

**Harnessing Technology:
Annual sector survey of Adult and Community Learning
2008–09
Final Report**

Contents

Introduction	6
Aims and objectives of the study	6
Summary and analysis of research data.....	7
Section A: Respondents and their organisation	7
Section B: Organisations' use of e-strategies.....	13
Organisational commitment to ICT/e-learning	17
Section C: ILT equipment and access.....	20
Organisations' ILT implementation and satisfaction levels	24
Section D: Use of information and learning technology (ILT) with learners	28
Development, promotion and use of learning resources by staff.....	32
Section E: ICT and staff skills	36
Section F: Challenges and support	41
Challenges and preventative factors	42
Funding and support	44
Section G: ILT safety and security.....	52
ACL practitioners	53
Section A: Respondents and their organisations.....	53
Section B: (ILT) Resources for teaching and learning.....	56
Section C: Learning platforms	64
Section D: Continuing professional development (CPD)	67
Section E: Impact of ILT	70
Voluntary and community organisations: Nine profiles	72
Profile 1: A training organisation for adults with disabilities (East Midlands)	74
Profile 2: A UK online women's centre (Eastern England)	74
Profile 3: A Citizens Advice Bureau (North West England)	75
Profile 4: An adult education centre (Yorkshire and Humber)	75
Profile 5: A training organisation for community groups (South East England)	76
Profile 6: A community-based development trust (Yorkshire and Humber)	76
Profile 7: A women's training and education centre (North East England)	77
Profile 8: An adult college (Yorkshire and Humber).....	78
Profile 9: A community centre (North West England)	78
Summary.....	79
Wider sub-sector consultation group: A summary	79
Where next? The ACL <i>Harnessing Technology</i> surveys 2009/10	82
Conclusions and issues	83
References.....	89

Figures

- 1 Types of funding received by responding organisations, excluding LSC and PCDL
- 2 Types of venues within which organisations deliver learning
- 3 Frequency with which organisations update their e-strategy
- 4 Proportion of ACL staff awareness of their organisational e-strategy
- 5 Respondents' perceptions of ACL tutors' access to computers within their organisation
- 6 Bandwidth of organisations' main internet connection
- 7 Organisations' use of wired/wireless networks
- 8 Levels of organisations' satisfaction with technology access for ACL staff
- 9 Providers' response to potential positive impacts of ILT on learner experience (agree/not sure/disagree)
- 10 Proportion of organisations indicating staff promotion/creation of learning resources
- 11 Perceptions of whether staff have identified benefits of the use of computer-based resources
- 12 Agreement/disagreement with the statement: 'Adult and community learning staff at our organisation have the skills needed to deliver and support learning using ILT.'
- 13 Training available to ACL staff, by type
- 14 Proportion of respondents' agreement with listed preventative factors
- 15 Respondents indicating the extent of the impact of central government policies
- 16 Extent to which government policies/external organisations have supported organisations' ability to use ICT/e-learning
- 17 Safety and security measures
- 18 Regional distribution of respondents
- 19 Online resources
- 20 Developing e-learning resources

21 Use of personal area on learning platform

22 Access to teaching resources from learning platform

Tables

1 Response as a proportion of total local authorities in each region

2 Number of organisations citing multiple funding streams

3 Frequency of provider responses in relation to the proportion of contracted-out provision

4 Descriptions of venues, used for the delivery of learning, classified as 'other'

5 Frequency of respondents' communication of e-strategy to staff, with commentary from respondents

6 Proportions of organisational budget committed/spent on ICT equipment and support

7 Elements currently being addressed in organisations' e-strategies or prioritised in 2008/09

8 Percentage of organisations indicating number of learning sites/venues within which ACL staff can perform specific online activities

9 Organisations' perception of their levels of ILT implementation

10 Providers' agreement/disagreement with potential positive impacts of ILT on learner experience

11 Respondents' perceptions of their organisations' ILT skills and knowledge

12 Training available to ACL staff, by type

13 Proportion of respondents' agreement with listed preventative factors

14 Types of funding accessed by organisation and comments on how it has helped

15 Respondents indicating the extent of the impact of central government policies other than *Harnessing Technology*

16 Extent to which government policies/external organisations have supported organisations' ability to use ICT/e-learning

17 Other locations where learning is delivered

- 18 Access to ILT equipment
- 19 E-Guides access to equipment
- 20 Non-E-Guides access to equipment
- 21 Practitioners' use of technology
- 22 E-Guides' use of ILT
- 23 Non-E-Guides' use of ILT
- 24 Other software that practitioners are using to develop e-learning resources
- 25 Practitioners' use of ILT in their teaching
- 26 Practitioners' views on their provider's support for ILT and e-learning
- 27 Impact of ILT and e-learning on learners
- 28 Practitioners' views on impact of ILT and e-learning
- 29 Impact of ILT on the practitioner's working week

Introduction

This survey into the use of technology in adult and community learning (ACL) is one of four *Harnessing Technology* sector surveys commissioned by Becta to inform their continuing work in monitoring the use of technology to support business processes and learning across the educational system. It is intended that the research will be used by Becta to influence and inform the implementation of *Harnessing Technology* and other strategies and policies for the period through to 2014.

NIACE has also conducted the parallel survey of offender learning, and through co-ordination by Becta, the adult and community learning survey has been aligned to those conducted in work-based learning and further education (FE) colleges.

This is the second year that four parallel surveys have been conducted by Becta, and this year's ACL work seeks not only to ensure continuity with the previous survey but also to increase the sample size and range of provision surveyed.

This section provides a description of the background to the survey, a description of the methods employed and an overview of feedback from the pilot stage.

Background

Becta's work within the further education and skills system began with FE colleges in 2001, extending to other providers in the further education and skills sector in 2007. This extension covered FE colleges, adult and community learning (ACL), work-based learning and offender learning. In this context, ACL refers to the definition of the sub-sector previously described as personal and community development learning (PCDL) in the 2007/08 survey.

The 2007/08 surveys of PCDL showed an e-maturity level of 18%. Though this statistic is low, it is likely that e-maturity is a sector relative concept when trying to develop an overview of the FE and skills sector as a whole. In order to establish a more descriptive understanding, the 2008/09 survey sought to further characterise what it currently means to be an e-mature organisation within ACL, seeking to illustrate the range of diversity within the sub-sector.

[The survey] has a huge emphasis on numbers of computers and connectivity, whereas in our experience here, e-learning is very much wider and more varied than the questionnaire suggests.

Respondent from the 2008 pilot, South West Region

Aims and objectives of the study

The purpose of the *Harnessing Technology* surveys is to assess the levels of organisational/sectoral e-maturity within the various post-16 sub-sectors. NIACE was commissioned to conduct two surveys in 2008/09: one within the ACL sub-sector and one within offender learning. The surveys are intended to secure both provider

and practitioner perspectives on the e-maturity of their organisations, in line with *Harnessing Technology*.

The aim of the contract is to survey the level(s) of e-maturity within the adult and community learning sub-sector. The objectives are as follows:

- gather information on the use made of technology by institutions and staff in the PCDL sector
- identify and analyse issues affecting the use of technology in the adult and community learning sub-sector
- utilise data from existing surveys to identify national trends and issues for policy makers, Becta and adult learning providers in their use of technology
- relate the findings of the survey to priorities identified in the revised *Harnessing Technology: Leading next generation learning 2008-2014* and the FE and Skills Implementation Plan and other national priorities affecting the different parts of the sub-sector or the system as a whole.

Summary and analysis of research data

The following section comprises a summary and analysis of the ACL provider (senior manager) survey and the ACL practitioner survey. The data is grouped along similar categories to facilitate comparison and each section is briefly summarised. Nine voluntary and community organisations have also completed this survey; their responses have been composed as profiles in order to illustrate the different types of organisations within the wider ACL community to be surveyed next year.

Local education authorities (LEAs)

Of the 150 local authorities contacted, 65 (43%) responded to the survey. Of these, four responses came from organisations to whom all or the majority of particular local authority provision was sub-contracted. It should therefore be noted that the data drawn from these organisations, in respect of their wider organisational provision, will have some effect on the sections relating to organisational infrastructure as their knowledge of the authority provision/infrastructure/support mechanisms may be limited to the contribution of their organisation. Further, response has come from senior managers with a range of titles and responsibilities, which suggests a range of perspectives

In the analysis, actual figures have been used, supplemented by percentages to illustrate proportionality.

Section A: Respondents and their organisation

The first section of the survey was intended to define the sub-sector in terms of a profile of characteristics, including regional distribution, funding profile, type of delivery, type of learning venues and analysis of tutors by contractual hours.

Regional distribution of respondents

Overall, each region was represented to some extent (Table 1), with the greatest proportion coming from the South East: 11 respondents, 17 per cent of total response and 58 per cent of all local education authorities in that region. At the other end of the scale, 23 per cent of LEAs in the North West responded to the survey: five respondents, 8 per cent of total.

The second poorest represented region was London, with nine responses which, although comprising 14 per cent of the survey, only represented 27 per cent of the local education authorities from the region.

Table 1: Response as a proportion of total local authorities in each region

Region	Representati on per region	Actual respondents
East Midlands	44%	4
East of England	50%	5
London	27%	9
North East	50%	6
North West	23%	5
South East	58%	11
South West	56%	9
West Midlands	64%	9
Yorkshire and the Humber	47%	7

Profile of funding received by respondents. Respondents were asked to identify, beyond LSC core funding or PCDL, what other funding they received (Fig. 1). Family, Language, Literacy and Numeracy funding was identified by 94 per cent of respondents (61), followed by Wider Family Learning (92%; 60 respondents), First Steps (82%; 53 respondents) and NLDC (75%; 49 respondents). Very few LEAs were in receipt of EU funding (9%; 6 respondents).

Respondents were asked to identify, beyond LSC core funding or PCDL, what other funding they received (Fig. 1). Family, Language, Literacy and Numeracy funding was identified by 94 per cent of respondents (61), followed by Wider Family Learning (92%; 60 respondents), First Steps (82%; 53 respondents) and NLDC (75%; 49 respondents). Very few LEAs were in receipt of EU funding (9%; 6 respondents).

Of those citing 'other' funding (38%; 25 respondents), the funding types cited on more than one occasion were, in order of frequency: Family Learning Impact Fund (FLIF), Adult Learner Responsive, Train to Gain, FE, the Big Lottery, funding for work-based learning, and learndirect. Other types being cited in single instances included Economic Development Agency funding, funding for adults with learning difficulties, Sure Start, extended provision, and Entry to Employment. Overall, 63

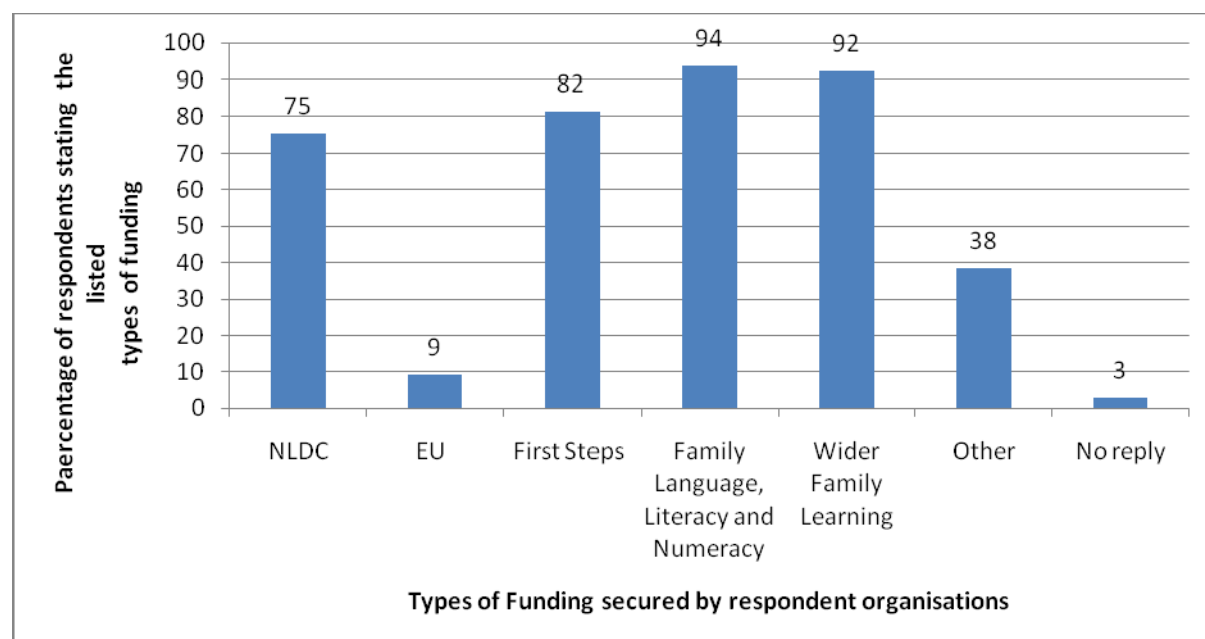
respondents indicated that they only had access to one of the listed¹ streams of funding, beyond LSC and PCDL (Table 2). Of these, the majority of organisations (58 organisation; 92%) had accessed at least three of the listed types of funding, 39 of which (62% of organisations accessing additional funding) had accessed four types.

Table 2: Number of organisations citing multiple funding streams

Number of listed types of funding received	Number of organisations
1 type	2 (3%)*
2 types	3 (5%)*
3 types	15 (24%)*
4 types	39 (62%)*
5 types	4 (6%)*

**(n=63; respondents citing one or more types of funding, beyond LSC core funding or PCDL)*

Figure 1: Types of funding received by responding organisations, excluding LSC and PCDL



(Multiple response; figures represent % of total respondents to survey)

¹ These figures apply to *listed* types of funding. The category ‘other’ has not been included in this particular analysis.

Respondents were asked to identify the proportion (%) of provision that was (a) contracted out, (b) direct delivery or (c) 'other'. Sixty providers offered a response to this question. On average,² 18.47 per cent of provision was contracted out by the provider, while 70.69 per cent was direct delivery, and 3.15 per cent of provision being classified as 'other'. In order to better understand the distribution of the data, see Table 3. Of the 60 providers responding to this question, 45 per cent offered 100 per cent direct delivery, whereas only two providers contracted out 100 per cent of their provision. In total, 8 per cent of respondents to this question cited 'other', one of which indicated that this was achieved through a partnership agreement.

Overall, 48 per cent of respondents' provision was mixed, although the majority of this was weighted towards direct delivery. This data suggests a diluted sectoral profile, in terms of the potential range/distribution of delivery organisations, but may well obscure the range and type of delivery agents.

Table 3: Frequency of provider responses in relation to the proportion of contracted-out provision

Proportion (%) of contracted-out provision	No of respondents
0	31 (52%)
<5%	2
5%	3
10%	5
15%	3
20%	3
25%	1
50%	2
70%	1
80%	2
90-99%	5
100%	2

(Percentages based on n=60)

Range of learning locations

Organisations were also asked to indicate the number of different locations through which they deliver learning. The average³ number of learning locations was 97, across 62 organisations, with a range of 2 to 600 learning locations. In terms of the types of venue that these figures represent, Fig. 2 illustrates the frequency of response across the categories listed in the questionnaire. The most frequently cited

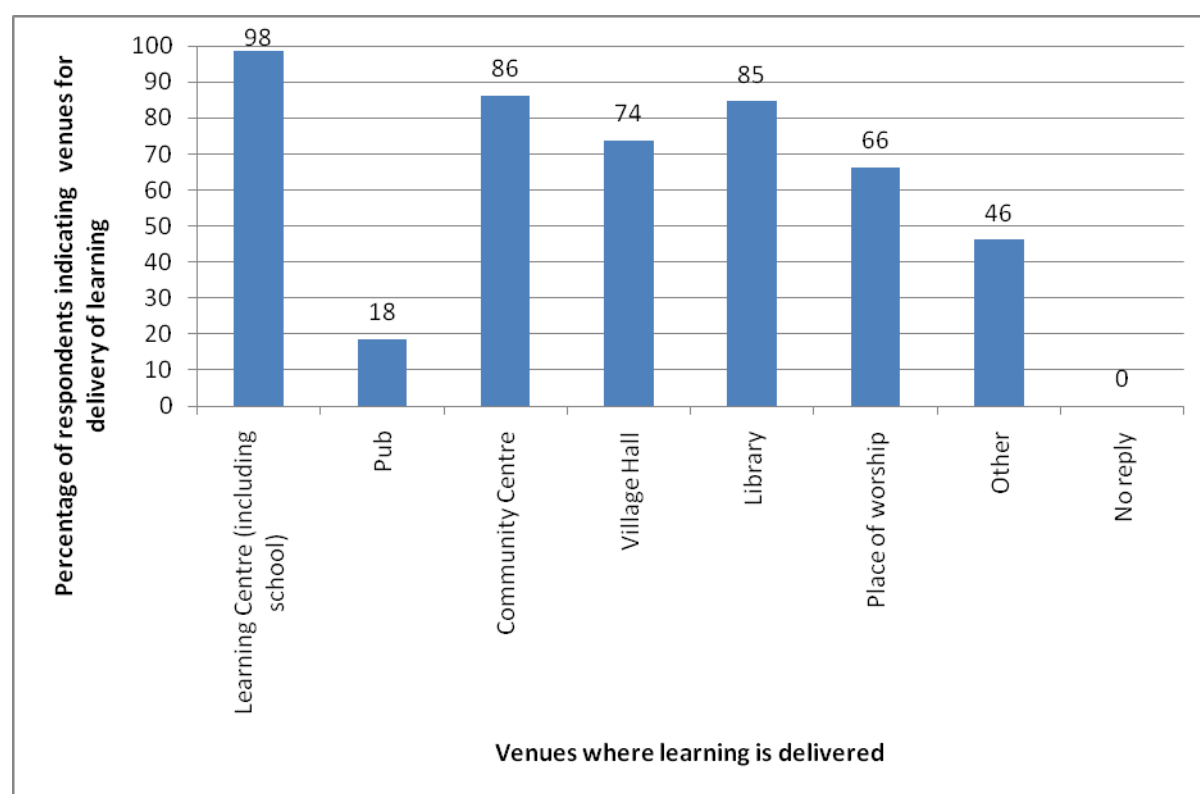
² Arithmetic mean average.

³ Arithmetic mean average.

response was 'Learning centre (including schools)', which was used as a point of delivery by 98 per cent of organisations (64 respondents). This was followed by 'Community centre' (86%) and 'Library' (85%). The least frequently cited location was 'Pub' (18%). All organisations except one (which represents a partial contracted-out provision) delivered across multiple venues. Overall, 62 per cent of providers delivered across (at least) five different types of venue.

Of those organisations citing 'other' (46%, see Table 4), the most frequently listed were children's centres (12 respondents), followed by work-based venues (10 respondents), primary/village schools (6 respondents) and open-air venues (4 respondents). Respondents listed 35 different types of 'other' learning venues; in order to illustrate the diversity, a complete range can be seen in Table 4.

Figure 2: Types of venues within which organisations deliver learning



(Multiple Response; figures represent % of total respondents to survey)

Table 4: Descriptions of venues used for the delivery of learning, classified as 'other'

Type(s) of venue	Description	No	Description	No
Work-related venues (16)	Workplaces	10	RAF bases	2
	High street premises	1	Council offices	1
	Hospitals	1	Teacher corporate training centre	1
Non-static/mobile delivery venues (10)	Open air: <i>allotments, bird watching at the coast, farms and parks</i>	4	Buses	2
	Mobile ICT suite	1	Traveller sites	1
	Boats	1	Learners' homes	1
Static, non-residential centres/locations whose primary function is not delivery of learning (33)	Children's centres	12	Day centres	3
	Sports centre/clubs	3	Sure Start/family centres	3
	Museums	2	Voluntary organisations	1
	Day services	1	Neighbourhood nurseries	1
	Deaf association premises	1	Masonic rooms	1
	Housing association premises	1	Clinics	1
	BBC centre	1	Hotels	1
	Swimming pools	1		
Static locations whose primary function is delivery of learning (12)	Primary/village schools	6	Charity premises	1
	Colleges	3	Dance studio	1
	Small training providers	1		
Residential locations, including prisons (3)	Prisons	1	Care homes	1
	Retirement homes	1		

Numbers of tutors and learning support staff

We asked organisations to list the number of tutors and learning support staff currently delivering/supporting adult learning for them. In total, 58 providers responded to this question. Overall, most staff were part-time; part-time delivery staff⁴ made up the greatest proportion of staff (9,429 across 59 organisations), with

⁴ It should be noted that, due to the definition of 'part-time' employed, this figure is likely not to include hourly paid sessional workers. Previous local authority surveys conducted by NIACE (ICT Skills for

an average of 150 per organisation, within a range of 1 to 624. This was followed by part-time learning support staff (1,053 across 43 organisations), with an average of 21 per organisation, within a range of 1 to 169.

As for full-time staff (30 hours per week), there was a greater number of tutors compared to learning support staff. Overall, 33 organisations indicated that they employed full-time tutors (548.5 FTE across 33 organisations), with an average of 14 per organisation, within a range of 1 to 76. The type of staff with the lowest number of staff was full-time learning support (203 in total), which was only listed by 19 organisations. The average number of learning support staff per organisation was 7, within a range of 1 to 55.

To summarise, respondents represent each region to some extent and exhibit characteristics which suggest high levels of uneven complexity in terms of funding arrangements, suggesting a wide range of related priorities. Learning is delivered through a considerable number of mixed venues, whose primary business is not always related to learning, highlighting the potential for contingent levels of technical infrastructure and support. In terms of learning delivery and support staff, the workforce is dominated by part-time delivery staff, though it is likely that figures obscure the scale of the workforce, due to the known high levels of sessional, hourly paid staff employed within the sub-sector.

Section B: Organisations' use of e-strategies

The second section of the survey sought to establish organisations' use of e-strategies, the frequency with which they are updated, the communications that underpin and disseminate them and the elements they address and prioritise.

Prevalence, communication and staff awareness of e-strategies

In total, 62 local education authorities (95%) indicated that they had an e-strategy in place; only one organisation stated that they did not have an e-strategy.⁵ One respondent didn't know; however, later in the survey they indicated that, although they did not have a formal written document, they had made use of the e-Learning Positioning Statement (ELPS) to review progress. Therefore, all percentages are based on n=63. Only one organisation did not reply.

Of those that indicated they made use of a strategic document of some type (n=63), 84 per cent stated that the document included specific objectives for adult and community learning, 14 per cent stated that theirs did not and 2 per cent (1 respondent) did not know.

