LEARNING AND WORK INSTITUTE

Adult Participation in Learning Survey 2018

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Corin Egglestone, Oliver Crunden, Emily Jones and Fiona Aldridge

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www.learningandwork.org.uk @LearnWorkUK @LearnWorkCymru (Wales)

About Learning and Work Institute

Learning and Work Institute is an independent policy, research and development organisation dedicated to lifelong learning, full employment and inclusion.

We research what works, develop new ways of thinking and implement new approaches. Working with partners, we transform people's experiences of learning and employment. What we do benefits individuals, families, communities and the wider economy.

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Contents

Introduction

For over 20 years, Learning and Work Institute (L&W) has undertaken an annual survey of adult participation in learning. The survey, which draws on data from a national representative survey of 5,000 adults across the UK, provides a rich evidence base on who participates in learning, their motivations, barriers, and benefits experienced.

Participation in learning benefits individuals, communities and the wider economy[1]. It is associated with better labour market outcomes, and there is strong evidence too on the impact of learning on health and well-being, as well as upon families and communities. Increasing and widening access to learning is crucial to future prosperity, fairness and social inclusion in the UK.

Yet, despite the strength of this evidence, recent years have seen a decline in the number of adults participating in learning and training[2]. If we are to engage more adults in learning and realise the benefits of doing so, it is vital that we understand who learns, how they do so, and their motivations and barriers to learning.

This report presents the findings from the 2018 Adult Participation in Learning Survey, including patterns of participation in learning across demographic groups, characteristics of learning, barriers to participation and factors that would facilitate future learning. It also includes a range of new questions focused on employees' perceptions of their job security and career prospects, of their need to learn new skills for work and of available sources of information, advice and guidance.

Survey findings

The 2018 Adult Participation in Learning Survey records the lowest participation rate in the 22-year history of the survey series; just 35 per cent of adults say that they have participated in learning during the previous three years. This is two percentage points lower than the 2017 survey, which reported the previous lowest participation rate, and six percentage points lower than the survey before that. Urgent action is clearly required if we are to reverse this decline.

As in previous years, the survey highlights persistent inequalities in learning. Those in lower social grades, older adults, those with fewer years of initial education, and those furthest from the labour market are all under-represented in learning. There is also considerable national and regional variation across the UK, although evidence that adults living in more deprived areas are less likely to be learning, suggests that differences within regions are likely to far outweigh the differences between them. The development of local

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[1] *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise: The impact of adult learning across the UK*
https://www.learningandwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/LW-EU-Report-Nov-2017-V8-1.pdf
[2] *Further Education and Skills in England: 2017/18 academic year (December 2018)*
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/789172/FE_and_Skills_commentary_Dec_2018_final_v2_March2019update.pdf

skills plans and the devolution of Adult Education Budget to some parts of the country will have an important role to play in tackling these geographical disparities.

The continuing fall in participation, reflected in this years' survey, is not equally spread across the adult population. Instead it appears to be concentrated around particular characteristics; mainly (but not exclusively) associated with those already under-represented in learning. The substantial gap in participation between those in social grades AB and DE has widened by three percentage points since 2017. Similarly, the drop in participation is more pronounced among those with fewer years of initial education; with a decrease of three percentage points among those leaving aged 16-18, compared with a drop of just one percentage point for those who remained in education beyond this point.

Participation among self-employed workers has dropped by six percentage points, and for the unemployed and those not seeking work, by five points each. While participation rates have remained stable for around half of the age groups analysed in the survey, participation among 35-44-year-olds has dropped by seven percentage points. The gap between the best and worst performing regions has increased from seven per cent in 2017 to 14 per cent in 2018, suggesting an exacerbation of regional differences in learning participation. Any efforts to raise participation, need to take particular account of how to reach, engage and support those who are currently under-represented in learning if we are not to further exacerbate such inequalities.

Current participation remains a strong predictor of future learning, with more than three in four learners (77 per cent) saying that they are likely engage in learning again in the next 3 years, compared with just 16 per cent of adults who have done no learning since leaving full time education. A substantial challenge remains therefore in encouraging more people to learn; with almost three in five adults (57 per cent) considering themselves unlikely to learn over the next three years.

Future intentions to learn vary substantially, although individuals' perceptions of whether they will take up learning in the future appear to be less dependent on socio-economic characteristics and more tied to recent learning history. Social grade and terminal age of education are far less powerful predictors of future learning than they are of current learning status – emphasising the cumulative returns of participation in learning. If we are to encourage more adults to take their first step back into learning, we need to ensure they have access to opportunities to 'have a go', building their confidence and whetting their appetite to learn more, with clear progression routes onto further learning.

The survey shows a wide range of motivations for, barriers to, and benefits of, learning. Almost three-quarters (72 per cent) of learners are learning for their work or career, with 62 per cent of these anticipating that it will benefit them in their current job and 12 per cent retraining to move into a substantially different role. However, work and career are only part of the story. Around a quarter of all learners are motivated by interest or personal development, highlighting the importance of access to a broad range of both work-related and non-work related opportunities.

Consistently across the survey, the greatest single barrier to engaging adults in learning is associated with work and other time pressures. Those with current or recent experience of learning are also likely to cite situational barriers such as cost and caring responsibilities, while those with less recent experience are more likely to reference dispositional barriers, such as lack of interest or a belief that they are too old to learn. Around one in eight adults say that they would be more likely to take up learning if it were cheaper (12 per cent), if they could learn at home (12 per cent), if the learning was related to something that they were interested in (12 per cent), and if they could learn at a time that suited them (11 per cent). However, a third (33 per cent) of those who have not done any learning in the previous three years say that nothing is prevent them from learning, illustrating the importance of not only removing barriers, but also actively promoting the relevance and benefits of learning to encourage participation.

The benefits of learning for individuals are wide ranging and include improved subject knowledge (36 per cent), improved skills for their current job (25 per cent), greater enjoyment of learning (22 per cent) and more self-confidence (21 per cent). Work-related benefits such as being more productive, having greater job security and satisfaction, securing a new job or promotion, and improving working relationships are all cited. So too are wider benefits such as meeting new people, having a better understanding of other cultures, keeping healthy and active, and having greater control of life.

The ways in which people learn vary too. Nearly one quarter (23 per cent) of the learners surveyed are on a training course at work. Twenty-one per cent are learning independently and 19 per cent are learning on the job. Education institutions are important too. Sixteen per cent of these learners are studying at university, 8 per cent at a further education college and 5 per cent in a local adult education centre.

While just 15 per cent of learners say their current learning is predominantly online, roughly half (47 per cent) say that they have engaged in online learning at some point. This is most common among learners in higher social grades and with more years of initial education. It is also particularly prevalent among those aged 35-54 and among the self-employed. This is perhaps unsurprising, given the most frequently cited benefit of online learning (51 per cent) is that it enables learning to fit around their wider lifestyle.

A majority of those in work feel secure in their jobs (81 per cent) and believe that their job offers good prospects for career progression (57 per cent). Where a person's employment does not offer this security or visible progression prospects, they are twice as likely to think that they will change jobs within the next three years. In these circumstances, individuals are also around two and a half times more likely to engage in learning in order to retrain into a substantially different role, than to invest in upskilling in their current line of work.

Seven in ten workers do not expect to change jobs in the next three years. However, when asked what action they would take if they discovered they were at risk of losing their job, forty-six per cent said they would look for a similar role in their current industry, 20 per cent would seek to work in a different industry and sixteen per cent would look for a more senior role in their current industry. Analysis shows an individual's response to this risk is heavily influenced by whether they work full-time, part-time or are self-employed.

The world of work is changing, and two-fifths of workers (39 per cent) anticipate that they will need to learn new skills for their work or career within the next three years. Consequently, they are significantly more likely (72 per cent) than those who do not perceive a need to develop their skills (15 per cent) to expect to engage in learning. Perceptions of the need to further develop skills in the future tend to decline with age and are particularly high among those in social grade C1 and among unemployed adults.

Making good choices about changing jobs, career progression, or gaining new skills to improve job and career prospects are often dependent on having access to accurate, relevant and timely information and advice. When asked about where they would go for this, the most frequently cited response was that they would undertake a general online search. This was followed by engaging with Jobcentre Plus and with education providers and talking to family, friends and colleagues. Over a fifth of adults say they do not know where to go for information and advice about changing jobs or career progression (22 per cent) or about gaining new skills to improve their job or career prospects (24 per cent) – with women, older adults, those in lower social grades and lose with fewer years of initial education particularly vulnerable to having to make decisions without access to such information and advice.

Implications for the National Retraining Scheme

The 2018 Adult Participation in Learning Survey was part-funded by the Department for Education in order to inform the ongoing development of the National Retraining Scheme (NRS). As well as drawing on the wider implications of the survey in relation to the need to, and challenges of, engaging more adults in learning, the survey results also suggest that the NRS has an important role to play in:

- helping people recognise their need to develop new skills – for example if they work in a declining industry or their job is at risk of automation. Those who perceive a need to learn new skills for work in the next three years are 15.8 times more likely than those who don't to say that they intend to engage in learning.

- helping those without job security or progression opportunities to consider retraining for roles in different industries. Those at risk of losing their job are much more likely to look for similar work in their current industry (46 per cent), rather than consider wider opportunities (20 per cent).

- ensuring information about the opportunities available through the NRS are widely promoted and accessible to all, both on- and off-line. The NRS is being designed to support adults aged 24 and over, in work, without a degree level qualification, and on low to medium wages. Many adults with these characteristics do not currently know where to source information and advice about learning new skills, changing jobs or career progression.

- ensuring that those who are not confident or able to learn online are not excluded from opportunities to retrain. In order to enable more adults to access training, the NRS is seeking to provide opportunities for flexible online and blended learning. While a growing proportion of adults (47 per cent) have some experience of online learning, significant barriers still exist for some, particularly those with limited digital skills and access.

About the Adult Participation in Learning Survey

Since 1996, L&W (then NIACE[3]) has been undertaking the Adult Participation in Learning Survey on an almost annual basis[4]. 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, over a span of more than 20 years.

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 participated, 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 a 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.'

The 2018 Adult Participation in Learning Survey included 5,314 adults aged 17 and over across the UK, with fieldwork conducted in November and December 2018. This sample has been weighted (generating an effective sample of 4,984) to provide a nationally representative dataset. In addition to overall participation in learning, the 2018 survey includes questions to identify barriers to learning for different groups of adults, motivations for learning and changes which would make learning more attractive. The survey also explores issues such as who participates and what they are learning, how learning is undertaken, whether learning leads to a qualification, benefits or changes from learning, investment in learning and employees' perceptions of their need for learning.

In 2018, the survey was part-funded by the Department for Education, in order to inform the development of the National Retraining Scheme. As such, this report includes analysis to better understand two groups – Upskillers and Retrainers – who are learning for career-related reasons.

Further information about the methodology and the definitions used in this report can be found in the Annex. To find out more about survey series and explore trend data from the past 20 years through our interactive charts visit www.learningandwork.org.uk

[3] National Institute of Adult Continuing Education

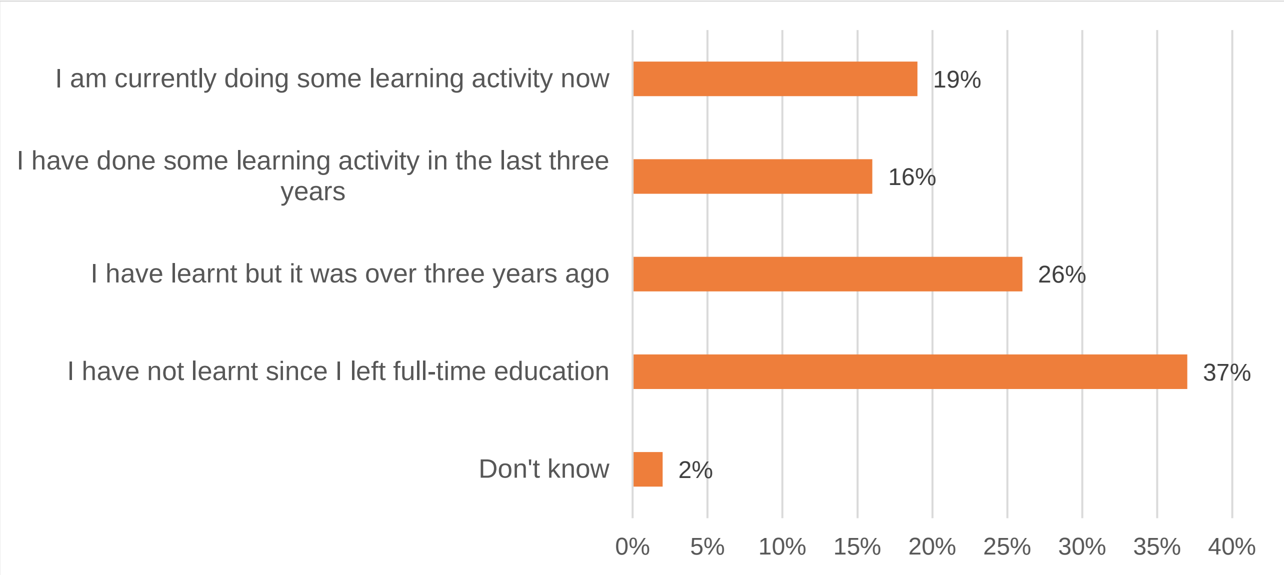
[4] Surveys were undertaken annually from 1996 except in three years: 1997, 1998 and 2016.

Results and analysis

Participation in learning

The 2018 survey shows that around a fifth of adults (19 per cent) are currently learning, with a further 16 per cent having done so in the previous three years (see Figure 1). While 37 per cent have not learnt since leaving full-time education, 26 per cent have done so, but over three years ago.

