

RESEARCH

BIS | Department for Business
Innovation & Skills

BIS RESEARCH PAPER NUMBER 15.

Evaluation of Level 3

JANUARY 2011

Evaluation of Level 3

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

January 2011

Research Paper Number 15

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
1 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0ET

www.bis.gov.uk

BIS Research paper number 15

January 2011

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Appendix B: Wave 3 Questionnaire

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Abbreviations

ALG	Adult Learning Grant
BIS	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council
DIUS	Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills
EMA	Education Maintenance Allowance
FE	Further Education
GCE A/AS/ A2 level	General Certificate in Education Advanced/Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced second year level
HE	Higher Education
HND/HNC	Higher National Diploma/Higher National Certificate
IAG	Information, Advice and Guidance
ILR	Individualised Learner Record
IQCS	Interviewer Quality Control Scheme
IT	Information Technology
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
MRQSA	Market Research Quality Standards Association
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
PSA	Public Service Agreement
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
UK	United Kingdom
UKCES	United Kingdom Commission for Employment and Skills
WBL	Work-Based Learning
YPLA	Young People's Learning Agency

Executive summary

Introduction and context

Experian and Ipsos MORI were commissioned in August 2007 to undertake a strategic evaluation of Level 3 provision in England to 2010, based on an analysis of existing learner data, a 3-wave follow-up survey of Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funded Level 3 learners and additional employer, provider and learner qualitative research. In 2010, the election of the new Coalition government and the replacement of the LSC with the Skills Funding Agency have inevitably changed the policy emphasis since this project was commissioned. However, the research will still inform BIS and Skills Funding Agency about the nature of demand for Level 3 provision; the most effective routes for meeting learner needs as well as the relative costs of different programme areas.

This document presents the findings from wave 3 of the learner survey, related back to previous waves of the survey undertaken on an annual basis since enrolment in September 2007. The report focuses on the impacts of the course on attitudinal, learning and job related outcomes. Statistically significant differences between learner groups as well as trend data are highlighted throughout the report.

Wave 3 survey methodology

The target population of the 3-wave follow-up survey comprises learners who started an LSC funded Level 3 qualification in the academic year 2007/08. In total, 3,416 telephone interviews were undertaken with learners who had taken part in wave 1 (a total of 8,630 learners took part in wave 1).

For the survey, the sample design enables regional analysis of Further Education (FE) and Work-Based Learning (WBL) funded learners, but as the overall population are predominantly FE learners (96 per cent) the WBL sample had to be boosted at wave 1 and the FE sample reduced accordingly. Corrective weighting was then applied at the analysis stage. The questionnaire was designed by Ipsos MORI and Experian in consultation, and covers the following broad areas:

- Learner characteristics/status;
- Reasons for non-completion and next steps including intentions to undertake further learning/training;

- Perceived benefits of the qualification among completers and likelihood of undertaking further learning/training;
- Learner attitudes including perceived impact of the qualification; and
- Impact of training/qualification on occupation and salary.

3-wave evaluation findings

The analysis that follows links and summarises the findings from each of the three waves of the Level 3 evaluation into a set of core conclusions for all Level 3 provision. Readers are also encouraged to refer to the wave 1 and wave 2 reports for further detail and analysis, and reference to the source wave of the findings is provided throughout.

Learner profile and previous activities

- **Routes into Level 3:** Prior to enrolling, over half of all learners come to Level 3 study from secondary school, a school sixth form or a college/training provider. A further one-quarter come from employment (wave 1).
- Choices around qualifications are clearly associated with life stage (age, experience of employment, family life and so on), nevertheless, there are variations amongst the choices made by different ethnic minority groups within the 16 to 18 cohort (wave 1).
- **Sources of information, advice and guidance:** The main sources of information learner's use when deciding whether to study and what course to take are their tutors/advisors, friends and relatives, schools based staff and careers guidance. This is particularly true of the young, while older learners are also likely to say employers and independent research, for example, the internet (wave 1).
- An emerging issue around information, advice and guidance is the appropriateness of different forms to the specific needs of older (25+) learners, further removed from the traditional sources such as schools and colleges, particularly as older learners are more likely to report feeling unprepared for the learning they need to do in life today (wave 1).
- **Mix of work and learning:** A substantial share (two-fifths at wave 2) of Level 3 learners are balancing some form of employment as well as studying, although overall, it is females, aged over 19, White, currently educated to Level 3 or above and without a disability who have a higher likelihood of working while learning (wave 1 and 2).

Learner attitudes and experiences

- **Information about qualification:** Overall, students generally feel well-informed about the format and content of courses and what is expected of them, but there

are a relatively low proportion of learners who feel informed about how the course or training will help them to gain skills to use in a job (wave 1 and wave 2).

- **Financial considerations:** Financial considerations do not figure prominently in early learner decision making.
 - Around half of learners in receipt of financial learner support at the start of the course said *it would make no difference to my choice at all*, and a further 35 per cent said *I'd still have applied for the same course but would have had to earn more money as well* (wave 1). However, further into learning nearly two-thirds (62 per cent) of Level 3 learners who get financial support say they would have found it more difficult to continue their course if they had not, suggesting that it may become a more critical factor in progression further into the course. This support may also have become a safety net for learners in the current economic slowdown (wave 2).
 - The impact of fee payments is more theoretical than actual (as almost three-quarters of learners do not pay fees, either because the LSC or employer is funding it or the learner is exempt), although 1 in 3 of those making some contribution to the cost of their course felt it influenced the amount of effort they put into it (rising to 45 per cent of City & Guilds learners), but fewer felt it influenced either the timing or their choice of course (wave 1). Furthermore, at wave 3 over half (53 per cent) of learners making some contribution to the cost of their course said they would still have gone ahead if they had to pay more (a further 18 per cent said it would have depended on how much more they had to pay and 27 per cent said they would not).
 - While there appears to be a willingness to pay, or pay more towards Level 3 course fees, further analysis of the underlying evidence suggests that those most likely to indicate a willingness to pay in fact may not have the ability to do so. Of the 16-24 year olds who were in employment prior to starting the Level 3 learning and expressed a willingness to pay, nearly all were earning between £6,000 and £15,000 gross per annum before their course started. This is likely to be due to part-time employment alongside earlier studies. So whereas there may be a greater *willingness* to pay or contribute more, the *ability* to do so may not be realistic. The finding that the over 25 age groups are less willing to contribute – even those on higher earnings - may reflect greater financial responsibilities and a greater understanding of the financial commitment compared to younger learners. It should be noted that the sample size of the data at pay band level is limited and these results therefore not fully robust; it does however provide indications worth further investigation.
-

- **Incidence of early leaving:** Qualification aim emerges early on as likely determinants of a learner's progression, as does age by association.
- Over the three waves early leavers are over-represented by GCE A/AS/A2 level and BTEC qualification aims.
- Compared to the average, older learners are most at risk of dropping out of their course within a few months of starting (wave 1) or after more than one year into the course (wave 3) whereas the youngest learners (aged 16 to 18) are most at risk of dropping out of their course within one year (wave 2). Linked to age, the longest duration of study before leaving is of learners paying all their fees, suggesting a greater commitment to the course than other learner groups.
- Over the three waves early leavers are also generally over-represented by males and learners on partial Level 3 qualifications.
- **Reasons for early leaving:** The evidence suggests that early leavers across all waves are particularly likely to report that they *found the course was not what I wanted to do after all*. Further analysis also reveals that *workload made it difficult to make time for studying/training* was a greater concern for wave 1 early leavers compared to wave 2 and 3, while wave 2 and wave 3 early leavers are more likely to have dropped out on finding that *the course was too difficult*.
- **Incidence of completion:** Qualification aim is a key determinant of duration before completion, as the greatest proportion of completers within a few months of starting undertook qualifications not considered full (City & Guild and 'Other'), which generally take less time to complete than full qualifications. Access to Higher Education (HE) learners are the most likely to have completed at wave 2 (most Access to HE courses can be completed in a year or less), whereas of learners in learning after one year, over 80 per cent had completed at wave 3.
- Wave 3 completers are also relatively young, generally 16 to 18 (and by association learners previously educated to Level 2 or below and not paying fees), whereas learners aged 19 and over are more likely to finish in the first year (up to wave 2).
- **Views of training:** Eighty six per cent of completers by one year agree that the money paid towards it was money well spent and that doing this training or qualification was the right choice (a similar proportion of those in learning at one year but completed by two years also agree with both statements). However, further age analysis suggests that young learners moving from Level 2 to Level 3 are more likely to feel that they made the wrong choice compared to adult learners moving from Level 2 to Level 3, which suggests greater consideration is given to available options by those more distant from the education system.
- **Overall challenge:** Part of the value attached to Level 3 learning is that two-thirds of learners feel their course is challenging, compared to just a fifth who find it easy (wave 2 and 3). However, young learners on GCE A/AS/A2 levels seem least able to cope with the difference between Level 2 and Level 3 learning from the case

study research, and this may help to explain the lower retention rate on these courses (wave 2).

- **Satisfaction with learning:** Learners are generally highly positive about their course (a satisfaction rate of 90 per cent at wave 2 and 88 per cent at wave 3), although there is a strong correlation between satisfaction levels and progression, and between satisfaction levels and how well informed the learner felt at the start of the course.
- Where learners do express dissatisfaction the most common causes are *poor quality teaching* (34 per cent), *disappointing/not what I expected/wanted* (27 per cent), *the course is badly organised/run* (23 per cent) and *tutors were unsupportive* (20 per cent) (wave 2).

Impact of Level 3

- **Expected gains:** Early hopes for the course or training are quite diverse, although the *chance to learn something new*, the opportunity to *develop skills that will look good to future employers* and *skills to help me to do a better job in the future* are cited by the greatest proportion of learners (89 per cent, 85 per cent and 85 per cent respectively) (wave 1).
- **Aspirations on completion:** Learners are most likely to have enrolled on their course or training with the longer term view of progressing *on to higher education*, reported by 27 per cent of all learners. This was followed by *getting a job* (14 per cent). However, of concern is that 32 per cent said they *did not know* what they wanted to do afterwards, suggesting a lack of understanding about where the course/training will take them, particularly for GCE A/AS/A2 level learners (wave 1).
- University is most likely to be considered by Level 3 learners previously educated to Level 2 or below – a group of learners looking to move progressively through the qualification levels – and those previously educated to Level 4 or above – a group of learners potentially using Level 3 to access unrelated university level qualifications.
- **Perceived gains:**
 - There is a (net) agreement¹ by all Level 3 learners that the course or training has made them *confident in my ability to learn* (77 per cent), *get a good job* (68 per cent) and become *more positive about learning* (66 per cent), and a (net) disagreement with the statement if completed that they *did not get everything I wanted* (55 per cent) (wave 2). 71 per cent (net) of Level 3 learners also believe they are now more attractive to employers (wave 3).
 - Completers are generally more likely to say they feel more positive about learning than early leavers, but this distinction becomes most prominent further into the course (i.e. at later waves). The impact of completing learning on confidence and attractiveness to employers also only becomes apparent over time (wave 1, 2 and 3).
 - Learners also believe that doing their course has given them *the chance to learn something new* (94 per cent), *skills that will look good to future employers* (87 per cent), *skills to get a better job in the future* (84 per cent), *a qualification* (83 per cent), *improved self confidence* (82 per cent) or *skills to help me do a different job in the future* (81 per cent) (wave 3).

¹ The net value is the percentage reporting they agree minus the percentage reporting they disagree. If there is a balance of opinion the net percentage will be zero; if the majority of respondents respond positively the net percentage will be greater than zero; if the majority of respondents respond negatively the net percentage will be less than zero.

- Notably, the main benefit cited by learners who had completed their Level 3 course is *a qualification* (93 per cent). All gains are then responded to equally between the two groups; although completers are less likely to cite *improved self-confidence* (76 per cent) (wave 2).
 - Comparisons between wave 1 and wave 2 also suggest that courses with a shorter duration are less likely to be undertaken with *a qualification* as the outcome, and more likely to lead to *improved self-confidence*.
 - Reported skill gains as a direct result of Level 3 are most frequent for *team working, oral communication, written communication, team working, problem solving, technical/practical or job-related skills, literacy* and *general IT user skills*, all cited by between half and three-quarters of learners (wave 3).
 - **Likelihood of further learning:** Encouragingly, over three-quarters (77 per cent) of Level 3 early leavers within one year will consider signing up for further learning or training in the future. This is comparable to the proportion of completers at the same point who say they are likely to undertake further learning in the next three years (78 per cent) (wave 2). University is the most popular site for this further learning (wave 3).
 - However, the longer a learner takes to leave or complete the course, the less likely they are to say they will return to learning (wave 1 to wave 3).
 - **Activity after learning:** An equal proportion of Level 3 learners who are not still in learning are either a student at college or university or in paid work or self-employment (wave 3).
 - However, this masks progression depending on the learning outcome, as early leavers are more likely to be in paid work or unemployment now compared to completers, who are instead more likely to be a student at college or university (wave 3).
 - Progression into employment or further learning/training from Level 3 provision also varies significantly by qualification aim (GCE A/AS/A2 level and Access to HE are most likely to move into college or university and NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeships and City & Guilds into paid work or employment), learner characteristics (gender, age and ethnicity) and experience of the course.
 - Further analysis also shows that there is a strong likelihood that learners will move back into the same activity after two years (i.e. in work, at school or college or unemployed) as before beginning the Level 3 course, despite what their original goal may have been (wave 3).
 - Although just over half (56 per cent) of learners say the recession has not affected how they view their learning and 65 per cent say the recession has made no
-

difference to the likelihood of further training, 37 per cent say the recession has made Level 3 learning more valuable, primarily because it will *help me to find work in the future*, and 27 per cent say that further training is more likely (wave 3).

- **Progression in work or learning:**
 - Level 3 learning seems to have greater value to those now in further study or training than it does for those now in work – the learning undertaken supported almost two-fifths of learners into new studies and 35 per cent of students into training, but only one-quarter of employees (of more than six months) or casual or temporary workers into their job.
 - However, nearly two-thirds of those now unemployed believe that Level 3 learning has improved their chances of finding a job they would like to do. Furthermore, those previously unemployed, inactive or working before beginning the course are more likely to say their course has made them better able to do their current job than those previously in the education system (wave 3).
 - Not all further learning after Level 3 is at a higher level – if progressing into further learning at a school sixth form, college or university the majority state this will lead to a Level 4 or higher qualification, but if progressing into a training course or Apprenticeship this is the case for only 45 per cent of learners (wave 3).
- **Sectoral and occupational change:** Key findings from wave 2 and 3 analysis suggest the following trends in sector and occupational employment:
 - Retention in the same industry at the start and end of Level 3 learning is lowest in Hotels & Restaurants and Wholesale and Retail and highest in Education and Health & Social Work, which does reflect the relative retention rates in these sectors generally. Education and Health & Social Work also attract the greatest proportion of moving learners.
 - There is generally more movement of Level 3 learners between occupations than between industries.
 - The lowest rate of movement by occupation is from Skilled Trades, and the highest rate of movement is from Elementary into Sales & Customer Service and Personal Service occupations. Personal Service, alongside Professional and Associate Professional & Technical occupations attract the greatest proportion of moving learners generally.
- **Other employment impacts:**
 - As a result of Level 3 learning, around two-fifths of employees are doing a job with more responsibility or have been promoted and around one-third report they are earning more (wave 3).
 - However, of those in work preceding Level 3, supervisory responsibilities, hours worked and income bands have not changed significantly (wave 3).

Introduction

Overview

This document presents the findings from the final wave of a three-wave follow-up survey of Learning and Skills Council (LSC)-funded Level 3 learners, undertaken in November 2009, before the creation of the Skills Funding Agency and YPLA and the election of the Coalition government. This wave looks at learners two years after enrolment (in September 2007), with a particular focus on the impacts of the course on attitudinal, learning and job related outcomes. It examines learners' satisfaction with their practical experience of learning and training, receipt of value for money, the subjective and work related impacts of training, and draws together summative conclusions about the impacts of training on attitude and work related outcomes.

These findings are also split by or linked to findings from waves 1 and 2, which considered profiles of learners; choice and decision making; payment of fees; access to learner support; attitudes to learning; perceptions of course delivery; balancing study with outside commitments; study and financial support; advice received and learners' opinions of their courses.

A total of 3,416 learners took part in this survey; from a sample of 5,248 learners at wave 2 (and 8,630 at wave 1), an adjusted response rate of 60 per cent (details of the survey methodology are presented in section 1.1).

The three-wave follow-up survey of Level 3 learners is being undertaken to provide an evidence base with which to evaluate the success and cost effectiveness of different Level 3 programmes/qualifications. Analysis of the survey is therefore on the basis of variation across programmes, with subsequent analysis driven by the presence or otherwise of significant variations across a range of variables. The main reported differences between learner groups are statistically significant but, for information and as an indication of general trends, all percentage responses are presented in the accompanying tables and charts.

This document is a standalone analysis of the survey but also forms part of a suite of documents that have been produced as part of the wider strategic Level 3 evaluation. Details of documents available within the evaluation are contained in appendix A, while a fuller overview of the evaluation is provided in section 1.3.

Current Policy Context

Between 2001 and April 2010 the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) was responsible for the funding and delivery of post-16 education and training in England. In particular, the throughput and delivery of Level 3 has been key to meeting the demand led agenda and policy responses included Train to Gain, the Level 3 adult (19 to 25) entitlement, and increasing fee assumptions.

Since the evaluation was commissioned key pillars of the skills policy context have gone through several significant changes, not least as a result of the Coalition government being elected in May 2010. Previous to this, Machinery of Government changes saw the LSC handing over responsibility for funding and delivery of 16 to 19 education and training to the Young People's Learning Agency and Local Authorities in March 2010. All post-19 learning became the responsibility of the Skills Funding Agency, an executive agency with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), while Apprenticeships will be supported by the National Apprenticeship Service.

As of writing, the Coalition government is preparing a major skills strategy which will record the government's vision for the skills market in the UK. This will be released in late Autumn 2010 when we will see the detail of how the challenge of building an internationally competitive skills base will be tackled. What we know now is that the contribution Level 3 provision will make to that vision will be critical – whether through GCE A/As/A2 Level, work based NVQ or Advanced Apprenticeships and whether Level 3 learning is used as a progression route to higher level skills or used as a practical and vocational qualification in its own right.

The strategic Level 3 evaluation

Experian and Ipsos MORI were commissioned in August 2007 to undertake a strategic evaluation of Level 3 provision in England, and this included booster samples at wave 1 in the regions of Greater London, the South East, the North East and the North West. The research will inform BIS and LSC successor agencies about the nature of demand for Level 3 provision; the most effective routes for meeting learner and employer needs; as well as the relative value of different programme areas. Its broad objectives are to:

- Understand the relative contribution of different programmes and initiatives delivering Level 3 to learners; and
- Determine the extent to which Level 3 qualifications are perceived – by employers and learners – to have an economic value, and what the value is.

Underpinning these objectives are a range of questions that will be answered to assess the overall benefits of the different programmes and initiatives for different learner and

employer types, and the extent to which programmes and initiatives support employability and development. These questions include:

- What programme and provider types deliver Level 3 qualifications? Who accesses this provision and does this reflect economic and social need?
- What learner support mechanisms are available to Level 3 learners and do they succeed in supporting need?
- What is the impact of fee policies and fee remissions on recruitment to Level 3, retention and achievement?
- What are the trends in the supply of Level 3 over the past three to four years in relation to take-up by learners and employers and delivery by providers? And how well do trends in supply relate to the demand agenda of employers and the national economy, and learner requirements in respect of employability and progression?
- What impact has the availability of Level 3 learning had on employer take-up and employer perceptions of public sector learning? What impact on take-up has it had for learners and providers?

The detailed review of the Level 3 evaluation framework is documented in the *Evaluation of Level 3 Baseline Report*. This considers the complexities of defining the Level 3 evaluation focus, together with the different forms of evaluation – operational, strategic and economic – that the research should achieve.

The evaluation framework for Level 3 provision has been developed to incorporate the following:

- An **'initiative'** specific framework to identify issues which are only relevant to particular programmes, initiatives and support mechanisms;
- A **'cross cutting'** operational framework to identify common outputs and outcomes across initiatives, programmes and support mechanisms;
- A **'strategic'** framework to identify how operational outputs contribute directly to Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets;
- An **'economic'** framework (or model) identifying how Level 3 contributes to monetary PSA targets and assessing Value for Money.

Wave 1 of the survey research established the baseline of Level 3 provision, and pulled together information around the **initiative** and **cross-cutting** frameworks. The research addresses **strategic** and **economic** frameworks at wave 2 and also at wave 3 of the research.

In addition to the learner survey, further qualitative research was undertaken at the national level between waves 1 and 2 to enable the views of employers and providers to be built into the overall evaluation, as well as providing richer qualitative detail on learners' perceptions of Level 3 programmes and support mechanisms. This provides the scope both to probe further on findings from wave 1 of the learner survey and to use the qualitative findings to refine the quantitative questions at wave 2 and wave 3 of the survey. The qualitative data allow us to probe in depth the outcomes and impact of Level 3 training as perceived by learners, including any unexpected outcomes that cannot be captured by quantitative survey techniques alone.

As there is no control group against which to compare Level 3 learners (i.e. the wider population that are not entering into education or training at this level), analysis of impacts are based on learner perceptions. Comparison for the evaluation (and for each survey wave) is across different programmes (i.e. Level 3 qualifications), with additional analysis available by initiatives and learner support.

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the help and support of all the Level 3 learners that participated in each wave of the survey. We would also like to thank Gareth Ashcroft and Kate Murphy at Skills Funding Agency and staff at BIS for their helpful contributions to the questionnaire designs.

1 Research methodology

1.1 Overview

This document presents the findings from wave 3, the final wave of the follow-up survey of LSC funded Level 3 learners, undertaken in November 2009. These findings are related back to previous waves of the survey, drawing conclusions about the relationship between final outcomes and initial baseline indicators and early experiences of the course.

The wave 1 survey was carried out in March 2008 and presented profiles of learners and their employment status; information around choice and decision making; payment of fees; access to learner support; and attitudes to learning. A total of 8,630 learners took part in this survey wave across the whole of England.

Wave 3 took place in November 2009, 26 months after their course/training start date; following on from wave 2 of the survey which took place in September 2008. In total 3,416 learners took part in wave 3 of the survey, and 5,248 learners took part at wave 2. The main reported differences between learner groups are statistically significant² but, for information and as an indication of general trends, all percentage responses are presented in the accompanying tables and charts.

1.2 Wave 3 Level 3 learner survey

Survey design

This is a three wave longitudinal survey³ of learners who started an LSC-funded Level 3 qualification in the academic year 2007/08. As in the specification for learner records in 2007/08 (i.e. preceding the introduction of Learner Responsive and Employer Responsive collections), Level 3 provision is broadly described as Further Education (FE) or Work-Based Learning (WBL).

In order to be eligible for selection, learners on the Individualised Learner Record (ILR)⁴ had to be:

² Appropriate statistical tests have been applied to check the significance of comparisons.

³ Involve interviewing the same respondents across all three survey waves.

⁴ The ILR was the sample frame. Data freeze F01 was used for learners funded through the Further Education stream and data freeze WLB-P3 was used for learners undertaking Work Based Learning.

- aged 16 plus;
- undertaking a Level 3 qualification part-time or full-time (i.e. flagged on ILR as A_NVQLEV = 3);
- engaged in LSC funded learning (ILR variable A10 ≠ 99);
- active for inclusion in analysis (ILR variable A_LIVE_B > 1 (FE return) or A_ILPY2D > 1 (WBL return));
- given permission to be contacted for research (ILR variable L27 = 3 or 9); and
- started their learning in 2007/08 (course start date (A27) = from September 2007).

The timings of the three surveys were as follows:

- Wave 1 was conducted in March 2008, after the first release of the (ILR) for 2007/08 became available for sampling. The purpose of wave 1 was to collect baseline information on learners' economic status and perception of their learning.
- Wave 2 took place 12 months after these learners started their learning (in September 2008) and sought to capture the outcomes of the learning for those who have completed (for example, employment outcome or progression to further learning).
- Wave 3 took place approximately 26 months after the learning start date (November 2009) and focused on measuring the longer-term impact of the learning.

Sample design

A requirement of the sample design was to enable regional analysis of FE and WBL (including Level 3 Train to Gain) learners for all three survey waves. The population, however, comprised predominantly FE learners (96 per cent). This meant that, in order to enable regional analysis by work-based learning provisions at wave 3, the work-based learning sample had to be boosted at wave 1 and the FE sample reduced accordingly. Corrective weighting was then applied at the analysis stage (see section 1.2.4).

Table 1.2 shows the proposed sample structure for wave 1 and anticipated sample structure at wave 3 (excluding the regional booster interviews discussed below). The work-based learning interviews were boosted to achieve c.100 interviews at wave 3 (this is the minimum recommended sample size for subgroup analysis). This sample design enabled regional analysis of FE and work-based learners (although the scope of the latter was more limited particularly at wave 3). Another group that was boosted was "FE Level 3 entitlement learners aged 19 to 25 years", from 170 (3 per cent of the population of eligible FE learners) to 300 interviews (7 per cent of the eligible population of FE learners).

Table 1.1: Structured samples at waves 1 and 3						
Region of Learner	Structured sample, wave 1			Structured sample, wave 3		
	FE	WBL	TOTAL	FE	WBL	TOTAL
E of England	413	233	646	195	110	305
E Midlands	256	233	489	121	110	231
Gr. London	776	233	1,009	366	110	476
North East	145	233	378	89	89	178
North West	1,053	233	1,287	497	110	607
South East	917	233	1,150	433	110	543
South West	466	233	699	220	110	330
West Midlands	647	233	880	306	110	416
Yorkshire & Humber	446	233	679	210	110	320
Unknown	136	64	199	63	31	94
Total	5,255	2,161	7,415	2,500	1,000	3,500

Source: Wave 2 Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

Finally, four regions requested booster interviews at wave 1 to enable drill down analysis for their region: London, North West, North East and South East. This resulted in an additional c.288 interviews per region (i.e. a total of c.8,567 interviews at wave 1). Booster interviews were also conducted in three regions at wave 2: London, North West and South East. This resulted in between 160-250 additional interviews per region (i.e. a total of c.5,248 interviews at wave 2). No regional boosters were conducted at wave 3.

Table 1.2 shows the total number of interviews achieved for waves 1 and 2. A detailed breakdown for wave 3 is shown in table 1.3.

Table 1.2: Achieved interviews, inclusive of booster interviews, wave 1 and wave 2

Region of Learner	Total interviews at wave 1			Total interviews at wave 2		
	FE	WBL	TOTAL	FE	WBL	TOTAL
East Of England	421	233	654	273	140	413
East Midlands	257	235	492	155	133	288
Greater London	948	369	1,317	577	180	757
North East	435	233	668	199	125	324
North West	1,078	500	1,578	731	286	1,017
South East	938	503	1,441	594	286	880
South West	467	235	702	311	153	464
West Midlands	655	233	888	421	140	561
Yorkshire & Humberside	453	235	688	297	129	426
Unknown	135	67	202	81	37	118
Total	5,787	2,843	8,630	3,639	1,609	5,248

Source: Wave 1 and 2 Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

Response rates

A total of 8,630 interviews were conducted at wave 1. The adjusted response rate was 46 per cent. The large majority of learners agreed to be re-contacted for wave 2 (1, 7,926 learner – 93 per cent). Prior to conducting the second wave, a mail-out was issued informing learners that they would be contacted shortly for a follow-up telephone interview and providing them with the opportunity to ‘opt-out’ of the survey - 76 learners opted out at this stage bringing the total number for recontact to 7,850 (91 per cent). We attempted to contact all of these participants in the second wave.

A total of 5,248 learners were interviewed at wave 2 – 61 per cent of all learners interviewed at wave 1. The adjusted response rate⁵ at wave 2 was 71 per cent. Again, a

⁵ Excluding bad telephone numbers and movers.

high percentage of those interviewed agreed to be recontacted for wave 3 – 4,934 learners (94 per cent of those interviewed at wave 2); 38 of these learners subsequently opted out of the survey in response to the advance mailing. An additional 2,597 learners who agreed to be recontacted at wave 1, but for whatever reason, we were unable to interview at wave 2, were also included in the wave 3 sample bringing the total number for recontact for wave 3 to 7,493.

A total of 3,422 learners were interviewed at wave 3 – 40 per cent of all learners interviewed at wave 1. The adjusted response rate at wave 3 was 60 per cent. A detailed breakdown of the response rate at wave 3 is presented in the table below. More detailed response rate breakdown for previous waves can be found in the Wave 1 Baseline and Wave 2 Interim reports.⁶

Table 1.3: Breakdown of leads provided at wave 3			
Final sample status	Total sample used (N)	Total sample used (%)	Valid sample (%)
Achieved interviews	3,422	46	60
Sample still live	424	6	7
Respondent quit interview	52	1	1
Refusal	1058	14	19
Leads tried max. times	482	6	8
Not available during fieldwork	258	3	5
Total valid sample	5,696	76	100
Bad number	1582	21	

⁶ http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/Interim_Evaluation_Level_3_-_Wave_1_report.pdf

⁶ http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/FELearnersLongitudinalSurveyWave2Summary_10April07.doc

Table 1.3: Breakdown of leads provided at wave 3		
Respondent no longer at address	217	3
Total invalid sample	1,799	24
Total sample used	7,495	100
Unadjusted response rate		45.6
Adjusted response rate		60.1

Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

Wave 3 sample achieved and weighting

Interlocking regional weights for FE and WBL were applied in the analysis so that the final data were representative of the population of FE and work-based learners combined. The variables used for weighting were:

- Age, gender and ethnicity for FE learners for each region.
- Age, gender and ethnicity for work-based learners for each region.
- RIM regional weights to correct for the regional booster interviews.

Table 1.4 shows the weighted and unweighted sample profile along with effective sample sizes. The weights applied have reduced the overall effective sample size from 3,422 to 2,362. This has had minimal impact on overall statistical reliability – the margin of error has increased from +/-1.7 percentage points to +/-2.0 percentage point.

Telephone fieldwork

The telephone surveys were conducted by Ipsos MORI Telephone which is a member of the Interviewer Quality Control Scheme (IQCS) and Market Research Quality Standards Association (MRQSA) quality accreditation. Prior to starting fieldwork, interviewers were fully briefed by members of the Ipsos MORI project team. They also received full written instructions about all aspects of the survey.

Table 1.4: Comparisons between weighted & unweighted data				
	Unweighted	Weighted	Effective sample size N	+/- maximum error*
	N	N		
National (all)	3,422	3,422	2,362	2.0
Provision				
FE	2,308	3,290	2,194	2.1
	Unweighted	Weighted	Effective sample size N	+/- maximum error*
	N	N		
WBL	1,114	133	932	3.2
Region - FE				
E of England	162	288	159	7.8
East Midlands	99	214	98	10.0
Gr. London	357	455	351	5.2
North East	203	164	199	7.0
North West	427	573	421	4.8
South East	342	513	337	5.3
South West	205	307	203	6.9
West Midlands	270	391	265	6.0
Yorks & Humb	192	298	190	7.1
Unknown	51	87	50	14.0

Table 1.4: Comparisons between weighted & unweighted data				
Region - WBL				
E of England	109	10	95	10.1
East Midlands	90	12	77	11.2
Gr. London	116	11	104	9.7
North East	99	11	85	10.7
	Unweighted	Weighted	Effective	+/- maximum
	N	N	sample size N	error*
North West	198	21	175	7.4
South East	192	18	164	7.7
South West	115	15	100	9.8
West Midlands	89	15	72	11.6
Yorks & Humb	84	15	71	11.7
Unknown	22	4	18	23.8
Gender				
Male	1,767	1,432	1,604	2.4
Female	1,655	1,991	1,522	2.5
Age				
16-18	2,095	2,148	2,003	2.2
19-24	467	441	431	4.7
25+	860	832	816	3.4

Table 1.4: Comparisons between weighted & unweighted data				
Ethnicity	Unweighted N	Weighted N	Effective sample size N	+/- maximum error*
White	2,930	2,849	1,972	2.2
Black	151	167	116	9.1
Asian	239	279	191	7.1
Mixed/other	94	120	78	11.2

Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

*Based on 95% confidence intervals for 50% of findings and finite universe size

2 Learning at Level 3

2.1 Level 3 participation and learner profile

Trends over time

The government has a number of public targets and commitments, including qualification to Level 3 –

56 per cent of working age adults are qualified to at least Level 3 by quarter 4 of 2011 – and of men aged 19 to 64 and women aged 19 to 59, 50.8 per cent were qualified to at least Level 3 by quarter 4 of 2008.⁷ Performance against these targets will be updated following the release of quarter 4 2009 figures in 2010.