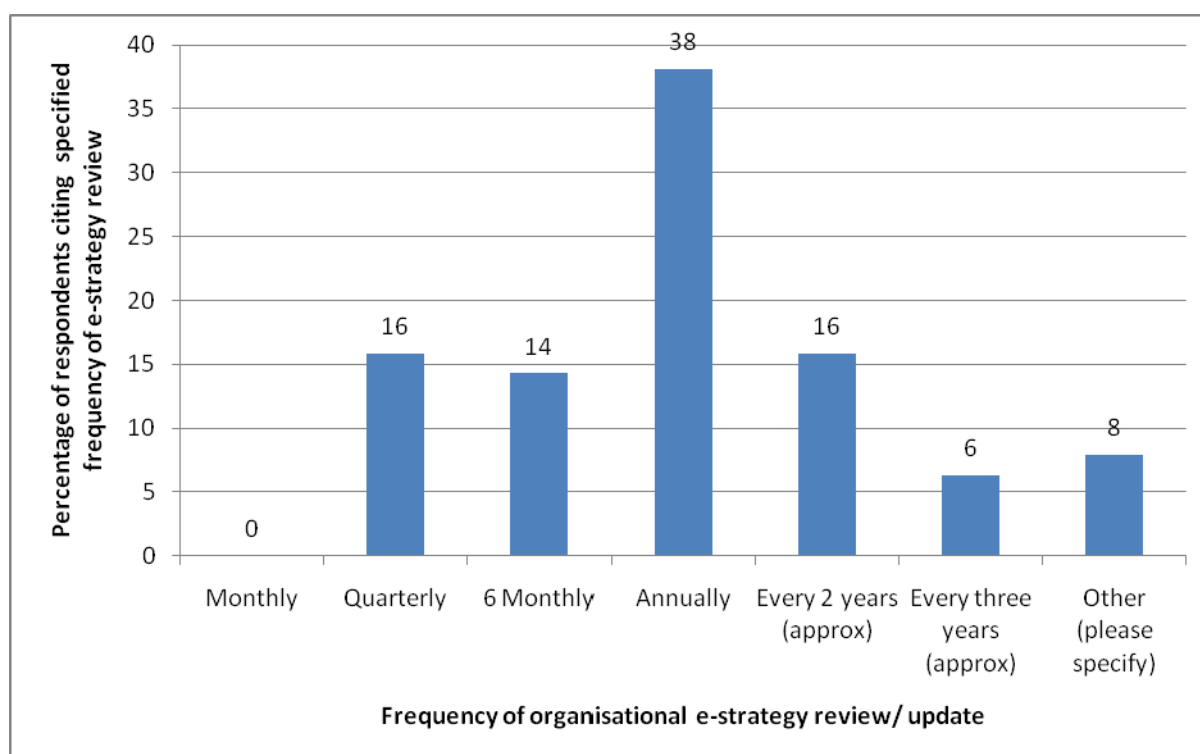
Respondents were also asked to indicate, from a pre-defined list, the frequency with which they updated their e-strategy (see Fig. 3). The majority of respondents (38%)

Life) discovered that records of such staff are inconsistently held. Therefore, it is highly likely that the actual workforce figures are considerably higher.

⁵ This is consistent with NIACE records arising from work with local authority senior managers.

indicated that they updated their strategy on an annual basis, with 16 per cent of organisations indicating that their strategy was reviewed quarterly and a further 16 per cent reviewing it every two years. Fourteen per cent of organisations updated their strategy monthly, with only 6 per cent of organisations opting for a three-yearly review and 8 per cent citing 'other'.

Figure 3: Frequency with which organisations update their e-strategy



(Percentages based on n=63)

Having established the regularity of update, the survey sought to investigate the frequency with which the strategy is communicated to staff within their organisation. Respondents were asked an 'open' question, and of the 63 organisations with an e-strategy, only one did not reply.

Overall, the majority of organisations claimed to communicate their e-strategy to staff annually (38 per cent; 24 respondents). Table 5 shows a breakdown of categorised responses; additional comments have been included, to illustrate the wider context within which the comments were made. It is clear from the data that most respondents have a regular communication strategy, and that in many cases, this is supported by the strategy being made available in a 'shared' area.

Table 5: Frequency of respondents' communication of e-strategy to staff, with commentary from respondents

Frequency of communication	Respondents	Additional comments
Not at all	1	'The e-strategy excludes ACL and this is not shared with ACL.'
Initially	2 (3%)	'At initial briefing.' 'Once.'
Every three years	1	
Every two years	1	
Annually	24 (38%)	'Action plan communicated at various points through year.' 'Available on learning platform.' 'Also always accessible.' 'Monitored through SMT.' 'Also posted on the VLE.' 'The organisation has an ILT strategy group which meets termly and disseminates information throughout the organisation.' 'Positioning tool updated 3 times a year and circulated.'
Six-monthly	4 (6%)	'Some aspects are ongoing.'
Every term	5 (8%)	'Tutor forums are held each half-term for each curriculum area and e-learning is a focus of these meetings. There is currently an action plan to engage staff with e-learning; TNA to be distributed in February.'
Quarterly/monthly	5 (8%)	'Arising from ICT area within SAR so resulting team meetings (monthly/quarterly) arising from this.' 'The strategy is currently being updated. It will be stored on our Moodle learning platform once it has been finalised. The previous version is on there already but the action plan has been used as a working document since 2006 and updated quarterly. The strategy covers all MACLS provision which includes FE and ACL.'
As required	2 (3%)	
No targeted communication; always available	8 (13%)	'Available to staff on VLE and website.' 'E-learning strategy is an integral element of all strategies which staff have electronic access to.' 'Latest version of e-learning strategy and action plan available on VLE to all staff at all times.' 'Available on intranet.' 'Strategy is available on the toolkit (online).' 'IT is available at all times on our staff-facing learning platform.' 'Available electronically via website.'

Regularly (various comments)	3 (5%)	'The strategy is communicated via practical activities on a regular basis: purchase of equipment; training of E-Guides; training on specific equipment; using ILT for RARPA etc. Staff (tutors) don't receive the strategy as a document, though managers of direct delivery and outsourced provision are more aware of it and contribute to ELPS.' 'Weekly blog, weekly staff briefing, once a year in staff conference and E-Guide training sessions.' 'The e-learning strategy action plan is distributed when updated (minimum three times a year).'
Ad hoc/irregular communication	5 (8%)	'This is currently one of our targets for this year so it is widely communicated. However, at times this has been more ad hoc.' 'Never as a strategy document. QIP includes actions regarding e-learning for each team.' 'Not regularly or in a structured way.' 'No regular timetable.' 'All members of Strategy Group attend update meetings. It is then the responsibility of members to cascade info to teaching and support staff.'
No category	1	'In place of e-strategy.'

(Open question; percentages based on n=63)

In terms of communicating their e-strategies, organisations listed a range of methods, with the majority of organisations making use of multiple routes and mechanisms. The most frequently cited mechanisms were:

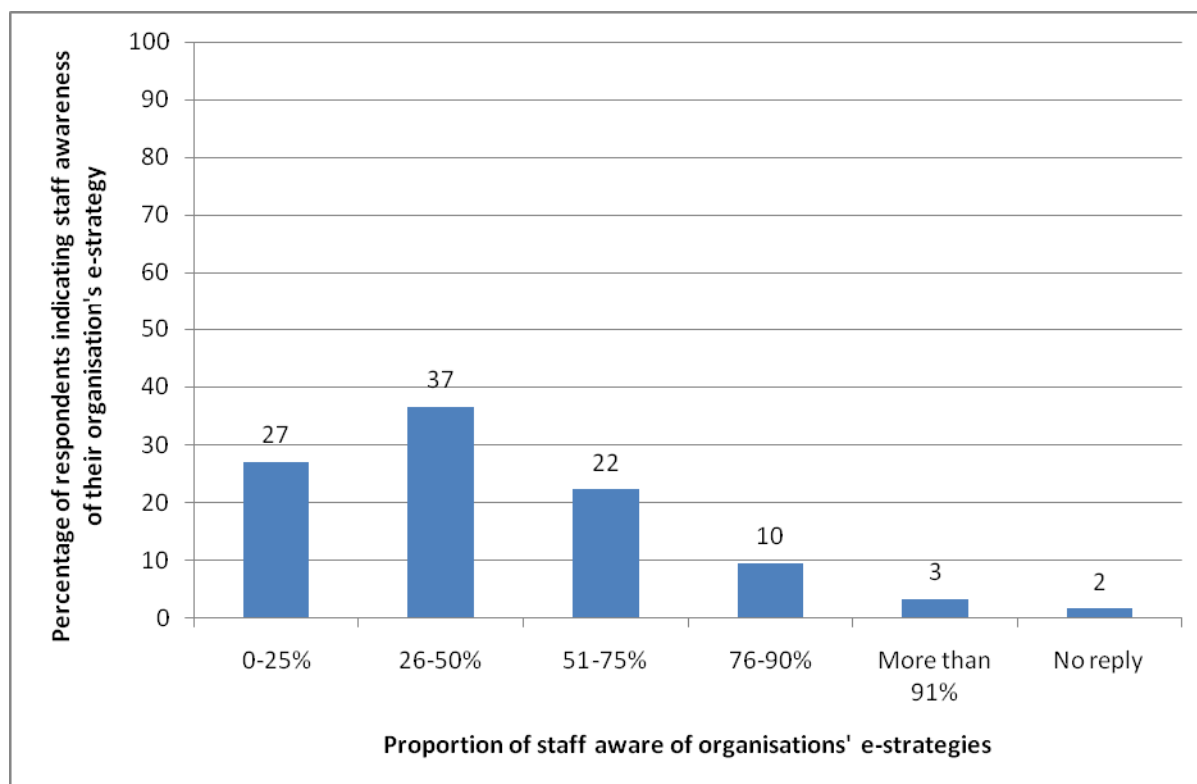
- organisational VLE/intranets (27%, 17 respondents),
- staff meetings (25%, 16 respondents)
- email or electronic file transfer (22%, 14 respondents)
- specific staff groups and forums (21%, 13 respondents)
- staff briefings, newsletters and/or blogs (13%, 8 respondents)
- shared drive (13%, 8 respondents)
- website (10%, 6 respondents)
- tutor handbook, toolkit or CD-ROM (10%, 6 respondents).

Other mechanisms cited by more than one organisation, but fewer than six, were hard copies, through CPD, via E-Guides, e-learning champions, specific training, senior management and ELPs/self-assessment review, and by embedding it in practice.

Further to this theme, the survey sought to establish levels of ACL staff awareness, in terms of their organisational e-strategies (Fig. 4). Overall, the greatest proportion of organisations (37%) indicated that 26–50 per cent of their ACL staff were currently aware of their organisational e-strategy, while 27 per cent indicated that 25 per cent

or fewer of their staff were aware. Twenty-two per cent of respondents felt that 51–75 per cent of their ACL staff were aware of their e-strategy and only 10 per cent felt that 76–90 per cent of their staff were aware. Only 3 per cent of organisations felt that 91 per cent or more of their ACL staff were aware of their e-strategy, and one organisation, from those with an e-strategy, did not respond to this question.

Figure 4: Proportion of ACL staff awareness of their organisational e-strategy



(Percentages based on n=63)

Organisational commitment to ICT/e-learning

Having established awareness, the survey sought to identify the extent to which organisations agreed or disagreed with the following statement: 'There is strategic commitment to the integration of technology within every aspect of the organisation.'

Responses

Only those respondents with an e-strategy responded to this question (n=63), of which over half (52%) indicated that they agreed with the statement, with a further 21 per cent agreeing strongly. Only 2 per cent disagreed and a further 2 per cent disagreed strongly. Overall, 24 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

In order to understand the financial investments made by organisations in their ICT equipment and support, the survey asked respondents to indicate the percentage of

their overall organisational budget attributed to (a) ICT equipment and (b) ICT support. Table 6 shows the average, range and response in each case. Overall, 10 per cent of those responding to the question about ICT equipment (n=61) indicated that they did not attribute any of their budget to purchasing ICT equipment. A similar proportion (8%) indicated that they did not attribute any of their organisational budgets to ICT support. On average, an equal amount – 4 per cent of organisational budget – was spent on ICT equipment and support respectively. Seven respondents in each case were unsure or had not yet made decisions as to the allocation of finance.

Table 6: Proportions of organisational budget committed/spent on ICT equipment and support

	Average (mean)	Range	Response	Respondents indicating zero spend	Don't know/unsure
ICT equipment	4%	0–20%	61 respondents	6 respondents	7 respondents
ICT support	4%	0–30%	59 respondents	5 respondents	7 respondents

(Open question)

When asked about strategic prioritisation of listed elements, the majority of respondents agreed on a series of elements. Table 7 shows responses as a percentage of total survey respondents and shows the frequency of instances where organisations are both addressing and prioritising an element. The most important element to organisations appears to be teacher CPD, which was being addressed, prioritised or both by 86 per cent of organisations, as was 'use of a learning platform'. Seventy-seven per cent of organisations were addressing, prioritising or both the replacement of ILT equipment and 68 per cent of organisations were prioritising and/or strategically addressing investment in ILT infrastructure.

Personalising learning was identified by 58 per cent of organisations as being prioritised and/or addressed. Development of an acceptable ILT use policy was the next most frequently cited element being prioritised and/or addressed.

The least cited element was 'participation in the Home Access scheme', which was only indicated by 12 per cent of organisations,⁶ followed by 'using technology to offer integrated services via extended school' (18%) and 'policy on safe disposal of ILT equipment' (26%).

E-safety was identified by 42 per cent of organisations as being prioritised and/or addressed and development of a documented data protection policy by 37 per cent.

⁶ This is likely to be a reflection of the fact that the pilot is only being conducted in two local authorities.

Participating in the self-review framework and purchasing of a learning platform were being prioritised and/or addressed by 35 and 34 per cent, respectively.

Table 7: Elements currently being addressed in organisations' e-strategies or prioritised in 2008–09

Specified elements	Addressing in e-strategy	Prioritising this year	Addressing and prioritising	No reply
Replacement of ILT equipment	32%	14%	31%	23%
Participation in Self-Review Framework	29%	6%	0	65%
Participation in the Home Access scheme	11%	0	2%	88%
Purchasing of learning platform	23%	5%	6%	66%
Use of learning platform	29%	12%	45%	14%
Documented data protection policy	26%	8%	3%	63%
E-safety	28%	11%	3%	58%
Acceptable ILT use policy	38%	6%	3%	52%
Policy on safe disposal of ILT equipment	18%	5%	3%	74%
Teacher CPD	29%	9%	48%	14%
Using technology for personalising learning	31%	11%	17%	42%
Using technology to offer integrated services via extended school	9%	3%	6%	82%
Investment in ILT infrastructure	31%	14%	20%	35%

(Percentage based on n=65)

To summarise section B, almost all organisations had e-strategies or strategic documents in place, the majority of which made explicit objectives related to ACL. The majority of these were updated annually as a minimum and communicated to staff at least as frequently as they were updated. Communications were achieved through multiple mechanisms, though most often via (a) VLE/intranet or shared drive, (b) staff meetings, (c) email and (d) other existing groups, some strategic. Despite this, over half of respondents felt that 50 per cent or fewer of their ACL staff were aware of their e-strategy.

In terms of budgetary commitments, on average 4 per cent of the total organisational budgets were spent on ICT equipment and the same figure on ICT support. As for specifically targeted factors, teacher CPD, use of learning platforms, replacement of equipment and investment in ILT infrastructure were either being currently addressed, prioritised for the following year or both, and over 70 per cent either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: 'There is strategic commitment to the integration of technology within every aspect of the organisation.'

Section C: ILT equipment and access

The following section is intended to establish the levels of ILT equipment and access available to respondents.

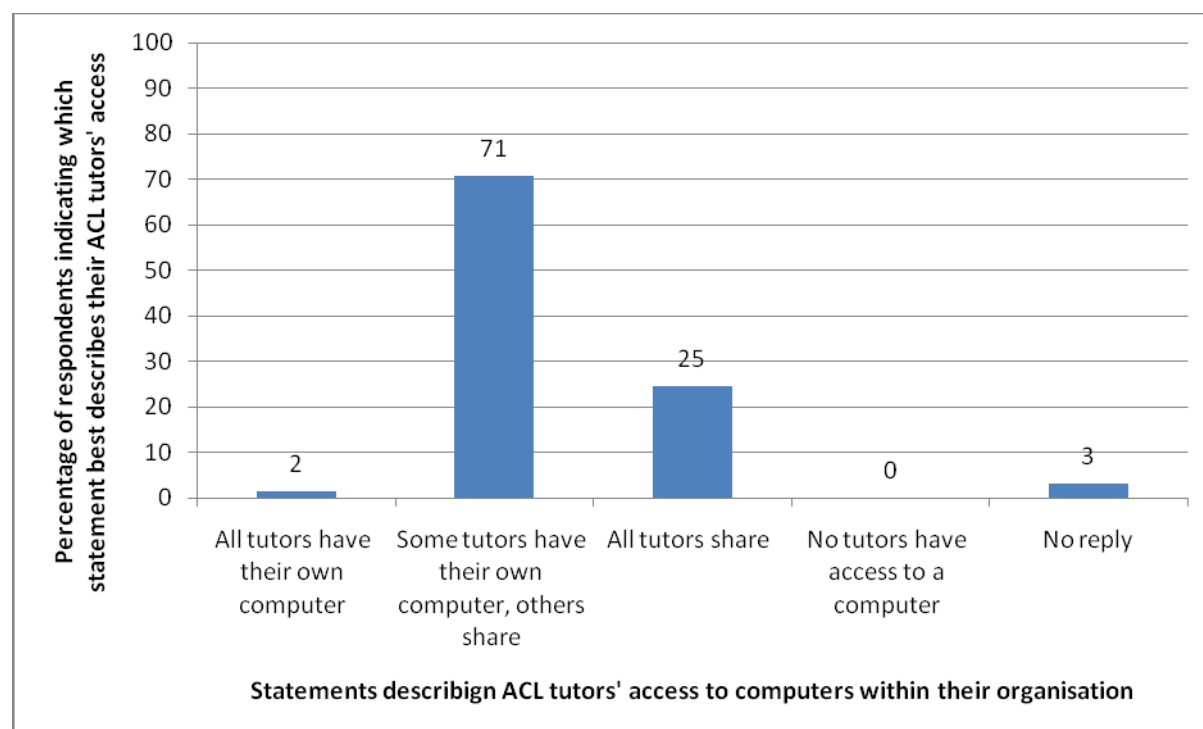
Organisations' access to computers

Organisations were asked to give the number of computers they had on site for ACL staff to use. Overall, 57 organisations responded to the question, of whom five did not know and one did not directly deliver. Of the 51 remaining, two did not have any computers on site for ACL staff. On average, organisations had 93 on-site computers for ACL staff to use, with answers ranging from 2 to 500.

In terms of the level of access, 97 per cent of respondents indicated that ACL tutors had some level of access to a computer within their organisation (Fig. 5). On closer inspection, 71 per cent of respondents felt that, while some of their tutors had access to their own computers, others had to share, with 25 per cent of organisations indicating that all of their tutors had to share. Only one organisation indicated that all ACL tutors had access to their own computers.

In terms of prioritisation of sole access for ACL staff, 54 per cent of organisations felt that this had been achieved, while 8 per cent stated that, while it hadn't, it was a current priority. However, 32 per cent of organisations felt that securing sole access to a computer for ACL staff was not a current priority.

Figure 5: Respondents' perceptions of ACL tutors' access to computers within their organisation



Organisations' levels of access to the internet and related activities

Respondents were asked to indicate the speed/bandwidth of their organisation's main internet connection (Fig. 6). The majority of respondents did not know (37%, 24 respondents). However, 28 per cent (18 respondents) stated that it was no less than 10Mbps and 25 per cent (16 respondents) indicated that the speed of their main internet connection was 100Mbps to 1Gbps. Only 9 per cent of organisations (6 respondents) had connections that were over 1 Gbps; one organisation did not reply to this question.

In terms of whether staff are able to access the internet when they need to at their place of work, all 62 organisations that responded to this question said that their staff had some level of access. The majority of respondents (63%, 41 respondents) stated that staff have unrestricted internet access (subject to legal and ethical firewall), while 32 per cent (21 respondents) indicated that, although staff had access to the internet, it was limited to websites that have been approved by the organisation.

Fig. 7 illustrates organisations' use of wired or wireless networks. Overall, the majority of organisations (60%, 39 respondents) made use of both wired and wireless connections, while 32 per cent (21 respondents) were entirely wired. Only 3 per cent of organisations (2 respondents) were entirely wireless, and a further 3 per cent did not know. One organisation did not respond to this question. The greatest proportion of these networks (77%, 50 respondents) were able to support the transfer of large files, although 45 per cent of respondents (29 respondents) stated

that this was not encouraged on a large scale. However, 17 per cent (11 respondents) indicated that their network had problems dealing with this kind of usage, and 6 per cent of respondents (4 respondents) did not reply to this question.

Figure 6: Bandwidth of organisations' main internet connection

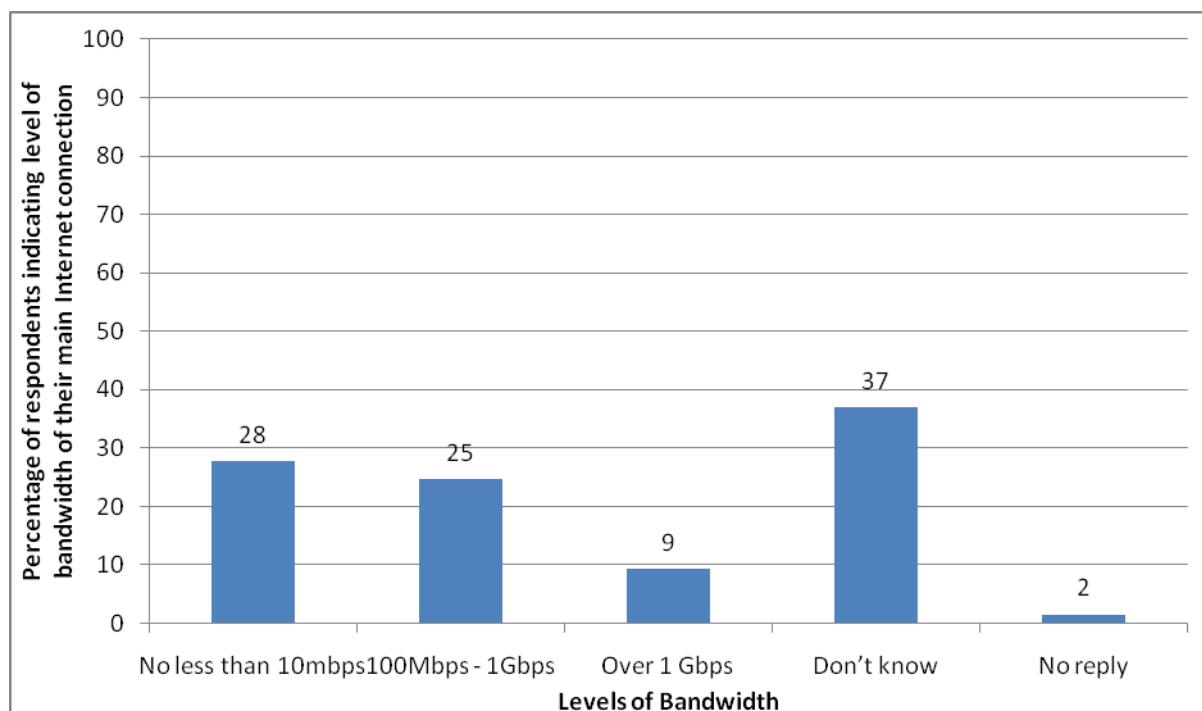
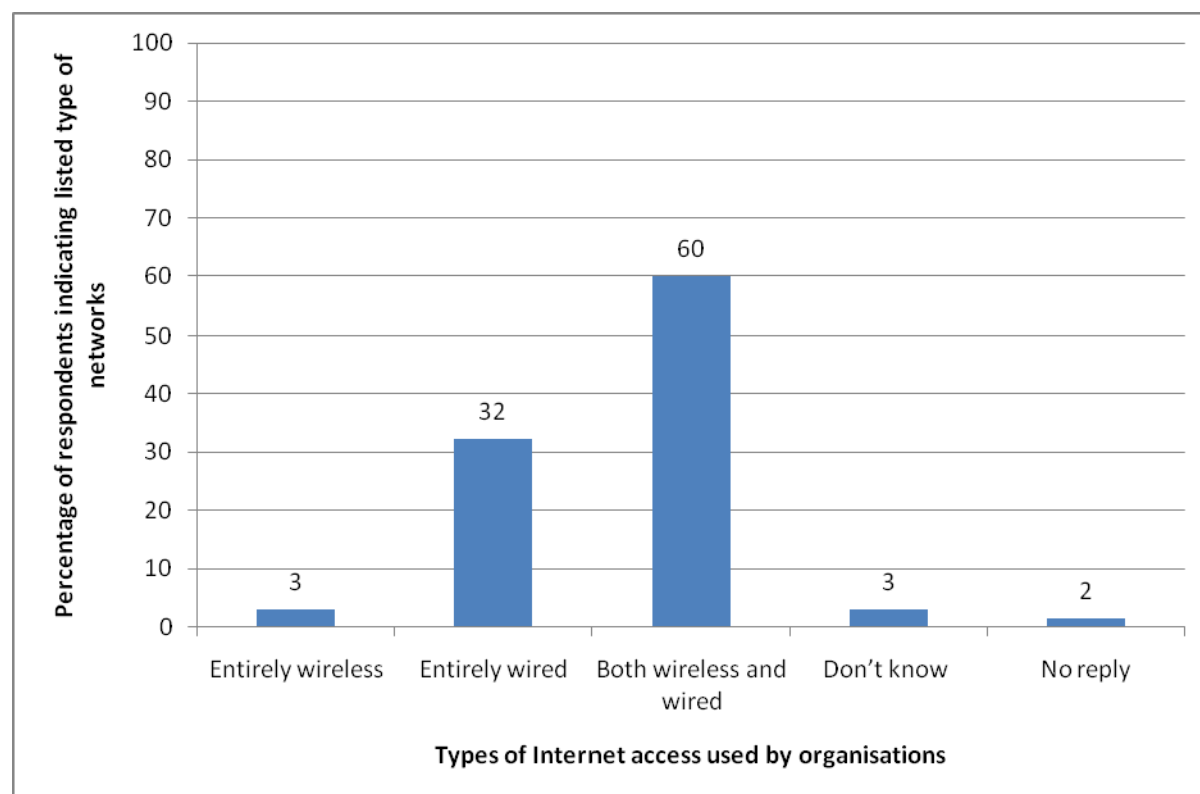


Figure 7: Organisations' use of wired/wireless networks



Having established the effectiveness of the network, organisations were asked to indicate the number of centres within which ACL staff were able to perform specific online activities in support of teaching and learning (Table 8).