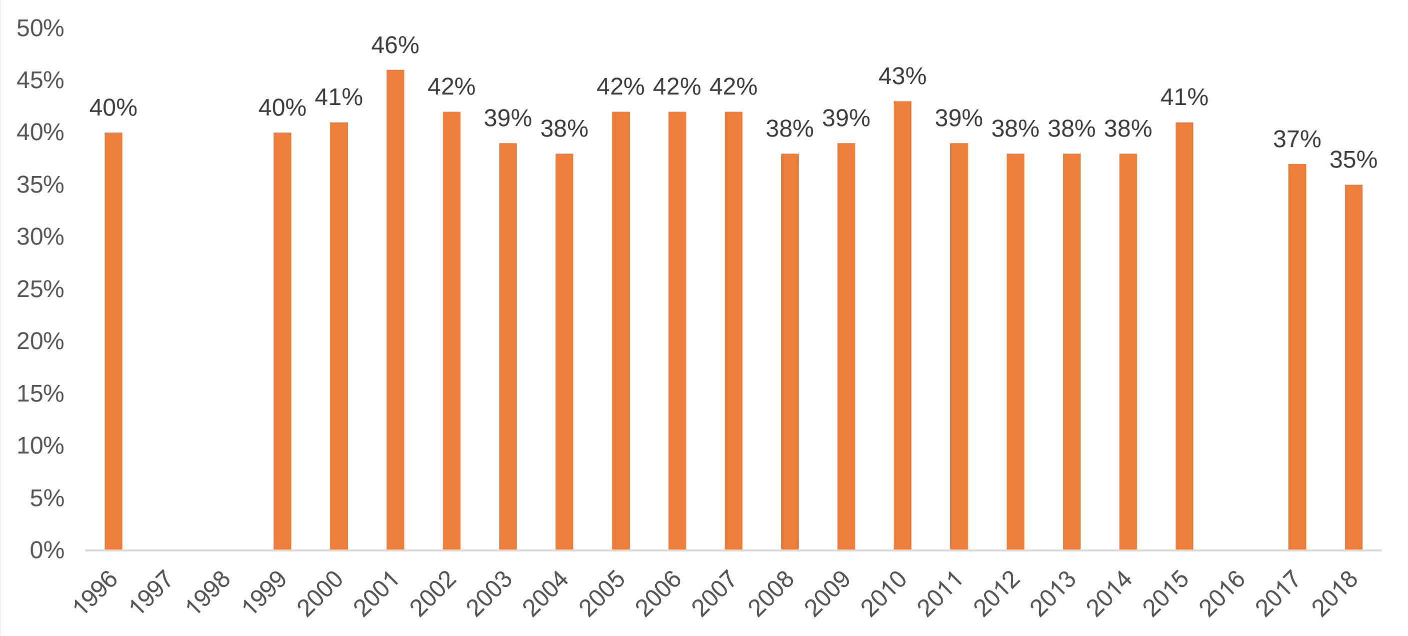
Figure 1: Participation in learning



Base: all respondents. Weighted base = 4,984. Unweighted base = 5,314.

In comparison with the results from previous years, 2018 has the lowest participation rate (current or recent learning) in the history of the participation survey, at 35 per cent of adults (see Figure 2). This is two percentage points lower than that of the 2017 survey, which itself had the lowest participation rate to date, and six percentage points lower than the survey before that (2015).

Figure 2: Participation in learning, 1996-2018



Base: all respondents to each survey. Weighted base for 2018 = 4,984. Unweighted base for 2018 = 5,314.

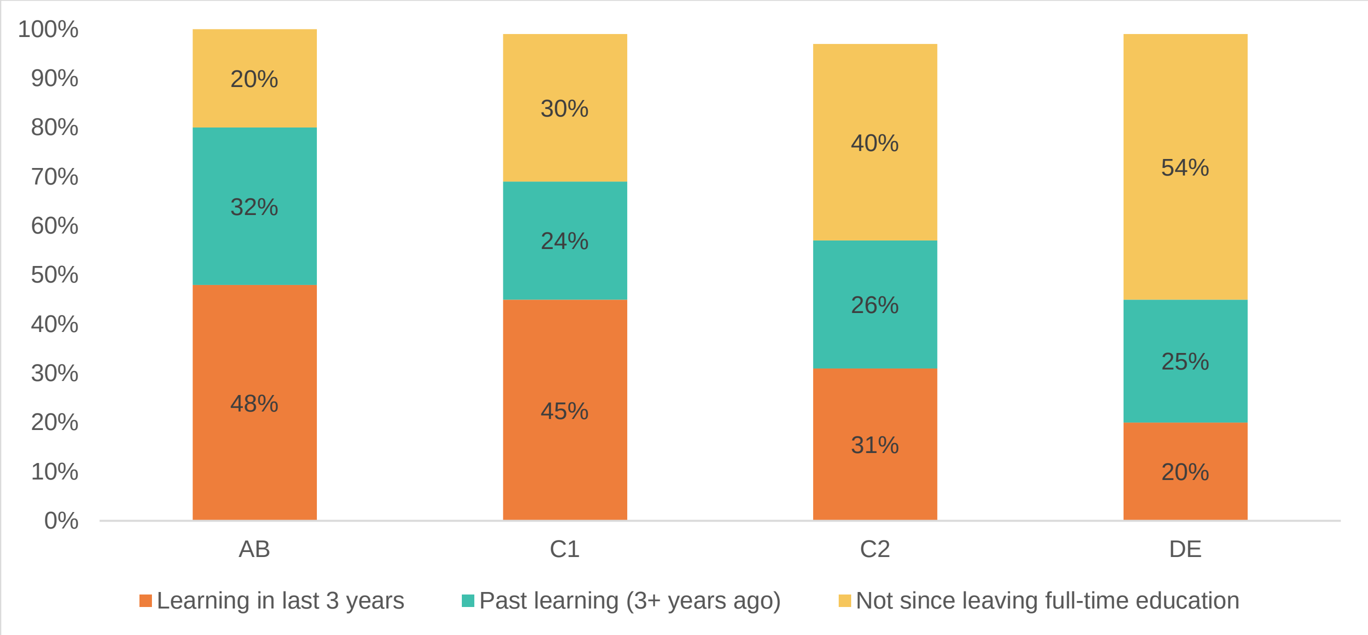
Demographic breakdowns

In general, women are slightly more likely than men to be current or recent learners; in total, 36 per cent of women are participating in learning compared to 34 per cent of men. However, unlike the 2017 survey, this difference is not statistically significant.

Social grade[5] remains a key predictor of participation; respondents from higher social grades are more likely to be participating in learning than those from lower grades (see Figure 3). Just under half (48 per cent) of adults in the AB social grade are current or recent learners, compared with 45 per cent of adults in C1, 31 per cent of adults in C2, and 20 per cent in DE. Although the difference in participation rates between the AB and C1 grades is small and not significant, both have significantly higher participation rates than the C2 and DE grades; the C2 grade also has a significantly higher rate than DE. In addition, more than twice as many adults in the DE grade have not participated in learning since leaving full-time education as those in AB, with respective figures of 54 per cent and 20 per cent; this gap has increased by three percentage points since 2017.

[5] Social Grade A includes the upper and upper-middle classes and is generally grouped with Grade B, the middle classes. Grade C1 includes the lower-middle class, often called white-collar workers. Grade C2 mainly consists of skilled manual workers. Grade D comprises the semi-skilled and unskilled working class, and is usually linked with Grade E, those in the lowest grade occupations or who are unemployed.

Figure 3: Participation by social grade

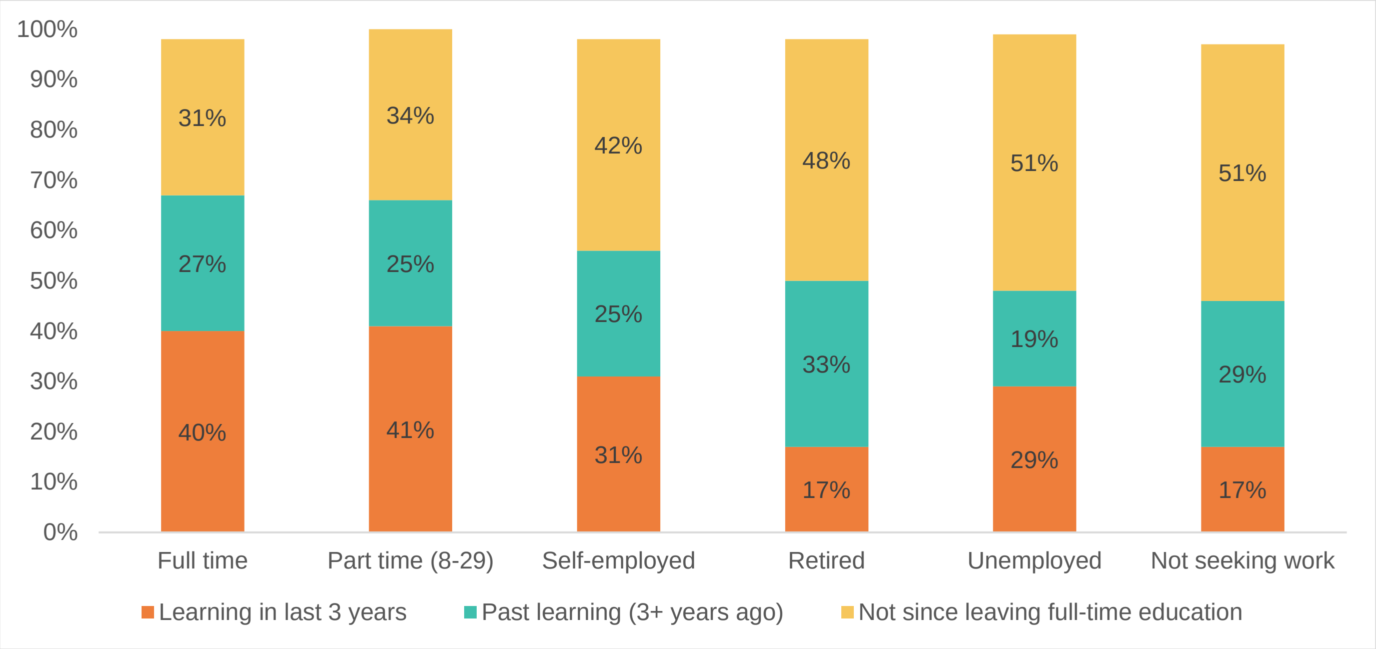


Base: all respondents. Total weighted base = 4,984, AB = 1,033, C1 = 1,414, C2 = 1,047, DE = 1,490. Total unweighted base = 5,314, AB = 1,000, C1 = 1,297, C2 = 1,184, DE = 1,833.

Working status is a key predictor of participation; closer proximity to the labour market is associated with higher participation rates (see Figure 4). Full and part-time workers are the most likely to be participating in learning, with respective figures of 40 and 41 per cent. Although part-time workers have slightly higher participation rates than full-time workers, this is not statistically significant. The participation rate drops significantly to 29 per cent of unemployed respondents, with a further significant drop to respondents who are out of work but not seeking it (17 per cent) or are retired (17 per cent).

Comparisons with 2017 show that participation has decreased across every category of working status, with the exception of retired respondents where it has increased by two percentage points. The largest drop has been for self-employed workers, which decreased from 37 per cent in 2017 to 31 per cent in 2018. Substantial drops have also occurred for unemployed respondents (34 per cent in 2017 compared to 29 per cent in 2018) and those not seeking work (22 per cent in 2017 compared to 17 per cent in 2018).

Figure 4: Participation by working status



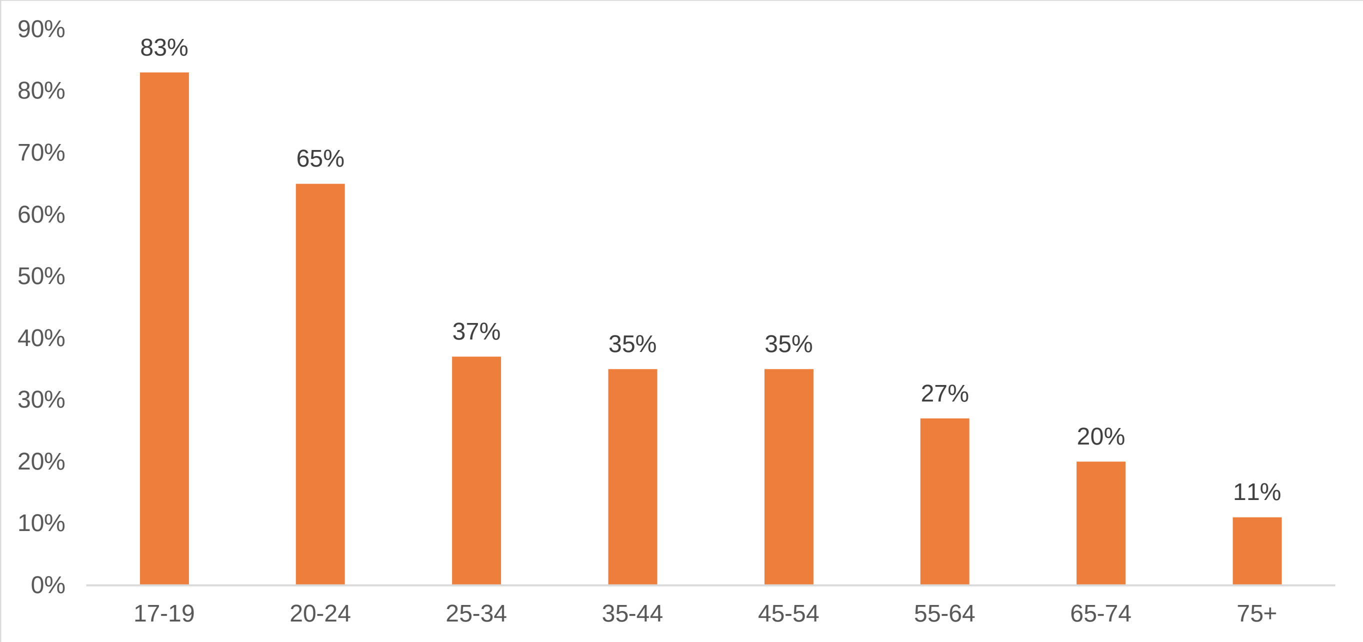
Base: all respondents excluding part time (under 8 hours)[6], at school, in higher education and not seeking work. Total weighted base = 4,984, full time = 1,911, part time (8-29) = 604, self-employed = 159, retired = 1,101, unemployed = 242, not seeking work = 617. Total unweighted base = 5,314, full time = 1,703, part time (8-29) = 611, self-employed = 154, retired = 1,591, unemployed = 257, not seeking work = 669

There is a strong effect of age on participation rate (see Figure 5). As in previous surveys, participation decreases with age. The highest participation rate is amongst 17-19-year-olds, with a figure of 83 per cent. As age increases the participation rate drops substantially, by 18 percentage points to a rate of 65 per cent of 20-24-year-olds, and then by 28 percentage points to a rate of 37 per cent of 25-34-year-olds. The participation rate remains relatively stable between the 25-34 and 45-54 age groups, before dropping with each subsequent increase in age. Excluding the 25-34 and 35-44 groups, each age group has a significantly higher level of participation than the next oldest group.

