RESEARCH

BIS | Department for Business Innovation & Skills

BIS RESEARCH PAPER NUMBER 63

National Adult Learner Survey 2010

OCTOBER 2012

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Research paper number 63

October 2012

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Background

The National Adult Learner Survey (NALS) is a series used by BIS and its predecessor departments to look at a variety of aspects of adult participation in learning beyond compulsory continuous education. The 2010 survey is the fifth such survey with previous releases in 1997, 2001, 2002 and 2005.

Introduction

NALS 2010 was undertaken on behalf of BIS by Ipsos MORI. Fieldwork took place between January and August 2010, with a short break in the run up to the General Election. A total of 4,647 interviews with 16-24 year olds not in continuous full-time education and those aged 25 and over were conducted with a response rate of 57%. The 2010 survey covered England only; this differed from previous surveys which also included Wales and Scotland.

Participation in learning was subdivided into three main categories:

- **Formal learning** designed to lead to a nationally recognised qualification;
- **Non-formal learning** being a taught class but not leading to a qualification; and
- **Informal learning** involving self-study to improve knowledge of a subject.

Learning Trends

Adult participation in **all categories** of learning in the three years preceding the survey was 69%. This represents an 11 percentage point decline from the 80% recorded in NALS 2005. Indeed it is the lowest level recorded in the NALS series.

There are differences by learning category:

- The most significant decline has been in non-formal learning – from 56% in 2005 to 39% in 2010;
- Participation in informal learning declined by 13 percentage points from 56% in 2005 to 43% in 2010; and
- Participation in formal learning in unchanged at 24%.

The causes of the decline are not directly collected by NALS but are likely to be due to a combination of the following:

- The economic downturn since 2008. This has affected individuals' willingness to spend money on learning – 58% of respondents cited cost as an obstacle to learning compared with 21% in 2005.

- A reduction in funding for many short courses in favour of longer, qualification-led, learning in response to the Leitch Review of Skills[1];
- A decline in employer funding for on-the-job training[2]; and
- A reduction in participation in ICT skills (a strong driver of learning participation in previous NALS) as more of the adult population have developed basic ICT skills.

Participation in learning has declined across almost all age groups with the exception of 16-19 year olds – overall participation rate among this group is unchanged (79%). The decline has been most noticeable among those aged 60 and over, reversing the significant rise in participation rate among this group between 2002 and 2005. The decline in 2010 has brought the participation rate among adults aged 60-69 and 70 plus back to pre-2005 levels (48% and 24% respectively).

Overall participation continues to be closely linked to household income, employment status and previous educational attainment.

There is a 29 percentage point gap in overall participation between those in the highest and lowest income bands (84% of those with a household income of £31,200 plus per annum compared with 55% of those with £10,399 or less), although formal learning rates are not too dissimilar (29% and 25% respectively). The widest gap is in informal learning, 63% and 25% respectively.

The highest participation rates were for respondents in work – 81% of those in full-time employment, 72% part-time and 74% self-employed but declining to 64% among the unemployed. It is lowest for respondents who are economically inactive (45% of those looking after family, 38% retired and 40% of those incapable of work).

There is a positive link between participation in learning and highest qualification. There is a 63 percentage point gap in participation rates between those with a Level 5 qualification (90%) and those with none (27%). This gap has widened since 2005. Participation among those with Level 1 or no qualification trail significantly behind those with even Level 2 attainment (55% compared with 73%).

What people are learning

In the three years prior to the 2010 survey, learners undertook an average of 2.06 courses, up from 1.9 in 2005. Some 41% of courses were taken to obtain a qualification, 39% were guided on-the-job training and 20% were neither qualification-led nor on-the-job.

Academic and job-related courses are most popular in the formal and non-formal learning types (43% of courses studied) followed by leisure and life skills courses (28%). As noted

[1] Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills (http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/leitch)

[2] http://www.ukces.org.uk/reports/national-employer-skills-survey-for-england-2009-main-report-evidence-report-23

earlier, participation in ICT-related courses has declined since 2005 – from nine percent to five percent in 2010.

A quarter of formal or non-formal courses were paid for in full by the learners. However, employers remain the largest contributor to fees – 41% of courses were fully employer-funded.

Half (49%) of formal and non-formal courses led to learners acquiring new skills relevant to their jobs. Over a third of courses (37%) helped improve job performance, 19% boosted job satisfaction and nine percent resulted in higher wages.

Looking at the wider impacts, 64% of formal and non-formal courses taught learners new skills and 32% of courses boosted learners' confidence.

Employers were the most common sources of information, advice and guidance (IAG) for formal and non-formal courses (40%), followed by family and friends (20%) and educational institutions (15%).

Future Learning

Seven in ten (68%) economically active respondents[3] say they are likely or very likely to undertake job-related training in the near future. This represents a decline compared with 2005 (77%) but corresponds with the general fall in participation recorded in 2010. Similarly, those with higher previous educational attainment were more likely to say they will undertake further learning (55% of those with Level 4/5 say "very likely" compared with 38% with Level 2 and 16% with no qualifications).

All respondents were asked their intentions to undertake non-vocational learning in the near future. Again, there is a downward trend. Overall, 43% stated likely or very likely compared with 51% in 2005, but for non-learners[4] this falls to 24%. Approaching half (46%) of non-learners were not at all likely to undertake any non-vocational learning.

Seven in ten (68%) respondents would be willing to save towards future learning, 26% unwilling. Naturally, this corresponds to respondents' likelihood to undertake future learning – 73% of those planning future learning would be willing to save.

Respondents were asked about their motivations for, and potential barriers to, future learning. [5]

Overall, cost (58%), a lack of time (42%) and inability to fit learning around job (29%) and family (25%) were the most commonly cited obstacles. Respondents with no or Level 1 prior qualifications were more likely to say they lack confidence (23% and 16%

[3] Only economically active respondents were asked this question

[4] Those who had not participated in any learning in the past three years

[5] This question is not comparable with the barriers to learning question asked in 2005.

respectively compared with eight percent of those with a Level 2), and knowledge of the courses available or appropriate for them (15% of those with no qualifications and 18% with Level 1).

Three in five (62%) were motivated by learning something new and 42% each by improving job prospects and income.

Overall, motivations for learning are closely linked with life stages. Respondents aged 16-39 were more likely to be motivated by enhanced job prospects (promotion and income) whilst older working age respondents want to improve their job performance and satisfaction. People aged 20-49 were more likely to want to learn to help their children and those aged 50 plus were more likely to want to learn new things, build confidence and meet new people.

Although participation in non-formal and informal learning have fallen, respondents' views on the value of learning have remained broadly similar to 2005. This suggests that it is changes in individual circumstance that is contributing to the decline. There has been an increase in the number thinking learning is an investment in the future (82% 2010, 76% 2005) and fewer believe that leaning is only worthwhile if it leads to a qualification.

Segmentation

NALS 2010 included an exercise to segment respondents according to their attitudes to, and participation in, learning. The analysis resulted in eight distinct segments which are summarised below. They are ranked from highest to lowest percentage of learners present.

Pro-learning Go-Getters represent 20% of respondents. This group values learning with the highest proportion regarding learning as an investment. It is composed predominately of learners – the highest of all the segments (80%). People in this segment are most likely to disagree that the skills required for work cannot be learned in a classroom. They are also most likely to disagree that they prefer to spend their free time doing things other than learning. They are motivated by a desire to improve their job performance and job satisfaction. The main barriers to participation include: lack of availability of the right courses, the costs associated with learning and being able to fit learning around caring responsibilities.

Typically people in this segment have spent more time in continuous full-time education and is highly qualified (24% left full-time education at the age of 21 or older compared with 15% overall; 50% is qualified to Level 4 or 5 compared with 34% overall). Although they are no more likely to be employed than overall, those that are working tend to be higher earners (33% earn £31,200 plus compared with 27% overall). People in this segment are most committed to undertaking learning in the next two to three years: 81% say they are likely to job-related learning and 61% say they are likely to do other types of learning.

Pro-learning Planners represent 18% of respondents. They are also very positive about learning, agreeing strongly that learning is an investment in the future, that learning is for people like them and that they found school useful. They are likely to have participated in

learning the past three years (75%) and to say they would do so in the future. This group feel particularly time-poor and have problems fitting learning around caring responsibilities.

This segment is younger than average - 40% are aged under 40. They are more likely to live with a partner and have a child under 16 (30% compared with 23% overall). Members of this group are well educated – 52% are qualified to Level 4 or 5 compared with 34% overall; are more likely than average to be employed full-time (44% compared with 38% overall) and to be earning in excess of £31,200 per annum (35% compared with 27% overall).

Distracted Advocates represent 21% of respondents. People belonging to this group value learning, with three quarters (75%) having participated in the past three years. They strongly believe in the need to keep improving their knowledge and skills and see learning as an investment. Indeed, their motivations for learning are job-focused: to improve their job performance or to get a promotion. However, they feel unable to fit learning around their work commitments and do not want to give up their free time for learning.

There is higher than average representation of high earners in this segment: 39% have an annual salary of £31,200 or higher compared with 27% overall. Linked to this, they are well qualified (36% are qualified to Levels 2 or 3 compared with 29% overall; 39% are qualified to Levels 4 or 5 compared with 34% overall). As fits their attitude to learning, they are more likely than average to say they would do job-related learning in the next two or three years.

The '**Fearful of Failure'** represents 11% of respondents. People in this segment are more likely than average to report that they do not know about the courses available. Just over half participated in learning over the past three years (56%). They report that they would be likely to learn if it would help build their confidence and enable them to help their children. They generally agree that learning is fun, but lack the confidence to learn on their own and worry about keeping up with other learners.

The segment is overwhelmingly female (70%), and holds low qualifications (54% are qualified to Level 1 or have no qualifications compared with 37% overall). Members are also more likely to be out-of-work and looking after their family (13% compared with 7% overall). A quarter are dependent on means-tested benefits (26% compared to 18% overall).However, they are as likely as people overall to take part in job-related learning or other types of learning in the future.

Work a Priority before Learning represents seven per cent of respondents. Members of this group are negative about learning: they do not view it as fun, nor necessary for work and nor an investment in the future.

Approaching half are in full-time employment (45% compared with 38% overall). This group is less likely than average to consider learning in the next two to three years.

'Means-To-Enders' represent nine percent of respondents. They lack the confidence to learn on their own and believe that the skills required for work cannot be acquired in a classroom. They are the only segment more likely to agree than disagree that 'learning is only worthwhile if there is a qualification at the end of it'. They generally lack the confidence to participate in learning and feel they are too old to learn. However, they

would be more likely to undertake learning if it would help build their self-confidence and provide greater job security.

A quarter (27%) have participated in learning in the past three years – significantly less than the average of 50%; 64% are either qualified to Level 1 or have no qualifications. Three quarters (74%) left continuous full-time education at age 16 or younger and 11% is unemployed – the highest level of unemployment of all the segments. They are more likely than average to be living in the most deprived areas (34% are in the most deprived Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) quintile compared with 19% overall).

'Too Old to Learn' represent eight per cent of respondents. This group is disinterested in learning and feels they are too old to benefit. They are generally disinterested in learning, feel that learning is not for people like them and prefer to spend their free time doing other things. A quarter (25%) has participated in learning in the past three years and the large majority are unlikely to undertake learning in the next two to three years.

A high proportion of this segment is aged 70 or over (52%) and retired (65%). Two thirds (67%) are qualified to Level 1 or have no qualifications.

The final segment is **'Learning Avoidant',** representing seven per cent of respondents. Members of this group are least interested in learning, with just 22% having participated in learning in the past three years. People in this segment are most likely to disagree that learning is fun or that they need to keep improving their knowledge and skills. A lack of interest in learning and their age are seen as barriers. They also tend to feel that learning is not for people like them. They are least likely of all the segments to do learning in the next two to three years.

Similarly to the *Too Old to Learn segment,* people in this group are older (30% aged 70 and over compared with 15% overall). Four in five (78%) are qualified to Level 1 or have no qualifications. They are more likely than average to be retired or incapable of work. However, unlike the *Too Old to Learn* segment, they are more likely than average to be living in the most deprived IMD quintile (29% compared with 19% overall).

Conclusions

The key predictors of participation in learning is unchanged; they are prior engagement in learning and educational attainment. Learners are more likely than non-learners to appreciate the wider benefits of learning, meaning that they are more willing to move beyond formal learning to include non-formal and informal learning. They are also more willing to contribute towards the cost of learning which is key given finite public resources and the need to rebalance the financial contribution borne by the individual, the employer and the state. It is also important to note that those in learning are undertaking more than recorded in 2005.

Clearly then the challenge is to promote the value and wider benefits of learning to those with low prior qualifications. Widening awareness of learning opportunities and addressing the finding that those with low or no qualification often lacked the confidence to learn. Accessible and effective IAG would appear to be one possible solution that would address several of these barriers to wider participation. Another would be to ensure that more

people leave compulsory education with at least Level 2 qualifications, which, among a vast array of other benefits, is the threshold above which participation in further learning is highest.

1. Introduction

The first National Adult Learning Survey (NALS) was commissioned in 1997 and explored participation in a wide range of learning experiences. This baseline study was followed by repeat surveys in 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2005. This report presents the findings for NALS 2010. NALS is used by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) to provide evidence of adult participation in learning.

1.1 Types of learning covered by NALS

NALS is designed to capture a wide range of learning experiences and, therefore, employs a broad definition of learning. Three categories of learning - formal, non-formal and informal[6] are used in NALS 2010. As in previous surveys, a series of questions was asked in NALS 2010 to establish whether respondents had undertaken any of these types of learning in the previous three years or since leaving continuous full-time education (CFTE).

A learner is defined as a respondent who has left continuous full-time education and has taken part in at least one formal, non-formal or informal learning activity within the three years prior to the survey or since leaving continuous full-time education.

Learning is subdivided into three main types which are recognised by international bodies such as Eurostat and OECD. These are as follows:

Formal learning is defined as learning that is intended to lead to a nationally recognised qualification, even if the qualification is not achieved.

Non-formal learning is a course or taught class that does not lead to a nationally recognised qualification.

Informal learning is learning that involves self-study to improve knowledge of a subject, not involving taught classes or qualifications. This might include reading books, manuals, journals or attending seminars.

In line with previous NALS, learning can also be categorised as taught and self-directed although these two learning types are not discussed within the main body of the report. Further information on these learning categories can be found within the appendix tables report.

[6] The terminology used to refer to this type of learning has changed over time. In NALS 1997, it was described as 'non-taught' learning, while in NALS 2000 it was referred to as self-taught as well as non-taught learning. In NALS 2001, 2002, 2005 and 2010 the term 'self-directed' learning is also used.

Taught learning includes:

- any taught courses intended to lead to a qualification;
- any taught courses designed to help develop skills used in a job;
- any courses, instruction or tuition in driving, playing a musical instrument, art or craft, sport or any other practical skill;
- any adult education classes including evening classes;
- any learning involving an individual working on their own from a package of materials provided by an employer, college, commercial organisation or other training provider; and
- any other taught course, instruction or tuition.

Self learning includes:

- supervised training while doing a job;
- time spent keeping up to date with work or professional developments; and
- deliberately trying to improve one's knowledge or professional developments.

The learning measured in NALS can also be classified as vocational or non-vocational learning. Note that the definitions are slightly different to the previous NALS survey and are not directly comparable.

Vocational learning is learning that is:

- related to the respondent's job at the time of starting the learning, or
- started in order to help with a future job, or
- started in order to help with voluntary work; or
- any course leading to a nationally-recognised qualification

In contrast, non-vocational learning is:

- unrelated to the respondent's job at the time of starting the learning; and
- not started in order to help with a future job; and
- not started in order to help with voluntary work.

1.2 Main changes to the questionnaire 2010

NALS 2010 replicated the method used in NALS 2005 for collecting detailed information on formal and taught learning. However, in 2005 respondents who had completed more than one course were asked to select the one they found most useful to discuss in further detail. In 2010 respondents who had completed more than one course were asked about *each* course that they had studied. Therefore, the detailed information on formal and taught learning is not directly comparable with earlier NALS.

The core topics included in NALS 2010 and in earlier NALS were:

- Experience with education and qualifications achieved.
- Levels of participation in different types of adult learning, that is: formal, non-formal and informal.
- The subject and mode of learning and how much time people spend on different learning activities.
- Information, advice and guidance on learning.
- Obstacles and incentives to learning.
- Key socio-demographic indicators (e.g., gender, age, ethnicity, disability, educational background and employment circumstances).

Non-core topic areas included in previous surveys and NALS 2010 were:

- Attitudes to learning.
- Future learning and learning initiatives.
- Use of ICT.

A few additional areas were included in NALS 2010:

- Communications and media.
- A discrete choice exercise to identify the relative importance of different factors in influencing participation in learning.

1.3 Summary of methodology

Full details on the survey methodology are contained in a separate Technical Report. In this section we present a summary of the sampling and weighting procedures.

The survey fieldwork was conducted between 18th January and 1st August 2010. In total, 10,215 addresses in England[7] were randomly selected from the Postcode Address File (PAF) and interviews were attempted with one eligible adult in each household[8]. A total of 4,647 Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI) were conducted. The adjusted[9] response rate is 57%.

NALS 2010 used the same eligibility criteria as NALS 2005: Eligible adults include (i) people aged 16-24 **not** in continuous full-time education and (ii) all adults aged 25 and over regardless of their current learning status. Prior to the 2005 survey, a person had to be aged 16 and above, not in continuous full-time education, and normally resident at the address in order to be eligible to participate. This change was made in 2005 to accommodate the sampling requirements of the European Adult Education Survey (AES).

[7] NALS 2010 covers England only whereas NALS 2005 included Scotland and Wales. Previous NALS covered England and Wales.

[8] This replicates the sampling strategy in 2005. In preceding surveys in the NALS series, however, up to two adults were interviewed per household. This strategy was changed as part of efforts to maximise response rates.

[9] The adjusted response rate works out the response rate from only those addresses in the sample that were eligible for the survey i.e. removing those that no longer existed or were not inhabited at the time of the survey. More information can be found on the breakdown of eligible and ineligible sample in the NALS 2010 Technical Report, Section 4.4.

In line with previous NALS, the 2010 data have been weighted to correct for different household and individual selection probabilities and non-response.

In NALS 2010, a trade-off or "discrete choice" exercise was included to determine the relative importance of different factors in an individual's decision to undertake learning. The factors selected for inclusion were those identified in a literature review to be highly correlated to people's motivations for, and barriers to, learning. They included: where and when the learning would take place; the main benefit or outcome of the learning for the participant; the time commitment per week; the overall duration of the course and the financial cost/ fees involved. Respondents were presented with 8 sets of 'choice tasks'. Each choice task comprised four options and the respondent was asked to choose their preferred option. The 8 choice tasks were randomly assigned to ensure coverage of all possible combinations. Results of the trade-off exercise are detailed in section 4.2.2.

