

Interim Evaluation of Level 3 – Wave 1 report

October 2008

Further information

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Learning and Skills Council

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Executive Summary

Introduction and context

Experian and Ipsos MORI were commissioned in August 2007 to undertake a strategic evaluation of Level 3 provision in England to 2010, based on an analysis of existing learner data, a three wave longitudinal survey of LSC-funded Level 3 learners and additional employer, provider and learner qualitative research. The research will inform the LSC about the nature of demand for Level 3 provision; the most effective routes for meeting learner needs and LSC priorities; as well as the relative costs of different programme areas.

This document presents the findings from wave 1 of the learner survey, undertaken in March 2008 with 8,630 learners who started on a LSC-funded course for qualification in 2007/08, as a standalone analysis of the survey and also part of a suite of documents that are being produced through to 2010. It presents profiles of learners and their employment status; choice and decision making; fees; learner support; and attitudes to learning. The main highlighted differences between learner groups are statistically significant, but general trends between learner groups are also recognised.

Wave 1 survey methodology

The target population of the longitudinal survey comprises learners who started an LSC-funded Level 3 qualification in the academic year 2007/08. The sample design enables regional analysis of Further Education (FE) and Work Based Learning (WBL) funded learners, but as the overall population are predominantly FE learners (96 per cent) the WBL sample had to be boosted at wave 1 and the FE sample reduced accordingly. Corrective weighting was then applied at the analysis stage.

The questionnaire was designed by Ipsos MORI and Experian in consultation with the LSC, and covers the following broad areas:

- Learner characteristics/status
- Learner choice, IAG and prior assessment
- Fee remissions
- Learner support funds
- Completers: Impact (this section will be expanded in waves 2 and 3)
- Learner attitudes towards work and learning
- Early leavers – reasons

Level 3 learner characteristics

The following analysis of ILR and survey data presents the profile of learners engaged at Level 3, to understand and inform the learner survey findings around choice, attitudes and experiences:

- The majority of Level 3 learners – just under two-thirds – are 16 to 18 year olds undertaking full Level 3 aims such as GCE/A/AS/A2 levels and BTEC qualifications.
- Considerably more than half of Level 3 learners are female and, whilst the gender split is more even at the 16 to 18 age group, women account for three-quarters of the 25 plus age group, where they are mainly enrolled on Access to HE programmes.
- A greater than average share of the Asian student Level 3 population is opting for GCE/A/AS/A2 level programmes, with BTEC qualifications also popular. In contrast, they are under-represented on NVQ and Advanced Apprenticeship programmes. Asian students are typically younger than the average Level 3 student population.
- Black learners engaged in Level 3 learning are more likely to be female, and to be older, in the 19 to 24 and 25 plus age groups. Black students are as likely as the wider Level 3 learner population to opt for GCE/A/AS/A2 levels, but are under-represented on NVQs and Advanced Apprenticeships, and are more likely than on average to be engaged on Access to HE programmes.
- Work-based Level 3 learning is dominated by male students, particularly White males. Only around 1 per cent of Black and Asian Level 3 learners undertake work based learning, compared to 4 per cent of White learners.
- Five per cent of Level 3 learners report a disability and 3 per cent report having a learning difficulty. The distribution of disability across key characteristics is broadly in line with the distribution of learners. However, learners with learning difficulties are more likely to be male, White, in the 19 to 24 age group and undertaking an Award, Certificate or Diploma or a BTEC, and considerably less likely to be undertaking GCE/A/AS/A2 level qualifications.
- The majority (7 in 10) of Level 3 learners do not make any contribution to their learning, and the small share of learners who pay all their fees (16 per cent), are typically older (aged 25 plus), reflecting the entitlement of all under 25s to a funded first full Level 3 qualification.
- Early leavers account for 5 per cent of Level 3 learners in the survey, and completers a further 6 per cent. The qualification aim is a key determinant of learner progress in the course, as is age, current qualification level and whether the learner is a fee payer.

Routes into Level 3

Learner status

As the majority of Level 3 learners are currently educated to Level 2 or below, it follows that the largest share of Level 3 learners – more than 4 in 10 – come from either secondary school or school sixth forms. This group are predominantly enrolled on GCE/A/AS/A2 level courses and BTECs; whilst the quarter of learners that worked for an employer are more likely to opt for NVQs and Advanced Apprenticeships, City & Guilds, Access to HE and (Advanced) Awards, Certificates or Diplomas.

The 5 per cent of learners previously unemployed and looking for work mainly opt for Access to HE or City & Guilds courses; while those taking up Level 3 after looking after home or family (3 per cent) predominantly take up Access to HE.

In addition to studying, just under half of all Level 3 learners are also undertaking some form of work for an employer, with the likelihood highest amongst those taking NVQs, Advanced Apprenticeships and City & Guilds qualifications. Older learners (aged 19 to 24 and 25 plus) are the most likely to be in employment although just under 1 in 4 GCE/A/AS/A2 level learners, dominated by the 16 to 18 age group, are in some form of paid work.

Amongst those in employment prior to beginning their Level 3 studies (around a quarter of learners), the majority entered from jobs in the public administration, education and health sector (36 per cent) and the distribution, hotels and restaurants sector (27 per cent), but worked across a broad range of occupations.

Choice and decision making

Motivations for undertaking Level 3 learning are mainly expressed around the chance to learn something new: developing skills that look good to future employers; skills to do a better job in the future; a qualification; skills to do a different job in future; and improved self confidence. However there are variations in motivations by programme, which in part reflect the different profiles of learners undertaking the qualifications. For example, those undertaking Access to HE courses are more likely than average to be looking for a boost to self confidence, to bring about change to their current circumstances through a different job in future, or a promotion.

The majority – 6 in 10 learners – had not considered doing a Level 3 course before their enrolment in September 2007. But amongst those that had considered prior enrolment the dominant reason (particularly for GCE/A/AS/A2 levels and BTECs) for not enrolling was given as too young/still at school. For those taking Access to HE courses, family commitments, personal reasons and affordability played a part; and for those now taking a BTEC, the barriers faced were affordability and the time to devote to studying.

Information, Advice and Guidance

Key sources of advice supporting Level 3 learners in their course decision making were College advisors or tutors (cited by 16 per cent) followed by friends and relatives (14 per cent), although 1 in 10 learners reported none. Positively, most learners report feeling well-informed about their course with roughly 8 in 10 feeling informed about the content and subject areas together with the standard of work expected; and roughly 7 in 10 feeling informed about the amount of work expected in your own time together with how the course would help you gain skills to use in a job. Older learners (aged 25 plus) report feeling less informed than their 16 to 18 and 19 to 24 age group counterparts.

Learner attitudes and experiences

Attitudes to learning and skills

Early in their learning experience, more than 9 in 10 Level 3 learners expressed positive attitudes to the value of skills: agreeing *that learning new skills is something I will need to do throughout my working life*; agreeing that *I enjoy learning new skills*; and believing that *you're more likely to get a better job if you do some learning, training or education*.

However, it would seem that some learners are potentially unprepared for the demands of their Level 3 studies, in that *school did not prepare me for the learning I need to do in my life today*, with the feeling particularly reported by learners aged 25 plus and those with learning difficulties.

Encouragingly, most (6 in 10) Level 3 learners hold generally positive feelings about education, particularly so amongst the 16 to 18 age group, those undertaking GCE/A/AS/A2 levels and amongst Asian learners. Negative and ambivalent feelings about education are particularly reported by those with learning difficulties, and by learners on Access to HE courses.

Expectations of training

In terms of aspirations on enrolling, 32 per cent of Level 3 students do not know what they want to go on and do after their course in terms of education, employment or training; just over a quarter wish to go on to higher education; and just 14 per cent want to get a job (the remaining learners cite other aspirations such as get a better job, stay with the same employer, become self-employed or do further training in FE). Again there is variation by programme type with those on Access to HE, and those doing GCE/A/AS/A2 levels, more likely to seek higher education (66 per cent and 41 per cent respectively); while those undertaking City & Guilds, NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeships and BTEC qualifications are more focused than all Level 3 learners on getting a job (25 per cent, 20 per cent and 19 per cent respectively).

Experiences of leavers

One in 20 of Level 3 learners starting their course in September 2007 had left by February 2008. The main reason for failure to complete – cited by just over a quarter of leavers – is that *the course was not what I wanted to do*, while a tenth or more mentioned workload, poor quality teaching/training and health problems as factors. Learners were unclear about what could have helped them continue with training with around 1 in 5 saying nothing, while around 1 in 10 leavers mentioned more college support and more time to complete. Positively, more than half of these learners that dropped out report being likely to undertake further training in future.

Progression

Of the small number that had completed their programme of learning by February 2008, 19 in 20 report having made the right choice with the qualification. Just over a half of completers had received IAG about further learning options, and for the majority this was with a course tutor. More than 7 in 10 of completers report they are likely to undertake a higher level qualification in the coming three years.

Monetary influences

Fees

Overall, seven in 10 Level 3 learners report that they do not make any fee contributions to their learning. However, reflecting the entitlement structure, this rises to just under 9 in 10 learners aged 16 to 18, compared to under half of the 25 plus age group of learners.

GCE/A/AS/A2 level learners are the least likely to be contributing reflecting the younger age profile of learners on this qualification. NVQs and Advanced Apprenticeships, together with BTECs, are also courses where the majority of students do not contribute to the cost of their learning. Of the 27 per cent who pay all or some of their fees, these learners are most likely to be on City & Guilds programmes, undertaking (Advanced) Awards, Certificates or Diplomas or on Access to HE courses.

Well over half of all Level 3 learners report that their course is paid for by Government or the LSC, with just over a quarter reporting exemption from course fees. Around 10 per cent of learners are fully or part funded by their employer, primarily those undertaking NVQs and Advanced Apprenticeships, and City & Guilds programmes of study.

Financial considerations appear to have a limited impact on learner decision making, although it may positively impact on a successful outcome: 1 in 3 of those making some contribution to the cost of their course felt it influenced the amount of effort they put into it, although fewer felt it influenced either the timing or their choice of course.

Amongst learners who are not contributing to the cost of their Level 3 learning, if they had had to contribute, the greatest proportion felt that it would have made no difference to their decision (38 per cent); although a similar share felt that they would have applied for the same course but would have had to work to earn money as well (36 per cent). Of the limited number of learners (15 per cent) that would not have stayed in learning, the effect of fee contribution is more likely to have an impact on students taking Access to HE and NVQ or Advanced Apprenticeship qualifications, and also the 19 to 24 and 25 plus age groups.

Of the small share of early leavers, just 7 per cent cited financial reasons as a factor in exiting learning.

Financial support

The dominant form of learner support amongst learners is the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), restricted to 16 to 18 year old students, and received by 29 per cent of Level 3 learners. Adult Learning Grants, aimed at the 19 to 24 age group are received by just 4 per cent of that age group. Discretionary hardship payments are received by 3 per cent and financial support towards childcare costs, by 2 per cent. Though support towards childcare costs is received by relatively few students, amongst these students, its availability considerably influenced their decision to take their course.

Findings and issues

The extent of perception differences between further education and work-based learning, how these are formed and why they are held, can usefully be explored in the qualitative research that precedes wave 2 of the survey, given the focus of policy on work-based training, together with the promotion of the vocationally oriented diploma.

There are some early findings of relevance to policy makers which include considerably below average proportion of GCE/A/AS/A2 level students feeling informed about the relevance of their qualification for developing the skills valued by employers.

Another emerging issue around IAG is the appropriateness of different forms of IAG to the specific needs of older (25+) learners, further removed from the traditional sources for IAG such as schools and colleges.

The impact of balancing work and study over the course of their qualification can also be usefully explored in later waves, linking this to success rates, and also the impact on employability outcomes.

1 Introduction and context

1.1 Introduction

This document presents the findings from wave 1 of a three wave longitudinal survey of LSC-funded Level 3 learners, undertaken in March 2008. Wave 1 presents profiles of learners and their employment status; information around choice and decision making; payment of fees; access to learner support; and attitudes to learning. The main highlighted differences between learner groups are statistically significant, but general trends between learner groups are also recognised. A total of 8,630 learners took part in this survey wave (details of the survey methodology are presented in section 2.1).

Wave 2 of the survey will take place around September 2008, 12 months after these learners started their course/training; and wave 3 is scheduled for around September 2009, 24 months after their learning start date. Waves 2 and 3 will review the experiences, motivations and successes of Level 3 learners as they progress through their programmes of learning in Further Education (FE) and Work based Learning (WBL) funding environments.

The longitudinal survey of Level 3 learners is being undertaken to provide an evidence base with which to evaluate the success and cost effectiveness of different Level 3 programmes/qualifications. Analysis of the survey is therefore on the basis of variation across programmes, with subsequent analysis driven by the presence or otherwise of significant variations across a range of variables.

This document is a standalone analysis of the survey but also forms part of a suite of documents that are being produced through to 2010, as part of the wider strategic Level 3 evaluation underway (details of documents available within the evaluation are contained in appendix A, while a fuller overview of the evaluation is provided in section 1.3).

1.2 Policy context

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is responsible for post-16 education and training in England including funding and delivery. The government's goal is to increase the proportion of students gaining Level 3 qualifications delivered by the LSC due to the increasing demand for Level 3 qualifications within the economy, as identified by the Leitch report. The LSC is also charged with two further responsibilities: to increase demand for Level 3 qualifications amongst employers through Train to Gain (with the training partly funded by employers); and to contribute to the PSA target for participation in Higher Education (HE), as Level 3 is a progression route for learners entering HE.

In parallel with raising the number of Level 3 learners, the LSC is operating in tighter funding conditions. To make difficult funding decisions the LSC seeks to ensure that costs are associated with returns and best value for money is obtained. There is also a move to increase the contribution made to learning by those that benefit, including the individual (a rise in qualification levels is correlated with higher wages) and employers (skills contribute to higher levels of productivity), associating a real value with education and encouraging learners – as consumers – to exercise meaningful choice across programmes and provider institutions.

In future, fees for adult courses will increase to 50 per cent and be paid for by individuals and employers; whilst young adults (19 to 25) will continue to be exempt and receive fee remission for their first Level 3 qualification.

1.3 The strategic Level 3 evaluation

Experian and Ipsos MORI were commissioned in August 2007 to undertake a strategic evaluation of Level 3 provision in England. The research will inform the LSC about the nature of demand for Level 3 provision; the most effective routes for meeting learner needs and LSC priorities; as well as the relative costs of different programme areas. Its broad objectives are to:

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

Underpinning these objectives are a range of questions that will be answered to assess the overall benefits of the different programmes and initiatives for different learner and employer types, and the extent to which programmes and initiatives support employability and development. These questions include:

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

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

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

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

Wave 1 of the survey research establishes the baseline of Level 3 provision, and pulls together information around the **initiative** and **cross-cutting** frameworks. The research will address **strategic** and **economic** frameworks in waves 2 and 3 of research, when further information becomes available.

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

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

1.4 Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the help and support of all the Level 3 learners that participated in wave 1 of the survey. We would also like to thank Kate Murphy at LSC National and Janette King and Trevor Tucknutt at DIUS for their helpful contributions to the questionnaire design.

2 Survey methodology

2.1 Overview

This section of the report contains the technical details of the wave 1 survey of learners conducted as part of the Evaluation of Level 3 research. The target number of interviews in wave 1 was 7,415,¹ plus additional booster interviews were conducted in London, North West, North East and South East. This resulted in an overall target of 8,569 interviews at wave 1, and 8,630 were actually achieved.

A more detailed methodological paper is also available as a separate technical report (see appendix A).

2.2 Sample design

2.2.1 Target population

The target population comprises learners who started an LSC-funded Level 3 qualification in September of the academic year 2007/08.

The sample frame is the Individual Learner Records (ILR) F01 (for learners funded through the Further Education stream) and WLB-P3 (Work Based Learning).

In order to be eligible for selection, learners on the ILR had to meet all of the following criteria:

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

2.2.2 Main sample

A requirement of the sample design was to enable regional analysis of FE and WBL learners for all three survey waves.

The population is predominantly FE learners (96 per cent) and this meant that, in order to enable regional analysis by WBL at wave 3, the WBL sample had to be boosted at wave 1 and the FE sample reduced accordingly. Corrective weighting was then applied at the analysis stage (see section 2.4.1).

¹ It is anticipated that the sample will be c. 4,668 interviews at wave 2 (63 per cent of wave 1 sample) and c.3,500 interviews at wave 3 (47 per cent of wave 1 sample).

Table 2.1 shows the proposed sample structure for wave 1 and anticipated sample structure at wave 3. The WBL interviews were boosted to achieve c.100 interviews at wave 3 (this is the minimum recommended sample size for subgroup analysis). This sample design enables regional analysis of FE and WBL learners (although the scope of the latter will be more limited particularly at wave 3).

Table 2.1: Structured samples at Waves 1 and 3

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

Table 2.2 shows the final sample structure at wave 1, inclusive of the regional booster interviews.²

Table 2.2: Structured sample targets inclusive of booster interviews, wave 1

Region of Learner	Total interviews at wave 1		
	FE	WBL	TOTAL
National Office	133	66	199
East Of England	413	233	646
East Midlands	256	233	489
Greater London	797	500	1,297
North East	433	233	666
North West	1,075	500	1,575
South East	938	500	1,438
South West	466	233	699
West Midlands	648	233	881
Yorkshire & Humberside	445	233	678
Total	5,605	2,964	8,569

² Four regions commissioned 288 booster interviews *each* to provide greater scope for subgroup analysis - London, North West, North East and South East.

The only other sub-group that was boosted was FE 19 to 25 years Level 3 entitlement learners, from c.170 (3 per cent of the population of eligible FE learners) to c.300 interviews (7 per cent of the eligible population of FE learners). No further disproportionate sampling was proposed as this would have further impact on the effective sample size once corrective weighting was applied.

2.3 Questionnaire design and piloting

The questionnaire was designed by Ipsos MORI and Experian in consultation with the LSC. Table 2.3 summarises the areas covered by the questionnaire in wave 1, and also shows the broad areas that will be covered in future waves 2 and 3.

Table 2.3: Survey topic coverage

Wave 1	Waves 2 and 3
Learner characteristics/status	Learner status check
Learner choice, IAG and prior assessment	Training/learning in practice and learner support
Fee remissions	Learner satisfaction with teaching and provider
Learner support funds	Information about next steps
Completers: Impact (this section will be expanded in Waves 2 and 3)	Completers: Impact – satisfaction, progression, gains from the qualification, future intention, occupation and salary
Learner attitudes towards skills and learning	Early leavers: Reasons, activities since leaving and future intention
Early leavers – reasons	

Prior to the main survey, a live pilot was undertaken by Ipsos MORI to ensure the questionnaire flowed well and was clearly understood by learners. The pilot comprised 45 interviews with a range of learners in FE and WBL and the interviews were evenly split between learners aged 16 to 18 and 19 plus.

The objectives of the pilot were to check:

- The questionnaire for comprehension;
- The questionnaire routing; and
- The interview length.

Feedback from the interviewers was very positive, with most reporting a general willingness and enthusiasm on the part of learners to participate in the survey. The majority of learners had no difficulty with the questions because they were highly relevant to their current situation. Moreover, the vast majority of questions have been used successfully in other surveys.

The average interview length was 17 minutes and a small number of questions were removed to bring it down to 15 minutes.

2.4 Full survey

A copy of the final wave 1 questionnaire is provided in Appendix B.

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

Ipsos MORI interviewed 8,630 Level 3 learners between 3rd and 28th March 2008 (see table 2.4 for a regional breakdown). The average interview length was 15 minutes and the valid response rate was 46 per cent.

Table 2.4: Achieved interviews, inclusive of booster interviews, Wave 1

Region of Learner	FE	WBL	TOTAL
National	135	67	202
East Of England	421	233	654
East Midlands	257	235	492
Greater London	948	369	1,317
North East	435	233	668
North West	1,078	500	1,578
South East	938	503	1,441
South West	467	235	702
West Midlands	655	233	888
Yorkshire & Humberside	453	235	688
Total	5,787	2,843	8,630

2.4.1 Weighting

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

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

The weights applied have reduced the overall effective sample size from 8,630 to 5,796 but this has had minimal impact on overall statistical reliability.

3 Profile of Level 3

3.1 Level 3 learners and aims

The sample structure of learners engaged at Level 3 is taken from the ILR, and so the learners surveyed in the wave 1 survey are representative of the total Level 3 population. The following analysis presents this profile, to inform our analysis of the findings detailed in the subsequent chapters.

The majority (63 per cent) of Level 3 learners are aged 16 to 18, with a current qualification at Level 2 or below (69 per cent) and undertaking full aims (61 per cent, such as GCE/A/AS/A2 levels and BTECs). Over half (58 per cent) of learners are female, 82 per cent are White and around 90 per cent do not have learning difficulties or disabilities.

In general, the profile shows that 19 to 24 year olds are over-represented in the WBL funding stream, while FE attracts more 16 to 18 year olds and learners aged 25 plus. Further analysis also shows that WBL is over-represented by males, the White ethnic group (compared to Black and Minority Ethnic BMEs) and amongst learners already with qualifications at Level 3.

In terms of qualifications, there are also distinct differences in the types of learners enrolled (table 3.1):

- Compared to their opposites, GCE A/AS/A2 level attract an above-average proportion of 16 to 18 year olds, learners currently educated to Level 2 or below and learners not making any financial contribution to their fees.
- Work-based BTEC courses are also primarily delivered to 16 to 18 year olds, and to an above-average proportion of males with qualifications currently at Level 2 or below.
- In contrast, NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeships are taken up by a greater proportion of females, older learners (aged 25 plus), learners of White ethnic origin and those already currently holding Level 3 or above qualifications, compared to the average. Two-thirds of these learners also consider their current main activity to be working.
- (Advanced) Awards, Certificates and Diplomas also attract more older learners (aged 25 plus) than the average, and learners already currently holding Level 3 or above qualifications.
- As to be expected, Access to HE courses are primarily undertaken by learners aged 19 plus. There is also an over-representation of females and learners of Black ethnic origin, and those who are more likely to pay fees than the average. These learners also consider their main activity to be unemployed or looking after the family or home.
- City & Guilds have the highest representation of male learners, those aged 25 plus and learners already educated to Level 3 or above, of the full list of aims. Two-thirds of these learners also consider their current main activity to be working.