Table 8: Percentage of organisations indicating number of learning sites/venues within which ACL staff can perform specific online activities.

	In all learning locations	In some learning locations	In none of the learning locations	Don't know	Not available
Access to their work email account	20	72	0	2	5
Access to the Virtual Learning Environment	17	54	0	2	25
Uploading course materials to the VLE	18	52	3	0	25

Downloading course materials to the VLE	17	54	2	0	25
Access to learner e-assessment tools	9	52	3	6	26
Access to online information, advice and guidance	12	52	8	5	22
Access to online library resources	11	43	9	2	34
Online testing	6	74	5	2	11

Overall, the greatest proportion of respondents indicated that activities could be undertaken in some of their learning locations. The second most frequently cited response, with the exception of 'access to their work email account', was that the listed activities were not available at their learning locations. Access to online library resources was the activity which was most frequently unavailable (34%, 22 respondents).

In terms of the activity most frequently cited as being available in all learning locations, this tended to be 'access to their work email account' (20 per cent; 11 respondents), followed by 'uploading course material to the VLE' (18%, 12 respondents), 'downloading course materials to the VLE' (17%, 11 respondents) and 'access to the VLE' (17%, 11 respondents).

The activity most frequently cited as being available in some of the learning locations was 'online testing' (74%, 48 respondents), followed by 'access to their work email account' (72%, 47 respondents) and, to a lesser extent, activities related to access of the VLE.

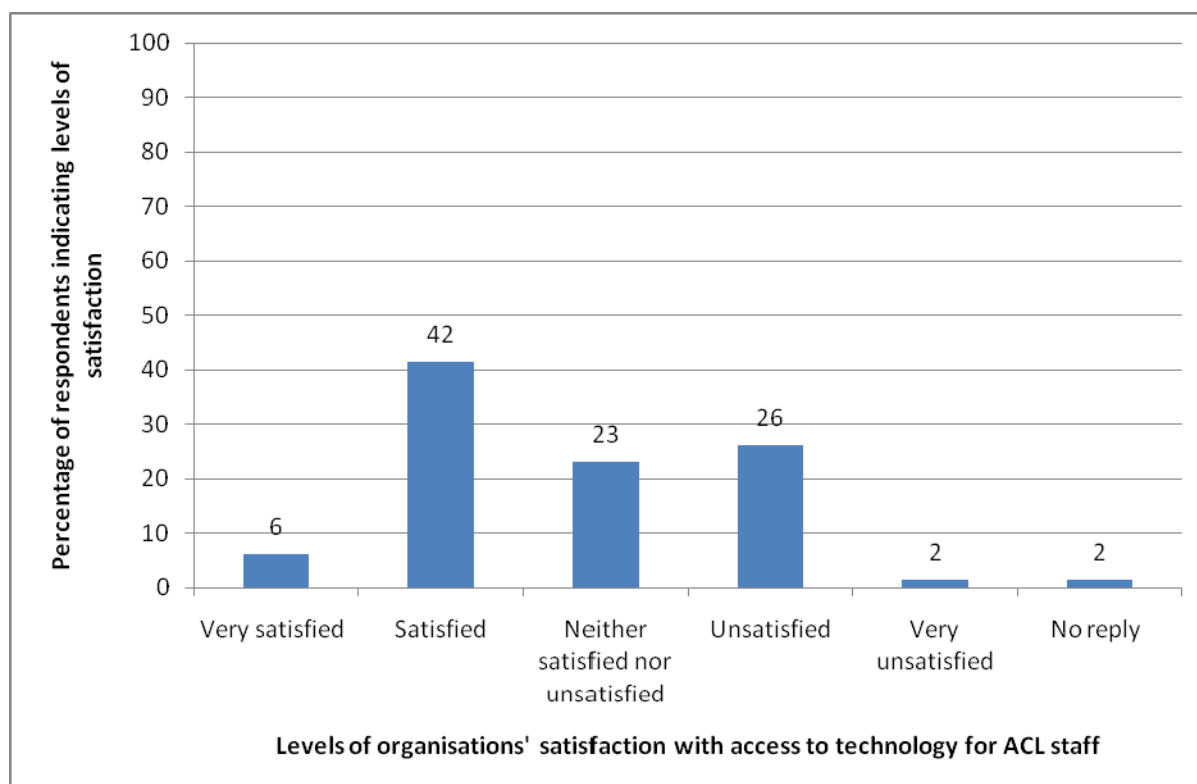
A very small proportion of respondents stated that a VLE was not to be found at any of their learning locations, and approximately a quarter indicated that a VLE was completely unavailable to staff, as was access to learner online assessment tools. For a smaller proportion (22%, 14 respondents), access to online information, advice and guidance was unavailable.

Organisations' ILT implementation and satisfaction levels

In order to identify the extent to which organisations were satisfied with the level of technology available to their ACL staff, respondents were asked to indicate their satisfaction on a 1–5 scale. Fig. 8 shows that the highest proportion (42%, 27 respondents) were satisfied that their ACL staff had access to the technology they needed, with a further 6 per cent (4 respondents) indicating that they were very

satisfied. Twenty-three per cent (15 respondents) indicated that they were neither satisfied nor unsatisfied, and approximately a quarter (26%, 17 per cent) expressed dissatisfaction. Only one organisation (2 per cent) was very unsatisfied, and one organisation did not reply to this question.

Figure 8: Levels of organisations' satisfaction with technology access for ACL staff



Respondents were also asked to indicate their impressions of their organisations' stage of ILT implementation, against a range of measures, on a scale of 1–5, with '5' being 'not applicable'. In order to make their assessment more meaningful, a series of descriptors were developed, and the headings were designed to match those used by the e-maturity framework.⁷ The following descriptors were used:

- 1 Beginning:** This is at the early stages of being implemented.
- 2 Developing:** This has been partly implemented but we are still working towards introducing it fully.
- 3 Performing:** This has been fully implemented.
- 4 Pioneering:** This has been fully implemented and has been highlighted by inspections/external agencies as an excellent achievement.
- 5 Not applicable** at our organisation.

⁷ Since the development of the survey, the language of the framework has changed and it has now been renamed the 'Generator'.

Table 9 shows a summary of responses, in percentage terms. Overall, the most frequently cited stage of implementation was 'Performing' (35% of all responses), followed by 'Developing' (28%), 'Beginning' (16%) and 'Outstanding' (7%). Twelve per cent of all responses indicated that the listed activities were not applicable, and 2 per cent of all responses were 'No reply'. It should be noted, however, that such aggregates obscure the detail of the data, particularly given the nature of the sub-sector, and should therefore not be used as a sub-sectoral summary.

In terms of the specific, listed indicators, the following can be said:

- In terms of sufficient connectivity for all ICT applications, the greatest proportion of organisations felt that they were 'Performing' (43%), followed by 40 per cent who felt they were 'Developing'.
- With regard to having computers/laptops for *staff* use with fast internet access, the greatest proportion of organisations felt that they were 'developing' (45%), followed by 40 per cent who felt that they were 'Performing'.
- In terms of computers/laptops for *learner* use with fast internet access, 40 per cent of organisations felt that they were 'Developing', and 40 per cent felt that they were 'Performing'.
- In terms of implementation of a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), the greatest proportion of organisations felt that they were 'Developing' (45%), followed by 18 per cent who felt they were 'Performing'.
- When asked about a computer network accessible remotely by *learners*, the greatest proportion of respondents felt that this was 'Not applicable' to their organisation (42%), followed by 31 per cent of organisations who were at the 'Beginning' stages of implementation.
- However, when asked about a computer network accessible remotely by *staff*, a greater proportion of organisations indicated that they were 'Performing' (31%), followed by 26 per cent who were 'Developing'.
- When asked about technical support for learners when on site, the greater proportion of organisations indicated that they were 'Performing' (32%), followed by 26 per cent who felt they were 'Developing'. However, when asked the same question about off-site provision, the greater proportion of organisations indicated that this was 'Not applicable' to their organisation (38%), while 20 per cent were at the 'Beginning' stages of implementation.
- When asked about technical support for staff and managers when on site, the greatest proportion of organisations felt that they were 'Performing' (62%), followed by 14 per cent who were 'Developing'.
- When asked about access to ICT equipment (e.g. digital cameras), the greater proportion of organisations indicated that they were 'Performing' (63%), with 18 per cent of organisations at the 'Developing' stage of implementation.

- In terms of staff access to relevant digital/electronic content, equal proportions of responding organisations (35%) indicated that they were 'Developing' and 'Performing'.
- When asked about the use of ICT in booking and scheduling of work and teaching spaces, the greater proportion of organisations indicated that they were at the 'Beginning' stages of implementation (31%), with 22 per cent indicating that they were already 'Performing' in this area.
- In terms of the implementation of appropriately equipped teaching spaces for full exploitation of ILT, 45 per cent of organisation felt that they were 'Developing', while 35 per cent considered themselves to be 'Performing' in this area.
- In terms of the security of their learning environment(s), 51 per cent of organisations saw themselves as 'Performing' with 22 per cent at the 'Developing' stage.
- When considering the existence of effective suppliers for infrastructure, hardware and software, 60 per cent of organisations saw themselves as 'Performing', while 17 per cent felt that they were still 'Developing'.

Table 9: Organisations' perception of their levels of ILT implementation

	Beginning	Developing	Performing	Outstanding	Not applicable	No reply
Sufficient connectivity for all ICT applications	11%	40%	43%	5%	0	2%
Computers/laptops for staff use with fast internet access	11%	45%	40%	3%	0	2%
Computers/laptops for learner use with fast internet access	9%	40%	40%	3%	6%	2%
Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)	15%	45%	18%	8%	12%	2%
Computer network accessible remotely by learners	31%	15%	6%	5%	42%	2%
Computer network accessible remotely by staff	22%	26%	31%	6%	12%	3%
Technical support for learners when on site	20%	26%	32%	9%	11%	2%
Technical support for learners when off site	20%	8%	9%	3%	38%	22%
Technical support for staff and managers when on site	9%	14%	62%	11%	2%	3%

Technical support for staff and managers when off site	26%	28%	20%	5%	20%	2%
Access to ICT equipment (e.g. digital cameras)	2%	18%	63%	14%	0	3%
Staff access to relevant digital/electronic content	9%	35%	35%	15%	2%	3%
Use of ICT in booking and scheduling of work and teaching spaces	31%	20%	22%	5%	22%	2%
Appropriately equipped teaching spaces for full exploitation of ILT	15%	45%	35%	2%	2%	2%
Security of the learning environment	11%	22%	51%	11%	3%	3%
Existence of effective suppliers for infrastructure, hardware and software	9%	17%	60%	8%	3%	3%

To summarise section C, there are on average 93 computers available on site for use by ACL staff on the premises used by each provider. Almost all organisations felt that tutors had some access to these, though this tended to be shared, with only some sole access. In terms of internet bandwidth, most organisations enjoyed less than 1Gbps or were not sure of the speed of their connection. Networks tended towards a mix of wireless and wired or were, among a lower proportion, entirely wireless. Transfer of large files was possible across most networks, though not necessarily supported by organisations, and access to online activities were not equal across organisations' learning locations, possibly suggesting variable access to the internet.

Despite this, a greater proportion of organisations were satisfied with the technology access available to ACL staff. However, 23 per cent stated that they were 'Neither satisfied or unsatisfied', and 26 per cent were 'Unsatisfied'. In terms of levels of ILT implementation, across a range of indicators, organisations responded that they were 'Performing' (i.e. specified technologies had been fully implemented), or 'Developing' (technologies had been partly implemented but they are still working towards introducing them fully).

Section D: Use of information and learning technology (ILT) with learners

The following section is intended to identify organisations' use of ILT, creation and promotion of resources, and the perceived benefits of these.

Perceived impacts of ILT on the learner experience

Organisations were asked to indicate, on a scale of 1 to 5, the extent to which they agreed with a series of statements about the potential positive impacts of ILT on the learner experience (see Table 10). The category 'Not applicable' was also included.

Table 10: Providers' agreement/disagreement with potential positive impacts of ILT on learner experience

	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not applicable	No reply
Flexibility of delivery	25%	58%	9%	5%	0	3%	0
Creative teaching and learning	26%	65%	8%	2%	0	0	0
Wider variety of subjects on offer	8%	29%	40%	20%	0	3%	0
Learner access to relevant digital/electronic content	12%	77%	9%	0	0	2%	0
Increased quality of information, advice and guidance (IAG) available to learners	14%	42%	31%	11%	0	3%	0
Availability of personalised learning space	14%	34%	14%	20%	5%	11%	3%
Improved learner engagement and enjoyment	23%	55%	18%	3%	0	0	0
Better assessment of learner	5%	48%	31%	15%	0	2%	0
Increased learner attainment	2%	31%	54%	11%	0	0	3%
Increased learner retention	6%	35%	48%	9%	0	0	2%
Learner progression	3%	32%	52%	6%	0	3%	3%

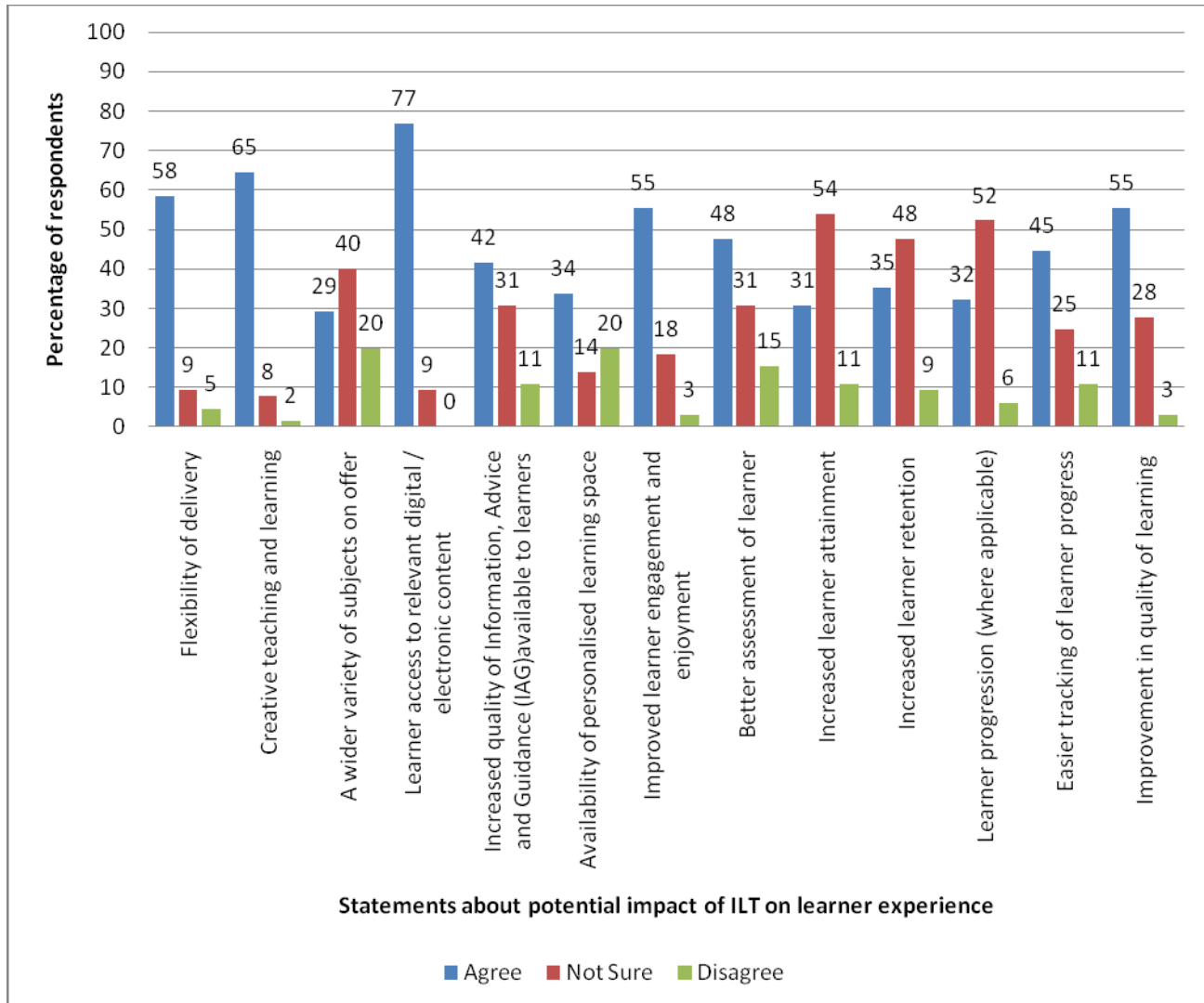
(where applicable)							
Easier tracking of learner progress	14%	45%	25%	11%	2%	5%	0
Improvement in quality of learning	12%	55%	28%	3%	0	0	2%

Overall, very few respondents 'Strongly disagreed' with any of the statements related to the potential positive impact of ILT on learner experience. The most common response was agreement, which accounted for 47 per cent of total responses, across all of the statements. Twenty-eight per cent of responses to all statements were 'Not sure', 13 per cent 'Strongly agreed' and 9 per cent 'Disagreed'.

Fig. 9 illustrates the distribution of responses, across all of the statements, within the three most cited types of response: 'Agree', 'Not sure' and 'Disagree'. On a review of the data, the following can be said:

- The three statements with which most respondents 'Strongly agree' were that ILT had a positive impact on 'Creative teaching and learning' (26%, 17 respondents), 'Flexibility of delivery' (25%, 16 respondents) and 'Improved learner engagement and enjoyment' (23%, 15 respondents).
- The statement which saw most respondents indicating that they agreed was that ILT enabled 'Learner access to relevant digital/electronic content' (77%, 50 respondents), followed by 'Creative teaching and learning' (65%, 42 respondents), 'Flexibility of delivery' (58%, 38 respondents), 'Improvement in quality of learning' (55%, 36 respondents), and 'Improved learner engagement and enjoyment' (55%, 36 respondents).
- The statements about which the greatest proportion of respondents were 'Not sure' were: whether ILT led to 'Increased learner attainment' (54%, 35 respondents), 'Learner progression' (52%, 34 respondents) and 'Increased learner retention' (48%, 31 respondents). This is generally unsurprising given that these are the most indirect impacts and therefore notoriously difficult to substantiate empirically.
- There were proportionately fewer responses within the categories on the negative side of the spectrum. However, the statements with which the greatest proportion of respondents disagreed were that ILT has led to 'Availability of personalised learning space' (20%, 13 respondents), 'A wider variety of subjects on offer' (20%, 13 respondents) and 'Better assessment of learner' (15%, 10 respondents).
- The fewest responses were to be found in the 'Strongly disagree' category, with only two statements attracting this response. These were that ILT led to 'Availability of personalised learning space' (5%, 3 respondents), and 'Easier tracking of learner progress' (2%, 1 respondent).

Figure 9: Providers' response to potential positive impacts of ILT on learner experience (agree/not sure/disagree)



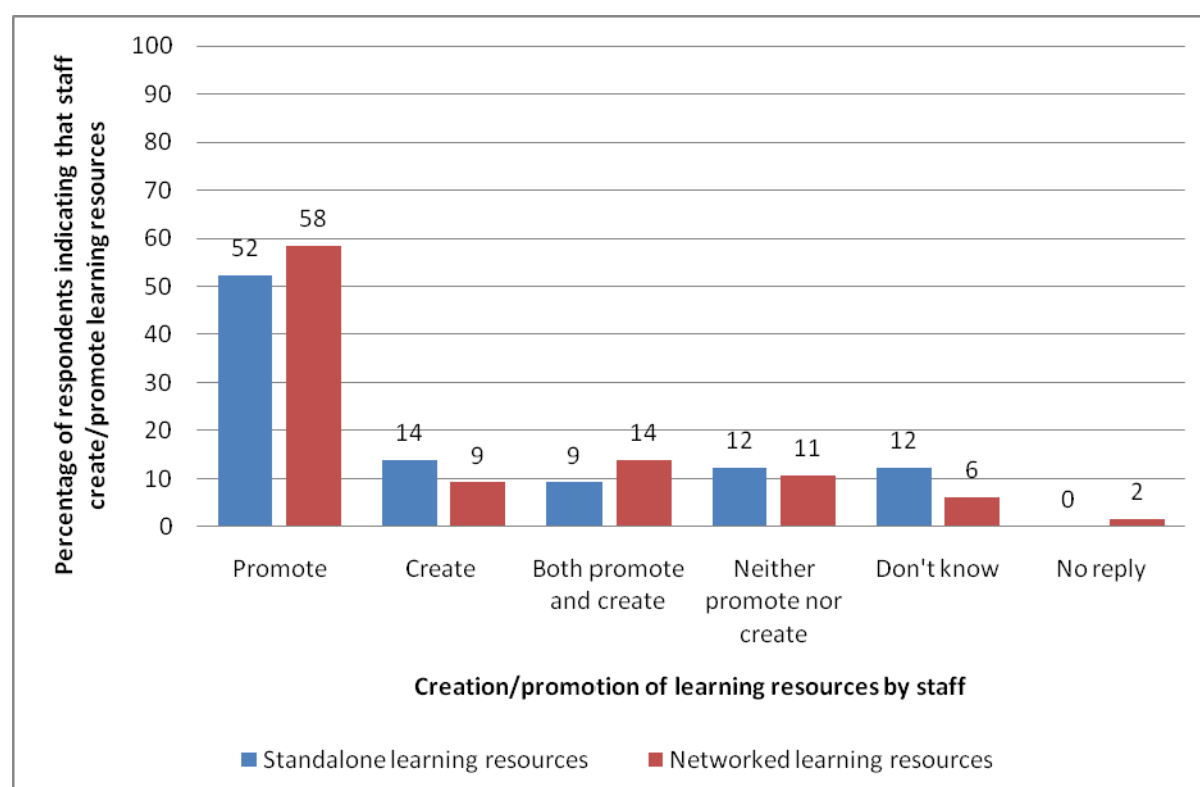
Development, promotion and use of learning resources by staff

Fig. 10 illustrates the extent to which staff created and/or promoted standalone and networked learning resources within organisations. Overall, learning resources were more often promoted than they were created, with a slightly higher proportion of networked learning resources being promoted (7 more respondents).