1.4 Guidance on interpretation of the data

It should be remembered that a sample and not the entire population participated in the survey. As a consequence, all results are subject to sampling tolerances, which means that not all differences are significant. A guide to sampling tolerance is included in the technical report, but in general, figures based on the total sample are accurate to within +/- 0.9 and 1.4 percentage points. Unless stated otherwise, this report only comments on statistically significant differences in the data.

The percentages presented in the tables have been calculated from the weighted **responding** bases. Both the weighted and unweighted bases are shown at the bottom of each table. In tables and charts where percentages do not add up to 100% this is due either to multiple answers, to rounding, or to the exclusion of 'don't know' or 'no response' categories. Where figures are combined to produce a net result (e.g. very satisfied and fairly satisfied combined to produce a percentage for satisfied) this figure represents the addition of the raw values, and as such may not represent the sum of the two percentages. Throughout the report an asterisk (*) denotes either a value greater than zero, but less than 0.5%.

Where appropriate, analysis has also been conducted at sub-group level. All reported subgroup differences are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. In some instances the data are based on small sample sizes (less than 100 respondents) and should be treated with caution; this is noted in the text or footnotes.

2. Learning Trends

2.1 Changes in learning patterns since 1997

This chapter focuses on trends in learning participation since 1997 including changes in different types of learning as described previously – formal, non-formal, informal, vocational and non-vocational learning. In line with previous NALS reports, this chapter focuses mainly on learning among adults aged 16-69.

2.1.1 Learning in the past three years

NALS measures adult participation in learning in the *three years prior* to the survey. This measure encompasses formal, non-formal and informal learning.

Between 2005 and 2010, adult participation in learning by this measure fell by 11 percentage points to the lowest level recorded by NALS - from 80% to 69% (Table 2.1). This trend is consistent with other emerging evidence[10].

Table 2.1 Comparison of learning participation rates over the past 3 years in NALS

Survey name	Date of fieldwork	Learning participation in past 3 years
		%
NALS 2010[11]	Jan 2010 – Aug 2010	69
NALS 2005	Oct 2005 – Feb 2006	80
NALS 2002	Jan 2002 – Jun 2002	76
NALS 2001	Jan 2001 – May 2001	76
NALS 1997	Mar 1997 – Apr 1997	74

Base: All respondents aged 16-69 not in continuous full-time education.

The decline, however, has not been felt equally across the three major learning types (Chart 2.1). The most significant decline has been in non-formal learning which fell by 17 percentage points and now accounts for less than two in five adults. The profile of those participating in non-formal learning is broadly similar to that in 2005 indicating that the decline is widespread and not isolated to particular groups.

Participation in **formal** learning is unchanged at 24%. It remains the least common type of learning among adults in England.

[10] Mason,G. (2010) Adult Learning in Decline? Recent evidence at UK National and City- Region Level http://www.llakes.org/llakes-research-papers/ p11

[11] NALS 2010 covered England only whilst trend data for NALS 1997-2005 included both England and Wales. However, Wales had a slightly lower participation rate than England, so the exclusion of Wales in the 2010 survey does not explain the decline.

Participation in **informa**l learning fell by 13 percentage points during the same period though it remains the current dominant learning type.

The reasons for the decline in non-formal and informal learning cannot be determined directly from the survey. However, the survey does show that although the percentage of learners has decreased, the number of learning activities per learner has increased (see section 3.1). Other relevant evidence from the survey is as follows:

- Cost appears to be a bigger barrier to learning than in previous NALS (section 4.2)
- Time is a key factor in people's decisions to learn with the large majority expressing a strong preference for distance learning (section 4.2.2)
- Most of the population under 60, are now familiar with computers, and computer usage has greatly increased since the previous survey. (section 2.2.4) Not surprisingly, the number of courses undertaken on ICT skills has decreased (section 3.1)
- Attitudes towards learning are positive for most people and have not declined since 2005 (section 4.3).
- The self-assessed likelihood of future learning has decreased (section 4.1)

The decline in learning is likely to arise from a combination of factors which may include the following.

- The economic downturn from 2008 onwards has led to economic hardship amongst most groups which has reduced individual and employer willingness to spend money on learning[12]. However, it should be noted that informal learning has also decreased (even though it can be done at little cost), and sometimes recessions can lead to increases in learning in order to prepare for jobs when they become available.
- As a result of the Leitch review of learning, public funding of short courses (particularly in FE colleges) has reduced considerably, in favour of longer courses leading to nationally recognised qualifications[13]. This would in particular reduce the amount of non-formal learning undertaken.

[12] http://www.ukces.org.uk/reports/national-employer-skills-survey-for-england-2009-main-report-evidence-report-23

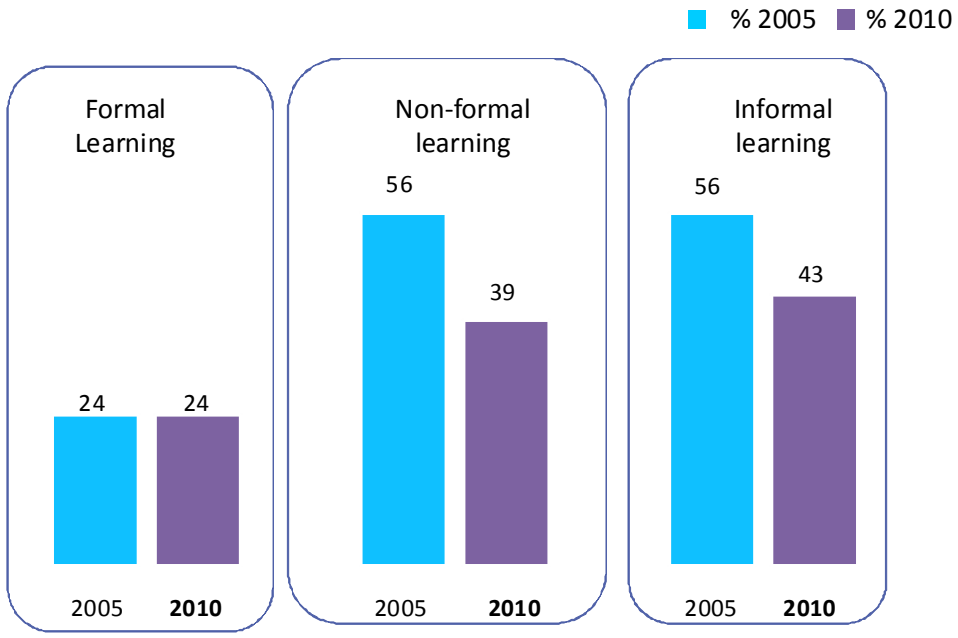
[13] Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills (http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/leitch)

- According to the National Employers Skills Survey (2009), there has been a decline in employers' funding for on-the-job training resulting in fewer staff receiving training between 2007 and 2009 (from 63% of the workforce to 56%)[14].

- ICT training was previously a strong driver for learning. However, most of the population under 60 now have basic ICT skills, so the demand for this learning has decreased strongly and adversely affected the overall participation in learning.

- A lack of time is a key contributing factor in the decline of informal learning. Indeed, the trade-off exercise that respondents completed as part of the survey confirmed that decisions on whether to learn is highly influenced by the amount of time commitment involved

Chart 2.1 Changes in participation in different learning types between 2005 and 2010



Base: All respondents aged 16-69 not in continuous full-time education. Fieldwork 18th January – 1st August

When considering all of the different learning activities respondents were asked about, again we see a significant fall across most learning activities. No single area has seen a particularly severe change, with the general trend being one of decline. This confirms that 2010 is seeing an overall downturn in learning participation.

[14] http://www.ukces.org.uk/reports/national-employer-skills-survey-for-england-2009-main-report-evidence-report-

Table 2.2 Participation in different learning activities – NALS 2005-2010		
	2005 (England and Wales)	**2010 (England)**
% Undertaken…	%	%
A course designed to lead to a qualification[15]	32	25
A course designed to help you develop skills for work	38	32
A course or tuition in practical skills	23	15
Adult education/ evening classes/ community-based learning	14	10
Learning from a package of materials	13	10
Some other type of course or tuition	14	11
Supervised on-the-job training	28	23
Professional development	45	35
Other self-directed learning	30	20
Weighted base	*3871*	*3942*
Unweighted base	*3340*	*3806*
Base: All respondents aged 16-69 not in continuous full-time education.		

2.2 Who is learning?

This section looks at the characteristics of learners and non-learners.

2.2.1 Economic circumstances

Overall participation in learning continues to be positively linked to household income and deprivation (measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD[16]).

Household income groups

There is a 29 percentage point gap in participation between those in the highest and lowest household income bands (Table 2.3). The most significant change in participation over time has been among people in the lowest income households where the participation rate has fallen to the level recorded in 2002 (it fell from 64% to 55% between 2005 and 2010).

[15] There is a decline between 2005 and 2010 in the percentage who initially said they were studying for a qualification. However, when asked in more detail about their learning activities – there was actually no change in the percentage studying for a nationally-recognised qualification (i.e. taking part in formal learning).

[16] The IMD ranks geographical wards according to a composite measure of deprivation encompassing six domains: income, employment, health and disability, education, skills and training, housing, and geographical access to services. Five IMD quintiles are presented in the report: the first quintile is least deprived and the fifth quintile is most deprived.

Table 2.3 Percentages of household income groups reporting different types of learning

	£10,399 or less	£10,400-£20,799	£20,800-£31,199	£31,200+	Total
	%	%	%	%	%
Any learning	55	61	72	84	69
Formal learning	25	23	26	29	24
Non-formal learning	25	31	40	56	39
Informal learning	25	35	44	63	43
Vocational learning	49	55	67	82	64
Non-vocational learning	13	15	13	15	14
Weighted base	*499*	*641*	*530*	*1224*	*3942*
Unweighted base	*616*	*677*	*522*	*1055*	*3806*

Base: All respondents aged 16-69 not in continuous full-time education.

However, there is considerable variation by type of learning. For example, participation in formal learning is comparable across different household incomes indicating that income is not the over-riding factor for this type of learning. By contrast, the gap in participation is substantial for **informal learning**, where there is a difference of 38 percentage points between people in the richest and poorest households. Informal learning tends to be low cost so these observed differences are not directly related to income. Rather they are related to differences in attitudes and motivations towards learning; the latter is key because informal learning is primarily self-directed: people in high income households are more likely to be engaged in informal learning because they place greater value on the wider benefits of learning, have more experience of learning and are more resourceful in seeking information, advice and guidance about learning opportunities.

The link between household income and participation in **non-formal learning** is more direct because there is usually a fee associated with this type of learning and government subsidies for non-formal learning has diminished in recent years: there is a difference of 31 percentage points in participation between the most and least wealthy households. Employment status is also a factor as non-formal learning includes on-the-job training and those in lower income households are less likely to have access to this type of training because they are more likely to be out-of-work or in low paid occupations. This factor also explains differences in participation in vocational learning.

Participation in non-vocational learning is relatively low across all groups.

Index of Multiple Deprivation

The link between learning participation and economic circumstance is further reinforced when looking at participation rates by IMD (Table 2.4) although the difference in participation between those in the most and least deprived quintiles is not as pronounced as for household income. However, as can be seen, respondents in the least deprived areas are more likely to report learning across almost every learning type than those in the most deprived areas - the difference in participation between the most and least deprived

quintile is particularly stark for informal learning. The exception is, again, formal learning which remains similar across all deprivation quintiles[17].

Table 2.4 Percentage of respondents in multiple deprivation index quartiles reporting different types of learning

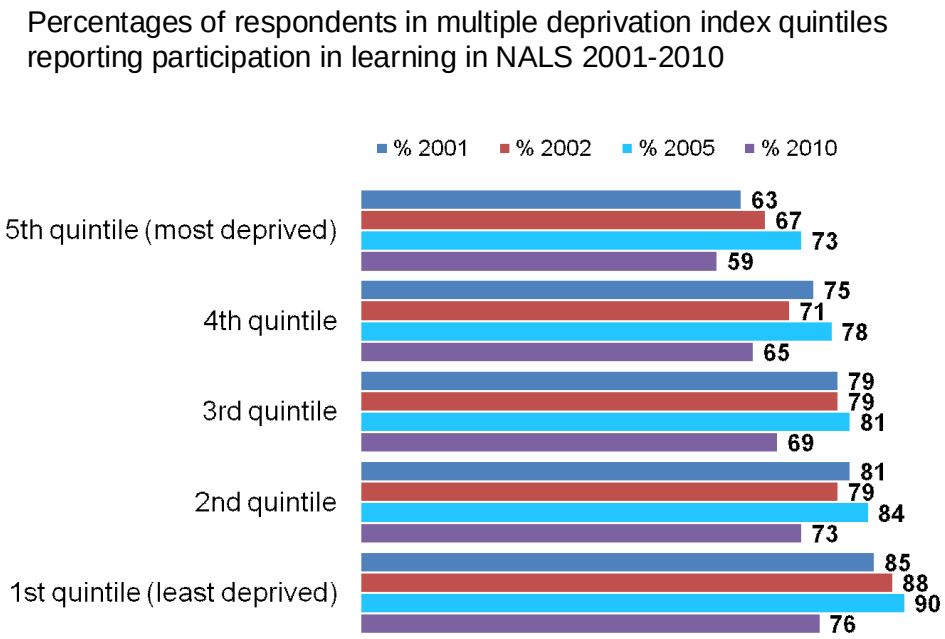
	5th quintile (most deprived)	4th quintile	3rd quintile	2nd quintile	1st quintile (least deprived)	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Any learning	59	65	69	73	76	69
Formal learning	27	25	23	24	22	24
Non-formal learning	28	37	40	43	48	39
Informal learning	30	40	42	47	55	43
Vocational learning	55	61	63	68	71	64
Non-vocational learning	11	13	16	15	15	14
Weighted base	*783*	*746*	*690*	*847*	*847*	*3942*
Unweighted base	*798*	*729*	*655*	*789*	*803*	*3806*

Base: All respondents in England aged 16-69 not in continuous full-time education.
Non-vocational learners are respondents who are not vocational learners.

The **size of the decline** in learning participation has been broadly similar across the IMD quintiles (Chart 2.2). The gap between the most deprived and the least deprived quintiles currently stands at 17 percentage points which is similar to the 2005 findings, and still below the 22 percentage points measured in NALS 2001. However, participation level is at its lowest since 2001 for all quintiles.

[17] The higher than average figure for formal learning among the most deprived group is not statistically significantly different from that for the least deprived quintile.

Chart 2.2 Learning trends by Index of Multiple Deprivation quintiles



Base: All respondents aged 16-69 not in continuous full-time education. Fieldwork 18th January – 1st August

As Table 2.5 shows, learning is closely linked to employment status because people in-work have greater access to learning opportunities and, linked to this, greater appreciation of the wider benefits of learning. Four in five full-time workers are engaged in learning. Participation rate is slightly lower for part-time employees, self-employed people and the unemployed. It is lowest for people who are economically inactive.

Informal learning is most commonly undertaken by people who are self-employed, perhaps because it is likely that any on-the-job learning for this group is also included as informal learning. Non-vocational learning is the only learning type undertaken by more of those who are economically inactive.

Table 2.5 Percentage reporting different types of learning according to employment status

	FT empl'ee	PT empl'ee	Self-empl'd	Un-empl'd	Looking after the family	Retired	Incap-able of work	Other[18]	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Any learning	81	72	74	64	45	38	40	88	69
Formal learning	28	26	24	26	18	5	14	59	24
Non-formal learning	52	44	36	26	21	21	16	32	39
Informal learning	54	42	60	34	20	23	19	35	43
Taught learning	61	56	52	44	35	25	27	77	51
Self-directed learning	68	52	62	42	24	25	22	47	52
Vocational learning	79	69	73	58	34	25	28	79	64
Non-vocational learning	12	13	12	14	17	19	18	17	14
Weighted base	*1772*	*510*	*317*	*269*	*309*	*452*	*192*	*123*	*3942*
Unweighted base	*1568*	*528*	*279*	*242*	*338*	*527*	*209*	*115*	*3806*

Base: All respondents aged 16-69 not in continuous full-time education.

2.2.2 Educational background

2.2.2.1 Qualification level

The positive link between participation in learning in the past three years and highest qualification is shown in Table 2.6: there is a 63 percentage point difference in overall participation between adults with a Level 5 qualification and those with none. This gap widened in 2010 as the decline in participation fell more dramatically among learners with lower level qualifications.

The groups that clearly stand out in Table 2.6 are those with no qualifications or with a Level 1 qualification only. Participation levels for these groups trail significantly even when compared with their immediate neighbours (those with a Level 2 qualification). This reinforces the importance of getting those with no qualification engaged in learning and getting those with low level qualifications to consider progressing to higher levels. The findings also indicate a need to raise awareness of different ways of learning among those with low level qualifications.

[18] This category includes those in full-time education, on a Government or Learning and Skills Council programme, and doing voluntary work.

Table 2.6 Percentage of highest qualification groups reporting different types of learning

	Level 5	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1	No quals	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Any learning	90	81	73	73	55	27	69
Formal learning	31	29	27	30	16	8	24
Non-formal learning	59	48	40	39	32	12	39
Informal learning	77	60	46	39	25	12	43
Vocational learning	89	77	67	68	49	20	64
Non-vocational learning	17	19	13	12	11	8	14
Weighted base	*299*	*1147*	*581*	*657*	*917*	*326*	*3942*
Unweighted base	*289*	*1096*	*544*	*614*	*883*	*361*	*3806*

Base: All respondents aged 16-69 who had been in continuous full-time education but were not currently in continuous full-time education.

The levels of qualifications in the above table can be interpreted as follows: Level 5 = Higher Degree; Level 4 = first degree or equivalent; Level 3 = 2 A levels, or NVQ 3 or equivalent; Level 2 = 5 GCSEs Grade A-C or NVQ2 or equivalent, Level 1 = qualifications at a lower level.

As can be seen from Table 2.7, learning has dropped significantly among those holding qualifications at all levels since NALS 2005. The lower the level of qualification held the greater the decrease in participation between 2005 and 2010.

