RESEARCH

Tracking Learning Outcomes: Evaluation of the Impact of Ufi

Claire Tyers and Alice Sinclair
Institute for Employment Studies

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Ufi Ltd was established in 1998 to fulfil its vision of a 'university for industry'. The delivery network was launched in Autumn 2000, with two main products: an independent national learning information and advice service, and a network of learning centres, both operated under as **learndirect**. This evaluation follows a strategic initial evaluation in 2002 and tracks the progress of individuals for up to two years from their initial contact with **learndirect.** The findings are based on a telephone survey of just over 1,500 service users.

The evaluation

The aim of the evaluation was to assess the impact that Ufi is having on learners in the learning market. More specifically, to determine whether **learndirect** has had an impact on:

- attitudes towards learning
- participation in learning
- knowledge and skills, either through use of **learndirect** or progression onto other providers
- the employability of users and their employment situation.

The data in this report constitutes the analysis of two surveys conducted during Winter 2003. One involves users of the **learndirect** helpline, and the other, individuals taking **learndirect** courses. All respondents had first been in contact with Ufi for between 15 months and two years before this survey, and had already been surveyed in Summer 2002. By re-contacting the same individuals again, it has been possible to track changes to their learning and work situation over an extended period. Additionally, the work attempts to compare outcomes for **learndirect** users with larger, national data sources, including the Labour Force Survey (LFS), and the National Adult Learners Survey (NALS), to allow some benchmarking of these results.

Respondent details

In total, the surveys involved 1,567 individuals. Of these, 787 were referred into the study because they had been taking **learndirect** courses in November and December 2001, and 780 had used the **learndirect** helpline in February and March 2002.

The profiles of **learndirect** helpline users and **learndirect** learners are very different, both from each other and from national datasets. **learndirect** learners, when compared to the population of adult learners, are more likely to have low level qualifications, to be outside the labour market, and to have little recent experience of learning. In contrast, helpline users have more recent learning histories, and higher level qualifications, but are still more likely to be out of work than the general population. Both samples have far more female respondents than either of the national data sets. These differences are important in setting later results in context.

Key findings

The role of IAG

The majority of respondents had used some form of Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) about learning and/or career opportunities over the tracking period. This type of support received relatively high ratings for its influence on respondents in their decision to take up learning. Repeat **learndirect** learners were the most positive about the influence of IAG, and the **learndirect** helpline and website received particularly high ratings. These ratings also became more positive over time.

Progression within learning is related to a set of 'learning characteristics', such as age, recent experience of learning, and participation in the labour market. However, there is evidence that take-up of IAG can be an important moderator in changing behaviour and attitudes. The use of IAG among the learners was the most important predictor of whether an individual went on to progress in their learning, and whether they anticipated taking on further learning in the future.

Attitudes towards learning

There was little evidence of changes to attitudes towards learning over the tracking period. However, the way in which this was measured in the survey was flawed. To truly reflect changes in attitudes, the baseline attitudes of people have to be measured. In this case, such measurements would need to be taken not only before contact with **learndirect** advisers, or learning centres, but also **learndirect** marketing / advertising. By the time of the first survey, the point from which we measure any change, individuals

had already been involved with **learndirect** for some time. It is likely, therefore, that much of the attitudinal change we might expect had already occurred before our pseudo-baseline measurement. Therefore, in this case, we can say little about attitudinal change.

There was evidence, however, that where helpline users had engaged in some form of learning following their initial call, this resulted in more positive attitudes than among those who had not entered learning.

Participation and progression in learning

The participation rates of **learndirect** learners in any learning in the three years before their involvement with **learndirect** was just 38 per cent. This compares to a participation rate over the same period for NALS respondents of 69 per cent. This demonstrates that **learndirect** learners are a group with much less recent experience of learning than we might expect. As such, the data would suggest that they would be less likely to participate in learning, on average. However, **learndirect** has successfully engaged these learners. The same point applies to helpline users, 52 per cent of whom had been involved in learning over the last three years.

Participation rates at the time of the second survey were higher for both learners (at 29 per cent) and helpline users (32 per cent), than for the general population[1] (around half of this). There was no evidence that participation in **learndirect** learning promoted greater participation rates, overall, than any other type of learning, although this result does not take account of the less active learning profile of **learndirect** learners.

Certainly, participation in learning leading to a qualification increased over time, to 15 per cent by the time of the second survey of learners. Helpline users were twice as likely to be involved in qualification led study, reflecting their greater connection with recent learning, and their overall profile. Older and more disadvantaged learners, by contrast, were the most likely to 'repeat-learn' with **learndirect**. Also, those with lower prior qualification levels and no recent experience of learning stated particularly that their experience of **learndirect** learning influenced their decision to go on to other forms of learning.

Qualifications gained

The proportion of individuals going on to gain qualifications was not high – at nine per cent for both the learners and helpline users – when compared with other data sources, reflecting to some

[1] As indicated by analysis of the Labour Force Survey

degree the profile of respondents. However, the gains were greatest within both samples for individuals with level 1 qualifications. This is likely to reflect the fact that progression onto higher levels (*eg* taking a level 3 qualification) can take longer than the tracking period covered by the research but also provides further evidence of the impact of **learndirect** on the lower qualified learner. Again, the profile of respondents who had made qualification gains was younger and with a more recent learning history, showing that once people are engaged with learning, they are more likely to progress within formal learning routes. However, the proportion, in both samples, of the '45 years and older' group gaining qualifications was comparable, and in fact slightly higher, than other national data sources.

Skills gained

Respondents in both samples were particularly positive about the soft skills they had gained, such as self-confidence, and social skills. However, the majority also believed that they had gained job-related skills, and IT skills. In all cases there was a positive relationship between job changes (*eg* promotions, new jobs) and qualification gain, and the perception that individuals had gained a whole range of skills. Individuals who had experienced changes were more likely to feel that they had gained skills than others.

Employability

By the time of the first survey, 12 per cent of learners and 20 per cent of helpline users had experienced a job-related change. These proportions increased to 30 per cent and 46 per cent by the time of the second survey. In both cases, the most common outcome was securing a new job in a different type of work. The most important predictors of whether an individual achieved such a change included age and ethnicity, but recent learning history was also a factor. This result demonstrates that although there are many factors in the workplace that can affect an individual's opportunities, recent experience of learning plays an important part in maximising these.

Conclusions

Learners

learndirect learners are less likely to have taken part in recent learning than the general population (as taken from NALS), and are also disadvantaged in a number of other ways (*eg* age, employment status). All consideration of their progress must take this into account. In contrast, participation in learning, subsequent to their first **learndirect** course, was higher than average (as taken from the LFS), suggesting a real shift in learning behaviour for this

group. **learndirect** also acted as a stepping stone into other forms of learning , and participation in qualification related study by this group increased over time. In relation to other outcomes:

- Nine per cent of **learndirect** learners had gained a qualification over the tracking period. Individuals with a baseline qualification at level 1 were most likely to make progress , as did 13 per cent.
- Thirty per cent reported a performance related pay rise over the period.
- Skills gains were common, particularly in relation to IT, self-confidence and social skills.
- Around one-third of **learndirect** learners had experienced some changes to their work, most commonly moving into a different area of work.
- Individuals were most positive about the role of **learndirect** in making changes.

Helpline users

Helpline users are also less likely to have had a recent learning experience than people in general (taken from NALS). Helpline users are very positive about the use of IAG sources, particularly those who were repeat users of **learndirect** services (*ie* helpline and website). Participation in learning 18 months after their initial call to the **learndirect** helpline was, again, much higher then average.

Other outcomes include:

- Nine per cent of **learndirect** helpline users gained a qualification, but 16 per cent of those with a baseline qualification at level 1 did so.
- Twenty-seven per cent had received a performance related pay rise over the 18 months.
- Almost all helpline users reported having gained something from learning where they had taken part; most commonly they had gained self-confidence, but also the opportunities to progress onto further qualifications.
- Around one-third had changed jobs over the tracking period.
- Those with the most positive outcomes were most positive about the role of **learndirect** in these changes.

Overall

The main conclusions of this evaluation are, therefore, that:

- **learndirect** encourages participation in learning, particularly among those *without* a recent learning history or higher level qualifications
- **learndirect** complements other forms of learning and is an important bridge to more formal methods of study
- **learndirect** helps individuals to gain confidence and skills.

Also, there is some evidence of the role of IAG in helping to facilitate changes to attitudes towards learning and learning behaviour.

1. Introduction

1.1 About Ufi

Ufi Ltd was established in 1998 as the government's flagship for lifelong learning, to fulfil its vision of a 'university for industry'. Launched in Autumn 2000, the delivery network of **learndirect** has enabled Ufi to deliver two main products; an independent national learning information and advice service, and a network of learning centres. **learndirect** is the largest government-backed e-learning network[1] of learning centres in the world[2].

The **learndirect** network delivers a huge array of online and off-line courses in partnership with a range of higher and further education providers, with the voluntary and community sectors, and through private training suppliers. Learners can also access courses in their own home or at work as the services are designed to be as flexible as possible and aim to meet a wide variety of learner needs. By April 2003, around 750,000 people had enrolled on **learndirect** courses, and more than five million calls and six million web enquiries to the **learndirect** advice service had been handled by the 24 hour **learndirect** advice service.

Future activities are driven by Ufi's strategic plan published in 2002, outlining the work of Ufi into 2007. The plan maps out Ufi's mission to inspire existing learners to develop their skills further, to win over new and excluded learners, and to transform the accessibility of learning in everyday life and work. Ufi Ltd continues to broaden and expand the reach of **learndirect** through the integration of activities of the UK Online Centres and recent additions to their portfolio. These additions include the business development service network and Skills for Life delivery (dealing with adult literacy and numeracy).

[1] Although it provides a broader range of services than just e-learning

[2] Ufi Annual Review, 2002/3

1.2 Evaluation aims

Following an earlier strategic evaluation of Ufi[1], the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), in partnership with Ufi, has commissioned a second-stage evaluation which examines the impact of both **learndirect** learning and the national learning and advice line. The overall aim of this evaluation is to assess the impact Ufi is having on users. It is not intended to comment on or measure the extent to which Ufi is meeting its targets, nor does it seek to judge the efficacy of delivery (which is part of the role of Ufi Ltd's dedicated research team).

The objectives of the evaluation are, therefore, to assess or establish for users of **learndirect** national learning advice line (referred to throughout this report as **learndirect** helpline users), and separately for those learners registered with the **learndirect** network (referred to throughout this report as **learndirect** learners), the extent to which **learndirect** has had an impact on :

- attitudes towards learning, particularly those without a history of participation in learning
- participation in learning, to establish any identifiable changes to learning patterns
- knowledge and skills gained through the use of **learndirect** and/or further learning, including learning outcomes and 'softer' outcomes (*eg* confidence and motivation)
- the employability of users, including those moving into work, staying in work, and gaining promotion within work.

This report has been written in order to provide an overview of measures designed to assess these impacts and brings together results from surveys of **learndirect** learners and helpline users.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 Sample construction and response rates

The data in this report comes from a survey of the same cohorts of **learndirect** national learning advice line users and **learndirect** learning network users who were first surveyed during the initial evaluation in 2002. This longitudinal element has been introduced in order to determine any further impacts since the time of the earlier evaluation.

Individuals were selected for inclusion in the original survey of helpline users (conducted in July and August of 2002) if they had

[1] Tamkin P, Hillage J, Dewson S, Sinclair A (2003), *New Learners, New Learning: A Strategic Evaluation of Ufi*, DfES

used the **learndirect** helpline during February and March 2002. The learners sample was conducted with individuals who had enrolled on **learndirect** courses in the latter part of 2001. Individuals who agreed to be re-contacted, following the first survey, form the sample for this follow up.

The follow-up surveys were conducted during November and December 2003. The adjusted response rates for the surveys (adjustments are made for numbers where contact was not possible — see Appendix 1 for full details) are both over 70 per cent. The number of achieved interviews with helpline users was 780, and with **learndirect** learners was 787. This report only presents data for those individuals for whom data is available from both survey waves.

Details of the achieved samples are presented in chapter 2.

1.3.2 Questionnaire design

The design of the survey instrument for this aspect of the evaluation was based largely on the questions used at the time of first contact with the sample in 2002. Question formats were maintained, where possible, to allow direct comparability between the results of the two surveys. However, there was a need to rationalise the questions used, as the original survey took 30 minutes to complete, and the follow-up was 20 minutes long. Some questions were, therefore, removed from the original survey. Additionally, some questions were updated or new questions added to reflect current policy interest. BMG were the primary authors of both survey instruments, but the current instrument went through a number of iterations to meet the needs of a steering group, consisting of representatives of the DfES, Ufi, BMG and IES.

1.3.3 Comparison with other data sources

In order to set the data in context and to allow readers to compare and contrast the results with those of other surveys, a number of comparator data sources are examined within this report. It should be noted that the respondents to these data sources vary significantly in profile to **learndirect** users. As these differences are so significant, and are apparent across a number of different variables (see chapter 2 for full details), no attempt to weight the data from the surveys for this evaluation, to the other data sources, has been made. However, wherever possible, the data has been analysed in order to allow as direct a comparison as possible to be made by filtering the data sources in the same way (*eg* considering only those in work, or in work-related learning in both the sources). Throughout the report, where the results of the evaluation are compared with other sources, these differences are highlighted in the text. Anyone seeking to use the tabular data from this report should also be aware of, and note, the differences

in respondent profiles when making direct comparisons between **learndirect** users and other groups.

1.3.4 Data from the surveys

Before moving on to the evaluation evidence, it is important to discuss the nature and limitations of the data used. Table 1.1 presents the time-line for the surveys.

The first survey was conducted at time point 1 (referred to throughout this report as T1) in July and August 2002, and the second survey conducted at time point 2 (referred to throughout this report as T2) in November and December 2003. This means that the evaluation has involved contact with individuals over a period of up to 18 months. However, retrospective data was collected at T1, referring to learning patterns over up to three years before the survey.

Throughout this report, where progress has been tracked, data is presented which refers to progress made by the time of each survey (*ie* by T1 and by T2) in order to provide a cumulative description of impact.

However, where ratings or attitudinal data has been collected which relates to specific events, or where questions are not directly comparable at T1 and T2, it has been necessary to separate out responses. In these cases, the data is more limited in scope and is presented separately for individuals responding to the questions at T1 and T2, rather than cumulatively. Where this is necessary, it is harder to estimate the true impact of **learndirect** over time, but the data does provide some indication of progress at each of the time points.

The time between intervention and impact measures varies to some degree. For most individuals, the initial **learndirect** helpline consultation will have been at least 21 months previously, and the **learndirect** learning at least two years before T2. Thus, when comparing results from the two samples it should be considered that the time since intervention differs. This is also true within each sample (due to the date of enrolment on **learndirect** courses and the date of each survey varying by up to two months) but to a lesser degree.

Table 1.1: Evaluation time-line of the project phases (by group)

	(T0)	(T1)	(T2)
User group	**Initial contact with learndirect**	**First survey**	**Follow up survey**
Learners	Nov/Dec 2001	July/Aug 2002	Nov/Dec 2003
Helpline users	Feb/Mch 2002	July/Aug 2002	Nov/Dec 2003

Source: IES, 2004

1.4 Structure of remaining report

The remainder of this report presents the analysis of key data relating to impact from both the 2002 and 2003 surveys, for both the **learndirect** learners and helpline users. The remaining sections are structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 describes the profiles of respondents to both the **learndirect** helpline and learners surveys.
- Chapter 3 examines the use of IAG sources and their perceived influence on learning take-up, as well as examining changes to attitudes towards learning.
- Chapter 4 looks at participation rates, including participation in learning leading to qualifications.
- Chapter 5 presents analysis of progression within and onto learning, including completion rates.
- Chapter 6 considers qualification, income and skill gains.
- Chapter 7 discusses employability gains, including job-related changes.
- Chapter 8 presents the conclusions of the evaluation.

2. Learner/Helpline User Profiles

To assess the impact of the **learndirect** helpline and **learndirect** learning, outcomes were compared for the two survey samples, against data from the general population, using two national surveys:

- National Adult Learners Survey (NALS) 2002, which looks at levels and types of learning in the UK, and, therefore, provides a good comparison group of learners.
- The Labour Force Survey (LFS) for the Summer 2002 and Autumn 2003 quarters, which provides information on the UK labour market, including learning behaviours of individuals.

It is also worth noting that in later chapters, a comparison is also made with the Pathways in Adult Learning (PALS), which re-contacted participants from the 2001 NALS survey in 2003, to determine progression and outcomes over time for this group.

Before making any comparisons, it is important to examine how these sample populations differ from one another, as demographic disparities between the populations may, to some extent, account for any variance in outcomes that emerge. This chapter therefore presents the following:

- descriptions of the achieved samples of **learndirect** learners and helpline users
- a comparison of these profiles with those of other data sources used later in the report[1].

2.1 Sample profile

2.1.1 Helpline users

The characteristics of the achieved sample of **learndirect** helpline users are presented in Table 2.1. In summary, the majority of respondents in our sample are:

[1] Two LFS quarters are used in this report for comparisons, Summer 2002 and Autumn 2003. For brevity, only the Autumn 2003 quarter is examined. The profiles do not differ widely between the two quarters but a presentation of Summer 2002 data is provided in Appendix 4.

- female (64 per cent)
- over 25 years old (86 per cent are aged between 25 and 64)

Table 2.1: Comparison of characteristics of 2003 helpline users and national data[1]

Characteristic	Group	Frequency	%	NALS 2002 %	LFS Autumn 2003* %
Gender	Male	281	36	44	49
	Female	499	64	56	51
	Total	*780*	*100*	*100*	*100*
Age	16 to 24	96	12	8	14
	25 to 44	467	60	40	37
	45 to 64	197	25	31	30
	65 and over	19	2	21	19
	Not known	1	0	0	0
	Total	*780*	*100*	*100*	*100*
NVQ level equivalence (baseline)	NVQ Level 1 equivalence	98	13	31	-
	NVQ Level 2 equivalence	187	24	12	-
	NVQ Level 3 equivalence	146	19	15	-
	NVQ Level 4 equivalence	151	19	23	-
	NVQ Level 5 equivalence	25	3	5	-
	No NVQ equivalence	174	22	14	-
	Level 2 and above	509	65	55	62
	Below Level 2	272	35	45	38
	Total	*780*	*100*	*100*	*100*
Work status (baseline)	Working	474	61	60	61
	Unemployed but seeking work	113	15	4	3
	Not seeking work[2]	149	19	15	16
	Retired	44	6	21	20
	Not known	0	0	1	0
	Total	*780*	*100*	*100*	*100*
Learning history	Learned in last 3 years	403	52	69	-
	Did not learn in last 3 years	377	48	31	-
	Total	*780*	*100*	*100*	-

* The LFS sample used consisted of people aged 16 and over. Highest NVQ level is calculated for those of working age or in employment only. Unemployed is defined using ILO definition. Not seeking work was calculated by subtracting the number of retired from the number of inactive.

[1] Base sizes have been removed in this table (for NALS and LFS data) for ease of comparison, however, these are presented in a further table in Appendix 4.

