

# Adult Participation in Learning Survey 2023: Yorkshire and the Humber

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**Learning and Work Institute**

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## Summary

Learning is crucial for life, work and society. It can help people find work, progress in or change careers, support health and wellbeing, promote social integration, and many more benefits besides. Lifelong learning will only grow in importance as the UK's population ages, people have longer working lives, and our economy and society changes.

Since 1996, Learning and Work Institute has been undertaking the Adult Participation in Learning Survey on an almost annual basis. The survey provides a unique overview of the level of participation in learning by adults, with a detailed breakdown of who participates and who does not.

Year-on-year the survey finds stark and persistent inequalities, with some groups more likely to learn as an adult than others. The 2023 survey also indicated that differences between geographical regions may be widening. With greater devolution of learning and skills policy and funding, it is important to better understand patterns of participation at a regional level.

Regional differences in adult participation in learning can be explained by demographical differences, in other words, who lives in the region. But other factors, such as policy interventions, can also result in these differences. This report provides insights on adult participation in learning in Yorkshire and the Humber.

### Key findings for Yorkshire and the Humber

In Yorkshire and the Humber, 47 per cent of adults said they have learned over the past three years, which is consistent with the UK and England averages. While Yorkshire and the Humber has the third lowest participation in learning rate in England, the proportion of current or recent learners is only significantly lower than the proportions of three other regions: Greater London (64 per cent), East Midlands (52 per cent) and the North West (52 per cent). Adults in Yorkshire and the Humber are significantly more likely to participate in learning than adults in Scotland (41 per cent).

The regional differences in participation rates could be partly explained by demographic differences. For example, in the survey sample, there is a higher proportion of adults in the DE social grade<sup>1</sup> and a lower proportion of adults in the AB social grade<sup>2</sup> in Yorkshire and the Humber than in the rest of the UK. Adults in higher social grades are the most likely to participate in learning, which could explain why the participation in learning in Yorkshire and the Humber is lower than in some other English regions.

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<sup>1</sup> DE social grade corresponds to adults in semi-skilled and unskilled manual occupations; unemployed and lowest grade occupations plus economically inactive and retired.

<sup>2</sup> AB social grade corresponds to adults in higher and intermediate managerial, administrative, and professional occupations.

Within Yorkshire and the Humber, and as seen in the UK as a whole, there are significant inequalities between demographic groups:

- Adults in the highest social grade (AB) are significantly more likely to participate in learning than adults in other social grades.
- Younger adults are significantly more likely to take up learning than older adults.
- The longer individuals remain in full-time education, the more likely they are to learn as an adult. In Yorkshire and the Humber people who full time education aged 17 or 18 are more likely to take part in learning than the rest of the UK.

These inequalities are fairly similar in the other regions: the demographic groups that are less likely to participate in learning in Yorkshire and the Humber are also those that are less likely to learn in the other regions.

In Yorkshire and the Humber, adults' motivations for learning and their method of learning are similar to the UK overall: they are more likely to be learning for work than for leisure; they are mainly learning independently or through work; and most are doing at least some of their learning online. Around three in ten learners are accessing provision (31 per cent) for free or their employer is covering the cost (28 per cent).

Around two thirds (67 per cent) of recent or current learners in Yorkshire and the Humber said they have experienced at least one challenge while learning. This is similar to the rest of the UK. The most commonly cited challenge, as seen in the rest of the UK, was work and other time pressures. Furthermore, survey respondents who say they haven't engaged with learning in the past three years were most likely to cite cost as a barrier to learning, which is similar to the rest of the UK.

The survey included questions about career change. More than two in five (44 per cent) would like or need to change their career/industry/occupation in the next one or two years. The main reason cited was to earn more money, followed by a desire to feel happier at work, to get a more interesting job or want a new challenge. Respondents were most likely to cite dispositional barriers<sup>3</sup> to changing job or career, including a lack of self-confidence and fear of applying for jobs. Most commonly, respondents said that if they wanted to change career, they would find learning or training helpful and they would search online to find information and advice (32 per cent). However, adults in Yorkshire and the Humber are significantly more likely to say they don't know where they would find information for career change than in the rest of the UK, with 14 per cent of adults saying this compared to 11 per cent in the rest of the UK.

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<sup>3</sup> Dispositional barriers relate to the attitudes, perceptions and expectations of adult. They include barriers such as feeling too old to learn, being put off by tests and exams, not feeling confident enough to learn.

## Introduction

Learning is crucial for life, work and society. It can help people find work, progress in or change careers, support health and wellbeing, promote social integration, and many more benefits besides. Lifelong learning will only grow in importance as the UK's population ages, people have longer working lives, and our economy and society changes.

The Adult Participation in Learning Survey provides a unique insight into how many adults are taking part in learning each year, the benefits people see from learning, and the reasons why some adults say they have not taken part in learning. It does so based on a broad definition of learning, including but not limited to formal learning, courses and qualifications.

The 2023 survey shows almost one in two adults in the UK took part in learning in the last three years, the highest rate since the survey started in 1996. This continues the step change in learning participation seen since the pandemic, which followed a decade of declines as the Government cut adult education budgets in England and austerity hit services.

The increase in participation since the pandemic has been driven by a rise in self-directed learning, including online. This is often for personal or leisure reasons or general interest. This is clearly positive, but other opportunities to learn have become more limited over time: employer and Government investment in England are down in the last decade.

There is more positive news in the narrowing over time of some inequalities in learning participation between groups. This includes by age, important given our aging population. Nonetheless, these inequalities remain stark and persistent and, in the case of regional differences, may in fact have widened in recent years.

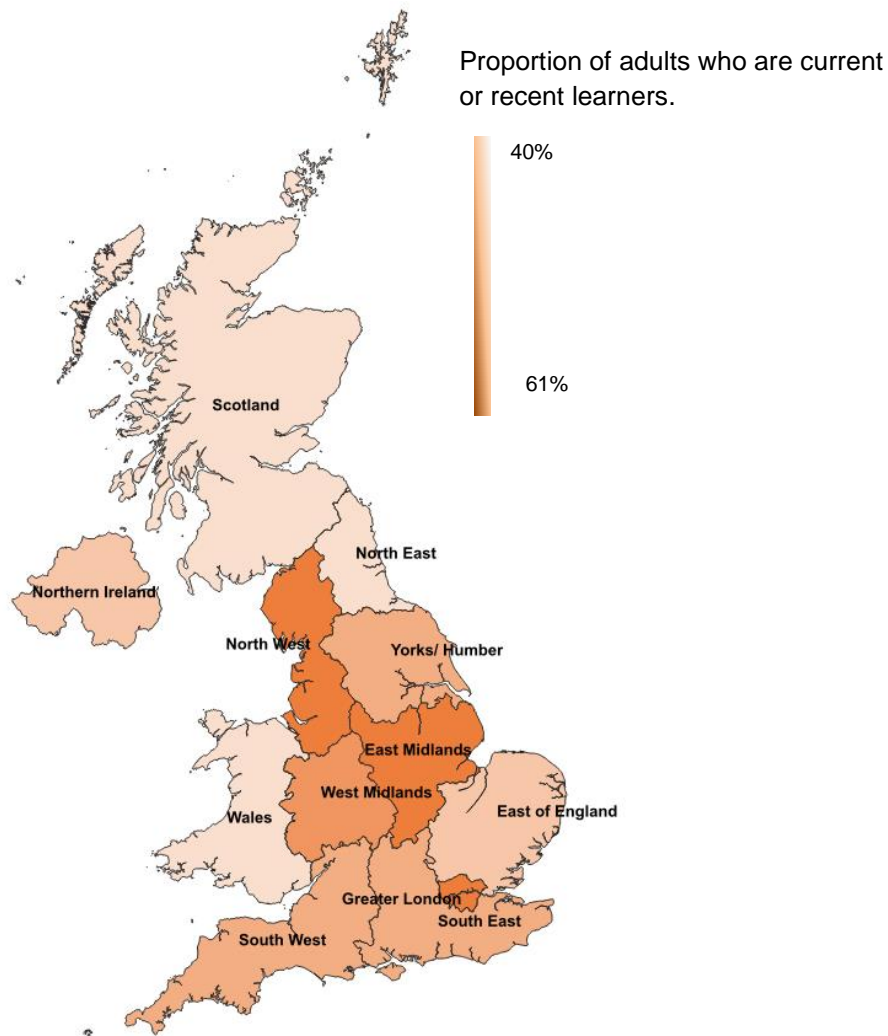
Growth in learning participation since 2019 shows an innate interest in learning among adults. However, fewer opportunities to learn at work or take part in formal learning or courses means people face limits in the types of learning they can pursue. Learning in all its forms has value and benefits.

To engage more adults in learning, policymakers, commissioners and those working in learning providers need to look at people's motivations for learning. The biggest reasons adults give for not taking part in learning are cost, feeling too old, time pressures and also not wanting to / not seeing the benefits. That points to the need to build a culture of learning and offer people a range of flexible learning options. Learning and Work Institute has called for an expanded Lifelong Learning Entitlement to provide more help with the course and living costs of learning at all levels and through life. Along with better incentives for employers to invest more in training, such as a new Skills Tax Credit, this can help us make that step change.

## Analysing UK's nations and regions

While increased participation in learning is encouraging, there are stark regional differences and the survey indicates that these inequalities have been growing since 2017.<sup>4</sup> For example, while more than three in five adults in London have learned within the past three years, only two in five adults say are either a current or recent learners in the North East. Furthermore, participation rates are also lower for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales than for England.

**Figure 1: Adult participation in learning by English regions and UK nations**



Source: Adult Participation in Learning Survey 2023.

However, there are also important inequalities within regions and nations, with some groups less likely to take part in learning than others. With greater devolution of learning

<sup>4</sup> Hall, S., Jones E., Evans, S. (2023) [Adult Participation in Learning Survey 2023](#), Learning and Work Institute.

and skills policy and funding, it is important to better understand patterns of participation at a regional level. This can help inform where interventions and support are best targeted and may make the greatest impact. It should be noted that combined authorities, who manage devolved adult education budgets, cover sub regional areas rather than a region as a whole.

## About the Adult Participation in Learning Survey

Since 1996, Learning and Work Institute has been undertaking the Adult Participation in Learning Survey on an almost annual basis.<sup>5</sup> The survey provides a unique overview of the level of participation in learning by adults, with a detailed breakdown of who participates and who does not.

The survey deliberately adopts a broad definition of learning, including a wide range of formal, non-formal and informal learning, far beyond the limits of publicly offered educational opportunities for adults. Each year, a representative sample of approximately 5,000 adults aged 17 and over across the UK are provided with the following definition of learning and asked when they last took part, as well as how likely they are to take part in learning during the next three years:

*‘Learning can mean practising, studying, or reading about something. It can also mean being taught, instructed or coached. This is so you can develop skills, knowledge, abilities or understanding of something. Learning can also be called education or training. You can do it regularly (each day or month) or you can do it for a short period of time. It can be full-time or part-time, done at home, at work, or in another place like college. Learning does not have to lead to a qualification. We are interested in any learning you have done, whether or not it was finished.’*

Like most of our surveys in recent years, the 2023 survey explores who participates in learning; motivations and barriers; how learning is undertaken; and benefits experienced as a result of learning. It also includes questions on learning for career change.

Unlike previous years, the 2023 survey sample includes regional boosts to achieve a minimum sample size in each UK region (600 for all regions apart from Northern Ireland, where the sample was boosted to 400 respondents). The boosted sample consists of 9,506 adults aged 17 and over (8,906 weighted). A total of 789 adults in Yorkshire and the Humber took part in the survey (730 weighted).

Fieldwork was conducted between August and September 2023 by a market research company via their UK online omnibus survey. The sample has been weighted to provide a nationally representative dataset.

To find out more about the survey series and explore trend data through our interactive charts, visit [www.learningandwork.org.uk](http://www.learningandwork.org.uk).

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<sup>5</sup> Surveys were undertaken annually from 1996 except in three years: 1997, 1998 and 2016.

