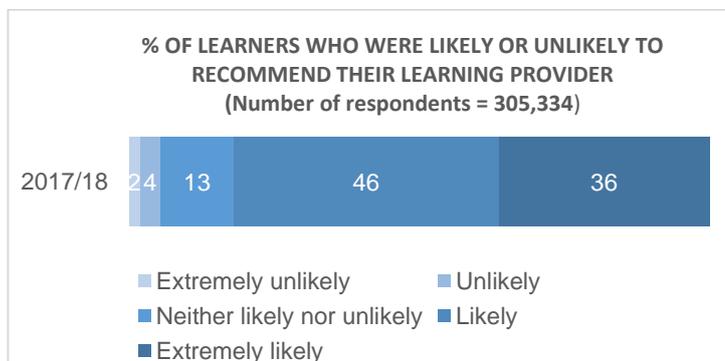




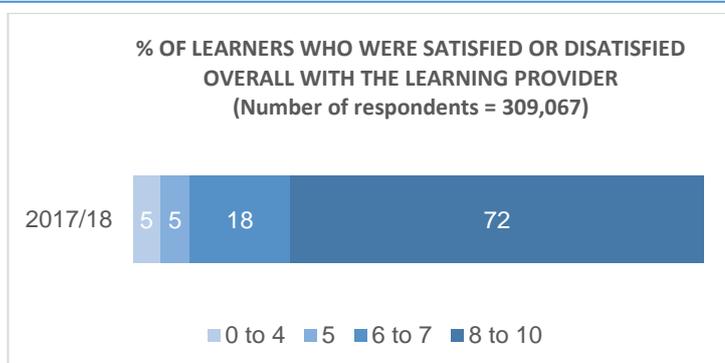
More than 8 in 10 learners would recommend their learning provider to friends or family.



82% of learners were “likely” or “extremely likely” to recommend their learning provider to friends or family with 6% of learners unlikely to do so.

The recommendation rate was down slightly this year compared to last year, falling from 83% to 82%¹.

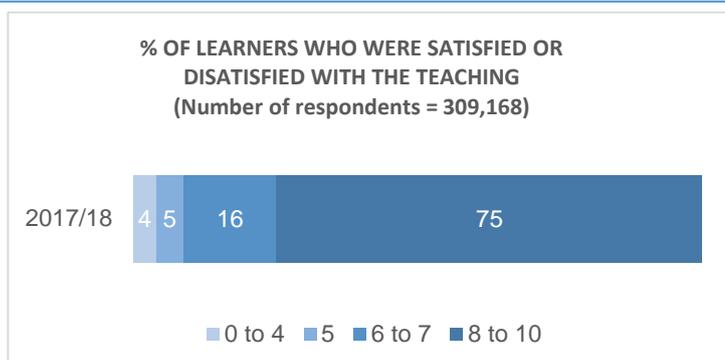
9 out of 10 learners were satisfied with their learning provider.



90% of learners were satisfied with their learning provider giving a score of at least 6 out of 10.

Compared to last year there was a fall of 3 percentage points in the proportion of learners giving a score of 8 to 10¹.

Three quarters of learners were highly satisfied with the quality of teaching.



91% of learners gave a score of at least 6 out of 10 when rating their satisfaction with the teaching.

Compared to last year there was a fall of 1 percentage point in the proportion of learners giving a score of 8 to 10¹.

¹ The confidence interval for 2017 to 2018 was typically between +/-0.12% and +/-0.14%. The confidence interval for 2016 to 2017 was typically between +/-0.11% and +/-0.13%. This change is statistically significant.

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About this release

This publication provides the main findings of the FE Choices Learner Satisfaction Survey 2017 to 2018. This survey measures learners' satisfaction with learning and training funded by the Department for Education. The survey applied to most general further education colleges, tertiary colleges, specialist colleges, local authorities and most independent learning providers.