[2] This figure includes those unable to work due to ill health/disability (39 cases), looking after family/home (84 cases), full-time students (15 cases), and individuals not working or looking for work (11 cases).

Sources: IES, based on survey of ***learndirect*** *helpline users, BMG, 2003 and NALS, 2002, and LFS, Autumn 2003, Office for National Statistics*

- in employment (61 per cent) with 15 per cent of the sample unemployed and looking for work
- qualified to level 2 or above (although around a third are qualified below level 2).

The sample profile for the 2003 survey of helpline users is similar to the profile for 2002. The age profile is slightly different, and there is now a higher proportion of individuals of working age. There are also slightly more individuals qualified to below level 2 than in 2002. However, these differences do not suggest any major biases due to sample attrition and no weighting to the original sample has been carried out (see Appendix 4 for a comparison of the profiles of 2002 and 2003 respondents).

2.1.2 Learners

The characteristics of respondents to the **learndirect** learners survey (Table 2.2), show that the majority:

- are female (60 per cent)
- are over 25 years old (97 per cent are aged 25 or over). It is also important to note the high proportion of people over working age in the sample (22 per cent aged 65 and over)
- are in employment (44 per cent), but there is also a large proportion that is retired (30 per cent)
- are qualified to level 2 or above (although over a third are qualified below level 2)
- have not engaged in learning in the three years leading up to the first survey (62 per cent).

Overall, the sample profile for the 2003 survey is similar to the profile for 2002. The 2003 sample is more likely to be economically inactive but less likely to be unemployed. There is also a slight discrepancy in the proportion of learners qualified to level 1; with more in the 2003 sample. However, this may be due to differences in the way that the qualification level was measured between the two waves. We would conclude, therefore, that there are no major biases due to sample attrition.

2.2 Comparisons with NALS and LFS

2.2.1 Helpline users

Compared to both the full NALS (*ie* both learners and non-learners) and LFS samples, helpline users are more likely to be:

- female
- of working age, especially between the ages of 25 to 44

- qualified to NVQ level 2 or above (although the disparity is less pronounced with the LFS sample) and less likely to hold higher NVQ levels such as level 4 or 5 (although this

Table 2.2: Comparison of characteristics of learndirect learners and national data[1]

Characteristic	Group	Frequency	%	NALS 2002 Learners* %	LFS Autumn 2003** %
Gender	Male	316	40	46	49
	Female	471	60	54	51
	Total	*787*	*100*	*100*	*100*
Age	16 to 24	23	3	9	14
	25 to 44	273	35	48	37
	45 to 64	312	40	33	30
	65 and over	171	22	10	19
	Not known	8	1	0	0
	Total	*787*	*100*	*100*	*100*
NVQ level equivalence (baseline)	NVQ Level 1 equivalence	134	17	27	-
	NVQ Level 2 equivalence	161	20	14	-
	NVQ Level 3 equivalence	114	14	17	-
	NVQ Level 4 equivalence	144	18	30	-
	NVQ Level 5 equivalence	38	5	7	-
	No NVQ equivalence	167	21	4	-
	Total	*787*	*100*	*100*	-
	Level 2 and above	457	58	68	62
	Below Level 2	301	38	32	38
	Not known	29	4	0	0
	Total	*787*	*100*	*100*	*100*
Work status (baseline)	Working	349	44	74	61
	Unemployed but seeking work	79	10	4	3
	Not seeking work[2]	127	16	10	16
	Retired	232	30	11	20
	Not known	-	-	1	0
	Total	*787*	*100*	*100*	*100*

* Defined as learners if have participated in some form of learning in the last 3 years

** The LFS sample used consisted of people aged 16 and over. Highest NVQ level is calculated for those of working age or in employment only. Unemployed uses ILO definition. Not seeking work is calculated by subtracting the number of retired from the number of inactive.

[1] Base sizes have been removed in this table for ease of comparison, however, these are presented in a further table in Appendix 4.

[2] This figure includes those who are unable to work due to ill health/disability (42 cases), looking after home/family (53 cases), full-time students (15 cases) and individuals not working or seeking work (19 cases).

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** learners, BMG, 2003 and NALS, 2002 (based on IES analysis of NALS and LFS Autumn 2003, not published figures)*

comparison was only possible with NALS)

- unemployed, but much less likely to be retired.

2.2.2 Learners

For the learners survey, the most appropriate comparison group is the general population of adult learners, which was drawn by selecting learners from the NALS 2002 survey. However, comparisons with the general population, as estimated from LFS, show similar discrepancies between the samples. Compared to both of these groups, **learndirect** learners are more likely to be:

- female
- older
- qualified to below level 2, and much more likely not to hold any qualifications at all, or any that are equivalent to NVQs (although this comparison was only possible with NALS).

Employment status did not differ a great deal between the **learndirect** learners and the general population as a whole. However, compared to the general population of adult learners, **learndirect** learners are more likely to be out of employment, and much more likely to be retired.

2.3 Chapter summary

The **learndirect** learner and helpline samples differ on a number of characteristics. The profile of learners is that they are older, in general, than helpline users, they are also more likely to be unemployed or economically inactive (particularly retired). Helpline users are likely to be qualified to a higher level and have a more recent history of learning than **learndirect** learners.

These differences are reflected in the differences between each of the samples and other survey data. In comparison with the National Adult Learners Survey and the Labour Force Survey, helpline users are more likely to be of working age, unemployed (as oppose to more individuals who are economically inactive in the two comparator datasets), and qualified to level 2 or above. In contrast, **learndirect** learners are more likely to be older, qualified to below level 2 and much more likely to have no qualifications.

These differences are important to note when comparisons are made between data sources in the remaining chapters.

3. Use of IAG Sources and their Influence

An important assumption underlying the operation of the **learndirect** advice line is that access to information, advice and guidance (IAG) about learning opportunities is likely to help individuals enter learning and/or improve their lives in other ways. Underpinning this is a large body of evidence which examines the benefits of guidance[1]. Recent work from the DfES has shown, for example, that one of the main influences on whether learners from hard to reach groups had improved their qualification level over a period of around 15 months was the number of guidance sessions they had received[2]. Therefore, it is important to consider the extent to which individuals have used sources of IAG, not only as a matter of interest in itself, but also as a potential factor in considering impact in later chapters.

This chapter examines the use of advice sources by **learndirect** learners and helpline users, including both advice from **learndirect** and other sources. It also considers the extent to which individuals feel that their use of these sources has helped them to access learning opportunities.

3.1 learndirect learners

The sample of **learndirect** learners may or may not have used the **learndirect** helpline or other sources of advice as part of their route into learning. Learners were asked to discuss their use of IAG sources for two time periods:

- in the 12 months before T1
- in the period between T1 and T2.

They were also asked to state whether their use of these sources had contributed to their decision to take up learning in the corresponding time periods. Data is therefore presented cumulatively for usage of IAG sources, but cross sectionally (*ie* for

[1] See Hughes D, Bosley S, Bowes L, Bysshe S (2002), *The Economic Benefits of Guidance*, Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby, for a review of some of this evidence.

[2] Tyers C *et al.* (2003), *The Impact of the Adult Guidance Pilots,* DfES

usage before T1 and between T1 and T2 separately) in relation to the extent to which this advice helped them enter learning. The cross sectional presentation is necessary as individuals may have responded at both time periods in relation to different learning episodes, and in different ways, so a 'total' is not possible. Also, the questions were asked about all learning at T1, and about **learndirect** and other learning separately at T2.

3.1.1 Advice sources used

In the year before the first survey, the majority of **learndirect** learners had not received or sought out IAG (Table 3.1). In particular, use of the **learndirect** helpline was relatively low and just seven per cent had used this IAG source in the 12 months before T1. Additionally, almost a quarter of learners had used the **learndirect** website for information and guidance purposes (as opposed to learning), and one-in-five had used another source of IAG. These rates of **learndirect** usage, however, are much higher than for NALS respondents, where usage among the 2002 sample was just above five per cent[1].

The extent of usage increases over time, however, and in the next 15 months, a slightly greater proportion had used the **learndirect** helpline (11 per cent). This might suggest that contact with the **learndirect** learning network stimulated greater demand for the helpline service. Demand for the **learndirect** website and other sources remained fairly constant over this time, with usage levels similar to those in the year before T1. Overall, by T2, 58 per cent of **learndirect** learners had accessed some form of IAG, over a third

Table 3.1: Use of IAG sources (learndirect learners)

		Used source		
Time period	**Advice source**	**Frequency**	**%**	**Base (N)**
By T1	**learndirect** helpline	57	7	787
	learndirect website	178	23	787
	Other IAG source	155	20	787
T1 to T2	**learndirect** helpline	86	11	787
	learndirect website	151	19	787
	Other IAG source	175	22	787
Cumulative by T2	**learndirect** helpline	133	17	787
	learndirect website	271	34	787
	Other IAG source	278	35	787
	Any source	458	58	787

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** learners, BMG, 2003*

[1] Fitzgerald R, Taylor R, LaValle I (2002), *National Adult Learning Survey (NALS) 2002*, DfES

had used the **learndirect** website, and around 17 per cent had used the **learndirect** helpline.

3.1.2 Influence of IAG on learning take-up

Individuals who had used some form of IAG were asked to state whether the help they received at each time point had influenced them to take up learning (on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is equal to 'no influence' and 5 is equal to 'significant influence') in the corresponding time period. The results are presented separately for learners having used each source (Table 3.2), and at each time point. Data from T1 relates to all learning whereas data at T2 is broken down by type of learning undertaken.

At T1, the users of non-**learndirect** IAG providers gave the highest average score for the influence of this provision on their decision to take up learning. At T2, the results were slightly different. Overall, **learndirect** learners gave higher ratings, particularly those using the **learndirect** helpline. The helpline received higher ratings as an influence on the decision to take up learning, than any of the other sources, for individuals taking on new **learndirect** and non-**learndirect** courses. Therefore, despite more limited usage of the **learndirect** helpline among the sample of **learndirect** learners (although only against 'other' sources combined), individuals using this source did feel the impact of the advice they had received through it.

Because of the nature of the data, and the way it was collected (*ie* responses are not 'independent' of one another as individuals could be in any or all of the user groups) combined with the small base sizes for T2, it is not possible to determine whether any significant differences exist between these groups in relation to their responses.

Table 3.2: Perceived impact of advice on decision to take up learning (learndirect learners)

Time point	Advice source	Type of learning	Influence on learning (mean score)	Base (N)
At T1	**learndirect** helpline	All	3.12	57
	learndirect website	All	3.02	175
	Other IAG source	All	3.55	151
At T2	**learndirect** helpline	**learndirect**	4.17	29
		other	3.96	23
	learndirect website	**learndirect**	3.88	41
		other	3.82	57
	Other IAG source	**learndirect**	4.06	33
		other	3.92	97

[1] Although individuals could have used more than source, data was only collected on the overall influence of all sources used. Therefore, one individual's rating can contribute to more than one mean score in this table.

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** learners, BMG, 2003*

3.2 Helpline users

In order to be eligible for inclusion in the survey of helpline users, all respondents must have used the **learndirect** national learning advice line at least once. However, it is interesting to examine their subsequent use of this and other sources of IAG. Also, where individuals have entered learning, following their call to the helpline in 2002, individuals were asked to comment on how the advice they had received, additional or otherwise, had helped them make this decision.

The use of IAG sources is presented cumulatively, as well as cross sectionally, but attitudinal data relating to one or more incidents is presented in a cross-sectional format only.

3.2.1 Advice sources used

Those in the helpline users sample were asked to outline any other use of IAG sources (Table 3.3). By T1, just less than ten per cent had used the **learndirect** helpline again, and 17 per cent had used the **learndirect** website. Almost half the sample had used some form of IAG (either formal or informal) from other sources. The usage rates for the time between T1 and T2 are also very similar to these levels.

Overall, by T2 (*ie* cumulatively), 17 per cent of individuals had used the **learndirect** helpline again, 27 per cent had used the **learndirect** website at least once, and almost 70 per cent had used some other source of IAG. This last figure is very similar to the usage levels of non-learners in NALS 2002 (among whom, 71 per cent had used some advice source). Again, usage rates of the **learndirect** advice line are greater than for NALS respondents, of whom only five per cent used this source of IAG. As the usage of

Table 3.3: Additional use of IAG sources (learndirect helpline users)

		Used source		
Timepoint/period	**Advice source**	**Frequency**	**%**	**Base (N)**
By T1	**learndirect** helpline	72	9	780
	learndirect website	136	17	780
	Other IAG source	365	47	780
T1 to T2	**learndirect** helpline	72	9	780
	learndirect website	108	14	780
	Other IAG source	378	49	780
Cumulative by T2	**learndirect** helpline	132	17	780
	learndirect website	211	27	780
	Other IAG source	534	69	780
	Any IAG source	601	77	780

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** helpline users, BMG, 2003*

learndirect is greater among those who used it before, those who used the **learndirect** helpline once are more likely to use the source again, although previous caveats about the differences between this sample and NALS still apply (see chapter 2).

3.2.2 Influence on decision to take up learning

Having used these sources, a number of people went on to access learning. Helpline users who had learnt in some form, in the year before each of the surveys, were asked to rate the influence of the IAG they received (again, on a scale of 1 to 5), up to that point in their decision to enter learning. The results are presented in the same way as for the learners' data (see Section 3.1.2), *ie* separately for learners having used each source, and at each time point. Data from T1 relates to all learning whereas data at T2 is broken down by the type of learning undertaken.

Table 3.4: Perceived impact of advice on decision to take up learning (learndirect helpline users)

Time point	Advice source	Type of learning	Influence on learning (mean score)	Base (N)
T1	**learndirect** helpline (additional contact)	All	3.48	
	learndirect helpline (original call only)	All	3.12	277
	learndirect website	All	3.10	72
	Jobcentres	All	2.02	39
	Careers Service	All	2.02	42
	Employer/work colleagues	All	2.03	30
	Learning and Skills Council	All	2.00	17
	Trade association/professional body	All	1.98	42
	Libraries	All	1.88	43
	Internet	All	1.79	62
	College/university	All	1.76	253
	Other	All	1.67	24
	Friends and family	All	1.64	33
	Citizens Advice Bureau	All	1.56	9
T2	**learndirect** website	**learndirect**	4.27	15
		other	3.54	112
	Other IAG sources	**learndirect**	4.10	10
		other	3.59	97
	learndirect helpline (additional contact)	**learndirect**	4.07	14
		other	3.60	57
	learndirect helpline (original call only)	**learndirect**	3.89	35
		other	3.40	320

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** helpline users, BMG, 2003*

At T1, users of the **learndirect** website and helpline, on average, gave higher ratings to the influence of this support on their decision to enter learning, than users of any other source. Individuals using the helpline more than once (*ie* using the service again since their original call), gave the highest ratings to the influence of the advice they had received on their decision to enter learning.

At T2, individuals gave higher ratings to the influence of all sources of IAG. Users of other IAG sources, in particular, gave a more positive rating at T2. The users of the **learndirect** website, who had taken **learndirect** courses, gave the highest average rating. Repeat **learndirect** helpline users were, again, more positive than those using the service only once. In all cases, individuals in **learndirect** learning were more positive about the IAG sources they had used.

3.3 Attitudes to learning

The sample of **learndirect** helpline users were asked a series of questions at T1 and T2 to gauge their attitudes to learning[1]. The same questions were asked in both surveys in order to determine the extent to which these attitudes changed over time. Table 3.5 presents the results Statements where the change has been statistically significant are marked.

Before moving on to interpret these results, it is important to note that no information is available on individuals' attitudes to learning before their involvement with the **learndirect** helpline (*ie* no 'baseline' data is available). Therefore, the data does not measure attitudes before and after the **learndirect** helpline intervention, but simply compares attitudes of learners directly following their initial intervention, and their attitudes some time later. Ideally, the hypothesis we would test would be that contact with the **learndirect** helpline results in changes in attitudes but the absence of baseline data makes this impossible to assess.

The direction of change is unclear, and neither solely negative nor positive changes have occurred in attitudes since T1. The most positive change in attitudes over time was that individuals were more likely by T2 to want to spend their free time in learning. However, they were also more likely to feel that they had less time for learning, and that they were not interested in learning. Individuals were less likely to seek convenient learning, and less likely to want to do an evening class.

[1] These attitudinal questions were derived from Ufi's attitudinal segmentation model of the adult learning market.

Table 3.5: Mean change in attitude scores between two surveys (learndirect helpline users)

Attitude Variable	Mean Score T1	Mean Score T2	Mean Change	Nature of change	N
I see paying for my own learning as an investment*	4.02	3.82	-0.20	Less likely to see learning as an investment	765
I need a way of learning that I can do when it is convenient for me*	4.34	4.21	-0.13	Less likely to worry about convenience	774
I'm not interested in doing any training or learning*	1.61	1.78	0.17	Less likely to be interested in doing learning	755
I'd love to do an evening class*	3.45	3.28	-0.17	Less likely to want to do an evening class	757
I prefer to spend my free time doing things other than learning*	2.95	2.70	-0.24	More likely to want to spend free time on learning	769
I don't have time to learn*	2.36	2.65	0.29	Less likely to have time to learn	774
Information about courses is easy to find	3.54	3.46	0.08	No significant change	759
I don't have the confidence to learn new skills	1.83	1.91	-0.05	No significant change	777
Learning is very expensive	3.37	3.30	-0.07	No significant change	746
Courses related to hobbies are as valuable as work-related courses	4.01	4.01	0.00	No significant change	772

* the change between T1 and T2 is significant

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** helpline users, BMG, 2003*

There are a number of reasons which might help explain why the data is inconclusive. Firstly, individuals' reasons for seeking IAG are extremely varied, as are their personal circumstances and learning situations. Changes to their situation may override any positive impact of either learning or IAG support. Additionally, it could be argued that the biggest change in attitudes would occur immediately following the intervention (*ie* at T1 or before), leading to high scores at T1, and that this effect could be expected to dissipate over time.

In an attempt to help clarify these results, changes in attitudes were compared for individuals using the **learndirect** helpline more than once. No significant differences were found, although individuals using the helpline more than once had a more positive change in relation to their confidence to learn new skills; a result which narrowly missed statistical significance.

The results were also compared between individuals who had taken part in learning (since contact with the helpline in 2002) and those who had not. In this case, a number of significant differences were found. Where there was a negative change, this was lessened for the learner group. Also, on two variables ('information about courses is easy to find' and 'learning isn't for people like me'), the direction of change was different, such that those engaged in

learning actually showed a positive change on these items compared with a negative change for those who had not learnt.

Because changes in attitude from pre-intervention, or baseline levels cannot be calculated, drawing conclusions from this data is difficult. There is little evidence of a positive change in attitude between T1 and T2 but a change in attitude as a result of the use of the helpline is not being measured by this. It would appear that repeated use of the helpline has little impact on the way in which attitudes change over time, but this may simply reflect the fact that those seeking further help have more complex needs and/or less positive images of learning initially (again, without baseline attitudes it is not possible to say). Where learning has taken place, however, the positive impact on attitudes is more apparent.