Since the 2017 survey, the participation rate has dropped for half of the age groups; the largest drop is for the 35-44 age group, which has decreased by seven percentage points, from 42 per cent in 2017 to 35 per cent in 2018. The participation rate has dropped by two percentage points for both the 25-34 and 55-64 age groups, and by one percentage point for the 17-19 group.

[6] Due to small sample size

Figure 5: Participation by age

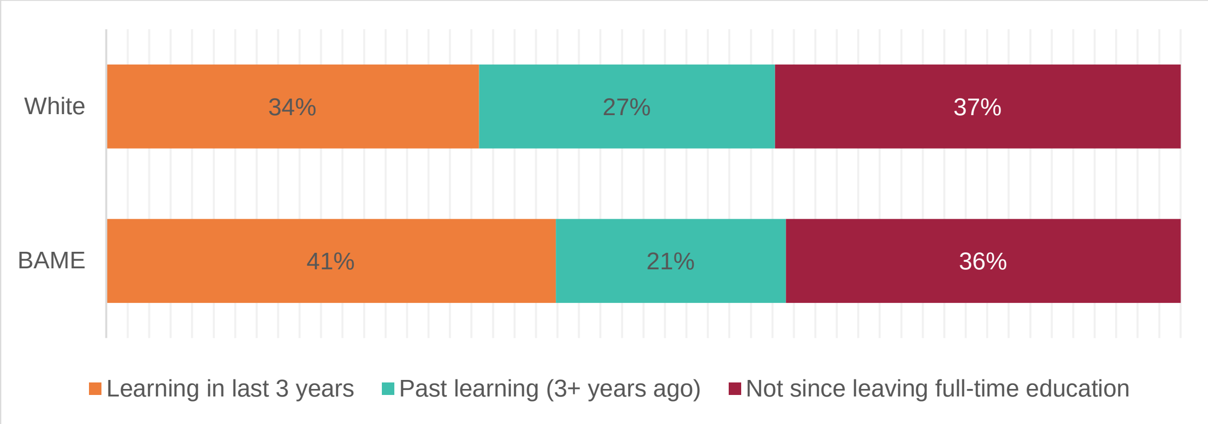


Base: all respondents. Total weighted base = 4,984, 17-19 = 186, 20-24 = 491, 25-34 = 960, 35-44 = 804, 45-54 = 791, 55-64 = 788, 65-74 = 537, 75+ = 428. Total unweighted base = 5,314, 17-19 = 176, 20-24 = 458, 25-34 = 907, 35-44 = 751, 45-54 = 747, 55-64 = 748, 65-74 = 872, 75+ = 655.

Overall, respondents from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds are significantly and substantially more likely to be participating in learning than respondents from White backgrounds, with respective figures of 41 per cent and 34 per cent (see Figure 6)[7]. However, there is little difference in the proportion of the two groups who have not learnt since full time education, with figures of 37 per cent for respondents from White backgrounds and 36 per cent for respondents from BAME backgrounds.

[7] It should be noted that grouping individuals from BAME backgrounds together masks differences between different ethnicities. While the Participation Survey collects demographic data from respondents, including ethnicity, the sample is too small to disaggregate different ethnic minority groups.

Figure 6: Participation by ethnicity

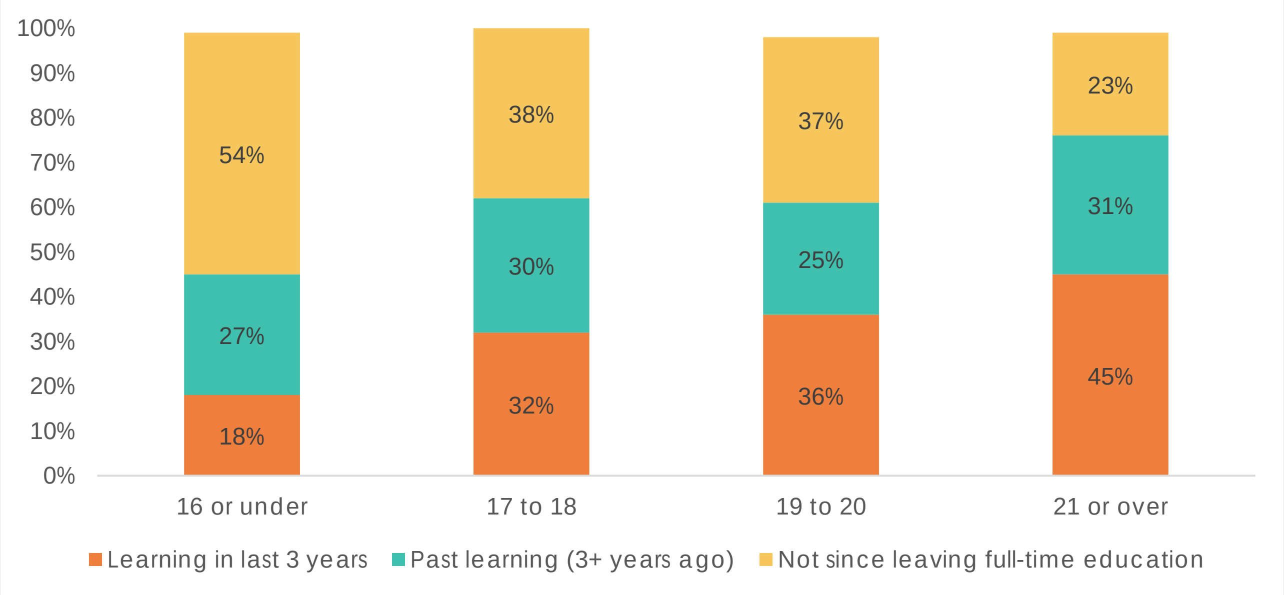


Base: all respondents. Total weighted base = 4,984, BAME = 678, White = 4,268. Total unweighted base = 5,314, BAME = 680, White = 4,595.

The age at which respondents completed full-time education (terminal age of education) is strongly associated with participation in learning. Fewer than one in five adults (18 per cent) who left education at 16 or under are participating in learning or have done so within the previous three years (see Figure 7). This figure increases substantially for respondents who stayed in education for a short while longer, with significantly higher figures of 32 per cent for respondents who left education at the age of 17-18 and 36 per cent for those who left aged 19-20. Respondents who stayed in education until at least the age of 21 are two and a half times more likely to be learners than those who left aged 16 or under, with a participation rate of 45 per cent.

Compared to the 2017 survey, participation rates have dropped for each group. However, this drop is more pronounced for respondents who left education at a younger age, with a decrease of three percentage points for those who left at 18 or younger compared to a drop of one percentage point for respondents who remained in education until at least the age of 19.

Figure 7: Participation by age of completing full-time education

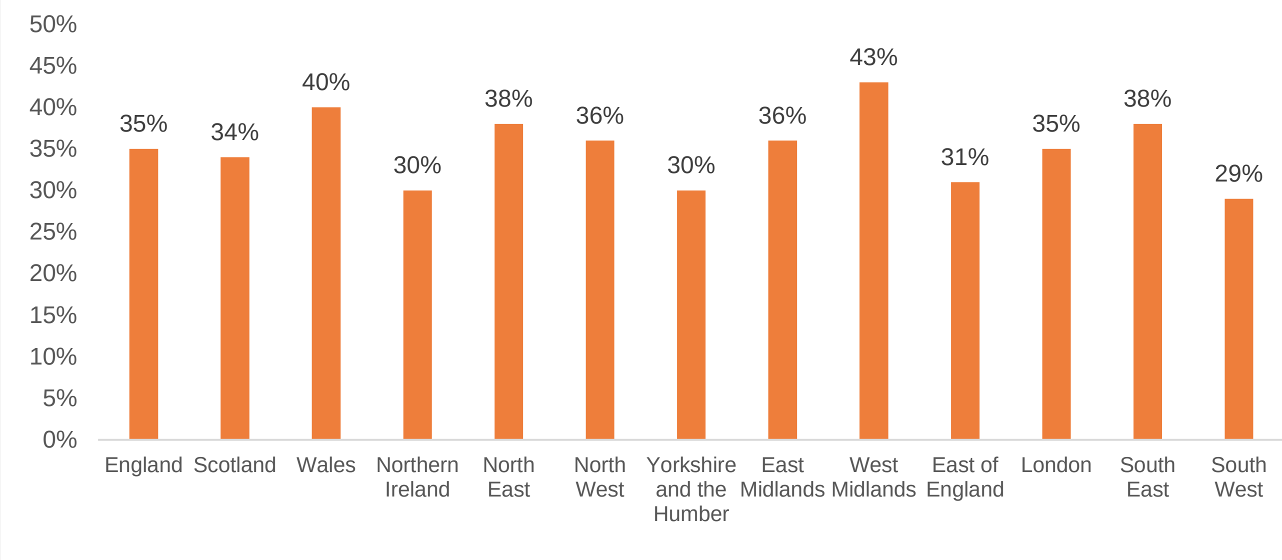


Base: all respondents. Total weighted base = 4,984, 16 or under = 1,874, 17-18 = 940, 19-20 = 380, 21+ = 1,361. Total unweighted base = 5,314, 16 or under = 2,221, 17-18 = 972, 19-20 = 388, 21+ = 1,325.

When comparing levels of participation in learning across the UK, the survey shows that 35 per cent of adults in England are either currently learning or have done so in the past three years, compared with 34 per cent of adults in Scotland, 40 per cent in Wales and 30 per cent in Northern Ireland (Figure 8). Other than the gap between Wales and Northern Ireland, these differences are not statistically significant.

By English region, the West Midlands continues to have the highest proportion of learners, at 43 per cent; an increase of three percentage points since 2017. The South West has seen the largest decrease in participation rate since 2017, dropping five percentage points to 29 per cent and making it the region with the lowest proportion of learners in 2018. The gap between the best and worst performing regions has increased from seven per cent in 2017 to 14 per cent in 2018, suggesting an exacerbation of regional differences in learning participation.

Figure 8: Participation by country and region



Base: all respondents. Total weighted base = 4,984. England = 4,127, Scotland = 450, Wales = 236, Northern Ireland 172, North East = 213, North West = 539, Yorkshire and the Humber = 412, East Midlands = 341, West Midlands = 427, East of England = 495, London = 626, South East = 672, South West = 400. Total unweighted base = 5,314. England = 4,368, Scotland = 498, Wales = 263, Northern Ireland = 185, North East = 217, North West = 577, Yorkshire and the Humber = 443, East Midlands = 364, West Midlands = 463, East of England = 506, London = 642, South East = 714, South West = 442.

Regression analysis of participation in learning

A regression analysis shows that when social grade, age, terminal age of education and working status are all taken into account, all four variables are significant predictors of participation in learning.[8] Of the variables included in the analysis, social grade emerged as the most important predictor of current or recent participation in learning. Likelihood of participation increases with each step 'up' in social grade category, such that those in social grade AB are between 2.3 and 3.6 times *more* likely to be a current or recent learner, compared to those classified within social grade DE. A similar pattern occurs for terminal age of education; the later individuals leave full time education the more likely they are to be a recent or current learner. Those leaving full time education aged 21 and above are between 1.7 and 2.4 times *more* likely to be a learner, compared to school leavers aged 16 or younger.

As age increases, the likelihood of participating in learning decreases. With each yearly increase in age, and holding other predictive factors constant, the likelihood of an individual being a current or recent learner decreases by 1.3 per cent.

Compared with those in full-time employment, likelihood of learning decreases for those who are unemployed or are retired. When taking the other predictors into account, retirees are between 1.2 and 2.0 times *less* likely to participate in learning than full-time employees. Unemployed adults are between 1.4 and 2.1 times less likely. Part time

[8] When combined these variables account for between 11 and 15 per cent of the variation in participation status.

employees and the self-employed exhibit no significant differences in terms of likelihood of participating in learning, compared to full time workers.

Participation in learning by index of multiple deprivation

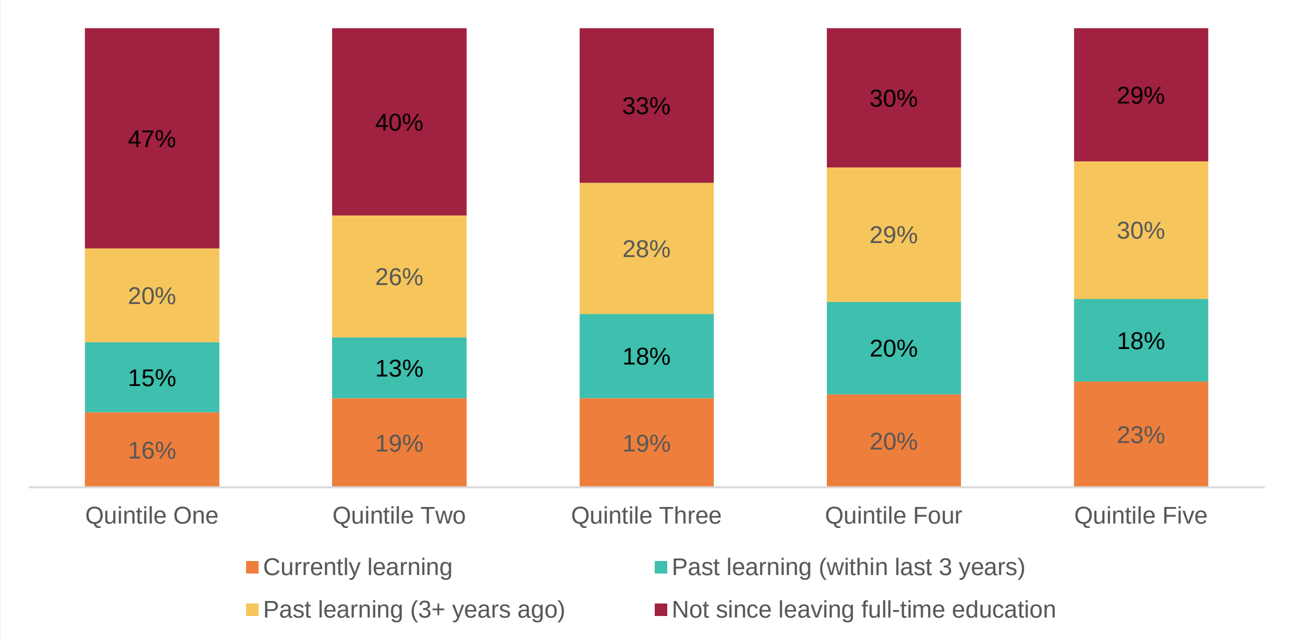
The index of multiple deprivation is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in England[9]. The index combines information from the following seven domains to calculate the level of deprivation: Income; Employment; Education, Skills and Training; Health and Disability; Crime; Barriers to Housing and Services; and Living Environment. Although IMD is based solely on location, rather than personal characteristics, it is considered a good proxy for respondents' individual socio-economic circumstances.

