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Cost and outreach pilots evaluation

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Executive summary

Introduction

Starting this Parliament, the UK Government is providing £2.5 billion (£3 billion when including Barnett funding for devolved administrations) for a new National Skills Fund to help adults learn valuable skills and prepare for the economy of the future.

The National Skills Fund builds on extensive user research and engagement with local areas and employers undertaken through the National Retraining Scheme. The Cost and Outreach Pilots, commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE), to test innovative approaches to lifelong learning and inform the design of the National Retraining Scheme, are a key part of this evidence base. The pilots aimed to develop the evidence base on how more adults can be engaged in learning. The pilots ran in five areas, led by the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)¹ or Combined Authority: Greater Lincolnshire LEP, Heart of the South West LEP, Stoke and Staffordshire LEP, Leeds City Region LEP, and West Midlands Combined Authority.²

The pilots were predominantly targeted at working adults with low to medium skills. In order to engage adults in learning that would be “economically valuable” to them and/or the local economy, varied levels of subsidised courses were aligned to local economic priorities, for example growth sectors or occupations, and those that potentially lead to higher wage returns for the individual. All subsidised courses led to qualifications at Level 3 or above. Selected courses were subsidised at three levels: 25 per cent, 75 per cent or 100 per cent.

Learning and Work Institute (L&W) worked as DfE’s development partner on the Cost and Outreach Pilots, providing support on the design, delivery and evaluation of the pilots.

This report is the final report of the evaluation of the Cost and Outreach Pilots, summarising the findings from an impact and process evaluation. It builds on an interim report, published in July 2019³.

¹ There are 38 Local Enterprise Partnerships across England: <https://www.lepnetwork.net/>

² The West Midlands Combined Authority covers three LEP areas: Greater Birmingham and Solihull; the Black Country; and Coventry and Warwickshire.

³ Learning and Work Institute (2019) [Cost and outreach pilots evaluation: Interim report.](#)

Methodology

The evaluation took a mixed methods approach, involving:

- Analysis of administrative (individualised learner record (ILR))⁴ data to assess the impact of the pilot on course enrolments, completion and achievement rates
- Management information data collected by pilot delivery partners
- A survey of learners who enrolled on subsidised courses
- Qualitative interviews with pilot delivery partners, learning providers and learners who enrolled on subsidised courses.

Key messages

Learning from the subsidised offer

A key aim of the pilots was to test whether offering a course fee subsidy encourages the uptake of learning, and if the level of subsidy has an impact on this uptake. The impact evaluation compared the take up, completion and achievement rates of courses in pilot areas with a comparison group of LEP areas who did not take part in the pilot.⁵ It aimed to estimate the extent to which differences in learning and achievements could be attributable to the pilot.⁶

The data shows a decline in the number of enrolments across both pilot and non-pilot comparison areas. However, the fall in enrolments was statistically significantly⁷ smaller in the pilot areas than in the non-pilot areas. **The pilot was therefore associated with a positive difference in the uptake of learning.** There is no evidence that the pilots had an impact on completion or achievement rates.

A total of 1,581 enrolments were recorded on subsidised courses, four-fifths (80 per cent) of which relate to courses that were fully subsidised. The qualitative evaluation indicated

⁴ FE providers record and submit ILR data to the ESFA on learner enrolments, completions and achievements, as well as demographic information about learners. This data is used by the ESFA to calculate funding earned by providers. The data also provides information on the effectiveness of the learning programmes in terms of who they reach, what learning they achieve and what outcomes are achieved. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/individualised-learner-record-ilr-sources-of-data>

⁵ In order to understand the impact of the pilot, the data for pilot areas was compared to other LEP areas with similar characteristics. The criteria used to identify comparison LEPs were: LEPs had similar labour market characteristics to the pilot areas, including those within the same productivity range as the pilot areas and the areas were distinct and no geographical overlap with pilot areas could be identified.

⁶ Completion of a course refers to retention (i.e. an individual remaining on a course until it is planned to end) and achievement refers to passing assessment.

⁷ If a difference is statistically significant then we can be reasonably sure that it is a genuine difference, rather than a difference which has occurred randomly.

that **the availability of subsidised learning played a significant part in motivating many individuals on pilot courses to enrol, and particularly that it enabled them to start their course sooner because they no longer had to save to pay the fees.** The qualitative evidence also suggests that:

- Subsidies of 100 per cent and 75 per cent have similar and strongly motivating effects compared to a subsidy of 25 per cent.
- Subsidies act as an incentive for both individuals to enrol on a course and for employers to support their workforce to participate in learning.
- There appears to be a widening participation effect, as **subsidies can support individuals who work in sectors and occupations that have traditionally been less likely to invest in training, and in SMEs where employees may find it more difficult to negotiate time off to train.** Subsidies also facilitate participation by adults who are resistant to taking out loans. However, flexible delivery models, targeted outreach and tailored IAG are also important for these groups.
- **Some deadweight was created**, as pilot funding covered the costs of fees on some courses that would almost certainly have been paid by employers or the learners themselves. The evaluation methodology does not allow the amount of deadweight to be calculated.

Nearly two-thirds of learners (64 per cent) achieved their qualification, although **the data does not show a relationship between the level of subsidy and achievement** (in part due to the small number of enrolments to courses subsidised at 75 per cent and 25 per cent). The qualitative interviews gathered mixed views from learners on the extent to which accessing subsidised learning affected their commitment to completing their course. There are some indications that it may have instilled a slightly greater sense of obligation, but also that learners may have given lower priority to the course than if they had paid the fees in full.

Effective practice in outreach, IAG and course delivery

The evaluation findings highlight a number of key factors to be considered in designing and delivering career learning opportunities for adults.

An **integrated local approach is critical**, with clear strategic leadership and a well-developed planning and delivery partnership in which all partners are clear about their roles and buy in to the programme. Activity must be supported by robust processes to ensure seamless and certain progress for learners. Specific infrastructure elements, including partnership protocols, data sharing agreements and branding, would help to ensure a joined-up approach.

Flexible delivery of both learning opportunities and IAG is essential to engage working adults and those with other commitments in learning. Digital delivery of learning and telephone-based IAG appear to be particularly valuable models in this regard.

Learner survey responses emphasises the value of high quality IAG prior to course enrolment. Nearly a fifth (17 per cent) of learners indicated that they had not received enough information about their course before starting. These learners were more likely to report that the course did not meet their expectations and to report dissatisfaction with course delivery. Despite participation in the pilot, a substantial minority of learners (38 per cent) surveyed said that, by the end of their course, they still did not know where to look for information to advance or change their career. This highlights the importance of having a **high-profile and high-quality IAG offer for adults engaged by the National Skills Fund, which could involve continued collaboration with the National Careers Service, and offer IAG support for the duration of the course**. This offer will need to be clearly communicated to ensure individuals are aware of what they can access, how and the benefits of doing so.

Nearly a quarter of learners (24 per cent) responding to the survey would have liked more support while on their course. Most learners who took part in qualitative interviews were unaware that additional support might have been available from their provider to help them with any issues they experienced. This highlights the importance of **proactive communication from providers about the pastoral and learning support they offer**.

Individuals draw on a range of sources of support, and learning programmes have potential to be designed and delivered in ways which potential to strengthen these:

- For learners in work, support from employers includes allowing time off to undertake training and providing help with the costs of learning. **Building such support through employer engagement is key to enabling participation in career learning by employed adults.**
- Various kinds of on-programme IAG, including **embedded IAG delivered by tutors and intensive, structured work coaching has supported completion and progression.**
- Family support is critical, but the evaluation data does not show whether and how pilot design features such as flexible delivery or subsidies for course fees, may have impacted on the readiness of family members to encourage and enable learning.
- **Informal peer support from fellow learners on a course has clearly been key to enabling some individuals to sustain their learning** and learning providers

could take steps to facilitate it and extend the potential benefits to distance learners.

Employer engagement is a vital element of career learning initiatives, as support from employers impacts at many levels on what is delivered, how and to whom. Effective employer engagement can build demand from both employers and individuals by ensuring that the courses on offer reflect local business needs; and secure employer investment in learning, either directly through contributions to course fees or indirectly by releasing staff to take time off to train. Engaged employers may also be willing to offer work placements and work experience opportunities for learners, particularly those seeking to move into a new sector or occupation.

Learner outcomes

Learners reported a number of changes which they attributed to their learning experiences on the pilot. These relate to:

- Work and careers. The vast majority of learners surveyed were motivated to enrol on their course for work-related reasons and **77 per cent of learners responding to the survey reported a positive change in their work situation.** These outcomes include increased confidence to improve their work situation; moving to a new job; taking on additional responsibilities in their existing role; and increased pay.
- Learning and skills. **The majority (70 per cent) of learners responding to the survey indicated that they were fairly or very likely to take up learning in the future.** Most learners interviewed reported that they had already enrolled on or started another course. Other outcomes related to learning included increased confidence and motivation to learn and being more aware of learning opportunities.
- Personal and family circumstances. **Nearly half of learners responding to the survey (47 per cent) indicated that their self-confidence had improved and nearly one third of learners (31 per cent) made new friends or found a new partner.** Learners interviewed also reported feeling empowered to be a positive role model for their children and that they had inspired family and friends to take up learning.

Several interviewees mentioned negative outcomes, including reduced time with family, increased stress and less time for hobbies. However, almost every one of these learners stated that the positive outcomes they experienced outweighed the negative.

Local implementation

The interviews with pilot partners consistently conveyed underlying concerns about the way in which the pilots were implemented, and the impact that this had on local activity. Overall, **the requirements on the timescales for the pilot and what could be delivered were felt to have limited the ability for the pilot to test approaches to stimulating demand for career learning.** Take up may have been adversely affected by the timescales rather than necessarily being directly related to the outreach approaches or provision on offer. This is not to suggest that respondents believed the initiative had little value. On the contrary, most of those who were interviewed were clear that **the approach had considerable potential and the pilot provided some clear lessons** for planning and delivery partners. But there was a strong sense that more could have been achieved with more time and greater scope for local discretion in determining what was delivered and how.

Feedback from delivery partners also reflected that the outreach was delivered at the wrong time of year to engage new learners. **The start of the calendar year was identified by several providers as the optimal time for commencing activity to reach new learners.**

The evidence suggests that the challenging project timescales and other restrictions have had the following consequences:

- The **volume of activity delivered through each element of the programme – outreach, IAG and subsidised courses – was considerably less than was originally anticipated.** Outreach was rushed or by-passed completely by learning providers, referrals to pilot IAG were very low in some local areas, and a high proportion of courses did not run because learners could not be recruited. Independent marketing by learning providers led to recruitment of learners who would have enrolled on courses anyway, which may have contributed to deadweight.
- Demand for some courses was low because the offer did not always reflect local priorities in terms of the skills needs of employers and the (re)training needs of individuals. **Greater local discretion was said to be needed in to determine the subject areas and levels of qualification offered,** and in ensuring that the delivery model was accessible for adults in work.
- The **limited time available for course planning and development meant that the quality of some provision was compromised.** Learners generally reported satisfaction with their learning experiences. However, it is also apparent that in some instances the need to hurry the development of blended and distance

learning options and to offer additional provision led to issues with the quality of resources, staffing and the on-programme support given to learners.

Policy considerations

The research highlights a number of considerations for the DfE as they develop and implement the National Skills Fund:

1. Course fee subsidies can help to engage adults and their employers in learning and training opportunities. The offer of a subsidy can help to reduce risk for learners moving into an area they do not have experience in.
2. To avoid deadweight, subsidies should be prioritised for economically valuable courses which existing evidence suggests that employers or adults may not pay for otherwise.
3. Clear strategic leadership is critical to ensure successful implementation of activities at a local level. Strong branding and clear progression routes are also important to secure and sustain engagement with individuals.
4. Consideration should be given to the degree to which local areas should have discretion about the learning or training made available through the National Skills Fund. This may enable local areas to align activities to local economic priorities and existing initiatives.
5. A flexible approach to outreach, careers IAG and course delivery is needed to engage working adults and their employers.
6. To ensure adults access the learning and training that is right for them, it will be important that they can access high-quality careers IAG. This could include utilising existing agencies with established communication and outreach channels, including the National Careers Service, individual providers, LEPs and the Department for Work and Pensions.
7. Consideration should be given to how employers can be incentivised to support individuals to access learning, including time off to train.
8. Providers should ensure their support offer is proactively communicated to learners, and courses should be designed in a way that facilitates communication between peers, even when delivered online.
9. The tight timescales for design and delivery were frequently cited by interviewees. The DfE should therefore allow sufficient time for development, delivery and evaluation to maximise the impact of the National Skills Fund, as well as ensuring that early, clear and consistent messaging is provided to learners.

1. Introduction

Starting this Parliament, the UK Government is providing £2.5 billion (£3 billion when including Barnett funding for devolved administrations) for a new National Skills Fund to help adults learn valuable skills and prepare for the economy of the future. It aims to boost productivity and help ensure that businesses can find and hire the skilled workers they need and help people fulfil their potential.

In a speech on the Lifetime Skills Guarantee in September 2020, the Prime Minister announced that for adults who do not currently have a level 3 qualification, the National Skills Fund will (from April 2021) fully fund their first full Level 3, focusing on the valuable courses that will help them get ahead in the labour market.⁸ He also announced six digital bootcamps to support local regions and employers to fill in-demand vacancies by providing valuable skills based on employer demand.

This announcement recognised that despite the evidence on the benefits of learning,⁹ the UK has recently seen a decline in the number of adults participating in learning and skills training.¹⁰ In addition, studies have consistently demonstrated persistent patterns of inequality in participation.¹¹ Younger adults, people who already have higher level qualifications and those in higher socioeconomic classifications are most likely to be learning.

The National Skills Fund also builds on extensive user research and engagement with local areas and employers undertaken through the National Retraining Scheme. The National Retraining Scheme was announced in 2017 to help adults to retrain as the economy changes, and its integration into the wider National Skills Fund offer is crucial in allowing the government to scale up into a different, more ambitious offer.¹²

The Cost and Outreach Pilots, commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE), to test innovative approaches to lifelong learning and inform the design of the National Retraining Scheme, are a key part of this evidence base. The pilots aimed to develop the evidence base on how more adults can be engaged in learning. The pilots ran in five

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pms-skills-speech-29-september-2020>

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Green, F et al. (2015) "The declining volumes of workers' training in Britain", *British Journal of Industrial relations* 52(2) pp.422-488

¹¹ Learning and Work Institute (2018) [Adult Participation in Learning Survey 2017](#)

¹² Department for Education (2020) [National Retraining Scheme: Key Findings Paper](#)

areas, led by the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)¹³ or Combined Authority: Greater Lincolnshire LEP, Heart of the South West LEP, Stoke and Staffordshire LEP, Leeds City Region LEP, and West Midlands Combined Authority.¹⁴ These areas were purposively selected by the DfE according to various policy considerations, including to ensure diversity in type of geographical area (urban, rural and coastal), and because they had relatively low levels of productivity and workforce skills and there was deemed to be room for growth .

Learning and Work Institute (L&W) is an independent policy, research and development organisation dedicated to lifelong learning, full employment and inclusion. L&W worked as DfE's development partner on the Cost and Outreach Pilots, providing support on the design, delivery and evaluation of the pilots.

This report is the final report of the evaluation of the Cost and Outreach Pilots, summarising the findings from an impact and process evaluation. It builds on an interim report, published in July 2019¹⁵.

1.1 Pilot design

This section provides an overview of the pilot aims, design process and the approaches planned in each of the pilot areas.

1.1.1 Pilot aims

The overall aim of the pilots was to provide evidence to inform the design of the National Retraining Scheme by testing:

- what approaches to outreach are most successful at engaging adults in learning
- whether offering a course fee subsidy encourages the uptake of learning, and if the level of subsidy has an impact on the uptake.

The pilots were predominantly designed to engage working adults with low to medium skills. Given the emphasis on career learning, the aim of the pilots was to engage adults in learning that is “economically valuable” to them and/or the local economy. It was therefore intended that subsidised courses would be aligned to economic priorities, for

¹³ There are 38 Local Enterprise Partnerships across England: <https://www.lepnetwork.net/>

¹⁴ The West Midlands Combined Authority covers three LEP areas: Greater Birmingham and Solihull; the Black Country; and Coventry and Warwickshire.

¹⁵ Learning and Work Institute (2019) [Cost and outreach pilots evaluation: Interim report.](#)

example growth sectors or occupations, and those that potentially lead to higher wage returns for the individual. All subsidised courses led to qualifications at Level 3 or above.

To assess the most effective level of subsidy in encouraging enrolment, completion and achievement, selected courses were subsidised at 25 per cent, 75 per cent or 100 per cent. The final qualifications agreed for subsidy can be found at Appendix 1. The subsidised courses could be accessed by anyone who met the standard minimum entry requirements for each course.

1.1.2 Pilot design process

Pilot lead organisations designed the pilots in collaboration with a range of local stakeholders including learning providers, local authorities, National Careers Service providers, employers, and Unionlearn representatives.

The design of outreach involved consideration of the messages to be communicated to potential learners, the method of communication, and the most appropriate messenger. This element of the pilot also included independent and high-quality information, advice and guidance (IAG). IAG offered through the pilot tended to be delivered by local National Careers Service providers. The focus of the IAG varied from light-touch signposting to providers and courses, to holistic careers advice and guidance before and during the learning programme. To ensure the outreach and IAG engaged adults, delivery partners considered how these activities could be delivered flexibly, for example through different modes (face to face, via telephone) and at different times of the day.

While pilot leads were expected to propose qualifications for subsidy that aligned to local economic priorities, there were some restrictions due to existing funding and quality arrangements that could not be changed within the timescales of the pilot. Qualifications needed to be at Level 3 or above, available on the Advanced Learner Loan catalogue, and deliverable within the 2018/19 academic year. A list of qualifications in scope was shared with pilot leads to support their selection of qualifications.

The adult education funding team at the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) reviewed the qualifications proposed in pilot leads' initial delivery plans and carried out modelling work to ensure that the combination of qualifications and subsidies across the pilot areas were affordable and could provide comparability for evaluation. Adjustments advised by the ESFA included: scaling back estimated number of learners; a proportionate redistribution of funding across areas; and adjusting qualifications to ensure some consistency and comparability. In April 2018, the ESFA distributed letters to providers in each of the pilot areas, notifying them of their funding allocation for the relevant subsidised qualifications and asking them to confirm their intention to participate.

Further details of the specific approach taken in each pilot area can be found in the interim report.¹⁶

¹⁶ Learning and Work Institute (2019) [Cost and outreach pilots evaluation: Interim report.](#)

2. Methodology

The quantitative aspects of the evaluation sought to assess the impact of pilot activity on:

- the level of enrolments, course completions and the achievement of qualifications in pilot areas;
- the profile of learners in pilot areas; and
- outcomes for individuals who took part in the pilot.

The qualitative aspects of the evaluation also explored how and why any impacts were achieved and the approaches that were most and least effective in this.

2.1 Impact evaluation

The analysis presented in this report is based on Individualised Learner Record (ILR) data¹⁷ shared by the ESFA in November 2019, which includes data for the academic years 2014/15 through to 2018/19. The data relates to courses relevant to the pilots (that is, the qualification was eligible for subsidy in at least one of the pilot areas).

This report includes data on:

- The number of enrolments to subsidised courses in each pilot area
- The Sector Subject Area for these courses
- The subsidy level of courses
- The profile of learners on subsidised courses
- Completion of subsidised courses
- Achievements on subsidised courses¹⁸

¹⁷ FE providers record and submit ILR data to the ESFA on learner enrolments, completions and achievements, as well as demographic information about learners. This data is used by the ESFA to calculate funding earned by providers. The data also provides information on the effectiveness of the learning programmes in terms of who they reach, what learning they achieve and what outcomes are achieved. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/individualised-learner-record-ilr-sources-of-data>

¹⁸ Completion of a course refers to retention (i.e. an individual remaining on a course until it is planned to end) and achievement refers to passing assessment.

In order to understand the impact of the pilot, the data for pilot areas was compared to other LEP areas with similar characteristics. The comparison LEP areas selected for the impact analysis were:

- Cornwall and Isles of Scilly
- Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire
- Dorset
- Gloucestershire
- Humber
- Lancashire
- Leicester and Leicestershire
- North East
- Sheffield City Region
- The Marches

The criteria used to identify comparison LEPs were:

- LEPs had similar labour market characteristics to the pilot areas, including those within the same productivity range as the pilot areas
- The areas were distinct and no geographical overlap with pilot areas could be identified.

The pilot areas, providers and courses were selected purposively, taking into account policy considerations, rather than primarily to enable robust statistical research. As the pilot areas lie close to extremes for both low productivity and low skills in the workforce, it was not possible to include very similar areas for comparison, meaning that the matching of pilot and non-pilot areas had some weaknesses. The non-pilot areas selected are close to the pilot areas with respect to productivity and skill levels, but not as extremely low. To counteract this, information on skills deficits identified through the Employer Skills Survey and information on the unemployment rates in each LEP area was used to identify wider labour market pressures.

The analysis was undertaken using a difference-in-difference methodology. This involved analysing trends in the numbers of enrolments in pilot and non-pilot areas before and after the pilots took place. The difference in the number of enrolments in the pilot areas between 2017/18 and 2018/19 was compared to the difference in the number of enrolments in non-pilot areas for the same time period, to give an indication of the impact of the pilots.

2.2 Management information data

Management information (MI) data was collected by pilot partners delivering outreach and IAG activity, which was shared with L&W for analysis. This indicates the scale and reach of pilot activity, including the number and profile of adults who were engaged through outreach or IAG support.

Some providers involved in pilot IAG activities submitted data of inadequate quality and/or which did not fulfil the data protection guidelines for the pilot, meaning that it could not be used. The information presented in this report should therefore be understood to be indicative of the cohort engaged in IAG activities, rather than fully representative.

Outreach activities were delivered by a wide range of partners who used different methods to reach potential learners. It was not possible to collect individual-level data on the characteristics of those receiving outreach communications. Instead, partners were asked to share a summary record of:

- the number of individuals receiving information about the pilot, where feasible, for example, the number of emails sent; and
- the nature and level of outreach targeting, either by individual characteristic or geographical area.

Providers delivering IAG activities were asked to provide information on the number and profile of individuals who accessed support, to help understand whether the pilot reached its intended audience. Data collected included: employment status, highest previous qualification, age, gender, and benefits claimed.

A summary of the MI data can be found at Appendix 2.

2.3 Learner survey

Learners enrolled on subsidised courses were surveyed to capture information on attitudinal and behavioural change.

L&W sent an online survey to learners in two waves, using email contact details included in administrative (ILR) data.

- The first wave survey was distributed in December 2018, up to four months after the start of subsidised courses. The survey focused on learners' motivations and attitudes towards learning and the findings are presented in the interim report.¹⁹

¹⁹ Learning and Work Institute (2019) [Cost and outreach pilots evaluation: Interim report](#).

The survey was distributed to 939 learners who were enrolled on subsidised courses as of December 2018. The survey was open for six weeks from December 2018 to February 2019. A total of 173 valid survey responses were received, representing a response rate of 18.4 per cent.

- The second wave survey was distributed in November 2019, at least three months after the scheduled completion of subsidised courses. It captured learner experiences and any attitudinal, behavioural or employment status changes that resulted from undertaking the subsidised course. It was distributed to 1,575 learners who had enrolled on subsidised courses as of November 2019. The survey was open for six weeks from November 2019 to January 2020. A total of 169 valid survey responses were received, a response rate of 11 per cent.

To account for non-response, survey responses have been weighted to produce an effective sample of 1,498. Weighting responses ensures that the distribution of learner characteristics in the survey sample more closely matches the characteristics of all learners on subsidised courses. Weighted responses are analysed to ensure findings are more reflective of the views and experiences of pilot learners more widely. However, due to the low proportion of learners who responded to the survey, the results should be treated with caution.

2.4 Qualitative evaluation

Qualitative data collection captured the views and experiences of pilot delivery partners and pilot participants at key stages of the evaluation. In total, 73 delivery partner interviews and 143 learner interviews took place.