3.4 Chapter summary

Learners

Among learners, by the time of the second survey, 58 per cent had used some form of IAG, with 17 per cent using the **learndirect** helpline, over a third using the website and 35 per cent using some other form of IAG. Learners were positive about the influence of IAG on their take-up of learning. Repeat **learndirect** learners were most positive about the influence of IAG, particularly the **learndirect** website. Overall, the **learndirect** helpline received more positive ratings than any other source.

Helpline users

By the time of the first survey, 17 per cent of helpline users had made another call to the **learndirect** advice line. Over a quarter had used the **learndirect** website at least once, and 69 per cent had used another source of advice. Compared to data from the National Adult Learners Survey, individuals using the helpline once are more likely than average to call again.

Ratings of the influence of IAG on the take-up of learning among helpline users was again positive. In particular, at the time of the first survey, users of the **learndirect** website and helpline gave higher ratings to the influence of these sources of support than any other. By the second survey, ratings of all sources were higher on average, particularly among individuals having progressed into **learndirect** learning and who had used the **learndirect** website. In all cases, users of **learndirect** learning were more positive than those in other learning about the influence on IAG.

Changes in attitudes to learning were monitored over the tracking period, but there was no identifiable trend. Some evidence did exist that where individuals had gone into learning that they were more positive than those who had not. Aside from this, there was

little evidence of continued positive change in attitudes over time. In the absence of baseline data on attitudes, collected before their initial call to the helpline, however, it is difficult to gauge accurately how existing attitudes may have been changed by the call.

Overall

The majority of individuals had used some form of IAG support over the tracking period. Ratings of the influence of this support in the decision to enter learning were relatively high, particularly for the **learndirect** helpline and website, and particularly among individuals who had chosen to take up **learndirect** learning.

4. Participation Rates

An important aspect of the activities of **learndirect**, a key aim of the organisation's work, and a prominent policy focus is the engagement of individuals in learning. This is particularly true for those individuals without a recent learning history or without a history of positive participation. This is underpinned by the belief that learning offers benefits to the individual, the community and the economy[1]. In this chapter, the extent to which survey participants took part in learning and the type of learning they were involved in is examined. Further consideration is given to whether this learning involved study for qualifications.

4.1 Participation rates

4.1.1 Learners

The sample of **learndirect** learners obviously contains individuals who have been involved in some learning during the tracking period of this evaluation. However, it is possible to determine whether individuals had been involved in learning before their enrolment with **learndirect**, and the extent to which they continued in learning afterwards (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Participation rates (learndirect learners)

	Participation %		
Time point/period	**In learning**	**Not in learning**	**Base (N)**
3 years before **learndirect** learning	38	62	787
At T1	48	53	776*
At T2	29	71	787
Overall participation rate**	91	9	787

* For 11 individuals, the status of learning at T1 was unclear

** Overall participation rate is the proportion of individuals who have participated in learning between the time of the first and second surveys (*ie* between T1 and T2)

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** learners, BMG 2003*

[1] See *Education and Skills: Delivering Results: A Strategy to 2005,* DfES

In the three years before their involvement with **learndirect** learning, only 38 per cent of individuals had been engaged in some form of learning. The equivalent participation rate of NALS respondents is 76 per cent, demonstrating that the **learndirect** learners are far less likely to have been engaged in recent learning at the time of their initial contact with **learndirect.**

In the 15 month period between T1 and T2, 91 per cent were involved in learning. This figure does not include those who had completed or dropped out of their **learndirect** learning before T1 (completion rates are discussed in more detail in chapter 5). However, the overall participation rate is high and reflects the fact that most individuals were still engaged in their initial **learndirect** courses at T1.

The participation rate at T2 is a more accurate reflection of continued learning, showing almost exclusively additional learning taken after the initial **learndirect** course (or courses). However, it presents a 'snapshot' picture of participation and this rate will be an underestimation when compared with other sources which measure participation over time. The data does show that 29 per cent of individuals were still involved in some form of learning by T2.

An interesting comparator group for this result is the cohort of 2001 NALS learners who were followed-up in 2003, in the Pathways in Adult Learning (PALS) survey. The participation rate of individuals who were learning at the time of the first survey, was 32 per cent by the time of the PALS follow-up two years later. However, this figure relates to individuals engaged in learning leading to a qualification, so would be higher if all types of learning were included. It would seem, therefore, that **learndirect** learners are no more likely than other learners to continue to learn in the period following their initial learning.

However, these participation rates compare extremely favourably with data for the general population. The LFS collects this data only for individuals of working age (or over retirement age and in work), and at a point in time, rather than over a period of time. Comparing participation rates which most closely match T1 and T2, and for this same group of individuals, the **learndirect** sample has much higher participation rates (Table 4.2). At T2, the participation rates among **learndirect** learners (and PALS learners) was double that of the general population. This would suggest that participation in **learndirect,** and other types of learning, is related to increased levels of subsequent participation rates. It is also important to acknowledge that **learndirect** learners are generally qualified to a lower level, and are more likely to be out of work than the LFS 'population', factors which may influence the propensity of individuals to participate. The message here is that getting individuals into learning, of whatever type, is the key to encouraging further learning.

Table 4.2: Participation rates, working age population (learndirect learners)

		Participation %	
Data source	**Time point/period**	**In learning**	**Not in learning**
learndirect learners (Base = 592)	T1	48	52
Labour Force Survey	Summer 2002	13	87
learndirect learners (Base = 592)	T2	30	70
Labour Force Survey	Autumn 2003	15	85

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** learners, BMG 2003 and analysis of the Labour Force Survey (quarters Summer 2002 and Autumn 2003)*

Although these figures give a general indication of the levels of involvement in learning, it is important to determine the types of learning that this participation data relates to, particularly given our interest in **learndirect** learning. A comparison of participation rates at each time point and over time, for **learndirect** and other learning, is presented in Table 4.3. This clearly shows that although participation in **learndirect** courses (and in learning generally) decreases over time, where individuals are taking new courses, these are increasingly more likely to be with other providers.

Table 4.3: Participation rates by type of learning (learndirect learners)

Time point/period	**learndirect only %**	**learndirect and other %**	**Other only**	**None**	**Base (N)**
At T1	41	3	4	53	776*
At T2	14	3	12	71	787
Between T1 and T2**	58	4	29***	9	787

* For 11 individuals, the type of learning at T1 was unclear

** Overall rates reflect any learning engaged in between T1 and T2

*** The overall participation rate is higher than the two snapshot participation rates would suggest, as a number of individuals have been involved in learning over time that were not involved in learning at the specific times of the surveys

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** learners, BMG 2003*

Overall, by T2, 33 per cent of the sample had been involved in some form of non-**learndirect** learning. Ninety-one per cent of learners had been engaged in some form of learning in the period between T1 and T2, compared to a participation rate in learning (any kind) among the NALS sample of 73 per cent. However, this difference is a reflection of the fact that much of the learning among the **learndirect** sample is continued learning from their initial course.

The patterns of participation also differ according to learners' personal and educational characteristics (Table 4.4 presents the results where there was a significant difference between respondents, according to the characteristic), although not in this case, in relation to their use of IAG.

Table 4.4: Type of overall participation by learner groups (learndirect learners)

		Type of participation			
Learner characteristic	**Learner Group**	**No learning**	**Other/other and learndirect**	**learndirect only**	**Total**
Age	16 to 24	13*	39	48	23
	25 to 44	5	41	54	273
	45 to 64	11	32	56	312
	65 and over	13	20	67	171
NVQ level (baseline)	No qualifications	13	22	66	167
	NVQ Level 1 equivalence	8	28	64	134
	NVQ Level 2 equivalence	9	28	63	161
	NVQ Level 3 equivalence	6	40	54	114
	NVQ Level 4 equivalence	10	41	49	144
	NVQ Level 5 equivalence	11*	39	50	38
NVQ group (baseline)	Level 2 and above	9	36	55	457
	Level 1 and below	11	24	65	301
Economic status (baseline)	Working/self-employed	7	38	55	349
	Seeking work	6	41	53	79
	Not in work and not seeking work	8	33	59	127
	Retired	15	23	62	232
Prior learning (in 3yrs before **learndirect** involvement)	In learning	6	52	41	295
	No learning	11	22	67	492
Total		9	33	58	787

* This signifies that the frequency for this cell is less than 5.

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** learners, BMG, 2003*

The groups most likely to have taken part in other forms of learning were:

- younger learners (aged 44 or below)
- individuals qualified to level 3 or above
- those seeking work
- individuals who had been in learning in the three years before their involvement with **learndirect.**

In contrast, the groups most likely to learn only with **learndirect** were:

- older learners (particularly those aged 65 and over)
- individuals with no or lower qualifications
- individuals not in work and not seeking work, and retired learners
- individuals with no learning history in the three years before their **learndirect** enrolment.

Additionally, multivariate tests were performed to determine the personal characteristics and other factors that best predict whether a **learndirect** learner engaged in any further learning in the period following their **learndirect** course. None of the variables entered were found to be significant predictors (see Appendix 3 for details of the analysis) when other factors were controlled for. This null result suggests that either there is no identifiable trend which predicts learning participation following a learning episode, or that our data does not explain this trend. The use of IAG, therefore, did not account for any variation in the propensity to take up further learning, when other factors were controlled for. It is possible that some unobserved characteristics (*eg* motivation levels, self-confidence, level of enjoyment of learning) might help to explain this trend.

Overall, therefore, **learndirect** appears to be a route into learning for those with limited experience of learning. It appeals particularly to those who are outside of the workplace, and to those with few existing qualifications. Of those with no learning in the three years before their enrolment with **learndirect**, 22 per cent have moved through **learndirect** and onto other courses. Also, participation rates are higher for **learndirect** learners than for the general population, even two years after their enrolment on a **learndirect** course. This provides further evidence that individuals are encouraged to continue on to further learning opportunities following an initial learning episode, and that for some groups, **learndirect** is a useful way to begin the engagement process.

4.1.2 Helpline users

The rates of learning in the three years before their call to the **learndirect** helpline are much higher for helpline users than **learndirect** learners (as would be expected from their different profile, see chapter 2). Almost half had participated in some form of learning in this period (Table 4.5). However, in the 18 months following the call to the helpline, almost three-quarters of this same group had taken part in learning. This demonstrates that individuals were more likely to participate in learning following their helpline call. Although it is likely that individuals making the call to the helpline were already predisposed to take up

Table 4.5: Overall participation rates (learndirect helpline users)

Timepoint/period	In learning %	Not in learning %	Base (N)
3 years before helpline use	48	52	780
T1 (2002)	22	78	780
T2 (2003)	32	68	780
Overall (any time T1 to T2)	59	41	780
In learning at any point since helpline	73	27	780

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** helpline users, BMG, 2003*

Table 4.6: Participation rates, working age population (learndirect learners)

		Participation %	
Data source	Time point/ period	In learning	Not in learning
***learndirect** learners (Base=725)	T1	22	78
Labour Force Survey	Summer 2002	13	87
learndirect learners (Base=725)	T2	32	68
Labour Force Survey	Autumn 2003	15	85

* These are individuals who were engaged in **learndirect** learning at T0. By T1/T2 they may have completed or left these courses.

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** learners, BMG 2003 and analysis of the Labour Force Survey (quarters Summer 2002 and Autumn 2003)*

learning, this is an interesting result; particularly when participation rates for those in work or of working age are compared with population data (taken from an analysis of the Labour Force Survey, see Table 4.6). The rates of participation by **learndirect** helpline users are much higher. However, in making this comparison, it should be noted that the helpline users sample is slightly better qualified overall (at the baseline) than the general population as indicated by the LFS.

Turning to the type of learning individuals are engaged in, (Table 4.7) 11 per cent of individuals had taken up a **learndirect** course at

Table 4.7: Participation by type of learning (learndirect helpline users)

Time point/ period	learndirect only %	learndirect and other* %	Other only	None**	Base (N)
T1 (2002)	5	N/A	16	79	771
T2 (2003)	4	1	22	73	780
Overall (any point T1 to T2)	3	8	48	42	780

* The way that data was collected does not allow individuals to have declared both l**earndirect** and other types of learning in the first survey

** Individuals in non-taught learning are not included to allow comparability with the learners survey data, hence the figures in this table will vary slightly from those in Table 4.5

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** helpline users, BMG, 2003*

some point since their call to the helpline and a further 48 per cent had taken part in other types of learning. Different groups of learners were compared (as for the **learndirect** learners data) but only one significant difference emerged (Table 4.8). Individuals who had not participated in any learning, in the three years before their call to the helpline, were less likely to have participated in the period since that call. However, two-thirds of this group had still gone on to take up some form of learning. We believe that this provides further evidence of the impact of **learndirect** services on individuals with less recent experience of learning. Subsequent use of the **learndirect** helpline did not emerge as significant.

Table 4.8: Participation of those with and without a recent learning history (learndirect helpline users)

		Type of participation		
Characteristic	**Group**	**No learning**	**In some learning**	**Total**
Prior learning (in 3yrs before **learndirect** involvement)	In learning	21	79	317
	No learning	34	66	249
Total		*27*	*73*	*780*

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** helpline users, BMG, 2003*

As for the learner data, multivariate tests were performed to examine the factors that best predict whether a **learndirect** helpline user participated in any learning in the period following the helpline call. Again, none of the variables were found to be significant predictors (see Appendix 3 for details of the analysis).

Overall, then, **learndirect** helpline users are more likely to be participating in learning 15 months following their call to the helpline, than the population in general. In particular, individuals with a recent history of learning (before their helpline call) had high participation levels.

4.2 Learning leading to a qualification

Participation in learning is a pre-requisite for gaining qualifications. However, **learndirect** courses offer individuals the opportunity to learn without the pressure of qualifications. It is possible that by taking part in **learndirect** first, individuals go on to take up more formal learning opportunities. In this section, work towards qualifications is considered.

4.2.1 Learners

Among **learndirect** learners, participation in qualification related study increased over time, from ten per cent at T1 to 15 per cent at

Table 4.9: Taking qualifications (learndirect learners subsequently)

	Studying for a qualification (%)		
Time point/period	**No**	**Yes**	**Base (N)**
At T1	90	10	787
At T2	85	15	787
Overall (any time T1 to T2)	79	21	787

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** learners, BMG, 2003*

T2 (Table 4.9). However, this is substantially lower than for NALS learners, 36 per cent of whom were studying for a qualification when surveyed in 2001, and for PALS learners (NALS learners who were followed up in 2003), 32 per cent of whom were studying for a qualification. However, this does not take account of the different profiles of the two samples (*ie* their different 'starting point') in relation to prior learning or qualification level *etc.*

Just over one in five individuals has been involved in (or were still involved in) study leading to a qualification over the 15 months of survey tracking. In order to determine who is more likely to be studying for a qualification, these results were considered across a range of personal and educational/economic characteristics. (Table 4.10 presents the results, where there was a significant difference between respondents according to the characteristic.)

Participation in learning leading to a qualification drops off with age; the highest level of participation is among the youngest group (although numbers in this group are small). This type of learning is highest among those with mid-level baseline qualifications (*ie* level 2 or level 3 equivalents), and lowest among retired individuals. Those with recent experience of learning were much more likely to have participated in qualification related learning.

Multivariate tests[1] were performed to examine the factors that best predict whether a **learndirect** learner studied for a qualification between T1 and T2. The following factors were found to be important, confirming our findings from other analyses:

- **Progression:** The incidence of engaging in additional learning, which is a progression from previous learning, is the strongest indicator of whether the individual studied for a qualification. As might be expected, those who progressed in their learning were more likely to be studying for a qualification. However, it should be noted that progression in learning and studying for a qualification are not synonymous. The logistic regression

[1] In this case logistic regression (see Appendix 3 for further details)

Table 4.10: Whether studied for a qualification between T1 and T2 (learndirect learners)

		Studied for a qualification		
Learner characteristic	**Learner group**	**No (%)**	**Yes (%)**	**Base (N)**
Age	16 to 24	57	43	23
	25 to 44	66	34	273
	45 to 64	82	18	312
	65 and over	96	4*	171
Qualification level (baseline)	No NVQ equivalence	90	10	167
	NVQ Level 1 equivalence	83	17	134
	NVQ Level 2 equivalence	71	29	161
	NVQ Level 3 equivalence	74	26	114
	NVQ Level 4 equivalence	84	16	144
	NVQ Level 5 equivalence	82	18	38
Whether baseline qualification below Level 2	Level 2 and above	77	23	457
	Sub Level 2 qualified	87	13	301
Economic status (baseline)	Working/self-employed	74	26	349
	Seeking work	76	24	79
	Not seeking/homemaker/ill/disabled/ full-time student	73	27	127
	Retired	91	9	232
Whether in any learning in three years before **learndirect** involvement	In learning	63	37	295
	No learning	89	11	492
Used **learndirect** website	Yes	73	27	271
	No	82	18	516
Used other IAG sources (not **learndirect** helpline)	Yes	65	35	278
	No	87	13	509
Total		79	21	787

* This signifies that the frequency for this cell is less then 5.

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** learners, BMG, 2003*

was repeated excluding this variable, and the model remained significant.

- **Age:** The age of the individual is the next most significant predictor of studying for a qualification. As age increases, the likelihood of studying for a qualification diminishes.
- **Previous learning history:** This is the third variable to have a significant effect upon studying for a qualification. As our other analyses would suggest, those who have been in learning in the three years leading up to their **learndirect** learning are more likely to have studied for a qualification in the period following.

Whether an individual had used IAG, either in the form of the **learndirect** helpline, website or any other form of IAG, was not a significant indicator of whether they studied for a qualification.

The data, therefore, presents a picture of the person who is working towards qualifications as younger, with more recent experience of learning, and recently having progressed within learning (see chapter 5 for more detail on how progression is defined). These learners seem likely, therefore, to be more engaged, and less disadvantaged in the labour/learning markets. Data already presented shows that **learndirect** is successful in getting people started in learning (through the high participation rates). This is particularly true for disadvantaged learners. For these individuals contact with **learndirect** helps to build up the type of learning history that can result in onwards progression to qualification related learning at a later date.

4.2.2 Helpline users

Among the helpline users, there is little difference in the rates of participation in qualification between T1 and T2; at both points, around 30 per cent of individuals were taking a qualification (Table 4.11). Almost 50 per cent participated in some qualification related learning over the 15 month tracking period.

Comparing the participation of different learner groups there were a number of characteristics by which there was significant variation (Table 4.12). Interestingly, in this case, prior learning history (before helpline call) was not significant. As for the learners, participation was significantly different according to age, with learners aged 44 or less most likely to be taking qualification. Individuals qualified to level 3 or 4 were the most likely to be seeking further qualifications, causing a significant difference between those qualified to above and below level 2. Retired people, unsurprisingly, given their higher average age, were less likely than other groups to be working towards a qualification.

