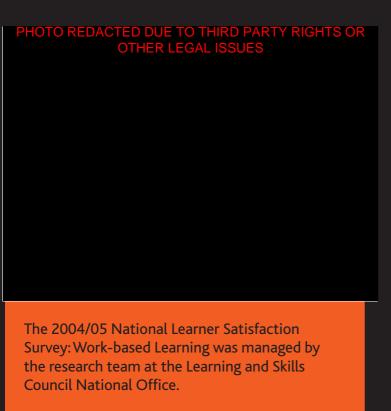


Leading learning and skills

National Learner
Satisfaction Survey:
Work-based
Learning 2004/05

July 2006

Of interest to everyone involved in sustaining and improving levels of learner satisfaction across the work-based learning sector



In partnership with GfK NOP.

For information

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Executive Summary

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The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) 2004/05 National Learner Satisfaction Survey (NLSS) was carried out between February and June 2005. Interviews were conducted with learners on a range of provision, namely further education (FE), work-based learning (WBL) and adult and community learning (ACL). Interviews were primarily over the telephone, but those with disabilities or learning difficulties were given the option of faceto-face interviews if required.

A total of 43,671 learners were interviewed during the course of the survey. Learners were interviewed about their perceptions of the delivery of education and training in England and their satisfaction levels in relation to different aspects of their learning experience; quality of teaching, management of learning, pre-entry advice and guidance, learner support, benefits and impacts of learning.

The results showed that the overall satisfaction levels of learners are the highest they have ever been since the NLSS began and that the majority of learners were likely to return to learning in the future.

This report analyses and summarises these findings in WBL provision and makes available a wealth of information and data which can be used for longitudinal analysis on different sub-groups of learners.

Introduction

1

The National Learner Satisfaction Survey provides an overview of delivery and satisfaction with education and training in England among learners aged 16 and over. The survey also allows an analysis of key sub-groups within the learner base, for example, younger learners, learners from minority ethnic backgrounds and learners with disabilities or learning difficulties.

2

The 2004/05 survey, the fourth year it has been conducted, involved interviews with over 43,000 learners from three different sectors, namely further education, workbased learning and adult and community learning (accredited and non-accredited).

3

The survey was conducted during the first half of 2005 and consisted of three waves of interviews designed to include the following learner types:

- those in the further education sector, that is, those attending general further education colleges, sixth form colleges and other specialist further education institutions
- those in the FE sector undertaking **learndirect** courses
- those undertaking work-based learning
- those undertaking FE delivered by adult learning providers (accredited courses)
- those undertaking non-accredited adult and community learning courses.

4

The results give a valuable national picture and contain a wealth of information about different sub-groups of learners. For example, in further education provision, results can be analysed by different variables such as:

- age
- gender
- ethnicity
- area of learning
- level of qualification
- disability, learning difficulty
- prior attainment level.

Methodology

5

The NLSS sample was designed to ensure a minimum of 500 FE learners were interviewed per local LSC, thus allowing dissemination and robust longitudinal analysis of results at local LSC level.

6

The WBL sample for the survey was selected from the database of learners called the ILR (Individualised Learner Record). Prior to sample selection the database was 'cleaned' by removing:

- under-16s
- learners known to be deceased
- learners with no telephone numbers.

7

The database was then stratified by various criteria such as local LSC, age, gender and ethnicity to improve the quality of the sample size. From this, a systematic sample (one in *n*) of learners was selected to achieve a specified number of learners.

8

A total of 43,671 learners were interviewed for the 2004/05 survey. Of these, 5,619 were from the work-based learning sector. The table below shows the number of interviews conducted with each learner type on a national level:

	2004/05
	No. of Interviews
Further Education (total)	31,648
Of which:	
General FE	27,568
Sixth form college	2,254
Other/specialist	1,826
learndirect	903
Work-based Learning	5,619
FE delivered by Adult Learning Providers	1,731
Non-accredited Adult and Community Learning	3,770
Total	43,671

Three waves of interviews were conducted from February to June 2005. The interviews were conducted by telephone with an average interview length of about 10 minutes. Interviews consisted of a set of core questions which were asked on all three waves and covered the following areas:

- overall satisfaction with the learning experience
- overall satisfaction with the quality of teaching and management of learning
- likelihood to return to learning in the future.

10

In addition to the core questions, each wave of interviews also consisted of a particular set of modular questions covering the following areas:

- wave 1: pre-entry advice and guidance
- wave 2: support for learners
- wave 3: impact of learning.

11

The questionnaire remained largely unchanged from the 2003/04 survey, although some additional questions were added to the modular sections to allow for further in-depth analysis of learner responses.

12

Given the different nature of **learndirect** courses and their first time inclusion in the survey, the 2004/05 questionnaire also included alternative versions of some core and modular questions to make them more relevant and reflect the different style of learning at **learndirect**. This is the first time this has taken place.

13

Learners unable to participate in the telephone survey because of a disability or learning difficulty were offered the option of completing the survey face-to-face. A total of 139 interviews were conducted face-to-face and the data from these interviews combined with the results of the telephone interviews.

14

All interviews were conducted by trained interviewers working on behalf of GfK NOP and all interviews were conducted in compliance to the Market Research Society Code of Conduct.

15

More information on the National Learner Satisfaction Survey methodology and questionnaire can be found in the updated document *NLSS: Guidance on the core methodology and core questionnaire*. This document has been updated to include the 2004/05 questionnaire.

16

This document, and the complete 2004/05 dataset, is available from the website http://researchtools.lsc.gov.uk.

Abbreviations used

17

At times the following abbreviations are used in the reporting of the NLSS results:

- further education FE
- work-based learning WBL
- further education delivered by adult
- learning providers FE delivered by adult learning providers (ALP)
- non-accredited adult and community learning (ACL) – non-accredited ACL

18

Where there is discussion of data presented in figures and tables in this report, data subsequently mentioned and/or described is directly derived from the figures and tables.

Presentation of findings

19

Percentages: for clarity and brevity, and in accordance with normal practice, percentages in the figures are rounded to whole numbers. This means, where appropriate, they do not always add up to 100 per cent.

20

For some questions in this survey, as in earlier surveys, learners are offered a range of options where they can select as many or as few as they choose. Resulting percentages expressed, for example course choice, reflect learners' multiple response options and thus will usually add up to far more than 100 per cent.

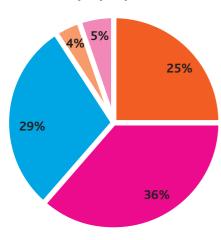
21

In order to compare percentage results across different years of the survey we use the notation of change in 'percentage points'.

Overall Satisfaction with the Learning Experience

Figure 1: Overall satisfaction with the learning experience for the work-based learning sector (2004/05 data)





Base: All respondents for all waves (core question) 5,619 This question allowed a single response.

22

In the National Learner Satisfaction Survey, a number of core questions are asked of all respondents in every wave. These questions have been prioritised by the LSC as key measures of satisfaction. This section explores the following measures:

- overall satisfaction with learning
- reasons why learners left their course or programme early.

23

With reference to the second bullet point relating to early leavers, it should be emphasised that the early leavers in the National Learner Satisfaction Survey are not representative of *all* early leavers in work-based learning. To be in the sample for this survey they would have left their course or programme at some time between the ILR "freeze" used for sampling and the interview itself.

Key messages

24

Once again, nine in ten learners reported some level of satisfaction with their experience overall. The proportion of learners in this sector who reported that they were 'extremely' satisfied overall was at an all time high in 2004/05 (from 17 per cent in the first year of the survey to 25 per cent in 2004/05). Comparing the data with last year, satisfaction levels amongst males and females have become more equal; however, the more mature workbased learners remain more satisfied overall than the 16–18 year olds.

25

Reasons for leaving early can be given under four broad groupings:

- expectations being mismanaged (the most common single reason mentioned by early leavers was that the individual was simply on the wrong course/programme)
- reasons related to the support offered by the employer and/or changes in employment
- reasons related to the quality of delivery
- health and personal reasons (including financial issues).

26

In the first category, the data identifies a need for expectations to be managed. Over a fifth of the early leavers (22 per cent) mentioned that they were simply on the wrong course or programme and four per cent said that the work involved was not what they had envisaged.

27

On the aspect of quality of delivery, eight per cent thought that the provider/college was badly run/disorganised and eight per cent mentioned specific problems with tutors/trainers or assessors. The survey highlights the dependence on the employment status for this sector and arguably there is little that the provider can do if a new employer is unwilling for the individual to continue with their programme (12 per cent of early leavers changed jobs and nine per cent got a job). Health/personal and financial reasons were mentioned by almost a fifth of learners as reasons for leaving early.

Increase in overall satisfaction

28

Figure 1 shows that a quarter (25 per cent) of learners in the 2004/05 survey were 'extremely' satisfied with their overall learning experience (we see later that this is a significant increase from 2003/04). Just over a third (36 per cent) were 'very' satisfied, and 29 per cent were 'fairly' satisfied. Approximately one in 20 learners (five per cent) said they were dissatisfied and just four per cent were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

29

Figure 2 shows that satisfaction has been maintained from 2003/04 to 2004/05. Up until this latest survey, the proportion of respondents who were either 'fairly' satisfied (arguably a problem area) or dissatisfied had increased slightly year-on-year. In 2004/05, however, the data shows an increase in the proportion 'extremely' satisfied and *also* a decline in the proportion of learners that were 'fairly' satisfied or dissatisfied. This observation is a positive one.

30

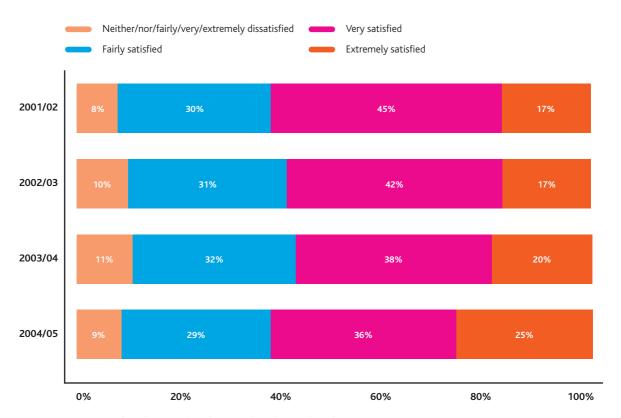
The next paragraphs explore the findings by key demographics.