2.4.1 Pilot delivery partner interviews

Pilot delivery partners were interviewed in two waves. Stakeholders interviewed in both waves included: senior L&W staff who supported each of the pilots; pilot leads at the LEPs or combined authorities; and partners who delivered outreach, information, advice and guidance (IAG) and subsidised courses. Interviews were conducted at the following time points:

- Wave 1: September to November 2018, during pilot delivery. These interviews provided an overview of the pilot design, key stakeholders, and factors that affected design and implementation of activities.
- Wave 2: May to July 2019, at the end of pilot delivery. These interviews explored partners' experiences of being involved in pilot activities, including challenges they faced; the effectiveness of outreach, IAG and subsidised course provision;

outcomes of the pilot; and views on pilot processes, partnerships and communication.

Table 1 provides a breakdown of interviews by pilot area and interviewee type, across both interview waves.

Table 1: Wave 1 and 2 pilot delivery partner interviews

| Pilot Area | Pilot lead (LEP/CA) | | Outreach and/or IAG partner | | Learning provider | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|----------|-----------------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|
| | Wave 1 | Wave 2 | Wave 1 | Wave 2 | Wave 1 | Wave 2 |
| Heart of the South West | 1 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 4 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 4 |
| Leeds City Region | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 3 |
| West Midlands | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 4 |
| Total | 5 | 4 | 11 | 12 | 23 | 18 |

2.4.2 Learner interviews

Learners were interviewed in three waves to capture their views, experiences and reported outcomes at key stages of the pilot evaluation. Semi-structured depth interviews were conducted via telephone with learners who were enrolled on subsidised courses as part of the pilot. For all three waves, participants were recruited via email and telephone using administrative data. Different groups of learners were interviewed at each wave i.e. the interviews did not track the same learners the whole way through the evaluation. Quotas were used during recruitment to achieve a spread across age and gender, and to ensure that most participants were in work and qualified at level 3 or below.

Interviews were conducted at the following time points:

- Wave 1: January to February 2019, towards the beginning of their course. These interviews explored learners' experiences and views of pilot outreach interventions with which they engaged; learners' experiences and views of IAG interventions they received; and how the outreach, IAG and course subsidies have influenced attitudes to learning, the decision to take up learning, and the type of learning taken up.

- Wave 2: June to July 2019, at the end of their course. These interviews explored learners' experiences of subsidised courses, including reasons for withdrawal; whether and how the course subsidies influenced retention and completion; positive and negative outcomes for them as individuals, as well as for their families and wider lives; and learners' future plans.
- Wave 3: November to December 2019, at least three months after course completion. These interviews explored similar topics to the wave 2 interviews, with a particular focus on outcomes experienced since the end of the course and learners' plans for further learning and career development.

Table 2 provides a breakdown of interviews by pilot area, across all interview waves.

Table 2: Wave 1, 2 and 3 learner interviews

| Pilot Area | Wave 1 | Wave 2 | Wave 3 |
|----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Heart of the South West | 25 | 11 | 10 |
| Stoke on-Trent and Staffordshire | 12 | 7 | 12 |
| Leeds City Region | 8 | 6 | 9 |
| West Midlands | 8 | 4 | 11 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | 7 | 5 | 8 |
| Total | 60 | 33 | 50 |

3. Outreach and information, advice and guidance

This chapter presents findings on the outreach activities and information, advice and guidance (IAG) that was delivered across the pilot areas. Drawing on qualitative interview evidence from pilot delivery partners and learners, as well as select MI data, it summarises what was delivered and identifies lessons learned.

Key chapter findings

- In each pilot area, outreach was delivered using a range of approaches including: advertising via social media, local press and radio; telephone marketing; face to face activities; and employer engagement.
- Taking a localised approach to the pilots enabled partners to tailor messages about learning to target groups and communities. However, it was also noted that the pilot activity in some areas could have been better integrated with other local activity or strategies.
- Delivery partners perceived that social media and face to face activities were effective in reaching prospective learners, although recognised that messages needed to be targeted to specific groups. Feedback from partners and learners suggests that working with and through employers appeared to be a particularly effective way of engaging working adults in learning.
- Overall, the volume of outreach delivered within each pilot area was less than originally intended. This was mainly attributed to the short timescales available for pilot implementation, but also that outreach took place at the wrong time of year to engage adults. Some learning providers undertook their own direct marketing because they were concerned that locally co-ordinated pilot outreach would not be able to recruit learners in time.
- While the pilot was successful at engaging some adults in IAG, qualitative feedback reflected that numbers were lower than originally anticipated.
- Some IAG delivery partners cited flexible delivery of this service as a key strength of the pilot. Flexible delivery included IAG in the workplace, 'out-of-hours' provision, on-programme IAG, and telephone-based delivery.
- Some delivery partners reported weak mechanisms for information sharing and referrals between outreach, IAG and course delivery. Some outreach partners reported that they struggled to get information from colleges about which pilot courses were being delivered.
- Some pilot IAG providers said they were unable to offer support to learners because they were 'blocked' by colleges who perceived this to be in competition with their in-house IAG provision.

3.1 Pilot outreach

3.1.1 What was delivered

In each pilot area, locally co-ordinated outreach (i.e. led by the lead delivery partner) was delivered using a range of approaches including:

- advertising via social media, local press and radio;
- telephone marketing;
- face to face activity via stands in town centres, community centres, children's centres, libraries, at school gates and in the workplace; and
- employer engagement, with the aim of cascading messages to adults in work.

Alongside this locally co-ordinated pilot outreach, almost all learning providers also undertook their own direct marketing and recruitment activity, in part because they lacked confidence that the locally-led pilot outreach would attract sufficient learners within the limited time available for recruitment. This additional outreach by learning providers predominantly involved integrating information about the pilots into existing marketing activity, although a small number of learning providers also undertook supplementary activity in the community or with employers to promote courses subsidised through the pilot. Other providers sought to recruit via existing learner contacts, including course waiting lists and cohorts of learners that were about to finish a course in the same subject at the level below. This may have resulted in providers recruiting people who would have engaged in learning anyway, rather than attracting new learners who may not have previously considered learning.

Overall, the volume of outreach delivered within each pilot area was said by delivery partners to be less than originally intended. These challenges were attributed to delays in the initiation of local pilots, which squeezed the time available for outreach. This is explored under 'issues and challenges' below.

Scale of outreach

Pilot areas took tailored approaches to outreach. Common methods of outreach included advertising campaigns through social and traditional media channels (e.g. TV, radio adverts and local news outlets) and face-to-face engagement (e.g. a careers fair and a street festival). A full description of pilot outreach activities by area can be found in Appendix 2.

3.1.2 Strengths and effective practice

Interview evidence from both delivery partners and learners highlighted aspects of outreach activity that worked well, which could help to inform the implementation of the National Skills Fund.

Local approaches

Pilots were developed and led at a local level and this was identified as a key strength. Taking a localised approach to the pilots enabled partners to tailor messages about learning to target groups and communities. For example:

- Leeds City Region developed specific messaging around local labour markets and the possible wage premiums associated with travelling to take up a better job further from home. This was communicated alongside practical advice and support on travel costs and options.
- In Heart of the South West, outreach messages included information about job opportunities available in named local areas within the region. Messages also highlighted that undertaking a Level 3 in a certain subject would enable an individual to start a new career in that sector. The message was tailored for different local areas using labour market intelligence gathered from local employers about opportunities.
- In Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire, pilot marketing materials included local colleges' logos to give the campaign a local 'look and feel' and increase its credibility with residents.

Several delivery partners pointed to the importance of local networks and partnerships (for example between learning and National Careers Service providers) in enabling the effective communication of outreach messages, by providing access to target groups and opportunities for outreach to "piggyback" on existing activities.

Differentiated methods

MI data submitted by outreach partners (see appendix 2 for more detail) indicates that social media formed a substantial part of the activity in each pilot area. Delivery partners interviewed perceived social media to be the most effective medium for reaching prospective learners, although different social media channels appeared to have greater traction with different groups. The Heart of the South West pilot found that:

- Facebook was "a fantastic hit with the over-55s" as many older residents are on the local council's Facebook group. This appeared to be much less effective for younger adults who regarded the local authority as a "bland brand".

- Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn appeared to be more effective social media channels than Facebook for reaching younger adults.

Face to face outreach was also reported to be effective, but the location and timing of this provision appeared to be key to its success, which varied with context. For example, in Greater Lincolnshire, outreach to low paid workers was conducted in a supermarket on a trading estate with considerable success:

You've got the flow of traffic with our target group, and I think that was a good way of engaging with the people who we wanted to engage with. We had it first thing in the morning at 7:30, in order to try and capture the early traffic, people going shopping on their way to work. We had it at lunch time, and then we had a twilight session, so that we would catch employed people. – *Pilot lead, Greater Lincolnshire*

Employer engagement

Evidence from partners and learners suggests that working with and through employers appeared to be a particularly effective way of engaging working adults. Employers were targeted via routes including LinkedIn, breakfast meetings and intermediary organisations such as Chambers of Commerce. Messages were then cascaded to employees through organisational newsletters, staff emails and performance reviews, and face to face outreach sessions in the workplace. Face to face sessions appear to be most effective at reaching staff when they take place after some information is circulated.

Outreach messages

Outreach partners gave limited feedback on the effectiveness of different messages for engaging different target groups, and the evidence from learners was also inconclusive in this regard. However, some indicative lessons can be identified. In particular:

- The offer of subsidised learning was helpful for reaching and engaging employers.
- The most effective messages were those which were tailored, targeted and precise. For example, one outreach provider reported that they had most success with messages which put actual figures on the potential financial returns of taking a particular course and progressing at work, rather than making more vague statements about increasing skills to enhance earning potential.

3.1.3 Issues and challenges

Pilot delivery partners raised a range of issues, which they believe negatively impacted upon the delivery and effectiveness of outreach activity.

Pilot timescales

Concerns were repeatedly expressed by delivery partners about the timescales for pilot implementation. These difficulties focused chiefly on the ways in which delays with contracting and commencing the pilots reduced the amount of time available at the start for the planning and delivery of outreach. The following consequences were noted:

- Insufficient time was available for the development and refinement of targeted messages.
- Fewer activities were delivered than were originally planned.
- Learning providers, who were concerned that centrally-led outreach would not be able to recruit to pilot courses in the time available, undertook their own direct marketing without reference to the methods, target groups and messages agreed for the pilot. This may have contributed to deadweight associated with the pilot, as providers recruited people who would have engaged in learning anyway.

In some instances, outreach was thought to be delivered at the wrong time of year to engage new learners. The start of the calendar year was identified by several providers as the optimal time for commencing activity to reach new learners. In contrast, they observed that the summer months – when much pilot outreach activity took place – are likely to be less fruitful because:

- providers are operating with reduced capacity;
- potential learners are less focused on work-related matters;
- there is less lead-in time to engage adults less likely to learn or who might require more support in their decision making, before courses started in September; and
- in rural and coastal areas and other tourist “hot-spots”, the seasonal peak means that working adults have little time to think about learning, and some of those contacted through face-to-face outreach are likely to be holidaymakers rather than the target local population.

Design features

The choice made by providers to run their own outreach and recruitment activities was felt by other delivery partners to have both undermined the clarity of outreach messaging, the methods of engagement that were being piloted and the groups of adults targeted through outreach. This lessened the robustness of pilot testing as the additional activity made it challenging to isolate the impact of the pilot outreach. Several interviewees – both pilot leads and outreach providers – argued that recruitment to pilot courses should have been limited to centrally coordinated outreach.

The mechanisms to support signposting and referral from centrally coordinated outreach to IAG were reported to be too weak. For example, an outreach provider reflected that it

was not enough to simply give potential learners the number for the National Careers Service on first contact and expect that this would result in an IAG outcome. Another noted that better tracking systems were needed so that learners' progress could be followed and if necessary, they could be followed up.

Some outreach partners, such as National Careers Service providers, reported that they struggled to get information from colleges about which pilot courses were being delivered. This resulted in learners being signposted to courses that turned out not to exist, resulting in complaints from the individuals involved.

The outreach role was viewed by delivery partners as being too limited, and many of those delivering outreach struggled with the fact that they were not promoting anything more substantial than the idea of learning or IAG. Interviewees reflected that prospective learners wanted more specific information than the pilot outreach was offering, at the point when they were initially engaged:

One of the negative aspects of it was the fact that we weren't necessarily selling anything, if you see what I mean. So, what we were doing was encouraging people to either find out more from a local college or, in the first instance, it's to ring the IAG phone number. The people who were on the stands kept on saying, from their perspective, it would have been better if they could have had a list of qualifications. I think that they felt that actually having something to sell on the stand would have made their jobs a little bit easier. – *Pilot lead, Greater Lincolnshire*

Some of the messages being tested were felt, on reflection, to have been insufficiently targeted. For example, in Leeds City Region, the messages tested through the social media campaign, which formed the main element of pilot outreach, were based on the theme of "new year, new you". Although the LEP believed that these messages would appeal to the target groups, they were essentially "universal", and so concluded it would have been better to develop messages aimed more explicitly at target groups, such as workers in the "gig economy" and returners to work.

Gaps in provision

Gaps in the local learning "offer" were thought to have undermined the effectiveness of outreach. It was reported that instances had occurred of prospective learners being enthused to consider undertaking learning, only to find that little or no suitable provision was available to direct them to. For example, in Greater Lincolnshire, a strategic need to train more cooks and chefs had led to the inclusion of a catering qualification in the pilot's provision, and outreach in the form of a cookery demonstration on a local market had attracted considerable attention. However, only one subsidised course was available in

the area, leading to concerns that outreach had raised expectations that providers were unable to meet.

3.2 Information, advice and guidance

3.2.1 What was delivered

Providers delivering IAG activities were asked to provide information on the number and profile of individuals who accessed support, to help understand whether the pilot reached its intended audience. Data collected included: employment status, highest previous qualification, age, gender, and benefits claimed. Partners delivering IAG in each pilot area submitted data returns to L&W containing information on 687 adults who accessed this support, 447 of whom consented to their data being analysed and thus reported on. A summary of the data submitted can be found at Appendix 2. Not all providers involved in pilot IAG activities submitted useable data, so the findings presented should be treated as indicative of the cohort engaged in IAG activities, rather than fully representative.

The profile of adults accessing IAG as indicated by the data sample was as follows:

- Nearly a third (31 per cent) were aged 25-34 and almost a quarter (24 per cent) were aged 35-44. A further 21 per cent were aged 45-54. The mean age was 37. These data suggest that the pilot was successful in reaching its target group of adults aged over 24.
- Women represented just over half (54 per cent) of all adults who accessed IAG, with men making up 46 per cent of the cohort.
- The majority (59 per cent) held qualifications at Level 2 or below. A further 21 per cent held qualifications at Level 3 while one fifth (20 per cent) were qualified at Level 4 or above. These data suggest that IAG was accessed not only by adults in the target group but also by those who already held higher level qualifications.
- Half (50 per cent) were employed, with a further 4 per cent self-employed. Just over two fifths (42 per cent) were unemployed, with the majority of these (121 out of 168) in the West Midlands sub-sample. Just 5 per cent of the adults who accessed IAG were economically inactive.

The number of adults accessing IAG through the pilot was lower than anticipated at the outset. Several provider interviewees said that the pilot activity had led to a higher take-up of IAG among working adults. It was also suggested that IAG became more effective at supporting people from target groups onto courses as the pilot progressed. However, partners in some pilot areas stated that the take-up of pilot IAG was extremely low and the provision failed to engage and support target learners.

3.2.2 Strengths and effective practice

Delivery partners identified aspects of IAG delivery which they believed had worked well and provided examples of effective practice in engaging and supporting target learners.

Flexible delivery models

Flexible delivery of IAG was essential for making it accessible to adults in work and those with other commitments. This was cited by IAG delivery partners as one of the main strengths of the pilot, and particularly useful once individuals had begun their courses and had additional demands on their time:

Being able to offer participants a flexible approach, so not being prescriptive in saying you have to have face to face, because you know people who are working and doing part time provision, it's tough to juggle it all, and being able to reflect what their needs are has worked really well. – *Outreach and IAG provider, Heart of the South West*

Interviewees reported a range of ways in which they implemented flexible delivery, including:

- delivery of initial IAG in the workplace;
- 'out-of-hours' provision, including face to face and telephone services;
- on-programme IAG (including provision of information on job vacancies) delivered to distance learners in Heart of the South West through telephone, email and WhatsApp; and
- telephone based delivery – particularly for adults in work and women returners – which was considered to be time efficient while also offering direct, personalised support.

It should be noted, however, that feedback on the success of flexible IAG models was mixed. In Heart of the South West, delivery partners reported that flexible on-programme IAG was highly successful. Work coaches identified flexibility as the most attractive element of their service offer based on positive feedback they received from learners. Meanwhile, in Greater Lincolnshire, delivery partners reported that the out of hours service engaged very low numbers, but it is unclear why this was the case.

Integrated local offer

Delivery partners interviewed said that IAG services were better able to engage and support learners when the local “offer” was coherent and joined up and it was clear to learners what was available. The following examples illustrate different aspects of this:

- In the Leeds City Region pilot, all IAG was accessed via a single local phone number, and learners were able to use this to engage and re-engage with the service at any stage on their learning journey.
- In Heart of the South West, take-up of IAG increased among individuals enrolling on a course starting in January 2019 (compared to the previous September), because the local infrastructure was more developed to enable this. Better relationships had been established between learning providers and pilot outreach and IAG, due to better strategic leadership and operational investment of time and effort in building the necessary partnerships.
- A learning provider in Heart of the South West, which also provided outreach and IAG, reported that 48 of the 119 learners recruited to their subsidised courses accessed work coach support²⁰. They suggested that it was easier for their organisation to make referrals because they had details for their students and could promote the IAG “offer” directly to them.
- A number of IAG providers commented on the value of the high-quality labour market information that they received through the pilot’s strategic partners for underpinning their discussions with learners.

3.2.3 Issues and challenges

The most common issue identified by delivery partners across the pilot areas was the low level of take-up of IAG by adults. Interviewees highlighted a range of challenges that contributed to this limited engagement.

Partnership working between IAG and learning providers

Weak relationships between IAG providers and learning providers resulted in what some IAG providers regarded as the ‘blocking’ by colleges of learners’ access to wider pilot IAG. They were therefore unable to offer support to learners or to provide support for progression. It was suggested that some learning providers perceived pilot IAG to be in

²⁰ Central to the design of the Heart of the South West pilot was the testing of a work coach model. In the context of the pilot, this work coach model aimed to provide holistic and personalised IAG and support before and during learners’ programme to improve earnings potential and career progression.

competition with their own in-house IAG provision, rather than an additional source of support to learners.

Where take up was low, some IAG providers attributed this to inadequate referral processes, which relied on signposting learners to a telephone helpline only. Limited mechanisms existed to enable outreach providers to follow up with learners or to communicate with IAG services to track learner outcomes. The lack of data sharing agreements between pilot delivery partners meant that learners were not proactively supported to progress from outreach to IAG and then to learning.

Concern about gaps in the information underpinning IAG provision was also raised by several IAG providers. They were reportedly unable to get information from colleges about the pilot courses on offer, which limited their ability to provide clear and accurate information to learners to aid decision-making. An IAG provider said that they had inadvertently referred learners to a subsidised course which was full, because this information had not been shared with them by the provider.

Pilot timescales

The challenging timescales for the delivery of the pilot presented two distinct challenges in relation to IAG. Firstly, it meant that there was not enough time to develop effective approaches and messages for communicating the opportunities and benefits of IAG effectively to potential learners. Secondly, many learners were recruited directly to courses for which the start date was imminent. Although in some instances IAG was subsequently made available to support learners on pilot courses and with progression, they had missed the chance to access IAG to support critical decision making about which course to pursue. These issues were said to be compounded by adults in general having low levels of awareness of what IAG is, how it is relevant to them and the potential benefits of accessing it.

3.3 Local implementation

Most of the implementation issues raised through the evaluation relate to specific stages of delivery and are reported in the preceding sections of this chapter. However, the evidence also sheds light on a number of more general lessons for local implementation.

3.3.1 Leadership and partnership working

On the whole, pilot leads said that partnerships worked well and that effective communications were in place. Across the pilots, it was evident that steering groups had been established and that partners kept in touch through email, telephone and face to face meetings.

I would say that we have a really good relationship with all those partners. Whilst they had the formal stuff like the regular meetings, the evaluation feedback, the steering group, we also have a really good relationship where we have that continual dialogue, anyway. –
Pilot lead, Leeds City Region

Other delivery partners offered mixed perspectives. Some indicated that pilot leadership had been good, that the overall aims of the pilot and the expectations of partners had been communicated clearly from the outset, and productive on-going dialogue has been maintained. In some other areas, some interviewees stated that they had felt a lack of leadership and clarity on the pilot, particularly in the early stages.

On the relationships between outreach and IAG providers and learning providers, interviewees reported varied experiences. Some had developed good links and described partnerships as effective. Others highlighted areas where they felt partnerships did not work well. The most commonly reported area of concern was a lack of trust and cooperation between learning providers, particularly where this was perceived to be rooted in commercial competition. Interestingly, several interviewees from learning providers said that they were unaware of there being other partners on the pilot and had had no contact with external organisations.

3.3.2 Integrated and coherent approach

Clarity of the offer

Delivery partners perceived the challenges of partnership working to be due to a number of factors. One pilot lead said that time constraints meant that the IAG element of their pilot was not in place when outreach delivery started, creating uncertainty and making it impossible to present the entirety of the “offer” to learners. Weaknesses in the infrastructure to support partnership development and delivery were also cited. The lack of protocols to clarify roles, processes and expectations, and of data sharing agreements to facilitate seamless learner journeys, were described as being key obstacles to effectiveness.

Branding

Interviewees argued that there was a need for stronger branding (local and/or national) to give a clear identity to the initiative, as this would have provided clarity for learners and promoted buy-in from partners. In the Leeds City Region pilot, the outreach campaign adopted a clear brand, but this was not taken up by the colleges that delivered the learning. Interviewees from pilot areas that did not use a distinctive brand said that this would have helped to address some of the challenges they experienced due to learning providers by-passing pilot processes.

Lack of local integration

It was also reported that pilot activity in some local areas could have been better integrated with other local activity and strategies. One interviewee, who worked with the LEP in a strategic capacity on other initiatives, described that the pilot had been relatively invisible within this wider work.

4. Learner enrolments and achievements

This chapter presents the number of learner enrolments to subsidised courses for each pilot area, as well as the number and rate of course completions and achievements. It summarises the results of the impact evaluation, which investigated the extent to which differences in the take-up, completion and achievements could be attributable to the pilot. The chapter also draws on findings from qualitative interviews with pilot delivery partners for context.

Key chapter findings

- A total of 1,581 enrolments were recorded on subsidised courses.
- Out of 103 potential subsidised courses, 54 had no learners enrolled. Learning providers reported that the main reason why courses did not run was that they failed to attract enough learners. Interviewees attributed this to the specifications of the pilot, including the timescale for course delivery and that courses were targeted at working adults, who may have less time to commit to learning.
- Four-fifths (80 per cent) of learner enrolments related to courses that were fully subsidised. Enrolments on courses subsidised at 25 per cent made up 11 per cent of all enrolments on subsidised courses, and enrolments on courses subsidised at 75 per cent made up nine per cent of those recorded.
- Analysis of course data shows that there was a decline in the number of enrolments across both the pilot and non-pilot comparison areas. However, the fall in enrolments was statistically significantly smaller in the pilot areas. The pilot was therefore associated with a positive difference in the uptake of learning, bearing in mind the limitations highlighted in the methodology section.
- Nearly two thirds (64 per cent) of learners on subsidised courses (at all levels of subsidy) achieved their qualification.
- Some delivery partners stated that a number of courses included in the pilot were allocated high subsidies, when experience showed they would have been funded anyway, by employers or learners themselves. This indicates that there was some deadweight associated with the pilot.
- Some delivery partners interviewed suggested that the subsidy had more impact on the timing of learning, rather than participation itself, with the subsidy enabling adults to do the course sooner than planned. Some also observed a widening participation effect, with subsidies engaging employees in sectors that have traditionally been less likely to invest in staff training, and in SMEs.