A logistic regression[1] was performed to examine the factors that best predict whether a **learndirect** helpline user studied for a

Table 4.11: Taking qualifications (learndirect helpline users)

	Studying for a qualification (%)		
Time point/period	**Yes**	**No**	**Base (N)**
At T1	29	69	780
At T2	30	70	780
Overall (any time T1 to T2)	48	52	780

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** helpline users, BMG, 2003*

[1] See Appendix 3 for full details

Table 4.12: Whether studied for a qualification in period T1 and T2 (learndirect helpline users)

Characteristic	Group	No (%)	Yes (%)	Base (N)
Age	16 to 24	40	60	96
	25 to 44	49	51	467
	45 to 64	62	38	197
	65 and over	79	21	19
Qualification level (baseline)	No NVQ equivalence	56	44	25
	NVQ Level 1 equivalence	60	40	174
	NVQ Level 2 equivalence	58	42	98
	NVQ Level 3 equivalence	44	56	186
	NVQ Level 4 equivalence	40	60	146
	NVQ Level 5 equivalence	60	40	151
Whether baseline qualification below level 2	Level 2 and above	48	52	508
	Sub level 2 qualified	59	41	272
Economic status (baseline)	Working/self-employed	51	49	474
	Seeking work	50	50	113
	Not in work, but not seeking work	49	51	149
	Retired	80	20	44
Total		52	48	780

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** helpline users, BMG, 2003*

qualification (between T1 and T2). However, the only factor found to be an effective predictor was age. As previous analyses suggest, as age increases the likelihood of studying for a qualification diminishes. None of the variables concerning the additional use of, or satisfaction with , the helpline were found to be influential.

Therefore the profile of helpline users studying for a qualification is similar to **learndirect** learners. Helpline users are likely to be even more highly qualified than **learndirect** learners. Of those learners with a base level qualification below level 2, 40 per cent have studied for a qualification since their call to the helpline.

4.3 Chapter summary

Learners

In the three years before their involvement with **learndirect**, only 38 per cent of individuals had taken part in learning, compared with a 91 per cent participation rate over the 15 month tracking period. Whilst this rate reflects the fact that most learners were still engaged in their initial **learndirect** learning at the time of the first survey, at the point of the second survey, 29 per cent were involved in new learning. This participation rate is double that of

the population as a whole (taken from the Labour Force Survey). Participation in **learndirect** learning is, therefore, related to increased levels of subsequent participation, but apparently no more so than participation in other forms of learning. The low levels of prior learning for this group and the different sample profile (when compared to LFS and NALS) should be noted in relation to this result.

A third of individuals had been involved in non-**learndirect** courses by the time of the second survey, suggesting also that **learndirect** can be an effective stepping stone to other forms of learning. The profiles of individuals moving into other learning, and those taking up further opportunities within **learndirect,** were different. In particular, **learndirect** learning appeals to older learners, those with a low level of qualification, individuals not in work and who have no recent learning history (although a fifth of this group had moved into other learning by T2).

Participation in learning leading to a qualification increased over time, from ten per cent at the time of the first survey, to 15 per cent at the time of the second. Around one in five learners were taking qualifications at some point during the 15 month tracking period. This form of study, however, was less common than for NALS learners, around a third of whom were studying for a qualification. Although, again, all comparisons with NALS must be placed in the context of the different sample profiles. Among the **learndirect** sample, study for qualifications was most common among younger learners, those with existing level 2 or 3 qualifications, and those with a recent experience of learning.

Helpline users

Before their call to the helpline, around half of **learndirect** helpline users had participated in learning in the last three years. In the 18 month period following their call, almost three-quarters had taken part in some form of learning. The rates of participation by helpline users were also higher than for the general population (estimated from the Labour Force Survey).

Just over ten per cent had participated in **learndirect** learning and a further 48 per cent had gone into other forms of learning. Individuals without a recent learning history were less likely to go into learning during the tracking period, although two-thirds still did so, a very positive result. This suggests either that individuals were ready for learning when they called the helpline or that something about their call stimulated the learning, or possibly both.

At the time of both surveys, 30 per cent of helpline users were involved in study leading to a qualification. Age was the main factor for this group in determining whether qualifications were being taken, with older learners less likely to have taken up this type of learning.

Overall

Participation among both samples, by the time of the second survey, was higher than for the general population. Participation in qualifications had risen over time, and young, progressing learners with a more recent learning history and existing qualifications were the most likely to move onto non-**learndirect** provision and qualification related study. In contrast, older learners, those without a recent learning history, and those more disadvantaged in the labour market, were more likely to repeat learn with **learndirect.**

5. Learning Progression

Participation in learning is, of course, a pre-requisite for any learning related outcomes. Another important aspect of participation, however, is progression within learning. Here, progression is defined as learning which is at a higher level than prior learning undertaken by that individual. The tracking data enables analysis of the extent to which learners have progressed within their learning over time. Also in this chapter the extent to which learners' additional **learndirect** learning and other learning has involved progression is examined. Also considered are the completion rates for different courses, the learning 'patterns' of individuals (where their movement in and out of different types of learning is plotted) and the extent to which future learning is planned.

5.1 Progression within learning

Individuals in the sample of **learndirect** learners[1] were asked to comment on all additional learning they had taken since their original **learndirect** course, in relation to whether it was at a higher, similar or lower level to prior learning of the same kind. Therefore, individuals taking more than one **learndirect** course were asked to compare the level of additional courses to other **learndirect** courses, and their level of non-**learndirect** learning was compared with other similar learning in the past. In this section, the extent to which individuals progressed in either **learndirect** or other learning over the tracking period is examined, as is the extent to which progression occurred *within* both **learndirect** and other types of learning.

5.1.1 Overall progression

Overall, 59 per cent of learners engaged in further learning following their original **learndirect** course. Just under a quarter of the sample took up other courses but did not progress to a higher level of learning. However, 35 per cent not only took up further learning, they also progressed to a higher level with at least some of that learning. There were significant differences within the

[1] This information was not collected for helpline users.

sample, with some learners more likely to have made progress than others (Table 5.1 presents only these significant factors).

The groups that were more likely to have made progress within their learning were:

- younger learners (aged 44 years or less)
- individuals qualified to level 2 or 3

Table 5.1: Progression within learning (learndirect learners)

		Nature of additional learning			
Learner characteristic	**Learner group**	**No additional learning**	**No progression within learning**	**Some progression within learndirect or other**	**Base (N)**
Age %	16 to 24	41	18*	41	22
	25 to 44	38	20	42	248
	45 to 64	41	24	35	274
	65 and over	50	30	21	155
NVQ level %	0	49	26	25	38
	1	43	25	32	120
	2	45	18	37	144
	3	36	18	46	104
	4	42	29	30	130
	5	29	36	36	31
NVQ group (baseline)	Level 2 and above	40	23	37	409
	Level 1 and below	47	26	28	273
Economic status (baseline) %	Working/self-employed	43	21	36	313
	Seeking work	29	24	47	66
	Not seeking work	40	19	42	113
	Retired	44	30	26	212
Prior learner (in 3yrs before **learndirect** enrolment) %	Yes	25	26	49	232
	No	51	22	27	452
Used **learndirect** website	Yes	35	22	43	239
	No	45	25	31	465
Used other IAG sources (not **learndirect** helpline)	Yes	27	22	52	240
	No	49	25	26	464
Total		41	24	35	704**

* Percentage is based on less than five individuals and should be treated with caution

** Data is unavailable on progression for 83 learners due to non or null response

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** learners, BMG, 2003*

- individuals seeking work or economically inactive (interestingly, more so than those in work)
- individuals with recent learning experiences (in the three years before the initial **learndirect** course)
- individuals using the **learndirect** website, and individuals using IAG from sources other than **learndirect.**

Individuals taking-up further learning (*ie* subsequent to their initial **learndirect** courses) were slightly more likely to do so by taking a further **learndirect** course (as did 36 per cent) than other courses (as did 31 per cent). However, this further learning was more likely to be at a higher level if the individual continued with **learndirect** (17 per cent of those taking additional courses with **learndirect** progressed to a higher level of study compared to 13 per cent of learners taking other courses).

This (nominally) lower progression rate is likely to reflect the profiles of individuals who choose to stay with **learndirect** learning rather than moving into other types of learning (see chapter 3), as this group tends to be older, and are less likely to have a recent learning history. These same characteristics are related to lower progression rates overall and lower participation in qualification driven learning (see chapter 4). The higher take-up of repeat **learndirect** courses reflects, once again, that they are particularly attractive to individuals who are not ready for, or attracted by, other types of learning.

The data was also analysed using multivariate tests to see which factors are the strongest predictors of whether a **learndirect** learner goes on to progress in learning. A significant model was produced, which found the following factors to be important:

- **Use of IAG:** The most effective predictor of going on to progress in learning was whether the individual had used any form of IAG since their course. Those that had received IAG were over two times more likely to go on to progress in learning than those who had not[1].
- **Previous learning history:** In line with the earlier findings, previous learning history was found to be an important determinant. Those who had been engaged in learning in the three years leading up to the first survey were more likely to go on to progress in learning than those who had not.

These results suggest that, controlling for factors such as age, economic status *etc.*, individuals using IAG are more likely to progress in learning. Whilst learning history is also an important

[1] The multivariate test was repeated entering the forms of IAG separately and the only significant factor was non-**learndirect** IAG. Neither the **learndirect** helpline or website were seen to be significant factors of progressive learning.

factor, there is something either about the receipt of IAG, or those individuals who seek it out, that means they are more likely to have been or to be engaged in progressive learning.

5.2 Completion rates

Another consideration is the extent to which individuals complete their learning. There are a number of ways to calculate completion rates, and the method chosen can impact greatly on how high the completion rates appear. It is important, therefore, to be clear on how the completion rates have been calculated in this report. In this case the completion rates are based on learning episodes, rather than individuals, as each person could have taken multiple courses with different outcomes for each. Ongoing learning episodes have not been used in the calculation of completion rates. These rates are based on the number of learning episodes (that are no longer ongoing) which have been successfully completed (as opposed to individuals who have 'dropped out' of learning). The numbers of ongoing episodes are presented separately.

This method of calculation assumes that ongoing learning episodes will be completed at the same rate as those that are no longer ongoing. In fact, this may or may not be the case. This limitation should be considered in interpreting and contrasting data from other sources which are likely to have calculated completion rates in a different way.

5.2.1 Learners

Of all the **learndirect** learning episodes taken and no longer on-going, 63 per cent were successfully completed[1]. Non-**learndirect** courses had a 91 per cent completion rate. Therefore overall,

Table 5.2: Completion rates — all learning episodes (learndirect learners where data available)

Type of learning	Completion rate %	Base (N= learning episodes no long ongoing)	Ongoing (N= no. still on courses)
learndirect*	63	712[1]	132
other	91	231	121
All	70	943	253

* The data for **learndirect** courses excludes individuals who had gone on to further **learndirect** courses between their first learning episode and T1, as completion data was not available for these learning episodes.

[1] This figure does not reflect the total number of learning episodes engaged in, as completion data was unavailable for courses undertaken between the initial **learndirect** course and T1. Individuals taking courses in this timeframe have been dropped from the analysis as their completion rates were unclear from the available data.

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** learners, BMG, 2003*

[1] *ie* the individual concerned stated that they had learnt the full course and had not retired early from that course.

learndirect learners completed 70 per cent of the learning episodes that are no longer ongoing. A further 253 learning episodes are yet to reach conclusion (see Table 5.2).

5.2.2 Helpline users

The rates of completion of **learndirect** episodes, although in relation to far fewer episodes than the learners, were slightly higher, with two-thirds successfully completing their **learndirect** courses[1]. The completion rates of other learning episodes were again higher, at 78 per cent, although lower than for learners. The overall completion rate for all finished learning episodes was 75 per cent, with 224 ongoing episodes (see Table 5.3).

Table 5.3: Completion rates — all learning episodes (learndirect helpline users)

Type of learning	Completion rate %	Base (N= learning episodes no long ongoing)	Ongoing (N= no. still on courses)
learndirect	66	92	36
other	78	377	188
All	75	469	224

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** helpline users, BMG, 2003*

5.3 Learning patterns

There are many pathways that individuals take through learning. Some will be continuous learners, while others will dip in and out of learning. Some will study consistently for qualifications, while others prefer less formal learning mechanisms. Attempting to track these paths is difficult because of the inevitable, and highly individual, complexity of pathways in samples of this size. In order to attempt to capture some of this complexity, the data has been presented in a way that tracks individuals through their learning at T1 and T2 according to a simple typology of learning (Figures 5.2 and 5.3). These typologies are slightly different for **learndirect** learners and helpline users and are presented separately in the sections that follow.

5.3.1 Learners

At each point, individuals are classified as being in one of the following categories:

- in learning leading to a qualification
- in learning not leading to a qualification

[1] *ie* the individual concerned stated that they had learnt the full course and had not retired early from that course.

- in **learndirect** learning
- not in learning.

Those most likely still to be in learning were those engaged in a non-**learndirect** course that was leading to a qualification (either alongside **learndirect** learning or on its own). This may be because qualification-based courses tend to be longer. Those least likely to be in learning at T2 were those who were not learning at T1 because they had dropped out of their **learndirect** course.

Looking at the different types of learning people were engaged in, those still in **learndirect** learning at T1 were the group most likely to be in **learndirect** learning again at T2. Those studying for a qualification at T1 were more likely than the other groups to be studying for a qualification at T2.

Where people had taken part in other learning, they were asked how they felt about the role of **learndirect** in this other learning. The results were very positive: 64 per cent felt that their **learndirect** experience had complemented other learning; 70 per cent felt that **learndirect** had acted as a stepping stone to other learning.

The data was also examined for differences according to a range of characteristics (Table 5.4). Only two emerged as significant. These results showed that individuals with low prior qualification levels, and no recent experience of learning before **learndirect** enrolment, were particularly positive about the influence of **learndirect** learning on other learning they had done.

Table 5.4: Role of learndirect in other learning (learndirect learners by per cent)

Learner groups	Has been stepping stone	Has not been stepping stone	Base (N)	Has complemented learning	Has not complemented	Base (N)
Level 1 and below learners	78	22	64	83	17	64
Level 2 and above learners	60	39	149	66	32	149
Been in learning in 3 yrs before **learndirect**	55	44	121	62	36	121
Had not been in learning in 3 yrs before **learndirect**	74	26	106	76	23	106
Total	70	30	227	64	36	227

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** learners, BMG, 2003*

5.3.2 Helpline users

At each point, helpline users are classified as being either:

- in learning leading to a qualification

- in learning not leading to a qualification (including **learndirect** learning)
- not in learning.

Figures 5.2 and 5.3 clearly show that those who have been in learning at one point are more likely to be in learning again at a later date. Looking at the non-learners over the two time points, of those who were not in learning at T1, 70 per cent were still not in learning at T2, compared to around 60 per cent for those who were in learning at T1.

There is a similar pattern for learning which is leading to a qualification. Those who were learning towards a qualification at T1 were much more likely to be doing so again at T2, at 34 per cent compared to 18 per cent for those who were not. However, it is interesting to see that learning *per se* is not linked to taking up qualification based learning.

The proportion who went on to study for qualifications at T2 was the same for those who had been in non-qualification based learning at T1 as it was for those who were not learning at all at T1.

5.4 Likelihood of future learning

Over half of **learndirect** learners considered themselves either likely or very likely to take part in future learning (Table 5.5). These individuals were asked whether this would be the case without their contact with **learndirect**. Just less than a third of learners stated that they would not be considering future learning without having participated in **learndirect** learning.

Using multivariate tests[1], it was possible to examine which factors best predicted whether a **learndirect** learner thought they would learn again in the future.

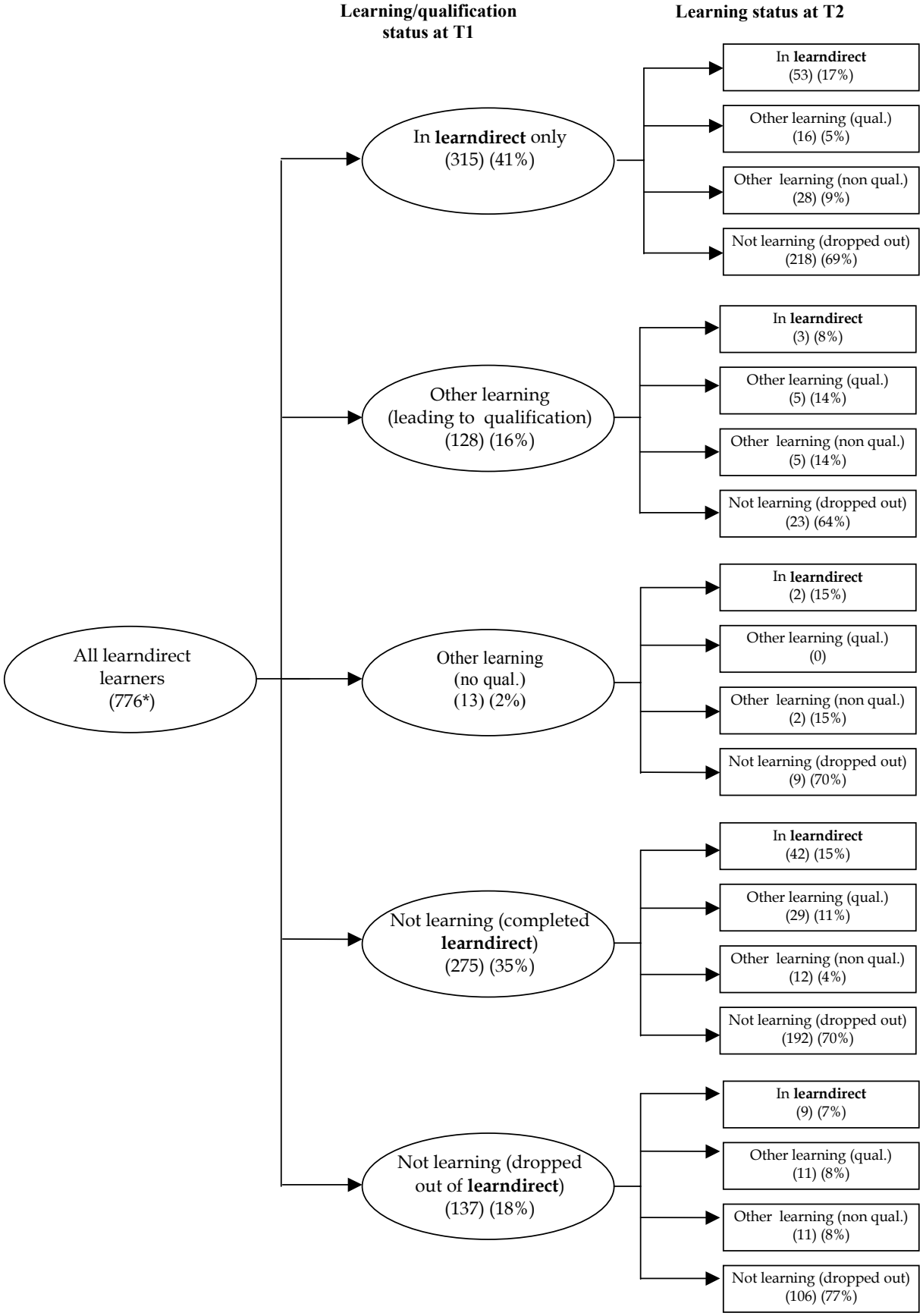
Table 5.5: Likelihood of participation in further learning (learndirect learners)

	Frequency	Per cent
Not at all likely	141	19
Not likely	47	6
Neutral	163	22
Likely	135	18
Extremely likely	261	35
Total	747	100

