Department for Business innovation & Skills

ADULT FURTHER EDUCATION

Government Response: Outcome based success measures

DECEMBER 2014

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Contents

1.   Foreword from Minister for Skills and Equalities

Outcome based success measures are designed to measure what is really important in further education – the outcome for the learner. English colleges and other providers perform well at helping their learners to achieve qualifications and that should be celebrated. But it is also important that prospective learners, and those that advise them, understand the impact learning and qualifications can have on job prospects, earning potential and the likelihood of securing higher level skills. We therefore need to look beyond the qualification to the outcome for the learner. The real value of vocational education is whether learners make progress into or within employment or further learning.

That is why we consulted on proposals for new success measures on learner outcomes to complement the measures we already use for qualification achievement: destination (into employment, Apprenticeship or further learning); progression (within learning); and earnings. The measures have been developed using data from across government, matched robustly and securely.

I was pleased with the general support for the idea of outcome measures and with the constructive comments on developing these further. We intend to proceed with the new measures as proposed in the consultation paper, but we want to make sure they are as useful as they can be. There are a number of issues we need to explore further and we will consult on the detail of, and timetable for, using and publishing the measures as part of a new accountability framework.

These new measures will give learners and employers better information about vocational qualifications and about the performance of colleges and other providers, to help them make informed choices about what and where to study. The measures will also give other stakeholders like LEPs, and providers themselves, better data on the performance of individual providers and how they compare with similar providers.

Developing the measures is important to the continuing improvement of the FE sector. I encourage learners, employers and providers to contribute as we develop the measures. With your support we can ensure that outcome based success measures improve outcomes for learners to the benefit of all.

Nick Boles

Minister for Skills & Equalities

2.   Executive Summary

1.   To succeed in the global race, this country needs high quality post-19 education and training that provides the following outcomes:

- the skills that employers and businesses need and value;

- the skills individuals need and value to gain employment, change employment, progress in work and function in society;

- the strategically important skills the nation needs (and in which businesses and individuals might under-invest); and

- value for money for businesses, individuals and the state.

2.   Since 2010 the Government has embarked on a significant programme of reform of the further education (FE) system to meet the need for high quality post-19 training outcomes – at the heart of which are greater freedoms and flexibilities for colleges and providers so that they can be responsive to the needs of learners and employers, complemented by a rigorous accountability regime. Greater freedom, increased responsiveness and a strong accountability regime are the drivers for a continuous improvement in quality.

3.   DfE's proposals on 16-19 education published earlier this year set out a new framework for young learners.[1] Government has also set out its intentions for reforms for Apprenticeships and most recently funding of Traineeships.[2] Our proposals for new outcome based success measures for adult learners in FE are another part of this package of greater freedom, increased responsiveness and a strong accountability regime.

4.   On 12 August we published a consultation on post-19 learner outcomes which proposed three new measures:

- Learner **Destinations** (into further learning, and into or within employment, including Apprenticeships),

- Learner **Progression** (progression to a higher level qualification) and

- **Earnings** (following completion of learning).

5.   Lord Young has championed the development of earnings data in his report on education 'Enterprise for All'[3]. In the report, he recommended the development of a

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[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/16-to-19-accountability-consultation
[2] https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/traineeships-funding-reform-in-england
[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/enterprise-for-all-the-relevance-of-enterprise-in-education

Future Earnings and Employment Record which will provide young people and parents with employment and earnings data against all courses delivered by both FE and Higher Education (HE) institutions. Government supports this recommendation, and the earnings measure developed as part of this consultation is a step towards achieving this in the FE sector

6. We suggested that these measures, with the existing measure of qualification **Achievement**,[4] would provide a rounded picture of provider performance which could be used by learners, employers, providers and others to inform choice, to inform provider self-assessment and to inform performance management and inspection.

7. We invited comments on the proposed definitions for the measures, what additional information would be helpful, the uses to which the data could be put and how it should be presented and published. The consultation closed on 10 October 2014. We received 88 written responses to the consultation and held a number of workshops and roundtables with employers, students and training providers. A summary of responses to the consultation and details of stakeholder engagement is at Annex A. The list of those who responded is at Annex B.

8. We are grateful to all those who took the time to attend events and to provide a written response. This paper sets out the Government's response to the consultation and our proposed way forward.

