



Wales: Moving Towards The Learning Country

Survey on Adult Participation in Learning in Wales 2007

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Wales: Moving Towards The Learning Country

- Audience** National and local bodies in Wales concerned with education, training and skills in Wales.
- Overview** NIACE undertake an annual survey of adult participation in learning across the UK. This report presents the 2007 results for Wales. It includes findings on participation in learning, future intentions to learn, motivation, benefits and barriers to learning.
- Action required** None - for information.
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- Related documents** Moving Forward (2003)
Towards a Learning Future (2002)

Produced on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government by NIACE and NIACE Dysgu Cymru.

NIACE and NIACE Dysgu Cymru have a broad remit to promote lifelong learning opportunities for adults. NIACE Dysgu Cymru works to develop increased participation in education and learning, particularly for those who do not have easy access because of barriers of class, gender, age, race, language and culture, learning difficulties and disabilities, or insufficient financial resources. www.niacedc.org.uk

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Summary

This survey on adult participation in learning provides the first comprehensive picture of the position in Wales since 2003. These data serve as a means of evidencing progress towards Welsh Assembly Government targets, referencing performance in Wales compared to that of the other nations of the UK and identifying areas of concern.

The data presented here offer a mixed picture, with some encouraging findings and others less so. The good news story is that the overall proportion of adults participating in learning has increased slightly from 42% in 2003 to 43% in 2007. At the same time, the proportion of adults who have not participated in learning since leaving full time education has declined from 32% in 2003 to 30% in 2007 and recent participation in learning has increased across all regions of Wales.

However there is also some cause for concern. Since 2003 the gap in participation between socio-economic classes has widened so that adults in socio-economic classes AB (upper and middle classes) and C1 (white collar workers) are now more likely to be engaged in learning than C2s (skilled manual workers) and DEs (including semi-skilled, unskilled working classes and pensioners). This is a clear indication that the learning divide is still a major challenge to overcome.

The picture is also mixed when it comes to participation in learning in relation to age. Whereas current or recent participation in learning has increased among adults aged 17-24 (+2%) and 45-64 (+4%), it has decreased by 2% in both adults aged 25-44 and those aged 65+. Given the reality of demographic change, the falling birth rate, decline in flow of new young entrants to the workforce, coupled with the raising of retirement age and greater life expectancy, there will have to be enhanced learning opportunities for adults, including work related education and training, if the goals of economic and social prosperity are to be achieved.

The data on participation in learning in relation to employment status again reveal both some encouraging and disappointing results. Although there has been an overall decrease in participation in learning among adults who are unemployed (from 44% to 39%), working part time (from 61% to 55%) and not in paid employment (from 27% to 24%), there has been an increase amongst adults who are working full time (from 52% in 2003 to 57% in 2007) and the proportion of retired people engaged in learning has remained constant (20%).

The data presented here indicate that if we are to improve the education, training and skill levels of Welsh people we must put at least as much emphasis on the 'stock' of the existing and potential labour force as upon the 'flow' of new entrants to the labour market. Learning is a powerful tool for both personal development and as a 'first step' back into social and economic activity. It is therefore of concern that the number of unemployed adults engaged in learning has decreased since 2003 (-3%).

More positively, looking at Wales in relation to the other nations of the UK reveals that Wales still has the largest proportion of learners at 43%. This represents an increase from 2003 (42%) though it is worth noting that England and Northern Ireland have recorded more significant increases. Looking at the Welsh regions in relation to the rest of the UK shows that participation levels in South West Wales (48%) are the highest across the whole UK.

Participation in learning

- The 2007 survey shows that 18% of adults are currently learning, with 43% having participated in some learning activity during the last three years.
- The proportion of current or recent learners has increased from 39% in 2002 to 42% in 2003 and again slightly to 43% in 2007. However, whereas the proportion of current learners had risen between 2002 and 2003, by 2007, it has fallen back again from 22% to 18%.
- Since 2002, there has been a continuous decline in the proportion of adults who say that they have not done any learning since leaving full time education. This figure dropped from 39% in 2002 to 32% in 2003, and again to 30% in 2007.