The survey is predominantly online with a small percentage of responses paper based. A total of 341,627 learners took part in the survey, from an eligible population of 1,821,629, across 923 colleges and other training providers. The survey took place between October 2017 and May 2018.

The survey was funded by the Department for Education, and carried out by Ipsos MORI and RCU Limited. The main aim of the survey is to provide comparative satisfaction data that employers and learners would use to inform their choice of college or training provider.

Feedback

We are constantly monitoring and evaluating our release, and how our releases look. We would welcome feedback on any aspect of this document at Andy.Cooke@education.gov.uk.

1. Recommendation and overall satisfaction

82% of learners were “likely” or “extremely likely” to recommend their learning provider to friends or family and only 6% of learners were unlikely to do so. The recommendation rate was down slightly this year, falling from 83% in 2016 to 2017 to 82% in 2017 to 2018. The percentage of learners that were “extremely likely” to recommend their learning provider fell by 2% from 38% last year to 36% this year.

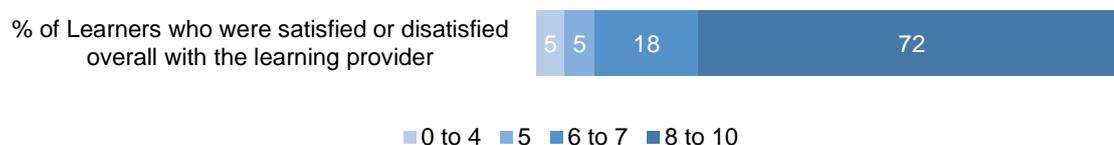
Figure 1: Likelihood to recommend



Number of respondents : 305,334

Just under three-quarters of learners (72%) gave a score of 8 to 10 when asked to rate their overall satisfaction with their learning provider on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 equals “very dissatisfied” and 10 equals “very satisfied”.

