

100. That work-related training is the source of their qualification achievements is confirmed by table 33, which indicates the method by which the highest qualification, that is the one which leads to their classification as relatively successful, was obtained.

Table 33 Method of obtaining the highest qualification of the unexpectedly successful.

	%
School	6
Post-school education course	17
Apprenticeship	58
Other work-based training	20

101. Although only 17% (a total of 43 individuals) obtained their highest qualification through educational courses, some of their achievements were substantial, given their poor performance at school. Two had obtained degrees, three had teaching, nursing or other professional qualifications seventeen technical or higher technical qualifications, and two had A-levels. Of the remainder, ten had craft qualifications, four RSA, five O-levels or the Scottish equivalents

102. We have seen elsewhere that such courses tended to be in social, administration or business studies more than any other category, but was not the case for this group. One third were in vocational or professional subjects and a similar proportion were in engineering, technology or science. Four-fifths had obtained their qualification at an FE or technical college, usually through a full-time or sandwich course.

103. However, for many more of the unexpectedly successful, an apprenticeship or other training in the course of their employment was the avenue to their qualifications. Of the 190 individuals who had obtained their qualifications in this way, nine obtained higher technical qualifications (City and Guilds FTC, HNC, HND or higher TEC/BEC) and fifteen had professional qualifications, of which all but one were in nursing. The two largest groups were the 79 people with technical qualifications (City and Guilds Advanced, ONC/OND or TEC/BEC), and 87 with craft-level qualifications (almost entirely City and Guilds).

104. Three-quarters of the above qualifications were obtained in the course of apprenticeships, the major exception being those with nursing or other professional qualifications. Over half these apprenticeships were in 'making and repairing (metal and electrical 'trades.

9. DESTINATIONS

105. The ability to examine the subsequent history of people with contrasting education and training experiences is potentially one of the most fruitful uses of the information now held by NCDS. However, to date the analyses which have been undertaken in this area were not designed to identify specifically those with experience of further education and training. Nevertheless, two sets of analysis do provide interesting and relevant information. The first relates overall experience of education and training to economic status at twenty-three, and qualifications obtained to the social class of the current or latest job; the second compares the destinations and experiences of those who finished their full-time education at various ages.

Education and training

At the time of the 23-year interview, 70% of the cohort were in full-time employment, 4% part-time, 10% unemployed, 12% full-time housewives, and 4% in full-time education or out of the labour force for reasons. However, these proportions differed significantly between the two sexes, and according to their education and training experience, as can be seen in table 34.

Table 34 - Participation in education and training and economic status at interview.

<u>Men</u>	Status at 23:					
	F/t ed. %	F/t emp. %	P/t emp. %	Unemp. %	Housework %	other %
No education, apprenticeship or other training.	0	74	1	20	0.2	4
Apprenticeship or other training only.	0	87	1	11		
Education only	12	71	2	11		2
Education and training	6	87	0.9	6		
<u>Women</u>						
No ed., appr. or other training	0	43	8	9	38	3
Appr. or other tr. only	0	64	5	6	22	2
Education only	5	65	8	7	13	2
Education and training	3	78	4	5	9	2

Some of the patterns in this table are not surprising, for example those women with no post-school education or training were most likely to have married early and be full-time housewives by twenty-three. However the relationship with current unemployment is most striking. Men with no post-school education or training were twice as likely to be unemployed at the time of interview as others. Those who had taken education courses, but no work-based training, also have a surprisingly high unemployment rate, once the proportion still in full-time education is taken into account, but this group will include those people whose education has finished only shortly before the time of interview and who were therefore not long in the labour market.

For women, the relationship between education and training and unemployment is in the same direction, but much less marked. This may well be because those who said they were housewives included some who were 'hidden unemployed' - not actively seeking work, but who would have been working if opportunities had been available.

The general relationship between qualification level and social class is predictable, particularly when a very broad grouping of qualification is used, as has had to be done in table 35. However, the relationship is far from perfect. Some of the 6% of those with qualifications of A-level or above who are in semi- or unskilled manual occupations may be recent graduates still seeking more permanent employment. On the other hand 4% of those with no qualifications at all were in professional or intermediate non-manual occupations.