Table 1 Participation in learning, 2002, 2003 and 2007 compared			
	2007 %	2003 %	2002 %
Current learning	18	22	20
Recent learning (in the last three years)	25	20	20
All current or recent learning	43	42	39
Past learning (more than three years ago)	26	26	22
None since leaving full-time education/don't know	30	32	39
Weighted base	1,000	993	1,000

Base: all respondents.

Owing to the weight of the sample and the rounding of numbers some tables may sum to more/less than 100%

Future intentions to learn

- 47% of adults in Wales say that they are likely to take up learning in the next three years. 50% say that they are unlikely to do so.
- Future intentions to learn have increased over the three surveys from 38% in 2002, to 43% in 2003 and again to 47% in 2007.
- There has also been a gradual decline in the proportion of adults who say that they are unlikely to learn in the next 3 years from 58% in 2002 to 54% in 2003 to 50% in 2007. However, 42% adults believe that they are very unlikely to learn in the future, an increase of 4 percentage points since 2003, but still 6 percentage points lower than 2002.

Table 2 Future intentions to take up learning, 2002, 2003 and 2007 compared

	2007 %	2003 %	2002 %
Very likely	28	25	21
Fairly likely	19	18	17
Total likely	47	43	38
Fairly unlikely	9	16	11
Very unlikely	42	38	48
Total unlikely	50	54	58
Don't know	3	3	4
Weighted base	1,000	993	1,000

Base: all respondents

Owing to the weight of the sample and the rounding of numbers some tables may sum to more/less than 100%

Future intentions to learn in relation to learning status

- This years survey reinforces findings from previous years, which suggest that current participation impacts upon future intentions to learn.
- 85% of current learners report that they are likely to take up learning in the future, compared with only 18% of those who have not participated since leaving full-time education. In contrast only 15% of current learners said that they were unlikely to take up learning in the next three years compared with 78% of those who have not participated in learning since leaving full time education.

- Since 2003, future intentions to learn have increased among adults from all categories of learning status. The largest increase has been among past learners (those who last participated in learning over 3 years ago), where the proportion of adults likely to learn in the future has risen from 29% to 36%

Table 3 Future intentions to take up learning, by learning status, 2003 and 2007 compared

	2007					2003				
	Total	Current learners	Recent learners	Past learners	None/ Don't know	Current learners	Recent learners	Past learners	None/ Don't know	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Very likely	28	64	38	17	8	62	30	12	6	
Fairly likely	19	21	29	19	10	20	36	16	8	
Total likely	47	85	67	36	18	83	66	29	13	
Fairly unlikely	9	6	10	13	5	7	17	24	16	
Very unlikely	42	8	20	50	73	8	15	45	68	
Total unlikely	50	15	29	63	78	15	31	68	83	
Don't know	3	-	4	2	4	3	3	3	3	
Weighted base	1,000	179	252	263	305	218	198	263	307	

Base: all respondents

Owing to the weight of the sample and the rounding of numbers some tables may sum to more/less than 100%

Participation in learning and future intentions to learn in relation to gender

Participation in learning by gender

- Men and women are equally likely to be participating in learning (43%).
- Since 2003, participation in learning by both men and women has increased by one percentage point. Within this however, the proportion of current learners has declined, especially among women. As a result, men are now more likely to be current learners than women - in 2003, the reverse was true.
- The proportion of men who have not participated in learning since leaving full-time education has remained constant since 2003 at 30%; whereas the proportion of women has decreased from 33% to 31%.

Table 4 Participation in learning, by gender, 2003 and 2007 compared					
	2007			2003	
	Total %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %
Current learning	18	19	17	21	23
Recent learning (in the last three years)	25	24	26	21	19
All current or recent learning	43	43	43	42	42
Past learning (more than three years ago)	26	27	26	28	25
None since leaving full-time education/don't know	30	30	31	30	33
Weighted base	1,000	478	522	482	511

Base: all respondents

Owing to the weight of the sample and the rounding of numbers some tables may sum to more/less than 100%.

Future intentions to learn by gender

- 51% of women and 42% of men report that they are likely to take up learning in the next three years.
- The proportion of men who expressed an intention to take up learning has decreased slightly since 2003 (-1%), while the proportion of women has increased from 44% to 51%.
- Since 2003, the proportion of men unlikely to do any future learning has increased slightly from 54% to 55%, while the proportion of women has decreased more significantly from 53% to 46%.