Table 3.1: Profile of survey respondents, by qualification aim
(% of column total)

	Total	GCE/A/ AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
Gender									
Male	42%	42%	32%	28%	41%	34%	52%	65%	34%
Female	58%	58%	68%	72%	59%	66%	48%	35%	66%
Age									
16-18	63%	88%	28%	2%	48%	46%	84%	17%	34%
19-24	13%	5%	24%	41%	12%	10%	10%	20%	16%
25+	25%	6%	47%	57%	40%	43%	5%	62%	50%
Ethnicity									
White	82%	79%	89%	72%	85%	86%	82%	86%	85%
Black	6%	6%	4%	17%	7%	5%	5%	7%	5%
Asian	7%	9%	5%	5%	6%	6%	8%	4%	5%
Mixed/Other	5%	5%	3%	5%	2%	4%	5%	3%	6%
Full Level 3									
Full	61%	59%	88%	96%	34%	35%	80%	12%	20%
Not Full	39%	41%	12%	4%	66%	65%	20%	88%	80%
Type of provision									
FE	96%	100%	70%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
WBL	4%	<0.5%	30%	-	<0.5%	<0.5%	<0.5%	<0.5%	<0.5%
Highest current qualification level									
2 and below	69%	84%	53%	57%	57%	53%	80%	40%	47%
3	13%	9%	19%	16%	20%	17%	10%	20%	13%
4 and above	7%	3%	11%	4%	12%	12%	2%	22%	18%
Learning Difficulty									
Yes	3%	2%	2%	3%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%
No	89%	89%	92%	91%	87%	90%	88%	86%	85%
Disability									
Yes	5%	5%	3%	4%	5%	5%	5%	4%	7%
No	87%	86%	91%	89%	86%	90%	88%	86%	82%
Payment of Fees									
Yes-all	16%	8%	14%	28%	29%	24%	11%	41%	34%
Yes-some	11%	6%	14%	19%	9%	15%	13%	14%	15%
No	71%	84%	70%	53%	62%	59%	75%	45%	50%
Current main activity									
Employed	27%	10%	67%	22%	37%	38%	14%	65%	34%
In education	64%	85%	23%	58%	52%	48%	79%	22%	42%
Other*	9%	4%	9%	17%	10%	12%	6%	12%	22%

* Unemployed, looking after family/home, sick, retired, carer
% may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of don't know/no answer

Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

The full data tables from which the following analysis is based are presented in appendix C.

3.1.1 Gender (table C1)

Generally women are more likely to participate in Level 3 courses than men (58 per cent and 42 per cent respectively), but there are some notable trends for differing groups:

- Females are over-represented on NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship courses (which are funded through both the FE and WBL streams) and on Access to HE, while male learners are more prominent on BTEC and City & Guilds.
- Female learners are predominantly engaged in FE, whereas WBL has an above-average proportion of males.
- 16 to 18 year olds are over-represented amongst male learners compared to female.
- In general, female Level 3 learners have a higher qualification base than males, as 23 per cent are currently educated to Level 3 or above, compared to 17 per cent of males.

3.1.2 Age (table C1)

For Level 3 learners there are two main age groups, young learners (16 to 18) and the full-time adult market, defined as:

- 'Late sixth-formers' – young people who have taken a year or two longer to reach Level 3 (GCSE retakes, starting and dropping out of sixth form before college transfer), and so are on courses at age 19 or 20.
- 'Adult returners' – commonly people in their 30s or later coming back to study after a career change or family break.

The profile of Level 3 learners by age is 63 per cent 16 to 18 year olds, 13 per cent 19 to 24 year olds and 25 per cent aged 25 plus. Further analysis also shows:

- Almost three quarters (73 per cent) of learners aged 25 plus are female, compared to 54 per cent of 16 to 18 year olds.
- Full Level 3 aims are primarily undertaken by 16 to 18 year olds, who are concentrated in GCE A/AS/A2 level and BTEC courses. In contrast, 16 per cent of 19 to 24 year olds and 11 per cent of those aged 25 plus are enrolled on Access to HE.
- As entitlement to subsidised and fully funded training differs by age, the proportion of learners who pay some or all of their fees significantly increases with age (for example, 40 per cent of the 25 plus age group have paid all of their fees compared to just 5 per cent of the 16 to 18 year old age group).

3.1.3 Ethnicity (table C2)

Compared to the English population, where almost one in ten people are from a BME group, overall LSC-funded Level 3 learning attracts a greater proportion of non-white learners. However, the representation of BME learners in FE is significantly higher than in WBL activities³ and consequently BMEs are under-represented on NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeships. Other notable differences by qualification aim are the above-average proportion of Asian learners on GCE A/AS/A2 level and BTEC courses and Black learners on Access to HE.

Additional analysis shows:

- Females account for an above average proportion of BME learners than they do White learners.
- In general, BMEs aged 19 to 24 are well represented at Level 3, supported by an above-average engagement on Train to Gain and Level 3 Entitlement initiatives.⁴
- An above-average proportion of Asian learners are aged 16 to 18, while the same is true for Black learners aged 25 plus.
- BME learners are enrolling on Level 3 courses with a generally lower qualification base than White learners, and the difference is particularly noticeable for Asians (of whom 75 per cent are educated to Level 2 or below, compared to the average of 69 per cent).
- This type of engagement with LSC supported learning at first Level 3 explains the smaller proportion of BMEs who are paying all of their fees compared to White learners.

3.1.4 Learning difficulty and/or disability (table C3)

The LSC is committed to delivering knowledge and skills to all through improving access to, and experience of, post-16 learning. Although the majority of Level 3 learners do not have a learning difficulty or disability (5 per cent report a disability and 3 per cent report having a learning difficulty), there are certain groups that are more likely than others – compared to their counterparts, males, 19 to 24 year olds and learners of White ethnic origin are over-represented amongst learners with learning difficulties. Learners with learning difficulties are also more likely to be undertaking an Award, Certificate or Diploma or BTEC, and considerably less likely to be undertaking GCE/A/AS/A2 level qualifications.

3.1.5 Target groups – LSC initiatives and financial support (table C5)

Train to Gain Level 3, Level 3 entitlement and Adult Learner Accounts are all targeted at specific groups, and this is reflected in the profile of learners in the survey. Although the number of individuals engaged with these initiatives in the survey is relatively small, the analysis shows that 92 per cent are aged 25 plus, and it has attracted an above average proportion of females. In contrast, the Level 3 entitlement is targeted at learners aged 19 to 24, and those wanting to enrol on their first Level 3 qualification.

³ This trend is highlighted in a Cabinet Office report, which states that only a small proportion of minority ethnic young people in post-16 education follow work-based routes, with particular under-representation of young people of Asian origin (*Ethnic Minorities and the Labour Market*. Cabinet Office, 2003).

⁴ The new Level 3 entitlement for 19 to 25 year olds should attract a disproportionate number of young people from African-Caribbean, Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities as young learners who do not hold Level 3 qualifications (*Skills strategy equality impact assessment*, Department for Education and Skills, 2007).

The profile of learners receiving support is analysed for the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), Adult Learning Grant (ALG), and 'Other' forms that include financial support towards the cost of childcare, hardship payments, residential support and Career Development Loans. Almost all (95 per cent) learners receiving EMA are aged 16 to 18,⁵ whereas ALG is targeted at learners aged 19 and over (this age group account for 83 per cent of ALG recipients⁶). 'Other' forms of learner support are more evenly distributed by age. Additionally, BMEs are over-represented in the group receiving learner support, as are learners enrolled on their first Level 3 qualification (i.e. with current qualification at Level 2 or below).

Learners in receipt of social security benefits or tax credits are primarily female and aged 25 plus. BMEs and learners with disabilities are also over-represented in this group.

3.1.6 Prior attainment (table C6)

Overall, around two-thirds (69 per cent) of Level 3 learners are increasing the level of their highest qualification by enrolling on their current course (i.e. currently educated at Level 2 or below), while the remaining learners are already educated to Level 3 or above.

The profile of learners differs significantly according to their highest current qualification level. Learners enrolled on their first Level 3 qualification (i.e. currently holding Level 2 or below) are most likely to be aged 16 to 18 and studying GCE A/AS/A2 level and BTEC courses. In contrast, females, learners aged 19 plus and learners on courses that are not full Level 3 are over-represented amongst those already educated to Level 3 or above.

3.1.7 Fee payments (table C6)

Almost three-quarters (71 per cent) of learners had not financially contributed toward the fees of their course or training. A further 11 per cent had contributed some and 16 per cent all.

Learners are least likely to have financially contributed towards their course fees (compared to their counterparts) if: they are enrolled through the WBL funding stream; on qualifications that are full Level 3 (reflecting the entitlement); with current qualifications at Level 2 or below; and in courses primarily taken up by the under 25s (particularly GCE/A/AS/A2 level and Advanced Apprenticeships).

3.2 Early leavers and completers

Of the 8,630 learners enrolled in September 2007 who took part in the wave 1 survey, 450 (5 per cent) had already left their course or training by February 2008 and 482 (6 per cent) had completed the course (table 3.2).

The qualification aim is a key determinant of learner progress, as the greatest proportion of completers undertook qualifications not considered full (City & Guilds and 'Other'), which generally take less time to complete than full qualifications.

⁵ The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is paid to learners up to 20 years of age.

⁶ The age of the learner is recorded at the start of the academic year (August 2006) but learner support is as at the end of the academic year. Thus the 17% of ALG recipients recorded as aged under 19 in this table are learners who would have turned 19 over the course of the academic year and become recipients of the ALG.

Table 3.2: Progress of learners, by qualification aim
(% of column total)

	Total	GCE/A/ AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
Progress with training/qualification									
Starting/continuing	89%	94%	88%	94%	87%	82%	92%	69%	77%
Dropped out	5%	5%	4%	6%	3%	5%	7%	7%	6%
Completed	6%	1%	9%	1%	10%	13%	1%	24%	18%

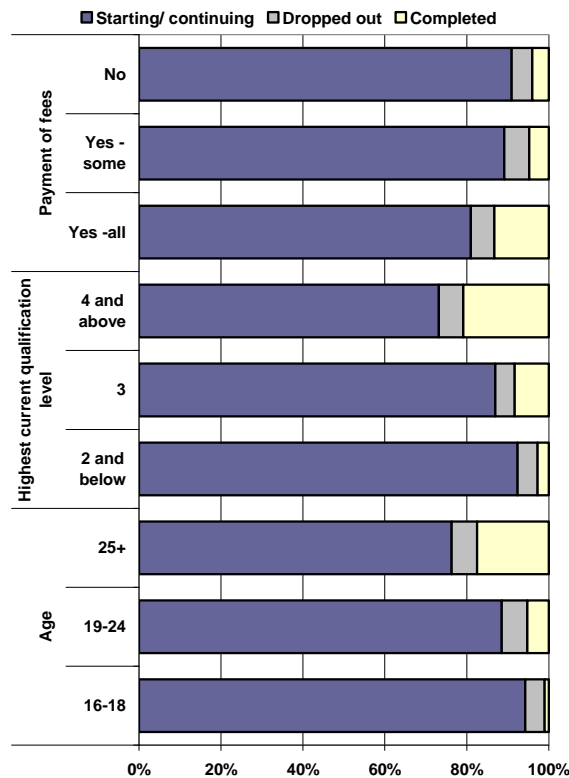
% may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of don't know/no answer

Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

Figure 3.1 illustrates the key characteristics that are linked to a learner's status. The groups most likely to have completed their course are adults (aged 25 plus), currently educate to level 4 or above, and having paid all their fees.

Figure 3.1: Progress of learners

QA2: How far have you got with this training/qualification?
(% of total, single coded)



Base: all
Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

4 Routes into Level 3

4.1 Status of the learner

4.1.1 Previous and current activities

To understand the type of learners enrolled at Level 3, it is useful to determine what activities they were engaged in before starting the course. This also develops the picture of entry and progression routes into Level 3 and identifies particular groups who are likely to engage and it will act as a baseline to show progression into (higher level) employment or higher earnings.

More than half (57 per cent) of all Level 3 learners were either at secondary school, a school sixth form or a college/training provider prior to enrolling (table 4.1). This proportion does differ depending on the aim of the learner, for example 79 per cent of learners on GCE/A/AS/A2 level and 74 per cent of those doing BTECs were previously in the education system, compared to just 9 per cent of Access to HE.

A further 28 per cent of Level 3 learners previously worked for an employer or were self-employed and these learners do gravitate towards more work-based courses and Access to HE. The self-employed are also over-represented within City & Guilds, reflecting the range of vocational qualifications delivered through this awarding body.

Table 4.1: Prior activities of learners by qualification aim
(% of total, single coded)

	Total	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
Working for an employer	26%	9%	57%	55%	37%	37%	14%	56%	36%
Self-employed	2%	1%	3%	3%	3%	3%	<0.5%	10%	5%
At a school sixth form	17%	23%	7%	1%	16%	13%	21%	3%	9%
At a college/training provider	15%	15%	9%	7%	13%	16%	22%	8%	13%
Unemployed and looking for work	5%	3%	5%	13%	3%	6%	4%	8%	6%
Looking after the family/home	3%	1%	5%	12%	3%	5%	1%	3%	6%
At secondary school	25%	41%	8%	1%	17%	12%	31%	5%	9%
Base (all)									

QA1a: What was your main work status before you started this course/training?

Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

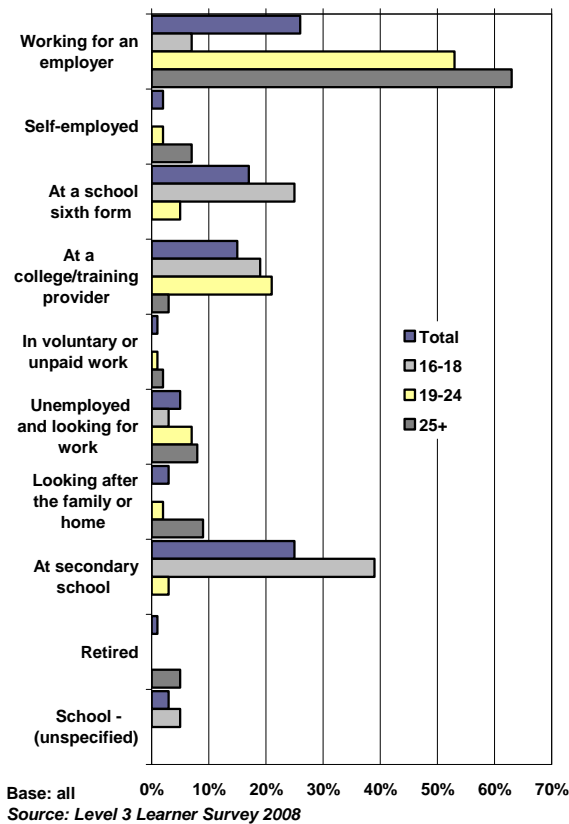
The routes into Level 3 also vary according to the characteristics of the learner. For example:

- Learners progressing from secondary schools and school sixth forms are primarily the youngest age group (16 to 18). Significant proportions of these do not pay their fees as their fees are waived and are engaged on their first Level 3 qualification.
- Older people are naturally more likely to have been employed prior to starting their course or training. This is the case for more than half of 19 to 24 year olds, and almost two thirds of those aged 25 plus, compared to just 7 per cent of those aged 16 to 18.
- Learners who worked for an employer prior to enrolling are also disproportionately better qualified, accounting for 61 per cent of those holding a qualification at Level 4 or above (compared to 18 per cent of learners currently educated to Level 2 or below).
- Those previously in employment are more likely to pay for all or part of their courses, with around half of those paying for all of their fees coming from this group, and almost a third who pay for some.
- Linked to the target age group of EMA, over 80 per cent of those receiving this form of learner support progress from either school sixth forms, secondary schools or college/training providers to Level 3. In contrast, over 40 per cent of learners receiving ALG learner support were previously in employment.

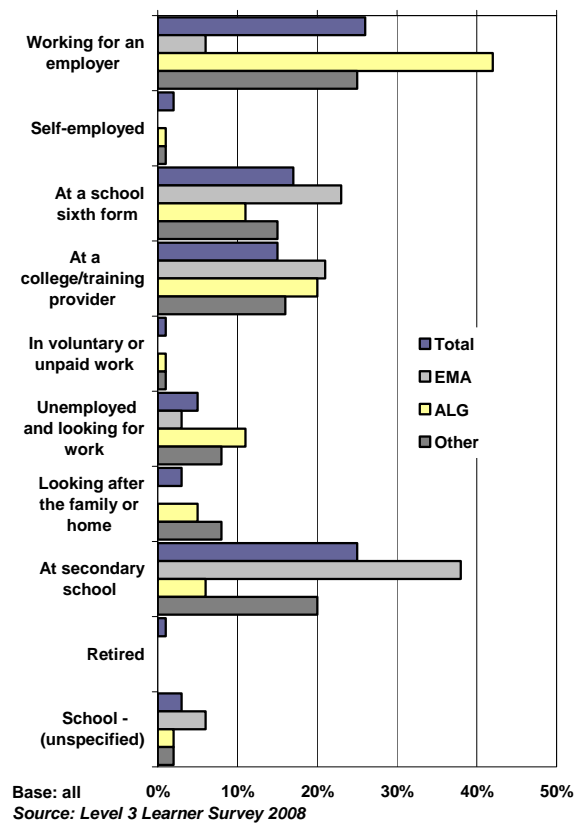
Figure 4.1: Prior activities of learners

QA1a: What was your main work status before you started this course/training?
(% of total, multicoded)

By age



By learner support



Learners who also report being in employment whilst currently studying are more likely to be found in a work-related course or training, including NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeships and City & Guilds, whilst those whose activity is primarily college or training provider based are most likely to be engaged on BTEC, GCE A/AS/A2 level, Access to HE and (Advanced) Award, Certificate or Diploma courses (as shown in table 4.2).

Older learners are most likely to be working alongside their Level 3 course or training, and amongst this group of learners there is also a greater proportion of females and the higher educated (compared to their counterparts).

Table 4.2: Current activities of learners by qualification aim
(% of total, multicoded)

	Total	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
Working for an employer	48%	38%	77%	41%	53%	52%	43%	65%	43%
Self-employed	3%	1%	5%	2%	7%	6%	1%	11%	7%
On a training scheme	5%	2%	16%	5%	3%	5%	3%	3%	5%
At a school sixth form	8%	18%	1%	2%	3%	3%	3%	0	2%
At a college/training provider	73%	76%	58%	75%	75%	67%	85%	54%	63%
In voluntary or unpaid work	6%	5%	6%	6%	8%	7%	5%	5%	10%
Unemployed and looking for work	10%	10%	4%	9%	10%	10%	13%	8%	12%
Looking after the family or home	9%	4%	13%	21%	12%	12%	6%	13%	14%
Base (all)									

QA1b: And which of the following activities are you currently involved in?

Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

The majority (84 per cent) of learners whose main activity before they started their course/training was working for an employer, and whose main activity remains so, are with the same employer as they were before. However, it seems that younger people, males and those currently educated to Level 2 or below are more likely to have changed employer than the average, indicating groups of learners who are possibly less settled in their roles.

4.1.2 Industrial and occupational routes into Level 3

The majority of learners who worked prior to enrolling come from two broad industrial groups - public administration, education and health, and distribution, hotels and restaurants, although there is representation from each of the major industrial groups in the economy (table 4.3).

By qualification aim, learners previously working in the public administration, education and health sector account for 45 per cent of those doing NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeships and more than 40 per cent of those on (Advanced) Awards, Certificates or Diplomas. This is compared to the average of 36 per cent.

In contrast, 42 per cent of those studying for GCE/A/AS/A2 levels, 47 per cent of those doing BTECs and 31 per cent of those on Access to HE previously worked in the hotels, restaurants and distribution sector (compared to the average of 27 per cent).

Notably, the manufacturing, utility and construction sectors are over-represented by learners enrolled on BTEC and City & Guilds.

Table 4.3: Industry worked in by qualification aim
(% of total, single coded)

	Total	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
Agriculture and Fishing	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%	0%	4%	1%	2%
Energy and Water	4%	0%	3%	1%	3%	3%	2%	19%	3%
Manufacturing	6%	4%	5%	2%	9%	6%	6%	14%	4%
Construction	4%	5%	5%	2%	2%	2%	10%	7%	3%
Distribution, Hotels and Restaurants	27%	42%	20%	31%	20%	24%	47%	12%	27%
Transport and Communications	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%	6%	4%
Banking, Finance and Insurance	6%	7%	5%	10%	7%	7%	3%	4%	7%
Public Admin, Education and Health	36%	29%	45%	35%	44%	45%	11%	27%	38%
Other Services	8%	7%	10%	12%	7%	5%	9%	8%	7%
Base (all working for an employer before they started training)									

Q11a: What did the organisation you worked for do or make?

Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

Breaking down the sectors further, and as illustrated in figure 4.2, 52 per cent of older workers worked in the public administration, education and health sector before enrolling, compared to 22 per cent of 19 to 24 year olds and just 4 per cent of 16 to 18 year olds. This sector was also over-represented by females and those currently educated at Level 3 or above, reflecting the workforce make-up of this sector generally. Notably, learners engaged with the Train to Gain Level 3 pilot are also significantly more likely to have been previously employed in this sector than the average.

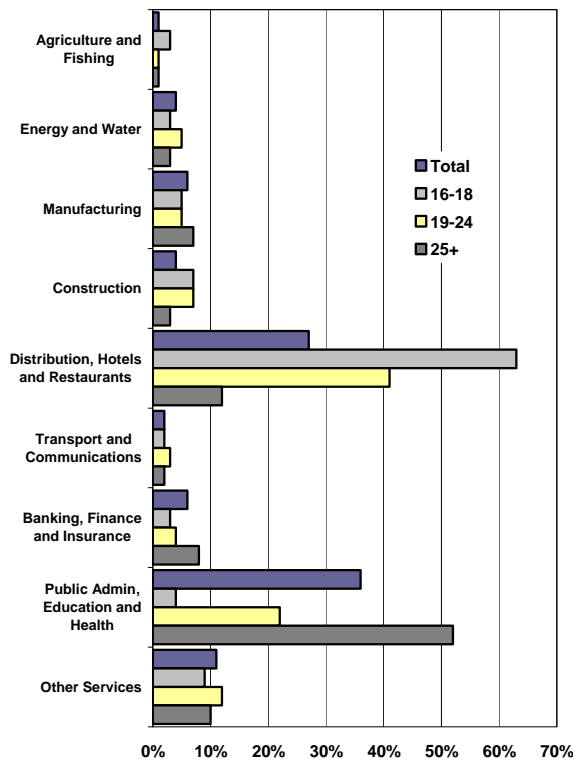
In contrast, the distribution, hotels and restaurants sector is represented by almost two-thirds of 16 to 18 year olds, and 41 per cent of 19 to 24 year olds (compared to just 12 per cent of those aged 25 plus). This sector is also over-represented by male Level 3 learners and learners undertaking their first Level 3 qualification.

Figure 4.2: Industries learners worked in before enrolling

Q11a: What did the organisation you worked for do or make?

