



FE Choices Learner Satisfaction Survey

2016 to 2017 National Report

Executive Summary

Introduction

This report provides an overview, at a national level, of the findings from the FE Choices Learner Satisfaction Survey 2016 to 2017. (Please see Appendix 1 for further information about the survey.)

This report focuses on the Learner Satisfaction Survey results only.

Key Findings

The Learner Satisfaction Survey provides a rich dataset, which can be analysed by a wide range of variables including age, level of study and gender. Additional analysis also took place by subject area and apprenticeship framework. This level of detailed analysis is possible because of the robust methodology employed by the survey and the large number of responses and the matching of learner responses to the ILR. All differences highlighted between groups are statistically significant.

The key findings from the survey at a national level are:

Question 8: Recommendation

(How likely is it that you would recommend the learning provider to friends or family?)

- 83% of respondents would recommend their learning provider to friends or family.
 - Well over a third (38%) would be extremely likely to recommend the learning provider
 - 45% would be likely to recommend.
- Learners aged 25 or over were more likely to recommend the learning provider than 16 to 18 year olds, with 93% of 25+ adults who would recommend compared to only 76% of 16 to 18 year olds.
 - 60% of learners aged 25 or over would be extremely likely to recommend the learning provider compared to 25% of 16 to 18 year olds.
- Female learners were much more likely to recommend the learning provider than male learners, with 87% of females compared to 79% of males.
- Learners studying at Level 1 or below were considerably more likely to recommend (92% of respondents) compared to those studying at Level 2 (83%) or Level 3 and above (78%).
 - 53% of learners at Level 1 or below would be extremely likely to recommend the learning provider, compared to 32% of Level 3 or above learners.
- Learners living in the areas of highest deprivation¹ were slightly more likely to recommend their provider than other learners.
 - Recommendation levels ranged from 86% among learners from the most deprived areas, compared to 81% of learners from the least deprived areas.
- 16 to 18-year-old apprentices were slightly less likely to recommend their learning provider than adult apprentices (82% compared to 88%).

¹ Defined as learners whose home postcode is in the 10% most deprived Super Output Areas in England according to the rank of Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2010.

- 16 to 18-year-old classroom based learners appeared to be the least likely to recommend (76%).
- Learners attending Other Public Funded institutions were more likely to recommend their learning provider (93%) compared to other provider types.
 - 88% of learners attending Private Sector Public funded institutions would recommend their provider whilst 78% of those from General FE Colleges (including tertiary) would recommend.
- A high level of learner recommendation appears to be associated with providers with outstanding or good Ofsted grades. 85% of learners at providers rated as outstanding or good by Ofsted would recommend the learning provider.
 - This compares with 77% of learners at providers who were rated as 'requires improvement' and 74% of learners at providers who were rated as inadequate by Ofsted (based on Ofsted scores from the 2012 to 2013 academic year onwards).
- Learners living in the Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly and Tees Valley Local Enterprise Partnership areas were more likely to recommend than learners in any other LEP area, with 88% being extremely likely or likely to recommend.
 - Greater Cambridge, and Greater Peterborough had the lowest percentage of learners who would recommend their learning provider (76%).

Subject Analysis

Responses to the 2016 to 2017 learner satisfaction survey were matched to the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) to identify a main subject of study (using the sector subject area tier 1 classification) or apprenticeship framework. Key findings from this analysis are:

- The subject areas Languages, Literature & Culture and History, Philosophy & Theology had the highest levels of learner recommendation (“How likely is it that you would recommend the learning provider to friends or family?”), with 94% of all respondents studying in these areas recommending the learning provider.
 - Other subjects with high provider recommendation included Preparation for Life & Work (92%) and Education & Training (90%).
- Science & Mathematics was the only subject where less than three-quarters of learners (73%) would recommend their learning provider.
- 75% of learners taking two or more A-Levels (in similar or different subject areas) would recommend their learning provider.
- In almost all subject areas, Level 2 learners rated their provider more highly than level 3+ learners.
- Most apprenticeship framework areas were highly rated by learners compared to classroom based study in equivalent subject areas. The only exception was Education & Training.
- There were significant variations between frameworks.
 - In Health & Social Care, Hospitality & Catering, Service Enterprises, Business Management and Retailing & Wholesaling had 90% or more of respondents recommending their learning provider.
 - In contrast, only 76% of respondents would recommend their provider when taking ICT Practitioners frameworks.

