Skills Funding Agency

Learner Satisfaction Survey Community Learning Extended Trial 2013 to 2014

This report was undertaken by Ipsos MORI on behalf of the Skills Funding Agency

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Of interest to colleges, training organisations and the general public interested in the 2013 to 2014 Learner Satisfaction Survey Community Learning Extended Trial.

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Section 1: Introduction and Methodology

This report provides a summary of the findings for the 2013 to 2014 Extended Trial of the Learner Satisfaction Survey for Community Learning. The survey ran at the same time as the main FE Choices Learner Satisfaction Survey (Version 6).

Learner Satisfaction pilots for Community Learning also took place in the surveys in 2011 to 2012 (Version 4) and 2012 to 2013 (Version 5). The Version 5 survey was targeted specifically at the 15 Community Learning Trust pilots (CLTs) and there were eight colleges and training organisations (providers) from the trusts that participated. CLT providers were developing new ways of working in partnership with their communities with a view to meeting the needs of all potential learners. Feedback indicated that the Learner Satisfaction Survey generated useful insight for these providers. For the academic year 2013 to 2014 (Version 6), an extended Learner Satisfaction trial for Community Learning took place, with all providers of this type of provision encouraged to take part.

The Community Learning Extended Trial 2013 to 2014 survey window ran from 25 November 2013 to 13 April 2014, although the window closed for paper responses a month earlier due to the extra processing required compared with the online survey. The 2013 to 2014 survey involved a much larger number of providers than in the pilot the previous year. Learners from a total of 187 providers took part in the survey, with most completing the questionnaire online. The questionnaire was very similar to that used for the Community Learning Version 5 survey in the academic year 2012 to 2013. The only difference was that learners were additionally asked to identify their main reason for taking their course or activity and the main outcome of their learning. A copy of the survey questionnaire is included in Appendix 3.

For the first time, we introduced quality tests to check the robustness of each provider's returned sample, to ascertain whether or not we could award a valid score. The quality tests included an assessment on sample skew and calculation confidence interval, similar to those used for the mainstream Learner Satisfaction Survey. The final score calculation included a weighting factor, to counter any imbalance in the sample based on

the age and gender of learners when compared to each provider's Community Learning population as a whole.

All providers that took part in the survey received a detailed report on the results (Appendix 4). Following the completion of the survey and dissemination of the reports, we carried out a number of telephone interviews with the Community Learning provider staff involved in the survey. This report analyses the results of the survey and includes some initial feedback from providers on the survey process and the value of the outputs.

Section 2: Findings from the Survey

Survey responses summary

The table below (Figure 1) summarises the total number of responses by learners during the survey window.

Figure 1: Summary of Survey Respondents

	All Responses
Number of providers participating	187
Total number of survey responses	26,131
Total number of paper based questionnaire responses	9,500
Percentage of responses which were paper based questionnaires	36%
Total number of learners who responded given help	3,457

The survey questionnaire asked respondents if they were completing the survey themselves or were receiving help from someone else. Of the 26,131 valid responses, 3,457 (13%) said they were receiving help. This figure is considerably higher than the equivalent figure for the 2013 to 2014 Version 6 mainstream survey (7.2%).

Statistical significance

Each provider's survey sample underwent two quality tests to check for statistical robustness. The first was a confidence interval test for minimum sample size. We used the latest available Individualised Learner Record (ILR) datasets to calculate the number of eligible learners attending each provider in the survey period (25 November 2013 to 13 April 2014). We then used this figure to calculate the minimum returned sample size that would generate 95% confidence that the measured results were within 5% of the estimated true value, providing the sample was broadly representative. We awarded providers a score if they achieved a sufficiently large sample to pass this test, or reached the threshold of at least 70% of all eligible learners providing valid responses.

In addition to the confidence interval test, the skew test was used to ensure that the degree of bias within the sample submitted by individual providers was within acceptable parameters. Details of how we calculated both quality thresholds are available in Appendix 5.

Of the 187 providers that had Community Learning learners return questionnaires, 60 achieved a sufficiently robust sample to pass the confidence interval and skew quality tests and were awarded a score. In almost all cases, the reason providers did not pass was that the sample size was too small. The sample quality tests described above mirror the tests used for the main Learner Satisfaction Survey, although many Community Learning providers did not survey sufficient numbers of learners to pass the confidence interval test.

The Community Learning Survey takes longer to organise than the main Learner Satisfaction Survey due to provision being spread across multiple community venues, often without IT facilities available to learners. With the survey opening in late November, very few providers managed to survey sufficient numbers of learners who completed courses in December. These learners would be within the survey window and included in the survey population for calculating the sample confidence interval, but would not be around during the spring term when most providers conducted the survey. Therefore, we recommend starting the survey a few weeks earlier to enable more learners to take part during the autumn term.

Profile of respondents

Figures 2 shows the gender profile of learners who responded to the survey and compares it with the national population of Community Learning learners.

Figure 2: Gender Profile of Survey Respondents compared to BIS-funded Community Learning Total Population
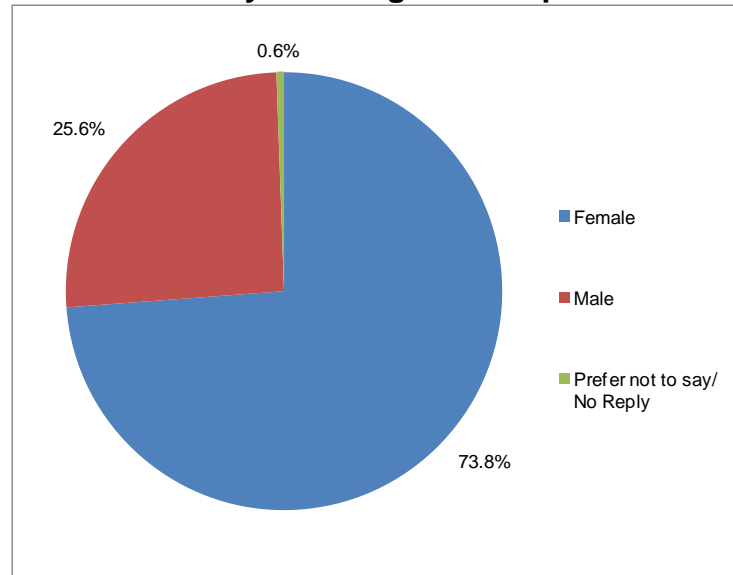
Survey Sample (Base = 26,131)

Community Learning Total Population (Base = 264,178)

The survey sample gender profile was exactly in line with the Community Learning population as a whole and reflected the high proportion of females engaged in this type of provision. (The Community Learning population is defined as all learners taking

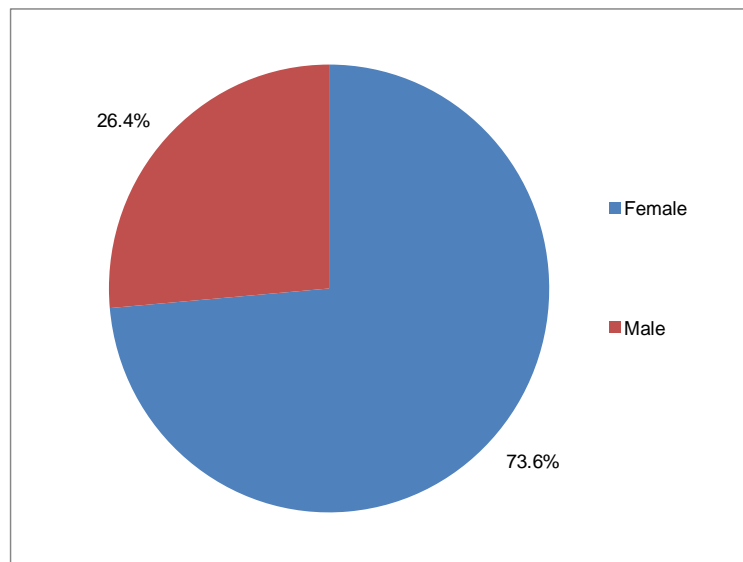courses and activities funded through the Community Learning budget within the survey window (25 November 2013 to 13 April 2014).

Figures 3 shows the age profile of learners who responded to the survey and compares it with the national population of Community Learning learners.

Figure 3: Age Profile of Survey Respondents compared to BIS-funded Community Learning Total Population
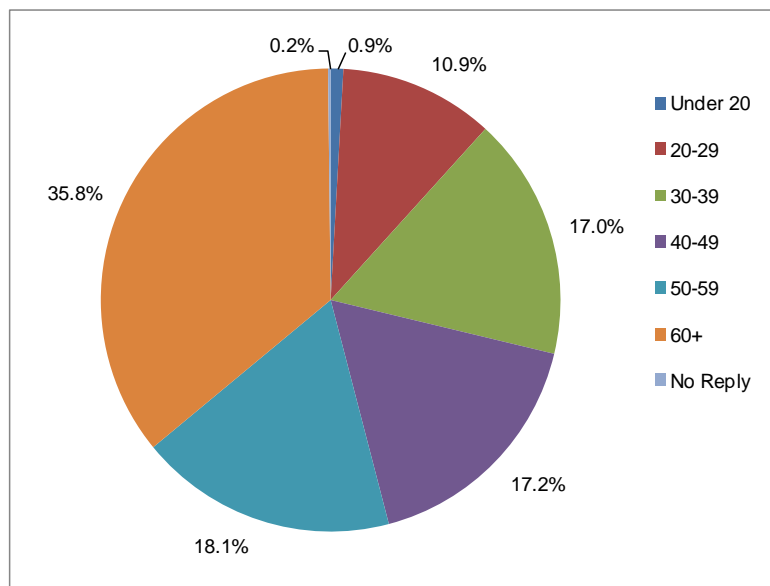

Survey Sample (Base = 26,131)
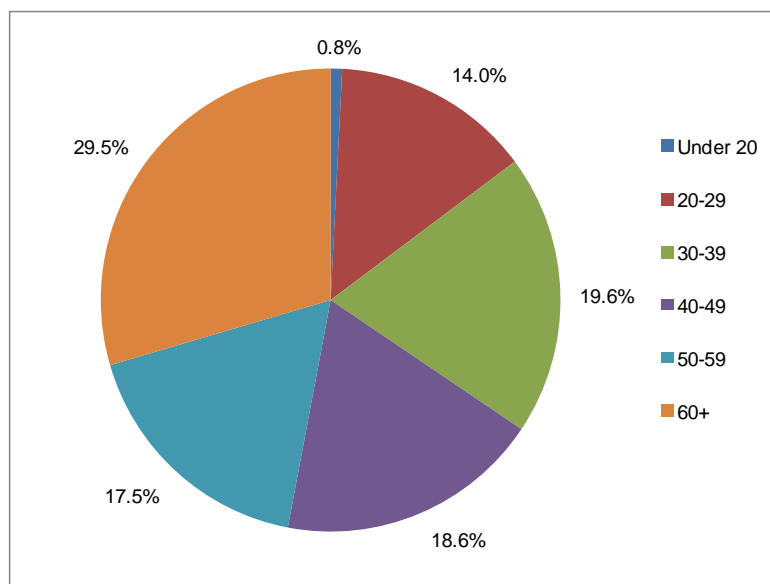
Community Learning Total Population (Base = 264,178)

The charts show that there was a relatively close match between the age profile of the sample and the overall Community Learning population. However, learners aged 60 and over were slightly over-represented in the sample and those age 30 and under were slightly under-represented.