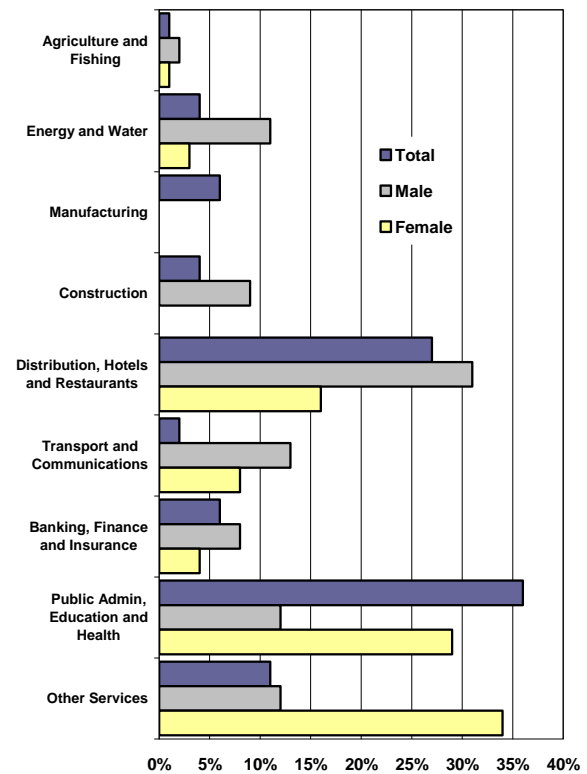
(% of total)

By age



Base: all who who were working for an employer prior to training
Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

By gender



Base: all who who were working for an employer prior to training
Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

The occupations in which learners were employed before starting their training or course is fairly diverse, with representation across the full range:

- Professional occupations account for 14 per cent of all learners in their previous role, although they are over-represented in Award, Certificate and Diplomas, and City & Guilds courses.
- BTEC and GCE A/AS/A2 level qualifications have large concentrations of those previously employed in sales and customer services and elementary occupations, although GCE A/AS/A2 levels are less likely to attract skilled trades occupations than BTECs.
- Personal service occupations are over-represented within NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeships and Access to HE.

Table 4.3: Occupation by qualification aim
(% of total, single coded)

	Total	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
Managers & Senior Officials	5%	6%	3%	5%	10%	5%	6%	4%	4%
Professional Occupations	14%	16%	15%	10%	14%	19%	5%	17%	18%
Associate Professionals & Technical Occupations	11%	9%	10%	12%	10%	10%	5%	6%	17%
Admin & Secretarial Occupations	13%	11%	14%	17%	22%	12%	7%	8%	14%
Skilled Trade Occupations	10%	2%	9%	2%	9%	4%	11%	38%	6%
Personal Service Occupations	14%	9%	20%	19%	8%	16%	9%	5%	9%
Sales & Customer Service Occupations	15%	25%	8%	16%	11%	15%	29%	10%	12%
Process, Plant & Machine Operatives	2%	1%	1%	4%	3%	2%	1%	0%	3%
Elementary Occupations	11%	14%	10%	12%	8%	8%	20%	8%	12%

Base (all working for an employer or self-employed before they started training)
% may not sum to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of don't know/no answer

Q11b: What was your (main) job at that time?

Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

Over one-third of learners had responsibility for supervising the work of other employees whilst working for an employer prior to starting their training. Learners who had previously supervised the work of others are more likely to be older, and 42 per cent pay the entirety of their fees.

4.2 Choice and decision making

Learners in the survey were asked what they hoped to gain from embarking on the course or training. This type of questioning reveals the motivations of Level 3 learners, and with this information further conclusions can be drawn around whether their expectations are being realised.

For all learners who had started their course at the time of the survey, early hopes for the course or training are quite diverse (as shown in table 4.4), although *the chance to learn something new*, the opportunity to develop *skills that will look good to future employers* and *skills to help me to do a better job in the future* are cited by the greatest proportion of learners (89 per cent, 85 per cent and 85 per cent respectively). The latter two motivations are particularly important to learners on NVQs/Advanced Apprenticeships and BTEC courses, both work related qualifications.

More tangible gains, such as *better pay*, *a job* and *a promotion/better job* are relatively low down the list, although still reported by over half of all learners. That said, learners enrolled on NVQs/Advanced Apprenticeships are especially keen to achieve these gains.

Table 4.4: Expected gains from course or training by qualification aim
(% of total, multicoded)

	Total	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
The chance to learn something new	89%	89%	89%	89%	88%	92%	90%	86%	87%
Skills that will look good to future employers	85%	85%	89%	77%	88%	87%	87%	85%	70%
Skills to help me to do a better job in the future	85%	83%	90%	79%	87%	88%	90%	86%	73%
A qualification	80%	80%	87%	77%	85%	84%	78%	81%	68%
Skills to help me to do a different job in the future	78%	78%	72%	81%	81%	82%	84%	75%	71%
Improved self-confidence	75%	67%	82%	83%	81%	79%	81%	68%	72%
Better pay	58%	54%	66%	57%	62%	58%	62%	57%	45%
A job (if not working)	55%	52%	66%	52%	55%	66%	57%	58%	43%
Skills to help me to do my current job better (if working for an employer)	52%	34%	81%	35%	54%	52%	46%	67%	50%
A promotion/better job (if working for an employer)	51%	37%	63%	58%	57%	54%	55%	55%	45%
None	1%	1%	<0.5%	1%	<0.5%	<0.5%	1%	<0.5%	1%
Base (all)									

QA5: Which, if any, of the following do you hope to gain from this training/qualifications?

Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

Compared to overall responses, the differences by learner group are as follows:

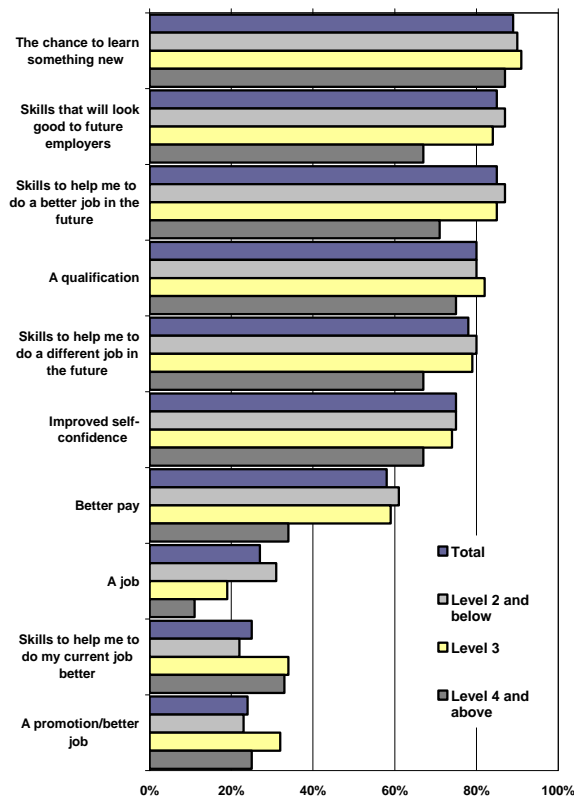
- In general, it appears that learners funded through WBL (predominantly NVQs and Advanced Apprenticeships), those who are non-fee paying and with current qualifications at Level 3 or below are more likely to give examples of gains from their course or training than their counterparts.
- Adult learners (aged 25 plus) are generally less likely to report skills for the future as something they are hoping to gain, but most likely to cite skills to do their current job better.
- The expected gains by gender are generally consistent, although females are more likely to be seeking *improved self-confidence* than males, while a higher proportion of males than females are looking to get *better pay*.

Figure 4.3: Expected gains from course or training

QA5: Which, if any, of the following do you hope to gain from this training/qualifications?

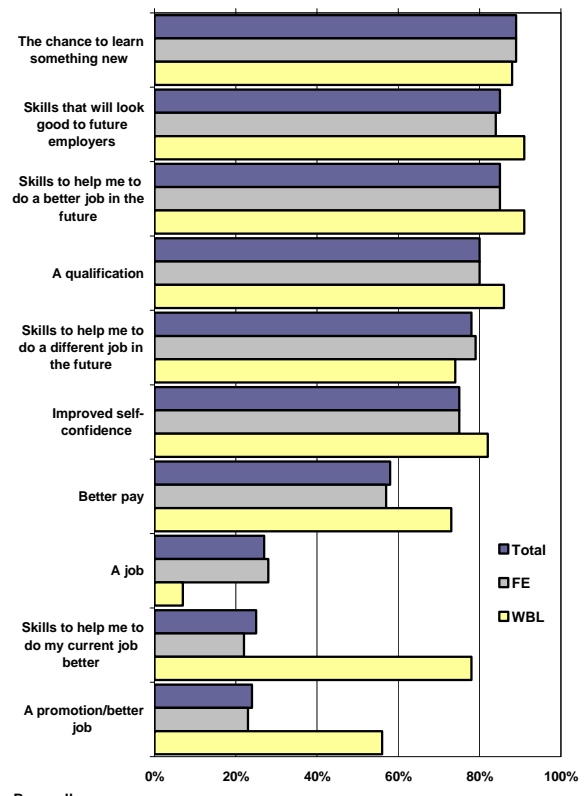
(% of total, multicode)

By current qualification



Base: all
Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

By type of provision



Base: all
Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

Most learners (61 per cent of the total) had not considered doing a Level 3 course before their enrolment in September 2007. For those who had, the primary reason why they have not done the course before now is age (*too young/still at school*), particularly for GCE A/AS/A2 level and BTEC learners (table 4.5).

In contrast, Access to HE learners are noticeably influenced by *family commitments, personal reasons* and the affordability of the course. *Family commitments* were also a key reason for those enrolled on NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship and (Advanced) Award, Certificate and Diplomas to have not done the course earlier.

Table 4.5: Barriers to doing qualification earlier by qualification aim
(% of total, multicoded)

	Total	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
Too young/still at school	36%	61%	10%	6%	21%	19%	40%	6%	10%
Was doing another course	8%	5%	9%	-	4%	6%	12%	8%	18%
I was told I needed the lower level qualification before I could do this course	7%	5%	9%	4%	14%	6%	10%	8%	5%
I had family commitments	7%	1%	14%	29%	10%	15%	2%	4%	10%
I did not have the time to devote to studying	6%	5%	8%	8%	6%	5%	3%	10%	9%
Personal reasons	5%	3%	7%	13%	5%	7%	6%	6%	4%
This course/ qualification was not available locally	4%	4%	5%	<0.5%	5%	5%	3%	7%	8%
I could not afford to pay for the course	4%	1%	7%	13%	3%	7%	2%	12%	6%
Times of the course was unsuitable	3%	1%	4%	6%	6%	3%	3%	6%	3%
I could not get funding for the course	2%	<0.5%	7%	3%	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%
I needed to be in employment	2%	1%	3%	3%	2%	3%	2%	7%	4%
Base (all who have considered doing this training/qualification before now)									
QA8: Why did you not do this training/qualification before now?									
Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008									

Age is also a key factor behind the reasons for not enrolling earlier. Intuitively, learners aged 16 to 18 years old are limited by their being too young or still at school, while those aged 19 to 24 had to achieve a Level 2 qualification before they could begin at Level 3. In contrast, the oldest learners were most likely to cite location, times, affordability and family commitments as barriers to undertaking the course earlier.

4.3 Information, advice and guidance (IAG)

Knowing the main sources of IAG and how this information is being conveyed allows mismatches to be identified, particularly as gaps in knowledge and incorrect information often discourage learners.

Learners were asked what the most valued source of advice for them was in terms of helping them decide whether to do their course or training. People engaged with learners on a day to day basis are generally the most important, especially when compared to specialist career staff, as shown in table 4.6:

- Sixteen per cent of learners cited *college advisor/tutor* as the most important source of advice (in terms of helping them decide whether to do the course or training), rising to 18 per cent of those doing NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeships, 19 per cent of those doing Advanced Awards, Certificates or Diplomas and 23 per cent of those on Access to HE courses.
- Twenty three per cent of learners doing GCE A/AS/A2 levels did cite either *school career guidance staff* or *other staff at school* as the most important source of guidance, although the largest single influences remains *college advisor/tutor* and *friends/relatives* (both 15 per cent).
- For work-based training and courses the importance of the *employer* is evident; for those doing NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeships 21 per cent cited their employer as the most important source of advice in terms of helping them decide whether to do the course or training.

Table 4.6: Most important sources of advice by qualification aim
(% of total, single coded)

	Total	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeships	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
Friends, relatives	14%	15%	12%	16%	13%	13%	16%	11%	17%
School careers guidance staff	7%	12%	3%	2%	5%	5%	8%	2%	2%
College open evening	5%	7%	3%	3%	7%	4%	5%	4%	3%
Employer	5%	<0.5%	21%	1%	7%	8%	2%	11%	4%
Through hobbies / interests	7%	8%	6%	5%	4%	6%	7%	9%	11%
College advisor / tutor	16%	15%	18%	23%	19%	16%	17%	14%	16%
Other staff at school	6%	11%	2%	1%	4%	5%	6%	4%	2%
None/ nothing	10%	9%	9%	11%	14%	13%	8%	8%	13%
Base (all)									

QB3: Which source of advice was most important in terms of helping you decide whether to do this training/qualification?

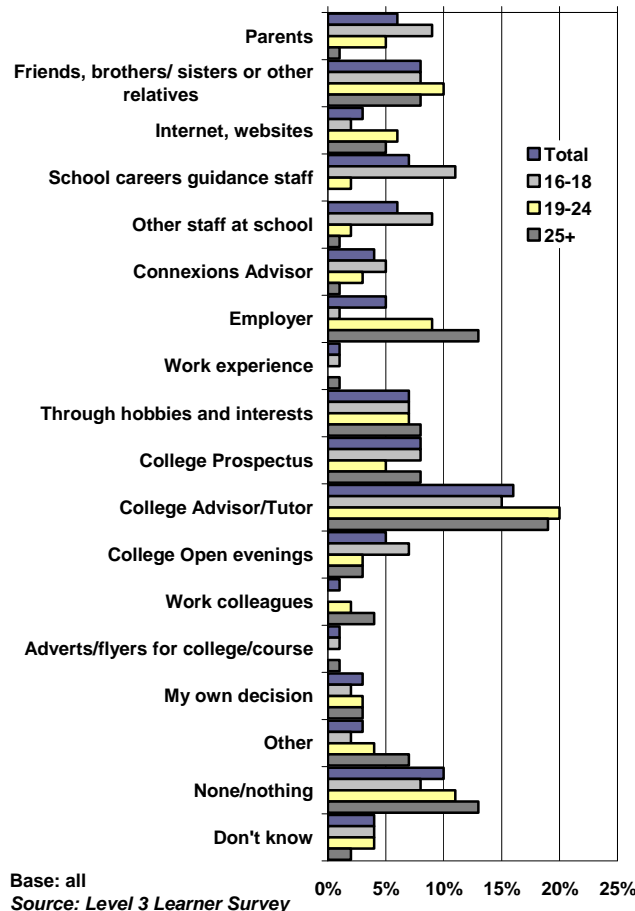
Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

One of the key determinants of where learners access IAG is their age, as shown in figure 4.4. For the youngest age group (16 to 18 year olds), learners are significantly more likely to be influenced by parents, schools career guidance staff, college open evenings and Connexions advisors. As the age of the learner increases, college advisors, employers, work colleagues and independent research (internet) become greater influences.

A further conclusion to be drawn from the survey results is that friends and relatives are more important to learners from BME groups than from White.

Figure 4.4: Most important sources of advice by age

QB3: Which source of advice was most important in terms of helping you decide whether to do this training/qualification?
 (% of total, single coded)



Base: all
 Source: Level 3 Learner Survey

When enrolling on their course or training, the majority of learners feel informed of the key aspects of the programme, and this is a general view held across most aims (table 4.7).

Learners on NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeships and Access to HE are the most positive about the information they had access to, although the latter did feel relatively under-informed about the standard of work expected.

The results also suggest a moderate concern for learners on City & Guilds courses, in terms of the information available around content, subjects and amount of work. Similarly, there seems to be a degree of misinformation around how the course or training would help learners gain the skills to use in a job for those enrolled on GCE A/AS/A2 levels.

Table 4.7: Information at the time of enrolment by qualification aim

(net % of total informed i.e. % informed minus % not informed)

	Total	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeships	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
The content of the course and the subjects you would cover	78%	78%	81%	79%	77%	77%	79%	72%	80%
The amount of work expected of you in your own time	68%	68%	68%	72%	68%	68%	71%	59%	60%
How the course/ training would help you gain skills to use in a job	67%	53%	79%	69%	75%	78%	77%	69%	68%
The standard of work expected of you	81%	85%	81%	76%	80%	77%	82%	81%	74%
Base (all)									

QB4: Thinking back to when you enrolled on this course/training, how well informed did you feel at that time about the following aspects of the course or training...?

Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

There are certainly some groups of learners who believe they are less well informed about the course or training than others, and these findings raise some useful questions about where IAG should be improved. For example:

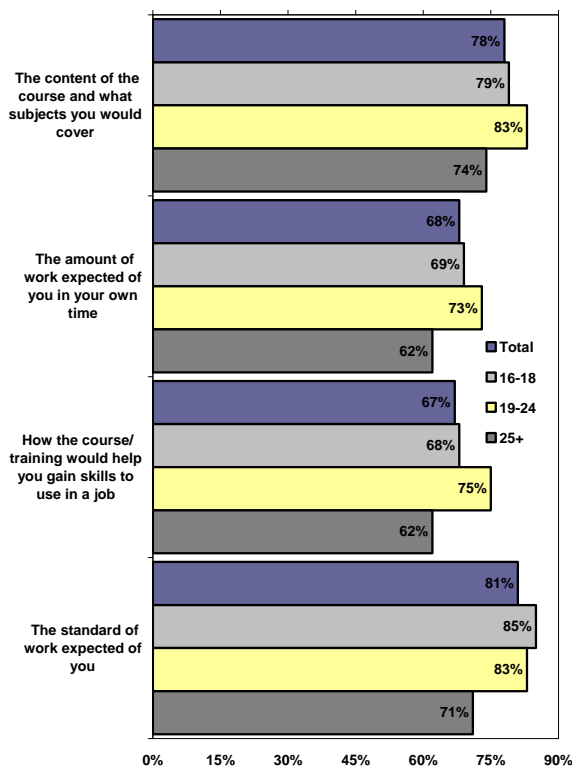
- The (net) proportion of learners citing they feel informed about the content, amount of work, how skills would be gained to use in a job and standard of work expected is generally much lower for learners aged 25 plus, and this would suggest that if there is a gap between leaving education and enrolling again on courses or training this increases the need for appropriate and quality information.
- In general, the 19 to 24 age group feel the most informed about different aspects of their Level 3 engagement, compared to their younger and older counterparts.
- The results also suggest that White learners feel they are (net) more informed than BME learners.

- There is a notable uncertainty around the information provided/received by learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. As illustrated in figure 4.5, the proportion of learners with a learning difficulty feeling (net) informed about the content of the course equals just 67 per cent (compared to 78 per cent of all learners). Similarly, just 60 per cent of learners with a learning difficulty and/or disability feel (net) informed about the amount of work expected in their own time (the average is 68 per cent).
- Learners with a disability are least likely to feel informed about *how the course or training would help you to gain skills to use in a job* and the *standard of work expected of you*.

Figure 4.5: Information at the time of enrolment

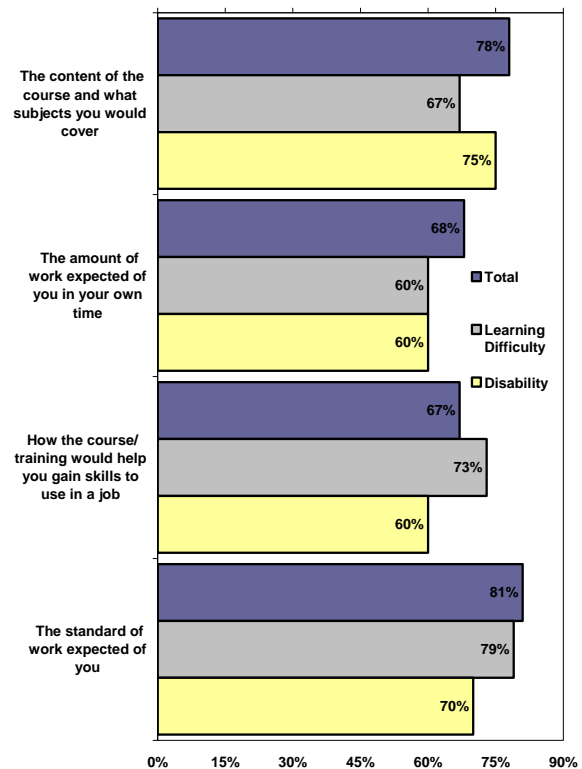
QB4: How well informed did you feel about the following aspects of the course or training when enrolling?
 (% those feeling *informed* less % those feeling *not informed*)

By age



Base: all
 Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

By disability or learning difficulty



Base: all
 Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

5 Learner attitudes and experiences

5.1 Introduction

To begin to draw together conclusions for the wider evaluation of Level 3 provision, a key step is to understand why learners are engaged with these courses and what they believe they will gain from them. Wave 1 of the survey provides a baseline of learner attitudes to skills and learning, which then translates into what they hope to gain from completing a Level 3 course and where it will lead them.

5.2 Attitudes to learning and skills

There are some very strong positive opinions about training emerging from the survey. Each learner was asked whether they agree or disagree to a series of statements, and to what extent:

- *Learning new skills is something that I will need to do throughout my working life* is supported by 93 per cent of learners, with 81 per cent strongly agreeing to this statement. Encouragingly, this is a view held across all groups.
- Additionally, 97 per cent of learners (net) agree to *I enjoy learning new skills*, again a view reflected across all groups.
- A similarly positive response was given to the statement *you're more likely to get a better job if you do some learning, training or education*, (net) agreed by 95 per cent of learners.
- Over half (57 per cent) of learners disagree that *school did not prepare me for the learning I need to do in my life today*, but 36 per cent agree with this statement. There is therefore not a general consensus on the school experiences of learners.
- Although the majority (82 per cent) disagree that *spending time learning is too much effort*, there is a minority (15 per cent) that agree with this statement.

Table 5.1: Views on learning by qualification aim
(net % of total agreeing i.e. % agreeing minus % disagreeing)

	Total	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
Learning new skills is something that I will need to do throughout my working life	93%	93%	92%	90%	93%	93%	95%	97%	87%
I enjoy learning new skills	97%	96%	97%	98%	98%	97%	96%	97%	97%
You're more likely to get a better job if you do some learning, training or education	95%	95%	93%	95%	93%	93%	96%	95%	93%
School did not prepare me for the learning that I need to do in my life today	-21%	-38%	-4%	1%	-21%	-7%	-24%	1%	-3%
Spending time learning is too much effort	-67%	-65%	-66%	-65%	-73%	-71%	-64%	-76%	-70%
Base (all)									

QE2: For each of these statements, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree.

Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

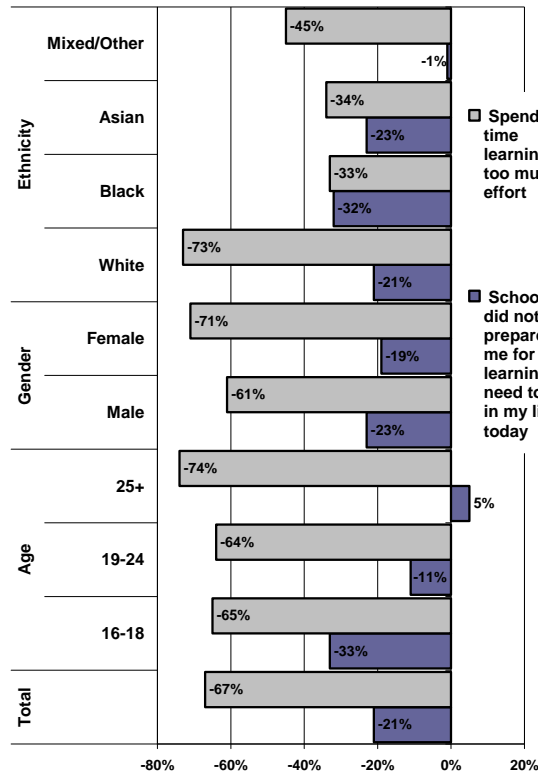
However, as illustrated in figure 5.1, the proportion of learners agreeing that *school did not prepare me for the learning I need to do in my life today* rises by age, to 48 per cent of adult learners (aged 25 plus, compared to the average of 36 per cent). This suggests that individuals who have been engaged with the labour market for longer periods of time are more likely to believe that school has not prepared them for the likelihood of future learning.