Table 2.7 Percentage of highest qualification groups reporting learning over time

	Level 5	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1	No quals	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Learners 2010	90	81	73	73	55	27	69
Weighted base (2010)	*299*	*1147*	*581*	*657*	*917*	*326*	*3942*
Unweighted base (2010)	*289*	*1096*	*544*	*614*	*883*	*361*	*3806*
Learners 2005	97	92	88	84	69	46	80
Weighted base (2005)	*243*	*1080*	*582*	*542*	*1084*	*326*	*3856*
Unweighted base (2005)	*218*	*899*	*493*	*461*	*950*	*310*	*3331*

Base: All respondents aged 16-69 who had been in continuous full-time education but were not currently in continuous full-time education.

Age when left continuous full-time education (FTE)

There is a clear link between participation in learning and time spent in full-time education (FTE), particularly for non-formal, informal and vocational and non-vocational learning (Table 2.8): respondents who reported leaving FTE aged 16 years or younger are significantly less likely than those remaining in FTE beyond this age to have taken part in these types of learning.

Table 2.8 Percentages of respondents leaving continuous full-time education at different ages reporting different types of learning

	16 or younger	17-18	19-20	21 or older	Total
	%	%	%	%	%
Any learning	61	74	77	84	69
Formal learning	22	28	30	25	24
Non-formal learning	34	43	40	54	39
Informal learning	33	44	53	68	43
Vocational learning	56	68	71	80	64
Non-vocational learning	12	13	15	21	14
Weighted base	*1768*	*881*	*328*	*753*	*3942*
Unweighted base	*1770*	*817*	*293*	*714*	*3806*

Base: All respondents aged 16-69 who have been in continuous full-time education.

The decline in overall participation in learning between 2005 and 2010 has affected all groups equally meaning that the gap in participation between different groups has remained constant (Table 2.9). As can be seen, the decline in participation recorded in NALS 2010 follows a prolonged period of stability during which the participation rate among different age groups remained fairly constant (there is a spike in the trend in 2005 when the participation rate increased by six percentage points among those leaving full-time education at 16 or earlier; this has since been reversed and participation among this group, as with all other age groups, is now at the lowest level recorded by NALS).

Table 2.9 Percentages of respondents leaving continuous full-time education at different ages reporting some learning

	16 or younger	17-18	19-20	21 or older	*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*
	%	%	%	%	*%*	*%*
NALS 1997	64	84	86	93	*5245*	*5386*
NALS 2001	65	85	88	93	*5490*	*5519*
NALS 2002	66	85	87	93	*5633*	*5708*
NALS 2005	72	85	88	94	*3800*	*3285*
NALS 2010	61	74	77	84	*3942*	*3806*

Base: All respondents aged 16-69 who have been in continuous full-time education.

Parental Education

The link between participation in learning and parental education reported in previous NALS is also evident in NALS 2010 (Table 2.10). People whose parents remained in continuous FTE beyond the age of 16 (regardless of whether or not one or more parents hold a degree) are more likely to follow the same path (i.e. they themselves are more likely to remain in FTE and, consequently, acquire higher level qualifications). This pattern is observed in almost all forms of learning including informal learning, though the clearest link is observed for vocational learning. This is because those with at least one parent in FTE beyond the age of 16 are more likely than average to have higher level qualifications and to be in employment where there are greater opportunities for vocational learning. Linked

to this, they are also more likely to place greater value on the wider benefits of learning and to have a greater awareness of different learning opportunities.

Table 2.10 Percentages reporting different types of learning according to highest level of parental education

	Neither parent stayed at school after 16	At least 1 parent at sch 16+, neither have degree	At least 1 parent at sch 16+ and has degree	Total
	%	%	%	%
Any learning	65	81	84	69
Formal learning	22	28	35	24
Non-formal learning	37	50	50	39
Informal learning	39	55	59	43
Vocational learning	59	77	81	64
Non-vocational learning	13	18	19	14
Weighted base	*3042*	*309*	*523*	*3942*
Unweighted base	*2997*	*283*	*463*	*3806*

Base: All respondents aged 16-69 not in continuous full-time education.

2.2.3 Demographic characteristics

Learning participation varied with demographic characteristics in a similar way to previous NALS, though the gap in overall participation by gender and ethnicity reported in 2005 has been closed by a higher than average decline in participation among White men. Participation in formal learning is higher than average among respondents of Black ethnic origin (42% compared with 25% overall). Further analysis of ethnicity is not possible due to small base sizes.

2.2.3.1 Age

Participation in learning continues to decline with **age**: it is highest among those aged 16-29, falling slightly among 30-59 year olds and, thereafter, declining significantly among those aged 60 and over (Table 2.11). This pattern is broadly consistent across formal, non-formal and informal learning with one exception - 16-19 year olds are least likely to have taken part in informal learning. As would be expected, participation in vocational learning is particularly low among those aged 60 and over. However, this group is more likely than younger people to report taking part in non-vocational learning.

Table 2.11 Percentages of age groups reporting different types of learning								
	16-19	**20-29**	**30-39**	**40-49**	**50-59**	**60-69**	**70+**	**Total**
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Any learning	**79**	**77**	**73**	**72**	**69**	**48**	**24**	**62**
Formal learning	44	37	29	24	18	8	2	21
Non-formal learning	30	40	46	42	42	27	12	35
Informal learning	25	42	48	49	46	31	13	39
Vocational learning	72	73	70	69	65	36	10	56
Non-vocational learning	16	14	13	11	15	19	18	15
Weighted base	*126*	*710*	*804*	*906*	*726*	*669*	*705*	*4647*
Unweighted base	*61*	*566*	*769*	*895*	*747*	*768*	*841*	*4747*

Base: All respondents not in continuous full-time education.

There has been a fall in learning participation across almost all age groups with the exception of 16-19 year olds – the overall participation rate among this group is unchanged (Table 2.12). The decline is most noticeable among those aged 60 and over, reversing the significant rise in participation among this group observed between 2002 and 2005. This trend is partly due to an increase in the employment rate among those aged 60-69 which means less time available for learning (31% are in paid employment compared with 27% in 2005). The decline in 2010 has brought the participation rate among adults aged 60 and over back to pre-2005 levels.

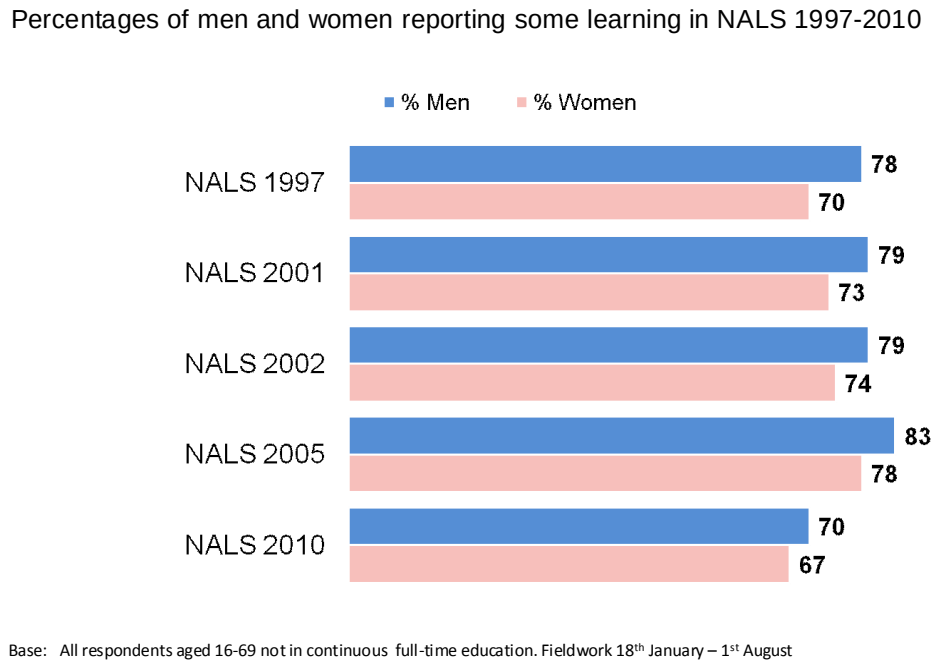
Table 2.12 Percentages of age groups reporting some learning – NALS 1997-2010									
	16-19	**20-29**	**30-39**	**40-49**	**50-59**	**60-69**	**70+**	***Weighted base***	***Unweighted base***
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%		
NALS 1997	82	85	82	78	67	47	NA	*5245*	*5386*
NALS 2001	76	86	83	80	74	49	25	*6451*	*6451*
NALS 2002	82	85	83	81	74	51	28	*6668*	*6668*
NALS 2005	80	89	84	84	77	64	38	*4543*	*3989*
NALS 2010	79	77	73	72	69	48	24	*4647*	*4647*

Base: All respondents aged 16-69 not in continuous full-time education.

2.2.3.2 Gender

The gap in participation between men and women has now narrowed to three percentage points, which is no longer statistically significant – a departure from previous NALS (Chart 2.3). However, gender difference persists for some types of learning: men are more likely than women to take part in informal (47% compared to 40%) and vocational learning (66% compared with 62% of women).

Chart 2.3 Trends in participation by gender



Base: All respondents aged 16-69 not in continuous full-time education. Fieldwork 18th January – 1st August

2.2.3.3 Disability

Approaching three in five adults with a work-limiting disability (that is, 'a health problem or disability that affects the kind of paid work or the amount of paid work a person may do') have taken part in learning in the past three years (57%) – well below the level for adults with other long-term disability and those with no disability. Interestingly, participation rates for these two latter groups are broadly similar for all types of learning measured by NALS (Table 2.13). By contrast, adults with a work-limiting disability are less likely to report taking part in **all** forms of learning – with the exception of formal learning, which shows no significant difference. They are also less likely than others groups to be in paid work, which would partly account for their lower participation in work-related learning.

Table 2.13 Percentages of respondents with and without a disability reporting different types of learning

	Work-limiting disability	Other long term disability	No disability	Total
	%	%	%	%
Any learning	57	70	71	69
Formal learning	22	24	25	24
Non-formal learning	28	37	42	39
Informal learning	34	42	46	43
Vocational learning	52	63	67	64
Non-vocational learning	13	18	14	14
Weighted base	*257*	*320*	*3170*	*3942*
Unweighted base	*279*	*332*	*2981*	*3806*

Base: All respondents aged 16-69 not in continuous full-time education.

The gap in learning participation between those with and without a disability has narrowed between 2005 and 2010. This is particularly evident for those with a **work-limiting disability** where the gap with non-disabled adults has narrowed from 22 percentage points in 2005 to 14 percentage points in 2010. The gap in vocational learning participation between those with a work-limiting disability and those with no disability has also reduced, from 27 percentage points in 2005 to 14 percentage points in 2010.

2.2.3.4 Caring responsibility

As would be expected, participation in learning is lower among adult carers (59% compared with 69% overall). This is evident across all learning types with the exception of formal learning where participation rates are comparable to those with no caring responsibilities (Table 2.14).

However, households with children under 16 are more likely to participate in formal learning than those without. A further distinction is observed between single and two parent households: couples with children under the age of 16 are more likely to have taken part in informal and non-vocational learning compared with lone parents because they are more able to share childcare responsibilities.

These trends are consistent with NALS 2005.

Table 2.14 Percentages of respondents with and without caring responsibilities reporting different types of learning

	Parent with partner	Lone par-ent	Single person	Part-ner no child-ren	Carer for sick/ Dis-abled*	Not a carer for sick/ disabled*	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Any learning	72	65	61	67	59	71	69
Formal learning	28	30	22	19	23	25	24
Non-formal learning	42	37	33	41	27	42	39
Informal learning	49	32	35	45	38	45	43
Vocational learning	69	59	54	62	52	66	64
Non-vocational learning	12	13	14	16	19	14	14
Weighted base	*1049*	*299*	*516*	*1533*	*265*	*3154*	*3942*
Unweighted base	*846*	*419*	*856*	*1306*	*230*	*2713*	*3806*

Base: All respondents aged 16-69 not in continuous full-time education.

2.2.4 Learning and ICT use

This section examines the behaviour of learners in relation to use of ICT for learning. As can be seen from Table 2.15 below, the number of respondents who have used ICT and who are current ICT users has continued to increase between 2005 and 2010. Nine in ten (90%) respondents say they have used a computer or the internet at some point, with a similar proportion saying that they are a current computer or internet user.

Table 2.15 Use of computers and the Internet NALS 2001-2010

	2001	2002	2005	2010
	%	%	%	%
Used computer/Internet	67	70	77	90
Never used computer/Internet	33	30	23	10
Current computer user*	55	59	70	88
Current Internet user*	44	51	66	87
Current computer and Internet user	43	50	65	88
Current computer user but not Internet	12	10	5	1
Current Internet user but not computer	2	2	2	1
Not current computer/Internet user	43	39	28	12
Weighted base	*6451*	*6668*	*4543*	*3942*
Unweighted base	*6451*	*6668*	*3989*	*3806*

Base: All respondents aged 16-69 not in continuous full-time education
*These two categories are not mutually exclusive.

There has been an increase in ICT use among all age groups between 2005 and 2010, to the extent that almost all adults aged 16 to 49 years are current ICT users. The pace of increase has been fastest among older users though reflecting this group's lower baseline.

Table 2.16 Current ICT users according to age NALS 2001-2010

	2001	2002	2005	2010
	%	%	%	%
16-19 years	75	74	92	100
29-29 years	78	81	92	98
30-39 years	73	79	89	96
40-49 years	71	78	83	93
50-59 years	61	66	74	88
60-69 years	29	31	52	73
70+ years	10	12	25	38
Weighted base				*4446*
Unweighted base				*4469*

Base: All respondents not in continuous full-time education. Base data from prior to 2010 unavailable.

There is also a clear link between qualification levels held by respondents and current use of ICT, with those qualified to a higher level more likely to be current ICT users. The gap in ICT use between those with no qualifications and those with Level 5 qualifications has narrowed substantially over time though it remains significant (a 42 percentage point gap in current ICT use). Indeed, between 2005 and 2010, the most significant increase in ICT use has been among those least qualified (Level 1 and below) though this is, in part, due to the lower baseline for these groups. There remains considerable scope for greater use of ICT among those with no qualifications.

Table 2.17 Current ICT users according to highest qualification NALS 2001-2010

	2001	2002	2005	2010
	%	%	%	%
No qualifications	9	13	27	58
Level 1	44	49	63	87
Level 2	71	76	80	94
Level 3	64	71	80	92
Level 4	79	85	90	98
Level 5	93	94	92	100
Weighted base				*3942*
Unweighted base				*3806*

Base: All respondents aged 16-69 not in continuous full-time education. Base data from prior to 2010 unavailable.

The levels of qualifications in the above table can be interpreted as follows: Level 5 = Higher Degree; Level 4 = first degree or equivalent; Level 3 = 2 A levels, or NVQ 3 or equivalent; Level 2 = 5 GCSEs Grade A-C or NVQ2 or equivalent, Level 1 = qualifications at a lower level

Respondents from the least deprived (1st) quintile are more likely to be current ICT users than those from the most deprived (5th) quintile. However, the 12 percentage point difference between the 1st and 5th quintiles shows that IMD quintiles have a much less significant impact on ICT usage than level of qualification.

Again the 2010 survey sees an increase in ICT usage across all IMD quintiles.

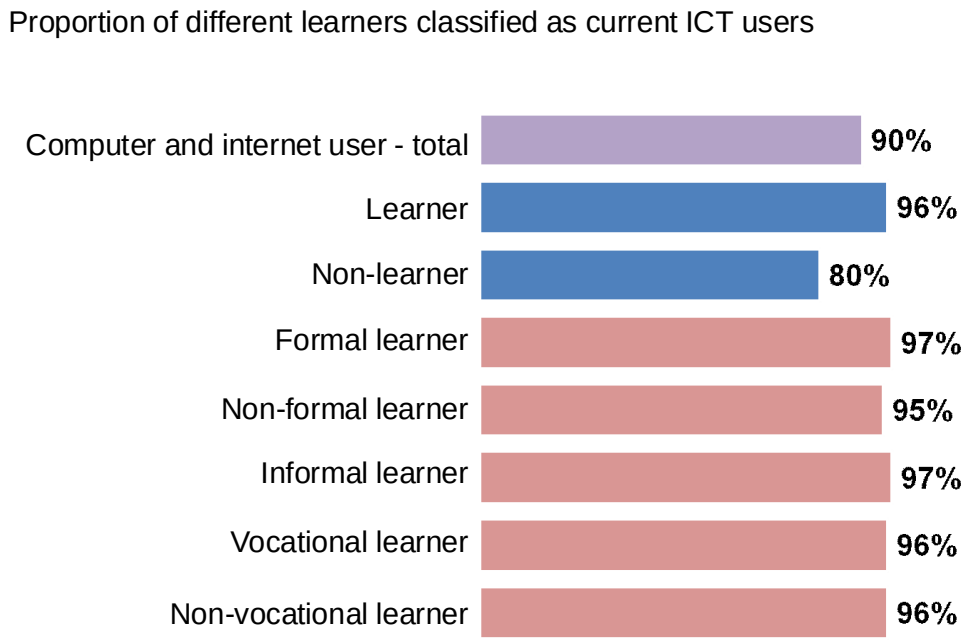
Table 2.18 Current ICT users according to Index of Multiple Deprivation quintiles NALS 2001-2010

	2001	2002	2005	2010
	%	%	%	%
1st quintile (least deprived)	64	69	80	96
2nd quintile	62	65	76	93
3rd quintile	54	62	70	90
4th quintile	55	57	70	88
5th quintile (most deprived)	45	52	66	84
Weighted base				*3942*
Unweighted base				*3806*

Base: All respondents aged 16-69 not in continuous full-time education. Base data from prior to 2010 unavailable.

The link between highest qualifications and current ICT use is further reinforced when looking at recent engagement in learning activities: almost all of those who have participated in learning in the past three years say they are current ICT users compared with 80% of non-learners. There are no significant differences in ICT use by learning type indicating that it is learning per se that is key to encouraging greater use of ICT.

Chart 2.4 Proportion of different learners classified as current ICT users



Base: All respondents aged 16-69 not in continuous full-time education (3,632), fieldwork 18th January – 1st August

2.3 Conclusions

NALS 2010 has recorded a steep decline in non-formal and informal learning compared with previous NALS. Participation in formal learning is unchanged.

The decline in non-formal learning coincides with the shift in public funding away from short courses in favour of longer courses leading to nationally recognised qualifications. At the same time, there is also evidence that employers are training fewer employees

The relationship between individual characteristics and participation in learning shows similar patterns to that reported in previous NALS surveys. For example, participation in learning continues to be positively linked to household income. Educational background remains a good predictor of learning participation: those with higher qualifications are more likely to participate. Furthermore, those with at least one parent in FTE beyond the age of 16 are more likely to continue in full-time education and to acquire higher level qualifications. Learners are most likely to be young, without a work-limiting disability and/or without caring responsibilities. The gap in participation by gender and ethnicity reported in 2005 has been reduced by a larger than average decline in participation among White men.

