

Interim evaluation of Leap Ahead:

Information, advice and guidance
Services to businesses and employers
Progression agreements



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Overall aim of the LLNs

“To improve the coherence, clarity and certainty of progression opportunities for vocational learners into and through higher education”

Information, advice & guidance

- § Next Step Derbys, Guideline Careers Notts, NTU
- § Over 1200 interviews would not have taken place
- § 6 x sector careers & vocational routes brochures with Local Labour Market Information
- § Outplacement with larger companies
- § Supported *Your Future East Midlands*
- § Advisers more confident and better equipped
- § Good reasons to continue to nurture contacts

Adviser – “I’ve been surprised by the flexibility of courses and learnt not to make assumptions, but to pick up the phone, and where necessary advocate for the client.”



Client – “I wondered about getting into teaching and rang the local university to get some advice. They weren’t very helpful, they said it was a popular course and I’d need extra UCAS points, but didn’t explain how to get them. It was very off-putting really. Anyway the careers adviser was brilliant. He phoned up someone he knew at the university and we sorted out different ways to do it, to fit in with the kids.”



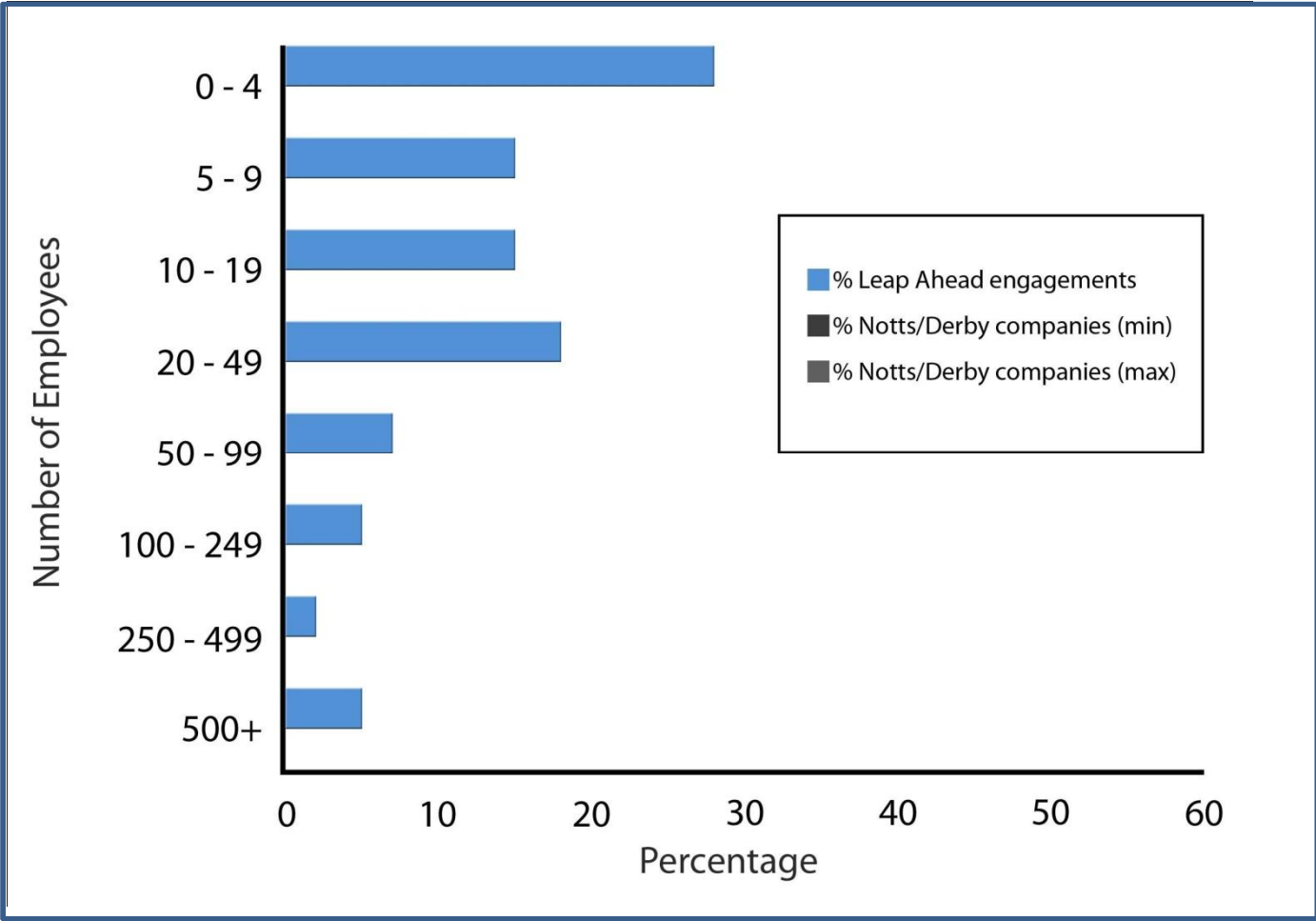
“She (the careers adviser) gave me such a boost, I would have done it anyway eventually but I just needed someone to tell me I wasn’t aiming out of my league. I’m determined to show my kids you can do anything, you don’t have to just go along with what everybody else has done.”