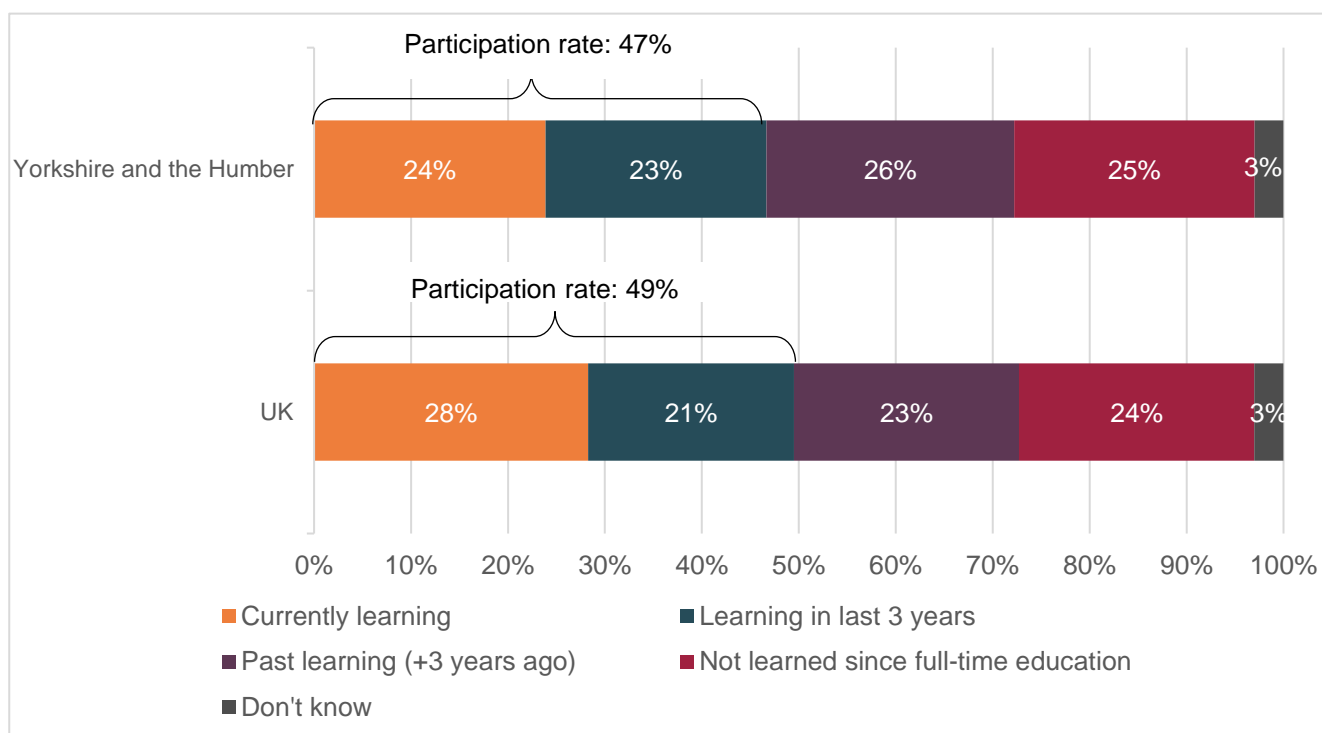


## Adult participation in learning in Yorkshire and the Humber

Participation in learning is slightly higher in Yorkshire and the Humber compared to the UK overall. Just under one half (47 per cent) of adults in Yorkshire and the Humber stated they are currently learning or that they have taken up learning within the past three years, compared to 49 per cent in the UK. However, the difference is not statistically significant.

Almost one in four adults in Yorkshire and the Humber said they are currently learning (24 per cent), with a further 23 per cent saying they have done some learning over the past three years (Figure 2). Just over one in four adults (26 per cent) said they have not done any learning since full-time education or that they have been in learning over three years ago (25 per cent).

**Figure 2: Overall participation in learning in Yorkshire and the Humber**



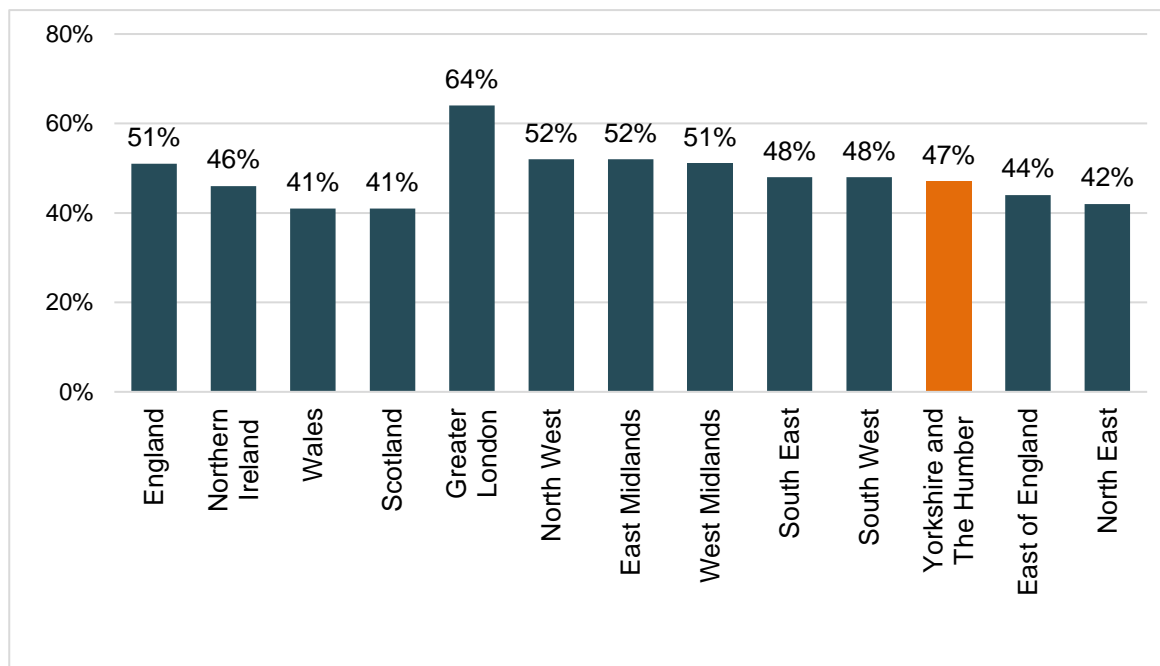
Base: Yorkshire and the Humber respondents. Weighted base = 730, unweighted base = 786. UK: all respondents. Weighted base = 8906, unweighted base = 9506.

When comparing levels of participation in learning across the UK in 2023, the survey shows that the participation rate in Yorkshire and the Humber is slightly below the average in England (51 per cent) (Figure 3). This compares to 46 per cent in Northern Ireland, and 41 per cent in both Scotland and Wales.

**Yorkshire and the Humber has the third lowest participation in learning rate in England.** However, the proportion of current or recent learners is only significantly lower than the proportions of three other regions: Greater London (64 per cent), East Midlands

(52 per cent) and the North West (52 per cent). Adults in Yorkshire and the Humber are significantly more likely to participate in learning than adults in Scotland (41 per cent). These regional differences can be partly explained by compositional factors – who lives in this region – as some demographic groups are more likely to participate in learning than others.

**Figure 3: Participation in learning by region and nation**

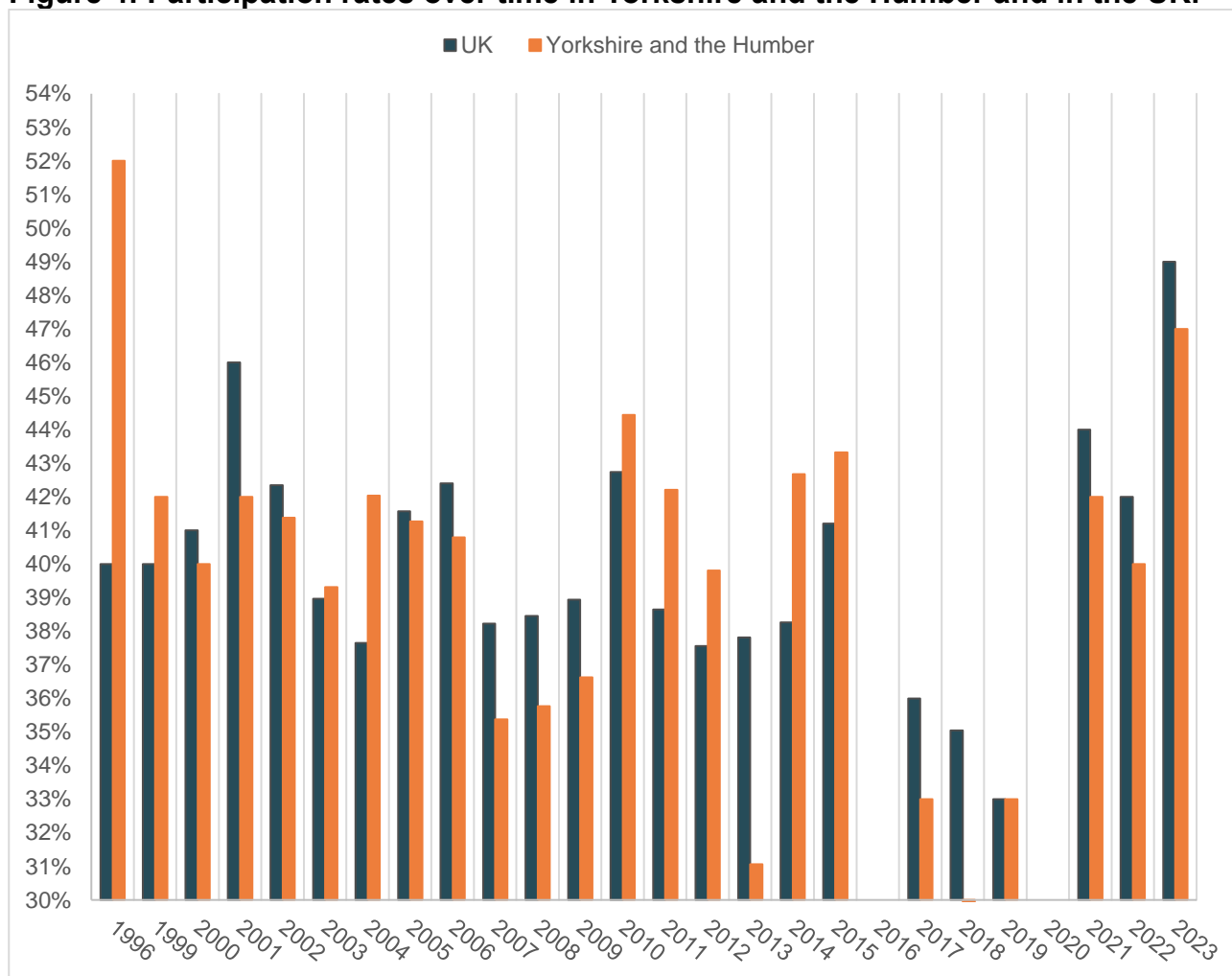


Base: all respondents. Total weighted base = 8,906, North East = 359, North West = 975, Yorkshire and The Humber = 730, East Midlands = 651, West Midlands = 782, East of England = 832, Greater London = 1,173, South East = 1,216, South West = 772, England = 7,491, Northern Ireland = 249, Scotland = 744, Wales = 422. Total unweighted base = 9,506, North East = 598, North West = 1,045, Yorkshire and The Humber = 786, East Midlands = 709, West Midlands = 834, East of England = 814, Greater London = 1,328, South East = 1,083, South West = 711, England = 7,908, Northern Ireland = 401, Scotland = 600, Wales = 597.

In the 27-year history of the survey, the participation rate in Yorkshire and the Humber has been higher than the UK average in nine years (Figure 4)<sup>6</sup>. While there are some variations in the rates, the trend follows broadly the trend in the UK. However, the year-on-year changes need to be interpreted with caution as the volatility of the estimates are partly due to the smaller sample size at a regional level.

<sup>6</sup> Note that data is available for 23 out of 27 years. The survey did not run in 1996, 1997 or 2016. The survey in 2020 was carried out using a different methodology and is therefore not comparable.

**Figure 4: Participation rates over time in Yorkshire and the Humber and in the UK.**



Base: all respondents to each survey. Weighted base for 2023 = 8,906, unweighted base for 2023 = 9,506.

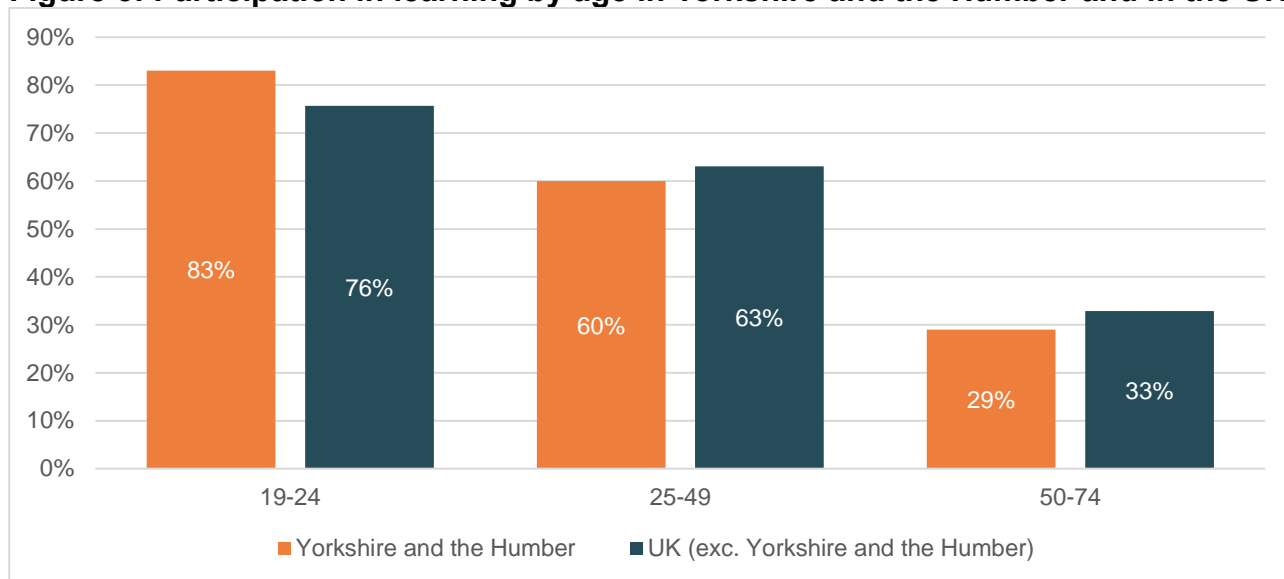
## Demographic breakdown

### Age

The UK survey consistently shows that participation in learning decreases with age. In Yorkshire and the Humber, younger adults aged 19 to 24 are significantly more likely to say they are current or recent learners than all the other age groups (Figure 5). More than four in five younger adults (83 per cent) said they are current or recent learners, compared with three in five adults aged 25-49 (60 per cent) and three in ten adults aged 50-74 (29 per cent).