Source: IES, based on survey of learndirect learners, BMG, 2003

[1] See Appendix 3 for further details

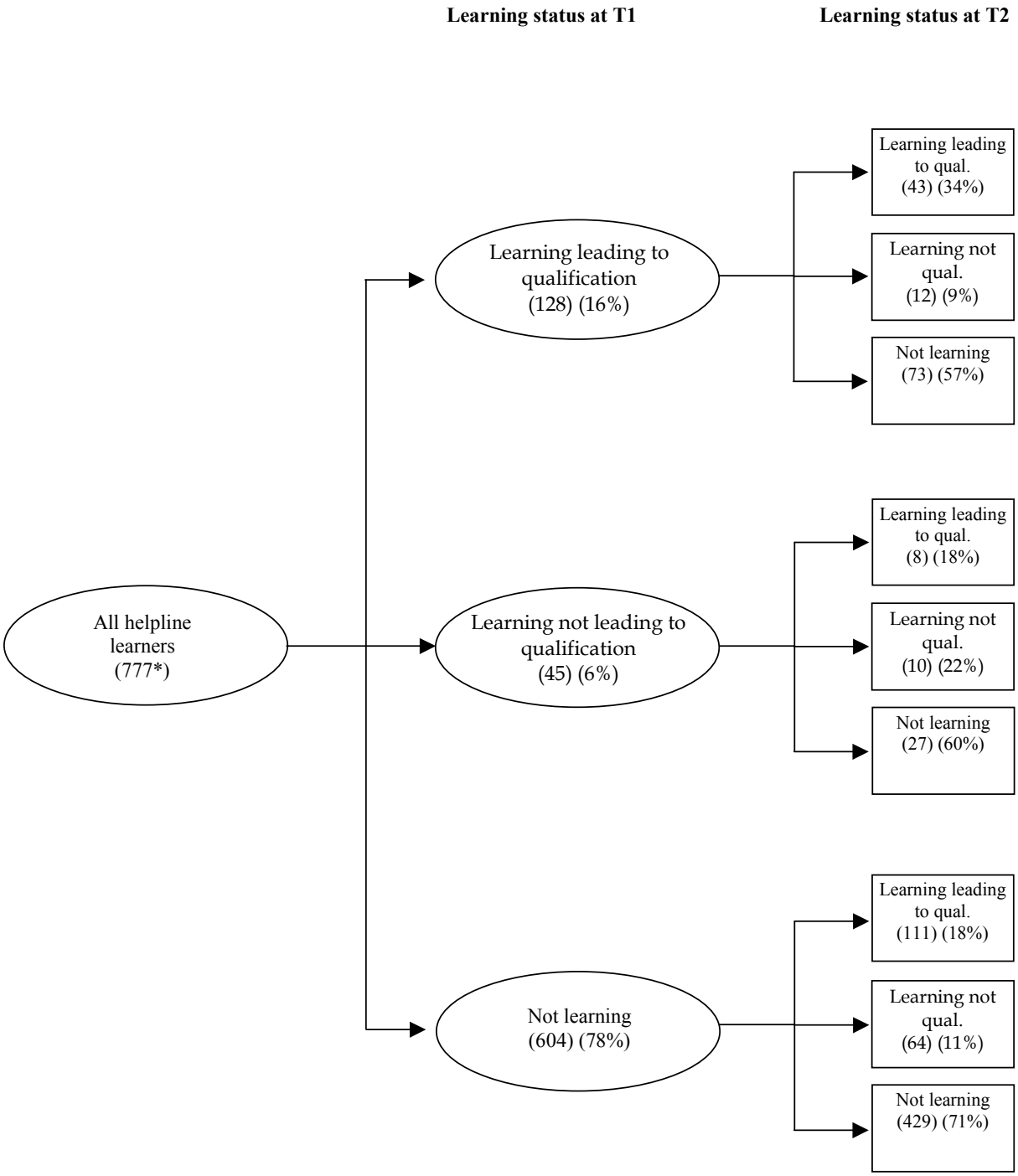
Figure 5.2: Learning patterns of learndirect learners



Note: For each percentage, base is number of learners at prior step * data is missing for 11 learners

Source: IES, 2004

Figure 5.3: Learning patterns of learndirect helpline users



Note: For each percentage, base is number of helpline users at prior step

* Data is missing for 3 learners

Source: IES, 2004

The results found a number of determinants of responses to this question:

- **Use of IAG:** The factor that best predicted whether someone thought they would learn again was whether they had received IAG. Those who had received IAG were significantly more likely to think they would engage in future learning than those who had not[1].
- **Additional participation in learning:** The next most important factor was whether the individual had engaged in any learning since the **learndirect** course. Those who had were more likely to believe they would engage in learning again.
- **Age:** The third most important factor was age, with the perceived likelihood of future learning diminishing as age increased. This is in line with our other findings highlighting how older people are less likely to be progressive learners.
- **Progression in learning:** Another important factor was whether the learner had progressed in their learning over the tracking period. Those who had progressed in their learning were more likely to believe they would learn again in the future.
- **Previous learning history:** In line with the other findings, previous learning history was found to be a significant determinant of whether someone thought they would learn in the future. Those who had engaged in learning in the three years leading up to the first survey were more likely to think they would learn again.

It is interesting in this model that IAG usage and participation in learning over the tracking period, along with whether individuals have progressed within learning are more strongly related to future learning plans than earlier learning histories. **learndirect** services, therefore, seem well placed to encourage positive attitudes towards learning.

5.4.1 Helpline users

Helpline users were more likely than learners to want to participate in future learning, and almost 60 per cent felt themselves either likely or extremely likely to participate in future (see Table 5.6).

[1] The multivariate test was repeated entering the forms of IAG separately. Of the different forms of IAG discussed, non-**learndirect** IAG was the best predictor followed by the **learndirect** website. Use of the **learndirect** helpline was not found to be influential.

Table 5.6: Likelihood of participation in further learning (helpline users)

	Frequency	Per cent
Not at all likely	88	12
Not likely	53	7
Neutral	167	22
Likely	116	15
Extremely likely	335	44
Total	759	100

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** helpline users, BMG, 2003*

As for the learners, multivariate tests were performed on the helpline user data to see which factors best determine whether a user thinks they will learn in the future. For this group, only two factors were found to be important:

- **Learning participation:** the most effective predictor was whether the individual had participated in learning since the helpline call. As for the learners, those who had participated were significantly more likely to think they would learn at a later date.
- **Satisfaction with the helpline call:** this was the next most important predictor; the higher an individual rated their satisfaction with their original call to the helpline, the more likely they were to believe they would learn in the future.

With reference to the latter factor, it is possible that those who were more satisfied with the helpline call were more likely to actually participate in learning, and that this in turn influenced their attitude to future learning. However, satisfaction with the helpline was a significant factor, even once participating in learning and other demographic variables had been controlled for. As such, the finding provides strong evidence of a positive impact of the helpline service on attitudes to learning.

5.5 Chapter summary

Learners

Just under 70 per cent of **learndirect** learners had taken up further learning opportunities by the time of the second survey. Over a third of the sample had progressed within this additional learning to a higher level than they had in prior learning. Individuals taking part in additional **learndirect** learning were slightly more likely to be happy to do so at the same level. Progressing learners have a similar profile to those who engage in qualifications, as they are more likely to be younger, to be qualified to level 2 or 3, to be in (or seeking) work, and to have recent learning experiences. However, the most effective predictor of whether a

learndirect repeat learner had progressed within their learning was whether they had used some form of IAG support. Those who had were over twice as likely to go on to progress in learning that those who had not.

The completion rate (*ie* where the individual reported that they had completed their learning fully, rather than retiring early from the course) of **learndirect** courses was 63 per cent, compared to a 91 per cent rate of completion of other courses (although a substantial number were ongoing and not included in this analysis).

Over half of the learners felt that they were likely to take part in future learning, and a third of learners felt that they would not be considering other learning if they had not participated in **learndirect.** Whether an individual was thinking about participating in future was best predicted by whether an individual had used IAG support, with those who had used it more likely to participate.

Helpline users

Sixty six per cent of helpline users who learnt through **learndirect** completed their courses successfully, and 78 per cent did so for other types of learning. Among helpline users, 60 per cent thought it likely that they would participate in future learning. The best predictor of this was whether individuals had a recent learning history, as those that did were more likely to feel they would take part in future learning. Interestingly, however, the second most important predictor was whether individuals were satisfied with their original call to the helpline. Those who were satisfied were more likely to want to learn in future.

Overall

Progression within learning and study for qualifications are linked to a similar set of factors. Younger individuals and those most closely connected to the labour market and prior learning are the most likely to progress. However, in both progression and plans for future learning, the use of IAG emerges as a positive factor. For helpline users, satisfaction with the service they received, along with a recent learning history, are the factors most likely to predict an interest in future learning.

6. Outcomes

The economic benefits of learning are well documented[1]. There is also a range of evidence in relation to a wider impact, such as on families, health and community/citizenship[2]. In this chapter, data available from the surveys of **learndirect** users is analysed specifically to determine individual gains in qualifications, earnings and skills. Comparisons are made between those who have/have not participated in learning and those who have/have not accessed sources of IAG, alongside a range of other characteristics.

6.1 Qualification gains

Earlier chapters have examined the issues of progression, completion and study for qualifications, this section considers the extent to which the sample has actually made a qualification gain. It should be noted that different levels of qualifications can only be achieved over certain periods and some take longer than others. There are a large number of individuals involved in qualification related learning (see chapter 4) who may not yet have been on-course for sufficient elapsed time to achieve their end qualification goal. The data for qualification gains, therefore, can only include courses which take less than 15 months to complete, or which had started before the tracking period began.

In measuring changes to qualification level against NVQ equivalencies, it is not possible for individuals qualified to level 5 at T1 to increase their qualification level. Also, individuals may have gained a qualification at the same level as their existing highest qualification. This evaluation did not collect data relating to this type of qualification gain, and individuals are only considered to have gained a qualification if this new qualification is now their *highest* qualification.

[1] See, for example, work by the Centre for the Economics of Education who presented in-depth analysis of data from the LFS.

[2] See, for example, the website of the DfES Centre for the Wider Benefits of Learning for further details/publications.

6.1.1 Learners

Nine per cent of learners had increased their qualification level since T1. This is much lower than gains among PALS respondents, between 24 and 51 per cent[1] of whom had gained a qualification between 2001 and 2003. This reflects the higher participation in qualification-driven learning among this group (see chapter 4 for details). It also shows the different profiles between **learndirect** samples and NALS (see chapter 2).

learndirect learners with a baseline highest qualification of NVQ level 1 were the most likely to have gained a qualification, and 13 per cent of this group had moved up to level 2 or higher (Table 6.1). Of those qualified below level 2 initially, nine per cent had moved to level 2 or above over the tracking period (Table 6.2). This figure is higher for lower level learners than for the more highly qualified (nine per cent compared to seven per cent), although this difference is not significant statistically. This does suggest that **learndirect** courses are more successful in encouraging qualification-related learning among lower qualified

Table 6.1: Changes to qualification levels (learndirect learners)

	Current NVQ level						
Baseline NVQ level*	**No qual.**	**NVQ Level 1**	**NVQ Level 2**	**NVQ Level 3**	**NVQ Level 4**	**NVQ Level 5**	**Base (N)**
No qual. %	**94**	5	-	1**	-	-	167
NVQ Level 1 %	-	**87**	10	2**	1**	-	134
NVQ Level 2 %	-	-	**88**	9	3**	-	161
NVQ Level 3 %	-	-	-	**89**	11	-	114
NVQ Level 4 %	-	-	-	-	**99**	1**	144
NVQ Level 5 %	-	-	-	-	-	**100**	38
Total	17	21	16	21	5	21	758

* The baseline level of qualification is only available for 758 individuals due to missing data on prior qualification level

** Signifies that the number of individuals that this percentage is based on is under 5 and should be interpreted with caution

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** learners, BMG, 2003*

Table 6.2: Changes to sub-level 2 (learndirect learners)

	Current qualification level		
Learner level	**Below level 2**	**Level 2 or above**	**Base (N)**
Below level 2 %	91	9	301

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** learners, BMG, 2003*

[1] It is not possible to give a precise indication of changes to qualification level from PALS, as many respondents had studied for 'other quals' which could mean they were studying for any of the levels; 1, 2 or 3.

learners. However, the gains for this sub-level 2 group are less than for their counterparts in PALS, between 13 and 26 per cent of whom had gained a qualification over the two year tracking period.

There were a number of groups statistically more likely to have gained a qualification (Table 6.3). These were individuals:

- aged 16 to 24 (although this group is small)
- with an existing qualification at NVQ levels 1 to 3
- who were not retired
- with a prior history of learning who had used an IAG source, other than **learndirect** services.

These results show that participation, progression and qualification gain are all highly related, as the groups most likely to gain a qualification are also those also most likely to have positive outcomes all round. They also highlight the possible role of IAG in the facilitation of successful learning.

Table 6.3: Qualification gains by learner characteristics (learndirect learners)

		Gained a qualification since T1		
Learner characteristic	**Learner group**	**No (%)**	**Yes (%)**	**Base (N)**
Age	16 to 24	70	30	23
	25 to 44	87	13	273
	45 to 64	95	5	312
	65 and over	98	2	171
Qualification level (baseline)	No NVQ equivalence	94	6	167
	NVQ Level 1 equivalence	87	13	134
	NVQ Level 2 equivalence	88	12	161
	NVQ Level 3 equivalence	89	11	114
	NVQ Level 4 equivalence	99	1*	144
	NVQ Level 5 equivalence	100	-	38
Economic activity (baseline)	Working/self-employed	90	10	349
	Seeking work	91	9	79
	Not in work, but not seeking work	91	9	127
	Retired	97	3	232
Whether in any learning in three years before **learndirect** involvement	In learning	82	17	295
	No learning	98	2	492
Used other IAG sources (not **learndirect** helpline)	Yes	87	13	278
	No	95	5	509
Total		92	8	787

* Signifies that the number of individuals that this percentage is based on is under five and should be interpreted with caution

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** learners, BMG, 2003*

In order to set these results in context, a comparison has been made with data available from the LFS. Qualification data is only available through the LFS for individuals in work or of working age. The same filters have been applied to the **learndirect** learners data in order to ensure the best comparison (Table 6.4). Gains for the LFS sample reflect individuals who have gained their highest qualification in the last two years. The period over which learners were able to work towards a qualification is longer than for the **learndirect** group (who were tracked for 15 months). **learndirect** learners are also more likely to be out of employment, qualified to lower levels, and older than the LFS estimates.

It might, therefore, be expected that the qualification gains among **learndirect** learners would be lower than for LFS (based on the fact that age and prior qualification levels contribute to the likelihood of gaining qualifications). The data reflects this, and nine per cent of learners compared to 15 per cent of the LFS sample had gained their highest qualification in the relevant period. Without a more effective comparator group, it is difficult to say with confidence whether the **learndirect** sample is experiencing greater gains than would be expected.

However, when age is controlled for, younger **learndirect** learners are still less likely than their LFS counterparts to have gained a qualification. Fifteen per cent of **learndirect** learners aged between 16 and 44 gained a qualification over the tracking period, but this compares to a figure of 21 per cent among LFS respondents in the same age group over this period. However, the proportion of older **learndirect** learners gaining a qualification was slightly greater than for their peers in the LFS. Four per cent of **learndirect** learners aged 45 or over had gained a qualification over the tracking period compared to three per cent of LFS respondents.

Table 6.4: Qualification gains for working age population* (learndirect learners)

	Whether gained a qualification		
Source	**Yes**	**No**	**Base (N)**
learndirect learners	9	91	592**
LFS	15	85	38,259,687 ****
	Whether working towards a qualification		
Source	**Yes**	**No**	**Base (N)**
learndirect learners	15	85	775**
LFS	16	84	38,165,342 ****

* Defined as men aged 16 to 64 and women aged 16 to 59 or those outside this range who are still in work

** Where age is not given in years (only in a band) individuals had to be excluded from this analysis

*** Data is calculated for the LFS sample based on the previous two years, but data for the helpline users is for the previous 15 months only

**** Base figure is weighted to the general population

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** learners, BMG 2003 and LFS Autumn quarter2003, Office of National Statistics*

There were similar proportions of individuals studying for a qualification in both samples.

6.1.2 Helpline users

A similar analysis was carried out for helpline users and the same level of qualification gain was found: nine per cent. Again, individuals with a baseline qualification of level 1 were most likely to have gained a qualification, but individuals with a level 2 baseline were as likely to have gained a qualification (Table 6.5). Among the sub-level 2 population, six per cent became qualified to level 2 or above, but none of those starting out with no qualifications went on to gain any in this period. This result does not, therefore, accurately reflect the level of gains made by those individuals who started with a level 1 qualification, 16 per cent of whom had progressed to at least level 2 by T2.

A number of factors were significantly related to whether individuals had gained a qualification (Table 6.6). Younger learners, and those with a prior qualification level of one or two, were the most likely to have gained a qualification. Of younger learners, those aged 25 to 44 were particularly likely to gain a qualification (11 per cent had done so). Of those with a prior level of qualification of one or two, 16 per cent of each group had gained a qualification. There was also a significant difference between those qualified to level 2 and below and those with

Table 6.5: Changes to qualification levels (learndirect helpline users)

	Current NVQ level						
Baseline NVQ level	**No qual.**	**NVQ Level 1**	**NVQ Level 2**	**NVQ Level 3**	**NVQ Level 4**	**NVQ Level 5**	**Base (N)**
No qual. %	**100**	-	-	-	-	-	174
NVQ Level 1 %	-	**84**	10	3*	3*	-	98
NVQ Level 2 %	-	-	**84**	13	3	-	186
NVQ Level 3 %	-	-	-	**88**	12	-	146
NVQ Level 4 %	-	-	-	-	**98**	2*	151
NVQ Level 5 %	-	-	-	-	-	**100**	25
Total	22	10	21	20	22	4	780

* Signifies that the number of individuals that this percentage is based on is under five and should be interpreted with caution

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** helpline users, BMG, 2003*

Table 6.6: Changes to sub-level 2 proportion (learndirect helpline users)

	Current qualification level		
Learner level	**Below level 2**	**Level 2 or above**	**Base (N)**
Below level 2 %	94	6	272

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** helpline users, BMG, 2003*

higher initial qualifications: the better qualified group were more likely to have made progress than the others. The overall progression rate to level 2 was six per cent (Table 6.7).

Comparisons were also made with the LFS. As for the learners data, the rate of qualification gain was calculated for everyone in work, or of working age, so that the sample was comparable with the LFS analysis (Table 6.8). The overall gain was the same as that of the **learndirect** learners sample, at nine per cent compared to the 15 per cent gain in the LFS. Analysing these results by age, ten per cent of the under 45 group made qualification gains, compared to five per cent of older users. This compares to rates for LFS respondents of 21 per cent and three per cent respectively. Again, therefore — and in the same way as the learners' data — while younger **learndirect** helpline users are less likely than the LFS 'population' to have gained a qualification, gains are actually slightly greater among the older group.