Survey responses

The survey questionnaire comprised 15 questions (see Appendix 3 for a copy of the survey instrument). Q1 and Q2 asked learners to give their reasons for taking the course and identify the main reason. The 10 questions from Q3 to Q12 asked learners to rate various aspects of their course or activity on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 equals "very bad" and 10 equals "very good". We used the responses to these questions to calculate the overall satisfaction score for each provider. Q13 asked learners how likely they were to recommend their course or actively to friends or family on a five-point scale running from "extremely likely" to "extremely unlikely". Finally, Q14 and Q15 asked learners about the impact of their learning and the main outcome.

The table below shows the response to the 10 scoring questions (Q3 to Q12) and the average satisfaction scores given by learners to each question. Where possible, comparisons are made with overall scores and adult subgroup scores for equivalent questions from the mainstream FE Choices Learner Satisfaction Survey (Version 6).

Figure 4: Responses to the 10 Satisfaction Scoring Questions
(Including Comparison with FE Choices Learner Satisfaction Version 6)

|	Community Learning Survey		Mainstream FE Choices Survey		
Question	Responses	Overall Average Score	Overall Average Score	Adults Average Score	Adults at Local Authorities Average
Q3. How good or bad was the information you were given when you were choosing your course or activity?	24458	8.5	8.2	8.5	8.6
Q4. How good or bad was the help staff gave you in the first few weeks of your course or activity?	25911	9.1	8.4	8.7	9.0
Q5. How good or bad is the teaching on your course or activity?	25993	9.4	8.5	8.9	9.3
Q6. How good or bad is the respect staff show to you?	25965	9.6	8.8	9.3	9.5
Q7. How good or bad is the advice you have been given about what you can do after this course or activity?	19448	8.7	8.0	8.4	8.5
Q8. How good or bad is the support you get on this course or activity?	24656	9.4	8.5	8.9	9.2
Q9. How good or bad are the staff at listening to views of learners?	24158	9.3	8.2	8.8	9.0
Q10. How good or bad are the staff at acting on the views of learners ?	23256	9.2	8.0	8.6	8.9
Q11. How good or bad has the course or activity been at meeting your expectations?	21239	9.1	---	---	---
Q12. Overall, how good or bad do you think the organisation that provides your learning is?	25903	9.1	8.4	8.8	9.1
Overall		**9.1**	**8.4**	**8.8**	**9.0**

The average satisfaction scores given by Community Learning learners were consistently higher than the scores given by learners who participated in the main Learner Satisfaction Survey.

Community Learning learners were most satisfied by the respect shown by staff (Q6) and least satisfied by the quality of information they were given when they were initially trying to choose their course (Q3).

The following charts shows how satisfaction scores differed when broken down by age and gender. Please note that the final score calculation included a weighting factor to counter any age and/or gender imbalance within a provider's survey sample.

Figure 5 shows the average survey scores for each of the satisfaction rating questions by gender. The scores given by females and males were very similar, although females tended to give slightly higher satisfaction scores for all 10 questions. Although the differences were small they were shown to be statically significant. (Statistical significance is defined as being at least 95% confident that the observed differences could not have occurred by chance.)

Figure 5: Survey Responses by Gender (Average Score)
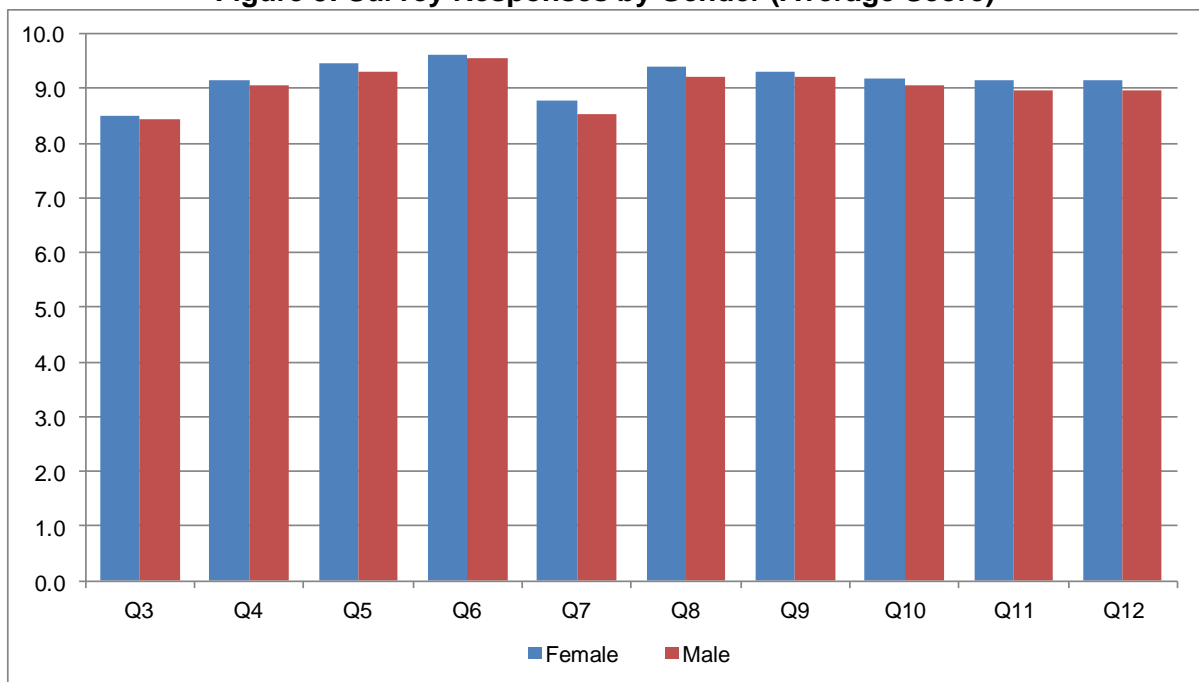
Gender	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12
Female	8.50	9.15	9.46	9.61	8.77	9.41	9.29	9.19	9.15	9.14
Male	8.44	9.06	9.32	9.54	8.55	9.22	9.20	9.06	8.98	8.96

Figure 6 shows the average survey scores for each of the satisfaction rating questions broken down by age group. Within each column, the colour scale runs from red for the highest scores, through to orange then to yellow and then to green for the lowest scores.

Figure 6: Survey Responses by Age (Average Score)

Age	Base	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12
Under 20	232	8.12	8.99	9.17	9.37	8.11	8.98	9.14	8.93	8.76	8.84
20-29	2841	8.43	9.11	9.39	9.59	8.66	9.28	9.32	9.24	9.17	9.11
30-39	4435	8.54	9.15	9.41	9.59	8.76	9.32	9.35	9.27	9.18	9.15
40-49	4492	8.48	9.11	9.42	9.56	8.70	9.34	9.24	9.18	9.14	9.10
50-59	4733	8.34	9.05	9.39	9.58	8.62	9.32	9.22	9.09	9.07	9.05
60 and over	9351	8.56	9.17	9.47	9.63	8.80	9.44	9.26	9.10	9.06	9.09

Q3. How good or bad was the information you were given when you were choosing your course or activity?
Q4. How good or bad was the help staff gave you in the first few weeks of your course or activity?
Q5. How good or bad is the teaching on your course or activity?
Q6. How good or bad is the respect staff show to you?
Q7. How good or bad is the advice you have been given about what you can do after this course or activity?
Q8. How good or bad is the support you get on this course or activity?
Q9. How good or bad are the staff at listening to views of learners?
Q10. How good or bad are the staff at acting on the views of learners?
Q11. How good or bad has the course or activity been at meeting your expectations?
Q12. Overall, how good or bad do you think the organisation that provides your learning is?

Respondents aged 60 and over gave the highest score for six of the 10 questions and were particularly positive about the teaching and support they had received on their course. Learners aged under 20 tended to give lower satisfaction ratings compared with other groups, although the number of respondents was comparatively low. This mirrors the findings from the main FE Choices Learner Satisfaction Survey, where 16- to 18-year-old learners have consistently given lower average satisfaction scores compared to those aged 19 and over.

Figure 7 shows the percentage ratings given by learners to each of the 10 scoring questions, where 0 = very bad and 10 = very good.

