Learner Satisfaction
Community Learning Survey
2014 to 2015 Report

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

October 2015
Of interest to colleges and training organisations
Ipsos MORI

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Section 1: Introduction and Methodology

This report provides a summary of the findings for the 2014 to 2015 Learner Satisfaction Survey for Community Learning. The survey ran at the same time as the main FE Choices Learner Satisfaction Survey (Version 7).

Learner Satisfaction pilots for Community Learning took place in 2011 to 2012 and 2012 to 2013. In 2013 to 2014 an extended trial for Community Learning took place, with all colleges and other training organisations delivering this type of provision encouraged to take part.

The Community Learning survey was open from 3 November 2014 to 29 March 2015, although the survey closed for paper responses on 9 March due to the extra processing required compared with the online survey. Learners from a total of 185 colleges and other training organisations took part in the survey, with most completing the questionnaire online. The questionnaire was unchanged from that used for the Community Learning survey in the academic year 2013 to 2014. A copy of the survey questionnaire is included in Appendix 2.

Quality tests to check the robustness of each provider's returned sample were used to establish if a valid score could be awarded, details of which are shown in Appendix 4. The tests included an assessment on sample skew and calculation confidence interval, similar to those used for the mainstream Learner Satisfaction Survey. The final score calculation included a weighting factor, to counter any imbalance in the sample based on the age and gender of learners when compared to each provider's Community Learning population as a whole.

All colleges and other training organisations that took part in the survey received a detailed report on the results (Appendix 3). This report analyses the results of the survey and, where applicable, includes comparisons with the mainstream survey results (2014 to 2015) and the results of last year's extended trial for Community Learning (2013 to 2014).
Section 2: Analysis of Responses

Survey responses summary

Table 1 summarises the total number of participating colleges and other training organisations and responses by learners during the survey window (following the removal of invalid responses).

Table 1: Summary of Survey Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of providers participating</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of survey responses</td>
<td>32,315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of paper based questionnaire responses</td>
<td>12,372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of responses which were paper based questionnaires</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of learners who responded given help</td>
<td>3,593</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The survey questionnaire asked respondents if they were completing the survey themselves or were receiving help from someone else. Of the 32,315 valid responses, 3,593 (11%) said they were receiving help. This percentage is slightly lower in comparison to the 2013 to 2014 Community Learning survey (13%) but still considerably higher than the equivalent figure for the 2014 to 2015 mainstream survey (6.9%).

Statistical significance

Each college or other training organisation’s survey sample underwent two quality tests to check for statistical robustness. The first was a confidence interval test for minimum sample size. The latest available Individualised Learner Record (ILR) datasets were used to calculate the number of eligible learners attending each provider in the survey period (3 November 2014 to 29 March 2015). This figure was then used to calculate the minimum returned sample size that would generate 95% confidence that the measured results were within 5% of the estimated true value. Samples representing at least 70% of
all eligible learners were also deemed to be sufficiently robust. In addition to the confidence interval test, the skew test was used to ensure that the degree of bias within the sample submitted by individual providers was within acceptable parameters. Details of how we calculated both quality thresholds are available in Appendix 4.

All colleges and other training organisations taking part in the Community Learning survey were given detailed feedback on their results. The survey reports issued to individual providers showed the response by learners to each individual question. The results were broken down by a range of learner characteristics and also by subject area and delivery location.

For the mainstream Learner Satisfaction Survey, colleges and other training organisations meeting the required survey sample quality tests are awarded an overall score which is the mean of the scoring questions. Of the 170 colleges and other training organisations that returned valid responses to the survey, 72 (42%) achieved a sufficiently robust sample to pass the confidence interval and skew quality tests. Therefore, they were given an overall score in addition to the score for each question. This was an improvement from the 2013 to 2014 survey when 32% of colleges and other training organisations taking part in the survey received an overall score.
Profile of respondents

Figure 1 shows the gender profile of learners who responded to the survey and compares it with the national population of Community Learning learners. (The Community Learning population is defined as all learners taking courses and activities funded through the Community Learning budget within the survey window (3 November 2014 to 29 March 2015).