A further concern is that individuals with learning difficulties also appear to have a relatively negative perception of how schools prepare them for future learning (44 per cent of this group agree that *school did not prepare me for the learning I need to do in my life today*).

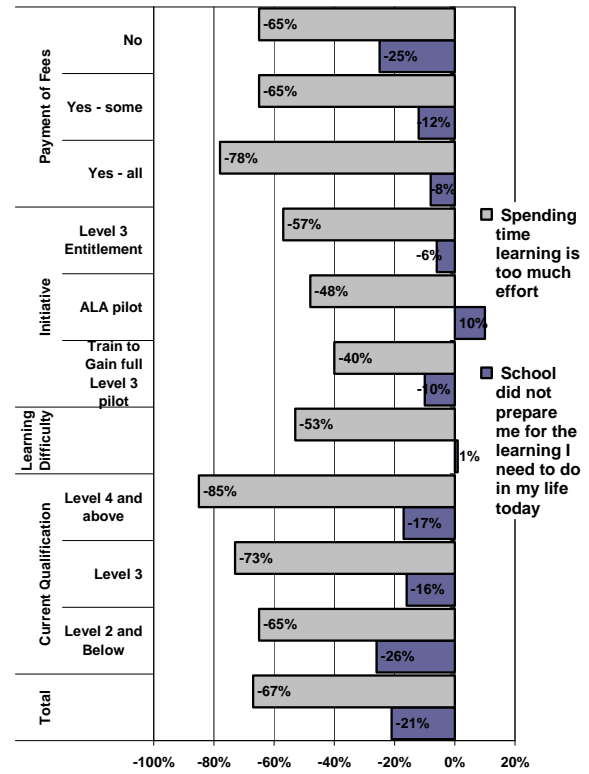
The young, males, BMEs, lower qualified and those with learning difficulties are more likely to agree that *spending time learning is too much effort* than their counterparts. Furthermore, individuals engaged with some of the LSC initiatives (Train to Gain Level 3, Adult Learner Accounts and Level 3 entitlement) are also more likely to agree with this statement. In contrast, and as expected, learners who are paying all of their fees are less likely to agree that *spending time learning is too much effort*.

Figure 5.1: Views on learning

QE2: For each of these statements, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree.
 (net % of total agreeing i.e. % agreeing minus % disagreeing)



Base: all
 Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008



Base: all
 Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

Feelings about education on leaving school are generally positive (the response of 60 per cent of learners, table 5.2), particularly for learners currently enrolled on GCE A/AS/A2 level courses. However, negative or indifferent feelings are strongly conveyed for learners engaged on Access to HE. As a qualification designed for people who would like to study in HE but who left school without the required qualifications, this finding is somewhat expected.

Table 5.2: Views of school experiences by qualification aim
(% of total, single coded)

	Total	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
Generally positive feeling about education	60%	71%	51%	38%	57%	55%	59%	47%	54%
Generally negative feelings about education	18%	11%	21%	36%	24%	20%	19%	25%	25%
Not bothered either way about education	21%	18%	27%	24%	18%	24%	21%	27%	20%

Base (all)

QE3: Thinking back to when you left school would you say you had...?

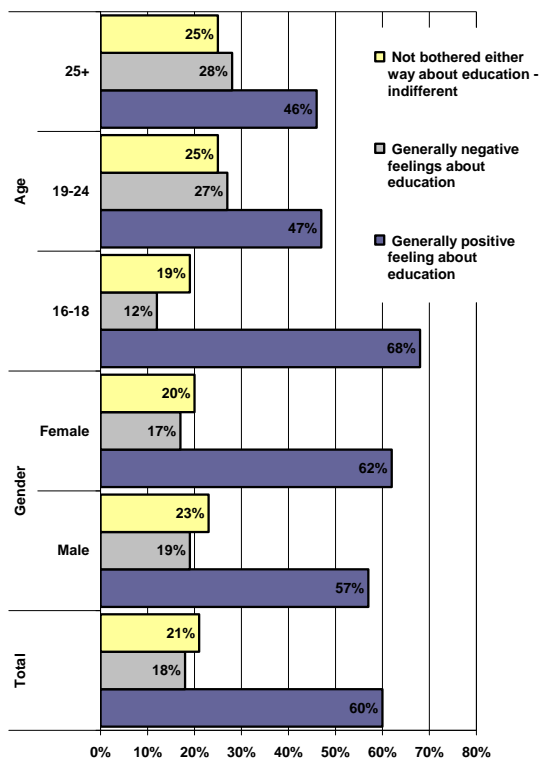
Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

Negative or indifferent feelings are also more likely to be reported by learners who are male, in the older age groups (19 plus), White, and for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (figure 5.2).

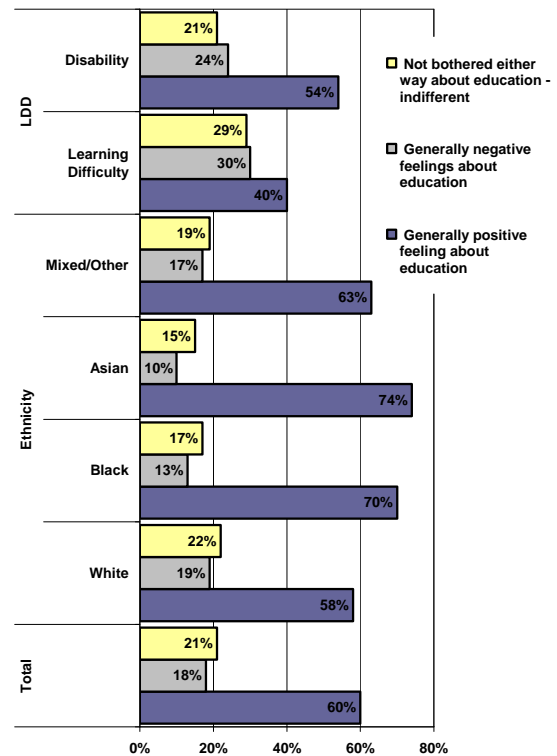
Figure 5.2: Views of school experiences

QE3: Thinking back to when you left school would you say you had...?

(% of total, single coded)



Base: all
Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008



Base: all
Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

5.2.1 Match of current skills to job demands

Overall, there is a tendency for learners who are also currently working (employed or self-employed) to believe the skills they have now are higher than needed for their job (21 per cent reporting that they are *a little higher* and 20 per cent reporting that they *greater exceed*, table 5.3). This is particularly the case for learners on GCE A/AS/A2 level and Access to HE courses.

That said, learners on Access to HE also recognise that their *job is changing so I need to develop new skills*, for which higher education is seen as a key route to achieve this. This is also the case for learners on work-based NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeships qualifications, relating closely to the arrangements of WBL and a learners employed status.

Table 5.3: Match of current skills to job demands by qualification aim
(% of total, single coded)

	Total	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
Greater exceed	20%	27%	14%	31%	17%	17%	20%	9%	15%
A little higher	21%	26%	19%	18%	23%	19%	20%	18%	19%
Roughly match	31%	28%	37%	14%	29%	30%	29%	38%	31%
Job is changing so need to develop new skills	19%	11%	25%	25%	20%	21%	18%	28%	22%
Don't know	9%	9%	4%	12%	11%	12%	12%	7%	14%
Base (all working or self-employed)									

QE1: Which of the following statements best describes how well the skills you have now meet the demands of your job?

Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

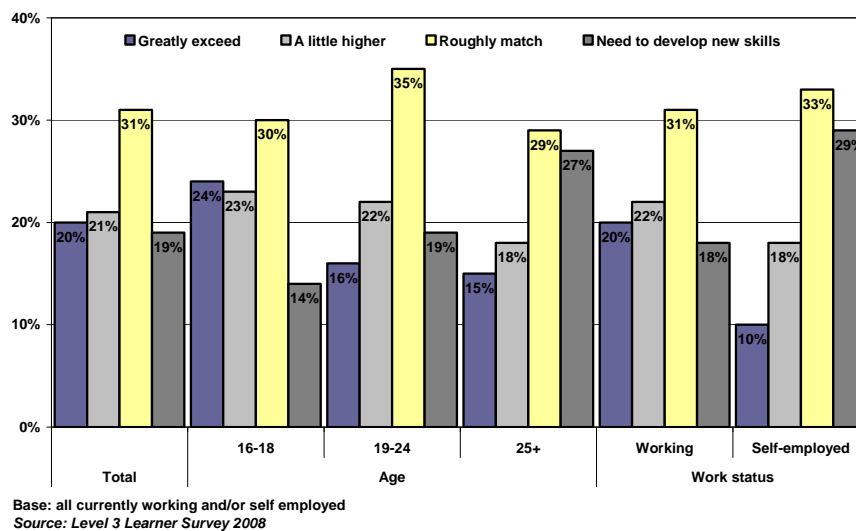
The differing views of learner groups, illustrated in figure 5.3, are as follows:

- Forty seven per cent of young learners (16 to 18) believe their skills are higher or greatly exceed those demanded by their current job (the average is 41 per cent), while 27 per cent of adult learners state that *my job is changing so I need to develop new skills* (compared to 19 per cent overall).
- Twenty eight per cent of the self-employed state that *their job is changing so I need to develop new skills*, reflecting the range of skills required to manage and grow a small business in an ever-changing business environment.

Figure 5.3: Match of current skills to job demands

QE1: Which of the following statements best describes how well the skills you have now meet the demands of your job?

(% of total, single coded)



5.3 Expectations of training and the reality

Education and training is generally considered a way of improving skills and qualifications for the benefit of both the individual and their current or future employers, and the wider economy. However, the priorities of individuals do differ, depending on their characteristics and situation.

As an open question to learners (i.e. options were not given by the interviewer), learners are most likely to have enrolled on their course or training with the longer term view of progressing *on to higher education*, reported by 27 per cent of all learners (although 32 per cent said they *did not know* what they wanted to do afterwards, table 5.3). This was followed by *getting a job* (14 per cent).

Not surprisingly, two-thirds of learners on Access to HE courses wish to go to university (the very nature of Access to HE is to equip learners with qualifications to enable them to progress into higher education for those who left school without the usual qualifications). Learners enrolled on GCE A/AS/A2 level courses are also more likely to cite this aspiration than the average. In contrast, the NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship and City & Guilds route is for learners with job-related aspirations (*get a job, get a better job and stay with the same employer* are reported by an above-average proportion).

Indeed, almost all learners reporting that their aim is to progress *on to higher education* are funded through the FE funding stream (particularly those studying Access to HE and GCE/A/AS/A2 level), whereas WBL learners are more concerned with *getting a better job* and *staying with the same employer*.

Table 5.3: Aspirations on course completion by qualification aim
(% of total, single coded)

	Total	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
Get a job	14%	7%	20%	9%	14%	18%	19%	25%	18%
Get a better job	6%	2%	13%	4%	8%	8%	5%	16%	10%
Stay with same employer	6%	1%	21%	<0.5%	8%	10%	2%	12%	5%
Become self employed	2%	<0.5%	4%	<0.5%	5%	6%	1%	8%	5%
Go to university/HE	27%	41%	4%	66%	17%	13%	28%	2%	12%
Do further training in FE	5%	4%	5%	4%	6%	6%	4%	6%	8%
Don't know	32%	41%	24%	13%	29%	29%	34%	17%	27%
Other	8%	4%	8%	2%	11%	8%	6%	11%	13%
Base (all)									

QA6a: Thinking back to when you first started this training/qualification did you know what you hoped to do immediately after completing it?

Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

Compared to the overall picture, there are some notable differences in aspirations between learners:

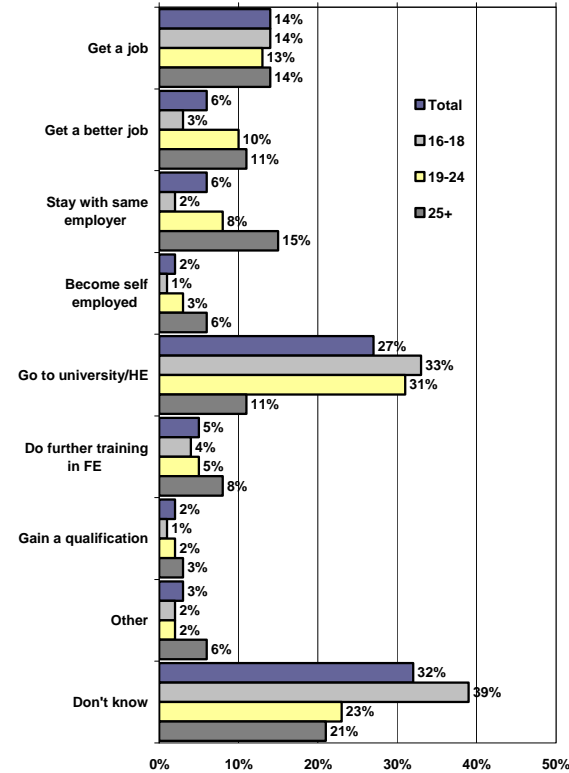
- The priorities of adult learners (aged 25 plus) are different to younger learners, as are the priorities of learners with current qualifications at Level 3 or above compared to those embarking on their first Level 3. For adult learners and the higher qualified the course or training is more likely to allow them to *stay with the same employer*, *get a better job* and *become self-employed*.
- That said, younger learners and the lower qualified are more likely to be unsure of their goals generally, by answering *don't know* to the question.
- There is a small variation on the longer term views of learners by ethnic group, as BME learners are more likely to believe Level 3 learning allows them to progress *on to higher education* than White learners.
- Individuals receiving learner support are more likely to report that the course or training will allow them to *get a job* and to progress *on to higher education* than those who are not financially supported in this way.

Figure 5.4: Aspirations on course completion

QA6a: Thinking back to when you first started this training/qualification did you know what you hoped to do immediately after completing it?

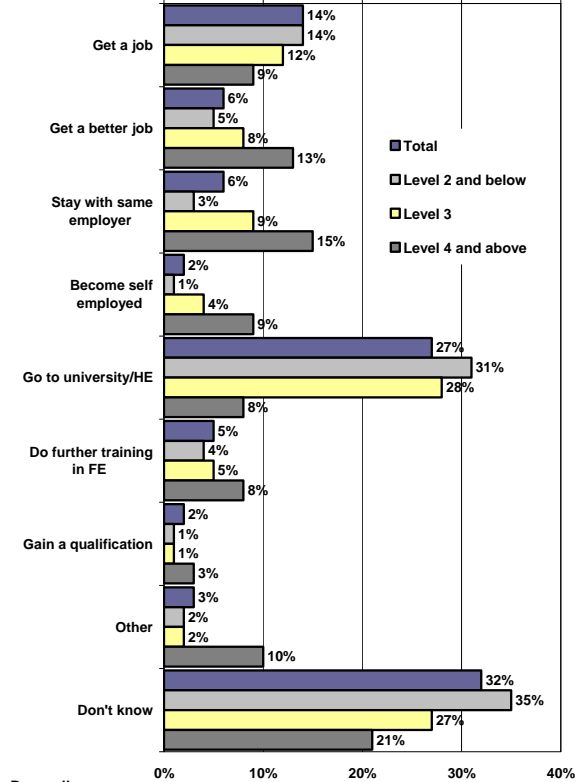
(% of total, single coded)

By age



Base: all
Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

By current qualification



Base: all
Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

Ninety two per cent of learners who know what they want to achieve also believe that the course or training will help to do this a great deal or by a fair amount, rising to 97 per cent for those enrolled on Access to HE (table 5.4).

This is consistent across most groups, although with the possible exception of adult learners (aged 25 plus) and learners with Level 4 or above qualifications (where the proportion was 89 per cent and 83 per cent respectively).

Table 5.4: Contribution of training to aspirations by qualification aim
(% of total, single coded)

	Total	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
A great deal	65%	60%	65%	86%	66%	69%	66%	60%	62%
A fair amount	27%	31%	26%	11%	27%	24%	28%	31%	29%
Not very much	4%	5%	3%	1%	2%	4%	4%	4%	5%
Not at all	2%	2%	4%	2%	3%	1%	1%	2%	3%
Don't know	2%	2%	2%	<0.5%	2%	2%	1%	3%	1%
A great deal/fair amount	92%	91%	91%	97%	93%	93%	94%	91%	91%
Not very much/not at all	6%	7%	7%	3%	6%	5%	5%	6%	8%
Base (all)									
QA6b: To what extent do you think this training/qualification will help you to [response at A6a]?									
Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008									

5.3.1 Gains from completing

Encouragingly, the views of learners who have completed their course are very similar to those who are currently studying (see section 4.2). *A chance to learn something new* was reported to be a gain by 87 per cent of completers, followed by *skills to help me to do a better job in the future* (80 per cent), *a qualification* (79 per cent) and *skills that will look good to future employers* (79 per cent).

Notably, the gains from completing the training are least likely to be defined in terms of work-based rewards, as *better pay* is reported by just 44 per cent (of all completers), and a promotion by 27 per cent (of completers who currently work for an employer).

Table 5.5: Gains from course completion by qualification aim

(% of total, multicoded)

	Total*	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Award, Certificate or Diploma	Other
A qualification	79%	95%	87%	50%
The chance to learn something new	87%	95%	88%	82%
Improved self-confidence	77%	89%	82%	71%
Skills to help me to do a different job in the future	71%	80%	79%	56%
Better pay	44%	63%	47%	26%
A job (if not working before starting the course)	40%	*	*	*
Skills to help me to do my current job better (if working for an employer)	59%	74%	*	*
A promotion	27%	40%	*	*
Skills that will look good to future employers	79%	94%	83%	54%
Skills to help me to do a better job in the future	80%	94%	84%	64%
Nothing	2%	-	1%	3%
Base (all completers)				

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

QG1: Which of the following do you think you have gained from doing this training/qualification?

Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

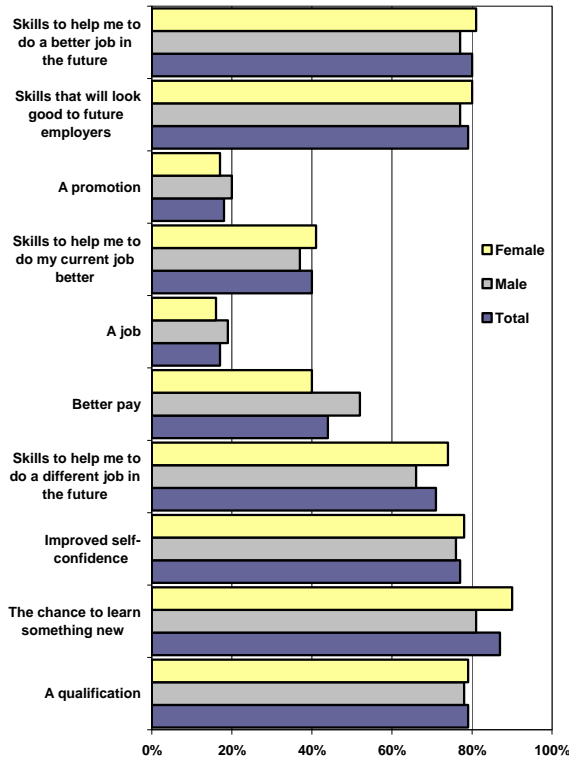
A review of the responses of different groups shows that the youngest learners (16 to 18 year olds) are generally more focused on the opportunities to gain a *qualification*, a *job* or receive *better pay*, while *the chance to do something new* stands out as the greatest gain for adult completers (aged 25 plus), as shown in figure 5.5.

The softer gains from the course or training, around the skills learnt and just learning something new, are also reported by a higher proportion of females than males, but the proportion of males reporting *better pay* is notably higher than females.

Figure 5.5: Gains from course completion

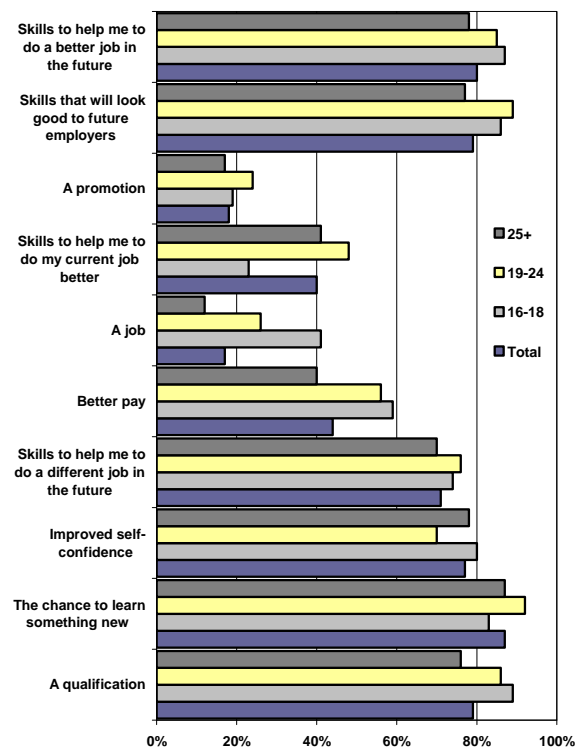
QG1: Which of the following do you think you have gained from doing this training/qualification?
(% of total, multicoded)

By age



Base: all who have completed their course/training
Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

By gender



Base: all who have completed their course/training
Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

In separate case studies of Level 3 Train to Gain learners, undertaken as part of the wider Level 3 evaluation research, all felt that they have learnt new skills from the course or training that will be immediately transferable to their day-to-day job, and will make a difference to the way they carry out certain tasks. Furthermore, some learners feel that the Level 3 training has made them reflect on their working practices and helped them understand why tasks have to be performed in certain ways. As such, doing the training has helped them to do their job better.

Employers and learners both agree that the positive outcomes of training include more confident and effective staff that are able to offer a better standard of work.

5.3.2 Experiences of leavers

The primary reason, cited by 28 per cent of leavers, was *found the course was not what I wanted to do*, followed by *workload made it difficult to make time for studying/training* (13 per cent) and *poor quality teaching/training* (11 per cent, table 5.6).⁷

In general, there is a significant concern amongst WBL learners around *change in job circumstances* (33 per cent) while FE learners generally *found the course was not what I wanted to do* (28 per cent).

Compared to the average, the concerns of GCE A/AS/A2 level leavers are more around the difficulty and workload, while leavers of BTEC courses particularly highlight a general unhappiness with the course, in terms of what they wanted to do and the quality of teaching.