Table 35 Highest qualification level by social class of current or most recent job.

	Prof & Inter NM	Other NM	Skilled Manual	Semi & Unskilled	Never had a job
	%	%	%	%	%
A-level equivalent and above (incl. C & G advanced, ONC/D, TEC/BEC	44	26	20	6	4
O-level equivalent (incl C & G craft, RSA)	11	48	25	15	
Below O-level	7	34	29	30	
No quals .	4	16	27	49	3

Age of completing full-time education

110. Further analysis examined the labour market activities of cohort members at yearly intervals after they had left full-time education (strictly, after the first time they left full-time education, as some will have returned at a later date). This is based on the definition of education as being for a qualification, and not work-based, as explained previously, and therefore has not examined training activities. Furthermore there is no differentiation as to the level of the educational activity, so that no distinction is made between school, further education and higher education.

111. Perhaps the most pertinent indicator is the proportion who were unemployed, and table 36 shows the proportions (of the economically active) unemployed at yearly intervals in June of each year. As only a very small number left education at the age of twenty, this group is excluded.

However, the numbers in all groups which left at age nineteen or later are considerably smaller than those of earlier leavers, and the figures relating to them should be seen as correspondingly tentative.

Table 36 - Proportion of the economically active unemployed at yearly intervals after completing full-time education.

<u>Men</u>	Age of completing f.t. ed.:	Proportion unemployed in June of year when aged						
		17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	16	3.6	4.4	5.0	5.2	5.1	8.2	13.9
	17	-	4.0	2.5	2.0	3.4	4.9	8.3
	18	-	-	4.4	3.7	2.3	4.4	5.9
	19	-	-	-	2.6	1.3	4.4	7.5
	21	-	-	-	-	-	7.2	6.0
	22	-	-	-	-	-	-	11.9
 <u>Women</u>								
	Age of completing f.t. ed.							
	16	3.4	4.1	5.1	5.4	4.7	5.5	7.2
	17	-	4.4	3.0	1.6	1.7	3.1	5.2
	18	-	-	2.6	1.3	2.2	2.6	3.5
	19	-	-	-	2.4	2.4	4.2	7.2
	21	-	-	-	-	-	3.2	5.4
	22	-	-	-	-	-	-	6.0

Interpretation of table 36 is not straightforward as it is influenced by the underlying economic climate as well as educational experiences. Thus almost all groups had the highest proportion unemployed at the age of twenty-three, when the recession had begun to bite in 1981.

Nevertheless, there is evidence of education affording some protection against unemployment. Among those who left at sixteen, seventeen or eighteen, the advantage of the later groups was not always immediately apparent, but had certainly become so in later years as unemployment became more widespread.

114. Those who completed their education at the age of twenty-two had a notably high unemployment rate at the age of twenty-three, though not so high as those who had finished education at sixteen. There is some suggestion that men who completed their education at twenty-one or twenty-two were more willing than women to face a period of unemployment in order to obtain the type of work they wanted.

115. As mentioned previously, for women the distinction between unemployment and leaving the labour force, in particular to be a full-time housewife, is not always clear-cut. Furthermore there is interest in whether the investment of additional education is repaid by a greater commitment to employment. Table 37 shows, in the same way as the previous table, the proportion of women who were economically inactive, but not in full-time education or on a government scheme. 'Economically

inactive' does include a small number unable to work because of sickness or disability and those on extended holiday, but is mainly composed of those who were housewives.

Table 37 - Proportions of women economically inactive at yearly intervals after completing full-time education.

Proportion economically inactive (not including full time education) at							
Age of completing f.t ed	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
16	4.7	10.3	14.6	19.3	24.1	30.2	
17		4.3	6.2	8.5	11.4	15.3	
18			4.8	4.5	5.5	8.5	
19				4.2	3.6	7.8	
21						1.8	
22							

116. Not surprisingly, the longer women stayed in full-time education, the less likely they were to have left the labour force by a given age. Among those who left education between sixteen and nineteen, between four and five per cent had left the labour force one year later. Thereafter the proportion of sixteen-year-old leavers who were economically inactive increased steadily to the point where just over one third had left the labour market at the age of twenty-three. In other leaving groups the rate of increase was less marked. For both eighteen and nineteen-year leavers fewer were economically inactive after two years than after one although there was a steady increase thereafter.