Differences by gender and age

31

Results from 2003/04 suggested that older learners were more likely to give an 'extremely' satisfied rating than the younger groups. The data in this latest survey shows no discrimination by age at all, suggesting that the increase in satisfaction overall is derived from an increase in satisfaction amongst the younger work-based learners.

Figure 2: Overall satisfaction with learning experience (comparisons over time)



Base: 2001/02 (2,032); 2002/03 (2,003); 2003/04 (6,111) 2004/5 (5,619)

This question allowed a single response. Learners who responded 'don't know' not shown.

Female learners have, in the past, appeared to be more satisfied with their overall learning experience and this was the case once again in 2004/05. Whilst the proportion rating themselves as 'extremely' satisfied with the whole experience has increased for both groups in 2004/05, females were once again significantly more satisfied (29 per cent of the females rated themselves as 'extremely' satisfied compared with 21 per cent of the males). Males were much more likely than females to state that they were 'fairly' satisfied (33 per cent compared with 25 per cent).

Differences by other factors

33

Learners with disabilities were slightly less likely to state that they were either 'extremely' or 'very' satisfied with their experience overall (58 per cent compared with 61 per cent of learners with no disabilities).

34

Learners in minority ethnic groups were less likely to state that they were either 'extremely' or 'very' satisfied with their learning experience (56 per cent extremely/very satisfied compared with 62 per cent of White learners). A third (33 per cent) said that they were 'fairly' satisfied compared with 29 per cent of White learners.

Early leavers

35

All respondents in the 2004/05 survey who had left their course/programme early were asked for their main reason for doing so. Reasons for leaving early can be given under four broad groupings:

- managing expectations (the most common reason mentioned was that the learner was simply on the wrong course/programme)
- reasons related to the employer and/or their employment
- reasons related to the quality of the delivery of the programme
- health and personal reasons (including financial reasons).

36

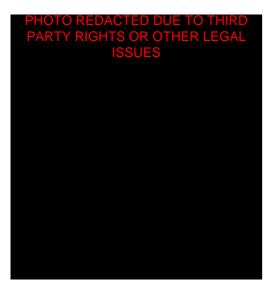
The most common reason cited overall for leaving the course early was that the course or programme was wrong for the learner (22 per cent of early leavers). This being the case, managing expectations has to be key in reducing the proportion of learners that leave early. Another four per cent of early leavers mentioned that there was more work involved or that the work was more difficult than envisaged.

37

There were also some references to the quality of the programme and relationships with trainers/tutors/assessors (eight per cent mentioned that the provider/college was badly run/disorganised and eight per cent made specific reference to the quality of delivery by tutors/trainers/assessors).

Table 1: Overall satisfaction with learning experience, by age and gender (2004/05 data)

	Total	Male	Female	16-18	19-24	25 plus
Base: All respondents for all waves (core question)	5,619	2,942	2,677	2,609	2,590	420
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Extremely satisfied	25	21	29	25	24	26
Very satisfied	36	35	38	35	37	39
Fairly satisfied	29	33	25	31	29	25
Neither/nor	4	4	4	4	4	4
Fairly/very/extremely dissatisfied	5	6	4	5	5	7



For many learners in this sector there is a level of dependence on the learner staying in their job in order to stay on the programme. Changing their job situation certainly has had an impact for early leavers (12 per cent of early leavers mentioned that they had changed jobs and nine per cent mentioned that they had got a job). Related to the employment situation once more, seven per cent of early leavers referred to a lack of support from their employer as being the main reason for leaving.

39

Health and other personal problems were also significant for learners in this sector:

- financial reasons, such as the cost of travel (eight per cent)
- health reasons (six per cent)
- personal problems (five per cent).

Differences by gender and age

40

In terms of analysis by key variables, reasons for leaving showed no relationship to gender. However, by age it can be seen that:

- 16–18s were significantly more likely to cite 'wrong course/programme for me' (26 per cent compared with 17 per cent of the 19–24 age group)
- changing jobs and getting a job were more likely to be mentioned by older learners (16 per cent of the 19–24 age group said changing jobs was the main reason for leaving compared with 10 per cent of the 16–18s).

41

Sample sizes were too small to explore reasons for leaving early among disability and minority ethnic groups.

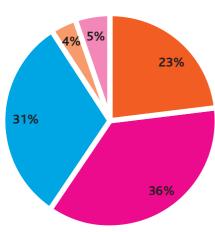
Table 2: Reasons for leaving early – mentions over 3 per cent (2004/05 data)

	2004/05
Base: All Early Leavers	397
	per cent
Wrong course/programme for me	22
Changed jobs	12
Got a job	9
College/provider badly run/disorganised	8
Tutor/assessor problems/problems with quality of training	8
Financial reasons (i.e. cost of travel)	8
Lack of support from work/problems at work	7
Health reasons	6
Personal problems	5
Too much work	4

Overall Satisfaction with the Quality of Teaching/Training

Figure 3: Overall satisfaction with the quality of teaching/training in the workbased learning sector (2004/05 data).





Base: All respondents for all waves (core question) 5,619 This question allowed a single response.

42

This section examines overall levels of satisfaction with the quality of teaching/training provided in work-based learning and also looks in detail at ratings given by learners for individual aspects of teaching and training they receive in the sector

43

One of the core questions used in the NLSS over the years and covered in this section relates to the management and use of lessons and session time and asked respondents to indicate whether they believed such time was put to good use or whether, in their view, some of it was wasted. In addition, learners were asked to identify issues or problems they had encountered during their learning programmes, such as disruption or late arrivals for lessons. These issues are examined in this section.

Key messages

44

Overall satisfaction with teaching/training is extremely high once again in 2004/05 (nine in ten expressing some level of satisfaction). The proportion of learners who rated themselves as 'extremely' satisfied with teaching/training overall was at an all time high (this figure has steadily increased year-on-year from 18 per cent in 2001/02 to 23 per cent in 2004/05). The proportion of learners rating their tutors/trainers/assessors as a 9 or 10 out of 10 for all individual measures has increased since 2003/04.

45

Fewer learners in 2004/05 were willing to say that some lesson/session time had been wasted (58 per cent compared with 60 per cent in 2003/04). Of those that did consider that some time was wasted, the vast majority thought that only a little had been wasted.

46

More than half (54 per cent) of learners mentioned that lessons/sessions had been disrupted by learners arriving late by five minutes or more. At least a quarter mentioned that they were kept hanging around and/or that other learners were noisy/disruptive in sessions. Other types of disruption were mentioned by between 10 per cent and 25 per cent of learners. A quarter said that they had experienced no disruptions at all.

Overall satisfaction with teaching/training

47

The percentage of learners in the 2004/05 survey who were satisfied to some extent with the overall quality of teaching/training was high at 90 per cent. Almost a quarter (23 per cent) of learners in 2004/05 were 'extremely' satisfied with the overall quality of teaching/training and nearly two fifths (38 per cent) were 'very' satisfied. Just over three in ten were 'fairly' satisfied and five per cent stated some degree of dissatisfaction.

48

Figure 4 shows that, when compared over four years, the 90 per cent of learners reporting some satisfaction with the overall quality of the teaching/training has remained static. The most encouraging point to note is the continuous increase in the proportion of learners reporting 'extreme' levels of satisfaction year-onyear (from 18 per cent in 2001/2 to the current level of 23 per cent in 2004/5). From previous regression analysis performed on the data, the quality of teaching/training has the greatest impact on overall satisfaction and further increases in high levels of satisfaction this year have probably been the major factor in increasing overall satisfaction to a fourvear high.

Fairly/very/extremely dissatisfied Fairly satisfied Extremely satisfied Neither/nor Very satisfied 2001/02 41% 2002/03 30% 41% 2003/04 37% 2004/05 38% 0% 20% 60% 80% 100% 40%

Figure 4: Overall satisfaction with teaching/training in the work-based learning sector (comparison over time)

Base: 2001/02: (2,023), 2002/03: (2,003), 2003/04: (6,111), 2004/5 (5,619)

This question allowed a single response. Learners who responded 'don't know' not shown.

Differences by gender and age

49

Although levels of satisfaction with the overall learning experience in 2004/05 were balanced across age groups (see Table 1), older learners were generally more satisfied with the overall quality of teaching/training (29 per cent of the 25 year plus group were 'extremely' satisfied compared with 23 per cent of the other age groups). Also, 31 per cent of the 16–18s rated themselves as 'fairly' satisfied compared with 26 per cent of the 25 plus group (see Table 3).

50

By gender, and similarly to the observations for overall satisfaction, satisfaction with teaching/training was highest amongst females (26 per cent said they were 'extremely' satisfied compared with 21 per cent of the males). Females were significantly less likely to use the 'fairly' satisfied rating (27 per cent compared with 34 per cent of males).

Differences by other variables

51

Learners with disabilities were significantly more likely to say that they were 'extremely' satisfied with the quality of teaching/training than those without (28 per cent compared with 23 per cent).

However, when the ratings for 'extremely' and 'very satisfied' are combined, there is very little difference in satisfaction between the two groups.

52

Learners from minority ethnic groups were less likely than White learners to say that they were extremely satisfied with the quality of teaching/training (20 per cent compared with 24 per cent). However, when the ratings for 'extremely' and 'very satisfied' are combined, there is very little difference in satisfaction between the two groups.

Table 3 Overall satisfaction with quality of teaching/training, by age and gender (2004/05 data).

	Total	Male	Female	16-18	19-24	25 plus
Base: All respondents for all waves (core question)						
Unweighted	5,619	2,942	2,677	2,609	2,590	420
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Extremely satisfied	23	21	26	23	23	29
Very satisfied	36	35	38	37	36	34
Fairly satisfied	31	34	27	31	30	26
Neither/nor	4	4	3	3	4	3
Fairly/very/extremely dissatisfied	5	6	5	5	5	7

This question allowed a single response. Learners who responded 'don't know' not shown.