The participation rates by age in Yorkshire and the Humber are slightly different from the UK overall. However, none of the difference are statistically significant.

**Figure 5: Participation in learning by age in Yorkshire and the Humber and in the UK**



Base: Yorkshire and the Humber respondents. Total weighted base = 661, 19 -24 = 76, 25-49 = 271, 50-74 = 314. Total unweighted base = 720, 19-24 = 79, 25-49 = 310, 50-74 = 331. UK respondents (exc. Yorkshire and the Humber). Total weighted base = 7280, 19-24 = 823, 25-49= 3286, 50-74 = 3273. Total unweighted base = 7986, 19 -24 = 841, 25-49 = 3728, 50-74 = 3417.

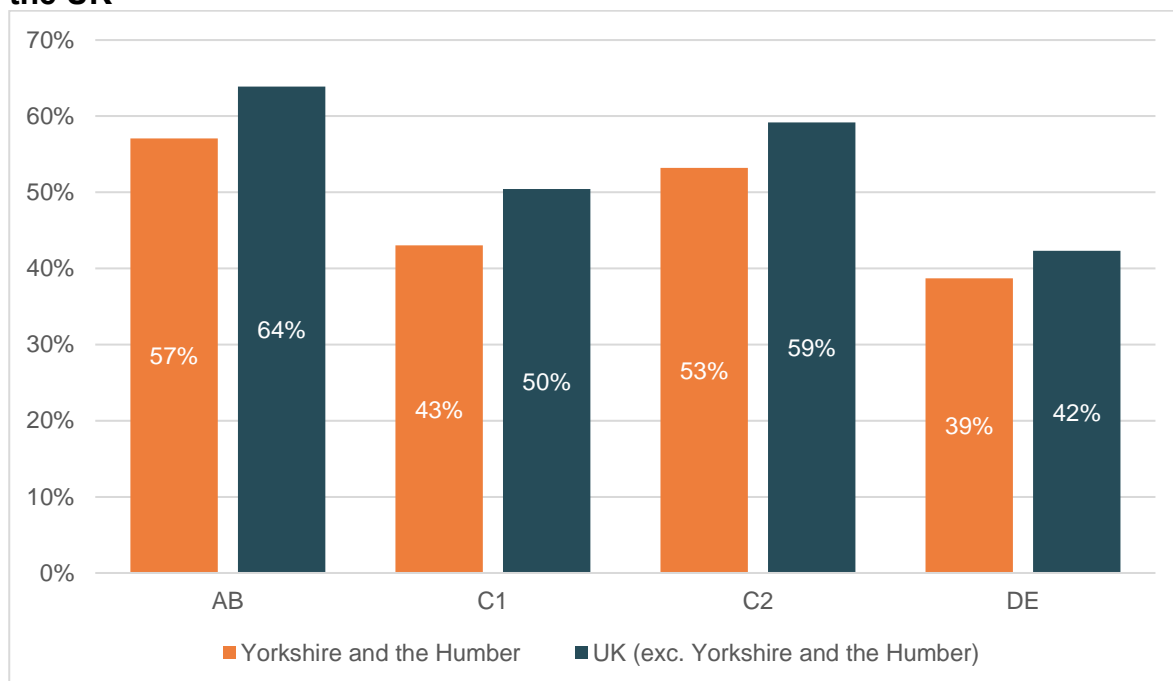
### Social grade

The Adult Participation in Learning Survey consistently shows that social grade<sup>7</sup> is a key predictor of participation in learning. In Yorkshire and the Humber, people in the AB and C2 social grades are significantly more likely to say they are current or recent learners compared those in C1 and DE grades (Figure 6). Just under three in five adults (57 per cent) in the AB social grade said they are current or recent learners, compared to 53 per cent in the C2, 46 per cent in the DE grades and 43 per cent in C1.

The participation rates by social grades are fairly similar to the rates in the UK (excluding Yorkshire and the Humber). While there are some slight differences, none of these are statistically significant.

<sup>7</sup> Social Grade: AB: Higher and intermediate managerial, administrative, and professional occupations. C1: Supervisory, clerical, and junior managerial, administrative, and professional occupations. C2: Skilled manual occupations. DE: Semi-skilled and unskilled manual occupations; unemployed and lowest grade occupations plus economically inactive and retired.

**Figure 6: Participant in learning by social grade in Yorkshire and the Humber and in the UK**



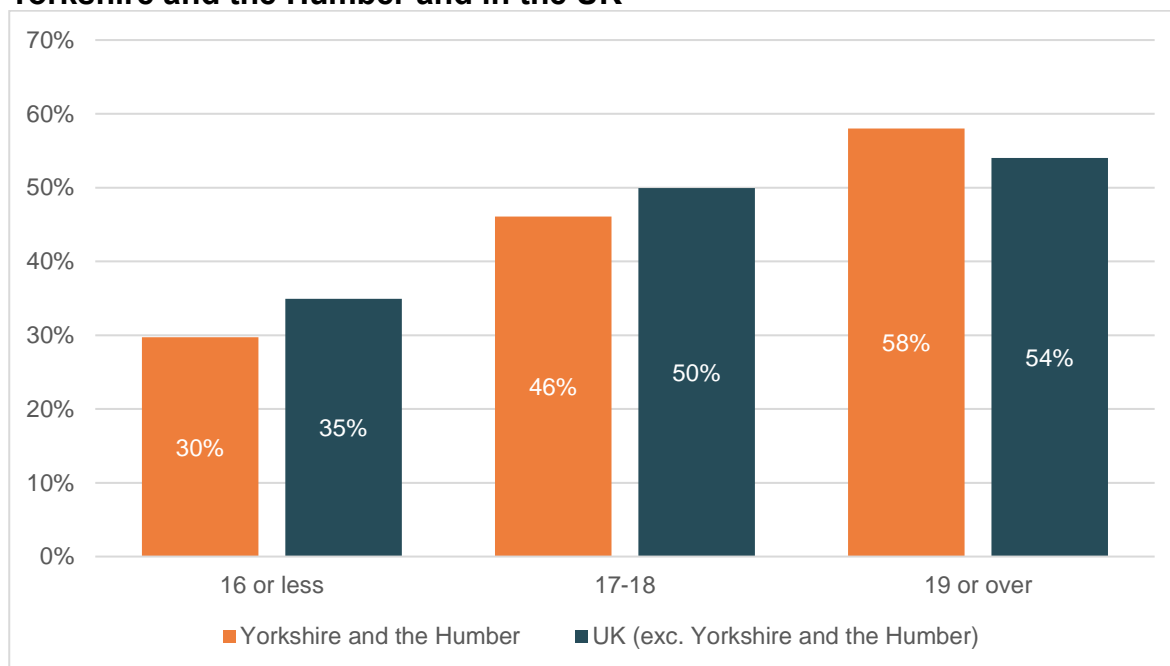
Base: Yorkshire and the Humber respondents. Total weighted base = 730, AB = 184, C1 = 179, C2 = 124, DE = 243. Total unweighted base = 786, AB = 196, C1 = 192, C2 = 135, DE = 263. Base: UK (excluding Yorkshire and the Humber) respondents. Total weighted base = 8176, AB = 2554, C1 = 1844, C2 = 1382, DE = 2398. Total unweighted base = 8720, AB = 2707, C1 = 1988, C2 = 1488, DE = 2537.

### Age completed full-time education

The survey uses the age someone left full-time education as a proxy for highest level of qualification. The UK survey shows that the longer individuals remain in full-time education, the more likely they are to learn as an adult. In Yorkshire and the Humber, adults who left full-time education aged 16 or under are significantly less likely to learn as an adult than the other groups (Figure 7). Three in ten adults (30 per cent) who left education aged 16 or under are current or recent learners. This figure increases for those who stayed in education until age 17-18 to nearly one half of adults (46 per cent) and nearly three in five (58 per cent) for those who left education aged 19 or over.

In Yorkshire and the Humber, the participation rates are fairly similar to the rates for the UK overall.

**Figure 7: Participation in learning by age of completing full-time education in Yorkshire and the Humber and in the UK**



Base: Yorkshire and the Humber respondents. Total weighted base = 731, 16 or less = 243, 17-18 = 197, 19 or over = 291. Total unweighted base = 750, 16 or less = 275, 17-18 = 177, 19 or over = 298. Base: UK respondents (excluding Yorkshire and the Humber). Total weighted base = 8275, 16 or less = 2469, 17-18 = 1822, 19 or over = 3506. Total unweighted base = 8275, 16 or less = 2469, 17-18 = 1979, 19 or over = 3827.

### Gender

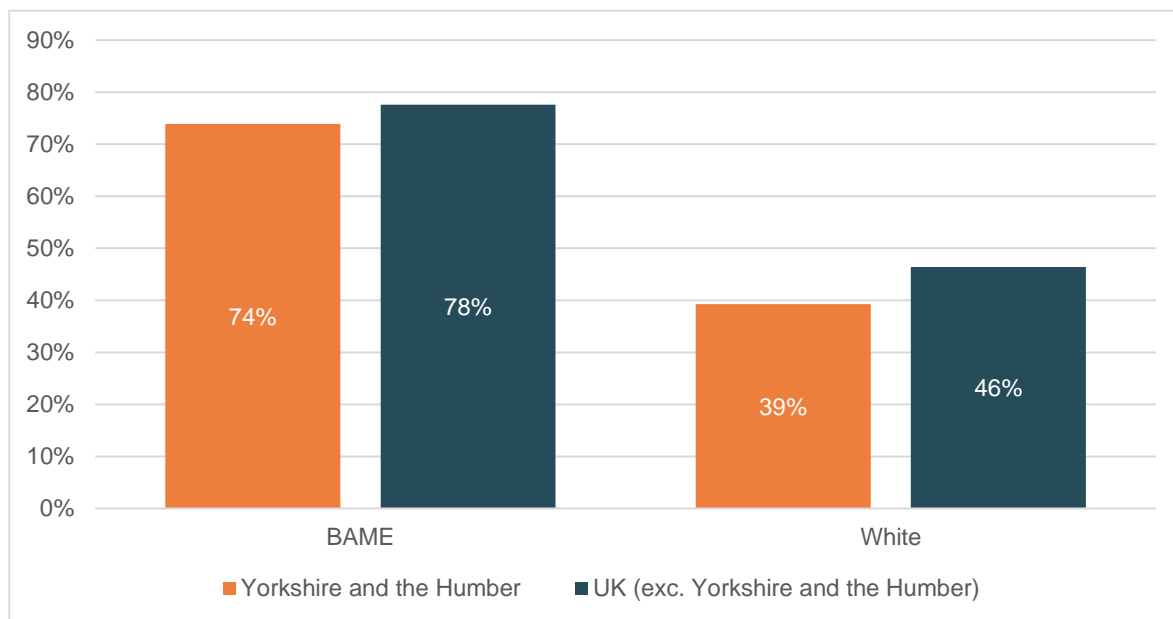
In Yorkshire and the Humber, men (48 per cent) are more likely than women (46 per cent) to say they are current or recent learners. However, this difference is not statistically significant. Furthermore, the rates are similar to the UK overall, with 51 per cent of men and 47 per cent of women in the UK saying they are current or recent learners.

### Ethnicity

The national survey indicates that people from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds are more likely to say they have taken part in learning than White respondents. This is also the case in Yorkshire and the Humber, with nearly three quarters (74 per cent) of adults from BAME backgrounds saying they are current or recent learners, compared with 39 per cent of White respondents (Figure 8).

The participation rates for both groups are fairly similar to the rates in the rest of the UK.

**Figure 8: Participation in learning by ethnicity in Yorkshire and the Humber and in the UK**



Base: Yorkshire and the Humber respondents. Total weighted base = 525, BAME = 87, White = 438. Total unweighted base = 564, BAME = 96, White = 468. Base: UK respondents (excluding Yorkshire and the Humber). Total weighted base = 5334, BAME = 887, White = 4447. Total unweighted base = 5556, BAME = 946, White = 4610.