4.1 Pilot enrolments

4.1.1 Take up of subsidised courses

This section provides an overview of the take up of subsidised courses in each of the five pilot areas.

As Table 3 shows, a total of 1,581 enrolments were recorded on subsidised courses. The breakdown of enrolments by pilot area is given in the table below. The difference in the number of enrolments can be explained in part due to differences in the size of pilot areas and the focus of pilot activities.

Table 3: Number of enrolments in each pilot area

| Pilot area | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| West Midlands | 658 | 41.6% |
| Heart of the South West | 395 | 25.0% |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | 194 | 12.3% |
| Leeds City Region | 176 | 11.1% |
| Greater Lincolnshire | 158 | 10.0% |
| Total | 1,581 | 100.0% |

This analysis reflects the actual enrolments, not the potential take-up of all available places. Appendix 1 lists all the courses approved for subsidy (some of which were available in multiple pilot areas), together with the number of learners that enrolled on the courses. Out of 103 potential subsidised courses (counting a qualification eligible for subsidy in two LEPs as two potential courses), 54 had no learners enrolled.

Enrolments by Sector Subject Area

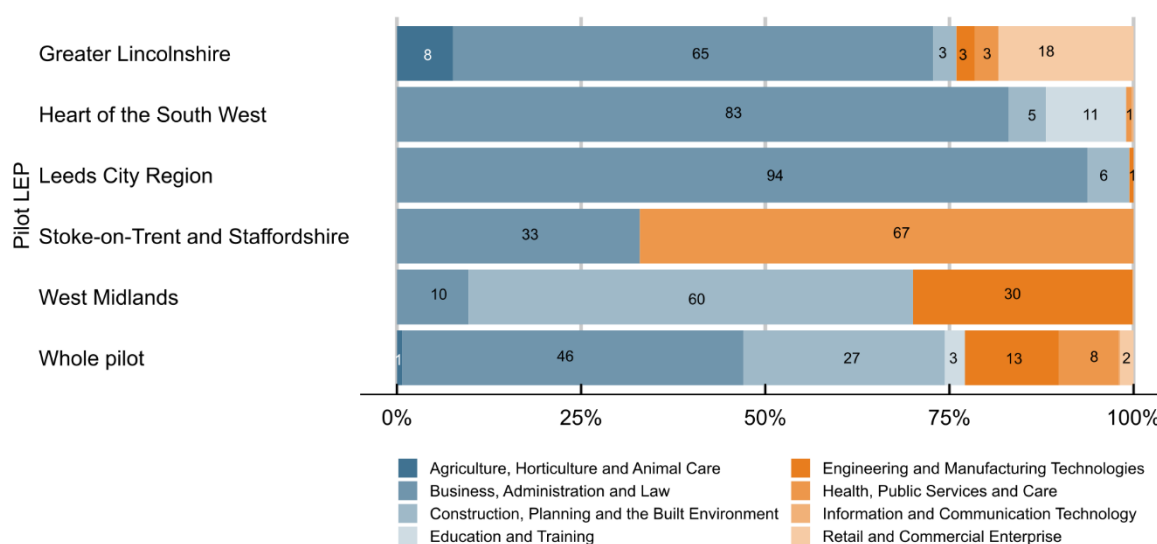
Figure 1 displays the number of learner enrolments on subsidised courses in each of the pilot areas by Sector Subject Area (SSA)²¹. The majority (46.3 per cent) of all enrolments related to courses in Business, Administration, Finance and Law. Just over one quarter

²¹ SSAs are a single framework of sectors and subjects used to categorise qualifications. The framework includes two tiers of categories. See ESFA (2018) *Learning Aim Class Codes 2018 to 2019* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/732683/Learning_Aim_Class_Codes_2018_to_2019.pdf

(27.3 per cent) of the enrolments were on courses in Construction, Planning and the Built Environment and 12.6 per cent were in Health, Public Services and Care.

The qualifications agreed for subsidy differed across pilot areas. The courses available in the Information and Communication Technology SSA had no learners enrolled in any pilot LEP. Construction and Engineering had many courses with no learners, and overall this SSA had very few enrolments outside the West Midlands, where these courses were a focus. It is not possible to say exactly why certain courses had no or few learners, but this could be related to providers' decisions to run courses as well as their ability to attract learners. The courses that were successful in recruiting across the pilots were particularly those in leadership and management and accounting.

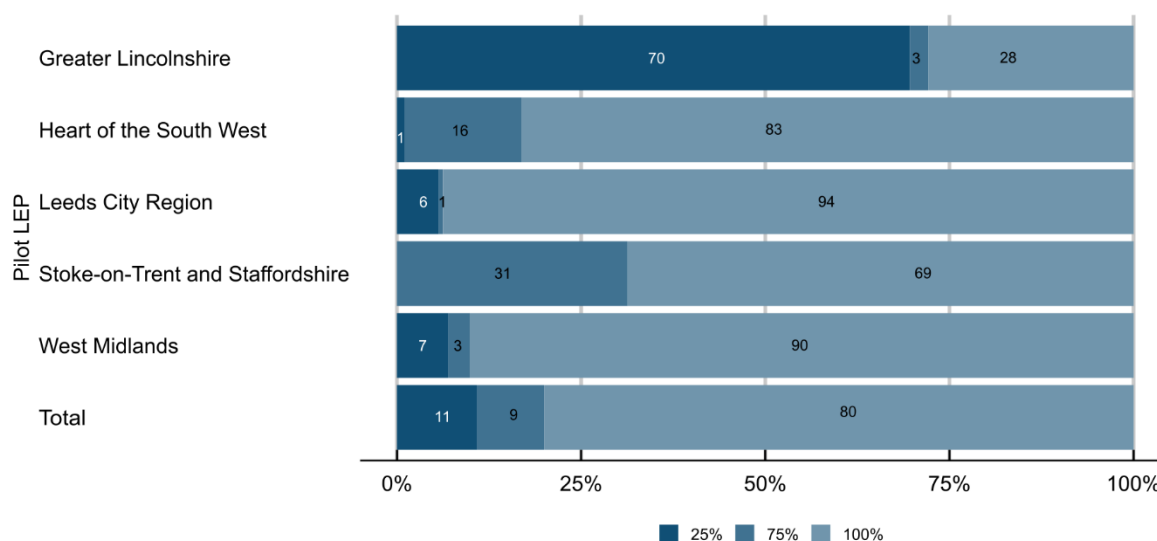
Figure 1: Enrolments to subsidised courses by Sector Subject Area and pilot area (percentage)



Enrolments by subsidy level

Figure 2 shows the number of enrolments to subsidised courses in each of the pilot areas by level of subsidy. Four-fifths (80 per cent) of learner enrolments relate to courses that are fully subsidised. Enrolments on courses subsidised at 25 per cent make up 11 per cent of all enrolments on subsidised courses, and enrolments on courses subsidised at 75 per cent make up 9 per cent of those recorded.

Figure 2: Enrolments to subsidised courses by subsidy level and pilot area (percentage)



Note: Totals may equal more than 100% due to rounding

Reflections from pilot delivery partners on learner recruitment and take-up

While we cannot conclusively state the reasons behind the low take-up of courses, qualitative interviews with providers offer some possible explanations. Some colleges did not run the majority of the courses they were allocated, and several interviewees reported that none of their subsidised courses went ahead. Learning providers consistently stated that the main reason why courses did not run was that they failed to attract enough learners.

Learning providers overwhelmingly attributed the low take up of courses to the specifications of the pilot. The requirements that courses be at Level 3 or above and delivery be completed by July 2019, coupled with a key focus on targeting adults in work, created a highly challenging delivery environment. Pilot courses were offered on a much more intensive basis than learning providers would normally have attempted when delivering substantial qualifications to employed adults. In many cases it proved impossible for potential learners to make the time commitment that would have been necessary to undertake the course. The following comment reflects this widely expressed view:

Some of the courses that had to be done in 12 months, it wasn't possible to do them when you are in full-time work. Some, you know, could have been eighteen months, so it was a shame really. Another six months and we'd have had a lot more people going onto the courses. – *Pilot lead, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire*

Several interviewees said that these difficulties were particularly acute for adults working in small businesses, where there is less scope for negotiating time off to train. There was a clear sense that, for adults in work, learning opportunities need to be available with less intensive delivery over a longer period of time, to make it easier to balance work, learning and other commitments.

The introduction of flexible delivery models was reported to have helped with the recruitment of new and different learners. For example, a learning provider in Heart of the South West stated that the new blended learning option on their accountancy course attracted more learners who were new to the college, whereas the face to face courses were primarily taken up by existing learners progressing from Level 2. It was also suggested that the availability of distance learning courses was particularly helpful for enabling certain groups to take up learning, including women with children and learners living in rural locations with poor public transport links.

In addition, interviewees argued that there was a need for a broader range of courses to be made available to support upskilling and retraining than those that were eligible for inclusion in the pilot. The setting of Level 3 as the baseline for pilot courses was felt to take insufficient account of the needs of some adults for lower-level options to enable them to initiate a change in career direction. It was stated that offering courses at Level 2 in subjects where there was a clear local need to stimulate demand and open up pathways would have engaged more learners, including those who already had Level 2 qualifications but found that these were not relevant for the jobs for which they wanted to retrain.

Delivery partners argued that some pilot courses did not reflect local need, and pilot leads from a number of areas reported that the constraints around which courses could be offered (i.e. providing local areas with an initial list of what was in scope) made it less likely that employers would support the pilot and promote the courses to their staff. Several interviewees identified qualifications to which they believe resources could better have been directed in light of local skills needs. Health and Social Care qualifications were repeatedly cited in this regard.

The qualitative evidence from delivery partners emphasised that the availability of subsidised learning can play an important role in motivating individuals to take up learning. Several interviewees perceived the course fee subsidy to be the single most important driver of enrolment. The following lessons, based on delivery partners' experiences, provide some context to the different numbers of enrolments across the different subsidy levels:

- Subsidies of 100 per cent and 75 per cent were said to have similar and strongly motivating effects. Interviewees suggested that higher subsidies may have been particularly helpful for prompting adults to make a change in career direction.

Subsidising courses at 25 per cent was said to have little effect, either in overcoming resistance among some adults to taking out Advanced Learner Loans or prompting adults or employers to cover the balance of fees.

- For some learners, the subsidy was reportedly more likely to have an impact on the timing of the take-up of learning, rather than participation itself. Several delivery partners suggested that having access to the course subsidy enabled adults to do the course sooner than would have been the case if they had to fund it through other means.
- There appeared to be a widening participation effect, as subsidies enabled individuals to engage in upskilling and retraining whose circumstances meant that they would otherwise have been unlikely to do so. This included employees in sectors and occupations that have traditionally been less likely to invest in staff training, and in SMEs where they had found it difficult to negotiate time off to train.

The subsidy was a big pull, especially for workers in the care sector.

Notoriously, employers are not keen to pay for people to go up a level. So, there was quite an impact there, a take-up there. –

Learning provider, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire

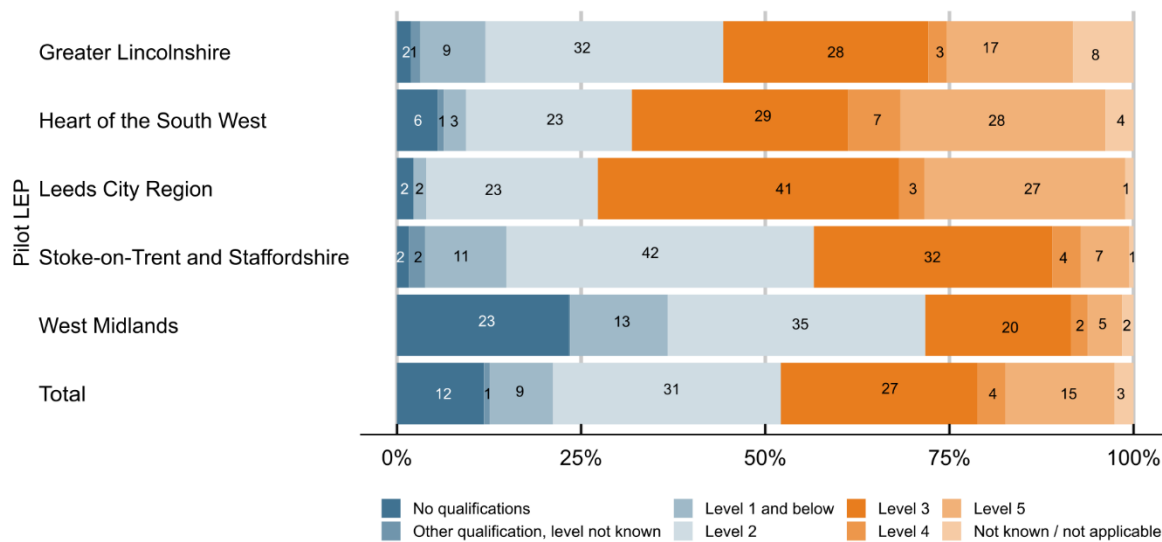
- Adults returning to learning or seeking a new career direction were encouraged to “have a go” by the offer of subsidised learning. For example, one learning provider reported that their accountancy courses are usually filled by people already working in the sector, but the subsidised courses attracted adults who aspired to work in accountancy or financial services. It was also suggested that learners may have been encouraged by the subsidy to take up courses in non-traditional areas, such as women joining construction courses.
- Feedback from learning providers also suggests that there was a sectoral dimension to individuals’ willingness to take out loans and fund their own learning. Learning providers commented that learners’ willingness to self-fund appeared to be relatively high for courses linked to industries such as construction and hair and beauty, where qualifications are necessary for career progression.
- Some delivery partners stated that a number of courses included in the pilot were allocated high subsidies, when experience showed they would have been funded anyway, either by employers or learners themselves. This point was most strikingly made with regard to accountancy courses and was expressed by interviewees from multiple pilot areas. This indicates that there was some deadweight associated with the pilot, although the evaluation methodology does not allow the level of deadweight to be quantified.

4.1.2 Profile of learners on subsidised courses

The pilot was primarily targeted at working adults, aged 24+, with low to medium skills. Information on employment status is included in ILR data, however, this was not recorded for all learners and this data was missing for 14 per cent of all subsidised enrolments. Due to the unreliability of the incomplete data, analysis on learner enrolments by employment status has not been included.

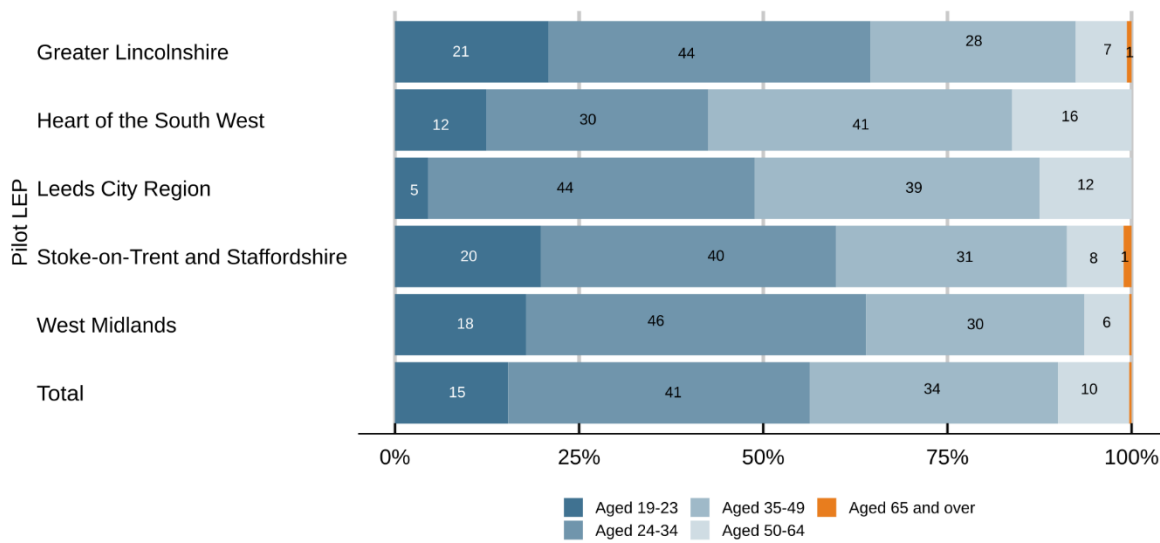
Over one quarter (27 per cent) of all learners on subsidised courses were qualified to Level 3 and 31 per cent held a Level 2 qualification (Figure 3). Four per cent of learners already had a qualification at Level 4 and 15 per cent of learners already had a qualification at Level 5.

Figure 3: Learners' level of prior qualification, by pilot area



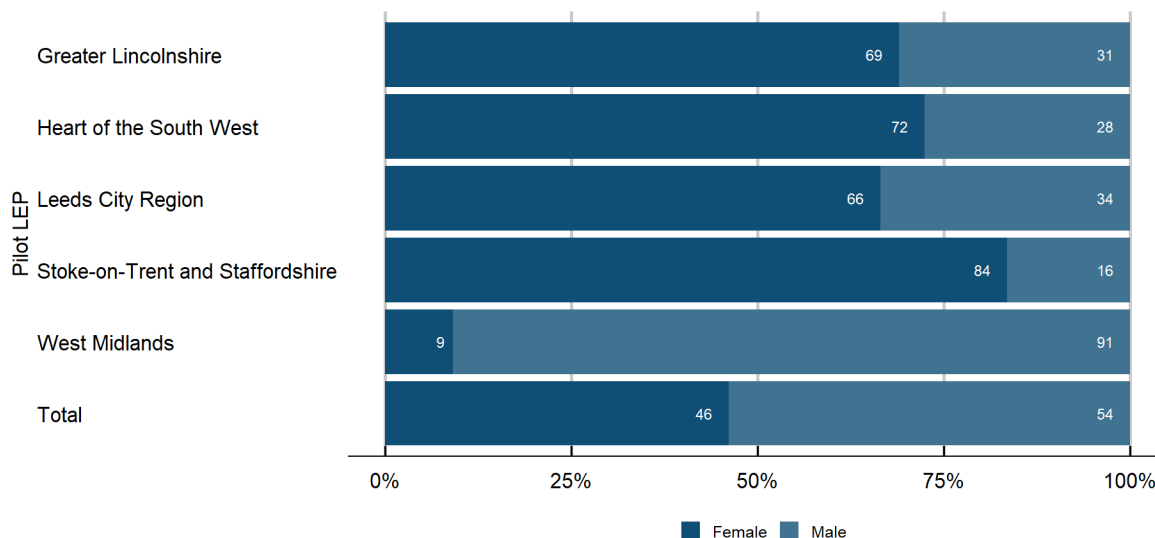
Two fifths (41 per cent) of learners on subsidised courses were aged 24 to 34 years, with a further third (34 per cent) aged 35 to 49 (Figure 4). A total of 15 per cent of the learners were aged 19-23 and 10 per cent were aged 50-64. Only five learners were 65+.

Figure 4: Learners' age group, by pilot area



Over half (54 per cent) of learners on subsidised courses were female and 46 per cent were male (Figure 5). The proportion of women and men varied considerably across the pilot areas. While men make up 91 per cent of learners on subsidised courses in the West Midlands, women make up 84 per cent of learners in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire. This is likely to reflect differences in the subjects of subsidised courses. A total of 60 per cent of courses with enrolments in the West Midlands were in Construction, which traditionally attract more men than women. A further 30 per cent of West Midlands learners were in Engineering, which has a similar, though less extreme, pattern. Conversely, 67 per cent of courses with enrolments in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire are in Health, Public Services and Care, which traditionally attract more women. Differences in gender could also reflect the groups targeted through outreach. Women make up nearly three quarters (72 per cent) of learners enrolled on subsidised courses in the Heart of the South West and women with qualifications at Level 2 or below in Western Somerset were one of the specific target groups in that area.

Figure 5: Learners on subsidised courses, by gender

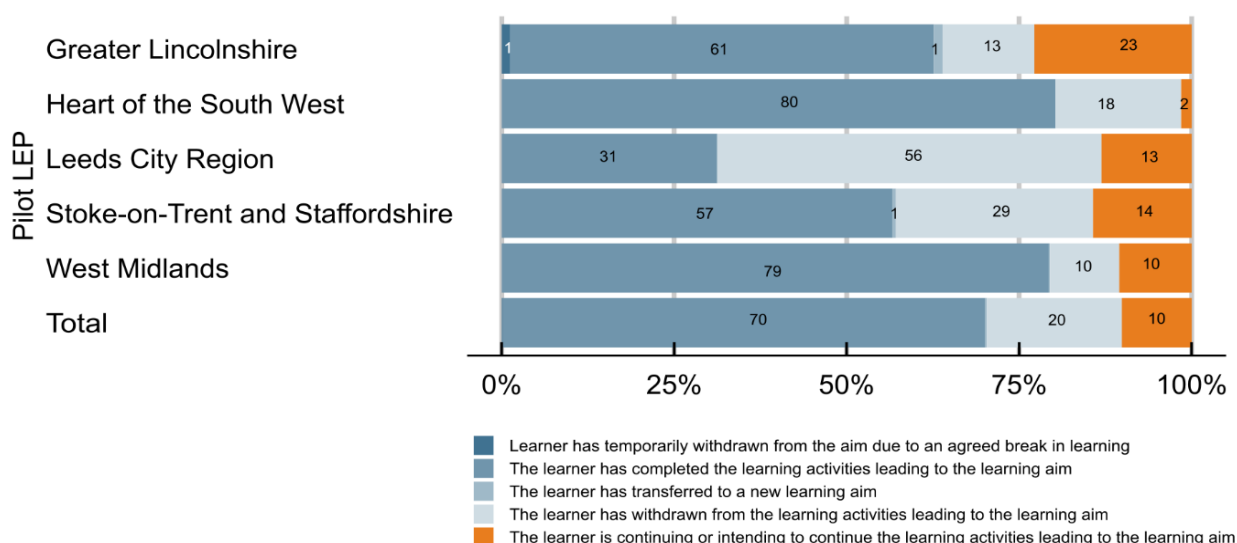


4.2 Completion of subsidised courses

While all subsidised courses were planned to be completed within the 2018/19 academic year, records for 10 per cent of enrolments were categorised as ‘study continuing’ in the full year data. Enrolments classed as ‘continuing’ have been excluded from the calculation of completion and drop-out rates.

Figure 6 shows the extent of completion of courses. Drop-out rates were highest in Leeds City Region (64 per cent), followed by Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire (31 per cent). Learners enrolled on subsidised courses in Heart of the South West, the West Midlands and Greater Lincolnshire had a similar rate of completion to each other (81 per cent and, 80 per cent and 80 per cent respectively).

Figure 6: Course completion for learners on subsidised courses, by pilot area



4.2.1 Perceived influence of subsidy on learner completion

Learners taking part in qualitative interviews were asked whether the subsidy had made any difference to their completion of the course. While qualitative research cannot give us an objective assessment of the impact of the subsidy, it does provide some in-depth insight into interviewees' decision-making, although these findings cannot be generalised to the wider population of learners participating in the pilot. Learners had mixed views about the extent to which the subsidy had impacted on the value that they assigned to the course. Some learners reported that they valued the course more because of the subsidy; these learners stated that they were more motivated and more likely to complete the course because they had not paid a full fee. Others stated that they valued the course less because of the subsidy and gave a lower priority to their learning than they would if they had they paid the full fee themselves.

Several learners said that the subsidy had no impact on the extent to which they valued the course and did not influence their determination to complete it. These learners stated that they were motivated by an internal sense of responsibility and drive and would have completed the course regardless. For a small minority of learners who believed (incorrectly) that they would have to pay back the subsidy if they withdrew from the course, a sense of obligation and a desire to avoid paying back the subsidy were underpinning motivating factors.