Table 5.6: Reasons for leaving by qualification aim

(% of total, multicoded)

	Total*	GCE A/AS/A2 level	BTEC
Found the course was not what I wanted to do after all	28%	27%	35%
Poor quality teaching/training	11%	8%	14%
The course was too easy	3%	3%	3%
The course was too difficult	8%	13%	9%
Workload made it difficult to make time for study/training	13%	18%	12%
Times of course didn't suit my working hours	4%	6%	3%
Too difficult to balance the course/training with other non-work commitments	6%	6%	5%
Changed to a different job/left job	5%	3%	2%
Health problem/illness	10%	4%	9%
Change in family/home life	4%	4%	<0.5%
The course was cancelled/stopped part way through/moved location	1%	-	1%
Became pregnant/had a baby	2%	-	1%
Financial reasons	7%	4%	15%
Base (all early leavers)			

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

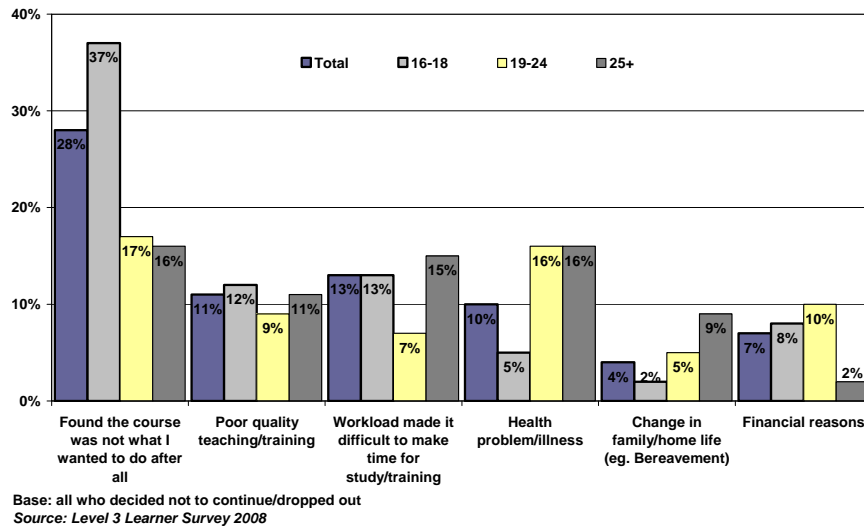
QF1: Why did you decide not to complete your course/training?
Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

⁷ For learners who gave more than one reason for leaving, *found the course was not what I wanted to do* was likely to be the primary reason.

The age of the learner also makes a difference in terms of the reason for leaving, as while 37 per cent of the 16 to 18 age group reports they *found the course was not what I wanted to do*, an above average proportion of 19 plus reported circumstantial reasons, such as *health problem/illness* and *change to family/home life* (figure 5.6).

Figure 5.6: Reasons for leaving by age

QF1: Why did you decide not to complete your course/training?
(% of total, multicoded)



A relatively limited number of suggestions were given for what would have enabled the leavers to complete (table 5.7), but this information is important if policy is to encourage learners to remain on their course or training. The most popular (although only cited by 11 per cent of learners) was *more support from your college* (particularly for GCE A/AS/A2 level leavers), while 18 per cent reported *nothing*.

WBL learners in general put forward the need for *more support from supervisor, line manager, employers* and *more support from your training provider*, reflecting the demands on WBL learners training while also employed.

Table 5.7: Reasons to continue with training by qualification aim
(% of total, multicoded)

	Total*	GCE A/AS/A2 level	BTEC
More financial support/if amount of financial was higher	8%	7%	10%
Better guidance at the time of choosing training/qualification	6%	8%	5%
More support (transport, material etc.)	3%	1%	3%
More time to train during working hours	2%	2%	-
More time to complete the course overall (duration)	9%	8%	8%
More support from supervisor, line manager, employer	1%	2%	1%
More support from your college	11%	14%	9%
More support from your training provider	4%	6%	2%
Better preparation for work while at school	1%	1%	3%
Better training provider	5%	4%	5%
A course more related to your job	3%	2%	4%
The guarantee of a better job at the end	1%	-	1%
Better pay	2%	2%	-
Nothing	18%	22%	21%
Base (all early leavers)			

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

QF3: What, if anything, would have enabled you to complete the training/qualification?

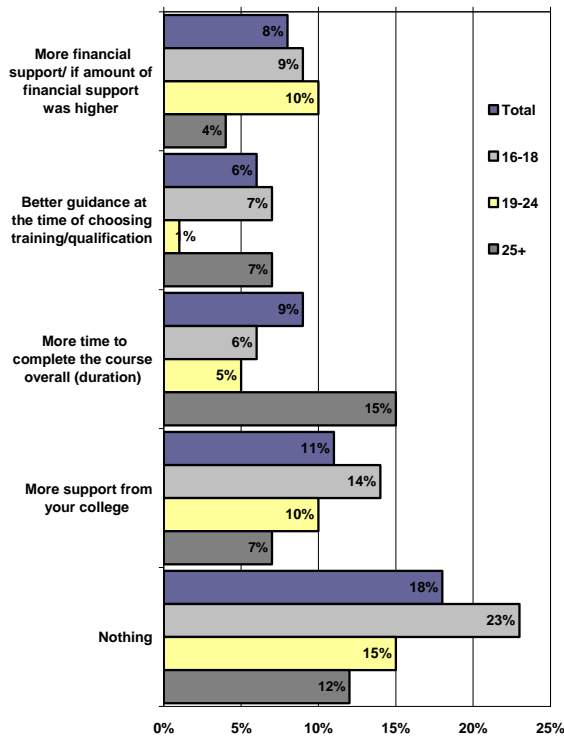
Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

As shown in figure 5.7, *more support from your college* is relatively more important to females and the youngest age group (16 to 18) than their opposites, while adult learners (aged 25 plus) are more concerned with practical aspects such as *more financial support* and *more time to complete the course overall*.

Figure 5.7: Reasons to continue with training

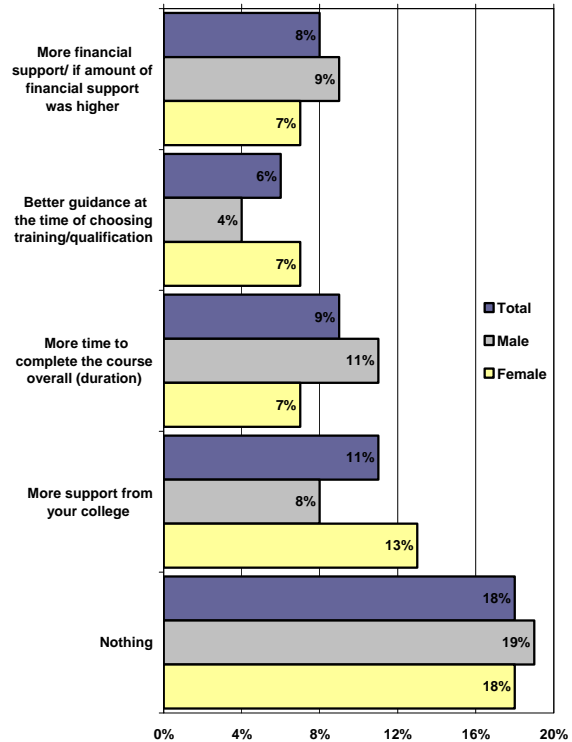
QF3: What, if anything, would have enabled you to complete the training/qualification?
(% of total, multicoded)

By age



Base: all who decided not to continue/dropped out
Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

By gender



Base: all who decided not to continue/dropped out
Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

5.4 Progression

Whether a learner is considering further learning opportunities relates to what they have gained from the current course, and their experiences. If they plan to progress it indicates that they benefited from the experience and that they would like to continue to do so.

Positively, 95 per cent of completers believe that the course or training they did was the right choice for them (table 5.8). There is also a high degree of satisfaction with the course or training expressed by completers, as 93 per cent are either fairly, very or extremely satisfied and just 6 per cent dissatisfied.

Table 5.8: Completers who have made the right choice by qualification aim
(% of total, single coded)

	Total*	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Award, Certificate or Diploma	Other
Yes	94%	96%	94%	91%
No	4%	4%	3%	8%
Not sure	2%	1%	3%	1%

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

QG2: Looking back, do you think that the training/qualification you did was the right choice for you?
Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

IAG supports the progression from Level 3 courses to an equivalent or higher level, and there is an even split of completers who have, and have not, had someone talk to them about further training or learning options (although females are more likely to have had this talk than males). This suggests that there is no consistent policy that providers follow to engage with completers and to discuss their future options.

Table 5.9: Further training or learning options by qualification aim
(% of total, single coded)

	Total*	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Award, Certificate or Diploma	Other
Yes	51%	45%	48%	48%
No	49%	55%	52%	52%

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

QG4: Has anyone talked to you about further training or learning options now you have completed this qualification?
Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

Of the completers who have benefited from IAG, this conversation is most likely to occur with their *tutor* (64 per cent), followed by *careers advisor at college/training provider* (19 per cent) and *employer, manager, supervisor, HR* (12 per cent, table 5.10). Tutors are most evident through the FE funding stream, while the latter two are more likely in WBL.

Table 5.10: Sources of further information

(% of total, multicoded)

Tutor	64%
Careers advisor at college/training provider	19%
Other careers service staff	4%
Employer, manager, supervisor	12%
Friends or family	7%
Other	8%

Base (all completers talked through further training or learning options)

QG5: Who talked to you about further learning?

Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

Almost three-quarters (72 per cent) of completers report that they are likely to undertake further learning or training for a higher qualification than the one they have completed in the next three years (as shown in table 5.11).

Table 5.11: Likelihood of undertaking further training by qualification aim

(% of total, single coded)

	Total*	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Award, Certificate or Diploma	Other
Very likely	49%	53%	47%	46%
Fairly likely	23%	15%	26%	21%
Fairly unlikely	11%	14%	13%	11%
Very unlikely	11%	11%	7%	15%
Too early to say	4%	5%	4%	3%
Don't know	2%	2%	3%	3%
Likely	72%	68%	73%	67%
Unlikely	22%	25%	20%	27%

Base (all completers)

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

QG6: How likely or unlikely are you to undertake further learning or training for a higher qualification than the one you have completed, in the next three years?

Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

There is a positive split between leavers who are likely to sign up for further training in a similar subject but at a higher level to those who are unlikely (55 per cent and 40 per cent respectively). However, a relatively higher proportion of leavers are likely to sign up for further training generally in the future (81 per cent).

By qualification aim, there is less likelihood for GCE A/AS/A2 level leavers to plan for further training in a similar subject but at a higher level than the average.

Table 5.12: Likelihood of undertaking further training by qualification aim
(% of total, single coded)

	In a similar subject but at a higher level			Generally		
	Total*	GCE A/AS/A2 level	BTEC	Total*	GCE A/AS/A2 level	BTEC
Very likely	30%	22%	29%	48%	52%	39%
Fairly likely	25%	21%	30%	32%	29%	39%
Fairly unlikely	20%	32%	20%	10%	9%	15%
Very unlikely	20%	24%	18%	5%	5%	3%
Too early to say	3%	1%	3%	2%	3%	1%
Don't know	1%	1%	-	2%	1%	3%
Likely	55%	43%	59%	81%	81%	78%
Unlikely	40%	55%	38%	15%	14%	19%

Base (all early leavers)

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

QF4a/b: How likely or unlikely are you to sign up for further training in the future?

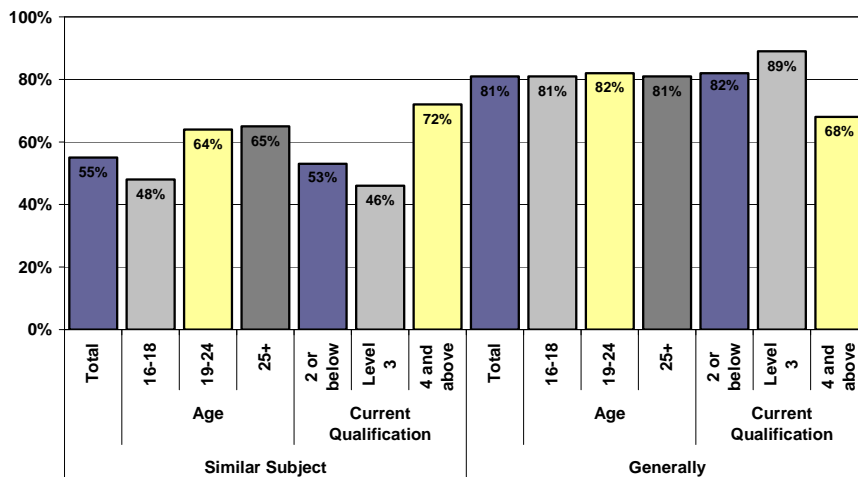
Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

The proportion of leavers likely to undertake further training in a similar subject does rise with age (as illustrated in figure 5.8), while a relatively high proportion of learners who are currently educated to Level 3 or below are likely to sign up for further training generally.

Figure 5.8: Likelihood of undertaking further training

QF4a/b: How likely or unlikely are you to sign up for further training in the future?

(% of total, single coded)



Base: all who decided not to continue/dropped out

Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

Additional evidence from learners, gathered through the Train to Gain case studies, suggests that the majority of learners think that training is important for career development and would be keen to undertake further training if the opportunity were to arise.

6 Monetary influences

6.1 Fees

Current government policy is focused on shifting the balance between public funding of education and training, and individual and employer contributions. To deliver the pledges made in the 14-19 and Skills White Papers (2005 and 2006 respectively), the LSC Priorities for Success statement (2005) introduced some significant changes to LSC funding policy, both in terms of fee assumptions⁸ and also through changing the mindset of all concerned.

Previous research has been conducted to understand the impact on fee policies on an individual's willingness to pay for a course or training.⁹ The wave 1 learner survey has built on this by questioning learners specifically on Level 3 courses, given the introduction of fees will disproportionately hit those taking Level 3 courses and above.

6.1.1 Profile of fee payers

The majority (71 per cent) of learners in the survey did not pay any financial contribution towards course fees, although the proportion rises to 84 per cent of GCE A/AS/A2 level learners and falls to just 45 per cent of those enrolled on City & Guilds courses.

Table 6.1: Payment of fees by qualification aim
(% of total, single coded)

	Total	GCE A/AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
Yes – all of it	16%	8%	14%	28%	29%	24%	11%	41%	34%
Yes – some of it	11%	6%	14%	19%	9%	15%	13%	14%	15%
No	71%	84%	70%	53%	62%	59%	75%	45%	50%
Don't know	1%	1%	1%	1%	<0.5%	2%	2%	-	1%
Base (all)									

QC1: Some people pay for courses or training. Did you personally make or will you make any financial contributions towards course fees for this training/qualification?

Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

⁸ Fee assumptions refer to the proportion of the total cost of a course that is funded by the individual and/or employer.

⁹ For example, Ipsos MORI telephone survey investigating the general public's views of Further Education (FE) on behalf of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC); June 2007.

Paying for Learning: Learners, tuition fees and the new Skills Strategy, NOP Social and Political (now GfK NOP Social Research) on behalf of the Learning and Skills Research Centre; 2006.

The Impact of Fee Policies on Recruitment to LSC-funded Provision; RCU on behalf of the Learning and Skills Council; 2007.

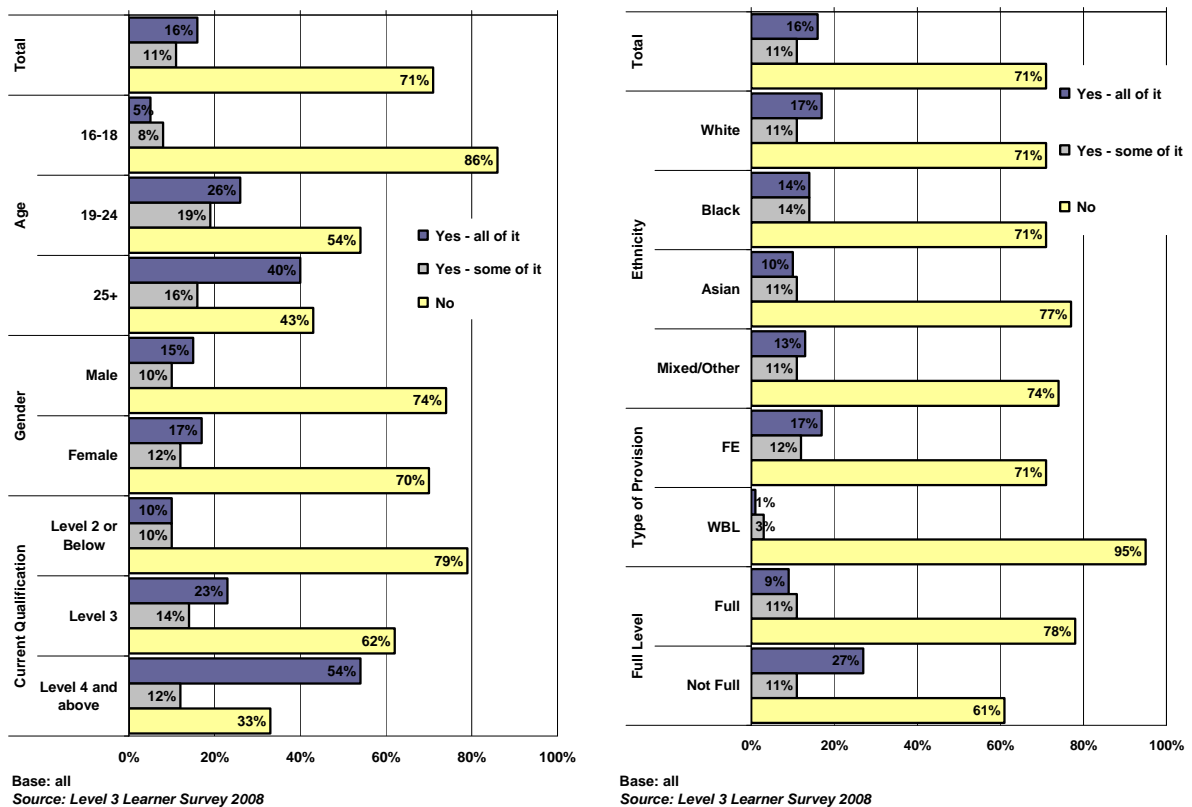
The main difference by learner group is by age, as this is the primary factor that determines a learner’s entitlement to fee subsidies. Reflecting this, just 13 per cent of 16 to 18 year olds pay all or some of their fees, compared to 56 per cent of the 25 plus age group.

In addition, only 4 per cent of WBL learners are fee paying, a finding that reflects LSC funding arrangements and also the role of the employer in paying individuals fees.

Figure 6.1: Payment of fees

QC1: Some people pay for courses or training. Did you personally make or will you make any financial contributions towards course fees for this training/qualification?

(% of total, single coded)



The reasons for not fully contributing to fees are primarily government/LSC funding or fee exemption. Over half (56 per cent) of learners who paid some or none of the course costs said their *course is being paid for by the government or LSC* and a further 27 per cent *are exempt from paying any course fees*.

The government/LSC is particularly involved in funding GCE A/AS/A2 levels while employers are most likely to pay for NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship and City & Guilds courses. Exemption is greatest for GCE A/AS/A2 level and Access to HE.

Table 6.2: Reason for not paying full cost by qualification aim
(% of total, multicoded)

	Total	GCE/A/ AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
The course is being paid for by the government/LSC	56%	64%	45%	56%	50%	51%	57%	40%	48%
The course is being paid for by your employer	11%	1%	39%	2%	16%	17%	5%	35%	13%
The course is being paid for by an individual such as a parent or partner	5%	4%	2%	4%	7%	5%	7%	3%	6%
You are exempt from paying any course fees	27%	32%	15%	34%	26%	23%	29%	15%	22%
Some of the course fees were waived	3%	2%	3%	8%	4%	6%	2%	4%	7%
Other	1%	0	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	6%	1%
Don't know	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	6%	6%	3%	8%

Base (all who have paid some or none of the course costs)

QC6: Which of the following applies to why you did not pay the full cost of the course or training?

Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

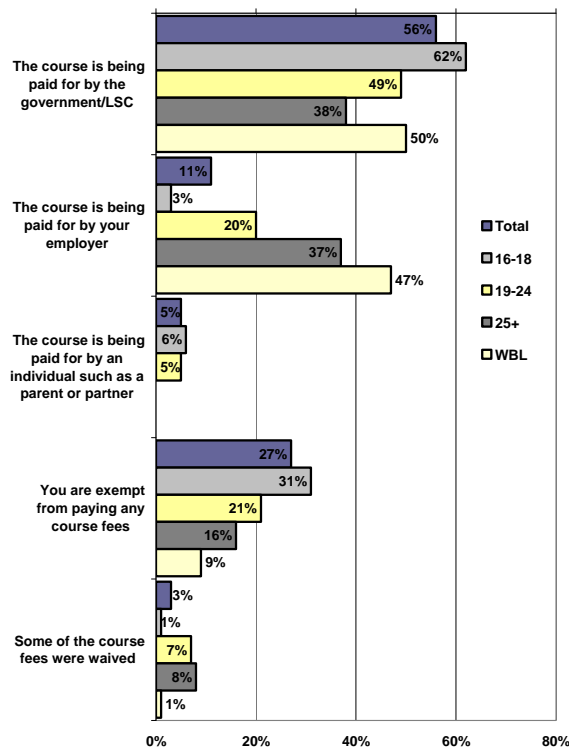
As shown in figure 6.2, government/LSC and exemption from payments are also strongly reported by the youngest learners (16 to 18 years), those in FE and with current qualifications at Level 2 or below, while older learners, those in WBL and the higher qualified are more likely to say *the course is being paid for by their employer*.

Figure 6.2: Reason for not paying full cost

QC6: Which of the following applies to why you did not pay the full cost of the course or training?

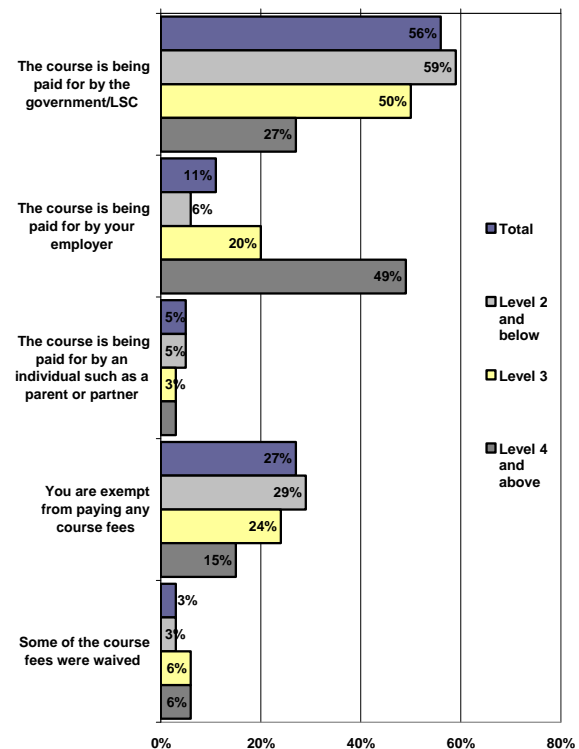
(% of total, multicoded)

By age and type of provision



Base: all who have paid some or none of the course costs
Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

By highest current qualification level



Base: all who have paid some or none of the course costs
Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

For learners who paid all or some of the course costs, 60 per cent were not offered any help or support to make their financial contributions easier to meet. For those who were, this was primarily in the form of paying in instalments or through a payment scheme (7 per cent) and college subsidy or discount (5 per cent). Specifically, EMA was offered to 10 per cent of 16 to 18 year olds and ALG was offered to 6 per cent of 19 to 24 year olds. Ten per cent of WBL learners also state that their employer offered support or funding.