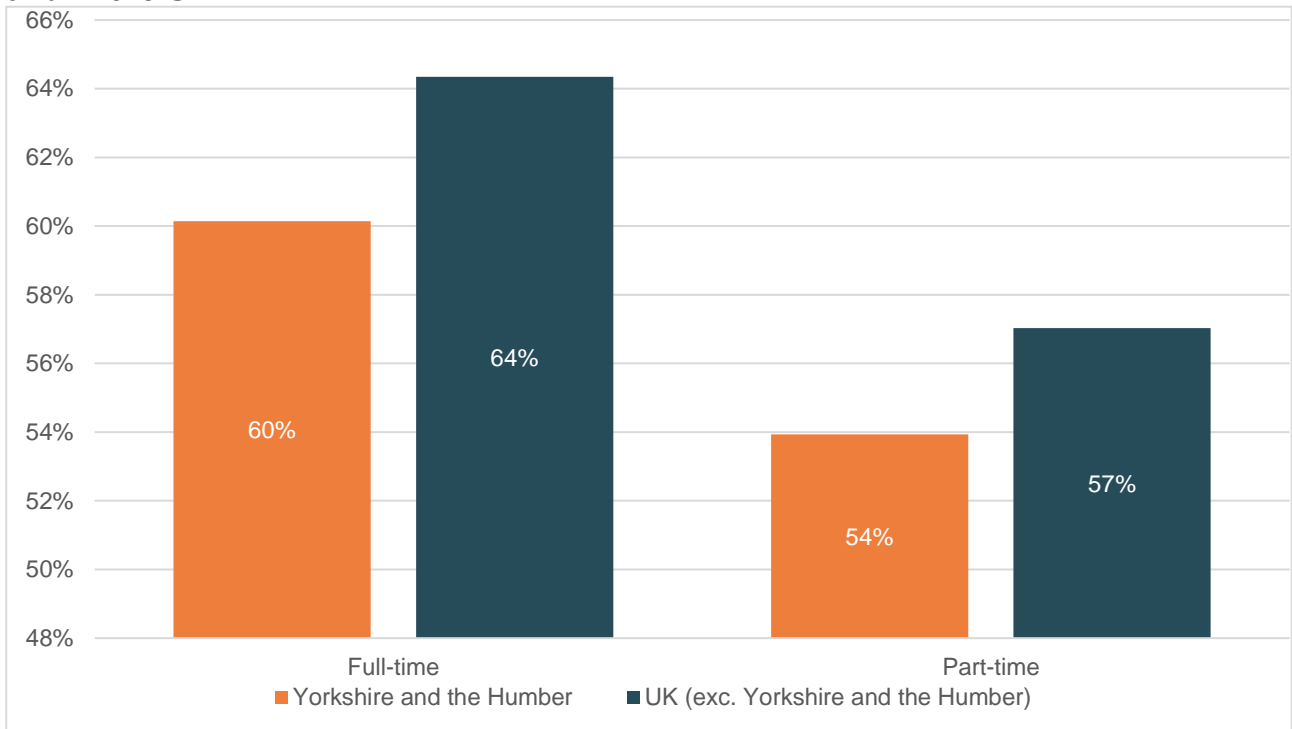
### Working status

The survey shows that working status is a key predictor of participation in learning, with closer proximity to the labour market associated with higher participation rates. Due to small sample sizes, Yorkshire and the Humber analysis includes only two working statuses: working full-time and working part-time (Figure 9).

Adults in full-time employment are significantly more likely to say they are currently learning or have done so in the last three years (60 per cent), compared to those working part-time (54 per cent).

The participation rates by working status in Yorkshire and the Humber are similar to the UK overall.

**Figure 9: Participation in learning by working status in Yorkshire and the Humber and in the UK**



Base: Yorkshire and the Humber respondents. Total weighted base = 718, Full-time = 272, Part-time = 89. Total unweighted base = 775, Full-time = 305, Part-time = 100. Base: UK (excluding Yorkshire and the Humber) respondents. Total weighted base = 8076, Full-time = 3211, Part-time = 1166. Total unweighted base = 8612, Full-time = 3583, Part-time = 1291.

Note: Respondents in other working status are not shown in this chart due to small sample sizes in Yorkshire and the Humber.



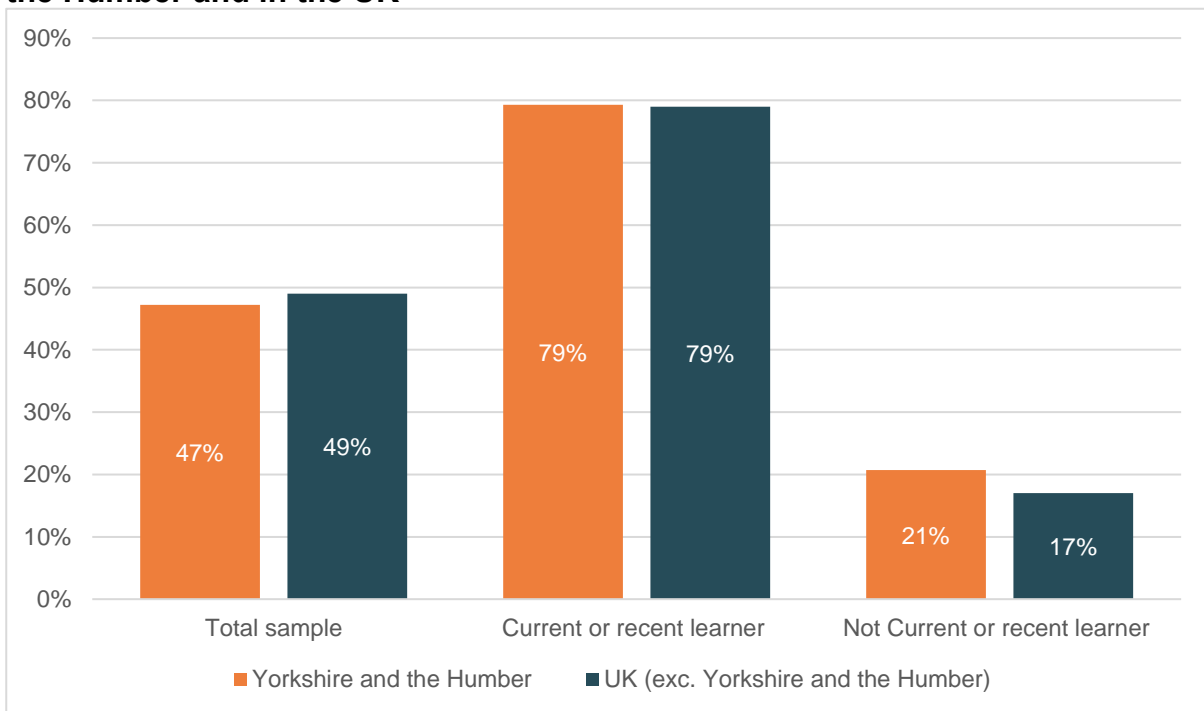
## Future intentions to learn

As well as patterns and experiences of current/recent learning, the survey captures future intentions to learn. Respondents were asked about their likelihood of taking up learning in the next three years.

In Yorkshire and the Humber, almost half (47 per cent) of adults said that they are either very likely or likely to take up learning in the next three years (Figure 10). However, adults' intention to learn is highly influenced by their current learning status. Recent and current learners are significantly more likely to say they are likely to learn in the future than adults who haven't engaged with learning in the past three years. Nearly four in five (79 per cent) current or recent learners said they are likely or very likely to learn in the future, compared with just above one in five (21 per cent) of adults who haven't engaged with learning in the past three years.

These proportions are fairly similar to the UK overall: 79 per cent of the current or recent learners said they are likely to learn in the future compared with only 17 per cent of adults who have not taken up learning over the last three years.

**Figure 10: Future likelihood of learning by current learning status in Yorkshire and the Humber and in the UK**



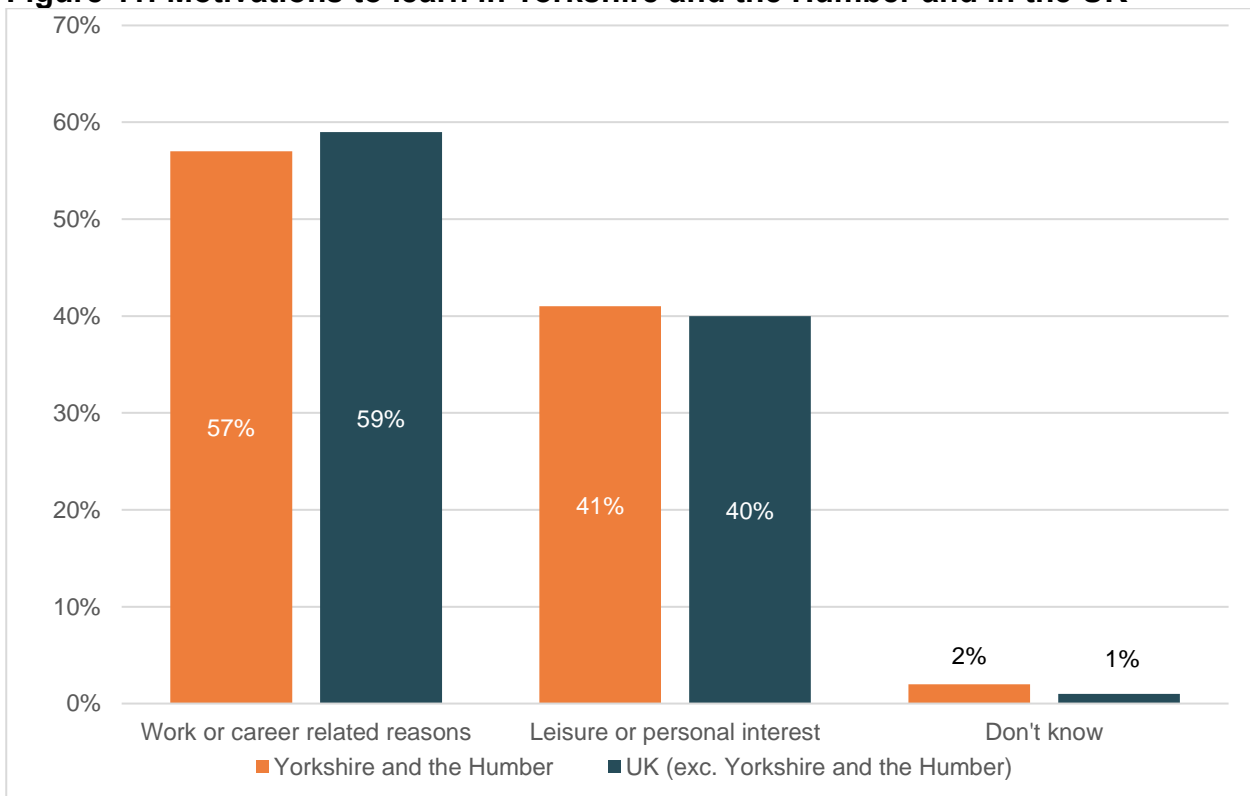
Base: Yorkshire and the Humber respondents. 'Don't know' responses have been taken out. Weighted base = 730, Current or recent learner = 341, Not current or recent learner = 389. Unweighted base = 786, Current or recent learner = 375, Not current or recent learner = 411. Base: UK (excluding Yorkshire and the Humber) respondents. Weighted base = 8175, Current or recent learner = 4055, Not current or recent learner = 4120. Unweighted base = 8720, Current or recent learner = 4403, Not current or recent learner = 4317.

## Motivations to learn

Respondents who have engaged with learning within the previous three years were asked to state whether they started their main learning for work or career related reasons. In Yorkshire and the Humber, nearly three in five adults (57 per cent) said they took up learning for work or career related reasons, while around two in five (39 per cent) say they took up learning for leisure or personal interests (Figure 11).

These proportions are similar to the rest of the UK: 57 per cent of respondents in the rest of the UK said they took up learning for work or career related reasons compared 42 per cent who say they did it for leisure or personal interest.

**Figure 11: Motivations to learn in Yorkshire and the Humber and in the UK**



Base: all current or recent learners in Yorkshire and the Humber. Weighted base = 341, unweighted base = 375. Base: all current or recent learners in the UK (excluding Yorkshire and the Humber). Weighted base = 4055, unweighted base = 4403.