Figure 1: Gender Profile of Survey Respondents compared to SFA-funded Community Learning Total Population

Survey Sample (Base = 32,315)

Community Learning Total Population (Base = 274,935)

Source: ILR R06 2014 to 2015
The survey sample gender profile was very close to the Community Learning population as a whole which shows that almost three-quarters of learners on this type of provision are female.

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

**Figure 2: Age Profile of Survey Respondents compared to SFA-funded Community Learning Total Population**

Survey Sample (Base = 32,315)

Community Learning Total Population (Base = 274,935)

Source: ILR R06 2014 to 2015
The charts show that there was a relatively close match between the age profile of the sample and the overall Community Learning population. However, as was the case for last year’s survey, learners aged 60 years and over tended to be over-represented in the sample and those aged 30 years and under were slightly under-represented. The overall age profile of this year’s survey sample was very similar to the age profile of the 2013 to 2014 survey sample.

**Survey responses**

The survey questionnaire retained the same 15 questions that were used for the 2013 to 2014 survey (see Appendix 2 for a copy of the questionnaire). Firstly, learners were asked to give their reasons for taking the course and also identify the main reason. They were then asked to rate various aspects of their course or activity on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 equals “very bad” and 10 equals “very good”. Responses to these questions were used to calculate the overall satisfaction score for each college or other training organisation. Learners were then asked to say how likely it was that they would recommend their course or activity to friends or family on a five-point scale running from “extremely likely” to “extremely unlikely”. The final two questions asked learners about the impact of their learning and the main outcome from taking the course.
Table 2 below shows the response to the 10 scoring questions (Q3 to Q12) and the average satisfaction scores given by learners to each question. Where possible, comparisons are made with overall scores and adult subgroup scores for equivalent questions from the mainstream FE Choices Learner Satisfaction Survey (Version 7).

Table 2: Responses to the 10 Satisfaction Scoring Questions
(Including Comparison with FE Choices Learner Satisfaction Version 7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Community Learning Survey</th>
<th>Mainstream FE Choices Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responses</td>
<td>Overall Average Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3. How good or bad was the information you were given when you were choosing your course or activity?</td>
<td>30407</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4. How good or bad was the help staff gave you in the first few weeks of your course or activity?</td>
<td>32069</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5. How good or bad is the teaching on your course or activity?</td>
<td>32196</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6. How good or bad is the respect staff show to you?</td>
<td>32117</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7. How good or bad is the advice you have been given about what you can do after this course or activity?</td>
<td>24017</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8. How good or bad is the support you get on this course or activity?</td>
<td>30575</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9. How good or bad are the staff at listening to views of learners?</td>
<td>30360</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10. How good or bad are the staff at acting on the views of learners?</td>
<td>29150</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11. How good or bad has the course or activity been at meeting your expectations?</td>
<td>32161</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q12. Overall, how good or bad do you think the organisation that provides your learning is?</td>
<td>32111</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>30516</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The average satisfaction scores given by Community Learning learners were consistently higher than the scores given by learners who participated in the mainstream Learner Satisfaction Survey. This was true even when the results from the Community Learning learners were compared to the results from the cohort of learners studying at Local Authorities, which are the most comparable group of training providers to those which deliver Community Learning.

Community Learning learners gave their most positive responses to the questions on the quality of teaching (Q5), support they received on the course (Q8) and the respect shown to them by staff (Q6). The least positive responses were to the questions on the quality of information they were given when choosing their course (Q3) and the advice they were given on what to do after completing their (Q7).

The following charts show how satisfaction scores differed when broken down by gender and age. The overall final score calculation included a weighting factor to counter any age and/or gender imbalance within a college or other training organisation’s survey sample.
Figure 3 shows the average survey scores for each of the satisfaction rating questions broken down by gender.

Historically, both the mainstream Learner Satisfaction survey and Community Learning survey have shown consistently higher levels of satisfaction scores among female learners and the same pattern is repeated again this year. The chart shows that, on average, females gave slightly higher satisfaction scores for all 10 questions, but the greatest difference was on the issue of advice given to learners on what to do after their course or activity (Q7).