6.1.2 Fees and their influence on choice, effort and timing

Learners who had paid towards the cost of their course or training were asked whether this influenced their choice, the amount of effort they put in or the timing. Thirty three per cent said yes, the fact they had to pay had influenced *the amount of effort they put into the course or training*, although this fell to 19 per cent whose *timing of the course* had been influenced and 16 per cent whose *choice of the course* had been influenced, suggesting that finance has only a relatively small effect on individuals choices and decisions.

Table 6.3: Fees and the effects on individual choices
(% of total, single coded)

	Choice of course/training	The amount of effort you put into the course/training	The timing of your course
Yes	16%	33%	18%
No	83%	66%	80%
Don't know	1%	<0.5%	2%

Base (all who had paid some or all of the course costs)

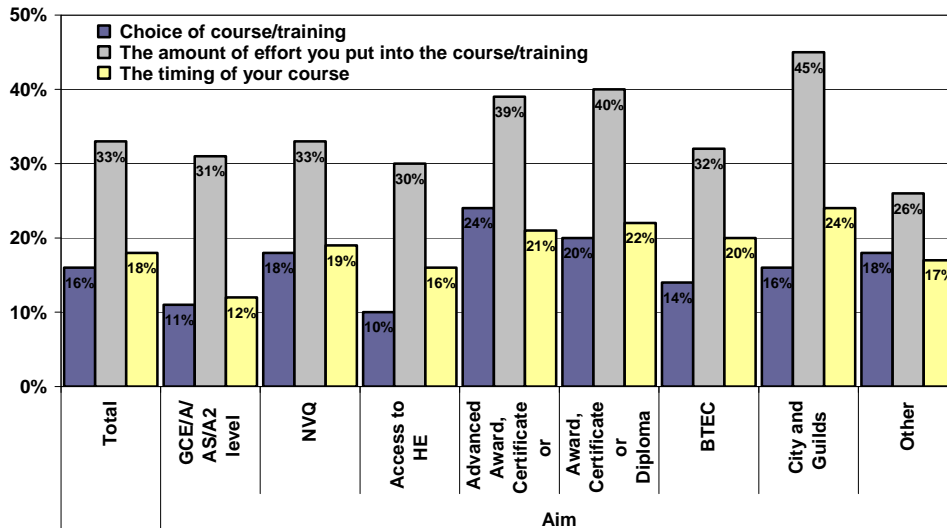
QC7: Did the fact that you had to pay towards the cost of your course/training influence your...?
Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

The influence on each of the three areas from making financial contributions was least for the youngest learners (16 to 18), those with Level 2 and below qualifications and for those enrolled on GCE A/AS/A2 level and Access to HE (figure 6.3), compared to their opposites. In contrast, fee paying learners on Awards, Certificates and Diplomas and City & Guilds were the most likely to consider their choice, effort or timing compared to other aims.

Previous analysis (section 5.2) also shows that, as expected, learners who are paying all of their fees are the least likely to agree that *spending time learning is too much effort*.

Figure 6.3: Whether having to pay affected your choices

QC7: Did the fact that you had to pay towards the cost of your course/training influence your...?
(% of total saying yes)



Base: all who have paid some or all of the course costs
Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

The findings of the survey again suggest that finance has a relatively small effect on individuals' choices and decisions. Thirty eight per cent of learners who had not paid any course or training fees stated that their having to do so *would have made no difference to my choice at all* and 36 per cent said they would *still have applied for the same course but would have had to earn more money as well* (table 6.4). Just 15 per cent said they *would not have stayed in learning at all*.

Learners enrolled on NVQs/Advanced Apprenticeships, Access to HE, and Awards, Certificates and Diplomas are more likely to have left learning if they had to pay fees than learners on other courses (particularly GCE A /AS/A2 level and City & Guilds).

Table 6.4: Choice if had to pay for course by qualification aim
(% of total, single coded)

	Total	GCE/A/ AS/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	City & Guilds	Other
It would have made no difference to my choice at all	38%	42%	36%	30%	35%	38%	36%	38%	38%
I'd still have applied for the same course but would have had to earn more money as well	36%	36%	33%	37%	37%	35%	39%	43%	30%
I would have applied to do a different course	8%	9%	6%	5%	5%	9%	7%	7%	6%
I would not have stayed in learning at all	15%	11%	21%	26%	21%	16%	15%	10%	20%
Other	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	0	1%	1%	1%
Don't know	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	4%
Base (all who have not paid for the course)									

QC8: If you had to pay for this training/qualification, which one of the following best describes what you would have done?

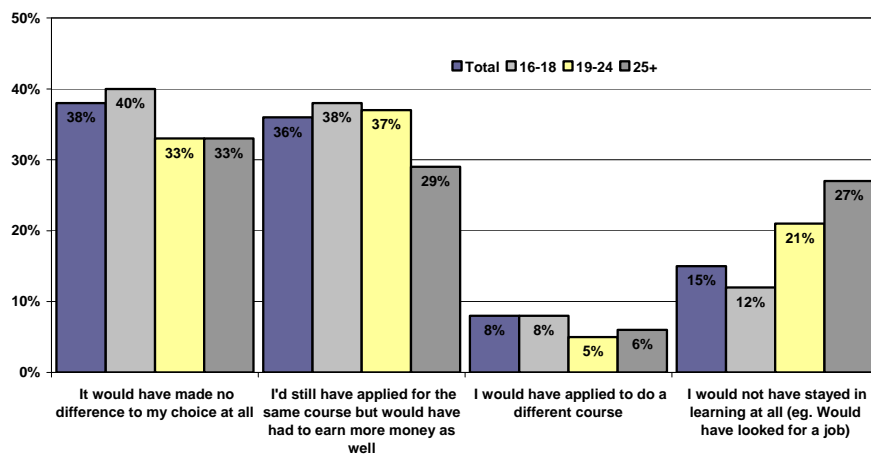
Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

The proportion that *would not have stayed in learning at all* if they had to pay for the course or training does rise to 27 per cent of the 25 plus age group (illustrated in figure 6.4). Learners participating in Level 3 initiatives, namely Train to Gain, Adult Learner Accounts and Level 3 Entitlement, are also all more likely than average to *not have stayed in learning at all* if they had to pay.

Figure 6.4: Choice if had to pay for course by age

QC8: If you had to pay for this training/qualification, which one of the following best describes what you would have done?

(% of total)



Base: all who have not paid the course costs
Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

6.1.3 Early leavers

While the reasons for leavers to have dropped out of their course are mainly course related (*found the course was not what I wanted to do after all* and *poor quality teaching/training*) and time or workload related (*workload made it difficult to make time for study/training*), 7 per cent of early leavers did report *financial reasons* (see table 5.6, section 5.3.2 for full details).

As the number of early leavers is relatively small (the survey was conducted with learners beginning their course in September 2007 and the interviews were undertaken in February 2008), there is little to conclude about which groups financial reasons primarily affects, although on a gender basis it would appear that males report financial reasons more than females.

There are a diverse range of areas that, if improved, would have enabled early leavers to complete the course or training (see table 5.7, section 5.3.2 for full details). Eleven per cent did suggest *more support from your college*, but financially 8 per cent stated *more/higher financial support* (2 per cent also said *better pay*).

6.2 Financial support

The principle behind Learner Support is to enable more learners to participate, and to remain, in learning by removing financial barriers. Financial support is available to individuals to access or complete their education in situations where a lack of money may otherwise restrict them. Positively, previous analysis (section 5.3) also suggests that individuals receiving learner support are more likely to report that the course or training will allow them *to get a job* and to progress *on to higher education* than those who are not financially supported in this way.

The most common form of learner support is the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), although this is concentrated in the 16 to 18 age group. In contrast, the Adult Learning Grant (ALG) is concentrated in the 19 to 24 age group.

Table 6.5: Receipt of learner support

(% of total, single coded)

	Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)	Adult Learning Grant (ALG)	Financial support towards the cost of childcare	Dance and Drama Award	Hardship payments	Residential support	Career Development Loans
Yes	29%	4%	2%	<0.5%	3%	1%	1%
No	71%	96%	98%	100%	97%	99%	99%
Base (all)							
QD1/D2: Have you ever received learner support in relation to this course/training?							
Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008							

The type of learner support with the greatest influence on learner decisions seems to be financial support towards the cost of childcare, with a greater proportion of learners reporting to be influenced to those who don't (table 6.6). However, it should be noted that for the largest form of learner support, namely EMA, there is a net negative response to its influence on learner decisions, and also a relatively large proportion of learners are generally unsure.

Table 6.6: Influence of learner support on decision to do course or training
(% of total, single coded)

	Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)	Adult Learning Grant (ALG)	Financial support towards to cost of childcare	Hardship payments
A great deal/fair amount	22%	24%	45%	23%
Not very much/not at all	41%	52%	29%	50%
Net	-19%	-28%	17%	-27%
None/no answer	36%	21%	22%	26%
Base (all who have ever received...)				
QD3: To what extent was your decision to do this training/qualification influenced by the fact you could apply for learner support?				
Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008				

Learners in receipt of learner support were asked whether, if they had not been able to get this support, what actions they would have taken. Around half (52 per cent) did say *it would make no difference to my choice at all*, and a further 35 per cent said *I'd still have applied for the same course but would have had to earn more money as well* (as shown in table 6.7). Just 6 per cent reported that they *would not have stayed in learning at all*.

Learners enrolled on GCE A/AS/A2 level courses are more likely (than the average) to report that not accessing learning support *would make no difference to my choice at all*, while learners on Award, Certificate or Diplomas are more likely to cite *I'd still have applied for the same course but would have had to earn more money as well*. Individuals on NVQs/Advanced Apprenticeships and Access to HE are the most likely to state that without receiving learner support they *would not have stayed in learning at all*.

Table 6.7: Choice if had no learner support by qualification aim
(% of total, single coded)

	Total	GCE A/A2 level	NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	Access to HE	Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	Award, Certificate or Diploma	BTEC	Other
It would have made no difference to my choice at all	52%	58%	42%	34%	42%	43%	52%	46%
I'd still have applied for the same course but would have had to earn more money as well	35%	33%	32%	31%	45%	43%	38%	33%
I would have applied to do a different course	3%	3%	2%	4%	-	4%	3%	4%
I would not have stayed in learning at all	6%	4%	12%	12%	8%	6%	5%	9%
Other	1%	<0.5%	1%	3%	-	1%	1%	1%
Don't know	3%	2%	11%	16%	5%	4%	1%	8%

Base (all in receipt of support)

QD4: If you had not been able to get learner support which one of the following best describes what you would have done?

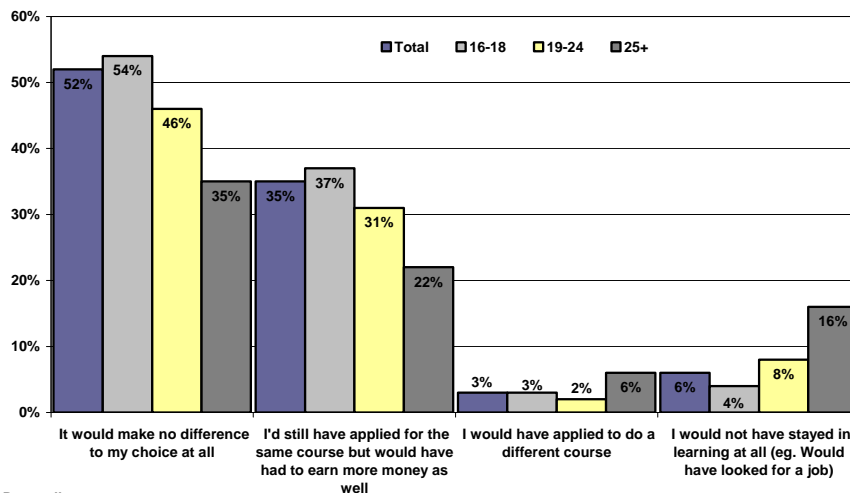
Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

The views of adult learners do differ from younger learners. For the 25 plus age group the proportion saying *it would make no difference to my choice at all* was only 35 per cent (compared to 54 per cent of 16 to 18 year olds and 46 per cent of 19 to 24 year olds) while the proportion saying they *would not have stayed in learning at all* was 16 per cent (compared to 4 per cent of 16 to 18 year olds and 8 per cent of 19 to 24 year olds).

Figure 6.5: Choice if had no learner support by age

QD4: If you had not been able to get learner support which one of the following best describes what you would have done?

(% of total, single coded)



Base: all
Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

7 Findings and implications

7.1 Summary findings from the baseline wave 1 survey

7.1.1 Level 3 learner characteristics.

The majority of Level 3 learners – just under two-thirds – are 16 to 18 year olds undertaking full Level 3 aims such as GCE/A/AS/A2 levels and BTEC qualifications.

Considerably more than half of Level 3 learners are female and, whilst the gender split is more even at the 16 to 18 age group, women account for three-quarters of the 25 plus age group, where they are mainly enrolled on Access to HE programmes.

A greater than average share of the Asian student Level 3 population is opting for GCE/A/AS/A2 level programmes, with BTEC qualifications also popular. In contrast, they are under-represented on NVQ and Advanced Apprenticeship programmes. Asian students are typically younger than the average Level 3 student population.

Black learners engaged in Level 3 learning are more likely to be female, and to be older, in the 19 to 24 and 25 plus age groups. Black students are as likely as the wider Level 3 learner population to opt for GCE/A/AS/A2 levels, but are under-represented on NVQs and Advanced Apprenticeships, and are more likely than on average to be engaged on Access to HE programmes.

Work-based Level 3 learning is dominated by male students, particularly White males. Only around 1 per cent of Black and Asian Level 3 learners undertake work based learning, compared to 4 per cent of White learners.

Five per cent of Level 3 learners report a disability and 3 per cent report having a learning difficulty. The distribution of disability across key characteristics is broadly in line with the distribution of learners. However, learners with learning difficulties are more likely to be male, White, in the 19 to 24 age group and undertaking an Award, Certificate or Diploma or a BTEC, and considerably less likely to be undertaking GCE/A/AS/A2 level qualifications.

The majority (7 in 10) of Level 3 learners do not make any contribution to their learning, and the small share of learners who pay all their fees (16 per cent), are typically older (learners aged 25 plus), reflecting the entitlement of all under 25s to a funded first full Level 3 qualification.

Early leavers account for 5 per cent of Level 3 learners in the survey, and completers a further 6 per cent. The qualification aim is a key determinant of learner progress in the course, as is age, current qualification level and whether the learner is a fee payer.

7.1.2 Routes into Level 3

Learner status

As the majority of Level 3 learners are currently educated to Level 2 or below, it follows that the largest share of Level 3 learners – more than 4 in 10 – come from either secondary school or school sixth forms. This group are predominantly enrolled on GCE/A/AS/A2 level courses and BTECs; whilst the quarter of learners that worked for an employer are more likely to opt for NVQs and Advanced Apprenticeships, City & Guilds, Access to HE and (Advanced) Awards, Certificates or Diplomas. The 5 per cent of learners previously unemployed and looking for work mainly opt for Access to HE or City & Guilds courses; while those taking up Level 3 after looking after home or family (3 per cent) predominantly take up Access to HE.

In addition to studying, just under half of all Level 3 learners are also undertaking some form of work for an employer, with the likelihood highest amongst those taking NVQs, Advanced Apprenticeships and City & Guilds qualifications. Older learners (aged 19 to 24 and 25 plus) are the most likely to be in employment although just under 1 in 4 GCE/A/AS/A2 level learners, dominated by the 16 to 18 age group, are in some form of paid work.

Amongst those in employment prior to beginning their Level 3 studies (around a quarter of learners), the majority entered from jobs in the public administration, education and health sector (36 per cent) and the distribution, hotels and restaurants sector (27 per cent), but worked across a broad range of occupations.

Choice and decision making

Motivations for undertaking Level 3 learning are mainly expressed around the chance to learn something new: developing skills that look good to future employers; skills to do a better job in the future; a qualification; skills to do a different job in future; and improved self confidence. However there are variations in motivations by programme, which in part reflect the different profiles of learners undertaking the qualifications. For example, those undertaking Access to HE courses are more likely than average to be looking for a boost to self confidence, to bring about change to their current circumstances through a different job in future, or a promotion.

For the majority – 6 in 10 learners – the choice to take a Level 3 course was not considered before their enrolment in September 2007. But amongst those that had considered prior enrolment the main reason (particularly for GCE/A/AS/A2 levels and BTECs) for not enrolling was given as too young/still at school. For those taking Access to HE courses, family commitments, personal reasons and affordability played a part; and for those now taking a BTEC, the barriers faced were affordability and the time to devote to studying.

Information, Advice and Guidance

Key sources of advice supporting Level 3 learners in their course decision making were College advisors or tutors (cited by 16 per cent) followed by friends and relatives (14 per cent), although 1 in 10 learners reported none. Positively, most learners report feeling well-informed about their course with roughly 8 in 10 feeling informed about the content and subject areas together with the standard of work expected; and roughly 7 in 10 feeling informed about the amount of work expected in your own time together with how the course would help you gain skills to use in a job. Older learners (aged 25 plus) report feeling less informed than their 16 to 18 and 19 to 24 age group counterparts.

7.1.3 Learner attitudes and experiences

Attitudes to learning and skills

Early in their learning experience, more than 9 in 10 Level 3 learners expressed positive attitudes to the value of skills: agreeing that learning new skills is something I will need to do throughout my working life; agreeing that I enjoy learning new skills; and believing that you're more likely to get a better job if you do some learning, training or education.

However, it would seem that some learners are potentially unprepared for the demands of their Level 3 studies, in that school did not prepare them for the learning they need to do in their life today, with the feeling particularly reported by learners aged 25 plus and those with learning difficulties.

Encouragingly, most (6 in 10) Level 3 learners hold generally positive feelings about education, particularly so amongst the 16 to 18 age group, those undertaking GCE/A/AS/A2 levels and amongst Asian learners. Negative and ambivalent feelings about education are particularly reported by those with learning difficulties, and by learners on Access to HE courses.

Expectations of training

In terms of aspirations on enrolling, 32 per cent of Level 3 students do not know what they want to go on and do after their course in terms of education, employment or training; just over a quarter wish to go on to higher education; and just 14 per cent want to get a job (the remaining learners cite other aspirations such as get a better job, stay with the same employer, become self-employed or do further training in FE). Again there is variation by programme type with those on Access to HE, and those doing GCE/A/AS/A2 levels, more likely to seek higher education (66 per cent and 41 per cent respectively); while those undertaking City & Guilds, NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeships and BTEC qualifications are more focused than all Level 3 learners on getting a job (25 per cent, 20 per cent and 19 per cent respectively).

Experiences of leavers

One in 20 of Level 3 learners starting their course in September 2007 had left by February 2008. The main reason for failure to complete – cited by just over a quarter of leavers – is that the course was not what I wanted to do, while a tenth or more mentioned workload, poor quality teaching/training and health problems as factors. Learners were unclear about what could have helped them continue with training with around 1 in 5 saying nothing, while around 1 in 10 leavers mentioned more college support and more time to complete. Positively, more than half of these learners that dropped out report being likely to undertake further training in future.

Progression

Of the small number that had completed their programme of learning by February 2008, 19 in 20 report having made the right choice with the qualification. Just over a half of completers had received IAG about further learning options, and for the majority this was with a course tutor. More than 7 in 10 of completers report they are likely to undertake a higher qualification in the coming three years.

7.1.4 Monetary influences

Fees

Overall, seven in 10 Level 3 learners do not make any fee contributions to their learning. However, reflecting the entitlement structure, this rises to just under 9 in 10 learners aged 16 to 18 do not, compared to under half of the 25 plus age group of learners.

GCE/A/AS/A2 level learners are the least likely to be contributing reflecting the younger age profile of learners on this qualification. NVQs and Advanced Apprenticeships, together with BTECs, are also courses where the majority of students do not contribute to the cost of their learning. Of the 27 per cent who pay all or some of their fees, these learners are most likely to be on City & Guilds programmes, undertaking (Advanced) Awards, Certificates or Diplomas or on Access to HE courses.

Well over half of all Level 3 learners report that their course is paid for by Government or the LSC, with just over a quarter reporting exemption from course fees. Around 10 per cent of learners are fully or part funded by their employer, primarily those undertaking NVQs and Advanced Apprenticeships, and City & Guilds programmes of study.

Financial considerations appear to have a limited impact on learner decision making, although it may positively impact on a successful outcome: 1 in 3 of those making some contribution to the cost of their course felt it influenced the amount of effort they put into it, although fewer felt it influenced either the timing or their choice of course.

Amongst learners who are not contributing to the cost of their Level 3 learning, if they had had to contribute, the greatest proportion felt that it would have made no difference to their decision (38 per cent); although a similar share felt that they would have applied for the same course but would have had to work to earn money as well (36 per cent). Of the limited number of learners (15 per cent) that would not have stayed in learning, the effect of fee contribution is more likely to have an impact on students taking Access to HE and NVQ or Advanced Apprenticeship qualifications, and also the 19 to 24 and 25 plus age groups.

Of the small share of early leavers, just 7 per cent cited financial reasons as a factor in exiting learning.

Financial support

The dominant form of learner support amongst learners is the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), restricted to 16 to 18 year old students, and received by 29 per cent of Level 3 learners. Adult Learning Grants, aimed at the 19 to 24 age group are received by just 4 per cent of that age group. Discretionary hardship payments are received by 3 per cent and financial support towards childcare costs, by 2 per cent. Though support towards childcare costs is received by relatively few students, amongst these students, its availability considerably influenced their decision to take their course.

7.2 Emerging issues and considerations

Choices around qualifications are clearly associated with life stage (age, experience of employment, family life and so on), nevertheless, there are variations amongst the choices made by different ethnic minority groups within the 16-18 cohort that point to variations in perceptions of qualifications. Given the policy of encouragement of work based training, together with the promotion of the vocationally oriented diploma, the extent of perception differences, how these are formed and why they are held, can usefully be explored in the qualitative research that precedes wave 2 of the survey.

Wave 1 findings show that a substantial share of Level 3 learners is in some form of employment as well as studying. The impact of balancing work and study over the course of their qualification can be usefully explored in later waves, linking this to success rates, and also the impact on employability outcomes. This is also an area for exploration in the qualitative research phase.

Early findings around IAG indicate that no one dominant source of advice emerges although it will be useful to explore the various ways in which IAG are accessed, and how they combine/compete with each other in the decision making process of Level 3 learners through the qualitative research.