## Learning delivery

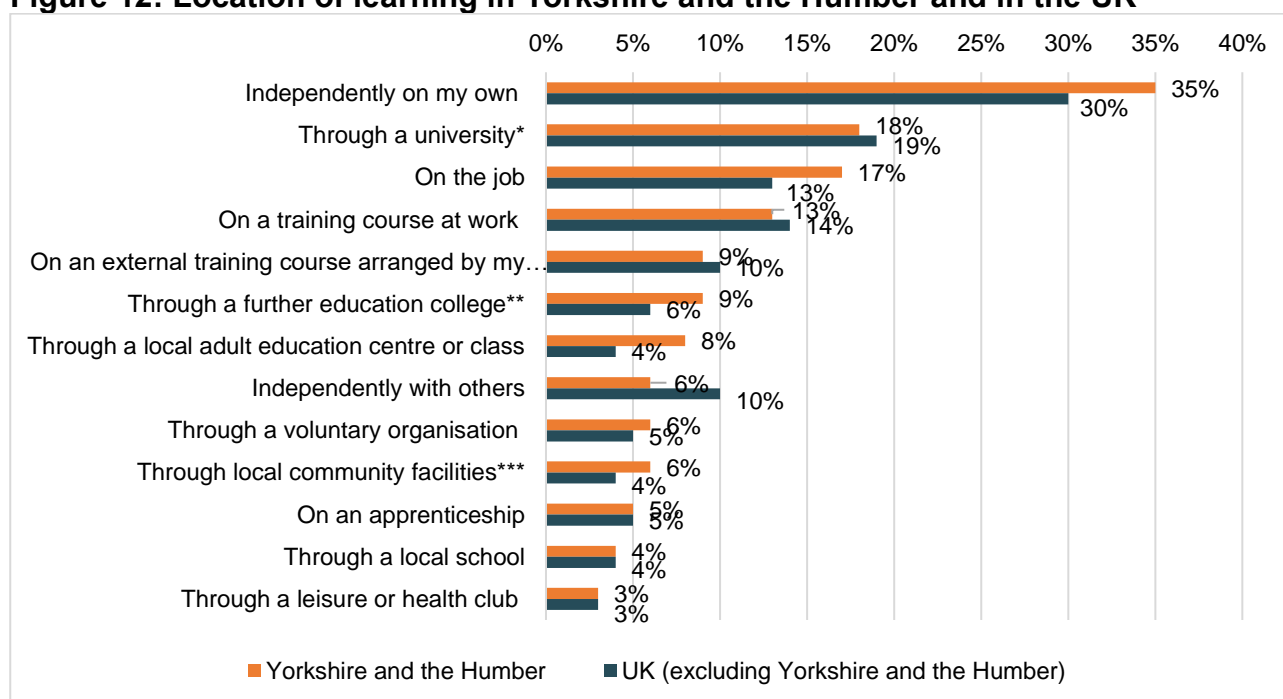
Adults who reported that they are currently learning or have done so in the last three years were asked how they did or are doing their main learning. In Yorkshire and the Humber, over one third (35 per cent) current and recent learners said they learned independently on their own (Figure 12).

Work related learning was also commonly reported, with 17 per cent of adults learning on the job, 13 per cent through a training course at work and 9 per cent through an external training course arranged by their employers. Only five per cent reported doing an apprenticeship.

The third most commonly reported type of provision was a course with a university higher education institution (18 per cent). Around one in ten learners (9 per cent) said they did this through a further education college.

Other provision reported by learners included voluntary organisation (6 per cent), local adult education centre (8 per cent), community facilities (6 per cent), local school (4 per cent), or leisure or health club (3 per cent).

**Figure 12: Location of learning in Yorkshire and the Humber and in the UK**



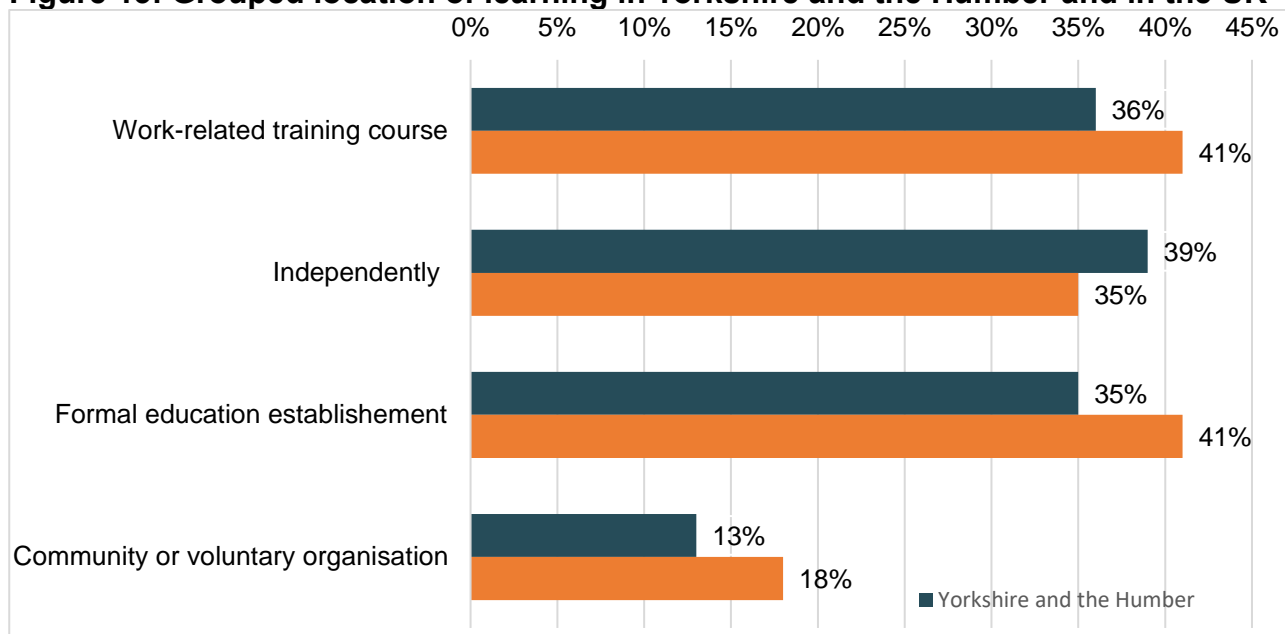
Base: all current or recent learners in Yorkshire and the Humber. Weighted base = 341, unweighted base = 375. Base: all current or recent learners in the UK (excluding Yorkshire and the Humber). Weighted base = 4055, unweighted base = 4403. \*higher education institution/Open University \*\*tertiary/6th Form college \*\*\* such as a library, museum, place of worship, bookshop etc.

To help with comparison, these delivery methods could be grouped in four categories: independently; formal education establishment; work-related training course and

community or voluntary organisation.<sup>8</sup> In Yorkshire and the Humber, 39 per cent of learners said they had learned independently, 36 per cent said they had done a work-related training course, 35 per cent said they have done their training through a formal establishment, and 13 per cent said they have done their training through a community or voluntary organisation (Figure 13).

The delivery methods are fairly similar to the rest of the UK, with 41 per cent of current or recent learners in the other regions doing their learning either independently or through a work related course, 35 per cent doing it through a formal educational establishment and 18 per cent through a community or voluntary organisation. There are no statistical differences in the method of learning between adults in Yorkshire and the Humber and the rest of the UK.

**Figure 13: Grouped location of learning in Yorkshire and the Humber and in the UK**



Base: all current or recent learners in Yorkshire and the Humber. Weighted base = 341, unweighted base = 375. Base: all current or recent learners in the UK (excluding Yorkshire and the Humber). Weighted base = 4055, unweighted base = 4403.

<sup>8</sup> The response options were categorised as follows:

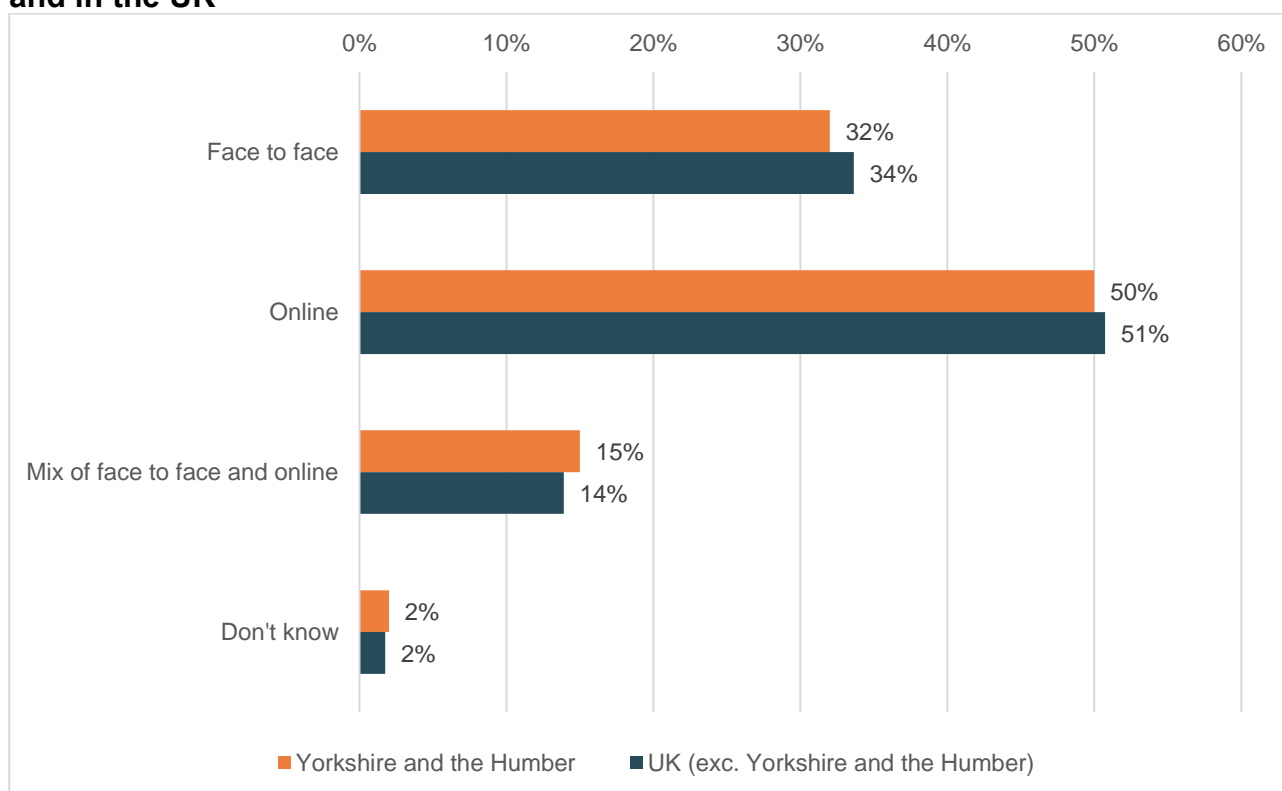
- Work-related, including: On the job; On a training course at work; On an external training course arranged by my employer; On an apprenticeship
- Independently, including: Independently on my own; Independently with others
- Formal educational establishment, including: Through a university/higher education institution/Open University; Through a further education college/tertiary/6th form college; Through a local adult education centre or class; Through a local school
- Community or voluntary organisation, including: Through a voluntary organisation; Through local community facilities e.g. library, museum, place of worship, bookshop etc; Through a leisure or health club.

## Online and face to face

Adults who reported that they are currently learning or have done so in the last three years were asked whether their main learning took place online or face-to-face. In Yorkshire and the Humber, one half (50 per cent) of current or recent learners said they completed at least one of their learning online (Figure 14). Nearly one in three (32 per cent) said they have taken up their learning face to face and just over one in ten (12 per cent) said their learning has involved a mix of online and face to face learning.

The proportions are similar to the UK overall: 51 per cent of learners in the rest of the UK said they have done their learning online, 34 per cent said they have done it face to face and 14 per cent said it involved a mix of online and face to face learning.

**Figure 14: Participation in learning by mode of delivery in Yorkshire and the Humber and in the UK**



Base: all current or recent learners in Yorkshire and the Humber. Weighted base = 341, unweighted base = 375. Base: all current or recent learners in the UK (excluding Yorkshire and the Humber). Weighted base = 4055, unweighted base = 4403.

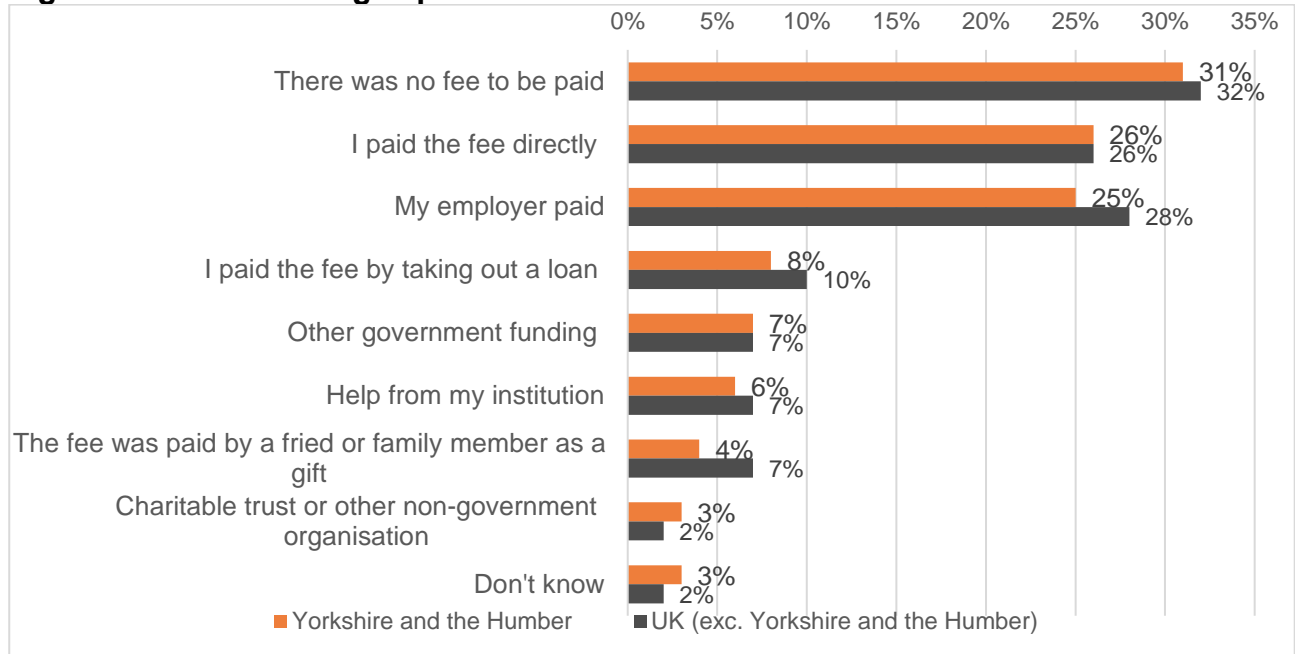
## Fees

In Yorkshire and the Humber, nearly seven in ten (67 per cent) of current or recent learners said a fee was attached to their main learning (Figure 15). Most commonly, learners reported they paid their fee directly (26 per cent). One in four (25 per cent) of learners said their fee was paid by their employer. Less than one in ten learners said they paid their fee by taking out a loan (8 per cent), with other government funding (7 per cent), with help from institution (6 per cent) or with support from their friend or family member (4

per cent). Support by charities or non-governmental organisation was reported by just one per cent of learners.