Analysis of participation in learning by index of multiple deprivation shows that participation in learning increases as deprivation decreases (see Figure 9). The participation rate rises from 31 per cent of quintile one (highest deprivation) to 40 and 41 per cent of quintiles four and five (lowest deprivation), respectively. The pattern is reversed for respondents who have not participated in learning since leaving full-time education, dropping from 47 per cent of quintile one to 29 per cent of quintile five.

These findings are supported by a comparison of the mean index of multiple deprivation, which is significantly higher[10] for respondents who are participating in learning (1.9) than for those who have not learnt within the previous three years of since full-time education (1.7).

[9] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015
[10] $P < 0.001$

Figure 9: Participation status by index of multiple deprivation quintiles



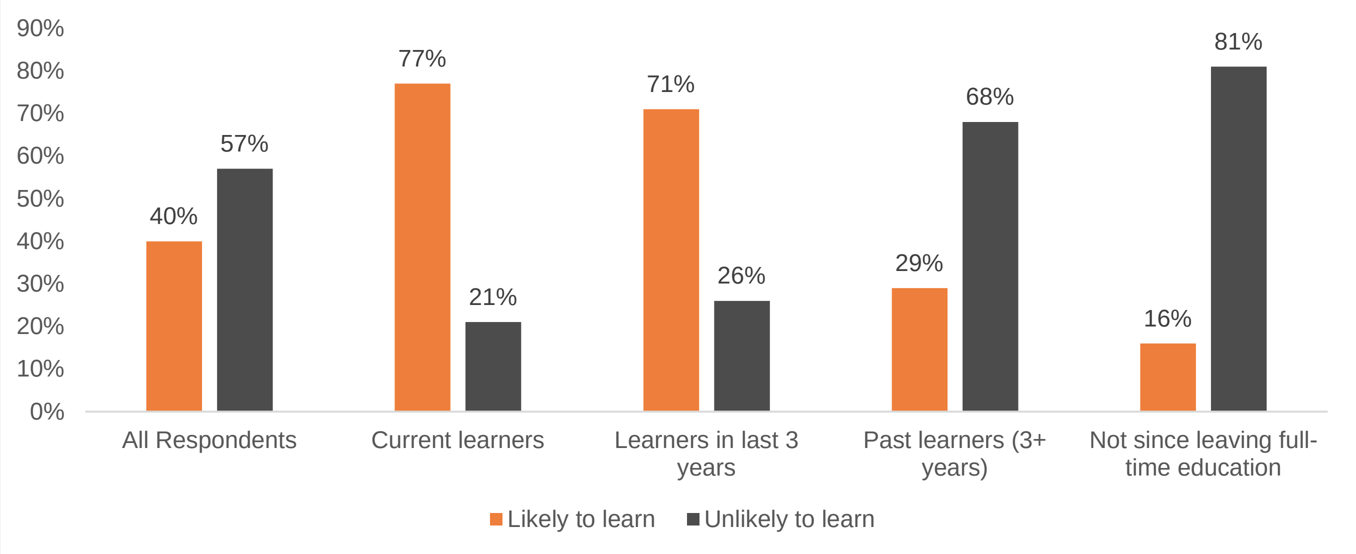
Base: all respondents. Total weighted base = 4,984, Quintile One = 1,151, Quintile Two = 1,178, Quintile Three = 931, Quintile Four = 768, Quintile Five = 724. Total unweighted base = 5,314, Quintile One = 1,253, Quintile Two = 1,262, Quintile Three = 968, Quintile Four = 803, Quintile Five = 780.

Future intentions to learn

As well as patterns and experiences of current/recent learning, the survey captures future intentions to learn and how these vary by demographics. All respondents were asked their likelihood of taking up learning in the next three years. Two in five adults (40 per cent) say that they are either fairly or very likely to, while 57 per cent say they would be fairly or very unlikely to take up learning within the next three years. These proportions are almost identical to those found in 2017, illustrating the continuing challenge of engaging more and different adults in learning.

As in previous years, the 2018 survey suggests that current or recent participation in learning is a key indicator of future intentions to learn. Over three quarters of learners (77 per cent) say that they are likely to take up learning again in the next three years, compared with just 16 per cent of adults who have done no learning since leaving full-time education (see Figure 10). The more time since adults have participated in learning, the less likely they consider themselves to be to do so in the future; emphasising the importance of encouraging adults to try out learning and providing support for them to continue to do so throughout their lives.

Figure 10: Future likelihood of learning by current learning status



Base: all respondents who gave a likelihood of future learning. Weighted base = 4,984. Current learners = 933, learners in last 3 years = 814, past learners (3+ years) = 1,308, not since leaving full-time education = 1,854. Unweighted base = 5,314. Current learners = 906, learners in last 3 years = 796, past learners (3+ years) = 1,443, not since leaving full-time education = 2,085.

Perceived likelihood of future learning varies between demographic groups. Regression analysis shows that social grade, terminal age of education, age and current learning status are all significant predictors of future likelihood of learning[11].

Of these, current learning status emerges as the most important predictor of likelihood of future learning. Holding other factors constant, the odds of current learners citing that they are likely to take up learning in the next three years are between 7.9 and 10.9 times *higher* than those not participating in learning.

Age was also found to have a substantial effect. Holding other factors constant, each yearly increase in age *decreases* the chance that people cite they are likely to learn within the next three years by 3.2 per cent. Increases in both social grade and age of leaving full-time education were also found to be associated with increased perceived likelihood of future learning.

In contrast to participation in learning, working status is not a significant predictor of likelihood of future learning. Individuals' perceptions of whether they will take up learning in the future seems to be less dependent on socio economic characteristics and more tied to recent learning history. For example, both social grade and terminal age of education are far less powerful predictors of future learning than they are of current learning status. This

[11] This model accounted for between 28.7 and 38.9 per cent of the variation in responses to future likelihood of learning.

emphasises the cumulative returns in terms of participating in learning, and that one of the results of learning is often the desire to learn more.

Likelihood of future learning was also found to be heavily dependent on whether individuals see themselves as needing to learn new skills for work in the next three years[12]. Among those who do, the odds of them stating they are likely to learn in the next three years is 15.8 times higher than those who do not believe they have a workplace skill need.

Motivations to learn

Each year, current and recent learners are asked to state whether they started their main learning for 'work or career related reasons', or whether they have taken up learning for 'leisure or personal interest'.

Just over three-quarters (77 per cent) of learners have taken up their *main* learning for work or career related reasons, and just under a quarter (23 per cent) for leisure or personal interest. Some groups of adults are more likely to learn for work or career related reasons than others (see Table 1), including:

- **Younger respondents**, with each age group below the age of 35 significantly more likely to do so than each age group over the age of 45.
- **Adults in the C2 social grade**, who are the most likely to learn for work and/or career reasons (83 per cent), and significantly more likely to do so than any grade other than C1 (79 per cent). The DE grade have significantly lower figures than the other three grades (68 per cent).
- **Respondents from BAME backgrounds**, who are significantly more likely to learn for work and/or career reasons (83 per cent) than respondents from White backgrounds (76 per cent).

In contrast, adults who are more likely to be motivated to learn by leisure or personal interest are more likely to be:

- **Older respondents**, with more than nine out of 10 (93 per cent) learners aged 75 or above and 78 per cent of those aged 65-74 identifying this as their reason for learning. This drops significantly to just under two fifths (38 per cent) of 55-64-year-olds and as low as 10 per cent for respondents aged 17-19.
- **Retired adults**, with almost nine in ten (88 per cent) learning for leisure or personal interest compared to just 11 per cent of full-time workers and 20 per cent of part-time workers (8-29 hours).

[12] $P < 0.001$

Table 1: Reason for taking up main learning

Demographic Group		For leisure or personal interest	For my work and/or career
Total		**23%**	**77%**
Gender	Male	22%	78%
	Female	24%	76%
Age group*	17-19	10%	90%
	20-24	12%	88%
	25-34	12%	88%
	35-44	17%	83%
	45-54	21%	79%
	55-64	38%	62%
	65-74	78%	22%
	75+	93%	7%
Social grade*	AB	25%	75%
	C1	21%	79%
	C2	17%	83%
	DE	32%	68%
Ethnicity*	White	24%	76%
	BAME	17%	83%
Terminal age of education	16 or less	31%	69%
	17-18	26%	74%
	19-20	23%	77%
	21+	26%	74%
Working Status*	Full-time (30+hrs)	11%	89%
	Part-time (8-29hrs)	20%	80%
	Part-time (<8 hrs)	15%	85%
	Self-employed	17%	83%
	Retired	88%	12%
Weighted base		**406**	**1,340**

Base: all respondents who have recently done or are currently learning. Weighted base = 1,746; unweighted base = 1,702.

The 2018 survey included a new question that asked adults who have learnt for work or career related reasons how they think it might help their work or career prospects. By far the most common response is that it will help them to ‘develop or improve in their current role’, cited by over three fifths (62 per cent) of learners (see Table 2). An additional nine per cent state that it will help them to ‘gain a promotion in their current line of work’. Twelve per cent of those learning for work related reasons indicate that they are learning to retrain into a substantially different type of job.

Table 2: Perceived work/career related benefits of learning

How learning might help my work and/or career	Percentage
To develop or improve in my current job/the role I had at the time	62%
To retrain into a substantially different type of job	12%
To get a promotion in my current line of work	9%
To get a similar role in my current line of work	5%
To get a job	3%
Part of school/university study	2%
To get a better job	1%
For my career	1%
To get into further education	1%
To gain a qualification	1%
Personal development/improvement	1%
Job requirement	0%
Don't know	2%
Other	0%

Base: all respondents who have recently or are currently learning for work and/or career related reasons. Weighted base = 1,340; unweighted base = 1,246.

All learners were asked to identify their broader motivations for starting their *main* learning. Just over a quarter (26 per cent) say that they are motivated by an interest in a subject. Similar proportions cite a desire to develop themselves as a person (25 per cent), to help them improve in their job (24 per cent), or to achieve a recognised qualification (24 per cent) (see Table 3). One fifth (20 per cent) simply state that they learn because they enjoy it. These findings are much the same as in 2017. The continued prevalence of non-career related motivations highlights the importance of ensuring a broad range of learning opportunities are available. Both work-related and non work-related opportunities are vital to encourage adults to engage with learning.

Table 3: Motivations to learn[13]

Motivation	Percentage
I am interested in the subject\personal interest\gain knowledge of the subject	26%
To develop myself as a person	25%
To help me do my current job better\improve job skills	24%
To get a recognised qualification	24%
I enjoy learning\it gives me pleasure	20%
To get a new or different job	15%
To improve my self-confidence	14%
To give me greater job security	14%
To get a promotion or better pay	12%
To make my work more satisfying	9%
Not really my choice - employer requirement	9%
To help me get onto a future course of learning	8%
To keep active\pass the time	8%
To meet people	7%
Not really my choice - professional requirement	7%
In order to set up a business	3%
To improve my health\help with a disability	3%
To enable me to volunteer	2%
To support my children's schooling	2%
To help me increase my working hours	1%
Not really my choice - benefit requirement	1%
Other	0%
Don't know	3%

Base: all current or recent learners. Weighted base = 1,747; unweighted base = 1,702.

To compare with the results from the 2017 survey, motivations were grouped into five categories:

- **Work-related,** including: To get a new or different job; To help me do my current job better\improve job skills; In order to set up a business; To help me increase my working hours; To get a promotion or better pay; To give me greater job security; To make my work more satisfying
- **Learning and knowledge**, including: To get a recognised qualification; To help me get onto a future course of learning; I enjoy learning\it gives me pleasure; I am interested in the subject\personal interest\gain knowledge of the subject; To support my children's schooling
- **Health and wellbeing**, including: To develop myself as a person; To improve my self--confidence; To keep active\pass the time; To improve my health\help with a disability

[13] Respondents could give more than one answer

- **Social and community**, including: To meet people; To enable me to volunteer
- **Requirements**, including: Not really my choice - employer requirement; Not really my choice -- professional requirement; Not really my choice - benefit requirement

Over half of respondents cite reasons related to learning and knowledge (53 per cent), with a similar proportion citing work-related reasons (52 per cent) (see Table 4). These are followed by health and wellbeing (36 per cent), requirements (16 per cent) and social and community (9 per cent)[14].

A comparison with 2017[15] shows that results for both years are fairly similar (albeit with a switch over in the order of the work-related and learning and knowledge groups) (see Table 4). This indicates a strong level of consistency in learners' motivations for learning.

Table 4: Grouped motivations for learning, 2017 and 2018

Group	Percentage 2017	Percentage 2018
Learning and knowledge	55%	53%
Work-related	56%	52%
Health and wellbeing	39%	36%
Requirement	16%	16%
Social and community	10%	9%

Base: all learners who cited a motivation. Weighted base 2017 = 1,776; unweighted base 2017 = 1,626. Weighted base 2018 = 1,747; unweighted base 2018 = 1,702.

Locations, methods and characteristics of learning

Learners were asked where they did or are doing their *main* learning, which provides insights on where adults are most likely to access learning. Learners are most likely to say that they are learning on a training course at work (23 per cent), learning independently (21 per cent), learning on the job (19 per cent), learning at a university or higher education institution (16 per cent) and learning online (15 per cent). Where and how adults learn has remained largely the same as the 2017 survey.

[14] Since groups were developed post-hoc, differences may be partly or wholly due to unequal representation or coverage of groups amongst answer options.

[15] There were some small changes in the answer options included in 2017 and 2018, but these were minor.