9. We strongly believe in the value and importance of outcome measures. We need to move beyond the qualification as a measure of success and look also at what impact the learning makes. Many of those who responded to the consultation supported the broad idea of measuring outcomes as well as achievement. We therefore intend to continue with outcome based success measures.

10. In the main, there was support for the idea of using the new success measures as part of a basket of measures against which we could set minimum standards and for the principles that the framework should be simple and transparent, proportionate and rigorous. There was, however, concern about the practicalities of doing so and the detail of a new minimum standards framework.

11. We believe there is merit in including information on outcomes as part of a basket or scorecard of measures to assess provider performance. However, we recognise concerns about using the measures for performance management purposes and we will consult further in 2015 on options for doing this to ensure that a new accountability framework is fair, proportionate and straightforward.

12. There were many comments and suggestions about the detail of the measures. The measures are new and the data is experimental. We will continue to develop and extend the measures over time, looking at publication of more granular data, coverage of additional learners and possible variations to the measures.

13. There was a very strong view from those who responded that contextual information, particularly about a provider's local area and the provision offered, would help users to

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[4] As currently measured by Qualification Success Rates

understand the data and to make a fair comparison between providers, both for informing choice and informing any performance management or inspection decisions. But at the same time, respondents felt that the measures should be straightforward and easy to understand for all users. We will consider how best to incorporate contextual information alongside the outcome measures, and which information would be most useful, balancing this additional information against the need to avoid over-complicating the measures.

14. There was no consensus from those who responded on the best way to present the data and the best place to publish it. We believe there may be considerable merit in including the information on providers' own websites using a widget which draws on a central data source, both from an informing choice point of view and consistency with the position for HE data and the proposed position for 16-19 data. We therefore propose to consider a similar widget for FE providers to host on their websites. We will also consider further other options for publication. Third parties are likely to be better placed than Government to come up with imaginative ways to present the data and engage with learners, employers and others to help them choose. Many already do this for schools and HE. We want to encourage the same for FE. To further help young people make informed choices, we will work with DfE to ensure 16 year olds are able to use online portals to find out about the full range of post-16 courses in their area. In time outcomes data could become a key feature of these portals to help young people make fully informed decisions.

15. We will aim to publish a plan and timetable for developing the measures further and for publishing them following the consultation on a new accountability framework in 2015.

3.   The Measures

16. **This section cover questions 1 and 3 in the consultation paper:**

    Question 1: Do you believe that the definitions for the headline destination measure and sustained employment and sustained learning measures are appropriate?

    Question 3: What should be the main features of a measure which records achievement of GCSEs in maths and English?

Government Response

17. There was general agreement that the new outcome measures would provide a useful addition to the information already available to learners, employers, providers and others. We will proceed with the measures proposed in the consultation paper using matched data in order to reduce bureaucracy on providers and to make best use of the information now available. We will also continue to explore and develop the measures to provide more and better information for learners, employers, providers and other users, taking account of views received in response to the consultation. We will ensure that when we publish the data we include a full explanation of the measures so that it is clear what is covered and providers can be compared on a fair basis.

18. The data is still experimental and we do not plan to use it formally until the measures using the matched data have been fully developed and considered fit for the purpose

intended. However the method to link the datasets is well established and robust, achieving very high match rates that provide representative coverage for FE.

Coverage of the measures

19. As indicated in the consultation document, we are aiming to include information on those who are self-employed in the employment measure by summer 2017. This is complex analytical work but we are confident that it is possible to do.

20. Many respondents wanted to see volunteering reflected in the outcome measures. We do recognise that volunteering may be a destination for some learners, either in itself or as a stepping stone to employment. We cannot at the moment obtain this information using matched data but we will keep this under review if new data sources become available.

21. We can obtain destinations for those in Adult and Community Learning (ACL) using matched data. Those learners are likely to be undertaking learning for a variety of reasons and many may not be planning to move directly into employment or into further learning. The detail of information held about ACL learners may mean that match rates could be poorer than those for other types of learners and there may be more instances where we cannot publish a score for a provider because the number of learners with a positive destination is less than the minimum group size. However, given the strong view that this type of provision should be included in the outcome measures, we will aim to do that.