The proportions of people who reported paying for their learning in Yorkshire and the Humber was similar to the rest of the UK (66 per cent). Although the proportions of learners in Yorkshire and the Humber are marginally different from some of the ways participants reported paying for their learning, none of the differences are statistically significant.

**Figure 15: How learning is paid for in Yorkshire and the Humber and in the UK**



Base: all current or recent learners in Yorkshire and the Humber. Weighted base = 341, unweighted base = 375. Base: all current or recent learners in the UK (excluding Yorkshire and the Humber). Weighted base = 4055, unweighted base = 4403.

## Barriers to learning

Each year, current or recent learners are asked to state any challenges that they have encountered while learning, and adults who have not participated in learning for at least three years are asked to identify the barriers that prevent them from doing so. These provide insights on the types of obstacles that policy and practice can seek to remove to ensure that more and different adults are able to engage in learning throughout their lives.

### Challenges current or recent learners have experienced

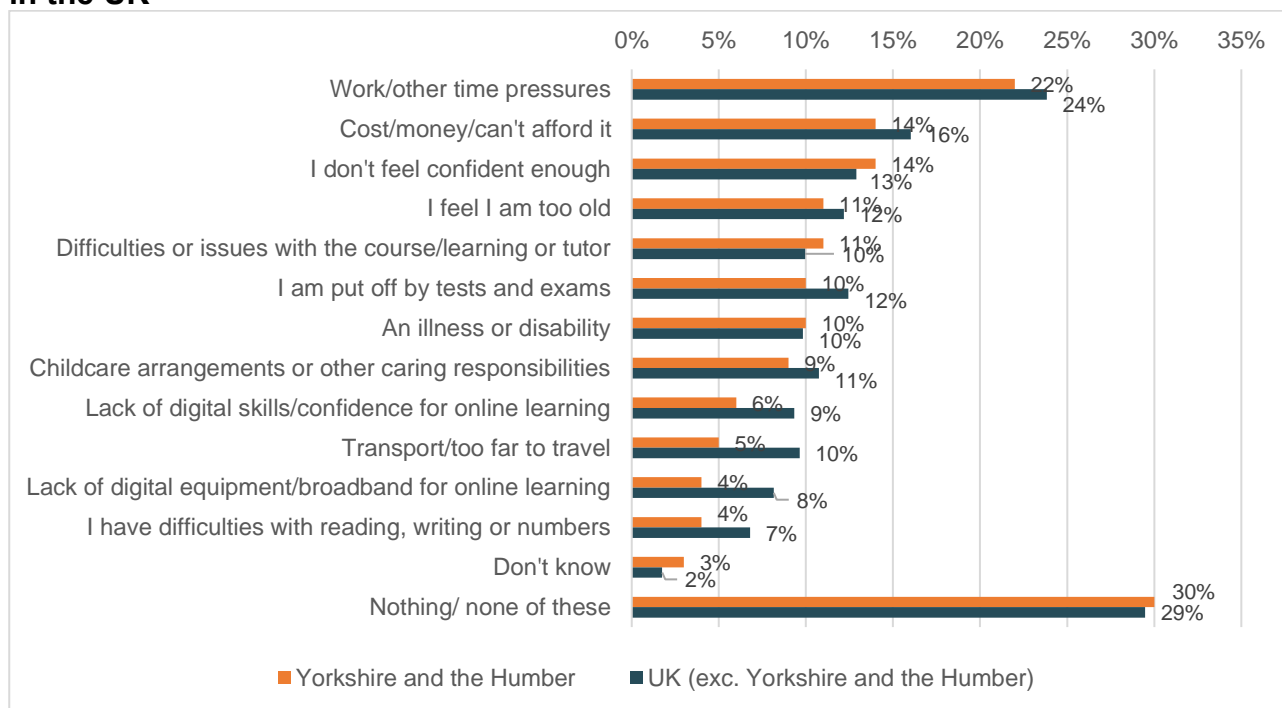
In Yorkshire and the Humber, two third (67 per cent) of current or recent learners identified at least one challenge while learning. This proportion is not significantly different from the rest of the UK.

Most commonly, current or recent learners identified work and other time pressures as a challenge, with nearly one in five (23 per cent) of adults in Yorkshire and the Humber identifying these as a challenge (Figure 16).

Other common challenges relate to people's attitudes or perceptions of learning, such as lack of confidence to learn (14 per cent), feeling too old (11 per cent), or being put off by tests/exams (10 per cent). Respondents identified challenges related to their situation, including the cost of learning (14 per cent), illness or disability (10 per cent), childcare arrangements or other caring responsibilities (9 per cent), or transport (5 per cent). Participants also said they experienced digital barriers while learning due to a lack of digital equipment (6 per cent) or a lack of digital skills or confidence for online working (4 per cent).

The challenges experienced by learners Yorkshire and the Humber are similar to those identified by learners in other UK regions.

**Figure 16: Challenges experienced when learning in Yorkshire and the Humber and in the UK**



Base: all current or recent learners in Yorkshire and the Humber. Weighted base = 341, unweighted base = 375. Base: all current or recent learners in the UK (excluding Yorkshire and the Humber). Weighted base = 4055, unweighted base = 4403.

Challenges encountered by learners can be grouped into those that are:

- **Situational**, arising from an adult's personal and family situation, including: cost/money/can't afford it; Childcare arrangements or other caring responsibilities; Transport/too far to travel; Work/other time pressures; lack of digital equipment/broadband for online learning
- **Dispositional**, relating to the attitudes, perceptions and expectations of adults, including: I feel I am too old; An illness or disability; I am put off by tests and exams; I have difficulties with reading, writing or numbers; I don't feel confident enough; lack of digital skills/confidence for online learning
- **Institutional**, arising from the unresponsiveness of educational institutions, including: Difficulties or issues with the course/learning or tutor.

In Yorkshire, just above two in five (43 per cent) of learners said they have experienced situational challenges (Table 1). Nearly two in five (38 per cent) said they are facing dispositional challenges and a further 11 per cent said they are facing institutional challenges. These proportions are fairly similar to the UK overall (see Table 1).



**Table 1: Grouped challenges experienced by current or recent learners in Yorkshire and the Humber and in the UK**

Group	Yorkshire and the Humber	The UK (excluding Yorkshire and the Humber)
Situational	43%	46%
Dispositional	38%	40%
Institutional	11%	10%
No challenges encountered	27%	34%

Base: all current or recent learners in Yorkshire and the Humber. Weighted base = 341, unweighted base = 375. Base: all current or recent learners in the UK (excluding Yorkshire and the Humber). Weighted base = 4055, unweighted base = 4403.

### Barriers faced by people who haven't engaged with learning within the past three years

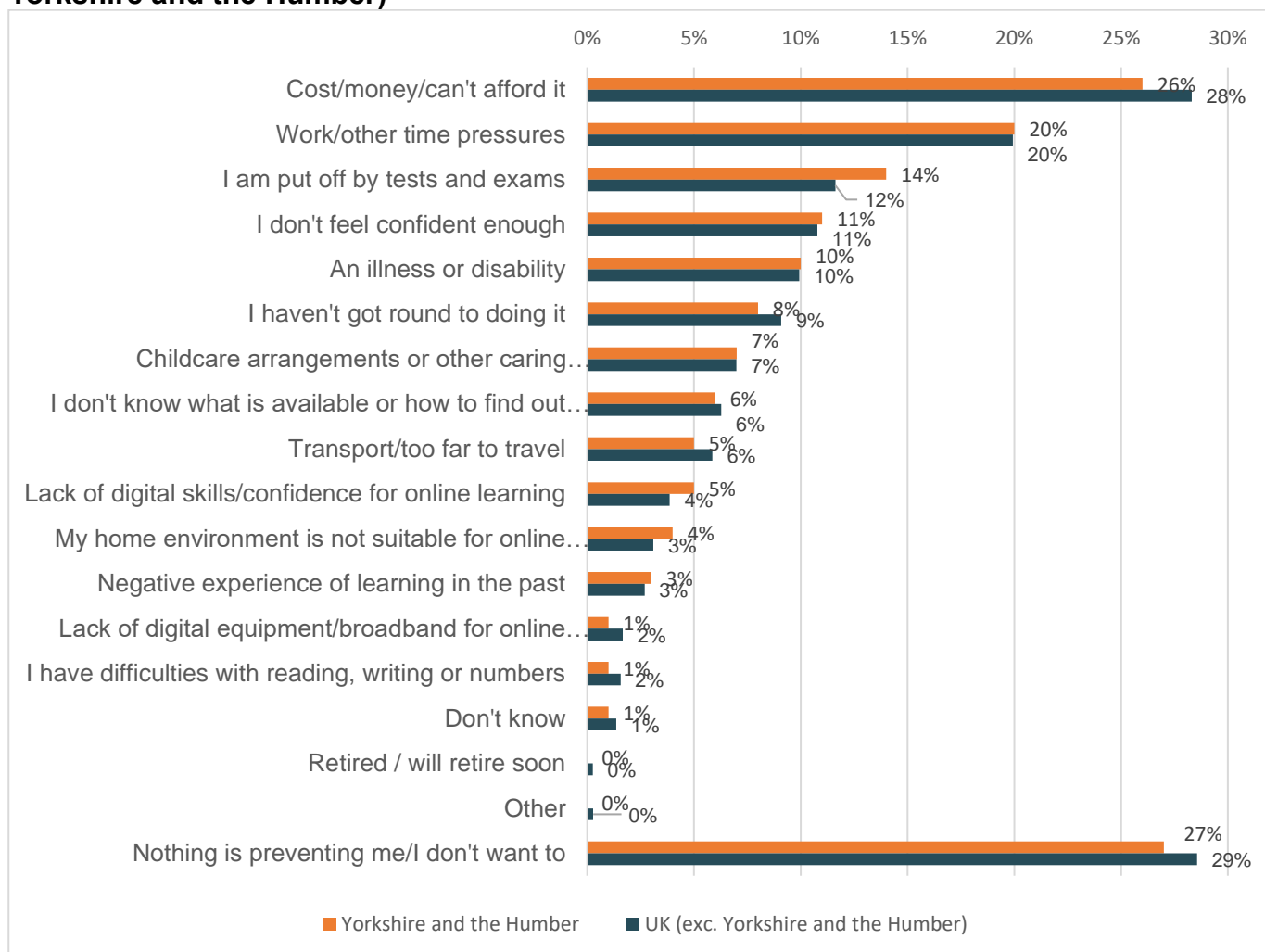
In Yorkshire and the Humber, just above two third (67 per cent) of adults who say they have not engaged in learning within the past three years identified at least one barrier. This proportion is similar to the rest of the UK (69 per cent).

The top barrier identified by the adults who haven't taken up learning within three years is the cost of learning (26 per cent) (Figure 17). This was followed by three in ten adults (30 per cent) saying they feel too old to take up learning.

Other dispositional barriers that were reported by more than one in ten adults in Yorkshire and the Humber related to people's perception including being put off by tests and exams (14 per cent) or not feeling confident enough (11 per cent). One in ten adults (10 per cent) identified a disability or illness preventing them from taking part in learning.

The barriers people faced in Yorkshire and the Humber are similar to the barriers experienced in the other regions.

**Figure 17: Barriers to learning in Yorkshire and the Humber and in the UK (excluding Yorkshire and the Humber)**



Base: respondents who have not participated in learning within the last three years in Yorkshire and the Humber. Weighted base = 367, unweighted base = 387. Base: respondents who have not participated in learning within the last three years in the UK (excluding Yorkshire and the Humber). Weighted base = 3832, unweighted base = 4011.