Table 5: Location of Learning[16]

Location	Percentage
On a training course at work	23%
Independently on my own	21%
On the job	19%
Through a university\higher education institution\Open University	16%
Online including through an app e.g. websites, forums, YouTube	15%
On an external training course arranged by my employer	12%
Independently with others	9%
Through a further education college\tertiary\6th form college	8%
Through a local adult education centre\evening institute\Workers' Educational Association class	5%
Through local community facilities e.g. library, museum, place of worship, bookshop etc.	4%
Through a voluntary organisation	3%
On an apprenticeship or higher apprenticeship	2%
Through a local school	1%
Through a leisure or health club	1%
Other	1%

Base: Current or recent learners. Weighted base 2017 = 1,858; unweighted base 2017 = 1,694. Weighted base 2018 = 1,747; unweighted base 2018 = 1,702.

To compare with the results from the 2017 survey, responses about the location of learning were split into four categories:

- **Work-related**, including: On the job; On a training course at work; On an external training course arranged by my employer; On an apprenticeship or higher apprenticeship
- **Independently**, including: Online including through an app e.g. websites, forums, YouTube; 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\evening institute\Workers' Educational Association 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

Just over two fifths (43 per cent) of learners are participating in work-related learning (see Table 6). This is followed by independent learning (36 per cent) and learning through a

[16] Respondents could give more than one answer

formal educational establishment (29 per cent). The least common category is community or voluntary learning (8 per cent)[17]. These results follow a similar pattern to the 2017 survey, indicating a consistency in how adults undertake learning.

Table 6: Grouped locations of learning, 2017 and 2018

Group	Percentage 2017	Percentage 2018
Work-related	55%	43%
Independently	41%	36%
Formal educational establishment	34%	29%
Community or voluntary	6%	8%

Base: all respondents who cited a factor or stated 'none'. Weighted base 2017 = 1,858; unweighted base 2017 = 1,694. Weighted base 2018 = 1,747; unweighted base 2018 = 1,702.

Online learning

Learners were specifically asked if they have participated in any online learning (see Table 7). Roughly half (47 per cent) of learners have done so, with the most common type being independent online learning with no extra support (19 per cent), followed by a mixture of online learning and in person tuition (12 per cent). Eight per cent of learners have also accessed online learning with other types of support.

Table 7: Take up of online learning[18]

Type of learning	Percentage
Independent online learning with no extra support	19%
A mixture of online learning and in person tuition	16%
Online learning with access to tutor support	12%
Online learning with other types of support e.g. peer forum, access to learning materials online	8%
I have not taken part in any courses involving online learning	51%
Don't know	2%
Other	0%

Base: all respondents who have recently completed or are currently learning. Weighted base = 1,747; unweighted base = 1,702.

Excluding respondents who answered 'don't know', 48 per cent of learners are taking part in courses with some form of online learning and 52 per cent are not. Some groups of adults are more likely to learn online. Learners in the AB social grade are the most likely to learn online (58 per cent), followed by those in C2 (48 per cent) and C1 (47 per cent). Learners in the DE social grade are the least likely to participate in online learning (36 per cent). Likelihood of participating in online learning peaks in the 45-54 age group (59 per cent). The lowest proportion participating in online learning are the 75 plus age group (25

[17] Since groups were developed post-hoc, differences may be partly or wholly due to unequal representation or coverage of groups amongst answer options.
[18] Respondents could give more than one answer

per cent), followed by 17-19 (30 per cent), 20-24 (36 per cent) and 65-74 (43 per cent). Adults who left full-time education aged either 19 to 20 or 21 and above are the most likely to learn online, with figures of 55 per cent for each group. This is followed by individuals who left education at 17 to 18 (52 per cent), with those who left at 16 or under the least likely to participate in online learning (47 per cent). The proportion of men and women who are participating in online learning is identical, with 48 per cent of each group doing so.

Out of online learners who have received some form of tutor support, 57 per cent receive support over email (see Table 8). Almost a third receive support via a forum or chatroom (32 per cent), with 30 per cent receiving it via webchat, 24 per cent receiving video conferencing support and 18 per cent over the telephone. Only 6 per cent of online learners receive face-to-face support from a tutor.

Table 8: Mode of tutor support for online learners[19]

Mode	Percentage
Email	57%
Forum or chatroom	32%
Webchat	30%
Video conferencing	24%
Telephone	18%
Face to face or in person	6%
Other	4%
Don't know	2%

Base: all respondents who received tutor support for online learning. Weighted base = 207; unweighted base = 198.

The most commonly reported benefit of online learning is being able to fit learning around the learner’s lifestyle (51 per cent) (see Table 9). Other commonly cited benefits include being able to learn on a mobile or tablet (30 per cent), being able to use online learning materials (30 per cent) and being able to access an online learning platform or website (24 per cent).

[19] Respondents could give more than one answer

Table 9: Benefits of online learning[20]

Benefit	Percentage
Being able to fit the learning around my lifestyle	51%
Being able to learn on my mobile or tablet	30%
Using online materials as part of my learning	30%
Using an online learning platform/website as part of my learning	24%
Being able to access tutor support remotely	18%
Being able to collaborate with other learners online	13%
Access to a student forum	13%
Being able to webchat/live chat with tutors	11%
Being able to webchat/live chat with other learners	10%
Using video-conferencing as part of my learning	8%
It is relevant to me	1%
None of the above	11%
Other	1%
Don't know	1%

Base: all respondents who have participated in an online learning course. Weighted base = 827; unweighted base = 787.

Over half of online leaners (53 per cent) state that they have not experienced any difficulties learning online (see Table 10). The most common difficulty relates to motivation for learning independently without class time (11 per cent), followed by technical problems (7 per cent), feeling isolated (5 per cent), delays in teacher feedback (5 per cent), poor quality of online materials (5 per cent) and a bad internet connection (5 per cent).

[20] Respondents could give more than one answer

Table 10: Difficulties encountered in learning online[21]

Factor making online learning difficult	Percentage
I found it difficult to be motivated to do the learning independently without class time	11%
There were technical problems with online learning	7%
I have felt isolated when learning online	5%
There has been a delay in teacher feedback	5%
I wasn’t able to build relationships with other classmates due to the remote nature of the course	5%
The quality of the online materials (videos, lecture slides etc.) was poor	5%
The experience was affected by a bad internet connection	5%
There has been a lack of support from the teacher	4%
There was a lack of technical support	4%
Don't know	4%
Tasks, resources or materials didn't work well on my mobile	3%
There was a lack of or no access to other resources (e.g. such as through a library)	3%
The platform/website was difficult to use	3%
My IT skills weren't good enough to get the best out of the course	3%
The student forum was not helpful	2%
The student forum was affected by complaints of other learners	2%
Finding the time to do it	2%
Found the course academically difficult	1%
Health issues	0%
Nothing made it difficult	53%
Other	1%

Base: all respondents who have participated in an online learning course. Weighted base = 827; unweighted base = 787.

Qualifications

Over three fifths (62 per cent) of learners are studying for a qualification, with substantial variations related to the demographic characteristics of learners. The likelihood of learning for a qualification declines with age. Learners in lower social grades (C2 and DE) are more likely than ABC1s to be working towards a qualification. Those in employment, whether part-time or full-time are more likely than those not in work to be undertaking accredited learning. Learners from BAME background (79 per cent) are also significantly more likely than those from a white background (59 per cent) to be doing so.

[21] Respondents could give more than one answer

Table 11: Demographic breakdown of whether or not respondent's current learning will lead to a formal qualification

Demographic Group		Yes	No	Don't know
Total		**62%**	**37%**	**0**
Sex	Male	62%	38%	
	Female	62%	37%	
Age group*	17-19	92%	7%	1%
	20-24	90%	10%	--
	25-34	67%	33%	1%
	35-44	64%	36%	--
	45-54	53%	46%	0
	55-64	37%	62%	2%
	65-74	13%	86%	0
	75+	6%	94%	--
Social grade*	AB	52%	47%	1%
	C1	64%	36%	0
	C2	69%	30%	1%
	DE	67%	33%	--
Ethnicity*	White	59%	41%	1%
	BAME	79%	21%	0
Terminal age of education*	16 or less	58%	42%	1%
	17-18	53%	47%	--
	19-20	58%	42%	0
	21+	50%	50%	0
Working Status*	Full-time (30+hrs)	61%	38%	0
	Part-time (8-29hrs)	64%	35%	0
	Part-time (<8hrs)	51%	49%	--
	Self-employed	54%	46%	--
	Retired	14%	86%	0
Weighted base		**1,084**	**654**	**8**

Base: all respondents who have recently done or are currently learning. Weighted base = 1,746; unweighted base = 1,702.

Investment in learning

Since 2011 there have been a range of changes to the funding of adult education provision. Whilst entitlements to fully-funded or co-funded provision remain for some learners, dependent on age, course subject and prior attainment, others are required to pay the full course fee. The introduction of advanced learner loans in 2013/14 enabled individuals studying Level 3 or above to borrow for the cost of the course and to pay back only once their income had exceeded an earnings threshold.

In the context of these changes, a question was included in the 2017 survey to investigate adults' investment in their learning; this has been repeated in the 2018 survey for comparison[22].

The 2018 survey shows that, for 19 per cent of adult learners, no fee is attached to their *main* learning (see Table 12). Twenty-eight per cent of learners indicate that their employer paid for some or all of their learning; twenty-four per cent paid the fee directly. Twelve per cent have taken out a formal learning loan to pay for their learning, a four percentage point increase from 2017. Eight per cent of learners state that they receive other government funding.

Table 12 compares these figures with those from the survey in 2017. The results are broadly similar, indicating that funding sources have remained consistent.

Table 12: Method of funding current or most recent learning, 2017 and 2018

Method of funding	2017	2018
My employer paid	29%	28%
I paid the fee directly	22%	24%
I paid the fee by taking out a formal learning loan e.g. Student Loan, Advanced Learner Loan, Career Development Loan	8%	12%
Other government funding	10%	8%
It was internal training provided by my employer	5%	6%
The fee was paid by a friend or family member as a gift	2%	2%
Help from my institution e.g. access funds, grants, bursaries etc.	3%	2%
I paid the fee by taking out a non-learning specific loan e.g. loan from a bank or building society, loan from a friend or family member	2%	1%
Charitable trust or other non-government organisation	1%	1%
There was no fee to be paid	19%	19%

Base: all respondents who have recently completed or are currently learning. Weighted base = 1,746; unweighted base = 1,702.

Respondents who are learning for work or career related reasons were asked how they think their learning would help their job or career. Upskillers[23] are significantly more likely[24] to say that their employer paid for some or all of their learning (54 per cent) than those Retrainers (26 per cent). This is consistent with the findings of a learner survey conducted for the evaluation of the government's Cost and Outreach pilots.[25]

22 Respondents could give more than one answer

23 See Annex for definition of upskillers and retrainers.

24 $P < 0.001$

25 Learning and Work Institute (2019) *Cost and outreach pilots evaluation: Interim report* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/818274/190705_Cost_Outreach_Pilots_Interim_Report_v4_FINAL.pdf

Barriers to learning

Each year, respondents are asked to identify the barriers to learning that they have experienced. Adults who are currently, or have recent experience of, learning are asked to state the factors that made their learning difficult; adults who have not participated in learning for at least three years are asked to identify the factors that prevent them from doing so. Together, 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.

Adults who have not participated in learning within the last three years

The most commonly cited barrier to learning for adults who have not taken part in learning for at least three years is work or other time pressures (16 per cent) (see Table 13). This is followed by a lack of interest (13 per cent) and feeling too old (12 per cent). These continue to be the top three barriers to learning reported by adults, with each seeing an increase of between two and three percentage points since 2017. A third of adults who have not learnt recently (33 per cent) say that nothing is preventing them from taking part in learning in the next three years, down five percentage points from 2017. This points to the importance of not only removing barriers to learning, but actively promoting the benefits of learning and encouraging participation.

Table 13: Barriers to learning[26]

Barrier	Percentage
Work\other time pressures	16%
Not interested\don't want to	13%
I feel I am too old	12%
Childcare arrangements or other caring responsibilities	11%
Cost\money\can't afford it	10%
An illness or disability	8%
I feel no need to learn anymore	7%
I haven't got round to doing it	3%
I don't feel confident enough	3%
No suitable courses are available	2%
Transport\too far to travel	2%
I am put off by tests and exams	2%
I don't know what is available or how to find out what is	1%
I have difficulties with reading, writing or numbers	1%
I don't have the qualifications needed for a course	1%
Other	1%
Nothing is preventing me	33%

Base: respondents who had not learnt in the previous three years or since full-time education. Weighted base = 3,162; unweighted base = 3,528.

To enable comparisons and to compare with the results from the 2017 survey, responses were split into four categories:

- **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
- **Dispositional** - relating to the attitudes, perceptions and expectations of adults, 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 feel no need to learn anymore; I am put off by tests and exams; I have difficulties with reading, writing or numbers; I don't feel confident enough; Not interested\don't want to
- **Institutional** - arising from the unresponsiveness of educational institutions, including: No suitable courses are available
- **Nothing preventing**

[26] Respondents could give more than one answer

The most common type of barrier is dispositional (42 per cent), followed by situational (31 per cent) (see Table 14)[27]. The order of categories is the same in 2018 as in 2017, with a similar pattern of results. This indicates a strong level of consistency in barriers to learning.

Table 14: Grouped barriers to learning, 2017 and 2018

Group	Percentage 2017	Percentage 2018
Dispositional	37%	42%
Situational	29%	31%
Institutional	2%	2%
Nothing preventing	38%	33%

Base: all respondents who cited a factor or stated 'none'. Weighted base 2017 = 3,145; unweighted base 2017 = 3,413. Weighted base 2018 = 3,162; unweighted base 2018 = 3,528.

A demographic breakdown of grouped barriers to learning indicates that:

- The prevalence of dispositional barriers increases as age group increases; 20 per cent of 17-19-year-olds cite dispositional barriers compared to 67 per cent of respondents aged 75 plus. They are also more common amongst respondents from lower social grades (cited by 52 per cent of respondents in DE, compared to 35 per cent in C2, 37 per cent in C1 and 35 per cent in AB) and amongst respondents from White backgrounds (cited by 43 per cent compared to 32 per cent of respondents from BAME backgrounds). Dispositional barriers are also more likely to be cited by those furthest from the labour market (cited by 60 per cent of retired respondents and 48 per cent of those not looking for work, compared to 28 per cent of full-time workers).
- Situational barriers are more likely to be cited by women than men (with respective figures of 34 per cent and 29 per cent). They are less prevalent amongst older respondents (cited by 5 per cent of respondents aged 75 plus compared to 43 per cent of 17 to 19 year olds) and amongst respondents from White backgrounds (cited by 30 per cent compared to 40 per cent of respondents from BAME backgrounds).
- There is little variation in the prevalence of institutional barriers, although the comparison is limited by the small sample size.