Figure 2: Satisfaction with their learning provider



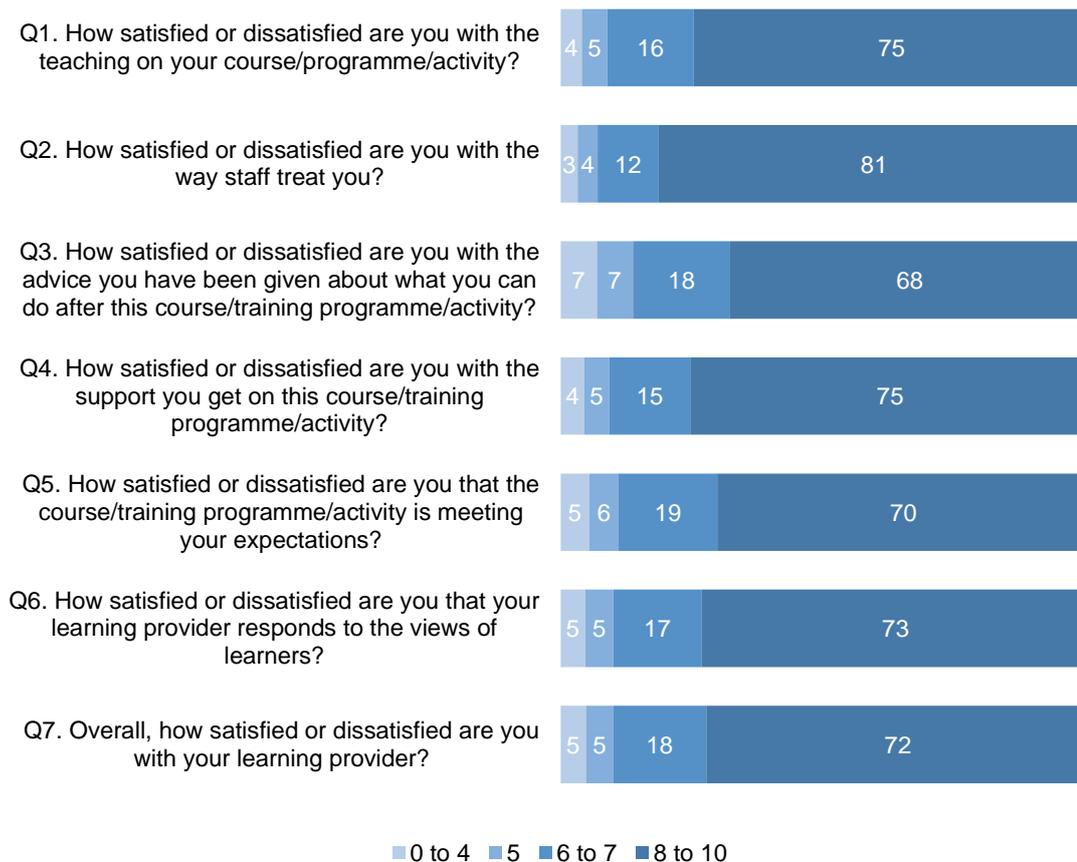
Number of respondents: 309,067

2. Detailed ratings

The majority of respondents were satisfied with the various aspects of their learning experience. The way staff treat learners was the most highly rated aspect with 81% of learners giving a rating of 8 to 10. The teaching/training and the support given by staff were the next most highly rated with 75% of learners scoring these aspects 8 to 10.

The advice learners had been given on what they could do after completing their current programme of study received the lowest satisfaction rating with 68% of respondents giving a score of 8 to 10.

Figure 3: Overall results for individual questions



Comparing this year's results with those from the 2016 to 2017 survey shows that satisfaction ratings have fallen across all questions. The percentage of learners scoring 8 to 10 fell by three percentage points on the questions relating to their overall satisfaction with the college/learning provider and whether the course or programme was meeting their expectations.

Figure 4: Comparison of those learners with a highly satisfied response rating between 2016 to 2017 and 2017 to 2018

% Scoring 8 to 10	2016 to 17	2017 to 18	% Point Change
Q1. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the teaching on your course/programme/activity?	76.0	74.8	-1.2
Q2. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way staff treat you?	83.2	81.4	-1.8
Q3. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the advice you have been given about what you can do after this course/training programme/activity?	69.7	68.0	-1.7
Q4. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the support you get on this course/training programme/activity?	77.7	75.4	-2.3
Q5. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that the course/training programme/activity is meeting your expectations?	73.5	70.4	-3.1
Q6. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that your learning provider responds to the views of learners?	75.4	73.3	-2.1
Q7. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your learning provider?	75.4	72.5	-2.9

Differences by subject area

There were marked differences in the levels of satisfaction with their learning provider when analysed by the learner's main subject area. Learners taking subjects in Languages, Literature & Culture were the most likely to recommend their learning provider, with 95% of respondents indicating that they were "likely" or "very likely" to do so. The recommendation rate also exceeded 90% in three other subject areas: Education & Training, Preparation for Life & Work and History, Philosophy & Theology.

The learners that were least likely to recommend their learning provider were those studying Science & Mathematics with less than three out of four indicating that it was "likely" or "very likely". There were five other subject areas where less than four out of five learners would recommend their course or programme to friends or family. These were: Agriculture, Horticulture & Animal Care; Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies; Construction, Planning & the Built Environment; ICT; and Leisure, Travel & Tourism.

Figure 5: Likelihood to recommend by subject area

Q8 How likely is it that you would recommend the learning provider to friends or family?	Base	% Recommend
1 Health, Public Services and Care	44,304	84.6%
2 Science and Mathematics	5,267	74.2%
3 Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	10,695	77.0%
4 Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	32,816	75.4%
5 Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	18,552	75.8%
6 Information and Communication Technology	14,395	74.6%
7 Retail and Commercial Enterprise	23,977	83.9%
8 Leisure, Travel and Tourism	14,497	79.1%
9 Arts, Media and Publishing	28,196	81.2%
10 History, Philosophy and Theology	473	92.0%
11 Social Sciences	657	83.3%
12 Languages, Literature and Culture	4,738	94.9%
13 Education and Training	3,494	91.6%
14 Preparation for Life and Work	30,965	91.9%
15 Business, Administration and Law	33,068	80.6%
Not assigned to a subject area	39,240	83.7%

Differences by learner characteristics

Female learners were more likely than male learners to recommend their learning provider. 86% of female learners indicated that they would be “likely” or “very likely” to recommend their learning provider to friends and family compared to 78% of males.