22. We will also explore the best approach for including offender learners covered by the Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) in performance measures, to give a more complete picture of the sector. This group are harder to match accurately and employment and sustained learning outcomes may not be the most relevant measure to consider for performance. However, we agree it would be useful to establish a measure to support performance management and provider self-assessment.

23. We understand concerns about gaps in the data due to the minimum group size of 100 learners (we only publish a score when there are at least 100 learners in any group of matched learners). We need to have a fuller understanding of the different presentations required so we can develop a sustainable strategy for treating data that fits with data protection rules and other publishing commitments. As with the experimental data published alongside the consultation, we may need a relatively high minimum size to provide as much certainty as possible that individual learners cannot be identified through matching this data with other published data sets. But we hope further work will enable us to go lower than the current limits, particularly for national level data.

Definitions

24. As many respondents agreed, there is merit in defining the measures in a way that is consistent with the measures used by DfE for 16-19 year olds. We therefore intend to continue with the October – March reference period for the sustained employment and sustained learning measures. We accept that FE provision is often flexible in nature and a less rigid reference period may seem more relevant in many cases so we will explore more flexible measures to sit alongside these measures.

25. We have noted the views of many respondents that it would be more natural to measure learners who move into sustained employment only after their learning rather than those who are in employment before and after their learning. We did publish data for a separate measure showing those who were on Jobseekers Allowance and Employment Support Allowance before their learning and in employment after. But we will explore whether there is more we can do around the employment measure.

GCSE maths and English

26. There was little feedback on the main features of a measure recording achievement of GCSE maths and English. From those who did respond on this question, the key point made was that the learner's starting point was important to assess distance travelled and the provider's effectiveness.

27. We agree that robust initial and diagnostic assessments by providers play an important role in helping us understand what progress learners make through their course and up to their final assessment. We will continue to explore how this information can most effectively be collected and analysed to demonstrate clearly progress in achieving at a higher level and enhance the publicly available data that will be available through the new success measures.

4.   Additional information

28. **This section covers questions 5, 8 and 10 in the consultation paper:**

   Question 5: What contextual data/information (if any) should be published alongside the data to ensure that learners and employers are able to make an informed decision about the relative performance of providers?

   Question 8: Do you think results should be published at qualification level and/or at qualification by Awarding Organisation too?

   Question 10: Are there are other breakdowns such as different reference periods or delivery by subcontractors that could be used by local players (e.g. LEPs)?

Government Response

29. We agree that some contextual information may be helpful to enable more informed use of the measures, particularly if they are to be used to compare or make judgements about providers or qualifications. All users of the measures – whether learners, employers, Government or providers themselves – need to have enough information to understand why scores for different providers or qualifications are different or similar. At the same time, it is important not to over-complicate the measures and overload users with too much information which obscures the measures or gets ignored. We will work with UKCES, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and others to agree how appropriate contextual information can be used alongside the outcome measures, and which information would be most useful.

30. There was a clear demand for publishing destination measures at a more granular level – course, qualification, subject or level – particularly to aid learner choice of what to study. We will therefore explore at what level we can most sensibly do this. The need to

maintain a minimum group size to ensure that individuals cannot be identified means that it will not be possible to publish a complete data set by course or qualification, certainly at provider level and possibly at national level in some cases. More granular data is likely therefore to be a mix of sector subject area and course/qualification level. For example, we could publish course or qualification level data at national level, with an additional breakdown at LEP and provider level for the most popular courses or qualifications. We will also consider further how best to incorporate a breakdown by awarding organisation as we develop the measures.

5.   Accountability

31. This section covers questions 2, 7, 11 and 12 in the consultation paper:

      Question 2: Do you agree that for accountability purposes the headline measure covering all levels of provision should be used?

      Question 7: Do you agree that the measures as currently proposed will help governors and non-executives to hold colleges and providers to account and challenge underperformance?

      Question 11: Do you agree with these principles for future Minimum Standards?

      Question 12: Do you have specific views on a future Minimum Standards methodology?

      Government Response

32. We strongly believe that it is no longer enough to measure only qualification achievement rates. Achievement rates are important but are not enough on their own. The FE system must focus on outcomes – what does the qualification enable the learner to do next? We believe that many different groups of users will find this information useful. We therefore intend to move to a system of minimum performance standards that reflects the importance of outcomes, based on the principles set out in the consultation document: outcome based, simple and transparent, proportionate and rigorous.