Helpline users are more likely than LFS respondents to be qualified to level 2 and above, so as gains for higher qualified respondents were less common (presumably at least partly because of the length of time taken to gain higher level qualifications, traditionally longer than those at level 2 or below) this might help explain the difference between this sample and the LFS results. Again, the time over which new qualifications are counted towards this figure is longer for the LFS than for the helpline users, which is likely to affect the results. To conclude, rates of qualification gain among helpline users appear to be

Table 6.7: Qualification gains by personal characteristics (learndirect helpline users)

		Gained a qualification since T1		
Helpline user characteristic	**Helpline user group**	**No (%)**	**Yes (%)**	**Base (N)**
Age	16 to 24	94	6	96
	25 to 44	89	11	467
	45 to 64	95	5	197
	65 and over	100	-	19
Qualification level (baseline)	No NVQ equivalence	100	-	174
	NVQ Level 1 equivalence	84	16	98
	NVQ Level 2 equivalence	84	16	186
	NVQ Level 3 equivalence	88	12	146
	NVQ Level 4 equivalence	98	2	151
	NVQ Level 5 equivalence	100	-	25
Whether baseline qualification below level 2	Level 2 and above	90	10	508
	Sub-level 2 qualified	94	6	272
Total		91	9	780

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** helpline users, BMG 2003 and LFS Autumn quarter 2003*

Table 6.8: Qualification gains for working age population* (learndirect helpline users)

	Whether gained a qualification		
Source	**Yes**	**No**	**Base (N)**
learndirect helpline users***	9	91	725**
LFS	15	85	38,259,687****

* Defined as men aged 16 to 64 and women aged 16 to 59 or those outside this range who are still in work

** Where age is not given in years (only in a band) individuals had to be excluded from this analysis

*** Data is calculated for the LFS sample based on the previous two years, but data for the helpline users is for the previous 15 months only

**** Base figure is weighted to the general population

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** helpline users, BMG 2003 and LFS Autumn quarter 2003, Office of National Statistics*

slightly lower than for the population as a whole but the data is inconclusive due to discrepancies in the way the figures can be calculated for the two samples.

6.2 Income

Information was collected in both survey waves on the level of income individuals received. In this section, the data is analysed for any changes. There are a number of issues with the data, however, which need to be noted and considered in the interpretation of the results.

Firstly, actual income levels were only available for a minority of individuals (and so have not been analysed here). Banded income was a more common way for individuals to respond to these questions. This means that no measure of the actual size of income gains is available. Using banded data is likely to underestimate the extent of income change as individuals need to increase to the band above from their original level in order for a change to be apparent. The bands are sufficiently wide for fairly significant changes to be missed using these measures.

Also, data was only collected for individuals in work at both times and income from benefits was not examined. This is important in considering results from other research where income data may be presented for a different population. The surveys also both included a substantial proportion of individuals who exercised their right not to comment on their income. Therefore, the numbers involved in this analysis are less than in other areas of this report.

Despite these limitations, it remains worth considering the extent to which individuals had improved their levels of income. Further details on movement between the bands is also available, but is presented separately in Appendix 2.

Table 6.9: Changes in income (learndirect learners)

Learner characteristic	Learner group	No change/ decreased earnings	Increased earnings	Base (N)
Gender %	Male	66	34	77
	Female	74	26	136
Age %	16 to 24	33*	67*	6
	25 to 44	74	26	116
	45 to 64**	70	30	91
NVQ level (baseline)%	Level 2 and above	70	30	141
	Level 1 and below	74	26	61
Prior learner (in 3yrs before **learndirect** enrolment) %	Yes	70	30	103
	No	73	27	110
Total		71	29	213

* Signifies that the number of individuals that this percentage is based on is under five and should be interpreted with caution

** Includes a small number of individuals over the age of 64 who were working both times

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** learners, BMG, 2003*

6.2.1 Learners

Overall, just under 30 per cent of learners had increased the level of their income over the 15 month tracking period (Table 6.9). There were no significant differences among the sample according to the personal and educational characteristics available for comparison, but Table 6.9 presents some of these comparisons for completeness. Use of IAG sources was examined but there was found to be no significant differences among the sample in relation to their IAG use and income gains.

6.2.2 Helpline users

The levels of income gains for helpline users were slightly lower than for the learners, and 27 per cent of helpline users had increased their earnings over the previous 15 months (Table 6.10). Again, there were no significant differences among the sample according to their personal and educational characteristics or IAG usage, but data is presented here as a matter of interest for readers.

6.3 Skill gains

All **learndirect** learners, and those helpline users who had undertaken learning, were asked to comment on what they thought they had gained from this learning. Individuals were questioned about a range of work, essential and social skills. In this section these results are discussed.

Table 6.10: Changes in income (learndirect helpline users)

Helpline user characteristic	Helpline user group	No change/ decreased earnings	Increased earnings	Base (N)
Gender %	Male	74	26	262
	Female	70	30	158
Age %	16 to 24	54	46	48
	25 to 44	75	25	268
	45 to 64**	76	24	104
NVQ level (baseline)%	Level 2 and above	70	30	279
	Level 1 and below	79	21	141
Prior learner (in 3yrs before **learndirect** enrolment) %	Yes	74	26	232
	No	71	29	188
Additional use of helpline	No additional use	73	27	360
	Used helpline again once	74	26	42
	Used helpline again twice of more	59	41*	17
Total		73	27	420

* Signifies that the number of individuals that this percentage is based on is under five and should be interpreted with caution

** Includes a small number of individuals over the age of 64 who were working both times

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** helpline users, BMG, 2003*

6.3.1 Learners

Almost all learners (98 per cent) felt that they had gained something from their learning by the time of the second survey (Table 6.11). The most common skills gained were IT skills, followed by self-confidence/motivation and personal/social skills. The table presents the proportions of learners reporting that they had gained a skill at T1, and at T2, and also a composite figure of the proportions reporting having gained a skill in both or either of the surveys.

There were a number of factors according to which there were significant differences in the responses of the sample. These differences were as follows:

- **Age**: the propensity to have gained a job-related skill (related to either current or future jobs), to progress into qualifications, to have gained team working and literacy/numeracy skills all decreased with age. In contrast, older learners were the ones most likely to feel that they had gained personal/social skills.
- **Level of baseline qualification**: individuals qualified to level 2 or higher were more likely to feel they had gained job-related skills, or to progress into qualifications, whereas, individuals with lower qualifications were more likely to feel that they had gained numeracy and/or literacy skills.

Table 6.11: Skills gained from learning (learndirect learners)

	At T1		At T2		By T2	
Skills gained	**%**	**(N)***	**%**	**(N)***	**%**	**(N)***
Job-related skills – relevant to current/previous job	52	459	56	540	58	638
Job-related skills – relevant to a future job/career	65	514	59	532	66	642
The opportunity to progress onto qualifications	60	631	54	669	69	757
Personal/social skills	69	728	67	742	82	784
Problem solving skills	54	702	56	708	71	778
Team working skills	28	632	36	685	45	758
Self-confidence and motivation	77	739	74	740	89	780
Literacy skills	33	652	40	687	50	764
Numeracy skills	28	649	36	685	44	761
IT skills	91	769	87	756	96	785
Gained a skill	96	787	98	787	98	787

* Only individuals for whom the item is relevant are included in this breakdown, hence the differing base numbers

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** learners, BMG, 2003*

- **Baseline economic status**: individuals in work were the most likely to feel they had gained skills related to their current or prior jobs, whereas, respondents seeking work were the most likely to feel that they had gained skills relevant to future job opportunities. Individuals seeking work were also most likely to feel that they had gained team working and literacy skills. The retired were most likely to feel that they had gained numeracy skills but least likely to have gained the opportunity to progress onto qualifications (presumably because this interests them less).
- **Learning history**: individuals without a recent learning history were more likely to feel that they had gained confidence/motivation and or IT skills.
- **Use of learndirect helpline**: individuals who had used the helpline were more likely to feel they had gained job-related skills for their current or previous work, to have gained the opportunity to progress onto qualifications, and to have gained personal/social skills.
- **Use of learndirect website**: was connected to a greater likelihood of gaining job related skills for both current and future opportunities, with onward progression to qualifications, and with increased numeracy and literacy skills.
- **Use of other IAG**: was related to job skills for a current/prior job and progression onto qualifications. However, users of other IAG sources were less likely to feel they had gained personal/social skills.

In summary, therefore, younger learners, individuals without a recent learning history, individuals seeking work, and those who

have used IAG resources are the ones most likely to report having gained something from their learning.

Additional analysis was also carried out to determine whether individuals making progressions within their learning and/or work were more or less likely to feel that they had gained skills. The significant results were as follows:

- Individuals who had progressed in some form of learning were more likely to feel that they had gained job skills for the future.
- Learners who had secured a new job (in the same type of work) were more likely to have gained job skills for both current/previous and future positions.
- Learners with a new job in a different line of work were also more likely to have gained job skills for both current/previous and future jobs, but were also more likely to have gained literacy skills and numeracy skills.
- Learners who had secured a promotion at work were more likely to feel they had gained job skills for their current job, but individuals who had not achieved a promotion were more likely to feel that they had gained personal/social skills.
- Individuals with a pay rise were more likely to feel they had gained job related skills for both the present/previous and future jobs, to feel that they had the opportunity to progress into qualifications in the future, and numeracy skills.

While it is not possible to state the direction of the relationship (*ie* whether individuals gaining skills are then more likely to progress within work or learning, or vice versa), there is a relationship between positive work and learning outcomes and positive views about skill gains. Interestingly, however, there did not appear to be a relationship between gaining a qualification and gaining skills, as those with a qualification were no more likely to feel they had gained any of the specified skills than those without.

6.3.2 Helpline users

Again, there were very few helpline users who did not feel that they had gained a skill by T2 (Table 6.12). The skills that individuals were most likely to report having gained were self-confidence and motivation (81 per cent), job related skills for future opportunities, and the opportunity to progress onto further qualifications.

Comparing different learner groups, there are, again, a number of significant differences on each of the skill gain questions. These were that:

Table 6.12: Skills gained from learning (helpline users who have been in either learndirect or other learning)

	At T1		At T2		By T2	
Skills gained	**%**	**(N)***	**%**	**(N)***	**%**	**(N)***
Job-related skills – relevant to current/previous job	53	259	63	395	57	563
Job-related skills – relevant to a future job/career	77	297	85	412	80	564
The opportunity to progress onto qualifications	81	303	78	421	79	565
Personal/social skills	63	295	72	417	70	565
Problem solving skills	64	297	71	416	70	566
Team working skills	47	280	58	416	55	566
Self-confidence and motivation	80	309	81	429	81	566
Literacy skills	45	276	49	410	48	565
Numeracy skills	41	277	41	170	57	566
IT skills	62	294	60	405	60	565

* Only individuals for whom the item is relevant and who have been involved in learning by each time point are included in this breakdown, hence the differing base numbers

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** helpline users, BMG, 2003*

- **Age** was important in relation to job-related skills (both current and future), progression into qualifications and in literacy skills. For all of these, as learners got older, they were less likely to report having made gains in any of these areas.
- **Baseline qualification level:** those with lower qualifications were less likely to feel they had made gains in relation to their current or previous jobs, or in relation to future work opportunities than those with higher qualifications.
- **Baseline economic status:** those in work were more positive about gains in relation to current and future work, and in relation to team working than those without work.
- **Prior learning history:** on almost all items, individuals with a recent learning history (*ie* in the three years before **learndirect** contact) were more positive about what they had gainedthan those without.

Overall, therefore, among the helpline users, younger learners, those with higher levels of qualifications, individuals in work and with a recent history of learning are the ones that feel they have gained the most from their learning. On this variable, however, there were no observed differences between those who did and did not continue to use the helpline.

Also, the results were compared for learners who had, and had not, experienced a range of outcomes. The results, where there were significant differences between these two groups, are presented below:

- Individuals gaining a new job in the same type of work were more likely to feel that they had gained job skills related to their current/previous work.
- Where respondents had received a promotion since their first contact with the helpline, they were also more likely to feel they had gained job skills related to their current/previous work. Additionally, they were more likely to feel that they had gained team working skills.
- Helpline users gaining a performance related pay rise were more likely to feel they had gained job skills for their current/previous work, but also for future jobs and to have gained literacy skills.
- Similarly, individuals who had gained a qualification over the tracking period believed themselves to have made gains on almost all the skills they were questioned about. They were more likely to believe they had gained skills related to their current/previous jobs and future work opportunities, that they now had better team working and literacy skills. The same pattern was also apparent for learners who had taken a qualification (whether or not they had gained one) over the tracking period.

The responses were compared for **learndirect** and other learners to determine any differences in the skills gained, and a number of significant results did emerge. **learndirect** learners were less likely to feel they had gained skills related to their current/previous job (46 per cent versus 60 per cent of other learners), but were more likely to feel they had gained personal/social skills (79 per cent compared to 68 per cent of other learners). **learndirect** learners were also significantly more likely to feel they had gained IT skills (70 per cent compared to 57 per cent of other learners).

6.4 Chapter summary

Learners

Nine per cent of learners had gained a qualification over the tracking period. The type of learner gaining qualifications was similar to that identified as taking qualifications in earlier chapters (*ie* younger, with a prior history of learning). Also, individuals who had used an IAG source were more likely to have gained a qualification. Gains were particularly marked for individuals with a baseline qualification of NVQ level 1, who were the most likely to have gained a qualification: 13 per cent had moved up to at least level 2.

Just under 30 per cent of learners (for whom data was available) had received a pay rise over the tracking period.

Very few learners did not feel that they had gained something from their learning. The most common skill gains among **learndirect** learners were IT skills, self-confidence/motivation and personal/social skills. There were a number of different ways in which individuals felt they had gained skills. Individuals in work were most likely to feel they had gained skills to help with their current job, whilst those seeking work were most likely to feel they had gained skills for future jobs. Individuals without a recent learning history were most likely to feel they had gained self-confidence and IT skills. Individuals using IAG sources were generally more likely to feel they had gained skills than those who had not.

Helpline users

Among helpline users, nine per cent of individuals gained qualifications. Individuals with a baseline qualification of level 1 or 2 were the most likely to have gained a qualification; 16 per cent of each group had done so. Younger learners were also more likely to have gained a qualification.

Among helpline users, 27 per cent had received a pay rise during the tracking period.

Very few learners from among the helpline sample felt that they had not gained anything from their learning. The most common gains were self-confidence/motivation and the opportunity to progress onto further qualifications. Younger learners, those with higher levels of qualifications, individuals in work and with a recent history of learning were the ones more likely to report having gained a variety of skills.

Overall

Qualification gains were particularly apparent among learners with a prior qualification level of 1 or equivalent. Among the learners sample, users of IAG services emerge as more likely to have gained a qualification. Gains in earnings appear to be at about 30 per cent for both **learndirect** learners and helpline users.

While almost everyone felt they had gained something from their learning, there are consistently groups who emerge as more positive across both samples. These are, again, those potentially most advantaged in the labour market, including younger learners, in work or seeking work, with recent experience of learning, and who have higher baseline qualification levels. Interestingly, however, the use of IAG is a factor in its own right among the **learndirect** learners sample. As throughout this report, where the analysis has been significant on this factor, users of IAG emerge as more likely to report having gained a range of skills.

7. Employability

The impact of learning on work is a factor which lies towards the end of any chain of impact and is often the hardest to measure. In the previous evaluation of Ufi[1] the chain of impact was described as a 'funnel' with many at one end, but relatively few journeying all the way along the chain to achieve significant personal and vocational outcomes at the other. The wider end of this funnel has already been discussed, through the examination of participation and achievements data. This chapter goes some way further down this route, dealing with the extent to which individuals have experienced job-related changes and the extent to which they attribute these changes to their involvement in learning.

It should be noted that, for some individuals, a number of items discussed in this section will have been irrelevant at both times (*eg* remaining in a job). However, due to the way in which the data was collected, with different bases for the questions at T1 and T2, it has been necessary to calculate all percentages from the total number of respondents to allow comparison over time. This may have resulted in an underestimate of the scale of job-related changes for those in work.

7.1 Learners

Individuals were asked to state whether they had experienced any of a series of work-related changes (Table 7.1). Twelve per cent of learners had made some form of change by T1, since enrolling on a **learndirect** course, and almost 30 per cent had experienced a change by T2. The most common change was for individuals gaining a new job, and by the time of the second survey, 21 per cent of learners had done so.

The extent to which **learndirect** and other learning was perceived as useful in making changes differed according to the aspect of work in question (Table 7.2). **learndirect** was felt to be particularly useful in gaining promotions, with 60 per cent of those who had gained a promotion stating that their **learndirect** learning had helped. In contrast, other types of learning were felt to be more

[1] Tamkin P, Hillage J, Dewson S, Sinclair A (2003), *New Learners, New Learning: A Strategic Evaluation of Ufi* , DfES

Table 7.1: Job-related outcomes (learndirect learners)

	% made changes	
Type of change	**By T1**	**By T2**
New job in same work	3	8
New job in different work	5	13
Achieved a promotion	1	4
Got a performance-related pay rise	3	8
Overall – any change	12	29
Base	787	787

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** learners, BMG, 2003*

Table 7.2: Role of learning in job-related outcomes (learndirect learners)

	Helped by learndirect learning		Helped by other learning	
Type of change	**(%)***	**N**	**(%)****	**N**
New job in same work	47	66	67	24
New job in different work	43	101	44	27
Achieved a promotion	60	30	50	12
Got a performance-related pay rise	37	65	40	15

* This data reflects where individuals have attributed changes to **learndirect** at either T1 or T2

** This data was collected only at T2

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** learners, BMG, 2003*

influential in relation to getting a new job in the same type of work, and over two-thirds of individuals who had gained a new job and taken part in other learning felt it had helped them. However, the numbers in both cases are relatively small.

So far, the data has related to learners' *perceptions* of whether their learning had any impact on their job-related gains. It is also possible to objectively assess any impact by applying multivariate tests to the data. A series of multivariate analyses[1] were conducted to examine which factors best predict whether learners achieved a work-related gain after their call.

Looking firstly at any type of job-related gain, the most important factors were as follows:

- **Age:** an individual's age was the most important determinant of whether or not they achieved a positive job outcome. As age increased, the likelihood of any gain decreased.
- **Ethnicity:** another major predictor of a job-related gain was ethnicity. White helpline users stood more chance of achieving

[1] See Appendix 3 for further details

a job-related outcome than non-White users, although the number in the latter group was small.

- **Previous learning history:** the third most significant factor in predicting job-related gains was whether the individual had been engaged in learning in the three years leading up to the first survey. Those who had been engaged were more likely to have obtained a job-related gain. Whilst this does not provide any evidence of the impact of **learndirect** services, it does support the link between learning and employment gains *per se*.

None of the variables were able to provide a significant prediction of whether the individual achieved a new job in a different type of work. However, significant models were produced for the remaining three types of job-related gains.

Age was the only significant predictor of both whether learners achieved a new job in the same work, or a promotion. As before, the chances of obtaining these gains decreased with age. Both age and ethnicity were important predictors of whether learners received a pay rise, with chances decreasing with age and for non-White users.

These results demonstrate that there are many factors in the workplace that can affect whether an individual is able to reap the rewards of their learning, but they also show that having recent experience of learning is important in its own right.