The use of ICT has continued to increase across all groups of respondents though the pace of change has been most positive among those least qualified (Level 1 or below), reflecting these groups' lower baseline. This has led to a narrowing of the gap in ICT use between the most and least qualified though there remains significant scope for further increase in ICT use among the latter.

3. What are people learning?

This chapter examines the courses that respondents have been studying (formal, non-formal and informal) including subjects and qualifications studied as well as the cost and time commitment required. It also considers the outcomes of different courses for respondents, looking at both employment outcomes and wider outcomes of the learning.

3.1 Formal and non-formal learning

This section examines participation in formal and non-formal courses which includes those leading to a qualification as well as those that do not. Where relevant, findings from NALS 2005 are included to provide context. It is important to note that the results presented in this chapter for NALS 2005 and 2010 are not directly comparable because they are based on different timeframes and course selection criteria: the findings for NALS 2005 were based on the most important course (as defined by the respondent) in the past year whilst the findings for NALS 2010 are based on two courses (selected at random) undertaken in the past three years.

3.1.1 Qualifications and Subjects

In the three years prior to NALS 2010, learners undertook an average of 2.06 courses, with almost half (47%) saying that they had studied at least two courses (a similar percentage (49%) undertook a single course). In NALS 2005, learners undertook an average of 1.90 courses in the past year.

From this point onwards section 3.1 discusses the findings for the selected learning activities, and the data is based on the answers given for the courses studied, rather than at a respondent level. The sections prior to 3.1, and from 3.2 onwards analyse the findings by respondent.

Qualifications

Two in five courses (41%) reported in NALS 2010 were undertaken with the intent to obtain a qualification: 18% of these were FE courses, 15% Train to Gain and three per cent were Apprenticeships. Two in five courses were guided on-the-job training (39%) and the remaining 20% of courses neither led to a qualification nor were on-the-job training.

The most common qualification was NVQ or equivalent (20%), specifically at Level 2 (43% of NVQ courses were at this level). As would be expected, a higher than average percentage of Train to Gain courses studied led to an NVQ (26%). The second most commonly reported qualifications were key or basic skills, making up 10% of courses leading towards a qualification and rising to 14% of Train to Gain courses. A fifth (21%) of courses was described as ‘other vocational professional courses’, and a quarter (26%) among those courses described neither as TTG or FE courses.

Table 3.1 Qualifications studied

	FE	TTG	Other formal	Total formal[19]
	%	%	%	%
Key/basic skills qualification	7	15	11	11
GCSE	7	2	2	3
Diploma in HE	7	6	2	4
Degree	5	1	6	5
Higher degree	3	1	6	4
Nursing or other medical qualification	2	4	4	4
Other teaching qualification	5	3	3	3
Other academic professional qualification	3	2	5	4
City and Guilds	8	7	4	5
NVQ	15	26	20	20
Other vocational professional qualification	8	18	26	21
Other	31	14	12	16
Weighted base	*301*	*229*	*859*	*1389*
Unweighted base	*280*	*194*	*787*	*1261*

Base: All courses that led to a qualification.
'Other' refers to all of the qualifications listed on the show card as possible answers, but selected by fewer than 30 respondents. The full list of answer options for this question can been found in the questionnaire appendix.

Subjects

The broad subjects of the courses undertaken are similar to those reported in NALS 2005. Academic and job-related courses are most favoured by adults undertaking formal and non-formal learning (43% of courses studied overall) followed by leisure-related and life skills courses (28% of courses studied). As would be expected, academic and work-related subjects are more commonly reported by learners undertaking FE courses.

However, participation in ICT related courses has reduced since NALS 2005. Mathematical and computer Science participation is 3% (7% in NALS 2005) and Computer Use participation is 5% (9% in NALS 2005).

[19] Total formal learning is s combination of FE, TTG and Other formal courses.

Table 3.2 Subjects studied

	FE	TTG	Other formal	Total formal	On-the-job	Other non-formal	Total formal plus total non-formal
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Academic and work-related subjects (net)	**75**	**59**	**65**	**65**	**63**	**52**	**61**
Business and administrative studies	9	5	6	7	14	9	10
Education & teacher training	12	5	6	7	10	4	7
Engineering	2	8	5	5	5	2	4
Modern languages and literature	7	1	4	4	*	6	3
Creative arts and design	9	2	2	4	1	5	3
Mathematical and computer sciences	6	4	5	5	2	4	3
Medicine and dentistry	3	4	4	4	3	2	3
Social studies	5	6	3	4	2	2	3
Architecture, building and planning	2	2	3	3	2	1	2
Physical sciences	2	4	2	2	1	*	1
Mass communication & documentation	*	1	1	1	1	1	1
Law	*	1	2	2	2	1	1
Other subjects allied to medicine	4	2	3	3	4	3	3
Other academic subject	-	*	*	*	1	-	1
Other specifically work-related subject	8	12	15	13	16	10	13
Other academic or work related subjects	4	*	2	2	1	3	2

Table 3.2 Subjects studied (cont.)

	FE	TTG	Other formal	Total formal	On-the-job	Other non-formal	Total formal plus total non-formal
Leisure & life skills subjects (net)	**29**	**33**	**34**	**33**	**30**	**47**	**36**
Health & well-being	3	10	8	7	7	5	7
Computer use	4	4	4	4	5	5	5
First aid	-	3	3	2	3	5	3
Sport/physical activity	1	1	2	1	*	8	3
Food & cookery	4	5	3	3	3	2	3
Self-development	1	1	1	1	3	5	3
Number skills	3	1	1	2	*	*	1
English language/creative writing skills	2	1	2	2	*	1	1
Handicrafts, art and culture	1	-	-	*	*	2	1
Music, drama & performing arts	1	-	*	*	-	3	1
Other leisure or life skills subject	9	6	11	10	9	10	10
Other	1	3	1	2	3	2	2
Weighted base	*299*	*222*	*854*	*1376*	*1754*	*1320*	*4449*
Unweighted base	*279*	*192*	*781*	*1252*	*1657*	*1278*	*4187*

Base: All respondents who have done any formal or non-formal learning
NB responses sum to more than 100 due to back coding of multi coded Other responses

3.1.2 Course funding

A quarter of formal or non-formal courses studied in the three years prior to the survey were paid for in full by learners or their families (this excludes on-the-job training which was paid for by the employer). This is similar to NALS 2005 where 29% paid fees. An additional one percent of courses were paid for by both the respondent and the employer. Employers are the largest contributor of fees - 41% of courses were reported to have been paid fully by the employer, rising to 52% of Train to Gain courses. Employers were least likely to fund courses studied at a Further Education college.

A third of courses had no fees to pay.

Table 3.3 Employer and respondent contributions to fees

	FE	TTG	Other formal	Total formal	Other Non-formal (i.e. excluding On-the-Job Training)	Total formal plus Other non-formal
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Employer paid all fees	26	52	49	44	37	41
Employer and respondent paid fees	2	1	1	1	*	1
Respondent paid all fees	27	11	19	19	32	25
No fees to pay	45	36	31	35	31	34
Weighted base	*271*	*191*	*740*	*1202*	*947*	*2149*
Unweighted base	*256*	*165*	*690*	*1111*	*918*	*2029*

Base: All courses that led to a qualification. (excluding those on-the-job courses)

For courses where respondents contributed towards the course fees the average amount that respondents paid for formal or non-formal courses in the past three years was £1,023. These figures are not comparable as the two surveys used different reference periods and methods for course selection. Course fees were highest for 'other formal' courses (excluding TTG and FE college courses) – an average of £2,038 in the past three years. In contrast, course fees for non-formal courses (excluding on-the-job training) were the least expensive. Although not directly comparable, there does seem to be a big increase in the amount of fees paid compared to NALS 2005 where the average amount paid was £588.

Table 3.4 Amount paid in course fees by respondent or the respondent's family/partner in the past 3 years (where respondent contributed towards the course fees)

	FE	TTG	Other formal	Total formal	Other Non-formal (i.e. excluding On-the-Job Training)	Total formal plus Other non-formal
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Under £1	8	-	2	4	1	2
£1 - £100	22	8	12	15	36	26
£101 - £500	38	53	35	37	42	40
£501 - £1000	6	27	16	14	10	12
More than £1000	26	11	36	31	10	20
Mean	£1,202	£809	£2,038	£1,683	£468	£1,023
Median	£230	£350	£550	£450	£150	£250
Weighted	*72*	*20*	*147*	*239*	*284*	*522*
Unweighted	*72*	*16*	*148*	*236*	*300*	*536*

Base: All courses that led to a qualification. (excluding those on-the-job courses)

In addition to course fees, for around a fifth (21%) of courses in the past three years the cost of books and equipment was met by learners similar to 21% in NALS 2005. Book and equipment costs for courses in NALS 2010 were met in full by the employer for a similar proportion (23%).

Over half of Train-to-Gain courses (56%) involved nothing to pay for books and equipment, rising to 62% of 'other non-formal' courses. Employers were least like to pay costs associated with a course undertaken at an FE college.

Table 3.5 Employers' and learners' contributions to the cost of equipment and books

	FE	TTG	Other formal	Total formal	Other Non-formal (i.e. excluding On-the-Job Training)	Total formal plus Other non-formal
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Employer paid all costs	14	29	31	27	19	23
Employer and respondent paid costs	-	-	*	*	*	*
Respondent paid all costs	35	15	20	23	18	21
No costs to pay	51	56	49	51	62	56
Weighted	*271*	*193*	*742*	*1207*	*942*	*1249*
Unweighted	*255*	*167*	*689*	*1111*	*914*	*2025*

Base: All courses that led to a qualification. (excluding those on-the-job courses)

Learners with higher prior qualifications (at least a Level 4 or equivalent) were more likely to have paid all costs associated with equipment and books (24% compared with 13% of learners qualified to Level 1 or below). All costs for these courses were also more likely to be met by employers (25% for those qualified at Level 4 or above compared with 17% of those qualified to Level 1 or below). Correspondingly, courses studied by those in managerial and professional occupations, as well as those working in personal services were more likely than average to involve an employer covering the full cost of equipments and books.

For learners who contributed towards the cost of books and equipment the average amount spent in the past three years was £236. In NALS 2005, the average amount spent by learners in the past year was £106.

Other formal courses (i.e. not at an FE college or through a Train to Gain programme) required the most spend on average (£339) whilst those on a Train to Gain course paid the least (an average of £58).

Table 3.6 Amount paid for books and equipment by respondent or the respondent's family/partner in the past 3 years (where respondent contributed towards the cost)

	FE	TTG	Other formal	Total formal	Other Non-formal (i.e. excluding On-the-Job Training)	Total formal plus Other non-formal
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Under £1	5	5	13	10	10	10
£1 - £100	68	84	45	56	67	60
£101 - £500	22	11	30	26	19	23
£501 - £1000	3	-	4	3	*	2
More than £1000	2	-	8	6	4	5
Mean	£160	£58	£339	£257	£204	£236
Median	£70	£40	£100	£70	£30	£50
Weighted	*79*	*24*	*153*	*257*	*167*	*423*
Unweighted	*79*	*22*	*148*	*249*	*167*	*416*

Base: All courses that led to a qualification. (excluding those on-the-job courses)

3.1.3 Time spent on courses

The average number of teaching or tuition hours received over the *past three years* for formal or non-formal courses was 143 hours per course. As would be expected, there is significant variation between formal and non-formal courses with formal courses receiving, on average, more teaching and tuition. The amount of tuition time received is also related to age, with the formal learning courses being dominated by younger learners. For example, learners aged 16-17 years received an average 278 teaching or tuition hours over the past three years compared with an average of 200 hours received by all learners.

In NALS 2005, the average time spent on the main course in the past year was 80 hours.

Table 3.7 Hours of teaching or tuition received in formal and non-formal courses over the past 3 years

	FE	TTG	Other formal	Total formal	On-the-job	Other Non-formal (i.e. excluding On-the-Job Training)	Total formal plus non-formal
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1 to less than 6 hours	*	4	5	4	19	11	11
6 to less than 10 hours	2	6	10	7	27	19	18
10 to less than 20 hours	9	10	11	10	18	17	15
20 to less than 30 hours	6	8	11	9	10	13	10
30 to less than 40 hours	4	13	9	8	5	9	7
40 to less than 50 hours	6	7	8	8	4	10	7
50 to less than 60 hours	3	3	2	2	2	2	2
60 to less than 70 hours	4	5	2	3	1	3	2
70 or more hours	65	44	44	49	14	17	28
Mean	274	289	254	264	53	93	143
Median	108	52	40	60	12	20	24
Weighted base	*254*	*174*	*645*	*1073*	*967*	*882*	*2921*
Unweighted base	*240*	*151*	*594*	*965*	*891*	*860*	*2716*

Base: All courses that led to a qualification where respondents have received at least one hour of tuition

Perhaps as to be expected, those who say that they have returned to full-time education, after a break of two years or more, cite longer teaching hours per course over the past three years than those who have not returned to full-time education (210 hours compared to 129 hours respectively).

The average number of self-study hours spent over the past three years was 200[20] though it is significantly lower for non-formal learning (excluding on-the-job learning) and Train to Gain courses. In NALS 2005, an average of 78 hours of self-study time was spent in the past year.

[20] These figures are not directly comparable with NALS 2005 as the reference period for NALS 2010 is the number of hours spent in the past three years so as to include long courses. NALS 2005 asked about number of hours spent in the last year only so undercounts time spent on longer courses.

Table 3.8 Hours of self-study for formal and non-formal courses over the past 3 years

	FE	TTG	Other formal	Total formal	Other Non-formal (i.e. excluding On-the-Job Training)	Total formal plus non-formal
	%	%	%	%	%	%
No self-study or homework*	11	24	23	20	45	31
1 to less than 6 hours	5	8	11	9	16	12
6 to less than 10 hours	3	8	5	5	5	5
10 to less than 20 hours	10	9	7	8	7	7
20 to less than 30 hours	9	8	5	7	6	6
30 to less than 40 hours	4	7	5	5	2	4
40 to less than 50 hours	3	7	4	4	4	4
50 to less than 60 hours	3	3	3	3	1	2
60 to less than 70 hours	3	2	2	2	2	2
70 or more hours	50	24	37	38	12	26
Mean (if self-studied)	254	83	309	259	93	200
Median (if self-studied)	80	32	56	56	18	37
Weighted base	*255*	*187*	*683*	*1126*	*900*	*2025*
Unweighted base	*243*	*159*	*629*	*1031*	*868*	*1899*

Base: All courses that led to a qualification.
*Not included in the mean and median calculations

Again, those who have returned to full-time education after a break of 2 or more years spend, on average, longer on self-study than the total (314 hours compared to 200 respectively). As do those who are already qualified to a higher level, with those who currently hold a Level 4 or 5 qualification, spending 243 hours per course on self-study on average compared to 94 hours from those who hold the equivalent of a Level 1 qualification or below.

Most courses lasted a month or less, with just over half (55%) of formal and non-formal courses being of this length. A further nine percent of courses lasted between 2 and 3 months. The average length of formal and non-formal courses was 7 months. Courses at FE colleges tended to be the longest, with an average length of 12 months and on-the-job training had the shortest duration, lasting on average just 5 months.

Table 3.9 Length of completed courses

	FE	TTG	Other formal	Total formal	On-the-job	Other Non-formal (i.e. excluding On-the-Job Training)	Total formal plus non-formal
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A month or less	9	34	32	27	77	53	55
2-3 months	11	19	10	11	5	12	9
4-5 months	15	8	10	11	2	5	6
6-9 months	30	16	15	18	3	8	9
10-12 months	12	8	10	10	5	7	7
13-18 months	10	5	8	7	3	4	5
19-24 months	8	6	8	8	1	3	4
More than 2 years	7	4	9	8	5	9	7
Mean	12	9	10	10	5	8	7
Weighted base	*303*	*227*	*845*	*1377*	*1775*	*1452*	*4605*
Unweighted base	*285*	*197*	*787*	*1269*	*1671*	*1449*	*4389*

Base: All courses that led to a qualification

Three in ten (31%) courses undertaken by learners in paid employment took place entirely during paid working hours, with a further one in ten (10%) courses within working hours and one in five (20%) taking place entirely outside of working hours. Two fifths (40%) of courses studied by those in paid work were on-the-job training.

Train to Gain courses were the most likely to take place entirely within working hours (66% compared with 31% overall). In contrast, FE courses were most likely to have taken place entirely in a learners' own time (49% compared with 20% overall).

Learners engaged in training that is related to their job were divided on whether they had a choice: 43% of courses was made compulsory by employers and a further 10% was made compulsory by some other person or organisation compared with 49% where participants had a choice.

3.1.4 Use of ICT

Nearly half (46%) of formal and non-formal courses involved the use of a computer and/or the internet (a decline from 62% in NALS 2005). A third (33%) used both; 10% used a computer only; and two percent used the internet only. Usage of the computer and the internet is higher among learners undertaking formal compared with non-formal courses. It is highest among those undertaking FE courses (61%).

Courses studied by younger learners were also more likely to have involved the use of both a computer and the internet for learning (55% of 16-19 year olds compared with 20% of 60-69 year olds).

Table 3.10 Computer usage

	FE	TTG	Other formal	Total formal	On-the-job	Other Non-formal (i.e. excluding On-the-Job Training)	Total formal plus non-formal
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, only internet	2	3	3	3	2	2	2
Yes, only a computer	8	10	8	8	14	8	10
Yes, both	61	45	51	52	21	23	33
No	29	42	38	37	63	67	54
Weighted	*273*	*193*	*745*	*1212*	*1033*	*952*	*3196*
Unweighted	*256*	*167*	*693*	*1116*	*953*	*923*	*2992*

Base: All courses that led to a qualification.

Of the courses, which involved a computer or the Internet, almost half (48%) required the use of a computer or internet to complete tests or assignments; this was most common among FE courses (64%). Around two fifths (42%) required the technology to download course materials and 28% to complete final assessments (this practise is more widespread among formal courses).

Table 3.11 What computers have been used for

	FE	TTG	Other formal	Total formal	On-the-job	Other Non-formal (i.e. excluding On-the-Job Training)	Total formal plus non-formal
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
To complete tests or assignments	64	63	61	62	36	37	48
To download course materials	45	36	52	48	33	44	42
To complete final assessments	39	44	39	39	14	24	28
To communicate with tutors	27	16	36	31	13	20	23
To use simulations	10	2	19	15	22	17	18
To view video or listen to audio	20	11	20	19	14	19	17
To work through a CD-ROM based course	14	13	19	17	15	15	16
To communicate with other students	20	6	24	21	8	13	15
To play games	1	-	2	1	2	1	1
None of these	12	7	6	7	21	16	14
Weighted base	*94*	*49*	*255*	*398*	*280*	*192*	*870*
Unweighted base	*90*	*41*	*242*	*373*	*254*	*189*	*816*

Base: All courses that led to a qualification.