The question with the smallest difference in scores between females and males was about the respect shown to learners (Q6) which received the highest rating overall from both genders.
Figure 4 shows the average survey scores for each of the satisfaction rating questions broken down by age group. Within each column, the colour scale runs from red for the highest scores through to orange, yellow and then to green for the lowest scores.

**Figure 4: Survey Responses by Age (Average Score)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Q3</th>
<th>Q4</th>
<th>Q5</th>
<th>Q6</th>
<th>Q7</th>
<th>Q8</th>
<th>Q9</th>
<th>Q10</th>
<th>Q11</th>
<th>Q12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 20</td>
<td>8.21</td>
<td>8.73</td>
<td>8.91</td>
<td>9.11</td>
<td>8.38</td>
<td>8.97</td>
<td>8.91</td>
<td>8.79</td>
<td>8.75</td>
<td>8.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q3. How good or bad was the information you were given when you were choosing your course or activity?**

**Q4. How good or bad was the help staff gave you in the first few weeks of your course or activity?**

**Q5. How good or bad is the teaching on your course or activity?**

**Q6. How good or bad is the respect staff show to you?**

**Q7. How good or bad is the advice you have been given about what you can do after this course or activity?**

**Q8. How good or bad is the support you get on this course or activity?**

**Q9. How good or bad are the staff at listening to views of learners?**

**Q10. How good or bad are the staff at acting on the views of learners?**

**Q11. How good or bad has the course or activity been at meeting your expectations?**

**Q12. Overall, how good or bad do you think the organisation that provides your learning is?**

Learners aged 60 and over were generally the most positive group giving the highest score for seven of the 10 questions. They were particularly positive about the teaching and support they had received on their course. Learners aged under 20 tended to give lower satisfaction ratings compared with other groups, although the number of respondents was comparatively low because this cohort of learners covered only 19 year olds. (Community Learning is for adults aged 19 years and older.) This mirrored the findings from the mainstream FE Choices Learner Satisfaction Survey which have shown that young people tend to be less positive than older age groups when responding to learner satisfaction surveys.
Figure 5 shows the percentage ratings given by learners to each of the 10 scoring questions, where 0 = very bad and 10 = very good.

For most questions, well over three quarters of respondents gave scores of 9 or 10. The vast majority of learners (90%) gave a score of 9 or 10 for respect shown by staff (Q6) and 85% rated the quality of teaching on their course (Q5) as 9 or 10. Only 2% of learners gave scores of 6 or less for both these questions. In total, five of the ten scoring questions were given average ratings of 9 or higher by at least four-fifths of learners. The questions least likely to receive satisfaction ratings of 9 or 10 were Q3 (How good or bad was the information you were given when you were choosing your course or activity?) and Q7 (How good or bad is the advice you have been given about what you can do after this course or activity?).
Table 3 shows the response to the 10 scoring questions from this year’s survey compared to the results obtained from the 2013 to 2014 Community Learning survey.

Table 3: Responses to the 10 Scoring Questions
(2014 to 2015 Survey Results Compared to 2013 to 2014 Survey Results)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>2014 to 2015 Survey</th>
<th>2013 to 2014 Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q3. How good or bad was the information you were given when you were choosing your course or activity?</td>
<td>30407</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4. How good or bad was the help staff gave you in the first few weeks of your course or activity?</td>
<td>32069</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>32196</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>24017</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>30575</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9. How good or bad are the staff at listening to views of learners?</td>
<td>30360</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10. How good or bad are the staff at acting on the views of learners?</td>
<td>29150</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11. How good or bad has the course or activity been at meeting your expectations?</td>
<td>32161</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q12. Overall, how good or bad do you think the organisation that provides your learning is?</td>
<td>32111</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>305163</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results from this year’s survey were very similar to last year, most scores were maintained and there was a small 0.1, but statistically significant, increase in the score
for the quality of pre-course information (Q3) and the advice on what to do after completing the course (Q7). This shows very encouraging progress in two areas that have tended to attract the least positive responses from learners in previous surveys.

The overall average score for all ten questions was also slightly higher this year compared to last year and again the difference was statistically significant.