Further detail from the Statistical First Release shows that:

- In 2007/08 357,800 16 to 18 year olds were enrolled on Full Level 3 qualifications (up 4.1 per cent from 2006/07); and 328,100 adults were enrolled on Full Level 3 qualifications (up 22.6 per cent from 2006/07);
- Data for the first six months of 2008/09 (1st August to 31st January) show that there were 362,500 young people and 340,000 adults enrolled on Full Level 3 qualifications.

The 2007/2008 Level 3 evaluation baseline

At the outset, and to inform our interpretation of the evidence from the research, the following analysis is of the profile of learners engaged at Level 3 in 2007/08 (as presented in full in the wave 1 report).⁸ The points illustrate the broad characteristics of Level 3 learners, to support our understanding of learner attitudes, experiences and impacts in the subsequent sections and chapters:

- The majority of Level 3 learners – just under two-thirds – are 16 to 18 year olds undertaking Full Level 3 aims such as GCE/A/AS/A2 levels and BTEC qualifications.
- Considerably more than half of Level 3 learners are female and, whilst the gender split is more even at the 16 to 18 age group, women account for three-quarters of the 25+ age group, where they are mainly enrolled on Access to HE programmes.

⁷ Data Service (2009) *Post-16 Education & Skills: Learner participation, outcomes and Level of Highest Qualification Held*, DS/SFR3, 25th June 2009.

⁸ http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/Interim_Evaluation_Level_3_-_Wave_1_report.pdf, page 14.

- A greater than average share of the Asian student Level 3 population is opting for GCE/A/AS/A2 level programmes, with BTEC qualifications also popular. In contrast, they are under-represented on NVQ and Advanced Apprenticeship programmes. Asian students are typically younger than the average Level 3 student population.
- Black learners engaged in Level 3 learning are more likely to be female, and to be older, in the 19 to 24 and 25+ age groups. Black students are as likely as the wider Level 3 learner population to opt for GCE/A/AS/A2 levels, but are under-represented on NVQs and Advanced Apprenticeships, and are more likely than average to be engaged on Access to HE programmes.
- Work-based Level 3 learning is dominated by male students, particularly White males. Only around 1 per cent of Black and Asian Level 3 learners undertake work-based learning, compared to 4 per cent of White learners.
- Five per cent of Level 3 learners self declare a disability and 3 per cent report having a learning difficulty. The distribution of disability across key characteristics is broadly in line with the distribution of learners. However, learners with learning difficulties are more likely to be male, White, in the 19 to 24 age group and undertaking an Award, Certificate or Diploma or a BTEC, and considerably less likely to be undertaking GCE/A/AS/A2 level qualifications.
- The majority (7 in 10) of Level 3 learners do not make any contribution to their learning, and the small share of learners who pay all their fees (16 per cent), are typically older (aged 25+), reflecting the entitlement of all under 25s to a funded first Full Level 3 qualification.
- The qualification aim is a key determinant of learner progress in the course, as is age, current qualification level and whether the learner is a fee payer.

2.2 Status of learners at wave 3

By wave 3, just over two years after enrolment, almost all learners still in learning or not started at wave 2 have completed their course across all qualification aims. Just 4 per cent are still in learning, while 13 per cent have left their course early.

Analysis by qualification aim suggests that NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship learners are the most likely to still be in learning (24 per cent), although 70 per cent had completed by wave 3.

At wave 3 BTEC and Access to HE learners are the most likely to have completed their course, and in the latter case amongst the least likely to have left early. However, whereas

a significant proportion of Access to HE had completed by one year (wave 2) the majority of BTEC completion is between one and two years (wave 3).

Table 2.1: Training progress by qualification aim (% of total, single coded)									
	Total	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
Wave 1									
Starting/still learning	89%	94%	88%	94%	87%	82%	92%	69%	77%
Decided not to continue/dropped out	5%	5%	4%	6%	3%	5%	7%	7%	6%
Completed this qualification/training	6%	1%	9%	1%	10%	13%	1%	24%	18%
Wave 2									
Still learning	42%	33%	40%	11%	46%	40%	73%	22%	34%
Decided not to continue/dropped out	11%	14%	6%	8%	4%	12%	12%	7%	8%
Completed this qualification/training	46%	52%	54%	80%	49%	48%	15%	70%	54%
Wave 3									
Still learning	8%	4%	24%	*	7%	6%	3%	*	12%
Decided not to continue/dropped out	5%	6%	5%	*	4%	6%	3%	*	9%
Completed this qualification/training	87%	90%	70%	*	89%	88%	93%	*	78%
Base (all still in learning or not started at the previous wave)									
Wave 1 QA2: How far have you got with this training/qualification?									
Wave 2 QA1b: Where are you now with the training/qualification?									
Wave 3 QA1a: Where are you now with the training/qualification?									

Source: Wave 1 and 2 Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

Key differences between early leavers and completers

By wave 3 the type of learner who completes or leaves early has changed noticeably from earlier waves, as shown in table 2.2, as a number of factors appear to interact in determining whether a learner will leave early, and how long they take to complete:

- Wave 3 completers are relatively young, generally aged 16 to 18, do not already have a level 2 qualification and do not pay their fees, whereas learners aged 25+ are more likely to finish in the first year (up to wave 2). This is partly linked to aim - younger learners tend to take GCE A/AS/A2 levels and BTEC, which generally last one to two years – but also to the tendency for older learners to take partial Level 3 courses, which are shorter to complete.
- Learners who are also more likely to leave the earliest are primarily females, those who do not yet have a Level 3 qualification and learners with a learning difficulty or disability. By later waves of the survey, this has changed and the proportion of these groups leaving early reflects the average.

Table 2.2: Profile of survey respondents, by status (% of column total)

	Total	Wave 1		Wave 2		Wave 3		
		Early leavers	Completers	Early leavers	Completers	Early leavers	Completers	
Age								
16-18	63%	56%	11%	70%	49%	63%	77%	
19-24	13%	15%	12%	12%	16%	11%	10%	
25+	24%	29%	77%	18%	35%	26%	13%	
Gender								
Male	42%	36%	35%	38%	39%	45%	44%	
Female	58%	64%	65%	61%	61%	55%	56%	

Table 2.2: Profile of survey respondents, by status (% of column total)

		Wave 1		Wave 2		Wave 3		
	TOTAL	Early leavers	Completers	Early leavers	Completers	Early leavers	Completers	
Ethnicity								
	White	83%	80%	89%	82%	82%	84%	83%
	Black	5%	5%	4%	6%	7%	4%	5%
	Asian	8%	10%	5%	8%	7%	10%	8%
	Mixed/Other	4%	5%	2%	3%	3%	2%	4%
Type of Provision								
	FE	96%	98%	93%	98%	97%	95%	97%
	WBL	4%	2%	7%	2%	3%	5%	3%
Full Level 3								
	Full	62%	52%	20%	60%	49%	60%	78%
	Not full	38%	48%	80%	40%	51%	40%	22%
Aim								
	GCE/A/AS/A2 level	35%	33%	4%	46%	40%	31%	28%
	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	13%	10%	20%	7%	15%	12%	10%
	Access to HE	5%	5%	1%	4%	9%	2%	1%
	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	6%	3%	11%	2%	6%	4%	5%
	Award, Certificate or Diploma	10%	9%	21%	10%	9%	12%	10%
	BTEC	22%	27%	5%	23%	7%	22%	38%
	City & Guilds	3%	5%	15%	2%	5%	5%	1%

Table 2.2: Profile of survey respondents, by status (% of column total)								
		Wave 1			Wave 2		Wave 3	
TOTAL		Early leavers	Completers	Early leavers	Completers	Early leavers	Completers	
Other	7%	7%	21%	5%	8%	10%	5%	
Highest current qualification level								
2 and below	70%	64%	34%	75%	70%	70%	80%	
3	13%	12%	19%	9%	12%	10%	8%	
4 and above	8%	8%	26%	6%	7%	7%	4%	
Learning Difficulty								
Yes	4%	5%	3%	4%	3%	2%	4%	
No	89%	90%	89%	87%	88%	90%	87%	
Disability								
Yes	5%	8%	4%	7%	5%	4%	4%	
No	87%	87%	89%	86%	87%	89%	87%	
Payment of Fees								
Yes-all	16%	18%	38%	15%	16%	18%	12%	
Yes-some	11%	13%	10%	11%	11%	17%	10%	
No	71%	68%	51%	73%	72%	65%	77%	
% may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of don't know / no answer								

Source: Wave 1, 2 and 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

3 Experiences of Level 3

3.1 Introduction

This section explores learner experiences of Level 3, and their views on this. It covers the length of the course, their expectations, whether they were doing their first choice course, and satisfaction and challenge. This is followed by analysis of why certain learners did not complete the course, whether learners felt they made the right choice, if it was money well spent and whether they would be prepared to pay more for Level 3.

3.2 Learning and training in practice

Duration before early leaving

Considering early leavers, there is a wide distribution of time spent doing a course, with 31 per cent lasting 1 to 5 months, 24 per cent lasting 6 to 10 months and 34 per cent lasting 11 to 20 months (table 3.1). GCE A/AS/A2 level learners are slightly more likely to leave after 11 to 20 months (41 per cent).

The mean length of study before leaving a course was just under 10 months (9.8).

Table 3.1: Length of participation before leaving early, by qualification aim (% of total, single coded)

	Total*	GCE A/AS/A2 level	BTEC
1 to 5 months	31%	28%	51%
6 to 10 months	24%	26%	19%
11 to 20 months	34%	41%	25%
21 months+	9%	4%	4%
* The total represents the views of all, but only the aims with a base number greater than 50 are shown individually			
Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of don't know/no answer.			
Base : All early leavers			
D1: About how long were you doing the training/ qualification?			

Source: Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

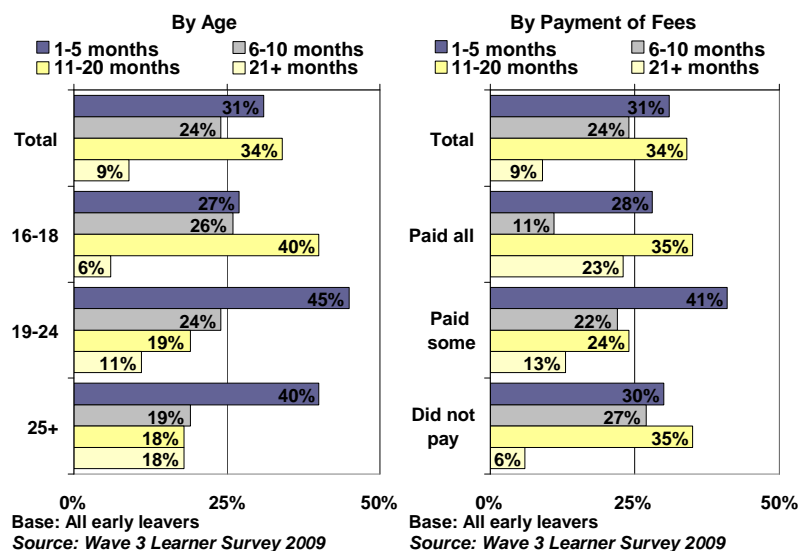
Findings by learner characteristic

Younger learners (aged 16 to 18 years) are least likely to leave between 1 to 5 months, and most likely to leave between 11 and 20 months (as shown in figure 3.1). In contrast,

learners aged 25+ either leave very early on or persist with a course for 21 months or more before leaving. Learners who pay all of their fees also last for far longer than other learners (14.4 months on average), which is significantly above average and suggests they may be more committed to completion than other learner groups.

Figure 3.1: Length of participation before leaving early, by learner characteristic (% of total, single coded)

QD1: About how long were you doing the training/ qualification?



Learners who leave after 6 to 10 months are the most likely to now to again be students at university or college, suggesting that if leaving near the end of the first year progression to another course is relatively likely.

Further age analysis

Partial level 3 learners aged 19+ are much more likely to leave in the first 5 months (45 per cent) than 16 to 18 year olds (25 per cent) on equivalent courses, so the barriers they face seem to impact them much earlier on.

Duration before completion

The majority of Level 3 learners finish their course in 1 to 2 years (57 per cent), with a further quarter finishing after 10 months to a year (25 per cent, table 3.2). Other learners range from a few months to several years. However, length of completion is heavily influenced by qualification aim:

- Nearly all BTEC and GCE A/AS/A2 level learners take between 10 months to 2 years to complete.
- City & Guilds (30 per cent), NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship and (Advanced) Award, Certificate or Diplomas are most likely to complete in 6 months or less. This reflects the greater variety of structures / volume of content within these qualifications, and the fact that they are often taken in a work based situation without a fixed exam or finish date.
- As a result a relatively small proportion of City & Guilds and NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship learners take more than two years (16 and 11 per cent respectively).

The majority (88 per cent) of learners complete their course in the amount of time expected although Access to HE and City & Guilds students tend to consider the course is shorter and NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeships both longer and shorter.

Table 3.2: Length of completion by qualification aim (% of total, single coded)

	Total	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
1-3 months	2%	<0.5%	3%	-	6%	3%	<0.5%	20%	9%
4-6 months	4%	1%	12%	-	7%	6%	1%	10%	4%
7-9 months	5%	3%	13%	4%	7%	7%	1%	7%	11%
10 months - 1 year	25%	27%	24%	80%	20%	24%	11%	16%	28%

Table 3.2: Length of completion by qualification aim (% of total, single coded)

	Total	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
1-2 years	57%	66%	32%	12%	49%	49%	83%	21%	35%
2 years or more	5%	3%	12%	2%	6%	6%	3%	16%	5%
Other	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	3%	1%	9%	5%
Compared to expected									
Longer	5%	3%	13%	4%	5%	6%	4%	5%	6%
Shorter	7%	3%	20%	13%	7%	4%	5%	12%	5%
About expected	88%	93%	67%	83%	88%	90%	91%	83%	87%
Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of don't know/no answer.									
Base : Completers									
E1: Approximately how long did it take you to complete your training/qualification?									
E2: Was this longer, shorter or about the length of time that you'd expected?									

Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

Findings by learner characteristic

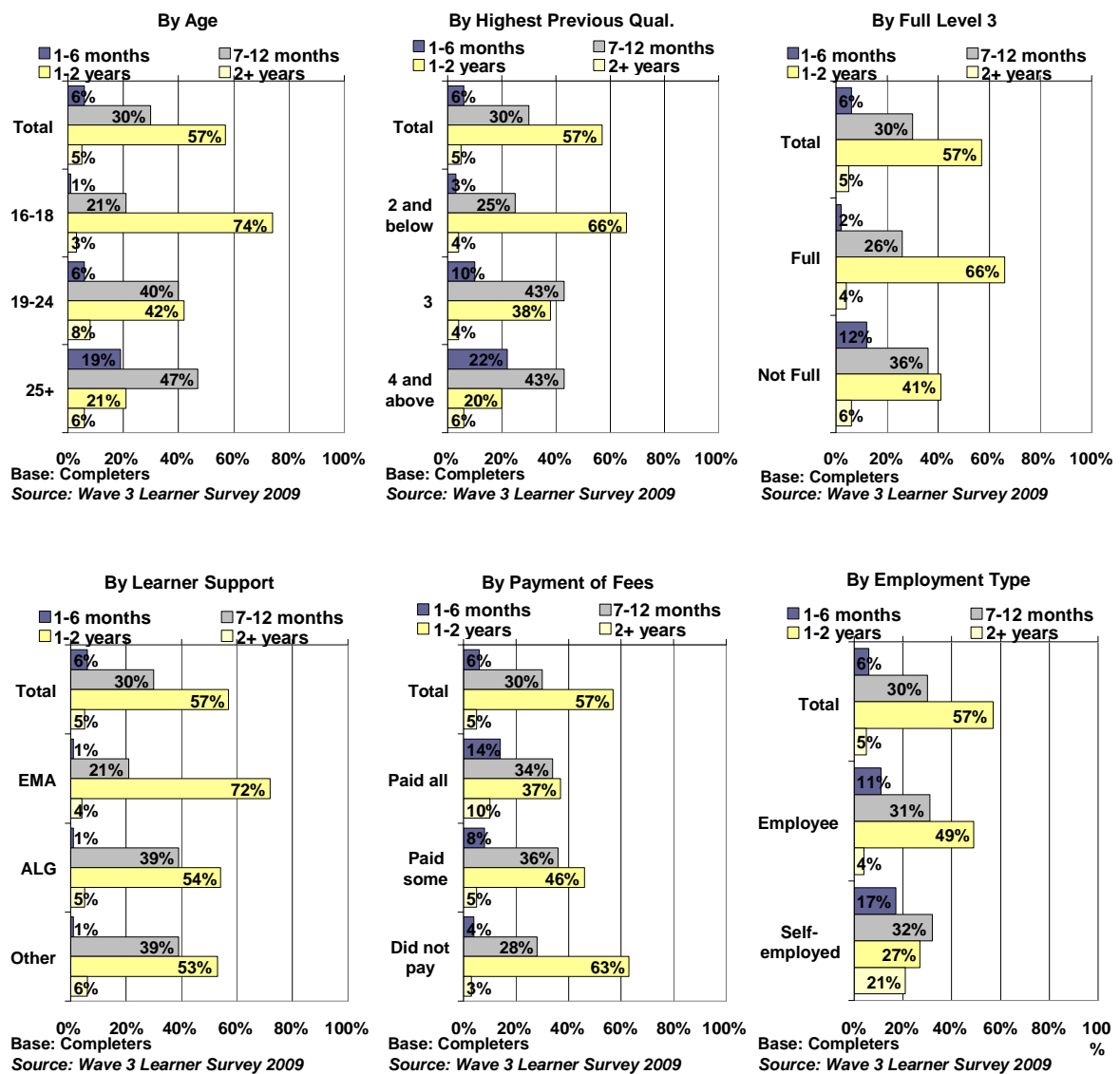
While aim is the key determinant of course length, the types of learners taking these courses, and the reasons they take them, are also important. The responses in figure 3.2 fall into three distinct trends:

- Learners aged 25+, and those who are already better qualified (Level 3) or take a partial Level 3 course show a tendency to finish in the first year.
- In contrast the inter-linked groups of 16 to 18 year olds, learners in receipt of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), who do not pay their fees or are without a Level 3 plus qualification typically take 1 to 2 years.

- Learners who stand out as being most likely to take more than two years to complete are the self employed and those who pay all of their fees (21 and 10 per cent respectively).

Figure 3.2: Length of completion by learner characteristic (% of total, single coded)

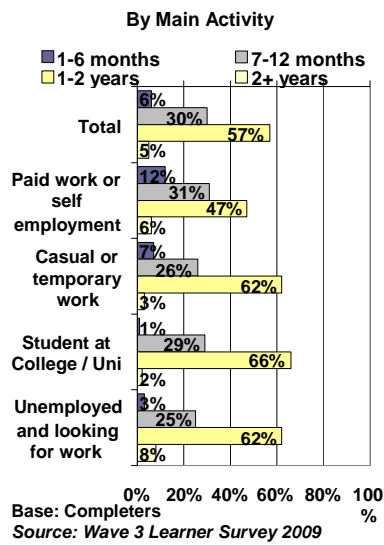
QE1: Approximately how long did it take you to complete your training/qualification?



Looking at what learners are doing now (see figure 3.3), those in paid work or self-employment (12 per cent) are more likely to finish in up to 6 months than average (6 per cent). Students at college or university (66 per cent) are more likely to finish in 14 months to 2 years than average (57 per cent).

Figure 3.3: Length of completion by learner outcome (% of total, single coded)

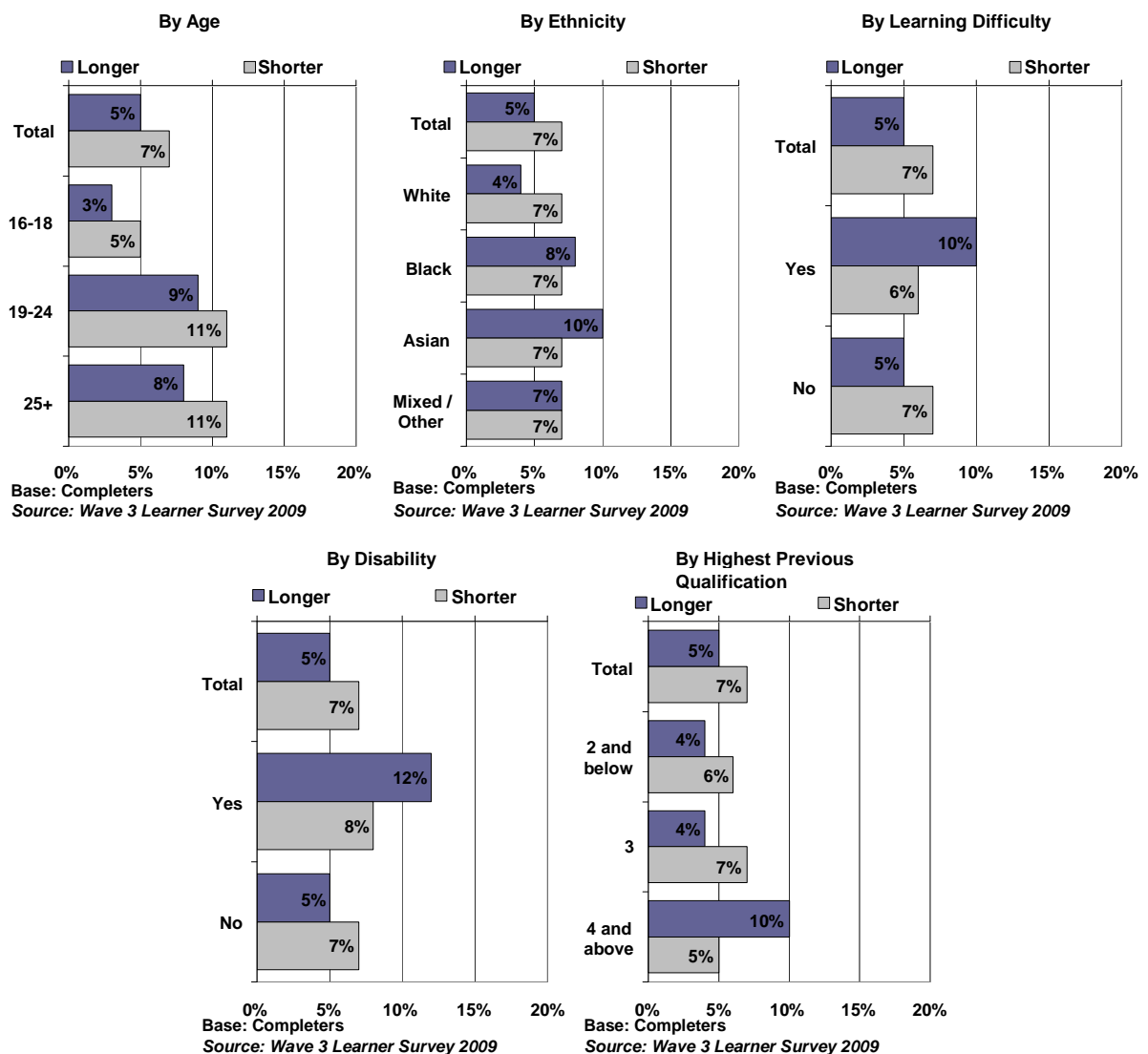
QE1: Approximately how long did it take you to complete your training/qualification?



Additional analysis shows that learners aged 19+ are more likely to say their course was not the length they expected, but be both longer and shorter. Other learners who tend to over-estimate their course length are Asian learners, those who have a learning difficulty or disability or those who already have a Level 4 or higher qualification.

Figure 3.4: Expectations of length by learner characteristic (% of total, single coded)

QE2: Was this longer, shorter or about the length of time that you'd expected?



Further age analysis

Generally, older learners are likely to complete their course sooner than younger learners, regardless of qualification aim or other learner characteristic. This is particularly pronounced for FE learners, where 22 per cent of 16 to 18 year olds finish in less than a year, compared to 59 per cent of 19+ year olds.

Analysis by wave

The later a learner completes their course, the less likely they are to say the course was shorter than expected (13 per cent at wave 1, compared to 6 per cent at wave 3). However, the majority of learners still correctly anticipate how long their course would be, although the lowest proportion is NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship learners.

Table 3.3: Length of completion by qualification aim and wave of completion (% of total, single coded)

	Total	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
Wave 1 Completer									
Longer	4%	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Shorter	13%	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
About expected	82%	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Wave 2 Completer									
Longer	4%	4%	4%	5%	4%	3%	1%	5%	5%
Shorter	8%	3%	23%	12%	7%	6%	7%	10%	1%
About expected	88%	93%	74%	83%	89%	90%	92%	85%	91%
Wave 3 Completer									
Longer	6%	3%	26%	*	7%	7%	3%	*	8%
Shorter	6%	4%	17%	*	5%	3%	4%	*	5%
About expected	88%	92%	57%	*	88%	90%	92%	*	86%
Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of don't know/no answer.									
Base : Early Leavers (Wave 1, Wave 2 , Wave 3)									
E2: Was this longer, shorter or about the length of time that you'd expected?									

Source: Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

First choice

Early leavers are more likely to say they did not get their first choice of course than completers, as a sixth of early leavers said their course was not their first choice, double the proportion for completers. Clearly not getting their first choice of course can be linked to leaving early, although the majority (82 per cent) of early leavers did get their first choice.

By qualification aim, early leavers from GCE A/AS/A2 levels are the most likely to say it was not their first choice (20 per cent) whereas the greatest proportion of early leavers doing their first choice of course were BTEC learners.

Amongst completers there is little variation, although the greatest proportion of NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeships reported it was their first choice.

Table 3.4: First choice courses or not by qualification aim (% of total, single coded)

	Total*	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
Early leavers									
Yes, was my first choice	82%	79%	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
No, wanted to do something else	16%	20%	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Completers									
Yes, my first choice	92%	91%	94%	95%	94%	89%	91%	87%	91%
No, wanted to do something else	8%	8%	5%	5%	6%	10%	9%	12%	7%

* The total represents the views of all, but only the aims with a base number greater than 50 are shown individually
Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of don't know/no answer.

Base: (Early leavers)

QD2: Was this course your first choice or did you want to do a different course/qualification?

Base: (Completers)

QE3: Was this course your first choice or did you want to do a different course/qualification?

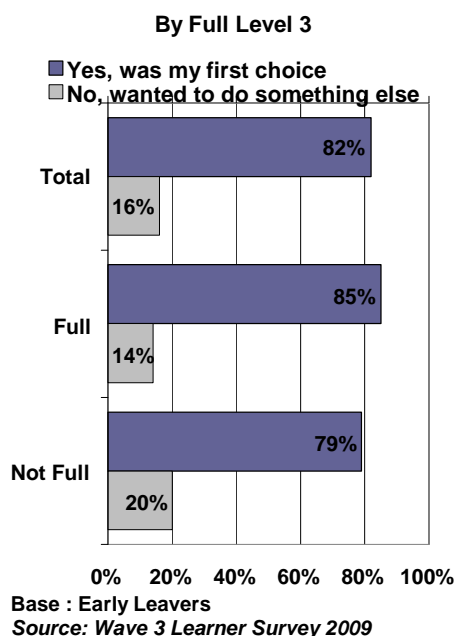
Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

Findings by learner characteristic

Early leavers most likely to say the course was not their first choice are generally those taking a partial Level 3 course (as shown in figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5: Early leavers' first choice course or not by learner characteristic (% of total, single coded)

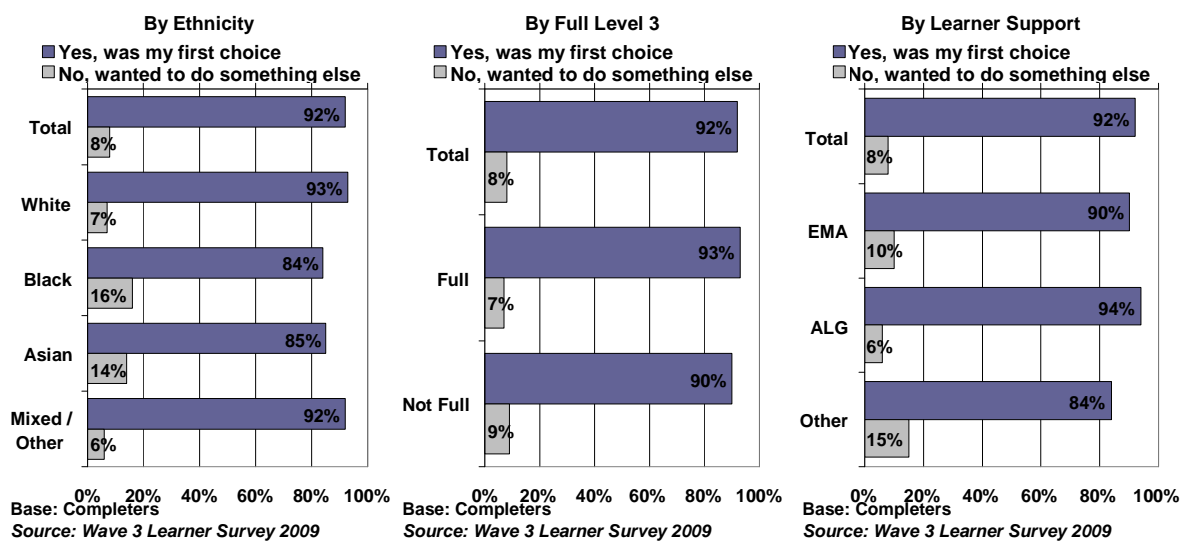
QD2: Was this course your first choice or did you want to do a different course / qualification?



Amongst completers, Black and Asian learners (16 and 14 per cent respectively) are more likely than average (8 per cent) to say their course was not their first choice. Learners taking a partial Level 3 (9 per cent) and those in receipt of Other learner support (10 per cent) are also more likely to say this.

Figure 3.6: Completers' first choice course or not by learner characteristic (% of total, single coded)

QE3: Was this course your first choice or did you want to do a different course / qualification?



Learners who completed a course but said it was not their first choice are more likely to report that the course was a negative experience, they are dissatisfied or that it was too easy.

Right choice

The majority (85 per cent) of completers agree that their course was the right choice for them. This rises to 94 per cent for Access to HE and 90 per cent NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship agreement, whereas nearly one tenth of GCE A/AS/A2 level students report that it was not the right choice. In general, work-based learners are more likely to say the course was their first choice than FE learners.

Table 3.5: Views of training/qualification by qualification aim (% of total, single coded)

	Total	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
Right choice									
Agree	85%	82%	90%	93%	88%	86%	86%	77%	84%
Disagree	8%	9%	5%	4%	6%	6%	9%	8%	5%
Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of don't know/no answer.									
Base : Completers									
E4a: How strongly do you agree or disagree with this statement? 'Doing this training/qualification was absolutely the right choice for me.'									

Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

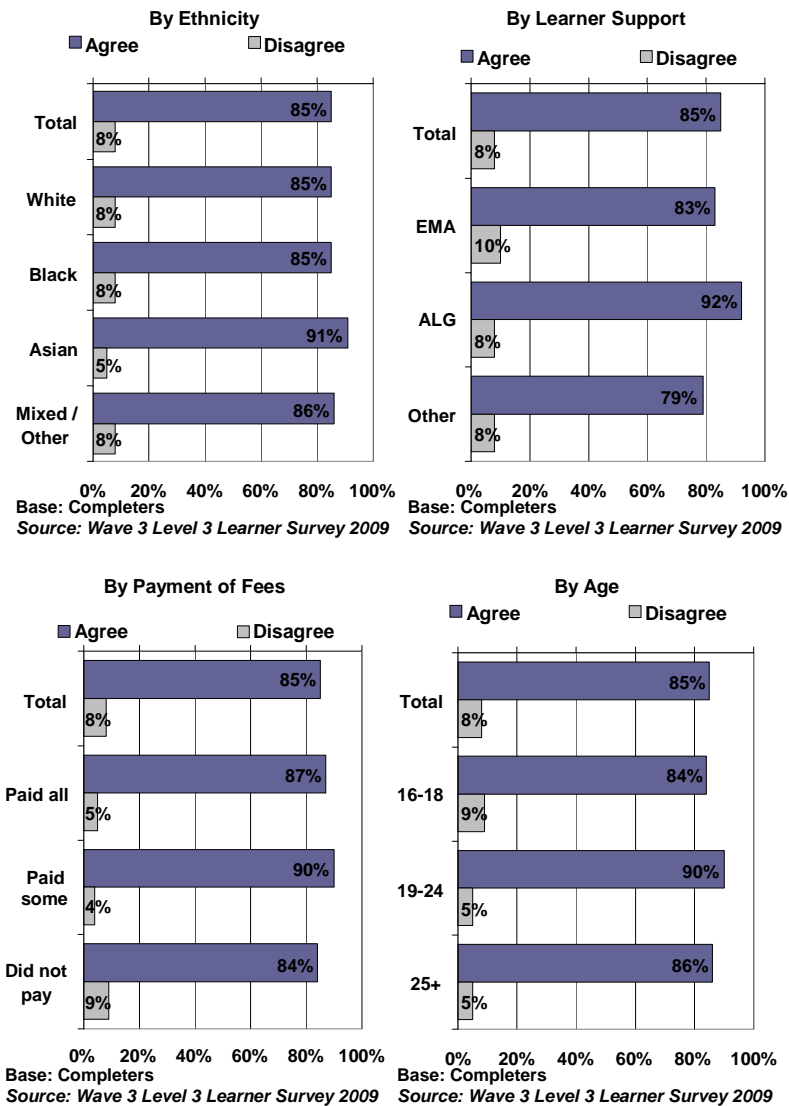
Findings by learner characteristic

Despite a below average proportion of Asian learners citing that the course was their first choice, it is these learners who are most likely to say their course was the right choice (figure 3.7). This finding, alongside other evidence across all three waves, indicates a general and more positive attitude to Level 3 learning and its impact amongst Asian learners than other ethnic groups.

Other learner groups citing their course was the right choice are in receipt of an Adult Learning Grant (ALG) and those who paid some of their fees. In contrast, the least likely to say it was the right choice are aged 16 to 18, White, in receipt of the EMA or not paying their fees.

Figure 3.7: Views of training/qualification by qualification aim (% of total, single coded)

QE4a: How strongly do you agree or disagree with this statement? ‘Doing this training/qualification was absolutely the right choice for me.’



Unsurprisingly many of those saying it was not the right choice also say they had a negative learning experience and are dissatisfied overall, although it is interesting to note that most learners are still satisfied and as many said it was a negative experience as said it was positive. Those who found the course easy are also slightly more likely to say the course was not the right choice.

Further age analysis

Younger learners (aged 16 to 18 years) who previously had a Level 2 qualification or below are more likely to think the course was not the right choice than older learners with equivalent qualifications. This suggests that it is learners continuing through the education system without a break who are more likely to feel they made the wrong choice, whereas those doing a course at a later stage tend to feel more that they make the right choice.

Level of satisfaction

The majority (88 per cent) of learners are satisfied with their course, although a small minority (8 per cent) are not. By qualification aim learners are most likely to be satisfied if they take NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeships or Access to HE (93 and 95 per cent respectively), whereas GCE A/AS/A2 level students are the least likely to say they are satisfied (85 per cent). In general, work-based learners are more likely to report satisfaction than FE learners.

Table 3.6: Training satisfaction by qualification aim (% of total, single coded)

	Total	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
Satisfied	88%	85%	93%	95%	87%	89%	88%	88%	86%
Dissatisfied	8%	9%	4%	5%	8%	8%	8%	7%	10%
Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of don't know/no answer.									
Base (all)									
QC1: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are/were you with this course/training?									

Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

Findings by learner characteristic

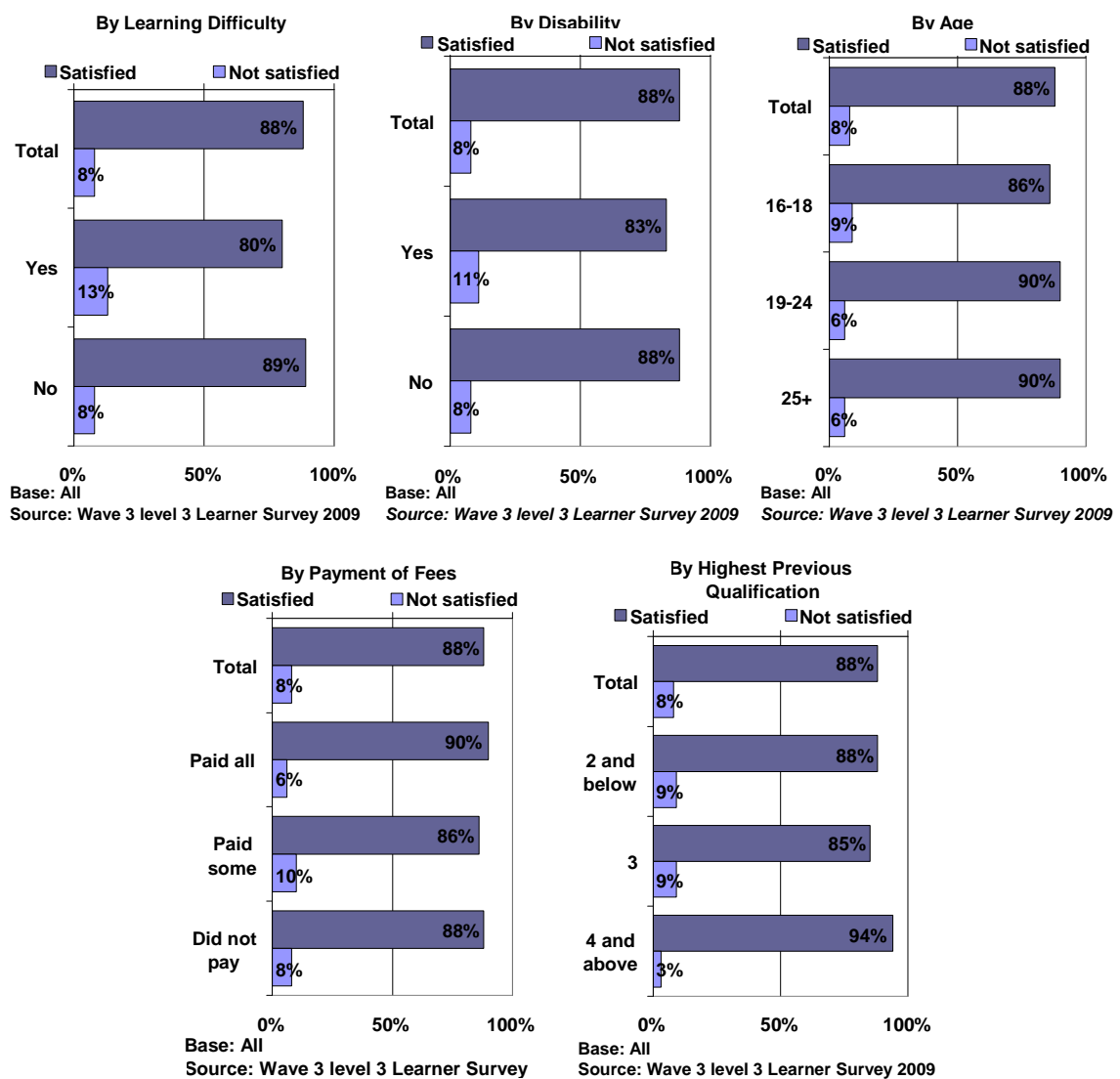
Overall satisfaction with Level 3 learning varies noticeably by learner characteristic, suggesting contingent factors other than course type/structure have an important role to

play. Notably, learners with a disability or learning difficulty are less satisfied, as are younger learners; the same groups also less likely to get their first choice of course.

In contrast, learners who pay all of their fees or already have a Level 4 qualification are the most satisfied overall. There is also a tendency for those who found their course challenging to be more satisfied.

Figure 3.8: Training satisfaction by learner characteristic (% of total, single coded)

QC1: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are/were you with this course/training?



Further age analysis

Although younger learners are generally less satisfied, this difference is mainly a result of slightly lower satisfaction levels amongst 16 to 18 year olds in FE, whereas those in work-based learning are equally satisfied regardless of age. In particular, the prominent group of dissatisfied young people are those who do 'Other' qualifications.

Overall challenge

Around two-thirds (65 per cent) of learners find their course challenging, but a fifth (22 per cent) do not. GCE A/AS/A2 level learners are the most likely to find their course challenging, whereas NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeships, BTEC and Award, Certificate or Diploma students are more likely than average to report it as easy.

Table 3.7: Overall challenge of the course by qualification aim (% of total, single coded)

	Total	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
Easy	22%	16%	29%	21%	25%	24%	26%	20%	23%
Challenging	65%	70%	58%	72%	66%	60%	62%	72%	66%

Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of don't know/no answer.

Base (all)

QC2: Overall, how easy or challenging is/ was the course/ training?

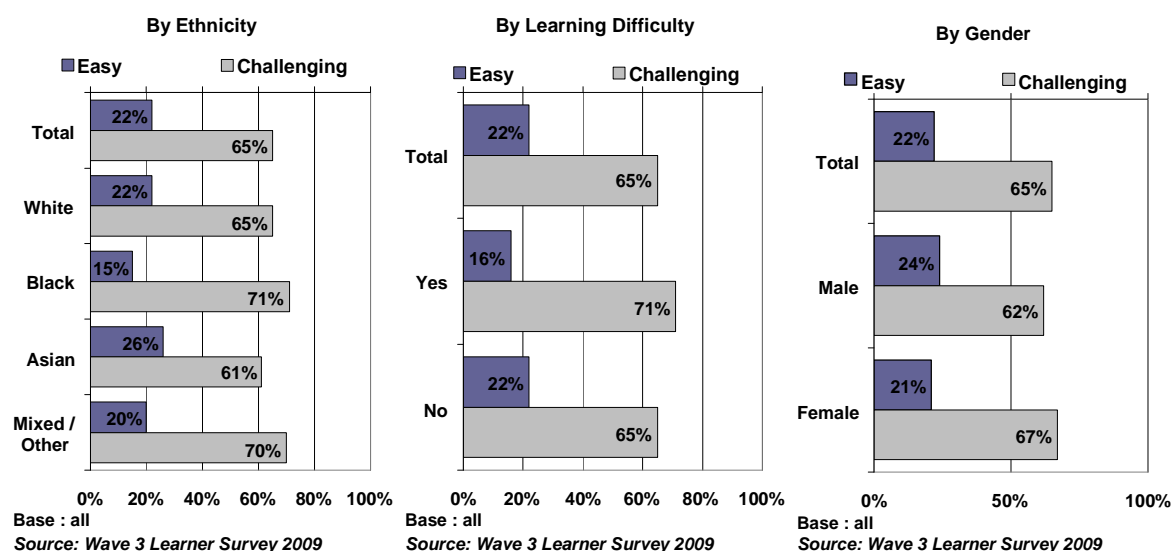
Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

Findings by learner characteristic

By learner characteristic the students most likely to say they find their course challenging are Black, have a learning difficulty and are female. Conversely, Asian students are less likely overall to say the course was challenging.

Figure 3.9: Overall challenge of the course by qualification aim (% of total, single coded)

QC2: Overall, how easy or challenging is/ was the course/ training?



3.3 Reasons for not completing

One-half of early leavers did not complete because of course related reasons, one quarter reported circumstantial reasons, one-eighth time/workload factors and a small proportion for financial reasons. Interestingly, early leavers at wave 1 are less likely to say the course was not what they wanted to do (22 per cent), suggesting it takes time for learners to realise a course is not for them. No other reason shows a significant change between waves.

GCE A/AS/A2 level learners leave early for quite different reasons to others. Course related reasons for leaving are reported by 62 per cent of participants on these latter two courses compared to 52 per cent elsewhere. In contrast, few cite circumstantial reasons (16 per cent) when compared to other learners (25 per cent).

Comparing FE to work-based learning generally, one-half of work-based learners stop because of their circumstances compared to a quarter of FE learners, primarily because work-based learners changed job (26 per cent) or their course was cancelled or suspended (13 per cent).

Table 3.8: Reasons for not completing course by qualification aim and type of provision (% of total, multi coded)

	Total*	GCE A/AS/A 2 level	BTEC	FE	WBL
Course Related	52%	62%	48%	53%	27%
Found the course was not what I wanted to do after all/changed my mind	30%	32%	34%	30%	17%
Poor quality teaching/training	8%	9%	3%	8%	10%
The course was not at the right level for me – too easy	2%	<0.5%	3%	2%	4%
The course was not at the right level for me – too difficult	11%	16%	7%	11%	-
Time/workload related	13%	14%	10%	13%	11%
Workload made it difficult to make time for studying/training	6%	9%	8%	6%	3%
Times of course didn't suit my working hours	2%	1%	2%	2%	6%
Too difficult to balance the course/training with other non-work commitments	4%	4%	1%	4%	2%
Circumstantial	25%	16%	27%	24%	51%
Changed to a different job/left job	5%	1%	7%	5%	26%
Health problem/illness	8%	9%	8%	8%	6%
Change in family/home life (e.g. bereavement)	6%	4%	4%	6%	1%
The course was cancelled/stopped part way through/moved location	2%	0%	3%	2%	13%
Became pregnant/had a baby	1%	0%	0%	1%	2%
Financial reasons	6%	3%	10%	6%	6%

* The total represents the views of all, but only the aims with a base number greater than 50 are shown individually

Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of don't know/no answer.

Base (Early leavers)

QD3: Why did you decide not to complete your course/training?

Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

Findings by learner characteristic

There is significant variation in reasons for learning depending on learner characteristics. Learners aged 16 to 18 years old, claiming EMA or not paying fees are much more likely to leave early for course related reasons, whereas nearly half of learners aged 25+ leave their courses early for circumstantial reasons, mainly because of family/home (11 per cent) or health issues (26 per cent).

3.4 Financial considerations

Impact if required to pay more

Amongst learners who paid for some or all of their course fees, 53 per cent said they would still have gone ahead if they had to pay more and a further 18 per cent said it would depend on how much more they had to pay. In contrast 27 per cent said they would not.

Amongst learners who did not pay for their course, or refused to say, just over half (55 per cent) would still have gone ahead if they had been required to pay and a further 9 per cent would consider it depending on how much (a lower proportion than that of fee payers). In contrast, a greater proportion of non-fee payers than fee payers would not have gone ahead.

Although there is little variation by qualification aim in the views of fee payers, it is Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma learners not paying fees are most likely to say they would have still gone ahead if required to pay (67 per cent), whereas those taking an Award, Certificate or Diploma are the least likely (47 per cent). In general, work-based learners are more likely than FE to say they would have gone ahead if they had been required to pay (61 per cent).

Table 3.9: Willingness to go ahead if had to pay more towards/pay course fees (% of total, single coded)

	Total*	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/ Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	Other
Paid some / all fees								
Yes	53%	55%	54%	*	*	48%	58%	48%
Depends how much	18%	14%	19%	*	*	21%	20%	17%
No	27%	27%	27%	*	*	30%	21%	30%
Did not pay fees								
Yes	55%	53%	58%	55%	67%	47%	59%	59%
Depends how much	9%	9%	9%	15%	3%	14%	10%	6%
No	34%	36%	33%	29%	30%	38%	30%	31%

Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of don't know/no answer.

* The total represents the views of all, but only the aims with a base number greater than 50 are shown individually Base (All who paid for some/ all of their training/ qualification)

QC3a: Taking into account your experience of doing this course / training would you still have gone ahead with course/ training if you had to pay more towards the cost of it?

Base (All who did not pay for the training or refused/ didn't know amount at wave 2)

QC3b: Taking into account your experience of doing this course/ training, would you still have gone ahead with course/ training if you had to pay towards the cost of it?

Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

Findings by learner characteristic

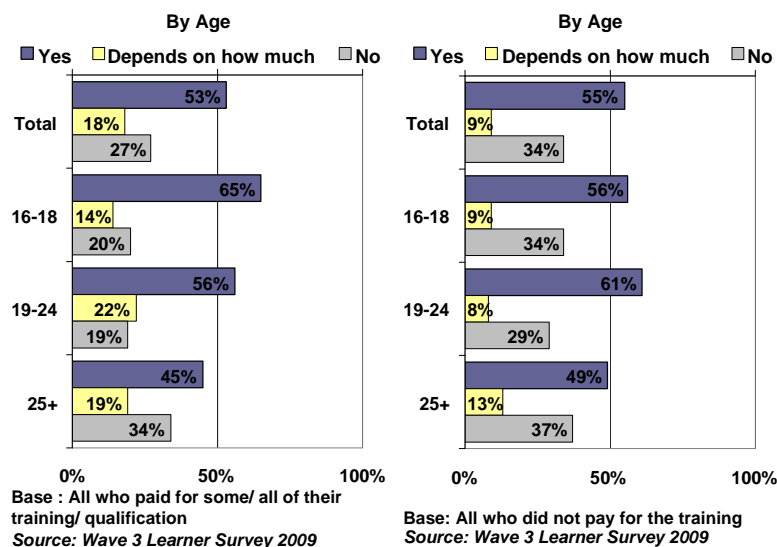
By age, 16 to 18 year olds would more likely have gone ahead with their course if required to pay more (65 per cent), while a greater than average proportion of 25+ year olds would not have (34 per cent).

Of those who did not pay any fees, older (25+ years old) learners are least likely to say they would have still gone ahead if they had to pay (49 per cent).

Figure 3.10: Willingness to pay/pay more towards course fees (% of total, single coded)

QC3a: When we spoke to you last year, you mentioned that you'd paid ... towards the cost of this course/ training. Taking into account your experience of doing this course / training would you still have gone ahead with course/ training if you had to pay more towards the cost of it?

QC3b: Taking into account your experience of doing this course/ training, would you still have gone ahead with course/ training if you had to pay towards the cost of it?



Looking at the relationship of willingness to pay to experiences of learning, completers are understandably much more likely to say they would have gone ahead with their course if required to pay more (58 per cent), whereas drop outs are much less likely to report that they would (35 per cent). Learners who had a negative experience, are dissatisfied or found the course easy are also much less likely to say they would go ahead (22, 25 and 49 per cent respectively).

Further age and pay analysis

Young learners (aged 16 to 18), in work-based learning (primarily NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeships) are the most likely say they would still have gone ahead if they had to pay for their training.

Older learners (aged 25+) are generally less likely to be prepared to go ahead if they have to pay more for their course/training, but this is more the case for older females than older males.

While there appears to be a willingness to pay, or pay more towards Level 3 course fees, further analysis of the underlying evidence suggests that those most likely to indicate a willingness to pay in fact may not have the ability to do so. Of the 16-24 year olds who were in employment prior to starting the Level 3 learning and expressed a willingness to pay, nearly all were earning between £6,000 and £15,000 gross per annum before their course started. This is likely to be due to part-time employment alongside earlier studies. So whereas there may be a greater *willingness* to pay or contribute more, the *ability* to do so may not be realistic. The finding that the over 25 age groups are less willing to contribute – even those on higher earnings - may reflect greater financial responsibilities and a greater understanding of the financial commitment compared to younger learners. It should be noted that the sample size of the data at pay band level is limited and these results therefore not fully robust; it does however provide indications worth further investigation.

Views of value of training

Overall, 87 per cent of learners feel the course was money well spent, and only 7 per cent do not. The qualification aim most likely to report they receive value for money is NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship (95 per cent).

Table 3.10: Views of training/qualification by qualification aim (% of total, single coded)

	Total*	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	Other
Money well spent (if paid towards qualification)						
Agree	87%	90%	95%	86%	83%	88%
Disagree	7%	4%	3%	10%	9%	8%
* The total represents the views of all, but only the aims with a base number greater than 50 are shown individually Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of don't know/no answer. Base : Completers E4b: How strongly do you agree or disagree with this statement? 'The money I paid towards this training / qualification was money well spent.'						

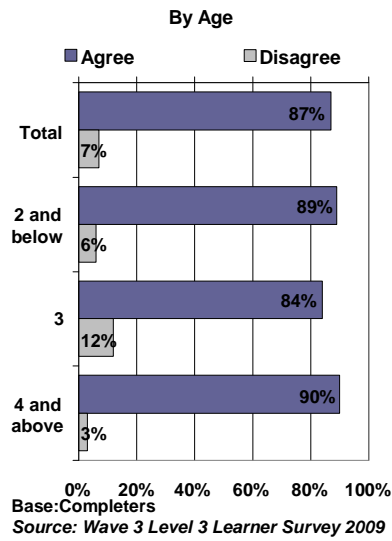
Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

Findings by learner characteristic

The main difference by learner characteristic is that very few learners who already have a Level 4 or higher qualification say the money they spent on the course was not well spent (figure 3.11).

Figure 3.11: View on value of money spent, by learner characteristic (% of total, single coded)

QE4b: How strongly do you agree or disagree with this statement? 'The money I paid towards this training / qualification was money well spent.'



4 Impact of Level 3

4.1 Level 3 achievement and success

In total, 159,800 young people achieved Full Level 3 qualifications in 2007/08 (an increase of 7.8 per cent from 2006/07) and 134,500 adults achieved Full Level 3 qualifications in 2007/08 (an increase of 17.0 per cent from 2006/07).

National statistics regarding achievement and success also complement the evidence available from the Level 3 learner survey by allowing comparison with performance at other qualification levels. As shown in table 4.1:

- The success rate for young people's Full Level 3 qualifications was 72.6 per cent in 2007/08, which is an increase of 4.9 percentage points on 2006/07.
- The success rate for adults' Full Level 3 qualifications was 70.6 per cent in 2007/08, which is an increase of 5.1 percentage points on 2006/07.
- On comparable courses in further education, young people at Level 3 have higher success rates than adults over the three year period from 2005/06.
- This trend was also evident for Advanced Apprenticeships in 2005/06 and 2006/07, but the latest year data shows that adults have significantly increased success rates on these qualification aims.
- However, success rates of Full Level 3 courses and Advanced Apprenticeships are consistently lower than at Level 2 for both young people and adults.

Table 4.1: FE and Apprenticeship Success Rates by Level (2005/06 to 2007/08)

		2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
		full year (final)	full year (final)	full year (final)
Young People (Under 19s)				
	Further Education	75.1%	77.4%	79.9%
	Skills for Life	69.0%	72.8%	76.0%
	Full Level 2	67.9%	70.1%	74.1%
	Full Level 3	64.9%	67.7%	72.6%
	Level 2	69.6%	73.3%	77.0%
	Level 3	77.5%	79.3%	81.0%

Table 4.1: FE and Apprenticeship Success Rates by Level (2005/06 to 2007/08)

	Apprenticeships	49.7%	59.5%	63.3%
	Apprenticeships (Level 2)	51.8%	60.3%	64.2%
	Advanced Apprenticeships (Level 3)	44.5%	56.9%	60.7%
Adult (19+)				
	Further Education	76.8%	76.5%	80.5%
	Skills for Life	65.3%	67.9%	73.1%
	Full Level 2	68.3%	69.4%	71.4%
	Full Level 3	62.0%	65.5%	70.6%
	Level 2	74.2%	75.6%	79.6%
	Level 3	68.6%	72.0%	77.1%
	Apprenticeships	46.9%	58.5%	64.7%
	Apprenticeships (Level 2)	50.9%	60.1%	64.8%
	Advanced Apprenticeships (Level 3)	41.4%	56.0%	64.5%

Source: DS/SFR3, June 2009.

4.2 Learners perceptions of the impact of Level 3

Impact of learning

There are some strong and consistent impacts of doing a Level 3 course. Overall, around four-fifths of learners feel more positive about learning than when they started their course, more confident in their ability to learn and believe they are more attractive to employers.

By qualification aim, Access to HE, NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship and BTEC have the greatest impact, while in general work-based learning has a greater impact than FE as fewest learners feel more positive, confident or attractive to employers if they take GCE

A/AS/A2 level, City & Guilds or 'Other' courses (at wave 2 and wave 3 City & Guilds learners in particular are least likely to agree that Level 3 has brought them benefits).

Table 4.2: Learners' perceptions of the impact, by qualification aim (% of total, single coded)

	Total	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
Feel more positive									
Agree	79%	75%	83%	91%	79%	80%	82%	70%	70%
Disagree	11%	13%	9%	3%	7%	12%	10%	15%	17%
Feel more confident									
Agree	85%	83%	88%	92%	84%	84%	89%	75%	80%
Disagree	8%	10%	5%	4%	5%	8%	7%	11%	13%
More attractive to employers									
Agree	82%	80%	91%	84%	86%	83%	84%	72%	75%
Disagree	11%	13%	4%	8%	8%	10%	12%	18%	18%
Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of neither agree or disagree and don't know/no answer.									
Base : All Learners									
F1a: I feel more positive about learning than when I started this course/ training: Please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with this?									
F1b: I feel more confident in my ability to learn: Please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with this?									
F1c: The learning that I've done will make me more attractive to employers: Please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with this?									

Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

Findings by learner characteristic

Although qualification aim appears to be a key driver of impact, by ethnicity Asian and Mixed/Other learners both feel most positive and more confident, while White learners are noticeably less likely to feel this way (figure 4.1).

Learners who do not pay any fees are also more likely to be positive about learning and feel more confident in their ability to learn, alongside those who did not already have a Level 3 qualification, whereas those with Level 4 qualifications are less likely to feel more positive about learning and more attractive to employers. Potentially this is to do with already having high level qualifications and also perhaps being established in the labour market.

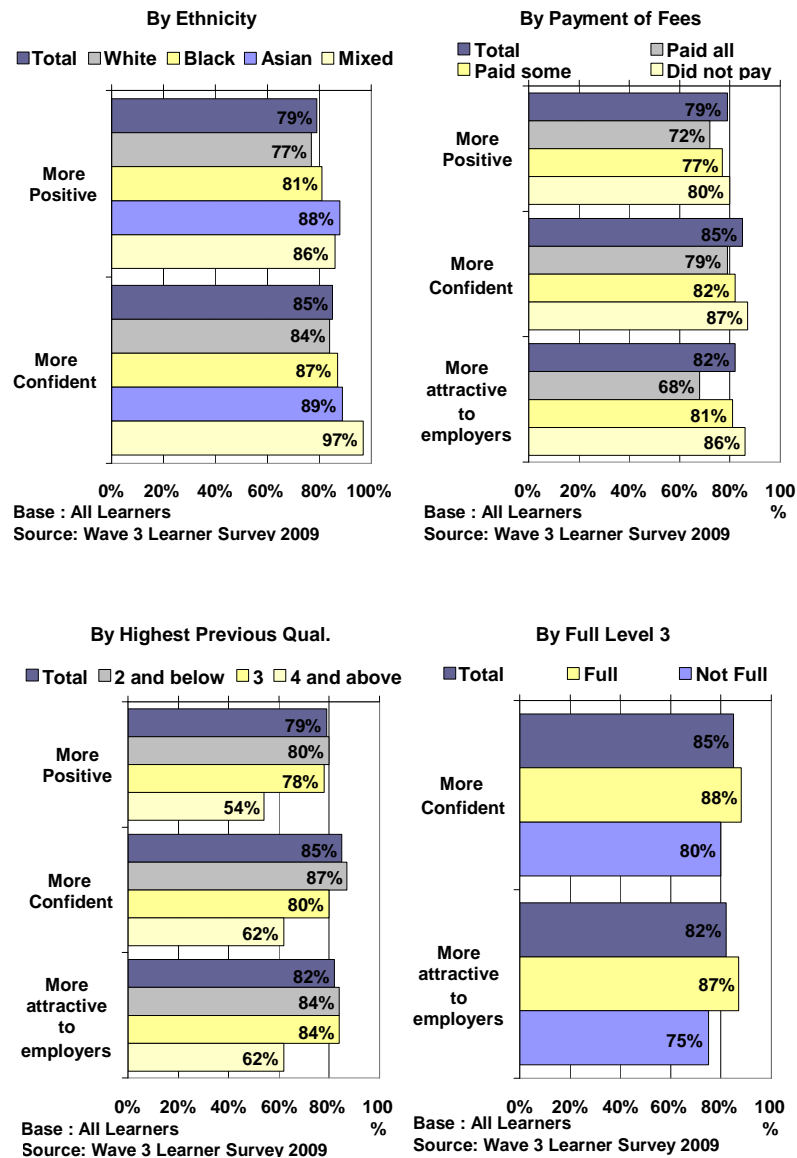
Learners less likely to say their course makes them more attractive to employers are those aged 25+, and those who took a partial Level 3 course.

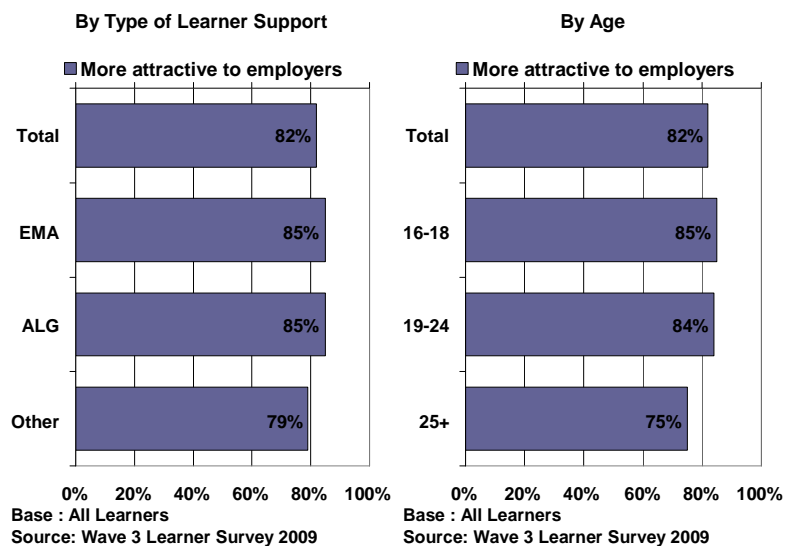
Figure 4.1: Learners perceptions of the impact, by learner characteristic (% of total, single coded)

F1a: I feel more positive about learning than when I started this course/ training: Please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with this?

F1b: I feel more confident in my ability to learn: Please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with this?

F1c: The learning that I've done will make me more attractive to employers: Please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with this?





Further age analysis

The benefits discussed previously often only apply to certain age groups. In particular it is older Asian learners who more often mention a confidence boost, a more positive attitude and increased attractiveness to employers whereas younger Asian learners are no different from other ethnic groups in the same age group. The same age pattern applies to learners without a Level 3 qualification.

The lack of increased confidence and increased attractiveness to employers for a GCE A/AS/A2 level learner is driven by learners aged 19+, whereas their younger peers are not markedly different from the average.

Analysis by wave

Completers are more likely to say they feel more positive about learning than early leavers, but this only emerges in later waves. The proportion of completers who feel more positive about learning increases from 70 per cent at wave 1 to 84 per cent at wave 3, whereas for early leavers it decreases from 67 per cent to 57 per cent.

Table 4.3: Learners perceptions of the impact, by learner status (% of total, single coded)

	Wave 1	Wave2	Wave 3
Completer			
Agree	70%	77%	84%
Disagree	17%	11%	8%
Early Leaver			
Agree	67%	58%	57%
Disagree	22%	26%	26%
Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of neither agree or disagree and don't know/no answer.			
Base : All Completers / Early leavers			
F1. I feel more positive about learning than when I started this course/ training: Please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with this?			

Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

The impact of completing learning on confidence also becomes more apparent over time. Three quarters of early leavers and completers feel more confident at wave 1; however by the final wave 91 per cent of completers feel more confident, whereas only 69 per cent of early leavers feel more confident.

Table 4.4: Learners' perceptions of the impact, by learner status (% of total, single coded)

	Wave 1	Wave2	Wave 3
Completer			
Agree	74%	83%	91%
Disagree	13%	8%	5%
Early Leaver			
Agree	75%	65%	69%
Disagree	19%	25%	22%
Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of neither agree or disagree and don't know/no answer.			
Base : All Completers / Early leavers			
F1. I feel more confident in my ability to learn: Please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with this?			

Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

Learners who completed a course very early on (by the wave 1 survey) are also much less likely to report feeling more attractive to employers, when compared with those who took a longer time to complete.