Fifty-two per cent of staff in responding organisations promoted standalone learning resources (34 respondents), whereas 14 per cent (9 respondents) created them and 9 per cent both promoted and created (6 respondents). Twelve per cent (8 respondents) neither promoted nor created standalone learning resources.

In terms of networked learning resources, 58 per cent of staff in responding organisations (38 respondents) promoted standalone learning resources, whereas 9 per cent (6 respondents) created them and 14 per cent (9 respondents) both promoted and created. Eleven per cent (7 respondents) neither promoted nor created standalone learning resources.

Figure 10: Proportion of organisations indicating staff promotion/creation of learning resources



Having established the extent to which materials were promoted/ created, the survey sought to identify the adult and community learning courses within which they were being promoted/used. Asked to list the courses, 61 organisations responded to the

question. Overall, the most cited courses were Skills for Life, which were listed with the following frequency:

- Skills for Life (generic): 17 respondents, 28% of those responding to this question
- Numeracy: 7 respondents (11%)
- Literacy: 6 respondents (10%)
- ESOL: 10 respondents (16%).

ICT/IT was the second most frequently cited course type, mentioned by 39 organisations (64%), followed by foreign languages (24 respondents, 39%), family learning (18 respondents, 30%) and arts/crafts (17 respondents, 28%).

Ten organisations stated that resources were available for all the ACL courses, and seven of them indicated that they used computer-based learning resources in courses related to digital photography/media/publishing. The following were also mentioned, albeit less frequently:

- teacher training and courses related to learning for work (6 respondents each)
- maths, business studies/admin and law (4 respondents each)
- English and British Sign Language (3 respondents each)
- learndirect, childcare, sports and leisure, health/wellbeing, NVQ, makeup/hair, music/music technology, leisure, travel and tourism, creative writing, construction, history, science, education and training (2 respondents each)
- use/promotion of computer-based learning materials in 'some' of their courses, depending on staff ability/familiarity, etc (2 organisations).

The following courses were mentioned by one organisation only: driving theory, back to work, complementary therapies, teaching assistants provision, access to HE, photography, graphic design, general studies, healthy living, VPA, web design, supportive learning,⁸ video, fashion, computer repair, electronics, UK online, dyslexia support, visual and performing arts, healthy eating, yoga, NCFE L2 volunteering, humanities, health and beauty, health, literature and culture, public services and care. One organisation also stated that they had plans to create resources over the coming year.

Having established the types of areas within which computer-based resources were being promoted/used, the survey sought to establish whether organisations' staff had identified any benefits in their use, when compared to more traditional resources (see Fig. 11). The majority of organisations (83%, 54 organisations) felt that their

⁸ See <http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=2959> – browse down to 'Supportive learning courses 2008-2009'.

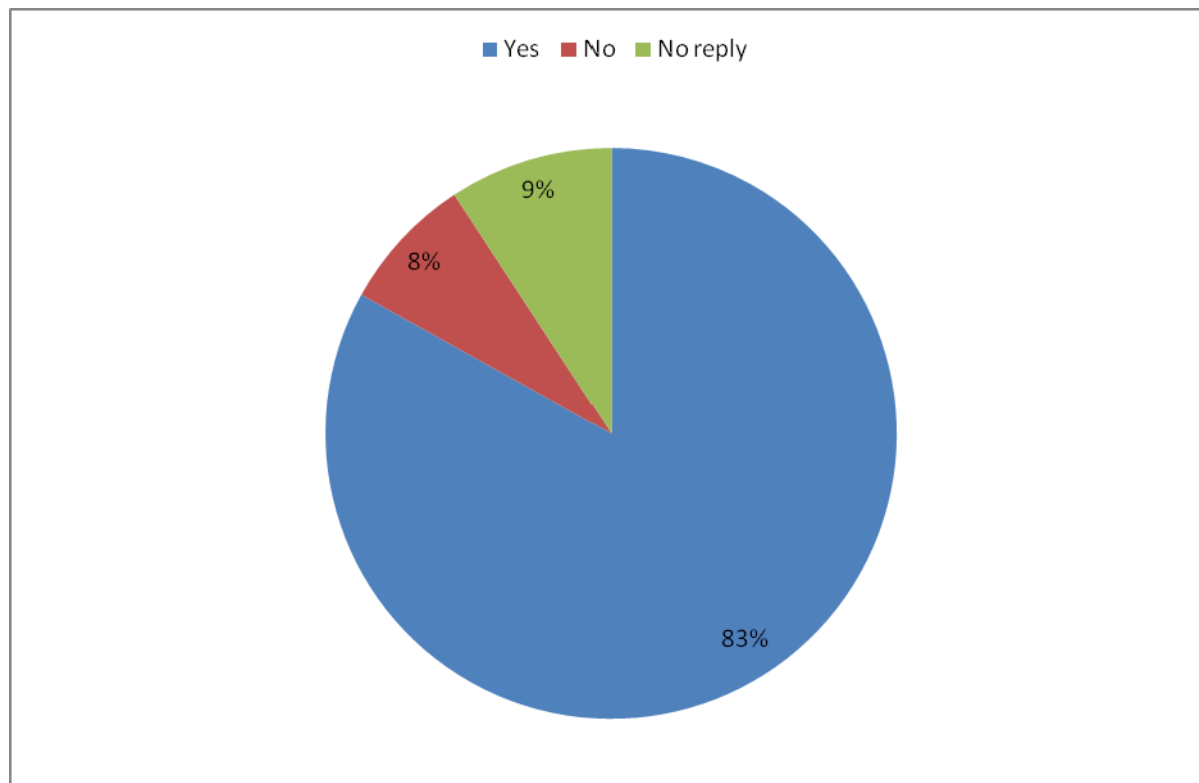
staff had identified benefits in the use of computer-based resources. Fifty-three organisations went on to describe these benefits:

- ease of sharing resources (10 respondents)
- time saved during preparation, impact on learner engagement, accessibility of digital resources (7 respondents each)
- ease of adaptability of resources, higher-quality learner materials/resources, flexibility inherent in this type of resource (5 respondents each)
- enhanced interactivity in the classroom (4 respondents)
- promotion of independent learning, tutors having less to carry (3 respondents each)
- such materials remaining in perfect condition, use enhancing creativity, use allowing individualisation/personalisation (2 respondents each).

The following benefits were mentioned in one instance only: stimulates enthusiasm among learners, back-ups are available, [allows for] immediate feedback, no need to print/photocopy, supports learners who have missed class, allows for a wider range of activities, cost saving, enhances learner confidence, learners can work at their own pace, enhances tutor enthusiasm [with the right training], a wider range of resources available, good for research, digital resources maintain their currency, improved staff skills, develop indirect employability skills, attracts and retains non-traditional learners, supports the sustainability agenda, enables adults to see further benefits of learning.

Two organisations also stated that some of their staff were more reluctant than others to engage with computer-based resources.

Figure 11: Perceptions of whether staff have identified benefits of the use of computer-based resources



Examples of organisations using computer-based resources

North Yorkshire County Council: Recording inclusive evidence for learner progression [<http://excellence.qia.org.uk/page.aspx?o=166607>]: e-RARPA used with supportive learning group.

North Yorkshire Learning Net [<http://www.n-yorks.net>]: teachers are required to register for a login to access the host of learning materials and URLs for the different SSAs in the Adult and Youth Education area.

North Yorkshire County Council Moodle [<http://www.nyccmoodle.co.uk/moodle>]: originally intended to support ITQ candidates, but has grown significantly and now is supporting more and more VQ candidates.

To summarise section D, when presented with a series of statements about possible positive impacts of ILT on the learner experience, the majority of organisations either agreed or strongly agreed, particularly to the statements that ILT had led to 'Creative teaching and learning', 'Learner access to relevant digital/ electronic content' and 'Flexibility of delivery'. The statements to which the greatest proportion of respondents indicated they were 'Not sure' related to the impacts on learner attainment, progression and retention. Overall, both networked and standalone learning resources were promoted more than twice as often as they were created by staff, and this tended to occur most frequently in ICT/IT courses, language courses (such as modern foreign languages), family learning and arts and/or crafts. Where resources were used, it was felt that staff had identified as benefits: the ability to share resources, the ability to save on preparation time, the ability to enhance learner engagement and the accessibility of digital resources, when compared to more traditional resources.

Section E: ICT and staff skills

This section of the survey sought to identify where respondents located their organisations, in terms of skills/ knowledge, and the ways in which they supported further skills/ knowledge development.

In order to assess organisations' perceptions of their point of development, on the following four-point scale:

- 1 Beginning:** A small number of staff have the skills and knowledge to do this, but the majority need training and support to do this.
- 2 Developing:** A large number of staff are able to do this, but there are a few who still need additional training and support to feel confident in using it.
- 3 Performing:** The majority of staff are able to do this confidently
- 4 Pioneering:** All of our staff are able to do this and our organisation has been highlighted by external agencies/inspections as being excellent in this area.

Overall, the most frequently cited organisational stage of skills/ knowledge development was 'Developing' (42% of all responses), followed by 'Performing' (26%), 'Beginning' (24%), and then 'Outstanding' (5%). Four per cent of all responses indicated that the listed activities were 'Not applicable', and 1 per cent of all responses were 'No reply'. Table 11 shows the number of responses, in terms of the percentage of organisations responding, per category/level.

In terms of 'Managers' knowledge about how to harness technology for the management and delivery of learning', the greatest proportion of organisations (49%, 32 respondents) indicated that they were 'Developing', followed by 21 per cent (21 respondents) who felt that they were 'Performing'. When looking at each statement independently, the following can be said:

- In terms of 'Management and staff skills in general ICT (e.g. word processing, spreadsheets)', the greatest proportion of organisations (55%, 36 respondents) indicated that they were 'Performing', followed by 37 per cent (24 respondents) who felt that they were 'Developing'.
- In terms of 'Management and staff skills in using ICT with learners', the greatest proportion of organisations (66%, 43 respondents) indicated that they were 'Developing', followed by 23 per cent (25 respondents) who felt that they were 'Performing'.
- When asked about 'Management and staff skills in using ICT to develop learning materials', the greatest proportion of organisations (49%, 32 respondents) indicated that they were 'Developing', followed by 23 per cent (15 respondents) who felt that they were 'Beginning'.
- When asked about 'Management and staff skills in teaching and facilitating online', the greatest proportion of organisations (54%, 35 respondents) indicated that they were 'Beginning', followed by 26 per cent (17 respondents) who felt that they were 'Developing'.
- In terms of 'Management and staff knowledge of online learning resources', the greatest proportion of organisations (54%, 35 respondents) indicated that they were 'Developing', followed by 23 per cent (15 respondents) who felt that they were 'Beginning'.
- When asked about 'Use of ICT for data collection/collation and analysis', the greatest proportion of organisations (49%, 32 respondents) indicated that they were 'Performing', followed by 31 per cent (20 respondents) who felt that they were 'Developing'.
- In terms of 'Adoption of new and emerging technologies (e.g. blogs, wikis, mobile phone coverage, social networking)', the greatest proportion of organisations (51%, 33 respondents) indicated that they were 'Beginning', followed by 28 per cent (18 respondents) who felt that they were 'Developing'.
- Finally, in terms of 'Sharing and reusing of digital/electronic content', equal numbers of respondents indicated they were 'Beginning' and 'Developing' (35%, 23 respondents), with 20 per cent (13 respondents) indicating that they were 'Performing'.

In terms of areas at the 'Beginning' stage of skills/knowledge development, the greatest proportion of respondents felt that this occurred in areas related to delivery and facilitation of online learning and the use of new technologies. The greatest number of organisations listing themselves as in the process of 'Developing' skills

and knowledge were to be found in the areas of having skills to use ICT with learners and knowledge of online learning resources.

Organisations most often considered themselves to be 'Performing' when grading their skills in general ICT and use of ICT for data collection and analysis. Those considering themselves to be 'Pioneering' were mostly referring to use of ICT for data collection/collation and analysis or adoption of new and emerging technologies, though this only accounted for 14 and 11 per cent (9 and 7 respondents), respectively.

Table 11: Respondents' perceptions of their organisations' ILT skills and knowledge

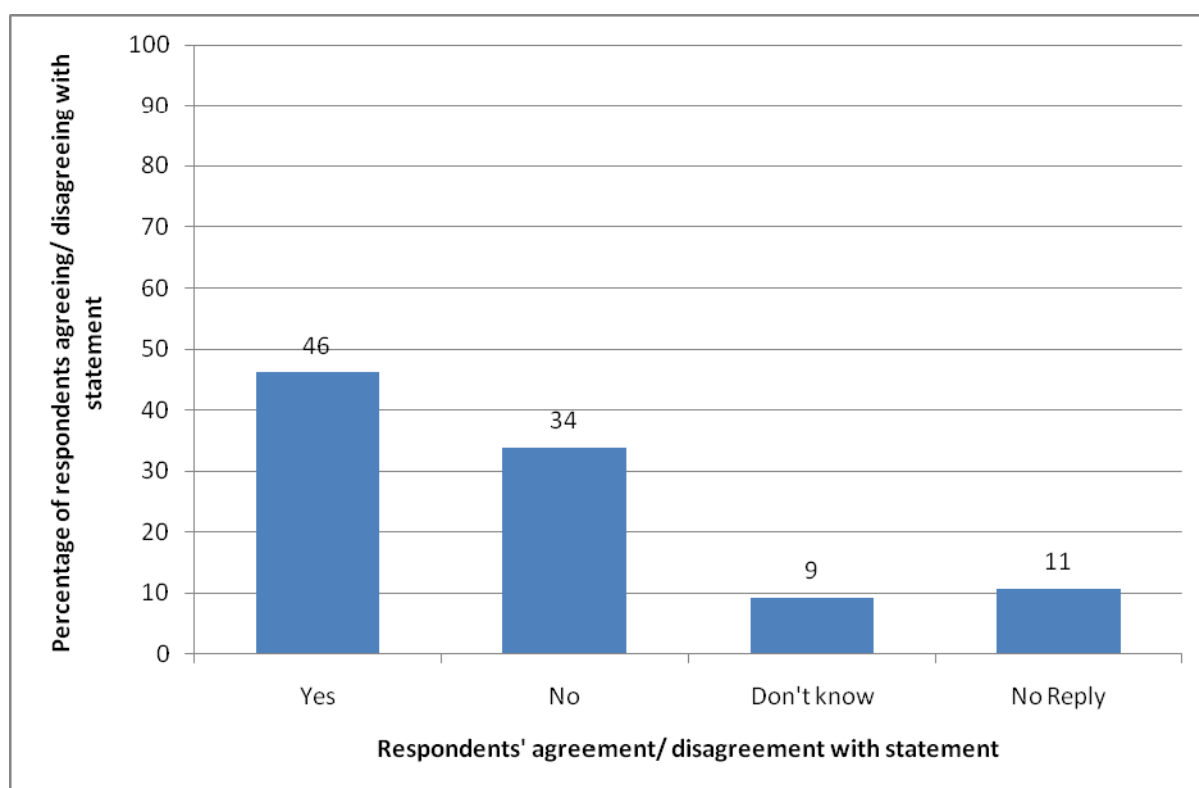
	Beginning	Developing	Performing	Pioneering	Not applicable	No reply
Managers' knowledge about how to harness technology for the management and delivery of learning	11%	49%	32%	6%	0	2%
Management and staff skills in general ICT (e.g. word processing, spreadsheets)	2%	37%	55%	6%	0	0
Management and staff skills in using ICT with learners	9%	66%	23%	2%	0	0
Management and staff skills in using ICT to develop learning materials	23%	49%	22%	3%	3%	0
Management and staff skills in teaching and facilitating online	54%	26%	2%	5%	14%	0
Management and staff knowledge of online learning resources	23%	54%	18%	3%	0	2%
Use of ICT for data collection/collation and analysis	5%	31%	49%	14%	0	2%
Adoption of new and emerging technologies (e.g.	51%	28%	11%	0	11%	0

blogs, wikis, mobile phone coverage, social networking)						
Sharing and reusing of digital/electronic content	35%	35%	20%	5%	5%	0

Having established organisations' perceived skill/knowledge levels, respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed with the following statement: 'Adult and community learning staff at our organisation have the skills needed to deliver and support learning using ILT' (see Fig. 12).

Overall, the greater proportion of respondents indicated that they agreed with the statement (46%, 30 organisations), while 34 per cent (22 organisations) disagreed. Six organisations commented that not *all* of their staff had the skills required, and five of them chose not to tick any of the pre-defined categories for that reason.

Figure 12: Agreement/disagreement with the statement: 'Adult and community learning staff at our organisation have the skills needed to deliver and support learning using ILT.'



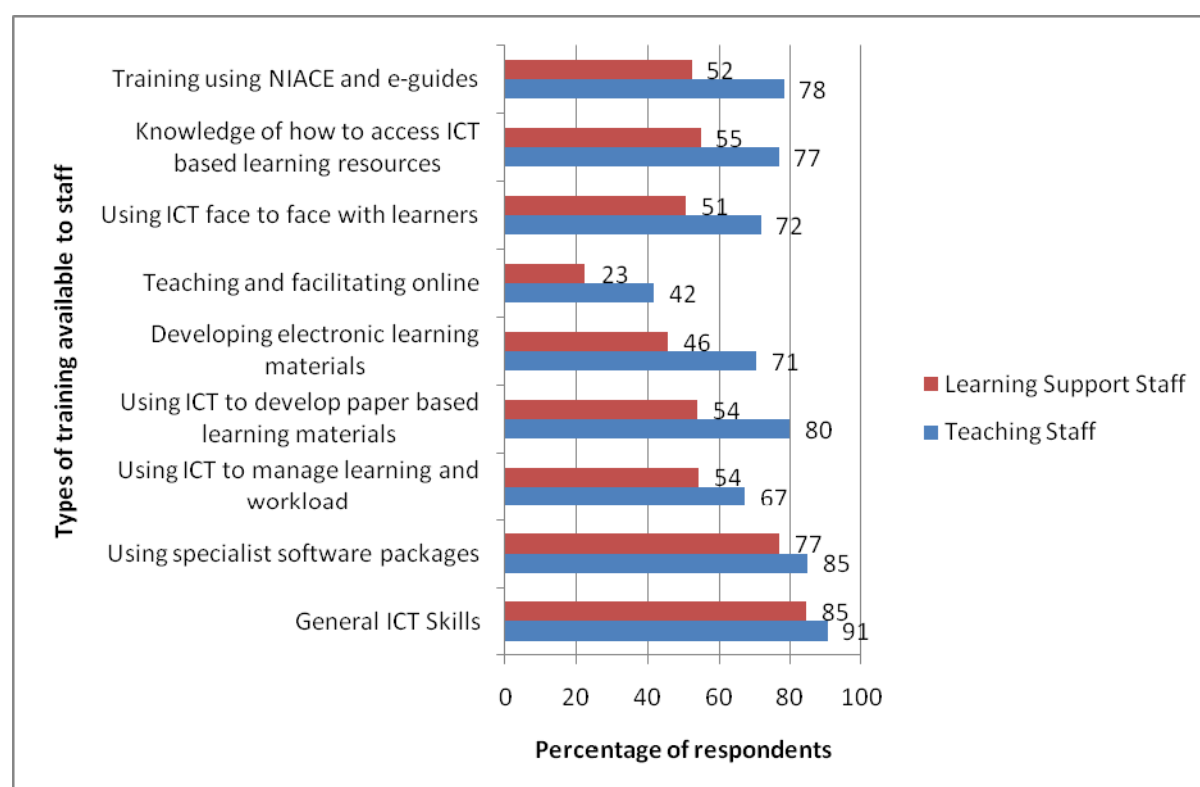
Respondents were then asked to indicate the training available to their (a) teaching staff and (b) learning support staff. Only one person did not respond to this question.

Fig. 13 illustrates the response and Table 12 summarises the data in percentage form.

Table 12: Training available to ACL staff, by type

	Teaching staff	Learning support staff
General ICT skills	91%	85%
Use of specialist software packages	85%	77%
Use of ICT to manage learning and workload	67%	54%
Use of ICT to develop paper-based learning materials	80%	54%
Development of electronic learning materials	71%	46%
Teaching and facilitating online	42%	23%
Use of ICT face to face with learners	72%	51%
Knowledge of how to access ICT-based learning resources	77%	55%
Use of NIACE and E-Guides	78%	52%

Figure 13: Training available to ACL staff, by type



Overall, less training was available to learning support staff than was available to teachers; this pattern was consistent across each of the different types of training. In percentage terms, based on all responses to the question, 29 per cent of indicated

training was available *only* to teaching staff, 1 per cent of indicated training was available *only* to learning support staff, while 55 per cent of indicated training was available to both. The type of training most often left blank was that which related to teaching and facilitating online, followed (in half as many instances) by training using ICT to manage learning and workload.

In terms of frequency, the majority of organisations indicated that 'general ICT skills training' was provided for both types of staff, followed by 'use of specialist software packages'. Using ICT to develop paper-based learning materials was the third most cited type of training for teachers, while knowledge of how to access ICT-based learning resources was the third most cited type of training for learning support staff.

Training using NIACE and E-Guides was the fourth most cited type of training available to teachers, while, in the case of learning support staff, it was using ICT to manage learning and workload and using ICT to develop paper-based learning materials.

The fifth most cited type of training for teaching staff was knowledge of how to access ICT-based learning resources, followed by using ICT face to face with learners, the latter also being the fifth most cited type of training available to learning support staff.

The least cited type of training for both teaching staff and learning support staff related to teaching and facilitating online, followed by training to support the development of electronic learning materials.

To summarise section E, when asked to assess the skills/knowledge levels within their organisation, respondents most often indicated that they were 'Developing'. Delivery and facilitation of online learning and the use of new technologies were the areas within which most organisations felt they were 'Beginning', and of those organisations who indicated that they were 'Performing', the greatest proportion were referring to general ICT skills and the use of technology for data collection and analysis.

The greater proportion of organisations felt that ACL staff had the skills they required to deliver and support learning; however, approximately a third of respondents did not. It should also be noted that the figures obscure a diverse workforce, within which some staff are more skilled than others. In terms of training available to staff, more was available to teaching staff than to learning support staff, with generic ICT skills training and software-specific training being the two most frequently cited types available. Training related to online learning was the least available type.

Section F: Challenges and support

This section of the survey sought to identify the factors preventing effective use of ILT and e-learning, the types of funding that have enabled development in this area and the extent to which government e-learning and ICT policy, as well as external bodies, have influenced and aided organisational practice and development.

Challenges and preventative factors

Organisations were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed/disagreed with a series of pre-identified factors, which have been known to prevent the effective use of ILT and e-learning among staff. Fig. 14 illustrates the distribution of response across the categories and Table 13 summarises the data, in percentage terms.

Overall, the limitation with which most respondents either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' was that there was insufficient time to take up training opportunities (78%, 51 respondents); this was also the category with which there was most strong agreement (20%, 14 respondents). At the other end of the spectrum, most respondents either 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' that virtual security access issues (69%, 45 respondents) were barriers to their effective use of technology, followed by security issues in general (68%, 44 respondents) and physical security access (62%, 40 respondents).

Forty-three per cent of respondents (28 respondents) either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that insufficient training opportunities were a barrier, while 49 per cent (32 respondents) either 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' that this was the case.