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

Figure 6: Likelihood of recommending the course or activity

The likelihood of recommendation by learners was extremely high with 94% saying it was likely or extremely likely that they would recommend their course or activity to friends or family. This figure was slightly higher than the results from the previous Community Learning survey (2013 to 2014) when the likelihood of recommendation was 93%. The recommendation rate was also considerably higher than the equivalent figure for the 2014 to 2015 mainstream Learner Satisfaction survey which was 83% (with 37% of learners extremely likely to recommend their course).
The following set of charts show the survey responses to the questions on the main reasons for taking the course or activity and the self-reported impacts of their learning. Figure 7 shows all the reasons identified by learners.

**Figure 7: Reasons for taking the course or activity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>All Reasons</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Under 40</th>
<th>40 and over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To gain skills and knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td>23121</td>
<td>71.5%</td>
<td>71.5%</td>
<td>71.8%</td>
<td>74.1%</td>
<td>70.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To meet people and make new friends</td>
<td></td>
<td>11903</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For personal interest or pleasure</td>
<td></td>
<td>17543</td>
<td>54.3%</td>
<td>55.2%</td>
<td>51.9%</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
<td>58.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To help you participate in social activities</td>
<td></td>
<td>6173</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To help you get a job or with your work</td>
<td></td>
<td>5677</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To benefit your health or wellbeing</td>
<td></td>
<td>8589</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To progress on to another course</td>
<td></td>
<td>5756</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To help other members of your family</td>
<td></td>
<td>4182</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reason</td>
<td></td>
<td>1488</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base = 32,315

Almost three-quarters of respondents said that they had taken their course to gain new skills or knowledge and those aged under 40 years old were more likely than older respondents to give this reason. However, personal interest or pleasure were much
more likely to feature in the list of reasons why respondents aged 40 years and over had chosen their course or actively, compared to those younger than this.

The chance to meet people and make new friends through their learning had motivated well over a third of respondents to take their course although females (39%) were more likely than males (30%) to cite this reason.

A quarter of Community Learning learners had taken the course to improve their health or wellbeing, with females and those aged 40 years and over more likely to give this reason.

Respondents aged under 40 years old were almost three times as likely as older learners to be taking the course or actively to improve their employment prospects, with a third of younger learners giving this reason. These learners were also much more likely than people over 40 years old to be taking the course in order to progress into further learning.
The respondents were asked to identify the main reason for taking their course or activity. The chart and table below show the results.

**Figure 8: Main reason for taking the course or activity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Reason</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Under 40</th>
<th>40 and over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To gain skills and knowledge</td>
<td>14198</td>
<td>51.3%</td>
<td>50.1%</td>
<td>54.4%</td>
<td>50.5%</td>
<td>51.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To meet people and make new friends</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For personal interest or pleasure</td>
<td>5447</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To help you participate in social activities</td>
<td>564</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To help you get a job or with your work</td>
<td>2180</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To benefit your health or wellbeing</td>
<td>2502</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To progress on to another course</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To help other members of your family</td>
<td>851</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reason</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base = 32,315

Over half of the respondents said the main reason for taking their course or activity was to gain skills and knowledge with males (54%) slightly more likely than females (50%) to state this reason. The second most frequently cited reason was personal interest or pleasure, identified by a fifth of respondents.
Almost one in ten learners said their most important reason for taking their course was to benefit their health and well-being although respondents aged 40 years old and over were more than twice as likely as younger learners to have done so.

Figure 9 shows respondents’ perceived outcomes from their learning.

As a result of taking a Community Learning course, three-quarters of learners said that they had acquired new knowledge and skills and almost half felt that they had made new friends. Approaching 40% of learners said that they were more likely to progress to another course.
A third of respondents said they had gained more confidence, this figure rose to over 40% among those aged 40 and under. Well over a quarter of the respondents aged under 40 years said they were more likely to get a job or progress at work as a result of taking their course.

Taking a Community Learning course had also benefitted the health and wellbeing of a third of female respondents and a third of those aged over 40 years old.

The chart and table below show respondents’ views on the single main outcome of their learning.