33. Many of those who commented on these questions were concerned not so much about the principle of using the new learner outcomes as part of a basket of performance measures but about the detail of how they would be used. We recognise the concerns. It is important that the new system is fair and soundly based. It needs to take account of the differences between providers and types of provision yet not be overly complex and difficult to understand. We need to take time to get the details right. We therefore propose to consult further on what a new accountability system including minimum standards should look like.

34. At this point, and taking account of the responses to this consultation, we would expect:

   - that the outcome measures would be used with achievement rates as part of a basket of measures that could trigger further investigation and ultimately intervention;

- to use a time series of data rather than a particular point in time when considering intervention, to give a more rounded picture of performance;

- not to use the earnings measure as part of a minimum standards framework, although we intend to continue with the measure and develop it further to inform choice;

- that the outcome measures would not be used as part of a payment by results system; such a system must be able to track individual learners and matched data cannot be used in that way.

35. Ofsted have said they would expect to use the measures to inform discussions during an inspection and will consider further uses as the data develops. We will continue to involve Ofsted in the development of the measures.

6.   Presentation and Publication

36. **This section covers questions 4, 6 and 9 in the consultation paper:**

   Question 4: What are your views on using performance tables for post-19 provision as an effective means of comparing provision?

   Question 6: Do you agree that headline measures should be included on individual providers' websites?

   Question 9: Do you have views on where and in what format this information should be published?

   Government Response

37. There may be considerable benefit in including the outcome measures data on providers' own websites. That is where many users look for information on where to study, and it may be easiest to present the appropriate contextual information there. It would also put FE providers on a par with universities and potentially schools in terms of presenting information. Those offering university level provision already host a widget with a set of key information. DfE is considering a widget for providers' websites covering 16-19 provision, to be automatically populated from DfE data.

38. We therefore propose to consider a similar widget for providers to host on their websites including the success measures and other key data for post-19 provision. This could also include relevant contextual information and information created through FE Choices about learner and employer satisfaction levels.

39. We agree that it is sensible to make the success measures available through the careers service websites including the National Career Service website and plotr. We will work with the new careers company to ensure the data is promoted to sites where young people seek information too. This information is a good fit with the information about providers, qualifications and careers already provided through the Service.

40. We will also consider further whether we could develop a methodology to compare "similar providers" and a national set of performance tables (which could also reflect local contextual information), as suggested in the consultation document. But we will also encourage third parties to use the data as they may be better placed than Government to come up with imaginative ways to present the data and engage with learners, employers and others.

41. As we develop a presentation and publication strategy, we will bear in mind the strong view expressed that the measures must be presented in a simple and straightforward way so that they are easily accessible to all users, with appropriate explanation and contextual information.

7. Next Steps

42. We have published the next tranche of earnings data alongside this Government response[5]. We are aiming to publish the next tranche of experimental destinations data on 2011/12 learners in the New Year.

43. We will consult in 2015 on more detailed options for a new accountability framework using outcome based success measures. We will aim to follow the timetable proposed in the consultation paper of introducing the new framework in summer 2017.

44. We will aim to publish a plan and timetable for developing the measures further and for presenting and publishing them following the consultation on the new accountability framework.

45. We are preparing an Equality Impact Assessment as part of the consultation on more detailed options for the new accountability framework.

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[5] [NEED TO INSERT LINK TO EARNINGS DATA]

Annex A: Summary of responses

1. During the consultation BIS staff held and attended a number of events with employers, students, providers and their representative bodies to explain the proposals and ascertain views.

2. The consultation closed on 10 October 2014 with 88 written responses submitted. The written responses and the views expressed at events during the consultation period have been included in this summary.

   Question 1:

   Do you believe that the definitions for the headline destination measure and sustained employment and sustained learning measures are appropriate?

Option	Total	Percentage of All
Yes	49	56%
No	25	28%
Unsure	8	9%
Unanswered	6	7%

3. The majority of respondents thought the headline measures seemed sensible because they broadly underpinned the principles of accountability, transparency and value for public investment. They also welcomed that the measures were seeking to align with DfE. Another view was that for the first time, the measures have the potential to provide independent and quantifiable evidence on just how good the sector is at getting people into jobs and helping them progress in their careers.