In each case, 52 per cent of respondents (34 respondents) either 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' that ICT infrastructure and e-learning resources were inadequate and that the approach of providers was cautious. Thirty seven per cent of organisations (24 respondents) in each case either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that a lack of awareness of existing training opportunities and inadequate ICT infrastructure and e-learning resources were barriers to their effective use of ILT. Of those indicating 'Other', five organisations elaborated, mentioning a lack of funding and, less frequently, a lack of resources and fear of change as barriers.

Figure 14: Proportion of respondents' agreement with listed preventative factors

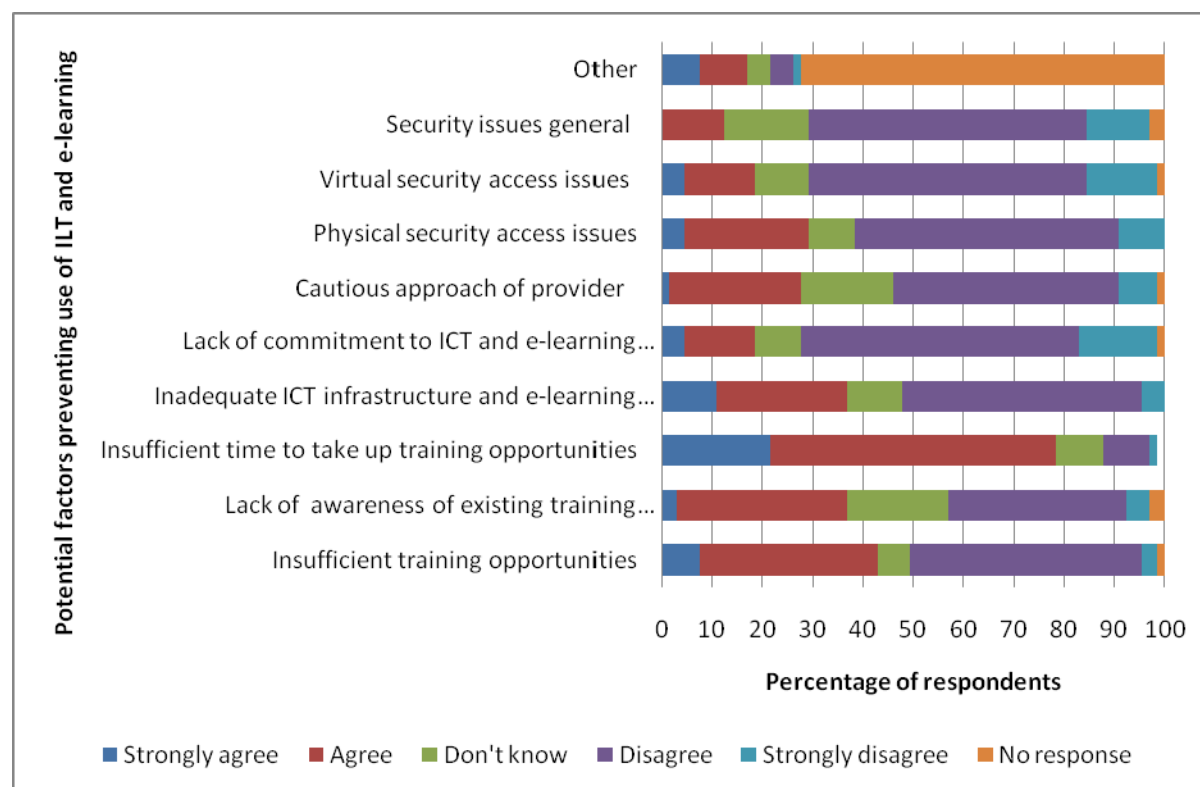


Table 13: Proportion of respondents' agreement with listed preventative factors

	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Don't know (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	No response (%)
Insufficient training opportunities	8	35	6	46	3	2
Lack of awareness of existing training opportunities	3	34	20	35	5	3
Insufficient time to take up training opportunities	22	57	9	9	2	0
Inadequate ICT infrastructure and e-learning resources	11	26	11	48	5	0
Lack of commitment to ICT and e-learning by senior management staff	5	14	9	55	15	2
Cautious approach of provider	2	26	18	45	8	2
Physical security access issues	5	25	9	52	9	0
Virtual security access issues	5	14	11	55	14	2
Security issues (general)	0	12	17	55	12	3
Other	8	9	5	5	2	72

Funding and support

Organisations were asked to indicate whether they had, over the previous 18 months, been in receipt of any government-funded support for effective use of ILT. Eighty-two per cent of organisations (53 respondents) stated that they had, 14 per cent (9 organisations) had not, and 3 per cent (2 organisations) did not know. One respondent did not answer this question.

Of the 53 organisations who responded positively, the majority (58%, 31 respondents) indicated that they had received CaMeL funding, 28 per cent (15 respondents) had accessed E-Guides and 21 per cent (11 respondents) cited NIACE but did not specify the funding stream. The funding was helpful in a range of ways; comments can be seen in Table 14. Funding cited only once does not feature in the table, but included: Quilt (NIACE); NIACE– ILT infrastructure and competence; LSIS; capital investment fund; UK online funding; CEL; Apollo (Becta); SLC E-Electives; ELPs; ALP; e-strategy support; and peer review development group grant.

Table 14: Types of funding accessed by organisation and comments on how it has helped

Funding type and No of respondents	Comments related to how it has helped
Capital Motivating eLearning (CaMeL) (31 respondents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Mobile classroom equipment for outreach.' • 'Interactive whiteboards.' • 'ILT for RARPA (cameras, camcorders, voice recorders).' • 'Equipping a training centre.' • 'Additional IT capacity.' • 'Investment of capital to purchase ILT equipment for classrooms.' • 'This has been hugely beneficial in supporting us to ensure the equipment is available for all areas of learning.' • 'NIACE CaMeL bid gave £20,000 towards new e-learning equipment. Process of training on new equipment to begin in summer term.' • 'Improving ICT infrastructure in children's centres (key delivery venues) and portable equipment for tutors.' • 'CaMeL funding (30k) to replace laptops and purchase ILT equipment. Enabled the use of new Microsoft software.' • 'Helped to equip classrooms and workshops with IWBs, PCs with internet access and mobile digital equipment and so enabled us to develop the use of ILT in the classroom.' • 'CaMeL funding through NIACE has enabled us to purchase further hardware to support development of e-learning for both tutors and learners.' • 'Mobile e-learning.' • 'Supplying equipment for tutors and ILT development.' • 'CaMeL funding (via NIACE) helped purchase an ICT suite,

	<p>laptops, digital voice recorders and data projectors for use in teaching.'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'CaMeL capital funding– £20,000 to enable internet connectivity in all classrooms in our two major venues.'
<p>E-Guides (15 respondents)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'E-Guides training– one further E-Guide trained. Two of our original E-Guides have left so this has replaced one. Also, E-Guides mailing group.' • 'E-Guide training– focused purchase of equipment to support a specific curriculum area.' • 'Providing essential ICT/ILT skills and knowledge.' • 'Particularly developing skills and sharing content on VLE.'
<p>NIACE (non-specific) (11 respondents)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Used to provide wireless teaching facilities; NIACE grants used to purchase equipment to support teaching and learning (e.g. cameras, interactive whiteboards, etc).' • 'NIACE funded projects have helped to improve the level and access of IT used for teaching in our organisation.' • 'NIACE funding helped to establish and develop our learning platform.' • 'NIACE funding for equipment. Without this funding we wouldn't be able to have bought <i>any</i> ICT equipment for our provider organisations and wouldn't have been able to make any inroads into using ICT in the classroom with ACL learners.' • 'The organisation received NIACE funding for capital and revenue bids in January 2008. This enabled the purchase of new computers, most of which were deployed in classrooms with multimedia projectors and wireless keyboards. This has allowed tutors to use the internet or VLE more easily in class as they do not have to book laptops and projectors for the rooms where the equipment is installed.' • 'NIACE e-learning funding to open internet café.' • 'NIACE capital and revenue bid for tutor PCs and establishment of VLE granted for period Sept–Dec 2007.'
<p>NLDC (NIACE) (7 respondents)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Update/upgrade ICT suites and to install interactive boards in many classrooms.' • 'Establish a e-learning platform.' • 'Staff training.' • 'Purchase of laptops for community venues.' • 'NLDC capital and revenue funding has enabled us to develop the use of ILT with learners in outreach locations.' • 'To cover IT support and maintenance.' • 'NLDC capital funding to equip neighbourhood skills centres with PCs.' • 'NLDC capital – enhancing learning environments in venues using ICT.' • 'NLDC capital (used to replace hardware in 10 learning centres in

	2008).'
JISC RSC support (6 respondents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'RSC London meetings and contact have aided development of ILT across the college.' • 'RSC JISC adviser has provided us with visit and a sample e-strategy. Their bulletins have enabled me to pass on information about funding opportunities for capital funding to the training providers that we work with.' • 'Awareness of a range of teaching and learning materials and opportunity to see other provider's solutions and experience; sharing of good practice.' • 'JISC – annual monitoring visit and subsequent health check.' • 'JISC Regional Support Centre – regional Moodle users' group; ACL/WBL Forum.' • 'JISC – advice and guidance very helpful in developing and implementing strategy and keeping us abreast of current conferences, training opportunities and developments in ILT.'
Projects funded by European Union (various) (6 respondents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'ESF Convergence – Rural isolation access.' • 'ESF Urban II.' • 'Investing in Communities (EEDA).' • 'ESF Staff Development Project.' • 'Objective One & Convergence Funding – Supporting ICT/ILT full-time support team.' • 'Grundtvig Partnership funding.'
LSC (non-specific) (3 respondents)	
NIACE Capital and Connectivity project (3 respondents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Funding helped connect many community learning venues wirelessly to the net.'
Becta (2 respondents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Becta Technology Exemplar Network.'

Having established support accessed by organisations, the survey sought to gauge the extent to which government e-learning and ICT policies have had a positive impact on them. Respondents were asked to indicate, on a four-point scale, the extent to which they felt that specific policies had had an impact on their organisation. Fig. 15 illustrates the distribution of response by response type and Table 15 shows a summary of the data in percentage terms.

Overall, the two most influential central government e-learning/ICT policies were family cohesion and e-safety (learners' confidence in their home use of technology). Sixty-two per cent of organisations (40 respondents) indicated that they had seen a positive impact – responding either 'Very much' or 'To some extent' – as a result of family cohesion policies. Fifty-two per cent (34 respondents) had seen a positive

impact – responding either ‘Very much’ or ‘To some extent’ – as a result of e-safety policies.

For 38 per cent of those replying (25 respondents), the policies relating to reduction of paperwork or administrative burden had made ‘little or no impact’, followed by policies related to support for e-government and e-democracy (23%, 15 respondents), although a greater proportion (28%, 18 respondents) felt that these types of policies had had an impact ‘to some extent’.

When the question of policy influence was raised at the wider consultation group, it was clear that this is also likely to be the pattern within the wider sub-sector:

Can we look at F4? It's a very interesting question, because if I'm brutally honest my answer to that would be e-learning and ICT policy zero; community cohesion, informal adult education, worklessness... the health agendas have much more influence on my ICT stuff than e-learning and ICT policies. E-learning and ICT may influence those government departments, but when you talk to me about empowerment that has a direct influence on how I structure my programmes in order to deliver that agenda – that's not really ICT and e-learning– there's a separation between government policy and IC- type policy.

Consultation group respondent

The *Harnessing Technology* policy was not specifically referenced, although many elements of its implementation were recognised by respondents in their answers to other questions.

Figure 15: Respondents indicating the extent of the impact of central government policies

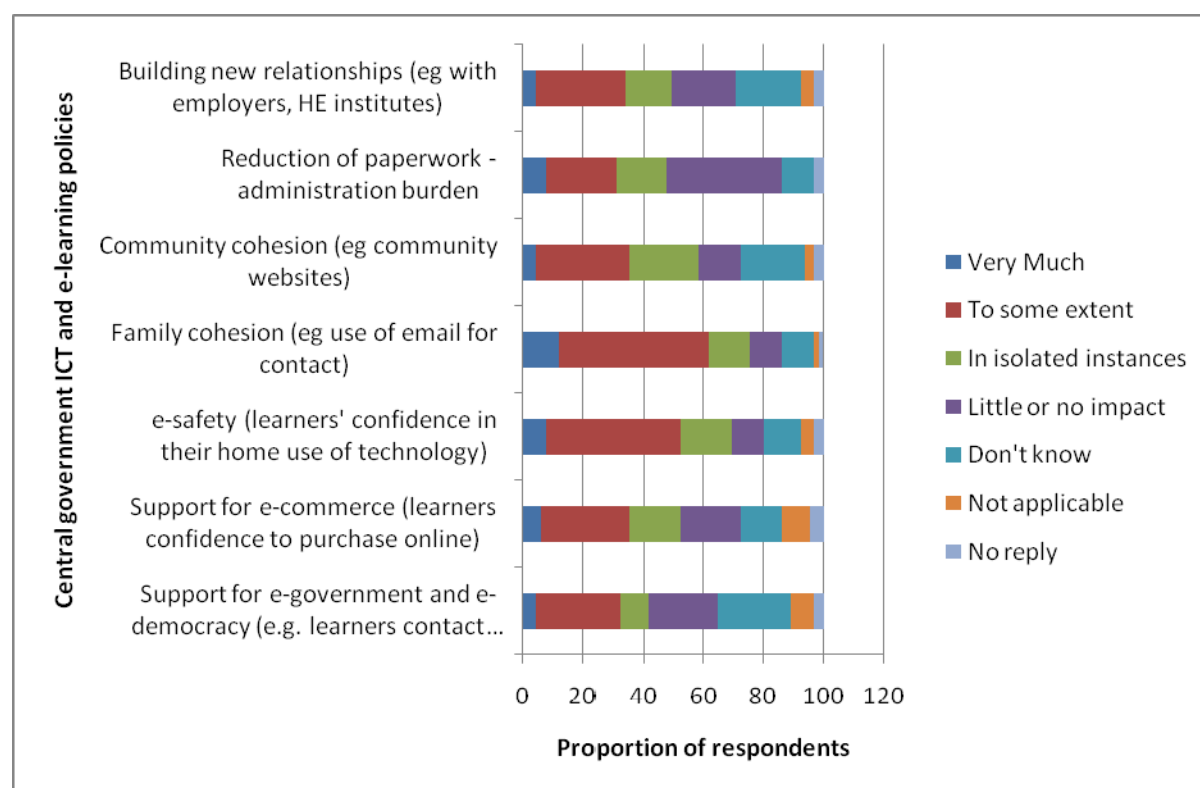


Table 15: Respondents indicating the extent of the impact of central government policies other than Harnessing Technology

	Support for e-government and e-democracy	Support for e-commerce	E-safety	Family cohesion	Community cohesion	Reduction of paperwork	Building new relationships
Very much (%)	5	6	8	12	5	8	5
To some extent (%)	28	29	45	49	31	23	29
In isolated instances (%)	9	17	17	14	23	17	15
Little or no impact (%)	23	20	11	11	14	38	22
Don't know (%)	25	14	12	11	22	11	22
Not applicable (%)	8	9	5	2	3	0	5
No reply (%)	3	5	3	2	3	3	3

Having established the influence of government policies, the survey sought to establish levels of actual support. Respondents were asked to indicate, on a four-point scale, the extent to which they felt that specific policies/external organisations had supported their organisations' ability to use ICT/e-learning. Fig. 16 illustrates the distribution of response by response type and Table 16 shows a summary of the data in percentage terms.

Overall, only three policies/external organisations supported respondents 'very much'. These were:

- the LSC Quality Improvement Strategy (23%, 15 respondents)
- the Government's skills strategy (*Leitch Review of Skills*) (17%, 11 respondents)
- the National Learning Network programme (including aclearn) (12%, 8 respondents).

These were also the three policies/external organisations that most frequently supported organisations 'to some extent':

- The National Learning Network programme (including aclearn) was influential among 49 per cent (32 respondents).
- The LSC Quality Improvement Strategy was influential among 46 per cent (30 respondents).
- The Government's skills strategy (*Leitch Review of Skills*) was influential among 38 per cent (25 respondents).

The policies/external organisations having 'little or no impact' in terms of e-learning were most frequently:

- the National Archive (e.g. *Moving Here*, CASBAH) (43%, 23 respondents)
- the British Library (43%, 23 respondents),
- Culture Online resources (e.g. *City Heritage*, *Headline History*) (37%, 24 respondents), and
- regional MLA Resources (e.g. through Renaissance, SoPSE) (35%, 23 respondents)

These were also the four policies/external organisations cited with most frequency as being 'not applicable'.

Figure 16: Extent to which government policies/external organisations have supported organisations' ability to use ICT/e-learning

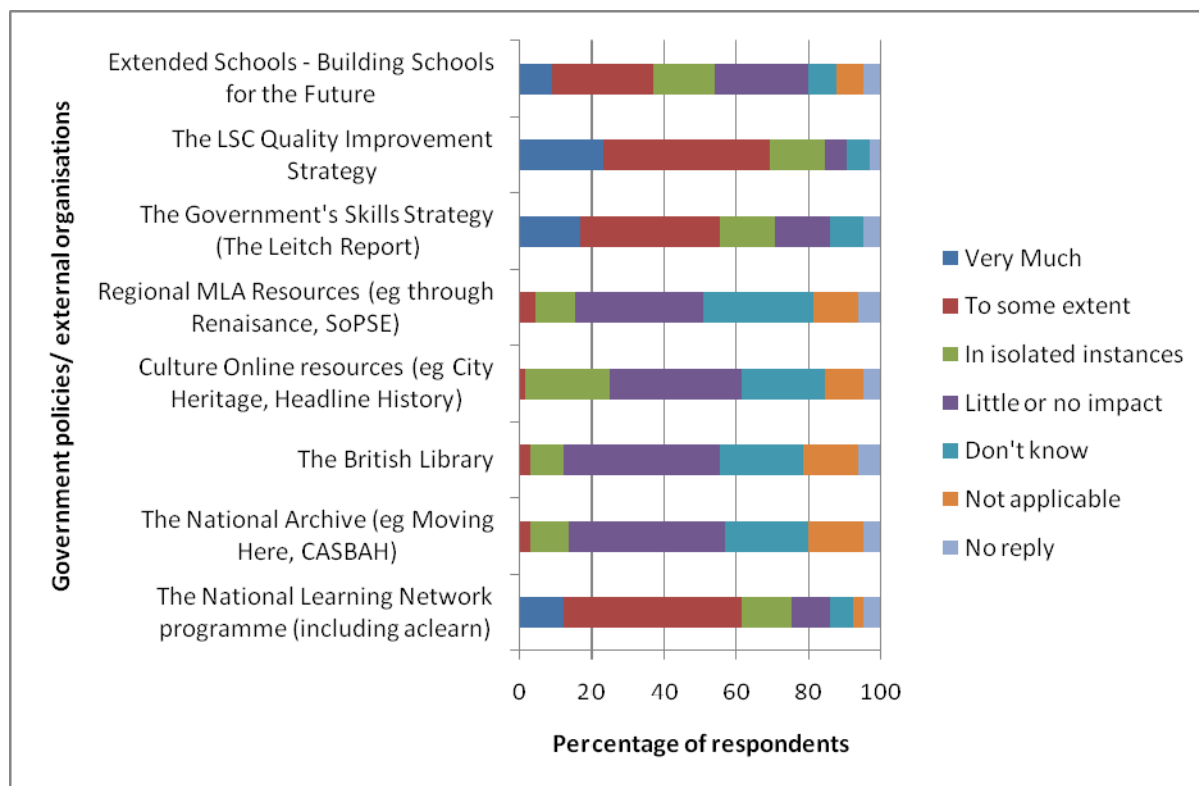


Table 16: Extent to which government policies/external organisations have supported organisations' ability to use ICT/e-learning

Government e-learning and ICT policies	Very much	To some extent	In isolated instances	Little or no impact	Don't know	N/A	No reply
The National Learning Network programme (including aclearn)	12%	49%	14%	11%	6%	3%	5%
The National Archive (e.g. <i>Moving Here</i> , CASBAH)	0	3%	11%	43%	23%	15%	5%
The British Library	0	3%	9%	43%	23%	15%	6%
Culture Online resources (e.g. <i>City Heritage</i> , <i>Headline History</i>)	0	2%	23%	37%	23%	11%	5%
Regional MLA Resources (e.g. through Renaissance, SoPSE)	0	5%	11%	35%	31%	12%	6%
The Government's skills strategy (<i>Leitch Review of Skills</i>)	17%	38%	15%	15%	9%	0	5%
The LSC Quality Improvement Strategy	23%	46%	15%	6%	6%	0	3%
Extended Schools – Building Schools for the Future	9%	28%	17%	26%	8%	8%	5%

To summarise section F, the main barrier limiting effective use of ILT and e-learning among staff was 'insufficient time to take up training opportunities' followed, to a lesser extent, by 'insufficient training opportunities'. The least pervasive barriers all related to security (virtual, general and physical). Approximately 8 out of 10 respondents were in receipt of funding to support effective use of ILT, and of those, CaMeL was the most frequently cited, followed by E-Guides.

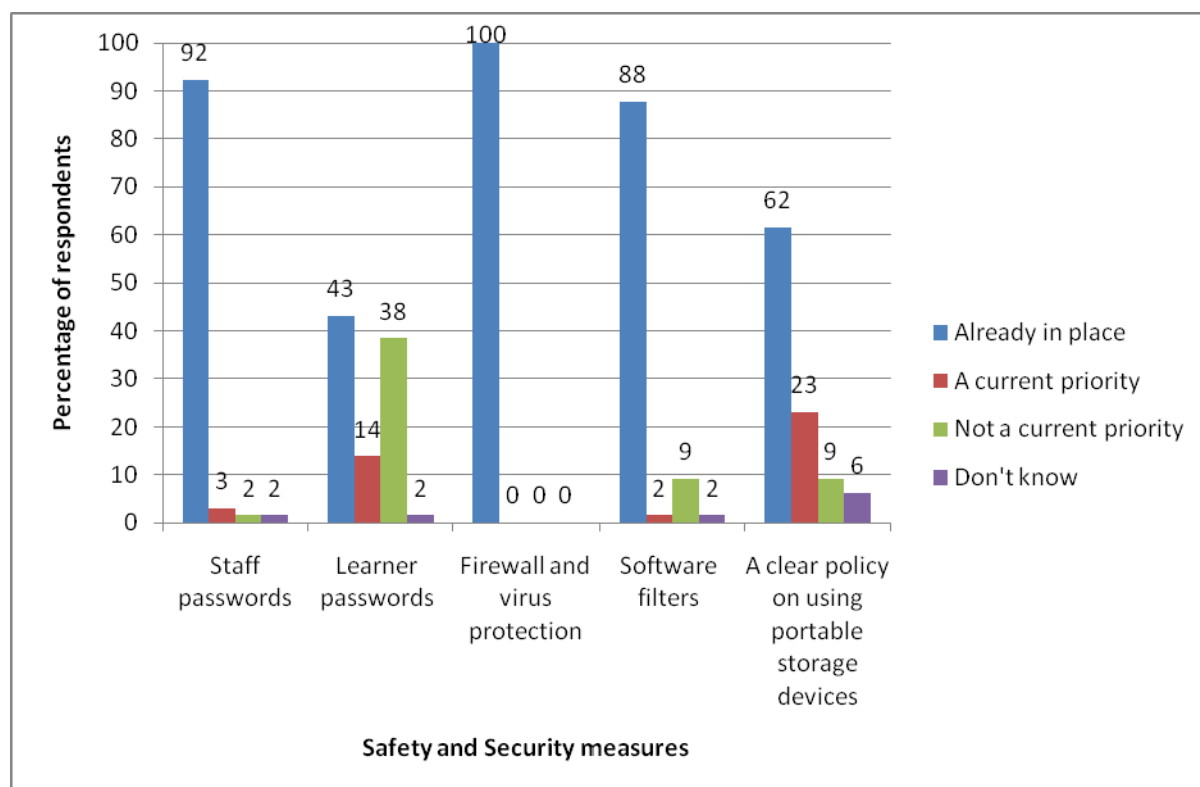
In terms of policy impact, the most influential type of e-learning/ICT policies were those related to family cohesion and e-safety, and the least were those that targeted a reduction in paperwork or administrative burden. The LSC Quality Improvement Strategy, the *Leitch Review of Skills* and the National Learning Network programme

were considered to have been of most support to organisations' ability to use ICT/e-learning, and the National Archive and the British Library were seen to be the least.