Among those who had continued their education to the age of twenty-one or twenty-two, very small numbers indeed had left the labour market by the age of twenty-three.

It seems, therefore, that at least until the age of twenty-three each additional year of education did lead to a longer period of labour force activity. It is, of course, possible that this is only a partial story. Many of the early leavers may be out of the labour market only temporarily whilst their children are young, and could return later. Conversely, later leavers may simply be postponing their childbearing and may spend a similar period economically inactive but at a later age. A further follow-up of the cohort would certainly illuminate this issue.

EDUCATIONAL PLANS AT TWENTY-THREE

Of course, the educational story of the NCDS cohort is not complete at the age of twenty-three, as many can be expected to take education or training courses subsequently. In fact when asked whether they were 'seriously considering taking any (other) educational or training courses of any kind' 21% (18% of women; 25% of men) replied positively. Over half of these were referring to courses for which they said they had already applied or were about to do so.

Further evidence that these were reasonably firm plans is indicated by table 38, where only 3% did not know what type of course they intended to take. One third were considering taking evening courses, although this type of course was particularly likely for those women seriously considering a course of some kind.

Table 38 Type of planned course, by sex.

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Both Sexes</u>
	%	%	%
Full-time	27	29	28
Sandwich	4	4	4
OU	4	4	4
Correspondence	7	4	6
Evening	29	41	34
Part-time or weekend	10	5	8
TOPS	7	4	6
Other	9	6	8
know	3	2	3

120. As would be expected, there was greater uncertainty about the qualification hoped for at the end of the course: 23% did not know this. A great variety of qualifications was mentioned, the most common being nursing (12% of women), other professional (10% of men and 9% of women), first degrees (9% of men and 6% of women) and postgraduate qualifications (8% for both sexes).

121. The Scots were slightly less likely to say that they were seriously considering a further course: 17% did so, compared with an average of 22% across all other regions. Within regions, the numbers indicating a particular type of course or qualification were generally too small to present with any confidence, although there was a strong suggestion that, among those with a course in mind, the Scots were least likely to be considering an evening course (30% compared with, at the extreme, 40% of those from London and the South East), and among the most likely to be considering a full-time course.

DISCUSSION

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the findings reported in this paper has been the importance of the further education sector to this cohort of young people passing through their late teens and early twenties. Only thirty per cent of them had taken no education or training courses since leaving school. The seventy per cent who had done so will include those who went straight from school into higher education and also those whose work-based training was entirely on the employer's premises or at an employer's or industry training centre. An exact statement of the proportion passing through the further education sector is not possible, an estimate based on either the kinds of qualifications obtained or the proportion saying that they had attended an FE or technical college during an apprenticeship, other training or for an educational course, would suggest that at least about half of the entire cohort had done so.

An obvious question concerns the extent to which this picture will have changed, as any more recent cohort will have passed through the same part of their lives during a period of dramatically increasingly unemployment, especially among the young, and reduction in training opportunities, particularly in apprenticeships. The most recently available national figures do show some changes. For example, national figures - which are cross-sectional and cannot allow for cohort effects are for England only and include overseas students - show an 18% increase in advanced FE enrolments between 1979 and 1983 (DES 1984a). On the other between 1978 and 1982 there was a small reduction in non-advanced FE numbers, although this masked a substantial increase in full-time and

sandwich courses and a reduction in part-time day and evening courses (DES 1984b).

