



Skills Funding Agency

FE Choices Learner Satisfaction Survey

2015 to 2016 National Report

Executive Summary

Introduction

This report provides an overview, at a national level, of the findings from the FE Choices Learner Satisfaction Survey 2015 to 2016, which took place between November 2015 and April 2016.

Colleges and training providers in scope for FE Choices and eligible to take part in the survey included:

- General FE colleges
- Specialist colleges (including art and design and land based)
- Special designated institutions
- Higher education institutions
- Other public-funded institutions
- Private sector, public funded institutions

Learners in scope were those funded through the Adult Skills Budget, including apprenticeship provision, Education Funding Agency or with a 24+ Advanced Learner Loan for learning undertaken between November 2015 and March 2016.

Learners aged under 16, those undertaking Community Learning, Offender Learning and European Social Fund programmes were not eligible to take part in the survey.

FE Choices provides consistent and comparable information for learners and employers to help them make informed choices about publicly funded education and

training. It also provides consistent management information on key performance indicators. FE Choices comprises a set of performance indicators that cover aspects of a college or provider's provision including success rates, learner destinations and satisfaction levels of learners and employers.

This report focuses on the Learner Satisfaction Survey results only.

The total number of learners who submitted a valid response to the Learner Satisfaction Survey in 2014 to 2015 was 344,499. Of these, 325,467 were linked to the Individualised Learner Record (ILR), allowing us to identify details of their learning programme and personal characteristics, such as age and gender. The vast majority submitted an online response, with 4% completing a paper-based survey.

The 325,467 survey respondents who took part in the survey is equivalent to 19% of the eligible learner population and ensures that the results accurately represent views of learners with a confidence interval of 0.1%. The confidence interval gives an indication of how accurately the score from the valid responses reflects the result the college or training organisation would have achieved had all learners responded to the survey. Due to the large number of responses, the results in this report are un-weighted.

The 2015 to 2016 Learner Satisfaction Survey included eight rating questions. For the first seven, learners were asked to rate various aspects of their course, learning programme or training programme on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 represented 'very satisfied' and 10 represented 'very satisfied'. The questions were:

1. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the teaching on your course?
2. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way staff treat you?
3. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the advice you have been given about what you can do after this course?
4. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the support you get on this course?
5. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that the course is meeting your expectations?
6. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that your learning provider responds to the views of learners?
7. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your college?

The remaining question used a different scale:

8. How likely is it that you would recommend the learning provider to friends or family?

There were six possible responses to this question; "Extremely likely", "Likely", "Neither likely nor unlikely", "Unlikely", "Extremely unlikely" and "Does not apply".

Note: Question wording was tailored to the learner's environment. The wording above is for learners in a college environment.

Key Findings

The Learner Satisfaction Survey provides a rich dataset, which can be analysed by a wide range of variables including age, level of study and gender. Additional analysis is provided by subject area and apprenticeship framework. This level of detailed analysis is possible because of the robust methodology employed by the survey, the large number of responses and the matching of learner responses to the ILR. All differences highlighted between groups are statistically significant.

Results at a national level for Q8 (How likely is it that you would recommend the learning provider to friends or family?) show that:

- Over 80% of respondents would recommend their learning provider to friends or family. Just over a third (35%) would be extremely likely to recommend the learning provider whilst 46% would be likely to recommend.
- Learners aged 25 or over were more likely to recommend the learning provider than 16 to 18 year olds, with 93% of 25+ adults who would recommend compared to only 76% of 16 to 18 year olds. More than 57% of learners aged 25 or over would be extremely likely to recommend the learning provider compared to 25% of 16 to 18 year olds.
- Female learners were slightly more likely to recommend the learning provider than male learners, with 85% of females compared to 78% of males.
- Learners studying at entry level were considerably more likely to recommend (94% of respondents) compared to those studying at Level 3 or above (77%). 54% of learners at entry level would be extremely likely to recommend the learning provider, compared to 31% of Level 3 or above learners.
- Learners living in the areas of highest deprivation¹ were slightly more likely to recommend their provider than other learners. Recommendation levels ranged from 84% among learners from the most deprived areas, compared to 79% of learners from the least deprived areas.