Figure 7: Spread of Responses
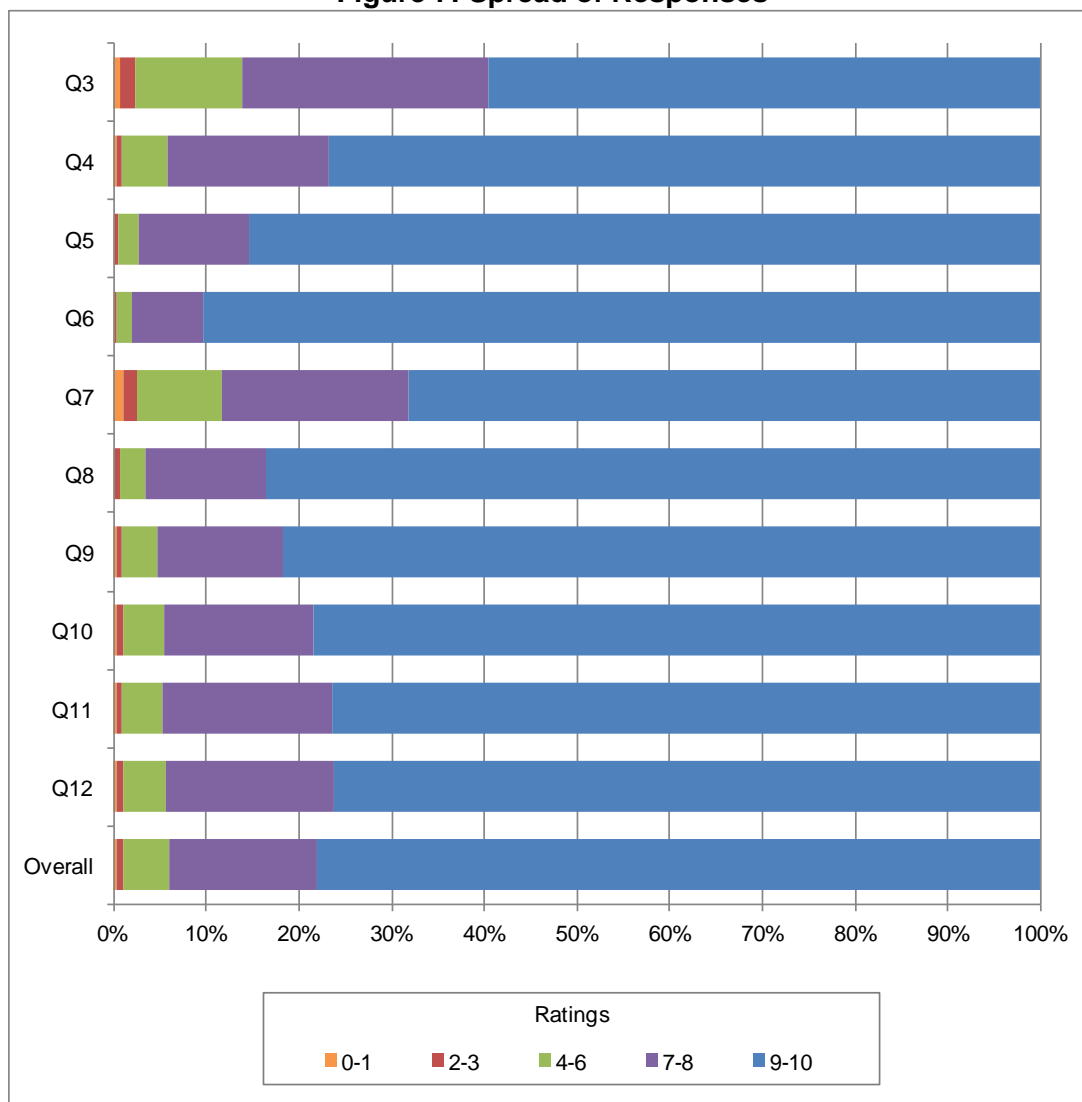
Response	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Overall
0-1	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2-3	2%	1%	0%	0%	2%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
4-6	12%	5%	2%	2%	9%	3%	4%	4%	4%	5%	5%
7-8	27%	17%	12%	8%	20%	13%	13%	16%	18%	18%	16%
9-10	59%	77%	85%	90%	68%	84%	82%	79%	76%	76%	78%

On average, four out of five learners gave scores of 9 or 10 to each of the 10 questions although, as Figure 7 illustrates, there was some variation between questions. The response to Q6 (How good or bad was the respect staff show to you staff show to you?) was extremely positive, with 90% of respondents giving a score of 9 or 10 and further 8% giving a score of seven or eight. Respondents also indicated very high levels of satisfaction with staff at their provider, with 85% giving a score of 9 or 10 for Q5 (How good or bad is the teaching on your course or activity?). Similarly, 84% of respondents

gave a score of 9 or 10 for Q8 (How good or bad is the support you get on this course or activity?).

A key question in the Community Learning survey (and not in the mainstream survey) is Q11 (How good or bad has the course or activity been at meeting your expectations?). Again, respondents tended to be very positive about this aspect of their learning.

The questions least likely to receive very high satisfaction ratings related to pre-course and post-course elements. For Q3 (How good or bad was the information you were given when you were choosing your course or activity?), 40% of respondents gave a score of eight or less. Q7 (How good or bad is the advice you have been given about what you can do after this course or activity?) also received relatively lower ratings, with almost a third of learners giving a score of eight or less.

The chart below shows how likely Community Learning respondents were to recommend their course or actively to friends or family.

Figure 8: Likelihood of recommending the course or activity
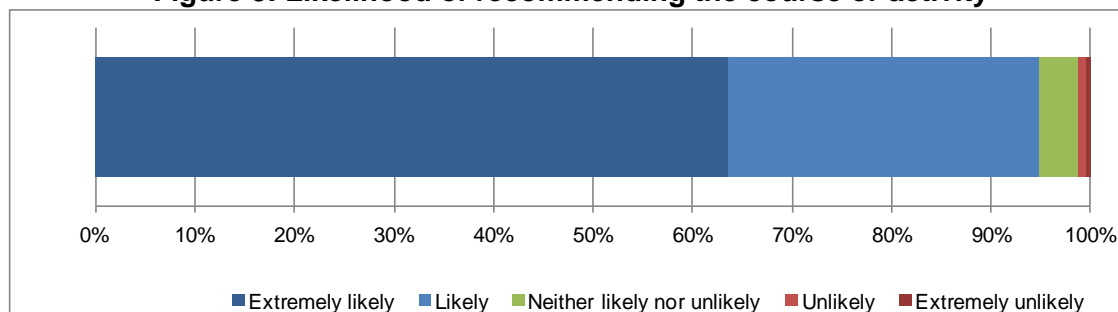
How likely is it that you would recommend the organisation that provides your learning to friends or family?	Community Learning Survey
Extremely likely	62%
Likely	31%
Neither likely nor unlikely	4%
Unlikely	1%
Extremely unlikely	0%
Does not apply / No response	2%
Base (All survey respondents)	26131

The results were very positive for Community Learning, with almost two-thirds of learners saying it was extremely likely that they would recommend their course or activity.

The following set of charts show the survey responses to the questions on the reasons for taking the course or activity and the self-reported impacts of their learning. Figure 9 shows all the reasons identified by learners.

Figure 9: Reasons for taking the course or activity
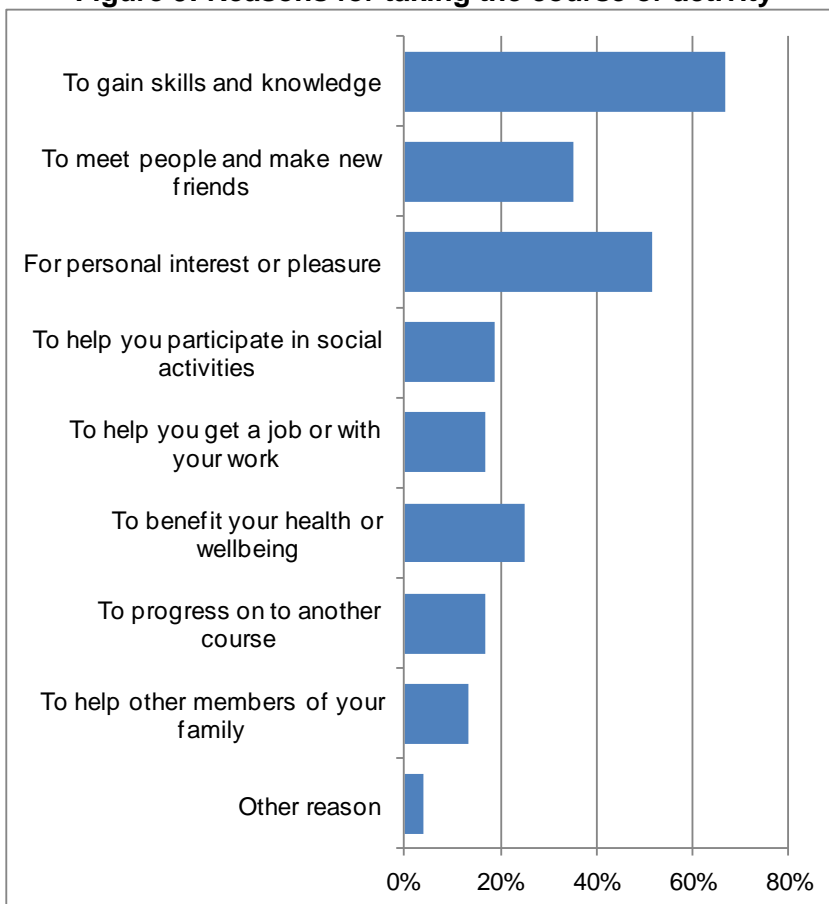
All Reasons	Count	Percent	Female	Male	Under 40	40 and over
To gain skills and knowledge	17456	66.8%	66.6%	67.3%	68.0%	66.3%
To meet people and make new friends	9200	35.2%	37.1%	29.9%	33.8%	35.8%
For personal interest or pleasure	13488	51.6%	52.7%	48.6%	40.6%	56.1%
To help you participate in social activities	4917	18.8%	18.9%	18.3%	20.6%	18.1%
To help you get a job or with your work	4446	17.0%	16.7%	17.6%	29.7%	11.9%
To benefit your health or wellbeing	6552	25.1%	26.7%	20.3%	18.3%	27.8%
To progress on to another course	4393	16.8%	16.6%	17.4%	21.9%	14.7%
To help other members of your family	3462	13.2%	14.5%	9.3%	22.6%	9.5%
Other reason	1000	3.8%	3.6%	4.4%	4.5%	3.5%

Two-thirds of respondents said that they had taken their course to gain new skills or knowledge and just over half for personal interest or pleasure. Over a third expected to meet people and make new friends through their learning. Overall, a quarter of Community Learning learners hoped their health or wellbeing would benefit from the course or activity, with females and those aged 40 and over more likely to give this reason.

The respondents were asked to identify the main reason for taking their course or activity. The chart and table below shows the results.

Figure 10: Main reason for taking the course or activity

Main Reason	Count	Percent	Female	Male	Under 40	40 and over
To gain skills and knowledge	10502	51.1%	49.8%	54.6%	50.7%	51.3%
To meet people and make new friends	613	3.0%	2.9%	3.3%	3.3%	2.9%
For personal interest or pleasure	3985	19.4%	19.4%	19.5%	12.8%	22.0%
To help you participate in social activities	340	1.7%	1.5%	2.0%	1.8%	1.6%
To help you get a job or with your work	1576	7.7%	7.2%	9.0%	13.6%	5.3%
To benefit your health or wellbeing	2038	9.9%	11.3%	6.0%	4.3%	12.1%
To progress on to another course	467	2.3%	2.4%	1.9%	4.5%	1.4%
To help other members of your family	755	3.7%	4.2%	2.2%	7.2%	2.3%
Other reason	264	1.3%	1.2%	1.4%	1.7%	1.1%

Over half of the respondents said the main reason for taking their course or activity was to gain skills and knowledge and almost a fifth cited personal interest or pleasure. One in ten learners said their main reason was to benefit their health and well-being although almost twice as many females (11.3%) as males (6.0%) said this was their main motivation for taking the course.