In other words, since the NCDS cohort left school, the FE sector has seen an increase in full-time students, many of whom will not be in employment at the same time, and a reduction in part-time students particularly apprenticeships on day-release

Part of the picture is an increase in the numbers of students taking CSE O and A-level courses in further education establishments, both full and part-time. However, we have seen within the NCDS findings that a substantial number of courses which were not successfully completed were of this type. It is understandable that colleges will wish to persuade young people to continue their education with them and that those people are increasingly likely to choose to do so as an alternative to unemployment or in the hope of acquiring qualifications for a more rewarding job. However, neither group will be happy if the result is a large number of uncompleted and failed courses. Colleges should consider whether there is an element of waste here (and whether appropriate courses are available. For further evidence and discussion of this issue see Dean, 1985).

This is not to argue for a tighter admissions policy. On the contrary, we have seen how for that group of people whom we termed 'unexpectedly successful' FE proved to be the route from school failure to relatively high qualifications. It is important though that very few of this group took O or A levels after school. Rather they succeeded in

acquiring other, commonly technical, qualifications, often though training in conjunction with employment. Therefore it should perhaps not be the role of further education to encourage young people to continue to attempt what they have failed to achieve at school, but rather to guide them towards more technical, vocational and pre-vocational courses

127. There is some reassurance for educators in all sectors in the fact that education and training do appear to offer some protection against unemployment. At the age of twenty-three one in five of the men who had experienced no education or training since leaving school were unemployed compared with half as many of the rest. There was some indication that those who had undertaken work-based training were particularly well placed. This may be a temporary phenomenon, as those who had continued their education longest, and had therefore been in the labour market for only a short period by the time of interview, had particularly high unemployment rates which could be expected to reduce reasonably rapidly.

128. Similarly, although we have been able to examine only relatively short-term patterns up to the age of twenty-three, there are strong indications of the importance of education and training for women, even when considered narrowly as an investment in their labour market potential. Each year of additional education or training after the minimum school-leaving age did lead to increased participation in the labour market, at least in the short term. At the extremes, one third of those women who finished their education at sixteen were economically inactive at the age of twenty-three, compared with about one in fifty of those who had continued their education to the age of twenty-one or twenty-two.

129. The variety of courses taken and routes pursued by these young people offer a formidable challenge to those whose task it is to provide advice and information towards the end of their schooling. The situation is likely to have improved in recent years with a greater investment in the training of careers teachers, but many will still not be able to give comprehensive information on the range of options available within further education. Certainly, there was a strong suggestion at the age of sixteen that schools and even more the young people themselves were not aware of what was possible outside the traditional academic route of O-levels, A-levels and teacher training or universities (see Fogelman, 1979) discrepancy between expectation and experience will have been particularly marked for those who, at the age of sixteen, hoped to go on to train to be teachers - and this will have affected the women disproportionately.

130. Sex differences have been a consistent theme of the findings reported in this paper. Women were more likely to take educational courses rather than training in the course of employment, and very few indeed were apprentices. They took courses which were predominantly in the fields of social, administration or business studies or health, whereas men were more likely to take technical subjects. Generally predictable as these differences might be, they are very important. We have seen how for a small but significant number of young men apprenticeships and other work-based training were the route to a level of success beyond what their school performance would have predicted. only comparable route for women was the profession of nursing, and that was far less important numerically.

Regional variations in education and training experience were not substantial. The small differences which did exist usually were in the directions which would be predicted from the socio-economic characteristics of the regions, but often with Scotland proving to be the exception. For example, the lowest proportions with no post-school education or training were among those whose schooling was in the Southern regions of England, but also in Scotland. However, the balance of education and training was somewhat different in Scotland where there were more, compared with other regions, in apprenticeships and in full-time training courses. Although other regions did not differ greatly in the proportions with training of some kind, the Welsh had a notably high proportion whose training did not lead to a formal qualification.

It was interesting to find that within regions the proportion going to polytechnics or universities appeared to be complementary. For example, Southern parts of England, Wales and, particularly, Scotland had the lowest proportions going to polytechnics (central institutes in Scotland) but were among those with the highest proportions entering universities. The converse was the case for the Midlands and Northern England.

Further possibilities.