	2007			2003	
	Total %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %
Very likely	28	26	30	25	25
Fairly likely	19	16	21	18	19
Total likely	47	42	51	43	44
Fairly unlikely	9	12	6	19	13
Very unlikely	42	43	40	35	40
Total unlikely	50	55	46	54	53
Don't know	3	3	3	3	3
Weighted base	1,000	478	522	482	511

Base: all respondents

Owing to the weight of the sample and the rounding of numbers some tables may sum to more/less than 100%.

Participation in learning and future intentions to learn in relation to socio-economic class

Participation in learning by socio-economic class

- Socio-economic class is a key determinant of adult participation in learning.
- Adults in the highest socio-economic groups (AB) are more than twice as likely to be learning as those in groups DE. In addition, one-half of DEs (50%) have not participated in learning since leaving full-time education, compared with only 10% of ABs.
- The gap in participation between socio-economic classes has widened since 2003 with more adults in classes ABC1 (+5%), and fewer adults in classes C2DE (-1%) participating in learning.
- Among all groups, the proportion of adults reporting *current* participation in learning declined between 2003 and 2007, with participation among adults in class C2 declining 10 points from 34% to 24%.
- The proportion of adults who have done no further learning since leaving full-time education has decreased in socio-economic classes AB (from 17% to 10%) and C1 (from 20% to 17%) while it has increased in classes C2 (from 28% to 30%) and DE (from 49% to 50%).

Table 6 Participation in learning, by socio-economic class, 2003 and 2007 compared

	2007					2003			
	Total %	AB %	C1 %	C2 %	DE %	AB %	C1 %	C2 %	DE %
Current learning	18	30	24	15	9	35	34	18	11
Recent learning (in the last three years)	25	28	38	24	17	19	22	22	17
All current or recent learning	43	58	63	39	26	54	57	40	28
Past learning (more than three years ago)	26	32	21	31	24	30	24	33	22
None since leaving full-time education/ don't know	30	10	17	30	50	17	20	28	49
Weighted base	1,000	189	224	219	366	168	225	248	352

Base: all respondents

Owing to the weight of the sample and the rounding of numbers some tables may sum to more/less than 100%.

Grade A includes the upper and the upper-middle classes, and is generally grouped with Grade B, the middle classes.

Grade C1 include the lower-middle class, often called white-collar workers. This group with the arrival of computing and the decline of manufacturing is increasing in size. Grade C2 consists in the main of skilled manual workers and their families.

Grade D comprises the semi-skilled and unskilled working class. Grade E are those at the lowest level of subsistence, mainly pensioners and those dependent upon social security schemes.

Future intentions to learn by socio-economic class

- Adults in socio-economic classes AB and C1 (55% for both) are far more likely than those in classes C2 and DE (42% and 41%) to take up learning in the next three years.
- Since 2003 the proportion of adults who say that they are likely to learn in the future has increased among those in socio-economic classes AB (from 48% to 55%) and DE (from 31% to 41%) but decreased among those in classes C1 (from 59% to 41%) and C2 (from 43% to 42%).

Table 7 Future intentions to take up learning, by socio-economic class, 2003 and 2007 compared

	2007					2003			
	Total %	AB %	C1 %	C2 %	DE %	AB %	C1 %	C2 %	DE %
Very likely	28	33	38	22	23	31	33	27	15
Fairly likely	19	22	17	20	18	17	25	16	16
Total likely	47	55	55	42	41	48	59	43	31
Fairly unlikely	9	7	12	8	7	18	15	18	15
Very unlikely	42	35	32	44	50	32	23	36	51
Total unlikely	50	42	44	52	57	50	38	54	65
Don't know	3	3	1	6	2	2	4	3	3
Weighted base	1,000	189	224	219	366	168	225	248	352

Base: all respondents

Owing to the weight of the sample and the rounding of numbers some tables may sum to more/less than 100%.

Grade A includes the upper and the upper-middle classes, and is generally grouped with Grade B, the middle classes.

Grade C1 include the lower-middle class, often called white-collar workers. This group with the arrival of computing and the decline of manufacturing is increasing in size. Grade C2 consists in the main of skilled manual workers and their families.

Grade D comprises the semi-skilled and unskilled working class. Grade E are those at the lowest level of subsistence, mainly pensioners and those dependent upon social security schemes.