Early Leavers at wave 2 tend to feel more attractive to employers than those who left at Waves 1 or 3.

Table 4.5: Learners perceptions of the impact, by qualification aim (% of total, single coded)

	Wave 1	Wave2	Wave 3
Completer			
Agree	68%	83%	89%
Disagree	15%	10%	6%
Early Leaver			
Agree	55%	67%	54%
Disagree	36%	28%	36%
Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of neither agree or disagree and don't know/no answer.			
Base : All Completers / Early leavers			
F1. The learning that I've done will make me more attractive to employers: Please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with this?			

Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

Gains from Level 3

Over four-fifths of learners believe that doing their course has given them *the chance to learn something new, skills that will look good to future employers, skills to get a better job in the future, a qualification, improved self confidence or skills to help me do a different job in the future* (table 4.6). *Better pay* is mentioned by three-fifths of learners.

Amongst those who are employed, the most often mentioned benefit is *skills to do my current job better* (22 per cent), while *increased job security, or a promotion* are less often mentioned.

Results also vary by aim:

- NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship learners are much more likely than other learners to cite immediate work related benefits, such as *skills to do my current job better*, a *promotion* and *greater job security*, followed by Awards, Certificate or Diploma and City & Guilds.
- BTEC learners stand out as being most focused on *skills to do a different job*, *skills to do a better job*, *better pay* or to *get a job*. Therefore, participants seem to see them as a way of changing career path or setting themselves up for better rewarded future employment.
- GCE A/AS/A2 level learners are least likely to cite all the benefits except for *the chance to learn something new*. Access to HE learners also have similar responses, suggesting participants on these two courses are less certain what the gains will be.

Table 4.6: Gains from training/qualification by qualification aim (% of total, multi-coded)

	Total	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
The chance to learn something new	94%	94%	92%	95%	98%	92%	94%	96%	94%
Skills that will look good to future employers	87%	85%	94%	85%	90%	86%	91%	86%	81%
Skills to help me to get a better job in the future	84%	81%	88%	80%	85%	84%	90%	80%	77%
A qualification	83%	80%	88%	83%	92%	83%	86%	82%	78%
Improved self-confidence	82%	74%	89%	84%	87%	87%	87%	71%	81%
Skills to help me to do a different job in the future	81%	78%	80%	80%	83%	80%	87%	76%	77%
Better pay	61%	56%	65%	63%	63%	63%	71%	55%	51%
If not working or self-employed									

Table 4.6: Gains from training/qualification by qualification aim (% of total, multi-coded)

	Total	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
A job	65%	57%	75%	63%	66%	69%	72%	58%	59%
If Employed									
Skills to help me to do my current job better	22%	11%	49%	4%	26%	34%	18%	31%	28%
Greater Job Security	17%	8%	38%	4%	21%	27%	16%	19%	23%
A promotion	12%	5%	27%	5%	14%	21%	12%	14%	14%
F2. Which of the following do you think you have gained from doing this course/ qualification?									
Base : All Learners									

Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

Findings by learner characteristic

Female learners are slightly more likely than men to anticipate *greater job security*, *improved self confidence* and *skills to help me do my current job better* whereas male learners are most likely to mention *better pay*.

Learners more often mentioning immediate work-related benefits like *skills to help me do my current job better*, *a promotion* or *greater job security* are also those aged 19+, White and pay none or some of their fees.

In general learners taking a full Level 3 qualification are more likely to cite all benefits *except* those related to their immediate employment situation. The same pattern is also true for learners who are already qualified to Level 4 or above.

Further age analysis

Older learners (aged 19+) are generally the most likely to cite benefits related directly to immediate employment (*skills to help me do my current job better, a promotion or greater job security*). The exception to this is 16 to 18 year olds taking Award, Certificate or Diploma, who are as likely to feel they have gained these benefits as older learners.

It is also noted that GCE A/AS/A2 level learners are less likely to cite nearly all benefits compared to other learners, and this is especially true of older learners on this qualification aim.

Skills

Looking at the skills learners feel they have gained as a result of doing their qualification, between one-half and three-quarters of learners have gained *team working, oral communication, written communication, team working, problem solving, technical / practical or job-related skills, literacy* and *general information technology (IT) user skills* (table 4.7). Less frequently mentioned are skills like *management, numeracy, customer handling* and *office administration skills*. Just 8 per cent of learners have gained *foreign language skills* as a result of their qualification.

By qualification aim:

- Only around one-half of learners on GCE A/AS/A2 level and Access to HE say they have gained *technical, practical or job specific skills*.
- GCE A/AS/A2 level learners more often mention *written, language and literacy skills* than other learners.
- BTEC learners are amongst the most likely to cite gains in every skill, except for *written, language and literacy skills*.
- Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma and BTEC learners are the most likely to mention gains in *IT professional skills*.
- Award, Certificate or Diploma learners are most likely to cite gains in *customer handling skills*.
- NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship learners more often than average say they have gained skills like *office administration, customer handling, numeracy* and *technical, job related or practical skills*. In contrast, they are less likely to cite *literacy, communication or IT skills*.

Table 4.7: Gains from training/qualification by qualification aim (% of total, multi-coded)

	Total	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
Team working skills	77%	73%	76%	77% H	75%	76%	89%	54%	72%
Oral communication skills	74%	75%	70%	83%	65%	76%	80%	43%	74%
Written communication Skills	74%	78%	69%	91%	63%	70%	76%	46%	68%
Problem solving skills	72%	66%	73%	75%	68%	73%	81%	65%	67%
Technical, practical or job-specific skills	68%	52%	79%	46%	77%	83%	79%	81%	67%
Literacy skills	62%	65%	56%	83%	56%	57%	64%	40%	55%
General IT user skills	53%	45%	48%	76%	56%	51%	70%	32%	49%
Numeracy skills	44%	36%	52%	70%	43%	38%	51%	44%	45%
Management skills	42%	36%	42%	34%	41%	41%	56%	21%	39%
Customer handling skills	35%	24%	51%	26%	36%	42%	41%	29%	41%
Office admin skills	28%	23%	32%	32%	32%	28%	31%	21%	29%
IT professional skills	25%	18%	20%	29%	36%	25%	37%	14%	26%
Foreign language skills	8%	10%	5%	6%	6%	7%	8%	4%	11%
F3. Which, if any, of the following skills do you feel you've gained as a direct result of doing this qualification?									
Base : All Learners									

Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

Findings by learner characteristic

In almost all skills, learners aged under 25 are more likely to say they have gained. However, 19 to 24 year olds are more likely than other learners to say they have gained *office administration* or *technical, practical or job-specific skills*.

By ethnicity, Black learners are more likely than average to say they gained every skill except *customer handling skills*. Asian learners are also very likely to mention gains in most of the skills. Learners also typically mention more benefits when they are doing a full level 3, in receipt of EMA, hold lower level qualifications or pay some or none of their fees.

Learners with a disability are more likely than those without to say they have gained *literacy, foreign language and oral communication skills*.

Further age analysis

Younger learners are generally more likely to have gained in the broadest number of skills. One of the main explanations for this variance is that older people are more likely to take partial Level 3 courses, which are likely to develop a narrower range of skills. However, if older learners are taking a full level 3 qualification they are generally as likely as younger learners to report that they have gained skills.

Impact of the recession on value of learning

Just over half (56 per cent) of learners say the recession has not affected how they view their learning, while 37 per cent say the recession has made it more valuable and 7 per cent think it has become less valuable. By qualification aim, BTECs and NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeships are the most likely to be seen as more valuable, whereas GCE A/AS/A2 levels and City & Guilds are the least likely.

Table 4.8: Impact of recession on value of learning, by qualification aim (% of total, single coded)

	Total	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
More Valuable	37%	32%	43%	40%	39%	36%	42%	31%	32%
No difference	56%	62%	52%	54%	53%	52%	50%	52%	60%
Less Valuable	7%	6%	4%	6%	6%	9%	7%	16%	7%

Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of don't know/no answer.

Base : All learners

F4. What impact, if any, has the recession had on how you view the learning you did in ...?

Source: Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

Table 4.9 shows that learners most often feel the recession has made their learning more valuable because it will help them find work in the future (41 per cent). Comparatively few other reasons are mentioned, but most commonly are greater job security (14 per cent) or a need for new or updated skills (9 and 7 per cent respectively).

Learners on all qualification aims say their learning is more valuable because it will help them find work in the future, although GCE A/AS/A2 level learners are the most likely to say this. Improved job security is primarily mentioned by NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship and Award, Certificate or Diploma (in contrast few GCE A/AS/A2 level learners mention this) and Award, Certificate or Diploma and Other aim learners are also slightly more likely than other learners to say their learning is more valuable because it has made them better at their job (10 and 13 per cent respectively).

Table 4.9: Why recession made learning more valuable, by qualification aim (% of total, multi coded)

	Total*	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	Other
Will help me to find work in future	41%	46%	39%	38%	39%	39%	38%
Will give me greater job security	14%	7%	28%	9%	23%	11%	17%
I needed new skills	9%	9%	9%	14%	10%	7%	11%
I needed to update my skills	7%	9%	5%	8%	9%	5%	8%
To have better/higher qualifications/knowledge/experience	7%	9%	5%	5%	2%	8%	10%
To do my job better/ give a better service	4%	2%	5%	6%	10%	3%	14%
Financial reasons/ higher salary/ pay rise	3%	3%	4%	3%	4%	3%	2%
Don't know	11%	9%	10%	17%	11%	18%	6%
Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of don't know/no answer.							
* The total represents the views of all, but only the aims with a base number greater than 50 are shown individually							
Base : All learners who think learning is slightly or much more valuable							
F5a. Why do you say this?							

Source: Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

Three-fifths of learners say their learning is not more valuable through the recession because they or their job have not been affected by the recession (30 and 28 per cent respectively, table 4.10). One-tenth of learners also said they needed to get qualified anyway.

Table 4.10: Why recession has not made learning more valuable, by qualification aim (% of total, multi coded)

	Total*	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	Other
Recession hasn't affected me	30%	34%	17%	19%	30%	34%	27%
Recession hasn't affected my job	28%	20%	53%	40%	31%	22%	26%
Wanted/ needed to get qualified anyway	10%	11%	8%	2%	11%	11%	10%
Feel secure in the job	6%	3%	15%	13%	10%	3%	8%
Don't know	11%	12%	8%	9%	9%	16%	7%
Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of don't know/no answer.							
* The total represents the views of all, but only the aims with a base number greater than 50 are shown individually							
Base : All learners who think recession has made more							
F5b. Why do you say this?							

Source: Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

Amongst learners who feel that the recession has made no difference to the value of their learning, most responses relate to lack of demand in the labour market (table 4.11). This is mainly because it is hard to find a job (25 per cent), or there are fewer jobs available in their field of learning (13 per cent). Other reasons include a lack of demand for luxury treatments or likelihood of being made redundant.

One-quarter (23 per cent) of learners say that the learning they did was not relevant to a job.

Table 4.11: Why recession has made learning no more or less valuable, by qualification aim (% of total, multi coded)

	Total*
Cannot/hard to find a job	25%
Course/ qualification not relevant to job	23%
Less jobs available in area related to training	13%
Likely to be made redundant anyway	5%
Don't know	6%
Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of don't know/no answer.	
* The total represents the views of all, but only the aims with a base number greater than 50 are shown individually	
Base : All learners who think recession has made no difference to the value of their learning	
F5c. Why do you say this?	

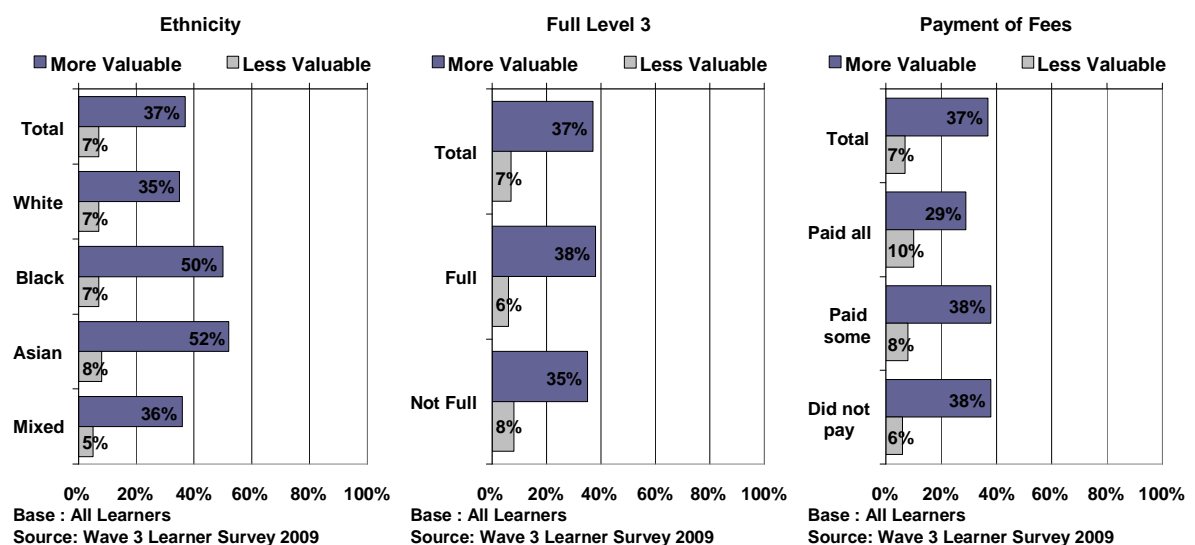
Source: Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

Findings by learner characteristic

The learners most likely to say their learning has become more valuable in the current economic climate are Black or Asian, taking a full Level 3 course and paying none or some of their fees.

Figure 4.2: Impact of recession on value of learning, by learner characteristic (% of total, single coded)

F4. What impact, if any, has the recession had on how you view the learning you did in ...?



Learners aged 25+ are the most likely to say their learning is more valuable as they have gained increased job security (22 per cent) and because they needed new skills (11 per cent).

Those who say learning is not more valuable because they are already qualified tend to already have a Level 3 qualification, older learners (aged 25+) tend to say they feel more secure in their job and younger learners (16 to 18) are most likely to say they are not paying for their course anyway.

Further age analysis

Younger learners taking GCE A/AS/A2 levels and Awards, Certificates or Diplomas are more likely than older learners to think their learning has become more valuable.

The older (19+) learners reporting their learning has made their job more secure are more likely to take an NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship and do a full Level 3 course.

Females aged 16 to 18 are more likely to say their learning has become more valuable because they needed to update their skills, while young men are more likely to say it increased their job security.

4.3 Current activity

Signals of progression from Level 3 are evidenced by the activity of learners once their course has ended, either through leaving early or completing. In a question asked of all learners apart from those still in learning, around one-half (51 per cent) of this group are now in paid work or self-employment expected to last 6 months or longer. Forty seven per cent are also students at college or university.

When asked what their main activity is, 41 per cent also state they are either a student at college or university and 40 per cent either are in paid work or self-employment. However, there are some very notable and important distinctions by qualification aim, as shown in table 4.12:

- Of learners enrolled on NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeships or City & Guilds courses, around three-quarters are now in paid work or self-employment.
- In contrast, an above average proportion of GCE A/AS/A2 level and Access to HE learners have progressed onto college or university.
- College or university is also more likely than average to be the progression route for BTEC learners, but along with 'Other' learners they are also the most likely to be unemployed.
- Although based on a very small sample, 'Other' learners now unemployed and not studying or looking for work predominantly give *retired from paid work* as the reason (75 per cent). This group are primarily those aged over 25 and undertaking partial Level 3 courses.

Overall, 76 per cent of work-based learners have progressed into paid work or self-employment, while 43 per cent of FE learners have progressed into college or university. Compared to FE, a greater proportion (8 per cent) of work-based learners are also now involved in Apprenticeships.

Table 4.12: Main current activity by qualification aim (% of total, single coded)

	Total	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
Student at college or university	41%	60%	8%	76%	24%	25%	45%	5%	19%
Paid work or self-employment expected to last 6 months or longer	40%	24%	75%	12%	55%	58%	34%	72%	52%
Unemployed and looking for work	7%	5%	4%	5%	7%	4%	9%	10%	12%
Casual work, temporary jobs or jobs expected to last 6 months or less	4%	4%	3%	-	7%	2%	5%	5%	4%
Unemployed, not studying or looking for work	3%	2%	3%	4%	3%	4%	2%	4%	7%
Apprenticeship	2%	1%	3%	-	1%	2%	3%	3%	1%
Voluntary or unpaid work for more than a few days	2%	1%	2%	1%	3%	3%	1%	1%	4%
Training course or scheme	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%	-	1%
Student at a school sixth form	<0.5%	1%	-	-	-	-	*	-	-

Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of don't know/no answer.

Base: All apart from those still learning

B1ab: I'd like you to tell me which of these activities is your main activity (the thing you spend the most of your time doing).

Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

The average duration from ending learning (through completion or drop-out) into the main activity described in table 4.12 is 5 months, although four-fifths or learners have progressed within this time.

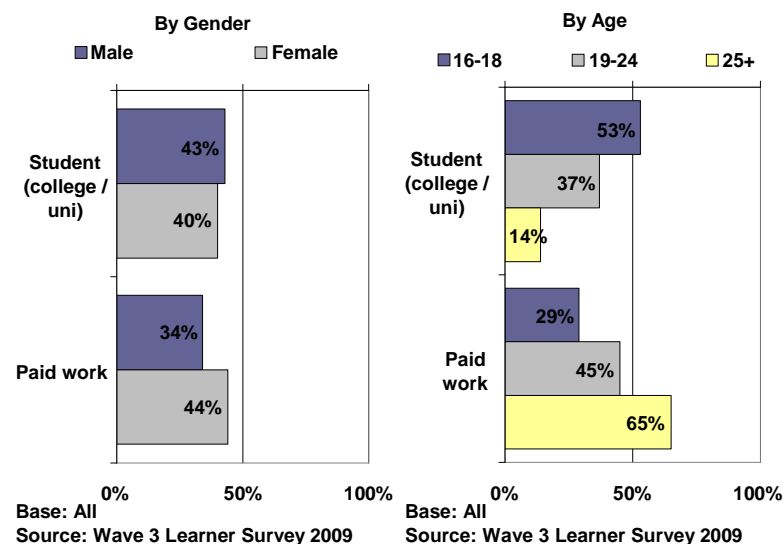
Findings by learner characteristic

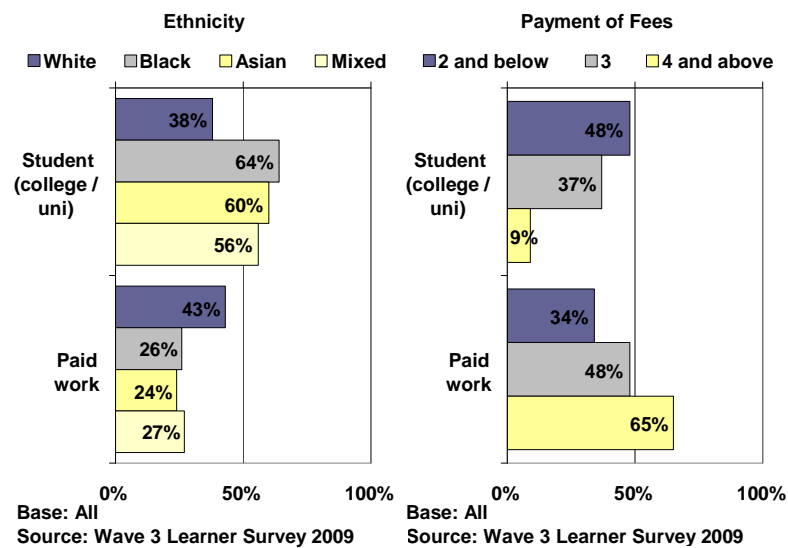
By learner characteristic the pathways to employment from Level 3 learning are stronger for females and learners aged over 19, White learners, those already educated to Level 3 and above and also those paying all fees (figure 4.3). Conversely, their counterparts are more likely than average to progress into college or university.

Additionally, a relatively small but significant proportion of males are now unemployed and looking for work (10 per cent), while 8 per cent of learners aged 25 and over are now unemployed and not studying or looking for work.

Figure 4.3: Main current activity by learner characteristic (% of total, single coded)

B1ab: I'd like you to tell me which of these activities is your main activity (the thing you spend the most of your time doing).



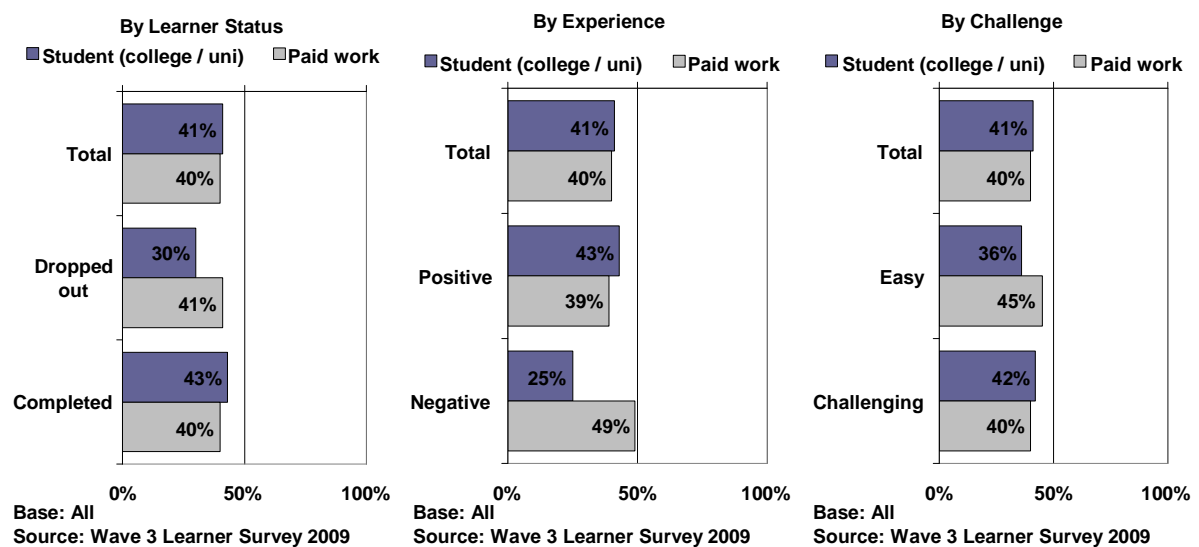


There are also differences in the current activity of Level 3 learners depending on their experience of the course and whether they completed or left early (see figure 5.2):

- An equal proportion of early leavers and completers have progressed into paid work or self-employment, but early leavers are more likely now to be unemployed and looking for work while completers are more likely to be students at college or university.
- There is also a correlation between progression and the impact and challenge of the training, as learners reporting the training was easy or that learning has had a negative impact are more likely to be in paid work or self-employment, while learners citing the training was challenging or that it has had a positive impact are now more likely to be students at college or university.

Figure 4.4: Main current activity by learner outcome (% of total, single coded)

B1ab: I'd like you to tell me which of these activities is your main activity (the thing you spend the most of your time doing).



Analysis by wave

Further analysis also shows that there is a strong likelihood that learners will move back into the same activity after two years (i.e. in work, at school or college or unemployed) as before beginning the Level 3 course, despite what their original goal may have been:

- Over half of learners previously at secondary school, a school sixth form or a college/training provider are now a student at school sixth form, college or university.
- Two-thirds of learners previously working for an employer are now in paid work or self-employment.
- One-fifth of learners previously unemployed and looking for work remain unemployed and looking for work now.

Place of further learning

The split of the group whose main activity is as a student at college or university is 75 per cent at university and 25 per cent at a further education college. However, by qualification aim the proportion at university increases to 81 per cent of GCE A/AS/A2 level and 93 per cent of Access to HE learners, whereas college is a greater draw for Award, Certificate or Diploma and BTEC students progressing into further learning (table 4.13).

Table 4.13: Place of further learning by qualification aim (% of total, single coded)

	Total*	GCE A/AS/A2 level	Access to HE	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC
At a university	75%	81%	93%	58%	71%
At a further education college	24%	19%	7%	42%	28%

Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of don't know/no answer.

* The total represents the views of all, but only the aims with a base number greater than 50 are shown individually

Base: All who are students at college or university

B17: Where are you doing this further learning?

Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

5 Progression in work or learning

5.1 Introduction

This section considers the impact of Level 3 for learners now in work, including sectoral and occupational trends and other employment impacts, and the impact of Level 3 for learners now in further study, also detailing the reasons for this.

5.2 Impact of Level 3 if in long-term work

Perceptions of the impact of Level 3

A quarter of learners now in work or waiting to start work say they could not have got or stayed in their job without the learning they did (25 per cent). Table 5.1 shows this is most true for NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeships learners (37 per cent) and work-based learners generally (44 per cent), whereas few GCE A/AS/A2 level learners say this (12 per cent).

Table 5.1: Could have got or stayed in current job without learning, by qualification aim (% of total, single coded)

	Total*	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	Other
Yes	74%	87%	61%	75%	70%	75%	73%
No	25%	12%	37%	25%	30%	24%	24%

Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of unsure/no answer. * The total represents the views of all, but only the aims with a base number greater than 50 are shown individually

Base : (if working as an employee or waiting to start a confirmed job as an employee, (not self-employed))

B13. Could you have got or stayed in this job without the learning you did in ...?

Source: Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

Nearly two-thirds of learners who are in work or waiting to start say that their course has improved their ability to do their job. By qualification aim the majority of NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship say this, but less than half of GCE A/AS/A2 level learners do.

Table 5.2: If better at doing their job, by qualification aim (% of total, single coded)

	Total*	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	Other
Yes	63%	47%	80%	71%	67%	58%	59%
No	34%	51%	18%	27%	31%	38%	40%

Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of unsure/no answer.

* The total represents the views of all, but only the aims with a base number greater than 50 are shown individually

Base : (All in paid work, self-employed waiting to start a job or self employed)

B9. As a result of the learning you did do you think you are/ will be better at doing your job?

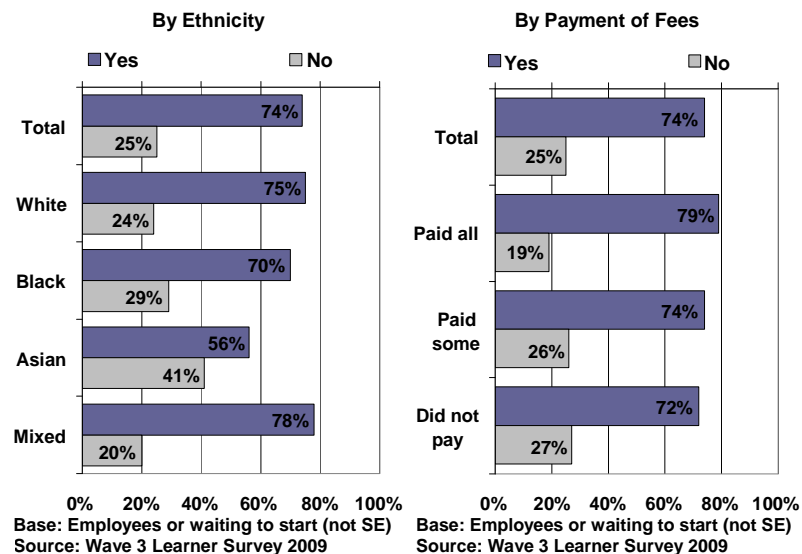
Source: Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

Findings by learner characteristic

Asian learners now in work are most likely to say they could not have got/stayed in their job without doing their learning (41 per cent) than other ethnic groups. Those who pay all of their fees are more likely to say this than part or non-fee payers.

Figure 5.1: Impact if in long term work, by learner characteristic (% of total, single coded)

B13. Could you have got or stayed in this job without the learning you did in ...?

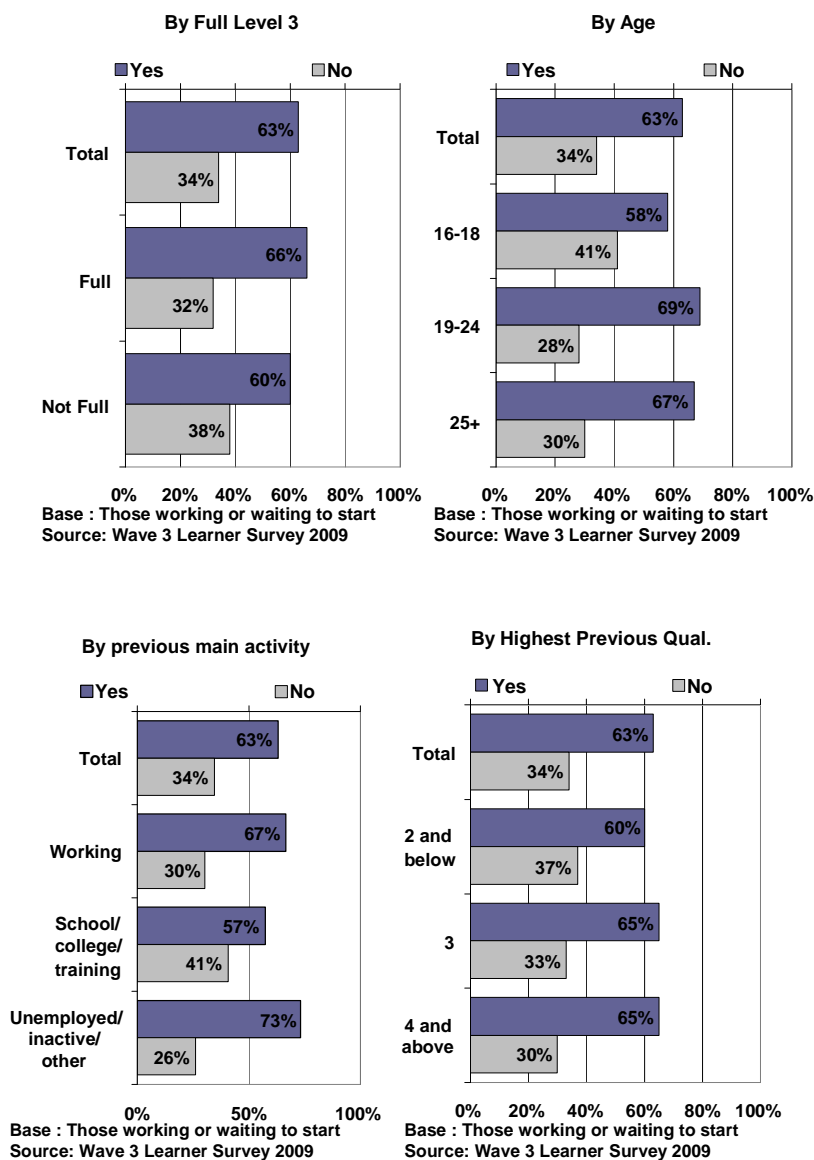


Full Level 3 learners are more likely than average to say doing their course has made them better able to do their current job, as are older learners (aged 19 and over) and those previously unemployed, inactive or working before beginning the course (as shown in figure 5.2).

Interestingly, those previously without a Level 3 or above qualification are least likely to say that the course has resulted in them being better at their job. However, when this analysis is restricted only to learners who were in work before beginning the course, the reverse is true. In other words, learners previously in work but without a Level 3 or above qualification are more likely to say that the course has resulted in them being better at their job than those previously in work but already with a Level 3 or above qualification.

Figure 5.2: If better at doing their job, by learner characteristic (% of total, single coded)

B9. As a result of the learning you did do you think you are/ will be better at doing your job?



Further age analysis

Two-thirds (63 per cent) of 16 to 18 year olds in work-based learning could not have got their job without their course. In contrast, only a third of older work-based learners say they could not have got/stayed in their job without their learning.

Other employment impacts

Nearly half (44 per cent) of employees now have a job with more responsibilities as a result of their learning, rising to half of NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship and Award, Certificate or Diploma learners, but falling to less than a third of GCE A/AS/A2 level. In general, work-based learners are more likely to have moved into a job with more responsibility (63 per cent) than FE learners.

Table 5.3: If doing a job with more responsibilities as a result of learning, by qualification aim (% of total, single coded)

	Total*	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	Other
Yes	44%	30%	50%	41%	53%	46%	44%
No	56%	70%	48%	55%	47%	53%	56%

Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of unsure/no answer.