There are some emerging early findings of relevance to policy makers which includes considerably below average proportion of GCE/A/AS/A2 level students feeling informed about the relevance of their qualification for developing the skills valued by employers. No doubt lack of maturity partially explains this, but it suggests that more can be done to articulate to young GCE/A/AS/A2 level students, the generic skills they are developing through their GCE/A/AS/A2 level studies which will enhance their future employability.

Another emerging issue around IAG is the appropriateness of different forms of IAG to the specific needs of older (25+) learners, further removed from the traditional sources for IAG such as schools and colleges. This is of relevance given the roll out of IAG to adults and specific needs can be explored the qualitative research. An indication of some of age-related tailoring of advice and guidance requirements comes through the attitudinal questions within this wave 1 survey, which show that older learners are more likely to report feeling unprepared for the learning they need to do in life today.

Wave 1 captures baseline information about learner expectations, and as we move through waves 2 and 3 we will explore the relationship between expectations and achieved outcomes amongst completers.

Amongst Level 3 leavers that failed to finish their course, the main issue appears to be around course suitability, which again points to greater examination of IAG and its role in decision making in forthcoming qualitative research. Given the lack of clear reasons for why early leavers dropped out, this also requires greater exploration through qualitative work.

Hypothetical financial impact questions suggest that financial considerations do not figure prominently in learner decision making. This is a critical policy issue as policy makers consider the issue of individual contributions to qualifications, and the evidence will be reviewed over waves 2 and 3, as the number of early leavers/non completers rises and we can explore this further based on actual learner experiences.

Whilst only a small share of learners is in receipt of childcare allowance learner support, this form of financial support, appears to exert a considerable influence on learner decision making. As much as is possible, given the small numbers concerned, we will explore this through the qualitative research phase.



Appendix A

Evaluation of Level 3 reports

Evaluation of Level 3 Baseline Report, December 2007

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

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

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

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

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



Appendix B

Wave 1 questionnaire

EVALUATION OF LEVEL 3 Post Pilot (29 February)

Evaluation Aims

- To understand different routes, suitability etc contribution of different programmes and routes delivering Level 3 to learners;
- To determine the extent to which Level 3 qualifications are meeting learners' needs and their impact on employability and progression; and
- To understand the different experiences, levels of support that learners receive.

Questionnaire structure for waves 1-3

Wave 1

- Learner characteristics/status
- Learner choice, IAG and prior assessment
- Fee remissions
- Learner support funds
- Learner attitudes towards work and learning
- Early leavers – reasons
- Completers – impact (this section will be expanded in waves 2 and 3 as unlikely to be many at wave 1 and will make questionnaire very long if explored fully at wave 1)

Waves 2 & 3

- Learner status check
- Training/learning in practice and learner support
- Learner satisfaction with teaching and provider
- Information about next steps
- Completers: Impact – soft and hard, future intention
- Early leavers: Reasons, activities since leaving and future intention

Additional note

Random sample from ILR of starts 07/08 from F01 on release December 2007.

Analysis will be across different programmes (i.e. L3 qualifications) with additional analysis available (depending on sample size) by:

- Initiatives
- Learner support.

There will be no control group of non-L3 learners for the evaluation

**SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE WAVE 1
EVALUATION OF LEVEL 3**

ASK PERSON WHO ANSWERS PHONE
Please can I speak to (CONTACT NAME)?

Good morning/afternoon/evening etc

I am from Ipsos MORI, an independent research organisation. I am calling on behalf of the government's Learning and Skills Council. We are conducting a survey of what people think about learning and training in general and their experiences of training they have received.

We are contacting you because you have recently taken part in (or about to start) a training or qualification. We are keen to hear about your experiences and attitudes to this course or training, even if you have not yet started it, have completed it or decided not to proceed with it for whatever reason.

The interview should only last around 15 minutes

Would it be ok to talk to you about this just now?

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

If appropriate, arrange to call at another time

INTERVIEWER PROMPTS:

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

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

If you have any queries please call Jane Darragh or Juliet Brown at Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute on 0207 347 3000, or the Market Research Society free phone number 0500 396999

Content

Screener

Section A: Choice & Decision Making

Section B: IAG at outset

Section C: Fees

Section D: Learner Support

Section E: Learner Attitudes

Section F: Early Leavers

Section G: Completers

Section H: Current Status

Section I: Demographics

Section J: Re-contact

ASK ALL

- S1. I understand you have been or are currently involved in working towards (TEXT SUBSTITUTION FROM SAMPLE: NAME OF COURSE). Is this right?**
Prompt if necessary: The organisation that provided this course is <INSERT FROM 'SAMPLE P_PROVIDER_NAME'> and we have the course start date as around <INSERT A27 FROM SAMPLE>

Yes	1	GO TO QS4 AND THEN QA1
No	2	ASK QS2
Don't know	3	

ASK IF NO/DON'T KNOW

- S2. Are you about to start a course or training that will lead to a qualification either through your work or in your own time?**

Yes	1	GO TO QS3
No	2	THANK & CLOSE
Don't know	3	

ASK IF YES

- S3 Is this course/training <READ OUT ILR RECORD>?**

Yes	1	GO TO QS4 AND THEN QA1
No	2	THANK & CLOSE
Don't know	3	

ASK IF "LA_TYPE" IS "OTHER" OR "MIXED"

- S4 Which of the following best describes this qualification? READ OUT. SINGLE CODE ONLY**

1. Advance Award/Certificate/Diploma
2. Award/Certificate/Diploma
3. BTEC
4. City & Guilds
5. RSA
6. GNVQ
7. NVQ
8. A level
9. AS level
10. Key skills
11. Other (SPECIFY - DOES NOT HAVE TO BE AN ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION)

NOW REPEAT QUESTIONS J1c through to J12 DEPENDING ON RESPONSE AT S4

SECTION A: CHOICE & DECISION MAKING

I'd now like to talk to you about what you are currently doing and your experiences of this course/training.

Please concentrate on your experiences of the (TEXT SUBSTITUTION COURSE/TRAINING) in the rest of this interview even though you may have been involved with other courses or training.

ASK ALL

A1a Firstly, what was your main work status before you started this course/training? PROMPT TO CODE. IF THEY WERE DOING MULTIPLE ACTIVITIES, RECORD THE ONE THEY SPENT THE MOST TIME DOING. SINGLECODE

A1b And which of the following activities are you currently involved in (READ OUT)? MULTICODE OK

ASK IF MORE THAN ONE AT A1b

A1c Which one is your current main activity? By main activity I mean the one you spend most time doing. SINGLECODE

- Working for an employer
- Self-employed
- On a training scheme
- At a school sixth form
- At a college/training provider
- In voluntary or unpaid work
- Unemployed and looking for work
- Looking after the family or home
- Temporarily sick or injured
- Long-term sick or disabled
- Something else (WRITE IN)

ASK IF MAIN ACTIVITY BEFORE & NOW = WORKING FOR AN EMPLOYER (CODE 1 AT A1A AND A1C)

A1d Are you currently working for the same employer as before you started this course/training?

- Yes
- No

ASK IF MAIN ACTIVITY BEFORE & NOW = SELF EMPLOYED (CODE 2 AT A1A AND A1C)

A1e Are you currently doing the same type of self-employed work as before you started this course/training?

- Yes
- No

ASK ALL EXCEPT NOT YET STARTED (CODE 1 AT QS2)

A2 How far have you got with this training/qualification? SINGLE CODE

- About to start
- Started/underway/Still learning
- Decided not to continue/dropped out
- Completed your qualification/training

A5 Which if any of the following <do><did> you hope to gain from this training/qualification? READ OUT - ROTATE. CODE ALL THAT APPLY

Source: *Train to Gain Employee Evaluation + additional code "a job"*

- A qualification
- The chance to learn something new
- Improved self-confidence
- Skills to help me to do a different job in the future
- Better pay

ASK IF NOT CURRENTLY WORKING at Q1b

- A job

ASK ONLY IF WORKING FOR EMPLOYER at Q1b

- Skills to help me to do my current job better
- A promotion/better job

ASK ALL

- Skills that will look good to future employers
- Skills to help me to do a better job in the future
- (ASK LAST) Were there any other benefits you expect to gain from doing this course/training? IF YES, SPECIFY
- *None of these*

A6a Thinking back to when you first started this training/qualification did you know what you hoped to do immediately after completing it? IF MORE THAN ONE, ASK THEM FOR MAIN THING THEY WANTED TO DO. DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLECODE

Source: *Extension of Apprenticeship*

- Get a job
- Get a better job
- Stay with same employer
- Become self employed
- Go to university/HE
- Leave employment and do full time training in FE
- Start an apprenticeship
- Do further training in FE
- Other (WRITE IN)
- Don't know

ASK ALL APART FROM DON'T KNOW

A6b And to what extent do you think this training/qualification will help you to
(READ OUT RESPONSE AT A6a)? REVERSE SCALE

- A great deal
- A fair amount
- Not very much
- Not at all
- Don't know (DO NOT READ OUT)

ASK ALL

A7 Have you ever considered doing this training/qualification or another
qualification at this level before now?

- Yes
- No
- DK

ASK IF YES

A8 Why did you not do this training/qualification before now? DO NOT READ OUT.
CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

- I was told I needed the lower level qualification before I could do this course
- This course/qualification was not available locally
- I thought it would be too much effort for me/might be too demanding
- Times of the course was unsuitable
- I thought it would be of little benefit to get the qualification
- I could not afford to pay for the course
- I could not get funding for the course
- I did not have the time to devote to studying
- I had family commitments
- Personal reasons
- Too young/still at school
- I needed to be in employment
- Other (WRITE IN)
- *Don't know*

SECTION B: IAG AT OUTSET

ASK ALL

- B3 Which source of advice was most important in terms of helping you to decide whether to do this training/qualification? DO NOT READ OUT PROMPT IF NECESSARY – SINGLE CODE** Note to interviewer: if respondent says 'myself' prompt for other, if no other, then please code as 'null'

Source: *Extension of Apprenticeship*

- Parents
- Friends, brothers/sisters or other relatives
- College Prospectus
- Non targeted information from media e.g. TV programmes
- Targeted information from media e.g. TV adverts
- Internet, websites
- School careers guidance staff
- Other staff at school
- College Advisor
- College open evenings
- Connexions Advisor
- Employer
- Work experience
- Through hobbies and interests
- Other (WRITE IN)
- Don't know
- *None*

- B4 Thinking back to when you enrolled on this course/training, how well informed did you feel at that time about the following aspects of the course or training Please answer in relation to how your knowledge at the time of enrolment and not how you feel now.**

Source: *NLSS 2006/7(also being used in Evaluation of Pilot ALA)*

CODE FOR EACH: very well informed, fairly well informed, not very well informed, or not at all informed (Don't know). ROTATE STATEMENTS AND REVERSE SCALE. SINGLE CODE EACH STATEMENT.

- The content of the course and what subjects you would cover
- The amount of work expected of you in your own time
- How the course/ training would help you gain skills to use in a job
- The standard of work expected of you

SECTION C: FEES

I'd now like to ask you some questions about any fees you have paid towards this course/training.

ASK ALL

C1 Some people pay for courses or training. Did you personally make or will you make any financial contribution towards the course fees for this training/qualification? IF YES, PROBE FOR WHETHER PAID/ WILL PAY ALL OR SOME OF IT.

Source: Value of Learning Survey for LSC

- Yes –all of it
- Yes- some of it
- No
- Don't know

ASK IF PAID ALL OR SOME OF COURSE COSTS (CODES 1-2) AT C1

C2 How much money have you personally paid or will you pay towards the cost of this training/qualification, in total?

Source: Value of Learning Survey for LSC

- RECORD AMOUNT.
- Don't know
- Refused

ASK IF DK OR REFUSED AT C2

C3 Can you tell me if it ... READ OUT. SINGLE CODE ONLY.

Source: Value of Learning Survey for LSC

- Less than £50
- £50-£75
- £76-£99
- £100-£149
- £150-£199
- £200-£299
- £300-£399
- £400-£499
- £500-£749
- £750-£999
- £1,000 or more
- Don't know
- Refused

ASK IF PAID ALL OR SOME OF COURSE COSTS (CODES 1-2) AT C1

C4 Did you pay (or will you pay) this fee in one lump sum or in instalments?
SINGLECODE

- Lump sum
- Instalments
- Don't know

C5 Were you offered any help or support to make it easier for you to meet the cost of this course/qualification? IF YES: PROBE: What help or support were you offered? WRITE IN VERBATIM FOR PILOT

No – not offered any help or support

ASK IF PAID SOME OR NONE OF THE COURSE COSTS (CODES 2-3) AT C1

C6 Which of the following applies to why you did not pay the full cost of the course or training? READ OUT. MULTICODE OK.

Source: Value of Learning Survey for LSC

- The course is being paid for by the government/ Learning and Skills Council
- The course is being paid for by your employer
- The course is being paid for by an individual such as a parent or partner
- You are exempt from paying any course fees
- Some of the course fees were waived
- Other reason (specify)
- Don't know

ASK IF PAID SOME OR ALL OF THE COURSE COSTS (CODES 1-2) AT C1

C7 Did the fact that you had to pay towards the cost of your course/training influence your . . . READ OUT. (Yes, No or DK for each)

- choice of course/training
- the amount of effort you put into the course/training
- the timing of your course

ASK IF NOT PAID/DK (CODE 3-4) AT C1

C8 If you had to pay for this training/qualification, which one of the following best describes what you would have done: READ OUT. SINGLECODE

Source: Extension of EMA to PLA and E2E

- It would have made no difference to my choice at all
- I'd still have applied for the same course but would have had to earn more money as well
- I would have applied to do a different course
- I would not have stayed in learning at all (e.g. would have looked for a job)
- Something else (Please specify)
- Don't know

SECTION D: LEARNER SUPPORT

I'd now like to find out your experiences of learner support funds.

ASK IF IN RECEIPT OF LEARNER SUPPORT FROM SAMPLE

D1 Our record shows that you have received or are currently receiving the (INSERT FROM SAMPLE). Is this correct? YES, NO, DK FOR EACH

ASK FOR EACH NO/DK AT D1

D2 Have you ever received (READ OUT) in relation to this course/training? MULTICODE. YES, NO, DK FOR EACH. CHECK LIST AGAINST ILR

- Education Maintenance Allowance – EMA
- Adult Learning Grant – ALG (a financial allowance to help with cost of learning such as travel, books and materials)
- Financial support towards the cost of childcare
- Dance and Drama Award
- Hardship payments – sometimes also known as Access Funds or Learner Support Funds
- Residential support
- Career Development Loans

ASK FOR EACH "YES" AT D1 OR D2

D3 To what extent was your decision to do this training/qualification influenced by the fact you could apply for <insert>? READ OUT. REVERSE SCALE. SINGLECODE

- A great deal
- A fair amount
- Not very much
- Not at all
- Don't know

ASK ALL IN RECEIPT OF SUPPORT AT D1. ASK ONCE ONLY

D4 If you had NOT been able to get <insert all coded yes at D1>, which one of the following best describes what you would have done: READ OUT. SINGLECODE

- It would made no difference to my choice at all
- I'd still have applied for the same course but would have had to earn more money as well
- I would have applied to do a different course
- I would not have stayed in learning at all (eg. would have looked for a job)
- Something else (Please specify)
- Don't know

SECTION E: LEARNER ATTITUDES

I'd now like to ask a few questions on how you feel about work and training

ASK ALL WORKING OR SELF-EMPLOYED (CODES 1-2) AT QA1B

E1 Which of the following statements best describes how well the skills you have now meet the demands of your job? READ OUT – REVERSE. CODE ONLY ONE.

Source: Train to Gain Employee Evaluation

- My skills greatly exceed the needs of my job
- My skills are a little higher than needed for my job
- My skills roughly match the needs of my job
- My job is changing/has changed so I need/have needed to develop new skills

ASK ALL

E2 I am going to read out some statements about learning. For each, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree READ OUT CODES. ROTATE STATEMENTS. REVERSE AGREE-DISAGREE SCALE

Source: FE Learner Longitudinal Survey, DfES

- Learning new skills is something that I will need to do throughout my working life
- School did not prepare me for the learning I need to do in my life today
- I enjoy learning new skills
- You're more likely to get a better job if you do some learning, training or education
- Spending time learning is too much effort

E3 Thinking back to when you left school would you say you had . . . READ OUT. SINGLECODE

Source: NLSS

- Generally positive feeling about education
- Generally negative feelings about education
- Not bothered either way about education – indifferent
- Don't know

SECTION F: EARLY LEAVERS

ASK EARLY LEAVERS ONLY

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

F1 SHOWCARD **Why did you decide not to complete your course/training?** CODE
ALL THAT APPLY. PROMPT IF NECESSARY

F2 IF MULTICODE: **And what was the main reason?** SINGLECODE

Source: NLSS Reasons for Leaving Early for FE and WBL Course, DfES

Course-related:

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

Time/workload related:

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

Circumstantial

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

Other

- Financial reasons
- Other (WRITE IN)

F3 What, if anything, would have enabled you to complete the training/qualification? DO NOT READ OUT – CODE ALL MENTIONED

Source: *Extension of EMA to PLA and E2E*

- More financial support/if amount of financial support was higher
- Better guidance at the time of choosing training/qualification
- More support (transport, material etc.)
- More time to train during working hours
- More time to complete the course overall (duration)
- More support from supervisor, line manager, employer
- More support from your college
- More support from your training provider
- Better preparation for work while at school
- Better training provider
- A course more related to your job
- The guarantee of a better job at the end
- Better pay
- Nothing
- Other (WRITE IN)
- DK
- Nothing

F4a How likely or unlikely are you to sign up for further training in a similar subject but at a higher level in the future? REVERSE SCALE

- Very likely
- Fairly likely
- Fairly unlikely
- Very unlikely
- Too early to say (DO NOT READ OUT)
- DK

F4b How likely or unlikely are you to sign up for further training generally in the future? REVERSE SCALE

Source: *Train to Gain Employee Evaluation with amendment underlined*

- Very likely
- Fairly likely
- Fairly unlikely
- Very unlikely
- Too early to say (DO NOT READ OUT)
- DK

SECTION G: COMPLETERS

ASK COMPLETERS ONLY.

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

G1 Which of the following do you think you have gained from doing this training/qualification? READ OUT-ROTATE. CODE ALL THAT APPLY

Source: Train to Gain Employee Evaluation + additional category "a job"

(ASK ALL)

- A qualification
- The chance to learn something new
- Improved self-confidence
- Skills to help me to do a different job in the future
- Better pay

(IF NOT WORKING BEFORE STARTING COURSE AT QA1a)

- A job

(ASK IF WORKING FOR EMPLOYER AT QA1b)

- Skills to help me to do my current job better
- A promotion

(ALL)

- Skills that will look good to future employers
- Skills to help me to do a better job in the future
- *Nothing*
- *Other – PLEASE SPECIFY*

G2 Looking back, do you think that the training/qualification you did was the right choice for you?

Source: Train to Gain Employee Evaluation

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

G3 Why do you say that? WRITE IN

- Don't know

ASK ALL COMPLETERS

G4 Has anyone talked to you about further training or learning options now you have completed this qualification?

- Yes
- No
- DK

ASK IF YES

G5 Who talked to you about further learning? MULTICODE OK

- Tutor
- Careers Adviser at college/training provider
- Other Careers Service Staff (ie. **not** at college/provider)
- Employer, manager, supervisor, HR
- Friends or family
- Someone else – who? (WRITE IN)
- Can't remember

ASK ALL

G6 How likely or unlikely are you to undertake further learning or training for a higher qualification than the one you have completed, in the next 3 years?

READ OUT. REVERSE SCALE CODE ONLY ONE.

- Very likely
- Fairly likely
- Fairly unlikely
- Very unlikely
- Too early to say (DO NOT READ OUT)
- DK

G7 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with your course/training?

READ OUT. REVERSE SCALE. CODE ONLY ONE

- Extremely satisfied
- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Fairly dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Extremely dissatisfied
- DK

SECTION H: CURRENT STATUS

I'd now like to ask you some questions about your work.

Note: ask about previous job first I1a through to I1e. Then ask about current job (I2a through to I2e) if they have left/completed course and are currently working/self-employed.

ASK IF WORKING FOR EMPLOYER BEFORE STARTED TRAINING (CODE 1 AT QA1a)

I1a You mentioned earlier that you were working immediately prior to starting this course. I would now like to ask you some questions about this job. What did the organisation you worked for do or make?

ASK IF CURRENT MAIN ACTIVITY IS WORK (AT QA1c) **AND** HAVE COMPLETED OR LEFT TRAINING (CODES 3-4 AT A2) **AND** NOT WITH SAME EMPLOYER (NO AT QA1d)

I2a What does the organisation you currently work for do or make?

READ OUT AND CODE ONE ONLY
PROMPT TO CODE. SINGLECODE ONLY
PROBE AS NECESSARY:

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

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

ASK IF WORKING OR SELF-EMPLOYED BEFORE STARTED TRAINING (CODES 1-2 AT QA1a)

I1b What was your (main) job at that time? IF UNSURE: Probe for a job title that would make sense outside the company (e.g. Production Line Manager not Head of B Section) and record this information fully in "other" to enable coding

ASK IF CURRENT MAIN ACTIVITY IS WORK (AT QA1c) **AND** HAVE COMPELTED OR LEFT TRAINING (CODES 3-4 AT A2)

ASK IF CURRENT MAIN ACTIVITY IS SELF-EMPLOYED (AT QA1c) **AND** HAVE COMPELTED OR LEFT TRAINING (CODES 3-4 AT A2)

I2b What is your current main job?

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

Managers & Senior Officials

1 Corporate Managers
2 Managers & Proprietors in Agriculture & Services

Professional Occupations

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

Associate Professionals & Technical Occupations

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

Admin and Secretarial occupations

12 Admin Occupations
13 Secretarial and Related Occupations

Skilled Trade Occupations

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

Personal Service Occupations

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

Sales and Customer Service Occupations

20 Sales occupations
21 Customer service occupations

Process , Plant and Machine operatives

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

Elementary Occupations

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

ASK IF WORKED FOR EMPLOYER BEFORE STARTING COURSE

I1c In your job did you have responsibility for supervising the work of any other employees?

- Yes
- No

ASK IF CURRENT MAIN ACTIVITY IS WORK (AT QA1c) **AND** HAVE COMPELTED OR LEFT TRAINING (CODES 3-4 AT A2) **OR**

ASK IF CURRENT MAIN ACTIVITY IS SELF-EMPLOYED (AT QA1c) **AND** HAVE COMPELTED OR LEFT TRAINING (CODES 3-4 AT A2)

I2c In your job do you have responsibility for supervising the work of any other employees?

- Yes
- No

ASK IF WORKING OR SELF-EMPLOYED BEFORE STRATING COURSE

I1d How many hours a week did you usually work, excluding meal breaks but including paid overtime?

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

Source: LSC Learner Destination Survey

- ENTER HOURS
- Part-time (16 hours or less)
- Varies too much to say

ASK IF CURRENT MAIN ACTIVITY IS WORK (AT QA1c) **AND** HAVE COMPELTED OR LEFT TRAINING (CODES 3-4 AT A2) **OR:**

ASK IF CURRENT MAIN ACTIVITY IS SELF-EMPLOYED (AT QA1c) **AND** HAVE COMPELTED OR LEFT TRAINING (CODES 3-4 AT A2)

I2d How many hours a week do you usually work, excluding meal breaks but including paid overtime?