Barriers can be grouped into those that are:

- **Situational**, including: Cost/money/can't afford it; Childcare arrangements or other caring responsibilities; Work/other time pressures; Lack of digital equipment/broadband for online learning; My home environment is not suitable for online learning; Transport/too far to travel
- **Dispositional**, including: I don't know what is available or how to find out what is; I feel I am too old; An illness or disability; I haven't got round to doing it; I am put off by tests and exams; I have difficulties with reading, writing or numbers; I don't feel confident enough; Lack of digital skills/confidence for online learning; Negative experiences of learning in the past.

Almost half of the respondents (46 per cent) who have not taken part in learning recently said situational barriers preventing them from doing so and 54 per cent said dispositional barriers were preventing them. Nearly three in ten adults (28 per cent) said they did not want to engage with learning or that nothing was preventing them from doing so. These findings are fairly similar to the UK overall (see Table 2).

**Table 2: Grouped barriers faced by adults who haven't engaged with learning within the past three years in Yorkshire and the Humber and in the UK**

Group	Yorkshire and the Humber	The UK (excluding Yorkshire and the Humber)
Situational	46%	46%
Dispositional	53%	51%
No challenges encountered	28%	30%

Base: respondents who have not participated in learning within the last three years in Yorkshire and the Humber. Weighted base = 367, unweighted base = 387. Base: respondents who have not participated in learning within the last three years in the UK (excluding Yorkshire and the Humber). Weighted base = 3832, unweighted base = 4011.

## Learning for career change

Advances in technology, including Artificial Intelligence, alongside longer working lives will see more people needing to change jobs and careers. The Coronavirus pandemic also had a profound effect on the labour market, with an increase in the number of people who are economically inactive and job vacancies at record levels.

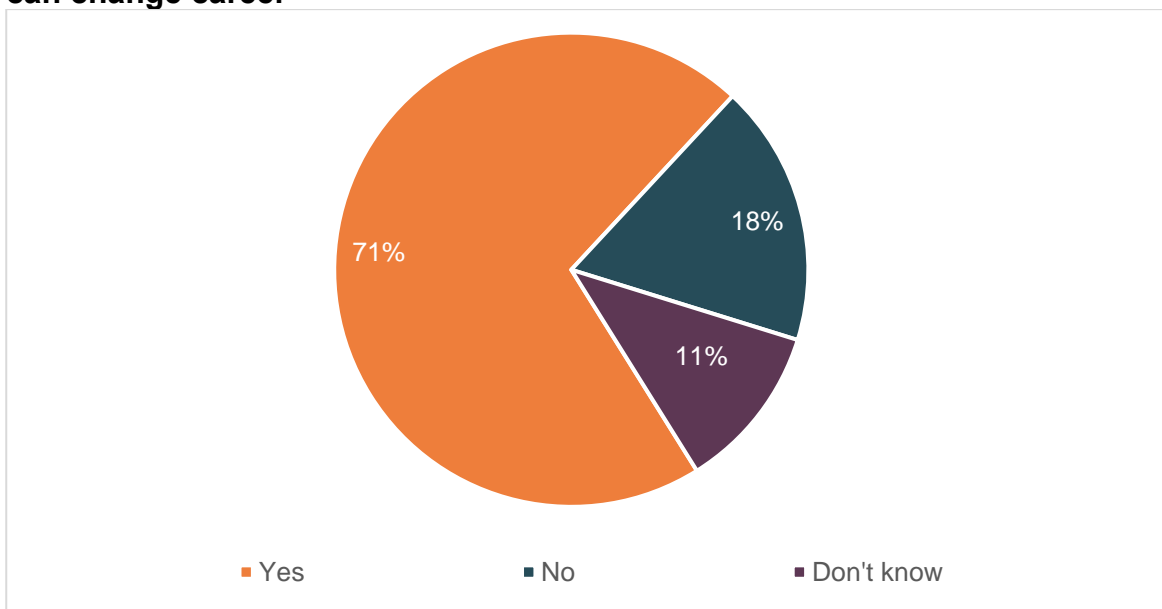
Many workers will therefore need to reskill into different careers to ensure they can make the most of the opportunities ahead. Within this context, this year's survey asked adults whether they are planning to change job or career in the near future. The survey also explored motivations to change career, barriers to changing career and what support people would find helpful.

### Changing job or career

All respondents who are working or unemployed and seeking work were asked whether they thought people like them could change careers or change the occupation/industry they were in. In Yorkshire and the Humber, three in ten adults (71 per cent) believe that people like them can change career (Figure 18). Nearly one in five (18 per cent) said they did not think that people like them could change careers and one in ten (11 per cent) said they don't know.

This is fairly similar to the UK overall with 71 per cent of respondents who believe that people like them are able to change careers, 16 per cent who did not think so and 12 per cent did not know.

**Figure 18: Respondents in Yorkshire and the Humber who believe people like them can change career**



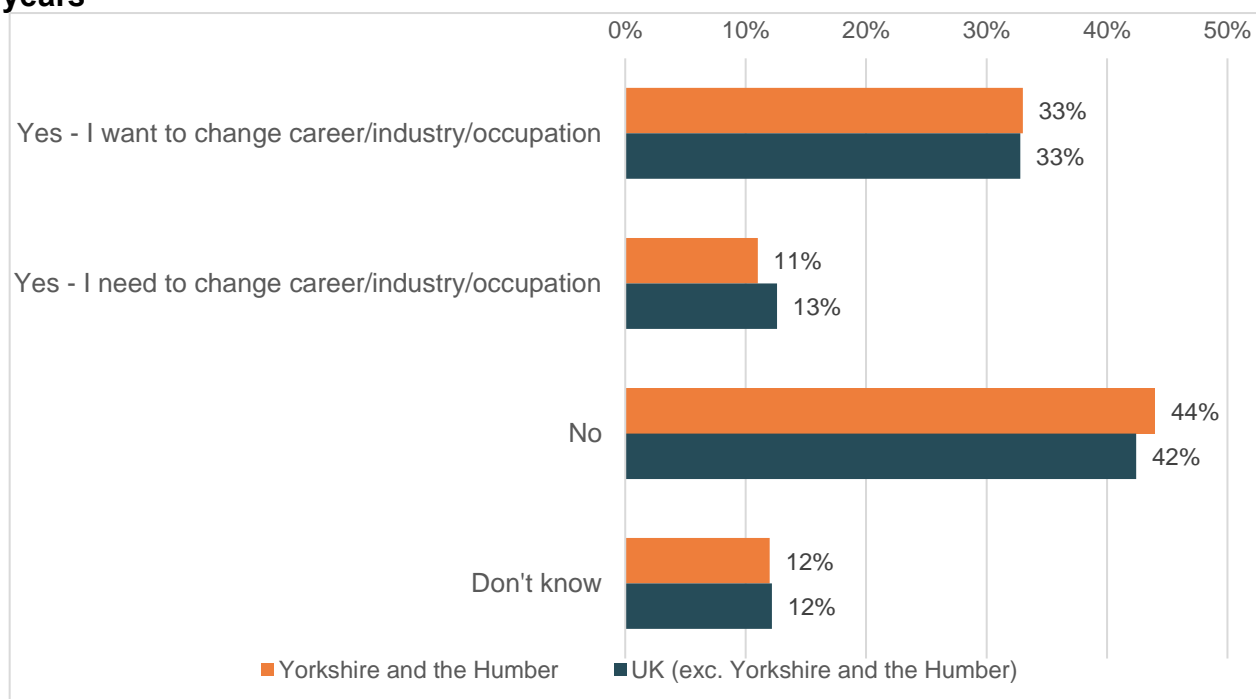
Base: respondents who are employed, unemployed and seeking work or in full-time education in Yorkshire and the Humber. Weighted base = 460, unweighted base = 512.

In Yorkshire and the Humber, just above than two in five adults (44 per cent) want (33 per cent) or need (11 per cent) to change their career/industry/occupation in the next one or two years (Figure 19). Over two in five (44 per cent) said they do not need or want to change career and 12 per cent don't know.

These figures are similar to the rest of the UK, with 33 per cent of adults who said they want to change career/industry/occupation in the next one of two years, 13 per cent who said they need to, 42 per cent who said they do not want or need to and 12 per cent saying they don't know.

Wider research indicates that around six per cent of adults change occupation or sector each year.<sup>9</sup>

**Figure 19: Whether adults want or needs to change career in the next one or two years**



Base: respondents who are employed, unemployed and seeking work or in full-time education in Yorkshire and the Humber. Weighted base = 460, unweighted base = 512.

### Motivations for career change

Respondents who indicated that they either want to or need to change career in the next one to two years were asked the reason for this change (Figure 20). In Yorkshire and the Humber, the main reason cited was to earn more money (47 per cent). This was followed by wanting to feel happier at work (35 per cent) and wanting to get a job that would be more fulfilling or worthwhile (35 per cent) or more interesting (35 per cent).

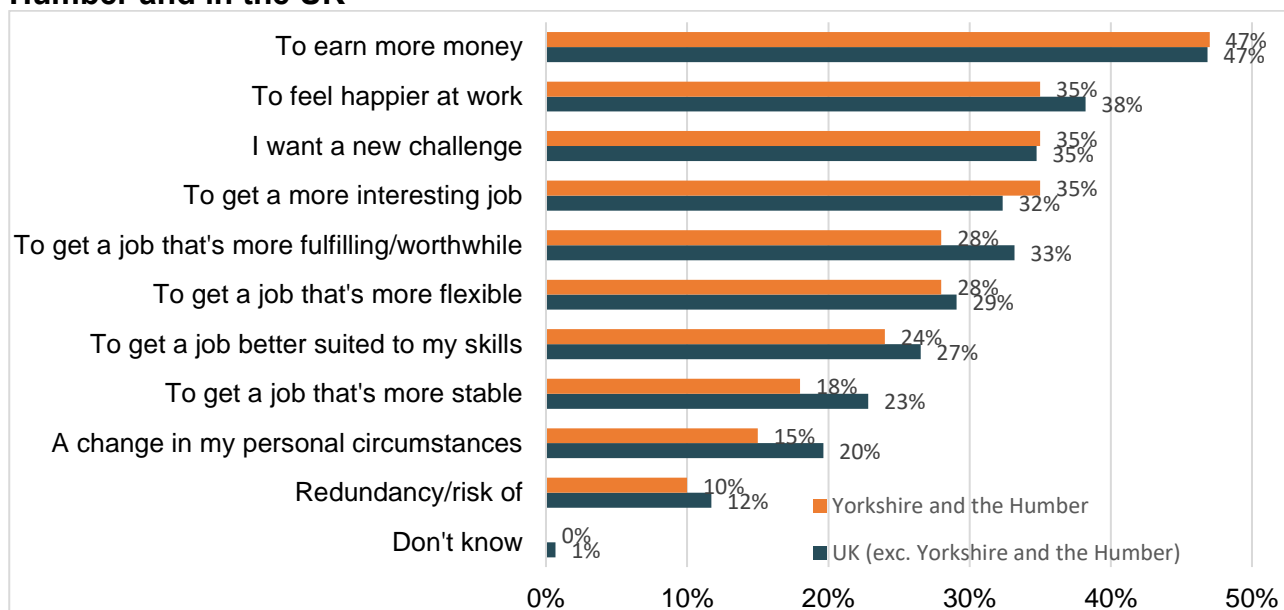
<sup>9</sup> Evans, S. and Vaid, L. (2023) [All change: Understanding and supporting retraining and career change](#)

Respondents also reported wanting to get a job that was more flexible (28 per cent), better suited to their skills (24 per cent) or more stable (18 per cent).

A further 15 per cent reported that a change in personal circumstances was the reason for wanting a career change and 10 per cent said they feared or were at risk of redundancy.

The motivations for career change in Yorkshire and the Humber are fairly similar to the rest of the UK (Figure 20).

**Figure 20: Reasons for wanting or needing career change in Yorkshire and the Humber and in the UK**



Base: respondents who want to change job/career in the next 1-2 years in Yorkshire and the Humber. Weighted base = 221, unweighted base = 199. Base: respondents who want to change job/career in the next 1-2 years in the UK (excluding Yorkshire and the Humber). Weighted base = 2447, unweighted base = 2720.

### Barriers to career change

Respondents who indicated that they want or need to change career were then asked what was stopping them from doing this (Figure 21). In Yorkshire and the Humber, the most cited barrier was barriers related to finance, including not being able to afford pay cut (25 per cent), not being able to afford to retrain (22 per cent), and/or not being able to afford training costs (21 per cent).