Participation in learning and future intentions to learn in relation to age

Participation in learning by age

- In general, participation in learning declines with increasing age.
- 70% of 17-24 year-olds are current or recent learners, compared with just under one half of the rest of the working population and only 14% of adults aged 65 and over. In addition, 50% of all adults aged 65 and over say that they have not participated in any learning since leaving full time education.
- Since 2003, levels of participation in learning among adults aged 65 and over have decreased. For all other adults participation levels have increased.

	2007					2003			
	Total %	17-24 %	25-44 %	45-64 %	65+ %	17-24 %	25-44 %	45-64 %	65+ %
Current learning	18	35	21	16	5	43	25	18	9
Recent learning (in the last three years)	25	35	28	28	10	25	25	20	7
All current or recent learning	43	70	48	44	14	68	50	40	16
Past learning (more than three years ago)	26	11	25	29	36	15	27	28	30
None since leaving full-time education/ don't know	31	19	27	27	50	16	23	33	53
Weighted base	1,000	139	350	310	200	130	347	298	219

Base: all respondents

Owing to the weight of the sample and the rounding of numbers some tables may sum to more/less than 100%.

Future intentions to learn by age

- Future intentions to learn declines with age. Seventy per cent of 17-24-year-olds say that they are likely to take up learning in the next three years compared with 59% of 25-44-year-olds, 46% of 45-64-year olds, and just 12% of those aged 65 and over.
- Since 2003, the proportion of over 65s who intend to take up learning over the next three years has fallen slightly. Future intentions to learn have increased across all other age groups. As a result, the gap in intentions to learn among younger and older adults has widened.
- Since 2003, the largest increase in future intentions to learn have been among those aged 45-64 (+8%).

Table 9 Future intentions to take up learning, by age, 2003 and 2007 compared

	2007					2003			
	Total %	17-24 %	25-44 %	45-64 %	65+ %	17-24 %	25-44 %	45-64 %	65+ %
Very likely	28	47	35	25	8	47	31	21	6
Fairly likely	19	23	24	20	4	20	26	17	6
Total likely	47	70	59	46	12	68	56	38	13
Fairly unlikely	9	15	9	7	6	11	16	18	13
Very unlikely	42	12	28	45	83	9	24	40	72
Total unlikely	50	27	37	52	88	28	40	58	85
Don't know	3	4	4	2	-	3	3	3	1
Weighted base	1,000	139	350	310	200	993	130	298	219

Base: all respondents

Owing to the weight of the sample and the rounding of numbers some tables may sum to more/less than 100%.

Participation in learning and future intentions to learn in relation to employment status

Participation in learning by employment status

- Those in employment (57% of adults in full-time employment and 55% of adults in part-time employment) are much more likely to be participating in learning than those outside of the workforce.
- 39% of unemployed adults¹, 24 % of those who are not working² and 20% of retired adults are also learning.
- Since 2003, there has been a decrease in participation in all groups except for those in full-time employment, where participation has risen from 52% to 57%, and retired adults, where participation in learning has remained constant. Current participation has declined across all groups.
- Almost one-half of unemployed adults have not participated in any learning since leaving full-time education. This figure has increased from 34% in 2003 to 48% in 2007.

¹ Includes only those who are registered as unemployed and claiming Job Seeker's Allowance.

² Excludes those registered as unemployed

Table 10 Future intentions to take up learning, by learning status, 2003 and 2007 compared

	2007						2003				
	Total	Full time	Part time	Unemployed	Not working	Retired	Full time	Part time	Unemployed	Not working	Retired
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Current learning	18	24	10	11	9	8	25	32	14	9	9
Recent learning (in the last three years)	25	33	45	28	15	12	26	29	30	18	10
All current or recent learning	43	57	55	39	24	20	52	61	44	27	20
Past learning (more than three years ago)	26	19	27	13	39	36	27	17	22	31	32
None since leaving full-time education/ don't know	30	24	18	48	37	44	22	21	34	42	48
Weighted base	1,000	379	121	66	161	231	380	100	53	143	273

Base: all respondents

Owing to the weight of the sample and the rounding of numbers some tables may sum to more/less than 100%.