A small number of learners asserted that, had they paid the full course fee themselves, they may have been more likely to complain about elements of the course with which they were dissatisfied:

I think if I'd have paid the full fee for the e-learning that was provided, I'd have been quite disappointed. But, because I haven't paid anything, it is what it is, it's done what it's needed to do. But had I paid for that, I think I'd have been quite annoyed. – *Learner, Leeds City Region*

In such instances, the subsidy may have prevented learners from providing constructive feedback to providers on elements of the course that did not meet their needs or expectations and accessing additional support.

4.2.2 Learners' reasons for non-completion

Only 11 per cent (19 out of 169) of learners responding to the learner survey withdrew from their course. Due to the low numbers the results should be treated with caution,

although they do provide insight into why learners withdrew from their course. Reasons for withdrawal included²²:

- Finding it too difficult to juggle studying with work and/or family responsibilities (nine respondents)
- Being dissatisfied with the delivery of the course (nine respondents)
- Not receiving enough support to complete the course (one respondent)
- Not being permitted to return to study after having a child (one respondent).

A small number of learners interviewed had also withdrawn from their courses. They cited a range of reasons to explain this:

- Institutional factors relating directly to the way in which the course was delivered. These included: the provision of incorrect information about the course at the point of enrolment; the implementation of an intensive delivery timescale, which made the course unmanageable; poor teaching quality; and a lack of support for learners with additional learning needs.
- Situational factors associated with learners' personal circumstances, including changes in personal circumstances, changes in work and a lack of childcare.
- Attitudinal factors appear to have underpinned the withdrawal of a very small number of learners, who compared their own abilities unfavourably to those of their peers and doubted that they would succeed.

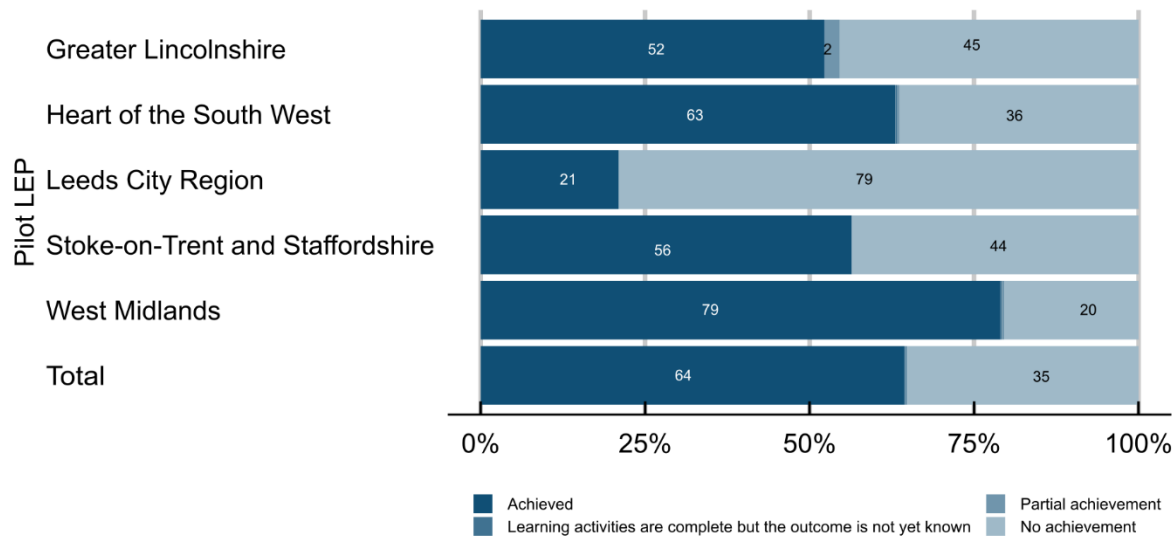
4.3 Achievements on subsidised courses

Nearly two thirds of learners (64 per cent) achieved their qualification (see Figure 7 below).²³

²² Learners could state more than one reason for withdrawal.

²³ Achievement of a course refers to completion of a course and passing an assessment.

Figure 7: Qualifications achievement by learners on subsidised courses, by pilot area (excluding continuing learners)



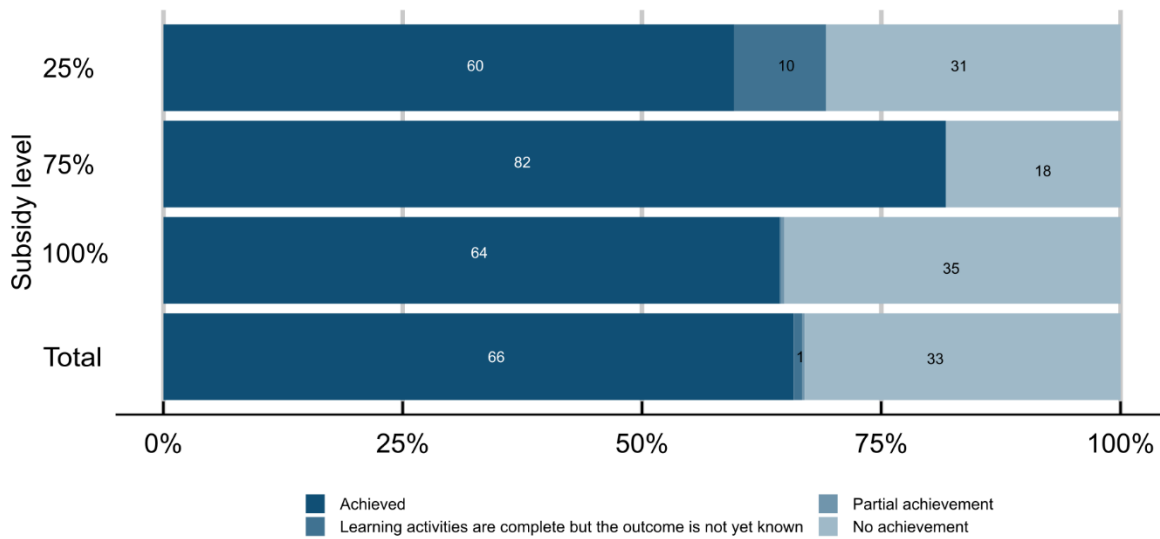
Comparisons of achievements within pilot areas by level of subsidy

This section examines the overall differences in achievement rates by level of subsidy. This is not broken down by pilot area due to the low number of enrolments for courses subsidised at 25 per cent and 75 per cent.

Figure 8 shows the achievement rates for all enrolments by subsidy level, excluding those courses shown as continuing. The highest achievement rate was for courses subsidised at 75 per cent, at 82 per cent (covering nine per cent of all learners enrolled on non-continuing courses). However, whether this is a statistically significant difference would require a formally randomised or statistically matched study, which was not feasible for this pilot.²⁴ Similarly, the difference between the achievement rate for the 25 per cent subsidy level (60 per cent of learners, with an additional 10 per cent with unknown outcomes) and that for the 100 per cent subsidy level (64 per cent) is small, and statistical significance testing would require a more robust trial design. This applies to all the findings in this section.

²⁴ If a difference is statistically significant then we can be reasonably sure that it is a genuine difference, rather than a difference which has occurred randomly.

Figure 8: Qualifications achievement in all areas by level of subsidy



Comparison of achievements in pilot areas by learner characteristics

This section examines the overall differences in achievement rates by learner characteristics. It looks at the pilots overall rather than by individual pilot areas. It is included to show the reach of the subsidised courses, not the effectiveness of the pilots compared to a counterfactual²⁵. Achievement rates have been calculated including only those courses that were recorded as completed.

Figure 9 shows that the achievement rate was higher for men than women, with 72 per cent of men achieving, compared to 58 per cent of women. In each case, there were small numbers in the ‘partial achievement’, or ‘completed but unknown outcome’ categories. The remainder were known not to have achieved.

²⁵ The counterfactual would demonstrate what would have happened in the absence of the intervention.

Figure 9: Course achievement in all areas by gender

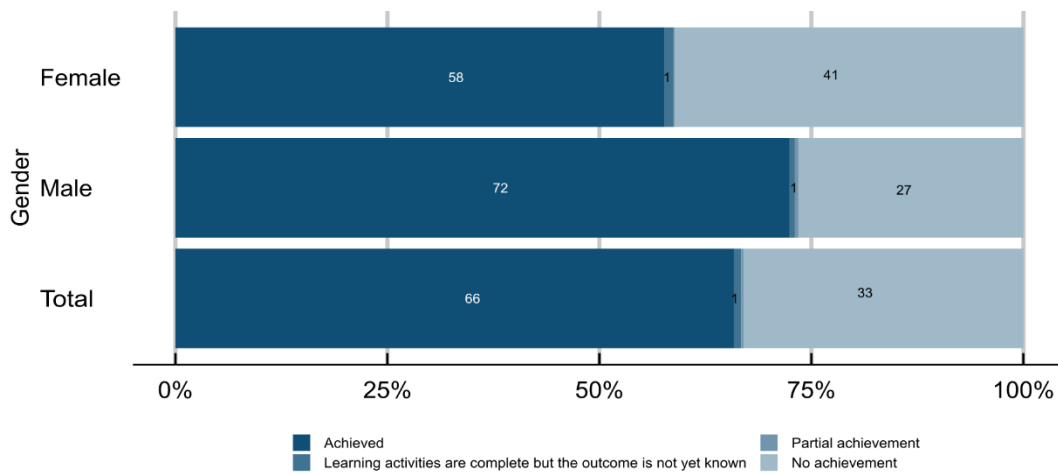
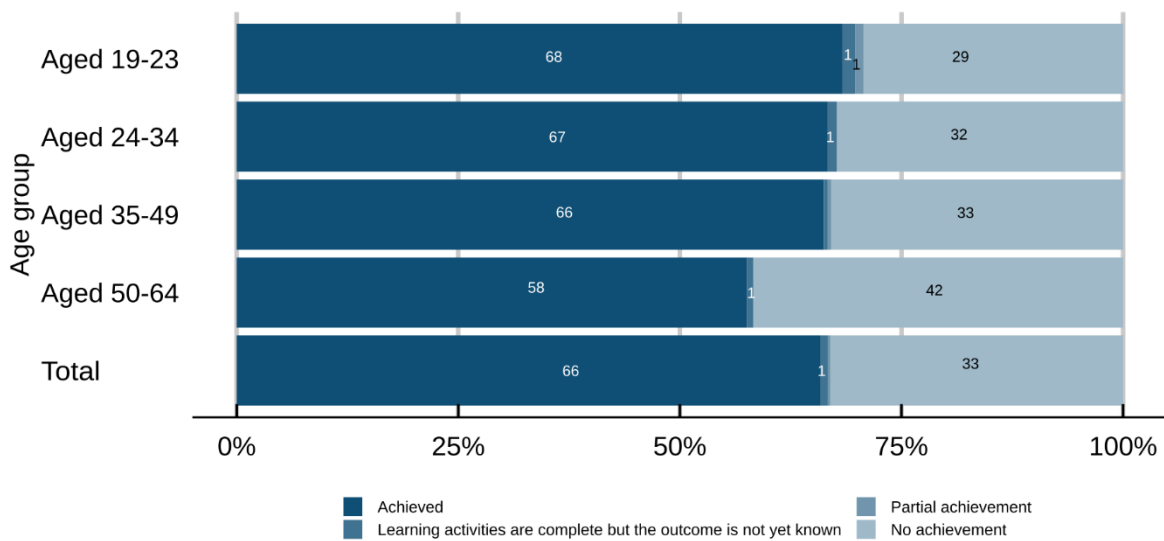


Figure 10 shows achievements by age group. Achievement rates were higher for younger participants than older, but for those under 50, the differences were marginal. The achievement rates for those aged 50-64 were substantially lower than for younger groups.

Figure 10: Course achievement in all areas by age group



Note: Totals may equal more than 100% due to rounding

Figure 11 shows achievements by prior qualification level. The highest achievement rates were by those with the lowest qualifications, including those with no qualifications or Level 1 or below.

Figure 11: Course achievement in all areas by prior qualification level

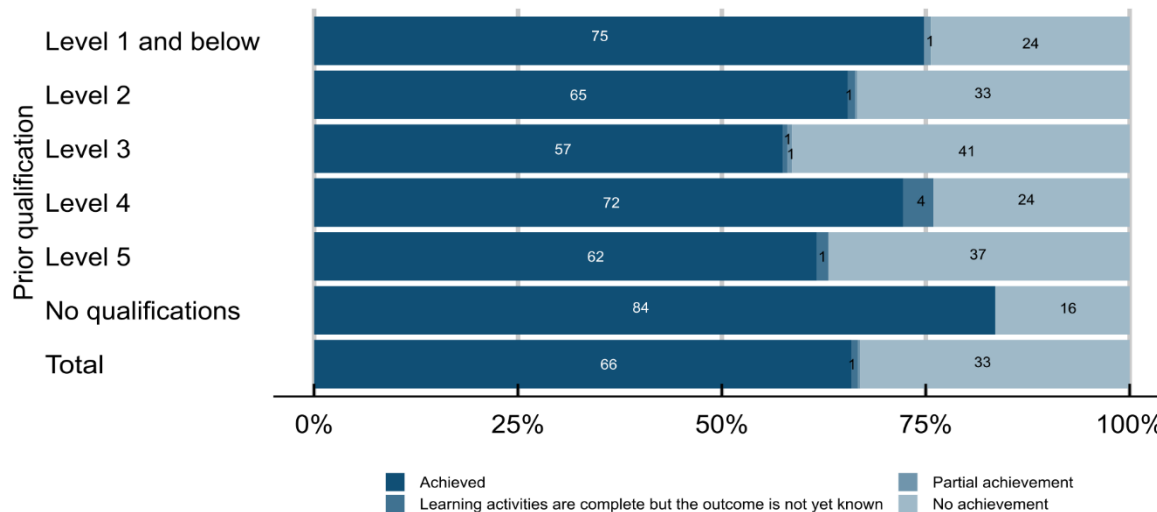
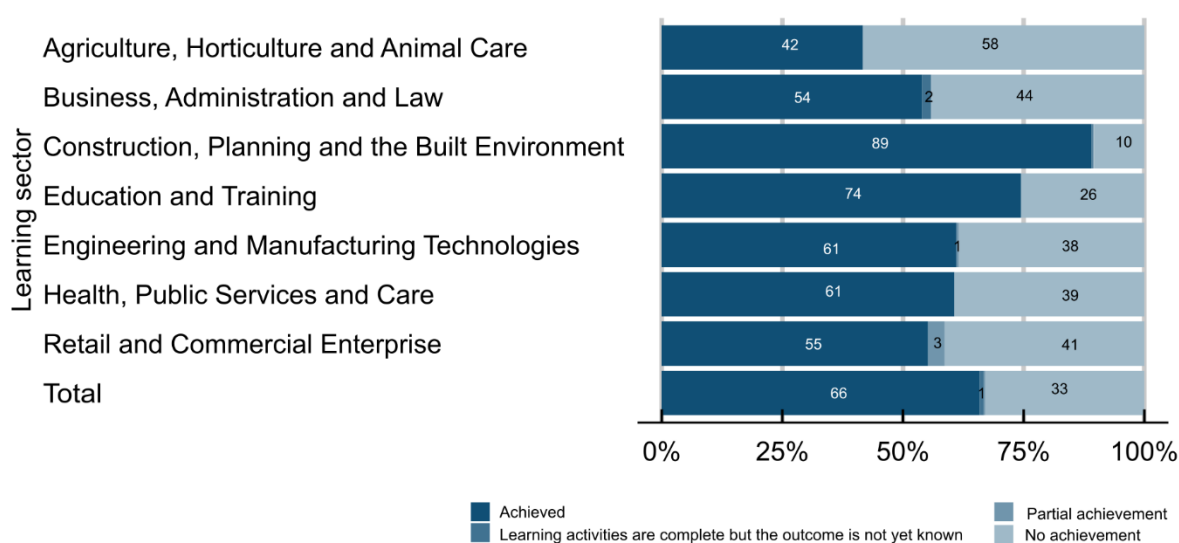


Figure 12 shows the achievement patterns by Sector Subject Area (SSA), for those areas that had more than a minimal number of learners (the two learners in Information and Communication Technologies are excluded from the figure). Learners in Construction, Planning and the Built Environment had the highest achievement rate at 89 per cent. Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care had the lowest at 42 per cent. In both these cases, courses were predominantly in one pilot area (Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care in Greater Lincolnshire and Construction, Planning and the Built Environment in the West Midlands, though there were smaller numbers in other pilots). The largest group of learners (46 per cent of the total) were in Business, Administration and the Law, where the achievement rate was 54 per cent.

Figure 12: Course achievement in all areas by SSA Tier 1



4.4 Comparisons between pilot and non-pilot areas

The overall aim of the pilots was to test approaches to engaging adults in learning. The impact evaluation compared the take-up, completion and achievement rates for courses in pilot areas with a comparison group of LEP areas who did not take part in the pilot. It therefore estimated the extent to which differences in take-up, completion and achievements could be attributable to the pilot. An explanation of how comparison areas were selected can be found in the methodology section.

4.4.1 Comparisons of enrolments between pilot and non-pilot areas

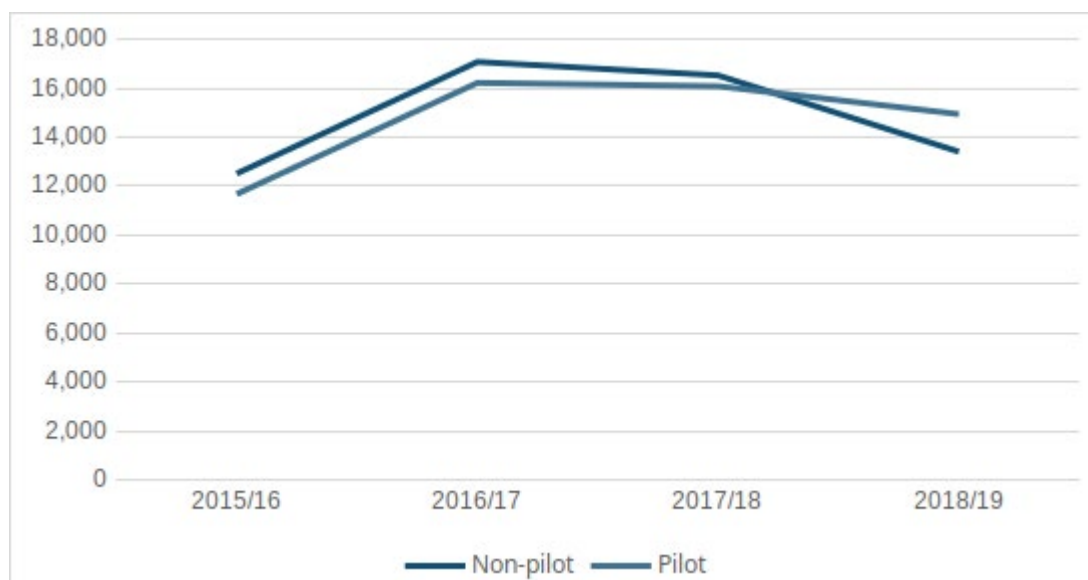
This section compares enrolments on all courses that were eligible for subsidy across the pilot with the same courses in the non-pilot comparison areas. The total number of enrolments on these courses from 2015/16 to 2018/19 in pilot and non-pilot areas are shown below (Table 4).

Table 4: Enrolments on courses eligible for subsidy in pilot areas compared to non-pilot areas

| Academic year | Non-pilot | Pilot |
|---------------|-----------|--------|
| 2015/16 | 12,515 | 11,680 |
| 2016/17 | 17,082 | 16,225 |
| 2017/18 | 16,529 | 16,085 |
| 2018/19 | 13,411 | 14,941 |

The overall pattern of these enrolments is shown in Figure 13 below. The number of enrolments increased in 2016/17 and then fell year on year thereafter. The pilot took place in 2018/19.

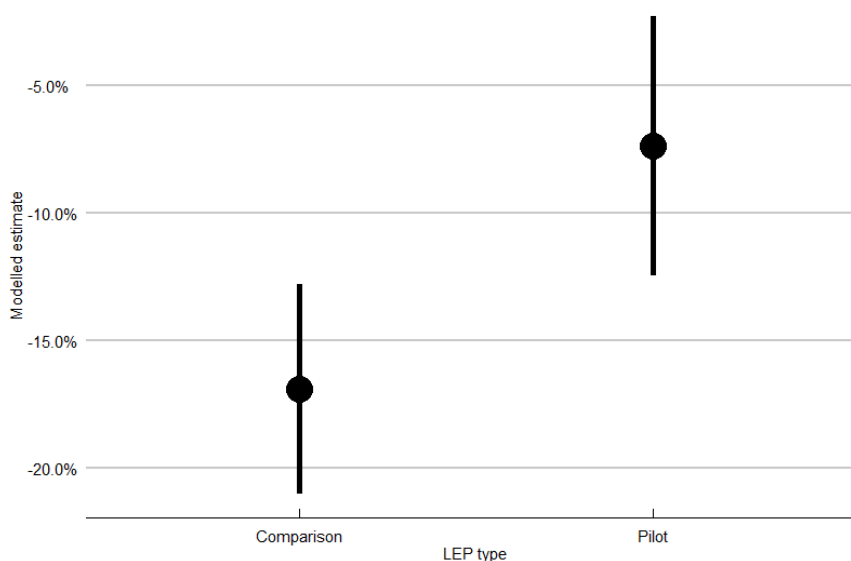
Figure 13: Trend in learner numbers on courses eligible for subsidy in pilot areas compared to non-pilot areas



In the pilot areas, the analysis model (controlling for local labour market factors) showed a fall of seven per cent in enrolment in the specified courses between 2017/18 and 2018/19. In the non-pilot areas, the fall in enrolments on the same courses was more than twice as large, at 17 per cent. The results indicate that the impact of the pilot on enrolments is both positive and statistically significant (see Figure 14).

Figure 14 (and the following similarly constructed figures) shows an estimate for the percentage change in learners in the two groups of areas, and a statistical confidence interval showing the range in which 95 per cent of estimates fall. Where there is no overlap between the ranges for the pilot areas and the comparison areas, the difference is statistically significant. The central estimate is that in non-pilot comparison areas, enrolments fell by 17 per cent, and in the pilot areas, the fall was 10 per cent. This is statistically significant.

Figure 14: The change in enrolments from 2017/18 to 2018/19 on courses eligible for subsidy in pilot areas compared with non-pilot areas



4.4.2 Comparisons of completions between pilot and non-pilot areas

The pilot aimed to understand whether the course fee subsidy made a difference to course completions. Completions refer to a learner remaining on a course until its planned end date.

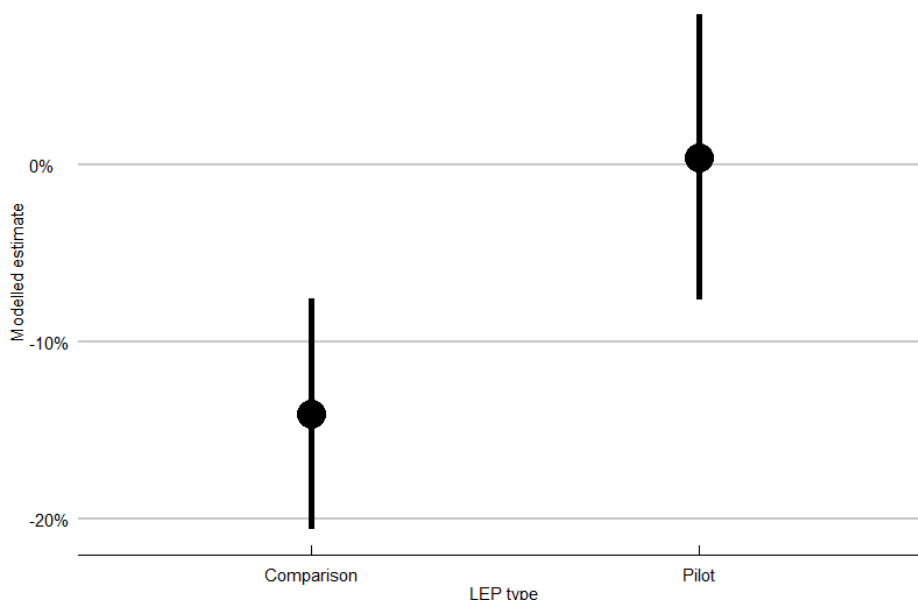
This section compares completions on all courses that were eligible for subsidy across the pilot with the same courses in the non-pilot comparison areas. The analysis includes comparison of the total number of completions and the completion rate in each area. The total number of achievements and achievement rates from 2015/16 to 2018/19 in pilot and non-pilot areas are shown below (Table 5).