The following chart and table shows respondents' perceived outcomes from their learning.

Figure 11: Outcomes of taking the course or activity
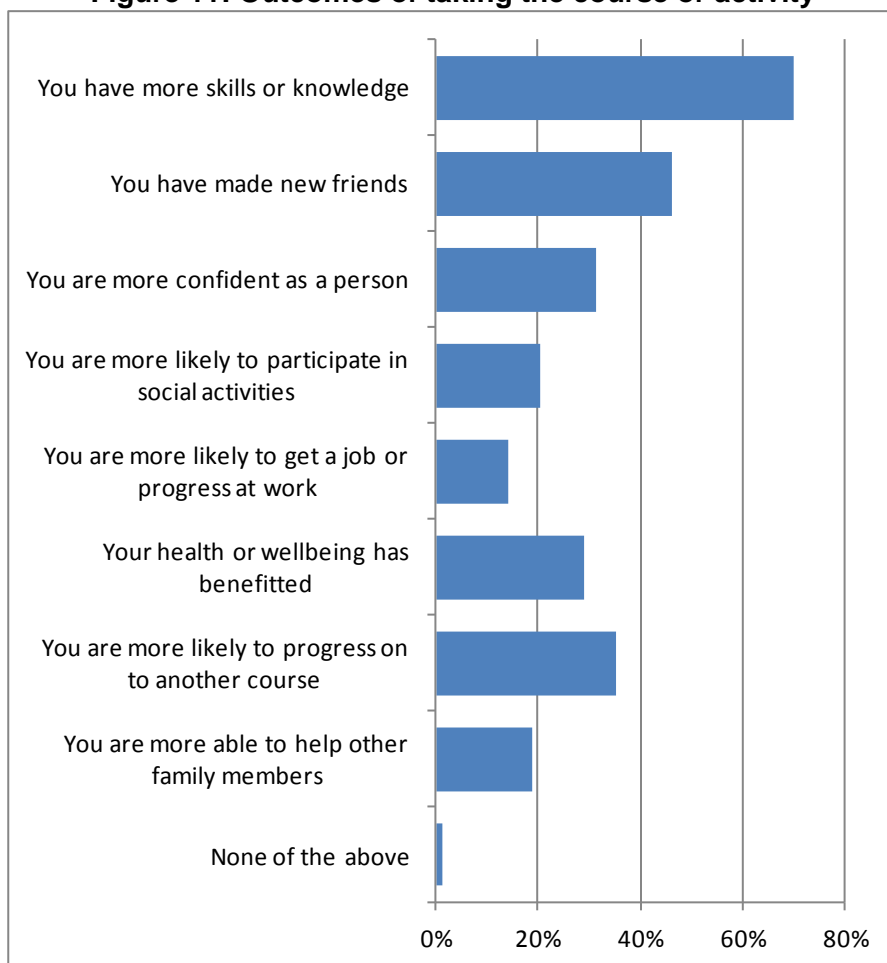
All Outcomes	Count	Percent	Female	Male	Under 40	40 and over
You have more skills or knowledge	18253	69.9%	69.5%	70.7%	68.8%	70.3%
You have made new friends	12061	46.2%	48.0%	41.0%	41.7%	48.0%
You are more confident as a person	8161	31.2%	32.2%	28.2%	36.6%	29.1%
You are more likely to participate in social activities	5323	20.4%	20.4%	20.0%	24.2%	18.8%
You are more likely to get a job or progress at work	3726	14.3%	13.9%	15.1%	24.8%	10.0%
Your health or wellbeing has benefitted	7554	28.9%	31.0%	23.0%	21.4%	32.0%
You are more likely to progress on to another course	9192	35.2%	35.0%	35.6%	37.7%	34.2%
You are more able to help other family members	4980	19.1%	20.2%	15.4%	27.5%	15.6%
None of the above	363	1.4%	1.4%	1.2%	1.6%	1.3%

As a result of taking a Community Learning course, almost 70% of learners said that they had acquired new knowledge and skills, 46% said that they had made new friends and 35% said that they were more likely to progress to another course. Those who were the most likely to say that they had gained in confidence were males and those aged under 40. Over a quarter respondents in this age group also said they were more able to help other family members as a result of their learning.

The chart and table below shows respondents' views on the main outcome of their learning.

Figure 12: Main outcome of taking the course or activity
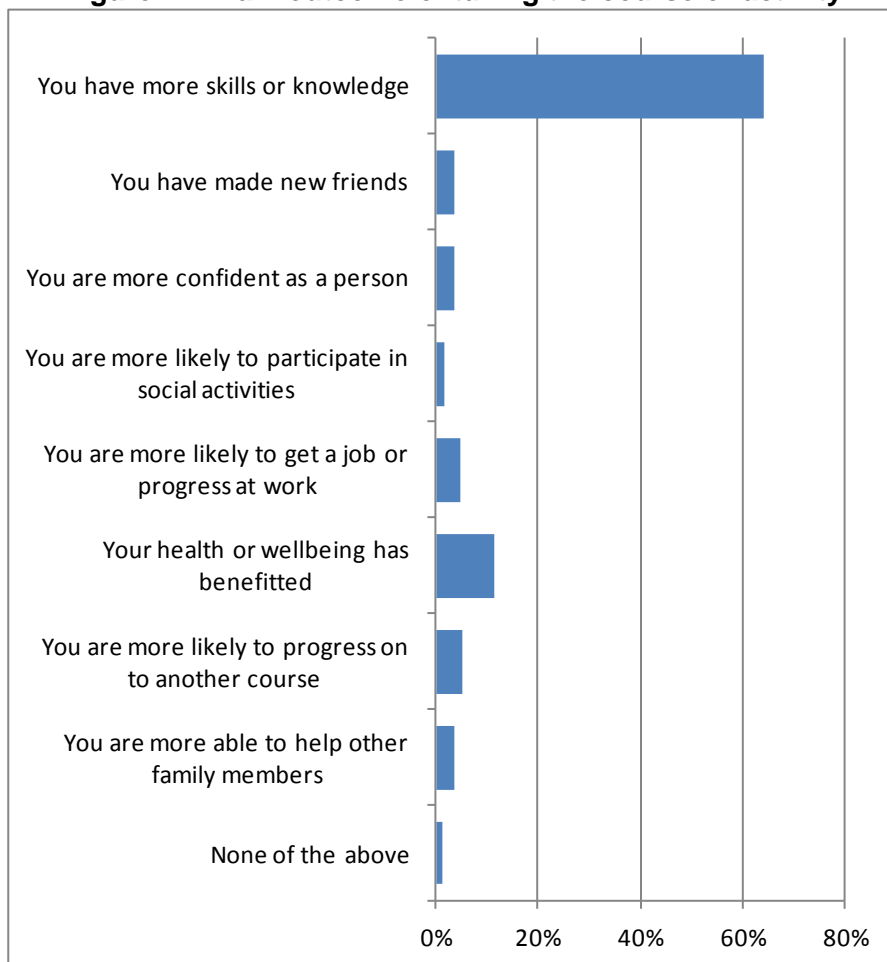
Main Outcome	Count	Percent	Female	Male	Under 40	40 and over
You have more skills or knowledge	12982	64.1%	62.6%	68.6%	58.6%	66.3%
You have made new friends	713	3.5%	3.4%	3.8%	3.9%	3.4%
You are more confident as a person	767	3.8%	3.7%	3.9%	5.7%	3.0%
You are more likely to participate in social activities	385	1.9%	1.7%	2.4%	2.4%	1.6%
You are more likely to get a job or progress at work	1004	5.0%	4.6%	6.0%	9.0%	3.4%
Your health or wellbeing has benefitted	2350	11.6%	13.3%	6.8%	5.2%	14.1%
You are more likely to progress on to another course	1042	5.1%	5.1%	5.2%	6.5%	4.6%
You are more able to help other family members	723	3.6%	4.1%	2.0%	7.2%	2.1%
None of the above	290	1.4%	1.5%	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%

The single main outcome of the learning for most learners (64.1%) was that they had gained more skills or knowledge. The second most frequently cited main outcome was improved health or wellbeing, which 11.6% of learners identified.

The chart below show the percentage of all respondents who gave each reason for taking the course set against the percentage of all respondents identifying the matching outcome.

Figure 13: Reasons for taking the course or activity and outcomes
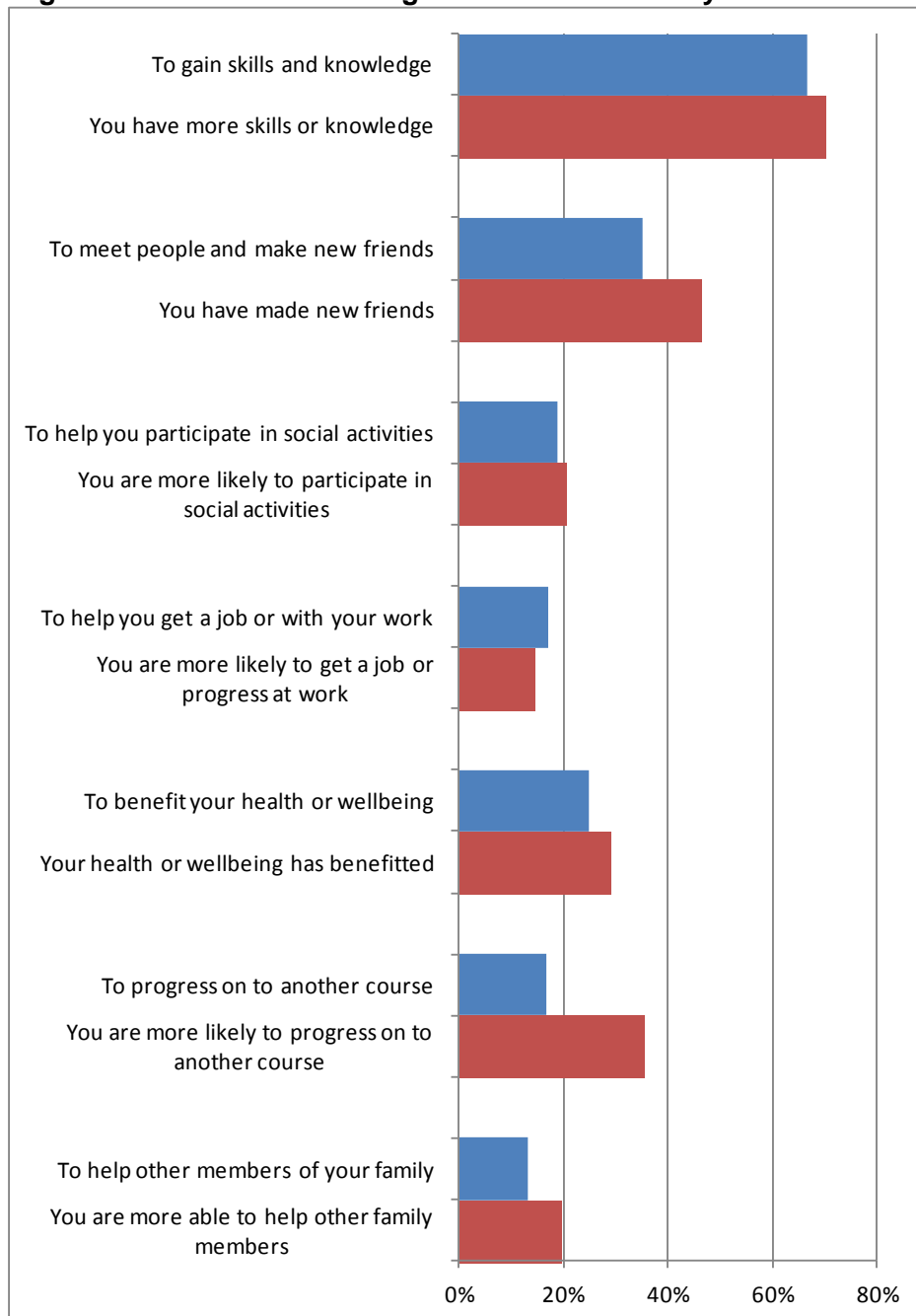
In almost every instance, the percentage identifying a particular outcome exceeded the percentage giving that particular reason for taking the course. The only exception was finding a job or helping with work where the outcome percentage was slightly lower. The learning had been particularly effective at encouraging learners to participate in further