* The total represents the views of all, but only the aims with a base number greater than 50 are shown individually

Base : All learners (if working as an employee or waiting to start a confirmed job as an employee)

B12. As a result of the learning you did, are you/ will you be doing a job with more responsibilities?

Source: Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

A fifth (18 per cent) of employees have also been promoted since completing their learning (see table 4.15). Of these, two-fifths (39 per cent) said it was a direct result of doing their course which means 8 per cent of all learners now in work were promoted as a direct result of their course.

NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship are most likely to be promoted (26 per cent) and most likely to say a promotion was a direct result of their course (70 per cent). This means that just under a fifth of all employees (18 per cent) who did an NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship get promoted as a result.

In total, a third of work-based learners were promoted as a result of their learning, and three quarters of these said it was a direct result of the course. This means a quarter of work-based learners have been promoted as a direct result of their learning.

Table 5.4: Promotion since learning, by qualification aim (% of total, single coded)

	Total*	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	Other
Promoted							
Yes	18%	15%	26%	16%	17%	14%	16%
No	81%	83%	74%	82%	82%	86%	81%
Promoted as a result of course							
Yes	39%	*	70%	*	*	*	*
No	58%	*	28%	*	*	*	*

Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of unsure/no answer.

* The total represents the views of all, but only the aims with a base number greater than 50 are shown individually

Base: (Currently working as an employee)

B11.a Have you been promoted since you completed your learning?

Base: (Currently working as an employee and promoted since completing their learning)

B11b. And was the promotion a direct result of your learning in ...?

Source: Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

Just under one-third of people in work or waiting to start are now earning more as a result of their learning, which rises to 40 per cent for NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship learners but is only 20 per cent for GCE A/AS/A2 level learners. In general, half of work-based learners are earning more as a result of their learning.

Table 5.5: Impact of learning, by qualification aim (% of total, single coded)

	Total*	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	Other
Earning more as a result							
Yes	31%	20%	40%	38%	34%	33%	22%
No	67%	79%	57%	60%	62%	65%	77%

Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of unsure/no answer.

* The total represents the views of all, but only the aims with a base number greater than 50 are shown individually

Base : All learners (if working as an employee or waiting to start a confirmed job as an employee, not self-employed)

B10. As a result of the learning you did are you/ will you be earning more?

Source: Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

Although many learners have more responsibility since beginning Level 3 learning, the picture of whether Level 3 learners go on to supervise employees is fairly static. Of those who did not previously have responsibility for supervision, 18 per cent now do. Most of those who previously had supervision responsibilities still have them (63 per cent), but a substantial proportion does not (37 per cent). This confirms a similar picture to completers at wave 2.

Learners who were in employment prior to or at the start of their course, and are in employment at wave 3, 57 per cent are working the same number of hours. Just under a third are working more hours (30 per cent), while around one-fifth are working less.

Two-thirds of learners who were in part time work at the start of their learning (or immediately before) have now moved into full time work. However, the majority of those who were working over 30 hours a week still do so, with less than one-in-ten doing fewer hours.

Comparing reported wages before and after learning confirms the above picture. The majority of people whose main activity prior to learning was work are earning within the

same income band (defined in £100s per month), while 31 per cent are in a higher earning band and 10 per cent are in a lower earning band.

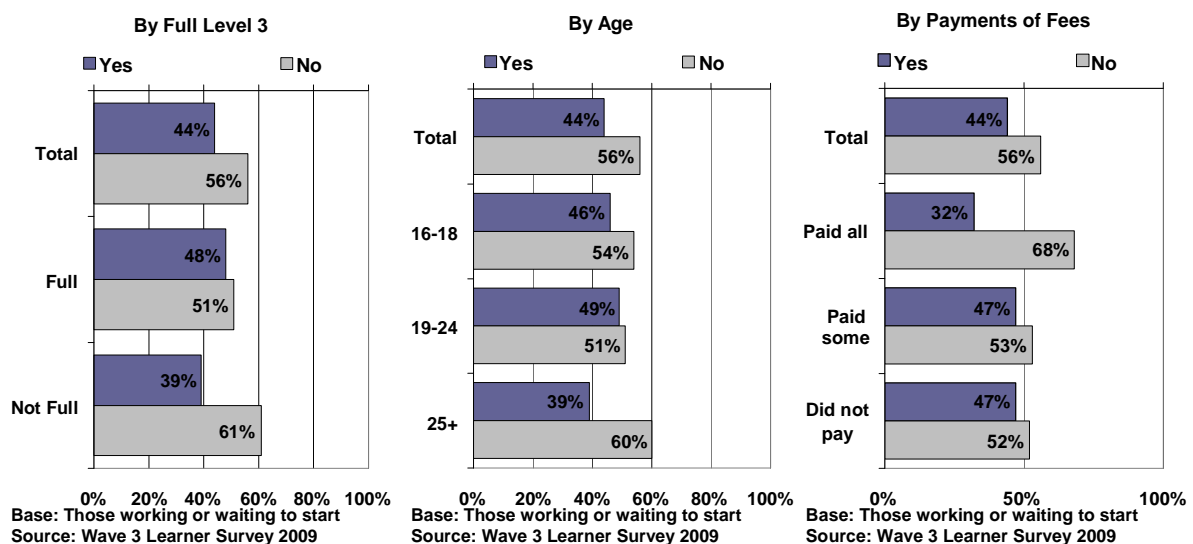
Prior to their Level 3 learning, 40 per cent of workers were earning £1000 or more a month, whereas this has now risen to 48 per cent. And for those who were earning £750 to £999 a month, 42 per cent are now earning more than £1,000 a month.

Findings by learner characteristic

Learners who took a full level 3 course are relatively more likely to say they have a job with more responsibility (48 per cent) than partial courses (39 per cent, figure 5.3). Older (25+) learners are less likely than average to say they have a job with more responsibilities as a result of their course or training (39 per cent), as are those who paid all of their fees (32 per cent).

Figure 5.3: If doing a job with more responsibilities as a result of learning, by learner characteristic (% of total, single coded)

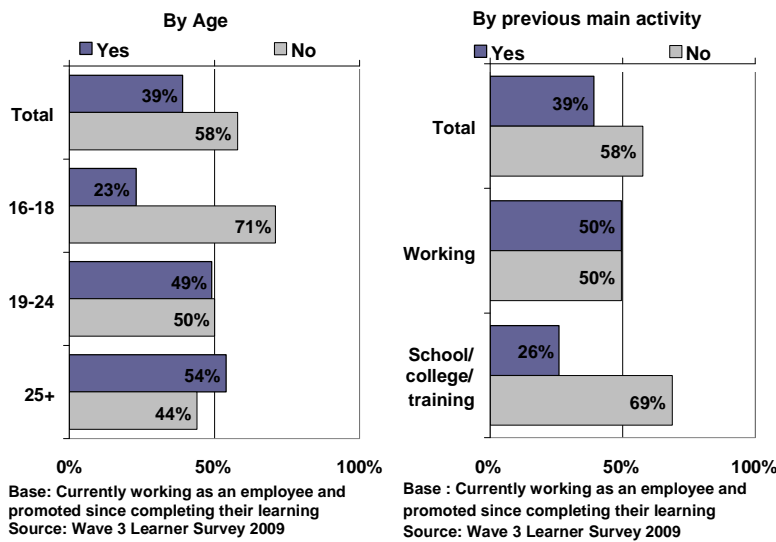
B12. As a result of the learning you did, are you/ will you be doing a job with more responsibilities?



By age, learners aged 25+ are the most likely to have been promoted since completing as a direct result of their learning (54 per cent). Additionally, learners working before beginning their Level 3 course are more likely to have been promoted as a direct result of their learning than learners previously in the education system.

Figure 5.4: Promotion since learning, by learner characteristic (% of total, single coded)

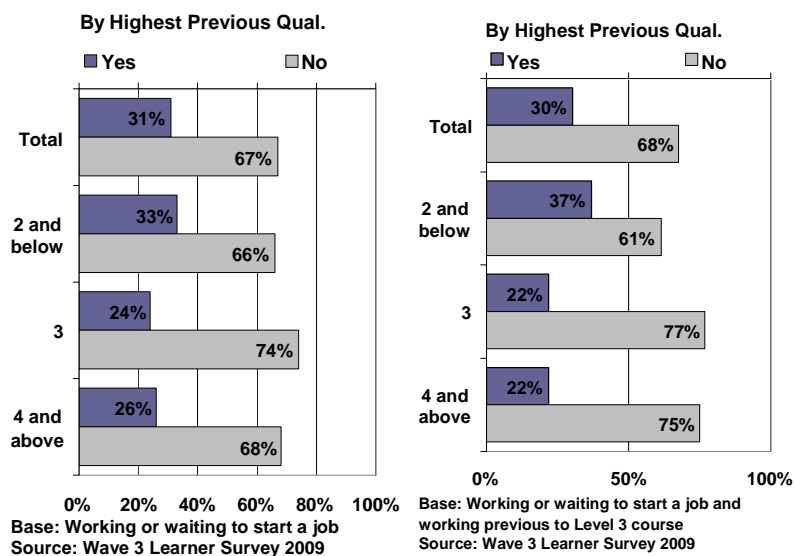
B11b. And was the promotion a direct result of your learning in ...?



Importantly, those who previously had at Level 2 or below qualification are the most likely to be earning more as a result of their training (33 per cent). This also rises to 37 per cent of this learner group who were in work previous to their Level 3 course.

Figure 5.5: Impact of learning, by learner characteristic (% of total, single coded)

B10. As a result of the learning you did are you/ will you be earning more?



Further age analysis

Older learners taking NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeships are more likely to be promoted as a result of their learning than younger learning on equivalent courses. In contrast, 16 to 18 year olds doing partial Level 3 courses are more likely to have been promoted than those doing full courses, whereas there is no difference for older learners.

Younger learners in work-based learning are much more likely to be earning more as result of their course than older work-based learners (72 per cent and 45 per cent respectively). They presumably start out at a low wage at a younger age then move up the pay scale more quickly.

Sectoral and occupational change

The following analysis considers the tangible benefits and impact of Level 3 learning in terms of sectors and occupations, although it is important to note that this study does not include a control group, and so reported impacts of Level 3 are based on learner perceptions. Reported impacts also cannot be directly attributed to the courses undertaken, only associated with the courses undertaken.

Allow for this, key findings from both wave 2 and 3 analysis suggests the following trends in sector and occupational employment:

- Retention in the same industry at the start and end of Level 3 learning is lowest in Hotels & Restaurants and Wholesale and Retail and highest in Education and Health & Social Work, which does reflect the relative retention rates in these sectors generally. Education and Health & Social Work also attract the greatest proportion of moving learners.
- There is generally more movement of Level 3 learners between occupations than between industries.
- The lowest rate of movement by occupation is from Skilled Trades, and the highest rate of movement is from Elementary into Sales & Customer Service and Personal Service occupations. Personal Service, alongside Professional and Associate Professional & Technical occupations attract the greatest proportion of moving learners generally.

5.3 Impact if in short-term work, unemployed or volunteering

Just over a third of those in casual or temporary work say that Level 3 learning will help them get the job they want and one-quarter of those doing casual or temporary work now are in a position related to their learning. Of the learners who are now volunteering, most said that it is not related to the course they did.

Table 5.6: Impact if in short term work, by qualification aim (% of total, single coded)

	Total*
Work related to learning?	
Yes	24%
No	76%
Will work help you?	
Yes	35%
No	61%

Table 5.6: Impact if in short term work, by qualification aim (% of total, single coded)

Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of don't know/no answer.

* The total represents the views of all, but only the aims with a base number greater than 50 are shown individually

Base: (If work is casual or temporary)

B20. Is this casual or temporary work related to the learning you did in ...?

B21. Will this casual or temporary work help you to get the sort of job you want to do?

Source: Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

Of those who are currently unemployed and looking for work, nearly two-thirds think the course or training they did has improved their chances of finding a job they would like to do (table 5.7). Generally learners think their volunteering will also help them find the kind of work they wanted to do, although this is not the case for all.

Table 5.7: Impact if unemployed, by qualification aim (% of total, single coded)

	Total*
Yes, learning with improve my chances of finding a job	63%
No, learning will not improve my chances of findings a job	34%
Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of don't know/no answer.	
* The total represents the views of all, but only the aims with a base number greater than 50 are shown individually	
Base : (if unemployed and looking for work)	
B24: Do you think the learning you did in has improved your chances of finding a job that you would like to do?	

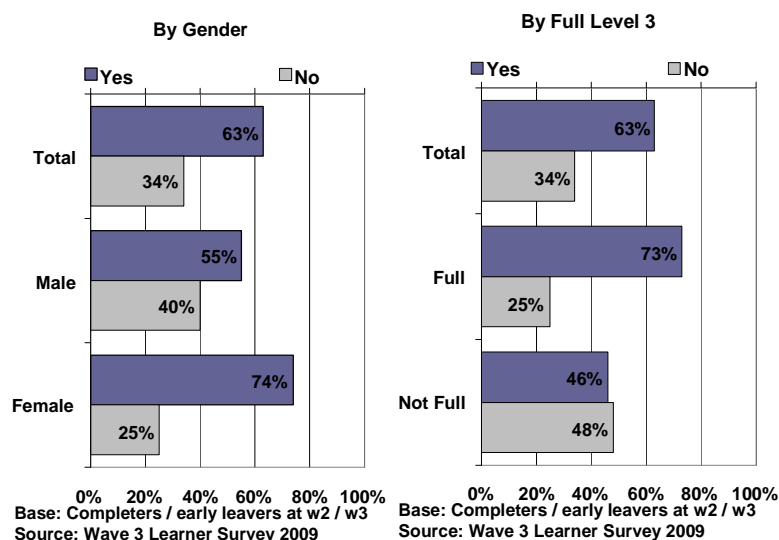
Source: Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

Findings by learner characteristic

Three-quarters (74 per cent) of female learners who are now unemployed and looking for work believe their course has made it more likely they will find a job they want, compared to half of unemployed men (55 per cent, as shown in figure 5.6). However, less than half (46 per cent) of those who did a partial Level 3 course think it will help them.

Figure 5.6: Learners' perceptions of the impact, by learner characteristic (% of total, single coded)

B24: Do you think the learning you did has improved your chances of finding a job that you would like to do?



Volunteers are quite polarised in age terms, either being aged under 19 or aged over 25. Few of the young people volunteering were doing something related to their prior learning, but some of the older learners, especially females, had gone on from their course into related volunteering.

5.4 Impact if in further study

Perceptions of the impact of further learning and training

Of those who have gone on to do a further training course or Apprenticeship, 36 per cent say they could not have done it without their Level 3 course (table 5.8). This proportion rises to two-thirds of all work-based learners.

The majority of learners now doing a course at a sixth form, college or university could not have done it without their previous course (59 per cent), noticeably higher than the number on training courses or apprenticeships. This is particularly true for Access to HE and BTEC

learners (84 and 70 per cent), whereas half of GCE A/AS/A2 level learners say they did not need to for their current course, which is notable when traditionally this qualification aim was the primary route to further learning in these institutions.

Table 5.8: Impact if in further study, by qualification aim (% of total, single coded)

	Total*	GCE A/AS/A2 level	Access to HE	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC
Training					
Yes	62%	*	*	*	*
No	36%	*	*	*	*
School sixth form, college or university					
Yes	40%	49%	15%	41%	29%
No	59%	50%	84%	55%	70%

Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of unsure/no answer.

* The total represents the views of all, but only the aims with a base number greater than 50 are shown individually

Base: (if on training course or waiting to start a training course)

B15. Would you have been able to do this training without the learning you did ...?

Base: (Student at school sixth form college or university, or waiting to start)

B18. Would you have been able do this further learning without having done the learning you did in ...?

Source: Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

Nearly all of those who have gone on to do another training course also say that it will help them get the type of job they want (91 per cent).

Table 5.9: Impact if in further study, by qualification aim (% of total, single coded)

	Total*
Yes, further training will help me to get the job I want	91%
No, further training will not help me to get the job I want	6%

Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of don't know/no answer.

* The total represents the views of all, but only the aims with a base number greater than 50 are shown individually

Base: (if on training course or waiting to start a training course)

B14c. Is this further training helping/ will this further training help you to get the sort of job you want?

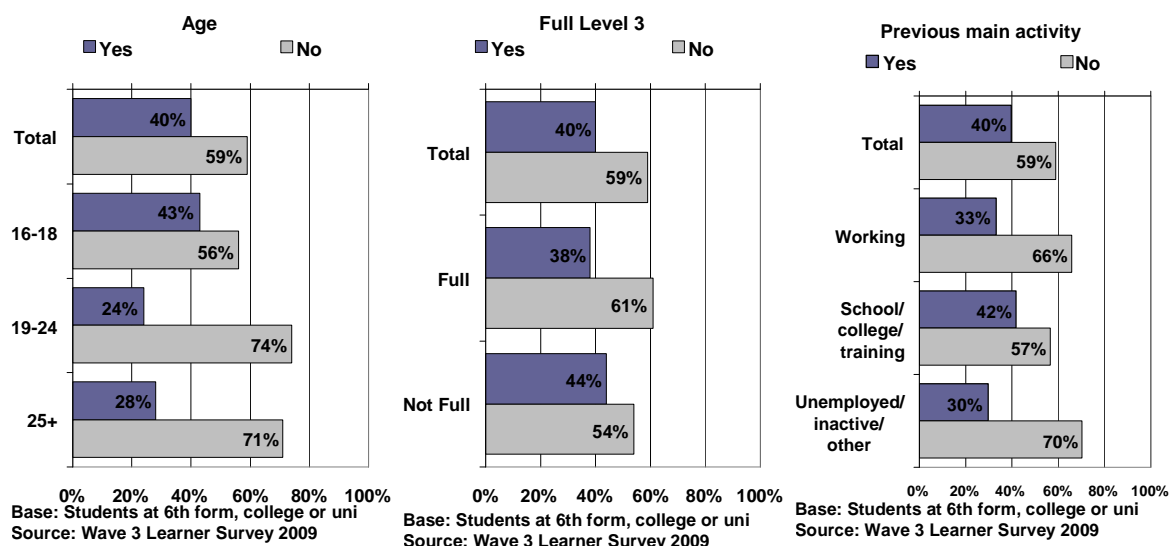
Source: Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

Findings by learner characteristic

Nearly three-quarters of learners aged 19+ say they could not have done their current course without their previous learning and three-fifths of Full Level 3 learners say they needed their previous course to progress to further learning. The Level 3 course has also supported progression routes into further learning more for learners previously working, unemployed or inactive than those previously in the education system.

Figure 5.7: Impact if in further study, by learner characteristic (% of total, single coded)

B18. Would you have been able do this further learning without having done the learning you did in ...?



Further age analysis

Half of 16 to 18 year olds leaving or completing GCE A/AS/A2 levels and now at a school sixth form or university say they could have done their course without their GCE A/AS/A2 levels, suggesting a misunderstanding of the relationship between their learning and their subsequent studies. In contrast, only 29 per cent of 16 to 18 year olds who took BTEC say the same.

General likelihood of further study

In each survey wave a relatively high proportion of Level 3 early leavers responded they are likely to sign up for further training generally in the future three years (77 per cent at wave 3). This would suggest that despite not experiencing the full achievement of completing a course, the experience has not significantly disengaged them, particularly for learners in FE (table 5.10).

Table 5.10: Likelihood of early leavers further learning or training by qualification aim (% of total, single coded)

	Total*	GCE A/AS/A2 level	BTEC	FE	WBL
Likely	77%	79%	73%	77%	68%
Unlikely	20%	16%	25%	20%	28%

Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of don't know/no answer.

* The total represents the views of all, but only the aims with a base number greater than 50 are shown individually

Base: All early leavers

D4: How likely or unlikely are you to sign up for further learning/training generally in the next 3 years?

Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

Around three-quarters of learners who completed their course also say they are likely to undertake further learning for a higher qualification in the next three years, compared to one-quarter who are unlikely (table 5.11).

Access to HE learners are the most likely to plan further learning, as for these aims the route is clear into Level 4 higher education, whereas over one-third of (Advanced) Award, Certificate or Diploma, City & Guilds and 'Other' students report they are unlikely.

Table 5.11: Likelihood of completers further learning or training by qualification aim (% of total, single coded)

	Total	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
Likely	72%	74%	75%	90%	63%	65%	77%	62%	62%
Unlikely	25%	24%	22%	9%	36%	33%	21%	35%	36%

Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of don't know/no answer.

Base: All completers

E5: How likely or unlikely are you to undertake further learning or training for a higher qualification than the one you have completed in the next 3 years?

Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

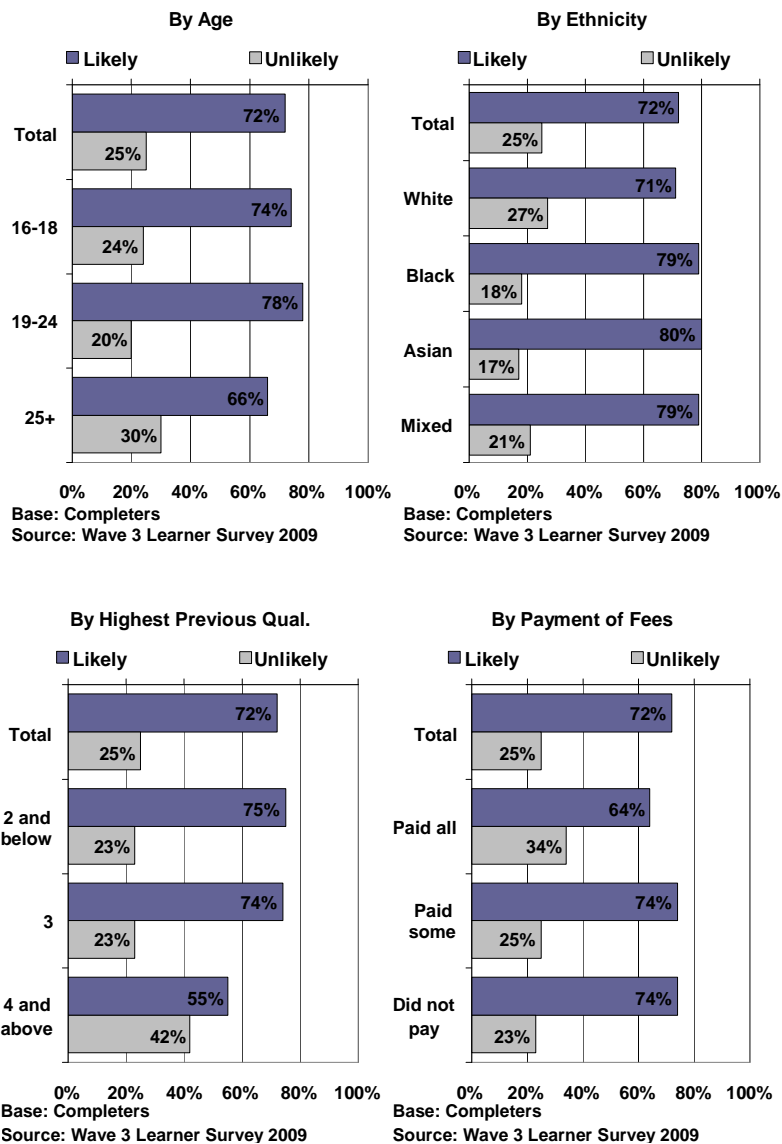
Findings by learner characteristic

Further analysis of the learner responses show that there is little difference in likelihood of further training for early leavers by age, but that females are more likely to undertake further learning or training than males (80 per cent compared to 73 per cent).

In contrast to early leavers, where gender is a key determinant of the likelihood of further learning or training, of completers' age and ethnicity are key determinants, with over 25s and White learners the least likely (figure 5.8). Completers already qualified to Level 4 or above and those paying all fees are also the least likely, which partly reflects the greater proportion of older learners in these groups.

Figure 5.8: Likelihood of completers doing further learning or training by learner characteristic (% of total, single coded)

E5: How likely or unlikely are you to undertake further learning or training for a higher qualification than the one you have completed in the next 3 years?



In addition, there is further correlation between the likelihood of completers undertaking further learning and their experiences of the course, with a greater proportion responding as likely where the impact of learning was positive and that the training was challenging compared to their counterparts.

Analysis by wave

Analysis according to the timing of early leaving – before wave 1; between wave 1 and wave 2; or between wave 2 and wave 3 – shows that the longer a learner remains in Level 3 learning before dropping out, the less likely they are to consider further learning, as shown in table 5.12.

Around a fifth of completers are unlikely to continue training, regardless of when they finish. However, those who finish at wave 1 (i.e. the course length is very short) seem slightly less likely to do further learning than later completers.

It is interesting to note that at wave 1 and 3 completers are less likely to consider further learning than early leavers.

Table 5.12: Likelihood of further learning or training by wave (% of total, single coded)

	Early leavers			Completers		
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
Likely	81%	78%	69%	70%	80%	75%
Unlikely	15%	20%	25%	22%	19%	23%

Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of don't know/no answer.

Base: All early leavers (at each wave)

Wave 1 F4b; Wave 2 D8; Wave 3 D4: How likely or unlikely are you to sign up for further learning/ training generally in the next 3 years?

Base All completers (at each wave)

Wave 1 G6; Wave 2 E8; Wave 3 E5: How likely or unlikely are you to undertake further learning or training for a higher qualification than the one you have completed, in the next three years?

Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

Type of further study

Of Level 3 learners who have progressed into a training course or Apprenticeship, only 45 per cent state that this training will lead to a Level 4 or higher qualification (i.e. a degree, foundation degree, diploma in higher education, NVQ Level 4, Higher National Diploma or Certificate (HND/HNC)).

In contrast, of Level 3 learners who have progressed into further learning at a school sixth form, college or university (see section 5.1 for details), the majority (90 per cent) state that this learning will lead to a Level 4 or higher qualification. This rises to 100 per cent of Access to HE Level 3 learners.

Table 5.13: Further learning for higher level qualifications by qualification aim (% of total, single coded)

	Total*	GCE A/AS/A2 level	Access to HE	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC
Yes	90%	89%	100%	94%	89%
No	8%	10%	-	6%	7%
Unsure	2%	1%	-	-	4%

Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of don't know/no answer.

* The total represents the views of all, but only the aims with a base number greater than 50 are shown individually

Base: All who are students at school, sixth form college or university or waiting to start a confirmed college or university course

B16: Is this further learning leading to any of the following qualifications: a degree, foundation degree, postgraduate qualification, diploma in higher education, NVQ4, HND/HNC?

Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

In total, 30 per cent of learners at wave 3 are either now doing, or waiting to start, further learning at a university.

Of the other learners (i.e. those not currently at, or intending to attend, university), 70 per cent had previously considered going to university (table 5.14). This proportion rises to 76 per cent of BTEC and 83 per cent of GCE A/AS/A2 level learners (and all of Access to HE learners, although the sample size for this group is relatively small).

In general, university is more likely to be considered by Level 3 learners in FE than work-based learners.

Table 5.14: Consideration of university by qualification aim (% of total, single coded)

	Total*	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE, Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
Yes	70%	83%	51%	57%	61%	76%	62%	68%
No	30%	17%	49%	43%	39%	24%	38%	32%

Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of don't know/no answer.

* The total represents the views of all, but only the aims with a base number greater than 50 are shown individually

Base: All learners apart from those currently at or waiting to start university

F7: Have you ever considered going to university?

Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

The primary source of information for learners about future learning is their tutor (53 per cent), followed by college or training provider careers advisor (28 per cent) and friends or family (23 per cent). However, 13 per cent of students progressing into further learning at a school sixth form, college or university did not talk to anyone and looked into it themselves.

The relative importance of sources of information does vary by qualification aim, as shown in table 5.15:

- BTEC learners are the most likely to speak to their tutor or provider careers advisors.
- GCE A/AS/A2 level learners are also reliant on their tutor or provider careers advisors, but are additionally more likely to speak to friends and family than other learners.
- Access to HE and Award, Certificate or Diploma learners are the most likely to explore their options on their own.

Table 5.15: Source of information about further learning by qualification aim (% of total, multi coded)

	Total*	GCE A/AS/A2 level	Access to HE	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC
Tutor	53%	52%	34%	55%	57%
Careers advisor at college/training provider	28%	31%	26%	19%	29%
Friends or family	23%	28%	20%	11%	19%
Nobody/looked into it myself	13%	11%	21%	23%	13%
Other careers service staff	4%	3%	6%	4%	6%
Employer, manager, supervisor, Human Resources	1%	<0.5%	2%	-	1%

Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of don't know/no answer.

* The total represents the views of all, but only the aims with a base number greater than 50 are shown individually

Base: All who are students at school, sixth form college or university

B19: Who talked to you about further learning?

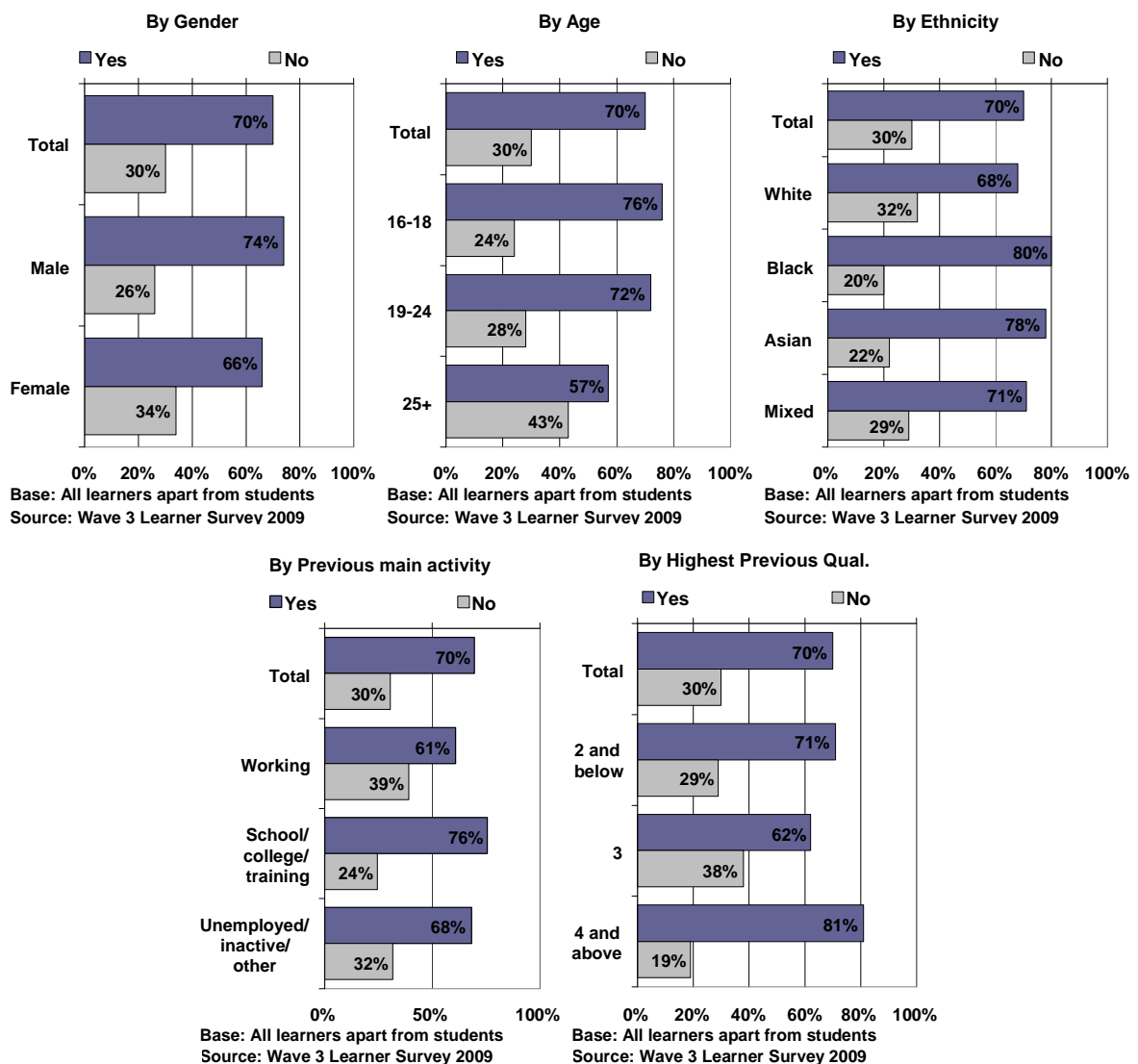
Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

Findings by learner characteristic

Additional analysis by learner characteristic shows the consideration of university is more likely amongst males, the under 25 age group and Black and Asian learners, compared to their counterparts. University is also a consideration for learners previously in the education system and learners educated to Level 2 or below – a group of learners looking to move progressively through the qualification levels – and those previously educated to Level 4 or above – a group of learners potentially using Level 3 to access unrelated university level qualifications.