Individual aspects of teaching/training

53

Learners in the survey were asked to rate ten aspects of teaching/training corresponding to their perceptions of quality. Learners rated each measure using a scale from one (very poor) to 10 (excellent). For the purposes of reporting, it has been agreed at the LSC that the measure to be tracked year-on-year is the proportion of learners that rated the following aspects of teaching/training as either 9 or 10 out of 10, that is, in the uppermost ranges. In 2004/5 the scores were highest for:

- knowledge of the subject (62 per cent)
- how well they relate to you as a person (54 per cent)
- the support they give you in study techniques (42 per cent)
- providing prompt and regular feedback on progress (41 per cent).

54

Table 4 shows the proportions rating a 9 or 10 out of 10 for all aspects. It shows a significant shift towards the use of higher ratings in 2004/05 compared with 2003/04. For all individual measures, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of learners using the uppermost scale of satisfaction. Most significantly, three measures received the highest increase in satisfaction year-on-year; planning sessions, making the subject interesting and enjoyable and the quality and availability of materials.

55

The increase in performance is a positive turnaround; the data for 2003/4 showed a decrease in percentage points of learners giving 9 or 10 out of 10 for *all* of the above aspects of teaching/training and learning compared with 2002/03.

Differences by gender and age

56

There were quite marked differences in satisfaction ratings for aspects of teaching/training by age and gender, as shown in Table 5. For all aspects females were significantly more likely to use the uppermost ratings of 9 or 10 out of 10. The areas where the divide was most marked between male and female (at least 15 percentage points) were the following:

- understanding you and how you like to learn
- setting clear targets to help learners improve
- the support they give you
- prompt and regular feedback on progress.

57

By age, the older learners proved to be more inclined to use the uppermost ratings.

Table 4: Ratings for aspects of teaching/training – the percentage rated as 9 or 10 out of 10 by learners (2003/04 and 2004/05 comparison)

	2003/04	2004/05	+/- percentage point difference year on year
Base: All respondents for all waves (core question)	6,111	5,619	
	%	%	
Knowledge of the subject	58	62	+4%
How well they relate to you as a person	50	54	+4%
The support they give you for example in improving techniques or time management	38	42	+4%
Providing prompt and regular feedback on progress	37	41	+4%
Setting clear targets or learning goals to help you improve	36	40	+4%
Planning their lessons	33	39	+6%
Quality and availability of training materials they use	34	39	+5%
Making your subject interesting and enjoyable for you	33	38	+5%
Understanding you and how you like to learn	35	38	+3%
Managing the group of learners	34	38	+4%

Base: All respondents rating (base differs for all aspects)

This question allowed a single rating per precode. % rating 9 or 10 out of 10 shown.

Differences by other variables

58

Learners with disabilities were more likely to rate trainers/tutors and/or assessors as a 9 or 10 out of 10 for 'understanding you and how they like to learn' (43 per cent compared with 38 per cent of learners without disabilities). They were less likely to do so for 'knowledge of the subject' (56 per cent compared with 62 per cent). The other measures remained broadly comparable.

59

Learners from minority ethnic groups were less likely to rate trainers/tutors and/or assessors as a 9 or 10 out of 10 for the following: 'knowledge of the subject' (56 per cent compared with 62 per cent of White learners), 'how well they relate to you as a person' (50 per cent compared with 54 per cent) and 'the support they give you' (42 per cent compared with 46 per cent). The other measures remained broadly comparable.

Lesson time lost

60

Over the years a question relating to use of session time has been used as a core question in survey. The questionnaire asks the respondents if all of their lessons or training sessions have been put to good use or if some were wasted.

61

It should be noted that learners' opinions about what constitutes wasted lesson time can and does vary. This question is therefore a subjective response and reports learners' own perceptions of wasted lesson time.

62

In 2003/4 nearly two fifths (39 per cent) of learners responded that no time was wasted and three fifths believed lesson time was wasted (60 per cent). In 2004/5 the percentage that believed that no lesson/session time was wasted increased to 41 per cent and 58 per cent said that some was wasted (one per cent said that they did not know). This is a positive observation year-on-year.

Table 5: Ratings for aspects of teaching/training – the percentage rated as 9 or 10 out of 10 by learners (2004/05 data)

	Total	Male	Female	16-18	19-24	25 plus
Base: All respondents for all waves (core question)	5,619	2,942	2,677	2,609	2,590	420
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Knowledge of the subject	62	60	64	61	62	65
How well they relate to you as a person	54	47	61	53	53	63
The support they give you, for example, in improving study techniques or time management	42	35	50	43	40	48
Providing prompt and regular feedback on progress	41	34	49	41	41	45
Setting clear targets to help learners improve	40	32	48	41	38	45
Planning their lessons	39	32	46	39	37	46
Quality and availability of teaching materials	39	35	45	41	37	47
Managing the group of learners	38	32	45	39	36	44
Making the subject interesting or enjoyable	38	32	44	40	34	48
Understanding you and how you like to learn	38	30	47	39	37	45

This question allowed a single rating per precode. % rating 9 or 10 out of 10 shown.

63

Breaking down the data further, in 2004/05, 31 per cent said that a minimal amount of lesson/session was wasted (less than 10 per cent of time). Just over one in ten (11 per cent) said that between 10 per cent and a quarter of lesson/session time had been wasted and another 10 per cent said that a quarter to a half of lesson/session time had been wasted. Just under one in twenty (six per cent) said that over half of their lesson/session time had been wasted.

Differences by gender and age

64

Table 6 highlights that, similar to the other measures of satisfaction, females and the older learners were more positive in their reaction to the quality of delivery. Almost half of the females (49 per cent) said that no time was wasted compared with significantly fewer males (33 per cent).

Younger learners considered that more lesson time had been wasted compared with older learners in the survey (41 per cent of the 16–18 year olds and 39 per cent of the 19–24s said that no time had been wasted compared with 55 per cent of the 25 plus group).

Differences by other variables

65

In relation to the perception that trainers/tutors and/or assessors were maximising lesson time, learners with disabilities were slightly more positive. They were more likely to have said that *no* lesson time was lost (46 per cent compared with 41 per cent of learners with no disabilities).

66

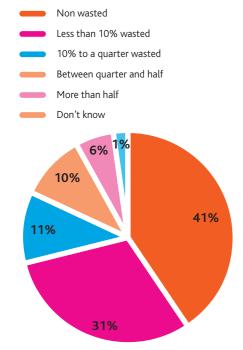
Learners from minority ethnic groups were also more positive. They were more likely to have said that *no* lesson time was lost (47 per cent compared with 40 per cent of White learners).

Learners' experiences on the course/programme

67

Learners were asked whether they had encountered particular issues or problems in their learning programme. The issues prompted in the question have been derived from research with learners in the design stages of the satisfaction survey about what disruptions or grievances they had experienced. The percentage of learners who responded that they encountered the following situations on a 'fairly regular basis' is shown in detail by Figure 6 and summarised below.

Figure 5: Percentage of wasted lesson time (2004/05 data)



Base: All respondents for all waves (core question) unwtd 5,619 This question allowed a single response.

68

The most common problem experienced in 2004/05 was that other learners were arriving at lessons/sessions at least five minutes late on a regular basis (mentioned by 54 per cent of learners). Other issues mentioned by over a fifth of respondents were:

- other learners making a noise and disrupting the session (29 per cent)
- being left hanging around with nothing to do (25 per cent)
- trainers/tutors and/or assessors arriving at least five minutes late (21 per cent).

69

The next figure shows the full detail.

Differences by gender and age

70

There were some major differences by age and gender relating to this issue. Males and the younger learners were significantly more likely to agree that the following issues were experienced on a fairly regular basis:

 other learners arriving late by five minutes or more

- other learners making noise/disrupting
- being left hanging around with nothing to do
- lessons/sessions finishing early
- trainers/tutors and/or assessors arriving late by five minutes or more.

Differences by other variables

71

Learners with disabilities were more likely to report the following (at least +3 percentage points higher than those without disabilities):

- hanging around with nothing to do
- trainers/tutors and/or assessors arriving late (by five minutes or more)
- lessons/sessions badly planned
- trainers/tutors and/or assessors going at a pace too fast.

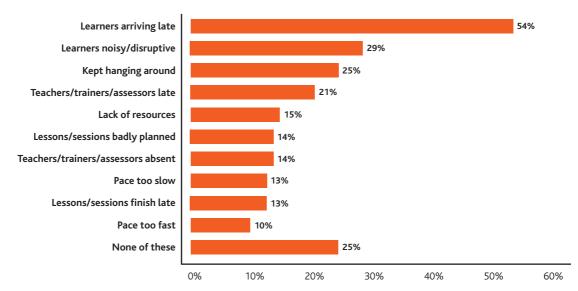
72

There were no differences in the response to this question by minority ethnic groups.

Table 6: Percentage of wasted lesson time, by age and gender (2004/05 data)

	Total	Male	Female	16 - 18	19 – 24	25 plus
Base: All respondents for all waves (core question)	5,619	2,942	2,677	2,609	2,590	420
	%	%	%	%	%	%
More than a half are wasted	6	6	6	7	6	4
Between a quarter and a half are wasted	10	11	9	10	9	8
10-24% are wasted	11	14	8	10	12	7
Less than 10% are wasted	31	35	27	31	32	24
None are wasted	41	33	49	41	39	55
Don't know	1	1	2	1	2	2

Figure 6: Issues experienced on programme (2004/05 data)



Base: All respondents for all waves (core question) unwtd 5,619

This question allowed a multiple response. Chart shows mentions of 10% or more. Learners who responded 'don't know' not shown.

Table 7: Issues experienced on programme, by gender and age (2004/05 data)

	Total	Male	Female	16-18	19-24	25 plus
Base: All respondents for all waves (core question)	5,619	2,942	2,677	2,609	2,590	420
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Other learners arriving late by 5 minutes or more	54	61	46	62	50	24
Other learners making noise/disrupting	29	34	24	35	26	6
Being left hanging around with nothing to do	25	29	21	31	22	12
Lessons/sessions finishing early	21	22	21	26	19	8
Trainers/tutors/assessors arriving late by 5 minutes or more	21	21	21	24	19	11
Lack of resources/equipment	15	18	11	16	15	8
Lessons/sessions being badly planned	14	16	13	16	14	9
Trainers/tutors/assessors being absent	14	14	13	16	13	8
Trainers/tutors/assessors going at a pace too slow	13	14	13	15	13	9
Lessons/sessions finishing late	13	14	12	15	12	9
Trainers/tutors/assessors going at a pace too fast	10	12	9	12	9	5
None of these	25	21	31	19	28	48

This question allowed a multiple response. Chart shows mentions of 10% or more. Learners who responded 'don't know' not shown.