learning. The chart on the following page shows the main reason for taking the course against the main outcome.

Figure 14: Main reason for taking the course or activity and main outcome
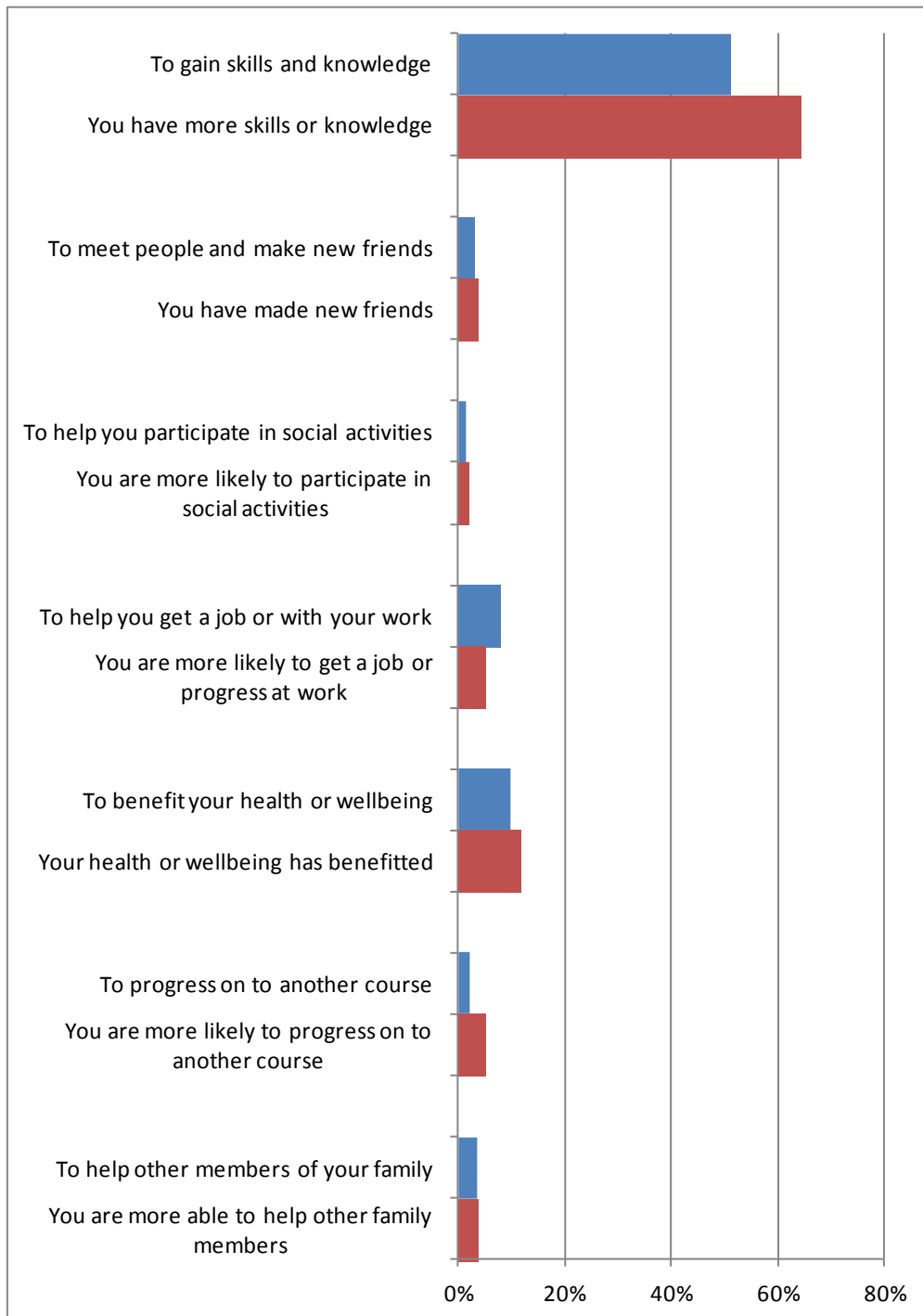
Around half the respondents said their main reason for taking the course was to gain skills and knowledge, although almost two-thirds identified this as the main outcome.

Section 3: Feedback from Providers

Following the dissemination of the Community Learning survey results to providers, we carried out a telephone survey of provider staff to gather feedback on the survey process and the value of the survey reports. We interviewed eight staff from six providers, and included those who had been involved in administering the survey and managers who could potentially use the survey results in planning provision.

We targeted a cross-section of providers and the organisations taking part in the feedback included two further education colleges, three county councils and one city council. Three of the six providers had been awarded a score but the others had not generated sufficient responses to pass the required quality thresholds.

The survey questionnaire

Respondents were generally very positive about the survey questionnaire and its relevance to Community Learning. In addition to the 10 scoring questions, the questions on reasons for taking the course and survey outcomes were also thought to be very useful and particularly relevant. One provider said the FE Choices survey, for both Community Learning and mainstream learners, was the only large-scale survey they had carried out this year.

Survey results presented in the report showed that a much higher percentage of Community Learning learners had needed help completing the questionnaire in comparison to the mainstream survey. Post-survey interviews with Community Learning provider staff who had been involved in the administration of the survey confirmed that a higher proportion of learners in this type of provision tended to need help completing the survey compared to mainstream learners. This was due to the higher proportion of older learners lacking confidence in using computers and also the higher proportion of learners requiring help with language, particularly those whose first language was not English.

Provider reports

The survey results were made available to providers in July 2014, within three months of the closure of the survey window. The reports show learners' responses to all questions

and include breakdowns by a range of learner characteristics such as age, gender and subject area studied. (See example report in Appendix 4.)

The feedback from respondents on the provider reports which showed their organisations survey results was very positive. Respondents were particularly pleased that the surveys had been processed quickly and results had been disseminated in July.

One provider explained how the results were already helping with their planning:

> "We noted from the survey results that our information and guidance score was lower in comparison to other areas. This confirmed our own findings and we are putting together a quality improvement plan for the advice and guidance we give to learners."

Another provider had already used the information from their report to put together a PowerPoint presentation to present their survey results to senior managers. Others had looked at the results and said they would definitely use the information in future. A couple of providers said the information would come in very useful when they put together their self-assessment reports early next term. Not only the results of the survey, but also the demographic information within the reports was said to be useful for self-assessment.

It was generally agreed that the information within the reports was clear and easy to use and navigate, although not all the respondents had had a detailed look at the results at the time they were interviewed. The ability to explore the data by showing the results for different learner groups, such as breakdowns by age and gender, was thought to be very useful.

One provider thought the scores for each question were very useful for their information but was unsure of how to present the results to learners. Normally, the provider feeds back survey results in the form of a percentage, for example the percentage of learners who were satisfied with their course. They were not sure how meaningful a score out of 10 would be to learners. However, the respondent thought the recommendation question which is presented as a percentage figure (that is, the overall percentage who would be likely or extremely likely to recommend the course) would be much easier to present to learners.

There was general agreement that the scores broken down by subject area contained within the reports were particularly useful. Two providers said they would be using the subject information to help with their self-assessment reports and inspection by Ofsted. Another respondent said the information would be very useful to curriculum manager for planning provision.

To help providers identify and compare scores by different delivery locations attended by learners, the reports included a breakdown of scores by postcode. Some providers thought this more useful than others. One mentioned that their organisation tends to run courses across centres, so the postcode breakdowns were not as helpful as, for example, the subject area breakdowns.

Providers thought that the responses to the questions on learners' reasons for taking their course or activity and their perceived outcome were particularly useful. One provider commented:

> "We were very interested to see the results of the "reasons and outcomes" questions. A significant number of those who attend our courses we regard as "fragile learners" and we will need to look very closely at their reasons for taking the course and make sure we are meeting them."

Another provider found the reasons and outcomes information very useful but was a little confused by the weighted numbers. They suggested that the charts would be clearer if unweighted numbers were used.

Several respondents spoke about the value of a national survey, particularly if the results were benchmarked to allow providers to compare themselves against others. Some respondents thought the national survey could possibly replace their own, while others thought it important to retain internal surveys, particularly to gather course specific feedback in the form of open questions. Some providers taking part in the mainstream FE Choices Learner Satisfaction Survey currently link their own internal questionnaires to the national survey and it could well be that a similar system could help Community Learning providers.

Organising the survey

All of the providers said that organising and implementing the survey had involved a focused effort to gather the target number of responses. However, two of the three providers awarded a valid score had also taken part in the previous pilot and their prior knowledge of how the survey worked had helped inform their survey organisation this year. One provider explained how they had set targets for individual managers, which helped them achieve a particularly good response to the survey. Another respondent whose organisation had taken part in the 2012 to 2013 Community Learning Pilot Survey said they had been better prepared this time because they had been able to build on their experiences of the previous survey. This had enabled them to capture more responses through a combination of paper and online questionnaires and they had managed to generate a sufficient number to produce a valid score.