Figure 5.9: Consideration of university by learner characteristic (% of total, single coded)

F7: Have you ever considered going to university?

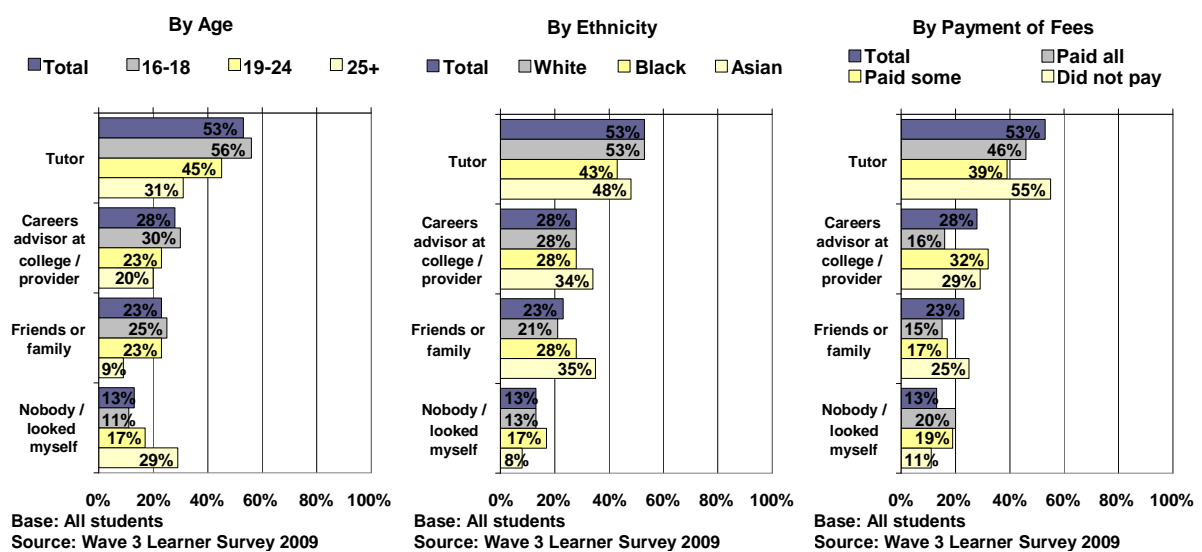


There are additional differences in the source of information about further learning by learner characteristic, although this is partly reflected in the findings by qualification aim. For example, conversations with tutors, careers advisors or friends and family are more likely for younger learners and those not paying all of their fees (figure 5.10). In contrast, looking into it themselves is reported more frequently by learners aged 25+, and those paying part or all of their fees.

Advice from family and friends is noticeably more common for Asian learners (35 per cent) than others (23 per cent), while White learners are less likely to receive advice in this way (21 per cent).

Figure 5.10: Source of information about further learning by learner characteristic (% of total, multi coded)

B19: Who talked to you about further learning?



Reasons for further study

An open question (i.e. no options were provided) to early leavers asked for the reasons why they are unlikely to do further learning. The responses were that they had *had enough of learning* (23 per cent of respondents), they would *need to pay course fees* (15 per cent), they would *prefer to concentrate on working* (15 per cent) and they *prefer to spend time doing other things* (12 per cent).

Of Level 3 learners who have progressed into a training course or Apprenticeship, the primary reason was *to help me get a job* (40 per cent), followed by *to get a higher level qualification* (27 per cent), *for my own personal interest* (17 per cent) and *to get on at work, promoted, or a pay rise* (16 per cent). Job related reasons are also more prominent for Level 3 learners in work-based learning than FE.

Table 5.16: Reasons for further training by type of provision (% of total, multi coded)

	Total*	FE	WBL
To help me get a job	40%	39%	53%
To get a higher level qualification	27%	27%	27%
For my own personal interest	17%	17%	13%
To get on at work/get promoted/pay rise	16%	16%	18%
To help me get a different job	6%	6%	1%
Suggested/required by my employer	6%	5%	10%

Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of don't know/no answer.

* The total represents the views of all, but only the aims with a base number greater than 50 are shown individually

Base: All who are on a training course, on an apprenticeship or waiting to start a confirmed training scheme

B14a: what are your reasons for doing this further training?

Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

Of Level 3 learners progressing into university (or had generally considered it) the reasons are primarily because *it will help me get a well paid job* (30 per cent), *it is necessary or a requirement for my chosen career* (23 per cent), *to gain a qualification or degree* (23 per cent) or *it will give me more career choices* (18 per cent).

University as a necessity for a career and for more career choices is particularly strong for Access to HE learners, and routes into a well paid job for GCE A/AS/A2 level, (Advanced) Award, Certificate or Diploma and BTEC learners.

Table 5.17: Reasons for considering university by qualification aim (% of total, multi coded)

	Total*	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	Other
It will help me get a well paid job	30%	33%	22%	23%	34%	30%	30%	28%
It is necessary/a requirement for my chosen career	23%	23%	26%	40%	22%	24%	22%	15%
To gain a qualification /degree	23%	22%	30%	18%	18%	18%	25%	24%
It will give me more career choices	18%	17%	17%	25%	22%	18%	18%	12%
To improve learning/skills	14%	14%	8%	8%	16%	20%	14%	17%
It is something I've always wanted to do/assumed I would do	11%	13%	9%	13%	7%	5%	10%	15%
It will give me greater job security in the future	7%	8%	2%	9%	6%	8%	6%	7%
For the social/university life	6%	9%	3%	2%	6%	4%	5%	4%
It is important to have qualification in a recession	5%	5%	4%	5%	4%	6%	5%	5%
Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of don't know/no answer.								
* The total represents the views of all, but only the aims with a base number greater than 50 are shown individually								
Base: All learners who are at or waiting to start university or have considered going to university								
F8a: Why did you consider going to university?								

Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

Of those who had not considered going to university, this is primarily because learners are *not interested or it is not right for me* (33 per cent) and *costs too much or do not have the money* (21 per cent)

Table 5.18: Reasons for not considering university by qualification aim (% of total, multi coded)

	Total*	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC
Not interested in going to university/not right for me	33%	33%	34%	33%	37%
Cost too much/don't have the money	21%	23%	17%	17%	27%
Don't want to do any more studying	11%	17%	10%	14%	12%
Because of my age	8%	5%	12%	12%	1%
Don't think I'm clever enough	7%	7%	8%	5%	3%
Don't want to move away from home/family/friends	5%	4%	4%	5%	6%
Family commitments	5%	4%	10%	6%	2%
I want to get a job	5%	9%	6%	3%	5%
Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of don't know/no answer.					
* The total represents the views of all, but only the aims with a base number greater than 50 are shown individually					
Base: All who are students at school, sixth form college or university					
B19: Who talked to you about further learning?					

Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

In light of the current economic climate, all learners in wave 3 were asked whether the recession has changed their likelihood of doing further training, and one-quarter (27 per cent) say the recession has made further training more likely, with the greatest response by qualification aim being from BTEC learners. However, the majority (65 per cent) of respondents state that it has made no difference (table 5.19).

Table 5.19: Impact of recession on further study by qualification aim (% of total, single coded)

	Total	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
More likely	27%	27%	27%	27%	26%	23%	32%	23%	27%
Less likely	7%	6%	6%	6%	10%	6%	7%	11%	7%
No difference	65%	67%	66%	65%	63%	70%	61%	62%	64%

Column % may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of don't know/no answer.

Base: All learners

F6: Has the recession made you more or less likely to do further training/qualifications, or has it made no difference at all?

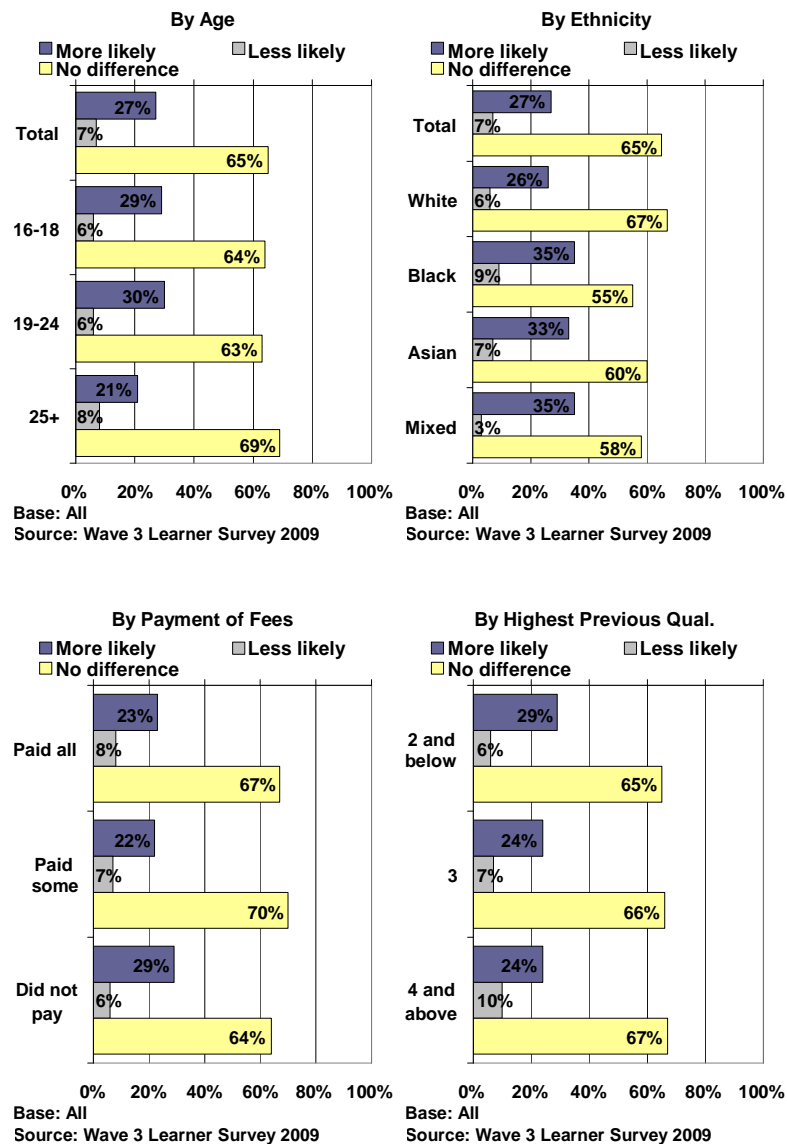
Source: Wave 3 Level 3 Learner Survey 2009

Findings by learner characteristic

It is learners aged under 25, non-White, previously educated to Level 2 or below and not paying fees who are most likely to be considering further training as a result of the recession, and there is also a significantly greater proportion than the average of learners whose main activity now is unemployment (and looking for work) who are likely to do further training, as shown in figure 5.11.

Figure 5.11: Impact of recession on further study by learner characteristic (% of total, single coded)

F6: Has the recession made you more or less likely to do further training/qualifications, or has it made no difference at all?



6 Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

The concluding chapter of this, the final report of the Level 3 evaluation, links and summarises the findings from each of the three waves of the Level 3 evaluation into a set of core conclusions for all Level 3 provision (section 6.2). Sections 6.3 to 6.10 then follow with related analysis for each of the qualification aims undertaken at Level 3.

Readers are also encouraged to refer to the wave 1 and wave 2 reports for further detail and analysis, and reference to the source wave of the findings is provided throughout.

6.2 All Level 3

Learner profile and previous activities

- **Routes into Level 3:** Prior to enrolling, over half of all learners come to Level 3 study from secondary school, a school sixth form or a college/training provider. A further one-quarter come from employment (wave 1).
- Choices around qualifications are clearly associated with life stage (age, experience of employment, family life and so on), nevertheless, there are variations amongst the choices made by different ethnic minority groups within the 16 to 18 cohort (wave 1).
- **Sources of information, advice and guidance:** The main sources of information learner's use when deciding whether to study and what course to take are their tutors/advisors, friends and relatives and schools based staff and careers guidance. This is particularly true of the young, while older learners are also likely to say employers and independent research, for example, the internet (wave 1).
- An emerging issue around information, advice and guidance is the appropriateness of different forms to the specific needs of older (25+) learners, further removed from the traditional sources such as schools and colleges, particularly as older learners are more likely to report feeling unprepared for the learning they need to do in life today (wave 1).
- **Mix of work and learning:** A substantial share (two-fifths at wave 2) of Level 3 learners are balancing some form of employment as well as studying, although overall, it is females, aged over 19, White, currently educated to Level 3 or above and without a disability who have a higher likelihood of working while learning (wave 1 and 2).

Learner attitudes and experiences

- **Information about qualification:** Overall, students generally feel well-informed about the format and content of courses and what is expected of them, but there are a relatively low proportion of learners who feel informed about how the course or training will help them to gain skills to use in a job (wave 1 and wave 2).
- **Financial considerations:** Financial considerations do not figure prominently in early learner decision making.
 - Around half of learners in receipt of financial learner support at the start of the course said *it would make no difference to my choice at all*, and a further 35 per cent said *I'd still have applied for the same course but would have had to earn more money as well* (wave 1). However, further into learning nearly two-thirds (62 per cent) of Level 3 learners who get financial support say they would have found it more difficult to continue their course if they had not, suggesting that it may become a more critical factor in progression further into the course. This support may also have become a safety net for learners in the current economic slowdown (wave 2).
 - The impact of fee payments is more theoretical than actual (as almost three-quarters of learners do not pay fees, either because the LSC or employer is funding it or the learner is exempt), although 1 in 3 of those making some contribution to the cost of their course felt it influenced the amount of effort they put into it (rising to 45 per cent of City & Guilds learners), but fewer felt it influenced either the timing or their choice of course (wave 1). Furthermore, at wave 3 over half (53 per cent) of learners making some contribution to the cost of their course said they would still have gone ahead if they had to pay more (a further 18 per cent said it would have depended on how much more they had to pay and 27 per cent said they would not).
 - While there appears to be a willingness to pay, or pay more towards Level 3 course fees, further analysis of the underlying evidence suggests that those most likely to indicate a willingness to pay in fact may not have the ability to do so. Of the 16-24 year olds who were in employment prior to starting the Level 3 learning and expressed a willingness to pay, nearly all were earning between £6,000 and £15,000 gross per annum before their course started. This is likely to be due to part-time employment alongside earlier studies. So whereas there may be a greater *willingness* to pay or contribute more, the *ability* to do so may not be realistic. The finding that the over 25 age groups are less willing to contribute – even

those on higher earnings - may reflect greater financial responsibilities and a greater understanding of the financial commitment compared to younger learners. It should be noted that the sample size of the data at pay band level is limited and these results therefore not fully robust; it does however provide indications worth further investigation.

- **Incidence of early leaving:** Qualification aim emerges early on as likely determinants of a learner's progression, as does age by association.
 - Over the three waves early leavers are over-represented by GCE A/AS/A2 level and BTEC qualification aims.
 - Compared to the average, older learners are most at risk of dropping out of their course within a few months of starting (wave 1) or after more than one year into the course (wave 3) whereas the youngest learners (aged 16 to 18) are most at risk of dropping out of their course within one year (wave 2). Linked to age, the longest duration of study before leaving is of learners paying all their fees, suggesting a greater commitment to the course than other learner groups.
 - Over the three waves early leavers are also generally over-represented by males and learners on partial Level 3 qualifications.
- **Reasons for early leaving:** The evidence suggests that early leavers across all waves are particularly likely to report that they *found the course was not what I wanted to do after all*. Further analysis also reveals that *workload made it difficult to make time for studying/training* was a greater concern for wave 1 early leavers compared to wave 2 and 3, while wave 2 and wave 3 early leavers are more likely to have dropped out on finding that *the course was too difficult*.
- **Incidence of completion:** Qualification aim is a key determinant of duration before completion, as the greatest proportion of completers within a few months of starting undertook qualifications not considered full (City & Guild and 'Other'), which generally take less time to complete than full qualifications. Access to HE learners are the most likely to have completed at wave 2 (most Access to HE courses can be completed in a year or less), whereas of learners in learning after one year, over 80 per cent had completed at wave 3.
- Wave 3 completers are also relatively young, generally 16 to 18 (and by association learners previously educated to Level 2 or below and not paying fees), whereas learners aged 19 and over are more likely to finish in the first year (up to wave 2).
- **Views of training:** Eighty six per cent of completers by one year agree that the money paid towards it was money well spent and that doing this training or qualification was the right choice (a similar proportion of those in learning at one year but completed by two years also agree with both statements). However, further age analysis suggests that young learners moving from Level 2 to Level 3 are more likely to feel that they made the wrong choice compared to adult learners

moving from Level 2 to Level 3, which suggests greater consideration is given to available options by those more distant from the education system.

- **Overall challenge:** Part of the value attached to Level 3 learning is that two-thirds of learners feel their course is challenging, compared to just a fifth who find it easy (wave 2 and 3). However, young learners on GCE A/AS/A2 levels seem least able to cope with the difference between Level 2 and Level 3 learning from the case study research, and this may help to explain the lower retention rate on these courses (wave 2).
- **Satisfaction with learning:** Learners are generally highly positive about their course (a satisfaction rate of 90 per cent at wave 2 and 88 per cent at wave 3), although there is a strong correlation between satisfaction levels and progression, and between satisfaction levels and how well informed the learner felt at the start of the course.
- Where learners do express dissatisfaction the most common causes are *poor quality teaching* (34 per cent), *disappointing/not what I expected/wanted* (27 per cent), *the course is badly organised/run* (23 per cent) and *tutors were unsupportive* (20 per cent) (wave 2).

Impact of Level 3

- **Expected gains:** Early hopes for the course or training are quite diverse, although the *chance to learn something new*, the opportunity to *develop skills that will look good to future employers* and *skills to help me to do a better job in the future* are cited by the greatest proportion of learners (89 per cent, 85 per cent and 85 per cent respectively) (wave 1).
- **Aspirations on completion:** Learners are most likely to have enrolled on their course or training with the longer term view of progressing *on to higher education*, reported by 27 per cent of all learners. This was followed by *getting a job* (14 per cent). However, of concern is that 32 per cent said they *did not know* what they wanted to do afterwards, suggesting a lack of understanding about where the course/training will take them, particularly for GCE A/AS/A2 level learners (wave 1).
- University is most likely to be considered by Level 3 learners previously educated to Level 2 or below – a group of learners looking to move progressively through the qualification levels – and those previously educated to Level 4 or above – a group of learners potentially using Level 3 to access unrelated university level qualifications.
- **Perceived gains:**

- There is a (net) agreement⁹ by all Level 3 learners that the course or training has made them *confident in my ability to learn* (77 per cent), *get a good job* (68 per cent) and become *more positive about learning* (66 per cent), and a (net) disagreement with the statement if completed that they did *not get everything I wanted* (55 per cent) (wave 2). 71 per cent (net) of Level 3 learners also believe they are now more attractive to employers (wave 3).
- Completers are generally more likely to say they feel more positive about learning than early leavers, but this distinction becomes most prominent further into the course (i.e. at later waves). The impact of completing learning on confidence and attractiveness to employers also only becomes apparent over time (wave 1, 2 and 3).
- Learners also believe that doing their course has given them *the chance to learn something new* (94 per cent), *skills that will look good to future employers* (87 per cent), *skills to get a better job in the future* (84 per cent), *a qualification* (83 per cent), *improved self confidence* (82 per cent) or *skills to help me do a different job in the future* (81 per cent) (wave 3).
- Notably, the main benefit cited by learners who had completed their Level 3 course is *a qualification* (93 per cent). All gains are then responded to equally between the two groups; although completers are less likely to cite *improved self-confidence* (76 per cent) (wave 2).
- Comparisons between wave 1 and wave 2 also suggest that courses with a shorter duration are less likely to be undertaken with *a qualification* as the outcome, and more likely to lead to *improved self-confidence*.
- Reported skill gains as a direct result of Level 3 are most frequent for *team working, oral communication, written communication, team working, problem solving, technical/practical or job-related skills, literacy* and *general IT user skills*, all cited by between half and three-quarters of learners (wave 3).
- **Likelihood of further learning:** Encouragingly, over three-quarters (77 per cent) of Level 3 early leavers within one year will consider signing up for further learning or training in the future (wave 2). This is comparable to the proportion of completers at the same point who say they are likely to undertake further learning in the next three years (78 per cent) (wave 2). University is the most popular site for this further learning (wave 3).
- However, the longer a learner takes to leave or complete the course, the less likely they are to say they will return to learning (wave 1 to wave 3).
- **Activity after learning:** An equal proportion of Level 3 learners who are not still in learning are either a student at college or university or in paid work or self-employment (wave 3).

⁹ The net value is the percentage reporting they agree minus the percentage reporting they disagree. If there is a balance of opinion the net percentage will be zero; if the majority of respondents respond positively the net percentage will be greater than zero; if the majority of respondents respond negatively the net percentage will be less than zero.

- However, this masks progression depending on the learning outcome, as early leavers are more likely to be in paid work or unemployment now compared to completers, who are instead more likely to be a student at college or university (wave 3).
 - Progression into employment or further learning/training from Level 3 provision also varies significantly by qualification aim (GCE A/AS/A2 level and Access to HE are most likely to move into college or university and NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeships and City & Guilds into paid work or employment), learner characteristics (gender, age and ethnicity) and experience of the course.
 - Further analysis also shows that there is a strong likelihood that learners will move back into the same activity after two years (i.e. in work, at school or college or unemployed) as before beginning the Level 3 course, despite what their original goal may have been (wave 3).
 - Although just over half (56 per cent) of learners say the recession has not affected how they view their learning and 65 per cent say the recession has made no difference to the likelihood of further training, 37 per cent say the recession has made Level 3 learning more valuable, primarily because it will *help me to find work in the future*, and 27 per cent say that further training is more likely (wave 3).
 - **Progression in work or learning:**
 - Level 3 learning seems to have greater value to those now in further study or training than it does for those now in work – the learning undertaken supported almost two-fifths of learners into new studies and 35 per cent of students into training, but only one-quarter of employees (of more than six months) or casual or temporary workers into their job.
 - However, nearly two-thirds of those now unemployed believe that Level 3 learning has improved their chances of finding a job they would like to do. Furthermore, those previously unemployed, inactive or working before beginning the course are more likely to say their course has made them better able to do their current job than those previously in the education system (wave 3).
 - Not all further learning after Level 3 is at a higher level – if progressing into further learning at a school sixth form, college or university the majority state this will lead to a Level 4 or higher qualification, but if progressing into a training course or Apprenticeship this is the case for only 45 per cent of learners (wave 3).
 - **Sectoral and occupational change:** Key findings from wave 2 and 3 analysis suggest the following trends in sector and occupational employment:
-

- Retention in the same industry at the start and end of Level 3 learning is lowest in Hotels & Restaurants and Wholesale and Retail and highest in Education and Health & Social Work, which does reflect the relative retention rates in these sectors generally. Education and Health & Social Work also attract the greatest proportion of moving learners.
- There is generally more movement of Level 3 learners between occupations than between industries.
- The lowest rate of movement by occupation is from Skilled Trades, and the highest rate of movement is from Elementary into Sales & Customer Service and Personal Service occupations. Personal Service, alongside Professional and Associate Professional & Technical occupations attract the greatest proportion of moving learners generally.
- **Other employment impacts:**
 - As a result of Level 3 learning, around two-fifths of employees are doing a job with more responsibility or have been promoted and around one-third report they are earning more (wave 3).
 - However, of those in work preceding Level 3, supervisory responsibilities, hours worked and income bands have not changed significantly (wave 3).

6.3 GCE A/AS/A2 level

Learner profile and previous activities

- **Details of aim** (ILR): 59 per cent of GCE A/AS/A2 level learners are in courses classed as full.
- **Learner characteristics** (ILR): GCE A/AS/A2 level attract the highest proportion of 16 to 18 year olds, learners currently educated to Level 2 or below and learners not making any financial contribution to their fees by qualification aim.
- **Routes into Level 3** (wave 1): 79 per cent of learners were previously in the education system (secondary school, a school sixth form or a college/training provider), which is the highest proportion by qualification aim. Case study evidence informs this trend by suggesting that, for school leavers, GCE A/AS/A2 levels are often considered the only option for post-16 study as it is the next step in their goal of university and there are established and strong links with previous GCSE study (wave 2).
- **Sources of information, advice and guidance** (wave 1): the top three sources are *college advisor/tutor* (15 per cent), *friends/relatives* (15 per cent) and *school careers guidance staff* (12 per cent, the highest proportion by qualification aim). Case study evidence further suggests that parental influence plays an important role in the decision-making process, particularly if either parent is university educated, and that there is little proactive searching of further information (wave 2).

- **Mix of work and learning** (wave 2): alongside Level 3 learning, 52 per cent of GCE A/AS/A2 level learners are also working (for an employer or self-employed), the lowest proportion by qualification aim.

Learner attitudes and experiences

- **Information about qualification** (wave 1): a considerably below average 53 per cent of GCE/A/AS/A2 level students feel informed about the relevance of their qualification for developing the skills valued by employers (the lowest proportion by qualification aim).
- **Fees and their influence** (wave 1): payment towards fees (some or all) influenced 31 per cent of learners on the amount of effort put into the course/training, 12 per cent on timing of course, and 11 per cent on choice of course/training. All proportions are below average.
- **Incidence of early leaving** (wave 2 and 3): GCE/A/AS/A2 level learners have the highest rate of not continuing/dropping out by qualification aim (14 per cent of starters decided not to continue/dropped out by one year, and 16 per cent of those in learning after one year dropped out by two years).
- **Incidence of completion** (wave 2 and 3): 52 per cent of starters had completed by one year, and 83 per cent of those in learning after one year had completed by two years.
- **Views of training** (wave 2 and 3): 83 per cent of completers by one year agree that doing this training or qualification was the right choice (a similar proportion of those in learning at one year but completed by two years also agree) and 82 per cent agree that the money paid towards it was money well spent (the lowest proportion by qualification aim), rising to 90 per cent of completers by two years.
- **Overall challenge** (wave 2 and 3): at wave 2 an above average 72 per cent of learners felt their course is challenging (70 per cent at wave 3), compared to 16 per cent who found it easy (at wave 2 and wave 3).
- **Satisfaction with learning** (wave 2 and 3): learners are generally highly positive about their course (a satisfaction rate of 90 per cent at wave 2 and 85 per cent at wave 3, although this is the lowest proportion by qualification aim). Of those who are dissatisfied, GCE/A/AS/A2 level learners are most likely to cite *poor quality teaching* (36 per cent).

Impact of Level 3

- **Expected gains from Level 3** (wave 1): the top three expected gains are *the chance to learn something new*, the opportunity to develop skills *that will look good to future*
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employers and skills to help me to do a better job in the future (89 per cent, 85 per cent and 83 per cent respectively).

- **Aspirations on completion** (wave 1): the top three aspirations are *go to university/HE* (41 per cent), *don't know* (41 per cent, the highest proportion by qualification aim), and *get a job* (7 per cent, the lowest proportion by qualification aim).
- **Consideration of university** (wave 3): if not already progressing to university, 83 per cent of GCE A/AS/A2 level learners had considered going to university (the highest proportion by qualification aim).
- **Effect of training** (wave 2 and 3): there is a (net) agreement¹⁰ that the course or training has made them *confident in my ability to learn* (73 per cent), *get a good job* (63 per cent) and become *more positive about learning* (62 per cent), and a (net) disagreement with the statement if completed that they did *not get everything I wanted* (54 per cent). 68 per cent (net) of Level 3 learners also believe they are now more attractive to employers.
- **Skills gains** (wave 3): the top three skills to be gained from Level 3 are *written communication* (78 per cent), *oral communication* (75 per cent) and *team working* (73 per cent).
- **Other gains from completion** (wave 2): the top three gains are *a qualification* (94 per cent), *the chance to learn something new* (93 per cent), and *skills that will look good to future employers* (88 per cent).
- **Likelihood of further learning after completion** (wave 2): 80 per cent of learners say they are likely to undertake further learning in the next three years, compared to 18 per cent who are unlikely.
- **Activity after learning** (wave 3): 60 per cent of GCE A/AS/A2 level learners out of learning (through completion or dropping out) are now students at college or university, 24 per cent are in long-term paid work or self-employment and 5 per cent are unemployed.
- **Employment impacts** (wave 3): As a result of Level 3 learning, 30 per cent of employees are doing a job with more responsibility and 20 per cent report they are earning more (both proportions are the lowest by qualification aim). Since completing, 15 per cent have also been promoted.

6.4 NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship

Learner profile and previous activities

- **Details of aim** (ILR): 88 per cent of NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship learners are in courses classed as full.

¹⁰ The net value is the percentage reporting they agree minus the percentage reporting they disagree. If there is a balance of opinion the net percentage will be zero; if the majority of respondents respond positively the net percentage will be greater than zero; if the majority of respondents respond negatively the net percentage will be less than zero.

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- **Learner characteristics** (ILR): NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeships are taken up by a greater proportion of females, older learners (aged 25+), learners of White ethnic origin (the highest proportion by qualification aim) and those already currently holding Level 3 or above qualifications, compared to the average.
 - **Routes into Level 3** (wave 1): 60 per cent of learners were previously working for an employer or self-employed (the second highest proportion by qualification aim, behind City & Guilds). Case study evidence informs this trends by suggesting that few have come straight from school, as progression to Advanced Apprenticeships is often from when an Apprenticeship (at Level 2) with an employer has been completed (wave 2).
 - **Sources of information, advice and guidance** (wave 1): the top three sources are *employer* (21 per cent, the highest proportion by qualification aim), *college advisor/tutor* (18 per cent), and *friends/relatives* (12 per cent).
 - **Mix of work and learning** (wave 2): alongside Level 3 learning, 85 per cent of NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship learners are also working (for an employer or self-employed), the highest proportion by qualification aim.

Learner attitudes and experiences

- **Information about qualification** (wave 1): by qualification aim, the highest proportion of learners feeling informed about how the course/training would help them to gain skills to use in a job is NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship (79 per cent).
 - **Fees and their influence** (wave 1): payment towards fees (some or all) influenced 33 per cent of learners on the amount of effort put into the course/training, 19 per cent on timing of course, and 18 per cent on choice of course/training.
 - **Incidence of early leaving** (wave 2 and 3): 6 per cent of starters decided not to continue/dropped out by one year, and 8 per cent of those in learning after one year dropped out by two years.
 - **Incidence of completion** (wave 2 and 3): 52 per cent of starters had completed by one year, and 83 per cent of those in learning after one year had completed by two years.
 - **Views of training** (wave 2 and 3): 91 per cent of completers by one year agree that doing this training or qualification was the right choice (a similar proportion of those in learning at one year but completed by two years also agree) and 87 per cent agree that the money paid towards it was money well spent, rising to 95 per cent at wave 3 (the highest proportion by qualification aim).
 - **Overall challenge** (wave 2 and 3): at wave 2 64 per cent of learners feel their course is challenging (58 per cent at wave 3), compared to 23 per cent who find it easy (29 per cent at wave 3, the highest proportion by qualification aim).
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- **Satisfaction with learning** (wave 2 and 3): learners are generally highly positive about their course (a satisfaction rate of 91 per cent at wave 2 and 93 per cent at wave 3).