Current and recent learners

Learners are also most likely to identify work and time pressures as something that makes their learning difficult (14 per cent) (see Table 15). This is followed by cost (6 per cent) and childcare or caring responsibilities (5 per cent). These continue to be the top three barriers to learning reported by learners, although each has dropped by one percentage point since 2017.

[27] Since groups were developed post-hoc, differences may be partly or wholly due to unequal representation or coverage of groups amongst answer options.

Table 15: What has made learning difficult for learners[28]

Difficulty	Percentage
Work\other time pressures	14%
Cost\money\can't afford it	6%
Childcare arrangements or other caring responsibilities	5%
An illness or disability	4%
Transport\too far to travel	4%
I am put off by tests and exams	4%
Difficulties or issues with the course/learning or tutor	3%
I could not get time off work	2%
I don't feel confident enough	2%
I feel I am too old	2%
I have difficulties with reading, writing or numbers	2%
Don't know	2%
Other	1%
Too busy/lack of time	0%
Nothing prevented me from continuing	62%

Base: Current or recent learners. Weighted base = 1,747; unweighted base = 1,702.

Barriers for current learners were grouped into:

- **Situational**, including: Cost\money\can't afford it; Childcare arrangements or other caring responsibilities; Transport\too far to travel; Work\other time pressures; I could not get time off work; Too busy/lack of time
- **Dispositional,** 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
- **Institutional,** including: Difficulties or issues with the course/learning or tutor
- Nothing preventing

The most commonly cited category of barriers is situational (26 per cent), followed by dispositional barriers (11 per cent) (see Table 16)[29]. This is the same order as in 2017, indicating consistency in the pattern of barriers for learners over time.

A comparison with the barriers of respondents who have not taken part in learning within the previous three years (as described above) shows that current or recent learners are most likely to cite situational barriers, whilst those who have not learnt recently are most likely to say that dispositional barriers are preventing them from learning.

[28] Respondents could give more than one answer
[29] Since groups were developed post-hoc, differences may be partly or wholly due to unequal representation or coverage of groups amongst answer options.

Table 16: Grouped what has made learning difficult for learners, 2017 and 2018

Group	Percentage 2017	Percentage 2018
Situational	39%	26%
Dispositional	21%	11%
Institutional	2%	3%
Nothing preventing	45%	62%

Base: all respondents who cited a factor or stated 'none'. Weighted base 2017 = 1304; unweighted base 2017 = 1311. Weighted base 2018 = 1,747; unweighted base 2018 = 1,702.

Benefits of learning

Learning as an adult can have significant benefits for individuals, including those related to health, employment, and social life and community. Each year, survey respondents are asked to identify the benefits or changes that they have experienced as a result of participating in learning.

In the 2018 survey 36 per cent of learners identify an improvement in knowledge of the subject as a change or benefit of their learning (See Table 17). A quarter (25 per cent) feel that they have improved the skills needed to do their job. Over a fifth of respondents report enjoying learning more (22 per cent) or that their self-confidence has improved (21 per cent), and nineteen per cent of learners feel more confident at work. Only 13 per cent of learners state that they have not yet experienced any changes or benefits. The pattern of results is similar to that of the 2017 survey, demonstrating the consistency of benefits experienced by learners.

Table 17: Changes or benefits experienced as a result of learning[30]

Benefit experienced	Percentage
I have improved knowledge of the subject	36%
I have improved the skills needed to do my job	25%
I enjoy learning more	22%
My self-confidence has improved	21%
I am more confident at work	19%
I have got or expect to get a recognised qualification	14%
I am more productive at work and/or my work is of a higher quality	14%
I have met new people, made new friends or found a new partner	12%
I am more understanding of other people and cultures	12%
I have greater job security	11%
I have improved my general life skills e.g. budgeting, time management, communication	11%
I have kept active	11%
I have more control of my life	10%
My work has become, or I expect my work to become, more satisfying	9%
I have got or expect to get a new or different job	7%
I have changed or expect to change the type of work I do	6%
My working relationships with colleagues have improved	6%
I have got or expect to get a promotion or a rise in earnings	5%
My working relationship with my employer has improved	5%
I have moved or expect to move onto a further course of learning	5%
I am more involved in local events and issues	4%
My health has improved, and/or it has helped with a disability	3%
I have a greater understanding of my child's, or children's, schooling	3%
Family relationships have improved	3%
I have started volunteering or increased levels of volunteering	3%
I have set up a business	2%
I am less likely to take time off sick	2%
My children and/or family have become more interested in learning	2%
I have not yet experienced any benefits or changes	13%
Don't know	5%
Other	1%

Base: all respondents who have recently completed or are currently learning. Weighted base = 1747; unweighted base = 1,702.

To enable comparisons with the results from the 2017 survey, benefits or changes were grouped into four categories:

- **work-related**, including: I have got\expect to get a new or different job; I have changed\expect to change the type of work I do; I have set up a business; I have

[30] Respondents could give more than one answer

got\expect to get a recognised qualification; I have got\expect to get a promotion or a rise in earnings; my work has become\I expect my work to become more satisfying; I am more confident at work; I have greater job security; my working relationships with colleagues have improved; my working relationship with my employer has improved; I have improved the skills needed to do my job; I am more productive at work\work is of a higher quality; I am less likely to take time off sick;

- **health and wellbeing**, including: My self-confidence has improved; My health has improved\it has helped with a disability; I have more control of my life; I have kept active\filled the time;
- **learning and knowledge**, including: I have moved\expect to move onto a further course of learning; I enjoy learning more; my children\family have become more interested in learning; I have a greater understanding of my child's\children's schooling; I have improved my general life skills e.g. budgeting, time management, communication; I am more understanding of other people and cultures; I have improved knowledge of the subject;
- **social and community**, including: I have met new people\made new friends\found a new partner; Family relationships have improved; I am more involved in local events and issues; I have started volunteering\increased levels of volunteering

The most common type of benefit experienced by learners are work-related benefits, experienced by almost three fifths of learners (57 per cent) (see Table 18). Fifty-three per cent of learners experience benefits related to learning and knowledge, 31 per cent experience benefits related to health and wellbeing and 18 per cent experience social or community related benefits[31]. The pattern of the results is similar to 2017, with the same order of categories; this emphasises the consistency of reported benefits of learning.

Table 18: Grouped changes or benefits experienced as a result of learning, 2017 and 2018

Group	Percentage 2017	Percentage 2018
Work-related	75%	57%
Learning and knowledge	63%	53%
Health and wellbeing	40%	31%
Social and community	23%	18%

Base: all respondents who cited a factor or stated 'none'. Weighted base 2017 = 1,561; unweighted base 2017 = 1,438. Weighted base 2018 = 1,747; unweighted base 2018 = 1,702.

A demographic breakdown of grouped benefits indicates that:

[31] Since groups were developed post-hoc, differences may be partly or wholly due to unequal representation or coverage of groups amongst answer options.

- Work-related benefits are more common amongst respondents between the ages of 20 and 54; over 60 per cent of respondents in each age group within this range experience work-related benefits, compared to 50 per cent of 17-19-year-olds, 49 per cent of 55-64-year-olds, 25 per cent of 65-74-year-olds and 11 per cent of respondents aged 75 plus. The prevalence of work-related benefits is similar amongst respondents in the top three social grades (61 per cent in AB, 60 per cent in C1 and 61 per cent in C2), but substantially lower in the DE grade (40 per cent). Work-related benefits are also more likely to be cited by respondents from BAME backgrounds (63 per cent) compared to respondents from White backgrounds (56 per cent).
- Benefits relating to health and wellbeing are more common amongst women than men (33 per cent compared to 28 per cent) and amongst respondents from BAME backgrounds (42 per cent compared to 29 per cent of respondents from White backgrounds).
- Benefits relating to learning and knowledge are more common amongst women than men (55 per cent compared to 51 per cent) and amongst respondents from BAME backgrounds (62 per cent compared to 51 per cent of respondents from White backgrounds).
- Social and community-related benefits are more common amongst women than men (20 per cent compared to 15 per cent) and amongst respondents from BAME backgrounds (24 per cent compared to 16 per cent of respondents from White backgrounds). They are least common amongst respondents in full-time work (8 per cent) compared to other working statuses.

Tackling barriers to learning

When participants are asked what would make them more likely to take up learning in the future, the most common responses are if it was cheaper or fees were lower (12 per cent), if they could learn at home (12 per cent) and if learning was related to something they are interested in (12 per cent) (see Table 19).

However, for almost every factor, individuals who perceive themselves as likely to learn in the future feel that it would be more beneficial than those who perceive themselves as unlikely to learn. This emphasises that adults who perceive themselves as future learners are more easily facilitated into further learning.

Table 19: Factors facilitating the take up of learning[32]

Factor	Likelihood of future learning		Total percentage
	Likely (%)	Unlikely (%)	
If it was cheaper or the fees were lower *	16%	9%	12%
If I could learn at home *	15%	9%	12%
If the learning was related to something I'm interested in *	16%	10%	12%
If I could learn at a time that suited me *	14%	9%	11%
If it led to a qualification which employers recognise and value *	14%	7%	10%
If my employer would pay all or some of the costs *	12%	7%	9%
If I could learn online (fully or partly) *	12%	7%	9%
If I could learn at work *	11%	5%	8%
If my learning helped me earn more or gain a promotion *	9%	5%	7%
If I could get time off work to learn *	10%	5%	7%
If the start dates of learning were flexible *	9%	5%	7%
If I could learn at a more convenient location *	9%	4%	6%
If the learning would help my family *	6%	4%	5%
If I could get expert advice on what course or learning project would suit me best *	5%	3%	4%
If I could get support with childcare and/or other caring responsibilities *	5%	3%	4%
If my line manager or employer encouraged me *	5%	2%	4%
If there was a distance learning option *	6%	2%	4%
If I had a say in what and when I was going to learn *	5%	4%	4%
If I could sample the course or attend a taster session to see if it was right for me *	7%	3%	4%
If I could get help with my illness, disability and/or mental health	3%	2%	3%
If someone I knew and trusted encouraged me or came with me *	4%	2%	3%
If I knew that adults like me were doing the course	4%	3%	3%
If I knew there was help I could access to improve my confidence *	4%	2%	3%
If could get help with English\reading\writing *	3%	1%	2%
If I could get help with maths\understanding numbers *	2%	1%	1%

Base = all respondents. Weighted base = 4,984; unweighted base = 5,314.

[32] Respondents could give more than one answer

To enable comparisons and to compare with the results from the 2017 survey, factors were grouped into six categories:

- **Advice, encouragement and disposition**, including: If I could get expert advice on what course\learning project would suit me best; If my line manager\employer encouraged me; If someone I knew and trusted encouraged me or came with me; If the learning was related to something I'm interested in; If I had a say in what and when I was going to learn; If I knew that adults like me were doing the course; If I could sample the course\attend a taster session to see if it was right for me; Age/if I was younger
- **Financial**, including: If it was cheaper\the fees were lower; If my employer would pay all\some of the costs
- **Outcomes and benefits**, including: If it led to a qualification which employers recognise and value; If my learning helped me earn more\gain a promotion; If the learning would help my family; If it leads to a (new) job; If there were financial benefits (all other references); If I could learn new skill/something I will use
- **Practical support**, including: If I could get support with childcare\other caring responsibilities; If I could get help with my illness\disability and/or mental health; If I could get time off work to learn; If could get help with English\reading\writing; If I could get help with maths\understanding numbers; If I knew there was help I could access to improve my confidence
- **Structure**, including: If I could learn at a more convenient location; If I could learn at home; If I could learn at work; If I could learn at a time that suited me; If there was a distance learning option; If I could learn online (fully or partly); If the start dates of learning were flexible; Not online/if I could meet others
- **None**

The most commonly cited factors that would encourage participation in learning are structural (30 per cent) (see Table 20). In addition, just over a fifth of leaners (22 per cent) indicate that factors related to advice, encouragement and disposition would make them more likely to learn and 18 per cent that financial factors would do so. A further 17 per cent cite factors related to outcomes and benefits, and 16 per cent factors related to practical support[33]. Almost two fifths (38 per cent) of respondents state that nothing would make them more likely to learn in the future.

[33] Since groups were developed post-hoc, differences may be partly or wholly due to unequal representation or coverage of groups amongst answer options.

Although there were some small changes in the answer options included in 2017 and 2018, results for both years are fairly similar. This indicates a strong level of consistency in the factors that would make learning more likely.

Table 20: Grouped factors facilitating the take up of learning, 2017 and 2018

Group	Percentage 2017	Percentage 2018
Structure	31%	30%
Advice, encouragement and disposition	20%	22%
Financial	20%	18%
Outcomes and benefits	18%	17%
Practical Support	14%	16%
None	41%	38%

Base: all respondents who cited a factor or stated 'none'. Weighted base 2017 = 4,862; unweighted base 2017 = 5,039. Weighted base 2018 = 4,984; unweighted base 2018 = 5,314

A demographic breakdown of grouped factors facilitating the take up of learning indicates that:

- Structural factors are more likely to be cited by respondents in higher social grades, with figures of 34 per cent for AB and 36 per cent for C1, compared to 26 per cent for C2 and 25 per cent for DE.
- Factors related to advice, encouragement and disposition are more likely to be cited by respondents in younger age groups, with a figure of 22 per cent or more for each group under the age of 65, compared to a figure of 16 per cent for 65-74-year-olds and 9 per cent for respondents aged 75 plus. These factors are also more likely to be cited by respondents in higher social grades, with figures of 26 per cent for AB and 24 per cent for C1, compared to 19 per cent for C2 and 18 per cent for DE.
- Financial factors are more likely to be cited by respondents in higher social grades, with figures of 22 per cent for both AB and C1, compared to 15 per cent for C2 and 13 per cent for DE.
- Factors related to outcomes and benefits are more likely to be cited by respondents aged between 20 and 44, with either 24 or 25 per cent of each age group within this range citing them, compared to 14 per cent of 17 to 19 year olds, 18 per cent of 45 to 54 year olds, 11 per cent of 55 to 64 year olds, three per cent of 65 to 74 year olds and two per cent of respondents age 75 plus. They are also more likely to be cited by respondents from BAME backgrounds (with a figure of 20 per cent compared to 16 per cent for respondents from White backgrounds).
- Factors relating to practical support are more likely to be cited by women than men (17 per cent compared to 13 per cent). They are also more likely to be cited by respondents aged between 20 and 44, with between 22 and 24 per cent of each age group within this range citing them, compared to 13 per cent of 17 to 19 year olds, 14

per cent of 45 to 54 year olds, 11 per cent of 55 to 64 year olds, three per cent of 65 to 74 year olds and two per cent of respondents aged 75 plus.