Feedback from trainers/tutors and/or assessors

73

Learners were asked how motivating they found feedback from trainers/tutors and/or assessors to be. In 2004/5 three quarters (75 per cent) of the learners said that feedback was motivating. Very few (three per cent) said that it was demotivating and another fifth said that it had no effect either way.

74

These findings were very similar to 2003/4, when almost three quarters (74 per cent) of learners found the feedback they received from trainers and tutors was motivating, a result broadly consistent with the results of the two earlier surveys.

Differences by gender and age

75

Females showed a more positive response to quality of feedback. In this instance age did not prove to be a significant variable (the younger learners were as satisfied as the older).

Differences by other variables

76

There is no variance in the data according to the disability of the learner.

77

Whilst the data in 2003/4 showed that minority ethnic groups were slightly less satisfied with feedback, in 2004/5 there was no difference at all.

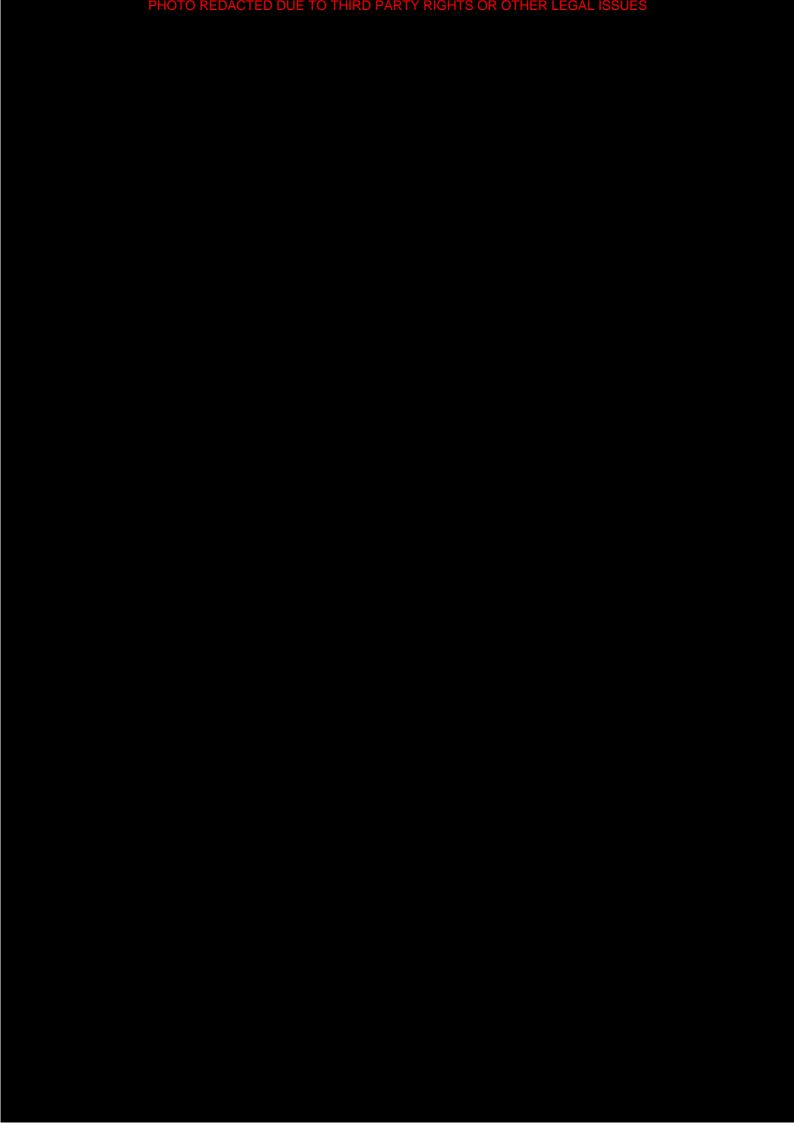
Table 8: How do you feel about the feedback on how you are doing from your trainers/tutors and/or assessors? (2004/05 data)

	Total
Base: All respondents for all waves (core question)	
Unweighted	5,619
	%
Motivating	75
No effect either way	20
Demotivating	3

This question allowed a single response. Learners who responded 'don't know' not shown.

Table 9: How do you feel about the feedback on how you are doing from your trainers/tutors and/or assessors? By gender and age (2004/05 data)

Base: All those who made a complaint	Total	Male	Female	16-18	19-24	25 plus
Base: All respondents for all waves (core question)						
Unweighted	5,619	2,942	2,677	2,609	2,590	420
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Motivating	75	72	79	75	75	73
No effect either way	20	23	16	19	21	20
Demotivating	3	3	3	4	3	3



Information and Guidance Prior to Entry

78

This section explores factors influencing the choice of course/programme and also the choice of provider. It also highlights the sources of advice used pre-entry for learners in this sector and their perceived usefulness of this advice.

Key messages

79

Qualifications and acquisition of skills were primary drivers for undertaking programmes for almost all work-based learners (93 per cent mentioned 'to gain qualifications' and 89 per cent mentioned 'to advance knowledge and skills in this area'). 'Liking the subject' and 'personal interest' were factors that should not be underestimated, however (mentioned by 85 per cent in both instances).

80

The main motivations for choice of provider (for learners that had a choice) were convenience of location and simply the fact that they offered what was needed (25 per cent and 24 per cent respectively). Almost a fifth of learners had no choice at all (their employer chose).

21

Employers were key to pre-entry advice for this sector (mentioned by 58 per cent of learners). Parents were ranked second in terms of use (at 36 per cent). Other sources of advice mentioned by over a third of learners were Connexions (at 36 per cent, this was a significant increase since 2003/04) and friends (34 per cent).

82

The sources of advice where the proportion of learners rating it as 'very useful' was highest (over 50 per cent) were, in the following order: Connexions, teachers/tutors at college/provider, employer, adviser at an Information and Guidance Centre, school careers adviser and parents/family members.

Table 10: Factors influencing learners' choice of courses and programmes – mentions of 5 per cent or more (2003/04 and 2004/05 comparisons)

	2003/04	2004/05
Base: All respondents wave 6 in 2003/04 and wave 9 in 2004/05		
Unweighted	2,046	1,869
	%	%
To gain qualifications	95	93
Advance skills and knowledge in this area	92	89
Like the subject	85	85
Fitted career plans	86	85
Relevant to my job	87	85
Personal interest	85	85
At a time that suited me	74	68
Suggested/required by employer	65	60
To meet other people/make new friends	52	54
Suggested by others	42	44
On offer locally	44	40

Factors influencing choice of course/programme

83

Gaining a qualification and acquisition of skills and knowledge were the most common reasons mentioned for undertaking training (93 per cent and 89 per cent of learners respectively). The fact that the programme or training fitted career plans and that it was relevant to the current job were also key drivers (85 per cent in each case). However, the importance of the learner liking the subject and having a personal interest in the area were also reasons not to be underestimated in terms of their importance (mentioned by 85 per cent of learners in each case).

84

Compared with last year, there seems a tendency to state fewer reasons for taking up the programme or training. Most of the percentages were down year-on-year for most of the reasons for training. Reasons that have reduced most significantly were convenience of a time that suited the learner (-6 percentage points from last year) and the requirement/suggestion by the employer (-5 percentage points from last year).

Differences by gender and age

QE

In 2004/5, the driver that showed most significance by gender was the one related to convenience; 72 per cent of females said that they had undertaken the

programme because it was at a time of day that suited them compared with 64 per cent of males.

86

The reasons that were cited by more of the mature learners in 2004/5 compared with the 16–18 year olds were:

- it was relevant to my job (89 per cent of the 25 plus group and 88 per cent of the 19–24s compared with 81 per cent of the 16–18s)
- because it was at a time that suited me (76 per cent of the 25 plus and 71 per cent of the 19–24s compared with 64 per cent of the 16–18s)

Table 11: Factors influencing learners' choice of courses and programmes by gender and age – mentions of 5 per cent or more (2004/05 data)

	Total	Male	Female	16-18	19-24	25 plus
Base: All respondents wave 9 2004/05						
Unweighted	1,869	1,033	836	937	804	128
	%	%	%	%	%	%
To gain qualifications	93	92	94	92	94	89
To advance my skills and knowledge in this area	89	88	89	87	91	89
For my own personal interest	85	85	85	87	82	82
Because I like the subject	85	84	86	86	84	80
Because it fitted in with my future career plans	85	85	85	84	86	78
It was relevant to my job	85	83	86	81	88	89
Because it was at a time that suited me	68	64	72	64	71	76
To meet other people/make new friends	54	55	54	65	45	33
Suggested or required by employer	60	63	57	57	64	64
Suggested by others	44	44	44	47	42	34
Because it was on offer at my local college/this college	40	42	37	43	38	29

 suggested or required by employer (64 per cent of the 25 plus group and 19–24s compared with 57 per cent of the 16–18s).

87

Reasons that were much more important to the younger learners (16–18 year olds) were mostly linked to liking the subject, meeting new people and convenience of provider:

- for my own personal interest (87 per cent of the 16–18s compared with 82 per cent of the 19–24s and 25 plus)
- because I like the subject (86 per cent of the 16–18s compared with 84 per cent and 80 per cent of the 25 plus)
- to meet other people/make new friends (65 per cent of the 16–18s compared with 45 per cent of the 19–24s and 33 per cent of the 25 plus)

- suggested by others (47 per cent of the 16–18s compared with 42 per cent of the 19–24s and 34 per cent of the 25 plus)
- because it was on offer at my local college/this college (43 per cent of the 16–18s compared with 38 per cent of the 19–24s and 29 per cent of the 25 plus).

Factors influencing choice of provider

88

In 2004/5, the main factors influencing choice of provider were convenience of location and the fact that they offered the training or programme desired (25 per cent and 24 per cent respectively). Significantly, almost a fifth of learners (18 per cent) said that they had no choice of

provider and that their employer chose. Reputation was important to approximately one in ten learners, either reputation generally (five per cent) or reputation for their specific programme or training (three per cent).