Impact of Level 3

- **Expected gains from Level 3** (wave 1): the top three expected gains are *skills to help me to do a better job in the future*, *the chance to learn something new* and the opportunity to develop skills *that will look good to future employers* (90 per cent, 89 per cent and 89 per cent respectively). By qualification aim, NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship is also the highest proportion of learners reporting *the chance to learn something new* and skills *that will look good to future employers*.
- **Aspirations on completion** (wave 1): the top three aspirations are *don't know* (24 per cent), *stay with the same employer* (21 per cent, the highest proportion by qualification aim), and *get a job* (20 per cent).
- **Consideration of university** (wave 3): if not already progressing to university, 51 per cent of NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship learners had considered going to university (the lowest proportion by qualification aim).
- **Effect of training** (wave 2): there is a (net) agreement¹¹ that the course or training has made them *confident in my ability to learn* (78 per cent), *get a good job* (77 per cent, the highest proportion by qualification aim) and become *more positive about learning* (71 per cent), and a (net) disagreement with the statement if completed that they did *not get everything I wanted* (65 per cent, the highest proportion by qualification aim). 87 per cent (net) of Level 3 learners also believe they are now more attractive to employers (the highest proportion by qualification aim).
- **Skills gains** (wave 3): the top three skills to be gained from Level 3 are *team working* (76 per cent), *problem solving* (73 per cent) and *oral communication* (70 per cent).
- **Other gains from completion** (wave 2): the top three gains are *a qualification* (97 per cent, the highest proportion by qualification aim), *skills that will look good to future employers* (92 per cent), and *skills to help me to get a better job in the future* (89 per cent).
- **Likelihood of further learning after completion** (wave 2): 72 per cent of learners say they are likely to undertake further learning in the next three years, compared to 25 per cent who are unlikely (the highest proportion by qualification aim).
- **Activity after learning** (wave 3): 8 per cent of NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship learners out of learning (through completion or dropping out) are now students at college or university, 75 per cent are in long-term paid work or self-employment (the highest proportion by qualification aim) and 4 per cent are unemployed.

¹¹ The net value is the percentage reporting they agree minus the percentage reporting they disagree. If there is a balance of opinion the net percentage will be zero; if the majority of respondents respond positively the net percentage will be greater than zero; if the majority of respondents respond negatively the net percentage will be less than zero.

- **Employment impacts** (wave 3): As a result of Level 3 learning, 50 per cent of employees are doing a job with more responsibility and 40 per cent report they are earning more (the highest proportion by qualification aim). Since completing, 26 per cent have also been promoted (the highest proportion by qualification aim).

6.5 Access to HE

Learner profile and previous activities

- **Details of aim** (ILR): 96 per cent of Access to HE learners are in courses classed as full, the highest proportion by qualification aim.
- **Learner characteristics** (ILR): Access to HE courses have the highest proportion by qualification aim of learners aged 19+, females, and learners of Black ethnic origin. They are also more likely than average to be paying some or all of their fees.
- **Routes into Level 3** (wave 1): an above average 58 per cent of learners were previously working for an employer or self-employed. Additionally, an above average 25 per cent of learners were previously unemployed or inactive.
- **Sources of information, advice and guidance** (wave 1): the top three sources are *college advisor/tutor* (23 per cent, the highest proportion by qualification aim), *friends/relatives* (16 per cent), and *none/nothing* (11 per cent).

Learner attitudes and experiences

- **Information about qualification** (wave 1): by qualification aim, one of the lowest proportions of learners feeling informed about the standard of work expected of them is Access to HE (76 per cent).
- **Fees and their influence** (wave 1): payment towards fees (some or all) influenced 30 per cent of learners on the amount of effort put into the course/training, 16 per cent on timing of course, and 10 per cent on choice of course/training. All proportions are below average.
- **Incidence of early leaving** (wave 2 and 3): 8 per cent of starters decided not to continue/dropped out by one year, and 9 per cent of those in learning after one year dropped out by two years.
- **Incidence of completion** (wave 2 and 3): 80 per cent of starters had completed by one year (the highest proportion by qualification aim), and 88 per cent of those in learning after one year had completed by two years.
- **Views of training** (wave 2 and 3): 92 per cent of completers by one year agree that doing this training or qualification was the right choice (a similar proportion of those in learning at one year but completed by two years also agree) and 97 per cent agree that the money paid towards it was money well spent. Both proportions are the highest by qualification aim.
- **Overall challenge** (wave 2 and 3): at wave 2, 77 per cent of learners feel their course is challenging (73 per cent at wave 3; both proportions are the highest by qualification aim), compared to 17 per cent who find it easy (20 per cent at wave 3).
- **Satisfaction with learning** (wave 2 and 3): learners are generally highly positive about their course (a satisfaction rate of 92 per cent at wave 2 and 95 per cent at wave 3, the highest proportion by qualification aim).

Impact of Level 3

- **Expected gains from Level 3** (wave 1): the top three expected gains are *the chance to learn something new*, *improved self-confidence* and *skills to help me to do a different job in the future* (89 per cent, 83 per cent and 81 per cent respectively). By qualification aim, Access to HE is also the highest proportion of learners to report *improved self-confidence*.
- **Aspirations on completion** (wave 1): the top three aspirations are *go to university/HE* (66 per cent, the highest proportion by qualification aim), *don't know* (13 per cent), and *get a job* (9 per cent).
- **Effect of training** (wave 2): there is a (net) agreement¹² that the course or training has made them *confident in my ability to learn* (90 per cent, the highest proportion by qualification aim), *get a good job* (65 per cent) and become *more positive about learning* (78 per cent, the highest proportion by qualification aim), and a (net) disagreement with the statement if completed that they did *not get everything I wanted* (63 per cent). 76 per cent (net) of Level 3 learners also believe they are now more attractive to employers.
- **Skills gains** (wave 3): the top three skills to be gained from Level 3 are *written communication* (91 per cent), *oral communication* (83 per cent) and *literacy* (83 per cent). By qualification aim, Access to HE learners generally also respond most strongly to these skills gains.
- **Other gains from completion** (wave 2): the top three gains are *the chance to learn something new* (98 per cent, the highest proportion by qualification aim), *a qualification* (95 per cent), and *improved self-confidence* (90 per cent, the highest proportion by qualification aim).
- **Likelihood of further learning after completion** (wave 2): 95 per cent of learners say they are likely to undertake further learning in the next three years (the highest proportion by qualification aim), compared to 4 per cent who are unlikely.
- **Activity after learning** (wave 3): 76 per cent of Access to HE learners out of learning (through completion or dropping out) are now students at college or university (the highest proportion by qualification aim), 12 per cent are in long-term paid work or self-employment (the lowest proportion by qualification aim) and 5 per cent are unemployed.

¹² The net value is the percentage reporting they agree minus the percentage reporting they disagree. If there is a balance of opinion the net percentage will be zero; if the majority of respondents respond positively the net percentage will be greater than zero; if the majority of respondents respond negatively the net percentage will be less than zero.

6.6 Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma

Learner profile and previous activities

- **Details of aim** (ILR): 34 per cent of Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma learners are in courses classed as full.
- **Learner characteristics** (ILR): Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma attract more older learners (aged 25+) than the average, females, and learners already currently holding Level 3 or above qualifications.
- **Routes into Level 3** (wave 1): a below average 46 per cent of learners were previously in the education system (secondary school, a school sixth form or a college/training provider) and an above average 40 per cent were previously working for an employer or self-employed (wave 1).
- **Sources of information, advice and guidance** (wave 1): the top three sources are *college advisor/tutor* (19 per cent), *none/nothing* (14 per cent, the highest proportion by qualification aim), and *friends /relatives* (13 per cent).
- **Mix of work and learning** (wave 2): alongside Level 3 learning, 65 per cent of Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma learners are also working (for an employer or self-employed).

Learner attitudes and experiences

- **Information about qualification** (wave 1): by qualification aim, one of the highest proportions of learners feeling informed about how the course/training would help them to gain skills to use in a job is Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma (75 per cent).
- **Fees and their influence** (wave 1): payment towards fees (some or all) influenced 39 per cent of learners on the amount of effort put into the course/training and 21 per cent on timing of course (both proportions are above average). 24 per cent are influenced on choice of course/training, which is the highest proportion by qualification aim.
- **Incidence of early leaving** (wave 2 and 3): Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma learners have the lowest rate of not continuing/dropping out by qualification aim (4 per cent of starters decided not to continue/dropped out by one year, and 7 per cent of those in learning after one year dropped out by two years).
- **Incidence of completion** (wave 2 and 3): 49 per cent of starters had completed by one year, and 90 per cent of those in learning after one year had completed by two years (the highest proportion by qualification aim).
- **Views of training** (wave 2 and 3): 86 per cent of completers by one year agree that doing this training or qualification was the right choice (a similar proportion of those in learning at one year but completed by two years also agree).

- **Overall challenge** (wave 2 and 3): at wave 2, 69 per cent of learners feel their course is challenging (66 per cent at wave 3), compared to 22 per cent who find it easy (25 per cent at wave 3).
- **Satisfaction with learning** (wave 2 and 3): learners are generally highly positive about their course (a satisfaction rate of 91 per cent at wave 2 and 87 per cent at wave 3).

Impact of Level 3

- **Expected gains from Level 3** (wave 1): the top three expected gains are *the chance to learn something new*, the opportunity to develop skills *that will look good to future employers* and *skills to help me to do a better job in the future* (88 per cent, 88 per cent and 87 per cent respectively).
- **Aspirations on completion** (wave 1): the top three aspirations are *don't know* (29 per cent), *go to university/HE* (17 per cent), and *get a job* (14 per cent).
- **Consideration of university** (wave 3): if not already progressing to university, 57 per cent of Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma learners had considered going to university.
- **Effect of training** (wave 2): there is a (net) agreement¹³ that the course or training has made them *confident in my ability to learn* (73 per cent), *get a good job* (74 per cent) and become *more positive about learning* (63 per cent), and a (net) disagreement with the statement if completed that they did *not get everything I wanted* (60 per cent). 78 per cent (net) of Level 3 learners also believe they are now more attractive to employers.
- **Skills gains** (wave 3): the top three skills to be gained from Level 3 are *team working* (75 per cent), *problem solving* (68 per cent) and *oral communication* (65 per cent).
- **Other gains from completion** (wave 2): the top three gains are *the chance to learn something new* (93 per cent), *a qualification* (91 per cent), and *skills that will look good to future employers* (88 per cent).
- **Likelihood of further learning after completion** (wave 2): 75 per cent of learners say they are likely to undertake further learning in the next three years, compared to 25 per cent who are unlikely.
- **Activity after learning** (wave 3): 24 per cent of Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma learners out of learning (through completion or dropping out) are now

¹³ The net value is the percentage reporting they agree minus the percentage reporting they disagree. If there is a balance of opinion the net percentage will be zero; if the majority of respondents respond positively the net percentage will be greater than zero; if the majority of respondents respond negatively the net percentage will be less than zero.

students at college or university, 55 per cent are in long-term paid work or self-employment and 7 per cent are unemployed.

- **Employment impacts** (wave 3): As a result of Level 3 learning, 41 per cent of employees are doing a job with more responsibility and 38 per cent report they are earning more. Since completing, 16 per cent have also been promoted.

6.7 Award, Certificate or Diploma

Learner profile and previous activities

- **Details of aim** (ILR): 35 per cent of Award, Certificate or Diploma learners are in courses classed as full.
- **Learner characteristics** (ILR): Award, Certificate or Diploma attract more older learners (aged 25+) than the average, females, and learners already currently holding Level 3 or above qualifications.
- **Routes into Level 3** (wave 1): a below average 41 per cent of learners were previously in the education system (secondary school, a school sixth form or a college/training provider) and an above average 40 per cent were previously working for an employer or self-employed.
- **Sources of information, advice and guidance** (wave 1): the top three sources are *college advisor/tutor* (16 per cent), *none/nothing* (13 per cent), and *friends /relatives* (13 per cent).
- **Mix of work and learning** (wave 2): alongside Level 3 learning, 56 per cent of Award, Certificate or Diploma learners are also working (for an employer or self-employed).

Learner attitudes and experiences

- **Information about qualification** (wave 1): by qualification aim, one of the highest proportions of learners feeling informed about how the course/training would help them to gain skills to use in a job is Award, Certificate or Diploma (78 per cent).
- **Fees and their influence** (wave 1): payment towards fees (some or all) influenced 40 per cent of learners on the amount of effort put into the course/training, 22 per cent on timing of course, and 20 per cent on choice of course/training. All proportions are above average.
- **Incidence of early leaving** (wave 2 and 3): Award, Certificate or Diploma learners have one of the highest rates of not continuing/dropping out by qualification aim (12 per cent of starters decided not to continue/dropped out by one year, and 15 per cent of those in learning after one year dropped out by two years).
- **Incidence of completion** (wave 2 and 3): 48 per cent of starters had completed by one year, and 83 per cent of those in learning after one year had completed by two years.

- **Views of training** (wave 2): 82 per cent of completers by one year agree that doing this training or qualification was the right choice (the lowest proportion by qualification aim) and 84 per cent agree that the money paid towards it was money well spent (a similar proportion of those in learning at one year but completed by two years also agree).
- **Overall challenge** (wave 2 and 3): at wave 2, 65 per cent of learners feel their course is challenging (60 per cent at wave 3), compared to 24 per cent who find it easy (wave 2 and wave 3).
- **Satisfaction with learning** (wave 2 and 3): learners are generally highly positive about their course (a satisfaction rate of 88 per cent at wave 2 and 89 per cent at wave 3).

Impact of Level 3

- **Expected gains from Level 3** (wave 1): the top three expected gains are *the chance to learn something new*, *skills to help me to do a better job in the future*, and the opportunity to develop skills *that will look good to future employers* (92 per cent, 88 per cent and 87 per cent respectively). By qualification aim, Award, Certificate or Diploma is also the highest proportion of learners to report *the chance to learn something new*.
- **Aspirations on completion** (wave 1): the top three aspirations are *don't know* (29 per cent), *go to university/HE* (13 per cent), and *get a job* 19 per cent).
- **Consideration of university** (wave 3): if not already progressing to university, 61 per cent of Award, Certificate or Diploma learners had considered going to university.
- **Effect of training** (wave 2): there is a (net) agreement¹⁴ that the course or training has made them *confident in my ability to learn* (79 per cent), *get a good job* (71 per cent) and become *more positive about learning* (69 per cent), and a (net) disagreement with the statement if completed that they did *not get everything I wanted* (52 per cent). 73 per cent (net) of Level 3 learners also believe they are now more attractive to employers.
- **Skills gains** (wave 3): the top three skills to be gained from Level 3 are *team working* (76 per cent), *oral communication* (76 per cent) and *problem solving* (73 per cent).

¹⁴ The net value is the percentage reporting they agree minus the percentage reporting they disagree. If there is a balance of opinion the net percentage will be zero; if the majority of respondents respond positively the net percentage will be greater than zero; if the majority of respondents respond negatively the net percentage will be less than zero.

- **Other gains from completion** (wave 2): the top three gains are a *qualification* (92 per cent), *the chance to learn something new* (89 per cent), and *skills that will look good to future employers* (86 per cent).
- **Likelihood of further learning after completion** (wave 2): 75 per cent of learners say they are likely to undertake further learning in the next three years, compared to 23 per cent who are unlikely.
- **Activity after learning** (wave 3): 25 per cent of Award, Certificate or Diploma learners out of learning (through completion or dropping out) are now students at college or university, 58 per cent are in long-term paid work or self-employment and 4 per cent are unemployed.
- **Employment impacts** (wave 3): As a result of Level 3 learning, 53 per cent of employees are doing a job with more responsibility (the highest proportion by qualification aim) and 34 per cent report they are earning more. Since completing, 17 per cent have also been promoted.

6.8 BTEC

Learner profile and previous activities

- **Details of aim** (ILR): 80 per cent of BTEC learners are in courses classed as full.
- **Learner characteristics** (ILR): Work-based BTEC courses are primarily delivered to 16 to 18 year olds, and to an above-average proportion of males with qualifications currently at Level 2 or below.
- **Routes into Level 3** (wave 1): 74 per cent of learners were previously in the education system (secondary school, a school sixth form or a college/training provider), which is the second highest proportion by qualification aim, behind GCE A/AS/A2 level.
- Case study evidence suggests that when BTECs are chosen over GCE A/AS/A2 level, this is because there is less emphasis on exams and more focus on coursework, and because they are viewed by learners and career advisors as an alternative option for the less academically able (wave 2).
- **Sources of information, advice and guidance** (wave 1): the top three sources are *college advisor/tutor* (17 per cent), *friends /relatives* (16 per cent), and *none/nothing* (8 per cent).
- **Mix of work and learning** (wave 2): alongside Level 3 learning, 60 per cent of BTEC learners are also working (for an employer or self-employed).

Learner attitudes and experiences

- **Information about qualification** (wave 1): by qualification aim, BTEC is one of the highest proportions of learners feeling informed about how the course/training would help them to gain skills to use in a job (77 per cent).

- **Fees and their influence** (wave 1): payment towards fees (some or all) influenced 32 per cent of learners on the amount of effort put into the course/training, 20 per cent on timing of course, and 14 per cent on choice of course/training.
- **Incidence of early leaving** (wave 2 and 3): BTEC learners have one of the highest rates of not continuing/dropping out by qualification aim (12 per cent of starters decided not to continue/dropped out by one year, and 13 per cent of those in learning after one year dropped out by two years).
- **Incidence of completion** (wave 2 and 3): 15 per cent of starters had completed by one year (the lowest proportion by qualification aim), and 85 per cent of those in learning after one year had completed by two years.
- **Views of training** (wave 2 and 3): 85 per cent of completers by one year agree that doing this training or qualification was the right choice (a similar proportion of those in learning at one year but completed by two years also agree). 83 per cent of those in learning at one year but completed by two years also agree that the money paid towards it was money well spent. (the lowest proportion by qualification aim).
- **Overall challenge** (wave 2 and 3): at wave 2, 64 per cent of learners feel their course is challenging (62 per cent at wave 3), compared to 22 per cent who find it easy (26 per cent at wave 3).
- **Satisfaction with learning** (wave 2 and 3): learners are generally highly positive about their course (a satisfaction rate of 91 per cent at wave 2 and 88 per cent at wave 3). Of those who are dissatisfied, BTEC learners are most likely to cite *disappointing/not what I expected/wanted* (38 per cent).

Impact of Level 3

- **Expected gains from Level 3** (wave 1): the top three expected gains are *the chance to learn something new*, *skills to help me to do a better job in the future* and the opportunity to develop skills *that will look good to future employers* (90 per cent, 90 per cent and 87 per cent respectively). By qualification aim, BTEC is also the highest proportion of learners to report *skills to help me to do a better job in the future*.
 - **Aspirations on completion** (wave 1): the top three aspirations are *don't know* (34 per cent), *go to university/HE* (28 per cent), and *get a job* (19 per cent).
 - **Consideration of university** (wave 3): if not already progressing to university, 76 per cent of BTEC learners had considered going to university.
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- **Effect of training** (wave 2): there is a (net) agreement¹⁵ that the course or training has made them *confident in my ability to learn* (81 per cent), *get a good job* (75 per cent) and become *more positive about learning* (70 per cent), and a (net) disagreement with the statement if completed that they did *not get everything I wanted* (33 per cent, the lowest proportion by qualification aim). 72 per cent (net) of Level 3 learners also believe they are now more attractive to employers.
- **Skills gains** (wave 3): the top three skills to be gained from Level 3 are *team working* (89 per cent), *problem solving* (81 per cent) and *oral communication* (80 per cent). By qualification aim BTEC learners generally also respond most strongly to these skills gains.
- **Other gains from completion** (wave 2): the top three gains are *the chance to learn something new* (97 per cent), *a qualification* (94 per cent), and *skills that will look good to future employers* (94 per cent, the highest proportion by qualification aim).
- **Likelihood of further learning after completion** (wave 2): 74 per cent of learners say they are likely to undertake further learning in the next three years, compared to 21 per cent who are unlikely.
- **Activity after learning** (wave 3): 45 per cent of BTEC learners out of learning (through completion or dropping out) are now students at college or university, 34 per cent are in long-term paid work or self-employment and 9 per cent are unemployed.
- **Employment impacts** (wave 3): As a result of Level 3 learning, 46 per cent of employees are doing a job with more responsibility and 33 per cent report they are earning more. Since completing, 14 per cent have also been promoted (the lowest proportion by qualification aim).

6.9 City & Guilds

Learner profile and previous activities

- **Details of aim** (ILR): 12 per cent of City & Guilds learners are in courses classed as full, the lowest proportion by qualification aim.
- **Learner characteristics** (ILR): City & Guilds have the highest representation of male learners, those aged 25+ and learners already educated to Level 3 or above, by qualification aim.
- **Routes into Level 3** (wave 1): 66 per cent of learners were previously working for an employer or self-employed, the highest proportion by qualification aim.
- **Sources of information, advice and guidance** (wave 1): the top three sources are *college advisor/tutor* (14 per cent), *friends/relatives* (11 per cent), and *employer* (11

¹⁵ The net value is the percentage reporting they agree minus the percentage reporting they disagree. If there is a balance of opinion the net percentage will be zero; if the majority of respondents respond positively the net percentage will be greater than zero; if the majority of respondents respond negatively the net percentage will be less than zero.

per cent, the second highest proportion by qualification aim, behind NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship).

Learner attitudes and experiences

- **Information about qualification** (wave 1): by qualification aim, the lowest proportion of learners feeling informed about the content of the source and the subjects covered and the amount of work expected in their own time are City & Guilds (72 per cent and 59 per cent respectively).
- **Fees and their influence** (wave 1): payment towards fees (some or all) influenced 45 per cent of learners on the amount of effort put into the course/training and 24 per cent on timing of course (both proportions are the highest by qualification aim). 16 per cent were influenced on choice of course/training.
- **Incidence of early leaving** (wave 2 and 3): 7 per cent of starters decided not to continue/dropped out by one year, and 12 per cent of those in learning after one year dropped out by two years.
- **Incidence of completion** (wave 2 and 3): 70 per cent of starters had completed by one year (one of the highest proportions by qualification aim), and 81 per cent of those in learning after one year had completed by two years.
- **Views of training** (wave 2 and 3): 86 per cent of completers by one year agree that doing this training or qualification was the right choice, falling to 78 per cent of those in learning at one year but completed by two years (the lowest proportion by qualification aim).
- **Overall challenge** (wave 2 and 3): at wave 2, 69 per cent of learners feel their course is challenging (73 per cent at wave 3, the highest proportion by qualification aim), compared to 22 per cent who find it easy (20 per cent at wave 3).
- **Satisfaction with learning** (wave 2 and 3): learners are generally highly positive about their course (a satisfaction rate of 88 per cent at wave 2 and wave 3).

Impact of Level 3

- **Expected gains from Level 3** (wave 1): the top three expected gains are *the chance to learn something new*, *skills to help me to do a better job in the future* and the opportunity to develop skills *that will look good to future employers* (86 per cent, 86 per cent and 85 per cent respectively).
- **Aspirations on completion** (wave 1): the top three aspirations are *get a job* (25 per cent, the highest proportion by qualification aim), *don't know* (17 per cent), and *get a better job* (16 per cent, the highest proportion by qualification aim).
- **Consideration of university** (wave 3): if not already progressing to university, 62 per cent of City & Guilds learners had considered going to university.

- **Effect of training** (wave 2): there is a (net) agreement¹⁶ that the course or training has made them *confident in my ability to learn* (67 per cent, the lowest proportion by qualification aim), *get a good job* (65 per cent) and become *more positive about learning* (65 per cent), and a (net) disagreement with the statement if completed that they did *not get everything I wanted* (34 per cent, the second lowest proportion by qualification aim). 54 per cent (net) of Level 3 learners also believe they are now more attractive to employers (the lowest proportion by qualification aim).
- **Skills gains** (wave 3): the top three skills to be gained from Level 3 are *problem solving* (65 per cent), *team working* (54 per cent) and *written communication* (46 per cent). However, by qualification aim City & Guilds learners generally respond least strongly to most skills gains.
- **Other gains from completion** (wave 2): the top three gains are *a qualification* (96 per cent), *the chance to learn something new* (90 per cent), and *skills that will look good to future employers* (90 per cent).
- **Likelihood of further learning after completion** (wave 2): 74 per cent of learners say they are likely to undertake further learning in the next three years, compared to 25 per cent who are unlikely.
- **Activity after learning** (wave 3): 5 per cent of City & Guilds learners out of learning (through completion or dropping out) are now students at college or university (the lowest proportion by qualification aim), 72 per cent are in long-term paid work or self-employment and 10 per cent are unemployed.

6.10 Other

Learner profile and previous activities

- **Details of aim** (ILR): 20 per cent of 'Other' learners are in courses classed as full, one of the lowest proportions by qualification aim.
- **Learner characteristics** (ILR): 'Other' qualifications attract an above average proportion of female, aged 19+ learners, and learners already qualification to Level 3 or above. Behind City & Guilds, the highest proportion of 'Other' learners pay some or all of their fees.
- **Routes into Level 3** (wave 1): a below average 31 per cent of learners were previously in the education system (secondary school, a school sixth form or a

¹⁶ The net value is the percentage reporting they agree minus the percentage reporting they disagree. If there is a balance of opinion the net percentage will be zero; if the majority of respondents respond positively the net percentage will be greater than zero; if the majority of respondents respond negatively the net percentage will be less than zero.

college/training provider) and an above average 41 per cent were previously working for an employer or self-employed, or, 12 unemployed or inactive.

- **Sources of information, advice and guidance** (wave 1): the top three sources are *friends/relatives* (17 per cent, the highest proportion by qualification aim), *college advisor/tutor* (16 per cent), and *none/nothing* (13 per cent).
- **Mix of work and learning** (wave 2): alongside Level 3 learning, 67 per cent of 'Other' learners are also working (for an employer or self-employed), the second highest proportion by qualification aim, behind NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship.

Learner attitudes and experiences

- **Information about qualification** (wave 1): by qualification aim, the lowest proportion of learners feeling informed about the amount of work expected in their own time and the standard of work expected is 'Other' (60 per cent and 74 per cent respectively).
- **Fees and their influence** (wave 1): payment towards fees (some or all) influenced 26 per cent of learners on the amount of effort put into the course/training, 17 per cent on timing of course, and 18 per cent on choice of course/training.
- **Incidence of early leaving** (wave 2 and 3): 8 per cent of starters decided not to continue/dropped out by one year, and 11 per cent of those in learning after one year dropped out by two years.
- **Incidence of completion** (wave 2 and 3): 54 per cent of starters had completed by one year, and 84 per cent of those in learning after one year had completed by two years.
- **Views of training** (wave 2): 91 per cent of completers by one year agree that doing this training or qualification was the right choice and 83 per cent agree that the money paid towards it was money well spent (a similar proportion of those in learning at one year but completed by two years also agree).
- **Overall challenge** (wave 2 and 3): at wave 2, 64 per cent of learners feel their course is challenging (67 per cent at wave 3), compared to 24 per cent who find it easy (22 per cent at wave 3).
- **Satisfaction with learning** (wave 2 and 3): learners are generally highly positive about their course (a satisfaction rate of 92 per cent at wave 2 and 86 per cent at wave 3).

Impact of Level 3

- **Expected gains from Level 3** (wave 1): the top three expected gains are *the chance to learn something new* (87 per cent), *skills to help me to do a better job in the future* (73 per cent) and *improved self-confidence* (72 per cent).
- **Aspirations on completion** (wave 1): the top three aspirations are *don't know* (27 per cent), *get a job* (18 per cent), and *other* (13 per cent).

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- **Consideration of university** (wave 3): if not already progressing to university, 68 per cent of 'Other' learners had considered going to university.
 - **Effect of training** (wave 2): there is a (net) agreement¹⁷ that the course or training has made them *confident in my ability to learn* (75 per cent), *get a good job* (55 per cent, the lowest proportion by qualification aim) and become *more positive about learning* (62 per cent), and a (net) disagreement with the statement if completed that they did *not get everything I wanted* (64 per cent). 57 per cent (net) of Level 3 learners also believe they are now more attractive to employers (one of the lowest proportions by qualification aim).
 - **Skills gains** (wave 3): the top three skills to be gained from Level 3 are *oral communication* (74 per cent), *team working* (72 per cent) and *written communication* (68 per cent).
 - **Other gains from completion** (wave 2): the top three gains are *the chance to learn something new* (90 per cent), *a qualification* (82 per cent), and *improved self-confidence* (81 per cent).
 - **Likelihood of further learning after completion** (wave 2): 67 per cent of learners say they are likely to undertake further learning in the next three years, compared to 29 per cent who are unlikely (the lowest proportion by qualification aim).
 - **Activity after learning** (wave 3): 19 per cent of 'Other' learners out of learning (through completion or dropping out) are now students at college or university, 52 per cent are in long-term paid work or self-employment and 12 per cent are unemployed (the highest proportion by qualification aim).
 - **Employment impacts** (wave 3): As a result of Level 3 learning, 44 per cent of employees are doing a job with more responsibility and 22 per cent report they are earning more (one of the lowest proportions by qualification aim). Since completing, 17 per cent have also been promoted.

¹⁷ The net value is the percentage reporting they agree minus the percentage reporting they disagree. If there is a balance of opinion the net percentage will be zero; if the majority of respondents respond positively the net percentage will be greater than zero; if the majority of respondents respond negatively the net percentage will be less than zero.

Appendix A

Evaluation of Level 3 Reports

Evaluation of Level 3: Baseline Report, December 2007

The baseline report was an opportunity to review all available material pertaining to the delivery of Level 3 qualifications. The report was developed around three key themes:

- Part 1 – Level 3 provision in England: The literature review considers all available material pertaining to the delivery of Level 3 qualifications, including evaluations previously undertaken by the LSC and other Government agencies. In particular, the literature review presents all available information around the objectives and measures of success stipulated for each Level 3 programme. Other relevant areas are bespoke research around particular policies, learners, programmes and costs analysis, all of which inform the design of the evaluation framework as well as providing valuable contextual information for the wider study.
- Part 2 - Analysis of baseline data: There are a number of data sets that inform this evaluation. Part 2 presents the baseline data, drawing on the ILR dataset for delivery of Level 3 by Further Education providers and Work Based Learning. In addition, LSC funding data is used to calculate costs of delivery. A time series and understanding of trends in Level 3 provision and take-up is based on 3 to 4 years of back data.
- Part 3 - Developing an evaluation framework: Following on from the literature review and secondary analysis, Part 3 of the baseline report develops a detailed evaluation framework confirming the multiple objectives and sets of indicators for each so that there is a focus for the ongoing gathering and monitoring of data throughout the evaluation.

Evaluation of Level 3: Train to Gain Trials Wave 1, March 2008

This report considers Train to Gain Level 3 trials, which is one of a number of recent initiatives aimed at Level 3 provision in order to better meet the needs of England's learners and employers.

A case-study approach was adopted for this research whereby interviews were conducted with an employer, one of their employees (i.e. the learner) and the provider who delivered the training. Case studies were completed in each of the trial regions: London, West Midlands and the North West.

Evaluation of Level 3: Train to Gain Trials Wave 2, January 2009

The second report begins to look at emerging quantitative evidence of delivery to understand the size and scale of the Trials, and also reviews other relevant research to draw together a picture of how the Trials are performing against their measures of success.

Evaluation of Level 3: Wave 1 National and Regional Reports, October 2008

This report presented the findings from wave 1 of a three wave longitudinal survey of LSC-funded Level 3 learners, undertaken in March 2008.

Wave 1 presents profiles of learners and their employment status; information around choice and decision making; payment of fees; access to learner support; and attitudes to learning.

Regional reports were commissioned in Greater London, North East, North West and South East.

Evaluation of Level 3: Wave 2 National and Regional Reports, January 2009

The wave 2 report is an opportunity to provide interim findings on how learners are progressing a year after beginning their Level 3 qualifications. The report considers the following themes:

- Training and learning in practice: Training delivery and the variations between courses, with a focus on information, advice and guidance, practicalities of courses, support received
- Early Leavers and Completers: Previous experiences of education, support from employers and authorities, information, advice and guidance received, attitudes to learning and more detailed analysis of the interactions and impacts.
- Learner experiences: Effects of training and impact of employment.

Regional reports were commissioned in Greater London, North West and South East.

Evaluation of Level 3: Wave 3 National and Regional Reports, March 2010

The wave 3 report looks at learners two years after enrolment, with a particular focus on the impacts of the course on attitudinal, learning and job related outcomes. It examines learners' satisfaction with their practical experience of learning and training, receipt of value for money, the subjective and work related impacts of training, and draws together summative conclusions about the impacts of training on attitude and work related outcomes.

Regional reports were commissioned in Greater London and North West.