Section G: ILT safety and security

The final section of the survey was intended to identify safety and security measures that organisations already have in place, those that are a current priority and those that are not a current priority. Fig. 17 illustrates organisations' responses to the question asking providers about their safety and security measures.

Figure 17: Safety and security measures



Overall, the response appearing with most frequency was 'Already in place' (77% of all possible responses), followed by 'Not a current priority' (12%) and 'A current priority' (8%).

More specifically, all organisations had both firewalls and virus protection already in place. Staff passwords were in place within 92 per cent of organisations (60 respondents), while for 3 per cent of them, this was a current priority (2 organisations). Eighty-eight per cent of organisations (57 respondents) already had software filters in place, a further 2 per cent (1 respondent) considered this a priority and 9 per cent (6 respondents) did not.

When asked about whether they had a clear policy on using portable storage devices, 62 per cent of organisations (40 respondents) indicated that they did, while

23 per cent (15 respondents) stated that this was a current priority for them, 9 per cent (6 respondents) said it wasn't and 6 per cent did not know.

Learner passwords was the measure which saw the most division. Forty-three per cent of organisations (28 respondents) already had them in place, while for 38 per cent (25 respondents), this was not a current priority. Fourteen per cent (9 respondents) indicated that, while these were not currently in place, this was a current priority for them.

To summarise section G, organisations saw a high level of existing security measures; approximately 7 out of 10 responses to the series of statements indicated measures were in place. All organisations indicated that they had firewalls and virus protection in place, and most of them also made use of staff passwords. Learner passwords were least common and were not considered a priority by over a third of organisations.

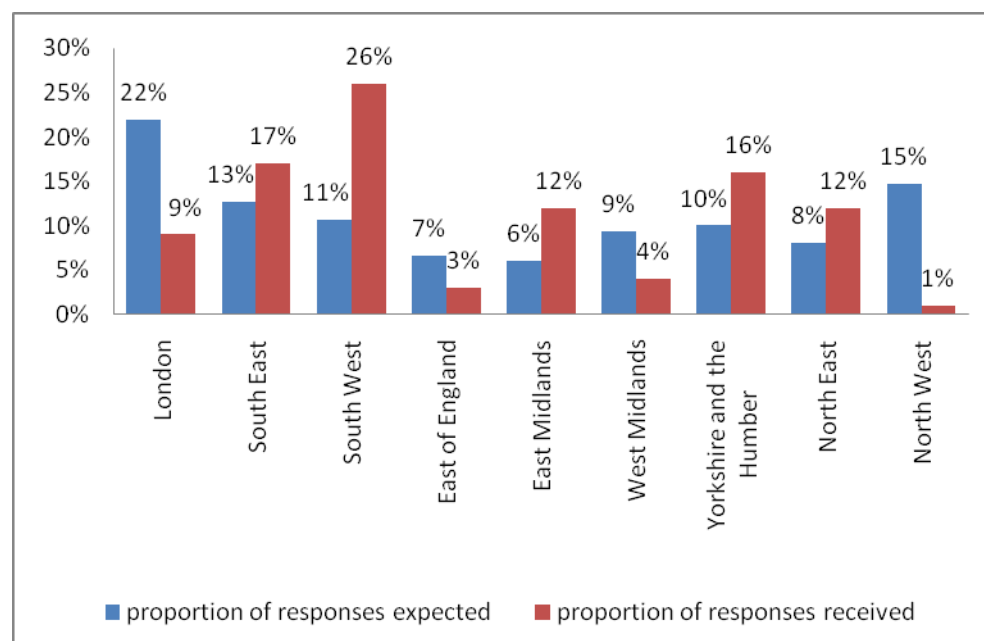
ACL practitioners

Overall, 95 practitioners from 39 local authorities responded to the survey. In the 2008–09 e-maturity survey, Sero suggested that their analysis may not have been wholly representative as E-Guides and other enthusiasts were more likely to respond. This year, although the respondents included almost equal numbers of E-Guides and non E-Guides – 52 and 47 per cent, respectively – feedback from participants in the focus group suggested that it had been quite difficult to get practitioners to complete the questionnaire and that, in reality, it would have been the enthusiasts and those already making good use of the technology that were more likely to respond to the survey. This should perhaps be something that should be considered in the 2009/10 survey.

Section A: Respondents and their organisations

The first section of the survey was intended to find out more about the practitioners that responded to the survey – for example, their job role, numbers of hours they worked and the types of venues in which they delivered learning.

Figure 18: Regional distribution of respondents



There were responses from practitioners from each of the regions, but as Fig. 18 shows, in some regions, the response was lower than expected – for example, in the North West, London, the East of England and the West Midlands. In other regions, such as the South West and the East Midlands, there was a higher than expected number of practitioners responding to the survey.

Profile of respondents

The majority of the practitioners who responded to the survey (81%) were involved in a teacher/training role. A further 6 per cent were in a learning support role, with the remaining 13 per cent work in 'other' roles such as co-ordinator/management.

Nearly half of the respondents (49%) had been working in their roles for more than 10 years and about one third of the practitioners (35%) had been in them for 5–10 years. However, it is difficult to tell from the data whether these practitioners had been with the same employer for that duration, as practitioners in ACL often work on short-term contracts and turnover of staff can be high in this sub-sector. High staff turnover is clearly an issue for providers as it means having to offer new staff training in e-learning and ICT equipment. On the basis of this supposition, long-term staff are more likely to have embedded ILT/e-learning in their practices and to have taken advantage of any training/CPD opportunities regarding ILT.

Overall, around one fifth of the practitioners who responded (21%) work on a full-time basis. However, the majority work part time, with around half of them (47%) working 10 hours or less per week.

Of the 95 practitioners who responded to the survey, nearly half deliver either Skills for Life courses or other vocational qualifications, including IT.

Learning locations

The practitioners who responded to this survey deliver learning in a variety of different learning locations. Eighty-six per cent of them deliver learning from learning centres and nearly half (49%) do so from community centres. Around a quarter of the practitioners deliver learning in libraries (24%) and village halls (23%). A further 19 per cent stated that they also delivered learning in 'other' locations, including children's centres, colleges and workplaces.

Table 17: Other locations where learning is delivered

'Other' location	No of practitioners delivering in this location
Children's centres	5
Workplace	2
Mobile ICT suite	1
Museum	1
At the organisation building	1
Army base	1
Conservative Club	1
College	3
Sure Start	1
Age Concern centre	1
School and Bridge Women's Education Centres	1
Resource centres	1
Private residential home	1

To summarise this section, there were responses from practitioners in each of the nine regions. However, some regions such as the South West were over-represented, whereas other regions such as London had fewer than expected responses. The majority of the practitioners (81%) worked in a teaching/training role. Nearly half of the respondents (49%) had been working in their role for more than 10 years and about one third of the practitioners (35%) had been in their role for 5–10 years. A large proportion of the practitioners worked part time, with about half of the respondents (47%) working 10 hours or less per week. The practitioners who responded to this survey deliver learning in a variety of locations: 86% deliver it from learning centres and nearly half (49%) do so from community centres.

Section B: (ILT) Resources for teaching and learning

This section looked at what sort of access practitioners had to ILT equipment and the internet, as well as how they are using the technology in their teaching and learning practices.

Access to ILT equipment: In the 2008–09 e-maturity survey, 67% of the practitioners reported very good access to work-based computers and to computers away from work. This year, the question was phrased slightly differently and practitioners were asked specifically about whether they had sole or shared access to IT equipment.

Around two thirds of the practitioners surveyed this year have dedicated access to a laptop or computer at work (62%) and about half of them have access to their own laptop/computer away from work (55%). However, it is worth noting that the feedback from the focus group suggested that, although a high proportion of practitioners have sole/dedicated access to a computer, this doesn't necessarily mean that they have access to one during their teaching session

We used our CaMeL project money to give all of our established tutors a laptop. In terms of the ability to work in different locations, it's better than sharing equipment.

Table 18: Access to ILT equipment

	Computer/ laptop at work	Computer/ laptop away from work	Digital camera	Interactive whiteboard	Data projector	Video conferencing
I have sole/dedicated access to one of these.	62%	55%	28%	15%	15%	4%
I share this with 1–2 colleagues	8%	1%	6%	7%	9%	1%
I share this with more than 2 colleagues.	24%	13%	47%	51%	53%	12%
This is available at my organisation but I have no access to it.	1%	11%	11%	11%	13%	7%
This is not available at	2%	15%	3%	14%	4%	64%

my organisation

No response	2%	6%	4%	3%	6%	12%
--------------------	----	----	----	----	----	-----

Only 28% of the practitioners have sole/dedicated access to a digital camera, with the majority (47%) sharing a digital camera with two or more colleagues.

However, on further analysis, it is clear that there is a greater likelihood that E-Guide respondents will have sole access to computers in addition to more favourable levels of access to other technologies overall.

Table 19: E-Guides access to equipment

	Computer/ laptop at work	Computer/ laptop away from work	Digital camera	Interactive whiteboard	Data projector	Video conferencing
I have sole/dedicated access to one of these.	80%	71%	37%	16%	27%	8%
I share this with 1–2 colleagues.	8%	2%	8%	4%	10%	0%
I share this with more than 2 colleagues.	12%	14%	47%	55%	49%	14%
This is available at my organisation but I have no access to it.	0%	6%	6%	16%	12%	8%
This is not available at my organisation.	0%	4%	0%	8%	0%	63%
No response	0%	2%	2%	0%	2%	6%

(Percentages are based on n=49)

Table 20: Non-E-Guides access to equipment

	Computer/ laptop at work	Computer/ laptop away from work	Digital camera	Interactive whiteboard	Data projector	Video conferencing
I have sole/dedicated access to one of these.	44%	36%	20%	13%	2%	0%
I share this with 1–2 colleagues.	9%	0%	4%	11%	9%	2%
I share this with more than 2 colleagues.	36%	11%	47%	44%	56%	9%
This is available at my organisation but I have no access to it.	2%	16%	16%	4%	13%	7%
This is not available at my organisation.	4%	27%	7%	20%	9%	64%
No response	4%	11%	7%	7%	11%	18%

(Percentages are based on n=45)

Tables 19 and 20 show an additional analysis of practitioner access to ILT equipment, indicating that there are differences between access for E-Guides and access for other practitioners. Some of the key differences are highlighted below:

- 80% of E-Guides have sole/dedicated access to a computer or laptop at work, whereas only 44% of the non-E-Guides have such access.
- 71% of the E-Guides have sole/dedicated access to a laptop or computer away from work, but only 36% of the non-E-Guides have this kind of access.
- 27% of the E-Guides have sole/dedicated access to a data projector, whereas only 2% of the non-E-Guides do.

Overall, about half of the practitioners also share an interactive whiteboard (51%) and data projector (53%) with two or more colleagues, but this is not surprising as these types of equipment tend to be located in one room rather than moved about. Participants at the focus group felt that it was acceptable for practitioners to have to share interactive whiteboards, but ideally they would like them to have sole access to

data projectors – on the one hand, teaching staff are being encouraged to make more use of interactive PowerPoint in their lessons, but on the other hand, they are not being given the equipment to be able to deliver this.

Discussions from the focus group suggested that, although it would be ideal for practitioners to have sole access to a lot of digital equipment, in reality it would be too costly to equip every practitioners with technology such as digital cameras, data projectors and laptops.

There's no way we could afford one laptop for each tutor. Some of our providers are in community school settings where there is a whiteboard and projector but no laptop, and the centre may only have one laptop to share among staff.

Comment from ACL provider at focus group

Sharing doesn't work where the tutors are part time in different locations.
Practitioner in focus group

Sixty-four per cent of the practitioners reported that they have no access to video-conferencing equipment at their organisation; a further 12 per cent did not respond to this question. From discussions with participants, we found that video conferencing is not currently at the top of many providers' priorities. Those who have used video conferencing have done so mainly for staff meetings rather than for teaching and learning purposes. However, the participants at the focus group recognised that video conferencing potentially has some value, especially in rural areas where it could benefit learners and tutors who are unable to get to certain learning locations.

Access to the internet

Just over half of the practitioners (57%) have unrestricted access to the internet at their place of work, with a further 41 per cent having some internet access, albeit restricted to sites approved by the organisation. However, as participants at the focus group stated, having access to the internet at work does not necessarily mean that the practitioners have access to the internet when they are teaching learners.

It is also worth noting that there are still about 3 per cent of the practitioners who stated that they have no internet access at work at all.

The 2008–09 e-maturity survey showed that 31 per cent of practitioners had wireless-enabled access to their organisation's network. This year, the figure is slightly higher, with 53 per cent reporting that they have wireless access to the internet at work.

Online resources

Last year, 58 per cent of the practitioners stated that they had access to online resources while at work (Sero, 2008). The term 'online resources' could have been interpreted in a number of different ways by practitioners, so this year, the question

was more specific about the types of online resources to which they had access. Practitioners were asked, first, whether they were aware of specific online resources and, second, whether they had used any of these resources with learners.

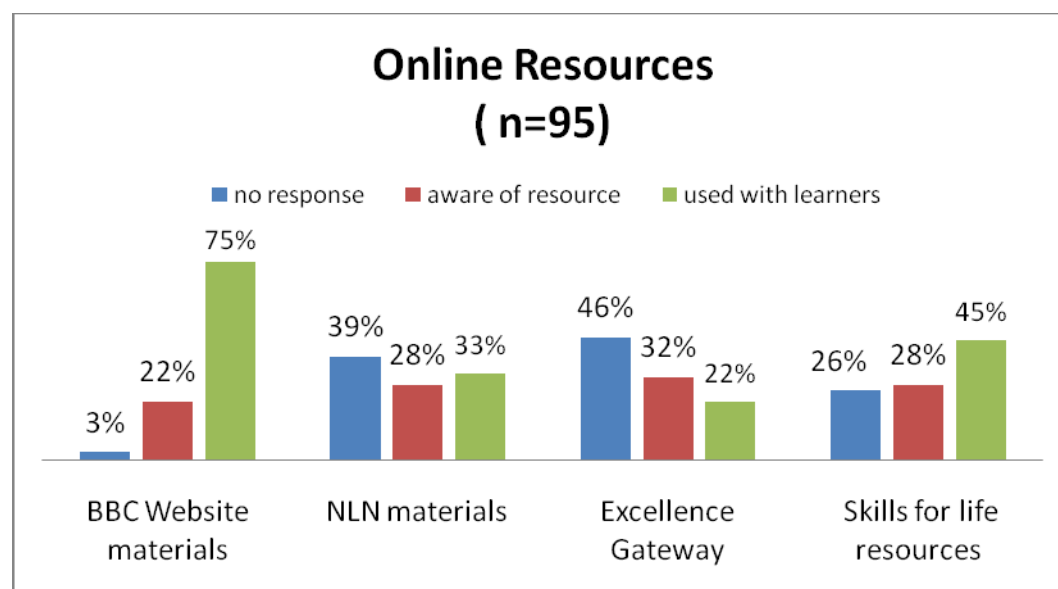
A large number of the practitioners (75%) had used the BBC's online resources with their learners, and a further 22 per cent were aware of these resources but had not necessarily used them with their learners.

The Skills for Life resources also appeared to be popular, with 45 per cent of the practitioners reporting to have used them with learners and a further 28 per cent aware that they existed.

Only about a third of the practitioners (33%) have used the NLN-ACL online resources with their learners. During discussions with the focus group, it became apparent that, despite the publicity and promotion of NLN-ACL resources in 2007/08, many practitioners were still unaware of their existence. As one participant at the focus group stated:

They were issued quite a while ago, and if there is a change in staffing then they get forgotten about. It was also annoying when they changed the website address.

Figure 19: Online resources



1.1.1

Practitioners' use of technology

In 2008–09, Sero found that 96 per cent of the practitioners used technology to create paper-based learning materials often, or all the time. This year, the question was phrased slightly differently and practitioners were more specific about how often they used the technologies for various activities.

In this survey, 79% of the practitioners claim to use technology on a daily basis or at least once a week to create paper-based learning materials. In addition, around half of them use technology on a daily or weekly basis to develop e-learning materials (51%) or assess learner's work (54%).

Practitioners are also making use of online collaborative tools fairly frequently, with 25 per cent of them using online collaborative tools on a daily basis and a further 21 per cent using them at least once a week. They appear to use diverse media (such as game-based learning and podcasting) less frequently, with only 22 per cent of the practitioners using them on a daily/weekly basis.

Practitioners do not appear to be making much use of e-portfolios with learners, with 63 per cent of respondents stating that they have never used them. It should be noted that this response may be affected by practitioners' understanding of what constitutes an 'e-portfolio'.

Table 21: Practitioners' use of technology

	Paper-based	E-learning materials	Learners' work	Learner targets	Diverse media	Online tools	E-portfolios	Teach online
On a daily basis	45%	24%	19%	12%	5%	25%	4%	12%
At least once a week	34%	27%	35%	32%	18%	21%	8%	25%
Once a month	16%	24%	19%	19%	31%	18%	15%	17%
Less than twice a year	4%	9%	8%	8%	16%	14%	7%	12%
Never	1%	12%	16%	28%	28%	20%	63%	32%
No response	0%	3%	3%	1%	2%	2%	2%	3%

However, if a comparison is made between E-Guides and non-E-Guides (see Tables 22 and 23), it is clear that E-Guides use these resources more frequently. Overall:

- 68 per cent of E-Guides use technology on a daily basis or at least once a week to develop e-learning materials, whereas only 36 per cent of the non-E-Guides do so.
- 62 per cent of E-Guides are making use of online collaborative tools on a daily basis or at least once a week to develop e-learning materials, whereas only 29 per cent of the non-E-Guides do this.

Table 22: E-Guides' use of ILT

	Paper-based	E-learning materials	Learners' work	Learner targets	Diverse media	Online tools	E-portfolios	Teach online
On a daily basis	53%	31%	22%	16%	10%	33%	8%	20%
At least once a week	31%	37%	35%	31%	16%	29%	10%	27%
Once a month	14%	22%	20%	16%	41%	16%	16%	16%
Less than twice a year	2%	8%	12%	10%	16%	18%	10%	14%
Never	0%	2%	10%	27%	16%	4%	55%	22%
No response	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

(Percentages based on n=49)

Table 23: Non-E-Guides' use of ILT

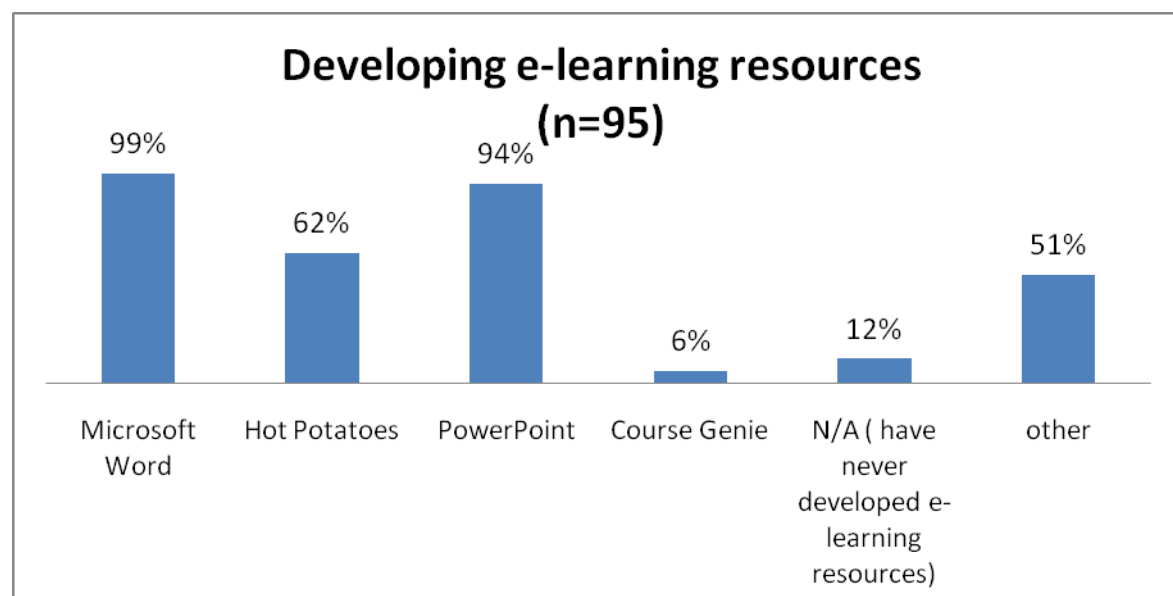
	Paper-based	E-learning materials	Learners' work	Learner targets	Diverse media	Online tools	E-portfolios	Teach online
On a daily basis	38%	18%	16%	7%	0%	16%	0%	2%
At least once a week	36%	18%	33%	31%	20%	13%	7%	24%
Once a month	18%	24%	18%	22%	20%	20%	11%	16%
Less than twice a year	7%	11%	4%	7%	13%	9%	4%	9%
Never	2%	22%	22%	31%	42%	38%	73%	42%
No response	0%	7%	7%	2%	4%	4%	4%	7%

(Percentages based on n=45)

Developing e-learning resources

Almost all the practitioners who responded have developed e-learning resources using Word and/or PowerPoint. A significant number of practitioners (62%) have also used Hot Potatoes to develop e-learning resources.

Figure 20: Developing e-learning resources



In addition to the software listed in the survey, 51 per cent of the practitioners used other types of software, which can be seen in Table 24.

Table 24: Other software that practitioners are using to develop e-learning resources

Software used	No of responses
Access	1
Adobe Acrobat	1
Adobe Photoshop	5
Audacity	3
Camtasia	2
Corel Draw	1
CrazyTalk	1
Dvolver	1
Excel	12
eXe	2
Flash	1
Formulator Tarsia	1
FrontPage	1
Google	1
Microsoft Publisher	8
Moodle	6
Movie Maker	4
Open Office	1
Optivote	1

Paint	1
Paintshop Pro	1
PDF Creator	1
Photo Story	8
Pinnacle Studio	1
PowerPoint	2
Promethean ActivStudio	2
Puzzlemaker	2
SansScrip – Course Creator	1
Scils website	1
SMART software	2
Spellmaster*	1
Survey software	1
ToonDoo	1
TurningPoint	3
WebQuests	1
Widgit	1
WinDVD	1
Wink	2

To summarise this section, 62 per cent of practitioners reported that they have sole/dedicated access to a computer/laptop at work, but this did not necessarily mean that the computer/laptop was available to them for teaching purposes. Practitioners generally have good shared access to a range of ILT equipment. However, feedback from the focus group suggested that, ideally, practitioners would like to have dedicated access to certain ILT equipment such as digital cameras and data projectors to use with their learners. Seventy-nine per cent of the practitioners claim to use technology on a daily basis or at least once a week to create paper-based learning materials. About half of the practitioners use technology on a daily or weekly basis to develop e-learning materials (51%) or assess learners' work (54%). Practitioners do not appear to be making much use of e-portfolios with learners, with 63% of the respondents stating that they have never used them. Almost all of the 95 practitioners that responded have developed e-learning resources using Word and/or PowerPoint, and a significant percentage (62%) have also used Hot Potatoes. Further analysis of these figures shows that E-Guides have greater access to technology than non-E-Guides and they also use ILT with greater frequency.