7.2 Helpline users

Overall, 46 per cent of helpline users had experienced change in their work situation by T2. The most likely job-related changes for helpline users were they had found a new job (Table 7.3). Almost one-in-five users had a new job in a different type of work, and a further 16 per cent had found a new job in the same type of work. Thirteen per cent had gained a performance-related pay rise over the tracking period, and six per cent had secured a promotion.

Table 7.3: Job-related outcomes (learndirect helpline users)

	% made changes	
Type of change	**By T1**	**By T2**
New job in same work	6	16
New job in different work	7	19
Achieved a promotion	2	6
Got a performance-related pay rise	4	13
Overall – any change	19	46
Base	780	780

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** helpline users, BMG, 2003*

Table 7.4: Role of learning in job-related outcomes (learndirect helpline users)

	Percentage in job-related learning for whom use of helpline was useful			
	By T1		By T2	
Job outcome	**%**	**Base (N)**	**%**	**Base (N)**
New job in same work	11	44	29	125
New job in different work	16	58	30	144
Achieved a promotion	22*	18	36	45
Got a performance-related pay rise	10*	31	31	101

* Signifies that the number of individuals that this percentage is based on is under five and should be interpreted with caution

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** helpline users, BMG, 2003*

People were also asked to state whether their use of the **learndirect** helpline was helpful in making these work changes (Table 7.4). The results were most positive for individuals who achieved a promotion, and of those who had secured one by T2, 36 per cent felt that their helpline call was useful. The data also shows that the perceived benefits of helpline use become more marked over time.

Multivariate tests[1] were performed on the data from helpline users to objectively assess which factors were important determinants of whether or not job-related outcomes were obtained. Most of these were inconclusive and only the one significant model is discussed. The most important factors in whether individuals gained a promotion were:

- **Age:** age emerged as the most significant factor, with likelihood of achieving a promotion decreasing with age.
- **Perception that the helpline call helped to know where to look for suitable courses:** individuals who believed the helpline was helpful in their knowing where to look for suitable courses were more likely to have achieved a promotion.

It is difficult to interpret this finding, partly because it is not clear what the initial reasons for calling the helpline were. However, it is possible that those who found the helpline useful were indeed able to find the right course, which in turn gave them the necessary skills to move up in their career.

Again, age is the most important factor, although it is interesting to see that helpline usage also emerges as significant, particularly in relation to clear course information, which is one of the main functions of the **learndirect** advice line.

[1] See Appendix 3 for further details

7.3 Chapter summary

Learners

Following their enrolment with **learndirect,** 12 per cent of learners had made some form of work-related change by the time of the first survey. By the time of the second survey, this figure had risen to almost 30 per cent. The most common change was securing a new job in a different area of work, and 13 per cent had done so by T2. **learndirect** courses were seen as most useful in gaining a promotion, and 60 per cent of those who had been promoted felt that **learndirect** learning had been helpful in this. Multivariate analysis showed that the most important factors in predicting whether or not an individual would have made a work-related change were age (older learners were less likely to have experienced an outcome), ethnicity (White learners more likely to have achieved an outcome), and prior learning history (those with more recent experience were more likely to have achieved an outcome).

Helpline users

One-in-five helpline users had experienced a work-related change by the time of the first survey. This rose to 46 per cent by the time of the second survey. The most likely outcome was finding a new job, whether in a different line of work (16 per cent by T2) or in the same work area (13 per cent by T2). Individuals receiving a promotion were the most likely to feel that their contact with **learndirect** had been helpful. Multivariate tests showed that age was the most important predictor of progress at work (the older the learner, the less likely that they had received a work-related outcome). However, whether an individual felt that their original helpline call had been useful, in pinpointing course opportunities, also emerged as significant.

Overall

The role of the **learndirect** helpline and learning is less pronounced in terms of work-related outcomes. This is because **learndirect** has no *direct* impact on work. It would be expected that learning outcomes would be more apparent, as this is where **learndirect** is focussed. In order for individuals to experience work-related outcomes, there are a number of employer and employment related factors that need to be in place. The extent to which **learndirect** can have a direct role in these will always be limited. However, there is still a substantial minority of learners who feel they have not only experienced work-related change, but who have also been helped in this by their **learndirect** experiences.

8. Conclusions

The primary purpose of this evaluation is to assess the impact of Ufi, through the monitoring of individuals using the services of the **learndirect** advice and information line, and the **learndirect** learning network. In this chapter, evidence is drawn from previous chapters to determine the extent to which Ufi has impacted on:

- attitudes towards learning and participation rates, particularly among those without a history of participation in learning
- progression within learning, including the study for qualifications
- outcomes of learning, including qualification and skill gains
- the transfer of benefits to work, including economic gains.

Before moving on to discuss the evidence, it is worth summarising the differences between the profiles of the two user groups. **learndirect** learners tend to be more disadvantaged than the general population in terms of their learning history and economic status. In contrast, helpline users are better qualified and more likely to have been in recent learning than individuals in the wider population. These are important differences in interpreting the results of this evaluation.

8.1 Participation in, and attitudes towards, learning

Entry to learning

Perhaps the strongest evidence available in this report is about participation rates. Participation rates of learners and helpline users over a year on from their initial contact with **learndirect** are high in comparison to the general population. In particular, there is evidence that participation rates rise substantially following a call to the helpline, when compared with prior participation levels. This is despite the fact that helpline users have a high baseline participation rate.

For **learndirect** learners, particularly the 'learning disadvantaged' (*ie* those without a recent learning history or qualifications), repeat enrolment on **learndirect** courses is a particularly appealing route.

Where individuals are better equipped or more confident about joining the learning market, *ie* where they are 'existing', rather than 'new' learners, they tend to move more speedily into other types of learning. There is also evidence that **learndirect** learning stimulates demand for qualification driven learning, and that **learndirect** courses act as a stepping stone to other types of learning.

Where individuals do move into other types of learning, a substantial percentage do so to gain qualifications. Among **learndirect** learners, participation in study leading to a qualification increased over time, suggesting that successful completion of **learndirect** courses enable individuals to gain the necessary skills, or the confidence to look for further opportunities. Among **helpline** users, the drive for qualifications is stronger from the start, but remains strong over time.

Changes in attitudes

There is little evidence from this evaluation (due in part to the methodology) that suggests that attitudes to learning grow more positive over time following helpline intervention. This may seem surprising, given the shifts in behaviour associated with the increased participation rates. However, no baseline data is available and data was only collected on the attitudes of helpline users. These individuals, with more experience of learning, on average, and more recent experiences, are likely to have well shaped learning attitudes already. The extent to which use of the **learndirect** helpline can impact on these, therefore, is likely to be limited.

8.2 Impact of advice sources

Throughout the report, the use of information and advice sources emerges as a significant factor in positive outcomes, for both samples. This is not surprising when the influence of IAG on the take-up of learning is examined.

The majority of **learndirect** learners used some form of IAG support, whether formal or informal during the tracking period. Use of the **learndirect** helpline and website were higher than might be expected, suggesting that **learndirect** learning stimulates the demand for other **learndirect** services. Repeat use of the helpline among helpline users was also high, as was the use of other sources, including the **learndirect** website.

Where individuals using IAG sources had entered learning, they were positive about the influence of the information and advice they had received. Among serial **learndirect** learners (who tended on average to be the most disadvantaged groups) the ratings of the influence of the **learndirect** website were particularly positive.

learndirect learners overall, however, gave the highest ratings of the influence of IAG on their take-up of further learning to the **learndirect** helpline. Thus, for these learners, contact with **learndirect** advice line services helps to encourage additional participation.

Among helpline users, users of the **learndirect** website and helpline gave higher ratings to the influence of these sources of support than any other at the time of the first survey. Thus, even those who are more knowledgeable of the learning system find the availability of **learndirect** services important, particularly at the initial decision-making stage in deciding what learning opportunity to take up. Again, among this sample, users of **learndirect** learning were more positive than those in other learning about the influence on IAG. This, again, provides evidence of the importance of this type of advice for those less connected with recent learning.

8.3 Learning progression

There was also evidence of progression within learning, for a substantial minority of **learndirect** users. Progression for **learndirect** learners was most likely to be a priority for the same types of individuals as those working towards qualifications (*ie* younger, working, and with a more recent learning history).

The influence of IAG sources is very apparent here, as the most effective predictor of whether a **learndirect** repeat learner had progressed within their learning was whether they had used some form of IAG support. This is true not only in relation to whether they had progressed in learning, but also whether they intended to continue to learn in the future. There is, therefore, something about individuals who seek out information and advice, or about the service they receive, that encourages a greater interest in learning progression and continuation. If it is the latter, then the importance of IAG for those without a recent working knowledge of the learning system is clear yet again.

In contrast, the best predictor of whether helpline users would continue to learn was whether they had a recent learning history. However, individuals with higher satisfaction ratings about their original call to the helpline were also more likely to want to learn in future. The helpline intervention alone, in contrast to **learndirect** learning, therefore appears less effective in breaking down barriers to learning for the learning disadvantaged. Intuitively, this is as expected, as the nature of the intervention is far more limited in scope than contact with the **learndirect** learning network, which occurs over a longer time period. Experiences of learning through **learndirect** work alongside, or pave the way for, the influences of subsequent IAG.

8.4 Learning outcomes

Qualifications gained

There is some evidence of qualification gains among both samples. This is particularly true for individuals with a baseline qualification at or equivalent to NVQ level 1. Individuals with no existing qualifications have made more limited progress towards qualifications, but these are individuals with the furthest distance to travel.

Comparisons with the LFS suggest, however, that the gains made are lower than might have been expected, compared to those made among the general population. However, this result is not entirely surprising, given that **learndirect** learners are more disadvantaged, on average, than this population. Progress made by a cohort of other learners, taken from PALS, also suggests that qualification related learning is less common for **learndirect** learners than other learner groups. Again, however, the more disadvantaged profile, particularly the lower incidence of recent learning among **learndirect** learners compared to PALS learners helps to explain this result. Given the lower incidence of formal learning, there is some evidence of the positive influence of IAG on individuals in relation to entry to qualifications. Among the **learndirect** learner group, users of IAG sources were also more likely to have gained a qualification.

Skills

The most common skill gains among **learndirect** learners were IT skills, self-confidence or motivation, and personal and social skills. Learners from the helpline users sample were, again, most likely to feel that they had gained self-confidence or motivation from their learning, but they also felt it had given them the opportunity to progress onto further qualifications. This provides further evidence of the ways in which **learndirect** can provide essential building blocks which individuals can use in other opportunities, and improve their chances of success. Among the helpline users, **learndirect** learners were more positive than other learners about IT skills gains, reflecting the beneficial nature of computer based offerings.

The skills gained by individuals were likely to reflect their individual needs. Individuals in work, for example, were the most likely to have experienced job skill gains, whereas, those seeking work felt the skills they had gained would be useful in future work. Individuals without a recent learning history were most likely to feel they had gained self-confidence and IT skills. Across both samples, the learning 'winners' (*ie* younger learners, those with higher levels of qualifications, individuals in work, and with a recent history of learning) were the ones more likely to report

having gained a variety of skills. The use of IAG sources was a positive influence across the board; individuals using IAG sources were generally more likely to feel they had gained skills than those who had not.

Income

There was only limited information available from the surveys on income changes. As with most studies on this issue, there were difficulties in collecting true income data. Banded data is insufficient in measuring change effectively, and only banded data was available here. Just under 30 per cent of **learndirect** learners, and a similar proportion of helpline users, had received enough of a pay rise to take them up an income band over the course of the tracking period.

8.5 Employability

More limited evidence exists in relation to employability. It should be noted that for many of those using **learndirect** services, work gains are either not possible or not desirable. Reflecting this, fewer individuals felt that they had been able to use their learning gains to their advantage at work. However, almost half of helpline users had experienced a work-related change over the tracking period, and just under a third of learners had done so.

Movement within work was the most common outcome, resulting in new jobs within the same or different areas of work. Among both samples, learning was seen as most important in securing promotions. Age was by far the most important factor in whether individuals had experienced work–related changes, no doubt reflecting the older profile of **learndirect** users.

In considering work-related outcomes it is worth noting a number of other things. Firstly, that learning gains do not necessarily impact on work unless opportunities are available to that individual, and secondly, that employment changes are the final link in the impact chain. As this is the case, it is likely that these changes will take longer to become apparent than learning outcomes. Individuals using **learndirect** learning in particular are likely to have further to travel to achieve significant employment gains because of their user profile, prior learning levels and employment situations.

8.6 Summary

In summary, the main conclusions of this evaluation are that **learndirect** is good at:

- encouraging participation in learning, particularly among the 'learning and economically disadvantaged'

- changing the way that individuals who have been out of learning for some time view their learning, and acting as a stepping stone to, or complementing other types of learning
- helping individuals gain the confidence and skills to enter other types of learning
- helping individuals with low levels of qualifications into successful qualification-related study.

Additionally, IAG emerged as an important contributor to successful outcomes, particularly for the more disadvantaged **learndirect** learners sample, who are more likely to need this extra help than others.

It is not surprising that lower proportions of learners and helpline users have experienced work related changes given their age and economic profiles. Where these changes have occurred, individuals were very positive about the role of bringing them about.

The work of **learndirect**, targeted as it is on drawing in new learners and working with those in most need, is difficult. To date, we have evidence that many learners are helped to enter and progress within learning and that this does, in itself, result in measurable outcomes. However, the value of these fundamental changes to individual behaviour, and the encouragement of potential lifelong learning, are likely to continue to have an impact well beyond the scope of the tracking data collected in the course of this research. At present, the data demonstrates the impact of **learndirect** at the beginning of the chain, but is less supportive its influence in making changes further along. However, this tracking study only provides information for a relatively short period and can only illustrate changes up to two years later. Many courses or progressions within work and/or learning could reasonably be expected to occur over a longer period of time.

Appendix 1: Response and Sample details

Response rates

Table A1.1: Response rate: survey of helpline users

Issued sample	1,612
Achieved interviews	780
Unadjusted response rate	*48%*
Unobtainable/ineligible	305
No reply	30
Terminated	15
Fax/Engaged/Answerphone	80
Ring back	80
*Adjusted response rate**	*71%*
Refused	322

* Adjusted response rate deducts individuals with contact details that are not usable

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** helpline users, BMG, 2003*

Table A1.2: Response rate: learners survey

Issued sample	1,482
Achieved interviews	787
Unadjusted response rate	*53%*
Unobtainable/ineligible	356
No reply	15
Terminated	15
Fax/Engaged/Answerphone	30
Ring back	30
*Adjusted response rate **	*76%*
Refused	252

* Adjusted response rate deducts individuals with contact details that are not usable

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** learners, BMG, 2003*

Profile details (comparison of 2002 and 2003)

Table A1.3: Composition of learndirect helpline users (2002 and 2003)

		2003		2002
Helpline user characteristic	**Helpline user group**	**Frequency**	**Per cent**	**Per cent**
Age	Under 25	78	10.1	17.1
	25 to 34	196	25.5	31.2
	35 to 44	251	32.6	28.0
	45 to 54	145	18.8	14.5
	55 to 64	69	9.0	6.4
	65 +	31	4.0	2.7
Gender	Male	281	36.0	36.9
	Female	499	64.0	63.1
Economic status	In Employment	497	63.7	62.0
	Unemployed	69	8.8	13.8
	Economically Inactive	214	27.4	24.3
Ethnic group	White	679	87.4	86.3
	Minority ethnic	98	12.6	13.7
NVQ level of current qualification	No NVQ equivalence	174	22.3	20.5
	NVQ Level 1 equivalence	97	12.4	6.9
	NVQ Level 2 equivalence	178	22.8	24.8
	NVQ Level 3 equivalence	142	18.2	25.0
	NVQ Level 4 equivalence	163	20.9	18.4
	NVQ Level 5 equivalence	26	3.3	4.5
Total Sample Size		**780**		

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** helpline users, BMG, 2003*

Table A1.4: Profile composition of learndirect learners

		2003 data		2002 data
Learner characteristic	**Learner group**	**Frequency**	**Per cent**	**Per cent**
Age	under 25	23	3.0	6.7
	25 to 34	78	10.0	14.1
	35 to 44	195	25.0	24.3
	45 to 54	155	19.9	19.9
	55 to 64	157	20.2	19.2
	65 +	171	22.0	15.8
Gender	Male	316	40.2	39.4
	Female	471	59.8	60.6
Economic status	In Employment	375	47.6	48.1
	Unemployed	55	7.0	10.0
	Economically Inactive	357	45.4	41.9
Ethnic group	White	708	91.1	88.2
	Minority ethnic	69	8.9	11.8
NVQ level of current qualification	No NVQ equivalence	167	22.0	29.2
	NVQ Level 1 equivalence	134	17.7	7.2
	NVQ Level 2 equivalence	161	21.2	21.4
	NVQ Level 3 equivalence	114	15.0	17.2
	NVQ Level 4 equivalence	144	19.0	19.5
	NVQ Level 5 equivalence	38	5.0	5.4

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** helpline users, BMG, 2003*

Appendix 2: Detailed Breakdown of Income Changes

See following pages for Tables.

Table A2.1: Helpline users changes in income bands — detailed breakdown

	Current income								
Baseline income	**Up to £5,199**	**£5,200 to £10,399**	**£10,400 to £15,599**	**£15,600 to £20,799**	**£20,800 to £25,999**	**£26,000 to £31,199**	**£31,200 or more**	**Don't know/ refused**	**Base (N)**
Up to £5,199	60	20*	-	-	-	-	-	20*	10
£5,200 to £10,399	10	41	29	5*	-	-	1*	13	78
£10,400 to £15,599	-	9	50	20	6*	-	1*	14	70
£15,600 to £20,799	-	-	4*	48	32	-	2*	14	56
£20,800 to £25,999	-	4*	4*	14*	39	21	11*	7*	28
£26,000 to £31,199	-	-	-	13*	-	50*	25*	13*	8
£31,200 or more	-	-	-	-	-	17*	67*	17*	6
Don't know/refused	18	20	15	10	5	1*	5	27	164
Total	43	74	85	67	41	12	20	78	420

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** helpline users, BMG, 2003*

Table A2.2: Learners

	Current income								
Baseline income	**Up to £5,199**	**£5,200 to £10,399**	**£10,400 to £15,599**	**£15,600 to £20,799**	**£20,800 to £25,999**	**£26,000 to £31,199**	**£31,200 or more**	**Don't know/ refused**	**Base (N)**
Up to £5,199	44	33	3*	3*	-	3*	-	14	36
£5,200 to £10,399	4*	53	20	4*	-	-	-	19	74
£10,400 to £15,599	2*	11	53	16	-	2*	2*	15	62
£15,600 to £20,799	-	-	20	51	11*	-	-	17	35
£20,800 to £25,999	-	-	-	19*	31	31	13*	6*	16
£26,000 to £31,199	-	-	-	-	18*	59	12*	12*	17
£31,200 or more	-	-	9*	-	9*	-	73	9*	11
Don't know/refused	8	10	10	12	4*	8	10	38	73
Total	26	65	64	44	16	23	20	66	324

*Source: IES, based on survey of **learndirect** learners, BMG, 2003*

Appendix 3: Detailed Results of Multivariate Tests

Most of the analysis in this report has been based on bivariate analysis (*ie* looking at the relationship between a dependent variable and an independent variable). This establishes what effect a given independent variable, such as gender or baseline qualification level, has on a dependent variable, such as whether or not the user studied for a qualification. In order to establish the combined effect of the independent variables upon the dependent variable, *ie* how well we can predict the outcome on the dependent variable from what we know about the individual, it is necessary to use another statistical technique known as multivariate analysis.