Older learners were more likely to recommend their learning provider to friends or family than younger learners. More than nine out of ten of those aged 25 and over would be likely to recommend their learning provider compared to eight out of ten of those aged 19-24. Learners in the 16-18 age group gave the least positive response with three out of four likely to recommend their learning provider.

Figure 6: Likelihood to recommend by age band and sex

Q8 How likely is it that you would recommend the learning provider to friends or family?	Base	% Recommend
Female	162,385	85.7%
Male	142,949	77.7%
16-18	164,625	75.8%
19-24	47,652	82.4%
25-34	34,179	91.0%
35-44	25,619	93.5%
45-59	23,006	93.4%
60+	10,253	94.8%

Differences by provider type

Satisfaction with the learning provider was highest among learners attending Other Public Funded providers which includes Local Authorities. 93% of these respondents were “likely” or “very likely” to recommend their learning provider. This reflects the more general positive response from adult learners (aged 19+) who make up the bulk of the learners at these institutions.

Recommendation rates were also relatively high among learners who attended Private Sector Public Funded organisations. 86% of respondents from this group said they were “likely” or “very likely” to recommend their learning provider. General Further Education Colleges and Special Colleges had lower recommendation scores. 78% of respondents from General Further Education Colleges said they were “likely” or “very likely” to recommend their learning provider.

Figure 7: Likelihood to recommend by provider type²

Q8 How likely is it that you would recommend the learning provider to friends or family?	Base	% Recommend
General FE College incl Tertiary	172,379	77.6%
Other Public Funded i.e LA's and HE	40,129	93.4%
Private Sector Public Funded	81,487	85.7%
Special Colleges, Specialist Designated College	11,339	80.5%

² Other Public Funded i.e. LA's and HE covers the majority of Community Learning (22,129), where 95.8% would recommend.

Differences by funding stream

Classroom based learners aged 19+ were the most positive about their learning provider with 93% saying they would be “likely” or “very likely” to recommend them to friends and family. Adult apprentices (aged 19+) were the second most positive with 86% saying they would be “likely” or “very likely” to recommend their provider. Classroom based learners aged 16-18 were the least likely to recommend their learning provider with a 75% recommendation score.

Figure 8: Likelihood to recommend by funding stream³

Q8 How likely is it that you would recommend the learning provider to friends or family?	Base	% Recommend
16-18 Apprenticeships	30,018	79.7%
16-18 Classroom Learning	145,637	75.4%
19+ Apprenticeships	54,254	85.7%
19+ Classroom Learning	77,026	92.7%

³ Total numbers are greater than the base number because learners may be on more than one funding stream within the survey window.

3. Technical Information

Quality and methodology information is available on the Data Explained Tab of the Transparency Spreadsheet, published with the data outputs on .GOV.UK. This provides further information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data, including how it is validated and processed.

The Learner Satisfaction Survey 2017 to 2018 measures learners' satisfaction with learning funded by the Department for Education from 30 October 2017 to 4 May 2018. The survey applied to all general further education colleges, tertiary colleges, land-based colleges, art and design colleges and most independent learning providers that deliver provision. The exceptions were sixth-form colleges; employers in receipt of an Apprenticeship Direct Grant; and colleges and other training providers funded to deliver training exclusively to their own employees. A total of 1,821,629 learners were eligible to take part in the survey and 1,531 colleges and training providers were in-scope.