Services to businesses & employers

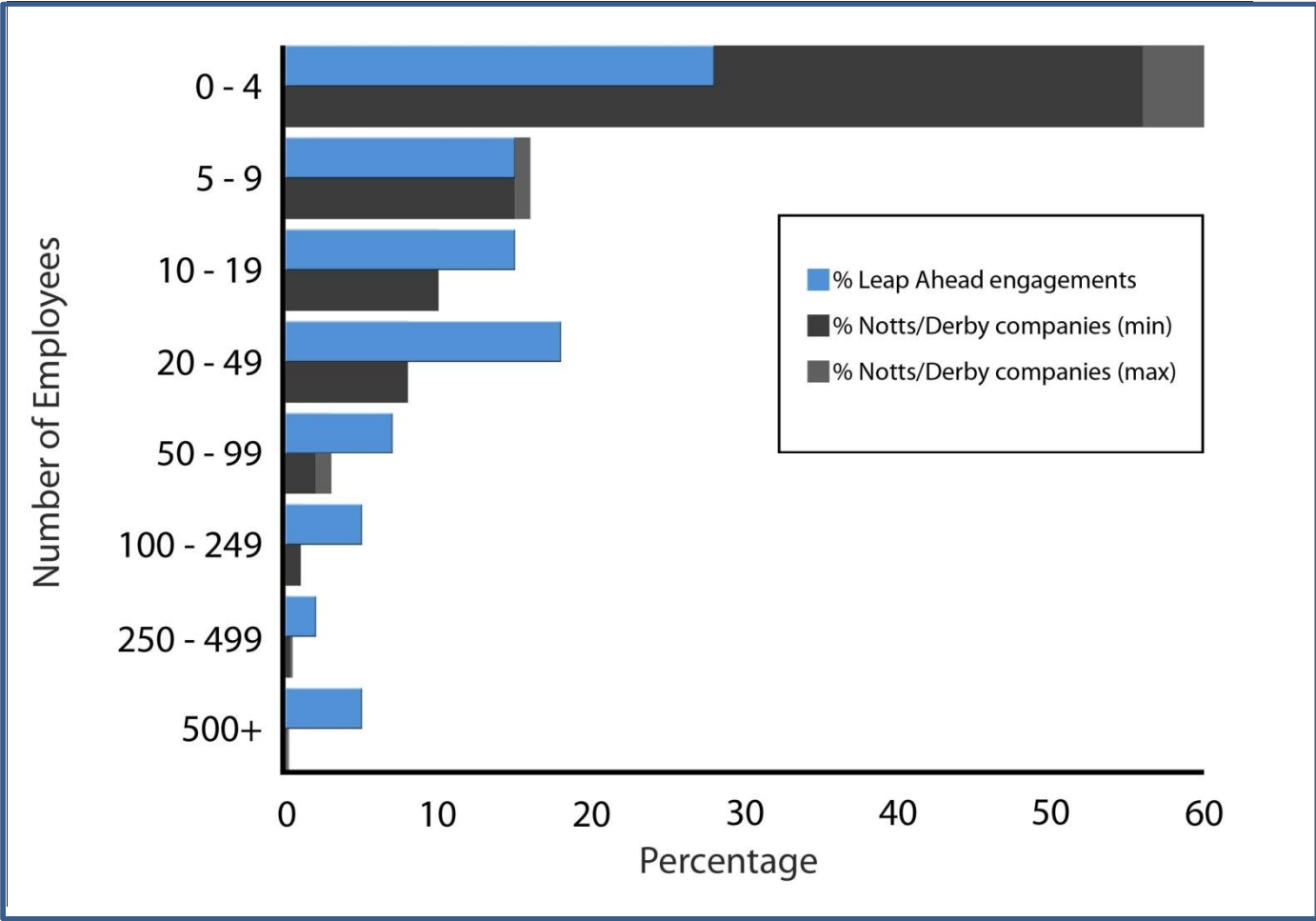
'Work in the field with employers ...to create demand from employers and bring intelligence back for HE providers to act upon...broker flexible solutions from providers to ensure specific employer requests for training and employment are met.'