The three providers that were awarded a score had all relied heavily on using official paper copies of the survey. One respondent explained that the paper option had been essential because much of the provision took place in community centres and local venues that did not have access to computing facilities. The provider found that paper copies of the survey were much quicker to complete because many of the learners needed one-to-one help in managing the technology for the online survey.

Respondents were generally delighted with how positive their survey results were although there was some disappointment among those who did not receive a valid score that they had not managed to survey sufficient numbers of learners. One of these providers said they had not realised it was possible to obtain official paper copies of the survey.

Section 4: Conclusions

Summary of findings

The Community Learning Learner Satisfaction Survey Extended Trial received a very good response with over 26,000 Community Learning learners from 187 providers taking part in the survey. The overall sample appeared to be a good cross-section of Community Learning as a whole and closely matched the learner population in terms of age and gender.

The results of the survey were extremely positive, with the average scores for all questions given by Community Learning learners higher than equivalent scores for the Version 5 mainstream survey.

Over 90% of learners thought it likely that they would recommend their course or activity to a friend or relative, with almost two-thirds saying it was extremely likely that they would do so.

Feedback from providers regarding the survey results was very positive. They were particularly pleased to see the high scores given by respondents across all aspects of their learning.

All of the providers that took part in the follow-up interviews had found the survey reports easy to use and the information within them useful. The scores broken down by subject area were of particular interest, with providers saying the results would be useful for self-assessment and curriculum planning. Providers were also pleased with the quick turnaround of results in July.

Around one in eight learners had received help in completing the survey, for example with language or computing skills. In the post-survey interviews, providers highlighted the need for a higher level of one-to-one support with the questionnaire for Community Learning learners compared with mainstream learners.

Learners gave a wide range of reasons for taking Community Learning courses and activities, with the most frequently stated reasons to "gain new skills and knowledge" and for "personal interest or pleasure".

As a result of taking a Community Learning course, almost 70% of learners said that they had acquired new knowledge and skills and almost half had made new friends. A particularly positive outcome was that over a third said that they were more likely to progress into further learning.

Just under a third of providers had a sufficient number of survey responses to receive an overall score. Comments from a couple of providers that had taken part in last year's pilot of the Community Learning Survey suggested that organising and implementing the survey had been more straightforward second time around.

Many providers had relied heavily upon the use of paper questionnaires in venues where computing facilities were not available. Post-survey feedback from providers highlighted the importance of the paper survey option.

Recommendations

Many providers achieved a good number of responses to the survey but still failed to meet the required threshold to pass the confidence interval test. With the survey opening in late November, very few providers managed to survey sufficient numbers of learners who completed courses in December. This is because the Community Learning Survey, compared with the main Learner Satisfaction Survey, takes longer to organise due to provision being spread across multiple community venues, often without IT facilities available to learners. Therefore it is recommended that the Community Learning Survey is started earlier to enable providers to survey more of the learners who complete their courses in December.

Feedback received from providers following the survey suggests that it is sometimes unclear to them whether particular learners should complete the Community Learning Survey or the main Learner Satisfaction Survey. The two surveys are also very similar, have the same survey window and can easily be confused. Therefore it is recommended

that the two surveys are made more distinct and providers receive more help in identifying which learners should complete which survey.

On the whole, the survey reports received very positive feedback from providers, although some were unclear about the weighting of results and how it had been applied. It is recommended that future reports include a more detailed explanation of weighting on the results sheets where it has been applied.

Appendix 1: Technical Summary of Research Methodology

Governing Research Principles

All RCU's research and consultancy work is governed by a rigorous quality assurance system that is accredited under the market research industry kitemark ISO 20252, the policies and guidelines of the Market Research Society and relevant Data Protection Legislation. For more details of ISO 20252 and the Market Research Society codes of conduct see www.mrs.org.uk.

Overview of Methodology

The Skills Funding Agency commissioned Ipsos MORI and RCU to undertake the Learner Satisfaction Survey Community Learning Extended Trial. Following the survey, RCU contacted a selection of providers by telephone to gather feedback on the survey process and reporting of results.

Project Team

- Richard Boniface, Managing Director
- Peter Byram, Director of Quantitative Research
- Chris Lee, Research Analyst
- Dave Carter, Statistical Analyst

Key Quantitative Research Elements

Element 1

- Description: Testing of the Community Learning Learner Satisfaction Survey with a sample of learners undertaking Community Learning.

- Target Population: Community Learning learners.

- Sampling: Community Learning providers selected learners to take part in the survey.

- Data quality checks: Overall, learners from 187 providers took part in the survey. In the process of matching responses to the ILR, 32 providers were identified as having learners who responded to the survey using mainstream survey questionnaires. To ensure the information provided by learners was not lost, the data from the nine questions which the two surveys have in common was included in the analysis of the Community Learning Survey.

- Broad Topic Areas: The survey comprised an introductory page, questions mirroring the national Learner Satisfaction Survey and specific questions on the social impact of Community Learning. The online and paper-based questionnaires contained identical questions and both were made available to providers. A copy of the questionnaire is available in Appendix 3.

- Storage of Raw Data: As part of our quality assurance arrangements we will keep evidence of individual survey responses for 18 months after the closure of the project and we will then securely destroy it.

Key Qualitative Research Elements

Qualitative research is not intended to produce results that are statistically representative of a wider population. Evidence was gathered using a discussion guide containing open-ended questions that were appropriate to the project's information needs.

Element 1

- Description: Telephone interviews with Community Learning provider staff.

- Target Participants: Key Community Learning provider staff that had co-ordinated and administered the survey or viewed the survey reports.

- Broad Topic Areas: The discussion guide is available in Appendix 2.

- Analysis: Respondent views have been analysed by an experienced researcher who has reported the views of respondents in a way that supports the intended project outcomes but does not risk identifying individual respondents.

- Verification: As part of our quality assurance arrangements we will keep interview/discussion records, and (where appropriate) evidence of verification for at least 18 months after the closure of the project. In the event of a need for further verification, we will make these available for examination by an agreed third party.

Reporting

The report includes a combination of direct reporting of survey outcomes and the interpretations/recommendations of RCU staff. The latter approach is clearly identifiable from the report context and/or section headings.

Appendix 2: Discussion Guide with Providers

Post-survey feedback

Comments on survey process, what went well, what were the challenges?

Views on reports?

How useful are they?

Are they easy to use / understand?

Anything about the format you would like changed?

Any additional information you would like included?

Value of the survey to your organisation?

Any other comments?

Appendix 3: Learner Satisfaction Survey Instrument for the Extended Trial

Skills Funding Agency

Community Learning

FE Choices
Learner Satisfaction Survey 2013/14

Welcome to this short Learner Satisfaction Survey. Learners all over England are answering these questions. Your answers are very important. The Skills Funding Agency will use your answers to tell future learners what different organisations that provide learning are like.

Your completed survey will go to two survey companies - Ipsos MORI and RCU. Ipsos MORI and RCU will add your answers to the answers from other learners. They will send us, the Skills Funding Agency, the results. None of your lecturers, trainers or supervisors will see your answers.

The survey follows the rules of the Market Research Society. If you have any questions about the survey, you can contact the research company, Ipsos MORI at http://fechoices.ipsos-mori.com/contactus.

Ipsos MORI and RCU will keep your survey for no more than 18 months. If you want us to destroy your answers before then, please email us at servicedesk@thedataservice.org.uk.

If you are happy to take part in the survey, please carry on.

Version D

Q13. How likely is it that you would recommend the organisation that provides your learning to friends or family?

- ☐ Extremely likely
- ☐ Likely
- ☐ Neither likely nor unlikely
- ☐ Unlikely
- ☐ Extremely unlikely
- ☐ Does not apply

Q14. As a result of taking the course or activity would you say that: (Tick ALL that apply)

- ☐ You have more skills or knowledge
- ☐ You have made new friends
- ☐ You are more confident as a person
- ☐ You are more likely to participate in social activities
- ☐ You are more likely to get a job or progress at work
- ☐ Your health or wellbeing has benefitted
- ☐ You are more likely to progress on to another course
- ☐ You are more able to help other family members
- ☐ None of the above

Q15. The main outcome of taking the course or activity was: (Tick ONE only)

- ☐ You have more skills or knowledge
- ☐ You have made new friends
- ☐ You are more confident as a person
- ☐ You are more likely to participate in social activities
- ☐ You are more likely to get a job or progress at work
- ☐ Your health or wellbeing has benefitted
- ☐ You are more likely to progress on to another course
- ☐ You are more able to help other family members
- ☐ None of the above

Thank you very much for your time.

(a) What is your personal learner number?
(Please ask your learning provider if you do not know it.)

(b) First name

(c) Surname or family name

(d) Date of birth (dd/mm/yy for example, 15/02/82)

(e) Are you writing in the answers yourself?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Yes, with someone helping me
- ☐ No, someone is writing in my answers for me

(f) How old are you?
- ☐ Under 20   ☐ 20-29   ☐ 30-39   ☐ 40-49
- ☐ 50-59   ☐ 60-69   ☐ 70 or over

(g) Are you:
- ☐ Female?   ☐ Male?   ☐ Prefer not to answer

Q1 What were your reasons for taking the course or activity?
(Tick ALL that apply)
- ☐ To gain skills and knowledge
- ☐ To meet people and make new friends
- ☐ For personal interest or pleasure
- ☐ To help you participate in social activities
- ☐ To help you get a job or with your work
- ☐ To benefit your health or wellbeing
- ☐ To progress on to another course
- ☐ To help other members of your family
- ☐ Other reason

Q2 The main reason for taking the course or activity was:
(Tick ONE only)
- ☐ To gain skills and knowledge
- ☐ To meet people and make new friends
- ☐ For personal interest or pleasure
- ☐ To help you participate in social activities
- ☐ To help you get a job or with your work
- ☐ To benefit your health or wellbeing
- ☐ To progress on to another course
- ☐ To help other members of your family
- ☐ Other reason

To answer the following questions please give each a score out of 10.
"0" will mean "very bad". "10" will mean "very good".

Try to answer every question, but if a question does not apply to you at all, please choose "Does not apply".