3.1.5 Outcomes of formal and non-formal courses

Formal and non-formal courses involved a number of positive employment outcomes. Half (49%) led to respondents learning new skills relevant to their jobs, rising to 60% among Train to Gain courses. Approaching two in five (37%) courses helped to improve job performance; on-the-job training more likely to report this particular outcome (45%). A fifth (19%) involved greater job satisfaction and nine per cent higher salaries. Train to Gain courses were twice as likely on average to lead to a change to a different type of work as a

result of doing the training (12% compared with six per cent overall). FE courses, on the other hand, were twice as likely to lead to securing a job (12% compared with seven per cent overall).

Table 3.12 Employment outcomes for formal and non-formal courses

	FE	TTG	Other formal	Total formal	On-the-job	Other Non-formal (i.e. excluding On-the-Job Training)	Total formal plus non-formal
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Learned new skills for my job	33	60	50	48	56	41	49
Was able to do my job better	25	28	38	33	45	33	37
Got more satisfaction out of the work I was doing	16	23	24	22	19	15	19
Earn more money	7	15	19	16	5	7	9
Got a new job	12	11	11	11	4	4	7
Stayed in my job, which I might have lost	5	3	7	6	8	5	6
Changed to a different type of work	7	12	9	9	5	5	6
Got a promotion	2	9	9	8	4	1	4
Set up my own/family business	2	5	2	2	*	2	2
Was able to deal with work problems related to my health/disability	2	2	3	3	3	2	2
None of the above	39	20	24	26	17	39	27
Weighted base	*188*	*157*	*515*	*859*	*882*	*769*	*2510*
Unweighted base	*174*	*137*	*480*	*791*	*816*	*734*	*2341*

Base: All courses that led to a qualification.

Courses studied by younger respondents were more likely to lead to a new job (31% of 16-19 year olds and 13% of 20-29 year olds compared with seven percent overall). Whereas courses studied by older respondents were more likely to lead to more job satisfaction (23% of 40-59 year olds compared to 19% of the total).

Looking at the wider outcomes of learning, two thirds (64%) of courses taught learners new skills, with the same proportion improving knowledge and skills in the subject studied. This is similar across all types of courses studied. Over half (54%) provided learning that was interesting to respondents. Less than one in twenty (4%) left participants feeling that they had not gained any of the wider outcomes from their learning.

Table 3.13 Wider outcomes for formal and non-formal courses

	FE	TTG	Other formal	Total formal	On-the-job	Other Non-formal (i.e. excluding On-the-Job Training)	Total formal plus non-formal
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Taught me new skills	64	63	64	64	62	66	64
Improved my knowledge/skills in the subject	63	64	69	67	61	64	64
Was interesting	54	50	58	55	50	58	54
Was enjoyable	39	28	39	37	28	42	35
Boosted my confidence	39	34	37	37	29	31	32
Meant I made new friends/met new people	41	18	25	27	15	23	22
Increased my self-esteem	29	20	22	23	15	16	18
Encouraged me to do more learning	27	18	29	27	12	17	18
Helped me to do something useful in my spare time	14	4	9	9	3	15	9
Helped me to keep my body active	4	3	5	4	3	7	5
Encouraged me to take part in voluntary or community activities	4	7	3	4	1	5	3
Enabled me to help my child(ren) with their homework	9	3	3	5	1	3	3
Helped with my health problems/disability	4	*	2	2	2	2	2
None of the above	4	4	4	4	5	4	4
Weighted base	*188*	*157*	*515*	*859*	*882*	*769*	*2510*
Unweighted base	*174*	*137*	*480*	*791*	*816*	*734*	*2341*

Base: All courses that led to a qualification.

3.1.6 Information, advice and guidance for formal and non-formal courses

Employers were the most commonly cited sources of information, advice and guidance (IAG) for formal and non-formal courses, followed by friends, relatives and work colleagues.

Two fifths of courses involved the receipt of IAG from employers prior to starting; the figure is considerably higher among Train to Gain courses.

Friends, relatives and work colleagues were consulted for a fifth of courses and 23% of FE courses involved the receipt of IAG from an FE college. Courses studied by learners who left continuous FTE aged 21 or older and those with at least a Level 5 qualification are more likely than average to have involved IAG sought from friends, relatives or colleagues.

Just over a fifth (22%) of courses did not involve the receipt of any IAG prior to starting their course. Non-formal courses (excluding on-the-job training) were most likely to involve no IAG prior to their start (27% compared with 22% overall).

Table 3.14 Sources of IAG that were received for formal and non-formal courses

	FE	TTG	Other formal	Total formal	On-the-job	Other Non-formal (i.e. excluding On-the-Job Training)	Total formal plus non-formal
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
My employer	20	47	34	33	60	27	40
Friends, relatives of work colleagues	22	18	26	24	15	22	20
FE college	23	9	7	11	1	2	5
Other website or internet	8	6	7	7	1	6	5
School	7	3	4	5	3	3	4
University	8	2	11	9	1	2	4
Adult education or evening institute	3	2	2	2	*	4	2
Govt dept or Directgov website	1	2	3	2	2	2	2
Community, voluntary or religious organisation	1	1	2	1	*	3	2
New Deal or JSA advisor	1	5	2	2	*	1	1

Table 3.14 Sources of IAG that were received for formal and non-formal courses (cont.)

	FE	TTG	Other formal	Total formal	On-the-job	Other Non-formal (i.e. excluding On-the-Job Training)	Total formal plus non-formal
TV/radio/newspapers/ magazines/yellow pages	1	*	1	1	*	3	1
Leaflets through letterbox	3	1	1	1	1	2	1
Other person or organisation	*	1	2	1	1	2	1
No information, advice or guidance received	26	12	17	18	22	27	22
Weighted base	*272*	*193*	*745*	*1210*	*1024*	*949*	*3184*
Unweighted base	*255*	*167*	*693*	*1115*	*947*	*920*	*2982*

Base: All courses that led to a qualification

3.2 Informal learning

This section focuses on informal learning which is learning involving self-study to improve knowledge or skills on a subject. NALS recognises two types of informal learning:

- **Professional development**. This is informal learning for the purpose of keeping abreast with developments related to a job e.g. by reading books, manuals and journals and by attending seminars.

- - **"Other" informal learning**. This is deliberately trying to improve one's knowledge about anything, or teaching oneself a skill without taking part on a taught course.

The analysis in section 3.2, and the remainder of the report is based on respondents rather than courses.

3.2.1 Professional development

A third (35%) of respondents aged 16-69 said they had undertaken professional development in the past 3 years. As would be expected, the majority of those who said they keep up-to-date with work developments are in employment (46% compared with 13% of those not in employment). Men and those aged 30 to 59 years are more likely than average to have kept up with work developments. The subjects undertaken are shown in table 3.15.

Table 3.15 Subject of Professional Development

	Work developments
	%
Academic and work-related subjects (net)	**87**
Business and administrative studies	17
Education & teacher training	11
Engineering	10
Mathematical and computer sciences	9
Creative arts and design	6
Medicine and dentistry	6
Law	6
Architecture, building and planning	5
Social studies	4
Physical sciences	3
Mass communication & documentation	3
Modern languages and literature	2
Biology and biochemistry	2
Veterinary science, agriculture and related subjects	2
Historical and philosophical studies	1
Ancient languages and linguistics	*
Leisure & life skills subjects (net)	**37**
Computer use	8
Health & well-being	6
Food & cookery	3
Music, drama & performing arts	2
Self-development	2
Sport/physical activity	2
Nature/environment	2
Technology and broadcasting	2
First aid	2
Gardening/garden design	1
English language/creative writing skills	1
Local history, heritage and genealogy	1
Handicrafts, arts and culture	1
Photography	1
Languages and travel	1
Basic reading and writing skills	1
Number skills	1
Other subjects allied to medicine	4
Other academic subject	1
Other specifically work-related subject	10
Other leisure or life skills subject	5
Weighted base	*1370*
Unweighted base	*1272*

Base: All respondents aged 16-69, not in CFTE, who have kept up to date with work developments in the type of work they do without taking part in a taught course in the past three years.
NB responses sum to more than 100 due to back coding of multi coded Other responses

Nearly nine in ten (87%) were undertaking learning in academic and work-related subjects – the most commonly cited subjects were business and administrative studies, engineering and mathematics. Overall, the subjects undertaken by learners engaged in professional development are similar to those chosen by learners doing formal and non-formal courses.

3.2.2 "Other" informal learning

A fifth (20%) of respondents aged 16-69 said they had undertaken 'other informal learning' (i.e. self-study that is **not** related to professional development such as keeping abreast with development related to a job) in the past 3 years.

Respondents were asked about the amount of time they had spent on 'other informal learning'. The large majority of informal learners (85%) spent more than 10 hours on their learning in total. Just one in seven (15%) reported spending less than 10 hours. Those in full-time employment were more likely than those working part-time to spend more than 10 hours. Retirees were most likely to report spending more than 10 hours (93%) whilst those looking after a family were least likely (72%).

Men were more likely than women to say that they spent over 10 hours on 'other informal learning', whilst those with a work-limiting disability were also more likely than those without (including people with a disability) to report devoting more time to informal learning.

3.2.2.1 Subject

Half (49%) of 'other informal' courses was in academic and work-related subjects – the most commonly cited subjects within this category were creative art and design, mathematics, and business and administrative studies. The most commonly cited Leisure and Life Skills course subject was computer use (12%) (a decline from 16% in previous NALS). Learners undertaking 'other informal' courses were more likely than those undertaking informal professional development courses to cite leisure and life skills subjects (43%).

Table 3.16 Subject of informal learning

	Other informal learning
	%
Academic and work-related subjects (net)	**49**
Creative arts and design	7
Mathematical and computer sciences	7
Business and administrative studies	7
Modern languages and literature	5
Engineering	5
Historical and philosophical studies	4
Social studies	3
Architecture, building and planning	2
Education & teacher training	2
Law	2
Veterinary sciences, agriculture and related subjects	2
Physical sciences	1
Biology and Biochemistry	1
Medicine and dentistry	1
Mass communication & documentation	*
Ancient Languages and linguistics	*
Leisure & life skills subjects (net)	**43**
Computer use	12
Music, drama & performing arts	6

Table 3.16 Subject of informal learning (cont.)

	Other informal learning
	%
Self-development	4
Gardening/garden design	3
Sport/physical activity	3
Food & cookery	2
Health & well-being	2
English language/creative writing skills	2
Local history, heritage and genealogy	2
Handicrafts, arts and culture	2
Photography	2
Languages and travel	2
Nature/environment	1
Technology and broadcasting	1
Number skills	*
First aid	*
Other subjects allied to medicine (net)	1
Other academic subject (net)	*
Other specifically work-related subject (net)	3
Other leisure or life skills subject (net)	3
Weighted base	*766*
Unweighted base	*713*

Base: All respondents aged 16-69, not in CFTE, who have kept up-to-date with work developments in the type of work they do without taking part in a taught course in the past three years.
Results shown for responses with an unweighted base of 30 or greater.

3.2.2.2 Mode of learning

Four fifths (80%) of informal learners used printed materials such as books or magazines for their learning. Around two thirds (68%) used computers, and two fifths (41%) sought advice from a friend, family member or colleague.

Table 3.17 Mode of informal learning

	%
From printed material such as books or magazines	80
Using computers	68
From a friend, family member or colleague	41
Watching television, videos or DVDs or listening to the radio	30
Visiting learning centres (such as libraries)	14
Guided tours of museums or historical natural sights	8
As part of a self-organised learning group, for example a book club	8
Practise/hands on experience	5
Seminars/lectures/private lessons/meetings	2
Exhibitions/educational conferences	1
CDs/tapes	1
Speaking to people/specialists	1
On-the-job training	*
Other	1
None of these	2
Weighted base	*772*
Unweighted base	*717*

Base: All respondents aged 16-69, not in CFTE, who have kept up-to-date with work developments in the type of work they do without taking part in a taught course in the past three years.
Note: Only those subjects mentioned by 3% or more respondents are included in the table.

Older respondents were most likely to say they taught themselves through guided tours of museums and historical and natural sites, visiting learning centres or as part of a self-organised group. Men are significantly more likely than women to say that they learnt by using computers, through the television or radio, or from printed materials.

3.2.2.3 Use of ICT

Although 68% of informal learners said that their mode of learning involved a computer or the internet, 98% of all informal learners had used a computer to help them with their learning in some way. The most common reasons for using a computer were to find information on the internet (70%), followed by sending emails (38%) and finding photographs, videos or images on the internet (37%)..

Table 3.18 Computer usage of all "other" informal learners

	%
Find information on the internet	70
Send email to other people about the subject	38
Find photographs, videos or images on the internet	37
Using word processing, presentation or spreadsheet software	32
Use CD-ROMs or DVDs	24
Download audio or video	20
Visit chat rooms	11
Use simulations or games	8
Write blogs	6
Use software packages	1
Computer or internet used in other way for learning	3
Not used a computer for learning	2
Weighted base	*767*
Unweighted base	*711*

Base: All respondents aged 16-69, not in CFTE, who have kept up to date with work developments in the type of work they do without taking part in a taught course in the past three years.
Note: Only those subjects mentioned by 3% or more respondents are included in the table.

Respondents aged 60-69 were most likely to say that they had emailed other people about the subject (50% compared with 38% overall).

3.2.2.4 Whether other informal learning was work-related

Over two fifths (43%) of learners who had been employed in the past 3 years said that the informal learning they undertook was related to their current job. A fifth (22%) of those who were not in paid work or were not undertaking informal professional development learning said that the learning was to help them with a future job. Fifteen per cent of all informal learners said that the learning was intended to help them with voluntary work in the future.

Table 3.19 Whether informal learning related to work

	Related to current job	**Related to future job**	**Related to voluntary work**
	%	%	%
Yes	43	22	15
No	57	71	82
Maybe	N/A	7	*3*
Weighted	*644*	*467*	*769*
Unweighted	*578*	*448*	*715*

Base: Respondents aged 16-69 not in continuous full-time education who have engaged in informal learning over the past three years, col 1 those who have had paid employment in the past three years, col 2 those who were not in paid work and not undertaking job-related informal learning, col 3 all informal learners.

3.2.3 Learning outcomes

Three-quarters of learners undertaking job-related informal learning reported a positive employment-related outcome. Over half (53%) said that they had gained new skills relevant to their jobs and a similar proportion (52%) said the learning had helped improve their job performance. Three in ten (29%) reported greater job satisfaction. Overall the pattern of employment outcomes reported is similar to that for formal and non-formal learning.

A quarter of informal learners (undertaking job-related informal learning) did not realise any positive job-related outcomes from their learning.

Those with a higher household income (greater than £31,200) were more likely to report that they learnt new skills for their job or learnt how to do their job better, compared with those in households with an annual income of £10,399 or less. Those in lower income households (who were more likely to be out-of-work) were more likely to say that they got a new job as a result of their learning[21].

Table 3.20 Employment outcomes for informal learning

	%
Learned new skills for my job	53
Was able to do my job better	52
Got more satisfaction out of the work I was doing	29
Earn more money	13
Changed to a different type of work	12
Set up my own/family business	7
Got a new job	6
Got a promotion	6
Stayed in my job, which I might have lost without this learning	5
Was able to deal with work problems related to my health/disability	4
None of the above	26
Weighted base	*412*
Unweighted base	*370*

Base: All respondents whose self-taught learning was related to a current or future job

Informal learners also reported a range of non-job related positive outcomes: 75% said it improved their knowledge in the subject area and 71% said they learnt something interesting. Learning new skills was also mentioned by almost seven in ten (69%) and 59% said they found the learning enjoyable.

The pattern of wider outcomes is largely similar to those reported for formal and non-formal learning, albeit a small number of differences in terms of emphasis. For example, informal learners are more likely to report that the learning has helped them do something useful with their spare time (37% compared with nine per cent of formal and non-formal

[21] Please note: These figures are based on small base sizes and therefore results should be treated as indicative.

learners). Informal learners were also more likely to report feeling encouraged to do *more* learning (40% of informal learners compared with 18% of formal and non-formal learners). This indicates that informal learning is a good way of re-engaging those who are not accustomed to learning.

Table 3.21 Wider outcomes for informal learning

	%
Improved my knowledge/skills in the subject	75
Was interesting	71
Taught me new skills	69
Was enjoyable	59
Encouraged me to do more learning	40
Boosted my confidence	38
Helped me to do something useful with my spare time	37
Increased my self-esteem	26
Meant I made new friends/met new people	23
Helped me to keep my body active	10
Encouraged me to take part in voluntary or community activities	9
Enabled me to help my child(ren) with their homework	7
Helped me with my health problems/disability	6
None of the above	1
Weighted base	*773*
Unweighted base	*719*

Base: All respondents who have deliberately tried to improve their knowledge about anything, teach themselves a skill or study for a qualification without having taken part in a taught course in the past three years

Respondents who say they are incapable of doing paid work were most likely to report a boost in confidence. Similarly this group was much more likely to say that informal learning enabled them to do something useful with their time (79% compared with 37% overall) and that informal learning helped them to cope with their health problems or disability.

4. Future Learning

This chapter examines respondents' attitudes to learning and assesses the extent to which views have changed over time. It then looks at different typologies of learners to understand the value different groups place on learning - what motivates and deters them from undertaking further learning and the relative importance of these factors.

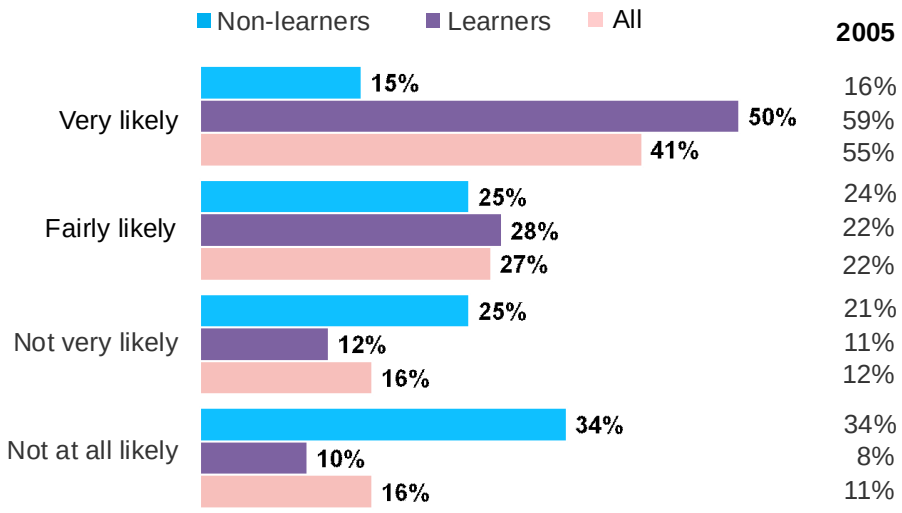
4.1 Future learning intentions

4.1.1 Job-related learning

Approaching seven in ten (68%) **economically active** adults said they are likely or very likely to do job-related learning (that is, learning related to a paid or voluntary job that they currently do or may do in the future) in the next two to three years including 41% who say they are very likely[22]. These figures compare unfavourably with those reported in NALS 2005 when three quarters (77%) said they were likely or very likely to do job-related learning. It is, however, consistent with the overall decline in learning participation.