Section C: Learning platforms

This section was intended to find out to what extent practitioners were using learning platforms.

* When listing this site, Google includes the warning: "This site may harm your computer."

Access to learning platforms

In 2008–09, Sero found that 43 per cent of the practitioners had access to a learning platform. This year, the figure is much higher, with 72 per cent (68 out of 95) reporting that they have access to a learning platform at their organisation, and where learning platforms exist, off-site access is now universal.

Moodle is the most popular learning platform in ACL, used by 79 per cent of the practitioners who have access to a learning platform. One of them summed up their reasons for using Moodle:

Accessing whenever, whatever, wherever improves communication between learners and tutors. Lessons are more dynamic and learners more motivated. Cater for all different types of learners and needs, facilitates differentiation.

However, some practitioners have found that learning platforms can have limitations. Some of the issues which practitioners raised about using learning platforms included:

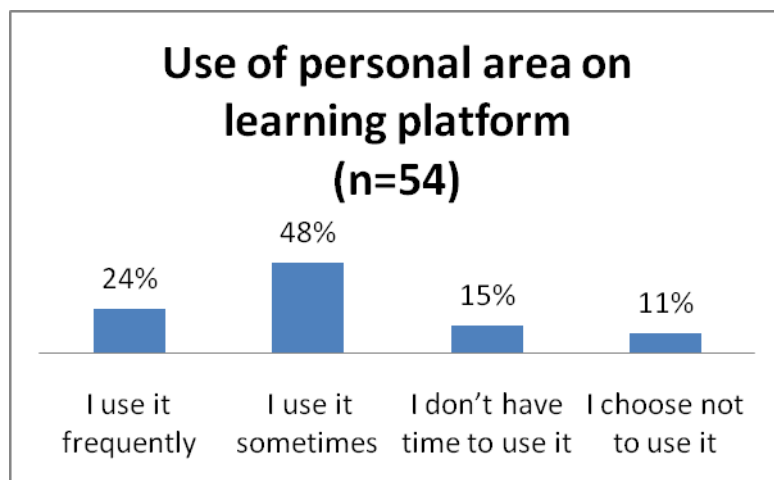
- learners not being able to access the platform because they do not have internet access outside of the classroom
- learners with a low level of ICT skills not having one-to-one support
- time-consuming and cumbersome uploading of materials
- many features requiring training before staff can use them
- non-user-friendly interface.

Focus group participants felt that it was important that a distinction be made between having access to a learning platform and actually making use of it; their experience was that, although learning platforms are available to most practitioners, only a few actually use them with learners; they are mainly used by staff for communication purposes.

Personal area on learning platforms.

Of the 68 practitioners who reported having access to a learning platform, 54 (79%) had access to a personal area on it. Nearly a quarter of these practitioners (24%) use the personal area 'frequently', with a further 48% using it 'sometimes'. Eleven per cent of the respondents who had access to a personal area choose not to use it.

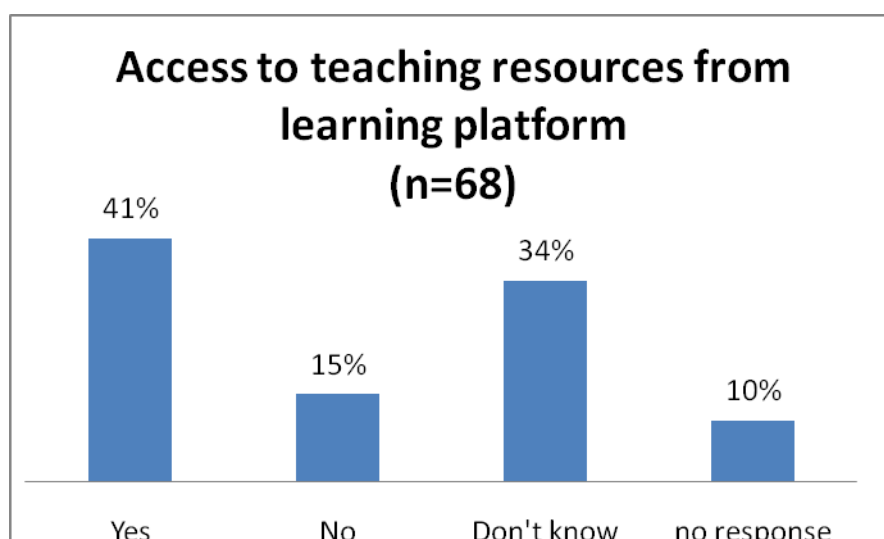
Figure 21: Use of personal area on learning platform



Access to teaching resources from learning platforms

Although 41 per cent of the practitioners reported that they could access teaching resources – such as NLN-ACL resources – from their learning platform, a significant group of them (34%) were unsure whether they could access these materials, while 15% answered 'No' and a further 10% did not respond to this question.

Figure 22: Access to teaching resources from learning platform



To summarise this section, 72 per cent (68 out of 95) of the practitioners reported that they had access to a learning platform at their organisation, which they can also access remotely. Moodle seems to be the most popular learning platform in ACL, used by 79 per cent of the practitioners who have access to a learning platform.

The focus group participants drew attention to the distinction between having access to a learning platform and active utilisation with learners, and so, although learning platforms were available to most practitioners, they are used more widely for staff communication than for learning activities. Seventy-nine per cent of those who have a learning platform had access to a personal area on their organisation's learning platform. Nearly a quarter of these practitioners (24%) use this frequently, with a further 48 per cent using it sometimes. Eleven per cent chose not to use it all. Forty-one per cent of the practitioners reported that they could access teaching resources from their learning platform. However, a significant group of them (34%) were unsure whether they could access these materials, while 15% answered 'No' and a further 10% did not respond to this question.

Section D: Continuing professional development (CPD)

This section was intended to find out to what extent practitioners are using ILT in their teaching and the level of support they receive from providers to implement ILT and e-learning.

Practitioners' use of ILT in their teaching

In Sero's 2008–09 survey, 80 per cent of respondents assessed their general use of ICT skills as either 'Good' or 'Very good'.

However, this year the question was changed slightly as it was felt that responses such as 'Good' and 'Very good' were quite subjective and could be interpreted in different ways by practitioners. As a result, practitioners were asked to rate their skills based on the following scale:

- **Beginning:** I have some knowledge of how to do this, but would require support or further training to feel confident in using it on my own.
- **Developing:** I can do this on my own and only require occasional support.
- **Performing:** I can do this confidently and use it regularly in my teaching practices.
- **Pioneering:** I can do this confidently and would consider myself an expert.
- **Don't know:** I have no knowledge of how to do this.

Table 25: Practitioners' use of ILT in their teaching

	General use of ICT	Using ICT with learners in the classroom	Using specialist software packages in my subject area(s)	Using ICT to manage learning and workload	Developing online electronic learning materials	Uploading content to a learning platform	Teaching and facilitating online	Locating and using online learning resources
Beginning	1%	4%	4%	3%	11%	13%	33%	10%
Developing	1%	13%	22%	17%	29%	17%	24%	23%
Performing	55%	55%	36%	43%	33%	27%	21%	54%
Pioneering	43%	24%	24%	29%	14%	22%	9%	23%

Don't know	0%	1%	9%	3%	11%	15%	24%	1%
No response	0%	3%	4%	4%	3%	6%	4%	4%

Ninety-eight per cent of the practitioners in this survey rated their general use of ICT as either 'Performing' (55%) or 'Pioneering' (43%). Practitioners were also confident about:

- using ICT with learners in the classroom (79% rating their skills as either 'Performing' or 'Outstanding')
- using specialist software packages (60%)
- using ICT to manage learning and workload (71%)
- locating and using online learning resources (77%).

The areas in which practitioners were slightly less confident about their ICT skills were:

- teaching and facilitating online: 33 per cent of the practitioners rated themselves as 'Beginning' and a further 24 per cent had no knowledge of how to do this
- uploading content to a learning platform: only 49 per cent rated their ability as 'Performing' or 'Outstanding'.

Providers' support for ILT and e-learning

Eighty-four per cent of the practitioners agreed/strongly agreed that their organisation provides them with access to ICT support staff who are able to help them with any problems/issues that they may have with ILT equipment.

However, this level of IT support doesn't seem to extend to learners, as only 33 per cent of the practitioners agreed/strongly agreed that learners have access to some form of technical support (e.g. online, help desk, local technician).

Table 26: Practitioners' views on their provider's support for ILT and e-learning

	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No response
Access to ICT support	33%	51%	5%	6%	4%	1%
Learner access to IT support	7%	26%	23%	29%	13%	1%
Access to training/CPD	41%	53%	4%	2%	0%	0%
Encouragement to develop e-learning resources	41%	43%	12%	2%	1%	1%

Provides support/ advice to adopt e-learning	31%	48%	12%	8%	1%	0%
Access to external advice	23%	34%	33%	8%	2%	0%
Promotes formal qualifications in e-learning/ ICT	32%	37%	17%	13%	2%	0%
Take up of e-learning beyond enthusiast	7%	29%	41%	12%	9%	1%
Access to onsite facilities for personal learning	14%	43%	24%	14%	4%	1%

Organisational support in terms of access to training and encouragement to adopt e-learning appears to be very good according to the practitioners in this survey. For example:

- 94 per cent agreed/strongly agreed that they have access to training and other professional development needs
- 84 per cent agreed/strongly agreed that their organisation supports and encourages them to develop e-learning resources
- 79 per cent agreed/strongly agreed that their organisation provides advice and support in helping staff adopt e-learning
- 69 per cent agreed/strongly agreed that their organisation promotes formal qualifications in e-learning and ICT.

A slightly lower percentage of practitioners – 57 per cent – agreed/strongly agreed that their organisation provides access to external advice and support in helping staff adopt e-learning and access to onsite facilities for personal e-learning.

Only 36 per cent of the practitioners agreed/strongly agreed that there is a take-up of e-learning beyond the enthusiasts in their organisation, with a further 41 per cent not sure about this.

To summarise this section, 98 per cent of the practitioners in this survey rated their general use of ICT as either 'Performing' (55%) or 'Pioneering' (43%). Practitioners were also confident about using ICT with learners in the classroom, using specialist software packages, using ICT to manage learning and workload, and locating and using online learning resources.

The main areas in which practitioners were slightly less confident about their ICT skills were teaching and facilitating online, where 33 per cent of the practitioners rated themselves as 'Beginning' and a further 24 per cent had no knowledge of how to do this.

Organisational support in terms of access to training and encouragement to adopt e-learning appears to be very good according to the practitioners in this survey. For example, 94 per cent agreed/strongly agreed that they have access to training and other professional development needs. However, only 36 per cent of the practitioners agreed/strongly agreed that there is a take-up of e-learning beyond the enthusiasts in their organisation, with a further 41 per cent not sure about this.

Section E: Impact of ILT

This section was intended to get practitioners' views on the impact that ILT and e-learning had had on their learners and teaching practices.

Impact of ILT and e-learning

Eighty-five per cent of the practitioners believed that the use of ILT and e-learning had allowed learners greater choice in learning opportunities as well as improved opportunities for innovation in learning and teaching. Seventy-one per cent of the practitioners reported that the use of ILT and e-learning had helped support/enable the development of new courses and improved administration procedures.

Table 27: Impact of ILT and e-learning on learners

	Greater choice in learning opportunities	Attract more learners	Improved learner retention	Improved learner outcomes	Improved learner satisfaction	Improved learner assessment	Learners manage own learning	Make use of learning platform
Yes, to a large extent	44%	24%	19%	25%	27%	32%	17%	12%
Yes, a bit	41%	27%	32%	39%	41%	33%	42%	35%
On isolated occasions	9%	23%	21%	16%	13%	14%	22%	17%
No, not at all	1%	7%	7%	5%	2%	9%	8%	18%
Don't know	4%	18%	20%	15%	16%	12%	9%	19%
No response	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%

Sixty-eight per cent of the practitioners felt that ILT and e-learning had improved learner satisfaction, whereas only 59 per cent felt that ILT and e-learning had improved staff satisfaction.

About half of the practitioners (51%) felt that ILT and e-learning had attracted more learners and had improved learner retention, but only 47 per cent reported that ILT had led to learners making use of a learning platform.

Table 28: Practitioners' views on impact of ILT and e-learning

	Improved staff CPD	Improved staff satisfaction	Innovation in learning and teaching	Development of new courses	Improved admin procedures
Yes, to a large extent	20%	12%	43%	29%	37%
Yes, a bit	47%	47%	42%	42%	34%
On isolated occasions	9%	11%	3%	11%	5%
No, not at all	4%	6%	1%	4%	9%
Don't know	18%	24%	11%	13%	15%
No response	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%

Impact of ILT on the practitioner's working week.

Sixty-seven per cent of practitioners stated that the use of technology had allowed them to save time in lesson planning and preparation, and 59 per cent said that the use of technology had saved time in record keeping. A smaller number felt that the use of technology saved time in lesson delivery, (45%) and assessments (44%).

However, a similar number of practitioners reported that technology had made no difference to the time spent on lesson delivery (37%) or assessments (40%). In addition, only 40 per cent of the practitioners felt that the use of technology saved time in communicating with learners remotely.

Table 29: Impact of ILT on the practitioner's working week

	Lesson planning and preparation	Lesson delivery	Assessment	Communicating with learners remotely	Record keeping
Save more than 2 hours	29%	14%	11%	14%	16%
Save between 1–2 hours	11%	8%	13%	5%	15%
Save up to 1 hour	27%	23%	20%	21%	28%
Makes no difference	18%	37%	40%	27%	25%
Lose up to 1 hour	7%	3%	3%	3%	4%
Lose between 1 and 2 hours	1%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Lose more than 2 hours	3%	1%	1%	0%	0%
Don't use technology for these tasks	1%	8%	11%	27%	8%
No response	2%	5%	2%	2%	1%

To summarise this section, 85 per cent of the practitioners believed that the use of ILT and e-learning had given learners greater choice in learning opportunities as well as improved opportunities for innovation in learning and teaching. Sixty-eight per cent felt that ILT and e-learning had improved learner satisfaction, whereas only 59 per cent felt that they had improved staff satisfaction. Sixty-seven per cent of practitioners stated that the use of technology had allowed them to save time in lesson planning and preparation and 59 per cent said that the use of technology had saved time in record keeping.

Voluntary and community organisations: Nine profiles

In order to help assess the extent to which the current survey could be useful within the wider ACL sub-sector, a small, diverse sample of nine voluntary and community organisations were invited to be interviewed/surveyed over the telephone. It should be noted that, as all of the organisations have received recent capital funding, the results are likely to show a highly positive picture of technology adoption, which is unlikely to be representative of the wider sub-sector.

On reviewing the results, it was clear that, in order to fully understand the sub-sector, the questionnaire would have to be significantly redesigned. Given the small sample, the data has been summarised into short profiles of 250 words.

The profiled organisations were sampled against a frame with the following characteristics:

- provision of libraries
- UK online centres
- neighbourhood learning centres supporting regeneration
- local third-sector bodies that deliver informal or non-formal learning as part of a broader range of activities
- national third-sector bodies that deliver informal or non-formal learning as part of a wider range of activities
- publicly funded bodies that deliver learning (eg NHS)
- size of learner cohort.

The profiles are necessarily general as they are based on survey responses, which somewhat obscures the complexity of the sub-sector, and so it should be noted that organisations with multiple delivery venues⁹ indicate that access to technology and infrastructure is variable from site to site. Additionally, all of the responding organisations had received CaMeL funding, as well as a wide variety of other funding, illustrative of a range of competing priorities which are not always ICT related. Generalisations have also been made about organisations' levels of implementation and/or staff skills. For reference, these generalisations are based on an average value of responses, across a range of areas of implementation/skills, and the self-assessment derives from the following pre-defined scales, with descriptors:

ILT implementation scale and descriptors

- **Beginning:** This is at the early stages of being implemented.
- **Developing:** This has been partly implemented and we are still working towards introducing it fully.
- **Performing:** This has been fully implemented.
- **Pioneering:** This has been fully implemented and has been highlighted by inspections/external agencies as an excellent achievement.

⁹ With the notable exception of the Citizens Advice Bureau.

ILT skills and knowledge scale and descriptors

- **Beginning:** Only a small number of staff have the skills and knowledge to do this; the majority need training and support to do it.
- **Developing:** A large number of staff are able to do this, but there are a few who still need additional training and support to feel confident in using it.
- **Performing:** The majority of staff are able to do this confidently.
- **Pioneering:** All of our staff are able to do this, and our organisation has been highlighted by external agencies/inspections as being excellent in this area.

Profile 1: A training organisation for adults with disabilities (East Midlands)

Supported by one full-time tutor and two part-time learning support staff, this centre delivers learning to 100–500 adults each year. With an e-strategy in place, the organisation ensures there are specific objectives for ACL, and their strategy is updated (and objectives disseminated to staff) every six months through team meetings so that all staff are engaged. Overall, 8 per cent of the organisation's annual budget is spent on ICT support, and a further 10 per cent on ICT equipment, with replacement of ILT equipment being prioritised for the coming year. The organisation has 11 computers for staff use, and all permanent ACL staff have dedicated access to their own computers at work. Internet access is also available through a 100Mbps–1Gbps line via both wired and wireless units.

Generally, the centre manager considers the organisation to be 'Performing' in terms of their ILT implementation, though staff access to relevant digital content and resources is 'Developing'; for example, staff do not have access to a VLE and have relatively little experience of using new and emerging technologies. At the time of interview, computer-based learning materials were not promoted or created but used in some Skills for Life and IT courses, with staff having not yet identified the benefits of using computer-based resources over more traditional ones. However, the organisation broadly sees the benefits of e-learning, and has some experience of online learning, making particular use of online testing, e-assessment and IAG.

Profile 2: A UK online women's centre (Eastern England)

This organisation delivers adult and community learning, across four centres to 501–1,000 learners each year. Their eight part-time tutors and ten part-time learning support assistants work at a range of locations including a children's centre, a women's centre (at which the organisation is based), a community centre and a centre related to a place of worship. The organisation has an e-strategy in place, with specific objectives for ACL, which is reviewed annually as part of a yearly staff development day (although less than a quarter of the staff are familiar with the strategy). In terms of funding for technology, 10 per cent of their organisational budget is spent on ICT equipment; with a further 3 per cent being spent on ICT support.

Overall, there are 45 computers on site for adult and community learning staff to use, and access to the internet is available, through both wired and wireless units. Some of these are allocated to staff while others share; however, developing sole access for staff is not currently considered a priority. In terms of resources, the organisation has access to a VLE, and considers itself to be 'Performing' across the majority of its ILT implementation, with the exception of remote access, where it considers itself to be at a developmental stage. In terms of e-learning, staff promote networked learning resources in the areas of ICT and e-democracy, and have identified the benefits of computer-based learning resources over more traditional resources. This is particularly the case in terms of the VLE, which they consider 'good for sharing with colleagues' and enabling 'better communication'.

Profile 3: A Citizens Advice Bureau (North West England)

This Citizens Advice Bureau provides for up to 100 adults each year, across bureaus, with the support of one full-time tutor. The organisation has an e-strategy in place, which is updated quarterly and communicated in detail every six months (supplemented by partial monthly updates as necessary). The e-strategy is disseminated through staff meetings, alongside their business development plan, resulting in most staff being familiar with it. Ten per cent of the organisation's annual budget is spent on ICT equipment (although there are no specific allowances for ICT support). In terms of hardware, there are 50 computers on site, and staff have both dedicated access to a computer at work and access to the internet through a 100 Mbps–1Gbps connection (via both wired and wireless units). The organisation makes use of a VLE, and management is very satisfied that ACL staff have access to all the technology they need.

In terms of self-assessment, they consider themselves to be 'Pioneering' in most areas of ILT implementation and staff skills, with the exception of technical support, where they consider themselves to be 'Performing'. Overall, the organisation has a strong commitment to the strategic implementation of ILT, and management feel strongly that technology can have a positive impact on the learner experience in a number of ways. From a resource development perspective, staff create both standalone and networked learning resources, which are used within all courses run through this bureau. This has resulted in them finding multiple benefits in using computer-based resources over more traditional materials, and this has allowed the learning experience to become more engaging and learner-centred, as well as professionalising practice and ultimately improving learner retention.

Profile 4: An adult education centre (Yorkshire and Humber)

This education centre provides direct delivery of learning to over 1,000 adults each year, with the support of two full-time teaching staff, 48 part-time teaching staff and six part-time learning support assistants. Delivery is achieved across four locations, including a learning centre, library and centre related to a place of worship. From an e-strategic perspective, there is a document in place that is updated as and when necessary, with different elements being communicated on an ad hoc basis as required. In terms of dissemination, the strategy is sent to managers, discussed at

team meetings and then segmented, with relevant bits distributed more widely; this process is intentionally informal and less than 25 per cent of staff are familiar with the strategy.

This year, the organisation is unable to dedicate any of its overall budget to ICT equipment and support, although it is strategically prioritising the replacement of ILT equipment, use of the learning platform, teacher CPD and investment in ILT infrastructure. In terms of current equipment, the organisation has five computers available for use by ACL staff, both wireless and wired, which all tutors share, sole access not being an organisational priority. The internet is available through a connection which is no less than 10Mbps, via which staff have unrestricted access, although there are problems sending large files. In terms of resources, staff promote both networked and standalone learning resources in most IT courses – accredited and non-accredited, Skills for Life, arts areas (including stained glass windows) and Healthy Living courses. This has resulted in the identification of benefits such as the way in which ILT can broaden choices and encourage independent learning and the way that online materials can act as extension activities.

Profile 5: A training organisation for community groups (South East England)

With three part-time teaching staff and one full-time learning support assistant, this centre provides learning directly to between 100 and 500 adults each year, through 10 separate venues, including a learning centre, a pub, a library and a centre related to a place of worship. There is an e-strategy in place that is updated quarterly and communicated to staff every six months, face to face, through review meetings; approximately 51–75 per cent of staff are familiar with the strategy. Ten per cent of the organisation's budget is spent on ICT equipment, with a further 5 per cent being spent on ICT support. This year the organisation is strategically prioritising teacher CPD, the use of technology for personalised learning and investment in ILT infrastructure.

All ACL staff have dedicated access to a computer at their place of work, and unrestricted access to the internet through both wired and wireless units; however, the system is unable to cope with large file transfer. Overall, management considers the organisation to be 'Performing' in terms of the various aspect of ILT implementation, and feels that the application of ILT has a positive impact on the learner experience. Currently, staff do not create digital materials, though they promote their use through Skills for Life (both embedded and dedicated), general training courses and short workshops. This practice has seen benefits such as better access to shared resources for both staff and learners (in particular, via a wiki-based internet site and Moodle).

Profile 6: A community-based development trust (Yorkshire and Humber)

This organisation provides for between 100 and 500 adult learners each year, through four different locations including a learning centre and a community centre. Ten per cent of provision is contracted out, but the organisation itself employs four

full-time and five part-time tutors and one full-time and four part-time members of learning support staff. They do not currently have an e-strategy in place, although they are in the process of development, reviewing progress six monthly and communicating aspects on a weekly basis via team meetings, email and workshops. Currently, the strategy covers use of the learning platform, replacement of ILT equipment, participation in the self-review framework, and data protection. Overall, between 26 and 50 per cent of staff are familiar with the strategy and there is a strong strategic commitment to the integration of technology within every aspect of the organisation.

Five per cent of the organisation's annual budget is spent on ICT equipment, with a further 1 per cent being spent on ICT support. There are currently 14 computers on site that ACL staff can use, with each member of staff having a dedicated computer available to them. Internet access is also available, which staff access through both wired and wireless units. Overall, aspects of ILT implementation across the organisation are variable, with the greatest levels of development being in infrastructure rather than skills-related areas, and staff neither promote nor create digital learning resources, although learndirect is available. However, staff within the organisation have identified significant benefits of the use of technology, including more flexibility, enhanced one-to-one teaching and better retention and management.