Future intentions to learn by employment status

- 65% of people who are unemployed and 57% of adults in full-time employment see themselves as future learners. Adults who are not working (45%) or who are working part-time (47%) are less likely to learn in the future. Retired adults (18%) are least likely to say that they will return to learning.
- Since 2003, future intentions to learn have increased across most categories of employment status, except for those who are employed on a part time basis, where there has been a decrease from 55% to 47%.
- Overall, the proportion of retired people who are likely to engage in learning in the future has remained unchanged since 2003. The proportion who say that future learning is *very unlikely*, however, has increased by 10 percentage points.

Table 11 Future intentions to take up learning, by employment status, 2003 and 2007 compared

	2007						2003				
	Total	Full time	Part time	Unemployed	Not working	Retired	Full time	Part time	Unemployed	Not working	Retired
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very likely	28	35	28	34	23	11	31	31	29	18	10
Fairly likely	19	23	19	31	22	7	23	24	27	20	8
Total likely	47	57	47	65	45	18	54	55	57	38	18
Fairly unlikely	9	10	10	7	9	6	18	16	17	18	14
Very unlikely	42	30	34	24	46	76	26	25	18	42	66
Total unlikely	50	40	44	31	55	81	44	40	35	60	80
Don't know	3	3	9	3	-	1	2	5	8	2	2
Weighted base	1,000	379	121	66	161	132	380	100	53	143	273

Base: all respondents

Owing to the weight of the sample and the rounding of numbers some tables may sum to more/less than 100%.

Participation in learning and future intentions to learn in relation to the regions and nations of the UK

Participation in learning by Welsh region

- There are significant differences in patterns of participation in learning across Wales. Adults living in South West Wales (48%) and Mid Wales (46%) are most likely to be learning (48%), followed by adults in South East Wales (43%). Respondents in North Wales are least likely to participate in learning (38%).
- Since 2003, participation has risen in Mid Wales (29% to 46%) and South West Wales (from 41% to 48%) but remained the same in South East Wales and declined in North Wales (from 43% to 38%).

Table 12 Participation in learning, by Welsh region, 2003 and 2007 compared

	2007					2003			
	Total	North Wales	Mid Wales	South West Wales	South East Wales	North Wales	Mid Wales	South West Wales	South East Wales
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Current learning	18	17	21	16	19	27	12	14	23
Recent learning (in the last three years)	25	22	25	32	24	15	17	28	20
All current or recent learning	43	38	46	48	43	43	29	41	43
Past learning (more than three years ago)	26	24	13	26	29	28	28	24	26
None since leaving full-time education/ don't know	31	37	41	26	28	29	43	34	31
Weighted base	1,000	261	44	238	458	240	59	163	532

Base: all respondents

Owing to the weight of the sample and the rounding of numbers some tables may sum to more/less than 100%. It is necessary to remember the smaller sizes involved when examining regional data, particularly for Mid Wales, therefore the data should be treated with some caution.

Participation in learning by UK nation

- 43% of adults in Wales are current or recent learners, compared with 42% in England, 33% in Scotland and 40% in Northern Ireland.
- Since 2003, participation has increased in Wales, England and Northern Ireland but decreased in Scotland. Northern Ireland has seen the largest increase (from 30% to 40%).
- Analysis of the UK findings are in a separate report, *The Road To Nowhere?* published by NIACE (Aldridge and Tuckett, 2007).

Table 13 Participation in learning, by nation of the UK, 2003 and 2007 compared

	2007				2003				
	Total	Wales	England	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Wales	England	Scotland	Northern Ireland
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Current learning	20	18	21	18	14	22	19	19	11
Recent learning (in the last three years)	21	25	21	15	26	20	20	19	20
All current or recent learning	41	43	42	33	40	42	39	38	30
Past learning (more than three years ago)	25	26	25	23	24	26	27	25	22
None since leaving full-time education/ don't know	34	31	33	44	35	32	34	38	47
Weighted base	4,916	1,000	4,138	421	139	993	3,956	547	146

Base: all respondents

Owing to the weight of the sample and the rounding of numbers some tables may sum to more/less than 100%.

It is necessary to remember the smaller sample sizes involved when examining data concerning Scotland and Northern Ireland, which should be interpreted with care. In both 2003 and 2007, the sample for Wales was boosted four-fold, although it has been reduced to its correct proportions when calculating UK-wide figures.