Chart 4.1 Future likelihood of job-related learning by current learning status

How likely is it that you will do any job-related learning, training, or education in the next two or three years?



Base: All respondents who are under 70 and working/planning to work in the future, or over 70 and are economically active Fieldwork 18th January – 1st August

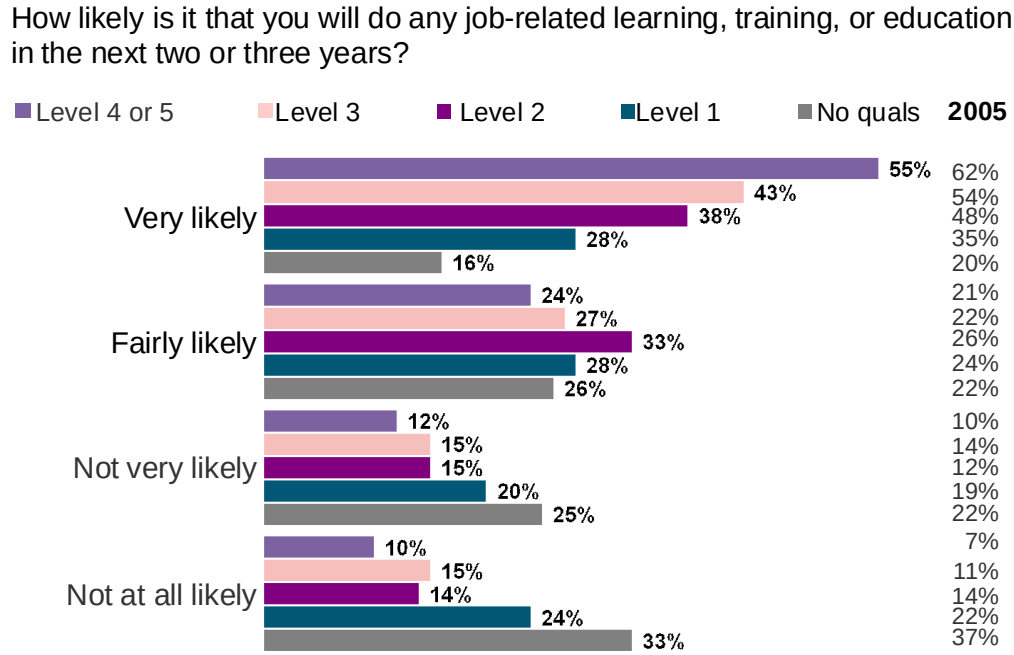
[22] This question is only asked of respondents aged 16-69 who are working/planning to work and people aged 70 or over who are economically active.

The most noticeable shift in views has been among learners: only half (50%) firmly believe that that they will do job-related learning compared with 59% in 2005. As would be expected, learners – particularly those who have taken part in learning in the past year, are more likely than non-learners to say they intend to do job-related learning in the next two to three years (50% of learners, rising to 60% of those who have undertaken learning in the past year, say they are very likely compared with 15% of non-learners). Learners are also more likely to be in paid employment and, therefore, have greater access to work-related learning opportunities. The proportion of non-learners who say they are very likely to do any job-related learning remains low (15%) and is unchanged from 2005.

A familiar pattern emerges when looking at future intentions by educational qualification: those with lower level or no qualifications (who are more likely to be non-learners) are least likely to say that they would take part in future job-related learning (Chart 4.2). However, firm intention to do learning in the future has fallen for all groups.

Whilst some of the differences in future intentions by qualifications are related to economic status (i.e. people with lower level qualifications are less likely to be in work), this alone does not explain the substantial differences. Other factors – people's attitudes towards learning and their awareness of, and ability to, seek learning opportunities are also important; these are explored in section 4.3.

Chart 4.2 Future likelihood of undertaking job-related learning by highest qualification level



Base: All respondents who are under 70 and working/planning to work in the future, or over 70 and are economically active (3,096) Fieldwork 18th January – 1st August

As observed in NALS 2005, individuals' likelihood of undertaking job-related learning declines with age: 83% of 16 to 19 year olds say they are 'fairly' or 'very' likely compared with 48% of those aged 50 and over. This is to be expected as job-related training tends

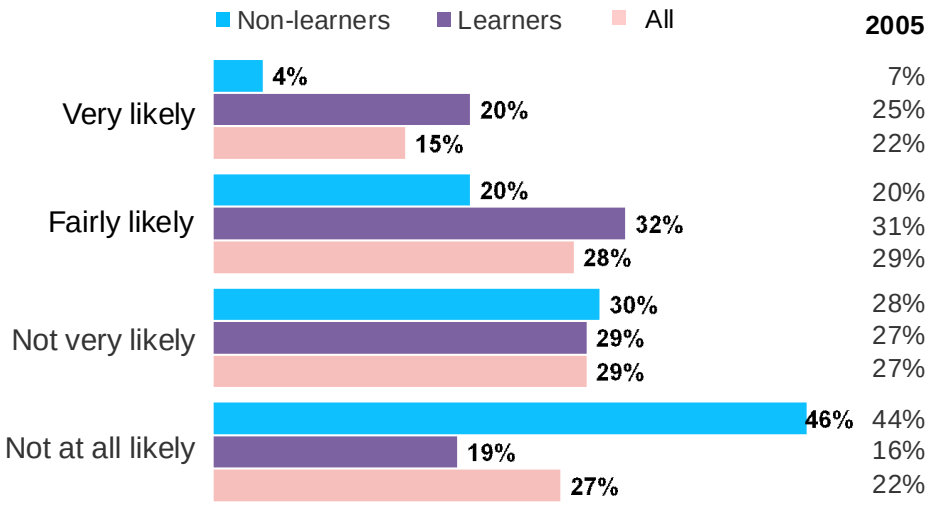
to be more common in the earlier years of people's careers. Those in full-time employment are more likely than part-time employees to say they would do job-related learning (73% compared with 63% of those in part-time employment), most probably because full-time employees have greater opportunities to do this type of training.

4.1.2 Non-vocational learning

All respondents were asked about their intention to undertake non job-related learning in the next two or three years. As in 2005, those expressing firm intentions are in the minority – 15% overall, rising to 20% of learners but accounting for just four percent of non-learners. Compared with 2005, there is less appetite for non job-related learning: 15% say they are very likely compared with 22% in 2005 (Chart 4.3).

Chart 4.3 Future likelihood of non-job-related learning by current learning status

How likely is it that you will do any **non** job-related learning, training, or education in the next two or three years?



Base: All respondents aged 16-69 not in continuous full-time education (3,665) Fieldwork 18th January – 1st August

The characteristics of respondents who are committed to non job-related learning are similar to those reported in NALS 2005: this group contains a higher than average percentage of women, adults aged 20-29, people with Black British ethnicity and those with Level 4 or 5 qualifications. By contrast, those least likely to do non job-related learning include: adults aged 60 and over and those with Level 1 or no qualifications. Among the latter group, there has been an increase in the numbers who report that they will not do non-job related learning in the future (from 31% in 2005 to 40% in 2010). This pattern is also evident among those with higher level qualifications and is consistent with the overall downward trend in informal learning discussed earlier in the report. The percentage of adults with Level 3 or Level 5 qualifications who are firmly committed to do

non-job related learning has fallen by 13 percentage points and 14 percentage points, respectively, since 2005[23].

Table 4.1 Percentages of respondents likely to do non-job related learning in the future by highest qualification

	Level 5	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1	No quals	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very likely	27	23	10	15	8	5	15
Fairly likely	33	32	28	31	23	17	28
Not very likely	29	26	33	29	33	29	29
Not at all likely	12	19	29	24	36	49	27
Weighted base	*293*	*1115*	*566*	*633*	*872*	*305*	*3799*
Unweighted base	*283*	*1062*	*528*	*593*	*843*	*338*	*3665*

Base: All respondents aged 16-69.

The levels of qualifications in the above table can be interpreted as follows: Level 5 = Higher Degree; Level 4 = first degree or equivalent; Level 3 = 2 A levels, or NVQ 3 or equivalent; Level 2 = 5 GCSEs Grade A-C or NVQ2 or equivalent, Level 1 = qualifications at a lower level.

4.1.3 Learning at FE institutions

Respondents expressing an interest in doing non job-related learning in the next two or three years were asked if they would do a course at an FE college. Over two in five (44%) say that they definitely intend to or are very likely or quite likely, and a further 26% think it is possible; there is no significant difference according to whether taught or self-learning was undertaken in the past 3 years. However, those with prior experience of studying at an FE college are more receptive to the idea – 57% compared with 44% overall. These findings are consistent with NALS 2005 (albeit with fewer saying they would do non job-related learning).

Those most attracted to doing a course at an FE college include people of Black British ethnicity, those aged 20-29 and lone parents with a child under 16. Older respondents, particularly those aged 50 and over, are far less attracted to FE colleges for non job-related learning.

As in 2005, there is limited difference by highest qualification - those with a Level 5 are more likely to say they definitely will not. This is likely to be linked to a lack of suitable high-level courses at FE colleges.

[23] In 2005 23% of respondents qualified to Level 3 reported they were *very likely* to do non-job related learning in the future, and so did 41% of those qualified to Level 5.

Table 4.2 Whether likely to start a course at an FE college at some point in the future by highest level of qualification

	Level 5	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1	No quals	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
I definitely intend to	14	10	13	18	11	11	12
It is very likely	9	14	15	17	18	18	15
It is quite likely	12	16	19	20	14	18	16
It is possible	25	27	24	19	29	36	26
It is not at all likely	24	21	23	17	17	11	20
I definitely will not	17	10	6	10	12	5	10
Weighted base	*173*	*614*	*211*	*291*	*268*	*67*	*1628*
Unweighted base	*174*	*585*	*202*	*283*	*286*	*71*	*1605*

4.1.4 Saving towards learning

All respondents were asked whether they would be willing to save towards learning they may do in the future. Approaching seven in ten (68%) said they would be willing and 26% unwilling. As would be expected, willingness to save is higher among those who say they are likely to undertake learning in the next two to three years – 73% willing and 17% unwilling.

Focusing on all learners (and not just those who say they are likely to undertake learning in the next two to three years), there is a significant difference between learners' and non-learners' willingness to save: 76% of learners say that they would be willing to save towards learning compared with 51% of non-learners. Correspondingly, non-learners are twice as unwilling to save (39% compared with 20% of learners). As previously discussed, non-learners are more likely to hold low or no qualifications and to live in low-income households. They also place less value on learning and are less likely to see it as relevant to them, as we discuss later in this section. Thus even if this group was offered free learning, it is unlikely to have a significant impact on participation unless accompanied by efforts to change attitudes towards, and awareness of, learning opportunities.

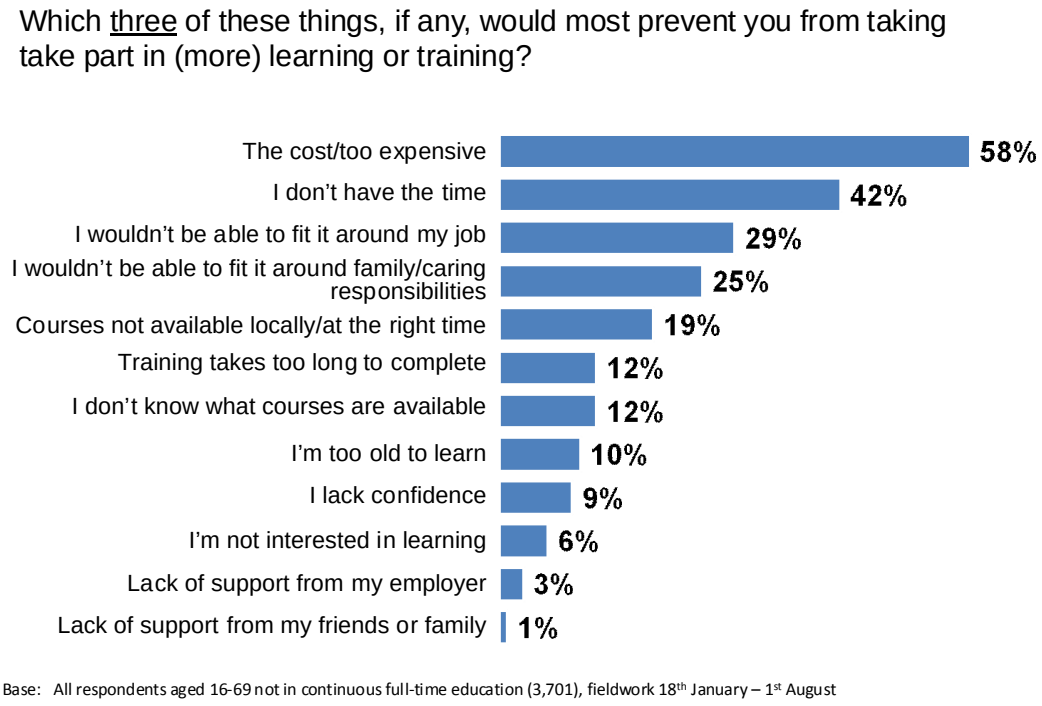
There is no difference in willingness to save towards learning among self-directed and taught learners and between formal, non-formal, and informal learners. However, vocational learners are more willing to save than non-vocational learners (77% compared with 71%).

4.2 Barriers and incentives to learning

All respondents were asked to identify from a list the potential obstacles to learning that applied to them. The results are not directly comparable with NALS 2005 due to the different way in which this question was asked. However, it is clear that cost has become a significant issue for a greater number of people compared with NALS 2005: in 2010 58% cited cost as barrier to learning compared with 21% in 2005.

Overall there are four main types of potential barriers: cost; lack of time and a perception that current provisions are insufficiently flexible; lack of awareness of learning opportunities; and lack of confidence and support from employers, families and friends. Respondents from black and minority ethnic groups are more likely to say they are uninterested or feel they are too old to learn.

Chart 4.4 Potential barriers to learning



Base: All respondents aged 16-69 not in continuous full-time education (3,701), fieldwork 18th January – 1st August

Cost is a significant potential barrier for around two-thirds of those aged 16-39. It is less of an issue for those aged 40-59 though still cited as a barrier by just over half. Lack of learning provisions locally and lack of knowledge about suitable courses were also cited as a barrier by those aged 16-19.

Lack of time is a particular obstacle for those aged 20-59 who are most likely to be in paid work. Men are more likely to find it difficult balancing learning with their jobs while women, particularly those aged 30-39, are more likely to cite lack of time due to family responsibilities.

Respondents aged 60 and over are more likely to cite a lack of interest in learning and to say they are too old to learn.

The most commonly cited barriers among those with Level 1 or no qualifications are cost and a lack of time – this is in line with people with higher level qualifications. However, adults with Level 1 or no qualifications are significantly more likely than average to say they lack confidence and do not know what courses are available and/or right for them. Those with Level 1 qualifications are more likely than average to say they are uninterested in learning or that they are too old to learn (this is not the case for those with no

qualification). Some of the lack of interest will be related to age, but it is likely that some will also have been put off learning by prior negative experiences.

Table 4.3 Potential obstacles to learning and reasons for not learning by current qualification

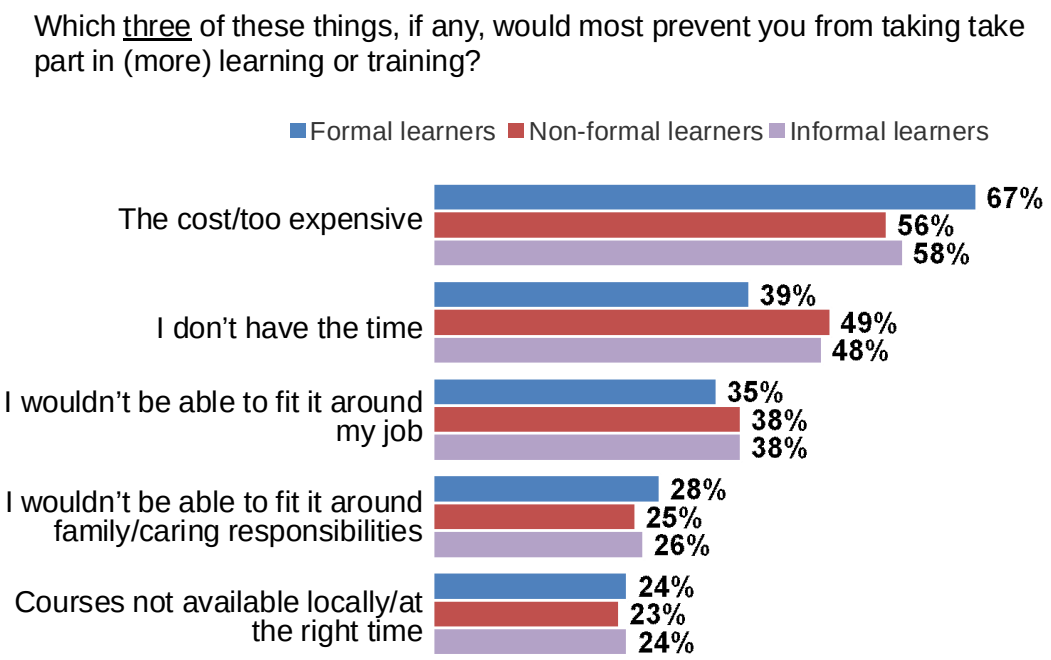
	Level 5	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1	No qual's	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
The cost/too expensive	47	57	62	65	56	50	58
I don't have the time	57	46	42	43	37	30	42
I wouldn't be able to fit it around my job	40	35	39	28	21	10	29
I wouldn't be able to fit it around my family/caring	29	25	25	29	24	18	25
The course(s) I want to do are not available locally/at the right times for me	26	25	18	18	16	6	19
Training takes too long to complete	13	13	11	14	10	13	12
I don't know what courses are available/right for me	4	8	13	13	18	15	12
I'm too old to learn	2	5	9	8	15	24	10
I lack confidence	2	4	6	8	16	23	9
I'm not interested in learning	1	4	5	4	9	17	6
Lack of support from my employer	6	4	3	3	3	1	3
Lack of support from my friends or family	1	*	1	1	2	3	1
Weighted base	*278*	*1071*	*541*	*625*	*871*	*299*	*3701*
Unweighted base	*268*	*1020*	*510*	*584*	*836*	*332*	*3569*

Base: All respondents aged 16-69
Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could mention more than one factor

Barriers to learning also differ by the type of learning that respondents are doing[24]. Cost is more likely to be cited as a barrier by formal learners; this is unsurprising as formal courses tend to be longer in duration and are usually more expensive. Time is a more pressing concern for informal and non-formal learners, with other barriers being similar across all learning groups.