Profile 7: A women's training and education centre (North East England)

This training and education centre provides learning to over 1,000 adults each year, across 30 different locations, including learning centres, community centres, village halls, libraries, and centres related to places of worship. Overall, the organisation employs 35 full-time and 30 part-time teaching staff and one full-time and 15 part-time learning support staff, and there is currently an e-strategy in place within the organisation that identifies specific objectives for ACL. This strategy is updated and communicated annually to staff as part of induction, senior management meetings, staff meetings and forums, and an estimated 26–50 per cent of ACL staff are familiar with it. It addresses acceptable ILT use policy, e-safety and replacement of ILT equipment.

In terms of financial commitment, 5 per cent of the organisation's annual budget is dedicated to spending on ICT equipment, with a further 5 per cent allocated to ICT support. In terms of hardware, there are 48 computers available on site for use by ACL staff, but while permanent staff have dedicated access to their own computers, others share. The organisation has internet access across an entirely wired network, and all staff have access to an email account at each of the learning locations. Overall, the organisation considers itself to be 'Pioneering', in terms of ILT implementation, with the exception of off-site support for staff and learners, where they rate themselves as less developed. Staff both promote and create digital resources and have identified the benefits of this as providing greater choice, greater access and more suitable materials for learners.

Profile 8: An adult college (Yorkshire and Humber)

This adult college provides learning to between 100 and 500 adults, through 10 learning locations, with the support of 12 full-time and five part-time teaching staff. An e-strategy is in place, which identifies specific objectives for ACL and is updated every six months. This is communicated to staff on an annual basis through face-to-face meetings, and as a result, 76 to 90 per cent of staff are familiar with the document. In terms of finance, none of the organisation's budget is dedicated to buying ICT equipment or support, though replacement of new equipment and investment in ILT infrastructure are two of their current strategic priorities, as is teacher CPD.

In terms of equipment, there are currently 23 computers available for ACL staff use on site, and all ACL tutors have dedicated access to a computer and the internet through both wired and wireless units. Overall, the organisation sees itself as mostly 'Beginning' or 'Developing' in terms of ILT implementation, and although they feel broadly that ILT can have a positive impact, they are somewhat unsure as to the wider potential benefits, such as learner progression or better assessment of the learner. In terms of digital materials, staff promote standalone learning resources and networked learning resources, some of the latter they create for use within ESOL and literacy classes. As a result, they have identified a number of benefits resulting from use of ILT, such as enhanced variety for the learners, the ability to aid differentiation, and an increase in learning.

Profile 9: A community centre (North West England)

With the support of 15 part-time tutors and one part-time member of learning support staff, this community centre provides learning to between 100 and 500 learners each year. There is an e-strategy in place, with specific objectives for ACL, which is updated every six months. The strategy, described as 'a work in progress', is communicated to staff annually via email, unless there are specific changes, at which point this would occur six monthly. Overall, 20 per cent of the organisation's budget is allocated to the purchase of ICT equipment, with a further 2 per cent for ICT support.

In terms of hardware, the centre has 20 computers available as parts of a wired network for use by ACL staff on site, but while some staff have dedicated access to a computer, others share. The various aspects of the centre's ILT implementation are mostly 'Developing', though staff feel that they have 'Pioneering' access to ILT equipment. They create networked learning resources for IT, language, family history, basic literacy and basic numeracy courses, and feel very positive about the use of technology with their learners. In terms of staff skills at the centre, it is felt that they are 'Performing' in all areas except online learning, where they are 'Developing'. A range of training opportunities is available to staff, but the biggest barrier to take up is insufficient time to access training opportunities.

Summary

Overall, it is clear that each organisation has a strategic approach to ILT implementation, although the extent to which they communicate this to staff is variable and usually dependant on need. Although in some instances the organisation is specifically ICT focused (UK online), most of the other organisations are developing the use of technology to support learning. In addition, although all the organisations see the benefits, the extent to which they have the resources and skills to realise them is variable. In terms of budgetary commitment to the use of ILT, there is no clear pattern, although those with higher allocated spend are clearly more likely to have access to multiple resources when compared to those for whom funding is contingent on annual opportunities. Despite this, staff seem to clearly see the benefits of using ILT and often promote, if not always create, resources in some of their subject areas.

The sample was drawn to reflect varying organisational types and to be regionally spread; therefore the lack of homogeneity is unsurprising, though this should be considered when developing funding responses.

Wider sub-sector consultation group: A summary

A wider sub-sector consultation group was held on 27 February 2009, as part of the Becta/NIACE Informal Adult Learning conference. Respondents were asked to discuss a series of questions related to the appropriateness of the questionnaire and associated measures, for application to their individual contexts. Overall, there was a diversity of response, illustrating the potential breadth to be captured next year. Overall, the following points and recommendations were made:

- The primary, overriding theme of the discussion was the issue of the *relevance* and *purpose* of the use of technology. The general feeling was that the tone of the survey was more suitable to schools or further education (FE), and that the adoption of e-learning – and, therefore, the impact of technology on learners – in the ACL sub-sector was considerably less linear.

But what you have here is a survey that was developed for schools, then modified for FE then modified to take in the e-government agenda and probably needs rewriting again to be relevant to the current digital action plan and inclusion agenda – particularly for the voluntary [sub-]sector.

- Further to this was some debate on how the process and application of technology was linked to the outcome – i.e. impact on the learner, regeneration, community cohesion, etc. It was generally felt that not linking the questions to organisationally relevant outcomes would result in a partial or skewed picture of the extent to which technology adoption is applied in a purposeful way and of the success of these applications.

It's about the outcomes [of various agendas] and how are we using technology to achieve those outcomes. The question should be what are the purpose and goals of the organisation, and then determine what the technological structure is.

The debate has moved on in the last two years from 'How do we equip places with technology?' to 'how is technology directly impacting on people's lives and what are the issues of exclusion?'

- Respondents suggested a range of preferred mechanisms for deployment of the survey. These ranged from (a) use of an online version only, sent out in 'shifts' – i.e. to do sections several weeks apart, thus getting around the issue of the length of the survey – to (b) telephone interviews, in order to give the opportunity for expansion and diversity of response. Tied to this was the general consensus that the sub-sector is so complex that there is a need for a greater use of free text in order to give more qualitative data.

Another reason for doing an interview is that the diversity of responses will be greater than on a paper version. I just looked at one section: the answer to question B1 was 'No', so the next three pages were irrelevant. In a telephone interview, you can mediate that. With that greater diversity, some of these pages with dozens of boxes can go – if you do an interview, you can ask and prompt. With the diversity of organisations you are likely to hit this year, it is unlikely that you could come up with something quite so structured as the current survey.

- The focus on computers and broadband was considered somewhat old fashioned, when a lot of learning can take place on a range of equipment such as social/collaborative media, PSPs, mobile devices, etc. It was felt that the assumption was that there is a fixed centre with a bank of computers in each organisation, thus obscuring broader practice.

Section C is very old fashioned – it talks about computers which is bizarre and talks about broadband use in centres, but most of my learning is done using social media tools, sticks, mobile phones... this is an assumption about what ILT is – and I have a problem with the term 'ILT' – I think it's complete nonsense – it assumes ILT is computers, [but] it is mobiles, PDAs, PlayStations, [yet] there is no reference to technology other than PCs. And the thing about speed – I don't get this, I don't understand why you're asking about speed – it assumes a static learning centre.

- Participants felt that pre-defined skills options were counter-productive. Instead they suggested we ask what skills it's important for staff to have, and whether they felt they have them, giving space for people to provide qualitative answers.

- It was suggested (by a representative of libraries) that perhaps two (or more) forms should be designed; one for learning providers, and one for organisations where the primary purpose is not delivering learning. There is also the issue of asking questions about informal learning, rather than formal structured, accredited learning. It was felt that the survey would need to capture the views of the wide range of informal learning opportunities that people engage in.
- The term 'ILT' was particularly disliked; it was felt that it was meaningless jargon that should be replaced or redefined. It was suggested that questions ought to refer to 'using technology to support learning' instead of 'ILT'.
- It was felt that the questions related to e-strategies were not helpful. These possibly need rewriting to be relevant to the current digital action plan and inclusion agenda, turning the e-strategy questions into a more outcome-driven set of questions.

What is interesting is establishing where your areas of weakness are – and that implies you are going to relate it to some quality improvement plan or some e-learning strategy. But a lot of voluntary organisations don't have an e-learning strategy, so that part of the survey which asks about e-learning strategy is not quite so relevant. Anyone who is FE mainstream has to have an e-learning strategy and had to sit down and write one.

In terms of incentivising response, the following comments were made:

- The aims of the survey (both analytic and policy) should be made clear in a way that is meaningful to organisations. It was felt that a good incentive is for the people filling in the form to feel that they are having some influence on policy by doing so – that the survey is intrinsically worthwhile. The point was made that the length of the survey is a secondary issue to the relevance of the questions.
- It was noted that it may be more of an incentive to fill in the form if it could be linked to some sort of tool that would benchmark where an organisation is in terms of their e-maturity, or at least to allow organisations to ask questions about where they are at in a particular area. The notion of benchmarking divided the group, with some feeling it was useful and others feeling the extreme opposite.

Where next? The ACL *Harnessing Technology* surveys 2009/10

Having established a starting point with local authorities, next year's surveys will both resurvey local authorities and seek to broaden the sample, to include providers from each of the following categories:

- third sector
- libraries
- UK online centres
- neighbourhood learning centres supporting regeneration
- local third-sector bodies that deliver informal or non-formal learning as part of a broader range of activities
- national third-sector bodies which deliver informal or non-formal learning as part of a wider range of activities
- public bodies that deliver learning (eg NHS).

In terms of local authorities and third-sector providers, a sample of learners will also be sought in order to illuminate issues related to *learner impact*.

Communications

In order to ensure a higher-level response, a communications strategy and publicity text(s) will be developed to ensure consistent and comprehensive communication and awareness-raising, prior to deployment. It is anticipated that these communications will commence in 2009.

Redesigning the survey instrument

Feedback from both the pilot and the wider sub-sector group, held in February 2009, indicated that the current version of the survey would require some redesign in order to be suitable for the wider sub-sector (*see comment below*). Given the variance of opinion exhibited during the group consultation, it is likely that there will have to be a series of questionnaires, comprising a consistent core of questions with additional sections designed specifically for particular aspects of the sub-sector. This will allow for some comparability across all aspects of the ACL sub-sector. It is anticipated that this will be discussed with Becta and the researchers at Becta's validation seminars in order to agree the core questions.

The question of value

Both during the pilot and during the wider sector consultation group, the issue of *value* was raised. The wider group, in particular, felt that, as long as completing the survey was seen as a *valuable* activity and the questions were clearly relevant to their activity and purpose, securing responses would prove much simpler.

The incentive to do it is that it is intrinsically worthwhile, and that you are not asking questions that are irrelevant, because it looks like you have not bothered to find out what I'm doing before you sent it to me.

Consultation group participant

This was reinforced by the pilot and telephone surveys of wider voluntary and community organisations. The responses from both the pilot and the wider interviews revealed an emphasis on an absence of time (which is perhaps better understood as an investment/value ratio).

You have to make it worthwhile for people to do it.

Mapping the sub-sector

It is clear from the survey and from our work with offender learning that the 2009/10 surveys have the potential for considerable crossover and double-counting. In order to minimise this, and to ensure that we have a clearer conceptual map of what type of learning is delivered and where, a record will be kept of community organisations who deliver both adult learning and offender learning. In these hybrid cases, we will endeavour to send only one survey, containing key questions from both areas.

Conclusions and issues

The following section of the survey will endeavour both to summarise trends arising from the data and to make a series of related recommendations.

Conclusions

It should be noted, that, while responses to the survey seem positive in terms of ILT access and use (Fig. 8, p23), the focus group members warned us that, in their view, some responses may have given an inflated picture of the level of e-learning activity. This may also have been exacerbated by responses from organisations known to NIACE through frequent funding and participation in research, a proportion of which are enthusiasts. However, beyond this caveat, they did endorse the trends shown in the survey data.

Overall, ACL is a broad and diverse sub-sector. The local authority context is no exception, as approximately a fifth of provision is contracted out (Table 3, p09), making e-maturity difficult to map.

Basic access is good: all responding local education authority providers stated that all permanent ACL teaching staff had access to the internet (Fig. 6, p19), and over half (54%) had dedicated access to a computer at work (Table 18, p51). More broadly, access to specific resources is generally available, although not equally across all learning locations. However, 42 per cent of respondents were satisfied that ACL staff had access to the technology they needed (Fig. 8, p23) and 83 per cent indicated that tutors saw the benefit of computer-based resources over more traditional ones (Fig. 11, p32).

The survey did not use identical questions to those used 2008–09. However, overall there seems to have been a minor improvement in responses in the instances shown below. Given the greater proportion of responding E-Guides in last year's survey,

this seems positive. The areas within which general comparison could be drawn were:

Comparison of access to laptops/computers

In the e-maturity survey last year, 67 per cent of the practitioners reported very good access to a work-based computer and to a computer away from work. This year, the question was phrased slightly differently, and practitioners were asked about the level of access they had to ILT equipment rather than rating their access to ILT equipment.

Around two thirds of the practitioners surveyed this year (i.e. 59) had dedicated/sole access to a laptop or computer at work (62%) and around half of them (i.e. 52) had access to their own laptop/computer away from work (55%) (Table 18, p51). Further analysis of these question highlighted the fact that the majority of the practitioners with this sort of access tended to be E-Guides (Table 19, p51): 39 of the 59 practitioners who had sole/dedicated access to a computer or laptop at work and 35 of the 52 who had sole/dedicated access to a computer or laptop away from work were E-Guides.

Comparison of access to internet

Last year, the e-maturity survey showed that 31 per cent of the practitioners had very good access through wireless-enabled laptops to their organisation's network, with a further 42 per cent reporting that their access was poor. This year, practitioners were simply asked whether they had access to wireless internet at their organisation and were not asked to rate the quality of that access. This year, 53 per cent of the practitioners had access to wireless internet at work (Fig. 7, p21).

Comparison of online resources

Last year, 58 per cent of the practitioners stated that they had access to online resources while at work (SERO, 2008). The term 'online resources' could be interpreted in a number of different ways by practitioners, so this year, the question was more specific about the types of online resources. Practitioners were asked, first, whether they were aware of specific online resources and, second, whether they had used these resources with learners.

A large number of the practitioners (75%) had used the BBC's online resources with their learners, and a further 22 per cent were aware of these resources but had not necessarily used them with their learners.

The Skills for Life resources also appeared to be popular, with 45 per cent of the practitioners reporting having used these resources with learners and a further 28 per cent aware that these resources existed.

Only around a third of the practitioners (33%) have used the NLN-ACL online resources with their learners (Fig. 19, p54).

Comparison of use of ILT in teaching

In the 2007/08 survey, practitioners were asked to rate how often (i.e. 'all the time'/'often'/'sometimes never') they used ILT for various teaching activities. This year, the question was phrased slightly differently, with practitioners being asked to be more specific about how often they used the technologies for various activities (ie 'daily basis'/'at least once a week'/'once a month'/'less than twice a year'/'never').

This year, about half of the practitioners (51%) reported that they use technology on a daily or weekly basis to develop e-learning materials, which is slightly higher than the percentage of positive responses (i.e. 'all the time'/'often') received last year (44%) regarding use of ILT to develop e-learning materials (Table 23, p56).

Also in 2007/08, Sero recorded a 34 per cent positive response rate (i.e. 'all the time'/'often') in the use of online collaborative tools, whereas this year, the figure appeared to be slightly higher with 25 per cent of the practitioners using online collaborative tools on a daily basis and a further 21 per cent using them at least once a week (Table 22, p55).

Key themes

In terms of this year's themes, the survey shows that:

The great majority of local authority ACL providers have made a commitment to the deployment of e-learning through the writing of an e-learning strategy or similar document (Fig. 4, p16). However, there is less certainty over the extent to which ACL staff are familiar with their strategy and its implications, from the communications they receive in their organisations. Key priorities remain in the realm of staff development and ICT hardware and infrastructure, which may have a relationship to the size and nature of the workforce – sessional staff with a high turnover. Notwithstanding this widespread commitment, the actual level of deployment of technology for learning varies greatly between providers

Providers and practitioners are more confident about describing their e-learning inputs (resources and training) than they are in documenting the impact of the use of technology. This is reinforced by the literature and is likely to reflect the problem of disassociating the application of technology from other variables when considering impacts such as learner attainment, progression and retention. It is also questionable that practitioners are equipped with the mechanisms to conduct such evaluations, beyond their personal perception.

At least a third of the organisations that responded do not yet believe that their staff have the skills needed to use technology to support learning (Fig. 12, p36). In reality, this proportion is likely to be higher, according to comments made during the survey that organisations' responses did not relate to *all* staff. This was further reinforced during the focus group and will be addressed during the redesign of the surveys through the development of questions to 'unpack' this. It would also be interesting to know why.

The main barrier to staff development was identified as a lack of time (Fig. 14, p39). This is a recurrent theme in much of NIACE research within the sub-sector. Both practitioners and providers consider this to be an issue, although paying staff to attend training can alleviate some of the pressure.

Although learning platforms are available to two thirds of respondents, they were not fully utilised with learners (Fig. 21, p58). This is likely to be attributable to the nature of the sub-sector as much as to knowledge or skills deficits. Many organisations deliver through a wide variety of community venues/environments over which they have little control. In some cases, these can be poorly resourced or primarily used for another purpose. Further to that, tutors may not feel that the technology is appropriate for their learners. The low level of support for off-site practice, for both tutors and learners, also limits the application of a learning platform.

Teachers say that they are much more confident using technology in face-to-face settings than they are in offering distance online learning (Table 25, p60). This finding is supported by previous studies and may have something to do with what is understood by 'online learning'. Often, this is interpreted as wholly online courses, rather than learning which utilises online components (blended learning), and again we return to the question of whether this is considered appropriate for the learner cohort. The higher level of providers indicating that they made use of networked resources suggests that blended learning is occurring.

Enthusiasts and champions who have had the most intense training are more likely to have access to technology to use in their teaching (Table 19, p54). This relates primarily to E-Guides, who were not only more likely to have access to a wider variety of technology but also were more likely to use it.

There is a call for improved off-site technical support (Table 9, p25). Responses indicate that off-site support is the area within which most organisations are least developed.

Issues arising from the survey

In general, the survey highlighted a series of factors very similar to previous research conducted in the sub-sector. Limitations of time, the requirement for further skills development and need for investment in infrastructure and equipment are still issues in 2008/09. These are likely to remain issues due to the nature both of the sub-sector and of technology itself and what is considered good practice. Therefore ongoing investment and strategic consideration is critical, as is communication with the sub-sector about its requirements.

The findings from this survey should be communicated to provider organisations and to individual practitioners, using appropriate networks. This should ensure that all aspects of the sub-sector are aware of the work, feel a sense of association with the outcomes and are able to use the information to inform their own development.

Making policy meaningful to the wider ACL sub-sector

The survey shows that the application of technology within ACL is 'spiky' in profile and deeply contextual in application; this is particularly true in the case of VLE adoption and online learning. The sub-sector experiences multiple tensions as the result of competing priorities, though fundamentally it is driven by the principles of social justice and most influenced by related policy agendas. This sets challenges to ensure that national interventions take account of and reflect this.

The survey has shown that, when seeking to describe e-maturity within this sub-sector, it is critical that the measures used are related to the context of the work of ACL, recognising the staff profile, pattern of dispersed delivery and the multiple policy contexts (e.g. informal adult learning, family learning, community cohesion, and digital inclusion).

Although a large number of providers now report that they make learning platforms available to their staff, the actual use of these online learning spaces appears still to be underdeveloped. The majority of the infrastructure and software investment has been made so the effective engagement of staff to use this technology remains a challenge.

Our research shows that learning is delivered through a wide variety of locations, not all of which have the potential to support high levels of e-maturity, as the concept is currently defined. Low levels of development for off-site support and variable levels of development across implementation areas indicate that provision is likely to be highly affected by both the environment within which it occurs and the learners to which it is delivered. This is highly likely to be even more the case when one looks to the wider sub-sector and those organisations delivering informal learning.

The survey suggests that ongoing support and resourcing is needed for all providers, but that there is a particular need to focus on 'late adopter' local authorities and third-sector organisations. The latter are especially effective in reaching disengaged learners. To ensure that they develop a strategic commitment to e-enabling their provision, they should be allowed direct access to resources even where their provision is 'subcontracted' from another provider.

E-Guides are more likely to have access to and make use of technology in their practice than non-E-Guides. Although initially limited to engagement by enthusiasts, the E-Guide training now *creates* enthusiasm. Cascade programmes, although limited by organisational application and support, offer a very real opportunity to support a fractional workforce with multiple skills requirements. Due to the high turnover inherent within the sub-sector, skills and knowledge progression is unlikely to follow at the arithmetic rate assumed by a cascade model. This is exacerbated by the rate of turnover in new technologies. However, with ongoing investment, a working model could be established to support the mutable nature of both the workforce and the technologies.

Investment should be targeted into a consistent, structural model of e-learning champion/guide development in order (a) to allow for a long-term recognised

model/brand, valued by the sub-sector, which is consistently available to staff on an annual basis, and (b) to enable its incorporation into organisations' strategic plans so that there is a greater level of consistency and competency across the sub-sector in terms of the skills being acquired and cascaded.

Supporting provider and practitioner research into learner impact

The survey shows that, although almost all organisations have regularly communicated e-strategies or strategic documents in place, there is no sense of what occurs as a result of the impact of these communications. Literature suggests that the management/staff interface is critical to genuinely effective ILT adoption, and therefore action needs to be taken to promote and support this action.

Although providers and practitioners see the value of ILT and are confident that it makes a positive impact on internal processes, communication and their practice, they are less certain, or are unsure, of the impact of technology on learner attainment, progression and retention. These are notoriously difficult impacts to identify, not least as they require a level of certainty regarding other factors/variables which may contribute to improvements in these areas. However, where evidence gathering has been embedded in the conditions of funding, in projects such as CaMeL¹⁰ and the research associate funding managed by the National College for School Leadership,¹¹, providers have been able to track their progress.

¹⁰ Capital Motivating e-Learning.

¹¹ <http://www.ncsl.org.uk/research-index.htm> (see 'Research associate programme').

References

Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (2009), *The Learning Revolution*, DIUS.

Luger, E et al (2007), *The Development of Online Learning with Full Online Support: The potential for introducing online learning in ACL provision*, project research report commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

Mackenzie-Robb, Lesley (2008), *Online and Blended Learning: Incentives for practitioners and learners in the post-16 sector. Work-based learning literature review*, Vantaggio.

Mossy, Mary (2008), 'Online and Blended Learning: Incentives for practitioners and learners in the post-16 sector', *Personal and Community Development Learning Literature Review* 3.

NIACE, (2008), *E-strategy Transformation Projects (E-Shift): Outcomes and final report* [<http://excellence.qia.org.uk/page.aspx?o=135176>, accessed 19 August 2009].

Proctor, L and O'Shea, J (2009). *Policy Requirements for Personal and Community Development Learning* (part of *Safeguard for Adult Learning*), circulated at Better Together: Annual partnership conference of the Learning and Skills Employment Network, Manchester, 19 March 2009.

Sero Consulting, on behalf of Becta (2008), *E-maturity in personal and community development learning: Review report* [partners.becta.org.uk/upload-dir/downloads/page_documents/research/ematurity_pcdl_report.doc, accessed 19 August 2009].