**Figure 10: Main outcome of taking the course or activity**

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

Base = 32,315
The main outcome of taking the course or activity for most learners was that they had gained more skills or knowledge (64%). Learners aged over 40 (66%) were more likely than younger learners (59%) to state this as the single main outcome. For those aged over 40 the second most frequently cited outcome was an improvement in health and wellbeing whereas those under 40 years old were more likely to identify progression on to another course.

The chart below shows the respondents answers to two questions: their reasons for taking the course or activity and the outcomes they reported after completing the course or activity.

Figure 10: Reasons for taking the course or activity and outcomes

The percentage of respondents identifying a particular outcome from their learning tended to far exceed the percentage giving the matching reason for taking the course.
This suggests learners had experienced a greater number of beneficial outcomes from their learning than they had anticipated.

As was the case last year, fewer learners identified finding a job or helping with work as a main outcome of their learning.

Almost 40% of respondents said the learning had encouraged them to progress on to a further course, although for half these, further learning had not been among their initial reasons for taking the course.

Figure 11 below shows the main reason for taking the course against the main outcome.

Almost two-thirds of learners identified gaining skills and knowledge as the main outcome of taking their course although only just over half said this had been their main reason for starting.
Section 3: Summary of findings

The Community Learning Learner Satisfaction Survey 2014 to 2015 received a good response with over 32,300 learners taking part from 170 colleges and other training organisations. This was an increase of 24% in learner numbers compared to the 2013 to 2014 survey.

The overall sample appeared to be a good representation of the Community Learning population as a whole during the survey period and closely matched the learner profile in terms of age and gender.

This year’s survey continued the pattern of extremely positive results from the Community Learning Learner Satisfaction survey, with the average scores for all responses higher than equivalent scores for the 2014 to 2015 Version 6 mainstream survey.

The average scores given by respondents to all questions equalled or exceeded the very high scores resulting from the 2013 to 2014 Community Learning survey. Satisfaction ratings were particularly high for the quality of teaching and the respect shown to learners by provider staff.

There appears to have been encouraging progress over the last year in two areas that attracted the least positive responses from learners last year. These are the quality of pre-course information and the advice given to learners on what to do after completing the course.

Almost all learners (94%) thought it likely that they would recommend their course or activity to a friend or relative, with almost two-thirds saying it was extremely likely that they would do so.

The most likely reasons for taking Community Learning courses were to “gain new skills and knowledge” and for “personal interest or pleasure” but many had discovered
additional benefits from their learning such as improved health and wellbeing and the ability to help other family members.

As a result of taking a Community Learning course, three-quarters of learners said that they had acquired new knowledge and skills and almost half felt that they had made new friends. For many learners, the course or activity had encouraged them to participate in further learning, which they had not anticipated before taking the course.
Appendix 1: Technical Summary of Research Methodology

Governing Research Principles

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

Overview of Methodology

The Skills Funding Agency commissioned Ipsos MORI and RCU to undertake the Learner Satisfaction Survey for learners taking Community Learning courses. The survey took place between 3 November 2014 and 29 March 2015. 62% of survey responses were online and 38% were paper questionnaire submissions.

Key Quantitative Research Elements

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

- Target Population: Community Learning learners.

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

- Data quality checks: Overall, learners from 170 providers had valid learner responses to the survey. In the process of matching responses to the ILR, 31 providers were identified as having learners who responded to the survey using mainstream survey questionnaires only. A small number of Community Learning learners responded on the mainstream questionnaire. To ensure their responses were counted they were transferred to be included in the analysis of the Community Learning Survey.
• Broad Topic Areas: The survey comprised an introductory page, questions mirroring the mainstream national Learner Satisfaction Survey and specific questions on the social impact of Community Learning. The online and paper-based questionnaires contained identical questions and both were made available to providers. A copy of the questionnaire is available in Appendix 2.