[24] Types of learning are defined as any respondent who has done that type of learning in the last three years. These are not mutually exclusive categories, as respondents may have done both a formal and an informal course and will therefore be counted in both categories.

Chart 4.5 Potential barriers to learning by different learning types



Base: All respondents aged 16-69 not in continuous full-time education (3,569), fieldwork 18th January – 1st August
*Top five mentions only

4.2.1 Incentives to learn

Respondents' were also asked to consider what would motivate them to take part in learning. Three in five (62%) are motivated by the prospect of learning something new and two in five are motivated by improved job prospects and income (mentioned by 42% each).

Generally, motivations for learning are closely related to life stages. For example, respondents aged 16-39 were particularly motivated by enhanced job prospects (promotion and higher income), while those in the latter stages of their working life wanted to be able to improve their performance at work for their own job satisfaction. People aged 20-49 wanted to learn to help their children while those aged 50 and over placed greater value on learning new things, meeting new people and confidence building.

Table 4.4 What would encourage respondents to learn by age

	16-19 years	20-29 years	30-39 years	40-49 years	50-59 years	60-69 years	70+ years	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
To learn something new	53	58	56	55	67	78	70	63
To increase my income	55	53	48	44	37	20	19	39
To improve my job prospects	59	58	51	48	31	8	4	37
To meet new people	19	16	15	13	27	47	55	26
To build self confidence	19	21	19	23	24	33	25	24
To improve my ability to do my current job	16	17	24	28	24	11	2	19
To get more job satisfaction	14	16	15	18	20	12	5	15
To enable me to help my child(ren) with their learning	7	16	18	15	10	9	12	14
To get a promotion	20	19	20	13	10	3	2	12
To get more job security	7	10	11	13	9	4	3	9
Weighted base	*126*	*706*	*794*	*886*	*692*	*583*	*483*	*4272*
Unweighted base	*61*	*562*	*760*	*876*	*716*	*665*	*590*	*4230*

Base: All respondents
* Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could mention more than one factor

There is also some correlation between incentives for learning and the qualifications held. Respondents holding a lower level of qualification are more likely to find an increased income an incentive to learning compared to their more highly qualified counterparts. Those with a Level 4 or above are most likely to say that they would like to improve their ability to do their current job and to have greater job satisfaction.

Table 4.5 What would encourage respondents to learn by current qualification

	Level 5	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1	No quals	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
To learn something new	66	61	65	57	62	60	62
To increase my income	31	37	48	50	44	35	42
To improve my job prospects	44	45	45	45	38	23	42
To build self confidence	15	19	20	25	29	37	23
To meet new people	18	20	17	20	26	40	22
To improve my ability to do my current job	36	30	20	20	12	6	21
To get more job satisfaction	26	19	16	13	15	8	17
To get a promotion	15	18	15	14	9	6	14
To enable me to help my child(ren) with their learning	10	11	13	18	16	14	14
To get more job security	8	9	9	10	11	10	10
Weighted base	*294*	*1125*	*567*	*646*	*876*	*266*	*3774*
Unweighted base	*283*	*1071*	*532*	*602*	*841*	*294*	*3623*

Base: All respondents aged 16-69, not in continuous full-time education, who had done no learning in the past 3 years
Percentages add up to more than 100 because respondents could choose more than one reply.

4.2.2 Relative importance of different factors in decision to undertake learning

In NALS 2010, a trade-off or "discrete choice" exercise was included to determine the **relative** importance of different factors in an individuals' decision to undertake learning. The factors selected for inclusion were those identified through the analysis of secondary literature to be highly correlated to people's motivations for, and barriers to, learning. They included: where and when the learning would take place; the main benefit or outcome of the learning for the participant; the time commitment per week; the overall duration of the course and the financial cost/fees involved. Chart 4.7 on the following page shows the different levels for each of these factors.

The trade-off exercise was designed to simulate real decision-making and thus provides more reliable information than relying purely on respondents' stated barriers and motivations. This means that the information collected from the trade-off exercise will not necessarily be completely consistent with self-reported barriers and motivations discussed previously because the exercise forces people to make trade-offs between a pre-determined set of factors (e.g. costs versus time) as well as different values (e.g. amount willing to pay towards a course).

Respondents were presented with eight sets of 'choice tasks'. Each choice task comprised four options and the respondent was asked to choose their preferred option – an example 'choice task' is presented in Chart 4.6. The eight 'choice tasks' were randomly assigned to respondents to ensure coverage of all possible combinations.

Chart 4.6 Discrete Choice task example

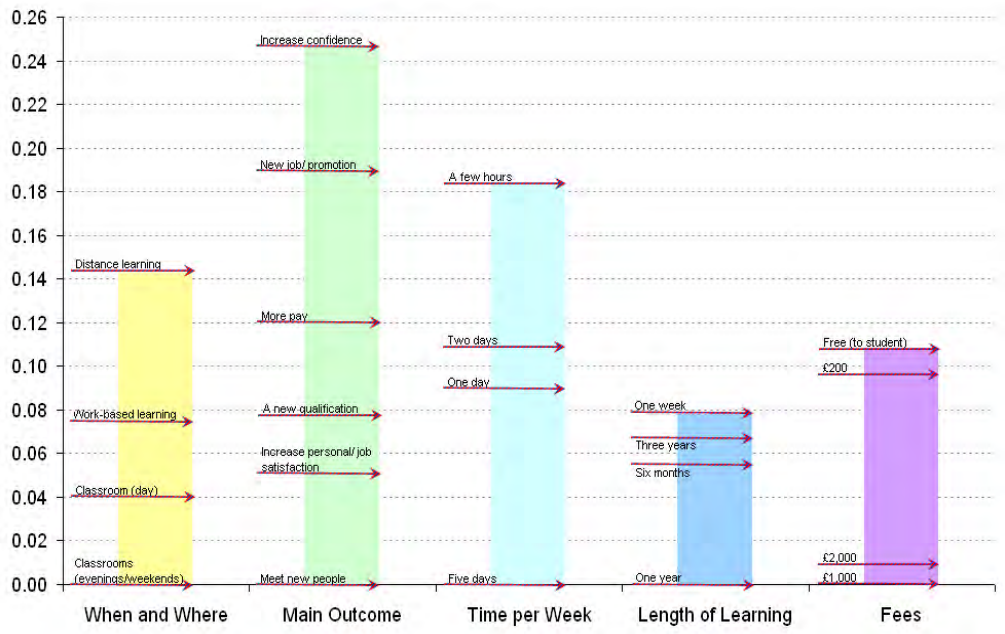
Which, if any, of these opportunities for learning would you choose?

	A	B	C	D
Where and when	At home in your own time	In the workplace/ on the job	In the workplace/ on the job	
Main benefit to you	Higher income/ more money	New job or promotion	Qualification	
Time commitment	A few hours a week for 6 months	A few hours a week for 6 months	5 days a week for 3 years	No learning
Fees	£1,000	£200	Free (employer or government pays)	
	❑	❑	❑	❑

The trade-off exercise allowed us to identify characteristics that were most and least appealing to potential learners (Chart 4.7). Taking the **average** of the whole sample of respondents, we see that the key consideration for respondents was likely outcome from the learning – that is, how the learning would benefit them. Learning packages that were

associated with boosting self-confidence or opportunities for a new job or promotion were most appealing. The next key consideration for potential learners was time commitment – respondents were attracted to learning that required just a few hours per week over a short period of time. Linked to this, they were particularly attracted to distance learning. They also wanted the learning to be free or certainly to cost no more than £200.

Chart 4.7 Relative importance of specific aspects of learning



Of the five factors presented, people's expectation of how they would benefit from the learning was the main factor in their decision-making, accounting for a third of the decision about which package to choose (33%). This is to be expected as it is usually the 'raison d'être' for learning.

The next factor that people took into account was time commitment per week, followed by where and when the learning would take place - accounting for 24% and 19% of the decision respectively. The cost of the learning holds less weight (14%) although, as we discuss below, both learners' and non-learners' alike are very sensitive to fee levels. This indicates that, although respondents placed lesser emphasis on costs relative to time and mode of delivery setting the fees above a certain level (in this case £200) would still have a significant impact on people's willingness to participate. Respondents were least sensitive to the length of learning (accounting for 10% of decision-making).

An increase in time commitment above a few hours per week would have a significant impact on people's decisions. This is consistent with respondents' preference for distance learning.

There is no difference in the **relative importance** of these factors between learners and non-learners. Both were most attracted by learning that helps to increase their confidence, involves minimal time commitment (i.e. a few hours per week), is delivered by distance learning and is either free or costs around £200 in the case of non-learners. Learners were most attracted to courses with long duration whilst non-learners wanted much shorter courses - one week was the optimal for this group. There was no difference in the relative importance (and levels) by learner type (i.e. formal, non-formal and informal).

There were subtle differences between learners and non-learners in their sensitivity to **different levels** for each factor such as different fees and time commitment.

Taking the most dominant factor –'main outcome', both groups displayed similar ranking to that presented in Chart 4.7. Non-learners are more likely than learners to withdraw from learning whose main outcomes are job-related (i.e. new jobs/promotion and increase pay), whilst learners withdraw from learning more sharply for outcomes that are based on achieving a new qualification. This pattern is consistent with their economic circumstance as learners were more likely than non-learners to be in employment.

Both groups are time-poor, and expressed preference for learning that requires a few hours per week, delivered via distance learning. Learners were particularly sensitive to learning that requires greater time commitment or involves daytime classes (both of which would lead to sharper declines in participation compared with non-learners). Non-learners were less likely to withdraw from learning that requires between one or two days per week or by daytime classes. They were, however, more likely to withdraw from learning that was work-based. Again, these patterns are to be expected given that non-learners are less likely than learners to be in paid work. Evening and weekend classes were least appealing to both groups.

Both learners and non-learners were sensitive to costs. An increase in fees from nothing to £200 would lead to a significant drop in willingness to learn among learners. Thus whilst learners are attracted by courses lasting just a few hours per week, taking place over a long time period (three years), they wanted this course to be free. They may see this level as realistic given that distance learning and work based learning were the two top preferences. Interestingly, non-learners were more willing than learners to pay up to £200 for their learning, particularly considering that they were most attracted by short courses lasting on average just a week.

4.3 Attitudes to learning across different groups

Although participation in learning has declined over the past five years people's views on the value of learning have remained broadly unchanged thus demonstrating that it is individuals' circumstances and their assessment of the future rather than their values and beliefs that have contributed to the change in behaviour.

As can be seen in Table 4.6, although there has been a slight decline in interest in learning, and a slight increase in the proportion of people who feel that they didn't get anything useful out of school, these attitudes represent a minority view, which are counter-balanced by an increased feeling that learning is an investment in the future. There are also now **fewer** people, particularly among non-learners, who believe that learning is only worthwhile if it has a qualification attached or that learning that is useful for work cannot be

obtained from a classroom setting. This is encouraging as it may indicate that people are more receptive to the wider benefits of learning.

Although learners are now less likely to do things on the spur of the moment, suggesting that they take more time to plan their learning than in 2005, people in general are just as likely to consider learning 'fun' and 'relevant to them'.

Table 4.6 Trends in attitudes towards learning

	Overall 2010	Learner 2010	Non-learner 2010	Overall 2005	Learner 2005	Non-learner 2005
	% Agree	% Agree	% Agree	% Agree	% Agree	% Agree
To succeed at work you need to keep improving your knowledge and skills	94	97	89	95	96	91
The skills you need at work can't be learnt in a classroom situation	53	52	56	55	54	62
Learning new things is fun	84	86	79	84	85	79
Learning isn't for people like me	9	5	18	7	4	19
I didn't get anything useful out of school	20	17	28	17	15	26
I see learning as an investment in my future	82	88	68	76	81	56
I don't have the confidence to learn on my own	22	18	32	20	17	30
Learning is something you should do throughout your life	93	95	87	93	95	85
Learning is only worthwhile if there is a qualification at the end of it	17	15	21	18	16	29
I often do things on the spur of the moment	64	65	61	68	70	62
I prefer to spend my free time doing things other than learning	54	50	62			
I don't need to do any learning for the sort of work I want to do	13	9	23			
I'm not interested in doing any learning, training or education	15	8	32	10	5	30
I would be worried about keeping up with the other people on the course	24	19	33			
I feel that I'm too old to learn	12	8	22			
I'll never find someone who will employ me	12	8	20			
There's no point in learning if you are unable to work	7	4	14			
I don't have the space or physical resources for learning	9	6	18			
My new skills would not be used at work	13	10	19			

Base: All respondents aged 16-69

As would be expected, learners (i.e. those who had taken part in learning in the three years prior to the NALS 2010 study) are more positive about learning than non-learners, and although both groups agree that learning is something you should do throughout your life and that learning new things is fun, non-learners are less likely to agree. One of the most significant differences between learners and non-learners is their general interest in learning with learners reporting a much greater interest in learning, training and education.

This is also the case when considering the time and space available for learning with learners more likely to agree that they enjoy learning in their free-time, that they have the space and physical resources available for learning and that they do things on the spur of the moment.

Non-learners are more likely to report that learning requires a qualification to be valuable, but much less likely to view learning as an investment in their future. They are also more likely to report that learning isn't for someone like them or that they did not get anything useful from school. Linked to this, they are more anxious about taking part in learning, revealing a greater worry about being able to keep pace with the work and lacking confidence in their ability to learn on their own. They are also more likely to report that they are too old to learn and are more fearful that they will never be employed. This last point is significant as non-learners have a narrower view of the benefits of learning compared with learners. For example, they are more likely to agree that learning is not relevant for the work that they do, there is no point in learning if you are unable to work and that their new skills would not be used at work. Non-learners are also more likely to agree that the skills required for work cannot be learned in a classroom. However, whilst the link between learning and work is important to them, this seems to be related to 'finding' work rather than contributing to 'progression' at work: they are less likely than learners to agree that to succeed at work you need to keep improving your knowledge and skills.

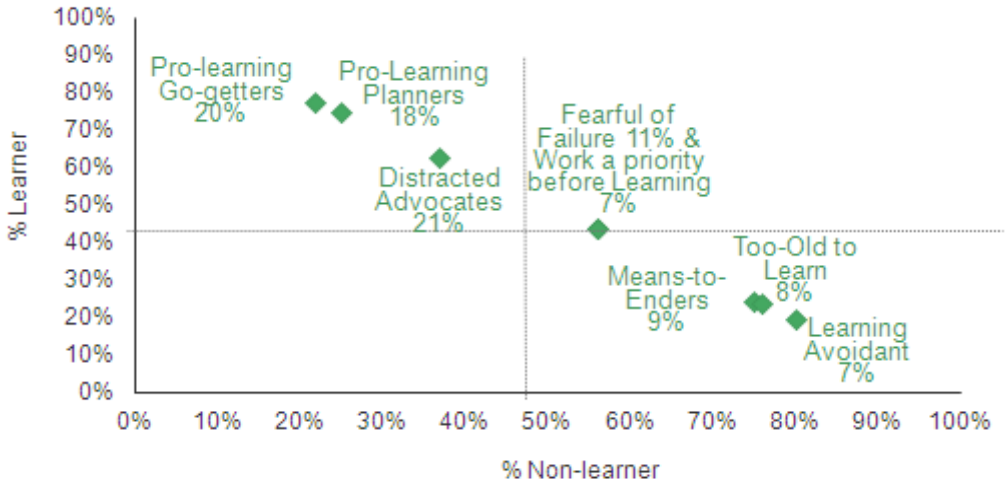
Overall, these findings suggest that those who have participated in learning in the past three years have a more positive attitude towards learning and a greater appreciation of the potential wider benefits.

4.3.1 Segmentation

It is possible to categorise people into distinct groups according to their expressed views towards learning using statistical techniques commonly referred to as segmentation analysis. The analysis conducted using NALS 2010 survey responses result in eight distinct groups or 'segments'[25] as shown in Chart 4.8 (the percentage figures refer to the size of each segment). The vertical axis represents the proportion of non-learners in each segment, and the horizontal axis the proportion of learners. Consequently, those segments in the bottom right-hand quadrant of the chart are active learners, whereas those in the top left represent non-learners.

[25] The segmentation analysis was based on all respondents, not just those aged 16-69. Consequently, the demographic and attitudinal findings for each segment are also based on all respondents, and may differ from the figures quoted elsewhere in this report where the base is is respondents aged 16-69.

Chart 4.8 Segment participation in learning in past 3 years



The following descriptions of the segments are presented from the most to the least positive about learning. The segments described in boxes coloured green are those where learners significantly outnumber non-learners, amber boxes have roughly similar proportions of learners and non-learners and red boxes identify those segments formed primarily of non-learners.

Table 4.7 Comparing the segments by demographic profiles

	Total	Pro-learning Go-Getters	Pro-learning Planners	Distracted Advocates	Fearful of Failure	Work a Priority Before Learning	Means-To-Enders	Too Old To Learn	Learning Avoidant
% of respondents	100%	20%	18%	21%	11%	7%	9%	8%	7%
Gender - Female	51	51	50	42	70	48	53	51	55
Age: 16-29	18	18	20	25	16	16	21	5	9
Age: 30-49	36	40	44	43	34	39	35	9	26
Age: 50-69	30	33	27	25	36	35	26	33	35
Age: 70+	15	9	9	8	13	11	20	52	30
Work status - employed	56	63	65	75	44	69	36	23	31
Income: =/> £31,100/yr	27	33	35	39	19	27	12	11	6
Qualified to Level 4 or 5	34	50	52	39	19	24	10	11	7
Children in household	30	30	36	31	34	31	30	10	17

Base: All respondents

The first segment is **'*Pro-learning Go-Getters*'**, representing 20% of respondents. This group values learning with the highest proportion regarding learning as an investment. It is composed predominately of learners – the highest of all the segments (80%). People in this segment are most likely to disagree that the skills required for work cannot be learned in a classroom and, in direct contrast to the *Distracted Advocates,* they are the most likely to disagree that they prefer to spend their free time doing things other than learning. They are also motivated by a desire to improve their job performance and job satisfaction. The main barriers to participation for them include: lack of availability of the right courses, the costs associated with learning and being able to fit learning around caring responsibilities.