The survey was predominantly online, with a small percentage of paper copies for whom access to the internet was impossible. A total of 341,627 learners took part in the survey with 309,259 matched to the Individualised Learner Record (ILR). This report is based on those responses matched to the ILR which allows analysis by subject area and funding stream⁴. Respondents were broadly representative of the population as shown in the table below. Learners aged 16-18 are more likely to be engaged on longer programmes of study with more guided learning hours and therefore tend to be over-represented in learning providers' survey samples.

Sample sizes and other factors for certain provisions can potentially make them less representative. Community learning programmes usually last between 6 to 12 weeks. So there is often limited time for learners to respond to the survey during their learning period. Further, many providers delivering community learning do so in settings that do not have internet access. So learner responses may be hampered as providers will need to order paper based copies of the survey, print and then distribute these copies to their community learning venues to allow responses to be captured. Hence, the survey response for Community Learning equates to 4% of the learning type population.

The base figures shown in this report are the number of learners giving a response to an individual question. As learners are not required to answer every question, some questions will have a lower base than the total number of survey respondents. In addition, learners may be appear in more than one funding stream in the survey window.

⁴ The accompanying open data files cover all valid response including unknowns, which can be greater than the ILR responses presented in this report

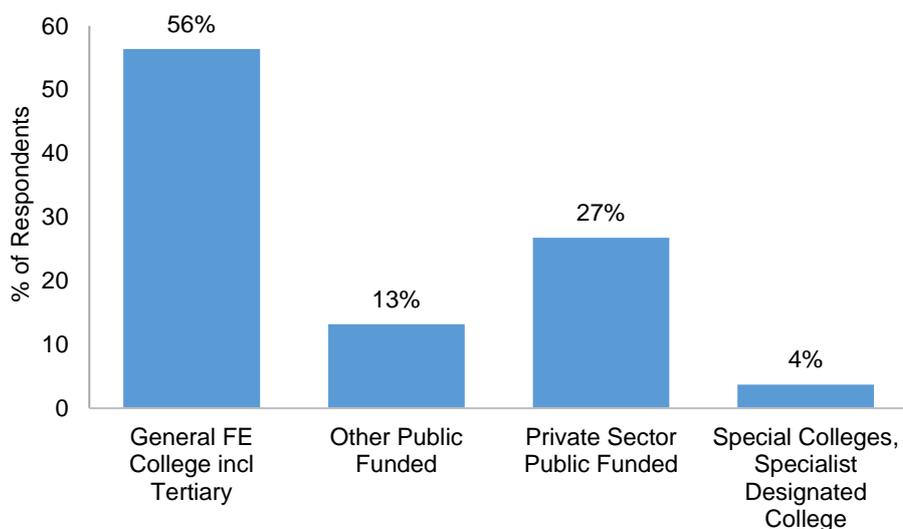
Figure 9: Comparison of survey respondents matched to the ILR with the survey population

Number of Responses / Learners	Population		Survey	
	N	%	N	%
Female	1,019,784	56%	163,928	53%
Male	801,845	44%	145,331	47%
16-18	632,054	35%	166,568	54%
19+	1,189,575	65%	142,691	46%
16-18 Female	284,398	16%	75,242	24%
16-18 Male	347,656	19%	91,326	30%
19+ Female	735,386	40%	88,686	29%
19+ Male	454,189	25%	54,005	17%
General FE College incl Tertiary	1,061,948	58%	174,347	56%
Other Public Funded	232,716	13%	40,704	13%
Private Sector Public Funded	429,360	24%	82,753	27%
Special & Specialist Designated Colleges	97,605	5%	11,455	4%
Level 1 or below	521,843	29%	63,609	21%
Level 2	634,709	35%	106,266	34%
Level 3+	665,077	37%	139,384	45%
East of England	174,372	10%	33,377	11%
East Midlands	160,020	9%	28,357	9%
Greater London	293,034	16%	39,645	13%
North East	110,540	6%	22,946	7%
North West	269,017	15%	48,204	16%
South East	237,799	13%	41,983	14%
South West	171,037	9%	29,344	9%
West Midlands	204,346	11%	33,961	11%
Yorkshire and the Humber	187,034	10%	29,088	9%
Other / Unknown	14,430	1%	2,354	1%
Total	1,821,629	100%	309,259	100%

Learner Profile

The majority of respondents to the survey attended General Further Education Colleges (56%). 27% of respondents attended Private Sector Public Funded organisations, 13% were from Other Public Funded organisation and 4% were from Special Colleges/Specialist Designated Colleges.