4. Many respondents had concerns or raised questions about the details of the measures. ACL providers asked that we consider including destinations which currently fall outside the scope of the proposed measures such as volunteering which was recognised as important in 'New Challenges, New Chances'. Another point raised by respondents was that self-employment should be included. Some respondents were concerned about the exclusion of groups with less than 100 learners.

5. For the sub measures of sustained employment and sustained learning, some respondents, particularly those from ACL providers, local authorities and LEPs, felt that the reference period of October to March of the following academic year after learning was too short and too rigid. This was felt to impact unfairly on older adult learners and those in apprenticeships where courses were more likely to finish at different times from the academic year.

6. Other key points in the responses were:

   - Factors beyond the control of providers (such as labour market variations, the type of provision offered and the personal circumstances of the learner) might skew the figures and undermine the proposed definitions.

- Interdependencies with other factors such as the local labour market might result in perverse outcomes; eg providers might be reluctant to take on certain groups of learners who might be less likely to secure the outcomes being measured.

- To accompany the headline measure it would be helpful to publish the total size of the cohort and the % of eligible learners in the cohort to give a sense of scale.

- Some respondents queried the validity and robustness of the data, how it would be maintained and improved going forward and the current limitations which constrained delivering the progression measure.

- It would be more valuable to look at the types and quality of employment that learners secure.

- Include qualitative data from National Student Survey on student experiences and how well they are prepared for work.

- Critical to develop consistency between 16-19 and post-19 provision.

- The earnings measure is too crude; it would be more informative if earnings could be linked directly to the learning.

- Those who leave the course early because they have secured employment should be counted as in employment.

- If a learner is already employed at the start of their course, the employment destination measure is not a reliable measure of 'value added'.

- Learners undertaking vocational education at a lower level than their previous academic achievements should be measured.

Question 2

Do you agree that for accountability purposes the headline measure, covering all levels of provision should be used?

Option	Total	Percentage of All
Yes	47	53%
No	20	23%
Unsure	10	11%
Unanswered	11	13%

7. Many respondents agreed but qualified this by saying that sub-measures should be considered in order to put the overall measure in context and enable a direct comparison between similar types of providers. This was particularly relevant to ACL organisations that concentrate on lower level learning which supports those furthest from the labour market, which could lead to unfair comparisons.

Question 3:

What should be the main features of a measure which records achievement of GSCEs in maths and English?

8. Many respondents questioned whether GSCEs in maths and English for older learners were appropriate given that learners had failed to achieve these qualifications at school. There was strong support from respondents that functional skills for adult learners offered a sufficiently challenging alternative. The measures should look at other maths and English qualifications and not just the achievement of GCSEs. However, others commented that GCSEs at grade C and above in maths and English were the 'gold standard' and central to education policy.

9. Other key points in the responses were:

    *   Focus on maths and English progress rather than absolute attainment; the learner's starting point was important to assess distance travelled and the provider's effectiveness.

    *   Consider learner attitudes and motivation which affects outcomes.

    *   A separate distance travelled measurement for maths and English seems excessive.

    *   Impact of achievement in maths and English on earnings and progression should be recorded.

Question 4

What are your views on using performance tables for post-19 provision as an effective means of comparison?

10. Nearly half of those who participated in the consultation did not answer this question. Many who did answer thought that the performance tables were misleading and may not give prospective students and employers a full picture of relevant performance; for example, high quality provision may not lead to employment due to local economic conditions. Many respondents commented that performance tables should distinguish results by type of provider such as FE colleges, independent training providers, local authority and ACL providers. Others thought that performance tables encouraged a service that was data driven rather than for the benefit of individuals.

Question 5

What contextual data/information (if any) should be published alongside the data to ensure that learners and employers are able to make an informed decision about the relative performance of providers?

11. The overriding view from most of those who replied to this question was that simple but informative contextual information needed to be presented simply so users could easily compare similar providers. Key contextual information was: the age of learners, the type of job opportunities in the local area, other local labour market information and the type of provision. Information about learners and the type of provision is critical because

FE enrols a significant proportion of disadvantaged learners as well as providing for many with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Question 6

Do you agree that headline measures should be included on individual providers' websites?