Employment and participation in learning

Job security

Over four fifths of workers say either feel very secure (41 per cent) or secure (40 per cent) in their employment (see Table 21); only a small proportion feel insecure (4 per cent) or very insecure (2 per cent).

Table 21: Perceived security in current employment

Security	Percentage
Very secure	41%
Secure	40%
Neither secure nor insecure	11%
Insecure	4%
Very insecure	2%

Base: all respondents who are in work (employed or self-employed). Weighted base = 2,705; unweighted base = 2,499.

Perceptions of job security among workers appear relatively unaffected by gender, age, ethnicity or age of leaving full-time education (See Table 22) but are influenced by working status and social grade. Part-time workers are less likely than those working full-time to perceive their job as being secure (76 per cent and 84 per cent respectively), and most likely to consider themselves as being in insecure work. The self-employed are least likely to consider their work to be secure. Significantly fewer workers in social grade DE perceive themselves to be in secure employment, with a figure of 73 per cent compared to 82 per cent for C1 and C2 and 85 per cent for AB.

Table 22: Demographic breakdown of perceived security in current employment

Demographic Group		Secure	Insecure	Don't know
Total		**81%**	**6%**	**1%**
Sex	Male	81%	6%	1%
	Female	82%	7%	1%
Age group	17-19	81%	3%	2%
	20-24	86%	5%	1%
	25-34	81%	7%	1%
	35-44	82%	6%	1%
	45-54	81%	7%	0
	55-64	80%	6%	2%
	65-74	84%	3%	2%
	75+	85%	11%	-
Social grade*	AB	85%	6%	1%
	C1	82%	6%	1%
	C2	82%	5%	2%
	DE	73%	8%	1%
Ethnicity	White	82%	6%	1%
	BAME	81%	8%	0
Terminal age of education	16 or less	83%	7%	1%
	17-18	82%	5%	1%
	19-20	81%	5%	1%
	21+	82%	7%	0
Working Status*	Full-time (30+hrs)	84%	5%	1%
	Part-time (8-29hrs)	76%	10%	1%
	Part-time (<8 hrs)	76%	3%	5%
	Self-employed	67%	8%	5%
	Retired	-	-	-
Weighted base		**2,203**	**169**	**30**

Base: all respondents who are in work (employed or self-employed). Weighted base = 2,705; unweighted base = 2,499.

The data suggests there is a link between how secure people feel in their job and participation in learning. Those who feel '*very* secure' in their work are more likely to be learning (43 per cent), than people who consider themselves 'secure' (26 per cent).

For learners, job security is associated with their reason for learning. Individuals who learn for work or career related reasons are significantly more likely to feel secure in their job, with a figure of 84 per cent compared to 75 per cent of those who learn for leisure or personal interest. Respondents who are learning for work or career related reasons were asked how they think their learning would help their job or career. Retrainers[34] are 2.4

[34] See Annex for definitions of upskillers and retrainers

times more likely to state that they feel insecure in their current employment than Upskillers.

Career progression

Almost three fifths of respondents either strongly agree (18 per cent) or agree (29 per cent) that they job offers good prospects for career progression (see Table 23). Eleven per cent disagree and five per cent strongly disagree, with just over a quarter neither agreeing nor disagreeing (26 per cent).Table 23: Extent to which respondents agree that their job offers good prospects for career progression

Extent of agreement	Percentage
Strongly agree	18%
Agree	39%
Neither agree nor disagree	26%
Disagree	11%
Strongly disagree	5%

Base: all respondents who are in work (employed or self-employed). Weighted base = 2,705; unweighted base = 2,499.

Perceptions of having good job prospects are greatest among workers who are younger, in higher social grades, with more years of initial education and in full time employment (see Table 24). Perceptions of good prospects for career progression decline as workers age beyond 25, as social grade decreases, and as people report fewer years in initial education.

Men (58 per cent) are slightly more likely than women (55 per cent) to see their job as offering good prospects for career progression, though this difference is not statistically significant.

Table 24: Demographic breakdown of extent to which respondents agree that their job offers good prospects for career progression

Demographic Groups		Agree	Disagree	Don't know
Total		**57%**	**16%**	**2%**
Sex	Male	58%	14%	2%
	Female	55%	18%	2%
Age group*	17-19	64%	15%	4%
	20-24	70%	12%	1%
	25-34	66%	12%	1%
	35-44	60%	15%	1%
	45-54	51%	18%	1%
	55-64	40%	22%	3%
	65-74	26%	19%	7%
	75+	9%	22%	14%
Social grade*	AB	67%	10%	1%
	C1	60%	15%	1%
	C2	53%	16%	3%
	DE	39%	26%	3%
Ethnicity*	White	56%	17%	2%
	BAME	62%	11%	1%
Terminal age of education*	16 or less	47%	19%	2%
	17-18	56%	17%	1%
	19-20	64%	13%	1%
	21+	64%	13%	1%
Working Status	Full-time (30+hrs)	62%	13%	1%
	Part-time (8-29hrs)	44%	23%	2%
	Part-time (<8 hrs)	25%	27%	7%
	Self-employed	42%	20%	5%
	Retired	-	-	-
Weighted base		**1,530**	**427**	**48**

Base: all respondents who are in work (employed or self-employed). Weighted base = 2,705; unweighted base = 2,499.

There is a significant relationship[35] between participation in learning and people feeling their job offers career progression. Learners are more likely to think their job offers good progression opportunities, and people with good career progression are more likely to be learning. Current learners are 14 per cent more likely to think that their job offers good

[35] P = .001

prospects for career progression than people who have not done any learning since they left school (63 per cent compared with 51 per cent).

Out of respondents who are learning for work or career related reasons, Upskillers are significantly more likely[36] to think that their job offers good progression prospects (68 per cent) than Retrainers (54 per cent). Retrainers are 2.5 times more likely to disagree that their job has good progression prospects. This is consistent with the findings of a survey of learners conducted for the evaluation of the government's Cost and Outreach Pilots.[37]

Changing jobs

Thirty per cent of workers think that they are likely to change jobs within the next three years; 12 per cent very likely and 18 per cent fairly likely (see Table 25). Just over a fifth (21 per cent) think that they are fairly unlikely to change jobs, and 44 per cent that they are very unlikely to.

Table 25: Perceived likelihood of changing jobs within the next three years

Likelihood	Percentage
Very likely	12%
Fairly likely	18%
Fairly unlikely	21%
Very unlikely	44%

Base: all respondents who are in work (employed or self-employed). Weighted base = 2,705; unweighted base = 2,499.

Expectations of changing jobs in the next three years tend to be related to both economic and educational advantage, with those in higher social grades and with more years of initial education more likely to anticipate a change (see Table 26). Employment status is important too, with part-time workers more likely that those working full time to expect change. The self-employed are less likely than employees of any status to say that they are likely to change their job.

Women (31 per cent) are slightly more likely than men (29 per cent) to say that they are likely to be changing jobs within the next three years, though this difference is not statistically significant.

[36] P = 0.004

[37] Learning and Work Institute (2019) *Cost and outreach pilots evaluation: Interim report* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/818274/190705_Cost_Outreach_Pilots_Interim_Report_v4_FINAL.pdf

Table 26: Demographic breakdown of perceived likelihood of changing jobs within the next three years

Demographic Group		Likely	Unlikely	Don't know
Total		**30%**	**66%**	**5%**
Sex	Male	29%	66%	5%
	Female	31%	65%	4%
Age group*	17-19	56%	42%	2%
	20-24	52%	42%	6%
	25-34	37%	58%	6%
	35-44	30%	65%	5%
	45-54	25%	71%	4%
	55-64	13%	84%	3%
	65-74	5%	95%	1%
	75+	-	100%	-
Social grade*	AB	33%	64%	4%
	C1	33%	64%	3%
	C2	26%	68%	6%
	DE	26%	66%	8%
Ethnicity*	White	29%	67%	4%
	BAME	34%	58%	8%
Terminal age of education	16 or less	20%	76%	4%
	17-18	29%	67%	4%
	19-20	31%	62%	7%
	21+	37%	60%	3%
Working Status	Full-time (30+hrs)	30%	66%	5%
	Part-time (8-29hrs)	33%	63%	4%
	Part-time (<8 hrs)	24%	59%	17%
	Self-employed	19%	75%	5%
	Retired	-	-	-
Weighted base		**806**	**1,773**	**126**

Base: all respondents who are in work (employed or self-employed). Weighted base = 2,705; unweighted base = 2,499.

Job security and clear, visible progression prospects are important in retaining staff. Workers who think that their current job is not secure are 2.5 times more likely than those who perceive their job to be insecure, to think they will change jobs within the next three years. Similarly, those who do not consider their current work to provide good prospects for career progression are 1.9 times more likely to think that they will change jobs.

Respondents who are in work (either employed or self-employed) were asked, if they were to change jobs within the next three years, what their rationale would be. Almost a third (32 per cent) of respondents said they would be seeking to earn more money (see Table 27). Thirteen per cent referenced having more career opportunities and 12 per cent cited career progression in their current industry or field.

Table 27: Rationale for changing jobs within the next three years, if change in employment were to occur[38]

Reason	Percentage
To earn more money	32%
To have more career opportunities	13%
Career progression in my current industry or field	12%
Moving to a similar job in a different organisation	9%
To have better working conditions (e.g. flexible hours)	9%
Career change to a different industry or field	8%
I am unhappy in my current job	8%
To have increased job security	7%
Retirement	7%
There are not enough opportunities in my current industry or field	4%
Caring responsibilities (e.g. children, relative)	4%
Ill health and/or disability	3%
To have a career break	3%
I work in a declining industry	2%
My job is at risk of automation	1%
Redundancy or company ceases trading	1%
Relocation	1%
Work for myself or start own business	0%
Nothing; I won’t change jobs	2%
Don't know	17%
Other	1%

Base: all respondents in work (employed or self-employed). Weighted base = 2,705; unweighted base = 2,499.

Adults in work (either employed or self-employed) were asked what action they would take if they discovered they were at risk of losing their current job. Forty-six per cent said they would look for a similar job in their current industry or field (see Table 28). Twenty per cent said they would seek work in a different industry, while 16 per cent would look for a job at a higher level in their current industry. Other actions include seeking advice from their employer (10 per cent) and learning new skills informally (nine per cent).

Full-time workers are significantly more likely than those working part-time or on a self-employed basis to consider a similar (48 per cent compared to 43 and 34 per cent respectively) or a higher role (18 per cent compared to 11 or 12 per cent respectively) in

[38] Respondents could give more than one answer

their current industry. Part-time workers are significantly more likely than full-time workers to say they would seek formal advice (10 per cent and 8 per cent respectively). Part-time workers and the self-employed are also more likely than those working full time to consider retirement.

Table 28: Action taken if discovered to be at risk of losing current job[39]

Action	Total	Full time	Part time (8-29)	Self employed
Look for a similar job in my current industry or field*	46%	48%	43%	34%
Look for a job in a different industry or field	20%	21%	19%	17%
Look for a job at a higher level in my current industry or field*	16%	18%	11%	12%
Seek advice from my employer e.g. HR, line manager*	10%	10%	11%	1%
Learn new skills informally (e.g. online, self--directed, from friends or family)	9%	9%	10%	5%
Seek formal advice (e.g. from National Careers Service, Jobcentre Plus, Citizen's Advice Bureau)*	8%	7%	10%	2%
Seek informal advice from friends or family	8%	9%	7%	8%
Start a training course to gain new skills	8%	8%	7%	11%
Seek informal advice from colleagues	7%	7%	7%	3%
Retire*	7%	6%	10%	12%
Take a career break	3%	3%	3%	4%
I am self employed	0	0	0	2%
Start own business or go self employed	0	0	0	1%
Be upset or worried	0	0	0	0
Not applicable	1%	1%	0	2%
Other	1%	0	0	2%

Base: all respondents in work (employed or self-employed). Weighted base = 2,705; unweighted base = 2,499.

Learning new skills

Just under two-fifths of all respondents feel that they are either very likely (17 per cent) or fairly likely (22 per cent) to need to learn new skills for work or career-related reasons within the next three years (see Table 29). Forty-three per cent of respondents feel that it is very unlikely, and 14 per cent that it is fairly unlikely.

[39] Respondents could give more than one answer

Table 29: Likelihood of needing to learn new skills for work or career-related reasons within the next three years

Likelihood	Percentage
Very likely	17%
Fairly likely	22%
Fairly unlikely	14%
Very unlikely	43%

Base: all respondents. Weighted base = 4,984; unweighted base = 5,314.

Half of those who think they will need to learn new skills for their career prospects in the next three years are already participating in learning. Comparatively only 7 per cent of respondents who think they are unlikely to need to learn new skills for their job are currently learning.

Around one half of full-time, part-time and unemployed adults anticipate that they will need to learn new skills for their work or career in the next 3 years, although this drops to 41 per cent among the self-employed and those working fewer than 8 hours per week (see Table 30). Older adults, those with fewer years of initial education and those in lower social grades are less likely to anticipate the need to develop their skills. In particular, C1s are significantly more likely to anticipate such a need, than those in any other social grade.

These patterns are important; those who anticipate the need to learn new skills for work are significantly more likely than those who do not, to say they will engage in future learning activities (72 per cent compared to 15 per cent).