	Very Bad										Very Good	Does not apply
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Q3 How good or bad was the information you were given when you were choosing your course or activity?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Q4 How good or bad was the help staff gave you in the first few weeks of your course or activity?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Q5 How good or bad is the teaching on your course or activity?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Q6 How good or bad is the respect staff show to you?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Q7 How good or bad is the advice you have been given about what you can do after this course or activity?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Q8 How good or bad is the support you get on this course or activity?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Q9 How good or bad are the staff at listening to views of learners?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Q10 How good or bad are the staff at acting on the views of learners?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Q11 How good or bad has the course or activity been at meeting your expectations?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Q12 Overall, how good or bad do you think the organisation that provides your learning is?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	

Appendix 4: Survey report example and provider guidance

Screenshots

FE Choices Learner Satisfaction Survey 2013/14 Community Learning Trial

Skills Funding Agency

Scores by Learner Characteristics	Scores by Subject	Scores by Delivery Location	Course/Activity Reasons	Course/Activity Outcomes	Reasons Vs Outcomes	Information & Overall Score

Your Overall Community Learning Learner Satisfaction score is   9.2

This is the end of survey report from the FE Choices Learner Satisfaction Community Learning Trial.

Guidance to take you through your report can be accessed from the same section on the Provider Extranet where you opened this report.

We recommend that the Guidance is read alongside this report.

Your organisation's data presented in the report is weighted for age and sex. The learner breakdown has been established from your learner's responses. Return 6 (R06) for the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) has been used to check your learner's selections of their age and sex.

If you have further questions about your report please contact us by emailing servicedesk@sfa.bis.gov.uk.

Profile of Respondents		Estimated number of eligible learners	Number of Responses	Estimated % of eligible learners responding	% share of all your valid responses
Under 40	Female	1,201	137	11%	14%
	Male	381	27	7%	3%
40+	Female	4,094	578	14%	61%
	Male	1,357	210	15%	22%
Unknown			2		0%
Total		7,033	954	14%	100%

Skills Funding Agency

FE Choices Learner Satisfaction Survey 2013/14 Community Learning Trial

Scores by Learner Characteristics	Scores by Subject	Scores by Delivery Location	Course/Activity Reasons	Course/Activity Outcomes	Reasons Vs Outcomes	Information & Overall Score

Age Band

- ● All Ages
- ○ Under 20
- ○ 20-29
- ○ 30-39
- ○ 40-49
- ○ 50-59
- ○ 60+
- ○ Unknown

Sex

- ○ Female
- ○ Male
- ○ Prefer Not to Say/Unknown

These are final figures based on survey responses. Figures are weighted. Figures in brackets are the number of respondents answering 0-10 for each question. A star in the brackets indicates suppression has been applied to the results to protect respondents' confidentiality.

Average Score

Question	Score
How good or bad was the information you were given when you were choosing your course or activity? (1,503.8)	9.0
How good or bad was the help staff gave you in the first few weeks of your course or activity? (1,178.5)	9.0
How good or bad is the teaching on your course or activity? (1,162.7)	8.9
How good or bad is the respect staff show to you? (1,442.6)	8.5
How good or bad is the advice you have been given about what you can do after this course or activity? (979.5)	9.0
How good or bad is the support you get on this course or activity? (1,169.5)	9.3
How good or bad are the staff at listening to the views of learners? (1,013.3)	8.4
How good or bad are the staff at acting on the views of learners? (1,260.8)	9.3
How good or bad has the course been at meeting your expectations? (1,145.8)	9.2
Overall, how good or bad do you think the organisation that provides your learning is? (1,089.9)	8.0

How likely is it that you would recommend the organisation that provides your learning to friends or family? (1,414.1)

- ■ Extremely likely
- ■ Likely
- ■ Neither likely nor unlikely
- ■ Unlikely
- ■ Extremely unlikely

Percentage of respondents which are likely to recommend your organisation to friends or family — **91%**

Skills Funding Agency

| Scores by Learner Characteristics | Scores by Subject | Scores by Delivery Location | Course/Activity Reasons | Course/Activity Outcomes | Reasons Vs Outcomes | Information & Overall Score |

Subject (All Learners)

- ● Health, Public Services and Care
- ○ Science and Mathematics
- ○ Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care
- ○ Engineering & Manufacturing Tech
- ○ Construction, Planning & the Built Environ.
- ○ ICT
- ○ Retail and Commercial Enterprise
- ○ Leisure, Travel and Tourism
- ○ Arts, Media and Publishing
- ○ History, Philosophy and Theology
- ○ Social Sciences
- ○ Languages, Literature and Culture
- ○ Education and Training
- ○ Preparation for Life and Work
- ○ Business, Administration and Law

These are final figures based on survey responses. Figures are unweighted and any groups with fewer than 10 have been suppressed. Figures in brackets are the number of respondents answering 0-10 for each question.

Average Score

Question	Score
How good or bad was the information you were given when you were choosing your course or activity? (40)	9.8
How good or bad was the help staff gave you in the first few weeks of your course or activity? (31)	9.2
How good or bad is the teaching on your course or activity? (40)	9.0
How good or bad is the respect staff show to you? (40)	7.9
How good or bad is the advice you have been given about what you can do after this course or activity? (42)	8.6
How good or bad is the support you get on this course or activity? (38)	9.1
How good or bad are the staff at listening to the views of learners? (31)	7.9
How good or bad are the staff at acting on the views of learners? (37)	9.9
How good or bad has the course been at meeting your expectations? (30)	9.2
Overall, how good or bad do you think the organisation that provides your learning is? (37)	9.9

How likely is it that you would recommend the organisation that provides your learning to friends or family? (39)

■ Extremely likely　■ Likely　■ Neither likely nor unlikely　■ Unlikely　■ Extremely unlikely

Percentage of respondents which are likely to recommend your organisation to friends or family 92%

40

Scores by Learner Characteristics	Scores by Subject	Scores by Delivery Location	Course/Activity Reasons	Course/Activity Outcomes	Reasons Vs Outcomes	Information & Overall Score

Delivery Location

- ● PR2 2YQ
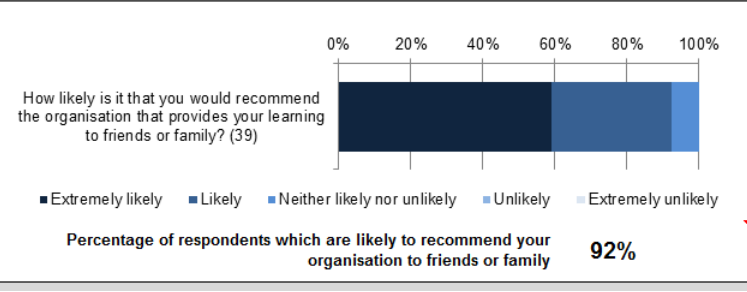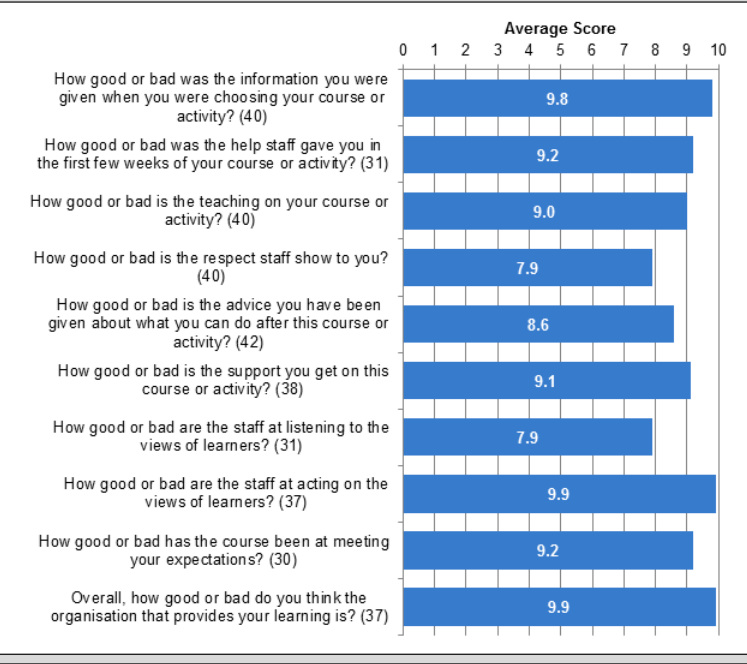- ○ PR4 7HZ
- ○ PR1 1AA
- ○ Not Applicable
- ○ Not Applicable

These are final figures based on survey responses. Figures are unweighted and any groups with fewer than 10 have been suppressed. Figures in brackets are the number of respondents answering 0-10 for each question.

Average Score

Question	Score
How good or bad was the information you were given when you were choosing your course or activity? (175)	9.7
How good or bad was the help staff gave you in the first few weeks of your course or activity? (203)	9.5
How good or bad is the teaching on your course or activity? (194)	9.4
How good or bad is the respect staff show to you? (194)	9.4
How good or bad is the advice you have been given about what you can do after this course or activity? (112)	9.9
How good or bad is the support you get on this course or activity? (173)	9.9
How good or bad are the staff at listening to the views of learners? (181)	9.6
How good or bad are the staff at acting on the views of learners? (169)	9.2
How good or bad has the course been at meeting your expectations? (125)	7.6
Overall, how good or bad do you think the organisation that provides your learning is? (196)	9.8

How likely is it that you would recommend the organisation that provides your learning to friends or family? (174)

■ Extremely likely ■ Likely ■ Neither likely nor unlikely ■ Unlikely ■ Extremely unlikely

Percentage of respondents which are likely to recommend your organisation to friends or family **88%**

Skills Funding
Agency

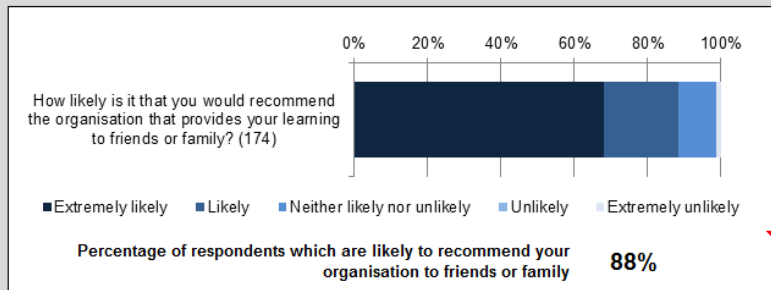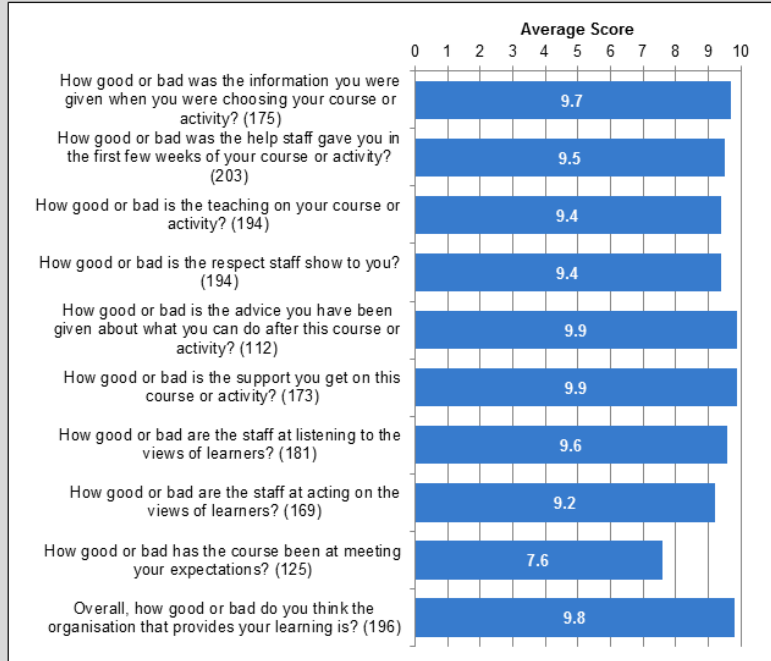| Scores by Learner Characteristics | Scores by Subject | Scores by Delivery Location | Course/Activity Reasons | Course/Activity Outcomes | Reasons Vs Outcomes | Information & Overall Score |

Information

- ◉ All Reasons
- ○ Main Reason

These are final figures based on survey responses. Figures are weighted. A star indicates suppression has been applied to the results to protect respondents' confidentiality.