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

- ENTER HOURS
- Part-time (16 hours or less)
- Varies too much to say

ASK IF WORKING OR SELF-EMPLOYED BEFORE STARTING COURSE

I1e What was your current usual take home pay, that is after all deductions for income tax, National Insurance and so on, but including overtime and bonuses?

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

Source: LSC Learner Destination Survey

- PROBE FOR ESTIMATE IF NECESSARY.

- ENTER EXACT AMOUNT AND CODE FREQUENCY (IE WHETHER WEEK, MONTH, YEAR)
- IF INCOME VARIES, GIVE A RECENT EXAMPLE OF AN AMOUNT.
- ENTER AMOUNT
- Refused
- Don't know

ASK IF CURRENT MAIN ACTIVITY IS WORK (AT QA1c) **AND** HAVE COMPELTED OR LEFT TRAINING (CODES 3-4 AT A2) **OR:**

ASK IF CURRENT MAIN ACTIVITY IS SELF-EMPLOYED (AT QA1c) **AND** HAVE COMPELTED OR LEFT TRAINING (CODES 3-4 AT A2)

I2e What is your current usual take home pay, that is after all deductions for income tax, National Insurance and so on, but including overtime and bonuses?

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

- PROBE FOR ESTIMATE IF NECESSARY.
- ENTER EXACT AMOUNT AND CODE FREQUENCY (IE WHETHER WEEK, MONTH, YEAR)
- IF INCOME VARIES, GIVE A RECENT EXAMPLE OF AN AMOUNT.
- ENTER AMOUNT
- Refused
- Don't know

ASK ALL

I3 Can I check, are you currently receiving any social security benefits or tax credits? SINGLECODE

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

ASK IF YES

I4 Can you tell me which of the following benefits or tax credits you are receiving at the present time? READ OUT

INTERVIEWER: CODE RESPONSE ACCORDING TO THE LIST BELOW. PROMPT FOR ANY OTHER BENEFITS THEY RECEIVE. CODE ALL THAT APPLY

- Job Seekers Allowance
- Incapacity Benefit
- Income Support
- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax Benefit
- Disability Living Allowance
- Carer's Allowance
- Child Benefit
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit
- Don't know
- Others (PLEASE WRITE IN)
- None of these

SECTION J: DEMOGRAPHICS

Finally, can I ask some questions about you. This information will be used to analyse the survey findings only.

ASK ALL APART FROM THOSE NOT YET STARTED.

J1a Can you tell me what, if any, qualifications you had before you started the [INSERT COURSE TITLE]

ASK IF NOT YET STARTED

J1b Can you tell me what, if any qualifications you have currently?

MULTI-CODE EACH CODED OPTION TO BE FOLLOWED UP SO ASSESSMENT OF LEVEL OF HI-QUAL CAN BE MADE

12. Degree or postgraduate degree (level 4 or above)
13. HNC/ HND (level 4)
14. BTEC
15. City & Guilds
16. RSA
17. GNVQ
18. NVQ
19. A level
20. AS level
21. GCSE
22. GCE – O level
23. CSE
24. Other (SPECIFY - DOES NOT HAVE TO BE AN ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION)
25. No qualifications

J1c	IF j1= 13 WRITE IN THE 'OTHER' QUALIFICATION SUBJECT. PROBE IF NECESSARY: What is the subject of this qualification? WRITE IN PROBE: What is the level of your qualification? WRITE IN > I13
J2	IF j1 = 3 Is your highest BTEC qualification . . . ? READ OUT. CODE ONLY ONE

	<p>at higher level (level 4)</p> <p>at National Certificate or National Diploma level (Level 3)</p> <p>at first diploma or general diploma (level 2)</p> <p>at first certificate or general certificate (below level 2)</p> <p>DK</p> <p>> J13</p>
J3	<p>IF J1 = 4</p> <p>Is your highest City & Guilds qualification..?</p> <p>READ OUT. CODE ONLY ONE</p> <p>advanced craft/part 3 (Level 3)</p> <p>craft/part 2 (level 2)</p> <p>foundation/part 1 (below level 2)</p> <p>DK</p> <p>> J13</p>
J4	<p>IF J1 = 5</p> <p>Is your highest RSA/OCR qualification ?</p> <p>READ OUT. CODE ONLY ONE</p> <p>a higher diploma (level 4)</p> <p>an advanced diploma or advanced certificate (Level 3)</p> <p>a diploma (level 2)</p> <p>or some other RSA (inc. stage I, II or III) (below level 2)</p> <p>DK</p> <p>> J13</p>
J5	<p>IF I1 = 6</p> <p>Is your highest GNVQ . ?</p> <p>READ OUT. CODE ONLY ONE</p> <p>advanced level (Level 3)</p> <p>full intermediate advanced level (level 2)</p> <p>part one intermediate level (below level 2)</p> <p>full foundation level (below level 2)</p> <p>part one foundation level (below level 2)</p> <p>DK</p> <p>> J13</p>
J6	<p>IF J1 = 7</p> <p>Is your highest level of NVQ ?</p>

	<p>READ OUT. CODE ONLY ONE</p> <p>level 1</p> <p>level 2</p> <p>Level 3</p> <p>level 4</p> <p>level 5</p> <p>DK</p> <p>> J13</p>
J7	<p>IF J1 = 8</p> <p>Do you have . ?</p> <p>READ OUT. CODE ONLY ONE</p> <p>one A level (level 2)</p> <p>more than one A level (Level 3)</p> <p>DK</p> <p>> K13</p>
J8	<p>IF J1 = 9</p> <p>Do you have ..?</p> <p>READ OUT. CODE ONLY ONE</p> <p>one AS level (below level 2),</p> <p>two or three AS level (level 2)</p> <p>More than three AS level (Level 3)</p> <p>DK</p> <p>> J13</p>
J9	<p>IF J1 = 10</p> <p>Do you have any ...?</p> <p>GCSEs Grade C or above?</p> <p>Yes > K12</p> <p>No > K13</p> <p>DK > K13</p>
J10	<p>IF J1 = 11</p> <p>Do you have any..?</p> <p>GCE-O Levels Grade C or above</p> <p>Yes > J12</p> <p>No > J13</p> <p>DK > J13</p>

J11	IF J1 = 12 Do you have any ..? CSEs Grade 1? Yes > J12 No > J13 DK > J13
J12	IF J9 = YES OR J10 = YES OR J11 = YES How many passes do you have at this level? fewer than five (below level 2) five or more (level 2) DK > J13

ASK ALL

J13 And can I ask how old you were when you first left full-time education?

- Under 16
- 16
- 17
- 18
- Over 18
- Never left full-time education

ASK IF "AGE" IS MISSING

J14 Can you tell me your age:

- RECORD EXACT AGE. RANGE CHECK: 16-20 YEARS. INTERVIEWER CONFIRM IF OUTSIDE RANGE.
- Refused

CODE IF "GENDER" IS MISSING (L13)

J15 GENDER (DO NOT ASK – CODE ONE)

- Male
- Female

ASK IF "ETHNICITY" IS MISSING (L12)

J16 Can you say to which ethnic group do you consider you belong? DO NOT READ OUT. CODE ONE ONLY - PROBE TO PRECODES

- White - British
- White - Irish
- White - any other White background
- Black or Black British - African

- Black or Black British - Caribbean
- Black or Black British - any other Black background
- Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi
- Asian or Asian British - Indian
- Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
- Asian or Asian British - any other Asian background
- Mixed - White and Asian
- Mixed - White and Black African
- Mixed - White and Black Caribbean
- Mixed - any other Mixed background
- Chinese
- Any other, please specify
- Refused

ASK "DISABILITY" IS MISSING (L15)

J17 Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

- Yes
- No
- Refused

ASK IF "LEARNING DIFFICULTY" IS MISSING (L16)

J18 Do you consider yourself to have learning difficulties?

- Yes
- No
- Refused
- Don't know

ASK ALL

J19 Can I just check, are you a parent or legal guardian of a child or children aged under 19? READ OUT. SINGLE CODE ONLY

- Yes
- No
- Refused

ASK IF YES

J20 How many children are you the parent or legal guardian for? SINGLE CODE ONLY.

- One
- Two
- Three
- Four
- Five or more
- Refused

J Permissions for further waves

ASK ALL

J1 Finally, we will be carrying out further research about this training next year. Can we contact you again in relation to this research?

- Yes
- No > CLOSE

ASK IF YES

J2 Please may I check, is this the best number to contact you on?

- Yes
- No - RECORD preferred number

J3 And is this a home/work or mobile number

- Home
- Work
- Mobile

J4 Do you have an alternative number we can use if we are unable to contact you on this number?

- Yes – RECORD NUMBER
- No

J5 And is this a home/work or mobile number or family/friends?

- Home
- Work
- Mobile
- Family/friends

➤ CLOSE

Closing statement

On behalf of the Learning and Skills Council, and Ipsos MORI, we would like to thank you for your time and help with this research.

NOTE: MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE SOURCES

- T2G Employee Evaluation
- Adult Learner Account Evaluation
- National Learner Satisfaction Survey (NLSS)
- Value of Learning
- Research into Expanding the Apprenticeship Programme
- Extension of EMA to PLA and E2E
- Learner Destination survey

Data from ILR which will be appended to survey

Date of Birth (L11)	Collect in survey if missing on ILR
Ethnicity (L12)	
Sex (L13)	
Learning Difficulties/Health problems (L14)	
Disability (L15)	Collect in survey if missing on ILR
Learning Difficulty (L16)	
Home Postcode (L17)	Check in survey
Prior attainment level (L35)	Ask in survey
Learner Status on Last Working Day before learning (L36)	
Employment status on first day of working (L37)	
Destination (L39)	
Current employment status (L47)	
Full Level 3 NVQ (L_FULLLEVEL3)	
Completion Status (A34)	
WBL Programme type (A15)	
Course title (L_ATYPE)	Check in survey
Provider name	
Start date of aim	
Region of learner	
Region of provider	
Learner support (L34)	
Special projects: T2G full L3 pilot (A10=60) and (A46=63) ALA pilot (A46=82 or 88 or 89) Level 3 entitlement (A14 = 24 if A13=0)	



Appendix C

Profile of Level 3: detailed tables

Table C1: Profile of survey respondents, by gender and age
(% of column total)

	Total	Male	Female	16-18	19-24	25+
Age						
16-18	63%	69%	58%	100%	-	-
19-24	13%	15%	11%	-	100%	-
25+	25%	16%	31%	-	-	100%
Gender						
Male	42%	100%	-	46%	48%	27%
Female	58%	-	100%	54%	52%	73%
Ethnicity						
White	82%	82%	82%	82%	76%	86%
Black	6%	5%	7%	5%	8%	7%
Asian	7%	9%	6%	8%	8%	4%
Mixed/Other	5%	4%	5%	5%	7%	3%
Type of Provision						
FE	96%	94%	97%	97%	89%	97%
WBL	4%	6%	3%	3%	11%	3%
Full Level 3						
Full	61%	63%	59%	70%	62%	37%
Not full	39%	37%	41%	30%	38%	63%
Aim						
GCE/A/AS/A2 level	35%	36%	35%	50%	15%	9%
NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	13%	10%	15%	6%	25%	25%
Access to HE	5%	3%	6%	-	16%	11%
Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	6%	6%	6%	4%	5%	9%
Award, Certificate or Diploma	9%	7%	10%	7%	7%	16%
BTEC	21%	27%	17%	28%	17%	5%
City & Guilds	3%	5%	2%	1%	5%	9%
Other	8%	6%	9%	4%	9%	15%
Highest current qualification level						
2 and below	69%	74%	66%	85%	56%	34%
3	13%	11%	15%	8%	25%	19%
4 and above	7%	6%	8%	-	6%	24%
Learning Difficulty						
Yes	3%	4%	3%	3%	5%	3%
No	89%	89%	89%	89%	89%	89%
Disability						
Yes	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%
No	87%	88%	87%	87%	89%	87%
Payment of Fees						
Yes-all	16%	15%	17%	5%	26%	40%
Yes-some	11%	10%	12%	8%	19%	16%
No	71%	74%	70%	86%	54%	43%

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

Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

Table C2: Profile of survey respondents, by ethnicity
(% of column total)

	Total	White	Black	Asian	Mixed/ Other
Gender					
Male	42%	41%	37%	50%	36%
Female	58%	59%	63%	50%	64%
Age					
16-18	63%	62%	54%	70%	66%
19-24	13%	12%	17%	15%	20%
25+	25%	26%	29%	15%	14%
Type of Provision					
FE	96%	95%	99%	99%	98%
WBL	4%	5%	1%	1%	2%
Full Level 3					
Full	61%	61%	57%	60%	60%
Not full	39%	39%	43%	40%	40%
Aim					
GCE/A/AS/A2 level	35%	34%	35%	46%	41%
NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	13%	14%	9%	8%	8%
Access to HE	5%	4%	14%	4%	5%
Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	6%	6%	6%	5%	3%
Award, Certificate or Diploma	9%	9%	7%	8%	7%
BTEC	21%	21%	19%	23%	23%
City & Guilds	3%	4%	4%	2%	3%
Other	8%	8%	6%	5%	10%
Highest current qualification level					
2 and below	69%	68%	68%	75%	73%
3	13%	14%	10%	8%	11%
4 and above	7%	7%	6%	6%	3%
Learning Difficulty					
Yes	3%	3%	2%	1%	1%
No	89%	89%	89%	91%	88%
Disability					
Yes	5%	5%	3%	4%	5%
No	87%	87%	88%	88%	86%
Payment of Fees					
Yes-all	16%	17%	14%	10%	13%
Yes-some	11%	11%	14%	11%	11%
No	71%	71%	71%	77%	74%

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

Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

Table C3: Profile of survey respondents, by learning difficulty and disability

(% of column total)

	Total	Learning difficulty		Disability	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
Gender					
Male	42%	51%	41%	43%	42%
Female	58%	49%	59%	57%	58%
Age					
16-18	63%	57%	62%	61%	62%
19-24	13%	21%	13%	13%	13%
25+	25%	22%	25%	26%	24%
Ethnicity					
White	82%	92%	82%	85%	82%
Black	6%	4%	6%	4%	6%
Asian	7%	2%	7%	6%	7%
Mixed/Other	5%	2%	5%	5%	5%
Type of Provision					
FE	96%	96%	96%	97%	96%
WBL	4%	4%	4%	3%	4%
Full Level 3					
Full	61%	61%	61%	59%	61%
Not Full	39%	39%	39%	41%	39%
Aim					
GCE/A/AS/A2 level	35%	24%	35%	39%	35%
NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	13%	10%	14%	8%	14%
Access to HE	5%	4%	5%	4%	5%
Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	6%	8%	6%	5%	6%
Award, Certificate or Diploma	9%	13%	9%	10%	9%
BTEC	21%	26%	21%	20%	21%
City & Guilds	3%	5%	3%	3%	3%
Other	8%	10%	7%	11%	7%
Highest current qualification level					
2 and below	69%	61%	69%	66%	69%
3	13%	12%	13%	14%	13%
4 and above	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%
Disability					
Yes	5%	26%	4%	100%	-
No	87%	70%	96%	-	100%
Learning difficulty					
Yes	3%	100%	-	17%	2%
No	89%	-	100%	77%	97%
Payment of Fees					
Yes-all	16%	18%	16%	14%	16%
Yes-some	11%	13%	11%	14%	11%
No	71%	69%	71%	70%	71%

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

Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

Table C4: Profile of survey respondents, by type of provision and course
(% of column total)

	Total	FE	WBL	Full	Not full
Gender					
Male	42%	41%	62%	43%	39%
Female	58%	59%	38%	57%	61%
Age					
16-18	63%	63%	44%	72%	48%
19-24	13%	12%	36%	13%	13%
25+	25%	25%	20%	15%	40%
Ethnicity					
White	82%	82%	93%	83%	81%
Black	6%	6%	2%	6%	7%
Asian	7%	7%	3%	7%	7%
Mixed/Other	5%	5%	2%	5%	5%
Full Level 3					
Full	61%	59%	99%	100%	-
Not full	39%	41%	1%	-	100%
Type of provision					
FE	96%	100%	-	93%	100%
WBL	4%	-	100%	7%	0
Aim					
GCE/A/AS/A2 level	35%	37%	<0.5%	34%	37%
NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	13%	10%	99%	19%	4%
Access to HE	5%	5%	-	8%	<0.5%
Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	6%	6%	<0.5%	3%	10%
Award, Certificate or Diploma	9%	9%	<0.5%	5%	15%
BTEC	21%	22%	<0.5%	28%	11%
City & Guilds	3%	4%	<0.5%	1%	8%
Other	8%	8%	<0.5%	2%	15%
Highest current qualification level					
2 and below	69%	69%	60%	60%	78%
3	13%	13%	19%	19%	10%
4 and above	7%	7%	3%	3%	2%
Learning Difficulty					
Yes	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
No	89%	89%	96%	96%	89%
Disability					
Yes	5%	5%	3%	3%	5%
No	87%	87%	96%	96%	87%
Payment of Fees					
Yes-all	16%	17%	1%	1%	9%
Yes-some	11%	12%	3%	3%	11%
No	71%	71%	95%	95%	78%

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

Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

Table C5: Profile of survey respondents, by initiative and learner support
(% of column total)

	Total	Train to Gain full Level 3 pilot	Level 3 Entitlement	EMA	ALG	Other	In receipt of social security benefits/ tax credits
Gender							
Male	42%	20%	47%	44%	42%	34%	22%
Female	58%	80%	53%	56%	58%	66%	78%
Age							
16-18	63%	-	3%	95%	17%	50%	12%
19-24	13%	8%	89%	4%	60%	18%	13%
25+	25%	92%	8%	1%	23%	32%	75%
Ethnicity							
White	82%	74%	74%	74%	78%	74%	78%
Black	6%	15%	10%	8%	13%	13%	8%
Asian	7%	8%	10%	12%	8%	9%	7%
Mixed/Other	5%	2%	7%	6%	2%	4%	5%
Type of Provision							
FE	96%	-	100%	99%	99%	98%	97%
WBL	4%	100%	-	1%	1%	2%	3%
Full Level 3							
Full	61%	100%	85%	68%	65%	66%	48%
Not Full	39%	-	15%	32%	35%	34%	52%
Aim							
GCE/A/AS/A2 level	35%	-	12%	45%	16%	24%	23%
NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	13%	100%	19%	5%	10%	13%	23%
Access to HE	5%	-	33%	1%	22%	15%	16%
Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	6%	-	2%	4%	5%	3%	7%
Award, Certificate or Diploma	9%	-	5%	8%	9%	11%	13%
BTEC	21%	-	18%	32%	24%	22%	10%
City & Guilds	3%	-	1%	1%	4%	3%	6%
Other	8%	-	10%	4%	10%	8%	12%
Highest current qualification level							
2 and below	69%	31%	74%	85%	72%	65%	47%
3	13%	22%	9%	8%	10%	13%	18%
4 and above	7%	19%	<0.5%	1%	3%	6%	12%
Learning Difficulty							
Yes	3%	2%	7%	3%	6%	6%	4%
No	89%	98%	86%	89%	88%	87%	88%
Disability							
Yes	5%	1%	3%	5%	3%	6%	9%
No	87%	99%	88%	87%	91%	87%	82%
Payment of Fees							
Yes-all	16%	-	18%	5%	11%	11%	15%
Yes-some	11%	7%	24%	9%	27%	19%	25%
No	71%	93%	56%	85%	63%	69%	60%

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

Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008

Table C6: Profile of survey respondents, by highest current qualification and fee payment
(% of column total)

	Total	Qualification level			Payments of fees		
		2 and below	3	4 and above	Yes - all	Yes - some	No
Gender							
Male	42%	44%	34%	33%	38%	37%	43%
Female	58%	56%	66%	67%	62%	63%	57%
Age							
16-18	63%	77%	40%	3%	20%	42%	75%
19-24	13%	11%	24%	12%	20%	22%	10%
25+	25%	12%	36%	86%	60%	36%	15%
Ethnicity							
White	82%	81%	87%	87%	87%	81%	81%
Black	6%	6%	5%	5%	5%	7%	6%
Asian	7%	8%	4%	6%	4%	7%	8%
Mixed/Other	5%	5%	4%	2%	4%	5%	5%
Type of Provision							
FE	96%	97%	94%	98%	100%	99%	95%
WBL	4%	3%	6%	2%	<0.5%	1%	5%
Full Level 3							
Full	61%	69%	48%	21%	35%	60%	67%
Not Full	39%	31%	52%	79%	65%	40%	33%
Aim							
GCE/A/AS/A2 level	35%	43%	26%	14%	18%	20%	42%
NVQ/Advanced Apprenticeship	13%	10%	19%	20%	11%	17%	13%
Access to HE	5%	4%	6%	3%	8%	8%	4%
Advanced Award, Certificate or Diploma	6%	5%	9%	10%	10%	4%	5%
Award, Certificate or Diploma	9%	7%	12%	15%	13%	12%	7%
BTEC	21%	24%	17%	7%	15%	24%	22%
City & Guilds	3%	2%	5%	11%	9%	4%	2%
Other	8%	5%	8%	20%	16%	10%	5%
Highest current qualification level							
2 and below	69%	100%	-	-	44%	61%	76%
3	13%	-	100%	-	19%	16%	11%
4 and above	7%	-	-	100%	23%	8%	3%
Learning Difficulty							
Yes	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	4%	3%
No	89%	89%	90%	88%	89%	90%	89%
Disability							
Yes	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	6%	5%
No	87%	87%	88%	86%	88%	87%	87%
Payment of Fees							
Yes-all	16%	10%	23%	54%	100%	-	-
Yes-some	11%	10%	14%	12%	-	100%	-
No	71%	79%	62%	33%	-	-	100%

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

Source: Level 3 Learner Survey 2008



Appendix D

About us

Who we are

Experian's Business Strategies Division

Experian's Business Strategies Division provides an understanding of consumers, markets and economies in the UK and around the world, past, present and future. Its focus is consumer profiling and market segmentation, retail property analysis, economic forecasting and public policy research, supporting businesses, policy makers and investors in making tactical and strategic decisions. As part of the Experian group, it has access to a wealth of research data and innovative software solutions. The division's economic research team is devoted to analysing national, regional and local economies for a range of public and private sector clients. Its statisticians, econometricians, sociologists, geographers, market researchers and economists carry out extensive research into the underlying drivers of social, economic and market change.

For more information, visit www.business-strategies.co.uk

Experian

Experian is a global leader in providing information, analytical and marketing services to organisations and consumers to help manage the risk and reward of commercial and financial decisions.

Combining its unique information tools and deep understanding of individuals, markets and economies, Experian partners with organisations around the world to establish and strengthen customer relationships and provide their businesses with competitive advantage.

For consumers, Experian delivers critical information that enables them to make financial and purchasing decisions with greater control and confidence.

Clients include organisations from financial services, retail and catalogue, telecommunications, utilities, media, insurance, automotive, leisure, e-commerce, manufacturing, property and government sectors.

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