89

Year-on-year, many reasons for provider choice stayed the same. The only factor that declined in significance remained the most commonly mentioned, that is, convenience of location (mentioned by 30 per cent last year compared with 25 per cent in 2004/05).

Table 12: Factors influencing learners' choice of provider – mentions of 3 per cent or more (2003/04 and 2004/05 comparisons)

	2003/04	2004/05
Base: All respondents wave 6 in 2003/04 and wave 9 in 2004/05		
Unweighted	2,046	1,869
	%	%
Convenient location/nearest	30	25
Offered programme/training I wanted	24	24
Had no choice/employer chose	23	18
To progress/get qualified/improve	7	9
Best reputation (general)	7	5
Friends were going there	7	3
Recommended by career advisor or school	3	3
Had no choice/no other providers in area	3	3
Best reputation for my programme	3	3
Offered at convenient times for me	4	3

Differences by gender and age

90

There were no significant differences by gender relating to provider choice in 2004/05.

91

Age had some significance for just a few of the reasons relating to provider choice in 2004/05:

- convenience of location was mentioned by significantly more older learners (27 per cent of the 25 plus and 28 per cent of the 19–24 year olds compared with 22 per cent of the 16–18s)
- limitation of choice by employer was mentioned by significantly more older learners (28 per cent of the 25 plus and 22 per cent of the 19–24 year olds compared with 13 per cent of the 16–18s)

 the provider offering a programme that the learner wanted was mentioned by significantly more 16–18 year olds (28 per cent compared with 22 per cent of 19–24 year olds and 16 per cent of the 25 plus group).

Sources of pre-entry advice and guidance

92

In 2004/5, the most mentioned source of pre-entry advice and guidance by work-based learners was their employer (58 per cent). With the proportion seeking advice from this source at almost six in ten, it was significantly higher than any other source (parents were ranked second with 38 per

cent). This highlights the importance of employers having a good all-round knowledge of all programmes and modules on offer. The data suggests that they have a large part to play in raising awareness, managing expectations and ensuring the individual gets guided towards a programme that suits their needs.

93

Other sources of advice mentioned in 2004/05 by at least a third of learners were parents/other family members (38 per cent), Connexions (36 per cent) and friends (34 per cent).

94

The proportions using each source of advice were similar to the data for 2003/4. There was, however, a significantly higher proportion of learners mentioning Connexions. In 2003/4, 27 per cent mentioned Connexions; in 2004/05 this increased to 36 per cent.

Table 13: Factors influencing learners' choice of provider by gender and age - mentions of 3 per cent or more (2004/05 data)

	Total	Male	Female	16-18	19-24	25 plus
Base: All respondents wave 9 2004/05						
Unweighted	1,869	1,033	836	937	804	128
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Convenient location/nearest	25	23	27	22	28	27
Offered programme/training I wanted	24	25	23	28	22	16
Had no choice/employer chose	18	19	16	13	22	28
To progress/get qualified/improve	9	10	8	10	9	10
Best reputation (general)	5	5	5	6	5	2
Friends were going there	3	3	3	3	3	2
Recommended by career adviser or school	3	3	3	4	2	1
Had no choice/no other providers in area	3	4	2	3	3	5
Best reputation for my programme	3	2	3	2	3	2
Offered at convenient times for me	3	1	4	2	3	5

Differences by gender and age

95

There were very few significant differences in the 2004/05 data reflected by the gender of learners. The only point to note was that males were more likely to seek advice from parents/other family members (40 per cent compared with 34 per cent of females).

96

Employers were more significant for the 19–24s than for the 16–18s in 2004/05. Apart from this source of advice, the observation in the data remains the same for all sources of advice, which frequency of use will reduce as the age of the learner increases. For instance, 47 per cent of the 16–18s mentioned parents/other family

members compared with 31 per cent of the 19–24 year olds and just 12 per cent of the 25 plus age group.

Usefulness of advice received

97

Learners were asked to rate the usefulness of various sources of advice used. If they had mentioned more than one source, the interview script randomly selected two as a maximum. It was interesting to reflect on the use of the top rating, 'very useful'. The source of advice that received the highest proportion of learners awarding it the top

rating ('very useful') was Connexions. Over six in ten learners (61 per cent) gave the quality of advice at Connexions a 'very useful' rating and a further three in ten (31 per cent) said it was 'fairly useful'. Sources of advice with at least 50 per cent of its users awarding it a 'very useful' rating were:

- teachers/tutors at college/provider (59 per cent rated it as very useful)
- employer (56 per cent)
- adviser at Information and Guidance Centre (55 per cent)
- school career adviser (53 per cent)
- parents/other family members (51 per cent).

Teachers at school received the lowest ratings (38 per cent).

Table 14: Sources of pre-entry advice for learners (2003/04 and 2004/05 comparisons)

	2003/04	2004/05
Base: All respondents wave 6 in 2003/04 and wave 9 in 2004/05		
Unweighted	2,046	1,869
	%	%
Employer	60	58
Parents/other family members	35	38
Adviser at Connexions	27	36
Friends	34	34
School careers adviser	30	31
Teachers/tutors at college/provider	32	31
Teachers at school	21	22
College admissions office	15	14
Adviser at Information and Guidance Centre	11	9
learndirect advice line	??	4
Nextstep	N/A	3

Table 15: Sources of pre-entry advice for learners by gender and age (2004/05 data)

	Total	Male	Female	16-18	19-24	25 plus
Base: All respondents wave 9 2004/05						
Unweighted	1,869	1,033	836	937	804	128
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Employer	58	58	58	52	65	59
Parents/other family members	38	40	34	47	31	12
Adviser at Connexions	36	37	34	54	19	9
Friends	34	33	35	39	31	23
School careers adviser	31	32	29	45	19	2
Teachers/tutors at college/provider	31	31	31	33	31	16
Teachers at school	22	23	22	32	14	5
College admissions office	14	15	13	15	14	9
Adviser at Information and Guidance Centre	9	9	8	9	8	9
learndirect advice line	4	4	4	4	3	7
Nextstep	3	3	3	4	2	4

This question allowed a multiple response. Only precodes with at least 3% agreement shown in table. Learners who responded 'don't know' not shown.

Table 16: Usefulness of sources of pre-entry advice (2004/05 data)

	Very useful	Fairly useful	Not very useful	Not at all useful
	%	%	%	%
Employer (N: 780)	56	38	4	1
Parents/other family members (N: 391)	51	43	3	2
Adviser at Connexions (N: 407)	61	31	4	2
Friends (N: 360)	43	51	4	3
School careers adviser (N: 303)	53	38	8	1
Teachers/tutors at college/provider (N: 307)	59	36	2	2
Teachers at school (N: 190)	38	54	5	3
College admissions office (N: 117)	43	51	3	1
Adviser at Information and Guidance Centre (N: 67)	55	36	7	1

NB: Bases were below 50 for learndirect advice line and Nextstep so they are not shown. This question allowed a single response. Learners who responded 'don't know' not shown.

Compared with 2003/4, the percentages of learners who opted for the 'very useful' rating has increased by at least 3 percentage points for the following:

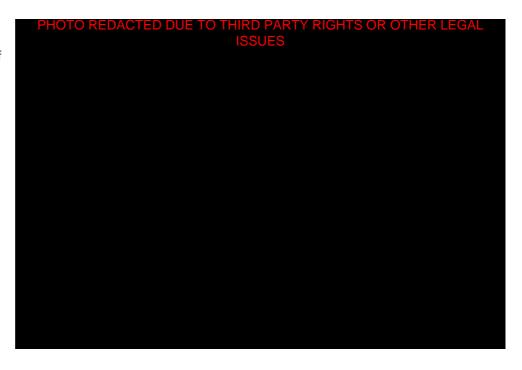
- school careers adviser (an increase of +9 percentage points from 2003/04)
- teachers/tutors at college/provider (an increase of +6 percentage points from 2003/04)
- Information and Guidance Centre (an increase of +4 percentage points from 2003/04)
- Connexions (an increase of +3 percentage points from 2003/04).

99

The only source of advice to decline significantly in the top score rating ('very useful') year-on-year was the college admissions office (a decrease of -6 percentage points from 2003/04).

100

Base sizes become very small for some of these sources of advice used by demographic variables.



Support for Learners

101

This section explores the support learners get once they have started their course/programme. More specifically:

- quality of management/administration of learning by the provider/college (these factors are not directly related to the trainer/tutor/assessor)
- managing expectations about the learning and delivery of the programme pre and post induction
- information relating to health and safety; learners' were asked whether they had received certain health and guidance information
- difficulties, if any, that learners experienced on courses, as well as the usefulness of advice sought to support them
- percentage of learners making complaints and outcome of their complaint.

Key messages

102

Over half of the learners in 2004/05 ranked their provider/college a 9 or 10 out of 10 for the following factors: 'seeing the same trainer/tutor/assessor throughout', 'trainers/tutors/assessors turning up as planned' and 'helping new people settle in'.

103

The only factor that was awarded a 9 or 10 out of 10 by about 40 per cent of learners was 'communicating changes in times for sessions'.

104

The understanding that the learners had of the course/programme and how it would be delivered pre induction shows room for improvement. Fewer than half of the learners said that they felt very well informed about the following: 'how the trainer/tutor/assessor would teach the course or programme' and methods used, 'types of assessment', 'amount of work expected in your own time' and 'timing of assessments'.

101

Whilst these ratings increase when learners were asked how informed they felt post induction, the proportions of learners feeling very well informed is still lower than 60 per cent for almost all factors.

106

More than nine in ten learners recalled specific health and safety information (emergency arrangements for fire, first aid) and how to report it and who to contact for health and safety advice. Increases in recall of health and safety information have been significant year-on-year.

107

Almost half of the learners (48 per cent) said that they had experienced none of the problems prompted in the survey. Problems mentioned by more than 15 per cent of learners were 'maintaining personal motivation' (20 per cent), 'standard of work required' (18 per cent), 'juggling the course/programme with other commitments at work' (17 per cent) and 'money pressures' (16 per cent).