Table 5: Completions on courses eligible for subsidy in pilot areas compared to non-pilot areas

| Academic year | Completions | | Completion rate (of enrolments) | |
|---------------|-------------|-------|---------------------------------|-------|
| | Non-pilot | Pilot | Non-pilot | Pilot |
| 2015/16 | 4,279 | 4,248 | 60% | 63% |
| 2016/17 | 5,586 | 6,085 | 60% | 64% |
| 2017/18 | 7,020 | 7,171 | 65% | 68% |
| 2018/19 | 6,002 | 7,219 | 67% | 70% |

In non-pilot areas, the number of completions fell by 15 per cent, while in pilot areas there was no change (Figure 15). While this difference is statistically significant, the higher rate of completions in pilot areas was driven by the higher number of enrolments. There is therefore no evidence that the pilots had an impact on completion rates.

Figure 15: The change in the number of completions from 2017/18 to 2018/19 on courses eligible for subsidy in pilot areas compared with non-pilot areas



4.4.3 Comparisons of learning achievements between pilot and non-pilot areas

The pilot aimed to understand whether the course fee subsidy made a difference to course achievements. Achievements refer to a learner passing an assessment and a qualification being awarded.

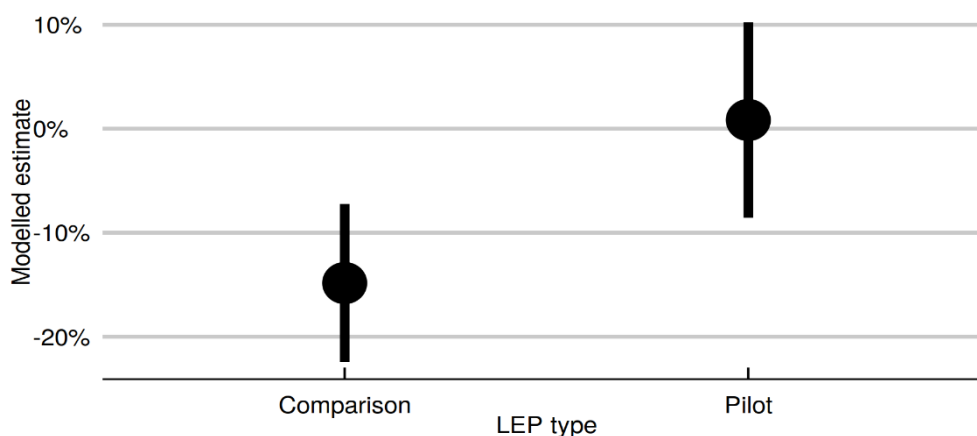
This section compares achievements on all courses that were eligible for subsidy across the pilot with the same courses in the non-pilot comparison areas. The analysis includes comparison of the total number of achievements and the achievement rate in each area. The achievement rate is calculated as a percentage of enrolments (on these courses) in each area, and excludes learners who were continuing their course. The total number of achievements and achievement rates from 2015/16 to 2018/19 in pilot and non-pilot areas are shown below (Table 6).

Table 6: Achievements on courses eligible for subsidy in pilot areas compared to non-pilot areas

| Academic year | Achievements | | Achievement rate (of enrolments) | |
|---------------|--------------|-------|----------------------------------|-------|
| | Non-pilot | Pilot | Non-pilot | Pilot |
| 2015/16 | 4,099 | 4,001 | 58% | 59% |
| 2016/17 | 5,113 | 5,407 | 55% | 57% |
| 2017/18 | 6,364 | 6,447 | 59% | 61% |
| 2018/19 | 5,410 | 6,405 | 60% | 62% |

Looking at the change in achievements from 2017/18 to 2018/19, the analysis model shows that, in non-pilot areas, the number of achievements fell by 15 per cent (after controlling for local labour market factors). However, in the pilot areas, the number of achievements increased by 1 per cent (see Figure 16). While this difference was statistically significant, the higher number of achievements was driven by the higher number of enrolments in pilot areas. There is therefore no evidence that the pilots had an impact on achievement rates.

Figure 16: The change in the number of achievements from 2017/18 to 2018/19 on courses eligible for subsidy in pilot areas compared with non-pilot areas



5. Learner experiences and outcomes

This chapter presents findings on the outcomes of learners on subsidised courses. It is based on the findings of the second wave of the quantitative learner survey and the second and third waves of qualitative learner interviews. The findings should be viewed as representative of those learners who responded to the survey and cannot reliably be generalised to the wider population of learners who participated in the pilots. The qualitative interviews provide valuable in-depth insights into learner experiences, but they also only reflect the views of those interviewed, rather than the wider population of pilot learners.

Key chapter findings

- The majority (68 per cent) of survey respondents indicated that they were satisfied with delivery of the course and the course information they received prior to enrolment. Learners generally rated the quality of teaching highly.
- Just over three quarters (77 per cent) of survey respondents reported experiencing at least one challenge during their course, including: fitting learning in with their job; fitting learning in with childcare or caring responsibilities; issues with the way the course was delivered; and financial difficulties.
- However, learners interviewed reported circumstantial factors that helped them to better manage learning alongside wider commitments. These included: partners looking after children or providing financial security for the household; employers offering time off work to study or allowing employees to scan or photocopy learning materials; and support from peers on their course.
- The majority (72 per cent) of survey respondents said that they had received support from their provider during their course, although 24 per cent said that they would have liked more. Most learners interviewed were unaware that additional support might have been available from their provider.
- A small number of learners interviewed reported issues with the quality of teaching, the course structure, and the quality of distance learning tools and materials. The tight timescale for delivery of the pilot presented challenges for some learners, particularly for those in full-time work.
- The majority (77 per cent) of survey respondents reported a positive change in their work situation as a result of their course, including increased confidence, understanding and motivation; moving into a new job; and an increase in responsibility or pay.
- Some learners responding to the survey and participating in interviews also reported experiencing wider outcomes as a result of their course, including progression to further learning, being able to better support their children's education, and improved wellbeing.

Evidence on learners' starting points (i.e. their prior experiences of and attitudes towards learning and motivations for enrolling on pilot provision) and their experiences of pilot outreach and IAG can be found in the interim report²⁶. Key findings from the first wave of the learner survey and qualitative interviews included:

- The majority (93 per cent) of survey respondents reported that they were motivated to start their course for work or career reasons. These included learners who wanted to upskill and progress in their current line of work, as well as those who wanted to retrain into a substantially different job.
- Interviewees described several triggers to take up learning, including loss of employment, progressing to the next level of qualification and a recent promotion at work.
- Learners became aware of learning opportunities through a range of channels, including their employer and learning providers' websites. Some learners interviewed said that messages communicated by employers were particularly influential as they were understood to be implicitly endorsed by the employer.
- Learners' testimonies suggested that, in most cases where IAG was experienced, this did not take the form of in-depth advice or guidance. Learners tended to be given practical information about their course and supported with their enrolment. In retrospect, some learners said that they would have welcomed more substantive IAG.

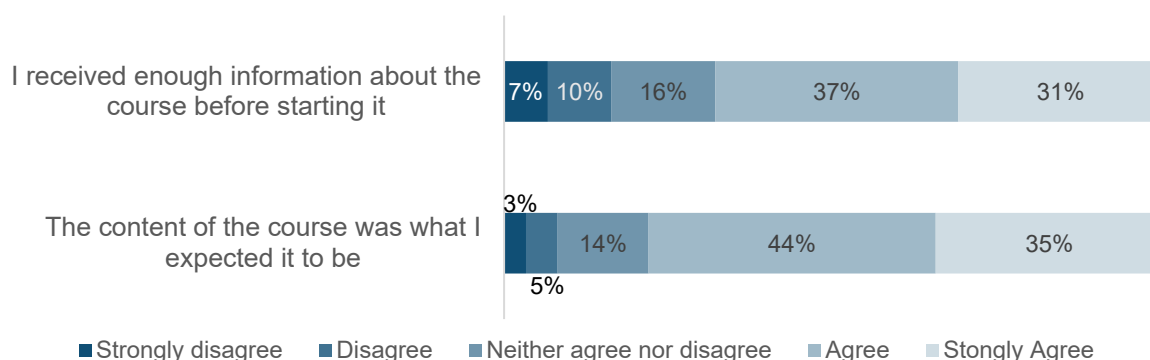
5.1 Learner experiences of course delivery

5.1.1 Satisfaction with pre-course information

The majority of learners responding to the survey agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the information they received about the course prior to enrolment (68 per cent) and that the content of the course matched their expectations (79 per cent) (see Figure 17). Respondents' levels of satisfaction with the information they received before the course strongly correlated with the extent to which the course matched their expectations. Respondents who indicated that they had not received enough information were more likely to report a mismatch between their expectation of the course and the content delivered.

²⁶ Learning and Work Institute (2019) [Cost and outreach pilots evaluation: Interim report](#). Department for Education.

Figure 17: Learners' satisfaction with pre-course information

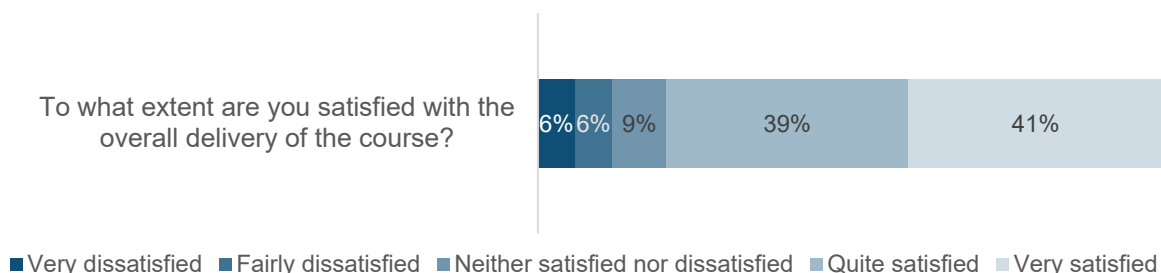


Base: All respondents. Unweighted base = 169.

5.1.2 Satisfaction with course delivery

The survey asked learners to rate their level of satisfaction with the overall delivery of their course. Figure 18 shows that four out of five (80 per cent) respondents were either quite or very satisfied with the delivery. Twelve per cent of respondents stated they were very or fairly dissatisfied.

Figure 18: Learners' satisfaction with course delivery



Base: All respondents. Unweighted base = 169.

Similarly, many of the learners interviewed were satisfied with the delivery of their course. Positive learner feedback on the mode of delivery and the quality of teaching are discussed below, based on the qualitative interviews carried out with learners

Mode of delivery

Learners interviewed for the evaluation said that they experienced one of two main delivery modes: face to face or distance learning with tutor support. Of the learners interviewed whose courses were delivered face to face, most attended a daytime class at their learning provider one day per week, although some attended evening classes once per week. It was rare for the learners interviewed to attend classes more frequently than this. Some learners said that they also completed a compulsory work-based placement that was generally distinct from their job if they were already in employment. Where

courses were delivered via distance learning, most learners interviewed reported that tutor support was available face to face (for example at their workplace) or via email and phone. Distance learning courses were generally delivered on a modular basis through an e-assessor platform, each module with a workbook attached.

Learners interviewed commonly reported that the delivery mode suited their individual preferences and life circumstances. For example, learners accessing face to face provision reported that they enjoyed attending a class as they were able to get out of the house, experience social interaction and benefited from direct contact with a tutor or classmates when needing help with tasks.

If we don't understand what the teacher's explained, we're able to interact with one another and I think being in a classroom environment helps a lot, especially with this kind of subject.

– *Learner, West Midlands*

In contrast, distance learners said this approach helped them to balance their course with work and family commitments, as they could break down their learning into manageable chunks and work through the material at their own pace, when and where it suited them. For example, learners described studying at home after their children were in bed, whilst others accessed online reading materials on their smartphones whilst travelling.

It's online so I can access it whenever I want. I even access it sometimes on the bus when I'm travelling. – *Learner, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire*

The flexibility of distance learning was particularly helpful for parents who work full time as they could study from home without needing childcare. Some learners living in rural areas also said that distance learning was the only mode of learning that worked for them, as travelling to a learning provider after work would not have been possible.

Quality of teaching

Overall, learners interviewed found their tutors to be supportive, available and approachable. A number of learners commented that their tutors could be reached quickly if needed via email or phone. Others reported that their tutors were sensitive to the needs of adults attempting to balance learning with wider commitments, for example by providing flexibility with deadlines and allowing learners to leave early to pick up children.

She understands that we're adults and we've all got lives outside of college... The recognition that we have got issues in life and we try

our best to better ourselves but we've also got stuff going on. –
Learner, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire.

The quality of teaching was generally rated highly by learners interviewed. They described tutors giving clear explanations and clarifying any queries, for example explaining the wording of assessment tasks. One learner with dyslexia described how a tutor adapted his teaching to meet her needs:

Sometimes if you're struggling in class, then the lecturer actually comes over and explains to you exactly what he's trying to say in maybe a different way than everyone else would understand. Me being severely dyslexic, he can then explain a different way. –
Learner, Heart of the South West

5.1.3 Challenges experienced by learners

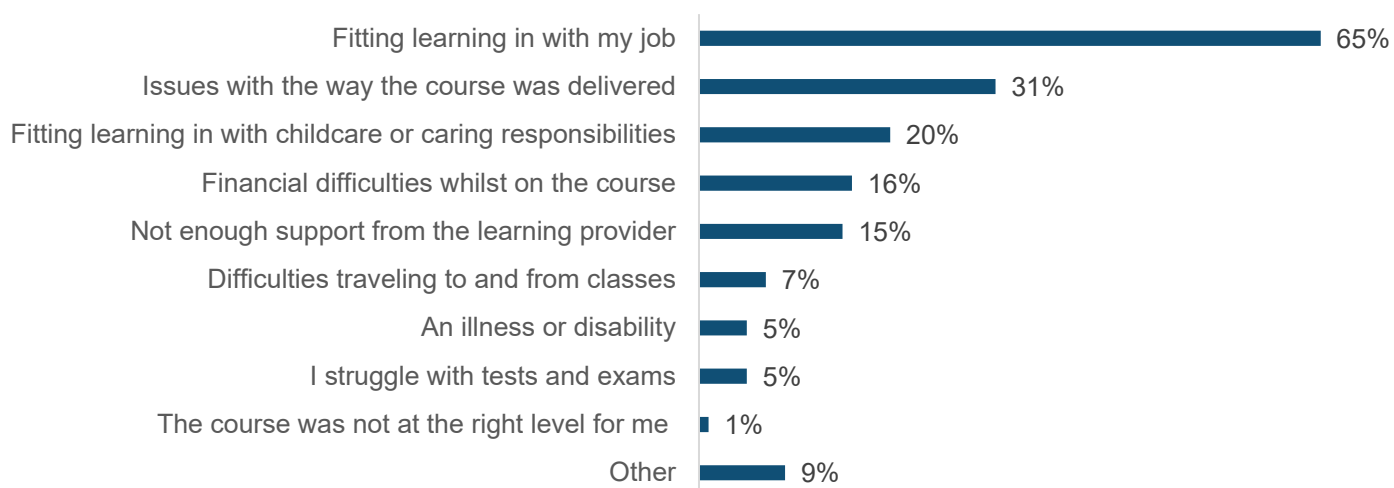
Learners responding to the survey were asked what, if anything, made learning difficult during their course. Just over three quarters of respondents (77 per cent) reported that they had experienced at least one difficulty, while 22 per cent indicated that nothing made learning difficult²⁷. For respondents who experienced a difficulty during their course, just under two thirds (65 per cent) indicated that they found it challenging to fit learning in with their job and 20 per cent had difficulties fitting learning in with childcare or caring responsibilities (see Figure 18).

While the majority of respondents reported that they were satisfied with the delivery of the course, nearly a third (31 per cent) indicated that they had issues with the way the course was delivered. Despite the subsidy for the course, 16 per cent of respondents stated that they had financial difficulties during the course. Fifteen per cent said they did not receive enough support from their provider.²⁸

²⁷ One per cent reported that they did not know if anything made learning difficult.

²⁸ The survey did not specify the types of support for learners.

Figure 19: Difficulties experienced by learners during their course



Base: Learners who experienced at least one difficulty. Unweighted base = 133.²⁹

Some learners interviewed for the evaluation also discussed difficulties they had experienced during their course. These issues relate to course delivery, as well as wider factors that influenced learners' experiences. The findings from the qualitative interviews are described below.

Challenges relating to course delivery

Although most of learners interviewed were satisfied with the teaching quality, a small number reported that they experienced issues, such as:

- Disruption caused by delays in putting teaching staff in place and by changes in staffing once the course was underway
- Poor teaching practice, indicated by a lack of pre-class preparation, weak classroom management and limited monitoring, intervention, support and correction in class.

Some learners interviewed reported issues with the quality of the distance learning materials. For example, virtual learning environments (VLE) that were not user-friendly, learning materials that were too text heavy to engage learners, and unclear assignment questions which impacted on learners' confidence.

Some distance learners interviewed struggled with inflexible linear module routes that were difficult to fit into a busy lifestyle. This meant that learners could not choose modules in an order that would fit best with peaks in their employment, for example by doing smaller modules during busy periods. One learner withdrew from their course when

²⁹ Respondents were able to select more than one category, hence totals add up to more than 100%.

a particularly large module clashed with a busy time of year at work. Learners reported that despite the later modules being longer, the time allowed to complete them was the same as the earlier, shorter modules. They said it would have been easier to balance study and work if they had a longer timeframe within which to complete the larger modules. Learners also would have preferred to receive an information pack upfront at the start of the course detailing the order, length and required study hours for each of the modules, in addition to deadlines for assignments.

So that you know when obviously quite a big [module] is going to take a while, and sort of plan ahead, rather than just wait for the next one to open and see how many questions it is and things like that. –
Learner, Leeds City Region

Several learners interviewed who were enrolled on distance learning courses reported being dissatisfied with the online learning mode, because they felt insufficiently supported by tutors and wanted face to face contact. In a small number of cases, learners said that had face to face support been available, this may have stopped them from withdrawing from the course.

The tight timescale for delivery of the pilot presented challenges for some learners interviewed. Particularly for those in full-time work, the more intensive delivery models of some courses brought additional pressures. Many interviewees stated that having more time to complete courses would have been a significant help. Several learners argued that the need to deliver courses in a shorter time than usual led to rushed teaching, which in turn hindered their understanding of what was being taught. One learner, who eventually withdrew, described how his face to face course moved to an increasingly blended learning approach as tutors regularly directed learners to the VLE to complete the session themselves.

We have sort of face to face, it's like, 'Alright, well, I'll put the rest on the computer because we haven't really got time go through it too in depth,' they were just sort of skimming over it. – *Learner, West Midlands*

Another learner's course was shortened by one term shortly after the course started, which required those who were away during the half-term break to make up the time. This respondent stated that her withdrawal from the course was due in part to a perceived lack of support from the college to enable learners to achieve the qualification in the shortened timeframe.

Overcoming challenges

Similarly to the survey respondents, learners taking part in interviews frequently said it was challenging to balance study with work, family and other commitments. However, many reported circumstantial factors that helped them to better manage these commitments, enabling them to stay engaged with their learning. For example, they adopted flexible approaches to finding time to learn, such as studying after children had gone to bed or while travelling on public transport. Some interviewees said that their partner helped them to balance study and family commitments by taking over household tasks, looking after children or providing financial security for the household, all of which allowed learners to attend college during the week and complete assignments.

Employer support was regularly cited as crucial in enabling learners to complete their course, particularly by those struggling to balance learning with work. This support was offered in a range of ways, such as allowing employees to study during spare time at work, prepare materials for home study such as scanning or photocopying, spend time off the job to meet with work-based tutors and assessors and take holiday leave to work on assignments.

Life at home's a little bit crazy with two kids and other stuff going on, so I've been able to find some time at home, but I wouldn't have been able to find enough to complete it without that support at work. –
Learner, Leeds City Region

Most interviewees reported that they gained vital support from peers on their course. Learners maintained regular contact with one another through email and WhatsApp groups and worked collaboratively at college to support each other with tasks and assignments. Learners highlighted that a strong peer support network helped them to better engage with the course material and motivated them to stay on their courses, as instant support was available in class or at home via WhatsApp if they were struggling.

The group of lads that we're with, as I said, we've been together from last year. They created a WhatsApp group. Whenever one struggles or someone doesn't pass an exam or someone needs help more than the others, we all chip in together and help that one person out, which has been really good. – *Learner, West Midlands*

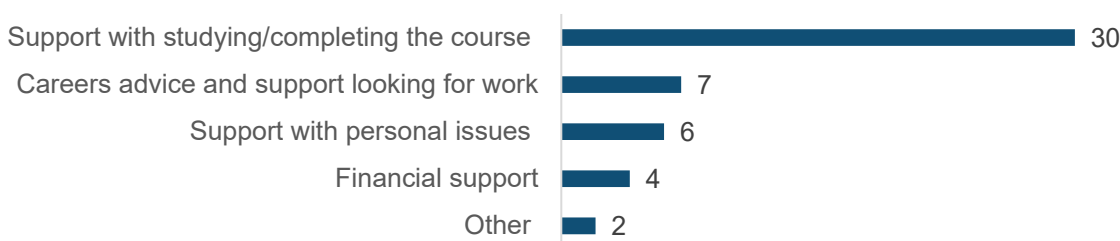
5.1.4 Support for learners

The survey asked learners about the support they received from their learning provider during their course.

- The majority of respondents (72 per cent) reported that they had received enough support from their provider
- Nearly a quarter of respondents (24 per cent) would have liked more support
- Just four per cent of respondents said they received no support and did not want any.

Of the survey respondents who wanted additional support, most wanted help with studying (see Figure 20). Respondents who wanted more support with studying were much less likely to report satisfaction with the delivery of the course.

Figure 20: Additional support desired by learners



Base: All respondents who stated they would have liked more support. Unweighted base = 39.³⁰

Notably, most learners who took part in qualitative interviews were unaware that additional support might have been available from their provider to help them with any issues they experienced.

Some learners interviewed who were changing career stated that it would have been useful to have had a work placement or similar opportunity embedded into their programme. They felt that their courses did not provide the practical experience necessary to allow them to fully get to grips with in-class material, or to prepare for the transition into employment after they had finished the course. For example, some career changers on accountancy Level 3 courses said that they would have welcomed opportunities to gain workplace experience and start to build professional networks outside the classroom.

So, really, what's stopping me, and I think will be stopping lots of other people, is, it isn't just getting the grades, it's also about getting some experience and getting to know people in the industry as well.
 – *Learner, Greater Lincolnshire*

³⁰ Respondents were able to select more than category. Figures presented in this chart are unweighted.

Most of the learners interviewed did not seek or receive formal IAG to help them make decisions about their future plans. However, several learners described informal IAG that was embedded into the course by tutors, which was helpful when they were deciding on next steps. Embedded IAG was often underpinned by tutors' direct industry experience. Typically, it was delivered informally either during lessons or in individual tutorials.

5.2 Outcomes for learners

Respondents to the survey and interview participants reported a range of positive outcomes of their learning. Some learners also anticipated that they would experience additional positive outcomes as a result of their learning in the future.

Several interviewees mentioned negative outcomes, including reduced time with family, increased stress and less time for hobbies. However, almost every one of these learners stated that the positive outcomes they experienced outweighed the negative.

5.2.1 Work and career related outcomes

The vast majority of respondents to the wave 2 survey (92 per cent) enrolled on subsidised courses for work or career related reasons. These learners fall into two categories: “upskillers”, who wish to upskill in their current line of work, and “retrainers”, who want to retrain into a substantially different job. The survey suggests that:

- The majority (58 per cent) of learners were upskillers³¹
- One in three (33 per cent) learners were retrainers.³²

This section describes the work and career related goals reported by survey respondents and learners interviewed.