As was stated at the outset, the work described in this paper has been essentially preliminary, and mainly descriptive, and there is scope for substantial further analysis of the data now held

In particular, it is possible, and desirable, to extend the analyses of 'destinations' in order to look at both the kinds of education and training and the nature of the employment at twenty-three in more finer detail. Some types of courses, such as City and Guilds, Ordinary National, Higher National, and first degrees, and some kinds of institutions, such as FE and technical colleges, polytechnics and universities, are sufficiently numerous to justify detailed examination in their own right, in terms of the subsequent careers of those who passed through them.

Another area which merits further investigation is that of the 'unexpectedly successful'. Analysis which has not been reported here has shown that their post-school progress does not appear in general to be related to the characteristics of the schools which they had attended. What then is it that differentiates them from others whose school performance was consistently poor (and the same question applies to that group who did consistently well at school but did not go on to achieve what would have been expected of them)? The next step should be to examine other aspects of their lives which might have been influential, such as their social and family background, their own marital, financial and housing experiences since leaving school, and their health

Such further analysis is potentially important, but it must be recognised that, particularly in the first area suggested above, it can be only partial, in that the age of twenty-three is not an ideal end-point. It is an age at which many young people are still mobile, occupationally and geographically, and have not yet settled into the lifestyle that will characterise much of their remaining lifetime. Furthermore adult and continuing education and career changes are becoming increasingly important, as are bridging courses to enable women to return to the labour market after raising children. More specifically, we have seen that a relatively high proportion of those whose education continued the longest were unemployed at twenty-three, and no doubt many others will have taken employment which they see as temporary until they find a job more suited to their qualifications

For all these reasons, a more satisfactory investigation of the relationship between education and training and subsequent experiences would be possible if further information were collected about this cohort of young people. They are now aged twenty-seven, and a further follow-up in two to three years time - not necessarily of the entire cohort and not necessarily entailing lengthy interviews as at twenty-three - would be both late enough for almost all to be established in their occupational and family careers and soon enough to capitalise on their continued cooperativeness and commitment to the study.

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NATIONAL CHILD DEVELOPMENT STUDY

The National Child Development Study (NCDS) is a continuing longitudinal study which is seeking to follow the lives of all those living in Great Britain who were born between 3 and 9 March, 1958.

It has its origins in the Perinatal Mortality Survey (PMS). This was sponsored by the National Birthday Trust Fund and designed to examine the social and obstetric factors associated with the early death or abnormality among the 17,000 children born in England, Scotland and Wales in that one week.

To date there have been four attempts to trace all members of the birth cohort in order to monitor their physical, educational and social development. These were carried out by the National Children's Bureau in 1965 (when they were aged 7), in 1969 (when they were aged 11), in 1974 (when they were aged 16) and in 1981 (when they were aged 33). In addition, in 1978, details of public examination entry and performance were obtained from the schools, sixth-form colleges and FE colleges.

For the birth survey information was obtained from the mother and from medical records by the midwife. For the purposes of the first three NCDS surveys, information was obtained from parents (who were interviewed by health visitors), head teachers and class teachers (who completed questionnaires), the schools health service (who carried out medical examinations) and the subjects themselves (who completed tests of ability and, latterly, questionnaires). In addition the birth cohort was augmented by including immigrants born in the relevant week in the target sample for NCDS1-3.

The 1981 survey differs in that information was obtained from the subject (who was interviewed by a professional survey research interviewer) and from the 1971 and 1981 Censuses (from which variables describing area of residence were taken). Similarly, during the collection of exam data in 1978 information was obtained (by post) only from the schools attended at the time of the third follow-up in 1974 (and from sixth-form and FE colleges, when these were identified by schools). On these last two occasions case no attempt was made to include new immigrants in the survey.

All NCDS data from the surveys identified above are held by the ESRC Data Archive at the University of Essex and are available for secondary analysis by researchers in universities and elsewhere. The Archive also holds a number of NCDS-related files (for example, of data collected in the course of a special study of handicapped school-leavers, at age 18; and the data from the 5% feasibility study, conducted at age 20, which preceded the 1981 follow-up), which are similarly available for secondary analysis.

Further details about the National Child Development Study can be obtained from the NCDS User Support Group.