• Storage of Raw Data: As part of our quality assurance arrangements we will keep evidence of individual survey responses for 18 months after the closure of the project and we will then securely destroy it.
Appendix 2: Learner Satisfaction Survey Instrument for Community Learning

Community Learner Satisfaction Survey 2014 to 2015

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thank you very much for your time.
Appendix 4: Survey report example and provider guidance

Screenshots

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

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

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

Q2 The main reason for taking the course or activity was: (Tick ONE only)
- To gain skills and knowledge
- To meet people and make new friends
- For personal interest or pleasure
- To help you participate in social activities
- To help you get a job or with your work
- To benefit your health or wellbeing
- To progress on to another course
- To help other members of your family
- Other reason
Appendix 3: Survey report example

Screenshots
### FE Choices Learner Satisfaction Survey 2014 to 15 Community Learning

**Example Provider (UKPRN: 99999999)**

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

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

### Average Score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How good or bad was the information you were given when you were choosing your course or activity?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How good or bad was the help staff gave you in the first few weeks of your course or activity?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How good or bad is the teaching on your course or activity?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How good or bad is the respect staff show to you?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How good or bad is the advice you have been given about what you can do after this course or activity?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How good or bad is the support you get on this course or activity?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How good or bad are the staff at listening to the views of learners?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How good or bad are the staff at acting on the views of learners?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How good or bad has the course been at meeting your expectations?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, how good or bad do you think the organisation that provides your learning is? | 0 |

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How likely is it that you would recommend the organisation that provides your learning to friends or family? | N/A|

- Extremely likely
- Likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Unlikely
- Extremely unlikely
What were your reasons for taking the course or activity?

- To gain skills and knowledge: 437.1
- To meet people and make new friends: 275.7
- For personal interest or pleasure: 416.7
- To help you participate in social activities: 129.1
- To help you get a job or with your work: 72.4
- To benefit your health or wellbeing: 281.1
- To progress onto another course: 45.7
- To help other members of your family: 52.9
- Other reason: 30.3

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

- You have more skills or knowledge: 473.2
- You have made new friends: 401.5
- You are more confident as a person: 226.2
- You are more likely to participate in social activities: 195.1
- You are more likely to get a job or progress at work: 61.0
- Your health or wellbeing has benefited: 315.9
- You are more likely to progress on to another course: 181.1
- You are more able to help other family members: 103.4
- None of the above: 3.4

These are final figures based on survey responses. Figures are weighted. A star indicates suppression has been applied to the results to protect respondents’ confidentiality.
Comparison between reasons for taking course and outcome after taking course

- To gain skills and knowledge: 79%
- You have more skills or knowledge: 79%
- To meet people and make new friends: 67%
- You have made new friends: 57%
- To help you participate in social activities: 21%
- You are more likely to participate in social activities: 23%
- To help you get a job or with your work: 12%
- You are more likely to get a job or progress at work: 10%
- To benefit your health or wellbeing: 47%
- Your health or wellbeing has benefitted: 53%
- To progress on to another course: 9%
- You are more likely to progress on to another course: 30%
- To help other members of your family: 17%
- You are more able to help other family members: 17%

These are final figures based on survey responses. Figures are weighted. A star indicates suppression has been applied to the results to protect respondents' confidentiality.
Appendix 4: Quality Tests for Survey samples

Confidence interval test for minimum sample size

Confidence interval calculation

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

\[
Sample\ Size = \frac{Z^2 \times p \times (1-p)}{c^2}
\]

Correction for Finite Population (for known population size)

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

Confidence interval of a returned sample

\[
Confidence\ Interval = Z \times \sqrt{\frac{px(1-p)}{n}} \times \sqrt{\frac{N-n}{N-1}}
\]

Where:

- \(Z\) = \(Z\) value (for example 1.96 for 95% confidence level)
- \(p\) = Assumed / observed % expressed as a decimal (for example 84% satisfied = 0.85)
- \(c\) = Confidence interval, expressed as decimal (for example ± 5% = 0.05)
- \(N\) = Number of eligible learners on provider’s ILR
- \(n\) = Number of valid responses
**Sample skew test**

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

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

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

**Skew formulas**

**Skew calculation:**

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

Where:

- \(i\) = Each individual learner category, ranging from one to four
- \(r\) = Percentage of learners on the provider’s ILR in the \(i^{th}\) category
- \(s\) = Percentage of learners in the sample in the \(i^{th}\) category
- \(| |\) = Absolute value