Satisfaction Questions 1 to 7

- The percentage of learners who rated the teaching on their course highly (giving a score of 8 to 10 for question 1 “How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the teaching on your course or activity?”) was 76%. Learners aged 25 or over were particularly positive about the quality of teaching, with more than 85% rating the teaching highly (8 or above).
- The response to the question “How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way staff treat you was particularly positive with 83% of respondents giving a score of 8 or higher.
- More than three quarters of all respondents (78%) gave a score of 8 to 10 for question 4 “How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the support you get on this course or activity?”
 - Older learners were more satisfied with the support they received with 94% of those aged 60 or over giving a score of 8 or higher to this question.
 - Learners at Level 1 or below were also very positive about the support they received, with 88% giving a score of 8 to 10.
- The lowest satisfaction rating, out of all of the questions, was for question 3 (advice learners had been given about what they could do after their course had finished).
 - Almost a third of learners (30%) gave a score of 7 or less, with 11% giving a score of 5 or less.
 - The satisfaction score was lower amongst 16 to 18 year olds compared to older age groups, with 62% of these respondents giving a score of 8 to 10.
- 16 to 18-year-old learners at General Further Education Colleges were less likely to believe that their provider responds to their views (questions 6), compared to 16 to 18-year-old learners at private training providers. 65% of 16 to 18-year-old learners at General Further Education Colleges gave question 6 a score of 8 to 10, compared to 80% who were enrolled with private training providers.

Appendix 1

FE Choices provides consistent and comparable information for learners and employers to help them make informed choices about publicly funded education and training. It also provides consistent management information on satisfaction levels of learners and employers.

The 2016 to 2017 Learner Satisfaction Survey took place from 31 October 2016 to 7 April 2017.

Colleges and training providers in scope for FE Choices and eligible to take part in the survey included:

- General FE colleges
- Specialist colleges (including art and design and land based)
- Special designated institutions
- Higher education institutions
- Other public-funded institutions
- Private sector, public funded institutions

For learning undertaken between November 2015 and March 2016 learners in scope were those funded through: -

- 16 to 19 funding
- Adult Education Budget funding, including Community Learning and Apprenticeship funding.
- Other funding
- Advanced Learning Loans

Learners on ESF programmes were not in scope.

The total number of learners who submitted a valid response to the Learner Satisfaction Survey in 2016 to 2017 was 364,589. Of these, 340,615 were linked to the Individualised Learner Record (ILR), allowing us to identify details of their learning programme and personal characteristics, such as age and gender. The vast majority submitted an online response, with 6% completing a paper-based survey.

The 364,589 survey respondents who took part in the survey were equivalent to 18.2% of the eligible learner population and gives an overall confidence interval of 0.1%. Due to the large number of responses, and because they are broadly representative, the results in this report are un-weighted.

The 2016 to 2017 Learner Satisfaction Survey included eight rating questions. For the first seven, learners were asked to rate various aspects of their course, learning programme or training programme on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 represented 'very dissatisfied' and 10 represented 'very satisfied'. The questions were:

1. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the teaching on your course or activity?
2. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way staff treat you?
3. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the advice you have been given about what you can do after this course or activity?
4. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the support you get on this course or activity?
5. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that the course is meeting your expectations?
6. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that your learning provider responds to the views of learners?
7. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your college or organisation that provides your learning?

The remaining question used a different scale:

8. How likely is it that you would recommend the learning provider to friends or family?

There were six possible responses to this question; “Extremely likely”, “Likely”, “Neither likely nor unlikely”, “Unlikely”, “Extremely unlikely” and “Does not apply”.

Note: Question wording was tailored to the learner’s environment. The wording above is for learners in a college environment.