The trade-off analysis shows that time commitment is the most important factor for this group, followed very closely by main outcome. Similarly to people in the "Distracted Advocates" group, they are particularly attracted to distance learning and learning that requires just a few hours commitment per week (duration of the course is less of an issue for them). They also want the learning to be free though charging up to £200 would have negligible impact on participation among this group.

Typically people in this segment have spent more time in continuous full-time education and is highly qualified (24% left full-time education at the age of 21 or older compared with 15% overall; 50% is qualified to Level 4 or 5 compared with 34% overall). Although they are no more likely to be employed than overall, those that are working tend to be higher earners (33% earn £31,200 plus compared with 27% overall).

The best media to communicate with this group is via newspapers - 43% read a newspaper daily compared with 39% overall. People in this segment are most committed to undertaking learning in the next two to three years: 81% say they are likely to job-related learning and 61% say they are likely to do other types of learning.

The second segment is **'*Pro-learning Planners*'**, representing 18% of respondents. As with the previous two, this segment is also very positive about learning, agreeing strongly that learning is an investment in the future, that learning is for people like them and that they found school useful. They are likely to have participated in learning the past three years (75%) and to say they would do so in the future. This group feel particularly time-poor and have problems fitting learning around caring responsibilities. Distance learning or learning requiring just a few hours per week is also most appealing to this group. They are, however, more sensitive to costs compared with the previous group – charging a fee of £200 or more would have a significant impact on this group's willingness to participate. The least important factor for them is duration of learning.

This segment is younger than average - 40% are aged under 40. People in this segment are more likely to live with a partner and have a child under 16 (30% compared with 23% overall). Members of this group are well educated – 52% are qualified to Level 4 or 5 compared with 34% overall; are more likely than average to be employed full-time (44% compared with 38% overall) and to be earning in excess of £31,200 per annum (35% compared with 27% overall). Newspapers and local radios are equally effective for reaching this group.

The largest segment is **'*Distracted Advocates*'**. A fifth (21%) of respondents falls within this group. People belonging to this group value learning, with three quarters (75%) having participated in the past three years. They strongly believe in the need to keep improving their knowledge and skills and see learning as an investment. Indeed, their motivations for learning are job-focused: to improve their job performance or to get a promotion. However, they feel unable to fit learning around their work commitments and do not want to give up their free time for learning.

The trade-off analysis for this group reveals a similar pattern to that for all respondents: the most important factor is the main outcome of learning, followed by time commitment per week and how the learning would be delivered. They express a strong preference for distance learning and learning that requires no more than a few hours per week. This group places equal importance on costs and duration of learning which is slightly different to the overall pattern. Increasing the duration of the course or increasing the fee up to £200 would have negligible impact on participation.

A high proportion of this segment is male (58%) and employed full-time (56%). Consumption of newspapers is in line with the overall (42%). However, people in this segment are more likely than average to listen to local radio daily (41% compared with 37% overall).

There is higher than average representation of high earners in this segment: 39% have an annual salary of £31,200 or higher compared with 27% overall. Linked to this, they are well qualified (36% are qualified to Levels 2 or 3 compared with 29% overall; 39% are qualified to Levels 4 or 5 compared with 34% overall). As fits their attitude to learning, they are more likely than average to say they would do job-related learning in the next two or three years.

The following segments are less positive in their perception of learning and, as indicated in Chart 4.7, are less likely to have participated in learning in the past three years.

The **'*Fearful of Failure*'** segment represents 11% of respondents. People in this segment are more likely than average to report that they do not know about the courses available and that they lack confidence. Just over half participated in learning over the past three years (56%). They report that they would be likely to learn if it would help build their confidence and enable them to help their children in their learning. However, they do not feel that learning is irrelevant to them; the segment generally agrees that learning is fun, but they lack the confidence to learn on their own and worry about keeping up with other learners.

The trade-off analysis for this group mimics the overall pattern: they want learning that is convenient to access (e.g. distance learning), takes up just a few hours a week and is free. Duration of the learning is not a pressing factor for them and they are receptive to courses that last up to three years. However, increasing the time commitment to, say, one or more days per week or the fee to £200 would have a significant impact on this group's willingness to learn.

The segment is overwhelmingly female (70%), and holds low qualifications (54% are qualified to Level 1 or have no qualifications compared with 37% overall). Members are also more likely to be out-of-work and looking after their family (13% compared with 7%

overall). A quarter are dependent on means-tested benefits (26% compared to 18% overall).However, they are as likely as people overall to take part in job-related learning or other types of learning in the future.

Newspapers and local radios are equally effective in reaching this group.

The fifth segment is ***'Work a Priority Before Learning'*****,** representing seven per cent of respondents. Members of this group are negative about learning: they do not view it as fun, nor necessary for work and nor an investment in the future.

The main outcome of the learning is the most important factor by far for this group, followed by how the learning would be delivered and time commitment per week – both are considered equally important. The fourth most important factor is cost. Duration of learning is least important. This group also expresses preference for distance learning involving a few hours a week. They want learning that is free although many are willing to pay up to £200. Increasing the time commitment to two or more days per week has a significant impact on this groups' participation as would any learning other than distance learning. Although they express preference for courses that last up to three years, they are also receptive towards very short courses.

Approaching half of people in this group are in full-time employment (45% compared with 38% overall). This group is less likely than average to consider learning in the next two to three years. And, if this group were to be targeted with information about learning, the local radio would be more suitable than newspapers (19% have not read a newspaper in the past year compared with 12% overall).

The sixth segment is ***'Means-To-Enders'***, representing 9% of respondents. They also lack the confidence to learn on their own and believe that the skills required for work cannot be learned in a classroom. They are the only segment more likely to agree than disagree that 'learning is only worthwhile if there is a qualification at the end of it'. They generally lack the confidence to participate in learning and feel that they are too old to learn. However, they would be more likely to undertake learning if it would help build their self-confidence and provide greater job security.

The main outcome and amount of time commitment per week are equally important to this group, followed by fees and how the training is delivered (these two factors are also considered to be equally important). People in this segment also expressed preference for learning that is free, convenient (e.g. distance learning) and involves a few hours a week. Increasing the time commitment to one or more days per week or the fee to £200 would have a significant impact on this group's willingness to learn. They prefer short courses but would not be deterred significantly by longer courses.

A quarter (27%) have participated in learning in the past three years – significantly less than the average of 50%; 64% are either qualified to Level 1 or have no qualifications. Three quarters (74%) left continuous full-time education at age 16 or younger and 11% is unemployed – the highest level of unemployment of all the segments. They are more likely than average to be living in the most deprived areas (34% are in the most deprived IMD quintile compared with 19% overall).

This segment is less likely than average to say they would do job-related learning or other types of training in the next two to three years. Newspapers and local radios are equally effective in reaching this group.

The next segment is **'*Too Old to Learn'*,** representing eight per cent of respondents. This group is disinterested in learning and feels that they are too old to benefit. They are generally disinterested in learning, feel that learning is not for people like them and prefer to spend their free time doing other things. A quarter (25%) has participated in learning in the past three years and the large majority are unlikely to undertake learning in the next two to three years.

The main outcome of the learning (specifically to increase self-confidence) is the most important factor by far for this group, followed by how the learning would be delivered (preferably by distance learning). The next important factors are fees and time commitment per week – both are considered equally important by people in the 'too old to learn' segment. People in this segment express preference for short, non time-intensive, courses (a few hours over one week). Unlike the previous groups, they are willing to pay up to £200 for the learning. Increasing the time commitment to two days per week has negligible impact on participation but increasing the duration of learning beyond a week is likely to deter a significant minority. Anything other than distance learning is also likely have a significant impact on this group's willingness to participate in learning.

A high proportion of this segment is aged 70 or over (52%) and retired (65%). Two thirds (67%) are qualified to Level 1 or have no qualifications. When thinking about communicating with this group, printed media would work best (53% read a newspaper daily compared with 39% overall). They are less likely than average to listen to the local radio (31% compared with 22% overall).

The final segment is **'*Learning Avoidant*',** representing seven per cent of respondents. Members of this group are the least interested in learning, with just 22% having participated in learning in the past three years. People in this segment are most likely to disagree that learning is fun or that they need to keep improving their knowledge and skills. A lack of interest in learning and their age are seen as barriers. They also tend to feel that learning is not for people like them. They are least likely of all the segments to do learning in the next two to three years.

This group is similar to the 'too old to learn' in that they consider the main outcome of the learning (specifically to increase self-confidence) to be the most important factor by far, followed by how the learning would be delivered (their preference is for distance learning) and, very narrowly behind, time commitment (preferably requiring a few hours over one week). Anything other than distance learning will have a significant impact on this group's willingness to participate in learning. Similarly to the 'too old to learn' segment, they are willing to pay up to £200 for the learning.

Similarly to the *Too Old to Learn segment,* people in this group are older (30% aged 70 and over compared with 15% overall). Four in five (78%) are qualified to Level 1 or have no qualifications. They are more likely than average to be retired or incapable of work.

However, unlike the *Too Old to Learn* segment, they are more likely than average to be living in the most deprived IMD quintile (29% compared with 19% overall).

This segment would be difficult to communicate with using mass media as they are least likely to read a newspaper or listen to local radio.

4.4 Information, advice and guidance

Over half of respondents (57%) reported receiving IAG in the past three years. As would be expected, learners are significantly more likely to report having IAG than non-learners (68% compared with 34%) (Table 4.8). This follows the same pattern seen in 2005. However, whilst there is no significant change in the proportion of non-learners who have received IAG in the past three years, the proportion of learners saying that they had received IAG has decreased by eight percentage points.

Table 4.8 Whether received IAG about learning in the past three years over time

	All learners (2010)	All learners (2005)	All non-learners (2010)	All non-learners (2005)
	%	%	%	%
IAG received	68	76	34	36
No IAG	32	24	66	64
Weighted base	*2691*	*3104*	*1227*	*766*
Unweighted base	*2527*	*2636*	*1254*	*704*

Base: All respondents aged 16-69 not in continuous full-time education.

Although the findings are not directly comparable, it is clear that there has been a decline in the numbers reporting IAG between 2005 and 2010. In 2005, 68% of respondents reported receiving IAG over the past 12 months compared with 57% over the past three years in NALS 2010. The decline is apparent among all groups, regardless of their level of qualification, though the downward trend has affected more learners than non-learners. Despite this, learners are still significantly more likely than non-learners to have had IAG. The gap in IAG between the most and least qualified respondents remains as wide as in 2005 (Table 4.9).

Table 4.9 Whether received IAG about learning in past three years by highest qualification held (comparisons with IAG received over the past 12 months in 2005)

	Level 5	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1	No qual's	Total
In past 3 years	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Learners 2010	69	75	60	72	66	49	68
Non-learners 2010	68	60	59	59	49	32	65
All 2010	68	64	59	62	50	34	57
*Weighted base 2010**	*297*	*1140*	*576*	*655*	*912*	*322*	*3917*
*Unweighted base 2010**	*287*	*1086*	*540*	*612*	*879*	*358*	*3781*
In past 12 months							
Learners 2005	83	82	75	74	69	65	76
Non-learners 2005	75	56	28	47	36	24	36
All 2005	83	80	70	70	59	43	68
Weighted base 2005	*243*	*1081*	*582*	*542*	*1084*	*326*	*3873*
Unweighted base 2005	*218*	*899*	*493*	*461*	*950*	*310*	*3340*

Base: All respondents aged 16-69 not in continuous full-time education. A small number (14) who had never been in cfte are not shown in the table, but included in the Total base.
*NB bases shown for 2010 are all respondents, for learner and non-learner bases see supplementary tabs A3.19 and A3.20

The most common sources of IAG by far continue to be employers and friends, relatives or work colleagues – used by around a quarter each. Around one in ten each use FE colleges, universities and non-government department websites.

Three in ten (30%) receive IAG from more than one source. Respondents who have undertaken **both** taught and self-directed learning are **most** likely to report having received IAG from multiple sources, as are respondents with higher level qualifications.

Table 4.10 Sources of IAG received about learning in the past three years, by learning status

	All learners	All non- learners
	%	%
My employer	27	3
Friends, relatives or work colleagues	24	6
FE college	11	6
Other website	10	2
University	9	2
TV/radio/newspapers/ magazine	8	4
Leaflets through letterbox	8	9
Adult Education or evening institute	7	4
Government Dept or Directgov website	6	1
New Deal or JSA advisor	5	4
Public library	4	2
School	3	4
Trade Union	3	1
Business link	3	1
Learndirect online	2	2
Community, voluntary or religious organisation	2	*
Learndirect (telephone)	1	1
Careers Advisory Service (website)	1	*
Careers Advisory Service (telephone helpline)	*	*
Next steps	*	*
Other person or organisation	5	1
Weighted base	*2527*	*1227*
Unweighted base	*2691*	*1254*

Base: All respondents aged 16-69

Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could mention more than one category

4.4.1 Sources of IAG respondents have been unable to find

In order to address potential gaps in IAG provisions, respondents were asked to indicate instances when they had been unsuccessful in locating IAG about courses.

One in ten (10%) reported that they had been unsuccessful in locating IAG, and 36% said they were successful[26]. However, over half (54%) had not attempted to look for IAG in the last three years, rising to 72% of non-learners. Non-learners were less likely to have looked for IAG or to be successful in finding the IAG they want (this group is more likely to comprise adults aged 50 and over and those with Level 1 or no qualifications).

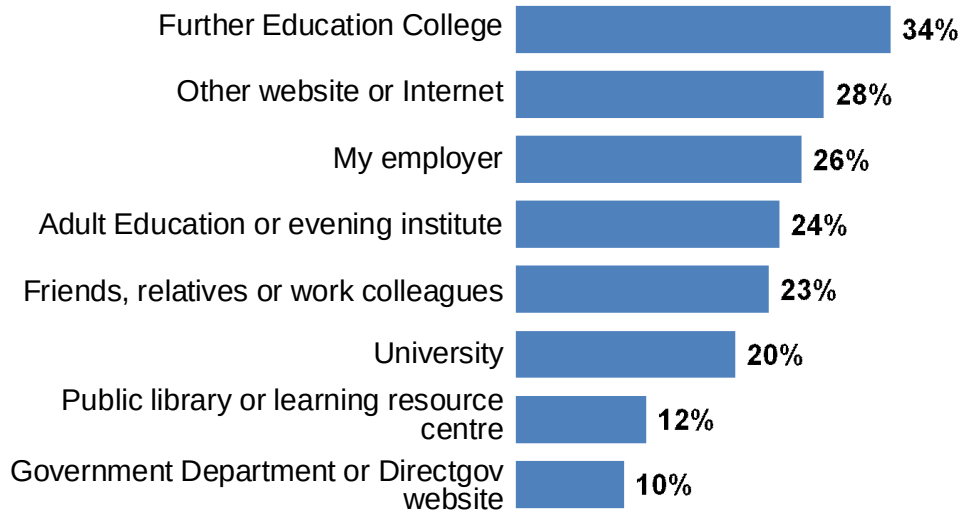
4.4.2 Sources of IAG respondents would use in the future

Respondents who indicated they are likely to take part in future learning (both job-related and non-job related comprising 55% of the total sample) were asked which sources of IAG (from a list) they would use to find out about courses.

Respondents are likely use a range of sources to find information rather than to rely on a single source. The most commonly cited preferences are FE colleges, websites, and employers (Chart 4.9). However, as highlighted in the previous section, in practice, people tend to favour informal contacts such as their employer, friends, relatives or work colleagues over more formal sources.

Chart 4.9 Sources of IAG for future learning

Which, if any, of the sources and organisations on this card would you be most likely to contact to find out about courses in the future?



Base: All respondents aged 16-69 who are likely to do job or non-job related learning in the next two or three years (2,535). Fieldwork 18th January – 1st August 2010. * Excludes responses under 10%

[26] Note the percentage representing those who were successful in their search for IAG is different from the figure in table 4.9 as some of those who received IAG did so without seeking it out.

Learners who have done self-directed learning are more likely than those who have done taught learning to use websites (32% compared with 22%). In general, non-learners are less likely than learners to select all sources with the exception of JSA advisors (12% compared with 5%) – this is linked to the higher incidence of non-learners not in paid employment.

There is limited difference by demographic characteristics. Young people aged 16-19 are far more likely to say they would contact a New Deal or JSA advisor compared with those aged 20 and above. Respondents aged 50 and above are more likely to contact a public library or an Adult Education Institution.

Respondents with higher level qualifications (Levels 4-5) prefer to seek IAG from universities, employers and websites. In contrast, those with Level 1 or no qualifications tend to favour Job Centres and FE colleges.

4.5 Conclusions

Overall, the majority of people say they are likely to do *job-related* learning in the future (68% say they are at least fairly likely to do so). This is consistent with the widely held views that to succeed at work, there is a need to continually improve one's skills. While there has been a decline in learning intentions since 2005, the characteristics of those committed to learning are unchanged. Young people and current learners are particularly likely to undertake learning in the next two to three years.

In contrast, people are significantly less likely to consider non *job-related* learning in the future (39% say they are likely compared with 61% unlikely). Moreover, there has been a decline of eight percentage points in the proportion of people saying they are likely to do non job-related learning in the future (43% in 2010 compared with 51% in 2005). This trend is consistent with the decline in participation in informal learning.

The trade-off exercise is designed to simulate real decision-making and thus provides more reliable information than relying purely on people's stated barriers and motivations. This reveals that people's expectation of how they will benefit from the learning is the main factor in their decision-making, followed by time commitment and where and when the learning takes place. The cost of the learning holds less weight although both learners and non-learners alike are very sensitive to fee levels. This indicates that, although respondents place lesser emphasis on costs relative to time and distance, setting the fees above a certain level will still have a significant impact on people's willingness to participate. Respondents are least sensitive to the length of learning.

Respondents are relatively insensitive to fees up to £200. However, an increase in fees to £2000 would have a significant impact on willingness to undertake learning (though respondents are relatively insensitive to fees of £1,000 and £2,000).

By contrast, an increase in time commitment per week from a few hours a day to two days a week would have a significant impact on people's decisions. Reducing it to one day makes little difference to people's decisions but increasing it to five days would reduce participation significantly. This is consistent with respondents' expressed preference for distance learning.

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URN 12/P164