What were your reasons for taking the course or activity?

Reason	Number of Weighted Respondents
To gain skills and knowledge	1,074.5
To meet people and make new friends	431.3
For personal interest or pleasure	811.9
To help you participate in social activities	174.6
To help you get a job or with your work	171.1
To benefit your health or wellbeing	244.7
To progress on to another course	171.1
To help other members of your family	143.3
Other reason	47.3

Number of Weighted Respondents
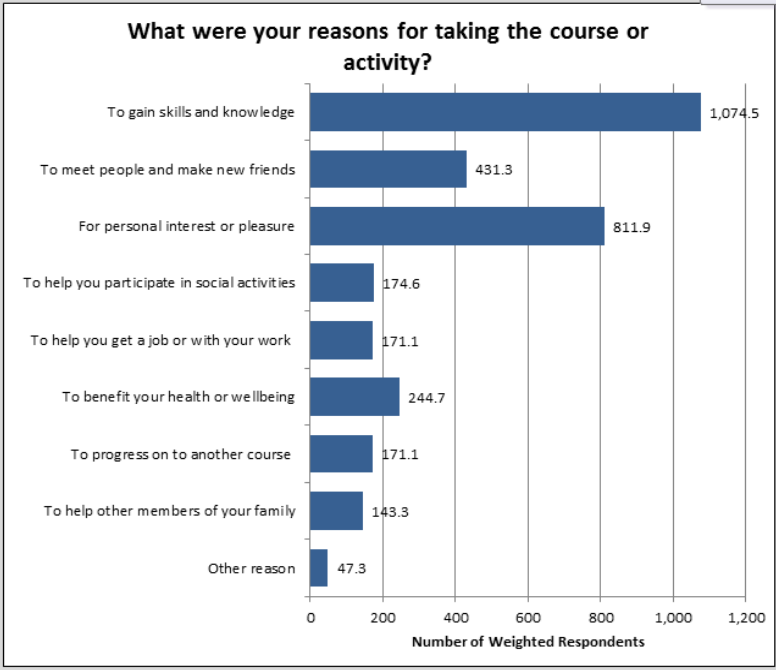
Scores by Learner Characteristics	Scores by Subject	Scores by Delivery Location	Course/Activity Reasons	Course/Activity Outcomes	Reasons Vs Outcomes	Information & Overall Score

Course/Activity Reasons

- ● All Outcomes
- ○ Main Outcome

These are final figures based on survey responses. Figures are weighted. A star indicates suppression has been applied to the results to protect respondents' confidentiality.
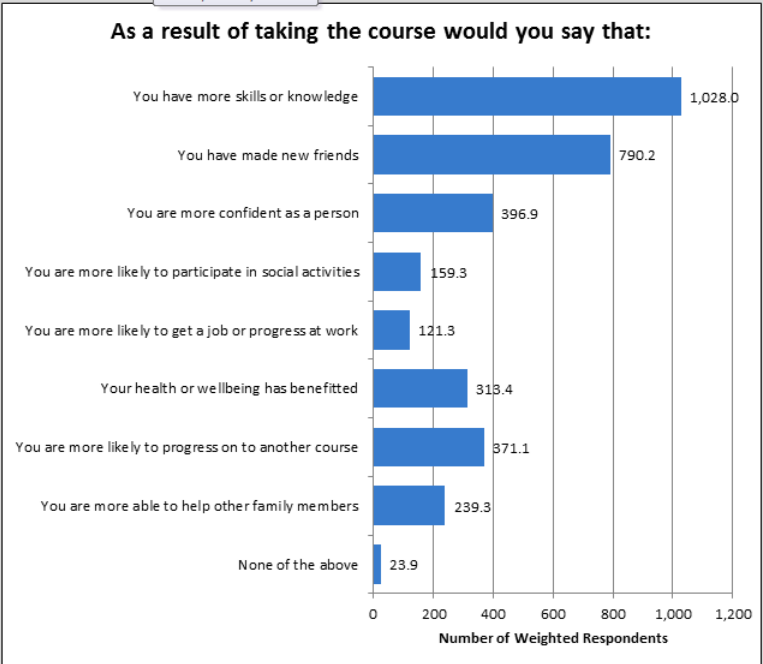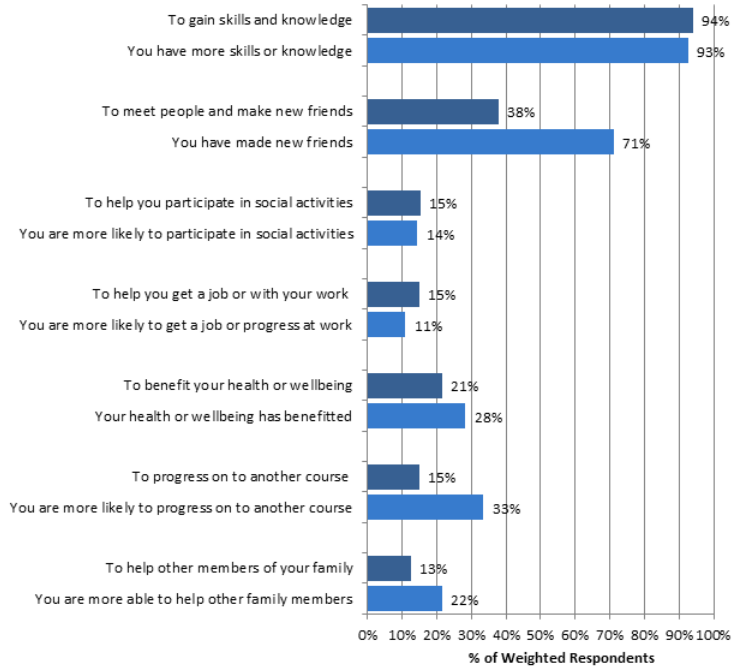
As a result of taking the course would you say that:

	Number of Weighted Respondents
You have more skills or knowledge	1,028.0
You have made new friends	790.2
You are more confident as a person	396.9
You are more likely to participate in social activities	159.3
You are more likely to get a job or progress at work	121.3
Your health or wellbeing has benefitted	313.4
You are more likely to progress on to another course	371.1
You are more able to help other family members	239.3
None of the above	23.9

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Scores by Learner Characteristics	Scores by Subject	Scores by Delivery Location	Course/Activity Reasons	Course/Activity Outcomes	Reasons vs Outcomes	Information & Overall Score

- ● All Reasons
- ○ Main Reason

Comparison between reasons for taking course and outcome after taking course

	%
To gain skills and knowledge	94%
You have more skills or knowledge	93%
To meet people and make new friends	38%
You have made new friends	71%
To help you participate in social activities	15%
You are more likely to participate in social activities	14%
To help you get a job or with your work	15%
You are more likely to get a job or progress at work	11%
To benefit your health or wellbeing	21%
Your health or wellbeing has benefitted	28%
To progress on to another course	15%
You are more likely to progress on to another course	33%
To help other members of your family	13%
You are more able to help other family members	22%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
% of Weighted Respondents

These are final figures based on survey responses. Figures are weighted. A star indicates suppression has been applied to the results to protect respondents' confidentiality.

Appendix 5: Sample quality tests

Confidence interval test for minimum sample size

Confidence interval calculation

Sample Size Calculation (as used in the Sample Size Calculator)

$$Sample\ Size = \frac{Z^2\ x\ p\ x\ (1-p)}{c^2}$$

Correction for Finite Population (for known population size)

$$Adjusted\ sample\ size\ = \frac{Sample\ Size}{1 + \frac{Sample\ Size - 1}{N}}$$

Confidence interval of a returned sample

$$Confidence\ Interval = Z\ x\ \sqrt{\frac{px(1-p)}{n}}\ x\ \sqrt{\frac{N-n}{N-1}}$$

Where:

Z = Z value (for example 1.96 for 95% confidence level)

p = Assumed / observed % expressed as a decimal (for example 84% satisfied = 0.84)

c = Confidence interval, expressed as decimal (for example ± 5% = 0.05)

N = Number of eligible learners on provider's ILR

n = Number of valid responses

Sample skew test

We used the skew test to ensure that the degree of bias within the sample submitted by individual providers was within acceptable parameters. Analysis of ILR data for the population produced a profile of learners for each individual provider, based on the following four learner categories:

1. Females aged under 40.
2. Males aged under 40.
3. Females aged 40 and over.
4. Males aged 40 and over.

We derived the measure for skew by comparing the spread of a provider's returned sample across these categories to its population profile based on the ILR. In a perfectly representative sample, the percentage of learners within each of the four categories would be exactly the same as the percentage of learners within each category based on the ILR data. The skew factor was defined as the sum total percentage of respondents within each category that were above or below the required percentage for a perfectly representative sample. Skew factors up to 40% were defined as correctable with the application of appropriate weighting; skew factors above 40% were regarded as not correctable.

Skew formulas

Skew calculation:

$$Skew = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{4} |r_i - s_i|}{2}$$

Where:

      i = Each individual learner category, ranging from one to four
      r = Percentage of learners on the provider's ILR in the ith category
      s = Percentage of learners in the sample in the ith category
      $||$ = Absolute value