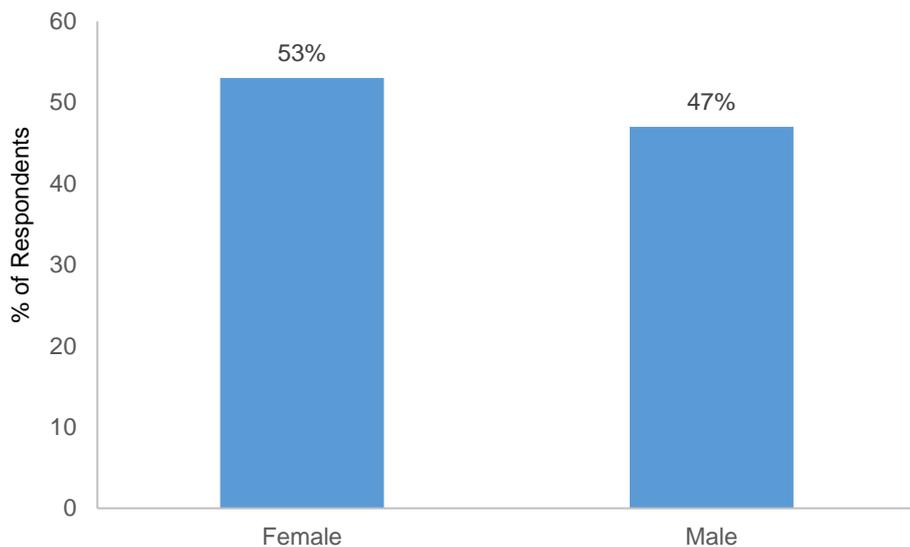
Figure 10: Percentage of respondents by provider type



Number of respondents : 309,259

A slightly higher proportion of respondents were female (53%) compared to male (47%). The majority of females were aged 19 and over (54%) whereas almost two-thirds (63%) of male respondents were aged 16 to 18.

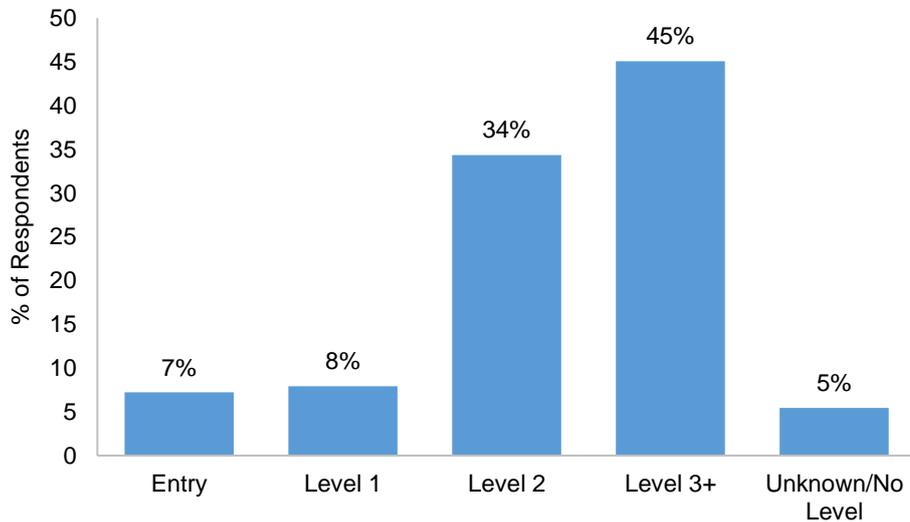
Figure 11: Percentage of respondents by sex



Number of respondents : 309,259

Just under half of respondents were studying at Level 3 or above (45%), whilst 34% were studying at Level 2.