Participation in learning and future intentions to learn by regions and nations of the UK

- 47% of adults in Wales say that they are likely to take up learning in the next three years, compared to 46% across the UK.
- Levels of future intention to learn are highest in South West Wales (51%), and lowest in Mid Wales (33%).
- 50% of adults in Wales say that they are unlikely to take up future learning, compared to 51% in England, 60% in Scotland and 59% in Northern Ireland.

Table 14 Participation in learning and future intentions to learn, by regions and nations of the UK, 2007

	Weighted base	Current/ recent participation	Future intentions to take up learning	
			Total likely	Total unlikely
United Kingdom**	4,916	41	46	52
Wales*	1,000	43	47	50
North Wales	261	38	48	51
South East Wales	458	43	46	51
South West Wales	238	48	51	46
Mid Wales	44	46	33	62
England				
London	601	45	52	44
South West	400	44	44	53
Eastern	444	46	49	49
South East	674	41	46	52
North West	578	42	47	50
East Midlands	374	37	46	53
Yorkshire & Humberside	400	38	41	57
West Midlands	450	45	46	53
North East	215	34	45	52
Scotland	421	33	37	60
Northern Ireland	139	40	40	59

* The Welsh sample was boosted to 1,057 interviews (weighted sample of 1,000) to enable a separate set of tables for Wales to be produced.

** The Welsh sample is reduced to its correct proportions when calculating UK-wide figures.

Base: all respondents

Owing to the weight of the sample and the rounding of numbers some tables may sum to more/less than 100%.

It is necessary to remember the smaller sample sizes involved when examining data concerning Scotland and Northern Ireland, which should be interpreted with care.

In both 2003 and 2007, the sample for Wales was boosted four-fold, although it has been reduced to its correct proportions when calculating UK-wide figures.

Motivations for learning

- Respondents who have participated in learning in the last three years were asked to identify the reasons why they started learning.
- 59% of learners say that they started learning for work related reasons. 59% cited personal development reasons and 22% cited education/progression reasons.
- 10% said that they did not choose to participate in learning, but were required to do so by their employer, for professional reasons or as a benefit requirement
- A greater proportion of women than men were motivated to learn by work-related reasons (60% compared to 57%) and personal development reasons (62% compared to 54%). Men were more likely to cite education/progression reasons (23% compared to 21% in women).
- In 2007, a greater proportion of respondents cited work related reasons than in 2003 (59% compared with 50%). A particularly large increase among women, from 48% to 60% means that women are now significantly more likely than men to cite work related reasons for taking up learning.
- Fewer respondents cited personal development reasons for taking up learning in 2007 (64%), than in 2003 (59%). The decline is particularly evident among women (from 73% to 55%), such that men are now more likely than women to be learning for their own personal development
- The 2007 survey shows a drop of 13 percentage points in the proportion of adults reporting education/progression reasons as a motivation for learning.
- Overall the drop in education/progression motivation for learning has been 13 percentage points since 2003. 23% of men and 21% of women in 2007 said that they started learning for education or progression reasons. This is a drop in the proportion of both men (-14%) and women (-13%) giving this response..

Table 15 Reasons for starting learning, by gender, 2003 and 2007 compared

	2007			2003		
	Total %	Men %	Women %	Total %	Men %	Women %
Work related reasons	59	57	60	50	54	48
Personal development reasons	59	54	62	64	55	73
Education/progression reasons	22	23	21	35	37	34
'Not my choice'	10	10	10	7	8	6
Don't know	1	2	1	1	3	-
Weighted base	432	206	226	416	202	214

Base: all current/recent learners

Owing to respondents being able to identify more than one reason, columns sum to more than 100%