Achievement of work and career related goals

Just over half of the survey respondents (54 per cent) who were motivated to learn for work-related reasons reported that they had achieved their goal by the second wave survey. The majority of respondents (79 per cent) who reportedly achieved their work-related goal attributed this, fully or in part, to their course.

³¹ This includes 45.1 per cent who said they are motivated to develop or improve in a current/recent role, 12.7 per cent of respondents seeking a promotion, and 0.5 per cent who are seeking to gain a similar role to their current line of work.

³² The remaining respondents were either unemployed at the time of enrolling and were motivated to learn to get a job (3 per cent) or indicated that they were motivated by something else (6 per cent).

Of the work-motivated survey respondents who had not achieved their goal yet, the majority (40 of 65) agreed that undertaking the course had brought them to closer to achieving their career-related goal. A roughly equal proportion (41 of 65) thought they were fairly or very likely to achieve their goal within the next three years.

Outcomes achieved

The survey asked learners, who were either in or looking for work, to identify work-related outcomes that they had experienced as a result of their course. The results are shown in Figure 21 below. Just over three quarters of respondents (77 per cent) reported a positive change in their work situation. Most commonly, respondents indicated that they had experienced outcomes related to confidence, understanding and motivation:

- Just over a third of respondents (35 per cent) said their confidence to improve their work situation had increased
- Over a quarter of respondents gained a better idea of their career goals (26 per cent), greater clarity in what they needed to do to achieve them (27 per cent), and experienced increased motivation to do so (27 per cent).

Figure 21: Work-related outcomes reported by learners



Base: Respondents who are in paid employment, or not in paid employment but looking for work. Unweighted base = 163. Respondents were able to select more than one option. ** indicates a response category only available to those in paid employment (unweighted base = 151).

Learners interviewed echoed this, with some reflecting that they have gained a clearer and more ambitious sense of what they want from their working life. Most attributed the increased clarity to their experience of the course, the course content, and what they have learned about progression pathways from tutors and classmates. For example, a learner who undertook a diploma in electrical installation described how his aspirations expanded beyond his initial expectations:

It's furthered [my aspirations] because I only expected to be installing. Now, I'm looking at testing and inspecting and then most likely going onto even programming and things like that. – *Learner, West Midlands*

Learners responding to the survey also reported achieving employment outcomes as a result of undertaking their course, including:

- moving into a new job (24 per cent);
- taking on additional responsibilities in their existing role (24 per cent); and
- increasing their pay (19 per cent).

Interview participants commonly stated that they have progressed at work as a direct consequence of the pilot learning. Some learners had moved into a new job with either their current or a new employer since enrolling on a subsidised course. Several said that they had done so as a direct result of the experience, skills and qualifications gained through the pilot. Some learners have successfully progressed into work, having been unemployed for several years before they started their courses.

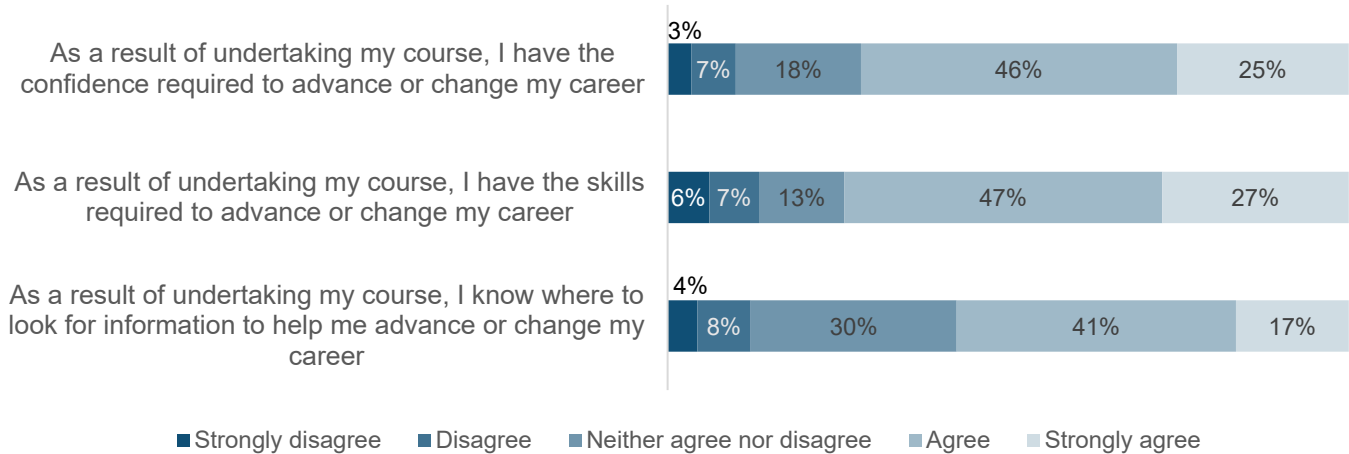
Some learners interviewed said that their earnings have increased as a result of undertaking a subsidised course. They reported being able to increase the services they offer to clients, attaining a promotion or a new job, or increasing their responsibilities at work, which in turn led to an increase in take-home pay. A small number of learners interviewed said that the increase in responsibilities at work was not attributable to the subsidised course and would have happened anyway as they continued to gain experience in their current roles.

In a very small number of cases, interviewees reported that they had taken a cut in earnings and responsibility in order to get a job in a new field. They accepted this as a necessary step towards the career they wanted, and a temporary situation which they interpreted as a positive outcome from their course.

Future career advancement

The survey asked learners about any changes they experienced, as a result of their course, that would help them to advance their career. Figure 22 shows that the majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they now have the skills (74 per cent) and the confidence (71 per cent) required to advance their career.

Figure 22: Changes in the information, skills and confidence required for career advancement



Base: all respondents. Unweighted base = 169.

Many interviewees supported this, saying that they have been able to apply learning from the course to their current job, leading to improved performance and increased confidence at work. For example, one learner described how he has been able to apply learning from a module on conflict management to situations at work:

I was a bit unsure how to deal with [conflict management], but then I read about it in this course and it clicked in my head. So, I certainly think it's going to help with my confidence in this company, or any other company. – *Learner, Leeds City Region*

Several learners who are aiming to gain a promotion or move into a more highly skilled role also said that they have grown in confidence, so that when the right opportunity presents itself, they will be ready and able to apply.

I am looking and I am feeling more confident to now apply for the higher-level jobs. Whereas, this time last year... I would have just been searching for the admin-related jobs. – *Learner, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire*

Learners interviewed also said that they had developed a wide range of transferable skills which have made them more effective in their current role and more confident about progressing in future. Transferable skills cited by learners related to: communication; writing; management; time keeping; personal organisation; interpersonal skills; learning-to-learn skills, including critical analysis and synthesising information; presentation; and IT skills including word processing, Excel and diary management. Some learners said they have developed a more positive and professional attitude whilst on their subsidised course, and therefore felt more prepared to enter a professional working environment.

Despite their engagement with the pilot, a substantial minority of those responding to the survey (38 per cent) disagreed or strongly disagreed that they know where to look for information to advance or change their career. This suggests that greater availability of information sources for career progression may be of benefit to adult learners.

However, some interviewees said they are more aware of learning opportunities now than they were before undertaking the subsidised course. Two broad themes are evident in relation to this increased awareness. Firstly, many learners reported obtaining information from college staff and tutors, other learners, and providers' marketing materials about other courses that are available, including progression routes from pilot learning. For example:

- One learner reported that halfway through the course, college staff talked to the class about the opportunity to go on to next qualification level in the following academic year.
- Promotional material on apprenticeships made a learner aware that they are open to adults as well as school leavers.
- Some learners reported carrying out their own research online to explore opportunities for progression.

Secondly, interviewees stated that the pilot increased their knowledge of the range of adult learning provision available, including flexible delivery through distance learning and part time courses. The experience of flexible learning demonstrated to some learners that they were able to balance learning with work and home life, and they reported being more likely to engage in career learning again in the future as a result.

5.2.2. Wider outcomes

The majority of learners (84 per cent) responding to the survey reported wider outcomes as a result of their course.

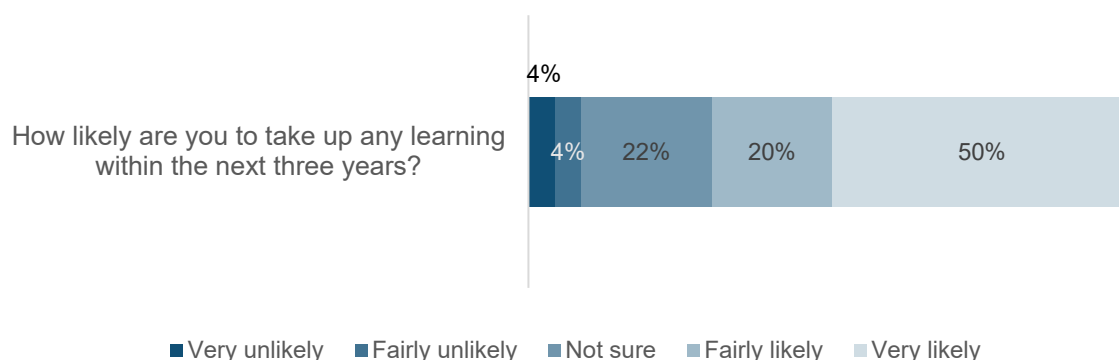
- More than two thirds of learners (69 per cent) said they improved their knowledge in the subject
- Nearly three fifths of learners (58 per cent) reported gaining new skills
- Nearly half of learners (47 per cent) indicated that their self-confidence had improved
- Nearly one third of learners (31 per cent) reported feeling more positive about their work situation
- Nearly one third of learners (31 per cent) made new friends or found a new partner.

This section explores these outcomes in more detail, primarily drawing on the qualitative interviews with learners. These wider outcomes relate to learning and skills, as well as personal and family outcomes.

Progression to further learning

Survey respondents were asked to rate the likelihood of taking up further learning in the next three years. As Figure 23 shows, half (50 per cent) of respondents said they were very likely to take up learning again and one in five (20 per cent) said they were fairly likely to. Only eight per cent said they were fairly or very unlikely to take up any further learning within the next three years.

Figure 23: Likelihood of further learning



Base: All respondents. Unweighted base = 169.

Most learners interviewed reported that they have either enrolled on or started another formal learning course since completing their subsidised course. In most cases, this progression was to a course at a higher level in the same subject, for example from accountancy Level 3 to Level 4. However, a small number of interviewees progressed sideways or even to a qualification at a lower level in a different subject with the aim of initiating a change in career direction or accelerating their career development. For instance, a learner who had completed a Level 3 childcare qualification through the pilot then undertook a Level 3 childminder introductory training course as a step towards setting up her own business. Another who had completed a Level 3 diploma in leadership and management subsequently enrolled on a Level 2 introduction to counselling as a way of gaining greater understanding of counselling as a career path.

Most interviewees who progressed straight from subsidised provision to another course attributed their continuing commitment to career learning to the opportunities and experiences gained through the pilot. They described having enhanced career aspirations together with increased confidence to undertake further learning and greater awareness of learning opportunities. Evidence relating to these last two factors is discussed in more detail in the relevant sections below.

Several learners interviewed who have progressed to further learning said that they had always intended to do so. However, they also recognised that completion of the subsidised course had provided a vital stepping-stone and helped to accelerate progress towards achieving their career goals.

Many interviewees reported that their confidence in their ability to learn has increased as a result of learning on the pilot. For some, this was because they have proved that they can learn and achieve, and now feel more driven and motivated to learn. One learner spoke of her “hunger” to do more learning. A common narrative expressed by learners was that before they started learning, they felt “useless” or “stuck”. However, they believed that learning has helped them to challenge and overcome limiting beliefs, leading to positive changes – and in some cases, transformations – in their attitudes towards themselves and their career. This was especially the case for learners over the age of 35 and those who have had an extended break from employment to care for children.

It's definitely a confidence boost, to go back to college... I've been at home with my children growing up, you do lose your confidence... It's been good to go back and realise that you can actually do it... It's a good confidence boost, mixing with other people, and learning something. – *Learner, Greater Lincolnshire*

Because of how I am as a person, because I've been out of education for a while, I felt quite nervous to just jump straight into Level 5. It is equivalent to a degree. I didn't go to uni or anything... I think, if I hadn't done a Level 3, I wouldn't be doing the Level 5. It was a good grounding and step up for me. – *Learner, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire*

Interviewees described being less afraid of undertaking learning and anticipated being proactive about seeking out further learning opportunities:

I think I would be more likely to ask for further training, sort of on-the-job training and courses and things like that. I'm not scared of learning anymore. If they were offering any courses, I'd be the first one to put my hand up and say, 'Yes, I want to learn more, I want to go further with that'. – *Learner, Heart of the South West*

A small number of interviewees who struggled with aspects of their pilot courses nevertheless indicated that the experience had helped them to gain greater awareness of their learning needs and preferences. They stated that this would help them to undertake learning more successfully in the future. For instance, one participant who did not complete her course reflected that if she could have done the course at Level 2 first, this would have been helped to build her confidence as she found the Level 3 too difficult. Other learners reflected that their experiences on subsidised courses helped them to realise that certain learning and assessment modes do not suit them. Some said that

they would be less likely to engage in formal, classroom-based learning again, but would consider informal and distance learning courses. Another learner reported that she found the exams and revising for exams difficult as she struggled to retain information. She concluded that a coursework-based course would have suited her better.

The small number of learners who said they felt more negative about learning attributed this to having to complete a high volume of work within short timescales. This has led some learners to conclude that learning is not manageable for them alongside work.

Wider family and personal outcomes

Many interview participants reported positive outcomes linked to their family and personal circumstances, which they attributed to the course. However, it is worth noting that several interviewees mentioned short-term negative impacts on their personal lives while they were actually undertaking the course, as they had less time to spend with their families and sometimes experienced stress due to the challenges of learning.

Interviewees with young children described a range of ways in which the experience of undertaking pilot learning had impacted positively on the place of learning within the family. For example, they reported:

- feeling empowered to act as good role models for their children, with the ability to demonstrate a learning mind-set and normalise lifelong learning at home;
- being able to better support their children with their homework; and
- inspiring family members and friends to engage in learning.

A few learners interviewed said that their wellbeing has improved as a direct result of learning. They attributed this to a range of factors, including:

- having a clearer line of sight to a career that interests them and so feeling less “trapped”; and
- progressing at work, thereby attaining greater job satisfaction, more income and financial security.

One learner described how, after a year of studying at college, her overall wellbeing and self-esteem has improved in various ways:

[Before] I felt, sort of a bit like, ‘I’m nearly 40 years old, I don’t have a job, I don’t have a career, I don’t know where I’m going.’ But now, after a year at college, I feel great, even within myself. I’m happier, I’m more confident, I’m sleeping better, I’m not worrying about things. It’s made a real difference to me as well, not just, obviously, getting the qualification but to my whole mindset in

a way. You know, my brain is still working, I can still do this and it's just building that confidence back up. – *Learner, Heart of the South West*

Although limited, some evidence emerged that re-engaging with learning through the pilot could act as a first step for some participants towards personal progression in their confidence and motivation to engage in a wider range of activities outside the home. One learner reported that she used to lack self-confidence and would avoid some forms of communication including talking on the phone. However, since doing the subsidised course, she has gained confidence talking in front of other people. As a result of this, she has chosen to become a parent governor at her daughter's school. The learner reflected that she would never have put herself forward for this position before doing the course.

6. Conclusions and implications for policy

The report presents the final findings from the evaluation of the DfE's Cost and Outreach Pilots. The report draws on: administrative data on learner enrolments, completions and achievements; qualitative interviews with pilot delivery partners and learners; and a learner survey. The Pilots are a key part of the evidence base informing the development and implementation of the National Skills Fund. This section therefore highlights considerations for policy.

Despite the evidence on the benefits of learning³³, the UK has seen a recent decline in the number of adults participating in learning and skills training³⁴. Studies have consistently shown the financial cost of learning to be a key barrier for adults' participation. Through the Pilots, we were able to test the impact of reducing or removing course fees. The evaluation findings indicate that this had a positive impact on enrolments, with no evidence that it affected course completion or achievements. In addition, the qualitative findings suggest that the subsidised offer was motivating for both individuals and their employers.

Previous research has also demonstrated persistent patterns of inequality in participation³⁵. Younger adults, people who already have higher level qualifications and those in higher socioeconomic classifications are most likely to be learning; with participation levels declining with age and distance from the labour market, and lowest for those with fewer or no formal qualifications. The Pilots enabled local areas to trial innovative approaches to outreach and IAG to engage more adults in learning. The evaluation findings highlight the importance of strong partnerships and leadership at a local level in delivering these activities; the need for flexibility in the delivery of careers IAG and learning, including the option of online delivery; and that careers IAG must be proactively promoted to adults before and during their learning.

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Green, F et al. (2015) "The declining volumes of workers' training in Britain", *British Journal of Industrial relations* 52(2) pp.422-488

³⁵ Learning and Work Institute (2018) *Adult Participation in Learning Survey 2017*
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/735438/Participation_in_Learning_Survey_2017.pdf

6.1 Policy considerations

The research highlights a number of considerations for the DfE as they develop and implement the National Skills Fund:

1. Course fee subsidies can help to engage adults and their employers in learning and training opportunities. The offer of a subsidy can help to reduce risk to these parties of the learner moving into an area they do not have experience in.
2. To avoid deadweight, subsidies should be prioritised for economically valuable courses that employers or adults may not pay for otherwise.
3. Clear strategic leadership is critical to ensure successful implementation of activities at a local level. This involves well-developed plans, distinct roles for delivery partners, and buy-in from local stakeholders. Strong branding and clear progression routes are also important to secure and sustain engagement with individuals.
4. Linked to a local approach, consideration should be given to the degree to which local areas should have discretion about the learning or training made available through the National Skills Fund. This may enable local areas to align activities to local economic priorities and existing initiatives.
5. A flexible approach to outreach, careers IAG and course delivery is needed to engage working adults and their employers. Online options can support this, although face-to-face engagement is also reported to be effective for some groups.
6. To ensure adults access the learning and training that is right for them, it will be important that they can access high-quality careers IAG, including engagement with existing provision such as the National Careers Service. This offer needs to be high-profile and clearly communicated to ensure individuals understand what they can access, how and the benefits of doing so.
7. Engaging with employers can be a particularly effective way of engaging working adults in learning. Consideration should be given to how employers can be incentivised to support individuals to access learning, including time off to train.
8. Individuals draw on a range of sources of support while on-programme, including from their provider and their peers. Providers should ensure their support offer is proactively communicated to learners, and courses should be designed in a way that facilitates communication between learners, even when delivered online.
9. The tight timescales for design and delivery were frequently cited by interviewees. This has implications for the effective design of interventions; the strength of the partnerships established locally prior to delivery; the successful implementation of activities; the volume and range of learners engaged; the quality of provision; and

therefore, potentially the outcomes of the programme. The DfE should therefore allow sufficient time for development, delivery and evaluation to maximise the impact of the National Skills Fund.

Appendix 1: Subsidised qualifications

The table below presents the final list of qualifications agreed for subsidy, by pilot area, subject sector area, qualification level and level of subsidy. Note a 'learning aim' is a set of activities leading to a qualification. It is not necessarily the same as a 'course' which could be made up of several qualifications. For the provision offered through the pilot, courses and learning aims have similar meanings.

Table 7: Final list of qualifications available for subsidy

| Pilot area | Learning aim title (2017/18) | Subject sector area | Provision | Subsidy | Learners |
|----------------------|---|--|-----------|---------|-------------|
| Greater Lincolnshire | ABC Level 3 Certificate In Fabrication and Welding Practice | Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies | Level 3 | 75% | 0 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | Advanced Certificate In Bookkeeping - Level 3 | Business, Administration, Finance and Law | Level 3 | 25% | Less than 5 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | Advanced Diploma in Accounting - Level 3 | Business, Administration, Finance and Law | Level 3 | 25% | 73 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | BTEC 90-credit Diploma in Health and Social Care (QCF) | Health, Public Services and Care | Level 3 | 25% | 0 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | Certificate for Proficiency in Food Manufacturing Excellence | Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies | Level 3 | 100% | 0 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | Certificate in Health and Social Care (VRQ) | Health, Public Services and Care | Level 3 | 25% | Less than 5 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | Certificate in Practical Horticulture (QCF) | Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care | Level 3 | 100% | 12 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | Certificate in the Management of Freight Forwarding Logistics (RQF) | Retail and Commercial Enterprise | Level 3 | 100% | 16 |

| Pilot area | Learning aim title (2017/18) | Subject sector area | Provision | Subsidy | Learners |
|----------------------|--|--|-----------|---------|-------------|
| Greater Lincolnshire | City & Guilds Level 3 Certificate In General Patisserie and Confectionery | Retail and Commercial Enterprise | Level 3 | 100% | 0 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | City and Guilds NVQ Diploma in Professional Cookery | Retail and Commercial Enterprise | Level 3 | 100% | 11 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | CMI Level 5 Diploma in Management and Leadership | Business, Administration, Finance and Law | Level 5 | 25% | 0 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | Diploma in Electrical Installation (QCF) | Construction, Planning and the Built Environment | Level 3 | 75% | 0 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | Diploma in Electrical Installations (Buildings and Structures) (QCF) | Construction, Planning and the Built Environment | Level 3 | 75% | 0 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | Diploma in Engineering Technologies (QCF) | Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies | Level 3 | 100% | Less than 5 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | Diploma in Plumbing Studies (QCF) | Construction, Planning and the Built Environment | Level 3 | 75% | Less than 5 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | Diploma in Site Carpentry (QCF) | Construction, Planning and the Built Environment | Level 3 | 100% | Less than 5 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | EAL Level 4 Certificate In Group Leadership in a Manufacturing Environment | Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies | Level 4 | 100% | 0 |

| Pilot area | Learning aim title (2017/18) | Subject sector area | Provision | Subsidy | Learners |
|----------------------|---|--|-----------|---------|-------------|
| Greater Lincolnshire | NCFE CACHE Certificate in Understanding the Principles of Dementia Care | Health, Public Services and Care | Level 3 | 25% | 0 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | NCFE CACHE Level 4 Diploma in Adult Care | Health, Public Services and Care | Level 4 | 25% | 0 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | NVQ Diploma in Hospitality Supervision and Leadership (QCF) | Retail and Commercial Enterprise | Level 3 | 25% | Less than 5 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | NVQ diploma in Occupational Work Supervision (Construction) | Construction, Planning and the Built Environment | Level 3 | 25% | 0 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | Pearson BTEC Level 3 90-credit Diploma in Engineering (QCF) | Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies | Level 3 | 100% | 0 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | Pearson BTEC Level 3 90-credit Diploma in Health and Social Care (QCF) | Health, Public Services and Care | Level 3 | 25% | 0 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | Pearson BTEC Level 3 90-credit Diploma in IT (QCF) | Information and Communication Technology (ICT) | Level 3 | 25% | 0 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | Pearson BTEC Level 3 Certificate in Dementia Care | Health, Public Services and Care | Level 3 | 25% | Less than 5 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | Pearson BTEC Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma in Travel and Tourism (QCF) | Leisure, Travel and Tourism | Level 3 | 100% | 0 |

| Pilot area | Learning aim title (2017/18) | Subject sector area | Provision | Subsidy | Learners |
|-------------------------|---|--|-----------|---------|-------------|
| Greater Lincolnshire | Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Certificate In Transporting Freight by Road | Retail and Commercial Enterprise | Level 3 | 100% | 0 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | Professional Diploma in Accounting - Level 4 | Business, Administration, Finance and Law | Level 4 | 25% | 29 |
| Heart of the South West | 90-credit Diploma in Engineering (QCF) | Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies | Level 3 | 25% | Less than 5 |
| Heart of the South West | 90-credit Diploma in IT (QCF) | Information and Communication Technology (ICT) | Level 3 | 25% | 0 |
| Heart of the South West | 90-credit Diploma in Public Services (QCF) | Health, Public Services and Care | Level 3 | 100% | 0 |
| Heart of the South West | Advanced Diploma in Accounting - Level 3 | Business, Administration, Finance and Law | Level 3 | 100% | 126 |
| Heart of the South West | BIIAB Diploma in Adult Care (England) | Health, Public Services and Care | Level 4 | 75% | 0 |
| Heart of the South West | Certificate for the Early Years Advanced Practitioner | Health, Public Services and Care | Level 4 | 25% | Less than 5 |
| Heart of the South West | Certificate in Education and Training (QCF) | Education and Training | Level 4 | 75% | 43 |
| Heart of the South West | Certificate in IT User Skills (ECDL Advanced) (ITQ) (QCF) | Information and Communication Technology (ICT) | Level 3 | 25% | 0 |