Option	Total	Percentage of All
Yes	43	49%
No	21	24%
Unsure	10	11%
Unanswered	14	16%

12. Those in favour of publishing headline measures on provider websites qualified this by saying that the measures needed to be presented in such a way as to be easily understood by the public. Also there needed to be a single established data set for providers to draw on in a consistent way. Others were against publishing on provider websites because this would be impractical; provider websites are already complex and local authority providers and those in corporate groups don't necessarily have control over their websites. Some respondents said that providers should be able to choose whether and what they published.

Question 7

Do you agree that the measures as currently proposed will help governors and non-executives to hold colleges and providers to account and challenge underperformance?

Option	Total	Percentage of All
Yes	32	36%
No	30	34%
Unsure	12	14%
Unanswered	14	16%

13. There was a mixed response on whether the measures would help governing bodies to challenge their executives. Some respondents thought they could be overloaded with information. Others thought the measures would be useful but governing bodies who were working effectively to hold providers to account should already be requesting and receiving a wide range of performance information from which to draw their conclusions. Respondents thought that LEPs would find it useful to see the range of provision in their area. Many respondents asked that BIS continue to work closely with Ofsted to include the measures on the Ofsted Dashboard.

14. Other key points in the responses were:

- Boards of Trustees should encourage such data to help them satisfy the public about the benefit of the organisation – so much better if the Government supports this.

- Some Apprenticeships are 4 years long so by the time data is available for the cohort, it is likely that regulations and or funding of those Apprenticeships will have changed, making it difficult to compare performance over time and make improvements from the data.

Question 8

Do you think results should be published at qualification level and/or at qualification by Awarding Organisation too?

Option	Total	Percentage of All
Yes at qualification level and by awarding body	20	23%
Yes at qualification level and No by awarding body	9	10%
Yes at qualification level	5	6%
No at qualification level and No by awarding body	9	10%
No by awarding body	9	10%
Unsure	16	18%
Unanswered	20	23%

15. Respondents in favour of the data being published at qualification level thought the information would be useful to providers as they sought to provide qualifications that offered learners the best long term prospects. However, respondents who said 'Yes' at qualification level and 'No' at awarding body level thought a breakdown at awarding body level would be less useful in informing choice. It could also inadvertently incentivise awarding bodies to drop standards or providers to pick the awarding bodies that looked easier to pass.

16. Those who were against publication at more granular levels thought the data should only be published if there was evidence that it would genuinely drive learner choice; they questioned how much the publication of course level data on FE Choices had influenced learners and employers.

17. Other key points in the responses were:

- Destinations and earnings outcomes from different forms of learning are going to be dependent on the labour market demand so it was unclear how informative a breakdown at qualification or awarding body level would be.

- If the Skills Funding Agency uses the measures to determine which qualifications to fund, this information should be readily available.

Question 9

Do you have any views on where and in what format this information should be published?

18. There was no overall consensus on where the data should be published, but the main point raised was that it should be in a location and format accessible to inform learners and employer choice. Suggestions for publication included Ofsted Dashboard, FE Choices, provider websites, National Careers Service, a new comparison website and GOV.UK. Respondents asked that the data be displayed as simply as possible in tabular format and with graphs and charts which would be easy to understand for learners and parents. Others suggested that it should be published in CSV format and enable the market to filter the information and further manipulate the data.

19. Providers were concerned that they would be unable to verify the data before it was published and about whether the data would be timely and detailed enough to be meaningful. Several respondents suggested that BIS should consult further on how the data is presented.

20. Other key points in the responses were:

- Learners and employers will search for details about a particular course not by overall provider performance.

- Prepare a separate easy-to-read view because learners will have limited understanding of how to interrogate statistics.

- Unlikely that the destination and earning data will be sensitive enough to show differences attributed to the same type of qualification.

- All the data should be made available in the same place and in the same format regardless of whether it was national, provider or qualification level data.

- Need to be able to filter the data by different criteria.

Question 10

Are there any other breakdowns such as different reference periods or delivery by subcontractors that could be used by local players (e.g. LEPs)?

21. Many respondents said that local breakdowns covering different geographical areas, key demographic variables and types of provider over multiple years would enable LEPs and local authorities to compare provision in their area and neighbouring areas and make informed decisions about provision in their area. Sub-contractor data would be useful.

Question 11

Do you agree with these principles for future Minimum Standards?