Benefits of learning

- Respondents who have participated in learning in the last three years were asked to identify any changes or benefits that have happened as a result of their learning.
- 30% of learners believe that they have developed as a person, 21% have met new people and made new friends, 20% report improvements in self-confidence, 19% have gained or expect to gain a recognised qualification and 14% have got or expect to get a job.
- In general, men cited more work related benefits than women. However, a greater proportion of women reported that they got/expect to get a job (17% compared to 11% of men). This is in contrast to the 2003 results, where more men than women reported having gained or expected to gain a job.
- Women were more likely than men to report that they have developed as a person - 34% compared to 26%, although this gap has closed since 2003.
- Since 2003, the proportion of women who said that their self-confidence has improved has dropped by half from 36% to 18%. Over the same time period, the proportion of men reporting the same benefit has dropped by only 2 percentage points from 24% to 22%.
- Since 2003, there has been a large decrease in the proportion of learners achieving, or expecting to achieve, a recognised qualification for their learning from 25% to 19%. Decrease is more evident among women (-9%) than men (-3%).
- For adults aged 17-24 and 65+ the most frequently cited benefit of learning was meeting new people and making new friends. Improved self-confidence is most likely to be cited by people aged 17-19 and least likely by those aged 65+.

Table 16 Main changes or benefits as a result of learning, by gender, 2003 and 2007 compared						
	2007			2003		
	Total %	Men %	Women %	Total %	Men %	Women %
I have developed myself as a person	30	26	34	26	20	32
I have met new people/made new friends	21	19	23	23	21	25
My self-confidence has improved	20	22	18	30	24	36
I have got/expect to get a recognised qualification	19	21	17	25	24	26
I have got/expect to get a job	14	11	17	16	20	13
Weighted base	432	206	226	416	202	214

Base: all current/recent learners

Owing to respondents being able to identify more than one benefit or change, columns sum to more than 100%.

Only changes/benefits mentioned by 14% or over of respondents listed.

Barriers to learning

- Respondents who said that they were not very likely to take up learning in the next three years were asked to identify the main factors that were preventing them from learning.
- 22% of adults feel that they cannot learn due to work or other time pressures. 19% said that they feel that they are too old to learn, 17% say that they are not interested whilst 13% do not feel the need to learn anymore. 10% of adults said that cost was a factor in preventing them from learning whilst 6% cited childcare/caring for others.
- Although the proportion of adults saying that the cost of learning is preventing them from learning dropped between 2002 and 2003 from 7% to 4%, it then more than doubled to 10% between 2003 and 2007. Cost as a barrier to learning, tends to become less important with age.
- Although the proportion of adults feeling too old to learn increased between 2002 and 2003 from 15% to 20%, there has been a slight decrease in 2007 to 19%. Feeling too old to learn, as a barrier to learning, increases with age - from 16% in those aged 55-64, to 26% in those aged 65-74, to 75% in those 75 and older.
- The proportion of adults who feel no need to learn anymore has risen from 8% in 2003 to 13% in 2007.
- Between 2002 and 2003, the proportion of those who are not interested in learning halved (from 26% to 13%). Between 2003 and 2007, it has risen again to 17%.

Table 17 Main factors preventing learning, 2002, 2003 and 2007 compared

	2007 %	2003 %	2002 %
Work/other time pressures	22	21	21
I feel I am too old	19	20	15
Not interested/don't want to	17	13	26
I feel no need to learn anymore	13	8	10
Cost/money/can't afford it	10	4	7
Childcare arrangements/caring for others	6	8	8
Weighted base	718	747	789

Base: all adults not very likely to take up learning in the next three years

Owing to respondents being able to identify more than one benefit, columns sum to more than 100%.

Barriers listed represent those that were mentioned by 10% or more of the respondents and/or were reported in previous years'.

- Men (25%) are more likely than women (19%) to say that work and/or other time pressures are a factor in preventing them from learning. This gap has widened since 2003.
- In 2003, men and women were equally likely to feel that there was no need for them to learn anymore (8%). By 2007, the proportion of respondents citing this response had increased, particularly among men, where it had risen from 8% to 17%.
- Childcare arrangements/caring for others remains a greater barrier for women (11%) than it is for men (2%), although the proportion of respondents citing this barrier has increased across both groups.
- The cost of learning continues to be of greater concern to women (12%) than it is to men (8%) with both groups more likely to see this as a barrier in 2007 than they did in 2003.

Table 18 Main factors preventing learning, by gender, 2003 and 2007 compared					
	2007			2003	
	Total %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %
Work/other time pressures	22	25	19	22	20
I feel I am too old	19	17	22	19	21
Not interested/ don't want to	17	18	15	14	12
I feel no need to learn anymore	13	17	10	8	8
Cost/money/can't afford it	10	8	12	3	5
Childcare arrangements/ caring for others	6	2	11	4	12
Weighted base	718	353	365	364	383

Base: all adults who are not very likely to take up learning in the next three years.
 Owing to respondents being able to identify more than one benefit, columns sum to more than 100%
 Barriers listed represent those that were mentioned by 10% or more of the respondents
 and/or were reported in previous years'.