Appendix B

Wave 3 Questionnaire Level 3 Evaluation – Follow-up Survey of Learners (Wave 3) DRAFT

Evaluation Aims

- To understand different routes, suitability etc contribution of different programmes and routes delivering Level 3 to learners;
- To determine the extent to which Level 3 qualifications are meeting learners' needs and their impact on employability and progression; and
- To understand the different experiences, levels of support that learners receive.
- Wave 3 survey focuses on establishing learners' current main activity and understanding the contribution of the Level 3 qualification to the activity, particularly in terms of employment outcomes and progression to learning at a higher level. This wave also includes questions on how learners view qualifications in a recession.

Content	Objectives	Who gets asked
A. Status at Wave 3	Check learner's current status to inform filtering	All
B. Current activity	To establish the current main activity of learners who have completed/dropped out. To understand impact of the qualification/training on learners' current activity	Completers and early leavers (both at W2 and W3)
C. Satisfaction with course	To understand learners' experience focusing on: - Learner satisfaction and reasons for dissatisfaction How challenging learners found the course	All
D. Early leavers	To understand reasons for non-completion and possible preventative measures To understand next steps for these learners: IAG in relation to further learning; likelihood of undertaking learning in future and potential barriers	Early leavers at W3

Content	Objectives	Who gets asked
E. Completers	To understand perceived benefits of training/qualification and value for money (among those who contributed financially) IAG in relation to further learning; likelihood of undertaking learning at a higher level in the future	Completers at W3
F. Attitudes	To measure the “soft” impact of the training/qualification To understand how learners view qualifications in a recession	All

INTERVIEWER INTRODUCTION

Please can I speak to (CONTACT NAME)?

Good morning/afternoon/evening etc

I am from Ipsos MORI, an independent research organisation. I am calling on behalf of the government's Learning and Skills Council. We are conducting research about people's experiences of training and learning in partnership with Experian. You should have received a letter about this recently.

We spoke to you in September 2008 and you said then it would be OK to contact you again. We are re-contacting all the people we spoke to last time to see how they are getting on with their qualification, training or work.

Would it be OK to talk to you about this now?

ADD IF NECESSARY: We are interested in getting your views even if you've not yet started your course/training, have completed it or decided not to proceed with it for whatever reason.

The interview should only last around 15 minutes.

Please be rest assured that your replies will be treated totally confidentially, and anything you say will not be revealed to anyone else connected to the training.

If appropriate, arrange to call at another time.

INTERVIEWER PROMPTS:

- Ipsos MORI is a member of the Market Research Society. All information that you give us will be treated in the strictest confidence and your identity will not be passed on to a third party or connected to your answers in any way.

- The LSC is the organisation in England that organises and pays for a lot of training to improve people's skills

If you have any queries please call Jane Darragh or Ruth Lightfoot at Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute on 0207 347 3000, or the Market Research Society free phone number 0500 396999. Alternatively, you can email Gareth Ashcroft at the LSC at Gareth.Ashcroft@lsc.gov.uk or call 020 7904 0782.

A. STATUS AT WAVE 3

THIS SECTION ESTABLISHES LEARNERS' CURRENT STATUS TO INFORM FILTERING FOR THE REST OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

ASK ALL WHO WERE STILL IN TRAINING OR NOT STARTED AT W2. OTHERS GO TO B1A

A1A When we last spoke to you in September 2008 about READ OUT <<INSERT COURSE NAME HERE (A09_Title) >>, you said that you....

Note to interviewer: we are only interested in THIS COURSE and not any further learning they may have done since

- a) [FROM SAMPLE] had not yet started your course.
- b) [FROM SAMPLE] were still doing your course/training.

Where are you now with the training/qualification?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

1. Still learning - GO TO C1
2. Decided not to continue/dropped out/unable to complete - GO TO A1B and then B1A
3. Completed this qualification/training - GO TO A1B and then B1A
4. Have not started qualification/training yet - GO TO A2

A1B Approximately when did you <stop><complete> this training/qualification?

RECORD MONTH: JAN-DEC OPTIONS

YEAR – 2008, 2009

Can't remember

ASK NON-STARTERS (code 4 at A1b)

A2 Are you still waiting or intending to start this qualification?

1. Yes (I am still expecting to start the training) > CLOSE
2. No (I am not expecting to start the training) > CLOSE
3. Don't know > CLOSE

B. CURRENT ACTIVITY

THIS SECTION ESTABLISHES THE CURRENT ACTIVITY OF LEARNERS WHO HAD COMPLETED/DROPPED OUT OF THEIR COURSE

ASK IF COMPLETED/DROPPED OUT OF COURSE AT W2 (SEE SAMPLE) OR W3 (CODE 2-3 AT A1). OTHERS GO TO C1

B1 I'm going to read out activities and I'd like you to tell me which of these
A activities you are currently doing. **READ OUT.**

ASK IF >1.

And which one of these is your main activity? By main activity I mean the thing that you spend the most time doing.

SINGLE CODE ONLY

SHOWCARD XX

Paid work or self-employment that you expect to last, 6 months or longer	1	GO TO B1B AND THEN B3
Casual work, temporary jobs or jobs that you expect to last less than 6 months	2	GO TO B1B AND THEN B19
Training course or scheme	3	GO TO B1B AND THEN B14
Apprenticeship	4	GO TO B1B AND THEN B14
Voluntary or unpaid work for more than a few days	5	GO TO B1B AND THEN B21
Student at a school sixth form	6	GO TO B1B AND THEN B16
Student at college or university	7	GO TO B1B AND THEN B16
Unemployed and looking for	8	GO TO B1B AND THEN

work		B22
Unemployed, not studying or looking for work	9	GO TO B1B AND THEN B2A
Something else (WRITE IN)	10	GO TO B1B AND THEN C1

ASK ALL

READ OUT IF >1 ACTIVITIES AT B1A: Please answer the following questions in relation to your main activity only, that is <INSERT MAIN ACTIVITY>.

B1B Approximately when did you start doing this activity?

DP: DISPLAY ACTIVITY SELECTED AT B1B

RECORD MONTH: JAN-DEC OPTIONS

YEAR

Can't remember

ASK IF B1A = 8 (UNEMPLOYED, NOT STUDYING OR LOOKING FOR WORK)

B2 What is the main reason you are not working, studying or looking for work? SINGLE CODE ONLY

SHOWCARD B2A FOR INTERVIEWERS

Waiting to start a confirmed job	1	GO TO B3
Waiting to start a confirmed training scheme (e.g. Apprenticeship)	2	GO TO B14
Waiting to start a confirmed university course	3	GO TO B14
Waiting to start a confirmed college course	4	GO TO B14
Looking after the family/home	5	
Temporarily sick, injured or disabled	6	
Long-term sick or disabled	7	
Believes no job available	8	
Travelling	9	GO TO B22
Not yet started looking	10	
Don't need work	11	
Retired from paid work	12	
Any other reason	13	

IN WORK

ASK IF WORKING OR WAITING TO START A CONFIRMED JOB (B1A=1 OR B2 = 1)

**B3 [IF B1A=1] I am now going to ask you some questions about your job.
In this job are you... READ OUT. SINGLE CODE ONLY**

**[IF B2=1] You have said that you are waiting to start a confirmed job.
I'd like you to answer the next set of questions bearing that job in
mind. In this job will you be...**

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE ONLY

Working as an employee	1	GO TO B4
Or self-employed?	2	GO TO B5

ASK IF WORKING AS AN EMPLOYEE (CODE 1 AT B3)

B4 [IF B1A=1] What does the firm/organisation you currently work for mainly do or make (at the place where you work)?

[IF B2=1] What does the firm/organisation you will work for mainly do or make (at the place where you'll work)?

DO NOT READ OUT. CODE ONE ONLY. PROBE AS NECESSARY:

- Eg. What is/was the main activity of this establishment?
- What exactly is/was made or done at this establishment?
- What material or machinery does/did that involve using?

1. Agriculture
2. Fishing
3. Mining or quarrying
4. Manufacturing or recycling (INTERVIEWER NOTE: May include industrial repair)
5. Electricity, gas or water supply
6. Construction
7. Wholesale or retail trade, including fuel sales, or sale or repair of motor vehicles
8. Hotels or restaurants, including catering, cafes, or take-aways
9. Transport, storage or communication
10. Financial intermediation
11. Real estate, renting or business activities including legal, accountancy, management consultancy, real estate, or renting (INTERVIEWER NOTE: also includes architects, consulting engineers, recruitment, photography, security, or market research)
12. Public administration or defence, or compulsory social security
13. Education
14. Health or social work, including charities, residential homes, or crèches/ nurseries
15. Community, social or personal service activities
16. Other (WRITE IN FULLY WHAT THEY DO/MAKE)

ASK IF WORKING OR WAITING TO START A CONFIRMED JOB (B1A=1 OR B2 = 1)

B5 [IF B1A=1] What is your current main job?

[IF B2=1] What will be your main job?

IF UNSURE: Probe for a job title that would make sense outside the company (e.g. Production Line Manager not Head of B Section) and record this information fully in “other” to enable coding

SHOWCARD XX

SOC codes: interviewers will be provided with examples to code as far as possible.

Managers & Senior Officials

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Corporate Managers |
| 2 | Managers & Proprietors in Agriculture & Services |

Professional Occupations

- | | |
|---|---|
| 3 | Science & Technology professionals |
| 4 | Health Professionals |
| 5 | Teaching & Research professionals |
| 6 | Business & Public Service professionals |

Associate Professionals & Technical Occupations

- | | |
|----|---|
| 7 | Science & Technology associate professionals |
| 8 | Health & Social welfare associate professionals |
| 9 | Protective service occupations |
| 10 | Culture, Media and Sports Occupations |
| 11 | Business & Public service associate professionals |

Admin and Secretarial occupations

- | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|
| 12 | Admin Occupations |
| 13 | Secretarial and Related Occupations |

Skilled Trade Occupations

14	Skilled Agricultural Trades
15	Skilled Metal & Electrical Trades
16	Skilled Construction & Building Trades
17	Textiles, Printing and other skilled Trades

Personal Service Occupations

18	Caring personal service occupations
19	Leisure and other personal service occupations

Sales and Customer Service Occupations

20	Sales occupations
21	Customer service occupations

Process , Plant and Machine operatives

22	Process, Plant and Machine operatives
23	Transport and mobile machine drivers and operatives

Elementary Occupations

24	Elementary Trades, Plant and Storage related occupations
25	Elementary Administration and service occupations

ASK IF WORKING AS AN EMPLOYEE (CODE 1 AT B3)

B6 [IF B1A=1] In your job do you have responsibility for supervising the work of any other employees?

[IF B2=1] In your job will you have responsibility for supervising the work of any other employees?

1. Yes
2. No

ASK IF WORKING OR WAITING TO START A CONFIRMED JOB (B1A=1 OR B2 = 1)

B7 [IF B1A=1] How many hours per week do you usually work, excluding meal breaks but including any paid overtime?

IF SELF-EMPLOYED: How many hours a week do you usually work, excluding meal breaks?

[IF B2=1] How many hours per week do you expect to work, excluding meal breaks but including any paid overtime?

IF SELF-EMPLOYED: How many hours a week do you expect to work, excluding meal breaks?

ENTER HOURS. ALLOW REF AND DK.

IF VARIES, TAKE AVERAGE IF POSSIBLE.

SOFT CHECK: INTERVIEWER TO RECONFIRM HOURS IF LESS THAN 10 OR OVER 60

HARD CHECK: 0 IS NOT PERMISSIBLE. 120 OR MORE HOURS NOT PERMISSIBLE.

B8 [IF B1A=1] What is your current usual take home pay, that is after all deductions for income tax, National Insurance and so on, but including overtime and bonuses?

IF SELF-EMPLOYED: What do you estimate your current total income is from your self-employed work, after taking away all expenses and taxes?

[IF B2=1] What do you expect to be your usual take home pay, that is after all deductions for income tax, National Insurance and so on, but including overtime and bonuses?

IF SELF-EMPLOYED: What do you expect your current total income to be from your self-employed work, after taking away all expenses and taxes?

ENTER AMOUNT. ALLOW REF AND DK.

PROBE FOR ESTIMATE IF NECESSARY.

INTERVIEWER NOTE: ENTER EXACT AMOUNT AND CODE FREQUENCY (I.E. WHETHER WEEK, MONTH, YEAR). IF INCOME VARIES, GIVE A RECENT EXAMPLE OF AN AMOUNT.

SOFT RANGE CHECK (CHECK IF OUTSIDE THESE RANGES): PLEASE CHECK WITH RESPONDENT THAT THIS FIGURE IS CORRECT.

- | | | |
|----|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1. | 1. Amount per WEEK | £50 TO £1,000 |
| 2. | 2. Amount per MONTH | £150 TO £5,000 |
| 3. | 3. Amount per YEAR | £1,000 TO £50,000 |

B9 [IF B1A=1] As a result of the learning you did do you think you are better at doing your job? The learning I'm referring to is the course you did in <READ OUT NAME OF COURSE>

[IF B2=1] As a result of the learning you did do you think you will be better at doing your job? The learning I'm referring to is the course you did in <READ OUT NAME OF COURSE>

SINGLE CODE ONLY

Yes	1
No	2
Unsure	3

B1 [IF B1A=1] As a result of the learning you did are you earning more?

0

[IF B2=1] As a result of the learning you did will you be earning more?

SINGLE CODE ONLY

Yes	1
No	2
Unsure	3

ASK IF CURRENTLY WORKING AS AN EMPLOYEE (B1A=1 AND B3=1)

B1 Have you been promoted since you completed your learning in **<READ**
1a **OUT NAME OF COURSE>?**

SINGLE CODE ONLY

Yes	1
No	2
Unsure	3

ASK IF YES (B11A=1)

B1 And was the promotion a direct result of your learning in **<READ OUT**
1b **NAME OF COURSE>?**

SINGLE CODE ONLY

Yes	1
No	2
Unsure	3

ASK IF WORKING AS AN EMPLOYEE OR WAITING TO START A CONFIRMED JOB AS AN
EMPLOYEE (B1A=1 AND B3=1) OR (B2= 1 AND B3=1)

B1 [IF B1A=1] As a result of the learning you did, are you doing a job with
2 more responsibilities?

[IF B2=1] As a result of the learning you did, will you be doing a job
 with more responsibilities?

SINGLE CODE ONLY

Yes	1
No	2
Unsure	3

B1 Could you have got/stayed in this job without the learning you did in
3 <READ OUT NAME OF COURSE>? SINGLE CODE ONLY

NOTE FOR LSC: SELF-EMPLOYED DO NOT GET ASKED THIS Q

Yes, definitely	1
Yes, probably	2
No, probably not	3
No, definitely not	4
Unsure	5

NOW GO TO B23

IN TRAINING

ASK IF B1A = 3 (ON A TRAINING COURSE) OR B2=2 (WAITING TO START A CONFIRMED TRAINING SCHEME)

B14a [B1A=3] What are your reasons for doing this further training?

[IF B2=2] You have said that you are waiting to start a confirmed training scheme. I'd like you to answer the next set of questions bearing that training activity in mind. Firstly, what are your reasons for doing this further training?

To help me get a job	1
To help me get a different job	2
To get on at work/get promoted/pay rise	3
To get a higher level qualification	4
Suggested/required by my employer	5
For my own personal interest	6
Other (write in)	7
Unsure	8

**B1 [B1A=3] Is this further training leading to any of the followings
4b qualifications: a degree, foundation degree, postgraduate qualification, diploma in higher education, NVQ4, HND/HNC?**

[IF B2=2] Will this further training lead to any of the followings qualifications: a degree, foundation degree, postgraduate qualification, diploma in higher education, NVQ4, HND/HNC?

SINGLE CODE ONLY

INTERVIEWER NOTE: HIGHER EDUCATION INCLUDES DEGREES, FOUNDATION DEGREES, POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, DIPLOMA IN HIGHER EDUCATION, NVQ4 OR ABOVE OR HND/HNC. IF RESPONDENT IS UNSURE, PROBE FOR POSSIBLE EQUIVALENT QUALIFICATION.

Yes	1
No	2
Unsure	3

B1 [B1A=3] Is this further training helping you to get the sort of job you
4c want?

[IF B2=2] Will this further training help you to get the sort of job you want?

SINGLE CODE ONLY

Yes	1
No	2
Unsure	3

B1 Would you have been able to do this training without the learning you
5 did in **<READ OUT NAME OF COURSE>**?

SINGLE CODE ONLY

Yes, definitely	1	NOW GO TO B23
Yes, probably	2	
No, probably not	3	
No, definitely not	4	
Unsure	5	

LEARNING

ASK B1A = 5 OR 6 (STUDENT AT SCHOOL SIXTH FORM COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY) OR
IF B2 = 3 or 4 (WAITING TO START A CONFIRMED COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY COURSE)

B1 [IF B1A= 5 OR 6] Is this further learning leading to any of the followings
6 qualifications: a degree, foundation degree, postgraduate qualification,
diploma in higher education, NVQ4, HND/HNC?

SINGLE CODE ONLY

INTERVIEWER NOTE: HIGHER EDUCATION INCLUDES DEGREES,
FOUNDATION DEGREES, POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, DIPLOMA IN
HIGHER EDUCATION, NVQ4 OR ABOVE OR HND/HNC. IF
RESPONDENT IS UNSURE, PROBE FOR POSSIBLE EQUIVALENT
QUALIFICATION.

Yes	1	GO TO B16
No	2	
Unsure	3	

ASK B1A = 6 (STUDENT AT COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY)

B1 **Where are you doing this further learning? Is it . . . ?** SINGLE CODE
7 ONLY

1. At a university
2. At a further education college
3. At a training provider
4. By distance learning
5. Other (specify)
6. Don't know

ASK B1A = 5 OR 6 (STUDENT AT SCHOOL SIXTH FORM COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY)

B1 **Would you have been able do this further learning without having done**
8 **the learning you did in <INSERT NAME OF COURSE>?**

SINGLE CODE ONLY

Yes, definitely	1
Yes, probably	2
No, probably not	3
No, definitely not	4
Unsure	5

NOW GO TO B23

B19 **Who talked to you about further learning?** MULTI CODE

1. Tutor
2. Careers advisor at college/training provider
3. Other careers service staff
4. Employer, manager, supervisor, HR
5. Friends or family
6. Someone else – who?
7. Can't remember

CASUAL OR TEMPORARY WORK

ASK IF B1A = 2 (CASUAL OR TEMPORARY WORK)

I'm now going to ask some questions on the casual work, temporary jobs or jobs lasting less than 6 months that you said you are doing.

B2 Is this casual or temporary work related to the learning you did in
0 <READ OUT NAME OF COURSE>? SINGLE CODE ONLY

Yes	1
No	2
Unsure	3

B2 1 Will this casual or temporary work help you to get the sort of job you want to do? SINGLE CODE ONLY

Yes, definitely	1
Yes, probably	2
No, probably not	3
No, definitely not	4
Unsure	5

NOW GO TO B23

VOLUNTARY WORK

ASK IF B1A = 4 (VOLUNTARY OR UNPAID WORK)

I'm now going to ask some questions on the voluntary or unpaid work that you said you are doing

B2 2 Is this work related to the learning you did in <READ OUT NAME OF COURSE>? SINGLE CODE ONLY

Yes	1
No	2
Unsure	3

B2 3 Will this work help you to get the sort of job you want to do? SINGLE CODE ONLY

Yes, definitely	1
Yes, probably	2
No, probably not	3
No, definitely not	4
Unsure	5

NOW GO TO B23

UNEMPLOYED

ASK IF B1A = 7 (UNEMPLOYED AND LOOKING FOR WORK)

B2 **Do you think the learning you did in <INSERT NAME OF COURSE> has**
 4 **improved your chances of finding a job that you would like to do?**
 SINGLE CODE ONLY

Yes, definitely	1
Yes, probably	2
No, probably not	3
No, definitely not	4
Unsure	5

ASK ALL COMPLETED/DROPPED OUT OF COURSE AT W2 (SEE SAMPLE) OR W3 (CODE 2-3 AT A1)
--

B2 **Taking everything you have told me into account, did your learning**
 5 **starting in 2007/08 have a positive impact on you? SINGLE CODE**
 ONLY

NOTE FOR LSC: This Q is asked in the LSC Learner Destination Survey. Its purpose is to see if learners who do not progress onto a positive destination (i.e. a (better) job or higher qualification still feel they have benefited from having done the qualification. This is why the Q wording is not more specific in terms of benefit (we are already measuring employment and progression elsewhere in the questionnaire)

Yes, definitely	1	GO TO FILTER AT SECTION C
Yes, probably	2	
No, probably not	3	

No, definitely not	4
Not sure/Don't know	5

C. TRAINING/LEARNING IN PRACTICE

THIS SECTION LOOKS AT LEARNERS' OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THEIR LEARNING/TRAINING.

THIS SECTION IS ASKED OF ALL LEARNERS.

I would now like to ask you some questions about this course/qualification <INSERT>. Please answer in relation to this course/training only.

C1 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied <are><were> you with this course/training? READ OUT. REVERSE SCALE

1. Extremely satisfied
2. Very satisfied
3. Fairly satisfied
4. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
5. Fairly dissatisfied
6. Very dissatisfied
7. Extremely dissatisfied
8. Don't know

ASK ALL

C2 Overall, how easy or challenging <are you finding><did you find doing> the course/training? READ OUT. REVERSE SCALE

1. Very easy
2. Fairly easy
3. Neither easy nor challenging [GO TO FILTER AT SECTION D]
4. Fairly challenging
5. Very challenging
6. Don't know [GO TO FILTER AT SECTION D]

IF PAID FOR SOME/ALL OF TRAINING/QUALIFICATION (SEE WAVE 1 RESPONSE)

C3 When we spoke to you last year, you mentioned that you'd paid <INSERT AMOUNT FROM WAVE 1 – QC2/C3 IF GIVEN> towards the cost of this course/training. Taking into account your experience of doing this course/training, would you still have gone ahead with course/training if you had to pay more towards the cost of it?

IF DID NOT PAY FOR THE TRAINING OR "REFUSED" OR "DON'T KNOW" AMOUNT AT WAVE 1

Taking into account your experience of doing this course/training, would you still have gone ahead with course/training if you had to pay towards the cost of it?

1. Yes
2. No

3. Depends on how much
4. Don't know

D. EARLY LEAVERS

THIS SECTION LOOKS AT REASONS FOR LEAVING THE COURSE EARLY AND FUTURE INTENTIONS. THIS SECTION IS ASKED OF ALL EARLY LEAVERS AT WAVE 3 (A1=2). OTHERS GO TO FILTER AT E1

You mentioned that you stopped doing the training/qualification. I'd like to ask you a couple of questions about why that was.

D1 About how long were you doing the training/qualification?

WRITE IN NUMBER OF MONTHS

- Don't know/Can't remember

D2 Was this course your first choice or did you want to do a different course/qualification?

- Yes, was my first choice
- No, wanted to do something else
- Don't know

D3 Why did you decide not to complete your course/training? MULTI CODE.

IF MULTICODE: **And what was the main reason?** SINGLE CODE

SHOWCARD XX

Course-related:

1. Found the course was not what I wanted to do after all/changed my mind
2. Poor quality teaching/training
3. The course was not at the right level for me – too easy
4. The course was not at the right level for me – too difficult

Time/workload related:

5. Workload made it difficult to make time for study/training
6. Times of course didn't suit my working hours
7. Too difficult to balance the course/training with other non-work commitments

Circumstantial

8. Changed to a different job/left job
9. Health problem/illness
10. Change in family/home life (eg. bereavement)
11. The course was cancelled/stopped part way through/moved location
12. Became pregnant/had a baby

13. Financial reasons

14. Other (WRITE IN)

ASK IF EARLY LEAVER

D4 How likely or unlikely are you to sign up for further learning/training generally in the next 3 years?

READ OUT. REVERSE SCALE

1. Very likely
2. Fairly likely
3. Fairly unlikely
4. Very unlikely
5. Too early to say (DO NOT READ OUT)
6. DK

ASK IF UNLIKELY

D5 Why are you unlikely to do further learning/training? DO NOT READ OUT. PROBE FULLY.

MULTICODE

SHOWCARD XX

INTEREST/NEGATIVE EXPERIENCE

Prefer to spend time doing other things

Had enough of learning

Put off learning by bad experience

COMMITMENTS

Lack of time due to work/hard to get time off work to learn

Lack of time due to family/children/other caring responsibilities

TRAVEL

Too far/long/difficult to get there (travel)

Too expensive to travel/ park

CHILDCARE

Childcare too expensive

No suitable childcare available

Lack of information about childcare

FINANCES

Hard to pay course fees/ would only do learning if someone paid fees

Didn't want to get into debt/borrow money

Needed to earn money/work

Worried it might affect my benefits

LACK OF CHOICE

Can't get on to the course I want

Didn't know about learning opportunities/couldn't find opportunities

Didn't know what it would be like

CONFIDENCE IN ABILITIES

Wasn't clever enough

Didn't have the right qualifications

Can't keep up with the course/workload

Found it difficult to fit in/settle in

STRUCTURAL/ COURSE RELATED

Suitable course wasn't available / is booked up

OTHER (PLEASE STATE)

E. COMPLETERS

THIS SECTION LOOKS AT COMPLETERS' ASSESSMENT OF THEIR COURSE AND FUTURE INTENTIONS.
THIS SECTION IS ASKED OF ALL COMPLETERS AT WAVE 3 (A1=3). OTHERS GO TO F1

You mentioned that you have already completed the training that you started. I'd like to ask you a couple of questions about what you got out of it.

E1 Approximately how long did it take you to complete your training/qualification? WRITE IN.

- Can't remember

E2 Was this longer, shorter or about the length of time that you'd expected?

1. Longer
2. Shorter
3. About expected
4. Don't know

E3 Was this course your first choice or did you want to do a different course/qualification?

1. Yes, was my first choice
2. No, wanted to do something else
3. Don't know

E4a How strongly do you agree or disagree with this statement: *Doing this training/qualification was absolutely the right choice for me*

REVERSE SCALE

1. Strongly agree
2. Tend to agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Tend to disagree
5. Strongly disagree
6. Don't know

IF PAID FOR SOME/ALL OF TRAINING/QUALIFICATION (SEE WAVE 1 RESPONSE)

And how strongly do you agree or disagree with this statement: *The money I paid towards this training/qualification was money well spent*

REVERSE SCALE

1. Strongly agree
2. Tend to agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Tend to disagree
5. Strongly disagree
6. Don't know

ASK ALL COMPLETERS

E5 How likely or unlikely are you to undertake further learning or training for a HIGHER qualification than the one you have completed, in the next 3 years? READ OUT. REVERSE SCALE. SINGLE CODE

1. Very likely
2. Fairly likely
3. Fairly unlikely
4. Very unlikely
5. Too early to say (DO NOT READ OUT)
6. Don't know

F. LEARNER ATTITUDES

THIS SECTION LOOKS AT THE IMPACT OF THE QUALIFICATION. IT IS ASKED OF ALL LEARNERS.

F1 Here are some things that people have said about their course /training. Please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with each in relation to the learning you did in **<READ OUT NAME OF COURSE>**. ROTATE

ASK ALL

I feel more positive about learning than when I started this course/training

I feel more confident in my ability to learn

The learning that I've done will make me more attractive to employers

REVERSE SCALE:

1. Strongly agree
2. Tend to agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Tend to disagree
5. Strongly disagree
6. Don't know

F2 Which of the following do you think you have gained from doing this course/qualification? READ OUT. MULTICODE

1. A qualification (DO NOT READ OUT TO NON-COMPLETERS)
2. The chance to learn something new
3. Improved self-confidence
4. Skills to help me to do a different job in the future
5. Better pay

(IF NOT WORKING/SELF-EMPLOYED)

6. A job

(ASK IF WORKING FOR EMPLOYER)

7. Skills to help me to do my current job better
8. A promotion
9. Greater job security

(ALL)

10. Skills that will look good to future employers
11. Skills to help me to get a better job in the future
12. Nothing
13. Other – PLEASE SPECIFY

F3 Which, if any, of the following skills do you feel you've gained as a direct result of doing this qualification? READ OUT. MULTICODE OK.

1. General IT user skills
2. IT professional skills
3. Oral communication skills
4. Written communication skills
5. Customer handling skills
6. Team working skills
7. Foreign language skills
8. Problem solving skills
9. Management skills
10. Numeracy skills
11. Literacy skills
12. Office admin skills
13. Technical, practical or job-specific skills
14. Any other skills – PLEASE SPECIFY

F4 What impact, if any, has the recession had on how you view learning you did in <READ OUT NAME OF COURSE>

READ OUT. REVERSE SCALE:

1. It has become much more valuable to me
2. It has become slightly more valuable to me
3. It has made no difference
4. It has become slightly less valuable to me
5. It has become much less valuable to me
6. Don't know

F5 Why do you say this? DO NOT READ OUT

CODE FOR SLIGHTLY OR MUCH MORE

1. Will give me greater job security
 2. Will help me to find work in future
 3. I needed to update my skills
 4. I needed new skills
 5. Financial reasons/higher salary/pay rise
-

6. To do my job better/give a better service
7. Other (specify)

CODES FOR NO DIFFERENCE

1. Feel secure in the job
2. Recession hasn't affected my job
3. Wanted/needed to get qualified anyway
4. Already qualified/experienced
5. Other (specify)

CODES IF SLIGHTLY OR MUCH LESS

1. Likely to be made redundant anyway
2. I can't afford to spend time training
3. Course/qualification not relevant to job
4. Due to my age/retired
5. Other (specify)

ASK ALL

F6 Has the recession made you more or less likely to do further training/qualifications, or has it made no difference at all?

1. More likely
2. Less likely
3. No difference
4. Don't know

ASK ALL **EXCEPT** CURRENTLY AT/WAITING TO START UNIVERSITY (B17=1 OR B2=3)

F7 Have you ever considered going to University?

1. Yes
2. No

ASK IF QF7=YES OR B17=1 OR B2=3

F8A If B2=3: You mentioned earlier that you are waiting to start a confirmed university course, why did you consider going to university?

ELSE: Why did you consider going to university? MULTICODE

1. It is *necessary/a requirement* for my chosen career
2. It will help me get a well paid job
3. It will give me greater job security in the future
4. It will give me more career choices
5. It's important to have qualifications in a recession

6. Most employers want people with a degree
7. Encouraged to do so by family/friends
8. Encouraged to do so by Careers/Connexions Advisor
9. It's what my friends are doing
10. To give myself time to think about what jobs I want to do
11. It's something I've always wanted to do/assumed I would do
12. Other (Write in)

ASK IF QF7=NO

F8B Why have you never considered going to university? MULTICODE

1. Don't want to do any more studying
2. Not interested in going to University/not right for me
3. No point as doesn't help you to get work
4. Cost too much/don't have the money
5. Too difficult to get a university place
6. Didn't think about it
7. Don't think I'm clever enough
8. Don't want to move away from home/family/friends
9. Don't know how to go about applying
10. Health problem/illness
11. Other (Write in)
12. Don't know

G. PERMISSIONS

ASK ALL

G1 Finally, if we, Ipsos MORI or another research organisation appointed by LSC or its successive organisation, were to carry out further research about this training/qualification could we contact you again? We would only contact you in relation to this research.

1. Yes
2. No

CLOSE

Appendix C

About us



About Experian's Public Sector services

Experian has been working with the public sector for over 20 years where it has specialised in delivering real cost benefits and efficiencies across a broad range of public services. Experian is a recognised and established provider of customer insight and revenue protection services to many hundreds of public sector organisations in central and local government. Its client list includes major government departments, over 70 per cent of UK local authorities, Regional Development Agencies, Strategic Health Authorities, Primary Care Trusts, Acute Trusts, Police Forces and Fire & Rescue Services. Experian helps the UK Public Sector meet its transformational objectives for improving outcomes and reducing inequalities for the citizen and community.

For more information please visit: www.experian.co.uk/publicsector

About Experian

Experian is the leading global information services company, providing data and analytical tools to clients in more than 65 countries. The company helps businesses to manage credit risk, prevent fraud, target marketing offers and automate decision making. Experian also helps individuals to check their credit report and credit score, and protect against identity theft. Experian plc is listed on the London Stock Exchange (EXPN) and is a constituent of the FTSE 100 index. Total revenue for the year ended 31 March 2009 was \$3.9 billion. Experian employs approximately 15,000 people in 40 countries and has its corporate headquarters in Dublin, Ireland, with operational headquarters in Nottingham, UK; Costa Mesa, California; and São Paulo, Brazil.

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URN 11/643