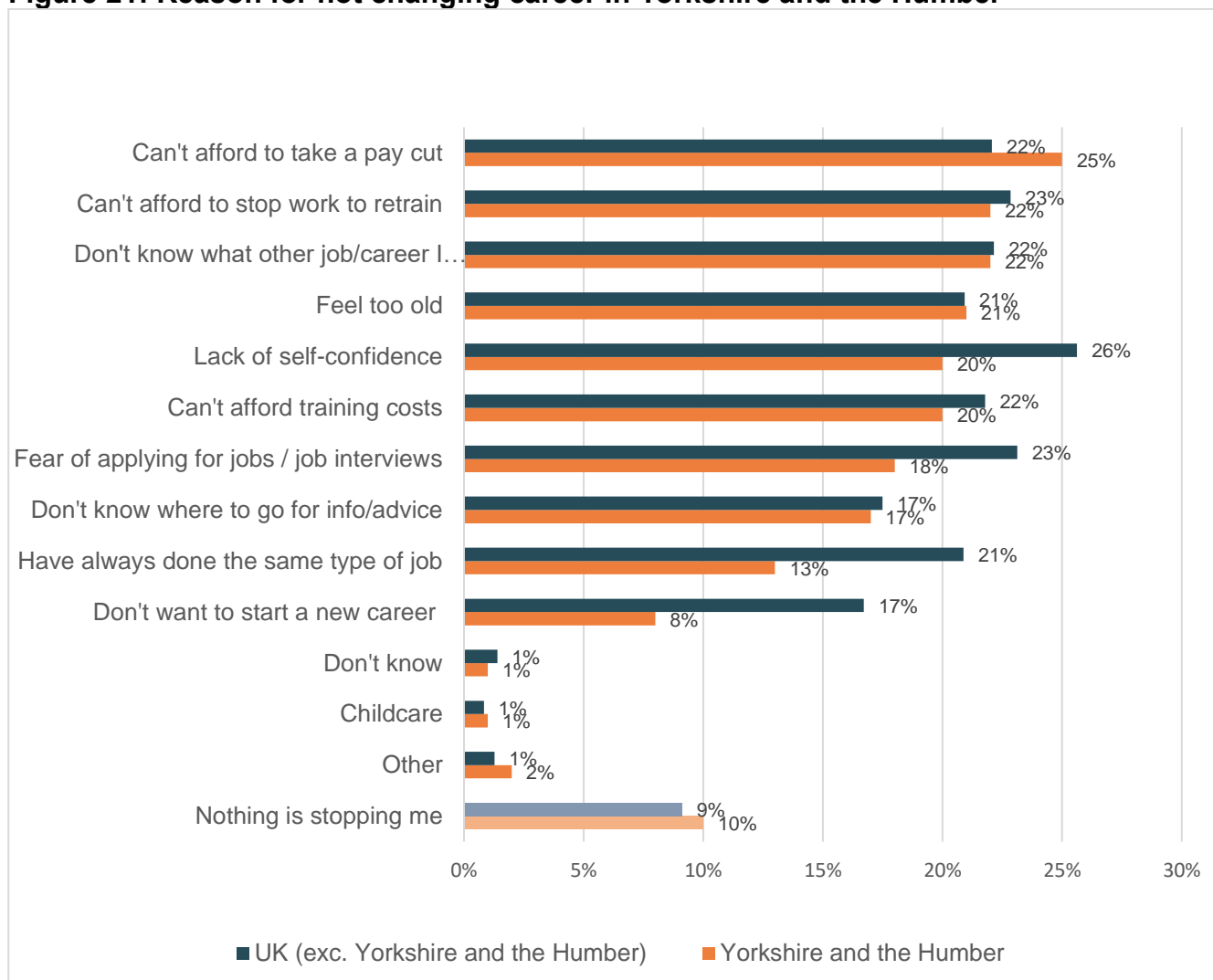
Some barriers relate to a lack of awareness of opportunities or guidance, with 22 per cent saying that they don't know what other job or career they could do and 17 per cent saying they don't know where to go for information and advice.

Other barriers related to dispositional barriers including a lack of self-confidence (20 per cent), feeling too old, a fear of applying for jobs/job interviews (18 per cent), having always done the same job (13 per cent) or not wanting to start a new career from the bottom (8 per cent).

One in ten respondents (10 per cent) who say they want or need to change career say that nothing is stopping them from doing this.

The barriers to career change identified by respondents in Yorkshire and the Humber are fairly similar to the ones identified in the rest of the UK (see Figure 21). While some of the figures are slightly different, none of the differences are statistically significant.

**Figure 21: Reason for not changing career in Yorkshire and the Humber**



Base: respondents who want to change job/career in the next 1-2 years in Yorkshire and the Humber. Weighted base = 199, unweighted base = 221. Base: respondents who want to change job/career in the next 1-2 years in the UK (excluding Yorkshire and the Humber). Weighted base = 2487, unweighted base = 2760.

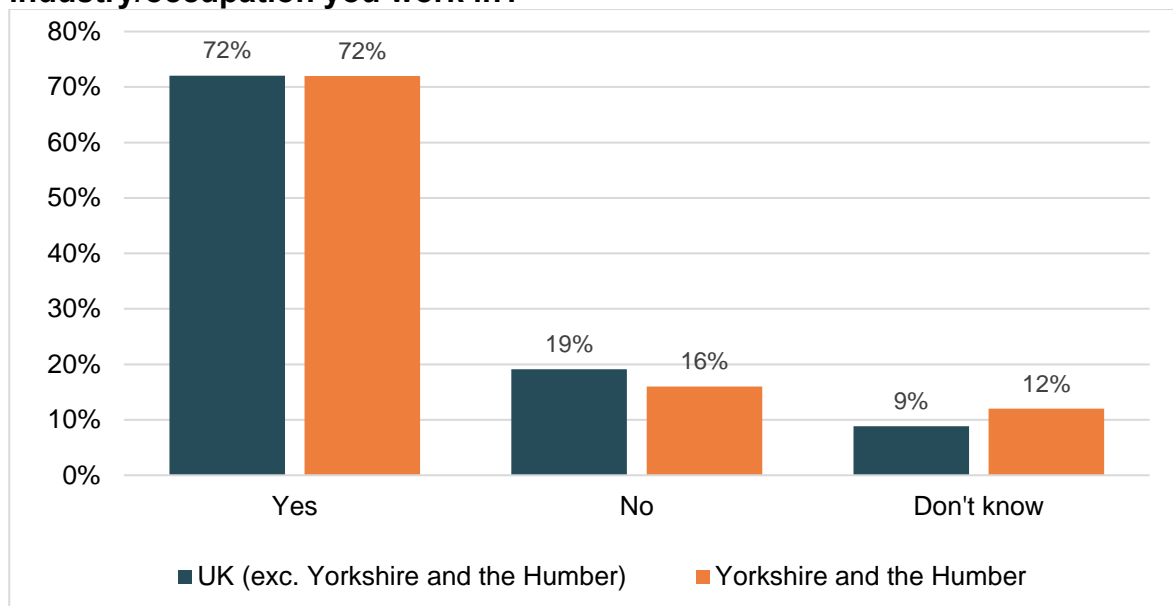
### Developing skills for career change

Respondents who indicated that they want or need to change career were asked if they need to develop their skills in order to change career or the industry/occupation they are in (Figure 22).

In Yorkshire and the Humber, seven in ten adults (72 per cent) said they need to develop their skills, while 16 per cent said they don't and 12 per cent said they don't know.

While some of these figures are slightly different from the rest of the UK, none of them are statistically significantly different.

**Figure 22: Do you need to develop your skills to change career or change the industry/occupation you work in?**



Base: respondents who want to change job/career in the next 1-2 years in Yorkshire and the Humber. Weighted base = 199, unweighted base = 221. Base: respondents who want to change job/career in the next 1-2 years in the UK (excluding Yorkshire and the Humber). Weighted base = 2487, unweighted base = 2760.

### Support for career change

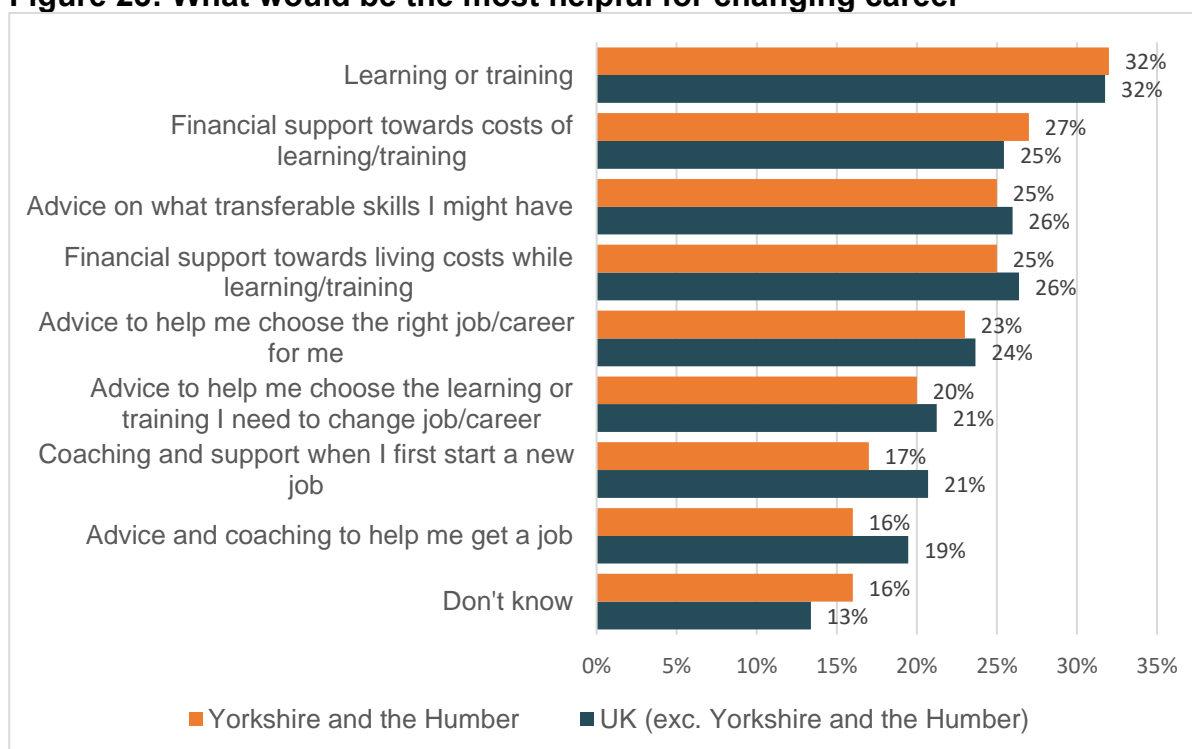
Respondents were asked to select, from a list of options, what support they would find helpful if they wanted/needed to change career (Figure 23). In Yorkshire and the Humber, respondents most commonly indicated that they would find learning or training helpful (32 per cent). This was followed by financial support, with 27 per cent selecting financial support towards the cost of learning and 25 per cent indicating they would find financial support towards the cost of learning helpful.

Respondents also stated that they would find advice useful – on their transferable skills (25 per cent), to choose the right job/career for them (23 per cent), to choose the learning or training they need (20 per cent), coaching to help them get a job (17 per cent) or coaching and support when they first start a job (17 per cent).

Respondents in Yorkshire and the Humber identified similar support to the rest of the UK (see Figure 23).



**Figure 23: What would be the most helpful for changing career**



Base: respondents who want to change job/career in the next 1-2 years in Yorkshire and the Humber. Weighted base = 199, unweighted base = 221. Base: respondents who want to change job/career in the next 1-2 years in the UK (excluding Yorkshire and the Humber). Weighted base = 2487, unweighted base = 2760.

Respondents were asked where they would go for information and advice if they wished to change career (Table 3). In Yorkshire and the Humber, nearly two in five respondents (37 per cent) said they would use a general online search to find information and advice. This was followed by friends, family and colleagues (24 per cent). These findings highlight the need for credible and trustworthy information being available and easy to find online, as well as the importance of social networks in providing information.

Other sources of information and advice include social media, education providers and recruitment agency/consultant (both 16 per cent), as well as a professional, sector or trade organisation (13 per cent), Jobcentre Plus (12 per cent) or National Career Service (12 per cent). Only 13 per cent of respondents said they would go to a prospective employer, and 12 per cent said they would go to their current employer.

Furthermore, 14 per cent of participants said they do not know where they would go for information or advice about changing job or career.

These figures are similar to the rest of the UK. However, **adults in Yorkshire and the Humber are significantly more likely to say they do not know where they would go for information about career change** (see Table 3). This demonstrates a need to raise awareness of sources of careers information, advice and guidance for adults.

**Table 3: Where respondents go for advice on career change**

Source of information/advice	Yorkshire and the Humber	UK (exc. Yorkshire and the Humber)
General online search	37%	37%
Friends, family or colleagues	24%	23%
Education provider such as a college or university	17%	16%
Social media	16%	15%
Recruitment consultant/agency	16%	16%
Professional, sector or trade organisation	13%	15%
Jobcentre Plus	12%	15%
National Careers Service	12%	12%
Prospective employers	13%	12%
Your current employer (e.g. HR, line manager)	12%	12%
Citizens' Advice	7%	8%
Local community, voluntary or religious centre	3%	5%
Local or national charity	4%	5%
Unionlearn representative or Workplace Learning Advocate	3%	5%
Don't know	14%	11%

Base: respondents who are employed, unemployed and seeking work or in full-time education in Yorkshire and the Humber. Weighted base = 460, unweighted base = 512.