- § Individual appointments through referral
- § Participating in networks
- § Following up pre-screened appointments

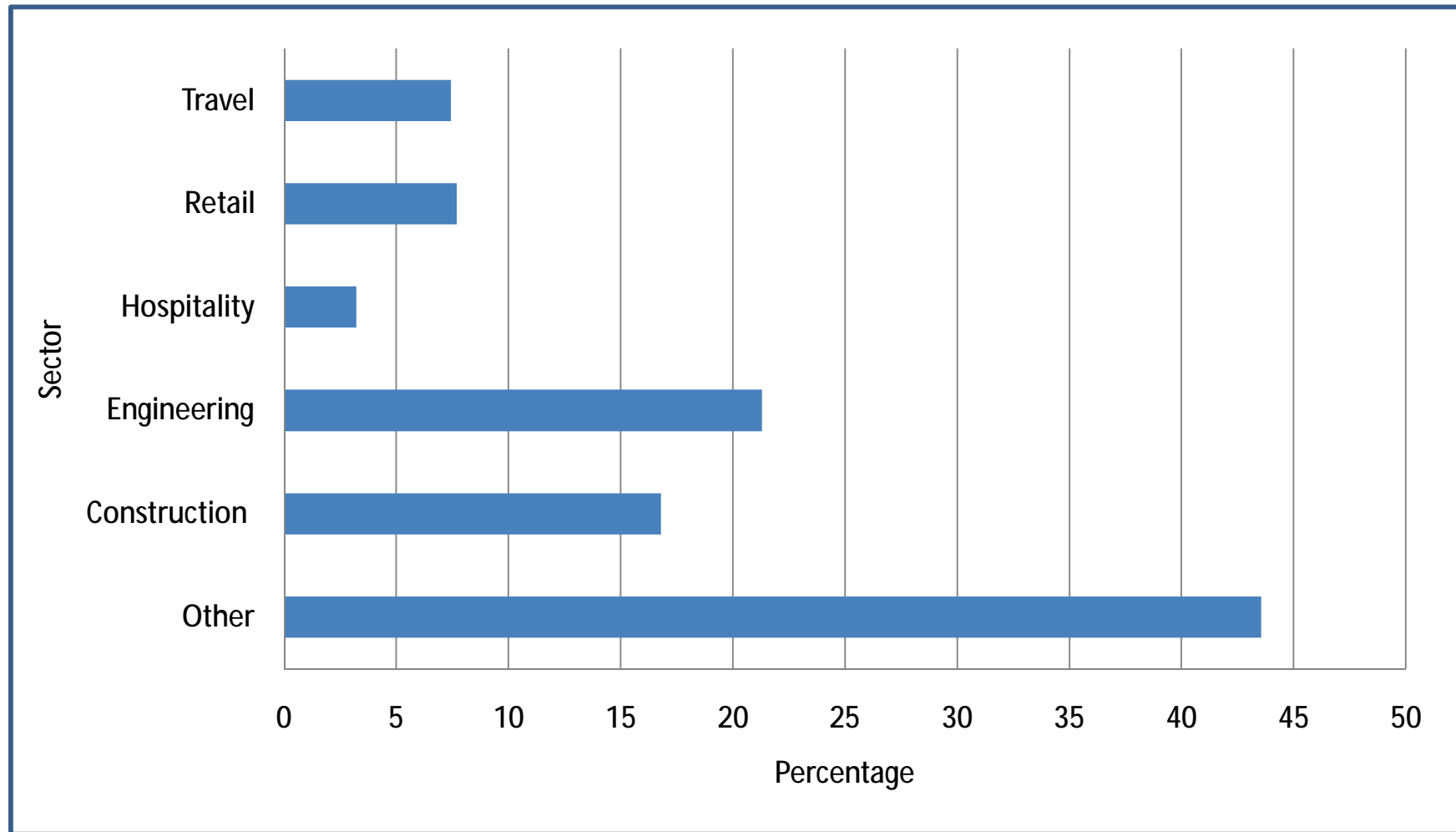
714 consultations by size of company



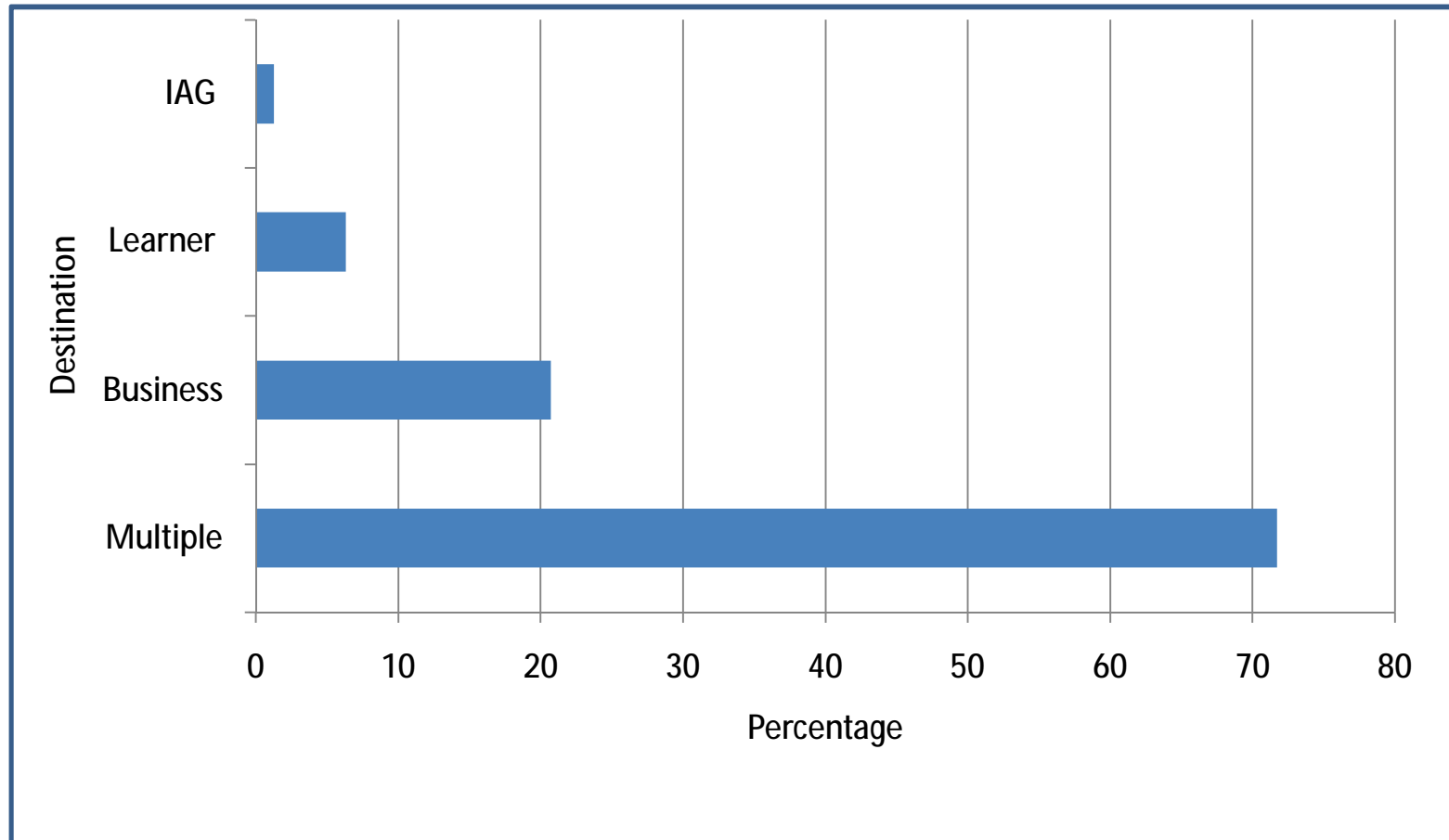
714 consultations by size of company



Engagements split by sector



Referrals from company engagements



“Our approach has been to listen to employers and talk about their needs using a language employers understand...we had to discuss all levels of learning to establish a relationship with employers and for them to see progression opportunities. This was done for us to understand the business and for employers to understand how skills can boost business performance.”

Enhanced awareness of vocational routes

- § Networking strategy has had multiplier effects - publicity & promotion
- § Cross-referrals with business support agencies
- § Building relationships for the longer term
- § Contribution to curriculum development and IAG
- § Records of conversations can help to shape supply

Progression agreements & Champion's Network

- § 10 agreements, over 24 anticipated
- § Little progress until Champions appointed
- § Leap Ahead played central co-ordinating role
- § Improved communication between different providers & understanding of each others provision, services, staff & students
- § Up to half committed to continuing progression work

“Grouping of like-minded folks”

“It can mean pushing or pulling, but in a facilitative or administrative fashion – contacting the champion in the other institution, getting the academics together, producing key notes and the draft progression agreement, circulating it and getting it signed off.”

'Meeting of equals'

- § Met people they wouldn't have done otherwise
- § Learnt new language
- § Found other things to help each other with
- § Enabled individual professional development
- § IAG people found them useful to know
- § Will keep in touch

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Opening spaces for conversations

- § IAG interviews wouldn't have taken place
- § Higher Level Skills Advisers conversations with employers
- § Progression Champions conversing internally and with each other

Keeping the conversations going

- § IAG practitioner network
- § Champions' Network
- § Don't lose the contact with business & employers
- § Listening and harvesting the content of conversations