Table 17: Management of learning – rating of factors (2003/04 and 2004/05 comparisons)

	2003/04	2004/05
Base: All respondents wave 7 in 2003/04 and wave 10 in 2004/05		
Unweighted	2,028	1,876
	% rating 9 or 10 out of 10	% rating 9 or 10 out of 10
Seeing the same tutor/assessor throughout	56	60
Trainers/tutors/assessors turning up as planned	54	59
Helping new people settle in	51	55
Providing support when I and other learners have problems	49	54
Making sure enough trainers/tutors and/or assessors are available	48	52
Managing timetables so that they suit the learner as best they can	42	46
Communicating changes in times for sessions	36	42

Almost two fifths (39 per cent) of learners who experienced one or more of the problems prompted in the survey had sought help from their provider. This is a significant increase year-on-year. Of those that sought help, 41 per cent said that it was 'very useful'. The proportion of learners who found that help and advice was 'very useful' has increased year-on-year.

109

In 2004/05, 14 per cent reported a complaint (formal and informal). Of these, 43 per cent said that an outcome had satisfied them and 17 per cent said that there had been an outcome that had not satisfied them (38 per cent said that there had been no outcome at all).

Management of learning

110

In the survey, learners were asked to rank a number of issues corresponding to the quality of administration of learning. These included:

- seeing the same tutor/assessor throughout
- trainers/tutors/assessors turning up as planned
- helping new people settle in
- providing support when I and other learners have problems
- making sure enough trainers/tutors and/or assessors are available
- managing timetables so that they suit the learner as best they can
- communicating changes in times for sessions.

111

These issues were related to quality of the provider as a whole and not related to the trainer/tutor/assessor specifically. Learners ranked each factor using a scale from one (very poor) to 10 (excellent).

112

The percentage of learners rating items as either 9 or 10 out of 10, that is, in the uppermost ranges, is shown in Table 17. The only two factors that were given a 9 or 10 out of 10 by less than 50 per cent of learners were:

- managing timetables so that they suit the learner as best they can
- communicating changes in times for sessions.

Table 18: Management of learning – rating of factors by gender and age (2004/05 data)

	Total	Male	Female	16-18	19-24	25 plus
Base: All respondents wave 10 2004/05						
Unweighted	1,876	930	946	832	904	140
	% rating 9 or 10 out of 10					
Seeing the same tutor/assessor throughout	60	53	68	59	61	67
Trainers/tutors/assessors turning up as planned	59	52	65	57	59	66
Helping new people settle in	55	45	65	57	52	62
Providing support when I and other learners have problems	54	46	62	54	52	66
Making sure enough trainers/tutors and/or assessors are available	52	45	60	53	50	57
Managing timetables so that they suit the learner as best they can	46	36	55	47	43	56
Communicating changes in times for sessions	42	33	50	41	40	58

Differences by gender and age

113

In line with the comments relating to other aspects of satisfaction, Table 18 shows that the females and the more mature learners (aged 25 plus) were significantly more satisfied than males and younger learners.

Managing expectations about the course/programme at induction

114

A new question was added to the modular questions in waves 9 and 10 in the 2004/05 survey that related to how well informed learners felt pre and post induction about the course/programme on a series of measures. Measures related to content, delivery and assessment of the learning. Learners were asked in wave 9

how well informed they felt at their induction and in wave 10 they were asked how well informed they felt at this stage of the programme (in March 2005). They were given options of 'very informed', 'quite informed', 'not very informed' or 'not at all informed'.

115

As one would hope, the proportions of learners feeling very well informed on the various points does increase the longer they were in their learning (from wave 9 to wave 10). Having said this, the increase was not significant and by wave 10 the data was still suggesting that many learners did not feel very well informed about some issues that were of a major influence to them and their programme.

116

The main points to highlight relate to the following types of information:

- how the course/training would help you gain skills to use in a job (63 per cent said they felt very well informed about this issue post induction, an increase of +3 percentage points from how they felt at the time of their induction)
- the content of the course/programme, what subjects it would cover (58 per cent said they felt very well informed about this issue post induction, an increase of +4 percentage points from how they felt about at the time of their induction)
- the standard of work expected (57 per cent said they felt very well informed about this issue post induction, an increase of +4 percentage points from how they felt at the time of their induction)

Table 19: How well informed were you at induction and after induction? (wave 9 and wave 10 comparisons)

	How well informed did you feel about the course/training at induction	How well informed did you feel about the course/training after induction
Base: All respondents wave and wave 10 2004/05	Wave 9	Wave 10
Unweighted	1,869	1,876
	% very well informed	% very well informed
How the course/training would help you gain skills to use in a job	60	63
The content of the course, what subjects it would cover	54	58
The standard of work expected	53	57
How the teacher/trainer would teach the course for instance group work or lectures	48	55
Type of assessments you would be given	47	53
The amount of work expected of me in my own time	47	48
The timing of assessments	42	47

- how the teacher/trainer would teach the course, for instance, group work or lectures (55 per cent said they felt very well informed about this issue post induction, an increase of +7 percentage points from how they felt at the time of their induction)
- type of assessments you would be given (53 per cent said they felt very well informed about this issue post induction, an increase of +6 percentage points from how they felt at the time of their induction).

The following factors were least likely to get a 'very well informed' rating pre induction and were also least likely to increase between pre and post induction stages. This would suggest that providers do need to be more explicit about information relating to these issues:

- the amount of work expected of me in my own time
- the timing of assessments.

Differences by gender and age

118

The data showed no significant difference by age but in relation to gender, there were significant differences to report. Females felt much more informed about every issue at both stages (pre and post induction).

Health and safety guidance

119

Given the importance of occupational health and safety to learners and to colleges and providers more generally, learners were asked if they were informed about certain health and safety issues:

 more than 9 out of 10 (94 per cent) learners recalled information delivered about emergency arrangements for fire

- more than 9 out of 10 (92 per cent) learners recalled emergency arrangements for first aid and how to report an accident
- more than 9 out of 10 learners (92 per cent) recalled who to ask for any health and safety advice or instructions
- almost 9 out of 10 learners (89 per cent) recalled any dangers involved with your training and how to work safely.

120

The findings have increased significantly year-on-year, particularly so for 'emergency arrangements relating to fire' and 'who to ask for health and safety advice or instructions'.

Difficulties encountered

121

In order to obtain some measure of the difficulties learners encounter during their learning experiences, learners were asked to identify problems they had encountered.

Table 20: How well informed were you at induction and after induction by gender? (wave 9 and wave 10 comparisons)

	How well informed did you feel about the course/training at induction		How well informed did you feel about the course/training after induction	
Base: All respondents	Wave 9	Wave 10	Wave 9	Wave 10
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Unweighted	1,033	836	930	946
The standard of work expected	50	57	53	60
How the course/training would help you gain skills to use in a job	56	65	58	67
The amount of work expected of me in my own time	41	54	41	55
How the teacher/trainer would teach the course for instance group work or lectures	45	53	50	59
The content of the course, what subjects it would cover	50	59	53	64
The timing of assessments	38	46	41	53
Type of assessments you would be given	42	53	48	57

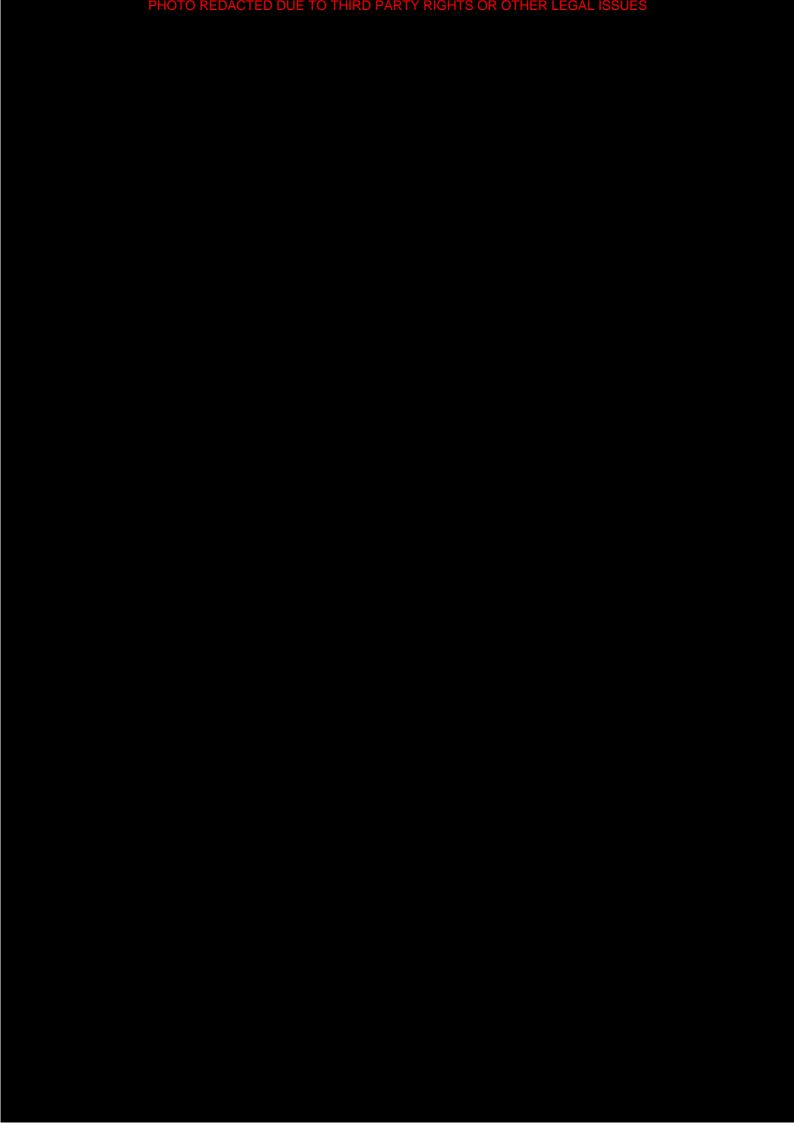


Table 21: Health and safety information (2003/04 and 2004/05 comparisons)

	2003/04	2004/05
Base: All respondents wave 7 in 2003/04 and wave 10 in 2004/05		
Unweighted	2,028	1,876
	% saying yes	% saying yes
Emergency arrangements for Fire	89	94
Emergency arrangements for first aid and how to report an accident	87	92
Any dangers involved with your training and how to work safely	86	89
Who to ask for any health and safety advice or instructions	85	92

This question was single response per precode (yes or no).