| Pilot area | Learning aim title (2017/18) | Subject sector area | Provision | Subsidy | Learners |
|-------------------------|---|--|-----------|---------|-------------|
| Heart of the South West | Certificate in Principles of Customer Service (VRQ) | Business, Administration, Finance and Law | Level 3 | 100% | 19 |
| Heart of the South West | Diploma in Business Administration (QCF) | Business, Administration, Finance and Law | Level 3 | 100% | 44 |
| Heart of the South West | Diploma in Electrical Installation | Construction, Planning and the Built Environment | Level 3 | 75% | 20 |
| Heart of the South West | Diploma in Leadership and Management (QCF) | Business, Administration, Finance and Law | Level 3 | 100% | 80 |
| Heart of the South West | Diploma in Management and Leadership | Business, Administration, Finance and Law | Level 5 | 100% | 25 |
| Heart of the South West | Professional Diploma in Accounting - Level 4 | Business, Administration, Finance and Law | Level 4 | 100% | 34 |
| Heart of the South West | Subsidiary Diploma in Engineering | Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies | Level 3 | 25% | 0 |
| Leeds City Region | 90-credit Diploma in Engineering (QCF) | Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies | Level 3 | 75% | Less than 5 |
| Leeds City Region | 90-credit Diploma in IT (QCF) | Information and Communication Technology (ICT) | Level 3 | 100% | 0 |
| Leeds City Region | Advanced Technical Diploma in Plumbing (450) | Construction, Planning and the Built Environment | Level 3 | 25% | 0 |

| Pilot area | Learning aim title (2017/18) | Subject sector area | Provision | Subsidy | Learners |
|-------------------|---|--|-----------|---------|----------|
| Leeds City Region | BTEC Diploma in Management (QCF) | Business, Administration, Finance and Law | Level 3 | 100% | 25 |
| Leeds City Region | BTEC National Extended Certificate in Business | Business, Administration, Finance and Law | Level 3 | 100% | 0 |
| Leeds City Region | BTEC National Extended Certificate in Health and Social Care | Health, Public Services and Care | Level 3 | 25% | 0 |
| Leeds City Region | BTEC National Foundation Diploma in Business | Business, Administration, Finance and Law | Level 3 | 100% | 0 |
| Leeds City Region | BTEC Subsidiary Diploma in Construction and the Built Environment (QCF) | Construction, Planning and the Built Environment | Level 3 | 25% | 0 |
| Leeds City Region | Certificate in Computer Aided Design (QCF) | Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies | Level 3 | 100% | 0 |
| Leeds City Region | Certificate in Health and Social Care | Health, Public Services and Care | Level 3 | 25% | 0 |
| Leeds City Region | Certificate in Web Design and Development (RQF) | Information and Communication Technology (ICT) | Level 3 | 100% | 0 |
| Leeds City Region | Diploma in Bricklaying (QCF) | Construction, Planning and the Built Environment | Level 3 | 25% | 0 |
| Leeds City Region | Diploma in Electrical Installation (QCF) | Construction, Planning and the Built Environment | Level 3 | 25% | 0 |

| Pilot area | Learning aim title (2017/18) | Subject sector area | Provision | Subsidy | Learners |
|----------------------------------|---|--|-----------|---------|----------|
| Leeds City Region | Diploma in Engineering Technology | Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies | Level 3 | 75% | 0 |
| Leeds City Region | Diploma in Gas Utilisation: Core Skills and Knowledge (QCF) | Construction, Planning and the Built Environment | Level 3 | 25% | 10 |
| Leeds City Region | Diploma in Leadership and Management (QCF) | Business, Administration, Finance and Law | Level 3 | 100% | 117 |
| Leeds City Region | Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care and Children's and Young People's Services (England) | Health, Public Services and Care | Level 5 | 25% | 0 |
| Leeds City Region | Diploma in Management (QCF) | Business, Administration, Finance and Law | Level 3 | 100% | 10 |
| Leeds City Region | Diploma in Plumbing Studies (QCF) | Construction, Planning and the Built Environment | Level 3 | 25% | 0 |
| Leeds City Region | Level 3 Foundation Diploma in Engineering | Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies | Level 3 | 75% | 0 |
| Leeds City Region | NVQ Diploma in Management and Leadership (QCF) | Business, Administration, Finance and Law | Level 5 | 100% | 13 |
| Leeds City Region | Subsidiary Diploma in IT (QCF) | Information and Communication Technology (ICT) | Level 3 | 100% | 0 |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | Advanced Certificate In Bookkeeping - Level 3 | Business, Administration, Finance and Law | Level 3 | 75% | 0 |

| Pilot area | Learning aim title (2017/18) | Subject sector area | Provision | Subsidy | Learners |
|----------------------------------|---|--|-----------|---------|----------|
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | Advanced Diploma in Accounting - Level 3 | Business, Administration, Finance and Law | Level 3 | 75% | 20 |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | Award in Advanced Manufacturing Engineering | Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies | Level 3 | 25% | 0 |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | BTEC Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare (England) (QCF) | Health, Public Services and Care | Level 5 | 100% | 14 |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | BTEC Subsidiary Diploma in Construction and the Built Environment (QCF) | Construction, Planning and the Built Environment | Level 3 | 25% | 0 |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | Certificate in Childcare and Education | Health, Public Services and Care | Level 3 | 100% | 5 |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | Certificate in Computer Aided Design (QCF) | Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies | Level 3 | 25% | 0 |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | Certificate in Fabrication and Welding Practice | Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies | Level 3 | 25% | 0 |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | Certificate in Health and Social Care | Health, Public Services and Care | Level 3 | 100% | 25 |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | Certificate in Human Resources Practice (QCF) | Business, Administration, Finance and Law | Level 3 | 75% | 16 |

| Pilot area | Learning aim title (2017/18) | Subject sector area | Provision | Subsidy | Learners |
|----------------------------------|---|--|-----------|---------|-------------|
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | Certificate in Leadership and Management (QCF) | Business, Administration, Finance and Law | Level 3 | 100% | 12 |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | Certificate in Principles of Leadership and Management (QCF) | Business, Administration, Finance and Law | Level 3 | 100% | Less than 5 |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | Diploma in Advanced Professional Cookery (Kitchen and Larder) (QCF) | Retail and Commercial Enterprise | Level 3 | 25% | 0 |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | Diploma in Electrical Installation (QCF) | Construction, Planning and the Built Environment | Level 3 | 25% | 0 |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care and Children and Young People's Services (England) | Health, Public Services and Care | Level 5 | 100% | 13 |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | Highfield Level 3 Diploma in Adult Care (RQF) | Health, Public Services and Care | Level 3 | 100% | 65 |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | NVQ Diploma in Hospitality Supervision and Leadership (QCF) | Retail and Commercial Enterprise | Level 3 | 75% | 0 |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | NVQ Diploma in Management (QCF) | Business, Administration, Finance and Law | Level 4 | 75% | 0 |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | NVQ Diploma in Management and Leadership (QCF) | Business, Administration, Finance and Law | Level 5 | 75% | 0 |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | NVQ Diploma in Wall and Floor Tiling (Construction) (QCF) | Construction, Planning and the Built Environment | Level 3 | 25% | 0 |

| Pilot area | Learning aim title (2017/18) | Subject sector area | Provision | Subsidy | Learners |
|----------------------------------|--|--|-----------|---------|-------------|
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | Professional Diploma in Accounting - Level 4 | Business, Administration, Finance and Law | Level 4 | 75% | 21 |
| West Midlands | 90-credit Diploma in IT (QCF) | Information and Communication Technology (ICT) | Level 3 | 75% | Less than 5 |
| West Midlands | 90 Credit Diploma in Engineering | Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies | Level 3 | 100% | 7 |
| West Midlands | 90 Credit Diploma in Engineering | Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies | Level 5 | 100% | 0 |
| West Midlands | BTEC National Foundation Diploma in Information Technology | Information and Communication Technology (ICT) | Level 3 | 75% | 0 |
| West Midlands | Cambridge Technical Foundation Diploma in IT (VRQ) | Information and Communication Technology (ICT) | Level 3 | 75% | 0 |
| West Midlands | Diploma in Administration (Business Professional) (QCF) | Business, Administration, Finance and Law | Level 3 | 25% | 10 |
| West Midlands | Diploma in Bricklaying (QCF) | Construction, Planning and the Built Environment | Level 3 | 100% | Less than 5 |
| West Midlands | Diploma in Business (QCF) | Business, Administration, Finance and Law | NA | 25% | 0 |
| West Midlands | Diploma in Business Administration (QCF) | Business, Administration, Finance and Law | Level 3 | 25% | 0 |

| Pilot area | Learning aim title (2017/18) | Subject sector area | Provision | Subsidy | Learners |
|---------------|--|--|-----------|---------|----------|
| West Midlands | Diploma in Digital Entrepreneurship | Business, Administration, Finance and Law | Level 3 | 75% | 18 |
| West Midlands | Diploma in Electrical Installations (Buildings and Structures) (QCF) | Construction, Planning and the Built Environment | Level 3 | 100% | 225 |
| West Midlands | Diploma in Engineering Technology | Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies | Level 3 | 100% | 172 |
| West Midlands | Diploma in Plumbing Studies (QCF) | Construction, Planning and the Built Environment | Level 3 | 100% | 36 |
| West Midlands | NVQ Diploma in Occupational Work Supervision (Construction) (QCF) | Construction, Planning and the Built Environment | Level 3 | 100% | 132 |
| West Midlands | Professional Diploma in Accounting - Level 4 | Business, Administration, Finance and Law | Level 4 | 25% | 36 |
| West Midlands | Subsidiary Diploma in Engineering (QCF) | Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies | Level 3 | 100% | 17 |
| West Midlands | Subsidiary Diploma in IT (QCF) | Information and Communication Technology (ICT) | Level 3 | 75% | 0 |

Appendix 2: Outreach and IAG data

Management information (MI) data was collected by pilot partners delivering outreach and IAG activity, which was shared with L&W for analysis. Data collected from partners is presented to indicate the scale and reach of pilot activity, including the number and profile of adults who were engaged through outreach or IAG support.

Outreach activities were delivered by a wide range of partners who utilised different methods to reach potential learners. It was not possible to collect individual-level data on the characteristics of those receiving outreach communications. Partners were asked to share a summary record of:

- the number of individuals receiving information about the pilot, where feasible, for example, the number of emails sent; and
- the nature and level of outreach targeting, either by individual characteristic or geographical area.

Providers delivering IAG activities were asked to provide information on the number and profile of individuals who accessed support, to help understand whether the pilot reached its intended audience. Data collected included: employment status, highest previous qualification, age, gender, and benefits claimed.

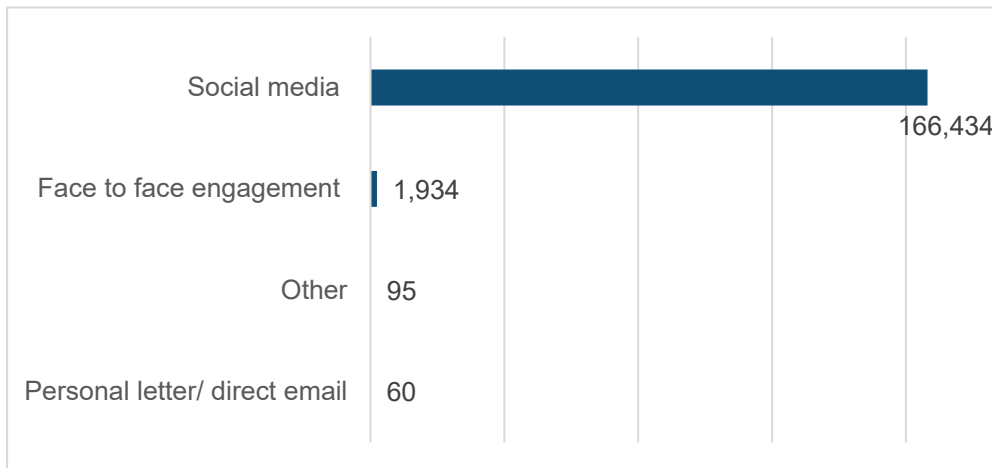
Scale of outreach

Outreach partners submitted regular summary reports on their activity, with the final data arriving in February 2019.

In Greater Lincolnshire, outreach activity focused on a social media campaign and face to face engagement. Pilot messaging was communicated via social media 166,434 times³⁶ (see Figure 24). Face to face activities were attended by 1,934 people.

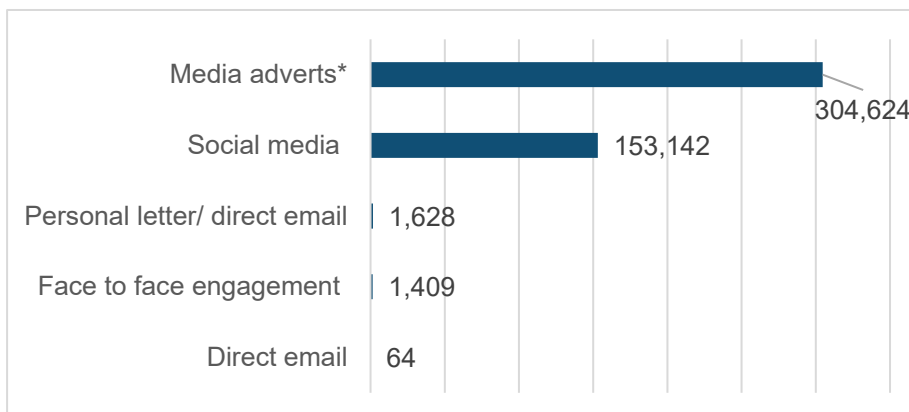
³⁶ This refers to the number of impressions on social media. Impressions refer to the number of times that content is displayed, regardless of whether it is viewed or clicked on by a user.

Figure 24: Number of adults reached by outreach method, Greater Lincolnshire



Data submitted by outreach partners in Heart of the South West indicates that outreach used social and traditional media channels, with 304,624 instances of promotional content being transmitted via traditional media adverts such as TV, radio adverts and local news outlets (Figure 25). Promotional content was displayed through social media³⁷ 153,142 times. In addition, 1,409 individuals were engaged through face to face activities.

Figure 25: Number of adults reached by outreach method, Heart of the South West

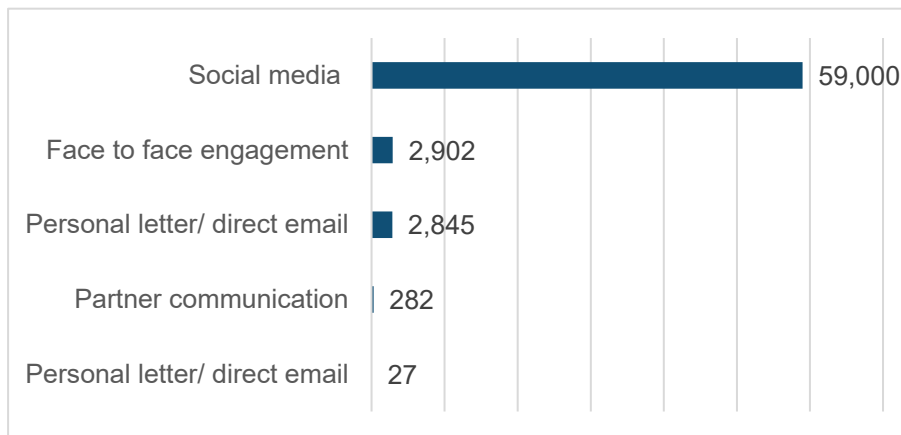


*Media adverts include TV, radio and advertising in local media sources. This figure has been calculated by including the readership of local papers and therefore should be treated in a similar manner as an impression on social media.

³⁷ This refers to the number of impressions on social media. Impressions refer to the number of times that content is displayed, regardless of whether it is viewed or clicked on by a user.

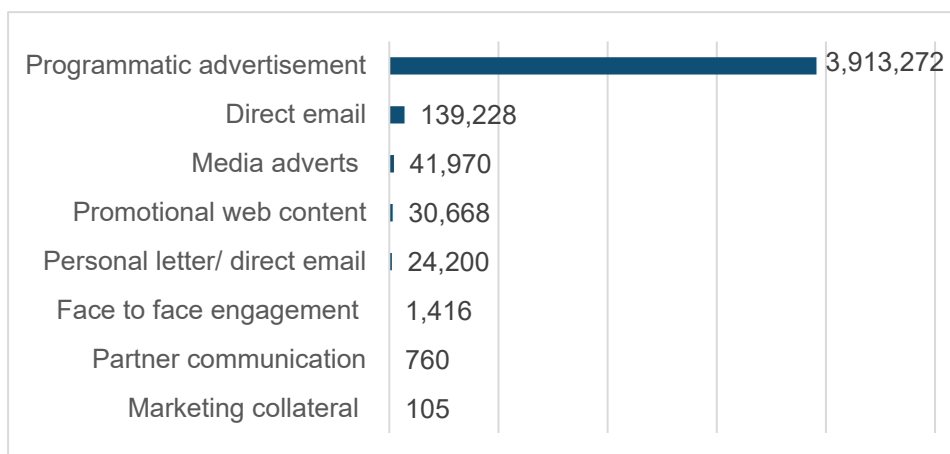
In Leeds City Region, outreach also focused on social media, with 59,000 instances of content being displayed and viewed on social media³⁸ (Figure 26). A total of 2,902 people were reached through face to face engagement.

Figure 26: Number of adults reached by outreach method, Leeds City Region



Outreach activity in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire mainly targeted individuals through programmatic advertising; advertisements on social media and websites were displayed 3,913,230 times³⁹ (see Figure 27). Face to face outreach, such as careers fairs and a street festival, were attended by 1,416 people.

Figure 27: Number of adults reached by outreach method, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire

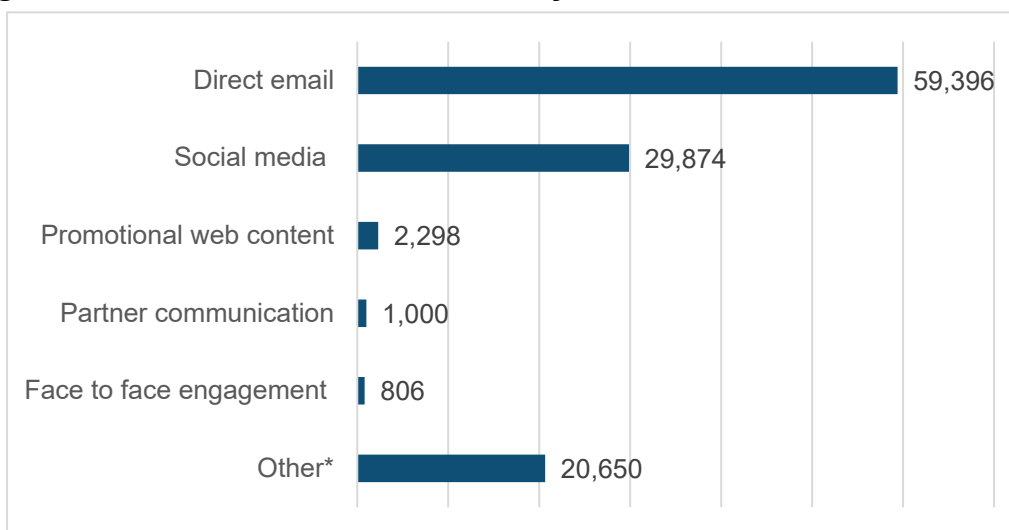


³⁸ Due to the way data has been recorded, this number refers to both the reach (number of times content has been seen) and the number of impressions (number of times content has been displayed in a feed) of promotional content. It has not been possible to disaggregate this figure.

³⁹ This refers to the number of impressions on social media. Impressions refer to the number of times that content is displayed, regardless of whether it is viewed or clicked on by a user.

In the West Midlands, outreach activity focused on digital communication, with 59,396 direct emails sent, 29,874 instances of promotional content being displayed on social media⁴⁰, and 2,298 visits to promotional web content (see Figure 28). A total of 806 people were engaged through face to face activities. The data also suggests that 20,650 individuals were reached through ‘other’ methods⁴¹.

Figure 28: Number of adults reached by outreach method, West Midlands



Numbers and profile of learners accessing IAG

Partners delivering information, advice and guidance (IAG) activity in each pilot area were asked to submit data on the adults who accessed this support. L&W received data returns with information on 687 adults across all pilot areas, 447 (65%) of whom consented to their data being analysed. This section provides a summary of the scale and characteristics of these 447 individuals⁴².

⁴⁰ This refers to the number of impressions on social media. Impressions refer to the number of times that content is displayed, regardless of whether it is viewed or clicked on by a user.

⁴¹ This category contains multiple methods of activity, including social media promotions, email campaigns, face to face events and leafletting. The information has been shared in a way that prevents disaggregation of the data.

⁴² Not all providers involved in pilot IAG activities submitted data of adequate quality and which fulfilled the data protection guidelines for the pilot. The information presented in this section should therefore be understood to be indicative of the cohort engaged in IAG activities, rather than fully representative.

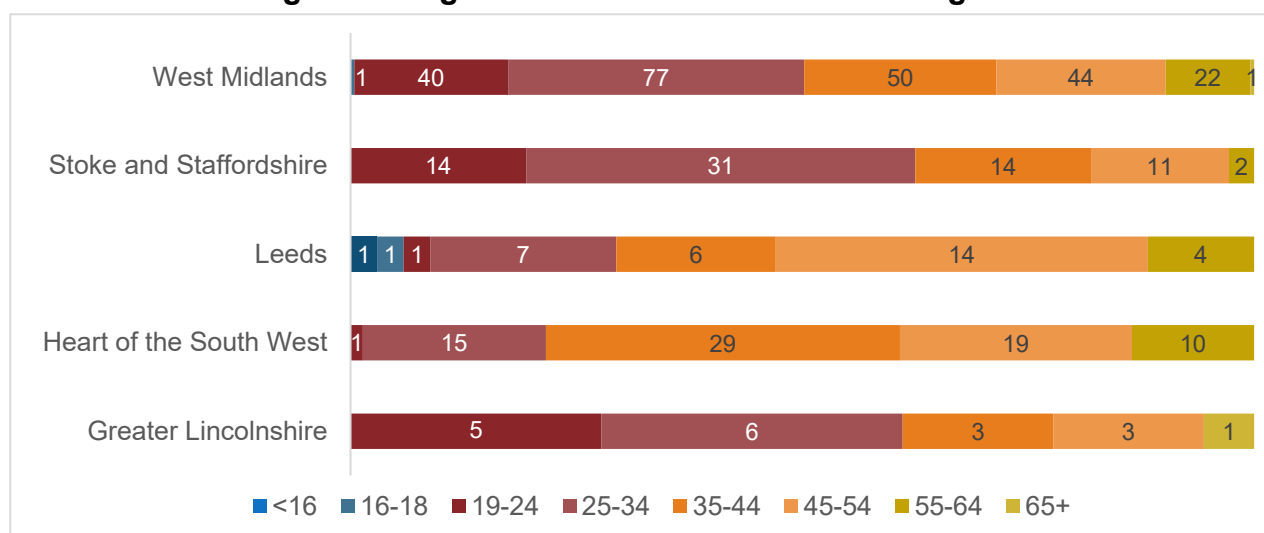
Table 8 below provides a breakdown of the number of adults reportedly engaged in IAG in each of the pilot areas. Delivery partners in the West Midlands and Heart of the South West submitted data for the highest number of adults, with 268 and 215 respectively. Data were received for 95 adults in Greater Lincolnshire, 74 adults in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire, and 35 adults in Leeds City Region.