Access to the Internet

- Access to the Internet has increased significantly over the recent years. In 2002 just 38% of survey respondents said that they had access to the Internet. This increased to 45% in 2003 and by 2007 had increased further to 55%.
- Data on access to the Internet highlight that the digital divide continues to reinforce the learning divide.
- In 2007, 58% of people with access to the Internet reported current or recent participation in learning, compared with 25% of those without access.
- Since 2003, for adults with Internet access, participation in learning has decreased from 61% to 58%, but there has been no change in adults without Internet access.
- 57% of respondents with Internet access reported that they were likely to take up learning in the future compared with 36% of those without access to the Internet.
- Since 2003, there has been a rise in the proportion of adults without Internet access who say that they are likely to learn in the future from 29% to 36%. However, fewer adults with Internet access say that they are likely to learn in the future (60% in 2003 to 57% in 2007).

Table 19 Participation in learning and future intentions to take up learning, by access to the Internet, 2003 and 2007 compared

	2007			2003	
	Total	Internet access	No Internet access	Internet access	No Internet
	%	%	%	%	%
Current/recent participation in learning	43	58	25	61	25
Likely to learn in the future	47	57	36	60	29
Unlikely to learn in the future	50	39	63	37	69
Weighted base	1,000	546	454	469	525

Base: all respondents

Owing to the weight of the sample and the rounding of numbers some tables may sum to more/less than 100%.

Due to the small sample sizes when broken down as above, the data should be treated with caution.

Appendix: Technical Notes

This survey, undertaken for NIACE, by RSGB, interviewed a weighted sample of 4,916 adults, aged 17 and over, in the UK from 9 February to 14 March 2007. A range of questions was asked on adult participation in learning, language competence and learning, learning at work and media literacy. This report is based on a boosted weighted sample of 1,000 adults in Wales and is primarily concerned with the findings from the following two questions on participation in learning.

“Learning can mean practising, studying or reading about something. It can also mean being taught, instructed or coached. This is so you can develop skills, knowledge, abilities or understanding of something. Learning can also be called education or training. You can do it regularly (each day or month) or you can do it for a short period of time. It can be full time, or part time, done at home, at work, or in another place like a college. Learning does not have to lead to a qualification. We are interested in any learning you have done, whether or not it was finished.”

Turning to learning in general: Which one of these statements most applies to you?

- 01: I am currently doing some learning activity
- 02: I have done some learning activity in the last 3 years
- 03: I have studied or learned but it was over 3 years ago
- 04: I have not studied or learned since I left full-time education

How likely are you to take up learning in the next 3 years?

- 01: very likely
- 02: fairly likely
- 03: fairly unlikely
- 04: very unlikely

Data on participation in adult learning in Wales has been collected in all of the surveys of adult participation in learning undertaken by NIACE during the past two decades. In 2002 and 2003, however, ELWa provided funding to boost the number of Welsh respondents four-fold to a weighted sample of 1,000 interviews. For 2007, funding has been provided by the Welsh Assembly Government to again provide a boosted weighted sample of 1,000 interviews in Wales.

The third substantive all Wales survey on adult participation in learning, funded by the Welsh Assembly Government, describes the current position in Wales in 2007 and provides trend data for participation in adult learning from the 2003 survey.

Launched during Adult Learners' Week 2007, *Wales: Moving Towards the Learning Country?* complements the parallel UK-wide report

Road to Nowhere? and builds on *Moving Forward* the 2003 all Welsh survey, and on NIACE's previous surveys of participation in adult learning.

Throughout this report percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number. Owing to this, and sensitivities introduced by weighting, some categories in the following tables may sum to slightly more than or less than 100%. Further, any percentages calculated on small bases should be treated with caution as they may be subject to wide margins of sampling error. Tables are percentaged vertically unless otherwise specified. In tables, * indicates less than 0.5 per cent but greater than zero, and - indicates zero. NSR indicates not separately recorded and NA indicates not asked.