Table 22: Difficulties encountered (2003/04 and 2004/05 comparisons) Mentions of above 5 per cent

	2003/04	2004/05
Base: All respondents wave 7 in 2003/04 and wave 10 in 2004/05		
Unweighted	2,028	1,876
	%	%
No problems encountered	51	48
Maintaining personal motivation	15	20
Standard of work required	16	18
Other commitments at work	18	17
Money pressures	14	16
Other commitments at home	15	15
Travel	9	13
Maths or numeracy skills	9	11
Extra help promised not provided	7	9
Reading/writing skills	6	8

Almost half (48 per cent) said that they had not experienced any of the difficulties prompted in the survey. The five difficulties, mentioned by the highest percentage of learners were:

- a fifth (20 per cent) of learners mentioned maintaining personal motivation
- slightly fewer (18 per cent) of learners mentioned managing to keep up with the standard of work
- 17 per cent agreed that they had encountered problems at some stage with other commitments at work
- a similar level (16 per cent) mentioned money pressures
- 15 per cent mentioned other commitments at home.

Differences by gender and age

123

Females in 2004/05 were more likely than males to say that they had not encountered any problems at all. Of those that did mention a problem, they were significantly more likely than males to mention meeting commitments at home.

Learners seeking help or advice for difficulties

Proportion of learners seeking help or advice

124

The survey asked if learners who experienced problems on their course/programme had sought advice or help from the college, provider or workplace on any of these matters.

125

In 2004/5, almost two fifths of respondents (39 per cent) who said that they had experienced one problem or more whilst on their training, said that they had sought help and advice from their provider on such issues.

Differences by gender and age

126

Whilst there were marked differences in response by age and gender in 2003/04, there only appears to be a gender influence in 2004/05. In 2004/05, 35 per cent of males said that they had sought advice from their provider compared with 44 per cent of females.

Table 23: Difficulties encountered by gender and age (2004/05 data) Mentions of above 5 per cent

	Total	Male	Female	16-18	19-24	25 plus
Base: All respondents wave 10 2004/05						
Unweighted	1,876	930	946	832	904	140
	%	%	%	%	%	%
No problems encountered	48	46	50	49	47	51
Maintaining personal motivation	20	21	19	20	20	18
Standard of work required	18	19	17	20	18	14
Other commitments at work	17	18	17	14	19	21
Money pressures	16	17	15	15	16	11
Other commitments at home	15	13	17	14	15	21
Travel	13	15	12	16	12	9
Maths or numeracy skills	11	11	10	12	10	7
Extra help promised not provided	9	9	9	10	8	7
Reading/writing skills	8	9	7	9	7	4

Table 24 has already shown the significant increase in seeking advice; it appears that there has been a significant rise for both males and females year-on-year:

- there has been a +11 percentage point increase for females reporting that they had sought advice (from 33 per cent in 2003/04 to 44 per cent in 2004/05)
- there has been a +7 percentage point increase for males reporting that they had sought advice (from 28 per cent in 2003/04 to 35 per cent in 2004/05).

Usefulness of help/advice

128

In 2004/05, 41 per cent of respondents who had sought advice and help from their provider on problems encountered said that this advice had been 'very useful'; a further 42 per cent said that it had been 'fairly useful'. Almost a fifth (18 per cent) said that it had been 'not very useful' or 'not at all useful'.

129

Not only has there been an increase in the proportion of learners seeking advice from their provider, the data also shows that, year-on-year, the quality of advice or help has improved slightly. In 2003/04 37 per cent of learners said that the advice had been 'very useful' compared with 41 per cent this year (an increase of +4 percentage points). There has been a decrease in the proportion stating 'fairly useful'. The percentage of learners who stated that advice was not useful has stayed the same at 18 per cent year-on-year.

Table 24: Have you sought advice or help from your provider on any of these matters? (2003/04 and 2004/05 comparisons)

	2003/04	2004/05
Base: All respondents wave 7 in 2003/04 and wave 10 in 2004/05		
Unweighted	997	964
	%	%
Yes	31	39
No	69	60

This question allowed a single response. Learners who responded 'don't know' not shown.

Table 25: Usefulness of advice? (2003/04 and 2004/05 comparisons)

	2003/04	2004/05
Base: All respondents wave 7 in 2003/04 and wave 10 in 2004/05		
Unweighted	305	382
	%	%
Very useful	37	41
Fairly useful	44	42
Not very useful	12	11
Not at all useful	6	7

Learner complaints

Proportions recording complaints 130

The survey asked all learners in wave 9 if they had made a complaint about the course/programme to their provider. An important consideration here is that learners' complaints were self-defined and this question is not a measure of those who sought to institute a formal process to deal with their particular complaint. It does include informal discussions about particular issues with a member of staff at their provider.

131

Of learners in the 2004/5 survey, 14 per cent reported that they had made a complaint about some part of their learning experience. This figure was comparable with findings from 2001/02, 2002/03 and 2003/04.

Differences by gender and age

132

There was no difference at all in the likelihood to record complaints by gender. There was a slight tendency for more of the 16–18 year old learners to report complaints (15 per cent of the 16–18s and 14 per cent of the 19–24s compared with 10 per cent of the 25 plus group).

Outcome of complaint

133

Table 26 shows that in 2004/05, 43 per cent of learners in the survey who made a complaint said the outcome satisfied them, almost two in 10 (17 per cent) said the outcome did not satisfy them and more than a third (38 per cent) said there was 'no outcome at all'.

134

This compares positively with 2003/04. The proportion of learners who reported complaints that also said that an outcome was satisfying has increased by +10 percentage points (from 33 per cent in 2003/04 to 43 per cent in 2004/05). A similar proportion noted that there was an outcome that did not satisfy them, meaning that there has been a reduction in the percentage of learners who said that there was 'no outcome at all'.

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Table 26: Outcome of complaint (2003/04 and 2004/05 comparisons)

	2003/04	2004/05
Base: All respondents wave 7 in 2003/04 and wave 10 in 2004/05		
Unweighted	305	264
	%	%
There was an outcome that satisfied me	33	43
There was an outcome that did not satisfy me	13	17
There was no outcome at all	52	38

Impact of Learning and Attitudes to Learning

135

In the 2004/05 survey learners were asked about attitudes to learning and the benefits they had received from their learning experience. This year, the LSC added a question about attitudes toward responsibilities/self discipline, taking a challenge and comfort in the learning environment. This section also looks at likelihood to learn again in the next three years.

Key messages

136

With regards to shifts in attitude over time, almost nine in ten (85 per cent) learners who said that they had negative feelings about education when leaving school also agreed that they were, at the time of the survey, enjoying learning and getting a 'buzz' from it.

137

The social life of learning is important, with just over half of work-based learners agreeing that they enjoyed learning mostly due to the social aspects.

138

With regard to attitudes toward responsibilities and new challenges, almost all work-based learners agreed that they liked a new challenge (93 per cent) and the majority found it easy to motivate themselves for learning (77 per cent). However, the data for 2004/05 showed that a significant proportion of learners had concerns about the standard or work required, managing their time properly and/or taking on new responsibilities.

Table 27: Attitudes about education when leaving school (2003/04 and 2004/05 comparisons)

	2003/04	2004/05
Base: All respondents wave 8 in 2003/04 and wave 11 in 2004/05		
Unweighted	2,037	1,874
	%	%
Generally positive	50	46
Generally negative	17	21
Not bothered either way - indifferent	32	32

This question allowed a single response. Learners who responded 'don't know' not shown.

Table 28: Attitudes about education when leaving school, by gender and age (2004/05 data)

Base: All those who made a complaint	Total	Male	Female	16-18	19-24	25 plus
Base: All respondents wave 11 2004/05						
Unweighted	1,874	979	895	840	882	152
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Generally positive	46	43	50	44	49	45
Generally negative	21	22	19	25	17	22
Not bothered either way - indifferent	32	34	29	30	33	32

A strong belief in the benefits of the current learning experience was noted once again in 2004/05 (similar to previous years). Over three quarters of learners agreed that their learning experience gave them skills they could use for a job, more confidence in the ability to learn, enhanced their creativity, gave them greater enthusiasm for the subject, enabled them to be better at learning on their own and/or made them more positive about learning than when they started.

140

Almost half (46 per cent) of work-based learners were 'very likely' to learn again in the next three years.

Learners' feelings towards education when leaving school

141

One of the important aspects of surveying learners is to gather information about what might have changed, particularly in terms of learner's attitudes and perceptions as a result of their learning experiences, and how learners now view past and present experiences.

142

This means it is important to try and gain some measure of learners' views about their experiences prior to entering their current learning programmes, and where possible compare or contrast these with attitudes now.

143

Table 27 shows that in the 2004/05 survey, almost half (46 per cent) of work-based learners had 'generally positive' feelings about education when leaving school, compared with a fifth of learners (21 per cent) who had 'generally negative' feelings about education. Almost a third of learners (32 per cent) were neither positive nor negative about their views on schooling.

144

Table 27 also shows that the proportion of learners in this sector who were positive about education when leaving school declined slightly year-on-year (from 50 per cent in 2003/04 to 46 per cent in 2004/05). The fact that more learners in 2004/05 stated that they were negative about education when leaving school may have implications for the sector in terms of levels of disenchantment with learning on entry.

Differences by gender and age

145

Age at the time of the survey appeared to show no significant difference on attitudes to education when leaving school.

Differences were apparent when comparing female and male learners in 2004/05 (as it was in the previous year). In 2004/05 half (50 per cent) of the female learners in the survey responded positively, compared with fewer than half (43 per cent) of male learners.

146

These results suggest that females in the sector generally viewed their prior learning experiences more positively and were rather less likely to be indifferent about education when compared with male learners

How learners currently feel about learning

147

Questions in the survey have provided information about how learners felt about learning at the time of the interview. Learners were asked which statements, if any, applied to themselves.