Multivariate analysis takes into account the effect of a range of independent variables and establishes the strength of the relationship between a dependent variable and an independent variable, taking into account the effects of all the other independent variables. In this appendix, further details are provided of the multivariate analysis undertaken on some of the survey questions. The survey data allowed predictions to be made regarding the status of individuals in relation to the following dependent variables:

- attitudes to future learning
- participation in learning since the intervention
- progression in additional learning (learners only)
- studying for a qualification between T1 and T2
- obtaining job-related gains since the intervention, including getting a new job in same type of work, a new job in a different type of work, achieving a promotion and obtaining a performance-related pay-rise.

The first of these dependent variables, attitudes to future learning, was analysed using multiple regression (see Tables A3.1 and A3.2). All the remaining dependent variables were entered into logistic regressions (see Tables A3.2 and A3.3).

In order to construct the regression models, a range of independent variables was tested in order to assess their impact on the above. These differed slightly for the helpline users and learners, as follows:

- gender
- age
- ethnicity
- base NVQ level
- economic status (employed/unemployed/inactive)
- further helpline use (helpline users only)
- IAG use (learners only)
- satisfaction with helpline[1] (helpline users only)
- perceived barriers to learning
- participation in learning since the intervention
- participation in **learndirect** learning since the intervention (helpline users only)
- progression in additional learning (learners only)
- previous learning history (whether engaged in learning in three years leading up to the first survey)
- studying for a qualification between T1 and T2 (learners only).

For some of the regressions, it was not appropriate to enter all of the independent variables into the analysis; a blank box in the tables denotes where the variable was not entered. For example, when looking at predicting studying for a qualification, the variable 'participation in learning' was excluded because the two things are clearly interlinked. Where it is not clear why the variable was not included, it is due to complex routing within the survey which meant that the group did not answer questions concerning either the dependent variable or one of the independent variables.

Some of the independent variables were categorical in nature and had to be recoded to make them binary (please refer to the tables for listings of the categories for each variable). For all of these a 1 represented the presence of that variable and a 0 represented the absence. For example, 'participation in learning since the helpline' was recoded so that all those that did participate were coded as 1, and all those who did not were coded as 0.

[1] This was entered as five separate variables which measured the extent to which they agreed that: (1) The information and advice about training that you received from **learndirect** has been helpful; (2) Calling the helpline has helped me decide what to do in terms of training or learning; (3) Calling the helpline has helped me know where to look for suitable training courses; (4) Calling the helpline has increased my awareness of job or learning opportunities; (5) that information from the helpline at T1 was helpful.

The recoded independent variables were then used to assess the effect of changing one of them on the ability to predict the outcome, *ie* the value on the dependent variable.

Multiple regression

Multiple regression is used to explain or predict the variability of the dependent variable (in this case, perceived likelihood of learning in the future) using information from two or more independent variables. The analysis provides a number of statistics, some of which are displayed in Tables A3.1 and A3.2. The coefficient B is the amount by which the dependent variable changes for each unit increase in the independent variable. The Standard error of B is the number of standard errors by which the predicted value of the dependent variable is likely to be wrong. The standardised beta results are crucial in multiple regression, as they are indicators of the relative strength of the different independent variables in influencing the dependent variable.

Logistic regression

Logistic regression follows the same principles as multiple regression but the interpretation is slightly different. For each of the categorical independent variables, one of the variable group is chosen as the reference category (shown on the tables in bold) and given a coefficient of 1 in the regression equation Exp (B). All of the other groups within the independent variables are then interpreted in comparison with the reference group. For example, a coefficient higher than 1 means that the group has higher odds of being satisfied than the reference group; and a value lower than 1 means they have lower odds of being satisfied than the reference group. In the case of the interval independent variables such as age and base NVQ level, interpretation is slightly different but a value above 1 indicates that chances of the outcome increase alongside the value on the independent variable.

In both multiple and logistic regression, significance tests consider whether the relationship between the dependent and independent variable could have occurred by chance. Significance tests also assess whether the relationship of the *combination* of the independent variables on the dependent variable, *ie* the model as a whole, could have occurred by chance. The test for statistical significance gives a value between 0 and 1. In all of the regressions, results were accepted as statistically significant if the value was not greater than 0.05.

Table A3.1: Details of multiple regression looking at attitudes towards future learning for helpline users

	Unstandardised Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardised Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
Gender (0 = female, 1 = male)	0.141	0.115	0.049	1.217	0.224
Base NVQ level (0 = no qualifications/NVQ equivalent to 5 = NVQ level 5)	0.052	0.038	0.056	1.354	0.176
In employment (0 = not in employment, 1 = in employment)	0.067	0.131	0.024	0.507	0.612
Unemployed (0 = not unemployed, 1 = unemployed)	0.254	0.184	0.065	1.380	0.168
Used the helpline again (0 = No, 1 = Yes)	0.107	0.143	0.030	0.745	0.457
Engaged in learning since helpline (0 = No, 1 = Yes)	0.814	0.128	0.263	6.356	0.000
Previous learning history (0 = has not learned in last 3 years, 1 = has learned in last 3 years)	0.192	0.114	0.070	1.689	0.092
The information and advice about training that you received from **learndirect** has been helpful (1 = disagree strongly to 5 = agree strongly)	-0.055	0.089	-0.037	-0.613	0.540
Calling the helpline has helped you decide what to do in terms of training or learning (1= disagree strongly to 5 = agree strongly)	0.005	0.077	0.004	0.066	0.947
Calling the helpline has helped me know where to look for suitable training courses (1 = disagree strongly to 5 = agree strongly)	0.072	0.081	0.050	0.899	0.369
Calling the helpline has increased my awareness of job or learning opportunities (1 = disagree strongly to 5 = agree strongly)	0.197	0.087	0.124	2.272	0.023
Extent to which agree that information from the helpline at T1 was helpful (1 = disagree strongly to 5 = agree strongly)	-0.041	0.079	-0.022	-0.523	0.601
Age	-0.006	0.005	-0.050	-1.195	0.232
Engaged in learning since helpline (0 = No, 1 = Yes)	-0.066	0.163	-0.017	-0.404	0.687
Ethnicity (0 = non-White, 1 = White)	-0.147	0.166	-0.035	-0.884	0.377
(Constant)	2.582	0.438		5.899	0.000
F statistic	4.939				
Significance	0.000				
R square	0.114				

Source: IES, 2004

Table A3.2L: Details of multiple regression looking at attitudes towards future learning for learners

	Unstandardised Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardised Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
Previous learning history (0 = has not learned in last 3 years, 1 = has learned in last 3 years)	-0.290	0.128	-0.091	-2.269	0.024
Age	-0.012	0.005	-0.122	-2.459	0.014
Perceived barriers to learning (0 = no barriers, 1 = barriers)	-0.163	0.120	-0.053	-1.362	0.174
Base NVQ level (0 = no qualifications/NVQ equivalent to 5 = NVQ level 5)	-0.012	0.034	-0.015	-0.368	0.713
In employment (0 = not in employment, 1 = in employment)	0.218	0.143	0.072	1.526	0.128
Unemployed (0 = not unemployed, 1 = unemployed)	0.332	0.214	0.068	1.547	0.122
Gender (0 = female, 1 = male)	-0.010	0.121	-0.003	-0.079	0.937
Engaged in additional learning (0 = No, 1 = Yes)	0.612	0.202	0.118	3.027	0.003
Progressed in learning (0 = No, 1 = Yes)	0.292	0.128	0.091	2.276	0.023
Used IAG (0 = No, 1 = Yes)	0.746	0.124	0.247	5.992	0.000
Ethnicity (0 = non-White, 1 = White)	0.160	0.206	0.031	0.775	0.439
(Constant)	3.188	0.558		5.709	0.000
F statistic	11.836				
Significance	0				
R square	19.4				

Source: IES, 2004

Table A3.3: Details of logistic regression analyses on helpline users

	Engaged in learning since helpline		Studied for a qualification		Any job-related outcome		Achieved a promotion	
	Sig.	**Exp(B)**	**Sig.**	**Exp(B)**	**Sig.**	**Exp(B)**	**Sig.**	**Exp(B)**
Perceived barriers to learning (0 = no barriers, 1 = barriers)	-	-	0.645	1.107	-	-	-	-
Base NVQ level (0 = no qualifications/NVQ equivalent to 5 = NVQ level 5)	0.516	1.043	0.176	0.903	0.634	0.972	0.338	1.129
In employment (0 = not in employment, 1 = in employment)	0.625	1.116	0.269	0.750	-	-	-	-
Unemployed (0 = not unemployed, 1 = unemployed)	0.841	0.941	0.801	1.100	-	-	-	-
Gender (0 = female, 1 = male)	0.412	1.177	0.764	0.936	0.141	1.297	0.468	1.294
Used the helpline again (0 = No, 1 = Yes)	0.381	0.811	0.741	1.101	0.158	0.729	0.959	0.978
Engaged in **learndirect** learning since helpline (0 = No, 1 = Yes)	-	-	0.783	0.928	0.475	1.196	0.843	1.103
Engaged in learning since helpline (0 = No, 1 = Yes)	-	-	-	-	0.658	0.916	0.662	1.201
Ethnicity (0 = non-White, 1 = White)	0.037	1.731	0.072	1.812	0.082	1.563	0.868	1.089
Previous learning history (0 = has not learned in last 3 years, 1 = has learned in last 3 years)	0.007	1.683	0.175	0.737	0.463	1.137	0.094	1.879
The information and advice about training that you received from **learndirect** has been helpful (1= disagree strongly to 5 = agree strongly)	0.889	0.979	0.118	1.306	0.281	0.863	0.557	0.849
Calling the helpline has helped you decide what to do in terms of training or learning (1 = disagree strongly to 5 = agree strongly)	0.915	1.014	0.822	0.967	0.410	1.103	0.233	0.771
Calling the helpline has helped me know where to look for suitable training courses (1= disagree strongly to 5 = agree strongly)	0.782	0.959	0.530	0.893	0.102	1.259	0.026	1.908
Calling the helpline has increased my awareness of job or learning opportunities (1 = disagree strongly to 5 = agree strongly)	0.158	1.215	0.861	1.028	0.019	0.743	0.126	0.697
Extent to which agree that information from the helpline at T1 was helpful (1 = disagree strongly to 5 = agree strongly)	0.152	1.223	0.616	0.929	0.957	0.993	0.393	0.790
Age	0.657	0.996	0.000	0.955	0.000	0.964	0.010	0.956
Chi-square	18.854		39.197		35.649		22.586	
Significance	0.128		0.001		0.001		0.047	
Nagelkerke R square	0.044		0.118		0.076		0.097	

Source: IES, 2004

Table A3.4: Details of logistic regression analyses on learners

	Engaged in additional learning		Studying for a qualification		Progressed in learning		Any job-related gains		Gained a new job in same type of work		Achieved a promotion		Obtained a performance-related pay-rise	
	Sig.	**Exp(B)**	**Sig.**	**Exp(B)**	**Sig.**	**Exp(B)**	**Sig.**	**Exp(B)**	**Sig.**	**Exp(B)**	**Sig.**	**Exp(B)**	**Sig.**	**Exp(B)**
Perceived barriers to learning (0 = no barriers, 1 = barriers)	0.358	0.771	0.095	0.639	0.460	0.868	0.095	0.698	0.084	0.557	0.688	0.808	0.198	0.644
Base NVQ level (0 = no qualifications/NVQ equivalent to 5 = NVQ level 5)	0.194	0.902	0.174	0.897	0.383	0.953	0.508	0.959	0.402	0.920	0.056	0.701	0.263	1.109
In employment (0 = not in employment, 1 = in employment)	0.518	1.261	0.650	0.872	0.448	0.842	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Unemployed (0 = not unemployed, 1 = unemployed)	0.484	1.509	0.515	0.755	0.139	1.633	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gender (0 = female, 1 = male)	0.772	0.919	0.542	0.848	0.092	1.389	0.879	0.967	0.124	1.731	0.355	0.614	0.877	0.950
Used IAG (0 = No, 1 = Yes)	0.490	1.223	0.000	1.668	0.000	2.333	0.123	1.416	0.177	1.659	0.052	4.593	0.939	0.974
Ethnicity (0 = non-White, 1 = White)	0.404	1.688	0.477	1.321	0.645	1.159	0.004	0.336	0.918	0.951	0.354	0.369	0.040	0.120
Engaged in additional learning (0 = No, 1 = Yes)	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.429	1.390	0.213	3.653	0.809	1.309	0.689	0.795
Studied for a qualification (0 = No, 1 = Yes)	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.701	0.898	0.860	0.931	0.483	0.613	0.225	0.576
Progressed in learning (0 = No, 1 = Yes)	-	-	0.000	0.000	-	-	0.519	0.858	0.343	1.400	0.720	0.804	0.984	0.993
Previous learning history (0 = has not learned in last 3 years, 1 = has learned in last 3 years)	0.114	1.728	0.000	3.105	0.001	1.866	0.025	1.639	0.136	1.638	0.585	1.341	0.087	1.781
Age	0.360	0.989	0.000	0.948	0.670	0.997	0.000	0.951	0.011	0.963	0.013	0.943	0.002	0.957
Chi-square	14.922		151.965		47.373		52.959		24.549		20.390		20.606	
Significance	0.093		0.000		0.000		0.000		0.006		0.026		0.024	
Nagelkerke R square	0.050		0.378		0.109		0.147		0.106		0.158		0.090	

Source: IES, 2004

Appendix 4: More Detail on National Data Sets

Table A4.1: Labour Force Survey – comparison of Summer 2002 and Autumn 2003 quarters

		LFS Summer 2002		LFS Autumn 2003	
Learner characteristic	**Learner group**	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Gender	Male	23,270,131	49	23,474,567	49
	Female	24,142,094	51	24,281,238	51
	Total	47,412,225	100	47,755,805	100
Age	16 to 24	6,623,115	14	6,775,447	14
	25 to 44	17,686,775	37	17,574,606	37
	45 to 64	14,201,932	30	14,445,780	30
	65 and over	8,900,403	19	8,959,972	19
	Not known	0	0	0	0
	Total	*47,412,225*	*100*	*47,755,805*	*100*
NVQ level equivalence** (baseline)	NVQ Level 2 and above	22,965,009	61	23,841,802	62
	Below NVQ Level 2	14,940,672	39	14,384,127	38
	Total	*37,905,681*	*100*	*38,225,929*	*100*
Work status (baseline)	Working	28,656,653	60	28,912,476	61
	Unemployed but seeking work***	1,634,748	3	1,510,420	3
	Not seeking work****	7,529,227	16	7,735,441	16
	Retired	9,591,597	20	9,597,468	20
	Not known	0	0	0	0
	Total	*47,412,225*	*100*	*47,755,805*	*100*

Source: IES, 2004

Table A4.2: Sample comparisons for helpline users (with base sizes)

		Helpline Users 2003		NALS 2002		LFS Autumn 2003*	
Learner characteristic	**Learner group**	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Gender	Male	281	36	2,906	44	23,474,567	49
	Female	499	64	3,762	56	24,281,238	51
	Total	780	100	6,668	100	47,755,805	100
Age	16 to 24	96	12	515	8	6,775,447	14
	25 to 44	467	60	2,655	40	17,574,606	37
	45 to 64	197	25	2,081	31	14,445,780	30
	65 and over	19	2	1,417	21	8,959,972	19
	Not known	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	*780*	*100*	*6,668*	*100*	*47,755,805*	*100*
NVQ level equivalence (baseline)	NVQ Level 1 equivalence	98	13	2,073	31	-	-
	NVQ Level 2 equivalence	187	24	785	12	-	-
	NVQ Level 3 equivalence	146	19	977	15	-	-
	NVQ Level 4 equivalence	151	19	1,526	23	-	-
	NVQ Level 5 equivalence	25	3	363	5	-	-
	No NVQ equivalence	174	22	942	14	-	-
	Level 2 and above	509	65	3,651	55	23,841,802	62
	Below level 2	272	35	3,015	45	14,384,127	38
	Not known	0	0	3	0	0	0
	Total	*780*	*100*	*6,668*	*100*	*38,225,929*	*100*
Work status (baseline)	Working	474	61	3,964	60	28,912,476	61
	Unemployed but seeking work	113	15	255	4	1,510,420	3
	Not seeking work	149	19	989	15	7,735,441	16
	Retired	44	6	1,412	21	9,597,468	20
	Not known	0	0	48	1	0	0
	Total	*780*	*100*	*6,668*	*100*	*47,755,805*	*100*
Learning history	Learned in last 3 years	403	52	4,607	69	-	-
	Did not learn in last 3 years	377	48	2,061	31	-	-
	Total	*780*	*100*	*6,668*	*100*	-	-

Source: IES, 2004

Table A4.3: Sample comparisons for learners (with base sizes)

		learndirect Learners		NALS 2002 Learners*		LFS Autumn 2003**	
Learner characteristic	**Learner group**	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Gender	Male	316	40	2,129	46	23,474,567	49
	Female	471	60	2,478	54	24,281,238	51
	Total	787	100	4,607	100	47,755,805	100
Age	16 to 24	23	3	430	9	6,775,447	14
	25 to 44	273	35	2,206	48	17,574,606	37
	45 to 64	312	40	1,512	33	14,445,780	30
	65 and over	171	22	459	10	8,959,972	19
	Not known	8	1	0	0	0	0
	Total	*787*	*100*	*4,607*	*100*	*47,755,805*	*100*
NVQ level equivalence (baseline)	NVQ Level 1 equivalence	134	17	1,248	27	-	-
	NVQ Level 2 equivalence	161	20	659	14	-	-
	NVQ Level 3 equivalence	114	14	770	17	-	-
	NVQ Level 4 equivalence	144	18	1,389	30	-	-
	NVQ Level 5 equivalence	38	5	337	7	-	-
	No NVQ equivalence	167	21	204	4	-	-
	Level 2 and above	457	58	3,155	68	23,841,802	62
	Below level 2	301	38	1,452	32	14,384,127	38
	Not known	29	4	0	0	0	0
	Total	*787*	*100*	*4,607*	*100*	*38,225,929*	*100*
Work status (baseline)	Working	349	44	3,425	74	28,912,476	61
	Unemployed but seeking work	79	10	169	4	1,510,420	3
	Not seeking work	127	16	462	10	7,735,441	16
	Retired	232	30	518	11	9,597,468	20
	Not known	-	-	33	1	0	0
	Total	*787*	*100*	*4,607*	*100*	*47,755,805*	*100*
Learning history	Learned in last 3 years	295	38	-	-	-	-
	Did not learn in last 3 years	492	62	-	-	-	-
	Total	*787*	*100*	-	-	-	-

Source: IES, 2004

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