Table 8: Number of adults engaged in IAG activities

| Area | Total recorded | Consent for data processing |
|----------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| West Midlands | 268 | 236 |
| Heart of the South West | 215 | 87 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | 95 | 18 |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | 74 | 72 |
| Leeds City Region | 35 | 34 |
| Total | 687 | 447 |

The target group for the pilots was adults aged 24 and over. Data recorded and shared by partners delivering IAG indicates that adults accessing this support fall into this group, with an average (mean) age of 37. Nearly a third (31%) of adults engaged in IAG were aged 25-34 and almost a quarter (24%) were aged 35-44. A further 21% of adults who accessed IAG were aged 45-54. The breakdown of ages in each area (see Figure 29) indicates that adults engaged in IAG in the Heart of the South West and Leeds City Region pilots were slightly older than in the other pilot areas, with an average age of 42.

Figure 29: Age distribution of adults accessing IAG

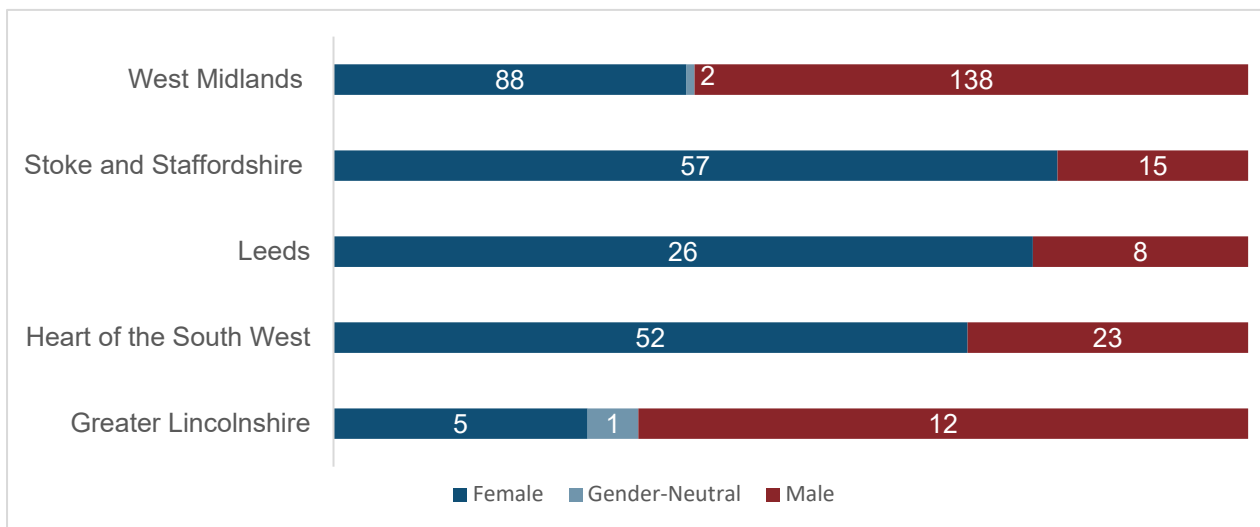


Base: Adults engaged in IAG (who gave consent for data to be processed)=433 (Unweighted)

Women represent just over half (54%) of the adults who accessed IAG, with men making up 46% of the cohort. A breakdown of gender across pilot areas (see Figure 30) indicates that the proportion of women engaged in IAG is far greater in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire, Leeds City Region and Heart of the South West. The data also suggests

that the West Midlands and Greater Lincolnshire pilots were more likely to engage men in IAG than women.

Figure 30: Gender of adults accessing IAG

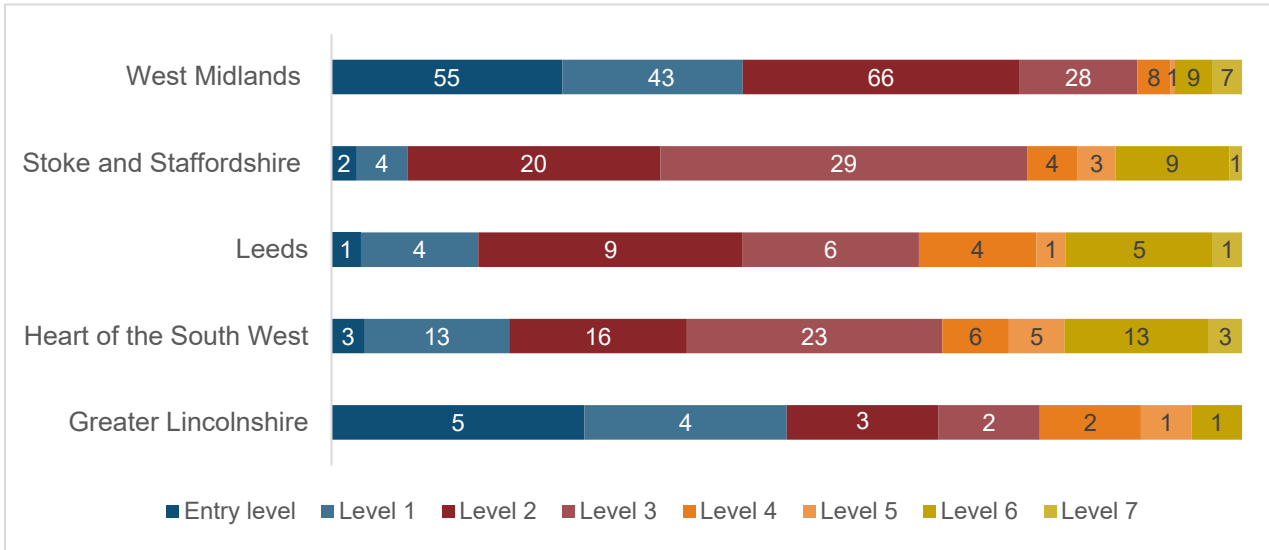


Base: Adults engaged in IAG (who gave consent for data to be processed)=427 (Unweighted)

The pilots aimed to reach adults with low to medium skills and subsidised qualifications were offered at Level 3 and above. The data indicates that the majority (59%) held qualifications at level 2 or below; 16% held Entry Level qualifications, 16% held Level 1 qualifications and 27% held Level 2 qualifications. A further 21% of adults accessing IAG across the pilots already held qualifications at level 3. Finally, one fifth (20%) of adults accessing IAG were qualified at Level 4 or above. This suggests that IAG activity did attract adults in the target group, as well as those who already held high level qualifications.

There was some variation across the pilot areas (see Figure 31). In the West Midlands, just over three quarters (76 per cent) of adults engaged with IAG were qualified up to Level 2, while only 34% of adults were qualified to this level in Heart of the South West.

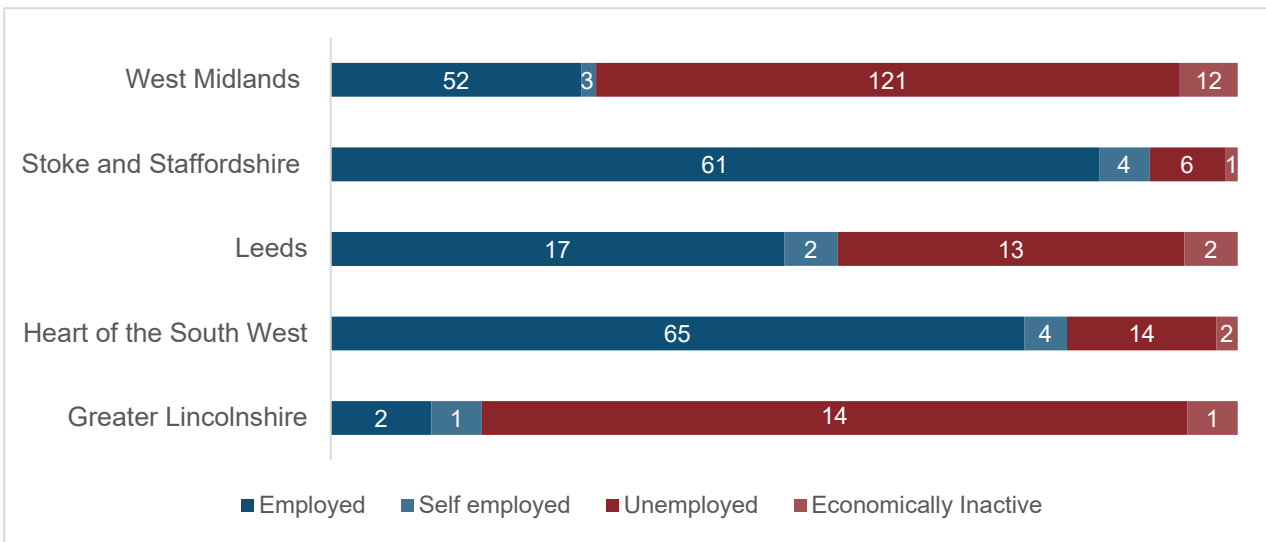
Figure 31: Qualification level of adults accessing IAG



Base: Adults engaged in IAG (who gave consent for data to be processed)=420 (Unweighted)

The main target group for the pilot was working adults. Half (50%) of adults engaged in IAG were employed, with a further 4% self-employed. Just over two fifths (42%) of adults who accessed IAG were unemployed, with the majority of these (121 out of 168) based in the West Midlands (see Figure 32). Just 5% of the adults who accessed IAG were economically inactive.

Figure 32: Employment status of adults accessing IAG



Base: Adults engaged in IAG (who gave consent for data to be processed)=397 (Unweighted)

Appendix 3: Pilot enrolments and achievements – data tables

Table 9: Enrolments to subsidised courses by Sector Subject Area and pilot area

| Sector | Greater Lincolnshire | Heart of the South West | Leeds City Region | Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | West Midlands | Total | Per cent |
|--|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|-------|----------|
| Business, Administration and Law | 103 | 328 | 165 | 72 | 64 | 732 | 46.3% |
| Construction, Planning and the Built Environment | 5 | 20 | 10 | 0 | 397 | 432 | 27.3% |
| Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 196 | 201 | 12.7% |
| Health, Public Services and Care | 5 | 3 | 0 | 122 | 0 | 130 | 8.2% |
| Education and Training | 0 | 43 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 43 | 2.7% |
| Retail and Commercial Enterprise | 29 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 29 | 1.8% |
| Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 0.8% |
| Information and Communication Technology | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0.1% |
| Total | 158 | 395 | 176 | 182 | 658 | 1,581 | 100.0% |

Table 10: Enrolments to subsidised courses by Sector Subject Area and pilot area; Sector Subject Area per cent of learners in each area

| SSATier1 | Greater Lincolnshire | Heart of the South West | Leeds City Region | Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | West Midlands | Total |
|--|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|---|----------------------|--------------|
| Business, Administration and Law | 65% | 83% | 94% | 40% | 10% | 46% |
| Construction, Planning and the Built Environment | 3% | 5% | 6% | 0% | 60% | 27% |
| Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies | 3% | 0% | 1% | 0% | 30% | 13% |
| Health, Public Services and Care | 3% | 1% | 0% | 67% | 0% | 8% |
| Education and Training | 0% | 11% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 3% |
| Retail and Commercial Enterprise | 18% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 2% |
| Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care | 8% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 1% |
| Information and Communication Technology | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

Table 11: Enrolments to subsidised courses by subsidy level and pilot area

| Pilot area | 25% | 75% | 100% | Total | 25% | 75% | 100% | Total |
|----------------------------------|------------|------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|-------------|--------------|
| West Midlands | 46 | 19 | 593 | 658 | 7% | 3% | 90% | 100% |
| Heart of the South West | 4 | 63 | 328 | 395 | 1% | 16% | 83% | 100% |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | 0 | 57 | 137 | 194 | 0% | 29% | 71% | 100% |
| Leeds City Region | 10 | 1 | 165 | 176 | 6% | 1% | 94% | 100% |
| Greater Lincolnshire | 110 | 4 | 44 | 158 | 70% | 3% | 28% | 100% |
| Total | 170 | 144 | 1,255 | 1,581 | 11% | 9% | 79% | 100% |

Table 12: Learners' employment status at enrolment, by pilot area

| Pilot area | Employed | Self employed | Not in paid employment looking | Not in paid employment not looking | Not known/not recorded | Total | Known total |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| West Midlands | 275 | 116 | 149 | 20 | 98 | 658 | 560 |
| Heart of the South West | 327 | 19 | 32 | 11 | 6 | 395 | 389 |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | 163 | 1 | 20 | 6 | 4 | 194 | 190 |
| Leeds City Region | 54 | 13 | 4 | 1 | 104 | 176 | 72 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | 114 | 3 | 17 | 11 | 13 | 158 | 145 |
| Total | 933 | 152 | 222 | 49 | 225 | 1,581 | 1,356 |
| Percentage of known | 69% | 11% | 16% | 4% | | | 100% |
| Percentages of all | | | | | | | |
| West Midlands | 42% | 18% | 23% | 3% | 15% | 100% | |
| Heart of the South West | 83% | 5% | 8% | 3% | 2% | 100% | |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | 84% | 1% | 10% | 3% | 2% | 100% | |
| Leeds City Region | 31% | 7% | 2% | 1% | 59% | 100% | |
| Greater Lincolnshire | 72% | 2% | 11% | 7% | 8% | 100% | |
| Total | 59% | 10% | 14% | 3% | 14% | 100% | |

Table 13: Learners' level of prior qualification, by pilot area

| Pilot area | No qualifications | Level 1 and below | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level 4 | Level 5 | Other qualification, level not known | Not known / not applicable | Total |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| West Midlands | 154 | 87 | 230 | 130 | 15 | 31 | 1 | 10 | 658 |
| Heart of the South West | 22 | 12 | 89 | 116 | 28 | 110 | 3 | 15 | 395 |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | 4 | 20 | 78 | 60 | 7 | 18 | 6 | 1 | 182 |
| Leeds City Region | 4 | 3 | 41 | 72 | 6 | 48 | 0 | 2 | 176 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | 3 | 14 | 51 | 44 | 4 | 27 | 2 | 13 | 158 |
| Total | 187 | 136 | 489 | 422 | 60 | 234 | 12 | 41 | 1,581 |
| West Midlands | 23% | 13% | 35% | 20% | 2% | 5% | 0% | 2% | 100% |
| Heart of the South West | 6% | 3% | 23% | 29% | 7% | 28% | 1% | 4% | 100% |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | 2% | 11% | 43% | 33% | 4% | 10% | 3% | 1% | 100% |
| Leeds City Region | 2% | 2% | 23% | 41% | 3% | 27% | 0% | 1% | 100% |
| Greater Lincolnshire | 2% | 9% | 32% | 28% | 3% | 17% | 1% | 8% | 100% |
| Total | 12% | 9% | 31% | 27% | 4% | 15% | 1% | 3% | 100% |

Table 14: Learners undertaking Level 3 learning, prior qualification, by pilot area

| Pilot area | No qualifications | Level 1 and below | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level 4 | Level 5 | Other qualification, level not known | Not known / not applicable | Total |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| West Midlands | 154 | 85 | 225 | 109 | 13 | 26 | 1 | 9 | 622 |
| Heart of the South West | 15 | 10 | 74 | 74 | 22 | 86 | 2 | 7 | 290 |
| Leeds City Region | 4 | 3 | 39 | 62 | 6 | 47 | 0 | 2 | 163 |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | 4 | 18 | 73 | 28 | 3 | 13 | 6 | 1 | 146 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | 3 | 13 | 40 | 26 | 2 | 15 | 2 | 12 | 113 |
| Total | 180 | 129 | 451 | 299 | 46 | 187 | 11 | 31 | 1,334 |
| West Midlands | 25% | 14% | 36% | 18% | 2% | 4% | 0% | 1% | 100% |
| Heart of the South West | 5% | 3% | 26% | 26% | 8% | 30% | 1% | 2% | 100% |
| Leeds City Region | 2% | 2% | 24% | 38% | 4% | 29% | 0% | 1% | 100% |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | 3% | 12% | 50% | 19% | 2% | 9% | 4% | 1% | 100% |
| Greater Lincolnshire | 3% | 12% | 35% | 23% | 2% | 13% | 2% | 11% | 100% |
| Total | 13% | 10% | 34% | 22% | 3% | 14% | 1% | 2% | 100% |

Table 15: Learners' age group, by pilot area

| Pilot area | Aged 19-23 | Aged 23-34 | Aged 35-49 | Aged 50-64 | Aged 65 and over | Total |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| West Midlands | 117 | 304 | 195 | 40 | 2 | 658 |
| Heart of the South West | 49 | 119 | 163 | 64 | 0 | 395 |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | 36 | 77 | 63 | 16 | 2 | 194 |
| Leeds City Region | 8 | 78 | 68 | 22 | 0 | 176 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | 33 | 69 | 44 | 11 | 1 | 158 |
| Total | 243 | 647 | 533 | 153 | 5 | 1,581 |
| West Midlands | 18% | 46% | 30% | 6% | 0% | 100% |
| Heart of the South West | 12% | 30% | 41% | 16% | 0% | 100% |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | 19% | 40% | 32% | 8% | 1% | 100% |
| Leeds City Region | 5% | 44% | 39% | 13% | 0% | 100% |
| Greater Lincolnshire | 21% | 44% | 28% | 7% | 1% | 100% |
| Total | 15% | 41% | 34% | 10% | 0% | 100% |

Table 16: Learners on subsidised courses, by gender

| Pilot area | Female | Male | Total | Female | Male | Total |
|----------------------------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| West Midlands | 60 | 598 | 658 | 9% | 91% | 100% |
| Heart of the South West | 286 | 109 | 395 | 72% | 28% | 100% |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | 158 | 36 | 194 | 81% | 19% | 100% |
| Leeds City Region | 117 | 59 | 176 | 66% | 34% | 100% |
| Greater Lincolnshire | 109 | 49 | 158 | 69% | 31% | 100% |
| Total | 730 | 851 | 1,581 | 46% | 54% | 100% |

Table 17: Qualifications achievement by learners on subsidised courses, by pilot area

| Pilot area | Achieved | Partial achievement | No achievement | Learning activities are complete but the outcome is not yet known | Study continuing | Total |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|--|-------------------------|--------------|
| West Midlands | 465 | 2 | 119 | 3 | 69 | 658 |
| Heart of the South West | 259 | 1 | 128 | 1 | 6 | 395 |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | 105 | 0 | 63 | 0 | 26 | 194 |
| Leeds City Region | 38 | 0 | 115 | 0 | 23 | 176 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | 69 | 1 | 44 | 8 | 36 | 158 |
| Total | 936 | 4 | 469 | 12 | 160 | 1,581 |
| West Midlands | 71% | 0% | 18% | 0% | 10% | 100% |
| Heart of the South West | 66% | 0% | 32% | 0% | 2% | 100% |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | 54% | 0% | 32% | 0% | 13% | 100% |
| Leeds City Region | 22% | 0% | 65% | 0% | 13% | 100% |
| Greater Lincolnshire | 44% | 1% | 28% | 5% | 23% | 100% |
| Total | 59% | 0% | 30% | 1% | 10% | 100% |

Table 18: Course completion for learners on subsidised courses, by pilot area

| Pilot area | The learner is continuing or intending to continue the learning activities leading to the learning aim | The learner has completed the learning activities leading to the learning aim | The learner has withdrawn from the learning activities leading to the learning aim | The learner has transferred to a new learning aim | Learner has temporarily withdrawn from the aim due to an agreed break in learning | Total |
|----------------------------------|---|--|---|--|--|--------------|
| West Midlands | 69 | 522 | 66 | 1 | 0 | 658 |
| Heart of the South West | 6 | 317 | 72 | 0 | 0 | 395 |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | 26 | 115 | 52 | 1 | 0 | 194 |
| Leeds City Region | 23 | 55 | 98 | 0 | 0 | 176 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | 36 | 97 | 21 | 2 | 2 | 158 |
| Total | 160 | 1,106 | 309 | 4 | 2 | 1,581 |
| West Midlands | 10% | 79% | 10% | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| Heart of the South West | 2% | 80% | 18% | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | 13% | 59% | 27% | 1% | 0% | 100% |
| Leeds City Region | 13% | 31% | 56% | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| Greater Lincolnshire | 23% | 61% | 13% | 1% | 1% | 100% |
| Total | 10% | 70% | 20% | 0% | 0% | 100% |

Table 19: Achievement by those learners who completed subsidised courses

| Pilot area | Achieved | Partial achievement | No achievement | Learning activities are complete but the outcome is not yet known | Total |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|--|--------------|
| West Midlands | 465 | 2 | 52 | 3 | 522 |
| Heart of the South West | 259 | 1 | 56 | 1 | 317 |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | 105 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 115 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | 69 | 0 | 20 | 8 | 97 |
| Leeds City Region | 38 | 0 | 17 | 0 | 55 |
| Total | 936 | 3 | 155 | 12 | 1106 |
| West Midlands | 89% | 0% | 10% | 1% | 100% |
| Heart of the South West | 82% | 0% | 18% | 0% | 100% |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | 91% | 0% | 9% | 0% | 100% |
| Greater Lincolnshire | 71% | 0% | 21% | 8% | 100% |
| Leeds City Region | 69% | 0% | 31% | 0% | 100% |
| Total | 85% | 0% | 14% | 1% | 100% |

Table 20: Achievement rates for courses subsidised at 100 per cent

| Pilot area | Achieved | Partial achievement | No achievement | Learning activities are complete but the outcome is not yet known | Study continuing | Total |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|--|-------------------------|--------------|
| West Midlands | 437 | 2 | 113 | 1 | 40 | 593 |
| Heart of the South West | 203 | 1 | 117 | 1 | 6 | 328 |
| Leeds City Region | 30 | 0 | 113 | 0 | 22 | 165 |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | 66 | 0 | 51 | 0 | 8 | 125 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | 23 | 1 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 44 |
| Total | 759 | 4 | 414 | 2 | 76 | 1255 |
| West Midlands | 74% | 0% | 19% | 0% | 7% | 100% |
| Heart of the South West | 62% | 0% | 36% | 0% | 2% | 100% |
| Leeds City Region | 18% | 0% | 68% | 0% | 13% | 100% |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | 53% | 0% | 41% | 0% | 6% | 100% |
| Greater Lincolnshire | 52% | 2% | 45% | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| Total | 60% | 0% | 33% | 0% | 6% | 100% |

Table 21: Achievement rates for courses subsidised at 75 per cent

| Pilot area | Achieved | Partial achievement | No achievement | Learning activities are complete but the outcome is not yet known | Study continuing | Total |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|--|-------------------------|--------------|
| Heart of the South West | 52 | 0 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 63 |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | 27 | 0 | 12 | 0 | 18 | 57 |
| West Midlands | 19 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 19 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Leeds City Region | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 103 | 0 | 23 | 0 | 18 | 144 |
| Heart of the South West | 83% | 0% | 17% | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire | 47% | 0% | 21% | 0% | 32% | 100% |
| West Midlands | 100% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| Greater Lincolnshire | 100% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| Leeds City Region | 100% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| Total | 72% | 0% | 16% | 0% | 13% | 100% |

Table 22: Achievement rates for courses subsidised at 25 per cent

| Pilot area | Achieved | Partial achievement | No achievement | Learning activities are complete but the outcome is not yet known | Study continuing | Total |
|-------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|--|-------------------------|--------------|
| Greater Lincolnshire | 42 | 0 | 24 | 8 | 36 | 110 |
| West Midlands | 9 | 0 | 6 | 2 | 29 | 46 |
| Leeds City Region | 7 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 10 |
| Heart of the South West | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Total | 62 | 0 | 32 | 10 | 66 | 170 |
| Greater Lincolnshire | 38% | 0% | 22% | 7% | 33% | 100% |
| West Midlands | 20% | 0% | 13% | 4% | 63% | 100% |
| Leeds City Region | 70% | 0% | 20% | 0% | 10% | 100% |
| Heart of the South West | 100% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| Total | 36% | 0% | 19% | 6% | 39% | 100% |



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