¹ Defined as learners whose home postcode is in the 10% most deprived Super Output Areas in England according to the rank of Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2010.

- 16 to 18 year old apprentices were slightly less likely to recommend their learning provider than adult apprentices (82% compared to 88%). 16 to 18 year old classroom based learners appeared to be the least likely to recommend (75%).
- Learners attending Other Public Funded institutions were more likely to recommend the learning provider (94%) compared to other provider types. 87% of Learners attending Private Sector Public funded institutions would recommend their provider whilst 77% would recommend at an General FE College (including tertiary).
- A high level of learner recommendation appears to be associated with providers with outstanding or good Ofsted grades. 87% of learners at providers rated as outstanding by Ofsted would recommend the learning provider. This compares with 76% of learners at providers who were rated as 'requires improvement' and 70% of learners at providers who were rated as inadequate by Ofsted (based on Ofsted scores from the 2012 to 2013 academic year onwards).
- Learners living in the Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly and Tees Valley Local Enterprise Partnership areas were more likely to recommend than learners in any other LEP area, with 87% being extremely likely or likely to recommend. Northamptonshire LEP had the lowest percentage of learners who would recommend their learning provider (74%).

Subject Analysis

Responses to the 2015 to 2016 learner satisfaction survey were matched to the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) to identify a main subject of study (using the sector subject area tier 1 classification) or apprenticeship framework.

Results at a national level for Q8 (How likely is it that you would recommend the learning provider to friends or family?) show that:

- The subject area Languages, Literature & Culture had the highest levels of learner recommendation, with 94% of all respondents studying in this area recommending the learning provider. Other subjects with high provider recommendation included Preparation for Life & Work (92%), History, Philosophy & Theology (91%) and Education & Training (90%).
- There were two subject areas with recommendation levels of 75% or lower - Science & Mathematics and Information Communications technology.
- 75% of learners taking two or more A-Levels (in similar or different subject areas) would recommend their learning provider.
- In almost all subject areas, Level 2 learners rated their provider more highly than level 3+ learners.
- Most apprenticeship framework areas were highly rated by learners compared to classroom based study in equivalent subject areas. The only exception was Education & Training.
- There were significant variations between frameworks. Health & Social Care, Hospitality & Catering, Service Enterprises, Business Management, Retailing & Wholesaling, Child Development & Well Being had 90% or more of respondents recommending their learning provider. In contrast, only 76% of respondents would recommend their provider when taking Public Services frameworks.

Questions 1-7

- The percentage of learners who rated the teaching on their course highly (giving a score of 8 to 10 for question 1 “How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the teaching on your course/programme?”) was 74%. Learners aged 25 or over were particularly positive about the quality of teaching, with more than 85% rating the teaching highly (8 or above).
- More than three quarters of all respondents (76%) gave a score of 8 to 10 for question 4 “How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the support you get on this course/programme?” Older learners were more satisfied with the support they received with 93% of those aged 60 or over giving a score of 8 or higher to this question. Entry level learners were also very positive about the support they received, with 62% giving a score of 10 out of 10.
- The lowest satisfaction rating, out of all of the questions, was for question 3 (advice learners had been given about what they could do after their course had finished). A third of learners (33%) gave a score of 7 or less, with 14% giving a score of 5 or less. The satisfaction score was lower amongst 16 to 18 year olds, where 60% of respondents gave a score of 8 to 10.
- 16 to 18 year old learners at General Further Education Colleges were less likely to believe that their provider responds to their views (questions 6), compared to 16 to 18 year old learners at private training providers. 58% of 16 to 18 year old learners at General Further Education Colleges gave question 6 a score of 8 to 10, compared to 78% who were enrolled with private training providers.