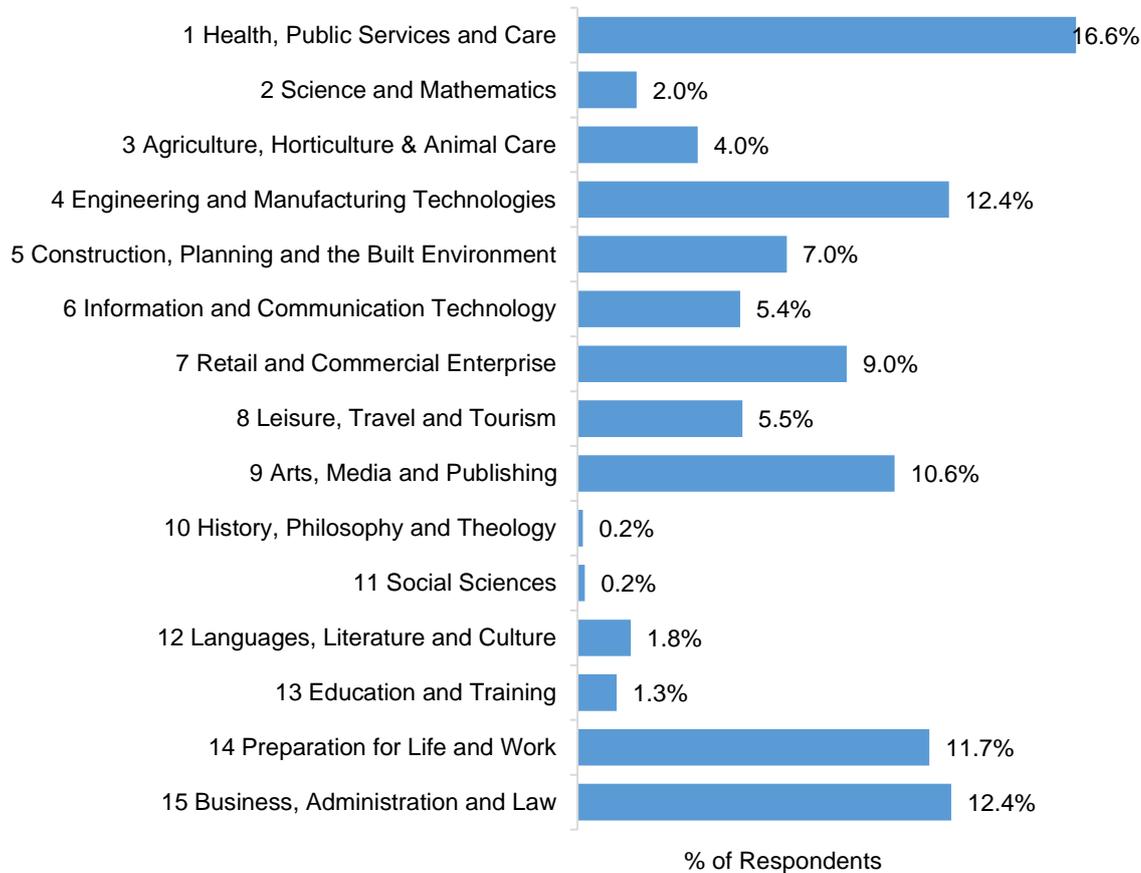
Figure 12: Percentage of respondents by level of study



Number of respondents : 309,259

The largest number of respondents were studying Health, Public Services & Care with 17% of learners studying in this sector subject area.

Figure 13: Percentage of respondents by sector subject area



Number of respondents : 269,678

4. Get in touch

Media enquiries

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Department for Education

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Download <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fe-choices>

Reference: FE Choices Learner Satisfaction Survey 2017 to 2018



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