Table 30: Demographic breakdown of likelihood of needing to learn new skills for work or career-related reasons within the next three years

Demographic Group		Likely	Unlikely	Don't know
Total		**38%**	**57%**	**5%**
Sex	Male	38%	57%	5%
	Female	38%	58%	4%
Age group*	17-19	77%	16%	6%
	20-24	69%	27%	5%
	25-34	54%	39%	7%
	35-44	50%	45%	5%
	45-54	39%	58%	3%
	55-64	21%	74%	5%
	65-74	4%	92%	3%
	75+	2%	96%	2%
Social grade*	AB	42%	54%	4%
	C1	48%	48%	4%
	C2	37%	57%	6%
	DE	27%	68%	5%
Ethnicity*	White	36%	60%	4%
	BAME	54%	39%	7%
Terminal age of education*	16 or less	21%	74%	4%
	17-18	40%	55%	4%
	19-20	44%	50%	6%
	21+	48%	49%	4%
Working Status*	Full-time (30+hrs)	50%	46%	5%
	Part-time (8-29hrs)	48%	47%	6%
	Part-time (<8 hrs)	41%	45%	14%
	Self-employed	41%	54%	5%
	Retired	3%	94%	3%
	Unemployed	51%	41%	8%
	Not seeking	27%	68%	5%
Weighted base		**1,905**	**2,845**	**235**

Base: all respondents. Weighted base = 4,984; unweighted base = 5,314.

Information and advice on changing jobs and career progression

When asked where they would go to find information or advice on changing jobs or progressing in their career, almost two fifths of respondents (38 per cent) say that they would do a general online search (see Table 31). Eighteen per cent of respondents would seek information and advice from Jobcentre Plus, while 16 per cent would consult friends, family or colleagues.

A general online search for information, is by far the most common source cited, particularly amongst particularly amongst full-time workers, part-time workers and the self-employed (51 per cent, 45 per cent and 46 per cent respectively). Around one in five workers cite Jobcentre Plus, compared with just 11 per cent of those who are self-employed. Part-time workers are significantly more likely than full-time workers to cite either an education provider (8 per cent and 5 per cent respectively), Citizens Advice Bureau (7 per cent compared to 4 per cent) and libraries (5 per cent compared to 3 per cent).

Retrainers are significantly more likely[40] to go to an education provider (17 per cent) than those who are upskilling (7 per cent). Conversely, Upskillers are significantly more likely[41] then Retrainers to seek information from their current employer (14 per cent and 8 per cent respectively).

[40] $P < 0.001$
[41] $P = 0.008$

Table 31: Sources of information and advice on changing jobs or career progression, by working status[42]

Information source	Total	Full time	Part time (8-29)	Self employed
General online search	38%	51%	45%	46%
Jobcentre Plus*	18%	20%	23%	11%
Friends, family or colleagues	16%	19%	21%	21%
Education provider such as a College or University*	8%	5%	8%	4%
Professional, sector or trade organisation	8%	12%	9%	9%
Social media	8%	11%	9%	9%
Your current employer (e.g. HR, line manager)*	7%	13%	9%	4%
Prospective employers	7%	11%	8%	7%
National Careers Service	5%	5%	5%	3%
Library*	5%	3%	5%	5%
Local media (e.g. newspaper, radio)	5%	5%	7%	3%
Citizen's Advice Bureau*	4%	4%	7%	4%
Local community, voluntary or religious centre	2%	2%	2%	2%
Unionlearn representative or Workplace Learning Advocate	1%	2%	3%	0
Recruitment agency	1%	1%	0	3%
Don't know	22%	10%	14%	14%
I wouldn't look for information or advice	4%	1%	1%	3%
Other	0	0	0	0

Base: all respondents. Weighted base = 4,984; unweighted base = 5,314

More than one in five adults (22 per cent) say that they don't know where they would go for information or advice on changing jobs or career progression. Those aged over 55, in social grade DE and who left initial education at the earliest opportunity are most likely to be in this position. Women are also significantly less likely than men to know where to go for information and advice (see Table 32).

[42] Respondents could give more than one answer

Table 32: Information sources for advice on changing jobs or career progression – demographic breakdown of 'don't know' response

Demographic Group		Percentage
Total		**22%**
Sex*	Male	20%
	Female	24%
Age group*	17-19	7%
	20-24	9%
	25-34	10%
	35-44	10%
	45-54	12%
	55-64	30%
	65-74	53%
	75+	63%
Social grade*	AB	18%
	C1	18%
	C2	20%
	DE	32%
Ethnicity*	White	24%
	BAME	13%
Terminal age of education*	16 or less	33%
	17-18	17%
	19-20	15%
	21+	15%
Working Status*	Full-time (30+hrs)	10%
	Part-time (8-29hrs)	14%
	Part-time (<8 hrs)	31%
	Self-employed	14%
	Retired	55%
	Unemployed	14%
	Not seeking	25%

Base: all respondents. Weighted base = 4,984; unweighted base = 5,314.

Information and advice on gaining new skills to improve career prospects

When asked where they would go to find information or advice on gaining new skills to improve their job or career prospects, the most common source cited by respondents is a general internet search (36 per cent) (see Table 33). This is followed by Jobcentre Plus (15 per cent), education providers (13 per cent) and friends, family or colleagues (13 per cent).

Part-time workers are significantly more likely than those working full-time to cite a range of sources, including: Jobcentre Plus (19 per cent compared to 15 per cent), libraries (8 per cent compared to 5 per cent), National Careers Service (7 per cent compared to 5 per cent), Citizens Advice Bureau (5 per cent compared to 3 per cent) and a local community, voluntary or religious centre (4 per cent compared to 2 per cent). Part-time workers are also significantly more likely than self-employed respondents to cite education providers (15 per cent compared to 7 per cent).

Retrainers are significantly more likely[43] to go to the National Careers Service (10 per cent) for information and advice to improve their job or career prospects than those looking to upskill (5 per cent).

Table 33: Information sources for advice on gaining new skills to improve job or career prospects, by working status[44]

Information source	Percentage	Full-time	Part-time (8-29 hours)	Self-employed
General online search	36%	47%	44%	49%
Jobcentre Plus*	15%	15%	19%	11%
Education provider such as a College or University*	13%	12%	15%	7%
Friends, family or colleagues	13%	14%	16%	15%
Professional, sector or trade organisation	8%	12%	10%	11%
Your current employer (e.g. HR, line manager)*	8%	15%	13%	3%
Library	7%	5%	8%	4%
Social media	7%	9%	9%	8%
Prospective employers	6%	8%	8%	4%
National Careers Service*	5%	5%	7%	3%
Citizen's Advice Bureau*	3%	3%	5%	3%
Local community, voluntary or religious centre*	3%	2%	4%	4%
Local media (e.g. newspaper, radio)	3%	3%	3%	2%
Unionlearn representative or Workplace Learning Advocate	3%	3%	3%	1%
Recruitment agency	0%	0	0	0
Don't know*	24%	12%	13%	18%
I wouldn't look for information or advice	4%	1%	1%	1%
Other	0%	0%	0%	0%

Base: all respondents. Weighted base = 4,984; unweighted base = 5,314.

Almost a quarter of respondents (24 per cent) say that they don’t know where they would go for information on gaining new skills to improve their career or job prospects. Again, those aged over 55, in social grade DE and who left initial education at the earliest

[43] P = 0.005

[44] Respondents could give more than one answer

opportunity are most likely to be in this position. Women are also significantly less likely than men to know where to go for information and advice (see Table 34).

Table 34: Information sources for advice on gaining new skills to improve job or career prospects - demographic breakdown of 'don't know' response

Demographic Group		Percentage
Total		**24%**
Sex*	Male	22%
	Female	26%
Age group*	17-19	8%
	20-24	9%
	25-34	11%
	35-44	12%
	45-54	13%
	55-64	32%
	65-74	54%
	75+	63%
Social grade*	AB	20%
	C1	19%
	C2	23%
	DE	32%
Ethnicity*	White	25%
	BAME	13%
Terminal age of education*	16 or less	34%
	17-18	18%
	19-20	19%
	21+	17%
Working Status*	Full-time (30+hrs)	12%
	Part-time (8-29hrs)	13%
	Part-time (<8 hrs)	34%
	Self-employed	18%
	Retired	57%
	Unemployed	14%
	Not seeking	26%

Base: all respondents. Weighted base = 4,984; unweighted base = 5,314.

Annex: Methodology

The Adult Participation in Learning 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 in any, 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 a 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.'

The 2018 Adult Participation in Learning Survey included 5,314 adults aged 17 and over across the UK, with fieldwork conducted in November and December 2018. This sample has been weighted (generating an effective sample of 4,984) to provide a nationally representative dataset. In addition to overall participation in learning, the 2018 survey includes questions to identify barriers to learning for different groups of adults, motivations for learning and changes which would make learning more attractive. The survey also explores issues such as who participates and what they are learning, how learning is undertaken, whether learning leads to a qualification, benefits or changes from learning, investment in learning and employees' perceptions of their need for learning.

Fieldwork was conducted by Kantar TNS via their UK omnibus survey. Kantar TNS use 2011 Census small area statistics and the Postcode Address File to define sample points – areas of similar population size within a region, with the entire sampling frame representative of the country's geographical and socio-economic profile. Each week, a number of these points are chosen as locations for the fieldwork. Quotas are set for gender and working status. The survey is carried out face to face using computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI).

Analysis

Analysis of the survey results predominately involved a mixture of descriptive statistics and the significance testing of demographic and key variable breakdowns. It should be noted that due to space limitations not all results have been included in this report. It should also be noted that all figures, breakdowns and analyses throughout the report are based on weighted data. For further analysis and access to the dataset, please email: Fiona.Aldridge@learningandwork.org.uk

Measuring participation

The survey uses a deliberately broad definition of learning to capture as wide an array of learners as possible, which goes beyond participation in publicly-funded provision. The interpretation of the definition is subjective and some individuals with similar experiences may classify themselves differently. An alternative approach was adopted by the National Adult Learner Survey (NALS),[45] which uses a different definition and a series of questions to classify respondents into formal learners, non-formal learners, informal learners and non-learners. Participation rates measured through NALS are higher than those captured by the Participation Survey.

While respondents are given a definition of learning, the self-reported nature of the Participation Survey relies on individuals to make a judgement about how it relates to them. This can be influenced by their existing understanding of what learning is, which can relate to a range of factors such as the formality of the learning, duration and/or method of delivery. Respondents may therefore interpret questions differently, and they may provide incorrect information (either deliberately or through mis-remembering details). However, this risk is mitigated by the large sample size and by the general consistency of responses over the surveys' 20-year history. An alternative approach would be through use of nationally-collected statistics on adult education such as in DfE and ESFA statistical releases.[46] However, such statistics are limited to publicly-funded provision and are unable to identify qualitative issues such as barriers to learning or motivations.

Index of multiple deprivation

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is UK Government's "official measure of relative deprivation for small areas".[47] It is based on a weighted combination of measures of seven areas of deprivation.[48] Each Lower-layer Super Output Area (LSOA) is given a unique ranking on an ordinal scale from the most deprived area (1) to the least deprived area (32,844). For the segmented analysis, these were grouped into quintiles from one (most deprived fifth of LSOAs) to five (least deprived fifth of LSOAs). Although IMD is based solely on location, rather than personal characteristics, it is considered a good proxy for respondents' individual socioeconomic circumstances.

IMD figures were amalgamated from separate figures for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. IMD quintile was therefore defined by country, rather than overall. In addition, specific data on LSOA for each respondent was not available. Therefore, LSOA was approximated through use of postcode data.

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45 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/34798/12-p164-national-adult-learner-survey-2010.pdf

46 https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/further-education-and-skills-statistical-first-release-sfr

47 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/579151/English_Indices_of_Deprivation_2015_-_Frequently_Asked_Questions_Dec_2016.pdf

48 Income deprivation, employment deprivation, education, skills and training deprivation, health deprivation and disability, crime, barriers to housing and services and living environment disruption.

Regression analysis

Binary logistic regression analyses were conducted to identify which demographic variables are significant predictors of certain binary outcomes (e.g. participation status). Predictor variables are variables found to influence an outcome once other variables have been taken into account. Therefore, a regression analysis helps to identify whether or not differences between demographic groups can be explained by differences in underlying variables. For the majority of regression analyses described in this report, the variables tested were age, social class, working status and age of leaving full-time education.

It should be noted that since working status is a categorical variable, it was necessary to choose one answer option as a reference point for other answers to be compared against. As the most common working status, full-time employment was chosen as the reference point.

A regression analysis produces a model of predictor variables for a particular outcome. The strength of the model is indicated by the proportion of the variance in answers that the model predicts i.e. how accurately a respondent's answer can be predicted from their demographic variables.

Retraining and upskilling

To contribute to the evidence base informing the development of the National Retraining Scheme, this report includes analysis to better understand two groups of learners who are, or have recently been, learning for career-related reasons. The two groups are "Upskillers" and "Retrainers".

Upskillers are defined as respondents who selected one of the following answers as their work-related motivation: 'To develop or improve in your current job or role\ the job or role you had at the time'; 'To get a similar role in your current line of work'; 'To get a promotion in your current line of work'. Retrainers were those who selected the answer: 'To retrain into a substantially different type of job'.[49]

In total, 87 per cent of applicable respondents were designated as "Upskillers" (850) and 13 per cent as "Retrainers" (126).

Definitions

The following definitions are used throughout the report:

- **Current learners** – respondents who are currently learning.
- **Recent learners** – respondents who are not currently learning, but have done so within the three years prior to interview.
- **Participation in learning** – respondents who are currently learning or who have done so in the three years prior to interview (current and recent learners).
- **Participation rate** – the proportion of respondents who are current or recent learners.

[49] Respondents who were retired, still at school or in full-time education were excluded from the analysis.

- **Main learning** – the primary item of learning in which respondents are engaged, or have been within the previous three years, as self-defined by respondents.
- **Any learning** – any item of learning in which respondents are engaged, or have been within the three years prior to interview.
- **Social grade** – based on Office for National Statistics' occupational classification, derived from a set of questions to identify features of respondents' occupation and workplace. Social Grade A includes the upper and upper-middle classes and is generally grouped with Grade B, the middle classes. Grade C1 includes the lower-middle class, often called white-collar workers. Grade C2 mainly consists of skilled manual workers. Grade D comprises the semi-skilled and unskilled working class, and is usually linked with Grade E, those in the lowest grade occupations or who are unemployed.
- **Upskillers** – defined as respondents who are in work and stated that they are motivated to learn to develop or improve in their current or recent job/role, to get a similar role in their current line of work, or to get a promotion in their current line of work.
- **Retrainers** – defined as respondents who are in work and stated that they are motivated to learn to retrain into a substantially different type of job.