Table 29: Attitude to learning currently (2003/04 and 2004/05 comparisons)

	2003/04	2004/05
Base: All respondents wave 8 in 2003/04 and wave 11 in 2004/05		
Unweighted	2,037	1,874
	%	%
I enjoy learning and get a buzz from it	59	55
I enjoy learning mostly because of the social aspects	52	53
I am carrying on learning because I can't think of anything else to do	11	11
I don't really enjoy learning	11	9

In 2004/05 just over half (55 per cent) said that they enjoyed learning and were getting a 'buzz' from it. Almost as many (53 per cent) said that they enjoyed learning for the social aspects.

Approximately one in ten said that they were carrying on learning because they could think of nothing better to do (11 per cent) and/or that they did not really enjoy learning (nine per cent).

149

Compared with the survey in 2003/04, the data was largely comparable. The only point to mention is that the proportion saying they were getting a 'buzz' out of learning appears to have decreased slightly year-on-year (from 59 per cent to 55 per cent).

150

It is interesting to note at this point that in 2004/05, 85 per cent of learners in this sector who said that they had a 'generally negative' attitude to learning when leaving school went on to say that they were getting a 'buzz' out of learning. This should be seen as positive.

Differences by gender and age

151

Whilst males and females equally enjoyed the social aspects of learning, females were much more likely to be getting a 'buzz' from it (64 per cent compared with 47 per cent). The 25 plus age group were significantly more likely to be getting a 'buzz' from learning and significantly less likely to be enjoying the social aspects. Table 30 gives the detail.

Attitudes toward the responsibility of learning

152

The survey in 2004/05 explored attitudes to learning in some more detail. The questionnaire included a number of statements which reflected possible attitudes toward responsibilities/self discipline, taking a challenge and comfort in the learning environment. The learners were asked to what extent they agreed with each statement. The statements are given below:

Broad area	Statement offered to respondent
Challenges	I get very nervous about the standard of work required I always like a new challenge
Learning environment	I feel out of place in a classroom situation
Responsibilities and self discipline	I do not usually enjoy taking on new responsibilities I find it easy to motivate myself for learning I can never seem to manage my time properly

Table 30: Attitude to learning currently, by gender and age (2004/05 data)

Base: All those who made a complaint	Total	Male	Female	16-18	19-24	25 plus
Base: All respondents wave 11 2004/05						
Unweighted	1,874	979	895	840	882	152
	%	%	%	%	%	%
I enjoy learning and get a buzz from it	55	47	64	48	58	75
I enjoy learning mostly because of the social aspects	53	53	53	59	49	37
I am carrying on learning because I can't think of anything else to do	11	12	10	13	11	5
I don't really enjoy learning	9	11	8	11	9	5

Table 31 shows the percentage of all respondents agreeing strongly or slightly to each of the statements. The main points to note were that:

- almost all agreed that they like a new challenge (93 per cent)
- just over three quarters (77 per cent) find it easy to motivate themselves for learning
- a significant proportion, between two and three in ten learners, were concerned about the following issues:
 - the standard of work required
 - managing their time properly
 - taking on new responsibilities.

Differences by gender and age (2004/05 data)

154

The only differences by gender and age were that females and the 25 plus age group were more likely to have agreed that they found it easy to motivate themselves for learning (see Table 32).

Benefits of learning

155

Learners in the 2003/04 and the 2004/05 survey were able to identify from a list of possible benefits, which they thought related to their learning experience.

Learners were asked to agree or disagree with statements regarding the effect their learning experience had on them personally. Responses are shown in Table 33, with the most common impacts in 2004/05 being those mentioned by at least eight in ten learners:

- It has given me skills I can use for a job (95 per cent)
- I feel more confident in my ability to learn (91 per cent)
- I am more creative and prepared to try new things (88 per cent)
- I have a greater enthusiasm for the subject (84 per cent).
- I am better at learning on my own (81 per cent)
- I feel more positive about learning than when I started (81 per cent).

156

Benefits mentioned by at least seven in ten learners in 2004/05 were:

- I feel more confident socially (75 per cent)
- It enables me to cope better with daily life (71 per cent).

157

Looking at the 'impact' data year-on-year, the main observation is that agreement with most of the impact or benefits of learning has increased slightly. An increase in the proportions of learners reporting the following benefits has also been significant (an increase of at least +4 percentage points):

- I feel more confident socially
- It enables me to cope better with daily life
- It has benefited my health and sense of well being.

Table 31: Attitudes toward responsibilities/self discipline, taking a challenge and comfort in the learning environment (2004/05 data)

	2004/05
Base: All respondents wave 11 in 2004/05	
Unweighted	1,874
	% agreeing
I always like a new challenge	93
I find it easy to motivate myself for learning	77
I get very nervous about the standard of work required	31
I can never seem to manage my time properly	25
I do not usually enjoy taking on new responsibilities	23
I feel out of place in a classroom situation	16

Table 32: Attitudes toward responsibilities/self discipline, taking a challenge and comfort in the learning environment by gender and age (2004/05 data)

Base: All those who made a complaint	Total	Male	Female	16-18	19-24	25 plus
Base: All respondents wave 11 2004/05						
Unweighted	1,874	979	895	840	882	152
	%	%	%	%	%	%
I always like a new challenge	93	94	92	92	95	94
I find it easy to motivate myself for learning	77	75	80	75	78	80
I get very nervous about the standard of work required	31	31	31	35	27	31
I can never seem to manage my time properly	25	26	24	27	22	28
I do not usually enjoy taking on new responsibilities	23	26	20	27	20	20
I feel out of place in a classroom situation	16	17	16	19	14	16

 $This \ question \ allowed \ a \ single \ response \ per \ precode. Table \ shows \ all \ rating \ strongly \ agree/slightly \ agree$

Table 33: Impacts of this learning event (2003/04 and 2004/05 comparisons)

	2003/04	2004/05
Base: All respondents wave 8 in 2003/04 and wave 11 in 2004/05		
Unweighted	2,037	1,874
	%	%
It has given me the skills I can use for a/my job	95	95
I feel more confident in my ability to learn	88	91
I am more creative and prepared to try new things	86	88
I have a greater enthusiasm for the subject	81	84
I am better at learning on my own now	81	81
I feel more positive about learning than I did when I started	78	81
I am better at managing my time and responsibilities	79	80
I feel more confident socially	71	75
It enables me to cope better with daily life	64	71
It has benefited my health and sense of well being	56	60

This question allowed a multiple response. Learners who responded 'don't know' not shown.

It is important to note that in 2004/05, 85 per cent of those who said that they had 'generally negative' feelings about education when leaving school agreed that they now feel more positive about learning due to this learning experience.

Differences by gender and age

159

Females were significantly more likely than males to report some of the impacts, in particular:

• I am better at managing my time and responsibilities (83 per cent compared with 77 per cent of males)

- I am more creative and prepared to try new things (90 per cent compared with 85 per cent of males)
- I feel more positive about learning than I did when I started (84 per cent compared with 79 per cent of males)
- I feel more confident socially (77 per cent compared with 72 per cent of males).

160

The 25 plus age group were less likely to report most of the impacts than their younger counterparts. More specifically these were:

- It has given me the skills I can use for a/my job
- I feel more confident in my ability to learn
- I am more creative and prepared to try new things
- I have a greater enthusiasm for the subject
- I am better at learning on my own now
- I feel more confident socially
- It enables me to cope better with daily life
- It has benefited my health and sense of well being.

Table 34: Impacts of this learning event, by age and gender (2004/05 data)

	Total	Male	Female	16-18	19-24	25 plus
Base: All respondents wave 11 2004/05						
Unweighted	1,874	979	895	840	882	152
	%	%	%	%	%	%
It has given me the skills I can use for a/my job	95	95	96	95	97	90
I feel more confident in my ability to learn	91	90	92	92	91	86
I am more creative and prepared to try new things	88	85	90	90	87	78
I have a greater enthusiasm for the subject	84	82	85	85	83	78
I am better at learning on my own now	81	80	82	81	83	74
I feel more positive about learning than I did when I started	81	79	84	85	78	82
I am better at managing my time and responsibilities	80	77	83	83	79	70
I feel more confident socially	75	72	77	83	69	61
It enables me to cope better with daily life	71	70	73	78	68	57
It has benefited my health and sense of well being	60	59	60	66	55	48

Table 35: Likelihood to learn again in the next three years (2003/04 and 2004/05 comparisons)

	2003/04	2004/05
Base: All respondents for all waves (core question)		
Unweighted	2,046	5,619
	%	%
Very likely	44	46
Fairly likely	33	33
Fairly unlikely	12	10
Very unlikely	9	8

This question allowed a single response. Learners who responded 'don't know' not shown.

Likelihood to undertake further learning in the next three years?

161

An issue of importance to the entire learning community is the extent to which learners wish to continue their learning experiences. In 2004/05 almost half (46 per cent) of work-based learners said that they would be 'very likely' to go into learning again in the next three years. A further third (33 per cent) said that they would be 'fairly likely'. In total, 18 per cent said that they would be 'fairly likely' to return to learning.

162

The data for this year shows little movement in the likelihood to learn again from that given in 2003/04.

Differences by gender and age

163

Females in 2004/05 were significantly more likely to learn again in the next three years. Half (50 per cent) said they would be 'very likely' compared with 43 per cent of males. In total (combining 'very' and 'fairly likely') 82 per cent of females were likely to learn again compared with 77 per cent of males.

164

There were no major differences by age in 2004/05.

Differences by other variables

165

There was no significant variation in the data by disability of the learner for this measure.

166

Learners from minority ethnic groups did show a far greater likelihood to learn again compared with other learners (54 per cent compared with 46 per cent said that they were 'very likely').

Related Publications

National Learner Satisfaction Survey: Highlights from 2004/05

Publication reference: LSC-P-NAT-060382

National Learner Satisfaction Survey: Guidance on the core methodology and core auestionnaire

Publication reference: LSC-P-NAT-060386

National Learner Satisfaction Survey: Further Education 2004/05

Publication reference: LSC-P-NAT-060387

National Learner Satisfaction Survey: Adult and Community Learning 2004/05 Publication reference: LSC-P-NAT-060389

Useful Website:

The 2004/05 National Learner Satisfaction Survey is available from http://researchtools.lsc.gov.uk

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