Option	Total	Percentage of All
Yes	34	39%
No	17	19%
Unsure	17	19%
Unanswered	20	23%

22. The respondents who thought the principles of minimum standards were sensible called for the methodology to be carefully considered. Many commented that the data needed to be understood in more detail and would welcome a specific consultation once further experimental data becomes available, before the measures were introduced. A number commented that the methodology should be kept simple and transparent. There were concerns about the robustness of the data and whether contextual information would be taken into account. If provider funding was to be affected by outcomes based on a variety of sources, the data had to be 100% accurate and informed.

23. Some expressed concerns about whether provider scores would be compared to national averages as the basis for assessment; this is unfair because 50% are automatically below average. To be fair and representative, contextual information needed to be considered.

24. ACL respondents did not think that minimum standards based on destination measures were as relevant for them as for FE colleges who aimed to get students into work.

25. Other key points in the responses were:

- Several respondents said that earnings should not be part of the measures.

- Accountability is important to ensure value for money, but it needs to reflect learners and their aims, aspirations and the time they need to achieve their intended outcome.

- Student success is often based on multi agencies; should they be separately accountable?

Question 12

Do you have specific views on future Minimum Standards methodology?

26. Those who responded to this question agreed with the concept of minimum standards, but thought it was difficult to set them to avoid perverse outcomes. There was no consensus on the number of measures that should trigger intervention. Some respondents who agreed with setting a minimum standard for each measure thought that providers should be considered to be below the standards if they fell below the threshold across all the measures. Others thought they should be considered below if they fell below two out of four of the thresholds.

27. Some respondents said that an Equality Impact Assessment would be useful to inform views.

28. Other key points in the responses were:

- Genuinely difficult to establish minimum standards for post-19 because learners take a wide qualification mix and have different aspirations.

- Tracking progress over a 5 -10 year cycle would provide valuable information.

- Future minimum standards methodology should align with Ofsted's Common Inspection Framework.

Annex B: List of respondents

EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYMENT ORGANISATIONS

CBI
Chatting Chimers
BCC
FSB
Green Inc (eu) Limited
HABIT
JTL

LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Buckinghamshire County Council - Adult Learning Service
Bury Council - Bury Adult Learning Service
City council (respondent input)
Derbyshire Adult Education Service (DACES)
Dudley MBC
Durham County Council Adult Learning & Skills Service
Greater London Authority
Halton Borough Council
Hull City Council
London Borough of Newham
The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
WAES
Waltham Forest Adult Learning Service
West Berkshire Council on behalf of the West Berks Community
Learning Partnership

LEPs

New Anglia LEP Skills Board
Tees Valley Unlimited

FE COLLEGE PROVIDERS

Accrington and Rossendale College
Barking & Dagenham College
Bishop Burton College
Blackpool and the Fylde College
Bolton College
Buxton & Leek College
Cambridge Regional College
Chichester College
City and Islington College
City College Norwich
Derby College

East Riding College
Easton & Otley College
FE College (anonymous)
FE College and Apprenticeship Provider (Respondent input)
FE Sussex (a consortium of 11 FE Colleges)
Fircroft College - a residential college
Gloucestershire College
Great Yarmouth College
Hertford Regional College
Leicester College
London College of Beauty Therapy
Loughborough College
Lowestoft College
Milton Keynes College
NCG
North East Surrey College of Technology
Northern College
Portsmouth College
Preston College
Redcar & Cleveland College
Richmond upon Thames College
Selby College
South Essex College
Suffolk New College
The Lancashire Colleges
The Manchester College
Vision West Nottinghamshire College
West Suffolk College

TRAINING PROVIDERS

A4E Ltd
Academy Transformation Trust
Adult, Family and Community Learning
Apprenticeship Training Agency
City Lit
Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)
ELATT
learndirect
Lifetime Training Group
National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE)
Workers Educational Association

COLLEGE AND PROVIDER REPRESENTATIVE ORGANISATIONS

Association of Colleges
Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP)
HOLEX
LEAFEA
The 157 Group

AWARDING ORGANISATIONS

City & Guilds
NCFE
Pearson UK

OTHERS

AAT
CACHE – The Council for Awards in Care, Health and
Education
Disability Rights UK
Lowestoft Sixth Form College
St Mungo's Broadway
University and College Union (UCU)
University of Durham